

# Research on the Balance of Urban Historical Blocks -- Taking the Area Around Jiangnan Road Pedestrian Street in Wuhan as an Example

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**Abstract.** Urban renewal and upgrading is inevitable, and excellent historical districts are cultural carriers that cannot be copied in the process of urban development. The relationship between fashion and history should co-exist. Taking Jiangnan Road Pedestrian Street Block as an example, this paper analyzes how to deal with the balance between the old and the new in urban construction, and how to integrate the fresh sense of humanistic fashion into the historical block, and discusses the historical and cultural value, current situation of Jiangnan Road Pedestrian Street architecture and the development strategy of its fashion block. By providing information collected through investigation and reading literature, we can conclude and infer its development direction and public will, and then discuss the gradual renewal direction of historical districts in turn. Taking it as an example, this paper preliminarily explains the important role and significance of historical and cultural blocks in enriching people's living environment and spiritual world.

**Keywords:** Balance between Old and New; Historical and Cultural Blocks; Humanistic Fashion; Protection and Renewal.

## 1. Introduction

With China's industrialization, urbanization has developed rapidly. The economic level is growing at a high speed, and people's living standards are constantly improving. The new generation of young consumers is growing. With the rapid development of urban modernization, in particular, the historical and cultural blocks of Jiangnan Road in Wuhan have been announced as the first batch of national historical and cultural blocks by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Rural Development and the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, and are also selected as historical and cultural blocks in Hubei Province. The Wuhan Municipal Party Committee and the Wuhan Municipal Government have launched a transformation plan for Jiangnan Road. In this digital era, the latest information and trends spread rapidly to all parts of the country, and the unchanging will eventually lead to the demise. In Jiangnan Road Pedestrian Street, a gathering place for young people, it is necessary to keep pace with fashion and actively update and upgrade. The demand of consumers in the market is gradually pursuing high quality (good shopping experience, good commodity quality) commodities with aesthetic taste. Good shopping experience is divided into shopping environment and shopping service. The shopping environment is divided into the environment inside the store and the environment outside the store. Therefore, a good transformation should be the result of the joint efforts of the government, developers, citizens and merchants. In recent years, the reconstruction of Jiangnan Road Pedestrian Street in Wuhan focused on the reconstruction of the outside environment and the upgrading of stores, and made a series of measures to deal with the balance between the old and the new in urban construction and improve the quality of cultural life of citizens. This move not only revitalized the whole street, but also promoted the recovery of the surrounding economy. With the help of the "long holiday" of the new crown epidemic, the pedestrian street is perfectly rejuvenated.

## 2. Meaning in Historical and Cultural Blocks

For Jiangnan Road Commercial Street, which has been mainly commercial for a hundred years, it is particularly important to update the store image, store decoration, and brand selection and introduction. Jiangnan Road Pedestrian Street Business District plays a certain role in driving the

economy of Wuhan, promoting the economic development of Wuhan and providing huge employment. But it also has its particularity. In particular, the Jiangnan Road pedestrian street has historical buildings that reflect the characteristics of the times and foreign architectural style. These historical buildings bear a long history of Jiangnan Road and are a part of the history and culture of Jiangnan Road, which means that Jiangnan Road Pedestrian Street is very important for Wuhan, both in business and in history and culture. Due to the economic development needs of Jiangnan Road Pedestrian Street, this street needs to attract more consumers to come for consumption. This requires the government, developers, merchants and local residents to work together to make some changes so that it can always have its unique appeal. According to the main audience groups of Jiangnan Road, Wuhan government has formulated the transformation direction of the pedestrian street. Its goal is to build Jiangnan Road pedestrian street into a trendy street, and most of the street merchants are young consumer groups. The pedestrian street is also integrated with the most popular emerging elements. The injection of emerging fashion elements will add new vitality to Jiangnan Road.

