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COMMUNICATING HERITAGE THROUGH URBAN SPACE: ANCIENT COMMERCIAL CULTURE AND THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF SHAOXING WATER TOWN

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Abstract

This research examines the relationship between the old business customs of Shaoxing's water villages and the development of modern cities. The paper tries to compare how Shaoxing water towns grew up with other old commercial centers in China. This shows how different Shaoxing's commercial habits are and their effect on city growth and culture landscapes. Discoveries show that traditional Shaoxing business keeps the economy going and also helps modern city growth with more culture-related tourism activities. There is a need emphasized by this study for those who make laws to balance the keeping of historical things with the need for new city demands. It proposes policies targeted at blending heritage retention with economic steps forward. With the help of thorough talks with communities and interested parties, the research broadens how we see commercial culture mixing with town developments. The results bring notable insights to those who plan cities, keep cultural history secure, and make policies, showing how keeping cultural history ties with economic running well and giving learnings that might help other towns with deep old business cultures.

Keywords: Ancient Commercial Culture, Historic District, Urban Development, Shaoxing, Commercial Culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Shaoxing, nestled in the north-central area of Zhejiang Province in China, is an historic metropolis unusual by way of its widespread historic history and profound cultural heritage, as cited by means of Fang, Li, and others in 2023 Fang and Li (2023), alongside Wang, Zhang and Peng (2023). With a records spanning over 2,500 years (Fang & Li, 2023; Wang et al., 2023), Shaoxing's developmental experience is specially noteworthy. In 490 BC, King Goujian of Yue capitalized on the region's hill and undeniable terrain to set up a city, marking the

inception of Yuezi City, now identified as the Yuezi City Historic District, referenced by way of Wang, Zhang and Xi (2022), Yu et al. (2022) and Zhou et al. (2023).

During the period of the Southern Song Dynasty, Shaoxing developed to its heyday and became the nation's political, commercial, cultural and communications hub. Although its popularity declined after the Song Dynasty, the metropolis maintained its importance through some administrative adjustments. Historically, Shaoxing's urban expansion has been extraordinary. It gained prominence sometime in the Eastern Jin Dynasty and was known throughout the Tang Dynasty as the best of the seven Eastern Zhejiang States, as evidenced by Li et al. (2023) along with Shao, Wen and White (2022) and Wa (2023). The Southern Song Dynasty (Li et al., 2023; Shao et al., 2022; Wa, 2023), Shaoxing is one of the largest towns in the world by area, alongside Jinling, although it is confined to an area of 8.32 square kilometers demarcated by a shielded moat.

In respect of city planning, Shaoxing adheres to the principle of “ construction of cities that will be residential areas ”, ensuring the scientific selection of plans and logical equipment, taking into account the needs of defense, security, external transportation and the needs of the city's inhabitants for production and daily life, as emphasized by the party of the year 2023 (Fang, 2023).

In terms of urban construction, Shaoxing experienced continuous improvement due to the establishment of the initial small capital city and the large mountain Yin city by King Goujian. In the Sui Dynasty, Luocheng was built after the self-formed system of the Northern Song Dynasty. Further expansion took place during the Southern Song Dynasty, through Yang and Xu (2023). During the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, people made attempts to restore town zoning and assemble related facilities. Shaoxing's specificity is evident in its historical process. Starting from the Eastern Han Dynasty, the improvement of channels, bridges and bazaars, including the construction of lakes, transformed Shaoxing into a specific water town, as mentioned by Ge (2022) and Xu and Sun (2021). It is worth noting that during its 2,500 years of development, Shaoxing has continued to improve its city structure and infrastructure while maintaining its previous ecological environment and standardizing its city configuration. Shaoxing was recognized as a National Historical and Cultural City earlier and has cultural and historical landmarks such as 2 National Historical and Cultural Towns, 1 National Historical and Cultural Village, 3 Provincial Historical and Cultural Towns, 13 Chinese Cultural Commonality Villages, and more than 100 different types of Commonality Villages. In addition, Shaoxing is part of the Grand Canal of China, which is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as Yu said in 2023 (Yu, 2023). The city has 395 national, municipal and provincially recognized cultural heritages and 339 items of non-material cultural heritages. Its historical and cultural heritage includes famous residences, ordinary mansions, temples, bridges and different structures with many relationships dating back to the Ming and Qing dynasties. It is worth noting that these buildings, especially famous residences, ordinary mansions and temples, are examples of architectural fashion in Shaoxing's historic streets. In the history of Shaoxing's prosperity through Reyes Escate, Hoogesteger and Boelens (2022), Mallik and Chhatar (2021), Mishra and Saxena (2024) and Lamadrid and Rivera (2023). This historic waterway has not only contributed to transportation and economic changes, but has also nurtured a special water culture. The history of the Shoreline Watertown is inextricably linked to its commercial culture. Due to its excellent water transport infrastructure, Shaoxing became a typical industrial core in ancient times. Its convenient waterways have made it a fundamental node of the north-south alternate route, attracting retailers from numerous regions and facilitating the alternation of goods and industrial practices. In Shaoxing's Water City, commercial activity contributes to a thriving cityscape characterized by bustling markets and lively service provider activity. This monetary boom greatly influenced Shaoxing's way of life and cultural identity through Chabrowski (2022a), Chabrowski (2022b) and Hu

(2023). The sparkling industrial way of life is reflected in the alternation of merchandise, architectural impacts, culture and art. The abundance of retailers and the blend of many cultures made Shaoxing Watertown a suitable vacation spot historically. Nevertheless, the legal elements of Shaoxing Watertown are undergoing substantial changes as times and urbanization accelerate. Modern-day city growth, marked by industrialization and industrial expansion, poses significant challenges to many older neighborhoods and buildings, such as Fang (2023), Lu (2023), and Wang (2022). The elimination of historic buildings has taken place, making the growth of the town possible, and now includes some common waterways, which have changed the appearance of the town.

