
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Spatial Layout Characteristics and Architectural Decoration Art of Ten Fragrances Garden in Guangzhou: An Analysis Based on Lingnan Garden Design Philosophy

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| ABSTRACT

This study takes Ten Fragrances Garden in Guangzhou as a case study and combines relevant literature and historical materials on Lingnan gardens to analyze its garden characteristics from two aspects: spatial layout and architectural decoration. It found that Ten Fragrances Garden fully embodies the characteristics of Lingnan gardens: "small and exquisite, practical and aesthetically pleasing." The garden design philosophy of Lingnan, as embodied in Ten Fragrances Garden, has significant reference value for contemporary garden design and cultural heritage protection.

| KEYWORDS

Ten Fragrances Garden; Ten Fragrances Park Memorial Hall; Spatial Layout; Architectural Decoration; Lingnan Gardens; Garden Art

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

As one of the three major schools of classical Chinese gardens (Jiangnan gardens, Northern gardens, and Lingnan gardens), Lingnan gardens are a unique product of the deep integration of regional culture and natural environment [1,2]. Unlike Jiangnan gardens, which pursue "though made by man, it seems to have been created by nature," and Northern gardens, which emphasize imperial grandeur, Lingnan gardens are characterized by practicality and inclusiveness, exquisite beauty, and a fusion of Lingnan's humid climate and maritime culture [3,4]. This manifests in their small, refined scale, where the residence and garden are integrated; their architecture is open and simple, yet ornately decorated (numerous wood carvings, brick carvings, stucco, and stained glass), and influenced by both Chinese and Western cultures (arched doors and windows, column capitals). In terms of layout, water features are skillfully arranged, with frequent use of geometric pools, and plant arrangements emphasize both practicality and aesthetics (*Bombax ceiba*, fruit trees, and bonsai), reflecting the pragmatic and inclusive spirit of Lingnan and forming a stark contrast to Northern and Jiangnan gardens. However, existing research largely focuses on more famous Lingnan gardens such as Yuyin Garden in Guangzhou, Foshan Liangyuan Garden, Dongguan Keyuan Garden, and Shunde Qinghui Garden, lacking a systematic analysis of garden-making philosophies and often neglecting the core issue of the intrinsic connection between garden spatial layout and architectural decoration. In-depth analysis of Lingnan gardens essentially explores how regional culture is materialized through spatial organization and artistic decoration. This not only fills the gap in the analysis of regional characteristics in classical garden studies but also provides theoretical support for contemporary regionalized garden design and the preservation of historical gardens.

Choosing Ten Fragrances Garden in Guangzhou as the specific research subject is both typical and unique. On the one hand, Ten Fragrances Garden, located in Haizhu District of Guangzhou (Figure 1), is the birthplace of the Lingnan School of painting in the late Qing Dynasty, and its garden-making activities are deeply intertwined with the aesthetics of literati [4,5]. It not only continues the spatial wisdom of Lingnan gardens, but also, through the participation of literati painters, forms the decorative characteristics of poetry and painting entering the garden, and an elegant artistic conception, making it a model of the

integration of literati gardens and regional gardens in Lingnan gardens. On the other hand, although the existing scale of Ten Fragrances Garden is not large, its spatial layout is complete (including core buildings such as Jinxi Nunnery and Xiaoyue Qin Pavilion), and its architectural and decorative remains are rich (wooden carved window lattices, gray plaster patterns, brick carved lintels, etc.). Moreover, it has retained its original appearance after restoration, providing a complete material carrier for empirical research. More importantly, current research on Ten Fragrances Garden mostly focuses on the history of the painting school and the interaction of literati, lacking a systematic exploration of its spatial layout logic, the cultural connotation of architectural decoration, and its compatibility with Lingnan garden-making ideas, resulting in a significant research gap. Therefore, taking Ten Fragrances Garden as a case study can not only concretize the core characteristics of Lingnan gardens, but also enrich the empirical system of Lingnan garden research through in-depth analysis of micro-cases, providing a reference sample for the protection and revitalization of similar historical gardens.



