

## Analysis of 19th Century Colonial Building Design in Tianjin, China

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### Abstract

This research delves into the intricate implications of 19th-century colonial facade characteristics on residence design in Tianjin, China. As a prominent city in the early 20th century, Tianjin boasted a unique blend of foreign concessions and indigenous Chinese architectural heritage. The study aims to bridge the knowledge gap regarding the significance of colonial heritage in residence design and its cultural preservation. The research objectives encompass exploring colonial facade traits of the 19th-20th century, experimenting with their integration in modern residence design, and proposing their relevance for Tianjin's context. Tianjin's historical evolution, initially marked by its status as a treaty port shared by various nations, shaped its architectural identity. The research employs a qualitative approach, involving on-site visits and photography to gather primary data from heritage buildings, both colonial-owned and those influenced by colonial aesthetics. This method facilitates a comprehensive assessment of architectural details, enabling a deep understanding of the interplay between colonial and indigenous elements. The study also employs a survey questionnaire to further investigate how colonial facade characteristics impact the residents' perceptions, motivations, and design choices. This approach enhances the analysis of intricate design decisions that link past colonial influences to contemporary residence design. Through content analysis and data triangulation, the study reveals insights into the interwoven cultural, historical, and aesthetic factors that have shaped Tianjin's architectural landscape. By bridging the gaps in understanding regarding the effects of colonial aesthetics on residence design, this research contributes to a broader discourse on architectural preservation and urban development. It underscores the importance of acknowledging and integrating colonial heritage to create a distinctive architectural narrative that captures the essence of Tianjin's rich history. Ultimately, this study enriches the discourse surrounding architectural preservation, cultural continuity, and the symbiotic relationship between past and present in urban design.

**Keywords:** 19th Century, Colonial Façade, Residence Design, Tianjin, China

**Introduction**

Long after it had begun, the lack of sufficient housing continued to be a problem. Advocates for low-cost housing for the economically disadvantaged were present at every level of government, and they continued their work (Ramsdell, 2021). In that year, poverty affected an astounding 357,000 people in Tianjin, which is equivalent to one-fourth of the city's total population. 44 There were a lot of people living in slum regions who had their own homemade straw homes that were crowded together. Tianjin, just like Nanjing, is suffering from a serious lack of available housing. There were real estate companies that did create housing projects for citizens, but those with low incomes were unable to afford to live in those homes. Liberal thinkers in China were curious as to whether or not their Western and Japanese counterparts had any viable solutions to the housing crisis in China (Hassan, 2022). As can be observed from the quantity and quality of journal papers and books that Chinese academics published throughout the decade of the 1920s, they contributed significantly to the dissemination of ideas concerning international housing policy. The rapid urbanisation that has taken place in contemporary Chinese cities has resulted in an increase in the number of structures that have a high energy demand but a low cultural value (Zhou, 2018). Many rural communities in China have developed one-of-a-kind regions by making use of the indigenous knowledge and resources available to them. These areas are in tune with the local ecosystem and climate. The buildings of the communities have the capability of controlling the weather in a manner that is both efficient and effective for the activities that have been planned. The methods of construction as well as the aesthetic aspects that were incorporated into these buildings have a lot to teach and inspire modern architects (Shah et al., 2022).

Modern building practises and the traditions of China's garden and water towns were combined in the city of Tianjin's traditional villages, which resulted in high standards of artistic value, cultural vitality, and ecological sustainability (Liu et al., 2019). These standards were achieved in Tianjin's traditional villages. Wood, bricks, and stones were utilised in the building envelopes in order to give protection from the weather. Over the course of time, the sculptures that were set into these materials have become an iconic aspect of the Tianjin skyline and a sign of the area's rich cultural history. For example, the cow-leg construction has been used for a very long time in the ancient architectures of the villages of Tianjin to support the roof and convey the stress to the columns. These structures have been there for hundreds of years. Prior to the Yuan Dynasty, its sole purpose was to act as a structural component; as a result, it was uncomplicated and suited its purpose. Since that time, it has evolved into a structural form that has been highly affected by Chinese art and culture. It bears the unmistakable historical imprint of the dynasties that followed the Yuan, such as the Ming, the Qing, and the Republic of China (Yeh, 2021): The artistic expression of these intriguing construction components has evolved through time to become increasingly complex and intricate, becoming more in sync with the cultures of the areas in which they are found while still fulfilling their structural duty. These forms may be built using standard, low-tech building procedures, and they are inexpensive to boot. Additionally, they are versatile. Building practises have traditionally benefited from the distinctive cultural icon that is the traditional house. This influence may be traced back throughout history. Therefore, it is tremendously beneficial for sustainable development to incorporate historic cultural knowledge, design, and construction processes into contemporary architectural design (Labadi et al, 2021).

