

# Protection of Macau's Historic Architectural Heritage

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**Abstract**—As Macau once was a Portuguese colony, there are the oldest, largest, best preserved and most centralized buildings with eastern and western styles coexisting in the historic urban area of Macau. The process of urban renewal has caused damages of different degrees to historical architectural heritage. It can be said that urban modernization was born at the cost of historical architectural heritage. Around the world, the protection of architectural heritage has been carried out in various forms since the formation of human society. In recent centuries, with the continuous development of civilized society, this protection activity has been expanding in both depth and scale. In view of huge number of historical architectural heritage, it has been facing difficulties and challenges to protect and utilize them all over the world. The ways and strategies for protecting the historic architectural heritage is a topic that scholars all over the world think and discuss together.

**Keywords**—Macau's historic architecture; architectural heritage; protection; reutilization

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

At the beginning of the 16th century, driven by the "Age of Exploration" in Europe, Portuguese sailed along the west coast of Africa, bypassed the Cape of Good Hope, and arrived at Macau via India and Malacca. In the age with wind as power, after a long sea voyage and coastal mooring, Portuguese combined its own European culture with different regions, nationalities and cultures of Africa and Asia and brought them to Macau together.

Macau has its unique economic and development model for more than 400 years since its inception. Macau boasts historic architectural heritage heavy with Portuguese overtone, and still retains a relatively complete and large-scale architectural complex of southern European style. A historic urban area consisting of 22 buildings on the Macau Peninsula and eight adjacent forelands was officially listed on the World Heritage List by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee on July 15, 2005.

For such historic architectural heritage complex, in the constant renewal and development of the city, the demolition and construction of architectural heritage cannot meet the needs of the society to seek a new way of survival. The main purpose of the protection of historical architectural heritage is to preserve historical authenticity, and to ensure that

cultural spirit and charm are given to play and its form, function and space are properly restored and restructured in a reasonable manner to meet the functional needs of the city and the spiritual needs of the society.

### B. Purpose

In the process of urban renewal, modern architecture is constantly emerging. As historical relic, historical architectural heritage needs to develop and change. In the context of urban renewal, it also needs to make corresponding changes and countermeasures to adapt to the development of the city. Existing urban planning mostly stays at the level of control with respect to the protection of architectural heritage. It preserves the architectural heritage by delimiting the scope of protection rather than really regarding architectural heritage as an important part of urban development.

The architectural style, architectural feature, building materials, architectural structure, architectural space and architectural decoration of historical architectural heritage contain abundant historical and humanistic information, which is of great protection value and research value. When people generally talk about the historical architectural heritage, many of them talk about the protection methods or modes of historical architectural heritage from the perspective of architecture. However, for historical architectural heritage, the more important value is the historical and cultural information contained in the historical architectural heritage. That is to say, in the process of protection of historical architectural heritage, the protection and continuation of history and culture cannot be ignored. This paper discusses how to better continue and inherit its historical and cultural connotations, and combines it with the needs of the current society and the city, thus providing some reference for the protection of historical architectural heritage.

### C. Ideas and Implications of Topic Selection

1) *Ideas of topic selection*: Macau is Asia's only city which boasts a world cultural heritage complex with southern European characteristics. It witnesses the integration of Chinese and Western cultures. For many investors or tourists, Macau has the scale and appeal of an international market. In this context, exploring Macau's culture and history has become particularly important and

also promotes the study on Macau's world heritage and cultural resources.

Protection of architectural heritage is the symbol of human history, culture and civilization. In the protection of architectural heritage, people never stop discussing the concept of "protection". As for whether the architecture is maintained as per the status quo or restored to its initial state, scholars from different countries may give different answers. However, in any case, the management, protection and development of architectural heritage should be made based on actual situation and follow the principles of scientific planning, rational development and sustainable utilization.

2) *Implications of topic selection:* With social development and historical evolution, these historical buildings are faced with various problems: buildings have not been utilized effectively though being repaired for many times; buildings have been used excessively, causing damages to their integrity; buildings have become victims in the process of urban development, and disappeared forever from people's horizon, but waited to be submerged in history.

In Macau, Historic Centre of Macau has local history and culture as well as core competitiveness. It is the world cultural heritage of Macau and China's 31st World Heritage.

