

DISTANCED



INTIMACY

S U P E R B L O C K





# HOMO URBANUS

**laboratory for sensitive observers**  
The project ‘Distanced Intimacy’ explores China’s dominant typology from the perspective of an incarcerated dweller.

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**P r o j e c t**

S U P E R B L O C K

-- Left Aerial photograph of the city’s periphery



‘The desire to see the city proceeded the means of satisfying it.’

*‘One of my Brazilian girl-students returned in tears from her first visit to France: **whiteness and cleanness** were the criteria by which she judged a city, and Paris, with its blackened buildings, had seemed to her **filthy and repugnant**.’*

The Brazilian girl student of Levi-Strauss, who had been living in a colony, directly entering to modernity from barbarism, without experiencing the history in between, so she **judged** the city by only its **whiteness and cleanliness**.

The whiteness and cleanliness is how contemporary cities works - a white sterile box- To keep It's cleanness by isolating all the processes of decay - in order to keep this cleanness - it must be **always renewed** - it's a perpetual confinement that preventing it from any forms of alienness/ hybridity/difference.

The project attempts to show that the pandemic only accelerated a process that was already in place, Through the experience of the covid 19 crisis, the city suddenly revealed as composed of an endless number of self-appointed quarantine units.

The film is presented as an act of my resistance towards the growing state of social isolation the superblock is creating.





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# PROJECT BACKGROUND

## FINDING A WAY TO URBANIZE

### **Planned community -**

#### ***The socialism unit - Danwei***

*Collective life , working units, Industrialisation*

#### ***Urban experiment - New Towns***

*Caoyang new village,*

#### ***Evolution of housing units***

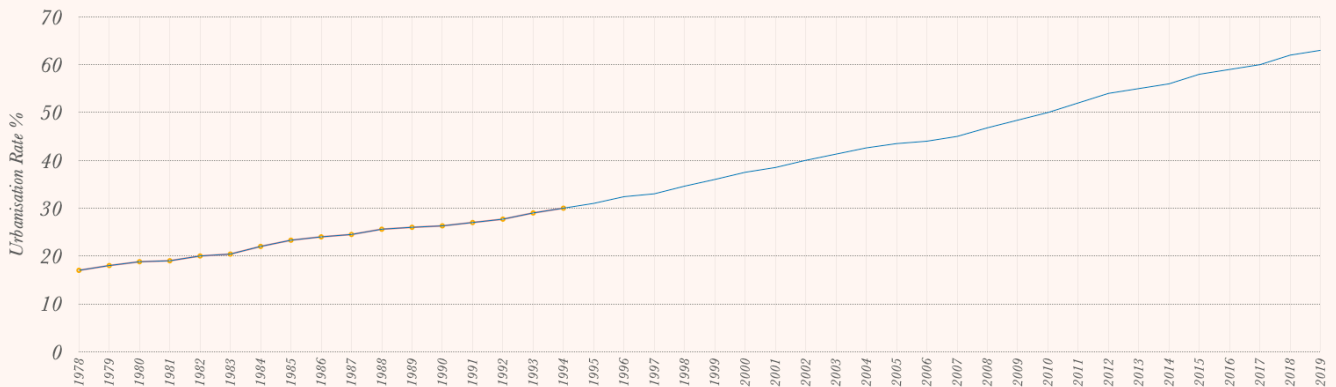
*From 1948 to 2020*

#### ***Urbanisation as an engine - Superblock***

### ***Rural Urbanization***

*Tongxi village*

### ***Beijing yuan***



“It was too often assumed that the inner life of an apparently prospering population should be as smooth as its external measures, but the accelerated changes of this emerging-world metropolis were often experienced as a violent and bewildering storm.”

- *capital: a portrait of delhi in the twenty-first century*





4

1

2

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*Evolution  
of hous-  
ing units  
in China*

*1. -1948*

*2. 1949-1978*

*3. 1979-2000*

*4. 2000 -*

The Inner City



## **Planned community**

### ***Danwei*** and new village

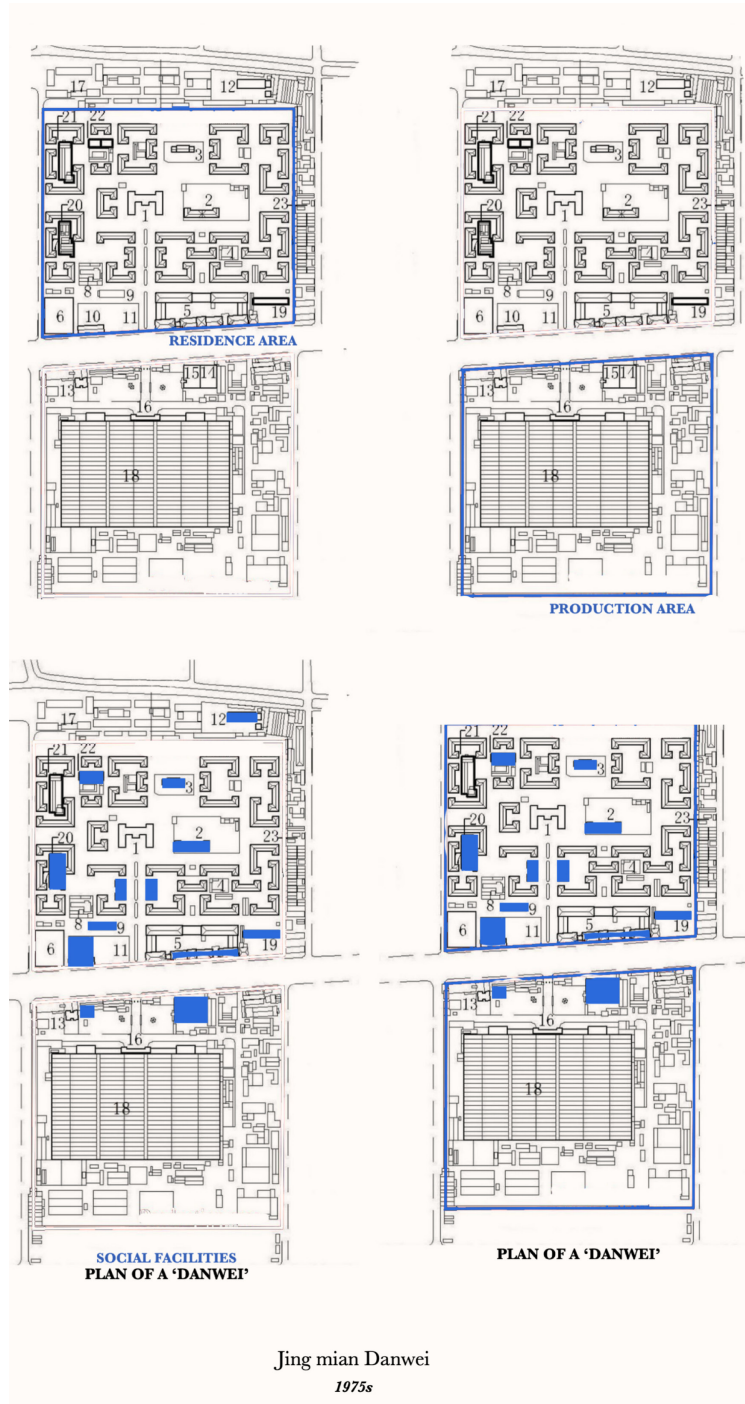
**Danwei** - used to signify this **spatial integration** of work, residence, and social life in cities.

A challenging spatial organization problem, addressed early in the development of “new China”, was whether or not to separate place of residence from place of work, as has occurred progressively in Western industrialized nations and in some Third World countries too. The Chinese tendency was to assign people to residences according to their workplace as much as possible.

Since the city is composed of many workplaces, it is understandable that the workplace is a more effective unit for delineating the identity of individuals in a group context than street address, district, or city name. So, socially danwei's primary significance is that it gives people personal workplace identity. By **living and working in the same place**, people are bound to develop a sense of place attachment-a **sense of belonging to a productive community**. This gives those people who are **detached from traditional village identity** a common frame of reference for daily use. Following the ancient tradition of **demarcating habitations** by enclosure (*see 'housing evolution'*), Danwei adopt the convention of walling each unit. This clearly gives a **visible evidence** of its separate and distinct identity from without as well as from within.

Thus, the enclosure was to create personal identity, productive-place identity, and a sense of social belonging. It **excludes those who are not members**, while at the same time it provides a **basis** for integrating those within it into an effective social, economic, and political unit.







## Planned community

### *Danwei and new village*

Most units have a compact area in which the workplace, residential areas, and social services are either closely juxtaposed or even intermingled. The separation of these areas is sometimes achieved by no more than a row of trees, a ditch, or a roadway. The areas provided for social activities and services can be vary widely from place to place - Some well developed and prosperous danwei had elaborate facilities for shopping, education, health care, and recreation. Shopping centers, nurseries, schools, clinics, hospitals, and sports fields are incorporated into the most advanced ones. The least developed danwei had at least ***eating hall and places for washing and bathing, socializing, and resting***. Danwei are highly organized and the spaces are intensively used that they appear to be almost like an extended, complex house or even a community.

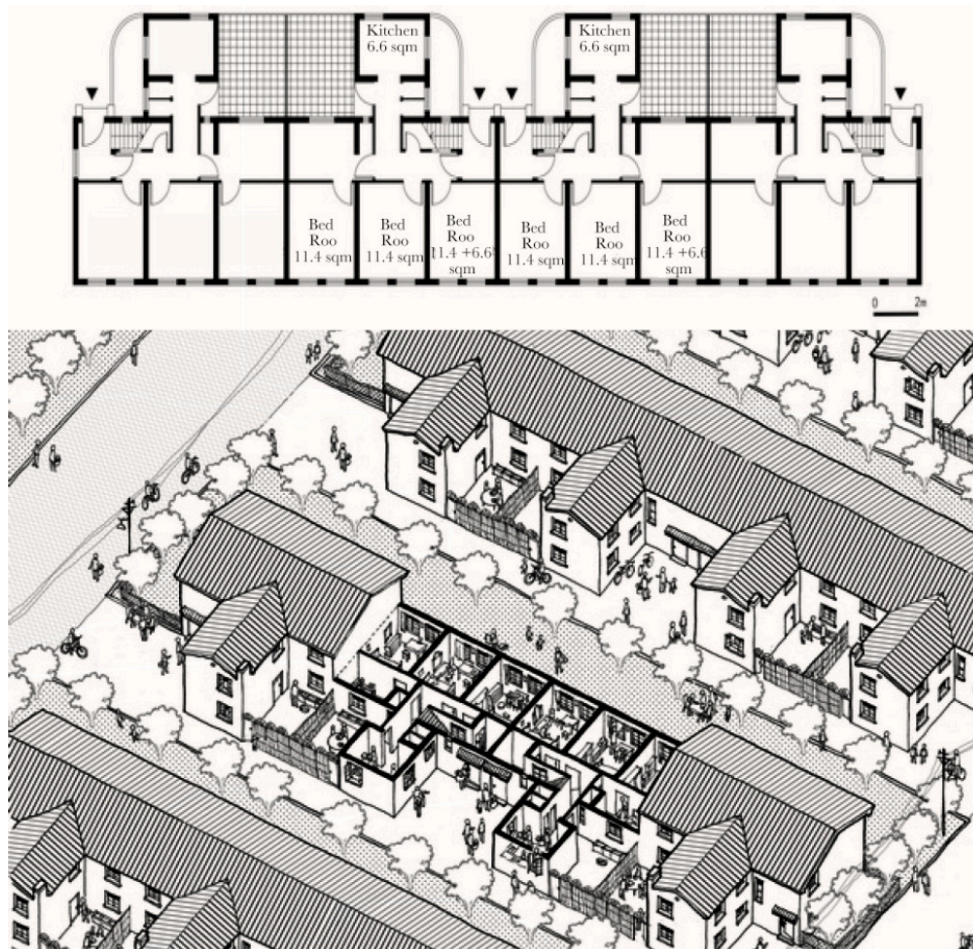
With work, domestic life, and social activities built-in to a single place, (*In fact, social life tends to occur within and around the work and residential establishments*) ***informal gatherings appear to fill in between workplace and residence***.

Congregating for informal visiting takes place wherever persons encounter one another: stairways, sidewalks, roadways, doorways. Spare time sports occur wherever participants gather: outside the factory door, in an unused room in the factory, in front of apartments, on streets and roadside curbs.

One of the more interesting features of the use of space for such a range of activities is that relatively few activities can claim exclusive use of any particular space. *Sometimes a part of a work space temporarily becomes a social space.*

Domestic space may ***overflow into social space*** when household activities such as *quilt-making* require it. **This creates an intricate, intermingled set of uses of space.**





Redraw by Yangchen, *From model community to monumental site*

***Caoyang New Village***



## Planned community

*Danwei and new village*

Before 1978, the organization of a city **was not based on the market** but we can easily find a city was **relied on urban blocks**, while today it relies on **patches** for the irregular plots

After the founding of New China, The industrialisation of a city required large numbers of people to participate, but there was a shortage of housing and very poor living conditions, so there was an urgent need to provide places for the large numbers of people coming to work in the cities. The challenge was how to improve the efficiency of urban use through regional layout, road transport and how to provide equal social and cultural services for workers in different settlements.



*Hanggang in 1990s.*

After some experimentation with different housing models, including the Soviet micro-community model and the workers' new village experiment, such as the ***Cao Yang New Village*** in Shanghai, the unit system and the workers' new village, as a model of social organization and spatial model was widely replicated throughout China.

at on the idea of collectivity. By comparing maps from before and after, s on an **infrastructural system** – and the new blocks has transformed to created by the brutal urbanization.

In short, as seen in the ariel plan, and as a result shaped the image of the city, the danwei-housing and workers' village with workplaces were mostly located on the **city skirt**, connected to the city and railways, urban development was **then spread out around these settlements**, it also organised the population and **regularised their daily routine**, thus ensuring that people were free from their private lives and could concentrate on their work and,



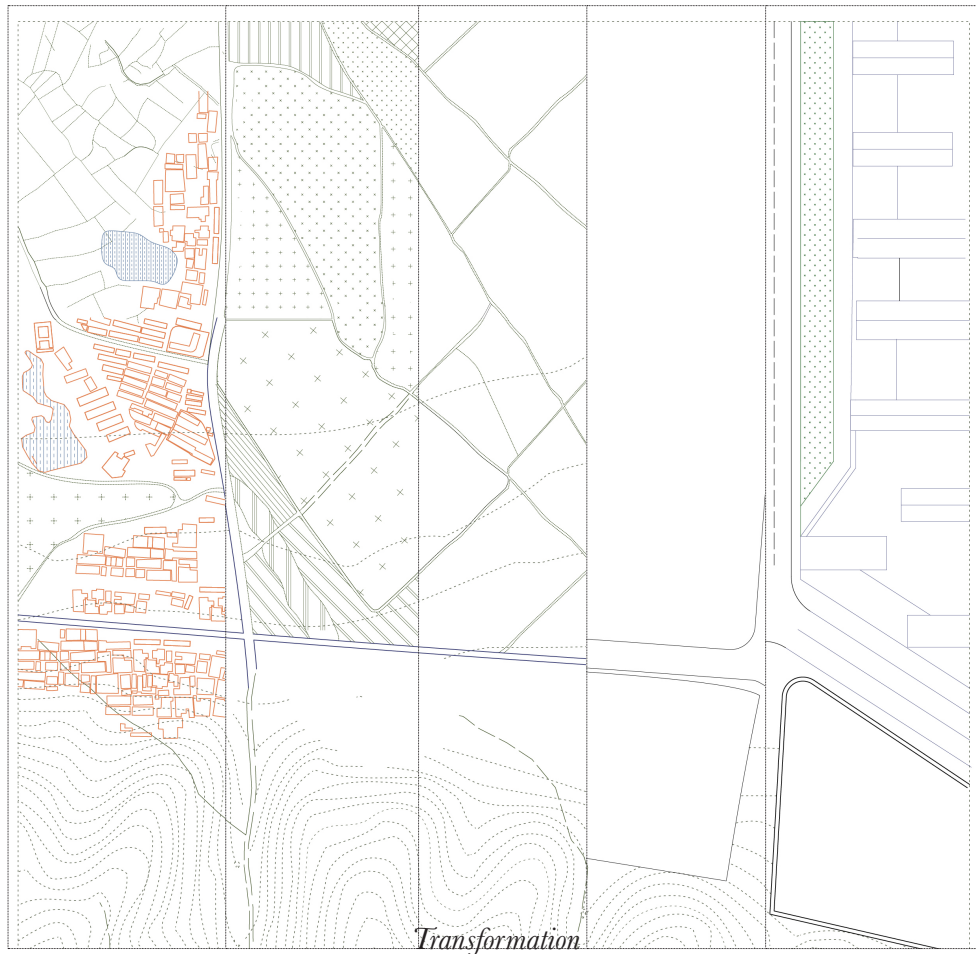
*The site of Hanggang in 2020.*

in particular, freeing housewives from domestic duties to participate in the construction of the country. In worker's village, different from the Damwei system, Service were set up in three levels .

*Service outlets (In according to **Caoyang new village**)*In the centre of the residential area, there are primary public facilities, including cultural centres, libraries, youth palaces, primary schools, auditoriums, large shopping centres, bathhouses, district hospitals, street offices, police stations, housing management offices, food management offices, industrial and commercial offices and post and telecommunications offices. The neighbourhoods are served by secondary service outlets: vegetable markets, department stores, catering shops, food and oil shops, etc. The neighbourhood committees set up tertiary outlets to meet the basic needs of residents.



## The end of *Planned community*



With the end of the command economy and the takeover of the market economy ,along with the opening up of the state’s population mobility led to a massive influx of people into the cities, leading to a housing shortage.Si-  
multaneously, the right to use the land as a tradable asset turned spaces across China into commodities that can be **demolished, relocated, and sold**. Large amounts of capital funding invested in the Chinese real estate market, with 40 percent of the proceeds going to the local government.  
Due to this stream of funds, the city underwent rapid expansion.



Especially after the 1990s, the superblock model (As the successor to both) was built in large numbers to **accommodate the increasing number** of migrating populations, supplemented by the ‘neighbourhood unit’ theory as the core of community infrastructure services, The standardized and formulaic nature of the design and construction of the superblock allows it to be rapidly replicated in large numbers, this model became the **default solution** for accommodating urban growth, and came to **dominate the expansion and transformation of the urban texture across the country.**



**The end of**  
*Danwei*



© Marc Riboud/Magnum Photos, 1960s

*At a factory-danwei in Liaoning province, where a group of workers were having lunch together at the canteen.*



*“This year, Hangzhou will complete the **renovation and demolition** of two hundred and fifteen old compounds....”*



*Still from film, 2020*

*An old resident in his danwei compound which is facing demolishing*



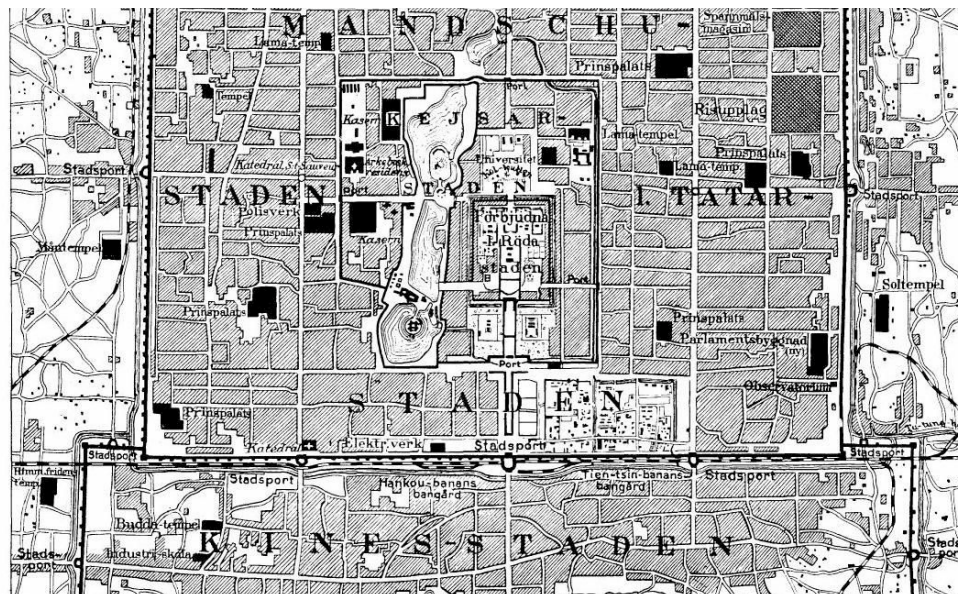
## Evolution of housing units *from danwei to superblock*

令五家為比，使之相保；五比為閭，使之相受；四閭為族，使之相葬；五族為黨，使之相救；五黨為州，使之相賙；五州為鄉，使之相賓。--《周禮·地官司徒》

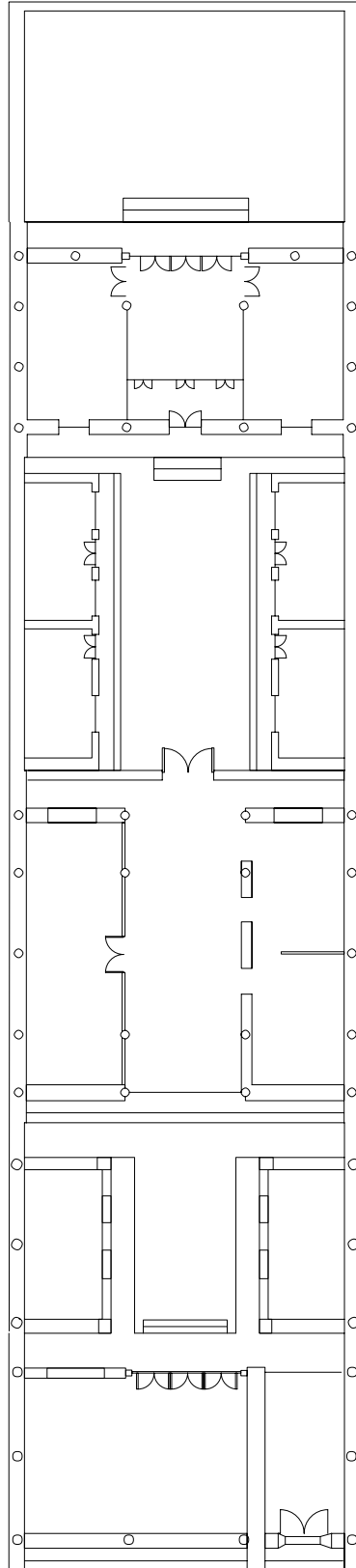
Courtyard house, as a traditional form of housing in China, had some superficial similarities with **Danwei**: Boundary was clearly defined by buildings and walls, and the walls and buildings in the both cases were utilized to demarcate social spaces. The third space (outside the individual house and inside the wall) provided a common ground in which the collective life occurred, and people needed permission to enter the space before they were allowed to access the buildings. And they are both a basic unit for a larger urban organization.

The difference between them is however evident: in the courtyard house, people lived in different rooms with their big family, parents, grand parents, brothers and sisters. It can be expanded to a bigger scale by adding rooms and yards. The Danwei, in contrast, promoted a principle of social equality and connection with each family seen as the same and bounded by working relations.

People kept living in courtyard houses till mid 20th century; people overthrew the inner city, emptied a big piece of land, and built new housing compounds.



*In parallel with and complementary to the new town experiment is the development of **residential units**.*



Courtyard house, 1880



## Evolution of housing units from danwei to superblock

**1932-1948** *New urban settlements born out of traditional residential forms*

The city located in east south part of china. Less subject to external cultural influences, Hangzhou start transform until the railways system developed under the policy of the government that time.

A variety of urban settlements theory introduced by Western countries, Hangzhou built some high-end residential settlements during this time. "7 SAGES" is one of the settlements (10 houses) built in 1930. It keeps the traditional form of introverted interior arrangement yuan, and introduced the compact organization form of town-house. In this period, wealthy people who lived in this residential started a transform of living, Left the big family and lived in a small family unit.

**1949-1978** *The start of housing shortage. adopts a simple and easy method to quickly build a house.*

In the first three decades of the founding of New China, the development of shared housing under the socialist planned economic system became the mainstay of urban housing. This stage has experienced the impact of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Housing policies have been affected by political and economic fluctuations, and the living standards of urban residents have declined.

**1949-1957** *Establishment of public housing, welfare housing system and urban housing distribution system*

At the beginning of the founding of New China, the living materials were poor, country provided basic living conditions for the people through welfare housing system. People began to flood into the city to make a living. The state built a number of single-story residential settlements to supply unit staff.

Followed by the period of studying from Soviet Union, combined the residential design method from Soviet with the national conditions, lowered the design standards (per capita use area), and built a batch of 3-4 standard-level assembly houses. (55-6 housing)

At this stage, one family normally has one room with a simple form of living. The kitchen and toilet are all set up outdoors. The furniture often has only beds, wardrobes, tables, chairs and cabinets.

**House always close to their workplace, and the neighbors are very familiar (colleagues or work in the same place).**

**1958-1976** *The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution*

The two phases of residential construction kept lowered standards, residential construction has been required to save, and a number of low-standard and economical housing have emerged. Due to the negative impact of the economy, the country re-established the residential policy in 1958, 1966, and 1973, reducing the size of each room to increase the number of rooms per household, and adding kitchen and bathroom to form a complete house unit. The average area is 34-36 square meters. The house is mainly 4-5 floors with a height of 2.8-3m. This period formed three standard planar forms depending on the area. 34m<sup>2</sup> plane and 36m<sup>2</sup> plane. some of the settlements keeps in use now.

