



Preliminary Research on Residential Landscape Design Based on Regional Culture - A Case Study of the Landscape of Diaoyu Tai MGM Grand Villa in Beijing

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Abstract.The application of regional culture in research holds significant importance for creating high-quality residential areas. Taking the landscape of Diaoyu Tai MGM Grand Villa in Beijing as an example, this paper discusses the residential landscape design based on regional culture. It proposes three forms of expression that integrate these two aspects: firstly, excavating cultural symbols; secondly, inheriting regional cultural characteristics; and finally, realizing the representation of historical culture. This provides new ideas for the landscape design of modern urban residential areas.

Keywords:Landscape Design; regional culture; residential district

1 Introduction

With the improvement of living standards, people have higher demands for their residential environments, and increasingly favor high-quality living conditions. In recent years, fierce competition in the real estate market and the growing trend of modular development have led to the homogenization and formalization of residential landscapes. This also results in a stacking of various cultural symbolic elements and expression of regional culture. Taking the landscape of Diaoyu Tai MGM Grand Villa in Beijing as an example, this paper focuses on discussing how to create distinctive landscapes from the perspective of regional culture, endowing cities with unique spiritual connotations, and achieving the harmonious coexistence of urban and humanistic environments.

2 The Significance of Integrating Regional Culture with Residential Landscape

In today's globalized world, where technology, economy, and culture are being homogenized, cities are not exempt from this "internationalism". It results in the gradual

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disappearance of residential areas with distinct regional characteristics and rich cultural flavors. They are being replaced by European, Nordic, and Mediterranean styles, leading to diminishing differences in urban landscapes. What's worse, the lack of regional culture in cities is becoming increasingly severe, and people are increasingly difficult to find cultural identity and psychological belonging in the spatial environment of their residential areas[1]. This "character crisis" of regions is gradually becoming prominent[2].

To solve the above difficulties, landscape design becomes our first tool. Landscape integrates content from multiple disciplines such as gardening, geography, history, art, and culture, making it a strong comprehensive carrier of regional culture. As an important part of the urban landscape, residential area landscapes play a significant role in inheriting urban styles and continuing regional cultures. Therefore, residential landscapes should be imbued with deeper cultural connotations, considering them from the perspective of regional characteristics, and deeply exploring the intrinsic traits of regional culture to create a high-quality humanistic environment.

3 The Expression of Regional Culture in The Landscape of Residential Areas

3.1 Excavating Cultural Symbols

Regional cultures possess unique and distinct typical characteristics, which are their unique imprints formed over the long course of history. In the process of designing residential landscapes, it is necessary to deeply excavate and organize these typical elements within the local culture, skillfully employing landscape language to express regional culture, allowing cultural symbols to integrate with the landscape. When selecting elements of regional culture, one should choose those that are most representative and present them in a diverse manner, ensuring that the landscape design is not only rich in cultural connotations but also does not lack modern aesthetic value [2].

3.2 Inherit the Characteristics of Regional Culture

When creating residential landscapes, it is necessary not only to unify architectural styles but also to deeply excavate regional cultural elements. Extract their essence, discard the dross, and achieve a reasonable inheritance of culture. Chinese culture, with its long history and profound depth, possesses numerous unique traditional cultural landscapes[3]. Therefore, for well-preserved traditional landscapes with high cultural value, we should draw on their design techniques to achieve a "making the past serve the present, echoing through time" design approach, highlight regional culture, and strive to present the public with the core of history [4]. Given China's vast territory and diverse ethnic groups, regional cultures exhibit a rich and colorful array of characteristics. The design needs to make full use of the regional characteristics and styles of different places, organically integrating regional culture into the

design, making the landscape more vibrant and realizing the "living" inheritance of culture [5].

3.3 Representing Historical Culture

While protecting culture, we should also inherit and promote our culture. Landscapes can be used to allow the public to see the restored appearance of historical culture, letting them appreciate the charm of gardens and understand the rich cultural significance during the process [6]. Therefore, only by gaining a deeper understanding of local history and culture landscape can designers better restore history and evoke historical memory[7].

