

THE INFLUENCE OF FRENCH CULTURE ON COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE: THE CASE OF THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT OF TOURANE (DA NANG)

SỰ ẢNH HƯỞNG CỦA VĂN HÓA PHÁP ĐẾN KIẾN TRÚC THUỘC ĐỊA:
TRƯỜNG HỢP CỦA KHU PHỐ THƯƠNG MẠI Ở TOURANE (ĐÀ NẴNG)

DINH Nam Duc*, LUU Thien Huong

The University of Danang - University of Technology and Education

*Corresponding author: dnduc@ute.udn.vn

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Abstract - The development of cities is sometimes at the expense of their historical value. This loss includes architectures that once held the cultural value of a city. This study aims to determine the influence of French culture and architecture on the downtown area of Tourane, specifically the commercial district, during its concessional period (1888-1950). To test the hypothesis that French culture is the core and original value of the architecture of the commercial district in the center of Tourane, this study used the main methods of typology analysis and graphical reconstruction of urban architectural space. The results of the study present the relationships between the architecture of the central market area of Tourane and French architecture and culture. These results reaffirm the core values of French cultural and architectural heritage that once existed and are an important section of the formation and development of Da Nang City.

Key words - architectural heritage; cultural heritage; graphical reconstruction; typology analysis

1. Introduction

1.1. The relationship between culture and architecture

Architecture is an art as well as a science of spatial arrangement. It also contains elements of religion, spirituality, culture, and social life. At different social stages, the expression of cultural life will also be different, which is displayed through different architectural forms.

The French colonists, in the process of approaching and ruling Indochina, had a profound impact on the life of indigenous society. Accordingly, new religions and beliefs were introduced, and the daily life activities of the natives were changed according to the orientation and imposition of the rulers. In terms of architecture, the transformation of architectural styles that the French have applied in Indochina clearly shows the cultural interference between French culture and indigenous culture, the culmination of which is the introduction and development of the Indochina architectural style from the early 1930s.

1.2. Objectives, hypothesis, and methods of the study

The case of the French concession Tourane, with the research limit in terms of geography being its central area, is used in this study to clarify the influence of French culture and architecture on the construction of architectural works in the downtown area, specifically the commercial district, during its concessional period (1888-1950). Accordingly, it is hypothesized that French culture is the core and original value of Tourane architecture. The main research methods of this study include

Tóm tắt - Sự phát triển của các thành phố (Tp.) đôi khi phải trả giá bằng các giá trị lịch sử của chúng. Sự mất mát này bao gồm cả những công trình kiến trúc đã từng giữ giá trị văn hóa của một Tp.. Nghiên cứu này nhằm xác định ảnh hưởng của văn hóa và kiến trúc Pháp đối với khu vực trung tâm Tp. Tourane, cụ thể là khu phố thương mại, trong thời kỳ nhượng địa của nó (1888-1950). Để kiểm tra giả thuyết, văn hóa Pháp là giá trị cốt lõi và nguyên bản của kiến trúc khu phố thương mại ở trung tâm Tourane, nghiên cứu sẽ sử dụng các phương pháp chính là phân tích kiểu hình và tái tạo đồ họa không gian kiến trúc đô thị. Kết quả nghiên cứu trình bày mối quan hệ giữa kiến trúc khu chợ trung tâm Tourane với kiến trúc và văn hóa Pháp. Những kết quả này đã khẳng định lại những giá trị cốt lõi của di sản văn hóa, kiến trúc Pháp đã từng tồn tại và là một bộ phận quan trọng trong quá trình hình thành và phát triển của Tp. Đà Nẵng.

Từ khóa - di sản kiến trúc; di sản văn hóa; tái tạo đồ họa; phân tích kiểu hình

typological analysis and graphical reconstruction of urban architectural space.

2. French culture in the colonies

2.1. Features of the French colonial empire

This research reviewed the principles of French planning in its colonies in the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition to natural and local features, the evolution of a colonial urban form depended heavily on the policies of the colonists. In this process, the colonial policy of the empires was not immutable. For example, the style of the British in India changed significantly from the period of the East India Company to the period of the Viceroy of India. The effect of Spanish colonialism on urban development in the 16th century was different from that of the 19th century [1]. French urban policies in Indochina also evolved from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century. During this colonization, colonists played a superior role in all aspects of colonial life. Regarding the colonial port cities of Southeast Asia, Horvath said that they served as a microcosm of colonial society and as a political, military, economic, religious, social, and intellectual warehouse between colonizers and the colonized [2].

