

preserving interiority

# RECOVERING SPATIAL SYNTAX

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## Preface

There's a particular sense of a place to any old Armenian settlement. Structures are gentle to the topography, while they weave together an almost outsidersness, but not really. The interstitial space between the dwellings, that which is designated to the communal or public life, is continuously inviting, wrapping you into its arms while never fully enclosing. This particular *psycho geography* is analogous to an anthropogenic island, one which P. Sloterdijk would perhaps describe as a “1,” with a centripetal force producing a sense of belonging or a sense of warmth. Here, the center of the settlement, which is often called the "middle village" (գյուղամեջ) will be analogous to the hearth of old living space. Kond district, like other old Armenian settlements, is a living example of this old sense of being inside. In the meantime, this narrow, maze-like space is continuously fragmented by the demands of contemporary life. Kond, with its continuity and collective interior commons, now appears to us as a collection of discrete and disconnected fragments.

Spatially, Kond has taken place for centuries, if not millennia. It represents an organizational complexity that's incomprehensible to the simplistic modernist paradigm, aiming to artificially simplify that which it cannot understand. This paradigm is aiming to produce cities that are too clear or simple. It's putting forward false intelligibility as if societies can fit neatly together like lego blocks. This paradigm has been the main driver of urbanization in Yerevan. It's also embodied in the past propositions for Kond. In contrast, an approach to the environment that's looser and more true to life has been rejected. At its worst, this paradigm tells you to thematize historic neighborhoods, an architectural "Disney Land" approach that's inviting big capital and excluding the actuality/diversity/complexity of collective life. This approach is the culprit of political, socio-spatial homogeneity and an enemy to urban diversity and memory.

The presupposition of this reasoning is simple and well known; cities must be true to life because they have the power to shape societies, not just represent them. Contemporary life exerts its demands with economic possibilities. It cultivates the human capital while also forcing the public realm into the realm of consumption. It comes with positive opportunities and adverse side effects.

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<sup>1</sup> This term by Peter Sloterdijk characterizes one of the anthropogenic islands, which, according to the German philosopher, decipher the collective human agency.

# The Case for Preservation in the Context of Urban Planning and Design

## INTRODUCTION

How can we connect with the past—whose erasure may lead to regret—without transforming the city into a museum? This well-known dilemma in urbanism, as seen in the case of Kond, is crucial to explore by comparing two distinct approaches: simulation versus the vernacular. The first approach is the construction of the fake past—building new structures but with the visual style/character of the past. In preservation practice, no self-respecting architect or urbanist would adopt such an approach, as the results of this simplistic and insufficient critical engagement often lead to spaces that, at best, become static and imposing cultural pavilions. Moreover, this approach represents a baseless assertion about the concept of an "authentic look." But what truly constitutes authenticity? Which layer of the past should be reproduced? What defines the authentic appearance, and which composition should be prioritized? The passage of time creates diverse and layered pasts. Therefore, in the practice of historic preservation and regeneration, there exists an opposing approach that focuses on preserving or recovering the environment by emphasizing the transformations that have occurred within the built environment over time. One well-known example of this approach is D. Chipperfield's project to restore the Neues Museum in Berlin, where details such as bullet holes from World War II were intentionally preserved. When discussing districts, this approach engages the principles of narrative conservation in preservation practices, rendering the environment functional in the present and ensuring its continuity for the future. This approach is known as vernacular urbanism. At an urban scale, it raises complex political questions, as seen in the case of the Xintiandi neighborhood in Shanghai, where designers had to decide whether to preserve the traces of poverty and colonialism. They decided not to preserve those traces, opting instead to recover only the facades. The rest of the spaces were allocated for commercial use, creating an environment for economically advantaged and socially affluent groups. This approach does not differ significantly from the simulation approach. While simulation focuses on the production of fake realities, "façadism"<sup>2</sup> involves the partial reproduction of the past, filtering out the full picture and presenting half-truths. Therefore, it is essential to adopt an approach that avoids both social homogeneity and uniformity, as seen in the previous example, enabling the restoration of time's transformations as a continuity without fetishizing or filtering any episode. These introductory remarks,<sup>3</sup> which reiterate well-known professional ideas, aim to highlight the approach that will guide the proposed intervention.

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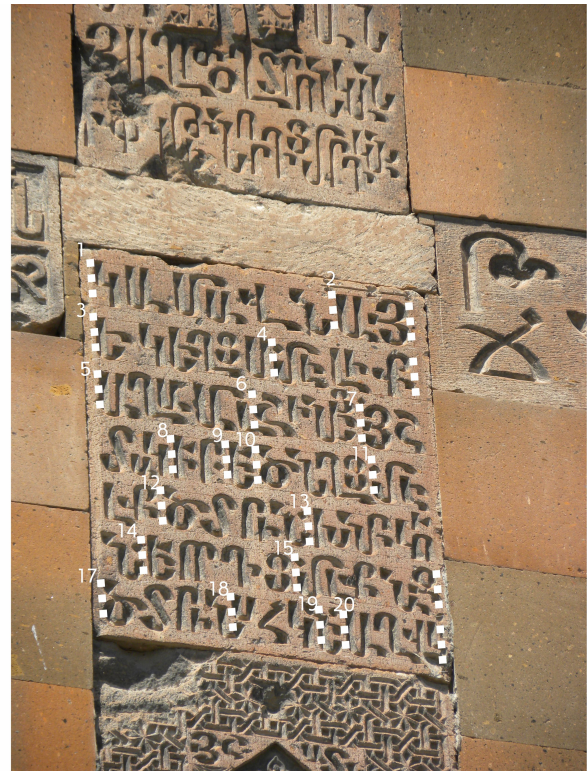
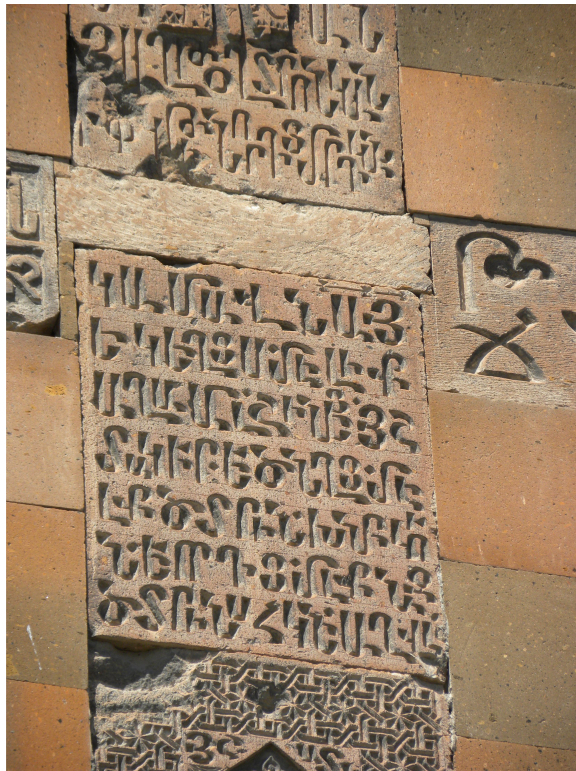
<sup>2</sup> façadism is a term put forward by R. Sennett from the book "The Decline of the Public Man". This sociological term outlines the criticism of a wide professional community to such an urbanistic approach, by M. Sorkin, J. Jacobs, D. Harvey, S. Zukni, S. Sassen and others.

