

# **Preservation and Renewal Strategies of Islamic Architecture in China: A Case Study on Mosques as Islamic Religious Structures**

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**Abstract:** Islamic architecture holds significant prominence within the architectural heritage of the Chinese nation. Mosques, as significant emblems of Islamic architecture, hold a crucial position in both social and religious matters. Currently only a few mosques in China that possess significant artistic merit and historical significance have been designated as protected sites. In addition, the economic gap between urban and rural areas, as well as the development gap between the east and the west areas, has resulted in numerous mosques that have not received adequate attention and implementation for their conservation and renovation. Hence, this study employs the qualitative research methodology and initiates an analysis based on the available literature sources, such as journals and theses. This study examines and evaluates the strategies for protecting the historical environment in which mosques are located, protecting the mosque architecture itself, and devising renewal strategies for mosque architecture, all of which are based on the present state of mosque development in China. The goal is to propose a comprehensive and practical plan for safeguarding and updating mosques in China so that they can play an active role in maintaining social stability, promoting cultural exchanges, and preserving historical heritage, as well as offering insights for the sustainable development of Islamic architecture in the country.

**Keywords:** China, Islamic architecture, mosques, preservation, sustainable development

## **Introduction**

Islamic architecture encompasses a wide range of buildings that are primarily intended to promote Islam. The styles and designs of these buildings may evolve and vary based on the diverse religious tasks they serve, but they consistently adhere to the fundamental religious principles of Muslims. The evolution of Islamic architecture in China has undergone a lengthy process, resulting in the fusion of Islamic architectural elements with traditional Chinese architectural style (Feng, 1991). This integration has made Islamic architecture an essential component of Chinese national architectural culture. One of the significant symbols of Islamic architecture is the mosque, which serves as a space for both religious and social activity for Muslims. It holds considerable influence over religion, society, and politics.

Nevertheless, amid the tumultuous social climate of 19th and 20th century China, the preservation of numerous mosques has been insufficiently prioritized. In both present and contemporary historical analysis, the concept of "a century of humiliation" (Zhang, 2021) has significantly shaped the character of the modern era. Consequently, numerous architectural studies during this period were influenced to varying degrees by this argument, resulting in numerous obstacles and inconveniences for the preservation research of historic mosques from an ideological standpoint. These challenges included the slow development of conservation policies, inadequate

financial backing, and a lack of dissemination and promotion of relevant architectural knowledge. These issues are especially conspicuous in conjunction with China's rapid urbanization development (Pan, 2012).

Therefore, the focus of this study is how to effectively preserve and renovate China's roughly 40,000 mosques so that they can better fulfil their religious duty and have a positive societal influence. As far as the conservation of mosques is concerned, the distinctive religious characteristics of mosque structures necessitate the implementation of many conservation policies, and the choice of protection methods must be determined with reference to their ethnicity, religious use, and other claims. In contrast to other historic building preservation efforts, the functions of the vast majority of contemporaneous religious types of buildings do not change over time (Ma, 2017). Therefore, to develop effective conservation strategies for mosques, it is necessary to consider two main aspects. Firstly, it is important to ensure the preservation of the mosque's historical, artistic, and cultural values. Secondly, it is crucial to accommodate the mosque's daily worship activities and religious life. This requires a careful analysis of the building and its current condition while adhering to the necessary regulations for protection. By doing so, the historical significance of the mosque can be fully realized. The active presence of many religious activities in esteemed mosques, including Beijing Niujie Mosque, Yangzhou Crane Mosque, and the Great Mosque of Xi'an (Shi, 2023), serves as compelling evidence of their strong position.

Thus, the conservation of mosque structures in China does not involve repurposing the refurbished buildings, but the more profound impact on the mosque is the renewal of buildings. Hence, it is imperative to take into account the simultaneous renewal and establishment of a coordinated protection plan while safeguarding and repairing mosque structures. The renovation and renewal of historical buildings should prioritize minimizing the impact on the original protected structures. Additionally, it should consider the essential requirements of mosque users and administrators. These needs should guide the determination of the final renewal strategy, aiming to achieve a more rational protection of modern mosque buildings. In general, the preservation and renewal of mosques is a comprehensive project that involves religious, cultural, social, and economic dimensions and is of great significance in maintaining social stability, promoting cultural exchanges, and preserving historical heritage.

