

# “Gandan” Housing Block in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

## Cultural Heritage and Urban Development

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### Introduction

The municipal area of Ulaanbaatar is 470,000 ha. The urbanized area is 16,000 ha with a population of 775,000, which accounts for 30 percent of the national population.

In the process of working out “General Plan to Develop Ulaanbaatar Capital City of Mongolia to 2020” in framework of the project “City Development Strategy” financed by the World Bank, one of the concepts of future Ulaanbaatar City is to be an Asian Area Development Centre with goal of popularising and introducing art and cultural heritages and traditions, and travel tourism sector will be developed attracting attention of tourists.

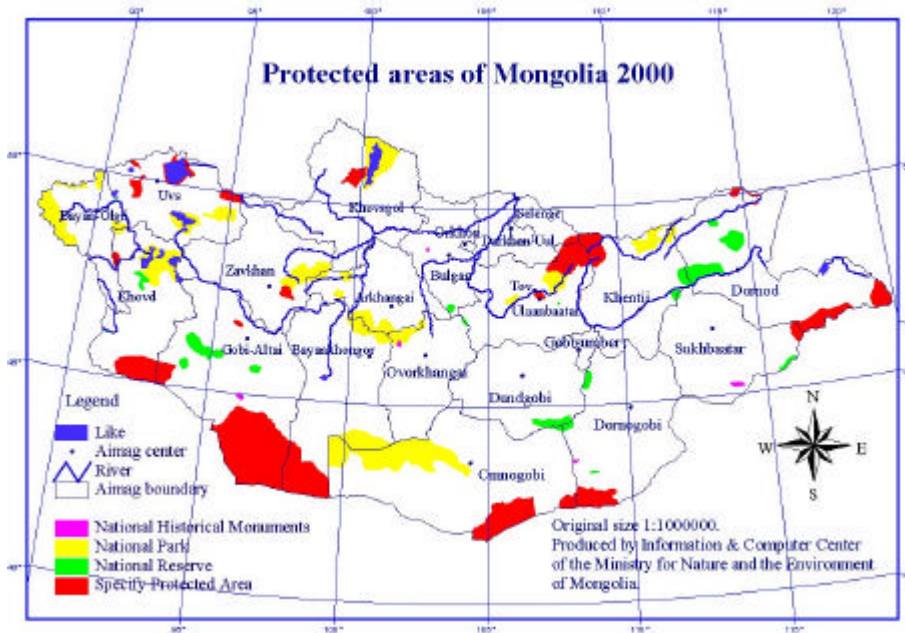


*Main Entrance of The Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery*

The City will be an attractive tourist destination in the Asian Region, aiming at promotion of Mongolian art, culture and heritage.

For this meaning, classifying into 3 categories by significance and value and setting the rating (grading) regarding architecture art by status of building built in 1924, 1960, and 1970 in the “General Plan to Develop Ulaanbaatar City” and designating protection area to historical and cultural sightseeing complexes such as Gandan

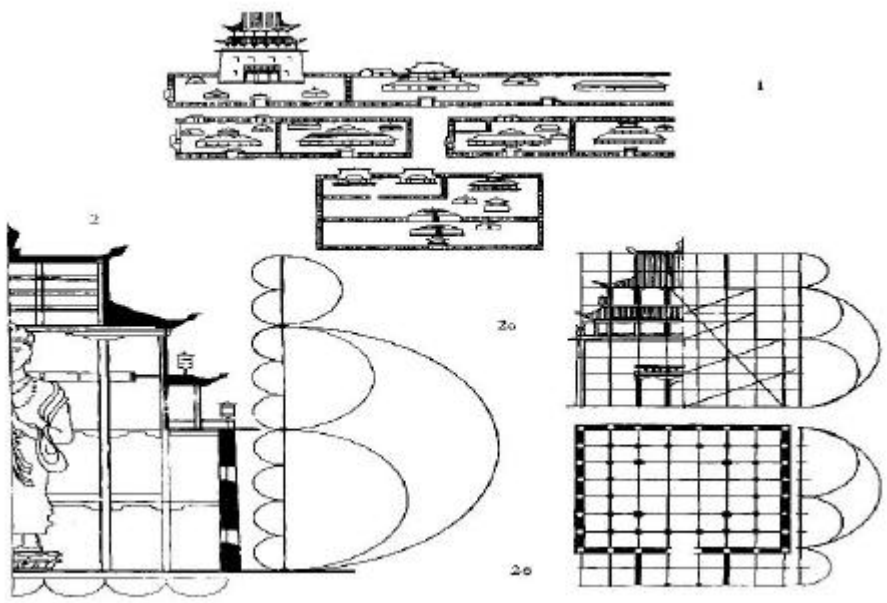
Tegchinlen Monastery, Choijinlam's Temple, Dambadarjaa Monastery, Geser Monastery, Green Place of Bogd Khaan, Gers shaped a small Temple and House of Chin Van Chanddorj and get resolution passed by the Government of Mongolia.



