

# Conservation and Regeneration of Historical and Cultural Blocks from the Perspective of Urban Renewal

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**Abstract:** Historical and cultural blocks are the epitome of a city's history and the condensation of its culture, highlighting its unique urban culture. With the acceleration of urbanization in China, historical and cultural blocks are confronted with multiple contradictions, such as protection and renovation, regeneration and commercialization, which have affected their long-term development. Based on the perspective of urban renewal, this paper analyzes the dilemma of protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks, clarifies the principles of protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks, proposes to optimize the overall planning of historical and cultural blocks, rationally develop historical and cultural blocks, create cultural experience tourism products and improve the architectural landscape style, and coordinate the protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks. To promote the sustainable development of historical and cultural blocks.

**Keywords:** Urban renewal; Historical and cultural blocks; Conservation and Regeneration

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## 1. Introduction

Urban renewal refers to the government's comprehensive transformation and upgrading of the urban environment, physical space, and social economy, with a focus on the renewal of urban infrastructure such as buildings, roads, and greenery to meet the needs of urban development. However, in some areas, the government has not handled the relationship between urban renewal and the protection of the cultural heritage of historical districts properly, resulting in some damage to the ancient buildings in historical and cultural districts, and affecting the development of historical and cultural districts. Based on this, the government should scientifically formulate urban renewal plans, clarify the principles of protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks, rationally develop historical and cultural blocks, restore ancient buildings and historical sites, create characteristic historical and cultural blocks, enhance the quality of greening and landscape design of historical and cultural blocks, create characteristic historical and cultural blocks to attract more tourists, Let the historical

and cultural blocks shine brightly.

## **2. Based on the principles of protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks from the perspective of urban renewal**

### **2.1. Principles for the reproduction of traditional historical Spaces**

In the process of developing historical and cultural blocks, the government should adopt different design concepts, highlight historical and cultural characteristics, reproduce traditional historical Spaces, upgrade and transform historical and cultural blocks, such as restoring architectural Spaces, architectural structures and architectural colors, etc. <sup>[1]</sup> The conservation and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks should adhere to the principle of recreating traditional historical and cultural features, restore ancient buildings and sites, and rationally design some ancient-style recreational facilities close to the culture of historical blocks in the ancient building complex, which can not only protect the original historical buildings but also provide rest places for tourists.

### **2.2. The principle of spatial extension**

In the conservation and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks, designers should not only preserve the original form of the historical and cultural space, but also scientifically extend the original space to ensure that the overall spatial style matches the overall cultural style of the block and enhances the overall cultural taste of the historical and cultural block <sup>[2]</sup>. For example, in 2024, the Anhui government restored Longfu Old Street in Tunxi District, Huangshan City. The buildings in the street adopted black and grey colors and the characteristic forms of Anhui southern residential buildings, such as sloping roofs with blue tiles and white roofs and horse-head walls, and added cultural signs and nameplates introducing cultural relics in the street, giving Longfu Old Street a brand-new look.

### **2.3. The integration of new building materials with traditional symbols**

In the process of urban renewal, some developers or residents lack awareness of cultural heritage protection, inevitably causing damage to traditional buildings, historical sites, etc. Against this backdrop, the government should properly handle the relationship between the protection, regeneration, and development of historical and cultural blocks, make rational use of new building materials to restore damaged ancient buildings, and ingeniously incorporate traditional elements into the design of new material structures. For example, designers can use materials such as wooden frames and steel frames to create traditional building structures like tiled roofs and dougong, integrating new materials with traditional symbols, so that the restored ancient buildings are more in line with the overall style of the historical and cultural block, highlighting the regional traditional historical and cultural characteristics, and thus achieving the design goal of coexistence of the old and the new <sup>[3]</sup>.

## **3. The Dilemma of protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks from the perspective of urban renewal**

### **3.1. The historical and cultural context of the block is difficult to sustain**

Many areas blindly pursue economic and short-term benefits, carry out radical renovations of historical and cultural blocks, and even illegally demolish some ancient buildings, resulting in the cultural context of historical blocks being difficult to sustain. Seemingly neat and brand-new buildings ruin the beauty of historical blocks and affect the experience of tourists. In many areas, the commercialization and homogeneity of historical and

cultural blocks are severe. They have not been transformed and developed following the regional culture and the cultural characteristics of the historical blocks, resulting in the lack of distinctiveness of historical and cultural blocks, causing “aesthetic fatigue” among tourists and making it difficult to attract them to come again, which has affected the development of the integration of culture and tourism in cities <sup>[4]</sup>.