Figure 1. The current location of Ten Fragrances Garden. (Image source: Screenshot from Google Maps by the author)

1.2 The Development History of Ten Fragrances Garden

Ten Fragrances Garden, formerly known as "Geshan Caotang", is located at No. 3, Geshan Huaide Street, Jiangnan Avenue, Geshan Community, Changgang Street, Haizhu District, Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province. It is surrounded by waterways and adjacent to urban roads such as Jiangnan Avenue and Rose Second Street. The garden was the residence of Ju Chao (1811-1865), a famous flower-and-bird painter in the late Qing Dynasty, and his brother Ju Lian (1828-1904) [6], and is known as the "cradle of the Lingnan School of Painting" [4].

The Ju brothers, Ju Chao and Ju Lian, first built the Ten Fragrance Garden in 1864, expanding their original residence. The garden originally covered over 700 square meters [7] and now covers about 696 square meters. It was originally composed of three parts: Jinxi Nunnery, Xiaoyue Qin Pavilion, and Zilihua Pavilion. It is named "Ten Fragrance Garden" because it is planted with ten kinds of fragrant flowers and trees, including *Daphne odora* Thunb., *Telosma cordata* (Burm. f.) Merr., *Artabotrys hexapetalus* (L. f.) Bhandari, *Jasminum sambac* (L.) Aiton, *Lilium longiflorum* Thumb., *Pogonia japonica* Rchb. f., *Chloranthus erectus* (Buch.-Ham.) Verdc., *Michelia × alba* and *Michelia figo* (Lour.) Spreng.

Ju Lian lost his father at a young age and was raised and educated by his elder brother, Ju Chao. In 1848, the two brothers went to Guangxi and were employed by the Provincial Surveillance Commissioner Zhang Jingxiu. In 1861, they returned to Guangdong with Zhang Jingxiu. After Zhang Jingxiu's death in 1864, the brothers returned to Guangzhou and settled down, gradually forming the scale of Shixiang Garden [7]. After 1865, the two lived in the garden for a long time and opened a school to teach students. Ju Chao died relatively early and had few students. However, Ju Lian devoted himself to the education of painting for a long time, and his students gradually flourished. He cultivated important figures of the Lingnan School of Painting, such as Gao Jianfu, Gao Qifeng, and Chen Shuren, making Ten Fragrances Garden an important source of modern Lingnan painting.

During the Anti-Japanese War (1931-1945), when the Japanese army occupied Guangzhou, they set up their headquarters next to Ten Fragrances Garden. The Japanese army demolished the houses in Ten Fragrances Garden and took away the beams, purlins, and other materials to use for cooking. A month later, the Japanese army withdrew, but the Jinxi Nunnery, Xiaoyue Qin Hall, and a large amount of furniture in Ten Fragrances Garden were destroyed, leaving only the Zilihua Hall [7, 8]. In 1966, due to political factors, the "Destroy the Four Olds"¹ campaign and the confiscation of houses were launched, and Ten Fragrances

¹ the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution to characterize elements of Chinese culture prior to the Chinese Communist Revolution that they were attempting to destroy. The Four Olds were 'old ideas', 'old culture', 'old customs', and 'old habits'.

Garden could not be spared. A large amount of old furniture, paintings, stationery, genealogies, house deeds, and other items in the house were burned. In August 1983, Ten Fragrances Garden was announced by the Guangzhou Municipal People's Government as the second batch of cultural relics protection units in Guangzhou [4].