This study aims to broaden our understanding by analysing the Housing and Residences of Tianjin's Colonial Heritage Design as well as the process of cultural enrichment that has made it possible for the region's singular heritage to be passed down from one generation to the

next. The quantity and quality of currently available research on interior design are both lacking. In China, there is a significant awareness gap among the general population on the significance of maintaining architectural history. This study will shed light on the significance of Colonial Heritage Design features in Housing and Residences through the use of traditional elements. Some specific objectives for study are given below:

RO1: To explore the 19th century colonial façade characteristics.

RO2: To experiment on the 19th colonial façade characteristics for residence design.

RO3: To propose the 19th colonial façade characteristics for residence design in Tianjin, China.

### **Literature Review**

The concept 19th century heritage, which in and of itself is still in its infancy phases, is closely linked to the idea of conserving recent history, which is still in its formative stages and is still in the process of developing (Shafe, 2022). It was in Chicago in 1995 that a conference with the title "Preserving the Recent Past" was held; however, the scope of the meeting was severely restricted to the preservation of cultural artefacts only from the 1920s through the 1960s. This meeting was severely limited to the preservation of cultural artefacts only from the 1920s through the 1960s. Recent legacy, in particular the history of modernist architecture, is now recognised by the relevant international organisations and institutions as an essential component of the common heritage of humanity. This recognition came about as a result of the fact that recent heritage is considered more significant than it was previously. This acknowledgment is the product of the internationalisation of activities aimed at the preservation of cultural traditions (Sasaki, 2021).

It is a glaring illustration of the way in which societies and buildings have developed over the course of time, and it serves as an excellent teaching tool. The phrase "cultural properties and constructed heritage" that are younger than fifty years old are referred to as having a "recent past" using the specialised term "recent past," which is often used in this context. This classification includes memorials, new construction, vernacular architecture, adaptive reuse, urban ensembles, city parks and gardens, landscapes, works of art, furniture, interiors, integrated industrial design, engineering works, roads, bridges, waterworks, harbours, and industrial complexes, as well as integrated industrial design. In contemporary design, it is common practise to make use of cutting-edge technology and materials, both of which frequently bring to issues that were not anticipated.

The quick disintegration of lightweight concrete domes, synthetic materials, and vast panes of glass are some examples of the challenges that can arise as a result of these factors. Even inconspicuous structures run the risk of falling into disrepair and being threatened with demolition in the same manner that notable landmarks do. This risk is especially prevalent with older buildings. DOCOMOMO International professionals such as Maristella Casciato have referred to modern architecture as a "legacy at high risk". The idea of heritage from the 19th century was developed in order to address the issue that structures from the 19th century are not accorded the same level of respect and preservation as other categories of heritage, such as those that are more historically significant or traditional. This problem led to the development of the concept of heritage from the 19th century. Buildings that were constructed in more recent times do not appear to have the same value as older, more well-known structures that were erected in the past.

The discrepancy may be the result of negative perceptions, according to which modern constructions may be responsible for destroying natural environments or historic sites, or it

may be the result of the relatively large amount of recent heritage, which creates challenges in selecting what to protect. Either explanation could be to blame (LA Clark, 2019). Either of these two explanations could be correct. Since the turn of the millennium, there has been a growing consensus among academics and policymakers that cultural artefacts from the 19th century should be preserved because they represent an essential component of humanity's collective memory. This is due to the fact that cultural artefacts from the 19th century are considered to be historically significant. This has been the case for some time now due to the significance of the artefacts that are being preserved. It is vital that some of the buildings that were established during the Modern Movement be maintained around so that subsequent generations would be able to appreciate the rich history and culture that is contained within them. These structures were built during the time of the Modern Movement.

The life expectancy of the buildings, the rapid advancement of technology, the divide between intended functions and contemporary needs, and the deceptive qualities of cultural ideas are all significant threats to the architectural heritage of the Modern Movement. As a result, the process of identifying and evaluating the heritage of the 19th century should be carried out within a framework of sustainable development, with consideration given to the heritage's relevance to both the present and the future (MH Yasien, 2022). This is because the 19th century was a watershed for a wide range of social, political, economic, and cultural developments. During the course of this process, this significance ought to be taken into consideration. It is essential, when evaluating historic projects, to take into account not only the community's actions in the fields of environment, business, and culture, but also the community's expectations regarding the outcomes of the project.

Heritage design basically is a concept in which many existing issues of housing in our society are addressed and through that the design is built. Through heritage design, houses are built with some recognizable symbols in such a special way that people love the design. In heritage design, a high level of commitment is required from the local people. The usage of the resources which are available in the local area helps to make the infrastructure of the design at a very low price and with the available raw materials to consume. Heritage design is basically the form of design that was made mostly in ancient times (Lawi, 2017). That kind of design is mostly seen in the old buildings and in the institutions.

