

# RESEARCH ON SHANGHAI FAMOUS HISTORIC GARDENS AND PARKS SANGHAI TÖRTÉNETI KERTJEI ÉS PARKJAI – ÉRTÉKVÉDELMI KUTATÁS

SZERZŐ/BY:  
DAIXIN DAI, MAN YUAN

## ABSTRACT

Historic gardens and parks have significant cultural meanings and their heritage value has been widely recognized. Including classical gardens, which are supposed to maintain their original design and keep their constant functions and features, Shanghai historic gardens and parks are in a continuous changing to meet various needs.

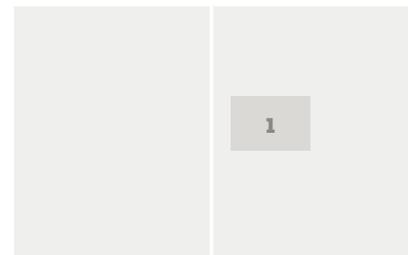
Both preservation and transformation of historic parks should be taken into account in the urban renewal process, for their historical significance not only lies in their cultural relics and historic sites, but also contemporary characteristics from updating. Shanghai Park Management Center attempts to look into the issue and formulate new policies to conserve and manage historical gardens and parks under fast urbanization. This paper introduces 3 research projects in this field conducted by Tongji University recently. One of the projects, *Shanghai Historic*

*Park Conservation Research*, is dilated. It aims at developing a reasonable registration process, including 6 steps, and ultimately recommends a list of famous historic gardens and parks selected from around 160 existing ones in Shanghai.

## 1 BRIEF HISTORY OF SHANGHAI CITY

Comparing with many other ancient Chinese cities, Shanghai has a history of only hundreds of years, starting from 1292 A.D. when the government of Yuan Dynasty established Shanghai County.

However, the outstanding characteristics and uniqueness of the city history lie in more recent times. Due to its geographic position in Yangtze River Delta, Shanghai has become the centre of cotton spinning cottage industry. Since opened as one of the foreign trading ports in 19th century after the Opium War, the city has played a leading role in China's modernization process. As a result, "Foreign



**Photo 1:** Winter Scene of Yu Garden (SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.BEHANCE.NET/GALLERY/1576403/SNOW-IN-YUYUAN-GARDEN](https://www.behance.net/gallery/1576403/Snow-in-Yuyuan-Garden))

and Chinese Divided” city organizations and management system were introduced by foreign concessions, and then these were merged into local system. After the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949, Shanghai has gradually become a nationwide industrial and economic center, as well as a rapid changing world-class metropolis.

## 2 THREE TYPES OF GARDENS AND PARKS IN SHANGHAI

According to the main period of development, Shanghai gardens can be classified into three types.

Ancient/classical gardens go back to Northern and Southern Dynasties, and construction of gardens reached a climax in Ming Dynasty (15th century). For example, Yu Garden typically represents the highest theoretical and technical standard of the classical gardens of the region (Photo 1). Moreover, the garden is a model of rehabilitation

and restoration of Chinese classical gardens. The main restoration started from 1956 and lasted about 30 years. Chen Congzhou (1918-2000), a well-known Chinese garden designer and scholar, was in charge of this rehabilitation and restoration project. He also transformed and enlarged it to meet new needs while rehabilitated the existing part. As a result, the garden, which is now representative of Shanghai classical gardens, is listed for its unique cultural significance.

After the middle of Qing Dynasty, modern gardens and parks (from 1840 - the year when Opium War broke out, to 1949 - the establishment of People's Republic of China) emerged, some of them simply modernized out of existing historic gardens. During this period, many private gardens were opened to the public, including Huangpu Park. Due to its location near the bund, which is often regarded as representative of the city's image of modernization, the park has gone through



