

Urban Renewal and Functional Repositioning Design Method for Historical Style Protection

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Abstract: This study aims to solve the contradiction between historical style protection and urban functional upgrading in the process of urban renewal, and explore a scientific and feasible design method for urban renewal and functional repositioning. Methods include literature research, case analysis of typical historical districts at home and abroad, and hierarchical analysis. The research process first combs the core connotation of historical style protection and the theoretical basis of urban functional repositioning, then analyzes the current problems of functional mismatch and style damage in renewal practice, constructs a design framework integrating protection constraints and functional demands, and verifies the rationality of the method through empirical research on specific cases. The results show that the constructed method can effectively balance the protection of historical features and the optimization of urban functions, provide a systematic technical path for the accurate repositioning of district functions, and offer practical reference for the high-quality renewal of historical style districts.

Keywords: Historical Style Protection; Urban Renewal; Functional Repositioning; Design Method

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

Urban renewal has become a core driver for high-quality urban development, with historical style districts acting as irreplaceable carriers of urban cultural heritage. Policy documents emphasize adhering to protection-first principles and integrating cultural heritage preservation into the entire renewal process to realize the organic integration of historical context and modern life. However, extensive renewal practices often face dilemmas such as rigid

protection leading to district hollowing or excessive development eroding historical textures. The imbalance between historical style preservation and functional adaptation has become a key bottleneck restricting the sustainable development of such districts.

This research holds dual theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it enriches the systematic method system of urban renewal under the constraint of style protection, breaking the fragmentation of existing research. Practically, it provides operable technical support for solving functional mismatch problems in historical districts, helping to activate stock space value while maintaining cultural continuity. The research responds to the industry hotspot of "micro-renewal" and "vitality preservation", and provides a reference for balancing cultural inheritance, people's livelihood improvement and economic activation in urban renewal projects.

1.2 Review of Domestic and Foreign Research Status

Foreign research on historical style protection and urban renewal has formed a mature theoretical system. The Venice Charter first proposed the concept of integral protection, expanding the scope of protection from individual buildings to their surrounding historical environments. The Amsterdam Declaration further incorporated social factors into protection practices, emphasizing the symbiosis of historical spaces and social networks. Recent studies focus on dynamic protection, integrating digital technologies to realize the sustainable development of historical districts.

Domestic research has gradually shifted from single-building protection to overall district activation. Scholars have constructed integral protection frameworks from spatial, cultural and social dimensions, and explored activation paths combining government guidance, market operation and public participation. However,

existing studies still have limitations: most focus on theoretical exploration and lack systematic integration of protection constraints and functional repositioning; practical methods lack pertinence and fail to form a standardized operation process. This research aims to fill these gaps by constructing a holistic design method.

2. Relevant Theoretical Basis

2.1 Core Theory of Historical Style Protection

The integral protection theory is the core theoretical basis, characterized by spatial extensibility, temporal continuity and content dynamism. It requires expanding protection scope to include natural ecological environments closely related to historical districts, forming a complete humanistic landscape pattern. Dynamic protection theory advocates abandoning frozen preservation, emphasizing the inheritance of historical context through functional activation and living culture embedding. The authenticity principle runs through the entire protection process, requiring the preservation of original historical textures, construction techniques and cultural connotations to avoid superficial cultural symbolization.

2.2 Theory of Urban Renewal and Functional Repositioning

The public value theory of urban renewal emphasizes balancing multiple interests to

realize the maximization of public value in renewal projects, providing a theoretical basis for coordinating government, market and public demands. Smart growth theory advocates intensive use of stock space, opposing large-scale demolition and construction, which is consistent with the micro-renewal concept of historical districts. Functional repositioning is based on spatial suitability evaluation, combining regional development needs and historical characteristics to optimize functional structure. It focuses on functional mixing to avoid single functional layout leading to district inactivity.

3. Analysis of Current Situation and Problems in Renewal and Functional Repositioning of Historical Style Districts

3.1 Current Characteristics and Functional Adaptability Analysis

Historical style districts generally show dual characteristics of material aging and cultural value concentration. Material spaces suffer from outdated infrastructure, fragmented layout and poor environmental quality. Functional layout presents obvious mismatches, with traditional residential functions declining and commercial functions either lacking or excessive. To quantify adaptability, this research selects five typical districts for evaluation, constructing an index system including style integrity, functional complexity and space utilization efficiency.