Those buildings were built in ancient times with much care and with genuine raw materials and those materials are mostly the expensive ones. In heritage design, everything has a particular format and those formats are followed strictly. Thus, in the earlier time, the structure for the institution, for offices and for the houses had the same pattern of design. In the heritage form of design, the focus is given to the strength of the elements and the quality of the elements used in the design. To make heritage design, commitment from the local people and the local location is required and in heritage design, the culture or the history of a particular region or the area is embedded in that design (Sokienah, 2020). That is one of the major characteristics of heritage design. Hence, to make a heritage design having proper knowledge regarding the culture and the history of that particular area is important and one should focus on that. In the heritage form of design, the buildings are made manually, people used to make the structure and the building and it was a time-consuming process. To make a building or institution, it used to take a large amount of time. A lot of effort had to pour in to build design or a structural way. The investment for heritage design is huge and it also takes a large number of people to complete that structure and along with that, the requirement of time is huge as well. The people of the recent generation are looking for comfort and to get comfortable the recent structure of design has also changed and younger generations are

looking for the modern form of design (Jia, Kuai & Dong, 2021). Heritage forms of design also provide comfort but nowadays people are looking for more comfort which heritage design provides.

### **Methodology**

The research design around observation of the heritage architecture is that of visiting the city directly and then making sure that each and every historical site of residence which is being analysed can be done so properly. This will require going around the city and focusing on those heritage buildings which have a history, and which are able to provide access and pictures can be taken accordingly. There will be many different residences included as part of this observation framework, which will include not only those owned by colonials but also those buildings which were owned by Chinese but were influenced by colonial architecture.

The data collection will focus on collecting pictures of these residences and to have adequate access to all of the residences, as many of these are public buildings which can be accessed at specific times in the day. The data collection will include as many pictures as possible which will form the basis of content analysis.

There are many mansions which are available for such observation. As such, the research design will be going around the city is observing the overall architecture and then recording that architecture through pictures and other means. The main research instrument then becomes photography as it allows for recording of data which becomes the basis of making better decisions. Given that this is a mixed methodology, and the goal is to study design, there is no other means of recording information and given that many of these are heritage designs it is likely that there has to be a focus on only using such primary data and the tools which are available.

### **Discussion of Finding**

The analysis of data is the topic of this section. The colonial era of the 19th centuries left an indelible mark on many aspects of contemporary society, particularly the built landscape. The colonial facades that sprang up in what is now Tianjin, China, during this time period are excellent examples of the city's unique blend of Chinese and Western architectural styles. The unique features of these colonial facades symbolised the cultural interplay between East and West. Understanding the impacts of these factors on Tianjin's contemporary residential design is vital for appreciating the city's architectural development and informing future design decisions. In an effort to bridge the gap between the past and the present, this study looks into how the colonial façade has influenced contemporary home architecture in Tianjin. We will study the history of architecture in Tianjin to gain insight into the cultural fabric that shapes the city's physical environment and to support the city's long-term development and preservation efforts.

#### *The selected colonial building*

In this research will discuss and analyze five buildings in Tianjin, China. Tianjin is a major city in northeastern China, located along the coast of the Bohai Sea. With a population of over 15 million people, it is one of the largest cities in the country and serves as a vital economic and industrial hub. Tianjin has a rich history that dates back over 600 years. It has been an important port city since ancient times, serving as a gateway to Beijing, the capital of China. The city played a significant role in trade and cultural exchange, and its unique blend of Chinese and Western influences can still be seen today.

The cityscape of Tianjin is a mix of modern and traditional architecture. The downtown area features skyscrapers, commercial centers, and bustling streets, while the historic districts showcase traditional Chinese-style buildings, narrow alleys, and historical landmarks. Notable attractions include the Ancient Culture Street, Tianjin Eye Ferris wheel, Italian Style Town, and Five Great Avenues. Tianjin is renowned for its cuisine, which is considered one of the eight great culinary traditions in China. Local dishes often incorporate seafood and emphasize a balance of flavors. Goubuli baozi, a type of steamed bun with a savory filling, is a famous local delicacy that has gained international recognition. As an industrial city, Tianjin has a strong manufacturing sector and is home to numerous factories and industrial parks. It is an important center for industries such as automotive manufacturing, petrochemicals, steel, and electronics. The Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area (TEDA) is a well-known industrial zone that attracts both domestic and foreign investment.

