



AN ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL CHANGES AND SOCIAL IMPACTS OF THE HAN
COMMUNITY THROUGH THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF NANCHUN
FROM 1953 TO 2024

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FROM 1953 TO 2024



A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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Faculty of Fine Arts, Srinakharinwirot University

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BY

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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DOCTOR OF ARTS
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This study employs a qualitative research methodology, focusing on the evolution of cultural spaces within the Han Chinese community of Nanxun Ancient Town from 1953 to 2024, and explores its social implications. Through purposive sampling, 13 residents, managers, and experts were selected as interview subjects, and field analysis was conducted in conjunction with four architectural structures. The study adopts structural functionalism as its core theoretical framework, combined with the AGIL model, to analyse the evolution of economic structure, social relations, and lifestyle across three stages: collective economy, market reform, and cultural revival. Additionally, social impact theory is employed to reveal the dual role of cultural spaces in economic adjustment and aesthetic expression. The research findings indicate that policy guidance and community participation can enhance the functional adaptability of historical and cultural spaces, providing practical references for utilising heritage.

Keyword : Nanxun Ancient Town, Cultural Space, Structural Functionalism, Social Impact

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

The protection of historic and culturally significant towns is an essential intrinsic requirement for urban development, playing an invaluable role in preserving historical context and promoting sustainable development(Dutt, 1925). Today, countries around the world are increasingly emphasizing the preservation and protection of historic towns. In Asia, Vietnam's Hoi An Ancient Town is renowned for its unique style blending Chinese and Japanese architectural elements. At the same time, the Philippines' Vigan City is famous for its Spanish colonial-era architectural heritage. Both have been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, showcasing the diverse charm of Asia's historic towns. In China, Nanxun Ancient Town, a gem of the Yangtze River Delta urban cluster, has a history dating back to the Chunyou period of the Southern Song Dynasty (1252)(Zong, 1970), spanning over 700 years (Jiang, 2004). With its profound cultural heritage, Nanxun flourished economically from the Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty to the mid-Qing Dynasty, driven by the booming silk industry and prosperous commodity economy. It became a significant hub in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces. In 1851, Nanxun's "Jili Silk" won gold and silver awards at the first World Exposition in London, a historic achievement that not only connected China with the exposition but also gave rise to a generation of wealthy tycoons. In the early 20th century, Nanxun's wealthy merchants integrated the essence of Chinese and Western cultures, constructing a series of luxurious mansions and private gardens that exemplified grandeur, sophistication, and wealth. These structures showcase the distinctive charm of Sino - Western fusion and have become breathtaking cultural landmarks of Nanxun. In June 2014, China's Grand Canal was successfully inscribed on the World Heritage List, with the Nanxun section of the Grand Canal and Nanxun Ancient Town included. Nanxun Ancient Town thus became the first ancient town in China to be listed as a World Heritage Site.

Nanxun Ancient Town features a diverse array of buildings with various architectural styles. Since modern times, the utilization of cultural spaces within Nanxun Ancient Town has undergone three critical stages of development, showcasing significant changes. These changes reflect the dynamic evolution of the Han community's lifestyle, economic activities (White, 1988), and cultural and religious practices, influenced by both internal factors, such as cultural identity, and external factors, such as economic transformation. The first stage (1953–1980) was characterized by a shift to collectivized production modes, where cultural spaces primarily served the collective needs of production and living. For example, communal dormitories replaced some traditional courtyard homes, emphasizing cooperation and shared community spirit (Morgan, 1971). The utilization of cultural spaces during this period reflected the Han community's transition from traditional household economies to collective economies and a focus on agricultural production. This phase was driven by collective cultural identity and influenced by the state's external push for economic organization. The second stage (1981–2005) saw increasing diversification in the functions of cultural spaces as economic transformation and urbanization accelerated. Traditional buildings were repurposed for industrial and commercial uses, as seen in the conversion of Zhang Shiming Residence into factory space, illustrating how conventional cultural spaces gradually adapted to economic demands. This stage reflected the Han community's transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy and a more open, urbanized lifestyle, demonstrating the process by which traditional culture adjusted under economic development pressures. The third stage (2006–present) has been shaped by the implementation of new urbanization and rural revitalization strategies. The utilization of cultural spaces has shifted towards cultural tourism and creative industries, such as the adaptation of the Siyehuguan into a cultural exhibition and commercial venue. Modern buildings have also been constructed to meet public service needs. The cultural space utilization during this period reflects the fusion of traditional and contemporary lifestyles within the Han community, with economic activities increasingly

focused on the service and cultural industries. It also demonstrates the diversification and reconstruction of cultural identity in the context of globalization (Li, 2007).

Overall, the changes in the utilization of architectural cultural spaces in Nanxun Ancient Town not only directly reflect the cultural identity and economic activity needs of the Han people but also serve as a microcosm of community development and cultural heritage shaped by both internal and external factors (Fei, 1988). Therefore, this study not only aids in the in-depth analysis of the dynamic changes in the utilization of architectural cultural spaces from 1953 to 2024, revealing the transformative characteristics of the Han community's lifestyle, economic activities, and cultural beliefs but also provides significant insights into understanding the aesthetic and cultural identity of the Han community during this period. This helps give a scientific basis for government departments to assist in formulating policies for cultural preservation and development; offers experience for other similar historical and cultural communities to achieve a balance between economy and culture; enhances academic understanding of the interaction between cultural spaces and social functions; and simultaneously promotes community development, improves residents' quality of life, and strengthens cultural identity.

1.2 Study Purpose

1. To analyze the changes in the use of cultural space of the Han community through the architecture in Nanxun Ancient Town from 1953 to 2024.
2. To analyze the aesthetic values and economic social impacts of the Han communities in Nanxun ancient town.

1.3 Study Significance

This study centers on the evolution process of the cultural space of the Han community in Nanxun Ancient Town from 1953 to 2024 and systematically explores the utilization of the cultural space and the social impacts experienced by the Han community in different historical periods, which is of great academic value and practical significance.

(1) Cultural heritage and architectural value revealed

As a typical historical and cultural town in Jiangnan, Nanxun Ancient Town not only carries material forms but also carries deep family ethics, religious beliefs, and regional aesthetic values. Through this study, the functional transformation process of Han community architectural space in different socio-economic stages is systematically sorted out, revealing the key role of architecture as a cultural space in inheritance and evolution, and enriching the current theoretical system on the living inheritance of cultural space. such as the shift in residential layouts from clan-based configurations to small family units, and the adaptation of commercial buildings from traditional storefronts to multifunctional spaces. The interactive relationship between culture and architecture helps to understand the cultural adaptation and transformation of the Han community in the process of modernization(Frankfort, 1950), providing theoretical support and case references for studying the dynamic development of traditional communities.

(2) Elucidating the relationship between the change of cultural space and the evolution of architectural forms

It is found that the changes in cultural space in Han communities are not only influenced by national policies and market mechanisms, but also reflected in the stage characteristics of architectural forms, from the simplification of functions during the period of collectivization, to the revival of traditions and modernization during the stage of market economy excesses, and then to the trend of landscaping and experientialization during the stage of cultural revitalization. This process reveals that the evolution of architectural form is a spatial expression under the action of multiple factors, expands the research horizons of architectural social function, and provides a new analytical framework for understanding the cultural mechanism behind architectural form.

(3) It provides rich information and policy suggestions for social figures, government departments and community managers who are concerned about the development of Nanxun

By sorting out the behavioral logic and spatial governance mode of community subjects in the process of cultural space evolution, the study proposes strategic paths to promote the cultural protection and sustainable development of the ancient town and

emphasizes the importance of community participation, pluralistic governance, and cultural ecology maintenance. The results can provide the government with the theoretical basis and empirical references in formulating cultural heritage protection policies, optimizing spatial planning, and promoting community economic development, as well as help local social forces better understand and participate in the protection and innovation of cultural spaces in ancient towns.

1.4 Concept identification

1.4.1 Culture

In this article, culture refers to the lifestyle, belief systems, and economy of the Han community in Nanxun Ancient Town. Culture encompasses both tangible aspects, such as traditional architecture and spatial layout, and intangible elements, such as community activities and aesthetic values. These cultural features serve as a dynamic bridge connecting the past and the present, continuously adapting to social, economic, and environmental changes while preserving the identity and cohesion of the local community.

1.4.2 Cultural Space

In this study, cultural space refers to the architectural features of Nanxun Ancient Town, encompassing residential buildings, commercial buildings, religious structures, ancient stages, ancestral halls, and other notable elements. These spaces not only serve specific functions but also act as venues for social interactions. Through their usage and evolution, they reflect the lifestyle, cultural beliefs, and economic activities of the Han community in Nanxun.

1.4.3 Changes in the Utilization of Cultural Space

In this article, Changes in the Utilization of Cultural Space in how various buildings in Nanxun Ancient Town are used by the Han community. These changes not only demonstrate the functional aspects of the architecture but also reflect the community's efforts in adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and Latency. Additionally, through the community relationships, balance, and cultural adaptability of the residents, the characteristics of the Han community's lifestyle, cultural beliefs, and economic activities are revealed.

1.4.4 Architecture of Nanxun Ancient town

In this study, the architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town refers to the preserved buildings from the Chunyou period of the Southern Song Dynasty (1252) to the present. These buildings serve as significant cultural spaces in China, carrying rich historical memories and cultural significance, while showcasing diverse architectural styles and social functions.

1.4.5 Han Communities

In this study, the Han community refers to the Han community in Nanxun Ancient Town. Han people have resided in the area since the town's establishment, with a history spanning over 700 years. Their lifestyle is marked by the distinctive characteristics of a water town, including a slow pace of life and the unique tradition of "Three-Course Tea." The community's customs are diverse and vibrant, encompassing festivals, folk arts, and traditional crafts. For example, during the Dragon Boat Festival, children wear tiger-head hats to ward off evil spirits and prevent disasters.

1.4.6 Social Impact

In this study, social impact refers to the influence of changes in Nanxun Ancient Town's architecture from 1953 to 2024 on the Han community's economy and aesthetic culture.

1.4.7 Aesthetic Value

In this study, aesthetic value refers to the quality of evoking a sense of beauty and emotional resonance through the utilization of architecture and cultural spaces in the Han community of Nanxun Ancient Town. It encompasses not only the characteristics of sensory pleasure and spiritual enjoyment but also enhances community cohesion, promotes cultural heritage, and fosters external recognition and appreciation of Han culture through aesthetic expression.

1.5 Study scope and framework

The architecture in Nanxun ancient town is the research object (Zhang Shiming Residence, Baijianlou, Siyehuiguan, Guanghui Palace, Ancient Opera Stage, Wenyuan Three Galleries, Nanxun Elephant Hotel, Nanxun Hilton Hotel). It analyzes the buildings in terms of their functions.

Local residents of various ages were selected to participate in in-depth interviews with different groups. Through the analysis of the building's spatial function and the behavior of its occupants, we can further explore the cultural characteristics of Nanxun and the cultural value of the building.

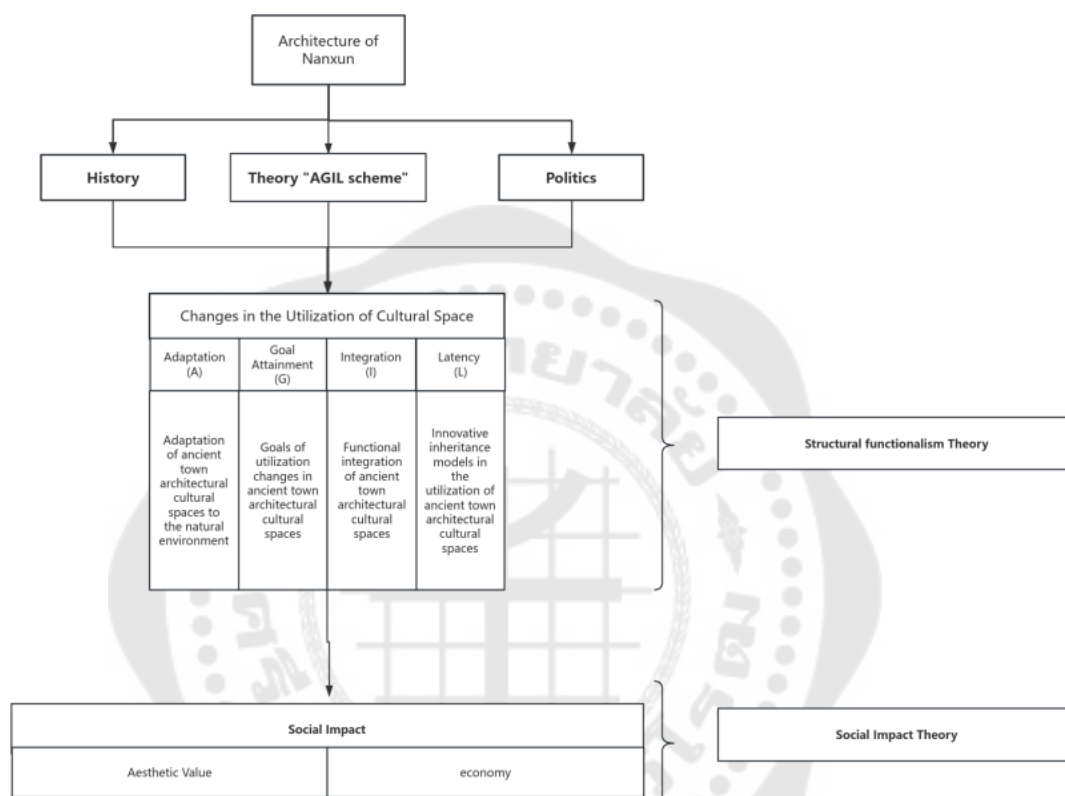


Figure 1 Thesis Framework Diagram

Source: Drawn by the author

Analysis of the Causes of Architectural Cultural Evolution Based on Cultural Policies and Regulations Issued from 1950 to 2024 Following the Founding of the People's Republic of China.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tracing and Analysis of the Historical Context of Nanxun Ancient Town

The historical context of Nanxun Ancient Town reveals its development from a water-town settlement established during the Southern Song Dynasty, to a thriving commercial center in the Ming and Qing dynasties due to the silk industry, and later, a blend of Eastern and Western cultures with diverse architectural styles during the late Qing and Republican periods. Following the founding of the People's Republic of China, Nanxun experienced functional adjustments and simplifications in architecture, and the collectivization period weakened the influence of family culture. After the reform and opening-up, Nanxun began to focus on heritage preservation, gradually developing the ancient town as a tourism resource, enhancing its economic and cultural functions. Since 2000, with Nanxun's inclusion as part of a World Heritage site, the town's preservation and development entered a new phase, with architectural functions becoming increasingly diverse. This progression formed a model of coexistence between cultural heritage preservation and modernization, reflecting the evolution and adaptation of residents' lifestyles, economic activities, and cultural practices in different historical periods.

2.1.1 The Origin and Historical Development of Nanxun Ancient Town

The origins of Nanxun Ancient Town date back to the Neolithic era, as evidenced by ancient cultural relics found within the region, which indicate the presence of clan tribes in primitive society. Nanxun's historical evolution is rich and has spanned several significant periods.

According to legend, during the Xia Dynasty's flood control under Yu the Great, the Nanxun region was part of Yangzhou. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, it successively belonged to the states of Wu, Yue, and Chu, eventually becoming a fiefdom of Lord Chunshen, Huang Xie of Chu, who established Gucheng County. After the Qin conquered the six states, the area became part of Wucheng County. In the early Southern Song Dynasty, the area was known as Xunxi, later

renamed Nanlin as residents on the southern bank prospered through the raw silk trade, with workshops and shops flourishing. During the Chunyou period, it was officially named Nanxun, a name that has remained unchanged.

In the Ming and Qing dynasties, Nanxun gradually became an important commercial center in the Jiangnan region, renowned for its thriving silk industry and prosperous market economy. During this period, the architectural style and street layout of Nanxun Ancient Town began to take shape. In the Republican era, Nanxun experienced several administrative changes but retained its unique culture and character. In recent years, Nanxun Ancient Town, with its well-preserved historical buildings and distinctive Jiangnan water-town landscape, has become a popular destination for domestic and international visitors interested in history and culture. The local government has intensified its efforts to protect and develop Nanxun, further enhancing its visibility and influence.

2.1.2 Constraints and Promotion of Nanxun Ancient Town's Development by the Natural Environment

The development of Nanxun Ancient Town has been profoundly influenced by its natural environment. As a water-town environment, it has both promoted the town's prosperity and imposed various constraints on its growth. Located within the Taihu Basin with a dense network of waterways, Nanxun's unique natural conditions facilitated its early development into a commercially accessible town. The waterways provided efficient transportation routes that supported the circulation of goods like silk, tea, and grain, driving the silk industry's prosperity during the Ming and Qing dynasties and attracting many merchants and wealthy families to settle there. However, the water-town environment has also presented certain limitations and challenges to Nanxun's development.

With abundant waterways and moist land, the geographical environment required that buildings be constructed along the water, forming a distinctive "street in front, river at the back" layout. Residential areas, shops, and guild halls are all situated along the river, making them convenient for water-based transport and daily life. This waterway-

dominated layout created a compact and dense arrangement of buildings with narrow alleys, promoting community interaction and concentrating commercial activity. However, the dense water network restricted the town's spatial expansion, making it difficult to scale up, as building space was constrained by the natural boundaries of the rivers, limiting possibilities for large-scale modifications or expansion.

Moreover, the humid climate and watery surroundings demanded high standards for building materials and maintenance. Traditional buildings in Nanxun primarily use wood and brick, but the humid Jiangnan climate causes wood to absorb moisture and decay, while water-rich areas breed mosquitoes, complicating building upkeep. Regular maintenance is required, resulting in shorter building lifespans and higher costs. Additionally, the intersecting waterways posed potential flood risks, with historical floods having damaged Nanxun's buildings and affected residents' lives, further constraining the town's development.

Despite these limitations, the natural environment has greatly promoted Nanxun's growth. The extensive waterways not only advanced commerce and the silk industry but also endowed Nanxun with its unique water-town charm, creating a cultural feature that attracts visitors. Today, as a cultural tourism destination, Nanxun's water-town environment is a vital component of showcasing Jiangnan culture, fueling tourism and providing economic growth points and funds for preserving traditional architecture. Thus, while the natural environment has limited Nanxun's expansion, it has also shaped its cultural identity, providing long-term support for its economic and cultural development.

2.1.3 The Commercial Prosperity Journey of Ancient Towns Driven by Economic Activities

The commercial prosperity of Nanxun Ancient Town began with the rise of the silk industry during the Ming and Qing dynasties. With its intersecting waterways and convenient transportation, Nanxun became a central silk distribution hub in the Jiangnan region. Local residents engaged in mulberry cultivation, silkworm farming, and silk weaving, gradually establishing a mature silk production system. As the silk trade

expanded, Nanxun accumulated substantial wealth, and affluent silk merchants built grand family residences and commercial guild halls. Representative buildings like the Liu Family Ancestral Hall and the Zhang Family Residence served not only as homes but also as venues for social and business interactions, highlighting the prosperity brought by the silk economy. By the late Qing and Republican periods, wealthy merchants in Nanxun began interacting with Western traders, integrating Chinese and Western architectural styles. For example, the Zhang Shiming Residence features Roman columns and stained glass windows, giving Nanxun's architecture a distinct fusion of East and West. At this time, institutions such as banks, chambers of commerce, and silk guilds were established, diversifying commercial activities from a single focus on silk to include broader financial and trade endeavors, further solidifying Nanxun's position as a key commercial town in Jiangnan.

Following the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Nanxun's economic structure changed, with traditional silk and handicraft industries gradually declining and many shops closing, leading to a commercial downturn. It was not until the reform and opening-up period that Nanxun's tourism industry began to develop, and traditional buildings were transformed into visitor-oriented facilities, such as guesthouses, teahouses, and silk craft exhibition halls, revitalizing the local economy. In the 21st century, Nanxun was designated a national historical and cultural town, and in 2014, it became part of the Grand Canal World Cultural Heritage, attracting a significant influx of tourists. To meet tourism demands, shops in Nanxun began integrating culture with commerce, selling items such as Nanxun's signature silk products, traditional pastries, and handicrafts, while traditional buildings gained new roles as cultural exhibition spaces. Today, Nanxun Ancient Town has established a business model focused on cultural experiences and tourism consumption, ensuring continued commercial prosperity while achieving a balance between cultural preservation and economic growth.

2.1.4 Changes in Social Structure and the Evolution of Residents' Lifestyles

The social structure of Nanxun Ancient Town has undergone significant changes with shifts in the economic and social environment. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the prosperity of the silk industry led to a clan-based structure centered around wealthy merchant families such as the Liu and Zhang families, who not only controlled the economy but also dominated local affairs. Ancestral halls and family temples served as the focal points of family life, functioning as spaces for worship, family gatherings, and business collaboration. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the traditional clan system was gradually replaced by a collectivized system. Land reform and the establishment of community organizations weakened clan power, transforming ancestral halls and family temples into public facilities, and shifting the social structure from family-centered to community- and collective-oriented. With the reform and opening-up, nuclear family structures became mainstream, the influence of collectivism diminished, and social organization became more diverse, as residents formed new networks of interaction with incoming merchants and tourists.

Residents' lifestyles also evolved alongside changes in social structure. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, multi-generational households and family gatherings were the norm, with family life revolving around clan traditions, ancestor worship, and family rituals. Residential and commercial spaces were integrated, with homes connected to shops in a front-shop, rear-residence layout. Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China, a collective lifestyle emerged, shifting from family rituals to community activities, with public facilities replacing family support, and family values gradually simplifying toward smaller nuclear units. After the reform and opening-up, the rise of tourism brought economic transformation, with many families converting traditional residences into guesthouses, restaurants, and handicraft shops, thus commercializing lifestyles as traditional living spaces shifted toward modern commercial use. The younger generation adopted more diverse and modern lifestyles. With Nanxun's designation as a World Heritage site, residents' sense of pride and identity in

traditional culture strengthened, allowing them to maintain Jiangnan water-town characteristics in their lifestyle while gradually integrating modern cultural elements.

2.2 Historical changes in the Han Chinese community of Nanxun Ancient Town.

Since the founding of New China, the Communist Party of China has implemented fourteen Five-Year Plans, leading the transition from the "National Economic Development Five-Year Plan" to the "National Economic and Social Development Five-Year Plan." This strategic initiative has had a profound impact on the changes within the Jiangnan Han communities. Under the guidance of these plans, Jiangnan experienced a transformation from an agricultural economy to an industrial one, with rapid development in light industry and high-tech sectors, and a gradual modernization of traditional handicrafts. Furthermore, the integration of urban and rural economies and adjustments in social structure facilitated the shift of Jiangnan's Han communities from traditional, rural forms to modern and diversified ones. In addition, policies related to infrastructure development, education, and cultural preservation not only promoted economic growth but also maintained the region's rich historical and cultural characteristics. This approach, which balances economic development with cultural heritage, has infused Jiangnan communities with new vitality as they transition from tradition to modernity, showcasing the advantages of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics.

2.2.1 "The First Five-Year Plan to the Fifth Five-Year Plan": The Initial Exploration Period under the Planned Economy System (1953-1980)

In the early years of the People's Republic of China, the country faced severe challenges. Led by the United States, Western capitalist countries adopted a hostile and isolationist stance, causing China to experience a shortage of funds, scarce resources, outdated technology, and a lack of talent. This situation left China in a state of poverty and underdevelopment, with its market unable to self-regulate. At the same time, the Soviet Union had completed its industrialization, and emulating the Soviet model of planned economic development became the optimal choice for China. The First Five-Year Plan (1953-1957) laid the initial foundation for socialist industrialization. The Second Five-Year Plan (1958-1962) focused on heavy industry, while the Third Five-Year

Plan (1963-1967) was heavily influenced by the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations and military threats from other countries, making defense construction the main priority of the plan. The Fourth Five-Year Plan began in 1970, and the Fifth Five-Year Plan was formulated in 1975. After the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee, the national economy entered a period of comprehensive adjustment, and the indicators of the Fifth Five-Year Plan were significantly revised. Initially, the plan aimed for successive goals of agriculturalization, defense industrialization, mechanization of agriculture, and modernization of science and technology, but in reality, only the First Five-Year Plan achieved significant success. During the period from the Second to the Fifth Five-Year Plan, due to incorrect judgments about economic construction and national development, there was a severe imbalance in the national economy.

During this period, the Han communities in the Jiangnan region underwent significant social and cultural changes. Agricultural production in the Jiangnan region experienced notable shifts, especially under the influence of land reforms and the collectivization movement, which fundamentally changed traditional land distribution and family-run farming models. After land reforms, farmers in Jiangnan gradually gained more land, and later, the agricultural collectivization movement further promoted the collectivization of production in rural areas, which altered the organizational structure of rural communities. Traditional rural life and family models gradually began to be influenced by collectivization and modernization, particularly in areas of Jiangnan where urbanization progressed rapidly. Modern production and lifestyles began to replace traditional rural customs. However, many traditional festivals and customs were still retained in rural areas, but they gradually integrated more modern elements under the influence of social change. Han ethnic residents' clothing also transitioned from traditional attire to simpler, more functional clothing styles during this period. Traditional Chinese clothing became mainstream, and more straightforward, practical designs were widely adopted. Men commonly wore Zhongshan suits, while women mostly wore simple dresses or suits, with uniforms becoming more standardized and unified. As rural populations migrated to cities, the Han communities in Jiangnan gradually formed more

urbanized structures. The development of light industry and textiles led to an increasing number of rural laborers entering cities. Factories and manufacturing industries attracted a large number of migrant workers, driving population concentration in urban areas. This change prompted a transformation in the traditional Han rural community and family structure, leading to the formation of more modern urban-style communities.

2.2.2 "The Sixth Five-Year Plan to the Fifteenth Five-Year Plan": The Innovation and Adjustment Period during Economic Transition (1981-2005)

The period from the Sixth Five-Year Plan to the Fifteenth Five-Year Plan (1981-2005) marked a phase of innovation and adjustment as various systems were gradually restored and rebuilt. This period coincided with China's economic transition, where the Five-Year Plans revitalized the combination of planning and market mechanisms, with improving economic efficiency becoming the central focus of these five plans. Since the Sixth Five-Year Plan, the Chinese government began to prioritize economic construction as the core of its work and aligned itself with the global trend of coordinated economic and social development. The Sixth Five-Year Plan, as the first Five-Year Plan after the reform and opening up, for the first time included social development content. During the Seventh Five-Year Plan period, the national economy maintained a certain growth rate. In the Eighth Five-Year Plan period, the pace of reform accelerated, and the government widely sought professional guidance and feasibility studies for major policies and projects. Despite the impact of the Asian financial crisis during the Ninth Five-Year Plan period, the economy continued to grow at a fast pace. During the Fifteenth Five-Year Plan period, China successfully joined the World Trade Organization, and the outward-oriented economy saw rapid growth. This phase also deepened the understanding of the role and function of medium- and long-term planning in the exploration of the economic system. After the reform and opening up, the directive elements in the plan formulation and implementation decreased significantly, and the plans became more guiding in nature, gradually evolving into strategic planning, which significantly enhanced the country's overall economic strength.

Since the reform and opening up, with the rapid development of the economy, Jiangnan, as the economic frontier, attracted a large influx of people. The Han

communities in the Jiangnan region gradually transitioned from traditional agricultural societies to urban societies primarily based on industrialization and commercialization. This transformation led to the migration of rural populations to cities, especially with the rapid development of economic centers such as Suzhou and Hangzhou, which attracted large numbers of rural laborers. Traditional family structures began to change, and the once-close-knit relationships within families and rural communities were replaced by looser urban lifestyles, giving rise to new forms of community. Many people chose to settle in cities, rebuild homes, and change their previous lifestyles and spatial layouts. During this period, Han communities in Jiangnan gradually experienced a conflict and fusion between modernization and traditional customs. While many traditional festivals and rituals were still preserved, the process of urbanization, especially among the younger generation, led to changes in lifestyles, and many traditional folk activities gradually declined. At the same time, new entertainment options and festive activities, such as Christmas and modern entertainment, became popular, gradually influencing the daily habits of local Han residents. Along with economic development and population mobility, food habits originally rooted in the water town culture (such as fish, shrimp, rice, and noodles) began to be influenced by foreign foods, especially with the rise of fast food culture and the entry of international restaurant brands. This led to a trend of diversification and modernization in Jiangnan's food culture. During this period, as the internet became more widespread, Han residents began to engage with external cultures. The intersection and clash of traditional local culture with foreign cultures prompted a more diverse cultural identity among social members. Although traditional Jiangnan culture was still preserved in many aspects, the influence of modernization and globalization encouraged people to be more open to and accepting of elements from other cultures in their daily lives.

2.2.3 "The Eleventh Five-Year Plan to the Fourteenth Five-Year Plan":

Comprehensive Development under the Improvement of the Market Economy System (2006—2024)

Since the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, China has renamed the "Five-Year Plan" to the "Five-Year Planning," marking a transformation and upgrading of the country's

development strategy. From the Eleventh Five-Year Plan to the Twelfth Five-Year Plan, the focus was on scientific development and improving the livelihood of the people. The plans emphasized changing the economic development model, promoting the transformation of government functions, and achieving major successes, including the successful hosting of the Beijing Olympics and the Shanghai World Expo. Moving into the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan, the Chinese government centered on the new development concept, insisted on supply-side structural reforms, and focused on the well-being of the people and institutional development. It successfully implemented 165 major projects, including the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the BeiDou Navigation System, and historically resolved absolute poverty, achieving the goal of building a moderately prosperous society. The Fourteenth Five-Year Plan, in the context of the new era, emphasized a systems approach and embarked on a new journey toward the second centenary goal.

This period also coincided with the rapid development of globalization, which broke down national, ethnic, and regional barriers. With the support of advanced technology, cultures in various regions rapidly spread, exchanged, and integrated. Globalization is a flow, moving from strong to weak, from the West to the East, from developed countries to developing countries. As a result, economically underdeveloped regions or countries face the gradual homogenization or even disappearance of local cultures. During this period, Han communities in the Jiangnan region underwent multiple transformations, including the deepening of urbanization, economic transformation, and cultural revival. The new urbanization and rural revitalization strategies promoted urban-rural integrated development, with traditional villages merging into modern urban systems. At the same time, the construction of characteristic towns achieved both economic and cultural development. Han communities gradually shifted toward high-tech industries, services, and green agriculture, attracting a new generation of young people to move into the communities, bringing about a diversification of community demographics. In some areas, the development of ecological agriculture achieved the

green upgrade of traditional industries, injecting new vitality into agricultural communities.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Five-Year Plans have been an important part of national development strategy, profoundly influencing the social, economic, and cultural changes in the Han communities of Jiangnan. From 1953 to 2024, the Jiangnan region has experienced the transformation from agriculture to industry, the promotion of urban-rural integration, and the far-reaching effects of globalization and modernization. Especially during the period of the planned economy system, agricultural production methods in the Jiangnan region underwent collectivization reforms, and traditional rural life gradually transitioned to industrialization and urbanization. With the advancement of reform and opening up, the economic and social structures of Jiangnan further adjusted, with the processes of modernization and traditional culture interwoven, intensifying urban-rural migration and changing traditional family and community structures. In the new era, Jiangnan, while continuing its economic transformation, also focused on cultural revival and ecological construction, promoting the integration of tradition and modernity, resulting in the formation of diverse and sustainable community structures. The implementation of the Five-Year Plans not only promoted economic growth but also provided institutional guarantees for the sustained development of the Han communities in Jiangnan, allowing them to maintain a rich historical and cultural foundation while rapidly developing.

2.3 Historical Changes in the Architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town

Looking back at the architectural and Han community changes in the Jiangnan region, we can clearly see the profound influence of the Five-Year Plans. From the initial forms of cave dwellings and nest-like homes to the later wooden framework building systems, Chinese architecture has undergone a long and complex development process. Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the gradual implementation of the Five-Year Plans led to significant transformations in the architecture field.

1953-1980

In traditional Jiangnan water town architecture, water is the core element, and residential buildings are often arranged along rivers or streets, forming a continuous spatial layout. This structure, formed by the interaction of rivers, buildings, and streets, is one of the important prototypes of Jiangnan architectural culture. However, during this period, the architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town did not receive systematic protection. Some old buildings were demolished or renovated due to deterioration or failure to meet modern usage needs, leading to a certain degree of destruction of the town's original appearance. During this period, the Han community in Nanxun underwent profound social transformation, gradually transitioning from a traditional agricultural society to industrialization and modernization. Land reform and agricultural collectivization shifted the community's production relationships from individual operations to collective collaboration. A large labor force migrated from rural areas to cities, increasing the population of urban Han communities and pushing the community into a new development stage driven by both economic and cultural forces.



Figure 2 The Weakening of Waterfront Spaces

Source: Nanxun Ancient Town Scenic Area Planning and Design Scheme

1981—2005

During this period, with the acceleration of urbanization, urban populations became denser, land use became more scarce, and traffic pressure increased. A significant portion of Jiangnan cities failed to fully recognize their cultural value and

advantages, instead pursuing industrialization and modernization blindly, and rushing into the tide of urbanization. This led to the demolition of old neighborhoods, the destruction of ancient buildings, the widening of streets, and the filling in of rivers. As a result, the traditional spatial structure of Jiangnan architecture underwent massive changes, and the unique architectural style was severely damaged. High-rise buildings began to appear in the cities, resembling dense "forests of towers." Some of these buildings had standard floors that were too narrow, and their designs were not user-friendly, resulting in inconvenience and waste of both labor and capital. Even more concerning was the blind pursuit of Western architectural styles in some projects, which overemphasized visual impact at the expense of local cultural context. Non-regional decorative elements, even some that carried neo-colonial cultural undertones, were used, leading to a proliferation of imitative designs and architectural plagiarism.

In this context, the local government of Nanxun invested a large amount of funds to carry out comprehensive restoration of the core area of Nanxun Ancient Town. The restoration adhered to the principle of "restoring the old as the old," aiming to preserve the historical appearance as closely as possible. At the same time, severely damaged buildings, or those lost due to historical reasons, were reconstructed. To complement tourism development, the buildings in the town began to diversify in function, with the addition of tourist facilities such as visitor centers, dining areas, and exhibition halls. Traditional buildings, while maintaining their exterior style, were internally transformed to meet modern commercial needs.

2005—2024

Due to modern living needs, the influence of foreign cultures, and changes in modern building materials and technologies, the appearance of towns has undergone dramatic changes. However, it is concerning that regional architecture and urban landscapes are gradually becoming more homogenized. In many building projects, there has been an emphasis on quantity over quality, with a focus on popular architectural styles while ignoring the environment and cultural context of the buildings.

As a result, buildings have increasingly copied each other, leading to serious issues of imitation and lack of originality. Jiangnan's architectural culture is being influenced by this trend, resulting in a phenomenon of "one city, one appearance" and "one building, one style." What was once rich in local architectural and cultural characteristics is now being gradually submerged and even consumed by these developments. In response to this homogenization, some Jiangnan cities have proposed a "World Towns" development strategy, aiming to change the uniform appearance of cities. However, this strategy has gradually overlooked the unique environmental and cultural features of the region. Jiangnan's traditional integration of "cities, gardens, and architecture" into a unified system, each with its own long history, distinctiveness, and individuality, is at risk. Unfortunately, many modern new constructions, planning, and design methods are disconnected from local context and rigidly apply Western architectural practices. These designs fail to account for the unique system characteristics of China or adapt to the contemporary environment, resulting in new buildings that clash with their surroundings, lacking harmony and individuality. As a result, the cultural charm that was once a hallmark of Jiangnan's architecture is gradually being lost. The traditional "small bridges, flowing water, and households" are being replaced by "roads, commerce, and residential areas."

However, in recent years, the government has begun to realize the cultural and spiritual heritage embedded in Jiangnan architecture, and efforts have been made to protect the traditional features of Jiangnan buildings while updating their use. Towns like Nanxun, Wuzhen, and Zhouzhuang have received government support for preservation, renovation, and development, aiming to retain the cultural significance of Jiangnan architecture while integrating it with modern life. These architectural spaces no longer serve solely as museums of brick, tile, and wood but have become vibrant cultural spaces. In recent years, the protection and management of Nanxun Ancient Town has been significantly strengthened, with more standardized restoration and maintenance work focusing on restoring and preserving architectural details in accordance with the original style. The protection philosophy in Nanxun has gradually shifted toward "living

protection," where buildings are kept in daily use while maintaining their original structure. This revival of architectural culture has also attracted local and international artisans, artists, and entrepreneurs, who have established exhibition halls, craft workshops, and cultural studios within traditional buildings.

From the initial exploratory phase under the planned economy, where the unique water-based spaces of Jiangnan water towns were reduced due to urbanization, leading to a simplified architectural culture, to the innovative adjustment period under the economic transition, where Jiangnan architecture evolved towards high-rise buildings but suffered from a blind pursuit of Western styles and architectural plagiarism, and then to the comprehensive development period under the improved market economy system, where Jiangnan architecture faces the threat of homogenization in the context of globalization, the government has gradually increased efforts to protect traditional architectural styles. Towns like Nanxun have attempted to blend modern life with traditional architecture, making these buildings vibrant cultural spaces that contribute to the inheritance and promotion of Chinese traditional culture.

2.4 The architectural evolution of Nanxun Ancient Town from the perspective of cultural space.

Amid the waves of cultural change, the architectural evolution of Nanxun Ancient Town unfolds like a vivid historical scroll, delicately illustrating how residents' needs have driven its architectural culture forward. This process not only reflects a respect for and inheritance of traditional architectural styles and craftsmanship but also showcases how the town's residents, within a globalized context, skillfully blend external influences while preserving local architectural characteristics, creating a unique cultural landscape(Rong, 1999). As times have changed, the architecture of Nanxun has transcended mere residential function to become a key symbol that preserves social memory, affirms cultural identity, and fosters community cohesion. These structures, in their silent language, convey shifts in residents' lifestyles, values, and social structures, serving as a bridge between past and future(Sun, 2005). They profoundly reflect the

complex and subtle interplay between residents' needs, social culture, and historical transformation(Ji, 2004).

2.4.1 Inheritance of Architectural Styles and Craftsmanship in Ancient Towns

The architectural style of Nanxun Ancient Town is deeply influenced by Jiangnan water-town culture, characterized by white walls, black tiles, green tile houses, and winding corridors and alleys. These features not only capture the unique charm of Jiangnan but also reflect the exceptional craftsmanship of ancient artisans. The town's architectural style can generally be divided into two categories:

1. Traditional Jiangnan Water-town Style: These buildings mainly use wood as the primary material, with intricate structures and elegant forms that embody the soft and refined beauty unique to Jiangnan.

2. East-West Fusion Style: As the Silk Road thrived and external interactions increased in modern times, some buildings in Nanxun incorporated Western architectural elements, such as Baroque-style facades and window grilles, while retaining traditional Jiangnan features. This fusion style reflects the openness and adaptability of Nanxun's people.

The craftsmanship of Nanxun's architecture is also noteworthy, especially in brick and wood carving. Brick carvings are often seen on doorways and walls, with intricate patterns rich in meaning and exquisite craftsmanship, serving as valuable materials for studying Nanxun's history and culture. Wood carvings are widely used in beams, columns, and window frames, often depicting flowers, animals, and figures symbolizing good fortune, showcasing the artisans' skills and aesthetic values. To protect and preserve these crafts, Nanxun has implemented several measures, such as enhancing preservation and restoration efforts using advanced techniques to maintain the authenticity and integrity of ancient buildings. Additionally, workshops and demonstrations are held to train a new generation of artisans, ensuring these skills are passed down through the ages.

In modern society, the transmission of Nanxun's architectural styles and techniques goes beyond preservation and restoration, seeking innovation and

development. Preservation strategies include comprehensive preservation and partial preservation. Comprehensive preservation involves maintaining the original state of well-preserved buildings, preserving the layout and functions of complete architectural groups. For instance, the preservation of ancient buildings along the West River area ensures the integrity of the water-town layout, adhering to the principles of authenticity, integrity, and sustainability(Zheng, 2003). Partial preservation, on the other hand, applies to areas where the structures are damaged or where the original character is disrupted. Selective preservation focuses on restoring representative elements to adapt them to modern needs while maintaining their original charm, and encouraging active resident participation(Li, 2010).

The transmission of Nanxun's architectural style and craftsmanship is a complex, multifaceted process involving the harmonious coexistence of tradition and innovation, the protection and inheritance of craft, and adaptation in modern society. Through this ongoing exploration and practice, Nanxun has not only preserved its traditional architectural styles and craftsmanship but also breathed new life into them within a contemporary context, contributing to the preservation and development of Chinese traditional culture.

2.4.2 Integration of Foreign Culture and Preservation of Local Architectural Characteristics in Nanxun Ancient Town

Since modern times, Nanxun Ancient Town has gradually integrated foreign cultural elements while maintaining its water-town characteristics. This fusion is first reflected in innovations in architectural design, such as the introduction of Western architectural aesthetics, including symmetrical layouts and three-dimensional compositions, which have brought a fresh visual experience to the town's architecture. Additionally, the introduction of modern building materials like steel, concrete, and glass has allowed Nanxun's architecture to combine traditional appearances with the functionality and aesthetics of modern construction.

Despite the profound influence of foreign culture on Nanxun's architecture, traditional elements—such as horse-head walls, small green tiles, and wood-carved

window lattices—remain central to its design. These traditional features are vital symbols of the architectural identity of the town. The strong local cultural identity held by Nanxun's residents has also been a driving force in preserving these architectural features. They incorporate traditional elements into building designs and strengthen local cultural identity through cultural activities and the preservation of traditional crafts(Manfredo, 2017). Additionally, in its protection and development efforts, Nanxun has focused on regulated planning and management, implementing strict preservation plans to oversee architectural design, construction, and use, ensuring that the town's architecture retains local character while developing in an orderly fashion.

