

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Commercial Features in Interior Architecture of Hoi An Ancient Town, Vietnam in the Process of World Cultural Heritage

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ABSTRACT

The ancient houses in Hoi An are genuinely remarkable and have contributed significantly to making this town a World Cultural Heritage Site. These old houses are also the embodiment of customs, habits, and ancient lifestyles that have been preserved throughout the years. Previous studies have focused on studying the values of these houses to maintain and promote their historical significance. However, there is still a need to supplement the study of commercial properties in the interior architecture of Hoi An's ancient houses. This would clarify the historical value and cultural interference that have created the architectural form and spatial organisation differences of the old house in this ancient city. Through qualitative research methods, it has been affirmed that Hoi An has a rich history and culture, where many cultural exchanges have been witnessed without a loss of local cultural elements. The study proposes practical solutions to help preserve Hoi An's identity as a museum of living relics and promote sustainable development with the nation's progress towards an ecological-cultural city. The study recommends that the government develop policies to protect these structures and encourage nostalgia business, which will help maintain these houses' architectural and decorative features, enhance educational value and awareness, and benefit both communities and visitors. This is a sustainable and responsible way to develop tourism in Hoi An.

INTRODUCTION

The commercial character expressed through each house's architecture and interior decoration makes the difference between Hoi An's ancient houses. Old houses in Hoi An are mainly used for trading. Their architectural structure includes many folds arranged in-depth and constitutes an architectural space consisting of three parts: trading space, living space, and worship space. This division is suitable for narrow premises and combines many house functions. It can be seen that the structure of Hoi An's

ancient house is an architectural product of regional culture. Hoi An, an old town, was formed in the sixteenth century, prospered in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and gradually declined in the nineteenth century. Despite the changes in history, the severe destruction of nature, and the speed of "urbanisation" of people, Hoi An is still intact. Besides, after considering the typical cultural and architectural features, at the 23rd session on December 4, 1999, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recognised the ancient town

of Hoi An as a World Cultural Heritage based on two criteria: "Hoi An is a physical manifestation of nature. outstanding ability to combine cultures through the ages in an international trading port; Hoi An is a typical example of a traditional Asian port town perfectly preserved." Ancient houses in Hoi An mostly date back more than 100 years, with the architectural styles of the Hoa Ha region in China and Japanese style (Khanh, 2020).

For hundreds of years, the ancient houses in Hoi An have been preserved reasonably intact in terms of architectural design and interior decoration. These

relics of ancient places have helped tourists from all over the world to somewhat imagine the lifestyle of generations of owners—people of the merchant class—in the previous Hoi An trading port. The commercial characteristics of the ancient houses in Hoi An are expressed through the organisation of living space, doors, and decorative motifs. The decorative details of the ancient houses thereby prove the cultural interference between countries in the region and the uniqueness of the ancient house architecture in Hoi An.

Objectives

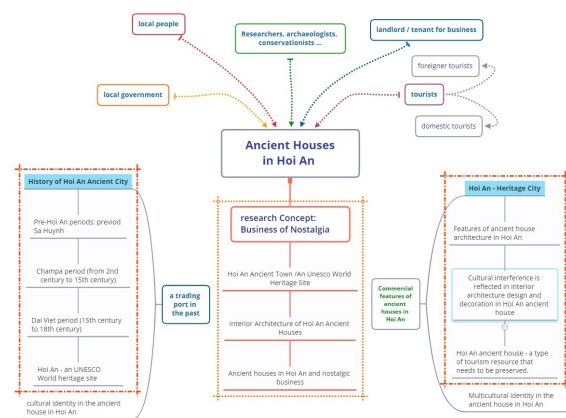


Figure 1: Framework of research (source: authors)