**1979-2000**

After the reform and opening up, China's economy has grown rapidly, housing policy has been trended towards marketization, which has brought about the development of China's urban housing. Housing has become a new consumer hotspot and economic growth point.

**1979-1986** *During the beginning of reform and opening up, the amount of residential buildings increased significantly*

The growing material culture needs of people promoted the improvement of residential buildings. In order to solve the terrible living conditions as soon as possible, the government re-planned and constructed most of the low-standard houses. At the same time, new housing allocation standards were proposed, and different sizes of houses were allocated by the type of employees.

At this stage, the privacy of the houses began to be taken seriously, and each family had independent kitchen and bathroom. The aisle has expanded into a vestibule. Connect the spaces and act as a public spaces in the house.

This period formed a new standard floor plan, 811 type house. There are two basic planes, 2 units and 3 units, which can be changed into 1 unit and 4 units by small changes, 811 were commonly used because it met the housing allocation standards.

The one-family type received the welcome from youth group and eased the problem of youth housing tension.

**1987-1999** *Residential construction has been centered on people.*

In this period, the **welfare distribution system** was gradually abolished, and the housing start became a consumer product. At the same time, the income level of the residents increased, the daily necessities were varied, and the residential space was personalized.

At this stage, many residential forms emerged, and the residential design began to be refined. The vestibule was generally accepted and expanded into a living room. In the 1990s, the living room became the center of family life, and the large living room with small bedroom became a characteristics of 90s.

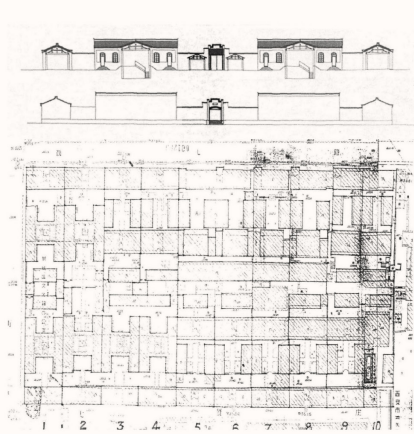
Two houses have become mainstream.

High-rise building appeared in late 90s.

**2000-** *Rapid civilization/Urbanization*

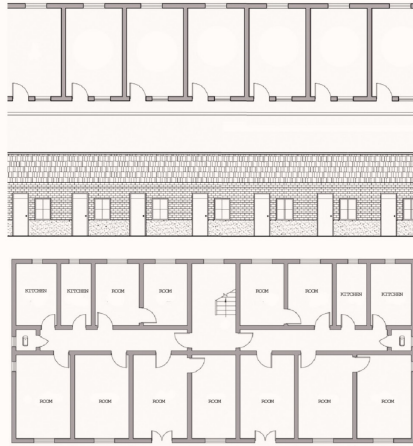
The residential market has become the largest market now. Various life issues have become the biggest problem in replacing the housing problem.

The emergence of new technologies, materials and equipment continues to advance the houses. High-rise residential buildings have become the main form of housing, and households have been miniaturized to meet various life details. The new residential form also spurs lifestyle changes like works at home. The relationship between people is getting weaker.



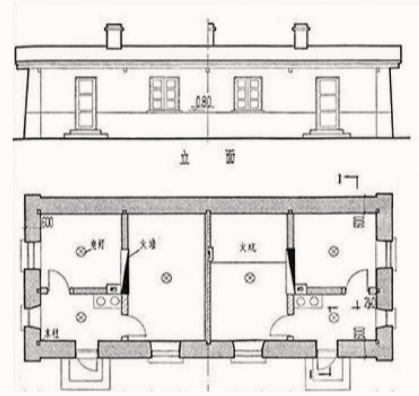
7 S A G E S

1 9 3 0



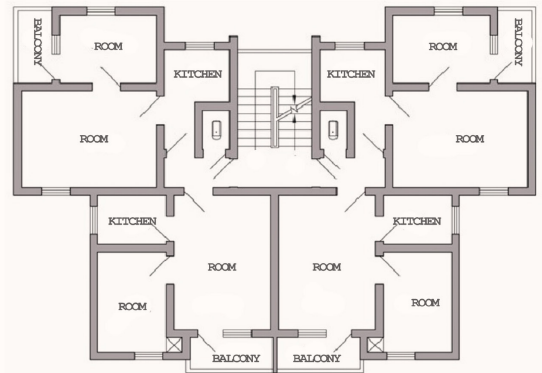
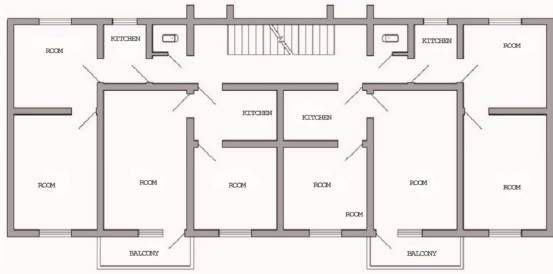
55-6 TYPE HOUSE STAFF HOUSE

1 9 5 5 FOR DANWEI



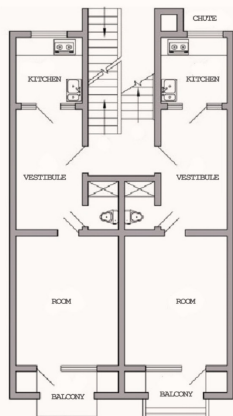
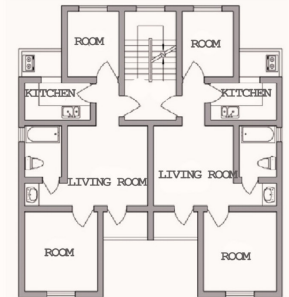
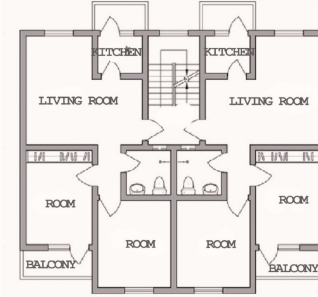
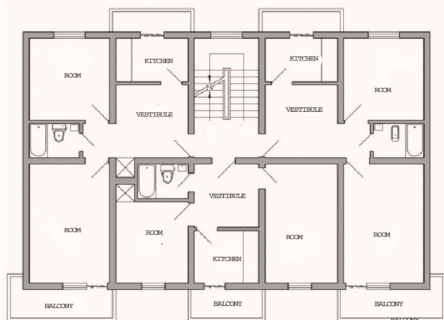
6502 TYPE HOUSE STAFF HOUSE

1 9 6 5 FOR DANWEI



GENERAL HOUSING TYPES DURING

1 9 5 8 - 1 9 7 6



811 TYPE HOUSE

1 9 8 1



HOUSE TYPE IN

1 9 9 0

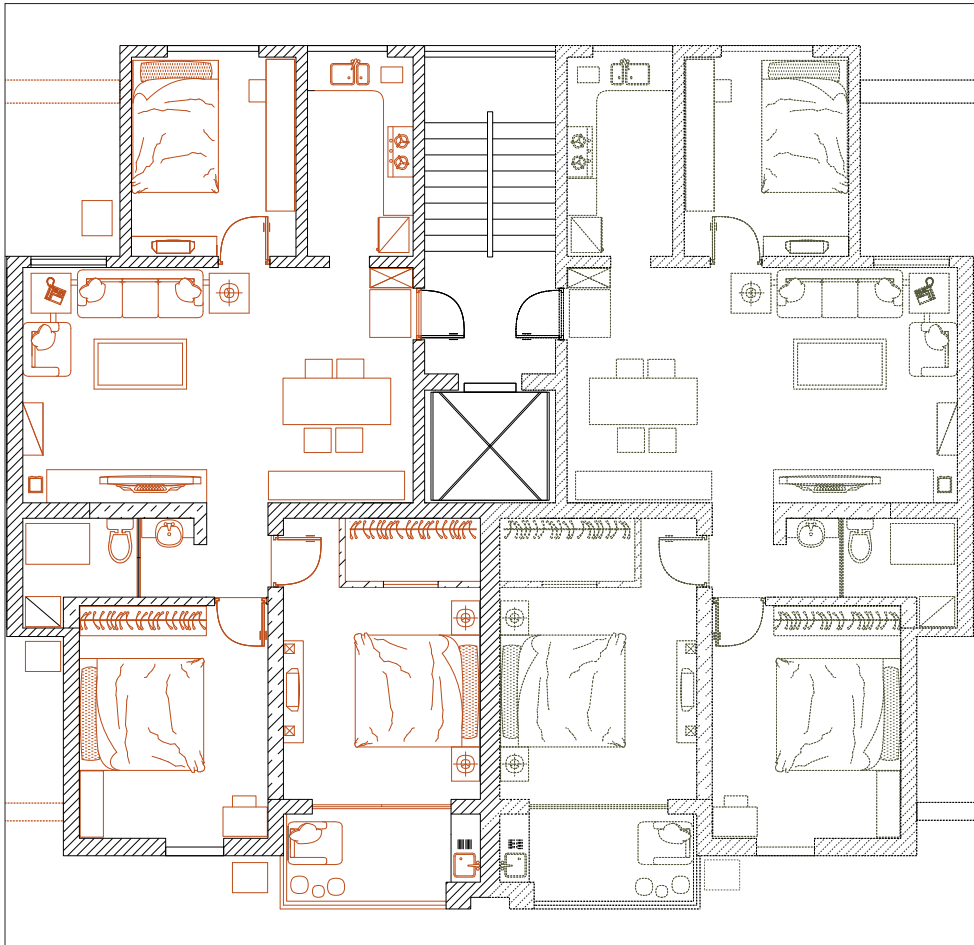


## **Evolution of housing units** *from danwei to superblock*

### **2000-** *Rapid civilization/Urbanization*

The residential market has become the largest market now. Various life issues have become the biggest problem in replacing the housing problem. The emergence of new technologies, materials and equipment continues to advance the houses. High-rise residential buildings have become the main form of housing, and households have been miniaturized to meet various life details.

The new residential form also spurs lifestyle changes like works at home. The relationship between people is getting weaker.



The building I live in, built in 2003



# Superblock Urbanization

**The superblock** is the form of residential area that adapts to this super standardised, functionalized form of residential unit and to the new logic of urban development.

Each superblock is designed and built **independently**, even in secret between the developer and their appointed firm based on the principles of economic optimization, such as the placement of buildings, the choice of materials and house types based purely on maximizing profitability, and the buildings are replicated towers with a standardized plan.



*“Its status and identity may be difficult to identify precisely, but this new era has rewritten forms of identity and status that were relatively difficult to explain in the past, using the single and universal criterion of **“price”**.”*

The **Superblock** also caters for the **desire to segregate oneself from other social classes** through ‘price’.

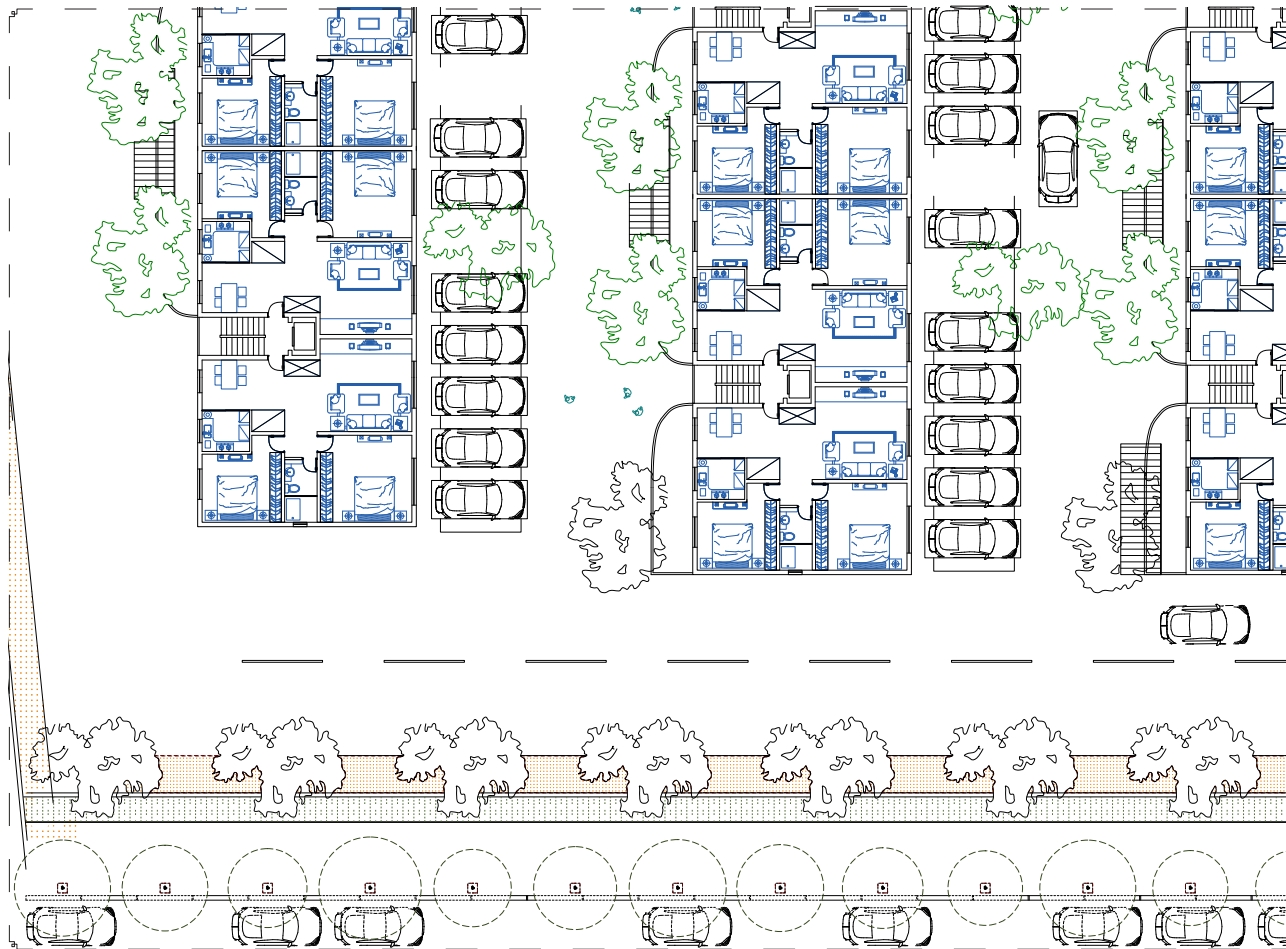




*Collecte from posters*

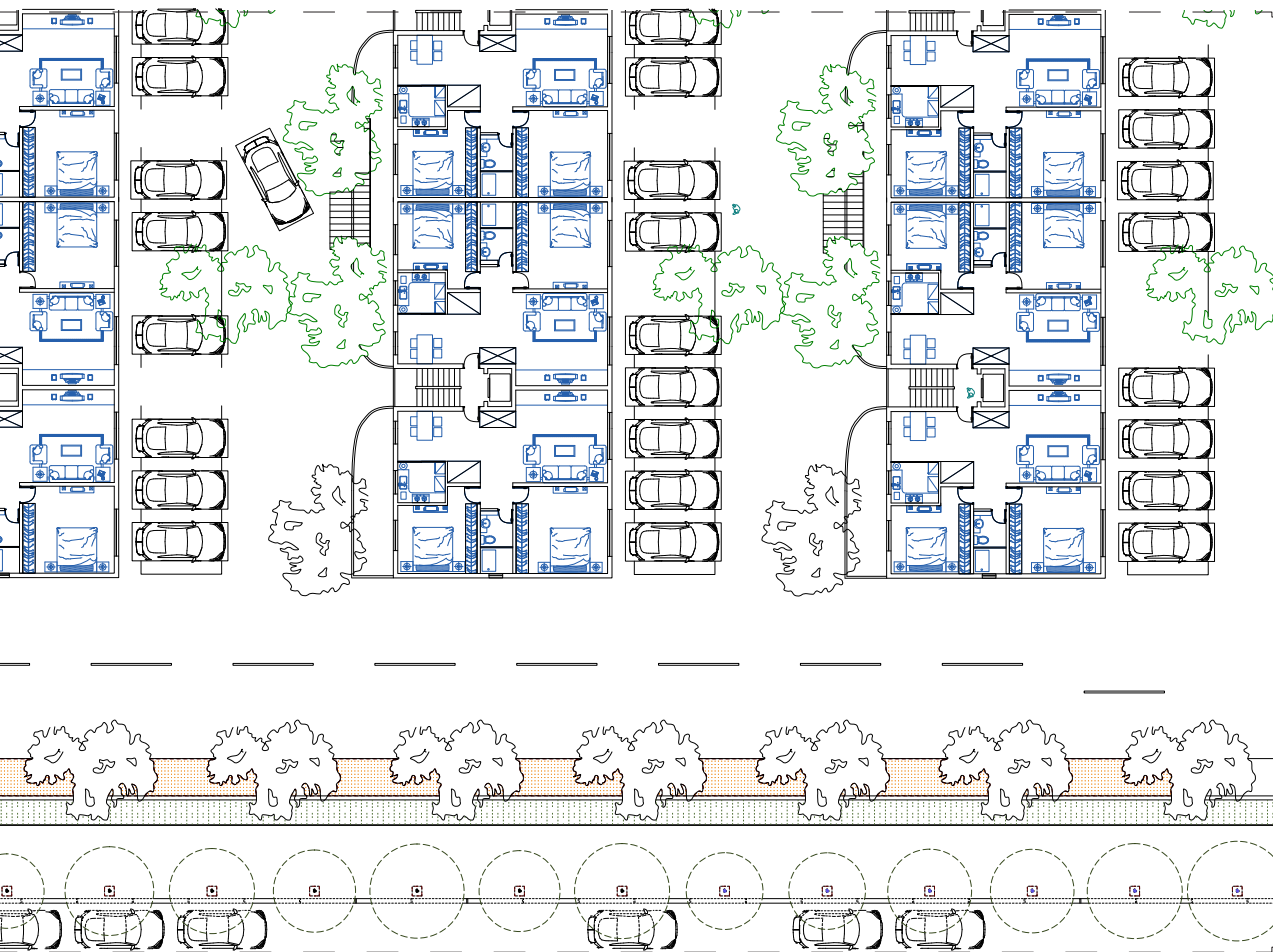


AS AN  
outcome  
*Formulaic Superblock*



*An Example*

The transformation from the Danwei to the Superblock was crucial in creating a new society, where the enclosed boundaries remain, but only one function was left within - residential. Connection and access to social facilities and places of work is now only possible via the motorway.

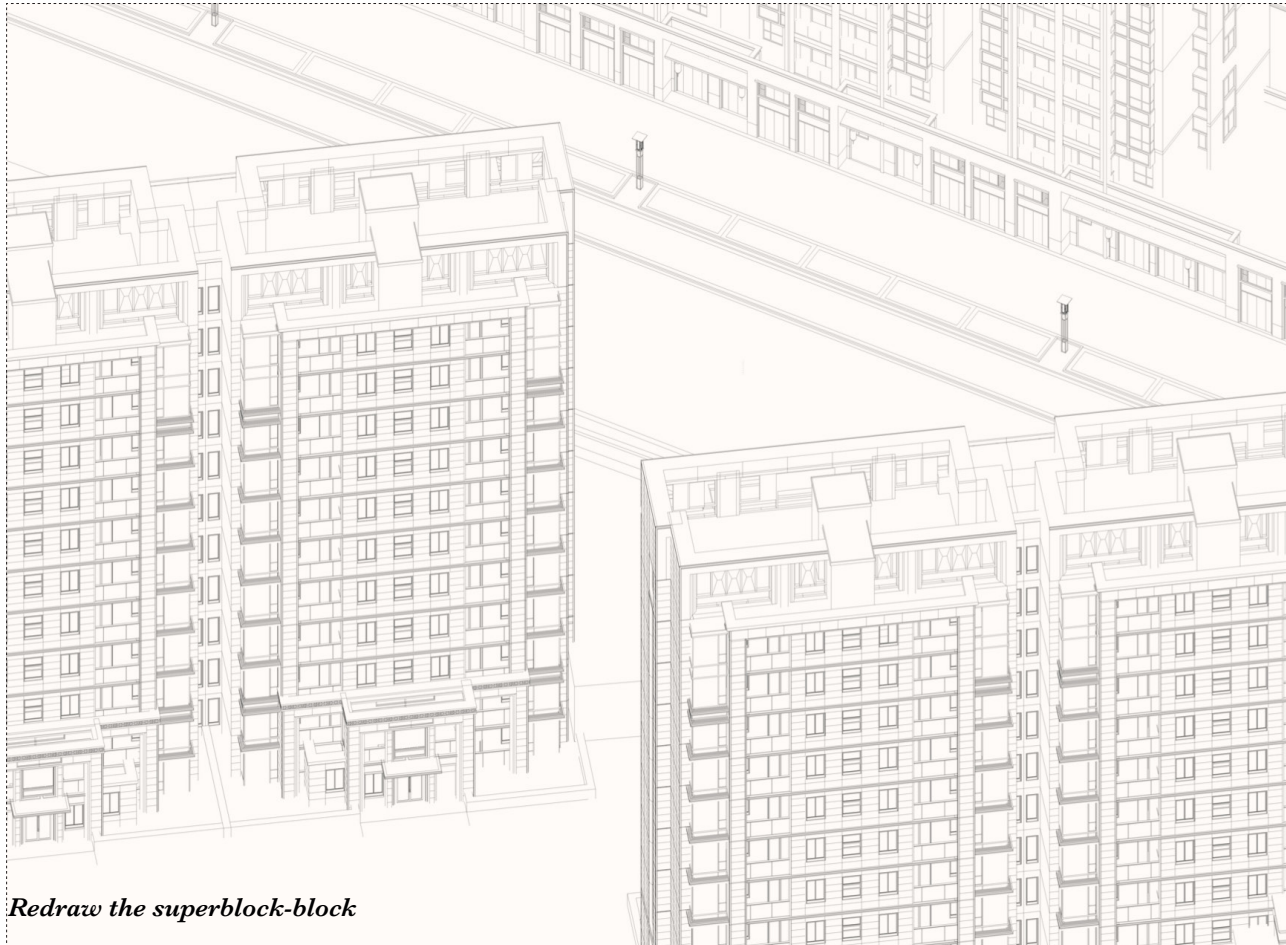


*A typical plan of superblock in 2000s (part)*



AS AN  
outcome  
*Segregated Superblock*

Living and working areas in modern city are often not connected. Hangzhou as an example of this - the district I lived in, 18 kilometres away from the city centre, but the work areas are always within the centre or the CBD, the commuting time can be long, like 1-2 hours. Based on the following research, (see article) a few bites of breakfast bought from shops nearby before going to work, after work is probably (especially) around. And Most of the activities take place around the work area rather than the home area.



Home is then **no longer a place to live, it is a place to sleep** - after the physical proximity has been lost, you want to go out for a meal with friends, 30 years ago most of you would choose a place next to your home, but now it is likely to open some software, such as an aggregated rating system, and after opening it you would find a place nearby. The city has become a **flat surface**, and we are actually doing a multiple choice and **moving home**. While in London, for example, the houses and the nearby are together, I go downstairs to the school, and the bars can become the common area.

There are several districts around the city that are mostly residential areas developed after the 1990s, such as the center of the city or the newly developed commercial zones, such as Binjiang, Xihu, Qianjiang new city (architectural survey). A very common situation is to go out at 7 o'clock, then 8-9 o'clock to the company, take (especially the Internet companies) 7-9 o'clock, most people will not go home to cook but just eat something other than near the house - because workplaces are normally in a center.



*Beijing Yuan, Hangzhou*

**THE NEW CITY**  
**THE SITE OF THE FILM**

As communities become disintegrated, local communities cannot be created, and the internet is speeding up this process, if you were familiar with it, but now, when friends want to get together for a meal, they would search for a cuisine and choose the top-ranked ones, and then they would go and eat together. The **pace is between points at a rapid pace instead of a deep understanding of one's 'local'.** For example, the station might be downstairs, and on the corner, there might be a bookshop, and the cafes and public facilities of the street.



AS AN

*outcome*

*Mobility*

Notes from observation : One might get a clue from these roads: the city is **planned**, architecture, **isolated** from each other, the modern city is a **dwelling machine based on rational analysis** - system without interfering with each other – **the key to efficiency**.

**observation - Traffic systems : the isolated system in the city :**

*aeroplanes, subways, motorways, overpasses, urban streets, dividers, pavements, crossings, zebra crossings, traffic rules...*

‘One of the first things one may notices when entering the city is that it is not a walkable place. Road overpasses...(in some part of city, they demolished original fabric to inhabit the car roads.) the city c The complete system of overpasses connects with the motorways outside the city - one may not know side of the overpass.’



*Still from research film*

Notes from observation : ‘The transport system **organises the whole city**, so for people, for *observation* depict the details of people’s clothing and gestures, **one does not experience the city with a chaos** as a succession of **planned streetscapes** and many flashback moments : crowds of people crossing the overpasses illuminated by the sun in the same yellow colour, The woman in the car next to you looking at a group of yellow helmeted delivery men crowding into the street, same shop signs, a tour bus full of people

Such system needs to **eliminate accidents** – *because if a crash happens, the overpasses, which allows people hours to break free.* **So Encounters, Spontaneous activities, are simultaneously eliminated from**

city, nature, art...are **no longer an indivisible and unclassifiable mixture** but **separate and** with various '**isolated systems**' overlapping and cooperating - different things happens in different

roads are made for cars -- straight and wide, there are more and more roads like motorways, highways, can then be extended horizontally, scaled by the ability of cars to move - it is not walkable. Now they are passing through a city if they don't look at the clusters of buildings that flash by on either



### ***Mobility of the city***

...the city is perceived through the car window glass, just as an impressionist painter does not carefully **ance encounter with strangers on the street**, or some **unexpected** decoration on a corner, but along the street, **blurs of people** that looks distorted by the speed of the car, the buildings on the side of the road look like she's scolding her kids but you can't hear anything because your car is so **well insulated**, a blur of people, red light... green light... red light ...green light...'