**Photo 2:** French Garden Elements in Fuxing Park

**Photo 3:** Chinese Garden Elements in Fuxing Park

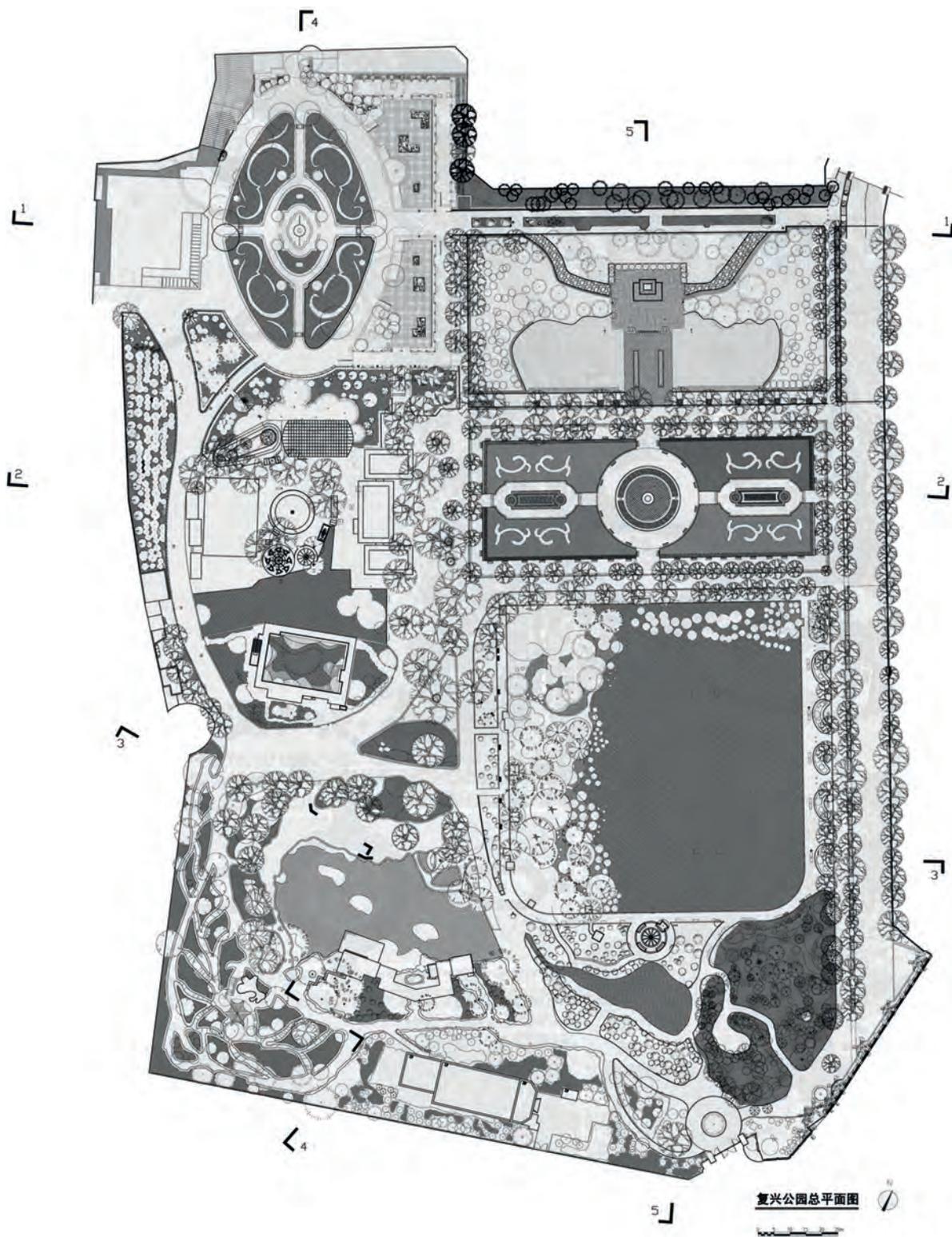
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**Figure 1:** Master Plan of Fuxing Park (SURVEYED AND DRAFTED BY TONGJI STUDENTS)



several modifications and it is difficult to read its original design. However, it is still listed, not only because it is the very first public park of China, but also the unique historic and cultural meaning of this historic site. Modern gardens and parks in Shanghai generally were designed and built in the colonial period and reveal a combination of eastern and western style. An example is Fuxing Park. It is also listed as an outstanding representative of both French and Chinese classical garden style (Photo 2-3, Figure 1).