Before UNESCO recognized them as relics, the ancient houses in Hoi An were referred to as "old houses" by the locals. They are the ancestors' memories with cultural and historical significance. Each ancient house is a unique piece of history, containing many changes in time and social development. "old house" and "ancient house" has a profound spatial transformation process. It created space through three levels of analysis for each space: social space means real space (physical), discourse space (performance), and living space (through human experience) (Henri and Donald, 1991). Various actors create physical space (or abstract space, in Lefebvre's terms). Considering the context of researching Hoi An's ancient house, it is the owners of the house, generations living in that house for hundreds of years. The local government and its policies are responsible for restoring and conserving the heritage. This view shows that another important point of Lefebvre is that space is associated with the time and daily life

of local people and the local government's political, cultural, and social policies here. This research offers an integrated approach that puts cultural heritage at the heart of the sustainable development process in ancient houses. Cultural sustainability can influence social, economic, and environmental sustainability. It is also influenced by components of these three dimensions of sustainable development. Culture is thus a resource for economic, social, and ecological sustainability. Culture is vital in achieving economic, social, and environmental sustainability. It is a valuable resource that contributes to the well-being of individuals and communities and helps promote a sense of identity and belonging. By embracing and preserving cultural practices, we can create a more inclusive society that values diversity and promotes a healthy environment. Whether through art, music, literature, or other creative expressions, culture can bring people together and inspire positive change. As we work towards a more sustainable future, we must

recognize the importance of culture and its potential to drive progress in all areas of life. When exploring the Hoi An ancient houses, it's essential to consider the importance of cultural heritage conservation. This theory dramatically emphasizes preserving cultural artefacts and traditions to benefit future generations. Moreover, applying art history theories, such as formalism and iconography, can enhance the study of Hoi An's ancient houses. Formalism concentrates on the artistic elements of a work, such as composition and colour, whereas iconography delves into the symbolic meanings behind the imagery. By employing these theories, scholars can attain a profound understanding of the historical and cultural significance of Hoi An's ancient houses. Besides proposing a theoretical framework that unifies input and output approaches to cultural sustainability in the economy, society, and environment, this paper expands previous research on how factors affect cultural sustainability in ancient houses.

(The interview appendix is attached at the end of the article.)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hoi An is an ancient town in Vietnam that shows the traditional features of Vietnamese culture. The historical and traditional values of the old houses here have attracted many scientific researchers to study them. This article mentions the following studies: The living heritage approach has effectively encouraged community participation in Hoi An Ancient Town. The approach has empowered local people to maintain their heritage place and uphold their cultural identity and way of life. As a result, the people of Hoi An have been able to preserve their unique heritage and enjoy a sustainable future (Huong, 2015) Besides, Hoi An International Cultural Research Institute and Showa Women's University (Shwa Joshi Daigaku, Japan) have paid much attention to the architecture of Hoi An's ancient town, and researchers have written thematic books. "Study of Hoi An Ancient Town, Hoi An Ancient Town Architecture" (Quốc et al., 2009).

The previous studies mainly focused on supporting documents for conserving material cultural values and the correlation in spatial layout. Based on these studies, the article presents research synthesising tangible and intangible culture and the simple and

latent factors in people's daily activities that have created Hoi An's cultural identity. There have been many studies on the formation and development of Hoi An ancient town, and the conservation of Hoi An to keep it from degrading (anh, 2005). In the thesis "Hoi An architectural monuments in the historical process," the researcher analyses the natural geographical features of the Hoi An area, the socio-historical conditions, and the economic fluctuations affecting the Hoi An area, leading to the formation of the commercial port town of Hoi An. In addition, these studies also provide assessments of the role of Hoi An on the trade route in the East Sea, the analysis of the primary factors forming the ancient town of Hoi An, the presence of architectural types with specific styles in terms of layout and dating, and historical fluctuations. In addition, these studies also analyse the transformation of urban form and Hoi An architecture through the historical process, primarily focusing on studying the characteristics of urban architectural space and art. architectural engineering (Van, 2007).

The book "The Politics of Ruins and the Business of Nostalgia" (Peleggi, 2002) investigates the theory and practice of heritage conservation in Thailand, particularly from the mid-1970s to the late 1990s. The book is also called the commodification and Consumption of heritage sites as tourist attractions, as well as the Linkage between the promotional narratives of tourism advertising and the official historical narrative of Thailand" (Peleggi, 2002). "Business of Nostalgia" is one of the significant issues in the ancient world, especially the world's cultural heritage. Thus, world cultural heritage cities usually combined business with consumption in the past. It is called the "Business of Nostalgia" or "Nostalgic Business." So 'business of nostalgia' is a familiar concept for experienced international researchers, and they have spent much research on this concept in the countries of the world that this article mentioned above. However, this concept is still new to researchers in Hoi An. Most researchers focus on the ideas of heritage conservation and tourism development. Social development has unique characteristics.