This paper analyses and studies the protection and utilization of architectural heritage in Macau, and puts forward some feasible suggestions for the current situation of Macau.

#### D. Methods

This paper uses investigation, analysis and literature research as its main research methods.

Firstly, it collects the information about the protection of historical architectural heritage and collates relevant theoretical bases; secondly, it conducts a detailed study on Macau's historical architectural heritage by using the analytical method combined with the theoretical bases, and infer a reasonable way to preserve the historical architectural heritage.

#### E. Selection Subject

1) *Historical architectural heritage:* Architectural heritage reference in this paper mainly refers to buildings created or left over by human activities in history, such as architectural relics, historic blocks, architectural groups, etc. When it comes to Macau, people may think about Ru íns of St Paul, Historic Centre of Macau, A-Ma Temple, Mandarin's House, church and so on, as shown in "Fig. 1".



Fig. 1. Fu de Temple. (taken by the author)

Heritage, an ancient and widely implied word, is the memory of social development and personal past experience. As an important branch of cultural heritage, historical architectural heritage is not only a very old thing, but also a new thing, and a developing thing. The European Charter of the Architectural Heritage promulgated in 1975 states that "European architectural heritage not only includes the most important monumental buildings, but also includes the secondary buildings located in ancient towns and characteristic villages as well as their natural and artificial environments." Since then, the scope of the architectural heritage that people think is worth protecting has expanded rapidly.

The historic architectural heritage planned in this paper not only includes the historic buildings themselves, but also include the spirit and soul of the historic buildings. The environment and time of different historic architectural heritages determine that buildings have different characteristics. Whether the building itself or the soul of the architectural heritage is indispensable. Without any part, the historical architectural heritage will lose its due value and significance.

2) *Protection:* The protection of historical heritage generally refers to the improvement, restoration and control of cultural heritage such as historical buildings and historical areas. With the progress of the society, the protection of historic architectural heritage is moving on in various forms with its theory and practice gradually adjusted and improved. The concept of protecting historical architectural heritage was originated in Italy, and the work of protecting historical architectural heritage might be traced back to the Charter of Athens 1931. The Venice Charter 1964 further expanded the scope of protecting historical buildings. Since then, the promulgation of a series of international regulations, such as the Nairobi Recommendations, the Florence Charter, the Washington Charter and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, has made the protection theory and practice of historical architectural heritage more extensive and more perfect.

3) *Integrity*: The concept of "integrity" first appeared in the Venice Charter promulgated in 1964, which expanded the scope of the definition of historical architectural heritage, and indicated that a historical relic was not only a building, but also included a urban or rural environment from which a unique culture, a meaningful development and a historical event witness could be found out. This is also the first interpretation of "integrity".

For the Historic Centre of Macau, architecture is the material carrier of historical heritage. Architecture provides the place for people to hold various events. It is the carrier of people's feelings and memories, and also the carrier of history and culture.

4) *Reutilization*: Reutilization refers to the rational utilization of cultural architecture on the basis of the protection of cultural architecture. The purpose of reutilization is to achieve the better continuation and development of the use function of the cultural relic buildings, and to assign new functions to the cultural relic buildings that have lost their original functions. Therefore, compared with traditional protection, reutilization not only preserves the value of cultural relic buildings, but also endows them with the attribute of new vitality.

## II. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROTECTION OF HISTORICAL HERITAGE

In terms of the protection and utilization, historic architectural heritage belongs to architectural heritage. The research on the field of architectural heritage mainly involves the interpretation of related declarations and charters of architectural heritage, the discussion of the concept and methods for protecting architectural heritage, and the study on the protection system of architectural heritage.

With the accelerating development of urbanization in China, traditional architecture is increasingly out of line with modern society and cannot be coordinated with modern society. More and more people value Western ideas and lifestyles. People begin to reflect on what should be reserved for their own culture. What remains under the impact of Western ideas and era evolution? Driven by this reflection, a number of architectural heritage have emerged in large cities in China in the form of renovation, but the protection and utilization of buildings are too unitary and lack of coordination and only effective in some cities, such as Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall in Guangzhou, Okura Garden Hotel Shanghai and so on. After that, through combination of theory and experience, the scale of the protection and utilization of architectural heritage has been further expanded, such as 798 Art District in Beijing, Shanghai Xintiandi, etc.