Indeed, the integration of foreign culture and the preservation of local characteristics in Nanxun's architectural evolution are complementary rather than contradictory. On the one hand, Nanxun has demonstrated cultural confidence by selectively incorporating beneficial aspects of foreign culture in response to local needs, rather than pursuing Westernization indiscriminately, thereby achieving cultural self-renewal and development (He, 1999). On the other hand, Nanxun's architecture strikes a balance between innovation and tradition, preserving traditional elements while embracing modern design concepts, thereby giving the town's architecture renewed vitality. This approach fosters a collective commitment to the protection and appreciation of ancient town architecture.

The integration of foreign culture and the preservation of local characteristics in Nanxun Ancient Town is a complex and profound topic. Nanxun has successfully maintained its architectural identity while actively embracing beneficial foreign cultural elements, achieving cultural self-renewal and sustainable development.

2.4.3 The Symbolic Meaning and Function of Architectural Culture in Social Transformation

The architectural culture of Nanxun Ancient Town holds profound symbolic significance. Firstly, it serves as a symbol of regional culture, showcasing the unique architectural style and cultural richness of Jiangnan water towns, providing an essential window through which outsiders can understand Jiangnan culture. Secondly, the

architectural culture of Nanxun Ancient Town is a vessel of historical memory. The clusters of ancient buildings and famous residences preserve and transmit abundant historical information, bridging the past and present. Moreover, the architectural culture represents cultural identity, as the preservation and transmission of architectural heritage foster a shared cultural identity and values among Nanxun residents, strengthening community cohesion and a sense of belonging (Lü, 1995).

Nanxun's architectural culture plays an essential role in driving local economic development, promoting cultural exchange and heritage preservation, and enhancing social cohesion. The ancient buildings and historical sites have become valuable resources for attracting tourists, stimulating the prosperity and growth of local tourism and injecting fresh vitality into the economy. Furthermore, Nanxun's architectural culture actively promotes cultural exchange and heritage preservation by providing a platform through cultural exhibitions and exchange activities for the outside world to experience Jiangnan culture, while also supporting local cultural continuity. Additionally, the architectural heritage strengthens social cohesion, as the preservation of architectural culture helps residents establish shared cultural values and identity (Huang, 1999), fostering harmony and stability in community relationships (Liu, 1996).

2.5 The Social Impact Mechanism of Architectural Cultural Space in Nanxun Ancient Town

In the grand narrative of cultural evolution, the architectural cultural Space of Nanxun Ancient Town not only reflects the profound historical changes but also reveals the close relationship between residents' needs and social transformations. As residents' lifestyles have evolved, their functional demands for architecture have also changed significantly, becoming a key force driving the innovation and development of the town's architectural culture. Meanwhile, the flourishing tourism industry has acted as a strong catalyst, injecting new vitality into the town's architectural culture and promoting a positive cycle of preservation and transmission.

However, as urbanization accelerates, Nanxun Ancient Town's architectural culture faces unprecedented challenges in preservation. How to maintain its unique

charm amid modernization is a pressing issue that requires immediate attention. In this context, formulating and implementing effective strategies is crucial. Additionally, community participation and cultural identity (Feng, 1994), as the social foundation for architectural preservation, have not only strengthened residents' pride and sense of belonging to their local culture but also provided solid support for the sustainable development of Nanxun's architectural heritage.

2.5.1 The Influence of Changes in Residents' Lifestyles on Functional Demands for Architecture

The profound transformation in residents' lifestyles has become a powerful driving force behind the evolving functional demands for architecture in Nanxun Ancient Town. This dynamic process not only reflects the complex landscape of socio-cultural change but also reveals the close, interactive relationship between architectural function and societal needs.

Historically, the architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town primarily focused on meeting basic living needs, such as housing, storage, and social activities. However, with the acceleration of modernization, residents' lifestyles have undergone unprecedented changes, presenting new challenges and opportunities for the functional demands of ancient town architecture. On one hand, the introduction of modern lifestyles has led residents to place greater emphasis on the comfort, privacy, convenience, and cultural value of architectural spaces. Diversified family structures, faster-paced lifestyles, and the advent of the information era have required more flexible and adaptable interior designs to cater to the personalized needs of different family members (Nanda, 1987).

On the other hand, shifts in residents' lifestyles have also driven the diversification and integration of functions in ancient town architecture. With the rise of tourism, Nanxun Ancient Town, as a cultural gem of Jiangnan water towns, has seen its architecture evolve beyond merely supporting daily life to become a significant platform for showcasing regional culture and attracting tourists. Many historic buildings, while preserving their original appearance, have been repurposed with new functions (Steward, 1972), such as cultural museums, handicraft display centers, and boutique

guesthouses. These added functions not only enrich the cultural significance of ancient town architecture but also stimulate local economic prosperity and support sustainable social development.

More deeply, the shift in residents' lifestyles driving new functional demands in Nanxun Ancient Town's architecture represents a re-evaluation and re-positioning of the cultural and social value of these buildings. This redefined perspective underscores the importance of adapting historical architecture to contemporary needs while preserving its heritage and cultural integrity.

2.5.2 The Promotion of Ancient Town Architectural Culture through Tourism

Development

The development of tourism in ancient towns has had a profound and complex impact on their architectural culture. On one hand, it has significantly raised public awareness and appreciation for ancient town architecture, providing new momentum for its preservation and transmission. The prosperity of tourism has driven efforts in the repair, maintenance, and restoration of historic buildings, ensuring their safety and integrity, while also encouraging local governments and residents to value the preservation of architectural heritage. Additionally, tourism has revitalized traditional architectural techniques, injecting new energy into the sustainable development of ancient town architecture. Moreover, the growth of tourism has promoted innovation and adaptation within ancient town architecture. While preserving its original cultural characteristics, the integration of modern design concepts and technological advancements has allowed ancient town architecture to blend with contemporary culture, creating tourist attractions that retain traditional charm while meeting modern aesthetic expectations. This fusion not only enriches the cultural depth of ancient town tourism but also enhances the competitiveness of its architectural culture.

However, the double-edged nature of tourism development should not be overlooked, as it can have negative effects if not properly managed. Over-commercialization is a concerning issue. Driven by economic gain, some ancient towns may over-exploit their tourism resources, leading to an overwhelming commercial

atmosphere that dilutes the town's cultural ambiance and natural rhythm. This can result in homogenized architectural styles and business models, stripping the town of its regional character and historical depth. Such homogenization not only diminishes the town's appeal to visitors but also undermines its unique value as intangible cultural heritage. In the process of developing tourism in ancient towns, it is essential to address and mitigate these potential issues. Effective planning and management of tourism development should prioritize the unique authenticity of the town's architectural culture, reasonably control visitor numbers, and curb over-commercialization. Additionally, enhancing tourists' cultural literacy and environmental awareness through education can transform visitors into advocates and protectors of ancient town architecture, rather than its detractors. Strengthening architectural preservation efforts with scientific and rational techniques ensures the safety and integrity of ancient buildings, thereby supporting the sustainable development of ancient town architecture.

2.5.3 Analysis of Preservation Challenges and Response Strategies in the Urbanization Process

In the process of urbanization, Nanxun Ancient Town, as a typical representative of Jiangnan water towns, faces unique preservation challenges and requires tailored response strategies. With the acceleration of urbanization, Nanxun has benefited from the economic prosperity brought by tourism development but has also encountered issues such as damage to ancient building clusters, over-commercialization of historic districts, loss of original residents, and cultural homogenization. These challenges not only threaten the historical and cultural integrity of the town but also undermine its unique value as a cultural heritage site.

The primary preservation challenge for Nanxun lies in the protection and restoration of its ancient buildings. Since many of the town's structures are wooden, they have been subject to weathering and human damage, requiring specialized preservation and restoration efforts. Additionally, the limited land resources resulting from urbanization create pressure to improve and revitalize the surrounding environment. With the influx of tourism, the town's capacity is also severely tested,

raising the urgent issue of balancing the protection of ancient buildings with meeting the needs of visitors.

In response to these challenges, Nanxun has implemented several strategies. First, it has strengthened the protection and restoration of its ancient buildings, utilizing expert teams for meticulous repairs while preserving the town's overall aesthetic and historical atmosphere. Second, strict control over the scale and intensity of commercial development is enforced to prevent over-commercialization from damaging the town's appearance. The town also encourages and supports original residents to participate in preservation efforts, maintaining its vibrancy and diversity. Additionally, Nanxun promotes eco-tourism and green tourism practices, guiding visitors to explore the town in more environmentally friendly and sustainable ways, thus reducing the environmental impact on the town. These strategies aim to ensure that Nanxun can navigate urbanization while preserving its cultural heritage and fostering a sustainable future.

2.5.4 Community Participation and Cultural Identity: The Social Foundation of Architectural Heritage Preservation

Community participation and cultural identity form a crucial social foundation for the preservation of architectural culture in Nanxun Ancient Town, especially significant within the dual contexts of urbanization and cultural heritage conservation. Community participation, as the cornerstone of preservation, involves the collaboration of residents, local government, social organizations, and tourists. This participation extends beyond the routine maintenance and restoration of ancient buildings to include the transmission and innovation of the town's cultural traditions. Through community involvement, the continuity, effectiveness, and cultural authenticity of preservation efforts can be ensured, helping to avoid issues like over-commercialization or cultural homogenization that might arise under a single dominant force.

Cultural identity is the internal driving force behind Nanxun's architectural heritage preservation. It reflects not only the pride and sense of belonging of local residents in their cultural heritage but also the experiential recognition of visitors who connect with the town's unique cultural atmosphere. The architectural style, water-town

landscape, folk activities, and historical narratives of Nanxun collectively create a distinctive cultural symbol. These elements strengthen the cultural confidence of local residents and attract domestic and international visitors to explore and experience this unique heritage. Enhanced cultural identity fosters a consensus on preservation, encouraging society to value and cherish the town's cultural heritage, thus providing broader social support and resource investment for its protection. Thus, community participation and cultural identity complement each other in the preservation of Nanxun's architectural heritage, forming the social foundation of conservation efforts. On one hand, strengthening community participation can inspire residents and society to actively support preservation, creating a framework of diverse collaborative governance. On the other hand, deepening cultural identity can enhance the attractiveness and influence of Nanxun's culture, promoting its transmission and development.

2.6 Field Investigation and Analysis of Historical Sites in Nanxun Ancient Town

The field investigation of historical sites in Nanxun Ancient Town reveals the rich history and cultural heritage of this Jiangnan water town, with various sites showcasing the architectural styles and social functions of different historical periods. Through examining representative buildings like the Zhang Shiming Residence, Siyehuiguan, Guanghui Palace, and the ancient opera stage, one gains insight into Nanxun's unique developmental path in residential, commercial, religious, and public life. The Zhang Shiming Residence, with its fusion of Chinese and Western styles, reflects the lifestyle of wealthy merchant families and the influence of Western culture. The Siyehuiguan highlights the town's commercial prosperity as a silk trade center, while Guanghui Palace embodies the residents' religious beliefs and community cohesion. The ancient opera stage, as a public entertainment space, captures the collective life and folk activities of the residents. Each site is not only a testament to architectural artistry but also a witness to the historical, social, and lifestyle transformations of Nanxun Ancient Town's residents.

2.6.1 Residential Architecture: Zhang Shiming Residence

The Zhang Shiming Mansion is a typical representative of a luxury residence in Nanxun Ancient Town, built at the end of the Qing Dynasty. It is one of the most prominent examples of the Sino-Western fusion architectural style. The mansion is grand in scale, covering a vast area, with a multi-courtyard layout and exquisite wood carvings, brick carvings, and stone carvings. The front part of the mansion was used for receiving guests, while the rear part served as the family living quarters. The layout is orderly and demonstrates the hierarchical structure and lifestyle of a wealthy merchant family at the time. The architectural style of the mansion blends Chinese and Western features. The building materials and design details reflect traditional Han Chinese aesthetics, while incorporating Western elements such as Roman columns, arched windows, and stained glass, reflecting the acceptance and integration of foreign cultures by the wealthy merchants in Nanxun during that period. Over time, the function of the Zhang Shiming Residence evolved from a private residence to a public cultural tourism site. This transformation reflects the interplay of economic development, cultural shifts, and the changing demands of urban functions.

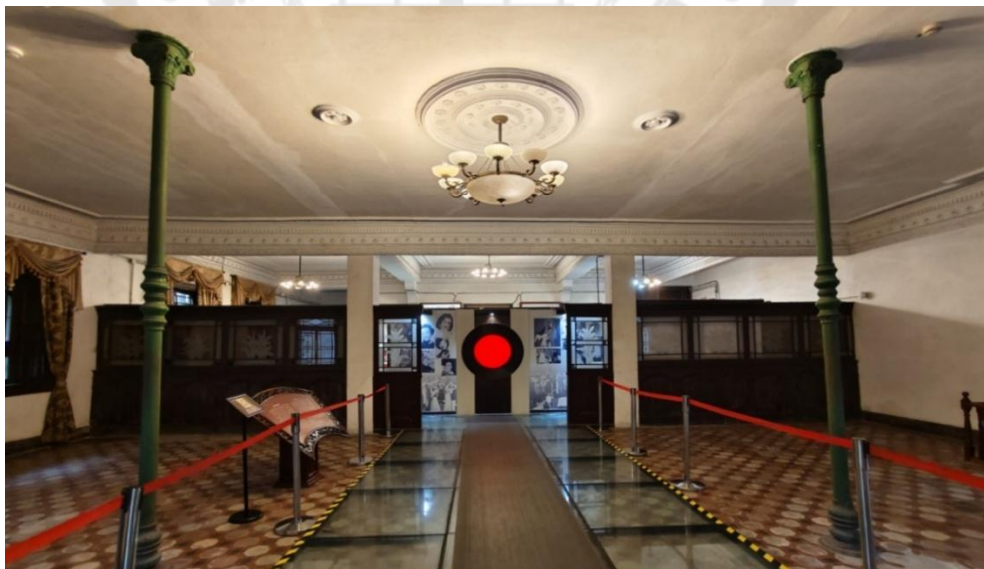


Figure 3 The ballroom was converted into a record showroom

Source: <https://www.163.com/dy/article/HEVIE81M0516A11S.html>



Figure 4 The exhibition hall features displays of old photographs

Source: Photographed by the author



Figure 5 The exterior has Haipai architecture

Source: <https://www.163.com/dy/article/HEVIE81M0516A11S.html>

2.6.2 Commercial Architecture: Siyehuiguan

The Silk Guild Hall is a typical example of commercial architecture in Nanxun Ancient Town, built during the Qing Dynasty. It was jointly funded by local silk merchants with the purpose of promoting cooperation and development within the silk industry. As the traditional business model of the silk industry gradually declined in modern times, the Silk Guild Hall lost its original commercial function. After preservation and restoration, the hall was redefined for cultural and tourism purposes, becoming a window for showcasing silk culture and architectural art in Nanxun. The architecture of the Silk Guild Hall is spacious, with a layout that includes a front hall and rear courtyard, making it suitable for commercial activities and product displays, while also serving as storage for silk and other goods. The interior decorations are elaborate, with finely crafted carvings on doors, windows, and column capitals, reflecting the wealth and status of the silk merchants. The Silk Guild Hall was not only a place for silk trade but also a center for merchant gatherings, information exchange, and commercial activities, witnessing the prosperity and glory of the silk industry in Nanxun.



Figure 6 Historical slogans retained on the exterior of the building

Source: Photographed by the author



Figure 7 The interior of the building has been transformed into the Jilihu Silk Museum

Source: Photographed by the author

2.6.3 Religious Architecture: Guanghui Palace

Guanghui Palace is an important Taoist building in Nanxun Ancient Town, originally built during the Ming Dynasty. It is dedicated to the worship of Emperor Guanghui, serving as a key place for local residents to pray for blessings and conduct religious rituals. Over time, the functions of Guanghui Palace gradually expanded beyond its original religious purpose. After repairs and renovations, it has been transformed into a cultural heritage site and tourist attraction in Nanxun. The architectural style of Guanghui Palace is solemn and elegant, with a symmetrical layout. The interior is adorned with intricate carvings of deities, flowers, and mythical beasts, showcasing the symbolic nature of traditional religious architecture. The main hall of the palace is dedicated to the primary deity, while the side halls are used for daily worship and religious ceremonies, reflecting the influence of religious culture on the daily life of residents in the Jiangnan region. Guanghui Palace is not only a center for religious activities but also strengthens the community's cohesion and cultural identity through

festivals, rituals, and temple fairs. It demonstrates the significant role that religious beliefs play in the lives of the people of Nanxun.



Figure 8 The current situation map of Guanghui Palace

Source: Photographed by the author

2.6.4 Public Architecture: Ancient Opera Stage

The ancient opera stage in Nanxun Ancient Town is a typical example of public architecture, built during the Qing Dynasty. Located near Nanxun Square, it has historically served as an important venue for community gatherings, entertainment, and holiday celebrations. The opera stage was the heart of local cultural life, primarily used for traditional opera performances and folk festivals. With the changes in modern society, including the reduced audience for traditional opera and the diversification of performance forms, the ancient opera stage gradually transformed from a central entertainment venue into a space for cultural display and tourism services. Today, the opera stage is no longer limited to opera performances but also plays a broader role in cultural dissemination and education. The design of the opera stage blends traditional Jiangnan architectural styles, featuring a wooden structure, carved beams, and intricate

decorative carvings that reflect the craftsmanship of the time. The stage is spacious and open on all sides, allowing the audience to sit around it, making full use of the town's spatial layout. During traditional festivals, weddings, and temple fairs, the opera stage remains a primary venue for watching dramas and performances. It not only meets the entertainment needs of residents but also carries a wealth of folk culture. The ancient opera stage in Nanxun is not just a performance space, but also a center for social interaction, where various opera and performance activities foster community engagement and cohesion, highlighting an essential aspect of public life in the ancient town.



Figure 9 The current situation map of the Ancient Opera stage

Source: Photographed by the author



Figure 10 The interior of the building has been transformed into a modern theater

Source: Photographed by the author

2.7 Structural functionalism Theory

Structural functionalism is one of the key theoretical schools in modern sociology, emphasizing that society is an organic whole composed of interrelated components. These components collaborate and divide functions to maintain the balance and continuity of the social system. Talcott Parsons, a representative scholar, proposed the "action system" theory, which includes four major elements: the social system, the behavioral organism, the personality system, and the cultural system. He also introduced the AGIL framework (Adaptation, Goal attainment, Integration, Latency) as the core conditions for maintaining social system equilibrium.

In the context of the Han community, structural functionalism provides an effective tool for understanding the utilization of cultural spaces and social changes in Nanxun Ancient Town.

Adaptation (A): The architectural forms and spatial layouts in Nanxun Ancient Town reflect strong adaptability to the natural environment. For example, the "front

street, back river" design fully utilizes the natural resources of the Jiangnan water town, creating convenient conditions for residents' daily lives and economic activities.

Goal attainment (G): Cultural spaces such as ancestral halls, Guanghui Palace, and traditional stages serve as central venues for enhancing community cohesion, promoting economic cooperation, and transmitting cultural heritage. These spaces are the core nodes for the organization and development of the Han community.

Integration (I): The integration function is particularly evident in Nanxun's multifunctional architecture, which coordinates various activities within the community. For instance, Guanghui Palace serves both as a center of faith and a venue for cultural events, while the Silk Guild Hall integrates economic exchanges with cultural interactions. These buildings foster collaboration and a sense of identity among community members, maintaining societal integration.

Latency (L): This function is reflected in the preservation and transmission of traditional culture in Nanxun Ancient Town. Through modern adaptations, such as transforming ancestral halls and traditional residences into museums or cultural experience spaces, the historical memory of the community is preserved, and residents' cultural identity is enhanced. This "latency" model continues symbols, values, and cultural heritage, laying a foundation for the sustainable development of the community.

Thus, based on the AGIL framework of structural functionalism, the utilization of cultural spaces in the Han community of Nanxun Ancient Town demonstrates multiple characteristics: adaptation to the natural environment, achievement of community goals, integration of multifunctional needs, and transmission of cultural patterns. These characteristics have persisted through various historical stages of Nanxun's development, providing critical theoretical support for understanding the social functions of its architecture. This study will use this theoretical framework to analyze the roles and impacts of Nanxun's architecture in cultural heritage and social transformation during three distinct historical periods

2.8 Social Impact Theory

Social influence refers to the power to induce changes in an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors under the influence of others or reference groups (Kelman, 2017). The concept of "social influence" first emerged in the 1950s. Scholars in the field of social psychology have conducted in-depth studies on the types, processes, and degrees of social influence from different perspectives (Yunjie, 1987). Social influence theory emphasizes that external sources of influence profoundly shape the economic and aesthetic values of individuals and groups, with the two being interdependent and mutually shaped through multidimensional interactions (Kroeber, 1939).

The theory of social impact suggests that both internal and external factors shape the economic and aesthetic values of architecture in Nanxun Ancient Town. External factors, such as economic development and policy initiatives, have profoundly influenced local architectural culture, reflecting power dynamics among social classes (Rosen, 1989). For instance, during the Ming and Qing dynasties, merchants in places like Nanxun and Wuzhen constructed Sino-Western hybrid mansions and guild halls to gain social status and recognition. These buildings not only showcased wealth but also fulfilled societal expectations of prosperity and elegance (Ogden, 1989). This architectural style became a shared consensus among affluent merchant groups in Jiangnan, driving the growth of architectural design and related industries. Internal factors, such as personal beliefs and values, also left their mark on architectural styles, evident in decorative elements like auspicious wood carvings. These features symbolized the integration of clan culture, spiritual expression, and external environments, resulting in architectural forms that blended intrinsic beliefs with contextual surroundings. The multidimensional interaction of these internal and external factors spurred the evolution of architectural design and associated industries, providing sustained momentum for the local economy.

Economic growth profoundly influences people's aesthetic levels and the shaping of societal culture (Woods, 1989). This change embodies both normative and

informational social influences within social influence theory and reflects the role of economic development in shaping aesthetic perceptions (Rodionova, 2017).

Economic growth promotes the elevation of people's aesthetic sensibilities. With material wealth provided by economic development(Nanda, 1987), people's pursuit of beauty has gradually moved from satisfying basic functional needs to meeting spiritual aesthetic demands(Wang, 1997). In Jiangnan, economic prosperity has supplied abundant resources to the architectural field, allowing buildings to shift from mere utilitarian functions to higher levels of aesthetic expression. Jiangnan gardens serve as a prime example: during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the region's economic prosperity enabled scholars and affluent merchants to invest heavily in garden construction. These gardens not only exemplified the refined elegance of traditional Jiangnan architecture but also embodied the pursuit of natural aesthetics and humanistic spirit, becoming an iconic interaction between Jiangnan's aesthetic values and economic growth (Hou, 2009).

With further economic development, Jiangnan's interactions with the outside world intensified, particularly during modern industrialization and globalization processes(Ellis, 2015). Modern architectural concepts were gradually introduced, promoting a fusion of traditional and modern styles. Many contemporary buildings integrate the white walls and black tiles of traditional Jiangnan architecture with the open spatial layouts of modern architecture. Economic growth drives not only the improvement of people's aesthetic levels but also, through resource support, conceptual exchange, and cultural preservation, continually fosters the evolution of architectural aesthetics in the Jiangnan region.

2.9 Related Literature Review

2.9.1 Research on the causes of the evolution of cultural space utilization in Han communities through ancient town architecture.

Research on the Causes of Cultural Evolution of the Han Ethnic Community through the Architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town. The study of the cultural evolution of the Han ethnic community through the architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town involves not only the evolution of architectural forms but also closely relates to cultural, social, and

economic factors. Zong (1970) in Zhejiang Huzhou Prefecture Gazetteer recorded the regional historical context of Nanxun Ancient Town and pointed out that the formation of the town's architectural style is inseparable from the development of the local economy, politics, and culture, revealing the profound impact of historical changes on architectural culture. Morgan (1971) in *Ancient Society* suggested that societal changes are inevitably accompanied by cultural development, and the architectural style of Nanxun Ancient Town is a reflection of cultural evolution. In particular, against the backdrop of changes in social structure, the architectural form gradually integrated foreign cultural elements with Han traditional features. White (1988) in *The Science of Culture* emphasized that cultural change does not occur in isolation, but is the result of multiple interacting factors. The evolution of architecture in Nanxun Ancient Town, from form to function, is the result of the interweaving of various social, cultural, and economic forces. Fei (1988) in *Regional Development Strategy and Planning Studies* further explored the driving mechanisms of regional cultural development, pointing out that the architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town not only reflects local cultural identity but also demonstrates adaptability to external influences. Ogden (1989) in *Social Change* mentioned that cultural changes are often accompanied by changes in the socio-economic structure. The architectural style of Nanxun Ancient Town gradually evolved to meet the changing social demands in response to economic reform and social upheaval. Woods (1989) in *Cultural Change* proposed that architectural style is not only a witness to social change but also a carrier of cultural identity. The architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town gradually formed unique cultural symbols in this process, reflecting the cultural identity of the Han society. Wang (1997) in *Symbols and Society* explored the symbolic meaning of folk culture, arguing that the architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town, as a cultural symbol, is a product of the integration of traditional Han culture and modern economic needs, reflecting the cultural adaptability during social transformation. Zhang (2001) in *The Change of Power and Cultural Structure in Rural Society* pointed out that architecture not only carries cultural heritage but also reflects the changes in social power structures. In this sense, the architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town reveals the evolution of power and

cultural identity during social transformation. Bi Ran (2002) in *On Collective Memory* proposed that collective memory is passed down through material culture, and the architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town serves as a carrier of this collective memory, reflecting the cultural identity of the Han ethnic community at different stages of social change. Wu (2005) in *Social Change and Cultural Identity* emphasized that architectural forms are an integral part of social cultural identity. The architectural style of Nanxun Ancient Town has undergone several changes in history and has gradually become an important symbol of the modern Han ethnic community's cultural identity. Wu (2011) in *From Cultural Construction to Community Identity* explored the impact of cultural construction on community identity, suggesting that the architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town, while meeting the residents' living needs, also promoted cultural identity and social integration within the community.

Through these studies, it is evident that the architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town is not only a concrete embodiment of cultural evolution but also a profound reflection of social change. The cultural identity of the Han ethnic community is critically validated through the evolution of these architectural forms. and modernization.

2.9.2 Related Studies on the Social Impact of Ancient Town's Architectural Culture Evolution

Exploring the Social Impact on the Han Ethnic Community through the Architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town Research on the social impact of Nanxun Ancient Town's architecture, particularly from the perspectives of aesthetic value and economics, reveals the profound interaction between architecture and community culture. Bok (1988) in *Multiculturalism and Social Progress* suggested that cultural diversity drives social progress, and the architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town embodies this cultural fusion. It reflects both the traditional aesthetic values of the Han ethnic community and the integration of external economic influences. Woods (1989) in *Cultural Change* pointed out that the evolution of local architectural forms is closely related to economic development. The architecture of Nanxun not only carries traditional aesthetic concepts but is also influenced by economic growth, driving changes in the

local social structure. Zheng (1992) in *Cultural Identity and Cultural Change* emphasized that architecture, as a symbol of cultural identity, connects its aesthetic significance with economic function. The traditional architectural style of Nanxun gradually formed a style that both aligns with Han aesthetic values and adapts to economic needs through interactions with the surrounding economic environment. Shi (1992) in *Ethnic Education and Cultural Change* noted that architecture is not merely a tool for cultural expression but is also closely tied to economic development. The buildings in Nanxun Ancient Town, through rational spatial layouts, both reflect traditional cultural aesthetics and meet local economic demands. Li (2001) in *Organizational Sociology and Decision Analysis* discussed how architecture influences community social behaviors and economic decisions. The architectural structure of Nanxun Ancient Town had a profound impact on the residents' lifestyles and economic activities, promoting trade exchanges and economic prosperity. Wang (2009) and Li (2007) in *From the Theory of "Cultural Distance" to the Socialization of Villagers in Urban Villages* explored the relationship between cultural identity and economic transformation. In the context of economic change in Nanxun, the transformation of architecture influenced residents' aesthetic values and economic behaviors. Wu (2011), through the study of local knowledge and social change, emphasized the dual role of architecture in cultural inheritance and economic activities. The architecture of Nanxun not only met local aesthetic demands but also responded to economic development needs, becoming a product of the intersection of culture and economics. Through these studies, it is clear that the architecture of Nanxun Ancient Town not only reflects the unique aesthetic values of the Han ethnic community but also plays an important role in economic development and social transformation. It has influenced the residents' lifestyles, cultural identity, and economic activity patterns, highlighting the intricate relationship between architecture, culture, and economy.

In summary, research on the architectural culture of Nanxun Ancient Town, from analyzing its causes to exploring its social impacts, demonstrates a multi-dimensional developmental trajectory that spans from macro theories to regional characteristics and

from historical analysis to modern practices (Daniel, 2012). Regarding the study of causes, research has progressed from Liang Sicheng's foundational work on traditional architecture to analyses of Jiangnan water town characteristics and then to a focus on cultural preservation and the integration of foreign influences from a global perspective. These studies have deepened the understanding of the multiple driving forces behind the formation of architectural culture, emphasizing the core roles of resident needs, economic development, social interactions, and cultural preservation in the evolution of architecture. In terms of social impact, literature has systematically examined the complex relationships among policy changes, urban-rural interactions, community participation, and economic development. Special attention has been given to striking a dynamic balance between modernization and cultural preservation, providing practical guidance for optimizing the lifestyles of ancient town residents while preserving their cultural heritage. However, current research also has certain shortcomings. Firstly, studies on how resident needs specifically influence the evolution of architectural culture remain insufficient, lacking systematic analysis, with most works staying at the level of theoretical and qualitative descriptions. Secondly, the impact of foreign and local cultural integration on architectural styles is often limited to individual case studies, with a lack of broader, comprehensive analysis, making it difficult to fully uncover the pathways of cultural fusion in the architectural evolution of Nanxun Ancient Town. Lastly, regarding the socio-cultural effects of Nanxun's architectural culture in the context of tourism and economic development, existing research focuses primarily on positive impacts while paying limited attention to potential issues, such as cultural commodification or social stratification caused by tourism development. This, to some extent, hinders a comprehensive understanding of the conflicts between cultural preservation and modernization.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study, "Analyzing the cultural changes and Social Impacts of the Han community through the Architecture of the Nanxun Ancient Town From 1953 to 2024" is a qualitative research study with two main objectives: to analyze the cultural changes of the Han ethnic community in Nanxun Ancient Town from 1953 to 2024 through the study of its architecture, and to analyze the social impact of the Han ethnic community in Nanxun Ancient Town. The research methods are as follows:

3.1 Sample Selection

3.1.1 Sample of People

The interview sample consists of 13 individuals: the researchers will interview three groups, including long-term residents, management personnel, and experts. Among the long-term residents, there are: young people born after 2006 who have lived in the area for less than 18 years; middle-aged people born between 1981 and 2005 who have lived there for 18 to 43 years; and elderly people born between 1953 and 1980 who have lived there for 44 to 71 years. The management personnel have been engaged in archival management work in Nanxun Ancient Town for about 10 years. The experts are cultural scholars who have studied Nanxun Ancient Town for approximately 20 years and have lived there on a long-term basis.

Table 1 Interviewee Schedule table

Interviewees	Long-term Residents (9 people)	Ancient Town Management Personnel (2people)	Cultural Scholars (2people)
	Residents born between 1953 and 1980	District Archives Bureau Management Personnel	Relevant Cultural Scholar
	Residents born between 1981 and 2005	Nanxun Ancient Town Planning and Design Team	Relevant Cultural Scholar
	Residents born between 2006 and 2024		

3.1.2 Sample of Physical Objects

The sample includes eight buildings: Researchers used purposive sampling (including residential buildings, commercial buildings, religious buildings, and public buildings) to select the top-ranked buildings from each functional category. These categories were chosen based on four aspects of cultural change and recommendations from researchers. These buildings effectively reflect the culture of Han communities.

(1) Residential Buildings:

Zhang Shiming Residence: Analyzes the impact of family structure and living needs on the architectural layout.

Baijianlou: Examines the influence of common people's needs on the function, spatial layout, and material craftsmanship of buildings.

(2) Commercial Buildings:

SiyeHuiguan: Explores the influence of silk trade demands on the building's functions and forms, as well as its modern adaptive uses.

(3) Religious Buildings:

Guanghui Palace: Interprets how religious needs shape the cultural significance of the building.

(4) Public Buildings:

Ancient Opera Stage: Investigates the importance of this building based on its role in cultural and community activities, highlighting the town's cultural and entertainment functions.

Wenyuan Three Galleries: Through analyzing the exhibit content, explores how traditional culture is reconstructed in modernized cultural spaces and how these spaces influence cultural identity among residents and visitors.

Nanxun Elephant Hotel: Represents the combination of traditional culture and modern commercial needs, contributing to the study of how Han communities leverage cultural resources to create economic value during economic transitions.

Nanxun Hilton Hotel: As an example of the introduction of an international brand, it serves as a critical case of modernizing cultural spaces under the influence of globalization, offering insights into how Han communities maintain cultural characteristics in a globalized context.

3.2 Research Methods

This study employs the following research methods to investigate Nanxun Ancient Town.

3.2.1 Literature Review Method

The literature review method involves collecting, verifying, and organizing documents, and deriving scientific understanding through their analysis. The literature review in this study focuses on the following four aspects:

(1) Historical Development of Nanxun Ancient Town's Architectural Culture

The literature review primarily seeks to outline the historical trajectory of Nanxun Ancient Town's architectural culture. By analyzing local chronicles such as Nanxun Zhi, Huzhou Fu Zhi, and Jiayetang Cangshu, the study explores the origin, development,

and connections between Nanxun's architecture, its local economy, and social structure. These texts document how the thriving silk industry in the Ming and Qing dynasties influenced architectural culture and how Sino-Western architectural styles were introduced during the Republican era. Additionally, academic books and papers, particularly those examining the evolution of Nanxun's architectural styles, are referenced to uncover the distinct features and transformation logic of its architectural culture across different periods.

(2) Interaction Between Resident Needs and the Evolution of Architectural Functions

The second focus of the literature review is the interaction between resident needs and architectural functions. By consulting literature on urban and rural planning, social culture, and residential needs—particularly studies on the adaptability of Jiangnan water town lifestyles and architecture—the study analyzes how residents' needs have shaped the layout and functional characteristics of Nanxun's architecture. Examples include the “front street, rear river” layout, “front shop, back residence” building form, and how clan halls and guild halls catered to family life and commercial cooperation. Analyses from academic journals and research reports provide scientific evidence on how residents' demands have guided the evolution of architectural functions.

(3) Causes of Architectural Culture Evolution

The third focus of the literature review is the multidimensional causes and adaptability of architectural culture evolution. This section draws extensively on literature related to cultural ecology and hierarchy of needs theories, exploring how factors such as the natural environment, socioeconomics, technological progress, and cultural transformation collectively drive the dynamic evolution of architectural culture. References such as *Cultural Ecology and Architectural Design* and *Studies on Cultural Changes in Jiangnan Ancient Towns* provide theoretical support, revealing how Nanxun adapted to social demands and external cultural influences by incorporating Sino-Western architectural elements and reinventing modern architectural functions.

(4) Cultural Changes and Their Impact on Nanxun Residents

The final focus is the profound impact of architectural cultural changes on the lifestyle and cultural identity of Nanxun residents. By consulting works such as History of Jiangnan Water Town Culture and A History of Chinese Architectural Culture Changes, the study examines how functional changes in architecture have altered residents' living patterns, commercial activities, and expressions of belief. Additionally, by referencing literature on cultural heritage preservation and tourism economic development, the study explores how Nanxun's architecture meets modern residents' needs while positively influencing local cultural identity, community cohesion, and economic development in the context of modern society.

3.2.2 Field Research Method

The field research method, also known as fieldwork or on-site research, is a scientific approach for direct observation and data collection. Through field investigations, new research frameworks and theoretical foundations can be established. The collection of raw, unprocessed data by researchers ensures the authenticity and accuracy of the study. This research project conducts an in-depth investigation of Nanxun Ancient Town, focusing on the spatial layout and functional evolution of its architecture, combined with the needs of local residents, to further interpret the causes of cultural change and its social impact. The investigation is carried out from the following perspectives:

(1) On-Site Examination of Spatial Layout and Functional Evolution of Architectural Culture

Through on-site examination, the study observes and records the spatial layout and functional evolution of representative buildings in Nanxun Ancient Town. These include residential buildings (e.g., Zhang Shiming Residence), commercial buildings (e.g., the Silk Guild Hall), religious buildings (e.g., Guanghui Palace), and public buildings (e.g., the ancient theater stage). The field investigation documents the overall structure, functional distribution, and current condition of these buildings, analyzing how they have adapted to residents' living, commercial, and cultural needs over different periods. For instance, Zhang Shiming Residence features a multi-courtyard layout that accommodates multi-generational family living while incorporating Sino-Western

architectural styles, reflecting the openness of wealthy merchants to foreign cultural influences.

(2) In-Depth Understanding of the Relationship Between Architectural Functions and Resident Needs

An important goal of the field investigation is to explore the relationship between architectural functions and resident needs. The study pays particular attention to the historical changes in architectural functions and their adaptability to residents' lifestyles. For example, the transformation of the ancient theater stage from an open performance venue to a cultural tourism site demonstrates the transition from residential needs to economic revenue demands. By observing the functional uses of architecture, the research reveals how resident needs have specifically driven adjustments in architectural space functions, highlighting the dual role of architectural culture in meeting everyday needs and preserving cultural heritage.

(3) Data Recording and Analysis Methods

The field investigation employs a combination of image recording, textual documentation, and mapping and measurement to ensure comprehensive and accurate data collection. Image recording captures the overall form, decorative details, and usage scenarios of the buildings, providing intuitive reference materials for analysis. Textual documentation describes the functional distribution, historical background, and interactions involving resident activities in detail. Mapping and measurement visually present changes in the spatial layout of architecture, such as building modifications and functional evolution across different historical periods. These complementary recording methods provide a solid data foundation for subsequent analysis and research.

3.2.3 Case Study Method

Case study method is a research approach that involves in-depth analysis of specific cases to reveal universal patterns or specific phenomena. In this paper, the case study method will focus on analyzing the cultural changes of representative buildings in Nanxun Ancient Town during different periods and their impact on the social

life of residents. By selecting representative architectural cases, the study will reveal how cultural changes, through the evolution of architectural space, function, and form, influence the social structure, economic activities, and cultural identity of the Han Chinese community.

The case study method, through detailed analysis of typical buildings in Nanxun Ancient Town, can deeply explore the interaction between residents' needs and architectural culture, revealing how cultural changes and social transformations impact the design and function of buildings. Furthermore, the research will examine how architectural culture becomes an important carrier of the social structure and cultural identity of the Han Chinese community, and how it maintains its cultural value and historical heritage during the process of modernization. This research not only provides a theoretical basis for the protection of Nanxun Ancient Town's architectural culture, but also offers practical guidance for the cultural protection and development of similar traditional ancient towns.

3.3 Research Tools

In-Depth Interviews

(1) Interview Content

The interviews center on the causes of architectural cultural evolution and resident needs, structured around hierarchical open-ended questions. For residents, the interviews explore how changes in family structure and lifestyle have influenced the adaptability of architectural functions, such as spatial layout adjustments during the transition from "multi-generational households" to "nuclear families." For preservation professionals, the discussions delve into the practical challenges of restoring traditional buildings, such as balancing modern functional demands (e.g., conversion to guesthouses or commercial use) with the cultural value of the original architecture. For scholars, the interviews focus on the deeper causes of architectural cultural evolution and its relationship with socio-economic development, such as the historical impact of the rise and decline of the silk industry on architectural layouts. This multi-layered question design ensures the depth and breadth of the interview content.

The interview content was surveyed using the IOC (Item-Objective Congruence) method, with ratings provided by three experts. Each expert gave a score of 0.5 or higher to ensure the reliability of the interviews.

(2) Recording Methods

During the interviews, various recording methods are employed to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data. Audio recordings capture the full content of the interviews, while on-site notes document the respondents' emotions, tones, and key viewpoints for detailed reference during later analysis. After the interviews, the recordings are promptly transcribed, and the information is preliminarily categorized to identify commonalities and differences among the various respondent groups for subsequent analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

Content Analysis Method

(1) Systematic Organization of Interview Records

The study involves analyzing interview transcripts with Nanxun residents, managers, and scholars, identifying key themes related to changes in architectural functions and resident needs. This systematic approach organizes a large volume of interview data and lays the foundation for further analysis.

(2) Interpretation of Documents and Historical Archives

By analyzing local chronicles, academic papers, and policy documents, the research outlines the historical trajectory of architectural cultural evolution in Nanxun. These sources not only reveal the phased characteristics of architectural culture changes but also provide historical evidence for analyzing how resident needs have driven these transformations.

(3) Categorization and Interpretation of Field Observation Notes

Field investigations in Nanxun Ancient Town documented the current usage and spatial layout of various buildings. Analyzing these records helps summarize the

adaptive characteristics of architectural functions, providing empirical support for uncovering the dynamic adaptability of architectural culture.

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter employs qualitative research methods, integrating literature analysis, field research, interviews, and case studies to provide systematic and in-depth support for exploring the causes and impacts of the architectural cultural evolution in Nanxun Ancient Town. It emphasizes the central role of resident needs in the dynamic evolution of architectural culture



CHAPTER 4

RESULT

4.1 Period of planned economy

After the founding of New China, China established a highly centralized planned economy to restore and rebuild its war-damaged national economy. From 1953 onwards, with the implementation of the first five-year plan, China entered the "initial and exploratory period" of socialist construction. The strategic goal of the country during this period was to establish an independent and relatively comprehensive industrial and national economic system on a severely limited material basis. In terms of institutional arrangements, the state carried out highly unified management of resource allocation. All areas from agriculture, industry, transportation to culture and education were put on a unified planning track. Centralized dispatch of resources and rigidity of plan implementation were ensured through the establishment of centralized agencies such as the State Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance. Internationally, China took reference from the Soviet model and regarded industrialization as a core element of socialist modernization, promoting the priority development of heavy industry through state power. This system enabled the country to focus on infrastructure, stabilize the regime, and gradually achieve orderly social development in the early stages of extreme resource scarcity and systemic transition.

