

Research on the Relationship Between the Protection and Utilization of Modern Buildings and the Regional Economic Development in Xi'an

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, with the continuous advancement of the “Four Reforms and Two Demolitions” work of the Xi'an Municipal Government, the protection and utilization of the existing outstanding modern architectural heritage shows a significant gap from the urban development situation. Some outstanding modern buildings with characteristics of the times are on the verge of being demolished before their cultural value and social value get fully exploited and utilized. Based on the results of survey on outstanding modern architectural heritages made in Xi'an in recent years, this paper further discusses several problems about the architectural heritages such as the cultural value, preservation status and property right theory, and further explores the reasonable protection, development, and utilization of modern contemporary architectural heritages in China and the relation between them and the development of the regional economic construction.

Keywords: Xi'an, modern buildings, cultural value, preservation status, protection and utilization, regional economic construction

I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of the "Greater Xi'an" plan, the protection and utilization of modern buildings in Xi'an are still subject to the social environment and regional economic development. The situation of building protection and utilization is complex. In addition to the government, there are a lot of market factors. Based on the theoretical analysis of building property rights, changing the status quo, and effectively protecting and moderately developing modern buildings on the one hand can drive the regional economic development, on the other hand conforms to the needs of the current Xi'an Imperial City Revival Plan, the Qin and Han New City construction, and the structure and layout of Xi'an's urban and rural planning and promotes the implementation of the "Greater Xi'an" plan.

II. BASIC SITUATION OF THE "OUTSTANDING MODERN ARCHITECTURAL SITE INVESTIGATION" PROJECT

In June 2017, Xi'an Incident memorial hall and School of Historical Culture and Tourism of Xi'an University jointly established the "Xi'an Outstanding Modern Architectural Heritage Protection Research Center". This Center engages in special investigation and protection research on modern architectural

heritages, makes efforts to grasp the actual problems facing in the protection of such heritages and provides theoretical basis for government in making relevant decisions. In 2017, Xi'an University signed a cooperation agreement with Xi'an Incident Memorial Hall and was commissioned by the Memorial Hall to carry out "Investigation on Xi'an's outstanding modern architectural heritages".

During 2017-2018, a survey on 28 districts in Xi'an revealed six outstanding modern buildings. In April 2019, Xi'an University successfully held an expert review meeting for the conclusion of the "2017-2018 Xi'an Outstanding Modern and Architectural Heritage Survey" project and the list of outstanding buildings to be recommended for protection. The meeting discussed and put forward related opinions on the six architectural heritages on the list. According to the development degrees at the current stage, the list can be generally divided into undeveloped architectural heritages and developed buildings. Among them, Laomu temple of Ming and Qing dynasties and the restaurant of Fanghua Courtyard are treated as the representatives.

III. CASE ANALYSIS OF MODERN ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGES

A. Case one: Laomu temple of Ming and Qing dynasties

1) *Geographical location:* This temple is located in the north end of Longchi lane, Dongguanjin, Beilin District, Xi'an City. The GPS coordinates is 34°15'54"N, 108°58'49"E, ASL 440m.

2) *Architectural features:* This temple is in single masonry structure. Up to now, the entrance, the second door, the side halls on two sides and the main hall are preserved. On two sides of the entrance, there is a pair of exquisitely carved bluestone gate piers. The piers are carved with Kylin inside and golden wheel outside, with exquisite patterns and smooth lines. The second door is inlaid with lintels, but the text on the lintels is no longer visible due to the age. On the back side of the entrance, there is a wooden ladder toward the second floor of the entrance. Going along the aisle toward the north end, what on your right side is the stone staircase climbing to the main hall. The main hall has three-room space and the window is open backward. The main body adopts gabled wooden beams and brick wall.

3) *Status analysis:* The appearance of this temple is basically kept intact. The entrance and the interior of main hall were artificially transformed for reason of being lived. The interior of main hall is divided into several houses by building new brick walls. There is no regular maintenance staff in the temple. According to functions, the surrounding is mostly residential area, located in the old urban area. The existing streets and buildings are relatively old and lack unified planning. From the status quo, protection is urgently needed.

