

PRESERVATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE PRC IN THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC INTERIOR DESIGN: APPROACHES AND MEANS

Joyce(Guo Yan)



Research subjects

This study focuses on the historical and cultural districts of Gaoyou City, specifically examining the "urban acupuncture"-style renovation practices of public indoor spaces, such as cultural exhibition halls and cafes. The research will delve into the selection logic of these "acupuncture points," the design techniques and implementation process of the "acupuncture," and systematically evaluate the resulting spatial, social, economic, and cultural "therapeutic effects." The aim is to validate and enrich the theory of urban acupuncture and provide design strategies and models that can be referenced for the micro-renewal and renovation of similar historical and cultural districts.

Research topics

This study explores how to use the concept and methods of "urban acupuncture" to resolve the conflict between preservation and development faced by contemporary Chinese historical and cultural districts. It opposes large-scale demolition and construction, advocating instead a precise, incremental, and gradual renewal model that can stimulate the district's inherent vitality.

Research Tasks

1.Functional optimization and spatial reconstruction.

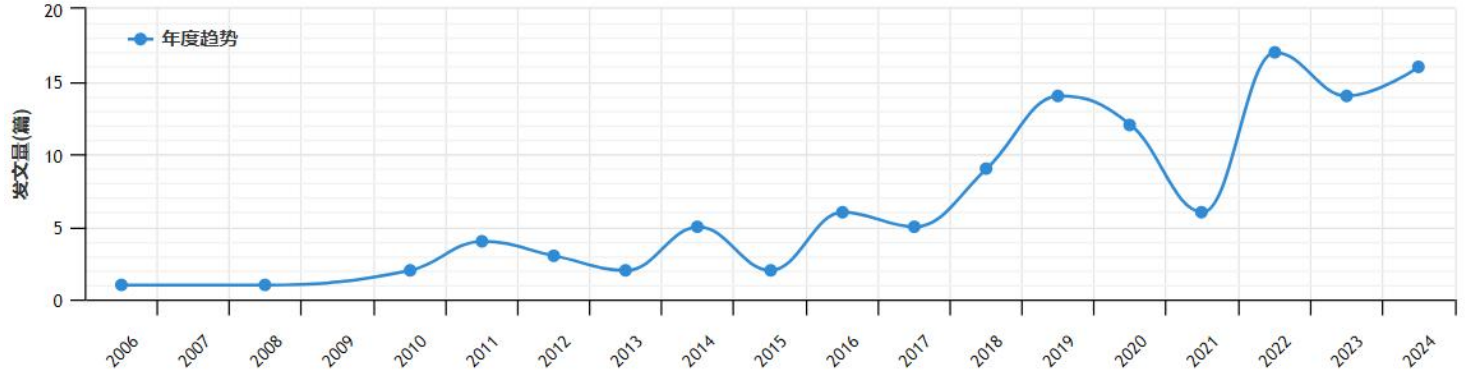
2.Determination of acupuncture points in the reconstruction design of the historical and cultural block in the south of Gaoyou City.

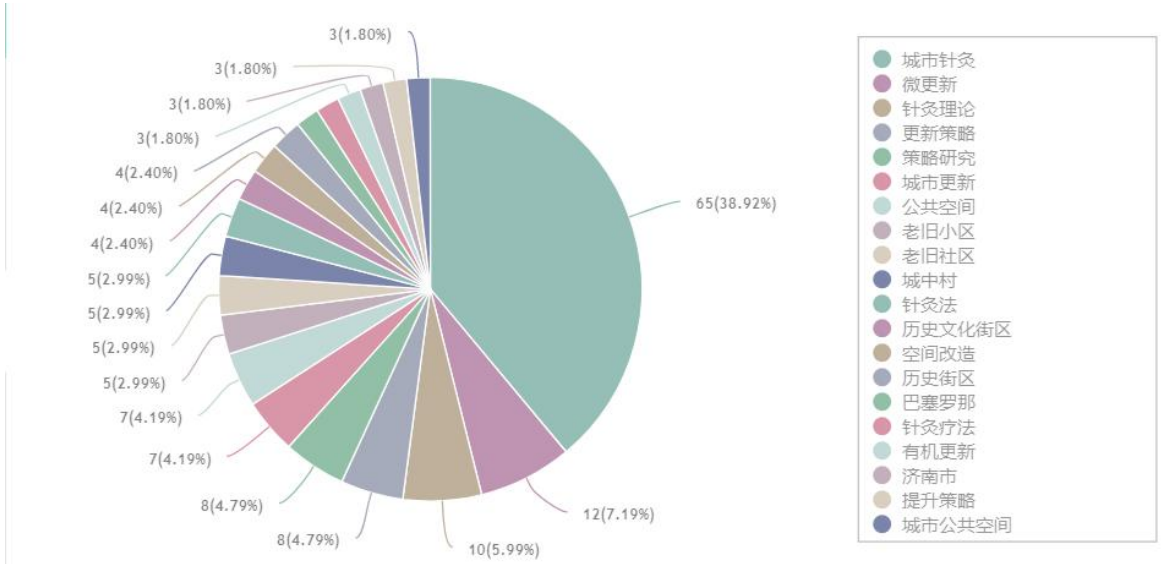
3.The translation and application of cultural elements in design.