Since 1998, numerous real estate developers had sought to purchase the Ten Fragrances Garden property, but the Ju family descendants refused to sell. In 2004, the Ju family donated the Ten Fragrances Garden property to the Guangzhou Municipal Government. The municipal government then began reconstruction work on the Ten Fragrances Garden. After consideration, it was decided to restore and rebuild the property on its original site, rather than relocating and rebuilding it elsewhere. Starting in 2006, over 20 million yuan was invested in the restoration of the Ten Fragrances Garden residence. The Guangzhou Municipal Government relocated the descendants of the Ju family from the Ten Fragrances Garden in February 2007. In April of the same year, the ashes of Ju Chao, Ju Lian, and other Ju family ancestors were reburied in the China Permanent Cemetery, while the Guangzhou Municipal Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology began excavation and surveying of the Ten Fragrances Garden. In May, the restoration project officially began, divided into two phases. On September 22, 2007, the first phase of the Ten Fragrances Garden renovation and preservation project was completed, with the basic reconstruction of Jinxi Nunnery and Xiaoyue Qin Hall and the restoration of Zilihua Hall. The Ten Fragrances Garden Memorial Hall was also officially opened [7].

In May 2009, Ten Fragrances Garden invested more than 50 million yuan in the second phase of the renovation and preservation project, including the construction of the Ten Fragrances Garden Art Museum, new exhibition halls, art exchange halls, the garden water system, waterfront platforms, connecting Ten Fragrances Garden with Haizhu Canal, and building the ancient water town wharf, as well as the renovation of the surrounding area [8]. The second phase included the renovation of a building that was preserved at the same time as Ten Fragrances Garden, the construction of new exhibition halls, art exchange halls, garden water systems, waterfront platforms, rest squares, and landscaping. It was also rated as a patriotic education base in Guangdong Province [8].

2. Literature review

2.1 Spatial Layout and Architectural Decoration of Lingnan Gardens

Lingnan historical gardens have distinct regional characteristics within the classical Chinese garden system. Their spatial layout and architectural style were gradually formed based on traditional Chinese garden-making ideas, combined with the natural environment and social living conditions of the Lingnan region. Existing research generally believes that systematic academic research on traditional Lingnan gardens started relatively late, but a clear development path has gradually formed since the mid-to-late 20th century. Early research mainly focused on field investigations and descriptive analysis, aiming to confirm the regional characteristics of Lingnan gardens within the classical Chinese garden system. As research progressed, scholars initiated thematic discussions on particular elements, including spatial organization, architectural form, and decorative art, thereby rendering the study of Lingnan gardens increasingly systematic and multidimensional [9].

In terms of spatial layout research, scholars mainly focus on the spatial types, planar organization methods, and environmental adaptability of Lingnan gardens. Lingnan gardens often organize space with "courtyard" as the core, forming a rich and continuous spatial structure through the combination of multiple courtyards or spatial units. This multi-unit combination layout not only helps to meet the needs of living and daily activities but also reflects the response to the hot and humid climate and urban land conditions in the Lingnan region [9]. Scholars Liu et al. took examples of Lingnan gardens in the Qing Dynasty as the object and analyzed their spatial structure and functional zoning characteristics in depth, pointing out that Lingnan gardens mostly adopt a layout form with a relatively compact scale and close spatial connection. This type of research emphasizes that the space is not developed in a single center but rather integrates multiple functional spaces through garden elements, such as corridors and water systems, to form a garden environment that combines practicality and aesthetics [9].

Spatial forms such as water courtyards and the combination of water and stone make the buildings, courtyards, and water bodies form an integrated layout, reflecting the spatial characteristics of Lingnan gardens that emphasize practicality and environmental adaptability. In terms of architectural decoration research, the academic community has systematically sorted out the traditional decorative techniques used in Lingnan gardens. Studies generally focus on decorative types, craftsmanship, and cultural connotations, pointing out that decorative forms such as plasterwork, wood carving, brick carving, pottery sculpture, and porcelain inlay possess distinct regional characteristics in Lingnan architecture and gardens. Decorative research not only focuses on its artistic expression but also emphasizes its cultural expression and aesthetic enhancement functions within garden spaces [10, 11]. In terms of decorative themes and cultural connotations, Lingnan garden architectural decorations often draw inspiration from flowers, birds, auspicious animals, and historical stories, exhibiting a distinct sense of daily life and regional cultural characteristics. These decorations not only beautify the architectural space but also, to a certain extent, embody local cultural identity and aesthetic concepts.

