

Research on Protecting Traditional Villages and Integrating Culture and Tourism

A Case Study of Zhenbei Village, Harbin City from the HUL Perspective

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Abstract

Zhenbei Village is a traditional village along the Middle East Railway, and it has developed tourism with the help of historical and cultural resources. However, due to the lack of reasonable guidance, the contradiction between its protection and tourism development has become increasingly prominent. Historic urban landscape (HUL) is a protection method for living heritage, which emphasizes that development should be attached importance to in protection, and the significance of historical stratification at the same time. This paper extracts the concept of "historical stratification" in HUL, studies the overall spatial correlation and temporal cultural value cognition of various elements in Zhenbei Village, and analyzes the landscape pattern, street space, architectural clusters, landmark nodes and cultural characteristics of different development stages. On this basis, Five strategies, namely, optimization and display of landscape pattern, optimization and continuation of street space, activation and protection of architectural clusters, repair and maintenance of landmark nodes, and protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, are put forward to integrate the protection of villages with the development of cultural tourism, in order to provide reference for the protection planning of other traditional villages and the integration of cultural tourism.

Keywords

Traditional village protection , Historic urban landscape, historical stratification, Integration of culture and tourism

1. Introduction

With the continuous improvement of the protection concept of traditional villages in China, although the protection of traditional villages has achieved certain results, there are still problems, which are reflected in the sharp decline in the number of villages, the serious destruction of some villages, the lack of inheritance of cultural heritage, and the threat of the environment and pollution. The Blue Book on Traditional Villages in China: Survey Report on the Protection of Traditional Villages in China (2017), released in December 2017, clearly points out that the current protection of traditional villages needs to adhere to the principles of integrity, authenticity, and sustainability. Based on the current state of conservation practices, the report emphasizes that village conservation should not be limited to tangible and static cultural heritage but should also cover intangible and living intangible cultural heritage. In 2011,

UNESCO adopted the Recommendation on Historic Townscapes, which elaborates on the relevant concepts and provides new perspectives and approaches to promote monuments' conservation and sustainable development. There have been successful cases of such practices in the international arena, with a wide range of applications covering ancient villages and towns. Taking Zhenbei Village as an example, conserving its traditional villages suffers from fragmentation and insufficient utilization of tangible and intangible cultural heritage inheritance. The current research on historic townscapes is rich, mainly focusing on the sustainability and systematicity of cultural heritage protection, the cognition of historical layers and overall protection, etc., such as Yang Tao[1] from the "process" and "hierarchy" of history, and the "process" and "hierarchy" of history. The study of the law of stratified accumulation of remains from the "process" and "hierarchy" of history and the construction of a sustainable systematic protection framework including four levels of identification, protection, development, and management, and Gu Xuanyuan[2] through the study of HUL concepts and methods, the study of the law of historical stratification for the significance of shaping the characteristics of the urban space. The significance of historical layering for the shaping of urban spatial characteristics. Therefore, under the guidance of the HUL concept, this paper studies the spatial and temporal dimensions of the cultural heritage of Zhenbei Village and proposes a holistic preservation and display strategy accordingly.

2. Methodology

2.1. Overview of historic urban landscape theory

Historic urban landscape (HUL) is defined in the HUL Recommendation as urban areas that have been formed through the accumulation of history and that combine cultural and natural values and characteristics. This category extends beyond the traditional notion of "core historic district" or "wholeness" to the cultural and geographic context of the city. The broader contextual elements encompass topography, geomorphology, hydrological conditions, natural features, historic buildings, modern elements, above and below-ground infrastructure, open spaces and gardens, land use and spatial layout, and experiential and visual connections. In addition, the concept addresses social practices, cultural values, economic dynamics, and intangible aspects related to diversity and identity.

It can be seen that the historic townscape encompasses both the historical process and the current and future attributes of the object of study, as well as the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This approach is essential for the conservation and study of villages, as it considers the context of the object of study and the environment in which it is situated and respects local values.

2.2. Recognition of historical layers and holistic conservation

The core concepts of historic townscapes cover two main aspects: firstly, the recognition of layers, and secondly, holistic conservation. The former emphasizes that the city is a multilayered concept dedicated to studying cultural heritage from its inception to its evolution and to discovering the intrinsic value of urban heritage in both its temporal and spatial dimensions. The latter focuses on improving urban heritage conservation strategies and integrating them into a diversified system of goals for the sustainable development of the city as a whole, which is reflected in the way cultural heritage is perceived, valued, and planned.