At the level of social organization, this phase was also accompanied by a large-scale collectivization movement, especially the introduction of the people's commune system in the countryside; in 1958, the CCP Central Committee approved the Resolution on the Establishment of People's Commune, which consolidated agriculture, industry, education, and the military into one basic social unit, the "government-society, industry-peasantry-business-academic-soldier" The People's Commune. At the same time, due to the planning system requires that all economic sectors need to be integrated into a unified arrangement, Nanxun ancient town of residential, commercial, faith and public building space gradually transformed into a tool to serve the collective production and publicity and education, such as religious venues have been converted into cultural

halls, commercial buildings were requisitioned for office institutions, residential space emphasizing collective living and labor production. Overall, the policy context from 1953 to 1980 laid down a path of spatial resource reconstruction dominated by national planning, providing the institutional preconditions for the subsequent multiple transformations of cultural space's functions.

Table 2 Overview map of the 1st Five-Year Plan - 5th Five-Year Plan

timing	full name	important event	core objective
1953-1957	The First Five-Year Plan of the People's Republic of China for Developing the National Economy	In January 1952 the Council of State initiated the preparation. Adopted by the National Congress of the Party in March 1955. Approved by the National People's Congress in July 1955	Focusing on the 156 projects designed with the help of the Soviet Union, it concentrated on industrial construction and the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, and private industry and commerce.

Table 2 (continue)

timing	full name	important event	core objective
1958-1962	Proposals of the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China on the Second Five-Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy	In August 1955, the State Department launched the The Party's Eighth Congress in 1956 adopted the Party's recommendations. August 1957 State Department completes first draft of plan but puts it on hold.	"Catching up with the United Kingdom and the United States" in a number of important products and production volumes, with a focus on metallurgy and the machinery industry
1966-1970	Outline of the report on the organization of the Third Five-Year Plan	The State Department initiated the preparation, in early 1963, of Approved by the Working Conference of the Central Committee of the Party in September 1965	Actively prepare for war and famine, put national defense construction in the first place, do a good job in the "three lines" of construction, heavy industry is the mainstay, and food and clothing are taken into account.

Table 2 (continue)

timing	full name	important event	core objective
1971-1975	Outline of the Fourth Five-Year National Economic Plan	The State Department initiated the preparation, in early 1970, of The 1973 Working Conference of the Central Committee of the Party proposed amendments	Continuing to prepare for war and the construction of the "three fronts", and driving the industrialization of the whole country with the development of the military industry
1976-1980	The first five years of the Ten-Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy 1976-1985 (Revised) (the first five years of the Ten-Year Plan outline).	In August 1974, the State Department initiated the The Party's Central Committee, which was adopted by the Plenary Session of the Party Central Committee in December 1975 on an experimental basis. Approved by the National People's Congress in 1979	Increased oil production, 120 new and renewed large-scale projects, and the establishment of a more complete industrial and national economic system

Before 1953 in the Jiangnan water town area, the natural geography was inextricably linked to traditional spatial patterns (Wu & Dong, 2006). As mentioned in the previous discussion, Jiangnan was located in the lakeshore plain of the Taihu Lake basin, with a dense network of rivers and lakes, and the convenience of the water system gave rise to a unique settlement pattern. (Liu, 2005) mentions that historically, in order to meet the needs of agricultural irrigation and transportation, the ancestors of Jiangnan dug longitudinal and transverse waterways, forming a water network system of "five miles with a longitudinal pool and ten miles with a transverse pond". The Great Canal of the Sui and Tang dynasties opened up the Jiangnan waterways to the north and south, making waterway transportation even more developed, and promoting the economic and cultural prosperity of the region. As mentioned by (Liu & Wu, 2008), water is the lifeline of the ancient towns in Jiangnan, where rivers are intertwined like a network, and boats and oars travel through them, creating the picturesque scenery of "small bridges, running water, and homes" and the water-based life characteristics. Ruan and Yuan (2008) also pointed out that ancient towns in Jiangnan often "become streets, cities and towns because of water", and the water environment directly shapes the spatial skeleton of the settlement and people's production and life style.

In the previous discussion, Nanxun Ancient Town was pointed out as a typical case of interaction between the Jiangnan water town environment and the Han community space. Nanxun is located in the northern plains of Zhejiang, with convenient land and water transportation, and has historically been known as "the source of the lake silk, fish and rice town". Wu (2010) has mentioned, Nanxun township rivers across, forming a unique cross-shaped water city pattern, from the west to the east of the canal and from the south to the north of the city river in the center of the town intersection into a "cross harbor", become a hub of land and water transportation and commercial centers, the four townships of the goods boats gathered at the bridge, presenting a "Tongjin Qiaokou peddling boats more than one. Tongjin bridge mouth peddling boat more" busy scene. As an axis, Nanxun township rivers and streets across, numerous bridges, traditional streets and lanes according to the water layout, constituting the outer

ring within the vertical water township spatial texture. The vertical city river extends from the center to the north and south, the northern section is called Baoshan River, the southern section is called Nanshi River, and the two sides are distributed with thoroughfares and marketplaces; the horizontal canal runs through the east and west, the eastern section is called Dongshi River, and the western section is Xishi River, which is not only the main traffic route in the town, but also connects the periphery of the water network through Shangtang Street. Jin (2008) also mentioned that the dense water network for the residents of Nanxun to provide a convenient production and life, but also shaped the spatial order of the settlement, the streets and lanes according to the river and set up, the traditional residential waterfront and the building, really do "home to the water, the household through the boat". Nanxun ancient town therefore presents a unique spatial layout of the water township community - the river is both a transportation corridor is also a market place, naturally, the settlement of each functional space in series. This water as a vein of spatial organization, so that the natural environment and human environment to achieve a high degree of integration.

The Baimanlou area reflects a high degree of interaction between the geography of the water town and the spatial layout of the community. Deng (2013) mentioned that the Baijianlou is located in the eastern part of Nanxun along the river, which is said to be the riverfront residential complex built by Dong Fen, the Minister of Ceremonies during the Jiajing period of the Ming Dynasty, for the purpose of accommodating family members and servants, and there were more than Baijianlou when it was first built, hence the name "Hundred House". This settlement along the river is laid out according to the meandering river situation, with houses built near the water and stone bridges connected across the river, constituting a long and winding waterfront street. Baijianlou on both sides of the long street close to the river paved, along the street houses clear color pink walls and tiles, the ground floor on the side of the water with Phi Eaves corridor, part of the street also built across the street riding tower, forming a continuous piece of the corridor eaves space. Residents live near the river and look at each other across the river, and the pattern of the front store and the back house extends

according to the water, which not only meets the function of combining commerce and residence, but also responds to the needs of waterway transportation. The Baimanlou River is 15 to 25 meters wide, with an open and curved surface, and low stone barges and densely-packed stone steps along the river, making it convenient for boats to moor. Street form presents "two sides of a river" typical water village characteristics: the west bank of the riverfront street without roof exposed, the east bank of the street is more along the gable corridor of the house and under the riding floor through, both the 3-meter-wide open-air narrow alleys, but also under the porch of the riding floor of the more than 2-meter-wide passageway. The riverfront buildings are mostly two-storey brick structure, open riding floors and the eaves of the corridor not only enriches the level of the facade along the river, but also provides residents with a shelter from the wind and rain of the public space. In terms of spatial structure, the Baimanlou residential complex is the most well-preserved traditional settlement along the river in the Jiangnan water town, reflecting a high degree of compatibility between the environment and spatial layout. This spatial structure allows residents to live near the river, and the pattern of the front store and the back house extends according to the water to satisfy the combination of commerce and residence, as well as reflecting a positive response to the demand for waterway transportation.

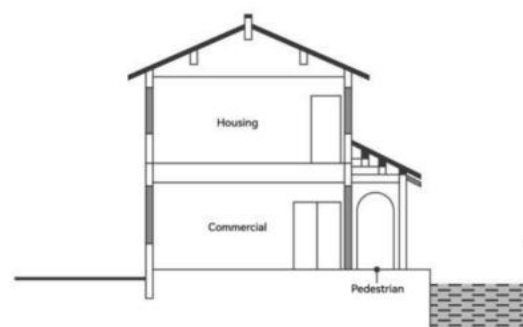


Figure 11 Momochi building lot, mostly with continuous openings, functioning mostly as a general residence

Source: Drawn by the author

The Nanshi River area, on the other hand, embodies a deeper level of interaction. Gu (1999) points out that the Nanshi River, as the main north-south river of the ancient town, not only carries the function of water transportation, but also serves as the main space for traditional marketplaces and cultural activities. Along the banks of the river, there are a large number of mansions and guild houses, including both the traditional Jiangnan mansions and the former residences of celebrities that are a combination of Chinese and Western styles in modern times. From the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, Nanxun saw the emergence of industrialists who returned from overseas due to the prosperity of the silk industry and built Chinese and Western style mansions along the Nanshi River, such as the Zhang Shiming Residence, which combines a Western-style building hall with a Chinese-style courtyard, making it unique in the neighborhoods along the water. These buildings were built near the river. These buildings were built along the river, with private wharves on the side of the river, which facilitated the loading and unloading of goods and travel. The spatial pattern along the Nanshi River, while continuing the traditional waterfront market pattern, also incorporates new cultural elements, reflecting the exchange and mutual appreciation of environment and culture in a specific historical period. For example, the Catholic Church (Jesus Church) built at the end of the Qing Dynasty and the Nanxun Silk Guild Hall built in the Republican period are adjacent to each other, displaying both Chinese and Western culture, which not only serves the spiritual life of the local community, but also serves as a testimony to the openness and tolerance of the ancient water town. Deng (2013) mentions that the area around the Nanshi River has been called the "landscape of Chinese and Western cultural exchanges" in the ancient town, and that the architectural styles along the river reflect the evolution of the cultural space under the recent environmental changes. It can be said that the wet water town environment has nurtured the diversified community space forms on both sides of the Nanshi River, while the prosperity of waterway transportation has promoted the development of cultural integration.

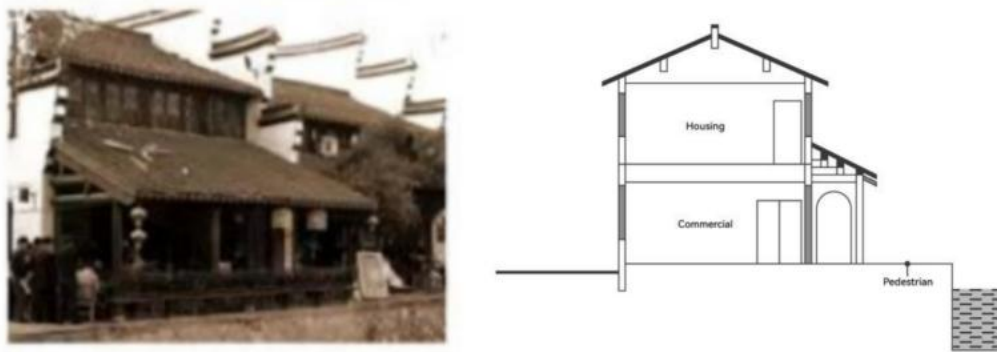


Figure 12 Buildings on both sides of the river in the southern city, with many deep and far-reaching riding floors, mostly functioning as stores

Source: Drawn by the author

Dongshi River and its surrounding neighborhoods are mainly reflected in the traditional commercial traffic space. Dongshi River is the main east-west waterway of the ancient town, with a relatively straight channel and a width of about 7.5 to 14 meters. The Dongshi River is the main east-west waterway of the town, with a relatively straight channel, numerous stores and public piers along both sides of the river, and ancient bridges such as the Tongjin Bridge and the Hongji Bridge spanning the Dongshi River, which not only connects the roads on both sides of the river but also serves as the core node of the marketplace. Dongshi River along the Shangtang Street was Nanxun important commercial street, silk line dai and other trading wharf on the distribution of its intermediary. In the era of water transport, Dongshi River bear the function of connecting neighboring towns and foreign material transportation, is a real "water street". Its spatial form is dominated by "one river and two streets", and the local section of the river is limited by conditions to a pattern of "one river and one road", but on the whole, the streets on both sides of the river are coherent, and the city river and the market are integrated into one. In order to accommodate waterborne trade, the Dongshihe market had ports along the river, and the front of the stores was adjacent to the wharf, so that goods could be loaded and unloaded directly through the waterfront gateway, forming a convenient network for the circulation of goods. However, this spatial organization

relying on water transportation is also subject to the constraints of the natural environment: the Dongshi River is moderately wide, but when the water level rises during the flood season, the buildings along the river have to be well protected against floods and tides; during the dry season, the passage of large vessels may be affected, thus affecting the prosperity of the market. These environmental factors in turn affect the form and functional layout of the cultural space. For example, the streets on both sides of the Dongshi River are relatively open and straight in order to accommodate more traders and people, while in the narrower parts of the tributaries, a number of water pockets are formed for boats to maneuver around and moor temporarily. Overall, the Dongshi River section reflects the shaping of the market space by the environment - the scale of the river determines the size of the market, the direction of the water flow influences the direction of the streets and alleys, and the bridges and piers become key nodes connecting the environment and the flow of people.

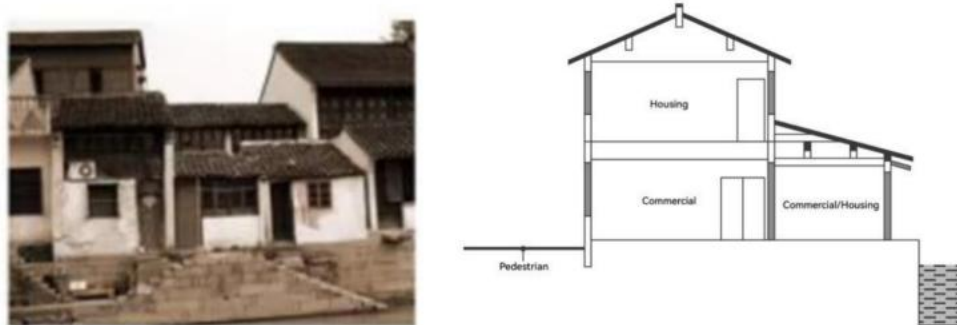


Figure 13 Buildings on both sides of the Dongshi River, mostly built with the river at their backs, are mostly mixed commercial and residential in function

Source: Drawn by the author

It can be seen, Nanxun ancient town to the water township geography as the basis for the formation of the interaction with the adaptation of the spatial layout of the Han community. On the one hand, the natural water network shaped the spatial structure of the settlement and functional zoning: cross-shaped water system as a skeleton, the city river, the canal along the development of prosperous markets and neighborhood communities, constituting a "small town of thousands of hold water

garden, Jiake boat in the city" scene. On the other hand, the spatial organization of the settlement also reflects the positive response to the water environment, such as the Baimanlou residential group built near the water, the commercial belt of the city river that runs through the north and south, and the Dongshi River corridor that connects the ancient town, etc., all of which demonstrate the process of the interaction and synergistic evolution between the environment and the cultural space.

4.1.1 Economic Structure: Cooperatives and Agricultural Production Systems

Within the overall framework of the planned economy system from 1953 to 1980, the economic structure of Nanxun Ancient Town underwent profound changes, showing a trend toward transitioning from individual operations to collective economic organisations. Against the state's large-scale promotion of agricultural collectivisation and material coordination policies, cooperatives and collective production teams became the basic units dominating rural economic life, with individual land operations and market activities uniformly incorporated into the state control system. Nanxun's agricultural and light industrial foundations were also integrated into the national planned allocation system as a major center for the silk industry in the Jiangnan region.

Nanxun grain station was built in 1955 by the Soviet Union to make a total granary. The original plan had 14 warehouses; currently, only 2 are surviving. Building site in Nanxun silk merchant family Qiu family private garden "Jian Yuan" on the former site, this transformation from private space to public space, clearly reflects the 1950s socialist collectivization transformation process of public space on the private space of the replacement and reuse of logic. The architectural style of the granary is a typical socialist realism style, with a grand shape and rigorous structure, reflecting the design concept of emphasizing practical functions and weakening decorative features. The granaries are large in scale, each with an internal diameter of 12 meters, a ceiling height of 17 meters, a volume of about 1,900 cubic meters, and a maximum grain storage capacity of 1,000 tons of rice. This scale design clearly reflects the national policy-oriented emphasis on production and reserves of strategic needs. Still, the towering regular's visual appearance highlights the collectivism of the social will and value

orientation. The granary not only realized the public function of grain reserves in Nanxun but also became a spatial symbol of community cohesion in Nanxun with its grand architectural image, further strengthening the embodiment of socialist collective values at the local level (Wang, 2002).



Figure 14 Nanxun Grain Depot, the main granary built by the Soviet Union in 1955

Source: Photographed by the author

Nanxun Cocoon Warehouse was built in 1976 as an essential public building for acquiring and storing local cocoons, reflecting the planned economic period of government-led economic functions in the spatial configuration. The building structure uses a reinforced concrete frame, emphasizing solidity and durability and reflecting the distinctive function for the first time. As an essential node of the sericulture industry, the cocoon warehouse not only connects the production and storage links in the physical space but also strengthens the public management function of the sericulture industry

chain in the social structure. This function is a clear, simple layout of the spatial form, which effectively realizes the centralized management of resources and production relations of the unified planning and further consolidates the collective economic system of social integration effect. At the same time, the construction of the cocoon bank also promotes the transformation of the sericulture industry in Nanxun from individualized production to collectivization and large-scale operation, reflecting the spatial response mechanism between the form of social organization and the orientation of economic policy at that time.



Figure 15 Nanxun cocoon station

Source: File photo of Nanxun Archives Bureau

This series of changes in architectural space not only reflects the simplification of form and homogenization of function on the physical level but also maps out the reorganization of collective concepts and the reconstruction of aesthetic consciousness of the Han Chinese community at a deeper level. The cultural space is gradually replaced by an institutional "production and mobilization platform" from a "symbolic

network of places", and the residents' attitude towards the architecture is shifted from emotional, identity, and ritual cognition to rational cognition of function, unity, and order (Song, 1986). This change has shaped a new phenomenon under the aesthetics of collectivism - that is, decoration has been devalued, scale has been standardized, privacy has been replaced by collectivity, and the standard of beauty has given way to individual experience, policy propaganda, and institutional discipline.

As demonstrated by the cases of grain warehouses and silk cocoon storage facilities, the economic landscape of the Nanxun region during this period was no longer market-driven but deeply embedded within the production logic of state and collective organisations, exhibiting a pronounced trend toward "de-individualisation." This alignment of spatial and institutional structures also drove the evolution of agricultural production methods from family-based operations to cooperative organisations, marking a pivotal turning point in the profound transformation of local social structures and economic forms. The economic structure of this period not only reshaped the functional attributes of Nanxun's architectural spaces but also laid the groundwork for the institutional reforms that would later pave the way for market-oriented reforms.

4.1.2 Social relations: internal family structure, levelling of social classes, neighbourly relations, and division of labour within the family

Under the planned economy system from 1953 to 1980, the social structure of Nanxun Ancient Town underwent a fundamental transformation. As socialist reforms progressed, the traditional Han Chinese community, which had been centred around clan-based social units, gradually disintegrated. In its place emerged a "collective lifestyle model" based on organisations such as work units, production teams, and cooperatives. The hierarchical power structure and gender-based division of labour within families were weakened in the highly homogenised institutionalised lifestyle, replaced by a "collective persona" evaluated based on work performance and political stance. During this period, the community order originally established on the basis of blood ties and family background underwent structural reconstruction. The dominant role of clan-based systems in actual life gradually gave way to neighbourly cooperation, collective affairs, and the intervention of political organisations. At the same time, the

state achieved comprehensive control over the identity and livelihood of urban and rural residents through measures such as the household registration system and grain rationing system, which also indirectly contributed to the relative levelling of social classes.

Before the founding of the ancient town of Nanxun Han community residential buildings generally use the traditional courtyard layout, with a one-entry or multi-entry courtyard as the basic type system, the formation of a strong functional partition and the family beliefs of the spatial system. Figure 2 is a typical one-entry courtyard, the building is mostly two-storey, the courtyard is generally planted with trees, for the average well-off people have.

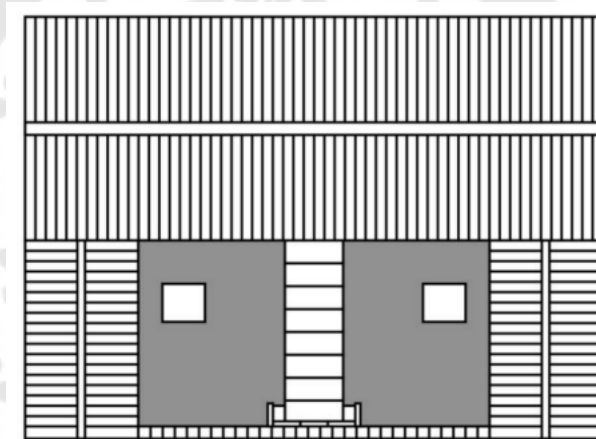


Figure 16 Inner courtyard layout form 1

Source: Drawn by the author

Figure 3 The compound is generally the second of a multi-entry compound, with the large house in the front generally serving as the living room, and the rear generally serving as the housing, with the outer corridor of the inner courtyard in the front generally equipped with a beautiful lean-to, and sometimes a well in the courtyard. Outside the side corridors there are auxiliary rooms such as kitchens, servants' rooms, etc., which are connected to the courtyard through the overcorridors.

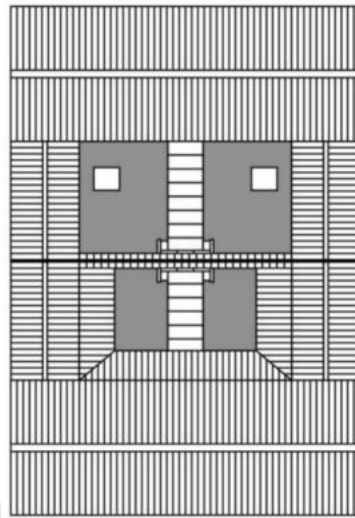


Figure 17 Inner courtyard layout form 2

Source: Drawn by the author

Figure 4 this type of yard is generally the last courtyard, the yard is generally behind the garden, behind the big house for the master study or other rooms for leisure purposes, the front big house for the bedroom or hall, with a single-story gallery connecting the front and back of the inner courtyard to show the meaning of the deep courtyard, the backyard is generally planted with two large trees, the front yard by the fence is generally planted with bamboo or climbing plants. This layout not only meets the needs of family life, but also reflects the Nanxun residents of the family ethics, spatial order and natural harmony of great importance, is an important part of the Han community cultural space in Nanxun ancient town.

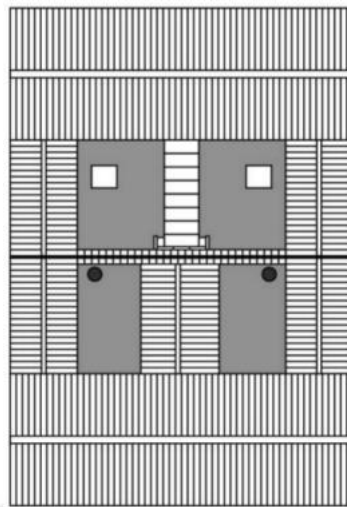


Figure 18 Inner courtyard layout form 3

Source: Drawn by the author

Nanxun is located in the humid climate conditions also profoundly affect the formation and maintenance of cultural space. Nanxun is a subtropical monsoon climate, four distinct seasons, short spring and fall and long winter and summer, the average annual humidity. This humid and rainy climate has an important impact on the site selection and construction strategy of the cultural space in the ancient town. In terms of site selection, traditional settlements tend to choose the terrain is relatively flat and near the water but not wet place to build(Ying, 1998). Although Nanxun township is surrounded by water, the main historical neighborhoods are located on the high terraces surrounded by a circular river to reduce the threat of flooding. Town rivers are intertwined, but the residents of the site to pay attention to the "water not close to the water", that is, the foundation of the house is slightly higher than the permanent water level, and through the river port and the water interface, not only to facilitate access to the water through the boat, but also to avoid the flooding of direct attack. This reflects the wisdom of the ancestors in the humid climate to adapt to the location of the site - to take full advantage of the transportation and landscape advantages provided by the water environment, but also through the selection of micro-topography and waterfront protection to avoid wet hazards. In terms of material and structural choices, traditional

architecture in the south of the Yangtze River is heavily influenced by the humid climate. Due to the high humidity of the air and frequent rainfall, buildings need to focus on moisture and mold resistance and drainage performance(Wang, 1999). Nanxun traditional houses generally use a combination of masonry and timber structural system: the lower part of the foundation is elevated by slate and paved, the walls are mostly made of bricks, and timber is used for the main load-bearing components such as roof beams and other beams. This "masonry for the body, wooden structure for the bone" approach, on the one hand, the use of masonry moisture resistance, not easy to insect characteristics to ram the building foundation, blocking the ground moisture; on the other hand, to play the advantages of flexible and lightweight wooden frame to support the broad roof and the gables out of the corridor. The roof is covered with small green tiles and has far-reaching eaves to quickly drain away rainwater and protect the walls from erosion. The façade is designed with windows for ventilation and eaves for shading, and the waterfront pavilions and rain corridors provide a climatic buffer for the residents, all of which reflect a positive response to the cultural space in a humid climate. The exterior walls of the houses are whitewashed and plastered without colorful decorations, partly because of the aesthetic tradition of simplicity, and partly to facilitate regular repainting to remove mildew and keep the walls dry and clean. It can be seen that in the humid climate, the Jiangnan houses achieve the purpose of moisture resistance and durability through the optimization of material combinations: stones and bricks enhance the resistance to moisture, while wood and tiles ensure structural resilience and indoor comfort. In addition, the spatial design of Jiangnan architecture everywhere reflects the consideration of ventilation, shade and drainage. The traditional houses in Nanxun are mostly laid out in courtyards, with internal patios and external alleys together constituting a ventilation and moisture drainage system(Cheng, 2004). The patio is open and narrow, with eaves to shield the house from direct rain and sunlight, and permeable paving to drain water quickly. The open doors and windows of the surrounding verandahs allow convective air to penetrate the room, accelerating the dissipation of moisture. The deep stone-paneled alleyways connecting the houses also

form "microclimate corridors" that guide cool air through the house in summer to dissipate heat, and in the rainy season to help circulate air to prevent mold and mildew. (Liu, 2007) referred to the building facade, Nanxun homes pay attention to window ventilation and eaves shade: waterfront facade permanent wooden windows or lattice cover windows, easy to cool air; eaves out of the larger and supplemented with eaves board, can be shielded from the sun and can be thrown to the rain outside the root of the wall. In addition, Nanxun street space in the ride and rain corridor is also a positive response to the humid climate. Baima building along the river along the ground floor of the riding building into a gallery, pedestrians even in the continuous rainy season can also be along the street corridor to avoid the rain and walk, not wet clothes. This design fully embodies the wisdom of "taking advantage of the times": utilizing architectural forms to provide a climatic buffer for daily life. This kind of waterfront streets and alleys with rain corridors is not only a unique feature of Jiangnan towns, but also the result of the subtle influence of the humid climate on the spatial pattern. These objective conditions in this period before the creation of Nanxun ancient town unique architectural style.

In the case of the former residence o, a representative building of traditional housing, the use of the site changed significantly from the 1950s to the 1960s, reflecting the reconfiguration of the spatial function of the private house during the period of collectivism. During this period the former mansion site was in a vacant state for many years and was under government escrow. According to Shen (2019), the building was borrowed by the PLA's JiuJiu Hospital from 1951 onwards for the stationing of the army's health system and medical functions; it was taken over by the Logistics Department of the Zhejiang Military Region in the early 1960s, and continued to serve as a base for the army's administrative offices and material deployment; and then transferred to the China Tea Import and Export Corporation for warehousing in 1968, which was a complete departure from the original residential and family Function.

This history is also confirmed according to relevant information(Qi et al., 2015), June 25, 1950, the outbreak of the Korean War, a large number of sick and wounded in

the war to return to China for treatment, because Nanxun town waterway transportation is convenient, but also a large number of public housing can be borrowed as a hospital room, so in the first half of 1951, the Nanjing Military Region decided to set up a second hospital in Nanxun, the Third Field Army. Nanxun town mobilized for this, less than half a month, completed the relocation task, vacated Zhang Shiming Residence, 185 mansions, and all kinds of furniture, 2654 pieces, for the troops to use. Hospital will be Qiushuli's building as inpatient department, Yuxi Qiao Public Hospital as Treatment Department, Yuying Tang as X-ray and laboratory room, Chamber of Commerce Building as the general dispensary, and Guanghui temple as the auditorium., and the establishment of 1-5 areas, respectively, in the Zhang Jingjiang former residence, Pang Laichen former residence, Chen Yuchang former residence, Zhang Shiming Residence, Mei Heng Yu silk factory site, etc., Xiao Lianzhuang for the convalescent sick, Ta Yuan, Liu's Temple into a bathroom or a sick bay, Liu Chongde former residence for the health school. In this way, Nanxun's many mansions instantly became a field hospital of a certain size.

From June 18, 1951, onwards, began to treat Baijianlouof wounded and sick volunteers from the northeastern border transit Suzhou to Xun, only Zhang Shiming Residence can be treated more than 200 wounded, during the East China condolence groups from all over the country, Nanxun reputation. 1953 July 27, the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed, marking the end of the war against the U.S. to aid the North Korean war. In 1954, the hospital was renamed a nine-nine hospital to continue providing medical services to troops.

In the early 1960s, China and Taiwan clamored for a counterattack on the mainland. Nine hospitals, due to war preparations, were moved to Jinhua. Unused houses were taken over by the Zhejiang Provincial Military District Logistics Department, and 369 troops were sent to stay in charge of the daily care. In 1968, Zhang Shiming Residence was used as a transit warehouse to produce the first Wuxing County People's Armed Forces Command, transporting tea from Anhui, Jiangxi, and Zhejiang and other places to be exported. Tea is to be exported.

In 1974, according to the relevant policies of the central government, Nanxun lent to the troops' housing should be returned to the local government. Accordingly, after negotiation, in March 1974, Zhejiang Provincial Military Region sent officers and Nanxun Town Revolutionary Committee consultations, approved by the Nanjing Military Region, the two sides signed an agreement, stipulating that "in 1951 Nanxun Town in support of the anti-American aid to North Korea mobilized residents to allow tens of thousands of square meters to the troops to use the return of the local housing". So far, Zhang Shimin's old residence and other mansions, after 20 years of long-term use by the troops, have all returned to the Nanxun town government.

In 1976, Nanxun Town Revolutionary Committee in order to improve the appearance of the town and solve the housing of residents, plans to transform the Baoshang Street, specifically the widening of Baoshang Street for the asphalt road (fill in Bei Shi River, demolition of bridges on the Bei Shi River) and along the street of the new four 4-5-storey building. In order to raise funds and building materials, the town of the Revolutionary Committee Director Li Yuxi, the city of the Revolutionary Committee Standing Committee, the People's Armed Forces Minister Qi Dinghua and the Director of the Housing Management Zhuang Yunfei three people went to Shanghai Tea Import and Export Company to negotiate three times, approved by the Wu Xing County Revolutionary Committee. Finally, they reached an agreement: 750,000 yuan, and the price index of 40 tons of steel, 175 cubic meters of lumber and 300 tons of cement, the transfer of the Zhang Shiming Residence paid, seeking forgiveness, Mei Heng Yu silk factory site, Zhang Jingjiang's former residence and other four mansion property rights (total area of 15,051.48 square meters). Nanxun Town Revolutionary Committee to use the above funds and materials, fill in the North River to widen the Baoshan Street asphalt road, the street on both sides of the new Yizhichun building, Zhongbai building, hardware building and the town of trade unions, commercial and residential buildings, referred to as "a street of six buildings". At that time, there was no money to build buildings, and selling the old house was also a desperate move, but objectively, it also accelerated the construction of Nanxun town.

During this period, although the former residence basically maintained its brick structure and original volume on the surface form, the nature of the architectural space and the logic of its use underwent a fundamental transformation. From the original highly privatized and ritualized family residence, the space was incorporated into the "functional redistribution" mechanism dominated by the state and the unit system and became the temporary land for the military system and the state-run enterprises. The spatial rights have shifted from "generational inheritance" to "planned distribution", the emotional connection between residents and buildings has been systematically interrupted, and the cultural symbolism of the former residence has been diluted. Against this backdrop, the public's aesthetic attitude towards the space of the mansion gradually shifted from "exquisite structure, superiority and inferiority of layout" to "durability, unity, and service to the collective", reflecting the deep linkage between spatial function and cultural cognition under the logic of statism.



Figure 19 Photographs of the ballroom after it was used as a warehouse

Source:https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?__biz=MjM5MzAwNDk1OA==&mid=206857578&idx=1&sn=5f0fcc5e93ba5af496029b72496c3c4e&chksm=2f3d699b184ae08dbe4f5f2e052c5327d2a2e31cfc8010d5681a7ef420d701fc2172a2ea3e39&scene=27

In the planned economy, Nanxun ancient town of residential architecture has experienced a significant transition from family-based to collective-based, originally emphasizing privacy and family hierarchical structure of the living space, gradually integrated into the state-led social production system. At this stage, the use value of living space far exceeded the single function of life, and it was continuously compressed, integrated and transformed into a material carrier serving collective labor, social organization and political education (Shan, 2007). Traditional mansion-style courtyards were divided and used to house multiple families, and the front and back halls and side rooms of a single family were divided into multiple living units, which were used to house newly moved worker families or to serve as auxiliary facilities for collective production activities. The walls between houses have been opened up, and life and production are intertwined in the same space, gradually weakening the sense of boundaries and privacy of the family.

Nanxun Chamber of Commerce as a representative of the traditional commercial buildings, in the 1953-1980 period experienced a significant functional reconfiguration. These buildings were originally used as the Nanxun local and surrounding areas as an important place for businessmen to meet, business exchanges and industry management, spatial design focuses on reflecting the commercial prosperity and social status, such as elaborate facade decorations and internal council chambers, which represented the core of the market economy in the pre-collectivization Han Chinese community. However, with the adjustment of national policies and the establishment of the planned economy system, the original functions of these spaces were rapidly weakened or even completely transformed.

In the early 1950s, the Nanxun Chamber of Commerce was incorporated into the collective economic system, the vacant property rights were transferred to public use, and the function of its use also underwent a fundamental change. Nanxun Chamber of Commerce was transformed into the office space of Nanxun Township Government, and this reuse of space was a direct response to the political and economic goals of the time, emphasizing the service of collective production and administration, rather than

market transactions and private commercial activities. This spatial transformation reflects more of an adaptive mechanism - the architectural space adapts to the needs of the collective economic system and social organization promoted by the state. Spaces originally designed for commercial exchanges were quickly adapted physically and functionally to meet the new political needs(Jing, 2009), mainly for office space. At the level of goal attainment, the nationalization and functional adaptation of commercial space reflected the state's policy goal of achieving unified management and centralized control of the means of production. This functional shift helped centralize the allocation of resources and the integration of social productivity, and was an indispensable part of the state-led economic model. The new function of space not only integrates administrative and community production activities, but also transforms the original market-based social relations into a new model of social integration centered on political and production organizations. Residents, the former business class and the new collective organization formed a new interactive relationship in this process. Although the superficial functions of commercial culture were weakened or even concealed during this period, some traditional commercial buildings still retained their original spatial patterns and decorative symbols, preserving a potential material basis for subsequent cultural memory and identity.(Wu, 2009) Although these cultural symbols were marginalized in the ideology of the time, they were not completely erased and became important resources for subsequent social and cultural revival(Yao, 2009).

The functional transformation of the Nanxun Chamber of Commerce and similar commercial spaces is a typical case of cultural spatial adjustment under the system of collectivization, which not only changed the physical use of the building, but also profoundly shaped the understanding of community members of the "commercial space" and their social roles, laying a historical foundation for the subsequent spatial readjustment during the period of reform and opening up.



Figure 20 Nanxun Chamber of Commerce exterior wall left the slogan of the year

Source: Photographed by the author

In summary, between 1953 and 1980, the social relations within the Han Chinese community of Nanxun Ancient Town transformed family-based to collective-based structures. Under the influence of collective systems and policies, the traditional authority of family structures gradually eroded, and interpersonal relationships were reorganized into new forms of social connections based on production organizations, neighborhood mutual aid, and political organizations. This transformation not only altered the identity recognition and daily interaction patterns of social members but also had a profound impact on the use and organization of cultural spaces. The sharing of neighborhood spaces, the blurring of public-private boundaries, and the redistribution of roles in collective labor led to the traditional clan-based order giving way to an institutionalized social structure centered on equal participation. The restructuring of social relations during this period laid the groundwork for the subsequent community

reorganization following the introduction of market mechanisms and provides an important reference point for understanding the interaction between cultural spaces and social structures in the Han Chinese community of Nanxun.

4.1.3 Lifestyle: Convergence of lifestyles, standardization of public life, marginalization of religious beliefs

Against the macro backdrop of the planned economy system from 1953 to 1980, the cultural landscape of the Han Chinese community in Nanxun Ancient Town underwent significant transformation. With the promotion of collectivization campaigns, the implementation of the unit system, and the comprehensive penetration of state ideology, the traditional cultural structure centered on family and grounded in religious rituals faced unprecedented challenges. Under the guidance of policies aimed at secularization and the abolition of private property, community lifestyles gradually shifted toward collective models, with cultural expressions exhibiting standardized and homogenized characteristics under institutional dominance. From dietary habits, living arrangements, to festive activities, the original diverse and regionally distinct cultural practices were replaced by uniform public living norms, forming a new socialist daily life order. Traditional beliefs and ritual activities were pushed to the margins in this process. This phase of cultural change not only reshaped residents' value systems but also provided a deep cultural backdrop for the functional restructuring and transformation of architectural spaces.

During the period 1953-1980, the faith buildings in Nanxun Ancient Town also underwent a profound spatial-functional reconfiguration. According to interviewer Ms. Zhou's recollection (Zhou, 2025), Guanghui Palace, as a typical case, underwent significant changes in its spatial functions and social roles. In the mid-1950s, the religious and spiritual symbolism originally carried by Guanghui Palace was systematically weakened, and the local government, in accordance with its policy orientation, changed the use of its religious space into a cultural auditorium and a wood factory. Religious carvings and symbols inside the building were painted over or replaced with new slogans and collectivist slogans, and the visual and symbolic system of the space underwent a qualitative change. Again, this reflects adaptive mechanisms.

Traditional religious sites needed to respond to the new social system and political demands, adapting their original functions of worship and belief to the social atmosphere of the time, which emphasized collectivism and political propaganda. This adaptation was not limited to the reuse of physical space but also included a shift in the symbolic meaning carried by the building, from religious worship to the dissemination of political culture. The re-functionalization of faith-based architecture was a manifestation of the state's goal of achieving unity of thought and collective identity. Such a change, which was necessary during the time of material shortage, not only saved the cost of building new public facilities but also promoted the depth of political propaganda through the reuse of space, helped the community residents under the collective economic system to form new values, and achieved rapid economic growth. The spatial integration role of Faith buildings is manifested in the unity of political and social organization. Traditionally, these buildings were physical symbols of the spiritual ties of the family, clan, or community; under the new system, they have become a new social bond between the state and its residents, carrying the public functions of propaganda, education, and the organization of gatherings. People's participation in spatial activities changed from rituals and prayers at the individual or family level to collective meetings and educational activities, and the social integration mechanism transitioned from clan networks to political collective networks. In the Latency dimension, although the sacred symbolism of religious buildings was weakened on the surface, many traditional spatial patterns and architectural images were preserved. For example, the overall architectural structure of Guanghui Palace has not been destroyed, and some traces of the carved beams and spatial divisions are still recognizable. These latent cultural symbols leave the possibility for the subsequent revival of cultural identity and partial restoration of faith functions. Even though the emotional mechanism of "honoring the gods" gradually faded in the psychological level of the residents, the sense of belonging to the space and the cultural memory did not disappear completely, but continued in an implicit way under the dominance of the political function(Ding, 2009). This reflects the logic of functional

adjustment and the transformation of social roles of Han communities under specific historical conditions.

Under the strong impetus of the planned economy system, the cultural landscape of the Han Chinese community in Nanxun Ancient Town underwent significant transformation between 1953 and 1980, characterized by the collectivization and standardization of daily life, the institutional restructuring of public life, and the gradual marginalization of religious beliefs from the core of spiritual life to private activities at the individual level. This cultural transformation was not an isolated phenomenon but rather a manifestation of the state ideology's deep intervention into the traditional way of life, reflecting a value system that prioritized "unity," "functionality," and "service to the collective." Although clan-based and local belief systems did not completely disappear, their visibility in spatial terms and their functional role in social life were both significantly reduced. The cultural landscape of Nanxun has shifted from a family-centric to an institutional-centric orientation, with cultural expressions in space becoming more rationalized and symbolized, laying the groundwork for deep-seated tensions and reflective foundations for subsequent stages of cultural reconstruction and value recognition.

4.1.4 Structural Adjustment Mechanisms under Spatial Functional Policy Orientation

In the period from 1953 to 1980, along with the comprehensive promotion of China's socialist construction, Nanxun ancient town of cultural space was deeply affected by the national policy orientation, experienced by the traditional family and the market logic dominated by the depth of the national collective function dominated by the adjustment. This period is in the "first five" to "fifth five" plan stage, China through the "five-year plan" established the national construction, industrial development, and social transformation as the core policy guidelines. Requirements for local spatial pattern and function to adapt to national strategic objectives. In particular, it was proposed in the First Five-Year Plan that major efforts should be concentrated on industrial construction consisting of 156 large-scale construction projects designed with the help of the Soviet Union for our country, which comprised 694 large- and medium-sized construction

projects, to lay the foundation for the establishment of China's socialist industrialization. Under this policy environment, the architectural space of the Han community in Nanxun was not only adjusted in terms of material form but also profoundly reconstructed in terms of social function, value identity, and collective behavioral norms.

