

# Lingnan Traditional Dwellings: Pátio das Seis Casas, Macau Peninsula

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**Abstract—** "Pátio" and "Beco" are the smallest existing roads in Macau. In the past, many Macau residents lived in "Pátio" and "Beco", and there was close contact and connection between neighbors. The Historic Centre of Macau is the 31st World Cultural Heritage Site in China. In the buffer zone of the historic district, there are many enclosures built by the Chinese in the past. As the street with the lowest level and the smallest scale, it has a certain flexibility and reflects the traditional Chinese social life and culture at that time. This research focuses on the non-legal protection of historical buildings in the buffer zone of Macau's world cultural heritage. Its style, artistic value, and future revitalization are very worthy of research.

**Keywords—** "Pátio" and "Beco", Lingnan Traditional Dwellings, Pátio das Seis Casas, buffer zone, Macau.

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the increasing demand for cultural inclusiveness and diversity in the international community, everyone and each group have different perceptions and descriptions of the past. We should establish a more inclusive narrative method, so that more people can fully understand and participate in the protection of heritage, and make cultural heritage a "colorful future" for mankind.

The Pátio, in Macau, refers to the texture of a group of houses facing the common space, from which the public space leads to the walkway or the entrance and exit. Most were built in the 19th century and are mainly concentrated in the inner port area. It is generally two to three-storey houses, and the buildings adopt traditional construction methods: masonry walls, sloping roofs, high ceilings, and patio designs that are conducive to air circulation.

The Pátio das Seis Casas is L-shaped and consists of six independent houses. The facade faces a central public space with a water well. It is the only Pátio in Macau that still retains its old appearance. Pátio das Seis Casas has a history of a hundred years. It is one of the few buildings in Macau with complete traditional Lingnan style. It has typical traditional Chinese architectural features and Portuguese architectural elements, reflecting its unique architectural artistic value. It is also an important physical material for studying the residence, living and real estate construction of Chinese businessmen in Macau in the late Qing Dynasty.

There is only one family left, and the landscape paintings painted by the painter George Vitalievich Smirnoff, who lived in Pátio das Seis Casas, also exist in the memory of the old city. The revitalization and utilization of Pátio das Seis Casas is conducive to revitalizing the old district of Rua da Praia do Manduco, guiding

tourists to enter the old city of Macau for an in-depth tour and appreciate the cultural heritage of both Chinese and Western Macau. At the same time, Pátio das Seis Casas is a vivid scene that retains the memory of the city of Macau, and is of great significance for cultivating the traditional culture and historical knowledge of Macau citizens, especially young people.



**Figure 01: Entrance**

**Image source: Photographed by the author**

## **II. LOCATION AND TIME OF APPEARANCE**

### **A. Location**

Pátio das Seis Casas is located in Freguesia de São Lourenço on the Macau Peninsula, adjacent to the Church of St. Lawrence. In the past, the surrounding area of the church was an area inhabited by the Portuguese. The Portuguese name is Pátio das Seis Casas, which literally translates to six houses, which matches the name of Pátio das Seis Casas, which lacks traditional Chinese characteristics and emotional color. Another name of Pátio das Seis Casas is Fuliuli, which is homophonic with the Cantonese "Fulu", which means looking forward to a happy life, making the name more local and traditional.