In recent years, Tianjin has seen significant development and urbanization. The city has invested in infrastructure projects, including the construction of a modern transportation network, high-speed rail connections, and an expanded airport. Tianjin has also become a center for higher education, with several prestigious universities and research institutions. Tianjin is actively promoting environmental sustainability and has taken steps to address air and water pollution. Efforts are being made to develop green technologies, improve public transportation, and enhance the city's green spaces.

Tianjin, due to its historical significance as a major port city, boasts a number of colonial-era buildings that reflect its past as a treaty port and international trading hub. These buildings showcase architectural styles from various foreign influences, including British, French, Italian, and German.

The most iconic colonial area in Tianjin is the Five Great Avenues (Wudadao), located in the Heping District. It is a collection of tree-lined streets where many mansions and villas were constructed during the late 19th centuries. The buildings in this area exhibit an eclectic mix of architectural styles, including neoclassical, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque. Some of the notable structures include the former British Consulate, the former Italian Club, and the former French Club.



Figure 1: Tianjin Maps (Sources: Google Maps)

### *The Colonial Building in Tianjin City*

Another notable colonial building in Tianjin is the Tianjin Customs House, located on the Hai River. Built in 1917, this grand building features a neoclassical design and served as the main customs office during the colonial era. Today, it has been renovated and transformed into the Tianjin Customs House Museum, showcasing the history of Tianjin's port and trade.

The Astor Hotel, located near the Five Great Avenues, is another well-known colonial building. Built in 1863, it is one of the oldest hotels in China and has hosted numerous famous guests throughout history. The Astor Hotel exhibits a combination of European architectural styles and has been restored to retain its original charm. The former German Concession area in Tianjin also features several colonial buildings. The German Club, built in 1903, is an elegant structure with a mix of German and Chinese architectural elements. It now serves as the Tianjin Art Museum. Nearby, the former German Governor's Residence is a magnificent mansion that showcases German Renaissance architecture.

Additionally, the Italian Style Town in Tianjin is a replica of an Italian village and features colonial-style buildings with Italian influences. It was constructed in the 2000s as a tourist attraction and offers visitors a glimpse into the architectural charm of Italy. These colonial buildings in Tianjin not only provide a glimpse into the city's history but also serve as important cultural landmarks. They stand as a testament to Tianjin's past as an international trading port and reflect the fusion of various architectural styles from around the world.

*Jinwan Square*



Figure: Jinwan Square

The time I've spent learning about Jinwan Square has been invaluable to my development as an architect and historian. This structure is more than just an impressive structure; it is symbolic of Tianjin's cultural centre and a representation of the city's long history. The Jinwan Square in Tianjin, China, is a well-known cultural landmark. It's a huge public square right on the banks of the Jinwan River, and it's the social, cultural, and recreational centre of the area.

The square's mixed modern and traditional architecture spans an area of about 230,000 square metres. It was envisioned as a place where Tianjin's diverse population might come together to learn about and celebrate the city's long history of artistic achievement. The grandeur and sophistication of Jinwan Square were immediately apparent to me upon my first visit there. Visitors are drawn in by the interesting juxtaposition of contemporary and classical design elements. Intricate sculptures, well maintained gardens, and exquisitely made buildings all work in harmony with their natural settings, demonstrating the designers' amazing attention to detail.

The building's significance as a gathering place for the arts is one of the main draws for my research. The Tianjin Grand Theatre, with its breathtaking architecture, is a major venue for a wide variety of creative performances, from opera and ballet to concerts and plays. Having experienced these gatherings myself, I can attest to the ability of art to unite and unite a community. In addition, the square is a social hub that regularly plays host to a wide range of events and celebrations. People's reactions to the artistic exhibits and performances have been uplifting to watch as they interact with one another. It exemplifies the significance of well-planned public spaces in promoting a sense of community and national pride.

My appreciation for Tianjin's cultural heritage has grown as a result of my research into Jinwan Square. The stunning scenery and peaceful atmosphere of the area are enhanced by its setting on the banks of the Jinwan River. I now have a far deeper respect for the city's development thanks to what I've learned about its history, its evolution over time, and the



architectural decisions that went into making the square. Located in the heart of Jinwan Square, the Tianjin Grand Theatre is a must-see architectural marvel. Both locals and visitors go to the theatre to see the operas, ballets, concerts, and plays that are regularly staged there.

The flowers, fountains, statues, and walking routes in the square make it a lovely place to take a stroll and take in the sights. The square's liveliness and cultural relevance are bolstered by the numerous art exhibitions, cultural festivals, and other activities that are conducted there. Residents and visitors alike go to Jinwan Square because of the variety of cultural activities, forms of entertainment, and riverside vistas it provides. The square is an enticing location in which to learn about and experience the rich cultural history of Tianjin, whether you're an art connoisseur or just seeking for a place to relax.