In view of the late start of the protection of architectural heritage in China, the development stage is not mature yet, resulting in inappropriate restoration and over-commercialization of some architectural heritage. As a result, the protection of architectural heritage in China is faced with new challenges, while western countries have already stepped in the mature stage with respect to the protection of

architectural heritage. The policies and measures adopted by western countries in protecting architectural heritage involve the mutual coordinated development of environment, economy and social structure. For example, it took Germany 50 years to transform and renovate Ruhr Industrial Zone to give full play to its regional advantages, industrial advantages and advantages of different strata, allowing for its coordinated development and realizing the diversification of industrial structure.

In a word, since historical architectural heritage is part of the city, its past, present and future need to be controlled by urban development, social economy and the mission and value of the era.

## III. INVESTIGATION OF MACAU'S HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AND ANALYSIS ON THE STATUS QUO OF HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

In 2005, "Historic Centre of Macau" was listed in the World Heritage List. In the Outline of the Plan for the Reform and Development of the Pearl River Delta" (2008-2020) and the Outline of the 12th Five-Year Plan for National Economy and Social Development of the People's Republic of China" (2011-2015), Macau is positioned as "World Tourism and Leisure Center", which brings opportunities for Macau's development as a cultural city. At the end of 2009, the Government of Macau SAR set up a cross-sectorial team to carry out overall planning research with the Ruins of St Paul as the center and its surrounding areas. In addition, the proposal of "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Great Bay Area" also created new rooms and opportunities for the development of Macau.

The Historic Centre of Macau is a historic block centered on the old urban area of Macau, which is connected by adjacent square and street. The Historic Centre of Macau is the oldest, largest, best preserved and most centralized architectural complex in China. It is a historic urban area in which western architecture is dominated and Chinese and Western architectures are blended. It is the result of cultural exchange and multi-cultural complementarity between China and the West for more than 400 years. This area is the central part of the old urban area inhabited mainly by foreigners mainly including Portuguese, which consists of major streets and many forelands. As shown in "Fig. 2", architectural complexes in this area present the typical characteristics of seaport cities and traditional habitats of Chinese and Portuguese and include the characteristics of Macau's combination of Chinese and Western cultures. They are used as a historic urban area in the application for world heritage.



Fig. 2. Macau historical architecture. (taken by the author)

The 22 historic buildings and 8 forelands in the Historic Centre of Macau, including Western-style churches and Chinese traditional temples, still keep their original functions, while some large-scale buildings have been renovated and gradually used as office buildings of museums, libraries and even government departments.

#### IV. MACAU'S STRATEGY AND METHODS FOR PROTECTING HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

##### A. *Macau's Strategy for Protecting Historical Architectural Heritage*

As one of three major gambling cities in the world, Macau has developed gambling tourism, but it also affects the development of Macau's historical architectural heritage. Therefore, Macau has begun to make full use of the advantages of world heritage and diversified culture, enhanced local residents' awareness to understand culture and heritage protection, and achieve sustainable development of Macau's historical heritage protection in the context of development and protection.

##### B. *Macau's Methods for Protecting Historical Architectural Heritage*

*1) Protecting historical architectural heritage with systems:* According to the records, Marques Esparteiro, Governor of Macau, appointed a committee on December 10, 1953 to "identify existing architectural relics". This is the first time that Macau has paid attention to the protection of architectural heritage in official written form. In 1960 seven years later, another Governor, Marques Jaime Silverio, issued an order to "study and propose appropriate measures to preserve and value historical and artistic relics". But the order was only limited to buildings, churches, palaces and fortresses. In 1974, Carvalho, the Governor of Macau, appointed a new committee to expand the protection scope, deepen the concept of protection and began to attach importance to the foreland space and historical blocks. It can be seen that the early study on Macau's architectural heritage

began in the period of the Macau-Portuguese government in the 1960s, and was mainly advocated by the government.

On September 4, 1982, the Cultural Institute of Macau (referred to as Cultural Affairs Bureau following the return of Macau to Mainland China) was established to specialize in the protection of cultural heritage. The functions and powers of the Cultural Property Department are determined by Decree-Law No. 63/94/M promulgated by the Macau Government on December 19, 1994. It is mainly responsible for the restoration, renovation and inventory of historical sites, buildings of architectural and artistic value and buildings rated as protected. The establishment of the Cultural Affairs Bureau has offered an executive body for the Macau's policy regarding cultural relic protection.

