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**Research on Spatial Renewal Design of Traditional Villages under
Landscape Pattern Language: A Case Study of Mingyuewan
Village in Suzhou**

Qualification work for obtaining the SVO «Master»

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landscape environment»

The qualification work contains the results of own research

The use of ideas, results and texts of other authors must be referenced to
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Abstract

Traditional villages, as important carriers of historical and cultural heritage, preserve rich tangible and intangible cultural resources and serve as “living fossils” of regional culture and collective identity. Among them, traditional villages in the Jiangnan region are distinctive settlements with significant historical, cultural, artistic, and social value. Shaped by the characteristic water-town environment and a long-established agrarian culture, these villages have developed distinctive cultural traditions, while also offering strong qualities of livability and tourism, making them representative landscapes in which natural and cultural elements are closely integrated. However, under rapid urbanization and modernization, Jiangnan traditional villages are increasingly confronted with spatial decline, disruption of cultural continuity, and a growing mismatch between traditional functions and contemporary living needs, making their conservation and renewal increasingly urgent.

Previous studies indicate that landscape schema language can serve as an effective tool for interpreting and translating spatial form and cultural meaning. Accordingly, this study adopts the perspective of landscape schema language. Through a review of relevant domestic and international theories and practical cases of traditional village renewal, it identifies the core components, spatial analytical methods, and renewal

logic of landscape schema language, and establishes an analytical framework linking “landscape schema language” with “traditional village space.” The research further defines a methodological path based on vocabulary extraction, syntactic analysis, and contextual interpretation. Taking Mingyuewan Village in Suzhou as the case study, field investigation and spatial analysis are conducted to identify its landscape schema characteristics and examine their relationships with cultural inheritance and regional spatial language. On this basis, spatial renewal strategies based on the translation of landscape schema language are proposed, with the aim of promoting the living inheritance and innovative development of Mingyuewan Village, balancing cultural conservation with contemporary functional needs, and supporting the sustainable renewal of the village.

Keywords: Landscape Schematic Language; Traditional Villages; Spatial Renewal

Introduction: Research Background and Relevance

Research Objective. This study approaches traditional village renewal from the perspective of landscape schema language and examines the distinctive regional culture of Mingyuewan Village in Suzhou. The research has three main objectives. First, it reviews relevant domestic and international studies on landscape schema language in traditional villages and systematically analyzes existing theoretical frameworks and practical cases. Second, it focuses on Mingyuewan Village to investigate the cultural meanings embedded in its landscape and to identify the constituent elements of its landscape schema vocabulary. On this basis, the study further examines problems arising from contemporary development, including the weakening of distinctive landscape characteristics and disruptions to cultural continuity, and explores effective approaches to conserving and renewing village landscapes while maintaining regional cultural identity. Finally, through appropriate and systematic design interventions, the study seeks to develop strategies that both preserve the original character of traditional village landscapes and enable them to respond to contemporary living needs.

Research Tasks.1 Review the basic theories of traditional village conservation, landscape schema language, regional cultural landscapes, and spatial renewal; Analyze representative cases of traditional village conservation and renewal in China and abroad, and summarize applicable

schema extraction methods, spatial organization strategies, and cultural inheritance approaches; 2 Investigate and analyze the historical evolution, natural environment, spatial structure, landscape elements, and current use of Mingyuewan Village in Suzhou; 3 Identify existing problems in landscape character continuity, cultural expression, spatial organization, public-space utilization, and adaptation to contemporary living needs; 4 Establish a landscape-schema-language-based spatial renewal framework for Mingyuewan Village and propose specific conservation, translation, and renewal design strategies.

Research Object. The study focuses on the identification, extraction, and translation of landscape schema language in the spatial renewal of traditional villages, taking Mingyuewan Village in Suzhou as the specific research object. The village's spatial structure, landscape characteristics, regional cultural elements, and renewal potential are examined to explore adaptive strategies for traditional village conservation and contemporary development.

Research Theme. The study investigates the identification, extraction, translation, and application of landscape schema language in the spatial renewal of traditional villages, with particular attention to how natural landscapes, settlement patterns, street and alley networks, public spaces, architectural forms, cultural nodes, and regional landscape elements can

be integrated into a coherent renewal strategy that preserves local cultural identity while responding to contemporary spatial and functional needs.

Research Methods. Literature review, case comparison, field investigation, spatial analysis, and schema extraction are combined to identify village characteristics and translate them into renewal strategies.

Research Significance. Theoretically, this study introduces landscape schema language into traditional village renewal, providing a structured approach to identifying, interpreting, and translating regional spatial characteristics beyond conventional studies centered on physical preservation. Practically, Mingyuewan Village retains distinctive landscape patterns and cultural resources. The proposed renewal approach aims to preserve these spatial and cultural characteristics while improving contemporary use, enabling traditional streets, public spaces, architectural elements, and landscape features to support both cultural continuity and sustainable development.

Research Significance. This study applies landscape schema language to interpret the spatial structure and cultural logic of Mingyuewan Village. Focusing on the Jiangnan water-town context, it extends traditional village research beyond mountainous and plain settlements. By identifying waterfront spatial patterns and their organizational rules, the study examines the relationship between spatial form and regional culture.

It further integrates schema language with cultural inheritance, translating local cultural characteristics into spatial design logic. The research provides a methodological basis for the conservation, renewal, and cultural continuity of traditional water-town villages.

Research Innovation. Traditional village renewal still faces homogenized conservation, fragmented spatial research, and weak design integration. Taking Mingyuewan Village in Suzhou as a case, this study applies landscape schema language to identify and translate spatial patterns, cultural meanings, and landscape relationships into renewal strategies, providing a framework for regional adaptation, cultural continuity, and the sustainable renewal of Jiangnan water-town villages.

Chapter 1 Literature Review in China and Abroad

1.1 Current Research on Traditional Villages

Research on traditional villages in China began in the 1930s, initially focusing on ancient settlements, vernacular dwellings, architectural documentation, and field surveys. However, systematic conservation developed relatively late. Rapid urbanization and economic growth subsequently accelerated the loss of traditional villages. In 1982, the State Council announced the first group of National Historic and Cultural Cities, followed by a series of policies and regulations on historic and traditional settlement conservation. Since the 18th National Congress of

the Communist Party of China, national conservation programs have been further strengthened. To date, 8,155 traditional villages have been included in the national conservation list, together with approximately 539,000 traditional buildings and 4,789 items of provincial-level or higher intangible cultural heritage.

Domestic research has gradually expanded from individual vernacular buildings to settlement systems, spatial structures, regional culture, and sustainable renewal. Since the 1980s, research has increasingly addressed cultural meaning, value systems, and settlement integrity. More recently, interdisciplinary methods have become prominent. Tao Hui et al. used digital media as an analytical framework to examine the representation, identity construction, local practice, and power relations of traditional villages, using Taipan Village in Guizhou as a case study. Shi Yang et al. applied GIS-based spatial overlay analysis, graph theory, and minimum spanning tree models to investigate the relationship between spatial efficiency and cultural gene transmission, providing quantitative support for conservation zoning, traditional construction inheritance, and regional cultural continuity.