The adaptive mechanism of the spatial system is manifested in the rapid response of various types of architectural functions to the requirements of the national economic plan and social organization (Luo, 2003). This trend of transformation can be demonstrated through typical architectural examples. Residential buildings, Zhang Shiming Residence, which once carried the family glory of private space, because of the war between the United States and North Korea, since 1953 was successively converted to military hospitals and warehouses, the original private properties, ceremonial functions were completely broken, the space has turned to serve the national public demand, reflecting the depth of space use and political ideology. Another example of commercial architecture, Nanxun Chamber of Commerce building has transformed an economic building independently managed by merchants to the office of Nanxun town government, symbolizing the reorganization of the state's spatial power over the traditional industrial and commercial class. These changes in the use of buildings not only reflect the actual operation of policy on spatial redistribution but also reflect the process of reconfiguring the original social relations and cultural perceptions of the Han community under the domination of policy.

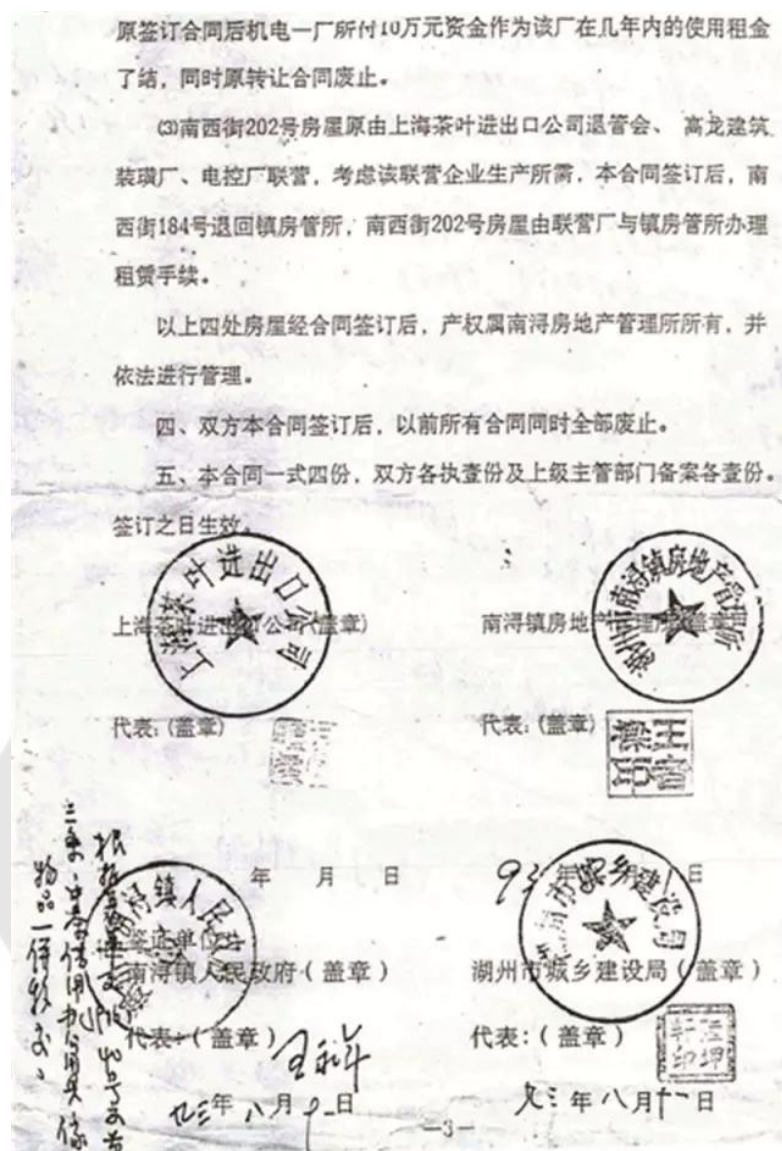


Figure 21 Zhang Shiming Residence and other private residences, sale and purchase contracts between the government and state-owned enterprises

Source: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?__biz=MjM5MzAwNDk1OA==&mid=206857578&idx=1&sn=5f0fcc5e93ba5af496029b72496c3c4e&chksm=2f3d699b184ae08dbe4f5f2e052c5327d2a2e31cfc8010d5681a7ef420d701fc2172a2ea3e39&scene=27

The restructuring of the Nanxun cultural space during this phase not only reflects the policy-driven dominant restructuring of the economic space but also demonstrates the profound intervention of space in the transformation of social organizations and

cultural structures. Economically, the cooperative system dominated agricultural and handicraft production, with residents' incomes determined by state allocation. The space was primarily used for public functions such as grain storage, collective offices, and education, reflecting the coercive coordination of space use through economic means; At the social level, the traditional clan-based social relationships were disrupted, and new organizational structures such as units and people's communes came to dominate community life. Neighborhood relationships became increasingly functionalized and institutionalized, forming a nested structure where "organization equals society"; religious activities were marginalized at the cultural level, traditional festivals were curtailed, and official propaganda replaced folk rituals as the dominant cultural content. Cultural symbols within the space also shifted towards visual expressions centered on state-sanctioned discourses such as collectivism and patriotism. This "economic-social-cultural" integration mechanism, centered on policy and mediated by space, was an essential pathway for the institutional restructuring of cultural space under the planned economy system, and left foundational traces and institutional inertia for subsequent spatial reassociation and cultural reconstruction.

The spatial functional adjustments during this period can be analyzed in depth using the AGIL theoretical model:

Adaptation

The architectural functions of Nanxun Ancient Town rapidly adapted to new policies and systems under the planned economy. Private spaces centered initially around families and merchants were transformed into public spaces serving the national economic system, such as granaries, hospitals, and government office buildings. Their spatial structures and functional layouts emphasized collectivism and efficiency. This transformation was a physical structural update and a spatial manifestation of adjustments to economic production relations, reflecting Nanxun's proactive adaptation to traditional economic models under agricultural collectivization policies and public-private partnerships in handicraft industries.

Goal attainment

Architectural spaces were assigned target functions related to national economic construction and political governance. Zhang Shiming's former residence was converted into a military hospital, and the Nanxun Chamber of Commerce became the town government office, illustrating space's service-oriented and goal-driven nature in meeting national governance needs. Through the redistribution of spatial resources, the state achieved centralized control over social material and organizational resources, thereby advancing core objectives such as agricultural collectivization and the initial layout of industry.

Integration

Along with the public ownership of space and functional transformation, social relationships within the community were also reshaped. The traditional social networks centered on clans and neighborhoods gradually gave way to institutional units such as production teams and communes. Residents' daily lives became highly collectivized under the "unitized" system, with shared space serving as an important vehicle for new forms of social integration. Additionally, the introduction of Soviet-assisted construction projects brought about a "Sino-Soviet fusion" in architectural forms and introduced external organizational norms and aesthetic systems, prompting Han Chinese communities to learn and internalize the social behavioral logic under the socialist ideology through spatial practices.

Latency

Although the traditional cultural system was marginalized on the surface, its underlying structure did not completely disappear but remained latent in the form of symbolic symbols or spatial components. For example, traditional roof forms or brick-and-wood elements can still be seen in Soviet-style architecture, and residents maintain their identification with traditional lifestyles and values in their daily use of these spaces. This cultural potential provided an internal foundation for later cultural revival.

Under the planned economy system from 1953 to 1980, the spatial adjustments in Nanxun Ancient Town exhibited a highly coordinated systemic interaction among the four functions of AGIL. The adaptive function was evident in the rapid incorporation of

traditional private spaces into the national governance system, such as the conversion of Zhang Shiming residence into a military hospital and grain warehouse, and the transformation of Qiu Jiajian Garden into a Soviet-assisted grain station. These examples demonstrated the swift response of spatial forms to policy objectives; the goal-achievement function served the strategic goals of national unified allocation and collective production through spatial reallocation, facilitating the transition from individual living spaces to the national material supply system; The integration function reinforces social organizational models through spatial collectivization, transforming neighborhood spatial relationships from clan-based to unit- and organization-led, and promoting the embedded construction of collective norms; The latent function manifests in the weakening of existing religious and family cultures and their replacement by national ideology, though traditional spatial forms such as roof styles are retained, serving as potential resources for future cultural memory reconstruction. The interaction among the four functions is manifested in a closed-loop mechanism of "spatial reconfiguration—achievement of social institutional goals—embedded organizational behavioral norms—continuation of cultural memory," constructing a highly centralized spatial governance model.






4.1.5 Aesthetic Convergence and Economic Homogenization Dominated by Publicity

(1) Aesthetic Value: Simplification and Decorative Weakening under the Orientation of Functional Priority

From 1953 to 1980, under the state-led planned economic system, architectural space gradually departed from the decorative aesthetic logic formed within the traditional Han community and shifted to the function-centered institutional use standard. Guided by the idea of "coordinated arrangement and centralized scheduling" for the use of spatial resources, the architectural style, detailing and visual language increasingly tended to be simple, unified and standardized, and traditional architectural decorations were generally weakened or even faded away at this stage. Architectural forms tend to be low-difference, strong-functional and manageable, constituting a direct expression of institutional aesthetic logic in physical space(Wan, 1991).

Prior to this, Nanxun ancient town of the original residential buildings to "pink walls and tiles, small tiles roofs, brick carvings and wood carvings" constitute the backbone of visual identification, showing a relatively strong regional aesthetic characteristics, spatial organization also reflects the "front hall after the bedchamber, the central axis of symmetry, layer into the order of etiquette "Before 1953, this kind of architecture emphasized the superposition of craftsmanship and symbols to construct the dignity and identity system of the family, which was a traditional aesthetic expression of "elaboration, refinement and symbolism". However, after the 1950s, due to the specificity of the era, these elements were gradually marginalized because they were closely related to the hierarchy and family symbols of the old society. A large number of traditional mansions were returned to units for use, and turned into dormitories, canteens, or storage places. In the actual transformation process of typical spaces such as Zhang Shiming Residence and the Baijianlou, the original delicate details such as carved doors and windows, wooden eaves, and courtyard levels were all removed, and replaced by a unified transformation of large areas of whitewash, closed aisles, and simplified structures, transforming the living space from "family order" to "family order". The living space was changed from "family order" to "collective use", and the value of architectural aesthetics was also changed.

Table 3 Nanxun Ancient Town Traditional Jiangnan Elements

Nanxun Traditional Jiangnan Elements				
				
whitewashed walls and white tiles	Tile roofing	a wall built around a horse's head	Brick carving gatehouse	roadside streets

The visual expression of commercial architecture has also undergone a fundamental transformation from "individual identification" to "institutional discipline".

Nanxun traditional business district, such as Sihang Dai, stores along the South River, initially through the plaque, the wall, carved doorway, family tradition of inscription, and other external decorations to strengthen the identity of the business and industry, belonging to the formation of a very recognizable visual style. This kind of decoration is not only a tool for commercial competition, but also a visual display of civic culture and industry self-discipline. However, under the planned economic system, commercial spaces were uniformly transformed into state-run places such as supply and marketing societies and cooperative stores. The facade was uniformly painted, decorative plaques were removed, the scale of windows and doors was simplified, the individual differences between the stores were compressed into a "uniform template", the overall commercial district showed a low degree of recognition, and a standardized visual pattern. Behind this is reflected in the "space can be controlled - symbols can be reproduced - visual missionary" logic of governance, aesthetics is no longer serving the goods and culture, but to serve the system's demand for order(Feng, 2000).

The aesthetic transformation of faith architecture reflects the deep coupling of spatial politics and visual order reconstruction. Taking Guanghui Palace as a representative, it was initially a vital folk temple in Nanxun, and its flying eaves and corners, painted beams and squares, and shrine murals constitute a highly decorative religious vocabulary, which is an essential spatial system for honoring the gods and demonstrating rituals. But in the 1950s, religion was categorized as "feudal superstition"; such buildings were emptied of space, converted into cultural halls, factory work areas, internal workstations, or meeting seats, and the original religious decorations were removed or covered. Walls were instead posted with propaganda slogans such as "Serve the People" and "The Great Leap Forward." Religious symbols completely gave way to ideological propaganda. The architectural vision was transformed from a "sacred totem" to a "political canvas. The architectural vision changed from a "sacred totem" to a "political canvas", and the spatial value changed from ritual bearing to organizational indoctrination.

Public buildings also show a structural evolution from diversity to templating. In the traditional period of the school, garden, trade unions, and other public spaces, due to the identity of the user and functional division of labor, the architectural form often adopts the central axis of symmetry, patio lighting, eave carvings, and other tectonic language, demonstrating a substantial functional-ceremonial-symbolic complexity. However, after 1953, these buildings were systematically transformed into street offices, cultural stations, communal meeting rooms, etc., which were used for unified propaganda, collective governance, and political mobilization. The architectural form tends to be "square - regular - unified", the roof is uniformly flat, the doors and windows are uniformly reduced, the decorative elements are all stripped, the simplification of the spatial decorations and the convergence of the visual style, which eventually formed a "system" that can be reproduced in large quantities. Visual template", whose aesthetic core is to serve administrative efficiency and organizational order.

This system-led spatial reconfiguration not only exists in the body of the building but also permeates the entire Nanxun visual culture system. Traditional "rhyme" exquisite cultural logic was "unified," saving the institutional logic of "practical" replaced. "Practical" system logic replaced, the individuality of the visual language was compressed, and functional priority has become the core standard of architectural form and aesthetic judgment (Liu, 2003). Further, the large-scale implantation of political propaganda images and institutional slogans strengthens the "ideological readability" of the space. Space no longer carries cultural connotations and identity meanings but becomes a physical terminal and visual communication device for the public management system (Anderson, 2005).

Table 4 Comparison table of architectural aesthetics of Nanxun Ancient Town Traditional

Building Type	Traditional phase (before 1953)	1953-1980 period
Residential Building	The house is characterized by hierarchy, symmetry, and rich brick and wood carvings; it expresses family identity and ethical structure	Decorative elements were removed, shared by multiple households, and structural modifications emphasized the need for uniformity.
Commercial Building	Plaques and column decorations are prominent, highlighting the identity of the business name and industry; the façade style is clearly differentiated	The original decorations were stripped away, the painting was unified and the facade was simplified, and the style of the commercial space was regulated by the system.
Religious Building	Religious decorations such as shrines, flying buttresses, and colorful paintings are prominent and express community beliefs and ritual orders	Religious elements were completely removed and the interior was converted into a factory or auditorium to carry out political propaganda and production functions
Public Building	The patio, lecture hall, and symmetrical structure are rich, emphasizing functional	Decoration is weakened and unified into office or administrative space,

	zoning and liturgical logic	emphasizing standardization and controlled visual expression
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During the planned economy system from the 1950s to the 1970s, new buildings in the ancient town of Nanxun exhibited an aesthetic characterized by functional prioritization and minimal decoration, heavily influenced by Soviet Stalinist architectural style, resulting in a "Sino-Soviet fusion" industrial architectural style. Such buildings emphasized structural regularity, symmetrical proportions, and simple forms, commonly featuring sloped roofs, thick brick walls, and a three-part structural layout, reflecting practicality and political symbolism. Influenced by Soviet-assisted construction projects under the First Five-Year Plan, the exterior of buildings was solemn and austere, with minimal decorative details, reinforcing national authority and collectivist consciousness. The Nanxun Grain Station's main grain warehouse and silk warehouse are typical examples of this period, featuring a simple and unified visual style.

Under the dominance of the planned economy, the architectural aesthetics of Nanxun Ancient Town exhibited highly institutionalized and functional characteristics. Traditional aesthetics were suppressed and marginalized during this period.

The dominance of minimalist institutional aesthetics

Under the state-led institutionalized aesthetic framework, Nanxun Ancient Town developed a highly homogenized visual landscape. Architectural styles were influenced by socialist realism aesthetics, emphasizing practicality and order, with decorative elements significantly reduced. Residents gradually accepted the aesthetic standards of "simplicity, neatness, and order." Individualized aesthetic expressions and regional differences were thus suppressed.

The Potential Persistence of Traditional Aesthetics

Despite the dominance of institutional aesthetics, traditional aesthetics did not wholly disappear. Some conventional elements, such as wood carvings and plaques, are still preserved in old houses, though inconspicuous, they persist within the architectural fabric. Meanwhile, festive decorations and family rituals continue to pursue

a sense of ceremony and aesthetic context, constituting an implicit transmission of cultural memory. This aesthetic undercurrent surviving under institutional suppression lays the foundation for emotional and visual resources for future cultural revival.

(2) Economic Values: Stagnant Market Mechanisms and State Configuration-Oriented Space Use Structures

Economic dimension, between 1953 and 1980 Nanxun ancient town of architectural space experienced a profound functional turn, the original family-run, community self-organization as the dominant logic of space use by the national unified configuration mechanism to be fully replaced. Collectivization system will be residential, commercial, faith and public buildings all into a unified production organization system and administrative management system, architectural space in this stage gradually lost the ability to serve as a platform for economic self-organization. In terms of commercial space, in the early 1950s Nanxun traditional commercial network in a number of types of property rights units - including private silk firms, Chamber of Commerce, private workshops, etc. - are included in the state-owned system. Nanxun Chamber of Commerce, for example, the building was originally for the local business community industry self-regulation and business exchanges in the center, was returned to the town government office space, no longer assume the function of trade coordination and market aggregation, turned into an administrative operation place. Similarly, the original active in the city river, Dongshi River along the silk, tea and wholesale wharf, or was requisitioned for warehousing land, or because of the prohibition of business policy closed down, the original spatial structure, although the physical level exists, but its economic function has been terminated in its entirety.

Planned economic system for the integrated use of commercial space not only changed the ownership of space, but also reshaped the use of space logic and economic behavior patterns. The market mechanism based on the supply and demand relationship in the transaction activities were replaced by the administrative command mechanism (Li, 2003), price, profit, competition and other traditional economic parameters no longer dominate the space value assessment, which makes the economic significance of Nanxun building by its ability to carry the task and decided,

rather than its circulation in the market and the efficiency of the use of space. This kind of top-down redistribution of space logic, greatly reducing the autonomy of space and economic activities between the correlation, so that the use of architectural space is highly dependent on the national macro scheduling and planning and implementation of the command system. During this period, the organization of residents' economic activities also underwent an institutional transformation, with the collectivization system abolishing the status of the family as the basic economic unit, and the residents being incorporated into the organizational structure of units, production teams, and people's communes, where labor and output were completed through the system of work credits and the distribution of collective proceeds, and the living space was used more for arranging the labor force rather than for promoting the family's economic activities. Against this background, the original multi-functional use of residential buildings - such as front stores and back houses, family workshops, and mansion-type handicrafts - is difficult to sustain, and the value of space use is only configured around the collective labor organization, with the economic mobility of the individual being severely limited. In addition, faith and public space, which originally had both social and economic attributes, were also reconfigured by functionalization during this period. After losing the functions of incense economy and blessing consumption, places of faith such as Guanghui Palace took on the tasks of propaganda and education or industrial production to serve the collective economy; Changsheng Pagoda, as a private monumental building, was converted into a martyrs' cemetery, and its commemorative and exhibition functions were shifted to the use of political indoctrination. The economic attributes of these spaces are no longer reflected in the marketization of their use rights or the circulation of their property rights, but rather in their resource-carrying capacity within the institutional framework, such as whether they have enough space to accommodate collective activities and whether they are able to take on the task of education and dissemination.

This change in the structure of spatial use reflects the deeper logic of the planned economy, in which the local economy is dependent on the State for allocation.

Economic power is concentrated in the hands of the central and higher organizations, and localities and individuals are only executors and submissives, lacking the ability to plan and integrate resources on their own. Architectural space is no longer the driving force of economic growth, but a container for the completion of planned tasks (Tao, 2004). As a result of the concentration of property rights in space, the administrativeization of the right to use space, and the unification of economic activity units, architectural space, which should be flexible and multifunctional, has been confined to a single task, and is unable to be spontaneously adjusted according to the needs of the society and the dynamics of the market.

Therefore, between 1953 and 1980 Nanxun ancient town building space, the logic of its economic value presents a high degree of institutionalization, de-marketization, heavy configuration, light circulation characteristics. Commercial behavior, self-employment, space reuse and other diversified economic forms during this period was greatly compressed or even suspended, the residents of the economic activities rely on the national resource allocation, the vitality of the local economy into the macro-planning system of obedience to the ability to architectural space has become the basic unit of the implementation of the administrative objectives of the planned economic system. Although this system effectively enhanced the centralized efficiency of resource allocation and the unity of organizational implementation at a particular stage in history, it also limited to a certain extent the ability of the lower spatial levels to regulate themselves and the flexible functioning of the community economy, making it necessary to face a more complex process of adjustment when promoting the multifunctional use of space and the transformation of mechanisms in the following years.

4.2 Period of transition of the economic system

In the 1980s, China entered a critical phase of economic reform, when the country began the transition from a highly centralized planned economy to a market-oriented socialist market economy. With the convening of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee in 1978, the state introduced a series of policies aimed

at "mobilizing local initiative" and "activating microeconomic units", such as the "household contract responsibility system", in which the farm household is responsible for agricultural production as an integral part of the household. For example, under the "household contract responsibility system", the agricultural household, as a relatively independent economic entity, is contracted to manage the land and other large-scale means of production of the collective, and to carry out production and management independently in accordance with the provisions of the contract. In addition to a small portion of the income from their operations, which is paid to the collective in accordance with the terms of the contract and to the State for taxes, all of it goes to the farm household. Policies such as the "development of the individual economy" and the "liberalization of the urban market for small commodities" have greatly stimulated the vitality of grass-roots society. At this stage, the national urban development policy also began to tilt towards "improving people's livelihoods, revitalizing culture, and boosting the local economy", and gradually weakened the high degree of control over architecture and space. Correspondingly, there was a loosening of cultural policies, with the reintroduction of the "Two lou Principles", the basic spirit of which was the policy guideline that different forms and styles of art could be freely developed, and that different schools of thought in science could be freely debated. As well as the gradual restoration of religious sites, an atmosphere of policy tolerance was formed, allowing the originally suppressed local culture and traditional spatial values to partially return. Especially in the late period of the Eighth Five-Year Plan and the Ninth Five-Year Plan, the state further took the development of cultural industry as one of the important directions of economic restructuring, and promoted the integration of local cultural resources with tourism, education, social services and other fields, which opened up the possibility of reusing traditional architecture and cultural spaces. The integration of local cultural resources with tourism, education, social services and other fields was promoted, opening up institutional channels for the reuse of traditional architecture and cultural spaces.

For Nanxun ancient town, this stage of policy change breaks the previous "collective ownership, unified management" as the characteristics of the spatial control model, including residential, commercial, faith and public buildings, including cultural space to obtain the redefinition and the possibility of use. Encouraged by the national policy, local governments have begun to explore the combination of "restoration of the old as the old" and "functional transformation" to utilize the spatial resources of ancient towns. For example, the property rights of some traditional mansions were returned to individual residents, commercial outlets were changed from state-run to individually operated, some temples were restored to religious use, and even new forms of space utilization such as cultural display and cultural creation pilots appeared. This period also laid the "cultural space that is the development of resources," the concept of transformation of the foundation, so that Nanxun in the latter part of the development of cultural tourism and creative economy, with the institutional support and policy experience of the double preparation. It can be said that the pre-reform and opening up of the system of relaxation and policy innovation, for the Han community to re-organize cultural identity, revival of traditional values and achieve the multiple goals of economic development to provide a key structural turning point.

Table 5 Sixth Five-Year Plan - Tenth Five-Year Plan Overview Chart

timing	full name	important event	core objective
1980-1985	Sixth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China	The State Council initiated its preparation in 1980, and the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee proposed amendments.	Continuing to adjust the national economy, promoting the household contract responsibility system in rural areas, and expanding urban business autonomy

		Approved by the National People's Congress in December 1982	
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Table 5 (continue)

timing	full name	important event	core objective
1980-1985	Sixth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China	The State Council initiated its preparation in 1980. Approved by the National People's Congress in December 1982	Continuing to adjust the national economy, promoting the household contract responsibility system in rural areas, and expanding urban business autonomy
1986-1990	Seventh Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China	In September 1984, the State Department initiated the preparation of In September 1985 the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party adopted the Party's	Insist on putting reform in the first place, putting the improvement of economic efficiency in a prominent position, adjusting industrial structure

		recommendations. Approved by the National People's Congress in March 1986	
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Table 5 (continue)

timing	full name	important event	core objective
1991-1995	Ten-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and the Outline of the Eighth Five-Year Plan of the People's Republic of China	The State Department initiated the preparation, in early 1990. Approval of the outline by the National People's Congress in April 1991. Program adjustments were made in 1993	Building the road to socialism with Chinese characteristics, promoting reform and opening up, and maintaining the sustained, stable and coordinated development of the national economy
1996-2000	Outline of the Ninth Five-Year Plan and the Vision for 2010 for the National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China	In March 1993 the State Department initiated the preparation of In September 1995 the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party adopted	Promoting the transformation of the mode of economic growth and the initial establishment of the socialist economic system, and fully completing

		the Party's recommendations. Outline approved by the National People's Congress in March 1996	the second strategic step of modernization.
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Table 5 (continue)

timing	full name	important event	core objective
2001-2005	Outline of the Tenth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China	In June 1999, the State Department initiated the preparation of The October 2000 plenary session of the Party Central Committee adopted the Party's recommendations. Outline approved by the National People's Congress in March 2001	Take structural adjustment as the main line, reform and opening-up and scientific and technological progress as the driving force, and improve people's living standards as the fundamental starting point.

4.2.1 Economic structure: industrial development and individual business ownership

Following the implementation of China's reform and opening-up policies in 1981, the economic structure of Nanxun Ancient Town entered a period of profound transformation. The collective production model under the planned economy gradually

disintegrated, and the local economy shifted towards a diversified development path guided by market mechanisms. Against this backdrop, township industries in Nanxun rapidly emerged, with township enterprises and joint-venture factories gradually dominating the industrial landscape, providing crucial support for local fiscal revenue and employment. Meanwhile, the central government's policy legalizing individual businesses stimulated residents' economic vitality. Traditional residential buildings were gradually converted into front-shop, back-residence-style family workshops and small shops, with individual entrepreneurship becoming one of the most vibrant economic forms in Nanxun Ancient Town's streets. This period of economic structural transformation not only reshaped the logic of spatial use but also provided a practical foundation for the reactivation of cultural spaces.

Initially, many of the original commercial spaces that were used as warehouses, offices, and supply and marketing societies during the period of collectivization, such as the stores along the Tongjin Bridge and the teahouse stores in the Old Street, were re-taken over by individual merchants. They restored the function of free trade of local commodities such as silk, local specialties, daily necessities, etc., bringing initial market vitality to the old town. At the same time, a new type of business form also began to sprout in the ancient town under the encouragement of the policy. From the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, under the influence of the initial development of tourism, some commercial stores began to try to introduce cultural elements and service experience content, such as selling paintings and calligraphy, embroidery, tea, scented sachets, etc., with the "Jiangnan imagery" of goods. Goods. Traditional stores along the street, such as Guanghui Street, Nandong Street, Zhangjialang and other places on the ground floor of the old mansion was transformed into a store in front of the residence, residential and commercial mixed use of flexible commercial structure, so that the commercial building in the form of retaining the traditional façade of the Nanxun style, functionally, it is gradually towards the logic of market-oriented operation. Store owners are mostly local residents, both cultural inheritors, but also the main market, reflecting the integration of small-scale business and local cultural expression mode. More

importantly, the commercial space in this stage is no longer a purely economic trading place but gradually becomes a carrier for community interaction and cultural identity reconstruction. For example, some traditional stores have been restored as pastry stores and pickle stores, which not only sell local food, but also retain the display and explanation of traditional production processes; there are also small stores of arts and crafts and wood carvings, which have become the socialization places for young people and handicraft lovers. This kind of commercial form of cultural expression, combining trading and display, strengthens the composite nature of commercial buildings and community embeddedness, so that in addition to its economic function, it assumes the multiple responsibilities of cultural dissemination and social interaction.

In the context of this commercial recovery, some very local landmarks of the traditional old store also resumed business one after another, becoming a vivid symbol of the return of traditional commercial culture. One of the particularly famous, is located in Nanxun District, Huzhou City, Tai'an Road, South East Street, No. 18, the first floor of the noodle shop. This has a hundred years of history of the old store, reopened in this period, quickly restored its unique position in the hearts of Nanxun people. Scholar House is not only a noodle shop, but also a cultural landmark, carrying the Jiangnan water town on the "gold list, the future is bright" and cultural heritage. As a signature product, "Scholar's Noodle" is made with simple but sophisticated ingredients, the noodles are long and thin with toughness, and the soup is as clear as amber, with a fresh aroma in the mouth. It is said that eating a bowl of Scholar's Noodle means a smooth career and a bright future, and thus it is often used by local residents as a celebration when they go to higher education, join the workforce, get married and other joyous occasions. This dietary behavior has long surpassed the desire for food and become a cultural practice with a sense of ritual. The store retains the old-fashioned decorative style of wooden lattice windows, green brick walls and red plaques and banners, creating a simple but historical space atmosphere that allows diners to experience cultural identity and emotional belonging between bowls of noodles. Scholar House Noodle House also attracted a lot of media attention, including China Central

Television "tongue on the China" program team, becoming an important window to spread the cultural memory of Nanxun and traditional crafts. This local flavor, cultural symbols and brand value fusion in one of the commercial spaces, in the whole Nanxun ancient town commercial system has a very high representative. It not only restored the local food traditions but also reconstructed Nanxun people in the new era of cultural identity, become a key bridge between the revival of traditional business and community identity reconstruction.



Figure 22 Guo Yuan Lou Noodle House

Source: Photographed by the author

Meanwhile, with the gradual establishment of a market economy system and the promotion of the "township enterprise" policy, the Nanxun region has profoundly restructured its industrial structure. Township enterprises emerged as the core driving force behind local economic growth, with wood flooring manufacturing and elevator production standing out as particularly prominent sectors, eventually developing into pillar industries of the regional economy. The wood flooring industry built upon traditional woodworking techniques by introducing modern production equipment and standardised processes, transforming from traditional workshops to large-scale manufacturing. The elevator industry, meanwhile, accelerated the modernisation of local manufacturing capabilities by collaborating with foreign partners to introduce advanced

technologies and management expertise. During this period, traditional craftsmanship and modern manufacturing coexisted and integrated, preserving Nanxun's original craftsmanship aesthetics and manual traditions while leveraging external resources to enhance product value and market competitiveness. This drove Nanxun's transition from a traditional agricultural economy to a manufacturing-based economy centred on light industry, laying the technical, capital, and brand foundations for the subsequent revival of the cultural tourism industry. This development also affirmed that the Han Chinese community in Nanxun had already developed a communal character marked by the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures.

Generally speaking, during 1981-2005, Nanxun ancient town commercial building has realized the historic transformation from plan control to market driven, and in the spatial structure, business subjects and functional types show obvious diversification and transitional characteristics. Traditional stores and new cultural stores coexist, individual business and tourism services coexist, commercial space not only to retain the traditional texture, but also constantly embedded in the new value expression system. The composite and flexibility of this commercial space not only marks the recovery and maturity of Nanxun's market mechanism but also lays an important foundation for the later tourism commercial landscaping.

4.2.2 Social relations: neighbourhood interaction, revival of diverse folk customs, rebuilding of employment relationships

With the deepening of reform and opening, the social relationship system of Nanxun Ancient Town underwent significant changes between 1981 and 2005. Against the backdrop of "de-institutionalization" and the return of property rights, the original social structure dominated by collective organizations gradually disintegrated. The interaction patterns between neighbors transitioned from institutional organizational relationships to spontaneous, emotional connections, and the human network within the community became active once again. Concurrently, with the rise of the individual economy and the redistribution of space, diverse folk activities such as local festivals, temple fairs, and traditional wedding and funeral rituals began to revive, creating a more flexible and diverse cultural landscape. Furthermore, the increase in family workshops,

small businesses, and homestay operations has facilitated the reconstruction of employment relationships at the micro level, gradually forming a new social interaction model between employers and employees based on contractual agreements. This marks the gradual transition of the social structure of the Han Chinese community in Nanxun from collective organizations to market logic and interpersonal negotiation mechanisms.

Into the 1980s, with the gradual relaxation of religious policy and the increasingly high atmosphere of local cultural revival, Nanxun ancient town of faith architecture has undergone a spatial reconstruction process. Originally in the collectivization period was weakened or even abandoned temples, ancestral halls and other spaces, and gradually restore its original rituals and folk rituals function, re-emerged as an important node of the cultural heritage of the Han community. At this stage, faith buildings not only recovered their spatial attributes of religious activities, but also closely integrated with community daily life, festivals and customs, and social interactions at the functional level, becoming the core carrier of the integration mechanism of cultural space.

Among them, the functional return of Guanghui Palace is the most representative. The temple was originally designated as public property after the founding of New China and was used for army auditorium activities, but since the reform and opening up, it was rebuilt in 2003, gradually restoring its traditional function of religious beliefs and re-establishing itself as a spatial focal point for the integration of emotions and memory of identity within the community. Every year in the first month of the Lunar Calendar, Guanghui Palace's Spring Festival Prayer Program attracts a large number of residents to come and participate on their own initiative, recreating the bustling scene of the temple's entrance with its incense burning. Ms. Weng 2024, an interviewee, mentioned in her recollection, "At that time, the temple entrance was crowded with people, and everyone, no matter how old they were, would gather at the temple to pray for blessings for the New Year." This behavior is not only a religious practice, but also a highly symbolic social ritual that reinforces the Han community's identification with local gods, community spirit and historical memory.

At the same time, folkloric practices such as weddings, funerals, birthdays and celebrations have gradually returned to the network of interactions between the space of belief and the space of habitation. For example, in traditional weddings, the ceremonies of "making a new bed", "crossing the hall", and "making a bed of joy" are often completed in the main hall or ancestral hall of the family, which are not only important ceremonial acts within the family but also reflect the inheritance of family honor and the spirit of rituals. It is not only an important ritual within the family but also reflects the inheritance of family honor and the spirit of etiquette. In the dowry, items symbolizing reproduction and blessings, such as "silkworm flower plaques," "red eggs," and "grandchildren cakes," are often arranged and presented by neighbors, strengthening inter-community collaboration and cultural memory ("Nanning: The South China Sea"). This strengthens the collaborative relationship and cultural memory between communities (X. Feng, 2005). The activation of this type of folklore space strengthens the structure of daily interactions within the community, so that the faith building not only serves the festivals but also extends to the cultural rituals at various points in the life cycle. However, with the change in social rhythm and the popularization of modern consumption methods, there has been a structural adjustment of folk ritual spaces. More and more young people are choosing to hold their weddings in commercial venues such as restaurants and hotels, no longer centered on the family home or ancestral hall. However, it is worth noting that even though the function of the space has moved out, the symbolic elements of the ceremony are still retained in folk practice. For example, behaviors with spatial memories such as "sticking red double happiness", "delivering wedding candies" and "offering tea" persist, indicating that traditional culture has not disappeared, but has been translated and continued in new spatial forms. The interviewee, Mr. Zhao (Zhaohua) Interviewee Zhao 2024 pointed out, "Nowadays, many people don't hold banquets at home, for convenience and style." This change in spatial logic suggests that the relationship between traditional beliefs and cultural space has shifted from physical attachment to the embedding of cultural connotations.

At the same time, in the birthday celebration, Nanxun people still retain a more complete traditional customs, permanent "Shoutang" in front of the door or hall, set up the tribute table, and with the "birthday noodles", "birthday peach" and other folklore Food to honor the elderly, neighbors and friends also visited the blessing, reflecting the cultural logic of the community's collective blessing (X. Feng, 2005). In the process of these rituals, the cultural space is transformed into an important place for emotional connection and social interaction, realizing the social integration from family identity to neighborhood consensus. Similarly, due to the weakening of family ties, individual small families tend to feel a certain distance from the extended family, especially among younger generations, where this sense of distance can become particularly pronounced.

Further, in the 21st century, driven by the logic of cultural display, the integration of faith space and festivals began to enter the stage of cultural landscaping and experiential development. For example, the Nanxun Lantern Festival combines traditional lantern techniques with modern projection technology, which not only maintains the ceremonial sense of the Lantern Festival's lantern-viewing custom but also attracts tourists to stop and participate with the help of modern means of communication. Faith spaces such as temples, ancestral halls are gradually incorporated into the tourism system, become a cultural display, social communication medium. Festivals promote the reinterpretation and recoding of cultural spaces through the participation of tourists, so that traditional spaces are no longer exclusive to the local area, but become a shared cultural field constructed by local residents and foreign tourists.

From a structural functionalist perspective, this transformation reflects the dual function of faith architecture between latent cultural mechanisms and social integration mechanisms. It retains the function of spiritual totem in traditional society but also re-establishes the relational bonds of spatial cultural identity through festive rituals and folkloric activities to interact with visitors. A scholar in his study points out (Zhang et al., 2011) that "the interactivity of a cultural space relies on the identity and participation of

its users, and festivals are an effective path to activate this participation." The Nanxun experience shows that the function of faith buildings is no longer limited to religion but is translated into a triple structure of cultural memory, social identity and community interaction through diverse social uses.

Therefore, from 1981 to 2005, the process of reactivation of faith buildings in Nanxun was not only the result of institutional liberalization, but also the result of the intertwined promotion of community cultural needs and social integration strategies. In this stage, faith architecture became a dynamic cultural platform, building a continuously renewed cultural space system between tradition and modernity, and promoting Han community cultural space towards openness, diversity and regeneration.

Table 6 Nanxun Folklore Classification and Description

Folklore category	folklore	timing	clarification
manufacturing process	rice farming practices	Throughout the year, focusing on spring	Includes agricultural festivals and blessings such as whipping spring cows, opening and closing rice-planting gates, burning incense pagodas, and the Chunshe Temple Fair.
	mulberry and silk weaving custom	The twelfth day of the lunar month, Ching Ming, and the month of silkworms (April)	Includes the rituals of silkworm flower birthdays, sweeping the silkworm flower fields, getting rid of silkworms, looking forward to silkworm

			letters, and thanking silkworms for their flowers.
	The Silkworm Cat	Lunar March to April	Making "Silkworm Cats" to pray for the repulsion of rats and pests.

Table 6 (continue)

Folklore category	folklore	timing	clarification
customs	the custom of building houses	full year	Selection of time and date, ceremonies, dedication, etc. in house construction
	decorate with flowers	Silkworm Month, Festivals	Silkworm flower jewelry is worn and made to symbolize good luck
	silk floss	After cocoon season	Turning silk cocoons into silk floss, part of traditional craftsmanship
	a horizontal tablet for silkworms	During the Silkworm Flower Festival	A good-luck ornament to hang in the silkworm room to pray for the success

			of the silkworms.
	celebrate a birthday	personal birthday	Birthday customs, including offerings and celebrations
	Hundred Flowers Birthday and Capsicum Birthday	February 12 and March 3 of the lunar calendar	Women's collective celebrations related to nature and festivals

Table 6 (continue)

Folklore category	folklore	timing	clarification
customs	the Mid-Autumn Festival on 15th of 8th lunar month	August 15 of the lunar calendar	Enjoying the moon, worshipping the moon, and eating mooncakes
	Yellow Rice - Winter and Spring Rice - Steamed Grain Rice	Seasonal agro-processing	Local Specialty Rice Foods and How to Make Them
	Chun-yuen-tung's "Three Treasures of Tea and Food"	perennial	Famous local tea food brands and their representative products
	Nanxun Xiang Da Dao Cai	curing season	Nanxun specialties, traditional pickle technology
	green tea with smoked beans	perennial	Local Traditional Tea
	Nanxun water	perennial	The traditional

	market custom		lifestyle of using boats for transportation and trading on the water
social custom	the custom of building bridges	When the bridge was built	Blessing and groundbreaking ceremonies prior to bridge construction, etc.

Table 6 (continue)

Folklore category	folklore	timing	clarification
	teahouse	perennial	A place for social interaction and information exchange
	Water Dragon Boat Festival and Water Dragon Boat	Dragon Boat Festival and Ching Ming	Water Festivals and Competitions
social custom	Rural childlessness/	In the event of a major family change	Continuation of the lineage through adoption, establishment of heirs, etc.
	division of a large family in smaller groups	Elderly parents or children upon marriage	Distribution of family property and responsibilities
	Civil contracts and	Sale of property,	Modalities for the

	pledges	marriage, etc.	conclusion and validation of contractual instruments
	the custom of taking on disciples and worshipping their masters	When you first learn a skill	Ceremony for the establishment of the mentor-apprentice relationship

Table 6 (continue)

Folklore category	folklore	timing	clarification
liturgy of life	Fertility practices	Pregnancy to full term	A series of etiquette from pregnancy, labor and delivery to full moon
	marriage customs	Betrothal to marriage	Marriage etiquette process, including welcoming the bride, wedding banquet, etc.

In summary, between 1981 and 2005, the social relationships within the Han Chinese community of Nanxun Ancient Town underwent a profound transformation from institutionally driven collective relationships to market-driven individual relationships. Unneighborly emotional bonds were revitalized under the impetus of property rights restoration and spatial autonomy. At the same time, the revival of folk customs restored the community's cultural memory and strengthened the cohesion of cultural identity.

Meanwhile, the reconstruction of employment relationships based on market mechanisms reflected the refinement of social division of labor and the diversification of occupational identities. This phase of social structural reorganization not only laid the interpersonal foundation for the community's cultural space restructuring but also provided a stable and resilient social support network for subsequent cultural-economic transformation.