Evolution and development are intrinsically linked, including the enormous challenges posed by urbanization, as emphasized by Li et al. (2022) and Liu et al. (2022). The development of modern cities requires extra land and increased infrastructure, mainly a change in the normal layout of water villages. The historically glorious commercial districts gradually shifted their activities, with large factories replacing small workshops and artisans. This transformation has affected the special cultural heritage of the Shaoxing water Village, as stated by Gyourko et al.(2022). However, as mentioned by Yang, Zang and Chen (2022), current urbanization offers new avenues for growth in Shaoxing. The restructuring of city planning has facilitated the maintenance and revitalization of active historic sites, attracting Jiang et al. (2022) and Ma and Wang Ma and Wang (2022). While common processes face challenges, this approach to improvement has facilitated the emergence of new industries and innovation centers. As suggested by Yadav et al. (2022), Shaoxing has the opportunity to preserve its cultural heritage while embracing a new path of development by combining current urban elements with the conventional appeal of a water town.

Core aim of the study is to dive deep, get clear about the commercial stuff in Shaoxing's water town historic places, about its historical start and change, and yet focusing on cultural and economic weight of business there. On top of that, looking at how urbanization of now affects the historic district means seeing how the growth of cities affect old commercial culture. This whole looking-things-up covers various parts, like city planning, land use, and saving cultural heritage. Not only that, this research gives ideas and experiences for other cities that have same historically and culturally type of characteristics, offering value in thinking out their own growth plans.

2. BUSINESS CULTURE IN THE SHAOXING WATERTOWN HISTORIC AREA

2.1. Formation and Growth of Business Activities in Ancient Times

Shaoxing has a rich heritage and has been a major player in trade since olden times. Its location at the confluence of the Yangtze and Qiantang Rivers creates a unique network of waterborne shipping and trade. This location has given Shaoxing an important position in the main direction of north-south trade, which means that most of the trade takes place here.

At present, back in the Spring and Autumn times, when the state of Yue had its capital here, King Goujian had his smaller cities used for military and governmental purposes, while the larger cities became centers of economic development. When you look at how the city was laid out, it had hills kind of dropping into the plains, with higher parts to the south and north had the lower parts. In the smaller southern city part, Fushan took up almost a third, making a settlement easier. At Fushan's southeastern foothills, elevated, dry, rich in forest, were healthy for living, so early kingdom palaces settled performing city administration. But over in larger city area, terrain made it so that places people lived were in drier south, while markets and workshops liked the wetter northern parts. Water in the southern region initially flows through residential

areas for domestic use and then flows downstream to support productive activities. During the Spring and Autumn Period to the Qing Dynasty, Shaoxing's urban landscape changed dramatically. Following the Sui and Tang dynasties, the number of cities increased dramatically as the internal divisions of the city disintegrated during the Song and Yuan dynasties. The building structure continued to evolve, transitioning from the initial ward gadgets to an organized open style street plan. Similarly, ritual city sketches shifted from an east-west orientation to a nested sample of north-south orientations. In spite of these changes, the spatial employers of the historic towns remained generally the same, with the exception of the commercial districts. The distinctive compact town core continues to serve as a political center, housing government institutions. Meanwhile, the southern section, marked by a variety of topographies and a network of upstream rivers, developed as a focal element for decent housing. In the northeastern section near Jieshan, several workshops flourished and organized the main public activity areas of the town, as shown in Figure 1.

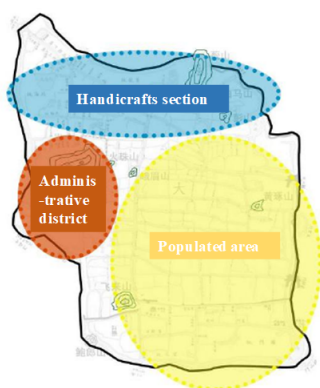


Figure 1: Diagram of the Old City's Spatial Pattern.

2.2. Business Space Expansion in Shaoxing Water Village Traditional Neighbourhoods

The inevitable evolution of the business sector stems from the herbal financial developments inherent in human society. However, in the case of the historic city of Shaoxing, the trajectories and samples of these changes are intricately woven into the evolution of its particular system of dykes and ponds. As mentioned earlier, this water installation served two purposes: it provided water for every day living and production, and it also facilitated internal transportation. The transportation potential of the Kittang system is closely related to historical canal transportation, which played a key role in shaping the industrial landscape of the city. The integration of waterways within the historic metropolis of Shaoxing was once seamless, particularly affecting the hilly-plain interface and the industrial growth of neighboring areas. The design of water installations immediately influenced the positioning of markets within towns, thus facilitating the establishment of commercial centers.