B. Case two: restaurant of Fanghua Courtyard

1) *Geographical location:* This restaurant is located in Kunmingchi Road #1, Yanta District, Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province, near Xi'an Chaoyang Apartment for the Aged in the north, nearby residential area in the south and opposite to aquarium flower market. The GPS coordinates is 34°15'12"N, 108°52'31"E, ASL 351.45m.

2) *Architectural features:* This restaurant adopts wooden structure, two-sided slope roof and brick building in east-west direction. By introducing Soviet architectural design methods, the house is formed into shape; the sloped roof is covered with blue tiles and provided with luthern and chimney. In addition, the building also incorporates some Chinese elements, such as wooden beams and continuous eaves and the like traditional Chinese building elements, to decorate the main body of the house. The building covers an area of

400 square meters. The maximum distance from the ground to the eaves is 8.4 m. The building is 28.75 m in length and 10.94 m in width. On the right side, there is a rectangular closed door with semicircle in the lower part, 3.12 m in height and 1.8 m in width. There are 12 windows on each side. Windows in the north side are all 1.3 m in height; the six windows in the south and east are 2.89m in height and extended by half of the height for subsequent decoration; the rest six windows are 2.15 m in height. These windows are all 1 m in width.

3) *Status analysis:* It is preserved in good condition. It was originally a factory building and now a restaurant. It is an asset held by individuals. The interior has been renovated and is under regular maintenance by special person. Most of the area around the restaurant is a high-end residential area. Some shantytowns have been demolished, and some facade houses are still in use. The houses that have not been demolished are basically dilapidated and uninhabited. The Chinese courtyard is relatively in good condition.

IV. EVALUATION ON THE VALUE OF MODERN ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

A. Value evaluation results of the Laomu temple in the Ming and Qing dynasties

1) *Historical value:* The Laomu temple in the Ming and Qing dynasties has obvious features of the architectural structure in Ming and Qing dynasties and adopts gabled wooden beam structure. The shape of gabled roof is simple. The construction method of this roof was neither included in the "Building Method (Yingzao Fashi, 营造法式)" written by Li Jiexiu in the Song Dynasty, nor was found in the existing architectural heritage of the Song Dynasty. During and after the Ming and Qing dynasties, gabled roof was widely used in the construction of residential buildings in the north and south of China. In the circumstances that there is few such ground buildings in Xi'an, this temple has certain historical value.

2) *Social and cultural values:* The overall status of the temple is relatively intact. It preserves the entrance, the second door, the western wing, stone pier, lintel and the like architectural heritages of residential buildings of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Its construction method has certain reference value for exploring the local characteristics of buildings in Xi'an in Ming and Qing Dynasties and has certain meaning for exploring the folk customs and culture in the area, with outstanding scientific and social values as a whole.

3) *Value evaluation:* The building complies with the value determination standard as stated in the part of

value analysis of outstanding modern architectural heritages in the "Measures for the Protection and Management of Excellent Modern Buildings in Xi'an": "Article 1 Buildings and structures reflecting the historical, culture and folklore traditions of the city's modern society and representing the characteristics of social development and characteristics of the region in a period", and "Article 9 Buildings and structures having historical, scientific, cultural, education and artistic values".¹

B. Value evaluation results of the restaurant of Fanghua Courtyard

1) *Historical value*: The Fanghua Courtyard substantially proved the historical fact that Soviet Union provided assistance in construction of China in the 1950s. It was constructed and used as changing room of the factory 3507 constructed under assistance of the Soviet Union. Its new architectural form has a certain function for studying the inheritance and acceptance relationship of modern architectural styles in Xi'an. The architectural technical elements contained in it have great reference significance for the construction of this type of buildings in the future.