Overall, spatial layout research focuses primarily on garden structure and environmental adaptation, while architectural decoration research emphasizes the analysis of technical systems and cultural connotations. These two types of research lay the foundation for further exploring the relationship between Lingnan garden space and decoration from a comprehensive perspective [9, 10]. Therefore, the spatial layout and architectural decoration of historical Lingnan gardens have formed an interdependent overall system through long-term practice. Spatial layout provides structural carriers and display nodes for

architectural decoration, while architectural decoration enhances spatial hierarchy and environmental atmosphere through visual and cultural expression, laying a theoretical foundation for subsequent analysis in conjunction with specific garden cases.

2.2 Analysis and Review of Ten Fragrances Gardens

Existing information about Ten Fragrances Garden mainly focuses on official cultural relic protection documents and public cultural information released by local governments. Official narratives generally define Ten Fragrances Garden as a commemorative cultural site renovated from the former residences of Ju Chao and Ju Lian and systematically outline its historical evolution, cultural relic attributes, and protection level. This type of information provides authoritative evidence for understanding the basic nature, protection background, and administrative positioning of Ten Fragrances Garden [8].

Regarding the renovation and reuse of Ten Fragrances Garden, publicly available government information details its phased renovation process and functional transformation. This information also provides a reference for the subsequent engineering renovation of former residences of celebrities and Lingnan garden architectural heritage. These publicly available renovation documents emphasize that Ten Fragrances Garden adhered to the principle of "original site protection and historical continuation" during the restoration process. While restoring the traditional architectural layout, memorial halls, exhibitions, and public cultural service functions were introduced, transforming it from a private residence into a cultural heritage space open to the public [8].

In local cultural dissemination and public narratives, Ten Fragrances Garden is often discussed within the context of the development history of the Lingnan School of Painting. Local governments and official propaganda texts generally emphasize the important role of Shixiang Garden as the place where Ju Chao and Ju Lian taught and taught students in the formation and development of the Lingnan School of Painting. They frequently use expressions such as "cradle of the Lingnan School of Painting" and "birthplace" to summarize its cultural status [12]. Media reports focus more on presenting the cultural value of Shixiang Garden from the perspective of historical figures, artistic heritage, and urban memory. Such reports usually combine the geographical location, historical changes, and important events of Shixiang Garden to describe its significance in modern Lingnan art history, in order to enhance the public's understanding of this historical garden and art space [13]. In general, existing research and reports on Shixiang Garden focus on cultural relic protection, art history significance, and public cultural dissemination, and the relevant content is mostly introductory and documentary. There is still relatively limited academic research that systematically analyzes Shixiang Garden from the perspective of garden space layout and architectural decoration, which also provides space for subsequent in-depth research from the perspective of garden history and architectural history [8, 12].

3. Methodology

This study's methodology centers on the Ten Fragrances Garden, a core case study within Lingnan Gardens. It examines its architecture, plant landscape, and cultural connotations, comprehensively collecting 13 categories of references, encompassing academic papers, government website archives, institutional reports, and authoritative media reports. The academic section includes journal articles on topics such as the creation of plant landscapes in Lingnan gardens, the formation of garden characteristics and styles, and the progress of classical garden research (e.g., Zhang et al.'s 2024 study on the plant landscape and cultural connotations of Lingnan gardens, Lu Qi's thematic analysis of the Ten Fragrances Garden, and Liu Guowei et al.'s review of research on classical Lingnan gardens). The practical and historical section includes first-hand materials such as the official introduction to the Ten Fragrances Garden Memorial Hall, cultural heritage archives released by the Haizhu District Government, and data on traditional Lingnan architectural decoration techniques in Guangzhou. Supplementary materials include in-depth reports from authoritative media on the Ten Fragrances Garden as the birthplace of the Lingnan School of Painting and papers from conferences on research related to traditional clay sculpture decoration in architecture.