During the Qin, Han and Six Dynasties, the construction of Jianhu Canal and Xixing Canal greatly strengthened Shaoxing's land and water transportation infrastructure. Jianhu enlarged the arable land area of the plains, increased productivity, and promoted the production of agriculture and handicrafts. Excess products that used to be needed domestically have been turned into bulk commodities for overseas trade. These waters facilitated transportation between cities and rural areas, connecting Shaoxing to the central plains through the Taihu Lake basin. These infrastructures provided an important education in the expansion of transportation and exchange of goods, reshaping the city's

“well-side market” into a sprawling marketplace with several stores and residences. For a time, the market in this ethnic town was restricted to the middle of the Fuhao River due to ceremonial rules. During the Sui and Tang dynasties, Shaoxing’s waterborne communities developed extensively, and advertising exchanges and commerce once again appeared. The modern market within the city should no longer fulfill the aspirations of the developing industry, which led to the strengthening of the “suburban markets” at the doorstep of the metropolis. These markets utilized every land and water transportation route, providing an upward thrust to active industrial streets. This improvement facilitated the construction of wharves, warehouses, hotels, and a variety of ancillary services. The spatial prosperity of ancient towns dictated water transportation routes, enhancing connectivity between rural towns and rural settlements while expanding the urban footprint.

By the end of the Tang and beginning of the Song, this regulatory mechanism began to disintegrate, and inner-city markets and cities transcended their previous limitations. As shown in Figure 2, there were several markets in the city and its suburbs that facilitated economic linkages between urban and rural areas. City residences stretched beyond the zoning of the city, provided by communities that were facilitated by industrial shipping by land and water. Suburban villages have undergone urbanization and are regularly integrated into the urban fabric. The Xixing Canal is a major transportation artery that has played an integral role in the relocation of the industrial core of this historic city. The physical market site near the Qingdao Bridge, located roughly at the geometric core of the city, has developed into a bustling industrial core along the banks of the Fuhao River, the inner-city location of the Xixing Canal, and the intersection of the Dajiang Bridge. Along this axis, eight markets are strategically positioned and surrounded by industrial facilities, stations, monasteries and astronomical observatories. This area has steadily grown to become the active heart of Shaoxing, luring officials, residents and retailers. In addition to these daily markets, regular markets thrived along with local customs, like the Lantern Festival Market at the Kaiyuan Temple, where a wide variety of goods were displayed, including jade, silk, pearls, rhinoceroses’ horns, perfumes, valuable drugs, fabrics for embroidery, and lacquer ware. Occasionally, calligraphy, famous paintings, bells, ceremonial vessels, and a wide variety of rare treasures are also traded, including the magnificence and hustle and bustle of these marketing activities. Traffic hubs, such as the “Siming Raft Gathering Place” and the sizable bridges and canal junctions, also spontaneously developed into bustling markets as items changed hands. For example, the area between Dongshuangqiao and Gwangnyeongqiao, which connects the Rumon, Wuyumon land gate and Dosimun water gate, flourished with the transit of retailers aided by the land and water passages. Wharves, stores, taverns and teahouses gathered here, organizing it as an important center of civic activity.

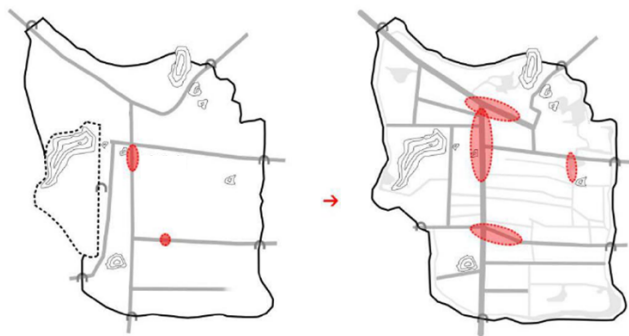


Figure 2: Variation of Business Space Layout in the Former District.

2.3. Business and Cultural Spatial Layout of Shaoxing Waterfront Historic Area

The Shaoxing Waterfront's approach to urban improvement cannot be separated from the careful planning and programming of its business district. Centered on preserving and communicating its rich history and culture, Shaoxing strives to seamlessly combine common building aesthetics with today's industrial needs in its industrial neighborhood planning. Centered on preserving and communicating its rich history and culture, Shaoxing strives to seamlessly combine common architectural aesthetics with today's industrial needs. This integration aims to cultivate cutting-edge businesses while preserving the water town's special historic appeal.