...to move quickly would immediately come to a (super) block - with a traffic jam and a 40-minute drive would take two hours from the space.



## Rural Urbanization *Superblock*

During the Chinese new year, I went back to my home town, and I saw the radical rural urbanization of 900 million people - The next step of urbanisation, according to national policy, will **not be reached** **villages**, the next step of economic and social development will focus on **rural urbanisation**. The **living conditions** in rural area- by demolish or reconstruct substandard houses in the villages and



‘The new

I saw these ‘**superblocks**’ standing on farmland alone, a resident told me :a ‘superblock’ is designed by a village brigade, so often a brigade is mixed with people from several villages, like we have here with village wholesale demolition and merging of several villages, means to share new communal amenities, and

*‘This step of urbanisation is not a suburban urbanisation, not a garden city, not a transformation of the countryside into a city. It is to imagine a self-sufficient model that can support a dynamic economy in countryside, provide cultural and intellectual equal and plural coexistence.’ - the countryside as a city.*

n. China's urbanisation rate has already reached 60% and is aiming to reach 70% by 2025, affecting  
 d by the continued spread of large cities, but ***through the development of the small towns and***  
 his action is attempting to reverse the migration of rural populace to city, architecturally by uplift the  
 offer houses for them in a superblock (shown in picture) –



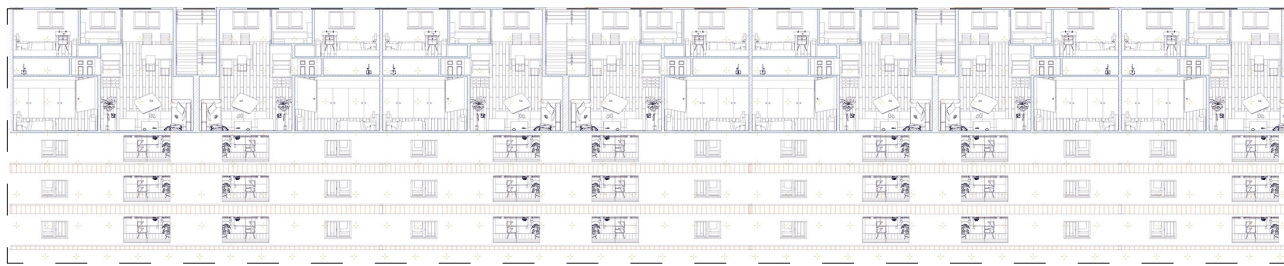
*Tongxi village*

w village'

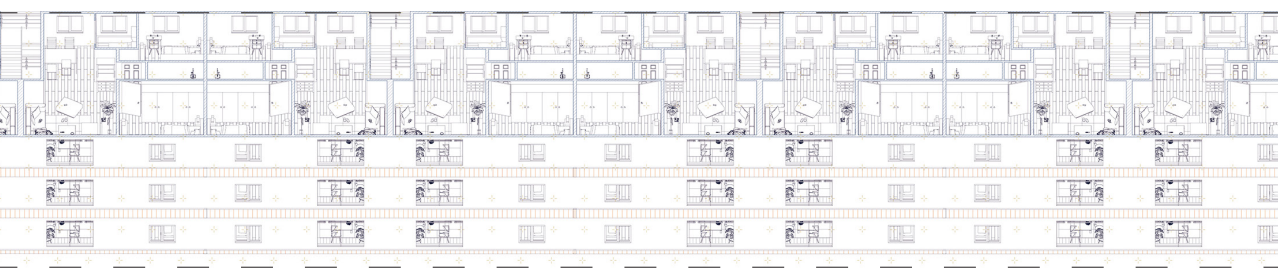
ed and built for inhabit one 'production brigade', and because most villages are not large enough for a  
 rs from the poverty alleviation village in mountains, the government pays for them to live here'. the  
**as an approximation of life in the city** (the **superblock**).

to an dense urbanized cores, With the upgrading of infrastructure and sanitation, The challenge of rural urbanization  
 l stimulation, and offer a respite to the inequality and division that plague the developmental city. The city as a space for





Thousands different ways of everyday life are **collectivised and homogenised**, the system, lives in the same houses with same functions, and **rejects any behaviour**



The superblock is helping to develop a deep **homogeneity** - everyone follows the same pattern that is not in keeping with the social climate of the country's efficient development







*Superblock block ,Beijing yuan*



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N T I N E

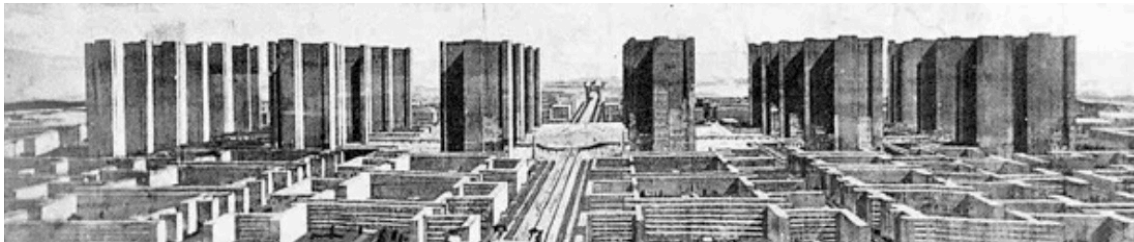


## Quarantine

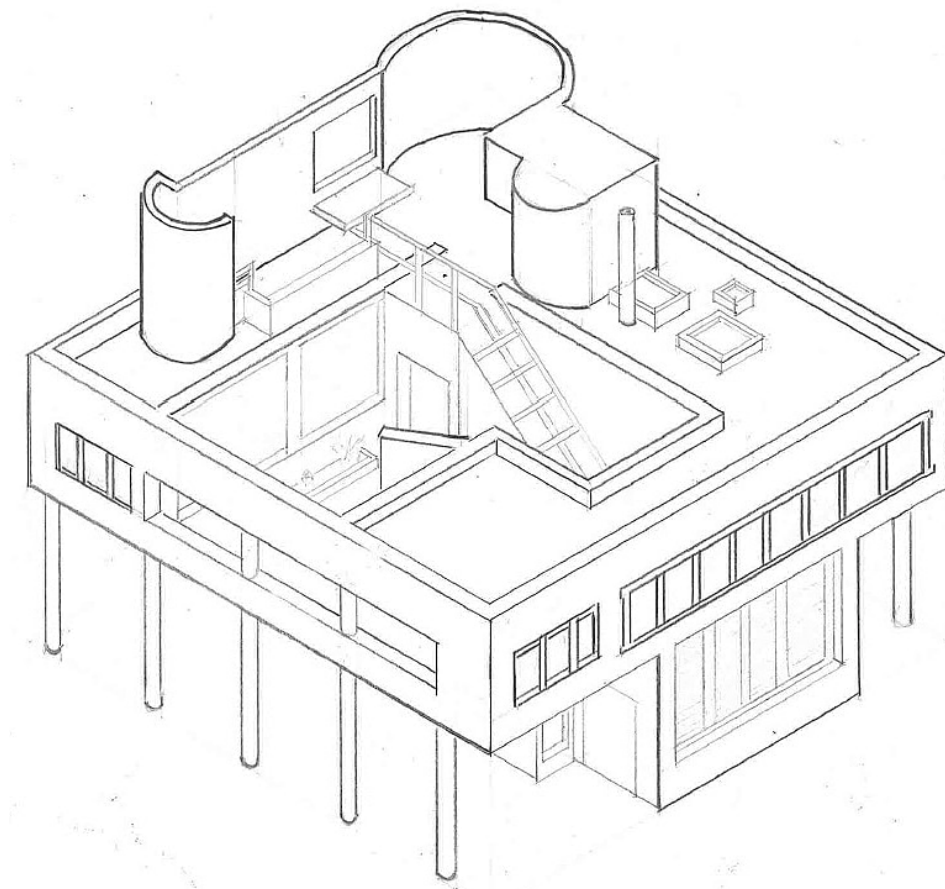
*Quarantine takes **different forms** in history*

### **Isolation** –( *Quarantine*)

Isolation has roots in the Latin word for “island“, refers to separating sick (or potential sick) individuals from society in order to contain the spread of the illness. It happens when the new disease is at the edge of the developed medical models. *Lazzaretto of Venice*, located at the entrance to the Venetian lagoon from the Adriatic and in 18th was used primarily to quarantine Turks, soldiers and crews of plague-infected ships. it was essential to **keep suspected people at the edge of the city away from clean people and wait for the diseases reveal itself** . The archipelago in Venice refined the **first archetypal quarantine** space for these *Airborne transmission diseases*. So it comes with a certain level of knowledge about transmission of a disease, **people need to understand how the disease is transmitted to stop the spread of it**, like *quarantine*, origins in the French for “forty” or “a forty-day period.”, (*refers to separating and restricting the movements of healthy individuals who may have been exposed to an illness*), mostly used for the prevention of **respiratory diseases**, like *tuberculosis*.



**Beatriz Colomina** discussed the relationship between the fear of infectious diseases and modern urban architecture in her book *:X-ray architecture*, she argues that the triumph of modern architecture is not a triumph of ‘reason’ at all, but a result of the fear of tuberculosis, and the driving force behind modern architecture is not concrete, but the x-ray machine. In the 19th century, 1 in 7 people died of tuberculosis - 1 in 3 in Paris. Tuberculosis has been around longer than civilisation, until 19th-20th it started to affect people, **The key is a change in the scale of population concentration**, Colomina argues, **Tuberculosis and modernist architecture are both essentially ‘urban’ thing**. Tuberculosis is described as a “**wet disease**”, as it arises from dirty, messy, dark and damp urban settlements. In ‘the radiant city’, Le Corbusier described the slums as the “*tuberculosis of the city*”, declaring that the slums should be all cleared. This manifesto shows in his work with the ground-floor elevations and roof gardens to connect the interior with the exterior. In this way, The sunlight and fresh air come in and blow away the invisible virus, in his word, a ‘**exact respiration**’.



## Exact Respiration

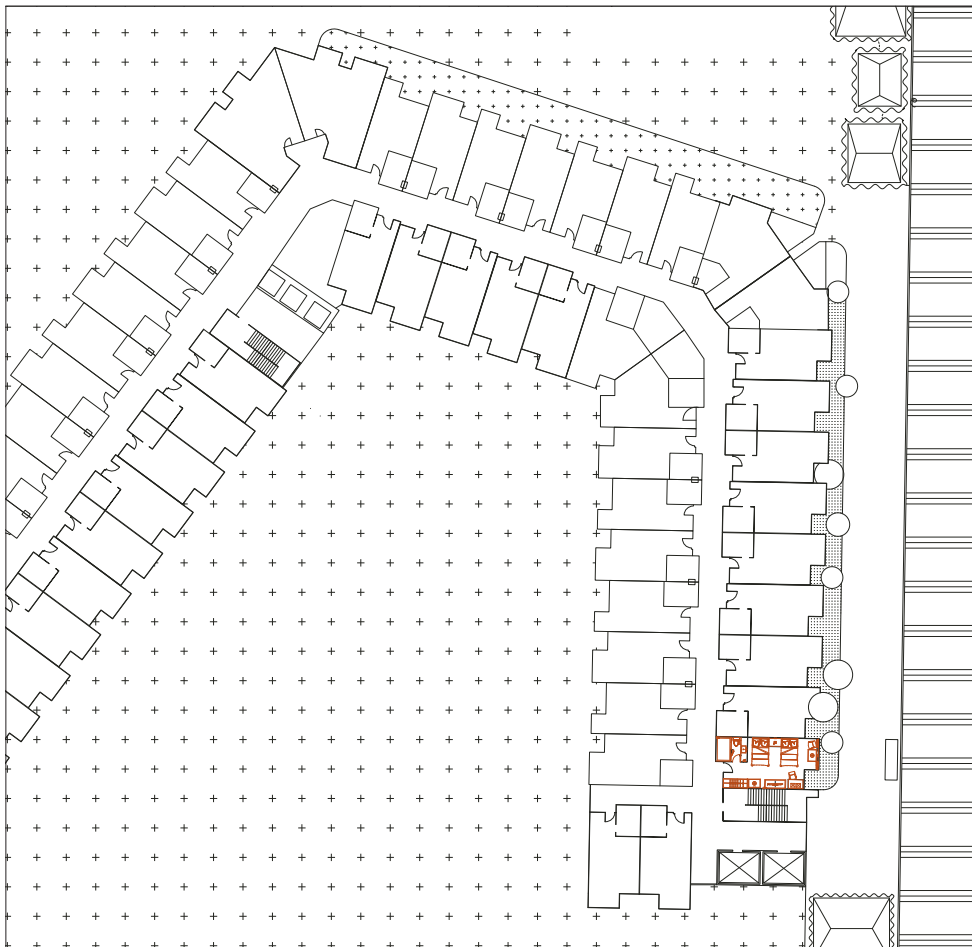
The **Quarantine** model for Tuberculosis:  
*A pure, clean geometry, free from the  
 complex, crowded urban environ-  
 ment.*

## Quarantine

*modernist architecture - the **white sterile box**.*

Isolation implies a boundary-mostly a solid, clear boundary, like the fence of quarantine hotel(the wall of superblock ) . With the development of science and medical models, scientists started to understand how different diseases transmit and developed different spatial isolation models to block different disease's spread through its mechanism of action. Like the '14 days' quarantine for covid-19. With these series of boundaries, quarantine is no longer necessarily needs to happen at the edge (or outside) of a city like an island but can **marbled through the city**, and the city can keep it's cleanness. For individuals, with the hazmat suit, masks...etc, people can even achieve a **technical isolation** without physically and spatially isolated.



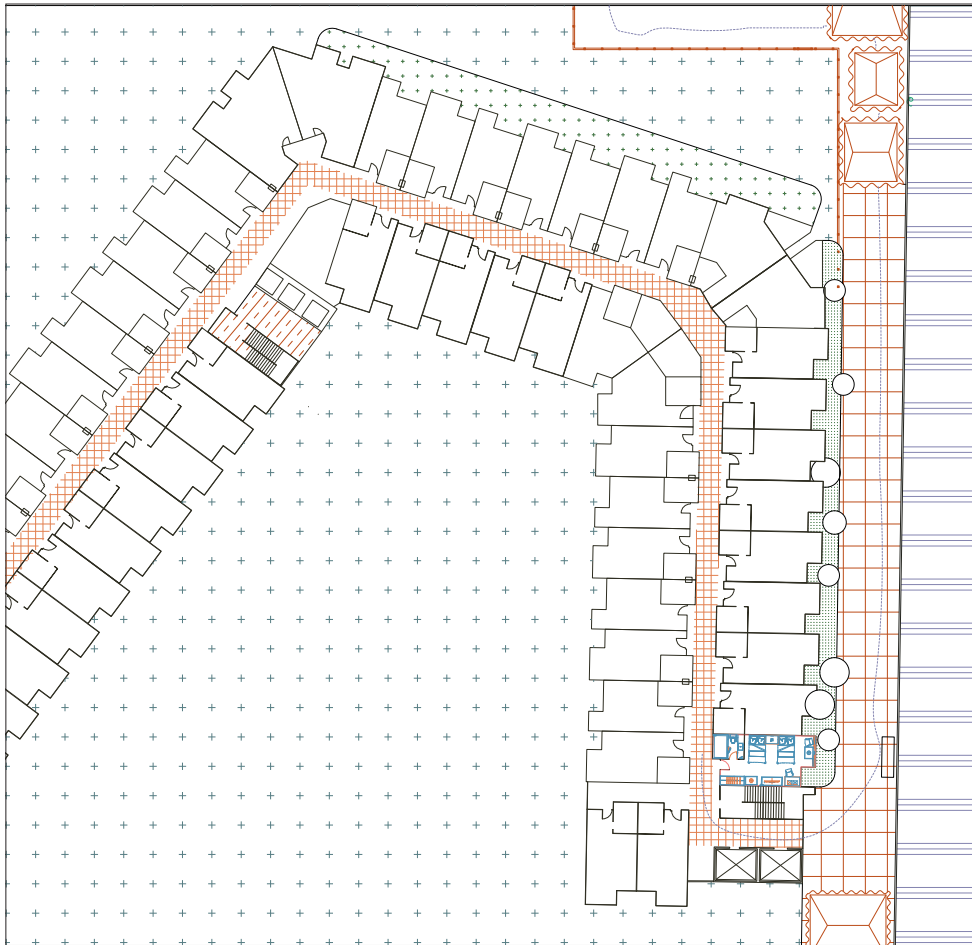


**Hotel**

## Quarantine

*modernist architecture - the **white sterile box**.*

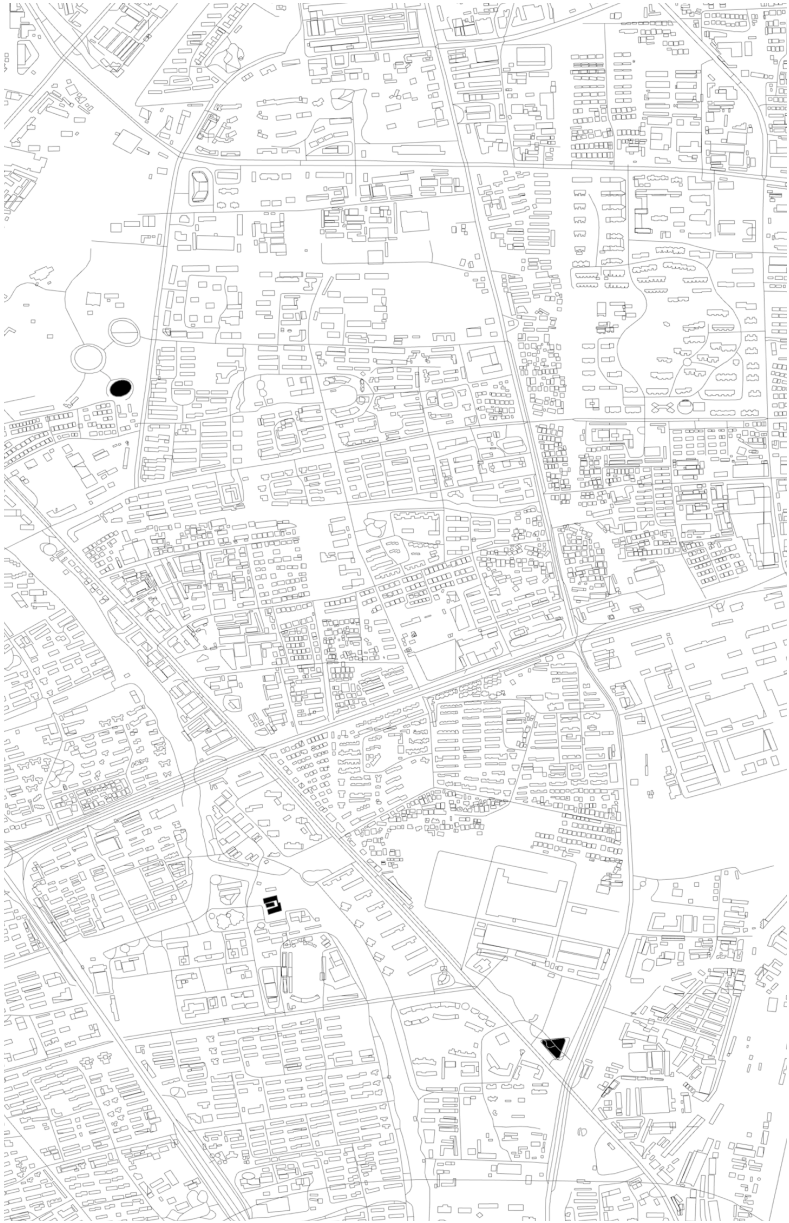
Like during the pandemic, a group of hotels were suddenly transformed into quarantine sites - through a collaboration between separated forces - the transport system, the waste management system, and hygiene system of the city; Within the hotel, the system already existed with equal rooms, logistical facilities, and more importantly, a control of access and management of occupants through a network of communication, that allowed for daily health examinations, food supply, and efficient waste disposal . Through these sets of visible infrastructures and invisible rules , the virus can be controlled within the city.



**Quarantine Hotel**

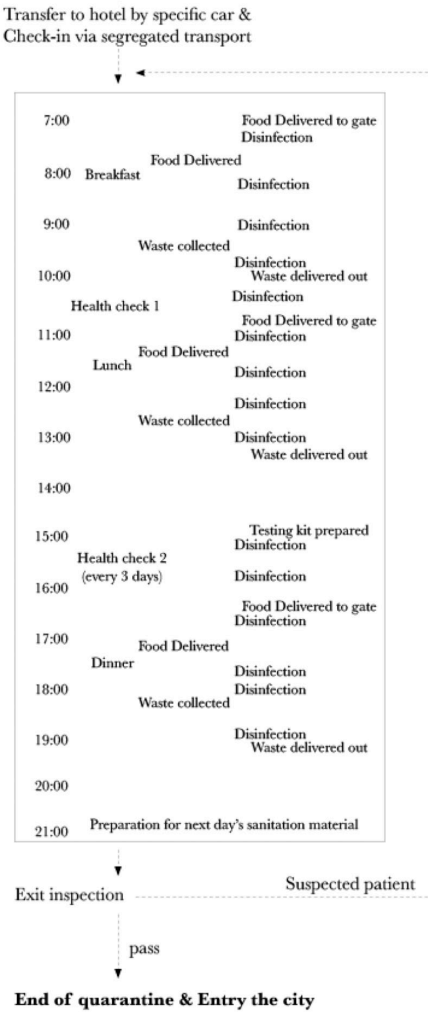


Quarantine



Quarantine hotels marbled through the city

Arrival



Rituals of quarantine

*Through the visible infranstructures and invisible rules, the quarantine hotel can marble through the city without any transmission occurs.*



Visible infranstructure

Q u a r a n t i n e

In China, superblocs have played an important role in managing epidemics as urban dwelling units, helping cities to contain them in a short time. A closer look reveals that they are in fact established patterns of quarantine units. As the living environment for most people, such spatial patterns profoundly influence the behavioural patterns of those who inhabit them, which in turn reinforce mutual isolation -- So the pandemic only accelerated a process that was already in place, Through the experience of the covid 19 crisis , the city suddenly appeared as **composed of an endless number of self-appointed quarantine units.**

Covid - 19 reveal one role of borders - to stop the spread of information between nature and the city, and between cities and people.





