

Community Action Planning in Urban Conservation of the Old City Yangzhou

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1. Background

China is developing at a tremendous pace. Rapid economic development and urbanization have led to an enormous amount of construction activity in terms of new urban districts, demolition and redevelopment of inner city areas. In many cities, the historic areas are being swallowed, resulting in a loss of cultural heritage. In Yangzhou, however, there still remains a substantial historical area of 5.1 km² with about 110,000 residents, characterized by 1 to 2 storey courtyard buildings with narrow streets and alleys.

Yangzhou Municipal Government (YMG) has discovered the historical and economic value of the old inner city and paid special attention to preserve the historic city area for years. GTZ, German Technical Cooperation, has been supporting the Municipal Government's efforts in preserving the old city centre and introduced the concept of "Sustainable Urban Conservation" for the rehabilitation of the old city that aims to improve the living conditions of residents in traditional urban neighbourhoods by upgrading these areas and supporting self-help initiatives. With a grant from the Cities Alliance, GTZ and YMG are elaborating a comprehensive upgrading strategy for the whole inner city of Yangzhou. The Strategy focuses not only on the preservation of listed historic buildings, but also the residents, particularly the lower-income groups, their living conditions, and respective modernization of buildings. By following a process-orientated (gradual upgrading) rather than a project-orientated approach that normally leads to the relocation of most residents, the residents will participate in the modernization of their living environment and benefit from the growing economic vitality of those areas.

In 2006, as a component of the urban conservation project, a pilot area was identified by the iYET (international Yangzhou Experts Team) together with the government counterparts of Yangzhou. This 120m x 120m area contains about 147 households. Major problems in this area which are typical of the Old City residential areas, include:

- Sanitary conditions of the houses in the area are often poor, individual toilets or bathrooms are often missing. Most of the residents still use public toilets.
- The physical conditions of the housing constructions are partly desolate and need improvement.
- Infrastructure needs attention. The existing storm water drainage, increasingly used for discharge of grey water and sometimes sewage of toilets, needs upgrading. Major collection pipes for sewage along major roads leading to a sewage treatment plant are in place; however the local network is not yet adjusted. Gas pipes are not in place, and electricity also needs improvement.
- Over the years, provisory extension of houses has reduced public space and access. Public space in the direct vicinity of the house as well as within the neighborhood plays an important role in daily communication and for economic activities (mobile selling of food and other small goods). Access is limited due to narrow roads and high building density. Emergency access, public maintenance and services need to be addressed.

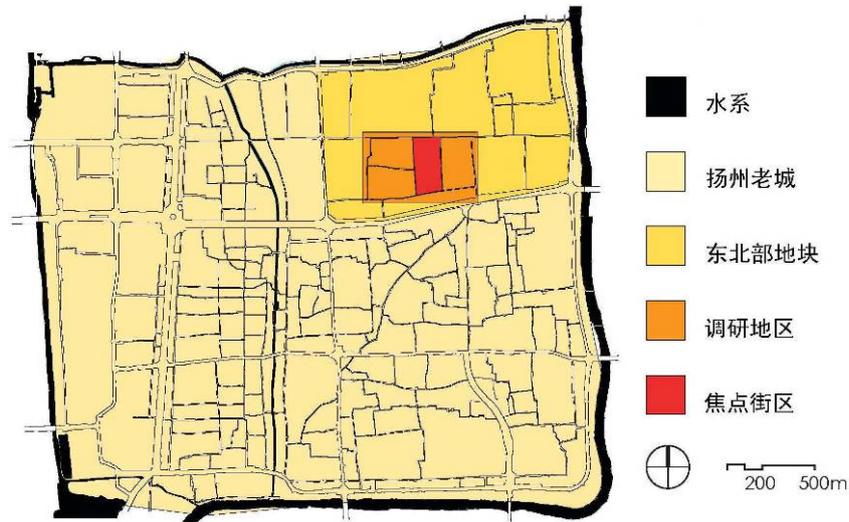


Fig.1 Old City Yangzhou and Location of the pilot area

Source: GTZ/Yangzhou Municipality(2005), p.12



Fig.2 Aerial view of pilot area (left)

Fig.3 Historical areas in the Old City Yangzhou(right)