4 Landscape Design of Diaoyutai Mgm Villa in Beijing Based on Regional Culture

4.1 Project Overview

The Diaoyu Tai·MGM Villa site is situated alongside the millennium central axis of Beijing. Originally, the site was a pomegranate garden for emperors in the Ming and Qing Dynasty, located on the historic site of the Pomegranate Village directly south of the Temple of Heaven (Figures 1). The project encompasses a landscape design area of 12,477 square meters. Due to its unique geographical location, which overlaps with cultural "heritage" sites, the project establishes a profound connection between the landscape attributes and regional culture. Consequently, the landscape design for Diaoyu Tai·MGM Villa requires an in-depth exploration of regional culture, preserving the historical context of nearby landmarks such as the Temple of Heaven, Chongwenmen, and Yonghe Temple. Simultaneously, it must integrate modern cultural elements from commercial hubs like Muxidi and Fangzhuang. This blend aims to reflect the elegance of classical garden landscapes through the spirit of ritual propriety and classical culture.

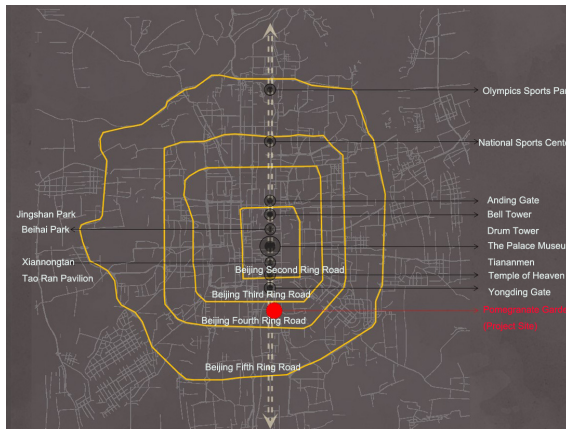


Fig. 1. Project Location Analysis

4.2 Design Concept

Beijing, with a history of over three thousand years, is a renowned historical and cultural city. The ancient urban planning of Beijing represents the pinnacle of ancient Chinese city planning, adhering to and refining the standards set forth in the "Kao Gong Ji" section of the "Rites of Zhou": "Artisans plan the city, square with nine li on each side, three gates on each side; within, nine longitudinal and nine latitudinal avenues, each nine tracks wide, with ancestral temples on the left, altars of the soil on the right, facing the court in front and the market behind." This project not only continues the architectural style but also delves deeper into the regional cultural context, adopting the layout of the ancient capital's "one street, nine alleys" configuration. The "one street" refers to the horizontal roads, while the "nine alleys" are the vertical pathways, reflecting the core of the regional culture and inheriting the classics (Figure 2). The names of the streets and alleys are derived from the poems of Emperor Qianlong during his tours of the "Three Mountains and Five Gardens" and Jiangnan, meticulously chosen to enhance the project's ancient elegance.

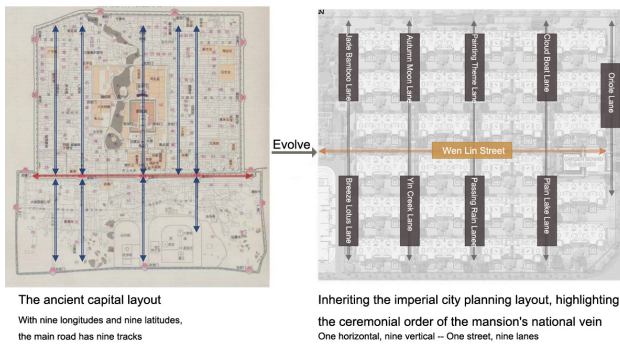


Fig. 2. Planning Layout: One Horizontal and Nine Verticals, Inheriting the Classic