International research on traditional villages developed earlier and has mainly focused on settlement morphology, cultural value, and social structure. A. Meitzen pioneered the typological classification of village morphology and systematically examined the factors shaping settlement

form, laying a foundation for later studies of rural settlement planning and morphology. Roland Lin investigated traditional village conservation and tourism development in Japan, with particular attention to rural depopulation and marginal settlements. Pisani Mario and Fabio Piscopo examined traditional villages from the perspectives of historical-cultural value, architectural characteristics, and spatial organization. From a sociological perspective, Daniel Kulp conducted fieldwork in Phoenix Village, Guangdong, and analyzed village social organization, cultural structure, and interpersonal relationships, providing an important basis for understanding the social dimensions of traditional settlements.

1.2 Current Research on Schema Language

Schema language theory originated in cognitive psychology, where “schema” was used to explain how individuals perceive and organize external environments through pre-existing cognitive structures. Its application later extended to architecture, environmental design, and spatial studies. Christopher Alexander and his collaborators developed “Pattern Language,” defining recurrent and broadly applicable spatial relationships as identifiable, combinable, and reusable patterns. The theory emphasizes that spatial form is structured through the interaction of units across multiple scales and hierarchical levels, providing a methodological basis for spatial identification, abstraction, and design translation.

International research has expanded pattern language from architectural and urban analysis to environmental psychology, landscape perception, place-making, and spatial experience. Iwańczak and Lewicka tested Alexander's theory in Warsaw by identifying 68 spatial patterns from 1,310 panoramic images and examining their relationships with environmental affect, aesthetic evaluation, and place preference. Their findings demonstrated significant associations between characteristic spatial patterns and positive environmental perception. Subsequent studies have increasingly focused on the combinatorial logic, hierarchical structure, and contextual adaptability of patterns, shifting from static morphological classification toward integrated analyses of spatial cognition, behavioral experience, and design generation.

Research in China developed later but has gradually formed a localized landscape-oriented framework. Wan Yanhua et al. applied Alexander's theory to traditional village conservation planning, seeking to balance contemporary development with regional cultural continuity. Meng Xiaoying et al. examined Nordic modernist landscapes and Alvar Aalto's architecture, emphasizing the relationship between built form and nature. Wang Yuncai et al. systematized the structure and classification of landscape spatial schema language and verified its applicability through cases such as the Jiangnan Ecological Park. Subsequent studies incorporated architectural form, vernacular dwelling types, land-use

patterns, water systems, and settlement modes into schema-based analysis, extending applications to village public spaces, habitat restoration, landform evolution, and ecological adaptation. Zhang Jinhao et al. further applied schema language to the identification, extraction, and translation of spatial genes in Zhongxie Village, promoting a shift from descriptive analysis toward standardized identification and design translation.

1.3 Research on Traditional Village Renewal Based on Landscape Schema Language

Research on traditional village renewal based on landscape schema language has increasingly developed within an interdisciplinary framework. At the theoretical level, Wang Yuncai and related scholars established a schema language system consisting of approximately 5,000 lexical units and 30 groups of syntactic rules. By treating spatial units as basic vocabulary and using scale nesting and transformation mechanisms, this framework provides a structured method for interpreting landscape spatial organization.

In practical studies, schema language has mainly been used to identify traditional spatial prototypes, settlement patterns, and evolutionary mechanisms, particularly in representative regions such as the water towns of the Shanghai–Nanjing–Hangzhou area. These studies demonstrate its value in coordinating new and existing spaces and supporting the continuity of regional cultural characteristics.

However, several limitations remain. Existing studies still rely heavily on theories of urban morphology, while research on the specific generative mechanisms of traditional village space remains insufficient. Further work is also required to strengthen the linkage between micro-scale morphological identification and meso-scale spatial regulation, as well as to clarify the relationship between morphological units and property-right structures. Accordingly, the application of landscape schema language to traditional village renewal still requires further theoretical and methodological refinement.

Chapter 1 Summary

Research on traditional villages has expanded from architectural documentation to spatial structure, cultural continuity, and sustainable renewal. Schema language, developed from cognitive psychology and Alexander's Pattern Language, provides a framework for identifying and translating spatial relationships. Its application to traditional village renewal supports the recognition of spatial prototypes and regional characteristics. However, further research is needed to clarify spatial generation mechanisms and strengthen the connection between morphological analysis and practical renewal design.

Chapter 2 Spatial Renewal Design for Mingyuewan Traditional Village in Suzhou

2.1 Analysis of Geographical Location of Ancient Mingyuewan

Village

Located in the southern part of Xishan Island in Taihu Lake, Mingyuewan Ancient Village is a typical natural ancient village featured with lakeside and hilly landforms. Originating prior to the Yuan Dynasty, the village boasts a profound historical construction heritage. It covers a total area of 6.41 square kilometers, with a construction land area of 279.75 mu and an average altitude of 3.33 meters. Dominated by hilly terrain, the village presents distinctive geographical characteristics integrating mountains and waters. Adjacent to the riparian shoreline of Taihu Lake, the village is constructed in accordance with the natural hilly terrain, retaining a complete and stable spatial pattern of mountains and waters. Endowed with the superior water and soil resources of Taihu Lake, the village has formed a traditional rural production system characterized by the integration of agriculture and fishery. The long-standing production modes of agroforestry cultivation and lake fishing have profoundly shaped the overall spatial texture as well as the alley and courtyard morphology of the village. Furthermore, the original lakeside mountain-water landscape foundation and the inherited traditional agricultural production and lifestyle constitute the core material carrier of the landscape schematic language of Mingyuewan Ancient Village, and serve as the fundamental foundation and core

support for the inheritance of the village's spatial form and the continuity of its rural landscape features.

2.2 Historical culture and the evolution of spatial pattern of Mingyuewan Village in Suzhou

Mingyuewan Village is located in the southeast of Xishan Island, Wuzhong District, Suzhou City, Jiangsu Province. Relying on the Taihu Lake forest and the Piaomiao Peak massif, it forms a unique landscape pattern of mountains and waters, making it a typical traditional water village in the Jiangnan region. The development and evolution of the village are closely related to the regional natural environment, socio-economic structure and local cultural inheritance. Over a long historical period, its spatial form has gradually developed into a settlement structure based on water systems, with streets and alleys as veins and building clusters as the main body.

The history of Mingyuewan Village dates back to the Spring and Autumn Period. According to legend, King Fuchai of Wu and Xishi once admired the moon here, giving rise to culturally distinctive local legends. With the development of Wu-Yue culture and the prosperity of economic activities along the Taihu Lake shore, the village gradually evolved from an early waterside natural settlement into a traditional village with a stable spatial structure. During the Qing Dynasty, along with the

development of agricultural production, commercial activities and clan culture, the village expanded continuously, forming a spatial system composed of ancestral halls, dwellings, streets, alleys and waterfront spaces. Influenced by the Jiangnan water-town environment, the spatial layout of the village at this stage showed typical characteristics of "nestling against mountains beside waters, streets built along rivers, and houses connected by lanes".

In the traditional society, Mingyuewan Village was mainly organized on the basis of clan ties and agricultural production. Its spatial form exhibited prominent living and regional characteristics. Most buildings in the village adopted the form of traditional Jiangnan dwellings, with courtyard spaces organized around courtyards and halls. Narrow alleys linked buildings to one another, creating a human-scaled and multi-layered spatial network. Meanwhile, the water system not only undertook transportation and production functions, but also connected important sites for daily life and social communication, constituting the unique waterfront landscape of the village.