In designing these business districts, building patterns often follow the heritage of the historic neighborhoods. The renovation and revitalization of historic structures, in harmony with today's business texture, emphasizes the creative strengths of the record and broadens the draw of the industrial districts. In addition, access plans within these districts emphasize the preservation of historic street and alley patterns, giving them a deep historical resonance. Currently, Shaoxing's ancient neighborhoods are specifically divided into three fantastic types, as shown in Figure 3. The first is a logical area, structured about the river in a "linear" way. Business blocks are arranged around the river to create a market atmosphere in the waterfront area. The Anchang Ancient Town is a typical example of this type of layout, where the central street - the river - is more than 1,700 meters long and 8 - 16 meters wide, stretching across the whole town. Along the river there are two pedestrian streets, each 3 - 5 meters wide, stretching in the west from Qingdun Bridge to Gaoqiao Bridge in the east, known in China as "Sanli Long Street". The area extends mainly along the east-west axis of the street-river, with minimal expansion in the north-south direction. Buildings along the river and the street now do not form second stories or separate clusters of buildings parallel to the industrial street. This layout, known as the "single zone" or "single avenue zone", creates a clear distinction between the extended east-west direction of Anchang and its more limited north-south aspect, giving the area a logical progression of the moon.

The second category is the t-shaped port area, which is featured by the confluence of two streams forming a t-shaped intersection, according to which the basic roads are organized. Dongpu Old Town is a typical example of this type of arrangement. Dongpu Old Street is located in the center of the unique town of Dongpu, surrounding the t-shaped intersection of the Jie River and the Miaobashi River. The Jie River is about 600 meters in length between east and west, and the Miaojiao River is around 200 meters in length between north and south, and the main river is usually about 10 meters wide. The main streets are aligned with these rivers and are usually three to five meters wide. Despite the vast differences in scale between the Boundary and Temple Bridge Rivers, and irrespective of the dominant architecture of these rivers, the map of the area stretches in all four orientations from the confluence of the streams. Nevertheless, the area generally retains an east-west oriented direction. Branching streams diverge from the main stream to provide easy access to water and traffic for nearby inhabitants.

One third is a cross-port market town, forming a moving shape around two intersecting rivers, creating an active marketplace interconnected by bridges and streets. Keqiao Ancient Town is clearly characterized by a busy market area at the crossroads of the Hakkang, which is known as the "Four Mouths" in China. The ancient town of Keqiao appears at the intersection of the east-west oriented Zhedong Canal and the north-south oriented Ke River, along which it is built. As a result, the spatial form of the town resembles a moving shape with a significantly improved balance in the east-west and north-south directions, presenting a typical square look. The town is split into 4 quadrants by the river. Yongfeng Bridge, located in the center of the old city, is a central element of the older city, with well-preserved buildings along the river. However, over time, much of the area's civic architecture has been displaced by contemporary buildings.

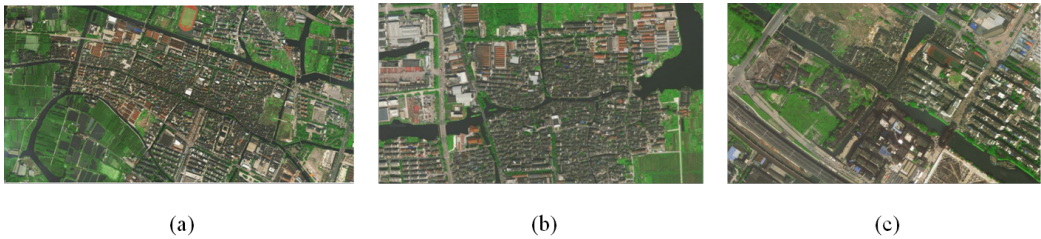


Figure 3: Three Shaoxing Waterfront Historic District Types.

2.4. The Fusion of Culture and Commerce

In Shaoxing Water Town, the commercial districts prioritize the seamless blend of culture and commerce, with this fusion being clearly reflected in both the architectural designs and the wide array of business activities. Markets in these zones tend to have a list of items and services of unique ethnic flavor water township as seen in Figure 4.

This document is about a layered comparison study concerning Water Town Shaoxing and Wuzhen, aiming to recognize the lasting commercial influences on modern-day cities' evolution. Water towns have set each different level of renown—Shaoxing, with its historical mercantile activity traditions, has affected today's urban layout and culture template, whereas Wuzhen is more noted for its well-upheld ancient houses and switch to a major place for tourists. Both water-centered locales are dealing with juggling past with the new. Shaoxing forces itself to fuse the new aura with old values via projects like cultural carnivals and business quests meant for tourist attraction and boosting finance movement. On the other side, Wuzhen specializes in tourism related to culture and sophisticated fairs like the Wuzhen Internet Conference, marking it as a place of global note yet keeping its old allure. The growth blueprints between them manifest differences in the degree of involvement amongst inhabitants and stakeholders. Shaoxing puts heavy care into people's welfare and participation when banking on tourism and enterprise ventures. Conversely, Wuzhen works towards growing an image fit for global recognition, which may sometimes clash with local interests of the people. Successes in business at Wuzhen demonstrate an approach applied right for commercializing old cultural assets. But, Shaoxing Water Town puts a bigger focus on safeguarding cultural roots and eco-growth practices together. These contrast different ways and consequences around keeping tradition and economic forward movement apparent between the sites.



Figure 4: Integration of Shaoxing Water Town Culture and Commerce.

