

## Article

# Character-Defining Elements Comparison and Heritage Regeneration for the Former Command Posts of the Jinan Campaign—A Case of Chinese Rural Revolutionary Heritage

Meng Chen <sup>1</sup>, Bin Zhao <sup>1</sup>, Hu Zhao <sup>1</sup>, Qiaochu Jiang <sup>2</sup>, Qi Zhou <sup>2</sup> and Hui Tong <sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Shandong Jianzhu University, Jinan 250101, China; chenmeng18@sdjzu.edu.cn (M.C.); zbkite@sdjzu.edu.cn (B.Z.); zhaohu@sdjzu.edu.cn (H.Z.)

<sup>2</sup> School of Architecture, Architectural History and Theory, Southeast University, Nanjing 210096, China; 230198410@seu.edu.cn (Q.J.); 101001781@seu.edu.cn (Q.Z.)

\* Correspondence: rover@sdjzu.edu.cn

**Abstract:** Rural revolutionary heritage in China represents a distinctive form of vernacular heritage. It holds significance not only for its connection to historical events and prominent figures, but also encapsulates the distinctive features of vernacular architecture. Since 2020, the present authors have conducted a survey of the rural revolutionary heritage in Jinan. The findings indicate that common challenges in this context are the issues of overprotection and low utilization efficiency. The two former command posts of the Jinan Campaign are representative of rural revolutionary heritage. The Yinjiadian command post building received the designation of revolutionary heritage earlier than the one located in Tangjiagou Village. However, it has undergone inappropriate repairs and alterations over time, which have compromised its original integrity. The Tangjiagou command post was granted heritage status towards the end of 2020, but despite retaining its vernacular architectural structure, material, and form, it has not been effectively conserved and utilized. In the present study, the history, characteristics, and current situation of the two command posts of the Jinan Campaign were explored using various methods such as historical data collection and analysis, field investigations, oral interviews, GIS analysis, and comparative research. The aim of the study was to determine regeneration strategies for the two command posts of the Jinan Campaign by identifying and comparing their character-defining elements. A comparative investigation of the two command posts in the Jinan Campaign was conducted and based on their different heritage characteristics and preservation status, regeneration strategies were proposed. Additionally, a systematic regeneration strategy for rural revolutionary heritage was explored, considering the unique challenges and opportunities associated with preserving and revitalizing these historic sites. Such measures promote the activation and survival of China's rural revolutionary heritage while providing valuable reference for its protection and research.

**Keywords:** character-defining elements; cultural heritage; Chinese rural revolutionary heritage; Jinan Campaign command post; regeneration strategy; Shandong province



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## 1. Introduction

Revolutionary heritage is a unique type of cultural heritage in China, referring to sites, relics, and memorial facilities that reflect the country's revolutionary history, including the Opium War in 1840 and the subsequent new democratic and socialist revolutions led by the Communist Party of China [1]. The conservation and regeneration of revolutionary heritage is highly valued by governments at all levels in China. Registration systems have been established for revolutionary heritage and relevant laws have been formulated to regulate its protection. Additionally, the academic community has shown increasing interest in the study of revolutionary heritage in recent years. This section provides an explanation on

the development process of revolutionary heritage protection, considering both practical applications and research perspectives.

### 1.1. Development Background

Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the conservation of modern revolutionary heritage has evolved through three phases. The first phase, from 1949 to the mid-1990s, involved creating a mechanism for identifying and registering revolutionary sites [2–5].

The second phase occurred from the mid-1990s until the end of the 2010s, which was characterized by economic development in old revolutionary areas and the promotion of red tourism through national economic policies [6–8].

The third phase began in the late 2010s and continues to the present day. This phase is characterized by comprehensive protection of revolutionary heritage at both national and local levels, cross-regional conservation efforts, and increased academic attention towards researching such sites (Table 1) [9–13].

**Table 1.** Conservation development phase of Chinese revolutionary heritage.

Phase	Time	Characteristic	Reason	Important Documents
1	1949 to mid-1990s	Standardization process for registering and protecting revolutionary heritage	Revolutionary commemoration for politics, publicity, and education purposes	List of National Key Cultural Relics Protection Units (1961, 1982, 1988)
2	Mid-1990s to end of 2010s	Development of old revolutionary areas and red tourism	Tourism economic development based on rural poverty alleviation	National Red Tourism Development Planning Outline (2004–2010)
3	End of 2010s to present day	Comprehensive and cross-regional conservation	Overall survey, investigation, and protection of cultural heritage in the new era	List of the First Batch of Revolutionary Cultural Relics Protection and Utilization Areas (2019, 2020)

Over time, the focus on revolutionary heritage has given rise to three legally significant concepts: Revolutionary Sites and Revolutionary Memorial Buildings, Red Cultural Heritage, and Immovable Revolutionary Cultural Relics (Figure 1, Table 2) [2,14,15]. From a conceptual standpoint, revolutionary heritage involves distinctions based on subjectivity, grading tangibility, and intangibility. Rural revolutionary heritage is an important type of revolutionary heritage (Figure 2). However, there is often a lack of further classification and specific focus on rural revolutionary heritage. The rural population accounts for 36.11% of the total population of China. The regeneration of rural revolutionary heritage is not only closely connected to the lives of rural people, but also serves as a means to cultivate cultural and national identity.

**Table 2.** Analysis of concepts related to revolutionary heritage.

Concept	Time	Relevant Document	Notes
Revolutionary Site and Revolutionary Memorial Building	1982	Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics	Associated with significant modern historical events, revolutionary movements, famous individuals
Red Cultural Heritage	2004	National Red Tourism Development Plan	Tangible and intangible heritage formed during the revolutionary time led by the CPC
Immovable Revolutionary Cultural Relic	2020	Notice on Submitting the List of Revolutionary Cultural Relics	Physical remains that reflect China’s modern revolution

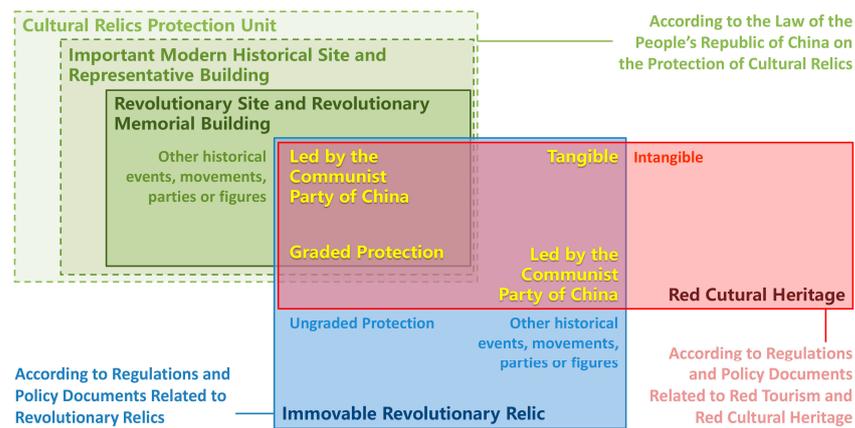


Figure 1. Analysis of relevant concepts of Chinese modern revolutionary heritage.

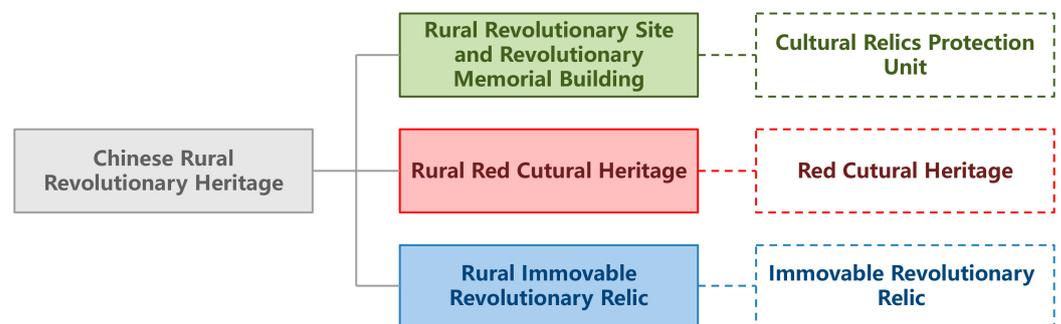


Figure 2. Conceptual framework of Chinese rural revolutionary heritage.

### 1.2. Research Background and Review

The existing research on revolutionary heritage encompasses various aspects such as protection and utilization strategies, specific heritage types, contemporary value interpretation, and red tourism. The typical focus of protection and utilization strategies is on investigating the revolutionary heritage in locations where significant events occurred or within a particular region based on existing data. For instance, studies have been conducted on the linear cultural heritage of the Long March and historical sites in certain provinces [16–18].

Research on modern war sites is a significant topic, involving heritage resource investigation, value evaluation, protection space system, suitability protection technology, display and utilization strategies, and other aspects [19,20]. Several scholars have explored broader concepts such as “modern war heritage” to develop protection planning methods and utilization strategies for these sites [21,22]. Guo Xin and Li Zhen analyzed the evolution and development trends of war heritage displays both domestically and internationally. The scholars suggested that the universality of the research objects should be expanded while considering the systematicness, pertinence, and experience in displaying cultural artifacts [23]. Based on the history of war and the coherence of war, Pan Yiting divided Nanjing’s modern war heritage into 12 categories, including headquarters, barracks, martyrs’ cemeteries, and others. Pan Yiting further proposed a “war memory landscape” that reproduces spiritual connotations from this era [24]. Some scholars have expressed the belief that “eventuality” is not only essential to understanding the value of war heritage, but also helps construct internal relationships between different aspects for a comprehensive explanation [25–28].

The field of humanities is currently focused on excavating and elaborating the cultural value of Red Heritage. According to such research direction, Red Heritage is viewed as a valuable cultural resource that provides social benefits and contributes to the recording

and dissemination of knowledge, inheritance of cultural spirit, and generation of social cohesion [29–31].

Red Tourism research is a crucial area of study that focuses on the utilization and preservation of Red Heritage, encompassing various aspects such as the development process, existing issues in red tourist areas, brand building for red tourism, infrastructure construction, local economic growth, and other related topics [32–34]. The policy of rural revitalization and the promotion of visually appealing leisure villages have driven the need for studying the distribution of rural tourism resources using GIS spatial analysis methods. This research direction holds significant importance in contemporary studies [35,36]. In recent years, scholars have explored GIS methods to holistically protect and utilize Red Heritage [37,38]. Similarly, a “field model” was proposed that integrates natural landscapes with cultural ruins by combining elements such as humanities, economy, education in planning, and design to maximize social value from red cultural landscapes [39].