The pursuit of fashion seems to have become a common practice. But what is fashion? In a broad sense, fashion represents respect for a certain period (time), and represents a series of social activities with innovative models and new trends. The dictionary defines fashion as a combination of fashion and fashion. The so-called time is time. The time is in a period of time; Advocate means advocating, being noble, having high taste and leading. Fashion may be a kind of replacement, where new things replace old ones, or old things are designed and transformed into new ones. Roads and buildings are not easy to make new ones to replace the old ones, so in environmental design, fashion in historical and cultural blocks can be understood as dynamic protection and gradual renewal. [1] Dynamic protection and gradual renewal refer to a process of continuous improvement and deepening. Appropriate protection methods can be formulated according to specific status quo, which is conducive to maintaining the historical value of historical districts, and can also meet the needs of the development of the times. In the historical buildings, "Shang" is undeniably persistent, and "Shi" can be achieved by relying on the current reasonable protection and upgrading of the surrounding environment. Technology fashion, form fashion and retro fashion are all fashion. Use these fashion elements to make the historical buildings more attractive with the traces of time passing behind the fashion blocks.

### 3. The Historical and Cultural Value of Jiangnan Road Pedestrian Street

In his book *Space, Time and Architecture*, Siegfried Gideon wrote that architecture is an index of the times, which reflects the development and life process of the times. It can be said that the historical buildings are equivalent to a video recorder recording the political changes, life changes, population changes and so on in this street for thousands of years. The historical and cultural block is a place with extremely "spatial characteristics". It takes the historical and cultural atmosphere as its most abundant characteristic, showing the multi-level intrinsic value of materiality and immateriality. Through the adjustment and distribution of a series of modern commercial formats, it has formed a unique sense of history and place, reflecting the diversity of urban culture. It plays an important role in extending the urban context [2]. The more abundant the historical stories carried and recorded by the old buildings, the more worthy of protection. This not only provides a favorable basis and reference for future generations to study the changes of the time, but also serves as a spiritual sustenance for local people to recall the past. Youlou, "Straight out of Xincheng Road, horses and carriages are woven like shuttles and people, and late at night, the song has never stopped." Today, the past is still prosperous. After local reconstruction and protection, there are still 13 excellent modern historical buildings and many buildings with style and features on both sides of the road, which have well preserved their architectural history.

Jiangnan Road was awarded the first batch of Chinese historical and cultural blocks by the National Bureau of Progress and National Cultural Heritage in 2015. The blocks have retained the Roman style, Byzantine style, European classicism, modernism and other styles of historical buildings. It is a

famous commercial and financial district in modern Chinese history. These excellent historical buildings are a beautiful landscape of Wuhan. Today, Jiangnan Pass has become the city card and landmark of Wuhan. It not only attracts a large number of tourists from inside and outside the province to clock in, but also drives the economic development around.

#### **4. Balance between Modern and Historical Culture**

Fashion and history should not conflict, or even be closely related. Today's history is also once fashionable. History is a record of fashion, and they should coexist. Jiangnan Road pedestrian street block is not only an important place for people's daily shopping and social activities, but also a space carrier of traditional culture and historical memory. It is because of the existence of history that we feel the charm of fashion, but also because of the existence of fashion that history attracts people's aftertaste. In the past, many streets with a long history were undergoing large-scale reconstruction, and the pursuit of "new" destroyed the street style and historical characteristics formed over hundreds of years, which also led to the lack of historical details of the reconstructed streets. Therefore, compared with the new trend, the streets are the real "essence" of China for those excellent historical buildings with real historical and cultural heritage.

##### **4.1 Technical Facilities**

In his book "House Form and Culture", Amos Lappot wrote that the primitive and vernacular buildings that have survived today are subject to the level of technology and lifestyle in the times, rather than the length of historical evolution. With the progress of the times, historical districts should also keep pace with the times and make reasonable improvements following the fashion. Therefore, the transformation of pedestrian street is also in line with science and technology. The application of smart light pole (Figure 1) on the pedestrian street has improved the sense of science and technology of the street. Wireless charging provides convenience for tourists. The illumination of the light has also been studied and tested. The brightness is adjusted with time and changes in the surrounding environment. It not only brings people a comfortable lighting experience, but also saves electricity. Smart light pole also combines fashion with history. The combination of Chinese and Western smart light poles not only combines the curly cloud pattern in Chu culture in shape, but also follows the trend of the times in science and technology. It has realized a number of smart applications of black technology, including 5G coverage, Tiangang project, smart street, mobile wireless charging, smart manhole cover, voice broadcast, one button help seeking, smart release, environmental monitoring, smart lighting, pedestrian flow monitoring, smart investment prevention, etc, It has become one of the first batch of pilot commercial pedestrian streets in China, the "SG Smart Pedestrian Street" with leading intelligence and functional complexity. It will become a strong support for Wuhan to take the lead in achieving full 5G coverage, leading the construction of smart cities and activating the prosperity and vitality of pedestrian streets [3]. The pedestrian street closely following the fashion trend has a huge naked 3D screen in the center of the pedestrian street (Figure 2). With the use of modern technology, people can feel the realistic 3D effect without using any tools. It can attract people to stop and give people an immersive visual feast while they are shopping.