The ancient house in Hoi An is a traditional house in the city, and it was also transformed from a rural

folk house following the new functional requirements. It also has the main characteristics of this type of housing in the ancient cities of Vietnam. It is a combination of residence, a place of production, a place of service, and business. The house has the main side facing the street, built close to each other. Each house usually has a tubular floor plan divided into many houses separated by small courtyards and tends to rise high due to its limited area. The internal circulation space in the old houses also shows independence and privacy compared to the outside. Tran Lam Bien commented: "If an ancient house in Hoi An stands alone, its appearance is not strong enough to anchor the eyes of tourists. They can only stand in the narrow street to create a cosy and warm atmosphere and artistic feelings. Their space is community space." (Van, 2007). The research "Hoi an Ancient city-The place of the past and Nostalgic business, a green destination and a livable city post COVID-19" is very amazing. It is important to have good control over the revival of the tourism business in Hoi An Ancient City, as this World Cultural Heritage site holds significant cultural and historical value. Van emphasized the need for social, environmental, cultural, and human policies to be put in place to promote the ancient city as a livable and sustainable green city. This will not only attract tourists but also ensure the preservation of the city's heritage for future generations (Van and Singyabuth, 2023).

Ancient house materials in Hoi An are mainly wood combined with Non-Nuoc stone, Thanh Ha pottery in Hoi An, glazed tiles in Dong Nai, and Chinese and Japanese decorative motifs. The French architectural style has begun to exist in the old town but is built of bricks, not wood. Therefore, the ancient house in Hoi An still shows the cultural exchange between China and Vietnam (Wheeler, 2001).

In interior design, cultural interference is reflected in decorative details such as pillars, columns, trusses, paintings, statues, antiques, etc., and the interior space of each house. Antiquities in ancient houses, including cups, bowls, plates, and vases, are influenced by Chinese culture. However, most are made of locally available materials and are creative products of local people's direction. Among the decorative details, "door eyes" are the details that many researchers are most interested in. " The richness and diversity of

decorative door designs in the architecture of ancient houses in Hoi An have become unique features. The elaborately carved eyes, shapes, and colours attract visitors' attention. Besides, the "eye door" is also the spiritual culture of Hoi An residents from the past, contributing to preserving the old soul of Hoi town. In Hoi An, there are more than 20 different types of doors. Most are round, hexagonal, octagonal, or cut into 6 or 8 chrysanthemum petals; a few are square, flat, semi-spherical, etc. (dantri.com.vn,2016). The "door eye" shape is divided into the central part and the rim. The centre is usually decorated with fruit shapes painted in black and white: pistil, seal, blessing, and longevity. The outer rim is shaped like a 6- or 8-petal chrysanthemum whose wings rotate in the shape of a leaf, a fruit, a couple of dragons, and four or five bats surrounding the word happiness. The eyes of the boat are a legendary creature with many powers related to the river. Eyes exist on the boat's bow to fight against mythical creatures; sometimes, people also want to sanctify the boat to become a sacred, vital object of prayer for peaceful navigation and peace of mind. Fishing is beneficial (Hoàng, 2006).

Tubular houses in Hoi An share walls and have few windows to allow ventilation and to follow the philosophy of Tam Tai of the East. The owners of these houses leave a central room to catch the air, calling it an inner courtyard consisting of two structural floors, two square columns standing on an honest rock, and carved pillars of squirrels, mailboxes, pomegranates, Buddha's hands, and bats. It can be added that the carved figures, according to Chinese culture, have symbolic meanings. The meanings of these symbols are: the bat symbolises happiness, the envelopes represent studying, and the pomegranate symbolises born babies. An informative article that delved into the connection between the value of heritage and ancient heritage houses. The piece also touched on the importance of cultural sustainability in the broader context of sustainable development. The author conducted a thorough literature analysis and surveyed five ancient houses in Hoi An to provide a deeper understanding of these issues. The article emphasized the significance of cultural sustainability in preserving ancient houses, aligning with Hoi An's goal of becoming an eco-cultural-tourism city. By prioritizing social, environmental,

cultural, and human aspects, we can ensure the long-term sustainability of Hoi An's heritage for generations to come (Van and Singyabuth, 2023).

