Tracing the Grotesque:

Finding Value in the Urban Villages of Shenzhen

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

The rapid urbanization, which has happened since the 1979 economic reform, has fundamentally changed Shenzhen, China. The city was developed to be an Economic Zone, so millions of original village houses were demolished and replaced by skyscrapers. However, the still remaining village houses are excluded from the urban planning strategy and they are described as the "dirty, unorganized, bad" Urban Villages. The formally constructed Shenzhen metropolis, which was intended to greatly improve life in Shenzhen through modernization, somehow fails to provide full sense of rootedness to the residents, while the residents who live within urban villages are having surprisingly positive connections with these low-end neighborhoods. So, do the informal and unorganized elements in the Urban Village only imply the sense of chaos and disorder? Can they mean something more?

Professionals such as Juan Du and Meng Yan have critiqued that the grotesque Urban Villages are actually called "homes" by millions of immigrants, and the orthodox urban planning strategies for the Shenzhen metropolis do create some negative effects. On the other side, figures such as Jane Jacobs and Jan Gehl state that public spaces are the most noticeable organ which flow throughout a community and these can fundamentally affect individuals' lives. Thus, this project aims to capture, record, and archive the public spaces within the Urban Village, the goal being to re-assess the spatial experience and try to define the positive attributes. The thesis photographically documents the public spaces in the Urban Village and compares them to the modern commercial housing community in the metropolis region. Furthermore, the thesis includes study diagrams on public spaces' dimensions and dynamics, and on sociological knowledge that are used to compare and critique these contrasting neighborhoods. This project focuses on researching how different public spaces, in which most of the public activities happen, assist to form different social life. Thus, the following documentation and discussion will exclude the impact from private interior residential space.

This thesis project aims to promote inclusion and support the maintenance of the Urban Village type. It also aims to discuss how the design of public space contributes to the wellbeing of residents; how access to public space allows for social inclusion. Lastly the thesis will purpose strategies based on lessons learned from successful aspects of the social life in the Urban Village that could be used towards positive modifications of the commercial housing type.

"dirty, unorganized and bad" are directly translated from the Mandarian term "Zang, Luan, Cha", they are the terms that almost everyone uses to describe Urban Villages.

The term "grotesque" in literature usually refer to a piece of work or art work is shaped strangely or not in a traditional way. I use this term to highlight my argument that the strangely shaped Urban Villages are still pieces of work and have their own value.[5]

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Dedication

To my family who migrate to the city of Shenzhen from thousands miles away to pursue their dream.

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Chapter 01

Experimental fields

The city of Shenzhen, which is located around the southern Pearl River Delta District of China, was before the 1980s mostly known for its fishing and agricultural business[1]. The Cultural Revolution, which happened between 1966 and 1976 and concentrated on building a society with the concept of proletarianization, caused severe damage to the development of China[2]. In this case, the "Great Escape to Hongkong" phenomenon that related to hundreds of thousands of illegal emigrations, had occurred around the district. There were 565,000 cases recorded[3]. In response to this economic and political catastrophe, president Deng Xiaoping claimed that the alleviation of poverty was the key to slow down the illegal emigrations and recover economic remediation. Thus, the "Economic Reform and Open-Up" was launched and executed around 1979[4]. The economic reform policy, which was described as "Emancipate the Mind, Seek Truth from Facts, Unite and Look Forward"[5], set multiple regions as "prototypes" or "Experimental Fields" to develop in unique methods by learning the more advancing technologies and management methods from other countries. In this case, Shenzhen, coupled with some other cities around Pearl River Delta region, became the "chosen one".

Shenzhen speed

Within the past 30 years the Economic Reform completely transformed the "Shenzhen fishing village" to the "Shenzhen metropolis". This type of metropolis in China is also known as "The Special Economic Zone (SEZ)". The development of the SEZ has undergone several different stages. At the first stage around 1980, the whole city was designed as an "industrial-oriented" district[6]. Nevertheless, the developments of other business, for example, commercial and residential, were relatively insufficient. However, these defects were rapidly fixed a few years later. The 1986 development strategy planned to transform the whole city to a comprehensive city by concentrating on the development of economic, educational and leisure businesses. In that period, 22 new public parks and 10 new tourism spots were built and were connected by 140 kilometers of new constructed highways[7].

Later on, between 1989 to 2010, the city was successfully developed as an international city which was mature in foreign trading process. During the time, multiple international cooperation enterprises were founded[8]. In order

1 Juan, Du, *The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 9-11.

2 "新中国峥嵘岁月｜1966年："文化大革命"十年内乱的开始 The Great Time of New China | 1966 "Cultural Revolution", the Start of a 10-years chaos", *Xinhua Web*, Last modified September 27, 2019, https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1645823585432164718&wfr=spider&for=pc.

3 Juan, Du, *The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 59-60.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid, 60-61.

6 Luxin, Huang, Yongqing, Xie, China Academic of Urban Planning & Design, China, "The Plan-led Urban Form: A Case Study of Shenzhen", *48th ISOCARP Congress* (2012), 2.

7 Ibid, 3-4.

8 Ibid.

to build assistance to the construction of basic infrastructure such as dams, paving roads and factories, army forces were even reorganized into construction crews with 490,000 workers, and this was a huge leap forward because there were less than 700 construction workers before 1979[9]. Around 2010, almost every region in the city of Shenzhen was intensively constructed. Moreover, several municipal centers, which consisted of advancing economic and technological enterprises, were founded[10]. Overall, the development of Shenzhen was considered by China as a triumph in regards to the development of the economy. According to the manifesto"Time is Money, Efficiency is Life", which was stated during the 1984 National Day Parade[11], Shenzhen's development is considered as one of the most rapid cases during the last century and the "Shenzhen speed" is usually described as "one floor should be constructed in three days"[12].

Population boom

Rapid urbanization requires tremendous amount of labor forces, and in this case, the central government had an ambitious plan for increasing population during the Economic Reform. The most noticeable execution was the change of flexibility in receiving Shenzhen's "Hukou" book. "Hukou" was used by residents to access health-care, residential and educational services in their assigned district[13]. Individuals who do not live in the same region as what is shown on their "Hukou" book may not have the convenience in accessing these basic services. In this case the local government in Shenzhen released policies that made it easy for most individuals to receive a Shenzhen Hukou. During that time, the manifesto, which can be translated as "If you come, you are immediately become part of the family of Shenzhen[14]", was made to encourage migration. On the other side, the huge amount of job opportunities, which were simultaneously created by the rapid urbanization, were attractive to most people who lived outside Shenzhen. Therefore, the relatively more accessible service system, plus friendly propaganda and job opportunities, resulted in the population boom. According to the statistics record, there were 314,000 residents in 1979[15], and the population growth rate reached to about 110.4 percent for continuously 8 years since the launch of economic reform policy. Between 1987 and 1992 the growth

9 Juan, Du, *The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 169-172.

10 Huang, Luxin, Xie, Yongqing, China Academic of Urban Planning & Design, China, "The Plan-led Urban Form: A Case Study of Shenzhen", *48th ISOCARP Congress* (2012), 7.

11 Juan, Du, *The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 78-80.

12 Ibid, 29-32.

13 Juan, Du, *The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 33-35.

14 Shenzhen Museum of Contemporary Art and Urban Planning, 2nd floor, Shiminzhongxin North, Children Palace South, Shenzhen, China 518000, accessed March 05, 2021. Shenzhen, China.

15 "深圳市历年（1979-2011）人口统计 Annual Record (1979-2011) of the Shenzhen Population", *Baidu Document*, Last modified June 17, 2014. https://wenku.baidu.com/view/4e76d54fc281e53a5802ff7f.html.

Fig 1.1.1 Shenzhen before 1979.

Fig 1.1.2 Shenzhen 2021, Tue, April 13, 9:27pm.

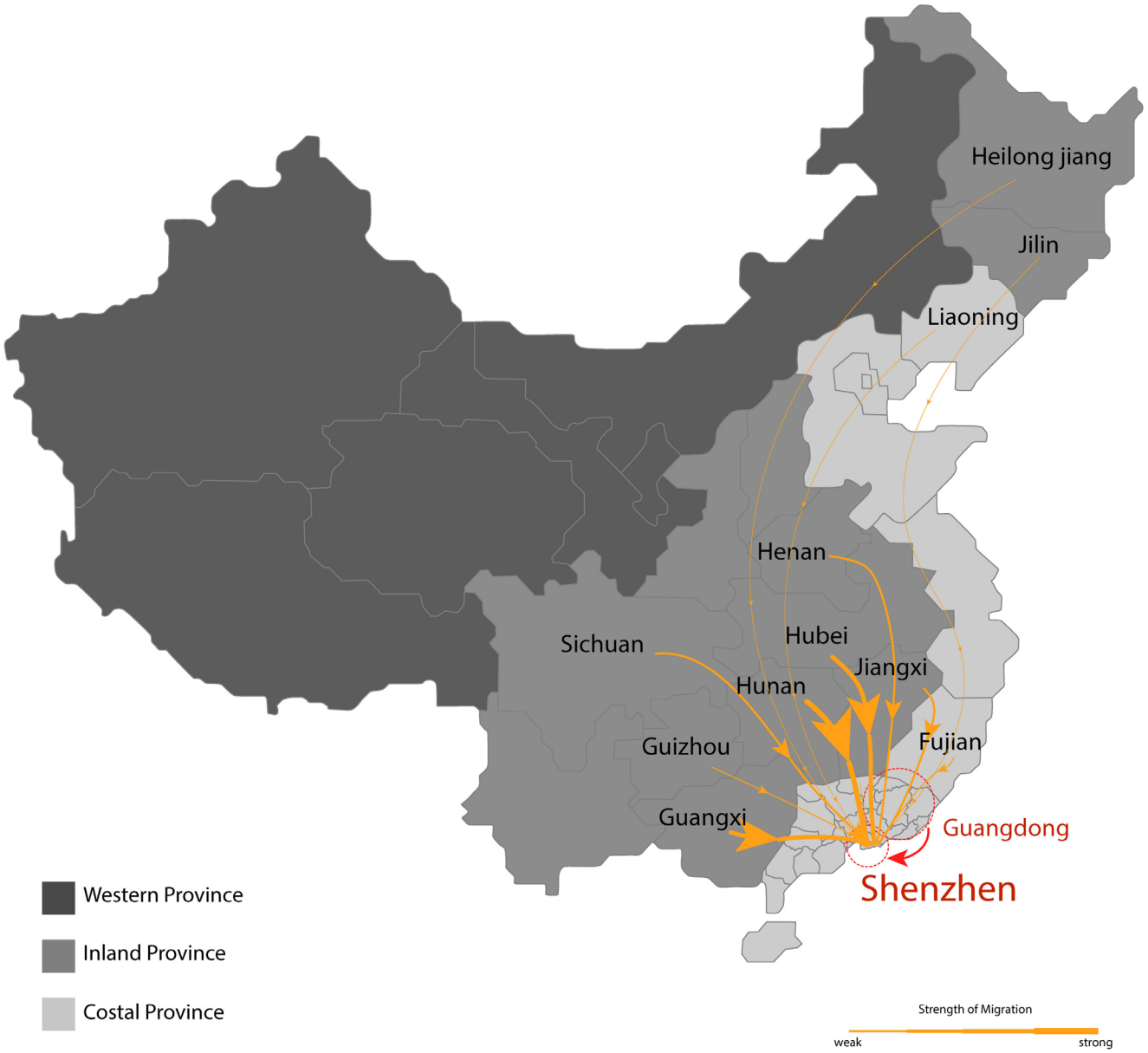


Fig.1.3.1
The location of Shenzhen on the map of China. Most immigrants are originally from Guangdong province, and other immigrants are originally from Hunan, Hubei and Guangxi province. The number of immigrants who are originally from Liaoning, Jinlin and Heilongjiang province is assumed based on author's family history and the relevant social network.

rate was decreased but still reached to 25 percent[16]. In 2001, the population in Shenzhen city was 4,687,600 and in 2003, the number has boosted to 5,574,100. In 2021, the population has reached 17,560,100[17]. Among these new immigrants, most of them were originally from nearby Guangdong province, and the rest of them came from the mid-districts of China such as Huanan, Jiangxi and Guangxi province[18].

Capitalistic and indifferent city

The urbanization of Shenzhen is overly considered as a triumph by the government of China. This process significantly alleviated poverty and promoted the economic development of the whole Pearl River Delta District. Notwithstanding, many issues, which could be possibly related to the core concept of the foundation of the new urban master plan, were simultaneously formed during this irregularly rapid development process. As mentioned before, the urbanization of Shenzhen can be entitled as "Emancipate the Mind and Look Forward[19]". The development of economic was now set in a more private scale[20], and this highly defined Shenzhen's overall urban vibe. This relatively avant-garde master plan received severely controversial critique from different figures. For instance, Shenzhen was described as a "newly formed special economic zones as sites of capitalism, rampant corruption, smuggling, money laundering" by the 1982 "The Origin of Old China's Colonial Concession" report. The masterplan was also critiqued as contrary to the concept of socialism and communism[21]. Although these harsh comments might seem as over-exaggeration, this capitalistic masterplan has shaped the whole city to a "capitalistic metropolis" in which most aspects of the city are strongly connected with capital.

Similar to the promotion of the growth of more private economic plus privately-owned businesses, several fundamental living facilities, such as residential housing, were encouraged to be commercialized or even privatized in order to enhance the market development (this will be discussed in Chapter 02), in this case, the cost for living were rapidly boosted. As a result, countless individuals, who migrate to Shenzhen seeking for job opportunities, cannot afford to stay for a long period. As mentioned before, the "Hukou" book refers to a self-rootness in an assigned region in China, however, over 63 percent residents in Shenzhen do not possess the local Hukou book or have no plan for applying the Shenzhen

16 Guanghui, Yang, "从统计角度看深圳人口的发展变迁 Take a Look at Shenzhen's Development based on Statistics", *SEZ's Economic* (2005): 16-17.

17 "常住人口1756万人！《深圳第七次全国人口普查公报》发布 Local Resident 17.56 million! Published by <The 7th Report of Total Population Data Collection in Shenzhen>", *Beijing Daily News*, Last modified May 17, 2021, https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1699967340991144599&wfr=spider&for=pc.

18 "深圳人口图鉴：86%的人在打拼，平均33岁，外省人中湖南占比最多 The Demographic of Shenzhen: 86% of the people are working, the average age is 33, lots of immigrants are from Hunan province", *Twenty-first century economic report*, Last modified August 28, 2020, https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1676254081291020868&wfr=spider&for=pc.

19 Juan, Du, *The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 60-61.

20 Juan, Du, *The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 194-196.

21 Ibid, 73.

Fig 1.4.1 Urban Village overlook.

Hukou because they cannot afford the long-term living[22]. In this case, these "non-Hukou residents", or "vagrants" as described, usually cannot enjoy the elevated services in education, medical and accommodation, and this severely increases the sense of "unrootness" or discrimination. Thus, although Shenzhen is a metropolis with one of the best living qualities, the city is frequently descried as "the rich city with absolutely no human touch". The sense of no human touch, which focus mostly on "I" and is mostly opposite with the traditional Chinese norm that is filled with hospitality among "us", is dramatically described in the work <Heaven to the Left, Shenzhen to the Right> written by the well-known author Murong Xuecun[23].

Human touch is a cliche in Chinese language, refers to the original "Ren Qing Wei", which can be translated to the taste (sense) of human emotion.

Something left behind

Even though by this time the majority of Shenzhen has been transformed, there remain areas that as yet have not been redeveloped. Thousands of original fishing villages, which have not been reconstructed yet, are considered as the parasite inside Shenzhen, and they have been called "Urban Villages"[24]. These neighborhoods receive no respect from the rest of the city and they are mostly described as "dirty, chaos and bad" because of their appearance. Nevertheless, the success of Shenzhen was built based on the idea of "flexible and inclusive". Even though the overall forms of these remaining Urban Villages do not follow the overall development concept of the whole new city, this thesis maintains that these communities deserve to be fully respected and preserved. Information about the Urban Village communities will be provided in the following chapters that aim to explore the positive attributes inside these weirdly shaped neighborhoods, and argue about how they can co-exist with such a standardized and modernized metropolis, and how their successful community aspects can be used to inform the design of commercial housings.

22 "深圳人口图鉴：86%的人在打拼，平均33岁，外省人中湖南占比最多 The Demographic of Shenzhen: 86% of the people are working, the average age is 33, lots of immigrants are from Hunan province", *Twenty-first century economic report*, Last modified August 28, 2020, https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1676254081291020868&wfr=spider&for=pc.

23 Juan, Du, *The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 314-315.

24 Ibid, 22-24.

Fig 1.4.2, Urban Village overlook.

Chapter 02

Elegant versus grotesque

Housing commercialization policy

As a Special Economic Zone in which international businesses and marketing development are playing significant parts, the city of Shenzhen has the ambition to expand its global reputation by modernizing most aspects of the city[25]. Residential communities, as one of the most significant programs within city regions, are meant to be designed and developed with multiple concepts which mostly focus on the aesthetically motivated appearance of the neighborhood. The overall goal for the development of residential communities is to be as attractive as possible, especially for the public spaces which are the most noticeable vein running throughout the community. This high-end appearance will be highly likely to boost the market values of the neighborhoods. In this case, most residential neighborhoods inside the city are called commercial housing and they have been popular since 1979. In fact, the relevant Shenzhen development policy was named as "Commercialized Housing". The policy had the ambition to make housing as a commercial product in order to stimulate the real estate market. This policy was one of the most remarkable proposals during the Economic Reform event and it was initially issued in 1978 by president Deng.

The original goal for "housing commercialization" was to promote real estate development and enhance the growth of housing markets[26]. Prior to 1978, residents' houses were mostly arranged by the government. Also, there was absolutely no profit for the government and the buying and selling of the land property between citizens is definitely forbidden[27]. Therefore, in this case, the government had huge pressures in producing these non-profit public housing programs. Nevertheless, under the "Commercialized Housing" policy, which highly encouraged the buying and selling process among individuals who have legal resident status, real estate market had grown in an incredible rapid rate[28].

During the 1990s, 2000 new real estate companies, which were put in charge of producing and selling housing apartments, were founded every month and this is the data only for the city of Beijing[29]. This resulted in the creation of a new housing production style with the characteristics described as high speed, high quantity and high quality. In this case, commercialized residential communities had become the most popular items in regards to housing rental. By 1998, housing commercialization policy had spread to 19 different provinces including those in Pearl Delta Region such as Guangdong and Hainan[30]. From 2000 to 2008, several housing

25 Juan, Du, *The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 197-199.

26 "改变中国房地产历史的60年 60 years that changed the real estate history of China", *Souhu*, Last modified September 27, 2018, https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1612734508283791498&wfr=spider&for=pc.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 "致敬40年|住房商品化制度启动 房地产市场初步形成 Memory the 40 years in which the housing commercialized policy was initiated and the market of China's real estate has started", *Souhu*, Last modified January 05, 2019, https://www.sohu.com/a/286919978_175523.

30 Ibid.

policies, which are highly related to tax and compensations, were assigned, and these policies highly encourage the trend of housing commercialized[31]. Similarly, multiple laws, which further encourage the purchasing and selling of housing, were released around the year of 2016[32].

This commercial housing is also called "properties for sale" or "Lou Pan" in the Chinese language. "Lou Pan" also refers to the concept of clustering multiple apartment buildings together as a unit with better control on selling. Thus, most of the commercial housing, as we can see today in China, are mostly arranged in groups of 2-4 buildings and they are usually separated from other programs in the same region by fences or walls. Commercial housing communities play a significant role in the city of Shenzhen because the real estate market is a primary source of economic development. The commercialized housing units now account for more than 40% of the total housing units in Shenzhen[33]. Moreover, according to the information provided by the archived data in Shenzhen Museum of Contemporary Art and Urban Planning, commercial housing will continue to be developed in a more rapid rate and by 2035, there will be 1.7 million commercial housing communities in this city[34].

The fences and walls create a more restricted level of access that makes these districts impenetrable in contrast with the open edge of the Urban Village as will be discussed further in Chapter 04.

Standardized public sidewalk

In addition to the residential community, the other standardized vein, which flows throughout the whole city, is the public sidewalk system. As one of the most noticeable elements of infrastructure running everywhere throughout the city, public sidewalks are used by the city to illustrate and represent the sense of elaboration and high standards by being designed and constructed in extremely formalized and organized forms. According to <The Guide of Road Design in Shenzhen>, written and published by Shenzhen Housing Construction Bureau and Shenzhen Traffic Construction Bureau, the overall design strategies for the public sidewalk in Shenzhen are borrowed from sophisticated technologies and experiences that are widely used in Shanghai and Hongkong[35]. These concepts are classified to several perspectives which can be identified as: people oriented, low carbon emission, public traffic first and highly sustainable[36]. In order to achieve these goals, several criteria for sidewalk design have been developed. For example, landscape decoration, standardized dimension, refinement design and the co-existing space for both people and public transportation, are set up and emphasized. Thus, most public sidewalks, particularly for those locations around residential and commercial districts, are designed to be quite uniform in appearance, with specific

31 "改变中国房地产历史的60年 60 years that changed the real estate history of China", *Souhu*, Last modified September 27, 2018, https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1612734508283791498&wfr=spider&for=pc.

32 Ibid.

33 Shenzhen Museum of Contemporary Art and Urban Planning, 2nd floor, Shiminzhongxin North, Children Palace South, Shenzhen, China 518000, accessed March 05, 2021. Shenzhen, China.

34 Ibid.

35 "深圳市工程建设指引 The guide of the structural engineering in Shenzhen: 深圳道路设计指引 *The Guide of Road Design in Shenzhen*", The Bureau of Residential Housing and Construction and The Bureau of Public Transportation, n.p. (2019): 2.

36 Ibid.

Fig.2.1.1
Fri, March 12, 2021, 2:21pm
Commerical Housing in Baihua Region, typical commercial housing communities cluster in Shenzhen, view from apartment in Nantian Garden Apartment 01.

requirements of vegetation decoration region, tactile paving, bike paths and bike stops[37].

Afforestation and digital surveillance

As an "Experiment Field" and a "Trail Blazer" for the Economic Reform Policy, Shenzhen City was one of the spots in which several avant-garde masterplan strategies were purposed and executed during 1980s. One of the most remarkable proposals was the "afforestation policy". The afforestation, which is characterized by extensive areas of formal planting, is one of the focuses for the Economic Reform policy, in addition to post 1988 the housing commercialization[38]. This is believed to have led Shenzhen City to be honorably mentioned as "The Best Residential City" by the United Nations in 1992, and as the "Garden City" in 2000.[39]

Afforestation in this case means the concept of using well-crafted plants as decoration elements to make the whole community greener.

The original motivation for this extensive vegetation planting focused on enhancing the importance of the natural environment and encouraging the idea of sustainable development. The quality of green spaces has had a significant impact on the market values of commercial housing communities, to the extent that several commercial housing producers may concentrate on crafting the landscape even before they finish the construction of the apartment buildings[40]. According to the "Requirement of Masterplan design in Shenzhen City" document which was reviewed and published by the Chinese State Council, the afforestation rate for commercial housing communities should be higher than 45 percent of the development site area[41].

In response to meet these criteria, some of the producers even remove ground floor program in order to fulfill the space with well-crafted vegetation clusters[42]. Furthermore, the concept of afforestation has focused on the inclusion of multiple types of vegetation, for instance, the integration among arbor, shrub and grass, in order to enhance the sense of elegance. In this case, the management and protection of these "artificial landscapes" are the most vital factors according to the landscape management department, therefore, the green spaces are treated as the "in-danger district" which required specific protection[43]. As a result, this vegetation, which was originally planned to encourage the connection between human and nature, have been fundamentally isolated from most types of human activities in order to avoid any possible damages which can potentially create negative influence on the artistic effect.

37 "深圳市工程建设指引 The guide of the structural engineering in Shenzhen: 深圳道路设计指引 *The Guide of Road Design in Shenzhen*", The Bureau of Residential Housing and Construction and The Bureau of Public Transportation, n.p. (2019): 2.

38 Weihua, Zhu, Dehua, Chen, "家园 花园 乐园-浅谈深圳市住宅小区园林绿化 Home, Garden, Playground, A Discussion of the Afforestation of the Residential Communities in Shenzhen", *CHINESE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE*, 17(4) (2021): 60.

39 Ibid.

40 Weihua, Zhu, Dehua, Chen, "家园 花园 乐园-浅谈深圳市住宅小区园林绿化 Home, Garden, Playground, A Discussion of the Afforestation of the Residential Communities in Shenzhen", *CHINESE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE*, 17(4) (2021): 60.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid, 61.

In addition to the relatively avant-garde afforestation policy, Shenzhen has another ambition to become one of the most advanced smart cities in mainland China[44]. Because of the foundation of the Huaqiang Electronic Market around 1990s, Shenzhen City has been named as the Silicon Valley in China and during 2015, Shenzhen became the first city which has reached the "mid-level" for becoming a digital society. Moreover, according to the "Opinions of Shenzhen Municipal People's Government on accelerating the construction of smart city and digital government", Shenzhen is designed to become the reference of a "Digital China" by the end of 2025.

In this case, the manifestos such as "Service looking for people, instead of people looking for service" and "One click on keyboard to know everything", have been widely spread[45]. In response to this ambition, a digital observation service has been widely set up since 2015 and based on the statistic records, there are more than 2,0000,000 data was shared in the local authorized data management center[46]. Moreover, during the COVID outbreak, digital observation systems were enhanced for the purpose of tracking and safety control[47]. As a result, surveillance systems in public spaces and public sidewalks, are being frequently installed. Even though this will make good commitments for public safety control, it may significantly influence the sense of freedom in public behavior and related social activities[48]. We will see that these surveillance systems are more prevalent in the commercial housing communities and less common in the Urban Villages as relates to the perceived need to protect the occupants and property.

Rootedness under the standardized concept

As described, the afforestation fundamentally pushes the commercial housing communities to become the perfectly shaped products. This strategy is helpful with the consideration of economic development. However, these perfectly shaped products may not be helpful in building human connections. One significant fact about the city of Shenzhen is that most residents here, no matter if they are permanent or temporary residents, are mostly migrated from other provinces within China[49]. In this case, it will be a significant question on if the individuals can root themselves within such a new and elegant urban environment. The answer for this can be again answered by the frequent description that the urban environment in Shenzhen severely lack human emotion. Moreover, based on the social research, the prevalence of negative wellbeing in

44 "从"人找服务"变为"服务找人",新型智慧城市的深圳模式 From People Look for Service, to Service Look for People, The New Smart City in the Shenzhen Mode", *Duchuang*, Last modified March 10, 2021, https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1693816923664129300&wfr=spider&for=pc.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Chris, Chambers, "NSA and GCHQ: the flawed psychology of government mass surveillance", The Guardian, Last modified August 26, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/science/head-quarters/2013/aug/26/nsa-gchq-psychology-government-mass-surveillance.

49 "深圳人口图鉴：86%的人在打拼，平均33岁，外省人中湖南占比最多 The Demographic of Shenzhen: 86% of the people are working, the average age is 33, lots of immigrants are from Hunan province", *Twenty-first century economic report*, Last modified August 28, 2020, https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1676254081291020868&wfr=spider&for=pc.

Shenzhen is highest within China[50]. These negative wellbeing mostly include depression, anxiety and loneliness[51], and the sense of rootedness may have something to do with this phenomenon. According to the theory described by Mindy Thompson Fullilove in her work <Root Shock>, the sense of root shock is usually happened during large scale urban renewal project in which most parts of the neighborhood have been demolished, and people may experience extremely difficult time in adapting with the new environment[52]. Even though the sense of root shock maybe too strong to describe immigrants' wellbeing, its very likely that individuals may seek the familiar residential environments which somehow follow and mimic their personal culture backgrounds. In this case, the over-standardized Shenzhen city, however, provides nothing related.

Back to the commercial housing communities, as the neighborhoods that fundamentally reflect Shenzhen's standardized and modernized spirit and play significant roles in individuals' daily lives, the spatial quality of these neighborhoods should somehow be blamed for depleting the sense of rootedness. It is obvious that as the elegantly shaped commercialized products, commercial housing communities are expensive. This has great potential in causing negative wellbeing because of the high rental pressure. Nevertheless, despite the housing pressure, loneliness is another term that can precisely describe the living style in Shenzhen[53]. This perimeter may have the strongest effect on the insufficient rootedness. The cause of loneliness may have strong connection with the lack of in person interactions. As mentioned above, Shenzhen is frequently described as the giant metropolis with no human touch. Therefore, the spaces within commercial housing communities, previously described as "too elegant to be engaged" because of the need to maintain the quality of appearance, including afforestation, may prevent social engagement, and it can deplete the sense of human touch.

The grotesque neighborhood

"Urban Villages", which stand on the opposite side if compared with high-end commercial housing communities, are unique and notorious neighborhoods within Shenzhen City. Different from the commercial housing developments which were highly promoted during the rapid urbanization period of Shenzhen, Urban Villages are established areas which were left behind from the city development strategy

50 Searle, Kendall, Grant Blashki, Ritsuko Kakuma, Hui Yang, Yuanlin Zhao and Harry Minas, "Current needs for the improved management of depressive disorder in community healthcare centres, Shenzhen, China: a view from primary care medical leaders", *International Journal of Mental Health System* 13, 47 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-019-0300-0.

51 B. L. Zhong, T. B. Liu, S. S. M. Chan, D. Jin, C. Y. Hu, J. Dai, and H. F. K. Chiu. "Common Mental Health Problems in Rural-to-Urban Migrant Workers in Shenzhen, China: Prevalence and Risk Factors", *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences* 27, no. 3 (2018): 256–65. doi:10.1017/S2045796016001141.

52 Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, And What We Can Do About It*, (New York: New Village Press, 2016), 27-34.

53 Zhong, B., Liu, T., Chan, S., Jin, D., Hu, C., Dai, J., & Chiu, H. (2018). "Common mental health problems in rural-to-urban migrant workers in Shenzhen, China: Prevalence and risk factors." *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences*, 27(3), 256-265. doi:10.1017/S2045796016001141.

during this process. They are basically the rural villages which existed before the urbanization and are still owned by these original villagers. Therefore, at the beginning, Urban Villages were usually constructed and maintained by these local villagers instead of the centralized government or authorized architectural teams.

Rapid urbanization has created tremendous amount of job opportunities, which caused a high immigration rate. By the late-2010s, new immigrants were counted nearly 70% of the total population in Shenzhen[54]. Urban Villages in Shenzhen provided the housing opportunity for large number of these immigrants by providing them with the low rental prices. In this case, the Urban Villages were constructed and expanded rapidly in order to match the immigration rate. The form of a typical Urban Village can be described as multiple 5 to 7 storey residential buildings that are arranged in extremely chaotic and intense patterns. The street widths can be extremely narrow and, in some cases, there are no sidewalks at all. The total number of Urban Villages that existed within the city was close to couple hundreds prior to the onset of demolition to promote the idea of the metropolis of Shenzhen. However, the developments and expansions of the Urban Villages to satisfy the housing of immigrants were too fast resulting that these works were soon to be treated as illegal operations. The government started to take the land ownership from the villagers in 2000 and issued a new construction policy in 2002 in order to reduce these illegal constructions[55]. However, with villagers' perspective, they still illegally "owned" the land property and the expansion of the community is the proper way to keep the land property[56]. In this case, the number of illegal housings was twice as much as that in 1990s. In order to solve this issue, the <Decision of the CPC Shenzhen Municipal Committee and Municipal Government on Resolutely Investigating and Punishing Illegal Buildings and Illegal Land Use> policy was issued around that year[57]. As a result, a large number of Urban Villages were forced to be eliminated.

Besides the forced elimination operations, some Urban Villages were fundamentally renovated. The most remarkable instance of Urban Village renovation was the transformation of Caiwu Wei village, which was planned and operated around the year of 2006[58]. This village's renovation was issued by the Kingkey company. The goal was to standardize the design form of the whole village towards a better outlook to fit with the overall urban image of the surrounding district, and to encourage the settlement of the state-owned banks and attract

54 "深圳人口图鉴：86%的人在打拼，平均33岁，外省人中湖南占比最多 The Demographic of Shenzhen: 86% of the people are working, the average age is 33, lots of immigrants are from Hunan province", *Twenty-first century economic report*, Last modified August 28, 2020, https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1676254081291020868&wfr=spider&for=pc.

55 Long, Shao, "深圳城中村的形成 The Formation of Urban Villages in Shenzhen", *Zhihu*, Last modified April 16, 2020, https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/132336570.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 Juan, Du, *The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 201-203.

Fig 2.5.1 Shangsha Village before renovation.

Fig 2.5.2 Imagined Shangsha Village after proposed renovation.

multinational finance corporations[59]. In this case, over hundred village housings were re-constructed to the new forms that filled with the sense of "high-end" and "modern".

The Caiwu Wei transformation soon became the reference guide for Urban Village renovation. The core concept of the "Caiwu Wei model", which set economic and profit as the focus, is similar to the idea of Shenzhen metropolis's development and the model inspires multiple Urban Village renovation projects in recent years[60]. One of the most noticeable projects is the C Future City project, which is directed by the Aedes team and operated around 2019, which fundamentally transformed a portion of Shangsha Village in the lower part of the Futian District. The main mission of this project was to transform the intense and dirty Shangsha Village to a luxury commercial complex in order to boost the market value of the whole district[61]. Moreover, this project can potentially be considered as one of the most inspiring reference models for the city development in near future[62]. Inspired by this redevelopment plan, Xiasha Village, which is almost seamlessly attached to Shangsha Village, will possibility to face elimination in the next couple years.

Features of demographic and space

The residents inside the Urban Village are mostly considered as the margin within the overall demographic structure in Shenzhen. The average age of these immigrants is between 21-40, and the average income lies between 500-3k yuan per month, even though a small portion of people can earn more than 10k a month[63]. Most of the workers here are engaged in the jobs with relatively low skill requirements and low income-deposit ratio[64]. To be more specific, most of the residents here are self-employed as the owner of food markets, grocery shops and catering businesses. Furthermore, even though the main reason why they chose to move to the Urban Village is mainly because of the low rental price and relatively convenient locations that are close to the impact urban districts, it is a pleasing surprise that quarter of them choose to settle themselves here because of the special living environment[65].

The spatial characteristics within Urban Villages are unique. The most obvious aspect is the sense of chaos and awkwardness as a result of the narrow, twisting and weirdly shaped walking spaces. These scenes are caused by the unorganized community planning strategy. Furthermore, the blurriness between public and private space is another

59 Juan, Du, *The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 201-203.
60 Ibid, 234-236.
61 "深圳市中心最大旧城改造|Aedas新作 The New Project of Aedas, The Largest Old Town Renovation in Mid-town Shenzhen", *Souhu*, Last modified October 18, 2019, https://www.sohu.com/a/347826796_120201912.
62 Ibid.
63 Shaoji, Yi, "关于深圳城中村外来人口安置问题的调查报告 A Research Report on The Housing Arrangement for the Immigrants in Shenzhen Urban Villages", *Baidu Literature Archive*, Last modified October 10, 2016, https://wenku.baidu.com/view/6bc504580029bd64793e2c14.html.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.

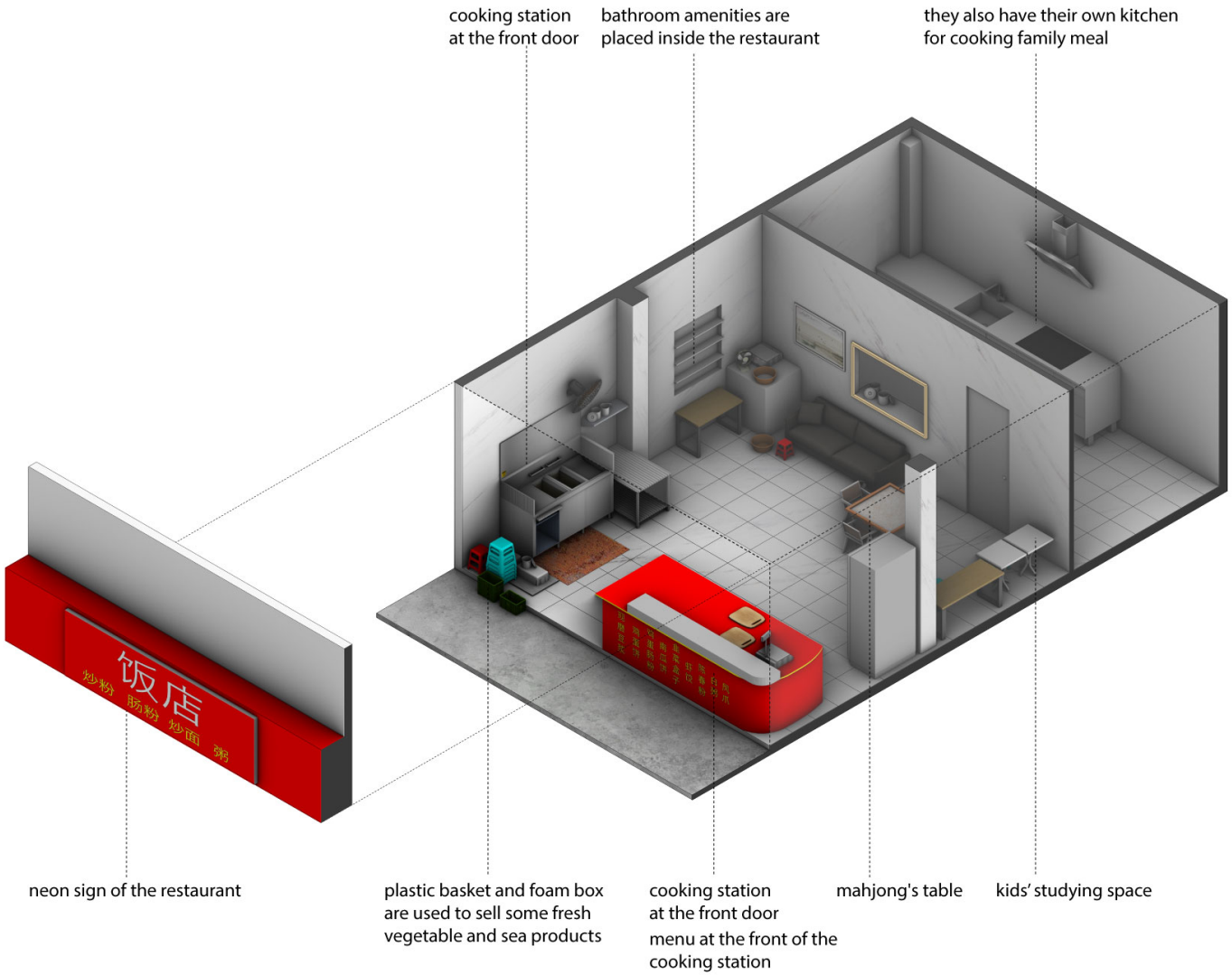


Fig.2.6.1
An example of working-living combined ground floor program inside urban village. This type of program is everywhere within urban village community.

remarkable feature of the neighborhood. To be more specific, in Fig. (2.6.1), this is an example of a ground floor program within Baishi Zhou Urban Village. This restaurant, which is supposed to be mainly used for the sake of public service, is highly "hybridized" because almost 50 percent of the interior spaces are used for private activities. Also, because of the demographic, most spaces on the ground level are built for public retail services but at the same time, they are also part of personal spaces which support multiple private activities for the local residents. Interestingly, the exterior public spaces are not completely public because parts of these exterior spaces are occupied by personal items such as clothing and motor cycles.

The surprising connection

The spatial qualities within Urban Villages are perceived as poor, at least from the perspective of public who lives in the more modern commercialized housing. Nevertheless, about 25 percent residents of the Urban Village have no issues with the overall living environment according to the previously finished questionnaire[66]. Besides, some of them even build strong sense of rootedness inside these grotesque and ugly neighborhoods. This can be represented by their rebellion against the Urban Village elimination. During the period when all residents were asked to leave because of the construction works, a tremendous amount of "nail houses" projects remained on the site. The term "nail house" refers to the fact that villagers refuse to move during the renovation, so they stayed inside their house and claim that nobody is allowed to touch their house[67]. These activities imply extremely negative attitudes towards the renovations and redevelopment which were intended to improve the appearance of these neighborhoods. The nail house caused frequent confrontations between villagers and developers, and the popular terms "heroic nail house defenders" or "heroic origin house defenders", were created among local residents in order to praise the activity of pursuing and maintaining personal property[68]. Even though this rebellion behaviors are also happened because the urban village residents seek compensations. The overall phenomenon indicates that these neighborhoods, with spatial qualities that were assessed as grossly substandard, are somehow mentally connected with the residents in unique ways.

It may not be true that the overall wellbeing of residents in Urban Villages is better than that of the individuals who live inside commercial housing communities. In fact, it will not be fair to directly compare the spatial and living qualities within these two types of neighborhoods in regards

66 Shaoji, Yi, "关于深圳城中村外来人口安置问题的调查报告 A Research Report on The Housing Arrangement for the Immigrants in Shenzhen Urban Villages", *Baidu Literature Archive*, Last modified October 10, 2016, https://wenku.baidu.com/view/6bc504580029bd64793e2c14.html.

67 Juan, Du, The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 204-205.

68 Ibid, 207.

to the different social attitudes and supports that they have faced and received. However, it will be interesting to notice that commercial housing communities, which are developed with high investments and usually treated as treasures, still fail to provide the most outstanding living quality to the residents. On the other hand, based on the discrimination and exclusion that Urban Villages have faced during the few decades of development, the overall connections between the residents and the neighborhoods are relatively surprising and impressive.

Fig 2.7.1 The “heroic nail house defender” described by Juan Du.

Fig 2.7.2 Another nail house around Longhua Region in Shenzhen.

Chapter 03

Documentation

Public space and public life

It is interesting to see that the residents' wellbeing and rootedness in both commercial housing communities and urban villages are not meeting with the expectation in different ways. And the public space design may have something to with this, because the public space design is an important factor that distinguish urban villages with commercial housing communities. According to Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre in their work <How to Study Public Life>, public space in city is defined as the space that is within built environment, and allow different types of activities such as walking and standing to take place at the same time[69]. Also, mentioned by Jane Jacobs in her work <The Death and Life of Great American Cities>, public sidewalks are the most visible public spaces within a city and they highly define a city's living quality and individuals' wellbeing[70]. Moreover, Jacobs mention that the shape and pattern of the public spaces can be significant to affect the related public life. For example, small and short block can create inspiring space[71]. Similarly, wide and empty spaces allow different pedestrians to use this space differently at same time, and this is helpful to create a lively city scene[72]. Therefore, in order to understand the quality of the spaces in both commercial housing communities and urban villages, the next two chapters will use different research and critique methods to assess the quality of the public spaces in these two types of communities.

The first and relatively obvious mission is to record and study the spatial design strategies, such as overall shapes and dimensions. This chapter will diagrammatically record the public space design in these two types of communities. Besides, understanding the public life around the public space, for example, the types of individuals' behaviors and the frequency of social interactions, can be significant in understanding the connection between individuals and the public spaces. Thus, the following chapter will also focus on recording and studying the behaviors of public life. The method that will be used on public life research is significantly inspired by the work written by Gehl and Svarre. According to Gehl and Svarre, public life study is relatively straight forward. The main methods are to observe and record what is happening on or around a defined public space[73].

