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## ETHNIC STYLE IN THE LANDSCAPE DESIGN OF VILLAGES IN HUIZHOU: PRINCIPLES AND AESTHETIC FEATURES

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*Ethnic landscape design plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage and maintaining the authenticity of rural environments. This paper explores the principles, compositional techniques, and artistic solutions used in ethnic landscape design in Huizhou villages. The research highlights the visual and symbolic importance of color schemes, vegetation selection, and architectural elements in shaping the identity of rural landscapes. By analyzing historical and contemporary examples, the study identifies key trends and provides recommendations for the adaptation of ethnic motifs in modern village design.*

**Key words:** Huizhou architecture, traditional landscape design, rural aesthetics, spatial composition, ornamental patterns.

### INTRODUCTION

Landscape aesthetics involves both the visual perception of external forms and the deeper interpretation of cultural and historical significance, encompassing elements such as color, materiality, and spatial composition [1]. The rural landscape of Huizhou, represented by ancient villages in southern Anhui, embodies the concept of 'unity of man and nature' through its landscape patterns, architectural forms, and terraced water systems. These villages are framed by lush green mountains, interwoven with serene water bodies, and characterized by horse-head wall buildings arranged in a staggered pattern. Their landscapes integrate agricultural fields, ancient wooden pagodas, and ecological corridors, creating a unique and harmonious aesthetic. While existing research primarily focuses on historical conservation, it often lacks an in-depth exploration of the artistic expression and spatial composition inherent in these environments. This paper systematically analyzes the aesthetic principles of traditional village landscapes, offering a modern interpretation of the design logic behind farming civilization, thereby addressing an academic gap in the study of ethnic aesthetic qualities within the framework of landscape design.

### PURPOSE

This study aims to examine the principles of ethnic landscape design in Huizhou villages, analyze the compositional and ornamental features of rural landscapes, and identify the application of Huizhou aesthetics in contemporary rural planning.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Spatial Composition and Traditional Village Structure of Huizhou

Huizhou traditional villages embody the integration of function, nature, and artistry. On a practical level, their layouts follow the principle of 'pillowed mountains, surrounded by water, and facing the screen', adapting to the mountainous terrain. The tiered water system defines the spatial rhythm, shaping stepped building clusters and a dynamic yet structured network of streets and alleys. Architectural elements such as Dingzhi Alleys and Curved Alleys, along with gatehouse pagodas, contribute to the rhythmic flow of space.

At the aesthetic level, spatial organization is enhanced by axial symmetry, framed landscape views, and dynamic visual perspectives that incorporate distant mountains and nearby water into the overall composition. The monochromatic palette of white walls and black tiles reflects Taoist notions of natural harmony, while horse-head walls evoke the rolling mountain landscape, and carved ornamentation carries embedded Confucian values. The interplay between modular spatial planning and organic natural forms establishes a balance between human intervention and the surrounding environment, shaping a vernacular landscape paradigm that is both rational and poetic.

### 2. Materials, plants and colors in Huizhou landscape design

The material selection in Huizhou traditional architecture embodies the principle of 'adapting to local conditions', balancing functionality and aesthetics. Yixian green stone is used for moisture-resistant foundations, while double-layer brick walls provide insulation, and mortise-and-tenon timber frameworks ensure flexible, earthquake-resistant structures [2]. The iconic stepped horse-head walls and layered green tile roofing act as fire barriers while enhancing the visual rhythm of the built environment. The black-and-white color palette of Huizhou architecture echoes the aesthetics of ink wash painting, where white-washed walls absorb and reflect mist, while blue-gray tiles embody the essence of Hui ink.

In contemporary adaptations, traditional green tiles have evolved into photovoltaic roofing, and nano-modified chalk coatings improve weather resistance while preserving the original aesthetic. Modular timber and stone applications are increasingly integrated into modern constructions, bridging traditional craftsmanship with technological innovation, ensuring both sustainability and cultural continuity (Fig. 1).

