KHARKIV STATE ACADEMY OF DESIGN AND FINE ARTS

Faculty of «DESIGN AND ARCHITEKTURE»

Department of «Environmental Design»

Research on Spatial Renewal Design of Traditional Villages Based on Landscape Pattern Language —— A Case Study of Mingyue Bay Village inSuzhou



Qualification work for obtaining the SVO «Master»
in the specialty B2 Design OPP «Design of the architectural and landscape environment»

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Contents



1 The background
2 The purpose and significance of the research
3 Regional Cultural Background
4 View the project

古往今来



Historical Paintings of Mingyuewan Village

1 The background

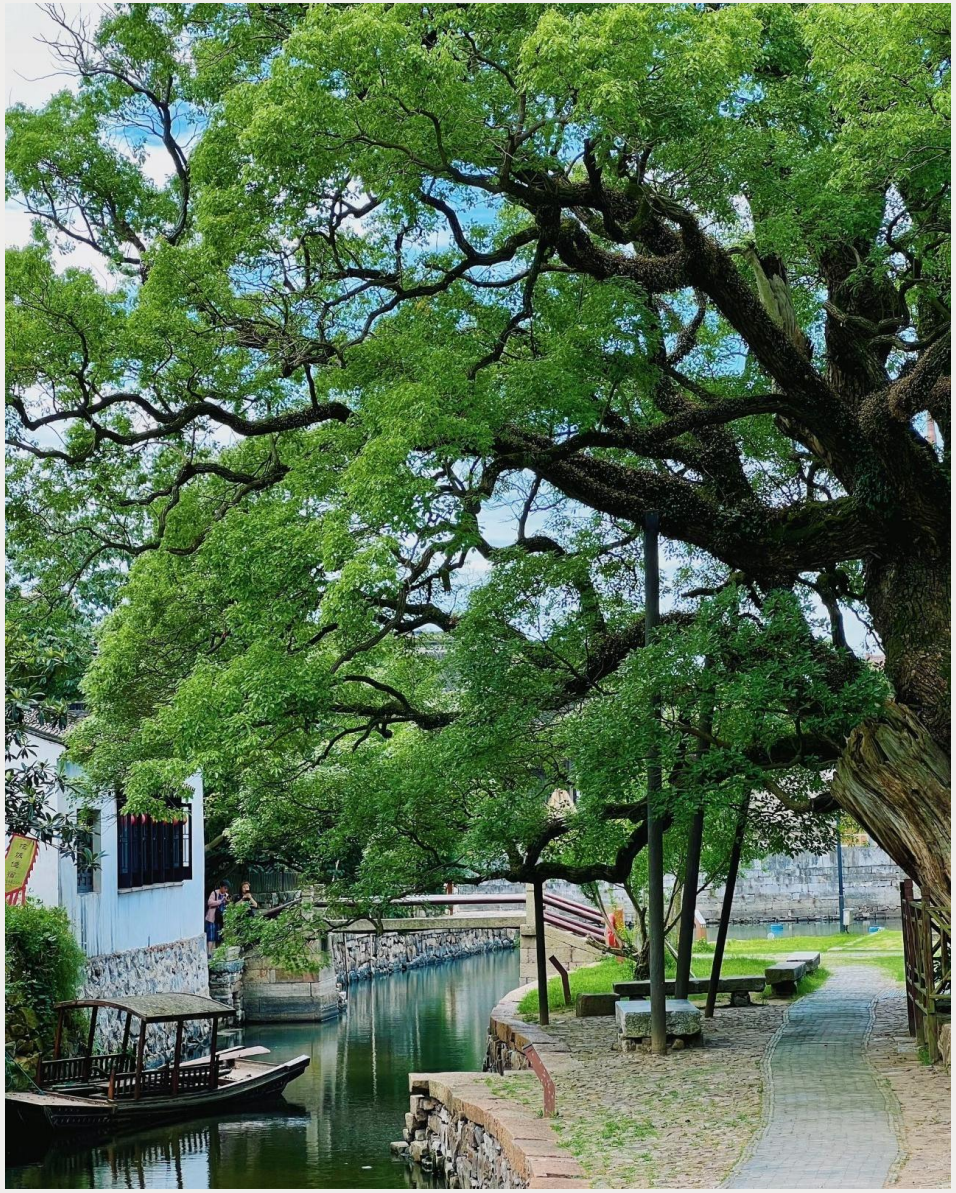
1 The background

Traditional villages are important carriers of historical and cultural heritage, preserving rich tangible and intangible cultural resources. Traditional villages in the Jiangnan region have developed distinctive spatial forms and cultural landscapes, shaped by their unique water-town environment and long-established agricultural traditions. However, with rapid urbanization and modernization, these villages face growing challenges, including spatial decline, the weakening of regional identity, disruption of cultural continuity, and a mismatch between traditional functions and contemporary living needs. As a result, their conservation and renewal have become increasingly urgent. Against this background, how