## **Literature Review**

The Venice Charter of 1964 has emerged as the most significant theoretical framework for the preservation and restoration of the twentieth-century global cultural heritage in the field of historic building conservation and related theories. Its central tenet, "the value of historical authenticity," is universally acknowledged (The State Administration of Cultural Relics, 2009). Additionally, China introduced the Charter in 1985. This ultimately resulted in the creation and execution of the Guidelines for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Monuments in China (China National Committee of the National Council on Monuments and Sites, 2015).

At the same time, the Chinese scholar Shan Jixiang introduced the international treatise on the protection of theoretical perspectives on the review and analysis of the literature From the Heritage Building to the Protection of Cultural Heritage (Shan, 2008). The book's perception of the basic theoretical research on the conservation of historic buildings in China has developed progressively in recent years, gradually converging with the international aspect.

In 1981, Yang Yongchang edited *Rambling about Mosques* (Yang, 1981), an earlier research document in China that proposed the national mosque as a theme. The architecture of mosques and the mechanism of their religious functions are both comprehensively introduced and sorted out, and different research perspectives are provided for subsequent studies on mosque architecture.

The *Comprehensive Survey of Mosques in China* (Wu, 1998) and its sequels collect information on more than 1,000 mosques across the country. The comprehensive data collection on mosques in this publication, which includes religion, ethnicity, architecture, tourism, sociology, and many aspects of scientific research, provides support and convenience. However, there is less involvement in the protection and renewal of mosques.

In terms of traditional protection and repair techniques, the Chinese Ancient Architecture Tile Stone Camp Method (Liu, 1993), Heritage Protection Technology (Wang, 2005), and other restoration methods are used to ensure the basic service life of historical buildings from literature. Nevertheless, some of these restoration methods lag behind the current concept of architectural conservation.

The book *On the Economy of Temples* (Luo, 2004) offers a unique vision of economics, through the historical study of the ways and means of economic income for various types of religious temples. By combining these methods with the current policy guidelines of ethnic and religious autonomy, self-support, and self-propagation, the book explores and analyses the question of how contemporary religious temples in China can survive and develop in a long-term and benign manner.

As a region with more advanced theories and practices of modern historical building conservation in China, Shanghai has a particularly deep and clear perception of cultural conservation. *Problems and Reflections on the Conservation of Modern Cultural Relics and Buildings in Shanghai* (Cao & Tan, 2011) summarizes the current situation of modern historical buildings and their conservation in the Shanghai area. More importantly, it puts forward issues such as defining the authenticity of modern architectural relics, their protection, and other issues. *The Analysis of the Protection Value of Excellent Modern Industrial Buildings in Shanghai* (Zhang & Qian 2000) focuses more on the value of industrial buildings in Shanghai, analyses the protection and reuse of many excellent modern industrial buildings, and explains the correlation and importance of the values of historical industrial buildings. This provides some theoretical references for the study of relevant protection work.

## **Research Methodology**

This study mainly adopts qualitative research methods. To achieve this goal, we mainly conducted a literature search to identify the current situation of the survival of mosques in China. In the literature screening, for the theme of the thesis, the most relevant authoritative literature that is related to the theme was selected through platforms such as Google Scholar, Peking University Chinese Core Journals Catalogue (Peking University Core), and China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). The selection of the literature is related to the fields of religious architecture, genetic preservation, mosques, architectural renewal, and so on.

The first stage was to collect information from journals and papers related to Chinese mosques that are currently listed as protected sites and those that are not officially recognized but are indeed safeguarded. We then collected and analysed relevant literature and materials on protection measures and renewal measures of Chinese mosques, to have a better understanding and knowledge of the subject. At the same time, in the selection of literature, the focus is on timeliness. The latest research results are selected to reflect the current research dynamics and the latest progress. For example, the literature from 2019 to 2024 can provide the latest information on mosque protection strategies. At the same time, the recent development of mosque conservation and renewal strategies is understood through field interviews with the relevant persons in charge of the Muslim North Temple of Zhengzhou, aiming to provide a multifaceted perspective and more practical insights into the topic of this study.

The results of this study are intended to be a reference for organizations and individuals interested in the conservation and renewal of religious buildings in Chinese mosques, contributing a common effort to enhance the conservation and renewal of Chinese mosques.

