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## **THE RESEARCH ON TRANSFORMATION OF THE CITY-LANDSCAPE BOUNDARY AND ADJACENT URBAN FABRIC IN HUBIN AREA**

**Abstract:** *The article studies the transformation of the boundary type and adjacent urban fabric in Hubin (lakeside) area of Hangzhou in the period from 1912 to 2018. Since the ancient times, Hubin area has connected Hangzhou ancient city with the world heritage site West Lake. As a special boundary between the nature and city since the ancient times, Hubin area is also the most prosperous area in Hangzhou. The reconstructions based on different needs of the time have influenced changes of the city-nature boundary. Relevant social factors have significantly influenced this boundary area in many respects including its openness, accessibility, density and enclosure degree of adjacent city and so on. As the bond of urban area and landscape, Hubin area also changes with the boundary and fabric. The research on evolution of Hubin area has demonstrated advantages and disadvantages in the evolution process of open and closed, public and private, large-scale and medium and small-scale buildings in city-landscape boundary and adjacent blocks. It has provided basic guides for urban development in the future and also offered reference for the city-landscape boundary of other cities in China.*

**Keywords:** *transformation, city-landscape boundary, urban fabric, social factors, openness, accessibility.*

### **Long-term closure of the city-landscape boundaries in history**

The West Lake has been the main water source in Hangzhou for a long time in history. With the development of economy and society, it has changed from a production-based lake to a scenery-based lake. However, China's classical cities have always served as "containers" with clear physical boundaries. The West Lake and the city are bound by walls. Historically, the West Lake act as the gardens occupied by the privileged classes. In the Qing dynasty, the rulers even set up military camps in Hubin area between the West Lake and the city. Hubin area at that time was surrounded by two walls, so the military camp in it was like a large castle that split the connection between the city blocks and the West Lake. Visitors to the West Lake needed to bypass the Qiantangmen and Yongjinmen in the distance to enter the West Lake. The West Lake and the city blocks were separated from each other (Fig.1).

### **Gradual opening of the city-landscape boundaries**

In 1912, Hangzhou ended the rule of the Qing Regime and began to demolish the city walls. Hubin area of the West Lake was gradually transformed into a public park open for the citizens. The military camps under the Qing Regime in Hubin area were dismantled. Parks, roads, private houses and shops were built, and a series of city parks were set up along the narrow strip of the West Lake. This was the first time that Hangzhou had opened the boundaries between its neighbors and the West Lake since it was founded.

The city's container was broken then, where naturally all kinds of elements of urban life flocked to. Hubin area transformed from the edge of the city into the city's commercial center area where restaurants and hotels were everywhere. At that time, Hubin area was called "new market". Since the Republic of China, a large number of lanes have been built in Hubin area.

Under the open boundary, the buildings along Hubin and rich road network realized the accessibility of the traffic in Hubin area. At that time Hubin area of the city was narrow and close, like a capillary system between the city and the West Lake. Only going west, people can reach the West Lake from various areas of the city. The building groups near the West Lake connected the city and the landscape in the form of arcade, open to the city's various interfaces. Citizens from the east side of the city can enter Hubin area through horizontal road, and carry out business and leisure activities. At this time, the West Lake and the city are intertwined.

Later, this border area has also been constantly occupied by relevant units. After founding of the People's Republic of China, a large number of state-owned units have adopted hydrophily of Hubin area and constructed many buildings not open to the outside world. By 1983, the units of six parks and old buildings for the residents in Hubin area had been demolished. Then in 2002, in order to achieve the government's policy of "returning the lake to people", six parks in Hubin area removed the city wall so that the landscape of the West Lake was incorporated into the city again. The whole West Lake became a circular large-scale open park, and Hubin area was a junction area of the West Lake city's landscape and the city.

### Passive closure of publicity

After demolishing of the park walls in Hubin area, the development mode of commercial buildings in the city began to change. Since the 1990s, traditional block-type business has gradually faded, being replaced by large "square box" commercial system.



Mall in77 2005



Mall in77 2015

Figure 1. Urban fabric of Hubin Area

In the early urban planning of Hangzhou in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the scale of block buildings gradually increased and small branches were gradually closed, replaced by large commercial facilities covering more than one block. This state affected Hubin area as well. For the originally friendly Hubin Road, due to the underground lane, the whole road completely turned into a walking lane, and formed a clear strip square. At the same time, a large hotel complex was under construction, with huge volume between the city and the West Lake. Then, the land along Hubin gradually developed into shopping malls.

Among them, for Hubin International Brands Street designed by Jerde Partnership (Fig.1), the architects initially expected to continue the style of Hubin area, to create a block-type business district, which was also one of the earliest modern block-type complexes in China. However, developers wanted to build the plot in the form of a high-end mall. The block-type business as well as brick paving could not provide consumers who wanted to buy luxury goods with high-end consumer experience. Therefore, the space between block-type several small

buildings were covered with a transparent roof, forming the enclosed place. Commercial positioning was naturally no longer as friendly as before, and the buildings in Hubin area not only expanded in the scale but also developed to be high-end, making people no longer enter the West Lake from the city in the form of multiple parallel lines. The relationship between the originally open boundaries and the city was destroyed then.