4.2.3 Lifestyle: Return to traditional culture and property rights awareness, modernisation of architecture and lifestyle

From 1981 to 2005, as the economic system gradually transitioned from a planned economy to a market economy, the cultural landscape of Nanxun Ancient Town also underwent significant changes. The restoration of property rights not only reignited residents' sense of belonging to traditional buildings but also prompted them to gradually reconnect with traditional culture through self-renovation and spatial reutilization. In this context, traditional cultural spaces such as clan halls and courtyard houses were reactivated, serving both as living spaces and as carriers of family memories and community culture. Meanwhile, the introduction of modern lifestyles and consumption concepts also prompted updates in building functions and usage patterns. Several historical buildings, while retaining their original appearance, were endowed with new commercial, exhibition, and social attributes, reflecting the interactive coordination between cultural continuity and functional rejuvenation.

In this evolutionary process, "family school - school - social library" constitutes the key chain of Nanxun cultural space function reconstruction, but also for the redefinition of the function of public buildings to provide a historical and practical support logic. First of all, as the family's internal education space of the family school, in the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China was the Nanxun gentry class commonly set up cultural venues, in the family school, the elders personally presided over the education of their children and grandchildren, teaching the "Four Books", "Five Classics", exegetical poetry and literature, and pay more attention to the "family style" "family discipline" "intergenerational transmission, including respect for elders, loyalty and honesty, hard work and thrift, propriety, justice, honesty and shame and other moral norms. Nanxun

Town Journal" mentioned that the late Qing Dynasty, Nanxun's gentry and merchant class have private schools in every house, especially Zhang, Liu, Shen three big families as a representative. Interview material also shows that a resident recalled his grandfather had personally taught family rules and family motto, which has "no bullying, no lawsuits, no gambling," and other content, in today's hearing still has a deep ethical value. These private school settings and the inheritance of the "style" formed the roots of the moral structure of the Han community in Nanxun. These cultural and educational space in the building belongs to the family private, but its value function has transcended the family category, become the early cultivation of social morality and cultural capital platform.

As times change, the function of the family school gradually replaced by modern schools, but the role of cultural space in the educational heritage has not been weakened, but in another form to be continued. In the interview, the interviewee Ms. Weng recalled, she went to elementary school in the 1970s, the school is in Nanxun five famous gardens, the first of the "Yiyuan". The government transformed the cultural space that originally belonged to a famous private garden into a public educational resource, providing a place of learning for the children of the town. This spatial reuse not only reflects the government attaches great importance to the function of education but also highlights the Nanxun Han community will be "the best place for education," the value of the concept. Similarly, the silk industry hall, a commercial building was also transformed in the 1980s "silk industry elementary school". This process of functional transformation shows that in the process of modernization; traditional cultural spaces continue to play their latent cultural functions through public education. The building that originally served for silk business meetings and industrial exchanges was transformed into a space that serves the education of children and youth in the community, which not only continues the spatial logic of "cultural space" but also strengthens the reproduction mechanism of education as a core value of the society. It is worth noting that these school functions are not simply spatial replacements, but in the content of education, community participation and cultural atmosphere to continue to retain the spiritual core

of the Han people's emphasis on education. These examples show that Nanxun's public cultural buildings have realized the continuation and transformation of cultural inheritance paths through the redistribution of spatial functions in different historical periods.



Figure 23 Silk Elementary School in the 1980s

Source: <https://www.douyin.com/note/7289838625976519993>

If the school is the modern inheritance of the spirit of the family school, then located in Xiaolianzhuang JiaYeTang library represents a high degree of integration of public cultural space in Nanxun and social transformation. It not only reflects the cultural pursuits of Nanxun gentry families, but also on the social level to assume the central role of public cultural reproduction. Located in the west bank of the river in the city of Liu's small Lianzhuang in the "Jiayetang library" was built in the Qing dynasty during the reign of the Tongzhi period, the peak period of the collection of more than 70,000 volumes of books, known as "Jiangnan folk collection of the most books". Its owner, yong Liu for Nanxun richest man, not only attach importance to industrial development, but also

promote Confucianism, library both for the family private school, but also from time to time to open to the scholar lectures and reading place, not only is Nanxun scholars "respect Confucianism and literature" symbol, but also become a set of indoctrination, display, collection, interaction function in one of the cultural space. (Ding 2009) that, as a symbolic space for the intellectual class, the cultural function of the library goes beyond the collection of books and reading, but is a symbol of the cultural center of the community, whose existence highlights the importance of a community's academic and ethical, and through a series of means such as book collection, lecturing, teaching, and so on, make the cultural identity of the internalized into the daily life of the components. Even in the midst of modern wars and cultural changes, the Xiaolianzhuang Book Depository has maintained its basic structure, and is still used as a museum and a base for literature and history research. The functional evolution of this space reflects the efforts of the traditional elite family to create a cultural landmark to realize the influence of the community and the continuation of cultural heritage. The collection of the library is dominated by documentary texts, including Confucian classics, historical archives, and local chronicles, reflecting the typical Han literary tradition. In the operation mechanism of the library, in addition to the use of family members, it has long been open to local scholars, scholars and even foreign researchers, with strong public attributes. This cultural space transcends the private domain of the family and becomes an important platform for social and cultural sharing. According to literature, Jiayetang has organized much local cultural research, calligraphy exhibition, reading and other activities, is an important place of education, research and cultural identity of Nanxun area. In addition, the collection of books building with public education and cultural accumulation of double function, in promoting the development of Nanxun community culture has played an important role. According to the Huzhou City Cultural Commissioner Zhang Jian (Zhang 2024): "The Book Depository symbolizes the Nanxun people's belief in the core of culture, that is, the collection of culture in order to pass it on, not to show off, but only to let the next generation know the books and sense of reason." This spatial

transformation not only preserves the homage to knowledge and culture but also reflects the community's intrinsic pursuit of cultural identity.

It is worth emphasizing that the town of Nanxun in May 2, 1949, to achieve peaceful liberation, in the early days of the establishment of the new regime, the protection of cultural heritage here has been the central government attaches great importance to. According to information records, the Liberation War army south, Premier Zhou Enlai had specially instructed Commander Chen Yi to send troops to focus on the protection of the two major collections in Zhejiang, Nanxun Jiayetang and Ningbo's Tianyi Pavilion, in order to prevent the war wave, resulting in cultural losses. It is in this kind of care and political commitment, Jiayetang can be preserved intact, become Nanxun town of many cultural spaces in the only one since the completion of the building has never been used for other purposes. Its spatial structure and cultural functions in the war, reform and social transformation in the continuation of the stability of the continuation of the 1984, zhejiang provincial people's government once again allocated two hundred and twenty thousand yuan to JiaYeTang comprehensive repairs, make its house a new look, and further establish its position in nanxun as a symbol of the spirit and cultural center. This system and material level of long-term support, not only to ensure the continuation of the physical form of space, but also to ensure that its cultural functions in the era of uninterrupted operation, become the Han community cultural heritage system in the irreplaceable solid fulcrum.



Figure 24 Jiayetang Collection in Nanxun Ancient Town

Source: Photographed by the author

During this period Nanxun also built a new typical public building Nanxun Wenyuan, it is known as "interpretation of the ancient town of Nanxun order". The garden by the Nanxun town government and Zhejiang Jiuan Public Welfare Co., Ltd. in 1999 to build, covers an area of 60 acres, of which the water area of 30 acres. The garden is surrounded by greenery, pavilions scattered, relying on Nanxun's rich history and humanities resources, through modern gardening concepts, to build a cultural landscape, but also with the educational dissemination and spiritual remembrance function of the composite garden space. "Jiangnan good, the most memorable is Nanxun" CCTV "China's top ten charming towns" comment, in the space design of the park has been a specific interpretation. Wen Park contains a number of thematic exhibition halls, in which the Red Army Long March Tracking Museum, the most iconic, the name of the museum by the founding general Zhang Aiping inscription. The museum tells Nanxun reporter Luo Kaifu field retracing the whole process of the Long March Road, and treasures "half a quilt" story of the three female Red Army used in the history of objects, reflecting the national memory of the local narrative and local dissemination. The exhibition hall not only has high historical educational value but also becomes an important point for visitors to remember the martyrs and baptize their spirit. Adjacent to the "Xu Chi Memorial Hall", displaying the life and creation of the Nanxun literature, including his masterpiece "Goldbach's Conjecture" as well as Chairman Mao's handwritten gift of "Poetry in the words of Zhi" precious historical materials, emphasizing the continuation of the spirit of the intellectuals in the Nanxun cultural genealogy. In addition to the theme of revolutionary history, the Garden also contains a number of artists commemorative space: such as "Yao Zhuzhu Dance Art Museum" presents the first generation of dancers in Nanxun growth trajectory, "Wu Shougu Art Museum", "Li Dazhen Art Museum" display of calligraphy and painting works and the spiritual world of celebrities, conveying the "treasure of the world, the people and the spirit of the place," the pride of the local culture. Monument gallery, golden dog group sculpture, "town history pavilion" and "sericulture Lefu" inscription and other historical elements of the

installation, in the space to evoke the viewer's traditional industries, lifestyle and spiritual pursuit of Nanxun as a whole memories. Respondent Ms. Wang (Wang 2024) noted, "Many community activities are held in the three pavilions, including painting and calligraphy classes, non-heritage experience classes, and 'neighborhood reading clubs'-this place is not just for tourists, but also for our own cultural space." The construction of this cultural service platform reflects the high adaptability of cultural spaces in integrating diverse needs. It is mentioned in the book *Dui Hong Xi Nanxun* that "the emergence of the three pavilions of Wenxuan is a symbol of the function of the cultural space in Nanxun Ancient Town from the traditional rituals to the modern structure of cultural governance, which not only optimizes the use of the space, but also rebuilds the social significance of the space" (Yuan et al., 2002).



Figure 25 Nanxun Wenxuan

Source:https://news.qq.com/rain/a/20230314A05BMT00?suid=&media_id=

Nanxun Wenxuan is not only a contemporary expression of urban aesthetics, but also a sample of cultural public practice. It shifts the function of public buildings from political service to the composite dimension of education, memory, dissemination, and

participation, so that community residents, foreign tourists, and youth groups can obtain cognitive construction and value inspiration in it. Its spatial logic of modern gardens and humanistic display fully reflects the initiative and creativity of local governance in the construction of the public cultural system after the reform and opening.

During this period, with the national housing system loosened and individual property rights policy gradually established, Nanxun ancient town of residential buildings from the original highly collectivized pattern gradually restored its private property attributes. Interview subjects, Mr. Liu and Ms. Weng, they have the property rights of the ancestral mansion, and property rights have been retained until now. It is clear that the government at the time was returning traditional houses and courtyard spaces to the original residents or their descendants. While enjoying the property rights, the residents also gained greater autonomy in the use and transformation of the space. This change not only marked the structural return of spatial functions from "uniform allocation" to "individual use", but also provided an institutional prerequisite for the restoration of the diversity of residential architecture, the reconstruction of the landscape and the return of social vitality.

With the continuous evolution of the social structure and functional layout of Nanxun ancient town, the demand for technical adaptability of residential and cultural space has also become more prominent. Many residents, on the basis of clear property rights, have carried out localized repairs and expansions of traditional mansions, often using modern building materials such as concrete, glass, and metal for roof reinforcement, door and window replacement, and structural filling, which has also attracted the attention of the government. In order to cope with the dual pressure of environmental constraints and functional transformation, Zhou (2004) mentions that since the end of the 20th century, local governments and professional organizations have gradually introduced modern building materials and restoration techniques, in an attempt to enhance the sustainability and practical applicability of cultural spaces while preserving historical features.

Since the 1980s, Nanxun Ancient Town has launched a succession of important historical neighborhoods of the protection and repair works. In 1986 was listed as a famous historical and cultural town in Zhejiang Province, the government and private forces to introduce structural reinforcement technology and environmental protection materials to enhance the service life of ancient buildings and safety performance. For example, in the area of Baimanlou, where there were originally problems such as rotting beams and columns and collapsing tiles due to lack of maintenance, Wang (2005) points out that in the early 2000s, a combination of steel and wood beams and frames were used to replace some of the load-bearing structures, and lightweight antique tiles were used on the roofs to reduce the load, and modern drainage systems were incorporated to improve the problem of stagnant water. This strategy of preserving the original form and updating the structure has allowed traditional spaces to improve their actual function without changing their appearance, enhancing their modern indicators such as climate adaptation and strength of use.

The introduction of digital restoration techniques in recent years has also brought new possibilities for the protection of cultural spaces. As mentioned in (Wang 2020), cultural heritage in the modernization process need to use new technologies "for multi-dimensional cultural awareness of the update and display", Nanxun through drone mapping and other advanced means to achieve the block scale facade data collection and reconstruction, to provide an accurate basis for subsequent restoration projects. In the South City River landscape renewal, the engineering team of typical buildings such as Zhang Shiming Residence, silk industry hall and other raw material comparison and node restoration, combined with the image recognition system to restore the wood carvings, brick carvings and other decorative components, to ensure that the visual texture and the unity of historical memory. This fusion of traditional craftsmanship and intelligent technology not only improves the accuracy and efficiency of restoration, but also reduces the threat of human error to the integrity of cultural space.

At the level of material use, Nanxun gradually transitioned to the "traditional appearance+ modern core" construction method. Such as part of the renewal of

residential heat preservation composite brick body instead of the traditional brick wall, built-in moisture-proof layer and ventilation cavity, effectively alleviating the Jiangnan region rain and high humidity on the structure of the damage caused. The roofing materials are generally made of antique tiles or metal cladding tiles, with the surface layer still retaining the visual effect of diwali, and the bottom layer enhancing the fireproof and moisture-proof performance. The use of these new materials makes the cultural space more resistant to climate attack and aging risks, and extends the life cycle of the cultural landscape. More importantly, the community participation mechanism has been gradually improved in this process. In many restoration projects, local residents were invited to participate in the selection of materials and layout design, and some folk artisans were directly involved in the restoration of handmade components, which not only enhanced the locality of the project, but also served as a platform for community memory and skill transmission. "The ecological regeneration of cultural space needs to rely on the cooperation mechanism of multiple subjects" (Lu, 2000), and Nanxun is precisely in this government, experts, residents of the triple linkage mechanism, to complete the cultural space from "historical remains" to "living culture". "living culture" transformation. Nanxun ancient town through the introduction of modern materials, digital restoration technology and community coordination mechanism, not only to enhance the cultural space in the structure, climate, function and other aspects of the adaptability, but also to ensure that its traditional cultural expression and the reality of the use of the demand for coordination and symbiosis. In the process of adapting cultural spaces to modern society, technology is not a substitute for tradition, but a medium for its continuation and transformation, and an important bridge connecting historical memory and contemporary expression.

In addition, as one of the most representative of the ancient town of Nanxun Han community residential complex, the evolution of its spatial form fully embodies the cultural space on the technological advances and changes in modern lifestyles active adaptation. From the original closed traditional residence, to gradually access to electricity, sewage, communications and other modern infrastructure, its external form

and internal function have undergone a deep transformation. Although these changes visually "disturb" the traditional space, they also indicate the regenerative capacity of the cultural space of the ancient town in the context of new technology.

The most intuitive traces of modernization in Baimanlou Old Street along the river are the wires exposed in the space. On top of the texture of white walls and black tiles, wires are interwoven like cobwebs, running through the eaves, doors, windows and walls of each house, constituting on the one hand an indispensable energy and communication system for the residents' daily life, and on the other hand destroying the original visual order of the regular, simple and quiet Jiangnan water town. This visual and cultural "conflict" is not a meaningless destruction, but a manifestation of the "adaptive" mechanism of cultural space function in the context of structural functionalism. According to the definition of "adaptation" dimension in Parsons' AGIL theory, the social system must continuously acquire resources from the external environment and transform them into an internally usable functional system. In the case of the Momochi Building, the introduction of an electrical system is a response to the demands of modern life. Traditional cultural spaces must absorb new technological resources without destroying residential functions in order to realize basic life security and the continuation of community functions. During the interview, an old Nanxun resident in his eighties pointed out, "Although these wires are indeed unsightly, young people nowadays go home at night to charge, turn on the air conditioner, and watch TV, and it is impossible to live without electricity." Zhou (2024) This observation reveals the close and inevitable connection between modern technology and residents' lives. In order to realize the "living heritage" of cultural space, it is necessary to connect with real life, rather than sticking to the "original appearance".

In addition to the electric power system, the Baichanglou area has been generally renovated by laying sewers outside the houses, especially in the alleys along the river, where drainage facilities have been renewed and paved with bricks, gradually replacing the traditional sewage discharge method of discharging sewage directly into the river. This change not only reflects the national system of environmental governance and

ecological protection, but also reflects the adaptive evolution of cultural space in the logic of modern governance. From the perspective of the structural function of cultural space, the systematic construction of sewers marks the transformation of traditional living space from a self-sufficient and closed lifestyle to a standardized and systematic social structure. The original small-scale sewage mechanism, which relied on individual experience and family self-organization, has gradually given way to the public domain system under the logic of modern urban planning. This spatial "technological embedding" not only improves residents' living comfort and health protection, but also fundamentally promotes the community's public awareness and the popularization of modern municipal concepts. A restaurant owner mentioned in an interview: "In the past, there was no sewage system in Baimajiulou, and residents dumped a lot of domestic wastewater into the river. Now that the government has paved the sewerage system, residents are obviously more aware of hygiene and more willing to participate in community governance." Liu (2024) This not only shows the direct sanitation improvements brought about by technological change, but also highlights its profound impact on community governance structures and residents' behavioral patterns.



Figure 26 Rehabilitation of electric wires and road sewage pipes in the residential and cultural space of Nanxun Old Town

Source: Photographed by the author

From the environment, functional transformation to technological adaptation, showing its continuity in historical change and dynamic characteristics. The humid Jiangnan climate and horizontal water network together constructed the spatial foundation of Nanxun settlement, giving birth to the traditional form of living by water, intertwined streets and bridges (Chen, 2004); while the social structure and economic model of change, the promotion of the cultural space from the clan living place to the collective economic unit, and then to the cultural tourism and public service carriers of the various transformations. Especially since the 2000s, the intervention of modern materials and digital restoration technology has not only improved the adaptability of the architectural environment but also expanded the functions of cultural spaces to serve education, exhibition and tourism. It can be seen that the continuous revitalization of cultural space is not to stick to tradition, but to realize the transformation path from "protection" to "regeneration" under the synergy of environment, society and technology.

In addition, at the level of spatial functions, traditional residential buildings have also begun to show a trend of functional diversification and local commercialization. Some of the residential buildings located in core streets and lanes, near rivers, or close to tourist routes have begun to rent out the first floor to small stores, catering stalls, or lodging operators, while retaining the upper floors or the backyards as family living space, thus realizing vertical zoning and embedding of economic functions in the space. This type of "combined residential and commercial" pattern not only raises residents' incomes but also stimulates the potential for reuse of cultural space. Traditional houses along the river, which were originally used only for residential purposes, have now been transformed into B&Bs, teahouses, bookstores, and cultural stores, bringing new users and cultural experiences to the ancient town. This partial commercialization is not a wholesale subversion of the residential function, but a

progressive spatial reconstruction, emphasizing the realistic adaptation based on respect for the historical texture. Many residents have transformed traditional halls into small family workshops, handicraft exhibition halls, or opened up small areas for tourists to visit, turning the originally closed family space into a semi-open place for cultural exchanges. This change not only responds to the demand for tourism and cultural consumption but also reflects the flexibility and creativity of the Han community in the use of space. For example, Ms. Zhou (Zhou 2024), an interviewee, mentioned that during this period, the government allowed his family to exchange a house outside the town with a vacant property in the old town. We visited Ms. Zhou's store, a two-story building located next door to Guanghui Palace. On the first floor, the front room has been made into a kiosk, the backyard is a living room with a kitchen and a dining room, and the second floor is a living room.



Figure 27 Ms. Zhou's shop

Source: Photographed by the author

In the property rights system gradually restored at the same time, Nanxun ancient town part of the important history of the house also experienced a complex transfer of ownership and spatial reuse process, reflecting the residential building in the context of institutional change on the function and identity of the continuous adjustment. Especially typical is the Zhang Shiming Residence large private house. The building has gone through several rounds of spatial function takeovers, as mentioned earlier, it was borrowed by the PLA's JiuJiu Hospital from 1951 to early 1960, then taken over by the Logistics Department of the Zhejiang Provincial Military Region from early 1960 to 1968, and after 1968, it was transferred to be used as a warehouse for the China Tea Import and Export Corporation. At this stage, the space of the mansion was endowed with political, military and economic attributes completely different from its original function, and its life and culture were basically unprotected. It was not until 1996 that the local government initiated a restoration project for the residence, taking the old as the new as the starting point, structurally reinforcing and historically restoring the body of the building, and formally transforming it into a historical and cultural attraction open to the public. This transformation is not only the result of the revaluation of cultural value, but also a realistic response to the reuse of traditional living space under the rise of tourism economy. During the restoration process, the original spatial pattern of the residence was strictly preserved, including the symmetrical hall structure on the central axis, the lighting system of the patio, and the detailed craftsmanship of the carved beams and paintings, etc., so as to keep the building as original as possible in terms of form. However, in order to adapt to the management of the scenic area and the needs of tourists, the interior of the residence has also been moderately modernized, such as the establishment of independent toilets, safety exits, fire escapes and barrier-free entrances, etc., so as to give the traditional mansion a basic reception and safety management capability. This renewal strategy of "external preservation - internal adaptation" reflects the logic of harmonization between the continuation of tradition and the adaptation of reality in residential architecture.



Figure 28 Spatial layout of Zhang Shiming Residence before 1953

Source: Drawn by the author

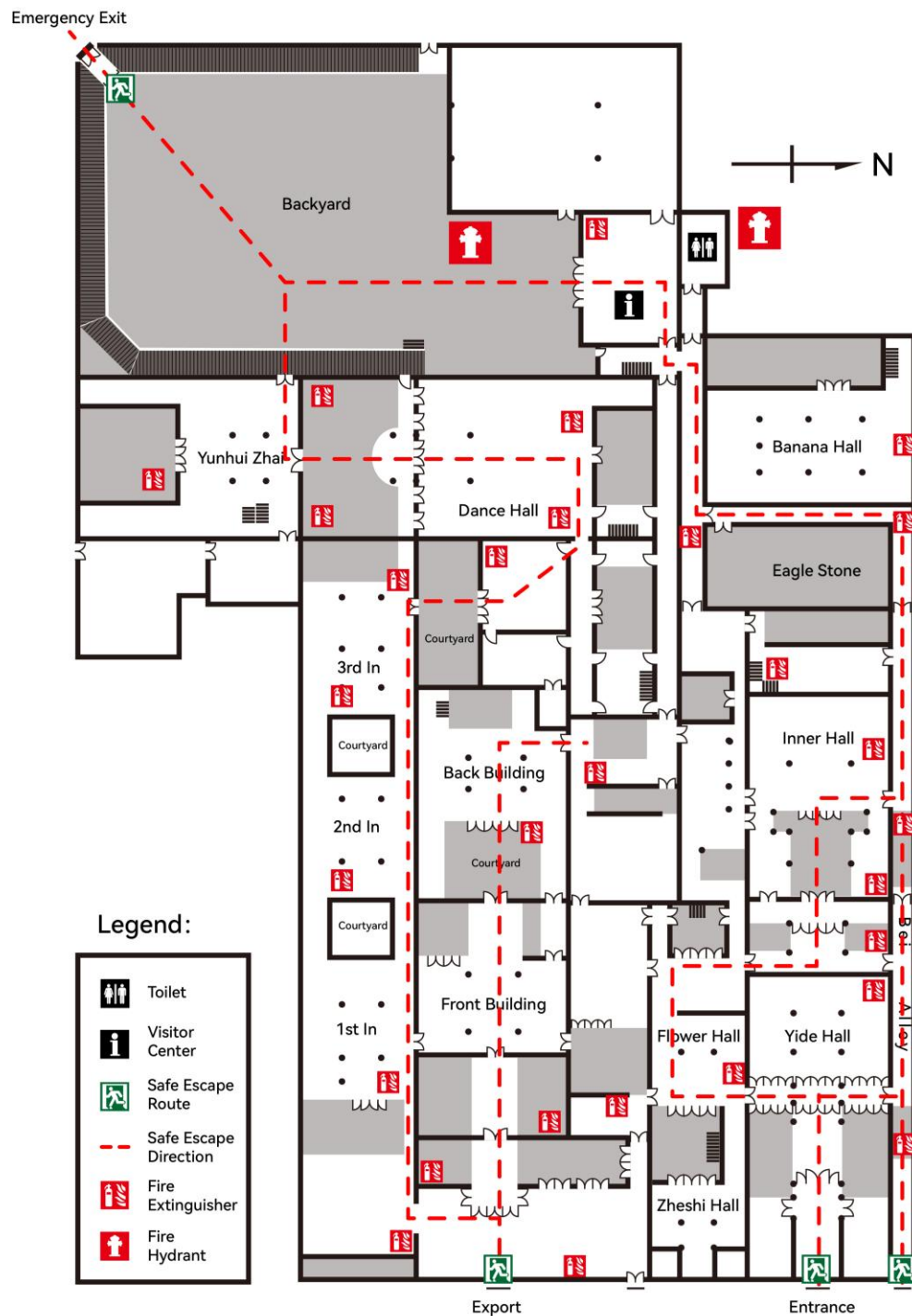


Figure 29 The spatial layout, facilities, and tour route of Zhang Shiming Residence after it was restored and turned into an attraction in 1996

Source: Drawn by the author

The transformation of Zhang Shiming Residence demonstrates that traditional living space is not only able to continue its original function of living but can also become an important carrier for contemporary cultural display, educational dissemination, and tourism experience through cultural identification, structural renewal, and institutional support. In this process, the building itself is not only a material heritage, but also assumes the social role of narrating local history, constructing cultural identity and maintaining collective memory (Xue, 2004). Its reuse also reminds us that residential architecture is not simply heading towards dissolution in the process of modernization, but rather regeneration through embedding itself in new social contexts.

In summary, between 1981 and 2005, the cultural transformation of Nanxun Ancient Town was characterized by the gradual revival of traditional cultural values and their integration with modern lifestyles. Driven by enhanced property rights awareness, residents actively participated in building renovations, spatial aesthetic updates, and the revival of traditional culture, transforming buildings from mere containers of daily life into important mediators of cultural identity, self-expression, and intergenerational transmission. The cultural spatial restructuring of this period not only continued the local historical and cultural heritage and accumulated institutional and emotional resources for the development of cultural industrialization in the 21st century.

4.2.4 Interactive adaptation of spatial functions and social organization under multiple mechanisms

In the period from 1981 to 2005, the evolution of cultural space in Nanxun Ancient Town gradually separated from the single political function under the planned economic system directive, showing the market mechanism, policy loosening, and community autonomy under the interweaving of the triple power of the "synergy of multiple" characteristics. In this structural background, the logic of the use of residential, commercial, faith and public building space is no longer dominated by a single political authority. Still, it is continuously adjusted through the interaction between the state, the local, the market and the community subjects, which promotes the composite function of the cultural space and the gradual reorganization of the social structure. The operation of the four-dimensional functional system of AGIL in this stage presents a distinctive

feature of the transformation from suppression to coordination. distinctive characteristics.

During this period, the spatial functional transformation of Nanxun was not only a response to economic policies but also reflected the multidimensional interaction between economic restructuring, the reconstruction of social relations, and the return to cultural values. Economically, the rise of individual entrepreneurship and the service industry, coupled with improved residents' income levels, provided the material foundation for spatial renewal; socially, residents' identities shifted from "unit members" to "individual entrepreneurs" and "cultural practitioners," fostering the growth of community self-organization capabilities; Culturally, the rediscovery of traditional elements and the strengthening of aesthetic awareness meant that spatial functions not only served life and the economy but also took on the composite tasks of identity recognition and cultural inheritance. This dynamic coupling of "economy-society-culture" constituted the internal mechanism for the reproduction of cultural space in Nanxun's Han Chinese community and provided a solid social foundation and emotional support for the subsequent integration of culture and tourism.

From the perspective of AGIL theory, the interactive adaptation process between spatial functions and social organisations in Nanxun during this stage exhibits a high degree of dynamism:

Adaptation

Under the backdrop of gradually advancing market economy policies, the spatial functions of traditional buildings in Nanxun have undergone flexible adjustments to actively respond to new commercial and lifestyle demands. For example, the reopening of the Zhuangyuanlou Noodle House is a typical example of spatial function restoration and renewal. Originally a traditional folk culinary business, the noodle house had ceased operations due to the planned economy system. However, following reforms, with the recovery of the catering market and the rise in residents' consumption demands, the space underwent façade renovations, functional updates, and service optimizations,

demonstrating the spatial adaptability of Nanxun's Han Chinese community in response to the new economic system.

Goal Attainment

The reform and opening-up policies explicitly outlined objectives such as promoting community economic recovery, enhancing residents' quality of life, and developing cultural initiatives. Wen Yuan, as a representative of public space, integrates Ming and Qing dynasty, Republican era, and Sino-Soviet architectural styles in its construction. It not only serves cultural education, leisure, and social functions but has also become a new hub for cultural tourism, promoting the balanced development of community economic transformation and cultural functions. The return of Zhuangyuanlou Noodle House aligns with the national policy encouraging individual entrepreneurship, reflecting the community's ability to execute these goals.

Integration

During this period, the coexistence of individual businesses and public cultural facilities in the spatial layout has rebuilt the social relationship network within the community. The Zhuangyuanlou Noodle House, as an important node for neighborhood interaction and consumption, has strengthened daily contact and interaction among residents; while Wen Yuan, through cultural exhibitions, festivals, and other events, has brought together people of different ages and backgrounds, forming a shared social and cultural space. This integration effect not only reflects the strengthening of unity within the community but also promotes understanding and collaboration between different social classes and generations.

Latency

Wen Yuan's design, which integrates various historical architectural elements, is not merely a retro style but also a symbolic return to cultural memory and values. Residents not only gain cultural experiences through using this space but also internalize traditional values into their daily lives through ongoing participation. For example, residents participating in calligraphy and painting exhibitions, traditional performing arts shows, and tea gatherings at Wen Yuan not only satisfy their spiritual needs but also reconnect with their emotional attachment to traditional culture. During

this period, the space's aesthetic and functional aspects coexist, serving as a crucial medium for transmitting cultural potential.

From the perspective of the interactive relationship among the four functions of AGIL, a positive feedback mechanism has been established between adaptation and goal achievement: market-driven forces drive spatial restructuring, while the revival of spatial functions in turn promotes the realization of economic objectives. For example, the rise of noodle shops and the development of public spaces jointly reflect an increase in residents' economic participation and an optimization of consumption structures. The integration and latent functions also reveal a cultural continuity mechanism in spatial governance: Wen Yuan and Zhuangyuan Noodle Shop serve as cultural and commercial carriers, respectively. On one hand, they facilitate residents' daily interactions and community connections; on the other hand, they evoke residents' recognition of and emotional attachment to local cultural traditions, thereby promoting the reconstruction of cultural consensus and the accumulation of social capital.

4.2.5 Recovery of Market Dynamism and Return of Cultural Identity

(1) Aesthetic Value: Restoration of Residents' Aesthetic Preferences and Spatial Return of Local Cultural Imagery

In the early 1980s, in the context of China's economic system reform started, Nanxun ancient town of space aesthetic order began to show a clear structural shift. With the "family contract responsibility system" promotion and "individual business" policy of liberalization, the state from a highly centralized planning system to the market regulation-based mechanism of transition, for the development of the individual economy and the release of the autonomy of the residents to use the space to create realistic conditions. This macroscopic change has also had a direct effect on the architectural space level, causing aesthetic practices to gradually break away from the institutional logic of functional suppression and formal unification, and instead to re-embed themselves in the expressive structure of daily life and local culture (Wang, 2004).

Residential architecture, as the type of space closest to individual life, was the earliest response and the most profound manifestation of this aesthetic shift. Between

1953 and 1980, mansions were uniformly expropriated for use as dormitories, canteens, or warehouses, and the original delicate structures of brick-carved gateways, wooden latticework and windows, and tiered courtyards were completely dismantled, and replaced with standardized spaces that were loosely partitioned, painted, and prioritized for functionality. Residential architecture has been reconstructed from the traditional pattern of "precepts, rituals and symbols" to the management template of "unity, practicality and collectivity". from the traditional pattern of "polite, ritualistic and symbolic" to the management template of "unified, practical and collective". After the 1980s, with the return of property rights and the decentralization of the right to repair, residents began to consciously restore "their own spatial appearance". In areas such as Baimanlou and Zhangjiazhuang Back Street, a large number of original decorative elements such as small green tiles, whitewashed walls and wooden window panes were restored. Unlike the forced simplification of the previous period, the restoration in this period shows an active beautification behavior based on memory experience, and its aesthetic value returns to the cultural identity of the family and the community, reflecting the shift of the living space from institutional obedience to individual participation.

The visual language of commercial space has undergone a fundamental transformation. 1953 to 1980, Nanxun commercial district in the silk line Dai, grain houses, miscellaneous stores, etc. were included in the unified state-run system, the store facade was painted a uniform color, the original plaque, columns, gatehouse and other identifying decorative elements are all cleared, the street shows "no difference in business The street surface showed a high degree of consistency of "undifferentiated business". The aesthetic expression of commercial space in this period was almost dissolved by the system. After the 1980s, with the liberalization of self-employment, residents converted the first floor of their homes into teahouses, retail stores, and convenient service points, and gradually restored traditional elements to the facade design. Gray walls with red lanterns, imitation wood windows and doors, and regular script store signs constitute an active reproduction of "Jiangnan imagery," which not only responds to local aesthetic preferences, but also serves the need for cultural




identification in the marketplace. Compared with the previous phase, commercial buildings in this period were no longer subject to mandatory regulations but became an aesthetic medium for operators to express local culture and evoke spatial memory actively.

Although the restoration of faith space does not have institutional strength, the reconstruction of its visual expression through social behavior is also very crucial. Between 1953 and 1980, traditional temples such as Guanghui Palace were converted into factories or auditoriums, and religious totems, sacrificial facilities, and decorations on the flying roofs were all removed, thus transforming the vision of temples from a "sacred and solemn" to a "collective function". "After the 1980s, although religious sites were not restored to their original functions, their aesthetic structure was continued in festivals and folk rituals as an 'alternative'. During festivals such as the Spring Festival, residents spontaneously put up couplets, lanterns, and incense burners. During weddings and funerals, they also used visual symbols such as red silk, happy couplets, and traditional window decorations. The space of faith is no longer centered on a fixed building but has shifted to a temporary spatial expression of event-type and behavior-type. Although the visual structure is fragmented, it forms a deep-seated cultural identity in daily life and constitutes a social extension of traditional aesthetics (J. Feng, 2005) .

In addition to traditional festivals and life rituals, the aesthetic element is an essential mechanism for constructing community cultural identity (Sai, 1985). In Nanxun Folklore has a detailed record, such as the Mid-Autumn Festival during the family production "half of the August plate", with delicate pastries, symbolic shapes and colors to express the reunion and the good wishes of the harvest; and wedding customs in the "red silk bed" The wedding customs of "red silk bedding", "dragon and phoenix hot gold wedding invitations" and "embroidered wedding clothes" reflect a strong festive aesthetic and cultural program (X. Feng, 2005). In these festivals and rituals, the choice of colors (e.g., red, gold, and green), decorative patterns (e.g., double happiness, pomegranates, and bats), and material preferences (e.g., satin and floral silks) reflect the visualization of cultural values such as "good fortune," "prosperity," and "inheritance.

The visual reproduction of cultural values such as "good luck", "prosperity" and "inheritance" is reflected in the preference of materials (satin and silk). These agreed-upon aesthetic rules serve as the basis for aesthetic judgment and a tangible expression of cultural norms and emotional identity within the community (Feng, 1999).

Table 7 Aesthetic elements in customs

Festive aesthetic elements					
					
Color Options: Red, Gold, Cyan		Decoration pattern: dragon, fish		Material Preference: Satin, Floral Silk	

Public buildings have also undergone a transformation from highly templated to limited autonomous restoration: between 1953 and 1980, the Jiaye Book Depository and the Silk Industry Hall were once converted to government offices or cultural stations, and their architectural forms were unified and simplified, with a grey exterior, standardized structure, and clean decorations, making them a typical space that "prioritized governmental use". After the 1980s, as the city's cultural awareness increased and the practice of local autonomy advanced, some public nodes gradually restored their original architectural styles while continuing to serve cultural and educational functions. In the cases of Jiaye Book Depository and Silk Industry Hall, the restoration of gables, replacement of doors and windows, and restoration of colors show the path of "preserving the original appearance and moderately renewing it", which is not a retro copy, but aesthetically pleasing with the core concept of "identification-continuity" and "continuity". Instead of retro-replication, the aesthetic choice is centered on "recognition and continuity" (Li, 1990). This change reflects the ability of public space to express itself visually after the loosening of the system, as well as the negotiation of cultural memory between community residents and local institutions.

Table 8 Comparison table of architectural aesthetics of Nanxun Ancient Town 1953-1980 and 1981-2005

Building Type	1953-1980	1981-2005
Residential Building	Mansions were uniformly expropriated as flats or dormitories, decorative elements were removed, structures were standardized, and the vision tended to be functionally suppressed.	The property rights of the mansion were returned, residents took the initiative to repair the house, and traditional components such as small green tiles and brick carvings were gradually restored, and the form reproduced the individual aesthetics.
Commercial Building	Stores have been converted into state-run business outlets such as supply and marketing cooperatives, with uniformly painted facades, plaques and decorations completely removed, lacking individuality.	The rise of individual business, the rise of antique facade design, red lanterns, plaques and other reappearances, to create the cultural identity of the Jiangnan imagery.

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Table 8 (continue)

Building Type	1953-1980	1981-2005
Religious Building	The temple was converted into a factory hall, with shrines and flying buttresses removed, the space carrying the function of political propaganda.	Recovering folk symbols such as lanterns and incense sticks in festivals and weddings constitutes a behavioral visual expression that perpetuates the aesthetic habits of faith.
Public Building	The original building is converted into an office or cultural station, with roofs, doors and windows treated uniformly and the façade color grayed out to form a templated style.	Moderate restoration of node buildings such as the library and the hall, emphasizing the preservation of the original appearance and the continuation of the style, and the gradual reconstruction of visual order.

During this period, with the gradual restoration of market mechanisms and cultural policy relaxation, Nanxun ancient town, with a function-oriented architectural aesthetic value, returned to a culture-oriented trend, the residents' aesthetic preferences re-embodied, and the traditional cultural imagery gradually returned to the space expression. From 1999, the new "Wenyuan" illustrates this point well. With Wenchang Pavilion as the center, surrounded by Red Army Long March Tracking Hall,

Wu Shougu Art Museum, and Xu Chi Memorial Hall, the three buildings together constitute a building group with strong local cultural attributes, showing the residents' reaffirmation of cultural identity and local spirit.

The overall architectural style of the three pavilions integrates the traditional garden architectural elements of Jiangnan with the functional requirements of modern exhibition. Wenchang Pavilion in the core location of the park, Wenchang Pavilion by the Nanxun nationality of the Ministry of Rites, Dong Fang in the Ming Dynasty during the Jiajing presided over the construction of the war in 1939 during the Japanese arson destroyed. 2002 Nanxun District Government to Qian Yunhe painting as a blueprint for the reconstruction of the Wenchang Pavilion in the park concentricity of the lake, its symmetrical composition, dignified, its architectural vocabulary in the Ming and Qing Dynasty style as the basis for the use of gray tile and white walls, wooden columns and beams, carved doors and windows, and other traditional components, so that architecture culture, and the building is a good example. Its architectural vocabulary is based on the Ming and Qing styles, using traditional components such as gray tiles and white walls, wooden pillars and beams, carved doors and windows, etc., so that culture can be externalized in the space in an architectural way, which represents the residents' cultural aspirations for the inheritance of knowledge and the spirit of the place.



Figure 30 Nanxun Wenchang Pavilion

Source:<https://cj.sina.com.cn/articles/view/1608094690/5fd993e200100vaqk>

The architectural style of the Red Army Long March Tracking Hall, which is compatible with it, shows the combination of political memorialization and local style. The building façade is characterized by Soviet-style masonry walls and three-part compositional logic, with the five-pointed red star and the Party emblem as the visual focus at the top to strengthen its "red memory" attribute. At the same time, the entrance is equipped with a Chinese-style sloped-roofed gable porch, seeking an aesthetic balance between monumentality and affinity. This is a typical "Sino-Soviet" architectural style, which also responds to the cultural continuity of local spatial imagery.

Wu Shougu Art Museum as a reform and opening up after Nanxun public cultural space of the important new node, in the architectural style reflects the aesthetic return to the traditional Chinese national form, at the same time in the structure of the material and construction of modern elements introduced into the logic of the formation of a unique cultural expression. The building as a whole adopts white walls and gray tiles, courtyard layout, double side pillars and black stone door frames at the entrance, and the eaves continue the traditional corner design, which has an obvious Jiangnan garden-like temperament. However, unlike the traditional wooden structure, the museum replaces the traditional timber with reinforced concrete structure, which on one hand improves the durability and safety performance of the building, and on the other hand demonstrates the fusion of local aesthetics and modern technology in the context of the new era.

Xu Chi Memorial Hall, on the other hand, embodies the typical features of eclectic architectural style of the Republican period in its architectural style. Its entrance adopts western-style columns and stone ball decorative elements, showing the design vocabulary of combining the East and the West, while the overall volume control and the appearance treatment of white walls and tiles continue the spatial logic of the traditional mansions in the south of the Yangtze River. This style reflects the Republican

architecture in the form of language of pluralism and tolerance and cultural mixing, is the space echo of Nanxun modern cultural development.