*'Super-blocked superblock'*

超 级

S U P E R B

*Along*

*the*

*passage*

Superblock

I

隔离

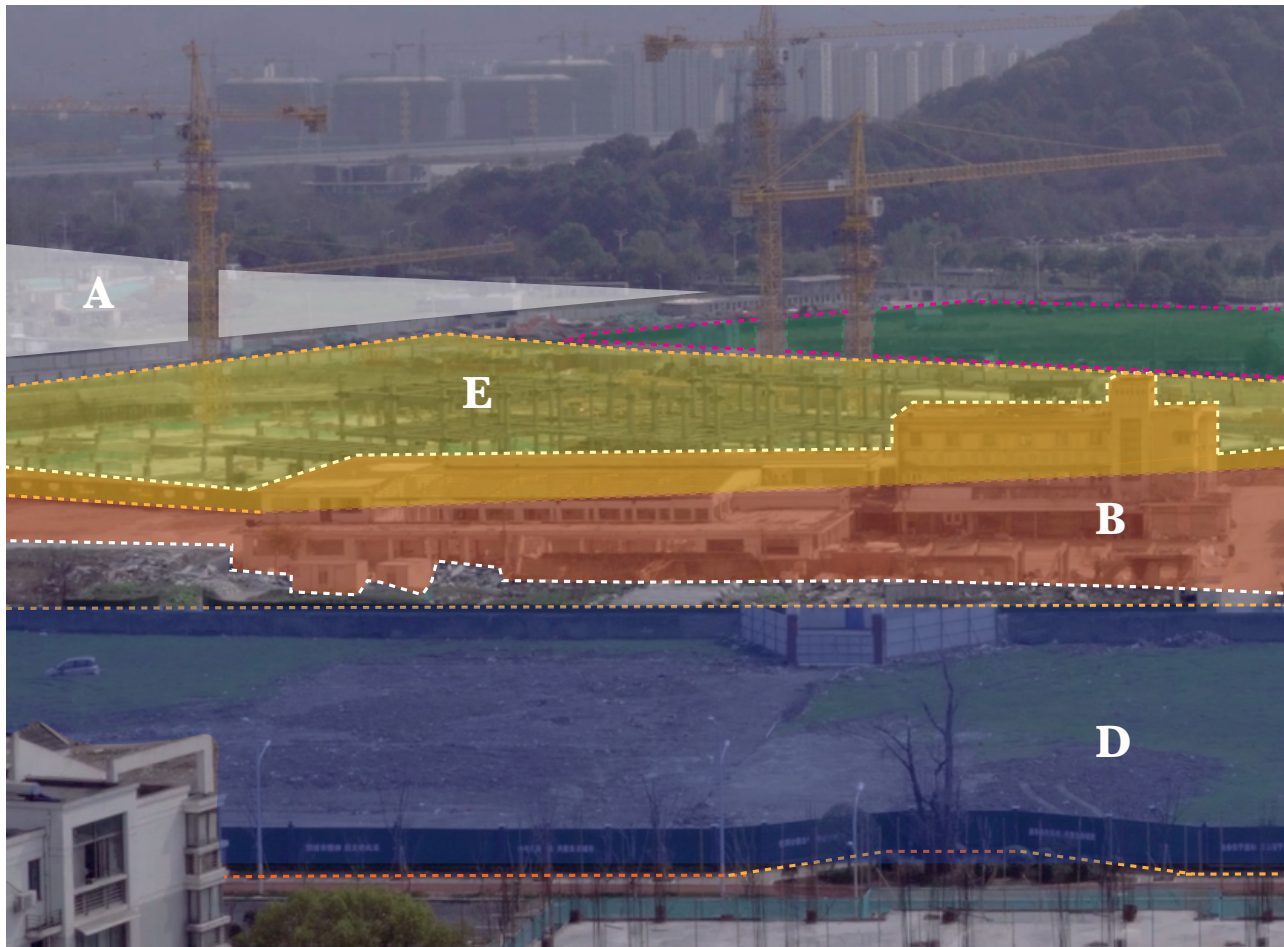
LOCKED

*provided**by**Quarantine*

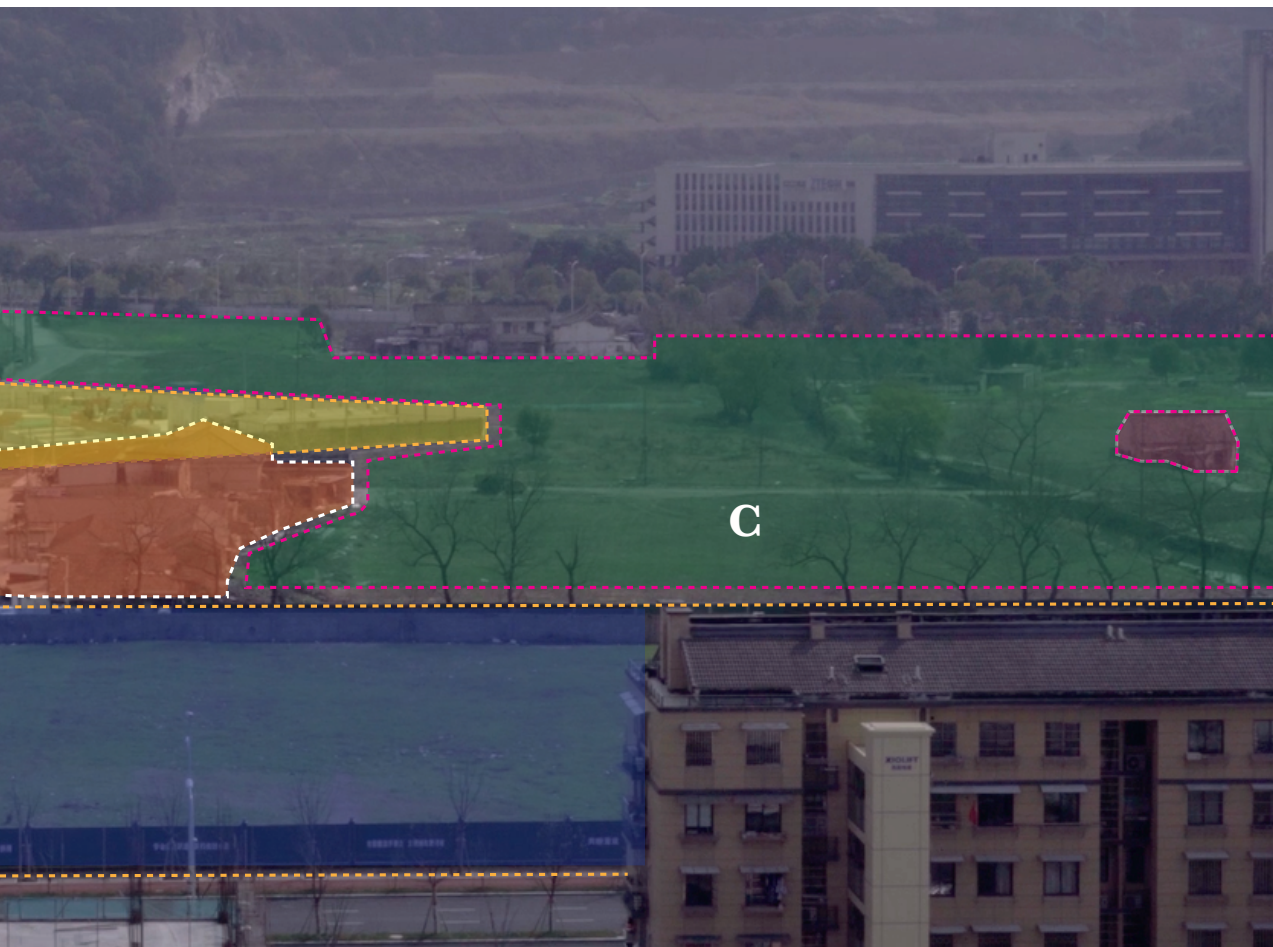


Boundary  
Walls  
*Land acquisition in city's phripery*

The **walls** that separate the quarantine hotel and the city also separate a **superblock** from the city.



These walls are always built beforehand on-site, to demarcate, protect, isolate and envelop the site. And these walls don't come down when the construction is finished, they will be decorated, hidden, and remain in the landscape. So, when they are built, they carve out a piece of land from the city, and only a limited number of people can enter it later.



This image captures an area undergoing urbanisation and contains several processes/ steps in the transformation of a plot of land from a relatively primitive state to an urban residential area

Phase A : Land acquisition

Phase B : demolition, resettlement, compensation.

Phase C : Municipal construction, such as the laying of water, network and electricity

Phase D : Sale of land in return for further site construction

Phase E : Developer to acquire land for construction

**Boundary**  
*observing*

*What forms the boundaries of our superblock?*

However, there are **more boundaries** in the block than just this wall. While  
What really constitutes the boundaries of our lives?

The Survey began by mapping the specific boundaries that exist to understand what exactly constitutes the boundaries of our lives (superblocks), and in the process I realised that boundaries do not only exist in the walls set by architects, but that there are many boundaries - unforeseen, invisible, but practiced in everyday life. So in this survey I am also trying to find out what can be used as a **crack** that allows us to re-engage with this boundary/.

As the super block was designed and built around 2000 with no electronic data left, so the information of the space and boundary can only be measured by more traditional methods - by walking and measuring on the site.

The satellite systems, digital photography, laser range finders and so on have made this process much easier. But it is true that the results are not very accurate given the inadequacy of the tools and the constraints of the site.

During the mapping process, I met an engineer who was involved in the construction of the superblock and live here afterwards, with his help we completed TS project - understand the subsurface structure (boundary) of the boundary.

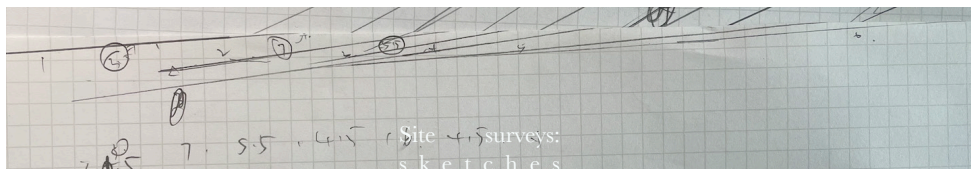
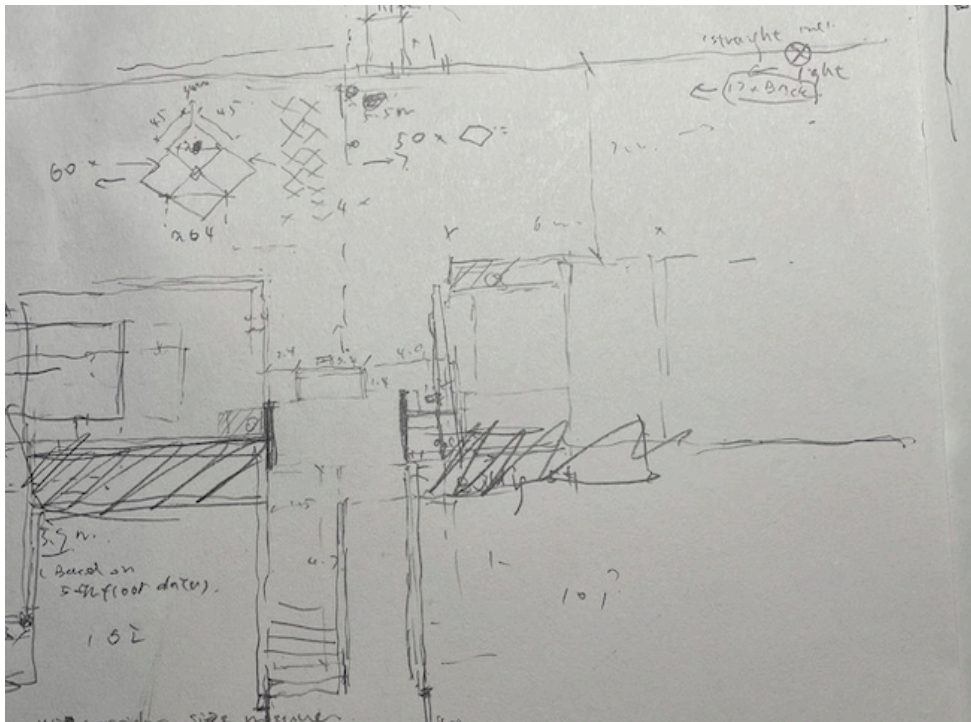
**Tools & Methods**

Satellite	/ GIS data
rulers	/ measure
phone	/ record
Computer	/ analysis
Camera	/ Filming



*“A great building must begin with the immeasurable, must go through measurable means when it is being designed, and in the end must be unmeasured.”*

Louis Kahn

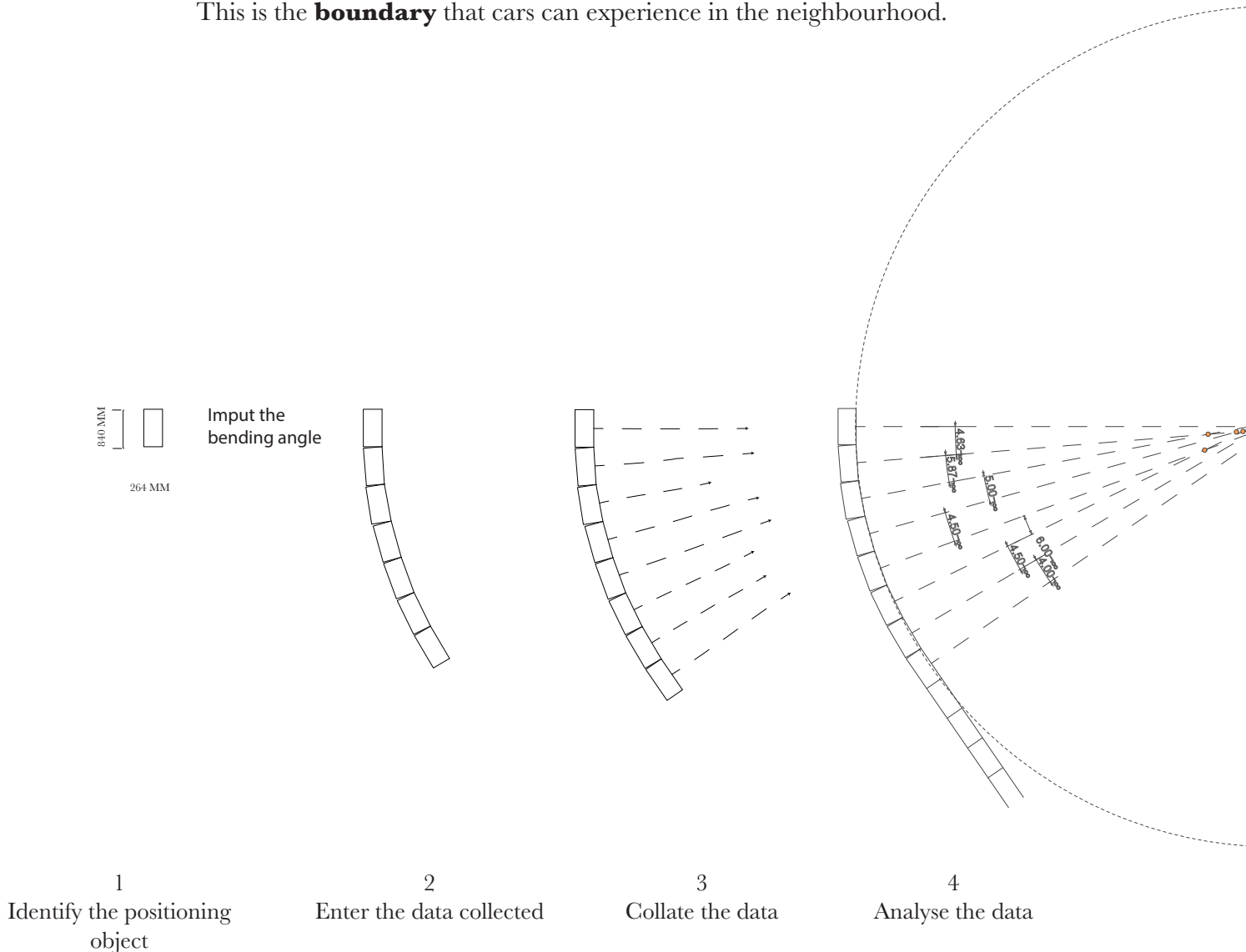


**Boundary**  
*observing*  
*How to do a architecture Survey*

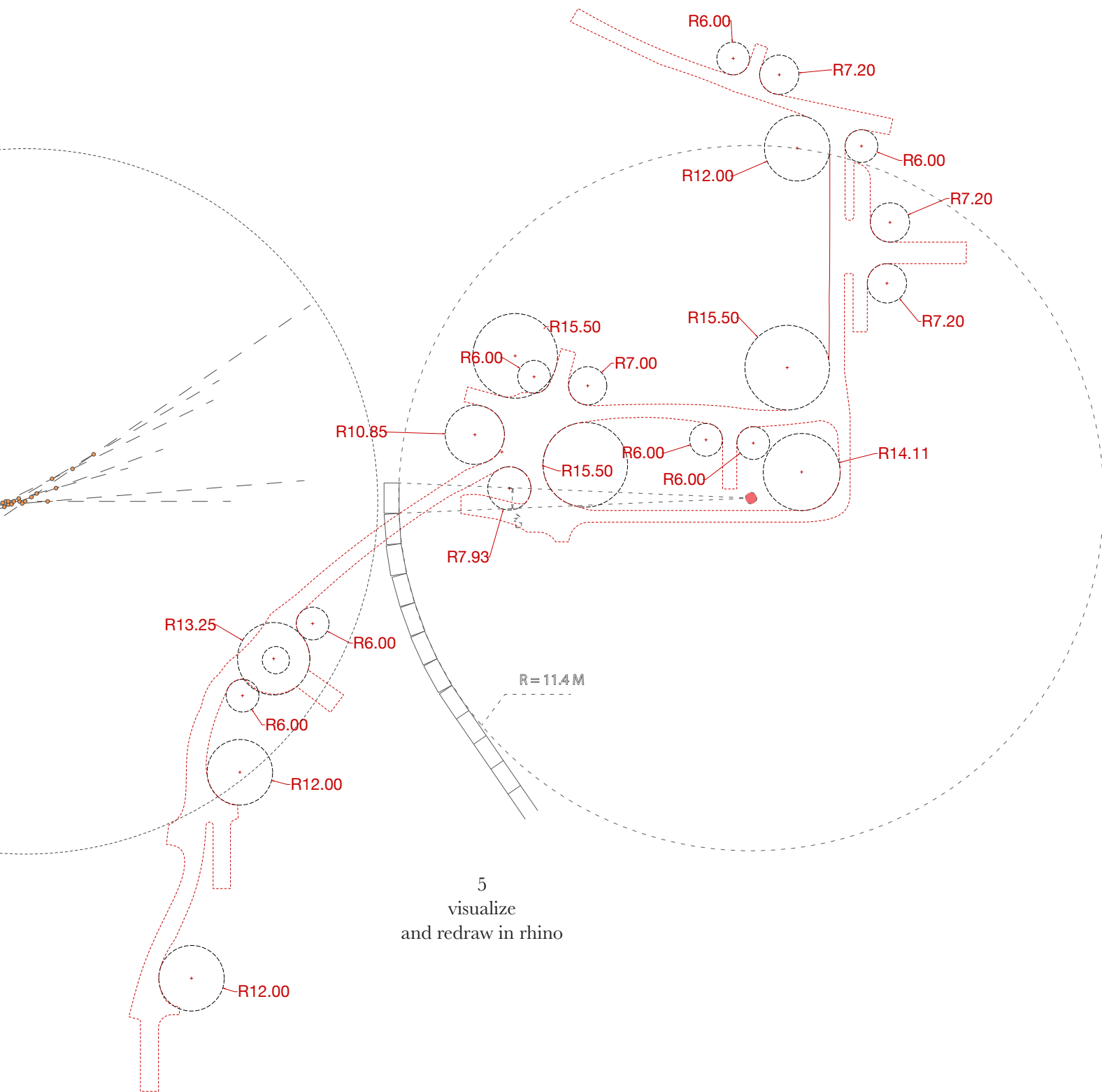
During the measurements, I found that the roads in the plot consist of two sets of curves with a radius greater than 12 and a radius greater than 6 - the ones where vehicles move through the district. The curves with a radius of mostly 6M are used as an adjunct to the main road, mostly in the turns leading to the underground garage.

(I need to admit that I have adjusted the gentle curves in the post-processing, as the size of the site makes it difficult to measure the straight lines and gentle curves between the different circular curves with any accuracy.

This is the **boundary** that cars can experience in the neighbourhood.



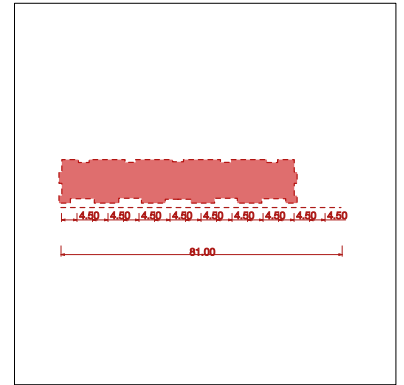
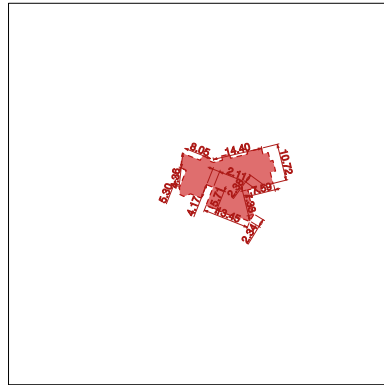
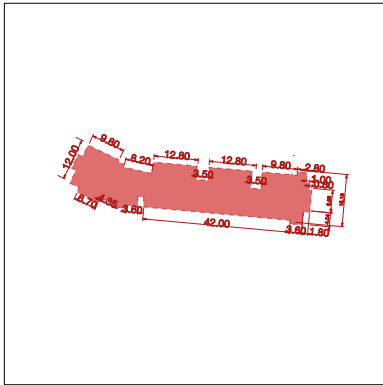
A major difficulty in mapping is that there are many curves. After studying this, I found that in fact the roads in the Superblock are just like the roads in the city - **they are consist of three basic line elements**: straight lines, circular curves and easement curves, so **they are designed and built for easily understood and constructed, rather than naturally occurring boundaries** - but this creates the possibility for mapping - the problem of measuring the curve becomes to define and measure the circular and straight lines.



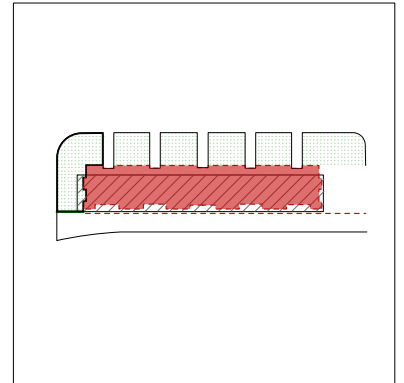
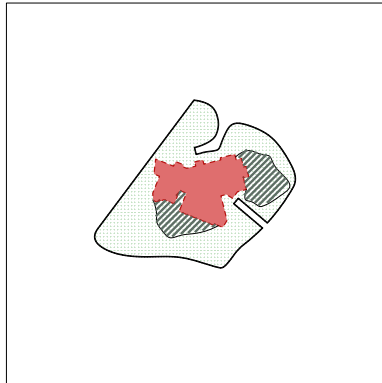
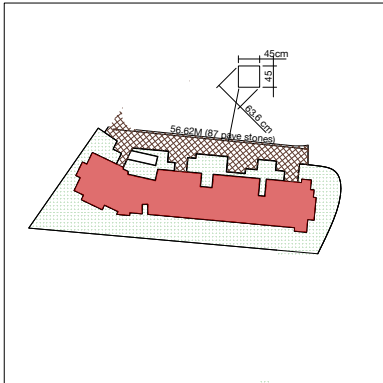


**Boundary**  
*observing*  
*How to do a architecture Survey*

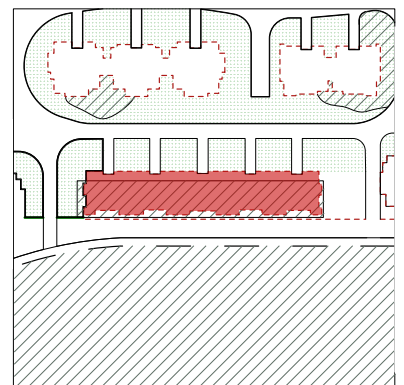
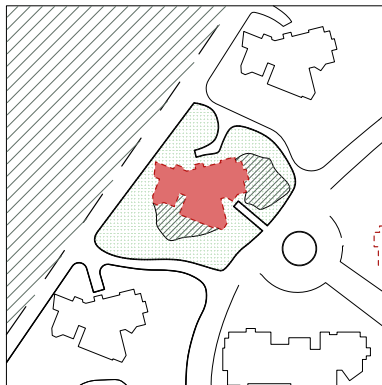
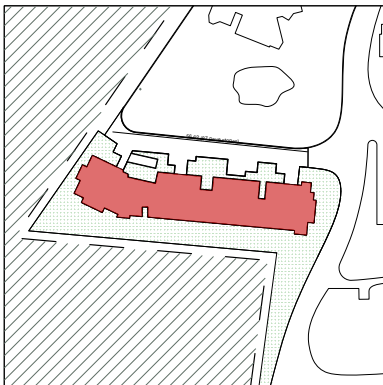
1



2



3



### Step 1 Measuring the building boundary

- As the building entrances are gated, only the outer dimensions can be measured. And because of the surrounding greenery, many locations are inaccessible and cannot be measured - Some of the unmeasurable boundaries can be analysed to know the data. But there is some that remains unknown.

### Unmeasurable Area

### Step 2 Extended measure

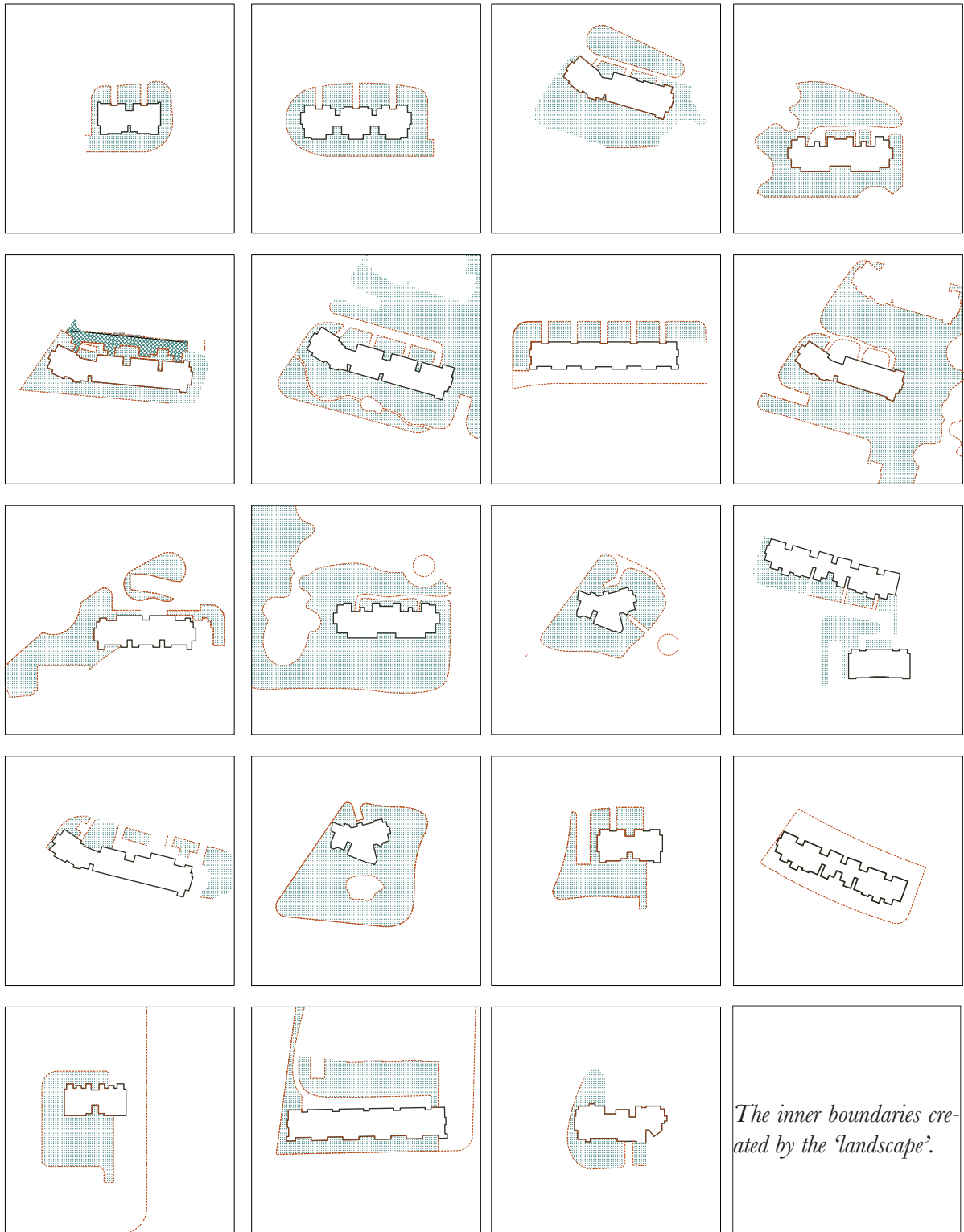
Using the building as a definitive point to extend the mapping of its green boundary.