The project draws inspiration from the Qianlong Imperial Garden, exemplifying royal order and elegance, and inherits the layout of the imperial gardens, showcasing the grandeur of the mansion. The Qianlong Garden, with its five-courtyard layout, reflects and emphasizes the reclusive ideals of ancient scholars, serving as a model of literati gardens within the palace and a masterpiece of the "Imperial Garden." Diaoyu Tai·MGM Villa continues the five-courtyard layout of the Qianlong Garden, with a sequence from the gate to the central courtyard, through the streets and alleys, finally leading to the private courtyards. This five-stage spatial progression—comprising the stages of introduction, transition, development, climax, and conclusion—is compactly structured, flexibly shifting between straight and curved paths, recreating the Qianlong Garden's blend of scenic views and residential functionality (Figure3). The garden features rugged rockeries, picturesque lake stones, lush trees, and winding paths leading to secluded spots. The landscape's combination of real and virtual elements complement each other, effectively highlighting the profound meanings of "ceremony," "welcome," "depth," "elegance," and "harmony" in the five-stage homecoming experience of Diaoyu Tai·MGM Villa.



Fig. 3. Spatial Layout Plan: Five Progressive Courtyards in the Ceremonial System

The design of the garden landscape is based on the ancient Chinese guest etiquette culture, extracting nine types of literati anecdotes from the important ceremony "Nine Guests' Etiquette", including presenting jade, balance, seating, serving tea, toasting, dining together, ink treasure, etiquette music, and chess. These elements are incorporated into the project's sculpture symbols, small pieces, and landscape walls to express the contemporary literati's high aspirations and achieve the inheritance and echo of regional traditional culture. (Figure 4, 5)

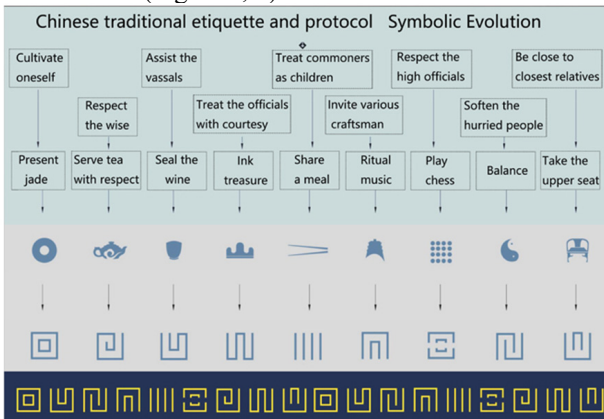


Fig. 4. Evolution of Symbols: The Rite of Nine Guests.

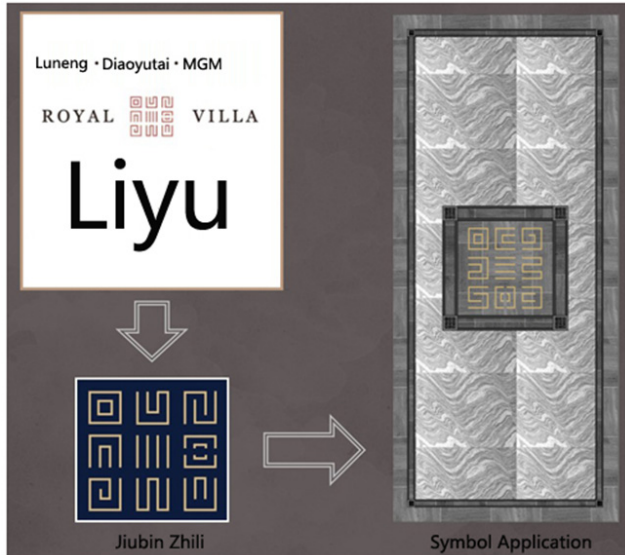


Fig. 5. Application of the Rite of Nine Guests

Diaoyutai-MGM Villas continue the imperial dragon vein, inherit the Forbidden City's etiquette system, and directly express the contemporary celebrities' innermost feelings with new Chinese-style cultural mansions, becoming a spiritual haven for their reclusive sentiments. It initiates royal gardens, creates classic national villas, and creates a tranquil and beautiful courtyard scene in the bustling city center. (Figure 6)



Fig. 6. Master Plan

4.3 Five-entry courtyard space creation

(1) Upon the first entry, the space is greeted by a court of ceremonial order and un-paralleled quality.