In the stage of modern development, with the advancement of urbanization and changes in population structure, the traditional production modes of Mingyuewan Village have gradually transformed, and the functions of some spaces have been adjusted. Traditional dwellings are confronted with problems such as idleness, renovation and

functional transformation. The village space has gradually shifted from the original living-production system toward cultural display. In recent years, as the conservation of traditional villages moves forward, Mingyuewan Village has attached importance to historic environmental preservation and spatial revitalization. By restoring traditional buildings, optimizing public spaces and preserving the water-town pattern, the village integrates historical and cultural resources with the demands of modern life.

2.3 Analysis of Traditional Buildings in Mingyuewan Ancient Village

Mingyuewan Ancient Village preserves abundant architectural relics dating back to the Ming and Qing dynasties. With rich architectural reserves and a complete conservation hierarchy, it forms a well-structured southern Jiangsu lakeside vernacular architectural cluster with distinctive regional features and serves as a typical carrier of traditional residential construction culture on Xishan Island of Taihu Lake. The village retains more than twenty traditional buildings of the Ming and Qing periods, including provincial-level and municipal-level cultural relic protection units as well as municipal controlled protected buildings. Together with a number of well-preserved vernacular dwellings, they constitute a hierarchical ancient architectural heritage system, which fully demonstrates the construction characteristics and human settlement

concepts of rural buildings in the Taihu Lake region during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

The traditional buildings in the village present clear chronological layers in their construction. The mid-Qing Dynasty represents the prime construction period, and most existing major buildings are courtyard-style halls erected in the Qianlong reign of the Qing Dynasty. Typical examples include Lizhou Hall, Zhanrui Hall, Ningde Hall, Hansan Hall, Deng Clan Ancestral Hall, and Huang Clan Ancestral Hall, all featuring regular courtyard layouts and high integrity of remains. In addition, a small number of building relics from the Ming Dynasty are preserved, among which Dunlun Hall is the most representative. The superimposed architectural remains of different periods form a village architectural pattern with temporal continuity and stylistic unity, which fully records the evolution of human settlement construction in Mingyuewan Ancient Village.

The overall layout and structural system of traditional buildings in Mingyuewan Ancient Village are highly adapted to the lakeside hilly geographical environment, forming a regional construction mode distinct from the plain-style dwellings in southern Jiangsu. In terms of layout, most local traditional buildings are one-to-three-story brick-wood courtyard structures. Following the central axis symmetrical principle, they are mainly oriented southward or southeastward, which precisely

accommodates the humid, rainy, and hot climate of the Taihu Lake region and optimizes indoor ventilation, daylighting, and moisture prevention. The courtyards feature rhythmic spatial openness and delicately scaled patios, embodying the classic construction wisdom of southern Jiangsu dwellings characterized by shallow depth, low eaves, and exquisite patio design. Structurally, the buildings generally adopt a column-and-tie wooden frame system combined with lightweight walls and gently sloped roofs. The lightweight structural components are highly adaptable to the undulating terrain of hilly areas. Indoor spaces are flexible and transparent, with functional zones divided by wooden screens and partition decorations, ensuring practicality while enhancing spatial hierarchy and flexibility.

In terms of decorative craftsmanship and architectural aesthetics, the traditional buildings inherit the vernacular characteristics of the Xiangshan construction technique in southern Jiangsu and feature distinctive brick, wood, and stone carvings. Decorative carvings are widely applied on gate towers, beam frames, window grilles, and courtyard walls, and high-grade courtyards retain residual Su-style painted decorations. The carving themes mainly include landscapes, flowers, auspicious patterns, and ritual symbols, presenting a simple, elegant, and restrained aesthetic style. Different from the exaggerated and luxurious decorations of inland southern Jiangsu dwellings, the

decorative system of Mingyuewan buildings forms a plain and refined lakeside vernacular architectural temperament. Formed by local craftsmen adapting to the lakeside geographical conditions of Taihu Lake, this unique construction and decoration system inherits the essence of southern Jiangsu traditional craftsmanship and reflects the rural patriarchal etiquette and folk culture, representing an integration of architectural technology and humanistic connotation.

Overall, the traditional buildings of Mingyuewan Ancient Village feature standardized layouts and complete systems. From the overall courtyard arrangement and wooden frame structure to detailed decorative craftsmanship, they are well adapted to the lakeside hilly landscape and local production and lifestyle of the region. The site-specific construction logic, simple regional style, and spatially practical yet humanized design jointly shape the unique architectural texture of the lakeside ancient village and preserve the original form and construction wisdom of rural dwellings in the Taihu Lake region during the Ming and Qing dynasties. As a typical case of lakeside ancient village architecture in southern Jiangsu, Mingyuewan's traditional buildings embody both ecological adaptability and regional humanity. They serve as highly recognizable research samples of southern Jiangsu vernacular architectural heritage and possess significant value for the inheritance and conservation of architectural styles of lakeside ancient villages in southern Jiangsu.

2.4 Analysis of Current Problems in Mingyuewan Village Suzhou

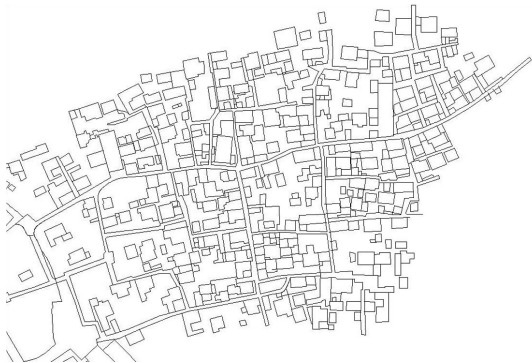
Insufficient utilization of historical landscape resources and inadequate transformation of spatial value Mingyuewan Village preserves landscape resources with historical and cultural values such as ancient trees and water systems. At present, the spaces surrounding ancient trees are mostly open vacant land, lacking systematic spatial organization and landscape atmosphere. The existing site fails to fully tap the potential value of ancient trees as cultural nodes and public activity cores of the village. Consequently, there is an effective disconnection between historical landscape resources and surrounding daily life as well as tourist experience. Meanwhile, deficiencies in spatial layout and functional configuration make it difficult to form distinctive landscape nodes with functions for stay, communication and cultural activities.

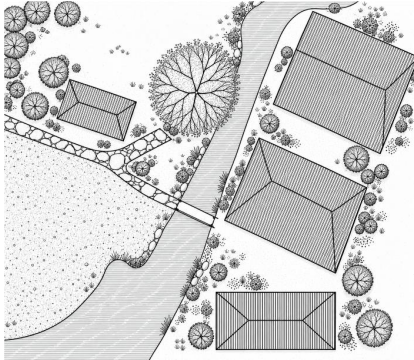
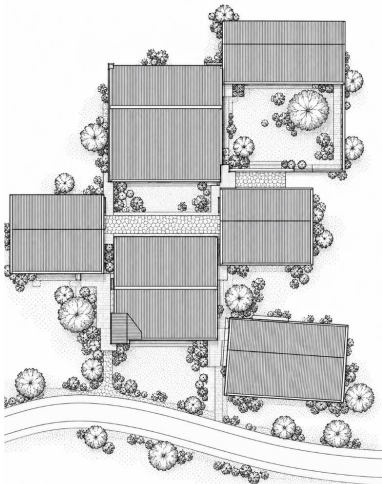
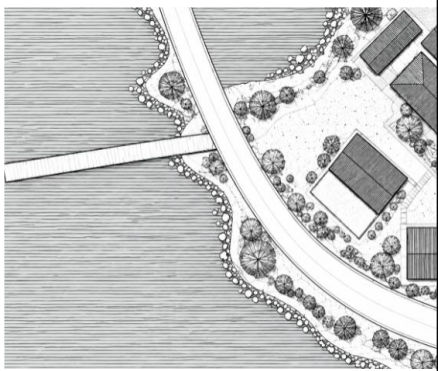
Insufficient characteristic expression of waterfront space and limited transformation capacity of water-town landscape resources. Relying on the Taihu Lake water system, Mingyuewan Village forms a unique waterfront environment. However, the existing river spaces mainly undertake basic transportation and landscape interface functions, lacking spatial experience design adapted to the water environment. Some waterfront areas are not equipped with continuous ecological trails, rest facilities and cultural exhibition spaces. As a result, the traditional "water-bank-village" spatial sequence is not fully manifested. The river

