

*Telling Their Own Stories - Representing Historical Information in Monuments and  
Historic Buildings in Taiwan*

Tsai-Chuan Chang

Tainan University of Technology, Taiwan

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## **1. Introduction**

Architecture can tell the story of the national, culture and history. It can also illustrate the story of a regime and a society as well as a family and an individual. Consequently, the preservation of the monuments and historical buildings is very important at national, social, cultural, family or an individual levels. In Taiwan, the Cultural Property Act was put into force in 1982. Hundreds of buildings have been listed as either monuments or historical buildings since the law was enacted. Normally, a monument or a historical building will be restored and will either continuously used as its original function or adaptive reused for a new function. In many cases, a space to display the historical information of that particular building is planned and designed. The historical information representation in the exhibition includes the history of the building, the designer (architect), the features of the building and the restored process as well as historical relics and documents of the building. This paper will discuss the design of such historical spaces and their roles as the educational settings.

## **2. Research scope and methodology**

Two similar buildings will be chosen as the study sample. One is former Taipei Prefecture Hall, the other is former Tainan Prefecture Hall. Both buildings were built during Taiwan's Japanese Period (1895-1945) and are now listed as the National Monument. Former Taipei Prefecture Hall is now reused as "Control Yuan", one of the five branches of the Taiwan Government. It is an investigatory agency that monitors the other branches of government. Former Tainan Prefecture Hall is reused as National Museum of Taiwan Literature and Cultural Heritage Research Center. Inside both buildings, there is a space for displaying architectural history. The paper will discuss the contents, methods, atmosphere, effects, educational functions and new/old dialogue of the display at a comparative level so as to build up academic references for buildings.

## **3. Case study of architectural history display spaces**

### **3.1 The History of the former Taipei Prefecture Hall and former Tainan Prefecture Hall**

Taiwan was ceded to Japanese as her first colony. The administration system of the Colonial Taiwan was readjusted several times during the colonization period. In the beginning of the Japanese governance, the administration center of every prefecture was located in the former Qing dynasty buildings. Beginning from the 1910s, the construction of new buildings for prefectural administration started. Taipei Prefecture Hall was completed in 1918 while Tainan Prefecture Hall was dedicated in 1916.

After WW II, former Taipei Prefecture Hall was reused as Control Yuan and remain the same function until now. Former Tainan Prefecture had been reused as The Headquarters of Air Force Supply Commander (1949-1969) and Tainan City Hall (1969-1997). Now, it houses the National Museum of Taiwan Literature and Cultural Heritage Research Center.

### 3.2 The characters of the two buildings

Both former Taipei Prefecture Hall and Tainan Prefecture Hall were designed by the Moriyma Matsunosuke, an architect of the Construction Department, the Office of Governor-General. Besides the personal design characteristics, these two buildings have some similarities which reflect the attitude of the colonial government. When Taiwan was colonialized by the Japanese, Western historical style buildings were introduced to Taiwan as a symbol of modernity and power.

Both former Taipei Prefecture Hall and Tainan Prefecture Hall are located in the center of the city. In front of both buildings are circus with statue of the Governor-General. The site plan of the Taipei Prefecture Hall is in the shape of “L” character while its Tainan counterpart is in the shape of the “V” character. A courtyard is located within both buildings. The main entrance is centrally located with a porch supported by Tuscan order. Taipei Prefecture Hall is crowned with a flat dome while Tainan case is topped by a Mansard Roof and is flanked by twin towers. Inside the lobby of both buildings, there is a grand staircase leading to the upper floor. In Taipei Prefecture Hall, the dome can be seen directly from the lobby since the floor was void. The governmental buildings of the Japanese colonial is very typologically designed and constructed. However, each building has its own characteristics in terms of details and expressions.

	
Former Taipei Prefecture Hall	Former Tainan Prefecture Hall

### 3.3 Display of architectural history

Basically, the display of architectural history can be categorized into two types. The first one is the building itself is treated as the object for display. The second one is to display the contents in a specific room or space. The following discussions will be focused on these two types of display

### 3.3.1 The building as the object for display

To preserve original buildings integrity authentically is the most directly exhibition. Visitors can experience the full scale architecture within the original site and city with the interaction of the environment, time, season. This is the best way to understand the context of the original building and its meanings. The issues needed to be carefully considered include what is the significance of the building, how to preserve the building within the context and how to adapt the new function in an old building.

