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# Shaping Possibilities of Traditions and Innovation in China Contemporary Landscape Design: A Case Study of Changsha Hunan Province

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#### **Abstract**

Rapid development and urbanization processes have had significant effects, including the shaping of sustainability practices focused on the urban level. Chinese cities have begun to pay attention to their rivers, and a large number of waterfront linear parks have been built in the riverside areas, so that the public can easily enjoy their landscape and entertainment functions. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate how the urban issue is commonly associated with environmental, economic, and social development, and how it is from there that solutions to the crisis we are currently facing can be found and implemented. The rationale of this study Changsha landscape continues to maintain its core traditions by preserving their landscape design safe and current through the use of innovation that is strategically implemented to its physical through online infrastructure. The benefits and challenges facing the listing system in practice should be made clearer by analyzing the background, the used criteria, the accountable agencies, and the protective mechanisms. To comprehend the design, the attributes, and the current state of these structures, this study conducted a literature review using the systematic literature review (SLR) and a survey has been done. These findings will be useful in defining the objectives for future lists of historic buildings in Changsha, and when combined with research on previous lists, they may be significant in understanding the prospects for modern heritage conservation in Changsha City.

## **Keywords**

Landscape Design, China, Historical Gardens, Modern Parks, Possibilities

## 1. Background

Traditional Chinese architecture is characterized by conservatism because it has always maintained continuity throughout the rise and fall of several dynasties (Dai & Lu, 2020), even in terms of minor architectural styles like landscape design and miniature building. The landscape has the potential to preserve and present regional traditions to help the tourists to have greater understanding and appreciate the regional local culture. Due to the lack of landscape planning in the modern urbanization, the landscape became severely damaged, or perhaps completely wipe out. The principles of Feng Shui, Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism, and social order were all adhered to in the layout and placement of a garden or an object in nature, and all had a definite hierarchy, with semantic meaning often hidden. Businesses need to find activity configurations that are not only internally consistent, but also appropriate given the current environment of the organization in order to achieve a competitive edge. To make matters worse, this difficulty increases after businesses face an environmental transition that alters the preexisting competitive landscape and introduces new, high-performing sets of activity choices (Siggelkow & Levinthal, 2003). Waterfront linear parks are an integral element of the city's ecosystem and water supply, providing a place for people to relax, socialize, exercise, and share ideas. These parks also have special value for the city's ecology and economy (Sun et al., 2021).

Most people prefer to settle in areas with access to both water and green. They do the same thing when constructing their cities. There is a river running through every city. Changsha City's Xiang River symbolizes providing both physical and spiritual lifeblood for many years, much like the Seine and Thames rivers did for Paris and London, and the Hangpu River did for Shanghai. It is surrounded by mountains on every side. The geomorphic characteristics of the low hills are an indication of many hundred thousand years of geological change and natural erosion. The city is located in an area of hills and plains, and the transition from one to the other and makes the landscapes colorful (Lin et al., 2021). Xiang River was planned with tourism and business in mind. It will help modernize Changsha's reputation in the eyes of the world. Changsha was founded centuries ago on both sides of the Xiang River. There are many initiatives on improving the quality of life along the river and strengthen the bond between locals and the water and green. For instance, landscape architecture is not just about making things look nicer, but it also opens up new avenues of exploration. From a business point of view, the team has designed a variety of amusement facilities that will bring in customers and spur on further commercial expansion. Human requirements must form the basis of all designs (GVL, 2018). In addition, the area itself should serve as a repository for varied emotions.

China's environment and architectural design have evolved throughout the years while preserving the traditional aesthetic that values a balance between nature and manmade structures (Ivashko et al., 2021). Riverside revetment is mostly artificial structure, with monotonous form, sparse vegetation; platforms and walkways are not hydrophilic; the pavement texture of the activity field is

single; high-rise buildings outside the area can influence the landscape and aesthetic appeal; all of which seriously reduce the naturalness and quality of the park landscape. The city of Changsha's prominence on the global stage. Designers and the government have capitalized on the waterfront's superior resources from an operational standpoint, with the goal of establishing a dynamic landscape zone that encompasses tourism, commerce, recreation, culture, and sports. It is because of the richness and complexity of ecosystems and human culture, it may be difficult to conduct a scientific evaluation of the cultural ecosystem, despite the fact that these services are more popular with the public and have more psychological benefits (Lin et al., 2021).