Culture and commerce combining are clear seen in activities of culture and artistic displays happening where people go shopping. In the business areas of Shaoxing Water Town, cultural happenings such as art shows of the water town and old-style craft displays are frequently held. A lot of tourists and fans of culture come to see. Besides, public cultural places exist in these shopping districts for art shows, calligraphy, and other sorts of happenings, providing spots for locals to gain culture and have leisure time. Added to that, the food business in these areas shows the fusion of culture and business smoothly. Traditional cooking culture in Shaoxing Water Town is well-regarded, with many restaurants out there presenting real local foods. By keeping and also rethinking cooking traditions, visitors can get tasty food and feel the special culture and atmosphere of the place by water together. To sum up, the style of the architecture in Shaoxing Water Town's district is old and, along with how the commercial parts were planned and designed, there is some respect given to old traditions. Culture and commerce are mixing in business development that's more present day. This combination not only makes business in these areas stronger but is also quite important in saving the cultural past of the water town and shaping the city's identity which is urban in character. As we think about future planning and development in cities, this way of combining things is a good example for other historical cities, to get both economic growth and cultural history to exist together without one affecting the other too much.

3. THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN OLD BUSINESS CULTURE AND MODERN CITY GROWTH

3.1. Continuation and Heritage of Ancient Business Culture in Watertown Historic District

The commercial culture, which is ancient in roots, of Shaoxing Water Town is an important part influencing the growth that is urban today. This old commercial culture is still present and ongoing in the historical district of Water Town, which makes it a lasting cultural thing that's urban. What it leaves behind builds the city's identity which is current and helps shape the city's look that's specific. The inheritance of old-time business culture inside historical quarters is shown through its styles of building and town plan in a fine manner. The Water Town historical area keeps many old-style houses showing ancient business features like water walls, stone bridges, and pavilions which symbolize ancient trade ways. These structures stand as historical memory and real signs of the past's business methods. They have become notable sights due to restoration and upkeep projects, bringing many tourists and culture fans. This revival work is important in keeping and spreading the ancient business culture of the Water Town historic region, as seen mentioned Figure 5.

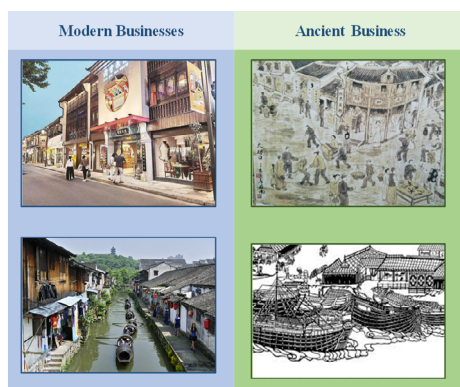


Figure 5: Inheritance of Ancient Commercial Culture in Shaoxing Water Village.

Ongoing business activities show the continuation of ancient commercial culture in Water Town's old sections. Although modern business forms are changing big time, traditional crafts and old trading ways stay alive here. Industries like silk weaving and tea processing maintain themselves as needed due to market forces while holding on to the old-time business know-how. Besides, small eating places and craft shops uphold old business culture features, creating appeal with visitors and town locals alike for authentic feelings and buying choices.

The historic business subculture of Watertown's Old Town is evident through the cultural events and fairs that take place within the business district. These events regularly utilize the historic districts, showcasing typical fairs, displaying costume parades, daily craft demonstrations, and art exhibits that highlight the heritage of Watertown. No longer just a historic industrial tradition, these festivals attract vacationers and foster a connection between residents and the city's past. Such cultural endeavors are integral in aiding and improving the cultural heritage of the old Watertown area.

In addition, the perpetuation of historical subcultures in the historical phase of Watertown is further evidenced through the social status of merchants. In this region, typical family businesses were passed down from generation to generation. These retailers are no longer just business operators, but important community individuals who contribute to city improvements and charitable activities. Their roles exemplify the combination of cultural ambassadors and community leaders contributing notably to the conservation and advancement of the district's cultural patrimony. In summary, the heritage and continuation of the historic business lifestyle in the Watertown Historic Area highlights the deep roots of the historical record and the town's traditions. The district is not only a commercial area, but also a culturally rich urban landscape with a full history of significance. This legacy is the foundation for the continued sustainable growth of Watertown's Old Town neighborhood, allowing for the development of a modern metropolis. Urban planning and future improvements that preserve and pass on the historic industrial way of life will no longer just enhance the city's recognizability, but enrich the cultural experience of its inhabitants. By skillfully blending historical traditions with new modernity, the Watertown Historic District promotes financial prosperity and social prosperity while maintaining its cultural essence.

3.2. Changing Functions of Old Historic Neighbourhoods in Modern Towns

The role of historic neighborhoods as heritage cultural places has changed in many ways as the city has grown and society has evolved. Districts, in ancient times being vibrant commerce centers but now are modern hubs of culture and tourism, reflect such changes in history, city cultures, and developments. Evolution of historic city districts could be divided in several aspects: decline and change of commercial hubs, preserving and promotion of heritage of culture, made into tourist places and spots of experience, and the expansion of arts and industries of entrepreneurship.

In times past, these areas have been important trade hubs alive with commerce and merchants. But, as urban cities developed and roads improved, trade was moved to other parts of the city more. Ancient crafts and smaller markets switched to modern business methods, which made the trading role of old places go down. Because of this reduction, attention turned to keeping their historic and cultural value instead. Efforts by authorities and community groups focused on restoring old buildings and protecting old crafts, turning these areas into cultural jewels. Now, they represent city heritage and attract many tourists and culture fans.

