

Qingdao Exchange Building

Subjects: Architecture And Design

Contributor: Meng Chen, Hui Tong, Yabing Xu, Qi Zhou, Linhua Hu

The Qingdao Exchange Building, built in the 1920s, is the largest products and stock exchange building in modern Shandong. In addition to being a historical witness to the economic development of Qingdao over the last 100 years, it has also been a historical scene of cultural exchanges between China and the West after the opening up of China in the early 20th century. After several changes in the building's property rights, the building was out of use for a long period of time, with a large number of materials and structures being damaged.

Keywords: Qingdao Exchange Building ; Chinese Modern Architectural Heritage ; value analysis ; rehabilitation strategies

1. Introduction

Qingdao is a new port city in Shandong Province in modern China, with a deep-water port and Jiaoji Railway. From the end of the 19th century to 1949, Qingdao was alternately occupied by Germany, Japan, and the National Government. As the frontier area influenced by Western culture in the Shandong Peninsula, the old urban area of Qingdao retains a large number of Modern Architectural Heritage sites. In January 2019, a special leading group was set up to launch the official application of the old city of Qingdao for the Preparatory List of World Cultural Heritage, which promoted the progress of architectural heritage protection. Built during the Japanese occupation in the 1920s, the Qingdao Exchange Building is the largest products and stock exchange building in modern Shandong (**Figure 1**).

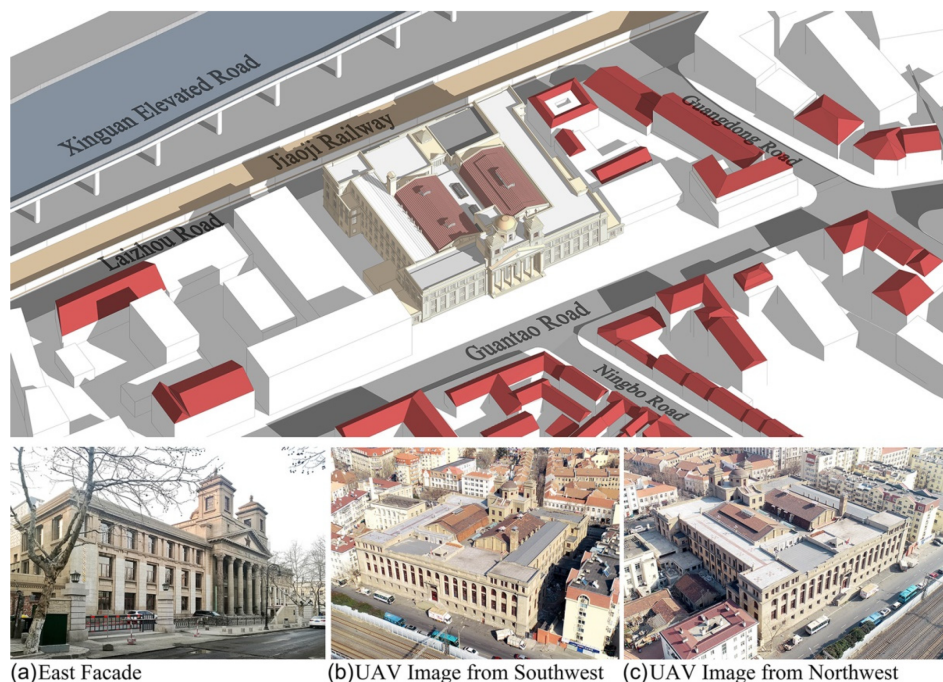


Figure 1. Qingdao Exchange Building.

2. History

Exchange buildings, which originated in Europe in the late Middle Ages, are organized and standardized trading places for bulk commodities or financial assets. With the functions of facilitating trading, circulating goods, adjusting finance, and leveling market prices, Exchange buildings were derived from financial war and were a significant factor in the development of the national economy and financial industry ^[1]. From the Meiji Restoration in 1868 to the outbreak of the First World War, Japan's economy exhibited a trend of rapid growth, transforming an agricultural country into a modern

industrial country. Japan introduced the new market organization system of Exchange buildings from Western countries so as to promote the primitive accumulation of capital. In 1914, there were 44 Exchange buildings in Japan, which promoted the development of Japan's domestic industrial revolution [2].