Figure 31 Red Army Long March Tracking Museum

Source: <https://cj.sina.com.cn/articles/view/1608094690/5fd993e200100vaqk>



Figure 32 Wu Shougu Art Museum

Source:<https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1697458182911266401&wfr=spider&f>

or=pc



Figure 33 Xu Chi Memorial Hall

Source:<https://cj.sina.com.cn/articles/view/1608094690/5fd993e200100vaqk>

The Wenyuan Three Halls exhibit diverse cultural functions and aesthetic styles internally. At the same time, externally they uniformly adopt the architectural language of the Ming and Qing dynasties, embodying the spatial strategy of "internal diversity and external unity." This group of buildings responds to the diverse cultural needs that emerged after reform and opening, while also reinforcing local identity and cultural memory through visual form, achieving a transition from utilitarian to symbolic space.

In summary, during this period, as the national economic system transitioned from a planned economy to a market economy, the spatial aesthetic system of Nanxun Ancient Town underwent a significant transformation.

The Revival of Aesthetic Awareness

During this period, Nanxun Ancient Town exhibited a "bottom-up" trend of aesthetic restoration. Under the backdrop of clarified property rights and relaxed regulations, residents gradually rebuilt their recognition and affinity for traditional visual

language through partial repairs and limited decorations. Shop operators, meanwhile, enhanced spatial recognition by incorporating traditional symbols (such as plaques, couplets, and roof tiles) into their designs, creating a commercial environment with cultural distinctiveness. Public cultural spaces, in their reuse, also continued the local architectural style, further strengthening the collective recognition of local aesthetic imagery among community residents.

Protection of Traditional Aesthetics

Nanxun's traditional aesthetics gradually revived from suppression with the restoration of market mechanisms. This trend not only stemmed from the awakening of residents' intrinsic aesthetic awareness but also benefited from the introduction of cultural relic protection regulations, local policy support, and the promotion of local cultural and historical publicity. Guided by the principle of "restoring the old as it was," traditional architectural elements have been recreated in their original form during renovations, combining institutional protection with daily transmission of conventional aesthetics. This has further strengthened the Han Chinese community's cultural continuity and spatial identity.

(2) Economic value: restart of individual economy and restoration of diversity of space use

From 1981 to 2005, along with China's reform and opening, the planned economic system gradually loosened, and the market regulation mechanism began to be introduced into the national economic operating system. In the "revitalization of the economy", "decentralization and profit" policy background, Nanxun ancient town's building space economic function has undergone a fundamental transformation, manifested in the recovery of the individual economy and the right to use the space reactivated. National implementation of the family contract responsibility system, individual business registration system, small-town development strategy for the city, and the release of traditional settlements, unprecedented space management autonomy. Nanxun, an ancient town, also eliminated the previous unified distribution and administrative control of the single structure. It gradually restored its function as a grass-roots economic activity, constructed with individual businesses, family workshops, and

small service organizations as the dominant micro-space economic structure, marking the beginning of the reconstruction of the local economic vitality.

The adjustment of the property rights system was the basis for the reconstruction of the economic function of space in this period, which directly promoted the residents' autonomous control over the use of space and their economic behavior (Zhou & Wu, 2009). The clear attribution of property rights in the residence enabled residents to transform their own space into business use, forming a typical pattern of "residence-business symbiosis". The traditional pattern of "running a business in the front room and living in the back room" has reappeared, and the street facades have been converted into stores, snack bars, barber shops and other daily service units, while retaining part of the space as a place for family life, thus breaking through the strict segregation of life and production under the unitary system. At the same time, small-scale production and the restoration of traditional craft workshops has become an important force to promote the economic recovery of the space. Nanxun, once a major silk town, has accumulated a large number of workshops and mansion-type commercial resources along the river. In the mid- to late 1980s, these spaces were reused, with some families transforming old loom rooms into textile exhibition halls, and carpenters, stonemasons, and other craftsmen beginning to open workshops combining processing and retailing in the neighborhoods, re-embedding their traditional skills in the new market mechanism. Despite the limited size of these units, they have effectively increased pedestrian density and economic mobility at the neighborhood level, reshaping the "micro-economic network" of community-based outlets.

The diversification of economic activities has led to a reconfiguration of the structure of economic roles in the community, and the construction of a multi-level spatial business system with the family as the node and the streets and lanes as the network. During this period, more social groups from different backgrounds began to participate in local economic activities through multiple paths: retired workers set up home workshops based on their own skills and resources, engaging in basic services such as carpentry, sewing and maintenance; residents with cultural and educational

backgrounds opened spaces for tutoring, calligraphy experience and lectures, transforming their homes from living spaces to places for cultural dissemination and knowledge services; young people developed new businesses such as creative design, photography services and local brand operation with the help of information technology. With the help of information technology, youth groups have developed new businesses such as creative design, photography service and local brand operation, forming a new industrial node with both cultural creativity and commercial attributes in the ancient town; migrant workers have opened catering stalls and convenient stores through leasing space, strengthening the grassroots service capacity. The addition of these diversified operators has transformed the economic utilization of the space in the old town from individual spontaneity to multi-principal synergy, significantly enhancing the inclusiveness, adaptability and endogenous development capacity of the local economy.

Against the background of increased flexibility in the use of space, architectural space no longer carries a single use function but is constantly given a composite economic role such as service provision, industrial embedding and community integration. A multi-subject linkage mechanism with complementary functions, coexistence of industries and matching of supply and demand has gradually been formed, and residents have demonstrated their awareness of the expectation of economic returns and their willingness to take the initiative to invest in the process of space use. The economic structure of the community has evolved from institutional distribution to market regulation, and the architectural space, while assuming residential and cultural functions, is also increasingly involved in the construction of service networks, economic ecology and social synergy, showing a high degree of localized adaptability and organizational flexibility.

Generally speaking, between 1981 and 2005, in the context of the deepening of China's economic system reform and the gradual establishment of the socialist market economy system, the economic attributes of the architectural space in Nanxun Ancient Town realized a critical transition from institutional coordination to market regulation. The

rise of self-employment, small-scale production and living service system has promoted the reactivation of spatial economy, and constructed a diversified local economy relying on spatial resources and oriented to the needs of the community structure. The autonomy and flexibility of residents' economic behaviors have been significantly increased, and a dynamic correlation has been established between the use of space and the mode of operation. The evaluation of economic value no longer relies on administrative allocation, but gradually shifts to market feedback, business returns and functional efficiency. This process not only realizes the initial update of the logic of spatial governance, but also lays the structural foundation and practical experience for the subsequent expansion of Nanxun Ancient Town's functions and industrial linkage.

4.3 Period of Improvement of the Socialist Market Economy System

Since 2006, China has formally entered the era of "planning", with the scientific concept of development as its guiding principle. Since the 11th Five-Year Plan, the state no longer controls development with "plans", but rather promotes high-quality development through more systematic, guiding and strategic "development planning". The policy system at this stage clearly sets out the goals of "promoting the development of the cultural industry," "building a socialist core value system," and "improving the quality of urban and rural human settlements," emphasizing that The objectives of "promoting the development of the cultural industry", "building a socialist core value system" and "upgrading the quality of urban and rural living environments" are clearly set out, emphasizing the comprehensive transformation of social governance, industrial structure and spatial patterns driven by culture. Since the 12th Five-Year Plan, "cultural soft power", "public cultural service system", "national historical and cultural city", "characteristic city" and "cultural center" have been emphasized. Since the 12th Five-Year Plan, "cultural soft power", "public cultural service system", "national historical and cultural city", "characteristic town", "traditional village protection" have become high-frequency words in multi-level policies, and under the comprehensive background of urban-rural integration, ecological civilization, and construction of a beautiful China, the cultural space has been transformed from the original object of protection into a Under

the comprehensive background of urban-rural integration, ecological civilization, and the construction of Beautiful China, cultural space has been transformed from an object of protection to a resource of active development under the empowerment of policies. At the same time, the policy of protecting intangible cultural heritage and the strategy of strengthening the country's culture have been deepened, encouraging localities to transform historical and cultural relics, folk activities, and traditional architecture into "cultural products" that can be operated and experienced. At this stage, culture is no longer just passively preserved history, but has become a realistic means of active production, driving spatial transformation in the direction of landscaping, consumerization and experientialization.

Nanxun ancient town is in this national cultural strategy context, ushered in the space landscaping and culture-driven depth of transformation. 2014 June, Nanxun as an important node of the Grand Canal of China was included in the UNESCO "World Heritage List", its cultural status has been internationally recognized. In July of the following year, Nanxun Ancient Town was successfully promoted to the national 5A level tourist attractions, officially stepped into the ranks of national cultural tourism destinations. With this historical opportunity, the local government actively integrate local resources, reconstructing the ancient town space use system. On the one hand, through the policy and financial guidance and market-oriented operation mechanism, a large number of traditional mansions into lodging, bookstore, cultural and creative space, to promote the functional composite of residential buildings and aesthetic renewal; on the other hand, the ancestral halls, temples, theaters and other beliefs and public space into the festivals, exhibitions and non-heritage dissemination of scenarios, the formation of a sense of participation as a path to the chain of cultural experience. At the same time, Nanxun also planning to create a new type of composite space, such as the three museums, visitor service centers, cultural parlor, completed the ancient and new integration, internal and external linkage of the spatial system remodeling. This period of policy-led spatial transformation, promoting the Han community cultural space from the closed system of residents for their own use, towards openness, integration, with

symbolic value of the public cultural landscape, its social functions, aesthetic characteristics and economic dynamics have been systematically reconstructed, the period of more in line with the times, more in line with the needs of tourism.

Table 9 11th Five-Year Plan - 14th Five-Year Plan Overview Chart

timing	full name	important event	core objective
2006-2010	Outline of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China	The State Council initiated the preparation and mid-term evaluation of the Tenth Five-Year Plan in July 2003. Outline approved by the National People's Congress in March 2006	Based on expanding domestic demand, optimizing industrial structure, conserving resources and protecting the environment, enhancing independent innovation capacity, deepening reform and opening up, and putting people first.
2011-2015	Outline of the Twelfth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China	The State Council initiated the preparation and midterm evaluation of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan in March 2008.	With scientific development as the theme, accelerating the transformation of the mode of economic development as the

		Outline approved by the National People's Congress in March 2011	main line, expanding domestic demand
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Table 9 (continue)

timing	full name	important event	core objective
2016-2020	Outline of the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China	<p>The State Council initiated the preparation and midterm evaluation of the Twelfth Five-Year Plan in April 2013.</p> <p>The October 2015 Plenum of the Party Central Committee adopted the Party's recommendations.</p> <p>Outline approved by NPC in March 2016</p>	<p>To build a moderately prosperous society in all respects, adhere to the five new development concepts of innovation, coordination, green, openness and sharing, take supply-side structural reform as the main line, and accelerate the formation of institutional mechanisms and development modes that lead to a new normal of economic development.</p>

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Table 9 (continue)

timing	full name	important event	core objective
2021-2025	Outline of the Fourteenth Five-Year Plan for the National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Vision 2035	In 2018 the State Council initiated the preparation and mid-term evaluation of the 13th Five-Year Plan. The October 2020 Plenum of the Party's Central Committee adopted the Party's recommendations. Outline approved by the National People's Congress in March 2021	Promote high-quality development, based on the new stage of development, implement the new development concept and build a new development pattern. Deepen supply-side structural reform, and lead and create new demand with innovation-driven, high-quality supply.

4.3.1 Economic structure: spatial reuse driven by the integration of culture and tourism

Since entering 2006, with the further improvement of the socialist market economy system, the economic structure of Nanxun Ancient Town has gradually transitioned to a new phase centered on the cultural tourism industry. Under the national

cultural-tourism integration strategy, the spatial layout of the ancient town has shifted from a traditional residential settlement to a composite functional layout dominated by cultural exhibition and leisure tourism. Tourism has become a key driver of local economic growth, not only stimulating the development of services such as homestays, guided tours, cultural performances, and catering, but also prompting the transformation of existing residential spaces into service-oriented spaces. The economic structure is showing a trend toward a transition from a traditional economy to culture + tourism integrated model. This deeply integrated development path has not only altered Nanxun's industrial foundation but also reshaped the social functions and cultural image of the community.

On this basis, many Nanxun original residents or cultural investors maintain the basic shape of the building under the premise of the mansion space for creative transformation, to create several historical texture and contemporary expression of the boutique B&B products. These B&Bs are no longer just the regeneration of traditional accommodation functions, but the intervention of cultural narratives, spatial reconstruction, and service experiences to form a new composite tourism space. One of the very representative cases is the pole - Nanlou Chunxiao vacation B&B, which is a typical style of Nanxun mansion transformed. During the transformation process, the design team retained the wooden structure of the beams and pillars, roof tiles, and atrium layout at the same time, while introducing modern materials such as customized glass, stone collage, and a comfortable lighting system, the classical Jiangnan atmosphere, and contemporary hotel standards for organic integration. The interior space is divided into several themed areas such as the "Elegant Room", "Water Pavilion", and "Spring Dawn Court", with detailed scenes such as a tatami-mat teahouse, a bookstore, and a small window facing the river, creating an atmosphere of both nostalgia and ritual. This creates an atmosphere of nostalgia and ritual. Nanlou Chunxiao not only in the architectural style of the continuation of the historical vocabulary of the ancient town of Nanxun, but also in the spatial experience of the level of construction can be immersed in, can be disseminated "cultural landscape".



Figure 34 Lodging Extreme-Nanlou Chunxiao Vacation B&B Interior Style

Source: Photographed by the author

Nanlou Chunxiao business logic is not only limited to accommodation services, but also further expanded into a composite cultural operation platform. In the "food" aspect, the bed and breakfast daily by the local farmers supply seasonal ingredients cooked from the Jiangnan morning tea and Nanxun private kitchen meals, such as Nanxun cake dough, eel paste fans, gravy soup, etc., to meet the tourists on the "original flavor" " in the local flavor" pursuit; in the "tour" aspect, the B&B for the residents to plan a small group of deep cultural experience as the core of the theme of the trip, including early morning water lane photography, night tour of the Baijianlou to speak of ancient and other cultural routes; in the "doing" aspect In terms of "doing", the B&B regularly organizes handicraft workshops focusing on handicrafts, folklore and skills transfer, such as tie-dyeing, scented sachet weaving, glutinous rice ball making, topography and painting, etc., so that the tourists can shift from passive watching to active participation, forming a cultural immersion experience that is both educational

and touristic. This logic has transformed the B&B from a simple one-night sleep space into a cultural experience for tourists.

From the perspective of spatial structure and industrial logic (Liu, 2006), this type of bed and breakfast is not only the direct results of Nanxun ancient town residential architecture landscape, but also reflects the space in the urban consumer context of the ability to reconfigure commercialization. On the one hand, the mansion after fine repair and re-injection of cultural language, successfully completed by the "living space" to "cultural scene" image remodeling, become attractive to tourists to stop, take pictures, dissemination of the material basis; on the other hand, through the upgrading of the accommodation function. On the other hand, through the upgrading of the accommodation function and the superposition of additional cultural experiences, the living space is also embedded in a larger cultural tourism industry chain, linking with local cultural creation, non-heritage display, festivals and other activities, constituting a positive closed loop of "accommodation-consumption-cultural dissemination-local branding. The positive closed loop of "accommodation-consumption-cultural dissemination-local branding" is formed. Tourists are no longer passive space users, but cultural subjects who dialog with history, interact with skills, and emotionally resonate with cultural identity in the space.

Therefore, it can be said that the South Building Spring Dawn as a representative of this group of new B&B, not only to promote the Nanxun ancient town of residential architecture of contemporary expression, but also become a connection between history and culture, contemporary aesthetics and the local economy of the core medium. These lodgings will be the organic integration of spatial resources, historical value and consumer behavior, in respect of the original appearance at the same time to complete the new functional expansion for the sustainable use of Nanxun cultural space, the revitalization of community economy and the revitalization of cultural memory provides a paradigm significance of the path of exploration. And this composite development model, is no longer a case study operation, but in the entire ancient town within the scope of the positive trend of proliferation. Through fieldwork, many of the original

mansions are entering the transformation stage one after another, and many residents have taken the initiative to vacate the front or upstairs space of their own homes in an attempt to emulate the operation mode of the boutique lodging of the "Nanlou Chunxiao" category, so as to realize the double conversion of cultural value and economic benefits. This not only shows that the residents of the ancient town have already possessed the consciousness of cultural space marketization and cultural translation, but also confirms the vitality and exemplary results of this spatial regeneration path integrating traditional landscape and modern experience in actual operation. It can be seen that the success of the model has become an important driving force for the development of landscape and functional diversity of Nanxun residential buildings, and for the future revitalization of local cultural space to provide a replicable, scalable path samples.



Figure 35 Residences in the Hyakumaru area that are being converted into a minshuku

Source: Photographed by the author

In the traditional residential building functions continue to tourism accommodation and cultural experience to expand at the same time, part of the historical background of the mansion has also been given a deeper social and cultural mission. Nanxun family heritage museum is the representative results of this transformation logic. The museum is located in the ancient town of East Street 38, formerly known as Nanxun modern silk business "eight cattle" one of the Jin Tong in the Qing Dynasty, Guangxu years built the Jin's former residence. As a typical Jiangnan compound, Jin residence not only complete structural preservation, and deep family rituals and spatial etiquette. 2014, Nanxun government comprehensively launched its renovation project, after two years, was fully completed in 2016, and as a basis for the creation of the spirit of the region and the ethical inheritance of the family style cultural landmarks. Nanxun family style museum to "Zhejiang has a gift - pro has a gift" as the theme of positioning, through the systematic combing of Nanxun townships family family rules, ancestral maxims, genealogical system, etc., to rebuild the contemporary expression of family culture. At the spatial level, the original pattern of the Jin's house was skillfully transformed into a cultural exhibition and interactive communication field: the main hall "Chengde Hall" is 9.6 meters high, for the inheritance of the display area, Nanxun and Huzhou area in the highest ancient residential hall building, both sides of the Jin Shaocheng writing "accumulation of good family will have a good fortune, capital wealth can train but to eternal years" Hall couplets, can see the Jin family in the family style advocate the good attitude. Turning left into the Prologue Hall, the writings on the walls allow visitors to understand that in recent years the community has repeatedly emphasized the importance of family and family culture to personal growth and social stability. Since the founding of the town in the Southern Song Dynasty, the people of Nanxun will cultivate and study the family, only good for the treasure, openness, morality and righteousness and other qualities of the family style in the land inherited to this day. Reflects the extension of the expression of living space in the new era of public culture system (Niu & Sheng, 2006).

The establishment of the Family Heritage Museum is a revitalization of the physical space of the building and a reactivation of the community value system. Originally a private place for family life and ethical practices, the Golden Mansion has become an educational platform open to the public and spreading cultural values. The transformation of this functional object has elevated the residential building to a composite cultural space that carries local cultural identity and moral education. Behind it is responding to the community's cultural call, but also reflects the Nanxun since ancient times, focusing on "family style, family education, family training" tradition in the new era of inheritance and remodeling. It can be said that Nanxun family heritage museum is a typical example of multi-functional transformation of residential buildings to public education. It is a real space of memory structure, take over the history of the spiritual blood, but also modern exhibition and community practice, to promote the contemporary reproduction of cultural identity, showing the Nanxun ancient town residential building in the context of the new era of cultural mobility and social value.



Figure 36 Nanxun family tradition museum

Source: Photographed by the author

With the Nanxun ancient town of culture and tourism integrated operation mode of maturity, the traditional commercial buildings gradually from scattered, individual business transformation into a more systematic, synergistic space network. Ancient town commercial space is not only completed at the functional level from the basic retail to the cultural and creative experience of the leap, but also in the form of organization tends to complement the orderly layout of the industry. Commercial space is no longer just a trading place, but embedded in the narrative of the ancient town of the important nodes (Zhang, 2010), not only to serve the immediate needs of tourists, but also to convey the image of Nanxun culture and cultural confidence in the modern expression.

In recent years, the core neighborhoods of the ancient town have gradually formed a layout of stores oriented to the integration of traditional and modern trends. Especially in the area of high-frequency flow of tourists, a number of commercial stores no longer fall into the low level of product homogenization competition, but through the theme of differentiation, service segmentation to achieve business complementarity. Take traditional clothing as an example, the ancient town has laid out a number of different styles of Hanbok experience store, they not only provide high-quality Hanbok rental services, but also supporting the traditional makeup make-up, hair styling, scene layout and street photography, etc., will be dressed up to play, playing cards and taking pictures, cultural dissemination to build a complete consumer chain. The sense of ceremony, pride and desire for expression presented by tourists in the experience of is an important manifestation of the reconstruction of cultural identity and expression of cultural confidence under contemporary cultural consumption (Chen, 2023).



Figure 37 Hanbok stores in the old town

Source: Photographed by the author

This kind of experiential business not only realizes natural integration with the historical context of the ancient town architecture, but also builds a new aesthetic order of the ancient town business scene: the vermilion sleeves in the background of the pink walls and the red sleeves, and the Hanfu silhouettes on the ancient bridge near the river have become a new type of business assets under the logic of scene economy. These Hanfu experience spaces not only enhance the cultural immersion of tourists, but also effectively extend their stay and enhance the consumption conversion rate, while further enhancing the brand recognition of the ancient town as a cultural destination.

The aforementioned Nanxun Chamber of Commerce, since 2010 to the present, the building was once again functional transformation into a "series of lake silk hall", specifically for the display of Nanxun's most representative of the intangible cultural heritage - series of lake silk. This again transformed in the inheritance of space on the

basis of cultural attributes, and further strengthen its economic and cultural composite function: on the one hand, through the story of the industry of lake silk and skills show, reconstruction of the historical continuity of the commercial culture of the ancient town; on the other hand, also in the form of public exhibition hall activated the cultural interaction between the community and tourists, become an important platform for the dissemination of traditional crafts and construction of local cultural identity. Residents participate in explanations and skill demonstrations in their daily lives, while tourists participate in cultural consumption through visits and experiences, jointly building a community integration field of "knowledge-experience-interaction". From the Chamber of Commerce to the government, from the history of the museum to the non-heritage pavilion, Nanxun Chamber of Commerce building multi-stage conversion is not the original significance of the space cut, but based on the real needs of the community to carry out cultural remodeling and social integration mechanism of the continuity of the unfolding. Each conversion, embodies the space in the history - system - culture between the role of reconciliation, constitutes the Nanxun cultural space in the social structure of change to maintain stability, integration of diversity, response to the reality of the important practice path.

At the same time to the silk industry hall, for example, in the traditional social form, Nanxun's commercial and cultural space to the silk industry as a representative of the economic function of the highly developed. At the end of the Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China, Nanxun became an important distribution center of silk in China, and buildings such as Silk House Dai and Silk Guild Hall came into being in this context. This kind of building integrates the functions of trading, displaying and management, and is not only a gathering place for merchants, but also an important node for promoting the economic vitality of the region. Silk industry halls were not only places for industry organization, but also assumed the functions of industry standard setting and interest coordination, providing institutional safeguards for the development of local industries and spatial support for cultural identity. The commercial buildings in this period have both traditional guild system and modern enterprise management mode

in their functional composition, which is not only the physical space of the industry's governance institutions, but also an important node connecting foreign capital and local resources. In the guildhouses, there are industry offices, accounting offices and storage spaces, and some of the mansions are equipped with modern facilities such as Western-style reception halls and telephone rooms. These buildings as a material space, not only witnessed Nanxun in the global silk industry network node position, but also become an important medium of local social organization and economic restructuring. This was originally used for silk industry consultation and industry organization of traditional buildings, in the 80's had been used as silk industry elementary school, but into 2006, with the national policy of historical and cultural towns and beautiful countryside construction of the promotion of Nanxun in the protection of cultural heritage and local economic development in the search for a balance between the socio-economic function of the cultural space to enter the renewal phase. Its gradual restoration of its cultural and commercial dual attributes, began to undertake exhibitions, cultural explanations and silk products such as sales of new functions, become an early "cultural and commercial integration" of the exploration of space. Hall of traditional Chinese opera performances, which not only become a window for tourists to understand the culture of Nanxun silk industry, but also to attract the surrounding residents and vendors through the space aggregation effect to form a new consumer scene.

In this context, the tourism industry based on cultural space has become an important path to promote the economic revitalization of ancient towns. Ma (2021) mentioned along the South City River is planned for the landscape area of Chinese and Western cultural exchanges, the original commercial buildings through landscape restoration and functional embedded re-activation. The Silk Industry Hall was transformed into the Nanxun Silk Industry Exhibition Hall, which not only displays traditional textile techniques, but also carries out commentary activities. Its body as a historical space to be retained, its function in education, tourism, business between the conversion and expansion, become a typical "cultural+ economic" space complex. In

this transformation process, the local government has adopted the strategy of both policy support and property rights integration. According to (Liu, 2010), in terms of operation mechanism, the government and enterprises jointly set up cultural tourism companies to guide cultural spaces to participate in the community economic system through leasing and entrusted management. On the one hand, this mechanism provides a sustainable source of funding for the protection of ancient buildings, and on the other hand, it also promotes the improvement of local employment and residents' income, realizing a win-win interaction between the cultural space and the community economy. Cultural space "reproduction" is not only a form of activation, but also an economic function of reconstruction and meaning remodeling. In Nanxun, this "reproduction" is not only limited to the surface of the physical repair, more in-depth to the industrial organization, service logic and community participation. In addition, the cultural space in the promotion of community economic development, but also strengthen the city's image and cultural brand shaping effect. After Nanxun was included in the list of world cultural heritage, its cultural branding strategy has been deepened, and several cultural spaces have been included in the construction of national key cultural relics protection units and provincial tourism demonstration zones, which has led to a large inflow of tourists and investors, forming a benign development cycle. As pointed out (Qin, 2022), the value of cultural space in the socio-economic system should not only be limited to the physical site, it should be understood as a kind of public, shared and cultural regeneration of social resources. Nanxun's experience shows that only by respecting the historical logic and community foundation of cultural space can we realize a true win-win situation for both economy and culture in the transition.



Figure 38 Nanxun Siyehuiguan

Source: Photographed by the author



Figure 39 Commentary venue in the Siyehuiguan

Source: Photographed by the author

At the same time, the periphery of the town's commercial support system is also synchronized to enhance. The most representative example is the Elephant Hotel, which has just completed construction in early 2025. The hotel to "Nanxun four elephants and eight bulls" in the legend of the "elephant" image as inspiration, the overall appearance of its building to a huge abstract elephant as the design prototype, from a distance it looks like an elephant standing with its head up, becoming a visual symbol of the city landmark. This figurative building not only has a strong visual impact but also reconstructs the contemporary expression of local traditional cultural totems in modern design language. Although the interior decoration is not yet clear, the symbolic expression of the exterior shape has successfully transformed the local cultural imagery into a contemporary representation, forming a dual connection between cultural cognition and visual memory. As a part of the contemporary commercial space, the Elephant Hotel is gradually becoming an important medium for the dissemination of local cultural image and memory activation. Of course, this also forms a pattern of internal and external linkage and layered division of labor with the commercial experience in the core area of the ancient town, enhancing the resilience of the overall cultural consumption chain.



Figure 40 Nanxun Elephant Hotel

Source:https://www.sohu.com/a/843008424_791225

Also located in Nanxun New District of Nanxun Hilton Hotel, is the use of "the rising sun, water around the new city" concept design, the main building for the spherical structure, the appearance of the sunrise, like rising, surrounded by the surrounding water system and green space, echoing the natural philosophy of the Jiangnan water town and landscape traditions. This way of conveying the spirit of regional culture through the language of architecture makes the modern space not only serve for business and tourism, but also become an immersive experience place of traditional Han cultural values and good wishes.



Figure 41 Hilton Nanxun Hotel

Source:https://travel.sohu.com/a/745521374_100758

Since the comprehensive development of tourism in Nanxun, the tourist flow has had a greater impact on the original cultural space, including changes in the rhythm of life of residents, the use of traditional space conflicts and other issues. And the establishment of a variety of service systems to provide a flexible interactive interface between community residents and tourists. On the one hand, they centralize and institutionalize the function of cultural dissemination, which reduces the flow and management pressure of traditional street space; on the other hand, they are also the regulating zone of cultural identity, so that tourists can "enter" the local life with more

respect and understanding under the guidance of the organization. As Ma Jing says, "The reconstruction of cultural space in the age of tourism requires the use of modern service facilities as a pivot point to build bridges between communities and tourists, a mechanism that is itself a manifestation of social integration"(Ma, 2008). This kind of space not only enhances the tourists' experience, but also indirectly activates the indigenous people's sense of cultural subjectivity and participation, realizing a balance between "external dissemination" and "community building". More importantly, this round of renewal of the commercial building system reflects the clear judgment of local governors on the deep integration strategy of culture and commerce. To avoid commercial homogenization of competition simultaneously, Nanxun ancient town gradually established a synergistic industry, functional composite, culture-driven, spatial complementary commercial space development mechanism. This branding and creative structure optimization, not only enhances the cultural and commercial image of the town but also for tourists to bring more depth and temperature of the cultural consumption experience, becoming the key support for the town's development.

In summary, since 2006, Nanxun Ancient Town has leveraged the integration of culture and tourism as an opportunity to achieve a profound transformation of diverse architectural types, transitioning from preservation to revitalization through dynamic regeneration, thereby driving the high-level synergistic development of culture and the economy. Cases such as the Nanlou Chunxiao Guesthouse, the Family Tradition Heritage Hall, the Silk Industry Guild Hall, and modern hotels collectively form a multi-layered paradigm for reusing cultural spaces in Nanxun. These examples demonstrate the modern activation mechanisms of local cultural resources and reflect the collaborative governance logic between community stakeholders, government, and market forces. Space is no longer a passive container but a dynamic system integrating the dissemination of cultural memory, the transformation of industrial value, and the coordination of social functions. In this process, Nanxun has not only redefined its local cultural brand but also explored a sustainable path to maintain cultural roots within the modern service economy system, providing a practical model with broader applicability

for the economic structural transformation of Jiangnan ancient towns under the new era's cultural and tourism development context.

4.3.2 Social relations: Differentiation of tourism occupations, enhanced service-oriented and interactive neighborhood relations

With the rapid development of the cultural tourism industry in Nanxun Ancient Town, the social relationship structure of the local Han Chinese community has undergone significant restructuring. The most obvious change is reflected in the transformation of occupational division of labor—traditional agricultural and factory workers have been replaced mainly by tourism-related occupations, with community residents gradually transitioning into roles such as homestay operators, tour guides, intangible cultural heritage inheritors, handicraft experience instructors, and cultural interpreters, forming a service-oriented occupational ecological network. This tourism-driven occupational division changes individual economic identities and reshapes the logic of unneighborly interactions. Driven by service demands, unneighborly relationships that were once based on kinship or geographical proximity now exhibit functional complementarity and cooperative symbiosis. For example, residents in the Nanxun Baijianlou area often form daily collaborative mechanisms through mutual referral, resource sharing, and rotating hosting arrangements while operating homestays, teahouses, and Hanf photography spots. This neighborhood co-operation model not only enhances the tourism reception efficiency of the ancient town but also promotes the emergence of new collaborative social relationships within the community, serving as an essential social mechanism foundation in the modern transformation of Nanxun's cultural space.

As the gateway to the ancient town's overall tourism reception system, the Nanxun Tourist Service Centre fully embodies the development direction of "multi-functional composite" public buildings in terms of spatial functional layout and service content. The building has a design area of 318 square meters. Though compact in size, it features a highly efficient functional layout, divided into sections such as a ticketing hall, visitor rest area, cinema hall, visitor lounge, and comprehensive service counter, forming an integrated composite service space that combines information reception,

ticketing services, rest facilities, cultural guidance, and preliminary exhibitions. In terms of spatial layout, the overall design adopts the traditional grey white colour scheme and sloped roof structure of Jiangnan architecture, maintaining visual continuity with the ancient town's architectural context. Internally, modern facilities such as glass partitions, circular light strips, digital information screens, and multilingual touchscreen interfaces are incorporated to create a reception atmosphere that balances modernity with local character. The cinema hall regularly screens films on the historical development of Nanxun and the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, enabling visitors to gain structured cultural knowledge before entering the ancient town. The rest area is equipped with cultural and creative display cabinets and illustrated walls, turning the waiting and leisure process into a prelude to cultural immersion. This building not only serves the basic needs of visitors but also aims to promote public culture and establish an image gateway, becoming the first point of contact for external visitors to experience the cultural space of the Han Chinese community. It combines traditional spatial aesthetics with modern service logic, marking a new functional requirement for public buildings in the cultural space operations of Nanxun Ancient Town. As a composite platform integrating service, communication, education, and experience, the Nanxun Tourist Service Centre provides a new model for the renewal of social relations in public buildings.



Figure 42 Nanxun Visitor Center

Source: Photographed by the author

In the public cultural space system of Nanxun Ancient Town, the functional reactivation of the ancient theater not only continues the physical place of traditional culture, but also injects a sustainable cultural performance mechanism for the contemporary community. These historic theater retained the lifting beam wooden structure, flying eaves arch, brick carving pedestal and other traditional craft features, its external appearance overall good protection, still maintains the local visual identity. Its interior has been moderately modernized and upgraded - additional lighting and sound systems, seats for the performers, backstage passages and digital guides have been installed to enhance the functionality without destroying its sense of history and ceremony. This original appearance, internal adaptation of the transformation strategy for the integration of traditional architecture into the modern cultural tourism environment provides a feasible model (Liu, 2004). More critical is that the spatial activation of the ancient theater is in the local cultural policy to promote the formation of a normalized operational mechanism. Nanxun Ancient Town officials have promoted the ancient theater to form a system of continuous cultural activities centered on local traditional drama. For example, during November 2024, the ancient theater has been staged "Dream of the Red Chamber", "Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai", including several performances of Yueju opera, attracting many tourists and local audiences to stop and watch. These high-frequency, regularized performances not only enhance the daily usage of the stage but also promote the re-embedding of traditional arts in the daily life of the community, making theater-going a participatory, transmissible, and reproducible cultural practice in the Han community again. In addition, the ancient theater also assumes a ceremonial and gathering social function at festival nodes, serving as the core activity site for festivals such as the Lantern Festival and the Dragon Boat Festival, as well as a place of collective memory and aesthetic emotional resonance for the Han community. Visitors take photos, watch performances, and participate in the opera experience here, not only to obtain the satisfaction of cultural consumption, but also to establish an emotional connection with local history and tradition. Therefore, the composite use of the ancient stage not only continues the historical logic of its

performance space, but also in the framework of contemporary cultural governance into a public participation, artistic dissemination and cultural identity reconstruction of cultural infrastructure, becoming one of the core nodes in the path of Nanxun Ancient Town cultural space revitalization.

Located in the periphery of the ancient town of Nanxun Lianshi grain silo historical and cultural district, also continued the similar transformation of the ancient theater, this street district is a typical industrial heritage spatial regeneration project, through the preservation of the historical grain silo texture, activated for the contemporary urban cultural composite space. The neighborhood is divided into five thematic areas, namely "Good Wishes, Good Scenery, Good Dwelling, Good Character, and Good Style", which play the role of the hub of the cultural narrative. The area integrates multiple functions such as urban book bar, shared office, parent-child education, conference salon, public lecture hall, etc. It is not only a window for displaying local culture, but also a platform for residents to participate in daily cultural life. The original single storage function of the granary is redefined as a cultural energy field integrating memory, knowledge and communication while respecting the logic of the building structure. This remodeling logic embodies another form of expression of the multiple activation mechanism of space (Dai, 2004), where public buildings can jump out of their original elimination function and shoulder new functions in their original image. The Lianshi Granary realizes the double compound of function and spirit in cultural dissemination, urban image reshaping, and community reintegration. This has also led to the creation of a large number of service-related jobs.



Figure 43 Nanxun Lianshi Granary Historical and Cultural Neighborhood

Source: https://www.sohu.com/a/608159716_121106832

Overall, the rise of the tourism industry has not only transformed the economic structure and spatial functions of Nanxun Ancient Town but has also profoundly influenced the social relationships within the Han Chinese community. The differentiation of tourism-related occupations has led to new forms of identity recognition and social interaction, driving residents to transition from traditional family roles to participants in cultural services. Meanwhile, in response to the business opportunities and challenges brought by concentrated tourist flows, unneighborly relationships have gradually evolved from static daily interactions into dynamic cooperative relationships, exhibiting high levels of service orientation, interactivity, and interest alignment. As demonstrated by the cultural experience ecosystem formed between the Nanlou Chunxiao Guesthouse and its surrounding businesses, as well as the diverse cases of collaborative operations among residents in the Baijianlou District, the community has already established a new social relationship framework based on division of labor, complementary interests, and

co-creation of culture. Such transformations support the dynamic operation of cultural spaces anemic operation of cultural spaces and reflect the continuous evolution of internal governance and social integration capabilities within Han Chinese communities under the backdrop of cultural and tourism integration, providing a deep-seated foundation for the social resilience of traditional communities in the new era.

4.3.3 Lifestyle: Combining public cultural activities, expression of faith, and visions of a better life

As cultural tourism continues to develop, the lifestyle of residents in Nanxun Ancient Town is undergoing a subtle transformation. The private, family-centered lifestyle of the past is gradually giving way to a more open, public-oriented approach to cultural participation. Cultural activities are increasingly integrated into daily life, giving rise to a new trend of culturalization in public life. From the festive decorations in the streets and alleys to the community activities organized in squares and temples, residents' daily rhythms are being reshaped by the pace of cultural activities, with life and ritual, participation and performance increasingly intertwined. This everyday cultural participation reflects how the lifestyle of Han Chinese communities is evolving towards greater openness, sharing, and visualization, making life in the ancient town itself a manifestation of cultural identity and value recognition.

Driven by cultural tourism and community cultural self-awareness under the common role of Nanxun ancient town of faith building since 2006 showed from the religious space to the depth of public culture and community spiritual field of transformation. Guanghui Palace, Liu's temple and other original religious ceremonial function of the building, in maintaining the basic faith structure under the premise of gradually being included in the festival show, cultural tourism and social governance composite system, forming a set of historical memory, emotional projection, moral constraints and social participation in one of the cultural space network. Among them, Guanghui Palace, as the most dynamic open faith space in Nanxun, demonstrates the multiple dimensions and deeper significance of this transformation process.

Guanghui Palace space function in contemporary activation, and constantly extended, gradually evolved into a comprehensive community spiritual center. It not only

retains the traditional incense burning and praying for blessings, festive ceremonies and other religious activities, while carrying the neighborhood consultation, cultural exchange, psychological comfort and other social functions, become the Nanxun community in transition in the emotional anchor and cultural identity support. With the accelerated pace of the city and the fractured family structure, individuals face more pressure and uncertainty in their daily lives, and the act of praying for blessings is regarded as an important practice to stabilize emotions and strengthen confidence. Respondent Ms. Shi (Shi 2024) said, "Before our children's exams, our whole family comes to offer incense, not only for good luck, but also as a sense of ritual and to feel down-to-earth." In this context, the act of faith has long since transcended the realm of religion, transforming into a mechanism for maintaining the psychological connection between the individual and society, providing spiritual support and a sense of order for the individual. At the same time, Guanghui Palace has also become an important part of the tourist experience, carrying the tourists' perception of local culture and participation needs. As the most open and active space in the ancient town of Nanxun faith building, Guanghui Palace often attracts a large number of tourists to come on weekdays "card praying". To a certain extent, this also makes the temple in the non-festival days can maintain a certain flow of people. Visitors are not only able to watch traditional incense ceremonies, hanging blessing strips and other interactive behaviors, but also get an immersive local cultural experience through scene decoration, cultural explanation and atmosphere creation. During festivals, the temple entrance is decorated with lights and incense, and visitors and residents participate in praying for blessings, watching performances, taking photographs and interacting, making this traditional faith space a cultural node for cultural and tourism integration. Some tourists even come to Guanghui Palace to offer incense as an important part of the ritual on the journey, to express their wishes for a smooth trip, family well-being, career prosperity, this cultural tourism behavior also reflects the positive recognition of contemporary people on the faith as a space for emotional regulation and spiritual support.



Figure 44 Prayer slips left by residents and tourists at Gwanghwigong Palace

Source: Photographed by the author

At the same time, of course, Guanghai Palace is also an important platform for community cohesion, assuming the functions of neighborhood consultation and collective participation. Its festivals not only attract visitors, but also become an important opportunity for socialization, communication and collective action of the indigenous residents. All parties in the community work together to prepare decorations and participate in the organization of the community market, which in itself provides a practical platform for community members to cooperate and negotiate, and strengthens the mechanism of cooperation within the community (Ren, 2000). The spatial form and festive rituals carried by Guanghai Palace construct a figurative cultural cognition system, enabling the indigenous residents to recover their sense of belonging and identity in the ever-changing social environment. Its continuous use of beliefs is not only significant to the local residents, but also serves as a cultural guide and integration for the new immigrants.



Figure 45 Decoration scene of the market held in front of Gwanghyeong Palace

Source: Photographed by the author

A deeper function is the social significance of moral constraints and behavioral norms carried by Guanghui Palace. With its unique ceremonial atmosphere and religious symbols, the faith space evokes the individual's cultural cognition of karma, the difference between good and evil, and a sense of reverence (Ye, 2004). The pious gesture of praying in front of the incense in the temple is not only a religious expression, but also a symbolic respect for the public order and moral bottom line. Especially in contemporary times, when the community trust mechanism is weakening, Guanghui Palace provides a soft field for ethical education, so that the faith space carries the real function of moral internalization in a seemingly non-institutionalized structure.

From the landscape level, the faith building also becomes an important node of the cultural landscape of the ancient town with its stable image symbols and cultural accumulation. The architectural style, spatial layout and festive decorations of Guanghui Palace construct a continuously recognizable cultural visual system, enabling it to assume the symbolic function of cultural memory and identity in a rapidly changing

social environment. For new immigrants, the faith space is also an intermediary mechanism for cultural integration, and participation in temple fairs, prayers or festivals becomes a practical way for them to "become part of the community".

