Success and Failure of Historic Preservation: The Cases of Chengdu, Kawagoe, and Williamsburg

Senior Thesis

Presented to
The Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Brandeis University

Undergraduate Program in East Asian Studies
Aida Yuen Wong, Advisor

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

by
Qianran Yang
May 2016

Copyright by
Qianran Yang

Committee members:
Aida Yuen Wong
Gary H. Jefferson
Heyward Parker James
Abstract

Only in recent decades have many Chinese historically significant buildings and sites been targeted for preservation. The initiator—usually the government—prioritizes economic profits, which leads to the over-commodification of cultural history. Demolition and inaccurate quasi-historic buildings are rampant, compromising the integrity of historic sites. Preservation thus ironically turns into destruction of heritage.

This thesis seeks to critically examine historic initiatives from a comparative perspective. The primary case study is the Kuanzhai Alley (宽窄巷子) historic preservation project in Chengdu, China. To illustrate the importance of appropriate initiatives and find applicable solutions to other Chinese historic preservation projects, I analyze the effect of different initiatives by comparing Kuanzhai with two other historic preservation projects, the Kurazukuri zone in Japan, and Colonial Williamsburg in the U.S.
# Table of Contents

I. Introduction..................................................................................................................4

II. Chapter One..................................................................................................................10

III. Chapter Two...............................................................................................................31

IV. Chapter Three............................................................................................................42

V. Conclusion....................................................................................................................52

VI. Bibliography...............................................................................................................54
Introduction

Motivation and Goal

There has been a global trend to rebuild historic zones into commercial tourist destinations. Initially, in the name of “historic preservation”, individuals, non-profit organizations, and governments have attempted to conserve properties that convey certain historical significance. Urbanization, economic development and growing tourism are major factors fueling the transition of commercialized historic zones. However, under different initiative and preservation methods, the integrity of conserved heritages varies. What is the distinctive about China’s historic preservation initiatives? One presumed intention is to give the visitors a fundamentally accurate view of historic structures, communities, and built environments as they were designed in the past. As the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention claims, authenticity and integrity are ways of measuring the significance of heritage and an essential part of preserving that heritage.¹ Over the years, international visitors have traveled to China to experience its rich heritage. However, while the visitors may be impressed by China’s modernization and rapid economic growth, they are disappointed by the missing distinctiveness of its Eastern culture. They walk on the quaint streets, taste the local food, and take photographs in front of the historic structures, yet these experiences usually amount to an artificial journey for touristic consumption. What can China learn from other preservation projects from other nations? To put the problem in proper perspective, this thesis introduces alternatives in Japan and the U.S., where a better balance is achieved between commercialization and historic preservation.

This paper seeks to determine where China has failed in restoring/reconstructing integral historic zones, degrading them into gimmicks for commerce. First, I introduce the case of Chengdu, a representative metropolis of inland China. I analyze the issues surrounding the preservation of Kuanzhai, a part of the “Manchu City” (满城) that dates back to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). I argue that the over-commercialization and indistinctive characteristics of Kuanzhai today are a result of excessive governmental interventions and lack of understanding of the significance of these unique structures. To equip Chengdu as a cultural, historic, and tourism site, the government restored and renovated the old houses in Kuanzhai in modern styles for commercial use. This undertaking, which started in 2003, has over time ruined the integrity of this district and promoted inauthenticity. More and more cities are following this renovation mode to build “historic” destinations for economic benefit. This thesis studies the negative impact of preservation on historic sites in China. I take two preservation projects in two non-Chinese cities, Kawagoe in Japan, and Williamsburg in the U.S., as informative models. Even though these two historic zones likewise incorporate some commercial activities like Kuanzhai does, they succeed in preserving unique structures along with distinctive built environments, which fulfill their historic and educational missions. As a result, I aim to present better preservation approaches that might be applicable to Chengdu and other cities in China, when facing similar challenges of historic preservation.

Existing literature and research in this thesis

The development of Shanghai Xintiandi inspired a list of Chinese cities to reconstruct historic zones into tourism destinations. Some scholars claim that a commercial historic zone would preserve the cultural heritage while generating economic profit. In a case study of
Kuanzhai, Tang Ke and Chen Feng (2012) applaud the cultural diversity of Kuanzhai.² The wide alley, well alley, and narrow alley were defined as places for quaintness, creativeness, and leisure. Hence various shops, including foreign brands and modern merchants were imported into the historic Kuanzhai protection zone. Tang and Chen argue that the innovative market positioning was efficient in expanding the market and attracting prospective consumers.³ The diversified restaurants, coffee shops, teahouses and souvenir shops provide travellers with convenience and leisure.⁴ In addition to the diversity, the merchants in Kuanzhai are managed in an enterprise management mode. This process includes the state-governed management group supervising commercial operations, housing renovations and customer service. However, when residents were relocated and left the community where they used to live and work in, no more diversity could compensate for the loss of integrity. In this thesis, a discussion on the initiative of the project is made to analyze how Kuanzhai was destined to fail in its attempt to be a complete historic preservation project and how non-government groups contributed to the management.

Demolition is another controversial topic in related research. Yang Chunrong (2009) criticized the demolition of some old houses in Kuanzhai, which further ruined the integrity of this historic zone.⁵ Although certain wooden structures were too shabby to be restored, the houses were demolished along with its quaintness. In this thesis, I analyze the initiative of the Colonial Williamsburg restoration project and its influence on cultural inheritance. In Yang’s research, she points out the difficulty of restoring a complete Kuanzhai. Her investigation also

² Tang Ke 唐克 and Chen Feng 陈凤,”Chengdu Kuanzhai xiangzi lvyou kaifa shangye moshi jiqi yunxing wenti” 《成都宽窄巷子旅游开发商业模式及其运行问题》[The tourism development of Chengdu Kuanzhai and its operation issues], Southwest University for Nationalities Journal 西南大学学报, 10 (2012): 148–149.
³ Tang and Chen, ”Chengdu Kuanzhai xiangzi lvyou kaifa shangye moshi jiqi yunxing wenti,” 148–149.
⁴ Ibid.
indicates that tourists rarely recognize whether the streets are newly built or the attempted preservation of the heritage. They are more concerned with the tidiness of the tourism site and the artificial quaintness.⁶ Even though Kuanzhai attracted waves of travellers to experience its unique culture, how many of them know about this Manchu heritage and history behind the preserved/reconstructed structures? Although Williamsburg has been the subject of many critiques in recent decades for its also artificially built environment⁷, the restoration of individual structures in researched periods styles has caused it to continue to be an American shrine and a distinctive tourism site.

Methodology and Sources

This paper includes three cases studies on Kuanzhai, Kurazukuri zone in Kawagoe, and Colonial Williamsburg, which are three historic tourism destinations in China, Japan, and the U.S.. I dissect the initiatives of the three historic preservation projects and adopt comparative perspectives to analyze the influence of different initiatives on the integrity of preserved structures. Detailed comparisons are made in Chapter Two and Chapter Three regarding the similarities and differences between Chengdu, Kawagoe, and Williamsburg. The three projects were initiated by different groups, which determined their different preservation methods such as demolition, restoration, renovation, and recreation.

I searched a wide array of documents found in the library and online for comprehensive information on each case. The sources include academic research papers, newspapers, journals, books and official websites of governments, organizations and foundations. To understand the

---

⁶ Ibid.
cultural identity of Kuanzhai, I consulted research on the history of Chengdu and Manchu City. Stapleton writes extensive information on the geographic setting of Chengdu, the design of Manchu City and the urban development of Chengdu. Di Wang’s work explains the unique street culture of Chengdu in terms of its origin, development, and how this culture influenced the city and the houses people live in. I mainly use web sources for the Kurazukuri zone, including the official website of the historic protection zone and the websites of non-government organizations. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and Colonial Williamsburg, Incorporated published several handbooks that are the basis for my knowledge of the Williamsburg project.

I also apply visual analysis to study the styles of historic structures, preservation project designs, and reconstructions. Besides the figures culled from various sources, I explain details of certain structures using photographs. Some photographs of Kuanzhai were taken by myself when I traveled to Chengdu in 2015. Other photographs are credited to official foundations and Internet sources.