2.2. The introduction of French culture into the colonies

The French colonial empire was made up of overseas colonies, protectorates, and territories under French rule from the 16th century. The policy of assimilation of the French in the early stages of colonization in Indochina

tended to be authoritarian, through destruction and reconstruction [3]. In the mid-19th century, as the French took over Algiers, the destruction of the existing city seemed to be the main objective, replacing the native quarters with a simple European model with a grid plan. Similarly, in Saigon, the French installed several French cultural emblems (café, racecourse, opera theatre, post office, palace, administrative buildings), after the fire of the city in 1859. Functional zoning and land use were other characteristics of French colonies. In addition to native quarters, the French colonial cities of the early 20th century essentially comprised five functional zones in their European quarters: administrative zone, residential zone, leisure zone, commercial zone, and industrial zone.

3. Planning of French colonial and concession cities in Vietnam

3.1. Transformation of indigenous cities

In the mid-19th century, when capitalism flourished in Europe, Vietnam under the feudal rule of the Nguyen kings was still an agricultural economy that did not have much contact with Westerners. In contemporary Vietnamese society, most people's lives were tied to the fields, while industry and commerce were underdeveloped and constrained by the laws of the feudal state. The structure of a Vietnamese feudal city consists of two main elements: “*Thành*” (*Citadel*) and “*Thị*” (*Town*). The citadel served as a gathering place for administrative and military authorities and as a symbol of the city. On the other hand, the town was where people lived, produced, and traded, mainly concentrated around the citadel or following the rivers.

3.2. The spread of Western models

Until the French established the protection of Indochina, the local cities were only a form of gathering of a few villages around a citadel, where the civic and military administration was located. New economic activities and the development of modes of transport have created many favorable conditions for the development of urban areas and the urban way of life. In this process, the formation of Indochinese cities was strongly influenced by the diffusion of images in the homeland of the French colonizers, as specified by Brocheux and Hémery: “*The urban nuclei created by the French reminded them of the towns they had left*” [4]. Villages that were once surrounded by mud and swamps in Indochina gradually became urban areas. Although the Governors-General are interested in planning the cities of Indochina, the plans of Indochinese cities show an extension only after the First World War. After the war, France promulgated the Cordunet Law in 1919 [5] on the urbanization of cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants in France as well as in their colonies, protectorates, and territories under mandate, including the cities of Indochina.

4. Case study of Tourane (Da Nang)

4.1. The formation and development of the French concession Tourane

Under the first kings of the Nguyen dynasty in Vietnam, Tourane played a particularly important role, more than any other port in the country, as written by

Hausmann [6]. Understandably, the kings did not prohibit Westerners from trading in Vietnam, because it was advantageous for the country. However, commercial activities can only take place at a designated place, the port of Tourane. The first concessional border of the French at Tourane (following the 1888 treaty) included five villages, all located on the left bank of the Han River. In attempting to expand the city of Tourane, the French pressured Vietnamese King Thanh Thai to sign the treaty of 15 January 1901 ceding fourteen other villages surrounding the newly established city to the colonial government.

After officially receiving Tourane as a concession, the French began moving the native areas and cemeteries within the boundaries of this concession to build the basic administrative and commercial facilities. During their tenure, the French applied municipal regulation to five cities in Vietnam, including Tourane. The French organized and developed three concessional cities (Hanoi, Haiphong, and Tourane) as they did in the two previous colonial cities (Saigon and Cholon). Since October 1888, the inhabitants of the villages of the concession territory in Tourane are no longer Vietnamese citizens. In the common language, the French call them “*the natives*”. On the administrative papers, they are “*subjects of the concession*”. The old judicial regulations were no longer valid. Instead, the laws were enacted by the French [7]. Discussing the stages of development of French concession Tourane, Dinh distinguishes different phases in the urban development of Tourane [8]:

+ 1888-1918: The period of city formation. The French quickly built their base here by copying the architectural blocks in the pre-colonial style (military facilities), neoclassical style (most of the administrator buildings);

+ 1919-1939: The period of expansion and beautifying of the city, corresponding to the filling of vacant land in the center, and the expansion of the road system and the limits of the central area. During this period, in addition to the architectural styles introduced in the previous period, there were also more works built in the Art Déco architectural style and the Indochinese architectural style, the most typical example for the combination of Western architecture and Eastern architecture;

+ 1940-1950: The period of extension of indigenous areas. In the context of the population growth after World War II (1939-1945), new residential areas were established outside the city center and they did not have much architectural value.

