



Analysis of Landscape Cultural Characteristics of Historic District of Tianjin Fifth Avenue

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Abstract. The Fifth Avenue is the most famous historical and cultural protection block in Tianjin. It is well known to the public because of its unique exotic spatial form, diverse architectural styles and special social and cultural background. It has become an important window to show the multi-cultural integration characteristics of Tianjin city.

Keywords: Tianjin Fifth Avenue · Historic District · Landscape culture

1 Introduction

The Fifth Avenue is a historic district formed in the modern settlement period of Tianjin. In 1860, this area was designated as the British concession. Since then, a series of foreign houses have been pulled up on the former reeds. It covers an area of about 140 hectares and is currently the largest historical and cultural protection block in Tianjin. Due to the unique spatial shape of these streets, a large number of garden villas and celebrity mansions of different styles are concentrated, so Tianjin people vividly call this special area “the Fifth Avenue”.

Fifth avenue is in Tianjin formed under specific historical background, and the influence of foreign culture context in modern historical block, not only closely related to cultural background and history of modern Chinese, the block structure, space form and architectural style is also directly reflect the contemporary world, planning and architecture of Tianjin city has produced important influences on the culture and landscape features. In August 2010, the Fifth Avenue won the title of “Famous Street of Chinese History and Culture” and became one of the 20 famous streets of Chinese history and culture in China.

2 The Historical and Cultural Background of Fifth Avenue

2.1 The Formation and Evolution of the Fifth Avenue

In 1860, Tianjin was forced to open its port, and Britain took the lead in setting up a concession area of 30.7 hectares on the west bank of the Haihe River. Later, eight other countries, including France, the United States, Japan, Germany, Italy, Russia, Austria

and Belgium, successively opened their own concession areas on both sides of the Haihe River, making Tianjin the city with the largest number of countries with concession areas in China. In order to further expand its sphere of influence, Britain expanded its concession area three times successively. By 1903, the area of British concession area had reached 410 hectares, becoming the largest foreign concession area in Tianjin.

Before 1903, the area of the Fifth Avenue was a pothole swamp on the southwest edge of Tianjin. After the third expansion of the British Concession, the area where the Fifth Avenue was located was extended to the British Concession, and its main function was determined to be residential, and the early development and construction of the Fifth Avenue was initiated. [1].

After 1929, with the gradual improvement of municipal pipe network, public service facilities and park green space, the superior environment and perfect facilities of the Fifth Avenue attracted many Chinese politicians and celebrities to build houses here. According to statistics, about 50 political figures and celebrities who have important influence in the modern history of China and Tianjin have bought or lived here. Due to their prominent social status or strong economic strength, most of the houses built by these dignitaries pursued novelty and luxury. By the 1840s, the Fifth Avenue area had become an upscale residential area with the largest area, the largest concentration of garden houses and the largest number of celebrity mansions.

After 1949, part of the real estate in the Fifth Avenue became public. Not only the organs and units moved in as office space, but also ordinary residents could live in the Fifth Avenue area through distribution, which changed the social structure and function of the Fifth Avenue. And with the rapid increase of population density, the living environment of the Fifth Avenue has gradually deteriorated, resulting in the original quiet environment, densely wooded garden houses gradually reduced to crowded, chaotic and shabby courtyard. It is gratifying that although buildings and courtyards were severely damaged during this period, the spatial pattern and form of historical blocks were basically intact, laying a foundation for the overall protection of later blocks. Since 1998, the Tianjin Municipal government has officially launched a comprehensive renovation and environmental treatment project on the Fifth Avenue, focusing on respecting history.

As an important representative of the characteristics of Tianjin historic districts, the unique historical and cultural connotation and features of the Fifth Avenue have attracted the attention of more and more experts and scholars at home and abroad. The protection of the Fifth Avenue has become the most important work of Tianjin historical and cultural heritage protection. Over the years, the Tianjin government has strengthened protection efforts through functional replacement, relocation of population, renovation of housing, improvement of public facilities, transformation of the neighborhood environment, and promotion of vitality, so that the features of this famous historic district can be well maintained and restored, and become an important window to display the multicultural characteristics of Tianjin.

2.2 To “The Culture of the Republic of China” as the Core Theme Construction

Based on the tracing of the geographical culture of the Fifth Avenue and the analysis of the characteristics of the theme events, it can be seen that the main cultural heritage factors of the Fifth Avenue are the concession culture, foreign culture and royal culture

carried by the block. Therefore, the basic idea of Tianjin Municipal government for the comprehensive renovation of the Fifth Avenue is to respect the authenticity and integrity of the architecture in the Republic of China, and the harmonious unity of landscape and architecture. At present, the Fifth Avenue retains the historical imprint of the Republic of China, with a number of historical buildings and former residences of famous people from Britain and France built in the 1920s and 1930s. Based on the above analysis, it can be seen that “the culture of the Republic of China” is the core of the cultural connotation carried by the Fifth Avenue. [2].

