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Spatial Characteristics and Conservation and Revitalization Strategies of Heritage Landscapes in Fuzhou's Shangxiahang Historic and Cultural District

Yun Gao*
School of Art and Design, Fuzhou University of International Studies and Trade, Fuzhou, Fujian Province, China
***Corresponding author, E-mail: gaoyun@fzfu.edu.cn**

Abstract:
As one of the "Three Historic and Cultural Districts" of the ancient city of Fuzhou, the Shangxiahang Historic and Cultural District became an international commercial port bustling with merchants due to the advantages of water transportation along the Min River in history. It is an important birthplace of "Fujian Merchants Culture" and a pivotal witness to the historical relics of modern port opening. With the acceleration of urbanization, the Shangxiahang Historic and Cultural District faces the challenge of balancing the preservation of its historical features with sustainable development, making it an urgent issue that needs to be addressed. This study, combining historical documentation research and field investigations, systematically examines the spatial characteristics of heritage landscapes in the Shangxiahang Historic and Cultural District, including its "two horizontal and one vertical" streets layout, the architectural style mixed functions of "commerce-residence-storage" and multicultural landscape nodes. Based on the current state of preservation and management challenges faced by the district, it proposes renewal strategies involving hierarchical management and collaborative participation from multiple parties. By exploring the path to balancing historical heritage and modern functions, this study aims to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the conservation and revitalization of similar historic and cultural districts in modern cities.

Keywords:
Fuzhou's Shangxiahang Historic and Cultural District, Heritage landscapes, Conservation and revitalization

1.Introduction

In recent years, with the acceleration of urbanization, the conservation and revitalization of historic and cultural districts have become significant issues in the conservation of China's cultural heritage and urban development. At the national government level, China has clearly put forward a 16-character guiding principle of "prioritizing conservation, giving first priority to rescue, pursuing rational utilization, and strengthening management." Subsequently, policy documents such as the "Regulations on the Conservation of Historic and Cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages" and the "Opinions on Strengthening the Conservation and Inher-

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itance of Historic and Cultural Heritage in Urban and Rural Construction" have been issued, emphasizing the need to coordinate cultural heritage conservation with the enhancement of urban functions in urban and rural construction, and promoting the coordinated development of "living transmission" and "organic revitalization". [1] The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China further states the need to "strengthen the conservation and inheritance of historic and cultural heritage in urban and rural construction," providing a clear direction for the sustainable development of historic and cultural districts. The General Office of the State Council of China has issued a notice titled "Several Economic Policies to Promote High-quality Development of Culture", further deepening the reform of cultural institutions and mechanisms. The notice emphasizes that "support should be given to the systematic protection and rational utilization of areas with dense cultural relic resources, as well as cultural relics and intangible cultural heritage, to promote the overall protection and living inheritance of historic and cultural area, historic and cultural districts, towns, as well as traditional villages." [2]

Academic research on historic and cultural districts primarily focuses on the identification of spatial characteristics, the optimization of conservation strategies, and the exploration of revitalization and utilization pathways. Zhou and Li (2016) conducted a survey on the current state of business models in historic and cultural districts, and proposed a new mechanism for commercial preservation in Beijing's districts from the perspective of collaboration among the government, society, and enterprises. [3] Ma et al. (2018), taking the Shuyuanmen Historic and Cultural District in Xi'an as an example, employed the space syntax model to investigate the spatial characteristics of its historic and cultural district. [4] Xie et al. (2023), taking the architectural style of downtown Philadelphia, USA as the research object, proposed an innovative preservation and optimization solution path for continuous and coordinated development. [5] In local studies on Fuzhou, the successful conservation experience and revitalization model of the Three Lanes and Seven Alleys Historic and Cultural District have been widely discussed. For instance, Zhang and Zhang (2024) explored its planning and design practices from the perspective of the holistic preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage within the district. [6] Yan (2022) was guided by the research framework of "thinking locally", he explored the unique values and conservation and regeneration methods of the the Three Lanes and Seven Alleys Historic and Cultural District. [7] Lin (2020) reflected on the changes in urban cultural heritage within the Three Lanes and Seven Alleys Historic and Cultural District through the evolution of urban spatial imagery and its inherent spirit. [8] However, systematic research on the spatial characteristics of heritage landscapes and the paths for conservation and renewal in the Shangxiahang historic and cultural district, which is also located within the axial spatial sequence of the ancient city in Fuzhou, remains relatively scarce. Existing literature primarily focuses on tracing the historical and cultural origins and geographical changes of the district, [9,10] addressing design and renovation challenges, [11] studying tourist satisfaction, [12] and researching traditional building restoration. [13] There is a lack of comprehensive discussion on the district's overall spatial layout, architectural style, and management mechanisms, making it difficult to address the practical needs for its preservation and development. This study focuses on the Shangxiahang Historic and Cultural District in Fuzhou, China. Through a systematic analysis of its heritage landscape spatial characteristics, it explores conservation and revitalization strategies suited to the current spatial conditions and management policies. The aim is to establish and highlight the shared Chinese cultural symbols and the image of the Chinese nation in urban and rural construction, providing a reference for the revitalization, inheritance, and development of

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similar historic districts.