to preserve the historical character and cultural values of traditional villages while meeting the needs of modern residents has become an important topic in rural renewal research. Landscape schema language offers a new perspective for understanding the spatial organization, regional cultural characteristics, and renewal design of traditional villages.



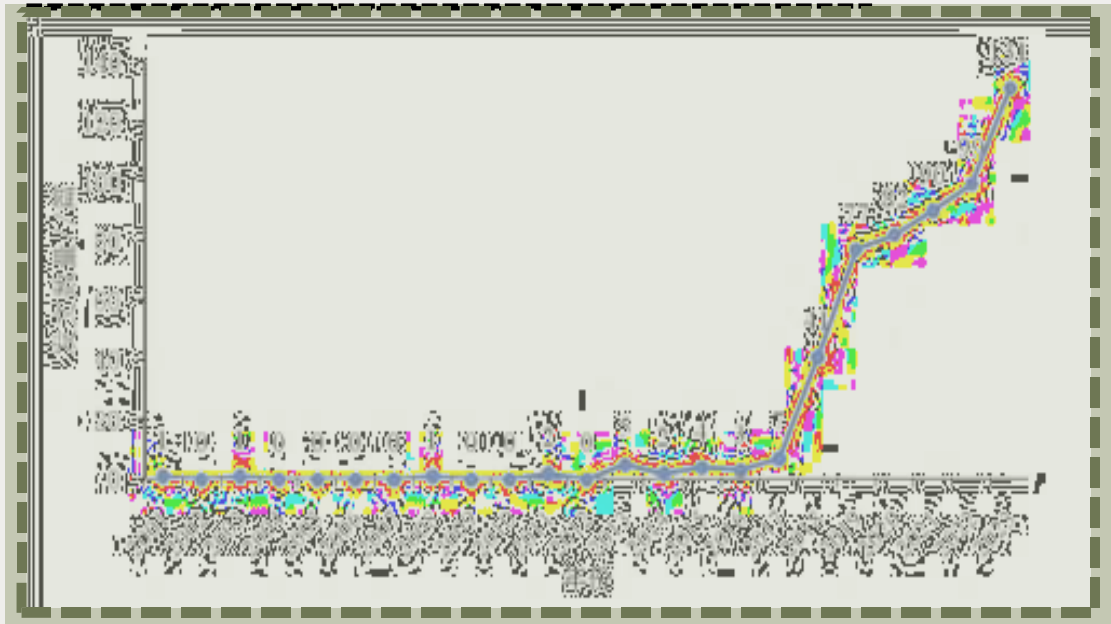
2 The purpose and significance of the research

This study examines traditional village renewal from the perspective of landscape schema language, with Mingyuewan Village in Suzhou as the main case. The research has three related objectives: one is to review studies and practical cases in China and abroad, and to clarify the main theories, analytical ideas, and methods used in landscape schema research; another is to examine the cultural meanings contained in the landscape of Mingyuewan Village and identify the main elements that form its landscape schema vocabulary, while also considering current problems such as the weakening of local landscape identity and breaks in cultural continuity; the third is to explore renewal strategies that can retain the original character of the village while allowing its spaces to better support present-day living needs. Through these objectives, the study seeks to connect cultural conservation, spatial renewal, and regional identity within a clear design framework.