The analysis focuses on three core aspects: First, using Ten Fragrances Garden as a typical case study and combining it with materials on traditional Lingnan architectural techniques, it analyzes the architectural characteristics of the Cantonese style, such as gray brick walls, Manchurian windows, and connecting corridors, and their adaptation to the hot and humid climate of Lingnan. Second, based on research literature on Lingnan gardens, it outlines the functional, ecological, and cultural principles of the "Ten Fragrances" plant arrangement in Ten Fragrances Garden and its functional positioning in serving sketching and artistic creation. Third, by integrating cultural heritage archives and media reports and relating them to the artistic practices of the two Ju family painters at Ten Fragrances Garden, as well as their innovative techniques of "colliding water and powder," it analyzes the symbiotic relationship between the garden space and the formation and inheritance of the Lingnan School of painting, clarifying its cultural causes and value as the cradle of the school.

4. Results

4.1 Spatial Layout Analysis of Ten Fragrances Gardens

4.1.1 Overall Spatial Structure

Ten Fragrances Garden is an irregular rectangle, bounded by a gray brick wall and street-level access, forming an inward-facing, enclosed garden layout that aligns with the "hidden yet revealing" spatial characteristics of traditional Cantonese residences. The garden centers around three main buildings: Xiaoyue Qin Hall (Ju Lian's painting studio), Jinxi Nunnery (Ju Chao's painting studio and study), and Purple Pear Blossom Hall (a guest room and teaching space). It is divided into three functional areas: a residential and creative area, a courtyard viewing area, and a support area. The northern building houses the residential and creative area, catering to the daily living and teaching needs of Ju Chao and Ju Lian. The courtyard viewing area, connected by a central "winding stream" water system, links flowers, trees, rockeries, and corridors, becoming the core location for sketching, picnicking, and literary gatherings. The support area is hidden in the southwest corner, providing storage and washing facilities. In terms of circulation, the main corridor paved with granite serves as the framework, forming a progressive circulation path of "entrance—connecting corridor—courtyard—building." This not only ensures the privacy and sense of ceremony of the space but also achieves efficient connection of functional spaces and avoids circulation interference between different scenes.



Figure 2. Purple Pear Blossom Hall. (Image source: https://news.dayoo.com/guangzhou/202412/25/139995_54765948.htm)

4.1.2 Layout Logic of the Core Space

Ten Fragrances Garden's core layout logic is "architecture surrounding the courtyard, water and rocks complementing each other, and flowers and trees adding color." Buildings are arranged in a staggered pattern around the courtyard, with individual structures such as Jinxi Temple and Purple Pear Blossom Hall connected to the courtyard via open corridors, forming a composite spatial interface of "building-corridor-courtyard," blurring the boundaries between indoors and outdoors. The central water feature, presented as a shallow stream and small pond, meanders between the buildings and vegetation, serving both to separate spaces and regulate the microclimate, while also creating a visually changing effect through "water following the corridor." The vegetation is primarily composed of "ten fragrant" flowers and trees (jasmine, magnolia, etc.), complemented by native plants such as banana trees and bamboo groves, either adorning the eaves of buildings or surrounding the water's edge, forming a layered effect with the rocks and buildings. This design satisfies the artistic needs of sketching and framing while enhancing the natural charm of the garden. This combination of "architecture as the skeleton, water as the veins, and vegetation as the clothing" achieves a high degree of unity between function and aesthetics, practicality, and poetry.

