

Reimagining & Reconstructing 1920s Shanghai in 2020:

*The Preservation of Wukang Mansion
in the Former French Concession*

by

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Class of 2022

A thesis submitted to the
faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors in Art History
and with Departmental Honors in the Science in Society Program

Abstract

This thesis unpacks the most recent preservation program (2005-2019) at Wukang Mansion in Shanghai's former French Concession and city center and illustrates the program frames Wukang Mansion into a collective reimagination and reconstruction of a cosmopolitanism ideal rooted in early 20th century Shanghai. Currently at Wukang Mansion and Wukang Road area, we see that later emerged modern elements were cast onto the neoclassical pre-1930s mansion and incorporated into the preservation program to recreate the 1930s cosmopolitan Shanghai. By referring to a variety of sources from oral history of the residents to planners' journal article and anchoring theories in science and technology studies on architectural studies, this thesis critically analyzes how modern Art Deco visual style emerged in 1930s induced the contemporary cosmopolitan ideal in the 21st century, among both the general outside tourists and three groups of actors (i.e., residents, planners, and investors) in the preservation program. Their actions in utilizing different means of science and technology available to realize their diverging versions of the ideal forms interesting interactions and compromises. With their collective effort, Wukang Mansion is empowered as a time machine for the audience to travel back into a reimagined 1930s "old Shanghai." In alignment, the most recent commercial projects in the area are masked in a cosmopolitan look and curated for the outside tourists. Using Wukang Mansion and Wukang Road as an example, the thesis ends with a timely discussion of the impact of COVID-19 and the emergence of social media on domestic historical tourism in Shanghai.

Table of Contents

- 3 Acknowledgement**
- 5 Introduction**
 - Estranged in the Cosmopolis***
 - 12 *Establishing Foreign Settlements and External Roads*
 - 19 *Chapter Outline: Reimagination and Estrangement*
- 24 Chapter I**
 - Hudec's I.S.S. Apartment, Shanghai's Wukang Mansion***
 - 25 *Laszlo Hudec: The Chameleon Architect In Shanghai*
 - 30 *Wukang Mansion's Design*
- 43 Chapter II**
 - Constructing Cosmopolitanism:
Power and Curse of Art Deco & Modernism***
 - 48 *Art Deco & Shanghai's Cosmopolitanism*
 - 53 *"Modeng Nülang (Modern Ladies)" & Chinese Art Deco*
 - 59 *Architecture, Hyperreality & Cosmopolitanism*
- 64 Chapter III**
 - (Re)constructing Wukang Mansion:
Place Memory in Contemporary Cosmopolitan***
 - 72 *Assembling a Time Machine: Restoration, Repair, Preservation*
 - 89 *Fabrication of Readable Architecture in Walkable Neighborhoods*
- 100 Chapter IV**
 - Commodification of Cosmopolitanism & Impact of Tourism:
Case of Ferguson Lane, COVID-19, & Social Media***
- 119 Bibliography**
- 125 Appendix**

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to express my wholehearted gratitude to my parents, Sharon Wang and Johnson Zhang, and my beloved hometown, the city of Shanghai. I feel extremely privileged to have this opportunity to explore a place that is so personally meaningful to me and visit the site amidst the pandemic.

My greatest appreciation goes to my thesis advisors, Professor **Joseph Siry** and Professor **Ying Jia Tan**. Your thoughtful guidance has tremendously helped me grow intellectually, and your diligence and selflessness has inspired and empowered me along this journey. I would also like to express thanks to Professor **Daniella Gandolfo** from the Anthropology Department. Your class on urban theories opened the door to the fascinating field of urban studies that I am willing to dedicate more time into in the future. I would also like to thank all professors in the Art History department for asking thought-provoking questions and offering suggestions that widen my knowledge and perspectives during colloquiums.

In addition, this thesis wouldn't be made possible without great guidance and encouragement from **Juntai Shen** and **Marcus Khoo**. Juntai—thank you for being my role model, adviser, and life mentor. Marcus—your writing mentor sessions are tremendously helpful, and I have learned so much from you.

I owe much to my housemates at 142 Cross, **Gloria Kang**, **Brian Kim**, **Chaiyeon Lee**, and **Megan Tran**, who unconditionally support, encourage, love and believe in me. To my 81 Home-mate (pun intended) **Henry Yang**—thank you for being such a great listener and adviser when I encounter obstacles along this journey.

My Fauver 207 friends—**Yiwen Huang**, **Terry Yuan**, **Elsie Zhao**, **Zihan Zhu**—thank you all for hugs and laughter, and mental support. My dearest friends at 88 Home, **Avi Friederich**, **Shawn Lin**, **Chunyue Ma**, **Shoko Narasaki**, **Tanya Phanich**, and **Dabin Shin**, thank you for all the “dessert therapies” and memories that keep me advancing fearlessly. My senior year wouldn't feel complete without all of you.

My gratitude and congratulation go to my fellow writers: **Christina Lu** and **Aiden Malanaphy**, with whom I share the same advisor(s); **Zubaida Bello**, **Maren**

Beriss, and **Christina Lu**, whom I met at Center for the Humanities Fellowship program; **Ben Filio**, **Avi Friederich**, **Shoko Narasaki**, and many more fellow writers and friends, who always grants me with encouragement and courage despite their own struggles. We have done something wonderful, and we deserve a big celebration.

I reserve a special place in my heart for **Sherina Li** and **Anna Zhou**—thank you for your endless support and great entertainment. My “day-ones” **Naraa Altai**, **Jiayang Cai**, **Shuyuan Liu**, and **Yongxi Tan**—thank you for being my backbone and home away from home. I also want to shout out to beloved **Michelle Kim** and **Elijah Joshua Pajarillaga**, who spent countless days and nights as my grind buddies—super grateful for your accompaniment.

Last but not least, I am very grateful for receiving **John T. Paoletti Research Travel Fellowships** and **Center for the Humanities Fellowship**. My site visits and research would not be made possible without great support from John T. Paoletti Committee, and I deeply enjoyed the great opportunity to attend lectures and have insightful conversations with other fellows at the Center for the Humanities.

Note on Romanization and Chinese Names

In this thesis, Chinese names of articles, books, places, or people are romanized into Hanyu Pinyin. Exceptions are made for Names of Chinese people who were active before 1949, in this case Wade-Giles Romanization method is used (e.g., Oei Huilan, Soong May-ling). Following the Chinese tradition, all Chinese people’s names in this thesis appear in the format of [Last name, First Name]. All Chinese names and phrases are in simplified Chinese, since it is the commonly used type of Chinese in Shanghai at the moment of composition.

When citing Zhang Ailing (张爱玲)’s work, I cite Zhang Ailing, her Chinese name, for work that was originally composed in Chinese, and Eileen Chang, her English name, for work that was originally composed in English.

Introduction

Estranged in the Cosmopolis

And so at last to Shanghai, a city belonging to no country. You have all read before of the over-bearing skyscrapers which line the Bund; of the Chinese city, which hardly a foreigner visits; of the meditative Sikh policemen, with their short carbines tucked under their arms...of the Shanghai Club, which has the longest bar in the world; of the unnumbered nightclubs, where the slim, slick Chinese girls are on the whole more popular than their Russian colleagues; of the rich Chinese, whose big cars are packed with guards against the kidnappers; of the trams, and the electric lights, and the incessant noise, and the crowds forever promenading, capriciously suicidal...of strange cosmopolitan atmosphere, in which an American flavour predominates...

—Peter Fleming (1934)¹

Hop onto a time machine and let us travel back to Shanghai in the 1930s.

Grab a map. [Fig. 1] Whether we are in the International Settlement or the French Concession, we can find ourselves in a cosmopolitan environment as described in this short passage written by British journalist Peter Fleming. Although the two foreign settlements are controlled by different authorities and marked by boundary stones, we can commute between those areas freely by rickshaws or litter that are man-powered, buses, or trams that run across the boundaries of the settlements and the Chinese controlled areas.

Moving along the wide Avenue Joffre² that runs in the east-west orientation, we may travel pass countless apartments selling all kinds of most fashionable dresses, or some high rises that could be residential or office. On foot or by tram,

¹ Peter Fleming, “Shanghai,” in *China’s Treaty Ports: Half Love and Half Hate*, ed. Chris Elder (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 112.

² Current Huaihai Road.

as we travel towards the west, the cityscape slowly fades out of our sight—fewer and lower buildings, fewer travelers or less busy traffic, and more serenity. When we reach the intersection of Avenue Joffre and Route Ferguson³, however, there stands an 8-story high rise at the intersection that is quite obvious among the low rises and garden villas of all kinds of styles and materials in the area. It is the Normandie Apartment, invested by the infamous bank in the city, International Savings Society, and is completed in 1925 and 1930 for its old and new blocks respectively. [Fig. 2] For some of us who know Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area in 2020 [Fig. 3], the serene suburban environment may feel strangely familiar. The surrounding buildings are taller in 2020, which makes Wukang Mansion fit more into the urban background. Avenue Joffre looks wider with more traffic and higher buildings along two sides, but the landscape and serenity along Wukang Road remain the same. And the garden villas still stand today.

Comparing the two paragraphs of Wukang Mansion in the 30s and in 2020, to ordinary audiences who are not architectural experts, there aren't many visible changes at the first glance. Wukang Mansion, as a well-preserved historical building, is qualified to be the time machine to connect us in 2020 back to the late 20s and early 30s cosmopolitan Shanghai. As Fleming's passage encapsulates, 1930s Shanghai's charm and uniqueness are rooted in the great diversity of nationalities as well as cultural influences. Indubitably, interwar period Shanghai⁴

³ Current Wukang Road.

⁴ Conventionally, the “Interwar Period” refers to the period between the end of World War I in 1918 and the start of World War II in 1939. However, since the Japanese occupation of Shanghai started

was a cosmopolis if not the most cosmopolitan city built on the identity as “a city belonging to no country.”

To unpack the complexity of interwar period Shanghai at multiple levels, I shall first identify three pairs of dualities that co-existed and largely shaped Shanghai’s cosmopolitan profile—1) the politics and the economy in Shanghai as the two most important determinants of the city’s fate, 2) the dichotomy between the Chinese and the Western (or the Foreign since Japanese should be included), as witnessed in all aspects, including demographics, businesses, cultural practices, and politics, and 3) the bifurcation of foreign settlements, the International Settlement, and the French Concession, as two competing yet reciprocal physical spaces defined by man-made boundaries.

In spite of the significance of the three pairs of dualities in setting up a foundation for Shanghai’s urban development, the physical, political, and cultural boundaries of the three dualities progressively blurred as the city expanded and later grew into a cosmopolis in the early 1920s. The dichotomy between Chinese and Western was disrupted by co-habitation as a result of a series of unsettling rebellions in the city; the physical boundary between the French Concession and the International Settlements was blurred by emerging cross-settlement economic and infrastructure developments; the political power and economic development started to become intertwined.

in 1937, when most of the civic life was largely disrupted by war, the “Interwar Period” for Shanghai here is defined as 1918 to 1937 instead of 1939.

Shanghai during the interwar period was not only a city belonging to no country but also a cosmopolitan that was no one's true home. From the cohabitation of residents of different nationalities to a mixture of various architectural styles in one area, to the birth of Chinese "Modern Ladies" figures [Fig. 4] who inherited both Chinese and Western characteristics, it became more and more difficult for both individuals and institutions to tie their identities to an independently established space. In many cases, in interwar period Shanghai, both Chinese and western citizens, both new immigrants and "born in Shanghai" locals experienced a feeling of estrangement, a feeling of being removed or displaced from one's original context or place of belonging. Cosmopolitanism, inevitably, achieves a state of harmony among all groups by estranging all groups involved.

Regardless of the reclamation of Chinese sovereignty and the political power exerted by the Chinese Communist Party over Shanghai during the years from the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949) to the Reform and Opening (the late 1980s), like how European style buildings still stand by avenues and streets in central Shanghai, cosmopolitanism has been running and still runs in the city's veins and engraved in its DNA, which is inherited from the interwar period before PRC. A deliberate move to revisit and revive Shanghai's cosmopolitanism emerged with the opening up of the country in the late 80s and early 90s. Shanghai, with its politically and geographically privileged standing, embraces the obligation to function as a point of contact between the nation and the outside world, especially western countries.

In the ongoing competition with other metropolises around the world such as New York City or Tokyo, Shanghai has been shaping its competitiveness and progressiveness around its identity as an international metropolis and cosmopolis and its ability to embrace inclusivity and diversity. In the preface of Shanghai's City Master Plan (2017-2035), it reveals the city's goal of "striving for the excellent global city" and becoming "one of the most competitive and influential cities" and a "city of humanities." In this process of becoming an excellent global city, the city utilized its history as a cosmopolis in the early 20th century and linked it to contemporary Shanghai through cultural and historic heritage from that period. Hence, we observe an increase in both attention and effort put on historic preservation projects in the city in the past 20 years since the establishment of "Shanghai Historic and Cultural Scenic Areas and Excellent Historic Architecture Preservation Policy"⁵ in 2002 by the city's government. Similar to the concept of cosmopolitanism, historic preservation by its nature creates an estranged feeling. Ideally, experts and architects attempt to empower the buildings with historic authenticity by saving them from unregulated renovations and updates. However, in reality, preservation programs usually remove the building from its original context and facilitate buildings to transcend boundaries of time and get transported into an imagined cityscape that no one, from residents who live there to outside

⁵ "Shanghai shi lishi wenhua fengmao qu he youxiu lishi jianzhu baohu tiaoli 上海市历史文化风貌区和优秀历史建筑保护条例 [Shanghai Historic and Cultural Scenic Areas and Excellent Historic Architecture Preservation Policy], " Shanghai Municipal Government, (Shanghai, China, 2002), <http://www.aibaohu.com>ShowArticlem.aspx?id=804>.

tourists and visitors feel attached to—it is a universal estrangement among all subjects that come into interaction with the building.

Among all preservation projects, the one at Wukang Mansion in Xuhui District in the former French Concession has received the most attention from the general public in the recent decade. In my thesis, by focusing on the case of Wukang Mansion, I hope to encapsulate estrangement as a theme that lands at the intersection of historic preservation programs and ideological reimagination of cosmopolitanism as both political agenda and civic desire. In other words, both the concept of cosmopolitanism itself and the actions of preservation that aims to actualize the cosmopolitan ideal bring estrangement. I will demonstrate how physical forms and historical narrations of the built urban environment, with a collective effort of residents currently residing in the mansion as well as actors in public (i.e., planners and government) and private sectors (i.e., real estate developers), is altered and curated into a space for a cosmopolitan reimagination that links back to both historically factual and imaginary 1920s Shanghai, and all groups of actors feel estranged consequently.

Wukang Mansion, previously known as the I.S.S. (International Savings Society) Apartment or Normandie Apartment, is a wedge-shaped 8-story neoclassical residential building located in the former French concession. [Fig. 5] It was designed in 1924 by a renowned Austrian-Hungarian architect, Laszlo Hudec, who designed a number of buildings in Shanghai. From 2005 to 2019, the government of Xuhui District in Shanghai initiated a preservation program at Wukang Mansion and Wukang Road area that includes actions on multiple scales,

from the mansion itself to its surrounding neighborhoods, to consciously connect to an imagined history that links to 1920s and 30's Shanghai's cosmopolitanism and modernity.

This program makes the most appropriate and inspiring case study for my argument for three interrelated reasons. Firstly, this program serves as a pilot study for both district and municipal government to explore ways for historic preservation at an areal scale that includes more aspects such as urban landscape and pedestrian sidewalks, instead of previous projects at a smaller scale of individual buildings. As a pilot study, this preservation program offers both relatively sizable written records and documents that reveal more about the publicly available process, which is unconventional for projects in China. It also demonstrates ways of creating an imagined cosmopolitan space in the Wukang Mansion area that speaks to the area's past and becomes crucial for future projects in Shanghai.

Secondly, Wukang Mansion has exerted its influence on Shanghai's cultural landscape since the preservation program. The program largely popularized the area and now brings hundreds of thousands of tourists every year, which fundamentally changed the neighborhood and the dynamics between the residents and the outside tourists. The popularity may signal the program's success in realizing the imagined cosmopolitan space since many tourists were attracted to experience 1920s Shanghai here.

Thirdly, among all of Hudec's work, Wukang Mansion was one of his few earlier works that were designed before he started his own practice and played a major role in shaping the city's landscape and more importantly, before the desired

modern style that is so representative of people's impression of interwar period Shanghai started gaining dominance in art and architectural style in the city. The mansion and the program, hence, foster an ideal study of how a pre-modern site is reimagined and masked with modernity.

In this introduction, I will first situate Wukang Mansion in a historical context that shaped Shanghai's geopolitical territory before the mansion's commission and completion in the mid to late 1920s. To fully explain how Wukang Road (Route Ferguson at the time) functions as an example of external roads that fell outside the boundaries but operated under French Concession governments, I will give more historical background about the establishment of the two foreign settlements and the emergence of external roads. This introduction ends with a brief outline the four chapters surrounding the case study of Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area in demonstrating how the cosmopolitan ideal is made the most critical part of place memory and site's history.

Establishing Foreign Settlements and External Roads

The story of Shanghai's prosperity as a modern cosmopolis started from the fall of the Qing Dynasty and several momentous treaties following wars with the Europeans and Japanese. In 1843, the Qing dynasty signed the Treaty of Nanking with the United Kingdom, agreeing to the open up of foreign trading at four new treaty ports, namely, Amoy (Xiamen), Foochowfoo (Fuzhou), Ningpo (Ningbo), and Shanghai, in addition to Canton. While the Treaty of Nanking (1842) set a foundation for Shanghai's economic development in the proceeding years, what

truly shaped the cosmopolitan area in Shanghai was the supplementary Treaty of the Bogue (1843), which granted foreign settlers to reside in the city. Under Article VI⁶ and VII⁷ in the Treaty, the British Consul George Balfour came into agreement with the Shanghai *Daotai*⁸ Gong Mujiu (官慕久) through the Land Regulations (土地章程 *Tudi Zhangcheng*, 1845) to establish a British concession on a piece of land of British's selection, to the north of the walled city.

Modeled after the Treaty of Nanking and Treaty of Bogue, the Sino-American Treaty of Wanghia (1844) granted Americans similar rights to a dedicated settlement. In 1849, the first French Consul in Shanghai, Charles de Montigny negotiated with Lin Gui, the Shanghai Daotai at the time, and successfully established the French concession. The word "concession" indicates a right to use land and property granted by a government. Yet, despite the fact that theoretically the territory remained under Chinese sovereignty, British, French, and American settlers were allowed to rent properties "in perpetuity" and they enjoyed extraterritoriality, which exempted them from Chinese law. The establishment of

⁶ [ARTICLE VI. It is agreed that English Merchants and others residing at or resorting to the Five Ports to be opened shall not go into the surrounding Country beyond certain short distances to be named by the local Authorities, in concert with the British Consul, and on no pretence for purposes of traffic...]

⁷ [ARTICLE VII. The Treaty of perpetual Peace and Friendship provides for British Subjects and their Families residing at the Cities and Towns of Canton, Fuchow, Amoy, Ningpo and Shanghai without molestation or restraint. It is accordingly determined that ground and houses; the rent or price of which is to be fairly and equitably arranged for, according to the rates prevailing amongst the people, without exactation on either side; shall be set apart by the local Officers, in communication with the Consul, and the number of houses built or rented, will be reported annually to the said local Officer by the Consul for the information of their respective Viceroys and Governors, but the number cannot be limited, seeing that it will be greater or less according to the resort of Merchants.]

⁸ *Daotai* (or *Taotai*), or Circuit Intendant, was the official of Shanghai during the Qing dynasty. In the late Qing dynasty, before the modern concept of a city was imported, Shanghai was identified as a circuit under Jiangsu Province.

the three foreign settlements not only largely boosted international trading and economic development in Shanghai but also assured a balance among all groups and entities residing in this city. The physical separation of space for residences and activities between the Chinese and the Foreigners formed an interesting state of coexistence with relative independence, yet such separation did not last too long.

Multiple waves of Chinese citizens' movement in the city during the unsettling mid-19th century were one of the catalysts that accelerated the expansion of established boundaries of the concessions. On the one hand, the Small Sword Uprising (1840-1855) rioted in the walled city and created a huge threat to public security within the larger urban area of Shanghai, including the foreign settlements. On the other hand, Shanghai, which benefited from its convenient location at the estuary of the Yangtze River in the East China Sea, had experienced a boost in international trade after the Second Opium War (1856-1860), followed by the Treaty of Tien-Tsin (1858) and Convention of Peking (1860).

The Treaty of Tien-Tsin granted British merchants access to inner China as "British merchant ships shall have authority to trade upon the Great River [Yangtze]...So soon as peace shall have been restored, British vessels shall also be admitted to trade at such ports as far as Hankow, not exceeding three in number..."⁹ The Treaty included conditional phrases such as "disturbed by outlaws" and "so soon as peace shall have been restored," pointing towards the on-going Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864), which happened from the Yangtze Delta region into

⁹ "Treaty of Tien-Tsin," signed on June 26th, 1858, Article X, <https://oelawhk.lib.hku.hk/items/show/1025>.

Hankow, at the time when the treaty was signed. It was obvious that the Qing government intended to maneuver the foreign military force to settle the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864). During this unsettling time, while neighboring cities experienced a strong disturbance in everyday life, Shanghai's concessions remained relatively protected by colonial governments. As a result, Shanghai came to have a “monopoly on trade,” and “affluent and desperate Chinese willing to pay any price for safety sought refuge and offloaded their wealth in the settlements.”¹⁰

The two incidents, the Small Sword Uprising and Taiping Rebellion, revealed the existing “multitude of multiethnic, international communities, each with distinct claims of identity.”¹¹ And such complexity complicates the architecture in the city. As scholar Cole Roskam pointed out in *Improvised City: Architecture and Governance in Shanghai, 1843-1937*, “The Small Swords Uprising may have threatened the city’s livelihood, but the Taiping Rebellion directly imperiled the survival of the Qing Empire, a goal with which a number of Shanghai’s residents were privately, if not publicly, sympathetic to the rebellion. The rebels’ defeat and the perseverance of the Qing regime illuminated the conflicted multiplicity of cultural and political relationships at work within the treaty port—relationships that, in turn, tested architecture’s ability to articulate them.”¹² As Shanghai grew from a colonial treaty port to an international megropolis,

¹⁰ Edward Denison, “Chapter Three: Constructing Shanghai, 1843-1899,” in *Building Shanghai, the Story of China’s Gateway* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Academy, 2006), 65.

¹¹ Cole Roskam, “Introduction,” in *Improvised city* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 8.

¹² Cole Roskam, “Chapter 2: Commemoration and the Construction of a Public Sphere,” in *Improvised city* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 76-77.

such complexity with co-existing identities of cohabiting groups in the city was inherited and constitutes the city's contemporary cosmopolitan identity.

In the meantime, the Small Sword Uprising and the Taiping Rebellion “pushed” Chinese citizens who were seeking refuge into the foreign settlements, in spite of the fact that the establishment of the concessions were meant for a physical dissociation between the groups. Although neither the Shanghai *Daotai* nor the foreign consuls were satisfied with the cohabitation of Chinese citizens and foreign settlers, the legal ambiguity allowed such cohabitation. The landowners in foreign concessions welcomed Chinese citizens who rented properties, as they became an additional source of income. Ultimately, such additional income converted into an increase in revenue from taxes, and the authorities of the concessions were no longer against having Chinese residents in areas under their control. Although some Chinese citizens eventually moved out of the concessions, the two incidents broke the invisible boundary between the Chinese walled city and foreign settlements. Regarding the architecture and urban design in the city, there were two outcomes following the incidents—gradually growing real estate market and external roads with modern infrastructure (i.e., electricity and water supply).

External roads (or extra-settlement roads, extraterritorial roads; 越界筑路 *yuejiezhlulu*) refer to roads beyond the boundaries of foreign concessions or settlements that were established by the treaties, marked by setting boundary stone markers or naturally by rivers. Most of the external roads are to the north or west of the established boundaries of the concessions. Some roads might already have existed for a while, but the concession authorities would fund to pave them with

better material such as cinder instead of the earth (natural soil). During the disturbances, authorities of the foreign settlements started building external roads partially to respond to “the congestion caused by the influx of Chinese” and connection between the concessions and other foreign-controlled facilities outside the boundaries.¹³ Constructing external roads became one of the most effective ways to extend the boundaries of the concessions, especially towards the west and the north of the city.

Before 1914, the International Settlement and the French Concession went through two expansions respectively [Fig. 6 & 7], using different strategies to negotiate with the Shanghai *Daotai*. After expansions, most of the previously constructed external roads become a part of the concessions. Although it was not a formally established rule, building external roads seemed to assist the negotiation for expansions. In 1914, however, the colonial authority at the French Concession successfully negotiated with the municipal government under the Republic of China for another expansion, which included a large area covered by external roads that were in place. With the intention of collaborating with the French Concession authorities to catch the “revolutionaries” in the city, Yuan Shikai, the president of ROC at the moment, agreed in this negotiation to let the French Concession expand to a size that was 15 times larger than the existing one at the time. After this agreement of 1914, the authorities of the foreign settlements became incentivized to construct more external roads, hoping for another expansion in the future.

¹³ John T Pratt, “The International Settlement and the French Concession at Shanghai,” *British Year Book of International Law* 19 (1938), 14.

The expansion came along with a booming economy and population, and consequently, a rising industry of real estate development. According to Wu Jiang, a professor at Shanghai Tongji University and the author of *A Hundred Years of Shanghai Architectural History (1840-1949)*, the mid-to-late 19th century was a critical period for revolutionary changes in industries related to architecture in the city. Firstly, the traditional method of construction and craftsmanship in wood and brick was revolutionized by the increasing demand for building western architecture in steel and concrete. Western contractors started to become involved in the construction of several important buildings.¹⁴ Concurrently, after years of having property owners and civil engineers designing buildings, the architect was introduced as a professional occupation in Shanghai, and western certified architects started moving to this rapidly growing city. One of the pioneers was William Kidner (1841-1900), who came to Shanghai in 1864 and participated in the construction of the Trinity Cathedral (1867-1869) [Fig. 8].¹⁵ At the time, he was the only architect in the city who was certified by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).¹⁶ With the thriving economy in Shanghai, more architects came to Shanghai and contributed to shaping the cityscape.

¹⁴ Wu Jiang 伍江, *Shanghai Bainian Jian Zhu Shi, 1840-1949* 上海百年建筑史[A Hundred Years of Shanghai Architectural History (1840-1949)] (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 1997), 43-45.

¹⁵ “Basic Biographic Details,” Scottish Architects, accessed on April 13, 2022. http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=201759

¹⁶ Wu Jiang, *A Hundred Years of Shanghai Architectural History*, 45.

Methodology and Chapter Outline: Reimagination and Estrangement at Wukang Mansion

This thesis aims to illustrate the full scope of how Wukang Mansion evolved from its completion in 1930 until the end of 2019 when the most recent preservation program concluded. By anchoring theories in science and technology studies on architectural studies and history, I will critically analyze both the formation of the cosmopolitan ideal among groups of actors in the preservation program and their actions in utilizing different means of science and technology that were available to them to realize their versions of the cosmopolitan ideal.

Four thematically and chronologically organized chapters collectively contribute to a larger argument in unpacking the reimagination and recreation of a cosmopolitan ideal at Wukang Mansion. We start from the birth of the I.S.S. Normandie Apartment before the popularization of modern style Shanghai, then exposed ourselves to a series of visual sources, in relation to Art Deco as a kind of modernity that was made to link to the cosmopolitan ideal, that potentially contributed to the later preservation program. In chapter three, we dive deep into the preservation program and unpack the negotiations between residents and planners and how the modern Art Deco elements from visual sources were cast onto the pre-modern mansion and incorporated into the preservation program to shape cosmopolitanism at Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area. The last chapter analyzes the commercial projects masked with a cosmopolitan look and curated for the outside tourists in the Wukang Road area, and ends with a timely discussion of the impact of COVID-19 and the emergence of social media on domestic historical tourism in Shanghai.