2 The purpose and significance of the research

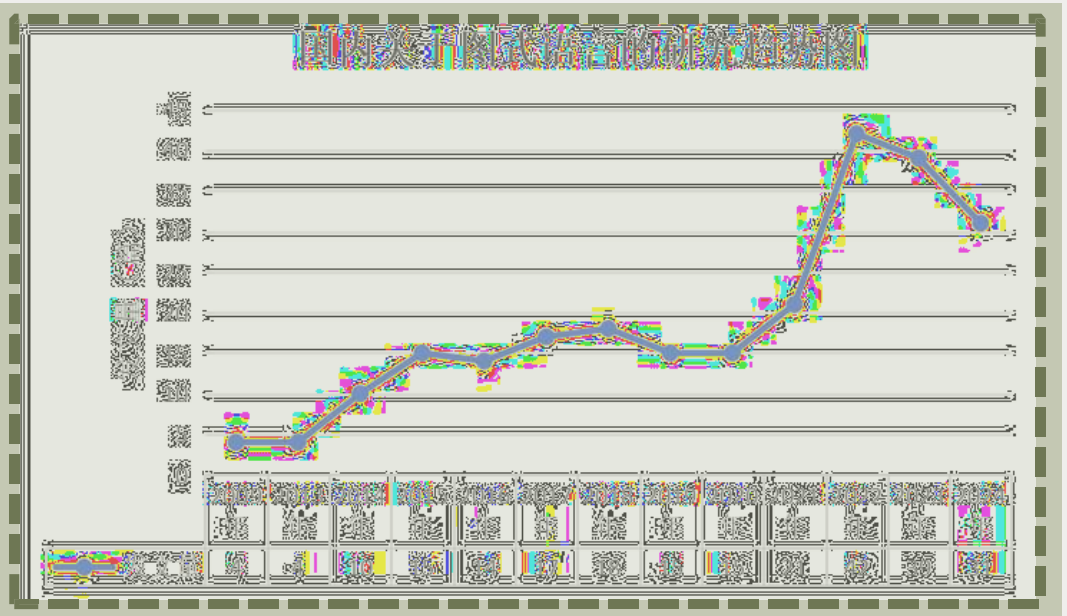
Research Background Relevant theoretical research



来源 知网

Traditional Villages Publication Volume on





来源 作者自绘

Publications on Pattern Language



2 The purpose and significance of the research

This study introduces landscape schema language into the renewal of traditional villages and uses it to interpret both spatial structure and cultural meaning. At the theoretical level, the research moves beyond an approach that focuses mainly on the protection of physical forms and instead provides a clearer way to identify, understand, and translate regional spatial characteristics. It also places greater attention on Jiangnan water-town settlements, which helps broaden research that has often focused on mountainous or plain villages.

3 Regional Cultural Background

3 Regional Cultural Background

Historical and Cultural Heritage of Mingyuewan Ancient Village



Thousand-Year-Old Camphor Tree



700-Year-Old Ancient Wharf





400-Year-Old Flagpole

Cultural Heritage





In November 2022, the traditional production technique of Biluochun tea was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The quality of Biluochun tea depends on its harvesting time. Tea picked before Qingming Festival is considered the finest, followed by tea harvested before Guyu Festival, while tea picked afterward is generally of lower quality.

The harvesting process is labor-intensive, requiring careful hand-picking of tender tea buds. Approximately 50,000–60,000 buds and 6–8 workers are needed to produce 500 grams of finished tea.

The tea undergoes six main processing stages, with heat control playing a crucial role. The finished leaves are known for their delicate appearance, tightly curled spiral shape, rich aroma, and visible fine hairs.

Historical Evolution of Mingyuewan Ancient Village

During the Qing Dynasty, Mingyuewan belonged to the Sixth Tu of the Thirty-Fifth Du in Dongting Township, Wu County. During the Republic of China period, it was successively administered by Wuxiang Township, Huili Township, Xiaoxia Township, and Daxia Town in Xishan District.

In the early years following the founding of the People's Republic of China, Mingyuewan was placed under Minghui Township and Shigong Township in Xishan District. Following the establishment of the people's commune system, it became Mingwan Production Brigade (later Mingwan Village) under Shigong People's Commune.

Before 1987, Mingyuewan belonged to Mingwan Administrative Village in Shigong Township. In January 1987, three townships in Xishan were merged to establish Xishan Town, and Mingyuewan became part of Mingwan Administrative Village under Xishan Town.

In 2000, Mingwan Village merged with Shifeng Village to form Mingyuewan Administrative Village. In 2003, Mingyuewan Village merged with Shigong Village, becoming a natural village within Shigong Administrative Village. In June 2007, Xishan Town was officially renamed Jinting Town.





