

# A Brief Analysis of the Design Research of Forbidden City Architectural Elements in Scarf Patterns

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**Abstract:** As a representative of Chinese culture, the architecture of the Forbidden City is a significant aspect of traditional ancient Chinese architecture. The patterns and shapes found on its buildings possess rich artistic connotations and considerable research value. This paper analyzes the cultural significance and architectural features of the elements within the Forbidden City. It extracts characteristic architectural elements from the Forbidden City and seeks to integrate these elements with modern clothing design. Furthermore, it explores the adaptability of traditional Forbidden City architectural elements when used in silk scarves as a medium. The aim is to promote the dissemination and development of traditional culture while providing innovative design concepts for contemporary fashion.

**Keywords:** Forbidden City; Silk Scarves; Cultural and Creative Design; Architectural Elements

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## Introduction

Emphasizing cultural self-confidence and bolstering cultural soft power, traditional culture is garnering wider societal attention. China boasts diverse and vibrant architectural styles. Beijing's Forbidden City, with its iconic hipped roofs, stands as a majestic symbol of ancient royalty, not only a pinnacle of Chinese architecture but also the world's largest ancient building complex, exemplifying the height of ancient Chinese architectural art. Globally, architecture effectively showcases national cultural charm, embodying artistic and cultural values that transcend other arts, rich in traditional elements and regional identity. Urgently, this rich heritage demands inheritance, protection, and promotion.

## 1. Research background

### 1.1 Cultural Connotation of the Forbidden City Architectural Elements

Currently, people are emphasizing the significance of cultural heritage and its development, which is intricately intertwined with economic activities, driving social advancement. To uphold Chinese culture amidst global cultures, modernizing and advancing our culture is paramount. The Forbidden City, a stunning Ming Dynasty complex, showcases China's cultural riches and the nation's rich history.

### 1.2 Cultural connotation of silk scarf products

As a versatile clothing accessory embodying function, decor, aesthetics, emotion, taste, and fashion leadership, accurately predicting silk scarf trends and capturing popular styles, elements, and patterns are vital to its design<sup>[1]</sup>. By delving into Forbidden City's architectural elements and their integration into silk scarf designs, we can discover unique decorative techniques, breathe new life into these scarves through theory-practice fusion, illuminate ancient Forbidden City elements in modern attire, and foster a living heritage of traditional culture with innovative applications.

## 2. Research status

### 2.1 Status of Application of Architectural Elements of the Forbidden City

The Forbidden City's cultural products captivate the public, yet few are directly integrated into clothing design, especially apparel accessories. Wei Yumeng leveraged Forbidden City colors and digital tech to preserve traditional patterns and innovate national fashion designs<sup>[2]</sup>. Han Yue et al. analyzed the connection between Forbidden City architecture and clothing design, deepening understanding of its elements and revealing their impact on modern fashion design<sup>[3]</sup>.

## **2.2 Status of research on silk scarves**

Silk scarves, a unique apparel accessory, are emerging in the industry but lack dedicated academic literature. As personalization and fashion trend, silk scarves, reflecting individual style, are in high demand. Leading brands and design events invest in scarf innovation, offering unique designs and craftsmanship to cater to diverse consumer preferences.

## **3. Overview of silk scarves**

Silk scarves, fashion accessories, offer aesthetics & functions like wind, sun, & dust protection. Worn draped, tied, or as collars, they're elegant textile choices. Traditional ones are intricate, involving silk extraction. Modern silk scarves showcase material diversity, mainly imitation silk & silk, in various shapes & sizes like long, square, & triangular, catering to diverse occasions & styles.

## **4. Application of Architectural Elements from the Forbidden City in Silk Scarf Design**

Forbidden City's architecture showcases traditional design, offering artistic inspiration and value. Its structure mirrors the organization and relationships of conformational elements, forming a comprehensive formal element<sup>[4]</sup>. This structural pattern governs style and appearance, reflecting unity and prescriptiveness.

### **4.1 Pattern Analysis**

Most of the architectural structures in the Forbidden City are skillfully constructed from wood. To resist erosion and aging, craftsmen meticulously apply colored lacquer to these wooden structures. These colored lacquers are not only colorful, but also painted into far-reaching patterns and motifs. This enhances the visual aesthetics of the building while providing rich cultural significance and decorative appeal. The decorative patterns on these buildings have become a significant source of inspiration for this design scheme. The integration of the unique shapes of hipped buildings enhances the recognizability of the pattern design, aiming to showcase the extraordinary charm of ancient Chinese architecture within the context of inheritance and innovation.