The first chapter aims to retrospectively contextualize the Wukang Mansion in contemporary Shanghai as I.S.S. Normandie Apartment in former French Concession, both regarding its general history and geography and regarding architect Laszlo Hudec's career, calls attention to the building's mundanity and a general trend to misidentify and overrate the building regarding its significance in Hudec's career. The chapter offers a conventional architectural history analysis of Wukang Mansion by critically examining its commission, patronage, users, location, interior, and exterior design, decorative details, and most importantly, the architect Laszlo Hudec's rather ordinary stylistic choices. Laszlo Hudec undoubtedly was a legendary chameleon architect that shaped Shanghai's cityscape, yet the apartment, like his earlier work when he was still working for a firm, does not epitomize his style and talent in architectural design that he developed later on. This contextualization of Wukang Mansion's "pre-modernity"¹⁷ and mundanity is helpful for demonstrating the extent to which the preservation program reshapes and recontextualizes its style and identity in later chapters.

Chapter two provides an original analysis of the preference for modern Art Deco elements as a manifestation of the cosmopolitan ideal that is collectively constructed by everyone in the city. By presenting the images of Chinese "Modern Ladies," I intend to pinpoint the inherent connection between modernity and cosmopolitanism. I argue that, by first mentally constructing the visualization of a "modern lady" and then situating the image into a built physical space that shares

¹⁷ Pre-modernity here refers to the style in Shanghai before 1930s when modern style fully dominates the city's aesthetics, which usually assimilates typical European / Neoclassical style.

some visual elements, the modernity is transferred onto the built environment, where the modern fantasy and ideal of cosmopolitanism can be cultivated. This chapter serves as a bridge between chapters one and three in deciphering the dissonance between historical facts about I.S.S. Normandie Apartment as a pre-modern building and curated narratives of Wukang Mansion that brings a modern vibe into the community.

Chapter three and chapter four are complementary to each other. Together they offer a holistic analysis of the most recent preservation program at Wukang Mansion. Chapter three focuses on the “insiders” through two sections that provide perspectives from residents of the mansion and urban planners in achieving a collective objective of reconstructing cosmopolitanism in contemporary Shanghai. Either group takes actions within their control that sometimes align yet other times are dissonant with the other group’s actions. To fully explain the complexity of the program, I incorporate several conceptual and theoretical frameworks for various purposes—the concept of place memory, proposed by Dolores Hayden in *Power of Place*, to facilitate explaining the collective objective, Bruno Latour’s model of detouring to untangle the multidirectional influences among the two groups of actors as well as the outside tourists, and concepts of urban walking experience such as Flaneur, which refers to wanderers in the city. The chapter concludes with a highlight of the sense of dissatisfaction and estrangement of each group as a result of multiple detours and compromises between the two groups.

Chapter four puts attention onto the outside tourists and analyzes the commercial activities in the Wukang Road area that specifically adapt to the

outsiders' curiosity and taste. It uncovers both the intention of real estate developers and feedback from the tourists on the commercial projects and the general post-preservation condition of Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area. Especially given the fact that the preservation program ended in the same year as the start of the pandemic in 2019, how this program has been received given the travel restrictions in the COVID era and a decline in the tourism industry is greatly valued. The strict ban on transnational travel in China, in fact, boosted domestic travels, especially "foreign-looking" and exoticized sites like Wukang Mansion or the former French Concession in general. The restraints to travel abroad intensifies people's appreciation for Shanghai's cosmopolitan identity making the city into an "arcade-like" urban space with unlimited potential to explore. The increasing popularity, however, creates new problems with consent and privacy, since the influx of tourists who are constantly taking photos may invade semi-private spaces such as the balconies. Wukang Mansion may be considered one of the last completed pre-COVID preservation programs. Although the future of the city and historic preservation in the city remains unknown with the ongoing pandemic, the need for shaping a cosmopolitan urban space that is supported by historical evidence will remain a priority for a long while.

This thesis is a narrative of estrangement in a cosmopolis. Interwar period Shanghai belonged to no country, nor was it anyone's home. Hudec was an outsider coming into the city and accomplished great things, but it is very likely that he still felt estranged when he left Shanghai in the 1940s. The modern Art Deco style was imported into the city and gave birth to the Chinese modernity, yet both Chinees

and Westerners may feel estranged. Wukang Mansion, after several generations of residents across a century, is being removed from its original social and historic context into a reimagined world, and during this process of transformation, both the insiders (i.e. residents, planners, and residents) and outsiders feel estranged. With the larger agenda of shaping Shanghai into a contemporary cosmopolis, the natives, the newcomers, and the visitors are all estranged.

Chapter I

Hudec's I.S.S. Apartment, Shanghai's Wukang Mansion

A hero is nothing but a product of his time. Hudec, it seems, was at the right place and at the right time and was engaged in the right occupation.

—Hua Xiaohong (2019)¹⁸

By the 1920s, Shanghai was already home to a group of talents in the field of architectural design. One of the most prominent firms was Palmer & Turner Architects and Surveyors (currently P & T Group), founded in Hong Kong in 1868, which hosted a team of RIBA certified professionals. For instance, George Leopold Wilson, a born and raised Londoner and one of P & T's chief architects, was involved in multiple projects on the Bund—the facade of the city. P & T group later designed other tall buildings like the Sassoon House [Fig. 1-1] and the Custom House [Fig. 1-2], which are crucial to Shanghai's urban scene. Yet today, the names of such firms and architects are less known than the buildings themselves amongst Shanghai citizens.

Amongst those foreign architects of which most of their names are lost in Shanghai's collective memory, Laszlo Hudec [Fig. 1-3], or his Chinese name 邬达克 [*Wu-da-ke*], was one of the very few names that are remembered and celebrated by residents today. His unusually complex and dramatic life experiences and diverse cultural background shaped him into a “chameleon architect,” a master who can design in a great variety of styles for drastically different clients and

¹⁸ Hua Xiaohong 华霄虹, *Shanghai Wudake Ditu* 上海邬达克地图 [Shanghai Hudec Architecture], (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2013), 15.

purposes. Hence, his well-known works such as the Park Hotel (1934) [Fig. 1-4], the Grand Theatre (1933) [Fig. 1-5], and the focus of this thesis, Wukang Mansion, receive great attention at all times and the design of those works are cherished as ingenious and innovative.

However, I hope to make an unpopular statement that Wukang Mansion, or rather the I.S.S. Apartment when Hudec designed it, is rather an outlier among Hudec's famous works of architecture because of its conventional, mundane, and utilitarian design. It is neither as grand as Park Hotel, which had been the highest building in the city, nor as unorthodox as Grand Theatre, both of which are in Art Deco style. This chapter provides a thorough analysis of Wukang Mansion's architectural design and its mundanity and relatively inconspicuous position in Hudec's career and presents the misalignment of how we understand Wukang Mansion as one of the key landmarks to Shanghai's identity and how Hudec treated the I.S.S. Apartment as a conventional work for a designated patron.

Laszlo Hudec: The Chameleon Architect In Shanghai

László Ede Hudec (1893–1958), also known as László Ede Hugyecz¹⁹ or 邬达克/邬達克 (*Wu-da-ke*), was born in Besztercebánya in Austro-Hungarian Empire (current Banská Bystrica in Slovakia).²⁰ In his early years, he was strongly

¹⁹ László Ede Hugyecz was Hudec's birth name. He used multiple fake names along his way to Shanghai, and eventually, he settled under the name Laszlo Ede Hudec. His signature on architectural drafts often appears as "L. E. Hudec."

²⁰ Although he would be Slovakian by the current borderline in 2022, he applied for Hungarian citizenship in 1941 after he lost his citizenship as an Austrian-Hungarian.

influenced by his father, a master builder and contractor.²¹ It is believed that he received a carpenter, mason, and stonemason certificate before attending the Hungarian Royal Joseph Technical University in Budapest to study Architecture. Upon his graduation, despite his well-rounded professional training, his skills and talent were not directly put into practice because he enlisted for joining World War I. In 1916, he was captured by the Russians and transported to Siberia, from where he eventually escaped to Harbin, then arrived in Shanghai in 1918, the exact year when his home “country” Austro-Hungary dissolved.

Today, many citizens often claim that Shanghai gave this young architect a stage to thrive as a professional and a long-term shelter to finally settle down after his traumatic captivity. Undoubtedly, his arrival in Shanghai was a critical turning point in his early life, as this “improvised city” had offered him nearly boundless space and opportunity for architectural design. Yet, regardless of a lack of solid evidence about his feeling about the city upon his arrival, some sources imply that, during the first two years of his stay, Hudec might have perceived Shanghai as a temporary layover before eventually moving back home. According to a biography published on Hudec Cultural Foundation’s website, from 1919 to 1920, he expected to purchase land around Micsinye, near his hometown Banská Bystrica in present-day Slovakia, so that he could move back to his motherland.²² However, in the short span of three years upon his arrival, there were several critical events that discouraged his return to home.

²¹ Hua, *Shanghai Hudec Architecture*, 20

²² “Biography of Laszlo Ede Hugyecz, from 1918 L.E. Hudec (1893-1958),” Hudec Project, accessed March 23, 2022, <http://www.hudecproject.com/en/biography>.

In addition to losing his nationality due to the Austro-Hungarian Empire's dissolution, Hudec experienced the death of his beloved father in 1920, which consequently led to his family's move to Budapest and a loss of all their assets. On a larger scale, the Central European region was left with economic and political depression from World War I. It is possible that, when Hudec traveled back home in 1921 for family affairs, he witnessed the post-war aftermath in his motherland, in striking comparison to prospering economy and real estate industry in contemporaneous Shanghai. Luca Poncellini, an architectural historian who specializes in Hudec Studies, suggested two additional factors that may have convinced him to stay in the city—a promotion to an associate-level position at R.A. Curry and an encounter with Gisela Meyer²³, a young German girl who was born and raised in Shanghai.²⁴ Later in 1922, Hudec married Meyer and started building their own house in Shanghai, which marked his decision to reside in the city at least for a while, if not longer. In 1925, he started independent practice under his name L. E. Hudec, and five years later, he started designing a new residence following the births of his three children. [Fig. 1-6] He stayed in the city until 1947 when he left for Europe and then America with his family.

Despite all kinds of struggles and obstacles along his way, he did successfully make a living and claimed a position among other influential architects who were practicing in Shanghai. It could be out of his expectation that his first

²³ Gisela Meyer was also the daughter of a wealthy German business owner in Shanghai. Hudec's first house that he designed for his new family in Shanghai was sponsored by his father-in-law, according to *Shanghai Hudec Architecture*.

²⁴ Luca Poncellini, "Laszlo Hudec in Shanghai (1919-1947): The brilliant trajectory of a Hungarian architect in the process of modernization of the greatest city of the East" (PhD Diss., Technical University of Torino, 2007), 3.

employment offer in Shanghai came very soon after he arrived in 1918. He was offered to serve as a draftsman at an American architectural firm, R. A. Curry, founded by the architect of the same name. Until he started his own practice in 1925, Hudec accumulated experience practicing and dealing with a variety of clients under R. A. Curry & Co. The founder of the firm, Rowland Curry [Fig. 1-7], graduated from Cornell University in 1907 and practiced as an architect in Cleveland for seven years before moving to Shanghai. It is suggested that he might be the first American architect to establish an office in China in 1914, as most of the practicing architects before Curry were British. Curry's involvement in bringing the "American way to build" to the city was highlighted in Jeffrey W. Cody's book *Exporting American Architecture 1870-2000*. It is mentioned that "riding the rising crest of an economic boom, Curry designed banks and other commercial structures, as well as schools and an American Club, for which he often used American materials and structural systems that were increasingly becoming available for purchase in Shanghai, either through agents (e.g., Andersen, Meyer) or from representatives of the American firms themselves (such as Truscon [Fig. 1-8])."²⁵ Working for Curry's firm granted Hudec opportunities to confront a wide range of issues from western clients and to receive influences from American architectural styles, which were quickly evolving and progressing at the time.

During his employment at the firm, similar to his European fellows, Hudec worked with western patrons, from large banks to successful individuals in business. He was involved in projects of various building types, from tall buildings such as

²⁵ Jeffrey W. Cody, *Exporting American Architects 1870-2000* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 110.

American Club (1922-1924) [Fig. 1-9] to high-end houses such as Ho Tung's Residence (1919-1920) [Fig. 1-10], which was customized for Ho Tung, one of the richest and most successful businessmen from Hong Kong. In early 20th century Shanghai, there were mainly two methods of commission—via designation, usually for private commissions by individuals, or through competition, usually for large projects by institutions. One example of the latter way of the commission was the McGregor Hall and Social Hall at McTyeire School for Girls (1921-1922) [Fig. 1-11]. Hudec, as a representative of Curry & Co., won the competition for designing these school buildings, in which the infamous American architect Henry Murphy also participated.²⁶

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Hudec was not a Western European, and the loss of his nationality put him in an ambiguous legal status—any legal cases or disputes that he was involved in needed to be resolved in Chinese court rather than western courts in concessions. At the same time, his identity can be read as less directly related to colonization, or, to a certain extent, an unfortunate young man who lost his home to the war. In 1942, a year after he claimed a Hungarian nationality, he was appointed as the Hungarian honorary consul at Shanghai. His compelling narratives and expertise as a well-rounded “Chameleon Architect” won him many Chinese clients after he started his own practice, and his collaboration with Chinese clients won him more Chinese admirers even today. The Chinese and Hungarian governments were also pleased to bond tighter through cultural exchange events surrounding the appreciation of Hudec’s architectural work.

²⁶ Hua, *Shanghai Hudec Architecture*, 153

Throughout his career in Shanghai, Hudec had worked with both Western and Chinese patrons from diverse backgrounds and created numerous works of different styles and purposes. Hence, nowadays when we examine Hudec's accomplishments, we tend to disregard the split between his career at the R.A. Curry firm and his own practice and tend to view the totality of his work to conclude his excellency. Although Park Hotel owns the prestigious title of being the tallest building in the city for a long while, the fame of Wukang Mansion, an apartment designed for the International Savings Society that was of rather conventional styles and design, surpasses Park Hotel, being one of the most popular tourist attractions and landmarks in the city since 2018.

Wukang Mansion and Surrounding in 1920s

Among Hudec's patrons, the International Savings Society was one of few that commissioned more than one project and influenced his career to a great extent. Founded in 1912 by French businessmen Rone Fano and Jean Beudin, the International Savings Society (I.S.S.) was one of the earliest and biggest commercial savings banks in China. The "international" in its name suggests that their commercial savings programs were open to people of all nationalities.²⁷ Their business model started to attract a large group of customers, especially the Chinese, who at the time didn't have many options for bank savings, and soon the company accumulated a large amount of money from clients' savings.

²⁷ Given the possible restriction targeting Chinese citizens before, the "international" might also indicate a special inclusion of Chinese nationalities as their clients

With a boom in real estate development in the 1910s, the I.S.S. seized chances to invest in constructing several mid and high-end condominiums for rent and houses for sale. In December 1920, the bank founded *Fonciere et Immobilere de Chine* (中国建业地产公司 *Zhongguo Jianye Dikan Gongsi*), a subsidiary company that was mainly involved in real estate investment, rent, and sales. The shocking growth of I.S.S. as both a bank and a real estate investing institution is partially attributed to its tight connection with the Municipal Council in French Concession (Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession Française de Shanghai, 法租界公董局). According to the Office of Shanghai Annals (上海市地方志办公室 *Shanghai Difangzhi Bangongshi*), R. Fano, one of the founders of the I.S.S., served on the board of the municipal council from 1919 to 1925.²⁸ Other senior executive members of I.S.S. also had a tight connection with the council and attended important events as representatives of the French in Shanghai. Undoubtedly, such a tight network with the governing administration that managed regulations and operations of the concession might have introduced more resources to the company.

Hudec, who was working for R. A. Curry during this real estate boom, was in charge of designing several I.S.S. properties for rental, including the I.S.S. (Normandie) Apartment (Wukang Mansion). The way in which Hudec was commissioned remains ambiguous—he could be appointed directly by the

²⁸ “Shanghai fazujie gongdongju dongshi biao 上海法租界公董局董事表 [A list of Board Members in the Shanghai French Concession Municipal Council],” last modified August 28, 2003, <http://www.shtong.gov.cn/Newsite/node2/node2245/node63852/node63862/node63958/node64501/userobject1ai58074.html>.

institution, or the institution appreciated the reputation of the firm as a whole rather than Hudec as an individual architect, and then the project was assigned to him. Whether Hudec and the I.S.S. had any direct connection or not, the completion of the I.S.S. properties were a telling demonstration of his ability and could have attracted more clients for future commissions.

Naming

Wukang Mansion, also known as the I.S.S. Normandie Apartment, was commissioned by the International Savings Society (I.S.S.). By 1934, the I.S.S. was in possession of 27 properties in the city, including apartments, mansions, and *lilong* houses. In addition to the I.S.S. sign at the entrance of their properties, many of the apartments share another common feature—they were named after places in France. Examples include Picardie Apartments (current Hengshan Hotel), Beam Apartment (current Shanghai Women's Department Store), Gascogne Apartment (current Huaihai Apartment), Savoy Apartment (Ruihua Apartment), the Apartment building “Le Dauphiné” (current Jianguo Apartment). The I.S.S. Normandie Apartment (current Wukang Mansion), designed by Hudec, also followed this rule of naming. Although one may anticipate a connection between its name and the victory at the infamous Battle of Normandy (1944), the building’s two phases were completed in 1926 and 1930 respectively, a decade before World War II. However, the apartment may have benefited from an increasing familiarity of the name *Normandy* since the Battle of Normandy. The name “Normandie

Apartment” inevitably added dramatic narratives to this apartment, especially for mere visitors who are not familiar with the site’s history.

Not only is the name “Normandie” unrelated to the Battle of Normandy regarding the timeline, but also Hudec was not aware of this name given to this particular apartment at the time he designed. On one of the drafts of floorplan, the project is simply named the “Apartment House for I.S.S.” [Fig. 1-12]. The purpose later naming as Normandie Apartment may be for marketing and creating a harmonious naming system among I.S.S. properties. The contemporary mistaken associations with the Battle of Normandy in the 21st century may suggest a contemporary imagination of the building as a battleship and its strong tie with France.

Location

In addition to the limited availability of vacant lots near the bund, there are three possible reasons behind those real estate investments on the western fringe of the city. Firstly, there might have been an increasing demand for residences for senior and managerial level employees who were new to the city. Stepping into the 20th century, Shanghai became a hot spot for all kinds of trading and financial activity, and thus attracted more foreign settlers to move to the city. In contrast to earlier settlers who came and set up their own business, those senior clerks’ stay was more provisional. Instead of lavish customized garden houses, which were designed for the wealthiest business owners in the city, they could be looking for

comfortable living spaces that can be rented for a period of time. Mid to high-end apartments like Wukang Mansion satisfied their needs, without costing too much.

The second potential reason could be the relatively low land value at the time of commission and an anticipation of further expansion of the urban area and a subsequent rise in land value. As mentioned earlier, Route Ferguson (Wukang Rd.) was officially constructed and established by the municipal administration of the French concession in 1907. In less than two decades, the region had grown from the countryside to an official part of the concession (since the 1914 expansion) with infrastructure in place. The booming economy and frequent enlargement of concessions' boundaries brought hope to the investors for future prosperity in the region. Another factor that may contribute to this anticipation of rising land value is the popularization of automobiles and public transportation. More efficient means of transportation improve the accessibility to areas that were previously perceived as remote and rural.

Located at the intersection of Route Ferguson (Wukang Road) and Avenue Joffre (Huaihai Road), the ship-like mansion is “sailing west.” Though Wukang Road and Huaihai Road are within the “Inner Ring Road” which is at the city center by today’s definition [Fig. 1-13 today’s location & inner ring road], it was at the west-most fringe of the city when the apartment was commissioned and constructed in the late 1920s. [Fig. 1-5] Following the order of expansion of the city from the Bund in the east to the western rural part, the land value gradually decreased from the east to the west. It may not be a coincidence that many of the I.S.S. The apartment was in the western part of the city. In the map showing the approximate

land value in 1926 [Fig. 1-14 Land Value Maps], Wukang Mansion was situated in the area with second to lowest land value. Regardless of the low land value, it may appear to be a bold decision to invest in mid to high-end apartments in the city's periphery.

Moreover, distancing from the Bund and "old French concession" (before expansion) not only provides a tranquil living environment but also puts the foreign settlers at a distance from the old Chinese city, where multiple incidents such as the Small Sword Uprising (1840-1855) happened. Although it had been decades since the incidents and the political situation was moderately stabilized, some suggested that staying at a distance from the old Chinese city was deemed a better choice.

Noticeably, even though the I.S.S. apartments laid in the western rural part of French concession, the choices of location for each apartment were strategic regarding their high accessibility. Many were alongside the major east-west avenues such as Avenue Joffre and Route Joseph Frelopt, which directly lead to the older parts of the concession. Wukang Mansion, unexpectedly, stands next to Avenue Joffre. As the map of Shanghai in late 1920s indicates [Fig. 1], multiple tram lines (represented by red lines) linked different parts of the city—the French concession, Chinese city, international settlement (both south and north of the Suzhou Creek), and Nanshi (Southern City) —together. Via tram, residents in apartments along Avenue Joffre had direct access to the French bund by the Huangpu River, where their companies might be located at. In addition to the existing public transportation system, the popularization of privately owned automobiles was a factor that further strengthened mobility within the city. Partially

in response to the growing dependence on automobile, when Wukang Mansion underwent the expansion in 1930, a 1,400 square-meter-garage (shown in the 1947 Shanghai Street Directory) was constructed on the adjacent piece of land, serving residents living in both the old and new sections of the Wukang Mansion.

Structure

Differing from the vernacular name of “the 9-Story Building,” Wukang Mansion is an eight-floor reinforced concrete apartment of a French Renaissance style. This height was considerably impressive at the time since the muddy soil in Shanghai was not suitable for building high rises. This problem was overcome with the advancement in construction technologies such as concrete raft foundations and the use of reinforced concrete for supporting taller structures. In 1920, the Robert Dollar Building, designed by Henry Murphy, was completed as one of the first eight-story buildings in the city. In 1923, architectural firm Lester, Johnson & Morriss designed the nine-story North China Daily News Building [Fig. 1-15]. It was not until the late 1920s when there started to emerge buildings higher than ten stories.²⁹ Wukang Mansion, therefore, was considered an apartment of significant height in the city at the time it was built in the mid-1920s. Moreover, since most of the high rises are towards the east part closer to the Bund, considering the rising land price and shortage in land, Wukang Mansion might be a special high rise in the western area of Shanghai.

²⁹ Wu Jiang, *A Hundred Years of Shanghai Architectural History*, 108

Facades

As one of the most famous wedge-shaped buildings in the city, Wukang Mansion stands on a piece of triangular-shaped land with a 30-degree angle. Many reviews and news articles today emphasize Wukang Mansion's prominent location at the intersection of six (five) roads (Huaihai Rd., Wukang Rd., Xingguo Rd., Yuqing Rd., Tianping Rd.) and attribute its great fame to this intersectionality. [Fig. 1-16 Map Right Now on Intersection] However, tracing back to the 1930 map, only Huaihai Rd. (Avenue Joffre) and Wukang Rd. (Route Ferguson) existed when Wukang Mansion's second phase was in place. [Fig. 1-17 Zoom in of 1930] Today, the intersectionality of six roads offers visitors perspectives of the building from different angles, but to understand closely how the building, especially its façade, was designed, Huaihai Rd. and Wukang Rd. should be the focus of the analysis.

Unlike conventional apartments with one side or two perpendicular sides facing the street, Wukang Mansion's two exterior façades form a 30-degree angle. Hence, there were at least three points of view—two from two street sides, and one facing the angled corner. In addition, using the modern urban planning concept of road hierarchy, Avenue Joffre was undoubtedly more important and busier than Route Ferguson, which was no different from a countryside trail.

The first floor hosts commercial shops along the veranda, while the upper floors are for residential use. The façade is visually divided into three sections. [Fig. 1-18 Façade from Huaihai Road] The artificial Ashlar stone base makes up the first two floors, with the veranda on the ground floor. The middle floors, from third to seventh, are made of fair-faced red bricks, which become the dominant visual

component of the building. The top floor echoes the base through the same material. On the third and eighth floor, respectively, there hang rows of cantilever balconies that extend through both the Huaihai Rd. and Wukang Rd. sides.

Materials

According to archival records, most construction materials were provided by foreign suppliers, mostly imported. The contractor was Remond et Collect, a French company that was also involved in the construction of Sheshan Basilica. Paul I. Fagan & Co. were in charge of the flooring and insulation, A.C. Horn Co. from Long Island City, New York, and John's Manville Products supplied materials, possibly for pipes, though not specified. The red bricks used for the exterior and balcony on the second floor are believed to be manufactured by the Tai Shan Brick and Tile Co., a Chinese manufacturer based in Jiashan. The company was a leader in the industry and exported a substantial amount of locally manufactured bricks, facing bricks, and tiles to other cities in the Far East. The Cathay Hotel³⁰ the former French Concession also used facing bricks produced by Tai Shan Brick & Tile Co.³¹ In a collection of Laszlo Hudec funds hosted at University of Victoria in Canada, there were several photos published by the company that were collected by Hudec. In particular, there were two buildings that appeared in the photos, potentially as

³⁰ Cathay Hotel occupies the 4th through the 9th floor in Sassoon House, which was commissioned by one of the most successful and powerful businessmen in Shanghai during the interwar period, Victor Sassoon. It is currently Jinjiang Hotel.

³¹ Leung-kwo Pkrudence Lau and Thomas Cooma, "Modern Architectural Influences of Western Construction Companies in China," in *Master-planning the Future*, ed. Austin Williams and Theodoros Dounas (China: Transport Research Publications Inc and Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, 2012), 75.

advertisements, and were designed by Hudec. There is a possibility for a long-term collaboration between Hudec and Tai Shan.

Floor Plan

The old block of the mansion, which was completed in Dec 1925, can be entered from Huaihai Road through an entrance that is setback from the inner wall of the veranda. The flooring of the semi-exterior ground under the veranda, at the entry doorway, and in the lobby are terrazzo [Fig. 1-19]. The interior walls are marble walls in the lobby, where a reception desk serves as the guardian of the mansion. Directly facing the entrance is an elevator that has been installed since the completion of the building. The golden indicator of the floors presents numerals in the Roman system from one to seven and “G” for the ground floor. [Fig. 1-20]

According to the existing floor plan [Fig. 1-12], there are two lifts and two staircases. [Fig. 1-21] For a period of time in history, only residents living above the third floor were allowed to use the lift³², although it remains unknown whether that was the rule among the earlier residents. To satisfy various needs of French employees, the space was separated to form a mixture of one, two, and three-bedroom apartment units. Each unit came with a living room, modern toilet, and a kitchen, with some units hosting extra spaces for storage. The apartment also came with a heating system and hot water supply. Most units are facing south, receiving sufficient sunlight and enjoying the great view of Route Joffre (Huaihai Road), and

³² Chen Baoping and Chen Danyan, *Zhuza Wukang Dalou* 住在武康大楼 [Living in Wukang Mansion] (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2020), 38, Kindle.

can be entered through doors opening to a hallway on the north side. Though the hallway is currently windowed, it is believed that the hallway was a veranda until the windows were added in the 1970s. The hallway creates a semi-public yet semi-private space—it helps communication with neighboring residents. [Fig. 1-22] Especially for families with children, the hallways became a kids' space for befriending and socializing.

Comparative Analysis

In comparison to the most well-known wedge-shaped building, namely the Flatiron Building (also known as the Fuller Building, 1902) in New York City, Wukang Mansion is unique in several ways. Firstly, the Flatiron Building is at the intersection of fifth avenue and Broadway, both of which are major avenues in the city. Hence, we can observe a consistency across the two facades, as opposed to Wukang Mansion's different facades. In addition, Flatiron's pointy angle is oriented towards the northeast, in comparison to the southwest in Wukang Mansion's case. With most units facing south and corner units facing west and light courts on Wukang Rd.'s side, Wukang Mansion offers its residents sufficient lighting throughout the day and gorgeous sunset views for the corner unit occupants if weather permits. Flatiron as an office building, on the other hand, may have different ways to treat lighting.

Wukang Mansion also stands out with its exterior veranda on its ground floor, differing from Flatiron's normal solid walls meeting the ground. In fact, Wukang Mansion is said to be the first "veranda-style" apartment in Shanghai. The veranda on the ground floor alongside the streets was more commonly seen in

Southern China such as Canton than in Shanghai. The choice of veranda could be made based on specific regulations on buildings and their relations with the access to the streets in French Concession. Hudec's design allowed pedestrians to utilize the sheltered space for walking while maximizing the land space on the upper floors.

