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A Study on the Theoretical Framework of Shanghai Urban Renewal Empowered by Haipai Cultural Lineage and the Yizhifang Practice

Song Gao[1], Jieli Feng[2], Weidong Li[3,*]

1 Shanghai Jiguang Polytechnic College, Shanghai, China

2 Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, Nomi, Ishikawa, Japan

3 Shanghai Urban Construction Drawing Review Consulting Co., Ltd, Shanghai, China

***Corresponding author, E-mail Address: lwdgs@163.com**

Abstract

This study is set against the backdrop of Shanghai's urbanization entering a stage of high-quality development. As the urbanization rate surpasses 63%, the focus of urban development has shifted from "incremental expansion" to "quality improvement of existing stock." In this process, urban renewal faces two central questions. The first is how to effectively inherit and translate a distinctive historical and cultural lineage amid modern functional transformation. The second is how to achieve a dynamic balance between international paradigms and local and regional characteristics under the impact of globalization. To address these questions, this study integrates two theoretical strands. The first analyzes the everyday vitality and renewal practices of Hong Kong to distill a governance philosophy characterized by human-centeredness, cultural integration, historical revitalization, and flexible innovation. The second draws on research on Shanghai's modern architectural culture to identify its core theoretical tenets: Sino-Western integration, Shanghai-style characteristics, and architecture as a cultural carrier. Together, these strands constitute the theoretical foundation of this study.

Methodologically, this study mainly adopts a literature-based approach to analyze in depth the theoretical perspectives of the two core sources mentioned above. It uses a case study method, taking the "Yizhifang" project in Shanghai M50 Creative Park as an empirical sample to examine its transformation from industrial heritage into a multicultural space. It further applies functional deconstruction to analyze its spatial layout and mix of business formats. Through this research, the study constructs a four-dimensional theoretical model of urban renewal applicable to the Shanghai context: context extraction, function integration, human-centered adaptation, and innovative revitalization. Empirical testing of the "Yizhifang" case distills its experience in successfully integrating industrial context with modern functions and organizing flexible, innovative business formats. It also identifies shortcomings in the deep integration of Shanghai-style cultural symbols, the construction of community participation mechanisms, and the refinement of human-centered design details.

The central conclusion of this study is the proposal of an optimized pathway for empowering urban renewal through Shanghai-style cultural lineage. The wisdom of Sino-Western integration, the pragmatic spirit, and

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the innovative genes embedded in Shanghai-style culture should serve as a core competitive advantage guiding urban renewal practice in Shanghai. By establishing a cultural lineage gene bank, building a composite cultural-ecological system, implementing refined human-centered design, promoting technology-enabled living heritage transmission, and creating a multi-stakeholder collaborative governance mechanism, this approach can provide a reference paradigm that combines theoretical depth with practical applicability for Shanghai and other cities with rich historical stratification to pursue culture-oriented sustainable renewal under globalization.

Keywords

Shanghai-style cultural lineage; urban renewal; translation of cultural lineage; theoretical framework; the Yizhifang case; Sino-Western cultural integration

1. Preface

1.1 Research Background

The research background of this study is rooted in the macro shift in China's urbanization process and the specific context of Shanghai's urban development. China's urbanization rate, based on permanent residents, has now surpassed the critical threshold of 63%, marking a transition into a stage of high-quality development characterized by quality improvement of existing stock rather than incremental expansion. Within this historic transformation, Shanghai, as a frontier of China's modernization, has seen the core imperative of urban renewal shift from mere spatial expansion and physical redevelopment toward the inheritance, translation, and innovative regeneration of its historical and cultural lineage. This requires renewal practice not only to address the aging of buildings and infrastructure but also to assume the mission of sustaining collective urban memory and revitalizing cultural genes.