<sup>3</sup> introductory remarks are in part a summary of points made by R. Sennett in "Building and Dwelling: Ethics .."

## Proposed Concept of Spatial Syntax

As already mentioned, the preservation of historical districts is not so much about restoring appearance; rather, the critical question lies in how to restore the spatial structure. To this end, this project has analyzed and highlighted the issues within the current spatial structure of the Kond district. This includes the distorted symbolic order of the district, the nature of the resulting internal common space, the continuity and discontinuities of urban patterns, and the dynamics of movement, territoriality, and fragmentation. Additionally, it addresses the dangers of gentrification, which threaten social homogeneity and cultural diversity, alongside other significant problems such as functional infrastructural breakdowns, isolation, and their subsequent economic implications.

To clarify the proposed concept of spatial syntax, let us direct our attention to two inscriptions placed on the facade of the Church of Saint John the Baptist.



What is illegible from today's point of view becomes legible when we consider the ancient writing conventions, where empty spaces between words were mentally inserted by the reader during the act of reading. "By the will of God, the church was built by Melik Aghamalyan in memory of his parents, Melik Tsatur and Khanbekun, and his sons, Melik Nazin, Tsatur, Isahak, and Aghavel"

“ԿԱՄԱԽՆ Ա(ՍՏՈՒԾՈՅ)Յ / ԵԿԵՂ(Ե)Ց(Ի)Ս ՄԷԼԻՔ / ԱՂԱՄԱԼ ՇԻՆԵՑ Յ(Ի)Շ(Ա)/ՏԱԿ ԻՒՐ ԵՒ  
ԾՆ(Օ)Ղ(Ա)Ց՝ ՄԷԼ(Ի)Ք Ծ(Ա)Տ(ՈՒ)ՐԻՆ, Խ(Ա)ՆԲ(Է)ԿՈՒՆ ԵՒ /ՈՐԴՈՑ ՄԷԼԻՔ ՆԱԶ(ԻՆ), /  
Ծ(Ա)Տ(ՈՒ)ՐԻՆ, / Ս(Ա)Հ(Ա)ԿԻՆ, ԱՂ(Ա)Վ(ԵԼԻՆ)”<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> inscription text read by K. Ghafadaryan, Yerevan. Medieval Monuments and Inscriptions, 1975, pp. 169-171.





If making that inscription readable only requires familiarity with the principles and traditions of Armenian orthography, then reading the next inscription necessitates understanding a broader context. "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews, Sign of the Victorious Lord for the Salvation of the Sons of People"

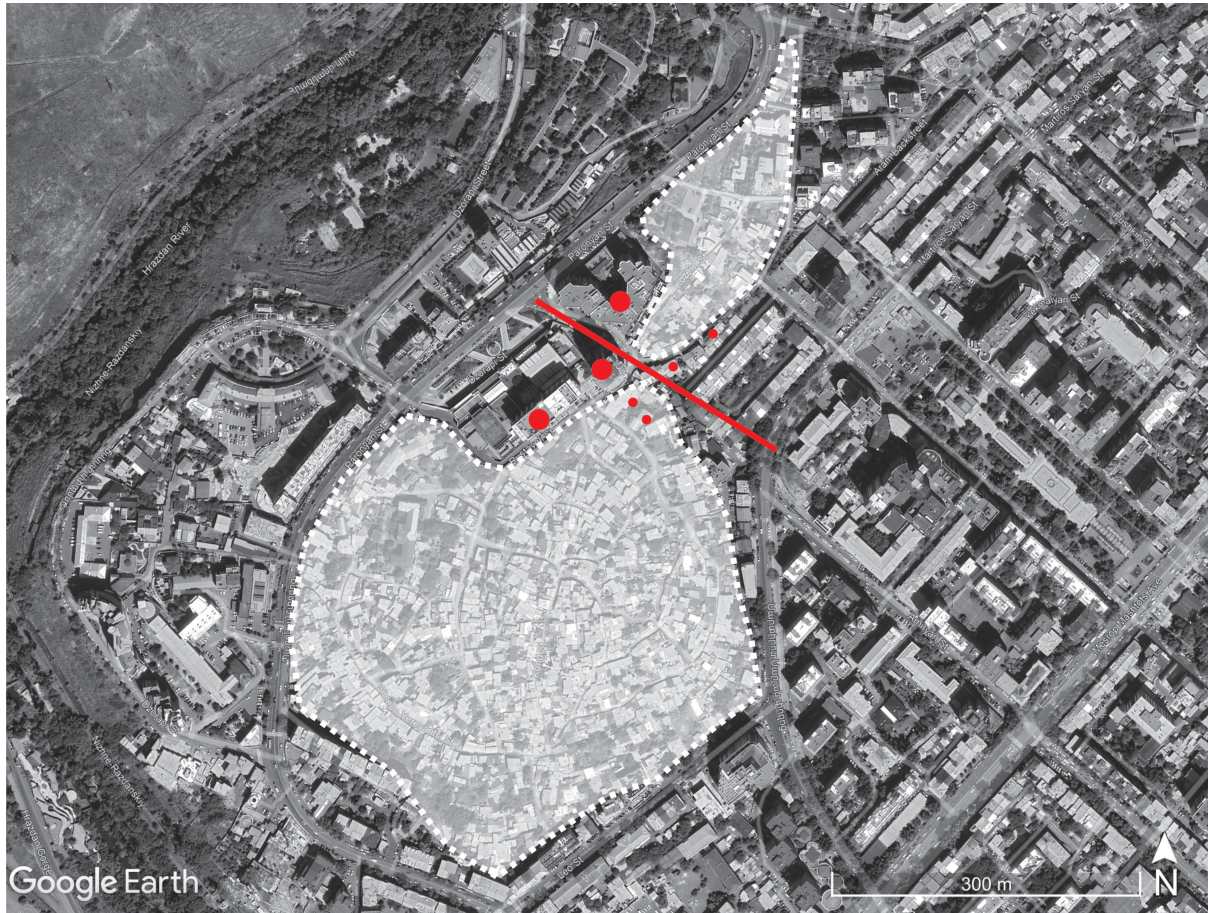
"Յ(ԻՍՈՒՍ) Ն(ԱԶՈՎՐԵՑԻ) Թ(ԱԳԱՒՈՐ) Հ(ՐԷԻՑ). / ՆՇԱՆ / ՅԱՂԹՕՂ Տ(Է)ՐՈՒՆ(Ա)ԿԱՆ / Ի ՓՐԿ(ՈՒ)ԹԻ(Ի)Ն ՈՐԴԻ(Ո)Ց Մ(Ա)ՐԴԿԱՆ": 4