2.Overview of the Shangxiahang Historic and Cultural District

The Shangxiahang Historic and Cultural District in Fuzhou (hereinafter referred to as "Shangxiahang District") is located in the southern section of the central axis of the ancient city of Fuzhou and on the north bank of the lower reaches of the Min River. It mainly covers Shanghang Road and Xiahang Road in Taijiang District, as well as nearby districts, and is commonly known as "Shuanghang". The Shangxiahang District has historically been a commercial hub and shipping terminal where merchants gathered in Fuzhou. An excerpt from "The Travels of Marco Polo" titled "The Kingdom of Zuga and Its Capital Fuzhou" meticulously documents the prosperity of Shangxiahang area as a port for trade between Fuzhou and overseas countries such as India during the Yuan Dynasty. The Shangxiahang District is not only the "international commercial port" described by Marco Polo but also an important hub on the Maritime Silk Road. It is also a golden cultural business card for Fuzhou City in the new era as it adheres to the essence of the "3820" strategic engineering ideology and accelerates the process of building a modern international city. In the center of the Shangxiahang Historic and Cultural District, there are Damiao Hill and Caiqi Hill stretching from southwest to northeast, while in the northwest lies Nanchan Hill, all belonging to the low hill region. The Min River tributaries, Sanjie River and Jinan River, are situated in the southeast and northwest of the Shangxiahang District, respectively. In the "Topographical Overview" section of the "Local Chronicles of Min County" written by Zheng Zugeng, it is recorded that "During the Southern Tang Dynasty of the Five Dynasties period, Shanghang and Xiahang were both vast stretches of the Min River..." [14] Later, the Min River's waters impacted the coast at the southern foot of Damiao Hill, forming two large sandbars. People took advantage of the tidal fluctuations to moor their boats and load and unload goods at these sandbars. During high tide, people walked on the "upper sandbar", which is homophonous with "Shanghang" (upriver voyage), and during ebb tide, they walked on the "lower sandbar", which is homophonous with "Xiahang" (downriver voyage). [10] Starting from the Yuanyou period of the Northern Song Dynasty, the sandbars gradually silted up, expanding into interconnected landmasses that formed solid land. New docks emerged along the riverbanks and tributaries, facilitating convenient, smooth, and rapid development of waterway shipping from then on. Due to the phonetic similarity between "Hang" (voyage) and "Hang" (a place name suffix) in the ancient dialect, the colloquial terms "Shanghang" (upriver voyage) and "Xiahang" (downriver voyage) evolved into "Shanghang" and "Xiahang", respectively, which collectively became known as "Shangxiahang". This refers to the two parallel streets running horizontally from Xiaoqiaotou (formerly known as "Shahe Bridge") to Damiao Road. The Shangxiahang area enjoys a pleasant climate, characterized by a subtropical monsoon climate. The Min River system, which interlaces and runs through the area, is well-developed. Sanjie River, facing the Zhang Zhenjun Ancestral Temple, once exhibited a unique tidal landscape known as "the tides rising on both ends of the Temple" during high tide. This was regarded as an auspicious omen of "gathering wealth and becoming rich" by the business community, leading to the concentration of numerous commercial activities in the Shangxiahang District. [10] The district is located in the alluvial plain of the Min River, featuring an overall flat terrain that is indeed conducive to urban development and the growth of commercial activities.

Since the Tang Dynasty, the Shangxiahang area has been a bustling commercial district in the city of Fu-

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zhou ancient city. During the Song and Yuan dynasties, with the thriving development of maritime trade, Shangxiahang became an established and important commercial center. During the Ming Dynasty, its commercial trade territory continued to expand. After the Opium War, Fuzhou was designated as one of the "Five Treaty Ports" for foreign trade, and the flow of merchants to and from Shangxiahang area became even more frequent. After the Ming and Qing dynasties, the basic framework of the street market was established. From the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China period, a large number of architectural landscapes with commercial culture, guild hall culture, and folk beliefs as their carriers were constructed, reflecting the diverse merchant culture and the strength of Fujian merchants in the Shangxiahang District. As a river port, the Shangxiahang area integrated diverse functions such as accommodation, storage and transportation, urban commerce, and literary exchanges, witnessing the advanced process of early Fuzhou's integration into world trade.

In May 2014, Shangxiahang area in Fuzhou was recognized as one of the first nine provincial-level historic and cultural districts in Fujian Province. The Shangxiahang District, along with the Three Lanes and Seven Alleys and Zhuzifang District, is listed as one of the "Three Historic and Cultural Districts in Fuzhou" in the "Urban Master Plan of Fuzhou (2011-2020)" and the "Conservation Plan for the Historic and Cultural City of Fuzhou (2012-2020)". In 2015, the Fujian Provincial Government approved the "Conservation Plan for the Shangxiahang Historic and Cultural District" submitted by the Fuzhou Municipal Government, which defined the conservation levels and scope of the district. It designated a core conservation area of 23.54 hectares, a construction control zone of 8.19 hectares, and an environmental coordination area of 31.9 hectares. [15] The specific boundaries of the Shangxiahang District are: north to Yanping Road and Xuejun Road, south to Zhongping Road, the south side of Building 1 of Zhongping Garden, Houyangli, and Hechun Lane, west to Baima South Road and Longping Road, and east to Gaoding Road and Santong Road, covering an area of 31.73 hectares, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Location schematic diagram of Fuzhou Shangxiahang Historical and Cultural District

Currently, the Shangxiahang District still maintains a strong commercial function, primarily dealing in tra-

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ditional specialty products, handicrafts, tea, and other commodities. In recent years, the district has gradually developed its cultural and creative industries, with some traditional shops transforming into new formats such as cultural and creative stores and specialty restaurants. However, at the same time, the district also faces issues such as aging buildings, homogeneous functions, and population loss, necessitating urgent scientific conservation and renewal strategies to sustain the vitality of this important maritime trade and cultural heritage. As an essential witness to the traditional "Fujian Merchants Culture" in Fuzhou's ancient city, the conservation and revitalization of the Shangxiahang District carry significant practical importance.

