

Research on the Narrative Design of Fishing Culture-Themed Landscape Based on the Perspective of Regional Context - Take the Xiangjiang River Basin as an Example

Jiahe Li^{1*}

¹ Solex School of Design & Art, Hengyang, China

Email Address

1556869763@qq.com (Jiahe Li)

*Correspondence: 1556869763@qq.com

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Abstract:

From the perspective of regional context, the design of fishing culture-themed landscapes in the Xiangjiang River Basin requires a cultural translation based on the basin's unique cultural ecology. This approach aims to enhance the cultural identity and experiential quality of waterfront spaces. However, current landscape designs often suffer from a lack of situational atmosphere and incoordination between color schemes and the surrounding environment, thereby hindering the effective transmission of fishing culture. To address these challenges, this paper proposes a series of optimization strategies, including enhancing the situational atmosphere of cultural spaces, emphasizing the harmony between color palettes and the natural environment, and optimizing the design of three specific narrative spaces—memory, folklore, and ecology. Additionally, strategies to improve interactive experiential spaces are suggested. These measures aim to provide theoretical references and practical guidance for the diversified landscape design of fishing culture in the Xiangjiang River Basin.

Keywords:

Regional Context, Xiangjiang River Basin, Fishing Culture, Landscape Narrative, Narrative Space

1. Introduction

Regional context theory emphasizes leveraging natural, historical, and social patterns to provide cultural anchorage for urban spaces, aiming to counteract the phenomenon of “cultural amnesia” in modern cities. However, amidst the process of rapid urban renewal, preserving the regional context embedded within landscapes remains a critical challenge in modern design. [1] This challenge is particularly acute in the waterfront development of the Xiangjiang River Basin. Although fishing culture constitutes the unique cultural DNA of this region, contemporary landscape practices often overlook the in-depth exploration and translation of this context. Consequently, cultural expressions tend to be superficial, failing to evoke a strong

sense of place identity among the public. Therefore, from the perspective of regional context, investigating the diversified landscape narrative design of fishing culture in the Xiangjiang River Basin holds significant theoretical and practical importance.

2. Significance of Narrative Design Under Regional Context

From the perspective of regional context, the design of diversified landscape spaces for fishing culture in the Xiangjiang River Basin holds significant importance. On one hand, this initiative facilitates the “restoration” and regeneration of regional culture. The fishing culture of the Xiangjiang River Basin has experienced a discontinuity during the modernization process, which often leads to a severe loss of cultural semantics and the traditional “spirit of place”. [2] By optimizing landscape spatial design and integrating the concept of regional context, it is possible to provide the public with an enhanced environment for cultural perception. This, in turn, strengthens public identity with local culture, aids in a deeper understanding of the history of the “Mother River,” and achieves more effective cultural transmission. On the other hand, the design of diversified landscape spaces offers valuable references for integrating regional context with modern waterfront design. Through the study of such strategies, designers can better master the application of regional context theory in landscape architecture, providing robust support and guidance for the spatial expression of Xiangjiang fishing culture. In conclusion, optimizing landscape spatial design under the guidance of regional context theory can create a more favorable environment for the preservation of Xiangjiang fishing culture, promoting its living transmission, while bridging the gap between relevant theories and practice.

3. Current Challenges in Fishing Culture Landscape Design

(1) Deficiency in spatial situational atmosphere. Current waterfront space designs along the Xiangjiang River are often constrained by flood control requirements and standardized municipal regulations, resulting in the extensive use of modern hardscapes such as concrete and granite. This approach severs the soft transition relationship of “water-bank-village” unique to the Xiangjiang River Basin, imbuing the space with a sense of industrial alienation. For fishing culture, which carries collective memories, such homogenized hard spaces fail to restore the rustic and warm atmosphere of traditional fishing villages. Consequently, they are unable to evoke emotional resonance among tourists, leading to a severe deficiency of *Genius Loci* (spirit of place).

(2) Disconnection between visual aesthetics and regional DNA. In the creation of the visual environment, existing designs often mechanically copy generic patterns of modern gardening. The dominant color palette is confined to a monotonous “municipal green” or “stone gray,” neglecting the unique color genes of Xiangjiang fishing culture—such as the “ink-wash gray” of the misty Xiangjiang, the “warm orange” of fishing lights, and the “dark brown” of boat wood. This aesthetic “distortion” renders the landscape space incapable of reconstructing the poetic context of fishing life. Furthermore, enclosed vegetation planting often blocks views of the river, causing a visual segregation between cultural experience and the natural entity.

(3) Disjunction between functional layout and cultural activities. The spatial layout lacks the support of a systematic narrative script, leaving cultural needs at different levels unmet. Firstly, there is a lack of “memory spaces” for individual contemplation; tourists struggle to find a quiet corner amidst noisy plazas to reflect on history.

Secondly, the scale of public activity spaces is often maladjusted, failing to fully consider the specific spatial requirements for intangible cultural heritage (ICH) activities such as antiphonal fishing songs and dragon boat sacrifices, resulting in the insufficient utility of “folklore spaces.” Finally, “ecological spaces” are frequently isolated from the viewing line of sight, lacking the display of the traditional wisdom of “human-water symbiosis,” which leads to a fragmented cultural narrative.