## **Results and Discussion**

In China, the current conservation strategy for mosques and religious buildings focuses to a greater extent on conservation and repair, as well as maintaining the orderly renewal of the building's functional areas, while hardly involving transformation and reuse. Mosques feature prominently in architectural renewal, encompassing practices like ghusl (ritual washing) and wudu' (ablution). They also have challenges related to expansion and renewal, which involve constructing and equipping the

building. This discussion primarily focuses on three aspects: the preservation of the historical setting surrounding the mosque, the safeguarding of the mosque building itself, and the renewal strategy for the mosque building.

### *The Conservation of the Historical Setting in which the Mosque is Located*

The Venice Charter, adopted during the 1964 International Conference of Architects and Technicians Working with Historic Buildings in Venice, unequivocally declares that the preservation of a cultural structure entails the appropriate preservation of its surroundings. Preservation of traditional environments is vital wherever they still exist. Any alteration, whether it is new building, demolition, or modification, that would disrupt or modify the existing connection between form and colour is strictly prohibited (The State Administration of Cultural Relics, 2009). In 2015, China made a reference to the Venice Charter and revised the Guidelines for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Monuments in China. Article 10 of these guidelines emphasizes the importance of fully protecting the value, value carriers, environment, and other elements that embody the value of cultural heritage monuments (China National Committee of the National Council on Monuments and Sites, 2015). China's guidelines are in line with international standards while focusing on the integration of mosques with traditional Chinese culture and the preservation of the character and function of religious buildings in the process of modernization. It can be seen that international conservation philosophies have influenced the development and implementation of China's mosque conservation strategy, making China's conservation philosophy consistent with both international standards and Chinese characteristics. Furthermore, this indicates that China has been actively monitoring and considering the development of policies related to environmental conservation in the context of cultural heritage structures.

However, China's vast expanse has resulted in distinct geographical disparities between its eastern and western cities, as well as disparities between urban and rural areas. For instance, the local governments in Shanghai and Qingdao value and safeguard mosques. Nonetheless, there are actual distinctions between the two areas' policies. The Songjiang Mosque, which highlights its historical background and cultural relevance, is one example of a mosque in Shanghai that is undergoing renovations with an emphasis on maintaining its historical appearance and cultural values. In contrast, Qingdao's mosque renovations are more concerned with addressing the demands of contemporary Muslims in their daily lives, such as expanding to accommodate the city's growing Muslim population and religious events. Therefore, to prevent the establishment of a single approach in developing and executing policies for safeguarding the historical surroundings of mosques, it is essential to rely on comprehensive research data about historical structures as the fundamental foundation. By conducting thorough and detailed analyses, we can ultimately devise conservation policies and strategies that are appropriate for the diverse range of historical environments surrounding mosques (Hasni et al., 2023).

The division of Chinese Historic and Cultural Districts, as currently implemented in China, is a widely used and effective approach guided by this concept. Historic building conservation was first established in China's regions with a notable abundance of historic structures, including Qingdao, Tianjin, Shanghai, Wuhan, and Hong Kong. Historic building preservation was implemented early in certain geographical locations, leading to the establishment of historic building preservation zones (Liu & Zhou, 2024). These zones prioritize the supervision and safeguarding of street planning, landscaping, and all historical structures within the area. They also regulate the construction of non-historical buildings and other elements that could impact the overall historical ambiance of the area. The objective is to adopt the sustainable preservation of historic buildings.

**Fig. 1** illustrates the former site of Qingdao Mosque, situated within the protected area of the traditional German red-roofed historical structures in Qingdao, which is not officially recognized as a historically preserved building. However, due to its proximity, both the former mosque site and the surrounding historical buildings have been well-maintained (Xue, 2019). Additionally, it is necessary for newly constructed buildings in the region to conform to the historical surroundings in terms of their height and roof shape. This is done to achieve maximum harmony with the architectural landscape of the protected area.

Thus, in 2015, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the State Administration of Cultural Heritage began to clearly define historical protection zones, requiring

active improvement of the infrastructure and living environment of historical and cultural neighbourhoods, stimulating their vitality, and preserving their appearance. This not only help establish a long-term system for the protection of mosques and the surrounding historic environment, but also guide the construction concept of new buildings, providing an important basis for their design.