Among them, it is considered that implementing of the Partial General Plan of Gandantegchinlen Monastery region, running Mongolian Traditional religious activity and has leading direction in term of historical significance in the World and National level, should be implemented is in high priority.

## Background

Gandan Monastery which was the only Gandan Monastery survived after the communist regime who destroyed all Buddhist monasteries was founded at the initiative of Luvsan-Chultem-Jigmed-Dambijantsan Javzandamba Khutuktu V Dalkhyn Terrace, in which Dalkh's family had a yard in 1838 (Year of Yellow Dog of XIV Sixty Years).



The Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery of Ikh Huree ( Ulaanbaatar )

A wooden rectangular temple with a golden roof, yellow wooden plank fences around the temple. Three big connected gers (Mongolian traditional dwellings) with red decorative Holtrog (tooth-like cloth decorations below the smoke hole of a ger) called north and south lobbies, and a two-story small temple with a green enamelled roof called Detsen Povron-Ikh Amgalan Togoldor as a reading room made of bricks, clay and wood were built on the site and the foundation of the Gandan Tegchinlen-Tugs-Bajasgalant Mahayana Monastery was laid.

Lamas (Monks), who studied in Gandan monastery, were divided into 30 monastic wards and were living in their respective wards and streets and mounted police officers were guarding the area around Gandan terrace in order to keep the lamas separate from ordinary people.

Thirty monastic district performed religious services and 3 Tsanid colleges taught Choir theories and conducted theoretical debates. Since a place of Bogd IV, Tsanid Buddhist colleges called Gungaa-choilon and Dashchoilon were established, 2250 lamas attended the monastery and the monastery was named Gandantegchinlen monastery, the western terrace of Ikh Huree has been called Gandan Terrace.



*The Main Magjid Janraisig Temple*

Until 1930, the organization of the old the religious service monastery had remained the same. In other words, there were Gandan Monastery in the centre of the area and houses and yards of lamas in the western and eastern parts of the area.

By the order of the Presidium of the State Small Hural, Gandan Monastery became a religious service place in 1944.

Since 1950, density of population of Gandan Terrace has increased and people have built new houses and yards in empty spaces, as well as a timber yard, a club, grocery shops and two four story 60-apartment houses were built without conforming to the complex of Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery Block.

Currently, 2250 families and 7300 people live in Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery Block.

## Problem Definition

The area of Gandan Block was targeted as a potential development site for the following reasons:

- It is located in the centre of the city of Ulaanbaatar;
- It is the main centre of Mongolian Buddhism;
- It is abundant historic and cultural monuments;
- It is included in the specially protected areas of Mongolia.



*View of Existing Streets Gandan Housing area*

The site has the following problems:

- Lack of development of engineering and social infrastructures;
- Fully occupied, but with poor quality buildings;
- Disorderly organized Ger Block turned into a place, where anybody builds his/her own yard or building, thus created an unattractive untidy environment like a slum in the centre of Ulaanbaatar city and caused over-pollution of soil;
- Gardening and surrounding improvements are not sufficient;
- Although it is the only Buddhist centre of Mongolia, there is no space for some traditional religious services, such as circumambulation;
- Road and spaces are not enough.