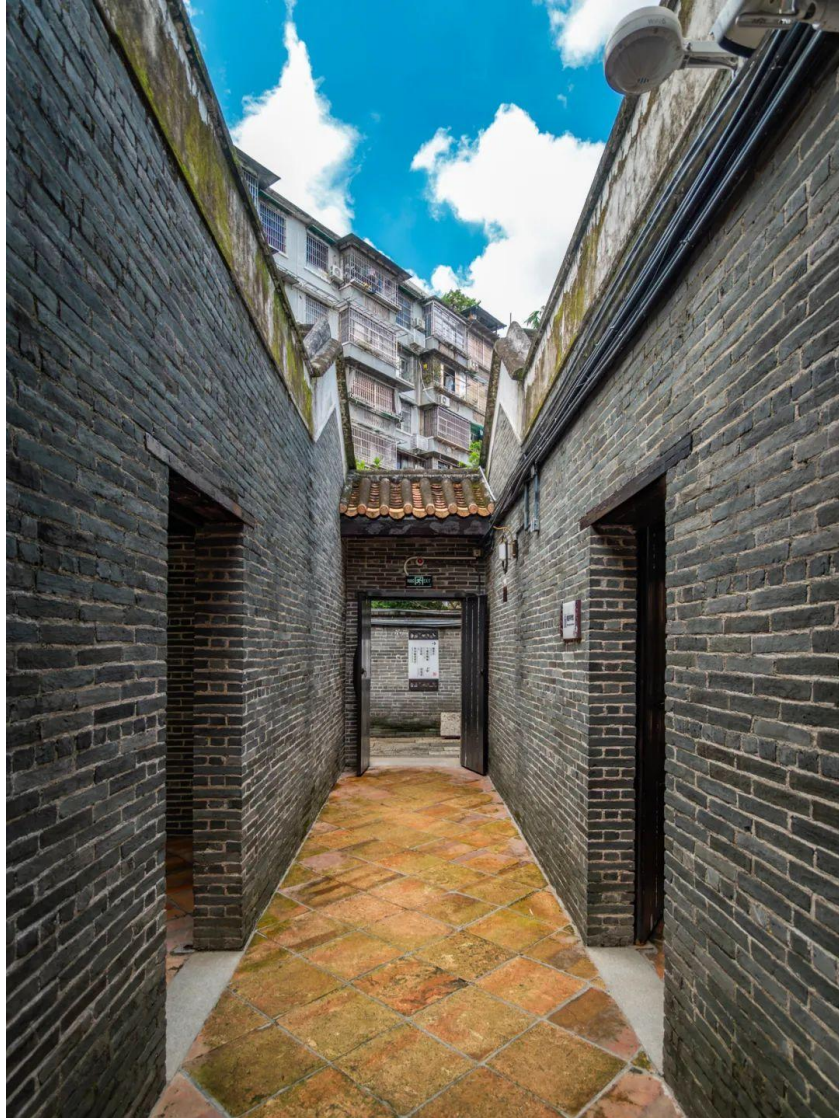


Figure 3. Qingyun Lane (Image source: https://news.dayoo.com/gzrbrmt/202507/18/170645_54848950.htm)

4.1.3 Spatial Layout Adaptability to the Lingnan Region

In terms of climate adaptation, Ten Fragrances Garden's southeast-to-northwest orientation precisely matches the dominant summer wind direction in Lingnan. Combined with open corridors, transparent Manchurian windows, and a courtyard design, it creates natural cross ventilation, effectively alleviating the stuffiness caused by the humid climate. The construction of the gable roof, with a green tile roof and gray brick walls, provides excellent rainproofing and heat insulation while also allowing for rapid heat dissipation and maintaining a comfortable temperature within the garden. In terms of terrain adaptation, relying on the gently undulating terrain of the Pearl River Delta plain, the garden creates a "miniature mountain forest" atmosphere through localized landscaping and water features, avoiding the destruction of the original landscape caused by large-scale renovations. In terms of lifestyle adaptation, the spatial layout closely aligns with the Ju brothers' complex lifestyle of "residence—creation—teaching": the courtyard serves as an open social space, meeting the needs of literary gatherings and sketching exchanges. The flexible division of studios and living rooms within the buildings balances privacy and creative convenience, reflecting the regional characteristics of Lingnan gardens that emphasize both practicality and aesthetics.