Traditional villages have unique cultural heritage and landscape deposits. Zhenbei Village, as a traditional village along the Middle East Railway, is a village with both Russian and Chinese styles and modern and contemporary features, so the protection of its cultural heritage must first recognize the mechanism of historical accumulation and understand the process of its accumulation from a dynamic perspective. The

existing studies on historical stratification, the stratification laws of historical landscapes, the interpretation of historical stratification processes, and the study of ephemerality and co-temporality are generally studied. Li Heping (Li, 2020), Xiao Jing (Xiao, 2018), and others have analyzed the landscape elements and characteristic symbols of historical cities in various development periods according to the concept of "accumulation" of urban historical landscapes and then analyzed them in depth. They analyzed the landscape elements and characteristic signs in each period of development of historical cities and then summarized the evolution of urban historical landscape characteristics. Pei Yu (Pei, 2022) and colleagues focused on the "comprehensive combing of resources and value assessment" of the urban historic landscape, analyzed the historical layering of Yulin Ancient City in-depth, and constructed a historical layering value assessment system of Yulin Ancient City accordingly. Cao Yongmao discusses the nature of the concept of "urban historic landscape," distinguishes between the temporal and co-temporal dimensions of the landscape, and then proposes a strategy for conserving historic towns that integrates both temporal and co-temporal considerations (Cao, 2019).

Research on the other core concept of holistic conservation is often based on revealing the pattern of historical accumulation, and most of the conservation targets are historic districts and historic towns. Zhao Xia (Zhao, 2014), Shen Yichen (Shen, 2020), and others explored the intrinsic value and comprehensive protection strategy of northern Zhejiang's historical and cultural cities, which are characterized by canal settlements. They explored the overall protection and planning management system proposal for the industrial heritage in the northern port area of Ningbo Ningbo Yongjiang. At the same time, they conducted a study on the overall protection of industrial heritage in Ningbo Yongjiang North Port Area and the proposal for a planning and management system. Yang Tao used the theory of historic cityscape to study the evolution of the conservation method of Barkhor Street's historical and cultural district and explored the possibility of its application in the conservation of historical and cultural districts (Yang, 2014). Tu Li, Zhao Pengjun, and others take the basic principles of historic townscape as an entry point, and based on their in-depth understanding of the spatial layout and value stratification of villages, they explore the basic mechanism of the formation of the historical layers of traditional villages and accordingly put forward a holistic conservation strategy for the implementation of the relevant strategies (Tu, 2021).

2.3. The Suitability of Introducing Historical Stratification Cognition and Holistic Protection into Village Protection

Traditional villages often have a long period of historical remains and value accumulation, and by analyzing their historical layers, it is possible to have a comprehensive understanding of their village values; secondly, traditional villages are often affected by regional factors, and the mechanisms behind the changes of their layers and value characteristics need to be understood; finally, there is a prominent link between the protection of cultural heritage of traditional villages and their sustainable development; based on the above reasons, it is appropriate to integrate holistic conservation concepts and layer recognition methods into the scope of traditional village conservation.

3. Analysis of the Historical Layers of Zhenbei Village

3.1. Overview of the Historical Heritage of Zhenbei Village

The planned village is Zhenbei Village in Harbin City, which is located in the northern part of Yifanpo Town, surrounded by mountains and water, with a good ecological environment, belonging to the traditional villages along the Middle East Railway, and rich in historical and cultural resources. Zhenbei

Village is one of the third batch of traditional villages in China, as announced by the Urban and Rural Affairs Department. At the same time, it is the first village in Shangzhi City that has been included in the list. According to the detailed planning unit of Zhenbei Village defined in the land space plan of Yimianpo Township as the planning scope, the total area of the village is 1981 hectares, and it is a village of suburban integration, with a planning period of 2023-2035 and a near-term period of 2025 (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Distribution of villages in Zhenbei Village. Source: Authors.