As the ancient wisdom goes, "A residence is crowned by its gateway." The gate serves as the breath of a household, where the buildings stand majestically, guarded by auspicious beasts that symbolize wealth and honor, signifying the owner's status and prestige. Flanking the entrance are a pair of hand-chiseled bronze lions, epitomizing the dignity and reverence of a noble household. The etiquette of the "Nine Honored Guests" is also incorporated into the ground sculptures at the door, integrating regional culture to reflect the lofty ambitions of contemporary scholars (Figures 7). The iron fences on both sides of the entrance adopt a classic interpretation of the pattern from the 25th seal of Emperor Qianlong, which represents the highest level of imperial seal in the official seal system, symbolizing imperial power and status, and is considered a treasure of the nation. As Emperor Qianlong once said, "What the Son of Heaven values most, in governing the universe and expounding the classics, is none more important than the national treasure." The fence, serving as an interface for external display, showcases nobility.



Fig. 7. Real View of the Gatehouse

(2) Upon entering the second courtyard, the space encounters a collection of exquisite treasures amidst a landscape of stone and water.

As one steps into this space, the scenery transports them into an artistic realm. Leaning on the railing and gazing into the distance, the freehand mountain-water landscape wall, inspired by the "Boyuan Letter," appears vividly before one's eyes. The Qianlong Emperor's appreciation sculpture, resembling a square seal, strategically placed in the water feature of the central courtyard, serves as the finishing touch, creating a perfectly harmonious scene. Bathed in the afterglow of the setting sun, the silhouettes of trees sway gently, and as one strolls along the cloister, the few pavilions within the courtyard seem to bridge the gap of a thousand years, allowing one to rediscover every plant, rock, and stone of the imperial garden, all precipitated in time, offering endless views for quiet contemplation...

The theme of the central courtyard's landscape is derived from one of the "Three Precious Calligraphy Manuscripts" collected by the Qianlong Emperor—the "Boyuan Letter." The background wall is abstracted from a freehand landscape painting commissioned to Dong Bangda during the Qianlong period. Concurrently, to shield the view into the private residential courtyard, a large area of metal grating is designed on one side of the lattice. The metallic pattern originates from the "Autumn Forest in

"Distant Ink Wash," a work created by Wang Yuanqi at the age of 45 upon his arrival in Beijing to serve, under the decree of Emperor Kangxi, later collected by the Qianlong Emperor (Figures 8).



Fig. 8. Real View of the Atrium

(3) The third progression into the neighborhood, Wen Lin Chang and Its Inheritance
 Wen Lin Chang Street, features a road that twists and turns, intersecting with irregularly placed scenic walls. This design breaks up and reorganizes the deep, serene street, imbuing it with rhythm and cadence. Accompanied by exquisite plant groupings, the street offers a view at every five steps and a picture at every ten, creating a pedestrian pathway full of the joys of life (Figures 9). The scenic walls are inspired by the poems left behind by Emperor Qianlong during his tours of the "Three Hills and Five Gardens" and the regions south of the Yangtze River, achieving cultural inheritance with profound implications. This meticulous attention not only reflects the project's rustic elegance but also its dedication to excellence.



Fig. 9. Real View of the Atrium

(4) The fourth entrance roadway, the roadway is deep and covered layer by layer
 The fourth alleyway, deep and layered, leads into the narrow entrance of an elegant residential area. Due to constraints in road layout changes, space is extended vertically with landscape walls hidden within the alleys to enrich the scenery. The names of

the nine alleys are derived from poems written by Emperor Qianlong during his travels to the Three Hills and Five Gardens and Jiangnan. These poems are inscribed on the entrance landscape walls, and their depicted scenes are transformed into freehand patterns displayed on the inner landscape walls, enhancing the Chinese atmosphere and cultural experience within the alley system. By transforming road spaces into scenic areas, combined with landscape stones and shaped plants, the experience of road landscape appreciation is enriched. The courtyard system defines spatial boundaries through grouped greenery, creating a sense of difference in plant selection among different alleys, thus enhancing the landscape variation experience of each alley. The small courtyard gates evolve from the Moon Gate of Jiangnan gardens, presenting Chinese classical charm with simplified lines, creating three different entry atmospheres. (Figures 10).