Without knowledge of the Christian context, this inscription would have remained cryptic. In general, within such regimes of legibility, the text remains unintelligible and closed until the final or key word of the sentence is spoken—much like in the past, when scrolls were read in languages such as Hebrew or Greek, with reading being a continual process of discovery, akin to the performance of a song, progressing from letters to words, from words to sentences, and so on.

In a broader context, without a clear final word or common hypothesis, the same religious texts diverged, giving rise to distinct and sometimes opposing religions, namely Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. In other words, merely decoding syntax literally does not lead to full understanding. Therefore, syntax as a concept in this case should be approached spatially, transitioning from literal decoding to semantic and conceptual comprehension. As we develop this metaphor, let us turn our attention to Kond as a spatially structured unity and as a "sentence" inscribed within a wider context. Within it, we may find monuments of Armenian Christianity, a semi-preserved mosque, and even monuments to the market "religion"—all serving as monuments or "words." Different layers of society and history overlap within this context. The Kond, in its currently preserved state, remains unreadable as a whole, despite having had a distinct spatial structure in the past. If we consider it a "sentence," its meaning is obscured; the legible words and illegible letters remain inarticulate.



At present, Kond consists of two isolated parts: one is the small island-like area preserved around St. John the Baptist Church, and the other is the semi-preserved section bordered by Paronyan, Leo, and Saryan streets. Both parts are disconnected from each other and the city, much like two separate islands.



One of the first problematic points that disrupted the urban structure of Kond is the division between these two islands. Without restoring this connection, the "sentence" remains incomplete and fragmented. Currently, the primary function of this section is to serve as a service area for transportation, primarily catering to the back entrance of the Dvin Hotel and the adjacent high-rise complex. The latter, with its assertive kitsch presence, effectively conceals St. John the Baptist Church, overshadowing its role as an urbanistic landmark. In the past, an awkward pedestrian or programmatic connection between these two islands could still be discerned—there may have been one or more semantic linking "words" in this part of the "sentence." Now, however, that connection has been completely erased from the "sentence." In general, the territorial formations shaped by this neoliberal creed—marked by the fetishization of market logic—have, in their social, public, symbolic, and spatial dimensions, subordinated the central element of Armenian cultural identity in the Kond district: the Christian monument. It is evident that without addressing this disjunction, it is no longer feasible to view Kond as one historical district and urban structure, as it has been for much of its existence. Furthermore, without a restorative intervention, this "sentence" will remain unreadable or

may even evolve into a "sentence" about something entirely different. If these formations dominate the Armenian Christian monument purely in spatial and visual terms, they have also socially introduced a destructive process of gentrification to the Kond historical district. This process has led to the creation of homogeneous social zones, where the "elite" area threatens to annihilate the rest, ultimately eroding the collective interior common and cultural diversity.

Currently, several social strata coexist in this fractured area, each closely yet separately. These include tourist and hedonistic consumer communities drawn to the Dvin Hotel, "elite" enclosed communities created by new multi-storey buildings, small guest house and hostel occupants, local long-term residents and renters of older homes, nearby ordinary Yerevan residential communities influenced by shabby modernist residences, and a small Christian community centered around St. John the Baptist Church, among others. Despite the density and spatial proximity, all these communities remain isolated from one another, as they only occupy an area in Kond without truly living in it. Thus, to address the rupture between the two isolated parts of Kond, it is insufficient to merely restore the pedestrian connection. If the spatial syntax is to be reinstated, this area also requires a programmatic intervention—one that invites all social strata occupying that space to participate in urban life. By connecting the "sentence" in this area, it is essential to emphasize the correct symbolic order, constructing the syntax around the key semantic element of this "sentence": the Church of St. John the Baptist.