### **3.2. The renovation and upgrading of historical districts lack a holistic approach**

In the context of urban renewal, many cities have recognized the economic and cultural value of historical and cultural blocks and have begun to develop them, adopting the concept of node renewal and transformation to renovate historical and cultural blocks, lacking unified planning <sup>[5]</sup>. For instance, government departments have not designed historical and cultural blocks based on their cultural characteristics and overall architectural style. They have overdeveloped historical and cultural blocks without unified planning for ancient buildings, sites, and intangible cultural heritage within the blocks, resulting in a lack of coordination among renovation nodes such as ancient buildings, greenery, and infrastructure, and affecting the overall landscape and visitor experience of historical and cultural blocks.

### **3.3. There is a lack of individuality in tourism routes and products that integrate culture and tourism**

At present, there is a widespread problem of commercialization and homogeneity in historical and cultural blocks. Folk performances, handicrafts, and characteristic cuisine have become the main selling points of historical and cultural blocks. There is a lack of personalized tourism products such as cultural and creative production, handicraft workshops, and VR immersive experiences, making it difficult to highlight regional cultural characteristics and lacking appeal to tourists <sup>[6]</sup>.

## **4. Pathways for the protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks from the perspective of urban renewal**

### **4.1. Adhere to the concept of overall planning and restore historical and cultural blocks**

The government should do a good job in the top-level design for the protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks, adhere to the concept of overall planning, clarify the characteristics and overall architectural style of historical and cultural blocks, scientifically formulate development and protection plans, and steadily promote the transformation and upgrading of historical and cultural blocks to bring them back to life.

First, the government should carry out overall protection of historical and cultural blocks, led by the integration of culture and tourism, with a focus on the protection of ancient buildings within the historical and cultural blocks, restore damaged ancient buildings in a timely manner, and carry out overall renovations of road networks, road surfaces and greenery within the blocks, so that the ancient buildings and infrastructure in the blocks can complement each other <sup>[7]</sup>. For example, in 2024, Ningguo City, Anhui Province, protected and renovated the old district of Helixi, focusing on dismantling more than 5,500 original small blue tiles of the ancient building “Cheng Family House” and replacing and repairing 197 eave columns, golden columns, purlins and rafters; A 24-hour surveillance system was set up at the site to prevent vandalism.

Secondly, the government should actively integrate and optimize the functions of historical and cultural blocks, optimize the spatial layout of the blocks, protect the ancient buildings and ancient sites within the blocks, and design recreational facilities, road signs, guidance maps, etc. following the overall style of the blocks. For example, designers can design ancient-style flower beds, signposts and street guidance signs based

on the characteristics of historical and cultural blocks, ensuring that the colors are in harmony with the overall architectural colors, and incorporate traditional symbols into the design of flower beds and benches in rest areas, allowing visitors to learn about the relevant knowledge of historical and cultural blocks during their rest, deepen their impression of the culture of historical blocks, and thereby stimulate their desire to consume. Promote the development of historical and cultural blocks <sup>[8]</sup>.

## **4.2. Build characteristic historical and cultural blocks based on the cultural features of the blocks**

In the context of urban renewal, localities should seize the opportunity of the development of the integrated culture and tourism industry, create distinctive historical and cultural blocks, make overall arrangements for the protection and development of historical and cultural blocks, avoid overdevelopment, highlight the characteristics of historical and cultural blocks, and attract more tourists.

First, the government should intensify the restoration of historical and cultural blocks, set up special funds, strictly prohibit the illegal demolition and destruction of ancient buildings and historical sites, preserve the basic framework of ancient buildings while highlighting their cultural connotations, integrate regional culture and intangible cultural heritage into the protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks, carry out protective development, and ensure the inheritance of historical and cultural blocks. For example, the government should explore the characteristics of historical and cultural blocks, invite inheritors of intangible cultural heritage and folk artisans to participate in the design of historical and cultural blocks, integrate regional culture and intangible cultural heritage into the design of block space and landscape, and turn historical and cultural blocks into highlights of urban tourism to promote the development of urban tourism <sup>[9]</sup>.