However, except for its veranda and wedge shape, Wukang Mansion was rather ordinary amongst its contemporaries in Shanghai at the time of its completion or other Hudec's work. Other I.S.S. apartments, of which many were designed by one of the distinguishable French architectural firms Leonard, Veysseyre & Kruze, also had their unique features. For instance, the Apartment Building Le Dauphiné is typically stylistically Art Deco, with a gated garden in front of the building. Hudec also managed to design inspirational Art Deco buildings such as the Park Hotel and the Grand Theater, which gained more reputation and became popular earlier than Wukang Mansion. Wukang Mansion was a great creature—yet its uniqueness was not enough for it to stand out from the variegated cityscape. The ways in which Wukang Mansion is shaped into one of the city's most important landmarks then became an interesting topic of exploration. In addition to Hudec's personal narratives, the multiple layers of history that it carries both architecturally (i.e., aging of materials) and ideologically (i.e., different generations of residents from distinct backgrounds) added colors to the mansion's story. The recent preservation programs and contemporary reinterpretation and marketing of the mansion presented the narratives in an appealing way, and the narratives were slowly engraved into the city's collective narrative.

Infrastructure

At the time of the completion of the mansion, water supply and electric systems and many other up-to-date technologies had been in place for more than 30 years. The mansion was located in the French Concession. However, despite the different sovereignties in the two foreign settlements, the right to construct and operate infrastructures in the French Concession were sold to other institutions. For instance, the water and gas supply were provided by the British water and gas companies that were also in charge of infrastructures in the International Settlement.³³ If one visits Shanghai after 1927, they might have been able to call friends in the Chinese controlled areas from the settlements or vice versa using rotary dial telephones.³⁴ It is also believed that the mansion had rooms designed for boilers and therefore enabled a central heating system.³⁵

As I will show in chapters three and four, the contemporary interpretation and reimagination transformed this rather mundane and ordinary project—From Hudec's I.S.S. Apartment, a residential building built for ordinary foreign clerks on utilitarian philosophy, to Shanghai's Wukang Mansion, a landmark and signifies the city's heritage and identity as cosmopolis for many decades.

³³ Zhang Zhongli, *Jindai shanghai chengshi yanjiu* 近代上海城市研究 [Contemporary Shanghai Urban Studies] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1990), 474

³⁴ Zhang, *Contemporary Shanghai Urban Studies*, 488

³⁵ Sha Yongjie, “*Chen Danyan, Chen Baoping, Daini zoujin wukangdalou* 陈丹燕、陈保平：带你走进武康大楼 [Chen Danyan, Chen Baoping: Into the Wukang Mansion],” by Chen Danyan. Tongji University Press, 2020, <https://b23.tv/Xdb2Pw5>.

Chapter II

Constructing Cosmopolitanism: Power and Curse of Art Deco & Modernism

Never was fantasy so functionally necessary for survival, whether to industry or the individual.

—Charlotte Benton and Tim Benton (2003)³⁶

If you search “Wukang Mansion” in *Red* (*Xiaohongshu*, literally translated to “Little Red Book”), one of the trendiest social media platforms in China, the first post with highest popularity has 13.2k likes.³⁷ [Fig. 2-1] The cover photo is a glamorous aerial side view of Wukang Mansion from a distance photoshopped into a warm hue, with a title “SHANGHAI” and a subtitle “SHANGHAI WUKANG ROAD,” both in a font that is reminiscent of Art Deco, a type of modern style that emphasizes on geometric and decorative aesthetics and is so unorthodox that leaves great impression for any general audience. This is a beautifully produced photo of Wukang Mansion shot from a curated angle that received many likes — except for the fact that Wukang Mansion is not at all considered Art Deco architecture, and this neoclassical building was designed and constructed before modernism dominated the cityscape. This is one example of a larger trend of “*Fu-gu Feng*” (Chinese: 复古风, literally meaning the revival of the old, “Retro-style,” or “Vintage-Style”) and “*Min-guo Feng*” (Chinese: 民国风, literally translate to

³⁶ Charlotte Benton and Tim Benton, “The Style and the Age,” *Art Deco 1910-1939* (Boston: Bulfinch Press/AOL Time Warner Book Group, 2003), 13.

³⁷ Search result as of March 14, 2022, subject to change after this date.

Republican style)³⁸ that rose in China in the 2010s, especially on social media.³⁹

Although it is apparent that this “Retro-style” targets Shanghai during the inter-war period and tries to frame it as the Golden Age of the city, the style can be understood as a collage of modern, its variant Art Deco, as well as earlier styles. The term “Art Deco,” in fact, was derived from Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris in 1925, which marks a high point of the French *Moderne* style and the beginning of American adoptions of such style.

In the process of framing a pre-modernism building, namely Wukang mansion, into the later Art Deco and Modernist movement in the city, visual media plays a critical role in educating the general public. Through analyzing visual sources related to Art Deco, we can unpack the intentional faming and exoticization or presentation of the exotic parts of the city fulfills the larger ideal of constructing cosmopolitanism in 21st century Shanghai.

Undoubtedly, the rise of social media accelerates mass consumption of media and cultural products, which in this case, the building itself and the concepts of Art Deco and Modernity that are implied in this building. As Professor Wu Weiping pointed out in her discussion about cultural industries, which include cultural tourism and photography as we see in this case, “the core of cultural industries includes a number of creative endeavors producing cultural products: music, motion pictures, television, art, design, books, new media, and

³⁸ *Minguo Feng* is usually associated with the fashion and aesthetics in the inter-war period westernized treaty ports. Qipao and other eclectic clothes that fuse Chinese and western elements are typical examples.

³⁹ The “Retro-style” can also be used for any style revived from the past, although commonly used either for 30’s modern style or 70’s to 80’s hippy style. The “Republican Style” refers specifically to the style in the 30’s.

architecture.”⁴⁰ In truth, the idea of Art Deco and Modernity, in the 1920s, shaped a universal aesthetic through the consumption of media and cultural artifacts—“as revolutions in transportation and communication opened up the world, not only to the wealthy traveler but also to the reader of popular magazines or the cinema-goer in Bombay or Budapest, Manhattan or Morecambe, Shanghai or Singapore, the forms of this dream coalesced in Art Deco.”⁴¹ Clearly, the chase after the ideal of Art Deco and the larger Modernism in Shanghai, whether a century ago or now, is closely knitted with a cosmopolitan dream in which Shanghai is the host of a cultural and ideological “bazaar.”

To thoroughly answer the questions raised earlier, I shall first introduce two important theoretical frameworks in the field of media and technology studies, namely, the Cultivation Theory by Gerbner in the 1960s and the Four-Quadrant Map of media and technology studies proposed by Boczkowski and Siles in 2014. The Cultivation Theory suggests how long-term media exposure can lead to a distorted view of reality that is closer to what's presented in the media that viewers consume, and as a result, viewers' attitudes and behaviors change. Gerbner's original theory concerns more with examples like the media's influence on shaping people's negative perception of the immigrants. In this case, I hope to adopt the theory in a way that, instead of constructing a distorted reality that is mutually exclusive with the reality (e.g., the false impression of higher crime rates among immigrants is mutually exclusive to the reality of similar crime rates among

⁴⁰ Wu Weiping, “Cultural strategies in Shanghai: regenerating cosmopolitanism in an era of globalization,” *Progress in Planning* 61 (2004), 162.

⁴¹ Benton, Art Deco 1910-1939, 13

immigrants and non-immigrants), the audience is mentally constructing hyperreality that builds upon the reality. The Four-Quadrant Map, on the other hand, consists of a vertical axis with production and consumption on two ends and a horizontal axis with materiality and content. Therefore, the four quadrants are the production of content, production of materiality, consumption of content, and consumption of materiality. While materiality in the original framework refers to media technology such as the internet, in my analysis, materiality means tangible objects that can be physically perceived by the audience, mostly architecture in this case. Boczkowski also theorized that as the result of increasing imitative activities on the internet we would observe a homogenization of content on the internet.⁴² In this case, the link between visual elements that signal Art Deco style or Modernity as the dominant aesthetics and cosmopolitan ideal is undoubtedly reinforced through imitative content creation, and consequently partially erase Shanghai's history before modernism came into the city. However, this process of amplification through media is not within the scope of this chapter, since this chapter focuses on how the audience builds the link in the first place. In other words, many posts on Red or other social media are a production of content that results from the consumption of content and materiality, and this chapter focuses on consumption rather than production. As Boczkowski defined, "the consumption of content, they concluded, implies an active reader—selecting, negotiating,

⁴² Pablo J. Boczkowski and Ignacio Siles, "Steps Toward Cosmopolitanism in the Study of Media Technologies: Integrating Scholarship on Production, Consumption, Materiality, and Content," in *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society*, ed. Tarleton Gillespie (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014), 53-54.

interpreting, discussing, or in short, being involved,”⁴³ which is the center of this discussion.

Using those two theoretical frameworks, I hope to suggest a loop of media consumption and production, through which the association between Shanghai’s glorious interwar period and Modernism, especially the aesthetic of Art Deco, is reinforced and amplified to the extent that overshadows other artistic styles (i.e., neoclassicism or Art Nouveau that were also present in the city) and other parts of the narration of the city’s history (e.g., the lack of political sovereignty of Chinese people in the city). Mass content exposure, including visual and textural media, especially with the growing use of social media, cultivates a fantasized ideal of Shanghai as cosmopolis among the general Chinese audience. Films, novels, posters, and photos can all provide visual content for consumption. The consumption of such content leads to the audience’s consumption of architectural works and their symbolism through conscious searches or unconscious encounters. They carefully select, interpret, and be involved with the content and the materials, then produce content that contains both primary sources (i.e., the film, novels, posters, buildings they encountered) and their own interpretations, of which either or both could be consumed by other audiences. It is nearly impossible to distinguish a single actor who initiated this loop. Rather, it is the product of a collective conscious preference of presenting the cosmopolitan side of Shanghai as the city’s identity and a collective unconscious choice of utilizing modernism, especially Art

⁴³ Boczkowski and Siles, “Cosmopolitanism in Media Technology Studies,” 59.

Deco style, as a visual manifestation of the ideal cosmopolitanism that is rooted in the 1920s to 1930s Shanghai.

Art Deco & Shanghai's Cosmopolitanism

With the prospering economy in the city, Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s was filled with the novel, exciting tangibles and intangibles imported and generated from all kinds of sources. One important concept that shapes Shanghai's city identity is cosmopolitanism, which is rooted in its colonial history but pushed to a higher level as a political agenda since the open-up policy in the late 1980s. In reality, the (re)construction of Shanghai's cosmopolitanism may seem like a response to the more and more heated competition of megacities around the globe. This chapter is not simply about the notion of regeneration of cosmopolitanism in Shanghai, as it was already proposed. In 2003, Wu Weiping, currently a professor at GSAPP at Columbia University, published an article analyzing cultural strategies in the city as means to re-establish the ideal of cosmopolitanism that is desired in this era of globalization.⁴⁴ As an extension to Professor Wu's thesis on the resurrection of Shanghai's cosmopolitan identity through cultural strategies, in this chapter, I want to highlight an intentionally constructed tight connection between cosmopolitanism and Art Deco style in architecture and fashion in contemporary settings. With an understanding of such connection, we uncover an intentional preference for using the Art Deco style to symbolize Shanghai during the interwar period, and ultimately to materialize the cosmopolitanism ideal on a visually

⁴⁴ Wu, "Cultural Strategies in Shanghai," 159

superficial level that can be understood by the general public in contemporary settings.

Tracing back to the birth of the term “Art Deco,” it was popularized after an exhibition, “Les Annees ’25’ Art Deco/Bauhaus/Stijl/Esprit Nouveau’, in 1966.⁴⁵ Given this chronology, in many of the examples of implications of such style in 1920s and 30s Shanghai, the artists, architects, or celebrities probably did not understand the aesthetic Art Deco as a specific style but rather as a branch falling under modernism. Bayer deciphered the meaning of modernism “as the term was more simply applied in the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties meaning something new and different, something exciting and unorthodox, something characterized by a sense of *joie de vivre* that manifested itself in terms of color, height, decoration, and sometimes all three.”⁴⁶

Despite the fact that there remains a lack of consensus of whether Art Deco is considered a style or merely a taste without theoretical categorization, the discussion of this “fleeting, frivolous, and nakedly commercial” style has “resonance for a lay public,” as many people make the association between Art Deco and the inter-war period.⁴⁷ In defining Art Deco architecture, Bayer describes it as “an architecture of ornament, geometry, energy, retrospection, optimism, color, texture, light and at times even symbolism.”⁴⁸ She also emphasized that Art Deco is less about a building’s structure or fundamentals, but concerned with surface and

⁴⁵ Patricia Bayer, *Art Deco Architecture: Design, Decoration, and Detail from the Twenties and Thirties* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1992), 12.

⁴⁶ Bayer, *Art Deco Architecture*, 12

⁴⁷ Charlotte Benton and Tim Benton, “The Style and the Age,” in *Art Deco 1910-1939*, 14

⁴⁸ Bayer, *Art Deco Architecture*, 8

forms.⁴⁹ Therefore, Art Deco, whether a style or a taste, can be summarized as glamourous and frivolous, sometimes ostentatious, with a sense of superficialness and illusive hope engraved in its DNA. Art Deco, with those characteristics, is feasible for illustrating and manifesting cosmopolitanism that is uniquely Shanghai both in the 1930s and now, for three reasons.

Firstly, the formation of Art Deco and the implication of this style is in nature largely international and the style itself speaks for cosmopolitanism. In Art Deco 1910-1939, different art historians trace the emergence of Art Deco to different regional cultures, including but not limited to Egyptian (Egyptomania), African, Japanese, and Chinese, especially in respect of fashion (clothing). With an increase in global exploration, elements from cultures that were perceived as “exotic” from a euro-centric perspective were taken and fused to form Art Deco. Architecture might be a different case, although architects throughout the world were actively engaged in the creation of the Art Deco style based on their own understanding. In turn, Art Deco can be found today in many places across continents, from Morocco to India. We can see a parallel between how Art Deco was formed with multiple sources of cultural input and the prevalence of different cultures and commodities of different traditions in Shanghai in the 1930s, as Quoted from Christopher Isherwood’s *Journey to War*, “You can buy an electric razor, a French dinner or a well-cut suit. You can dance at the Tower restaurant of the Cathay Hotel...you can attend race meetings...the latest American films...there is enough whisky and gin to float a fleet of battleships. The Jeweler and the antique

⁴⁹ Bayer, *Art Deco Architecture*, 8

dealer await your orders.”⁵⁰ As we see in both the case of Art Deco and life in Shanghai, cosmopolitanism creates something new and novel for almost all audiences and intentionally stays at a distance from a particular style or tradition. It helps Shanghai not fall into the fate of being a mere copy of its western metropoles but rather be a diverse cosmopolis.

Secondly, in order to construct Cosmopolitanism in Shanghai, its natives, the Chinese people, have to be in an equal position as groups of foreigners, if not more powerful. The rise of Art Deco in the city temporally coincides with the rise of Chinese-owned businesses in the city, with a larger societal shift from Imperialism to Capitalism. As Anna Jackson summarized in her discussion on “Art Deco in East Asia,” “The exuberant, decorative spirit of Art Deco was perfectly at home in Shanghai of the 1930s, but the specific characteristics the style bore in the city reflected a fundamental shift of power as British Imperialism was challenged by American capitalism. The Art Deco buildings of Shanghai were a symbol not so much of colonial authority as of the new doctrine of wealth.”⁵¹ While this shift to American capitalism promised opportunities of upward mobility in social status for only a tiny proportion of the Chinese population in the city, in comparison to earlier years, Chinese businessmen in the 1930s did receive more power to exert influence on civic life, for instance, construction of public buildings, in this cosmopolis. After being called primitive and underdeveloped for decades, Chinese businessmen in the city finally had power, financial and social, to commission buildings like the Park

⁵⁰ Christopher Isherwood, *Journey to War* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939), 237.

⁵¹ Anna Jackson, “Art Deco in East Asia,” in *Art Deco 1910-1939*, ed. Tim Benton and Charlotte Benton (Boston: Bulfinch Press/AOL Time Warner Book Group, 2003), 378.

Hotel (1934) in Art Deco style—a style that both glorifies their wealth and power and demonstrates that Chinese were finally in sync with the latest style that was widely valued across the globe. Such narrative, indeed, also fits into the political agenda of shaping Shanghai into a Chinese-controlled cosmopolis at this moment.

The third reason is the tight connection of Art Deco's *Joie de vivre* nature and a lifestyle that is characterized as *Wenyi* (Chinese: 文艺, literally translate to literature and art)⁵² and *Xiaozi* (Chinese: 小资, literally meaning petit-bourgeois)⁵³, which is commonly seen among Shanghai's citizens in their daily lives. Shanghainese people, regardless of social status, attempt to capture any chance to advance towards the desired lifestyle, such as having a cup of coffee even though they could only afford it once every while. In some respects, Shanghainese people can be considered more individualistic than other Chinese people, as they prioritize treating themselves through tangible and intangible rewards. Their *Joie de vivre* is not rooted in wealth but longing for a bourgeois lifestyle with limited resources. As I will discuss in chapters three and four, many commercial projects in the Wukang Mansion area reflect this aspect of Art Deco and provide a “petit-bourgeois” lifestyle rather than other more luxurious real bourgeois commerce.

Art Deco's strong connection with cosmopolitanism and compatibility with Shanghai's local cultural and historical context provides a solid foundation for the

⁵² *Wenyi*, literature (wen) and arts (yi), usually refer to younger generations who have great interest and special tastes of literature and arts; similar to hipster in western context but has less connotation of being rebellious.

⁵³ *Xiaozi*, which was originally referred to petite bourgeois who are slightly less wealthy than middle class or bourgeois, usually younger generations of white collars now. The term now is referred to the group of people who yearn for a romanticized type of western and modern lifestyle and interested in fulfilling their mental world with arts.

popularization of Art Deco. To further analyze the implication of Art Deco style iconography of the city, it is important to identify the gendering of modernism and Art Deco in the Chinese context. As we will see in examples in the following sections, in the Chinese context, many people's generic understanding of modernism, both in the 1930s and now, is largely shaped by the portrayal of "Modern Ladies" in China, who are also tightly associated with Shanghai, through their fashion style and the physical environment that they were situated in. The models of "modern ladies" can be fictional or non-fictional and can be involved in the realm of film, literature, or politics, their most important collective feature is that, in whatever ways, Shanghai is an inseparable part of their identities and stories. From out to in, from their appearance, fashion style, living spaces to narratives of their life, become icons that constitute a distinctive gold age in Shanghai, which substantially influenced public perception of the era.

"Modeng Nülang (Modern Ladies)"⁵⁴ & Chinese Art Deco

Above all implicit connections between Art Deco as a variant of Modern style and cosmopolitanism is the iconography of Shanghai's Golden Age, consisting of visual elements that make a spontaneous association to Shanghai's Golden Age. One piece of essence is the image of a *Modern Lady* (摩登女郎 *Modeng Nülang*). [Fig. 4] *Modern Ladies* could loosely mean women of modern style, in regard to the appearance and/or lifestyle, although, in the most ideal situation, they are Chinese ladies who do not look traditional Chinese nor entirely

⁵⁴ *Modeng Nülang* 摩登女郎 [Modern Ladies]

westernized but are presented as the embodiment of Chinese modernity, which started in Shanghai. *Modern Ladies* do not have a particular model, but rather, it is a collage of fragmented elements taken from a diverse range of influential Chinese women in the city at the time. From posters of the superstar *Ruan Ling-Yu* [Fig. 2-2] to photos of politicians and diplomats like Soong Mei-Ling [Fig. 2-3] and Oei Hui-Lan [Fig. 2-4], from photos of Eileen Chang herself to the portrait of *Wong Chia-chi* in the movie *Lust, Caution*, [Fig. 2-5] arranged from her original novella, the Chinese audience is infused with images of *Modern Ladies* in the cosmopolitan 1930s Shanghai. Some commonly seen elements include but are not limited to, *Qipao* (or Cheongsam, a Chinese form-fitting dress of Manchu origin), luxurious jewelry with simple modern design. Fashion and garments become an important part of making statements about female's status in the newly emerging modern society, as "questions of morality, national identity, and Chinese modernity were articulated through dress, shoes and hairstyles."⁵⁵ Most importantly, *Modern Ladies* (*Modeng Nülang*) are not Chinese girls who turn their back on tradition and fully imitate the western modern style. Rather, they are in constant (not always successful) attempts and sometimes struggle to maneuver and navigate between different styles.

One cannot discuss Art Deco without mentioning *The Great Gatsby*, the widely known novel if not a masterpiece by F. Scott Fitzgerald. To many Chinese audiences, whether they have read the book or not, Daisy Buchanan from the 2013 movie remake is likely to be their first encounter with Art Deco as a formal aesthetic

⁵⁵ Benton and Benton, *Art Deco 1910-1939*, 380.

style. In discussing the obsession with the fantasy of Art Deco, Charlotte Benton and Tim Benton wrote, “part of the fascination of the style lies precisely in its confrontation of new values with old, and in the hint of fragility and tragedy that often lurks behind its glitter – themes evocatively portrayed in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s novel, *The Great Gatsby*.⁵⁶ The motifs of a “confrontation of new values with old,” the beautiful fragility, and tragedy, are completed by two parts—the presence of *Daisy Buchanan*, symbolizing the glittering yet unapproachable luxury, and Gatsby’s longing. [Fig. 2-6] Interestingly, those motifs also have a dazzling prevalence in Eileen Chang’s novels as well as non-fictional writings, the works that one cannot overlook when studying Shanghai.

The value of Eileen Chang’s work in the context of this thesis is that, although many of her novels were set in Hong Kong, her works were written in Shanghai in the early 1940s as an immediate reflection of interwar Shanghai as a modern cosmopolis. In one of Chang’s arguably most famous works, *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier* (1943), *Ge Weilong*, a young naïve student who is staying at her aunt’s house in Hongkong to finish her schoolwork, ends up being corrupted and drained by the materialistic lifestyle of which her aunt and the high society in Hongkong were after.⁵⁷ In a seemingly cosmopolitan society, the absence of a single dominant ethnicity, nationality, or culture and a necessity to establish a social hierarchy potentially leads to material worship—and this holds true in interwar period Shanghai.

⁵⁶ Charlotte Benton and Tim Benton, 13

⁵⁷ Zhang Ailing, “Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier,” in *Love in a Fallen City* (New York: New York Review Books, 2007).

In *Love in a Fallen City*⁵⁸ (1943), Chang started the novel describing the different times running in the same city—

“Shanghai’s clocks were set an hour ahead so the city could “save daylight,” but the Bai family said: ‘We go by the old clock.’ Ten o’clock to them was eleven to everyone else. Their singing was behind the beat; they couldn’t keep up with the huqin of life.”⁵⁹

This opening presents the moment when the western daylight-saving time was implemented in Shanghai, some conservative traditional Chinese families refuse to integrate into this new and westernized system. This scene reveals a dissonance between the Chinese and Western in the cosmopolitan Shanghai and implicitly indicates her skepticism and ambivalence about the modernity at the time in Shanghai, which aligns with Chang’s statements about fashion. In a call for criticism towards fetishization of modernity, she wrote, in *Chinese Life and Fashions*, “the indiscriminate importation of things foreign went to such an extent that society girls and professional beauties wore spectacles for ornament, since spectacles were a sign of modernity.”⁶⁰ Although not all of the characters in her novels may be considered *modern ladies*, Chang herself is definitely one of the models for that group.

Despite Chang’s passion for fashion, her name was less associated with leading the fashion in the city than some other names—Lu Xiaoman (陆小曼, wife

⁵⁸ Zhang Ailing, *Love in a Fallen City* (New York: New York Review Books, 2007). Originally in Chinese, *Qincheng zhilian* 倾城之恋, translated by Karen Kingsbury and Eileen Chang.

⁵⁹ Zhang Ailing, “Love in a Fallen City,” in *Love in a Fallen City* (New York: New York Review Books, 2007), 3. Huqin is a type of traditional Chinese instrument, here used as a metaphor.

⁶⁰ Eileen Chang, “Chinese Life and Fashion,” in *The XXth Century* (Shanghai: XXth Century Publishing Co., 1943), 60, <http://hdl.handle.net/10524/32478>.

of Xu Zhimo, an influential Chinese poet) [Fig. 2-7], Oei Huilan (黃蕙蘭, also known as Madame Wellington Koo Huilan, wife of Wellington Koo, a former statesman of the Republic of China) [Fig. 2-4], and Soong Mei-Ling (宋美齡, Wife of Chiang Kai-Shek, former president of the Republic of China) [Fig. 2-3]. They were all from very privileged backgrounds, married to important figures in interwar Shanghai, and belonged to Shanghai's high society's social circles. In particular, although Soong Mei-Ling is more well known among Chinese nowadays, Soong and Oei (Koo) had a similar reputation as being the most fashionable women in their era. Thanks to their political importance, some of their old photos remain intact and are scanned and widely circulating on the internet. In those photos, we see Lu and Oei both in a modern curly hairstyle, with pearl necklace and accessories, in a modern style similar to the portrayal of Daisy Buchanan in 2013 The Great Gatsby movie. Both Vogue magazine and Art Deco 1910-1939 mentioned Soong and Oei as unarguable leaders of vogue in the city.

*"In the name of glamour, they waged battle with red lipsticks, long, beautifully painted nails, a few furs, lots of jewelry and mountains of silk clothes embroidered with sinuous dragons, multicolored fish and delicately stylized bamboo leaves. Precursors of the Chinese style in the first half of the last century, they were fashion rivals who introduced the rest of the world to an image of a modern, charismatic femininity that distanced itself from not only the rigid imperial robes but also the artificial exoticism of the stars of the moment in Shanghai and Hollywood."*⁶¹

—Vogue Italia

⁶¹ "Soong Mei-Ling, Oei Hui-Lan. Once upon a time," Vogue Italia, last modified June 2015, <https://www.vogue.it/en/people-are-talking-about/vogue-arts/2015/06/soong-meiling-oei-huilan-once-upon-a-time#ad-image>.

“Both women were great collectors of jade, but Huilan was also very fond of wearing her sapphire and diamond necklace from Boucheron and ... huge earrings to match.”⁶²

—Art Deco 1910-1939

The two quotes help us visualize the Chinese modern style through the figure of Oei Huilan. In the review of Soong and Oei’s fashion style, jewelry, especially modern design, plays an important role. There seems to be an analogy between wearing jewelry on top of western-style or eclectic style clothes to complete their modern looks and adding decorated geometric elements to a modern style building in Art Deco tradition. In some cases, pieces of jewelry and clothes were designed in geometric shapes with sharp angles and straight lines (as opposed to gentle curves in Art Nouveau style) similar to the patterns on windows or doors in Art Deco buildings. In a portrait photo of Ruan Lingyu, the superstar in 1930s Shanghai is wearing Art Deco earrings with a triangular design and qipao in a diagonal check pattern that echoes the earrings, which reminds the audience of the geometric shapes on stained glass windows in Art Deco buildings. [Fig. 2-2]

In addition to inspiration from influential women in the city, old magazines and advertisements with images of Modern Ladies also offered sources of visual references. As discussed in the book, “A Chinese taste for modern, or modeling, was conveyed through magazines such as Shanghai Huabao (Shanghai Sketch) or Liangyou (The Young Companion), which featured photographs of the latest fashions and the Art Deco interiors of the ‘typical modern home.’”⁶³ Besides

⁶² “Art Deco in East Asia,” Art deco 1910-1939, 378

⁶³ “Art Deco in East Asia,” Art deco 1910-1939, 378

magazines and advertising posters, Yuefenpai (Chinese:月份牌, calendar card or sposters), the paintings in printed calendars usually as advertisements for foreign companies and products imported into the cities, often portray Modern Ladies in qipao standing or sitting in a curated eclectic setting. In the poster for Qidong Tobacco Company, designed by artist and “father of Chinese poster art” Hang Zhiying (杭穉英), a lady in qipao with a geometric design of groups of cubes is leaning towards a table of Art Deco design. [Fig. 2-8] In addition to the design of qipao and the setting, her heels, makeup, and hairstyle all speak for her modern characteristics. Though calendar posters are usually criticized as evidence of the commodification of females, it could be more of the commodification of Art Deco, a particular type of modernity, that was cast on female characters to generate attraction. The establishment of an image of Chinese Modern Ladies offers a significant alignment with newly emerging modern architectural designs in the city—in the end, having a Chinese woman dressed in a traditional Qing Dynasty outfit in a modern building would feel very displaced.

