

# Heritage Conservation and Renewal of the Barkhor Street Historic District in Lhasa

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## Abstract

historical and cultural district is an important carrier of memory and inheritance of spirit and culture in the city. This paper takes Barkhor Street, the historical and cultural district of Lhasa, as the object of study. Combining the characteristics of the historical and cultural district of Lhasa Barkhor Street and the current situation of conservation, we analyze the problems of insufficient implementation of the system, lack of awareness of architectural authenticity, imperfect public service facilities and lack of green space in the conservation and renewal of Lhasa Barkhor Street . It also summarizes some suggestions for the future conservation and renewal of the historic and cultural district of Lhasa Barkhor Street .

## Keywords

History and culture; Barkhor Street; heritage conservation; renewal.

## 1. Introduction

Historical and cultural neighborhoods are the concentrated embodiment of a city's multiple cultures, rich in historical heritage, and are the most local cultural characteristics of each city and the area that best reflects the city's long history. With the rapid development of urbanization, the pace of urban renovation and renewal has accelerated, ignoring regional culture and building modern thought has caused certain impact on the local traditional-looking neighborhoods [1]. How to make the cultural heritage of historical and cultural neighborhoods get comprehensive protection and renewal in social development, reflecting its value, has important research significance for contemporary urban planners.

## 2. Characteristics and conservation status of the Barkhor Street historical and cultural district in Lhasa

### 2.1. Architectural features of historical and cultural districts

The overall appearance of Lhasa city can be summarized as ancient, simple and heavy, colorful and orderly, Tibetan style and new charm, and holy city of mountains and waters (as Figure 1). Barkhor Street is the core area of the old city of Lhasa, which is built around the world cultural heritage of Dazho Monastery, with a long history of more than 1300 years. is a historical and cultural district announced by the People's Government of Tibet Autonomous Region, a typical traditional Tibetan cultural settlement, with four blocks, in a circular shape, with a perimeter of about 1000 meters, containing 35 streets and 199 residential compounds. The overall appearance of Lhasa inside the "ancient and heavy". Nowadays, Barkhor Street is an important pilgrimage area and a comprehensive area for tourism, leisure and commerce. Since the 7th century, Barkhor Street, as an important historical and cultural center of Tibet, has been less damaged and still maintains a more traditional historical pattern and historical appearance. retains a rich cultural heritage. In 2009, Barkhor Street was selected as one of the first "Ten Famous Historical and Cultural Streets of China" [2]. According to the Lhasa architectural style

guideline score, Barkhor Street belongs to the traditional style core area (e.g. Figure 2), and its architecture has the following characteristics.

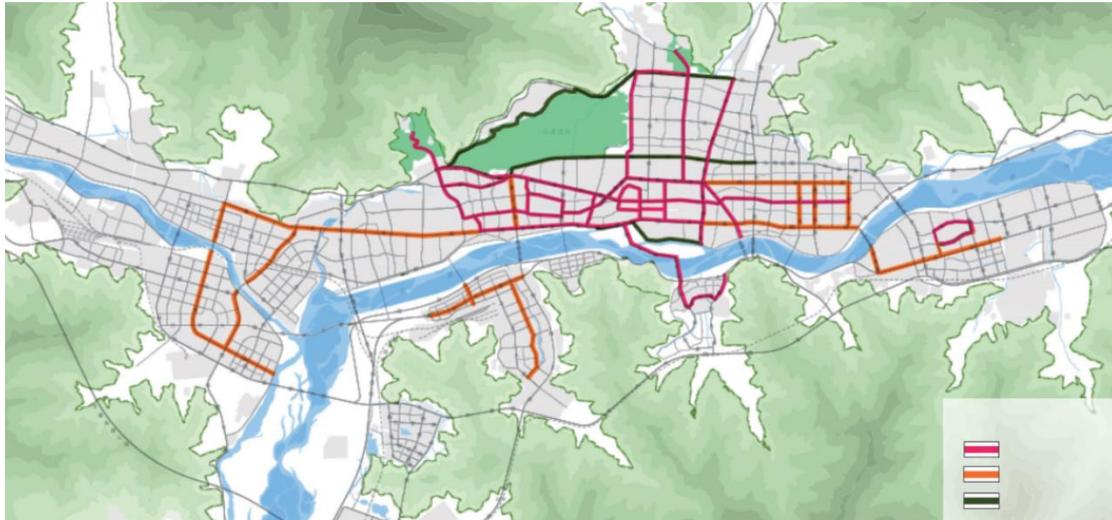


Figure 1 Schematic diagram of the classification of Lhasa's characteristic boundaries