CHAPTER I. REVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF RESEARCH IN CHINA AND ABROAD

Related research on urban acupuncture at home and abroad

Urban acupuncture theory, a new concept for achieving small-scale, incremental urban renewal, has been gradually introduced by scholars both domestically and internationally in recent years. While definitions of urban acupuncture vary slightly, there is a general consensus that it advocates for relatively small-scale interventions in specific urban areas to positively impact broader social, economic, and environmental issues.







Related research on the renovation and design of historical and cultural blocks at home and abroad

Since the 21st century, in order to ensure the smooth protection and development of historical and cultural blocks, my country has successively promulgated relevant policies. These policies have provided strong support for the development of my country's historical and cultural blocks and determined specific protection and transformation directions.

National policy documents on the development of historical and cultural blocks

years	name	content
2005年	《Standards for the Protection of Historic and Culturally Significant Cities》	Emphasize the protection of historical characteristics and spatial scale within historic districts.
2007年	《Urban and Rural Planning Law of the People's Republic of China》	It is clearly pointed out that for the renovation of the old city, attention should be paid to protecting the local traditional appearance and cultural heritage.
2008年	《Regulations on the Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages》	Clarify the concept of historical and cultural districts and their scope of protection
2021年	《Opinions on Strengthening the Protection and Inheritance of Historical and Cultural Heritage in Urban and Rural Construction》	It is clear that a system for the protection and inheritance of urban and rural historical culture should be established, strengthening protection, utilization, and inheritance, prohibiting large-scale demolition and reconstruction, and promoting active utilization.
2022年	《"14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural Development"》	It is clearly stated that we should inherit and promote the excellent traditional Chinese culture, and strengthen the protection and utilization of cultural relics as well as the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.

Related research on the renovation and design of historical and cultural blocks at home and abroad

Western countries have attached importance to the protection of historical and cultural heritage since the 18th century, and have formulated a series of relevant laws and management regulations, laying the foundation for the renovation, design and research of Western historical and cultural blocks.

Documents related to the protection of international historic urban areas

years	name	content
1931年	《The Athens Charter》	For the first time, the protection of valuable historical buildings and sites was proposed.
1964年	《Venice Charter》	Extending the scope of protection from buildings to urban and rural environments; proposing the principles of integrity and authenticity.
1976年	《Nairobi Proposal》	Emphasize the integrity of historical areas and their surrounding environments, and propose specific protection measures.
1987年	《Washington Charter》	Emphasize the importance of residents protecting historical sites
1994年	《Authentic Documents of Nara》	Starting from historical sites, call for the protection of cultural diversity.
1966年	《San Antonio Declaration》	Believing that the protection of historic districts requires a developmental and dynamic perspective



Conclusion

1.During the study, it was recognized that this topic is very relevant, as evidenced by a large number of theoretical scientific works, whose researchers consider this problem from different directions.

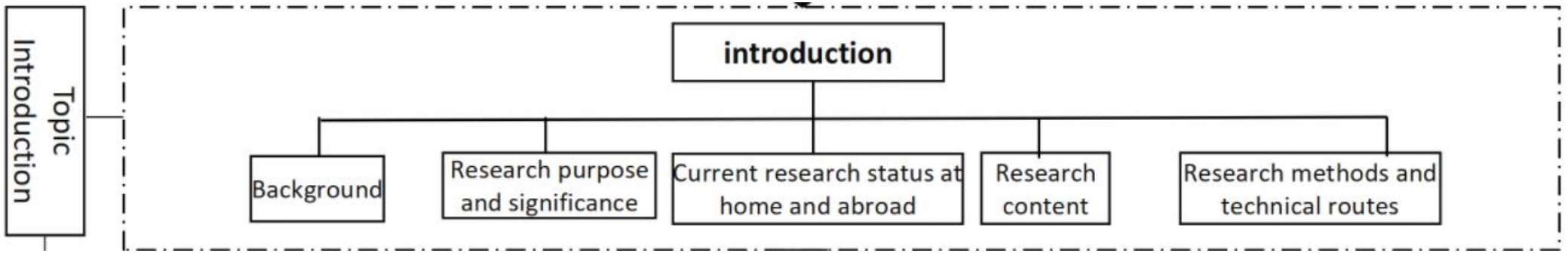
2.Combining the research results both in China and abroad, it can be seen that the application of urban acupuncture theory in the reconstruction of historical and cultural blocks still has a huge space for research. This topic aims to inherit its essence and supplement and deepen some contents based on existing theoretical research. The theory of “urban acupuncture” will be appropriately expanded to further explore its connotation. Combining the practice of reconstruction and design of the historical and cultural district of Gaoyu City, we aim to stimulate the inner vitality and culture of the district through small-scale and targeted design interventions.

3.It is found that at the local level, there are many potential small spaces in the ancient city that are closely related to the lives of residents. Through the transformation based on the above concept, it is possible to enhance the functionality, enhance the landmark of the area and spatial vitality, which can greatly affect the lifestyle of residents and the overall atmosphere of the quarter.

4. It is found that through the theory of "urban acupuncture", important points of reconstruction are selected, and professionally decided design is used to stimulate and promote the development of the entire region, plan its system, and improve the quality of public space and natural environment.