## Motivation for the Choice of Study

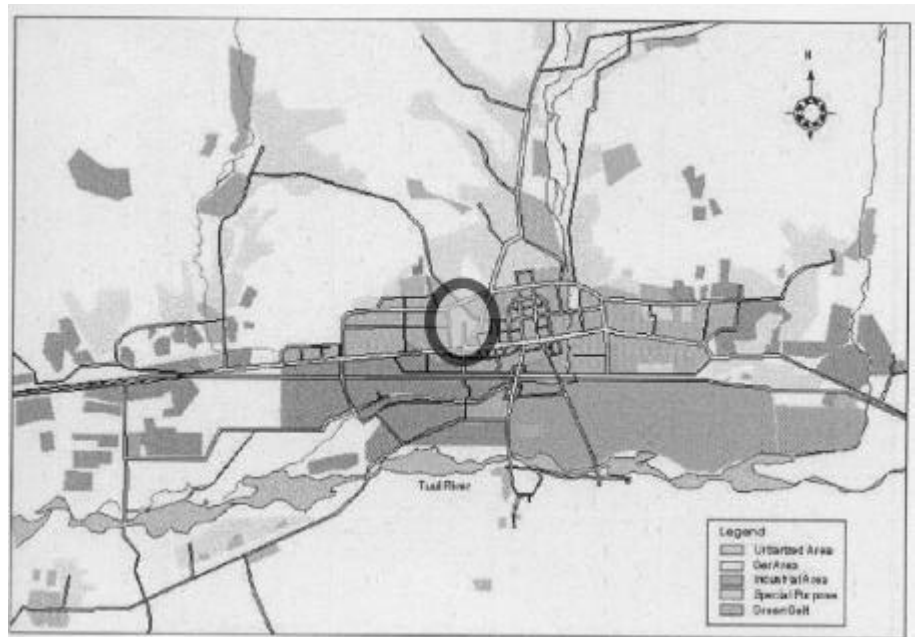
The GandanTegchinlen Monastery Block is located not far from the downtown of Ulaanbaatar, close to west side auto road and established in high hill. It is surrounded by nomadic gers, which are sights of historical and traditional face of Mongolia. Around this monastery, there are modern apartments. This architectural plan makes the city interesting that is valuable for city planning. Megzed Janraisag temple is based in respected side of this place, visible from every side of micro district's street.



*View of Top Left Southern Side*

It is very beautiful to show architectural model which represents Asian face. City planners are keeping the temple as historical sight and further decision is one of our prior issues. **Therefore planning in this area is the topic which motivated our professional interest.** Research Studies Results made in the territory of the Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery block. The Government and Religious Organizations aimed at restoring the old constructions, renew the old religious tradition of the Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery. Therefore we have been making the research study of historical documents, and collecting them.

The area of the Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery is very important from city planning point of view and it needs to define a decision on space of apartments, service constructions. There are 10 religious organizations hunting association and Ger district.



*The Ulaanbaatar Capital City Map*

Total area 40.75 ha. Area for the Monastery constructions 7.5 ha, hunting Association – 4.75 ha. road-2.0ha and nomadic tent-26.5 ha. It is a religion centre to have a religious ritual and ceremony that encounter Mongolia tradition.

This paper attempts to analyse and design how to plan for the Urban Development of the "Gandan" Area respecting the cultural heritage and facilitating sustainable Urban Development.

## Strategies for Urban Development

The City will be an attractive tourist destination in the Asian Region, aiming at promotion of Mongolian art, culture and heritage.

To promote international tourism by development of world-class tourism and infrastructure, in particular promotion of eco tourism taking advantage of Mongolian nature, culture, and heritage.

Housing: About 52 percent of the total population is living in apartments in the formal urban area. Serious housing problems are expected in the near future because 70 percent of the city population is under 35 years old.

The City will have a well-developed urban design with appropriate and adequate infrastructure facilities, coupled with well-defined land and housing policies for all citizens, including those who live in the Ger area.

### Description

Besides, the “Ger area” which accounts for 30 percent of the total settlements in the City, does not have a sewerage system.