Contribution of this article to the literature

This research studied the local knowledge set through a case study of commercial features in interior architecture in Hoi An. Therefore, it is used as an innovation for local education, architecture students, and researchers about the architecture of Hoi An's ancient house. To develop the competency of teachers teaching social studies and social history in the World Heritage City of Vietnam. The objectives were establishing teachers' cultural and social studies competencies to build educational innovations suitable for learning management and empowering social studies in Vietnam.

METHODOLOGY

The article uses qualitative research methods, surveys, and interviews with local people. In addition, this study also used the following ways:

Methods for gathering information from bibliographic sources such as books, newspapers, magazines, and theses to serve as a source of documents, a reference base, and specific solutions for preserving and promoting the old town's identity. An analytical method based on comparison, contrast, and evaluation to draw comments and speculations for solutions.

Scope of population and sample group

The population interviewed 20 people with their consent, conducting in-depth interviews with these people at different times and positions during the visit to the ancient house in Hoi An.

Methodology of the study

This research is qualitative with two main goals: "Commercial Features in Interior Architecture of Hoi An Ancient Town, Vietnam" as (1) the place that most strongly connects the cultural values of Hoi An and (2) "Business of Nostalgia." Select the field survey method and interview community groups visiting the ancient houses.

Method of collecting data

The primary research methods for collecting data have been observing, interviewing, and studying documents.

Collecting data by interviewing people who appeared

at the ancient houses in Hoi An for five months (from May 2021 to September 2022). On the 14th day of the lunar calendar every month, I spent about 5 hours a day observing cultural activities at the festival and conducting interviews. In addition, I also participated directly and recorded these activities.

Interviewing 20 people with their consent, in-depth interviews with these people at different times and positions in Hoi An. The interview is in Vietnamese and English, depending on whether the object is Vietnamese or foreign. For the interviewers to understand the meaning of the interview.

Tools utilised in the study:

- Structured and unstructured interviews about Hoi An's ancient houses and Vietnam's social and cultural history.
- Focus group interview form in the case of the staff of the World Heritage and Tourism Office of Hoi An, Vietnam.
- Structured and unstructured interviews with landlords and tenants about the history and use of the home.

A focus group brings together a group of participants to answer questions on a topic of interest in a moderated setting. Focus groups are qualitative and often study the group's dynamics and body language in addition to their answers.

I can gain much information from other sources, such as written documents, e.g., e-mails, policy documents, meeting minutes, organisation charts, reports, procedural manuals, and "official" corporate material such as an intranet, brochures, press releases, and web pages.

Analysis of formation

Summarised the survey as a table during and after the data collection process. Continue to analyse the data to see how cultural activities in the ancient town affect the interviewer's experience. I compare all interviews collected to ensure that all data is considered.

(The interview appendix is attached at the end of the article.)

RESULTS

Hoi An's development history

Hoi An was a commercial port in the past Around the 16th century, Hoi An's quarter was formed and flourished in the history of the world's largest trading

port. Hoi An is an urban area located downstream of the Thu Bon River in the coastal plain of Quang Nam province, Da Nang. Hoi An has become a significant trading port thanks to geographical factors and a favourable climate. Hoi, An Ancient Town, has a long history. Westerners call Hoi An "Faifo, a trading city with a port. However, the name Hoi An was known long before that. From the late 16th to the 17th centuries, many Chinese and Japanese people came to settle and live. The immigration and living conditions of foreigners in Hoi An have formed a very diverse and impressive architectural style, including houses of many different styles. This is also why the cultural value of Hoi An's ancient town is still preserved today. Hoi An is an ancient urban relic in which, in most architectural works, local people still live and operate. Hoi An has been considered a "living museum," a complex of relics of various types. In the complex historical and cultural relics of Hoi An, the old town is one of the essential components of particular importance. In general, the ancient town of Hoi An is located along long roads with civil, religious, and public architecture close to each other. Besides, the streets in this ancient town are connected, forming a rather typical urban space that, through survey research, can distinguish the development process in terms of its scale. (Van et al., 2021)