3.Spatial Characteristics of Heritage Landscapes in the District

The unique natural environment and profound cultural accumulation of the Shangxiahang District have shaped a diverse yet unified material heritage landscape spatial characteristic, blending marine culture, commercial trade culture, folk culture, revolutionary culture, and more. This has laid the material foundation for the formation of important historical and cultural heritage in Fuzhou and provided valuable heritage landscape resources for contemporary urban renewal and cultural inheritance. The characteristics of the material heritage landscape spatial elements in the Shangxiahang District are primarily embodied in the "area-line-point" criteria, which is "area network-boundary line-node". The "area network" focuses on the overall crisscrossing pattern of streets and alleys within the district; the "boundary line" refers to the continuous three-dimensional interface along the streets and alleys composed of historical buildings with high degrees of coordination and compatibility; and the "nodes" mainly target individual heritage elements such as cultural relics protection units and places of interest, serving as landscape spatial nodes for visual focal points, spatial guidance, and functional transitions during tours of the district. Therefore, the analysis of the heritage landscape spatial elements in the Shangxiahang District is centered on three aspects: the layout of streets and alleys, architectural style, and landscape nodes.

3.1. Layout of Streets and Alleys

The overall layout of streets and alleys in the Shangxiahang District roughly runs north-south and is arranged in parallel. The spatial pattern follows the original flow direction of the Min River, forming a unique urban spatial network texture characterized by a "city advancing as the water recedes" pattern. [16] The core sections of Shanghang Road and Xiahang Road serve as the "dual main axes", intersecting perpendicularly with Longping Road, which runs through the middle of "Shuanghang", forming a spatial pattern characterized by "two horizontals and one vertical" in the layout of streets and alleys. Typical "fishbone-shape" secondary streets and alleys extend from both sides of the main streets, closely intertwining with the Sanjie River, forming an overall crisscrossing network pattern of streets and alleys, as shown in Figure 2.

The lengths and widths of the street surfaces of the three main streets and alleys vary. Shanghang Road, running east-west, is approximately 872 meters long and 4 to 14 meters wide; Xiahang Road, running westward, is approximately 892 meters long and 12 meters wide; and Longping Road, running north-south, is approximately 323 meters long and 12 meters wide. The main streets are dominated by two-story buildings. The street surfaces of secondary streets and alleys such as Longlingding (Lane), Xinghe Lane, Xing'an Bridge Lane, Santong Bridge Underpass Lane, and Shengjun Road are shorter and narrower compared to the main

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streets. The widths of branch alleys such as Tangfang Lane, Zhongxing Lane, and Zongguan Lane are all under 3 meters. The relevant information and data on the street layout of the Shangxiahang District are shown in Table 1.

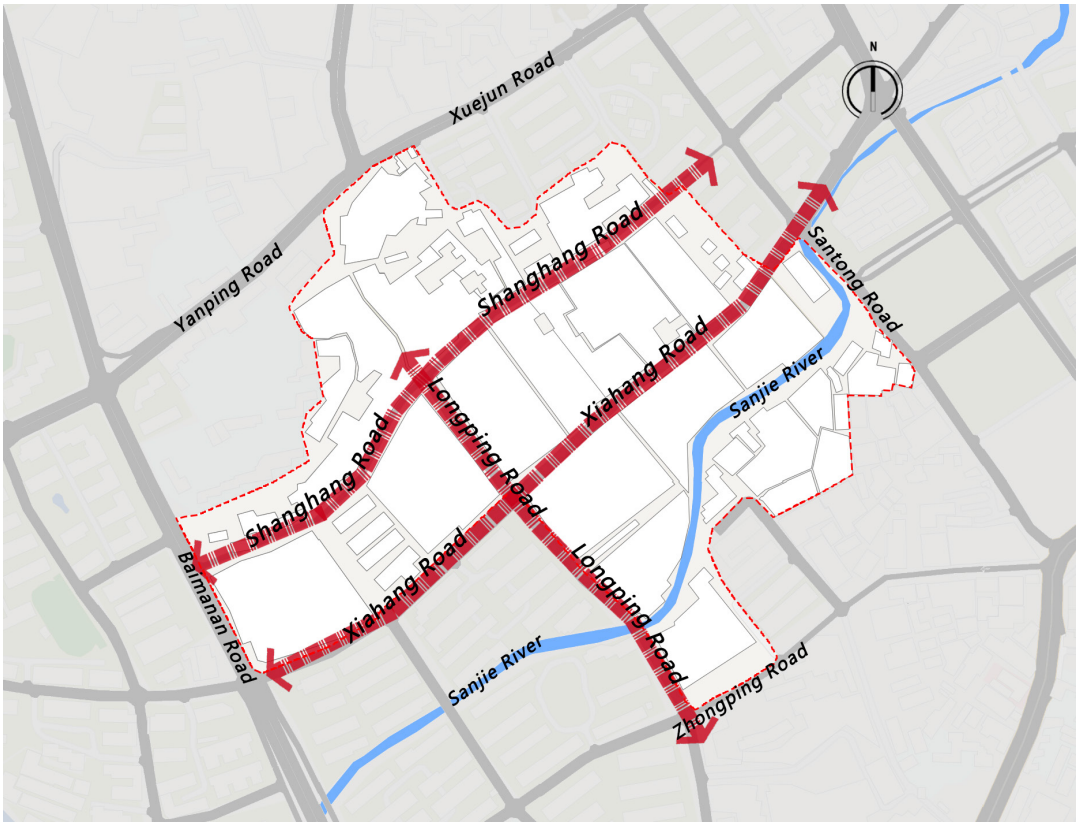


Figure 2. Schematic diagram of the "two horizontals and one vertical" layout of the main streets and alleys in the Shangxiahang Historical and Cultural District