### **4.2 Compositional Analysis**

The architecture of the Forbidden City shows a strong sense of stability and structural aesthetics, characterized by its exquisite symmetrical layout and counter-rotating angular design. This design not only provides the building with a broad range of applicability and architectural inclusiveness but also serves as a source of inspiration for decorating marginal areas that may lack visual stability. By incorporating the unique charm of the Forbidden City's architectural elements, these areas can enhance and adjust people's visual and psychological perceptions. In the realm of silk scarf design, compositional structure also plays a crucial role. This design solution skillfully adopts a compositional structure similar to the architecture of the Forbidden City, aiming to make the picture of the silk scarf present a more harmonious and comfortable visual effect. As consumers appreciate the scarf, they can experience a sense of stability and elegance derived from the ancient architecture.

### **4.3 Color Analysis**

The buildings of the Forbidden City utilize color in a manner deeply rooted in the ancient principles of yin and yang, as well as the five elements. Gold and red serve as symbols of imperial power, emphasizing the emperor's supreme dignity. The main structure of the complex features a roof adorned with yellow glaze, complemented by vermilion walls. This striking combination of gold and red not only creates a vivid contrast but also imparts an extraordinary sense of opulence and grandeur to the entire complex. Furthermore, the interplay of colors is evident in the blue of the sky and the yellow of the glazed tiles, the red and green of the doors and windows, and the painted decorations. The contrasting shades of the white pedestal and the ground further illustrate the intricate art of color coordination. The thoughtful contrast and blending of these colors provide viewers with a stunning visual experience, conveying a powerful emotional expression and reflecting the unique cultural significance and aesthetic philosophies inherent in the colors of traditional Chinese architecture.

#### 4.4 Design Practices

The design of this silk scarf skillfully integrates the essence of the Forbidden City's architecture. Its outer frame is inspired by the flying eaves and ancient doorposts of the Forbidden City, aiming to inherit the culture while exploring the harmonious symbiosis between tradition and modernity. The design adheres to the principle of maintaining the unique character of the Forbidden City while incorporating modern aesthetics, and is skillfully laid out: the doorposts are elegantly positioned on either side of the pattern, while the eaves gracefully arch over the top in a streamlined manner, with intricate arch details cleverly interspersed to add depth and richness. At the bottom of the design, flooring elements are spread out, and the overall composition combines square and round shapes, creating a dynamic, flowing, and introspective visual experience that is both full and soft. This design not only guides the viewer's gaze to naturally focus on the central subject but also demonstrates balance and harmony through its clever symmetrical arrangement.

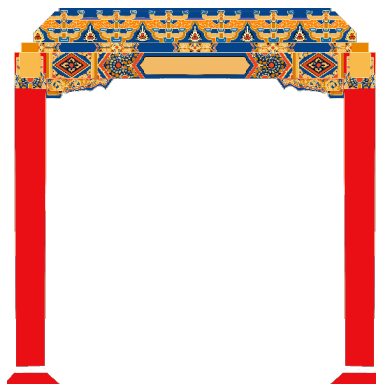


Figure 4-1 Draft Schematic Design

##### 4.4.1 main pattern

The hipped architecture of the Forbidden City is distinctive, and the essence of this design is deeply reflected in its characteristics. The pattern draws inspiration from the magnificent appearance of the Palace's iconic 'Hall of Supreme Harmony.' After careful refinement and re-creation, it not only presents the Palace from multiple perspectives—ranging from distant views to close-ups—but also progresses step by step. The design cleverly employs the technique of 'borrowing shape from shape' to create an immersive experience. This approach not only imparts a strong sense of identity to the artwork but also enhances its visual appeal. Furthermore, the design embodies a rich visual aesthetic rooted in Chinese style while profoundly inheriting the traditional auspicious culture of the Chinese nation. As a result, viewers can appreciate the deep cultural heritage and positive meanings embedded in the work while enjoying its beauty.

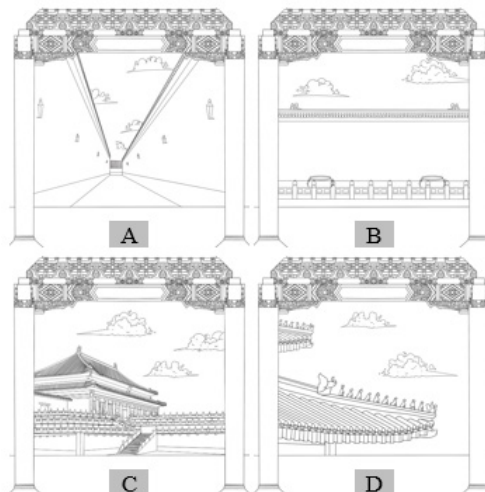


Figure 4-2 Draft main pattern design



Figure 4-3 Finished Product

## 5. Summary

Analyzing Forbidden City elements in modern design, emphasizing silk scarves' market value, exploring their fusion with Forbidden City architecture, revitalizing traditional motifs, blending modern ideas & trends, harmonizes tradition & modern fashion, offering fresh ideas & practical cases for traditional pattern innovation in modern dress design.

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