## Analysis

### Possibilities

- It is possible to develop tourism in the area, if it used as public land in Mongolia;
- Located in the centre of Ulaanbaatar City, Capital of Mongolia, so it is possible and less expensive to connect the area with central heating, water ,sewerage pipes and electricity;
- The area is in a large centre of Mongolia, which conducts Buddhist activities, so it is possible to protect and preserve historic and cultural monuments;
- Multi-story buildings have not been built in the territory of the block, it is possible to build style buildings and houses.



*View of the Traditional the Dwelling “Ger” in Gandan Area*

## Potential Risks

- The area is used as a public land so there may be difficulties with creation of reimbursement fund to the allocated families;
- Difficulties with finding urban land to be given to the evacuated families in order to decrease the density of population of the area;
- It is difficult to classify and distinguish families, organizations and business entities, who arbitrarily settled, from the ones, who settled legally, and allocate reimbursement funds to them properly;
- Lavatories is located in the yard and is badly affecting the soil which may cause difficulties for civil construction, road and plaza construction, gardening and civil pipeline work;
- It is difficult to build plazas circumambulation roads in order to follow the Buddhist religious procedures.

In the future, 2000 people of 500 families will live in Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery Block and it belongs to specially protected areas, so it will be used as public land.

## Actors

### The Government

- The Mongolian government has been actively developing a legal framework capable of conserving its natural heritage while at the same time responding to the demands of the newly introduced market economy
- The Government issued a law on special protected areas in 2001

### Ulaanbaatar City Municipality

The city is facing problems in the following areas:

- Overpopulation and In-Migration
- Irregular Land Use
- Insufficient Urban Infrastructure, Road and
- Transport and Housing Conditions
- Environment and Ecological Problems
- Social Poverty

and the city finance which is the main problem with city limited resources since there is no subsidy from the government, but the city financed the Gandan area from the UNESCO, a part from the Municipality and part from the Government.

### Religious organisations (Administration Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery of the Centre Buddhism in Mongolia)

These organisations contributed in the restoration of the old construction, renew the old religious tradition of the monastery by providing financial support derived from worshipers.

### The Union of Mongolian Architects – UMA, (NGO)

Is a supporting agency for the project of Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery Block

## Urban Planning, Research and Design Institute

This institute designed the General Detailed Plan of the project in the Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery Block.

## “Egel” Private Company of Architecture and Design

My role was to prepare and propose the general plan for the “Gandan” Housing Block.

## Design

Gandan Monastery block is one kind of the settlement place that has been developing since 1810. Since then it has developed as a monks apartment, ger district. There was a lot of pollution and illnesses in the district as it hasn't had any sewerage system. That is why we developed the Gandan area project since we found that it is beneficial to the territory.



*Existing Situation of “Gandan Housing Block*

We planned to build an apartment and public service utilities keeping national traditional view.

There are totally 7000 people and 2500 families, thus we planned to decrease it till 500 and we planned to have.