Jinwan Square, located in Tianjin, China, is a vibrant and iconic public space that showcases the city's rich cultural heritage and serves as a hub for various recreational activities. The square spans an expansive area along the banks of the Jinwan River and offers a harmonious blend of traditional and contemporary design elements.

The square's design follows a symmetrical layout, with a central axis dividing it into distinct sections. The main features of Jinwan Square include

i. Grand Promenade: A wide, paved promenade serves as the backbone of the square, running parallel to the river. It provides ample space for pedestrians to stroll, jog, or simply enjoy the scenic views of the river.

ii. Landscaped Gardens: Lush greenery, meticulously manicured lawns, and colorful flower beds adorn the square, creating a serene and inviting atmosphere. The gardens incorporate elements of traditional Chinese landscaping, such as rockeries, water features, and ornamental trees.

iii. Sculptures and Art Installations: Throughout the square, visitors can encounter an array of sculptures and art installations that celebrate Tianjin's cultural heritage. These artworks range from contemporary pieces to traditional statues, adding aesthetic appeal and cultural significance to the space.

iv. Performance Spaces: Jinwan Square features open-air performance spaces strategically placed within the square. These venues cater to various forms of artistic expression, including music, dance, and theater, providing a platform for both local and international artists to showcase their talents.

v. Pavilion and Viewing Decks: At strategic points along the promenade, pavilions and viewing decks offer elevated vantage points for visitors to admire the panoramic views of the Jinwan River and the surrounding cityscape. These areas provide resting spots and opportunities for contemplation.

vi. Water Features: The square incorporates water elements, such as fountains, reflecting pools, and meandering streams, which not only enhance the aesthetics but also add a sense of tranquility and coolness to the environment.

The architectural style of Jinwan Square combines modern design concepts with elements inspired by traditional Chinese architecture. The structures within the square feature clean lines, bold geometries, and a harmonious blend of materials like glass, steel, and concrete.

The buildings and pavilions often exhibit traditional Chinese architectural motifs, such as upturned eaves, intricate roof designs, and decorative elements like carvings and painted patterns. This fusion of traditional and contemporary design elements creates a visually striking ensemble that reflects Tianjin's cultural identity while embracing modernity.

*Function and Community Engagement*

Jinwan Square serves as a multi-functional public space that caters to the diverse needs of the community. It provides an environment for leisure, socialization, cultural events, and recreational activities. The square is a popular gathering place for residents and visitors alike, fostering a sense of community and cultural exchange.

The square's design promotes accessibility and inclusivity, with well-designed pathways, seating areas, and amenities catering to individuals of all ages and abilities. It hosts a variety of events throughout the year, such as cultural festivals, art exhibitions, and performances, further engaging the community and attracting tourists. Jinwan Square in Tianjin, China, combines traditional and contemporary design elements to create a visually stunning and culturally significant public space. With its landscaped gardens, sculptures, performance spaces, and panoramic views of the Jinwan River, the square offers a rich and immersive experience for visitors, promoting cultural exchange, community engagement, and leisure activities.

The analysis of data is the topic of this section. The colonial era of the 19th centuries left an indelible mark on many aspects of contemporary society, particularly the built landscape. The colonial facades that sprang up in what is now Tianjin, China, during this time period are excellent examples of the city's unique blend of Chinese and Western architectural styles. The unique features of these colonial facades symbolised the cultural.



Figure: Tianjin Xikai Church

The Tianjin Xikai Church, also known as West Church, is a historic Christian church located in Tianjin, China. It is one of the largest churches in the country and is an important landmark in Tianjin's architectural landscape. The construction of the Tianjin Xikai Church began in 1916 and was completed in 1919. The church was designed by the British architect Edward Peacock in a neo-Gothic architectural style, featuring pointed arches, stained glass windows, and a tall spire. The church's exterior is made of red bricks, giving it a distinctive appearance.

The interior of the Tianjin Xikai Church is equally impressive, with a spacious nave, ornate woodwork, and beautiful stained-glass windows that depict various biblical scenes. The church can accommodate a large number of worshippers and is known for its grandeur and architectural beauty. Throughout its history, the Tianjin Xikai Church has served as a center for Christian worship and community activities. It has played an important role in the growth and development of Christianity in Tianjin and has witnessed significant historical events. Today, the Tianjin Xikai Church continues to be an active place of worship and welcomes visitors who are interested in its history and architectural significance. It stands as a testament to Tianjin's rich cultural heritage and is a popular tourist attraction in the city.