#### (1)Former Taipei Prefecture Hall

The building was preserved and adaptively reused as the “Control Yuan”. The lobby and the staircase are spaces which the visitors can experience. The lobby is two-story high and the unique dome is directly on the top of the lobby and the staircase is monumental. The best way to experience these two elements and to see their beauty is to walk up and down the staircase and feel the change of the scale and the interplay of light and space.

		
<p>The lobby and the interior of the dome, Former Taipei Prefecture Hall</p>	<p>The staircase, Former Taipei prefecture Hall</p>	<p>Arches, celings are preserved in office sections, Former Taipei Prefecture Hall</p>

#### (2)Former Tainan Prefecture Hall

The front part of the building was preserved with an addition at the back to accommodate new National Museum of Taiwan Literature and Cultural Heritage Research Center. A new Mansard roof was restored in 2003 to replace the roof incorrectly restored during the previous restoration. The space in front of the building can be combined the green areas and the circus to form the venue for various events and festivals happened day and night.

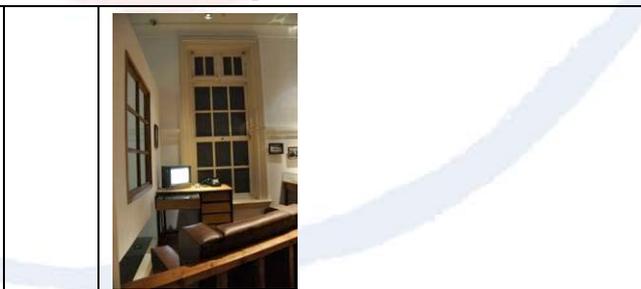
The new addition at the back of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall is now used as cultural space. The beauty of the brick arcade of the original building becomes the background and focus of the activity. The natural light from the gap between the addition and the original structure offers the changes of light/shadow and texture which has enriched the quality of the interior. In some cases, the arches were used as part of the exhibition. Arches can be the frame of the exhibited objects. They can be a dividing element in space. They can also installed or inserted by the glass so as to achieve the transparent and reflective effect to represent the structure of the original

building.

			
<p>The beauty of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall was combined with the outdoor activities</p>		<p>Night illumination of Former Tainan Prefecture Hall and the interplay of moonlight and the building.</p>	

				
<p>The two-story high arcades become part of new space for cultural activity. The interplay of natural light and the building create a new dimension of beauty.</p>		<p>Original arches are used and designed in several ways so as to have new spatial quality at the same time to represent the structure of the original building.</p>		

The original cast-iron water pipes have the effect of divide the façade of the building vertically. They become elements to hang display flags in the new design. The verticality of the original elements is thus preserved. The original window was integrated into the exhibition to form the study room of a writer. Original architectural elements become the scene of the exhibition. The original building is preserved, the unique elements were reinforced and mixed into new spaces.

	
<p>The original cast-iron water pipes were integrated into new design and became elements for hanging flags to express the verticality.</p>	<p>The original window was integrated as part of exhibition design and became part of display scene.</p>

### 3.3.2 Architectural history display room

In addition to treat architecture itself as an object for exhibition, both former Taipei Prefecture Hall and Tainan Prefecture Hall has a special room for telling their own

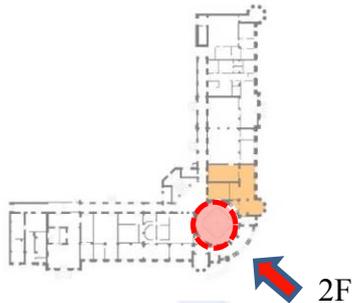
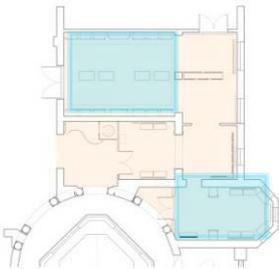
stories. The contents inside this display room include narration, presentation, and analysis of the preservation of building's past and hidden parts as well as intangible historical information. My discussions will be focused on the location, entrance orientation index, display contents and display methods on a comparative basis.