There are also masterpieces of gardens built in contemporary time (1949-now), of which Fangta Park is a superb example (Photo 4, Figure 2). Designed by Feng Jizhong, another famous domestic garden designer and scholar, the park originated from the conservative garden of an ancient tower built in Song Dynasty and other ancient buildings and relics in different periods, meanwhile it illustrates distinctive artistic imagery by using modern methods of design and techniques. It is also listed for its demonstration of Feng's



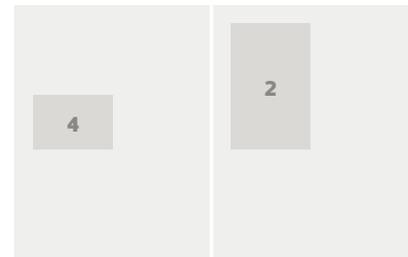
garden construction theory and it is the harmonious combination of ancient and contemporary aesthetics and technology.

It is a fact that historic gardens are places which bear witness to human behavior and reflection to local events and trends in history, which occupy an important place in forming local identity. Moreover, they take the responsibility as necessary places for outdoor experience and recreation of contemporary times. Besides, the recent UNESCO recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) put an emphasis

on a landscape-based approach on historic heritage preservation. Shanghai government is also seeking approaches to adapt, disseminate, facilitate and monitor its implementation.

### 3 RESEARCH PROJECTS ON SHANGHAI PARKS BY TONGJI UNIVERSITY

Recently there are mainly three ongoing research projects on Shanghai parks and gardens conducted by Department of Landscape Architecture, College of



**Photo 4:** Scenery of Fangta Park

**Figure 2:** Master Plan of Fangta Park  
 (1) North Gate  
 (2) Corridor  
 (3) Tian Hou Temple  
 (4) Screen Wall  
 (5) Fangta Tower  
 (6) Lawn

(7) Trench  
 (8) East Gate  
 (9) Bamboo Appreciation Pavilion  
 (10) He Lou Pavilion  
 (SOURCE: THANKS TO COURTESY OF DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, CAUP)