The study of public life in public space is the process of observing the interaction between the public space and the audience. Therefore, the first mission in this case will be define the audience and their behaviors. To be more specific, quoted from Gehl and Svarre, there are three fundamental perimeters that should be used in the process of defining the audience who are occupying or using the public spaces. The three perimeters

69 Jan Gehl, Birgitte Svarre, "*How to Study Public Life*", (Washington, Covelo, London: Island Press, 2013), 11-13.
70 Jane, Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, December 1992).
71 Ibid, 183-184.
72 Ibid, 66-68.
73 Jan Gehl, Birgitte Svarre, "*How to Study Public Life*", (Washington, Covelo, London: Island Press, 2013), 7-9.

are "Who, What and Where"[74]. The first term refers to the method that can be used to specific the audience, for example, their age[75]. The third term refers to the understanding of where do people move or stay, and if they are gathered or dispersed[76].

Besides, it will be important to observe for what they are doing. Thus, the second term may need more works to observe and study, and this term is more about the different activities that individuals are engaged. The first thing to specific these activities is to organize different activities into few categories. Quoted from the work <Life Between Buildings>, which is also written by Jan Gehl, public activities can be split into two different categories, which are necessary activities and optional activities[77]. Necessary activities are usually happened with more or less compulsory[78], for example, traveling between school or working place to home, waiting for bus or taxi, picking the delivery. Also, another remarkable characteristic of necessary activities is that they are usually not affected by the spatial quality of the surrounding environment[79].

On the other hand, optional activities happen if time and place make them possible[80]. To be more specific, few examples of optional activities can be sitting on the benches or ground and chatting with others, jogging or sunbathing. The most obvious feature of optional activities is that they happen only if the exterior spatial quality is favorable[81]. Therefore, necessary and optional activities will be an important factor to be recorded in this chapter because they can determine the quality of the public space. Except the activities that take place in the public space, it will be significant to record individuals' moving speed because according to Gehl, the walking speed can also tell if the exterior conditions are favorable or not[82].

Besides the three fundamental parameters that are necessary to be recorded and studied, some useful tools such as counting and tracing are also significant in order to understand the connection between individuals and public space[83]. As mentioned by Gehl, it will be essential to do a non-stop counting exercise, which is the process of finding out how many people are using the space, in order to understand if the public space is desired by the public or not. And this exercise should be last for at least 10 mins[84]. Moreover, tracking individual's moving pattern will be another vital observation method to see if the spatial quality is favorable to individuals or not. To be more specific, a boring public space with limited amount of attraction points may cause individuals to move in extremely straight patterns[85].

74 Jan Gehl, Birgitte Svarre, "*How to Study Public Life*", (Washington, Covelo, London: Island Press, 2013), 19-20.
75 Ibid, 25.
76 Ibid, 26-27.
77 Jan, Gehl, *Life between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011), 11-13.
78 Ibid, 11.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid, 12.
81 Jan, Gehl, *Life between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011), 12-14.
82 Jan Gehl, Birgitte Svarre, "*How to Study Public Life*", (Washington, Covelo, London: Island Press, 2013), 26-28.
83 Ibid, 30-33.
84 Ibid, 36-38.
85 Ibid.

Stages and illustration method

The commercial housing communities and Urban Villages have been created and constructed with completely different concepts and strategies. It may be deemed surprising that the poor spatial qualities inside Urban Village can actually cause multiple positive effects. Following the previous mentioned public space study methods, this section of the thesis photographically illustrates the details of the spatial features of the commercialized housing and Urban Village with a focus on the exterior public spaces. This chapter also includes documentation that traces aspects of public life and pedestrian movement around selected public spaces.

The study of public space in commercial housing communities will concentrate on the Baihua District which is located at the southern part of the Futian Region. This district is a comprehensive community with a mix of several residential communities, educational institutions and markets. It contains one of the largest and most well-known commercial housing clusters in Shenzhen with one of the highest real estate markets. The first method will follow Jacobs' statement about the shape and pattern of public space[86]. The following observation document will record several perspectives. The first one is the exact dimension of the public spaces inside the commercial housing communities and the public sidewalks outside them. The second part will photographically archive the green space design within 2 selected commercial housing communities in which the afforestations play the most important role. The last part will diagrammatically archive the dynamics of human movement inside these commercial housing communities through their use of the exterior spaces.

The study of public space in urban villages will be set in Xiasha Village. This neighborhood also locates at Futian Region and is 20 minutes away from Baihua District when traveling by private vehicles. The village can be considered as one of the most typical types of urban village community within Shenzhen. As discussed, in response to the Shangsha Village's renovation, Xiasha Village's future status is indeterminate because it is geographically attached to Shangsha Village. Thus, Xiasha Village will be an iconic example that speaks for "a normal urban village" in Shenzhen which has the risk to be eliminated.

The illustration method is also important to organize and understand the contents of public life. As stated by Gehl and Svarre, one of the most classic method to record public is to illustrate all the perimeters on mapping diagrams[87]. Thus, in this case, during the following sections, I will include several mapping diagrams that indicate the places where people standing or gathering. Also, I will list the frequency of necessary activities and stationary activities that I recorded during the previous sections. Moreover, I will use different

86 Jane, Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, December 1992), 109-111.

87 Jan Gehl, Birgitte Svarre, "*How to Study Public Life*", (Washington, Covelo, London: Island Press, 2013), 35-36.

illustrations methods to separate different groups of audience. To be more specific, individuals will be organized based on their Age. For instance, those who are attending school or seemingly aged below 25 will be categorized as young. Individuals who have the seemingly age that stands in-between 26 to 60 will be categorized as mid-aged. And the rest of them will be classified as elderly. Furthermore, in response to Gehl and Svarre's statement about the connection among walking speed, pattern and spatial quality, the mapping diagrams will also include in information about individuals walking speed and their walking tracks.

Documentations in commercial housing developments

The study of public space inside commercial housing communities focuses on illustrating the design details of the spaces within Nantian Garden 01, Baihua Unit 01, Baihua Unit 02, and Chang'an Garden. Each of these commercial housing communities is considered as one of the most valued housing properties in Shenzhen with selling price surpassing 24,000 CAD per square meter[88]. The scale and design strategies of these public spaces are slightly different, but the concept of providing tremendous amounts of basic infrastructures such as parking spaces and exercise facilities, plus the well-crafted garden district (afforestation), is held in common. The major concept behind the design and planning of these public spaces was to make the neighborhood looks elegant and promote the market price[89]. Thus, most of the public spaces inside these commercial housing communities, at least for those only used for on-foot walking activities, are intensely surrounded by decorative landscaping. The illustration of the commercial housing public spaces study includes photographs and mapping diagrams with the actual dimension which I measured during numerous site visits during the period from March 2021 to September 2021.

88 "Second-handd housing", *Residential Living*, accessed April 01, 2020, https://shenzhen.anjuke.com/sale/rd1/?kw=%E5%8D%97%E5%A4%A9%E4%B8%80%E8%8A%B1%E5%9B%AD&pi=baidu-cpc-sz-lp1&k-wid=174018848647&bd_vid=9206442500759141022.

89 Weihua, Zhu, Dehua, Chen, "家园 花园 乐园-浅谈深圳市住宅小区园林绿化 Home, Garden, Playground, A Discussion of the Afforestation of the Residential Communities in Shenzhen", *CHINESE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE* ,17(4) (2021), 1.

Fig.3.1.1
The location of Baihua District on the map of Shenzhen city.

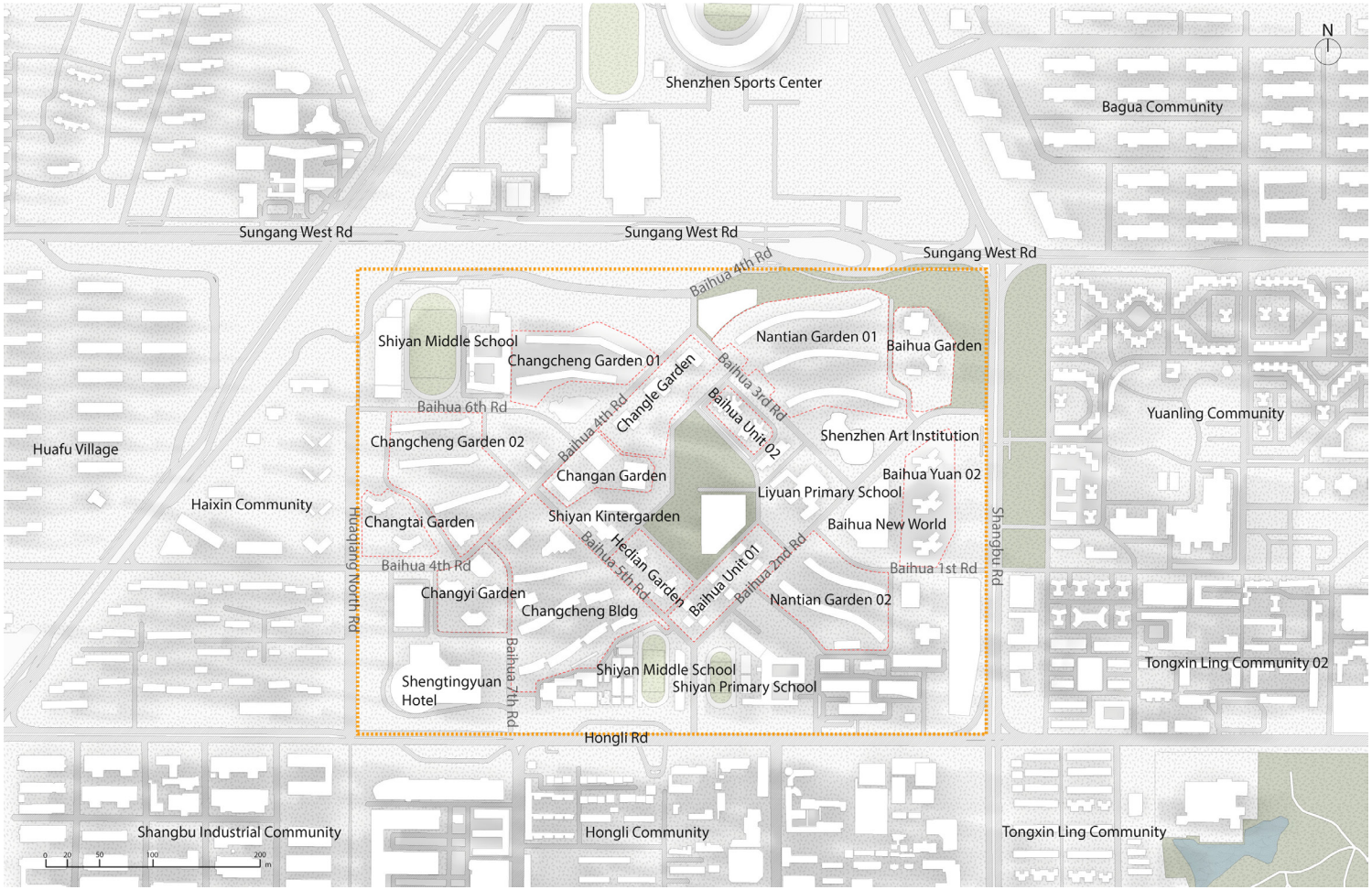


Fig 3.1.2
The Map of Baihua District, which is included inside the orange box.

Fig.3.1.3
Thurs, March 11, 2021, 2:00pm
Public sidewalk inside Nantian Garden 01, 1.2m wide road with inaccessible space on both sides.

Fig.3.1.4
Thurs March 11, 2021, 1:56pm
Public space in the same community, 4.2m wide road used as circulation space for residents and vehicles.

Fig.3.1.5
The location of Fig.3.1.3 and Fig.3.1.4, in the community plan.

Fig.3.1.6
Thurs, March 11, 2021, 2:11pm
Public circulation route, 1.2m wide route designed in curvature pattern with inaccessible space on both sides.

Fig.3.1.7
Thurs, May 13, 2021, 1:49pm
Public circulation route, 1.2m wide route designed in curvature pattern with mostly inaccessible space on both sides.

Fig.3.1.8
The location of Fig.3.1.6 and Fig.3.1.7, in the community plan.

Fig.3.1.9
Mon, May 24, 2021, 4:51pm
Public circulation route, 2.0m wide partially closed route with inaccessible space on both sides.

Fig.3.1.10
Thurs, April 01, 2021, 7:03pm
Public circulation route, 4.0m wide route with parking space on both sides.

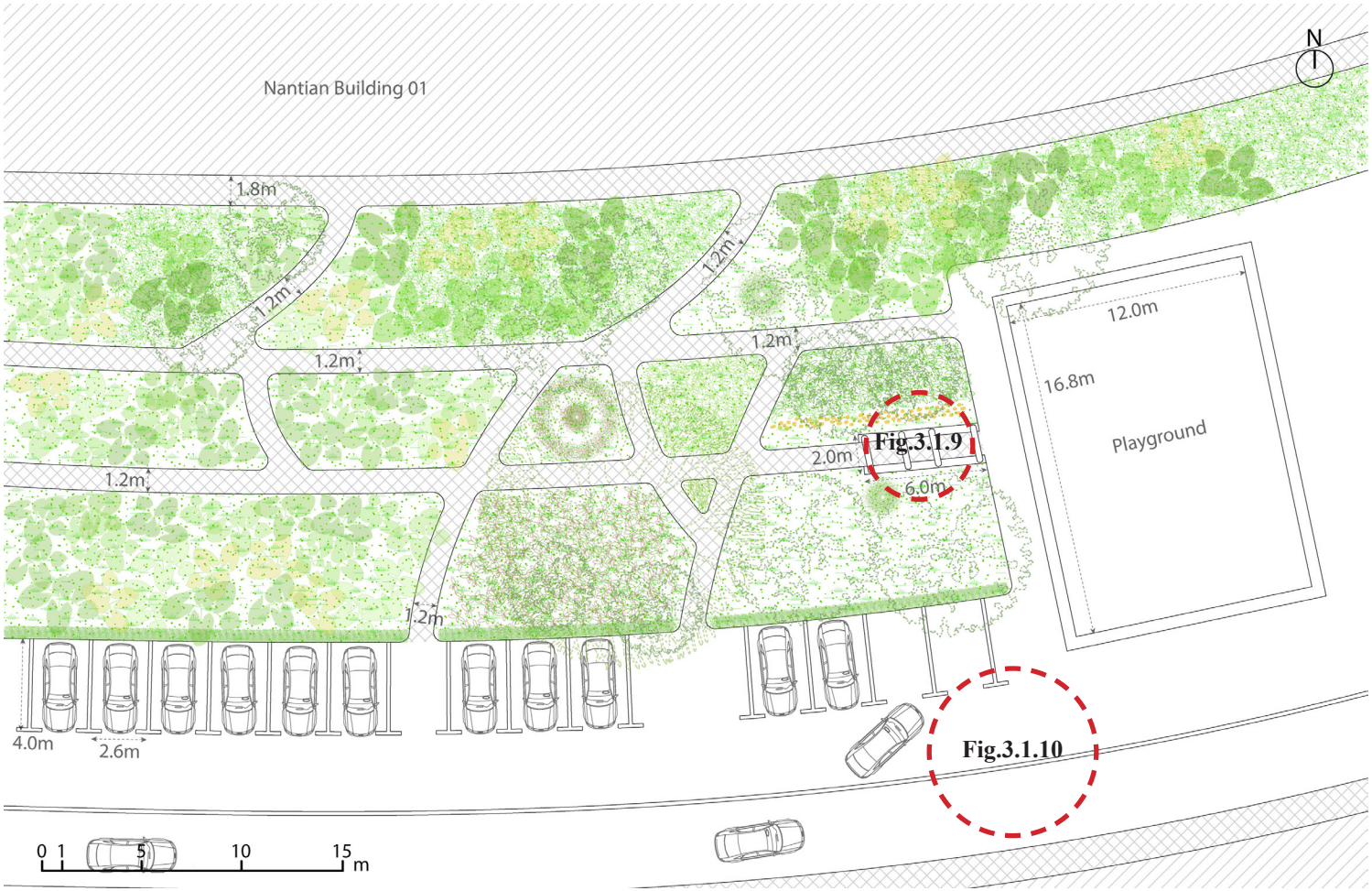


Fig.3.1.11
The location of Fig.3.1.9 and Fig.3.1.10, in the community plan.

Fig.3.1.12
Thurs, March 11, 2021, 2:18pm
Public space in Baihua Unit 02,
3.6m wide road used as circulation
space for residents and vehicles.

Fig.3.1.13
Thurs, March 11, 2021, 2:30pm
The only public playground space in Baihua Unit 02, this garden space stands in between two parking spaces.

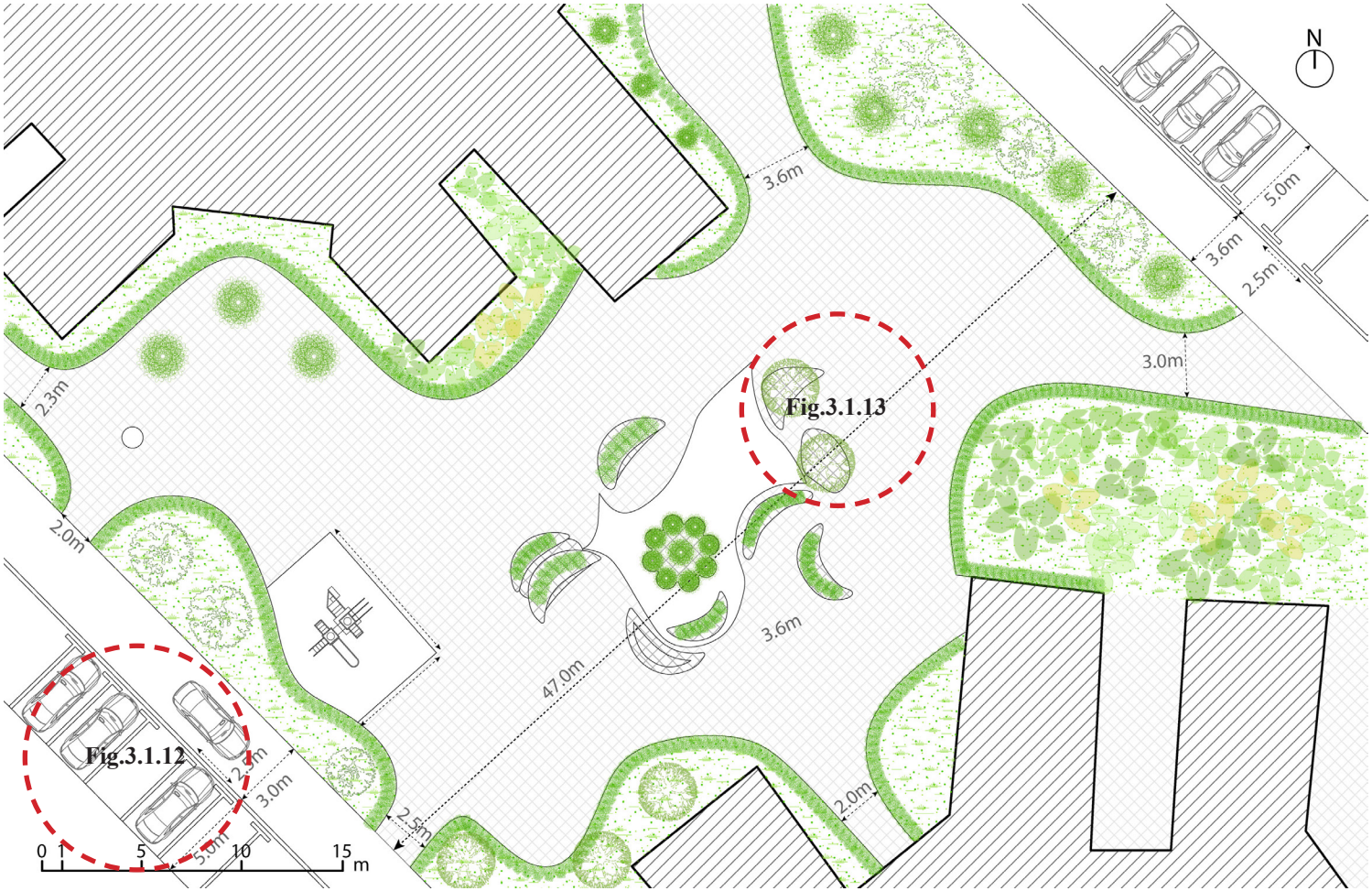


Fig.3.1.14
The location of Fig.3.1.12 and Fig.3.1.13, in the community plan.

Fig.3.1.15
Thurs, March 11, 2021, 2:46pm
Public sidewalk space in Baihua Unit 01, 1.5m wide road with fence and wall on the two sides.

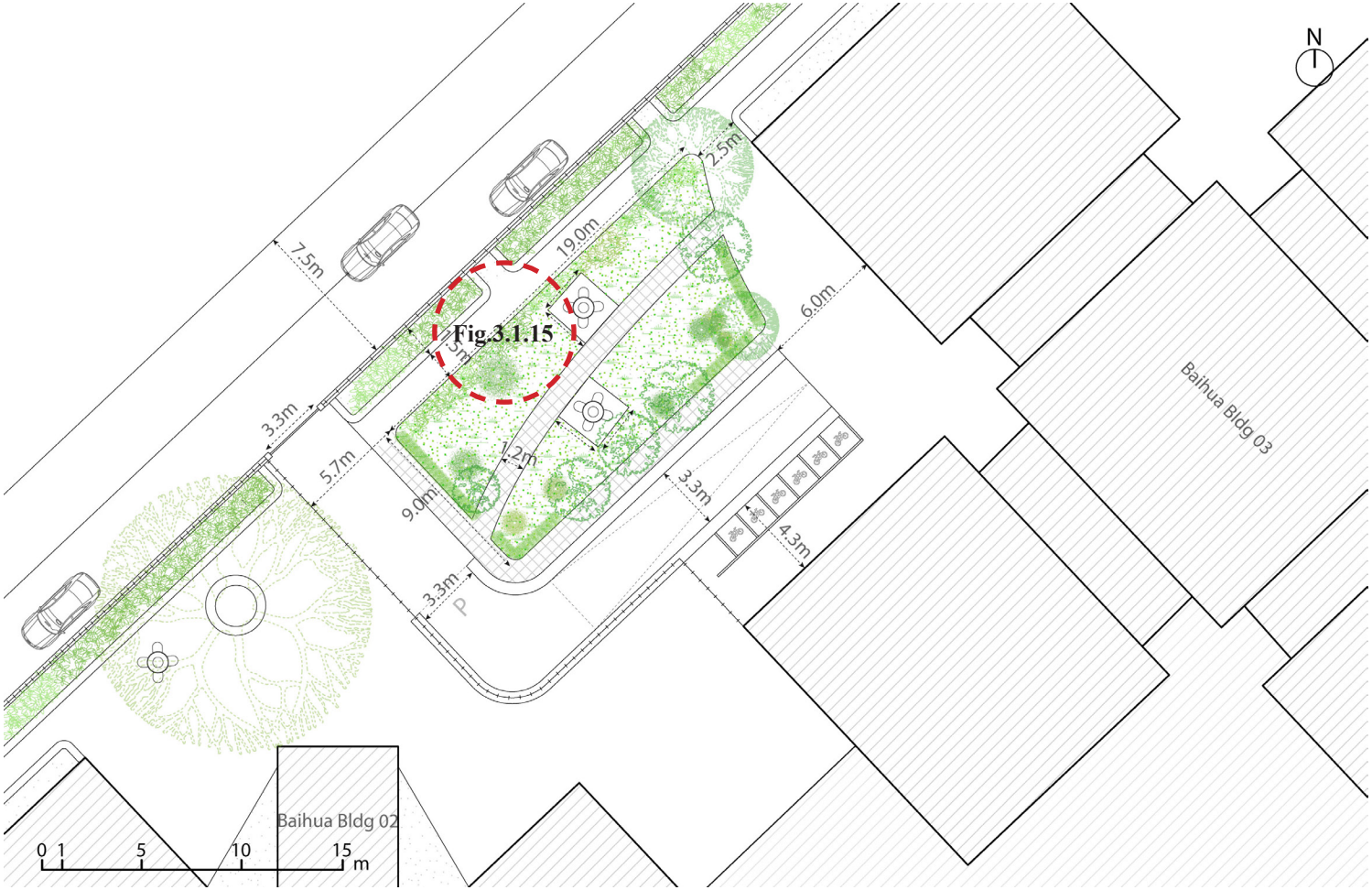


Fig.3.1.16
The location of Fig.3.1.15, in the community plan.

Fig.3.1.17
Thurs, March 11, 2021, 2:50pm
Public garden space in Baihua Unit 01, 1.2m wide road designed in curvature pattern, roughly 80% of the spaces are inaccessible.

Fig.3.1.18
The location of Fig.3.1.17, in the community plan.

Fig.3.1.19
Sun, August 01, 2021, 2:29pm
Public garden space on the rooftop of Chang'an Garden, with 3.0m wide road designed in curvature pattern, the spaces on the two sides are inaccessible.

Fig.3.1.20
The location of Fig.3.1.19, in the community plan.

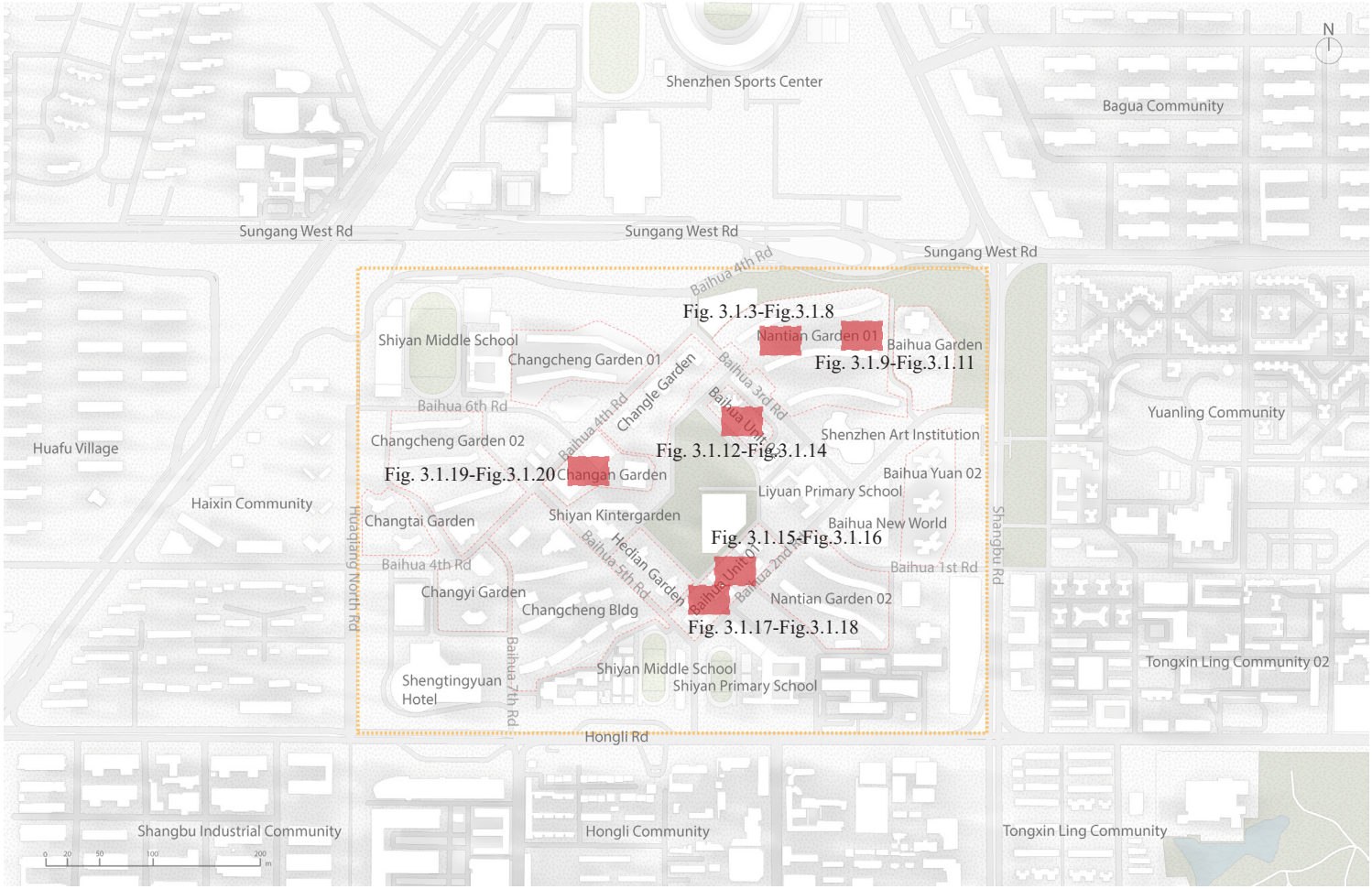


Fig.3.1.21
The location of Fig.3.1.3 to Fig.3.1.20, in the site plan of Baihua District.

Documentations in surrounding sidewalks

Similarly, the study of the public sidewalk concentrates on representing the design details of the sidewalk around the Baihua residential-commercial mixed cluster district. There are six major public sidewalks around this region and they are sequentially named as Baihua 1st to 6th Road. Each of these public sidewalks is located alongside one or more residential communities, but very few of them are directly connected with any residential apartments. Each sidewalk is designed with specific dimensions and different parts to meet the criteria provided in the road design guideline document which is mentioned before. This section will document Baihua 2nd to 5th Road, which are located close to the 4 commercial housing communities that are mentioned in the previous section. The representation of the sidewalk study includes photographs, mapping diagrams, and plans for the sidewalks with the dimension which I measured during actual field research.

Fig 3.2.1
Tue, March 09, 2021, 11:31am
Sidewalk on Baihua 2nd Road, the pedestrian sidewalk is 5.2m wide, and locates 27m away from the closest apartment building.

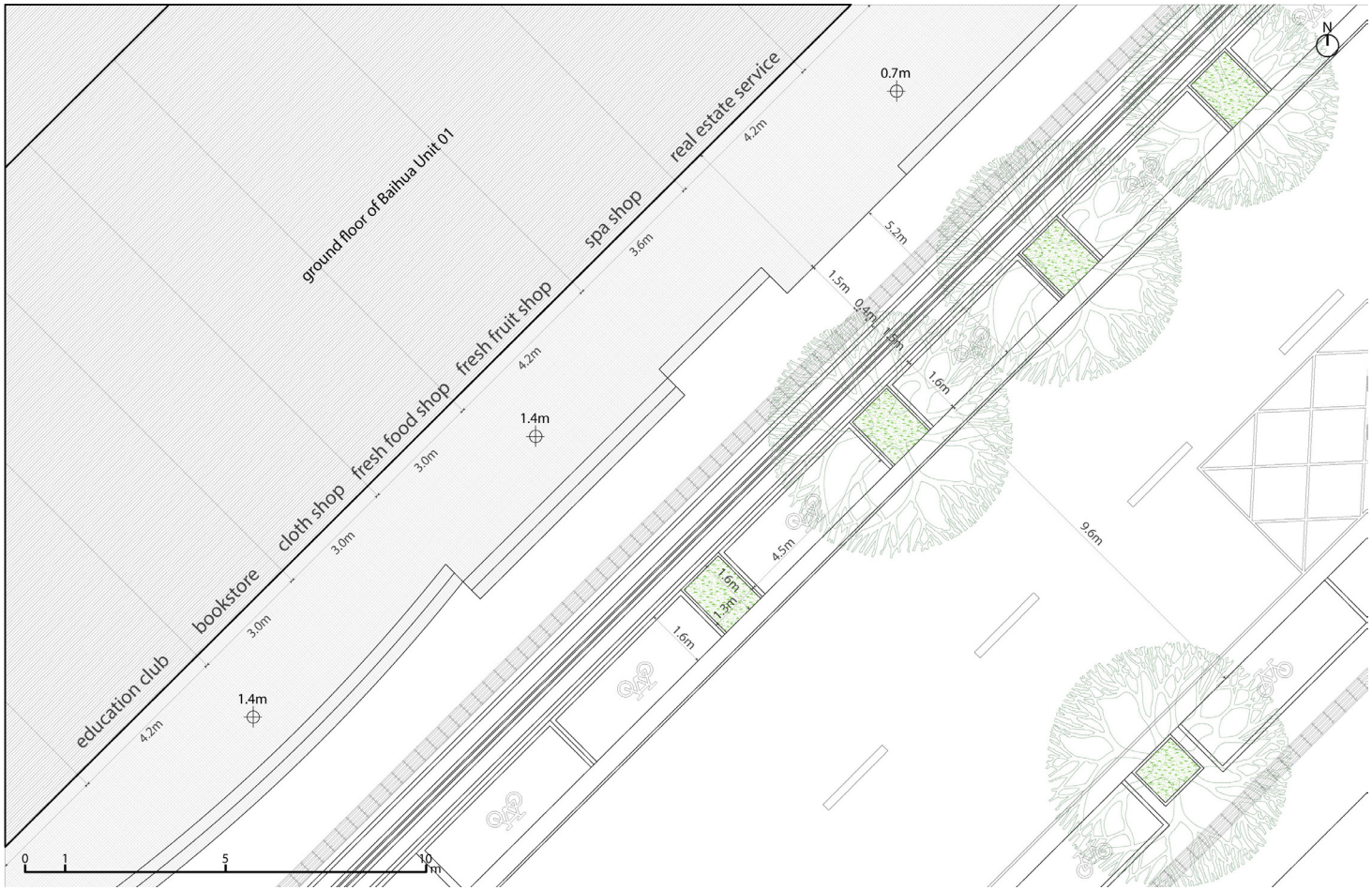


Fig 3.2.2
The design detail of the pedestrian sidewalk space on Baihua 2nd Road.

Fig 3.2.3
Sun, September 26, 2021, 11:49am
Sidewalk on Baihua 3rd Road, the pedestrian sidewalk is 4.6m wide, and locates less than 10m away from the closest apartment building.

Fig 3.2.4
The design detail of the pedestrian sidewalk space on Baihua 3rd Road.

Fig 3.2.5
Sun, August 01, 2021, 2:12pm
Sidewalk on Baihua 4th Road, the pedestrian sidewalk is 4.5m wide, and locates less than 10m away from the closest apartment building, the pedestrian sidewalk is attached to a 11.0m wide plaza space.

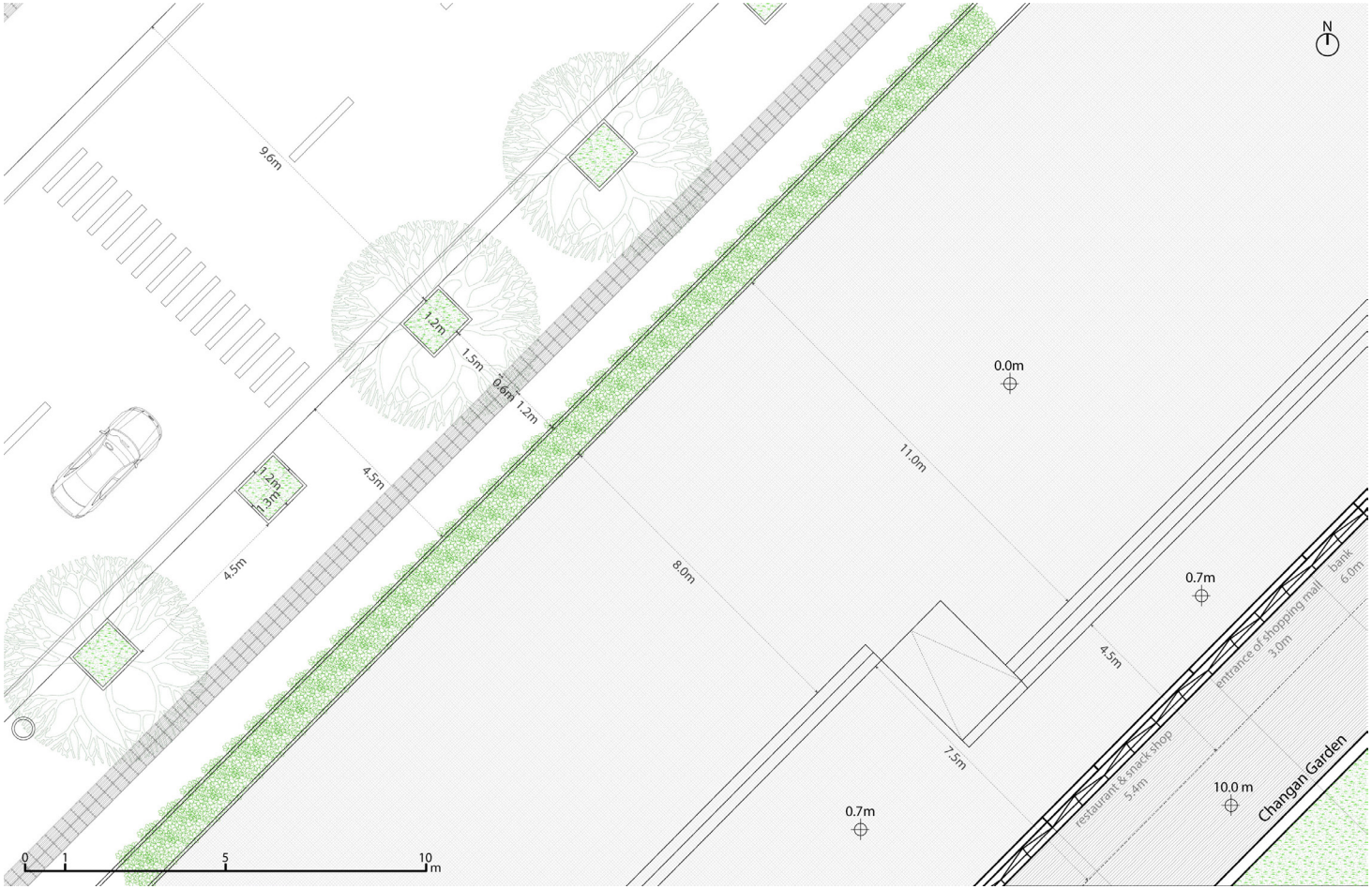


Fig 3.2.6
The design detail of the pedestrian sidewalk space and plaza space on Baihua 4th Road.

Fig 3.2.7
Wed, June 02, 2021, 4:55pm
Sidewalk on Baihua 5th Road, the pedestrian sidewalk is 4.3m wide, and locates less than 10m away from the closest apartment building.

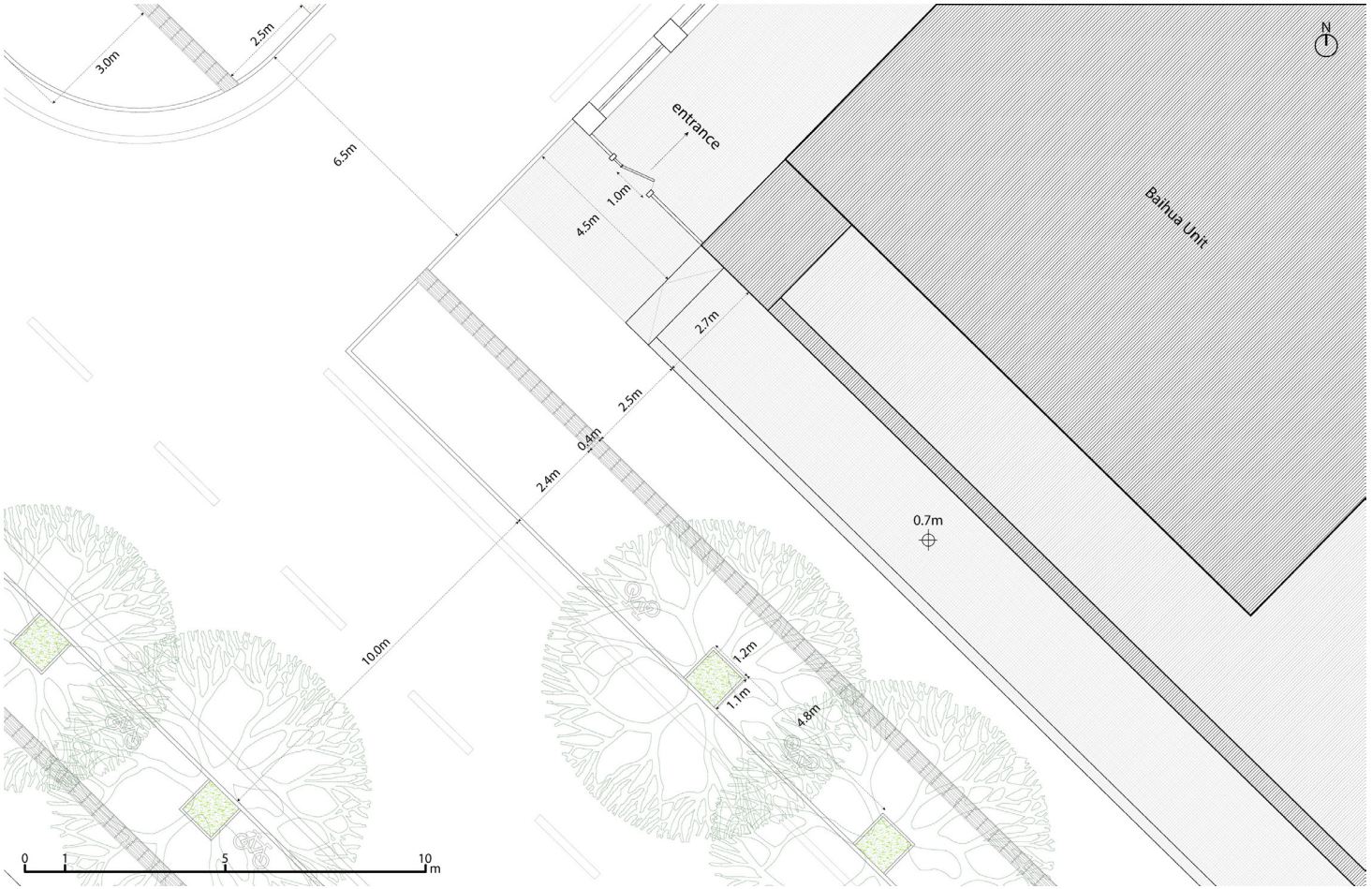


Fig 3.2.8
The design detail of the pedestrian space on Baihua 5th Road.