Structure and summaries

The structure of my analyses will proceed as follows. Chapter One presents an overview of the history of Chengdu and Kuanzhai. I analyze several significant structures in Kuanzhai and the whole design of the historic zone. Then I introduce the initiative of the preservation project and its operation details. Next, with an examination on the effect of Kuanzhai’s development into a commercial tourism site, I argue the controversies of this preservation project. Finally, I discuss the feasibility of using the Kuanzhai mode of restoration in other Chinese cities. The

---

8 Kristin Stapleton, Civilizing Chengdu: Chinese Urban Reform, 1895-1937 (Cambridge, MA: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center, 2000).
purpose of this chapter is to point out the flaws and controversies in Kuanzhai’s preservation approaches.

Chapter Two begins with an introduction on Kawagoe and the Kurazukuri zone, a historic site that also experienced urban transformation. In this chapter, I suggest solutions for preservation, which include capitalizing on non-governmental powers. I dissect the initiatives of various preservation approaches that non-government organizations have taken, including establishing preservation and construction rules, managing merchants, negotiating with residents, and promoting government regulations. Lastly, I analyze the advantages of non-governmental initiatives of historic preservation and what Kuanzhai could learn from the Kurazukuri zone for integral preservation.

Chapter Three mainly focuses on Colonial Williamsburg, a pioneering historic preservation project in the U.S.. I intend to demonstrate the importance and necessity of a determined initiative for preserving an integral heritage for educational, historic, and cultural purposes. This chapter also starts with a background introduction to the city and the historic site. To dissect the initiative of Colonial Williamsburg, I analyze the stories of Dr. Goodwin and Mr. Rockefeller, who were the fathers of the restoration project. I explain how their ambition and determination restored a significant heritage, as well as the details of how they restored a nearly authentic Williamsburg. In the end, I argue the achievements that Colonial Williamsburg has accomplished with regards to its integrity and how it maintains an educational tourism site and avoids over-commercialization.
Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

1.1 History of Chengdu

The city of Chengdu (Fig. 1) enjoys a history of over 2000 years. The Chengdu Plain is located in the Northwestern part of the Sichuan Basin, which has been densely populated since Neolithic times. From that stage on, when significant human habitation first occurred, Chengdu steadily developed into a prosperous city and became a major city in Western China.

As the provincial capital of Sichuan province, Chengdu is characterized as a political, cultural, and economic center. Especially, the well-preserved distinctive culture of Chengdu has made it a symbolic “cultural city” in west China. It was listed on “The First National Historic and Cultural City List”, published by the State Council in 1982. There are three significant historic conservation reserves in the city, Wenshu Yuan (Monastery) reserve, Daci Si (Temple) reserve, and Kuanzhai Xiangzi (Broad and Narrow Alley) reserve in this modern city. According to the questionnaire regarding “The image of Chengdu” conducted by the Chengdu City Planning Bureau in 2015, Kuanzhai is ranked No.1 for “featured landmark of Chengdu,” with 59% support from respondents. Developed from relics of the Qing Dynasty and constantly more different architecture built since the Republic of China era, Kuanzhai was chosen by the government to promote tourism and economic development in modern periods.

---

12 Tang Zewen 唐泽文 “Chengdu chengshi tese dibiao diaocha Kuanzhai xiangzi depiao zuiduo” 成都城市特色地标调查 宽窄巷子得票最多 [A survey on Chengdu’s landmarks show Kuanzhai is the most popular one], Sichuan Daily 四川日报, March 18, 2015, http://sc.cri.cn/549/2015/03/18/161s25155.htm. (accessed April 23, 2016)
1.1.2. History of Kuanzhai

Kuanzhai is located in downtown Chengdu (Fig.2), only 1000 meters from Tianfu Square, the largest city square in western China. Kuanzhai conservation occupies more than 640,000 square feet, among which 215,000 square feet are preserved as a traditional residential area. Each street is as long as 400 meters; the width of the Wide alley is around 6-7 meters while the width of the Narrow alley is about 4 meters.

---

\(^{13}\) China [map], http://chengdu.usembassy-china.org.cn/about_the_consulate.html (accessed October 25, 2015)
In early Qing period, the court implemented a policy called “divide and rule” in many cities and border towns, to facilitate regional governance. Because the central government would periodically send Manchu officers to these areas, where the majority of the local people were ethnically Han people. Starting in 1718, the court originally built Manchu Cities (满城), which is called A Small City (少城), in these places to house Manchu warriors and officers. There were forty-two streets: a boulevard to General’s mansion, eight streets for the Eight Banners and thirty-three alleys for soldiers. After the Revolution of 1911, the Eight Banners disappeared with the demise of Qing court and Manchu city opened up after the dissolution of the Eight Banners. Many gentries and warlords entered Manchu city and built their mansions in Kuanzhai (mostly in the Wide alley); common Han people also gained free access to this area and many merchants opened shops there; some of the Eight Banners’ posterity stayed.

---

14 Google Map, "the Wide Alley and the Narrow Alley", https://www.google.com/maps/place/Kuan+Alley+and+Zhai+Alley/@30.5515578,104.149146,9.95z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x36efc4d813561247:0x834b32cab17f5265. (accessed October 26, 2015)
As a result, these Manchu cities gradually merged with the main Han city area after the Qing dynasty and evolved into a public space for communities.

The legacy of ancient dwellings, mansions, and shops were well preserved following the Revolution of 1911. Then after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the houses of Kuanzhai were assigned to nearby state-operated enterprises to house employees.

There was another reallocation during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)\(^{18}\). During this period, City Planning Bureau of Chengdu was in chaos and the whole construction within the Manchu city was disorganized.\(^ {19}\) Without proper preservation treatment, only the Broad alley (宽巷子) and the Narrow alley (窄巷子) survived after these two allocations. The Well alley\(^ {20}\) (井巷子) was later reconstructed and recovered. After becoming one of The First National Historic and Cultural City List in 1982, Chengdu implemented a series of new city planning initiatives to guarantee historic preservation in the 1970s. From 1988-1990, and in 1996, Chengdu established two detailed projects on Kuanzhai historic reserve. However, there was not effective reconstruction, and plenty of new residences were built instead.\(^ {21}\) During this time, some residents opened teahouses, restaurants, and shops in their own houses and courtyards by taking advantage of the unique historic culture of Kuanzhai. Waves of local people who glimpsed the novelty of the new Manchu city were attracted in these streets, and then frequently came to Kuanzhai for leisure. However, the inferior housing insulation and poor facilities were overwhelming in Kuanzhai and old city.\(^ {22}\) To preserve the architecture in Kuanzhai and provide

---

\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Zhang Fuhe 张复合, Zhongguo jindai jianzhu yanjiu yu baohu 中国近代建筑研究与保护[Study and Preservation of Chinese modern architecture], (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2006), 305.

\(^{20}\) “Well” is translated from the Chinese character 井, which means the hole made in the ground that supplies water.

\(^{21}\) Zhang, Zhongguo jindai jianzhu yanjiu yu baohu, 305–306.

\(^{22}\) The old city here is referring to the Small City.
better living condition for the residents, the government of Chengdu launched a reconstruction project in 2003. The renovated Kuanzhai has been open to the public since June 14, 2008. After reconstruction, its single residential function was enriched with lively enhancement and was transformed into a multifunctional district that involves “culture, commercial, and tourism”.  

1.2. Explore Kuanzhai

1.2.1 Qing style Manchu relics

Kuanzhai has been microcosm of Chengdu’s history since the Qing dynasty. Overall, the Manchu city was built near the imperial city of Chengdu, with Wudan Mountain to the north and Henan River to the south (Fig. 3). Kuanzhai hence became an ideal choice for official military housing which takes advantage of Fengshui (风水) (geomancy). As for Eight Banner soldiers, the organized “fishbone” structure (Fig.4) made it convenient for governance and quick emergency response.