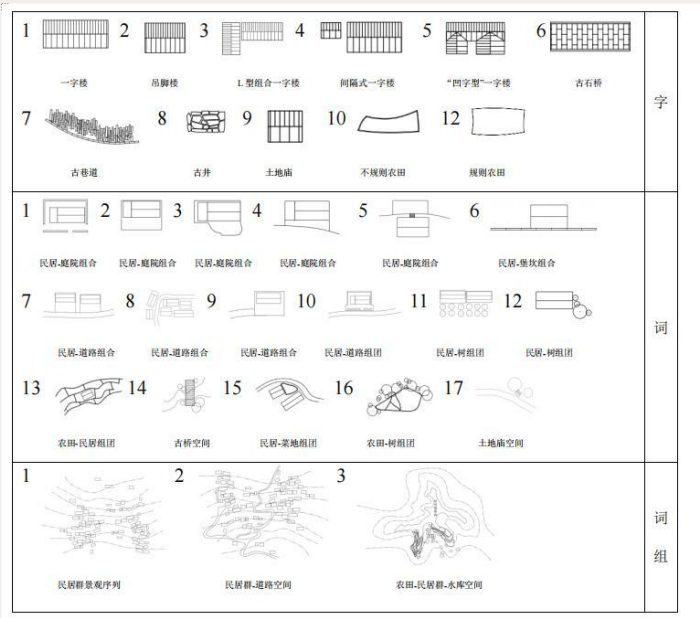


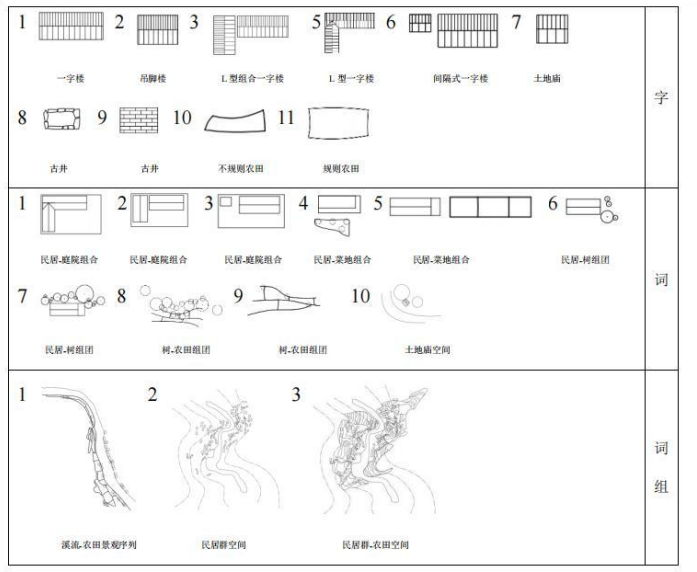
Notable Figures and Prominent Families of Mingyuewan Ancient Village

吴王夫差和美女西施	相传二千五百多年前的春秋时期，吴王夫差和美女西施曾经在此共赏明月，古村由此得名，村内石桥明月桥相传为夫差和西施曾在桥上共赏明月，故得名为明月桥，现存建筑为民国年间重建。
南宋明经博士、著作左郎黄明善	明月湾黄氏祖籍福建邵武，为迁山始祖，迁居明月湾后子孙繁衍，今为明月湾大族之一。黄氏宗祠始建于清乾隆四十九年（1784），坐北朝南，占地930平方米。其门厅、享堂等主要建筑均为原构。2004年由西山镇人民政府斥资整修，重建照壁、客厅等。
谏官邓肃	以写诗反对宋徽宗大办花石纲而闻名的谏官、南宋左正言。邓肃为迁山始祖，其六世孙邓迁，于南宋末年由本镇绮里迁居明月湾。清两广总督邓廷桢为邓迁之后，于嘉庆八年返乡寻根问祖、拜谒祠墓。邓氏宗祠始建于清乾隆十年，原建筑大部分毁于上世纪70年代，仅存照壁、门楼及厅堂遗址。2005年由西山镇人民政府于原址重建，基本恢复原状。
抗金名将之子吴挺	吴氏迁山始祖，其伯父吴玠、父亲吴璘以及哥哥吴挺，均为抗金名将。到明月湾后更名吴咸，卒于淳祐四年，葬明月湾潜龙岭之阳。现存吴氏宗祠。
洞庭商帮商人	明月湾黄氏宗祠系古代洞庭商帮商人聚会活动的重要场所之一，原有历史传统建筑群、建筑物及其建筑细部乃至周边环境基本上原貌保存完好。

4 View the project

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.