According to this project, the first programmatic intervention, the semi-open Armenian market "farmers' market," is positioned in front of the Dvin hotel building and the adjacent "elite" high-rise structure. This location, adjacent to the "middle village," is then connected to the semi-preserved, island-like area surrounding St. John the Baptist Church, which, according to this project, is transformed into an Armenian craftsman district. In other words, two environments of urban "theatricality," or two "new words" within the "sentence," are created on either side of the "punctuation" that reconnects the "sentence." Theatricality, as a concept in this context, is emphasized as one of the most prominent spatial forms of invitation. It applies equally to both the Armenian market and the stalls in the craftsman district. In the Armenian market, merchants and farmers carefully stage invitation scenes with their diverse products, shouting and persuading people to approach their tables. Similarly, craft making—like the work of the renowned stone carver and cross-stone master on Aram Street—becomes a performance in itself. The craft pavilions, akin to the "vernissage" stalls, serve as yet another spatial expression of theatricality. These two programmatic interventions function as a unified pedestrian mall, serving as a clear invitation for various social strata to engage in the shared life of the city, rather than retreating into their isolated spaces. By participating in and using the same urban infrastructure, these separate layers of society will have the opportunity to interact with one another, restoring the vibrant social diversity of Kond. This diversity is reflected in the various cultural layers embodied in the vernacular buildings that remain in Kond.



## Territoriality as an Obstacle

The problematic areas mentioned above, with their walled walkways and private security regimes, vividly embody Kond's internal territorialization process. This process has nearly irreversibly separated the elements of the urban structure—metaphorically, the "letters" of the "sentence"—from one another.

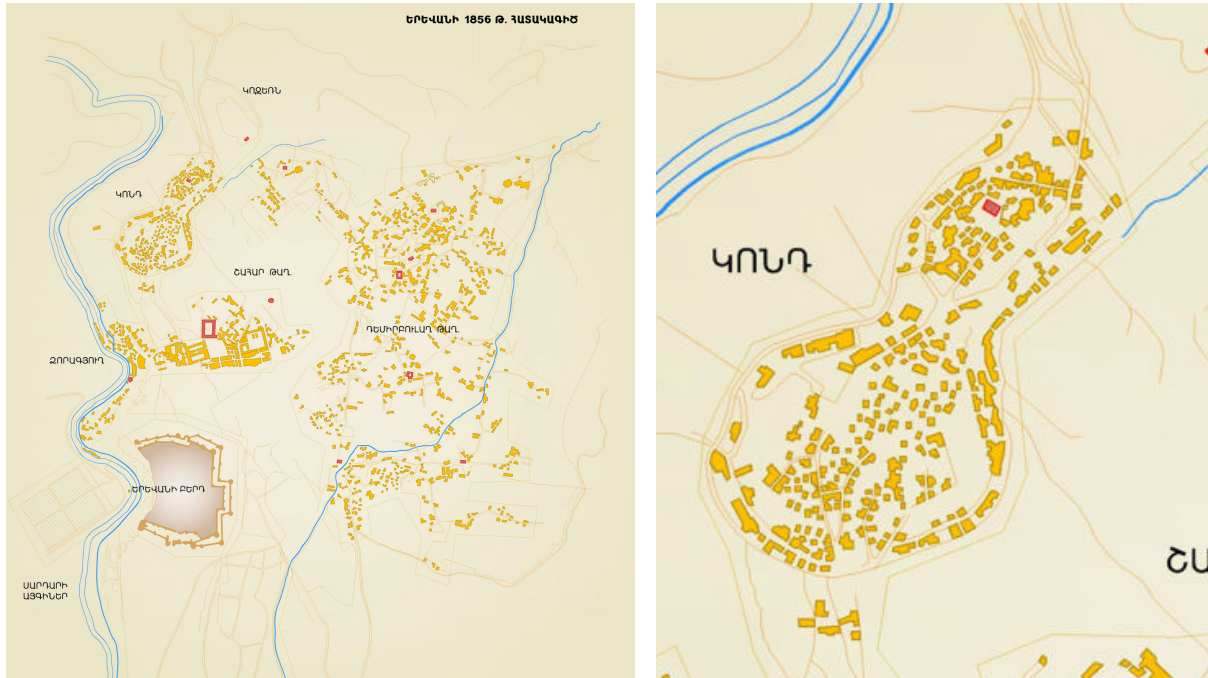
Analyzing early maps of Kond, such as Banov's 1808 map, reveals a depiction somewhat resembling the Nolli Map, as both highlight the relationship between open and closed spaces within a city. However, unlike the Nolli Map,<sup>5</sup> which clearly distinguishes between closed buildings and open streets, Banov's map leaves the exact nature of the closed areas ambiguous. For example, in the Yerevan Fortress, even large inner courtyards, which are not entirely built up, are marked as closed, suggesting that in Kond, the mapping emphasizes the impenetrable nature of these closed areas, which may have been directly inaccessible from the streets.



In Armenian settlements, the stone walls separating private plots of land, when built, were typically very low and served mainly as barriers for animals. In Banov's map, the plots of land that are separated from each other without significant construction can be observed. The two religious structures are visible, along with several small inner squares in the northeastern and southwestern parts, as well as a large open space in the middle of the hill.

<sup>5</sup> Nolli's map, officially called *La Pianta Grande di Roma*, was created by Giambattista Nolli and published in 1748.

The other historical map, made by A. Stotsky in 1856, emphasizes only separate buildings, like the classical Nolli Map. Here, we can see the same general outlines within the urban structure of Kond, but the manner in which it is constructed is legible in greater detail.



In this map, Kond is depicted as a distinct urban structure, with the larger buildings predominantly located in the lower areas and intermediate open spaces present between the mapped structures. The central portion of the hill is shown as developed.

Kond represents an extreme island condition within Yerevan. It exists between communities, yet its inhabitants often feel like tourists in their own city. Additionally, Kond is fragmented from within. The ultimate logic of this enclosed island has driven Kond into further disunity, as many residents have constructed walls around their properties, mirroring some of the modern developments that delineate their property lines with barriers. In this context, the separate properties serve as disconnected letters in this "sentence."

To break this cycle of isolation, it's essential to first establish a set of rules regarding property line boundaries, their acceptable materiality, and even to question their very existence. Secondly, enhancing transit and pedestrian access can maximize the porosity of the district.