A gradual shift from a modernist to a postmodernist aesthetic has been reflected in the world of design. The modernist ideology promotes the designer's role as all-knowing artist and creator, who weighs practical, theoretical, and political considerations alongside aesthetic ones when making design choices. During the shift to post-modernism, concerns including social responsibility, sustainability, environmental sensitivity, environmental integrity, and human health have received more attention (Milburn & Brown, 2003). Milburn & Brown (2003) stated that because of the complexities involved, professionals in the fields of urban and regional planning, architecture, interior design, and landscape architecture are increasingly viewing research as an integral part of their work. The relationship between human action and the significance of a location is emphasized in the transactional model of landscape (Thwaites & Simkins, 2006). These were the most pressing issues that needed to be addressed in this study: (1) What are the primary landscape components in Changsha? Where does Changsha's landscape beauty come from, and how does it relate to the city's landscape components and characteristics?

### 2. Changsha Landscape Elements

The concentric zone model of the outer development of construction land has a significant impact on the suburban landscape design (Hong et al., 2011). The analysis of urban-to-rural transects has also demonstrated that the consequences of agglomeration in urban regions are very clear. In contrast to the city center, the outlying districts have seen a major change in spatial heterogeneity and an increase in the fragmentation of the environment (Hong et al., 2011). The term "landscape visual quality" (LVQ) refers to the result of how various aspects of the landscape interact with the observer's cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes (Sun et al., 2021). Moreover, it is the degree to which an observer values a landscape for its aesthetic value. According to Sun et al. (2021), the aesthetic value is determined by the relationship between ecological quality and visual quality, and this in turn is influenced by the ecology, diversity, vividness, and maintainability of the landscape.

Protection plans for the central district of Changsha were updated in 2003 as part of the city's master plan. Planners now understand that the stereotypical three-layer protection plan, which includes Historic City, Historic Neighbor-

hoods, and sites of Cultural Relic and Historic Buildings, is insufficient to conserve urban features in light of the redevelopment's extensive violations of the historic urban landscape (Yu et al., 2019). Figure 1 shows that the historic buildings were planned to comprise the main architecture, while the historic homes were supposed to compose the minor architecture as a supplement to the cultural relic sites for the overall system, with fewer standards for protection. Additionally, plant communities of three distinct color compositions such as warmtoned dominating, warm- and cold-toned contrast, and multicolor harmonic can enhance the visual appeal of a given area by varying the hues and tones present in the surrounding natural environment (Luo et al., 2023). People's mental and emotional responses to colors vary. More and more thought is being put into the aesthetics of color landscapes as part of the building of ecological civilization (Luo et al., 2023).

The rise and fall of water levels throughout time, the design team transformed the flat riverfront into a multi-tiered area that encourages more dynamic interactions between people and water. Developing the space structure is to achieve good control of the space and to highlight the qualities of the site through the strategic placement of points, lines, and interfaces. Designing a landscape can open up more opportunities in addition to improving the visual impact. From an operational standpoint, the group has produced a number of recreational amenities that will draw visitors and support future commercial growth (Figure 2).

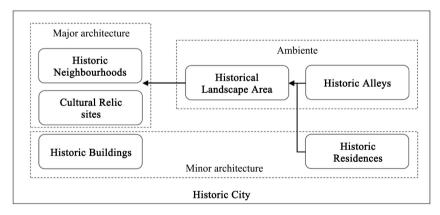


Figure 1. Structure of the protection plan for Changsha. Adapted from Yu et al., (2019).



Figure 2. The Hangpu River to Shanghai, the Xiang River is the symbol of Changsha City.

## 3. Methodology

The research area is in Changsha, in the Chinese province of Hunan. Hunan Province's capital Changsha is situated northeast of the province, down the river from the Xiangjiang River. It borders the Jiangxi Province cities of Yueyang to the north, Zhuzhou and Xiangtan to the south, Loudi and Yiyang to the west, and Yichun and Pingxiang to the east. Since ancient times, this city has served as a significant hub for the production of grains in China. Changsha also boasts a rich historical legacy, which includes ancient wall remnants, graveyards, temples, and structures. There are two factors that give the city its reputation with tourists. The city is located in the colorful transition zone between hilly and flat landscape.

The methods of combining research and design were explored across two stages in this study. Following a literature review that provided the framework for the investigation of the research, a pilot study was conducted using surveys conducted to undergraduate students from Architecture School at the Changsha University of Science and Technology. The purpose of these surveys was to investigate different points of view regarding the relationship between design and research. This study will be based on a survey method because this approach is appropriate to eliciting relevant information about individuals' and communities' customs, norms, and values (Kerlinger, 1966).

#### 4. Results

### 4.1. Regeneration and Identity

Many elements of the theory of place contribute to the place identity important to the regeneration process. Identity is a complicated concept to articulate. Placelessness will emerge when there is a lack of interesting characteristics, moreover, based on the theory of place identity, humans need to associate with a place of significance. Identity involves the qualities of being unique, different, original, dominant, unforgettable, recognizable by the people, easily recognized, and having a strong identity (Iqbal et al., 2020). Environment, activity, and meaning and association all play a part in how a place is perceived. Physical environment, observable activity, and meaning and association are the three main components of identity of a place (Iqbal et al., 2020). Architectural, cultural, and historical characteristics of the historic structures help to define a community (Table 1).

