

Adaptive Reuse and Implementation Challenges to Contracting Out Urban Declared Monument and Historic Buildings in Taiwan

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Abstract

Urban heritage reflects human evolution and thus is a key element of culture. Taiwan has undergone several stages over its 400-year history: Dutch Formosa, Spanish Formosa, Kingdom of Tungning, Qing rule, Japanese rule, and Republic of China. Ancient settlements evolved into modern urban areas gradually, and the government has declared that ancient monuments and historic buildings must be preserved. Considering the limited funds available, outsourcing is often used to manage these sites, to simultaneously preserve the value of heritage, attract funding from privately owned businesses for monument reuse in compliance with laws and regulations, and reduce the financial burden for maintaining the sites. Heritage reuse for tourism and leisure helps make historic preservation economically viable by using historic structures and landscapes to attract and serve travelers, but it also is accompanied by many problems. This research took a case study approach to explore the implementation challenges to contracting out urban monuments and historic buildings and to determine their feasible adaptive reuse in Taiwan.

The results from this study show that operating stores related to cultural and creative industries in declared monument and historic buildings is highly favorable. The incorporation of cultural and creative industries rarely causes public qualms about the destruction of monuments. People also value cultural exhibitions and performances, which make historic sites more attractive. In contrast, operating catering businesses in declared heritage sites has generated many controversies, such as concerns about the illegal construction of additional kitchen facilities that contribute to the destruction of historic monuments. Catering operations often are highly profitable, and thus they are the major form of monument reuse. There are, however, some successful cases of catering operations. The key factors for success are if the food and beverage, interior arrangement, and service match the atmosphere of the heritage sites, including their history, buildings, and outdoor landscape.