Thus, the geographical location, historical conditions, and the development process of Hoi An—essentially the process of self-creation and cultural exchange in a commercial centre—have made Hoi An unique in the past and culturally diverse (Hanoi Social Science Publishing House, In this ancient city, the "commercial" factor is more prominent, if not overwhelming, than the "town" factor. This explains why the import-export trade and service functions are more prominent than the administrative and military functions when compared to the ancient urban centres of the same time in Vietnam.

Hoi An is now a World Cultural Heritage, an international tourist city In March 1985, the Ministry of Culture recognised Hoi An as an Ancient Town, Sports and Tourism of Vietnam as a National Historic-Cultural Relic. After that, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recognised Hoi An as a World Cultural Heritage Site in December 1999. The Prime Minister granted

the Certificate of Recognition of a Unique National Relic in the first phase (August 2009). Hoi An is considered a "living museum—a museum about the history of architecture and urban population," which has become an essential and decisive resource and driving force, bringing economy and culture to a city society that has developed rapidly.

Hoi An's "living museum" of history, architecture, and urban dwellers has been preserved until today and in the future thanks to guidelines and policies suitable to reality to develop the heritage into a nostalgic business virtue. All undertakings and policies come from the community, clarifying roles, responsibilities, and benefits for the community. The human factor in Hoi An is also decisive in the success of the nostalgic business in this ancient town. Forefathers have persevered in working and creating, leaving an invaluable cultural heritage: the Old Quarter, a complex of urban architectural monuments, a World Cultural Heritage associated with tangible and intangible values, villages, rivers, and rich and unique traditional craft villages.

Besides, nature also bestows Hoi An with an environment—a river-sea-island ecosystem with many exciting and attractive points unavailable everywhere. According to historians, Hoi An is a typical model of the history of urban formation and development in Vietnam and Southeast Asia because of its central role, geographical-historical position, and result. Hoi An's urban heritage has been preserved entirely intact regarding landscape and architectural space. It is where people live daily, right in the heart of the heritage, with customs, habits, traditional manners, cuisine, and cultural activities still preserved and respected.

As a major brand of Quang Nam tourism, each product and each destination in Hoi An have its own values. Every Hoi An citizen is an ambassador, a bridge in promoting and introducing Hoi An as a city of heritage with gentle, hospitable, safe, and friendly beauty. Hoi, An people are always willing to help visitors discover and experience their city's unique traditional culture. As a result, the economic development speed of tourism in Hoi An increased dramatically, and the people's economic, cultural, and social lives changed and improved markedly. The number of tourists visiting Hoi An is rapidly growing. If 1999 there were

only nearly 100,000 visitors. In 2018, this number was more than 2.3 million. Tourism development must be associated with preserving tangible and intangible cultural values, particularly the two World Cultural Heritage sites of My Son and Hoi An, aiming to build and develop Hoi An into an Eco-Culture-Tourism City.

Commercial characteristics of ancient houses in Hoi An city

Hoi An ancient town, is located in the middle of the river confluence, where it has a favourable location, a cool climate, and is convenient for exchanges and trade. Especially trade exchanges between regions. Hoi An's ancient houses are usually very long in terms of architectural style. Most of the houses have access to two streets. Such houses are very convenient for business and trade. The tiles of ancient houses are often roofed with yin and yang tiles (two bricks facing each other to form a drainage line). This combines Chinese and Vietnamese architecture, the most accurate about the proliferation of traditional commercial ancient cities.