### **B. Overall Building Changes**

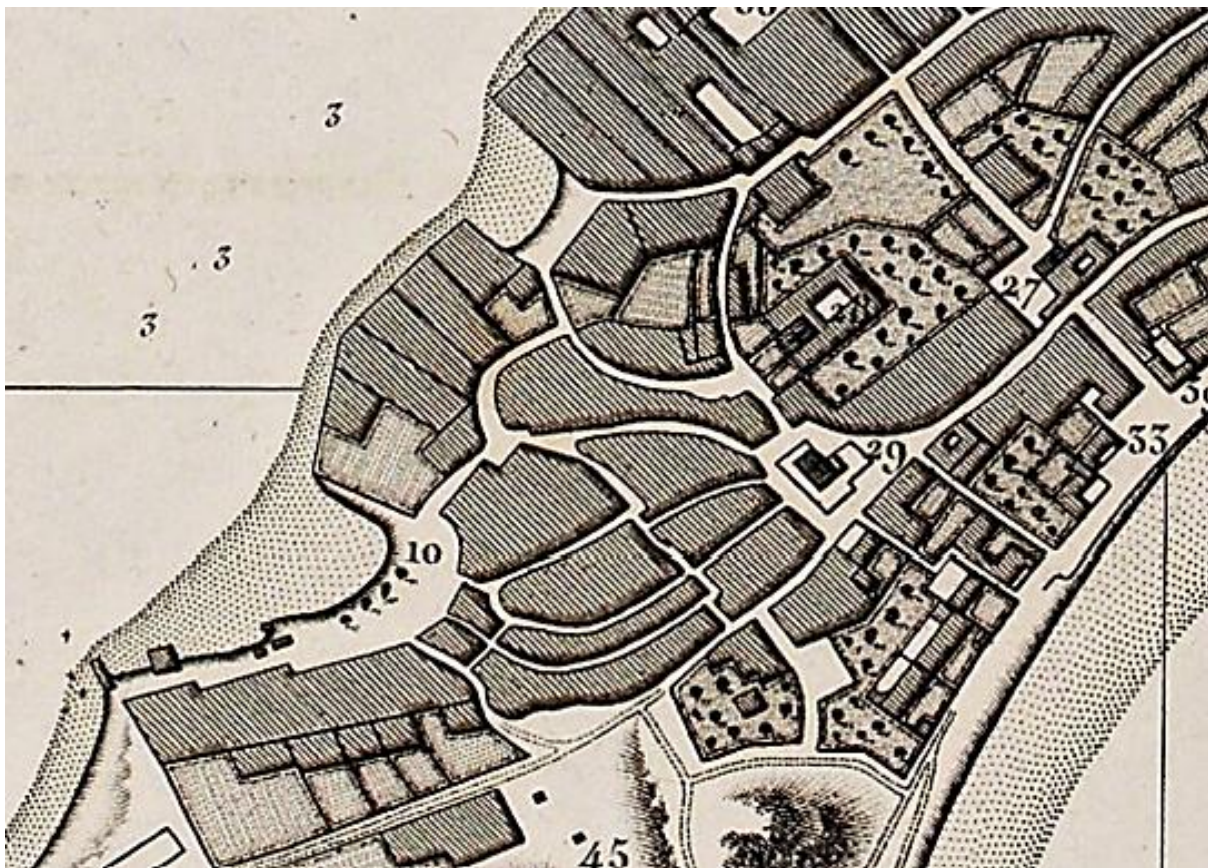
The houses within the Pátio das Seis Casas have also changed in their past residential use. Architect Lui chak keong pointed out that in the initial design and planning of the six houses in the enclosure, there should be only one door, that is, the double door in the middle, and the entrance from the double door is the hall. And near the gate, on the side of the hall is the stairs. In use, you can enter directly from the hall and go to the second floor directly. The flow line of people going upstairs has less interference with the hall



on the ground floor. However, since each building has only one external door, and there is no space division in the interior, the six houses should be used by one unit and one household at first. According to the current situation, in addition to the large double door in the center of each unit in the enclosure, a small door has been added on the side of the stairs. So it adapts to the ever-increasing residential population.

### ***C. Appearance time***

In the form seen on the map in 1792, Pátio das Seis Casas has not yet appeared. The serial numbers 27, 28, and 29 on the map are all the locations of the church at that time. There are many streets in this area, and there are no small-scale alleys yet.



***Figure 02: Macau Map in 1792***

***Image source: Macau University of Science and Technology Library - Macau in a Global Map <http://gmom.must.edu.mo/>, Collection Location: MUST Main Library N410 Map Storage Room: Map G2308.M2 G85 1792, Copy and original: Facsimile. Reproduced by: Library of Macau University of Science and Technology, 2020. Printed on rice paper. Map Provenance: Biblioth que Nationale de France; Received in: 2017; Call Number: FOL-H-3109.***

However, in 1927, the shape of the map shows that the texture of Pátio das Seis Casas is obviously L-shaped. The original large plot in this area was gradually divided into different small plots by streets and alleys of

different grades and scales. Therefore, it is speculated that the appearance of Pátio das Seis Casas was before the 20th century.