(4) Underdevelopment of interactive experience design. Current displays of fishing culture rely heavily on static sculptures or text descriptions. This “museum-style” display transforms living culture into cold specimens. The spatial design lacks multi-sensory interactive media, overlooking the importance of auditory (e.g., water sounds, working chants), tactile (material textures), and dynamic participation (simulation experiences) in constructing a sense of immersion. Tourists merely engage in visual browsing as bystanders, unable to integrate into the situational context as “participants” through embodied perception, thus failing to touch deep-seated emotional memories.

4. Narrative Design Strategies for the Fishing Culture Landscape

4.1. Enhancing spatial situational atmosphere

Driven by the intrinsic characteristics of the fishing culture in the Xiangjiang River Basin and the requirements of tourism, the visitor experience is predominantly concentrated in outdoor waterfront spaces, often lacking opportunities for indoor immersion. Consequently, landscape design must fully address visitor needs by providing enriched light and shadow experiences and maximizing exposure to the natural environment. Fundamentally, reconstructing this unique site ambiance requires the systematic extraction and transformation of both material and spiritual symbols derived from traditional fishery life. [3] Guided by this principle, structures integrating cultural light and shadow effects can be adopted for specific landscape nodes. For instance, corridor roofs designed with a “fishing net” texture can create activity spaces characterized by dappled light, evoking a unique atmospheric quality. Furthermore, regarding the design of viewing platforms, strategies such as cantilevering structures over the water surface or extending them into the wetlands should be considered. This approach maximizes the utilization of natural water scenery, providing visitors with more direct hydrophilic conditions. Such design interventions can significantly alleviate the sense of oppression and alienation associated with modern urban life, thereby facilitating physical and mental relaxation.

In the design of narrative display spaces, the prevalent practice of arranging sculptures within expansive plazas often induces aesthetic fatigue and creates a sense of psychological distance for visitors. To mitigate this issue, it is advisable to employ spatial separation strategies utilizing natural elements—such as reed marshes and bamboo fences—or landscape walls to isolate narrative nodes. This approach facilitates distinct narrative zoning, thereby maximizing the satisfaction of visitors’ psychological needs for an immersive experience. Furthermore, in the design of contemplation nodes, priority must be given to the privacy requirements of visitors. It is recommended to avoid completely open spatial configurations to ensure that the visitors’ emotional experience is adequately safeguarded within a semi-enclosed environment.

Given the high demand for water-related activities, specific spatial designs must prioritize visitor behavioral patterns by providing ample recreational spaces. Additionally, spaces such as boardwalks, steps, and revetments should be fully utilized to expand activity areas. Translating material symbols into physical design, materials such as preservative-treated timber or imitation old ship wood (see Figure 1) can be applied in these zones to cultivate a rustic and warm atmosphere, thereby avoiding the sense of coldness often associated with modern concrete materials.



Figure 1. Wooden Platform.

4.2. Harmonizing color and environment

In the design of fishing culture landscapes within the Xiangjiang River Basin, the harmonization of color and environment constitutes a pivotal factor. Beyond employing conventional green vegetation, it is imperative to explore diverse chromatic palettes to satisfy the requirements of cultural expression and visitor experience. For instance, colors such as “Xiangjiang Emerald” and “Fishing-Fire Warm Orange” can be applied to the design of landscape amenities. These hues not only contribute to alleviating visual fatigue among visitors but also stimulate their sensory experiences and evoke associations with the historical environment. Furthermore, through visual representations—such as depicting images of fishermen at labor, displaying photographs of old wharves, or utilizing reliefs—the charm and historical glory of the Xiangjiang River Basin can be showcased. These strategies serve to foster citizens’ cultural confidence and enhance their recreational interest.

Beyond intuitive visual presentation, profound cultural transmission relies on the translation of symbols. Symbol extraction is the most direct means of expressing regional context. Designers refine and generalize concrete or abstract elements from regional culture, transforming them into landscape symbols. [4] This design strategy enables the distillation of complex fishing culture connotations into spatial language, thereby reinforcing the unique identifiability of the place.

Designers can also employ specific interventions to facilitate visitors’ gradual adaptation to the cultural landscape environment. For instance, the integrated design of artificial landscape nodes and native vegetation (see Figure 2) allows visitors to perceive the natural aura characteristic of the “land of fish and rice” during their tour, thereby alleviating the stress associated with urban living. Furthermore, in the design of waterfront recreational spaces, through strategic spatial layout and the technique of “borrowed scenery,” visitors can be afforded direct visual access to the expansive river views, further mitigating their anxiety and unease. Finally, microclimatic factors within the environment—such as temperature, humidity, and acoustic conditions—must be meticulously considered to foster a comfortable and tranquil environment for cultural experience.



Figure 2. Plant Landscape Creation.