3.2. Overview of Historical Heritage of Zhenbei Village

3.2. 1. Composition of the historical heritage of Zhenbei Village

Landscape leisure culture: Mountains and water surround Zhenbei Village, which has a favorable ecological environment. The Ant River is a large tributary on the right bank of the Songhua River, and rice is abundant along its banks. Rich in mountain resources, it is rich in medicinal plants, high-quality timber, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, etc. Currently, Zhenbei Village utilizes its superior natural landscape layout to create leisure activities such as landscape tours and derive Zhenbei's oil paintings and other artistic cultures.

Street pattern: Zhenbei Village has formed a unique street texture in the development process, and the Middle East Railway is the key factor for its formation. The village's layout is closely centered around the railroad, and the streets and lanes converge to the railroad line or are distributed parallel to the railroad line. The village's layout is closely centered around the railway, with streets converging to the railway line or distributed parallel. Due to the planning in the early stage of construction and the limitation of land resources, the layout of buildings in the village is relatively compact. In addition, the streets and lanes of Zhenbei Village are diversified and have historical continuity. These streets and lanes have witnessed the historical development of Zhenbei Village, carrying rich cultural connotations and historical memories. The streets and lanes close to the Yimianpo Station show a certain radial shape, and most of the streets and lanes in the village show a regular grid layout. Some show a curved and irregular shape due to the impacts of the surrounding topography and geomorphology, the Ant River, and the natural growth factors.

Architectural Clusters: The Russian style characterizes the existing Middle East Railway building clusters in Zhenbei Village. The village's layout extends from the west to the east, from the beginning of the Red Flag Bridge to the east, and the layout of Russian-style buildings in the village is well organized. Within the village, there are 105 Russian-style buildings, of which 46 are state-level protected buildings. Most of these buildings were built between 1903 and 1904, and each is hung with the signboard of "National Key

Cultural Relics Protection Unit-Middle East Railway Complex." The complex's main buildings are well-preserved, but some houses have damaged walls, broken roofs, etc. Some of the courtyards in the complex have preserved traditional Russian customs, such as planting trees and flowers in the front gardens of the houses. The elements of the walls, portals, window panes, roofs, chimneys, etc., contrast with the surrounding flowers, which is particularly conspicuous against the yellow and white tone of the old houses and overflowing with a strong Russian flavor.

Landmark node: There are many landmark nodes in Zhenbei Village, and they can reflect the style of the village in different periods. The former site of the waiting room of the railway station in Bianpanpo and the former site of the Songhua River Branch Command of the Middle East Railway Road Protector Army are the witnesses of the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures with the architecture of the Middle East Road as the carrier. The former site of the locomotive crew apartments of the Middle East Railway in Yimianpo, the "East Building," now the Haiyi Rafting Entertainment Park, is a bunker-style building. The "East Building," the former site of the locomotive crew's apartment on the Middle East Railway, is now the Haiyi Rafting Entertainment Park.

Intangible cultural heritage: There are rich intangible cultural heritages in Zhenbei Village, including the Middle East Railway and beer cultures. The Yimianpo Station of the Middle East Railroad was built in September 1898. With the trade, the craft of making "nesting dolls" was introduced to the northern village of Yimianpo. 20century50s, local folk artists successfully produced the first domestic nesting dolls, marking the emergence of the industry in the side slope nesting dolls. In addition, Zhenbei Village is also known for its cultural relics and beer culture, being one of the first areas in China to cultivate hops and black currants (i.e., blackcurrants). However, the Guanghan Biomass Company currently occupies the site. In the early 50s, the state invested in a modern brewery in the area, which was the beginning of the wine industry in the town, but the brewery went bankrupt in the early nineties.

3.2. 2. Stratification of historical layers of historical heritage in Zhenbei Village

The distinction between "tangible cultural heritage" and "intangible cultural heritage" defines, to a certain extent, the framework of the elements of the historic landscape of Zhenbei Village and the content of its conservation and presentation. In practice, these two elements are not isolated from each other but have been organically integrated into the historical process. The construction of the Middle East Railroad contributed to the development of the village and attracted foreign residents to live here during the Sino-Russian trade. After more than a century of evolution, the landscape, folk traditions, natural conditions, the Middle East Railroad construction remains, and the intangible cultural heritage of Zhenbei Village has evolved into an integral part of the village. Landscape, folk traditions, natural conditions, the remains of the Middle East Railroad, and intangible cultural heritage have shaped the current landscape of Zhenbei. The current appearance of Zhenbei Village is not only the product of the interweaving of tangible and intangible systems but also the result of profound historical accumulation (Table 1). According to the historical development process of Zhenbei Village, its historical layers follow the correspondence of "culture-time-space." Zhenbei Village contains rich and diversified historical and cultural resources. However, the protection and utilization of these resources are scattered and fragmented.