The early Japanese Exchange buildings emerged in Dalian, Shenyang, Changchun, and other places in northeast China as Japan gained privilege in northeast China after the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. Between 1920 and 1921, as a result of the domestic economic crisis, Japan intensified the control of raw materials, products, and capital markets in colonial and semi-colonial areas. From 1916 to 1921, Japan set up over 100 enterprises in China, including various Exchange buildings founded by Japanese officials and private capital [3]. In 1919, Japan set up a government-run Exchange building on the Dexian Road of Qingdao. In 1920, the building was forced to set up a Sino-Japanese commercial joint exchange. The initial trading market was located on Dabao Island, including four trading departments: securities, gauze, local products, and currency. In 1921, there was a plan to build a new building on Guantao Road, but the plan was shut down soon after due to a lack of funds. Later, the Japanese military financed the project from opium sales, ensuring the progress of construction [4]. In August 1926, the building was completed with a total building area of 18,276 m². In September of the same year, Qingdao Exchange was officially opened, and several rooms were rented out to other companies and banks as offices [5]. The building was adjacent to Xiaogang Wharf in the west and Customs and Dagang Railway Station in the north, which was convenient for both ocean and railway transportation. Additionally, Guantao road was connected to Zhongshan Road Commercial Street in the south, surrounded by supporting facilities such as finance, transportation, catering, and tourism.

From its establishment to the early 1930s, the Qingdao Exchange Building basically monopolized the trading market of agricultural products and main goods until Qingdao Commodity Stock Exchange was set up by Chinese merchants with the support of the municipal authorities in 1931. After the outbreak of the Second World War, Japan's excessive involvement in foreign wars led to an extreme shortage of materials, and circulation was restricted. In 1944, the Qingdao Exchange Building was forced to close [6].

After the end of the Second World War, the Qingdao Exchange Building was occupied by the military of the Nationalist Government and ended its trading function. From November 1945 to June 1949, the Qingdao Exchange Building was used for the army of the Nationalist Government. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in October 1949, the Qingdao Exchange Building was used for the Chinese People's Liberation Army. After 2000, the building was gradually left unused. In 2006, the Qingdao Exchange Building, along with other Modern Architectural Heritage sites on Guantao Road, was announced as the third batch of Provincial Cultural Relic Protection Units of Shandong. In 2014, the interior decoration of the building was partially updated and then leased to enterprises, but the utilization rate was low. At present, with the Guantao Road Historical Block emerging as a famous place for cultural tourism and leisure, as well as being a popular public area for visiting, traveling, photography, and leisure activities, the Qingdao Exchange Building is in urgent need of renewal and reuse.

To summarize, the modernization of Qingdao City and the Guantao Road block has occurred over the last 100 years, with the Qingdao Exchange Building being a particular site for historical figures and historical events. In addition to being a historical witness to the commercial and economic development of modern Qingdao, the Qingdao Exchange Building has also been a historical place for cultural exchange between the East and the West since the opening up of China to the Western World in the early 20th century. Exchange buildings, as a building type, reflect the authenticity, importance, and integrity of historical information, which shows important historical and cultural values.

3. Current Status

The Qingdao Exchange Building is currently located between the old and the new urban areas. The building faces Guantao Road and Liyuan Courtyard (a type of multifamily residential area in modern Qingdao) in the east (**Figure 2a**), and the Xinguan Elevated Road and Jiaoji Railway in the west, a new urban area with high-rise buildings completed after the 21st century (**Figure 2b**). As the largest Modern Architectural Heritage on Guantao Road, the building basically retains the original spatial pattern and style characteristics.



Figure 2. Aerial View of Qingdao Exchange Building.

The building adjusts to the site height difference between the east and the west, forming an overall layout of three main floors in the east and four main floors in the west. A semi-basement on the west side is used as an auxiliary area with low lighting and ventilation demand. The original plane was centralized with crisscross corridors defining four exchange halls, the securities and currency trading halls in the east close to the main gate on Guantao Road and the local product trading halls in the west near the second door on Laizhou Road. Around the halls are room units, forming a clear functional spatial pattern.

The original overall spatial layout represents the spatial characteristics of the modern building type of Exchange buildings and has high historical value. Partial changes in the space occurred with subsequent changes in use; for example, several internal partitions were added to the former western trading halls, while the former eastern trading halls were transformed into a second-floor auditorium and an indoor sports hall, respectively (**Figure 3**). The additions and renovations that reflect historical value need to be distinguished from those that have no historical significance and are only for increasing functional capacity.