### Step 3 Position

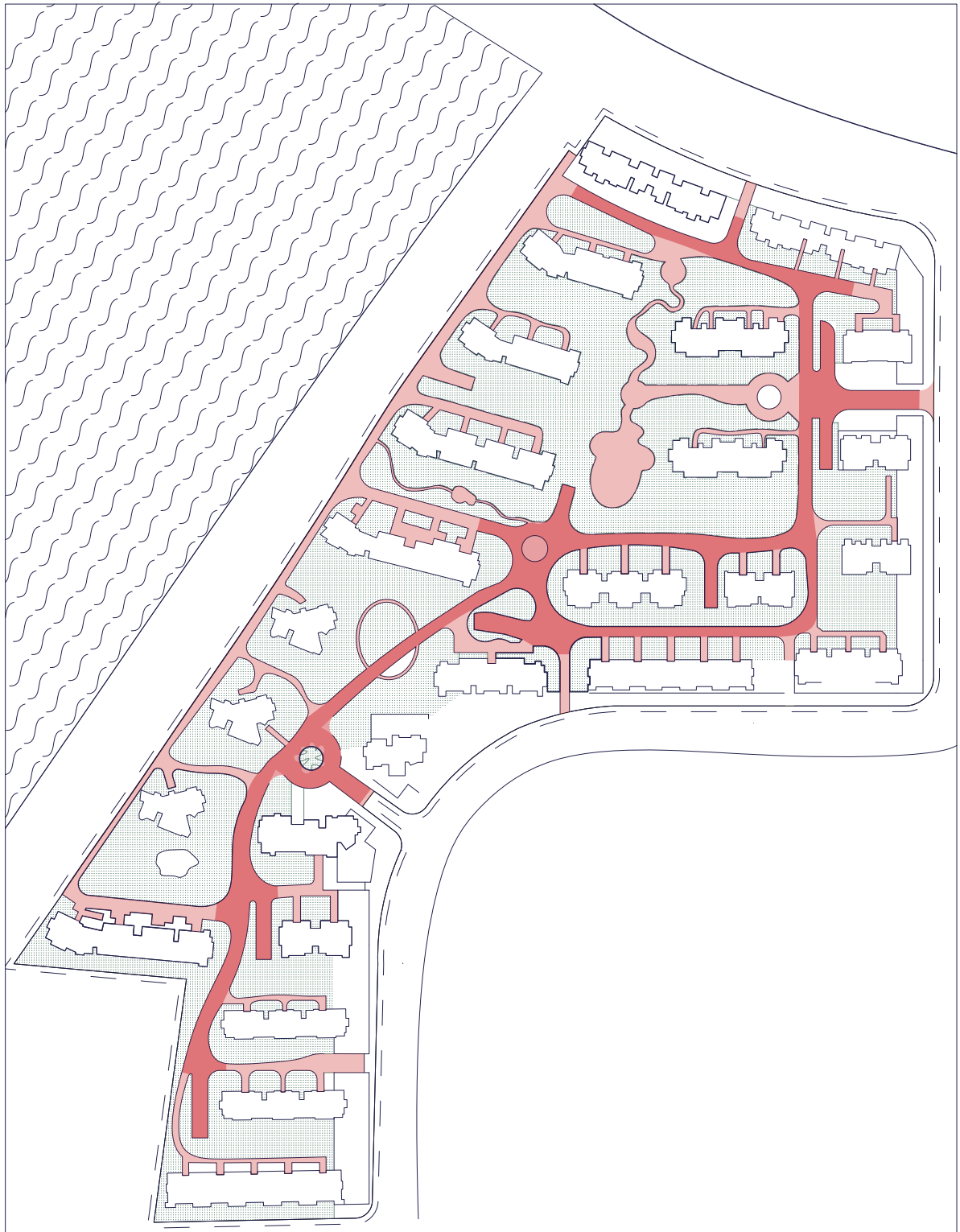
Mutual positioning in the software, also with the help of the GIS system, Google Earth.



Boundary  
observing  
*The Third space*







Accessible by

		Car
		People

S u p e r b l o c k

**Boundary**  
*observing*  
*The Third space*



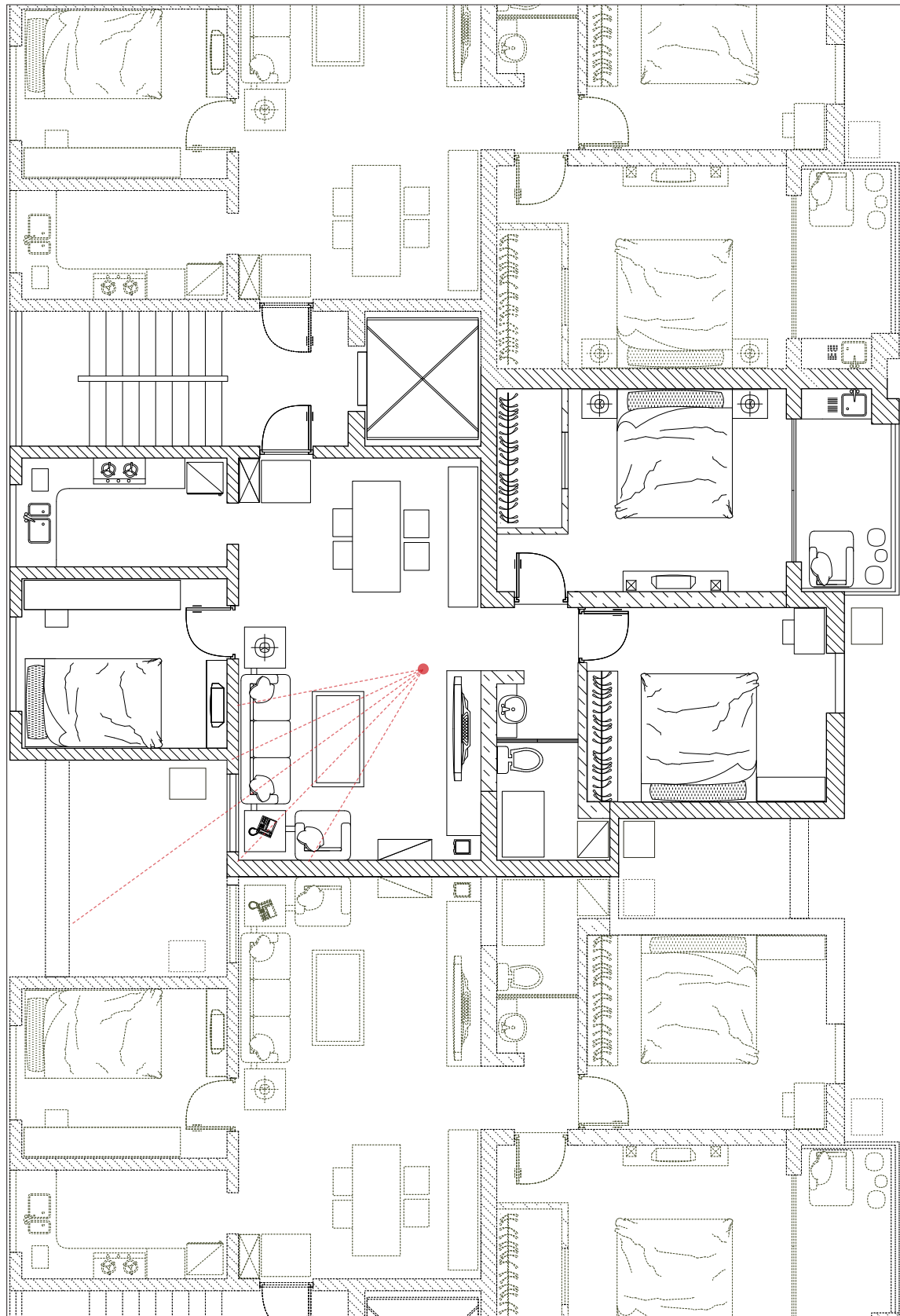
There is very little communication within the superblock, with each residential block having a separate entrance. To improve communication, small courtyards have been added to the doors of the residential blocks - It has resulted in each residential building being its own entity. These courtyards are a result of a mapping practice. They are the boundaries of these smaller superblocks. During the mapping process, they are identified as shared spaces in the site are all collectively owned, what I call the Third Space, **There is a gap**



separate flow and rarely crossing each other. Coupled with the fact that face recognition has now also  
 ing a mini-community. The greenery, as buffer space within the plot, becomes the new boundary in  
 even act as fences - in many places the space is inaccessible due to the greenery. Although the public  
**great amount of overlap between the third space and unmeasurable space.**



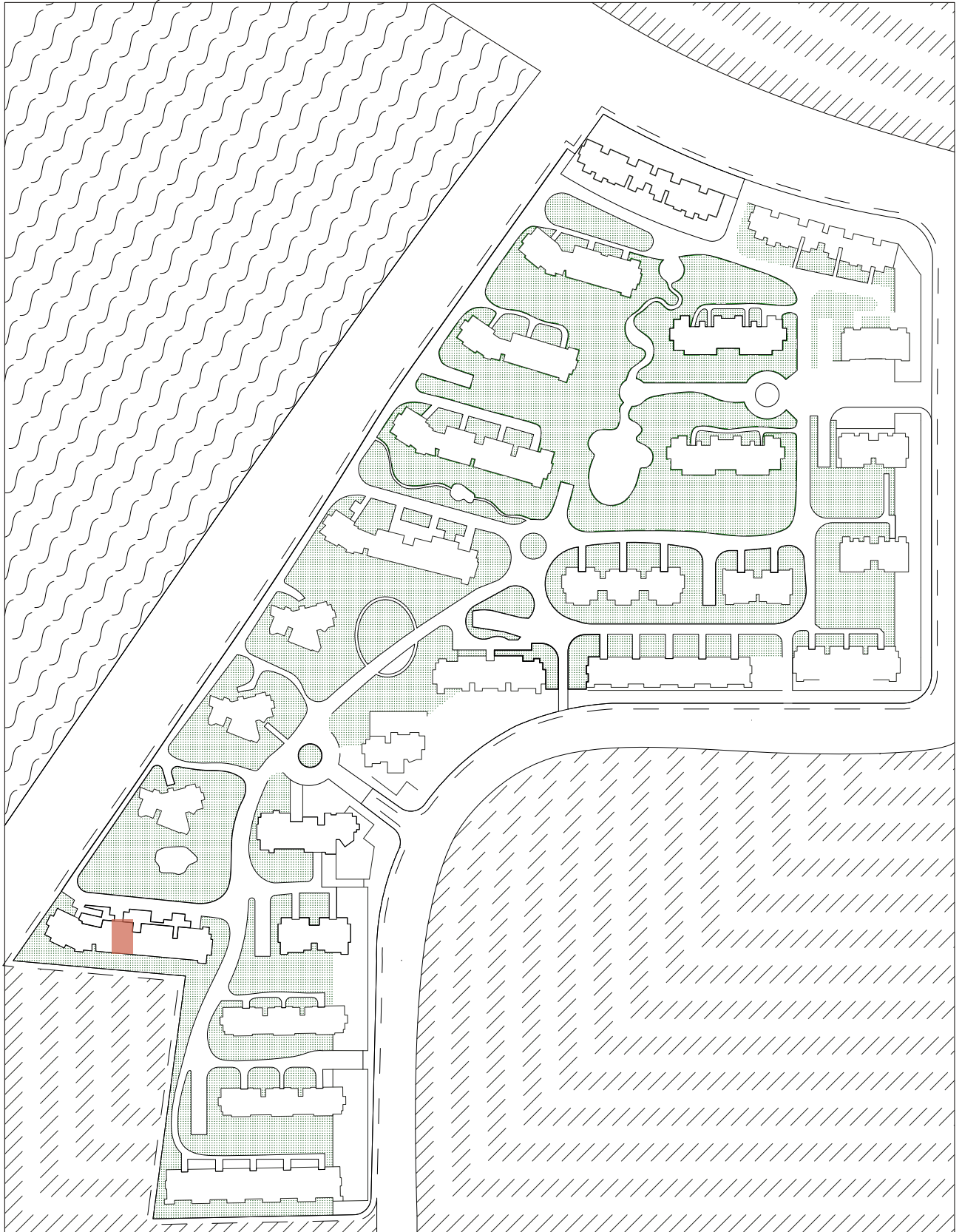
Boundary  
observing  
Individual unit



● Camera position

----- Sightlines

Plan of Unit 501 and its *imagined* neighbour's plans



The city is appeared as composed of an endless number of self-appointed quarantine units.



*Still from research film*

*The camera position and plan shown above.*

Instead of being a buffer space between the individual and the collective, the Third space is reduced to a narrow strip of space, five thousand square meters.





*Unit 501 Interior*

ed to only a landscape to be looked at, kept and planned. The superblock is creating a collection of all confinements.



*Still from research film*

*Neighbours are always doing the same thing at the same  
time, but they don't know, and i an the same.*



*Every inhabitants stay in their living room in 8 :00 PM*

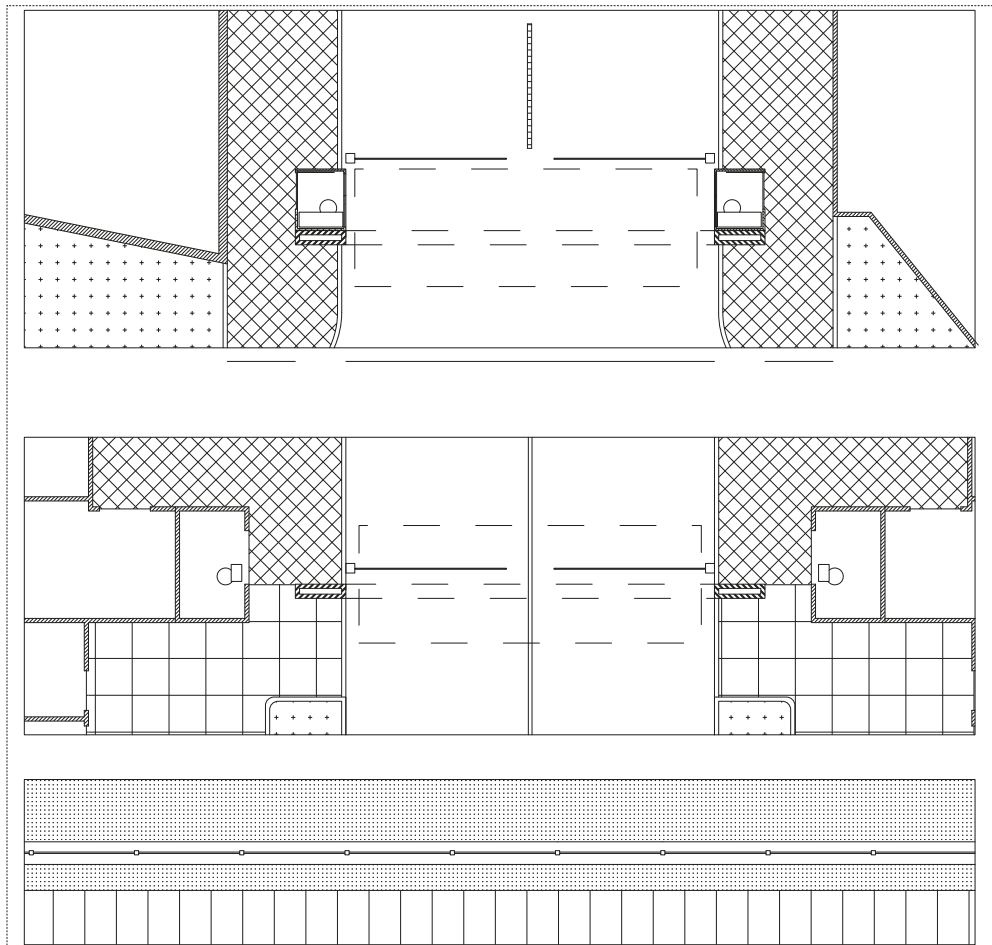


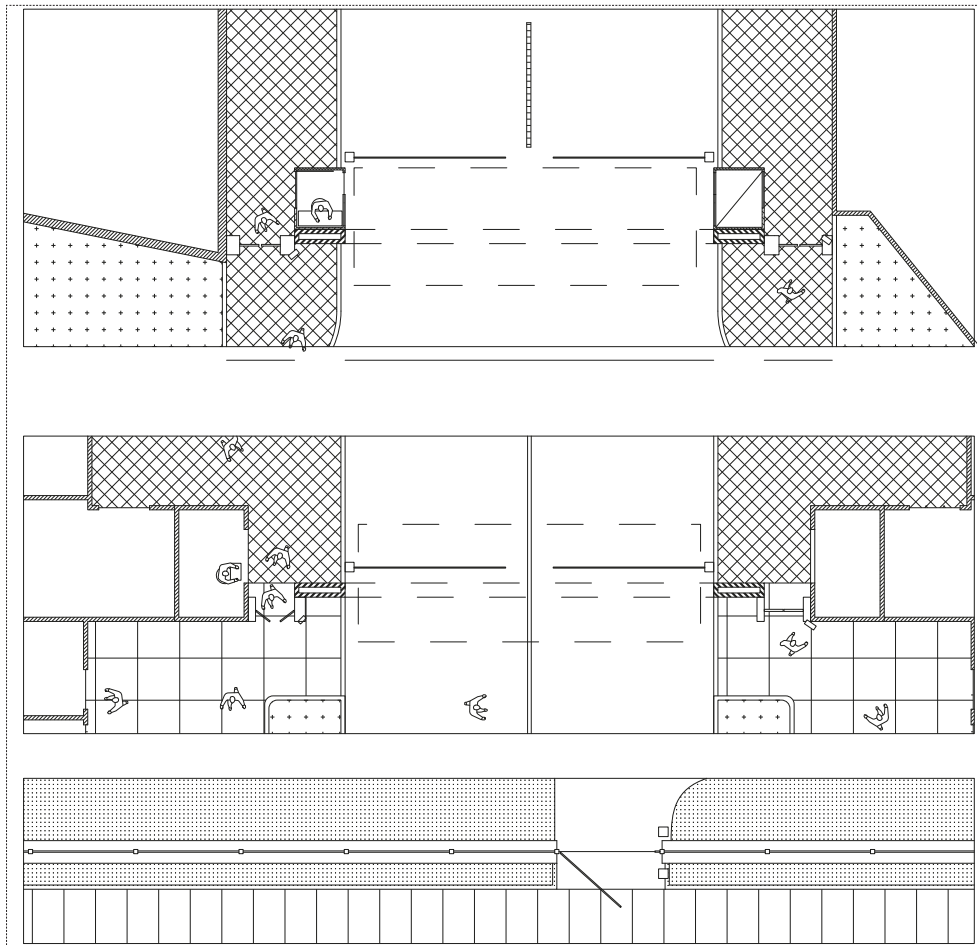
**Boundary**  
*study*

*Boundary in **Quarantine***

*Controlled movement of people*

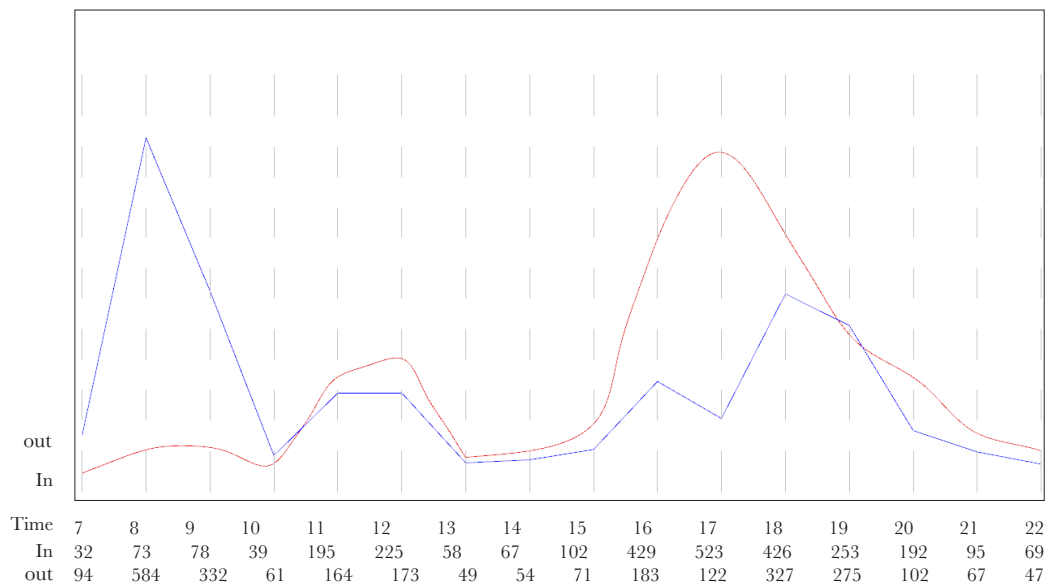
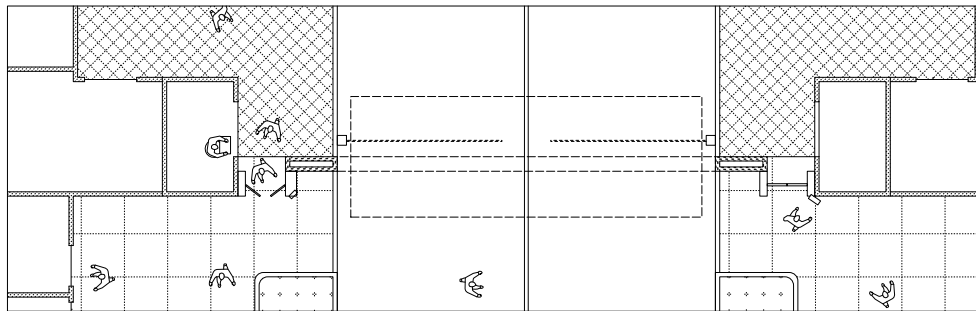
The boundaries are not only what architects normally imagine





**Boundary**  
*study*  
*Boundary in **Quarantine***  
*Add a cctv to the superbblock'*

**boundaries may also be a projection of a larger rule.**



**Note :**

*only people entering and exiting on foot were counted, people inside cars were not recorded.*

As the result shows, the district has a major outflow of people between 7-10am and an inflow of people between 4pm - 6pm. About half of the people in and out during this period are couriers.

Boundaries are not only spatial, but also temporal, and this is a larger level of control. The peaks and valleys of flow in a small area are just a projection of a larger control of flow.





There are **two** main entrances and exits in the neighbourhood, and I tested the pedestrian flow at one of them, **Entrance A**, for a day. The method I choosed to do with this is to cassy the camera with me at the entrance/exit, record and then calculate the number of people presence in the video.

**Boundary**  
*study*  
*Elimination of Informal*

***There are no dangerous criminals in this superbblock,  
only dangerous homeowners. - security***

Like fences, security guards (as representatives of the management team) are **no an option**, they are part of the culture of urban living in China. They are not there to prevent potential crime - the violent crime rate in Chinese cities is actually very low. In 2016, for example, China's homicide rate was 0.62 per 100,000 people, one of the lowest in the world. This report also mentions that the rate of major violent crime in China, **decreased** by 43% from 2012 to 2016. But the number of security guards serving in residential communities has **increased rapidly** over the same period. In 2014 there were over 4,200 security service companies with 4.5 million guards, and by 2019 there were 9,500 security service companies with 5.15 million guards. This is an official figure, but the actual number must be more than that, because many security guards are not registered on the register, the number of security guards now greatly exceeds the number of people in the public security system.

The property companies in the district outsource their security services to security companies. They sent 30 men, mostly migrant workers. They are day and night shifts, and required to work 12 hours a day, seven days a week, without any personal leave, sick leave or holidays, if you take the day off, you are deducted from that day's salary. At 7pm there is a handover between the day and night shifts and after the handover they have to return to the underground garage and continue the training for half an hour. So they actually work from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm, which is 13 hours long. Although they live in the city, most of them don't really have anything to do with it because all year round their eating, drinking, working, shopping and resting happens in this gated superbblock.

Comparing to the small chance of a violent crime, it is the **devaluation of assets** that makes homeowners feel **insecure** in the long term. It seems Security guards exist for this more important task - defending homeowner's property values - so they have to keep the neighbourhood in order, which that is tied to property values.