### 1.3. Research Aim

The state’s influence in policy development and research has played a crucial role in raising public consciousness regarding revolutionary heritage. However, a disparity exists between this comprehension and the practical implementation of safeguarding said heritage. Two primary concerns can be identified:

- (1) When renovating and protecting rural revolutionary heritage, the use of new materials and technologies often violates the principle of authenticity and integrity in architectural heritage protection. Such means can damage the traces of time and historical value that make these buildings significant to our history.
- (2) Rural revolutionary heritage sites are often repurposed as exhibition halls or memorial halls, with a focus on showcasing grand narratives of revolutionary history and important figures. However, such an approach can sometimes result in overlapping content between exhibitions and a lack of interactive participation with visitors [40].

The aim of the present study was to explore research paradigms suitable for the conservation of rural revolutionary heritage in China while also considering their utilization potentialities.

### 1.4. Paper Overview

The focus of the study was on two rural revolutionary heritage sites located in the southern mountainous area of Jinan City, Shandong Province, North China. Jinan has preserved numerous revolutionary heritage sites, including sites of important events, former residences of key figures, military heritage, memorial venues, and facilities. Among the first batch of sites in the Immovable Revolutionary Cultural Relics list of Jinan in December 2020, six rural revolutionary heritage sites in the southern mountainous areas of Jinan were identified as sites that urgently require renovation [41]. Since 2020, the present authors have been leading a project to investigate modern revolutionary heritage.

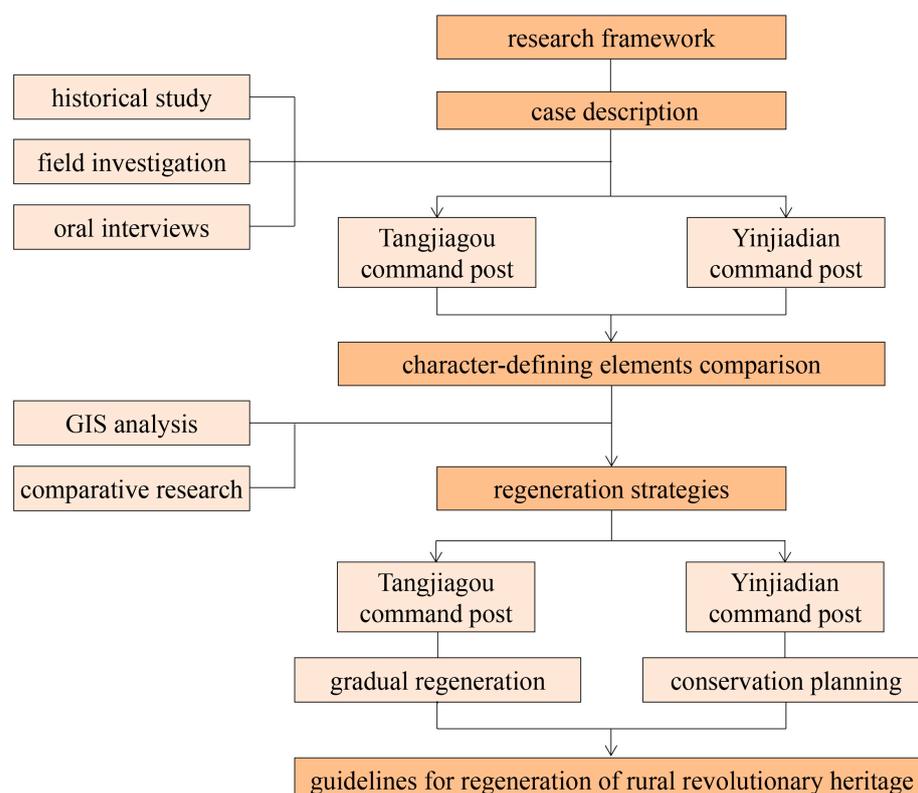
The former command posts of Jinan Campaign are representative of rural revolutionary heritage. The first site, situated in Tangjiagou village, faces challenges with effective conservation and utilization, despite retaining its vernacular architectural structure, material, and form. Meanwhile, the second site, situated in Yinjiadian Village, has undergone multiple renovations and no longer retains its original state. It now serves as an exhibition hall. Due to the difference in the preservation and reuse state, the two command posts of Jinan Campaign could be discussed as comparative cases.

In the present study, the history, architectural characteristics, and present situation of the two command posts of the Jinan Campaign were explored, with the aim of determining regeneration strategies by identifying and comparing their character-defining elements. Additionally, a systematic regeneration strategy for rural revolutionary heritage was explored, considering the unique challenges and opportunities associated with preserving and revitalizing these historic sites.

## 2. Materials and Methodology

In the present study, original research data were obtained from fieldwork, architectural surveying, history books and archives, and oral interviews. The concept of character-defining elements, derived from the Conservation of Canada's Historic Place, serves as a crucial link between heritage investigation and conservation practice [42,43]. Through the identification and comparison of the two command posts, the aim was to explore conservation and regeneration strategies suitable for rural revolutionary heritage through a case study of two command post sites (Figure 3). Qualitative methods such as historical study, field investigation, oral interviews, GIS analysis, and comparative research were employed. The methods were applied as follows:

- (1) Historical study: This included the history of Jinan Campaign, the history of the command posts, and the reasons for the location and relocation of the two command posts during the Jinan Campaign.
- (2) Field investigation: This included field visits to the command post buildings, the villages, and the surrounding environment. Then, the next steps included taking photographs, identifying important environmental elements, conducting surveys, and creating architectural drawings.
- (3) Oral interviews: This included interviews with veterans, war witnesses and their families, docents of Cultural Relics Protection Units, heritage owners and their descendants, and other elderly villagers. The purpose was to supplement the historical study, and to explore the changes in use and spatial layout of the two command post buildings.
- (4) GIS analysis: This included analysis of the topographical features of the two command posts, and analysis of the sight line. The aim was to analyze the reasons for site selection.
- (5) Comparative research: An index system of character-defining elements was constructed from the aspects of architectural heritage, environment, and community, and the character-defining elements of the two command posts were compared.



**Figure 3.** Research framework.

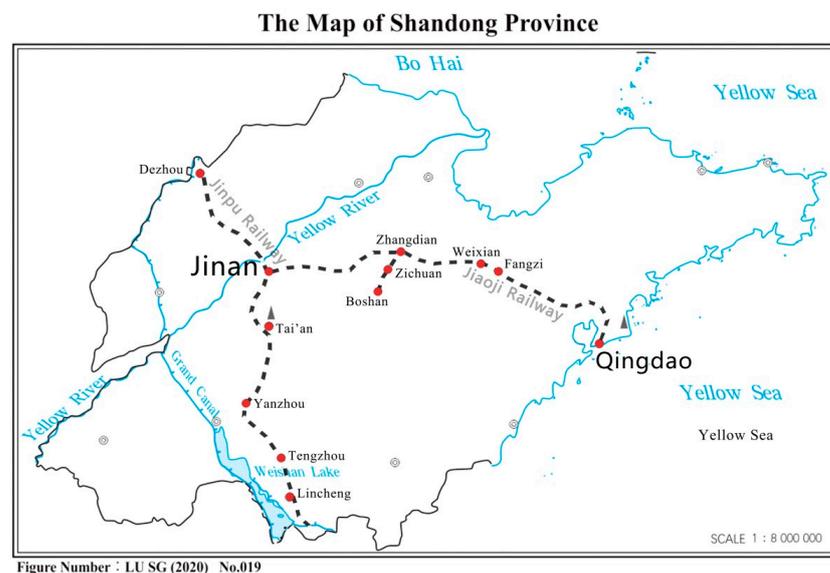
### 3. Case Description

#### 3.1. History of Jinan Campaign

Jinan, located in North China and serving as the capital of Shandong Province, is widely recognized as a prestigious city with a rich historical and cultural heritage (Figures 4 and 5). Owing to its geographical features, including the presence of Mount Tai to the south and the Yellow River to the north, Jinan has historically been a highly contested region for military strategists. From 16 September to 24 September 1948, the East China Field Army of the Chinese People's Liberation Army conquered Jinan City in only 8 days and 8 nights. The Jinan Campaign marked a significant turning point during the Chinese People's War of Liberation, as this was where Chinese Communist Party forces fought hard against Chinese Nationalist Party troops for control over a big city. This victory opened up opportunities for further strategic decisive battles by the Chinese People's Liberation Army [44].

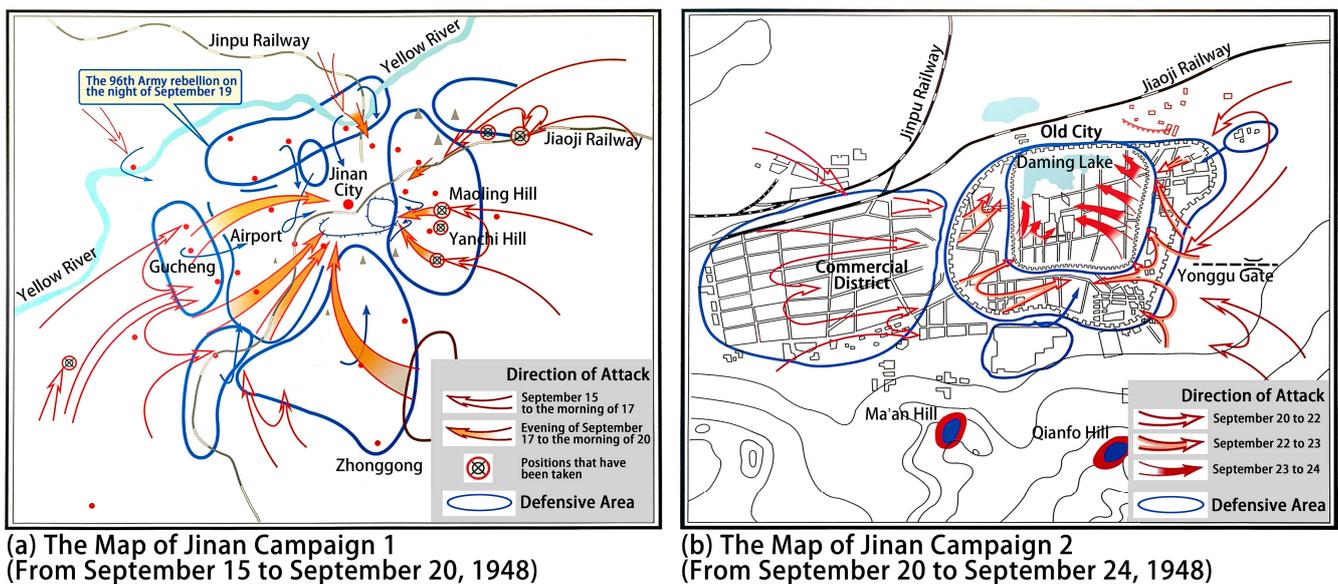


**Figure 4.** Location of Jinan in China (based on a map of the People's Republic of China by the State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping, Map Approval Number: GS(2019)1694).