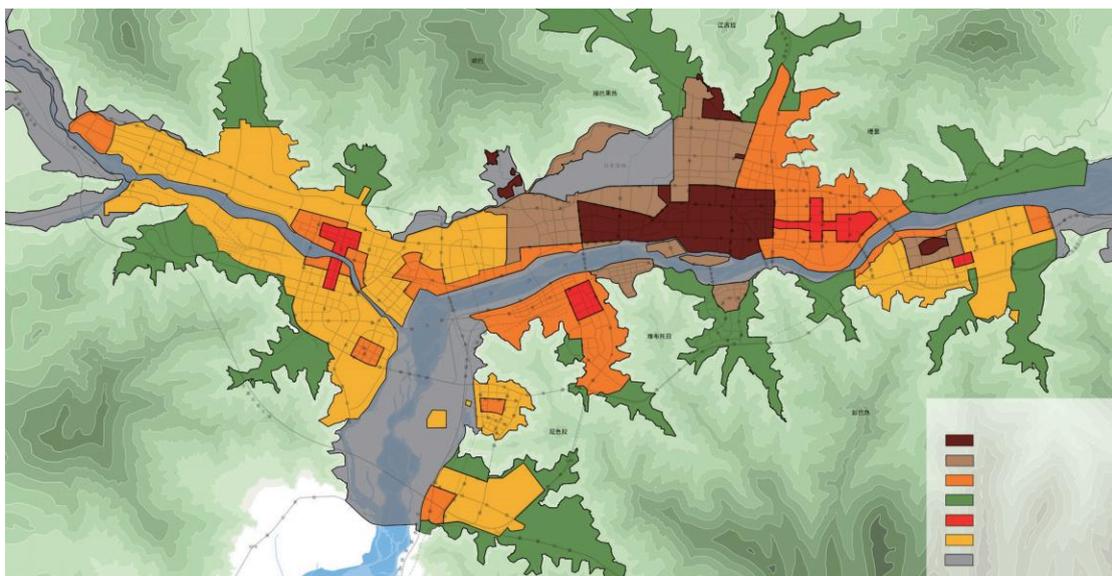


Figure 2 Architectural style zoning map of Lhasa

### 2.1.1. Architectural style

Barkhor Street contains religious buildings, urban public buildings, traditional residential compounds and other buildings, and many kinds of buildings. According to the "Lhasa Architectural Style Guidelines", both the original buildings and new buildings are currently preserved in traditional Tibetan style. For example, the walls are divided between 3 and 8 degrees, the exterior walls of the buildings are made of light-colored stone walls, and the doors, windows, gables, roofs and ancillary buildings are made of traditional Tibetan techniques.

### 2.1.2. Building materials, colors

The color of Tibetan architecture in Lhasa pays attention to the combination of humanistic elements and natural elements, and the overall impression of color is bright, strong, clear and warm. Building facade materials are adapted to local conditions, using traditional Tibetan building materials, mostly stone, wood, raw earth and other materials, and the colors are the traditional colors of Tibetan architecture. For example, as a monastery building, the color of its facade is Tibetan red, white and yellow, and the use of color has a strict hierarchy, which is

somewhat different from the general use of white in residential courtyards and partial embellishment of Tibetan red.

### **2.1.3. Status of spatial portfolio**

The spatial combination of Barkhor Street is mainly characterized by scattered and enclosed, with a high building density, the internal control height of the block buildings is lower than 15 meters, and the control height of most areas is lower than 12 meters, and the overall situation shows an orderly development.