Architecture, Hyperreality & Cosmopolitanism: Cultivating Fantasy Through Built Reality

The physical built environment, after all, comes into the spotlight as the center and most important part of constructing cosmopolitanism. Being able to visit the site completes the final step of the consumption of the content through sensations—seeing the structures and decorations on doors, touching the texture and materials, etc. Under the influence of the media, with the character of Modern Lady or scenes from films in mind, spectators treat the built reality as a playground

of imagination, for their fantasy of a hyperreal cosmopolitan Shanghai needs a physical space to rest. Hyperreality is commonly defined as the inability to distinguish reality from a simulation of reality, especially in technologically advanced postmodern societies with inventions like Artificial Reality (AR). In this case, the hyperreality is constituted by the superimposition of cultivated fantasies under media influence (i.e., the ideal of cosmopolitanism and modernity through the characters of Modern Ladies and their believed situated environment) and physical built reality (i.e., architecture).

“To Ferguson Lane,”⁶⁴ says *Wong Chia Chi*, a Chinese beauty in a *Qipao* and a trench coat, getting on to a rickshaw⁶⁵. This is the last line in Lee Ang’s film *Lust, Caution* (2007), a film based on Eileen Chang’s novella about seduction, assassination, and tactics in early 20th century Shanghai. For many audiences, this is their first encounter with the name “Ferguson Lane,” a road that is more broadly known as Wukang Road now. From the movie, this previously inconspicuous lane on the western edge of the former French concession started to receive more public attention. As they start doing more research on the history of this road, they stumble across more big names of remarkable women associated with the road and the neighborhood—Wang Renmei, Soong Ching-ling, Zhou Xuan.⁶⁶ Wang was a former resident of Wukang Mansion, Soong Ching-ling’s residence is right across

⁶⁴ Lee Ang, *Lust, Caution* (2007), 2:22:30.

⁶⁵ A kind of human-powered vehicle with one man drawing a two-wheel cart, introduced to Shanghai from Japan and widely used in foreign concessions

⁶⁶ Wang Renmei (王人美), Ruan Lingyu (阮玲玉), Hu Die (蝴蝶), and Zhou Xuan (周璇) were four most well-known actresses and celebrities in Shanghai at the time. Zhou was also famous for her singing.

the street from Wukang Mansion, and Zhou Xuan's former residence is located on Wukang Road.

Indeed, Wukang Road is not the only example, or Shanghai's "concession tourism" would not have a large market. Many other sites make more explicit connections between modernity and cosmopolitanism. Two of the most significant hotels and skyscrapers in 1930s Shanghai, namely, Park Hotel (1934) designed by Laszlo Hudec, and Cathay Hotel (1929) designed by Palmer & Turner, both in the center of the International Settlement. At Park Hotel, Chinese banks who were rising to power and a talented and ambitious Eastern European architect were an unconventional pair. The story of their partnership is a story of cosmopolitanism already, not to mention the less known fact that Danish (by A.Corrin), German (Siemens), and multiple Chinese firms contributed to the construction of the building.⁶⁷ At Cathay Hotel, nonetheless, the cosmopolitan thinking was pushed to another level. Victor Sassoon, the commissioner and owner of the hotel, warmly embraced cosmopolitanism, commissioned a set of "national suites" (Chinese: 九国套房, which literally translates into "nine-nation suites). It is mentioned in *The Last Kings of Shanghai* by Jonathan Kaufman—"In addition to the guest rooms, the Cathay featured a floor of "national suites," each decorated in a different foreign style: tatami mats in the Japan Suite, Indian rugs and cushions in the India Suite, Chinese furniture and ceramics in the China suite. Behind the luxury pulsing modern

⁶⁷ "Lüguan, binguan 旅馆、宾馆 [Hotels]," Shanghaitong, last modified January 15, 2004, <http://www.shtong.gov.cn/newsite/node2/node2245/node69543/node69549/node69577/node69595/userobject1ai68220.html>.

conveniences never widely available before in Shanghai or China.”⁶⁸ On the one hand, the suites might serve the needs of customers who were from different cultural backgrounds with particular preferences. On the other hand, having the suites in styles that were “exotic” to many of the customers might trigger their curiosity, and at the same time indicating how cosmopolitan this hotel and this city were, at the time of its completion. Behind the superficial interior design, Sassoon also hired a “global management team” from Bombay, London, and Germany who had different specializations in hotel and hospitality to better accustomed to customers’ needs.

While the two hotels provide the audience opportunities to cultivate their fantasies in close proximity, since the hotels are still in operations and the visitors can access the lobby or check into guest rooms, in some other cases with no access into the buildings, the buildings’ exterior become the crucial to the audience’s imagination, as we see in the case of Changde Apartment. Changde Apartment, also known as Eddington House, is an eight-story Art Deco apartment completed in 1936. It was home to Eileen Chang in 1939 before she went to Hongkong for college, and from 1942 to 1947, a period when she diligently produced a handful of astonishing work and her career as a writer peaked. Till this day, many fans and readers visit the apartment, in a way that is almost a pilgrimage, only to find out that, just like Wukang Mansion, it is private property with a “no trespassing” sign. As a compromise, they may sit in the Eileen Chang memorial café on the ground

⁶⁸ Jonathan Kaufman, *The Last Kings of Shanghai* (New York: Viking, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2020), 116.

floor of the building, trying to stay closer to this legendary author, although this café did not exist when Chang lived here, and the interior design is too contemporary to imitate her era.

As I will discuss in the following chapters, the preservation program at Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area serves this purpose of constructing a cosmopolitan ideal that is uniquely Shanghai and representative of Shanghai. With the accumulation of influences from *Lust, Caution* (and hence Eileen Chang) and images and stories of *Zhou Xuan* and *Wang Renmei*, as well as *Soong Ching-ling*, Wukang Rd. area surpasses all the examples mentioned in this section. Encountering one building and building connection with one type of visual cues is, ultimately, not as impactful as being able to move in the neighborhood and constantly receive visual cues and stimulations. The urban walking experience is definitive in this mental construction of a fantasized cosmopolitan Shanghai. At the 21st century's Wukang Mansion, we see a significant number of residents, among other key players including planners and real estate investors, actively involved in a manifestation of the Art Deco elements and the cosmopolitan ideal that is strongly tied to the artistic style.

Chapter III

(Re)constructing Wukang Mansion: Place Memory & Contemporary Cosmopolitan Shanghai

Social memory relies on storytelling, but what specialists call place memory can be used to help trigger social memory through the urban landscape...A strategy to foster urban public history should certainly exploit place memory as well as social memory.

—Dolores Hayden (1995)⁶⁹

On August 31st, 2021, several influential local media in China covered the news of the reopening of *Violet Barbershop*, a barbershop along the Huaihai side of Wukang Mansion that opened in 1936. [Fig. 3-1] For instance, the article by Thepaper.cn is titled, “Violet Barbershop’s Reopening Evokes Old Aunties’ Adolescence Memory.”⁷⁰ Another article by Xinmin Evening News is titled “New Shop at the internet-famous⁷¹ Wukang Mansion! Shanghai Citizens: ‘Long time no see!’”⁷² The news coverage on *Violet Barbershop* seems to all point toward a statement that the barbershop has been a critical part of the collective memory and

⁶⁹ Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Places: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 46.

⁷⁰ “Ziluolan meifating kaiye gouqi laoayi qingchun jiyi, huaijiuzhiyu gantan jiage piangao 紫罗兰美发厅开业勾起老阿姨青春记忆，怀旧之余感叹价格偏高 [Violet Barbershop’s Reopening Evokes Old Aunties’ Adolescence Memory.],” Thepaper.cn, last modified August 31, 2021, https://m.thepaper.cn/wifiKey_detail.jsp?contid=14289882&from=wifiKey#

⁷¹ *Wanghong* 网红 is a phrase commonly used on the internet, which literally means famous on the internet in Chinese. It is mostly neutral in terms of emphasizing one’s popularity, but sometimes it has slightly negative connotations of being too popular that causes bad phenomena or its popularity is overrated.

⁷² “wanghong Wukang dalou you shangxin la! Zhe jia dian rang shanghairen zhihu: haojiu bujian “网红”武康大楼又上新啦！这家店让上海人直呼：好久不见！[New Shop at the internet famous Wukang Mansion! Shanghai Citizens: ‘Long time no see!'],” Xinmin Evening, last modified August 31, 2021, <http://ish.xinmin.cn/xnjx/2021/08/31/32018851.html>.

history of the mansion. However, when we turn to the residents, we may see a different narrative of the barbershop. In the oral history, *Living in Wukang Mansion*, Huang Shufang’s daughter, who had lived with her family in the mansion until she went abroad in the early 2000s, recalled that her family were not frequent customers of the barbershop—she only went there once for her wedding styling. *Violet Barbershop* is one of the many examples of reconfigured spaces where the government intervened to preserve local history and one of the instances where dissonance between a memory that governments intend to shape, and the actual memory of the resident emerges.

To fully capture the municipal government’s intention and actions, I shall use urban historian Dolores Hayden’s definition of “place memory” and her emphasis on the function of “place memory” and differentiates it from “social memory”:

*Place memory encapsulates the human ability to connect with both the built and natural environments that are entwined in the cultural landscape. It is the key to the power of historic places to help citizens define their public pasts: places trigger memories for insiders, who have shared a common past, and at the same time places often can represent shared pasts to outsiders who might be interested in knowing about them in present.*⁷³

Inspired by all the visual sources that were discussed in Chapter 2, it is certain that the contemporary collective narration of Shanghai’s French Concession’s place history is surrounding a general theme of modernity and cosmopolitanism. However, in the process of constructing this contemporary

⁷³ Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 46.

narration, “inside” and “outside” players through different lenses contribute through different means, creating dissonances between their historic narration and historical facts or between statements from different groups. The dissonance and negotiations between different groups are critical in the shaping of cosmopolitanism. To a certain extent, the involvement of different groups and the existence of dissonance itself matches the concept of cosmopolitanism. Because of the large scale of the preservation program in the area, the boundary for defining “inside” and “outside” is ambiguous and dependent on specific sites—residents of Wukang Mansion are unquestionable insiders of the preservation project at Wukang Mansion. The dissonances are, nonetheless, wholly concealed and partially resolved by collectively recognizing tourists and visitors as the ultimate “Outsider.” In other words, instead of first constructing a place that triggers a “shared memory” and then presenting the shared past to Outsiders, the “Insiders” (including the residents of Wukang Mansion, the planners and government officials, and investors and business owners) feel the need to present a modern and cosmopolitan “common past” to the Outsider, which becomes the incentive to change the built environment to satisfy that need.

The concealment of dissonances and back and forth interactions between different groups of players can also be analyzed using Bruno Latour’s model of fact-builders and detours. He first pointed out the necessity of “others” to help the fact-builders transform a claim into a matter of fact. Therefore, the fact-builders are translating, or as Latour defines, giving the interpretation of the fact-builders’

interests in the claims that they hope to transform into a fact.⁷⁴ In this case, the Insiders, who are the fact-builders, are collectively transforming two claims—Shanghai is currently a cosmopolis and it has been one since the early 20th century—into a fact. To achieve this goal, they are translating the built environment, as objective evidence, to the Outsiders, the tourists, and visitors, through different tactics selected by each group of Insiders. Each group comes up with different translations by taking different routes to reach the same goal (endpoint) of presenting an idea of modernity and cosmopolitanism in Shanghai. Those translations act upon each other, forming what Latour frames as “detours” and “resulting drift.”⁷⁵

In the case of the Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area, a collective place memory is constructed in the process of multi-layer detours and drifts. Firstly, the residents, with the goal of repairment, experienced detours to preserve instead of simply repair enacted by planners and ultimately impacted by a need to present the mansion to the outsiders (i.e., visitors and tourists). From the exterior (i.e., the commercial space on the ground floor inside the veranda at Wukang Mansion) to the interior (hallways, then individual apartments), because of the different layers of boundaries that define outsiders and insiders, we see more detours happening on the exterior than the interior. With the detours, Wukang Mansion maintains its original “European look” with carefully curated commercial projects on the ground floor that harmonize with the Mansion’s “foreign” and historical outlook. Note that

⁷⁴ Bruno Latour, “Chapter Three: Machines,” in *Science in Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 103-108.

⁷⁵ Latour, “Machines,” 116.

although Wukang Mansion's architecture is meant to contribute to the cosmopolitan vibe along Wukang Road and there are occasionally western tenants living in the Mansion, this area is not considered a foreigner-concentrated area in terms of living, compared to places like Julu Road, where many foreigner-owned or foreigner-targeting businesses are located at. Therefore, the "insiders," the residents, in this case, are mostly Chinese, although some visitors may be of foreign nationality.

Within the seemingly homogenous group of residents, however, there exists a significant intra-group difference, possibly due to two factors—the Chinese Housing Reform in the 90s and the three interlinked yet independent architectural structures at Wukang Mansion. As I will discuss in the first section, such intra-group differences in their approach to preservation create a dynamic that is unique to Wukang Mansion's "insider group." *Living in Wukang Mansion*, an oral history of Wukang Mansion's residents that was published in 2020, will be the main source for providing residents' insight into the preservation programs and constructing the mansion's identity. Although the book only includes interviews with a handful of residents, the selection of residents largely reflects and represents the diversity of all residents living in the mansion.

Thirdly, the planners, who are commissioned by the government and guided by the city masterplan, came into the preservation program with two aims running on architecture and neighbor scales—to improve the residents' living conditions while protecting the historically preserved building, and to build a role model for "historical and cultural scenic area" that was newly proposed in 2005 via an official

document, Shanghai Historical and Cultural Scenic Area Protective Planning⁷⁶. The program at Wukang Mansion and Wukang Road area as a pilot study influenced the later municipal master plan and agenda. Published in 2018, *Shanghai's City Masterplan (2017-2035)* framed the city's objective as “in 2035's Shanghai, architecture is readable, neighborhood blocks are walkable...and the city is friendly and warmhearted.”⁷⁷ In comparison to the interior of the Wukang Mansion, planners had more dominance in making changes on government-controlled aspects of the neighborhood blocks, such as pavements, landscape, infrastructures (e.g., electric wires and poles) and public transportation, which are all crucial in shaping a walkable space.

Following the idea of constructing readable architecture and transforming neighborhood blocks into more walkable spaces, we can potentially link the program at Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area with theories and concepts regarding urban walking experience, including *flâneur*, *Dérive*, and some thinking within the field of psychogeography. *Flâneur* is a French phrase that refers to those who wander around the city without a specific destination. On a connected note, *Dérive*, literally meaning “drifting,” is defined in *Internationale Situationniste* (1958) as “a mode of experimental behavior linked to the condition of urban society: a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances,” it is a journey in an urban

⁷⁶ “Shanghai shi lishi wenhua fengmao qu baohu guihua 上海市历史文化风貌区保护规划 [Shanghai Historical and Cultural Scenic Area Protective Planning],” 2005, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwfbh/gssxwfbh/xwfbh/shanghai/Document/729954/729954.htm>.

⁷⁷ Shanghai's City Masterplan (2017-2035), 6, Shanghai Government's Official Website, <https://www.shanghai.gov.cn/newshanghai/xxgk/j/2035004.pdf>.

environment of those who are consciously unconscious.⁷⁸ It may or may not be a coincidence that both concepts, which belong to Situationist International, were rooted in and started from Paris, or more precisely, modern Paris. As Chris Jenks and Tiago Neves pointed out, “the flâneur is a character who comes into being in the urban space with the advent of modernity.”

One of the most common routes is to take the subway to Shanghai Municipal Library station or Jiaotong University Station, then start the walking trip from Wukang Mansion into the former French Concession area. Debord, in his Theory of Dérive, proposed that “the randomness of the derive is fundamentally different from that of the stroll, but also that the first psycho-geographical attractions discovered to run the risk of fixating the deriving individual or group around new habitual axes, to which they will constantly be drawn back.”⁷⁹ Setting Wukang Mansion as a starting point, the urban wandering experience for many visitors are no longer completely random. Therefore, most of the “outsiders” in this area are flâneur in Dérive only to a certain extent—they do own an overall objective is to search for ideal modernity and cosmopolitanism that is unique to Shanghai being a former supercolony. However, this objective cannot be easily realized by visiting one site, especially if the site is a “no-trespassing” private property that is not accessible to the visitors. Dérive, consciously immersing themselves in the urban environment that constantly feeds them hints and elements of historical Shanghai, is a must for their purpose. The purpose of movement in urbanity is no

⁷⁸ Guy Debord, “Internationale Situationniste 1,” Situationist International Online (June 1958), accessed March 23, 2022, translated by Ken Knabb, <https://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/definitions.html>.

⁷⁹ Guy Debord, “Theory of the Dérive,” in *Internationale Situationniste 2* (Paris, 1958).

longer getting to a certain destination, but the psych-geographical experience that is not achievable through other means except for being physically in the environment and perceiving senses when moving through space. Given this understanding of the “outsiders” purpose, I will discuss how their urban walking experience, or psych-geographical experience in urban space, is shaped by planners’ and government policies and actions, especially in relation to landscape management. The visitors’ experience of situating themselves in the former French Concession and coming into encountering various styles of European architecture and former residents of famous movie stars, which signals the glorified 1920s and 1930s Shanghai, is largely staged and curated by the planners.

The analogy of a time machine to the past is relevant but not unique to describe Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area. This time machine is one example of the government’s attempt to construct and then exploit place memory and social memory. In the past, Wukang Mansion itself had experienced three major repairs in 1964, 1982, and 2008, as residents recall⁸⁰, yet neither of the three had a scale as large as the most recent one from 2007-2019. The process of assembling this time machine started in 2005 with the establishment of policies regarding “historical and cultural scenic areas,” and multiple groups of players are involved—residents, planners, government, and investors in this process. This time machine, however, is made for and used by the “outsiders,” the tourists, the visitors, the foreigners, who are alien to the area. On the one hand, just like many other cities around the world, through the historical preservation program, Shanghai hopes to

⁸⁰ Chen and Chen, *Living in Wukang Mansion*, 73.

show the outsiders a cosmopolitan identity that can be traced back to its earlier history in the 1920s. On the other hand, the very act of prioritizing the “outsiders” itself is already uniquely Shanghai. Since the economic reform in the 1980s, Shanghai has served as the “Chinese gateway to the world,” and at the same time reversely as a telescope for Chinese people to obtain a glance into the Western world. Just like half a century ago, Shanghai again became the embodiment of cosmopolitan ideals. Shanghai, both then and now, is analogous to a “modern lady.” She shows a paradigm of eclecticism and performs as an ideal model for westernized Chinese-ness—they may possess some western characteristics, but no one would doubt the fact that deep inside they are Chinese. Occasionally, although the cosmopolitan ideals at Wukang Mansion may seem Eurocentric, especially given the European style architecture in the area, we still observe some aspects that align with traditional Chinese values, which makes this an even more interesting case study.

Assembling a Time Machine: Restoration, Repair, Preservation

At Wukang Mansion, the portal outside the lobby that leads to the verandah [Fig. 3-2] serves both as a buffer zone that invites tourists to come in close contact with the exterior and a clear boundary that prohibits tourists from entering the mansion. On the one hand, the wall left to the entrance holds photos, floor plan drawings, and texts that narrate the history and story of this mansion to the outsiders, tourists, or visitors. On the other hand, there hangs a plate on the door saying, “Private Property, Do Not Disturb.” [Fig. 3-3] There is also a guard at the door that restricts outsiders’ trespassing. Although the interior space is unwelcoming to the

tourists, they could get a glance at the interior from the photo wall right outside the lobby. Since the doors at the entrance are mostly transparent glass, they could also glimpse into the neoclassical marble lobby and a retro-style elevator with golden doors and a half-dial indicator with roman digits. The place memory at Wukang Mansion undoubtedly prioritizes memories and stories of the residents, both former and current. However, with the detouring framework, we see how to place memory is also curated by the residents' encounters and negotiations with not only the tourists (as we see at the mansion's entrance) but also the planners, experts, and contractors, who are performing as both professionals in historical preservation and a representative of the government. From the exterior and façade to the ground floor commercial spaces and verandas, to the interior staircases, elevators, and hallways, then eventually to individual apartments, there exist different levels of negotiations and "drifts" resulting from the intention to adapt to what the outsiders hope to see.

Commercial Activity at Wukang Mansion

Unlike the commercial projects in the surrounding areas that are invested by private companies, the shops and commercial spaces on the ground floor of the Wukang mansion are largely controlled by the government because Wukang Mansion is listed as historically preserved architecture. Although not falling into the temporal scope of this program from 2007-to 2019, the commercial activities at Wukang Mansion had undergone an earlier phase of "cleansing" in early 2000. Several residents recalled the old commercial activities adjacent to the mansion on Wukang Road or on the veranda, although their recollection and attitude vary due to the time they moved in and stayed in Wukang Mansion. Huang Shufang, who

moved into the mansion in 1950, moved abroad in 1984, and sometimes come back after then, said, “when we came back in 1999, it was such a chaos with the fish stalls...at the time no one was in charge of this, even with such a nice mansion standing in close proximity, there were people selling fish and it was so dirty, like a free market.”⁸¹ Huang’s daughter, on a similar note, recalled that, “at that time, there were people selling things from our place (Wukang Mansion) to Xingguo Rd., many of which were tiny stalls. But it was such a noisy and unhygienic situation with an unbearable smell. It improved a lot when we came back again in 2001.”⁸² Dissimilarly, Zhou Bingkui, who became a resident in 1956 at the age of 6, drew memories from his childhood—“when I just moved here as a kid, I thought Wukang Mansion is an interesting place, especially hanging around in the verandah. It was more interesting than now since there were stalls on the verandas. The stalls were selling toys for children and snacks like stinky tofu.”⁸³ Their diverging testimonies reveal the complexity of constructing a collective place of memory even within the group of residents who are considered “insiders.” As we see in the case of Violet Barbershop, a barbershop (or rather its name) that chosen by the government to be the iconic representative of the type of “desired commercial activity” that speaks for continuity, the construction of place memory, or the resolution of conflicts that emerged in the process of constructing place memory involves and relies on outside players, who are planners and the government in this case.

⁸¹ Chen and Chen, *Living in Wukang Mansion*, 41-42.

⁸² Chen and Chen, *Living in Wukang Mansion*, 41.

⁸³ Chen and Chen, *Living in Wukang Mansion*, 90.

*Violet Barbershop*⁸⁴, located on the first floor in Wukang Mansion along the façade facing Huaihai Road, reopened 15 years after its close-down in 2006 due to a lack of customers in 2021. There are two reasons behind the government's decision to "call back" the old barbershop. Firstly, since it has been a state-run business since the 1950s, the government has more control over operating under this name. Secondly, although the new barbershop has a different owner, the name "Violet Barbershop" carries generational memories and stories that complete the historic narratives of Wukang Mansion. The history of this barbershop can be traced back to 1937 when Japanese businessmen in town founded it. Lin Jianghong, a resident who moved into the mansion in 1954, mentioned anecdotes that he heard from the barbers at Violet Barbershop of how Chiang Ching-Kuo, son of Chiang Kai-shek and a pivotal figure in the Republic of China, visited the barbershop during his stay in Shanghai in 1945 to 1946.⁸⁵ Given the high status of Chiang Ching-Kuo, his visit undoubtedly veiled this barbershop with mysterious and appealing historical anecdotes. In 1958, Violet was merged with another barbershop next door and became a state-run business. Later in 1984, air conditioners, new style barber chairs, and the latest equipment for hairstyling were installed and introduced, making it among the trendiest barbershops in the city. However, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the emphasis on nostalgic feeling may not be so relevant to the ordinary residents at the mansion—it did exist in their memory, but they were not the frequent customers. *Violet Barbershop*,

⁸⁴ 紫罗兰理发店, *Ziluolan Lifa Dian*. *Violet Barbershop* is directly translated by the author. For the sake of comprehension, this store is referred to as "*Violet Barbershop*."

⁸⁵ Chen and Chen, *Living in Wukang Mansion*, 72.

famous for its newest equipment and fashionable hairstyles at a high price, might have had more customers from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

On this account, although Violet Barbershop may have existed in residents' memory, it is hardly a pivotal point in shaping place memory from the perspective of residents with very limited direct emotional attachment. The residents in general feel nostalgic, but they are not directly recalling their personal stories, since they did not have that much direct contact with the barbershop. Other stores on Wukang Mansion's ground floor have also been questioned by the residents because instead of meeting residents' daily needs, they are curated for tourists' curiosity, where we see the symbolic meaning and history of this building commodified. Day in Shuju, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, is a bookstore that sells books and souvenirs of Wukang Mansion and the surrounding French Concession blocks (in addition to normal popular books), which is open to the tourists. The bookstore also hosts a Chinese tearoom where visitors can read and drink tea indoors, which forms a contrast with the European style architecture outside in the French Concession and manifests a sense of eclectic experience in a cosmopolis. A studio space next to the entrance of the mansion is transformed into an exhibition space for both Wukang Mansion-related research and projects to display and for local artists to present their work which is especially educational to visitors who are interested in the area's history. The Cottage Café, a café with an interior that looks like a vintage store, and an ice-cream store that is connected to it, are quite popular on both Red and Dianping.com, a Chinese website similar to Yelp where people can post photos and reviews of restaurants and tourist spots. Serving only coffee and western-style

sandwiches and snacks, the café and ice-cream stores are made for tourists who want to experience the “retro-style” instead of the residents. Residents involuntarily compromised when the commercial activities are being shaped, regardless of their seemingly dominant “insider” identity.

Between Experts and Residents: Exterior and Hallways

At Wukang Mansion, the more interior a space gets, more privacy and power of shaping the space is given to the residents, and consequently planners had limited capacity for initiating preservative work in those places. As we will see, planners’ involvement remains at the level of exterior because it is seen as public space, and they partially took care of the hallways as semi-public space.

Though the exterior of the two facades is in stylistic uniformity, as previously mentioned in Chapter 1, Wukang Mansion’s two facades, one facing south along Huaihai Road (Avenue Joffre) [Fig. 3-4], the main avenue to enter Shanghai’s current city center from the west, the other facing north-west along Wukang Road (Route Ferguson) [Fig. 3-5], a one-way lane with very limited traffic and more dense landscape than Huaihai Road, have different designs respective to their qualities and levels as city streets. The planners in charge were clearly aware of the distinctions between the two facades.

Sha Yongjie, the chief planner (master planner) of the program at Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area and a Professor of Urban Planning at Tongji University, showed his analysis of the façade in relation to the mansion’s geographical location during his interview, “...as a space of ‘portal’ or ‘entrance,’

this (Wukang Mansion) is a pivotal core where two roads intersect. Hence, the façade as the interface, with the plantation, space, and cafes, are all important...Say, if we enter from the west into the city, then the façade facing Huaihai Road was in pretty good condition already, but it is only one of the two sides. The façade facing Wukang Road had more changes to be made...not to restore a fake one, as we can never fully revive the past, but rather to construct a contemporary scenery.”⁸⁶

Most of the preservative work done on the building’s exterior was done by planners like Sha and government-commissioned construction companies, which are reasonably experienced in the field of preservative construction. The preservation of exterior facade walls was commissioned to Shanghai Construction Decoration (Group) Design Co., LTD (上海建筑装饰（集团）设计有限公司) for design and Shanghai Xufang Construction Industry Co., LTD (上海徐房建筑实业有限公司) for construction. According to a news report that documented the whole process of exterior preservation work, there were five elements that they focused on—1) cleaning and repairing the exterior brick walls after measuring the degree of erosion and abrasion, 2) cleaning and repairing the stone façade at the bottom and towards the top of the building, 3) checking and repairing the balconies and steel-reinforced concrete, 4) repairing the iron windows by repainting parts with peeled paints and replace the broken ones with new windows of the same design, 5) managing any objects attached to the exterior walls for both safety and aesthetic reasons, the objects include air conditioners, extending canopy, and

⁸⁶ Chen and Chen, *Living in Wukang Mansion*, 348.

drying racks.⁸⁷ [Fig. 3-6, 3-7, and 3-8] Those are important foundational construction work that prolongs the mansion's life and assures the safety and structural stability after years of erosion. They allow the exterior of the mansion to look in unity, compared to previously individually customized balconies and exterior attachments.

Moving from the exterior to the semi-public interior spaces, such as the lobby and hallways, where the planners and residents are equally engaged, we see a dichotomy between residents and planners regarding their different understandings of the mansion's history. The pronounced divergence can be seen via a comparison between interviews with the master planner at Wukang Mansion, Sha Yongjie, and a current resident, Lin Jianghong. Their conclusions on Wukang Mansion's social standing (i.e., whether it was high-end or rather ordinary) at the time of completion are deduced from different sources—one on direct observation of the interior design details, the other on the floor plan and structural design.