That the subway station of Hubin Station was opened in 2012 also brought lots of traffic problems. The surrounding rich road network has almost disappeared in the previous transformation. Waking out from the subway exit, tourists can only reach the lakeside of the West Lake through one of the main roads – Pinghai Road – on both sides of the street are large-scale shopping malls. On major holidays, it may easily cause safety problems. During the music fountain in the evening, rails are even needed at Pinghai Road to ensure safety of the area. After the G20, with increasing number of tourists, limited access cannot bear the burden of too many people, so the rails became permanent. The West Lake boundary, which was originally opened, had to be closed again at this time, and the originally gained publicity further lost.

### Restoration of publicity

At this time, the government has gradually realized the impacts of current large-scale blocks on the organization of traffic and people in Hubin area. The buildings in Hubin area are needed to be reorganized to become open to the public. Mall in 77, originally Area A and C were separated from each other and the porch bridge was established between the second and the third floor, to increase the connection between closed volumes. Besides, the entrances and exits were added to the subway station, hoping to guide the people at Longxiangqiao Station to the surrounding blocks.

In addition, the format of the mall itself has also began to adjust. The previous luxury stores have been closed and replaced by the business more affectionate to people, such as theme bookstores and coffee shops. As a result, the volume in Area A originally covered with the glass dome will remove the roof, so that the entire mall will turn into open block again. Visitors from Longxiangqiao can reach the lakeside of the West Lake through a new block types. In this adjustment, the entrance mode of the West Lake restores the block type.

Although it is difficult to adjust some large-scale buildings in the near future, the Xinyuan Plot that will be updated by the city in Hubin area as well as the lanes and alleys such as Quanye Li that will be transformed according to the existing pattern, make the building in Hubin area connected to the lakeside of the West Lake like capillaries, so that it really becomes the lakeside large open commercial and leisure area.

### Changes of the city-landscape boundary and adjacent urban fabric

Reviewing the development history of the boundary between the West Lake and Hubin area, it can be seen that the boundary has gone through the process of closure-opening-passive closure-re-opening. The process from closure to opening has been accompanied by change and adjustment of the urban fabric near the West Lake (Fig.2).

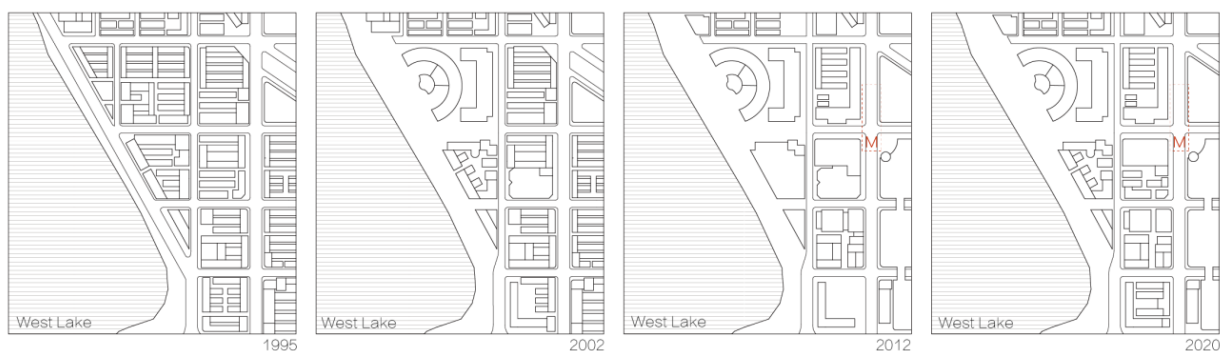


Figure 2. Urban fabric of Hubin Area

The reason for the process from closure to opening was the city's need for landscape daily. Open boundaries and the surrounding block business can support each other. The reason for the process from opening to passive closure is that with the construction of large-volume complexes, the architectural scale of Hubin area expanded and the secondary roads of the blocks have disappeared so that organization of people has become more passive. Then the government had to passively close the boundary of the West Lake. After the managers realized this problem, they gradually carried out adjustment and restored the scale of urban fabric, making Hubin become an area like capillaries again. With denser and more detailed urban fabric, the city and landscape have been tied together.

### **Conclusion**

Opening of the city-landscape boundary in Hubin and change of its surrounding urban fabric are accompanied by the progress and development of commercial forms at the social level as well as the urban managers' re-understanding of the relationship between architectural texture and boundaries. Similar urban and landscape boundaries are common in China. In Shanghai, the North Bund is in the second state, losing vitality under the too large scale of riverside city texture. Therefore, in the plot at the junction of the city-landscape, we should consider the influence of urban fabric on publicity of the boundary, so as to achieve more appropriate relationship between urban and landscape.

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### **References**

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