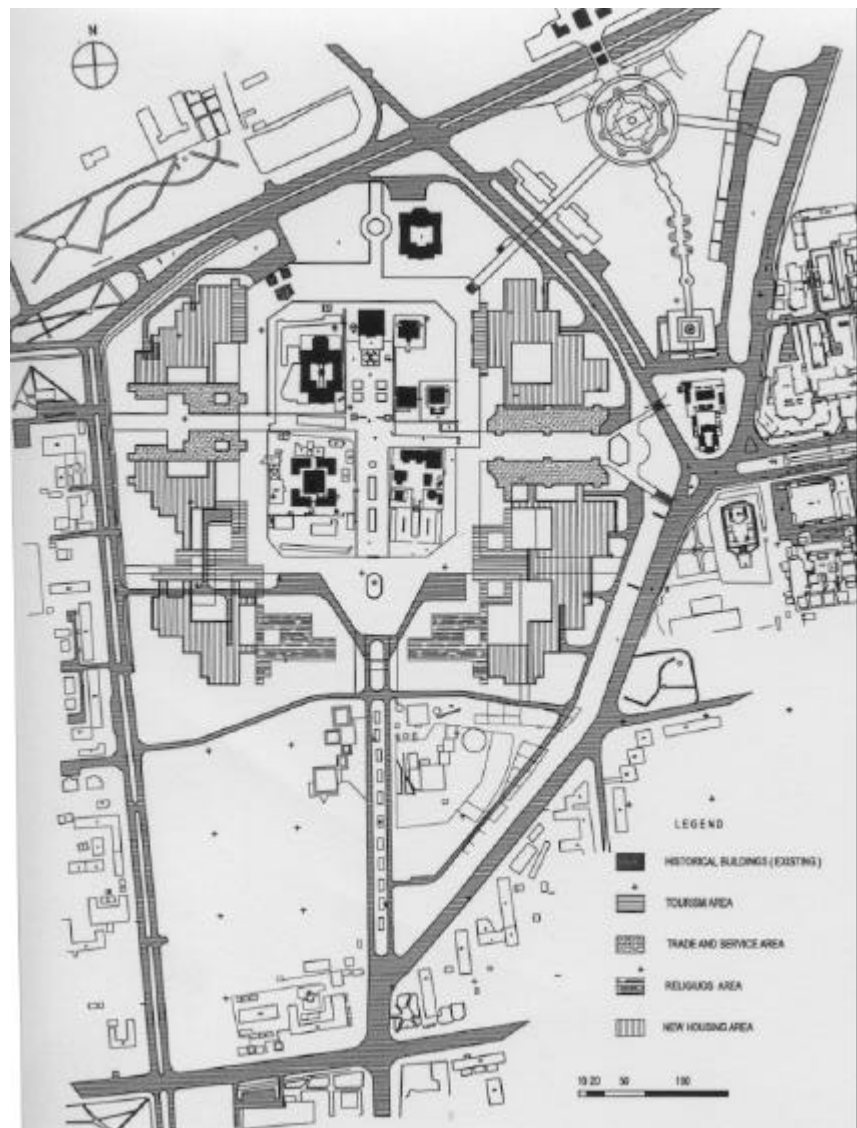
- Historical heritage building construction
- Trade and Service, public utilities
- Travel and tour

Religious traditions buildings including:

Total building	17,10 %
Public utilities square	7,20 %
Auto road	9,35 %
Historical heritage building and construction	10,57 %
Open space	18,72 %
Other square	26,95 %

We will chiefly care of historical heritage protection and storage, external utilization.