2) *Social value*: In terms of function, the restaurant is a public space building. The public space increases people's communication, promotes the exchange and communication between people, promotes the relationship between people's lives, and creates a strong atmosphere of socialist family life. In plane design of the building, the regular axis and the three-dimensional symmetrical spatial construction layout reflect a strong sense of order of socialism in a concentrated way.

3) *Artistic value*: This building is in a full-wood beam structure and was unique in Xi'an at that time. In 1951, buildings in Xi'an were dominated by single-slope wooden structure. In construction techniques, the building followed the mainstream at that time but with some breakthrough. The building is more than 8 m in height and has two parts on the spatial structure, symmetrical left and right; and the overall space is not utilized as urgent as modern architecture. The space is of 400 square meters of space, looks very transparent. The building is a product of the combination of technology and art, and has certain artistic value.

4) *Scientific value*: The building has been in existence for nearly 70 years since its completion in 1951, and has not been damaged. It can be seen that the courtyard used such building technology as relatively scientific and advanced at that time in aspects of initial

planning and design, structural construction, construction technology, and protecting it from suffering from natural disasters. The scientific value of the courtyard still needs to be further explored.

5) *Value evaluation*: This restaurant is kept basically intact. It complies with the evaluation standard as stated in the part of value analysis of outstanding modern architectural heritages: "Article 5 buildings and structures reflecting the exchange between Chinese and foreign architectural cultures" and "Article 7 buildings having architectural artistic characteristics or scientific research value in building type, space, pattern, construction process and engineering technology".²

V. PROTECTION AND UTILIZATION OF MODERN ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Protection and utilization are always the top priority for architectural heritage. Building protection itself needs to adhere to three principles: "sustainability, authenticity, and integrity". Such building needs to be used on the basis of respecting the differences of the building itself. Before making rational use of the building, it is necessary to consider many factors such as the overall regional layout, the city's future development planning, regional environmental greening, the mass' psychology and acceptance degree, and aesthetics. Both the temple and the restaurant meet the identification standards for excellent modern buildings, but there is large gap between their protection and utilization. The temple is not well protected and is in an undeveloped or even destroyed state, while the restaurant is in a developed state and is relatively well protected. Affected by the surrounding environment, the protection and rational use of the building still need to be explored. The following are some considerations on the methods for protecting and using the temple and the restaurant.

A. Laomu temple of Ming and Qing dynasties

1) *Protective repair*: At the present stage, the temple has not been specifically protected; the main building's wood components were decayed, and have man-made destruction. First of all, it is necessary to properly resettle the people who currently live in the temple, and get it enclosed and protected. Secondly, it is needed to put capital investment into the protection, hire experts and technicians to make analysis on the restorability of the building, provide rational protection and dispatch special persons to regularly repair it to the

¹ Xi'an Municipal People's Government. Administrative Measures for the Protection of Modern Excellent Buildings in Xi'an. Xi'an Municipal Government Order No. 121, 2015.

² Xi'an Municipal People's Government. Administrative Measures for the Protection of Modern Excellent Buildings in Xi'an. Xi'an Municipal Government Order No. 121, 2015.

old style to preserve the historical information of the ancient building to the maximum extent.

2) *Integrating regional advantageous resources:*

The temple has prominent resource advantages. Different from other single modern building, the temple is surrounded by famous temples and Taoist buildings such as Wangji Temple and Baxian Convent. The rich history and culture deposit provides favorable conditions for the protection and utilization of the temple. It is available to effectively rectify the surrounding environment of the temple, create a good architectural protection environment, fully explore the cultural connotation, and focus on the inheritance and development. To maximize the use of the surrounding environment for the effective development of the area, it is considered to use the existing complete building space and the surrounding ancient buildings to build a community museum or cultural block. Based on the overall preservation area and available space of the temple, the plan for constructing a cultural block is more feasible.

B. The restaurant of Fanghua Courtyard

1) *Restoring the historical and cultural atmosphere:*

The restaurant is a building constructed under assistance of the Soviet Union. The building itself combines the local architectural style and the Soviet style and is a product of Sino-foreign cooperation and exchange. The Soviet-type building stands for a historic era. The surrounding environment is relatively empty, and most of the areas are demolished houses. Considering the overall space, the cultural atmosphere can be restored by taking the restaurant as the center and making a purposed planning for the surrounding space.