Historic religious site in Tianjin, China, Xikai Catholic Church is also known as the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. As I learned more about this stunning building, I was taken in by its stunning design and the profound spiritual meaning it bears for Catholics. The solemnity and majesty of Xikai Catholic Church hit me the moment I stepped inside. The Gothic architecture is evident in the church's soaring spires, complex stained glass windows, and elaborate ornamentation. Everything about this building exudes awe, thanks to the skilled construction and painstaking attention to detail.

Equally interesting is the development of the Catholic Church in Xikai. It was first built in 1916, and it's still standing today as a testament to the power of faith and determination in the face of adversity. Not only is it a stunning piece of architecture, but it also serves as a symbol of the perseverance of the Catholic community in Tianjin. I spent a lot of time researching the history of the Xikai Catholic Church and the people who were involved in it. I discovered its significance as a haven of spiritual shelter and hope for the Catholic community in times of difficulty. Learning that the church was a pioneer in improving Tianjin's educational and medical infrastructure made me appreciate its historical significance even more.

In addition, I was able to learn more about the various religions and cultures represented in Tianjin thanks to my research into the Xikai Catholic Church. It showed how the city welcomed people of all religions and how they could peacefully coexist. This stunning piece of architecture serves as a symbol of peace and tolerance between the world's many faiths. My respect for architecture's ability to inspire emotion and transmit spiritual meaning has been heightened by my research into the Xikai Catholic Church. It has also brought to light the value of learning about and respecting our diverse religious and cultural traditions. When people visit their local church, they are reminded of the rich spiritual, cultural, and historical heritage that has shaped their community.

### *Italian Style Street*



Figure:Tianjin Italian Style Town

Tianjin, China's Italian Style Street (or "Wudadao") is a delightful and one-of-a-kind attraction that celebrates the country's historical and cultural ties to Italy. I was attracted by the European character and historical significance of this street as I dove headfirst into my research. As I strolled along Italian Style Street, I could have sworn I was in a quaint village in Italy. The buildings are ornate and sophisticated, with elaborate facades, arched windows, and other characteristics that call to mind the Renaissance and Baroque periods. The street's design and layout contribute to the Italian feel, with broad boulevards, towering trees, and cosy cafés dotting the walkways.

I was able to learn more about the origins of Italian Style Street thanks to my research. It originated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when Tianjin began to host foreign concessions. Historically, the street's commercial establishments and residents were primarily Italian, bringing with them a wealth of architectural knowledge and cultural influences. I was intrigued by the way the street blended Chinese and Italian styles. The buildings are mostly Italian in style, but they also have some traditional Chinese characteristics, resulting in a beautiful synthesis of the two cultures. The local cuisine, clothes, and way of life were all impacted by this cultural interaction, not only the architecture.

Italian Style Street is more than just a pretty place to look at; it's also a lively centre for art and culture. Visitors can enjoy a wide range of creative and cultural attractions within the buildings' many art galleries, boutiques, restaurants, and specialised shops. Cultural events, exhibitions, and festivals add to the street's already exciting vibe. I gained a deeper appreciation for the value of maintaining and honouring cultural history as a result of my research into Italian Style Street. It emphasises the value of cultural interactions and the long-lasting effects of different styles of architecture. The street is a tangible reminder of the importance of cultural interchange in forging a nation's unique identity and of the longstanding ties that have linked China and Italy throughout history.

### *Five Great Avenues*



Figure:Tianjin Five Great Avenues (Wudadao) Intersection Sign

Tianjin, China is home to the famous architectural district known as The Five Great Avenues or WuDaDao. I set out to learn about this magnificent area because I was interested in the history of the area and the wide variety of architectural styles it displays. My journey along the Five Great Avenues took me back in time. The area was given its name because it is anchored by the intersection of five major avenues. Buildings in these tree-lined streets represent a wide range of architectural eras and styles, attesting to Tianjin's long and varied past as well as its exposure to different cultures.

Exploring the Five Great Avenues and seeing the wide variety of building styles was fascinating. The district is filled with buildings from a wide range of time periods and architectural styles. It's incredible to see such a wide range of architectural styles represented, from neoclassical and Gothic palaces to Renaissance manors and Art Deco and Modernist villas. Different buildings tell different tales and showcase different eras in Tianjin's history. The fusion of Chinese and Western architectural styles makes the Five Great Avenues all the more interesting. Many of the structures successfully blend Western and traditional Chinese architectural styles, making for an aesthetically pleasing and culturally meaningful whole. The city's long history as a crossroads of cultures and a hub for global trade is reflected in the eclectic mix of architectural influences you'll find here.