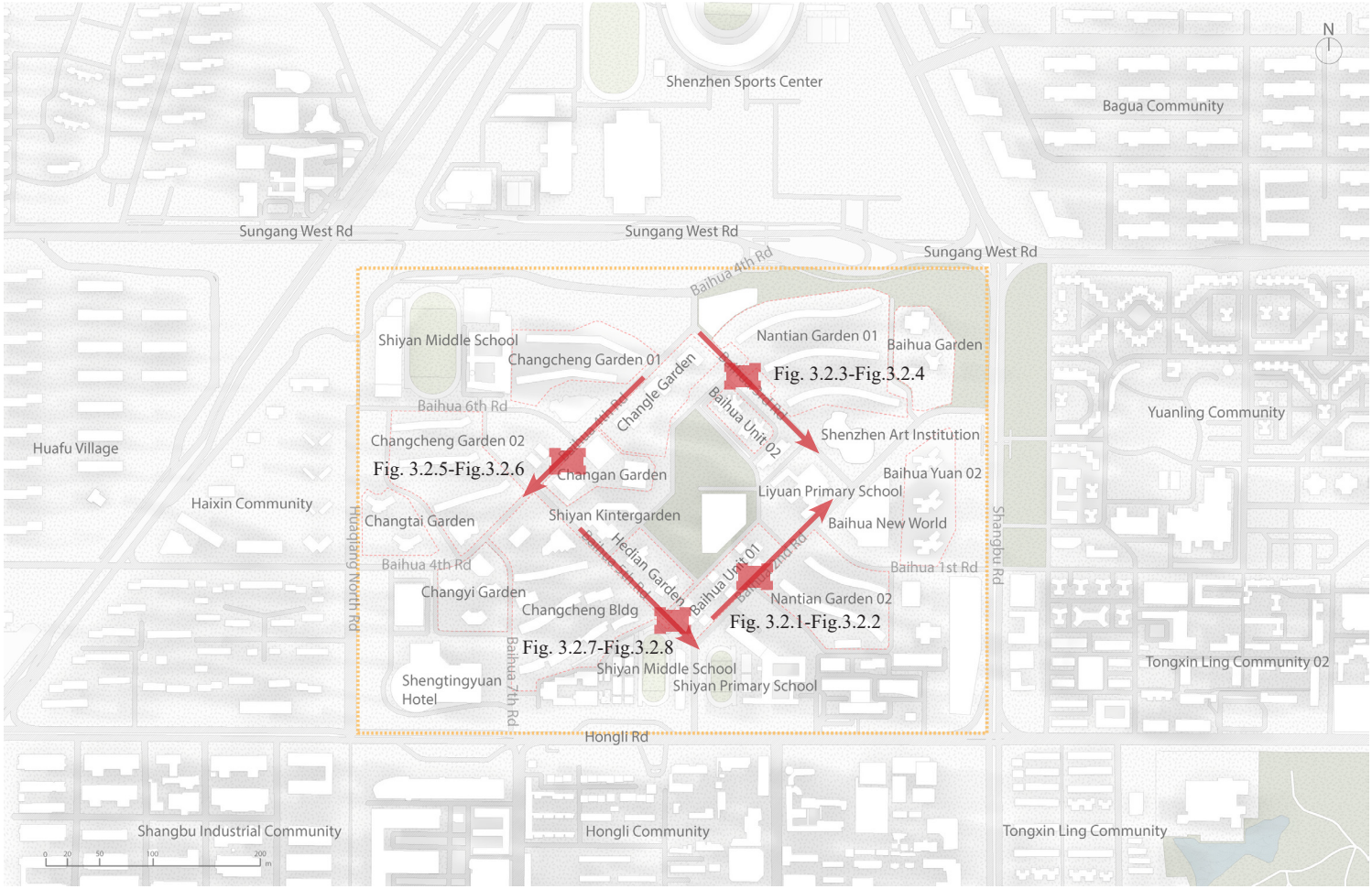


Fig.3.2.9
The location and the direction of the photograph of Fig.3.2.1 to Fig.3.2.8, in the site plan of Baihua District.

Documentations of the afforestation design

Despite the overall public space design, afforestation is one of the most significant elements for commercial housing communities. Thus, the following section aims to zoom in and focus on photographically archiving the different afforestation strategies in Nantian Garden 01 and Baihua Unit 01, in which the afforestation designs are the most remarkable. As mentioned before, all these communities are designed and developed in different strategies and forms. In this case, the design and the importance of the green spaces is fundamentally different in each community. To be more specific, the afforestation in Nantian Garden 01 is the most elegant while some part of the green spaces within Baihua Unit 01 seems as the one with the roughest quality. Moreover, this section will diagrammatically illustrate how these green garden spaces are visually connected and engaged with the surrounding apartment spaces.

Fig 3.3.1
Fri, April 09, 2021, 1:26pm
Afforestation in Nantian Garden 01 garden space.

Fig.3.3.2
The location of Fig.3.3.1, in the community plan.

Fig 3.3.3
Fri, April 09, 2021, 1:28pm
Afforestation in Nantian Garden 01 garden space.

Fig.3.3.4
The location of Fig.3.3.3, in the community plan.

Fig 3.3.5
Fri, April 09, 2021, 1:38pm
Afforestation in Nantian Garden 01 garden space.

Fig.3.3.6
The location of Fig.3.3.5, in the community plan.

Fig 3.3.7
Fri, April 09, 2021, 1:51pm
Afforestation in Baihua Unit 01
public circulation space.

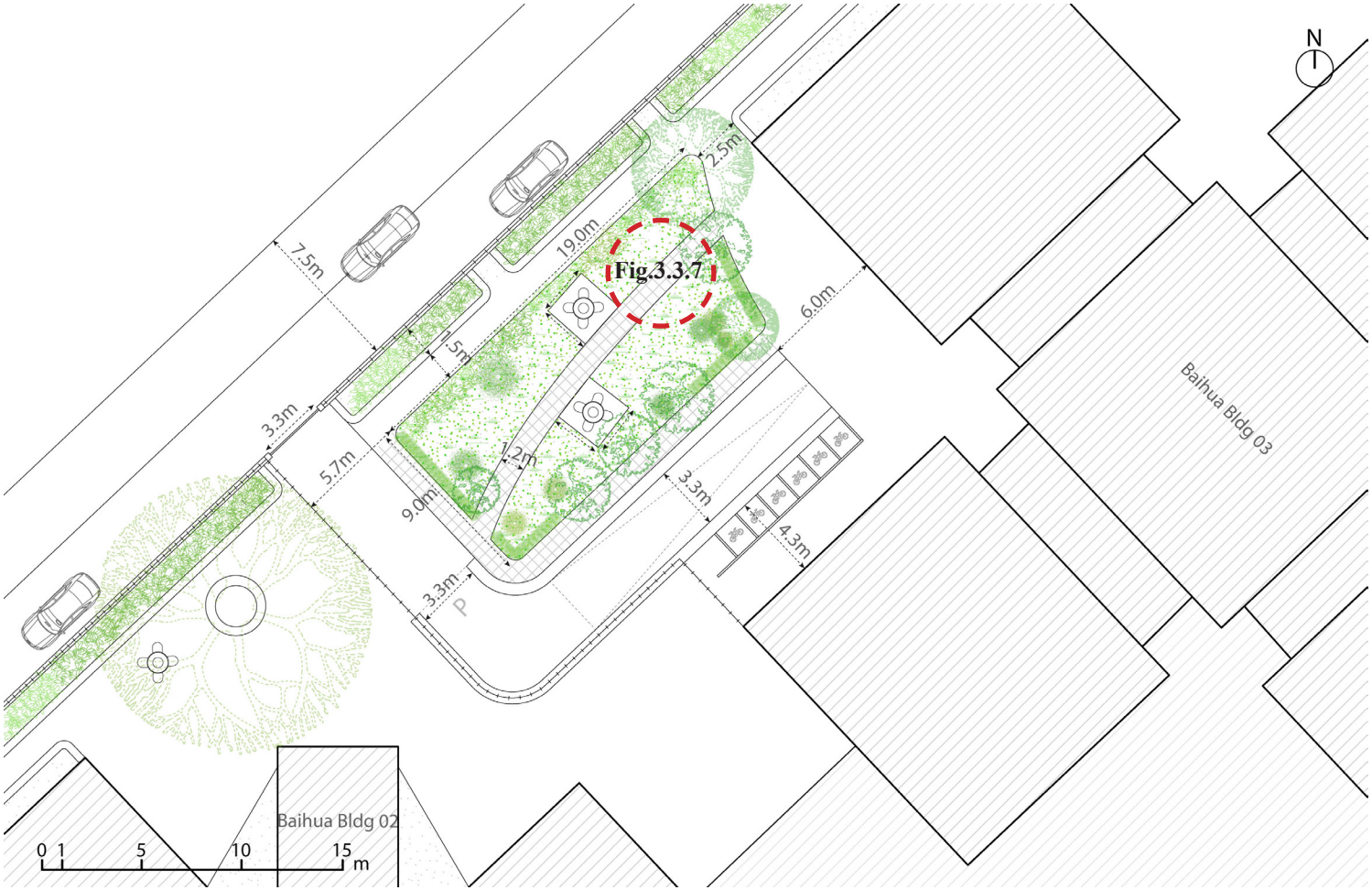


Fig.3.3.8
The location of Fig.3.3.7, in the community plan.

Fig 3.3.9
Fri, April 09, 2021, 1:54pm
Afforestation in Baihua Unit 01
public circulation space.

Fig.3.3.10
The location of Fig.3.3.9, in the community plan.

Documentations of the public spaces inside Xiasha Village

Based on the information that Xiasha Village, one of the most typical Urban Villages in Shenzhen, will likely to follow the footstep of the nearby Shangsha Village, which is being fundamentally eliminated and transformed[90]. Therefore, this part aims to study the spatial future of the public space within this community. The public spaces here can be classified into several categories. First of all, the public pedestrians which are located alongside the edge of the neighborhood. These spaces are relatively similar to the pedestrian sidewalks around the other part of the city because of the few afforestation elements installed alongside the edge of the road. Moreover, the public circulation spaces, which are used as pedestrians and traffic routes, lack any decoration elements and they are the most common types of the public spaces within Xiasha Village. And different with the public spaces within commercial housing communities which are mostly connected with the inaccessible vegetation zone, most of the circulation spaces here are seamlessly connected with the ground floor programs. Lastly, there exist multiple strangely shaped spaces which are impossible to find outside urban villages. This part of study and recording will concentrate on documenting the designs of different parts around the edge and within Xiasha Village. The documentation will also be represented through site plan drawings with dimensions noted.

90 "深圳市中心最大旧城改造|Aedas新作 The New Project of Aedas, The Largest Old Town Renovation in Mid-town Shenzhen", *Souhu*, Last modified October 18, 2019, https://www.sohu.com/a/347826796_120201912.

Fig.3.4.1
The location of Xiasha Village on the map of Shenzhen city.

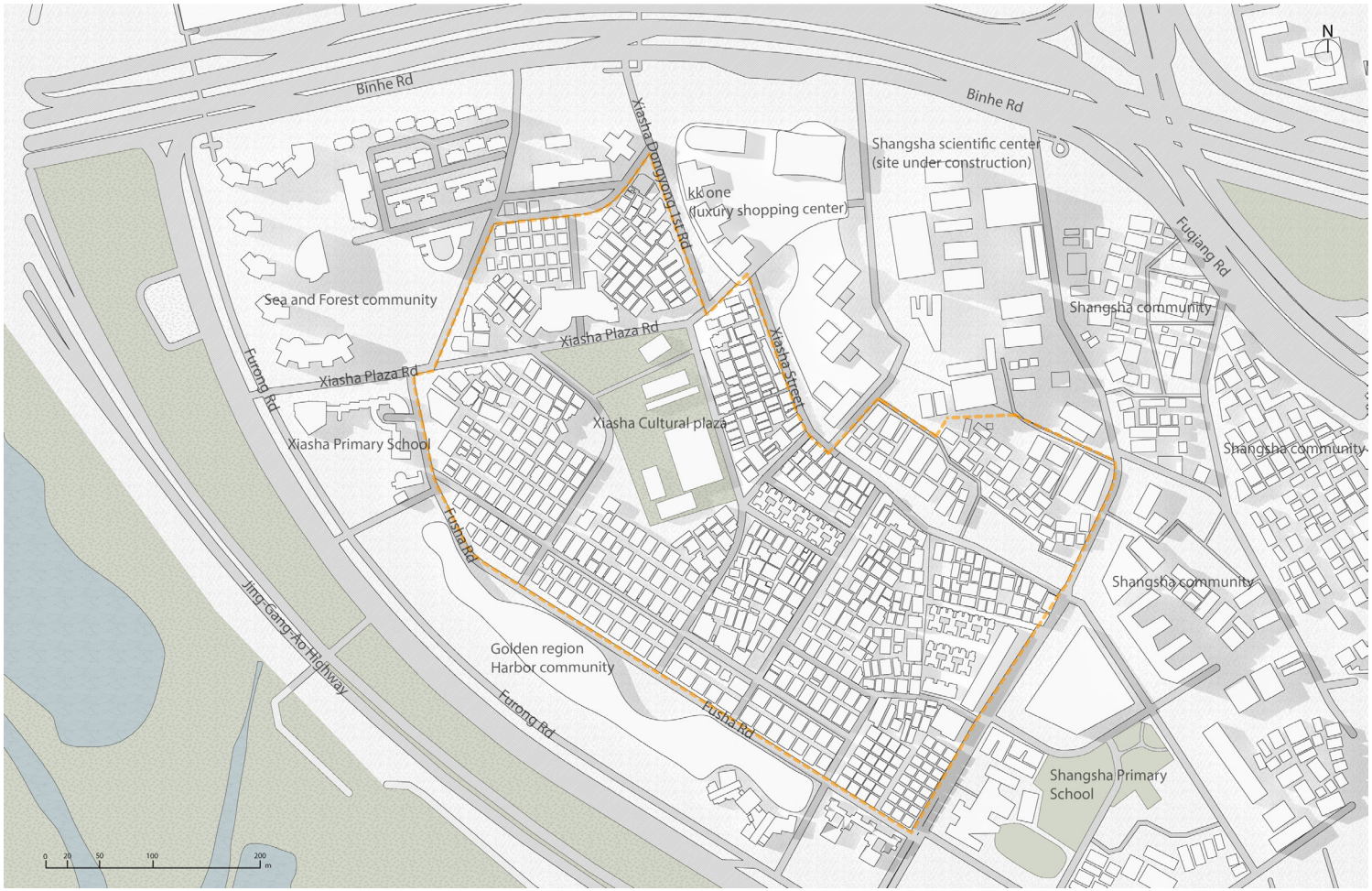


Fig 3.4.2
The Map of Xiasha Village, which is included inside the orange line.

Fig.3.4.3
Thurs, June 03, 2021, 11:36 am
The north east boundary of Xiasha Village locates close to the kkone shopping mall, the sidewalks here are 4.2 m wide.

Fig.3.4.4
The detail of the street scene that is described in Fig.3.4.3.

Fig.3.4.5
Thurs, June 03, 2021, 11:53 am
The south west boundary of Xiasha Village locates close to the Golden Region Harbor community, the sidewalks here are 1.8 m wide.

Fig.3.4.6
The detail of the street scene that is described in Fig.3.4.5.

Fig.3.4.7
Mon, September 06, 2021, 4:23 pm
The south east boundary of Xiasha Village locates close to the Shangsha Primary School, the width of the sidewalks range from 1.7m to 4.2m.

Fig.3.4.8
The detail of the street scene that is described in Fig.3.4.7.

Fig.3.4.9
Sat, June 05, 2021, 12:38 pm
The main road within Xiasha Village, the sidewalk are 1.2 meters wide with the 6 meter traffic route on the side.

Fig.3.4.10
Sat, June 05, 2021, 12:45 pm,
The side road within Xiasha Village, with about 4.2 meters wide, no public sidewalk in this region.

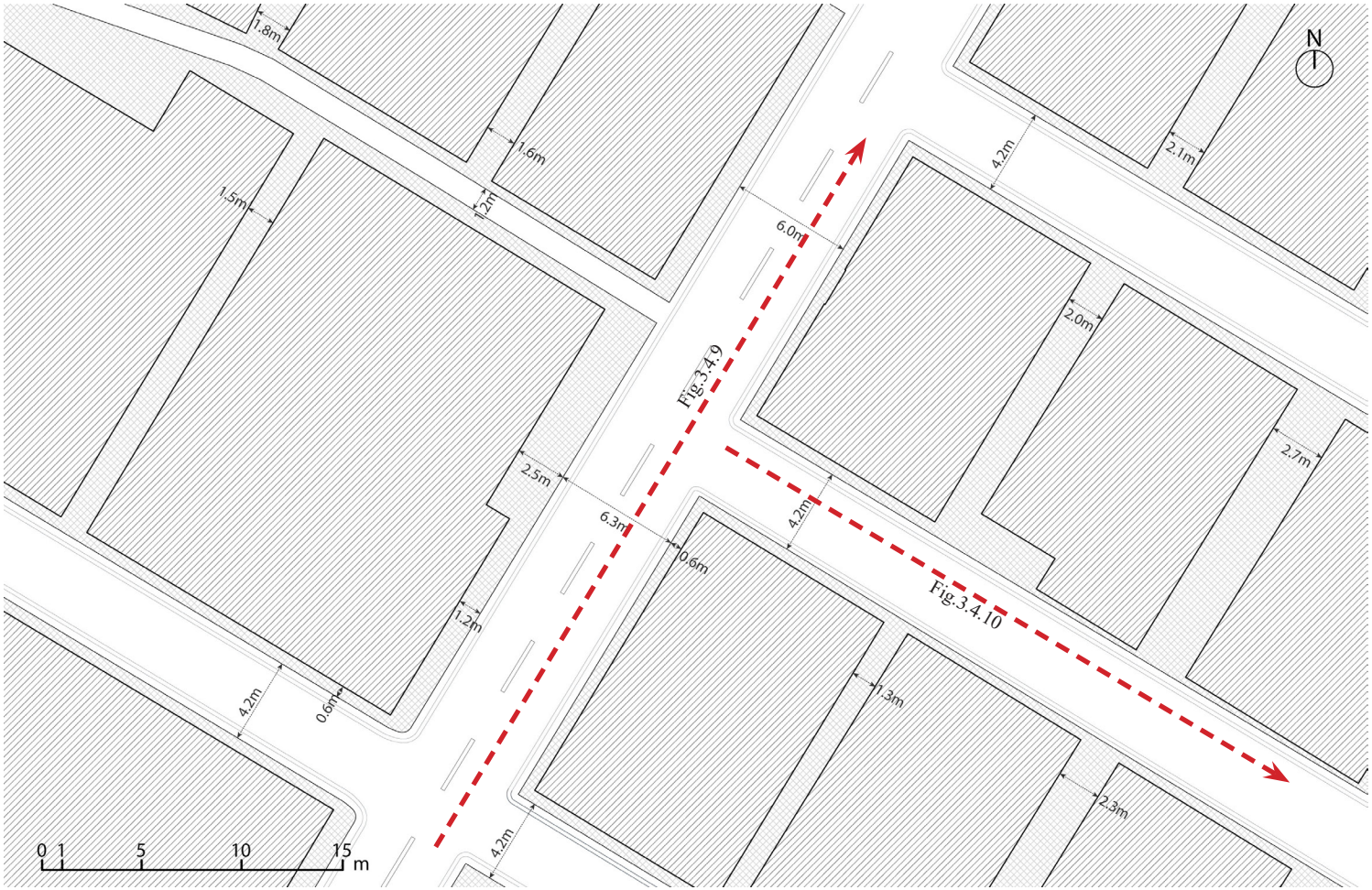


Fig.3.4.11
The location and detail of the street scene that is described in Fig.3.4.9 and Fig.3.4.10.

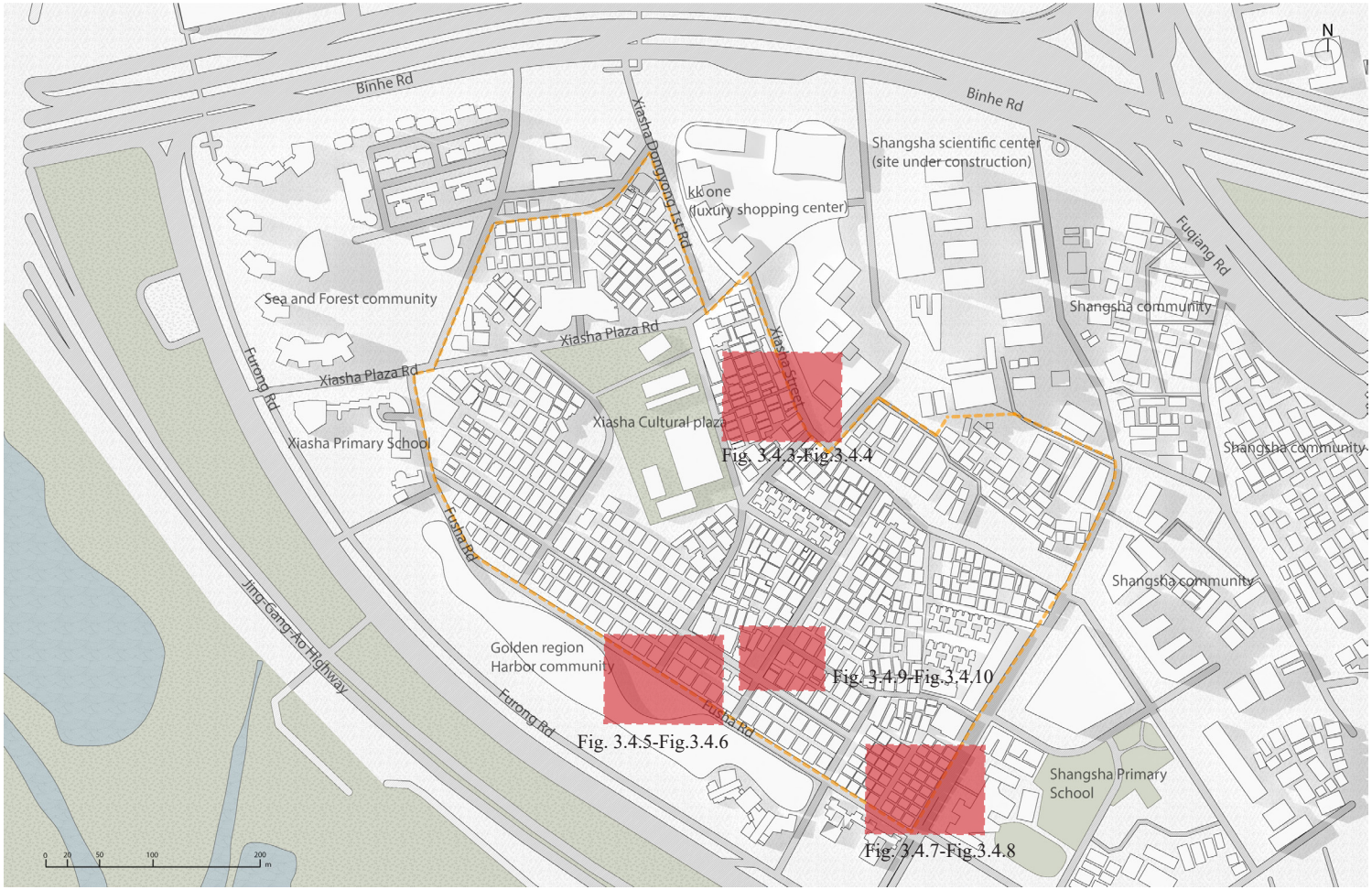


Fig.3.4.12
The location of Fig.3.4.3 to Fig.3.4.10 in the site plan of Xiasha Village.

Documentations of the chaotic voids inside Xiasha Village

Despite these major sidewalk and circulation space, which are seemed relatively similar to those in commercial housing communities except the decoration and the surrounding attachment, tons of public spaces within this neighborhood are weirdly and awkwardly shaped and they are the real spirits that define this community. As mentioned, Urban Villages including Xiasha Village have never been designed and constructed with any orthodox strategies, thus, some unorganized and chaotic "voids" are automatically formed and are created in different scales. First of all, the most common unorganized looking spaces within the Xiasha Village are "the handshake streets". These narrow streets are automatically formed during the neighborhood "shrinking" process. In most cases, villagers inside most Urban Villages are only allowed to build their properties within the red-line, which physically and metaphorically stands for the boundary of urban villages. This rule is particularly strict for some place like Xiasha Village which is located near the city center[91]. Therefore, the whole community was forced to shrink in area again and again. Thus, these handshake streets, which are normally less than 2.1 meters wide, were formed as the buildings were forced into extremely close proximity. And because of the features that are usually described as "privacy killer" and "sunlight blocker", they are the most notorious elements. Similarly, because of the poor neighborhood planning, the corporation between apartment buildings and public sidewalks can be extremely strange and awkward. These angular configurations have resulted in the formation of weirdly shaped "zig-zag" streets which are relatively difficult to navigate. Moreover, because of the irregular placement of apartment buildings in neighborhood plan perspective, some large-scale voids, which look similar to "courtyard" spaces, are erratically formed in between multiple buildings. Noticing that these unorganized and chaotic voids are the most unusual spatial elements within Xiasha Village, this section aims to document these spaces with the assist of dimensioned and noted digital models.

91 Shao, Long, "深圳城中村的形成 The Formation of Urban Villages in Shenzhen", *Zhihu*, Last modified April 16, 2020, https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/132336570.

Fig.3.5.1
Sat, June 19, 2021, 1:06 pm
One restaurant, three apartment building entrances, and bunches of personal items, shrink in this 2.3 m wide tiny-tiny public space.

Fig.3.5.2
The overall axonometric view of Fig.3.5.1, A Handshake Street.

Fig.3.5.3
Tue, June 15, 2021, 12:47 pm
One grocery store, one digital printing store, one restaurant and one apartment entry are stacked around a 1.8 m wide sidewalk space.

Fig.3.5.4
The overall axonometric view of Fig.3.5.3, A Handshake Street.

Fig.3.5.5
Tue, June 15, 2021, 12:59 pm
Part of the restaurant private kitchen space is extended on the nearby public sidewalk.

Fig.3.5.6
The overall axonometric view of Fig.3.5.5, A Handshake Street include the extension space of the nearby restaurant.

Fig.3.5.7
Fri, June 04, 2021, 7:26 pm
A sidewalk street with different width inside Xiasha Village, it locates close to the Xiasha Cultural Plaza, the width ranges between 1.2 meters to 3 meters.

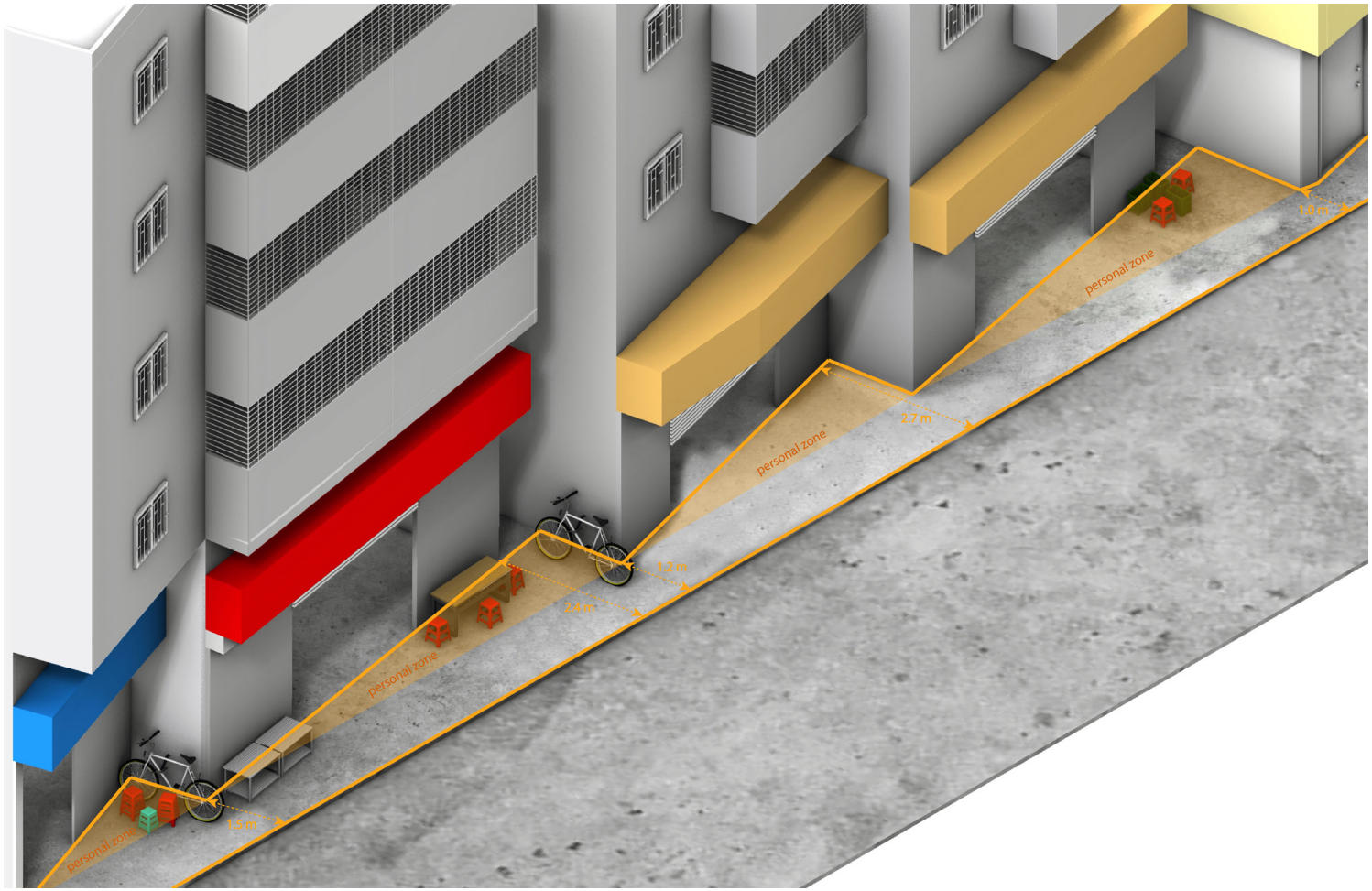


Fig.3.5.8
The overall axonometric view of Fig.3.5.10, A Zig-zag Street.

Fig.3.5.9
Sat, June 05, 2021, 12:19 pm
A courtyard space that locates in-between multiple residential buildings, people use this space as a dining and gathering space.

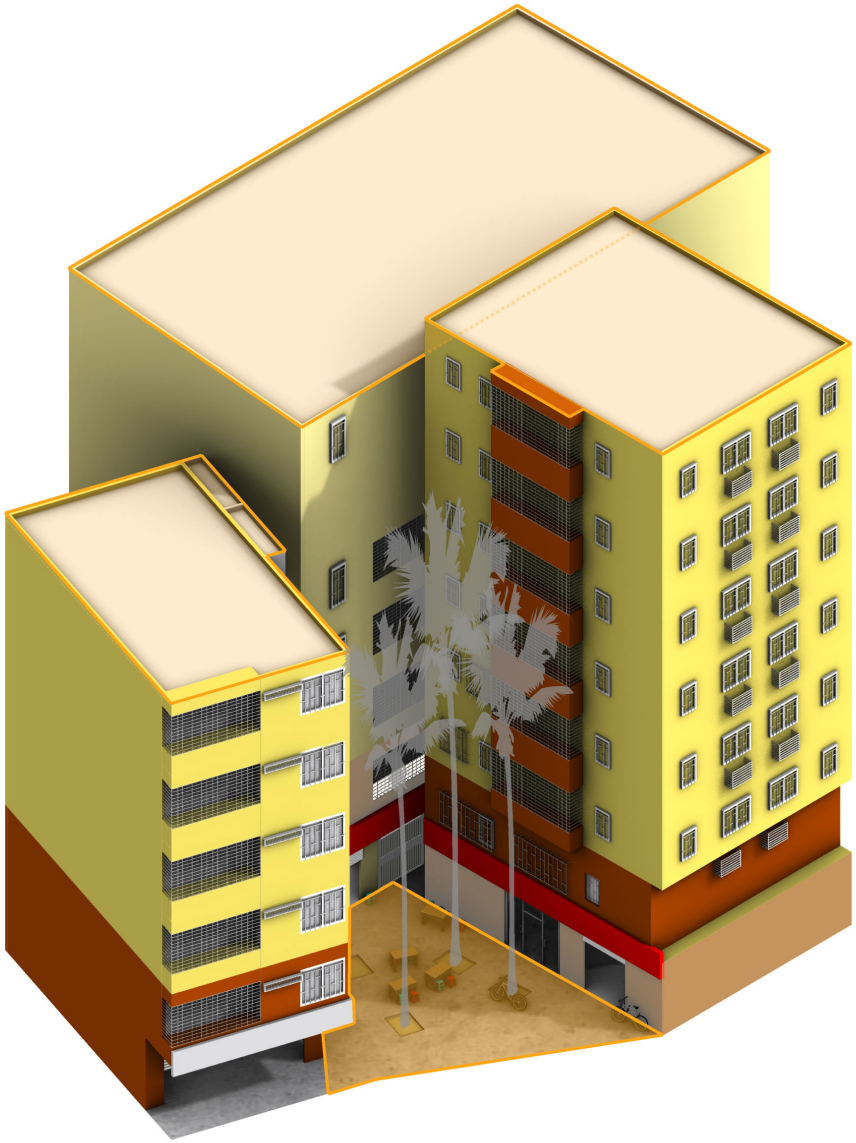


Fig.3.5.10
The overall axonometric view of Fig.3.5.13, A Randomly Formed Courtyard.

Fig.3.5.11
The location of Fig.3.5.1 to Fig.3.5.10 in the site plan of Xiasha Village.

Public life studies in Commercial housing developments

In response to Gehl and Svarre, it will be significant to understand the contents of public life if the goal is to critique the spatial quality of the public spaces[92]. Thus, the studies and records of individuals' behavior on public spaces are significant. This section will concentrate on documenting the public life that happens within the 4 communities and on the major public sidewalks around them. The observation of the public spaces inside the commercial housing communities was recorded in selected time and weather conditions during both weekdays and weekends. The recordings of the public life on the surrounding sidewalk spaces were conducted only during the weekend because early pre-assessment showed that the spaces were highly unoccupied during weekdays. Each observation lasted between 10 to 45 minutes depending on the size of the site. The study focused on observing several factors: for example, how many people are walking during the selected time; how many of them remain stationary; where do people stay and how long are the stays; what are the ages of the audiences. Moreover, this observation document also lists the activities, and records the frequency of these activities that encourage interactions among different individuals. Lastly, this document roughly illustrates individuals' moving path and their moving speed. The times spent conducting the documentation attempted to be as consistent as possible but had to account for long periods of rain as part of the study occurred during the rainy season as well as having some of the sites without access because of COVID-19 shut downs. The dates and times have been noted on all of the photographs as a point of reference.

92 Jan Gehl, Birgitte Svarre, "*How to Study Public Life*", (Washington, Covelo, London: Island Press, 2013), 9-13.

Fig.3.6.1
Thurs, May 27, 2021, 4:48pm
mostly sunny, 34 degree
Public space in Nantian Garden 01.

Fig 3.6.2

Thurs, May 27, 4:45pm to 5:15pm, mostly sunny, 34 degree

Weekday dynamic in the garden space and circulation space on the northwest side of apartment building. For the garden space, about 12 people appeared in this district during the time, most of them were middle-aged, with some young individuals and elderly. Most of them walked in a non-stop motion, their walking speeds ranged from 8s/10m to 20s/10m. The activities were mostly necessary activities such as walking, about 6 of them remained stationary for longer than 5 minutes. The stationary activities included doing physical exercises, and sitting on the benches. For the circulation space, there were around 15 people, most of them walked in non-stop motion, with average walking speed from 7s/10m to 12s/m. One stationary activity happened here. About 18 cars passed by during the 30 minutes observation.

Fig.3.6.3
Sun, April 04, 2021, 3:47pm
mostly sunny, 27 degree
Public space in Nantian Garden 01.

Fig 3.6.4

Sun, April 04, 2021, 3:45pm-4:15pm, mostly sunny, 27 degree

Weekend dynamic in the garden space and circulation space on the northwest side of apartment building. For the garden space, about 16 people appeared in this district during the time, with almost equal number of young, middle-aged, and elderly individuals. Most of them walked in a non-stop motion, their walking speeds ranged from 8s/10m to 16s/10m. The activities were mostly necessary activities such as walking, only 1 of them remained stationary for longer than 5 min. The stationary activities consisted of physical exercises. For the circulation space, there were around 20 people, most of them walked in non-stop motion, with average walking speed from 7s/10m to 18s/10m. There was no stationary activity happening during the time. And there were about 12 cars passed by during the 30 minutes observation.

Fig.3.6.5
Wed, May 26, 2021, 4:17pm
mostly sunny, 34 degree
Public space in Nantian Garden 01.

Fig.3.6.6

Wed, May 26, 2021, 4:10pm-4:50pm, mostly sunny, 34 degree

Weekday dynamic in the garden space and circulation space which is located close to the entrance of Nantian Garden 01. For the garden circulation space, about 40 people appeared in this district during the time, most of them were middle-aged and young individuals with few elderlies. All of them walked in a non-stop motion, their walking speeds ranged from 8s/10m to 14s/10m. The activities were all necessary activities such as walking, about 2 of them remained stationary in the pavilion space. For the circulation space which is located in-between two parking lots, there were around 25 people appeared, again, all of them walked in non-stop motion, with average walking speed from 6s/10m to 12s/10m. And there were no stationary activities. There were about 10 cars passed by during the 40 minutes observation.

Fig.3.6.7
Sat, May 15, 2021, 4:04pm
Mostly sunny, 30 degree
Public space in Nantian Garden 01.

Fig.3.6.8

Sat, May 15, 2021, 3:24pm-4:04pm, mostly sunny, 30 degree

Weekend dynamic in the garden space and circulation space which is located close to the entrance of Nantian Garden 01. For the garden circulation space, about 45 people appeared on this district during the time, most of them were middle-aged and young individuals with a few elderlies. All of them walked in a non-stop motion, their walking speeds ranged from 8s/10m to 16s/10m. The activities were all necessary activities such as walking, and none of them remained stationary in the pavilion space. For the circulation space which is located in-between two parking lots, there were around 20 people, again, all of them walked in non-stop motion, with average walking speed from 6s/10m to 14s/10m. There were no stationary activities. There were about 6 cars that passed by during the 40 minutes observation.

Fig.3.6.9
Mon, May 24, 2021, 4:52pm
Mostly sunny, 31 degree
Public space in Nantian Garden 01.

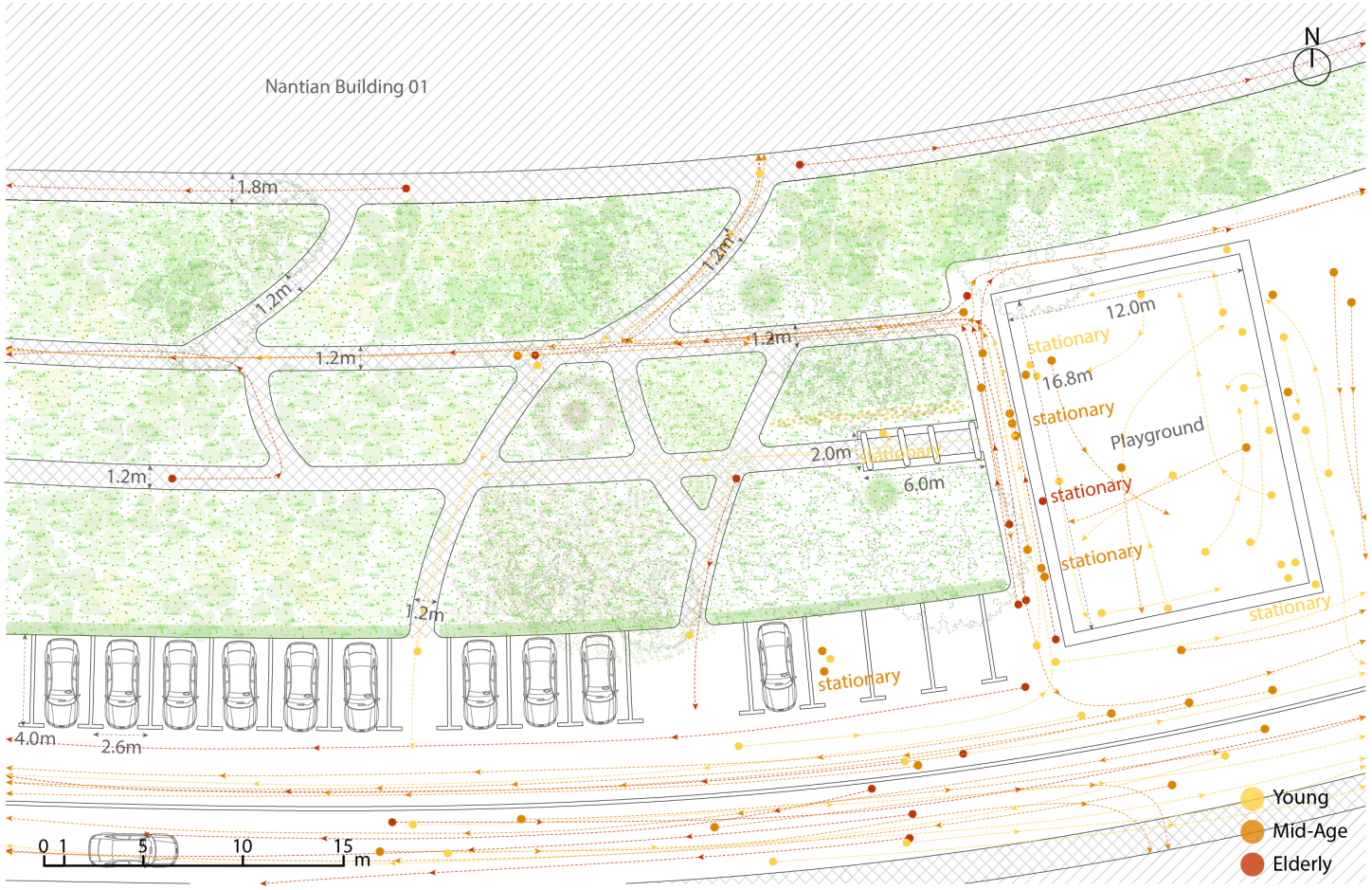


Fig.3.6.10

Mon, May 24, 2021, 4:50pm-5:30pm, mostly sunny, 31 degree

Weekday dynamic in the garden space and circulation space which is located on the right side of Fig.3.6.6. For the garden circulation space, about 9 people appeared in this district, most of them were elderlies. All of them walked in a non-stop motion, their walking speeds ranged from 10s/10m to 18s/10m. For the plaza space at the right side, about 21 people appeared and most of them were young individuals. Most of them were engaged in stationary activities. For the circulation space below, there were around 40 people, again, all of them walked in non-stop motion, with average walking speed from 6s/10m to 12s/10m. There were no stationary activities. There were about 14 cars that passed by during the 40 minutes observation.

Fig.3.6.11
Sat, May 15, 2021, 4:14pm
mostly sunny, 30 degree
Public space in Nantian Garden 01.