#### *The Conservation Plan Pertaining to the Construction of the Mosque Itself*

According to China's statistical data from 2014, there were 39,135 mosques and other places of Islamic activity that had undergone relevant registration, of which 39,019 were mosques. China has designated a part of the mosques as cultural monuments and provided them with protection. For instance, prominent mosques in the country, including Beijing Niujie Mosque, Yangzhou Crane Mosque, and the Great Mosque of Xi'an, which possess significant artistic value and have a rich history of building, have already been designated as important cultural heritage sites under national protection (Ma, 2017). Additionally, some of the mosque structures, known for their exceptional historical and artistic significance, have also been designated as provincial and municipal cultural heritage monuments for protection. However, despite the large number of mosques, many that meet the requirements for protection remain unlisted (Table 1). In the Xinjiang region of China, for example, where there are about 24,400 mosques, only 109 religious and cultural monuments, or 0.44 percent of the total are listed as cultural relics protection units at the autonomous region level or above. Based on the above information, it is evident that the preservation of mosque architecture is inadequate and requires significant improvements in various aspects.

**Table 1.** Location Distribution and Protection Level of Mosque Buildings in China (Partial Statistics)

No.	District	Name of Mosque	Level of Cultural Heritage Units
1	Quanzhou	Qingjing Temple	One of the first key cultural relics under national protection
2	Beijing	Niujie Mosque	The third batch of national key cultural relics protection units
3	Tongxin, Ningxia	Tongxin Great Mosque	The third batch of national key cultural relics protection units
4	Xi'an	the Great Mosque of Xi'an	The third batch of national key cultural relics protection units
5	Guangzhou	Huaisheng Mosque	The fourth batch of national key cultural relics protection units
6	Hangzhou	Phoenix Mosque	The fifth batch of national key cultural relics protection units
7	Yangzhou	Yangzhou Crane Mosque	The eighth batch of national key cultural relics protection units
8	Shanghai	Songjiang Mosque	Shanghai's second batch of cultural relics protection units
9	Datong	Great Mosque of Datong	The fifth batch of provincial cultural relics protection units in Shanxi Province
10	Beijing, Tongzhou	Tongzhou Mosque	The fifth batch of Beijing cultural relics protection units
11	Zhengzhou	the Muslim North Temple	The sixth batch of cultural relics protection units in Henan Province
12	Dingzhou, Hebei	Dingxian Mosque	County-level key cultural relics protection units
13	Kunming	Nancheng Mosque	Not yet listed as a heritage unit

Source: Shi (2023)

To begin with, it is necessary to provide a clear definition of the fundamental principle of safeguarding mosque architecture. The Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics in China explicitly states that preserving the original condition of cultural relics is the fundamental principle for

safeguarding and restoring historical buildings (Ji, 2017). However, this approach is inadequate and lacks rigor when applied to well-preserved modern mosques. Similarly, the protection of mosques across the country varies due to the diverse situations in the eastern developed regions and the middle and western regions. It would be unrealistic to impose the same security standards and needs uniformly. For example, urban mosques are well-funded and face the challenge of adapting to the impact of urbanization without altering the original state of the heritage. Rural mosques, in contrast, face a lack of adequate funding and resources for maintenance and repairs to keep the heritage as intact as possible. Hence, it is imperative to adjust the fundamental principle of preserving cultural relics, which entails maintaining their original state, and establish protection guidelines applicable to different locations. This will ensure that modern mosque buildings throughout the country receive enhanced policy protection for their preservation efforts.

Furthermore, the significance of conducting regional historical building surveys cannot be overstated when it comes to safeguarding local contemporary mosques. Many valuable modern mosque structures in China have not received adequate protection in their respective regions (Zhang, 2008). This lack of protection can be attributed to both a lack of attention and the failure to promptly gather and organize information about these mosque buildings in the relevant regions. The implementation of a systematic and comprehensive historical building census system is essential for promptly capturing and understanding such information. As one of the second group of historical and cultural cities designated in China, Shanghai, due to its special historical positioning and geographic factors, has many excellent buildings from the modern period. Therefore, the focus of its protection naturally falls on these buildings.

Coupled with the easing of the criteria for selecting existing historical structures in the surveys, the number of local historical buildings in Shanghai has been classified is more than 50% of local of the cultural protection units at the national, municipal, and other levels (Zheng, 2020). Shanghai's conservation initiatives demonstrate the advantages of enhancing the mosque building census. By accurately categorizing and conducting a thorough evaluation of all existing mosque buildings nationwide, we can improve the effectiveness of repair work and further promote their protection. For example, the Zhang Yuan in Shanghai's Jing'an District has been conserved and renovated as a result of historical building surveys (Fig.2).