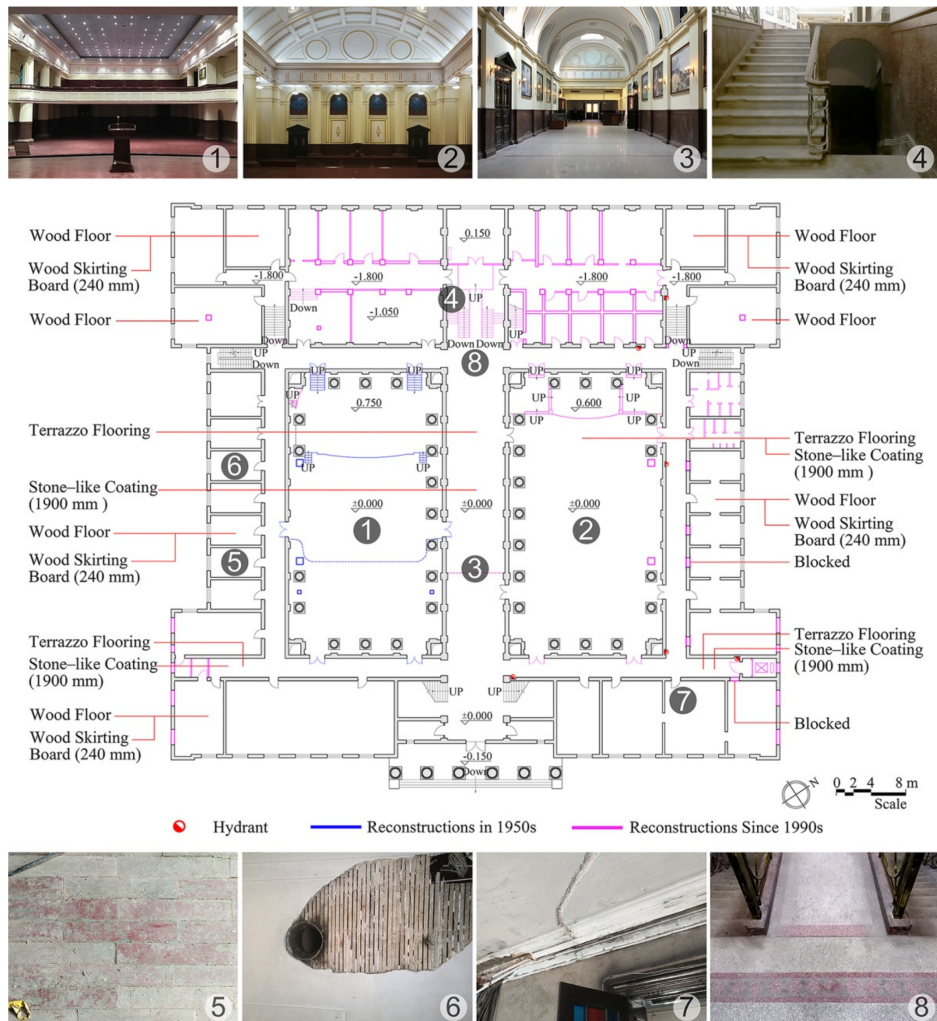


Figure 3. Ground Floor Plan of Qingdao Exchange Building.

In terms of structure, a mixed structure system was adopted for the building, with brick walls and columns as the vertical structure, reinforced concrete beams and floors as the horizontal structure, and Western wood trusses as the roof structure (**Figure 4**). Such structure is a common structural system in modern Chinese public buildings and shows the advantages of the compressive strength of bricks and the flexural strength of reinforced concrete and wood. According to the “Safety Appraisal Report of the Qingdao Exchange Building”, the main structure is basically safe and stable, with partial damage to the reinforced concrete beam, floor, and other parts, including concrete cracks and spalling, steel-bar corrosion, local decay, and node rusts of the wooden trusses.