##### *2) Protecting historical architectural heritage with laws:*

In order to strengthen the protection of cultural and historical architectural heritage, the Macau government regulates and improves various protection measures by means of legislation. The first protection law was Macau Decree-Law No. 34/76/M promulgated on August 7, 1976, which established the list of protected buildings and building complex for the first time. At the same time, a new Committee directly under jurisdiction of the Macau Government, the Committee for the Protection of Urban Landscape and Cultural Property of Macau (i.e. the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Relics), was established.

On June 3, 1984, the Macau Government promulgated the new Cultural Relics Protection Decree-Law No. 56/84/M. The decree-law abolished the old one and made a more precise and comprehensive definition and classification of Macau's cultural relics. It also made detailed provisions on specific measures for the protection of each cultural relic.

On December 31, 1992, the Macau Government amended and perfected the preceding decree-law and promulgated Decree-Law No. 83/92/M. The decree-law stipulated specific rules such as engineering, liability and punishment. The decree-law was promulgated along with an annex - List of Cultural Relics and Map of Cultural Relics. The annex basically covers a considerable quantity of the cultural relics, buildings and historical sites of the Macau Peninsula and the two offshore islands. For example, the decree-law stipulates that "protected buildings" are not allowed to be demolished or built, but allowed to be repaired as they are; that "buildings of architectural and artistic value" need to retain the appearance of the buildings, and that the interior can be changed according to the actual situation.

Following Macau's return, the Macau Cultural Affairs Bureau mainly carried out its work in accordance with the two decree-laws No. 56/84/M and No.83/92/M.

##### *3) Protecting historical architectural heritage with funds:*

Both the Macau-Portuguese government and the Macau SAR government have spent a lot of money on the protection of the heritage of the region. The Macau-Portuguese government was focusing on the restoration of Western-style churches, and after Macau's return, the

restoration mainly focuses on temples. The cost of heritage protection is allocated from the annual fiscal budget. From 1998 to 2001, more than 130 million Macau dollars were invested in heritage protection; since 1982, the Macau government has invested 250 million Macau dollars in heritage protection. The Macau Cultural Affairs Bureau has protected and restored about 330 buildings.

4) *Protecting historical architectural heritage with "buffer zone"*: According to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, when an application for world heritage is made for a heritage, protection measures shall involve establishing a buffer zone for the heritage at the same time, as shown in "Fig. 3".

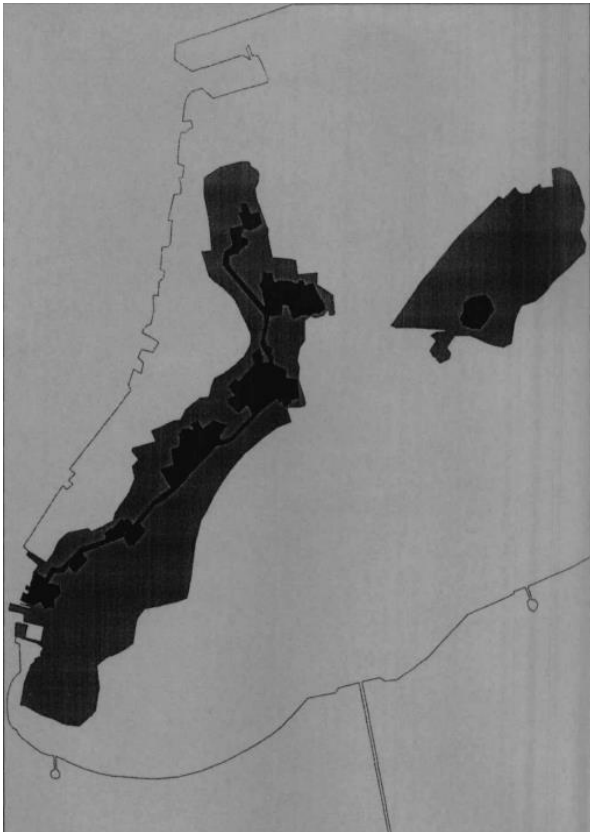


Fig. 3. Macau World Heritage and buffer Zone. (taken by the Macau World Heritage folder)

When the Historic Centre of Macau was listed as a World Heritage, the Macau Government defined the scope of the World Cultural Heritage Buffer Zone in accordance with the protection plan submitted to the World Heritage Committee. The Buffer Zone basically covers all of the "Historic Centre of Macau" and maintains the historic appearance around the World Heritage to the greatest extent.