![Fig. 3. Map of Chengdu during the Qing period](image)


24 The fishbone structure provides easily accessible passageways in all directions.

25 Wang, Street Culture in Chengdu, 26.
It is the only example of Hutong Culture (胡同文化) in southwest China and historical representation of the Chengdu city. The cultivation of Hutong Culture in Chengdu, a prosperous and peaceful inland city, facilitated the relaxing lifestyle of the whole city. The Eight Banner soldiers earned stable income from the court and barely needed to fight. They had wealth and prestige, and did all kinds of leisure activities, from tea tasting to art appreciation.

The buildings also blended with the caste ideology and norms during Qing period. The court regulated officers to use different colors for their house doors in accordance with their classes. The original residents of Kuanzhai were common soldiers, who were only allowed to use

---


dark color decoration for doors.\textsuperscript{28} As a result, the dominant tone of Kuanzhai was constituted with black and grey.

The houses were all made of wood at this time. To differentiate from houses of local civilians, the Eight Banner courtyards were equipped with Hutong gates. Gates in the Manchu city were made of bricks; the height and size of doors were larger than gates of the indigenous dwellings; these gates were also painted in black.\textsuperscript{29}

1.2.2 Western Sichuan style

Kuanzhai was designed in Beijing courtyard style, but the gardens, landscapes, and other details of decorations were marked with Sichuan characteristics. Sichuan garden stresses the correlation with nature in a graceful and implicit method. Each courtyard was considered as a large-scale bonsai, which demonstrates a unique Chengdu style.\textsuperscript{30}

The people in Sichuan enjoy group entertainment and are famous for their hospitality. The Wide Alley, No. 37 is a representative western Sichuan style courtyard (Fig.5). The large common space allows the hosts to invite friends to chat and drink tea in this yard. In addition, almost every western Sichuan architecture was originally built with extended wide roofs, which provides the residents with larger and broader public space for families to rest during hot weather, for women to do handicrafts, for kids to play and for neighbors to have conversations.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{28} Li Mingyan 李明燕, “Chengdu Kuanzhai xiangzi lishi jiequ de feiwuzhi wenhua yanxu fangshi” 成都宽窄巷子历史街区的非物质文化延续方式 [The methods of preserving intangible cultural heritage of Chengdu Kuanzhai Historic sites], Shanxi Jianzhu 山西建筑 35 (2009): 21.

\textsuperscript{29} She Long 佘龙, “Chengdu Kuanzhai xiangzi lishi wenhua baohuqu baohu yu liyong yanjiu” 成都宽窄巷子历史文化保护区保护与利用研究 [Research on preservation and development of Chengdu Kuanzhai Historic district], Sichuan jianzhu kexue yanjiu 四川建筑科学研究 4 (2006): 199.

\textsuperscript{30} Dai, “Jiyu chuantong de chengshi wenhua wenhua jingguan sheji-yi Chengdu kuanzhai xiangzi shaocheng wenhua jingguan sheji wei li,” 11.

\textsuperscript{31} “Yuanqi.”
Kuanzhai was built with attention to spatial design. Located in the downtown area and taken all factors of building a city into consideration. The width of Kuanzhai streets and the height of buildings create a special angle of view in this district (Fig. 6). Different angles bring various visual effects when viewing architecture. The angle of Kuanzhai approximately ranges from 30°-45°, which will draw viewers attention to architecture, through doors and windows to inner courtyards. Although house-owners live in the space behind the doors, the structure of the houses allows connections with the outside world, and the unique street culture in Chengdu.

---

32 Photograph taken by author.
33 Lin and Mei, “Chengshi lishi jiequ gaizao zhong de kongjian yingzao tujing,” 185.
Located in a subtropical region, this city has a climate characterized by fairly mild winters and humid summers; precipitation is sufficient but not heavy. Such conditions fostered a unique street culture. In the book *Street Culture in Chengdu*, the author Di Wong emphasizes a combination of physical structures that lined the streets and the myriad cultural activities that take place on the streets in ancient Chengdu. Kuanzhai is an exact site that epitomizes a traditional street culture to older residents reminding them of the time when streets were the primary work and leisure places for civilians. Ordinary residents would formerly hold all sorts of communal activities on these open, easily accessible streets, which granted freedom and interaction to the public. To the performers of folk arts, the street was their stage; to hawkers, the street was their market; to children, the street was their playground; to people of Chengdu, the street was the place where they grew up. With memories of watching lion dancing on the street, tasting refreshments, and purchasing knick-knacks, the common people today relish the streets and want to preserve the characteristics of this district.

---

34 Lin and Mei, “Chengshi lishi jiequ gaizao zhong de kongjian yingzao tujing,” 185.
37 Wang, *Street Culture in Chengdu*, 68.
1.2.3 Warlord mansions

During the turbulent warlord period, most places in China were in chaos. The inland city Chengdu became a peaceful destination to some generals and revolutionaries, such as Wenhui Liu, Youren Yu and Songyao Tian. They came to Chengdu and moved into the Manchu city. The appearance of Kuanzhai was significantly changed at this time. These ambitious celebrities renovated their houses to show off their wealth and reputation. They built larger and larger doors, which were the most noticeable piece of a dwelling. For example, the No. 25 house located in the Wide alley was the residence of Wang family, once owned by the provincial chairman Wang Zanxu. The grandiose door (Fig. 7.) indicated Wang’s prestiged social statues at that time.

![Fig.7. Current photograph of Wide alley No. 25](image)

The newly-built and renovated buildings in this period were mainly made of brick, in addition to the structure of wood built in Qing period.

---

38 Wenhui Liu (1895-1976), was a noble Sichuan warlord. Youren Yu (1879-1964), was a high-ranking official of the Nationalist Party. Songyao Tian, was a warlord of the Sichuan Clique and later a general of the Nationalist Party.

39 She, “Chengdu Kuanzhai xiangzi lishi wenhua baohuqu baohu yu liyong yanjiu,” 199.

40 Photograph taken by author.
1.2.4 Contemporary westernization

Starting from the warlord period, residents of Kuanzhai began to decorate their dwelling with western style ornaments. The Wilde Alley No. 11, Kailu (恺庐) (Fig. 8 & 9) is an architecture that was originally constructed in ancient Chinese style and then adorned with Western characteristics. It is the residence of the last descendent of the Eight Banners. The embedded stone plaque is carved with the Chinese characters of Kailu, which means pleasant dwelling. On the top, there is a large ellipse made of delicate stone, which looks similar to a mirror. According to the official introduction, the ellipse pattern represents a talisman that could ward off any evils, and hence protect the residents who live in this house. Additionally, this significant inclination of the door was designed to have more sunlight into the courtyard. It was said that the owner of Kailu changed the old door into this new arch after he traveled back from the Western countries.

Fig 8. Kailu

Fig. 9 Kailu

---

41 “Yuanqi.”
42 Ibid.
43 Photograph taken by author.
1.3. Compromise and controversies

1.3.1 Guideline of reconstruction

Unlike the remodeling of other old cities, the projects of Kuanzhai involved not scrapping it and starting all over again, but a “historic salvage” that aimed to visualise the traditional old Chengdu. This area of over 2,152,000 square feet was divided into two parts for reconstruction: A core preservation district featured by the Wide Alley and the Narrow Alley, and an environment coordination area that includes the rest (Fig. 10). The core preservation district focused on conservation, while the environment coordination area was geared toward commercial development.

![Fig. 10. Reconstruction coverage](https://mapsengine.google.com/map/edit?hl=en&hl=en&authuser=0&authuser=0&mid=zhteLNntD_G4.kT5Q_dOoQ8I0.

In the documents of *Urban Land Use Planning of Chengdu*, published in 2012, the government of Chengdu explicitly states that it will maintain the pattern of the old city utilities, strictly preserve cultural preservation districts including Kuanzhai, and restrict additional reconstruction.