Source: GTZ - CA Project Team



Fig.4 Poor living conditions in the pilot area (from left to right: low-income inhabitants / kitchen / poor sanitation situation)

Source: GTZ - CA Project Team

Due to the deteriorating physical conditions of the buildings, many younger and richer residents have moved to the new city areas. The majority of the residents now belong to the low income group.¹ Around 37 % of the residents are older than 61 years and there will be a significant demographic change within the next 10 years.²

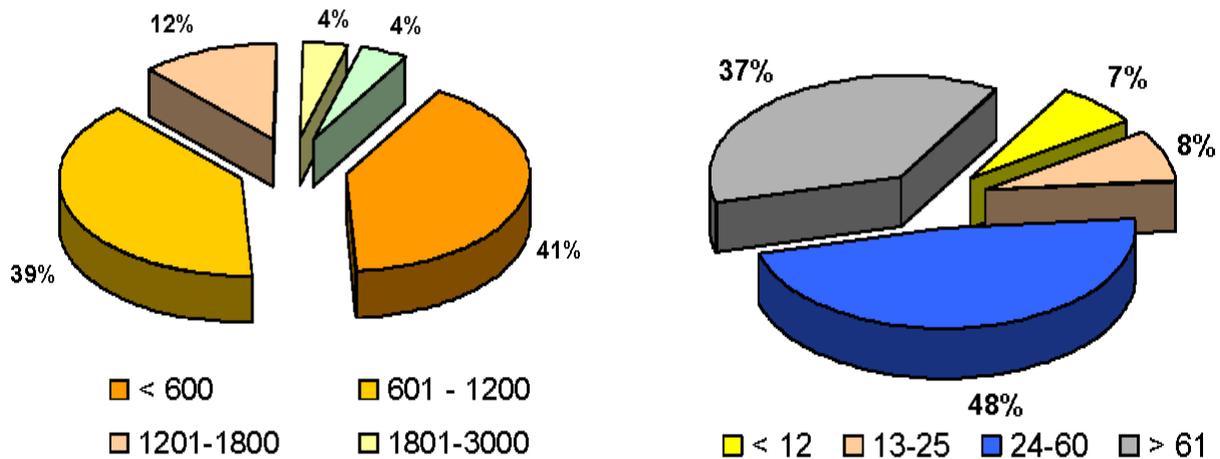


Fig.5 Population by income in pilot area, RMB/month (left)

Fig.6 Demographic structure in the pilot area (right)

Source: GTZ/Yangzhou Municipality (2005), p. 25

The challenge of the project is to develop an approach with the residents' participation. The unique opportunity for Yangzhou is to link upgrading with historical rehabilitation. Parallel focus is placed on families and history, neither is dominant. In order to improve the awareness of residents and encourage an active involvement of affected local communities, the methodology of Community Action Planning has been introduced and tested. The CAP methodology is intended to change thinking and develop approaches to include the participation of communities.

2. CAP –Workshop in the pilot area

An initial CAP workshop to test and develop the concept, organized by iYET of GTZ and YFCC, was held from 9-22 November, 2006, with the focus on establishing a participatory planning approach for rehabilitating and upgrading the historical Old City.

iYET stands for “international Yangzhou Experts Team”. Established by GTZ experts and representatives from local authorities, this team was composed of both local and foreign professionals. As the primary partner representing the city, a special government institution ‘Old City Office’ cooperated with iYET team. And the implementing partner was the YFCC (Yangzhou Famous City Company), a technical organization.

The purpose was to test Community Action Planning and to develop strategies and a development timeline for pilot area. Professor Goethert from MIT came to Yangzhou and worked together with the project team. Some authorities also participated in a supporting role: mainly the Cultural Bureau, Planning Bureau, Construction Bureau, House Management Bureau, and Environmental

Protection Bureau.

Framework

At first, a framework was worked out for the up-grading and participatory development, which provided:

- A manageable physical size to facilitate implementation
- Parallel community groups for effective support
- Recognizable entity to others

The strategy was to divide issues into three categories: House, Façade, and Lane/street.