	Middle East Railway Culture Layer	Beer culture layer	Folk culture layer
Historical staging	1898-1952	1930-1990	1950-present
Spatial features	Historic buildings, architectural	Individual building	Individual building

	clusters		
Significant Events	Yimianpo Railway Station was built	"Samsung" beer	Matryoshka doll making skills
Representative cultural relics	The former site of the locomotive crew apartment, the former site of the headquarters and the former site of the waiting room of the railway station on one slope of the Middle East Railway	Yimianpo Winery	—

Table 1. Layered Information Table of "Culture-Time-Space" Cultural Heritage in Zhenbei Village. Source: Authors.

4. The integration path of Zhenbei Village protection and cultural tourism from the perspective of HUL

4.1. Overall protection of landscape pattern

Create the brand impact of the characteristic tourism industry chain, deepen the influence of the characteristic leisure tourism industry, combine Shangzhi and Heilongjiang tourism market demand, around the Russian style experience activities, experience and products, combined with the main arteries to create the rural culture and tourism life landscape axes, create service facilities nodes; and relying on the ants to create the riverfront landscape axes, shaping the landscape and historical and cultural nodes (Figures 2-3).

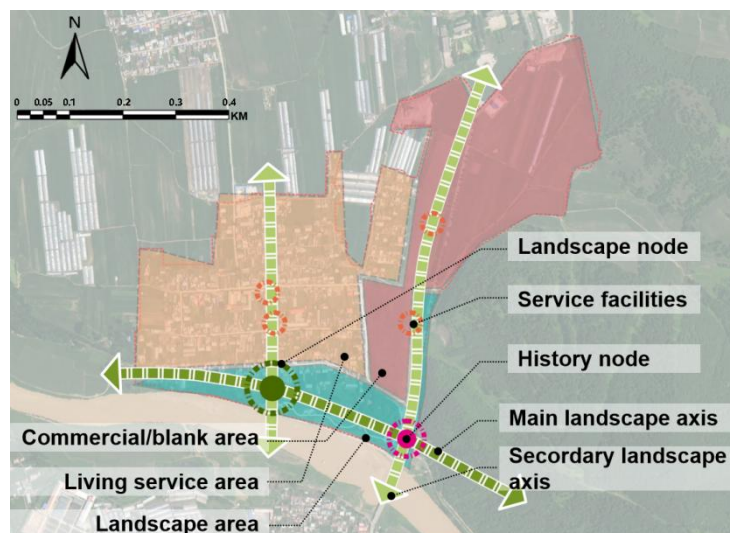


Figure 2. Landscape Pattern of Xinlitun. Source: Authors.

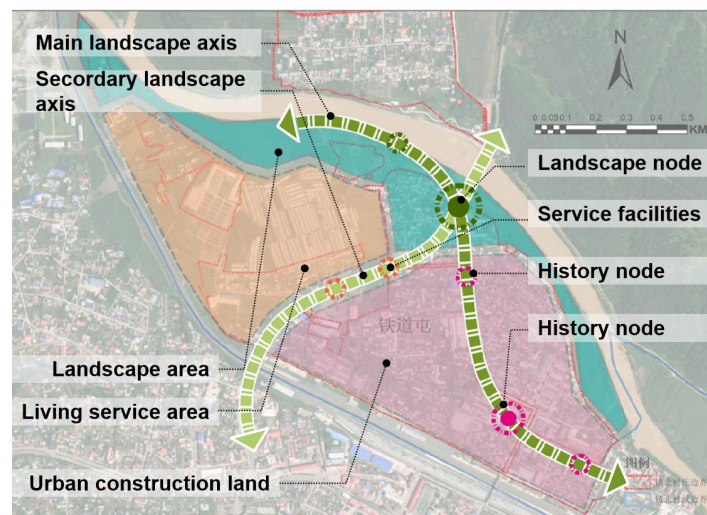


Figure 3. Landscape Pattern of Tiedaotun. Source: Authors.