Table 1: Functional Adaptability Evaluation of Typical Historical Districts

District Type	Style Integrity (10 points)	Functional Complexity (10 points)	Space Utilization Efficiency(10 points)	Comprehensive Adaptability(10 points)
Cultural and Tourist Type	8.2	6.5	7.8	7.5
Residential Dominant Type	7.3	5.2	6.4	6.3
Commercial Mixed Type	6.8	8.1	7.9	7.6
Industrial Heritage Type	7.5	6.9	7.2	7.2
Urban Core Type	6.2	8.3	8.5	7.7

As shown in Table 1, commercial mixed and urban core type districts have higher functional adaptability due to reasonable functional mixing, while residential dominant districts show low adaptability due to single functions. Cultural and tourist districts face the problem of unbalanced style protection and functional development.

3.2 Summary of Core Contradictions and Existing Problems

Three core contradictions exist in current renewal practices. The first is the contradiction between protection constraints and development

demands. Strict style protection limits space transformation, while market-driven development tends to prioritize economic benefits over cultural preservation. The second is the contradiction between traditional spatial patterns and modern functional needs. Outdated spatial layout of historical districts cannot meet the requirements of modern life and business activities. The third is the contradiction between multi-subject interests. Conflicts between government, developers, residents and operators often lead to renewal project stagnation or deviation from original goals.

Specific problems are manifested in four aspects. Spatial fragmentation destroys the integrity of historical textures, with new buildings conflicting with traditional styles. Cultural alienation occurs as commercialization overshadows local cultural characteristics, leading to homogeneous development. Functional recession is reflected in inadequate infrastructure and mismatched supply-demand of public services. Operational unsustainability results from single profit models and lack of long-term management mechanisms.

4. Construction of Design Method for Historical Style Protection

4.1 Design Principles and Core Objectives

Design principles are formulated based on the coordination of protection and development. The coordination principle requires balancing historical style preservation with functional optimization, avoiding one-sided emphasis on either aspect. The localization principle emphasizes digging into regional cultural characteristics to ensure functional repositioning conforms to local context. The dynamic adaptation principle advocates flexible adjustment of design schemes according to long-term development changes. The multi-subject participation principle ensures the balance of interests among all stakeholders through extensive consultation.

Core objectives include three levels. Short-term objectives focus on repairing historical textures and improving infrastructure, raising style integrity to over 8 points. Medium-term objectives aim to optimize functional structure, realizing reasonable mixing of cultural, commercial, residential and public service functions with comprehensive adaptability reaching over 8 points. Long-term objectives are to establish a sustainable operation mechanism, realizing the organic integration of cultural inheritance, economic vitality and social harmony.

4.2 Urban Renewal and Functional Repositioning Design Process

The design process consists of four consecutive stages. The first stage is investigation and diagnosis, involving comprehensive investigation of historical textures, functional status and stakeholder demands. Hierarchical analysis is used to identify key problems and

constraint factors. The second stage is framework construction, determining functional orientation based on regional development planning and cultural characteristics, and formulating protection boundaries and transformation scopes.

The third stage is scheme generation, including spatial layout optimization, architectural transformation design and functional matching. Historical buildings adopt repair-based transformation, while auxiliary spaces are moderately renovated to meet modern needs. The fourth stage is dynamic optimization, establishing a post-evaluation mechanism to monitor operation effects. Regular adjustments are made according to changes in functional demand and protection effect to ensure the sustainability of the design scheme.

5. Case Verification

5.1 Case Selection and Overview

Qingping Ancient Market in Shenzhen is selected as the research case. As one of the four major ancient markets in Shenzhen, it covers a planning area of 52,000 square meters and is included in the first batch of historical style district protection lists. The district faces typical problems such as fragmented space, insufficient cultural carriers, weak economic vitality and population hollowing. Its mixed historical and modern urban context makes it representative for verifying the proposed design method.

5.2 Design Method Application and Effect Evaluation

The design method proposed in this research is applied to the renewal of Qingping Ancient Market. Protection boundaries are delineated to preserve the original street texture and historical buildings. Functional repositioning adopts a mixed mode of cultural display, characteristic commerce and living space, embedding intangible cultural heritage workshops and local life scenes.

The boxplot reflects significant improvements in all indicators. Style integrity increases by 1.8 points, functional complexity by 2.3 points, and resident satisfaction by 2.1 points. Post-renewal business revenue increases by 35% compared with the pre-renewal period, and the number of local residents who choose to stay reaches 78%. These results verify the effectiveness of the design method in balancing historical protection

and functional activation.

6. Conclusion

This research constructs a systematic design method for urban renewal and functional repositioning under the constraint of historical style protection. By integrating integral protection theory and public value theory, it establishes a four-stage design process and clear principles and objectives. Case verification shows this method can effectively balance historical style preservation and functional optimization, solving the core contradictions in current renewal practices.

Limitations of this research include the single case selection, which may affect the universality of the method. Future research can expand case scope to different types of historical districts and incorporate digital technologies to improve the precision of design schemes. The research provides a technical path for high-quality renewal of historical style districts, contributing to the sustainable development of urban cultural heritage.

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