The most common type of house in Hoi An's old town is the one- or two-story tube house. These houses are characterised by narrow widths and very long depths, making them suitable for trading and living. Due to the harsh climate, Hoi An often has floods and storms, so the primary materials used to build ancient houses here have good bearing capacity and high durability. The old houses all have a wooden frame structure, and the two sides are separated by brick walls. The layout of the old townhouses in Hoi An includes trading, living, and worship spaces. An old-fashioned house in Hoi An always has the following layout: The front row of the house in contact with the street is arranged as a store, a place for trade and transactions, usually created by a double house. In addition to its primary function as a place of service and business, this space is used to receive guests, worship ancestors, provide sleep for the head of the household and guests, and store a family's wealth. Next is the courtyard. In the house, this courtyard is a natural space with many effects: providing light, regulating temperature, and creating ventilation. In the courtyard, homeowners often make a well to provide domestic water for the whole family or create small decorative miniatures. The back house is always the "internal space" of each family. The rear space is usually arranged as a place

to eat, sleep, do internal living, and store the house's goods. The last space is the backyard. This space is for constructing additional works such as a kitchen, water well (if not arranged in the courtyard), toilet area, etc. It is connected to the back by a side gate, where there is a function as "input" (purchase) for a family of merchants, so it is often adjacent to the riverbank.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, these tubular houses often had the front side opening to the street and the back side connecting to the riverbank. By the middle of the 19th century, when the riverbank was built, and new streets were formed, the houses in this period were often connected to both streets. Ancient houses have excellent structures, usually built according to the structure of a solid wooden frame and high-strength brick walls. This land often floods, so these old houses are built solidly and sustainably. That is also why Hoi An, an ancient town, retains its certainty. The tube house is the most characteristic type of housing in the Old Quarter (Bui and Tuan Anh Le, 2018). So named because of its unusual size, with a length reaching 40 to 50 m (sometimes even up to 60 m) and running deep inside street plots, and widths usually only 3 to 4 m (the maximum is 6 m). Most of the original houses were built on two floors. The first floor has a height of about 3 m, while the upper floor has a maximum height of 2.5 m. A typical house is typically divided into three to four blocks, separated by two to three courtyards. The home length/width ratio often exceeds 10/1.

Regarding the structure of the house, it is often divided into several compartments, each with its own function. The front of the house is a place to open a shop, while the back side connects to the river station to be a place to transport and import goods. The interior decoration materials of the house are mainly precious wood and are delicately carved and sculpted with images of two dragons, fruits, and ribbons, showing the wealth of generations of owners. The first floor of the ancient house includes function rooms, including a shop in the front, a warehouse next, and an inner courtyard used as a workshop. Besides that, there is a living room in the middle of the house; another courtyard is a place for children to play; a dining room combined with a kitchen; an open space for washing and drying clothes; and finally, a restroom.

The upper floor has two to three bedrooms for family members. On the upper floor of the first block, the bedroom is usually set back from the sales booth on the first floor.

Tile roof system

The roof structure is quite diverse, all gathered and designed in the style of a curved dome roofed with luxurious glazed yin and yang tiles and meticulously cared for in every detail.

Capital is the country's bustling city, so the investment in design is highly understandable. The roof structure is sophisticated and careful from design to materials used, with precious wood from hundreds of years of age remaining in its original state, colour, and beauty.

*Column system:*The central house column is one of the extraordinary marks in the significant column architecture, with solid pillars of precious wood transported from the south. Each temple, shrine, and pagoda's work depends on the area and how many columns are used; for example, the assembly hall consists of 4 door columns and internal columns, all built firmly from the pillars—the most precious wood of the highest quality.

*Pattern lines:*Pattern lines are the strong points of contemporary historical monuments, with dragon and phoenix motifs and grape characters engraved in the table of architectural works. The architecture of the truth of life leaves beautiful and honest lessons for future generations. The spatial architecture that creates the architectural features of Hoi An ancient town is defined by the stratified distribution of the distance between the houses. The houses in the old town only have a little space because of the tube house design and the nature of an urban area, so it is also relatively narrow between the houses.