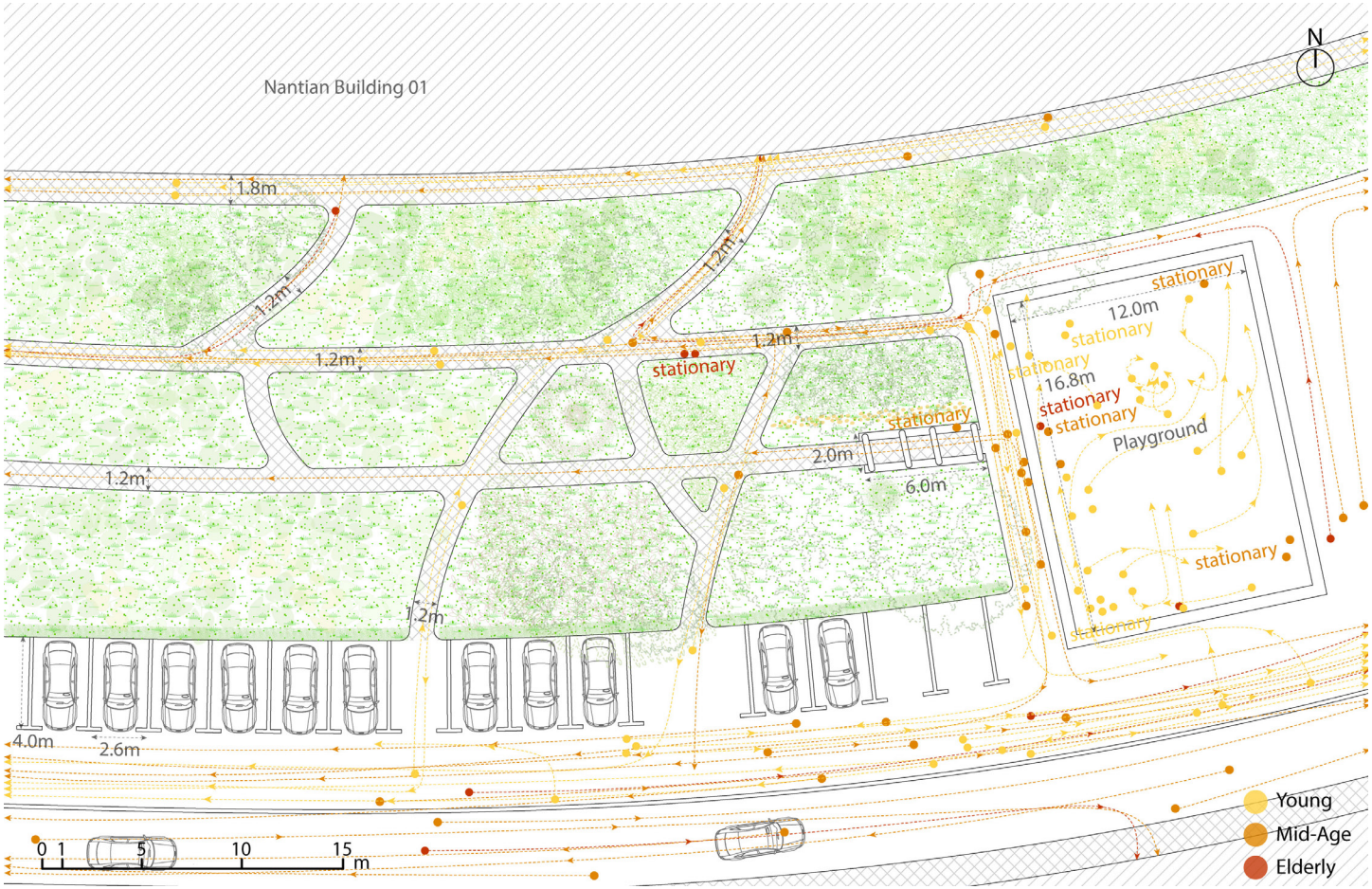


Fig.3.6.12

Sat, May 15, 2021, 4:10pm-4:50pm, mostly sunny, 30 degree

Weekend dynamic in the garden space and circulation space which is located on the right side of Fig.3.6.6. For the garden circulation space, about 19 people appeared in this district, most of them were young and middle-aged individuals. Most of them walked in a non-stop motion, their walking speeds ranged from 7s/10m to 14s/10m. One person was sitting. For the plaza space at the right side, about 33 people appeared and most of them were young individuals and most of the were engaged in stationary activities. For the circulation space below, there were around 29 people, again, all of them walked in non-stop motion, with average walking speed from 6s/10m to 14s/10m. There were no stationary activities. There were about 8 cars that passed by during the 40 minutes observation.

Fig 3.6.13
Wed, April 07, 2021, 4:51pm
mostly cloudy, 31 degree
Public space between building 01 and 02 in Baihua Unit 01

Fig 3.6.14

Wed, April 07, 2021, 4:45pm to 5:05pm, mostly cloudy, 31 degree

Weekday dynamic in the garden space between building 01 and 02 in Baihua Unit 01. About 40 people appeared in this district during the time. There were almost equal amounts of young, middle-aged and elderly individuals. Some of them walked in a non-stop motion, their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to 15s/10m. The rest of them were engaged into some optional activities such as playing chess, eating snacks, doing laundry, chatting, climbing trees, playing games and playing rock, scissors, paper.

Fig 3.6.15
Sun, May 16, 2021, 2:23pm
mostly sunny, 30 degree
Public space between building 01
and 02 in Baihua Unit 01.

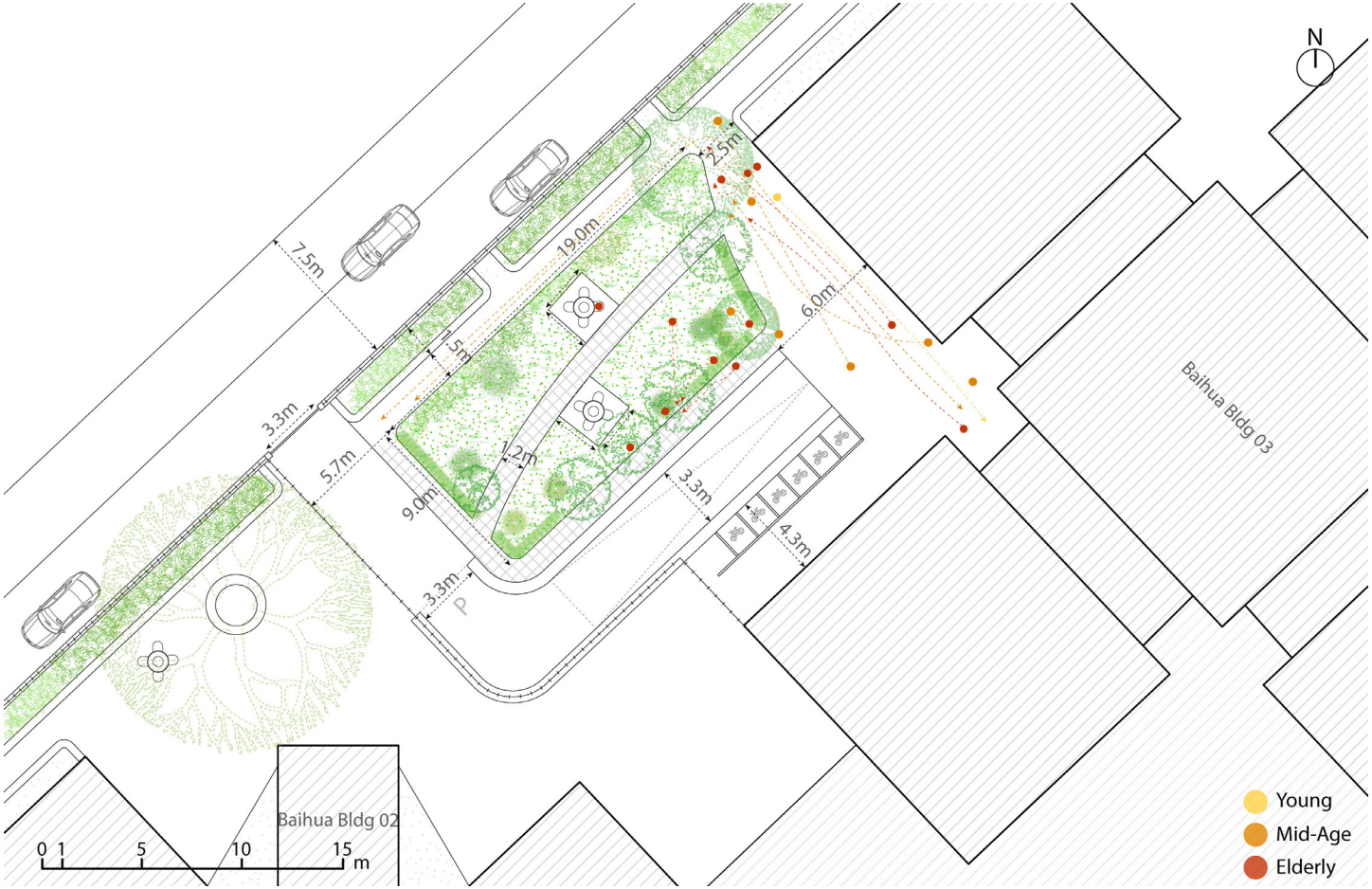


Fig 3.6.16

Sun, May 16, 2021, 2:20pm-2:40pm, mostly sunny, 30 degree

Weekend dynamic in the garden space between building 01 and 02 in Baihua Unit 01. About 21 people appeared in this district during the time. Most of them were middle-aged and elderly individuals. Some of them walked in a non-stop motion, their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to 15s/10m. The people around the garden space were engaged in some optional activities such as hanging laundry items.

Fig 3.6.17
Wed, April 07, 2021, 5:16pm
mostly cloudy, 31 degree
Public space between building 02 and 03 in Baihua Unit 01.

Fig 3.6.18

Wed, April 07, 5:07pm to 5:30pm, mostly cloudy, 31 degree

Weekday dynamic in the garden space between building 02 and 03 in Baihua Unit 01. About 33 people appeared in this district during the time, most of them young and middle-aged individuals. Some of them walked in a non-stop motion, their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to 15s/10m. Less than 6 of them remained stationary around the benches.

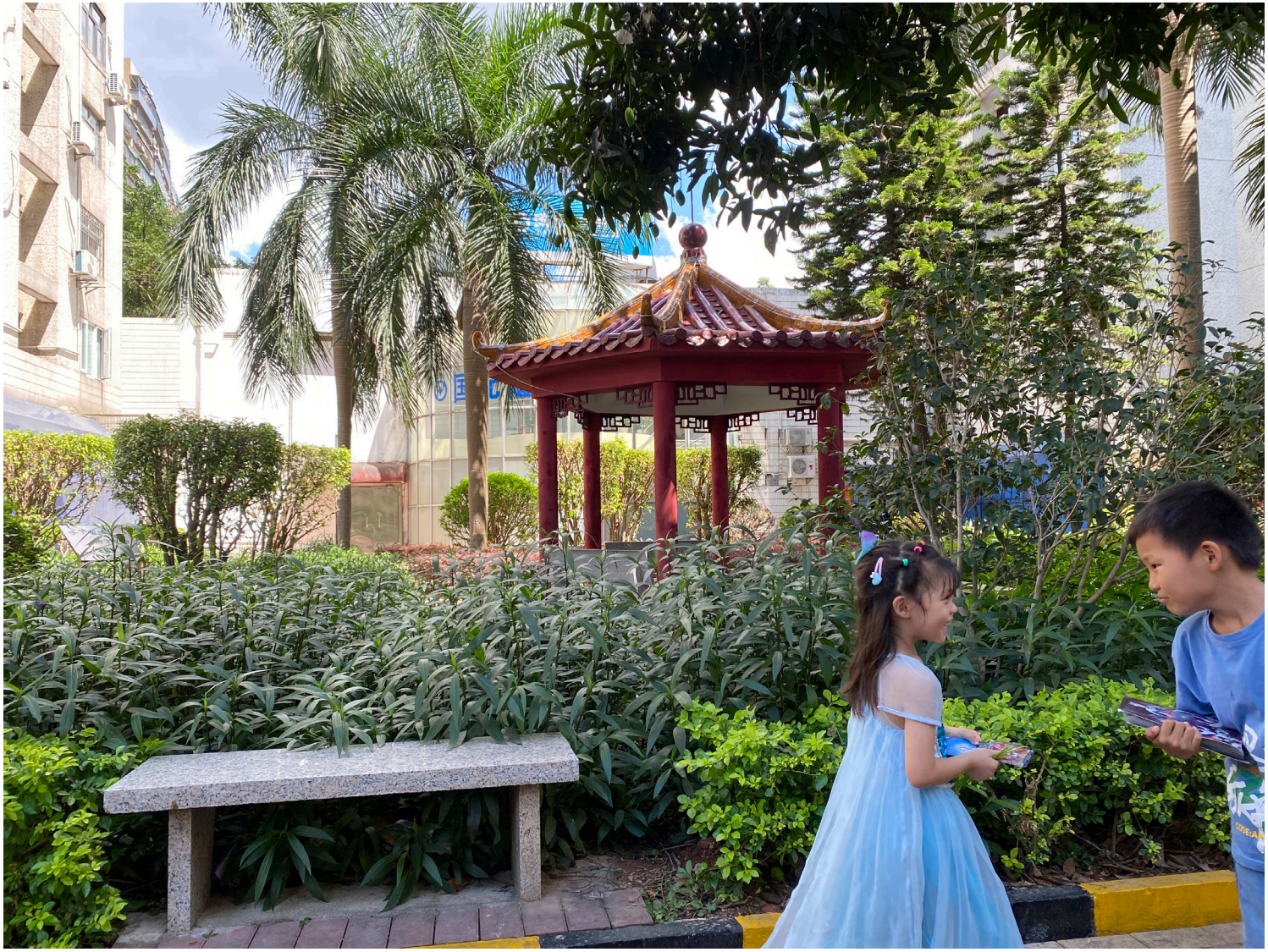


Fig 3.6.19
Sun, May 16, 2021, 2:14pm
mostly sunny, 33 degree
Public space between building 02 and 03 in Baihua Unit 01.

Fig 3.6.20

Sun, May 16, 2021, 2:00pm-2:15pm, mostly sunny, 33 degree

Weekend dynamic in the garden space between building 02 and 03 in Baihua Unit 01. About 16 people appeared on this district during the time. There were almost equally amount of young, middle-aged and elderly people. Most of them walked in a non-stop motion, their walking speeds ranged from 8s/10m to 15s/10m. And 4 of them remained stationary inside the central pavilion.

Fig 3.6.21
Fri, June 18, 2021, 5:45pm
mostly sunny, 33 degree
Public space in Baihua Unit 02.

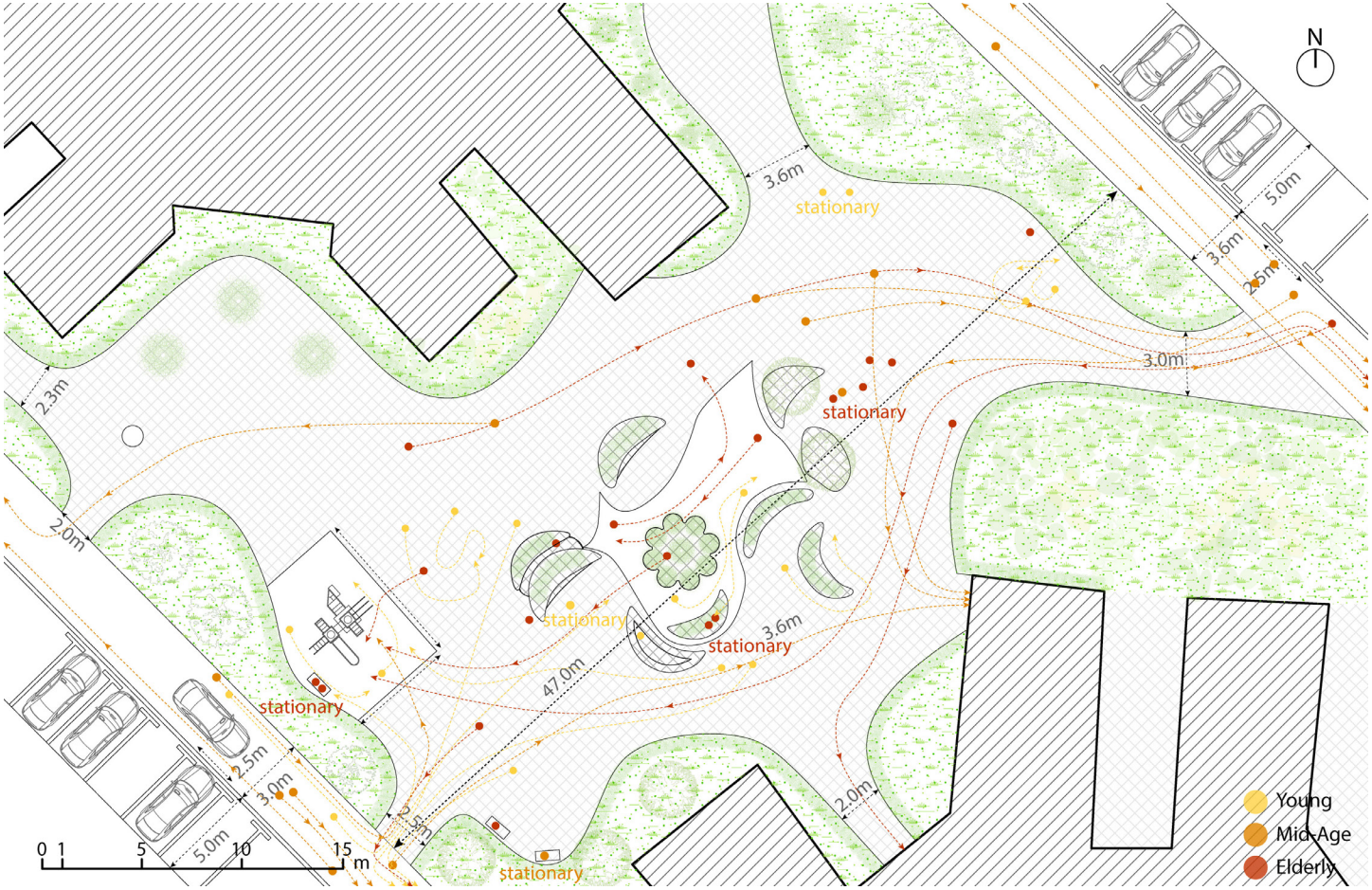


Fig 3.6.22

Fri, June 18, 2021, 5:40pm-6:10pm, mostly sunny, 33 degree

Weekday dynamic in the public space in Baihua Unit 02. About 50 people appeared on this district during the time. There were almost equally amount of young, middle-aged and elderly people. Part of them walked in a non-stop motion, their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to 15s/10m. And around 40 percent of the people were engaged in stationary activities either around the central landscape zone or the southwest playground area. For the circulation spaces which are located at the two side and are both connected with parking spaces, around 12 people appeared around these spaces and none of them were engaged in stationary activities.

Fig 3.6.23
Sat, May 29, 2021, 4:51pm
mostly cloudy, 28 degree
Public space in Baihua Unit 02.

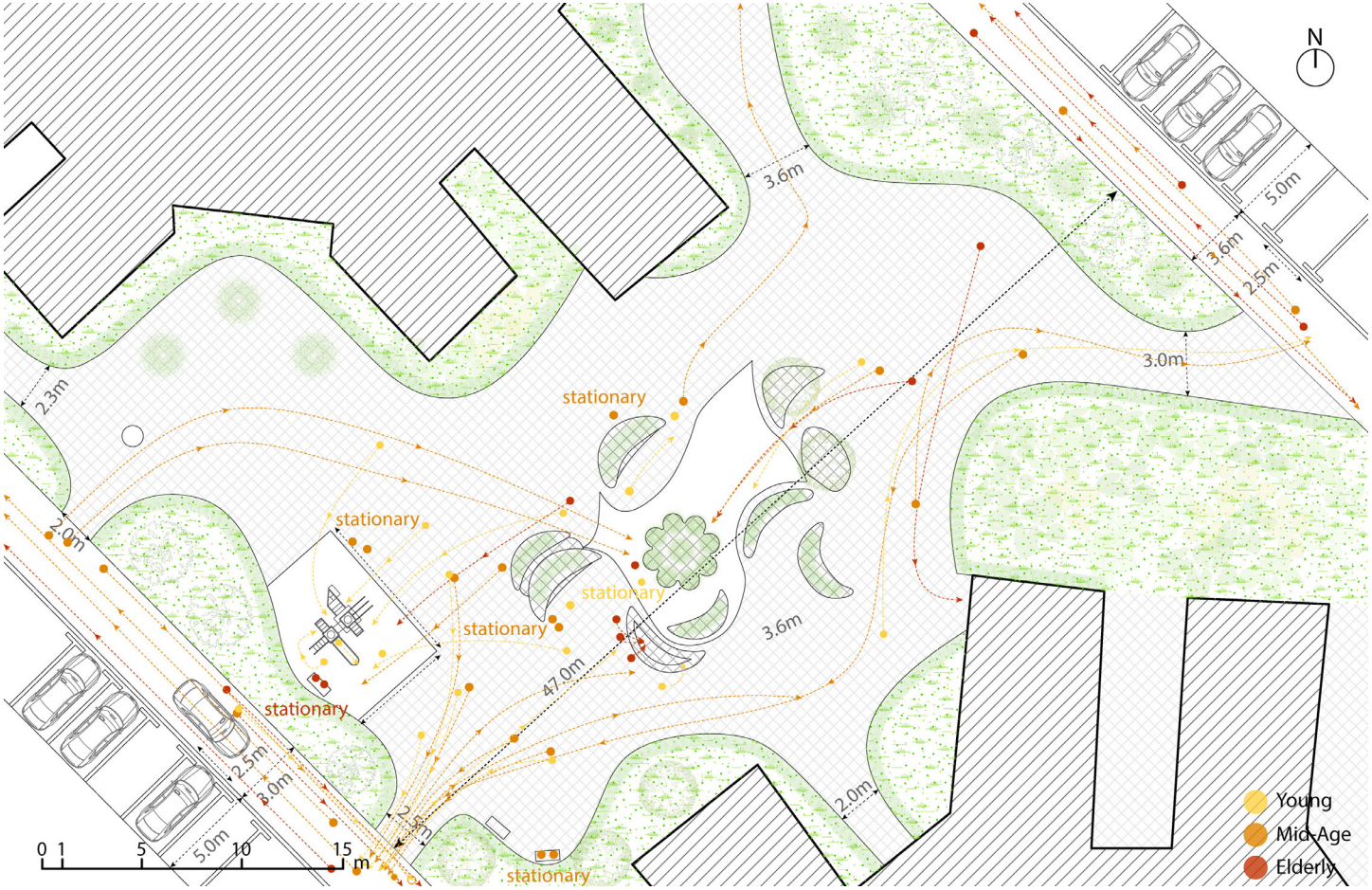


Fig 3.6.24

Sat, May 29, 2021, 4:20pm-4:50pm, mostly cloudy, 28 degree

Weekend dynamic in the public space in Baihua Unit 02. About 60 people appeared on this district during the time. Again, there were almost equally amount of young, middle-aged and elderly people. Part of them walked in a non-stop motion, their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to 20s/10m. And around 30 percent of the people were engaged in stationary activities either around the central landscape zone or the southwest playground area. For the two sides circulation spaces, around 16 people appeared around these spaces and again, none of them were engaged in stationary activities.

Fig 3.6.25
Fri, August 13, 2021, 3:34pm
mostly sunny 32 degree
Public space in Chang'an Garden.

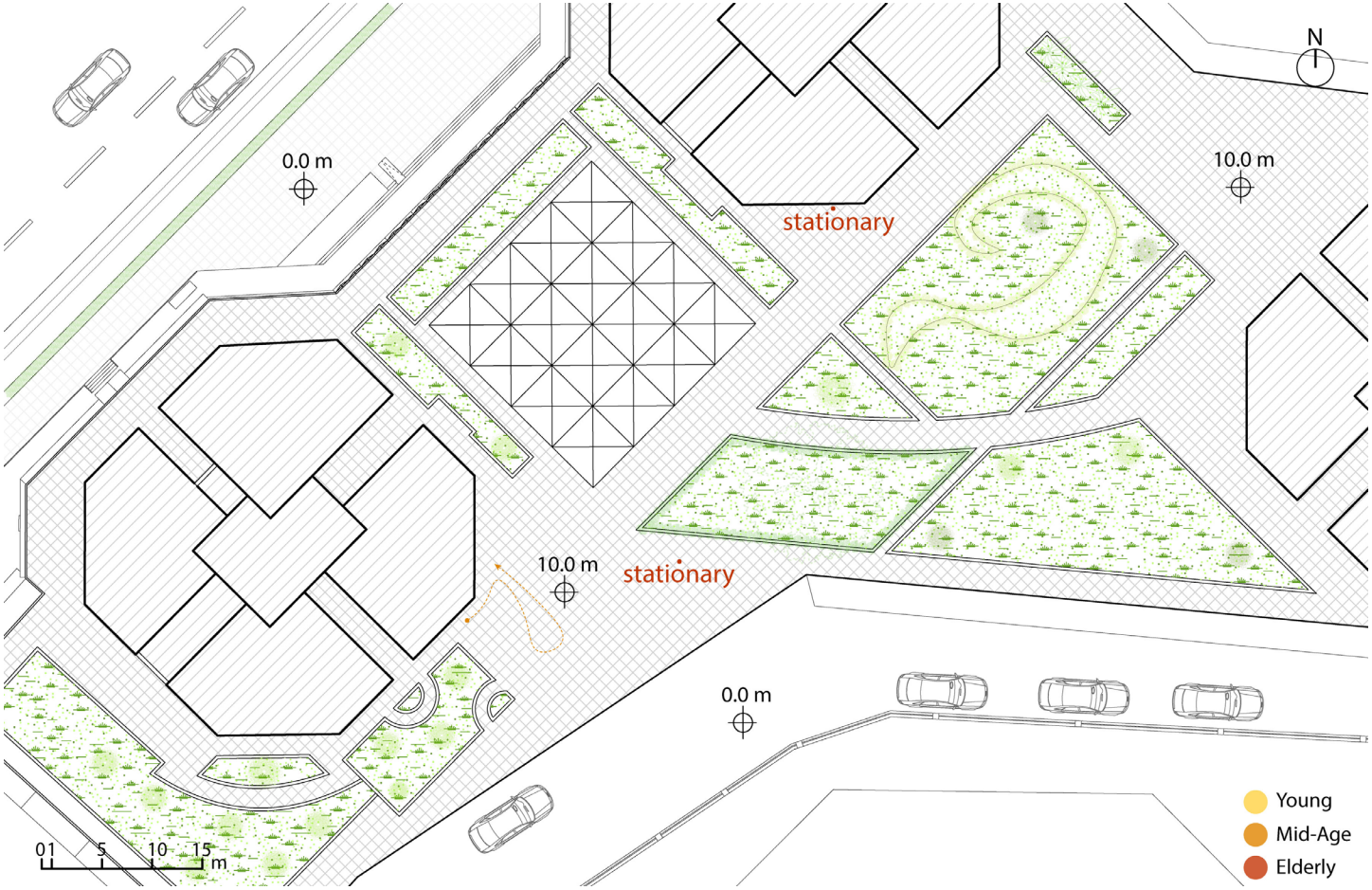


Fig 3.6.26

Fri, August 13, 2021, 3:30pm to 3:50pm, mostly sunny, 32 degree

Weekday dynamic in the roof garden space which is located in-between all three apartment buildings in Chang'an Garden. Only 3 people appeared in this district during the time, and all of them were either elderly or middle-aged individuals. Most of them stayed stationary and were engaged in specific activities such as doing laundry and cleaning the floor. The remaining activity were necessary activities such as walking and passing by. Some of the spaces which connect the 2nd floor of the apartment buildings and this roof garden are used as laundry space with hanging clothes, but no one was engaged in any laundry activities at this time.

Fig 3.6.27
Sun, August 01, 2021, 2:29pm
cloudy, 33 degree
Public space in Chang'an Garden.

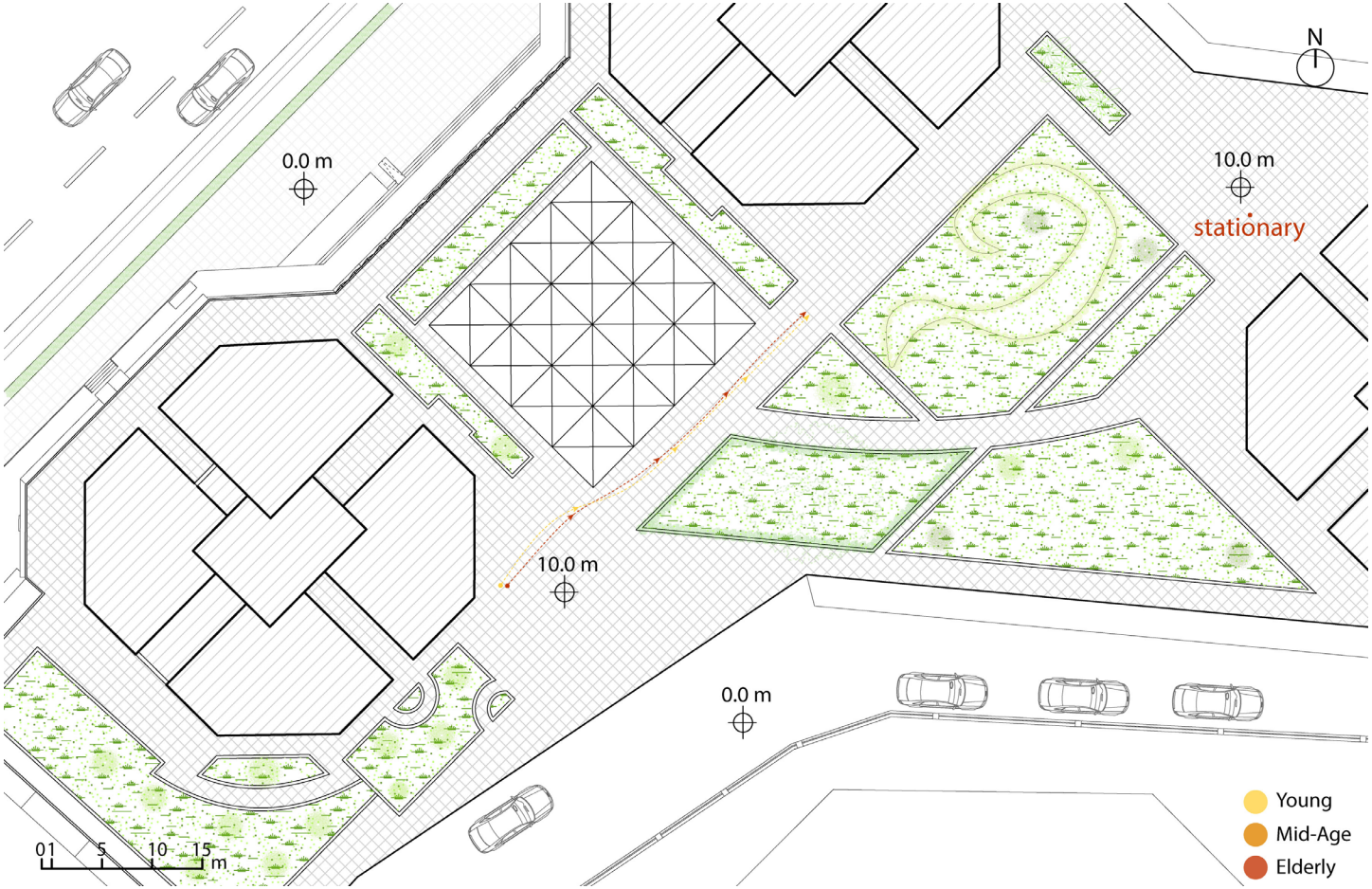


Fig 3.6.28

Sun, August 01, 2021, 2:20pm to 2:35pm, cloudy, 33 degree

Weekend dynamic in the roof garden space which is located in-between all three apartment buildings in Chang'an Garden. Only 3 people appeared in this district during the time, and all of them were either elderly or children. All of them walked in a slow motion, their walking speeds ranged from 12s/10m to 20s/10m. The activities were necessary activities such as walking and passing by. One of them remained stationery and smoking.

Fig 3.6.29
Sat, May 29, 2021, 4:59pm
cloudy, 29 degree
Pedestrian space on Baihua 2nd Rd.

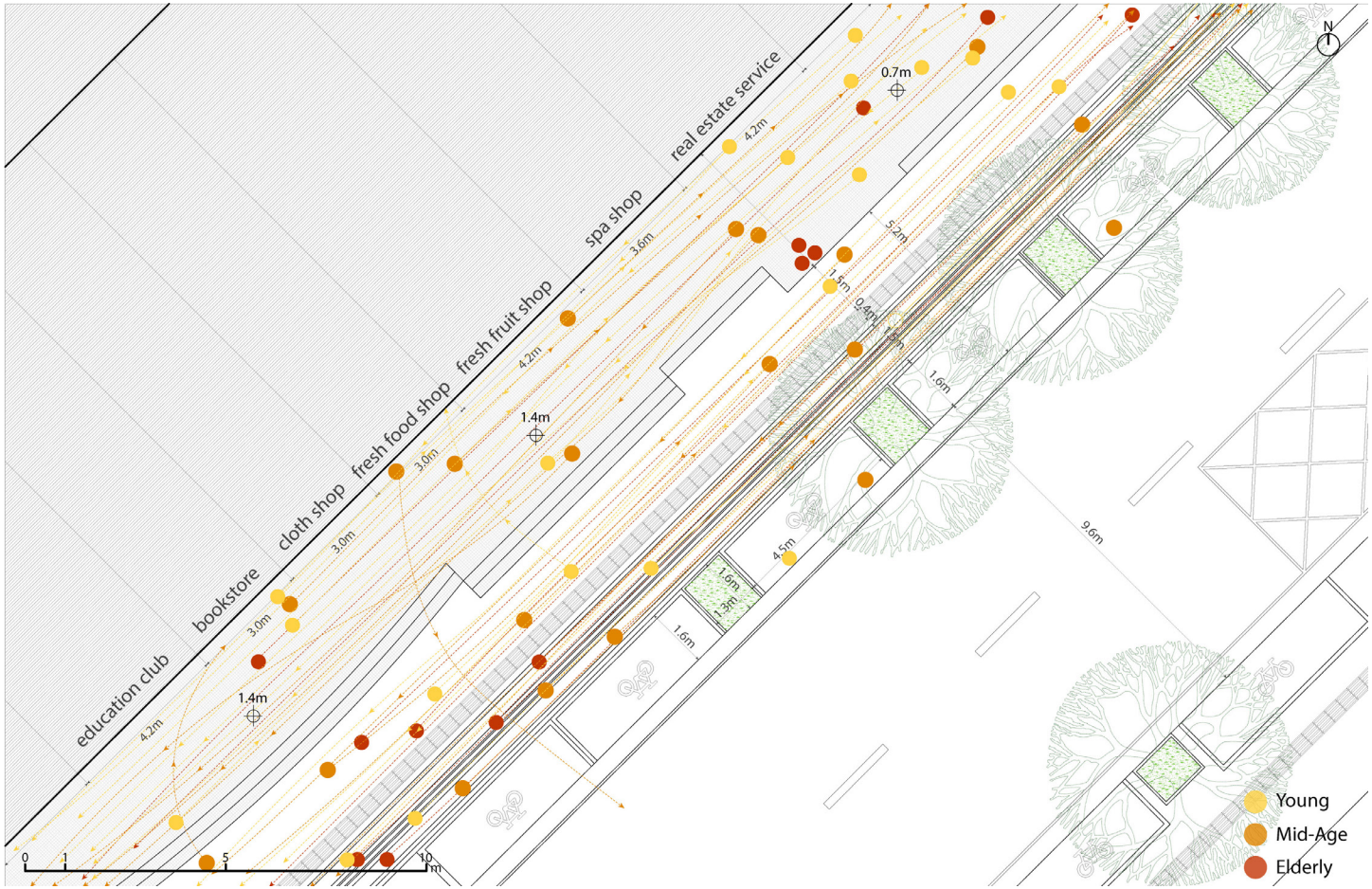


Fig.3.6.30
Sat, May 29, 2021, 4:59pm-5:15pm,
cloudy, 29 degree

Weekend dynamic on the north side of Baihua 2nd Road. The public program and public side walk hybrid side, about 30 people were walking on this sidewalk during the time, most of them are middle-aged and young individual with few elderlies, most of them walked in straight line, their walking speeds ranged from 5s/10m to 12s/10m. Few of them walked in pairs as family members. The activities were mostly necessary activities such as walking, few of the elderly remained stationary on the thin platform which locates 0.7 meter above the ground and close to the programs, few optional activities, for example, walking a dog, talking on the phone, happened few times. The public programs on the side are not very full occupied and there were almost no stationary activities outside these programs.

Fig 3.6.31
Sun, September 26, 2021, 11:55am
cloudy, 31 degree
Pedestrian space on Baihua 3rd Rd.

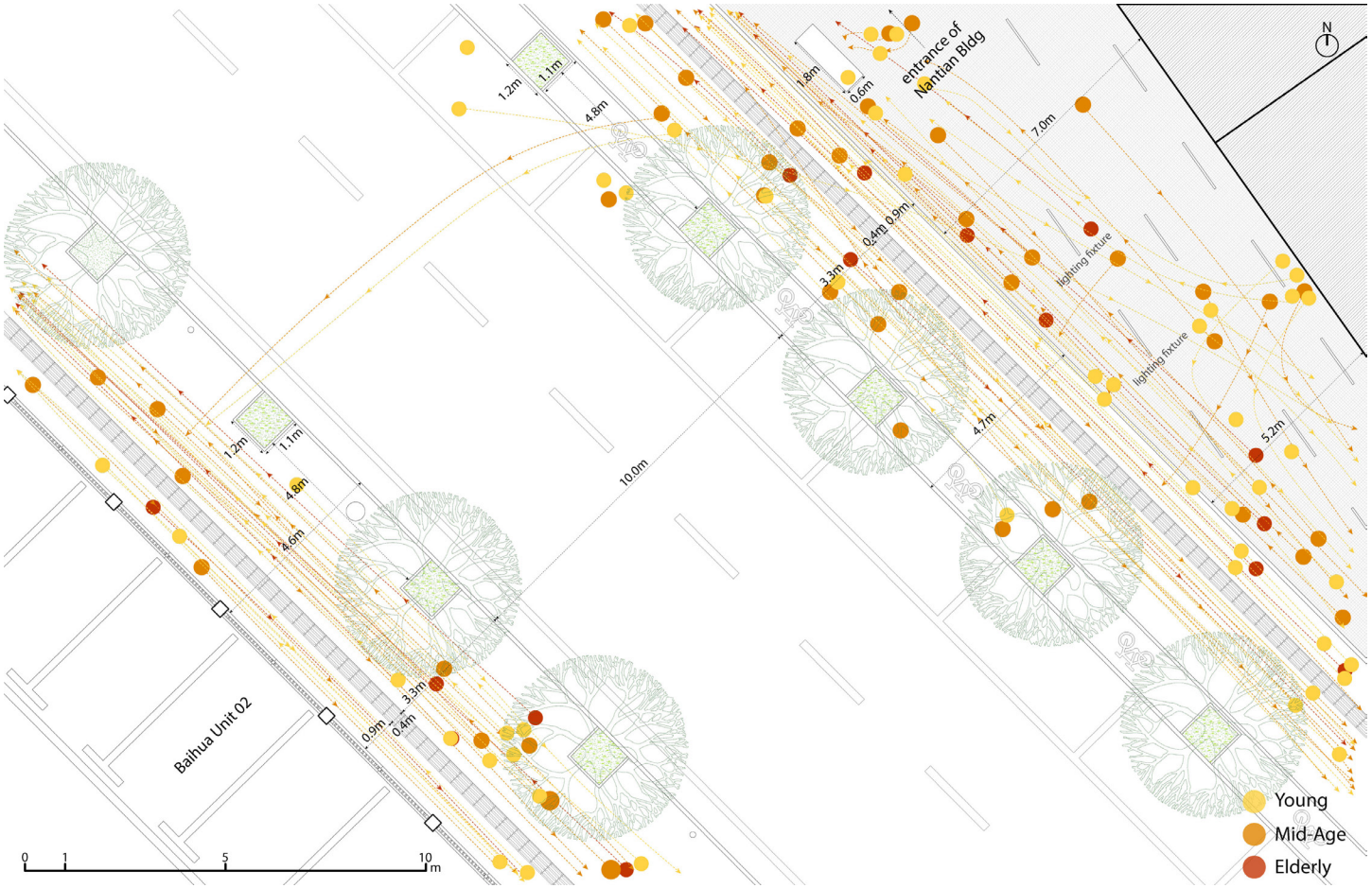


Fig.3.6.32

Sun, September 26, 2021, 11:50am-12:15pm cloudy, 31 degree

Weekend dynamic on the Baihua 3rd road. About 28 people were walking on the southwest side which is close to Baihua unit 02. Most of them were middle-aged and young individual with a few elderlies. Most of them walked in a straight line, their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to 12s/10m. The activities on this side were all non-stop activities. For the northeast side which is closer to Nantian Garden 01, around 60 people appeared, and most of them were middle-aged and young individuals with few elderlies. Most of them were engaged in non-stop walking, and around 6 of them were engaged in stationary activities, such as badminton and rope skipping in the nearby platform on the right side. The public programs on the side are more occupied than those in Baihua 2nd Road.

Fig 3.6.33
Sun, September 26, 2021, 11:45am
sunny, 31 degree
Pedestrian space on Baihua 4th Rd.