**Figure 5.** Location of Jinan in Shandong Province (based on a map of the Department of Natural Resources of Shandong Province, Map Approval Number: LU SG(2020) No. 019).

The Jinan Campaign can be divided into two stages. The first stage took place from 16 to 20 September 1948. During this time, the East China Field Army of the Chinese People's Liberation Army launched attacks on Jinan from both the western and eastern directions. The troops on the western front launched a "main attack" from the western suburbs of Jinan, while those on the eastern front provided assistance by attacking from Maoling Hill and Yanchi Hill in the eastern suburbs (Figure 6a). The war progressed more smoothly than expected with eastern troops occupying some highlands and approaching Yonggu Gate of the outer city. On the western front, the Chinese People's Liberation Army swiftly seized control of the airport following an uprising by the Wu Huawen Department of the National Army, effectively severing the National Army's air transportation lines.

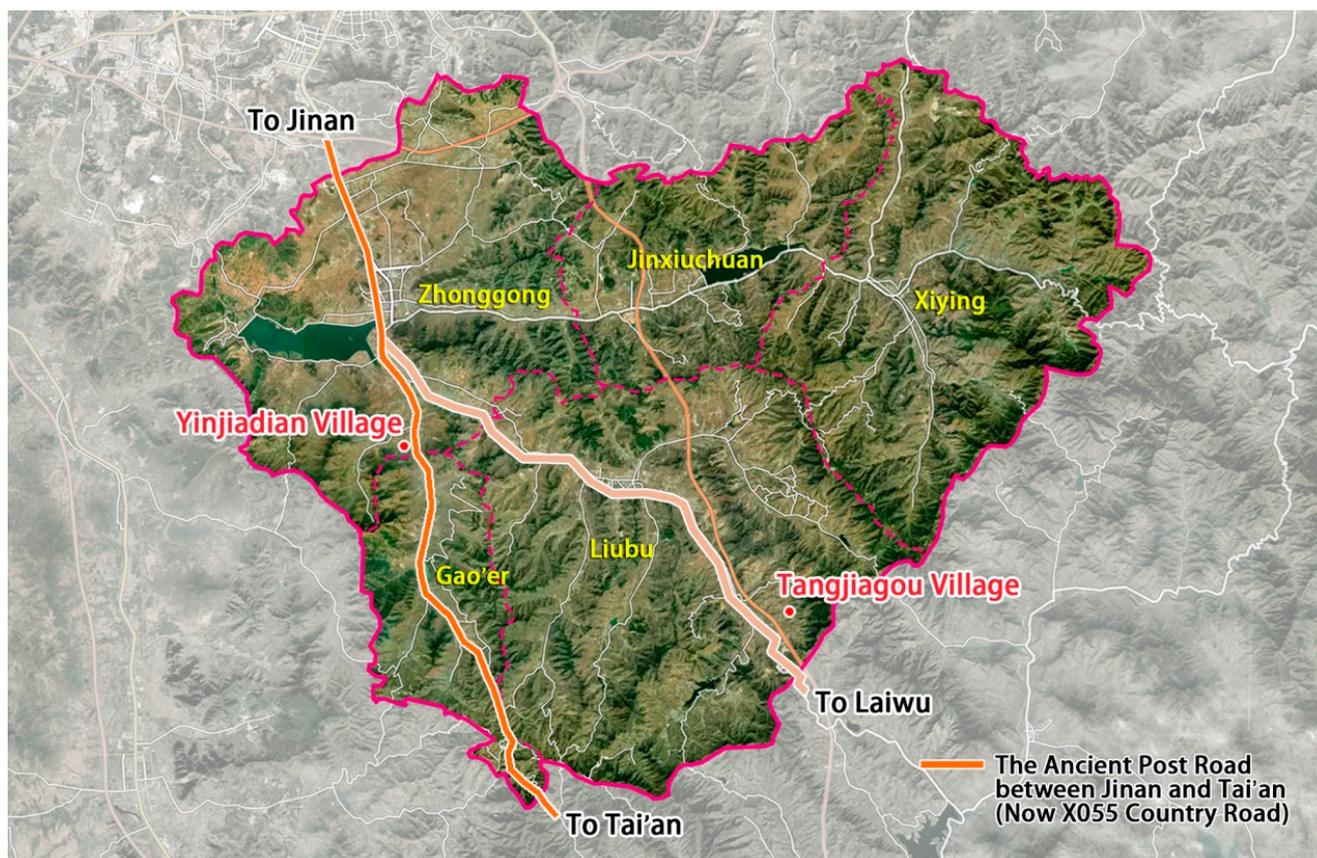


**Figure 6.** The map of the Jinan Campaign (based on a map of Jinan Campaign Memorial Hall).

In stage two, which lasted from 20 to 24 September, troops on both the eastern and western fronts broke through the outer city of Jinan after clearing the garrisons in the eastern suburbs and the commercial ports, respectively. In the early morning hours of 24 September, the inner city was breached, leading to occupation of Jinan City later that day (Figure 6b) [44] (pp. 1–13). With the rapid progression of the war, the command post was relocated from Tangjiagou village in Liubu to Yinjiadian village in Zhonggong, which was closer to the battlefield.

### 3.2. The First Command Post in Tangjiagou Village

Tangjiagou Village is situated in the southern mountainous region of Jinan, approximately 11 kilometers southeast of the Liubu Sub-district Office (Figure 7). From 16 to 20 September 1948, a command post of Chinese People's Liberation Army was set up in Tangjiagou Village [44] (pp. 123–145). The command post was chosen as the central headquarters for the Jinan Campaign due to its strategic location, strong local support base, and favorable topographical features.



**Figure 7.** Locations of Tangjiagou and Yinjiadian Village.

Before the Jinan Campaign, the military leaders engaged in multiple negotiations and determined a tactical plan for attacking Jinan that involved “attacking the economy and aiding the needy”. The leaders made preparations accordingly for a long-term siege [45]. The decision to establish the command post in Tangjiagou village was based on its strategic selection, primarily due to its robust mass base support. From 1937 to 1948, the Communist Party of China established a base in the southern mountainous areas of Jinan, providing security for the operation of the command post [46].

The presence of mountainous terrain was another crucial factor in determining the placement of a command post. The southern region of Jinan boasted an area with hills, overlapping peaks, ravines, and complex topography. Tangjiagou Village was situated far from the national government defense line and surrounded by tall trees and mountains that could serve as protection against enemy bombings [47].

A command post is a fully operational organizational structure that consists of several departments, including the headquarters, political department, confidential department, and communication department [44] (pp. 123–125). The command post space encompasses multiple buildings and the surrounding environment, such as the headquarters, telephone room, kitchen, and officers’ dormitory. Out of the original command post structures, only one building, specifically Building No. 149, has survived. This particular building functioned as the kitchen for the soldiers (Figures 8 and 9a,c). Unfortunately, the former headquarters building located at No.23 in Tangjiagou Village has collapsed due to disrepair (Figures 8 and 9a,b) [48].

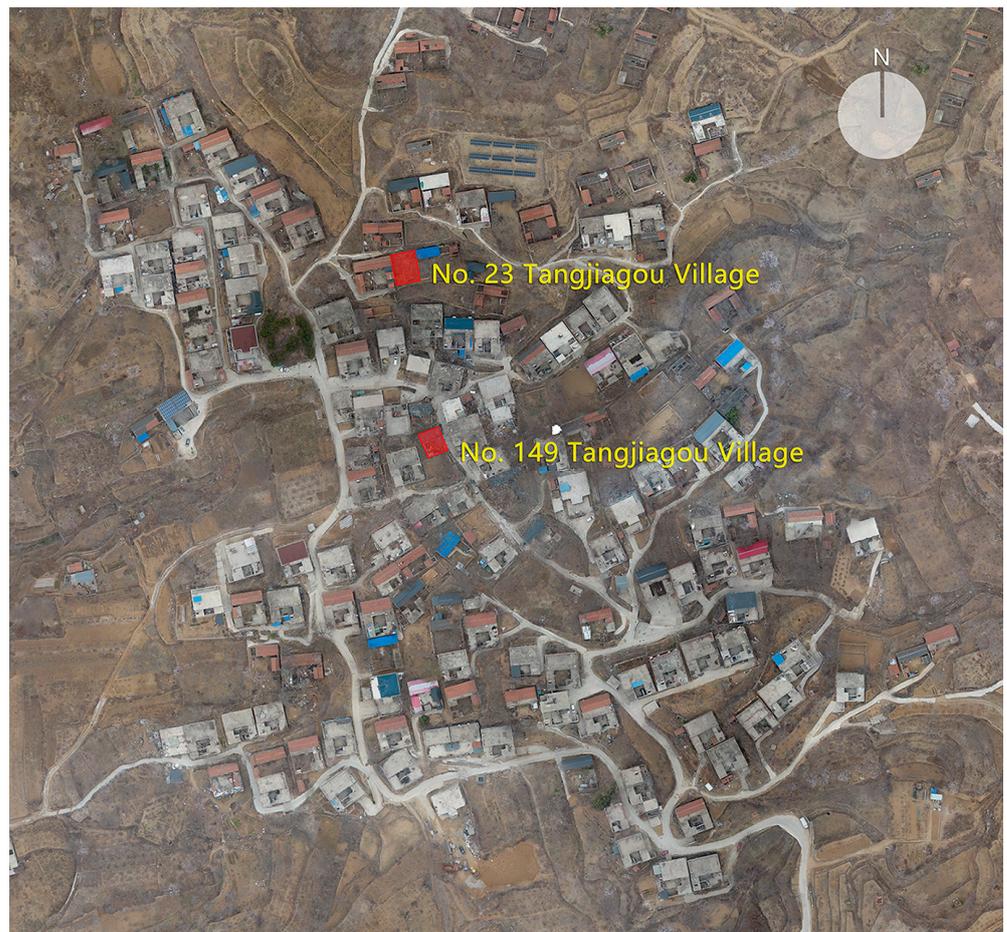
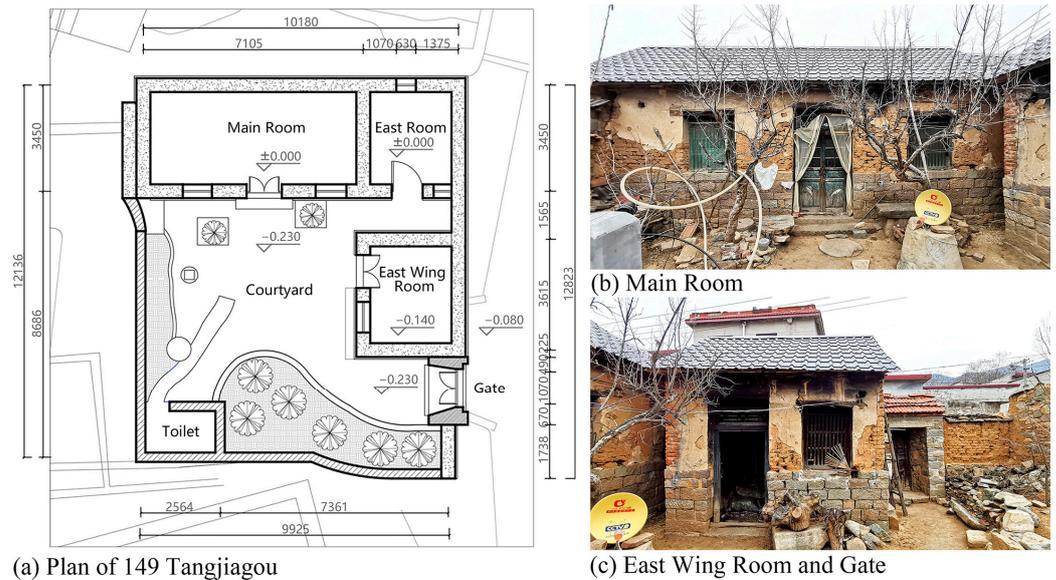