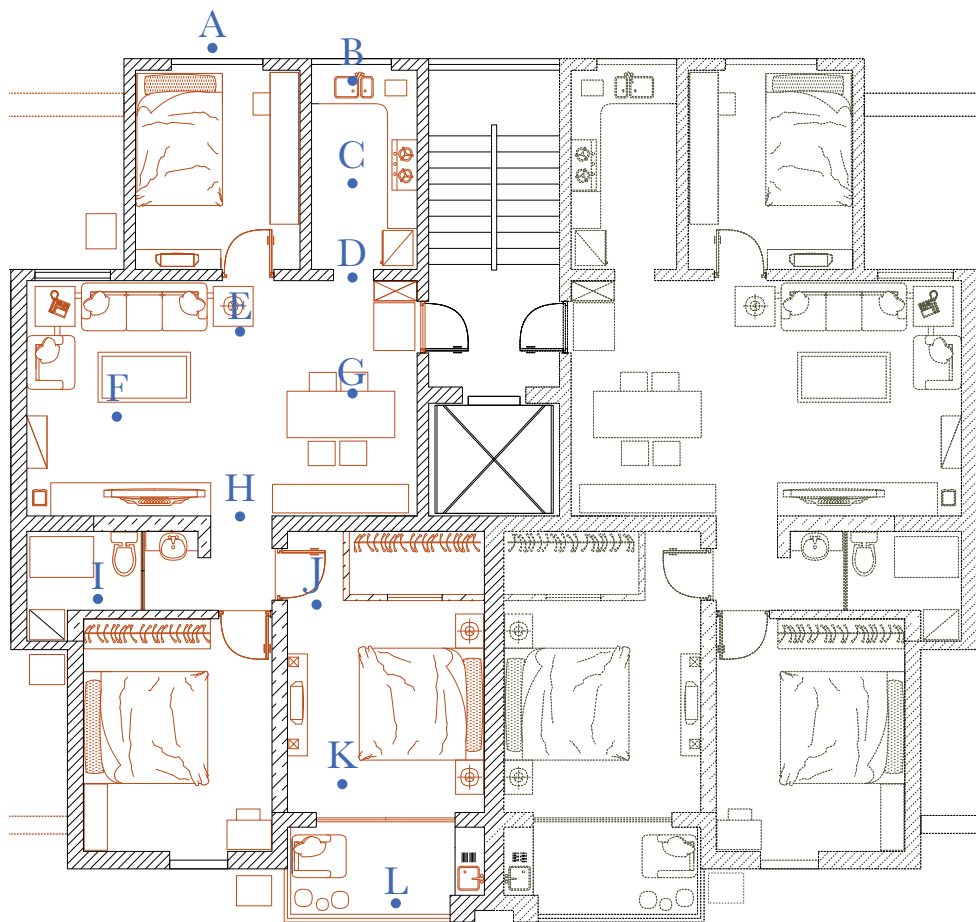
*security team*



**Boundary**  
*Study*  
*Prople retreat Indoors*

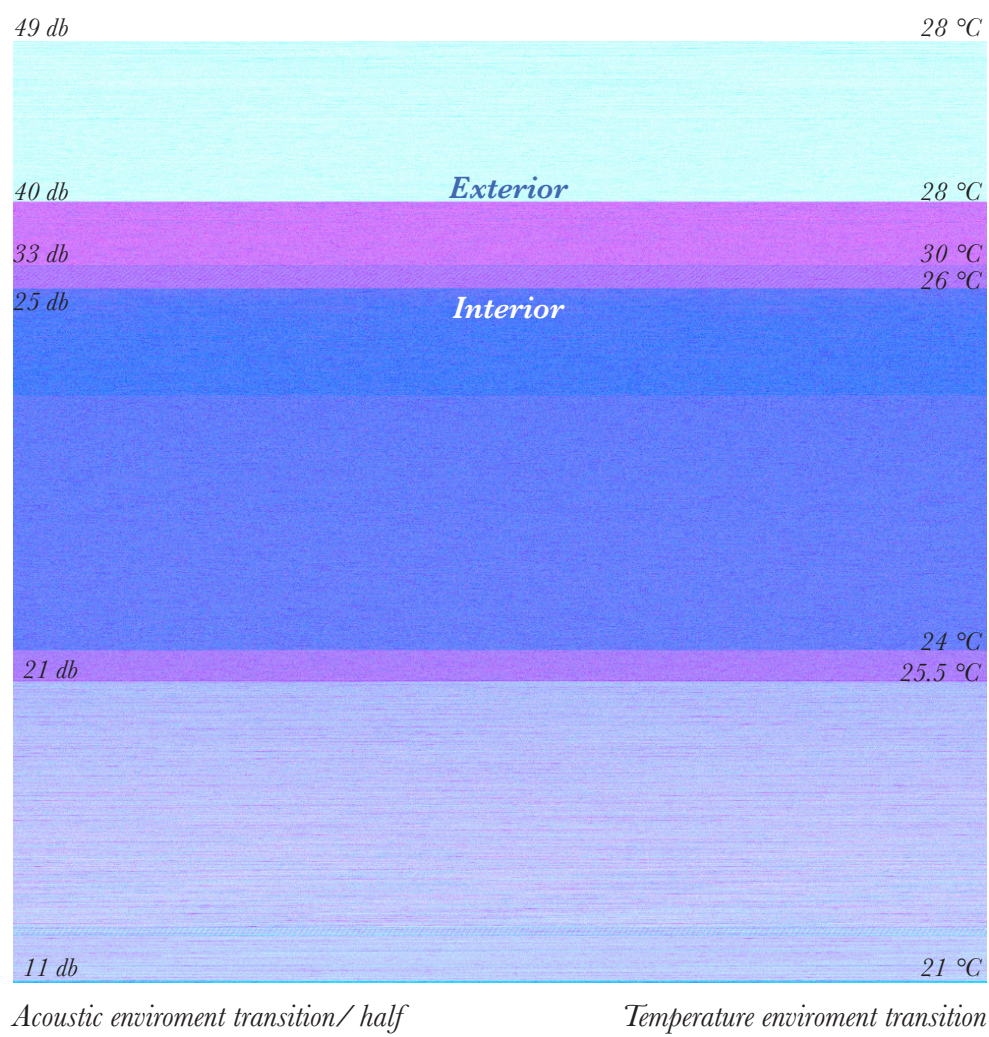
Like a wall, each additional layer of boundary adds a layer of barrier to the personal bubble while isolating a layer of information.

The superblock environment is layers of superimposed boundaries that makes public life inaccessible and private environments comfortable and convenient,



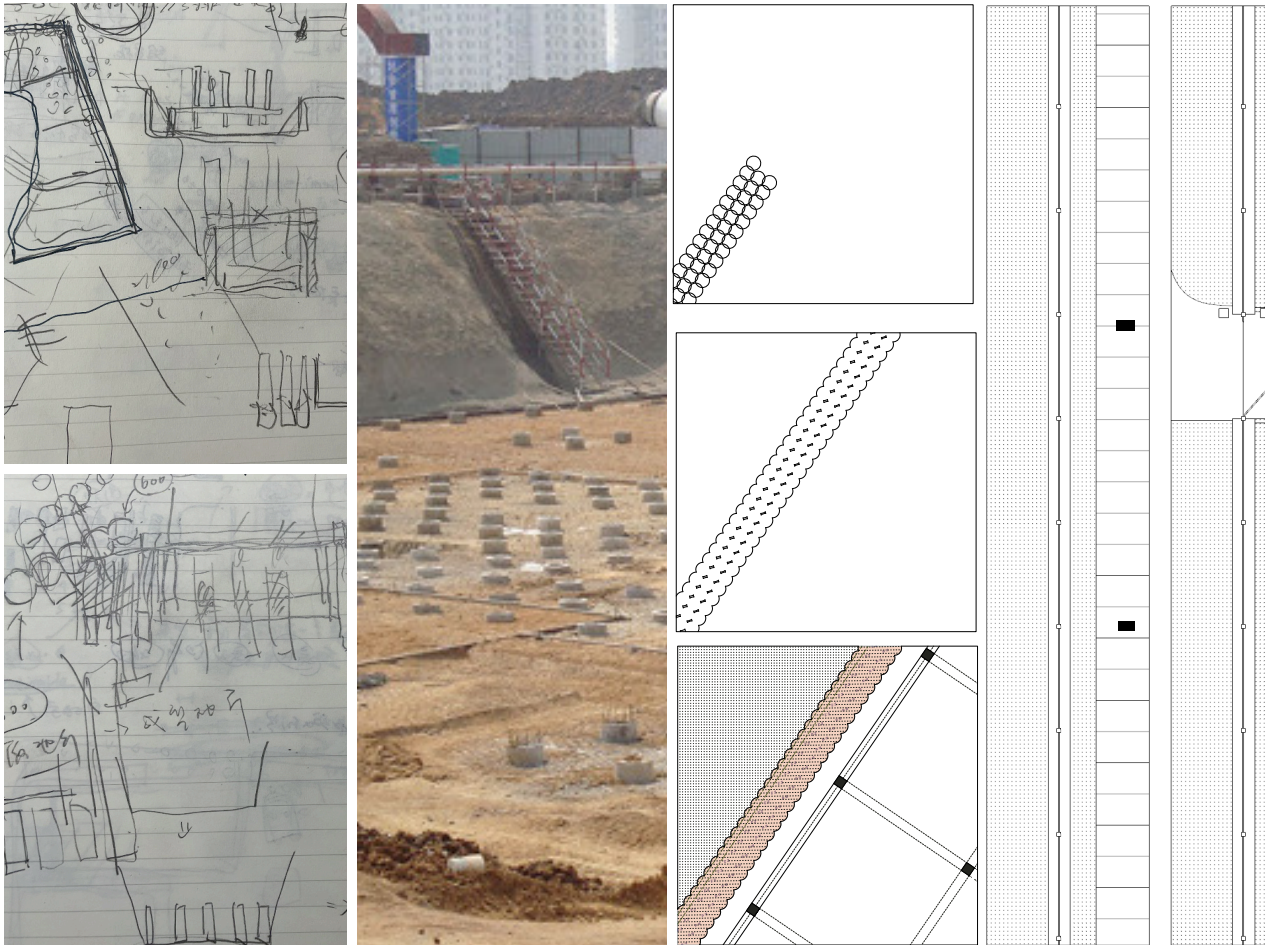
*Acoustic enviroment methods & test positions*

*Detail can be viewed in TS booklet*



## Boundary Study

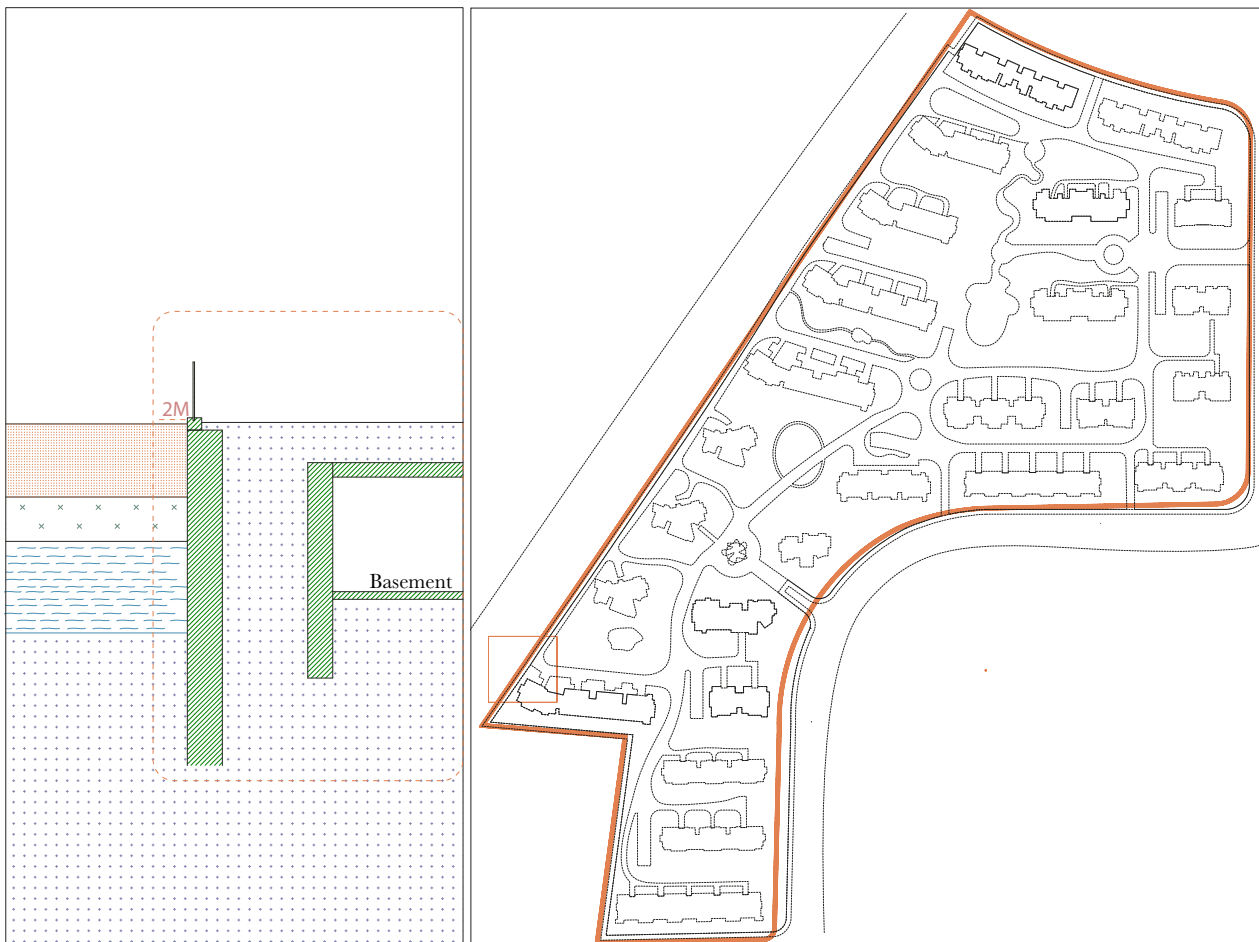
During the project, I met and knew an engineer who had been involved in the construction of this superblock. He introduced and explained me to a *(invisible ) boundary*.



*Hand-drawn sketches from the engineer.*

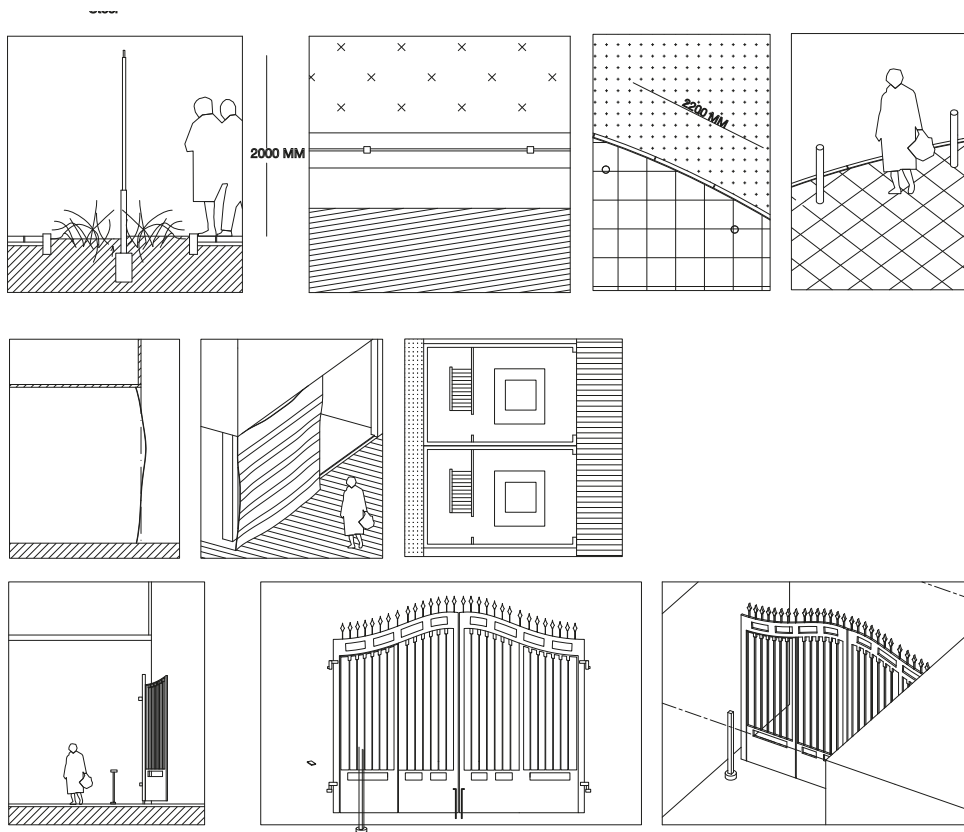
He explained to me : “Before the boundary wall is built, a series of foundation pit must to be dug, especially in **Hangzhou** where there is a lot of surface water, so most of the superblock here including this one need to have edge maintenance piles, In **this superblock** the practice was 600mm diameter piles dug down every 450mm, and did theree times around the base and finally forming a concrete wall about one and a half metres thick, Piles are then driven into the formed base to construct basement ,building on top of it...”

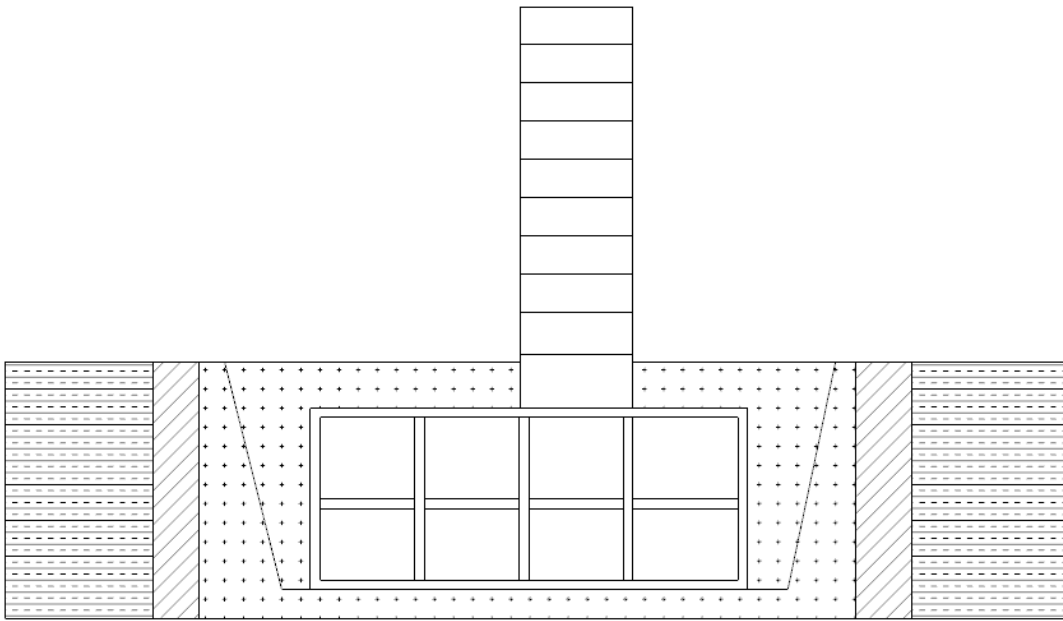




Superblock is designed to be spatially separated

The underground wall is isolating the superblock's underground environment from the urban foundation and stopping elements like water from entering the site. later, a **ground wall** will be built to isolate the above ground environment and stopping elements like people from entering the site as well.

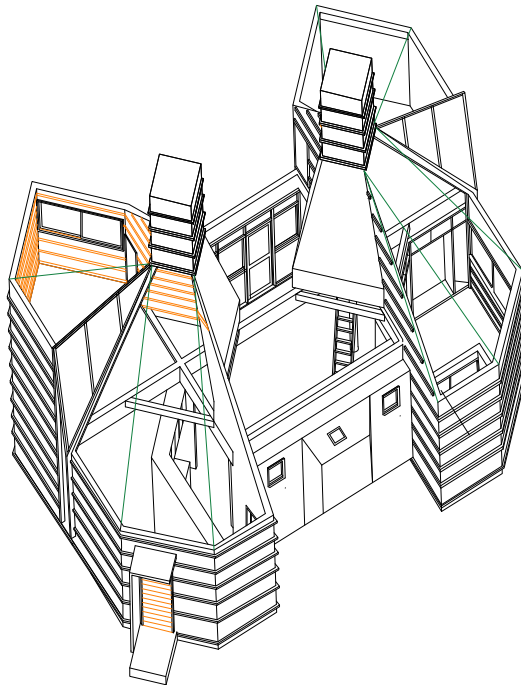




A separated individual to the larger city, Independent of local roots.

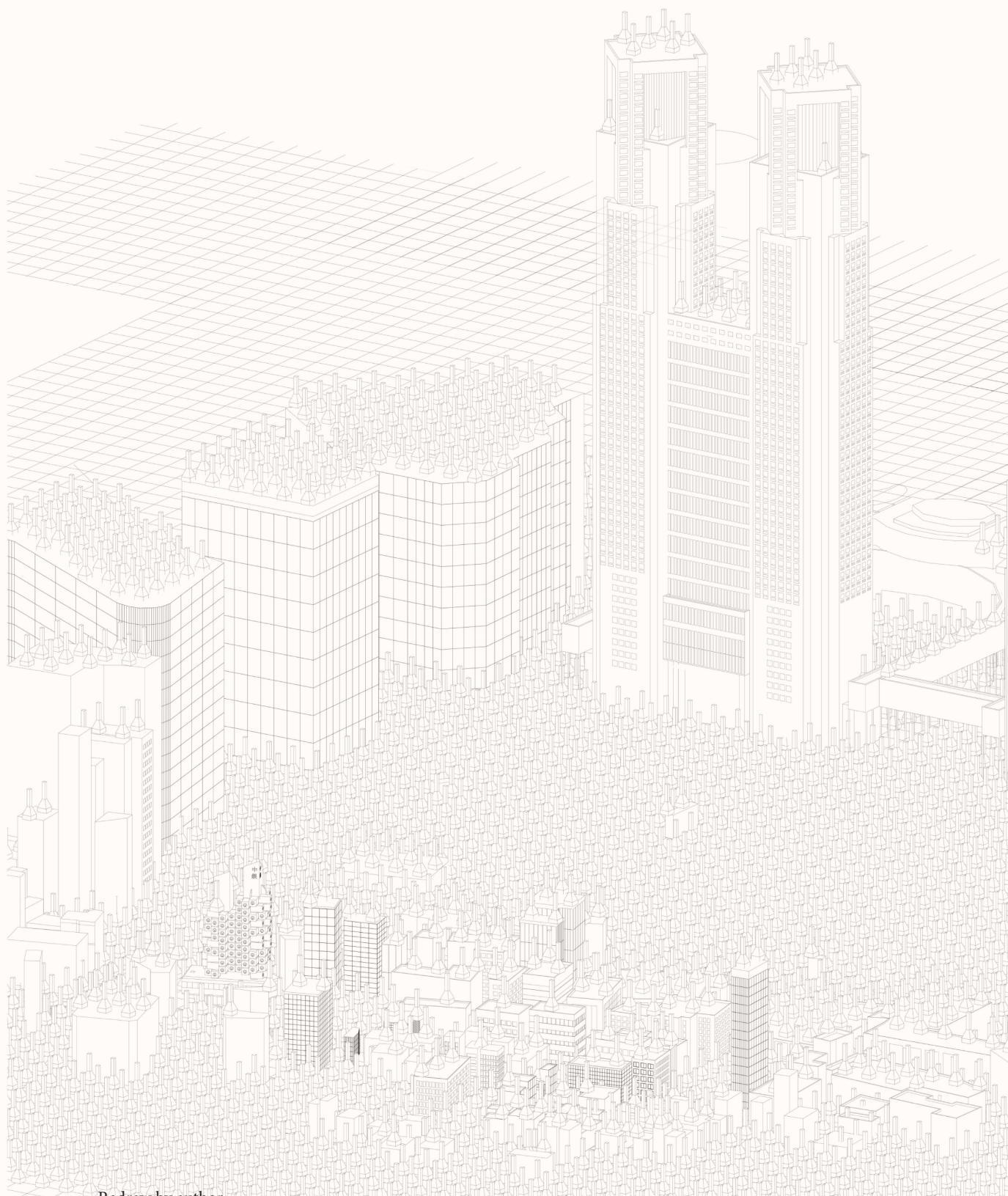


**A Radical**  
*Architecture Intervention*  
*Study from Urbot-1,2,3*



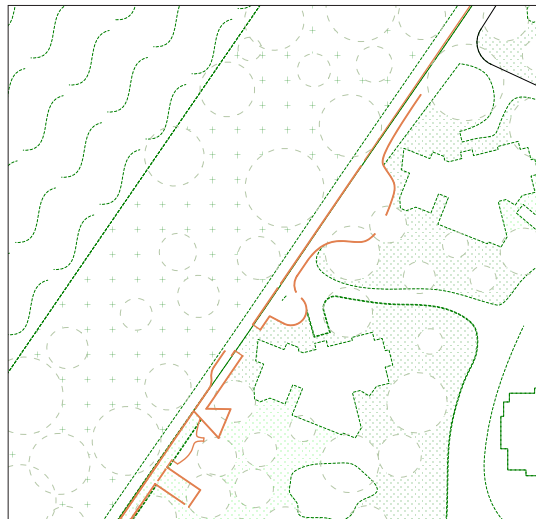
*Urbot - 001*

Toyo Ito made a radical intervention in answering this super individualized and standardized situation . In one of his essays he envisages a new installation, a standard housing system, a grid-like redistribution of the city, which offers only the simplest of functions, from urbot-001 to urbot-003, with functions ranging from housing, toilets, kitchens, to just one bed and a private space that can only accommodate one bed size, so that the boundaries of public life are naturally diffused into the urban space.