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, Jinting 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.



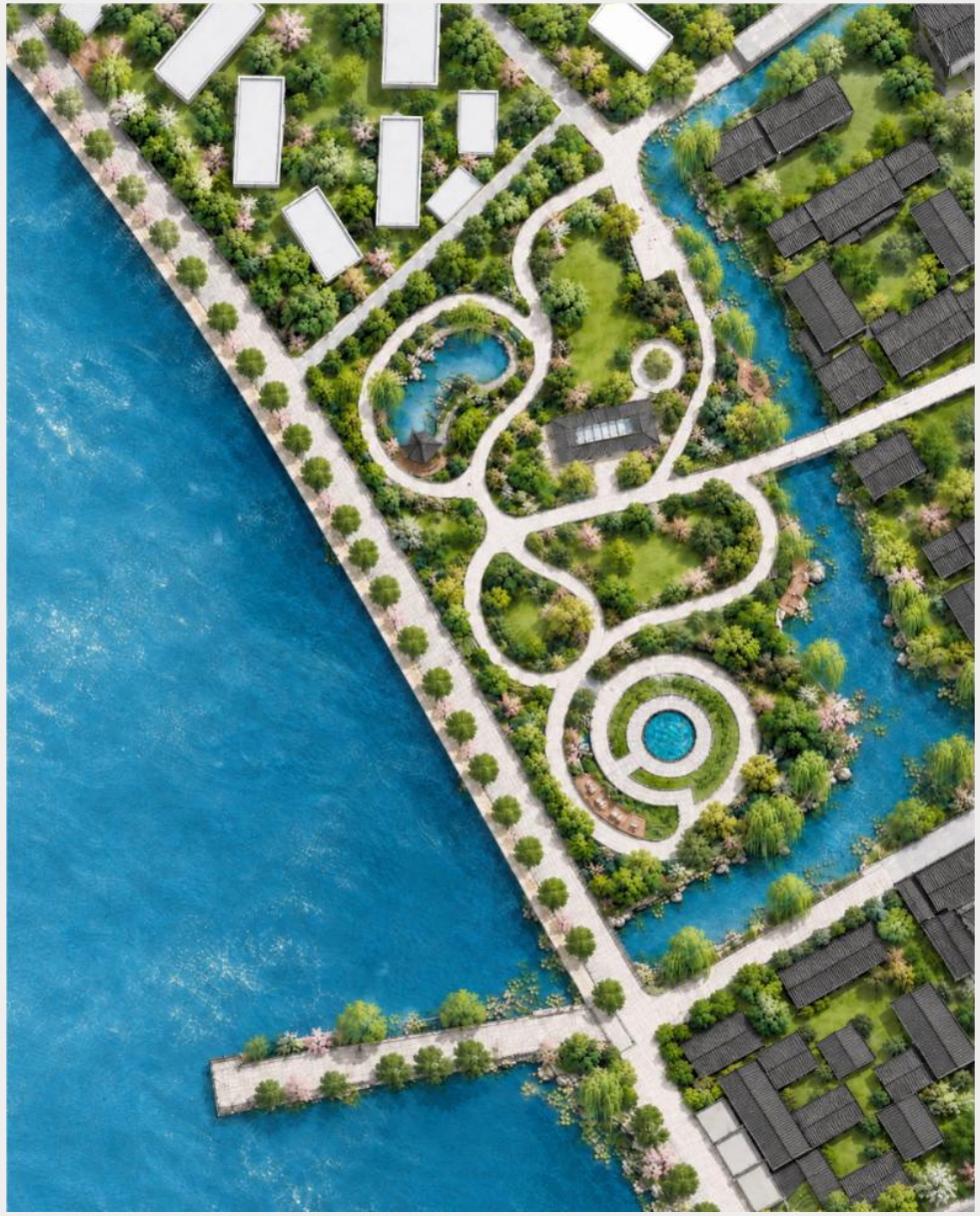






Located at the core area of the ancient village's main entrance, the site is adjacent to the Visitor Service Center and parking lot, serving as both the welcoming gateway for tourists entering the village and a key node for villagers' daily commuting. The site features a regular, square layout with an open interior, where the understory space enclosed by thousand-year-old camphor trees and the open lawn create rich spatial layers, providing sufficient room for the design and creation of diverse functional scenarios.