**Fig.1** Qingdao Mosque  
(Source: Zheng, 2020)



**Fig.2** Zhang Yuan, Jing'an District,  
Shanghai  
(Source: People's Daily Online)



**Fig.3** Publicity for the Protection  
of Heritage  
(Source: Union China.com.cn)

There are still numerous inadequacies and faults that require attention in the process of restoring the mosque buildings in China. Chinese mosques exhibit a diverse range of architectural styles, and the challenges associated with their repair are notably complex. The presence of a significant number of traditional Chinese-style mosques does not pose any substantial difficulties, thanks to the good inheritance of repair techniques and means. However, the use of masonry, wooden structures, and other conventional consumable and delicate materials, coupled with the destruction caused by turbulent times, necessitates the reinforcement and replacement of many building components during the restoration process. Unfortunately, such treatments often result in the loss of the original building's historical essence (Qi, 2020). For instance, the authenticity of the wooden structure was severely harmed when the eight gold columns and other structures of Guangxiao

Temple were replaced with reinforced concrete components during the 1955–1957 refurbishment because of the insufficient perception of conservation strategy of the time. In the short term, this approach prevented the structure from collapsing, but over time, it undermined the building's historical and cultural significance (Chen, 2017). Regarding mosques that combine Chinese-Western and Arabian architectural styles, there is a significant disparity between the architectural principles derived from Western countries and traditional Chinese architectural philosophy. Consequently, there is a lack of theories regarding the restoration of such mosques. Furthermore, the accumulation of restoration experience is somewhat limited due to the relatively short existence of modern buildings (Abduaini, 2014).

Simultaneously, there is a need for greater standardization in the design and construction qualification assessment and audit of mosque building restoration. Additionally, there is a need to strengthen the professional abilities of practitioners in this field. Shanghai excels in various areas, including its contributions to research and development in the field of historical building facade repair and protection. For instance, Tongji University has organized efforts to establish The Modern Historical Building Facade Repair and Protection of Technical Regulations (Dai, Lu, & Zhang, 2014). Similarly, the Shanghai Institute of Real Estate Research has been involved in the subject of Technical Regulations of Shanghai for Investigation of Cultural Relics Protection Projects (Modern and Contemporary Architecture) (Zhu, Wan, & Hu, 2010). Furthermore, the Shanghai cultural relics authorities have initiated a qualification training and examination program for heritage protection engineering. However, due to its late commencement, many aspects of the program are still in the experimental and adjustment phase, requiring additional time for verification and enhancement. Typically, resolving issues regarding the protection of mosque buildings is a lengthy endeavour that necessitates a systematic approach to establish a comprehensive protection mechanism and a detailed process to guide actual repair operations. This process involves the continuous accumulation of knowledge and experience to ultimately develop effective protection and repair work.

Finally, the plan aims to enhance the community's consciousness and promotion of mosque constructions. For the vast majority of Muslims who visit mosques frequently for worshipping many times a day, the historical significance and architectural grandeur of these sacred spaces are invaluable. It may be argued that it is the responsibility of every Muslim to save these mosque structures. In China, the general public's lack of religious beliefs and the disparities in living habits across various ethnic groups have caused them to become estranged from one another and, in some cases, even created a divide. This situation is not beneficial for national unity. The mosque building serves as a tangible representation of the country and its people's resilience and bravery in the face of adversity. Safeguarding it is a crucial aspect of fostering national cohesion. Relevant historical knowledge should be disseminated and made widely known to the general population (Chen, 2009). The objective is to develop and coordinate suitable educational initiatives and raise awareness about the fundamental principles of mosque building preservation in schools and communities. The goal is to establish widespread understanding of the significance of conserving mosque buildings among the public, as shown in **Fig. 3**.