---

44 “Yuanqi.”
45 “Chengdu yilu xialai de jiao cheng guimo de qingchao gujiedao—Kuanzhai xiangzi.”
46 Author’s created diagram, developed from Google Map, last modified Oct 26, 2015, [https://mapsengine.google.com/map/edit?hl=en&hl=en&authuser=0&authuser=0&mid=zhteLNntD_G4.kT5Q_dOoQ8I0.](https://mapsengine.google.com/map/edit?hl=en&hl=en&authuser=0&authuser=0&mid=zhteLNntD_G4.kT5Q_dOoQ8I0.)
to ensure the current cultural pattern.\textsuperscript{47} To pursue an impeccable preservation, the construction company, Chengdu Quaintown Construction & Administration Co, Ltd., a state-run company, cooperated with Tsinghua University and set a Kuanzhai Cultural preservation organization. During investigation, the researchers carefully measured and recorded all data in Kuanzhai and sorted all buildings into four categories, according to their cultural and architectural value (Fig. 11 and Fig. 12). Then they designed individual protective plans to these categories. In addition to preserving the appearance, they have also designed strategies to ensure safety, such as fire control, heat preservation, and seismic resistance.\textsuperscript{48}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig11.png}
\caption{Categorized and numbered diagram of Kuanzhai\textsuperscript{49}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{48} “Yuanqi.”
\textsuperscript{49} Zhang, Zhongguo jindai jianzhu yanjiu yu baohu, 306.
1.3.2 Dispute on moving out

In spite of how the reconstruction attempted to keep everything the same, it was controversial in several aspects. The first disagreement was the removal of former residences. Before reconstruction, there were more than 900 households living in Kuanzhai. Indeed, the living condition at Kuanzhai was shabby. Almost every courtyard was divided into several households and each of them was only about 20-30m². The poor isolation and facilities were also burdensome. As Ting Zhang, the general manager of Chengdu Culture & Tourism Development Group claimed in an interview in 2009, the program of Kuanzhai was initially a part of the reconstruction of old city, which aimed to improve living condition and preserve historic buildings in this area. But when the company started to reconstruct Kuanzhai, they noticed the unique cultural heritage and the potential of making this place a commercial tourism destination.

---

52. Cui Ran 崔燃, “Kuanzhai reconstruction preserved 40% old housing”, Huaxi dushi bao 华西都市报, July 28, 2013, b03.
53. Chengdu Culture & Tourism Development Group 完成的该区域的重建项目。它是一个子公司并在2007年被建立。
Following the principle of “moving out but not plucking down (只迁不拆)”, the government adopted methods such as “outright purchasing (买断)” and exchanging, in order to attain all housing property rights within the area and to relocate former owners and residents.\textsuperscript{55} However, the expense and inconvenience of persuading residents to move out of Kuanzhai was costly and time-consuming, since permitting their residency would increase the burden of regulating a commercial historic site. This would be difficult because the planners aimed to build a complex of cultural and business streets for leisure and tourism. In the end, except for 100 office spaces, all other households agreed with the reconstruction plan.\textsuperscript{56} However, this compromise of moving triggered another concern, which is over-commercialism. Indeed, it is vital to preserve the structure of Kuanzhai, yet the street culture represented by Kuanzhai is another essential part. As most residents had moved out, there were few people left to keep the traditional street culture alive. Even though there were still local stores and teahouses operated by original Chengdu people, the commercialized products and ambience would never be the same as the original.

1.3.3 Dispute on commercialization

Another dispute erupted on adopting the “Xintiandi” model from the city of Shanghai and bringing in all kinds of commercial boutiques. When equipped with modern appliances and conveniences, traditional houses in Kuanzhai became more functional. This model had succeeded in Shanghai and has been regarded as feasible. However, the historical background and cultural background were completely different.\textsuperscript{57} It would be fatuous to imitate the model

\textsuperscript{55} “Chengdu yiliu xialai de jiao cheng guimo de qingchao gujiedao—Kuanzhai xiangzi.”
\textsuperscript{56} “Narrow Alley in Chengdu.”
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
from Shanghai. Shanghai has been a massively westernized coastal city since the 1840s, when it became an open port to the Western world. On the other hand, Chengdu was a traditional city with underdeveloped urbanization. While the architecture of Xintiandi is a hybrid of western and Chinese styles, the streets and housing of Kuanzhai are made to represent the indigenous culture of Chengdu. In addition, the local population of Shanghai and Chengdu inherited distinctive culture and customs, respectively, from the past. The people of Shanghai enjoy a collision of eastern and western cultures and have developed adapted to new trends. At the same time, the relaxing lifestyle in Chengdu endows people there with a contentedness to enjoy life in the moment.

Each street has distinctive themes based on their historic background, and each of them is equipped with different shops that target various customers:58

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wide Alley</th>
<th>Narrow Alley</th>
<th>Well Alley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>theme</td>
<td>leisurely life (cultural)</td>
<td>slow life (commercial)</td>
<td>new life (modern)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>types of shops</td>
<td>hotel, spa, tea house</td>
<td>garden, housing, restaurants</td>
<td>pubs, western villa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>target customers</td>
<td>reminiscent people</td>
<td>consumers</td>
<td>young people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Wide Alley aims to present the nobility of historic aristocratic mansions. The roads are mostly paved with quartzite, and the inner courtyards apply bricks of the same color. There are repeating hitching posts and ancient lights along two roadsides, and stone lion statues in front of the houses, forming an antique streetscape. The Narrow Alley focuses on displaying indigenous civil culture. The entertainment and snacks along the streets attract plenty of travellers, day to night. Besides commercial shops, there is an experience pavilion located at the

---
Wide Alley, which displays a typical household in Qing period. This museum could have been an illustration of the Old Chengdu, but it fails to stand out from various food shops. The entry of Starbucks into Kuanzhai area was controversial. Opponents doubted the compatibility of a Western brand in this historic site. As a result, travellers who went to Kuanzhai with anticipation of exploring authentic culture only left this place with the impression of “a street with shops”. Although some former residents opened several shops in Kuanzhai when they lived there in the late 1980s, they only had tea houses, which mainly provide the neighbors a common place to drink tea and chat, as well as for other indigenes to occasionally stroll in the old city. The chairs they put in front of their houses were not for commercial consumers, but for local friends. The commercial achievement is indeed significant, due to these profitable shops, restaurants, hotels, and bars. But the modernized business model might counteract the cultural heritage and their operating cycle is limited.

1.3.4 Dispute on demolition and reconstruction

The Kuanzhai project preserved its original walls, bricks, doors and other components to the greatest extent. Yet still there were some buildings that were beyond repair. According to the investigation, most of the residences remaining in Kuanzhai were originally residential constructions made of wooden frame, with some brick-wood frames. This traditional architecture accounted for only 29% of the whole construction area, among which only 37% of them were repairable.\(^59\) Around 40% of the housing in the core preservation district would basically remain the same after renovating it in accordance to original characteristics and completing in-house facilities. The other 60% would be reconstructed on the basis of preserving original architectural

style, “making the old to keep looking old” (整旧如旧)\(^60\). However, most former architecture in the environment coordination area was removed and new quasi-historic buildings were built instead. In addition, to attract broader consumers, some Western and modern style buildings, such as independent villa were also constructed. Although the building size, style, and materials seemed consistent with the architecture in the core preservation district, in accordance with the guideline “making the new to look old” (整新如旧). This method was to preserve the integrity of Kuanzhai, but the authenticity of historic architecture was actually lost, and the stunt of ancient culture was replaced with non-historic substances to delude innocent travellers.

The quasi-historic materials used in the reconstruction projects and new buildings also destroyed the authenticity of Kuanzhai culture. Indeed, the traditional wood and brick materials did not have the properties of ruggedness, corrosion resistance, fireproofing that fulfill modern needs. Hence during reconstruction, the company would adopt reinforced concrete, stones and other modern construction materials.\(^61\) However, this plausible treatment failed to present an authentic Kuanzhai. The quasi-historic buildings in total covered 14735.2 m², about a quarter of the core preservation district. The quantity and scale of the new buildings exceeded the majority of original buildings. The exposed quasi-historic wood structure was all painted into red, which seemed inconsistent with the ancient architecture style of Kuanzhai.\(^62\) Besides, the larger-scaled new buildings (Fig. 13), steel framed structure, and French windows (Fig. 14) for business needs

---

\(^60\) “Chengdu yiliu xialai de jiao cheng guimo de qingchao gujiedao—Kuanzhai xiangzi.”