Figure 8. Geo-location map of No. 23 and No. 149 in Tangjiagou Village.

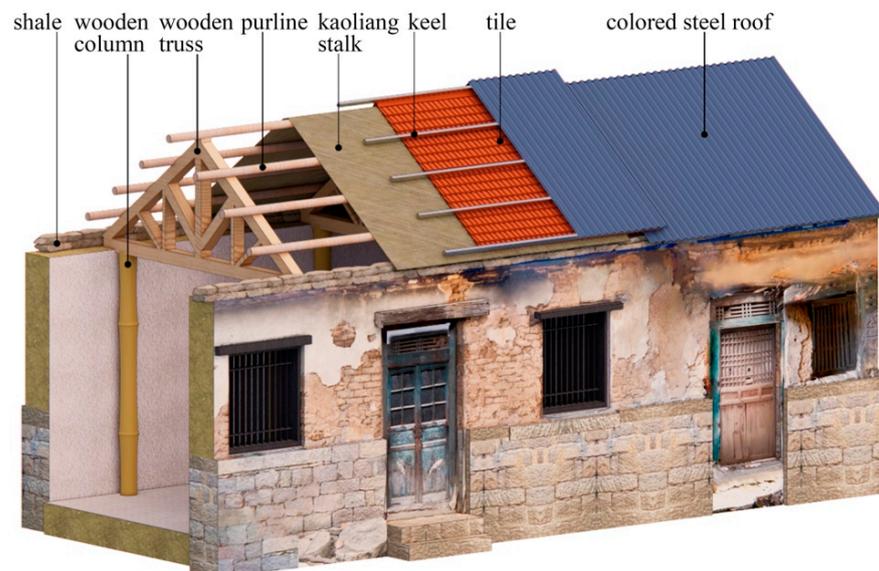


Figure 9. Current photograph of No. 23 and No. 149 in Tangjiagou Village.

Tangjiagou No. 149 is a typical example of an adobe traditional residential courtyard, situated in the southern mountainous area of Jinan. The courtyard comprises a gate, a main room, east side room and east wing room, showcasing the distinctive architectural pattern known as the “southeast gate and southwest circle”. Such pattern is commonly observed in residential buildings within this region (Figure 10). Traditional building techniques such as adobe brick walls, wooden frames, and straw roofs were used during construction (Figure 11). Over nearly a century since its construction, Tangjiagou No.149 has undergone several repairs as well as overall reinforcement and reconstruction work.



**Figure 10.** Building layout of No. 149 in Tangjiagou Village.



**Figure 11.** Structural and construction characteristics of No. 149 in Tangjiagou Village.

In January 2021, Tangjiagou No.149 was included in the first batch of Immovable Revolutionary Cultural Relics in Shandong Province; however, the building has not yet been classified or protected. Due to rain erosion and natural weathering, the building is exposed to several security risks. Such hazards are mainly manifested through local cracks in the adobe brick walls, weathering of the adobe brick masonry, and shale damage at the eaves, that require comprehensive repair and reinforcement measures.

### 3.3. The Second Command Post in Yinjiadian Village

On 20th September 1948, the command post was relocated from Tangjiagou Village to Yinjiadian Village, situated to the north (Figure 7) [44] (pp. 123–145). This move occurred as troops advanced into the outer city of Jinan. In contrast to Tangjiagou Village, which was characterized by mountainous surroundings and rugged terrain, Yinjiadian Village provided more favorable conditions in terms of location, transportation, and military observation.

The main reason for setting up the command post in Yinjiadian Village during the later period of the Jinan Campaign was due to its convenient transportation. Yinjiadian Village is situated along a significant ancient road that runs in a north–south direction, serving as a crucial link between Jinan and Tai’an (Figure 7), and making transportation convenient [49]. To ensure communication, a telephone line was established from Yinjiadian Village to the battlefield during Jinan Campaign [47].

The command post in Yinjiadian Village was strategically located for military observation and defense purposes. The village is surrounded by mountains on the east, south, and west sides. Nantai Hill in the southwest provided a vantage point to oversee the western battlefield in Jinan city, making it a crucial observation point and key terrain according to military science (Figure 12) [50]. During the Jinan Campaign, the general would visit the hill every afternoon to monitor the war situation in Jinan with his telescope [47]. The lush landscape surrounding the area also contributed to its security and defense capabilities (Figure 12) [47].



**Figure 12.** Bird’s eye view of Yinjiadian Village.

The second command post of the Jinan Campaign is situated at Yinjiadian Village No.12, which lies adjacent to the ancient road connecting Jinan and Tai’an on its eastern side (Figure 13). Prior to the campaign, this location served as a private school. Yinjiadian

Village No.12 was declared a municipal Key Cultural Relics Protection Unit in Jinan in September 1979 and later announced as part of Shandong Province's fourth batch of Provincial Cultural Relics Protection Units in 2013.



**Figure 13.** Geo-location map of No. 12 in Yinjiadian Village.

Due to its early recognition as a heritage site, the command post has undergone preservation and restoration efforts on five occasions between 1988 and 2021. Such interventions have led to significant changes in the overall appearance of the site. The current layout follows a traditional courtyard-style design with a north–south orientation comprising a gatehouse, main room, east and west side room, and west wing room (Figure 14a). During a later period, the west wing room was newly constructed as an addition to the command post.



**Figure 14.** Current photograph of the command post building in Yinjiadian Village.

The building was originally constructed as a typical adobe house in the southern mountainous region of Jinan. Later, it was transformed into a red brick masonry structure. The exterior walls were plastered and whitewashed (Figure 14b,c), while the interior was coated with wheat straw mud (Figure 14d), resulting in an antiquated appearance reminiscent of vernacular raw soil buildings. Instead of machine-made tiles, the roof now boasts straw-like roofing materials. In local traditional practice, cantilever shale was commonly employed in the cornice part of buildings. Such a technique served a dual purpose of resisting the lateral thrust of the roof truss and supporting the upper roof structure. However, in contemporary times, shale is solely utilized for decorative purposes as it no longer serves any structural function (Figure 14b,c).

The building has since been repurposed into exhibition halls. The main room and wing room contain old furniture showcasing old office equipment and military gear. The surrounding walls feature related materials and photos of the Jinan Campaign (Figure 14d). Pebbles and cement permeable bricks were used for the courtyard flooring (Figure 14b,c). In the first half of 2021, a new landscape was designed outside the courtyard, which includes water wells, military sculptures, and book sculptures (Figure 15).



**Figure 15.** Outdoor square of Yinjiadian command post.

However, there is a concern regarding the renovation of the former site of Yinjiadian Village command post, where traditional skills interpreted by contemporary individuals are being employed to recreate a sense of the past. Such an approach undermines the historical significance of the heritage site and violates principles of authenticity and integrity.

In general, both the Tangjiagou and Yinjiadian command posts hold significant value as rural revolutionary heritages. However, the Tangjiagou command post lacks effective protection, while the Yinjiadian command post has experienced excessive transformation. Further, the villages where these two command posts are situated, and the surrounding environment are poorly protected.

#### 4. Discussion

##### 4.1. Character-Defining Elements Comparison

According to the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, character-defining elements refer to the materials, forms, location, spatial configurations, uses, and cultural associations or meanings that contribute to the heritage value of a historic place, which must be retained in order to preserve its heritage value [42,43]. Despite such guidelines, rural revolutionary heritage sites often receive heritage status primarily due to their association with specific functions during the revolution or their connection to prominent revolutionary figures. Many rural revolutionary heritage sites were built relatively recently, and their artistic value, ontological value, and landscape value may not be particularly remarkable. In addition, a single revolutionary site often only witnessed a historical fragment and scene in the grand revolutionary narrative and revolutionary war, and its isolated preservation would damage the historical and cultural significance carried by the heritage. Thus, the identification of character-defining elements for rural revolutionary heritage should be based on its unique cultural context.

The spiritual significance carried by this heritage is particularly important. The 2021 edition of the Operational Guidelines stipulated that attributes such as spirit and feeling are not readily applicable as conditions of authenticity but are still important indicators of character and sense of place [51]. Principles should be defined for the identification of character-defining elements:

- (1) **Authenticity:** The spiritual significance of rural revolutionary heritage lies in its authenticity, which is conveyed through its regional architectural culture, age, and history. The authenticity of revolutionary heritage refers to its historical existence from formation to recognition as a protected object. Engaging in modernized renovations can potentially compromise the authenticity of the revolutionary heritage.
- (2) **Integrity:** Regarding the integrity of rural revolutionary heritage, various elements are encompassed such as ruins, architectural remnants, spatial layout, street systems, and natural landscapes. The location selection and operation of the heritage during the revolutionary period are also important aspects of integrity.

Based on the analysis of the aforementioned principles, the character-defining elements of rural revolutionary heritage could be denoted as follows:

- (1) **Architectural heritage:**
  - a. vernacular architectural structure, material, technology, and craftsmanship;
  - b. spatial configuration and interior layout; and
  - c. using status and functional features.
- (2) **Environment and Community:**
  - a. reasons for site selection and the relationship between the historic place and its broader setting;
  - b. military and revolutionary uses embodied in the site selection; and
  - c. customs and traditions that were or continue to be associated with the heritage.

