

Research on the Interior Design Path of Homestays Based on the Traditional Architectural Culture of Shibanyan Town

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Abstract:

The traditional architectural culture of Shibanyan Town constitutes an important component of China's unique architectural and cultural heritage. Exploring its innovative transformation path in contemporary homestay interior design is of great significance for comprehensively advancing rural vitalization and cultural inheritance, and it also serves as an essential approach to protecting, inheriting and innovatively utilizing distinctive regional cultures. Focusing on the contemporary design context, this paper mainly elaborates on how to realize the modern transformation and upgrading of local materials such as slate in design through deconstruction and recombination, dialogue between the old and the new, functional transformation and image extraction.

Keywords:

Shibanyan Town, Architectural Culture, Homestay Interior Design, Modern Translation

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of the national strategy for comprehensively advancing rural vitalization and integrating cultural tourism, the protection, inheritance and innovative utilization of regionally distinctive cultures have emerged as critical topics of discussion. As a spatial carrier and medium linking tourists with local cultures, homestays have transcended their inherent accommodation function, gradually evolving into venues where tourists can perceive and experience local cultural characteristics. Located in Linzhou City, Henan Province, Shibanyan Town is a village endowed with architectural wisdom and spiritual culture. It boasts a unique cluster of slate houses, embodies the artistic heritage as the "Valley of Chinese Paintings", and carries the red legacy of the Red Flag Canal Spirit. However, in practice, many homestay designers tend to resort to the simple imitation and mechanical accumulation of traditional cultural symbols, failing to integrate them with modern lifestyles and meet contemporary aesthetic demands. Therefore, this study aims to explore how to systematically and creatively transform the architectural cultural

heritage of Shibanyan Town into the intrinsic language and core experience of contemporary homestay interior design, thereby achieving the goals of living inheritance and sustainable development.

2. Core Characteristics of the Architectural Culture of Shibanyan Town

The architectural culture of Shibanyan Town is a crystallization of the local villagers' unique wisdom in utilizing and adapting to the natural environment. Its characteristics can be summarized into the following three interrelated aspects, which jointly serve as the inspiration and foundation for the interior design of local homestays.

2.1. Terrain-adaptive Spatial Pattern

The building clusters in Shibanyan Town exhibit an organic integration with the mountainous environment. Terraced fields are built along the mountain slopes with stone retaining walls, which not only meet the needs of mountain farming but also form a spectacular agricultural landscape. This topographical feature has exerted a profound impact on the distribution of local settlements; most villages are constructed on mountain slopes or in valleys, adopting a stepped layout and thus forming a spatial pattern of “mountain-field-residence-water” [1]. In terms of spatial form, the courtyard layouts fall into four types: the linear courtyard (see Figure 1), the L-shaped courtyard (see Figure 2), the U-shaped courtyard (see Figure 3) and the quadrangle courtyard (see Figure 4). The symmetrical layout along the central axis enhances a sense of order. The main house is reserved for the elders, while the wing rooms on the east and west sides are differentiated into kitchens and storage spaces, reflecting the Confucian ethical concepts. The layout featuring fewer exterior windows, high courtyard walls and narrow lanes mirrors the historical demand for theft prevention in mountainous areas.



Figure 1. *Linear Courtyard.*



Figure 2. *L-shaped Courtyard.*



Figure 3. *U-shaped Courtyard.*



Figure 4. *Quadrangle Courtyard.*

2.2. Distinctive Language of Materials and Construction

The dwellings in Shibanyan Town are typical representatives of traditional architecture in the Taihang Mountain area of northern Henan. Their treatment of architectural form, material selection and spatial layout profoundly demonstrates the integration of architecture with the natural environment and humanistic connotation.

The primary building material for traditional architecture in Shibanyan Town is the local red sedimentary rock. From the external structure to the internal components, the entire building is assembled from slate slabs of varying sizes. The texture of slate is visible everywhere on the walls, roofs and floors, forming the distinctive slate house[2]. No adhesives are required to fix the slate slabs on the walls and roofs; structural stability can be achieved merely through cutting and stacking. The building frame adopts a mortise and tenon structure, and the wooden post-and-lintel roof truss enhances the overall seismic performance (see Figure 5). Given the high frequency of rainy and snowy weather in mountainous areas, the slate slabs on the roof are laid in an overlapping manner, allowing rainwater to flow down smoothly and thus protecting the house. The natural integration of stone and wood creates a construction system that is not only economical, practical and durable, but also ecologically adaptable. The practice of selecting materials based on local availability and utilizing them according to their properties embodies the survival wisdom of local residents.



Figure 5. Post-and-lintel Wooden Roof Truss.