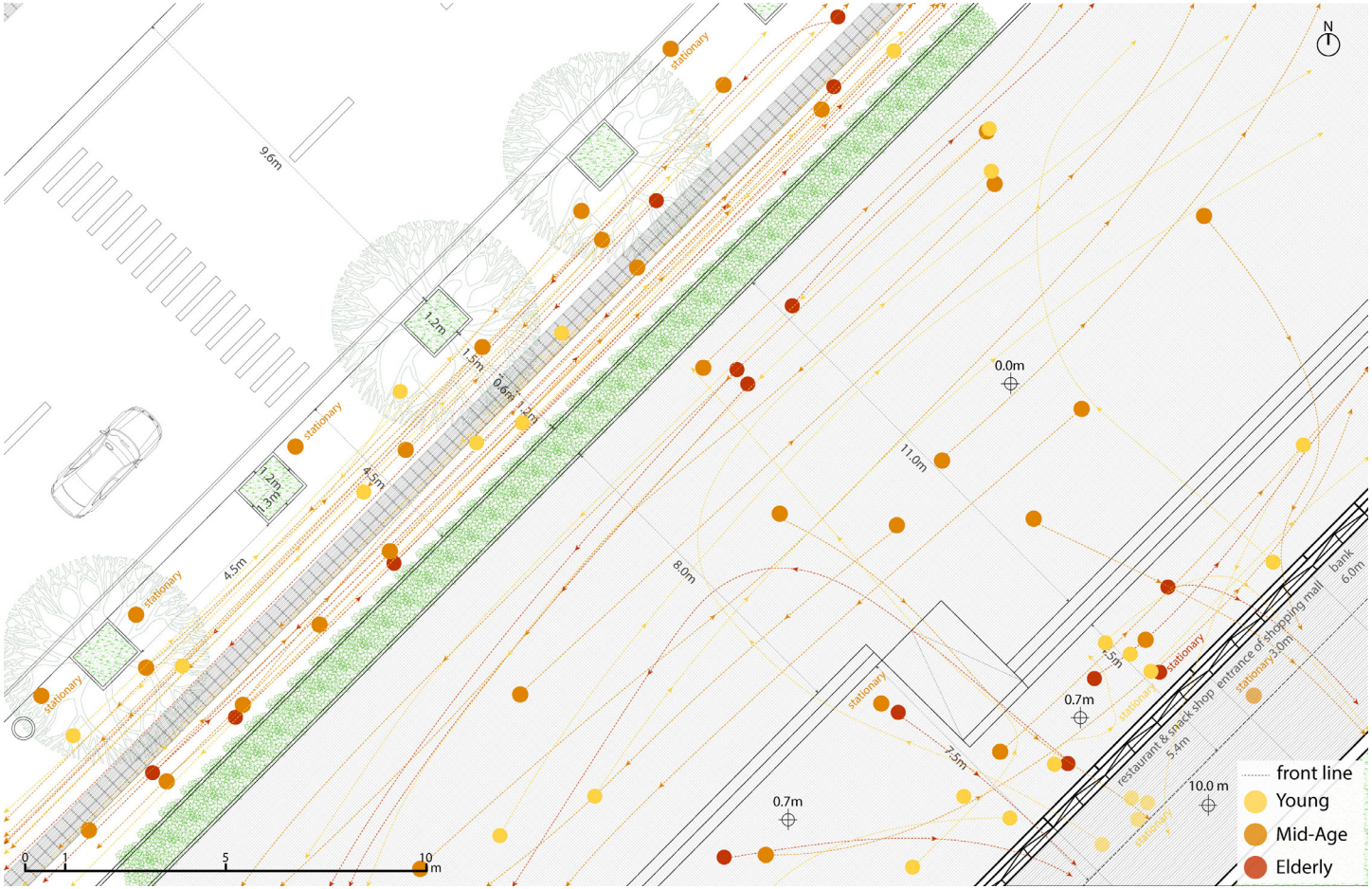


Fig 3.6.34

Sun, September 26, 2021, 11:20am-11:45am

Sunny, 31 degree

Weekend dynamic on the Baihua 4th Road south side which is connected to the ground level public space of Chang'an Building. About 30-40 people were walking on this sidewalk during the time, most of them are middle-aged and young individual with few elderlies, most of them walked in straight line, their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to 12s/10m. Few of them walked in pairs as family members. The activities on the sidewalk side were mostly necessary activities such as walking, almost no optional activities happened during the time. For the platform on the right side, few optional activities, such as badminton, rope skipping, happened few times. The public programs on the side are more occupied than those in Baihua 2nd Road.

Fig 3.6.35
Sat, October 22, 2021, 6:17pm
sunny, 25 degree
Pedestrian space on Baihua 5th Rd.

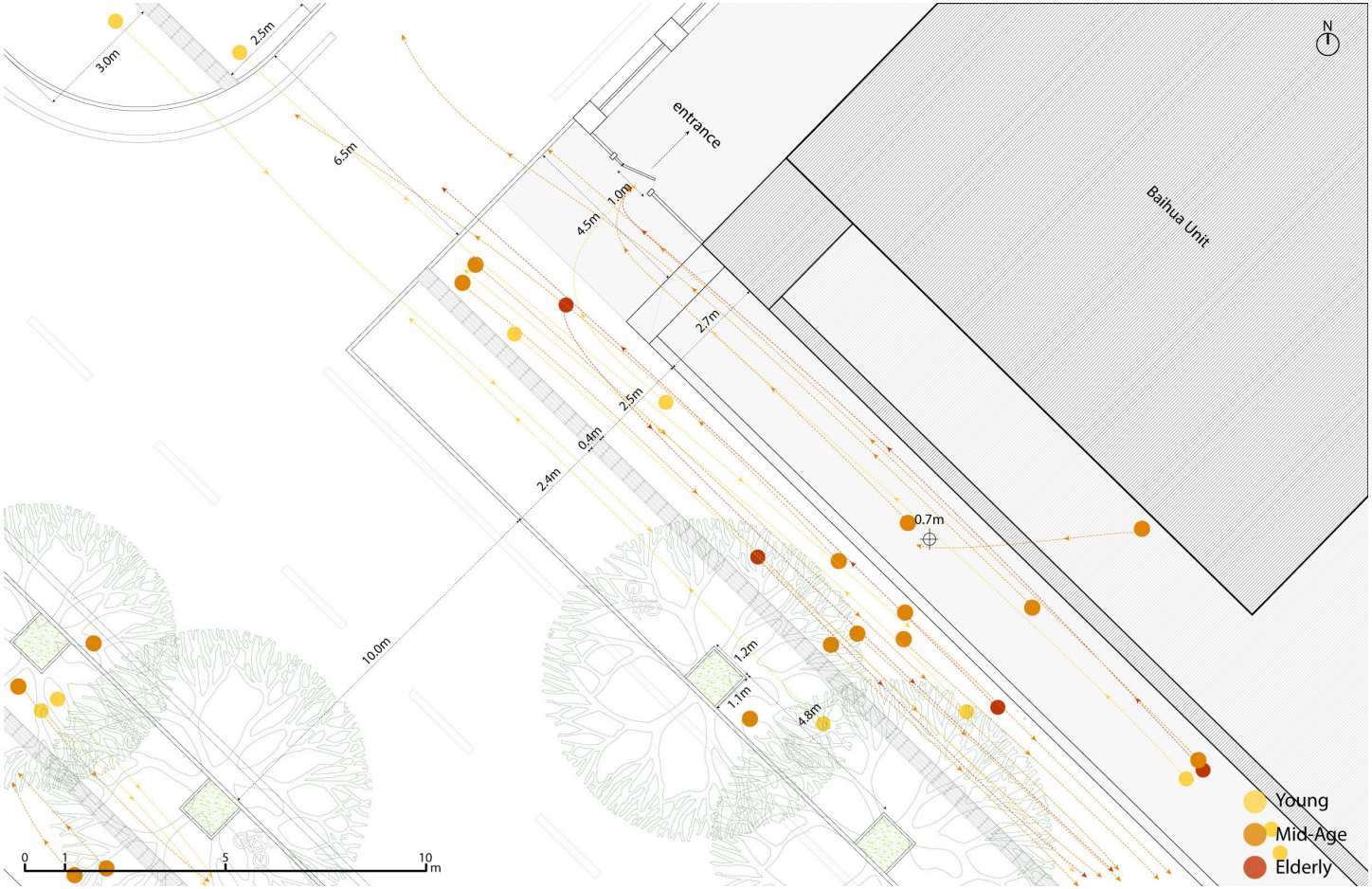


Fig 3.6.36

Sat, October 22, 2021, 6:00pm-6:20pm

Sunny, 25 degree

Weekend dynamic on the Baihua 5th Road south side which is close to Baihua Unit 01. About 29 people were walking on this sidewalk during the time, most of them were middle-aged and young individuals with a few elderlies. Most of them walked in straight line, their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to 12s/10m. Few of them walked in pairs as family members. The activities on the sidewalk side were all necessary activities such as walking, and no optional activities happened during the time.

Public life studies in Xiasha Village

Similar to the strategy described above, this part also aims to record the public life that happened within Xiasha Village. The study also separately records the public life around different parts inside Xiasha Village such as the village edges, typical circulation spaces and these unique spaces previously described (handshake street, zig-zag street) that only seem to occur in Urban Villages. The observations took place in selected time and weather conditions, and the research was mainly finished during the weekday and weekend. Each observation lasted between 15 to 60 minutes depending on the size of the site. The study focused on observing the same factors that were observed during the study of the commercial housing communities.

Fig.3.7.1
Thurs, September 02, 2021,
12:33pm, sunny, 34 degree
Public life on the north east Urban Village edge, and on the exterior plaza of kkone shopping mall.

Fig.3.7.2

Thurs, September 02, 2021, 12:00pm to 12:30pm, sunny, 34 degree

Weekday dynamic on the north east edge of Xiasha Village, opposite the exterior plaza of the KKone Shopping mall. More than 50 people were walking on both sidewalks during the time, most of them were middle-aged, and few young individual and elderlies. Most of them walked in a straight pattern, their walking speeds ranged from 7s/10m to 14s/10m. A high percentage of them walked in pairs as family members on both sides of the street. The activities on both sides of the street were mostly necessary activities such as walking. Very few optional activities happened during the time. Few of the residents were engaged in stationary activities on the staircase beside the village edge. About 20-25 individuals walked across the street and high percent of them walked towards the village from the mall.

Fig.3.7.3
Sat, September 11, 2021, 12:36am
sunny, 35 degree
Public life on the north east urban village edge, and on the exterior plaza of kkone shopping mall.

Fig.3.7.4

Sat, September 11, 2021, 12:06pm to12:36 pm, sunny, 35 degree

Weekend dynamic on the north east edge of Xiasha Village. More than 50 people were walking on both sidewalks during the time, most of them were middle-aged, and few young individual and elderlies. Most of them walked in a straight pattern, their walking speeds ranged from 7s/10m to 18s/10m. A high percentage of them walked in pairs as family members on both sides of the street. The activities on the village edge were mostly necessary activities such as walking. Very few optional activities such as sitting and talking happened on the stair. On the edge of kkone Shopping Mall, around 20 individuals were engaged in stationary activities around the installation of afforestation. About 20 individuals walked across the street and many of them walked towards the village from the mall.

Fig.3.7.5
Thurs, September 02, 2021, 12:43pm
sunny, 34 degree
Public life on the south west urban village edge, close to the Golden Region Harbor community.

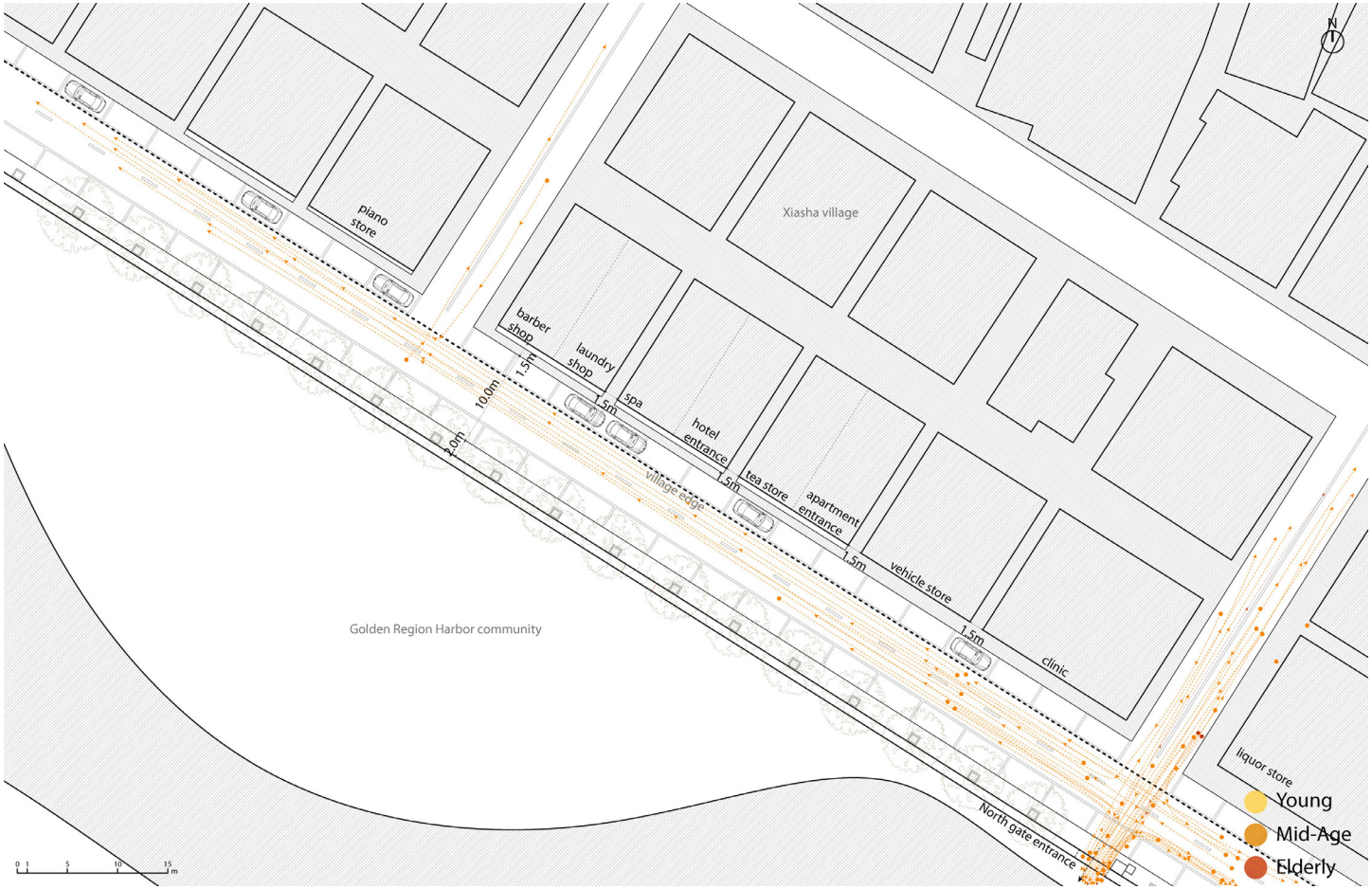


Fig.3.7.6

Thurs, September 02, 2021, 12:40pm to 1:10pm, sunny, 34 degree

Weekday dynamic on the south west edge of Xiasha Village, the relatively “low-end” of the village with less public programs distribution. Less than 40 people were walking on the village sidewalks during the time, most of them were middle-aged, most of them walked in straight pattern with no pauses. Their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to 14s/10m. During the 30 minutes research, around 20 individuals walked inside and out between Xiasha Village and the north gate of the Golden Region Harbor Community, noting that the north gate is not the only and most traffic convenient entrance of this community.

Fig.3.7.7
Sat, September 11, 2021, 11:24am
sunny, 35 degree
Public life on the south west urban village edge, close to the Golden Region Harbor community.

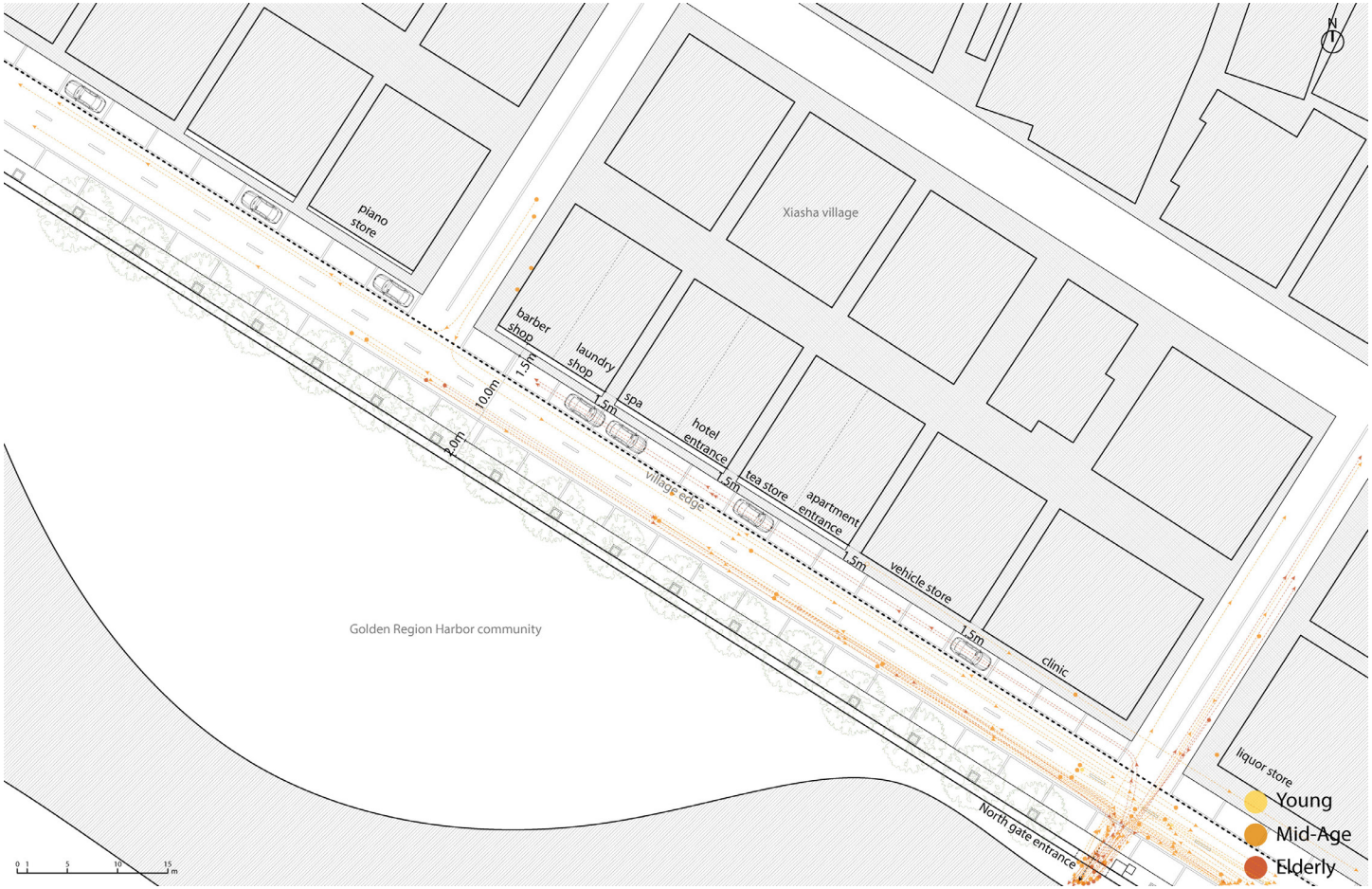


Fig.3.7.8

Sat, September 11, 2021, 11:20am to 11:50am, sunny, 35 degree

Weekend dynamic on the south west edge of Xiasha Village. Around 40 people were walking on the village sidewalks during the time. Most of them were middle-aged, most of them walked in straight pattern with no pauses. Their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to 20s/10m. During the 30 minutes research, around 18 individuals walked inside and out between Xiasha Village and the north gate of Golden Region Harbor Community, noting that the north gate is not the only and most traffic convenient entrance of this community.

Fig.3.7.9
Sat, September 06, 2021, 4:27pm
cloudy, 29 degree
Public life on the south west urban village edge, close to Shangsha Primary School.

Fig.3.7.10

Mon, September 06, 2021, 4:20pm to 4:50pm, cloudy, 32 degree

Weekday dynamic on the south east edge of Xiasha Village. More than 40 people were walking on the village sidewalks during the time. Most of them were young, and also many of them were middle-aged and elderlies. Most of them walked in a straight pattern with multiple pauses. Their walking speeds ranged from 7s/10m to 13s/10m. A high percent of them walked in pairs as family members. Stationary activities happened frequently here, mostly on the edge of each of the public programs. On the edge of the primary school, around 20 individuals were walking in straight lines with almost no pauses. There were almost no stationary activities happening on this side.

Fig.3.7.11
Wed, August 11, 2021, 5:54pm
cloudy, 33 degree
Public life on one of the main circulation within Xiasha Village.

Fig.3.7.12

Wed, August 11, 2021, 5:30pm to 6:30pm, cloudy, 33 degree

Weekday dynamic on the east side of Xiasha Village. More than 50 people were walking on this human-vehicles shared public space during the time. Most of them were middle-aged and young individual with few elderlies. Most of them walked in discontinuous patterns with multiple pauses, their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to more than 15s/10m. More than half of them walked in pairs as family members or partners. About 30 to 40 percent of individuals had somehow engaged in stationary activities such as chatting, sitting or even dining. Most programs alongside the sidewalks were extremely fully occupied.

Fig.3.7.13
Sun, August 22, 2021, 6:47pm
sunny, 35 degree
Public life on one of the main circulation within Xiasha Village.

Fig.3.7.14

Sun, August 22, 2021, 6:30 pm to 7:15pm, sunny, 35 degree

Weekend dynamic on the east side of Xiasha Village. Around 70 people were walking on this human-vehicles shared public space during the time. Most of them were middle-aged and young individual with few elderlies. Most of them walked in discontinuous patterns with multiple pauses, their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to more than 15s/10m. About 30 to 40 percent of individuals have somehow engaged in stationary activities such as chatting, sitting. Some groups of working-class individuals set up a removable group dining at the southwest corner. Most programs alongside the sidewalks were extremely fully occupied.

Fig.3.7.15
Sun, August 22, 2021, 6:23pm
sunny, 35 degree
Public life on the Zig-zag street within Xiasha Village.

Fig.3.7.16

Sun, August 22, 2021, 6:00 pm to 6:30pm, sunny, 35 degree

Weekend day dynamic on the east side of Xiasha Village. Around 60 people were walking on this human-vehicles shared public space during the time. Most of them were middle-aged and young individuals, with about 10 elderlies. Most of them walked in continuous patterns without pauses on the pedestrian and traffic route combined space, their walking speeds ranged from 6s/10m to more than 15s/10m. About 50 percent of individuals had somehow engaged in stationary activities such as chatting, sitting and dining. The stationary activities happened mostly on the east side of the human and traffic shared route. Most programs alongside the sidewalks were mostly fully occupied. Some programs were fully occupied at the entrance space.

Chapter 04

Public space and social life

According to the completed documentation, it is obvious that the overall spatial features of the public space, plus the style of life and social interactions, are fundamentally different inside the commercial housing communities and Urban Villages. Commercial housing was intended to stand for high quality life style and Urban Villages on the other hand, have been thought to represent miserable living conditions. However, as mentioned, according to the previous description, the overall residential life and wellbeing inside Urban Villages seemed better than expected if we look at individuals' thoughts and behaviors. The Shenzhen metropolis is considered the region in China with the least amount of rootedness and the most amount of solidarity[93]. In this case, commercial housings, which provide the residential spaces for most citizens in the metropolis area, may need to be blamed for causing these issues. Thus, this section has the ambition to dig deeply into the relationship between public spaces designs and their social impacts by comparing and discussing these factors in Xiasha Village and the 4 chosen commercial housing communities. The research will analyze how the recorded social behaviors are affected by the surrounding spaces. Moreover, the argument will be coupled with the information quoted from several literature works that focus on the connection among public spaces, social life and individuals' wellbeing. The goal is to discuss how public space design can potentially have impact on an individual's wellbeing. The analyses will be separated into different parts. Ultimately, it will be vital to know how we can design public space that addresses whether the neighborhood will be filled with the sense of inclusion or exclusion. Furthermore, the design and arrangement of public spaces can potentially have significant impact on neighborhood safety which is also important to maintain individuals' wellbeing. The overall perception of the qualities of the public spaces can be one of the most important factors to build the sense of rootedness. Lastly, based on this research and arguments, this section aims to discover the voice in regards to attitude that the public should have towards Xiasha Village and other Urban Village communities.

The Liminal Identity

Created using a unique design vernacular and thus looking completely different than the products coming out of professional design strategies, Urban Villages can mostly be distinguished from their surroundings because of the previously mentioned chaotic elements. Moreover, these communities have been described as hotbeds of social degradation that may grow as "spatial viruses" that affect their surrounding environments; and thus, special treatments, controls and supervisions are needed to avoid contamination

93 Searle, K., Blashki, G., Kakuma, R. et al. "Current needs for the improved management of depressive disorder in community healthcare centres, Shenzhen, China: a view from primary care medical leaders." *Int J Ment Health Syst* 13, 47 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-019-0300-0.

of the nearby urban environment[94]. The common criticisms of these villages as "dirty, chaotic, bad"[95]. Discrimination have resulted in exclusion associated with "othering" because Urban Villages, unlike the more recently design areas in the Shenzhen metropolis that are clearly defined and standardized, look and feel very different[96]. This characteristic is reflected in the term "village", which refers to a "borderer" and assumes a larger scale compared to the description of "commercial housing community", which clearly indicates a group of residential buildings for the purpose of living. As mentioned before, Urban Village communities are formed randomly based on individuals' needs and interests, instead of heavily relying on any historical preservation requirement or authentic urban planning strategy. Even though they were developed from a group of historic local agricultural villages, they nevertheless have extremely limited connection with the original form[97]. Thus, it is extremely challenging to define the Urban Villages' position with the overall urban planning perspective. This vague and varied identity makes them resemble a group of non-places, or seem to be just as simple as "village places", which have always tended to exist in a liminal and unclear stage[98]. The term liminal usually refers to the sense of transition, which means the object belongs to neither one nor another category but stands in the space in-between[99]. Such places may not be seen to fit with a standardized future city, because their existence results in senses of awkwardness due to their non-conformity with current ideas.

In fact, it is almost no doubt that Urban Villages, as liminal spaces with so many abnormal spatial characteristics, do not fit with overall urban master plans. Urban Village edges, as the most exterior parts which can represent the overall identity of the place and first capture people's attention, fundamentally illustrate and enhance this effect. Therefore, this section aims to explore and discuss the most visible parts of Xiasha Village that typify this difference: the village edges. The following paragraphs will photographically capture the northeast, southwest and the southeast village edges and analyze their features by breaking down their spatial typology and relevant functions. These will then be compared with the spatial characteristics found in commercial housing communities and discuss their difference with concerns about social effects.

94 Dror Kochan, "*PLACING THE URBAN VILLAGE: A Spatial Perspective on the Development Process of Urban Villages in Contemporaty China*," INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF URBAN AND REGIONAL RESEARCH, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2427.12287, 933.

95 "「脏乱差」的城中村，真有存在的必要？|图说深圳| For the "Dirty, Chaotic and Grotesque Urban Villages, do they really have to exist? | Photo Essay of Shenzhen", *Souhu*, Last modified February 05, 2018, https://www.sohu.com/a/221024016_355740.

96 Ibid.

97 Dror Kochan, "PLACING THE URBAN VILLAGE: A Spatial Perspective on the Development Process of Urban Villages in Contemporaty China," *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF URBAN AND REGIONAL RESEARCH*, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2427.12287, 929.

98 Dror Kochan, "PLACING THE URBAN VILLAGE: A Spatial Perspective on the Development Process of Urban Villages in Contemporaty China," *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF URBAN AND REGIONAL RESEARCH*, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2427.12287, 930.

99 Julia Thomas, "Understanding How Liminal Space Is Different From Other Places", *betterhelp*, Last modified February 08, 2022, https://www.betterhelp.com/advice/general/understanding-how-liminal-space-is-different-from-other-places/.

The penetrable edge

We start from the northeast village edge (Fig.3.4.3), located close to the high-end kkone shopping mall. This edge is the most visible one because it is usually used as the entrance to Xiasha Village for both local residents and outsiders. Different from the elegant, coherent, consecutive, massive, solid and impenetrable edge of the shopping mall, the village edge, the one located right behind the public sidewalk space, is simultaneously divided by small-sized shop and service programs at the ground floor of each building unit. Each building unit is separated by another layer of sidewalk and gap. These small to tiny gaps are mainly used for circulation, and people can walk into the Urban Village blocks from outside. Moreover, because of the unique spatial feature that the gaps seem seamlessly attached to the building, some residents choose to slightly transform the gap space to a self-made laundry space by hanging their clothes on the wood or plastic rods which are stuck in-between the gap. Thus, the gap spaces, that are attached to the public programs and directly connected to the public sidewalk, are used as a semi-public space and occupied by personal items that are not intended to be shared with the public. This combination of the totally public sidewalk space, private owned public programs spaces and the semi-public spaces create spatial hierarchies alongside the village edge (Fig.4.1.1). The gap spaces also make the village edge penetrable but also, somehow discontinuous with voids.

Moving to the southwest part of Xiasha Village (Fig.3.4.5), the edge here is relatively less noticeable because it is opposite to a commercial housing community instead of a shopping mall. However, this edge is wider because it is also attached to a 10-meter-wide circulation space shared by residents and vehicles. Like the one mentioned before, this edge is also separated by service programs on the ground floor. The entrances of these programs are seamlessly attached to a 1.5 meter wide, one step height circulation route which is purely used as pedestrian space, and the route is directly attached to parking spaces. Again, like the northeast village edge, the tiny gap between each apartment unit is filled with personal items such as clothes and bikes. Furthermore, as shown in Fig.4.1.2, despite their private storage function, these gaps are also used as public circulation spaces because they are directly connected to the sidewalk spaces within Xiasha Village. In this case, the overall structure of this village edge can be broken down into different layers which spontaneously support different uses such as walking, parking, laundry, shopping and most importantly, illustrate the inside more personal scene of the Urban Village to the outside public because the edge is visually and physically penetrable.

The engageable edge

The southeast village edge is located close to the Shangsha Primary School (Fig.3.4.7). It is also separated by different service programs, and the overall spatial language

Fig.4.1.1
Spatial analysis of Fig.3.4.3, northeast boundary of Xiasha Village.

Fig.4.1.2
August 22, 2021, 6:59 pm
The southwest boundary of Xiasha Village locates close to Golden Region Harbor community.

Fig.4.1.3
Spatial analysis of Fig.4.1.2, the southwest boundary of Xiasha Village.

Fig.4.1.4
Spatial analysis of Fig.3.7.9, the southwest boundary of Xiasha Village.

is quite different from the previous two edges because the gap between each apartment unit is blocked by iron fences. Thus, the edge overall is not as penetrable as the other two. However, the two-step landing spaces, which are attached to the public sidewalk, are installed in front of every program's entrance space, and every landing space is shared by 2 to 3 programs (Fig.3.7.9). These landing spaces have created an interesting relationship, plus spatial hierarchy, with both the attached programs and the public sidewalk spaces. If we considered the public programs as semi-public spaces because they are privately owned but partially shared with public, then the attached two step landing spaces can be seen as 75 percent public spaces, because figurally and psychologically, the individuals, who frequently occupy the spaces here, are the ones that just played as consumer roles in the attached programs (Fig.4.1.4). In this case, the landing space provides extra spots to support the consumers' stationary activities, and nicely organize the different activities between those who actually spent time inside these programs and those who just passed by. The spatial hierarchies here do not organize the activities by splitting the audience into different groups and sacrificing the sense of inclusion, instead, they perfectly provide the clear connection between the people who stay inside the programs, the one who remains stationary outside and the individuals who are engaged in motion activities on the public sidewalk space.

New relationship

With a clear glimpse of the spatial characteristics of the liminal and blurry identities of the Urban Village edges, it is vital to explore their impact on the social perspective. First of all, quoted from Dror Kochan in his work "Placing the Urban Village: A Spatial perspective on the Development Process in Contemporary China", the spatial liminality of the Urban Village space, particularly the Urban Village edge, allows for a certain spatial parity and blurring of differences. It also injects some new and instable elements into the stable structures which can spontaneously form a new social relationship[100]. Based on the spatial typology, the most remarkable social activities that have a great potential to happen around the Urban Village edge are the random and unplanned interactions, as known as the unstable elements. As mentioned before, the village edges are automatically formed with different types of spaces such as public spaces, semi-public spaces and semi-private spaces. They make the edge look discontinuous and chaotic. Nevertheless, these discontinuous and liminal moments, which serve different functions, play a significant role in supporting the random interactions. The possibilities that an individual randomly interacts with others are significantly increased because these spaces encourage communication among individuals who are

100 Dror Kochan, "PLACING THE URBAN VILLAGE: A Spatial Perspective on the Development Process of Urban Villages in Contemporaty China," *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF URBAN AND REGIONAL RESEARCH*, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2427.12287, 934.

all engaged in similar or different stationary activities at the same place during the same time. For example, people are likely to have some connection if they meet with others in such a tiny environment and stay there for a while.

Moreover, these discontinuous elements also promote the connection between individuals who live either inside the Urban Village, or outside and are engaging in motion activities such as walking and passing by. These connections can be either purely visual or orally related. To be more specific, people who are passing by Xiasha Village can take a glimpse of what is happening within this community, and the village residents are able to have good understanding about the scenes happening outside of Xiasha Village. Therefore, these penetrable and discontinuous features allow the formation of new social relationships, and they can be either the communication among individuals who live inside Xiasha Village, or the connection between the people who do live here and who do not.

The popular community

Despite the potential to enhance the connection and create new social relationships, the edges of the Urban Village make themselves as desirable elements to the surrounding environment. Again, as described by Dror Kochan, the Urban Village edge spaces attract populations from the outside environment, and convert the liminal space into a buffer zone with the ambiguous characteristics and fulfill a diverse set of purposes for both local and outsiders[101]. As a living and residential based community, the bonus features, which are the distributions of public service programs along the village edge, truly attract many people from the nearby neighborhoods, and somehow transforms the grotesque community to one which is needed by the surrounding. Because of the geographical location, the northeast edge is considered as one of the most commercial sites within the whole Xiasha Village. Over 90 percent of the ground floor programs are used as restaurants and snack shops and they are fully occupied most of time. According to the public life study which took place in September 02 and September 11, 2021, the southwest edge was filled with individuals who came from the nearby luxury shopping mall. There were about 25 individuals, who seemed like middle-class people working in mid-to high end real estate or marketing offices, came to the village site for dining or shopping (Fig.4.1.5). Similarly, for the southwest village edge which is located close to the Shangsha Primary School, the ground floor programs here focus on providing academic facilities to the local students. So based on the public life research, the village edge space here is fully occupied by teenagers and there were over 30 different individuals engaged in stationary activities during the 30 minutes observation. This scene is fundamentally different

101 Dror Kochan, "PLACING THE URBAN VILLAGE: A Spatial Perspective on the Development Process of Urban Villages in Contemporaty China," *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF URBAN AND REGIONAL RESEARCH*, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2427.12287, 933.

Fig.4.1.5
Thurs, September 02, 2021, 12:30pm to 1:00pm, sunny, 34 degree
Over 25 individuals come to Xiasha Village from the nearby luxury shopping mall.

Fig.4.1.6
Mon, September 06, 2021, 4:20pm to 4:50pm, cloudy, 32 degree
More than 30 individuals were engaged in stationary activities/ interactions alongside the urban village edge, while almost no stationary activities happened on the opposite side.

with that on the opposite side of the street which is attached to the primary school and consists of nothing but solid walls, plain afforestation elements and individuals with high walking speed and straight moving patterns (Fig.4.1.6).

The solid edge of the commercial housing community

Compared to the village edges that are liminal and spontaneously used as marketing spaces, circulation spaces and storage spaces, the edges of the commercial housing community are monotonous. The edges here brilliantly illustrate the feature of the inside community spaces which are basically secured utopian spaces that embrace a great level of certainty and reject unstable elements. Although the southeast side community edge of Baihua Unit 01 does line up with multiple service programs and the programs are attached by the step landing space, the landing spaces are overall too continuous and they seem like one giant and pure circulation space, instead of the spaces that selectively connect with the programs and support their services. Moreover, the landing spaces are mostly 4 steps above the ground and partially surrounded by iron fences, so the connection with the nearby sidewalk space is fundamentally lacking (Fig.3.2.1).

The community edge in Nantian Garden (Fig.4.1.7), the northwest side of Baihua Unit 01(Fig.4.1.8) and all sides of Baihua Unit 02 (Fig.4.1.9) are completely installed with impenetrable iron fences. Behind the fence layer, the attached areas are either built up with inaccessible afforestation spaces or parking spaces which fundamentally discourage any engagement from people. Therefore, the edges around the commercial housing communities are extremely solid and coherent in compared to that within Xiasha Village. They separate the community from the surrounding environment, refuse to provide any support to the outside and reject any connection which is not highly associated with the member of the community living in the residential buildings. Therefore, the spatial characteristics of these neighborhoods, at least from the perspective of public, can be described as solid, lonely and impenetrable.

Fig.4.1.7
August 20, 2021, 3:16 pm
The southwest edge of Nantian Garden community.

Fig.4.1.8
August 20, 2021, 3:26 pm
The northwest edge of Baihua Unit 01 community.

Fig.4.1.9
August 20, 2021, 3:18 pm
The northeast edge of Baihua Unit 02 community.

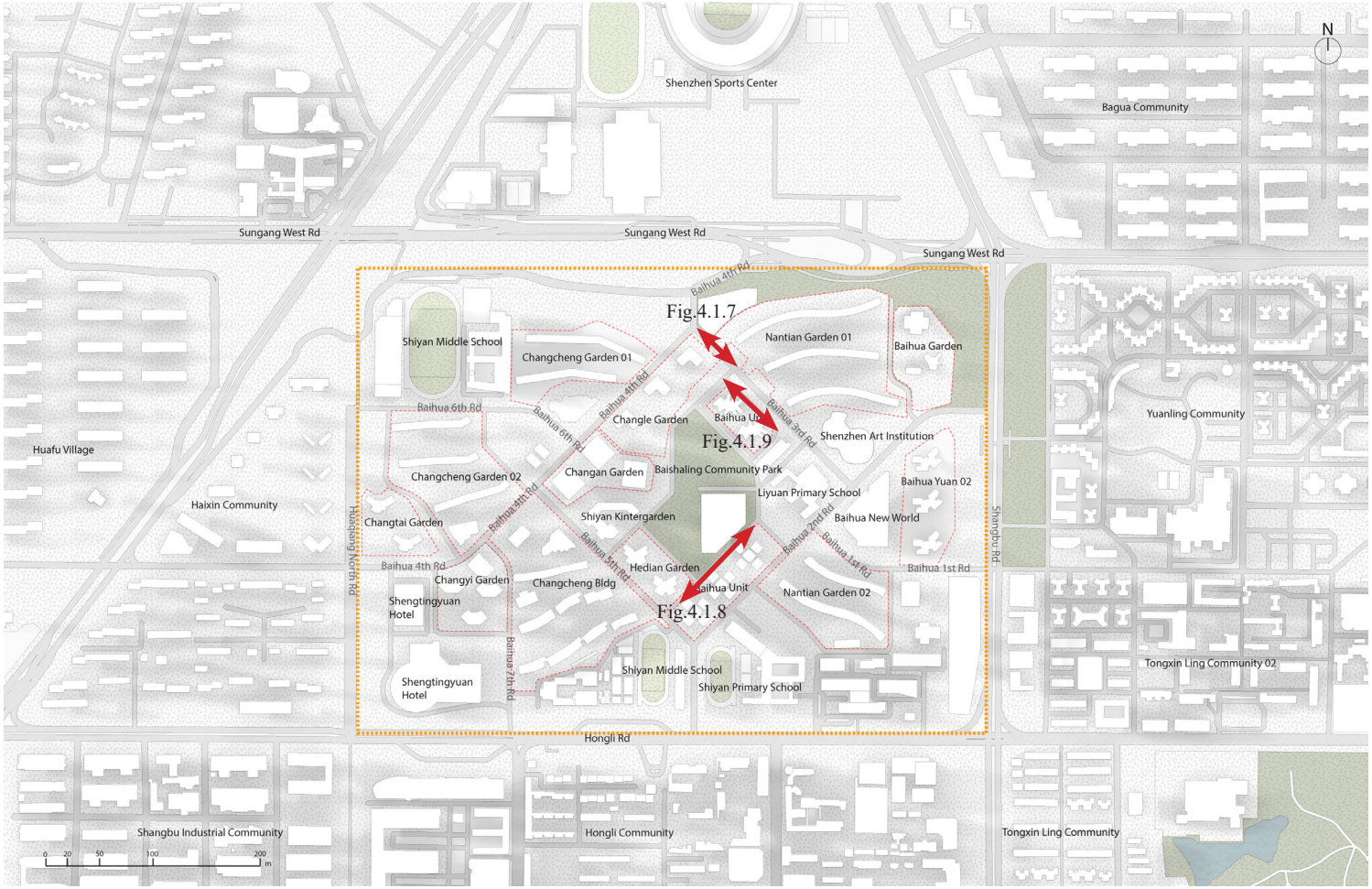
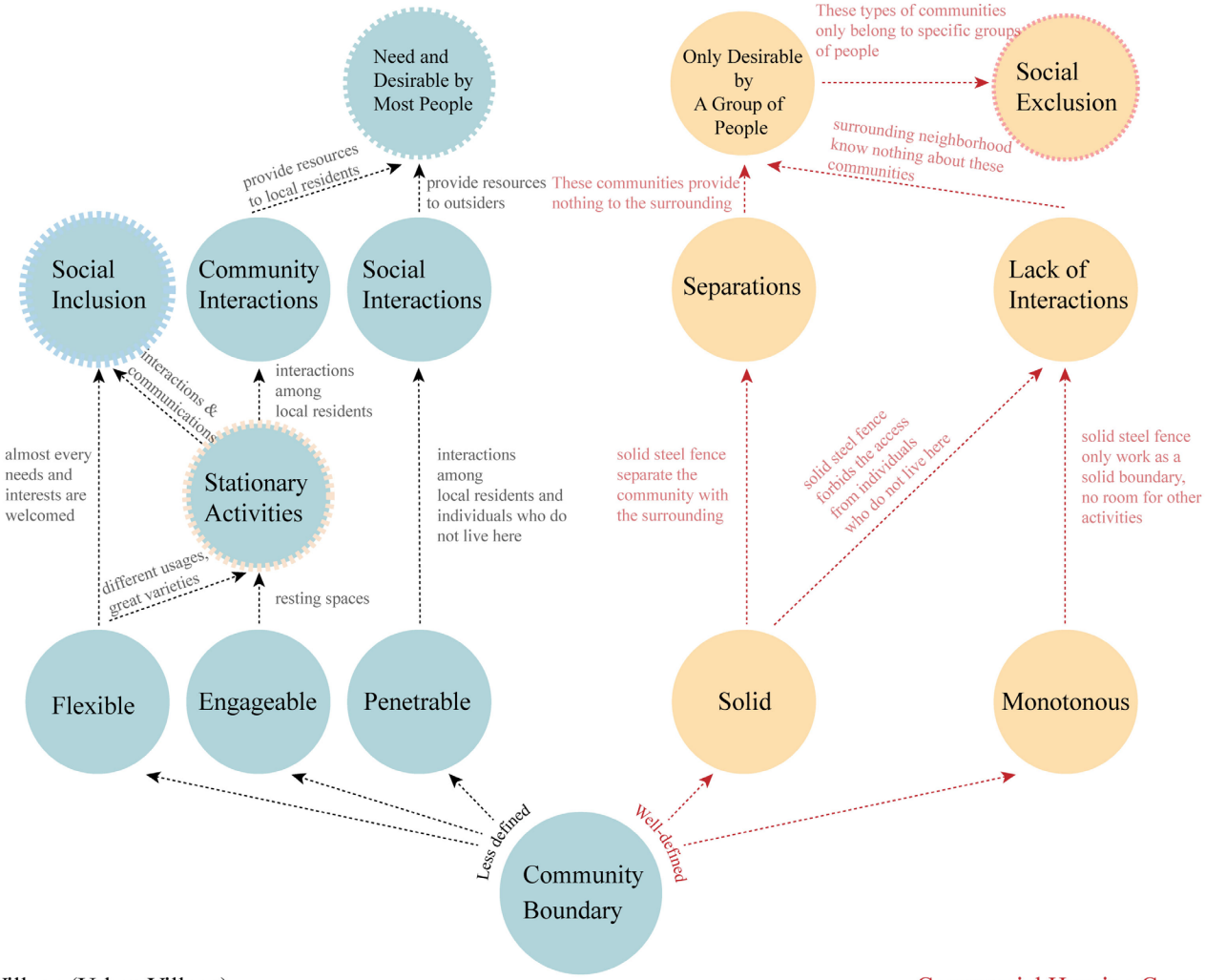


Fig.4.1.10
The location of Fig.4.1.7 to Fig.4.1.9 on the masterplan of Baihua District.