CHAPTERII. PUBLIC INTERIOR DESIGN PROPOSAL: APPROACHES AND TOOLS

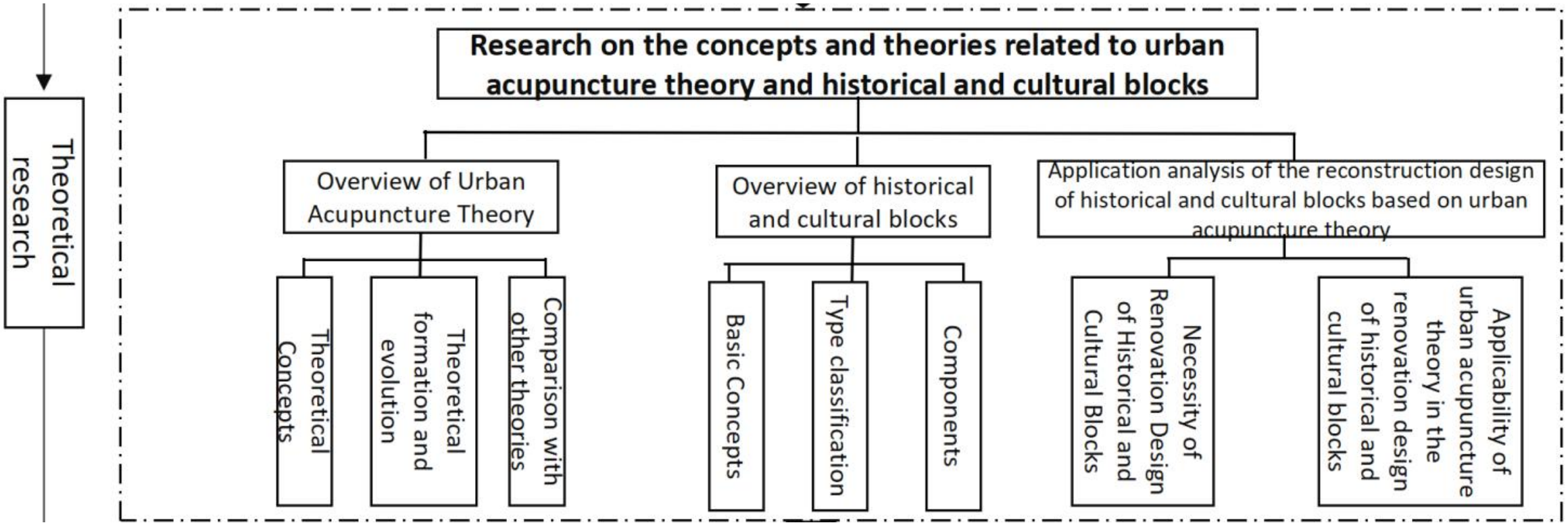
Topic Introduction



Starting from the background and significance, this study aims to identify a breakthrough by reviewing domestic and international research, clarify the research content, and plan specific methods and paths to achieve the research objectives.

CHAPTERII. PUBLIC INTERIOR DESIGN PROPOSAL: APPROACHES AND TOOLS

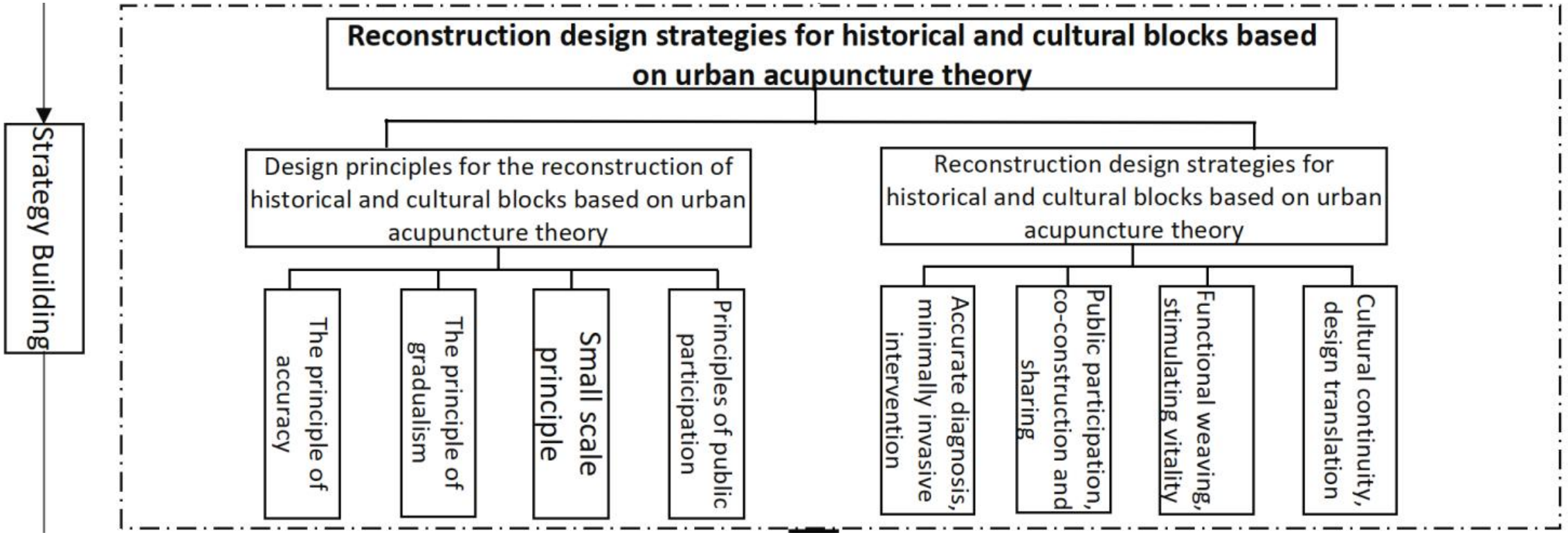
Theoretical research



This section systematically organizes the research directions of urban acupuncture theory and the renewal of historical and cultural blocks, laying a theoretical foundation for further in-depth research.

