

A Preliminary Analysis of Improvement of the Site Vitality of Enning Road

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Abstract: Enning Road is an old city street with Guangzhou characteristics. It has an excellent geographical location and the longest arcade in Guangzhou and is also the birthplace of Cantonese opera culture. However, despite so many advantages, the site vitality of Enning Road is relatively low. Therefore, this paper mainly analyzes the current situation of Enning Road and discusses how to make it play its own advantages to reproduce the past glory.

Keyword: *Enning road, position, Cantonese opera, vitality, culture tourism*

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0 The importance of the status of enning road

0.1 Importance of architecture

Enning Road is located in Liwan District, Guangzhou, which is an important block in Guangzhou. It starts from Baohua Road and extends eastward to Duobao Road. Qilou street, the most complete and longest street in Guangzhou, is composed of Enning Road, Longjin West Road, Tenth Fu Road, and Upper and Lower Ninth Pedestrian Street^[1]. During the Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China, it was a city full of prosperity, and it used to be a bustling commercial street and one of the important economic centers of Guangzhou.

Qilou is a typical representative of Guangfu culture, which is an exotic product, that is, the modern Qilou originated in India. Enning Road was adjacent to the 13 hong, the exclusive trading port at that time and was the window for the Qing Dynasty to communicate with the outside world. Qilou was quickly introduced

into Guangdong because this kind of building can keep away from the wind and rain and the sun and it is very suitable for rainy weather in South China. Therefore, Qilou is not only the representative of modern architecture in Guangzhou but also bears the development history of modern city in Guangzhou.

0.2 Importance of culture

Cantonese opera is called “red bean of the southern country,” and Enning Road is the most representative territory of Cantonese opera in Guangzhou, which can be regarded as the birthplace and headquarters of Cantonese opera culture. For a 100 years, it has been known as “the hometown of Cantonese opera,” “the birthplace of Wushu family of southern style boxing,” “the training base of longhu martial arts, and the area of cultural celebrities^[2], in which it has prevailed in the southern Guangdong opera art of Bayin Club Hall and the joys and sorrows of Guangyali. Enning Road reflects the survival and development history of Cantonese opera culture. There are few atmospheres of noise, impetuosity, hypocrisy, and hype. It is a paradise with a peaceful and elegant culture.

There are rich historical resources around Enning Road. The cultural relics protection units such as Taihua Building, Bahe Hall, and Bruce Lee’s former residence are scattered among them. In addition, there are a large number of traditional Lingnan dwellings, such as Xiguan House and Bamboo Tube House, which are the treasures of Lingnan culture.

1 The existing development problems of enning road

The location of Enning road has great advantages. Its western part is connected with the classical garden

scenic spot of Litchi Wan; in the central part, there is a newly built Cantonese Opera Museum and the famous commercial center of Guangzhou, Upper and Lower Ninth Pedestrian Street shopping block, is closely connected with its eastern part. It is reasonable to say that Enning Road, as a link connecting three important nodes, should have very good tourism resources, but the reality is that the venue's vitality is far from the three nodes and it has not played its role as a tourist cultural corridor. After analysis, the main reasons are as follows:

1.1 Lack of overall planning and ambiguous regional positioning

The renovation plan of Enning Road lasted for >10 years, and it has not completely ended until now. The transformation process did not give full play to the advantages and characteristics of Enning Road and lack of clear industrial positioning. There is a lack of guidance and transformation to the aboriginal residents. All of these factors destroyed the coordinated development of the whole region.

1.2 The overall length of the street is too long, lacking the rest node

The length of Enning Road is about 800 m. However, according to the tour line, from Liwanhu Park to Upper and Lower Ninth Pedestrian Street, the whole distance is about 2 km. According to current research and international relevant experience, the length of pedestrian streets is generally maintained between 600 m and 1000 m. If the length of the pedestrian street exceeds this range, the tourists will have problems such as lack of concentration and the walking speed is too fast in the process of viewing and sightseeing. Hao Jilin, the godfather of the Swire, once said that "it has been proved that the speed of walking too fast is not conducive to consumption." The problem with Enning Road is that the overall length is too long. After watching the Litchi Wan Park or the Upper and Lower Ninth Pedestrian Street, visitors will feel sleepy for the next viewing. Moreover, Enning Road has a very compact overall scale, lacking of rest space and node space, which makes the whole route lack of "breathing" place and makes customers feel bored or even tired, further reducing tourists' desire to watch and buy.