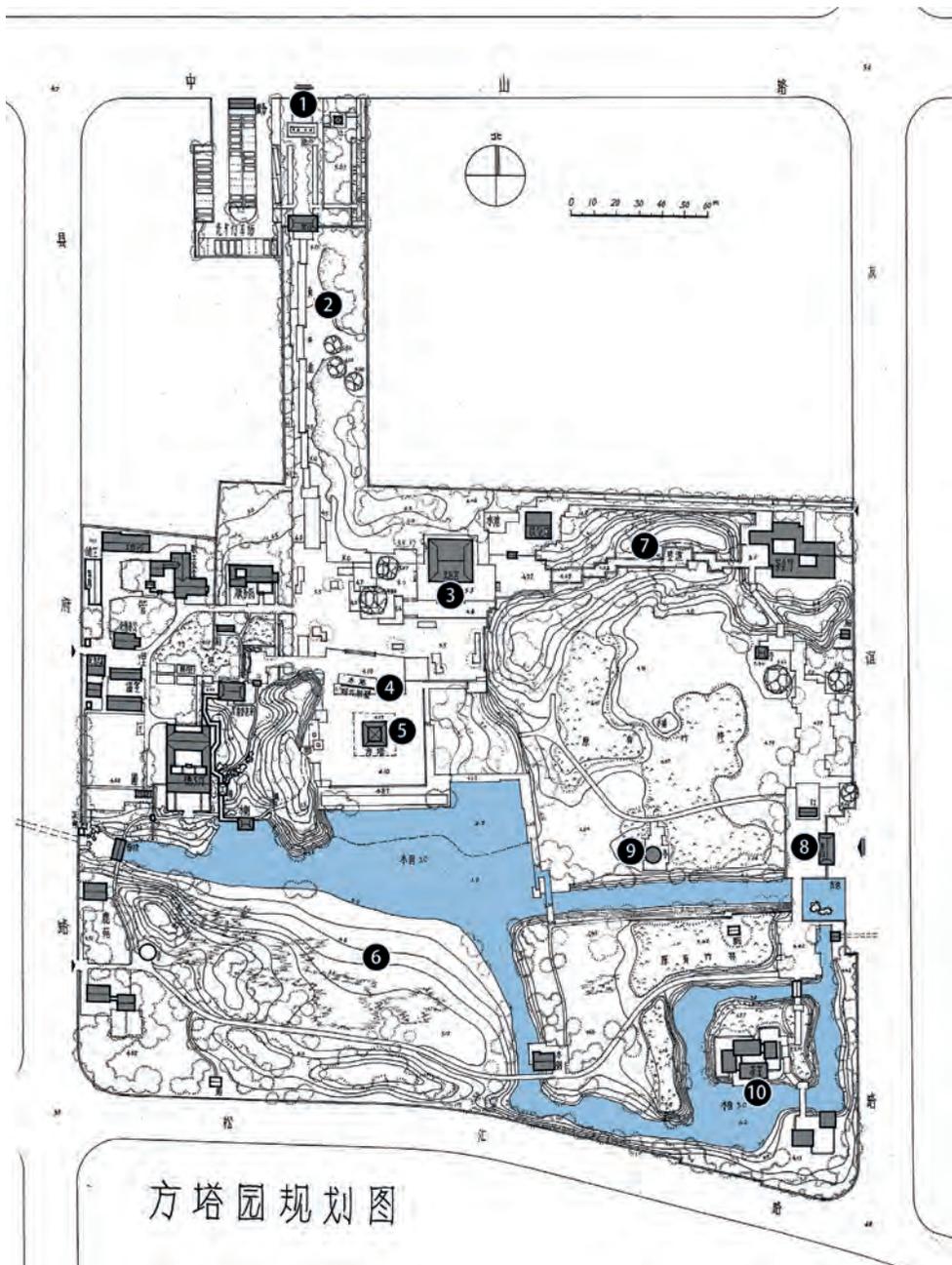
Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP) of Tongji University. Starting from 2015, the first one aims at setting up a GIS supported database for Shanghai gardens and parks, including spatial information such as feature layout, vegetation type, and dynamic data for better management, momentary number of visitors as example. The second one is to announce a list of famous historic gardens and parks, as a result of reorganizing documentation, investigating their current conditions, and assessing their values. The third one is looking forward to formulating proper and practical rules and regulations to conserve and manage Shanghai historic gardens and parks. Although different groups work separately, methods, data sharing and necessary communication ensure an efficient collaboration.

#### 4 REGISTRATION OF SHANGHAI FAMOUS HISTORIC PARKS

After one-year's work, the second research project *Shanghai Historic Park Conservation Research* has come to a conclusion in March 2016. Taking the evaluation of landscape heritage as the main starting point, and Shanghai public gardens and parks as the study objects, the research group selected and announced a list of 25 parks as The First List of Shanghai Famous Historic Parks.

##### 4.1 Clarification on Definition

The research started from clarifying the definition of famous urban historic parks. On one hand, various definitions such as international heritage conservation codes and regulations were put into comparison.



On the other hand, similar domestic definitions and relative local regulations were also analyzed to work out reasonable descriptions and indicators for Shanghai Famous Historic Parks. The final definition clarifies primary standards of listing: The Shanghai famous urban historic parks are those which were built more than 30 years within the city limit, which have unique impact on urban development and cultural life in certain historical periods and within certain areas, which have distinctively essential spatial patterns or elements preserved in their history.