\(^61\) “Narrow Alley in Chengdu.”


\(^62\) She, “Chengdu Kuanzhai xiangzi lishi wenhua baohuqu baohu yu liyong yanjiu,” 200.
destroyed the integrity of Kuanzhai. These modern designs improved utility and efficiency for urban life, but they were unnecessary and inappropriate features in this historic district.

Fig. 13. A modern style new building in Kuanzhai

Fig. 14. Shops in Kuanzhai

1.4. Completion and Vista

1.4.1 Economic development

After the reconstruction and until January 2009, Kuanzhai had received over 7,000,000 tourists and made over one hundred million retail transactions. The three pedestrian streets connected by interflow passages provided significant convenience to commerce and tourism. The flows of famous modern shops and western brands took place in the original civil market. Along with the increasing number of travellers, the consumer purchases of Kuanzhai also rose considerably. Wei

---

63 Li and Ma, “Zhengti lishi yuanzhenxing baohu yu chengshi lishididuan gengxin—yi Chengdu Kuanzhai xiangzi gaizao wei li” 整体历史原真性保护与城市历史地段更新—以成都宽窄巷子改造为例, Preliminary Study on the relationship between the complete authenticity conservation and the renewal for historical Block--based on analysis of the renewal of Kuanzhaixiangzi historical block in Chengdu, Chengshi fazhan yanjiu 城市发展研究 4 (2009): 162.
64 Ibid.
65 Photograph taken by author.
66 Cui, “Kuanzhaixiang gaizao laozhai baoliu le sicheng.”
Zhao, the owner of Longtang, a youth hostel at Kuanzhai, talked about the compromises he made in order to work with the market. He witnessed how Kuanzhai has transformed from a neglected place into a popular tourist site, as well as how the price of a cup of tea has increased by ten folds. He increased the rent of Longtang to 400 RMB and the target customers became businessmen, instead of backpackers. This is a common phenomenon in Kuanzhai, a way to gain profit, and the tendency of a high-end market.

1.4.2 Template or failure?

The seemingly successful Kuanzhai mode will be used as a reference for a new methodology of preservation and development of historic sites in other places, including other counties in Sichuan Province, Chongqing, other western cities in China, and even the Gold Coast in Australia. Yet according to analytical demonstration, the preservation of Kuanzhai proves to be a failure, despite the attempts to conserve the intrinsic cultural value. There are many historical, economical, and social factors challenging its historic preservation. The influx of population to Chengdu is expected to reach 30 million by 2042. Therefore Chengdu is a prime example of dramatic urban transformation. Chengdu is undergoing a massive expansion through urbanization, while preserving and promoting its cultural identity. Kuanzhai, as a remaining part of old Chengdu, carries a historical responsibility. However, its indigenous cultural value is diminishing due to the popularity of busy pubs and modern teahouses. Kuanzhai

---

68 Hu Jiali 胡佳丽 and Wang Yue 王玥, “Aodaliya huangjinhaian shi shizhang: jiejian kuanzhai xiangzi chuangyi zai huangjin haian jian zhongguocheng”澳大利亚黄金海市市长:借鉴宽窄巷子创意 在黄金海岸建中国城 [The mayor of Australia the Gold Coast intends to learn from the Kuanzhai mode and build Chinatown in the gold coast], Tianfu zaobao 天府早报, March 18, 2014.
became a broken piece of memory that local people reject to touch, a quasi-historic site, and a profitable business. Only by balancing economic development, cultural preservation, and building a substantial connection with participation from local people, can Chengdu preserve its the authenticity and integrity of its historic sites and cultural traditions.
Chapter Two

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 History of Kawagoe and Kurazukuri zone

Kawagoe (川越) was built in 1457. It only 30 minutes from central Tokyo (Fig. 15). Due to its location near Tokyo (formerly Edo), Kawagoe preserved an abundance of Edo-period cultural heritage, especially its built environment and traditional ritual activities. In 1923, the Great Kanto earthquake flattened a myriad of historical architectural sites in Tokyo. Later, World War II (1939-1945) devastated numerous buildings in the Tokyo area. The loss of historic heritage in Tokyo pushed Kawagoe, which was known as Little Edo (小江戸) locally, into the spotlight for its comprehensively preserved old structures. Gradually, waves of tourists started to visit Kawagoe, to wander on its quaint streets, taste the traditional Japanese sweets sold on the streets, and to experience the nostalgic atmosphere from the Edo period in general (Fig. 16).

Fig. 15. Relative location of Kawagoe and Tokyo

---

71 Google map conducted by the author on Mar. 15, 2016.
Kawagoe has plenty of historic architecture left behind from the Edo, Meiji, and Taisho periods. The Kurazukuri zone is set apart as an exemplification of Kawagoe’s core tradition. In 1999, this concentrated preservation area of Kawagoe was assigned as a Japanese historic architecture preservation zone.

2.2. Explore Kurazukuri

2.2.1 Traditional Warehouses

Kurazukuri is a type of Japanese house, originally meaning “storerooms” (Kura). This style leaves a forty-centimeter interspace between the inner wooden partition and the external

---


partition, and fills the interspace with earth and lime to strengthen fire resistance.\textsuperscript{74} In addition to these precautions, extra-thick wooden windows are applied, to minimize the fire during an emergency. These precautions were also considered a symbol of wealth by the merchants. In 1893, more than 1000 of these residential houses were damaged in a fire, and over one-third of the Kawagoe’s residents were affected. Many of the buildings could not be salvaged. Merchants wanted their new shops built in the style of the Kurazukuri.\textsuperscript{75} The cost of building a Kurazukuri house was ten times that of a normal house at that time. In a period of great prosperity, more than 200 Kurazukuri buildings were rebuilt. In Kawagoe, however, among these Kurazukuri buildings, which were painted with black carbonized plaster, only around a dozen has survived to the present day.

2.3. Preservation and Renovation

2.3.1 Causation

As a historic city near Tokyo, Kawagoe enjoys the benefits of convenient transportation and considerable tourist visits. Scholars of architecture, history, and other fields also became interested in this city.\textsuperscript{76} Since the 1960s, due to the establishment of the new Kawagoe train station and the nearby business center, the preservation of the Kurazukuri zone was under the threat of over-urbanization. Urban development at this time required new land planning that might change the traditional pattern of historic streets. To maximize profits and pander to the


\textsuperscript{75} “Zō-dzukuri monogatari” 蔵造り物語 [the story of Kurazukuri], Kawagoe ichibangi Kōshiki hōmupēji 川越一番街商店街公式ホームページ, https://kuradukuri.com/story. (accessed April 26, 2016)

\textsuperscript{76} Jiao, “Riben chuanyueshi yifanjie chuantong jiequ de baohu yu zhengzhi,” 257.
market, property developers tended to construct high-rises, to replace the obsolete Kurazukuri houses.\(^{77}\)

To boycott the demolition of historic architecture, local residents initiated a movement for historic preservation, which also received support from many scholars and experts, and such concerned groups as the Kawagoe Commerce and Industry Association (川越商工会議所) and architecture research institutions. In 1981, sixteen architectural sites in Kawagoe were listed in the first list of national rated cultural inheritances. Since then, local residents formed several non-government organizations to directly participate in preservation, urban planning, and policymaking regarding related matters.

2.3.2 Non-government actions

In 1983, to minimize the collateral damage to urban redevelopment, a non-governmental organization, the Kawagoe Warehouse Association (川越蔵の会), was established. (This group is still in operation today? If so, say it.) Members included shop owners, architecture experts, young people from the city hall, and residents living in the Kurazukuri zone. Their mission is to gather the power of independent citizens rooted in the region and contributes to the development of local communities.\(^{78}\) They insist on preserving the unique heritage of Kawagoe without compromising tourism and commercial competitiveness. Inspired and encouraged by such non-government organization, waves of local residents joined the movement of “preserving historic street space to recover the vitality of commerce”.

\(^{77}\) “Zō-dzukuri monogatari.”