Table 1. Relevant Information about Layout of Streets and Alleys in Shangxiahang Historical and Cultural District

Level	Name	Lengths(m)	Widths(m)	Direction
Main Streets	Shanghang Road	872	4-14	East-West
	Xiahang Road	892	12	East-West
	Longping Road	323	12	North-South
Secondary Streets	Longlingding (Lane)	131	4-10	North-South
	Xinghe Lane	92	3-5	East-West
	Xing'an Bridge Lane	153	2-6	East-West
	Santong Bridge Underpass Lane	215	2-6	East-West
	Shengjun Road	60	2-6	East-West
Alleys	Tangfang Lane	128.6	1-2	North-South
	Zhongxing Lane	69	1-2	North-South
	Zongguan Lane	42.5	1-2	North-South

The intricate street network layout characterized by a clear distinction between the primary and secondary east-west and north-south oriented alleys not only fulfills the needs for commercial activities in a bustling market but also facilitates smooth traffic flow for daily life in closely packed residences. While preserving the

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affinity of traditional district, it creates abundant levels and scale variations in the landscape spatial layout of the district, thereby fostering a rhythmic sequence of landscape spaces. Furthermore, the street pattern of the Shangxiahang District is closely related to the Min River water system network. Some streets and alleys are oriented parallel or perpendicular to the tributaries of the Min River, striving to align with the flow of the water system and coordinate with the rainwater and flood drainage needs of the river channels. This reflects the early urban planning's absolute respect, deep understanding, and full utilization of the natural environment. [16] The waterways that weave through the streets and alleys further enrich and invigorate the overall landscape spatial pattern of the district, adding a unique water town character of the Min River basin to the living environment of the district. From the perspective of the street and alley network pattern of material heritage landscapes, the Shangxiahang District embodies the advanced concepts and ancient wisdom of urban planning that were applied by the ancestors of Fuzhou in creating streets and alleys, who lived by the Min River, chose highlands for settlement, and took into account the terrain and water features in every aspect of commerciality, livability, and traffic accessibility. [17]

3.2. Architectural Style

Shangxiahang District is the birthplace and heritage site of the Fujian Merchants Spirit, and is known as the "Traditional Commercial Museum of Fuzhou". The district retains a large number of traditional-style buildings (structures) mainly from the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China period. After the opening of Fuzhou as a treaty port, foreigners not only constructed Western-style buildings in Cangshan urban area, but also brought the "Western influence" to Taijiang urban area, with the style of the Republic of China and Eclecticism prevailing in the Shangxiahang area. For instance, the "Yang Hongbin's Former Residence(also known as Caifeng Villa)" is a masterpiece of residential buildings that typify the Sino-Western architectural style of the Republic of China period; the "Zhang Zhenjun Ancestral Temple" represents the belief in the patron saint of Fujian merchants; the "Yongde Guild Hall" is a gathering place for traditional ceramic craftsmen; the "Nanjun Guild Hall" serves as a meeting point for southern Fujian merchants and scholars; the "Minister of Water Affairs Chen Wenlong Temple", honoring Chen Wenlong, who was ennobled as the "Lord of Zhenhai" for his bravery in voyaging, embodying the spirit of maritime heroism; the "Minqing Guild Hall", funded by overseas Chinese of Minqing origin and housing the "Huang Naishang Memorial Museum"; and the "Santong Bridge", which spans an inland river, facilitating travel and communication along the riverbanks. The architectural heritages mentioned above all constitute important tangible remnants for studying Fujian-style architecture, possessing immense historical and cultural value.

The buildings (structures) in the Shangxiahang District are predominantly traditional Fujian-style residences, which incorporate architectural elements such as Western Roman columns, portico columns, and Western-style buildings. Most of these buildings are two to three stories high, constructed with brick-wood or wood-stone structures. They are renowned for their aesthetic style that blends Chinese architectural elements from Southern Fujian, Central Fujian, and Fujian-Zhejiang regions with western architectural styles. Based on their functions, the architectural types can be classified into residential buildings, commercial buildings, folk buildings, guildhall buildings, and other structures. The distinctive feature of the architectures in the Shangxiahang District, unlike those in other districts, lies in their mixed "commerce-residence-storage" functional layout. Typically, they feature multiple courtyards, with four-courtyard layouts being the most common. The

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front and rear doors are usually located on Shanghang Road and Xiahang Road (taking No. 88 Xiahang Road - No. 77 Shanghang Road as an example), or on Xiahang Road and near Sanjie River (taking the Luo's Silk and Satin Former Shop at No. 181 Xiahang Road as an example). The first courtyard serves as the storefront, the second courtyard is used for warehousing, the third and subsequent courtyards are the residence of the owner, and the last courtyard, near the rear door, houses the apprentices and servants. The overall layout of the multi-courtyard buildings in the "shop at the front, residence at the back" style is elongated, with patios and hallways connecting the axial line of the courtyards, forming a Tanghulu(Chinese candied hawthorn skewers) shape spatial organization of the buildings. [18]