**Figure 03: Macau Map in 1927**

*Image source: Macau University of Science and Technology Library - Macau in a Global Map*  
*http://gmom.must.edu.mo/,Collection Location: MUST Main Library N410 Map StorageRoom: Map*  
*G7823.M2 P531927,Copy and original: Facsimile. Reproduced by: Library ofMacau University of*  
*Science and Technology.2019.Printed on non-woven paper.. Map Provenance: Biblioteca Nacional de*  
*Portugal; Re-ceived in: 2017; Call Number: C.C.217 R.*

### III. ARCHITECTURAL ART

In terms of details, the architectural details of Pátio das Seis Casas are very exquisite and have been preserved relatively completely. For example, the brick carvings on the top of the gables, the decorative paintings on the top of the building facades, the traditional decorations on the ridges of the gatehouses, the painted murals under the eaves, and the grey sculptures with the heads of the chimneys perfectly reflect the architectural characteristics of the traditional residences of Guangfu in Lingnan. Although Pátio das Seis Casas is currently not included in the World Cultural Heritage of the Historic Center of Macau and is not legally protected, it is lucky to be able to retain such integrity.





**Figure 04: Architectural Walls and Land Shrines**

**Image source: Photographed by the author**

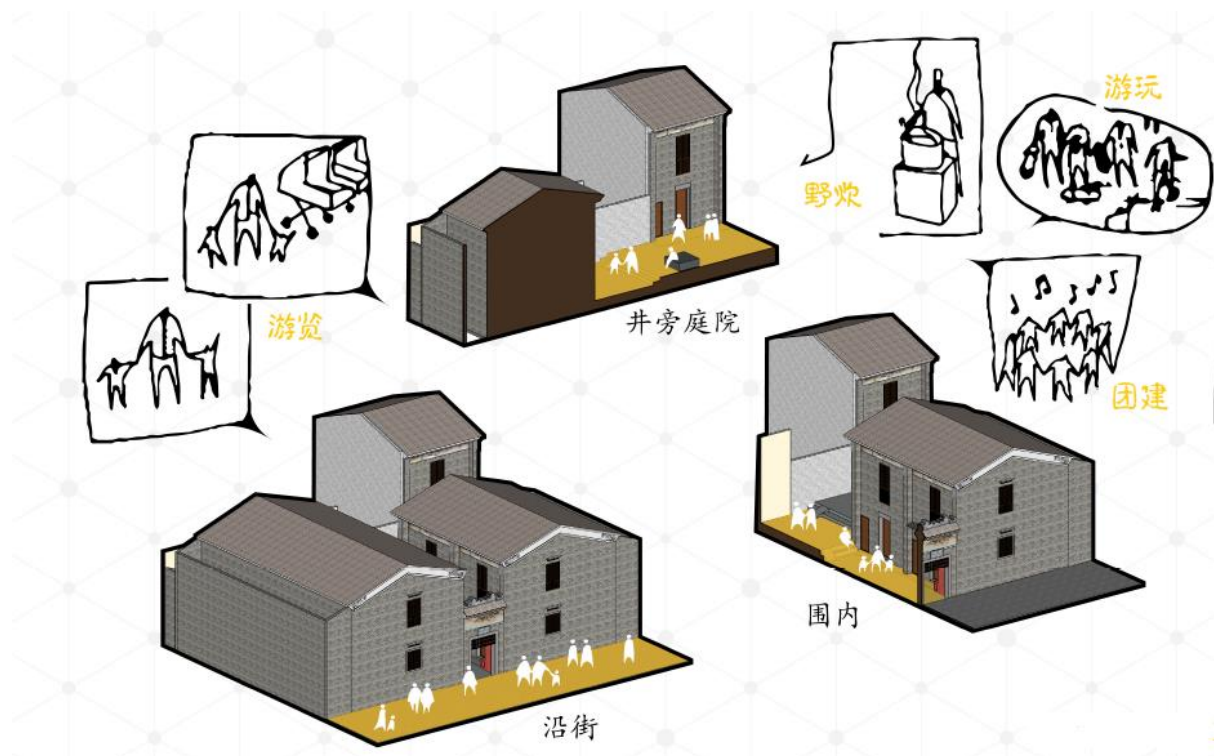


**Figure 05: Architectural Walls and courtyard well**

**Image source: Photographed by the author**

#### **IV. SPACE ACTIVITY ANALYSIS**

In the past, the public space in the Pátio das Seis Casas was used by the residents in the Pátio, just like our current community, small residential community, the residents in the Pátio are harmonious and friendly, and even the space in the same building will be shared with other families, similar to In the current co-tenancy nature, the activities inside and outside the enclosure are clearly separated. Today, there is only one family left, but due to the reputation of the World Heritage site and the high attention of the government and the public, these streets and alleys around the historic center of Macau have also begun to attract the attention of tourists, and they have gradually joined the modern tourism activities of visiting.