Surrounded by mountains on the east, north and west sides, and directly facing Taihu Lake to the south, the site is underpinned by a natural landscape framework formed by its original water system, native vegetation and ancient trees. The design can borrow views of the lake and mountains, introducing the external landscape resources into the site, reinforcing the spatial feature of Mingyuewan as a "village backed by mountains and facing the lake", and creating a progressive landscape visual corridor of "Mountains & Lake — Ancient Village — Site".



The design follows the traditional “Landscape Village Pattern” of Mingyuewan Village, which developed naturally through the interaction of Taihu Lake, terrain, streets, alleys, and residential buildings. Rather than imposing a rigid geometric layout, the design preserves the original water systems, waterfront boundaries, circulation routes, and traditional building clusters.

The overall spatial structure maintains the relationship between water, streets, buildings, and landscape nodes. The western waterfront and eastern river form the natural framework, while public spaces and green areas connect with the surrounding village. Curved pathways, interconnected routes, and distributed nodes create a continuous spatial sequence inspired by traditional street networks.

Through the modern interpretation of landscape schema language, the design integrates cultural heritage, ecological landscapes, and contemporary recreational functions. It preserves the village’s traditional spatial character while improving accessibility, public spaces, and residents’ living environment.





Mingyuewan Village still has many ancient trees preserved in its traditional spatial configuration .Such trees are valuable both ecologically and culturally—indeed, they help to recall or record the history of the village itself .Ancient trees commonly serve as links between streets，structures，and social areas (of activity) in ways that make places very identifiable .With this in mind， the present design takes the ancient tree seriously as one central “ character”of the landscape language and stresses its spatial transformation.

The ancient tree node is laid out with regard to the idea of “ tree as the core， circulation around the tree， and space for pause .”Areas of firm paving—large or dense—are kept away from the tree， with lawns and natural greenery used to help sustain roots and to preserve an ecological balance .Curved or looped paths are made to go round the tree，so that it remains accessible and visually dominant (rather than hidden) in relation to the whole site .

Among the items already recognized in prior work are square plots，curvilinear streets or alleys，and vocabulary taken from nature .The ancient tree is treated as a central spatial figure，the path as a link between places， and adjacent lawns or seating （or planting） as part of the supporting vocabulary .All such elements — taken together — make it possible to have a public area for rest， for visual contemplation， or for cultural involvement .

From a functional standpoint，the ancient tree node is meant not only to be part of the landscape but also to recall cultural memory .Simple historical facts，village traditions，or places for rest may be associated with the tree — thus converting it from an individual natural item into a community memory node .With such spatial reinforcement comes an opportunity to arrange a sequence of “ seeing the tree—circulating around it—pausing—understanding its cultural meaning，”and to make natural vocabulary once more meaningful culturally.



A circular public node—i.e., a space for gathering—is proposed in the southern part of the area as one of the most distinct such elements of the total design .Its shape is not simply the product of contemporary geometric logic， but of an abstract restatement of certain familiar village features (wells, open areas, zones of social contact) and of neighborhood life.

Traditional wells tended to be sited in parts of the settlement that were easily reached .Besides fulfilling their basic role of supplying water， they came naturally to serve as places of contact， of gathering， and of temporary stay .With this in mind， the traditional well area is to be understood as a spatial configuration which joins a “ central facility”to a “ public activity .”Such designs preserve the centralizing character of space by taking a water element or a well -like form as focal point (visually and functionally)， and by arranging round paths， seating， greenery， and planting to make a continuous spatial sequence.

With regard to the character level of the schema language， the circular center may now be considered a basic core of spatial vocabulary， and the adjacent ring path is linked—through its form—to the traditional connective vocabulary of streets and alleys .Starting from the center， various concentric spatial layers come together in a sequence of “ core—pause—circulation—planting，”which helps define the node’s individuality and also allows room for public life .

The design is not merely an exact copy of the physical type of traditional well platform .Rather， it keeps the social role of such a site — as one for gathering or meeting — intact， and turns an old item of daily infrastructure into a modern public space .The node is suitable for rest， for conversation， for limited activity， for observation， or for cultural reflection， and so illustrates how traditional configurations of space may persist even when their uses change over time.

Thank you