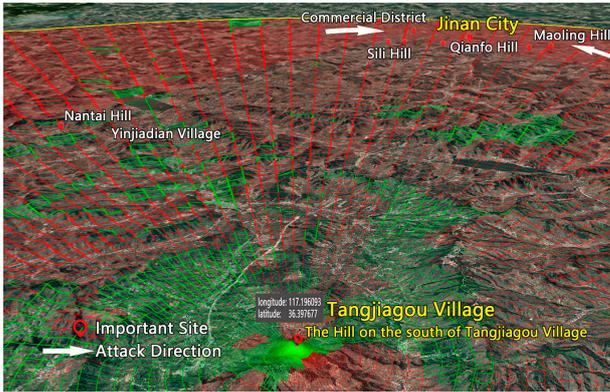
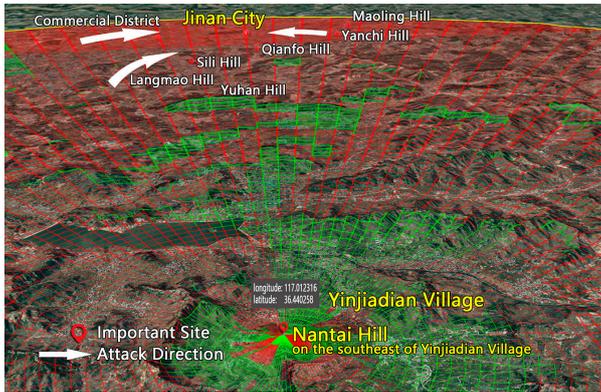
As this framework of character-defining elements is derived from the specific spiritual attributes of rural revolutionary heritage, it is applicable to each kind of rural revolutionary heritage, including the Cultural Relics Protection Unit, Red Cultural Heritage, and Immovable Revolutionary Relic. The micro case study allows for the practical implementation of this framework. By establishing connections between people, events, and architectural heritage, it offers a broader context for rural heritage research. This approach enhances our understanding and appreciation of the cultural significance of these historical sites [52,53]. Through character-defining elements comparison analysis of the two Jinan Campaign command post (Tables 3 and 4), the following conclusions can be drawn:

- (1) Tangjiagou command post retains the original vernacular architectural structure, materials, style, spatial configuration, and form. However, Yinjiadian command post does not reflect the characteristics of local vernacular architecture due to improper renovations in the later period.
- (2) Tangjiagou command post is currently abandoned and lacks close ties to the rural community. As a result, there is potential for its conservation and regeneration, considering its feasibility and potential for utilization. Meanwhile, Yinjiadian command post has been transformed into an exhibition hall and hosted several visits and festival activities. It has become integrated into the daily life of local residents.

**Table 3.** Architectural character-defining elements comparison of two command posts.

	Tangjiagou Command Post	Yinjiadian Command Post
Identity	 Ungraded Immovable Revolutionary Cultural Relic (2021)	 Provincial Cultural Relics Protection Units in Shandong Province (2013)
Current situation	Retains the original vernacular architectural character	Undergone improper renovations 4 times
Structure	Original vernacular adobe walls and wood truss	Brick wall, wood truss, and girder truss
Material	Local limestone shale, adobe, and wood	Common brick and wood
Craftsmanship	Traditional adobe wall technology	Imitates the craft of the past
Spatial configuration	Vernacular courtyard house southeast gate and southwest circle pattern	Vernacular courtyard house orientated north and south
Interior layout	Dailiness	Exhibition
Use status	Inhabited before 2021 abandoned from 2021 to present	A private school before 1949 exhibition hall for Jinan Campaign since 1979

**Table 4.** Environmental character-defining elements comparison of two command posts.

	Tangjiagou Command Post	Yinjiadian Command Post
Reasons for site selection	 <p>In the wooded mountainous area with security and concealment</p>	 <p>Close to the ancient post road and Nantai Hill with convenient transportation</p>
Sight line analysis	 <p>Low visual accessibility</p>	 <p>High visual accessibility</p>
Military uses	Security and concealment	Military observation
customs and traditions	No heritage-based customs and activities	Intermittent visits and commemorative events

**4.2. Tangjiagou Command Post: Gradual Regeneration**

The regeneration strategy of Tangjiagou command post involves preserving the architectural heritage, and combining the military, agricultural experience, and other rural tourism activities to better integrate the heritage into the rural community. Through such a gradual approach, the overall development of the rural area can be promoted (Figure 16). The first phase involves preserving the former command post, followed by renewing its surroundings in phase two. Finally, phase three entails a self-renovation of the village (Figure 17). The regeneration strategy’s intentions went beyond just restarting the local economy. While that was one of the goals, it also sought to address deeper issues. The strategy aimed to help local people find meaning in their lives, rediscover their identities that may have been lost or displaced due to rapid changes, and create new development opportunities throughout the region.

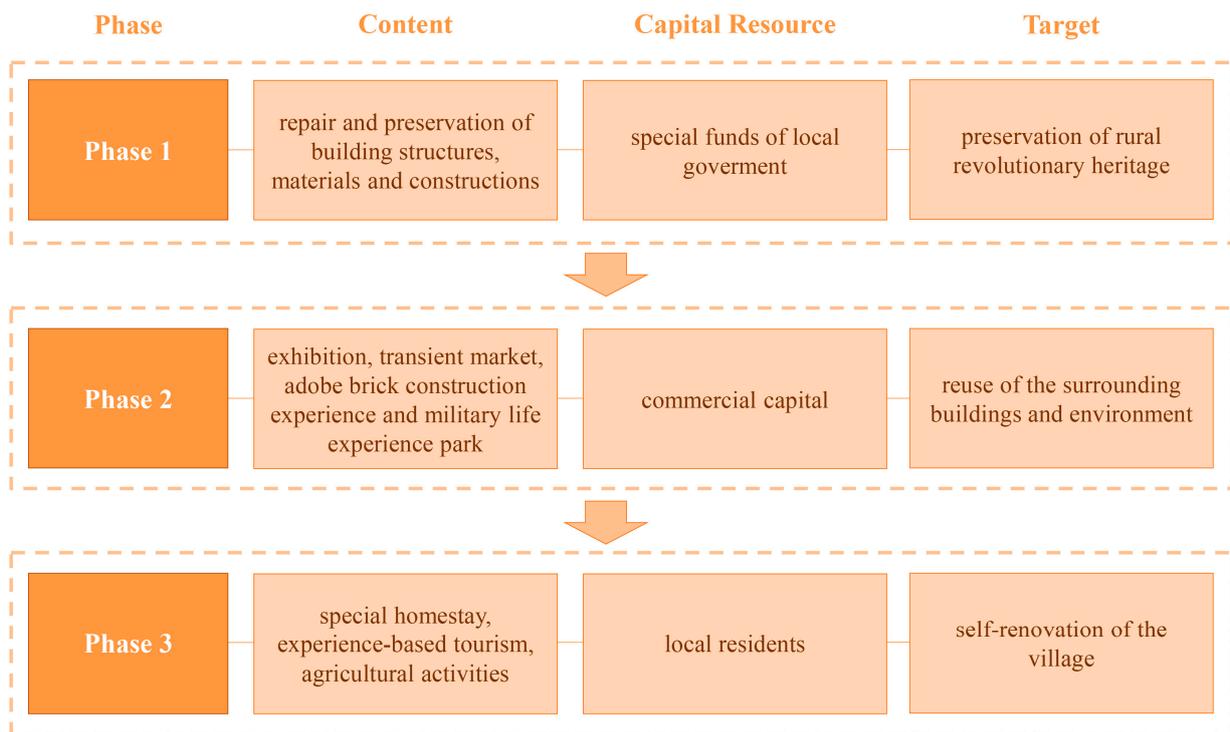


Figure 16. Gradual regeneration flowchart for Tangjiagou command post.

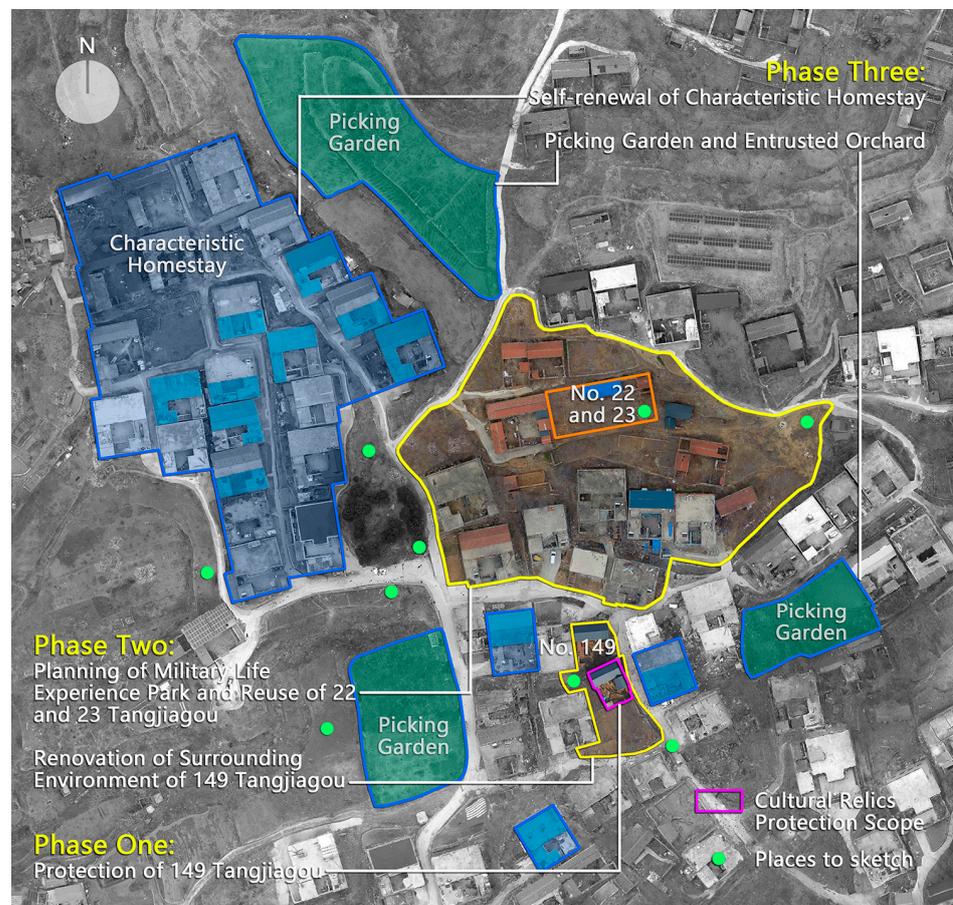


Figure 17. Renovation strategy of the Tangjiagou command post building and the village.