### 3. Decoration and decorative elements

Huizhou decorative art is distinguished by its intricate stone, brick, and wood carvings, forming an aesthetic language of symbolism and spatial depth. Traditional compositions emphasize symmetry, contrast between solid and void, and layered relief techniques, creating multi-dimensional spatial effects. Decorative motifs often include:

- Floral patterns (plum blossoms, orchids, bamboo, and chrysanthemums) symbolizing purity and resilience.
- Geometric designs such as 'back motifs' and 'ice crack patterns', enhancing architectural rhythm while serving functional purposes such as anti-slip surfaces.



- Symbolic patterns, including the 'Wanzhi' (endless knot) motif signifying good fortune, and fish-scale arrangements symbolizing structured harmony.

This fusion of technical skill, material aesthetics, and cultural narrative demonstrates the depth of Huizhou craftsmanship in integrating form, function, and symbolic meaning within landscape and architectural elements.



Huangshan  
Yungu Hotel



Shanghai Jiujiangtang New  
Hui- Style Villa



Photovoltaic  
integrated  
terracotta



Jiuhuashan high-  
speed railway  
station

**Fig. 1.** The application case of Huizhou traditional building materials in modern design

#### 4. Case Studies of Huizhou Village Landscape Design

Both Xidi and Hongcun villages exemplify the principles of ecological aesthetics, seamlessly blending built environments with natural landscapes. Xidi Village is structured around a tri-stream water system, where staggered architecture adapts to the terrain, integrating water courtyards and gardens that unify natural and human-made elements. Hongcun Village follows a 'cow-shaped' spatial layout, where Leigang Mountain forms the 'head', Yuehu and Nanhu lakes represent the 'stomach', and a network of water canals serves as the village's 'veins'. This unique water-town arrangement optimizes mountain and river resources, creating a distinctive, harmonious setting [3].

The paving materials, including Huizhou green bricks and Yixian stone bases, contribute to a cohesive black-white-gray chromatic scheme, enhancing the misty, ink-wash effect of the local landscape. Natural timber elements, mainly beech and cedar, are preserved using plain lacquer, allowing the play of light and shadow through intricate lattice windows. In Xufu Hall, Xidi Village, shallow relief and translucent carving techniques create layered visual narratives, while the brick, wood, and stone carvings of Chengzhitang in Hongcun exhibit refined craftsmanship, exemplifying the principle of 'carving without excess', balancing elegance and restraint.

#### 5. Modern Transformation and Development Trends

The evolution of Huizhou village landscape design does not merely involve replicating historical styles or demolishing old structures. Instead, modernization should be rooted in decoding spatial genes, iterating functional needs, and strengthening cultural-tourism integration. The future of Huizhou village landscapes should focus on:



'Low-intervention micro-renewal' – preserving key stylistic elements while adapting to modern lifestyles.

'Digital cultural preservation' – utilizing AI and 3D modeling to document and recreate traditional designs.

'Scientific applications of traditional materials' – developing eco-friendly solutions that maintain Huizhou's architectural and landscape character.

By combining ecological wisdom and cultural expression, Huizhou's villages can evolve through a dual-track development model of technological integration and spatial revitalization.

### CONCLUSIONS

This study has systematically examined the compositional and stylistic principles of traditional Huizhou village landscapes, emphasizing the role of spatial organization, material selection, and decorative motifs in shaping their unique aesthetic identity. By analyzing case studies and the integration of historical elements into modern design, the research highlights the importance of preserving cultural authenticity while adapting to contemporary design needs.

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### ЕТНІЧНА ЕСТЕТИКА В ЛАНДШАФТНОМУ ДИЗАЙНІ СІЛ У ХУЕЙЧЖОУ (КИТАЙ)

Етнічний ландшафтний дизайн відіграє важливу роль у збереженні культурної спадщини та підтримці автентичності сільського середовища. У цій статті досліджуються принципи, композиційні прийоми та художні рішення, що використовуються в етнічному ландшафтному дизайні в селах Хуейчжоу. Дослідження підкреслює візуальну та символічну важливість кольорової гами, підбору рослинності та архітектурних елементів у формуванні ідентичності сільських ландшафтів. Аналізуючи історичні та сучасні приклади, в дослідженні визначено ключові тенденції та надано рекомендації щодо адаптації етнічних мотивів у сучасному сільському дизайні.

**Ключові слова:** архітектура Хуейчжоу, традиційний ландшафтний дизайн, сільська естетика, просторова композиція, орнаментальні візерунки.