

UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation Case Studies—Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Street as An Example

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Abstract: *The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) established the Asia-Pacific Cultural Heritage Conservation Award in 2000. The award aims to recognize the achievements of individuals and public-private sectors in protecting or restoring buildings, places, and immovable properties of heritage value in the region. It encourages individual participation and public-private cooperation to protect the cultural heritage of the area for the benefit of future generations. This paper adopts literature research and case analysis as the primary research methods. Referring to the judging principles and standards of the New Design category in the 2022 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Conservation Award, based on the investigation and research of the case in China—Chongqing Yunyang County Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Street, it deeply analyzes the problems and deficiencies in the protection strategy of Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Street. It also explores the underlying logic of the sustainable development path of cultural heritage protection, hoping to provide valuable reference experience and practical reference for more cultural heritage application projects participating in this competition in the future.*

Keywords: UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Conservation Award; Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Street; Case Analysis; Development Planning.

1. UNESCO ASIA-PACIFIC HERITAGE CONSERVATION AWARD

As the influence of the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Conservation Award in the Asia-Pacific heritage conservation community gradually increases, the number of Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Streets from various countries participating in the award and winning the award has gradually increased. So far, a total of 426 works from 24 countries have participated in the selection, producing more than 140 awards[1]. The awards include the Excellence Award, which has made extraordinary achievements and has greatly promoted the country; the Outstanding Award, which has made outstanding achievements and has had a significant impact at the national or regional level; the Humanitarian Care Award, which has made significant achievements; the Honor Award, which has achieved certain achievements in certain aspects; and the New Design Award, which integrates new buildings well into the historical environment. Richard Engelhardt summarized the five principles shared by the Asia-Pacific Heritage Conservation Award: mapping collective cultural spaces, the significance of intangible cultural heritage, authenticity, representation of knowledge, and reuse of heritage through reasonable use. The Asia-Pacific Heritage Conservation Award reflects the practice of world heritage conservation trends in Asia and is recognized as the "wind vane" of world heritage conservation trends, especially guiding the heritage conservation work of developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

2. INTRODUCTION TO ZHANGFEI TEMPLE FOLK CUSTOM STREET

2.1 Background and Vision of the Heritage Site

Zhangfei Temple, also known as Zhang Huanhou Temple, is located on the south bank of Nanbin Road in Yunyang County, Chongqing City, and is known as the beautiful place of Bashu and the land of literary talent[2]. Established during the late Shu Han period of the Three Kingdoms, the heritage site contains the legend that Zhang Fei's body was buried in Langzhong, and his head was buried in Yunyang. This temple was built to commemorate Zhang Fei, a famous general of the Shu Han during the Three Kingdoms period. Zhangfei Temple is a national

critical cultural relic protection unit and 4A-level tourist attraction. It holds a crucial position in Yunyang's cultural heritage. In recent years, especially under the environment of the country's vigorous development of the rural revitalization strategy, the local government of Yunyang County has carried out a diversified cultural tourism construction layout around Zhangfei Temple. Specifically, the Zhangfei Temple site continuously deepens the integration of regional cultural tourism. Based on this, Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Street, an upgraded project of the Zhangfei Temple scenic area, came into being.

Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Street covers an area of 59,000 square meters with a total construction area of 30,000 square meters [3]. It is located on the south bank of Nanbin Road in the county seat, facing Yunyang County across the river. Its geographical location is superior, and it is an important node connecting various scenic spots. It is 80 kilometers away from Longgang National Geopark and only 3 kilometers away from Mopanshan Scenic Area. The site has a rich history and an extended cultural context. Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Street is unique, using modern wooden structure technology. The wooden structure buildings of the entire street cover more than 9,000 square meters, making it the largest wooden structure ancient architectural complex in China. It mainly adopts the architectural style of local ancient houses and integrates elements of the Three Kingdoms culture. The street has traditional cultural areas such as folk streets, city gates, stages, watchtowers, and city walls. The existence of Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Street not only respects the inherent historical culture of the heritage site but also enhances the interactivity of the Zhangfei Temple scenic area with its characteristics of integrating culture, catering, landscape, leisure, and sightseeing experience into one.