- There are three inner streets in the pilot area. These streets are very narrow, so we may better call them lanes. “Lane/street” is the key planning element, and its change is immediately visible. It allows quick and low cost interventions, and reinforces street community for mutual support. The street community is intended as key driver for improvement, and it needs a simple administration.
- As to “Façade”, secure roofs, for example, are very important elements to protect assets. And we wanted to find out how we could develop the strategy to prevent deterioration and provide additional subsidy to encourage the modernization.
- “House” is to improve the interior of the houses, e.g., we could set one “model house” per street initially for residents to follow, and to provide education opportunities such as tours, skill training, etc.



Fig.7 Framework for the CAP workshop
Source: GTZ CA Project Team/ iYET

Based on the framework and strategy above, we held the initial test to develop a Yangzhou approach focused on sustainable conservation.

Before the workshop we bought 12 disposable cameras and distributed them to 2 or 3 selected families in each street, and asked them to record what they determine as good historical elements and non-historical elements. On the second day, the pictures were printed out and brought to the workshops.

Task 1: Develop Awareness of Old City

About 30 residents and 20 representatives from different institutions (OCO, Urban Planning Bureau, YFCC, neighborhood committee and GTZ iYET) attended the workshop.

On the first day of the workshop, questions were raised for the residents at the workshop:

“What would you be proud to show visiting relatives or tourists?”

“What would you want to pass on to your children?”

The Purpose was to:

- build awareness, common understanding of historical elements;
- understand elements according to future planning and implementation;
- summarize elements to determine a common shared understanding and highlight limited issues.

At the workshop the residents’ representatives placed the pictures in the prepared framework, discussed about those historical and non-historical elements, and determined the elements requiring detailed design improvements for compliance with historical areas (Fig. 8a).

Task 2: Consider priorities and cost

The Purpose was to:

- understand concerns from different perspectives: families and city;
- understand relative importance of concerns;
- relate concerns to costs to determine budgeting needs in implementation;
- determine concerns that are the same and easy to implement, and concerns that are very different and require negotiation.

The residents at the workshop identified issues for policies to facilitate compliance (Fig. 8b).

Task 3: Do field survey of problems and issues

On the second day, the iYET worked together with the representatives of residents and YFCC to do field survey. The purpose was to update data on street and surface situation for the preparation of a detailed inventory.

Task 4: Prepare street community inventory

It aimed to provide base information for implementation at street scale. Families identified elements and their location specific to streets to build awareness. Elements by type, location, and number were marked so they became directly transferable for detailed technical plan development.

Task 5: Analyze Issues

On the third day, the residents, together with iYET, went back to the workshop, had a discussion about all the issues to be improved, recommended what should be done, and who should be responsible, and where the financial source is, and which policies should support them (Fig. 8c).



就试点地块的房屋修缮、沿街外观整治、街道整治存在的问题进行讨论

房屋内部	立面	街道广场
衣服晾晒凌乱； 室内空调机； 改建时坡屋顶改成平屋顶； 乱搭小坡屋占道； 空房屋破旧不堪； 铝合金门窗； 窗户样式不统一； 院落内的乱搭乱建； 地窖不通； 无化粪池（下水直通阴沟）； 天井铺地为水泥铺地； 室内天花板不规范； 人和文化遗存； 人口居住密度太高； 公私混合产权不利于实施改造； 公房内多家混合居住不利于实施改造； 居住空间拥挤； 高楼遮挡阳光； 电线、有线电视线路的走线零乱；	空调机； 外窗铝合金防盗网； 落水管外露； 外窗雨蓬不统一； 砖的颜色不统一（有红砖）； 擅自加高房屋层数； 外墙面砖； 山墙面混乱； 水泥楼房太高； 违章建筑占道； 屋面大瓦； 电线、有线电视线路的走线零乱；	垃圾堆放处脏乱； 东圈门入口厕所太脏； 街道为水泥地面； 缺乏老年活动场所； 没有外来参观者的停车场； 东圈门铺地下雨时积水； 东圈门街道铺地有破碎现象；

(a)