1.3 Low business format

A large part of the original residents of Enning Road have already moved away, and most of the remaining

residents belong to the social stratum with relatively low cultural and economic strength who do not have the ability to carry out post-maintenance and special operations on the building. There are not enough social resources in the neighborhood, at the same time, there are also great problems in the habitability and comfort. Hence, there is a great conflict between the development of the neighborhood and social life. As far as the businessmen on the road are concerned, there are both local residents and foreign businessmen, but generally speaking, the business format is relatively low, the quality of the operating products is low, and there are no local characteristics, and there is a lack of cultural development. Moreover, it partially overlaps with the Upper and Lower Ninth and does not show the style and uniqueness that the historical block should have.

In addition, due to the poor planning rationality, Enning Road has been renovating continuously in the past 10 years, which also has a great impact on the site business.

The protection and introduction of historical, cultural preservation buildings in the scenic area are too simple. There are only Bruce Lee and Zhan Tianyou's ancestral homes on the interface. Moreover, the words about the history and story of this century-old street and old houses cannot be found; some bamboo barrel houses and foreign-style houses of the Republic of China have been left behind, but there is no introduction to the exquisite Lingnan architecture, only the newly-hung shop signs. As for the whole street's landmark buildings, Bahe Hall and Golden Sound Cinema are easily overlooked.

1.4 Ignore the maintenance of the site

Enning Road was reorganized on the eve of the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games. However, after only 7 years of observation, there are many problems in the street interface, including the damage of paving, streetlights, and ceilings, the dirt on the walls and the aging of the wires. In addition, the decline of old urban areas is not only caused by material aging, but also by functional decline (due to the expansion of urban scale and population growth, reasonable urban environmental capacity has been broken through, resulting in the decline of the overall function of the city) and structural decline^[3]. All of these require the continuous attention and remediation of urban managers in the later period, but this aspect needs to be strengthened in the current situation.

1.5 Traffic problems

There are traffic problems in all old towns. Since the old town has a long history and a small scale, it does not reserve space for future development. Similarly, Enning Road is an important historical old street in Guangzhou, and there is no planned public parking area around it. Visitors and businesses often park their vehicles on roads with only two lanes, which is great damage to tourists' viewing experience.

Dealing with the old street style and traffic is a very contradictory problem. There have been many failure cases in Guangzhou before. For example, Renmin Road has built a viaduct to ensure smooth traffic. These methods have seriously damaged the street shape and scale of the historical urban area and have a great impact on the preservation of urban memories.

2 Improvement method

In the process of improvement, we need to consider the inheritance of new and old, the coexistence of commercial interests, cultural propaganda and community welfare, the coordination of compact space and public activities, the compatibility of green gardens and dense buildings, etc.

2.1 Street positioning

The low vitality of Enning Road is closely related to its previous ambiguous positioning. The development direction of a street should be combined with its own characteristics and historical development to achieve differentiated development. Based on the principle of "unique and quality," we should upgrade the industrial positioning and enhance the regional popularity with our own unique style and development direction.

2.1.1 Cultural experience zone of cantonese opera

As far as Enning Road is concerned, the positioning of Enning Road should be a complementary relationship with Upper and Lower Ninth and Liwan lake park. Shopping should not be its major format because this coincides with the positioning of the Upper and Lower Ninth. The reconstructed Enning Road should be based on cultural experience and should make full use of its rich historical and cultural resources. It will be the core area of Cantonese opera culture. Enning Road shoulders the mission of inheriting local history and enhancing the cultural heritage of the site. In this place, we should activate the history of Cantonese opera and combine it

with modern space and modern marketing and make it the carrier of the cultural development of Cantonese opera. The organic integration of economic development and cultural heritage will continue the historical and cultural context. Promote urban development and the improvement of living standards of residents. Specifically, some buildings can be transformed into theaters, enlarging the scope of the landscape and the space for sightseeing and recreation activities, and spontaneously forming a local and popular cultural and artistic performance center so that tourists can enjoy the opera art while having a rest. At the same time, we can use VR and other modern technologies to demonstrate the history and glory of the Cantonese opera. To extend, it should become a folk culture exhibition center in Lingnan, represented by Cantonese opera, which links the various node environments with historical streets or local neighborhoods to produce scale effect and scenic "district" effect. People can experience excellent Cantonese folk art here. The whole site will be combined with the Cantonese Opera Museum to form an experience base for the intangible cultural heritage of the country.

2.1.2 Folk handicraft exhibition zone

Vigorously create texts, making it a display area for folk crafts culture. The industry will be upgraded and re-integrated with old brands such as copper in the venue to avoid vicious competition of similar products but should be complemented by organic development. We will carry out unified packaging and marketing of folk handicrafts, cultivate brand awareness, and enhance the added value of products to make them vital. Taking culture as a soul and striving to do cultural derivatives, it is positioned as "a collection of aesthetics that integrates craftsmanship and creative exploration."