The traditional buildings in the Shangxiahang District predominantly utilize local materials such as grey bricks and granite, reflecting the regional architectural style of the Min River basin. The walls, constructed with a heavy and stable masonry structure, are well-suited to the local climate characterized by humidity and frequent rainfall, while also creating a simple and elegant visual effect. In terms of architectural detailing, the features such as the firewalls on the facade, Western-style arched voussoirs, carved railings, door and window components, all exhibit exquisite craftsmanship. The decorative carvings on components like brick carvings and stone carvings typically depict common classical elements such as auspicious birds and beasts, flowers, birds, landscapes, and folklore stories, which are aesthetically pleasing and carry certain folklore implications that are passed down among the people. Furthermore, the Huang Hengsheng's Cloth Former Store building employed locally sourced materials such as bricks, lime, and tiles, creating a vernacular architectural style reflective of the region. The building incorporates a blend of Western architectural elements, with colorful glass and Baroque-style ironwork scrollwork components commonly found in western architectural vocabulary. The "Western-style facades" of commercial buildings, which combine both local and foreign elements, often incorporate Chinese motifs such as Bagua (Eight Trigrams) and lotus flowers, greatly embodying the eclectic style characteristics of the traditional architecture in the Shangxiahang District. This article lists some representative buildings (structures) and their stylistic features in Table 2.

Table 2. Architectural Style of Shangxiahang Historical and Cultural District

Architectural Types	Functions	Representative Buildings (Structures)	Architectural Stylistic Features
Residential Buildings	Provide residential space and surrounding environment for occupants to meet their daily living needs.	Yang Hongbin's Former Residence(also known as Caifeng Villa) (Add: No.122 Shanghang Road)	Facing south, covering an area of approximately 2000m^2, with a building area of 523.7m^2. The overall style is a combination of Chinese and Western elements, consisting of a gate, archway, screen wall, courtyard, main building, garden rockeries, pavilions and other structures. The exterior decoration of the main building is simple and elegant, using Chinese classical checkered style doors and windows, and installing louvers.

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Residential Buildings	Provide residential space and surrounding environment for occupants to meet their daily living needs.	Huang Peisong's Former Residence(Add: No.172 Zhongping Road)	Facing south and located on a site of approximately 2,100m^2, this is a rare mansion of a martial champion from the late Qing Dynasty. Surrounded by firewalls, the mansion boasts eaves over its gates. It comprises three courtyards. The first courtyard is of through-and-post wooden structure, with a relief frame in gold on a blue background at the gate, where a plaque inscribed with "Huiyuan (First in Provincial Examination)" and "Yayuan (Second in Provincial Examination)" hangs. The three courtyards are laid out symmetrically around a central axis running from the south gate to the north gate, with all gates fixed with "doudi bricks" (bricks with holes for nails) through drilling.
Commercial Buildings	The first and second courtyards or the first-floor space of such buildings are often used as functional spaces for commodity sales, business exchanges, and product displays. The homeowners typically use the rear courtyard or spaces above the second floor as living spaces for their families.	Huang Hengsheng's Cloth Former Store(Add: No.217 Shanghang Road)	Facing north and located on a site of approximately 277m^2, this two-story building is constructed with brick-concrete structure. Surrounded by exposed brick walls made of grey bricks, its northern wall adopts a Gothic style, built with white granite strips and featuring a rounded-arch stone doorway in the center. The top of the second floor is equipped with a "glass dome", and there are corridors around it. A circular louvered window is set in the wall, flanked by a pair of Doric columns. The parapet wall surrounds the rooftop.
		Luo's Silk and Satin Former Shop(Add: No. 181 Xiahang Road)	Facing north and located on a site of approximately 1,249m^2, this complex comprises three courtyards. The exterior walls are made of grey bricks, and the upper part of the stone doorway frame is adorned with a stone circular arch added during the Republic of China period. The main building of the first courtyard spans five rooms in width and five columns in depth, featuring a through-and-post beam structure and a gable-and-hip roof. The main building of the second courtyard also spans five rooms in width and five columns in depth. The main building of the third courtyard spans three rooms in width and seven columns in depth.
Commercial Buildings	The first and second courtyards or the first-floor space of such buildings are often used as functional spaces for commodity sales, business exchanges, and product displays. The homeowners typically use the rear courtyard or spaces above the second floor as living spaces for their families.	Former Site of Xiankang No. 3(Add: No. 219 Xiahang Road)	Facing south and located on a site of approximately 275m^2, this three-story building features a rounded-arch stone doorway frame. The first floor is an open hall with staircases on both left and right leading to the second and third floors. There is an open space between the second and third floors, topped with a "glass dome". There are corridors on three sides, and the doors open into these corridors. In front, there is a business hall, and at the back, there are warehouses for medicinal herbs and living quarters.