Meanwhile, against the backdrop of deep globalization, urban renewal in Shanghai faces a more complex dual challenge. On the one hand, it must respond to the homogenizing pressures of global flows of capital, technology, and culture while preserving and promoting its distinctive local cultural identity. This identity is deeply rooted in the "Haipai" culture that took shape in modern times, marked by a notable integration and inclusiveness of Chinese and Western elements, as exemplified by the Bund architectural complex and Shikumen lilong. On the other hand, renewal must meet the diverse, high-quality demands of modern urban life for spatial function, economic vitality, and social interaction, thereby achieving the contemporary adaptive transformation of historical spaces. How, then, to achieve a dynamic balance between universal paradigms of globalization and locally specific values, and how to secure the creative continuity of cultural lineage while satisfying modern functional needs, constitute the core questions that current urban renewal practice in Shanghai must address. It is against this background that this study is conducted, aiming to explore a theoretical framework and practical pathways for responding to these questions.

1.2 Research Significance

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. At the theoretical level, it systematically inte-

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grates local wisdom from Hong Kong's urban renewal—human-centeredness, cultural integration, historical revitalization, and flexible innovation—with core arguments on Shanghai's modern architectural culture—Sino-Western integration, Haipai characteristics, and architecture as a cultural carrier. It aims to construct a theoretical framework for urban renewal that is closely adapted to Shanghai's urban context and cultural genes. This effort not only responds to the current Western-dominated state of urban renewal theory but also seeks to bridge the theoretical gap between the rich connotations of "local cultural lineage" and the concrete operations of "renewal practice," thereby providing a new analytical tool for interpreting and guiding localized urban renewal in a globalized context.

At the practical level, this study takes the "Yizhifang" project in Shanghai M50 Creative Park as a sample for in-depth analysis. As a contemporary practice in industrial heritage renovation and cultural space revitalization, the project is positioned as a composite cultural venue integrating artistic creation, exhibition, and consumption. Through the translation of industrial aesthetics, the integration of diverse functions, and the introduction of digital experiences, it concretely demonstrates a balance between cultural lineage transmission and functional upgrading. A case study of this sample helps distill an actionable pathway and key strategies covering cultural lineage extraction, functional planning, spatial design, and operational innovation. This offers a practical paradigm with reference value and replicability for the many industrial heritage renovation and cultural space revitalization projects in Shanghai and across China that face similar transitions.

1.3 Literature Review

This study is situated within existing academic discourse. As global issues, urban renewal and cultural lineage transmission have increasingly shifted from an early focus on physical spatial transformation to concerns with sociocultural dimensions and sustainability [1]. Wen Jun calls for going beyond simple physical renovation and technological fetishism in urban renewal, placing sociocultural reconstruction and human development at the core, and making cities genuine spiritual homes for people by respecting historical lineage, repairing social relations, and encouraging public participation [2]. Chen Zhong and Soja point out that spatial justice is not only the spatial expression of social justice but also a core dimension for understanding urban problems and constructing a rational urban society; China may explore a more just urbanization path different from Western capitalism [3]. Chen Zhong further notes that urban cultural lineage is not merely the physical remains of historical space but an "accessible humanistic space" that carries humanity, culture, emotion, and diversity [4]. The essence of urban cultural lineage is "human connections"—the cultural genes and emotional bonds formed through human–city interaction. To reasonably construct urban cultural lineage, it is necessary to respect the diversity of civilizations, emphasize the unity of inheritance and innovation, and avoid simplistic, commercialized preservation approaches [4]. International scholarship emphasizes human scale, adaptive reuse of historical environments, and community participation [5,6]. For example, the "everyday vitality" embodied in streets such as Queen's Road West in Hong Kong is a typical case of maintaining commercial ecology and cultural identity through refined design [7]. Domestic research, closely tied to rapid urbanization, has accumulated rich practice in historic district preservation and industrial heritage revitalization [8,9,10,11].

Focusing on Shanghai, although existing research has thoroughly examined the historical genealogy and stylistic integration of modern architecture (such as the Bund architectural complex and Shikumen), revealing

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the Sino-Western integration characteristic of Haipai culture [12], notable shortcomings remain. First, in theoretical construction, it often directly cites Western urban renewal theories and lacks a systematic theoretical framework rooted in Shanghai's unique modernization trajectory and Haipai cultural lineage itself, resulting in a lack of fit between theoretical dialogue and local practice. Second, in case studies, it tends to be fragmented, focusing either on historical textual research or on single-project renovation, and fails to organically link in-depth theoretical analysis, specific practical cases, and generalized optimization pathways into a complete research loop of "theory–practice–optimization." This study aims to address these shortcomings by integrating cross-regional theoretical resources and in-depth case evidence, attempting to construct a localized analytical framework with greater explanatory and guiding power.