2) *Creating a leisure and commercial area:* From the 1950s to the present, the restaurant has been a public space and is considered to be privately owned. In order to take advantage of its regional cultural advantages, it is available to make rational planning for the layout of the regional functional areas and attract investments to drive the regional industrial development and make up the lack of unity in architecture, as well as improve the construction of commercial and supporting service facilities in residential areas to improve the overall environmental quality. The restaurant can be positioned as recreational area based on function. The surrounding area can be planned as residential area, give play to the regional cultural advantages and stimulate the increase in the number of residents to attract guests. The symbiosis of the building and the corresponding public space can be

utilized to form a characteristic street style and fully display its historical and commercial values.

VI. MODERN BUILDING PROTECTION AND UTILIZATION AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNDER MODERN PROPERTY RIGHT THEORY

Through the investigation and analysis on the two modern buildings, it can be found that the protection and utilization of the two buildings not only involve the government or a certain department; in the new market situation, except the modern buildings included in the list of cultural heritages, other modern buildings that have not yet been discovered or have insufficient value attributes are often ignored in economic construction. In the list of 6 modern architectural heritages to be determined under field survey, in terms of ownership, some of them are state-owned, some of them are privately owned; according to the survey, it is temporarily determined that the temple is collectively owned, and the restaurant is privately owned. At present stage in China, the classification of building property rights is relatively flexible. The ownership and right of use are separated. As transfer rights and income rights are involved, the relationship is complicated and sometimes difficult to sort out. This is also not conducive to the protection of modern architectural heritage itself.

In actual protection, development and utilization of modern architectural heritages, it is inseparable from the regulation of an "invisible hands": market economy. The protection of modern buildings is inseparable from the market. The restaurant is exactly used for an active development in the social market and is linked to the regional economic development. It is privately owned and has the right to income. When the right to income is clearly divided, it has the right of free transfer, which is conducive to the investment of fund, technology and human resources, and further effectively protecting it.

Economic construction and cultural construction are not contradictory. Government management and free economic development are relative. From the perspective of the methods proposed for protection and utilization of modern architectural heritages, it is needed to appropriately "put the property rights of the architectural heritage into the market in a planned way, use the efficiency of the market, and the constraints of relevant national protection regulations to inject vitality into the protection of the architectural heritage".³ Of course, no matter whether it is used for constructing cultural street or community museum, the protection

³ Li Min. Architectural Heritage Protection under the Theory of Property Rights and Chinese Architectural Heritage in a Global Perspective: Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Chinese Architectural History ("Construction" Vol.4).

and use of modern architectural heritages is to give play to its own architectural value advantages and educate the public. It is needed to carefully arrange the layout to attract guests, promote regional business and investment attraction in intangible opportunity cost, and further drive the regional economic construction.

VII. CONCLUSION

The protection and rational use of outstanding modern buildings are closely related to regional economic development. Based on protection, taking advantage of the building to carry out active creation can promote regional economic development to a certain extent. Taking the restaurant of Fanghua Courtyard as an example, the economic value protection effect created at the present stage is far higher than that of the undeveloped Laomu temple. Regional economic development has increased the possibility of protecting and rationally using the architectural heritage. The two factors complement each other and promote each other. The protection of urban buildings is "not only to look for the past but more to respect the past"⁴. Against the background of the "Greater Xi'an Plan", it is needed to discover the outstanding modern architectural heritages in Xi'an, and increase the investigation and protection of the existing modern buildings in Xi'an. A balance between development and building protection should be found and maintained. Further, it is also needed to coordinate the local and central, regional and local, masses and governments, make use of the favorable conditions of the socialist market economy, develop on the basis of reasonable protection, stimulate potential value, and provide more supporting points for the planning of Greater Xi'an.

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