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Commercial Buildings	The first and second courtyards or the first-floor space of such buildings are often used as functional spaces for commodity sales, business exchanges, and product displays. The homeowners typically use the rear courtyard or spaces above the second floor as living spaces for their families.	Shengshun Tea Warehouse Former Site(Add: No. 238 Xiahang Road)	Facing south and located on a site of approximately 2,000m^2, this complex comprises three courtyards. The main building of the first courtyard spans three rooms in width. The two side rooms and the rear hall are two-story structures, with a veranda on the second floor of the rear hall. The main building of the second courtyard is also a two-story structure, spanning three rooms in width and five columns in depth, with two-story pavilions on both sides. The third courtyard is a two-story warehouse, with an entrance on the left side leading to a tea processing factory.
Folk Buildings	The building hosts activities related to folk beliefs, festivals, and clan gatherings, in order to enhance the social and emotional ties among relatives.	Minister of Water Affairs Chen Wenlong Temple(Add: No. 2 Santong Bridge)	Facing south and located on a site of approximately 1,000m^2, the building was originally constructed during the early Ming Dynasty and retains the architectural forms and artistic styles of that period. It is divided into a front hall and a rear hall. The main hall spans six columns in width and seven columns in depth, featuring wide, colorful plastered borders with floral patterns under the eaves. The roof is of the gable-and-hip type, with a ridge adorned with a sculpture of two dragons playing with a pearl.
		Zhang Zhenjun Ancestral Temple(Add: No. 88 Xing'an Lane)	It was first built during the Southern Song Dynasty, facing south with its ancestral hall covering an area of about 800m^2. It adopts a three-courtyard structure, with the front courtyard housing a stage, and corridors on both sides connecting to the main hall. The main hall spans three bays in width, featuring a single-eaved gable-and-hip roof and a wooden and stone structure in a post-and-lintel style.
Folk Buildings	The building hosts activities related to folk beliefs, festivals, and clan gatherings, in order to enhance the social and emotional ties among relatives.	Zeng Clan Ancestral Hall(Add: No. 196 Xiahang Road)	Facing south and located on the north side, it occupies an area of about 900m^2 and consists of two courtyards. The first courtyard houses a paper business facing the street, while the second courtyard is the main seat of the ancestral hall. Behind it are layouts including an entrance hall, cloisters, and an ancestral hall. The ancestral hall spans three bays in width and has seven columns in depth, surrounded by firewalls, saddleback walls, and a wooden post-and-lintel frame structure.

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Guild hall Buildings	It is a public space integrating offices, accommodation, entertainment, ancestral worship, and cultural education, serving as an activity venue for merchants and emigrants. It fosters emotional connections, alleviates homesickness, facilitates information exchange, mediates disputes, and promotes the orderly conduct of commercial activities.	Yongde Guild Hall(Add: No. 20 Aichengli)	Facing northwest and situated in the southeast, it occupies an area of approximately 1,200m^2, spanning three floors and standing at about 15m tall. It represents an ancient house that blends the regional characteristics of southern Fujian with Western architectural styles. Above the arches on both sides are inscribed with “Ren Jie (outstanding people)” and “Di Ling (auspicious land)”. The first floor adopts Qing Dynasty architectural style, while the winding staircase and iron doors and windows leading to the upper floors are all Western architectural elements. The third floor features a gable-and-hip roof.
		Nanjun Guild Hall(Add: No. 92 Xiahang Road)	Facing south and located on the north side, it occupies an area of approximately 2,000m^2. Surrounded by red brick walls with clean finishes, it features a gate with a blue stone frame and a horizontal plaque inscribed with the four large characters “Nanjun Guild Hall”. Each of the arched ceremonial doors on both sides bears a blue stone inscription, reading “Hai Qing (calm seas)” and “He Yan (peaceful rivers)” respectively. The wall plinth is adorned with ancient-styled relief carvings. The main hall adopts a double-eaved gable-and-hip roof and a wooden post-and-lintel frame structure.
Guild hall Buildings	It is a public space integrating offices, accommodation, entertainment, ancestral worship, and cultural education, serving as an activity venue for merchants and emigrants. It fosters emotional connections, alleviates homesickness, facilitates information exchange, mediates disputes, and promotes the orderly conduct of commercial activities.	Minqing Guild Hall(Add: No.71 Houtian Xinmin Street)	Facing west and situated in the east, it occupies an area of approximately 540m^2. The walls are made of grey bricks with a clean finish, and there are square glass windows. The front elevation features two large granite slabs that create three horizontal lines, dividing the upper and lower sections of the pedestal. The central gate has a red-lacquered wooden door frame, while the arches on both sides are inscribed with “Hu Guo (protecting the country)” and “You Ming (blessing the people)”. Inside, there is a “Huang Naishang Memorial Hall”.
		Fuzhou Chamber of Commerce Former Site(Add: No.100 Shanghang Road)	The complex consists of four courtyards, occupying an area of approximately 3,300m^2. The main building, Kuixing Tower, faces south and occupies about 480 square meters. It features a double-story design with upturned eaves and corners, totaling eight corners, resembling a soaring eagle spreading its wings, and is also known as the “Octagonal Tower”. The roof is of a cuspid type, and the structure is a wooden post-and-lintel pavilion. Inside, there is a wooden coffered ceiling in the shape of the Eight Trigrams.

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Other Structures	The bridge body connects the riverbanks on both sides, facilitating transportation.	Santong Bridge(Add: No.20 Santong Bridge Road)	There is a stone-arched bridge dating back to the Qing Dynasty, with a length of 36.7m and a width of 3.1m. The bridge has two piers and three spans of unequal lengths. The guardrail plates are inscribed with the bridge's name "Santong Bridge" and the words "Built on an auspicious day in the autumn of Bingyin year of the Jiaqing period".
		Xing'an Bridge(Add: beside No. 19 Xinghe Alley)	This is a stone-arched bridge dating back to the Qing Dynasty, with a length of 18.3m and a width of 2.1m. The bridge body features three arches made of granite, and the piers are shaped like boats, presenting a beautiful silhouette. Inscribed on both sides of the bridge are phrases such as "Newly Built in Bingwu Year of the Qianlong Period", "Renovated in Yichou Year of the Jiaqing Period", and "Renovated by Zhang of Chuiyu Tang, Supervisor of Qiaoshan Society". It is known as "a bridge spanning and connecting two shops", referring to Fuxing Shop in Shuanghang and Anle Shop in Cangxiazhou.