The existing logic of territoriality is one of increasing fragmentation. The rationale of private property over the past two decades has acted like a virus within the current organizational complexity of Kond, threatening to dismantle the original sense of interiority. Therefore, the territoriality must be revised to reopen the organizational system of Kond, allowing for the emergence of spontaneous communal spaces.



The three well-known approaches to the restoration of craft and art artifacts are also partially applicable in urban environments. Restoration, or the return of the "original," involves bringing a worn painting or a broken object back to its "new" appearance while remaining fragile, completely concealing the traces of the restoration work and creating an immovable artifact using only the materials and methods of the supposed "old" work. Repair, or "remediation," can refer to the application of a stronger, modern binder, the traces of which are visible on the surface of the broken object. This approach results in the broken object retaining a future use, but only the use it originally had. Reconfiguration, on the other hand, entails restoration with radical modification. By creating a completely different object from the fragments of the broken object, this method uses the brokenness as a motive to repurpose the old material and give it new life.<sup>6</sup>

The first approach can only be applied in the case of historically irreplaceable objects or buildings, as a fixed form does not allow for any other possibilities of use in the present. These buildings are like non-repeating strings within a sentence. The repair of individual constructions is applicable to the repeated but infrequent "letters and strings" in our sentence, while the third approach is relevant to the more frequently occurring "strings or letters."

It is important to emphasize that this methodology is not fully applicable to historical districts; these principles alone do not allow for a complete understanding or addressing of the underlying problems. Approaches that treat the urban environment as if it were a small object are misguided. The historical district of Kond cannot be entirely transformed into an archaeological excavation zone, nor can it be restored to some "original" or authentic appearance and form with a fixed and minimal use in the present. At the same time, it cannot be completely reorganized in a new way, as if the broken object were crushed and replaced with an entirely new entity.

The concept of spatial syntax proposed in this project involves a comprehensive extraction of the essential elements within the environment. In this approach, the urban structure is restored first through conceptual reasoning, second through vernacular urbanism methodology, and third through the application of a selective and varied percentage of well-known restoration approaches.

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<sup>6</sup> three well known approaches are described by R.Sennett in "Building and Dwelling: Ethics .."

# Main Design Decisions and their Rationale

1. The exact outline of the old streets of Kond, the pedestrian interior, is defined as the first red line. While it is clear that this outline must remain unchanged for the preservation of the urban structure, one must ask what exactly we are preserving by maintaining this outline with precision: a chaotic vernacular or anarchic randomness? Even ancient Roman servitude laws coordinated the relationship between private property and the street, insisting that private properties should be built evenly along the street in addition to maintaining a visual connection. In Kond's case, the outlines of the streets do not reflect the absence of a universal law; rather, they preserve the undefined commons, the regularity of the relationship between public and private, the process of their historical formation, and, indeed, an (archic) equality.
2. The second red line is defined by the haptic and tactile perception of space within the narrow streets of Kond, where these sensory experiences often outweigh the visual. The restoration of these surfaces should prioritize preserving the transformations of time, allowing the layered history of the environment to inform the design. For the pavements of the streets and the roofs, the district of Sarlat-la-Canéda in southwestern France serves as a suggestive reference, having largely avoided the impacts of Modernism while maintaining its medieval character. This example highlights the potential use of local natural materials in the restoration process, drawing on traditional stone finishes that resonate with the existing context of Kond, without suggesting that simulation is an appropriate approach.
3. As previously mentioned, to bridge the gap between the two isolated sections of Kond, two active urban programs are situated on either side of the intersection: the Armenian market and the craft district, featuring its pavilion section. This small district could be named after Arshil Gorky in response to the competition question.
4. These two programmatically active zones, along with St. John the Baptist Church, are connected by a pedestrian mall/park and, at the fault line itself, by an overpass/bridge. Various temporary pavilions are encouraged to be set up in the mall, creating interrelated and bordering programmatic conditions between the craft district and the market.
5. The design of the pedestrian park, as well as all new physical interventions, follows the natural *typeform* of Kond. The *typeform*, as an urban planning and design methodology, is more flexible than the prototype.<sup>7</sup> While the prototype rigidly and immutably defines the relationship between form and function, the *typeform* encourages a looser connection between form and function without fixed definitions. Moreover, while the *typeform* can adapt to

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<sup>7</sup> the summary of typeform vs prototype is articulated by R.Sennett in "Building and Dwelling: Ethics .."

different scales, the prototype imposes the existing scale of the form. The rationale behind this design decision lies in the fact that a rigid connection between form and function in urban planning, architecture, and other design modalities leads to the rapid obsolescence of the form. This pattern of obsolescence has been evident across technological, architectural, and urban scales.

6. In the areas of intervention where the existing old structures are transformed using the reconfiguration approach, connecting infrastructure is introduced through curved thin partitions, as depicted in the drawings. This is an example of applying the proposed spatial syntax method at the architectural scale. These partitions create new pathways for foot traffic and introduce openings in existing buildings. As a result, new inner courtyard areas emerge, and the buildings linked by these partitions form a single interconnected complex. The partitions can vary in transparency, from semi-transparent or fully transparent surfaces, such as the walkway passing in front of the designated historical monument, to opaque or nearly opaque composite surfaces, as seen in the buildings west of St. John the Baptist Church.
7. The Church of St. John the Baptist is established as the central spatial anchor within the urban context, functioning as a key element of navigational clarity and spatial legibility. Two dilapidated structures located directly in front of the church are being removed, with their outlines preserved on the park's surface as a historical trace. Additionally, some lower structures are being modified to enhance visibility of the church from Byuzand Street and the intersection of Saryan Street.
8. The connecting infrastructure of the mall transforms the three structures located near Kozern Street and under the overpass by preserving their outer walls, while fully restoring four other structures closer to the church. These structures, located directly behind the designated historical monument, are proposed to be retained and repurposed for new commercial use. Additionally, this intervention preserves nearly all of the structures at the intersection of Frick and Kozerni streets, linking them through the proposed spatial syntax methodology. The newly connected structures in this area may function similarly to the Mirzoyan Library or be repurposed as a closed exhibition hall complex.
9. The pedestrian overpass at the intersection of Frick and Rustaveli maintains a clearance of 4.75 to 5 meters, accommodating the structural requirements and thickness of the ground bridge. This height follows international standards, as the minimum crossing height in the EU, USA, and other regulatory regimes typically ranges from 4.3 to 4.5 meters, allowing for the passage of large buses and trucks. In this case, the height can be increased by an additional 0.5 to 1 meter if necessary. The park surface aligns with the entrance level of the church, which is designated as the 0 mark in the project, with a difference of 5.735 meters between this intersection and the upper part of Kozern Street.