## **2.2. Current situation of historic and cultural district protection and development**

As one of the top ten historical and cultural streets in China, Barkhor Street has a rich cultural heritage that gives it multiple values in history, culture, aesthetics, commerce, religion, architecture, etc. "Preservation" has been a long-term concern for government departments and researchers. In the 1980s, with the start of tourism in Lhasa, Barkhor Street became a must-see destination for domestic and foreign tourists visiting Lhasa. The development of tourism in Lhasa has brought new businesses, new residents and new vitality to the Barkhor Street. In 2012, the autonomous region prepared a project to protect and improve the historic district of Lhasa Barkhor Street by investing funds and improving management services to protect the heritage of the Barkhor Street. To implement Xi Jinping ecological civilization thought, firmly establish and practice the green water and green mountains, ice and snow is an important measure of the concept of the golden mountain, in 2018, Lhasa City invested 988 million yuan to start the central city water system restoration and ecological management project, to further enhance the quality of Lhasa city, the protection of national history and culture, the continuation of the city's historical lineage is of great importance.

### **2.2.1. The renovation of single buildings is coordinated with the overall protection of cultural space.**

Since the reform and opening up, the city of Lhasa has repeatedly implemented the Barkhor Street renovation project of dangerous buildings and identified 29 cultural relics and 56 ancient building protection compounds as the core of the protection of the cultural heritage of this historical district. 2012 Tibet Autonomous Region government in the original renovation, repair based on the Great and Small Zhao Monastery as the center, Barkhor, Lingkor transcendental road as the skeleton, with a circular street network as the system, the north and south of the Great Small Zhaoji closely linked, East and West connecting the Uto bridge and the Great Mosque, many nodes of the unique ancient city pattern. On this basis, planning and remediation measures were developed, including functional layout adjustment, internal height control, vacating large unit sites, evacuating large commercial functions, and adding public facilities [3]. For the restoration of the overall pattern of the ancient city of Lhasa, the protection of the environment and spatial texture around the cultural heritage and the establishment of connections between nodes and spaces, the characteristic functions of many cultural spaces have been effectively restored. For example, the former Yamen of the Qing government in Tibet has been renovated and restored, and free visits have been offered to tourists.

### **2.2.2. Simultaneous promotion of the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.**

Since 1992, Lhasa City has prepared the "Detailed Plan of Barkhor Street" and "Lhasa City Master Plan"; announced the "Barkhor Street Historical and Cultural Protection Zone" covering 130 hectares; promulgated the "Interim Regulations for the Protection and Management of the Old Town of Lhasa City" and "Interim Regulations for the Protection and Management of the Barkhor Street Historical and Cultural District of Lhasa City". provides laws, regulations and scientific standards for the protection of the Barkhor Street historical and cultural heritage. In

2016, the conservation and remediation project proposed to develop "Conservation Planning Management Guidelines" in the neighborhood conservation planning. clarifies the conservation elements and conservation requirements, and explores the digital management of conservation at the neighborhood level. The guidelines include seven parts: spatial planning control, architectural style and historical and cultural value assessment, road traffic guidance, commercial interface guidance, conservation zoning control requirements, building classification protection and improvement, and style protection requirements. All the important elements of the historic landscape of the neighborhood are incorporated into the spatial planning control, including the visual connection corridor with the surrounding mountains, Potala Palace, etc., the historic streets, important interfaces, historical environmental elements, etc. The proposed conservation measures and conservation concepts can be effective for both tangible and intangible cultural heritage [3].

### **3. Problems in the conservation and development of historical and cultural districts**

#### **3.1. Insufficient system execution**

The government of Tibet Autonomous Region has formulated a series of technical specifications based on the relevant national regulations, and the planning requirements, the conservation of the Barkhor Street Historic District is an important part of it, which should be strictly implemented in accordance with the relevant regulations. However, a comparison of the relevant provisions of the plan and the actual survey results reveals that the "Lhasa Barkhor Street Historic District Conservation Plan" has in fact not played its proper role in the renewal of the historic district.