3.3. Landscape Nodes

The landscape nodes in the Shangxiahang District mainly include historic buildings, archway gates, guild halls, temples, bridgehead plazas, gathering plazas, and leisure spaces, which collectively form the district's unique spatial texture and cultural landscape. In terms of historic buildings, the Shangxiahang District has preserved numerous traditional buildings of significant cultural value, among which the Gutian Guild Hall and Yongde Guild Hall are the most representative. The Gutian Guild Hall, built during the Qing Dynasty, was an important gathering place for the Gutian merchants from western Fujian. It features a complete architectural layout, with a deep and distant courtyard and an ingenious courtyard arrangement. [19] The Yongde Guild Hall, on the other hand, embodies the architectural art characteristics of the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China period. Its architectural details such as masonry carvings and wooden components possess high artistic value. These guild halls are not only important cultural relics under protection but also precious physical materials for studying the culture of Qing Dynasty merchant groups. Another example includes temples such as the Zhang Zhenjun Ancestral Temple and the Mazu Temple, which are not only venues for traditional religious activities but also important centers of community public life. These folk architectural heritages usually feature unique architectural forms and decorative styles. Their exquisite carvings, paintings, and plaques not only demonstrate the superb architectural art but also record the evolution of historical culture. At the same time, small open social spaces often form around these temples, providing residents with places for daily gatherings and leisure, thus enriching the spatial hierarchy of the district.

The intersections of streets and alleys in the Shangxiahang District are typically located at street corners or in front of important buildings, forming "breathing points" within the district. They serve to alleviate the pressure on street space and enhance the recognizability of the district. [20] These landscape nodes with different spatial shapes can be roughly divided into four forms: the cross-shaped nodes, which feature open spaces, smooth traffic flow, and high pedestrian volume; the T-shaped nodes, which are mostly located within

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streets and alleys, serve as traffic guides, and are the most numerous; Z-shaped and L-shaped intersections are mostly found at the turns of east-west streets and alleys. This lively variation in spatial sequence enriches the visual hierarchy of the spatial nodes in the district's landscape. [18]

In these landscape node spaces, historical relics such as ancient wells and stone tablets are often placed, serving both as practical facilities and as small built landscape elements with strong cultural charm. Additionally, some characteristic shops within the Shangxiahang District, such as century-old brands and traditional handicraft workshops, like Chunshang Shop and Ruifang Tea Shop, have attracted a continuous stream of tourists who stop by, thus also constituting important landscape nodes. These time-honored shops not only carry traditional commercial culture but also become an important part of the district's landscape with their unique storefront decorations and merchandise displays. The continuous facades of the buildings echo with the dotted distribution of these landscape nodes, jointly creating a layered district landscape that enriches the visual experience of the district and enhances its commercial vitality and cultural charm.

4.Current Status of Heritage Landscapes in the District

In the wave of urbanization, the heritage landscapes of the Shangxiahang District face a complex interplay between tradition and modernity. Although the original "fishbone-shape" streets and lanes layout has been largely preserved thanks to significant government investment, some of the branch alleys have been widened to meet fire safety and other requirements, affecting the "authentic" traditional spatial scale. The continuity of building facades within the district is gradually being disrupted as well. The renovation of some street-facing shops has disrupted the visual unity of the facades of historic buildings, affecting the overall landscape and appearance. Furthermore, the updated use of historic buildings exhibits a trend of differentiation. Designated cultural relics protection units, such as the Gutian Guild Hall and Yongde Guild Hall, receive active and proper maintenance. However, ordinary historic buildings suffer from severe neglect over time, and some building structures pose safety hazards. The traditional "shop at the front, residence at the back" use pattern of buildings is undergoing changes, with the upper residential floors of some buildings being converted into storage or office spaces. This has led to a continuous decline in the residential population of the district and insufficient vitality during nighttime. [21]

The lagging infrastructure renewal in the Shangxiahang District is also a prominent issue. The outdated water supply, drainage, and electrical facilities are difficult to meet the needs of modern life, while pipeline renovation is constrained by the protection of historic buildings. The lack of parking facilities within the district results in arbitrary parking of motor vehicles, encroaching on pedestrian space. The privately installed air conditioners, billboards, and other facilities by merchants lack standardized management, severely impacting the historic heritage and landscape of the district. Furthermore, the quality of public spaces demanded by both local residents and tourists in the district also urgently needs improvement. The landscape node spaces formed by the intersection of streets and alleys lack reasonable utilization, and some are occupied and used for stacking debris. Insufficient street greening and a lack of recreational facilities make it difficult to meet the activity needs of residents and tourists. The inadequate nighttime lighting system affects the safety and accessibility of the district. These issues all need to be systematically addressed in the conservation and revitalization process to enhance the livability and spatial vitality of the district.