1.4 Research Methodology and Technical Roadmap

This study adopts a systematic research methodology and a clear technical route to ensure the rigor of the research process and the reliability of its conclusions. The research methods mainly include the following. First, literature research: it conducts an in-depth reading of two core sources—"Urban Everyday Vitality Embedded in the Human Settlement Environment" and "Exploring the Unique Imprint of Shanghai's Modern Architectural Culture"—to extract and integrate core theoretical perspectives on Hong Kong's urban renewal experience and the characteristics of Shanghai's modern architectural culture. Second, case study: it focuses on the "Yizhifang" project in Shanghai M50 Creative Park, analyzing its design scheme, functional layout, and cultural lineage translation strategies to conduct in-depth empirical research. Third, comparative research: it compares the renewal logics embodied in Hong Kong streets, such as human-centered orientation and flexible innovation, with spatial practices under Shanghai's Haipai cultural lineage, in order to reveal similarities and differences in renewal models across cultural contexts.

Based on the above methods, this study follows the technical route outlined below. First, it constructs and integrates the theoretical framework. By distilling the core theoretical insights of the two key papers, it combines the four-dimensional insights drawn from Hong Kong—human-centeredness, culture, history, and flexibility—with Shanghai's theoretical attributes of integration, cultural carrier, and balance, thereby forming the analytical foundation of this study. Second, it analyzes the core characteristics of Shanghai's urban cultural lineage and the current state of urban renewal, examining the genes of Sino-Western integration and pragmatic innovation in Haipai culture and the challenges they face in current renewal practice. Third, it enters the case-based empirical stage of the Yizhifang project, using the constructed theoretical framework to systematically examine the project's positioning, spatial planning, and design strategies, so as to validate the theory and distill practical experience and shortcomings. Finally, based on the integrated findings of theory and empirical research, it proposes an optimized pathway for Shanghai's urban renewal oriented toward Haipai cultural lineage, aiming to produce a complete, closed-loop research outcome that moves from theoretical construction and status diagnosis to case validation and strategy generation.

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2. Theoretical Foundations of Urban Renewal and Cultural Lineage Transmission

2.1. Definition of Core Concepts

This study first defines its core concepts to establish a clear basis for theoretical dialogue. In this study, urban renewal refers to systematic intervention in the existing built environment after urbanization enters a stage of stock-based development. Its core goes beyond mere physical spatial transformation and emphasizes the functional restructuring and cultural value regeneration of existing space. This positioning echoes the practice in the Hong Kong study of sustaining street commercial ecology and everyday vitality through refined design, and it also aligns with Shanghai's development reality of shifting from "incremental expansion" to "quality improvement of existing stock."

In this process, cultural lineage translation is a key mechanism for achieving cultural value regeneration. It does not refer to the simple reproduction of historical elements, but rather to the transformation of local cultural symbols, historical elements, and collective memory—through creative design thinking—into spatial language, functional forms, and experiential scenes that can be perceived and used in contemporary life. For example, the Yizhifang project's preservation and translation of the industrial aesthetic of M50, and its planned immersive circulation from the "digital spore cluster" to the "critical void," are practical manifestations of cultural lineage translation.

Focusing on Shanghai, its distinctive cultural genes are referred to as the Haipai cultural lineage. It specifically denotes a regional cultural system formed during Shanghai's century-long modern opening, characterized by deep Sino-Western cultural integration and giving rise to a high degree of inclusiveness, pragmatic functionality, and a sustained spirit of innovation. This system is not only externally manifested in the stylistic integration of the Bund architectural complex and the Sino-Western synthesis of Shikumen residences, but also internalized as an urban development philosophy that balances international vision with local concern and reconciles nostalgic sentiment with modern needs. It constitutes a fundamental cultural resource for guiding Shanghai's in-depth and distinctive urban renewal.