\(^{78}\) “Kawagoe zō no kai ni tsuite” 川越蔵の会について [About Kawagoe warehouse association], Kawagoe zō no kai 川越蔵の会, http://www.kuranokai.org/about.html. (accessed April 24, 2016)
In 1986, shop owners of Kawagoe First Street suggested a “community and business center” concept, which gained support from the Kawagoe First Street Shopping Street Activation Model Promotion Committee (川越一番街商店街活性化モデル事業推進委員会). The committee included members of the Kawagoe First Street Commercial Cooperation (川越一番街商業協同組合), government officials from commerce, city planning and other departments, scholars from Waseda University, Tōyō University and other institutions, and prestigious leaders of several professional fields. They initiated research to analyze the commercial and architectural conditions of Kawagoe First Street and presented the Kawagoe First Street Activation Model Business Survey Report (川越一番街商店街活性化モデル事業報告書) in the same year. This report offered investigation of Kawagoe First Street, as detailed as the Kuanzhai investigation referenced in the previous chapter. The report suggested re-dividing street layout with respect to residential, community use, and commercial uses. In addition, the committee designed a model (Fig. 17) to illustrate the renovation effects on individual houses and the overall street space, and provided a rendering of the architecture’s facade renovation (Fig. 18). These two tools helped residents easily imagine the suggested changes, and simplified the execution for shop owners when they undertake renovations on their own, and hence ensure the integrity of the historic architecture in Kurazukuri zone.

---

79 Jiao, “Riben chuanyueshi yifanjie chuantong jiequ de baohu yu zhengzhi,” 263.
Either Kuanzhai’s research or in the document *Urban Land Use Planning of Chengdu* includes the utilization of idle land and housing. However, the *report* encourages property owners to take advantage of their housing, and for owners who would like to rent or sell their properties, the committee can act as an intermediary to find clients. In this way, the use ratio of historic warehouses is maintained and the committee can supervise any commercial transactions.

---

80 Jiao, “Riben chuanyueshi yifanjie chuantong jiequ de baohu yu zhengzhi,” 263.
81 Ibid., 264.
In 1988, another non-government group Kawagoe, First Street Shopping District Town Committee (川越一番街商店街並み委員会), drafted a document titled *Town Planning Norms* (町づくり規範) that specified renovation instructions for individual housing to further preserve the integrity of Kurazukuri zone (Fig. 19). For example, it requires that the height of architecture cannot be over eleven meters, sets a neutral color as the key color of the streets; it improves inner facilities while maintaining the original construction style, using traditional elements in accordance with the macro environment.\(^2\) Although the Kuanzhai project also attempted to preserve the integrity of the historic zone, it did not establish such comprehensive and detailed instructions. Additionally, the committee promised to offer both renovation and financial aids to certain shop owners. The renovation of the street space also promoted the traditional folk art industry. From 1989 to 1998, about two-thirds of the merchants received subsidies from the prefecture, city and other groups, in accordance with the *Norms*, and implemented renovations.\(^3\)

![Reference illustration of architecture appearance](image)

\(^2\) “Jirei bangō 039 zō-dzukuri no machi-dzukuri (saitamakenkawagoesti).”
\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Jiao, “Riben chuanyueshi yifanjie chuantong jiequ de baohu yu zhengzhi,” 265.
Since the Norms were established by a non-governmental organization, they were not legally binding. However, before the legal regulation came out in 1998, house owners and other residents all followed the rules, for nearly ten years.\(^8^5\) This spontaneous conformity to the Norms is a result of reasonable conditions, contingent support, and a spontaneous initiative by local people. The conduct and movements of these non-government organizations promoted governmental regulation and official support.

2.3.3 Government regulation

In 1998, the Kawagoe government established the first specific conduct, Kawagoe Traditional Buildings Preservation District Preservation Ordinance (川越市伝統的建造物群保存地区保存条例). Besides enacting a detailed regulation for the color, material, size and other structural standards, it set up guidelines for several activities that require permissions: any new construction, demolition, reconstruction, and removal; change of color, style and other elements that change the appearance; change of property uses and lumbering activity. Although Kurazukuri zone was gradually developed into a commercial and tourism site as Kuanzhai was, the Ordinance guided the merchants to preserve the authenticity to the largest extent. In addition, the Ordinance subsidized subsidies rates for different renovation initiatives. Merchants will not have to bear the financial burden and hence the market in the historic zone keeps operating stably.

2.3.4 Achievements

According to the data recorded by the Japan Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transportation (Fig. 20), since 1984, the year after the establishment of the Norms, the Kawagoe

\(^8^5\) Jiao, “Riben chuanyueshi yifanjie chuantong jiequ de baohu yu zhengzhi,” 269.
tourism figure increased. With the opening of a museum and the operation of trains, more travelers have been coming to Kawagoe. From 1998, the same year the Ordinance was established, the growth rate accelerated, especially the number of travelers to the historic zone, compared with the number of travelers to Kawagoe in general. Tourists were making special trips to the Kurazukuri zones to experience the authentic and integrative historic street space. Overall, tourism increased in Kawagoe from 22 million in 1985 to over 60 million in 2011.  

Fig. 20. Kawagoe Year Tourism Account

2.3.5 Lessons from Kurazukuri

There are several similarities between Chengdu and Kawagoe, more specifically, Kuanzhai and Kurazukuri. First, both locations originally boasted unique and historic

87 "Jirei bangō 039 zō-dzukuri no machi-dzukuri (saitamakenkawagoeshi)."
architecture. Secondly, historic zones were “forced” to be developed into tourism sites due to hastened urban development. It also seems that huge numbers of visitors since the large-scale transformations have resulted in considerable financial profits. However, as the previous chapter demonstrates, while the market value of Chengdu is soaring, its uniqueness is diminishing. The increased tourism and commercial atmosphere has alienated native Chengdu residents, taking away the places where they used to meet friends and enjoy leisure. The houses and shops have lost their familiarity, becoming more modern and gentrified, and the old teahouses have been replaced by novelty stores. In contrast, supported by non-government groups, regulated by the government, and “protected” by local residents, the original Kurazukuri style has remained intact, in better accord with the surrounding street space and historic culture. Chengdu, like many other Chinese cities that are rapidly transforming, need to slow down the process and marshal civilian actions to study and protect the integrity of historic heritage.
Chapter Three

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 History of the original Williamsburg

Williamsburg is located on the Virginia Peninsula and lies between small tributaries of the York and James River, and was founded as “Middle Plantation” in 1632. The second oldest university in the United States--William and Mary was founded there. In 1698, due to the burning of the statehouse in Jamestown, the first capital of Virginia Colony, Middle Plantation succeeded as the new capital of the Colony of Virginia. A year later, the General Assembly of Virginia passed an act, which authorized the city to have a new name--Williamsburg, in honor of King William III of England. In addition, it entitled “An act directing the building the Capitol and the City of Williamsburg” that set up explicit instructions for the establishment of the capital. During this period (1699-1780), it developed in size, population, and political significance. Living in the most powerful town in Virginia, the residents of Williamsburg, free and enslaved, contributed to the flourishing of the city. Colonial Williamsburg residents attempted to emulate the fashions and followed trends of their British counterparts, from occupations to architecture, and from lifestyles to living spaces. At this time, Williamsburg was the place that enjoyed an abundance of colonial tradition and became the epitome of American history from 1699 to 1779.

3.1.2 Historic buildings of Williamsburg

---

Among the significant structures of Williamsburg, the Capitol and the Raleigh Tavern were two of the representative buildings regarding political, cultural, and architectural aspects.

There were two Capitols before restoration. The first one was built in 1699, to replace the State Houses of Jamestown. This two floor architectural structure occupied consisted of two buildings that were connected by a gallery. The Capitol resembled the letter H. It was covered with hip roof, shingled with cypress, and equipped with dormer windows. In its day, The Capitol was the finest building in America and the architectural pride of the colonies. Unfortunately, the first Capitol was accidentally burnt down in 1747, and then the second Capitol was built. The new Capitol inherited the administrative and political functions of the previous one. In addition, its architectural luster was worthy of mention in the colonial era. It functioned until 1780, when the capital was moved to Richmond. Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, who was also an outstanding architect, commented:

The capitol is a light and airy structure, with a portico in front of two orders, the lower of which, being Doric, is tolerably just in its proportions and ornaments, save only that the intercolonations are too large. The upper is Ionic, much too small for that on which it is mounted, its ornaments not proper to the order, nor proportioned within themselves. It is crowned with a pediment, which is too high for its span. Yet, on the whole; it is the most pleasing piece of architecture we have.