重要性	对古城风貌重要的因素		
	最重要	次重要	一般
整治费用：花费不高的整治因素	空调机； 外窗铝合金防盗网； 垃圾堆放处脏乱；	落水管外露； 外窗雨蓬不统一； 砖的颜色不统一（有红砖）； 擅自加高房屋层数； 外墙面砖； 改建时坡屋顶改成平屋顶； 空房屋破旧不堪；	东圈门入口厕所太脏； 衣服晾晒凌乱； 街道为水泥地面； 天井铺地为水泥铺地； 缺乏老年活动场所； 室内天花板不规范；
花费较高的整治因素	擅自加高房屋层数； 外墙面砖； 改建时坡屋顶改成平屋顶； 空房屋破旧不堪；	山墙面混乱； 铝合金门窗； 窗户样式不统一； 院落内的乱搭乱建； 地窖不通； 无化粪池（下水直通阴沟）；	天井铺地为水泥铺地； 天井铺地为水泥铺地； 天井铺地为水泥铺地； 天井铺地为水泥铺地；
花费很高的整治因素	水泥楼房太高； 没有外来参观者的停车场； 东圈门铺地下雨时积水； 东圈门街道铺地有破碎现象； 违章建筑占道； 屋面大瓦； 人和文化遗存； 人口居住密度太高；	公私混合产权不利于实施改造； 公房内多家混合居住不利于实施改造； 居住空间拥挤；	高楼遮挡阳光； 电线、有线电视线路的走线零乱（室内、室外）；

重要性	对居民自身重要的因素		
	最重要	次重要	一般
整治费用：花费不高的整治因素	水泥楼房太高； 地窖不通； 铝合金门窗； 垃圾堆放处脏乱； 居民不知情，有破坏性修缮的现象；	天井铺地为水泥铺地； 外墙面砖； 外窗铝合金防盗网； 东圈门入口厕所太脏；	室内空调机； 外窗雨蓬不统一；
花费较高的整治因素	乱搭小坡屋占道； 公房内多家混合居住不利于实施改造； 违章建筑占道；	衣服晾晒凌乱； 公私混合产权不利于实施改造； 高楼遮挡阳光； 屋面大瓦；	院落内的乱搭乱建； 室内天花板不规范； 门面开店；
花费很高的整治因素	无化粪池（下水直通阴沟）； 居住空间拥挤； 居民去厕所问题； 没有厨卫设施； 人口居住密度太高； 东圈门铺地下雨时积水； 东圈门街道铺地有破碎现象；	空调机； 擅自加高房屋层数； 砖的颜色不统一（有红砖）； 窗户样式不统一； 山墙面混乱； 落水管外露； 改建时坡屋顶改成平屋顶；	没有外来参观者的停车场； 街道为水泥地面； 缺乏老年活动场所； 电线、有线电视线路的走线零乱； 空房屋破旧不堪；

(b)



(c)

Fig.8 Residents discussed and made decision together at the workshops

Source: GTZ CA Project Team/ iYET (2006)

Post-CAP

After the workshop, the timeline for implementation of the pilot area was developed. The first Phase Rehabilitation Guidelines was worked out and used for the upgrading of the pilot area. A detailed design guideline (Phased Upgrading Decision Matrix, see Fig. 9) is being developed for the whole old city. The guideline in a simple, visual matrix is intended to have clear, transparent goals which are understood by residents and professionals alike during the upgrading process and provide a template for upgrading standards which determine associated costs. As incomes increase and with it the ability and desire of residents to improve their houses, a guide offers models to follow. This avoids wasteful removal of inappropriate improvements, a goal shared by residents and government alike. The project team went to the houses on street for the Rapid House Assessment so that the residents could get information of renovation needs and cost estimation of their houses for decision. And the regular representatives from each street were selected as contact persons and supervisors, which will also guarantee the implementation of the results of the workshop.

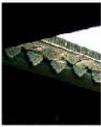
2 Yangzhou Old City, Phased Upgrading Decision Matrix (PUD Matrix)										
	Wall material	Door	Window	Awning	Air conditioner	Roof	Solar Heater	Rain pipe	Electricity	
Target							no Solar Heater			
				no awning	no AC		Flat-plate solar water heaters			
Transition										
										
Inappropriate										
										

Fig. 9 Phased Upgrading Decision Matrix
 Source: GTZ CA Project Team

3. Mini-CAP for the open space improvement

In the following months after the workshop, about 30 houses have been renovated. YFCC implanted the infrastructure in the street Wenhua Li Dong. In January 2007, a Mini CAP for the improvement of open space in the neighborhood of the first implemented lane was jointly held by iYET, Wenhua Li Dong community, the YFCC, and the Yangzhou Municipal Government. The residents themselves decided the plan with the selection and location of plants, street furnitures (tables and chairs) and other things in their neighborhood. And then the residents carried out the plan in the following two days.