2.2. Theoretical Insights from Hong Kong's Urban Renewal (Based on the First Core Paper)

Based on an in-depth analysis of "Urban Everyday Vitality Embedded in the Human Settlement Environment," this study distills four core theoretical insights from Hong Kong's urban renewal practice, which provide an important reference for the subsequent development of a localized urban renewal framework for Shanghai.

First, human-centered refined design serves as the micro-foundation of Hong Kong's street vitality. It is manifested not only in the comprehensive provision of physical facilities such as spacious sidewalks and systematic canopies, but also in the deep adaptation of these designs to user behavior and needs—for example, vertical elevators in the metro that flexibly adapt to terrain and highly recognizable wayfinding systems—thereby jointly creating a safe, comfortable, and caring public environment.

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Second, the balancing mechanism between multicultural integration and local characteristics constitutes its sociocultural core. Hong Kong's streets present a diverse spectrum of commercial formats, primarily local specialty dining supplemented by international cuisine. This symbiotic state is not an unstructured mixture but a dynamic equilibrium shaped by market forces and community preferences, effectively sustaining the underlying character of local culture and a sense of identity.

Third, the concept of "living heritage" reflects an innovative approach to historical revitalization. The most representative case is the "Ding Ding Tram," which transcends its role as a mere mode of transport or a static object of preservation. By continuously integrating into the modern urban transport system and everyday life, it has become a "living" cultural symbol that carries collective memory and fosters cultural identity, thereby achieving the contemporary continuation of its historical function and value.

Finally, the flexibility and innovative capacity of small and medium-sized business formats are central to maintaining the resilience of its commercial ecosystem. Family-run, small and medium-sized street-side restaurants, characterized by organizational flexibility, controllable costs, and rapid market responsiveness, constitute a capillary network of the urban economy. This flexible structure not only strengthens the local economy's capacity to withstand risks but also nurtures continuous micro-innovations, making it a vital source of urban vitality.

Together, these four insights constitute a systematic theoretical perspective that spans material space, socio-cultural processes, historical transmission, and economic innovation, offering a valuable theoretical tool for reflecting on and optimizing urban renewal practices in Shanghai and other cities.

2.3. The Theoretical Core of Shanghai's Modern Architectural Culture (Based on the Second Core Paper)

Based on an in-depth analysis of "Exploring the Unique Imprint of Shanghai's Modern Architectural Culture," this study further distills the theoretical core embedded in Shanghai's modern architectural culture, providing a foundation for understanding the contemporary translation of the Haipai cultural lineage. Its theoretical content can be summarized into the following four interrelated dimensions:

First, the genealogical evolution of Sino-Western integration is its most distinctive formal feature. Shanghai's modern architecture did not simply copy Western styles; rather, it deeply integrated and re-created Western styles such as Neoclassicism, Eclecticism, and Art Deco with local construction techniques and aesthetic preferences. This gave rise to two representative lineages—the grand public buildings of the Bund and Shikumen residential architecture—which directly reflect Shanghai's historical process as a meeting point of Chinese and Western cultures.

Second, this integration was internalized and shaped distinctive Haipai cultural traits. Influenced by the philosophy of the Mean and a pragmatic spirit, Shanghai's modern architecture exhibits a balanced, inclusive, and functionally rational character. This is evident both in the HSBC Building's structural simplification of classical forms and in the wisdom of Shikumen residences in integrating Chinese and Western elements within limited space. Both embody this trait: a rational reconciliation between form and function, and between the foreign and the local.

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Third, architecture in Shanghai is regarded as a key cultural and social carrier. It is not only a material crystallization of stylistic integration but also a physical embodiment of cultural transmission, a stage for social interaction, and a container of urban memory. From the grand halls of bank buildings to the everyday vitality of lilong spaces, architectural space carries and shapes modes of social interaction, forms of life, and collective identity. The continuity of its physical form is therefore crucial to sustaining cultural continuity.