Following the formation and development of Tourane concession, old city maps and city plans are the clearest illustrations of the intentions that the French had cherished for this city: the plan of the current state that military engineers drew this city at its founding in 1889 (*Plan de la Concession Tourane*, 1889, ANOM); the illustrative plan of the first public works at Tourane center (*Plan de la baie de Tourane (par les travaux publics)*, 1901, National Library of France); the map of the Tourane planning scheme in 1931 the plan influenced by the ambitions of architect Ernest Hébrard, the director of the architecture and urban planning department of Indochina between 1923

and 1931, in city design (*Plan du schéma de planification de Tourane en 1931*, belleindochine.free.fr); or the plan of architect Louis-Georges Pineau in a more harmonious attitude to the native natural environment (*Plan d'aménagement de la ville de Tourane 1944*, IFA). These plans, representing different urban planning perspectives, were designed for Tourane at different times and were implemented to varying degrees.

After the establishment of Tourane and its administrative organizations, the French gradually enacted regulations on urban management. These were the first laws allowing the French to manage works and trades in the city, urban services and town planning, as well as the construction of houses. Regarding land usage, from the end of the 19th century, Tourane was planned according to the standards of a French colonial municipality with basic functional areas (Figure 1): Administrative and military area, residential area (for Europeans), recreational area, commercial area, and industrial area [9].



Figure 1. Location of the commercial district on the functional subdivision map of Tourane in 1950 (Author's drawing)

The commercial district at Tourane center, as defined by this study, was a bustling area for transportation, exchange, and purchase of goods. This location, before the French established their concessional territory at Tourane, served as a place where ships of merchants stopped on their voyages, thanks to its favorable natural features. Geographically limited, the central district of this study includes mainly villas, dwellings, and mixed-use dwellings (shop houses) within approximately 150 meters of the waterfront or Avenue Quai Courbet (Bach Dang Street today), and 300 meters from Rue Dong Khanh (Hung Vuong Street today) to the south (Figure 1 & Figure 2). In

particular, the model of townhouses (including adjoining dwellings and adjoining shop houses) from 2 to 3 floors that uses the front of the ground floor as a business store, accounting for the majority. This district is a crowded place of commercial transactions, and is a soft boundary between the living and working areas of the French (in the north of the market) and the indigenous neighborhoods (in the west and south of the market), influenced by architectural styles imported, introduced and developed by the French to harmonize with local conditions.



Figure 2. Aerial photograph of Tourane center around the 1950s (Association des Amis du Vieux Hue, AAVH)

4.2. Typological analysis

Describing the architectural typology, the research of Altaş has shown that: “*Typology in architecture has been defined as creating an archive of the certain types related to architecture styles reduced to their elementary geometrical nature or the search effort of the combination possibilities of the architectural elements to classify the types which are the architectural form*” [10]. Typomorphological studies have been used since the mid-20th century as a tool for analysis and design, dealing with the physical and spatial structure of the built environment. They are derived from studies of typical spaces and structures in the city and are based on detailed classifications of buildings and open spaces by type (“*typology*”). In this regard, they consider not only the different scales of the built environment but also the character of the urban form and its inhabitants.

As a city of over 10,000 inhabitants in the late 1910s (specifically about 10,000 inhabitants in 1915 and 16,000 inhabitants in 1921), Tourane certainly falls within the scope of the French urban planning law in 1919, the Law Cornudet. The documents on the laws related to planning and architectural management for Tourane (height, number of floors, building density, color, decoration...) could not be investigated. This study mainly relates the above regulations through the case of other cities, for example in the study of P.T. Phan [11] on the case of Hanoi City. In addition, the approach of this study to the old architectures of Tourane is carried out in the direction of synthesis and evaluation, based on data sources (photos, maps, documents...) about Tourane.