2.3 The Influence of Western Planning Thought

During the period from the beginning of the construction to the mature development of the Fifth Avenue, the planning ideas and models reflect the changes of the planning trend in the world and Britain at that time to a certain extent.

At the beginning of the 20th century, when Western urban planning thought was changing, new planning theories and thoughts such as garden city utopia city, urban beautification movement, organic evacuation and community appeared in European and American countries. As far as Britain is concerned, the promulgation of the City Planning Act in 1909 not only marked the establishment of the city planning system in Britain, but also proposed the control of land development of urban residential areas for the first time and required local authorities to formulate city planning and design. Similarly, the British colonial city model with its own characteristics was established in the process of colonization, such as ensuring that city planning precedes town construction, stipulating the standard and layout of city planning, reserving public land and green belt, and avoiding excessive commercial development. These planning ideas also began to be reflected in the promotion of Tianjin British Concession. By comparing the map of Tianjin in 1913 and 1925, we can see the influence of the urban planning thought at that time on the change of the planning pattern of the British Concession.

In the 1913 map, the road network structure planned for the whole British concession basically did not consider the functional zoning, and adopted the form of grid network. The space was divided into two parts by the River, and there was no road running through the whole British Concession from east to west. And historical map in the 1925 edition, the promotion in the British concession qualitative changes have taken place in the community planning network, replace the grid network is ribbed type rectangular network, especially the concession area, a new volume of traffic and landscape functions in one comprehensive way, not only to well versed in the British concession area, also has been clear about the five avenue area as an independent residential area planning ideas.

As an upscale residential community at that time, the Fifth Avenue fully embodies the function and role of planning and design. Not only the road structure is more reasonable, water, electricity and other municipal facilities are perfect, but also the functional land planning has fully considered the residential function and living characteristics. In addition to all kinds of residential land, the area or surrounding businesses, concert halls, churches, museums, stadiums, schools, hospitals, parks and green space. In the layout, it not only pays attention to keep the quiet and peaceful residential area, but also meets the needs of the diversified life of the upper class at that time.

3 Analysis of Landscape Characteristics of the Fifth Avenue Block

As a residential area influenced by the foreign cultural context, the Fifth Avenue embodies the characteristics of diversity and diversity, and the overall and harmonious characteristics are worthy of being an important treasure of modern Chinese architectural culture.

3.1 Diversity and Pluralism

Various forms of residential buildings, different styles, exotic flavor, prominent personality is an important feature of the fifth Avenue block. Among the more than 300 well-preserved historical buildings in the block, their architectural forms are rarely repeated. Diversity and diversification is the most important feature of the Fifth Avenue. [3].

3.1.1 The Influence of Foreign Architectural Cultural Context

As an upscale residential area in the British Concession, according to the regulations of the British Concession authorities on the exterior shape of all buildings within the boundary must be in foreign form, so the foreign architectural form has become the mainstream of the residential form and style of Fifth Avenue. In order to pursue the new individuality and style of architecture, the owners and architects draw inspiration from the regional architectural elements of different countries. The architectural vocabulary can be described as rich and colorful. The houses with regional customs of England, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Spain and other countries can be found in the Fifth Avenue.

3.1.2 The Influence of World Contemporary Architectural Trend of Thought

Most of the historic buildings in the Fifth Avenue were built between 1910 and 1930, when the European architectural trend in this period was in a period of integration and transformation of various architectural styles, such as neoclassical, eclectic, early modernism, Art Nouveau and Art Deco. Therefore, the joining design of foreign architects not only improves and drives the overall architectural design level of the Fifth Avenue, but also introduces the world's contemporary architectural trend of thought into Tianjin.

3.1.3 The Influence of Owner Personality and Cultural Orientation

Most of the houses in the Fifth Avenue are independently built by high-end owners. The scale, form, style and building material selection of the houses are the concrete embodiment of the owners' social status, economic strength and cultural taste. Paying attention to the personality and quality of the houses has become one of the goals pursued by the owners. In order to satisfy the Chinese cultural complex of some owners, designers often take a compromise way to add Chinese architectural culture elements into the foreign architectural forms, such as Chinese style residential private courtyard and Western style house form combination, forming a unique "Western style house + Chinese style courtyard" Chinese and Western combination of residential form.

3.2 Wholeness and Harmony

Although the architectural forms and styles within the Fifth Avenue are colorful, the overall outlook of the block is very harmonious. This is not only closely related to the strict planning guidance and construction control of the block, but also the harmony of architectural scale, color and material is an important factor to maintain the integrity of the block style and characteristics.