Nowadays, a rising interest in history connects more with immersive visits and active participation. Ancient districts meet this trend by creating themed streets and having festivals with traditions. This pulls people in to see old designs, ancient crafting, and distinct cultural volumes. These areas have shifted towards lively tourist picks, bringing new economic life to their urban places.

In recent times, places with old spirited architecture become areas where artsy things occur, creative endeavors thrive, and historical structures turn into places where art happens, like studios or centers. Young creators frequent such spaces, finding inspirations from old-timey richness that fuses ancient charm with newness. Some locales are now where communities grow in contemporary urban-zones, in different cities, really. Governments, alongside community groups, make improvement in infrastructure to bring new faces and offer public utilities so people come.

3.3. Cultural and Economic Interaction in City Growth

There is a mutual influence and interaction between lifestyle and economy in the direction of city improvement and development. Past industrial culture has had a huge impact on the modern urban economy and is an indispensable element of urban life. Figure 6 gives the style evaluation of GDP and GDP per capita in Shaoxing Watertown for the years 2018 - 2023, showing an upward trend in the area's financial indicators. This highlights the profound impact of historical industrial heritage on financial vitality. In addition, ongoing urbanization methods are reshaping the panorama of this historic industrial culture. The aim of this course is to explore the impact of historic business traditions on today's urban economic system and the transformative impact of urbanization on this traditional cultural heritage.

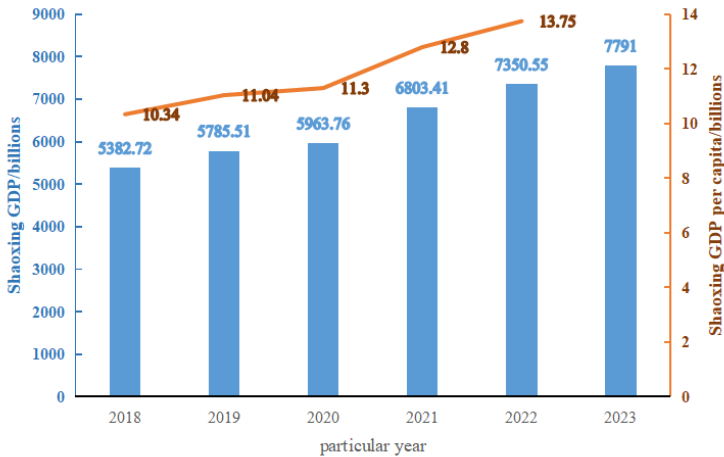


Figure 6: Changing Trends in GDP and GDP Per Person in the Shaoxing Waterfront.

In city shifts over time, culture plus economy blend and dance around affecting one another all the time. Old commercial practices deeply connected to daily city-life back then, now have influence on the cities' economic structure today. Urban changes also twist the old business-cultural ways we used to have. This part looks into the interaction between historical trade habits and their role in shaping our modern-day city-economies while seeing what urban spread does to these historical ideas.

3.4. The Impact of Ancient Business Culture on Modern City Economic

This subsection lay out origins and prospering of economic actions, guild-based commerce dynamics, the passing down of commercial skills and cultural knowledge, and duties of the merchants in society, split into four thematic parts themselves. Ancient commerce culture very important in the growth of economy during city's birth being so. As more people moved to live

in cities, commercial culture became the foundation of city economy, pushing forward prosperity by trade and skilled work. Using unique water transport networks, water towns like Shaoxing developed into central points for trade north south, thus having economic meaning through business activities they practiced.

Initiating organizational exploration into the ancient marketplace occurred early, not late, in history marked by creating guilds along with other formal structures that businesses took to get more orderly activities conducted. Collaboration was nurtured in these setups, and trade happened frequently, changing urban economies hugely. This commercial company provides a myriad of historical perspectives and references for today's urban commercial enterprise groups. The time-honored market tradition places a strong emphasis on the transmission of craftsmanship, which is reflected in the enduring crafts and creative industries. The water towns of Shaoxing, known for their silk and tea industries, are examples of how these traditions have been preserved and evolved into contemporary ways. The conservation of these handicrafts not only protects historical and cultured customs, it also provides fertile ground for today's economic and spiritual innovations. In addition, historic retailers often go beyond business interests to fulfill their social responsibilities. Wealthy retailers contribute to the community with donations to education, water saving programs, and sizable philanthropic endeavors. This subculture of service provider social accountability continues to this day, and the organizations' interactions in philanthropy and community development exemplify the standards of corporate social responsibility.

3.5. The Effects of Industrialization on Old Business Cultures

The main manifestations of the impact of urbanization on ancient commercial culture are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Impact of Urbanization on Ancient Commercial Culture.

Affect	Concrete Expression
Functional changes in commercial areas	Diminished influence of ancient commercial culture in business regions
Adaptation of architectural styles and urban planning	Business models have also changed radically
Diversity of cultural activities	Urbanization has fostered a diversity of cultural activities
Touristization of commercial culture	The rise of cultural and creative industries has injected new economic vitality into the city

The location and importance of business centers have changed dramatically as a result of urbanization. As urbanization progresses and industrial activity improves in different components of towns and cities, the monetary status of traditional historic commercial districts declines, thus weakening the influence of historic industrial subcultures on these areas. In addition, urbanization often requires a shift in building design and town hall planning. In some cases, cities have seen historic districts adapted to meet current traffic and business needs and, from time to time, have seen the replacement of common architectural patterns with modern buildings. This shift alters the depiction of historic commercial traditions in the City landscape.