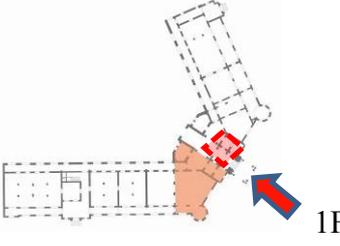
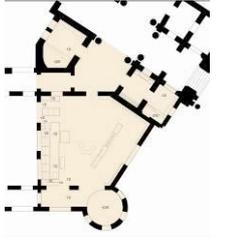
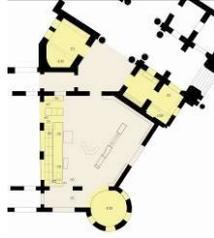
(1) Location of the display room

The location of the display room is determined by the designers who should consider the circulation of the visitors to the whole building. In both cases, the display room is located next to the entrance lobby. In Former Taipei Prefecture Hall, the room is located on the second floor while the room is on the ground floor in Tainan's case. The display room in Former Tainan Prefecture Hall is developed in two stages, with difference in the area. The first stage was to plan a special large exhibition room soon after the building's restoration was completed. After several years' display, "the special exhibition room" was re-designed to become "a permanent display room" and the display area as well as exhibition objects were reduced. The display media is also changed to meet the contemporary needs. However, the location of display room of both stages remains beside the lobby.

In the former Taipei Prefecture Hall, the visitors have to experience the two-story high magnificent lobby and climb up the grand staircase before entering the display room which is situated on the second floor. However, in former Tainan Prefecture Hall, visitors reach the display room immediately when they enter the building. Experiencing the building is planned purposely after visiting the display room.

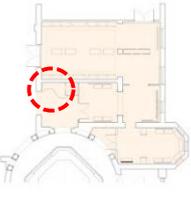
In addition to the architectural history, the information on the development of the Control System in Taiwan's governmental system is also exhibited.

	
<p>Location of display room (orange color) of the former Taipei Prefecture Hall</p>	<p>Location of the architectural history (blue color) in the display room of former Taipei Prefecture Hall.</p>

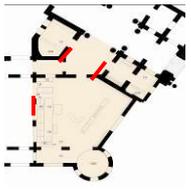
		
<p>Location of the first stage “special exhibition” display room of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall.</p>	<p>Location of the second stage “permanent exhibition” display room of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall.</p>	

(2) Orientation index at the entrance

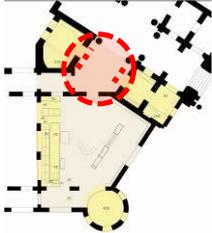
Orientation index at the entrance is very important in display room since it will guide the visitors to see the display and the building. In former Taipei Prefecture Hall, a curved sand glass wall is used as the orientation board with index to each space on the floor plan. The curved sand glass wall invokes the transparent effect and merges into the white wall behind at the same time solves the fragmental problem of the space in front of the display room. It also provides the visitors with a clear direction to the room.

		
<p>Location of curved sand glass wall</p>	<p>Curved sand glass exhibition board and plan index</p>	

In the display room of former Tainan Prefecture Hall, a floor index plan was drawn on the outer wall leading to the exhibition. The area of the display room was clearly marked. Besides, a light box with a heavy metal frame was used for the sign of display room entrance. The lightness and sophistication of the materials are a strong contrast to the original brick structure. Visitors are easily attracted by its visual effect.

			
<p>Orientation index at the stage of the special exhibition of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall</p>	<p>An wall with a floor index shows the area of the display room at the stage of the special exhibition.</p>	<p>The display light box was framed by metal materials at the stage of the special exhibition</p>	

In the second stage of the permanent exhibition, the orientation index at the entrance was replaced by an arch shape door way which reminds people the characters of the original building. The arch is painted black as a contrast to white of the wall in order to emphasize the entrance. The words in projecting light on the floor reinforced the image. The change of the light not only creates spatial atmosphere to attract the visitors but also bridges two rooms of display.

			
<p>Orientation index at the stage of the permanent exhibition of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall</p>	<p>Orientation index at the entrance, arches and projecting words form an integrated solution to the entrance.</p>		

By the contrast of texture, mass, form and color as well as dynamic lighting, orientation index of every space is thus emphasized. However, the relationship between the orientation index and the original building is reflected on the form of the old building. Many installments are detached from the original wall to avoid causing any damage to the original wall.