Ancient houses in Hoi An – A tourism resource that needs to be preserved

Hoi An is a typical example of a traditional Asian port town perfectly preserved. Economic benefits from tourism activities are the main reason many old homeowners in the Old Quarter area have rapidly turned their homes into commercial places. Many old houses along Le Loi, Nguyen Thai Hoc, Tran Phu, and Bach Dang streets have all become nostalgic business places. They are converted into restaurants, bars, clothing stores, lanterns, shoes, bags, souvenirs, handicrafts, etc. This change in function brings

benefits on the one hand. The economy, from selling goods and providing services to tourists, but on the other hand, it has changed the face of the old town. The houses were filled with goods, and a series of signs obscured the ancient facades of each home. The originality and integrity of many ancient structures in the Old Quarter area have been altered by the property owners themselves (both private and public). In terms of form, it can be clearly seen that the authorities and owners have well-maintained the structure, materials, and shape inside and outside of these buildings. However, the function is different. The lifestyle of local people has changed a lot. The locals and homeowners here have changed in two ways: to move out of this living space and to shrink the actual living space. Many tourists with nostalgic views have said that Hoi An's ancient town is now like a shopping area, and they feel sorry for a reflective and quiet Hoi An like before. The traditions and people of Hoi An are the core factors that attract tourists to this place.

Hoi An ancient town, has faced no less than ten floods yearly (Nguyen et al., 2022). When the water recedes, many old wooden houses struggle with termites and mould, forcing homeowners to buy materials for restoration. However, Kien Giang wood, the primary material for making bamboo and columns, is becoming scarce. The wood imported from Laos and the Central Highlands provinces is of poor quality, young, and cheap, so it is easy to damage. That is not to mention using other types of wood to replace them, which causes many ancient houses to lose their authenticity due to the unsatisfactory restoration of relics and other materials.

What is more worrying is that most old houses are used for trade and commerce, which has lost their spiritual value. The house has an ancient appearance, but the space inside has been converted to be more suitable for displaying fabrics, restaurants, and cafes. In other words, the "corpse" of the house is still there. Its "soul" is lost. For the casual visitor, the authenticity of the heritage is not an essential factor affecting their experience when visiting. However, for cultural visitors with owners, the authenticity of the heritage is a significant factor.

The sustainability of heritage sites is highly dependent on the level of cultural understanding and awareness in the community. People's knowledge of heritage

sites and their importance is vital for survival. If people are more knowledgeable, they will be more interested in protecting the cultural heritage of their communities and will try to limit damage to them. Here, tourism also contributes to raising this awareness among local people. Over the past decade, since Hoi An became a World Heritage Site, the people of Hoi An have witnessed many significant changes. More people come to Hoi An with more job and business opportunities, a higher income, and a higher standard of living.

The people of Hoi An are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of heritage and its protection. They all clearly understand that tourism is an effective tool that has brought many changes to people's economic, social, and cultural lives. This form of tourism is wholly based on the local cultural heritage. Otherwise, tourism cannot have a chance to develop in Hoi An. All efforts from the government, local authorities, heritage managers, or heritage experts are always needed to ensure the long-term survival of cultural heritages that are closely related to local people's current lives. Most old houses in Hoi An are privately owned; with these old houses, Hoi An would be Hoi An (Adongo et al., 2017). Most of the cultural practises, customs, and habits in Hoi An are already practised by local people; without those practices, Hoi An would no longer be Hoi An. Therefore, with the participation and voluntary participation of the owners and implementers of cultural traditions, such heritages can last long (Han, 2004). The emergence of tourism has brought many opportunities for many people to increase their income. Once their economic lives are secure, people care more about their livelihood security.

DISCUSSION

Tourism in Hoi An is the most significant economic sector and contributes the most to local economic development. While bringing many financial benefits and improving people's quality of life, tourism also negatively impacts local people's cultural heritage systems and daily lives. If not controlled with a serious, quick, and appropriate attitude, these negative impacts will soon cause changes in the environment, society, and culture, especially the system. The tangible and intangible cultural heritage

that has fueled the development of this industry in the destination of Hoi An will make the economic benefits unsustainable. Cultural heritage is an input material for the development of cultural tourism. The benefits from tourism development activities become the driving force and financial support for management, conservation, and management activities of heritage exploitation. To control the undesirable effects of tourism on heritage resources, Hoi An City has always tried to adjust and perfect its cultural heritage management systems, such as legal documents, management agencies, management orientation, and intervention measures. (Bui et al., 2020)