Lin, who has been living in the mansion since his birth in 1954, is convinced that Normandie Apartment, at the time of completion, was high-end (“高级” Gao-Ji).⁸⁸ As an employee of Shanghai Housing Guarantee and House Management Bureau, Lin may have paid extra attention to the interior design and its conditions and preservation over the decades that he has stayed in this mansion. Therefore, he reasoned his statement with direct observations of interior details, for instance, the

⁸⁷ “Great Case of Historical Building Preservation and Construction Documentary: Wukang Mansion (Part II),” Sina, accessed March 31, 2022, <https://finance.sina.com.cn/jjxw/2022-03-23/doc-imcwipii0115012.html>.

⁸⁸ Chen and Chen, *Living in Wukang Mansion*, 53.

original velvet felt on the edges of window frames to prevent noise from closing the window and the electric oil heaters not only in each apartment but also in the hallways. Witnessing the materiality of felt and electric oil heaters, which are less commonly used in Shanghai's households nowadays, and sensing the texture of velvet and solidity of the heaters by touching, both contribute to this sentiment toward an imagined past of the building and its earliest residents who moved in the late 1920s. As I will discuss in the next section, residents like Lin with sentiments tied to the building's distant past transform their emotions into actions such as keeping the original appliances and decorations despite their relatively outdated style and poor condition.

On the contrary, Sha examined the floorplan and structural design in the early stage of the preservation program. He later reached a conclusion that the Normandie Apartment was not a high-end apartment for the then richest in the city, but was built for middle-class young employees of foreign nationalities, who had no plan for a long-term stay but rather temporarily working and staying in Shanghai. The design of the building was nothing too special but rather on a more utilitarian side. The mixture of units with one to four rooms was aimed at adapting to a wide range of needs. [Fig. 3-9 the graph I drew] It appears to be the case that the residents understood the mansion to be rather high-end at the time of completion based on their observations, while the experts delineated it as a middle-class residence based on archival documents and historic research.

The divergence in understanding of Wukang Mansion's historic position and significance in Shanghai's cityscape, both at the time of completion in the

1920s and contemporary, leads to an ideological difference in approaching preservation. It appears that some residents like Lin seem to feel resentful of previous arbitrary damages to the building and hope for a reimagination of the old Normandie Apartment, while experts like Sha hope to preserve the current condition of the building, although occasionally implement elements of the “original look” if only the current element is damaged. During the interview with Lin, he expressed, many times, that he was aggrieved by the fact that many of the original interior elements, such as the blinds and felt on the windows, were damaged from previous “preservative programs.”⁸⁹ In the following section, we will see a more holistic yet complicated story about residents—some, like Lin, are making a proactive effort in restoring and preserving the interior as the way they understood to be the original from the 1920s, yet some other residents primarily concern with a renovation and repair of these aging architecture of their homes. And more interestingly, such divergence is marked by the three separate structures at Wukang Mansion.

Repair, Restoration, Preservation: Tripartite Mansion

Moving from the ground floor onto the upper residential floors, from exterior public commercial space to interior private space, residents come into the spotlight as the central actors. Though the residents of the mansion are usually framed as a collective group representing the “insiders,” it is noteworthy to identify and assess the intra-group difference regarding the residents’ socio-economic

⁸⁹ Chen and Chen, *Living in Wukang Mansion*, 53.

background both at the time when they moved in and now. Interestingly, although outside tourists usually perceive Wukang Mansion as one wedge-shaped structure, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the mansion consists of three structures. The structures, in fact, correspond to three groups of residents that come from different backgrounds that they host respectively. The three sections are usually referred to as the old block or main block (1850 Middle Huaihai Rd., completed in 1925), the new block (1834 Middle Huaihai Rd., completed in 1925 or 1930), and the garage (435 Wukang Rd., completed in 1930). [Fig. 3-10 marking on map] According to Living in Wukang Mansion, currently, there are 143 households living in the mansion—96 in the old block, 9 in the new block, and 38 in the garage. Although most of the previous discussion focuses on the old block and the residents in the old block constitute the majority of all residents, it is still significant to hear the voices of other residents in the new block and the garage, who tend to have a worse and older living environment. Given the tripartite spatial structure, I will first discuss the historical background that led to different socio-economic backgrounds of the three groups of residents residing respectively in the three parts, which contributed to their diverging approaches to preservation, then use examples of the physical changes those residents made to private spaces in their individual apartments.

The oral history, Living in Wukang Mansion, introduces resident interviewees' diverse backgrounds. Overall, the old block, completed in 1925 and hosted the first generation of tenants who were mainly foreigners, has a higher proportion of residents from higher socio-economic status. Most of the famous

movie stars, such as Wang Renmei and Zhao Dan, both lived in the old block as well. Although some of the residents in the old block experienced great turmoil and were forced to move out during the Cultural Revolution.⁹⁰ The new block and garage host residents that moved in, later on, most of whom are working class. In particular, the garage was transformed into a residential space only after 1949.⁹¹ Many workers and their families were accommodated by their companies, which are usually state-owned factories or institutions, to move into Wukang Mansion, mostly the new block and the garage. Since the garage was not designed as a residential space but later transformed, the individual units are quite compact for a whole family to reside in, and the ventilation and temperature control are not the most ideal for living. This stratification of the residents was solidified by China's housing reform in the 90s, a critical moment when the country departed from the planned economy that defined the real estate industry for the next 30 years.

Though the three groups of residents who reside in different structures are willing to collectively make changes at Wukang Mansion to construct a historical narrative of cosmopolitan Shanghai that is appealing to many outsiders, each group owns their understanding and hence approaches to this preservation program. In *Living in Wukang Mansion*, there appears to be a pattern where those living in the garage were desperately hoping for a renovation to improve their current living situation, those living in the new block wanted a repair that fix existing problems

⁹⁰ Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was a social political movement in China. Many civilians with higher social status were targeted and faced both physical and mental abuse at “denunciation rallies” (批斗大会).

⁹¹ Chen and Chen, *Living in Wukang Mansion*, 14.

due to the aging structures, and the group of residents in the old block, in which itself is a diverse community, we're looking for restoration. The three approaches are all diverging branches under the “preservations” that the planners were aiming for.

There are two more important details to take into careful consideration. The first is the fact that only the old block is recognized as a “historic preservation building” by the government, despite the tight connection between the old block and the other structures. The second deals with property ownership. After the Housing Reform in the 90s, properties were privatized and available for individuals to purchase instead of state-run housing assignments. During this period, we observe disproportionately more residents in the old block than in the other two structures purchasing the units that they were residing in, very likely because of their more well-off financial background.

The crucial differences between repair, restoration, and preservation are, in my opinion, dependent on to what extent the newly created elements fundamentally change or transform the existing elements, although defining each term is much more complicated and perplexing. Restoration, by definition, prioritizes the original form of an object or piece of architectural work. Underlying the action of restoration is a sense of nostalgia, a yearning for the “good old,” and an implicit condemnation of the preceding changes that happened to the object or building. Repair and renovation, on the other hand, aim to fix deteriorating elements which are resulting from aging. If time is linear, those living in the new block and garage refer to the contemporary living conditions as the objective while residents in the

old block are looking back in the past and aiming for preservation action with cultural and historical significance beyond simple repair.

Residents living in the garage were facing fierce living conditions because of the inadequate insulation and ventilation and very confined living spaces since the original function of the space was for parking cars not for people to live in. As a result, residents' repair primarily focuses on improving living conditions instead of a deeper intention for preservation or restoration. For instance, resident Tang Guilin mentioned in his interview that his family of five people lived in one unit of 19.7 square meters (212 square feet). Unlike the old block that had a piping system set up for gas, the garage only came with a water supply that was used for washing cars. Residents had to use a coal ball furnace for cooking until the late 1970s when gas was installed.⁹² [Fig. 3-11 garage] The concrete floor and walls exacerbated the already problematic interior temperature control and made the floor unbearably cold. For practical reasons, Tang's younger brother, whom he lived with, tiled wooden floorboards to make it warmer.⁹³ In some interior spaces where natural light cannot be reached, lights were later installed because the indoor space got dim when the weather is cloudy outdoors.⁹⁴

On a similar note, residents living in the new block did not worry too much about preserving the building but rather made changes to the built structure for utilitarian purposes. They are aware of the relatively peripheral status in relation to the old block, which has received the most attention and care since the completion

⁹² Chen and Chen, Living in Wukang Mansion, 164.

⁹³ Chen and Chen, Living in Wukang Mansion, 167.

⁹⁴ Chen and Chen, Living in Wukang Mansion, 168.

of the building in the early 20th century. As mentioned by one new-block resident Tong Rongsheng, “Soundproof here is terrible, sometimes we can hear people upstairs walking. It is because our new block is not as good as the old one. The old block’s quality is better. In the new block, the third floor that we are on is better than the second floor. I heard that the second floor used to host domestic helpers of prestigious residents.”⁹⁵ Similar to the garage, the new block also experiences problems with insulation and water-proof partitions. As resident Wang Yong reported, his balcony underwent repetitive renovations every two to three years, where he witnessed progress in insulation and water-proof technology. In fact, more than one new-block resident complained about the previous unsatisfactory repair work that did not fundamentally solve issues or the results did not last long. Overall, the residents in the new block, similar to those in the garage, have internalized a sense of inferiority, not necessarily in terms of social status, but simply regarding their living conditions. Constant emergences of issues with essential living demands put them in a position where they have to worry about functional renovation before aspiring for historic preservation, which we see in some residents living in the old block.

Zhou Bingkui, the resident who spent a memorable childhood in the old block, is one of the most representative characters that carry an “old block sentiment” that can be recognized in interviews with many old-block residents. Influenced by his father, who worked as a civic engineer, Zhou has been very against the act of making changes to the original structures of the building, and he

⁹⁵ Chen and Chen, Living in Wukang Mansion, 184.

believes that “the house should be left as it has been (in its original form).”⁹⁶ His preservation effort includes both actively not making any unnecessary changes (which are most changes in his opinion) and persistently preserving historical elements. One example of the first kind of effort is his refusal to install central air conditioning because he wants to keep the original height of the ceiling, which is significantly higher than most contemporary apartments. He stated that he did not want to make any destruction to the existing structures, since central air conditioning inevitably needs a suspended ceiling attached to the original one, which not only lowers the ceiling but also disrupts the structure. On a related note, instead of using the most up-to-date central air conditioning, he still uses the earlier style window air conditioners, which have shutters attached. Since the shutters are nowhere to be found now, he attentively kept shutters that some other residents tossed away, so that he can fix his own air conditioner when its shutter breaks. Although Zhou may be an extreme case of great intention to preserve historical aspects of his apartment, he is undoubtedly among a larger group of old-block residents who have conscious thoughts on conservation and executed significant actions or modifications in their individual apartments. In addition to making diligent moves for preservation, given that they experienced the previous preservation programs, many of them expressed resentment for the fact that the previous repairment actually damaged many historical architectural elements. Zhou, for instance, expressed discontent towards “facade clearing” actions in 2008-2009, in preparation for the EXPO in 2010. The actions include the irrevocable removal

⁹⁶ Chen and Chen, Living in Wukang Mansion, 104.

of iron railings of the old-block balconies and the addition of metal cases for concealing and sheltering the air conditioners that hang on the exterior of the building, which not only blocks some rooms' views but also disrupts the authentic visual harmony.

To summarize all repair and preservation efforts on the built structures of Wukang Mansion, actions were partially initiated by the planners yet largely impacted by the three groups of residents to a different extent. The separation of planners as the outsiders and residents as the insiders is correspondent to the split of planners' focus on the exterior and residents on interiors, with hallways as semi-public buffer spaces that were taken care of by both groups. Such an arrangement could be the result of detours and negotiations made between two groups to avoid conflict. And, as we see, planners and residents of the old block, which constitutes the majority of the residents, were consciously shaping the building into their ideal historically preserved building that reflects the age of Shanghai's cosmopolitanism. Unlike the residents in the new block and garage who were unsatisfied with previous preservation work because of its ineffectiveness in optimizing utilitarian functions of the building, the old-block residents were disappointed by the fact that much irreversible damage or loss of "historical species" happened in the past several decades, during the so-called preservation programs but actually mere renovation work.

Living in Wukang Mansion is a timely and valuable source that provides us with insights from both the planners and residents. If this oral history is storytelling about social memory, then it reveals how to place memory—memory of a

cosmopolitan place—is shaped through preservation work on the physical presence of architectural elements at Wukang Mansion.

Fabrication of Readable Architecture in Walkable Neighborhoods

While many tourists, when describing their experience online, start from the encounter of Wukang Mansion or the bookstore, *Dayin Bookmall*, on the Huaihai Road side of the Mansion, this description is rather incomplete—we abruptly started our journey from Dayin Shuju bookstore but neglected the potential public or private transportation one can take to reach the site and accordingly potential starting points of this journey. This section reveals how tourists' walking experience from the start to the whole walk is shaped by a group of planners led by Sha Yongjie, the chief planner (master planner) of the program at Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area and a Professor of Urban Planning at Tongji University. I am not suggesting that the tourists are intentionally guided towards a certain direction to finish a “route” or a destination-oriented walk, although multiple stops that are marked with historical significance are emphasized and well linked. Rather, at Wukang Road and its surrounding area, we see a holistic and effective introduction to carefully curated starting points and utilization of the city landscape to facilitate the wanderers' cognitive connection to the reimagined ideal of early 20th century Shanghai. This is achieved in three aspects – 1) a curation of transportation options to emphasize the point of contact (or point of entrance) and a variety of route options that give wanderers freedom to shape their own walking

experiences; 2) construction of an active interaction between the spectators and the spectacles, as well as between different spectacles (i.e., historical buildings); and 3) the incorporation of the appeal of seasonality into major landscape management both for utilitarian and ideological purposes.

The planners without doubt were aware of the emergence of the Flaneur-like visitors as tourism in China was transformed and the purpose of touring put more emphasis on thorough experience over the course of the trip than simply checking boxes off of a list of must-visit landmarks. To a certain extent, there appears a parallel between Wukang Road as a channel into the imagined space and Benjamin's arcade or department store and hotels that are described as "commodified spaces in which everything was for sale, and to which anyone was free to come, yet they endeavored to create the atmosphere of the salon...the crowds came to stare at but also to mingle with them...the society which thus constituted itself as a spectacle was a society of outsiders, and the boulevards and cafes offered...a homeland for these individuals without a home."

In regard to the first aspect, we see planners' discouragement for driving or taking taxis and active encouragement for using public transportation, both of which contribute to establishing a walkable neighborhood block. Because of transportation planning in the Wukang Road area, for any outsiders who do not reside in this neighborhood and want to visit, their choices of options are restrained to a certain extent. Not only is the density of bus stops is much higher than parking lots, but also out of the five roads that intersect at Wukang Mansion, only Huaihai Road is a four-lane avenue, the other four—Wukang Road, Xinguo Road, Tianping

Road, Yuqing Road—are all one-way one-lane streets.⁹⁷ [Fig. 3-12] Many parts of the roads are progressively becoming subject to parking bans, meaning the cars cannot pick up or drop people off. This is not a natural occurrence but an intentional control of the width of the streets and automobile traffic, which controls the street to a scale that is comfortable for human walking.

Although many tourists nowadays may take the narrow atmospheric lanes in the former French Concession for granted, those lanes are a part of a project/policy named “streets that will never be widened” (永不拓宽的街道 *Yongbu tuokuan de jiedao*) that was initiated in the late 1990s to early 2000 by Wu Jiang, a Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning at Tongji University in Shanghai, and Zhu Zhirong, one of the leading official of Xuhui District Bureau of Housing Security and Management.⁹⁸ The roads in the Wukang Road area were among the first ones to be listed and to be protected under this policy. Because the widening of roads is such a crucial step in urban development, yet it does irreversible damage to the existing urban fabric, this policy, in my opinion, carries a lot of foresight and wisdom from the leading planners. It was a bold move to “restrict” urban development in the early 2000s when the economy in Shanghai and in general China was taking off so rapidly. In turn, the effect of this policy is significant and rewarding. As we see at Wukang Road, the removal of traffic ensures a relatively serene environment in the neighborhood, both for the residents

⁹⁷ Four-lane and One-lane refer to lanes for automobiles. Except for Huaihai Road, the other four roads have two narrow bike lanes that are bidirectional.

⁹⁸ Chen Danyan, *Yongbu Tuokuan de Jiedao* 永不拓宽的街道 [The Streets that will never be widened] (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2014), 177-185.

and outside visitors. More importantly, limiting automobiles in the area helps people walking in the neighborhood to better engage with the historical aspect with fewer distractions. Without too many contemporary automobiles, they can more easily access this space of Shanghai modernity and imagine themselves in the 1920s, since automobiles, just like smartphones or computers, are a type of technology that is very suggestive of time/era (i.e., people automatically think about the 21st century when they see Tesla or other contemporary brands and 80's if they see vintage cars). As I will mention later when discussing the sidewalk and exterior wall design, in addition to automobiles, the removal of electric poles and wires also contribute to shaping a retrospective mental trip for tourists.

To compensate for the restricted use of automobiles, the bus stops and subway stations are set at convenient yet strategic spots. The two closest subway stations are Shanghai Library station (Line 10) and Jiaotong University (Line 10 and 11), both located on Huaihai Road, about 3-5 minutes' walk away from Wukang Mansion. [Fig. 3-13] Since Huaihai Road is a major avenue running through the city center, the location of the stations was less curated for Wukang Road but rather a logical decision considering citizens' general travel needs. What the locations of the two stations do, however, allow the tourists to progressively blend into the reimagined block of 1920s Shanghai from a rather busy contemporary avenue, Huaihai Road, into a peaceful, otherworldly street, Wukang Road.

Concerning the second aspect, which is to create an interactive environment to elevate the reasonableness of architecture, we see how planners and landscape

architects worked hard on revising the existing exterior walls and enclosures that define the private space and public pedestrian sidewalks. In the special case of Ferguson Lane that will be discussed in Chapter 4, the composition of three buildings with a courtyard in the middle is quite unique among all properties along Wukang Road, which, as a result, attracts many tourists to explore the world inside the alley. More often, tourists encounter private garden villas of various styles owned by or rented out to individuals or institutions, to which they don't have access. Their space of movement is restrained by privately owned properties mainly the pedestrian sidewalks. Experts were aware of the significance of walls in tourists' urban walking experiences and tried to shape the walls not as dull, solid, clear boundaries of private and public spaces, but as windows and lenses with which the tourists can read into the privately owned architecture and have more enjoyable moments of "discovery" when walking in the neighborhood.

One useful source to understand planners' strategies is an article, "A Study on Walls Landscape in Historical Features Protection Block: A Case Study of Wukang Road in Shanghai," written by *Zhang Manqi*, a scholar from Tongji University's Landscape Architecture department. The article first highlights the importance of Wukang Road as home to many former residences of famous people and 37 excellent historical buildings in total. Indeed, right across Huaihai Road from Wukang Mansion is the former residence of Soong Ching-ling [Fig. 3-14] , a very prominent political leader and wife of Sun Yat-sen. On the other side of Wukang Mansion on Wukang Road, there stands the former residence of Zhou Xuan, one of the most well-known singers and actresses in early 20th century

Shanghai. The article then touches on the main focus—the importance of “wall landscape,” which is a mixture of the use of plantations and the design of enclosures of buildings or gardens, at Wukang Road.

Given the limited accessibility to many of the historical buildings or sites (as the buildings usually have a garden), Zhang pushed the idea that walls complicate the relationship between the insiders and outsiders further and discussed the psychology of the urban walking experience. As she phrased, “due to walls’ function of restricting entrance, it makes a prominent feeling of the presence of different ownership of the space and hence alienation. On the one hand, while the walls mark a safe sense of possession for that inside, it does disrupt the communication between private property and public street spaces. On the other hand, for the outside tourists, walking in a space full of walls and facing the guards at entrances will invoke a sense of fear instead of comfort.”⁹⁹ Here, it becomes clear that the experts were aware of an unwanted spatial and hence psych-geographical segregation and alienation, which they tried to modify and improve.

Her later analysis provides an effective and concise outline of the walls’ existing problems and their relationships with their surroundings, followed by three pieces of advice for improvements. She identified three problems 1) some gardens are big, and the walls are dull and lack variation, 2) dissonance regarding walls’ texture and quality because of different property ownership, and 3) a lack of

⁹⁹ Zhang Manqi 张曼琦, “A Study on Walls Landscape in Historical Features Protection Block: A Case Study of Wukang Road in Shanghai,” *Modern Urban Research* no. 8 (2015): 113, <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1009-6000.2015.08.017>.

transparency and malleability due to over-dominance of “hard boundaries” (i.e. solid walls and closed gates or other forms of solid enclosure).

Wukang Road had great potential for fulfilling the cosmopolitan reimagination because of the diversity and great variation of historical architecture there. But with the problems Zhang identified, such potential and value are greatly diminished because of outsiders’ inaccessibility. She also stressed the importance of creating a harmonious relationship between the walls and its surrounding architecture, plantation, and general atmosphere, in particular, to have walls that echoes architectural style, create a comfortable walking space for pedestrians with trees on sidewalks, and add liveliness to the neighborhood by allowing the outsiders to see parts of residents life (e.g., small plants that residents raise in their courtyard or balconies that tourists can view from a distance).

Therefore, to better shape readable architecture and a walkable neighborhood where outside tourists and cast their imagination on Wukang Road, Zhang made three suggestions for improvement—to soften the “hard boundaries” by increasing malleability, transparency, and pairing with the proper plantation, to create “spatial knots” on sidewalks by framing zig-zagging walls, and to recreate historic materials and texture. Some interventions undoubtedly had taken her advice for references.

Apart from rearrangement of walls which allows more transparency that increases visual accessibility for tourists to enter historical sites, there is a concealment of electric poles and wires through either moving underground or naturally getting visually blocked by trees and leaves. Electric poles and bundles of

wires are not only not aesthetically pleasing but also, just like automobiles, are too “contemporary” in tourists’ minds. By clearing up the air space and moving the wires underground, for instance, at the intersection of Wukang Road and Huaihai Road in 2019, tourists can finally fully appreciate a view of Wukang Mansion and streets that matches their imagination of the 1920s, without visual disruption. Although this move was well-received among visitors, I shall point out that even at the time of Wukang Mansion’s completion the sky was not completely clear. In an old photograph of the mansion from the late 1920s, we can clearly see overflying cables for trams. From increasing access and readability of architecture in various styles that speaks for cosmopolitan Shanghai, to the strategy of concealing electric poles and automobiles, it is beyond doubt that the readable architecture and walkable neighborhood are specifically adapting to contemporary tourists’ taste.

In addition to transportation planning and pedestrian sidewalk design, it is not rare or innovative to incorporate landscape management into community planning, since greens and trees not only offer a green screen that naturally blocks outsiders’ view of private properties but also help mitigate climate changes and extreme weather conditions. For instance, in Shanghai, trees on sidewalks help create shades that effectively lower the temperature for pedestrians on a hot summer day, when the temperature can reach 37 degrees Celsius (98 degrees Fahrenheit) sometimes. What is special about landscape management in the Wukang Road area is the very intentional connection with a stereotypical “French Concession style” through careful implementation and branding of a specific type of Plane Trees and the attention to the illustration of seasonality through a policy concerning fallen

leaves. Along Wukang Road, many of those Plane Trees have a plate attached with a QR code for plantation experts to track their growth and update their data. In this case, the implementation of new technology is for preserving those trees that are significant to the community—because of its considered tight connection with France and its contribution to bringing the fall colors to the area.

The Plane Trees in the former French Concession owns a Chinese name of “Faguo Wutong,” which can be literally translated into “French parasol tree” or “French Wutong Tree.” Wutong is called the Chinese parasol tree in English conventionally, which well reflects the problem and misunderstanding with naming and translation. It is hard for anyone to embrace the concept of the “French” Chinese parasol tree, which is analogous to the existence of the French Concession—is it French or Chinese? Moreover, according to an article published in the journal Agricultural Archeology, the Plane Trees, in reality, are *Platanus orientalis* L., which has a secular name of London Plane.¹⁰⁰ In regard to the origin of this misunderstanding, the article referred to a news report on *Shun Po (Shanghai News)* in 1928 and mentioned that the London Plane does not originate from France, nor is it a kind of Wutong. It is because of the high prevalence of the London Plane in the French Concession and its leaves that share a similar shape as Wutong leaves that created such misunderstanding.”¹⁰¹ The name of French Wutong is still widely used today, as we see the name referred to in news articles, online social media,

¹⁰⁰ Chen Jie 陈杰, “Faguo wutong mingshi ji qi chuanru zhongguo Shijian kao 法国梧桐名实及其传入中国时间考 [French Wutong’s Name Origin and timeline of its import],” *Nongye Kaogu* 农业考古 [Agricultural Archeology] 3 (2017), 166.

¹⁰¹ Chen, “French Wutong,” 167.

and day-to-day conversation. It is one of the occasions where because it serves the public's interest (i.e., recreating 1920s Shanghai's French Concession), a pseudonym is being widely used without creating any cognitive dissonance in people's mind. In the end, who would've questioned "French" Wutong in the former "French" Concession?

On the other hand, Wukang Road was also one of the earliest roads that implemented the Fallen Leaves Policy¹⁰² in the late 2000s, in which the fallen leaves in fall would not be swept or cleared immediately, but rather left the leaves on the ground, which forms a fallen-leaf-floor. [Fig. 3-15] The policy was later extended to approximately 40 roads every year to be selected for keeping the fallen leaves, with some changes made to this list every year by Shanghai Landscaping & City Appearance Administrative Bureau. There are two possible motivations behind this policy. The first is a yearning for an appeal to seasonality and the beauty of autumn. Partially related to the first one, the second motivation is to use other places that are deemed the most beautiful as models to follow. In one of the news reports about 2017's list of streets under the Fallen Leaves Policy, the story started with a reference—"Maples trees in Ontario and Quebec, Canada; Yellowstone National Park in the States that assimilates a color palette with great autumn colors; and the great pair of historical buildings and red leaves at Arashiyama in Kyoto Japan...Autumn colors and scenery have already become the name cards for many

¹⁰² The name is not the official name but given by the author. This policy is referred as different names in newspaper coverage although the concept and actions remain the same. For consistency, I refer to this as the "Fallen Leaves Policy" in the following sections.

cities, regions, and nations.”¹⁰³ Plane Trees, which dominate the landscape at Wukang Road, happen to be a type of tree that gives clear and distinct signals of seasons. Considering the historical relevance and Plane Trees’ ability to bring the autumn colors to the area, it is not surprising that Wukang Road was among the first to test the Fallen Leaves Policy.

From the arrangement of prioritizing public transportation to rethinking the exterior walls and carefully curating a sense of seasonality through landscape management, we can see how the landscape and neighborhood community planning contribute to making a walkable city block and allow the readable architecture to be interactive with the tourists, the wanderer, the urban Flaneurs.

This chapter does not intend to cover and analyze at a detailed level of all aspects of the preservation and transformation efforts acted at Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area, not only because of its unnecessity, as many of the actions are similar to preservation programs in the past, but also because of a lack of a holistic master plan document by a single department, design firm, or group of planners. Instead, I choose to streamline significant actions that are quite special at Wukang Mansion—changes that are perceivable by the outsiders either through direct experience (e.g., viewing the building or walking in the neighborhood) or through secondary sources (e.g., media exposure to some key changes that are frequently covered in TV news reports or online social media posts).

¹⁰³ “Shanghai 29 tiao luoye jingguan daolu quanbu “luoye busao” rang zuimei shijie de jiequ gengshihe manbu 上海 29 条落叶景观道路全部“落叶不扫”让最美时节的街区更适合漫步 [29 “Fallen Leaves Scenic” streets in Shanghai, making the city blocks in the prettiest season more comfortable for walking],” Jiefang Daily, last modified November 22, 2017, https://www.shanghai.gov.cn/nw5827/20200905/0001-5827_1269364.html.

Chapter IV

Commodification of Cosmopolitanism & Impact of Tourism: Case of *Ferguson Lane*, COVID-19, & Social Media

Walking along the right side of the two-way four-lane Huaihai Road from east to west now in 2022, we would first encounter a bookstore, *Dayin Bookmall* (大隐书局 *Dayin Shuju*). [Fig. 4-1] In the bookmall, we can not only find books about merchandise, such as paintings and magnets, of Wukang Mansion. What the bookmall is known for, though, is its traditional Chinese tearoom where people can sit down and enjoy tea and serenity while reading books. The tea room resonates with the name of the bookmall—in Chinese, *Dayin* comes from the phrase 大隐于市 (*Dayin yu shi*), which means the real seclusion lifestyle happen in the noisy cities (rather than remote countryside). Outside the bookmall is the busy traffic running on the major east-west avenue in the city, which makes the indoor space feel even more otherworldly and quiet.