10. This pedestrian infrastructure is completely located within the border defined by the tender competition rules. Its implementation is made possible by the removal of four semi-new private houses in the front part of the new buildings of Rustaveli, whose owners receive compensation in the form of financial assistance or living space (details in the Feasibility Study). Following the same logic, three more semi-new structures are being removed in the "Armenian Market" program intervention area.
11. Within the scope of minimal intervention, a new transport infrastructure extends approximately 200 meters into the Kond area, leading towards the transport hub, which features an outer radius of 13.3 meters to accommodate the turning of large vehicles and buses. Currently, this section of the street is a traffic dead-end, created by the adjacent new private houses, and it largely deviates from the historical street network of Kond. To enhance the infrastructure in this area, four semi-new private houses are removed, with compensation provided to the owners in accordance with the established guidelines.
12. In this section of the intervention, two new buildings are introduced: a public structure featuring multistorey parking underneath and a medium-rise residential building. The proposed residential structure is made possible by the removal of another private house near Saryan. These two new buildings are designed to function as interconnected "core" investment opportunities, contingent upon the development of this infrastructure (details can be found in the feasibility section).
13. The facades of the old buildings adjacent to the pedestrian mall, as well as those along the historical streets of Kond, are being renovated using a "remediation" approach that emphasizes preserving the traces of time. Additionally, the boundary walls of the newly constructed high-rises adjacent to Rustaveli are being taken down to create space for a public transport/bus stop. This resulting pedestrian infrastructure enhances the porosity of the district and strengthens its connection to the city, linking it with the historic streets of Kond, the surfaces of which are also undergoing a complete renovation with cobblestones sourced from local materials, using a technique that increases rainwater porosity.
14. The pedestrian infrastructure extends to the intersection of Saryan and Leo streets, passing through a small cascade complex. The compositional axis of this complex was determined using an algorithmic approach, specifically the Galapagos optimization system. This genetic algorithm generated over 1,000 trajectories based on the site's geometric surface topology, optimizing the pathway according to the following simplified equation:  $\text{path\_variant} = \text{slope\_max} * (1 * \text{slope\_ave}) * (100 * \text{path\_len})$ , where  $\text{slope\_max}$  represents the maximum elevation difference between adjacent points,  $\text{slope\_ave}$  is the average of these differences along the entire trajectory, and  $\text{path\_len}$  is the total length of the path. The result is a trajectory that balances minimal length with the smoothest possible slopes. The algorithm was applied between two key points: the Armenian Farmers' Market intervention and the existing fish shop on Saryan Street.

15. This cascade complex, consisting of four platforms and 27-meter flights of stairs, is designed with the same slope as the well-known Cascade complex, familiar to Yerevan residents. However, unlike the Cascade, this complex features shorter continuous stairways and more frequent stops due to the addition of intermediate platforms. It also passes through a large park, developed as part of the design intervention. While the complex will maintain a sense of familiarity for locals, its design makes it more ergonomic.
16. A key decision of the project is to connect Kond to Yerevan's small center at what is its most active interface, and to design the portion of the Cascade complex that aligns with Saryan Street as a small but visually expansive square. This square will feature landscape elements such as a small artificial waterfall, green spaces, and stepped platforms. The openness of this entrance to Kond will ensure visibility from the Mashtots-Saryan intersection. To implement this section, 7 dilapidated small structures are being removed, along with 3 more for the adjacent park's construction.
17. A multi-residential and multi-functional complex is proposed adjacent to the small square, with its highest point positioned at -3.5 meters below the 0 elevation mark (which corresponds to the yard level of St. John the Baptist Church). The building reaches a height of 27.35 meters above the elevation of the Saryan/Leo intersection. This complex follows the methodological logic of Kond's typeform development and the proposed spatial syntax. To fully grasp Kond's typeform as a geometric structure, it is crucial to study the morphology of its existing buildings alongside the topography—the construction follows the terrain, forming angles in rhythm with the landscape. With this distinctive outline, the new building also serves as an entry point to another historical junction of Kond, located near the partially preserved mosque.
18. Adjacent to this complex, a low-rise development is being introduced along Leo Street. The interstitial space between the two complexes forms the entry point to a pathway that leads pedestrians to Simeon Yerevantsi Street within Kond, passing through an additional green zone/park along the way.
19. These various residential and public interventions represent a core investment opportunity, contingent upon financing the construction of the small cascading complex and the rehabilitation of the streets in Kond, following the aforementioned methodologies. To facilitate the construction of the two complexes, five dilapidated buildings adjacent to Leo Street are also removed, and the well-known fish shop is relocated within the multi-storey complex.
20. As a result of minimal intervention, several semi-preserved or half-ruined structures are removed. These buildings are of a repeated typeform variety within the urban structure of Kond; in other words, within the Kond "sentence," you may find many more of these "letters." This abstract reasoning highlights the hierarchy of values in conservation and restoration



by emphasizing the internal commons over the detailed, repetitive, but historically vernacular construction manifestations. However, as mentioned, in the urban planning context, the preservation claim must focus on preserving and restoring not isolated structures but the spatial structure of the entire urban whole, restoring not this or that "letter," but the entire "sentence."