In the course of urbanization, business models have seen a fundamental change. Traditional handicrafts and small-scale commerce are now mostly replaced by e-commerce and large shopping centres, the people shop here instead of the old markets. The ancient economic paths of commercial culture aren't compatible anymore really with all these big, new surroundings. Even though urbanization lessens the role of the older economic side of commercial culture, a variety of cultural activities have been

fostered by this conversion. Historical places, often, are hosting cultural things like performances, artistic endeavors, and festivals that now breathe new life into the city. As urban spreads, historical spots are now big for tourists. Through themed cultural places, tourist tours, these historical districts are having an economic renewal and the old commercial culture's importance is stretched in tourism.

3.6. Development of a New Paradigm for the Interaction between Culture and the Environment

Under the gaze of current urbanization, the interactive dance between culture and economy isn't one-sided anymore. Cultural and creative industries have stirred new power into cities with an economy, fresh vigor is put there. In historical districts, unique cultural assets exist, as abundant resources they serve these industries. Meaning new growth spots in urban places are so created. In cities, urban planning places focus sometimes on saving what is historical and keeping it going by weaving traditional streaks into modern buildings, with ancient buildings altered to fit new modern uses. Through this, traditional heritage and modern economic activities are blended, achieving harmony. Mixing old ways and new ways in planning cities leads to cities showing a more colorful and changing city landscape. During the time of urbanization, there appears a trend visible in community creating along with others. Historical areas are made into hubs belonging to both community and commerce in development synchronously. People living there get engaged in preserving cultural history and organizing business activities, thereby helping the development of harmonious communities, thus increasing social life inside these historic regions. With the development of the domestic digital economies, people can share and present history and culture with digital media. Social relevance and guided digital tours offer new interpretations of history and culture in the digital age and open up innovative ways of preserving and revitalizing the legacy of cities.

4. URBAN DEVELOPMENT: BALANCING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1. Safeguarding the Cultural Legacy of Water Town Historic Districts in Modern Urban Expansion

Within the framework of modern urban development, water town historic districts embody a treasure trove of cultural heritage, presenting both promising prospects and formidable hurdles. Achieving a harmonious equilibrium between preservation and progression, while ensuring the protection of their cultural heritage, poses a notable concern. The authors' proposed resolution is delineated in Table 2.

Table 2: Cultural Legacy Strategies for Preserving the Waterfront Historically Neighbourhoods.

Strategies	Concrete Expression
Development of conservation policy and planning	Establishing a clear policy and plan for conservation to ensure proper protection of the heritage in the waterfront historic districts
Strengthening the protection of cultural relics	Restoring and preserving important heritage in the Waterfront Historic District
Expanding Cultural Education and Heritage	Educate residents about waterfront history and culture with schools, neighborhoods, etc.
Guiding rational tourism development	Guide tourists to visit the scenic spots in an order through reasonable travel related activities.

The Administration must develop a complete range of strategies and techniques to successfully preserve the cultural heritage of the Watertown Historic District. This includes measures to restore historic buildings, preserve common craftsmanship and promote historical and cultural celebrations. To ensure the lasting conservation of heritage in these areas, it is essential to strengthen conservation

efforts, protect important artifacts in monuments, and establish or strengthen heritage management institutions. By attracting cultural and academic activities and sharing historical and cultural information through academic institutions and neighboring communities, a deeper understanding and connection to the old areas can be fostered among residents. Maintaining the continuity of old crafts ensures their continued vitality and adaptability to today's environment. Looking after safeguarding historical localities, it is quite important to carefully manage developing tourism. This involves creating centers for visitors, thinking about making paths for guided visits, and watching over visitor amounts to lessen unnecessary strain on these cultural spots. Setting up rules for maintaining buildings looks out for correct fixing and rebuilding of structures in historical areas to keep them real and from changing too much for business gain, protecting the whole cultural feel of these old-fashioned local places. Government departments could think about making a set of guidelines, a comprehensive policy framework you might call it, to protect things like cultural heritage. Historic sites are distinct, and you would need a balanced approach considering this and urban growth needs. Policies could be about things like giving tax breaks, offering financial subsidies, and giving technical help for preserving age-old structures. This might make private and corporate entities want to join in preservation works. Policymakers should look into a growth model focusing on cultural tourism, bearing in mind the quality of life and money matters, economic welfare, for those who live locally. Implementing projects like community grants, upgrading infrastructure, and programs that assist small-scale businesses to ensure the bounty from tourism is felt by residents could be on the table. Also, it might be a good idea to set up a highly capable management team—one made up of experts, academicians, community folks, and government people to keep an eye on how well the policies for cultural heritage protection are working. Periodic feedback and changes made would help keep policies current as socio-economic states and community desires change.

4.2. Sustainable Development Strategies and Policies for Watertown Historic District

Enhancing how Water Town historical districts attract people as a major landmark of a city needs creating some strategies and rules. Sustainable development for these areas shows how it's done through Figure 7.

