

## Insights into Chinese Modern Industrial Heritage Value from the Perspective of Britain Related Industrial Heritages in China

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**Keywords:** Industrial Heritage; Heritage Value; Britain Related Industrial Heritages

**Abstract:** Chinese modern industrial remains from 1840 to 1949 have long been regarded as underrepresented on the national heritage list. A number of sites are currently undertaking preparatory work to nominated sites as Industrial World Heritage. A significant issue that has emerged, however, is ensuring that these sites are able to fulfil both the requirements on authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value required by UNESCO. By putting the heritage in the transnational perspective, this paper tries to analyze the British related modern industrial heritage in China and make a case study of modern industrial heritages in Tangshan so as to revision its value, which shows the perspective to understand heritage value should be broadened. On one hand breaking down regional restrictions would allow sites to form networks of industrial heritage, on the other, emphasizing the importance of transnational interchange.

### 1. Introduction

Industrial heritage has been defined as a particular type of World Culture Heritage in many documents from UNESCO World Heritage Committee since 1994. The Global Strategy initiated from 2005 stressed the importance of listing industrial heritage as World Heritage and iconic industrial sites became far more of concern. The world heritage tentative lists submitted by state parties clearly show the changes and an increasing awareness of industrial heritage<sup>[1]</sup>. Among 24 inscriptions on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2015 there was a strong industrial heritage component.

China has a significant presence on the World Heritage List but, until now, only one industrial related heritage site. Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System was listed, as a representation of technical achievement from the 3rd century B.C. Industrial complexes, especially modern industrial remains dating from the period between 1840 to 1949 were long regarded as being obviously underrepresented on the heritage list. The China State Administration of Cultural Heritage delivered the announcement of industrial heritage conservation policy in 2006 and identification of industrial heritage site began during the third national cultural relic survey. In 2013, the State Council proposed 1,943 new National Key Cultural Relics Protection Units as part of the seventh installment and 170 Industrial Heritages were inscribed. At present the total number of industrial heritage sites identified within the National Key Cultural Relics Protection Unit is 329, of which 245 are ancient industrial heritage, and 84 are modern industrial heritage dating from after the Industrial Revolution<sup>[2]</sup>. Modern industrial heritage in China, a visible reminder of the process of modernization, contributes significantly to the identity of regions and countries, and forms an integral part of their history. Some sites in China are dealing with the preparatory work to declare industrial World Heritage. A number of sites in China are currently undertaking preparatory work to nominated sites as Industrial World Heritage. A significant issue that has emerged, however, is ensuring that these sites are able to fulfil both the requirements on authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value required by UNESCO.

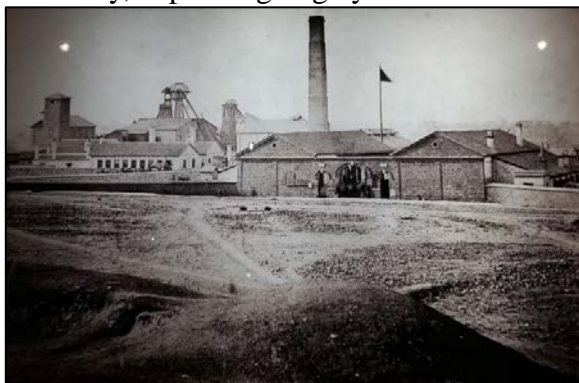
## 2. Industrial Heritage Properties Related with UK

National Key Cultural Heritage status, approved and promoted by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, is the highest level of protection available for unmovable historical relics in China. The administrative departments for cultural heritage select sites with significant historical, artistic or scientific value to be protected, among which national level, provincial level and city (county) level are classified. Until now, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage has identified seven batches of national level cultural heritages (1961, 1982, 1988, 1996, 2001, 2006, and 2013). As the significance of industrial heritage protection has been rapidly recognized in China in recent years, the government has begun to attach great importance to industrial heritage protection. It is noTable that, for the first time, a new category of site, Modern Important Historical Sites and Representative Architecture, has been enlisted in the seventh batch of the National Key Cultural Heritage List (2013), among which a significant proportion of industrial heritage is included<sup>[3]</sup>.