Redraw by author

**An Imagined  
Porous Boundary**  
*Technical study / proposal*  
**Find a place to be**





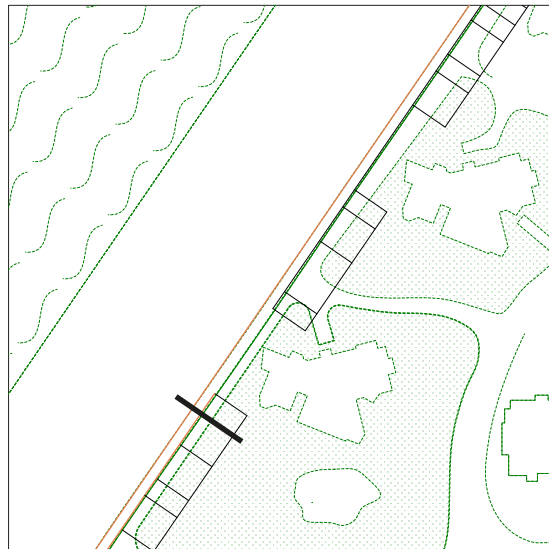
The border becomes physically more porous with the addition of facial recognition.

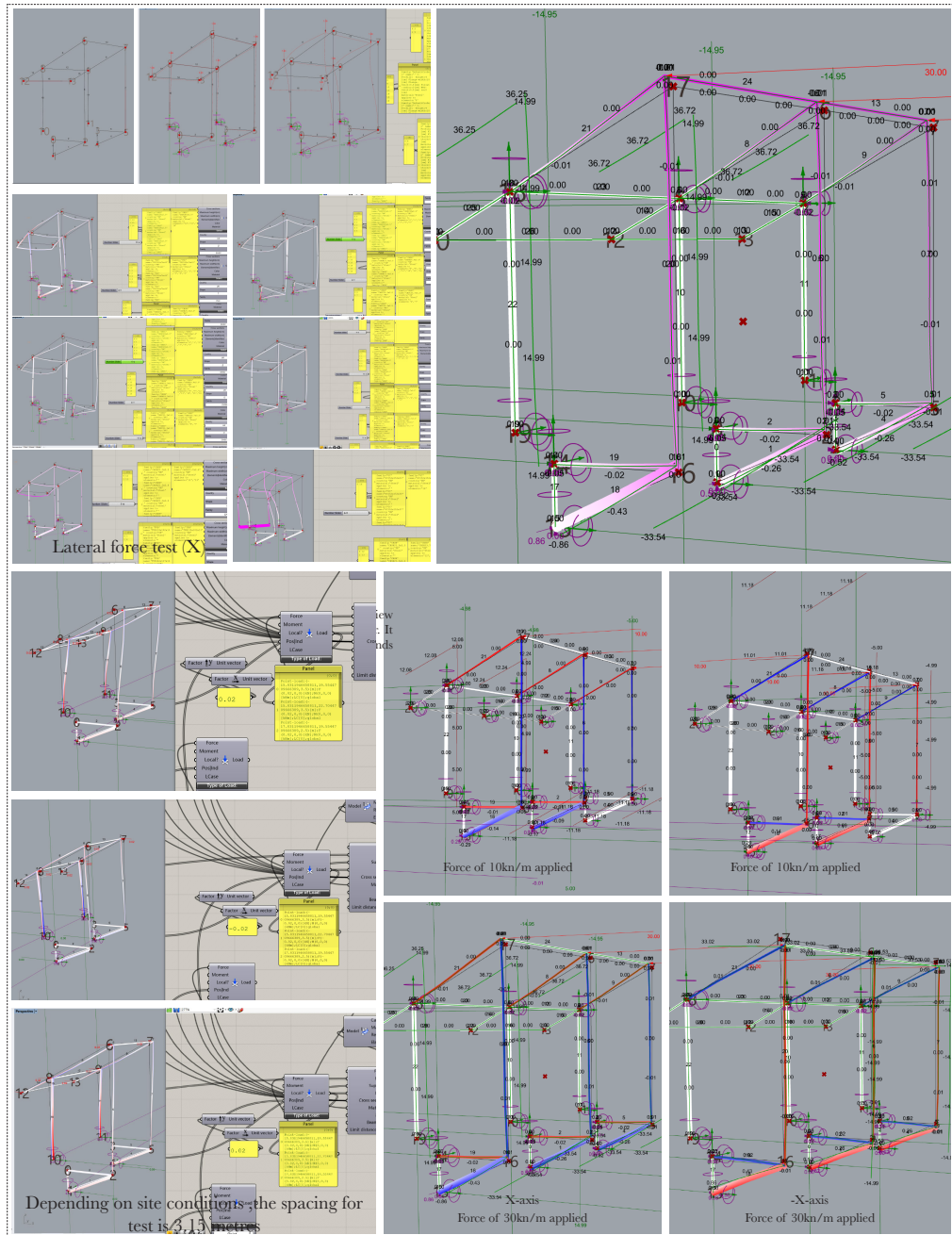
TS project is try to answer the social condition of superblock architecturally, reveal the existence of this overlapping boundaries and reinforcing it, borrow spaces from the superblock to accomadate some 'authorities' like a facial recognition to make it even more porous - you may need some invitations or 'passports' to enter the gate , but once entering , you become someone else, take on another role - what matters here is *solidarity*, that is not build some people that is already together-that refers to very disperse groups,very separate individuals,but they shared emotions,positions, support, Is to share solidarity - although we dont know each other,But I understand that loneliness. The intervention tries to cut into the various existing borders and turn them into a buffer space - accessible, inhabitable, thus providing a platform that allows for stay and the resistance.

A simple intervention version is planned here for test- as it is not the building itself that is important, but the way it could inhabit and the human experience that counts.

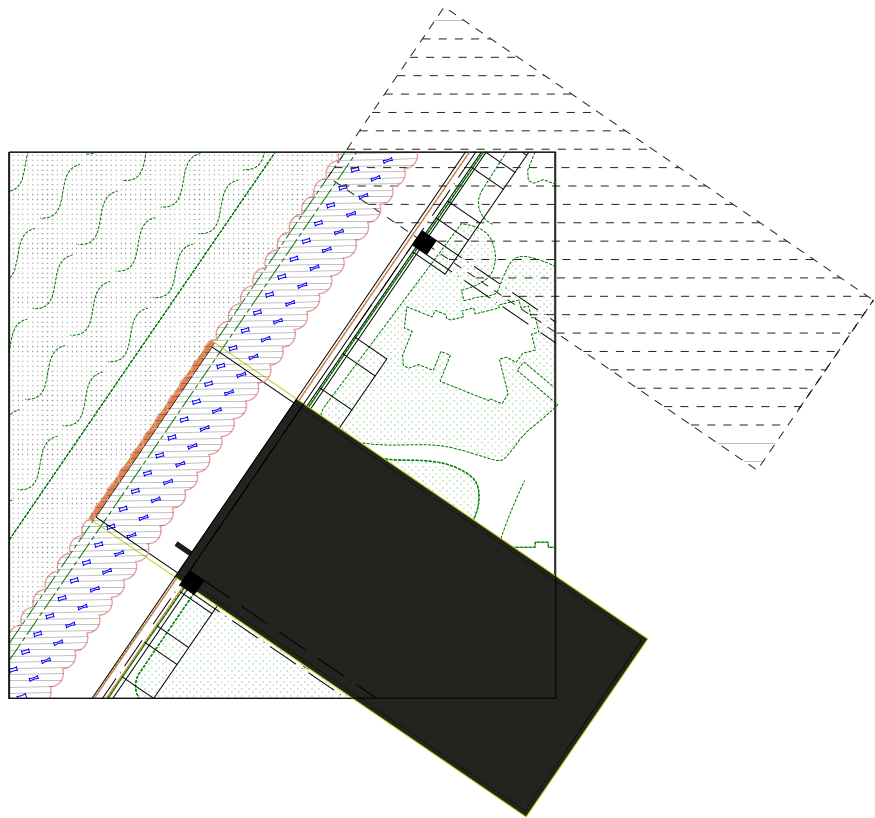
**Imagine**  
*A **Porous** Boundary*  
*Technical study*

*Feasibility study for transformation from fence to a buffer space*





Imagine  
*A Porous block*



*'Equipment'*



With such intervene, the definition of superblock can be completely changed, superblock only arise when the intervention of resistance is established, then it becomes the superblock, which has the primary control city and the sub-version and resistance city, the two things are layered. By layering them, the new definition of superblock emerges.

But then I realized , sometimes, is not even about trying to socialized, or meet, is actually about **find another space to be**, even just on my own.

To find those spaces should become a common search, one find their own spaces, create their own libration, no longer locked in their routine. Then the term **distanced intimacy** can become a collectively research of liberation, form of resistance, and becomes a alternative 'space' In parallel to the existed third space, it **doesn't need to invent new space, nor new subjects**, they can be just the old people doing some thing differently in old space.

A dark, grainy photograph of an elevator interior. A diagonal beam of light cuts across the frame from the top left towards the bottom right. The background shows the vertical lines of the elevator walls and a glimpse of the floor at the bottom right.

介

# ELEVATOR

*The*

*self*



v



# INTRUDER

*as*

*method*

*What are you doing here?*

one day, I met a girl in the elevator, we had a little conversation. she asked me,

*'are you live in the building?'*

*'yes', i said.*

*'ohh, you just moved in?'*

*'No, I lived here for 10 years'.*

*'Really? that's weird, I've never seen you before. '*

*'you know all the inhabitants in the building?'* I started to get a bit curious,

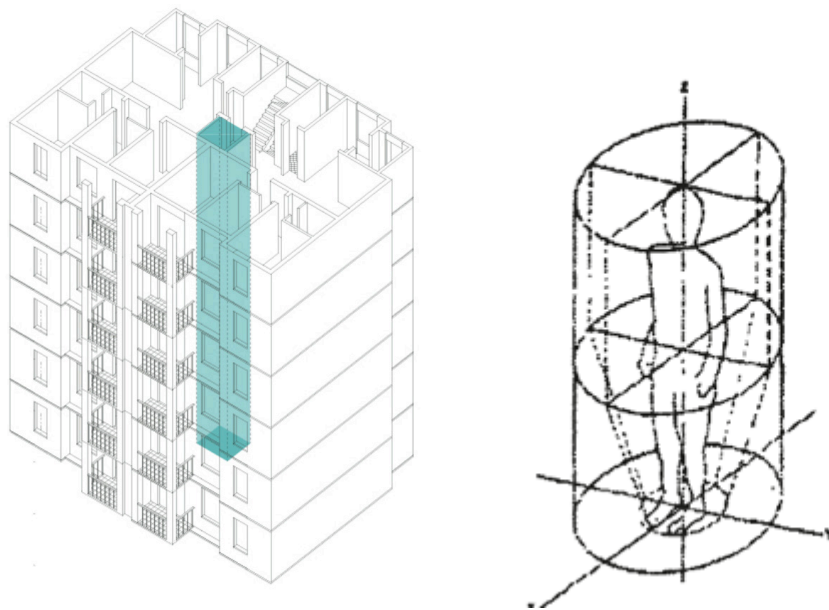
*'oh, I don't know any of them.'* she answerd,

*'But I can recognize them.'*

The lift reached the sixth floor and she went out.

In resistance to the powerful protocol, the centralized power of control. I need to be very tactical, The first method I used was put my self into other's '**personal distance**', to intrude into their intimate distance and start a connection.





### **The hidden dimension**

Edward T. Hall

The “personal distance” - within this distance. The eye can easily adjust its focus to observe detailed textures without significant visual distortion. However, even at this distance it is not possible to see the entire face at once, and central vision must be focused on certain features of the face, such as the eyes. It is exactly the distance at which both parties can reach each other’s fingers with their arms raised. In this range, detailed feedback is provided, the conversation is moderately vocal, and the interaction is more verbal than tactile, making it suitable for shaking hands and talking with relatives, close friends, So this distance can be measured, through a kind of ‘stranger proximity method’ to test the distance in different cultures.



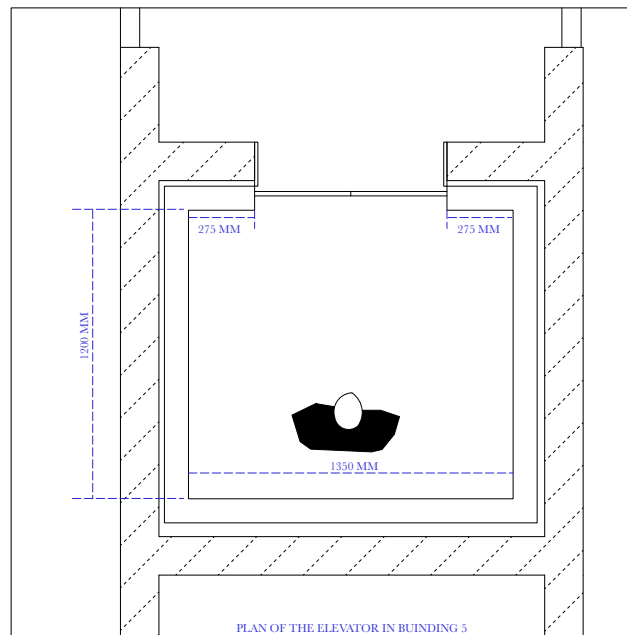
*Stills from research film*

Elevator

Intruder

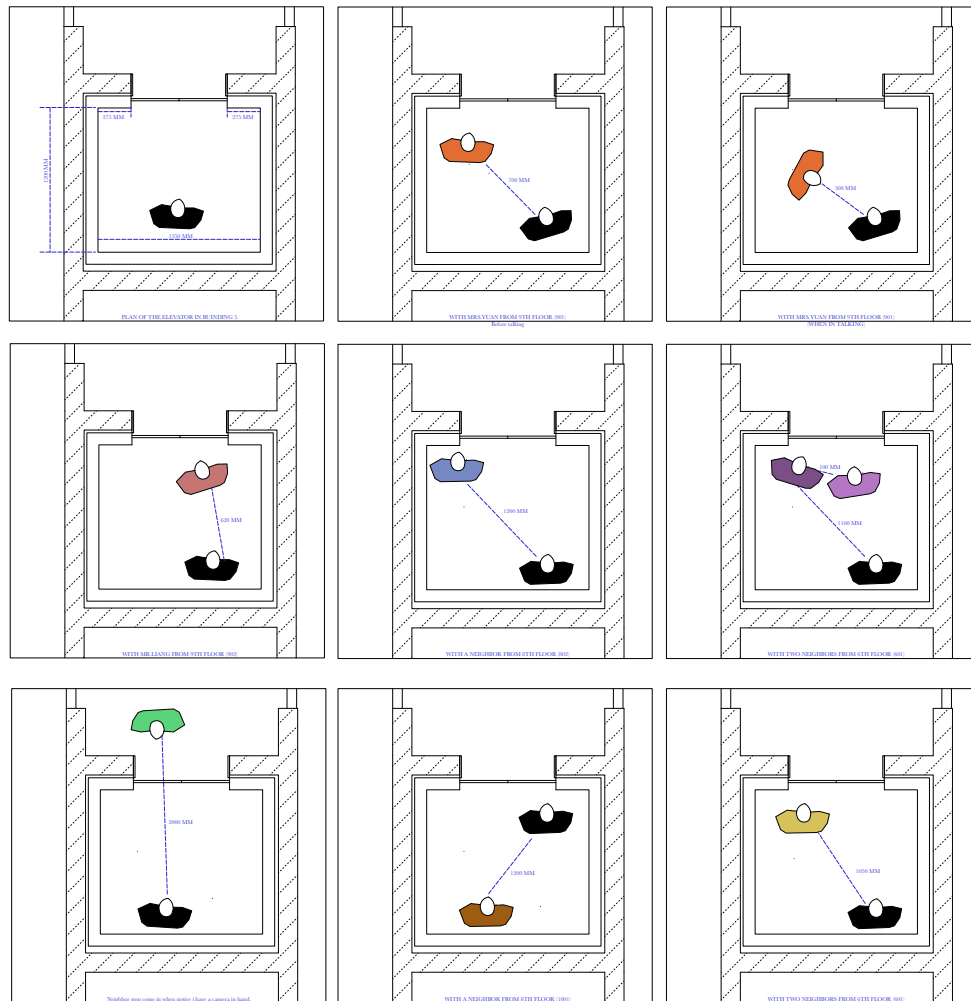


*Some moments of 'interaction'*



In order to create some connections with other inhabitants, I started with place myself inside the transportation device, to get a few minutes of interaction in the lift while people on the move. in the context of intense observation and connection created by physical proximity and temporality.





### Elevator Intruder

1.56M2, 30s , 190 times per day.

## Some little conversations taken in the elevator between me and my neighbours w

**An old lady entering the lift on the ground floor and pressed 4th floor button.**

Hello.

Hmmm

Hi, I live on the fifth floor, do you live here?

Oh, right. Yes.

How long have you lived here? we moved here two years ago.

Wow, May i ask how many people live in your house?

Why you ask?

Oh, I'm just doing a student project and trying to get to know my neighbours, no offence.

no more responds...

**An young guy entering the lift on the 7th floor**

Hello.

no responds.

Hi? I wonder if he didn't hear me.

no responds and take out his phone.

**A middle-aged man entering the lift on the 8th floor**

Hello.

hi

I live here, the fifth floor.

Ook... (He looks a bit confused)

Do you live here?

Yes.

Oh, Are you going to work?

Yes.

Can I ask you which area you work in?

In the Xiachen district.

Do you drive a car?

Yes

How long will it take? may i ask?

Around 50 minutes, if there's no traffic jam.

....

How do you feel about living here?

The lift arrived and he left without an answer.

**A middle-aged lady entering the lift on the ground floor and pressed 9th floor button.**

What are you doing here? (she started first, Seems unsuspecting of someone in the lift.)

Oh, I live here, I'm doing a student project, a study.

Oh, that's good. What school?

A foreign university.

What are you studying?

Architecture

What are you studying here? What's there to study in this lift?

Ummm, I'm just trying to meet the neighbours.

Oh, that's good.

silence

So how long are you going to stay?

I'll be in here all today, and will come back when i can.

Ok, funny.

**An old man e on the 10th f**

Hello

Yes

Daye, buying

Yes

Oh, I live her

back, I'll pr

around a lot.

Oh, good.

30 minutes later in and went to floors)

Hey, Daye, ba

cery?

I'm going up

Sure, I'll foll

you lived here

Me?

Yes

Yes

After

You're going o

Yes.

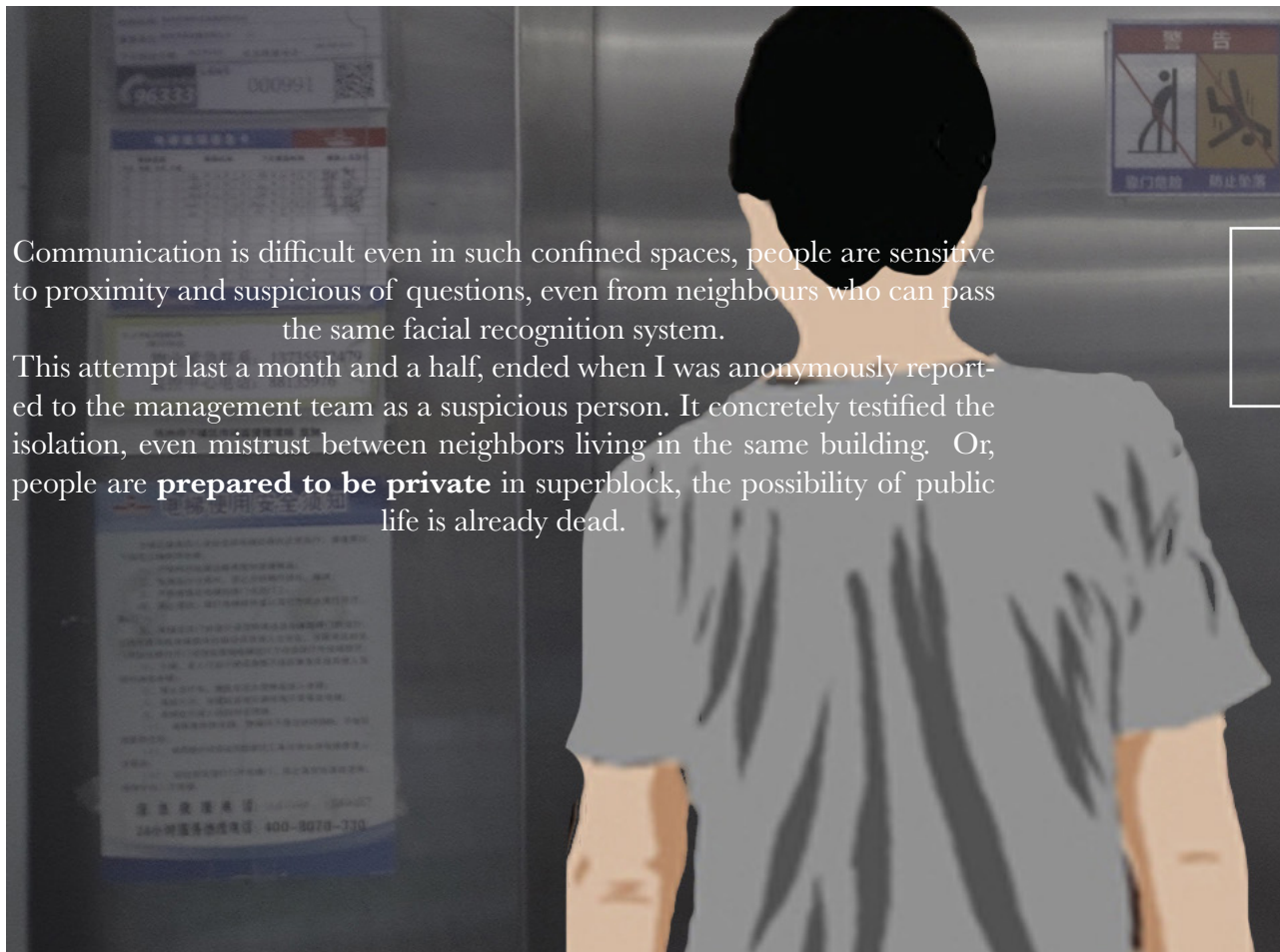
Why are you sti

Some dialogue can be put together with observations, like the obser

When they are on the move , up to 40 sec , in the spatial relationship shown above

entering the lift floor	Oh, I'm just stay here for a while, researching. <i>Oh...</i> How are your neighbours? <i>Oh, neighbours. I don't know them very well.</i> Ohh. Then you usually have any activities? <i>No, I don't.</i> Where do you like to spend time at home? <i>Oh, I'm more in the living room.</i> Why? <b><i>A middle-aged lady entering the lift on the ground floor and pressed 10<sup>th</sup> floor button.</i></b>  <i>She saw me with a camera in my hand as soon as she came in</i> <i>She asked : Is this a Sony camera?</i> Yes, it is. <i>You always take pictures?</i> kind of yes, I take videos. <i>Can you have look at this for me?</i> <i>I'm thinking of buying a camera for my son.</i>	Sure. Which camera model are you looking for ? ... <i>When we got to the 9th floor, she pulled me out of the lift and continued the questions.</i> ... <i>Thanks, ah right, emmm, what are you doing in there?</i> I'm working on a school project. <i>Oh.....ok, thanks.</i> <b><i>She went into the 1001 and it looks like she and that Daye are family, and 4 days later- Hi, going out?</i></b> <i>Hey, you again. you live here?</i> Yes I'm on the fifth floor. <i>Oh. - Oh.</i> Do you know your neighbours? <i>I don't really know my neighbours, but the people on the 11th floor above me are always changing, and they seem to be in a group home.</i> Do you have any activities during the week?	<i>Not reallt, I dont have time.</i> So.. Stay at home a lot? <i>Off work, yes.</i> Oh Ayi you have you bought the camera? <i>Yes, I did. I bought an a7m3 at the end.</i> Oh that's great. you have to work on the weekends too? <i>No, I'm just going to pick up my son.</i> Oh, how old is he? <i>Eleven.</i> Oh, so it's time for a hobby class. <i>yeah</i> never met again before being reported.  <b><i>I was on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor waiting for the lift</i></b>  The door of 502 opened and a man of about 60 came out. He took a look at me, turned around and took the stairs down.
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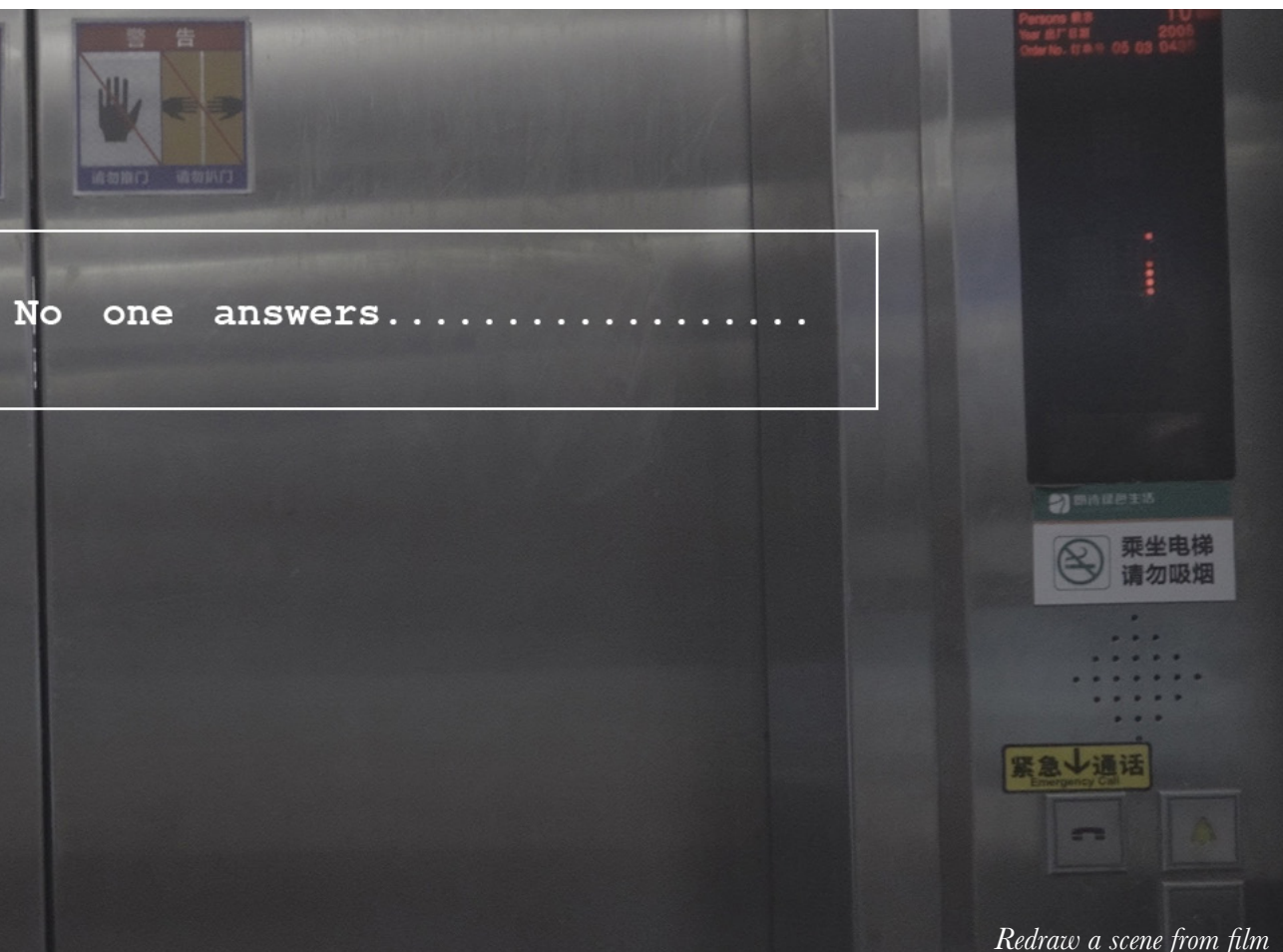
ervation "Add a cctv to the superblock" is derived from the dialogue.