Ultimately, these traits interact to form a dynamic balancing mechanism for responding to change. The development history of Shanghai's modern architecture is essentially a history of continually adjusting the relationship between "persistence" and "innovation" under the impact of globalization. It suggests that the vitality of the Haipai cultural lineage lies not in clinging to a particular historical fragment, but in embracing modern functions and technologies while maintaining the distinctiveness and adaptability of its cultural core, thereby establishing its own irreplaceable value position amid globalization. Together, these four core dimensions constitute the theoretical articulation of the Haipai cultural lineage in the spatial dimension.

2.4. Theoretical Framework Integration

Based on a systematic review of the practical wisdom of Hong Kong's urban renewal and the theoretical core of Shanghai's modern architectural culture, this study creatively integrates the two to construct a four-dimensional theoretical model tailored to the context of Shanghai's urban renewal: cultural lineage extraction, functional integration, human-centered adaptation, and innovative revitalization.

This model aims to provide a systematic analytical framework from cognition to operation. Cultural lineage extraction is the starting point. It emphasizes the systematic identification and excavation of Shanghai's Haipai cultural genes—including explicit architectural symbols of Sino-Western integration (such as Shikumen elements and industrial aesthetics) and the implicit spirit of pragmatic innovation—thereby laying a foundation of cultural legitimacy for renewal practice. Functional integration is the core transformative phase. It advocates creatively integrating the extracted cultural lineage elements into modern urban functional needs, promoting the organic symbiosis of diverse business formats such as cultural exhibition, artistic creation, commercial consumption, and community life, and achieving the unity of historical value and modern vitality. Human-centered adaptation is the value criterion. It requires renewal practice to draw on Hong Kong's concept of refined design, prioritizing responses to the diverse needs and behavioral experiences of users (residents, creators, visitors) in spatial scale, facility provision (such as circulation routes and barrier-free environments), and place-making, so as to create an inclusive and comfortable sense of place. Innovative revitalization is the sustainable driving force. It encourages the use of digital technologies (such as Yizhifang's immersive digital experience), flexible business format models (such as small and medium-sized creative units), and the concept of "living heritage" to promote the contemporary translation and continuous value appreciation of historical space and cultural resources, ensuring their resilience in dynamic development.

These four dimensions are not linear steps but an interrelated, iterative, and cyclical organic whole. The model both draws on the emphasis on human-centeredness and flexibility in the Hong Kong experience and is deeply rooted in the integrative and balancing qualities of Shanghai's Haipai cultural lineage. It seeks to provide a localized framework that combines theoretical explanatory power with practical guidance for addressing the core challenges facing Shanghai under globalization: cultural lineage transmission and modern

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transformation.

3. Shanghai's Urban Cultural Lineage: Core Characteristics and Current State of Renewal

3.1. Historical Stratification and Core Characteristics of Shanghai's Urban Cultural Lineage

The uniqueness of Shanghai's urban cultural lineage derives from its deep historical layering, which has condensed into identifiable core characteristics in the material remains of different periods. Its modern architectural heritage constitutes the classic framework of this lineage. The Bund architectural complex, as a tangible "exhibition of world architecture," exemplifies the integration of Western styles such as Neoclassicism and Eclecticism with local construction wisdom. Shikumen residences, found throughout the city's streets and lanes, more deeply embody the vernacular fusion of Western terraced housing layouts with Jiangnan residential styles and decorative arts, representing a microcosmic crystallization of Sino-Western cultural integration at the level of everyday dwelling. In the modern and contemporary period, industrial heritage has become an important new carrier for the continuation of this lineage. Old factories and warehouses, represented by Shanghai M50 Creative Park, not only inscribe the industrial memory of urban modernization but also, through their open spatial structures, provide physical carriers for contemporary art and creative industries, thereby inherently carrying the innovative genes of the shift from "producing material goods" to "producing creativity."

Behind these material legacies runs a stable yet dynamic Haipai cultural core. The first dimension is inclusiveness: a strong capacity to absorb, coexist with, and transform heterogeneous cultures, as evidenced by the integrated genealogy of Chinese and Western architectural styles. The second is pragmatism: a rational spirit that prioritizes function and practical effect, consistently manifested from the adaptive renovation of historic buildings to the efficient layout of modern spaces. The third is innovativeness: an intrinsic driving force for iteratively updating business formats, technologies, and even spatial forms in response to the needs of the times, as seen from modern commercial and financial innovation to the embedding of digital experiences in the current Yizhifang project. Together, these three dimensions constitute the spiritual essence of the Haipai cultural lineage, enabling it both to accumulate deep historical layers and to continuously inject cultural momentum into the city's contemporary renewal.