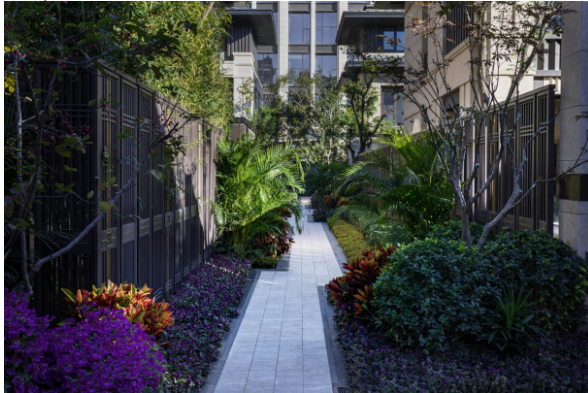


Fig. 10. Real View of the Street Block

(5) The fifth into the courtyard, nine rites into three realms, to take care of the dust

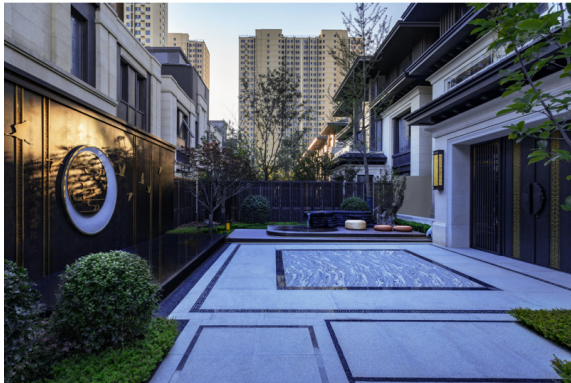


Fig. 11. Real-life View of the Fuwang Pavilion

The courtyard landscapes of the model homes match the style of their interior decorations, interpreting two different styles: Chinese classical learning and modern oriental. The large-sized courtyard, Wuwang Pavilion, spanning 173 square meters,

adopts the Chinese classical learning style, exuding a sense of calm and grandeur; the small-sized courtyard, Hua Fang Zhai, covering 155 square meters, features a modern oriental style, embodying elegance. The theme wall inside Wuwang Pavilion is inspired by the "Autumn Moon Screen" personally designed by Emperor Qianlong. It depicts an autumn scene with sweet osmanthus scents and a full moon hanging from tree branches, symbolizing the Mid-Autumn Festival. The poem inscribed by Emperor Qianlong adds a touch of cultural sentiment to the refined and elegant lifestyle of the small courtyard (Figures 11). The theme wall in Hua Fang Zhai's courtyard is created with a relatively simple technique, drawing inspiration from the Guangxiu embroidery "Phoenix Facing the Sun" produced during Emperor Qianlong's reign. "The phoenix cries out on that high mound. The parasol tree grows facing the morning sun." The phoenix stands on top of a rock, stretching its neck towards the rising sun, with parasol trees casting shadows, flowers blooming, and birds chirping. The embroidered imagery is lively and vivid, presenting a rich and vibrant scene. The wall art subtly outlines the sea surface and the rising sun with delicate lines portraying the phoenix spreading its wings towards the sun. The decorative pattern faintly visible on the back panel is simplified from traditional water and cliff motifs, embedding auspicious meanings within exquisite modern craftsmanship (Figures 12).



Fig. 12. Real-life View of the Painted Boat Pavilion

5 Conclusion

In today's society, with the continuous acceleration of urbanization, landscape design can not only beautify the environment but also serve as an important means of transmitting regional culture and shaping the image of a city. Integrating regional culture into the landscape design of residential areas to form a distinctive garden landscape design scheme is not only an inheritance and innovation of traditional culture but also explores a new approach for the modern interpretation of traditional gardens. This approach can better highlight the cultural characteristics of local regional gardens and promote the continuation of historical context through physical forms.

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