Communication is difficult even in such confined spaces, people are sensitive to proximity and suspicious of questions, even from neighbours who can pass the same facial recognition system.

This attempt last a month and a half, ended when I was anonymously reported to the management team as a suspicious person. It concretely testified the isolation, even mistrust between neighbors living in the same building. Or, people are **prepared to be private** in superblock, the possibility of public life is already dead.







观

*Seeing*

**SENSITIVE**

*Along the passage*



V  
察

者

*as*

*a*

# OBSERVER

*provided*

*by*

*Isolation*



S E N S I T I V E  
O B S E R V E R  
M E T H O D O L O G Y

And my way of resistance is to make a film, sensitively.

*Observing the city*

*Deadpan filming*

*Robert Venturi*

*Eyes on the street*

*William Holly Whyte*

*Film as a method*

*TTP project*

*Daguerréotypes*

*Architectural observation*

*The **body** eye*

*The **immersive** eye*

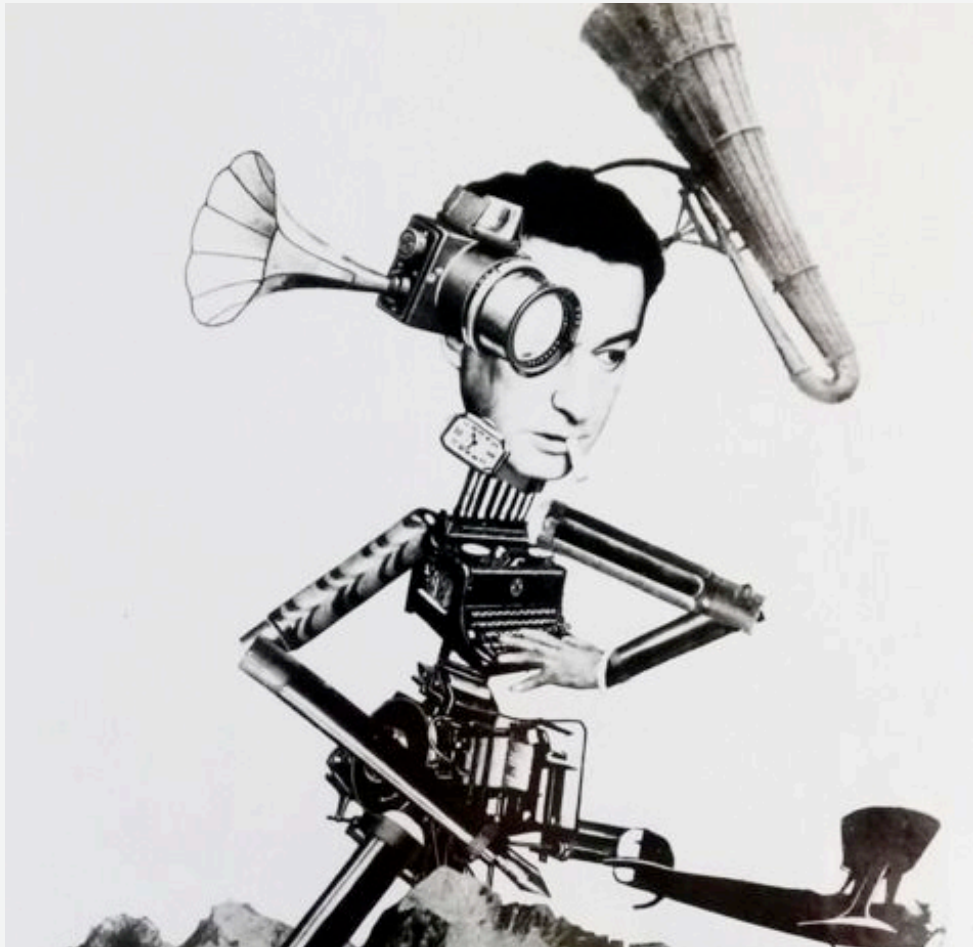
*Filmic observation*

*The **Cenimatic** Eye*

*The **Foreign** Eye*

**project**

‘Slow down, we must slow down.’



It is observing and collecting information about the city of Berlin, recording it on a typewriter, while the camera represents the eye and there is a phonograph on the right. It is trying to record every corner of the city with all its senses.

## Deadpan Filming

As The Chicago School of Sociology wrote in the 1960s,

*“To change a city, you must first observe it.”*

Historically, this is exactly how the book *Learning from Las Vegas* came about. The three authors of the book Robert Venturi, Steven Izenour and Denise Scott Brown, were teaching in the architecture department at Yale University at the time, and observing the city was the theme of their design studio. At the time, they took their students to Las Vegas.

They use a model of observation which they call it ‘**deadpan filming**’ - recording the space they are in as it is, and then **learning from** it. They do not resist or criticise anything that already exists, but draw from it, studying the city in a **bottom-up** way. This so-called ‘deadpan filming’ is an empiricist approach to urban research, which is studied through **observation and the interpretation of what is observed**. This is *Observing the world*. The film created in the Las Vegas research studio confirmed the attitude Stierli put in his book *Las Vegas in the Rearview Mirror*, where he writes: “Engineers and architects became the **dominant players** in observation.”. They started this bottom-up approach to the world around us. **a visual survey of an existing city** becomes a mandatory part of architectural design.



Venturi is setting up cameras on the front hoods of cars as a way for them to **observe**.



**Social**  
*observation*  
*The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*

**Eyes on the street**

William Holly Whyte began his contemporaneous study '*NY Street Life Project*' in the 1960s and continued into the 1980s and produced ***The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces***.

White was a sociologist whose basic approach to research was (also) to understand the social life of small urban spaces through **observation**. He scattered cameras around New York's urban spaces, **collected** people's movements on screen **and then analysed** these behaviours. The aim of the whole study is to improve social life in small public spaces. The project starts by observing people's behaviour and then improving the details in the design. He has done research on new squares in New York or other American cities, trying to understand which designs work and which don't, and the reasons behind them. For example, in his study of another city square, people were moving chairs around in the square, and he was exploring the reasons for this behaviour.

From White's discourse on observation and his reading of a **good** public space or street, he finds a place very close to the centre that brings together all these different elements of success. It could also be replaced by another book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, written by Jane Jacobs. The main idea here was to keep the city safe with '**eyes on the street**', that is to say, to keep the inhabitants in the streets and live there, so that children could play in the streets without fear.

It also seems to support one of my observation that the more cohesive a community is internally, the more open it is to the outside world.



White is observing the streets with his camera

**Filmic**  
*observation*  
*Observing through filming*

In a film called *The Smoke* (directed by *Ying Wang* and *Paul Auster* in 1995), which is probably a cinematic translation of this way of observation - the subject of the story is a cigar shop owner who lives on a street corner and who has been taking pictures of the place at eight in the morning for several years. In the next scene, he holds the photo album that documents his little corner and explains to his friend why he observes the city in this way - he observes the different people, the changes in light and shadow in different seasons. These are details that we can't get a feel for by quickly flicking through the photos, as in the film with his friend's feedback.

A more visual expression of this approach can be found in Hayahisa Tomiyasu's TTP project: Hayahisa looking at a ping pong table through his bedroom window. For a year he photographed it from almost the same angle, observing people's behaviour around this table, which eventually became a very famous study.

In these photographs, this particular space is almost completely alienated - no one is using it as a ping pong table, but for everything other than playing ping pong, and the filmic approach emphasises the presence of the (recorded) space even more.





## TTP

Hayahisa Tomiyasu

TTP is a series of photographs made by Hayahisa Tomiyasu from the window of his former student apartment in the German city of Leipzig. From his south-facing view we see a ‘tischtennisplatte’ or ping pong table used for a plethora of purposes – including a sun bed, a laundry counter, a kids’ climbing frame, an exercise site, a family lunch spot, a refuge from busy streets, among various other uses – except from table tennis. Tomiyasu spent **five years documenting** the humble table and thanks to his sustained curiosity we observe the idiosyncrasies of **human behaviour** and social habits, as seasons change, scenes mutate and people come and go.



**Filmic**  
*observation*  
*Hang out to the **street***

*“We make a map of our experience patterns, an inner model of the outer world, and we use this to organize our lives. Our natural ‘environment’—whatever impinges on us from outside—becomes our human landscape’— a segment of nature fathomed by us and made our home.”*

*- Gyorgy Kepes, The New Landscape*

A further observation can be represented by this documentary *Daguerréotypes*. It features vignettes of life in Rue Daguerre - a street in Paris, **where the filmmaker lived**.

Varda was caring for her two-year-old son at the time of filming and could not spend long periods away from her home. Because of this, the entire film is **confined within** a 90 metres radius of Varda’s home - the length of the electric cables for her equipment. The film’s name is a complex pun: The street, Rue Daguerre, is named after Louis Daguerre, inventor of the Daguerreotypes method of photographic printing. Most of those profiled come from places outside Paris, or even France. Over the course of the film, every subject is asked the **same three questions**: “Where did you come from?”, “When did you get here?”, “Why did you come?”.

During a voiceover in the film, Varda explains that the **business owners and occupants** of Rue Daguerre are her ‘**types**’, in reference to typologies both as the photographic style and practices of **social classification** that Varda was critical of. At various points the subjects assume formal, static pose as if in mid-19th century photo portraiture.

It is to be a **mix** of **external** observation with attention to an **internal** state of mind.



# DAGUERRÉOTYPES

**Daguerréotypes**  
Agnès Varda

Daguerréotypes (1976) is a French documentary by Agnès Varda.

Architectural  
observation  
*The **Body** Eye*

The group of situationist internationals had a similar idea in the way of seeing a city. As a member of SI, in the *'leaning tower from Venice'*, Ralph Romney described a city that could **not be described** by text, but by hundreds of **photos** along with some **text** talked about his ideas and some **sketches** which conveyed **scenes** and **thoughts** in his wander at Venice.

And In another map of SI group, the naked city collaged 19 fragments of an existing map of Paris and printed in black and linked by red arrows. These fragments were neither logically related to each other, nor do they follow any traditional perception or orientation., The **distance** between them did not match the true distance of each fragment. In his article 'Theory of the Dérive' He suggested that the purpose of the map was to reach *'beyond the discovery of unities of ambiance, of their main components and their spatial localization, one comes to perceive their principal axes of passage, their exits, and their defenses.'* It did not represent the city from a general point of view but organized a movement that was based on **psychological geography**.

They mapping with photographs, **immersive** perspective and storyboards, irrelevant to what 'god' sees but focus on their 'first-person experience' with the idea of journey, or in their words, 'drifting'. The idea of a journey with the immersive perspectives gives the observer /viewers a layer of depth that can't be seen in an **orthographic projection**.



## The Leaning tower of Venice

### Ralph Romney

Psychogeography was defined in 1955 by Guy Debord as “the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals.” It has also been defined as “a total dissolution of boundaries between art and life”.



Architectural  
observation  
*The **Immersive** Eye*

*Perspective is wandering, and the viewing is flowing*

The map of Zhi village was drawn by experience. From the perspective of modern cartography, the map of Zhi village was not the case of accuracy, architectural and natural elements were out of scale without any vertical projections. In the map, the author painted the relationship between objects in the village and implied a way of how readers should read the map. Author depicted how a bridge across a river, what a visitor can see when he enter the village, a gatehouse the with clear shape and orientation, and a forest with posture, author also marked some names of the figure in the map, like a peak named ‘wenlong,’ a tree named ‘heng’ and a puddle named ‘tan,’ these names are not in any system but are specific names people used in daily life.

It’s a painting that describes the author’s life in the town. This simple picture described a roaming experience and only depicted the “important” things for the inhabitants in a concrete way that organized one’s reality. As Wang Shu concluded,

*‘this picture may be the **most accurate description** of the real reality of this village’.*

The **wandering** implies not only a moving perspective or a constantly shifting state of vision stuck to each other in continuous time, but also a memory that is intermittently renewed.



### The map of Zhi village

Unknow

The ancient Chinese paintings do not have any single specific perspective; the viewpoint of the artist is fluid, the view spreading out in parallel with time as if it were a real traveller through the territory. As the painter imagines himself in the world of the image, the painting is creating space through time at the very moment of the brushstroke. Time and space are not separated from each other in the cartographer's cognitive system, they are one and the same thing.

**Filmic**  
*observation*  
*The **Cenimatic** Eye*

*“I am Kīno-eye, I am a builder, I have placed you [...] in an extraordinary room which did not exist until just now when I also created it. In this room, there are 12 walls shot by me in various parts of the world.”*

*- Dziga Vertov*

Vertov is saying that the camera actually creates a new space.

As a new **medium**, cinema creates new spaces and **new forms of spatial expression**, liberating us from the material world, and through his editing, a city is abstractly and strangely presented under the montage technique. New geographical and topographical features are creatively integrated.

In ***Man with a Movie Camera***, you can see the eye is looking at Moscow (the majority of the film was shot in Moscow, but not all of it - the film was shot in five different cities in total). It's **a narrative without characters**; the city **itself** becomes the guide and protagonist of the narrative. There are no professional actors, **people just play themselves**; their appearances are very short and there is little room for character development. *‘The experiment is creating a truly international, absolute cinematic language based on its complete detachment from theatre and literature.’*

Just like the chinese film maker Ouning, who produced the ‘Sanyuanli’ said, *“We kind of use Dziga Vertov as our teacher and inspiration.... But what it documents is not a gorgeous metropolitan picture, but a corner of a Chinese city that has been shattered by the wave of globalisation.”*

Some reviews may suggest that there is not much plot or incident in the film, but in fact the film is sending a very sensitive and accurate message to society.



## Sanyuanli

Ouning & Cao fei (presented in 2003 Venice biennale)

Ouning said:

*"We kind of use Dziga Vertov as our teacher and inspiration, but we don't hold the same kind of camera in our hands anymore, we now carry a more independent digital video camcorder with us. Sanyuanli is a documentary that belongs to the category of 'urban symphonies'. But it's not about a gorgeous metropolis, it's about a part of a Chinese city that has been shattered by the wave of globalisation."*

Ou Ning spent a lot of time in Sanyuanli. A small village that is gradually being eaten away by Guangzhou's urban development, forced to shrink by encirclement. *"Will the government make the same mistake again,"* says Ouning. *"Our Sanyuanli project has done its best to document the particular landscape of Guangzhou's urbanisation and to explore the accountability and effectiveness of the government's planning decisions and their handling of the urban village problem. The Sanyuanli project consists of a documentary film and a book together, which was made by a team of nine photographers and two recording artists, using a total of **six digital cameras** and a digital tape recorder."*



**Filmic**  
*observation*  
*The **Foreign** Eye*

*'but it was enough to take hold of one of them and hang on to it.'*

The most distinctive features of the film is that, The film unfolds through an unknown woman reading letters, looking at what the unknown photographer sees and hears and thinks in the letter, and it is not an interpretation of footage but a reorganisation of the fragmented footages recorded during the trip to give them a new personal meaning. Or in his word, *the image is the appearance of reality, while the letter as a inner memory, the combination is a way he tried to communicate the two worlds*.

The combination is beautiful. For the text, the image gives what the text cannot convey. For example, when he says fear, when he describes the glimpse of the African woman, the text conveys very intimate information that image can not. He looks at the world with his camera, and records what he sees, and the edited footage presents the associations in his mind - like when he watching the people in the train he put the associations in the film, he presents an authenticity and intimacy – it's the director's inner reality.

Here, with the narrator, he is not a character in the film but an outsider to the film just like us. But in fact both the cinematographer and the person reading the letters are the director himself,

he didn't hide himself, he can be everyone, or he is everyone. it appeared as the most suitable format for me to compensate for the lack of direct communication with locals and to transform the film into a more meditative form of expression, to illuminate the hidden urban condition and raise public awareness of this critical social situation.



**Sans Soleil**  
Chris Marker

*“My personal problem is more specific: how to film the ladies of Bissau? Apparently, the magical function of the eye was working against me there. It was in the marketplaces of Bissau and Cape Verde that I could stare at them again with equality: I see her, she saw me, she knows that I see her, she drops me her glance, but just at an angle where it is still possible to act as though it was not addressed to me, and at the end the real glance, straightforward, that lasted a twenty-fourth of a second, the length of a film frame.”*

*He quite fascinated about temples, At the funeral of animal in a temple, he found children looking not with fear, but with curiosity, as if they wanted to stare through the partition of live and death, They haven't experience death themselves, at what point does such curiosity will disappear ? When fear comes with a face and a name , like the ship of bijagos archipelago, and gradually replaces curiosity,*

Filmic  
observation

*The Foreign Eye*

*'After circling the globe, only banality still interests me.' - sans soleil*

when you're on a long trip - you're not at where you live everyday, you tend to see  
**everything as a scene or spectacle, seeing it at a distance.**

It is time to start use ones senses, and start fantansy, recaptures the distanced  
intimacy.



With architecture drawing , we generate new space on blank sheet. With film, we're working with a s  
**tion'**, with it, we understand narrative, ***not propositional.***

The project is to understand these thick observations through the lens and then extract information  
some (spatially) changes, or empowered characters in the film to do something.



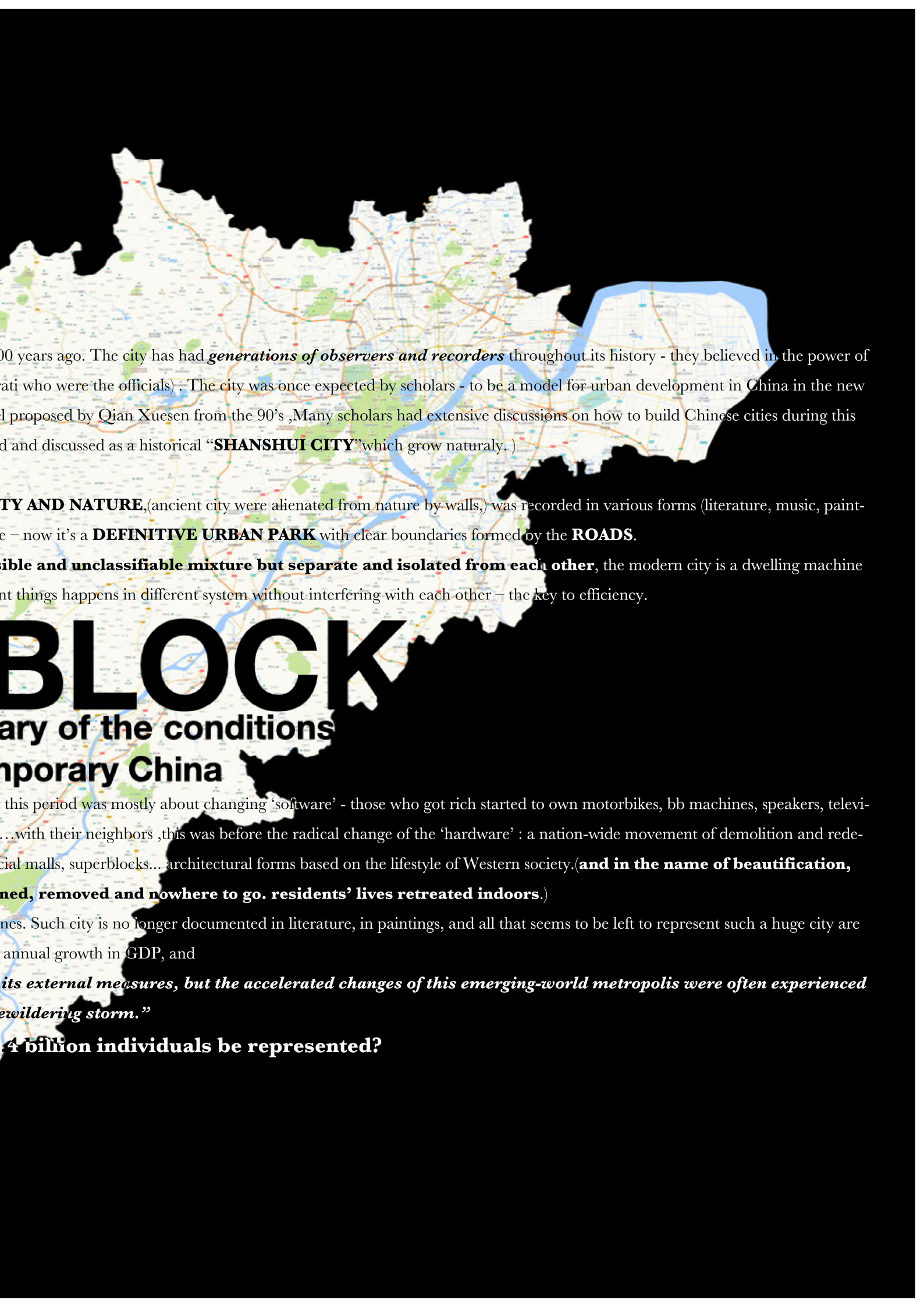


*Part of the footages*

situation which **already full of informations**, histories, routines .. or they called ‘ **thick observa-**  
 s from it and reassemble it, And by **reassemble** it there maybe moment one can actually do make







100 years ago. The city has had *generations of observers and recorders* throughout its history - they believed in the power of (scholars who were the officials) . The city was once expected by scholars - to be a model for urban development in China in the new model proposed by Qian Xuesen from the 90's ,Many scholars had extensive discussions on how to build Chinese cities during this period and discussed as a historical “**SHANSHUI CITY**”which grow naturally. )

**CITY AND NATURE**, (ancient city were alienated from nature by walls,) was recorded in various forms (literature, music, painting) – now it’s a **DEFINITIVE URBAN PARK** with clear boundaries formed by the **ROADS**.

**Unmanageable and unclassifiable mixture but separate and isolated from each other**, the modern city is a dwelling machine where different things happens in different system without interfering with each other – the key to efficiency.

# BLOCK

## History of the conditions in Contemporary China

In this period was mostly about changing ‘software’ - those who got rich started to own motorbikes, bb machines, speakers, television...with their neighbors ,this was before the radical change of the ‘hardware’ : a nation-wide movement of demolition and redevelopment, shopping malls, superblocks... architectural forms based on the lifestyle of Western society.(**and in the name of beautification, old cities were destroyed, removed and nowhere to go. residents’ lives retreated indoors.**)

Such city is no longer documented in literature, in paintings, and all that seems to be left to represent such a huge city are statistics, annual growth in GDP, and *its external measures, but the accelerated changes of this emerging-world metropolis were often experienced as a bewildering storm.*”

**How can 4 billion individuals be represented?**





# HOMO U

LABORATORY FOR S

TUT  
Ila beka,Louise Le

Architectura  
School of A





# URBANUS

SENSITIVE OBSERVERS

ORS  
moine, Gili Merin

l Association  
Architecture