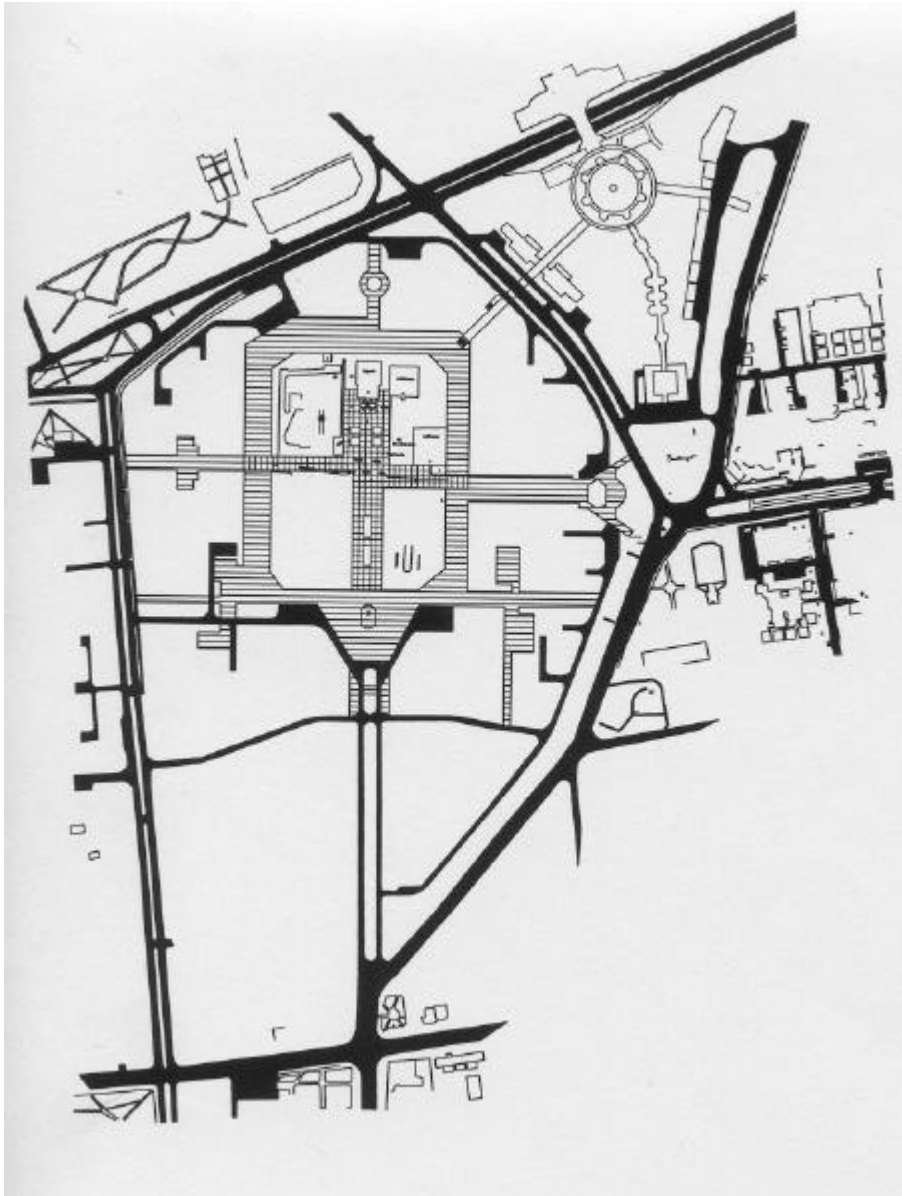
Religious traditional buildings will be kept same and we are planning to build Goroonii Zam, Maidar Ergeh Zam, Square of The Traditional Tsam Dance etc. square and buildings newly.



Zoning the housing Gandan area

### Trade and Service Areas

- Mongolian traditional handcrafts, carpenters, traditional gown, sewing, items and Handcrafter's Block. Traditional horoscope, souvenirs, shaman and ascension, traditional medicine.



Main road and Pavement of Gandan Area

### Travel and Tour Buildings

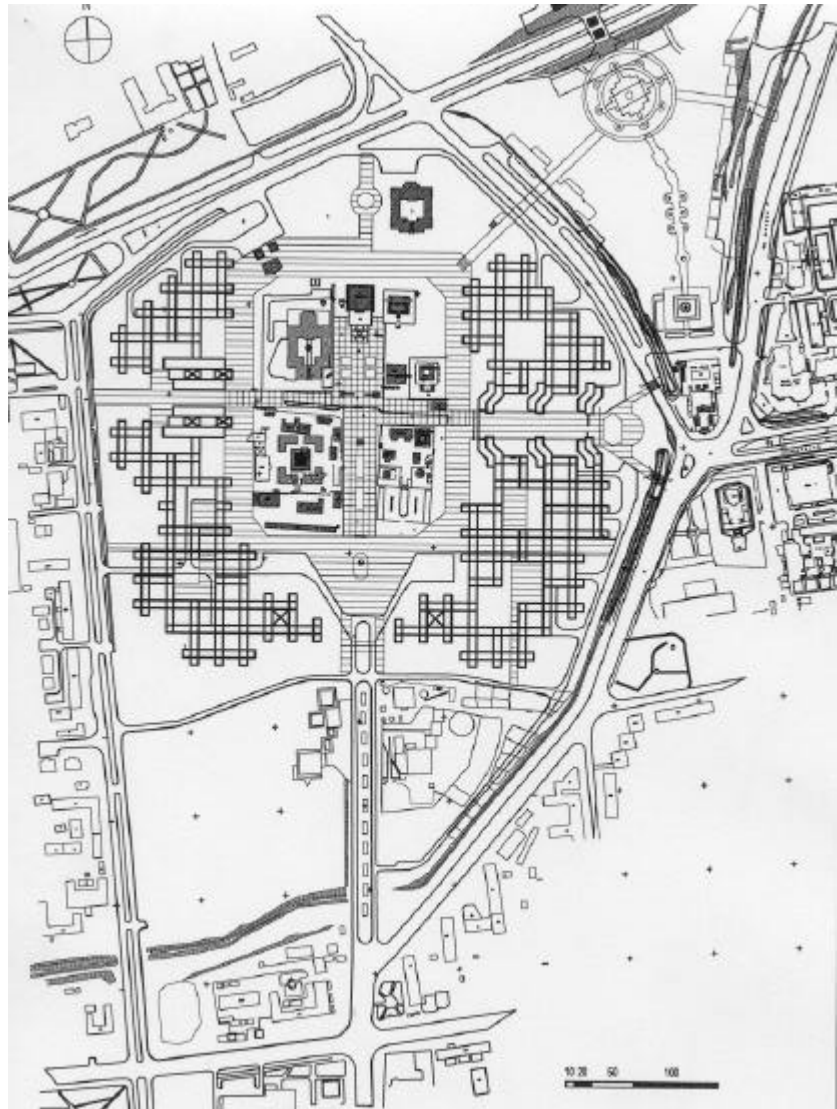
- Mongolian national tradition exhibition, exhibition to show Mongolian traditional view, hotels, traditional dish, restaurant and cafeteria, pub, souvenirs shop, small enterprise, national handcrafting.