#### 4.2 Comparative Analysis

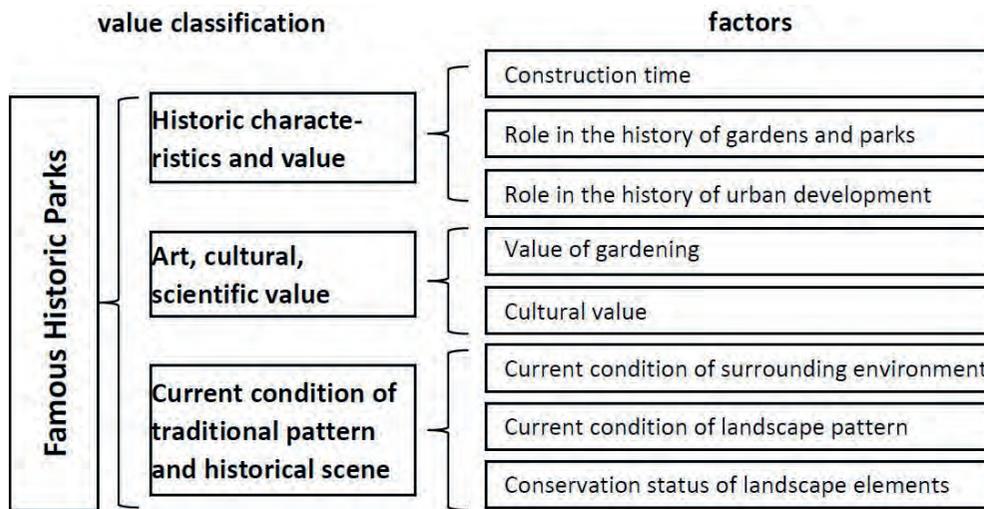
Second phase of the project was to set up a process of registration. Several comparative analyses were conducted as case study and references.

Firstly, the UNESCO *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*<sup>1</sup> states that the registered world heritage should satisfy two requirements: 1. Meet the outstanding universal value (OUV) evaluation; 2. Have characteristics of integrity and/or authenticity, and have adequate protection and management mechanisms to ensure that the heritage is well protected, as the premise of the OUV.

Secondly, the UK *Designation Register of Parks and Gardens Selection Guide-Urban Landscapes*<sup>2</sup> divides gardens and parks into three categories according to their main stages of development, and sets up different criteria of registration.

Thirdly, the identification and evaluation of historic landscapes of the United States contains a complete

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* [EB/OL]. 2015[2015-06-14] <http://whc.unesco.org/document/137843>  
<sup>2</sup> Historic England. *Designation Register of Parks and Gardens Selection Guide-Urban Landscapes* [EB/OL].



set of working procedures and regulatory standards, including *How To Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*,<sup>3</sup> *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*,<sup>4</sup> etc. The evaluation procedure places great emphasis on the nature of cultural heritage, its cultural background and evolution through time.

The research project also looked into current evaluation methods of domestic historic parks. After five years of study, *The First List of Beijing Famous Historic Gardens*<sup>5</sup> was announced to the public on 9th March, 2015.

According to the government's public documents, twenty-five gardens were selected with profound historical and cultural significance. The evaluation criteria system is given in Figure 3.

For each candidate, the procedure begins with classification according to its typical style, proceeding with evaluation by detailed factors. Weight coefficients are set up for each factor. An overall score of each garden/park will be worked out and conducted a comparison within all candidates.

However, the evaluation process of *Beijing Famous Historic Gardens* is not sufficiently reasonable. Firstly, quantitative methods are not always suitable to evaluate the quality and value of heritage. It is still a subjective process to decide weight coefficient for each factor since the quantitative evaluation method intend to be more objective. Secondly, the current condition, namely,

integrity and authenticity, describe the validity of heritage value, but it is not part of "value". So it is not reasonable to list it with other value classifications in the evaluation framework. Moreover, the process lacks clear and definite measurement indicators. Precise indicators such as "time" and "scale" can be measured by accurate numbers, but fuzzy indicators such as "historical events", "historical figures", "popularity" and "artistic characteristics" can only be described by words. For example, "historical figures" may refer to famous people of worldwide, national, or local importance. Therefore, Shanghai historic gardens and parks evaluation needs clear and explicit approach.

The historic parks of Shanghai vary in forms and characteristics, and some of their initial construction time can be traced back to Ming and Qing Dynasties. However, their distinguishing features are determined by the urban development process, especially during the historical turbulent period of modern times. The on-going transformation of garden heritages in Shanghai is to meet societal needs of each period. In fact, hardly any cultural relics remain in the original state. Most historic buildings and gardens have experienced repair and rebuild or reconstruction during their existence. Therefore, the evaluation process should explore their values of all periods and relative properties, in order to illustrate reasonable direction for future management.