Many cities are adopting "culture-led" approaches to urban regeneration, which involve the promotion of culture-related uses and activities to bring about broader social, economic, and environmental regeneration outcomes (McCarthy, 2006). These approaches can lead to economic innovation and diversification, image enhancement, and social cohesion. However, Evans (2005), emphasize that in order to make a distinction between "culture-led" regeneration initiatives and "cultural regeneration". "Culture-led" initiatives, he argues, put cultural engagement front and centre as a symbol of revitalization rather than as an

**Table 1.** A summary of issues concerning urban identity attributes.

Item	Descriptions
Form and space in the city	The concrete wall, lack of access, and subpar water quality all decrease the water feature's contribution to the genius loci and local identity and character. There is a gap in terms of landscape coherence, and the urban blocks are inaccessible to the edge of the water, with no connection to nearby open areas, junctions, and place markers.
Legibility	The contrast and harmony of colors are important factors to consider about when trying to enhance the aesthetic quality of plant color landscapes. Each color has its own distinct character, and the most crucial aspect of color design is the way various hues work together to create a harmonious as a whole. Some developed greenfield can enhance the beauty of their surroundings by hosting commercial enterprises, cultural events, memorials, and tourist attractions.
Activity	Indoor activities do not require access to water, and there is a lack of variety near the waterfront. After being restored, tourist resorts and comprehensive parks had slightly more water than neighborhood parks.
Meaning and association	The possibility of conserving modern heritage in Changsha, historical buildings in the city are significant. The Changsha Heritage Building and other Heritage Shophouses provide associations and meaning.

afterthought. Governments and regeneration intermediaries are increasingly concerned with the positive impact that cultural facilities and programmes have on the revitalization of areas and neighborhoods that have suffered from economic and physical decline and a wide range of social problems, including high unemployment, low income, high crime rates, inadequate public services, and substandard living conditions (Evans, 2005).

#### 4.2. Evaluation of Physical Settings

Place is both a psychological and a physical concept. Sense of place is a combination of its physical manifestation, its activities, and their meanings. Culture is a social unit in which people in society create meaning for the purpose of establishing and expressing shared identities (Cohen, 1994). Identifying place attachment and place identity should be done on the basis of consensus from user groups that have been categorized according to their roles, social, and cultural characteristics. The degree of emotional investment and the layered nature of shared and individual meanings vary across places with varying sociocultural characteristics.

The maximization of economic and social advantages in order to raise living standard as far as the city target is sustainable in terms of environmental restrictions and socio-economic equality is what it takes for a city to be sustainable (Guzmán et al., 2017). Policymakers are beginning to pay more attention to governance, quality of life, environmental psychology, green space, and natural and cultural assets as part of the sustainable development paradigm. The international agenda for sustainability recognizes the value of cultural heritage for es-

tablishing local identities and boosting economic vitality in an increasingly globalized society. Several scholars defined heritage as encompassing all three of the pillars of sustainability. Guzmán et al. (2017) emphasized that the preservation and appreciation of a city's cultural history is crucial to the area's and the city's future prosperity.

## 4.3. Meaning and Associations to Identity

Policymakers are unable to develop an evidence base for the deployment of "culture-led" regeneration methods due to the lack of, and attention towards, in-depth research into this issue. Creating a sense of landscape identity is a central issue in landscape planning and policy. Yet, there remains a lack of a precise description of the idea. The word "landscape identity" is ambiguous since it can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Landscape identity is not limited to the area of primarily physical or natural characteristics; however, it also includes subjective aspects of the landscape (Stobbelaar & Pedroli, 2011). The biophysical features of the area are aspects of the social and individual construction that becomes landscape identity. Stobbelaar & Pedroli (2011) emphasized that identity in the landscape is often associated with a particular location, region, county, or even a whole country, with features at the lower scale (region) integrating into the structures on the larger scale such as country or county.

As the power dynamic among stakeholders shifts, when their goals shift, when new players come into play, and when new functions emerge as fundamental, the landscape's identity develops a transformation. In order to foster a sense of national identity, it is crucial for people to form attachments to specific locations; hence, nationalizing states occupy imaginary landscapes that serve as memories. People's attachment to particular societal values is often reinforced through the creation of shared symbolic meanings for specific places. They were chosen with extra attention because of the impact they would have on the audience's emotions, and after becoming icons, they were given further strength through the cultivation of myths surrounding them. In addition, the concept of "compatibility", which describes how people's relationships with their environment are interactive and that perception is influenced by a variety of personal and environmental factors, the "subjective approach" describes how the individual constructs their own perception of the landscape based on their experiences and emotions (Coles et al., 2013).