Xiasha Village (Urban Village)

Commercial Housing Community

Fig.4.1.11
Community boundary and the social influence.

Two-way Hybridization

Constructed using a completely different strategy than the commercial housing communities, Urban Villages surprisingly have noticeable similarities with them. First of all, in both types of community, the development of infrastructure and living environment, and the goal of making profits, are the major motivation besides the residential purpose. Therefore, this economic concept has created interesting development trends for both types of community. Understanding the trend requires understanding the meaning of hybridization and the direction of the movement. As described by Sylke Nissen in her work "Urban Transformation, From Public and Private Space to Spaces of Hybrid Character", hybrid spaces, that is, public spaces are mostly privatized, are or soon will be the majority in urban regions, especially for districts in which the economic development is the priority[102]. She introduces some methods by which hybridization can take place. The most iconic one is that public spaces become semi-privatized because their right of use is somehow altered. The accessibility of these "public spaces" is only true for the individual groups who can be considered proper consumers[103]. However, the hybridization within Urban Villages is developed in the opposite direction: private spaces are made public. As we known, most Urban Villages, similar to commercial housing communities, are meant to be designed, constructed and owned by private groups of individuals. The most noticeable difference is that residents in Urban Villages have to do all the work based on their available resources and according to their personal needs and interests, and it is not really possible for them to acquire any orthodox design and planning strategies or even advice. As a result, the major tasks during village development are building together to make living and working spaces. Additional activities such as decorating and landscaping are minor or even excluded. This approach not only hybridizes interior spaces as the combination of public spaces and personal spaces, which I discussed in Chapter 02, but also leads to a hybrid influence on these chaotic public spaces. There is great potential then to create surprising effects in regards to social influences.

Making private spaces and activities public

I will explain the last statement in relation to the methodology by reversing Nissen's statements on privatization of public spaces, and using different scenes and spatial typologies in Xiasha Village to illustrate. Because of the limited area of the ground floor interiors, tremendous amounts of exterior public sidewalks here are "partially swallowed" up by spaces for shops and services. In this case, the two sides of the vehicle routes are mostly occupied by people. This widens the public walking space, and also makes the gap between walking areas and the ground floor

102 Sylke Nissen, "Urban Transformation From Public and Private Space to Spaces of Hybrid Character." *Sociologický Časopis / Czech Sociological Review 44*, no. 6 (2008): 1129–1149. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41132666.
103 Ibid, 1140.

programs seamless (Fig.4.2.1). As discussed previously in Chapter 02, most of the ground floor programs spontaneously support both public and totally private activities; therefore, numerous private activities that are not supposed to have public engagement are now taking place in the public areas and are affected by other activities and participants. These interactions can happen between the people who own different programs, or between those who own private properties and those who are doing activities in public spaces. To be more specific, in Fig.4.2.2, the owner of a kitchen facility shop has set up a personal dining space alongside the public sidewalk. He is then joined by a staff member who works in the nearby fruit shop but is focused on his cell phone at that moment. A few minutes later, when I returned to this spot from other site, they started drinking tea together.

The hybridization is also highly expressed on the zig-zag street, because the attached sidewalk spaces are relatively wide if compared to the interior space that supports only a limited area for private activities. The sidewalk spaces are normally used as extended private spaces to support individuals' personal activities (Fig.4.2.3). Thus, private spaces in this case are actually highly public because of their overlapping with the public sidewalk spaces. In Fig.3.7.15, the owner of the snack restaurant has a family gathering activity occurring outside in front of the entrance because they have young child who needs fresh air. At the same time, these families have some oral connection with those people who are waiting in the same area to dine inside.

Similarly, in Fig.3.5.7, the private family activities happening in the middle ground of the image attract people from other parts of the site wanting to get involved. As shown in the public life record diagram of the zig-zag street, these strangely shaped overlapping spaces are mostly filled with stationary activities involving different groups of people, because for the individuals who own the attached programs, their private gathering activities somehow affect the public. At the same time, their behavior can also be influenced by the public.

This phenomenon is also illustrated in the unique handshake street. Because of the limited available space, the boundary between the public spaces and the private ones must be blurred in order to use the space efficiently. To be more specific, the "private space" attached to the residence entrance can also be used as the laundry space, personal item storage space, and even dish washing space for the nearby kitchen. In other words, the "private" dishing-washing spaces or laundry spaces can also be used for personal item storage and circulation.

Moreover, the private space within Xiasha Village can potentially be made public by transferring the right of use to people undertaking a task that benefits both public and private subjects. This hypothesis can be illustrated by the scene in which the restaurant dish washer spontaneously cleans the dishes and also the street in which he is working (Fig.3.5.5).

Fig.4.2.1
August 11, 2021, 5:56pm
The narrow, one-step height public sidewalks here are swallowed by the programs' spaces, the two sides of the vehicle routes are largely occupied by people.

Fig.4.2.2
August 11, 2021, 5:38pm
The interaction between different owners, an extremely simple dining space was set up on the edge of public sidewalk space.

Fig.4.2.3
Spatial analysis of the southeast boundary of Zig-Zag street.

Fig.4.2.4
The zig-zag spaces are mostly filled with individuals who are gathering here.

Whether he did that intentionally or not, this hybrid space is a site of a magic trick. In addition to all the scenes inside, the penetrable edges, which were discussed in the liminal identity section, are another sign that this mostly privately owned residential community always embraces public engagement.

Privatized community space

It is obvious that the scene within commercial housing community is fundamentally different. Because the Economic Reform and Open policy fundamentally changing the economic status of Shenzhen, it partly unleashes the restricting boundary from the central government that is not built based on the focus of capital[104]. Plus, the housing commercialization policy significantly shifts the control of public housing property from the local government to different private enterprises[105]. In this case, public housing, which is commercial housing communities that are meant to be sold to individuals, are more like personal investments. Therefore, privatization is the trend of owning residential value as well as accessing the relevant living spaces and infrastructures.

As mentioned by Sylke, the privatized programs have the chance to significantly reduce the public debt from authorized departments and unleash these departments from pressure[106]. Also, the trend of privatization can increase the control level in order to enhance the sense of security[107]. Moreover, privatization has the opportunity to boost the market of the commercial housing field. The reason mentioned by Sylke perfectly matches the original purposes that initiated the housing commercialization policy in 1980s. Furthermore, Sylke claims that privatization processes can have some side effects, particularly for the privatized commercial housing. The first effect is the reshaping of public space will enhance the sense of exclusion with signs and different personal properties[108]. This is true. As illustrated in the previous chapter, most of the public sidewalk spaces in commercial housing communities, which could be potentially used as wide-open playground and support multiple types of activities, are mostly occupied by private vehicles. As shown in the public life study within Nantian Garden, the parking spaces that are filled with vehicles significantly shrink the public space and fundamentally enhance the sense of inaccessibility and exclusion on the two sides (Fig.4.2.5). This means that few residents still express their interests in engaging these "playground spaces." In this case, vehicles can metaphorically be seen as private "stuff items" which exclude other activities from the space.

Furthermore, Nissen's statement about the

104 Juan, Du, *The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 60-62.

105 "改变中国房地产历史的60年 60 years that changed the real estate history of China", *Souhu*, Last modified September 27, 2018, https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1612734508283791498&wfr=spider&for=pc.

106 Sylke Nissen, "Urban Transformation From Public and Private Space to Spaces of Hybrid Character." *Sociologický Časopis / Czech Sociological Review 44*, no. 6 (2008): 1129–49. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41132666, 1141.

107 Ibid, 1140-1141.

108 Ibid, 1140.

transferring of rights of use and the accessibility of public spaces to maintaining task on private subjects in order to reach some goals[109] is absolutely correct here. Besides, the goals she mentioned may not have many connections with the concerns about public interactions in this case. This statement is perfectly illustrated by the "green garden situation" in Nantian Garden 01 and the second public space in Baihua Unit 01 community. In these "public garden spaces", most of the area is covered by dense and tall green vegetation and they are designed to be inaccessible. As described in the public life study around the garden space within Nantian Garden, almost every square foot of the garden space is poorly unoccupied no matter during weekdays or weekends. Furthermore, the well-crafted vegetation fences, which strictly stand on the two sides of the path, annoyingly narrow down the walking space and eliminate the opportunities that public interaction can ever take place here (Fig.3.1.6). Similarly, the afforestation within Baihua Unit 01 is built in an extremely dense pattern which will not tolerate any human interaction, and it also awkwardly swallows and narrows down the sidewalk spaces. Moreover, there are signs which clearly state that the "public garden spaces" are under protection and are completely not allowed for private activities (Fig.4.2.6). On the other side of this community (Fig.(3.3.7)), the afforestation design is absolutely poor if compared to other spaces, but ironically, according to the public life record (Fig.(4.2.7)), this less elegant space is the one that supports the highest amount of activities that are engaged by people. As described about the concept of housing commercialization in Chapter 02, the afforestation here is the key element to complete the task which is to sugar coat the housing communities and enhance their market price. The task is reached by sacrificing the majority of the exterior of public spaces which could have otherwise been used to enhance social life.

The consumer only space

Moreover, as described by Nissen and this may be the most extreme and iconic example, the public space can be fully privatized for some purposes. Thus, the accessibility of these public spaces is reduced to consumer only and it is either controlled by security devices or highly blocked by spatial characteristics[110]. This statement can be seen in the case of Chang'an Garden. The design strategy of this commercial housing community is the new and popular trend in the commercial housing development around Shenzhen metropolis region because it boosts the communities' attractiveness on market. As illustrated in Fig (4.2.8), each apartment unit is intersected with a giant podium which is 2-3 stories tall . The ground floor of the podium is filled with public service programs, such as McDonald's, pharmacies and food markets,

109 Sylke Nissen, "Urban Transformation From Public and Private Space to Spaces of Hybrid Character." *Sociologický Časopis / Czech Sociological Review 44*, no. 6 (2008): 1129–49. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41132666, 1140.

110 Sylke Nissen, "Urban Transformation From Public and Private Space to Spaces of Hybrid Character." *Sociologický Časopis / Czech Sociological Review 44*, no. 6 (2008): 1129–49. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41132666, 1140.

and they increase the attractiveness of this community by providing necessary services nearby. Nevertheless, the public garden space is located 10m above the ground and completely loses the connection with the ground floor public sidewalk space. The design indicates that the public garden space within these communities can be accessed by no one but the groups who is considered as the authentic residents. And there is no chance for the individuals, if there is any, who are spending their social time around this garden space to have any form of connection with the outside public. Thus, any activities or interactions that are happening here can be extremely bland and lifeless. As a result, from the public life record of this community, the garden space remains empty all the time in either weekday or weekend (Fig.3.6.26 & Fig.3.6.28). Besides the empty scene, the lack of cleanliness alongside the garden sidewalk illustrates the lack of human interaction. The most ironic part of the lifted garden design is that this concept is popular for their ability to mark the community as “the one with the garden in the sky” and it will be competitive in terms of getting high market price.

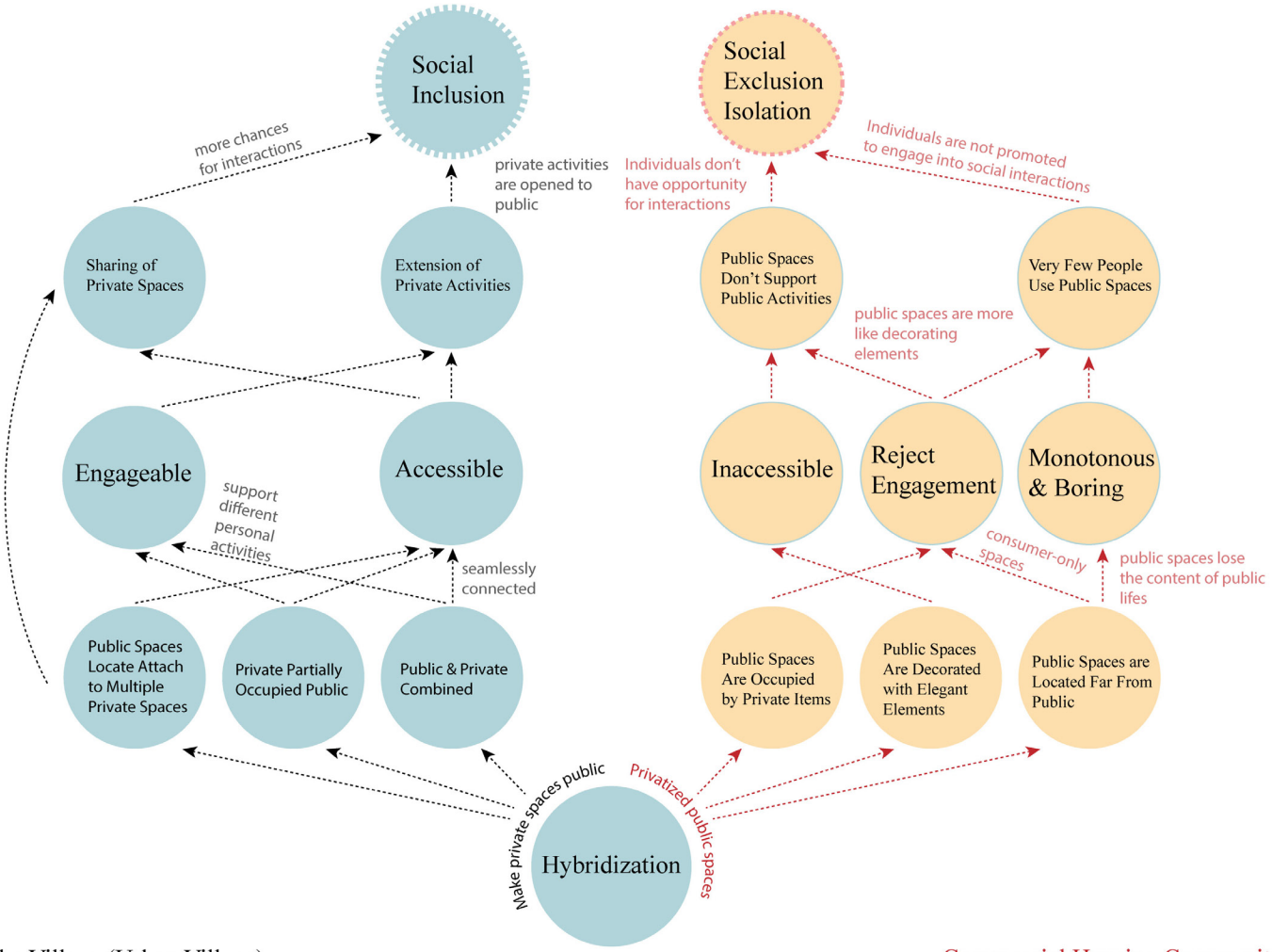
Privatization of housing may stimulate the real estate market and create some sense of security. In fact, the processdid a great job in these two fields. Nevertheless, it also creates a new trend that public infrastructures, public spaces, or even most parts of the cities, do not belong to all citizens any more, but to the groups who have the ability to convincingly assume the role of the consumer. And ironically, this phenomenon is mentioned in the previous section as well, commercial housing communities are always meant to be designed with orthodox strategies in order to fit well with the overall metropolis design intentions, but in fact, they swallow most things which should be shared by the public, and they provide nothing to the surrounding neighborhood.

Fig.4.2.5
February 27, 2021, 2:18pm
Vehicles occupy the public space as personal items and highly discourage any type of social activities.

Fig.4.2.6
April 09, 2021, 1:54pm
The crafted vegetation fence on the two sides of the road, translation from the sign “The little grasses are smiling, so please do NOT step on”, the sign prohibit any intersection with the green space.

Fig 4.2.7
April 07, 2021, 4:45pm to 5:05pm, mostly cloudy, 31 degree
The mapping diagram of Fig.3.3.7, multiple stationary activities occurred here.

Fig.4.2.8
The overall designed form of Chang'an Garden commercial community.



Xiasha Village (Urban Village)

Commercial Housing Community

Fig.4.2.9
Hybridization and the social influence.

Public Safety and Health

Hybridized in the method that a large number of private spaces used by the residents are overlapped with the exterior public spaces, it is the Urban Village community that encourages different forms of social interactions. Because of the fact that these interactions exist informally and randomly, Urban Villages are imagined to have serious safety and hygiene issues because of these disorganized and chaotic planning methods. Modern planning policies in Shenzhen equate lack of organization with lack of safety. Plus, this discrimination is also based on the fact that most residents who live within these communities are extremely under educated, so they must lack the skill and knowledge to make proper safety control keep spaces clean. In fact, the judgement is quite the opposite. Take the safety and health situation within Xiasha Village as an example, according to the "41st Public Security and Safety Index Report of All Streets in the City" in 2020, the safety index around Shatou Avenue, one of the main transportation arteries in which Xiasha Village stands alongside, has gained a 93 out of 100 score[111]. The score is considered to be decent if compared to the 94 out of 100 points for Yuanling Avenue[112], in which stands the Baihua District with dozens of luxury commercial housing communities. This index cannot entirely speak for Xiasha Village because it includes the security situation not only in this village but also in other communities around the district. But it will be unfair to describe Xiasha Village as the "Spatial Viruses" which consists of severe safety and health problems. And because of the penetrable features, this community will strongly affect the overall safety index if it does have these issues. As mentioned before, Urban Villages are overly excluded from the city development masterplan, plus, during my site visits, it is obvious that the digital and physical surveillance system within Xiasha Village is absolutely not as advanced as that in Baihua District. In this case, the spatial typologies must play significant roles in maintaining the overall safety and health situation to decent levels. Thus, in this section, I aim to explain how the spatial features, which spontaneously serve the public and private purposes, help to promote a safe and healthy living and working community. The explanation will be coupled with Oscar Newman's theory about defensible space that he mentioned in his work "Defensible Space Prevention through Urban Design"[113].

Sense of territoriality

According to Newman, one of the most outstanding characteristics of a defensible space is the sense of territoriality.[114] This sense can be approached by giving the

111 Qingjun Jiang, "深圳发布各街道治安安全指数，看看谁第一" Shenzhen releases the safety index of the main avenues, take a look which one is the safest", *Shenzhen Public Security*, Last modified October 16, 2020, http://sz.oeeee.com/html/202010/16/998786.html.

112 Ibid.

113 Oscar Newman, *Creating Defensible Space*. (Washington, DC: Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, 1996).

114 Ibid, 9.

control of the space back to residents and enhancing their emotional connection with the place. Thus, they have great motivation to try to preserve the area and hold the values and lifestyle of the space they own and occupy[115]. Within the Urban Village, it will be significant to build the sense of territoriality between residents and the public spaces in order to ensure the overall spatial quality. Again, speaking of occupying and somehow owing the public space, this concept can be perfectly illustrated in the area of the zig-zag street. These streets, which are mostly used as spaces for public circulation, are considered as semi-public spaces because they are partially occupied by private activities. Therefore, these semi-public spaces could be considered as the properties which are controlled by the individuals who use parts of spaces as stages to support their personal purposes. As a result, these people may choose to maintain and enhance the overall quality of the spaces to relatively high qualities in order to benefit their own subjects.

In Fig.4.3.1, a part of the zig-zag sidewalk space, which is located in front of the fried chicken house, is strangely shaped as a triangular form. In this case, the owners of the fried chicken house choose to occupy the right and first half of the space as their personal garden space by decorating it with their personal afforestation items. Even though these items are placed in dense patterns, the back part is still unoccupied and open for public circulation. Moreover, in order to maintain the greenness and liveness of these vegetation, the solid ground surfaces of the surrounding areas are mostly kept clean without extra mud and dirt which can potentially harm this green vegetation.

Besides, based on Newman's statement, some spaces, which are considered as completely public but are directly attached to the private or semiprivate spaces, may also be considered as extensions of these private spaces[116]. As shown in Fig.4.3.2, this is a random corner around the middle part of Xiasha Village and obviously no one can argue that this space is filled with unsafe and dirty elements. In the foreground of the image, the residents here constructed the half to one step height landing spaces, which are seamlessly attached to the entrance on the left and the public street on the right, as their personal space to place their own afforestation elements. In the middle ground to background of this image, the residents occupied the left side of the public street as their private tiny garden space. In this case, all of the public street spaces in this image are maintained to a high-level cleanliness because they are somehow considered as the extension of residents' private spaces and needed to be taken care of.

Group Effort

Despite the fact that the seamless connection between public, or semipublic space, and individuals can enhance the

115 Oscar Newman, *Creating Defensible Space*. (Washington, DC: Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, 1996), 9.

116 Oscar Newman, *Creating Defensible Space*. (Washington, DC: Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, 1996), 18.

Fig.4.3.1
June 09, 2021, 10:25am
The zig-zag space in front of the restaurant supports public and private activities, and the space is kept clean by the individuals who use parts of the space as spots to place the afforestation items.

Fig.4.3.2
June 15, 2021, 1:02pm
Clean and peaceful street scene within Xiasha Village.

Fig.4.3.3
June 19, 2021, 1:06pm
The narrow handshake street supports multiple purposes as a “shared garden space”, with relatively clean living environment.

spatial quality, the concept of sharing space among different groups of people can also create the similar affect. Take the tiny handshake streets as examples to explain this statement. The handshake streets within Xiasha Village usually connect to the entrances of different programs such as residential apartments, restaurants and grocery stores. In this case, these narrow spaces are frequently considered as the "shared courtyard spaces" for different groups of people. As shown in Fig.4.3.3, this handshake street here, in which the width is measured less than 2 meters, is spontaneously shared by different group of residents for different purposes such as dining, food preparation, storage, card games and clothes drying. Thus, these activities keep the solid surface of this handshake street in a clean shape without too many unhygienic elements. Moreover, the feature of sharing forms the "natural surveillance system" among residents. To be more specific, each group of residents have to ensure that their activities are taken place in organized and legal forms to avoid bothering others. Therefore, even though the narrow handshake streets are located in a relatively unnoticeable corner, they are still maintained as tidy forms based on the scene that most facilities and tools are arranged in organized patterns. The behavior of group supervision is vital to maintain the spatial quality.

Sense of familiarity

Another element that can promote the sense of territoriality and further enhance the spatial quality of a space, is the sense of familiarity, not only between individuals and spaces, but also between residents and other people. The different types of spaces in Xiasha Village gradually increase the social interaction scales, from individuals with their families, to individuals with strangers. As shown in the diagram (Fig.4.3.4), which is the spatial analysis for the spaces illustrated from Fig.3.7.11 to Fig.3.7.14. The spaces within each residential apartment (the largest circle) are like the comfort zone for social activities, in which the interactions are mostly happening among individuals with their families. These types of social life are considered as the most private ones with the smallest scale. The narrow and tiny handshake streets, which are seamlessly connected to the apartment entrances (thiner orange line), are the spaces that support a small scale of random interactions among groups of people who are engaging in similar or different types of activities around the tiny spaces. These types of interactions can fundamentally launch and build the sense of familiarity that individuals can possibly have to their surrounding neighborhood. Moving outside, the social interactions, which happen in the wide streets (wider orange lines) shared by residents and vehicles, are considered as completely random interactions with the largest scale. Even though this type of large-scale interaction happened less frequently than the one in the handshake street, it does a great job in enhancing the sense of familiarity that an individual can have to the overall environment within Xiasha Village.

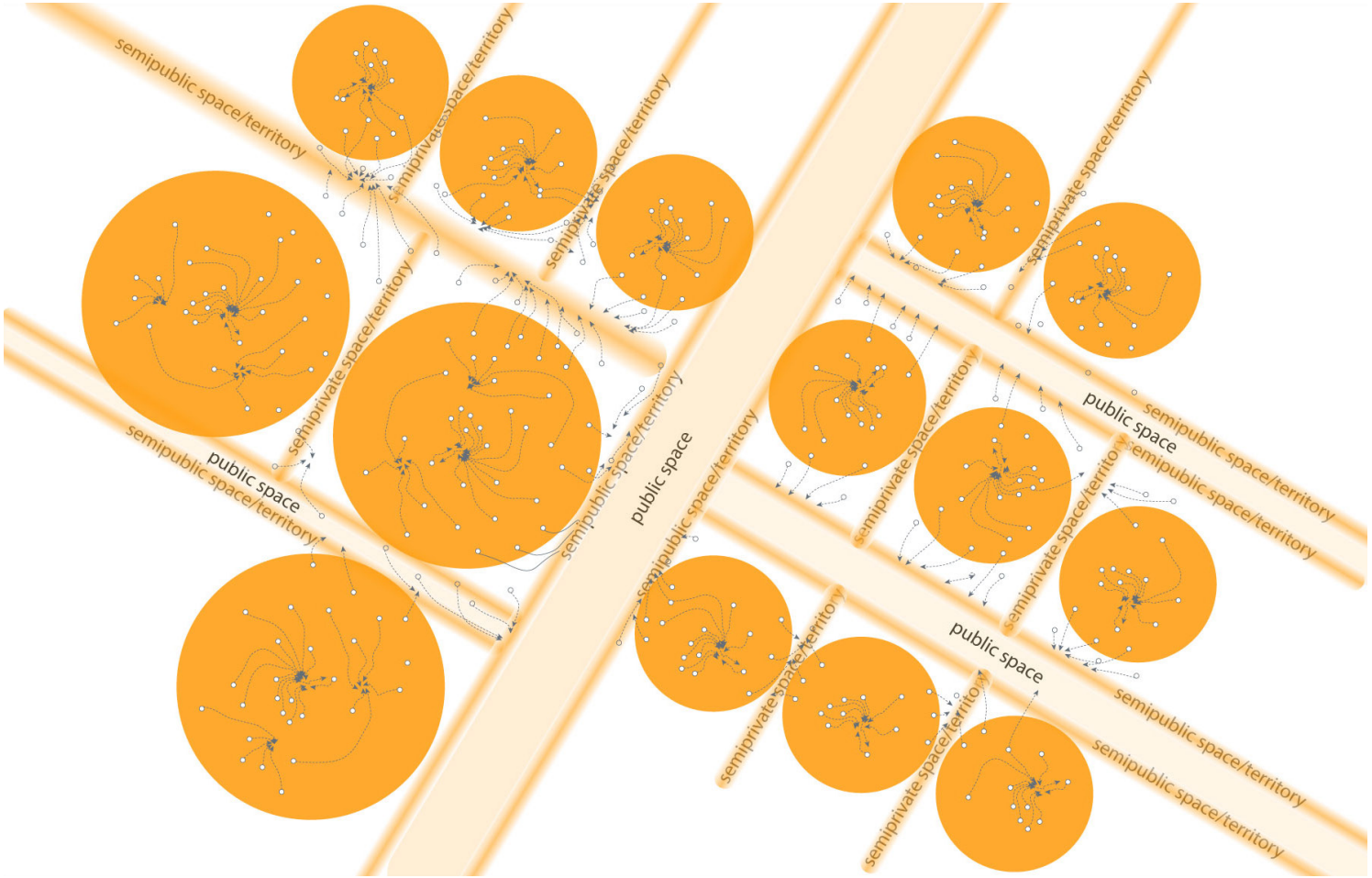


Fig.4.3.4
The spatial arrangement gradually increase the social interaction scale.

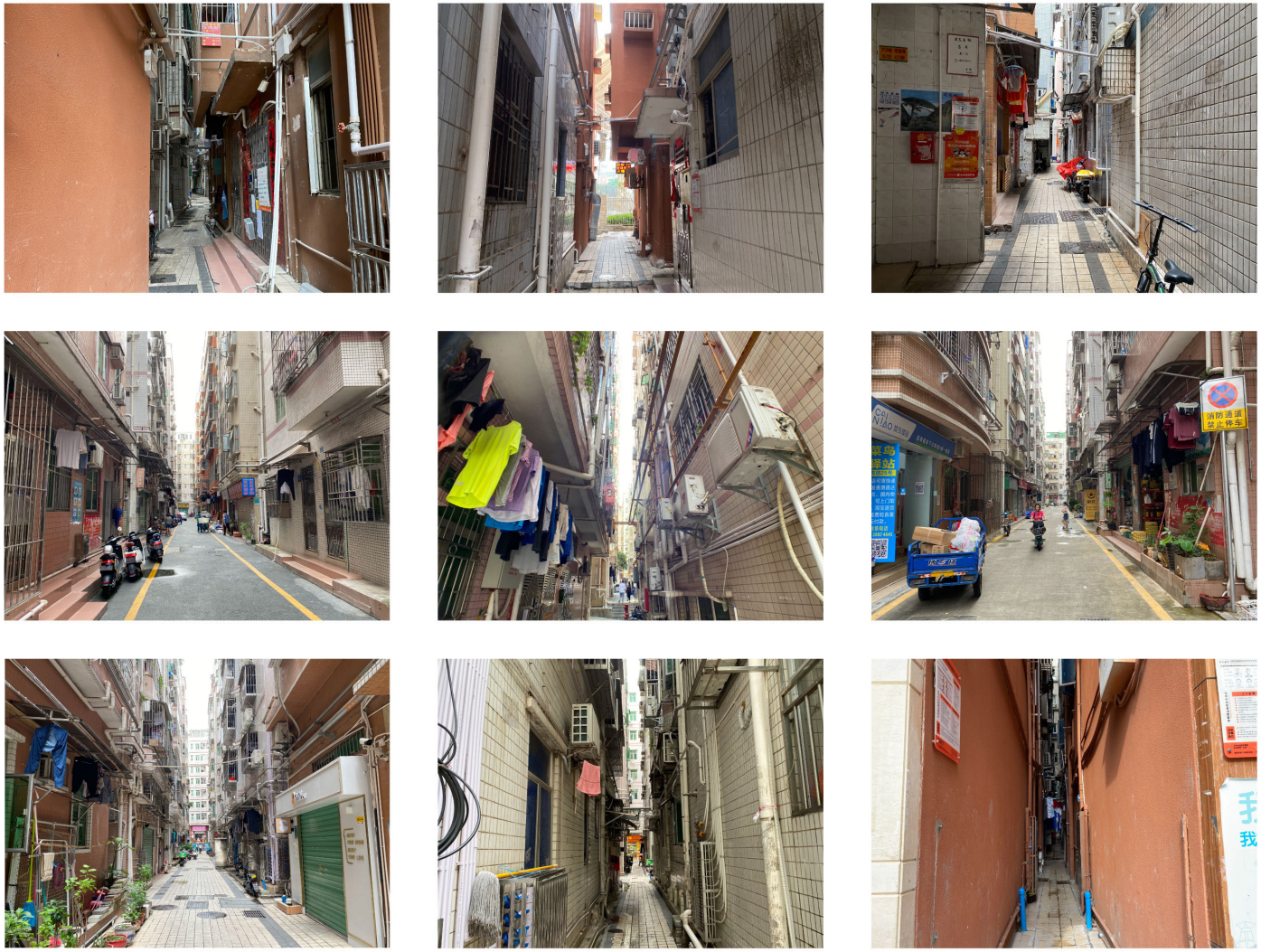


Fig.4.3.5
A collection of the public space scene that residents put their items completely unprotected.

Tracing the personal items

The sense of familiarity among individuals can create a sense of trust. Public trust, which directly comes from the feeling of familiarity between individuals and space, and among different people, is one of the most significant elements in regards to building a safe living environment with a sense of inclusion. As mentioned earlier, the unique spaces here build up the sense of familiarity, in this case, the public trust may already be built around the neighborhood. The strongest evidence of the public trust is the many private items which are placed in the public spaces. In Fig.4.3.5, this is a series of street scenes I photographed and collected during the site visits within Xiasha Village. As mentioned in the previous section, the handshake streets are sometimes used as personal laundry spaces, so large amounts of handshake streets are used as the clothes drying spaces with dozens of clothes hanging alongside the public apartment wall in completely unprotected forms. This mostly happens for the residents who live in the ground floor, however, the windows on the ground level are mostly attached with a steel frame, and the clothes can be hung on the steel frames and placed inside (Fig.4.3.6). Even though this method will decrease the sun exposure and air flow and this will take more time for clothes to get dried, it significantly prevents any risk of theft. Overall, residents still chose to use the public space as their clothes hanging spot and left their personal items completely unprotected. This can only be reached through the strong sense that most residents here believe that the surrounding neighborhood is safe. Similarly, in Fig.4.3.7, multiple residents park their motorcycles by simply leaning them against the wall without any security lock. This abnormal phenomenon highlights the sense of public trust around the neighborhood.

The loss of control

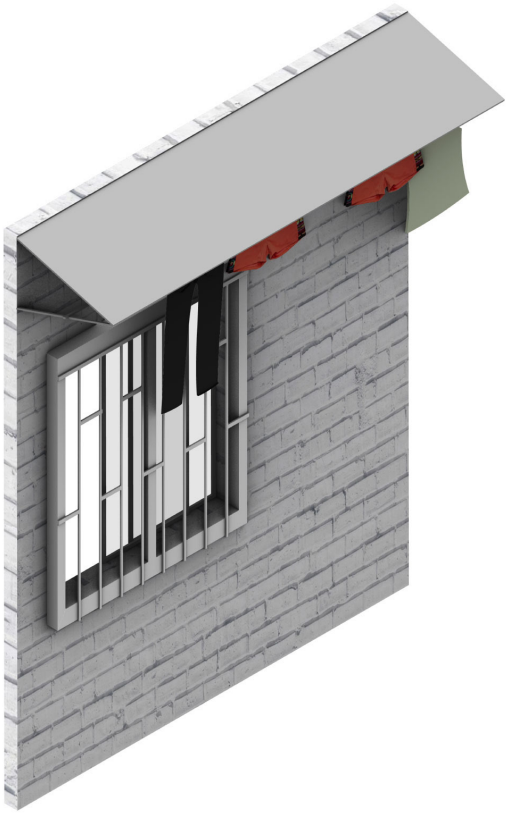
The senses of territoriality and familiarity are extremely helpful in maintaining spatial quality, and this is perfectly illustrated on the handshake streets in that each of them is shared by only few groups of residents. As mentioned by Newman, the larger the number of people that share a public space, the less the number of people that will actually care about the space because individuals will have no idea about who actually has ownership of the space[117]. This is sadly true. In Nantian Garden 01, the spatial arrangement of the program's distribution is relatively organized, so the shared public spaces are all located on the ground level (Fig.4.3.8). In this case, the giant and continuous ground floor public space is simultaneously shared by over thousands of people. As a result, this public space remains unoccupied all the time. The overall spatial quality here is extremely poor with dirty mud stuck on the wall because no one has any motivation to take any care of it.

117 Oscar Newman, *Creating Defensible Space*. (Washington, DC: Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, 1996), 17.

The depletion of control

The sense of territoriality is obviously formed based on the feeling of control, which can be further understood as believing that the spaces are mostly under control of specific individuals' groups. However, the overall spatial quality will be highly depleted if people always believe that the spaces are owned by the authority and they are having extremely limited control of it. This phenomenon is so common within the commercial housing communities. As described in Chapter 02, Shenzhen metropolis is considered as the technology hub in China and the digital surveillance systems are extremely pervasive and advanced. In Nantian Garden 01, every few square feet of public space are under watched by a digital camera. Even though the surveillance systems play an important role in maintaining public safety, they significantly reduce the sense of territoriality that individuals can have to a public space. The surveillance systems highly discourage the sense of control because residents will always believe that the public spaces never belong to them[118]. The reducing sense of control depletes the motivation for residents to spend any time in taking care of the quality of the public spaces. Although the living environment in Nantian Garden is appeared to have a very high standard, there are countless traces of mud and unhygienic elements stuck in the small corners of these well-crafted spaces and gardens. These detail scenes indicate no one is truly connected with these spaces.

118 Chris, Chambers, "NSA and GCHQ: the flawed psychology of government mass surveillance", The Guardian, Last modified August 26, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/science/head-quarters/2013/aug/26/nsa-gchq-psychology-government-mass-surveillance.



low security, better exposure

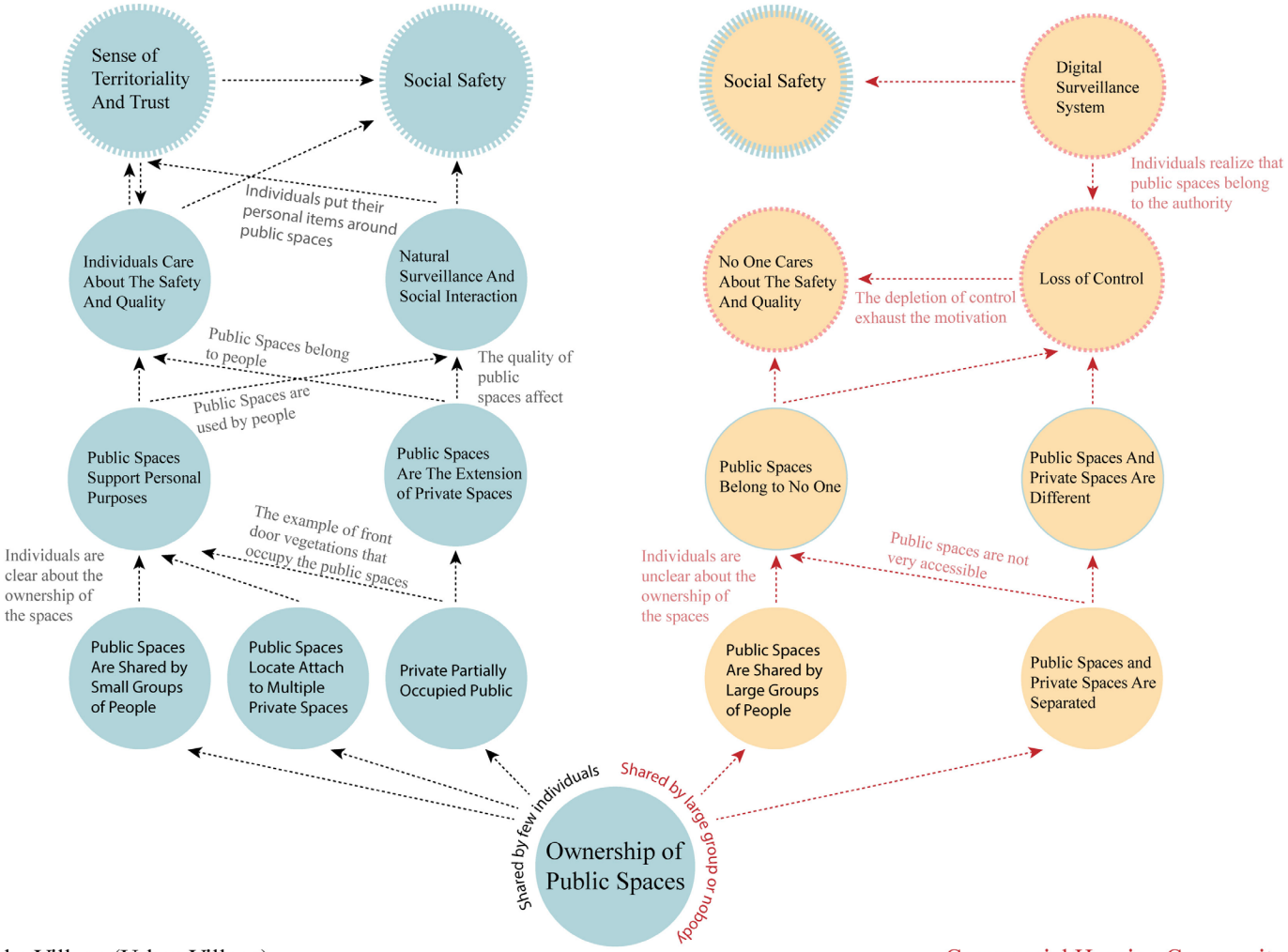
the more common type

high security, low exposure

Fig.4.3.6
Residents usually ignore and function of the steel frame and choose to hang their clothes in positions which are totally exposed to the public.

Fig.4.3.7
June 15, 2021, 1:17pm
Residents randomly “store” their private items around the public space, some expensive items are placed in unsecured form.

Fig.4.3.8
September 30, 2021, 12:01pm
The ground floor public space within Nantian Garden 01 is mostly unoccupied and filled with dirty elements.



Xiasha Village (Urban Village)

Commercial Housing Community

Fig.4.3.9
How the ownership of public spaces affect public safety and spatial quality.

The Influence of Stationary Activities

The spatial characteristics of Xiasha Village mentioned in the previous chapters highly encourage individuals to remain in stationary positions, such as standing, sitting, leaning or moving in small distances, for a while. These outside stationary activities can take place in different scales here. To be more specific, the narrow stage spaces that are attached to the entrance of these public programs allow residents to have a seat outside. Also, the handshake streets provide narrow spaces for residents' informal activities. Thus, these two types of public spaces encourage stationary activities and interactions to occur among individuals who both happen to be there, regardless of whether they have similar purposes. Moreover, the public sidewalk spaces that connect with public programs, plus the unique zig-zag spaces, are doing the same job. For example, the group of people who are having dinner, have the chance to interact with others who are taking family walks (Fig.3.5.7). Similarly, in Fig.4.4.1, customers are standing outside the grocery shop to taste the watermelon and having long conversations with the shop owner. Furthermore, the "unexpected void", which informally stands in between multiple residential apartments (Fig.3.5.9), provides a great space for large groups of social gatherings. Overall, based on the public life study diagram (Fig.4.4.2), the stationary activities, no matter how many individuals are engaged, are happening around multiple corners within Xiasha Village because of the unique spatial features. Therefore, Xiasha Village is a place in which residents frequently spend some time in the standing or sitting still positions.

In contrast, the spatial features within commercial housing communities, which are largely decorated with inaccessible afforestation items plus parking facilities, fundamentally discourage most types of stationary activities. According to the public life record within these three documented communities, most activities that happen here are nonstationary, except the few in the plazas in Nantian Garden 01 and Baihua Unit 02 (Fig.4.4.3 to Fig.4.4.4). The main reason behind this is that most spaces are either covered by non-accessible facilities or occupied by vehicles, which discourages stationary activities both physically and mentally. Moreover, the public sidewalk spaces that are built around these communities also refuse most types of pausing behaviors. As mentioned in Chapter 02, the overall public sidewalk design in Shenzhen metropolis strictly follows the zoning codes that prioritize the sense of modernism, the feeling of aesthetic, and the convenience of public transportation[119]. In this case, the sidewalk spaces have extremely limited connections with multiple types of human interactions rather than pure circulation. Based on the documentation of the four public sidewalks that are located close to the three commercial housing communities, almost no stationary activities happen

119 "深圳市工程建设指引: 深圳道路设计指引 The guide of the structural engineering in Shenzhen: *The Guide of Road Design in Shenzhen*", The Bureau of Residential Housing and Construction & The Bureau of Public Transportation, n.p. (2019): 1-2.

Fig.4.4.1
August 11, 2021, 5:57pm
People stand in front of the public programs to taste watermelon and have chat with the shop owner.

Fig.4.4.2
Stationary activities on public spaces within Xiasha Village.

Fig.4.4.3
May 15, 2021, 4:14pm
The stationary activities on the plaza space inside Nantian Garden 01.

Fig.4.4.4
May 29, 2021, 4:51pm
The stationary activities around the central garden space inside Baihua Unit 02.

except unlocking bikes or standing there and talking on phones. Besides, individuals usually travel in these spaces with relatively rapid circulation speed which can be as fast as 5 seconds for 10-meters walking. Thus, the communities' spaces that almost demand non-stationary activities, plus the attached sidewalk spaces that allow no pausing behaviors, fill the whole Baihua District with moving activities with relatively rapid rhythm.

