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In Search of Old Shanghai (Buildings)

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Earlier this week, the *Washington Post* published a fascinating article by Maureen Fan, paired with a very effective video that the same reporter narrates (hat tip to Shanghaiist for bringing both to my attention), that combines architectural and family history. This is because the grandfather of the *Post*’s Beijing bureau chief was Robert Fan, a leading local architect who designed, among many other buildings, the one pictured here.

I won’t try to summarize her piece, which is part memoir and part analysis of the fate of buildings her grandfather designed (some of which are shown in the accompanying video), as it is well worth reading in its entirety. I will just note that the video is a nice one to pair with the two-part “Jews in Shanghai” episode from the “Sexy Beijing” series that’s been recommended on this site before (and been lauded by NPR). In this episode, the American filmmaker Anna Sophie Loewenberg (who goes by “Su Fei”) and her father seek out the house in Shanghai that he lived in as a child.

A final note is that there’s a link between the two videocasts provided by the wonderful Shanghai historian Lynn Pan. The “Jews in Shanghai” episode opens with Su Fei shown reading one of Pan’s early books (*In Search of Old Shanghai*) and Robert Fan’s life and contributions to the city’s built environment are discussed in Pan’s latest publication (*Shanghai Style*).

Tags: Shanghai, shanghaiist