3.2. Current State and Challenges of Urban Renewal in Shanghai

Urban renewal practice in Shanghai has made notable progress in specific domains, producing project paradigms with nationwide influence. In the restoration and revitalization of historic buildings, the conservation-based use of the Bund architectural complex known as the "Exhibition of World Architecture" and the commercial renovation of Shikumen neighborhoods such as Xintiandi have explored pathways for the continued existence of historic districts. In the transformation of industrial heritage, projects such as M50 Creative Park and 1933 Old Millfun have successfully converted old factory buildings into spaces for art exhibition and creative industries, sustaining the material memory of industrial space while injecting new functions.

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These practices indicate that Shanghai has accumulated significant experience in the adaptive reuse of material heritage.

However, in light of the deeper requirements of high-quality development, current renewal practice still faces a series of core challenges. First, an imbalance often arises between cultural lineage transmission and commercial development. Some projects overemphasize consumption functions and image-building, thereby diluting the cultural depth and everyday vitality of historic places—in contrast to the naturally grown "everyday vitality" of Hong Kong streets. Second, functional layouts tend toward homogenization. The business formats of some renewal projects are highly homogeneous, failing to fully activate the diverse and composite potential inherent in Haipai culture and lacking the resilience of Hong Kong's flexible ecosystem composed of small and medium-sized businesses. Third, human-centered design details are generally lacking. Renewal often focuses on macroscopic form while lacking the refined consideration seen in Hong Kong at the micro level, such as street interfaces, barrier-free facilities, and public space comfort. Fourth, community participation mechanisms are notably insufficient. The renewal process is mostly dominated by top-down development, and the real needs and cultural identity of local residents and users are not fully integrated into decision-making, undermining the social inclusiveness and sustainable vitality of projects. Together, these challenges point to a key question: how to move beyond mere physical spatial transformation to achieve comprehensive cultural, social, and economic revitalization—precisely the core issue this study seeks to address.

4.The Yizhifang Project: A Case Study of Urban Renewal Practice in Shanghai

4.1 Project Overview

This study selects the "Yizhifang" project in Shanghai M50 Creative Park as its core empirical case. Located within M50 Creative Park, an important industrial heritage site in Shanghai, the project's spatial renovation directly builds on the structure and texture of the original industrial factory buildings, making it a representative example of current industrial heritage revitalization. In terms of overall positioning, it goes beyond a single art museum or cluster of studios, aiming to create a composite cultural and vibrant space that integrates artistic creation, exhibition and exchange, and leisure consumption. This positioning responds to urban renewal's demand for functional mixing and vitality generation.

To realize this positioning, the project planned four core functional zones: artistic creation (including artist studios and intangible cultural heritage transmission studios on each floor), exhibition and exchange (through art galleries, historical exhibition areas, and informal salons), dining and leisure (with coffee shops, light music bars, tea houses, and similar offerings), and digital experience (layered digital spaces spanning all floors). These functions are organically integrated within a five-story building, forming a three-dimensional ecosystem that ranges from basic commercial activity to in-depth creative work, and from physical exhibition to virtual experience. This spatial ecosystem primarily serves a target group aged 18–45, including professional artists, freelance entrepreneurs, and art educators—the core creative class—aiming to meet their diverse and composite needs for professional creation, work display, social interaction, and daily relaxation, thereby building a sustainable creative community ecosystem.

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4.2 Practical Pathways for Cultural Lineage Transmission in the Yizhifang Project

The cultural lineage transmission of the "Yizhifang" project is not achieved through symbolic imitation, but follows a systematic practical pathway from spatial texture to experiential content. At the level of cultural lineage extraction, the project deeply inherits the industrial heritage genes of the site. Its overall aesthetic tone is dominated by a gray palette, preserving and translating the inherent industrial aesthetic texture of the M50 park. It also draws on the "preservation and dialogue" strategy toward industrial remains in the transformation of the Ruhr coal mining area in Essen, Germany, making historical atmosphere the underlying tone of the space. In terms of functional integration, the project embodies the inclusiveness of Haipai culture, organically integrating functions that carry traditional memory—such as intangible cultural heritage studios and historical and cultural exhibition areas—with modern business formats such as contemporary artistic creation, digital art galleries, and light music bars, thereby constructing a multicultural symbiotic system that transcends time and space.