---

90 Lyon Gardiner Tyler, *Williamsburg, the Old Colonial Capital* (Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1907), 205.
91 William Oliver Stevens, *Old Williamsburg and Her Neighbors* (New York: Dodd, Mead &., 1938), 273.
93 Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State Of Virginia* (South Bend, IN, USA: Infomotions, Inc., 2001), 92.
The Raleigh Tavern (Fig. 21) is another distinctive piece of architecture in Williamsburg. This wooden structure was erected on the north side of the Duke of Gloucester Street, next to the Capitol. It was two stories in height and a leaden bust of Sir Walter Raleigh was placed above its door.\textsuperscript{95} The exact erection date was unknown, but the Tavern stood forth with a persistent prominence since the middle of the eighteenth century. It was a landmark of commerce for public assembly and of public auction. Besides merchants and traders, students of the College of William and Mary, politicians, commissioners, and executors would all come to this place.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{94} Anders, \textit{Williamsburg, Virginia}, 23.
\textsuperscript{95} Tyler, \textit{Williamsburg, the Old Colonial Capital}, 232.
\textsuperscript{96} A \textit{Handbook for the Exhibition Buildings of Colonial Williamsburg} (Williamsburg, VA: Publisher Not Identified, 1936), 46–49.
3.1.3 The Fall of Williamsburg and the Rise of Colonial Williamsburg

The transfer of Virginia’s capital to Richmond in 1780 caused the decline of Williamsburg. During its 146 years of anonymity, Williamsburg acted as a backwater that lacked novelty and lost vitality. Generation after generation, although many colonial descendants still lived there, the young residents were unaware of Williamsburg’s history, not to mention the Americans not living in the Williamsburg area. Williamsburg was similar to old Kuanzhai before

---

its reconstruction. It had inadequate sewage and electricity, which burdened the living conditions. Although the noble buildings as the Governor’s Palace, the Magazine, the George Wythe House, the Public Gaol, were supposed to be preserved by the City of Williamsburg, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (A.P.V.A.) and correlated foundations, this colonial-era architecture was in disrepair and could not be fully used for public exhibitions.\textsuperscript{98} The A.P.V.A only admitted members who were prestige in the community.\textsuperscript{99} Although the upper class members enjoyed reputation and were wealthy, they joined the A.P.V.A. more for maintaining their genteel social network, instead of preserving colonial Williamsburg. The second Capitol was burnt in a fire in 1832 and had never been rebuilt.\textsuperscript{100} The Tavern was sold to a new owner and the business started to decline. It was also destroyed by fire, in 1859.\textsuperscript{101} Although it was not clearly identified whether these fires were man-made or accidents, it was clear that even these historic buildings had not received proper maintenance.

Some houses had been rebuilt or modified from the eighteenth century style to the nineteenth century Victorian architectural designs. In addition to these changes, new buildings were built, as well as telephone poles, gas stations and other modern but odd settings for the area.\textsuperscript{102} The distinct colonial characteristics had been abandoned, forgotten, and disappeared, which was caused by fire and neglect.

The Rev. Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin, rector of Bruton Parish Church and religion professor at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, was a pioneer who devoted himself to rejuvenating eighteenth century colonial Williamsburg. He first noticed the educational, architectural, and historical value of Williamsburg, since coming to Williamsburg in 1902. His

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{100} Tyler, \textit{Williamsburg, the Old Colonial Capital}, 210.
\textsuperscript{101} \textit{A Handbook for the Exhibition Buildings of Colonial Williamsburg}, 52.
\textsuperscript{102} Anders, \textit{Creating Colonial Williamsburg}, 6
experience of witnessing the restoration of the Bruton Parish Church inspired his determination to restore Williamsburg.\textsuperscript{103} He traced the unique phase of American life there, which is an extraordinary amplification of freedom-loving people. In 1924, when Dr. Goodwin attended a Phi Beta Kappa dinner in New York, he found the hope for a revivable Williamsburg. He confided in Mr. John D. Rockefeller Jr., an outstanding philanthropist of the day, about his restoration proposal. Although born to a wealthy family that worked in the petroleum industry, Mr. Rockefeller preferred pre-industrial artifacts.\textsuperscript{104} After paying several visits to Williamsburg and experiencing the colonial heritage, Mr. Rockefeller agreed to fund the restoration project to preserve a city authentically typical of the Colonial period. His obsession with the quaint colonially built environment, desire to better his family’s reputation, and desire for perfection promoted the overall progress of the restoration.\textsuperscript{105} Both Dr. Goodwin and Mr. Rockefeller were primarily amazed by the brilliant past of Williamsburg and decided to preserve this heritage without seeking profit. In addition, foreseeing how Colonial Williamsburg could be built into a national landmark and educate generations of Americans, they designed and executed all details to perfection.

3.2. Colonial Williamsburg Restoration

There were three firms that were essential to the restoration project, and all of them were closely connected with Dr. Goodwin. Colonial Williamsburg, Incorporated, a non-profit company founded by Dr. Goodwin and two other friends, was set up to purchase buildings for

\textsuperscript{103} The Williamsburg Restoration: a Brief Review of the Plan, Purpose and Policy of the Williamsburg Restoration ... an Authoritative Statement Issued by Those in Charge of the Undertaking (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, Incorporated, 1933), 17.

\textsuperscript{104} Anders. Creating Colonial Williamsburg, 9.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
the restoration of Williamsburg.\textsuperscript{106} It was established before Mr. Rockefeller decided to fund the project and it served as a means for public educational and historic promotions. It also owned the titles of all of the properties, including those presented by A.P.V.A. and those given by individual donors.\textsuperscript{107}

While Dr. Goodwin was busy purchasing properties in the historic area, he employed Perry, Shaw & Hepburn, Architects, to investigate and plan the whole project. Since Dr. Goodwin desired to present an authentic Colonial Williamsburg, Perry, Shaw & Hepburn, Architects completed detailed on-site research and sent searchers to every important library in the country and even Europe, to collect official and accurate information.\textsuperscript{108}

Williamsburg Holding Corporation (renamed Williams Restoration, Incorporated, in 1934), was the business organization in charge of the entire undertaking. It managed and maintained the acquired properties. As Dr. Goodwin admitted, Williamsburg Holding Corporation was to control the profit-making entity.\textsuperscript{109}

With Mr. Rockefeller’s commitment to purchase all of the private residences and businesses along the Duke of Gloucester Street,\textsuperscript{110} the scope of the restoration project covered all essential attendant attributes--the residential houses, public buildings, taverns, as well as all of the decorations and fittings.\textsuperscript{111} In all, 88 buildings were to be restored,\textsuperscript{112} including the Duke of Gloucester Street, from the College of William and Mary to the reconstructed Capitol. In addition to the buildings, the Palace green, Court House Green, Market Square, Capitol grounds

\textsuperscript{108} Bossom, “Colonial Williamsburg,” 637.  
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 20.  
\textsuperscript{111} Bossom, “Colonial Williamsburg,” 636.  
\textsuperscript{112} Anders, \textit{Creating Colonial Williamsburg}, 7.
some common areas are also parts of the restoration plan.\textsuperscript{113} Due to the concern that revealing Mr. Rockefeller’s identity would send the prices sky high, Dr. Goodwin played the front man for all purchasing responsibilities.\textsuperscript{114} Meanwhile, he needed to sell the idea of restoring Williamsburg to the Williamsburg community and convince the house owners to sell the structures to him.