CHAPTERII. PUBLIC INTERIOR DESIGN PROPOSAL: APPROACHES AND TOOLS

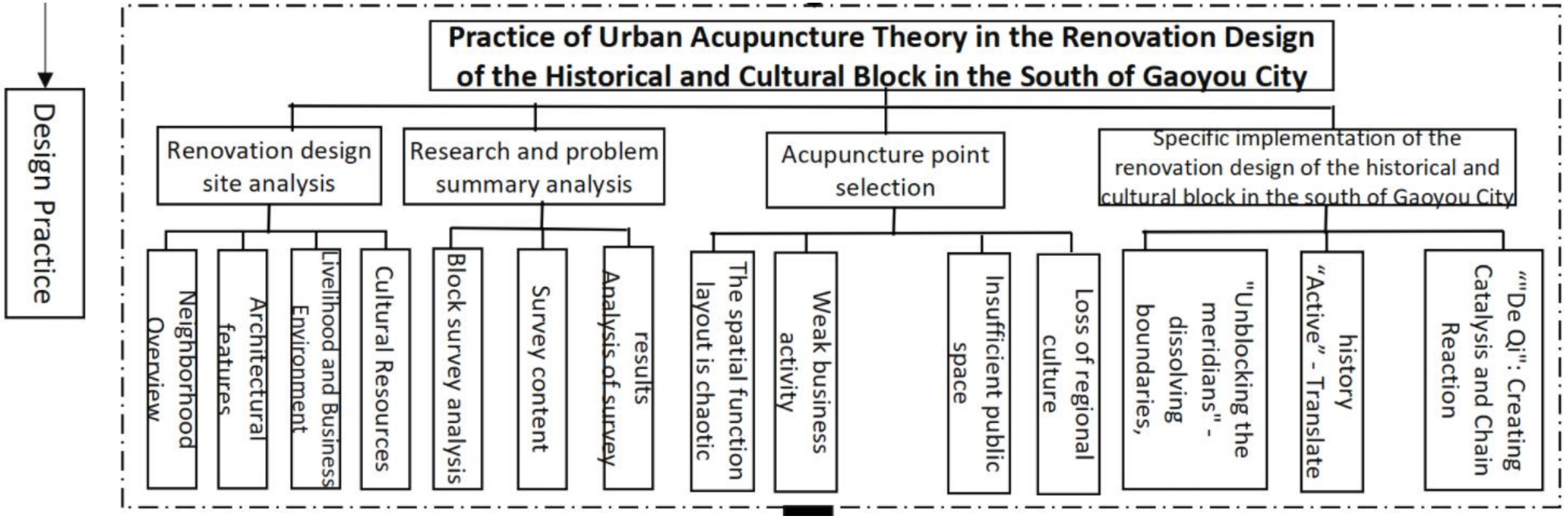
Strategy Building



This section systematically elaborates on the design strategies and principles for the renovation of historical and cultural blocks based on the theory of "urban acupuncture," providing guidance for the design practices described below.

CHAPTERII. PUBLIC INTERIOR DESIGN PROPOSAL: APPROACHES AND TOOLS

Design Practice



Based on preliminary research, this section identifies existing problems in the neighborhood and clarifies the target direction for renovation. Corresponding to the core element of "site selection" in the theory of "urban acupuncture," it assesses "acupuncture points" from three dimensions. Finally, for the selected "acupuncture points," it proposes three implementation strategies to revitalize the neighborhood.



APPROACHES

Core Objectives	Method Classification	Specific strategies	Implementation direction and value
Continuous and gradual transformation and regeneration of space	Update local space nodes	1. Canal Café: Creating a "canal culture-themed coffee scene," incorporating boat-shaped elements, and hosting coffee culture salons. 2. Gaoyou City Culture Exhibition Hall: Combining "immersive digital exhibitions + physical cultural relic exhibitions," setting up cultural experience areas, and regularly holding intangible cultural heritage handicraft activities. 3. Linking the two spaces: Creating a "coffee + culture" circulation route in the historical and cultural district, stimulating both social interaction and cultural consumption.	With the two spaces as core nodes, a composite scene of "coffee social space + cultural experience place" is constructed to enhance the frequency of interaction between residents and tourists and improve the cultural dissemination effectiveness and commercial appeal of the historical district.
	Improve the quality of public spaces	1. Canal Café: Featuring movable canal-themed installations. 2. Gaoyou City Culture Exhibition Hall: Creating a "public cultural sharing area" and a space for cultural lectures, open to the public free of charge.	With the upgrading of public space functions as the core, the project enhances the service of public spaces in historical and cultural blocks through scene creation, business integration, and resource sharing, thereby strengthening residents' sense of belonging and tourists' cultural experience.
	Urban Acupuncture Theory	1. Key Spatial Interventions: The café retains the old building's distinctive elements such as the pitched roof and wooden latticework, incorporating modern elements to create a clash between old and new; the exhibition hall integrates transparent glass display cases within the old building, showcasing artifacts while revealing the building's original structure. 2. Minor Reconstructions: The café's damaged wooden window frames and floor tiles underwent minor reconstruction, restoring its historical appearance; the exhibition hall's entrance steps and accessible pathways were partially reconstructed to optimize the user experience and avoid large-scale demolition and alteration.	Using the two major spaces as "acupuncture points," the project aims to reduce damage to historical spaces through precise intervention, optimize functions and maintain the original appearance through small-scale reconstruction, and create a chain effect of "micro-renovation - strong activation," providing a low-impact and highly adaptable practical path for the renewal of historical and cultural blocks.