In terms of human-centered adaptation, the project responds to the differentiated behavioral patterns and psychological needs of various users—such as tourists, creators, and visitors—through a clearly layered functional layout (the first floor focuses on commercial foot traffic, while floors two to five gradually shift toward creation, exhibition, and deeper leisure) and a carefully planned immersive experiential circulation. Its core innovation lies in innovative revitalization: the project plans a hierarchical digital experience sequence from the "digital spore cluster" on the first floor to the "critical void" on the fourth floor. This is not merely a technological application but a key strategy for the modern translation of cultural experience. It transforms abstract historical lineage and artistic content into perceptible, interactive immersive scenes, injecting future-oriented vitality into the narrative of industrial heritage and achieving "living" transmission.

4.3 Case Evaluation Based on the Theoretical Framework

Applying the theoretical framework constructed in this study—cultural lineage extraction, functional integration, human-centered adaptation, and innovative revitalization—to examine the "Yizhifang" project allows for a systematic evaluation of the strengths and limitations of its renewal practice.

Its core strengths lie primarily in the effective implementation of the dimensions of "functional integration" and "innovative revitalization." The project successfully balances industrial cultural lineage—preserved through a gray-toned aesthetic and spatial texture—with modern composite functions such as artistic creation, commerce, and digital experience. It constructs a diverse business format ecosystem in which intangible cultural heritage transmission dialogues with cutting-edge art, and physical exhibitions interweave with virtual experiences. This business format layout itself embodies flexible innovation: each functional unit can operate independently while also mutually stimulating the others, thereby enhancing the adaptability and resilience of the overall space.

However, the project has notable shortcomings in the following respects. First, in terms of the depth and breadth of "cultural lineage extraction," its distillation and translation of more broadly representative Haipai cultural symbols—such as Shikumen architectural vocabulary and Jiangnan folk cultural elements—remain relatively weak. Its cultural narrative is mainly anchored at the level of industrial heritage and fails to fully demonstrate the multilayered and rich nature of Shanghai's regional culture. Second, compared with the

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community networks endogenous to Hong Kong's renewal model, the project lacks effective community participation in its planning and operational mechanisms. The roles of local residents and broader social groups remain unclear, which may undermine its long-term social integration and sense of cultural identity. Finally, at the refined level of "human-centered adaptation," although large-scale functional zoning is present, there is still room for improvement in micro-level human-centered design details—for example, the interaction between buildings and urban street interfaces, the further development of barrier-free facilities in public spaces, and more inclusive detailed environmental design drawing on Hong Kong experience. These aspects require further refinement to achieve a higher-quality place experience.

5.Optimization Pathways for Shanghai's Urban Renewal Based on the Haipai Cultural Lineage

Building on the theoretical framework and empirical case analysis presented above, this study proposes future-oriented optimization pathways for Shanghai's urban renewal centered on the Haipai cultural lineage, aiming to systematically address existing challenges and achieve comprehensive cultural, functional, social, and economic revitalization.

First, deepen cultural lineage translation and establish an actionable "Haipai cultural lineage gene bank." This requires moving beyond reliance on a single industrial aesthetic and systematically extracting and encoding the multilayered genes of Haipai culture. At the level of architectural elements, it entails identifying typical vocabularies such as Shikumen doors and windows, lilong layouts, and Bund column orders. At the level of cultural symbols, it involves excavating intangible memories such as folk motifs, time-honored brands, and distinctive scenes of everyday life. At the level of business format genes, it entails summarizing commercial traditions such as traditional dining, intangible cultural heritage crafts, and refined retail. This will provide a rich repository of source materials for creative transformation.