I was able to put the development of the Five Great Avenues into historical perspective by studying them. Tianjin developed into a major international centre and trading port in the late 19th centuries. Foreign ambassadors, affluent businessmen, and other well-to-do expats settled in the area, bringing with them new architectural styles and cultural norms. Because of this, we now have a truly distinctive architectural landscape. The preservation and regeneration efforts of the municipal government are evident in the Five Great Avenues, which are also architectural marvels in their own right. The district has become a symbol of Tianjin's legacy and a famous tourist destination thanks to the restoration of many of its buildings to their former splendour. Tourists can take in the sights at museums and galleries as they promenade the city's tree-lined boulevards.

*Russo-Chinese Bank*



Figure: Russo-Chinese Bank

This foreign bank, formed in Tianjin in 1910 with French and Russian funding, exemplified Russian involvement in China from the Qing Dynasty until the Chinese Revolution. Today, the institution that calls this structure home is China's central bank. This classically Russian brick and wood building has two stories. The timber furnishings and decor have been meticulously conserved, making the interior just as stylish as the exterior. A wave of admiration floods over me as I enter the opulent Russo-Chinese Bank edifice. The historical significance and great design of this building quickly grab my attention. Studying this structure piques my interest because I am a history and architectural buff.

In the first place, the Russo-Chinese Bank is an interesting part of the annals of Russian-Chinese relations. It represents the strong diplomatic and commercial relations that existed between these two superpowers in the late 19th centuries. Insights on the cooperation of economies and the geopolitical dynamics of the time could be gleaned from exploring the archives and records associated to this bank. Moreover, the Russo-Chinese Bank's design is striking in its own right. Built in accordance with the styles of the day, this structure was designed by competent architects who successfully fused Western and Eastern elements. The cultural exchange of the time can be better understood by examining the building's fine details, researching the materials utilised, and learning the design concepts that were put into practise.

Investigating the bank's past would show not only its financial dealings, but also the effect it had on the neighbourhood. The Russo-Chinese Bank was a major player in the development of the local economy and commerce. To get a full view of the bank's relevance, it's important to look at how it helps with commerce and how it affects local businesses. It's not just interesting to learn about the history of the Russo-Chinese Bank; it's also a chance to help keep important pieces of the past alive. I hope that by taking photos of the building, researching its history, and writing about what I uncover, I will help convince people that it is important to keep historic buildings around for future generations to enjoy.

### *The colonial design element*

Colonisation, especially by European nations, left a lasting impression on the design of buildings all around the world. Several architectural features of the aforementioned Haihe Cultural Square, Xikai Catholic Church, Italian Style Street, and Five Great Avenues may be traced back to the colonial period.

### *Façade*

Colonial architecture is easily identified by its distinctive facade. The entrance is often in the middle, and the windows on either side are symmetrical. Columns, pilasters, and ornamental mouldings are frequently used to harken back to the classical architecture popular throughout the colonial period. These elements, influenced by European architecture, help create an imposing yet refined atmosphere.

### *Window*

Colonial-era windows tend to have their own unique style. Large and rectangular in form, with many sashes of glass, they are a common sight. Pediments and shutters are two examples of window embellishments. The symmetry of the building is aided by the placement of windows on the exterior, and there is plenty of natural light within.

### *Colour*

Colonial buildings' colour schemes reflect local traditions and cultural influences. Certain colours, however, have become emblematic of the era of colonial rule. Light blue, mint green, pale yellow, and off-white are some of the most popular pastel colours used to evoke airiness and refinement. Black or a deep brown may be utilised for details like window frames, doors, or decorative components to provide a striking contrast to the lighter tones of these colours.

### *Roof*

Colonial buildings' roofs often take on recognisable forms. The usage of pitched roofs is a consistent design choice because of the impression of permanence and safety they convey. In order to efficiently drain rainfall, these roofs often have a steep pitch. Clay tiles, timber shingles, and metal sheets are just a few examples of the roofing materials available. Dormer windows and gables are two examples of roof ornamentation that can spruce up an otherwise plain structure.

### *Balcony*

Balconies are a common architectural element in colonial-era structures. These balconies, which are often found on the higher floors, are an extension of the building's front and provide a place to enjoy the outdoors. These balconies' balustrades may feature elaborate woodwork or wrought iron railings for decoration. Balconies are a great way to improve the aesthetics of a building and to get to know your neighborhood from a new vantage point.

### *Analyzed of Design*

#### *Different colonial and Oriental Design*

**Cultural Influences:** European colonial powers including England, France, Spain, and Portugal are the primary inspirations for colonial architecture. It is reminiscent of the buildings that were common throughout the countries' colonial eras. Oriental architecture, on the other hand, is a broad term that includes a vast variety of styles from different parts of Asia, such as China, Japan, India, and Southeast Asia. Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and other local beliefs all have significant impacts on Oriental architecture, which has profound roots in these regions' cultural and religious traditions.