**Figure 06: Analysis of Space Activities**

*Image source: Drawn by the author*

## **V. PAINTERS WHO HAVE LIVED IN: GEORGE VITALIEVICH SMIRNOFF**

Introducing the famous Western painters in the history of Macau art, we usually mention George Chinnery (1774-1852) in England, Auguste Borget (1808-1877) in France and Russia's George • Smirnoff (George Vitalievich Smirnoff) (1903-1947) and so on. All three have lived or settled in Macau and Hong Kong, and left behind a large number of paintings and texts. In a time when photography was not yet widespread, their precious paintings helped to record and hand down the old buildings, streetscapes and coastal scenery of Macau and Hong Kong. Among the three, Smirnoff spent the longest time in Hong Kong, and although he lived in Macau for a short time, he created fruitful painting results.

George Vitalievich Smirnoff (1903-1947, Russian name Yuri) was a Russian painter who once lived in Macau. Born on October 27, 1903 in Vladivostok, which is located at the ends of the Muvier-Amu peninsula. At the beginning of this century, this city originally belonged to China and was ceded to Russia according to the Sino-Russian "Beijing Treaty" in 1860. It has become an important international trade port on Russia's Pacific coast and the largest industrial center in the Far East. Its prosperity is comparable to that of Shanghai, and its commercial civilization is increasingly prosperous. Not all residents worked in Vladivostok, however, and Smirov's father had left Moscow before he was sensible and never returned. Smirnoff was raised by his mother alone.



When Smiroff was young, he and his mother followed in the footsteps of his aunts and aunts, took the train through Suifenhe, and moved to Harbin in northeastern China with his mother after the "October Revolution" in Russia. In 1928, he graduated from the Department of Engineering and Architecture of Harbin University. In addition to undertaking architectural and design work, he also started painting and selling. In addition to engaging in architectural design and art creation, he also designs sets for musicals and costumes for ballets. He is an active figure in Harbin's cultural circles.

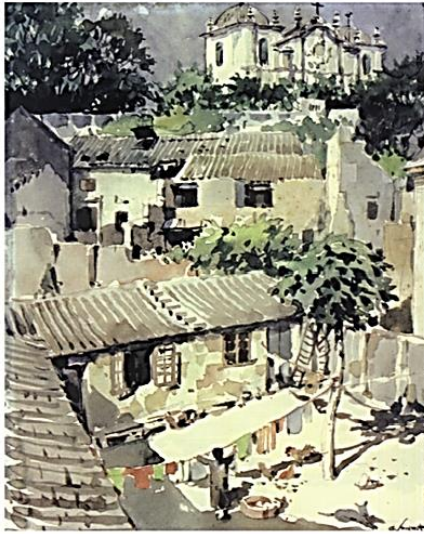
Smiroff's marriage was concluded in 1934, during the warring years, when he fled to Qingdao in Shandong with his wife and two daughters in 1937 due to the massive Japanese invasion of China. On January 10, 1938, the Japanese marines landed at Shazikou, 18 miles east of Qingdao. As a result, the lives of foreigners in Qingdao were also seriously threatened by the Japanese army.



Main Facade of St. Augustin's Church [Santo Agostinho].  
 1945. Watercolour.  
 25.5 cm x 29.4 cm.  
 Leal Senado / Lu í s de Camões Museum, Macao.  
 In: Macau • A invencao da paisagem, ill. 64.



Side elevation of St. Anthony's Church [Santo Ant ó nio]  
 --towards the Lu í s de Camões Garden [Jardim Lu í s de Camões]  
 1945. Watercolour. 22.4 cm x 28.3 cm.  
 Leal Senado / Lu í s de Camões Museum, Macao.  
 In: Macau • A invencao da paisagem, ill. 67.



View of St. Joseph's Church [Sao Jos é] Seminar and Chinese Dwellings.  
1945. Watercolour. 28.6 cm×22.6 cm.  
Leal Senado / Lu í s de Camões Museum, Macao.  
In: Macau • A invencao da paisagem, ill. 77.