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Although steps have been taken in line with government policies, adopting a "micro-renewal" strategy for the Shangxiahang District, with emphasis on gradual transformation. However, in the specific implementation process, there are issues such as a disconnection between planning and design and actual needs, as well as difficulties in coordinating residents' interests. In addition, there is a lack of unified standards and long-term planning for the modernization of facilities within the district (such as underground utility lines and public space optimization). Furthermore, in terms of funding support, the government has established special funds for district preservation and renewal, and encourages private owners to participate in the restoration of historic buildings through tax incentives and subsidies. However, the efficiency and transparency of fund utilization still need improvement, and some crucial projects have been shelved or delayed due to funding issues.

5.Strategies for Conservation and Revitalization of Heritage Landscapes

In response to the current state of heritage landscape spaces in the Shangxiahang District, the formulation of renewal zoning control strategies should aim to satisfy modern urban functional needs while preserving the traditional appearance of the historic and cultural district, thereby achieving sustainable development for the district. The specific strategies for the conservation and revitalization of Shangxiahang District can be divided into three categories: core heritage conservation areas, architectural style coordination areas, and environmental improvement areas. Corresponding renewal strategies can be proposed for different key control objects to promote the adaptation of heritage landscapes in Shangxiahang District to the needs of modern urban life while maintaining historical style, achieving a balance between heritage inheritance and development.

5.1. Core Heritage Conservation Areas

The key objects of management and control within the core heritage conservation areas are historic building clusters, cultural relics protection units, and significant landscape nodes, among other heritage landscapes. Stringent measures shall be taken to preserve and maintain the original state of these heritage landscapes within the area, with only necessary repairs and functional improvements being carried out. The basic layout of the streets and alleys spaces should be maintained, preserving the overall structural characteristics of the "fishbone-shape" arrangement. For localized areas that have undergone changes due to modernization demands, cautious evaluations should be conducted. Under the premise of ensuring basic functions such as fire safety, efforts should be made to restore the original scale as much as possible. [22] The widening of secondary streets and alleys within the district should be approached with caution. Solutions such as staggered parking spaces can be considered to address traffic issues, in order to avoid excessive widening that disrupts the original layout and texture of the district. The internal spaces of important architectural heritage should continue to be enhanced with scientific and reasonable revitalization and utilization strategies. Considerations can be given to introducing cultural exhibition, intangible cultural heritage displays, and other cultural tourism revitalization functions.

5.2. Architectural Style Coordination Areas

The coordinated conservation, preservation, and revitalization of the architectural heritage within the district focuses on large-scale traditional residences and the continuous streetscape formed by the facades of architectural heritage. On the premise of reflecting the overall style of the district, the conservation and re-

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vitalization of the style coordination zone should follow the principle of "repairing the old as it is, and using the old to repair the old", avoiding "a thousand cities and a thousand buildings with one appearance", allowing for moderate replacement of building space functions, and paying attention to detail coordination. For well-preserved architectural heritage within the district, regular maintenance and repairs should be conducted. For those that have fallen into disrepair over time, restoration should be carried out while preserving the original architectural structure, style, appearance, facade texture, and material color. [23] For existing modern multi-story buildings, strict height control and style management regulations should be established to ensure their harmonious integration with the surrounding environment. [24] Special attention should be paid to the restoration and protection of building detail decoration, and special craftsman training projects can be considered to achieve the renewal effect of "targeted acupuncture-like" fine repair of the district heritage landscapes while inheriting the traditional construction skills.

5.3. Environmental Improvement Areas

Adopting micro-renovation approaches such as "embroidering" and "patchworking", efforts should be made to update the heritage landscapes spatial nodes within the district. Attention should not only be paid to enhancing the quality of public spaces and infrastructure but also to the organic renewal of the district's fringe areas, external spaces, and functional transition zones [25]. For architectural heritage such as small ancestral halls and temples, routine maintenance should be strengthened, and community-level involvement in management should be encouraged. Within the district, the functional optimization and environmental enhancement of gathering squares and leisure spaces should be promoted, with increased greenery and cultural elements to improve space utilization. Addressing the impact of modern urban infrastructure on district landscapes, considerations should be given to implementing underground utility tunnels to bury pipelines, thereby reducing the visual impact of overhead cables. For modern equipment such as outdoor air conditioners and satellite antennas, unified installation standards should be established to minimize their impact on building facades. To alleviate congestion in the external spaces of the district, measures such as developing public parking lots nearby and introducing bike-sharing programs can be implemented, thereby promoting joint improvement of the environments in both functional transition zones within and outside the district.

6.Conclusion

The Shangxiahang Historic and Cultural District, as a living heritage of Fuzhou's commercial and trade culture, boasts its iconic "fishbone-shape"-like street pattern and alleyway texture, a blend of historical architectural styles that are both "overseas imports" and Sino-Western, as well as diverse heritage landscape spatial nodes. These elements are not only the material carriers of Fuzhou's urban history and culture but also the cultural symbols of the pioneering and enterprising spirit of Fujian merchants. The conservation and revitalization of the district must balance historical authenticity with modern functionality. Through graded management and control of core heritage conservation areas, architectural style coordination areas, and environmental improvement areas, the sustainable inheritance of the heritage landscapes can be achieved.

Against the backdrop of the technological industry renewal, where the country vigorously promotes the application of digital and intelligent technologies, future research should further explore the application of smart

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technologies in district management, deepen the activation mode of "heritage + technology", and stimulate endogenous vitality within the district. Meanwhile, attention should be paid to the living needs of local district residents and community cultural identity, avoiding the tendency of "museumification" in conservation and revitalization. This will enable the Shangxiahang District to not only continue the city's historical and cultural context but also genuinely integrate into modern urban life, becoming a city landmark that combines cultural charm with contemporary vitality.

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