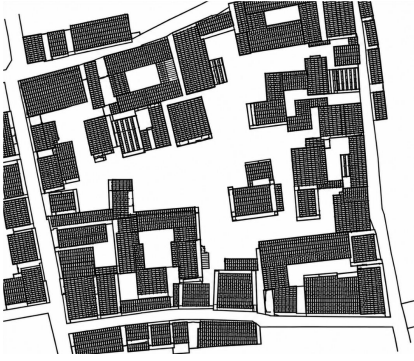
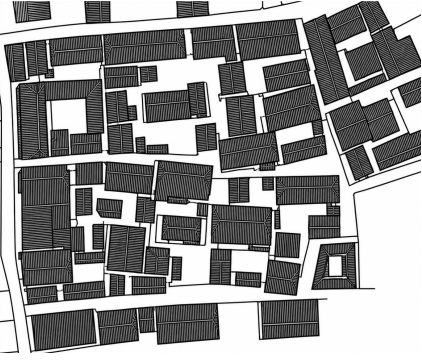
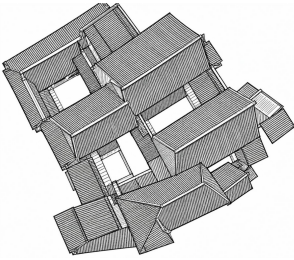
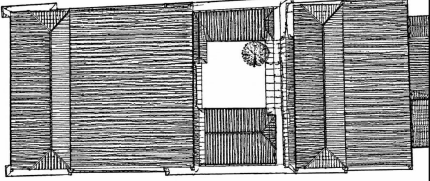
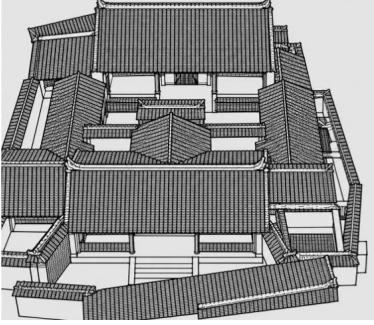
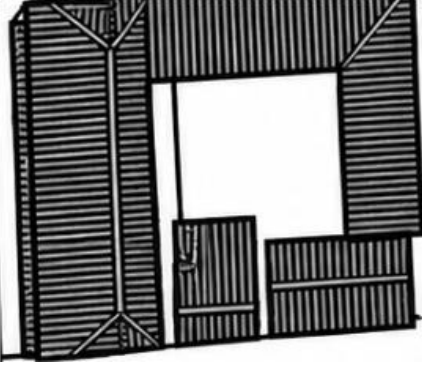
landscape resources have not been effectively transformed into attractive public spaces with cultural experience for tourism, which restricts the further realization of the landscape value of the water town.

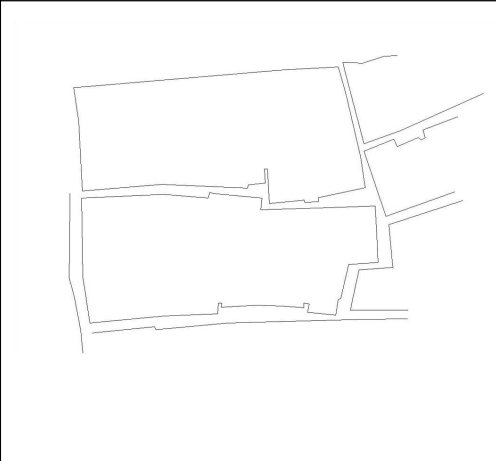
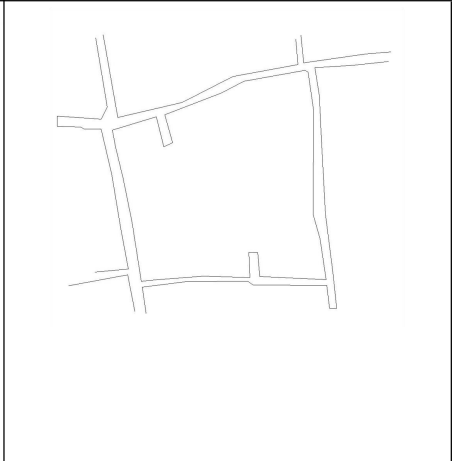
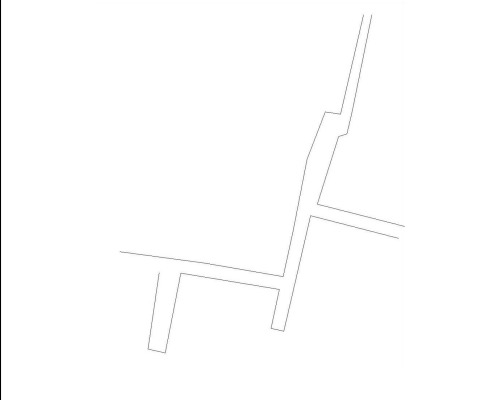
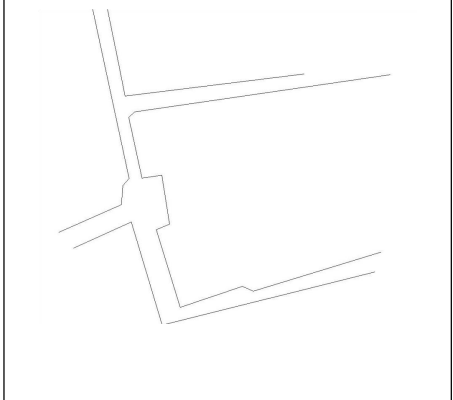
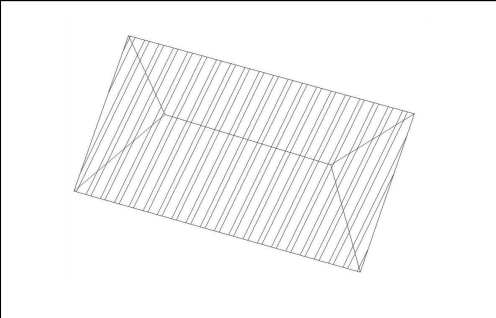
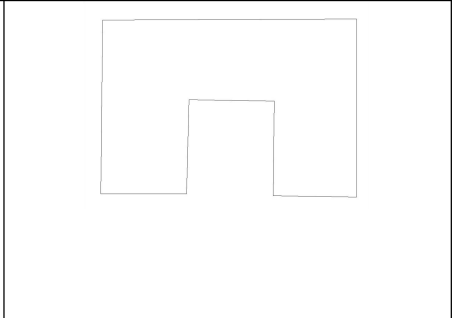
Insufficient allocation of public service facilities and imperfect functional foundation of tourism space. With the development of tourism in traditional villages, tourists’ spatial demands for rest, sightseeing, communication and cultural experience keep rising. Nevertheless, some tourism resources in Mingyuewan Village lack supporting infrastructure matching tourist activities, such as resting areas, landscape sketches, guidance systems and cultural exhibition facilities, making it hard for landscape spaces to form a complete recreational experience system. Meanwhile, the existing spatial functional layout fails to form effective connections with tourist behavior paths, which hinders the sustainable utilization of the village’s tourism resources.