"The community shows the way"
Wenhua Li Dong Lane Improvement Workshop
Blossoms

我们的家园我们建
 Our Community: We Build It

Get ready

- Agree with residents and lane and neighborhood leaders on workshop. Decide date and time.
- Spread the word among the lane community. Prepare "flyer" to hand out as reminder. Do this 2-3 days before. Make a banner?
- Decide who will be moderator - the person who would be responsible for managing the workshop. Make a general plan of the activities.
- Prepare a very big base plan that can be taped to the wall for everyone to see. This can be used to write on, and to help consider placement of the various plants, tables and chairs, and so on. Bring markers to write on the plan.
- Find some way to mark the ground to locate the plants - a paint brush and different colored paint would be good?
- Make arrangements for community members to bring tea and snacks. What about lunch?

Day 2+3: Prepare for Implementation

- Make sure it is clear who is responsible to pick up the materials. It is best have several people, perhaps a couple from the community, and someone from the support team.
- The main thing is to get the materials: plants, trees, tables, and so on. Who has the funds to pay for it? How will it be transported?
- Gather any equipment that would be needed: for example, shovels for planting, something to carry water in for the "first drink" of the plants, a wheelbarrow. Be sure that the equipment is brought to the site - who will do that?

Day 1: Decide What To Do

WELCOME!

- Formally start the activities, so everyone knows to pay attention and listen. It is best to have a community leader introduce you.
- First welcome the community members and introduce the leaders.
- Explain what will happen, so everyone is clear on the activities and what is expected. Be sure to tell them how long it will take, and when you expect to finish.

Discuss Your GOALS

- Discuss what you want to do.
- Think about general criteria for selection, whether plants, tables and chairs, or other things.
- Think about costs and where the funds will come from.

Think About OPTIONS

- It is useful to use a chart on the wall with headings of the various things you want to do: for example, "Trees," "flowers," "table," and so on. Then under each discuss the choices.
- A long list is OK - It is best to get many different choices.

Decide what you want: PRIORITIZE!

- Think about cost, maintenance, where to get, and how to transport the plants to the lane (if big).
- Sometimes a matrix helps to decide: 5 levels of costs down the side, and maybe size or type or maintenance across the top, or even all of these.

Decide LOCATION

- After everyone decided what to do, you need to locate where it will go.
- It may be useful to use bricks - or anything else - as markers to locate things so everyone can better visualize the location.

Consider MAINTENANCE

- Who will water the plants and take care of the trees?
- Who will keep the area clean?
- Consider: What needs to be done, How often, and Who will do.

Decide Next STEPS

- Consider what needs to be done, and who will do it. Perhaps a simple chart with "What" "Who" and "When" as headings across the top.
- Usually the tasks include going to buy the plants, deciding on which ones, and arranging for transport to the site.
- Decide who would be responsible.
- IMPORTANT!** Agree when to meet to finish the project.

Day 4: Carry Out the Projects

- Set a time to start. An announcement put up the day before is helpful. Remind the leaders to keep the community informed.
- Have someone who understands plants help. It is best if the person lives in the community, but anyone willing to help would be welcome.
- In Wenhua Li Dong Lane, wall murals were painted by a local artist. He brought his own paints and equipment, and spent the whole day making his works of art.
- Try to finish quickly - a half day would be ideal.

Celebrate Success!

A ribbon cutting has to be. Invite representatives from everyone! Make it festive!

And keep it going....and help it grow!

- Periodically visit the lane and see how it is going. Are the plants being watered? Is the area taken care of? Talk to the leaders and the abutters to see if they have any suggestions.
- Maybe a nice concert in the lane garden? Or an Art exhibition?

The workshop was an adaptation of the Wenhua Li Dong Community, the PRC and the Washington State Community Design Network. Photographed by ACU Hong, Shaojun, and the members of the program. Translation: David Longbin and Reinhard Goethert.