4.2. Optimize and continue street space

Combine the current road and street grading classification. According to the grade and current road conditions, the improvement of village roads is divided into three categories: road widening, road surface improvement, and road connectivity. The main roads are standardized and delineated, sidewalks, street trees, and cables are sequenced, and the roads are hardened, brightened, and divided into sidewalks; parking spaces or parking lots are set up along the routes according to demand. The streets and lanes in the village will be improved and hardened, the side ditches will be enhanced, the soil along the roads will be removed, and the landscape along the roads will be upgraded. The disconnected roads between the village groups and between the villages and farmlands will be connected to improve the road transportation system of the villages, ensure the passage of agricultural machines, and improve the efficiency of farming operations(Figures 4-5).

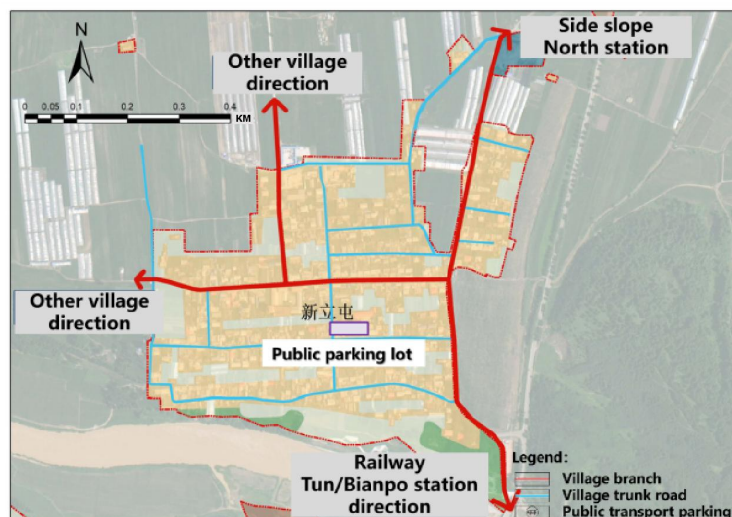


Figure 4. Xinlitun Road Traffic Planning Diagram. Source: Authors.

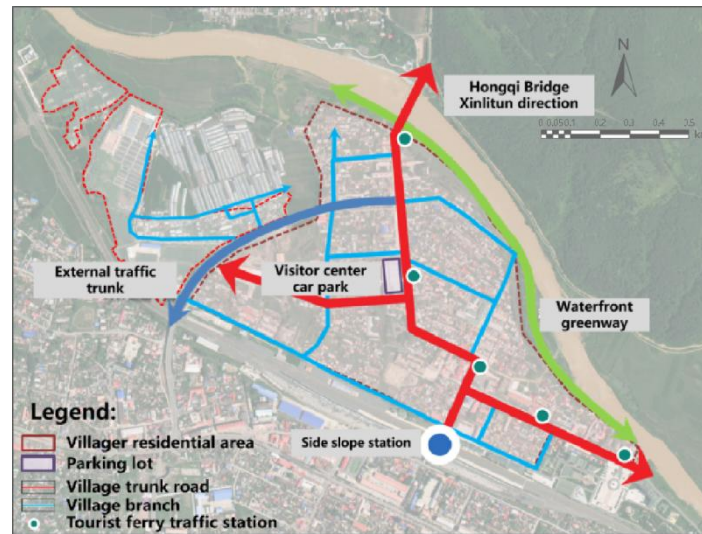


Figure 5. Road Traffic Planning Diagram of Tiedaotun. Source: Authors.

4.3. Activating and displaying building clusters

For the conservation of building clusters, mainly focusing on Tiedao Tun, which has many historical buildings, the first step is to determine the conservation zoning (Figure 6), and based on the upper planning, road and neighborhood division, the types and values of different types of historical and cultural heritage are systematically analyzed, and A-Riverfront Recreation, and B-Township Folklore are delineated, C-historical cultural tourism, D-art and culture four major protection areas. Secondly, on the basis of a comprehensive census of the town's historical architectural resources, all kinds of historical and cultural buildings are graded for protection. According to the age of the buildings, cultural resources, and the degree of importance, the buildings are classified into three grades: cultural relics, historical buildings, and Russian-style houses. Relying on the characteristic resources of the four districts, implanting characteristic functions, and combining the strong culture and history of Tiedaotun, we build a fine tour line for the display of architectural clusters and village styles (Figure 7), with the first line being the greenway cycling picking line, the second one being the rural life experience line, the third one being the Russian style experience line, and the fourth one being the Wukas characteristic sightseeing line.