There were a few Manchu descendants living in Kuanzhai. Similarly, a number of colonial descendants also owned and inhabited the town when the restoration began. In the case of Kuanzhai, the majority of former residents were forced to move out. This was due to Kuanzhai’s development into a commercial area, which would need to exclude residential elements as much as possible. Williamsburg handled this differently, as the residents of Williamsburg received cash for selling their houses and a “life tenure” free from rent, tax, insurance and repairs.\textsuperscript{115} Allowing the residents to return to Williamsburg after its restoration and reconstruction was a method of keeping Colonial Williamsburg alive as well as present an authentic community to its tourists. The vote of 150 for the project and 5 against in a town meeting on 1928\textsuperscript{116} indicated that the majority of attending residents trusted the restoration. Most families were satisfied with the money they received. More importantly, the town’s residents developed great pride for the community they are living in, the shrine of American colonial history.

The restoration project aimed to repair the buildings that were still standing, as well as rebuild and preserve the buildings that had vanished in Williamsburg between 1699 and 1840.\textsuperscript{117} However, when all the purchases of the historic buildings were complete, it was also found that

\textsuperscript{113} The Williamsburg Restoration, 5.
\textsuperscript{114} Anders, Creating Colonial Williamsburg, 21.
\textsuperscript{115} Bossom, “Colonial Williamsburg,” 637.
\textsuperscript{116} Anders, Creating Colonial Williamsburg, 22.
\textsuperscript{117} The Williamsburg Restoration, 5-6.
there had been 572 modern architectural buildings, which were incongruous of the colonial built
environment. Eventually, 520 modern buildings were demolished to preserve the integrity of
the colonial Williamsburg, 68 colonial buildings had been restored and 149 buildings had been
reconstructed by 1939.

However, the project had to make compromises for convenience and safety reasons. For
instance, it was forced to included fire hydrants, a twentieth century object in the eighteenth
restoration area. The restoration project adopted a low type of hydrant that was painted all green
to be inconspicuous in the greens. The houses for rented were also equipped with modern
plumbing, heat and light, as inconspicuously as possible. In spite of the compromises, in an
architectural perspective, Colonial Williamsburg has made significant efforts in preserving the
authenticity of the structures. The original bricks used in the Williamsburg structures were made
of local clay by local brickmakers. The bricks were durable and of a special yellow-red color.
The glazed-head bricks were made of special types of clay and burned with certain hard woods;
the gasses from the fire fuse a thin film of opaque glass on the bricks nearest the fire. This
required special burning conditions in the kiln and certain raw materials. Hence the restoration
employed colonial brickmakers to create similar bricks for restoring historic structures. In
addition to bricks, wood, hardware, and mortar used in the restoration were also taken from
original buildings, abandoned colonial buildings or produced in the same old methods; furniture
was made locally or imported from other colonies.

119 There were some modern buildings that were too good to be destroyed, so they remained in the
restoration area.
122 *The Williamsburg Restoration*, 16.
125 Ibid., 16.
In 1932, Raleigh Tavern became the first building that opened to the public after its restoration. More structures, houses and shops were completed later. The accurately restored Colonial Williamsburg soon attracted visitors from every state of the United States and even from other countries. The number of travelers increased significantly and reached one million till the outbreak of World War II (1945).\footnote{Thomas H. Taylor, “The Williamsburg Restoration and Its Reception by the American Public: 1926-1942” (Ph.D.’s thesis, George Washington University, 1989), 4.} However, Mr. Rockefeller’s funds and other donations could barely sustain the operational cost of Colonial Williamsburg in the long term. The restoration area needed to be supplemented from revenues of merchandising activities, including operating hotels and restaurants, leasing commercial properties, and selling souvenirs. Hence, a ticket policy was introduced and commercial shops were opened.

Indeed, in its later development, the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg remained controversial in terms of the lack of a discussion of slavery,\footnote{Anders, Creating Colonial Williamsburg, 22.} overemphasis on aesthetics than historical accuracy of the restored gardens\footnote{Anders, “Design and Deception at Colonial Williamsburg,” 64.}, over-commercialized tourism atmosphere.\footnote{The operation company has been devoted in presenting the “slavery” elements in recent years. However, it is difficult to show real slavery scene to the public nowadays since there are no more slavery.} Yet it is a shrine of American faith that reminds Americans of the past and continues to educate millions of descendants. It is a milestone for restoring a town in the style of a particular period. The heroic undertaking by Dr. Goodwin, Mr. Rockefeller, and other contributors and organizers was profound in extending the history of Colonial Williamsburg.
Conclusion

The project of Kuanzhai was launched by the government of Chengdu and constructed by a state-operated company with the initiative to design a cultural tourist destination. The project of the Kurazukuri zone was initiated by a group of local residents who live there, and aimed to protect their living community from over-urbanization. The Colonial Williamsburg Restoration Project was started by two private individuals, Dr. Goodwin and Mr. Rockefeller. They intended to restore a colonial-period historic zone and develop it for the purpose of education. Overall, the initiators and their initiatives in three projects developed the following differences on historic preservation. First, the relationship between initiators and the local community would have an effect on the preservation project. Residents could contribute comprehensive and accurate information on the historical, architectural and cultural aspects to the preservation. Second, different initiatives would influence the operation after the preservation process. An initiative would significantly determine the target and baseline of the project, so that only limited commercialization would be allowed. However, when commercial benefit was an intention of the preservation efforts, the boundary between preservation and profits became equivocal. Third, initiations would bias travellers, such that they would be blind to the history surrounding the area. Besides the presentation of the whole project, the introduction of merchants and the publicity of the project would determine the focus of its visitors. When travellers visit a new tourism destination with limited information, their understanding of the historic site would be easily altered by alluring shops and fancy structures.

The comparative studies of Kuanzhai, Kurazukuri zone, and Colonial Williamsburg encompass the fundamentals of a historic preservation project. The intrinsic value of antiquated structures is the primary reason for its conservation. However, an integral historic zone consists
of houses, along with its living community and the complexity of its unique culture. The demolition, artificial renovation, relocation of residents, and introduction of merchants in Kuanzhai made the preservation project an entirely commercial development. When facing increasing urbanization and progressive market competition, one crucial solution would be to build a commercial historic site. However, the central initiative should focus on the preservation. An improper initiative would lead to the total destruction of cultural heritage.

During the process of my research, I mainly encountered difficulties in searching sources. Unfortunately, there is a limited amount of research on Kuanzhai. This project opened to the public in 2008 and the trend of historic preservation in China only began in recent decades. Hence only a few Chinese scholars have conducted field research on Kuanzhai in this field. The existing scholarships mainly analyze the commercial operation mode. I had to search several Chinese databases to find research on architectural analysis and the information of Kuanzhai before the preservation project. Also, the research could be more accurate and convincing if I could have had access to more on-site research and attained more qualitative data on the commercial situation in the three projects. I hope to improve on this aspect with future studies.

As the example of Kuanzhai illustrates, the field of historic preservation in China currently lacks a thorough understanding to the balance between economic development and cultural preservation. For China and other developing countries, it is essential to learn from other mature historic projects of developed countries and consider historic preservation as a long-term objective. Scholars in this field could adopt comparative perspectives in different historic sites to analyze the benefits of historic preservation and appropriate treatment.
Bibliography


Anonymous. “Chengshi Chengdu de mingpian Kuanzhai xiangzi” 城事 成都的名片 宽窄巷子


Hu, Jiali 胡佳丽 and Wang, Yue 王玥. “Aodaliya huangjinhaian shi shizhang: jiejian Kuanzhai xiangzi chuanyi zai huangjin haian jian zhongguocheng” 澳大利亚黄金海岸市市长：借鉴宽窄巷子创意 在黄金海岸建中国城 [The mayor of Australia the Gold Coast intends to learn from the Kuanzhai mode and build Chinatown in the gold coast]. *Tianfu zaobao 天府早报*, March 18, 2014.


Jia, Dongting 贾冬婷 and Jia, Zijian 贾子健. “Xiangzi li de huohua lishi” 巷子里的活化历史
Yang 56


Liu, Hongtao and Li, Tingting. “Riben Chuanyue shi lishi jiequ de baohu yu


Tyler, Lyon Gardiner. Williamsburg, the Old Colonial Capital. Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1907.


Yang 58


