

2011 International Conference on Advances in Engineering

Material Factor for the Beauty of Modern Architecture Decoration in Harbin

He Ying¹, Liu Songfu¹, Sun Quan^{2*}

1. School of Architecture, Harbin Institute of Technology, Harbin, Heilongjiang, 150006 China

2. The Architectural Design and Research Institute of HIT, Harbin, Heilongjiang, 150090 China

Abstract

To conduct an in-depth research on the outstanding performance of architecture decorative material in the areas of technology and art at certain historical times, this article mainly studied the modern architecture decoration in Harbin. We did a survey on the decoration of 231 modern buildings in Harbin, and comprehensively studied the construction and artistic performance of materials used to decorate the modern buildings, such as woods, bricks, stone, plaster and iron, from the perspective of traditional art and technological philosophy, from which we found the important role of materials playing in the process of sculpturing the beauty of architecture decoration. The material factor of architecture decoration is a substantial foundation for the existence of architecture beauty, and reflects the traditional concept of different schools and culture in the areas of architecture materials and constructive technology.

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Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of ICAE2011.

Key words: modern architecture in Harbin, wood decoration, bricks, stone, plaster, iron processing

The basic structure of modern architecture in Harbin consists of wood, brick and ferroconcrete. Woods, bricks and stone are the main materials for decorating the architecture, and plaster decoration is commonly for the external side of the architecture. The “new art” campaign in Harbin popular in this period initiated traditional handicraft, so the decoration of architecture commonly took the iron decorative elements as the first choice, which was perfect combination of technology and art for decoration. The decorative materials mentioned above outstandingly reflect the unique beauty of modern architecture decoration through different construction technique according to their own characteristics, and add unique appreciation value to the architecture of this emerging city in modern times.

1. Simple wood decoration

* Corresponding author. Tel.: ; fax:.
E-mail address: heyingsong@guigu.org.

Wood is a kind of natural material, which can be applied to the partial decoration of the architecture after being processed by artisans. It's a unique material language praising simple architecture and the beauty of nature. In modern times, the decoration of traditional architecture of the Russian nation in Harbin commonly preferred wood as well. The History of Russian Architecture said, the solemn nature of the North, the simple technique and the only material (wood) urged the architects to find a way to show the artistic and splendid buildings in decoration and furnishing, and they had also deliberated on the proportion in composition of the external volume, the beauty and the balance of the sketch. Therefore, the architecture with wood decoration represented remarkable classic and profound reality.



Figure 1 the Orthodox Cathedral of St Nicola



Figure 2 the Cathedral of St Nicola

The Orthodox Cathedral of St Nicola at Nan Gang Centre, the highest geological site in Harbin, was the paragon of wood architecture in this period. This was the first large architecture project of “East Moscow” and the centre of the Lama Square, which is the Harbin Museum Square now. (Figure 1) The exquisitely carved wood decorations are some details of this kind of style, such as the wood stairs with exquisitely carved double slope roof crossing into the flame shape of an arch, at the centre of which is the elegant wood flower, at the entrance of the cathedral. (Figure 2)



Figure3 traditional wood residence of the Russian nation



Figure4 partial wood decoration of Independent residence

The traditional independent architectures of the Russian nation in Harbin, such as the independent residence at Jiangbei Garden Street (Figure 3), also commonly take woods as the decorative materials, which represents the traditional decoration of the Russian nation and expresses the culture of folk art and romanticism. Besides, some independent houses would use wood to decorate the balcony and the door handle. (Figure 4)

2. Simple brick decoration

In modern times, the brick was a widespread architecture material in Harbin city. According to the research on 231 modern buildings, 89.5% of them were constructed with bricks.



Figure 5-1 traditional brick residence of the Russian (1)



Figure 5-2 traditional brick residence of the Russia (2)

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