Overall, the lifestyle of residents in Nanxun Ancient Town has undergone a significant transformation towards greater cultural and spiritual significance in the context of the new era of cultural and tourism integration. The publicization of cultural activities has transformed previously scattered daily behaviors into collective community memories and social energy, thereby strengthening community cohesion and identity. Meanwhile, sacred spaces such as Guanghui Palace serve not only religious functions but also as symbolic venues where residents and tourists express their aspirations for a better life. Residents use these spaces to express their wishes for the growth of their children and the well-being of their families; tourists, on the other hand, view a pilgrimage experience as a psychological projection of smooth travel and a happy future during their journey. In this process, religious practices have evolved into a cultural practice that transcends identity boundaries, fostering emotional resonance and cultural identity among diverse groups within the ancient town's spatial context. This transformation in lifestyle is not only an active embrace of tradition by individuals but also a modern society's reconstruction of spiritual order and public cultural spaces, reflecting Nanxun Ancient Town's ability to continuously shape new forms of social life while maintaining cultural continuity.

4.3.4 Functional innovation of cultural spaces and deepening of social interaction mechanisms

In the Han community of Nanxun ancient town, cultural space is never closed and single-function existence, they are naturally embedded in the residential, commercial, public and faith in the spatial structure, and in the evolution of history gradually showed a high degree of functional synergy and spatial integration characteristics (Ma, 2003). This kind of integration is not imposed from outside, but is a social mechanism naturally formed in the long-term practice of the community, reflecting the high adaptability and self-organization of Han communities in spatial governance and cultural maintenance.

From the spatial distribution, Nanxun ancient town to the "front street after the river" as the basis of the pattern, living space, faith space, commercial space and public space between the physical adjacency and functionality of the intertwined nature. For example, in the Bacchanalia area, residents' daily life space and store space are often mixed, with street stores on the first floor, family living quarters on the second floor, and river ports on the back side, where boats can be moored. This hybrid building model not only saves space but also promotes the flow and interaction between residents' daily life and commercial activities, forming a highly active street culture. As contained in the "Nanxun town", "mixed residential stores, water ports are connected, the city prosperous but not lose peace"(Zong, 1970), this feature reflects the traditional logic of the Jiangnan water town cultural space "multi-functional embedded". This feature reflects the traditional logic of "multi-functional embedded" cultural space in Jiangnan water town. Faith space is embedded in the daily life of the community in another way. In Nanxun Ancient Town, although traditional places such as Guanghui Palace and Liu's Family Temple mainly serve for festivals and clan commemorations, during non-festival periods, these spaces are also often used by community residents for neighborhood gatherings, deliberations and consultations, and tourism and cultural displays. This "flexible use" makes religious space no longer a closed ceremonial space, but an important vehicle for community collaboration and emotional bonding. Ms. Zhou (2024), one of the community elders interviewed, mentioned, "We sometimes hold activities in the Liu Family Ancestral Hall now, and we are used to treating it as a common space for everyone." Similarly, 1953-present public space exists intertwined in homes, gardens, guilds, and temples. This type of spatial sharing mechanism reflects the flexibility and cultural resilience of Han communities in spatial integration and is an important manifestation of the expansion of the social functions of traditional cultural spaces in the modern context.

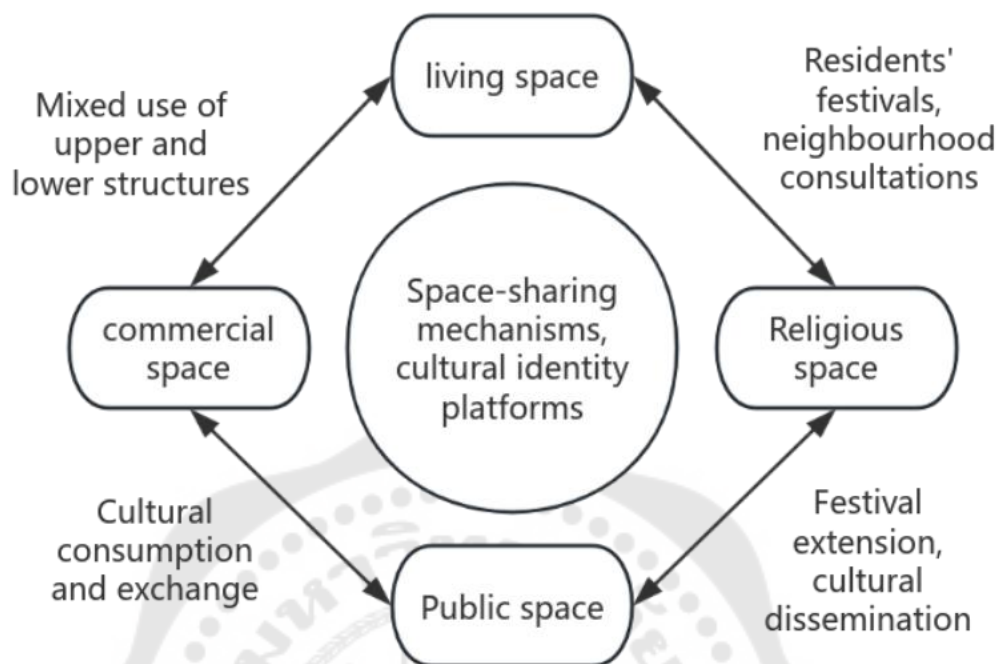


Figure 46 Overlap in the physical structure and functional use of the four spaces

Source: Drawn by the author

The integration of cultural space is also an important manifestation of its function in meeting the daily and public needs of the community. Traditional market spaces and theater spaces serve the public life of the entire community by taking on the functions of folk performances and commodity exchanges during lunar festivals and major occasions. Especially in the absence of modern community support, these cultural spaces have become "decentralized" nodes for the distribution of public resources, carrying a variety of tasks such as education, aesthetics, communication and order organization. As Shen Zurong pointed out in the *Jiaye Nanxun*, "a lane, not only the drama, but also the sound of the city, there is the sound of the people, there is the old Nanxun people's tradition of public discussion". In contemporary times, with the change of residents' lifestyles and the enhancement of cultural tourism demand, these cultural spaces are further endowed with new functional attributes. For example, in addition to the exhibition function of the silk industry hall, but also regularly held calligraphy and

painting exhibitions, cultural lectures and silk non-legacy experience activities, to achieve the linkage of traditional crafts and contemporary expression. The relevant person in charge of Nanxun District Archives Bureau (Zhu, 2024) said in the interview, "We pay special attention to the multi-functional activation of traditional space, hoping that it is both a historical witness and a cultural living room for citizens." This re-embedding of spatial functions not only enriches the public cultural life of the aborigines but also allows visitors to indirectly integrate into the community life in the process of participation, forming a synergistic ecology of shared cultural spaces. The multicultural space of Nanxun Ancient Town is not a place cut off from each other, but through the openness of space and functional mobility, a stable interaction mechanism is established between different systems such as residential, commercial and religious. This spatial synergy is an important supporting force for the Han community to maintain internal order and external openness, as well as the institutional basis for the continued vitality of the cultural space (Zhou, 2009). It is both a cultural heritage formed by history and a reflection of the community's social capacity to continuously integrate resources and respond to reality.

Since 2006, along with the continuous improvement of the socialist market economic system, China's economic governance gradually from the economic planning model to the evolution of economic planning, the state is no longer the direct allocation of micro-resources, but through the top-level design, industrial policy and spatial strategy to guide and control the local development (Qiu, 2011). This transformation of the logic of governance for the Nanxun ancient town of cultural space has brought unprecedented opportunities for independent reconstruction. The function of the cultural space is no longer a single service to the national goal, but has greater flexibility, in the market guide, social participation and cultural heritage between the formation of multi-directional feedback and compound synergy. It is in this institutional environment that the Han Chinese community cultural space in Nanxun has evolved synchronously in terms of function, goal, structure and cultural significance, showing a typical AGIL-type synergy mechanism.

At this stage, cultural spaces demonstrate strong comprehensive adaptability and regulatory capabilities. In response to the rise of the tourism market, the upgrading of cultural consumption, and the evolution of community aesthetic preferences, the spatial functions of Nanxun Ancient Town have undergone a profound transformation while preserving its historical form. From an economic structural perspective, Nanxun has transitioned from a traditional agricultural economy and small-scale industrial model to a service-oriented economic system centered on cultural tourism, forming a new economic landscape dominated by industries such as homestays, catering, cultural creativity, and guided tours. From the transformation of residential buildings into homestays, bookstores, and family tradition museums, to commercial buildings integrating Hanfu experiences, intangible cultural heritage retail, and immersive consumption, to public buildings such as tourist centres, grain warehouse districts, and elephant hotels serving as platforms for composite services and cultural dissemination, Nanxun's spatial system continuously adapts its form and functions, forming a multi-dimensional response mechanism to policies, market demands, and resident needs.

From the perspective of social relations, driven by market forces and external capital, some traditional residential buildings in the Hundred-Room House area have introduced chain homestay brands through space rentals, combining young people's aesthetic preferences and new media trends to create 'Instagram-worthy photo spots and comfortable accommodation' cultural tourism products. These new-style homestays emphasise visual impact, blending traditional elements with modern styles, significantly increasing the ancient town's exposure on social media and driving new growth in the tourism economy. Meanwhile, another group of residents have chosen to operate independently, opening small restaurants, homestays, cafes, and teahouses, forming an integrated regional collaborative economic entity cluster. In this process, residents have proactively avoided unhealthy competition through negotiation, establishing cooperative mechanisms for shared customer bases, information sharing, and joint marketing, demonstrating a high level of social integration and collaborative awareness within the community.

From a lifestyle perspective, the traditional closed family-oriented living model is gradually being replaced by an open, shared, and service-oriented lifestyle oriented toward tourists. Residents not only assume multiple roles as hosts, service providers, and storytellers, but their daily lives are increasingly intertwined with tourist needs, festival activities, and cultural displays, reflecting a lifestyle logic deeply integrated with spatial, economic, and cultural dimensions.

From the perspective of AGIL theory, the deepening of cultural space innovation and social interaction mechanisms in the BaiJianLou area during this phase demonstrates a high degree of systemicity and community agency:

Adaptation

Under the backdrop of the 11th Five-Year Plan emphasizing the expansion of domestic demand, Nanxun Ancient Town actively responded to the cultural tourism market's demand for personalized experiences and cultural ambiance through spatial functional restructuring. Some residential buildings introduced external capital through leasing, attracting chain homestay brands to settle in. In terms of spatial design, traditional wooden structural details were combined with modern aesthetic elements to create visually striking 'Instagram-worthy' photo spots. This spatial innovation not only enhanced the market competitiveness of residential buildings but also strengthened Nanxun Ancient Town's dissemination power on social media platforms, attracting a large number of young tourists.

Goal Attainment

With the objectives of expanding domestic demand and improving residents' quality of life, spatial functional innovation has effectively achieved the economic benefits and cultural dissemination goals for community residents. Through new business models such as homestays, photography hotspots, and cultural experience activities, the residential buildings in the Bai Jian Lou area have transitioned from traditional living spaces to cultural tourism consumption spaces. Homestay operators and external capital complement each other, driving the release of the market value of local cultural spaces. Meanwhile, leveraging tourist traffic, Nanxun's local cultural image has been widely disseminated, further promoting the brand development and economic

benefits of cultural spaces. Ms. Weng, a homestay operator, mentioned in an interview: 'Only by making tourists feel comfortable and stay longer can we increase consumption' (Weng, 2024). It can thus be seen that while pursuing economic benefits, residents are also actively fulfilling functional goals related to cultural dissemination and tourism services.

Integration

Some of the residential buildings in the Bai Jian Lou area are independently operated by residents, who have opened restaurants, homestays, cafes, and teahouses, forming an economic entity cluster with regional collaboration characteristics. Residents have established a collaborative model through active negotiation, sharing customer sources, operating in complementary ways, and conducting joint marketing, thereby avoiding the phenomenon of vicious competition in the homestay economy. This collaborative business network not only enhances cooperation within the community but also reshapes the organisational model of the ancient town's economy and social life, promoting the overall vitality and cohesion of the community. Social relationships have evolved from a 'familiar society' based primarily on kinship and geographical ties to a new cooperative network based on industrial collaboration and information flow.

Latency

Innovative spatial styles and the reinterpretation of cultural symbols continue to deepen the community's cultural identity and external image. The Bai Jian Lou area has introduced modern design concepts, retaining traditional architectural styles on the exterior of buildings within the scope of community consultation while appropriately incorporating contemporary fashion elements. This has attracted a large number of young tourists to share content on social media. The active dissemination by tourists has, in turn, reinforced the recognition of Bai Jian Lou as a cultural consumption space and a local cultural symbol, enhancing residents' pride in local traditional culture and their awareness of contemporary expression, and driving the contemporary renewal of community cultural identity. While the influx of external cultures does pose challenges to tradition, the community's strict maintenance of building exteriors indicates that

residents universally recognise local culture as the core resource sustaining Nanxun Ancient Town's long-term appeal.

Overall, the innovation of cultural space functions and the deepening of social interaction mechanisms in the Bai Jian Lou area reflect the Han Chinese community of Nanxun's profound restructuring of cultural space value recognition and utilisation models in the new era. Adaptation and Goal Attainment form a positive synergistic relationship, with flexible adjustments to spatial functions effectively serving both economic benefits and cultural dissemination objectives. Goal Attainment and Integration also interact positively, as community economic benefits in turn enhance residents' enthusiasm for participating in public collaboration, driving the steady development of regional collaborative networks. Integration and Latency complement each other, with the fusion of traditional architectural symbols and modern aesthetics deepening community cultural identity through social media dissemination. Latency and Adaptation exhibit a dynamic interdependent relationship: as the community adapts to market demands, it actively activates cultural symbols, enabling cultural identity to be modernised. Through the closed-loop operation of these four-dimensional synergistic mechanisms, the Nanxun Han Chinese community has constructed a spatial system that combines economic resilience, social integration, and cultural sustainability, continuously driving cultural space innovation and social restructuring under external influences.

4.3.5 The rise of consumer aesthetics and changes in economic innovation

(1) Aesthetic Value: Landscaping of Ancient Towns and Multiple Transformations of Cultural Element Expressions

Since 2006, Nanxun ancient town into the cultural renaissance and spatial renewal-oriented development of a new stage. In the national "Eleventh Five-Year Plan" and the implementation of subsequent policies continue to promote the background, China's economy into the fast lane of development, cultural soft power construction and urban and rural development strategy is constantly strengthened, Nanxun ancient town is located in the cultural space is also therefore more policy and resource support. In the policy guidance and local practice under the joint role of the ancient town landscape

system gradually established, traditional architecture and neighborhood space is no longer only regarded as historical remains to be preserved, but through the reconstruction of the aesthetic perspective and cultural symbols of the innovative expression of the realization of the "heritage preservation" to "organic regeneration" The process has not only enriched the visualization of the space (Chen, 1998), but has also made it more attractive to the public. This process not only enriches the visual semantic system of the space but also promotes the improvement of the aesthetic consciousness of the community, and reconstructs the expression mechanism of local cultural identity in practice (Li, 1998).

This phase is characterized by a high degree of self-awareness in the visual expression of residential buildings. Compared with the period between 1981 and 2005, when "individual repair" dominated and style was not yet fully negotiated and unified, residents after 2006 not only participated in residential repair, but also took the initiative to adjust the visual relationship between the façade style and the surrounding neighborhood. In terms of house repair, courtyard arrangement and doorway design, residents generally adopt antique doors and windows, symmetrical courtyards and decorative courtyard walls to build their own space with the criterion of "consistency and harmony". The space of the house is no longer just an appearance of restoring tradition, but an active projection of cultural identity and collective aesthetic consensus, and this change is more systematic and synergistic than that of the previous stage. At the same time, this kind of daily behavior shows the residents' recognition and response to the overall aesthetic orientation of the ancient town, and also strengthens the collective consensus of the community on what the cultural space "should look like" (Wang, 1993). More importantly, the enhancement of aesthetic awareness is not only reflected in the treatment of personal space, but also extends to the expression of lifestyle and enthusiasm for cultural participation (Shao, 2003). These behaviors not only build a closer emotional connection between residents and the space, but also provide a cognitive and practical basis for the continuous formation of local cultural identity.

Table 10 Aesthetic elements of daily life level in Nanxun in the new era

Aesthetic Orientation of Daily Life				
				
Traditional house center hall furnishings	Taihu Lake stone in the garden	small-scale water feature	flower pot	put up Spring Festival couplets

Commercial buildings in this stage are more characterized by "active design". Although the previous stage of the realization of the "antique modification" and "Jiangnan imagery" of the initial construction, but still mainly for individual operators out of commercial attraction of the local beautification. Since 2006, with the maturity of Nanxun tourism economy and brand awareness, store front decoration presents a unified planning and active innovation of the dual trend. Along the Nan Shi River, Baijianlou and other neighborhoods of commercial space using a unified material, a unified font, a unified scale system to reshape the visual order, supplemented by personalized lighting, non-heritage symbols embedded in the exhibition set to strengthen the space mood to create a very consumer-led "cultural neighborhood experience. The formation mechanism of this kind of repair, arrangement and expression is the visible embodiment of the activation of the market mechanism, which makes the architectural space as a common carrier of cultural identity and economic activities (Liao & Li, 2004).

In terms of belief space, there is also a shift from symbolic recovery to embedding in the cultural system. 1981-2005, traditional festivals and community rituals restored the "interrupted cultural order" through decorative behaviors (putting up Spring Festival couplets, hanging lanterns, etc.), but often in the form of "behavior-led, space-associated" activities. The traditional festivals and community rituals have restored the "interrupted cultural order" through decorative behaviors (putting up spring couplets, hanging lanterns, etc.), but often in the form of "behavioral dominance and spatial subordination. After 2006, Nanxun adopted a more systematic landscape integration strategy for streets, alleys, guilds, religions and squares, which not only strengthened the recognition of traditional features, but also expanded the multiple functions of cultural experience. In the South City along the river, the building facade and waterfront interface to be unified repair, bridge, theater, plaza and other locations are introduced into the installation of sketches, night lighting, visual guide system and other modern landscape elements, the formation of "aesthetic identification - cultural immersion - participation incentive" composite Landscape expression mechanism. Residents are no longer just passive receivers of the spatial visual order, but actively establish emotional connections and visual interactions with the public space through participation in festivals, community organizations, daily walks and other behavioral paths, expanding the overall experience to the dimensions of initiative, synergy and symbolism. This "multi-functional space strategy" is also embodied in the practice of renewal of religious buildings. Nanxun Catholic Church, for example, the place not only restored the function of religious activities, but also be included in the visitor system, become an important cultural node to tell the history of Nanxun religious and architectural art. Its restoration work to retain the original gothic style based on the combination of modern exhibition and interpretation system, showing the diversity and inclusiveness of Nanxun religious culture. Religious space is not only to serve the ritual needs of believers, but also through the cultural interpretation of the way to participate in the tourism experience, public education and visual system construction. The superposition of such spatial functions and the composite of visual language, constituting the public space in Nanxun

since 2006 from the "visual recovery" towards the "cultural connection" of the significant leap, but also marks its spatial values from a single use to the complex expression of the fundamental Transformation.

Public building space is shown from the "functional continuity" to "ritual participation" evolution. Compared with the previous stage in the "moderate repair, basic preservation" principle, after 2006 Nanxun in public space management gradually turned to a more holistic and strategic landscape integration path. Nan Shi River along the street façade was unified repair, bridge nodes, theater square, ancestral temple front lawn and other early marginalized traditional space was reactivated, no longer only assume the traffic or management functions, but through design intervention and functional reorganization, become the bearing of cultural memory, promote community communication important place. The spatial design of this period focuses on openness, ceremony and visual accessibility, and while retaining the traditional sloping roofs, gray walls, green stone paving and other landscape elements, it introduces elements such as modern installation sketches, night lighting, and visual guide systems to build a composite landscape system of "aesthetic recognition, cultural immersion, and participatory incentives". A composite landscape system of "aesthetic identification - cultural immersion - participation incentive" is constructed. In addition, the role of residents has changed from "receiver" to "participant". Instead of just passively following the visual plan, they continuously participate in shaping the visual atmosphere and cultural significance of the public space of through festivals, community activities and daily passages. The control of color, balance of scale and materials in the arrangement of the space show a systematic grasp of the aesthetic atmosphere, making these places not only symbolic of history and culture, but also a contemporary expression of community interaction and spiritual belonging. This way of dealing with cultural symbols is no longer restricted to the reproduction of "originality", but emphasizes more on the visual identifiability, integrity of cultural expression and realistic accessibility of aesthetic experience. Public space is no longer just a physical bearer of historical memories, but

an important platform for constructing local cultural identity, activating residents' emotional connection, and telling the story of community values.

More importantly, in this period, the Nanxun community within the aesthetic cognition also experienced a "reconciled transition". Initially rejecting modern design elements, some residents gradually shifted to the "balance between tradition and new needs" open aesthetic acceptance. For example, one resident mentioned in the interview, "We now know that guests like to take photos, so we pay attention to matching the flowers and lanterns planted in front of the entrance, but we don't use anything too bright or too glaring." This "mediated aesthetic" not only reflects the residents' ability to adapt to aesthetics in the modern context, but also their willingness to actively participate in the visual norms and cultural reproduction of the old town. At the same time, the aesthetic transformation also drives the localized development of the cultural industry and the recreation of community culture. Through the contemporary expression of traditional elements and redesign, such as hand-painted silk scarves, lake silk cultural creation packaging, Nanxun characteristics of collage, and other commodities, not only meet the aesthetic interest of tourists, but also convey the visual language of the symbols of Nanxun's local culture core. This "aesthetic as a bridge" mechanism of cultural dissemination, so that the aesthetic value is not only the experience of beauty but also becomes a community cultural and economic system of productivity factors and thus enhances the cultural autonomy of the community of Nanxun and external expression

Table 11 Comparison table of architectural aesthetics of Nanxun Ancient Town 1981-

2005 and 2006-present

Building Type	1980-2005	2006-present
Residential Building	After the return of the property rights, the residents repair the building on their own initiative,	Emphasis on landscape consistency and coordination, faux-traditional design

	restoring the traditional elements such as whitewashed walls and tiles, and aesthetically returning to the individual expression with reference to the memory.	incorporated into overall visual norms, and a shift in residents' aesthetic behavior towards collaboration and consensus
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Table 11 (continue)

Building Type	1980-2005	2006-present
Commercial Building	The rise of self-employment, antique facade spontaneous reproduction of Jiangnan imagery, decorative orientation by the impact of market attraction, more decentralized	Some religious buildings, such as temples, are restored to their original appearance and transformed into cultural display platforms, realizing the dual functions of faith and tourism.
Religious Buildin	Traditional visual elements such as couplets and lanterns are restored during festivals, but the faith space has not been systematically repaired and expression is fragmented	Some religious buildings, such as the Catholic Church, have been restored to their original appearance and transformed into cultural display platforms, realizing the dual functions of faith and tourism.
Public Building	The nodes such as the Guild Hall and the Book Depository will be moderately renewed based	Integrated integration of streets, alleys and squares, integration of guidance, lighting and traditional

	on the principle of "preserving the original appearance", and the functions and styles will be preserved.	nodes, balanced enhancement of public space functions, forms and cultural expressions
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Driven by the cultural and tourism industry, the core area of the ancient town emphasizes the continuation of traditional features, creating a unified Jiangnan aesthetic; while the surrounding supporting areas adopt modern design techniques, incorporating international characteristics in materials and forms, while also integrating local cultural symbols to meet modern aesthetic demands, achieving a fusion of traditional and modern expressions, balancing cultural continuity with functional updates.

The Fusion of Traditional and Modern Aesthetics

In the era of cultural and tourism consumption, the traditional architectural aesthetics of Nanxun no longer pursue complete restoration but instead extract elements and reinterpret them visually, integrating them into new spaces such as guesthouses, bookstores, and teahouses to form a "Jiangnan-style" symbolic expression. Residents and operators retain traditional features such as roof ridges, blue bricks, and wood carvings in exterior decorations while incorporating modern design styles preferred by younger generations, creating an aesthetic dialogue where tradition and modernity coexist. This "familiar yet novel" visual expression satisfies tourists' dual needs for photography and cultural experiences, enabling traditional aesthetics to continue in a new context.

Aesthetic Protection Under Institutional Regulations

The government has promoted the comprehensive protection of traditional aesthetics through measures such as promulgating the "Nanxun Ancient Town Protection Regulations" and guidelines for street appearance. Meanwhile, the

community has gradually formed an aesthetic consensus, with residents participating in designing shopfronts and street layouts through mechanisms such as "residents' forums," ensuring a more coordinated and consistent aesthetic expression. This promotes the sustainable inheritance of traditional aesthetics in urban renewal.

Summary: The architectural aesthetics of Nanxun Ancient Town between 1953 and 2024 shows a progressive trend from "function-oriented" to "cultural return" to "integration expression", reflecting the dynamic adjustment of aesthetic consciousness with the evolution of social and economic development and cultural policy. This reflects the dynamic adjustment of aesthetic consciousness with the evolution of social and economic development and cultural policies.

1953-1980, Nanxun ancient town building aesthetics by policy-led, social and cultural patterns of reconstruction, the residents of the aesthetic level of adjustment and personal values change, and other factors, showing the traditional clan aesthetics to the function of the first institutionalized aesthetic transformation trend. Policy level, the state vigorously promotes socialist construction and collectivist values, emphasizing the "simple, unified, practical" architectural concept. Influenced by the Soviet Union, Nanxun local buildings using the Stalinist and socialist realism style, the formation of the "Sino-Soviet fusion" architectural form (Shan, 2014), functional design overrides the traditional decorative, aesthetic tendency to simplicity, and regularity.

At the same time, the social and cultural patterns underwent a drastic transformation, clan ethics weakened, public space emphasized political functions, private space gave way to collective functions, and the ceremonial and symbolic elements of traditional aesthetics were drastically weakened. Residents' aesthetic level was also adjusted in this process, as mentioned by Shi (2024) in the interview, "At that time, homes were not decorated, as long as they could be used, everyone went to participate in collective labor, and homes were simply decorated." This aesthetic turn was further reinforced by the level of education and propaganda orientation; the younger generation received an aesthetic education in school and society that prioritized function and subordinated form to content, and their personal beliefs and

values shifted from the pursuit of family glory and spatial propriety to serving the collective and emphasizing political correctness. The original spatial consciousness rooted in clan ethics and traditional aesthetics is replaced by uniformity and normality, leading to the compression of individual aesthetic expression and the weakening of cultural confidence. Residents gradually adapted to and accepted the institutional aesthetic paradigm of simplicity, unity, and regularity, which permeated the layout of their residences, festivals, and even their choice of clothing, forming a tendency of aesthetic homogenization from the visual to the psychological (Parsons, 1951).

As a whole, the architectural aesthetics of Han communities in this period shifted from diversity and symbolism to homogenization and functionality, and traditional cultural symbols were replaced by institutionalized aesthetic paradigms in the visual language of the space, forming a systematic change from the spatial form to the daily aesthetic perception of the residents.

1981-2005, During this period along with the reform and opening up and the market economy gradually returning, Nanxun ancient town building aesthetics presented by the institutional aesthetic to the local cultural identity and regional personalized expression of the restoration of the adjustment process, by the policy guidance, the residents of the aesthetic level of enhancement, the transformation of socio-cultural patterns and personal values reshaping the comprehensive impact.

At the policy level, the state has begun to encourage the development of cultural diversity and local characteristics, and the policy of cultural relics protection has been gradually introduced, emphasizing the value concept of "repairing the old as the old". Such as the three museums in the construction process, clear requirements in the architectural form to reflect local cultural characteristics, the reconstruction of the Ming and Qing styles of Wenchang Pavilion, the other three pavilions into the pavilion display content related to the expression of the architectural form, the Red Army Long March Tracking Museum to the Soviet Union fusion of architectural expression, Xu Chi Memorial Museum to the Republican period to express the expression of the building, Wu Shougu Museum of Art to follow the expression of the Nanxun Ancient Town

architectural style, which reflects the policy advocacy Cultural return to the aesthetic orientation.

Social and cultural patterns have also been adjusted, with the development of the market economy and the improvement of living standards, Han Chinese community residents have gradually freed themselves from collectivist aesthetic norms, and have paid renewed attention to the cultural aesthetics of family space and public space. In the interview, the owner of the B&B Liu (2025) mentioned: "Before the house only seek to live, then began to pay attention to whether it looks good, there is no old Nanxun flavor, decoration is also willing to spend effort." This change reflects the simultaneous improvement of residents' aesthetic level and consumption ability, promoting the revival of individual aesthetic expression.

The general increase in education and the penetration of market culture has further changed the aesthetic perception of residents, and traditional cultural values have been re-emphasized in education, media, and local festivals, promoting cultural self-awareness and awakening aesthetic consciousness within the Han community. Individual beliefs and values have also taken a turn for the worse, with resident Li (2025) stating in an interview, "I didn't do much with these old things when I was young, but now I'm a bit nostalgic, thinking that these are the roots of our Nanxun." Residents take the initiative to repair the traditional gatehouse, restoration of mansion decoration, participate in festivals and other spatial arrangements and other practices, promoting the evolution of cultural space from passive preservation to active aesthetic construction. However, during the visit, it was also found that residents were subject to the influence of the previous period, presenting uneven aesthetic levels, as shown in the following picture, Mr. Zhang's home was added to the two-story building during this period and mixed with Chinese-style buildings. There is no unified Chinese architectural style in the surrounding area. It can be seen that the phenomenon of diversification existed in this period.



Figure 47 A new two-story building was built during this period in Mr. Liu's lodging house

Source: Photographed by the author

Overall, from 1981 to 2005 Nanxun ancient town building aesthetics gradually from the function of repression to the cultural return, community residents' aesthetic cognition from the "institutionalized acceptance" to the "cultural self-construction" of the qualitative change, the traditional cultural symbols re-entered the space visual Expression, architectural aesthetics presents a nationalized, localized and diversified characteristics.

2006-2024, During this period Nanxun ancient town's architectural aesthetics further towards the integration of the expression stage, showing the rise of cultural tourism, and consumer aesthetics to strengthen the dominant aesthetic innovation process, by the policy to promote the aesthetic level of the residents to improve the social and cultural forms of diversification and personal values reshaping of the multiple influences.

At the policy level, national and local governments have vigorously promoted the policy of cultural tourism integration. Promote the ancient town building style control and cultural aesthetic enhancement. In recent years, this concept has also been strengthened, such as the Nanxun Grand Canal Ancient Town Cluster Cultural Relics and Historical Buildings Repair Three-Year Action Plan in 2024, which puts forward the principles of "no change in the original state of cultural relics" and "minimal intervention", and the completion of 15 traditional building repair projects, emphasizing the following It emphasizes "reshaping the historical style" and adapting to modern needs in the process of conservation.

Social and cultural patterns have also been modernized and aesthetically diversified, driven by upgraded consumption and digital communication. Cultural tourism consumer groups are becoming younger and younger, social media such as Jittery and Xiaohongshu have become aesthetic trendsetters, and the design of architectural spaces places more and more emphasis on landscape experience and the visibility of cultural symbols. In the interview, Zhang (2025), the store manager of a B&B chain, pointed out, "Nowadays, it is important to do B&B not only to live well and look good in photos but also to have a little bit of something new and trendy to attract young

people." This trend has driven a shift in spatial aesthetics from a static heritage to a dynamic consumer scene.

Residents' aesthetic and educational levels have been raised overall during this period due to the foundation of China's nine-year compulsory education policy, which has led to more proactive participation, negotiation, and co-creation of Han communities in the renewal of cultural spaces. For example, Nanxun District Xunnan community 2022 to pilot the creation of "residents to say things," the council platform, to "civil people say, civil people discuss, civil people discuss" as the principle, the monthly fixed 6, 16, 26 for the The "Residents Speak Out Day" is fixed on the 6th, 16th and 26th of each month to solve livelihood problems through the closed-loop mechanism of "raising, discussing, acting and evaluating". As of March 2025, the total number of deliberations is 72, and 48 disputes have been resolved, covering such matters as neighborhood decision-making and infrastructure setup, showing the characteristics of consultative aesthetics and participatory cultural governance.

Personal values also show a trend of compounding. On the one hand, residents respect and maintain the historical features of the town, emphasizing the "old Nanxun flavor"; on the other hand, happy to accept the modern aesthetic language, promoting the architectural space to present the "traditional skeleton + contemporary expression" of the composite aesthetic characteristics. The study also found several chain brands, Nanxun ancient town for the design of a separate store style, novel and without losing coordination.



Figure 48 Chain brand: Peopeo Original Leaf Tea House

Source: <https://www.163.com/dy/article/JFP3DGVR0552QJ47.html>

With the rise of cultural tourism and consumer aesthetics to strengthen the building aesthetics with more emphasis on the landscape experience and cultural symbols of the function, the emergence of traditional form as the coat, modern materials, and functionality as the core of the style, the town remains conservative unified style, while the periphery of the supporting building is showing globalization and localization of the pluralistic fusion of trends. As Nanxun Elephant Hotel, is a typical modernist architecture and local traditional mascot elephant combination of buildings.

Overall, 2006-2024 Nanxun ancient town building aesthetic has been a "cultural return" further evolved into "integration of expression", policy guidance, market consumption, social culture, the residents of the subjectivity of the joint molding of traditional and modern, local and global, Policy guidance, market consumption, social culture, and residents' subjectivity have jointly shaped an architectural aesthetic pattern in which tradition and modernity, local and global, cultural memory and consumption experience are intertwined, and the aesthetic consciousness of the Han Chinese

community has been deepening and expanding in the process, and the cultural space has become an important platform for the confluence of local cultural self-confidence and contemporary aesthetics of life.

Table 12 Changes in architectural styles







Time	Architectural Style Characteristics	Building Photos
1953-1980	"Sino-Soviet fusion" architectural style influenced by socialist realism and Stalinist architecture	
1981-2005	A variety of traditional architectural styles from different periods: Ming and Qing Dynasty, Republic of China, and "Sino-Soviet fusion".	  

Table 12 (continue)

Time	Architectural Style Characteristics	Building Photos
2006-2024	Traditional Architectural Style of Nanxun Ancient Town (Inside the Ancient Town)	
	Modernist architectural design (outside the ancient town)	

(2) Economic Value: Transformation of the Commodification of Cultural Space and Growth Mechanisms under Rural-Urban Integration

In the third phase of the development of Nanxun ancient town, the economic attributes of architectural space have experienced from "local business unit" to "integrated cultural consumption scene" transformation process. With the deepening of the cultural tourism industry and the promotion of urban and rural economic integration strategy, the traditional space in the functional reconfiguration, business model and value system adjustment, so that its economic value from a single use to a multi-dimensional composite structure, constituting a cultural traction, tourism driven, community participation as the characteristics of the regional growth mechanism.

The process of commodification of space in this stage shows the continuous evolution of the main structure and operation logic (Fu, 2003). Compared with the 1980s family-style operation of the fragmented characteristics of the current Nanxun building space use more diversified and organized. In the collaboration between the local government and market players to promote, Baijianlou B&B clusters, non-heritage experience park, Silk Expo and other projects have landed to promote the traditional

residential buildings to set accommodation, display, experience and sales in one of the multifunctional composite space transformations. The definition of property rights and the right to use the space has become clearer, the operation management has been gradually brought into the standardized track, and the assessment of economic value no longer relies only on the rent or direct income but covers a variety of dimensions such as brand dissemination effect, tourists' carrying capacity, and the linkage effect with related industries (Wang & Huang, 2008).

The development of the tourism economy has also led to the reorganization of local collective and individual economic structures and the reconfiguration of the employment system. Tourism activities centered on cultural landscapes have helped to support market demand for traditional handicrafts, local cuisine, festivals and performances, and cultural and creative commodities, and a large number of residents have re-entered the economic cycle by setting up lodgings, cultural and creative stores, workshops, or engaging in service work. Traditional economic units such as weavers, carpenters and calligraphers have redefined their roles in the new industry, realizing the contemporary expression of intangible cultural heritage and transforming its economic value. In areas such as Nanshihe and Shangtang Street, residents have transformed traditional spaces into hospitality spaces, and at the same time participated in curation, sales, and cultural tourism promotion, re-constructing the link between space and labor.

Urban-rural integration is another central trend in this phase of economic evolution. The return of a large number of young people to their hometowns to start their own businesses, the participation of indigenous residents in business, and the formation of a platform-type organizational network under the guidance of the government have made the individual spatial economy no longer confined to the city or the village, but rather a hub for connecting the two. The phenomenon of lodging operations driving the sale of agricultural and sideline products, the display of non-traditional heritage triggering curriculum development and cultural education activities, and the expansion of performing arts festivals into regional cultural tourism brands shows that cultural space has become a key interface between urban and rural resource flows, industrial

collaboration and social interaction. In addition, the role of community residents in the tourism economy is no longer limited to the executive level, but has gained a structural position in terms of revenue distribution and discourse participation. Many of the lodgings, workshops and exhibition spaces are owned by families or operated by multiple families, and the revenue model has changed from single employment to joint operation and cooperative sharing, in which residents not only receive stable income, but also maintain control over local culture and social life through spatial dominance. Interviewees mentioned that "we can earn a stable income through our own houses and handicrafts," and that "our children are willing to come back to the town when it becomes more beautiful". During this period, some aboriginal residents, local cultural preservation organizations, cultural researchers and design teams began to participate in the formulation of the style guidelines and construction standards for ancient towns. For example, the consultation principle of "respecting the original appearance and adapting to the function" was gradually established for the design of the details of the door materials, lighting style and courtyard layout of the lodging houses. Through the visual transformation review, public announcement system and community hearing, the originally non-institutionalized aesthetic order began to exist in the form of semi-formal normative instruments.



Figure 49 Nanxun Ancient Town B&B

Source: Photographed by the author

Nanxun ancient town of cultural space transformation brought about by economic reconstruction, the individual level of the biggest changes, reflected in the traditional

society in the relatively marginalized groups of economic roles "re-invention" and identity "re-positioning". These changes mainly occur in housewives, retired elderly people, traditional craftsmen and other individuals who were originally excluded from the mainstream economic system. With the development of the cultural tourism industry and the expansion of the function of cultural space, these groups have been reabsorbed into the local economic cycle, becoming economically active, and reconstructing the original social labor structure and identity stratification.

Taking the housewife group as an example, in the process of B&Bization in traditional residential areas such as Baimanlou and Zhangjiazhuang Houjie, many indigenous residents have converted their unused old houses into B&Bs, with the female head of the family in charge of the daily operation, reception, and cleaning work, forming a typical "family-type cultural micro-economy". Compared with the traditional informal labor attached to the family, this kind of B&B operation in cultural tourism services not only improves the cash flow income of the family but also provides women with a relatively independent economic identity, changing the gender division of labor and family power structure.

At the same time, the retired elderly have also been reactivated by the cultural space to become "narrators" and "maintainers" of the community culture. In places such as Guanghui Palace, Jiaye Book Depository, and Zhilihu Silk Pavilion, it is common to see elderly residents serving as volunteer docents to introduce local customs, blessing culture, and the history of silk to visitors. This transformation not only transforms their original knowledge and experience into valuable labor assets but also enhances their sense of participation and accomplishment in community public affairs. During the interview, a volunteer lecturer in his 60s mentioned, "I used to work as a sericulturist, and young people didn't understand it, but now I tell it to outsiders, and everyone likes to listen to me."

Craftsmen have also transformed themselves from "endangered traditional artisans" to "front-stage figures in the cultural economy". Practitioners of traditional skills, such as blueprint, silk weaving and paper-cutting, are gradually integrated into the

tourism consumption system of the ancient town through the provision of experiential courses, participation in bazaar sales, and cooperation in cultural and creative design. These individuals have become important nodes of the cultural industry through the establishment of the "skills-products-brand" chain and have redefined their relationship with tradition in the economic process - they are no longer just heritage preservation, but also a means of preserving their heritage. Skill is no longer just heritage preservation, but also value creation.

Nanxun ancient town in the process of expanding the economic function of cultural space, intangible cultural heritage and traditional handicrafts have become the individual level "re-economization" of the key fulcrum. For a long time, these skills as a family within the intergenerational transmission of life skills exist, in the impact of urbanization and industrialization is becoming marginal. However, with the rise of cultural tourism industry and the reuse of cultural space, non-heritage resources not only to "reappear", but also through the integration of cultural and creative design, market packaging and experience economy into the business system, providing individuals with a new labor identity and economic income sources.

In Nanxun, representative of traditional skills, including the series of lake silk weaving, traditional paper-cutting, agricultural food production (such as yellow rice cake, winter rice balls) and so on. Lake silk, for example, was originally used in the family cloth, is now redesigned as cultural and creative products, such as handkerchiefs, pen bags, scarves, cell phone case packaging, etc., and through the "non-heritage experience courses + handmade sales" way into the tourism and cultural consumption chain. A craftsman running a silk workshop said, "Now there are a lot of tourists coming to the class, and the old things can come to life."

The transformation of such handicrafts reflects the linkage mechanism between "cultural content - market demand - experience form" in the economic transformation of cultural spaces. Through the scenario arrangement and interactive participation in the exhibition places of cultural space (such as the Jianli Lake Silk Museum, Folklore Workshop and Wenyuan Market), the non-heritage arts and crafts can make the tourists

change from "visitors" to "experiencers", thus activating the economic value and dissemination function of the arts and crafts themselves. Function. Craftspeople have also transformed from behind-the-scenes "skill depositors" to socially influential "cultural communicators" and "economic operators".

At the same time, the participation of youth groups has also promoted the transformation and upgrading of non-heritage crafts (Zukin, 1989). Some young people who have returned to their hometowns to start their own businesses or majored in design have combined modern design concepts with traditional crafts to create cultural and creative products that meet contemporary aesthetics. These young creators often disseminate their products through digital platforms (such as Shake Voice, Xiaohongshu and WeChat Shop), realizing the linkage between offline experience and online sales, thus forming a new individual economic growth mode of "non-heritage+design+platform".