2.1.3 Old street artistic conception experience leisure area

Finally, the business function of Enning Road should be a complementary relationship with the surrounding streets. Upper and Lower Ninth is a fast-paced shopping mode, and the development mode is too extensive. Traditional buildings have been destructively used, shops and signs have been wantonly renovated, without underlying content, which reveals a "impetuous" pursuit of economic interests. Enning Road should be compared with it, get rid of commercialization, form a low-speed living experience space, and strive to create

a fresh and elegant “place” so that tourists’ minds can be relaxed and alleviated. Functionally, it mainly displays the style of coffee shop, tea house, bookstore, and old street. Imagine sitting in the corner of the street in a quaint street, drinking a cup of light tea so that people can still find the habitat of one of the souls in a fast-paced life. There, you can rest when you are tired, change your mood, or you can walk into a homestay with regional characteristics, stay in a private confined cubicle, smell bamboo, read a book and chat; You can also regain the old memories of the ancient streets and alleys. You can meet a couple of friends and drink a cup of tea, and recall the little things worth remembering before the transformation.

2.2 Utilization of litchi wan

The Litchi Wan was blocked and became a stagnant pool. We should restore the old view of the Litchi Wan water system, make it circulate after reclaiming the river in the original site, strengthen the self-purification ability of the water body, develop the commercial and landscape resources along the river that can help the cruise ship project of the Litchi Wan. The natural landscape of Litchi Wan and the surrounding rich historical and cultural landscapes are organically integrated to form the “Guangzhou Hui Reception room” which reflects the natural landscape and the human landscape^[4]. Efforts should be made to purify river water systems and restore the ecological pattern of native plants so that it should be organized the public landscape space of the former residences and cultural relics of celebrities, forming an open and open tour order. A variety of hydrophilic and pro-green leisure viewpoints are set up around the clear river, and a humanized micro-circulation transportation system is built, which will enable people to view this Qilou street full of cultural emotion and characterized by the quiet beauty of life from multiple angles, multiple horizons, and multiple directions.

2.3 Improve the quality of life of existing residents and protect the urban fabric

Xu Yujian, a professor of architecture at Huaan University in Taiwan, who was the pioneer and leader of the preservation and activation of Taiwan’s old streets, once sighed after visiting Yongqing Square on Enning Road: “Oh, the residents of the old neighborhood are gone.” He thought: “The activation of old streets cannot be a cultural specimen. Lifestyle is regarded

as a kind of exhibition activity. We do not see the life of residents. We hire villagers to work and perform cultural life. More importantly, it cannot be run entirely by strangers, strangers’ industries, the shell is kept, and the soul is gone. Changing my soul is the so-called hermit crab.” Later, he pointed out in his academic lecture in Guangzhou that the misunderstanding of the preservation of Asian urban history is “the separation of the activation of old streets from local cultural life.” Zhang Song, a professor at the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, once wrote that “the so-called protection of scenic spots or short performances is problematic. Our city’s history and neighborhoods should be a vibrant real world^[5].”

Shanghai Xintiandi is a loser in this respect. He moved out all the original residents and replaced all living space with commercial space. Xintiandi has lost its breath of life, leaving only an empty shell. The original space order of Shikumen culture has been completely eroded by commercial development and the original spatial texture and spatial structure were completely destroyed, which make it a heterogeneity of mixed culture under the “body” of Chinese local characteristics^[6].

Nowadays, with various renovations, many residents have moved away, leaving mostly low-income groups that cannot update and improve their living conditions. The present situation of Enning Road is that the municipal infrastructure is obsolete and the sanitation environment is poor. When the main body of residence becomes the strangers and the local elders, slowly, the activities between neighborhoods naturally decrease, and the vitality of Hutong gradually loses.

For local residents, this is where they have been rooted for decades. The transformation process should make them feel “this is the home built for me.” The layout of the overall structure should be able to reasonably solve the transformation goal of “every age group can find its proper ownership at any time of the day” so that the whole block has a reasonable transition of rhythm, and can integrate with each other in life and operation. Creating the scale and space of rich relatives makes them have a strong sense of regional belonging and identity. Keep the “soul” of the ancient street.

Therefore, we should involve residents in the transformation. Widely listen to the voice of the people. This is a complicated and arduous process, which cannot be rushed for success. It should be gradual, and the two sides will continue to communicate and

feedback. The two sides keep communicating and feedback, so as to avoid the destruction of the interface by high-rise buildings, so as to make the whole street continue the texture of the city, maintain the style of the old city and inherit the historical context.

3 Summary

Enning Road is an irreplaceable urban wealth in Guangzhou, so enhancing its vitality has great benefits for regional industrial upgrading. We must marry historical wealth and cultural development, on the one hand, we need to create a traditional Cantonese opera culture atmosphere, on the other hand, we also need to embed modern fashion functions in the traditional space, adding product development and characteristic management, thus integrating traditional culture and modern functions, maximizing urban memory and activating street vitality.

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