2.3. Profound Connotation of Multidimensionally Intertwined Humanistic Spirit

The traditional architecture of Shibanyan Town serves as a spiritual carrier of the local distinctive culture. Thanks to its unique geographical environment and distinctive architectural appearance, a large number of painters and students come here every year for sketching, fostering a strong atmosphere of artistic creation. Meanwhile, the town boasts profound agricultural civilization and intangible cultural heritage. The lifestyle of living by mountains and thriving on water also attracts a great number of tourists to visit. In addition, the red spiritual civilization represented by the Red Flag Canal Project conveys the entrepreneurial spirit of “self-reliance and hard work” inherited from the predecessors. The integration of these three dimensions constitutes the collective memory and value identity embedded in the architectural cultural genes of Shibanyan Town, and also forms the town’s unique spiritual characteristics and narrative core.

3. Core Translation Paths of Architectural Culture in Shibanyan Town

3.1. Reorganization of Architectural Spatial Patterns

Nestled among the Taihang Mountains, the settlements of Shibanyan Town feature undulating terrain and a well-proportioned layout with mountain villages scattered across the area. In homestay space design, the macroscopic spatial form of mountain settlements can be scaled down; elements can be transformed into interior floor plan design through the means of breaking and reorganizing, thereby breaking the monotony of planar spatial structures. In the vertical dimension, interior spaces can echo the undulating mountainous morphology. The use of steps or embedded mezzanine structures can create a visual sense of hierarchy and progression, which enhances the sense of spatial exploration and experience, and ultimately achieves the natural integration of homestay spaces with the local architectural environment.

In homestay design, the layout forms of traditional courtyards in Shibanyan Town can be applied to the public spaces of homestays. For instance, low walls and soft partitions can be used to enclose the architectural space into an L-shaped or quadrangle courtyard layout; alternatively, grouped furniture can divide the space into several related yet independent zones, so that the spatial utilization is not limited to a single function.

Such a staggered and orderly dynamic circulation not only echoes the sense of security and belonging brought by the traditional courtyards of Shibanyan Town, but also establishes an intrinsic connection between the homestay space and the regional environment.

3.2. Modern Interpretation of Local Materials

In modern homestay design, slate—a local building material—is not merely used for roof and wall construction. Instead, its original structural form can be broken down and cut into strips, squares or irregular shapes. By means of deconstruction and recombination, these slate pieces can be dry-hung or collaged on walls to form relatively abstract artistic installations. This approach not only showcases the natural texture of slate itself, but also presents a geometric order distinct from that of traditional architecture, thereby endowing the slate material with new functions and vitality.

As a construction material, slate boasts strong plasticity, enabling it to fulfill diverse functions within a single homestay space. After refined processing and polishing, it can be used as dining table tops, coffee tables, wash basin bases, or even as cladding for decorative fireplaces. Through such processing, this inherently structural and enclosed construction material is transformed into items for daily use, effectively conveying the inherent texture and warmth of slate to every user.

Furthermore, combining slate with materials of varying textures can yield distinct effects. For example, smooth and lightweight glass, warm and minimalist natural wood, cool and exquisite metal, or plain and seamless micro-cement—when these materials are paired with slate, their respective properties are highlighted through the contrasts between old and new, heavy and light, and rough and delicate, which can enhance the spatial expressiveness and artistic appeal.

Meanwhile, the design can also transcend the physical entity of materials and be transformed into an abstract expression of imagery. The color system inherent in the bedding planes of slate can be adopted as the basic color scheme of the entire space. Furthermore, with the aid of digital media technology, the texture of slate can be projected in an optical and dynamic manner, thereby realizing the translation and

contemporary continuation of architectural cultural imagery in areas with load-bearing restrictions or cleanliness requirements.

3.3. Experiential Integration of Humanistic Spirit

Stone materials account for as high as 90% of the construction of traditional architecture in Shibanyan Town, and its construction activities rely on a set of region-specific construction techniques passed down for hundreds of years. In the stone mining process, craftsmen must strictly follow the strike direction of rock bedding planes, and obtain raw stone materials through standardized procedures such as snapping chalk lines, drilling holes, embedding steel wedges and splitting stones with hammer blows. The mined stone materials need further processing before being applied to architectural construction practices [3]. This complete set of construction procedures is not only a craft paradigm passed down from generation to generation, but also embodies the profound core of regional humanistic spirit. It contains the craftsmen's construction attitude of braving hardships and pursuing excellence, and also highlights the regionally adaptive construction wisdom of working in line with local conditions and following the laws of nature.

At the level of material selection, locally quarried slate not only boasts practical thermal insulation and energy-saving properties but also features distinct regional identifiability. It fosters a deeply coupled symbiotic relationship between the building and the base environment, creating a growing spatial imagery of "buildings emerging from the land" [4]. Essentially, this construction mode is a dynamic evolutionary process that conforms to regional environmental characteristics, develops strengths and circumvents weaknesses, and undergoes continuous iteration and innovation. The core humanistic spirit it carries needs to be integrated into modern homestay design through the translation path of spatial experience.