Coles et al. (2013) emphasized that the structure of the landscape, its physical characteristics and components, sensory engagement, and prior experience all provide feedback to initiate a positive (or negative) response and that landscapes are imbued with particularly strong meaning. This process of perception of the landscape is described as an active one.

# 4.4. Sustainable Urban Development and the Regeneration of Historical Sites

Urban revitalization in traditional contexts has changed places and embedded

new meanings within existing cultural and social contexts. Cultural preservation has been associated to happier, healthier communities through fostering a feeling of shared identity and history, enhancing the aesthetic appeal of public spaces, reducing the negative effects of overdevelopment, and adapting for the effects of climate change (Guzmán et al., 2017). In order to obtain personal narratives that reveal the detail of meaning, interviewing methods that allow the participant to discuss their experiences with the surroundings appear to be effective. According to Coles et al., (2013) stated that neurological research have discovered that multi-modality is the norm, not the exception, in how we experience our surroundings. The sensory experience connected with it can be referred to as "multi-modal", involving all of the senses.

These findings, in addition to the literature, indicate that individuals constructing meanings through a combination of sensory perception and mental processing (understanding based on associations with previous experiences, or memories). Global processes have had a significant impact on urban areas' integrity, how people see their environments and the values they embrace, as well as on the lives of the people who live there and use them (De Rosa & Di Palma, 2013). There is emerging evidence that urban redevelopment in traditional settings has weakened the place values of changed or newly constructed locations. Moreover, when familiar artefacts are destroyed in a natural disaster, for example, people lose their connection to the memories and emotions associated with those objects. The alteration and transformation of buildings and places, as well as the changing of their uses and purposes, may lead to a loss of identity (Ujang & Zakariya, 2015). Additionally, relocation to a new home and neighborhood, for example, disrupts a person's sense of belonging in their previous location.

For individuals or communities, these events can be devastating since they lead to a breakdown of sense of who they are. Urban features and icons (things, structures, and images) contribute to a sense of self, of community, and of place, hence it is crucial that their meanings and identities to be preserved (Hull et al., 1994). As a result, it is crucial in any regeneration endeavor to appreciate the level and sort of attachment and values associated with the places to clarify place significance.

#### 5. Conclusion

From the point of view of urban development, this study provides more evidence that cultural heritage is recognized as a valuable resource and urban phenomena. Based on this research, we know that cultural heritage monitoring in cities should include three distinct but interconnected elements: a strategic level, an operational level, and related indicators.

Pertaining the sustainability dimensions discussed, it was determined that, despite the growing number of references positioning the conservation of heritage and culture as fundamental to SUD, there is a gap in the interdisciplinary approaches of how urban dynamics influence cultural heritage. For this purpose,

the operational level is still associated to the tangible aspects such as social and economic demands through the preservation of the physical environment.

The results are significant in that they place a strong emphasis on human response, showing that landscapes have the ability to connect with people more deeply and may also have therapeutic effects. Essentially, it moves us closer to a situation in which the qualities of environmental factors, such as their physical traits and the interactions they support, are crucial. The results show that thorough case studies of every setting are required to better comprehend them and classify them as "supportive environments", or locations that encourage human interaction. A regeneration process encompasses the physical, cultural, and psychological aspects of the impacted areas, as well as the activities and factors that make up daily life for humans. Hence, the meaning of a place is not limited to the physical shape and physical boundary, but focusing on the city residents, considering of both their actual human experience and their subjective impressions of the area.

However, Ujang & Zakariya (2015) emphasized that place attachment and meanings could be explained by looking at the live-in experience of the people in place, which is especially relevant in the Asian context where place identities are being maintained. The cultural significance of some regions in Asia is strongly expressed in the region's diversity, colonial influence, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic identity. The cultural environments in which people live and thrive, as well as the "valuable and memorable elements" that make up their identities, should inform the way in which these locations change over time (Lim, 2005).

In order to identify important components that should be transmitted in the process of the regeneration of Changsha city, this study evaluated and assessed certain of the most important transformative experiences of the historical city where a city's creative and innovative potential is in particular. In addition to being a historical asset, cultural heritage also serves as a catalyst for urban growth in the future. It is possible to understand the importance of people's attachment to and interpretation of specific locations in Changsha by considering their lived experience there. Cultural diversity contributes to the challenge of predicting how residents will evaluate the area's social and psychological values. The economic and cultural dependence on a city is reflected from the nature and intensity of the relationships between residents who lived there. Moreover, the significant factors in creating a sense of belonging are the relationships formed within a community. The social and cultural construction of a given location lends it multiple layers of meaning.

#### **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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