The commercial district in Tourane was where the bustling trading activities took place, before - during - and after the French domination. The architecture of this area was a typical representation of the introduction,

development, and harmony of French architectural philosophy with indigenous architectural features. To perform the typology analysis, foremost, a collection of data on the buildings in this commercial district, built during the French colonial period (1888-1950), was carried out. Since then, the development of this neighborhood, illustrated in the form of typographic analysis maps, has clarified the transformation of the surveyed area over the continuous phases of development (Figure 3).

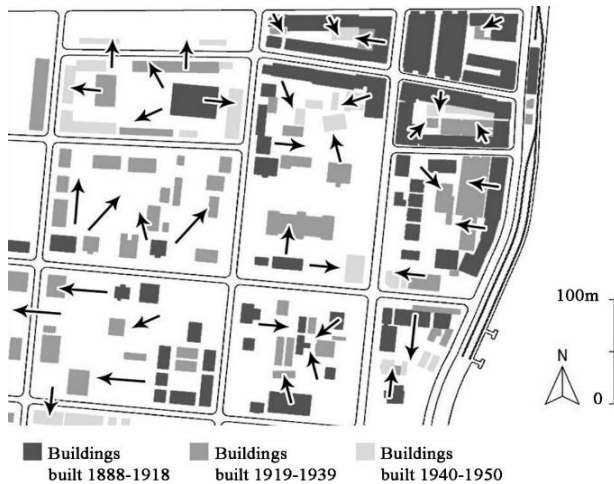


Figure 3. The urban growth in the commercial district of Tourane (1888-1950) (Author's drawing)

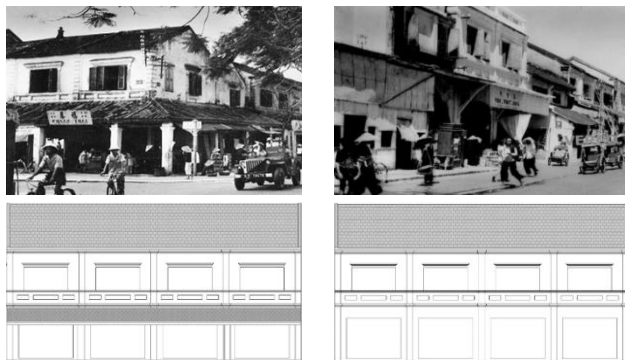


Figure 4. Example of the horizontal and vertical distribution of terraced houses at Rue Dong Khanh (left) and Rue Verdun (right)

The market district is located in the middle of the city center, consisting mainly of mixed residential - commercial lots and residential lots. As townhouses account for the majority of constructions in the commercial district, the characteristics of this type of construction are recognized as the typical symbol of the area:

- **Location and building density:** The characteristics of this area are townhouses with a high construction density. The building of Han Market and nearby residential areas are built mainly in the period 1888-1918. Construction in the area has the tendency to extend westward (far from the riverbank). The area around the market has the highest construction density, most of the buildings are 2-story to 3-story townhouses. The market building and the rows of townhouses characterize the architecture of the area. They are large, repetitive, and continuous buildings. The houses built later (located in the alley in the middle of the big plots) are smaller and lower. On the contrary, the housing areas further away from the riverbank are sparsely built,

which is an alternation between townhouses and villas.

- **Height and division of facade:** The rows of townhouses are built with no more than 3 floors (mostly 2-story houses). These houses have a floor height of 3.5 to 4 meters on the first floor and 3 to 3.5 meters on the upper floors. The total height of each building does not exceed 15 meters (including the inclined roof). Houses have horizontal divisions, marked by cornices. In addition, these buildings also have vertical divisions, formed by the details of pillars and pilasters.

- **Building size:** The size of townhouses in Tourane depends on the number of units to the width of the land. Usually, each unit is from 3.5 to 5.5 meters wide. Their length ranges from 15 to 60 meters.

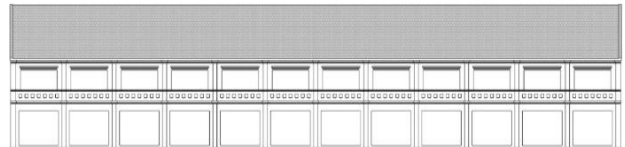


Figure 5. Example of a townhouse consisting of 12 units, with a total length of 60 meters at Avenue Quai courbet

For townhouses with a length of 20 meters or more, the building can be divided into two parts by an inner courtyard to solve the problem of natural light and ventilation.