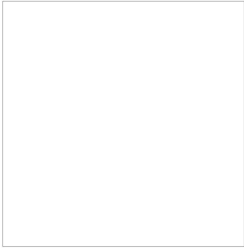
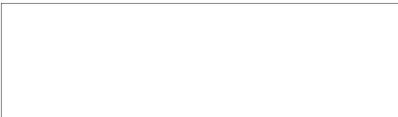
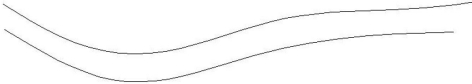
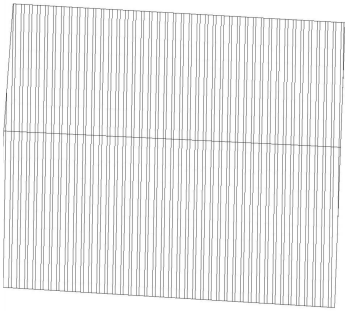
2.5 Extraction of Landscape Language

	Landscape Village Pattern
	

Sentence			
	Composite Space		
Phrase			
	Water Street Combination	Neighborhood Block Combination	
			
	Street-house Combination	Waterfront Boundary Combination	

		
	Pattern of Residential Combination	Pattern of Residential Combination
		
	Spatial Pattern of Ritual Hall	Spatial Pattern of Ancestral Hall
		
	Spatial Pattern of Ancestral Hall	Pattern of Residential Combination
	Linkage Space	

Phrase		
	Pattern of Street and Alley Network 1	Pattern of Street and Alley Network 2
		
	Pattern of Street and Alley Network 3	Pattern of Street and Alley Network 4
Characte		
	Temples and Ancestral Halls	Concave Courtyard (Ao-shaped Courtyard)

		
	Square Plot	Rectangular Block
		
	Curved Street and Alley	Residential House

To systematically identify the spatial organization of the traditional settlement of Mingyuewan Village in Suzhou, this study adopts landscape schema language as its theoretical foundation and conducts a hierarchical analysis following the sequence of “overall pattern identification—composite spatial induction—connection relationship extraction—basic vocabulary abstraction.” At the overall level, the spatial framework of the village is first identified by treating the natural landscape, road system, and building clusters as a “sentence.” This analysis reveals a characteristic landscape-village pattern in which the settlement develops in response to water, extends along circulation routes, and forms clustered spatial groups. On this basis, recurrent and

representative spatial relationships are classified into composite patterns, including water–street combinations, neighborhood-block combinations, street–house combinations, and waterfront-boundary combinations. These patterns reflect relatively stable relationships among water bodies, roads, buildings, courtyards, and public spaces, and constitute the principal “phrases” of the traditional village spatial language.

The schema system is further refined through the analysis of architectural and connective spaces. Architectural space primarily includes residential combinations, the spatial configuration of Lihe Hall, ancestral hall spaces, and courtyard-based residential forms. Their common characteristics include enclosure, inward orientation, hierarchical progression, and courtyard linkage. Traditional dwellings are organized through basic units such as halls, side rooms, courtyards, and enclosure walls, producing ordered spatial compositions, while ancestral halls and ritual buildings exhibit more explicit axial relationships and spatial hierarchies. Connective space is mainly composed of the street-and-alley network. Streets and alleys link building clusters through linear, curved, turning, and branching forms, creating a pedestrian network of varied scales and flexible orientations. These routes not only serve circulation functions but also act as important spatial media connecting residences, courtyards, public nodes, and waterfront areas.

At the level of basic vocabulary, complex spatial forms are further abstracted into typical spatial characters, including temples and ancestral halls, concave courtyards, square plots, rectangular plots, curved streets and alleys, and residential units. These characters constitute the fundamental units of Mingyuewan Village's spatial language and generate spatial patterns at different scales through rules of enclosure, juxtaposition, linkage, turning, and penetration. Accordingly, the traditional spatial language of Mingyuewan Village demonstrates clear hierarchical and generative characteristics. Its overall structure can be summarized as follows: the natural landscape defines the settlement framework; the street-and-alley system organizes the spatial skeleton; buildings and courtyards form spatial clusters; and basic spatial characters constitute the local components. This organizational logic, progressing from the whole to the part and from complex configurations to basic units, reflects the adaptive relationship between Jiangnan water-town settlements and their natural environment, as well as their emphasis on neighborhood interaction and regional cultural continuity.

The extraction of spatial language in this study consists of four main steps. First, based on site surveys, existing-condition mapping, imagery, and field investigation, the overall village form, water system, road network, buildings, and public spaces are identified, and representative spatial samples are selected. Second, recurrent spatial relationships are

classified to extract composite patterns such as water–street, street–house, neighborhood-block, and waterfront patterns. Third, these composite patterns are further decomposed into architectural spaces, street-and-alley networks, and courtyard relationships in order to analyze rules of enclosure, linkage, turning, and spatial connection. Fourth, the forms of buildings, courtyards, streets, alleys, and plots are geometrically abstracted into repeatedly identifiable basic characters, thereby establishing a hierarchical diagram of “character–phrase–sentence.” Through this method, the complex traditional spatial morphology of Mingyuewan Village can be transformed into a landscape schema language system with explicit structural relationships and compositional logic, providing a methodological basis for subsequent spatial translation and renewal design.

Chapter 3 Design Scheme

3.1 Overall Design: Continuation and Spatial Reorganization of the Landscape Village Pattern

The overall design responds first to the “Landscape Village Pattern” identified in the preceding analysis. The traditional settlement of Mingyuewan Village was not formed according to a rigid geometric order; rather, it gradually evolved through the long-term interaction of the Taihu Lake water system, surrounding topography, street and alley networks,

and residential construction. This process has given the village a strong sense of environmental adaptability and organic spatial growth. At the overall scale, the settlement is characterized by “development along water, extension along roads, and aggregation into clusters,” with buildings, roads, and water bodies forming an interwoven spatial relationship. Accordingly, the design preserves the site’s principal water system, waterfront boundaries, and existing circulation framework, while retaining traditional building clusters as important peripheral spatial interfaces. Large-scale demolition and reconstruction are avoided in order to prevent the imposition of an overly artificial spatial order.

At the overall spatial level, the design continues the traditional settlement logic of “water systems defining spatial boundaries—streets and alleys organizing the internal structure—buildings shaping spatial interfaces—landscape nodes embedded within the fabric.” The large water body on the western side of the site forms the primary natural backdrop, while the river channel on the eastern side functions as an internal hydrological connection. Traditional residential clusters are distributed along the site edges and on both sides of the water system, whereas the internal renewal area is organized through public spaces and natural landscape elements of different scales. Rather than treating the renewal area as an independent contemporary park, the design incorporates it as a new component of the traditional village spatial

system, allowing it to form an integrated landscape structure together with the existing streets, buildings, and water bodies.