In this section, I will discuss the social effects that are created by the stationary activities. I will further explore how stationary activities promote the sense of familiarity with the whole neighborhood and the sense of social trust among others in the community, both of which are helpful in promoting social inclusion.

The expansion of the sense of familiarity

Based on the theory mentioned by Jan Gehl in his work "Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space", optional interactions are usually referred to as the simple greeting, oral or some casual physical communications among strangers[120]. They can potentially be created during stationary activities. The reason is people will have more chance to meet and interact with others if they remain stationary around the public spaces for a while. Also, the longer time they spend with others in the same space, the more likely they are about to have interactions. The interactions here are mostly optional types such as greeting and talking for few minutes. These types of interactions can create some surprising effects on creating the sense of familiarity by expanding the radius of individuals' social networks. I will use Mark S. Grannovetter's theory about social ties[121] as a reference to further explain this hypothesis. The most vital feature about the types of random interactions, which are formed during the stationary activities, is that the connections in this case are mostly not very intense. The feature states that such social ties in this case are weak and short. Based on the fact that weak ties take a relatively short amount of time to be built up, people can potentially form multiple weak ties with others during different stationary activities. Grannovetter states that the flow of familiarity, information or "whatever it is", depends on two factors. The flow is proportional to the number of social connections path, and it is also inversely proportional to the length of such paths[122]. In this case, the weak ties, which are mostly formed during the simple greeting processes, are the key to expand an individual's social network within the neighborhood because they can be quick to build, and easy to be multiplied in numbers. The sense of familiarity, and the feeling of social trust, are fundamentally formed and enhanced in the case that people have more direct or indirect ties with others.

120 Jan, Gehl, *Life between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011), 13-14.

121 Mark S Granovetter, *The Strength of Weak Ties*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, American Journal of Sociology, 1973), Volume 78, Issue 6, 1360-1380.

122 Ibid, 1365.

The isolated groups

According to Jan Gehl, the overall social activities are the combination of two features. The first one is necessary activities, which are individuals' majority tasks such as sending children to school or going to work. These types of activities are the majority in commercial housing communities. The connections among the people who are engaged here are mostly very strong and they hardly affected by the environment[123]. The second type is, as mentioned before, the optional activities which create weak social ties and such ties are more likely to be created during random stationary activities[124]. Thus, the social network structure is more like a upside down pyramid; the top refers to the strong connection that individuals can have with their families or close friends, and then the network gradually transfers to the bottom which implies single individuals with the absent social ties[125].

However, if the middle part of the structure, which means the weak ties, break or disappear, then the social relationships within this community will be either extremely clustered or individually isolated[126]. As a person who has lived in Nantian Garden for 20 years and have connection with nobody besides my families and 3 other friends, this hypothesis about broken social network is sadly true. As mentioned before, because of the intense occupation of the facilities, most public spaces within this community are designed as circulation-only forms. Particularly for the sidewalk path in Fig.3.1.6, the overall designs of the surrounding environment are so well-crafted, that they ironically discourage even two people to present in a horizontal line. Moreover, as described, the public sidewalk streets around the community are designed with orthodox strategies. To be more specific, in Fig.3.2.3 to Fig.3.2.4, the sidewalk spaces are seamlessly attached to the tactile paving spaces, and on the right side stands the bicycle parking spaces and afforestation spaces. Thus, these elements are arranged in the perfectly-arranged patterns such that there is no room to support activities other than walking and bike parking. Therefore, most of the land around this region supports no stationary activities. What I observed within this community is that the social activities that happen here are mostly walking. And it seems like these happen either among families and close friends, or completely for single individuals. As a result, the overall social network within this commercial housing community is the combination of different small clustered groups and single individuals, and this type of network creates nothing but the sense of isolation and exclusion.

The great things about resting outside

Besides the fact that stationary activities can create more weak ties and such ties have great opportunities to expand individuals' social network and enhance the sense

123 Jan, Gehl, *Life between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011), 11.
124 Ibid, 12-14.
125 Ibid, 17-18.
126 Ibid.

of familiarity, these activities can simply do another vital favor, which is to allow people to rest for a while and have appreciations to the surrounding environment. According to the statistics mentioned in Chapter 03, residents who live within Urban Villages do have appreciations with the living environments no matter the quality. This phenomenon can be reflected by the fact that residents here mostly have strong senses about what is happening around them when they are "resting" in the public spaces. To be more specific, these resting activities include sitting or dining on the public spaces close to their residential districts, hanging clothes at the handshake streets, or washing vegetables alongside the public sidewalk streets. They have the opportunity to observe the different activities and features around the community when they are "resting" outside. Thus, residents tend to root themselves within this community because they actually spend time to know what the community looks like and what is happening here.

In contrast, as mentioned, lots of people view their living spaces within commercial housing communities as their valuable properties, and they live and decorate the house for some time and then sell them to other buyers in order to gain profits. The whole process is more like pure business activities, and this may refer to the fact that people's mental connections with the well-decorated communities are fundamentally lacking. As stated, the public spaces here are mostly designed to be circulation based and it highly discourages most types of stationary activities that allow individuals to pause for a while around the outside spaces. Moreover, individuals here usually live with relatively high rhythm life with fast moving speed. Thus, the overall lifestyle within commercial housing communities can be simply described as point-to-point circulations in rapid and non-stop patterns. In this case, these types of living styles will cause the sense of indifference, and then deplete extra mental connections with the living environment. As mentioned by Georg Simmel in his work "Metropolis and Mental life[127]", the protective organ within people's brains will be formed against rapid environmental modifications, and in this case, the rapid upheavals are fast shift between different scenes of space when people are moving around the district in a non-stop pattern[128]. Therefore, people tend to be less sensitive about what is happening around them and there is no room to form any sensitive emotions[129]. So, lack of resting behaviors outside will decrease people's connection with the environment, and this can prevent them from rooting themselves in the spaces that they are residing in.

The stages for stationary activities

The stationary activities have positive effects on connecting individuals with their residential community because they can expand people's social connections, and also

127 Georg Simmel, *Metropolis and Mental Life*, (Chicago: Syllabus Division, University of Chicago Press, 1961).
128 Ibid, 12.
129 Ibid.

slow down residents' living rhythm so they may have more room to build the mental connection with the neighborhood. According to the previous discussion, most types of stationary activities that are happening outside are optional which can be heavily affected by the surrounding physical environments. Thus, it will be vital to understand the spatial features of these environments that can successfully support individuals' stationary activities as well as their social influences. Based on the life study diagrams in Xiasha Village (Fig.4.4.2), even though multiple stationary activities are happening frequently here, they are mostly taking place on the narrower sidewalk spaces which are measured between 2.5 to 6 meters wide and mostly used by humans only. In contrast, the main roads, which are usually wider than 6 meters but over 70 percent of the spaces are shared by vehicles, hardly support many stationary activities that involve large numbers of people. The reason is that the spaces which can mostly support human interactions and exclude vehicles are relatively narrow on these sites. Although some stationary activities do happen alongside the main road, they mostly happen on the zig-zag streets where the "pop-up" spaces can be as wide as 2.7 to 3 meters, and they are rarely used for any circulation by vehicles and bikes. Therefore, the most obvious characteristic for the spaces that encourage stationary activities is wide and empty, and can mostly occupied by pure human activities without vehicles. Similarly, based on public space mapping diagram in Nantian Garden 01 (Fig.3.6.10 and Fig.3.6.12), over 95 percent of stationary activities take place on the wide-open plaza at the right side. These well-afforested circulation spaces at the left side, however, hardly support any activities other than the necessary walking behaviors because of the tiny accessible spaces which are less than 1.5 meters wide. Moreover, Baihua Unit 02 (Fig.3.6.22 and Fig.3.6.24) can be considered as the one that supports the greatest number of stationary activities among these three documented communities because of the central wide garden space. The Baihua Unit 01 community, on the other hand, causes the opposite effect because most public spaces within here are narrowed down by the inaccessible facilities.

Although the spaces with wide-open features are suitable for stationary activities, the dimension of these spaces is controversial. The stationary activities that happened on the 3 to 6 meters public street within Xiasha Village have the sense of inclusion for everybody regardless if they are purchasing the fresh vegetables on the left side or the meat on the right side. The reason behind this is that most individuals can easily find out about what are happening on the other side. However, the stationary activities that happening within Nantian Garden 01 and Baihua Unit 02 are separated to different clusters. To be more specific, in Fig.4.4.4, the public space here is 47 meters long, and the groups who are engaging in playground activities at the left side have almost no connection with the groups who are chatting on the other side. Gehl's statements about the public spaces' dimensions have reasonable explanation. He

states that the spaces which are distanced up to 7 meters, work functionally in connecting people[130]. However, if a space is wider than 35 meters, it will be hard for people to understand the contents of the activities that are happening on the other side[131]. Similarly, the stationary activities that are taking place on the plaza in Nantian Garden 01 are divided into different clusters (Fig.4.4.3). The connections between these groups are rare even though the space is 12 meters by 17 meters. Therefore, public spaces have to be empty enough and sized properly, and the width needs to be somewhere between 2.5 meters to 7 meters in this case, to fully support the stationary activities and enhance their relevant social influences.

130 Jan, Gehl, *Life between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011), 65-67.
131 Ibid, 67-69.

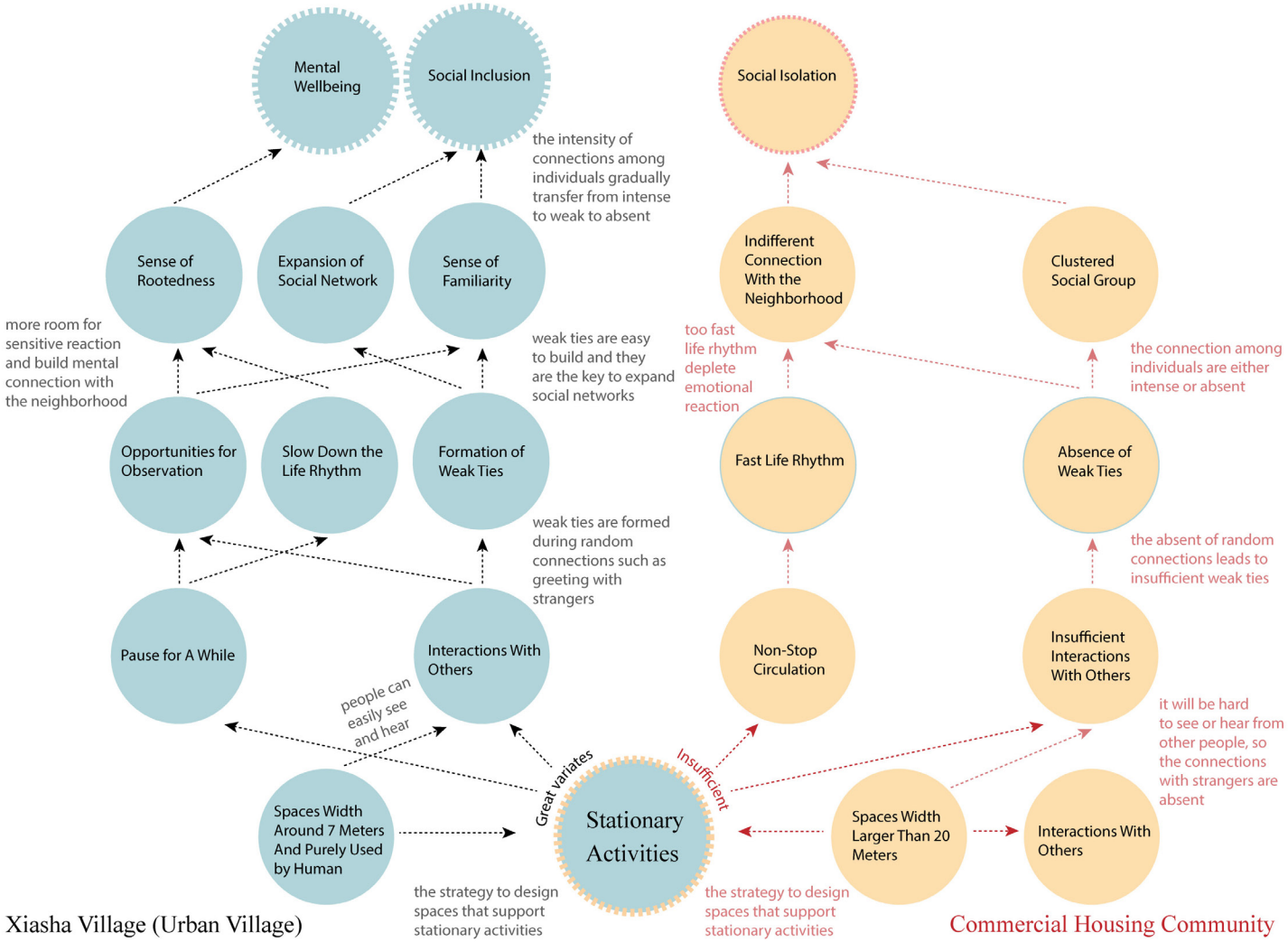


Fig.4.4.5
Stationary activities and the social influences.

The Fact About Diversity

The overall structures of the public spaces within Urban Villages are similar to those inside commercial housing communities. The public spaces contain circulation spaces and ground floor public program spaces. However, the overall spatial qualities, which can usually be indicated by the quantity of stationary activities plus social interactions that the spaces support, are different. Despite the direction of hybridization as discussed before, the diversity of the public programs, plus the diversity of the spatial features, is another key factor to fundamentally differentiate the quality of the public spaces inside these two types of communities. As illustrated in Fig.4.5.1 to Fig.4.5.2, the public programs within Xiasha Village serve dozens of functions such as dining, shopping, entertaining and cleaning, etc. In contrast, the public programs inside commercial housing communities mainly support only three types of functions, which are walking, decorative and driving, the last two terms are irrelevant in promoting human interactions. This creates a sense of monotonousness for the public spaces here. Similarly, the public spaces within Urban Villages are created with many "twists and turns" in forms, and they are different from those inside and around commercial housing communities, which are mostly straight and plain. Thus, this section aims to explore how the diversity of the public spaces is significant in terms of enhancing the quality of social life by promoting social interaction, organizing spatial orientation and encouraging a sense of rootedness.

Points of attraction

The stationary activities that take place in and around public spaces are important in building a healthy social life among residents, and the points of attraction are exactly the catalyst which suggests the quantity and quality of the social activities. As described by Jane Jacobs in her work "The Death and Life of Great American Cities", high-quality public activities with great diversity can simply be defined as different individuals appear at the same time in the same place and are engaged in different activities[132]. These theoretical street scenes can only be achieved when there are lots of different points of attraction, which belong to different categories in terms of social activities, located in the same space. These aforementioned scenes, however, can firstly be found around the northeast edge of Xiasha Village And they are highly mixed-functioned. In the edge scene here, different groups of individuals appear at the same time have the stage to be engaged for different purposes such as shopping for food, visiting spa or dining (Fig.4.5.3). Even the simple dining activities here contain a great amount of diversity. The foods that are served in restaurants here are fundamentally different from each other because they contain different cultural backgrounds from various regions around mainland China. Moreover, as described before, a great number of stationary activities happen alongside the streets or around

132 Jane, Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, December 1992), 64-66.

Fig.4.5.1
August 22, 2021, 6:36pm
Group dining activities around the public street corner inside Xiasha Village.

Fig.4.5.2
August 11, 2021, 5:56pm
Multiple types of activities are happened on the public street.

Fig.4.5.3
Program distribution alongside the northeast edge of Xiasha Village.

various corners here at the same time. They happen because of the different programs that are used as points of attraction. These attractor points are located close to each other and give a variety of reasons to a diverse range of individuals as to why they should all stay at the same place for a while.

Stationary activities are formed when there are diverse attraction points around the public spaces. The diversity can also make the public spaces lively and interesting, which in turn encourages more engagements between individuals and public spaces. As illustrated in multiple public street spaces inside Urban Villages, most types of activities, as long as they are completely legal, are supported, no matter if these activities belong to either working or entertainment categories. This highly broadens the usage of the public spaces and encourages everyone to find their place here.

In contrast, the feature of the public spaces within commercial housing communities can be considered as bland and boring. The public spaces hardly support any stationary activities, not only because of the limitation of sidewalk width (Fig.3.3.5 and Fig.3.3.9), but also because there are barely any points of attraction that convince people to stay there. To be more specific, the public spaces inside Nantian Garden 01 are largely occupied by parking spaces and inaccessible afforestation spaces. Additionally, the ground floor lobby-like spaces, as shown in Fig.4.3.8, which are also connected with the main public circulation spaces, are extremely boring and empty and they serve mostly no purpose. In this case, individuals will find nothing but an over 150-meter-long empty space, plus the extremely dull parking spaces that sit on the two sides of the sidewalk space, when roaming inside this residential community.

In addition to providing no reason for people to stay, this monotonous characteristic can also create a sense of exclusion that restricts the occupation of these public spaces only to the group of “proper consumers”. In Fig.4.5.4 to Fig.4.5.5, the public spaces in the northeast side of Nantian Garden 01 support only two types of sports activities which are fitness and basketball. Although these two types of activities are encouraged here, the spaces are still considered to be extremely monotonous because they support nothing else. To be more specific, the spaces here are mostly “well designed” in organized patterns with narrow sidewalk paths that connect different fitness equipment and the basketball court. Moreover, the rest of the spaces are fully occupied by well-crafted afforestation elements which are again completely inaccessible. In this case, based on the overall design and public life documentation (Fig.3.6.2 and Fig.3.6.4), only the individuals who have an interest in fitness or basketball related activities will utilize the space. Thus, these public spaces here are more like a double-functioned space which do not promote any other type of stationary activities, not even other sports activities such as badminton or Taiichi, which are usually popular in this region. The spaces here create a large sense of exclusion because people who do not plan to engage

Fig.4.5.4
The public space in northeast side of Nantian Garden 01, multiple fitness equipments are placed in the middle of the narrow walking paths.

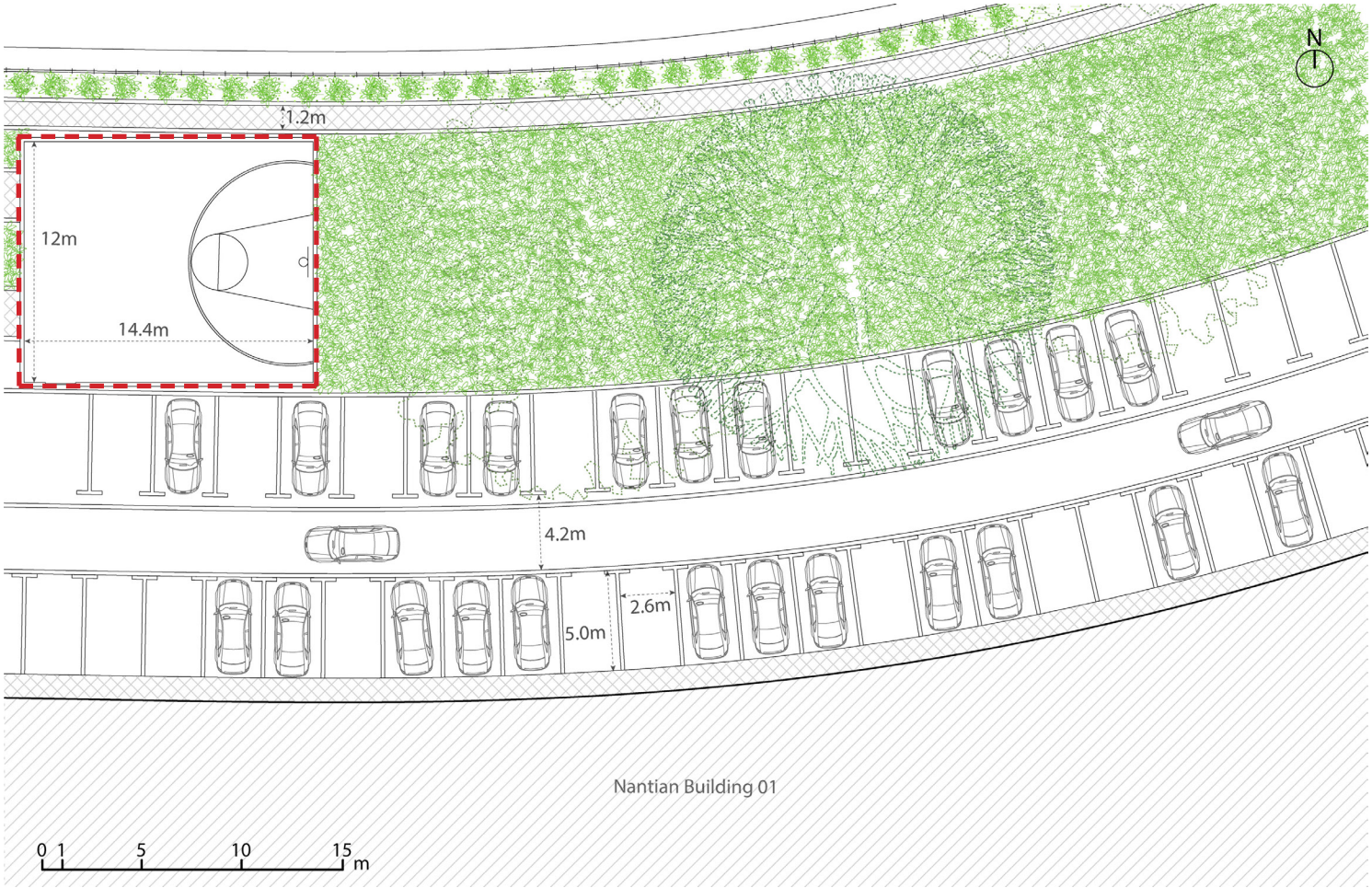


Fig.4.5.5
The right side of public space in northeast side of Nantian Garden 01, one basketball court, which is surrounded by steel fence, are attached to a completely inaccessible garden space.

in these two activities will experience some inconvenience when doing other activities because of the space design.

The unorganized order and the organized chaos

Another feature of diversity is that they have great potential to produce some elements that stand out, and these elements, with the perspective of architectural and public space design, are significant to mark and highlight the position of surrounding environment. Again, stated by Jane Jacobs, the diversities of uses are usually handled poorly in their form[133], and this is honestly true about the diverse forms in Urban Village. These seemingly unorganized diversities can however, offer the decent possibility of displaying genuine differences of content[134]. Thus, the differences can become inspiring and they have chance to stimulate spatial differences to individuals' vision. And in this case, this stimulation can be helpful to identify the direction around a district. The spatial organization within Xiasha Village can be so disorganized that it will be challenging to identify the exact location on digital map. However, my site research experiences went relatively smoothly without frequently getting lost because I randomly was able to identify one or two programs or parts of the streets, and consider them as the landmark of that district. To be more specific, I can easily find out where is the mid part of the community by visually locating the position of the continuous zig-zag street. Similarly, the handshake street, which contains the restaurant kitchen and the apartment entry and basically used as a tiny shared courtyard, helped me to identify the southwest direction of the community (Fig.3.5.1). Also, by locating the tiny grocery shop, which is advertised with the red board and stuck in the corner of a handshake street with brown-painted concrete wall surround (Fig.3.5.3), I can figure out the location of the existence point of Xiasha Village. I use my personal preference to define these "stand-out" programs, and different people will have different preferences. Even though the site plan is relatively difficult to navigate when represented digitally on electronic device, thanks to the great diversity, lots of spaces inside Xiasha Village are easy to recognize. There are always elements that look different from others and enhance the identification of the surrounding region.

On the contrary, the orientation inside the organized commercial housing communities can be relatively confusing because the lack of diversity that makes lots of objects look similar. Again, quoted from Jacobs, homogeneity and close similarity have the great possibility in creating internal disorder because these features fundamentally blur the sense of direction within a neighborhood[135]. The overwhelming scene of similarity destroys the natural indication of direction and in this case, it creates great confusion and this is definitely

133 Jane, Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, December 1992), 228-230.
134 Ibid.
135 Jane, Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, December 1992), 225-226.

another type of chaos[136]. This statement is so true based on the countless times that I failed to provide the precise information to the delivery person about where is apartment 01 and which is apartment 02. Even though each single time I described that apartment 01 is the one which stands in the middle of the parking lots and garden spaces, it made no help because apartment 02 does exactly the same thing. Moreover, there are barely any other elements existing here besides building, parking spaces and garden spaces. The absolutely identical parking spaces, plus the two garden spaces with slightly different and complex walking patterns but still look identical with human's ground level perspective, highly blur the orientation inside this community. The overall circulations inside this community can be chaotic because the diversity here is extremely poor and each region looks alike to each other.

Diversity and rootedness

Individuals' sense of rootedness with the neighborhood are usually formed when they can actually spend some time to have connection with the surrounding environment. This connection can be explained as having visual or physical contacts with the spaces. People will have even greater opportunity to explore around and build the sense of rootedness with the neighborhood if these contacts take place in slower and more detailed rhythms and manners. As stated by Jane Jacobs, the exploration that helps people to connect with the neighborhood, should always be taken on foot instead of by vehicles and automobiles because traveling on foot can slow down the circulation[137]. And great density can promote the slower and more intense contacts. This statement is perfectly represented inside Xiasha Village. In the street scene in Fig.4.5.7, the diversity of the public programs that stand alongside the public sidewalk space is huge. To be more specific, on the right side of the scene, the barber shop, which is decorated with a black advertisement board and yellow neon light, is attached to a deli shop that serves lots of Guangdong style snacks. Also, on the right side of the barber shop stands a Japanese restaurant. Moving forward, the small warehouse, which provides laundry and bathroom facilities to customers, is located between a pastry shop that is decorated in red color theme, and a fresh meat market in which dozens of fresh proteins are provided by the butcher. In this case, more than 6 different public programs, which serve 6 different types of social activities, stand alongside the same public street and they are seamlessly connected with each other. Thus, the circulation inside this community is spontaneously encouraged to be taken in the relatively slower on foot method so that residents can fully explore all the services that are provided in the public spaces. The longer time that people

136 Jane, Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, December 1992), 225-226.

137 Jane, Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, December 1992), 233-235.

spend on exploring the neighborhood, the greater opportunity for them to build connection.

Despite the fact that the great diversity provides reasons to encourage individuals to travel on foot and explore more, it also makes these roaming processes more enjoyable. The feature of enjoying is significant to further promote individuals to explore around the community and enhance their sense of rootedness. As mentioned before, the diversity within Xiasha Village can be represented in both functional and spatial perspective. The statement of the latter perspective can be shown by the different types of public spaces such as the wide and narrow sidewalk streets, handshake streets, zig-zag streets and the unorganized courtyard streets. These different types of public spaces are mostly seamlessly attached to the major circulation routes which are relatively long and shared by vehicles. The integrations among the traffic route and these strangely shaped spaces create unique public space patterns that add extra content to the overall circulation system. To be more specific, these strangely shaped handshake streets and zig-zag streets are seemed as the small "popped up" square spaces that are attached to the main streams and serve more types of activates rather than walking. Similarly, the unorganized courtyard space in Fig.3.5.9, can be viewed as a small-sized plaza space that supports group gatherings. In this case, these unique spaces which are not shaped normally, make the walking activities more interesting and also, less exhausting. This street scene is similar to what described by Gehl. He stated that walking patterns in a neighborhood, which contain multiple alternations of street spaces plus some "popped up" squares, can stimulate the psychological effect that the streets are shorter than their real dimension[138]. The whole walking processes can even be considered as a scavenger hunt type of game. The main quests are to move from one square, which is filled with some different and interesting activities, to another. And in the case of Xiasha Village, the great spatial diversity creates more "squares" and makes the walking as relatively enjoyable activities.

In contrast, the lack of spatial and functional diversity depletes individuals' interests and connection with the neighborhood by providing no stage and attractions point for stationary activities. Moreover, the poor diversity and monotonous feature can even build the sense of annoyance and exhaustion. This could be a further explanation of the poor connection that individuals build within the commercial housing communities. In Fig.4.5.8, the exterior circulation spaces are connected with two parking spaces plus the empty ground floor spaces on the two sides, which together build a boring scene. In this case, the walking activities here can be extremely monotonous because there will be no alternations or visual stimulations that can stimulate some points of interest. This situation will not change at all if people choose to circulate inside the ground floor atrium. Furthermore, described by

138 Jan, Gehl, *Life between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011), 144-145.

Gehl, acceptable walking distances are the combination of the street length with the quality of street contents[139]. Thus, for the streets in Nantian Garden 01 where street content is close to nothing, the acceptable walking distances will be short. Similarly, all the documented public sidewalks that are located outside commercial housing communities, may receive zero in terms of the street content grading because they support almost no activities other than walking. Besides, they are connected to nothing but the plain concrete communities' walls or iron fences. In this case, relatively long-distance walking will create the sense of annoyance and exhaustion. Particularly for the fact that the travel distance inside or around the communities here can be greater than 500 meters, they can potentially create negative effects on individuals' interests with the neighborhoods.

Diversity and reliability

The great diversity of a community has another surprising ability to create individuals' reliability with the neighborhood by providing resources in the most convenient way. Because of the great diversity within Xiasha Village, residents can easily get different resources based on their needs and interests in a short amount of time. For instance, in the handshake street in Fig.3.5.2, the restaurant space is seamlessly connected to the residential apartment and provides food resources. Similarly, the street in Fig.4.5.7 that contains tons of different types of programs, is located 6-8 meters away from multiple apartment building entrances, so, the residents here can easily get multiple types of resources in extremely short amounts of time. Moreover, as mentioned, these strangely shaped streets, which are always located extremely close to some residential apartments, also provide stages to support other types of daily activates such as laundry, resting or even mahjong. In this case, the diverse Xiasha Village community is basically a utopian residential community filled with resources that can be reached so conveniently, and the neighborhood is heavily relied by the local residents.

The poor diversity inside commercial housing communities, however, depletes the reliability that individuals can have with the surrounding because it provides nothing. The diversity around Nantian Garden 01 and Baihua Unit 01 and 02 is lacking. These three communities basically contain only three elements which are apartment buildings, afforested areas and parking spaces. Even though there are about two fruit markets plus one tiny restaurant located at the ground level outside Nantian Garden, they can hardly provide enough resources for over thousands of people who live here. In this case, individuals who live around this region are forced to rely on the resources that are located elsewhere. And according to the site map, these nearby resources usually cost them extra 20-30 mins in traveling (Fig.4.5.9). It is vital to mention the mental status that individuals can possibility have if they live

139 Jan, Gehl, *Life between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011), 139-141.

in an economic-driven metropolis like Shenzhen. As stated by Simmel, people's personality in such environment is like machines. It means that most of them expect schematically precise life schedules in order to maintain the stability of their wellbeing[140]. Extra travel time on the road has potential to add extra contents to people's expected routine and breaks their expected life schedules, which are supposed to be as precise as possible. In this case, the online resources deliveries, which can deplete the time for traveling and in-field product exchanging, but also highly discourage outdoor public social interactions, are heavily relied. In this case, the objects that actually matter to individuals are their own apartments plus the digital tools, and anything else in this community can be relatively meaningless.

140 Georg Simmel, "*Metropolis and Mental Life*", (Chicago: Syllabus Division, University of Chicago Press, 1961), 13-14.

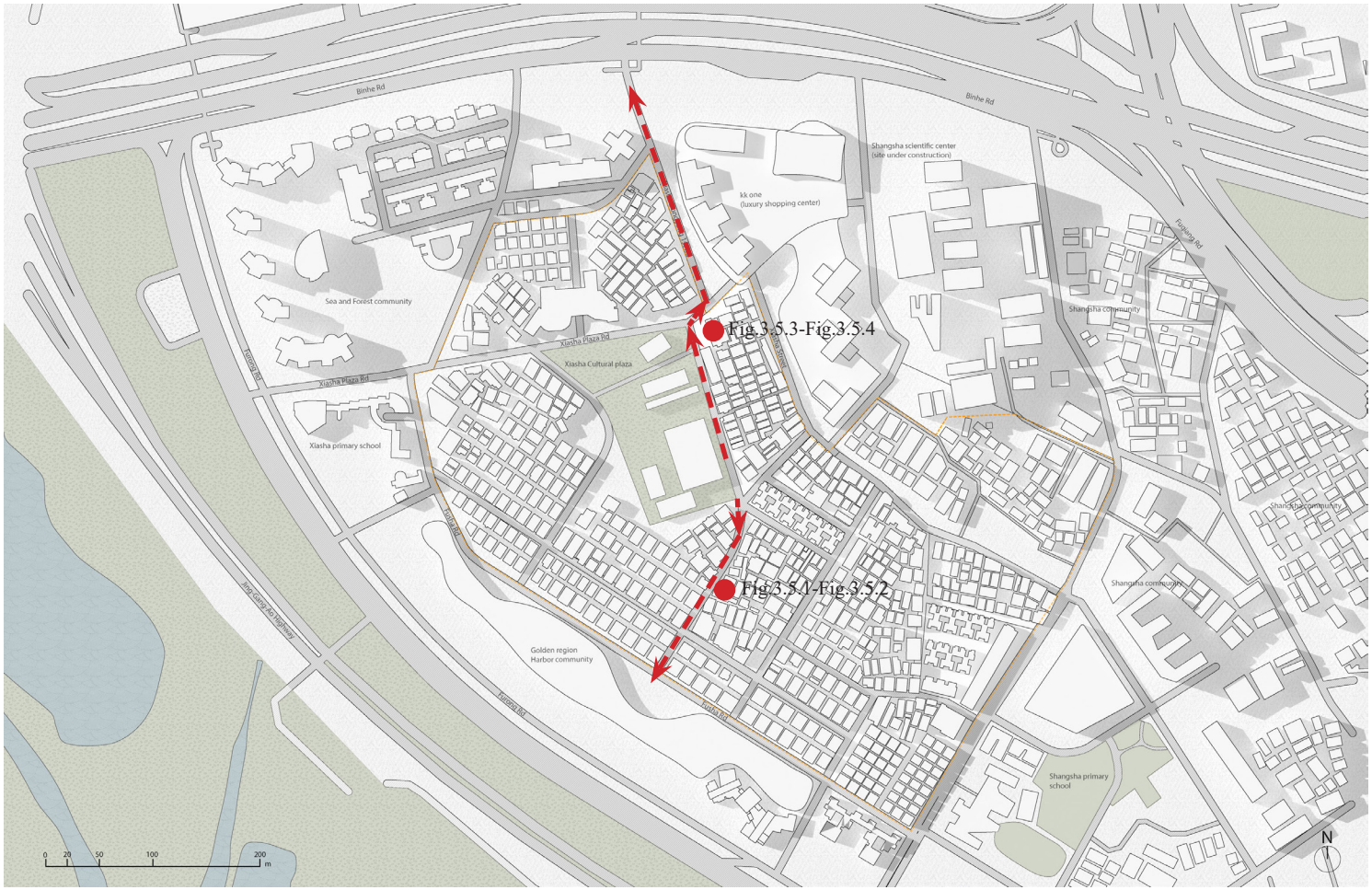


Fig.4.5.6
Some of the spaces that I used as visual hints when I traveling within Xiasha Village. These distinguishable spaces provide me with the location.

Fig.4.5.7
August 11, 2021, 5:54pm
Multiple different programs, which support social activities in different categories, locate seamlessly close to each other alongside the public sidewalk.

Fig.4.5.8
Axon view for the public space within Nantian Garden 01.

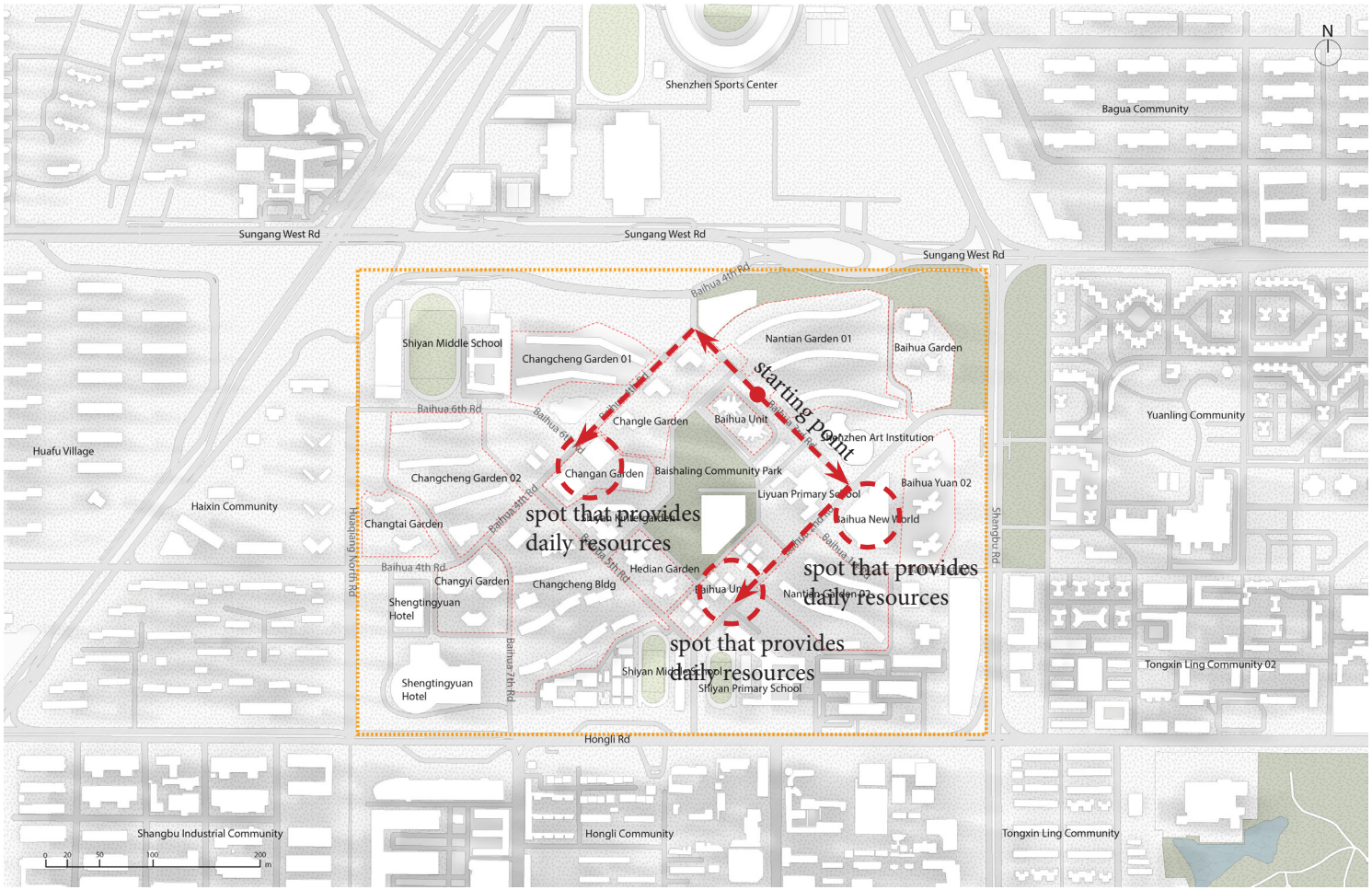
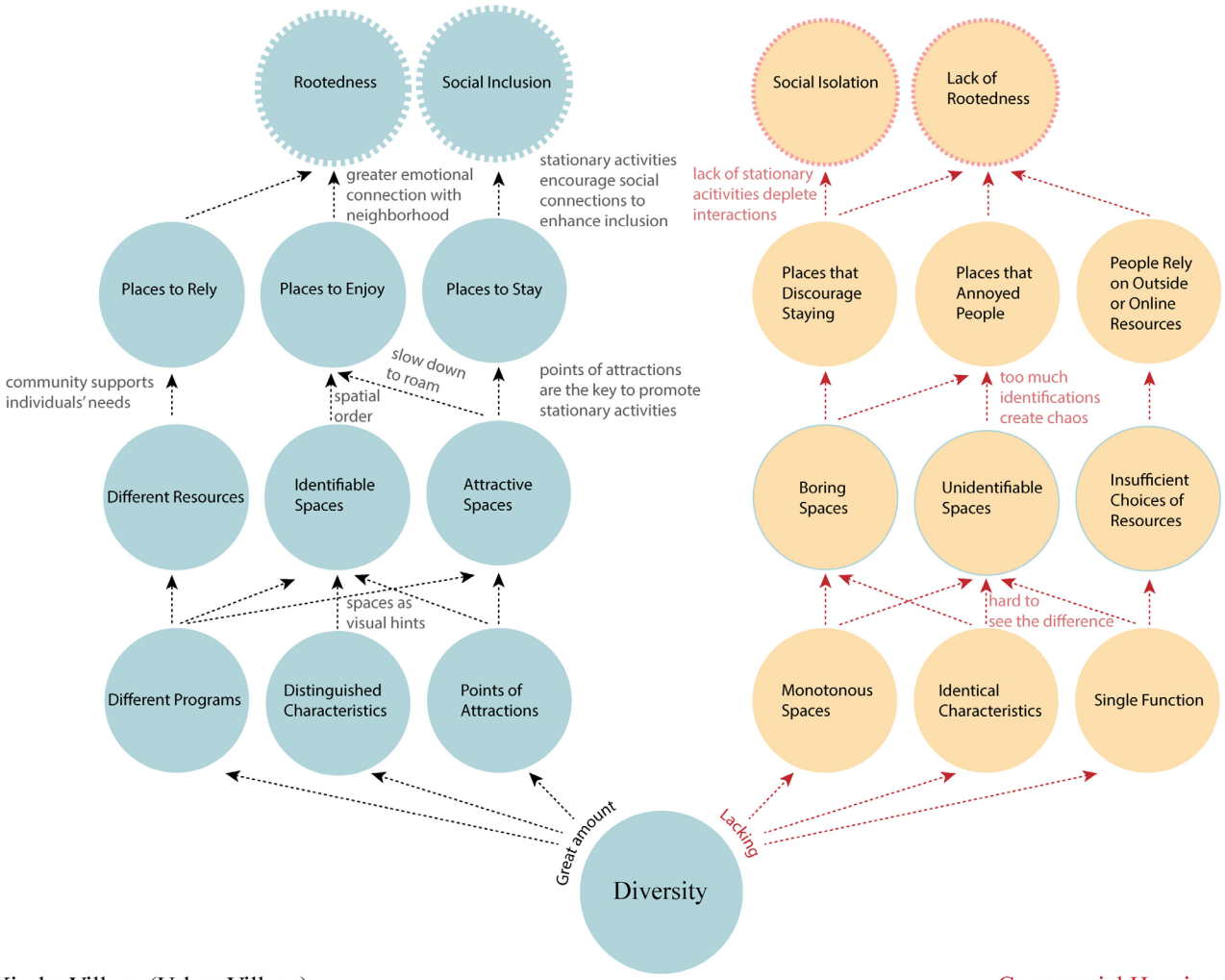


Fig.4.5.9
The resources can be inconveniently to reach for some residents because the overall design and planning of the public spaces in these communities are too “clean” and lack program diversity.



Xiasha Village (Urban Village)

Commercial Housing Community

Fig.4.5.10
Great diversity in public space can promote positive social effect.