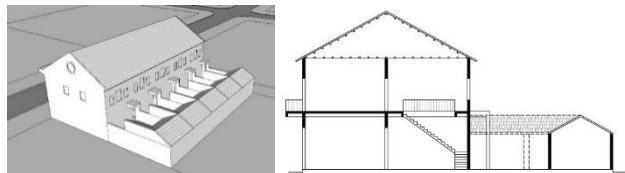


Figure 6. Example of a townhouse divided into two parts by an inner courtyard, at Avenue du Musée (Photos scanned from a research of D.V. Pham, 2007)

- **Colors and decorative details:** Besides the results of the field surveys, we also rely on the analysis of color photographs of buildings and neighborhoods to get an idea of the original colors and decorative details applied to the architecture. Older photos have a higher reference value. The decorative details of the houses reflect the architectural style of the building. For buildings in the neoclassical architectural style, the decorative details showing both the outside and the inside of the building have high aesthetic value. For architectural works in the French architectural style, the decorative details are simplified and applied to

remind the image of a French house. In the case of buildings in the Art Deco style, the decoration of the facade is simpler, and it presents a clear geometry, namely the circle and using a decorative concrete slat system.



Figure 7. Example of decorative details at the top of the wall on the facade of the courtyard of the townhouses at Rue Verdun (left) and Avenue Quai Courbet (right)


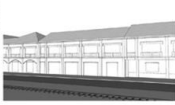
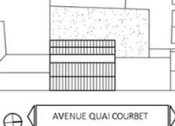
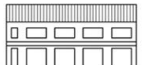
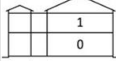
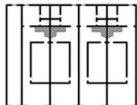
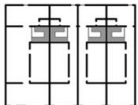


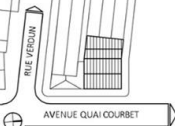


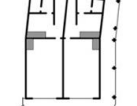
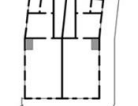




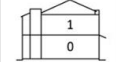
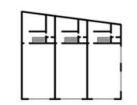
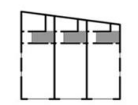


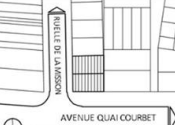


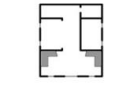
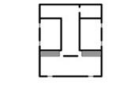


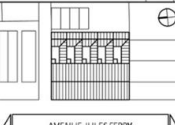


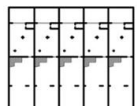
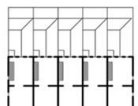


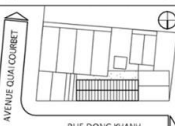


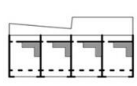
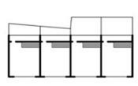
4.3. Graphical reconstruction analysis

This is a method of restoring images in 3D perspective, which makes it possible to illustrate the analysis of the architectural and urban spatial analysis, which has been applied in the research of Dinh (2021) for the specific case

of the French concession Tourane [12]. The period chosen to implement these 3D perspectives was that of the 1950s, at the end of French colonial rule in Tourane. Due to the limitation of documentation sources (maps, images, etc.) for the period before the year 1950, this research mainly exploited data from the following decades (the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s). Through the stages of cross-checking and adjustment, the extracted results will be used to represent the architectural and urban space of the commercial district of Tourane, in the 1950s.

The first step in the graphical reconstruction of the urban architectural space of Tourane, whose image is almost completely changed from the colonial period, begins with the visualization of the architectural structures. Our research begins with measuring buildings (for buildings that are still in existence) as well as extracting documents from archival and other research sources (for destroyed buildings). We then recreate the buildings with their characteristic features and present them as drawings.

Table 1. Typological characteristics of townhouses

Building	Plan of location	Type of facade	Type of section	Plan of first floor	Plan of upper floor
  A	 AVENUE QUAI COURBET				
  B	 RUE VERDUN AVENUE QUAI COURBET				
  C	 RUE VERDUN AVENUE QUAI COURBET				
  D	 RUE VERDUN AVENUE QUAI COURBET				
  E	 RUE VERDUN AVENUE JULES FERRY				
  F	 AVENUE QUAI COURBET RUE DONG KHANH				

In the overall observations of this study on the typological characteristics of townhouses, a few constants have been noted, as illustrated in Table 1:

- Townhouses are built with facades connecting directly to the sidewalk, and they can have backyards.
- Most townhouses have a simple facade and repeat modules on the facade. Openings (doors, windows) are repeated only in rectangular shapes and domed at the top.
- The main entrance on the first floor is generally

maximized, it can incorporate a roof over the front porch. Communication between the first floor and the upper floors is limited by an L-shaped or a U-shaped staircase.