Second, in the process of protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks, the government should handle the ingenious integration of regional culture into the greening and landscape design of the blocks, which can not only improve the environment of the blocks but also promote regional culture, thus breaking the current problem of homogeneity of historical and cultural blocks. For example, designers can explore elements of Anhui regional culture, incorporate regional culture into the landscape design of historical and cultural blocks, highlight the characteristics of the blue-brick and black-tiled buildings of southern Anhui dwellings, and promote the culture of Huizhou merchants within the historical and cultural blocks to further spread southern Anhui culture and promote the long-term development of the historical blocks <sup>[10]</sup>.

## **4.3. Focus on cultural experience and design personalized tourism landscapes**

In the process of developing historical and cultural blocks, the government should focus on the cultural experience of tourists and design personalized tourism landscapes, which can both deepen the impression of tourists and build the brand of characteristic historical and cultural blocks. The government can set up sculpture and creative workshops in the historical and cultural blocks, design wood and metal sculptures in combination with regional cultural characteristics, such as sculptures of local historical figures and folk tales, and design relevant introduction nameplates to help tourists understand the history of the historical and cultural blocks and the life stories of historical figures, evoke their memory of history, and leave a deep impression on them <sup>[11]</sup>. In addition, designers can display some handicrafts in the historical and cultural district, such as cultural and creative products like embroidery and wood carvings at the central service point of the district, and brochures in the shops along the street, making it easy for tourists to access the guidebooks at any time. Finally, designers can design bonsai, ponds and other landscapes in the central area of the historical and cultural district to create a Zen-like space, highlighting the ancient and simple side of the historical and cultural district and further highlighting



the historical and cultural heritage of the district. For example, the landscape design of historical and cultural blocks in the Anhui region can highlight the features of small Bridges and flowing water, wooden houses, blue bricks and black tiles, and design Zen bonsai to preserve the cultural characteristics of southern Anhui, further highlighting the characteristics of historical and cultural blocks and attracting more tourists <sup>[12]</sup>.

#### **4.4. Enhance the architectural landscape and enrich the street and alley space landscape**

Designers should, in combination with the functional zoning of historical and cultural blocks, rationally design street and alley Spaces, recreational facilities and landscape designs to create a favorable humanistic and historical landscape environment.

First, designers need to understand the functional zoning of the historical and cultural block and design the landscape according to different functional zoning <sup>[13]</sup>. For example, the commercial area landscape design should highlight the cultural and creative features, unify the materials and colors of shop signs, and place flower beds in front of the shops; The performance area should make full use of the space and display related costumes, handicrafts, etc. according to the performance activities; The leisure area is designed with ancient-style seats to facilitate visitors' rest and relax in an ancient-style setting <sup>[14]</sup>.

Secondly, designers should make good use of the corner spaces between the historical and cultural blocks' alleys and buildings, as well as between the streets and alleys, to create architectural ornaments, leisure seats, and statues of people and other decorations to beautify the alleyway space landscape and enhance the architectural style of the historical and cultural blocks. At the same time, designers can incorporate local characteristic green plants, flowers, etc. into the landscape design, and place shaped flower beds and bonsai landscapes in the historical and cultural blocks to highlight the regional cultural characteristics. For example, designers can use different plants to create human figures and models of folk architecture, which can attract visitors' attention and highlight the green landscape features of the historical district, thereby improving the quality of protection and regeneration of the historical and cultural district <sup>[15]</sup>.

### **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, urban renewal has a certain impact on the protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks, and has brought considerable challenges to the protection of historical sites and the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. Therefore, the government should seize the opportunity of the integration of culture and tourism, make good plans for the protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks, rationally develop historical and cultural blocks, and restore historical sites; Based on the cultural characteristics of the blocks, create distinctive historical and cultural blocks and promote the development of historical and cultural blocks. In addition, designers should handle the relationship between the development and protection of historical and cultural blocks, pay attention to the cultural experience of tourists, design personalized tourism landscapes, optimize the architectural, greening and garden landscape design of historical and cultural blocks, incorporate regional culture into landscape design, enhance the architectural landscape style, enrich the street space landscape, and comprehensively improve the quality of protection and regeneration of historical and cultural blocks.

### **Disclosure statement**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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