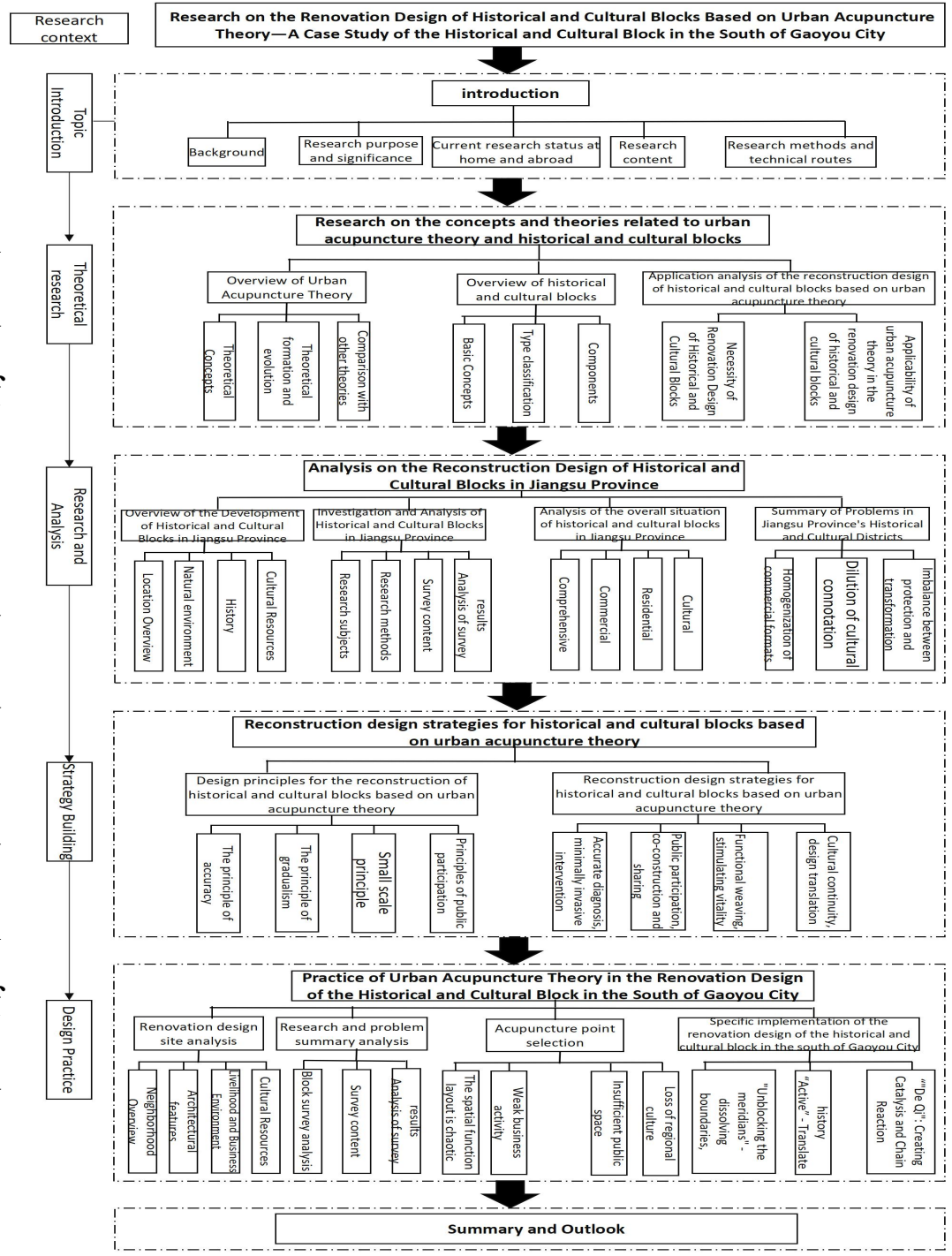


MEANS

Classification of Design Methods	Detailed strategy description	Implementation direction and value
Historical and cultural space optimization and restoration	For the café, the original brick and wood structure and roof of the building were preserved, and canal-themed decorations (such as oar-shaped lamps and canal map wall decorations) were added to enhance the historical feel of the space. For the exhibition hall, some of the old building's blue brick walls were preserved, and modern exhibition installations were added to achieve a spatial integration of "historical features + modern functions".	Accurately restoring the spatial memory of Gaoyou's historical and cultural district, giving cultural distinctiveness to public indoor spaces, and making them a "living container" for showcasing regional history.
Building a resilient protection mechanism	Rigid Dimension: Define "immutable core areas" such as building structure and historical decoration (e.g., exhibition space for artifacts in an exhibition hall), and clarify protection requirements according to regulations or design guidelines. Flexible Dimension: Introduce modern design elements (e.g., movable display cases, modern decorations) into non-core areas, allowing for dynamic adjustments to function and form.	Balancing the contradiction between "protection" and "development" means both safeguarding the cultural bottom line of historical districts and reserving flexible space for the functional iteration and business innovation of public spaces.
Implementation of multi-dimensional transformation strategy	Spatial Function Optimization: The Grand Canal Culture Exhibition Hall will be transformed into a multi-functional space combining static exhibitions and dynamic experiences; the café will expand its functions to include both social interaction and cultural dissemination. Neighborhood Revitalization and Long-Term Development: Using these two spaces as "key points," the project will connect surrounding historical buildings (e.g., by planning a "Grand Canal Culture Route" to link the exhibition hall, café, and surrounding intangible cultural heritage workshops) to form a "point-line-plane" network for neighborhood revitalization, promoting the sustainable development of the historic district.	Upgrading from "single-space renovation" to "block system revitalization," the multi-dimensional linkage of functions, funding, and networks injects long-term development momentum into the Gaoyou historical and cultural block, and provides a "replicable and scalable" transformation path for micro-renewal of similar blocks.