The proposed intervention represents the necessary minimum to place the Kond district on a path of economic development and spatial regeneration, while keeping it almost completely intact. In this way, the organizational complexity of Kond is preserved through the revelation and restoration of its urban structure. To facilitate its transition into a contemporary residential district, transport infrastructure expansion will be necessary, as illustrated by the maximum proposed development variation of this project, which adheres to the same spatial syntax concept. Importantly, even with maximum intervention, a deliberate design decision is made not to attempt to fully complete Kond, thereby preserving opportunities for ongoing professional analysis, reading, and imagination.

## Transit and Porosity

With minimal intervention, public transport services become accessible to the population of Kond, while private car traffic is limited to maximize preservation. Consequently, foot and bicycle traffic multiplies several times due to the introduction of the new infrastructure. Bus stops are strategically placed on both the proposed new street and Rustaveli Street, while multistory parking structures are situated beneath the newly added public building complex near the transit hub, with vehicular access from Saryan Street. This minimal intervention increases the porosity of Kond, creating a breathable boundary that connects Kond to the city, thus revising its current isolation.

Kond's transport transit can be expanded with a wider intervention, which is included for demonstration purposes, although the project's primary focus remains on minimal intervention, as outlined in the competition brief. Considering the preservation objectives in this dimension, the pedestrian interiority, and the contours of the existing streets, the proposed transit system in a maximum intervention context carefully cuts through building blocks to minimize disruption to community spaces, keeping a safe distance from the existing old streets. The street layout was derived from a combination of the Galapagos optimization algorithm results and meticulous studies of historical maps. The locations of all buildings on A. Stotsky's map were roughly plotted on the current Kond map, ensuring the new car street's axis remains as far from these points as possible. In this scenario, the added road system will primarily function on a service/rear entrance logic for vehicle transit, featuring minimal sidewalks. In contrast, existing old streets, designed primarily for pedestrians, can be reconstructed with a more permeable surface, such as

cobblestone, instead of the current asphalt, helping to mitigate some negative effects of the urban heat island phenomenon.

In the case of two levels of intervention, sanitary cleaning systems will operate under two different modes. For minimal intervention, garbage removal will utilize smaller vehicles for efficient collection. In contrast, with a wider intervention, emergency services such as fire and ambulance can be managed more effectively.

Summing up: In both cases, the citizens of the site and publics in slow or rapid transit are curated systematically—separately for the living and communal zones and together for the public zones. The isolated state of Kond is revised by activating the edges and strategically adjusting or locating new access points to the common space as well as to the active programming areas. With the proposed sectional relationship between the new and old, the critical-spatial approach to the landscape highlights the contrast and allows for interaction between the two systems, enabling them to exist and grow parallel to each other. This proposition is a form of interplay, an equation through which Kond's essential internal commons are preserved while simultaneously opening it economically and spatially to the future.

## Feasibility

Two investment paradigms are known in the urban planning environment: the core investing paradigm, in which the private investor makes a point investment according to fixed data, clear profit, and other conditions (this is how Yerevan is developing today), and the opportunity investing paradigm. This paradigm emphasizes when the infrastructure created as a result of the investment increases the value of the general environment; one of the famous examples is the High Line above-ground park in New York.

In this proposal, the core investment opportunity is interlinked with the precondition of investment in the related infrastructure, and the demand is addressed to the big developers. Thus, the project, with minimal intervention, has two or three core investment claims and one or more opportunity investment claims. Core investments will be concentrated in Zones 1 and 2 mentioned in the plan, while the opportunity investment claim refers to Zone 3 (the area adjacent to St. John the Baptist Church, the crafts district, as well as the market).

The proposition for core investment will be addressed to the developers, and the proposition for opportunity investment may be addressed to the European Investment Bank (EIB), which already has some experience in RA activities. This bank is experienced and interested in financing just such diversity-promoting long-term urban development interventions. Of course, it is also

possible to finance the same part with the core investment paradigm, but this project emphasizes the importance of having a diverse community of shareholders for that portion of the intervention, as well as preserving the dimensional scale of the Kond church area with minimal built intervention.

## Management

The proposed core investments involve the following simplified management stages and conditions:

1. The investment package, prepared with the designer's participation, includes new development, construction of new infrastructure, or renovation of existing structures. This package is awarded to the developer through a tender procedure, which is based not on price but on competence assessed through the full availability of professional and productive potential.
2. Demolition and Contracts: The private investor/builder pays for the demolished properties at the same price for which they will sell the future apartments or arrives at a different agreement with the property owner. The developer, the urban planning committee, and the residents become parties to the legal agreement.
3. The construction of high-rise buildings as an investment also entails the restoration of all adjacent old buildings using the remediation method, as well as the restoration of approved historical monuments through the appropriate restoration method.
4. The construction proceeds systematically and collectively for the entire approved zone.

The proposed opportunity investing includes the following simplified management stages and conditions:

1. The investment package is prepared by the design consultant in consultation with the urban planning committee. A third consulting organization may also be involved in the process.
2. The investment package is presented to various potential participants, including the European Investment Bank (EIB). Developers who can participate in the opportunity investment program with a collective application are also considered potential participants.
3. After the purchase process and before construction begins, owners are compensated at market value for properties with clear legal status.

4. Following the investment package purchase process, the urban development committee acts as a guarantor of the contract. Technical control is carried out by the designer.
5. Depending on the purchase process, the opportunity investment zone remains the property of the city. In the case of developer participation, it is partially given for a long-term lease.