**Structural Differences:** Many examples of colonial architecture have a strict, symmetrical layout that places an emphasis on geometrical forms and proportions. Its primary structural elements are load-bearing walls, columns, and arches. In contrast, the post-and-beam system and mortise-and-tenon joinery are less common in Oriental architecture. Buildings can now resist earthquakes and adapt to shifting climates thanks to the adaptability afforded by these technologies.

**Materials:** There is a broad variety of brick, stone, timber, and even concrete used in colonial architecture. The construction materials used in each area were determined in large part by the resources readily available there. Traditional wooden structure is widely used in East Asian countries like China and Japan and is a hallmark of Oriental architecture. Wood is highly prized because of its aesthetic appeal, adaptability, and longevity. In addition, clay, bamboo, and stone are frequently employed in Eastern building construction.

**Design Elements and Ornamentation:** Decorative elements in colonial buildings frequently mimic the styles popular in the countries that ruled the colonies. These include



grandiose facades with classical and Renaissance-inspired ornamentation and beautiful mouldings. However, Eastern architecture places a premium on minimalism, eco-friendliness, and the use of symbolic details. Intricate wood carvings, vibrant ceramic tiles, and traditional designs that express cultural and religious values are all examples.

### *Similarity of the design*

**Climate Considerations:** Colonial and Oriental styles of building both reflect the local climates that inspired them. In order to provide natural ventilation and shelter from the sun, structures in hot regions frequently include high ceilings, deep eaves, and shaded spaces. Steep roofs allow water to easily drain off in high-rainfall areas. Both forms of architecture are affected by climatic factors, which affects their design and material choices.

**Cultural Significance:** Both types of construction are significant culturally and historically because of where they originated. The ideals, morals, and hopes of the societies that spawned them are reflected in them. The former represents the rich cultural traditions and spiritual beliefs of Asia, while the latter displays the influence and legacy of European colonization.

**Adaptation to Environment:** Colonial and Oriental styles of architecture both reflect their environments and cultural settings. They take into account the local climate, geography, and resources when designing. Verandas are a common feature of colonial houses in tropical climates, whereas gardens, courtyards, and water features are integral parts of Oriental architecture.

**Symbolism and Ritual:** Both kinds of architecture are symbolic and are designed to facilitate cultural rituals. Symbols of the colonial power, such as religious icons, memorial plaques, and coats of arms, are frequently included into colonial architecture. Pagodas, temples, and sacred geometry are just a few examples of the ways in which Oriental architecture incorporates symbolic aspects inherited from local religious and philosophical traditions to serve as focal places for worship and ceremonies.

### **Conclusion**

Tianjin, China is one of the most historically significant cities in the country, and it is also one of the largest cities in the country. The research has shown that there is a distinct combination of architectural characteristics that are colonial and oriental in Tianjin. Tianjin has a rich architectural heritage that reflects its past as both a treaty port and an international commerce centre. This is because Tianjin was formerly a major port city as well as a centre for trade. The city is home to a number of buildings, the majority of which can be found along the Five Great Avenues, which showcase an eclectic mix of architectural styles influenced by the aesthetics of Britain, France, Italy, and Germany respectively.

Colonial architecture is characterised by a sophisticated, symmetrical, and commanding ambiance, which is achieved by the use of design elements such as distinctive facades, specifically fashioned windows, light pastel colour schemes, pitched roofs, and balconies. These components, which were profoundly affected by European architecture, are gracefully paired with the indigenous oriental designs, which draw from the profound cultural and religious traditions of Asia.

Tianjin's one-of-a-kind architectural identity is the product of the interaction between these two very different architectural forms. The city stands as a testament to the mingling of various cultural and architectural influences, offering a rich, historical tapestry that continues to be an important part of its urban development and cultural identity. The city is a testament to the mingling of different cultural and architectural influences. In addition, the ongoing

efforts of the city toward environmental sustainability and the development of green technologies offer an interesting future chapter in the history of the city's built environment. As a result, Tianjin provides an intriguing case study of the dynamics of urban architectural development in the past, present, and future within the framework of the global community. This study on Tianjin's colonial heritage in housing design offers crucial insights into the fusion of 19th-century colonial aesthetics with modern architectural trends. By exploring the intricate interplay between historical facades and contemporary designs, it deepens our understanding of architectural evolution and cultural preservation. The research underscores Tianjin's unique architectural identity, shaped by its history as a treaty port and international commerce hub. Through the integration of colonial and indigenous elements, it highlights the city's rich cultural heritage amidst urban development challenges. Moreover, by advocating for the incorporation of historic cultural knowledge, the study contributes to sustainable architectural practices and cultural continuity in Tianjin and beyond.

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