Methodology **Conclusion**

This study employs a comprehensive research approach combining theoretical construction, case analysis, field research, and design practice. First, through literature research, the core concepts of urban acupuncture theory are clarified, and its theoretical connection to historical block renewal is established. Next, a comparative analysis is conducted using typical renewal cases in Jiangsu Province to identify design strategies that can be used as reference. Furthermore, using field mapping, behavioral observation, and interviews, a systematic diagnosis of the Gaoyou Chengnan Block was conducted to accurately identify the site's characteristics and issues. Finally, through the design of public spaces such as a cafe and exhibition hall, the principles of urban acupuncture, such as "minimally invasive intervention and systemic linkage," were translated into four specific design strategies, completing a value cycle from theory to practice.



Existing achievements

Exhibition Hall Floor Plan



Existing achievements

Exhibition Hall Rendering



The preface hall of the Canal Culture Exhibition Hall：It laid a cognitive and emotional foundation for the in-depth cultural interpretation of the subsequent exhibition hall.

Existing achievements

Exhibition Hall Rendering



Time Story Exhibition Hall: Presenting the historical context of the canal through old photos and time installations, it builds emotional resonance

Existing achievements

Exhibition Hall Rendering



Regional Symbol Exhibition Hall: Focusing on regional symbols such as stamps and architectural models, it analyzes the material carriers of canal culture

Existing achievements

Exhibition Hall Rendering



Canal Culture Exhibition Hall: The Historical Timeline and Spatial Memory of the Canal.