#### 4.2.1. Phase 1: Preservation

As a typical adobe residence, Tangjiagou command post not only showcases the local wisdom of traditional materials and techniques, but also reveals layers of information from different periods of use (Figure 18). Preservation efforts should prioritize the retention of as much historical information as possible while effectively safeguarding these structures for the benefit of future generations. The exterior walls made with irregular adobe bricks, damaged wheat straw mud, and scattered straw on purlins at Tangjiagou command post are special aesthetic features formed through long-term use of local buildings, displaying historical charm (Figure 19a). It is essential that the signs of aging be preserved while improving the structural integrity of architectural heritage.

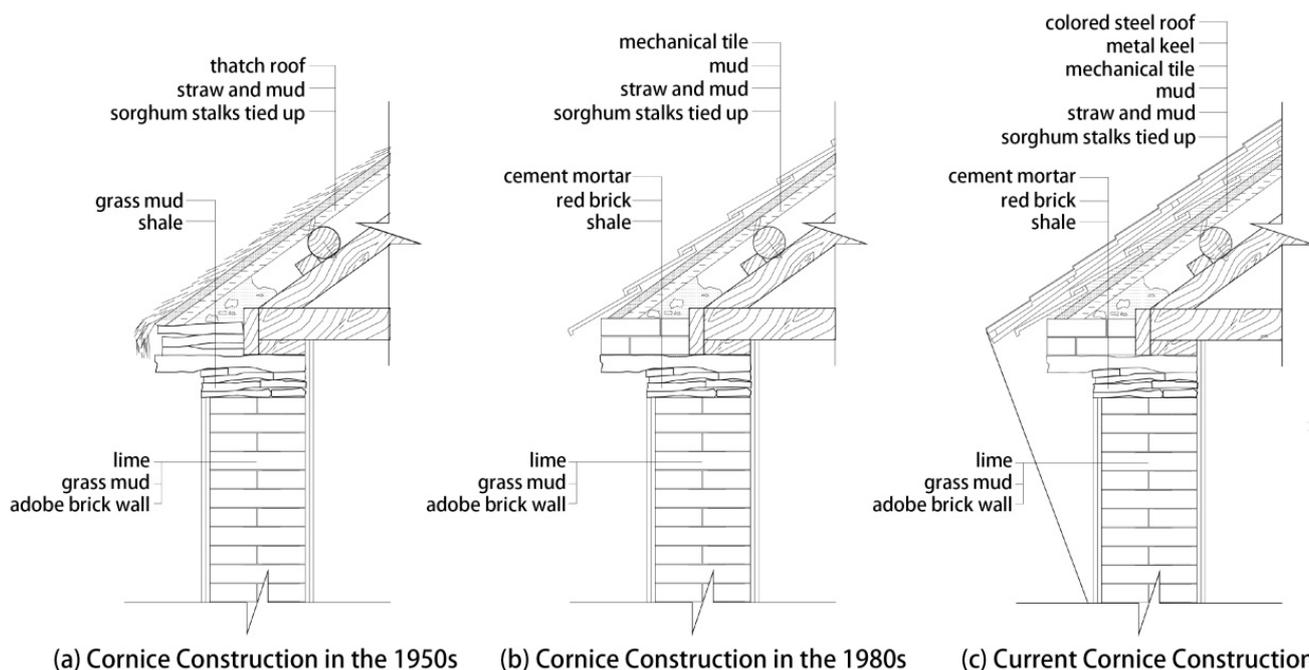


Figure 18. Cornice features of different periods of Tangjiagou command post building.

In order to ensure structural stability, repair and reinforcement measures should be implemented while striving to maintain the current state of the structures as closely as possible. Specific actions include repairing cracks and holes in walls, fixing wooden door and window lintels, repairing or replacing damaged components for doors and windows, and other measures (Figure 19b,c).

#### 4.2.2. Phase 2: Reuse

The second phase involves two key aspects: the reuse of revolutionary architectural heritage and the renewal of the surrounding environment. It is common for revolutionary architectural heritage to be repurposed into exhibition halls or memorial halls, resulting in a convergence of exhibition contents and a limited level of interactive participation [40]. As such, it is essential to investigate strategies that enable the exploration and utilization of local revolutionary resources while concurrently integrating heritage with local culture.

Tangjiagou village has a significant revolutionary history. During the Jinan Campaign, the local people provided logistical support by engaging in activities such as raising and transporting grain, facilitating ammunition transportation, and rescuing wounded soldiers [54]. This holistic approach encompassed both the open space in the south and the unused building in the north, encompassing daily public activities as well as transient tourist activities (Figure 20). By employing micro-narration methods along with fragmentation methods, the grand historical narrative of the Jinan Campaign can be presented in a way that fosters harmony and empathy towards all individuals involved in the events [55].

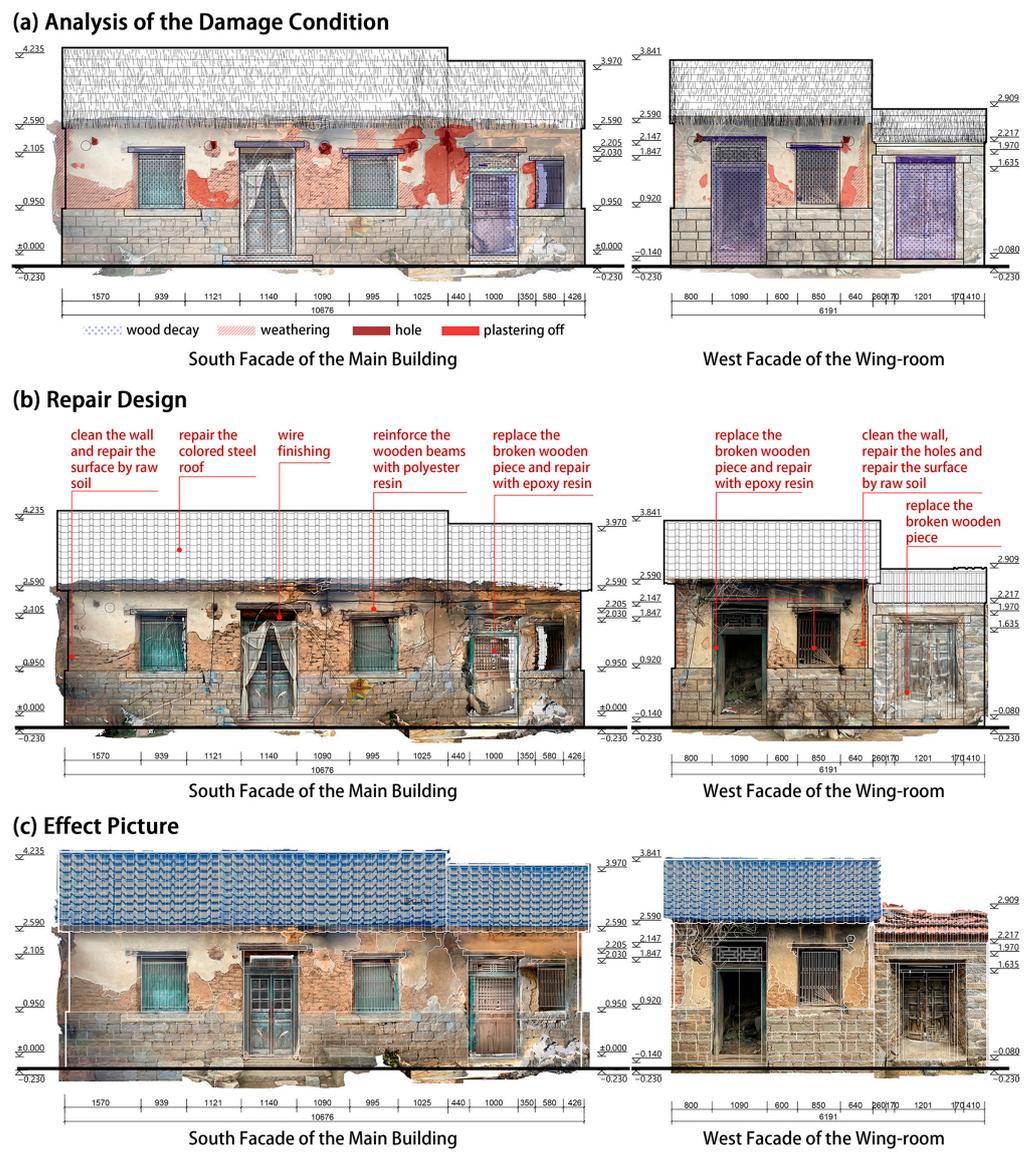


Figure 19. Conservation design of Tangjiagou command post building.