3.2.1 Building Scale and Height

The architectural scale in the Fifth Avenue gives people a feeling of exquisite and small as a whole, which is related to the spatial combination of courtyards and buildings. The overall control of building height and volume is the basis for the harmony of architectural scale. Since most of them are independent houses, the limited construction scale makes the building volume of the houses relatively small, the height is generally within three stories, and the height to width ratio of the buildings is about, which belongs to the appropriate scale range.

3.2.2 Building Materials and Colors

Although the choice of building materials of the Fifth Avenue is diverse, including stone and imitation stone commonly used in Western architecture, as well as traditional Chinese brick and wood materials. However, in order to highlight the simplicity and nature of residential buildings, the building structure and decorative materials are basically taken from natural materials, such as brick, tile, wood, stone, etc.

As a residential area, the architectural color of the fifth Avenue is very unique, stable and warm, atmosphere without loss of simplicity. Mainly through the use of materials natural texture and color collocation, to the block building adds a natural harmony and unity of natural charm.

4 Analysis of the Architectural Characteristics of the Fifth Avenue Block

4.1 Imitation of English Architecture

This kind of building is modeled after the style of British residential buildings. It is a building of brick and wood structure. The main characteristics are: With a steep side triangular roof, the roof is almost undecorated and wooden doors, slanted grid Windows. Such as located in the Tian He hospital next to Xu Shi Chang old house, built in 1922, for the three-storey brick building (Fig. 1).

4.2 Spanish Style Architecture

Spanish architecture is usually arranged in the way of far high and near low levels, which is relatively scattered, in line with people's sense of spatial scale. Spanish-style buildings



Fig. 1. Former residence of Xu Shichang (From wechat official account)



Fig. 2. The peace hotel (From wechat official account)

are typically hand-crafted, whether in topographic treatment or ironwork, door, window and exterior wall construction techniques. [4].

The Peace Hotel on Fifth Avenue reflects some of the characteristics of Spanish architecture. Its roof is covered with red tiles, yellow wall cement, the roof has an iron weather vane, giving people a mild, simple feeling (Fig. 2).

4.3 Italian Style Architecture

Also known as Baroque style, it is characterized by free shape, pursuit of dynamics, preference for rich decoration and sculpture, strong color, often interspersed curved surface and oval space, shutters are also a major feature of this type of architecture. [4].

Sun Dian Ying's old house at No. 20 Mu nan Road has four sets of baroque "twist columns" on its terrace. Its balconies, basements and corridors also reflect Italian style to a certain extent.



Fig. 3. Former residence of Chen Guang Yuan's (From wechat official account)

4.4 Eclectic Architecture

Eclecticism, also known as eclecticism, is the practice of unprincipled patchwork of different views and related theories. As the name suggests, eclectic architecture is an architectural form that absorbs the characteristics of many kinds of architecture.

Chen Guang Yuan's former residence at the intersection of Yunnan Road and Dali Road is a typical example of eclecticism. The three-story brick and wood building has an irregular plan and a patchwork facade that seems to reflect the ups and downs of his life. The external wall with light color plastered wall and dark sulfur brick wall collocation, simple and generous, quite modern architectural style, especially eye-catching is the three-story roof has an eight-pointed pavilion, for the typical Chinese style. The octagonal gazebo on the roof terrace is made of yellow glazed tiles with patterns of dragons and phoenixes on the tiles, which reflects Chen Guang Yuan's political ambition of being unable to stop, and also makes the whole building present a combination of Chinese and Western characteristics. The overall architectural style of the building is unique, dignified and magnificent (Fig. 3).

4.5 German Type Building

German style architecture of the building layout is not neat, there is no courtyard, shape freedom. The bottom uses brick, the floor uses wood frame, members are exposed, the arrangement is dense, the decorative effect is very strong. The roof is particularly steep, there is an attic, open tiger window, brown red, Chu - based wall with white alternating lines, constitute a chequered facade, bright color. [5].

For example, the former residence of Li Mian Zhi at No. 94 Munan Road can be regarded as German architecture on the whole. Li's old house is composed of four identical detached houses, all of which are two-storey buildings with brick and wood structure. The facade is plastered with bean grain stone and roofed with sloping roof. Architectural modeling is scattered, lively and generous, color collocation is very coordinated. The interior of the building is fully functional and well-decorated in accordance with residential design. The interior wallboard and floor are all made of high-grade hardwood, and the living room is hexagonal with a delicate fireplace, which has been well preserved. This group of buildings according to the Western single building design, Chinese style

enclosed plane layout, showing the family aggregation of living form, fully embodies the collision and blend of Chinese and Western culture in a specific historical stage, now as a commercial and office use.

5 Conclusion

Fifth avenue is formed under specific historical environment and conditions in Tianjin modern historical block with the multicultural characteristic, is the only and do not copy, but as a modern residential area reflects the concept of advanced planning, reasonable space structure, proper construction layout, comfortable neighborhood scale and rich architectural style is still worthy of our residential district design reference today.

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