The properties displayed within the Table are mainly from the seventh batch of the National Key Cultural Heritage List, which have a relationship with Britain in terms of product, management, construction, and technique. The properties which were not eventually inscribed on the list but nevertheless share a connection with Britain, , are also included in the Table Additionally the sites with a connection to Britain from the previous sixth batch have also been included (Tab.1).

## 3. Case Study: Tangshan Modern Industrial Heritage

Tangshan is a largely industrial prefecture-level city in northeastern Hebei province, China, which is adjacent to the capital city Beijing and municipality Tianjin. It is renowned as “the cradle of Chinese modern industry” and witnesses the developing process of country’s modern industry and is rich in industrial sites, architecture and living remains. In 1878, the Kailuan Coal Mining Company was set up, the first modern industrial and mining enterprise in China (Fig.1). Tangshan was the site of many of China’s most glorious industrial achievements. These included the first modern mechanized coal mine, the biggest power station, the first railway repair factory, the first cement factory, the biggest coal mine machinery factory in the modern times and so on. Equally, It was also the site of a huge number of industrial innovations with China’s first standard gauge railway, first steam locomotive, first railway station, first steam pump, first coal canal, first coal seaport, first stock certificate along with many other firsts originating from the city. Tangshan and the nearby port city Qinhuangdao, grew from the seed of the Kailuan coal mine to become a true industrial city, expanding hugely and revolutionizing the lives of its inhabitants.



(a) The coal mine in 1880



(b) The coal mine in 2019

Fig.1. The Kaiping Coal Mine

Local heritage sectors identified the significance of industrial heritage mainly from the perspective of its location and the site’s importance in the development of modern Chinese industry. Through analysis of successful nomination documents submitted by international Industrial World Heritage Sites it becomes clear that it is criterion (ii), that has been the justification for most industrial sites claims to OUV. Criterion (ii) demands that a site or landscape exhibit an important

interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design; and therefore it is these elements that are key to Tangshan's significance and must be noted<sup>[4]</sup>. Modern industries in Tangshan bear the undeniable imprint of British influence and disputes between Chinese and British enterprises over control of coal mines in the region should not be regarded as the simple and solitary link between the two nations. As the birthplace of the first Industrial Revolution, British technology, industrial systems, business management skills and its people themselves all directly influenced the modernization of the city. Western style factories, hospitals, schools, clubs, communication networks and houses are all evidence of a far deeper and more lasting connection than simply confrontation. Tangshan is a striking testimonial to the widespread influence of the western industrial system and city development.

Table.1 Britain Related Modern Industrial Heritages in China

NO.	PROPERTY	LISTED	PERIOD	CITY	RELATION
1	Beijing-Zhangjiakou Railway (Nankou Section-Badaling Segment)	Y	Qing Dynasty, the Republic Period	Beijing	technique
2	South Shilong Bridge on Guangzhou-Jiulong Bridge Railway	Y	Late Qing Dynasty	Shilong Town , Dongguan	fund, management
3	Qingxi Iron Works	N	Qing Dynasty	Qiandongnan Prefecture	product, technique
4	Tangshan Coal Mine Earlier industrial relics of Kailuan Mining Administration	Y	Qing Dynasty	Tangshan	management, technique
5	Big Bridge on Luanhe River	Y	Qing Dynasty	Tangshan	management, technique
6	The Qinhuangdao Port Architectural Complexes Built in Modern Times: Qinhuandao Power Plant of Kailuan Mining Administration	Y	The Republic of China	Qinhuangdao	construction, management
7	The Qinhuangdao Port Architectural Complexes Built in Modern Times: Senior Staff Club of Kailuan Mining Administration	Y	The Republic of China	Qinhuangdao	construction, management
8	The Qinhuangdao Port Architectural Complexes Built in Modern Times: Traffic Department of Kailuan Mining Administration	Y	The Republic of China	Qinhuangdao	construction, management
9	The Qinhuangdao Port Architectural Complexes Built in Modern Times: Top Grade No 1 house In Nanshan.	Y	Late Qing Dynasty	Qinhuangdao	construction, management
10	The Qinhuangdao Port Architectural Complexes Built in Modern Times: Senior Port House in Nanshan	Y	Late Qing Dynasty	Qinhuangdao	construction, management
11	The Qinhuangdao Port Architectural Complexes Built in Modern Times: Top Level House for senior staff in Kailuan Ming Administration	Y	Late Qing Dynasty	Qinhuangdao	construction, management
12	The Qinhuangdao Port Architectural Complexes Built in Modern Times: Qinhuangdao Manager Office building.	Y	Late Qing Dynasty	Qinhuangdao	construction, management
13	The Qinhuangdao Port Architectural Complexes Built in Modern Times: site for Tianjin-Yuguan Railway	Y	Late Qing Dynasty	Qinhuangdao	management
14	Site of Puzhen Machine Works	N	Late Qing Dynasty	nanjing	management
15	Pukou Railway Station	Y	Late Qing Dynasty	nanjing	management
16	Blenkin Rawson & Co	N	The Republic of China	nanjing	management
17	Double Gold Sluice	N	The Republic of China	Huaian	design
18	Maoxin Flour Mill	Y	The Republic of China	Wuxi	product
19	Site of Dasheng NO 3 Textile Company in Nantong	N	The Republic of China	Nantong	product, technique