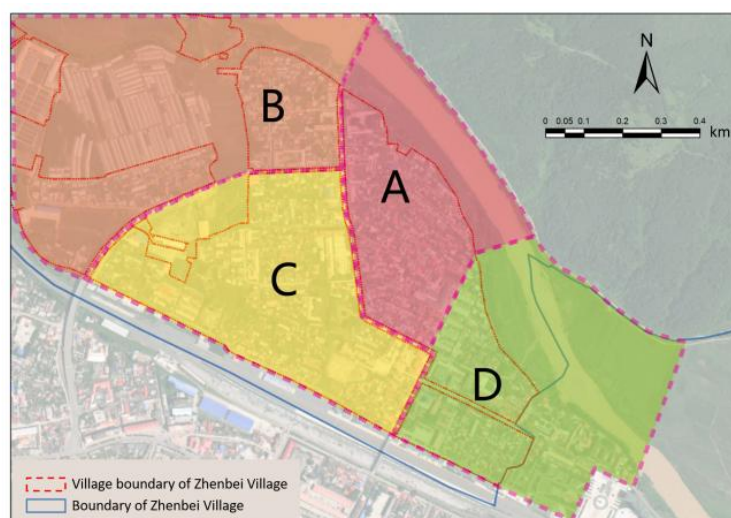


Figure 6. Protection partition. Source: Authors.

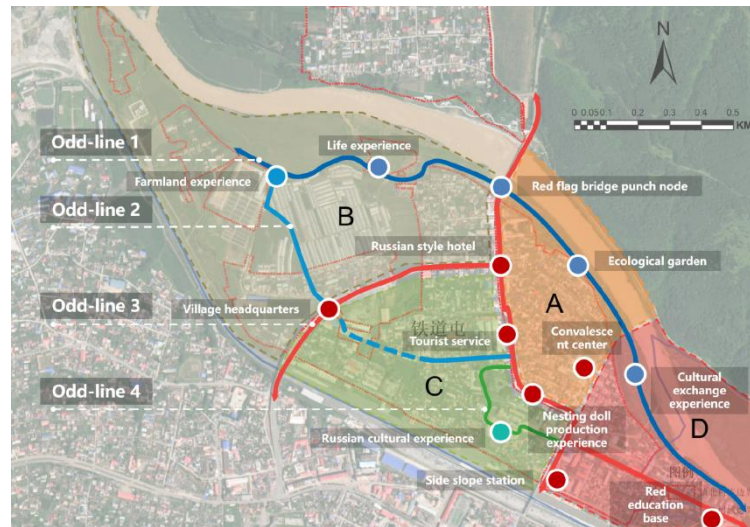


Figure 7. Design of boutique tour line. Source: Authors.

4.4. Repair and maintenance of landmark nodes

The design is mainly for the important nodes of Xinlitun and Tiedaotun. Xinlitun mainly renovates the former site of the brewery, the former site of the elementary school, and the former site of the water tower, and since the historical and cultural value of these three buildings is relatively low, it is mainly renewed by injecting three functions: the village activity center, the tourists' service center, and the village history museum (Figure 8). There are many historical and cultural buildings in Tiedaotun, so the landscape design is optimized for the important historical nodes (Figure 9).



Figure 8. Reconstruction of Xinlitun node. Source: Authors.