2.2 Description of the Conservation Work Already Undertaken

Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Street was completed in 2022. It is a newly built ancient-style building integrated into the historical environment. The sustainable conservation work that has been carried out reflects the inheritance of cultural symbols, the continuation of the Three Kingdoms spirit, and the use of technical protection. The author will elaborate on these three aspects.

2.2.1 Inheritance of Cultural Symbols

The architectural style of ancient Yunyang guides the exterior design of Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Street during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. It fully extracts the traditional architectural symbols of local places such as Zhangfei Temple and Mopan Mountain Scenic Area (Figure 1) and Peng's Ancestral Hall Watchtower (Figure 2). Miniaturize it into Yunyang's local architecture through re-creation. For example, a three-entry courtyard behind the main city building of Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Street serves as the prologue of the entire street. Its layout inspiration comes from the research on the courtyard layout of Zhangfei Temple. Another example is the main entrance of Zhangfei Temple Folk Custom Street, which draws on the way of Panshi Mountain Scenic Area to pass through the city wall hole first and then enter the main building.



Figure 1: Mopan Mountain wall entrance



Figure 2: Peng's Ancestral Hall Watchtower

2.2.2 Continuation of the Spirit of the Three Kingdoms

From a static perspective, the culture of the Three Kingdoms has always permeated the neighborhood. In the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street, there are elements such as the Three Kingdoms cultural stone wall and sculptures depicting scenes of characters from the Three Kingdoms. Notably, to focus on displaying historical materials related to Zhang Fei, the central corridor of the neighborhood is designed as the Zhang Fei Story Corridor, emphasizing the promotion of Zhang Fei's spirit. However, the continuation of the spirit of the heritage site and active preservation efforts have always continued. For instance, to promote Zhang Fei's character spirit of loyalty, bravery, and righteousness[4], every year on the 28th day of the eighth lunar month, both the Zhangfei Temple scenic area and the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street hold the Zhangfei Temple Fair, integrating culture, religion, and trade. They organize ceremonies such as opening the temple gate, offering sacrifices for blessings, and ringing the thousand-year-old bell. Additionally, the Zhangfei Temple Fair features a Three Kingdoms-themed evening party, presenting artistic programs like The Mighty Ba Kingdom, The Oath of the Peach Garden, The Eternal Zhangfei Temple, and Retreat at Changban Attacking the enemy, showcasing the rich tourism heritage resources of the location.



Figure 3: Zhangfei Temple fair pageantry

2.2.3 Technical Monitoring and Protection

In construction, Building Information Modeling technology is adopted. Throughout the entire lifecycle of the structure and facilities of the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street, their physical and functional characteristics

are digitally expressed. The design, construction, and operation processes and outcomes are based on this, with all model components in the neighborhood strictly controlled by parameters[5]. They can freely change according to the parameters while adhering to engineering practices, achieving visualization and optimization of the construction of the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street. In terms of conservation, digital monitoring technology is introduced. Dynamic monitoring of the entire chain, such as digital archiving and virtual reconstruction of the Three Kingdoms cultural stone wall, sculptures depicting scenes of characters from the Three Kingdoms, and the Zhang Fei Achievement Cultural Corridor in the neighborhood, provides a fresh perspective on the protection and utilization of the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street.