3 J. Timothy Keller, ASLA, and Genevieve P. Keller, *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*[EB/OL]. [2015-06-14] <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb18/>

4 National Park Service. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 1995[2015-06-14] <https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/pdfs/nrb15.pdf>

5 Beijing Municipal Bureau of Landscape and Forestry, *The First list of Beijing Famous Historic Gardens*[EB/OL]. 2015[2015-06-14] <http://www.bjyl.gov.cn/zwgk/gsgg/201510/P020151012360303705528.docx>

Value medium	Explanation	Key words
Event	Single or series of historical events, activities, regional development trends or patterns, social trends, etc.	Place of occurrence Witnessing place Testimony
People	Relevant to life experiences of important historical figures, such as former Residence.	Important relevance Important influence
Design/construction/planting	Garden form, style, theory; Skills, technology, materials, construction methods, artistic beauty; Retained ancient and famous trees, plant design of specific period or style, etc.	Pioneer Masterpiece Typical paradigm Outstanding example Important relevance Ancient and famous trees

## 5 REGISTRATION PROCESS

The process learns from the U.S. and UK register methods and evaluation criteria. Parks are typically classified into groups according to main period of development before evaluation. The whole process of registration consists of six essential steps. Value medium and criteria are used as core approach of evaluation; Thirdly, Site visit and current situation investigation are necessary to examine authenticity and integrity of these gardens and parks.

### STEP 1 History research

Archives, drawings, photographs, historic records, celebrity stories, reconstruction records, comments illustrate where the value of the park lies in.

### STEP 2 Age division

According to the construction period of their main layout and basic status, Shanghai historic gardens and parks are divided into three categories: ancient ones are mainly constructed before 1840, modern ones are created between 1840 and 1949, and contemporary ones are built from 1949 to till now.

### STEP 3 Embodiment of value

“Event”, “people”, “design/construction/planting” are selected as medium between value and properties of a park, including both tangible and intangible elements (Figure 4).

### STEP 4 Value criteria

List a number of required criteria for the “Event”, “people”, “design/construction/planting” to be met so that by comparing a historic park’s predominating value with the city level, a park can be identified whether it meets the city-level significance. By the end of this step, a series of candidate parks are listed.

### STEP 5 Site visit and current situation investigation

This step consists of three parts. The first is the park survey according to the list from STEP 4. It aims to check the preservation condition of physical remains and relics. Secondly, park administrators are interviewed to clarify current practical problems. Last but not least, park visitors are asked to fill out questionnaire and give short interviews in order to know their attitude and advices to historical preservation, recognition and renewal of urban parks.

The results turned out that some parks clearly should be crossed out, due to their insufficient protection or improper treatment and management. As for visitors, generally little attention is paid on local history and culture in historic parks, since they generally came mainly for recreational needs. However, many tourists agree “protection is more important”, and also emphasized the availability of modernized park facilities and unique cultural experiences.

Another finding is that the park influence and popularity exerts significant



**Figure 3:** Evaluation Criteria System of Beijing Famous Historic Garden (SOURCE: [HTTP://WWW.BJYL.GOV.CN/ZWGK/PO20151012360304172919.DOCX](http://www.bjyl.gov.cn/zwgk/po20151012360304172919.docx))

**Figure 4:** Value Medium



**Figure 5:** Elements related to tangible and intangible park elements

**Figure 6:** Selected List of Shanghai Famous Historic Parks

Elements related to tangible park components	Elements related to intangible park components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical objects: Boundary, architecture, art, garden ornaments, layout, spaces, garden style and features, vegetation characteristics and pattern, marks or traces, etc.</li> <li>Surrounding features: spatial connection, color, volume, layout, sense of place, style, material, crafts, etc.</li> <li>Living place of famous person, inscription, carving, places or scenes with special meaning, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>About historical events or persons: festival, handicrafts or traditional custom; locally originated, influential poetry, legends, songs, dramas, etc.</li> <li>Art and aesthetics reflected by the form and style.</li> <li>Unique construction technology, method of using material.</li> <li>Innovative idea and concept.</li> <li>Directly related to masters, theories or historical trends in the field of Landscape Architecture.</li> <li>Memories and stories about local history, emotion and resonance of local community.</li> </ul>

Classical historic parks	Modern historic parks	Contemporary historic parks
Yu Garden, Zuibai Pond, Qushui Garden, Guyi Garden, Qixia Garden	Huangpu Park, Fuxing Park, Longhua Martyr's Cemetery, Xiangyang Park, Zhongshan Park, Zhabei Park, Kunshan Park, Luxun Park, Huoshan Park	Huaihai Park, Fangta Garden, Huilongtan Park, Guangqi Park, People's Park, Guilin Park, Heping Park, Jingan Park, Linjiang Park, Penglai Park, Nanyuan Park

effect on the visitors' awareness and judgment on park's historical context, cultural activities and environments. By the above means, it is possible to check the validity of intangible historical elements.