Regarding the apartment block of the Gandantegchinlen. The Block is divided into 4 parts. It includes:

- Trade and service
- Public building construction
- Travel and tour
- Religious tradition

### Apartments with National View

It is planned to have religious building construction, historical items located in the state protected area



*Proposal for Development of "Gandan Housing Block "*

We planned the building construction to be one story in order to keep Gandan Monastery Block, a Historical heritage, to be a modern building keeping national architecture view and models.

We chose linear planning to form a condition suitable in the weather condition of our country and to protect from dust and dirt. Building must have own environment apart from the service buildings. Also the apartment will be in steps according to the land relief.

We decided to have the building of historical treasure not to be covered by each other. Apartment building must be perpendicular planning in order to keep the view of ger district kept in the history of The Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery. Regarding the volume-planning apartment will have a pyramid roof to keep the national traditional view.

The Religious Goroonii Zam, Maidar Ergekh Talbai /square/, other necessary roads, street and paves are planned newly.

Public buildings construction will be along the central street, in the front side, in the crowded places around the monastery.

## Conclusions and Recommendation

In the future 2000 people of 500 families will live in Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery Block and belongs to specially protected areas, so it will be used as a public land.

The Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery from its establishment became Palace for prayers and monk's living place. The Gandan Tegchinlen Monastery was restored like old traditional monk's district, prayer place created like man's place, in one hand. In other hand it made comfortable place for the gathering religious people and making prayer establishing the street for sales people and trade, which are advertised the Mongolian custom and tradition is very prior goal.

To make a travel and tour point from the Gandan Tegchilen Monastery and meet the present requirements and demand of prayers

It is a religion centre to have a religious ritual and ceremony that encounter Mongolia tradition. It would be a symbol and a special point to differ the city from other areas

Basic solutions of architectural planning of the general partial plan of the block are as follows:

- To build a well improved street with a tree-line road, which will go around the Upper Terrace and cross the area from the west to the east;
- To restore and preserve the area with historic monuments;
- To build several auxiliary streets connected with main streets in 200-500 meter distance northward and southward;
- To have a circumambulation road in least 20 m distance around the wall of the Monastery;
- Not to build two or more story buildings in the area in order to keep the monastery rising above the surrounding area;
- To supply the block with heating, hot and cold water, sewage and drainage pipelines in accordance with the principles of urban planning;
- To improve buildings to be built or preserved well.

The purpose of the basic solutions of the general partial plan is to develop modern tourism in the block and develop the area as an Asian centre of Buddhist development.

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