



# Integration and reconstruction of regional architecture — the sustainable development of caves in northern Shaanxi

Feng Li<sup>1</sup>, Shuxia<sup>2</sup> Yang and Yu Wen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Architecture, Xi'AN University of Architecture and Technology, China.

<sup>2</sup> School of Humanities, Hebei University of Engineering, China.

E-mail: ysxlf@yahoo.com.cn.

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## Abstract

The development of the economy and the exploitation of resources are intensifying the process of urbanization. The small towns in northern Shaanxi are making rapid progress in developing this urbanized landscape. The local residents' life style, the functional structure pattern of the towns and monomer building form are assimilated by the erosive unitary mode from the outside. Traditional local-style houses which local people depended on for existence for hundreds of years—caves—are being gradually abandoned in the course of urban renewal. This is leading to the fracture of the historical context of urban areas and losing their own unique characteristics and regional cognition.

The content of this paper is based on the investigation of local residents' current living situation and a large number of practical projects. It takes the renewal, protection and development of the regional caves in Zhidan County in northern Shannxi as an example, and applies the theory of integration and reconstruction to analyze the traditional dwellings—caves concerning its historical origin, development, current situation and various existing questions. The paper summarizes the relations between local-style houses, land utilizing, demographic composition, life style, urban environment as well as all kinds of space pattern. Based on ecology and sustainable development theory, the paper probes into the development model of the small towns in northern Shannxi and put forward the corresponding preliminary strategy. It will establish a solid foundation for further research in the field.

**Key words:** *Caves, Integration, Reconstruction, Sustainable development*