### STEP 6 Examine authenticity and integrity

For those parks who have city-level significance (selected in STEP 4), this step aims to check the validity of its value, by seeking tangible and intangible park elements that adequately support its relative value portion (Figure 5).

Based on the above steps, reasonable and reliable links are set up between park value and properties; meanwhile urban level significance is ensured.

### 6 CONCLUSION

The study turned out that 25 parks have been qualified as the first batch of Shanghai Famous Historic Parks, among which 5 are ancient/classical gardens, 9 are modern parks, and 11 are contemporary parks. Each of them represents some unique characteristics of Shanghai urban development. These parks reflect the history through not only remaining relics, but also current scenes and features. At present those parks not only provide beautiful and meaningful places for local residents, but also attract large numbers of tourists to experience a variety of space and activity, with its unique history. (Figure 6)

The project also proposed a series of advices for the government in three aspects:

- 1. Preservation of cultural relics**
  - In respect to the historical background of each period, reasonable assessment should be made about the needs of cultural relic's protection and maintenance.
  - Set boundaries between protected area and control zone, and control the surrounding development and transformation.
- 2. Public awareness**
  - Establish advisory organizations to guide public education and raise public awareness of historic landscape and cultural heritage.
  - Make rules to regulate tourists' behaviors in historic parks.
- 3. Park management and construction**
  - Collected data can enrich and improve Shanghai park GIS database, and apply to management practice;
  - Assuming that the uniqueness of history and culture of a park is grasped, it is possible to introduce or originate some innovative cultural events or activities, looking forward to reviving its historical characteristics while satisfy contemporary needs at the same time.

### References:

- [1]United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization, Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention[EB/OL]. 2013[2015-06-14] [https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dprgsg-urban-landscapes/130218\\_Urban\\_Landscapes\\_final.pdf/](https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dprgsg-urban-landscapes/130218_Urban_Landscapes_final.pdf/)
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## SANGHAI TÖRTÉNETI KERTJEI ÉS PARKJA – ÉRTÉKVÉDELMI KUTATÁS

A történeti kertek és parkok kulturális és kultúrtörténeti, értékvédelmi jelentősége óriási és világszerte széles körben elfogadott. Sanghaj történeti kertjei és parkjai folytonosan változnak, megújulnak az új funkcionális igényeknek megfelelően. S igaz ez még azokra a klasszikus kerttörténeti értéket képező kertekre, parkokra is, amelyeknél az eredeti kertépítészeti térformálást bizony célszerű lenne megőrizni.

A városmegújítási folyamatokban a történeti parkok esetében mind a megőrzés alapú megújítás, mind pedig az átépítés jellegű felújítás is szóba jöhet. A parkok történeti jelentősége ugyanis nem csak a kerttörténeti emlék mivoltból fakad, hanem a kortárs megfogalmazásból is. A

Shanghai Park Management Center feladata, hogy újszerű megújítási és menedzsment programot dolgozzon ki a gyors urbanizációs fejlődés által veszélyeztetett történeti kertek és parkok védelmére és fejlesztésére.

Az elmúlt években a Tongji Egyetem három kutatási program keretében foglalkozott a sanghaji történeti kertekkel és parkokkal. Ezek közül a történeti parkok megújításával foglalkozó kutatási program (Shanghai Historic Park Conservation Research) egy hat lépcsős értékelési rendszert vázolt fel az értékvédelmi lista összeállításához, és ezzel a módszerrel a vizsgált 160 történeti kert és park közül emeli ki a legértékesebb kerttörténeti, kultúrtörténeti értékeket Sanghaj történetikert-örökségéből. ©