Fig.10 Poster of Mini-CAP for open space improvement
 Source: Reinhard Goethert (2007)

4. Achievements of Community Action Planning

The “Community Action Planning” (CAP) approach and the related activities in Yangzhou have shown very positive results:

- Communities participated enthusiastically;
- Communities have been more aware of the issues of planning and implementation: houses, façade and street;
- Common understanding now has now been achieved;
- Residents were very active in expressing their opinions;
- Residents were able to make decisions in choosing among alternatives and structuring ideas;
- Residents have drawn up an action plan to organize short and medium term improvements in their housing environment by their own means;
- The master plan for the pilot area has been revised and improved considering the wills and suggestions of residents;
- After the workshop the results of the workshops were presented to the municipal government at a meeting. The deputy mayor and the directors of different bureaus as well as other government officials embraced enthusiastically the opinions of the residents;
- Some local and national newspapers reported the workshops in the Old City, which leads to a discussion about the old city conservation in a wider circle of residents in Yanhgzhou.



Fig.11 A renovated house with modern kitchen and toilet in the pilot area, before and after renovation,
Source: GTZ CA Project Team



Fig.12 A renovated house with more living space, toilet and kitchen, the young members will come back to live together with their parents, before and after renovation.

Source: GTZ CA Project Team



Fig.13 Improved open space: the illegal extension building being demolished and space for communication and entertainment for neighborhood now being provided.

Source: GTZ CA Project Team

By the end of 2007 the pilot area will be completed. The infrastructure and open space of the other lanes will also be improved. The majority of the original residents will stay within this block with their living conditions being improved.

5. Further Development

A first model with community participation has been developed of the rehabilitation of the traditional neighborhoods in Yangzhou. And the model will be further detailed, computerized and disseminated in the whole old city area.

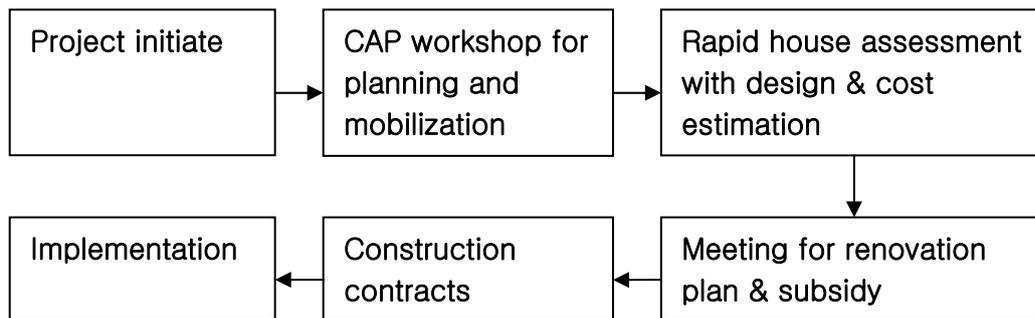


Fig.13 Rehabilitation process with community participation

Source: Author

In Yangzhou the Deputy Mayor and the directors from different bureaus have accepted the concept of participation and argued for its further development and application through the whole Old City, and potentially as a model for all China.

A five-year extension of the programme is being discussed, after which the approach would be incorporated into the standard government planning policies.

The functions of the Old City Office as the governmental agency and the YFCC as the implementation company will be clarified. It is discussed to establish a permanent implementation team that will be able to organize more efficiently the upgrading and redevelopment of the entire Old City and provide support for other cities in China that are interested in applying the approach and incorporating it into their planning programmes.

Community Action Planning will play a more and more important role in the mobilization and information exchange between governments and residents in the urban conservation. And in the implementation of community action plans, it is suggested to have support and empowerment from municipal governments who are strong in China. Urban conservation is a complicated process which needs cooperation of all stakeholders for a long time. In Yangzhou, GTZ has been cooperating with YMG in terms of institution, policies and process of decision making.

Notes

¹ The average monthly income per capita is 821RMB based on “Yangzhou Statistic Yearbook of 2004”. But according to the sample survey of GTZ and Yangzhou Urban Planning & Design Research Institute, over 50% families in this area have a lower standard.

² See GTZ/Yangzhou Municipality (2005), “Sustainable Urban Conservation in Yangzhou”, p. 25.

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