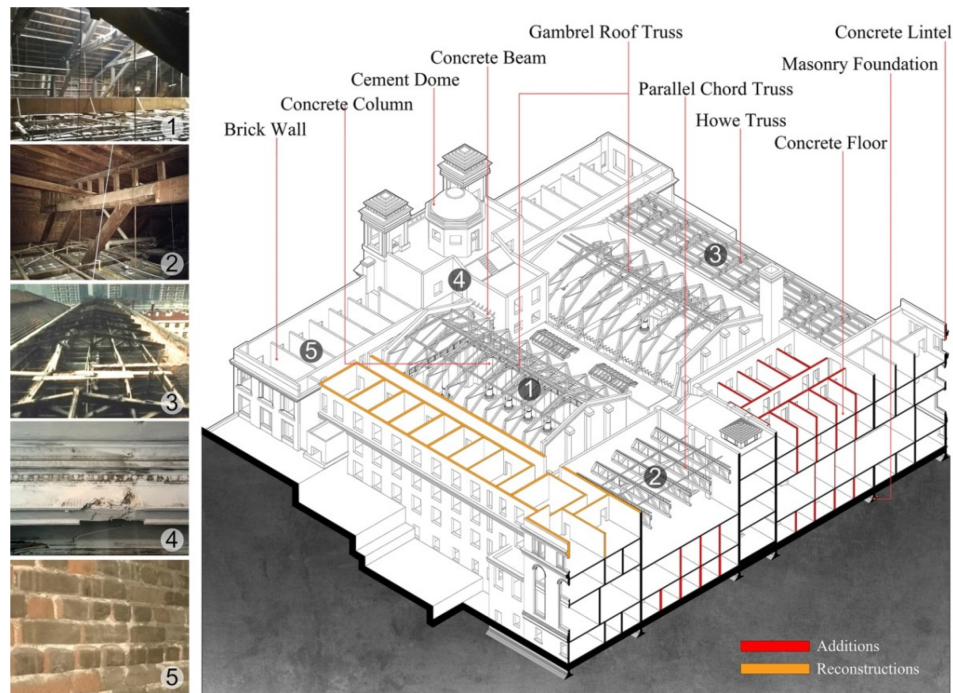


Figure 4. Structure of Qingdao Exchange Building.

The east and west facades by the urban roads essentially preserve the initial style. The symbols of a five-pointed star and No. 22 added on the pediment of the east facade are historical witnesses for military use after 1949. The cornice on the west elevation was reconstructed, which influenced the integrity of the classical order. Despite issues with the surface treatment, such as local damage and spalling of mortar materials and decorations, the main facades are well preserved. However, there is more severe damage in the southern and northern facades. The wall, eaves, decorative moldings, and windowsills are damaged and have partially fallen off to varying degrees, exposing red bricks locally, and a large number of downspouts are seriously damaged and in urgent need of repair (**Figure 5**).

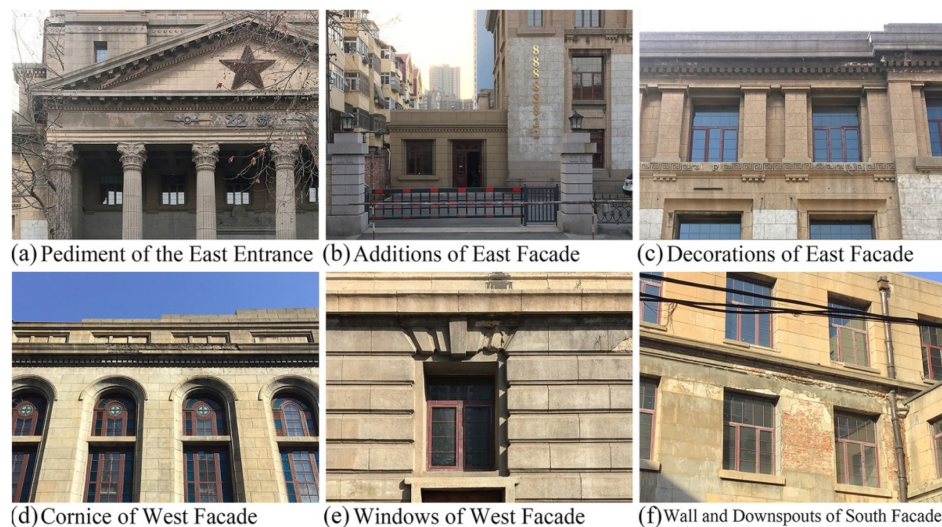


Figure 5. East Facade of Qingdao Exchange Building.

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