5) *Promoting the education regarding the protection of historical architectural heritage*: The Macau SAR is also carrying out the promotion and education regarding the protection of Macau's cultural heritage. The SAR Government not only pays attention to disseminating

knowledge about cultural relic protection to Macau residents, especially the younger generation, but also seeks to cooperate with non-governmental organizations and private institutions through various channels.

Macau has also attracted worldwide attention to Macau's cultural relics by hosting and participating in various large-scale conferences to promote our cultural heritage to the world. In 2001, the Seminar on Modern Asian Architecture Network" was held; in 2002, the Academic Seminar on Urban Cultural Heritage Protection — Macau Vision was held. The SAR Government has also signed cooperation agreements with the Portuguese Architectural Heritage Bureau on the protection, maintenance and improvement of architectural heritage of historical, artistic, landscape and social value, thus offering technical support and quality assurance to Macau's cultural relic protection.

Macau has also established scholarships for academic research to further promote the study of local culture and history, and has given priority to research projects on Macau's historical and cultural heritage. In Macau, Bachelor of History and Master of Science courses were offered at the University of Macau in 2007, and Ph.D. courses were added in 2010. The tutors were recruited from home and abroad. Experts have been invited to give lectures on academic research on Macau's history and culture on many occasions, which has actively aroused the emphasis and attention of the residents to local culture and cultural relics.

With the development of the Internet, the Macau Government has also kept pace with the times in order to make it more convenient for the public to understand the latest progress in the protection of Macau's cultural relics, find and download various types of data and pictures of Macau's cultural relics and World Heritage. In addition, Cultural Affairs Bureau has officially launched the website of Cultural Heritage of Macau.

The sustainable development of historic architectural heritage needs to be based on the protection and reutilization in order to achieve the promotion and sustainable utilization of historic buildings. Fortunately, the Macau government has foreseen the importance of protecting these architectural heritages, and has done a lot of work in the protection of Macau's heritage, mainly in terms of systems, laws and funds.

## V. CONCLUSION

To solve the problems in the protection and development of historical architectural heritage, we must first correctly understand the relationship between protection and development. At the same time, we should fully understand and analyze the protection theory at home and abroad, and establish the protection concept and specific methods in combination with actual situation of the buildings and the era background in which the buildings are located, so as to objectively view the value of historical architectural heritage. Historic architectural heritage is irreplaceable, and should become the priority of heritage protection, so we should formulate relevant policies, laws and development plans on this basis. However, the protection of historical architectural heritage not only means protecting itself, but also needs to

protect its historical significance, that is, the spiritual level of architecture. It should be developed, maintained and repaired on the premise of scientific and sustainable development. Development should focus on the spiritual benefits of history and culture rather than simply on economic benefits, and should focus on long-term development rather than quick success and instant benefit.

For the strict control of historical architectural heritage, on one hand, the buildings included in the protection list are indeed well protected; but on the other, the strict control also greatly restricts the implementation of building protection projects. As a result, many workers involved in the protection don't know how to start and can only carry out their work carefully. In this way, it is impossible to ensure the completion of the protection work. There are also those buildings which are not included in the list at present. Without legal protection, they can only decay or be renovated at will, or even disappear in the machineries upon the construction of the city. This also requires new revisions to be made to relevant policies.

Historic architectural heritage has profound historical and cultural value, which is of great significance to the future development of the city and the society. The recognition of architectural heritage includes not only the recognition of architectural entity itself, but also the recognition of profound historical and cultural connotations. In the process of architectural heritage protection, too much attention is paid to the protection of the building itself, but the protection of the age value and spiritual level of the building itself is often ignored.

Historic architectural heritage is a living existence. It is the coexistence of soul and substance. Historic architectural heritage lies in a specific environment with buildings as the carrier. They provide people with the place where life scenarios occur. Specific activities, unique memories and emotions that human generate in the environment and architecture are the dominant part of the historical architectural heritage. The protection of historic architectural heritage not only involves the protection and utilization with physical objects, but also involves the human-centered continuation and inheritance.

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