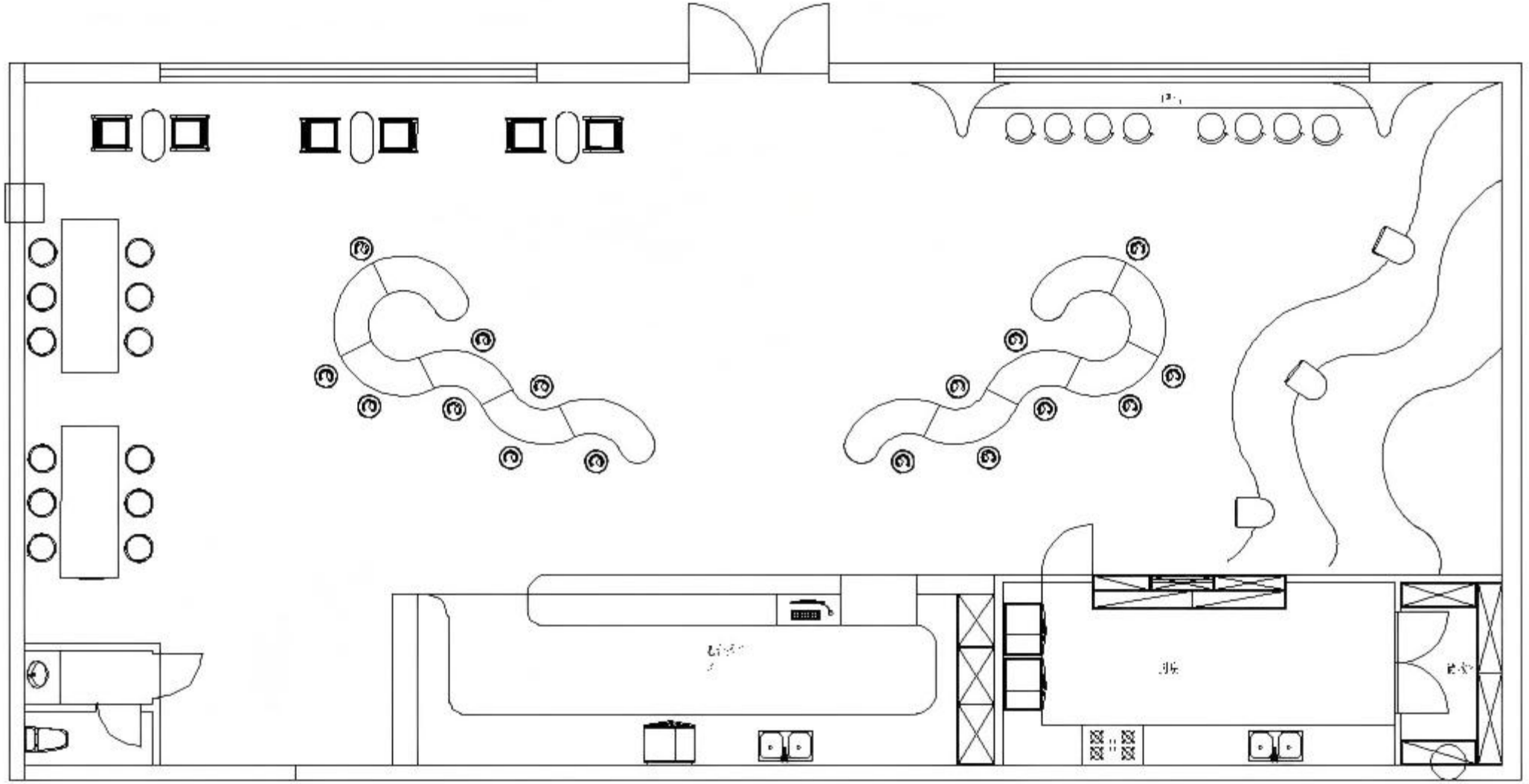
Existing achievements

Cultural Analysis in Exhibition Space

Design Dimensions	Specific performance strategies	Specific strategies	Corresponding showroom examples (image association)
Spatial morphology translation	Extracting natural imagery such as the canal's "waterways" and the region's "mountains and rivers," these elements are transformed into spatial forms such as curved walls, wave-shaped structures, and spiral installations.	Embodying the Chinese concept of "harmony between man and nature," it concretizes geographical and cultural elements into spatial language, strengthening the cultural locality of the site.	Figure 1 (Sequence of doorways), Figure 2 (Spiral scroll), Figure 3 (Curved wall surface), Figure 4 (Water ripples at the top)
Symbol element implantation	It incorporates architectural symbols such as Chinese pavilions, traditional architectural grilles, and wooden display stands; and extracts folk art symbols such as stamps and calligraphy.	Inheriting the formal aesthetics of Chinese architecture and the cultural genes of folk art, showcasing the diversity of tangible cultural heritage.	Figure 3 (Pavilion Model), Figure 2 (Document Scroll), Figure 3 (Stamp)
Historical narrative construction	Using a timeline (Sui and Tang Dynasties - Song and Yuan Dynasties - Ming and Qing Dynasties), old photo walls, and document exhibitions, the historical context of canal culture is connected.	Following China's narrative tradition of "learning from history," it conveys the logic of cultural inheritance and evolution through a linear historical presentation.	Figure 2 (Photo wall depicting stories of time), Figure 4 (Time node installation)
Material and Craftsmanship Expression	The project utilizes modern materials such as cement textures, wooden display cases, and glass bricks, combined with techniques that preserve the original appearance (such as wooden structure restoration).	Balancing the "cultural warmth of traditional craftsmanship" with the "innovative expression of modern materials," it embodies China's design wisdom of "blending the ancient and the modern."	Figure 1 (wooden display stand), Figure 3 (cement wall), Figure 4 (relief map wall)