In terms of overall layout, the design avoids establishing a single central axis. Instead, curvilinear paths, dispersed nodes, and looped spaces are combined to create the circulation system. The primary route connects the village entrance, waterfront areas, traditional buildings, ancient-tree spaces, landscape water features, and central public nodes, while secondary routes extend further into planted areas, small courtyards, and waterfront spaces. Through intersections, turns, loops, and branching, the path system develops an organizational pattern similar to the traditional street-and-alley network, producing a continuous spatial sequence of “entry—turning—opening—enclosure—pause—re-entry.”

This design process represents a contemporary translation of the traditional “sentence-level” schema. The landscape village pattern is not directly reproduced as a fixed physical form; instead, it continues to function as the underlying order of the design. Water remains the fundamental basis of spatial organization, roads continue to serve as the structural framework connecting different clusters, buildings maintain their role in defining spatial interfaces, and landscape nodes accommodate public activities, cultural experiences, and recreation. In this way, the design establishes an overall renewal framework that

integrates the traditional spatial pattern with contemporary functional requirements.

3.2 Waterfront Interface Node: Ecological Translation of the Waterfront Boundary Pattern

The waterfront area is one of the most distinctive components of the design in expressing the regional character of the Jiangnan water-town landscape, corresponding to the previously identified “Waterfront Boundary Combination.” The traditional waterfront of Mingyuewan Village is not merely the edge of a water body, but a composite space jointly shaped by the water surface, shoreline, paths, vegetation, buildings, and residents’ daily activities. Its spatial value lies in the continuity between land and water, rather than in a clear separation between the natural environment and the built village fabric.

Based on this pattern, the design treats the Taihu Lake waterfront on the western side of the site and the internal river channel on the eastern side as a continuous landscape system. Near the water, naturalized shorelines, stone revetments, wetland plants, and weeping willows are introduced to form a soft ecological edge and reduce the artificial character of continuous hard embankments. A waterfront promenade is arranged in the middle zone to accommodate sightseeing and slow movement, while trees, flowering shrubs, seating, and small resting

spaces are placed on the side adjacent to the internal green spaces and buildings. This creates a gradual spatial sequence of “water—shoreline—vegetation—path—village.”

This organization represents a reinterpretation of the traditional waterfront boundary pattern. Water remains an important natural vocabulary, while the former waterfront functions associated with production, washing, water collection, and transportation are transformed, under contemporary conditions, into ecological, recreational, and cultural-experiential functions. Waterside seating, viewing platforms, and small accessible waterfront spaces are introduced to transform the shoreline from a purely visual boundary into a public space that can be approached, occupied, and experienced.

At the same time, the planting design avoids overly regular landscape belts. Instead, it draws on the naturally evolved character of traditional waterfront vegetation by combining trees, shrubs, aquatic plants, and natural stones in irregular arrangements. This approach both preserves the natural character embedded in the traditional waterfront pattern and strengthens the ecological buffering capacity of the shoreline, allowing the renewed waterfront to embody both regional identity and contemporary ecological value.

3.3 Landscape Water Feature and Pavilion Node: Experiential

Translation of the Traditional Waterside Courtyard Pattern

A small-scale landscape water feature and pavilion space are introduced in the northern part of the site to respond to the distinctive spatial character of Mingyuewan Village, where water environments are abundant and buildings maintain close relationships with water. The water body is defined by a natural, curvilinear edge and is encircled by surrounding paths, while vegetation, natural stones, and aquatic plants are used to soften the artificial boundary.

The pavilion is positioned along one side of the water rather than at its geometric center, reflecting the traditional Jiangnan garden principle of building in close proximity to water. As visitors enter the node along the pathway, changing views of the water surface, planting, and pavilion are revealed from different angles, creating a continuous and dynamic visual sequence.

From the perspective of schema language, this node integrates several spatial patterns, including the “water–street combination,” “waterfront boundary,” and “building–water relationship.” The water body functions as a natural spatial vocabulary, the pavilion as an architectural vocabulary, and vegetation and paths as connective elements. Through juxtaposition, enclosure, and circumambulation, these components form a composite spatial configuration. The traditional principles of “dwelling by the

water” and “creating scenery through water” are thus translated into contemporary public landscape experiences characterized by waterside resting and movement around the water.

The scale of this node is deliberately kept relatively small to emphasize tranquility and visual appreciation, thereby forming a complementary relationship with the more active central public space. It accommodates short-term resting and viewing while reinforcing the spatial atmosphere and cultural identity of a traditional Jiangnan water-town settlement.

3.4 Street and Alley Network Node: Contemporary Organization of Traditional Connectivity Patterns

Streets and alleys constitute one of the most important connective systems within the spatial structure of Mingyuewan Village. Previous research identified several “Patterns of Street and Alley Network,” including linear, angled, branching, winding, and turning configurations. Rather than forming a regular road grid, these routes gradually developed through the long-term interaction of buildings, water systems, and everyday spatial needs, thereby exhibiting a strong degree of environmental adaptability.

Accordingly, the internal circulation system of the proposed design avoids an orthogonal road network. Instead, a relatively flexible network

is formed through curves, turns, intersections, and loops. Primary paths connect major landscape nodes and village spaces, secondary paths extend further into planted areas and architectural nodes, while smaller local paths lead toward waterfront spaces and resting areas. Together, these routes establish a clearly structured multi-level circulation system.

From the perspective of schema language, curved streets and alleys can be understood as basic spatial characters. Multiple street-and-alley characters are combined through intersection, linkage, and turning to form “phrase-level” connective spaces, which ultimately contribute to the broader “sentence-level” structure of the village. Road design is therefore not treated as an independent landscape element, but as an important medium through which the overall spatial schema is generated and organized.

At important nodes, paths are selectively widened to create spaces for pause and gathering; when approaching buildings, their scale is reduced to produce a more intimate spatial transition; along the waterfront, paths follow the curvature of the shoreline. In this way, the width, orientation, and spatial character of circulation routes vary according to surrounding conditions. This changing spatial rhythm echoes the continuously shifting scale and experiential qualities of traditional streets and alleys in Mingyuewan Village.

3.5 Ancient Tree Cultural Node: Place-Based Expression of Core

Natural Vocabulary

Mingyuewan Village retains a considerable number of ancient trees within its traditional spatial fabric. These trees function not only as ecological resources but also as important cultural elements that embody the historical memory of the village. Ancient trees often interact with streets, buildings, and public activity spaces to create highly recognizable places. Accordingly, this design treats the ancient tree as a key basic “character” within the landscape schema language and emphasizes its spatial reinterpretation.

The ancient tree node is organized according to the principle of “tree as the core, circulation around the tree, and space for pause.” Large areas of hard paving are avoided around the tree, while lawns and natural green spaces are retained to protect the root system and preserve ecological conditions. Curved or looped paths are arranged around the tree, ensuring accessibility while reinforcing its visual prominence within the site.

This design recombines previously identified elements, including square plots, curvilinear streets and alleys, and natural landscape vocabulary. The ancient tree functions as the central spatial character, the path serves as a connective character, and surrounding lawns, seating, and planting act as supporting vocabulary. Together, these elements form a

public space that accommodates resting, viewing, and cultural interpretation.