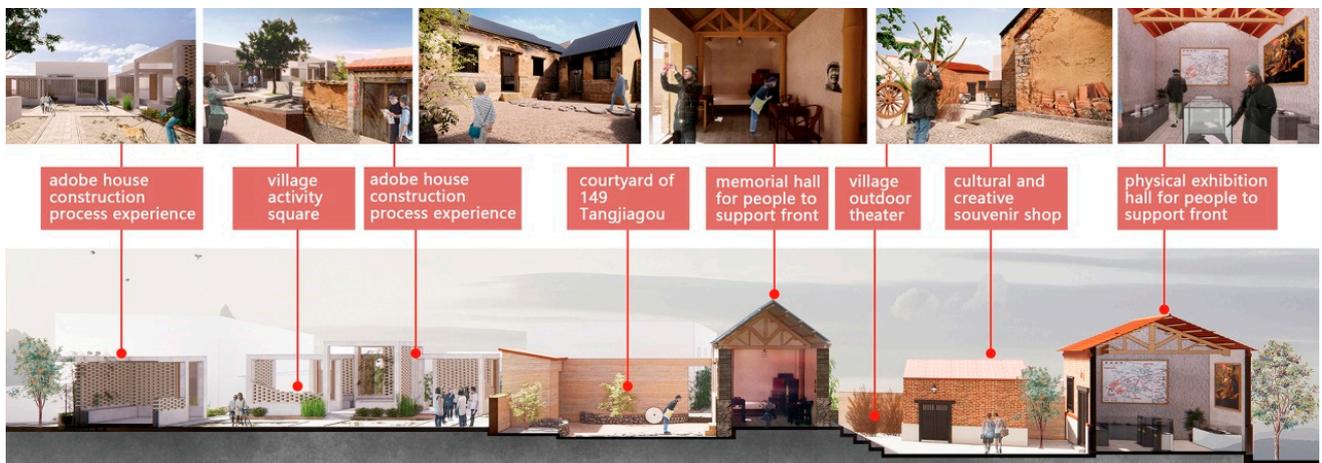
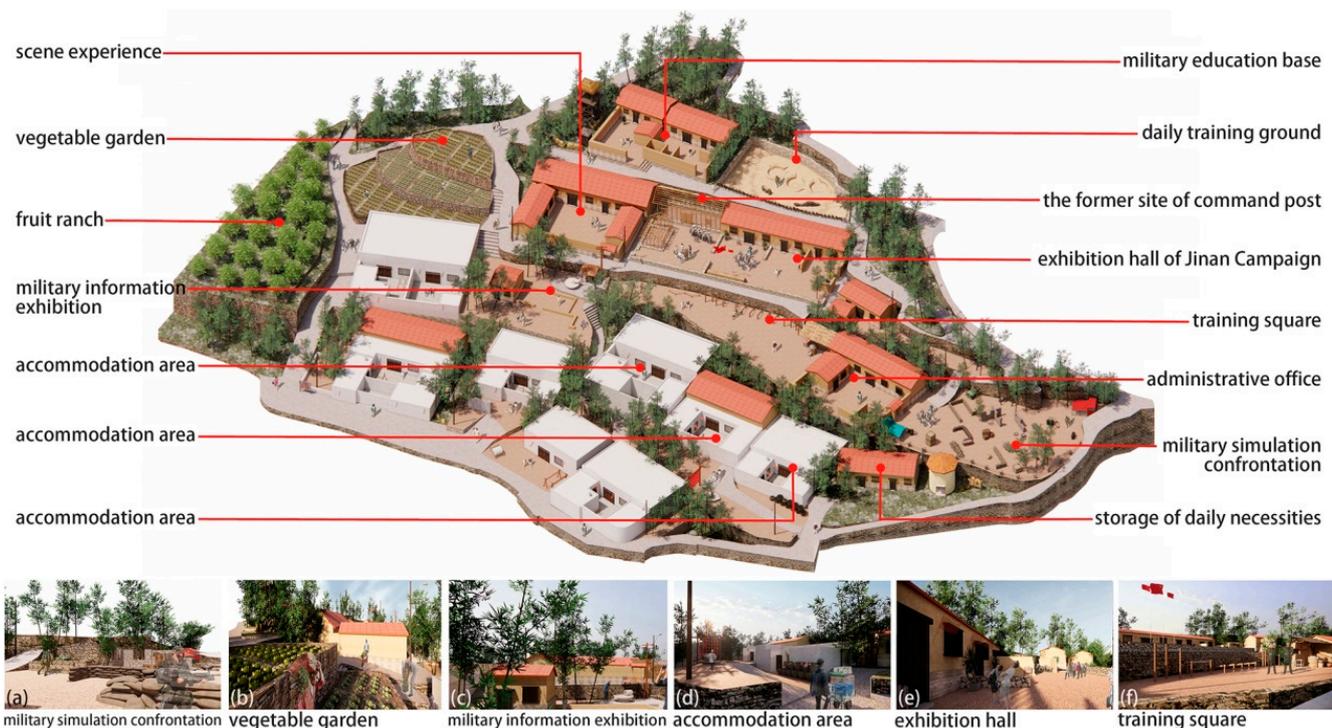


Figure 20. Renovation strategy of Tangjiagou command post building.

As there are many vacant buildings in the vicinity of No. 23, a military life experience park centred around the revolutionary site could be established. This immersive cultural tourism area would include military experience activities, fruit and vegetable picking, exhibitions, and commemorations (Figure 21). Digital technologies can also play a crucial role in the evolution of cultural tourism, transforming it into a cultural tourism experience economy [56,57]. By leveraging the revolutionary resources, a vibrant public building group can be created that will benefit both local villagers and visitors. These rural tourism activities not only serve to create a sense of identity and community, but also strengthen ties with family members who have moved away from the village [58,59].



**Figure 21.** Military experience park based on No. 23 and its surrounding environment in Tangjiagou Village.

#### 4.2.3. Phase 3: Self-Renovation

The third phase of renovating revolutionary sites involves boosting rural tourism by offering special homestays and agricultural activities. In terms of research-based and health-oriented tourism, villages with revolutionary culture have an edge over traditional rural tourist destinations. Therefore, regeneration of such villages can significantly increase farmers' income and promote the transformation and upgrading of rural industries [60].

The village has a population of 604 villagers and 245 households, with a high vacancy rate due to two-thirds of the residents working and living in cities and towns. To develop characteristic homestays, modern residential buildings in Tangjiagou Village can be utilized (Table 5). There are two business models for characteristic homestays. The first model involves attracting investment, where an outsourcing company formulates operating standards that will be implemented by house owners. The second model entails encouraging villagers to renovate their houses and utilize idle rooms as rental homestays, with supervision provided by village cadres.

**Table 5.** Self-renovation strategy of homestays.

	<b>Pattern 1: Homestay on the Wing-Rooms</b>		<b>Pattern 2: Homestay on the Second Floor</b>		
<b>Spatial layout</b>	 <p>Pattern 1: plan</p>	 <p>Pattern 1: axonometric</p>	 <p>Pattern 2: plan</p>	 <p>Pattern 2: axonometric</p>	
<b>Room layout</b>	 <p>Single bedroom and courtyard</p>	 <p>Double bedroom</p>	 <p>Double bedroom</p>	 <p>Suite</p>	 <p>Shared space</p>

Agricultural tourism, also known as experience-based tourism, involves engaging in leisure activities that showcase local industries. In Tangjiagou Village, the primary industry is fruit tree planting with over 46.7 hectares of land dedicated to this purpose. This includes approximately 20 hectares of peach trees and 13.3 hectares of hawthorn trees, as well as the cultivation of persimmons, chestnuts, and walnuts. This tourism model, which integrates activities such as fruit picking in orchards and visiting reclaimed gardens, falls under the category of ecotourism and facilitates the sustainable development of rural areas [61]. It serves to enhance rural tourism and generate income for local communities, while promoting industrial transformation in rural areas.

#### *4.3. Yinjiadian Command Post: Conservation Planning*

For revolutionary sites that have undergone repair and transformation, a thorough investigation of the surrounding environment should be conducted. The decision to select Yinjiadian village as a command post was influenced by several factors, including its defensive characteristics, convenient communication infrastructure, and its suitability for military observation purposes. Firstly, Yinjiadian Village in Zhonggong is surrounded by mountains on three sides with dense vegetation providing strong concealment and defence. Local villagers recall that in the past, the village was full of sturdy old trees while thick willows and poplars lined the riverbanks. The lush terrain also serves as an essential protective feature.

Secondly, the location of the command post was chosen for its convenient transportation. The road in Yinjiadian Village was once an ancient road during the Qing Dynasty and served as a crucial communication artery for secret Communist Party members during the revolutionary era. This road connects to Jinan city in the north and various stations and intelligence points in Gao'er area to the south. During the Jinan Campaign, this road played a vital role as a crucial communication line for the smooth operation of the command post, particularly during the later stages of the campaign. Therefore, it is essential that this ancient road be included within the protection scope, with particular attention given to building interfaces, greening efforts, and renovation of street furniture.

Nantai Hill, located on the southern side of Yinjiadian Village, served as a crucial military observation point during the later stages of the Jinan Campaign. The general would climb to its summit every afternoon to oversee and direct the war efforts in Jinan city to the north. The mountain's hidden vegetation landform was once utilized by confidential departments for their operations. In the planning process for the utilization and exhibition of this command post, introducing leisure activities such as mountaineering and sightseeing can help promote appreciation for revolutionary sites while ensuring their value is passed down through generations (Figure 22).

#### *4.4. Guidelines for Regeneration of Rural Revolutionary Heritage*

Numerous revolutionary heritage sites in the villages of the southern mountainous areas in Jinan encounter common preservation challenges. The List of First Immovable Revolutionary Cultural Relics in Shandong Province identifies 11 such relics in this region (Figure 23), including 4 cultural relic protection units and 7 ungraded immovable revolutionary relics [41]. Of the relics, six need urgent preservation and renovation. Most renovated buildings have been repurposed as exhibition halls, which can negatively impact the heritage site and result in low visitor numbers on regular days. These exhibition halls often operate only during anniversaries or festivals (Table 6).

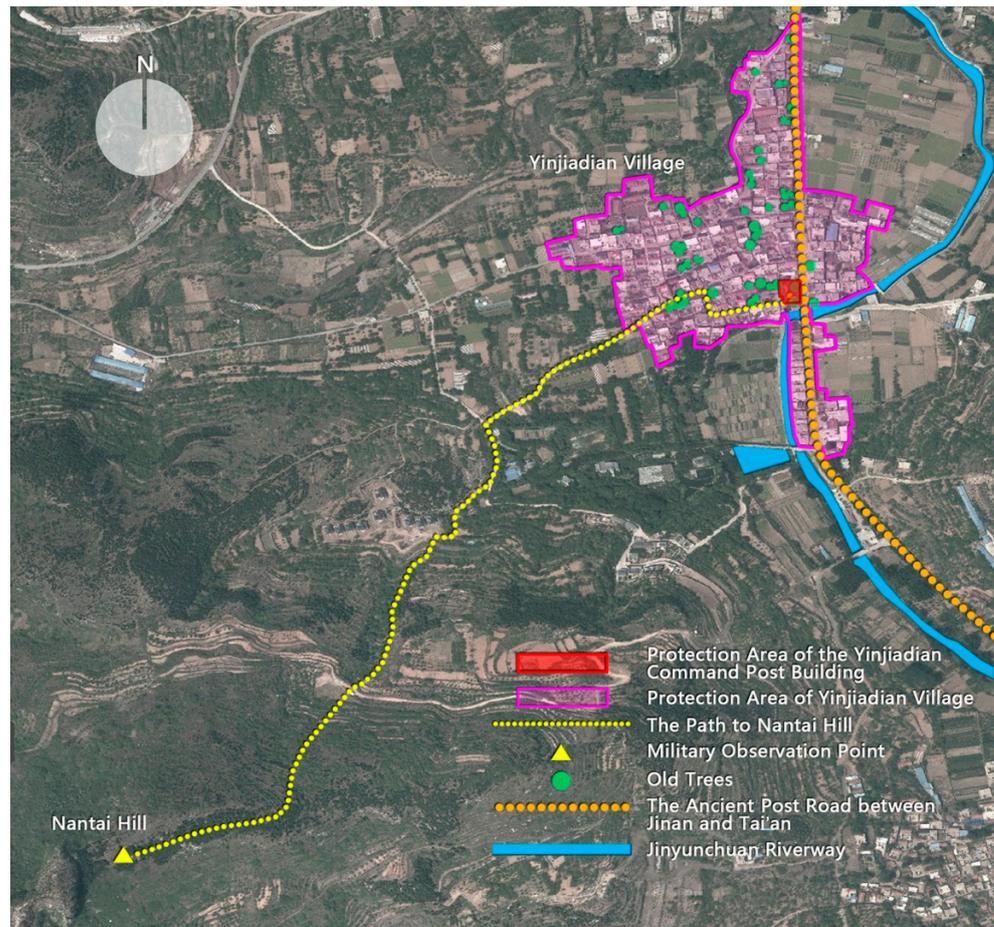


Figure 22. Conservation strategy of the environment of Yinjiadian Village.