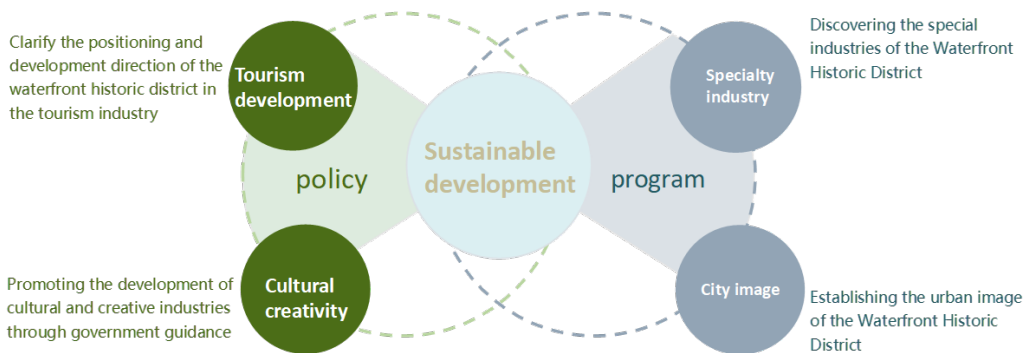


Figure 7: Advancing the Sustainability of the Historic Waterfront Neighborhoods.

The development of a complete tourism development strategy explains both the role of the Historic Waterfront District in transportation and its way forward. Attractions need enhancing, tourism products must be innovative, and there is a call to elevate services for tourists, thus making the district a place people want to visit very much. There is government help and guidance, which fosters creativity

and culture industries specifically in Water Town historic places. Ideas like setting up cultural hubs for innovation and providing support for entrepreneurs are included, which encourages creative work and adds to cultural aspects of the area. Using new tech like digital tools, virtual reality, and exhibitions you interact with, allows Water Town history to be shared with broader audiences. This sharing increases their charm and draws more people, visitors, investors. Unique industries like crafts of tradition and the local foods from historic water towns can be brought in focus using branding and promotions, they expand their impact within the city, becoming well-known as a water town brand. Image of urban areas such as water town with history promoted using cultural festivities, art shown in exhibitions, media to campaign, emphasizes uniqueness and draws recognition, more engagement.

4.3. Utilizing the Charm of Ancient Business Culture to Attract Visitors and Promote Regional Growth

Cultural transportation occupies a pivotal position in the strategy of frontier city building, especially in the ancient city of Watertown, where the prominent role of historical exchange culture as a special property is particularly prominent. Utilizing our historical industrial traditions to attract tourists and promote regional monetary prosperity requires meticulous planning and execution, as shown in Figure 8. The key to creating an exclusive cultural tourism company in the old district of Watertown is to combine the cultural resources of the district through cultural and creative festivals, alternative exhibitions, and exhibitions of typical handicrafts. This activity aims to create a unique cultural tourism experience. Drawing more people to Water Town's historic districts by broad promotion uses internet forums, networks of social media, and travel boxes to boost the area's visibility wider and pull in more visitors. Improving the tourism setup, which covers transport access, staying choices, and guided methods, targets making needs of tourists better and to push ahead the rise of sustainable tourism. Partnership work of Water Town's historic districts and nearby tourist sites might make cooperative effects occur. Plans which include shared ticketing and together advertisement initiatives prolong visit duration in the zone, encouraging regional tourism uplift together.



Figure 8: Capitalizing on Ancient Business Culture.

The larger portion of people who live here tend to care mostly about keeping alive their cultural past and lifestyle that is traditional, whereas the ones who own businesses prefer strategies for big development that could bring economic gains. Being engaged with the community is key and very crucial for protecting this cultural past and shaping methods that develop cities. Observations collected from community meeting discussions and forums held in public assist in improving how well projects are accepted by society, offering valuable insights that help those creating local policies to make better decisions,

more tuned to local needs. Though it makes deciding more complex, taking part in decisions from the community provides chances, which include growing transparency, building public trust in new plans, and finding new ways to solve development issues through being led by the community themselves.

5. CONCLUSION

A thorough study of the mix between historical commercial culture of towns near water—those are districts and the updated development in modern cities, this research shows how these places manage to walk the line of keeping old ways while bringing in modern features amid challenges and occasions for growth. The emphasis lies on how these areas focus heavily on their deep historical commercial roots being important in how cities evolve today. Old commercial traditions from water town districts set down the base for new city layouts. As cities grow, those old districts have changed to meet current social needs. Together, the old commercial habits in Shaoxing Water Town historical districts are very closely tied to modern urban growth, and they enrich each other mutually. Preserving old culture aspects and carrying out good development with conservation methods, these districts manage not only to keep going in new urban environments but also offer them a unique historical and cultural presence. The results of this survey reveal a strong link between the historic commercial traditions of the Shaoxing Watertown and the current growth of the city. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that despite significant efforts to obtain complete historical and contemporary data, barriers do exist. Specifically, lacunae in the scholarly historical literature may have also hindered the depth of the analysis, and the difficulty of obtaining up-to-date city improvement statistics should limit the study's ability to fully uncover modern trends.

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