#### **4. Findings and Discussion**

Effectively identifying the values of a site or landscape contributes enormously to our understanding and its significance locally, regionally, nationally and even globally. The analysis of Tangshan has largely focused on the number of national ‘firsts’ that occurred within the city, and the city’s role in facilitating them but with little emphasis on the wider international context. This national focus has been a common issue for many Chinese industrial sites that have sought to understand and communicate their values. Instead of this limited focus we propose a number of themes that could help provide a broader understanding of industrial heritage as a whole.

(1) Both national and trans-national industrial heritage are equally important. Those looking to identify value should expand their perspective and look beyond local or national significant especially to identify transnational influence and interaction. Between 1840 and 1949 China was a semi-colonial and semi-feudal nation which has led to a generally negative perception of this particular period. However, in the context of industrial development, western influence had an undeniable positive effect on China’s development as an industrial nation. Many key elements of industrial heritage in Asia were imported by the colonizers themselves or acquired from countries in the Western World, where factories and industrial facilities were pioneering and avant-garde. The expansion of the Western Industrial Revolution and its transfer of both ideas and machinery to developing Asian nations deserves to be explored.

(2) The identification of value should be increasingly geared towards an understanding of industrial complexes and networks, incorporating aesthetic and scientific values that reflect the history of architecture, construction techniques and equipment, rather than an isolated site. Industrial sites from different cities and regions can cooperate to build up a shared knowledge of the industrial past.

(3) The identification of value should become more people-centered in ways that reflect industry and industrial heritage’s integral role in people’s lives. Equally it is important not to exclude local communities from their heritage and there must be a focus on integrating the community into any decisions around the value of industrial heritage. Workers housing, sources of materials and transportation facilities are all significant parts of an industrial ensemble and must be considered accordingly.

(4) Highlight that industrial development in China is different from its counterparts in the West. In spite of the significant links between China and the West, however, it is important not to lose sight of the distinctiveness of Chinese industrial development. The development of native manufacturing methods and facilities is part of local history and China’s Industrial heritage is closely associated with the life history, memories, and stories of local people and social changes.

#### **5. Conclusion**

If Chinese industrial heritage is to be successfully nominated to the World Heritage List the perspective on heritage values must be broadened. On one hand, break regional restrictions allowing heritage sites to be joined together to form industrial networks. Additionally, significance should be attached to transnational interchange in order to understand Chinese industrial heritage in a global context. Chinese industrial heritage should be valued to illustrate the processes whereby China sought self-reliance by bringing technology, equipment, ideas and management skills from West from the late 19th century onward. This reveals the process of promoting and adapting industrial civilization and expansion to Asia’s most populous country where western technology and management skills interacted with the country’s needs and social traditions, which had on Asia as a whole.

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