This study has shown that the commercial characteristics of the ancient houses in Hoi An create the unique value of the heritage of the ancient dwellings and architectural complexes here. Preservation of these old houses should be considered a sustainable nostalgia business. The sustainable development of the nostalgic tourism business in Hoi An can only be guaranteed if the government and individuals responsible for the management, conservation, and exploitation of the heritage enter the stage of genuine cooperation. The management of heritage needs to recognise that tourism is also the subject of legitimate rights in exploiting the tourism value of heritage. Tourism plays a vital role in the management and promotion of heritage value. Cultural heritage and tourism are channels to convey the messages that heritage is born to convey. In other words, tourism and heritage management must find a familiar voice and work together towards the benefit of cultural heritage, not just at the level of protecting the interests of each industry. The recent drastic changes in guidelines and policies for managing and exploiting cultural heritage in Hoi An show strong local efforts in handling this issue.

Recommendations

The commercial characteristics of the ancient houses in Hoi An both show cultural interference with other countries and the local people's cultural identity. Therefore, these ancient houses have unique value and are different from the traditional old houses in Vietnam. Hoi An has always been regarded as a living museum, with a diversity and abundance of different types of heritage concentrated in a small

geographical area. The vibrancy of these heritages in the contemporary lives of heritage owners has made Hoi An a strong attraction for people who always appreciate and care about the culture worldwide. Preserving and protecting these heritages intact to this day is no small effort by the managers and people of Hoi An. In the face of drastic changes in contemporary life, especially the widespread popularity of exploiting cultural heritage values as the foundation for development, continuing to protect these heritages sustainably is a must. The Centre for Cultural Heritage Management conducted a survey that revealed Hoi An's ancient town possesses an impressive collection of over 1,100 houses aged between 100 and 200 years old. Of these houses, a remarkable 780 have been recognised as heritage relics. Between 2000 and 2010, 114 of these homes were sold to new owners. Moreover, approximately 600 existing homeowners have transformed their old houses into shops.

Heritage preservation is still challenging for all concerned, requiring extraordinary efforts, understanding, and cooperation from the people, local authorities, relevant units, and individuals.

With its immense advantages and potential for tourism, Hoi An is now a famous tourist destination after many years of ups and downs in its history. Not only diverse and rich in types but also a place known as friendly and hospitable; a high-quality destination in the direction of "Green Tourism", sustainable, taking traditional cultural values, indigenous elements, and having positive environmental content. This is also the foundation for Hoi An to continue to build and affirm a sustainable and friendly tourism brand. 1985 Hoi An Ancient Town was officially recognised as a national historical and cultural relic. Right after that, at the Resolution of the 9th Congress of the Party Committee of Hoi An Town (1986), for the first time, the City Party Committee posed in the congress document the issue: "Developing regulations and implementing measures to manage, protect, and restore the old quarter in association with organising a network to serve visitors and tourists, creating additional revenue for the budget".

At the end of 1991, at the 11th Congress of Hoi An Town Party Committee, it was decided to shift economic sectors, and for the first time, service

and tourism were officially included in the economic structure of Hoi An Town: fishing, agriculture, industry, handicraft, processing industry, service, and tourism. This is a deep awareness of the relationship between culture and tourism, and at the same time, it is a matter of paying attention to developing places to eat, stay, rest, entertain, and even resort.

To preserve the rich architectural and urban heritage of Hoi An and transform it into a "living museum," there are several measures that the government could take. Firstly, investing in restoring and preserving historic buildings and structures would maintain the town's authenticity and preserve its cultural heritage. Secondly, developing educational programmes and initiatives that inform locals and visitors about the history and significance of Hoi An would raise awareness about the town's cultural value and encourage greater appreciation for its unique character. Finally, promoting sustainable tourism practices that prioritise the preservation of the town's cultural heritage through collaboration with local businesses and organisations would help ensure that Hoi An continues to function as a "living museum" for future generations to enjoy. By taking these measures, the government would help preserve Hoi An's rich history and cultural heritage and ensure that it remains a unique and significant cultural destination (Vecco and Caust, 2019).

This study also opens up future studies on the government's mechanisms and policies on preserving the relics of ancient houses and the concept of "nostalgic business" in these ancient houses, not the shops. In this solution for tourism development, the architecture and decoration of the house are still maintained and protected from adverse effects. However, they increase the educational value and awareness of the people towards the heritage and develop sustainable heritage tourism.

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