##### **4.2 On the Store Image**

As the main unit of the block, the store is also upgraded with the pedestrian street, from selling goods to displaying the image and culture of the brand. A variety of brand flagship stores, image stores, concept stores and experience stores have been added to improve the store level of the pedestrian street [4]. Some merchants also spontaneously upgraded their stores. For example, the upgrading of stores and brands represented by the central department store (Figure 3). The number of low-end brands without security also decreased significantly. Create a new high-quality fashion image. While the store was upgraded, the exterior walls of the historic buildings on the pedestrian street were also reasonably renovated.

### 4.3 Infrastructure

In addition to ensuring the quality of infrastructure and hardware facilities, the pedestrian street also needs to improve its artistic quality through the beautification design of the street environment, which conforms to the aesthetic style of modern urban consumers [3]. The pedestrian street after this transformation has been greatly improved in terms of details. The benches, which were originally made of marble and granite for tourists to rest, are replaced by wooden ones. Where space is given, there is also a backrest, which greatly increases the comfort. *Cinnamomum camphora*, which often falls with purple and black fruits near the bench, is now replaced with a well maintained (tree). The barrier post at the intersection to control the flow of people is also upgraded to an electronic lifting post, which can be adjusted with the flow of people, providing security for pedestrians. On the ground pavement. Selected granite and cement slate. The color echoes with the exterior wall of the building. The smooth granite on both sides of the road is not a concave and convex cement stone plate. Matte smooth granite is laid under the rough exterior wall, and the distinction of texture and color is rhythmic. The slender sewer is added, which is almost invisible on the ground, beautiful and atmospheric, and solves the problem of road area water. The small green plants and logo design on the dustbin have changed people's stereotyped influence on the dustbin. Set up a small distribution square to create an open and inclusive space. The small distribution square has become an important outdoor activity site for community residents, providing an excellent outdoor public space for the crowded urban environment. The small distribution square has a superior geographical position in the city, so it can participate in cultural life with citizens and provide entertainment and leisure places for citizens' activities.

### 4.4 Create Regional Image

And added the visual image design of Jiangnan Road, and applied the logo design to every detail. For example, Jiangnan Road logo design is also attached to the surface well cover. In addition, the design of the trash can (picture) not only integrates the sign design of Jiangnan Road, but also sets green plants on the trash can, paying more attention to the principles of green design and ecological design. While upgrading the infrastructure, it is also beautifying the environment. In terms of details, the pedestrian sign system, ground, manhole cover, etc. are also attached with the sign design of Jiangnan Road. The existing historical buildings in the pedestrian street are sorted out, and the general outline of the historical buildings is outlined through abstract and simplified design techniques. The visual effect is concise and comprehensive, which also forms a unique regional identity.

## 5. The Development Strategy of Building a Balanced Historical Block

Now these new changes: the application of science and technology, more beautiful street design, more atmospheric ground pavement, more humane rest area, more reasonable plant landscape design, more ecological green design principle, more optimized small gathering square, etc. are all optimized and transformed on the basis of protecting historical and cultural buildings, and improved in the direction of creating a better life and culture, This direction of renewal and transformation is worth continuing. If we put aside the historical connotation and blindly pursue new things, we will lose ourselves.

### 5.1 Improve Living Space

Although the main street has taken on a new look, the main residential areas on both sides of the main street have not been updated and upgraded to meet the development of the times. Due to the poor living environment, most of the aborigines can move away. Most of the remaining residents are aging residents, and most of the tenants are low-income migrant workers nearby. The social stratum is single and the environment is dilapidated. When thinking about the relationship between place and space, Heidegger elaborated the important significance of human in space, and pointed the ultimate interpretation of this space to human's "poetic living". Whether residents or tourists, consumers,

buildings and blocks should serve people. It should be improved to provide a good living environment for residents and a good experience for tourists and consumers. [5] The main body of the residence in the historical district is the carrier of the historical culture, and the folk forces play an indispensable role in the inheritance and development of the urban traditional culture. It contains all kinds of groups in urban life, which should not be excluded because of their class and living conditions, but should be regarded as an organic whole. Only by maintaining and restoring the public value and social value, can the historical districts revive and keep up with the times.