Such concept of *Dayin* is tightly connected to an ideal of “serenity in the midst of noise / noisy places” (“闹中取静,” Nao Zhong Qu Jing) that is deeply appreciated by Chinese audience. On a larger scale, Wukang Road serves as the serenity in the noisy Shanghai city center. When tourists walk along Wukang Mansion’s verandah on Huaihai Road side, and turn 270 degrees into Wukang Road once they reach the pointy corner, they soon will find themselves in a kind of urban landscape that is different from the wide, busy Huaihai road.

As tourists walk along Wukang Road and enjoy the serenity, they would encounter an inconspicuous entrance next to Peet’s Cafe at the intersection of

Wukang Road and Tai'an Road—it leads to *Ferguson Lane* (374-378 Wukang Road), a commercial project that is housed in three historic buildings with a courtyard in the middle. [Fig. 4-2 Entrance to *Ferguson Lane*] Stepping away from the quiet Wukang Road into the small alleyway that leads into the courtyard, tourists are suddenly placed in a lively scene with people sitting for outdoor dining at restaurants and cafes or visiting clothes and flower shops. If *Dayin Bookmall* offers an experience of “serenity in the midst of noise,” then *Ferguson Lane* is providing the opposite—experiencing vibrancy and fun amidst a rather quiet space. In addition to the abundance of well-managed urban landscape and absence of cars and electric poles and wires which create a comfortable walking space that was mentioned in Chapter 3, we can see how the business owners strategically incorporate a dynamic change from quiet to busy environment (or vice versa) to make the outside tourists’ experience more playful.

Therefore, by putting tourists under the spotlight and analyzing how real estate developers and business owners are constructing a commercial space where they sell a cosmopolitan lifestyle to the outside tourists, this chapter aims to complement chapter three, where discussion centers around the intentions and actions of the “insiders,” namely the residents and planner. This chapter starts with an analysis of *Ferguson Lane* as a representative case of recent commercial projects on Wukang Road, followed by a discussion on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and emergence of social media on tourism in the area, and ends with a concluding note looking into the future of this program at Wukang Mansion and Wukang Road area. This chapter holds a back and forth interaction between how business owners

and developers shape the commercial projects having outside tourists' need for an otherworldly exotic space that carries a cosmopolitan dream, and how tourists in turn react to and interact with those new commercial projects as a part of the larger historically preserved area.

From the perspective of Investors and Business Owners, the stylistic choice of architecture and types of retail depend on their evaluation on what their intended audience would like. With a growing interest in the “Retro-style” among young consumers, multiple projects that commodifies this fantasized Shanghai modernity and cosmopolitanism completed in recent years, starting with Xintiandi ¹⁰⁴. *Ferguson Lane*¹⁰⁵ is a renovation, gentrification, and commercial project at three buildings, 374, 376, and 378 Wukang Road, and the courtyard spaces that link the buildings together. [Fig. 4-3] It is located at the intersection of Wukang Road and Tai'an Road, approximately five minutes' walk away from Wukang Mansion. The project is invested by **Cornes Properties Limited**, a Hongkong company specializing in “investing, developing, and renovating a wide range of premium properties in both Hong Kong and Shanghai, which include residential, hotel/serviced apartments, retails, industrials, and office typologies.”¹⁰⁶ **ANKEN Group (Shanghai)**, an independent developer specializing in real estate development and management, especially urban renewal projects, provided

¹⁰⁴ Xintiandi is an earlier urban renewal project also in French Concession that transformed an area of vernacular *Shikumen* architecture into a commercial space. More information about the project will be given in the following paragraphs.

¹⁰⁵ Chinese name is 武康庭 *Wukang Ting*, which translates to *Wukang Courtyard*. To distinguish between this commercial real estate project, from Wukang Road's historical name until the 1940s, Route Ferguson, the name of this commercial project, *Ferguson Lane*, is italicized.

¹⁰⁶ “About Us,” Cornes, accessed on March 19, 2022, <http://www.cornes.hk/en/about.php>.

“Design and Construction Supervision as a development consultant” for Cornes.

The two companies collaborated again in 2017 for the project *Yong Ping Lane* on Hengshan Road [Fig. 4-4 永平里] also in French concession, very close to Wukang Road. Interestingly, although both companies listed *Ferguson Lane* in the portfolio on their respective official website, the names of Cornes and ANKEN are not at all mentioned on *Ferguson Lane*’s official website, and Cornes is very briefly mentioned in their WeChat official account page. Instead, on their official website, three definitive paragraphs¹⁰⁷ that introduce the site’s identity that the developers intend to present to its visitors:

- (1) “*Ferguson Lane* is located in the serene former French Concession in Shanghai’s city center, along Wukang roads and close to Hu’nan Road. It is at a distance of 600 meters from Jiaotong University Station of subway line 11. As a new landmark for leisure in Shanghai, *Ferguson Lane* assembles a group of high-quality shops, and it has become one great example of the very few trendy commercial areas that were transformed from historically preserved buildings in the former French Concession. Here, city people’s imagination about ideal European lifestyle is encapsulated, fashion encounters traditions, the European Aura and local *Haipai* Culture is intermingled here.”
- (2) “Under the *Wutong* trees stand several French red-brick houses of different heights. *Ferguson Lane* not only preserves the original taste of Shanghai *Lilong* lifestyle but also incorporates the trendiness of avant-garde art galleries. French restaurants, fashion shops, beauty salons, and cafés here let people slow down their pace and gaze. Restaurants and pubs of all styles bring every visitor a unique atmosphere of *Ferguson Lane*.”
- (3) “The project was renovated in 2005. *Ferguson Lane* not only preserves its sites’ cultural history but also adds new vibrancy. *Ferguson Lane*

¹⁰⁷ “About Us.” *Ferguson Lane* Official Website, accessed on March 19, 2022, <https://www.fergusonlane.com.cn/about>. Originally in Chinese, translated by the author. For the original paragraphs in Chinese.

consists of three buildings in various styles from different eras, which, after transformation, forms a harmonious cluster.”

The three paragraphs, although not in a perfect corresponding relation, reveal three major subjects of Ferguson Lane as a commercial and historical preservation project: firstly, the project situates itself within the larger urban environment of Wukang Road and French Concession and attempts to appeal to general visitors and tourists; secondly, there is an emphasis on the success of preservation, intending to show the connection between the contemporary project and the sites’ history without specifying the history itself; thirdly, the local businesses are carefully curated to show diversity in types of commerce and styles, which concoct a scaled-down cosmopolis in this small courtyard.

Given the definition of “place memory,” if the preservation project at Wukang Mansion intends to (at least to some extent) trigger memories for the “insiders,” then Ferguson Lane is a project targeting the “outsiders,” the tourists who are interested in learning about distant unfamiliar past of the local community. However, as we will see in the preservation of the three buildings, this “shared past” that Ferguson Lane tries to represent and convey is manipulated by the developers and business owners from what the built environment inherits, to align with the general historic narratives of and vibes in the neighborhood. In this way, they can maximize the value of the historic narrative and commodify and sell it to the tourists.

On *Ferguson Lane’s* official WeChat¹⁰⁸ page [Fig. 4-5], a shorter introduction to the project is posted along with the history of Wukang Road: “Near

¹⁰⁸ A Chinese social media platform that is widely used, similar to Facebook.

Taian Rd, Ferguson Lane is located at No. 376 Wukang Rd. Pre-existing from the days of the early 20th Century French Concession, this enchanting and abandoned brick lane courtyard was re-discovered by Cornes 15 years ago and recreated into a small hub of incredibly popular coffee shops, restaurants, art galleries, wine stores, and the like...”¹⁰⁹ In this description, it is apparent that the developers hope to emphasize a connection to early 20th-century French Concession through the pre-existing built environment. However, only 376 appear to be in the original shape out of the three buildings, namely, 374, 376, and 378 Wukang Rd, after careful examination of the pre-existing site’s history. Completed in 1928, 376 Wukang Rd. was the former residence of Quo Tai-chi (郭泰祺) [Fig 4-6], a diplomat and former Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China.¹¹⁰ Although Cornes did not publish any information about preservation, it is very likely that this three-story neoclassical brick residence underwent a common repair without much modification of the original structure.

The cases of 374 and 378, however, are more complicated, as it is very hard to find solid evidence to trace the buildings’ histories back to the early 20th century. 378 Wukang Rd. is believed to be the former residence of Pei Tsu-yee (贝祖诒) [Fig. 4-7], an influential banker in interwar Shanghai and father of I. M. Pei, a famous Chinese American architect), and his wife. However, the building before the renovation looks too contemporary to be a direct descent of the architecture

¹⁰⁹ “Introduction to Ferguson Lane,” WeChat page, last modified on July 17, 2020, https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/2kUSux-2uAqT8bAUSun0_g.

¹¹⁰ “Ferguson Lane,” Shanghai Library Wukang Road Website, accessed March 19, 2022, <http://wkl.library.sh.cn/building-events-page?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fdata.library.sh.cn%2Fentity%2Farchitecture%2Fb4kfg663vvxvczyu.s>

from Pei's time in the early 20th century. It is reasonable to even suspect that the building had been entirely reconstructed and only share the same address as Pei's original residence. Even more absurdly, 374 Wukang Rd. did not exist in the early 20th century, as the site appears to be a lawn in the 1947 Shanghai Street Directory.¹¹¹ [Fig. 4-8] In addition to the choice to privilege the early 20th century, or more precisely, the 1920s to 1930s history of the neighborhood, the selection of shops at *Ferguson Lane* also reflects their intention of shaping this courtyard and three buildings into a tiny cosmopolis with a diverse range of cultural influences. According to the official website, there are three categories of commerce at Ferguson Lane, namely, food and beverage, fashion and design, and art. Quickly skimming through the shops listed, we find a cluster of carefully curated shops with different cultural backgrounds—"Sichuan Citizen" which offers specials from Sichuan, China; "Peet's Coffee" from the Bay Area in San Francisco; a restaurant and a bistro which both offer Italian cuisines; a Japanese restaurant specializing in "yakiniku" (grilled meat); two fashion brands that are founded by Dutch designers; and most importantly, the first "%Arabica" coffee shop in Shanghai, a chain coffee shop brand from Hong Kong and Japan, that is known by almost all youngsters in Shanghai and even across the country. [Fig. 4-9 List of Shops] The intention of arranging diversity within this cluster is less likely to fulfill the needs of foreign tourists from different backgrounds than to satisfy the curiosity and appeal to the novelty of Chinese tourists, who make up the majority of all visitors.

¹¹¹ *Shanghai Street Directory* (Shanghai: The Free Trading Co. LTD, 1947), 378.

Among all shops and restaurants, the collaboration with %Arabica may be deemed the most successful business decision *the Ferguson Lane* management group had made. [Fig. 4-10 % at Wukang Road Shop] The opening of %Arabica's first store in Shanghai at *Ferguson Lane* is central to the process of building up popularity at *Ferguson Lane* in the past five years. The founder's story and philosophy of the brand are in consonance with the project's general objective of generating cosmopolitan vibes. On the "Philosophy" page, the founder Kenneth Shoji started by introducing his parents, who are "Esperanto"¹¹² enthusiasts, and how he spent his childhood traveling with his parents around the world every summer. From buying a coffee farm in Hawaii to starting a flagship in Kyoto, Japan, via his personal journey, he demonstrated how he hopes to "see the world through coffee." In all of their stores, apart from minimalistic yet cozy interior design, customers usually see a decoration of a world map on a base of a coffee bean shape. Customers can also buy coffee beans produced in different parts of the world. Since its debut in Hong Kong and Kyoto, it had accumulated some popularity before opening its first store in Shanghai in 2017 at *Ferguson Lane*. At the store in *Ferguson Lane*, customers would enter a small courtyard hiding in the innermost section of *Ferguson Lane*, where they would encounter a huge wall with green vertical gardening and light of their % logo, curated specifically for customers to take photos and share on social media. If *Ferguson Lane* is an example of how real estate developers are actively selling this ideal of cosmopolitanism and modernity

¹¹² a 'universal language'.

in Shanghai, then %Arabica is a model of how business owners commodify and objectify such ideals on a smaller scale.

Many tourists as well as scholars in urban studies would inevitably compare the projects at *Ferguson Lane* and *Xintiandi* since *Xintiandi* started the paradigm of commercial urban renewal and preservation in China. Given the soaring popularity of *Xintiandi* in the past decade, many real estate investors and developers are looking forward to creating another commercially successful historic preservation project. Sites along Wukang Road appeared to be a feasible site for such a goal. A critical comparison of the two projects' similarities and differences unfolds the evolution of commodification of Shanghai modernity over the past two decades. The commercialization at *Ferguson Lane*, unlike *Xintiandi* which concerns more with profitability and westernization, puts an emphasis on shaping a cosmopolitan environment with a diverse range of shops. Such emphasis may be under the influence of tourists to achieve the goal of constructing cosmopolitanism that appears to be appealing to the tourists.

Located also in French Concession but much eastern and closer to the old Chinatown and the bund, *Xintiandi* is an urban transformation designed by Wood and Zapata in 1998 and completed in 2002. [Fig. 4-11 Xintiandi] At *Xintiandi*, local residents were relocated to compensating housing and given compensation. A small proportion of their old *Shikumen*¹¹³ homes [Fig. 4-12 Shikumen] was kept in their original structure but renovated into shops, restaurants, and pubs, mostly western

¹¹³ A type of vernacular dwelling that combines Chinese and Western elements, emerged in the 1860s and had been prevalent since then.

styles and cuisines, which we call Xintiandi today, while more were transformed into skyscrapers hosting hotels and offices. Since the completion of Xintiandi, the project has been thought of as successful in terms of creating capital, as hundreds of thousands of tourists and local residents spend money shopping and eating, and as progressive in regard to the preservative approach to the architecture in the vernacular style. Xintiandi is one of the earliest projects in China to renovate rather than simply demolish local buildings with a long history and one of the earliest waves of projects that were invested by companies outside mainland China—Shui On Land from Hong Kong, in this case.

One significant difference between the two projects is that, unlike *Xintiandi*, neither *Ferguson Lane* nor Wukang Mansion relocates existing residents. At *Ferguson Lane*, among the three buildings, 374 was an office building of a state-owned company, 378 was a hotel, and 376 was a private mansion, none of them involved the displacement of multiple families. This is partially because of the government's emerging approach to not "drastically demolish and construct"¹¹⁴ Indeed, since *Xintiandi* is a significantly larger project, the stakes of investment and the business strategies may be quite different for the two investment companies. As I will discuss towards the end of this chapter, the coexistence and direct contact with the insiders (i.e. residents) and outsiders (i.e. tourists) at Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area cause new problems with tourists' invasion of privacy and consent that have not been prevalent at *Xintiandi*.

¹¹⁴ Written in Chinese as 大拆大建 *Dachai Dajian*, which is frequently used in official policy documents.

The similarities between the two projects, nevertheless, are more useful in showing the long-term commercialization of Shanghai's modernity and cosmopolitanism. Besides the fact that both projects are invested by real estate developers from Hong Kong, one obvious similarity is the Art Deco designs of their logos—*Xintiandi*'s logo shows the golden outlines of the name [Fig. 4-13], and *Ferguson Lane*'s name and address number are designed in Art Deco font that shows on both the 378 and 376 entrances. [Fig. 4-14]

Despite the differences in scales, the courtyards at both sites share similar features, and visitors' walking experiences at the two sites are similar. By virtue of the pre-existing buildings, both sites manage to set entrances at one end of zigzagging narrow alleyways, leading to a decently sized courtyard in the middle as the point of destination. In the middle courtyards in both cases, there stand some sculptural works—a neoclassical fountain in *Xintiandi* and a group of contemporary sculptures in *Ferguson Lane*, that signal the sites' artistic identity. In addition, there are outdoor dining setups at both sites, in a style that clearly resonates with sidewalk cafes in Paris or outdoor dining spaces in plazas in Italy. It is disputable whether outdoor dining ever was common in China at any point in history, but it had hardly been associated with the desirable "bourgeoisie" lifestyle in China. One of the main concerns Chinese customers have been the dirt from the streets and glances from passersby. Setting outdoor dining in the courtyard may be a compromise and adoption of a western dining practice into the Chinese concept.

The use of spatial compression through a long and narrow channel followed by a spatial release with the central open space is very frequent in both Chinese and

Western practices. In a prominent tale in traditional Chinese literature, *The Tale of the Land of Peach Blossoms*¹¹⁵, a fisherman, after encountering blooming peach trees and passing through a very narrow mountain cave, discovered a dreamland-like society that is isolated from the outside secular world. Such spatial compression and release strategy can also be witnessed in many a distinguished American architect Frank Lloyd Wright's work, for amplifying the psychological experience when entering the open space after the compression. Arguably, the spatial compression and release ameliorate the pleasure and entertaining aspect of the urban walking experience for visitors, as they are constantly “exploring” and “discovering” new things unconsciously. For the outside tourists who merely have any knowledge of the site's history or the collective memory that residents have, such pleasure of discovering increases tourists' curiosity in learning about this site—whatever is presented at the site by the developers and business owners.

With the artsy sculptures and outdoor dining spaces that offer western cuisines, we see an intentional exoticization of the courtyard space and amplification of the cosmopolitanism that *Ferguson Lane* as a whole represents. Instead of the actual site history of the three buildings, the tourists now leave the area with the impression of an exoticized commercial space where they can experience an ideal cosmopolitan lifestyle and be exposed to different cultures. The buildings are eventually transformed into a mere skeleton hosting commodified cosmopolitanism that is shaped by real estate developers and business owners and consumed by outside tourists.

¹¹⁵ 桃花源记 *Taohuayuan Ji*, written by Tao Yuanming in the late Jin dynasty.

At *Ferguson Lane*, developers and business owners shape the historic buildings in a way that is appealing to the outside tourists, by hiding the site's actual history as the former residence of influential figures and recreating a cosmopolitan commercial space for consumption and exoticizing imagination. Unlike the program at Wukang Mansion, commercial projects like *Ferguson Lane* do not have a “finish line,” nor do they have an established definition of “success” or “completion.” The rise and fall of commercial projects in historically preserved buildings relies on the constantly changing profiles and tastes of the outside tourists. It appears that currently amidst the pandemic, Wukang Mansion and projects along Wukang Road are in alignment with outside tourists’ tastes and offered a physical space for tourists to realize their cosmopolitan dream.

Since early 2020, *Ferguson Lane* and other commercial projects along Wukang Road have experienced growth. One factor leading to the growth is that the completion of the preservation program at Wukang Mansion can be deemed an “upgrade” of tourists’ experience with a more comfortable walking space and a clearer image that is closer to their cosmopolitan imagination. The other crucial factor is the travel ban due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the influence of the travel ban, when it is nearly impossible for domestic tourists to travel abroad, there is an increasing demand among them on searching for a “foreign-feeling” exotic destination within the Chinese broader. As a site that was recently preserved and restored, Wukang Mansion and Wukang Road area offers a kind of foreign, historic feeling while satisfying the tourists’ contemporary needs regarding consumption of tangible objects (e.g., coffee, merchandise) and intangible cultural elements (e.g.,

different architectural styles). As a result, in 2021, during the national holiday of the Dragon Boat Festival that ran from June 12th to 14th, there were approximately 424,000 tourists who visited the Wukang Mansion and Wukang Road area.

The measure of Wukang Mansion or any tourist's destination's popularity among the younger generation of tourists is the number of social media posts. According to a report by *Yizai* (第一财经), a financial journal owned by Shanghai Media Group, currently on *Red*, there are more than 80,000 posts related to "Wukang Road." In addition, according to data provided by *Red*, the number of those related posts experienced a rapid growth in 2020. The number of existing posts in May 2020 has increased by 70% in comparison to a year ago in May 2019. And the number in May 2021 has increased by 3.5 times.¹¹⁶ With more and more convenient photo editing tools on smartphones, the social media posts—which consist of photos and text descriptions recording the built environment they visited and personal experiences—provide an insight into how the tourists perceive and consume a place's historical narratives.

At the exact time when I am composing this epilogue in early April 2022, Shanghai is experiencing its highest spike of COVID cases and its first city-wide lockdown. This time, their rather lenient pandemic management policies so far no longer work anymore. What Shanghai used to be proud of—the diversity of people and culture, the cosmopolitan ideal, the huge influx of visitors from across the

¹¹⁶ Xu Bingqing and Xu Shiyu, "Wukang —Anfu lu: xin xiaofei pinpai de xianxia maoxian 武康路—安福路：新消费品牌的线下冒险 [Wukang Road—Anfu Road: New Consumption Brand's Off-Line Gamble]," *YiMagazine*, last modified Janurary 18th, 2022, <https://m.yicai.com/news/101293320.html>.

nation and the world, in turn, became a burden to the city regarding quarantine and COVID management. Although Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area did benefit from the travel ban since it satisfies domestic tourists' eagerness to see exotic things, the future of this site and the long-lasting effect of this preservation program remains unknown. One certainty is that it is nearly impossible for Shanghai to continue its pre-COVID pursuit of a cosmopolitan ideal until the end of the pandemic.

BY FOCUSING ON EACH GROUP of actors (i.e., residents, investors and business owners, and planners), we see the reconciliation and dissonance between their actions from different approaches. Ultimately, however, the three groups that are considered “insiders” were largely folding their perspectives and actions around the outside tourists’ urge to not only reimagine but also to experience and live the life in 1920s Shanghai’s French Concession. The program at the Wukang Mansion and the surrounding area make a meaningful study not only because of its multi-layer complexity with different players playing almost equally important roles but also because it has been used as a pilot study for many new policies, like the streets that are never widened and the Fallen Leaves Policy. To complete the reconstruction and realization of the reimagining, we see an intentional formulation of historical narration, even sometimes at the price of distortion of historical facts. The history of Wukang Mansion and its surrounding area can be

traced back to early 1920s Shanghai, before the emergence of the Art Deco style as a part of the modern aesthetic. But as we see through restoration efforts and shop lineups and marketing, some visual elements from the succeeding time period were re-imposed back onto the earlier built structure to complete a historic narrative of the area.

Although the Wukang Mansion and Wukang Road area had served as pilot studies for the implementation of multiple policies, the underlying questions on historic preservation and restoration are never new. In the early 19th century, French architect Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc wrote in *On Restoration*, “the term Restoration and the thing itself are both modern. To restore a building is not to preserve it, to instate it in a condition of completeness which could never have existed at any given time.”¹¹⁷ For many decades, architects and historic preservation specialists around the world have been exploring their understanding of preservation and restoration and seeking resolutions to the difficult choice of the historical layer(s) to prioritize and privilege.

The program at Wukang Mansion and Wukang Road area, with a mixture of preservation, repair, restoration, and implementation of new elements, might be a new answer to this old question, formed collectively by the residents, planners, business owners, and investors, and influenced by tourists with their contemporary taste and preferences. This thesis is a timely discussion on preservation when we are 20 years into the 21st century. Since the completion of the preservation program

¹¹⁷ Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *On Restoration* (London: Sampson Low, Marston Low, and Searle, 1875), 9.

in 2019, with the ongoing Pandemic (at least at the time when this thesis is written) and the emergence of social media as one of the main tools for cultural and opinion-based communications, the growing tourism industry has imposed a long-term impact on the local community.

With the increasing number of outside visitors in the area who are constantly making noises and taking photos of the mansion, the encounters between the insiders and outsiders are not pleasant as the problems with privacy and consent emerge. In an interview, Cao Yinzhen, a current Wukang Mansion resident who is in her 70s, mentioned an earlier incident where a photo of her in pajamas when she visited a neighbor on the 6th floor was taken by tourists and uploaded onto the internet without consent. Although Cao does not express strong feelings of being troubled, her daughter-in-law explicitly said that it is quite “annoying” to have their home being an internet-famous building.¹¹⁸ In a more extreme case, some tourists trespassed into the building in order to take photos of the interior. One of the guards at the mansion testified that “even though we have the ‘no trespassing’ sign here, I have still experienced the incident when someone broke into the mansion and straight ran upstairs, and I had to chase after them.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ “Wukang dalou: “chaoji wanghong” beihou de renjian yanhuo 武康大楼：“超级网红”背后的人间烟火 [Wukang Mansion: mundanity behind being “super famous on the internet”],” xinhuanet, last modified December 03rd, 2021, http://sh.news.cn/2021-12/03/c_1310349672.htm.

¹¹⁹ “Shougoule! Shanghai jumin lou bianshen “wanghong” jingdian hou, zhenshi yiyan nanjin: nizai zhaopian li xiao, zhuhu duozai wuli “ku” 受够了！上海居民楼变身“网红”景点后，真是一言难尽：你在照片里笑，住户躲在屋里“哭” [Enough! Indescribable situation since some residential mansions became internet-famous landmarks: you are smiling in the photos, residents are crying at home.],” Tencent, last modified June 9th, 2021, <https://new.qq.com/omn/20210609/20210609A0E22J00.html>.

Unlike most of the tourists who may be described as flaneurs or urban wanderers, a group of outside visitors comes to the site for a particular purpose—to take wedding pictures. A journalist wrote in the new report in June 2021 that, even though it was a weekday afternoon, there were at least three couples taking wedding photos next to Wukang Mansion.¹²⁰ I have also encountered couples with teams of professional photographers taking wedding photos along Wukang Road when I visited in spring and summer. It is reasonable to suspect that the completion of the preservation work at Wukang Mansion and the Wukang Road area has made it an increasingly popular wedding photography destination. Western-style white wedding dresses and suits appear more natural in a western-looking space, and the convenient location of Wukang Mansion and Wukang Road makes it an optimal choice, especially for those on a budget. On some occasions, however, they took over the whole sidewalk and blocked other pedestrians' walks.

Out of all the unpleasant encounters at Wukang Road, the most well-known one may be the “Pink-Bow Incident.” At 129 Wukang Road, the Spanish-style residential house, also designed by Laszlo Hudec in 1929, has a balcony facing the street. The balcony received great attention from the huge influx of tourists during the “Gold Week” national holiday from May 1st to May 5th in 2021 because an old grandma-like lady that was living inside put a huge pink bow on the balcony for decoration. [Fig. 4-15] She sometimes waves at tourists when they greet her when she’s on the balcony. However, because of the overwhelming number of tourists and their disrespectful actions of taking photos and yelling at the old lady, disturbed

¹²⁰ Tencent, “Indescribable Situation.”

the insiders' daily life to a great extent. Although not a traditional type of wall, this balcony and many more at other houses along Wukang Road, serve as points of contact and encounters between the insiders and outsiders. The outside tourists, while consuming the cosmopolitan history of the site that is curated by the insiders, are incorporating the insiders as a part of the place memory and are in hope to learn more about their personal life. This is a reminder to the planner that the kind of transparency and malleability they emphasized in sidewalk design creates new problems for the local residents. The future of Wukang Road and Wukang Mansion remains unknown. As of now, this "Pink-Bow Grandma" moved out of the house on Wukang Road, the bow was taken off, and the balcony is completely locked. This incident itself becomes a part of the site's history and is sealed in memory.

History never ends. All the conversations, concealments, and negotiations between the insiders and outsiders never end. The end of this preservation program marks the beginning of a new era for this neighborhood, leading the writing of the next chapter of place memory towards a direction that neither the insiders nor the outsiders have control over.