### *Renewal Strategies for Mosque Buildings*

Many historical buildings that have been preserved to the present day, including residential, industrial, and commercial structures, are no longer utilized for their original architectural purposes. Instead, they have been repurposed to meet modern conservation requirements and face their own limitations. Examples of such adaptations are the famous Shanghai XinTianDi (China Architectural Culture Research Association, 2020) and the 1933 Old Market Square, which have lost their intended functions and converted into tourist attractions (Fig. 4). However, in contrast to these contemporary historical structures, the primary purpose of most religious buildings from the same era remains unchanged over time. Therefore, the preservation of mosque buildings does not involve the issue of alteration and repurposing. The more significant impact lies in the renewal of historical buildings. The primary concept of renewal is to sustain the utilization of a function by consistently iterating it to fulfil future requirements. The goal is to achieve a harmonious equilibrium between the preservation of the mosque building for future generations and its current daily utilization.





**Fig.4** Shanghai XinTianDi  
(Source: SOHU.com)



**Fig.5** The 1933 Old Market Square  
Source: photophoto.cn



**Fig.5** The commercial part of the mosque  
(Source: SOHU.com)

It is necessary to ascertain the level of protection for various regions and components of the mosque building complex. This will serve as the foundation for a logical renovation of the architecture. A mosque is not just a single structure, but rather a complex of buildings that serve different religious functions. These include the worship hall, minaret, ablution room, and enclosed courtyard, each playing a specific role in facilitating religious activities. The worship hall and minaret are the most significant components of the mosque complex. The worship hall, in particular, holds higher architectural and artistic importance since it serves as the central place for Islamic religious activities. The formal characteristics of each mosque building must be reflected in these important areas, regardless of the time and place of construction. Therefore, these well-preserved areas in the mosque complex have been given relatively more attention and importance in the preservation of modern architecture.

For example, during the safeguarding of mosque structures in Shanghai, a comprehensive investigation and survey were conducted to ascertain the appropriate level of protection for the buildings and identify the precise portions that require protection. The mosque buildings in the cluster of functional buildings are categorized into three groups based on their level of protection: cultural heritage area buildings, localized cultural heritage area buildings, and non-cultural heritage area buildings. The focus of architectural renewal is primarily on the latter two categories (Zheng, 2020). For localized cultural heritage area buildings, it is necessary to specifically screen cultural protection and non-cultural protection parts. This screening will serve as the foundation for subsequent work. For mosque protection buildings, the non-cultural parts need to be renovated and updated in a systematic manner, ensuring they maintain the original architectural style of the mosque and adhere to the principle of preserving recognizable historical buildings.

Moreover, ensuring the original authenticity of historic buildings plays a crucial role in the process of renewing the cultural and conservation aspects of mosques. In order to preserve the authenticity of mosques, it is advisable for heritage conservation areas to prioritize architectural conservation and renewal over current safety and aesthetic demands. This will ensure that the mosques remain well protected and functional without compromising their historical significance. Anti-seismic capabilities, fire-fighting facilities, air-conditioning and heating facilities, network facilities, and night-time lighting projects have presented significant tests and challenges to the maintenance and renovation of mosque buildings (Ma & Ye, 2006). The wooden frame system of modern Chinese traditional mosques has suffered extensive damage and a significant decrease in quality due to the buildings being too old and a lack of care. Many of the wooden beams and columns are no longer usable and need to be rebuilt. Severe cases may lead to the structural instability of mosques, resulting in their potential collapse and subsequent demolition and reconstruction (Xiao, 2021). The implementation of the regeneration process should prioritize the preservation of the original architectural elements and building forms of historic buildings. This will help minimize any alterations to the original architectural style and historical character that may result from the use of new building materials and elements.



The provision of hot water is equally crucial to fulfil the requirements of ghusl and wudu' prior to worship. As a very important facility in the mosque, with the development of Islam and the passage of time, the need for updating the relevant facilities and functional space has become more and more obvious. The Muslim North Temple of Zheng Zhou, for instance, is in the middle of an old city centre, with narrow roads, a dense population, and poor infrastructure (Liu, 2018). Firstly, the current hot water supply is insufficient to meet future needs. Secondly, the existing boiler room poses a safety risk to the surrounding historical buildings. Therefore, it is crucial to incorporate new technologies that are safer, more environmentally friendly, and energy-saving to minimize the impact on the heritage conservation area.