Functionally, the ancient tree node is intended to serve not only as a landscape feature but also as a place of cultural memory. Simple historical interpretation, village cultural displays, and resting facilities can be introduced around the tree, transforming it from an isolated natural element into a collective memory node. Through this spatial reinforcement, visitors experience a sequence of “seeing the tree—circulating around it—pausing—understanding its cultural meaning,” thereby transforming natural vocabulary into a culturally meaningful place.

3.6 Central Circular Node: Translation of the Traditional Well

Platform and Public Space Pattern

A circular public node is introduced in the southern part of the site as one of the most clearly defined gathering spaces within the overall design. Its form is not derived purely from modern geometric composition, but from an abstract reinterpretation of traditional village well platforms, communal open spaces, and neighborhood interaction spaces.

Traditional wells were generally located in easily accessible areas within the settlement. In addition to serving the practical function of water collection, they naturally became places for communication,

gathering, and short-term stay. In this sense, the traditional well space can be understood as a spatial pattern combining a “central facility” with “public activity.” The design retains this centralizing spatial relationship by using a water feature or well-inspired structure as the visual and activity core, while circular paths, seating, green spaces, and planting are arranged around it to create a continuous spatial sequence.

At the character level of the schema language, the circular center functions as a new core spatial vocabulary, while the surrounding ring path establishes a relationship with the connective vocabulary of traditional streets and alleys. From the center outward, multiple concentric spatial layers form a sequence of “core—pause—circulation—planting,” giving the node a strong sense of identity while enabling it to accommodate public activities.

The design does not simply reproduce the physical form of a traditional well platform. Instead, it preserves its social function as a place of gathering and interaction, transforming a former element of everyday infrastructure into a contemporary public space. The node can accommodate resting, social interaction, small-scale activities, viewing, and cultural interpretation, thereby demonstrating the continuity of traditional spatial patterns under changing functional conditions.

Conclusions to Chapter 3

The spatial renewal design of Mingyuewan Village does not regard landscape schema language as a tool for directly reproducing traditional forms. Instead, it is employed as a methodological framework for identifying the underlying rules of traditional spatial organization and translating them into contemporary design. Through a hierarchical analysis of the landscape–village pattern, street and alley networks, water–street relationships, waterfront interfaces, building clusters, courtyard spaces, and basic spatial characters, a design translation system is established from the overall spatial structure to individual nodes.

At the overall level, the design continues the relationship between the landscape environment and the village settlement. At the intermediate level, traditional combinations such as water–street, street–house, neighborhood block, and waterfront boundary patterns are reinterpreted. At the local level, spatial vocabulary including ancient trees, wells, pavilions, courtyards, residential buildings, and streets and alleys is reorganized and applied within contemporary spaces. The interaction among these different levels maintains the spatial continuity and local identity of the traditional village within the renewed environment.

Ultimately, the design establishes an integrated spatial structure in which water systems form the natural foundation, streets and alleys serve as the connective framework, buildings define spatial interfaces,

landscape nodes function as activity cores, and vegetation acts as an ecological medium. While accommodating contemporary requirements for sightseeing, recreation, cultural interpretation, and residents' daily activities, the design shifts the conservation approach from the preservation of physical form toward the continuation of underlying spatial logic. In this way, it provides a design practice framework based on landscape schema language for the conservation and renewal of traditional Jiangnan water-town villages.

Conclusion

This study takes Mingyuewan Traditional Village in Suzhou as the research object and focuses on the relationship between landscape schema language and spatial renewal. By reviewing relevant theories on traditional villages and schema language, and analyzing the geographical location, historical culture, spatial pattern, traditional architecture, and existing problems of Mingyuewan Village, the study extracts its representative landscape schema language. On this basis, design translation is carried out at multiple levels, including the overall spatial pattern, waterfront interface, landscape water features, street and alley network, ancient tree nodes, and public spaces. The study explores how traditional spatial schemas can be applied to contemporary village renewal and provides a design reference for the conservation and regeneration of traditional Jiangnan water-town villages.

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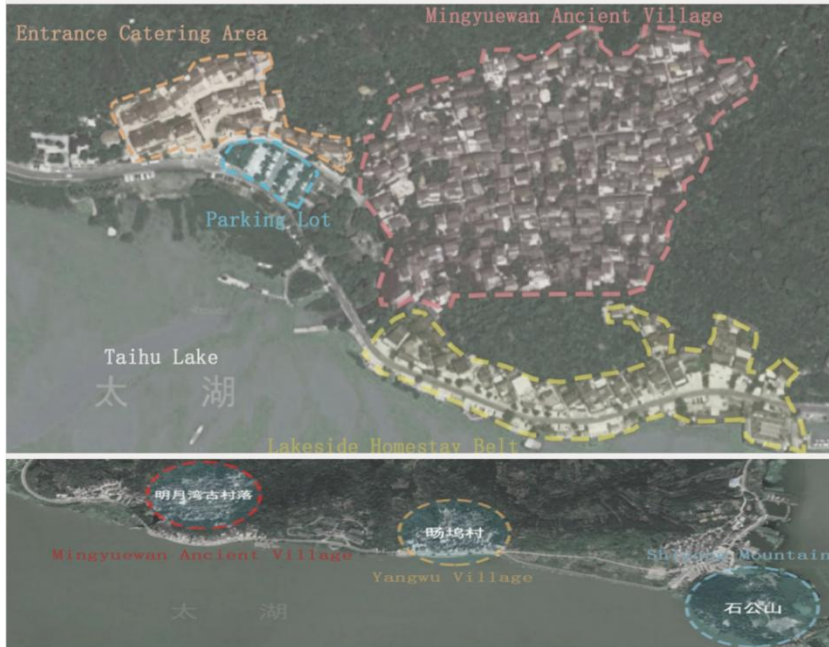
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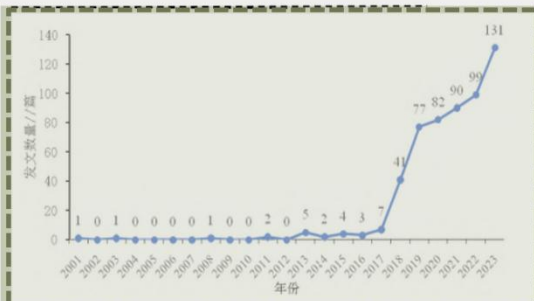
ANNEX A. (Tables and diagrams)

1 Location Analysis of Mingyuewan Ancient Village



Mingyuewan Ancient Village is located at the southern tip of Xishan Island in Taihu Lake, currently belonging to Damingwan Natural Village, Jintong Town, Wuzhong District, Suzhou City. Geographically, the closest adjacent villages are Yangwu Village and Shigong Mountain. Thanks to its unique and advantageous natural environmental conditions, the overall original features of the village have been relatively well preserved. Unlike most plain-type villages in the Jiangnan region, Mingyuewan Ancient Village is surrounded by mountains on the east, north and west sides, with villagers living along the shore of Taihu Lake, presenting distinctive characteristics of a water town mountain village. The existing area of Mingyuewan Ancient Village is approximately 10 hectares, and its surrounding functional zones mainly consist of the catering area at the main entrance, the parking lot, and the homestay belt at the southern end.