**Figure 07: Paintings by George Vitalievich Smirnov**

**Image source: Macau Art Museum**

At that time, only some inland areas in China, Hong Kong and Macau, were not affected by the artillery fire. In order to escape the fighting, Smirnov also left Hong Kong with other Europeans, only by boat with the help of a Belgian friend who was a collector of his paintings. Today, people can see the words "Qingdao Security Council" in the lower left corner of the side photo of Smirnov's crown. It can be seen that Smirnov has been integrated into the life of the local people to a certain extent when he was in Qingdao, and he did not stay there as a refugee or tourist.

On the other hand, because after Japan occupied Qingdao, it exercised military rule in the name of the Qingdao garrison, and the "Qingdao Security Council" was established on January 17, 1938, and changed to "Qingdao Special City" on January 10 of the following year. Office". From this, it can be seen that Smirnov left Qingdao at the end of 1938 and arrived in Hong Kong at the beginning of 1939. At that time, more and more people fled from the mainland to Hong Kong, and the rent of houses in the city increased. The financially-strapped Smirnov family could not live and work on Hong Kong Island, so they settled in Cheung Chau. He originally lived in Cheung Chau, and most of his existing landscape paintings about Hong Kong were painted in Cheung Chau. Later, he was hired by Marsman and Co. as an architect, participated in air defense engineering, and joined the Volunteer Army.

Before Smirnov arrived in Hong Kong, Hong Kong's fine arts were already highly developed. In 1937, the Governor of Hong Kong, Sr. Andrew Caldecott, initiated the establishment of a large-scale Academy of Fine Arts, while the Filipino painter Diosdado M. Lorenzo has established the "Hong Kong School of Painting, Drawing and Sculpture". When Smirnov arrived in Hong Kong, the Lingnan painter Huang Shaoqiang also arrived, and established the Hong Kong Academy of Fine Arts, and the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts



resumed classes in Hong Kong. By 1941, Feng Pingshan Library held the last painting exhibition before the war - Western Painting Exhibition. Since then, Hong Kong has entered a period of occupation.

On December 8, 1941, the Japanese occupied Hong Kong, and foreigners living there returned to their home countries. At that time, Smiroff had three children, could not find a job, lived a very hard life, and had to move constantly for personal safety, and at the same time, he painted day and night for income. Although he was almost poor and had no brushes, inks, colors and other painting supplies, he still managed to find relevant materials to paint, and painted Hong Kong scenery outside small wooden boxes to sell as souvenirs. During this period, he painted a group of landscape paintings of Hong Kong and Kowloon, which were sold on consignment to Russian restaurants in Hong Kong and Kowloon; he mounted all the body oil paintings and watercolor works to be sold in wooden frames and hung them on temporary hangings. On the tent, in order to make it easier to identify, he placed the number of Arabic numerals on the frame to solve the language difficulty. The painters sat beside them, reading books to lighten their luminosity. The Japanese loved these works very much and bought a lot of them.

Hong Kong's supplies were becoming increasingly scarce, and when Smiroff couldn't find a canvas, he used plywood or cardboard instead. He devoted himself entirely to the creation of watercolours, largely due to the lack of oil paints. During this period, most of his works were signed with Smirov's name, undated except for the year, but sometimes he used the pseudonym Vonrims.

In fact, Smiroff could leave Hong Kong safe from the Japanese army, but none of his family had any identification documents, so he had to remain in custody. Due to the lack of materials, he could not resume his work as an architect. He had to take a second place. He continued to paint, design fat boxes, match boxes, and candy wrapping paper. At the same time, he also used Hong Kong's landscape sketches to make holiday cards.

Alcoholic beverages during the fall of Hong Kong were very expensive, which was a serious living problem for the alcoholic Russians. To make a living, Smirov and his other Russians often brewed rice wine without permission. One day, he was inexplicably sent to Stanley Prison for two months. It was only when he was released that he was charged with brewing wine without permission.

During the fall of Hong Kong, he was employed by the Japanese government to paint murals in public works facilities, and was imprisoned in Stanley Prison for a month for making wine without permission. Due to the hard life and the fact that the residence in Tsim Sha Tsui was destroyed by the US air raid in December 1943, he decided to flee to Macau with his family.

According to material provided by Smirnoff's daughter Irene Smirnoff in 1985, the imprisonment of brewing bootleg wine was one of the reasons why Smirnoff fled to Haojiang. On the other hand, in the vast territory of China, only Macau is close to Hong Kong and is free from the threat of the bayonet of the Japanese army. It is relatively politically stable, and many large families have fled to Macau from various places. So this provides a lot of opportunities for a person who makes a living by painting.