Fire safety has gained significant attention from various sectors of society in recent years, progressively highlighting the significance of mosque building renovation efforts in relation to this matter. China's lack of fire awareness in modern period buildings, along with the high density of buildings in the region and inadequate fire spacing and protection facilities that do not meet national criteria, pose a significant threat to the protection of cultural relics. When renewing historic structures, it is important to carefully assess the current state of the heritage conservation area and the level of historical conservation's impact on fire safety, in addition to considering fire safety measures. To maintain the authenticity of significant historic buildings, it is generally advisable for less important buildings to proactively avoid proximity to the more important ones. They should also take responsibility of localized building rehabilitation and renewal, primarily for fire safety purposes.

Furthermore, the implementation of China's temple economic strategy has been employed to effectively impact the revitalization efforts of the mosque. The source of funding for historic building conservation, upkeep, and renewal has always been the most crucial component of the entire conservation process, particularly in rural areas where a lack of funding frequently makes it impossible to perform basic conservation of religious buildings. To ensure a consistent and sufficient flow of funds for maintenance, the principle of "whoever utilizes it, assumes responsibility for it" or a system of shared responsibility between property rights holders and the government is employed in China (Luo, 2006).

In addition, China's religion-related policies have an impact on the mosque as a religious edifice. The "three-self policy" (Fu, 2016) of self-governance, self-preaching, and self-support, which was established and put into effect in China in 1982, has played a crucial role in the maintenance and revitalization of modern mosques. Among them, the issue of self-support for mosques has been particularly significant. During the period before 1949 in China, the temple economy played a significant role in the social economy. Virtually all temples owned holdings, including fields and companies. The majority of the expenditures for temple activities were allocated to the construction and upkeep of temple structures. Subsequently, as a result of the limitations imposed by the land policy, the progress of temple construction increasingly depended on support from the government. Following the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy, the introduction of self-supporting measures compelled all temples to reassess the trajectory of their future growth. In this context, the mosque building renewal operations encompass not only the preservation of historical buildings in accordance with policies and regulations but also the integration of solutions to the mosque's self-sustainability challenges to promote unified thinking. For instance, the gradual conservation and repair work on the building amenities during the three reconstructions of the Muslim North Temple of Zheng Zhou between the 1980s and 1990s was self-financed at RMB 50,000, RMB 60,000, and RMB 100,000, respectively.

Simultaneously, mosques across various regions have utilized the practicality of their street sections to incorporate commercial activities into their original auxiliary spaces and lease them, thereby partially fulfilling the financial requirements of mosques for self-sufficiency. Fig. 5 shows a typical commercial street of a mosque in China. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the condition of the businesses located on the streets near many renovated mosques is unsatisfactory. There is an excessive focus on creating a modern commercial environment, which does not align well with the old architecture of the main building. To address these issues, it is imperative for multiple government departments to collaborate to enhance oversight of the owner, design, and construction during the renovation and renewal process. This will effectively safeguard the integrity of the modern mosque building's growth throughout its various stages of ongoing development.

## Conclusion

Mosque structures in China have played a significant role in the country's architectural culture. The development, rise, and fall of mosque buildings in China have witnessed the growth of the country and the nation together. Hence, it is imperative to thoroughly acknowledge the historical significance of mosque structures. China has currently developed several protection and restoration methods in the field of conservation; however, there remains a need for further enhancement of the overall conservation concept and conservation measures. We urgently need to approach these issues from an interdisciplinary standpoint, broaden our understanding of historic structures like mosques, and develop a more thorough maintenance and repair and renewal system that considers regional variations to encourage better care of these priceless historic structures.

Safeguarding and renewing mosques in China hold immense importance. Modern mosque architecture serves as both a physical representation of the religious beliefs of Muslims and a tangible expression of the Hui people's determination and industriousness within their social context. It also contributes to a deeper understanding of the historical development of the Hui people. Additionally, the conservation and revitalization of historic mosque structures have a positive impact on the economic growth of the city in which the mosque is situated. It gives the general population an opportunity to learn about religion, ethnicity, and related history, which can be converted and developed into commercial demand, resulting in economic development in neighbouring areas, such as attracting tourists and encouraging tourism. At the same time, it has the potential to draw a significant number of religious followers from around the world and fulfil their spiritual requirements, resulting in worldwide contacts between Muslims from diverse backgrounds and promoting various activities and national cooperation.

## Co-Author Contribution

The authors confirmed that there is no conflict of interest in this article. Author 1 carried out the fieldwork and prepared the literature review. Author 2 wrote the research methodology and did the statistical analysis and interpretation of the results.

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