Figure 4. A close-up view of the mountains and forests (Image source: https://news.dayoo.com/qzrbmt/202507/18/170645_54848950.htm)

4.2 Analysis of Architectural Decoration Art in Ten Fragrances Garden

4.2.1 Types and Distribution of Decoration

The architectural decoration of Ten Fragrances Garden is based on traditional Cantonese craftsmanship, mainly distributed in key areas such as the building facade, eaves, doors, windows, beams, and columns. Wood carvings are concentrated on door and window lattices, corridor brackets, and beam components, using openwork and relief carving techniques to present delicate patterns. Brick carvings are mostly seen on lintels, plinths, and gables, using shallow relief techniques to depict geometric and plant patterns, with a simple and rustic style. Gray plaster is mainly used on roof ridges, eaves, and wall tops, using three-dimensional shapes to create images of flowers and auspicious beasts, serving both decorative and waterproof functions. Painted decorations adorn the Manchurian window glass and beam surfaces, mainly using warm colors to create a warm and elegant visual atmosphere [14,15]. The various decorations follow the distribution logic of "highlighting the key points and distinguishing the primary and secondary elements": the decorations of the core buildings (Purple Pear Blossom Hall and Jinxi Temple) are more exquisite, while the auxiliary buildings are simplified, which avoids the cumbersome feeling of excessive decoration and highlights the hierarchical order of the space.

4.2.2 Decorative Themes and Cultural Connotations

The decorative themes are centered on natural imagery and literati aesthetics, carrying rich Lingnan cultural connotations. Plant themes primarily feature the "Ten Fragrances" (fragrant flowers and trees), plum blossoms, orchids, bamboo, and chrysanthemums, symbolizing noble character and the integrity of scholars, while echoing the garden's theme of "fragrant realm." Animal themes mostly depict auspicious beasts such as bats, magpies, and qilin, signifying favorable fortune, auspiciousness, and refined literati taste. Human figures are rare, appearing only in partial paintings, often depicting scenes of literati gatherings and sketches reflecting the artistic life of the Ju brothers. Textual patterns mainly feature the characters "福"

(fortune) and "寿" (longevity), as well as short poetic phrases, conveying the desire for blessings and cultural inheritance. These themes not only continue the auspicious connotations of Cantonese folk decoration but also incorporate the artistic aesthetics of the Lingnan School of painting, becoming a visual carrier of the garden's cultural connotations.

4.2.3 Artistic and decorative craftsmanship

In terms of craftsmanship, the decoration of Ten Fragrances Garden focuses on "simplicity and practicality, delicacy and dynamism": wood carvings employ a combination of openwork and bas-relief techniques, balancing transparency with structural stability. Brick carvings primarily utilize the "reduced relief" technique, with simple and smooth lines, that avoid overly elaborate carving. Stucco employs a "sculpting-painting" process, using local materials such as lime and straw for shaping, resulting in high durability. Painting primarily uses mineral pigments, with warm and elegant colors, avoiding strong and glaring hues. In terms of material selection, local materials from the Pearl River Delta are the core: wood carvings use moisture-resistant hardwoods such as camphor and rosewood; brick carvings use locally fired blue bricks; and stucco uses lime and shell powder as raw materials, reflecting the Lingnan architectural wisdom of "using local materials." In terms of color matching, the base colors are light gray, wood brown, and pure white, with warm colors such as red, green, and gold as accents. This not only matches the simple and dignified tone of Cantonese architecture but also enhances the visual layers through local bright colors, forming an artistic style of "elegance with dynamism".