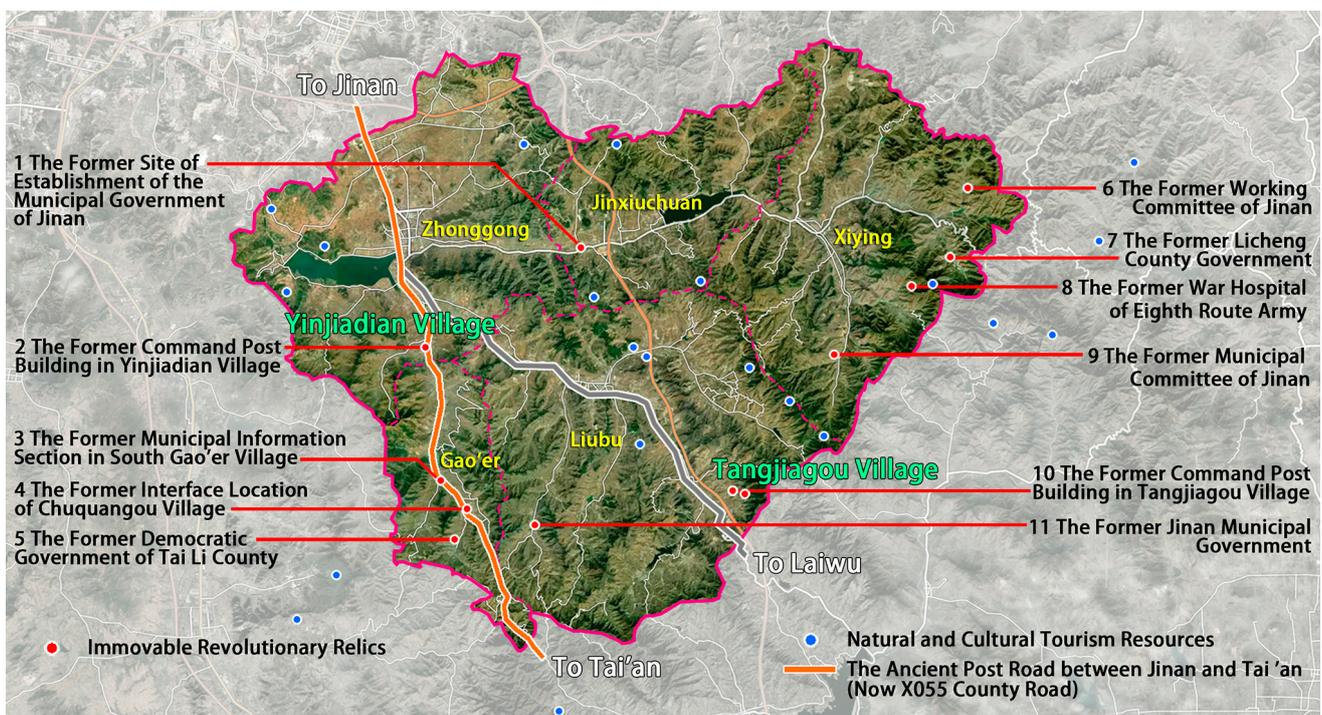


Figure 23. Distribution map of revolutionary heritage sites in the southern mountainous area of Jinan.

**Table 6.** Immovable Revolutionary Cultural Relics in southern mountainous areas of Jinan.

	Name	Identity	Function	Use Condition	Building Condition	Photo
1	The Former Site of Establishment of the Municipal Government of Jinan	Ungraded Immovable Revolutionary Relics	Exhibition	Closed	Recently preserved and renovated	
2	The Former Command Post of Jinan Campaign in Yinjiadian Village	Provincial-level Cultural Relic Protection Unit	Exhibition	Closed on weekdays and open on festivals and holidays	Recently preserved and renovated	
3	The Former Municipal Information Section in South Gao'er Village	Ungraded Immovable Revolutionary Relics	-	Abandoned	Serious damage	
4	The Former Interface Location of Chuquangou Village	Ungraded Immovable Revolutionary Relics	-	Abandoned	Serious damage	

Table 6. Cont.

	Name	Identity	Function	Use Condition	Building Condition	Photo
5	The Former Democratic Government of Taili County	Ungraded Immovable Revolutionary Relics	Exhibition	Closed on weekdays and open on festivals and holidays	Recently preserved and renovated	
6	The Former Working Committee of Jinan	County-level Cultural Relic Protection Unit	-	Abandoned	General damage	
7	The Former Licheng County Government	County-level Cultural Relic Protection Unit	Residence	Occasional habitation	General damage	
8	The Former War Hospital of Eighth Route Army	County-level Cultural Relic Protection Unit	-	Abandoned	General damage	

Table 6. Cont.

	Name	Identity	Function	Use Condition	Building Condition	Photo
9	The Former Municipal Committee of Jinan	Ungraded Immovable Revolutionary Relics	Exhibition	Closed on weekdays and open on festivals and holidays	Recently preserved and renovated	
10	The Former Command Post of Jinan Campaign in Tangjiagou Village	Ungraded Immovable Revolutionary Relics	-	Abandoned	Serious damage	
11	The Former Municipal Government of Jinan	Ungraded Immovable Revolutionary Relics	Exhibition	Open from Monday to Sunday	Recently preserved and renovated	

The revolutionary heritage sites in the southern mountainous area of Jinan are characterized by high internal correlation. Out of 11 revolutionary relics, there are 5 located along the ancient post road between Jinan and Tai'an. The remaining six are located at the junction of Jinan and Tai'an. To better preserve and reuse these historical sites, it is recommended to establish linear corridors and clusters of heritage based on narrative clues from revolutionary history. Such measures will allow for an integrated interpreted regeneration strategy to be formed, which can enhance both the display level and protection effectiveness of these cultural relics.

The southern mountainous region of Jinan is also rich in cultural and natural resources, making it an ideal location for developing revolutionary cultural tourism (Figure 23). It is recommended to integrate and utilize the historical, cultural, and natural landscapes of the area, so that tourists can participate in themed activities such as visiting historical sites and experiencing local customs. As such, a unique tourist destination centred on revolutionary culture can be created.

Based on the described analysis, the following guidelines for the protection and utilization of rural revolutionary heritage were formed:

- (1) To protect rural revolutionary heritage, it is important to improve the structural integrity of architectural heritage while preserving its historical value. For severely damaged sites, efforts should be made to rescue and reinforce building walls and roof truss structures in order to ensure their survival.
- (2) It is crucial to prioritize the comprehensive preservation of rural revolutionary heritage along with their surrounding environments. The placement of many rural revolutionary heritage sites is contingent upon their surroundings, which exhibit traits such as defensibility, concealment, ease of transportation, and military observation. To ensure effective protection planning, research should be conducted to fully understand the heritage resources.
- (3) To effectively reuse rural revolutionary heritage, the unique local characteristics of the heritage sites should be considered. The correlation between heritage ontology and events, people, or historical facts should be examined as a prerequisite for rational reuse. By utilizing activities, forms, and exhibition methods that appeal to younger generations, cultural heritage can be passed down for future generations.
- (4) To renew the rural revolutionary heritage, it is of considerable significance to integrate local resources. This can be achieved through research that utilizes natural and human resources in rural areas. Further, immersive cultural experiences such as visiting revolutionary military parks, mountain expansion camps, and military lecture halls can be established.
- (5) To protect the rural revolutionary heritage, it is crucial to strike a balance between local government guidance and rural autonomy while also encouraging active participation from villagers. This can be accomplished by utilizing the industrial strengths of rural areas and integrating the preservation of heritage with development of unique industries. By adopting such an approach, focus can be gradually shifted from solely conserving rural revolutionary heritage to revitalizing these communities as a whole.

## 5. Conclusions

The primary research focus of the present study was centered around identifying and safeguarding the character-defining elements of rural revolutionary heritage, guided by the principles of authenticity and integrity. Additionally, strategies to expand the possibilities for reusing revolutionary heritage were explored, with the aim of avoiding problems such as limited exhibition functions, redundant content between exhibitions, and a lack of interactive engagement with visitors. The article highlights the unique significance of rural revolutionary heritage as a distinct form of vernacular heritage. Its value extends beyond its association with historical events and figures, as it also embodies the characteristics of vernacular architecture and maintains a close connection with rural residents and their way of life. In the present study, by comparing the character-defining elements of two

command posts in Jinan Campaign, regeneration strategies were proposed according to different heritage characteristics and preservation status. Attaining a holistic approach to preserving and renovating both the heritage site and its surrounding environment is of paramount importance. As such, the present authors suggest focusing on integrating community life, local culture, and visitor experiences in the reuse process. By doing so, a conservation and regeneration model can be developed specifically for such heritage.

In recent years, micro-historiography research has gained widespread attention due to the influence of post-modern historiography. Unlike traditional grand narratives in historiography, micro-research focuses on textual analysis, comparison and organization of a single event, person, building, organization, or system. Such an approach provides a broader context for cultural heritage research, not only enriching local knowledge, but also contributing to the present understanding of the country. Based on a case study of the Jinan Campaign command posts, the focus of the present study was on small events to supplement the grand narrative and provide insight into larger events. By exploring daily life experiences from a microscopic perspective, an investigation was conducted into the core significance of revolutionary heritage using vivid activities and expressions that make grand narratives empathetic. Such measures promote the activation and survival of China's rural revolutionary heritage while providing valuable reference for its protection and research.

The study of revolutionary heritage is part of a broader social archaeology that encompasses the everyday lives of ordinary people and families, as well as topics such as housing, bereavement, mourning, and expectations that are not typically associated with archaeology. The expanded research scope of heritage protection encompasses not only national-level significance and commemoration but also the everyday experiences and perspectives of the general public. When re-examining revolutionary heritage, it is important to focus on great figures, events, and historical value, in addition to ordinary soldiers and civilian population in wars. Even the smallest and undocumented events and figures hold significance in understanding revolutionary heritage and should be given central importance in contemporary preservation, utilization, and inheritance efforts.

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