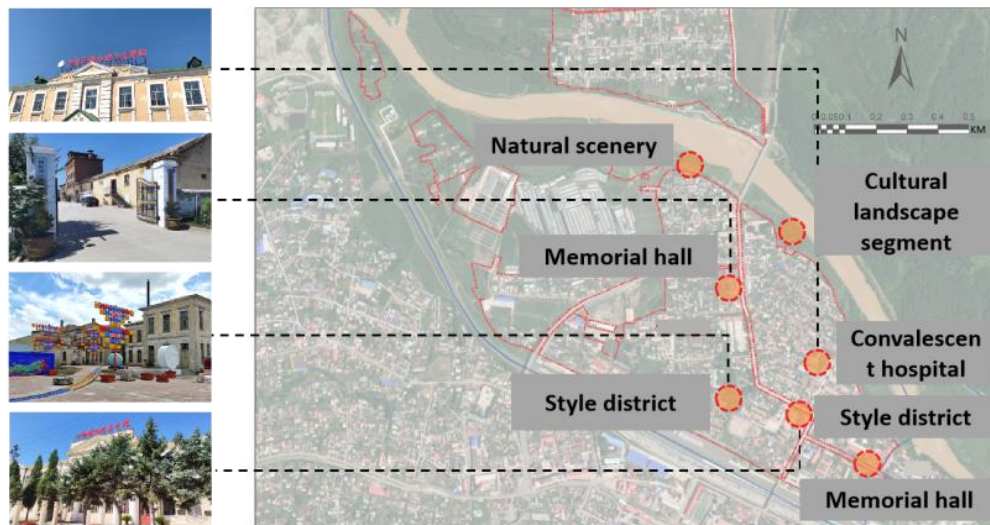


Figure 9. Optimization of railway nodes. Source: Authors.

4.5. Safeguarding and Transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Structuring "1+N" rural characteristic experiential tourism, promoting the integrated development of one, two, and three industries in Zhenbei Village, and carrying forward the beer culture and condor culture of Zhenbei Village, "1" refers to Rural tourism and leisure based on the agglomeration of tourism products, which based on the development of agricultural products, organically attached to the ecological tourism and participation in the experience and other functions; "N"- utilization of the status quo Intelligent greenhouse greenhouses, beer production, condor production base and rich historical and cultural heritage and other advantageous conditions to derive a variety of functional combinations (Figure 10).

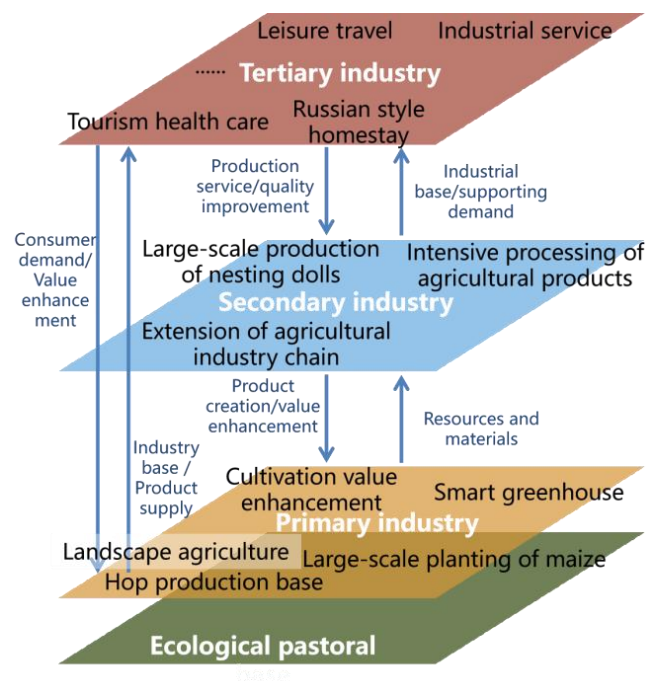


Figure 10. Inheritance Conception of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Source: Authors.

5. Conclusion

Based on the theory of historic townscape (HUL), this paper starts from two key ideas of cognition of its historical layers and holistic protection, studies the law of historical layers of Zhenbei Village in Harbin City, and cognizes the cultural heritage composition of Zhenbei Village from five categories of imagery elements: landscape pattern, street system, architectural clusters, landmarks, nodes, markers, and intangible cultural heritage, and proposes five major development strategies for cultural tourism integration in Zhenbei Village based on this foundation. Based on this, five development strategies for cultural tourism integration in Zhenbei Village are proposed to provide feasible paths for the inheritance and development of traditional villages. However, this paper also has deficiencies in the investigation of cultural heritage. It lacks quantitative data support, so future research can combine with ArcGIS spatial analysis to study the traditional villages in Zhenbei Village in depth. In the future, we can combine ArcGIS spatial analysis to further study the historical stratification of traditional villages in Zhenbei Village. (Team members: Yiqiu Cai, Jiacheng Pan, Yujun Wang, Hanyu Feng)

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