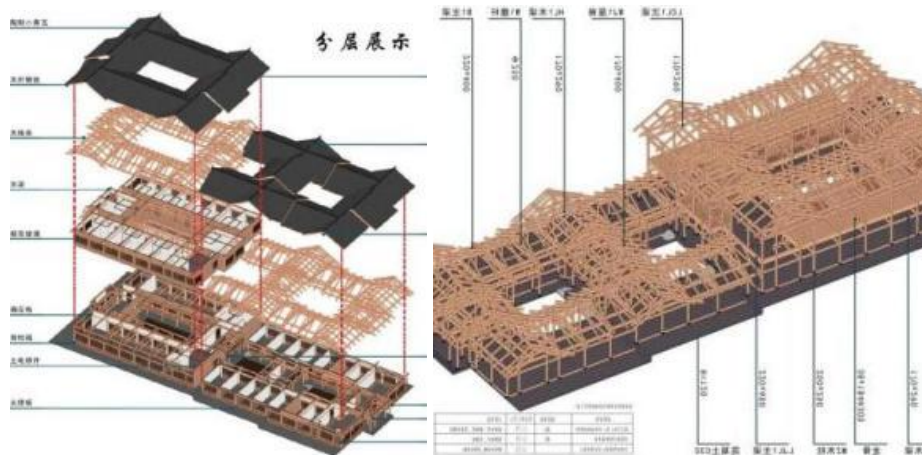


Figure 4: Examples of BIM technology effects

3. ANALYSIS OF NEW DESIGN AWARD CRITERIA

This section will refer to the New Design Award in the historical environment of the Asia-Pacific Cultural Heritage Conservation Award. Taking the Yunyang Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street as an example, it compares and analyzes the award criteria for new designs regarding situational design, sustainability, and impact. It explores the rationality and design flaws of the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street and extracts the conditions that should be met to win the New Design Award in the historic environment. The aim is to promote the positive development of cultural heritage sites by applying for the New Design Award and encouraging more projects that integrate new buildings well into the historic environment.

3.1 Situational Design

3.1.1 Innovative Design Concept

The design concept should demonstrate critical thinking that innovatively responds to a specific heritage background. The innovative response of the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street design is reflected in two aspects: On one hand, the neighborhood construction chose representative local venues (such as city walls, old houses, and stages) and adopted an integrated design approach. While maintaining the characteristics of the place, they simplified and constructed in line with the situation, critically inheriting the style of the heritage site and enhancing the local spatial attractiveness of the entire region. On the other hand, the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street boldly innovated the wall height[6], raising it by 6-9 meters in total, resolving the relative height difference issue between the entrance of the Zhangfei Temple scenic area and the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street, achieving a balance in their heights. Subsequently, using the elevated part of the wall, they created a retro-style city wall, breaking the traditional height limit of the city wall, reducing the conventional city wall height to 3-6 meters, and dividing the interior space of the city wall into two layers for parking and commercial purposes. This not only reduced the excavation of soil and rock at the heritage site but also solved the problem of parking difficulties for tourists. However, the innovative critical thinking of the design concept did not prevent the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street from falling into the trap of homogenization. The appearance of the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street lacks distinctive local memory points, still facing the same face for a thousand streets issue, lacking in-depth exploration of the historical accumulation and local cultural connotations of the heritage site. Protecting ancient buildings and cultural restoration has form but lacks substance.

3.1.2 Revealing Local Quality

New designs should help reveal the quality of the place, including its history, architecture, culture, and social significance. The Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street promotes the local cultural and historical atmosphere to some extent through physical means such as the Zhang Fei Story Corridor and the organization of the Zhangfei Temple Fair. However, in reality, the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street still uses traditional advertising methods like poster posting and rarely integrates with social media for promotion. For example, construction structures, floor plans, and detailed photos of heritage materials are seldom made public to the public through online platforms, and heritage protection agencies and related policies are rarely publicized in the media. At the same time, there are no professional guides in the neighborhood to introduce tourists to the local heritage spirit. They rely solely on tourists to actively enter the neighborhood to understand the heritage spirit, making the promotion seem passive and weak, needing more expressive power for the local heritage spirit.