Research Background Relevant theoretical research



来源 知网



Traditional Villages
Publication Volume on



来源 作者自绘

Publications on Pattern
Language



Research Significance

Research Significance

By deconstructing the traditional village landscape space of Mingyuewan and extracting its landscape pattern language, this study interprets the combinational logic of traditional Jiangnan culture. As a typical water-town village around Taihu Lake, Mingyuewan embodies the spatial qualities of water-dominant form, ecological sensitivity, and relatively enclosed circulation. The research helps compensate for the current emphasis on mountain and plain villages, and enriches the integrity and regional relevance of traditional village spatial theory. It also expands the application boundary of landscape pattern language by constructing a water-town adaptation branch, improving the classification of waterside vocabularies, refining waterside syntactic rules, and deepening the exploration of water-town contexts, thereby providing a methodological reference for the study of other regionally distinctive villages. More importantly, it deepens theories of cultural inheritance by establishing a dual linkage mechanism between landscape pattern language and cultural genes, upgrading heritage transmission from symbolic attachment to spatial-system embodiment, and addressing the problem of overly formalized cultural inheritance.

○ Theoretical Significance

This study deconstructs the prototype spaces of the traditional village landscape in Mingyuewan, Suzhou. By extracting landscape vocabularies from basic, composite, and complex spatial units, it builds a landscape language database that provides inspiration for the conservation-oriented innovation of traditional villages. Combined with local folk culture and everyday living practices, the study establishes a place-based system of landscape pattern language and enables a deeper interpretation of the local landscape. By identifying high-frequency, structurally clear, and culturally specific pattern vocabularies, the research accurately relates local cultural scenes to settlement structure, summarizes the key features of village spatial form, and explores directions for landscape renewal. It also offers a practical reference for the renovation and sustainable development of traditional villages in other regions.

Practical Significance



Research Content

Research Content

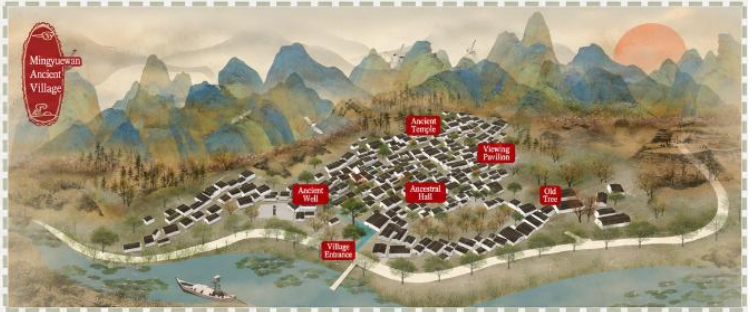
Traditional villages are inhabited settlements that carry distinctive regional culture and historical memory. In the course of modernization, they have encountered many development challenges. Taking Mingyuewan Village as the research object, this study explores the relationship between landscape pattern language and village conservation and renewal on the basis of thorough field investigation and a systematic review of relevant village materials. At the same time, it synthesizes and analyzes existing theoretical achievements at home and abroad, and selects Mingyuewan Village in Suzhou—a typical traditional village of Jiangnan—as a case for conservation and planning research based on landscape pattern language.

The landscape pattern language of Mingyuewan Village is first extracted through field surveying and mapping, image analysis, and literature review, identifying basic pattern units such as waterside embankments and the house–courtyard–garden structure. It then interprets the combinational logic of these units, summarizing the spatial syntax and the transitional sequence between public and private space, such as streets formed by water, lanes formed by streets, and networks formed by lanes, thereby constructing the overall pattern of mountain–water–field–village–harbor and revealing its underlying spatial wisdom. On this basis, the study evaluates the integrity of the spatial patterns, identifies points of rupture and absence, and attributes problems such as the insufficient vitality of public space to the weakening and variation of core patterns. Finally, it explores translation strategies and transforms traditional patterns through prototype restoration, type translation, and structural reorganization, proposing layered renewal and design schemes at the levels of overall pattern, public space, and architectural courtyards.



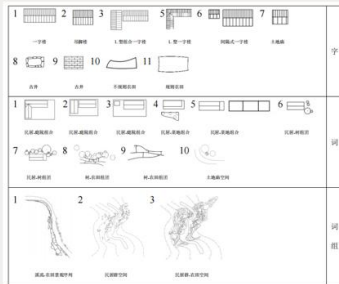
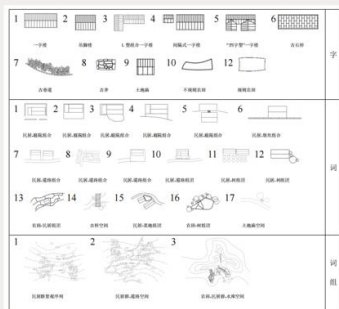
Location of Mingyuewan Ancient Village

Location of Mingyuewan Ancient Village



Mingyuewan Village is located at the southern end of Xishan Island on Taihu Lake, in Jintong Town, Wuzhong District, Suzhou, Jiangsu Province. It faces Taihu Lake to the south and leans against Qing Mountain to the north, while hills also encircle the village from the east and west, forming a landscape pattern in which mountains and water embrace one another. The village enjoys an excellent ecological environment, abundant mountain and water resources, and a relatively intact historic setting that preserves the original charm of a Jiangnan water town. It also benefits from a favorable transportation location, with convenient road networks nearby and close links to Suzhou's urban area and other cities in the Yangtze River Delta, making it easily accessible for visitors. Mingyuewan Village has successively been recognized as a Chinese Famous Historical and Cultural Village, a Jiangsu Provincial Cultural Relics Protection Unit, and a Key Tourism Village of Suzhou, giving it notable influence in the conservation of traditional villages and the development of cultural tourism.

Introduction to the Pattern Language of Landscape



The Pattern Language of Landscape is divided into three dimensions: Context, Vocabulary, and Phrases

① **Context** is categorized into Humanistic Context and Natural Context. Rooted in the landscape of Taihu Lake and mountains, Mingyuewan Village has evolved over thousands of years, forming a natural context characterized by "backing on mountains and facing water, with harmonious integration of fields and residences". Meanwhile, its fishing and agricultural production traditions, coupled with the cultural heritage of the Wu Region, constitute the humanistic context of the landscape pattern language. The integration of natural and humanistic contexts forms the holistic background for the generation and interpretation of the landscape pattern language, serving as the foundational basis for understanding the significance of all landscape elements in the village.

② **Vocabulary Extraction** in this study is divided into Physical Space and Cultural Space. Physical space elements mainly include waterfront docks, lane corridors, courtyards under ancient camphor trees, the "house-courtyard-garden" composite unit, and all components within the holistic pattern of "mountain-water-field-village-harbor". Cultural space elements mainly cover spaces that host folk activities of the Wu Region, and facilities that reflect the traditional fishing-farming production mode.

③ Spatial Generation Logic of Phrases:

- **Spatial Expansion Grammar:** "Forming streets along water → forming alleys from streets → forming networks from alleys". This pattern combination embodies the generative "grammar" of the village's spatial expansion along the water system.
- **Spatial Transition Sequence:** "Public space → semi-public & semi-private space → private space", which demonstrates the combination and transition of spaces with different privacy levels.
- **Functional Composite Combination:** "Waterfront dock + lane corridor + house-courtyard-garden", which reflects the pattern combination and linkage of production, transportation and living functions.