The traditional architecture of Shibanyan Town is essentially a narrative spatial expression of regional humanistic spirit, and its soft decoration system carries the life wisdom and value pursuits of the ancestors. Therefore, homestay design should abandon the straightforward display of cultural symbols and turn to an experiential and immersive path of humanistic translation.

The primary strategy is the artistic regeneration and functional reconstruction of traditional utensils. Specifically, regional traditional stone utensils such as stone millstones, stone tables, stone benches, stone vats and stone stairs can be taken as the carriers of humanistic connotations. Through artistic transformation and functional remodeling, the contemporary translation of regional memories can be realized. For example, a stone millstone can be converted into a tea table or decorative furnishing in the homestay lobby, retaining its original texture and historical traces; stone benches can be cross-material combined with modern metal components and reconstructed into a seating system for guest rooms, allowing guests to directly feel the regional historical context in daily usage scenarios; stone vats can be repurposed to create underwater micro-landscapes, changing their original functions and turning them into installation art for people to appreciate.

Furthermore, it is also necessary to construct experiential scenarios of local rural life, so as to realize the interesting translation and immersive transmission of regional life wisdom. Micro planting modules can be set up in open spaces such as homestay balconies and terraces, and traditional farm tools can be deconstructed and reconstructed into landscape installations or functional furniture. Meanwhile,

lightweight participatory activities such as “plant rubbing” and “seasonal ingredient processing” can be launched to establish a natural connection between guests and the land as well as seasons. This design approach can not only realize the contemporary value regeneration of traditional utensils and old farm tools, but also, through a more lightweight and experiential expression, achieve the in-depth integration of the regional humanistic spirit of Shibanyan Town into homestay spaces, and realize the organic integration of regional cultural context and modern lifestyles.

4. Principles of Homestay Interior Design Empowered by Architectural Culture

4.1. Principle of Cultural Translation

In the design of homestays related to Shibanyan Town, it shall be based on the core characteristics of the town’s traditional architectural culture, uphold the spiritual connotation of local architectural culture, reject simple replication, and abandon superficial borrowing or stereotyped copying. It is also necessary to adopt the transformation method of “*extracting the essence while discarding the form*”, so as to achieve an aesthetic state of “*spiritual resemblance rather than formal similarity*”. Through the deconstruction, recombination and innovative expression of architectural cultural elements, the modern translation of local cultural connotations can be realized, ensuring the vivid continuation and inheritance of Shibanyan Town’s traditional architectural culture in the space.

4.2. Principle of Integrating Habitability with Originality

In the design of local homestays, modern household facilities should be incorporated to meet the basic needs of contemporary life and enhance residential comfort. Meanwhile, it is also essential to preserve the originality of Shibanyan Town’s traditional architectural culture, so as to strike a balance between the two aspects. For instance, large windows can be designed to naturally introduce mountain views into the interior; the authentic tactile feel and texture of original materials such as stone and wood should be retained in the space. This approach integrates modern comfort with the natural texture of the region, and avoids altering the original characteristics of the space due to excessive modernization.

4.3. Principle of Cultural Experience

To address the homogenization problem in local homestay design, it is necessary to consider breaking the functional and standardized constraints of homestay spaces at the initial design stage, and integrate the spiritual core of Shibanyan Town’s architectural culture into the construction of spatial scenarios. By comprehensively considering the spatial layout of homestays, material selection for various interfaces, decorative details, and other aspects from multiple perspectives, efforts should be made to create an experiential space with a sense of cultural immersion, rather than merely a living space. This allows travelers to feel the historical background and spiritual connotation of the local architectural culture while residing. Ultimately, it realizes the upgrading of the space from “*functional use*” to “*cultural narrative*”, and promotes the dynamic continuation of the cultural bloodline of Shibanyan Town’s traditional architecture in contemporary homestay design.

5. Conclusions

This paper conducts an in-depth analysis of three core aspects of the architectural culture of Shibanyan Town: spatial patterns, material construction, and humanistic spirit, and systematically constructs the translation methods of the town's traditional architectural culture in modern homestay interior design. Through the three core paths of architectural spatial pattern reorganization, modern translation of materials, and experiential integration of humanistic spirit, the research realizes the transformation of design methods from superficial form imitation to in-depth connotation translation. The three principles proposed in this study provide practical value references for specific design practices.

The contemporary inheritance of Shibanyan Town's traditional architectural culture mainly lies in the creative integration of its spiritual core with the needs of modern life, enabling homestay spaces to truly become vivid carriers that bear local memories, activate rural vitality, and continue cultural genes. Thus, this research provides practical support for the dynamic inheritance of local regional culture and the integrated development of rural cultural tourism.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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