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Appendix

*Images asterisked are taken or drawn by the author

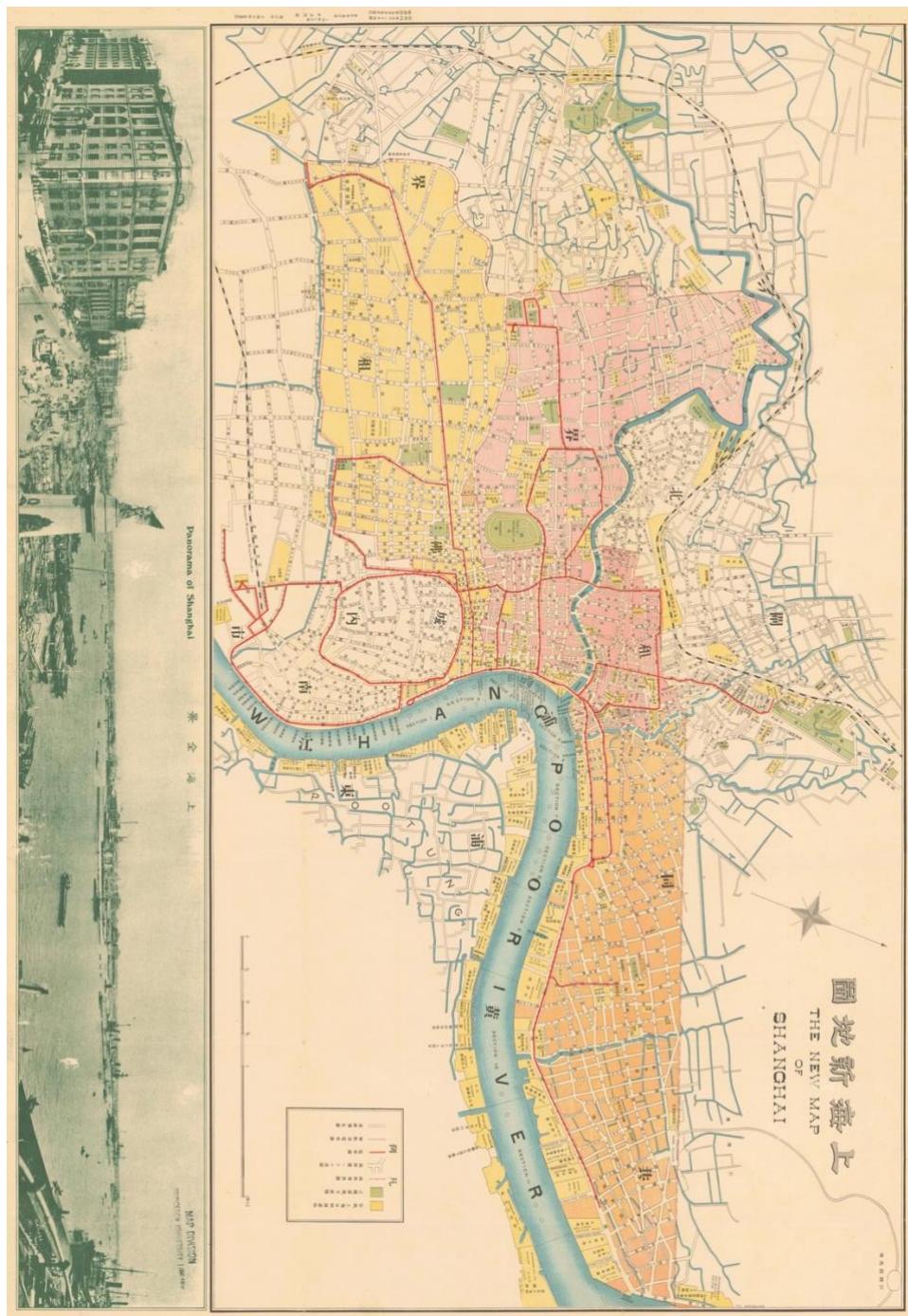


Fig. 1: Fusazō Sugie 杉江 房造, “The New Map of Shanghai (1929),” Shanghai:
Nihondō Bookstore, 1930.



Fig. 2: Normandie Apartments, c. 1924-1939, Institut d'Asie Orientale,
<https://www.virtualshanghai.net/Photos/Images?ID=74>.



Fig. 3*: Wukang Mansion (2020).



Fig. 4: Xie Zhiguang, advertisement, undated, *Visual Culture in Shanghai 1850s-1930s* (Washington DC: New Academia Publishing), 251.

This advertisement print illustrates two Chinese ladies in *qipao* and modern hair style. It represents a generic image of Chinese modern lady in 1930s.

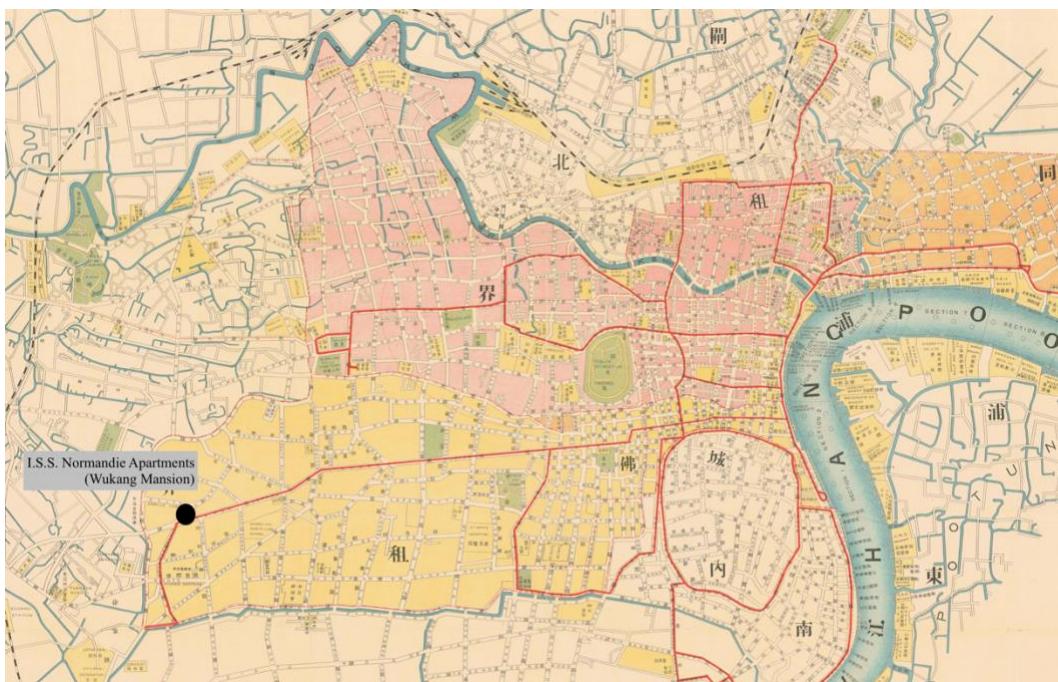


Fig. 5*: Normandie Apartment (Wukang Mansion)'s relative position on "The New Map of Shanghai (1929)."

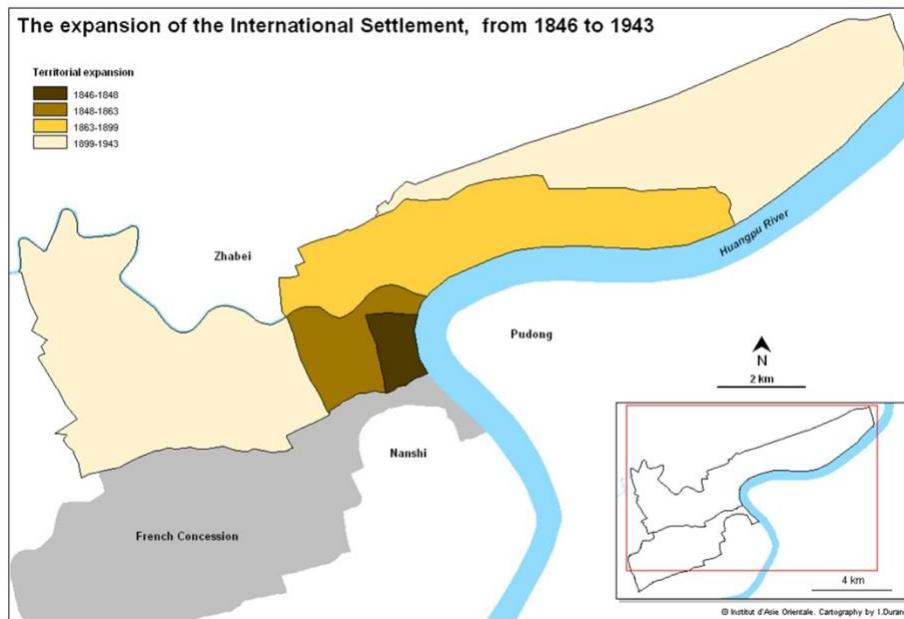


Fig. 6: I. Durand, “The Expansion of the International Settlement, from 1846 to 1943,” Institut d’Asie Orientale, 2008,
<https://www.virtualshanghai.net/Maps/Collection?ID=435>.

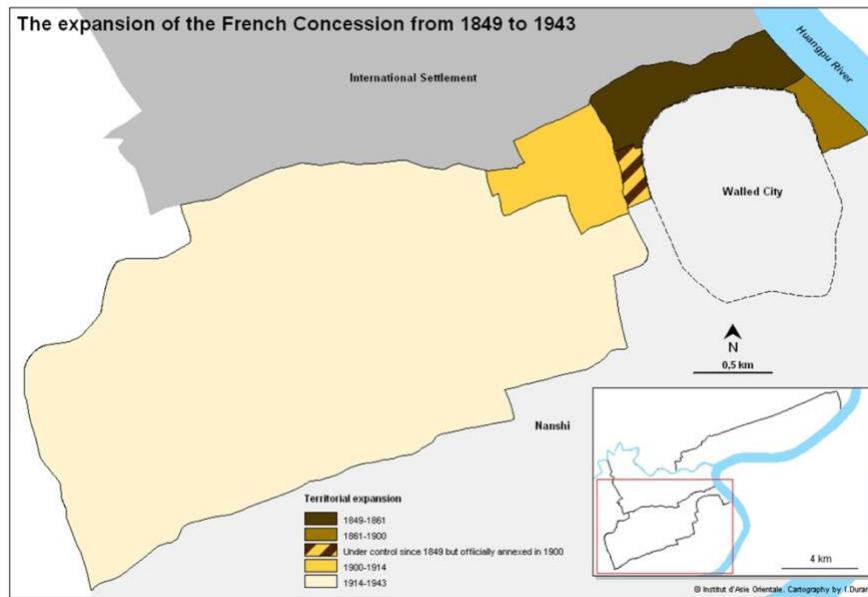


Fig. 7: I. Durand, “The Expansion of the French Concession, from 1849 to 1943,”
Institut d’Asie Orientale, 2008,
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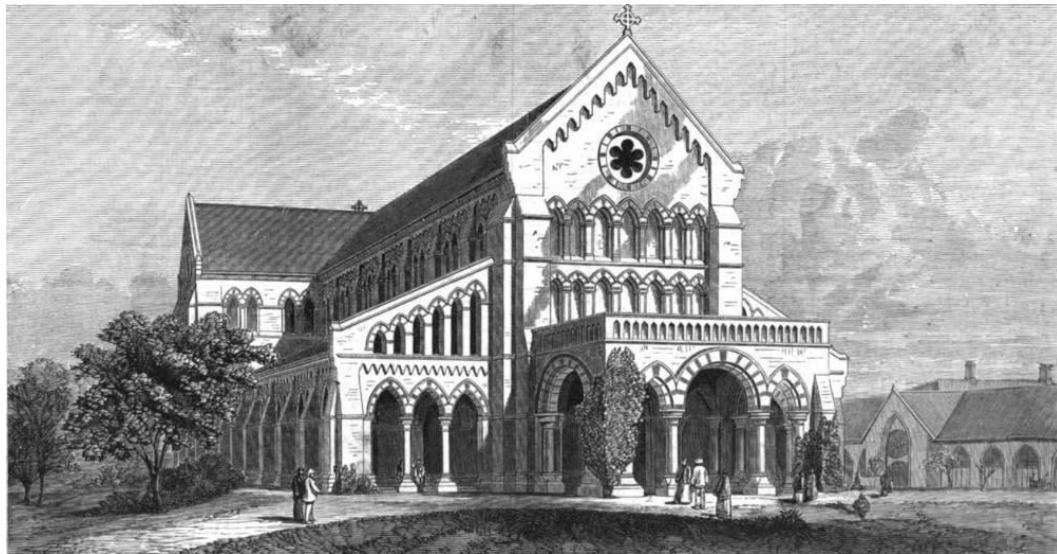


Fig. 8: Trinity Cathedral (1867-1869), London: The Illustrated London News (10 March 1877): 229. Designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott and modified by William Kidner. <https://victorianweb.org/art/architecture/scott/39.html>.



Fig. 1-1: P&T Group, Sassoon House, also known as the Cathay Hotel or the Peace Hotel, 1937, Raymond Vibiem Family Album, accessed through Virtualshanghai, <https://www.virtualshanghai.net/Photos/Images?ID=296>.

Fig. 1-2: P&T Group, Customs House.

Image c. 1929-1937,

<https://www.virtualshanghai.net/Photos/Images?ID=1303>.



Fig. 1-3: Portrait of Hudec, c. 1912-

1957, Hudec Project,

[http://www.hudecproject.com](http://www.hudecproject.com/upload/09portrek/index.htm)

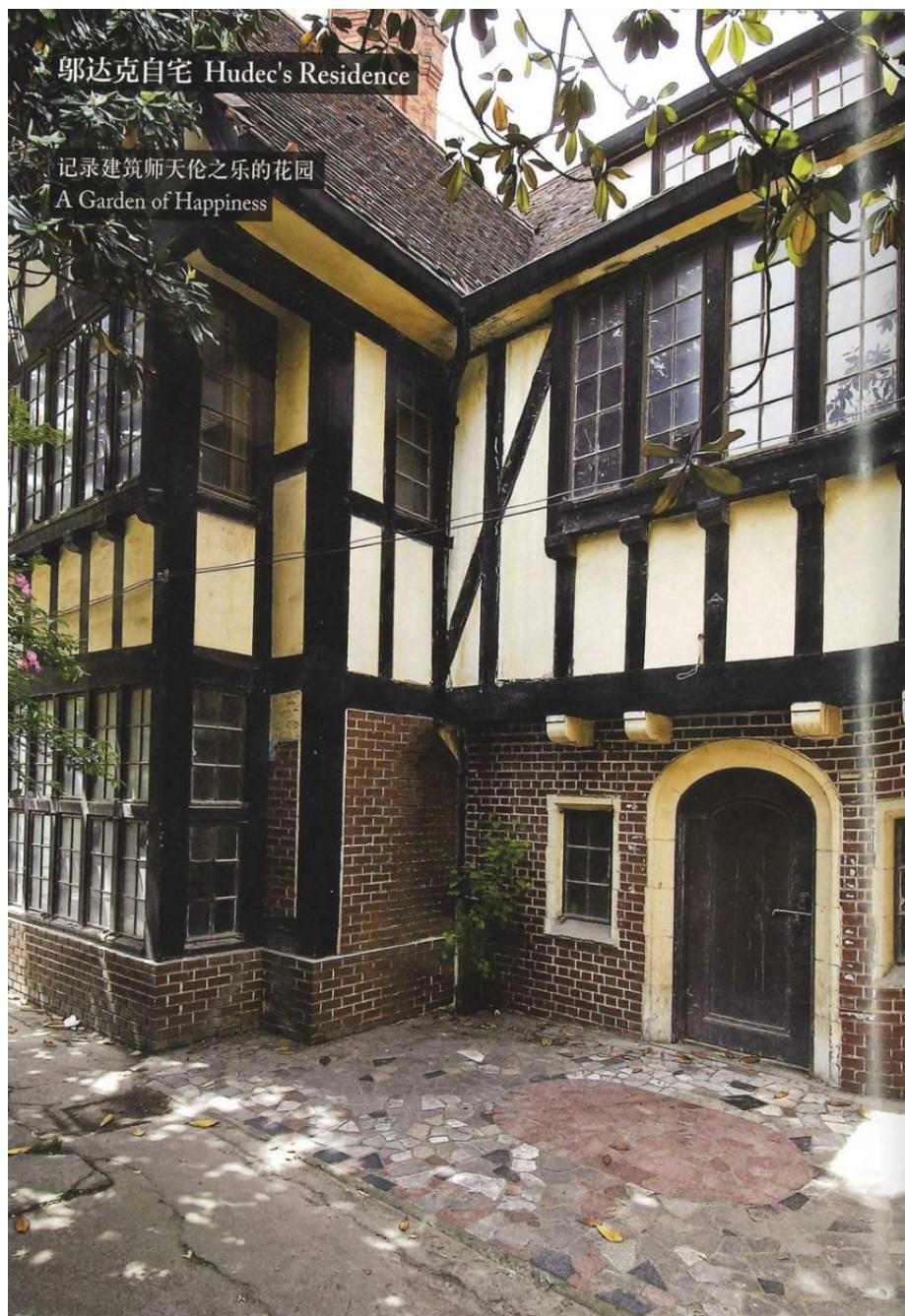
/upload/09portrek/index.htm. He is likely to be at a young age when he took thiss photo.



Fig. 1-4: Park Hotel
(1934), designed by
Laszlo Hudec. Image
c.1934-1939,
<https://www.virtualshanghai.net/Photos/Images?ID=1484>.



Fig. 1-5: Grand Theatre (1933), designed by Laszlo Hudec. Image c.1933-1939,
<https://www.virtualshanghai.net/Photos/Images?ID=23987>.



sFig. 1-6 Hudec's own residence, designed by Hudec. Image from *Shanghai Hudec Architecture* (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2013), 69.



Fig. 1-7: Portrait of Rowland Ashby Curry (1884-1947), c. 1918-1919,
<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Curry-5373>. Could be his passport photo.



Fig. 1-8: Preprinted card with logo of Truscon, or Trussed Concrete Steel Co.,
1903, Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trussed_Concrete_Steel_Company#/media/File:Trussed_Concrete_Steel_Co_logo_1903.jpg.

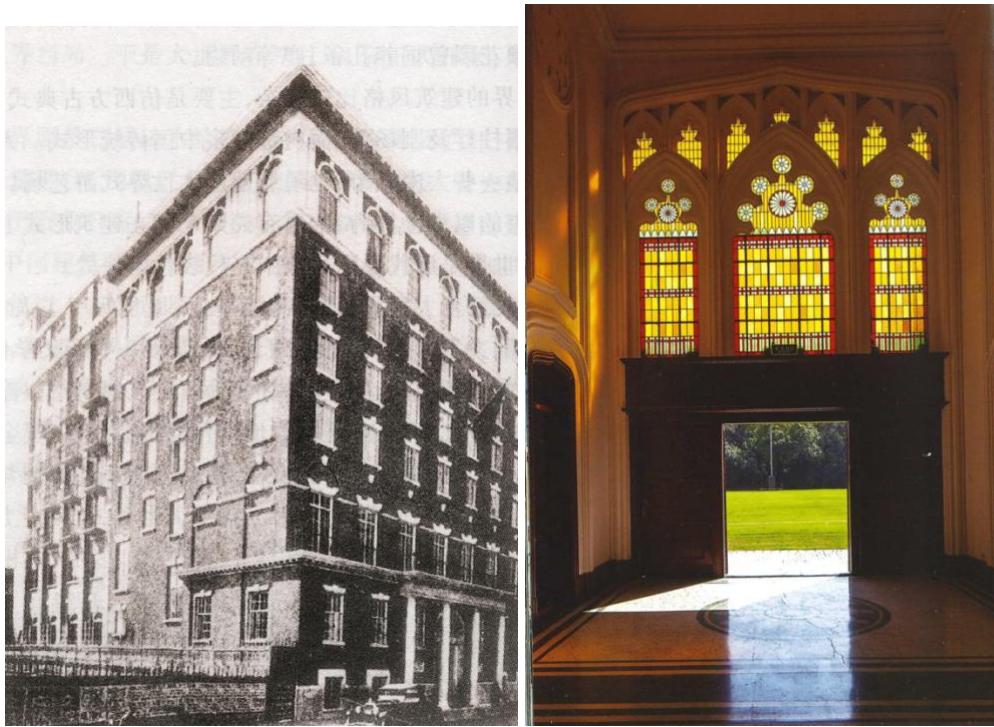


Fig. 1-9 (Left): American Club (1922-1924), designed by Laszlo Hudec. Virtual Shanghai. <https://www.virtualshanghai.net/Data/Buildings?ID=569>.

Fig. 1-11 (Right): McGregor Hall and Social Hall at McTyeire School for Girls (1921-1922), designed by Laszlo Hudec, interior. Image from *Shanghai Hudec Architecture* (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2013), 150.



Fig. 1-10: Ho Tung's Residence (1919-1920), south side, designed by Laszlo Hudec. [Thepaper.cn](https://m.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_3192049), https://m.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_3192049.

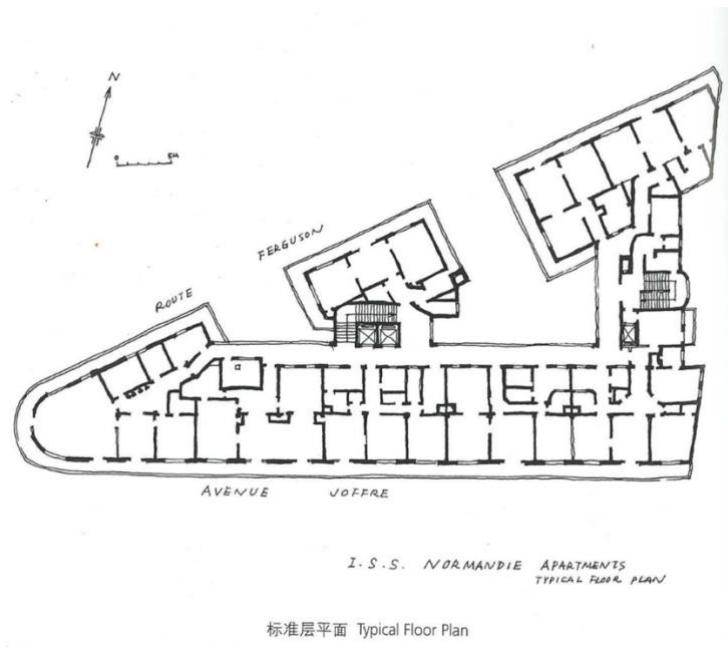


Fig. 1-12: Floorplan for I.S.S. Apartment (Wukang Mansion), simplified and remodeled by Hua Xiaohong. Image from *Shanghai Hudec Architecture* (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2013), 94.



Fig 1-13*s: Wukang Mansion's relative location to Inner Ring Road, which is usually used to make the city center of Shanghai nowadays.

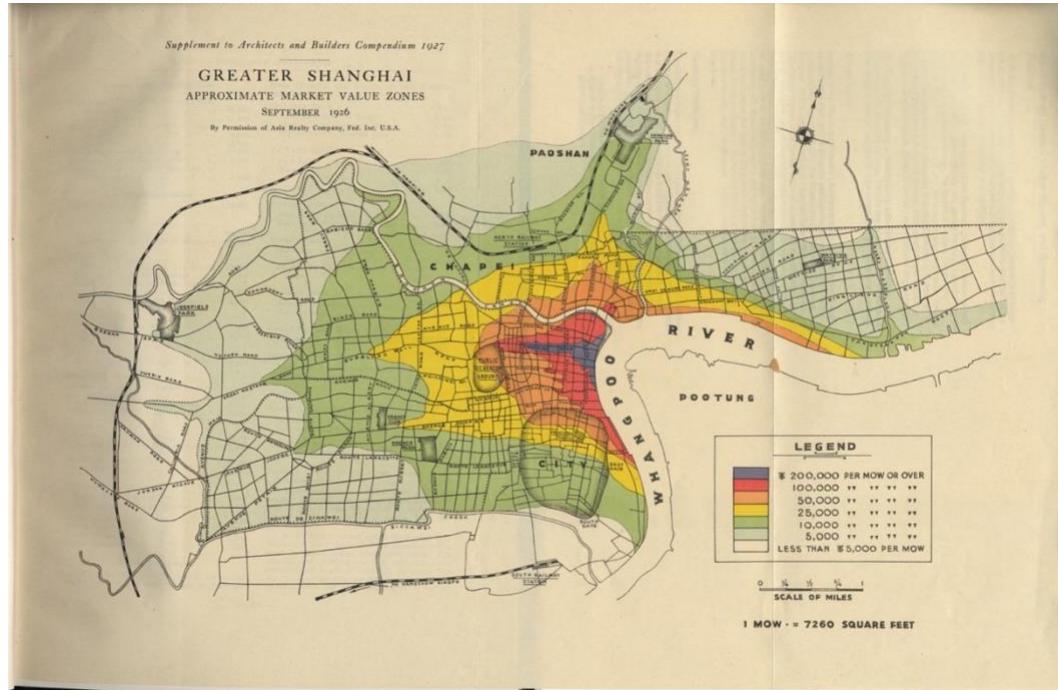


Fig. 1-14: Land Value Maps (1926), *The China Architects and Builders Compendium* (1927). Accessed through Virtualshanghai in April 2022.



Fig. 1-15 Northern China Daily News Building. Accessed April 2022.
<https://www.virtualshanghai.net/Data/Buildings?ID=529>



Fig. 1-16*: Wukang Mansion at the intersection of five roads now. Screenshot from Google Mapss, taken in April 2022.

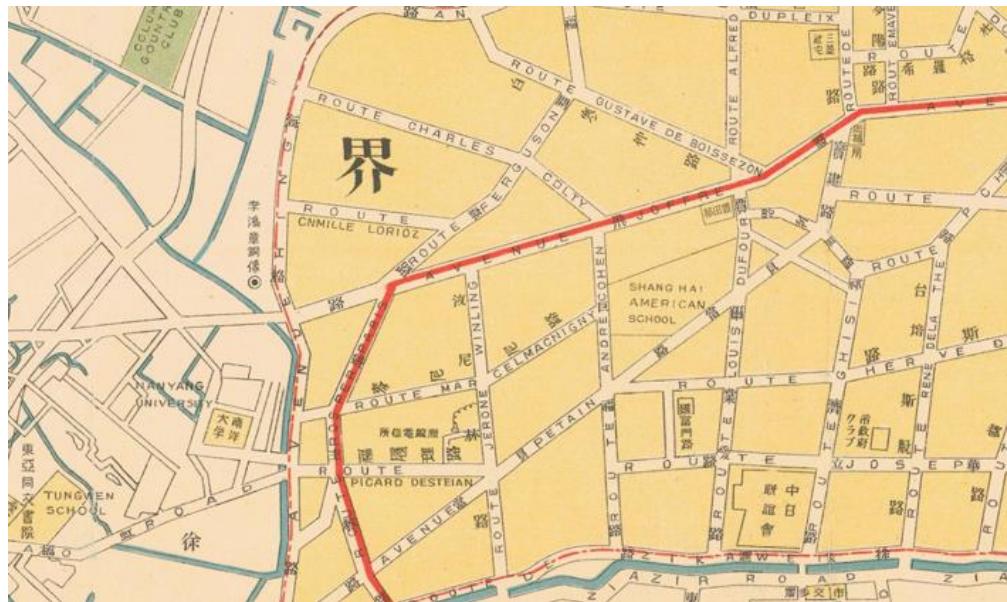


Fig. 1-17*: Zoom in on “the New Map of Shanghai” (1929), showing how Wukang Road and Huaihai Road were in place.

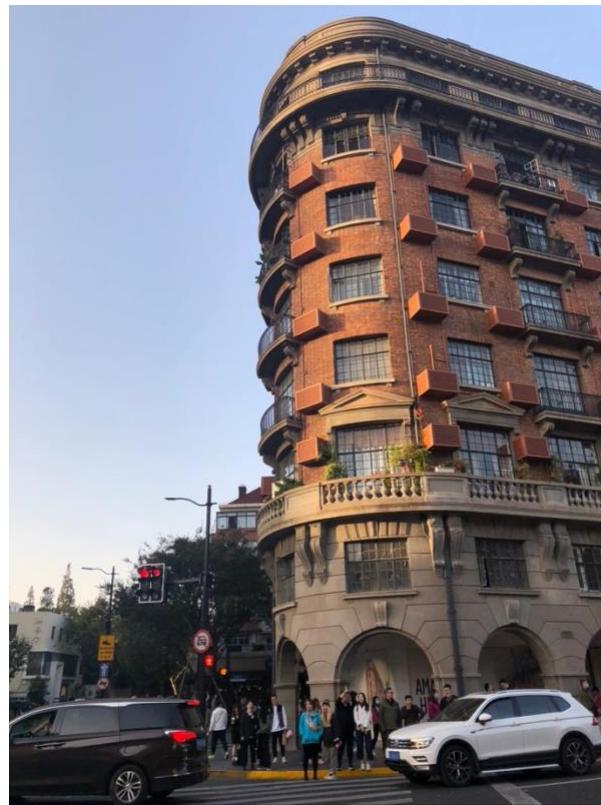


Fig. 1-18*: Close shot of Wukang Mansion's exterior and its three sections. Photo taken in November 2020.