In 1944, Smiroff and his daughter first arrived in Macau, his wife and other children then came to Macau to join them. In the early days, Smiroff also could not find a job in Macau and was penniless. At that time, everything in Macau was very expensive, and a pack of cigarettes in the black market cost more than 40 yuan; in desperation, Smiroff passed Friendship, received a grant from the British Consulate in Macau at that time to tide over the difficulties. However, the source of these funds is said to come from the Macau government, but the painter's daughter Ai Lian recalled that she was not clear whether the money came from international charities or the Macau government.

Since the 1940s, Smiroff has settled in Macau. At that time, he painted many paintings of Macau's buildings and street scenes. During the war, the Peak View Hotel served as a refuge for him and his family, as well as his first home in Macau. During the Anti-Japanese War, Macau, like Hong Kong, gathered many refugees. The Smiroff family had to keep moving houses, and finally, the family was more fortunate to find a house in better condition in "Liuwuwei" (Fluoli), but it needed to be shared with other families. However, Smiroff was fortunate enough to have the space to paint. Later, with the help of a Jesuit missionary, he worked as a teacher at St. Louis School at 33 South Bay Street, and his life finally improved, and he moved to 2 Rua da Prata.

When Hong Kong fell, a large number of Portuguese people who originally lived in Hong Kong also used Macau as a place of refuge. In order to allow those children who dropped out of school to return to school, the Irish Jesuits who took refuge in Macau opened a school in a building on Nam Van Street. It uses English as the language of instruction and recruits students. Smiroff got a job at the school as an art and math teacher.

In fact, Smiroff spent nearly a year in Macau, a small town that brought him the most stable life in his life. He took his daughter to and fro between the San Diego Fortress and other historical places to paint and mingle. He felt peace and quiet here, free from flight and unemployment due to war. He devotes all his energy to fine arts, and even when the painting materials are lacking, he does not spare the back of the watercolor paper.

Although Smiroff's influence on Macau's fine arts is not as great as that of Channery, his art education has inspired contemporary Macau painters. Lu's Dem'ee, known as the father of modern art in Macau, a well-known painter in Portugal and a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Porto, is his high point. Those directly influenced by Dem'ee include Guo Shi, Painters such as Tan Zhisheng and Zhao Weifu.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The surrounding area of Pátio das Seis Casas has a lot of historical relics. It is collectively called "Xiahuan Siwei" along with Pátio da Ilusão, Patio do Sal and Pátio do Bonzo. The surrounding areas are close to each other, and they all have high historical and cultural value, reflecting the unique characteristics of Macau.





*Figure 08: Well-preserved residential buildings*

*Image source: Photographed by the author*



In addition, there are important historical relics of the city such as Pátio da Claridade, Pátio das Seis Casas, Pátio do Padre Narciso, and St. Lawrence Church. For the entire block, the texture of Pátio das Seis Casas has hardly changed for more than 100 years, and it has certain historical and cultural value. Therefore, in terms of tourism development and education promotion, Pátio das Seis Casas not only has extremely high contemporary social value in education and economy, but also has high flexibility and potential in future development.

The history of its existence and the historical celebrities related to it are also important information for the historical development of Macau. Therefore, the existence of Pátio das Seis Casas is also of great social significance for improving the integrity and richness of the continuation of Macau's historical information. For Macau scholars, it is an important living textbook and research object, and for local residents, it is an important heritage to regain their memories and satisfy their feelings.

At the same time, it also reflects on its future protection development direction, such as:

1. Retain the street shape and external space elements (water wells, gate towers, land shrines) inside Pátio das Seis Casas.
2. Comprehensive structural repair of the buildings in the enclosure and cleaning of the facades, clearing of the newly added building components in the past.
3. Parking is prohibited within the Pátio to avoid damage to the original pavement monuments, and the size of the enclosure is small, and irregular parking will easily hinder the passage and cause unnecessary accidents.
4. In terms of activation, it is suggested to consider the coordination with the surrounding living environment and the linkage development with the surrounding historical relics.
5. It is recommended to place exhibition, education and other functions in the Pátio, and residence can also be considered, and it is not advisable to place too many commercial functions.
6. The surrounding environment should try to maintain its original quiet characteristics.
7. The issue of property rights in the enclosure should be given full attention, and the government should communicate with the property owners as soon as possible in the planning and conservation work to coordinate.

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