3.1.3 Compatibility with the Environment

The procedures or functions of the new design should be compatible and appropriate within its environment. The Zhangfei Temple scenic area, which was relocated due to the Three Gorges Project, lacked supporting tourist facilities in its vicinity. The commercial function of the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street addressed this issue. For instance, the construction of the boutique courtyard inn meets the accommodation requirements for families and groups (Figure 5). However, on the flip side, the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street tends to be overly commercialized. The imbalance between commerce and culture in the neighborhood artificially isolates the original life information and cultural characteristics. The historical and cultural heritage, architectural style, neighborhood landscape, and sculptures are gradually becoming empty shells of culture, lacking interactive, experiential, and immersive tourist experiences.

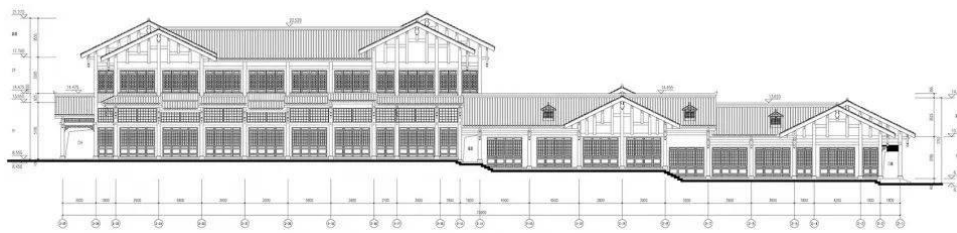


Figure 5: Facade of the Courtyard Inn

3.1.4 Relationship with the Surrounding Environment

The relationship of the new design with existing buildings and the natural environment. Factors include but are not limited to type, location, volume, form, scale, features, color, and texture. Adhering to the principle of staying within the attention of tourists, the design of the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street primarily focuses on small scales, volumes, and spaces. In terms of color layout, the roofs use small blue and glazed tiles, and the wall tiles consistently use green[7] without forming a dominant position. As a result, the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street has always existed as an adjunct to the Zhangfei Temple, has not been independent development, and has yet to form the unique cultural connotation and spiritual value of the block. Moreover, the commercial streets, parking lots, and other facilities in the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street are densely packed and overlook the proportional relationship with the surrounding mountains and waters, which has led to the impact on the historical regionalism of Zhangfei Temple.

3.1.5 Quality and Technical Rationality

The rationality of the choice and quality control of materials and construction techniques. The Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street actively responds to the carbon-neutral goal, using the most energy-efficient and environmentally friendly wooden structure buildings. The Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street resembles an ancient city, presenting the Zhangfei Temple scenic area in a new image of the ancient neighborhood and ancient temple, trying to capture the feel of the old Ba-Yu water town. However, the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street is built close to the Yangtze River, posing a potential risk of flooding, with high maintenance, operation, and repair costs. As the largest wooden structure complex in China, the neighborhood inherently has many combustibles, a high fire load, a low fire resistance level, and narrow evacuation channels. Coupled with potential external risks, a

fire could quickly spread rapidly. Furthermore, the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street is far from the city center and lacks other supporting infrastructure. Not only that, the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street is designed as a corridor-type building, significantly reducing the usable area and making it challenging to accommodate the tourist volume of the Yunyang International Tourism Zone in the long run.

3.2 Sustainability and Impact

3.2.1 Impact on Heritage Sites

The contribution to the environmental sustainability and resilience of heritage sites is reflected. The 1963 Venice Charter by the International Council on Monuments and Sites states that special attention must be paid to the location of cultural heritage to protect the integrity of heritage sites and to ensure that cultural heritage is appropriately cleaned and displayed[9]. On the one hand, the design of Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street incorporates the typical ancient architectural style of Yunyang and inherits the layout and colors of Zhangfei Temple. At the same time, digital monitoring technology is used to protect the original cultural connotations of the heritage site. These concepts have enhanced the cultural heritage resilience of the Zhangfei Temple scenic area to some extent. On the other hand, the restoration of the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street remains superficial, imitating and mechanically recounting the past. The construction of narrative space is still in a state of fault separation, which is not enough to convey the historical information and humanistic connotation of the Zhangfeimiao folk customs Street heritage site completely.