Preservation and Respect

To sum up, as mentioned in Chapter 01, the city of Shenzhen is filled with the sense of indifference and lack of emotion. Commercial housing communities were designed in a uniform and monotonous manner and they are definitely enhancing the ideas and bringing this sense to individuals' daily life. In contrast, even though Xiasha Village looks aesthetically grotesque, it has tremendous amounts of positive characteristics that provide the local residents with quality social life. As mentioned in the end of Chapter 03, Xiasha Village is placed on the "to be renovated or eliminated" list, which means that the whole community may looks significantly different in the coming years. Even though there is no published renovation plan leaked from any professional architectural teams, it is likely that this community will be changed to commercial and residential mixed skyscrapers which follows the footstep of nearby Shangsha Village. Nevertheless, based on the research and arguments, the neighborhood to potentially be fundamentally transformed or eliminated, is the one that has a series of remarkable attributes and promotes wellbeing for its residents. To be more specific, this neighborhood not only welcomes the groups who do not live here, but its commercial spaces also are needed by the outsiders. Moreover, this community is so filled with spatial and social diversity that it excludes nobody and provides the sense of rootedness to most individuals. Besides, this community is built in a way that the public safety and health can be maintained through eyes on the streets instead of the digital supervision system. Moreover, the public living environments here are so intriguing that most residents have the passion on spending time around them. Thus, the current form of Xiasha Village should be preserved as much as possible. Because the reason that Xiasha Village is typical enough to represent the spatial form of most Urban Villages in Shenzhen, these weirdly shaped neighborhoods all deserve to be preserved and protected.

Despite all the positive attributes about urban villages, I have to highlight the fact that Shenzhen should still be developed as an elegantly shaped metropolis because of its role as a special economic zone, and the concept of standardization will still be the core. However, it will also be important to notice that the overall structure of the demographic in Shenzhen is highly different with that in other Tier-1 metropolis such as Beijing because of the immigration history. Thus, the sense of rootedness is poor and the emotional connection between residents and the city is insufficient. In this case, the concept of promoting social inclusion and connection deserve extra attention during the process of developing residential community. Even though the shape of urban villages will never represent Shenzhen, the main concepts of their public spaces' development are still valuable learning resources. Thus, for the following chapter, I aim to introduce multiple ways of improving the quality of public spaces within commercial housing communities by learning from Xiasha Village.

Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen are considered and the Tier-1 city in China.

Chapter 05

Learning from the Urban Village

Urban Villages are the communities that hated by the public but constantly provide residential spaces to these groups of individuals who migrate to the city of Shenzhen and have the goal of pursuing job opportunities. Even though the spatial appearances of these neighborhoods will potentially have negative impact on the overall scene of the city, they are spontaneously creating some positive effects in terms of promoting social inclusion. This factor is significant to a newly and rapidly developed metropolis like Shenzhen in which people are trying to root themselves here. As mentioned earlier, most parts of the city are constructed with the concept of standardization and normalization. And according to the observation and research from previous chapters, these two concepts fail to build neighborhoods that are filled with the sense of inclusion, and individuals will hardly root themselves into communities which mostly focus on their market development instead of human engagement. Moreover, according to Meng Yan, founder and principal of a Shenzhen-based professional architecture team URBANUS, he critiqued that the over-standardization within a city should be considered as an illness[141]. He stated that people will lose connection with others in a city in which almost everything looks identical to each other and most corners are filled with standardized code instead of lively activities. In this case most individuals will lose interest in outdoor spaces and ridiculously rely on online resources such as food delivery and remote shopping[142]. This is true, the sense of social inclusion is built based on the interactions among individuals. The lack of social interactions will only encourage the growth of exclusion and isolation. Furthermore, according to Meng, one proper solution, which can be used in response to the boring and identical characteristic of a city, is to bring some sense of chaos into this "perfectly looking city" in order to increase the diversity[143]. Again, based on the previous discussion, diversity is one of the main factors that distinguishes Xiasha Village, which is one of the most typical Urban Villages, from commercial housing communities, which are mostly constructed with the main concerns of becoming perfectly elegant.

As discussed at the end of former chapter, Shenzhen will always look as standardized and elegant as what it looks right now, and commercial housing communities will still be the main trend. However, the spatial qualities in these neighborhoods can be improved by learning from the spatial characteristics that we have seen in urban villages. Thus, in this chapter, I aim to briefly propose the idea of slight modifications of the public spaces within commercial housing community with the method of learning from Xiasha Village, and input some "chaotic elements". The proposals will be

141 Xiaoyu, Wei, "城市拯救计划：给乏味的城市"添点儿乱" City saving plan: Make the boring city a bit chaotic", New Weekly Journal, Last modified June 11, 2020, https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/23kqeuWd0J17qyiJ66NK0Q.

142 Xiaoyu, Wei, "城市拯救计划：给乏味的城市"添点儿乱" City saving plan: Make the boring city a bit chaotic", New Weekly Journal, Last modified June 11, 2020, https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/23kqeuWd0J17qyiJ66NK0Q.

143 Ibid.

separated into different sections that concentrate on different parts of public spaces inside commercial housing community. The commercial housing community that I choose to test my proposal will be Nantian Garden 01, which is one of the largest and most elegant commercialized neighborhoods around Baihua District.

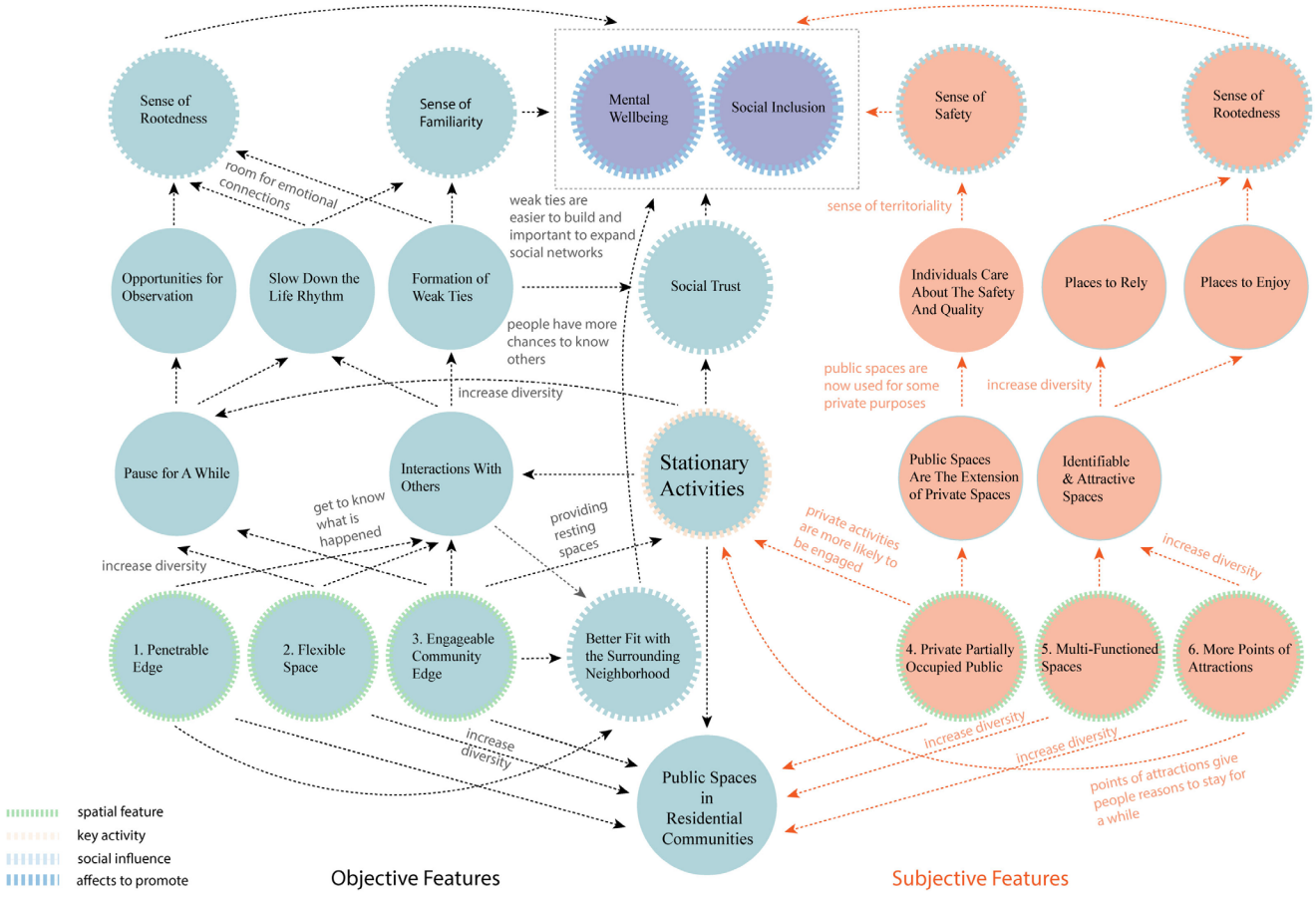


Fig.5.1.1
The spatial feature within Xiasha Village

Engageable community edge

The edge and gate area of a residential community is the most noticeable element because it is fully connected with the public spaces outside. The community's edge fundamentally represents the identity of the neighborhood, as well as builds up a relationship with the surrounding. To be more specific, the edges of Xiasha Village consist of different public programs, which provide resources and sitting spaces to the individuals who either live or not live here. Similarly, the village's edges are extremely penetrable, which means that almost anyone is welcome to use the resources here. In this case, even though Xiasha Village may look relatively disorganized if compared to the surrounding, it is highly engaged with the surrounding environment and highly demanded by the people who live nearby. Despite the resources, the edge of the community can potentially have high influence on the spaces that are close to this community. In Fig.(3.7.9), the public sidewalk space is filled with social life, mostly because the village edge is constructed with low and wide staircases which allow people to sit on. These simply built staircases fundamentally provide stages for stationary activities, and according to the previous research, stationary activities are the key to promote interactions among different individuals, and these interactions can directly lead to the sense of inclusion among people in the neighborhood.

In contrast, the community edge for Nantian Garden 01 is constructed with the characteristic of impenetrable and un-engageable. The community edges are built with solid stone walls with iron fences sitting on the top. The stone walls are 0.5 meter high but there are completely no "popped-up" spaces that allow people to sit (Fig.5.1.3). This is one of the main reasons why the stationary activities on the closest Baihua 3rd Road are extremely lacking. Additionally, the intense afforestation elements are planted right behind the iron fence, and the solid parking spaces are built behind. This spatial hierarchy fundamentally prevent any connection between the local residents with outsiders, and even the simple visual connections are highly blocked. In this case, the whole identity of this residential community can be described as a consumer-only space with full sense of exclusion. And this neighborhood is nothing but a black hole to the people who live nearby because of the poor connection.

Inspired by the spatial features in Xiasha Village, my first small-scale renovation proposal is to build a community wall which is relatively more engageable for all individuals who do or do not live here. The basic strategy is to add multiple "popped-up" sitting spaces which allows people to stay there for a while (Fig.(5.1.4)). Moreover, multiple 0.2m by 0.2m columns should be constructed besides these sitting spaces to provide spaces for people to stand by or lean on. These sitting behaviors can significantly boost the frequency of stationary activities which is vital in expanding individuals' social networks and building the sense of familiarity, rootedness and social trust. Aside from the outside sitting space, a 3 meter

to 3.5 meter empty space should be built between the steel fence and the inaccessible afforestation zone. This will highly increase the connection, either visually, physically or even orally, among local residents and those who do not live here. In this case, the community wall will be far more penetrable, and this feature is not only helpful in encouraging social interactions, but also have the capacity on increasing the connections that individuals may have with the whole Baihua District.

Ideally, in order to enhance the connection that this commercial housing community has with the surrounding neighborhood, the importance of the security gate should be significantly lifted. This goal can be accomplished by pushing back the gate, or replacing the gate with relatively accessible green spaces plus seating spaces. This move can start to break down the us and them aspect of the outside pedestrian space versus inside community space. Notwithstanding, even though the removal of the security gate may not affect the public safety due to the intense digital surveillance system, the absence of the security gate will blur the sense that this all the apartments and infrastructures inside this community are "bounded" together for marketing purpose. Thus, even though the boundaries of commercial housing communities are supposed to be penetrable in order to build more connection with the surrounding, with the identity of being "commercial products", it will be extremely challenging to make the edge mostly or completely loose and penetrable.

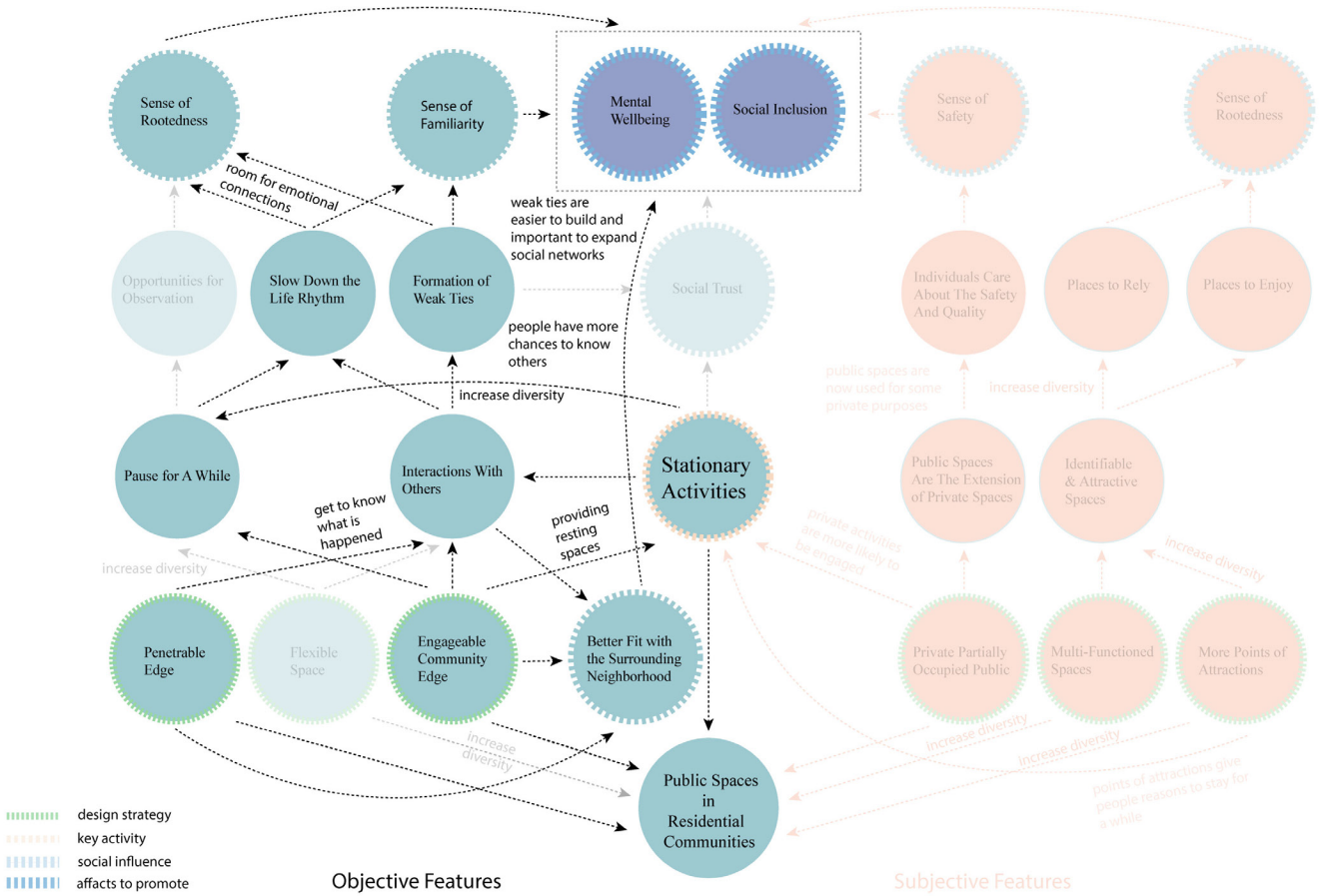


Fig.5.1.2
The renovation strategy 01, make the community edge more engageable and penetrable.

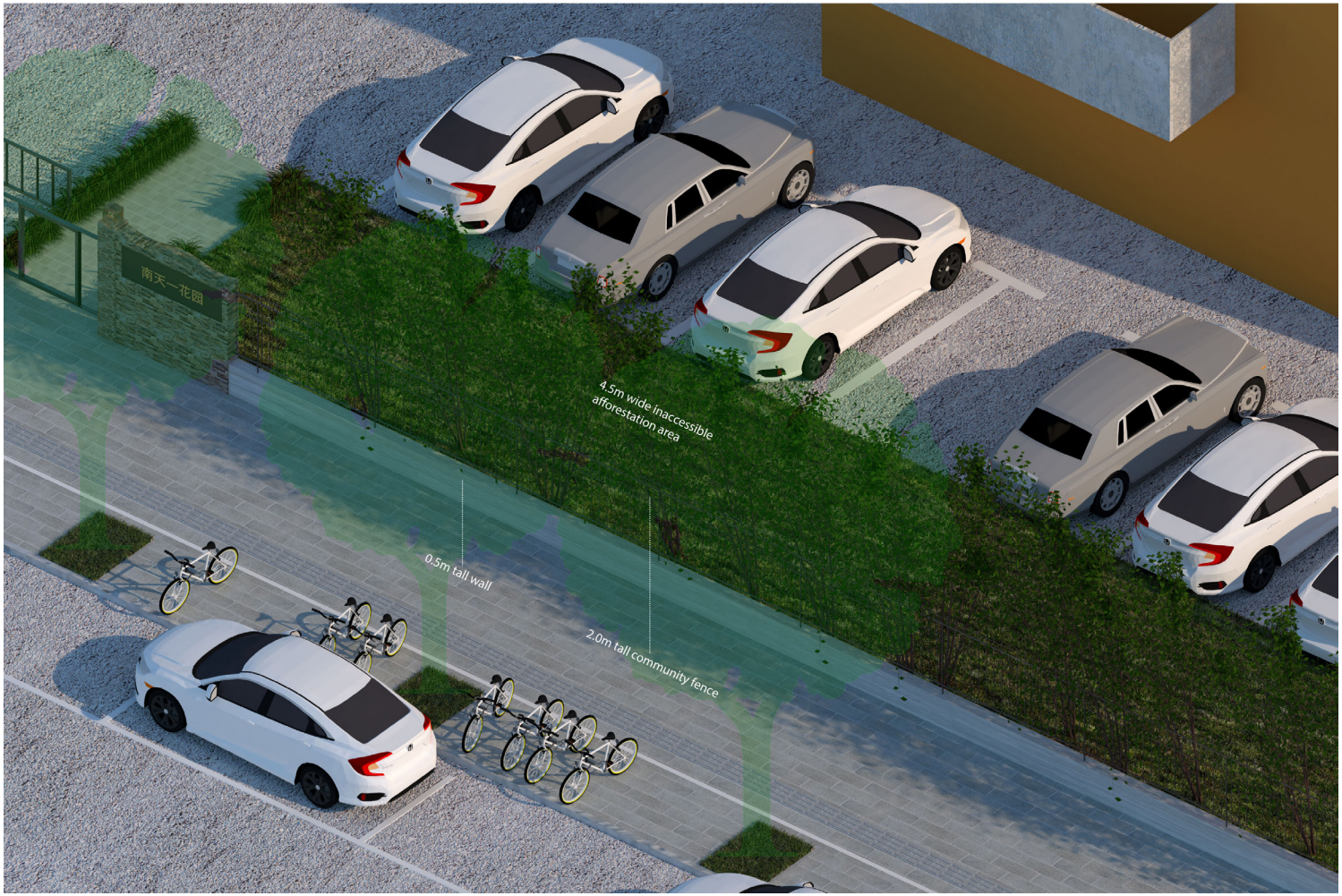


Fig.5.1.3
Community edge before renovation.

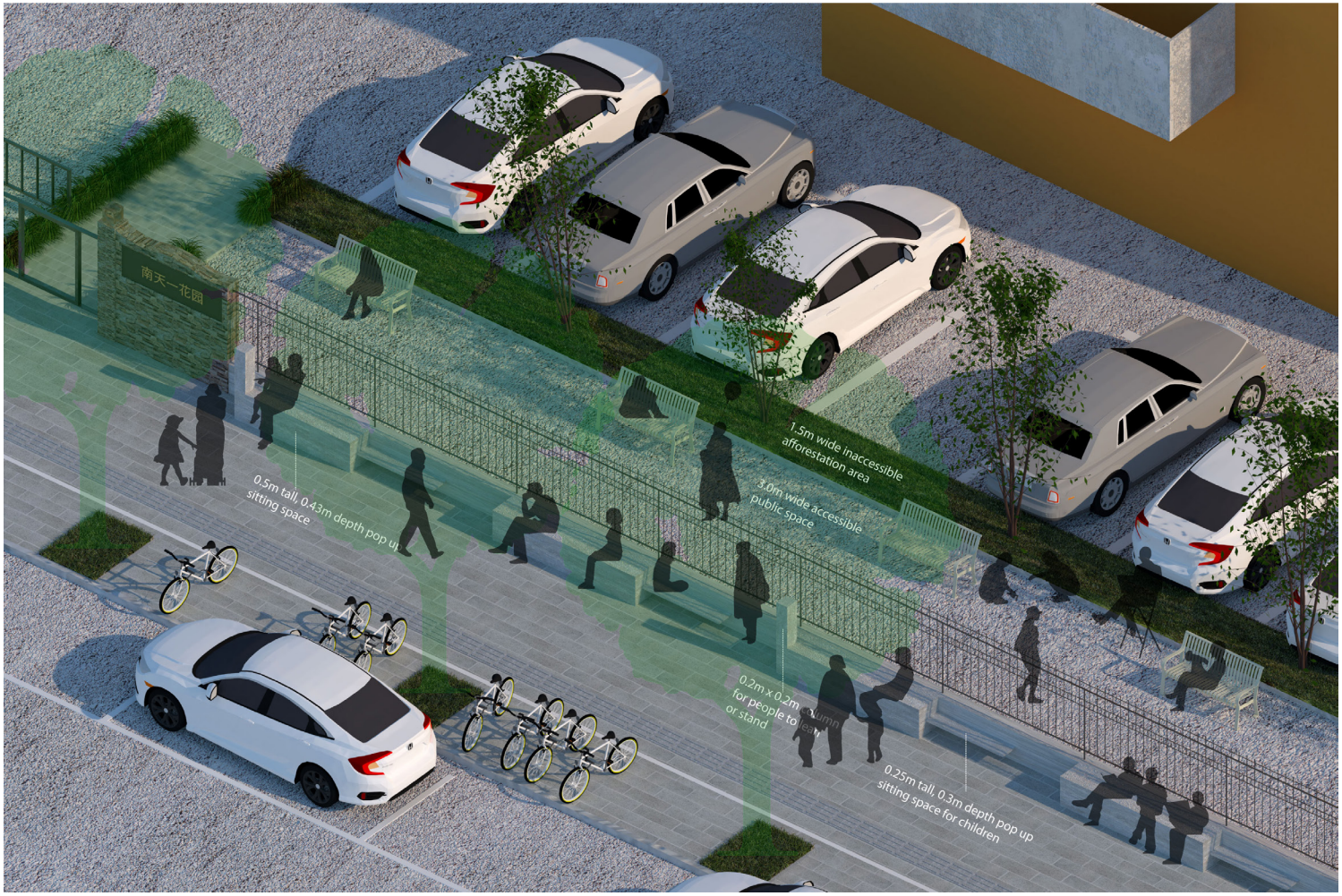


Fig.5.1.4
Community edge after renovation.

Flexible space and multifunction space

The most remarkable characteristic about the public spaces in Xiasha Village can be described as being unprogrammed. There is almost no restriction on individual's choice of activities. The great flexibility of the public space here is fundamentally the catalyst that encourage different individuals, who have different interests, to stay here for a while. Great variety and flexibility also refer to the promotion of random interactions. And as mentioned in the section about the weak ties among different individuals, this type of weak connection, which require shorter amount of time to build up, can largely expand individual's social network[144] especially when people have the opportunities to have connection with others who may have different interests of how to use this public space. In contrast, the public spaces in most commercial housing communities that I showed before, clearly indicate the main purpose of the specific public space. To be more specific, in Fig.(3.6.1), individuals who use this space to do some physical exercise can mostly and only have interaction with those who have the similar purpose. In this case, the entire neighborhood has the risk to be divided into different isolated groups which have the opposite influence on promoting social inclusion.

Aside from the feature of flexibility, another noticeable feature, which the public spaces in Xiasha Village have, is the function to support different purposes at the same time. Even though a multi-functioned space may seem similar to the meaning of a flexible space. Nevertheless, the fundamental requires for a public to be multi-functioned is to be wide enough to support multiple functions. While the requirement for a public space to be flexible is to be less restricted as possible. And in this case, the size of the public space may even be the more significant factor in encouraging social inclusion. To be more specific, the public space in Nantian Garden 01 (Fig.(3.1.6)) is empty enough for not restricting individuals' choices of activities. However, the size of the space itself, which allows no activities rather than circulation, is the most annoying restriction. A well-functioned public space should definitely have the space to engage people.

Thus, the second renovation proposal is to add multiple circular empty garden spaces that are attached to this slim circulation space in Fig.(5.2.3). The surfaces of these circular spaces will be built with natural soil ground in order to have better corporation with the surrounding afforestation elements. The spaces will support multiple types of activities such as picnic, sitting and dog activities. Moreover, the space will remain as clean as empty as possible without the installation of a single piece of infrastructure such as seat. Besides the empty feature, it will be vital to notice that these spaces should be sized properly. According to the research written by Jan Gehl, a space, which is not wider than 7 meters, can mostly encourage social interaction because this distance

144 Mark S Granovetter, *The Strength of Weak Ties*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, American Journal of Sociology, 1973), Volume 78, Issue 6, 1360-1380.

is the one that keep vision and hearing work effectively[145]. Furthermore, based on the examples of the sizes of public spaces in Xiasha Village, the sidewalk spaces which are measured around 2.5-4.0 meters, are also doing great job in bringing people together. Thus, these circular spaces will be designed with the width that is set between 3.0 meters and 7.0 meters. Therefore, with the help from the popped up circular spaces, individuals can hopefully to have some opportunities to pause their move in the public spaces for a while, and have some real connection with these well-crafted afforestation elements.

As mentioned, the overall afforestation area inside the whole community should not be lower than 45 percent. The rule is originally set by Shenzhen urban planning authority with the purpose of building towards a garden city. Afforestation elements do make positive effect on individuals' wellbeing, thus, the 45 percent requirement is not to be judged or challenged. Nevertheless, afforestation elements, if they are made with the purpose of decoration instead of human engagement, should occupy the areas which are originally not interacted with human behaviors, for example, the facade of the high-rise apartments. On the other hand, the ground floor spaces, which always have great potential for humanengagement, should be built with the characteristics that encourage human interactions.

145 Jan, Gehl, *Life between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011), 65-67.

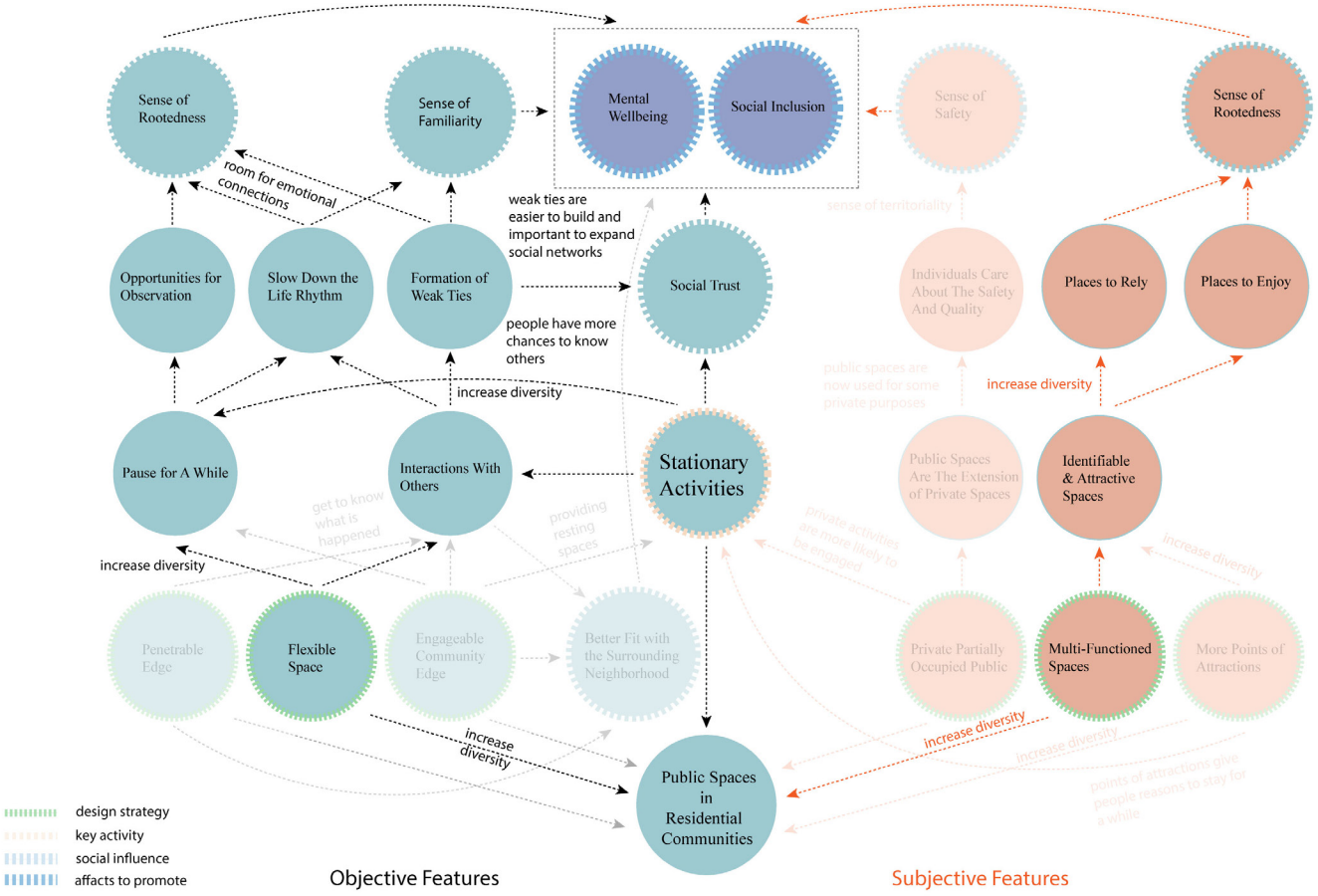


Fig.5.1.2
The renovation strategy 02, make the public space wider and more flexible.

Fig.5.2.2
Public space before renovation.

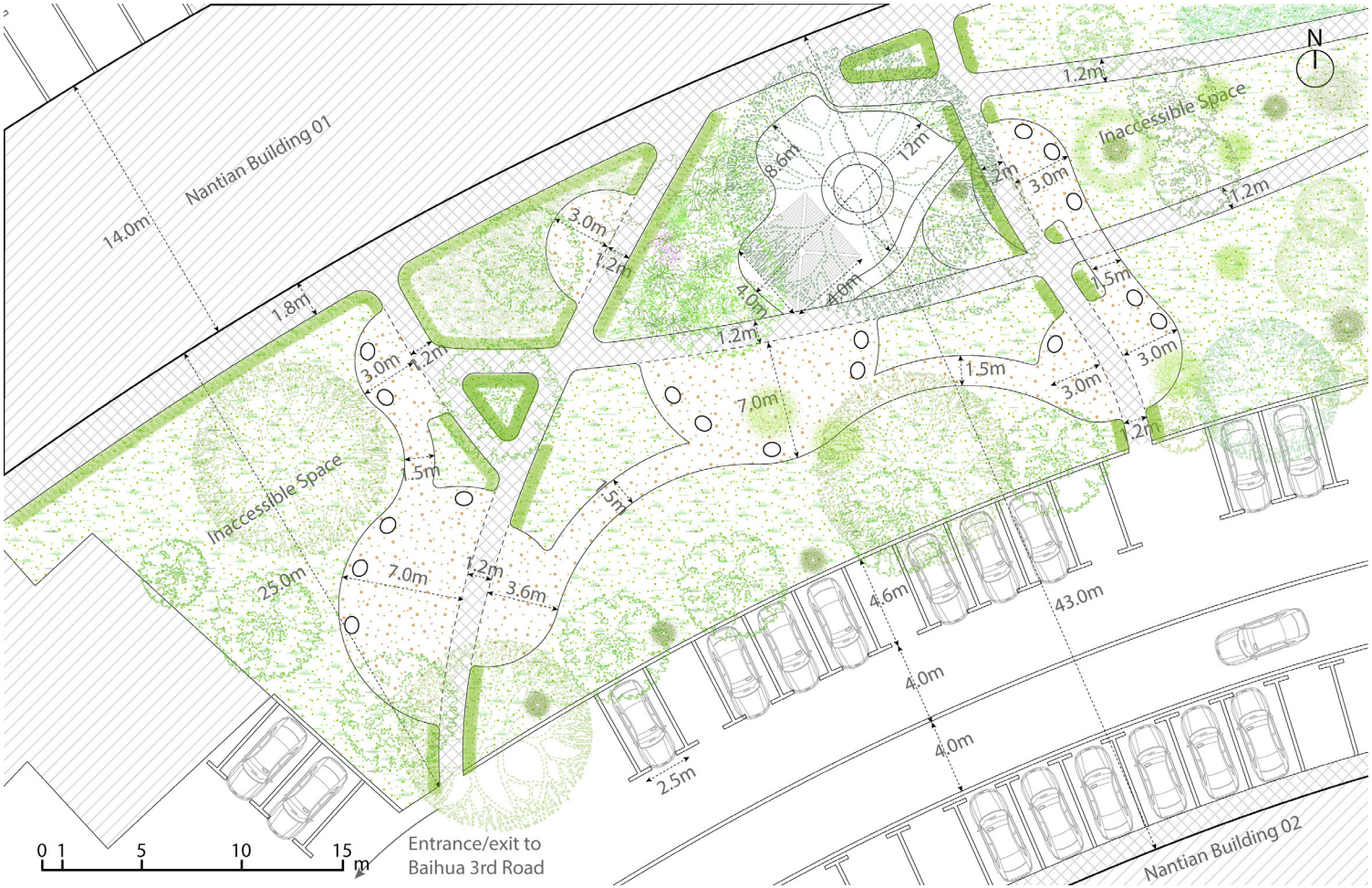


Fig.5.2.3
Public space after renovation.

More points of attractions

The empty spaces within Xiasha Village are interesting and intriguing and they relentlessly support different activities. Nevertheless, these empty spaces will be multiple "boring and empty" spaces if they don't include or are not connected to any points of interests. As illustrated before, the whole process of walking on these relatively empty sidewalks inside Xiasha Village is more like a scavenger hunt game because the space is seamlessly attached to multiple interesting programs that provide people with different resources. Similarly, the renovated empty public space, which I proposed during the last section, has the great potential to be attractive for the reason that individuals will be attracted by the extremely well-crafted afforestation elements because of their natural biophilia. In contrast, these empty and properly sized public atrium spaces that are located at the ground floor (Fig.(4.5.8)), deplete individuals' interests because they are connected with nothing but solid parking space and vehicles. Moreover, the affect is reciprocal, the exterior circulation space, which is attached to the parking spaces and the empty ground floor spaces behind, are also insanely boring because there is no point of attractions around.

As discussed in the previous chapter, points of attractions are exactly the catalyst that promote stationary activities, which can encourage the process of building up connection and sense of familiarity. Moreover, according to Jan Gehl, points of attraction add another layer of variety onto the feature of public spaces which can even make a long walking space feel shorter and more enjoyable[146]. And the interesting features can then enhance the sense of rootedness because people are enjoying their time around the public spaces in the neighborhood.

In this case, instead of making the ground floor lobby spaces look "clean and organized", my proposal for the renovation is to add some chaos into these spaces to transfer the circulation process into another scavenger hunt. The empty spaces should be filled with different entertaining infrastructures, and the types of infrastructures should be mixed up in one bay area. In this case, each bay, which originally looks identical with others, look differently at this point and each of them has the capacity to support different types of activities at the same time. Thus, the circulation around this public space here will be moving from one "courtyard or playground" to another and this is exactly the interesting scene that described by Jan Gehl.

Besides these infrastructures which are now mostly used for entertaining activities, it will be significant to add multiple food trucks or food service stations inside these empty ground floor voids. In general, the moveable food trucks are not highly appreciated by the authorities who aim to create perfectly clean and elegant community spaces. However, based on the public life study within urban villages plus my

146 Jan, Gehl, *Life between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011), 144-145.

own experience of traditional Chinese culture, the street food or food products, which are served around the exterior public space, have the greatest potential to attract people to stay there for a while. To be more specific, the ground floor public spaces will be significantly more attractive if there is one or couple spots that serve Jianbing, which according to the journal articles is the most popular street food in the whole China[147]. Jianbing food trucks are mostly followed by a relatively long waiting line[148]. Thus, I aim to encourage multiple food trucks which serve Jianbing, plus barbecue or cold noodles, to be placed around the entry of each "bay area" of this continuous ground floor public space (Fig.5.3.2). These street food spots will highly likely to boost the attractiveness of this public space, and significantly increase the frequency of stationary activities.

Except the fact that more contents plus more sense of flexibility can make the public spaces more attractive, this renovation strategy is also hybridizing the public space. Based on the previous research, the concept of hybridization is the key to shape the spatial characteristic within Xiasha Village. To be more specific, these infrastructures and the food trucks are hybridizing the mostly empty public space with some private activities. Nevertheless, these plugged-in private activities are not necessarily private because they are mostly engageable to the public. In this case, these add-on infrastructures and food trucks hybridize the empty public space to a space that include some private activities and they are not truly privatizing anything. On the other hand, the hybridization here connects individuals with the public space by providing them with some ownership. According to Newman's research, individuals will likely to pay more attention to the spatial quality of the public space if they have more control or ownership of the space[149]. The ownerships in this case can be refereed to fact that individuals are having lot more interactions with the public space.

147 Fiona Reilly, "Why Jianbing Is China's Most Popular Street Breakfast", *Serious Eats*, Last modified March 22, 2019. https://www.seriouseats.com/jianbing-chinese-savory-breakfast-crepe.

148 Ibid.

149 Oscar Newman, "*Creating Defensible Space*". (Washington, DC: Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, 1996), 9.

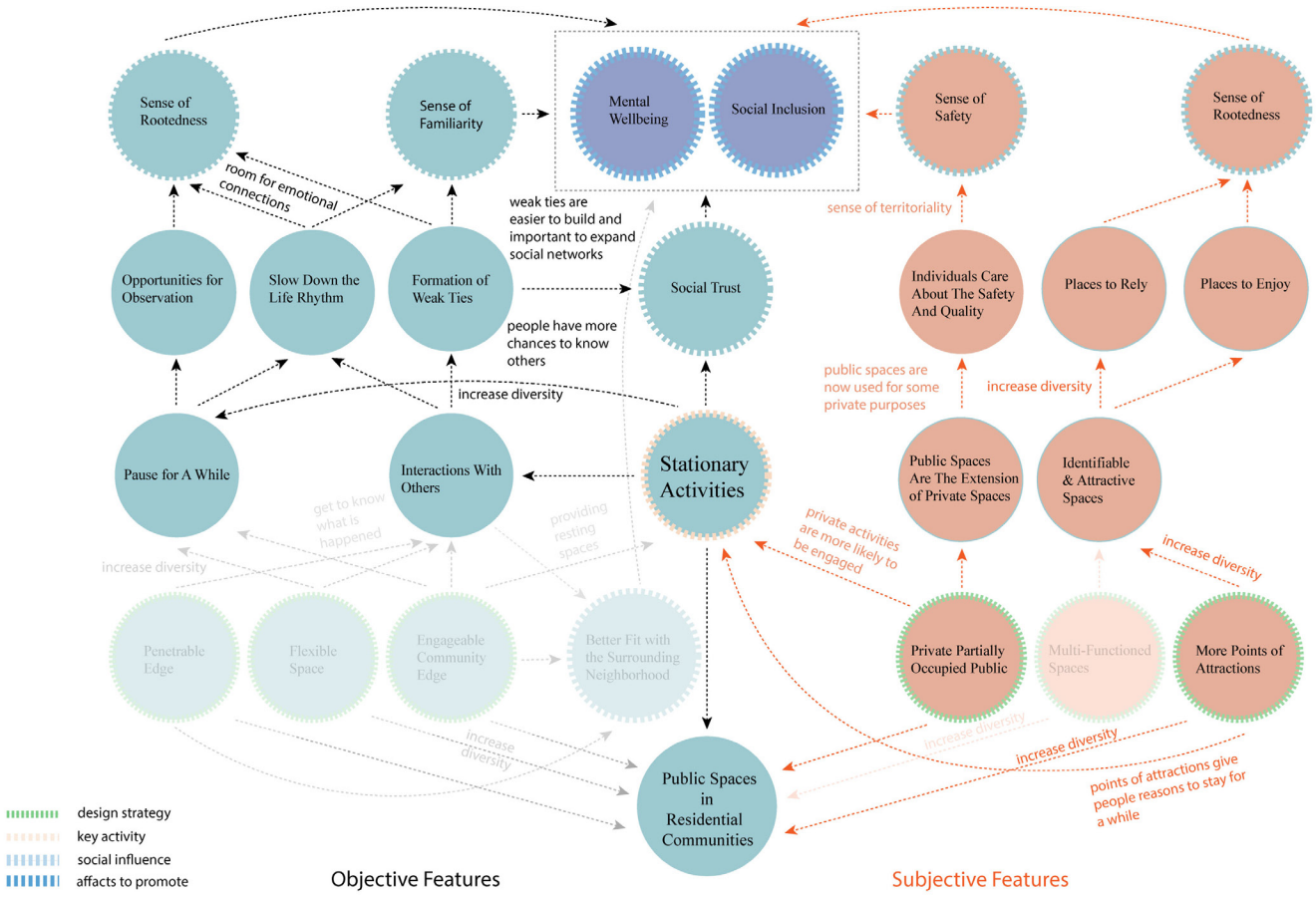


Fig.5.3.1
The renovation strategy 03, make the public space more chaotic, hybridized the space with more points of interests.

Fig.5.3.2
Public space before renovation.

Fig.5.3.3
Public space after renovation.

Embrace grotesque

In conclusion, with the help of these three renovation strategies, which can be summarized as making the community edge more engageable, widening the public spaces to a proper dimension, and hybridizing the public spaces with more points of interests, Nantian Garden 01 is hopefully to have more connections with its audience plus the individuals who live around the surrounding neighborhood. These renovation strategies, which are exactly inspired by the spatial characteristics within Xiasha Village, maybe helpful in improving the spatial qualities in most commercial housing communities in Shenzhen. Thus, “dirty, chaos and bad” may straightly imply negative features in most sense, nevertheless, in an over-standardized metropolis like Shenzhen in which the demographic is fundamentally chaotic, the characteristic of “chaos and bad” may be the terms that are desired.

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