#### **3.2. Inadequate understanding of originality**

From the current Barkhor Street residential buildings, most of the building appearance and building height can be repaired and managed in accordance with the "Lhasa Old Town Protection Regulations" 2013 and the "Lhasa Barkhor Street Historical and Cultural District Protection Plan" 2013 requirements. However, some problems have been found in the renewal of the city. For example, due to supervision and management problems, part of the residents still erect illegal buildings on the roof plane, not in accordance with the requirements of the height limit of the wind and landscape guidelines, breaking the ring of the overall appearance of the building. Secondly, from the architectural heritage of the original look, designers set to the historical district building reconstruction or reconstruction, the building structure form using frame structure, wall filling hollow brick or aerated concrete blocks, such design, construction of the building energy saving, seismic is beneficial, but not in accordance with the architectural heritage protection requirements of raw materials, the original process of traditional style area architectural design, construction, after many years from the protection of It is debatable whether the overall texture of the building has been destroyed from the perspective of architectural heritage.

#### **3.3. Inadequate public service facilities and the lack of green space**

The Barkhor Street street landscape has less greenery and only one "old banyan tree" remains in the inner transitway of Barkhor Street, which has become a resting place for tourists and residents. According to the satisfaction survey in the article "Regional Culture in Lhasa Barkhor Street Street Landscape", the satisfaction rate of green space and resting space among tourists is low, accounting for 29.6% and 21.3% of the total, due to the tourists' obvious discomfort with plateau activities, the strong light and lack of oxygen on the plateau, and the high demand for sun protection measures and resting places. Green space, truly tracing the history and humanity,

and improving the artistry of public space are also important factors to respect the regional culture and improve the quality of the environment [4].

## **4. Suggestions for countermeasures**

### **4.1. Sustainable development planning concept**

Scientific planning for the renewal of historical and cultural districts with a development perspective should be forward-looking and systematic. It should be considered as a whole, and resources such as land, culture and environment should be reasonably allocated to make the historical and cultural district a showcase window of Lhasa's local culture. Strictly delineate the red line of the neighborhood, improve legislation, continuously enhance the seriousness and authority of historical and cultural protection, and eliminate reconstruction after destruction. Strictly control the new projects in the historic district, from the building height, building density, volume ratio and other planning conditions to control, the scale, color and contradictory construction of the historic district should be avoided in the planning stage, large volume, large-scale retro buildings should also be avoided construction.

### **4.2. Ensuring the originality of the neighborhood's historical values**

On the basis of the clear red line of neighborhood protection, other general buildings are also analyzed, and their historical and cultural values are explored as much as possible. preserves urban memory, maintains historical authenticity, avoids excessive development, and focuses on cultural inheritance.

#### **4.2.1. In terms of architectural and cultural elements**

Various cultural elements and valuable architectural components and materials of old buildings should be retained and utilized. will be combined with architecture and landscape creation to fully demonstrate the historical and cultural appearance of the ancient city of Baoding.

#### **4.2.2. In the control of the overall texture**

The use of reasonable street landscape space scale and the use of decorative elements of the street landscape highlight regional culture, historical culture, customs and local conditions, combined with regional makes in the streets of single buildings, streets, landscape nodes, etc. not abrupt, and strive to integrate.

### **4.3. Enhance the quality of public services and add green space**

In the construction of the street landscape green space of Barkhor Street, the street of Barkhor Street is improved by using native plants, appropriately increasing the green shade places, and reasonably improving the street pavement of Barkhor Street, the existing pavement lacks the sense of orientation and indication and has no obvious regional recognition. The existing pavement lacks a sense of orientation and indication and has no obvious regional identity. Additional humanized supporting facilities, and appropriate planting of greenery in combination with spatial requirements.

## **5. Concluding remarks**

In 2013, Tibet Autonomous Region for the protection of the Barkhor Street historical and cultural district, and Lhasa Barkhor Street protection project to improve, Barkhor Street for its own regional cultural protection is currently in a good position to promote and achieve certain results, such as, the excavation and protection of traditional culture has been strengthened, people's livelihood improved, the neighborhood infrastructure has been significantly improved. However, with the test of time, it also reveals some problems such as weak system execution and poor management. In the future planning and protection, daily maintenance and post-

conservation process, how to maximize the regional culture and not to affect the normal commercial activities, is the future Barkhor Street historical and cultural district protection and renewal needs to face the problem.

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