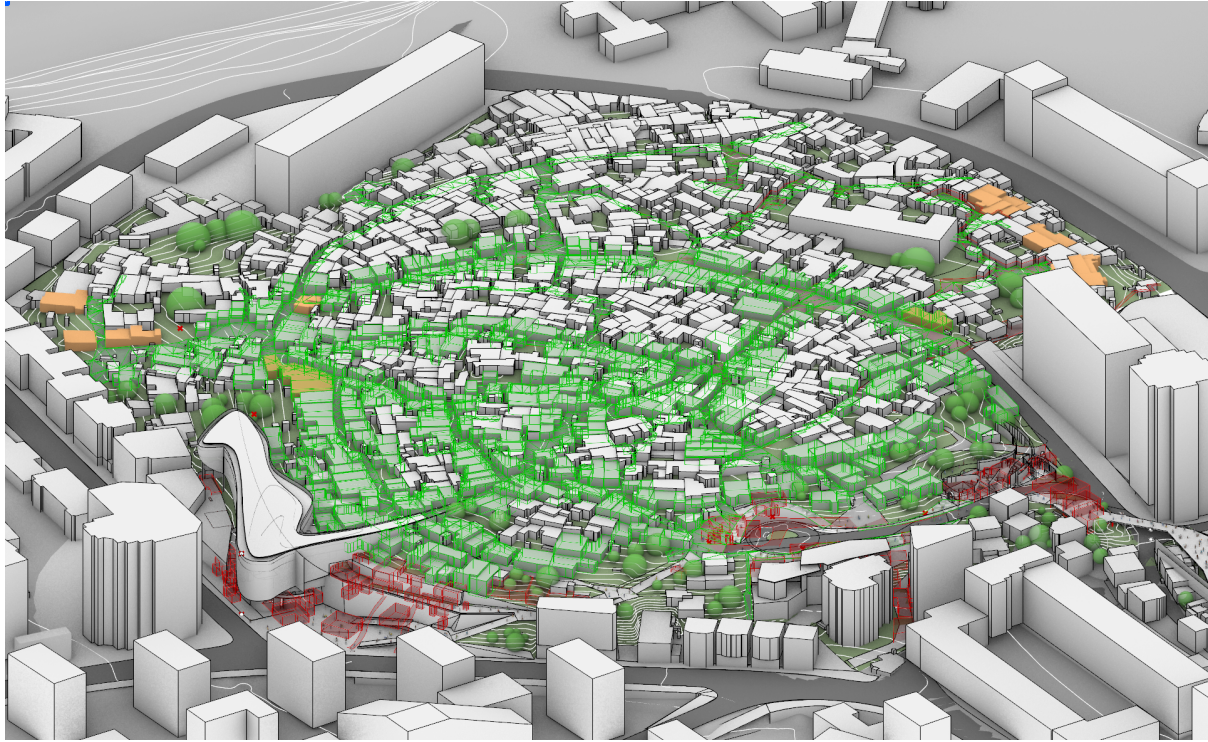
## Primary Technical and Economic Metrics and Calculations

The following are the indices of the construction works used in the calculations (include salary figures):

Unit of measurement	Construction work type	The cost in AMD	
cubic meter	demolition works (estimated from the total surface area taking into account the approximate thickness of the walls 60 cm)	3000	
square meter	new buildings, residential and public	225000	
cubic meter	excavation and transportation costs (average 13km freight transportation)	17500	
	asphalt roads, square meter per AMD	pedestrian areas sqm/AMD	infrastructures, AMD per meter (including earthworks)
	20000	15000	120000

Sale and rental prices used in the calculations are as follows:

sales cost (sqm/AMD)	commercial rental (sqm/AMD)
2000000	15000



					overall cost of infrastructure	sales cost (sqm/AMD)	commercial rental (sqm/AMD)	profit
	quantity	overall area (sqm)	total surface area (sq.m.), total excavation work (cubic meters)	cost of work (AMD)		2000000	15000	
demolition/cleaning work	15	11904	11099.417	33,298,251		23,808,000,000		
excavation/earthwork	-	-	25500	446,250,000				
new infrastructure/cascade	-	-	3263.0152	734,178,420				
repair/restoration	363	23412	-	5,267,700,000				
new built residential	2	26250	-	5,906,250,000		52,500,000,000		
transit roads		3300		66,000,000				
newly built commercial for rent		4900		1,102,500,000			73,500,000	
the small square, the sidewalks, the Kond streets		19273		289,095,000				
SUM	380	69766	39862.4322	13,845,271,671	1,023,273,420	28,692,000,000		13,823,454,909

### The simplified calculation for the core investing zone and its technical and economic indicators are as follows:

A basic calculation was performed by multiplying the areas by the work performance index, with all surfaces and volumes determined using a parametric model. Structures designated for demolition are marked in red, while those subject to remediation are marked in green.

The investment program encompasses the construction of a small cascade complex, with price calculations based on the same index used for new building construction. It also includes the construction of retaining walls, the entire prefabricated infrastructure, repairs to all Kond streets, renovations of most houses adjacent to these streets, and facade restorations. Additionally, land works are included in a separate line item.

As a result of the entire construction and subsequent sales, the estimated profit for the investor(s) is approximately 13.8 billion AMD, generated from the total sale price after deducting expenses, including the costs of demolished properties. Furthermore, investors will acquire a new commercial building adjacent to the newly constructed street in Kond, yielding a monthly profit of 73.5 million drams (taxes not included).





	quantity	overall area (sqm)	total surface area (sq.m.)	cost of work (AMD)
demolition/cleaning work	3	284	1436	4,308,000
repair/restoration		4397	-	989,325,000
pedestrian overpass		1606	-	361,350,000
commercial or rental space		1376		
the sidewalks/old streets/promenade		26856		402,840,000
SUM	3	7663	1436	1,757,823,000

**The simplified calculation for the opportunity investing zone and its technical and economic indicators are as follows:**

The proposed commercial lease area is located to the left of the designated historical monument, beneath the above-ground footbridge. The calculation of the profit area includes only the first floor, generating revenue of AMD 20.6 million. A portion of this revenue can be allocated for the continued maintenance of the infrastructure in this area, as well as for further restoration and preservation efforts.

This investment can also be integrated into the core investment package; however, the objective of the opportunity investment is to attract multiple stakeholders, thereby creating a continuous shared interest around this zone.

**Construction Cost Details:**

- **Demolition:** Total surface area \* demolition index
- **Renovation/Reconstruction:** Considered as new construction in terms of price (total floor area \* new construction index)
- **New Construction:** Total surface area \* demolition index + total floor area \* new construction index