Table 13 Identity transformation

Identity transition groups		
Groups of housewives		Responsible for daily operations, reception and cleaning
Retired elderly group		"Narrator," "Maintainer," "Volunteer Docent"
Groups of craftspeople		Provide experiential courses, participate in bazaar sales, and collaborate on cultural and creative design, etc.
the young		Returned to his hometown and opened a store

The informational social influence mechanism of social influence theory plays a key role in this process. The reason why many residents participate in the operation, explanation and production is because they have observed the successful behavior samples of others in the community and have been continuously stimulated by the feedback from tourists, market information and media dissemination, to adjust their own

behavioral patterns. This is a typical path of "observation-imitation-internalization", which is the psychological and social basis of how external economic logic is transformed into internal community dynamics. Individuals begin to reconstruct their understanding of their own identity and value and actively engage in economic activities after seeing that "old houses can make money" and "telling history can be a career".

At the same time, the dual mode of "resident participation + foreign capital operation" has also emerged in this phase. On the one hand, residents obtain income through property leasing, cooperative operation, skill participation and other ways, realizing the identity leap from "resource owner" to "cultural participant"; on the other hand, enterprises or individuals make unified planning and branding operation of the originally fragmented cultural space through capital operation and industry chain integration, thus improving the overall cultural tourism benefits and services. The original fragmentation of cultural space to achieve unified planning and branding operations, thereby improving the overall benefits of cultural tourism and service quality. Through field visits, it was found that Nanxun Ancient Town has a distribution of several chain-type bed-and-breakfast hotels, becoming an essential embodiment of foreign capital involvement. The entry of these capital forces triggered the optimization of the market competition mechanism, promoting the formation of the "survival of the fittest" pattern. Culture and tourism enterprises with strong management capabilities and high service quality have gradually stood out, which has not only enhanced the overall satisfaction of the tourist experience but also strengthened the profitability of the project. At the same time, the rent level of the B&B has grown steadily, enabling the indigenous people as the lessor of the property to obtain considerable income, thus realizing a win-win situation for the investor, operator and community residents, and forming a sustainable and benign spatial operation cycle.

Government in order to attract more high-quality capital in, Nanxun ancient town in January 18, 2023 on the implementation of major policy adjustments: scenic area of 2.18 square kilometers of the ancient city of the block for global tourists to achieve a permanent ticket-free, only for the location of six key cultural relics buildings to retain the

ticket system, tourists can independently choose whether to visit. This open policy has dramatically enhanced the freedom and willingness of tourists to visit the area and significantly boosted the growth of visitor flow. By January 19, 2024, Nanxun Ancient Town had received a total of 12.13 million tourists annually, representing a 690% increase compared to the same period in 2019. The number of service industry business subjects in the scenic area had increased to 593, with a growth rate of 192% (Shen, 2024). This policy has not only led to the full activation of the tourism industry but also created favorable conditions for the entry of high-quality capital, forming a positive cycle pattern in which people drive capital and capital promotes development, accelerating the ancient town's economy from a flow to a quality leap.

From 2006 to the present, the economic transformation of Nanxun Ancient Town's architectural space has evolved from an early restoration of its business function to a vital node embedded in the regional cultural and economic network. This change not only reflects the evolution of the logic of local practice, but also closely echoes the overall deployment of the national level on the construction of cultural power and the new urbanization strategy. The cultural tourism industry has reintegrated the traditional space into the contemporary industrial system, and the space is no longer just a carrier for storing cultural memories, but also a platform for carrying diversified economic activities (Ruan et al., 2007). Residents, as active participants in economic activities, gain practical benefits through business practices and play a more active role in cultural expression and community governance. The transformation of the economic structure triggered by the change of space use has promoted the continuous evolution of the ancient town's economic growth mode and provided a realistic path and development foundation for the modern governance and cultural regeneration of the traditional settlement.

Summary: From an economic perspective, the architectural and cultural space of Nanxun Ancient Town between 1953 and 2024 has experienced a single-use structure dominated by planned configuration, to the excessive stage of planned to market mechanism-driven development, and then to the transformation of composite economic

function driven by cultural tourism and consumption. In the first stage, the economic function of space is determined by the unified configuration of the state, property rights are attributed administratively, and the use of space is set around production tasks rather than market demand, resulting in the integration of traditional commercial networks, the disappearance of individual business, and the loss of flexible regulation of architectural space. In this context, the economic behavior of Han Chinese community residents was strictly integrated into the unit system, the original family-based economic organization structure was broken, and the residents lost the dominant power over space and industry, relying on the state to allocate and obtain the means of living. During this period, the economic identity of the residents tended to be single, i.e., "unit employees" or "community members", and diversified economic behaviors such as traditional handicrafts and individual trading were suppressed, leading to a decline in the individual economic initiative and a weakening of the community's ability to self-organize economically. In the second stage, the reform of the property rights system released the economic potential of the space, the individual economy and family workshops were restored, the residents regained their autonomy over the use of the space, and the architectural space gradually realized the symbiotic pattern of residence and business. In this stage, Han Chinese community residents relied mainly on traditional capital such as family resources, handicrafts, and social networks, and restored the right to operate and renovate their privately owned homesteads. Many families relied on their own space to open grocery stores, sewing stores, family hotels, and other forms of business, which pushed the traditional mansion towards the transformation of a "small business field". This process not only strengthens residents' spatial control but also promotes the reactivation of traditional handicrafts and local cultural memory. The economic relationship within the community has gradually returned from a unitary system to a neighborhood network structure, and the economic initiative and quality of life of the residents have been improved. In the third stage, with the development of cultural tourism and creative industries, the architectural space is endowed with new cultural and economic functions, presenting a composite utilization

mode integrating accommodation, exhibition, retail, and experience. Policy guidance, market mechanisms, and community participation in the interaction of the three, promoting the spatial transformation of Nanxun. Han community residents gradually by traditional "space users" into "cultural operators" and "tourism participants". Many residents of the original residents participate in the cultural creation of B&B, non-heritage workshops, local brand cooperation, and other diversified projects, the formation of residents to participate in the space co-creation of a new type of relationship between the networks. At the same time, some older residents, lacking experience in cultural tourism management, market sensitivity, or difficulty in adapting to the fast pace of emerging consumer culture, choose to lease their own properties to enterprises or individuals with greater operational capacity, thus introducing more professional and more capitalized private forces. These foreign cultural tourism organizations with brand resources, business planning capabilities, and online promotion mean, so that the ancient town space operation more competitive market, forming a virtuous cycle. This dual mode of "resident participation + foreign capital operation" promotes the formation of the scale and landscape development pattern of cultural tourism space. It shows the logic of the economic evolution of traditional Chinese settlements, which is constantly adapted between the macro system and local vitality.

Economically and then in terms of the evolution of income levels, the economic situation of the residents of Nanxun Ancient Town experienced significant changes between 1953 and 2024, with far-reaching impacts on the use of cultural spaces and community aesthetic perceptions. 1953-1980, restricted by the planned economic system, there is a lack of systematic income statistics on a national scale. According to the interviews, Nanxun residents were generally dominated by agriculture and the collective economy, with a small income gap and an overall standard of living below contemporary standards. About national data, in 1978, the early reform and opening up of the country's per capita GDP of only 156 U.S. dollars (about 381 yuan), disposable

income data has not yet been made public, the residents of the economic capacity of the building aesthetic and spatial transformation of the investment is extremely limited.

1981-2005, with the advancement of the market economy and urbanization accelerated, Nanxun residents' income level increased significantly, and the quality of life improved, for the architectural space recovery and aesthetic return to provide a material basis. In 2000 as the node, the national per capita disposable income of about 3721 yuan, Nanxun District income of 8684 yuan. The chart shows that before and after 2000 for Nanxun residents' income growth acceleration period, income improvement prompted residents to pay attention to the aesthetic quality of home and public space, promoting the recovery of traditional architectural style and cultural space function of reconstruction.

2006-2024, along with the implementation of culture and tourism integration strategy and the rise of consumer culture, Nanxun residents' income continued to grow rapidly. 2020 per capita disposable income reached 598.47 million yuan, much higher than the national 2020 per capita disposable income of 32,189 yuan, reflecting Nanxun District in the culture and tourism economy under the pull of the strong income growth. A substantial increase in the economic capacity of residents, for the cultural space functional composite, aesthetic innovation, and social media-driven space reengineering provides solid support. Spatial consumption and aesthetic pursuits have shown a trend of refinement and diversification, and residents' awareness of and willingness to participate in the protection of traditional architecture has significantly increased, forming a virtuous circle between cultural identity and economic vitality.

As can be seen since the second period, Nanxun ancient town residents' income level gradually pulled away from the gap with the national average and showed a clear leading trend. 2014 was named a world cultural heritage before and after the growth rate further increased. It can be seen that the traditional cultural empowerment of the township, bringing sustained income, and the local Han community firmly grasp the hearts of tourists.

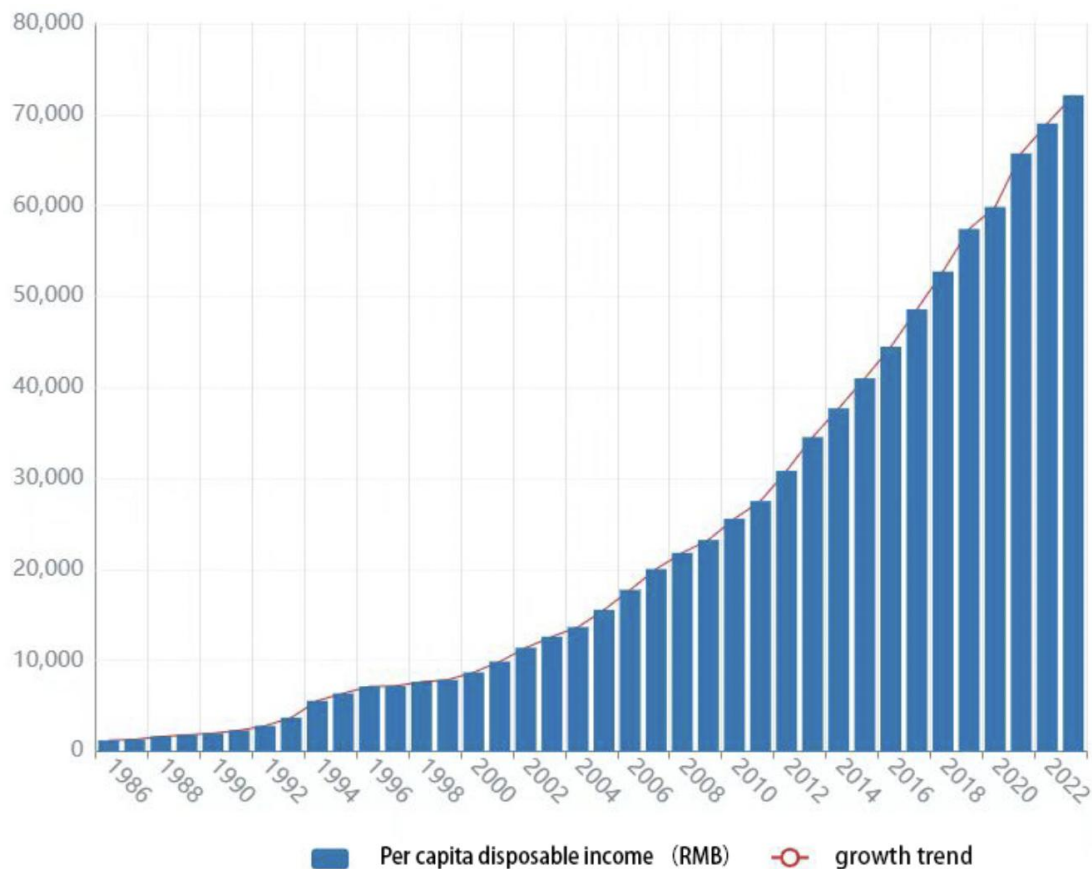


Figure 50 Disposable Income per capita in Nanxun, 1986-2022

Source: Drawn by the author

In summary, Nanxun's economic situation can be restated as, 1953-1980 years, Nanxun ancient town with a planned economy, residents relied mainly on income from work, wages uniform distribution, buying and selling forms of supply and marketing societies, state-run stores, the occupational structure of agriculture, collective enterprises and institutions as the core of the structure of the economic activities of the space is limited, the income gap is relatively small, the life to meet the basic needs of the primary, the market economy gradually recovered with the diversification of the private economy, individual business households revived. From 1981 to 2005, with the gradual recovery of the market economy, the income structure of the population was diversified, the private economy and self-employed industrial and commercial households emerged, traditional handicrafts and services recovered, the forms of

buying and selling shifted to the free market and private operation, the occupational distribution expanded to self-employed, industrial and commercial workers, the disposable income of the population was significantly raised, and the economic vitality was strengthened. 2006-2024, the rapid development of culture and tourism economy, Nanxun residents' income growth rate is significant, the occupational structure is further diversified, a large number of lodging operators, cultural and creative practitioners, tourism service personnel, online and offline consumption channels in parallel, buying and selling forms are more diversified, the formation of culture and tourism consumption as a leader, cultural space innovation driven by the new economic pattern, the economic capacity of residents and consumer willingness to increase simultaneously. Residents' economic capacity and willingness to consume have increased simultaneously, promoting the composite development of cultural space.



CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Summary

This study mainly proceeds from the fact that from 1953 to 2024, the cultural space of the Han community in Nanxun Ancient Town underwent a remarkable dynamic evolution under the economic, policy, and cultural contexts of different historical periods. This process embodies the adaptability of spatial functions, the realization of social goals, the integration of organizational relationships, and the continuity and innovation of cultural values, which profoundly reflects the idea of the community's ability to accommodate and adapt in the changing times. It is summarized in two points below.

(1) To analyze the changes in the use of cultural space of the Han community through the architecture in Nanxun Ancient Town from 1953 to 2024.

During this period, the use of architectural space in Nanxun Ancient Town underwent profound changes with the evolution of national policies, and socio-economic and cultural perceptions, demonstrating a high degree of adaptability and innovation in community cultural space.

1953-1980, under the planned economy system, Nanxun was dominated by agriculture and sericulture, and its architectural spaces were uniformly incorporated into the national public function system. Zhang Shiming residence was converted into a military hospital and warehouse, while the Nanxun Chamber of Commerce was transformed into the town government's office premises, reflecting the shift towards the "public ownership" and "priority of political functions" of architectural spaces. This policy was driven by the state's strategic need to advance socialist construction and collectivized production. Under the AGIL framework, external political changes drove adjustments to the "adaptation" mechanism, with policy objectives explicitly requiring buildings to serve collective interests. Resource integration was government-led, with party-government committees and people's communes responsible for spatial reallocation and functional coordination. The "potential pattern maintenance" phase promoted value homogenization through collectivist propaganda and institutional

education. During this phase, the Soviet model exerted a strong influence, with architectural styles incorporating Sino-Soviet fusion elements to reinforce political identity.

1981-2005, market economy reforms and the restoration of property rights led to the "property rights restoration and functional diversification" phase in architectural space. The Zhuangyuan Lou Noodle House reopened, and the Wenyu and San Guan was reconstructed in the original Ming and Qing dynasty, Republican era, and Sino-Soviet architectural styles, combining public cultural and commercial functions. Meanwhile, product manufacturing (flooring, elevator industries) became a pillar industry for the region, and Sino-foreign joint ventures drove industrial upgrading and transformation, bringing higher household incomes to community residents. This was driven by China's push for market economy transformation and cultural diversity policies. From an AGIL perspective, the shift in economic policies and social-cultural demands spurred "adaptive" adjustments, with the goal-achievement phase encouraging cultural revival and grassroots economic development; government planning departments, private property owners, and scenic area management institutions collaborated to achieve "integration," strengthening modernization of infrastructure in spatial governance practices to ensure comfortable living conditions for residents; "Potential pattern maintenance" is achieved through educational reforms that guide residents in rebuilding local cultural identity. This indirectly influences architectural styles and spatial aesthetics

2006-2024, the cultural tourism integration strategy deepens, and architectural spaces enter the "cultural regeneration and landscape expression" phase. The Bai Jian Lou residential area forms a synergistic economic network by introducing chain-branded guesthouses and self-operated cultural businesses, with spatial aesthetics evolving toward a fusion of traditional forms and modern experiences. More importantly, the cultural and tourism industry in the third phase did not emerge out of thin air but was built on the industrial foundation of the first two phases: profit accumulation from the industrial era (such as the elevator and wooden floor industries) provided financial

support for the restoration of ancient buildings accompanying facilities; In contrast, the silk industry from the first phase was successfully transformed into cultural immersive experience projects like the Jili Husi Exhibition Hall through the redevelopment of the Jili Lake Silk Culture IP. This process stems from the national policy orientation promoting cultural and tourism economy, intangible cultural heritage protection, and cultural consumption upgrading. Within the AGIL closed-loop framework, policy adjustments have prompted the "adaptation" mechanism to focus on both market and cultural demands. The goal-achievement phase emphasizes economic development, balancing expanding domestic consumption demand with cultural heritage preservation. This is jointly promoted by government cultural and tourism departments, community committees, and operators, with multi-party resource coordination (policy guidance + capital investment + community co-governance), and entities operating in a complementary manner to create a positive tourism experience. The "potential model maintenance" phase reinforces cultural brand building and new media dissemination to promote community cultural confidence and intergenerational recognition. Communities manage the renovation and new construction of ancient town buildings through a more scientific building classification system. This ensures a unified Jiangnan ancient town image within the town while adapting to modern needs, with the town's periphery featuring modernist architectural styles combined with local cultural elements.

As a whole, Nanxun ancient town architectural space change process is in line with the AGIL theoretical framework of cyclic interaction logic: changes in the policy environment to promote the adaptation adjustment — formulate clear development goals — government, market, community multiple forces to integrate resources — construct a cultural heritage path in line with contemporary needs. In each stage, government management, cultural tourism companies, market operators, community residents, and industry associations work together to form a cross-sectoral, cross-class, and multi-principal collaborative network to promote the continuous innovation of the value of the cultural space and the long-term maintenance of the community's cultural vitality.

(2) To analyze the aesthetic values and economic social impacts of the Han communities in Nanxun ancient town.

This study analyzes the deep impact of the cultural spatial evolution of the Han community in Nanxun Ancient Town on the community society during the period of 1953-2024 from the levels of economic value and aesthetic value, revealing the dynamic linkage between economic changes and aesthetic consciousness.

Economic aspects

1953-1980, by the national implementation of the planned economy, and collectivization policy, Nanxun ancient town economic form was highly centralized, the space mainly bore the collective production and distribution of materials function. The reason for the introduction of the policy is that the country needs to focus on the establishment of a unified production system to support the construction of socialism, the basic disappearance of the traditional individual economy, the weakening of family property rights, income is mainly dependent on the system of work and collective distribution, the country's overall slow economic development, Nanxun residents of the income level is low, the basic solution to the problem of subsistence, buying and selling to the supply and marketing societies, public stores, the main occupational structure is concentrated in the agricultural, collective enterprises and administrative institutions, economic activities are highly restricted.

1981-2005, the introduction of economic reform policies, the state turned to the development of a market economy, to promote the family contract responsibility system and the restoration of the property rights system, the logic behind the policy is the need to release the grass-roots economic vitality, to improve the standard of living of urban and rural residents. 2000 Nanxun per capita disposable income of residents reached 8,684 yuan, higher than the national per capita of 133%, Nanxun District because of the industrial base is superior to the growth of the obvious. Buying and selling methods from the planned circulation system to the free market and self-employment, the occupational structure of the emergence of a large number of self-employed businessmen, private entrepreneurs, the revival of traditional handicrafts and services, cultural space has

become an important vehicle for the revitalization of the family economy and the reconstruction of identity.

2006 - 2024, the integration of culture and tourism strategy put forward, the policy out of the need to enhance regional competitiveness and cultural soft power. Nanxun residents' income has grown significantly, and per capita disposable income in some years was higher than the national average. Buying and selling methods tend to be diversified, and online and offline integration and cultural consumption have become an important driving force. The occupational structure of a large number of B&B operators, cultural and creative practitioners, tourism service personnel, space from the collective production assets into high value-added cultural assets, some residents involved in the operation or rental properties to achieve income enhancement, the formation of "residents involved in the operation of foreign capital," the dual economic model.

Aesthetic value

1953 - 1980, the state promoted the construction of a socialist culture, and the policy emphasized simplicity, practicality, and collective priority. The aesthetic style of architecture was influenced by the Stalinist and socialist realist styles, resulting in the formation of a Sino-Soviet fusion of architectural style, which pursued the supremacy of functionality and weakened decorative features. The reason for this policy is out of the just-founded country, material scarcity status quo, and the tendency of the Soviet Union to aid China's policy. Nanxun ancient town residents in the education and publicity guide, the traditional clan aesthetics gave way to collectivist aesthetics, architectural style tends to be a simple, regular, aesthetic level of convergence, personal values emphasize obedience and collective belonging, the traditional aesthetic expression is compressed.

1981-2005, economic reform to release the space for cultural policy, the state encourages cultural revival and diversity of expression, the policy intent is to restore the economy, and promote the reconstruction of national cultural identity. Nanxun ancient town's architectural style in the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Republic of China elements gradually revived, Wenyuan three museums reflect this trend. Economic

development to enhance the income level of residents, educational reforms to return to the classroom of traditional cultural education, and residents of the aesthetic level. Visits to residents said that the beginning of the renovation in the restoration of wood carvings, plaques, traditional patterns, and values of local cultural confidence in the enhancement of the awareness of heritage protection emerged, the community took the initiative to participate in the construction of space aesthetics, aesthetics from passive acceptance of the transfer to active heritage construction.

2006 - 2024, as the city becomes a World Heritage Site, the cultural tourism policy emphasizes the concept of "living protection of non-heritage", and the aesthetics of consumption is oriented towards spatial landscaping, which is intended to promote economic growth and cultural dissemination through cultural consumption. Architectural style combines traditional forms and modern materials, emphasizes landscape experience, and under the influence of social media, the aesthetic style tends to be "photogenic" and "communicable", which is reflected in the renovation of B&Bs in the Baijianlou area. Residents' income diversification has increased significantly, education is more widespread, traditional culture and global consumer aesthetics influence residents' aesthetic judgments in parallel, and Li (2025), the interviewed resident, emphasized that "there should be bold flavors as well as new trends". Values have become more open and compatible, and the community's aesthetic cognition has shifted from emphasizing "guarding tradition" to "revitalizing expression," and the role of residents has shifted from "receiver" to "co-creator. The role of residents has shifted from being "receivers" to "co-creators".

In summary, the three stages of the economic and aesthetic evolution process show that Nanxun ancient town cultural space is not a static legacy, but in the policy orientation, economic power, cultural awareness, and community participation in the interaction of continuous evolution. The economic dimension of income growth, diversification of buying and selling methods and transformation of occupational structure, space revitalization, and aesthetic innovation to provide a material basis; aesthetic dimension, policy relaxation, architectural style revival, educational

enhancement, and transformation of values, together to promote the cultural space from the supremacy of function to the diversity of aesthetic expression. This process not only enhances the cultural self-confidence and economic resilience of the Han community in Nanxun but also provides a realistic basis for the construction of a community-centered cultural space governance model, which has important practical and theoretical significance.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Contribution of the study

(1) Dynamic Adaptation of Cultural Space and Expanded Application of AGIL Theory

This study finds that the core of Nanxun's cultural space reconfiguring its functions according to external changes conveys that the evolution of Nanxun Ancient Town's architectural space exhibits a high degree of dynamic adaptability, goal orientation, integration, and cultural maintenance, which is a high degree of compatibility with the theoretical framework of AGIL in Structural Functionalism. Cultural space is not a static physical place but is actively adapted and re-engineered in response to policy adjustments, market changes, and community needs. This is consistent with Parsons (1951) view that social systems need to constantly adjust their functions to maintain system stability.

However, this study also found that the AGIL theory, which originally emphasized the functional maintenance of society as a whole, is still deficient at the micro-spatial practice level. The case of Nanxun Ancient Town shows that the evolution of architectural space is characterized by "cyclic interaction" rather than "unidirectional functional division". Cultural space through architectural repair, aesthetic innovation, economic use, and other ways to promote community identity, cultural heritage, and social integration of the synchronization of the realization of the formation of a "space - economic - cultural" composite functional network. This suggests that we should go beyond the traditional static division of labor and pay more attention to the dynamic integration of spatial functions and cross-border integration process in the governance practice of ancient towns.

(2) Changes in Aesthetic Value: Spatial Expression of Cultural Identity Reconstruction

The evolution of the aesthetic logic of Nanxun Ancient Town's architecture, from the functional homogenization under collectivism, to the revival of local culture under marketization, to the integration of multiple aesthetics under the guidance of cultural tourism and consumption, fully confirms the interactive generative relationship between architectural style and residents' cultural psychology.

To a certain extent, this evolutionary trend supports Ma (2003) view that the dual role of policy and market drives spatial renewal. However, unlike Ma's emphasis on the policy and market-led "external force", this study reveals through the aesthetic value dimension that the role of residents' subjectivity in spatial aesthetics has been significantly underestimated. In the second and third phases, Nanxun residents gradually shifted from passive acceptance to active co-creation, and their participation in practices such as doorway design, negotiation of aesthetic styles of lodgings, and the arrangement of festival spaces became an important force in promoting aesthetic renewal. This finding suggests that in spatial governance, more attention should be paid to the community's aesthetic willingness and cultural and psychological structure, avoiding one-sided technical revitalization and neglecting the reconstruction of aesthetic and cultural identity.

(3) Changes in economic value: strengthening of community participation mechanisms

The process of Nanxun's Han community residents shifting from "space users" to "cultural operators and participants" partly confirms Gotham (2005) concern about the risk of excessive capital dominance and local marginalization in the tourism economy of ancient towns. However, this study also found that in Nanxun, the community has formed a strong "endogenous economic driving force" through the in-depth participation of cultural and creative lodgings, non-heritage workshops, and service-oriented businesses and that the residents have maintained a strong right to make cultural choices and economic initiatives under the guidance of capital.

However, this phenomenon may confirm the theory of "social production of space" (Henri, 1991), in the field of construction management. This theory emphasizes that space is not only a static physical form but also a dynamic process that is continuously "produced" and "reproduced" by the interaction of social, political, and economic forces. In this study, we found that the functional remodeling of the traditional houses, ancestral halls, chambers of commerce, and other historical spaces in Nanxun Ancient Town was accomplished through the dynamic negotiation between the government's planning objectives (envisioned space), the actual operation of the market (perceived space), and the residents' daily practices (living space).

This phenomenon suggests that Gotham's view does not sufficiently take into account the reorganization capacity of local knowledge and social capital, which is complemented by the Nanxun case. Nanxun residents have strengthened the endogenous resilience of the community economy through micro-community negotiation, hierarchical management of cultural space, and business differentiation practices, suggesting that future governance of ancient towns should establish a better support mechanism for community participation, to prevent excessive capital dominance leading to the hollowing out of local culture. At the same time, this process also reflects the characteristics of a multi-party synergistic governance mechanism in the practice of cultural spatial governance, and the reconfiguration of spatial functions is not a simple top-down planning and implementation process, but a nested social relationship, multi-party cooperation, and dynamic gaming governance process. In spatial practice, a complex network of collaboration and consultation has been formed among government departments, cultural and tourism enterprises, industry associations, community residents, and cultural experts. In the future, spatial governance should pay more attention to this characteristic of "social production", establish a platform for collaborative governance, improve the balance of interests and the guarantee mechanism for cultural expression, prevent the tendency of spatial homogenization and commercial monotony, and promote the formation of spatial renewal paths for ancient towns that combine locality, cultural diversity, and economic vitality.

(4) Capacity for global localization and cultural spatial inclusiveness

Nanxun's spatial evolution demonstrates a remarkable capacity for global localization (Roudometof, 2016), with architectural styles ranging from the East-meets-West fusion of Zhang Shiming's former residence to the fusion of modernism and traditional imagery in the Elephant Hotel, which forms a highly open space for cultural dialogue. This phenomenon suggests that the space of ancient towns in the era of globalization cannot simply apply the logic of structural functionalism's early national and state stability, but needs to pay attention to the role of cultural space as a node in the global cultural network. Nanxun residents actively and selectively absorb foreign cultural elements, forming a local-global embedded spatial representations, showing a strong capacity for cultural inclusiveness. This also suggests that future spatial governance policies should encourage cultural mash-ups and innovative expressions to avoid cultural rigidity.

In conclusion, the case of Nanxun Ancient Town not only verifies and expands the spatial adaptation logic of structural functionalism, but also suggests that the spatial governance of the ancient town needs to be transformed into a new governance paradigm of dynamic integration, pluralistic negotiation, and cultural co-creation, which provides a theoretical framework and practical inspiration for the promotion of the revitalization of the cultural spaces of the ancient towns and the development of the community in China.

5.2.2 Limitations of the study

Although this study centers on the evolution and social impact of the cultural space of the Han community in Nanxun Ancient Town to carry out a more systematic empirical analysis and theoretical discussion, there are still certain limitations, which need to be improved and expanded in the follow-up study, mainly reflected in the following three aspects:

(1) the limitations of the sample size

This study mainly relies on the case study of the functional evolution of a number of typical buildings in Nanxun Ancient Town (e.g., Zhang Shiming's former residence, Baima Lou, Nanxun Chamber of Commerce, Jiaye Book Depository, etc.), supplemented by in-depth interviews and literature analysis. However, due to the limitations of the research cycle and resources, the sample size of the selected buildings and the coverage of the interviewees are still limited, making it difficult to comprehensively cover the differentiated experiences in different social strata and spatial levels (e.g., smaller-scale street spaces and hidden cultural spaces) within the entire Han community. Therefore, the conclusions of the study are still somewhat localised in explaining the overall spatial evolution of Nanxun Ancient Town, and the universality and meticulousness of the study can be further enhanced by expanding the sample size and enriching the spatial types in the future.

(2) Subjectivity of the research method

This study adopts structural functionalism theory and social impact theory as the core analytical framework, and constructs analytical logic through qualitative methods such as inductive case analysis, interview data and spatial observation. Although the study emphasizes the combination of theory and empirical evidence and strives to achieve an objective analysis, qualitative research inevitably includes subjective judgments and interpretive biases, especially in the interpretation of the structure of the cultural space, the inference of the aesthetic psychology of the inhabitants, and the generalisation of the spatial-social relationship, which involves the risk of differences in understanding and subjective assignments of meanings. In the future, more quantitative methods can be combined to enhance the objectivity of the argumentation.

(3) Limitations of cross-cultural analysis

This study focuses on the evolution of cultural space of the Han community in Nanxun Ancient Town, and the analytical framework is mainly based on the Han cultural context and the social characteristics of the Jiangnan water town, although the introduction of the "global localisation" perspective and related theories, but the cross-cultural comparative analysis is still relatively weak. The study lacks sufficient comparative case support for spatial governance modes, cultural identity mechanisms

and aesthetic logic in different cultural contexts, which makes it difficult to directly generalize the study to other ancient towns or international cases with different historical and cultural veins and social and institutional backgrounds. In the future, the study can introduce more spatial practices of ancient towns in different regions and cultural backgrounds for horizontal comparison, so as to enrich the international vision and theoretical applicability of the study of cultural spatial evolution.

5.3 Recommendations for future research

5.3.1 Cultural Integration and Genius Loci

Under the background of rapid urbanization and deep development of cultural integration, how to properly deal with cultural integration and Genius Loci in the process of architectural renovation and cultural space regeneration has become a core topic than needs to be dealt with in future research. This study finds that Nanxun Ancient Town shows strong cultural inclusiveness in spatial transformation, and through the introduction of modern services (such as B&B, bookstore, cultural and creative space) and implantation of international aesthetic elements, to a certain extent, it has enhanced the visitor experience and cultural dissemination; but at the same time, the historical continuity and cultural texture of the original community is also facing the risk of being weakened, and the "spiritual symbolic function" of the traditional space has become a core issue for future research. The "spiritual symbol function" of traditional space is often marginalized in front of economic logic.

Genius Loci as a Norwegian architect Christian (1979) put forward an important concept, emphasizing the emotional resonance of space and people, as well as a specific geographic, historical and social contexts constitute the meaning of the place of existence. In the context of Nanxun, the spirit of place is embodied in the daily spatial structures such as the scale of streets and alleys, the layout of waterfront, ancestral houses, stone bridges and water lanes. These spaces are not only material existences, but also carriers of memories and values of life in Han communities for generations. Therefore, future research should explore in depth how spatial functions maintain community identity, so as to propose an architectural renewal strategy that takes into account both cultural heritage and modern evolution.

To address this cultural coordination challenge, future renovation projects could emphasize policies aimed at preserving this unique local essence, which would encompass both tangible (architectural places, spatial patterns, traditional skills, etc.) and intangible (clan culture, family memories, customs and folklore, etc.) aspects of the cultural space of Han communities. It calls for respecting traditional religious ceremonies, family memories and community life, and introduces residents' co-creation and community supervision mechanisms in the participation mechanism, so as to form a spatial experience that is compatible with Genius Loci and modern lifestyles.

In addition, the connotation of local culture is not static, but evolves in constant interaction. Therefore, the research should pay attention to the generative process of Genius Loci rather than treating it as a static heritage. In the future, through methods such as long-term cultural tracing, cross-generational interviews and spatial memory reconstruction, we can study how cultural spaces become emotional anchors of local identities and explore the issues of what kind of culture can enter and how to negotiate entry in the process of cultural integration, so as to promote the construction of a participatory local spiritual system.

5.3.2 Sustainable tourism and modern management mechanism

In the deep development of cultural and tourism integration, the main challenge facing the historical and cultural towns is no longer only the dichotomy of development and protection, but how to achieve sustainable operation of cultural space and community structure through refinement, institutionalization and participatory management mechanism of benign interaction. Nanxun Ancient Town, as a typical Jiangnan water town, in promoting the development of the tourism economy at the same time, the diversified cultural supply system and spatial composite utilization mode, has initially constructed a local cultural adaptability of the tourism management path. However, with the expansion of the scale of tourists, spatial commodification enhancement and the gradual alienation of community functions, Nanxun is also experiencing tourism overload, community marginalization and cultural dilution and a series of new problems, future research needs to be a systematic analysis of the

relationship between tourism, community and governance of cultural space and the construction of mechanisms.

In terms of sustainable tourism, the study observed that Nanxun Ancient Town in recent years through the implementation of the "micro-remodeling, fine enhancement" strategy to promote the upgrading of public service facilities (such as barrier-free access, travel distribution centers, cultural exhibition halls), to a certain extent, to alleviate the dichotomy between development and protection. At the same time, the local government has gradually promoted community participation mechanisms, through community participation platforms, cultural volunteers and tour guide training programs, in an attempt to break the traditional top-down management model. However, in the absence of a systematic management and evaluation framework, these explorations still face challenges such as fragmentation of practices, loss of community identity, and ambiguous evaluation of effectiveness.

Future research should strengthen the construction of the spatial carrying capacity assessment model for cultural tourism sites, and develop a scientific indicator system from the aspects of tourists' number control, landscape pressure threshold, community capacity response, etc. The data analysis and multidimensional thermal analysis can be introduced to assess the spatial carrying capacity of cultural tourism sites. Data analysis and multi-dimensional heat map can be introduced to dynamically monitor the gathering trend of tourists in real time and assist in the development of "reservation system", "staggered tour", "zoned tour" and other means of governance. At the same time, social psychology and community research should be combined to assess the acceptance, recognition and willingness of residents to participate in tourism activities, so as to avoid the erosive reconstruction of tourism capital on the local cultural life.

At the same time, the role of digital technology in ancient town tourism management should be strengthened. At this stage, although the wisdom of the nodes in the tourism nodes are presented, but more based on a single node set, should be integrated data in the intelligent guide system, cultural space digital archives, online

visitor behavior analysis platform and other platforms, data integration, the formation of data unified processing, help to achieve the precise scheduling of tourism resources and dynamic display of cultural space. Especially in Nanxun, an ancient town with both deep cultural heritage and living communities, digital means can inject new expressiveness into the dissemination of traditional culture, while also providing real-time data support for governance strategies.

In summary, building a sustainable tourism management mechanism that integrates cultural attributes, community structure and modern governance logic is an important direction for the future of Nanxun Ancient Town. Future research should continue to deepen in the governance model, data support and cultural participation mechanism, etc., in order to provide a scalable and replicable theoretical support and practical path for Chinese historical and cultural towns to achieve high-quality development in the new era.

5.3.3 Synergistic Governance and Community Participation Mechanisms

The sustainable development of cultural space depends not only on the protection and regeneration of the physical form of the building, but also on the coordinated operation of the social relations and governance structure behind it. In the renewal practice of Nanxun Ancient Town, the transformation of spatial functions often involves the joint participation of government authorities, market investment forces, cultural institutions and community residents. Therefore, a crucial direction for future research on cultural space is to develop a synergistic governance mechanism that incorporates multiple collaborations.

The study found that in the current Nanxun cultural tourism development system, the emergence of traditional craft experience courses, commentary performances, and other modes exists, but in the actual operation of the process, still exists at a single level of participation, the mechanism lacks sustained incentives, and other problems. Most of the space decision-making is still led by the local administration or driven by the main force of the enterprise; the community is regarded as the tourism environment "background", rather than the producer of cultural space. This kind of spatial

reconstruction model dominated by the perspective of the other will easily lead to the loss of the originality and subjectivity of the cultural space.

Future research should start from institutional design and community empowerment mechanisms to build a more scientific and sustainable collaborative governance mechanism. The establishment of a "revenue sharing mechanism" aims to promote active community participation, and maintaining the authenticity of the cultural space is a crucial guarantee. The current development of Nanxun ancient town tourism economy has formed a stable revenue chain, including cultural and creative products, catering, accommodation, cultural performances, and other types of tourism revenue sources. However, if there is a lack of reasonable distribution structure, these earnings are very easy to capital and administrative dominant party tilt, resulting in community residents in the space was transformed, life was disturbed at the same time, but it is difficult to get the corresponding return. This not only weakens the residents' sense of identity and willingness to participate but also may erode the community foundation and cultural value on which the cultural space is based in the long run.

Therefore, future research and practice should advocate for the establishment of a mechanism to redistribute the benefits of cultural spaces. The basic mechanism suggested may include: on the one hand, setting up a fixed percentage of tourism proceeds to be allocated to a special fund for community cultural development, which can be used to support local cultural projects such as traditional craft inheritance, community festivals, space repairs and residents' training, etc.; on the other hand, through the residents' co-benefit points mechanism, the residents' participation in public affairs such as space maintenance, cultural guided tours and experiential courses will be transformed into actual benefits, such as tax reduction, operating subsidies, public services, and other benefits. On the other hand, through the mechanism of residents' co-benefit points, residents' participation in public affairs such as space maintenance, cultural guided tours and experiential courses will be transformed into actual income rebates, such as tax exemption and reduction, business subsidies, and priority of public services. Increase residents' motivation to participate. At the same time, it is also

necessary to introduce community advisory committees, participatory planning workshops, and other modes to enhance the efficiency of consultation and realize true sharing and shared governance. Of course, this kind of multi-party governance should also be accompanied by a clear communication mechanism and conflict mediation mechanism to ensure consensus building and long-term cooperation in the transformation of cultural spaces.

Such a mechanism will in turn enhance the residents' awareness of their responsibility for the cultural space and their motivation to protect it, thus forming a virtuous circle and ensuring that tourism development will not be detached from the main cultural groups on which it depends.

5.3.4 Long-term tracking and modeling of spatial evolution

Nanxun Ancient Town, as a typical historical and cultural space in Jiangnan, has experienced complex structural transformation and cultural reconstruction in its architectural form and use function over the past seventy years. Although this study has sorted out the evolutionary paths of spatial functions at different historical stages through structural functionalism and social influence theory, the change of cultural space is not a static result, but a continuously occurring and dynamically generated process. Therefore, it is necessary for future research to build a set of long-term tracking system and prediction model of spatial evolution from the perspective of process and mechanism, in order to meet the theoretical and practical challenges of continuous renewal of cultural space in ancient towns under the complex social background.

At the methodological level, it is necessary to break through the analytical paradigm of previous studies, which is mainly based on the comparison of static time nodes, and shift to the dynamic modeling path of multi-temporal, multi-scale, and cross-data sources. Specifically, can be combined with geographic information systems, remote sensing technology, historical map digitization, local history text analysis, etc., the evolution of spatial morphology, functional use and social structure of the ancient town visualization reconstruction. For example, through the construction of Nanxun ancient town timeline building use change mapping, not only can reveal the spatial

function of the trajectory of change, but also for the spatial policymaking to provide a basis for decision-making. At the same time, macro variables such as local policies, economic activities, and population migration can be incorporated into the spatial database to form a causal modeling system of multivariate interaction.

Second, it should focus on the fact that based on the AGIL framework, future research can establish a system of spatial adaptability indicators (e.g., frequency of functional conversion, change in user structure, intensity of cultural symbols, etc.) to present the social adaptability of space in a quantitative way. Further machine learning, deep network and other algorithms can be used to cluster analysis, pattern recognition and evolution trend prediction of cultural spatial change data, providing prospective tools for the spatial governance of Nanxun Ancient Town and even other historical towns.

Again, the digital recording and monitoring technology of spatial change should be strengthened to reflect the rationality of architectural asset management. In the future, we can also try to develop a "cultural space evolution archive platform", integrating images, oral histories, use logs, policy instruments and other diversified information, maintained by residents, researchers and managers, so that the process of recording spatial change itself becomes the practice of local spirit. This not only enhances the authenticity and detail density of the study but also helps to establish a more localized narrative framework of spatial evolution.

In summary, the evolution of cultural space research cannot stop at the historical description but should move towards the data-supported systematic cognition, dynamic tracking, predictive modeling, intelligent decision-making of the whole process of closed loop. The spatial future of Nanxun Ancient Town not only needs to be understood and protected, but also needs to be scientifically identified, recorded and guided.

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