4.3. Optimizing memory, folklore, and ecological spaces

In the design of fishing culture landscapes within the Xiangjiang River Basin, distinct designs must be developed for historical memory spaces, folklore activity spaces, and ecological education spaces. Addressing the narrative expression of these categories, the design should adhere to the narrative logic of “weaving history, presenting the present, and envisioning the future” [5], thereby integrating fragmented cultural segments into a continuous spatial experience. Guided by this philosophy, the design of historical memory spaces necessitates the restoration of independence and immersion in the visitor experience, thus requiring the predominant use of semi-independent spatial forms. To achieve this, strategies such as landscape wall partitions, vegetative enclosure, and topographical elevation differences can be employed to enclose spaces for individual contemplation, providing visitors with an enhanced atmosphere of tranquility. Concurrently, elements such as fishing culture poetry and historical inscriptions can be integrated into the space, enabling visitors to perceive the historical depth of the place.

Folklore activity spaces constitute an integral component of the living presentation of fishing culture. Regarding the design of such spaces, emphasis must be placed on spatial openness and operability. These spaces can be configured as expansive waterfront plazas or stepped terraces, establishing a communal space for citizens to engage in activities such as antiphonal fishing songs, dragon boat race viewing, and festival interactions. Within such spatial configurations, a diversity of amenities and flexible voids (white space) should be incorporated to accommodate events of varying scales. Simultaneously, to enhance visitors' comfort and sense of belonging within these collective spaces, design interventions—including paving patterns, distinctive lighting, and shading structures—can be utilized to elevate the space's inviting atmosphere and cultural ambience.

Ecological education spaces are designed to assist citizens in comprehending the evolving human-water relationship following the implementation of the “fishing ban and withdrawal” policy. Within these spaces, emphasis must be placed on science popularization interactions and nature-based experiences for visitors. Addressing these requirements, the space can be configured as a multifunctional outdoor science center, comprising distinct zones such as the fish migration display area, wetland purification experience area, and ecological observation area. To satisfy visitors' cognitive demands, a variety of facilities—including educational display boards, interactive installations, and observation telescopes—should be strategically installed. Furthermore, interactive opportunities, such as stock enhancement and releasing experiences and ecological monitoring, should be provided to help citizens re-establish a consciousness of ecological protection.

4.4. Refining interactive experience spaces

The design of interactive experiences for fishing culture is characterized by distinct challenges. Modern tourists often experience a sense of estrangement from traditional culture, which frequently results in passivity during landscape interactions highlighting the need for a paradigm shift toward experience-oriented design, where modern cultural landscapes must evolve from traditional, static sightseeing to immersive, multi-sensory engagements. [6] To mitigate this, intimate experiential nodes or structures (approximately 10–20 m²) can be introduced. This reduction in spatial scale minimizes the sense of exposure often felt in expansive open sites, thereby enhancing visitors' sense of security and intimacy. Furthermore, rest facilities should integrate tectonic references to traditional black-awning boats (Wupeng boats) or fishing gear (see Figure 3), a strategy that deepens the experience and lowers psychological barriers. Regarding site selection, deep cultural immersion—such as listening to work chants or reading historical narratives—requires acoustic seclusion from external noise. Therefore, design interventions should create relatively independent zones utilizing solid materials—such as rubble stone and heavy timber—while avoiding the use of highly transparent or reflective modern glass that could disrupt the immersive state. Finally, the soundscape can be enriched through natural elements (wind, water) or ambient audio installations to facilitate emotional relaxation and enhance cultural perception.



Figure 3. Fishing Boat.

5. Conclusions

Based on the perspective of regional context, this paper conducts a systematic investigation into the narrative design of fishing culture-themed landscapes in the Xiangjiang River Basin. The study reveals that introducing narrative theory into landscape architecture can effectively resolve the problem of cultural semantic discontinuity existing in current waterfront spaces, significantly enhancing the depth of perception and transmission effectiveness of regional culture. Addressing the practical dilemmas in current landscape practices along the Xiangjiang River—such as the lack of situational atmosphere and the incoordination between color and environment—future design practices should focus on optimization from the following dimensions:

On one hand, priority should be given to the reshaping of landscape situational atmosphere and the creation of ambience. By introducing materials imbued with vernacular memories—such as preservative-treated timber and rubble stone—the

coldness of modern hard revetments can be broken, establishing an emotional connection between people and the place. Simultaneously, the synergistic design of color and the natural environment should be strengthened. Plant color schemes should be adjusted according to the seasonal changes of the Xiangjiang River, and emphasis should be placed on the integration of artificial nodes with native riparian vegetation to alleviate visual fatigue and enhance the ecological experience of the tour.

On the other hand, it is necessary to construct a multi-level narrative space system. Based on the distinct functional requirements of historical memory, folklore activities, and ecological education, the spatial allocation and layout should be differentiated to satisfy the cultural demands of different groups. On this basis, the design of interactive experiential spaces should be further deepened. Utilizing soft lighting, natural sound effects, and immersive installations, a relatively independent and tranquil experiential field can be created. This guides visitors from passive viewing to active perception, thereby achieving the living transmission and value regeneration of the fishing culture in the Xiangjiang River Basin.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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