5. Conclusion

5.1 Main Research Conclusions

This study takes Ten Fragrances Garden as a case study and combines relevant literature and historical materials on Lingnan gardens to analyze its garden characteristics from two aspects: spatial layout and architectural decoration. It found that Ten Fragrances Garden fully embodies the characteristics of Lingnan gardens: "small and exquisite, practical and aesthetically pleasing."

In terms of spatial layout, Ten Fragrances Garden adopts a compact and hierarchical organization method, and through the organic combination of buildings, courtyards, water features, and corridors, it forms a continuous and rich spatial experience within a limited space. The garden is centered around buildings such as Xiaoyue Qin Hall, Jinxi Temple and Purple Pear Blossom Hall and connects different functional spaces through winding and smooth circulation lines, realizing the unity of multiple functions such as living, creation, teaching, and viewing. This layout not only adapts to the reality of relatively tight land resources in the Lingnan region but also responds to the requirements of ventilation, shading, and spatial openness in the hot and humid climate, reflecting the characteristics of Lingnan gardens that emphasize practicality and environmental adaptability [9]. In terms of architectural decoration, Ten Fragrances Garden retains typical characteristics of Cantonese architectural art, such as blue brick walls, Manchurian windows, gray plasterwork, and wood carvings. These decorations possess high artistic and craft value and carry rich cultural connotations, reflecting the open, inclusive, and diverse cultural characteristics of the Lingnan region. The architectural decorations and garden space complement each other, jointly creating an aesthetically pleasing garden environment, culturally rich, and regionally distinctive [10, 11].

5.2 Contemporary Inspiration from the Design Philosophy of Ten Fragrances Garden

The garden design philosophy of Lingnan, as embodied in Ten Fragrances Garden, has significant reference value for contemporary garden design and cultural heritage protection. First, Ten Fragrances Garden fully embodies the design concept of "adapting to local conditions." Its spatial organization, architectural form, and plant configuration all fully consider the humid and rainy natural environment of the Lingnan region, improving the microclimate through connecting corridors, courtyards, water features, and well-ventilated and open architectural structures. This design philosophy, which emphasizes adaptability to the regional environment, still has practical value for current landscape design that emphasizes ecologically sustainable development. Secondly, Ten Fragrances Garden organically combines living spaces, artistic creation, and garden landscapes, showcasing the concept of integrating people with nature and culture within a spatial context. As an important birthplace of the Lingnan School of Painting, Ten Fragrances Garden is not only a living space but also a platform for artistic creation and cultural exchange. This suggests that modern public space design should pay more attention to the implantation of cultural functions and promote cultural inheritance and social interaction through space creation [12, 13].

Furthermore, the renovation and revitalization practices of Ten Fragrances Garden also provide a reference for the protection of historical gardens. On the basis of maintaining the original historical pattern and cultural characteristics, exhibition, education, and public cultural service functions were introduced, realizing the coordinated development of cultural heritage protection and social utilization. This model of "emphasizing both protection and utilization" has reference value for the renewal and utilization of other historical gardens and cultural heritage sites [8].

5.3 Limitations and Future Prospects

This study still has certain limitations. First, in terms of the research object, this paper mainly uses Ten Fragrances Garden as a case study. Although it has strong representativeness, a single case study is difficult to fully reflect the overall development characteristics of Lingnan gardens. Lingnan gardens from different historical periods and regions still exhibit differences in spatial layout and architectural decoration, thus limiting the scope of this research. Secondly, regarding research methods, this paper primarily employs literature analysis and case study methods, with research data mainly derived from academic literature, government archives, and publicly available information. Due to the lack of long-term field surveys, interviews, and quantitative spatial analysis, some spatial experience characteristics and usage behaviors have not yet been verified in greater depth.

Future research could expand its scope by conducting a horizontal comparison between Shixiang Garden and other typical Lingnan gardens such as Yuyin Garden, Keyuan Garden, Liang Garden, and Qinghui Garden, thereby more comprehensively summarizing the commonalities and unique characteristics of Lingnan gardens.

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