Second, promote functional mixing and build a symbiotic ecosystem of "culture + creation + commerce + community." Drawing on the experience of the Yizhifang project, this approach further strengthens the organic integration of functions and the permeation of experiential scenes. The core lies in breaking down barriers between business formats and carefully planning mixed spaces that combine "intangible cultural heritage revitalization sites + artistic creation workshops + everyday consumption scenes," so that cultural experiences are immersed in the flow of daily life, forming a self-nourishing and resilient neighborhood ecosystem.

Third, implement human-centered adaptation and promote refined, responsive spatial design. This involves actively drawing on the humanistic details embodied in Hong Kong's street renewal, and systematically optimizing sidewalk scale and comfort, building a coherent weather-protection system, and improving accessible facilities in renewal projects. At the same time, it calls for adding interactive micro-spaces—such as "informal salons" and "community inspiration walls"—that stimulate spontaneous interaction and community identity, thereby translating macro-level functional layout into micro-level well-being and a sense of belonging.

Fourth, expand innovative revitalization by leveraging technology empowerment and cultivating a flexible economy. On the one hand, continue and deepen the Yizhifang project's approach to "digital experience" by using AR, VR, and digital twin technologies to advance digital storytelling and immersive interaction for cul-

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tural heritage, thereby achieving "living" presentation. On the other hand, consciously cultivate and support small and medium-sized, individualized, rapid-response creative businesses and studios, whose flexible network can enhance the market adaptability and innovative vitality of the entire commercial ecosystem.

Fifth, innovate collaborative governance and build a participatory mechanism of co-construction and co-governance among multiple actors. The renewal process must shift from a dual dominance of "government–market" to a four-party collaborative governance model involving government (policy guidance and rule-making), market (capital investment and professional operation), community (feedback on local needs and cultural oversight), and creators/cultural institutions (content infusion and value leadership). By establishing regular communication platforms and participatory channels, this approach ensures that renewal projects achieve a long-term balance among cultural authenticity, commercial viability, and social inclusiveness.

These pathways are interlinked: cultural lineage translation serves as the foundation; functional integration and human-centered adaptation are the core levers; innovative revitalization is the sustained driving force; and collaborative governance is the institutional safeguard. Together, they form an operating system for urban renewal that takes the Haipai cultural lineage as its soul, places human needs at the center, and is oriented toward sustainable development.

6. Conclusion and Outlook

This study, through the theoretical integration of Hong Kong's urban renewal experience with Shanghai's modern architectural culture, and through an empirical analysis of the "Yizhifang" project, draws the following core conclusion: the wisdom of "Sino-Western integration" and the spirit of "pragmatic innovation" embedded in the Haipai cultural lineage constitute Shanghai's core cultural competitiveness in conducting urban renewal and shaping a distinctive urban identity in the context of globalization. As a concrete practice, the "Yizhifang" project has initially validated the feasibility of the four-dimensional theoretical model constructed in this study—"cultural lineage extraction, functional integration, human-centered adaptation, and innovative revitalization." Its explorations in the translation of industrial aesthetics, the integration of diverse business formats, and innovation in digital experience are of demonstrative significance. This further indicates that future urban renewal in Shanghai must consciously incorporate Haipai genes into deep cultural transmission while consistently adhering to a human-centered orientation in concrete functional upgrading and spatial creation, so as to achieve an organic unity of historical depth and contemporary vitality.

This study also has certain limitations. These lie mainly in the focused nature of the case analysis. Although the industrial heritage renovation project represented by "Yizhifang" is representative, it does not cover other types of renewal, such as historic districts and older residential neighborhoods. The generality of the theoretical model therefore requires further testing. Future research can be deepened in the following directions. On the one hand, the scope of comparative cases should be expanded, applying and revising the theoretical framework across different types of renewal projects. On the other hand, research on key mechanisms should be deepened, particularly the specific models of multi-stakeholder collaborative community governance and cutting-edge pathways through which digital technologies empower cultural lineage revitalization. Ultimately, through continuous practical feedback and academic iteration, the theoretical framework is expected to be

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continuously refined, providing more explanatory and instructive references for renewal strategies in Shanghai and other cities with rich historical layering.

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