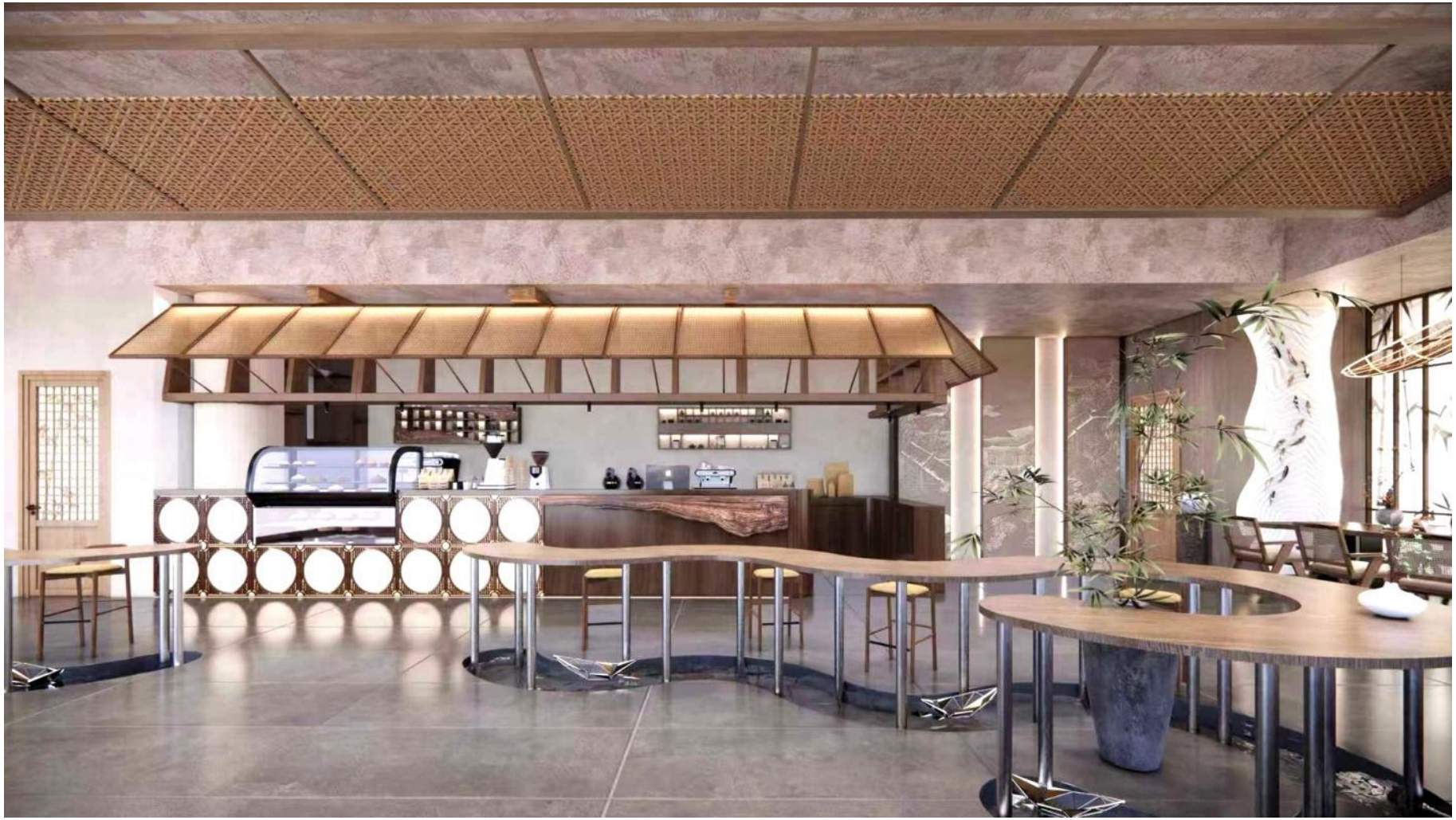
Existing achievements

Coffee shop floor plan



Existing achievements

Coffee shop rendering



Bar counter + social area：The integration of "functional layout + cultural symbols" creates a core scene that combines commercial attributes with cultural recognition.

Existing achievements

Coffee shop rendering



Integrated social and multi-person seating area: This area integrates the social long table area and booth area (meeting the quiet rest needs of two people or small groups), and at the same time forms a circulation linkage with the coffee-making area (with a bar counter visible on the left). It is a core space that combines "consumption experience, cultural immersion, and social interaction".

Existing achievements

Coffee shop rendering



Cultural and Artistic Social Area: This area combines a bar counter rest area with a cultural exhibition area, and is a distinctive space integrating "coffee consumption, cultural appreciation, and artistic interaction".

Existing achievements

Coffee shop rendering



Courtyard-style social and leisure area: This area mainly features multi-person social tables and chairs as well as private booths, making it suitable for scenarios such as friend gatherings and cultural salons. At the same time, it combines green plant landscapes and light and shadow designs to create a relaxed atmosphere of a "Chinese courtyard", meeting consumers' dual demands for "immersive rest and cultural experience".

Existing achievements

Coffee shop rendering



Bar counter rest area and cultural exhibition area: Achieve the functional integration of "coffee consumption + cultural appreciation", meeting consumers' dual demands for artistic interaction and leisure socializing.



Existing achievements

Cultural Analysis in Coffee Shop Spaces

Design Dimensions	Specific performance strategies	Specific strategies	Corresponding coffee shop case study (images linked)
Spatial morphology translation	The imagery of the canal's "waterways" is extracted and transformed into spatial forms such as curved long tables; architectural symbols such as Chinese-style roofs, lattice windows, and bamboo curtains are incorporated.	It embodies traditional Chinese culture and architectural aesthetics, and concretizes geographical elements into spatial language to enhance the cultural identity of the site.	Curved long table, lattice windows
Symbol element implantation	Incorporating cultural symbols such as ship-shaped lamps and traditional calligraphy installations; utilizing folk carriers such as tea sets; and extracting regional symbols such as canal shipping.	Inheriting the cultural genes of Chinese architecture and calligraphy, showcasing the diversity of tangible cultural heritage, and anchoring the memory points of regional culture.	Ship-shaped lamps, calligraphy installations, and tea set display cases
Material and Craftsmanship Expression	Using traditional materials such as wood, bamboo, and woven textures, combined with the "restoring the old to its original state" technique, and contrasted with modern materials such as cement and metal, the design creates a unique aesthetic.	Balancing the "cultural warmth of traditional craftsmanship" with the "innovative expression of modern materials," it embodies China's design wisdom of "integrating the ancient and the modern" and its creative philosophy of "beautiful materials and exquisite craftsmanship."	Woven ceilings, wooden furniture
Experience Scene Creation	Create a "courtyard gathering" style rest space; create an immersive cultural atmosphere through lighting and greenery.	Continuing the Chinese spatial philosophy of "moving people through environment," it creates a poetic atmosphere for cultural experience, achieving "observable and perceptible" cultural dissemination.	Bamboo landscape and calligraphy installation



Conclusion and Summary

Guided by the theory of "urban acupuncture" and using the historical and cultural district of Gaoyou City's Chengnan District as a case study, this paper conducted an in-depth study, from theoretical exploration to design practice. Through systematic work, it verified that urban acupuncture, with its core concept of "minimally invasive intervention," is an effective path to revitalizing historical and cultural districts.

This study first completed a theoretical review and construction, clarifying the principles of urban acupuncture: "precise targeting, minimally invasive intervention, catalytic reaction, and systemic linkage," laying the foundation for its application in interior design. Subsequently, through analysis of typical cases in Jiangsu Province and on-site diagnosis of the Gaoyou Chengnan District, the district's "problems" and "potential" were accurately identified. Ultimately, all of this research was condensed into the interior design of a café and exhibition hall, successfully translating abstract theory into practical design strategies.

This design has proven to not only inject new cultural functions and public vitality into the Gaoyou Chengnan District, but also achieve a refined model for organic renewal. It avoids the trauma of large-scale renovation, fosters a dialogue between old and new spaces, preserves cultural heritage, and promotes the revitalization of the district.



THANK YOU

Joyce(Guo Yan)