3.2.2 Contribution to Local Development

It should contribute to the socio-economic well-being, cultural continuity, and development needs of the local community. Shan Jixiang, the former director of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China, once stated that We must respect and maintain the connection and emotions between the people and cultural heritage, guaranteeing the people's right to know, supervise, participate, and benefit[10].The establishment of Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street has promoted the development of the local tertiary industry, stimulated the growth of related industrial chains, enhanced regional economic influence, and further narrowed the urban-rural poverty gap. However, as the popularity of Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street continues to grow, it poses significant challenges to the local ecological environment, residents' lives, and the protection of cultural relics and historical sites. These impacts may undermine local cultural identity, exacerbate divisions among people, and diminish local historical pride. In the long run, the inheritance of cultural heritage is worrisome, and the phenomenon of disappearing cultural environments is unfolding.

3.2.3 Broader Value Reflected

Whether architecture influences local, national, regional or international architectural practice and design policy. There are countless successful examples of antique architectural complexes. As a newly established antique architectural complex, Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street is still in its infancy, with limited design experience to draw from. Block is located on the edge of Chongqing County, the local LongGang National Wetland Park, Three Gorges Ladder City, and other old tourist places. Compared to famous tourist spots in Chongqing's central city, such as Hongyadong and Jiefangbei, its influence is minimal. Furthermore, its flaws naturally prevent it from influencing national, regional, or international architectural practices and design policies.

4. CONCLUSION

The revitalization of cultural heritage allows people to enjoy more heritage protection results, enrich people's spiritual world, and strengthen the nation's spiritual strength. Through a comparative analysis of the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street case and the new design award criteria in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Conservation Award, it can be concluded that the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street did not win an award in the 2022 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Conservation Award for the following reasons: First, concerning the heritage site, it always exists as an adjunct to the Zhangfei Temple scenic area, lacking distinctive memory points. In future planning, it should innovate based on tradition, break free from existing constraints, continue the low-rise high-density urban texture, retain the pattern and scale of alleys and courtyards while maintaining the continuity of the skyline, use sculptures, city walls, and other nodes to create highlights and build a regional spiritual identity. Secondly, in promoting local quality, relying solely on traditional advertising methods makes displaying local rates seem passive and weak. In the future, the neighborhood should seize the dividends of the digital age, make

good use of digital media and technology, actively explore innovative models to develop the district's digital economy, and vividly showcase regional quality from all angles. Lastly, regarding sustainable development, the neighborhood has limited potential to drive local economic growth, needs more regional spiritual communication, and faces high subsequent repair and protection costs. In the future, it needs to revive regional spirit through inheriting traditional culture, strengthening regional cohesion, protecting intangible cultural heritage, and carrying out public education. At the same time, by creating more additional industries and employment opportunities, the block becomes the economic activator of the surrounding area to maintain the operating costs of the later block and drive regional economic development.

On the land of the motherland, Yunyang Zhangfei Temple is the only one, then Zhangfei Temple folk customs street should also be unique. Antique architecture should not be a retro mechanical style but a place to show the core of cultural heritage and the wisdom of residents. In the future development planning of Zhangfeimiao Folk Custom Street, it is necessary to follow the positioning principles of architecture as the form, culture as the soul, tourism as the leader, and business as the main body [11], based more on the contemporary life context, listen to the historical and cultural language, innovate the operation and publicity methods, stimulate the creativity of the cultural tourism industry, create the advantage of alienation of business trips, and strive to highlight the fierce competition. Construct the high-quality development pattern of Zhangfei Temple scenic spot. Only in this way can the Zhangfei Temple Folk Customs Street stand tall in the historical river and the tide of the times, enduring forever.

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