- The front space of the first floor is frequently preferred for the store or living room, while the upstairs front space is used for the worship hall. The rooms are arranged in the middle or at the end of the house. The kitchen and toilets are located at the back of the house.
- Openings (doors, windows) are widely used at the

front and rear of the building to meet ventilation needs in the tropical climate.

We then present the reconstruction of the commercial district of Tourane. The architectural and urban space of this neighborhood was the most vivid image of the city's urban life. The most characteristic physical elements are recreated: buildings, streets, rows of trees, etc. This method makes it possible to visualize the urban scenes of this center from various angles, including those that do not have been archived through the photographic material.

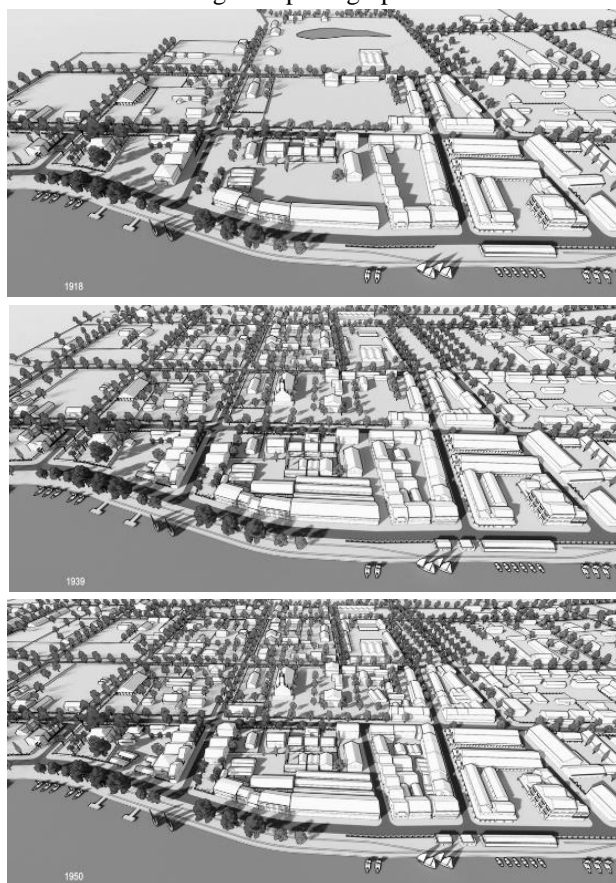


Figure 8. Perspectives of the commercial district, through the years 1918, 1939, and 1950 (Author's drawing)

5. Conclusion

Based on statistics and analysis of the most popular architectures of the market area, the townhouses, this research presents their characteristics: location and density of construction, height and divisions of the facade, size of the building, architectural style, color, and decorative details. Townhouses in the commercial district featured the traditional architectural style and the Indochinese architectural style, a perfect demonstration of the mixture between Western and Eastern cultures, and the Franco-Vietnamese culture in particular.

In this article, the elements of French culture are dissected from the perspective of planning and architecture, accordingly, the structure of a Vietnamese urban in the feudal period has been replaced by the model

of an urban area with clear functional subdivisions by contemporary French planning perspectives. In addition, the introduction and development of architectural styles by the French is demonstrated by the verification of old colonial architectures (existing or once existed in Da Nang City), is also a testament to the influence of French culture on the architecture of central Tourane. In the case of Da Nang City, the rapid disappearance of these architectural works has made French culture just a memory, not much influence on the development of Da Nang in the future.

The results of the method of graphical reconstruction of architectural and urban space allowed the visualization of old buildings and old streets that no longer exist today. From detailed views (of buildings) to overall views (of the whole area), the urban space of the Tourane commercial district at the end of each colonial phase (1918, 1939, 1950) has been reconstructed by images. These graphical representations explore the memory of a French concessional city that was only accessible through photographs and archival documents.

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