The era of demolition and construction should no longer exist. On the basis of respecting the historical buildings, we should use the concept of "gradual renewal" to protect the historical buildings. On the premise of not affecting the overall style of the block, we should plan, guide and gradually renovate the severely damaged buildings in a small scale according to their original appearance, and reasonably repair, maintain and carry forward the local historical culture. In terms of infrastructure and living environment, we should create a fresh and dynamic living environment for residents to avoid making old residential areas become old residential areas.

## 5.2 Enrich Spiritual and Cultural Life

Culture is the foundation of a nation, and cultural life and people's daily life should be inseparable. Provide space for cultural exchange, record history and culture, and enrich people's cultural life experience. On today's Jiangnan Road, you can see the Jiangnan Pass Museum (Figure 8), which is built on historical and cultural buildings, and the Time Museum at the exit of a residential area (Figure 9). They are "tools" to help people better understand the historical and cultural connotation of Jiangnan Road. Although such a simple space as the Time Museum has a limited scope and many shortcomings, this form of combining museum museum and museum built in historical buildings with the entertainment of modern young people deserves our in-depth study.

In the fast-paced life style of today's world, the life style of young people has changed a lot. Maybe they will not take the time to visit a museum or art museum, but when they go shopping, they are often attracted by a small museum or exhibition with distinctive characteristics on a street. For example, Jiangnan Pass Museum, which is built in Jiangnan Pass, shows visitors that the museum itself is a historical building, and the museum itself has historical and cultural value. When visitors come to Jiangnan Road Pedestrian Street, from the Xunlimen Pedestrian Street to the end of Jiangnan Pass Pedestrian Street, they will see Jiangnan Pass Museum. On the way, we also passed the Time Museum. People will enter the museum or stroll in the pedestrian street with great interest. At the same time, seeing the nearby Time Museum, a small and accessible museum, will make it easy for visitors to step in and learn about the history, culture and stories of Jiangnan Road.

The idea like the Time Museum is worth deepening, and its expression form should be in line with modern times. Breaking the stereotyped influence of museums, the audience on the pedestrian street is a relatively young group, and this stereotyped form is no longer attractive. The theme should be set in the interior according to the current fashion trend through design planning, just like the shop window in the mall, which can be appreciated so that it can really play its value. The change in the presentation form of the museum is more ornamental and attractive. For example, the Daxia Bookstore in the shopping center of Shanghai Libao Paradise, which is novel in form, integrates the museum into the physical bookstore. This relatively new combination is a win-win measure for both bookstores and museums. In fact, the audience groups of bookstores and museums have the same big problem. They all want to get knowledge, so colleagues who visit museums or read books can learn more at the same time. This is undoubtedly a very beneficial measure for the people. Xinhua Bookstore, located in the golden area of Jiangnan Road subway entrance, may be able to use this form for reference.

Such a form of cultural communication is worthy of our in-depth study. If we make good use of this form and develop it, it will be set up on the street, or in a place full of historical stories, which is similar to time. No matter how small the museum is, it can also enrich the spiritual and cultural world of young people. I believe that it will be more perfect under continuous updating in the future.

## 6. Conclusion

In the constant updating and upgrading of real life, I have learned that there is no eternal fashion, only eternal history. Respecting history, protecting history, and fearing history are the basic principles that each of us should abide by. It also made me understand that there is no fashion without history. In other words, history is the same as the past, fashion is the same as the present, they are an opposite existence, but they are interdependent. Our understanding of fashion in daily life is too one-sided. For example, clothing fashion, decoration fashion, etc. are limited to superficial fashion, ignoring the importance of many aspects in people's psychology and life. Fashion does not mean keeping a distance from people's daily life. Jiangnan Road Block, which aims to build a fashion fashion street, should enter people's daily life, so that fashion can improve people's quality of life, and at the same time, let the cultural atmosphere in life promote the development of fashion. Only by letting the fashion of the block enter the life, can the economic, social, cultural and aesthetic functions of the block be fully developed, so that the business card of Wuhan Jiangnan Road can be spread more widely, leading the fashion trend of the block in Wuhan and even the whole country.

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