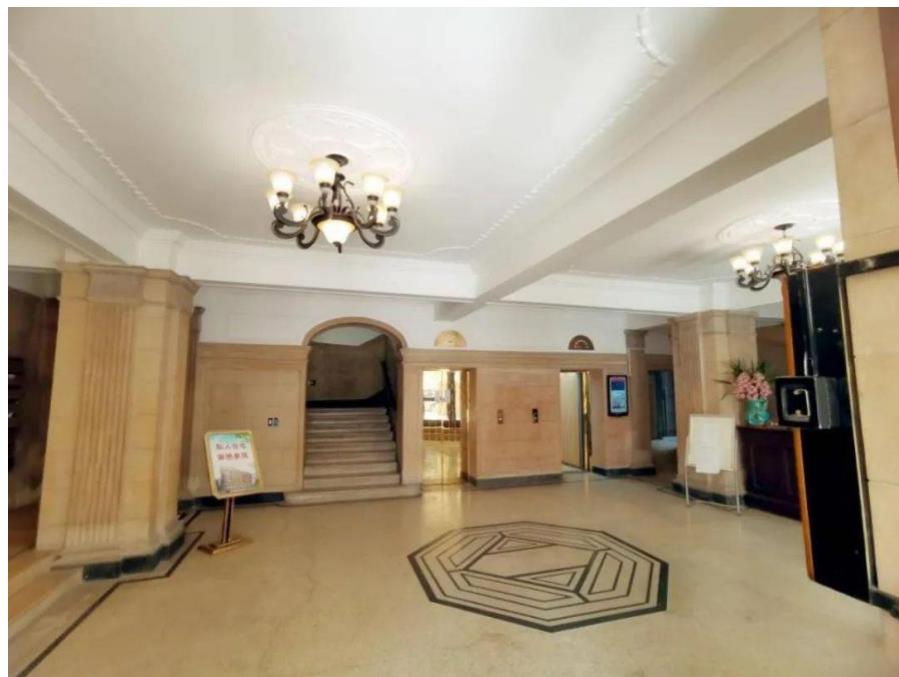


Fig. 1-19: Lobby with terrazzo flooring, and reception desk on the right. Sohu, last modified 2021, https://www.sohu.com/a/454452516_120209938.



Fig. 1-20: Golden Indicator at the main lift, potentially renovated. Sohu, last modified 2021, https://www.sohu.com/a/454452516_120209938.

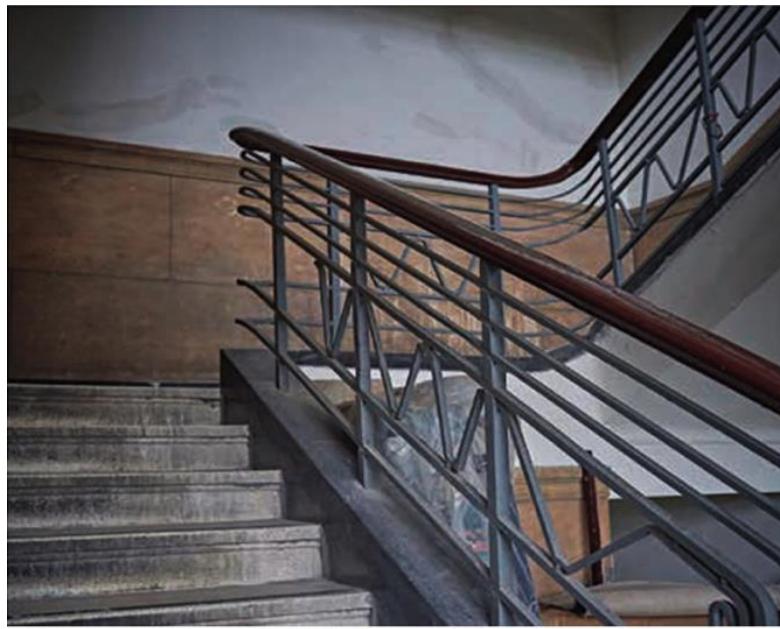


Fig. 1-21: Staircase in Wukang Mansion, 2019. *Living in Wukang Mansion* (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2020), 25.



Fig. 1-22: Hallway, renovated and bottom half painted green, 2022. Sina, accessed April 2022, <https://finance.sina.com.cn/jjxw/2022-03-23/doc-imcwipii0115012.shtml>.



Fig. 2-1*: Screenshot of a post about Wukang Mansion on Chinese social media platform,
Red. Captured on March 14th, 2022.



Fig. 2-2: Ruan Lingyu, 1934, *Art Deco 1910-1939* (Boston: Bulfinch Press/AOL Time Warner Book Group, 2003), 380.



Fig. 2-3: Soong Mei-ling and Chiang Kai-Shek's wedding photo, 1927, Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Soong-Mei-ling>. Note Soong's western style white dress and veils.



Fig. 2-4: Portrait of Oei Hui-Lan, undated. National Portrait Gallery London, accessed April 2022, https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/npg/madame_wellington_koo_nee_hui_lan_oei_by_bassano_ltd_22_apr_21/0.

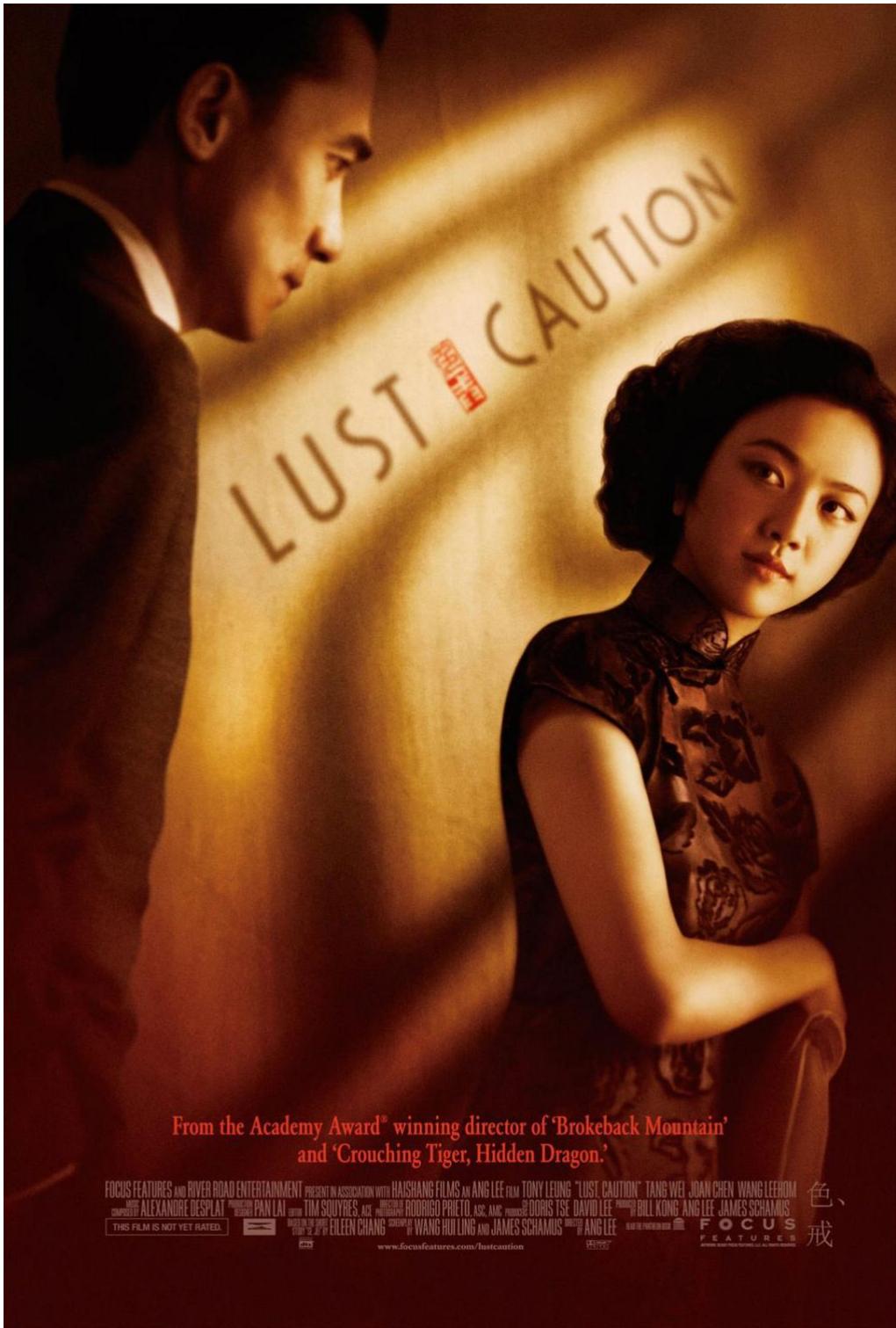


Fig. 2-5: *Lust, Caution* movie poster, with female lead character Wong Chia-chi (acted by Tang Wei) standing on the right in *Qipa*, IMDb, accessed April 2022, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0808357/>.



Fig. 2-6: Daisy Buchanan played in *The Great Gatsby* (2013). Accessed April 2022, <https://slate.com/human-interest/2015/05/the-great-gatsby-why-is-daisy-buchanan-so-reviled.html>.

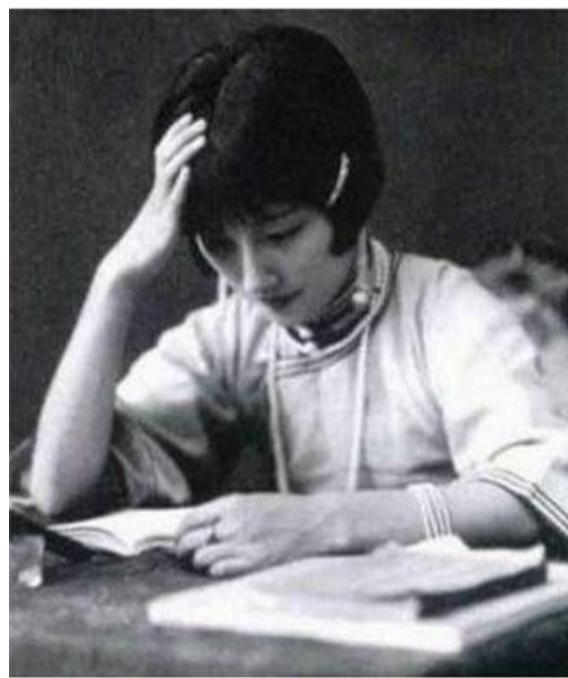


Fig. 2-7: Lu Xiaoman, in *Qipao* and jewelry, undated. Xinmin, accessed April 2022, <https://newsxmwb.xinmin.cn/zhendang/2021/04/03/31932181.html>.



Fig. 2.8: Hang Zhi-ying, Tobacco Advertisement poster, 1930s, *Art Deco 1910-1939* (Boston: Bulfinch Press/AOL Time Warner Book Group, 2003), 381.



Fig. 3-1: New *Violet Barbershop* that opened in 2021. Sina, accessed in April 2022, <https://news.sina.com.cn/o/2021-08-31/doc-iktzqtyt3266779.shtml>.

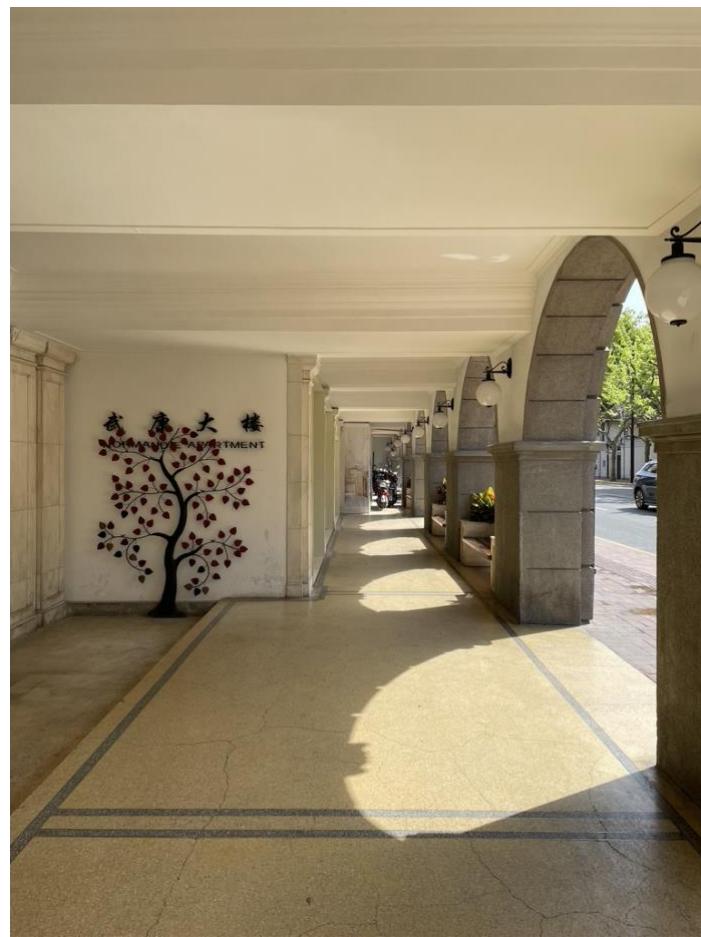


Fig. 3-2*: Wukang Mansion's Verandah. Taken in August 2021.



Fig. 3-3*: “No Trespassing” Sign at the entrance of Wukang Mansion on Huaihai Road side. Taken in August 2021.



Fig. 3-4: Wukang Mansion’s Wukang Road side exterior, Sohu, accessed April 2022, https://www.sohu.com/a/353132609_101437.



Fig. 3-5: Wukang Mansion's Huaihai Road side exterior, Sohu, accessed April 2022, https://www.sohu.com/a/353132609_101437.



Fig. 3-6: Work in progress for restoring the brick surface.



Fig. 3.7: Work in Progress for restoring the stone surface.



更换白玻璃,油灰重做



钢窗新做防锈漆



补齐五金件及白玻璃

Fig. 3.8: Work in Progress for fixing the windows.

Fig. 3-6 to 3-8: “Great Case of Historical Building Preservation and Construction

Documentary: Wukang Mansion (Part II),” Sina, accessed in April 2022.

<https://finance.sina.com.cn/jjxw/2022-03-23/doc-imcwipii0115012.shtml>.

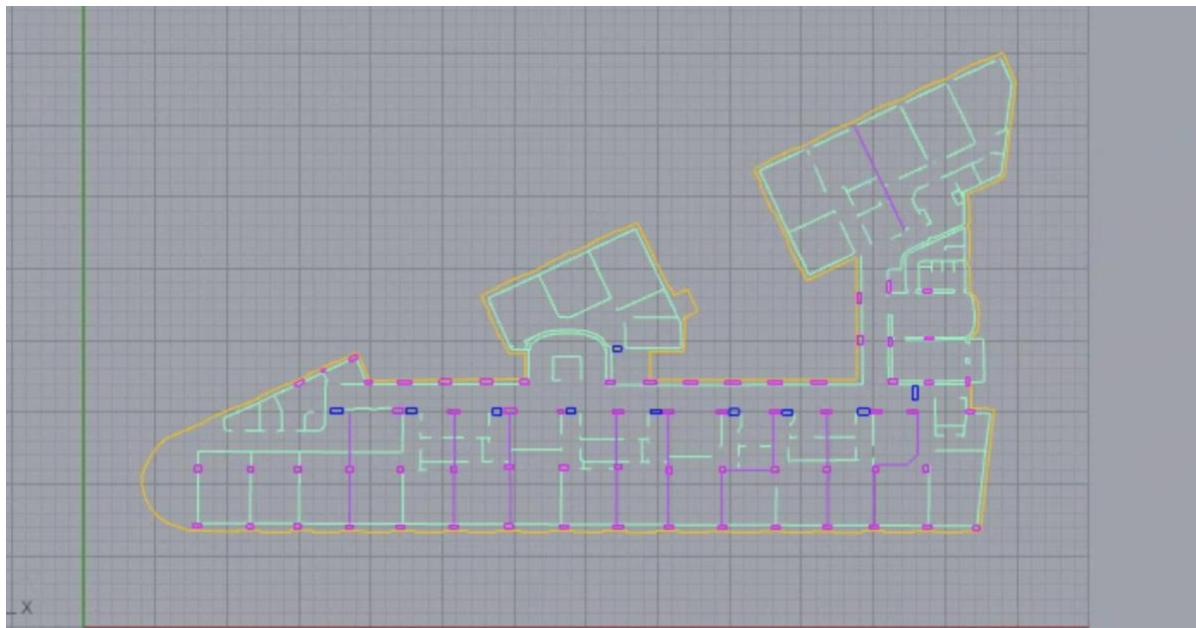


Fig. 3-9*: Wukang Mansion’s Floor Plan remodeled. Pink lines indicate walls separating different units. From the image we can see a variation of unit size and arrangements.



Fig. 3-10*: Edited Google Maps Screenshot indicating the three structures. The location of the New Block is anticipated by the author because of a lack of publicly available graph.

Fig. 3-11: Tang Guilin and family living in Wukang Mansion's Garage, *Living in Wukang Mansion* (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2022), 157, kindle.



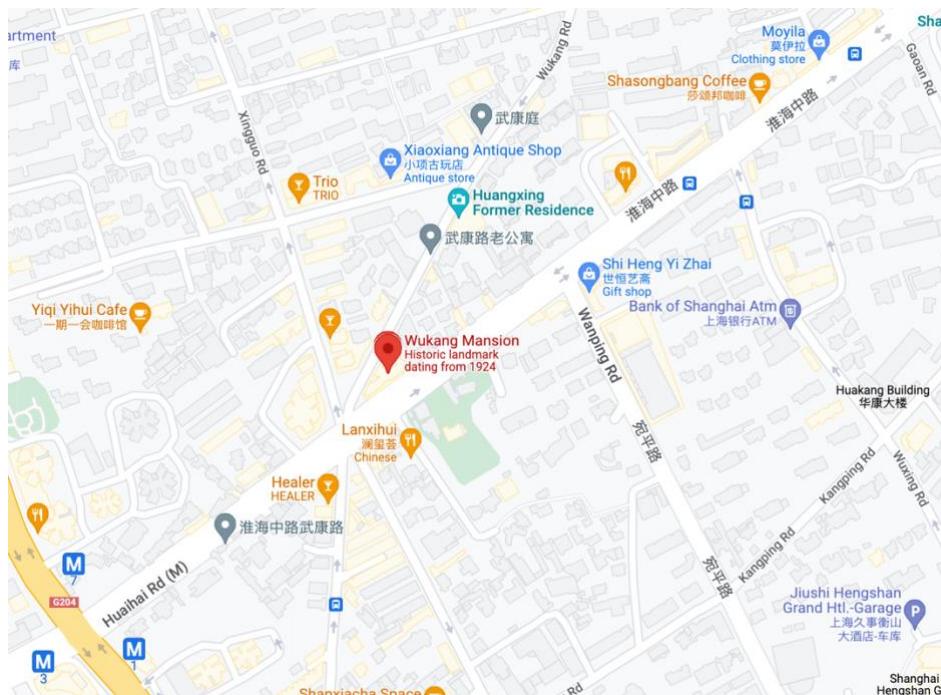


Fig. 3-12*: Wukang Mansion at the intersection of four one-way streets and one two-way four-lane avenues. Screenshot from Google Maps on April 12, 2022.



Fig. 3-13*: Two subway stations near Wukang. Screenshot from Google Maps on April 12, 2022.



Fig. 3-14: Former Residence of Soong Ching-ling. Shanghai Cultural and Tourism Bureau, accessed in April 2022, <https://chs.meet-in-shanghai.net/travel-class/site-detail.php?id=218>.



Fig. 3-15: Fallen leaves on Wukang Road in Fall, *Xinminweekly*, last modified November 2018, <https://m.xinminweekly.com.cn/content/8094.html>.



Fig. 4-1: *Dayin Bookmall*, along the Huaihai Road side of the building, Sohu, accessed in April 2022, https://www.sohu.com/a/464452623_231856.



Fig. 4-2: Entrance at *Ferguson Lane*, Ferguson Lane Official Website, accessed in April 2022, <https://www.fergusonlane.com.cn/>.

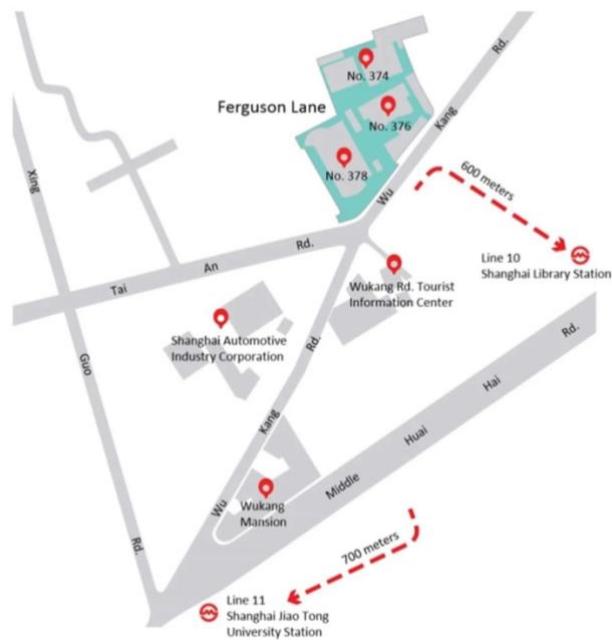


Fig. 4-3: Location Map of *Ferguson Lane*, Official WeChat account, accessed on April 12, 2022.

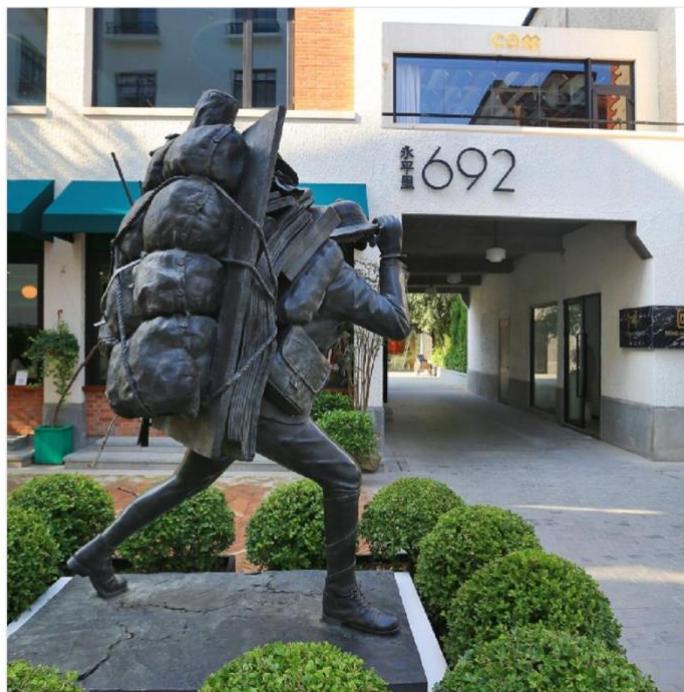


Fig. 4-4: *Yongping Li* 永平里, another historic preservation commercial project managed by Cornes. Accessed April 12, 2022,
<http://www.xufang.cn/product/36.html>.

X 武康庭 fergusonlane > ...

the American preacher. Wukang Rd. is now a "celebrity road", which condenses a centennial history of Shanghai in modern times. There are 14 excellent historic buildings and 37 retained historic buildings along the road. On 11th June 2011, Wukang Rd. was added to the country's list of National Historic and Cultural Streets of China.



武康庭位于武康路376号，近泰安路。此别具魅力的砖巷庭院，源于20世纪初的上海法租界年代，经历多年荒废后，终于在15年前由我们摩世集团重新开发，打造成了一个全新的天地。云集极富著名的咖啡店、餐厅、艺术画廊、红酒店等。目前，武康庭已跃居为上海远近闻名的区域，吸引艺术爱好者、时尚年轻人及共鸣者，成为获得赞誉、引人入胜的都会小秘境。

Near Taian Rd., Ferguson Lane is located at No. 376 Wukang Rd. Pre-existing from the days of the early 20th Century French Concession, this enchanting and abandoned brick lane courtyard was re-discovered by Comes 15 years ago and recreated into a small hub of incredibly popular coffee shops, restaurants, art galleries, wine stores, and the like. Ferguson lane is now an incredibly well-known area in Shanghai, gaining its reputation as small but enchanting urban oases for art lovers, hip, young crowds, and kindled spirits.

Comes Properties一直在香港及上海两地专门从事不同类型的优质物业项目的投资、开发及翻新发展，所涉及的物业项目包括住宅、酒店及服务式公寓、零售、工业及办公楼等。

Comes Properties specializes in investing, developing and renovating a wide range of premium properties in both Hong Kong and Shanghai, which include residential, hotel/serviced apartments, retail, industrial, and office typologies.

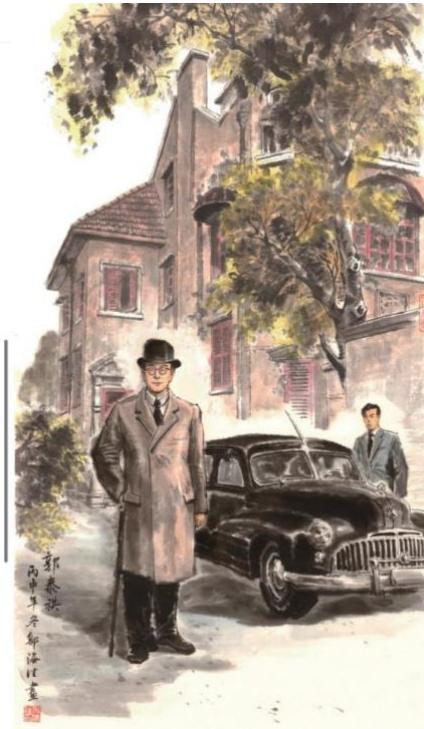


Fig. 4-5* (left): Screenshot of *Ferguson Lane*'s official WeChat page, taken on April 13, 2022.

Fig. 4-6 (right): Wu Haijia 邬海佳, A painting of Quo Tai-Chi in front of his residence at 376 Wukang Road. Thepaper.cn, accessed April 2022, https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_14896804.



Fig. 4-7 : Portrait of Pei Tsu-yee, United Nations digital access project, accessed April 2022, <https://lontad-project.unog.ch/records/item/10020-pei-tsuyee-chine-p289?offset=50>.



Fig. 4-8*: Edited map of *Ferguson Lane* area in *Shanghai Street Directory* (1947), 378. Red square showing how the current 374 Wukang Road building was a lawn in 1947.

Type	Tenant
F&B	PISTACCIO Italian Restaurant 意大利餐厅
Coffee	Peet's Coffee 咖啡店
F&B	TOKI Japanese BBQ & Bar 日式烤肉
F&B	Sichuan Citizen & Bar Basil 龙门阵川菜
Gallery	Leo Gallery 画廊
Gallery	Yellow Korner 摄影画廊
Retail	CHLOE CHEN 服装店
Retail	Rosa Gallica 花店
Retail	Property of 包店
Retail	Pudao Wines 葡萄酒酒店
F&B	Coffee Tree 西餐厅
F&B	A Cote Pizza 披萨店
F&B	Franck Bistro 西餐厅
F&B	Le Petit Bistro 西餐厅
Coffee	%Arabica 咖啡店
Retail	D.I.S 服装店
Gallery	Pine's Art 松荫艺术展厅
SPA	Zeta Villa Spa 美容店



Fig. 4-9: List of Shops at *Ferguson Lane* in both Chinese and English, *Ferguson Lane*'s official WeChat page, accessed on April 13, 2022. Blue labels indicate food and bar and red ones indicate retail, gallery, and other types of shops.



Fig.4-10: %Arabica at *Ferguson Lane* along Wukang Road. %Arabica official website. Accessed April 12, 2022. <https://arabica.coffee/en/location/arabica-shanghai-wukang-lu>.



Fig. 4-11: Xintiandi's middle courtyard, Xintiandi Official Website, Accessed April 12, 2022. <https://www.xintiandi.com/en/project/xintiandi-shanghai/>.



Fig. 4-12*: Shikumen Architecture at Xintiandi. Photo taken in April, 2020.



Fig. 4-13: Xintiandi's Logo in Art Deco style, Xintiandi Official Website, accessed April 12, 2022. <https://www.xintiandi.com/en/about-xintiandi/>.



Fig. 4-14: Entrance of *Ferguson Lane*, note the font of “Ferguson Lane” in the center and “378” on bottom right. Accessed on April 12, 2022,

<https://ankengroup.com/cn/ferguson-lane/>.



Fig. 4-15: “Pink-bow Grandma” waving at crowds. Accessed April 12, 2022.

https://www.sohu.com/a/465068339_612784.