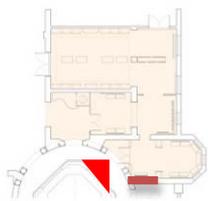
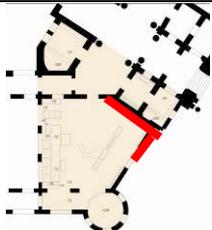
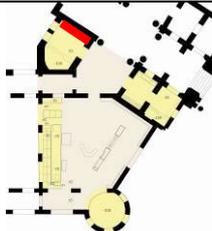
### (3) Display contents

In the display room of both former Taipei Prefecture Hall and Tainan Prefecture Hall, the contents of the exhibition are basically grouped to five categories: 1) history, 2) architect, 3) whole building model with the site, 4) structure and in situ exhibition, 5) architectural elements and building materials, 6) restoration concepts and methods.

#### 1). Architectural history

Generally speaking, architectural history is the first part to tell the visitors the date of the building, the purpose and function of the building and the condition of current

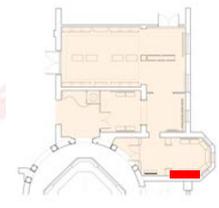
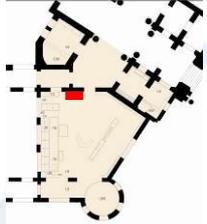
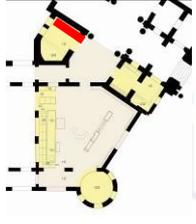
situation. In the former Taipei Prefecture Hall, the history is exhibited by using the panel. Both architectural drawings and narration of the development are printed on the panels. In former Tainan Prefecture Hall, the concept of the architectural history display is “time line”. The use of less words and more photos will make the exhibition easily understandable. The black blocks help to visualize the photos and side light of the light box on the time line help to highlight the effect. The vertical change of the photo blocks switch the direction of light, increasing the diversity of the display and the rhythm of the time line. Considering the limitation of the space, the original display was replaced by animation time line display at the permanent exhibition of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall. Instead of using the whole wall, architectural history display is presented by animated time line display.

Building	Location	Exhibition status
The former Taipei Prefecture Hall		
The “special exhibition” of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall		
The “permanent exhibition” of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall		 

## 2). Architect

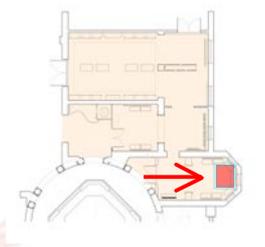
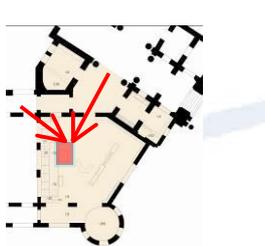
The architect of both former Taipei Prefecture Hall and Tainan Prefecture Hall is Moriyama Matsunosuke who is the most representative official architect during the Taiso Period of the Japanese Colonization in Taiwan. He is the designer of many important governmental buildings, including the office of the governor-general. Special architectural elements and the information on the architect were placed on the same display panel in the former Taipei Prefecture Hall. In former Tainan Prefecture Hall, the same display method similar to that of architectural history was adopted to

the display of architect to form the continuity. Other buildings designed by the same architect are also introduced so that the visitors can have a deeper understanding of the architect. Instead of placing with architecture elements the display of the architect in the permanent exhibition is presented with the architecture history.

Building	Location	Exhibition status	
The former Taipei Prefecture Hall			
The “special exhibition” of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall			
The “permanent exhibition” of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall			

### 3). Whole building model with the site

Whole building model with the site is the most direct way to understand the site plan and formal expression of the building. It is a necessity in the architectural exhibition. Because of the size, it often occupies an important location. In the former Taipei Prefecture Hall, the model is placed at the end of the axis, forming the focus of the display room. In the former Tainan Prefecture Hall, the model is located at the intersection of two axes of the irregular room.

Building	Location	Exhibition status	
The former Taipei Prefecture Hall			
The “special exhibition” of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall			

#### 4). Structure and in situ exhibition

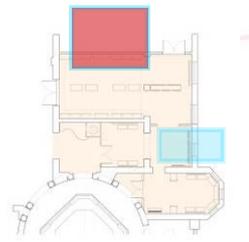
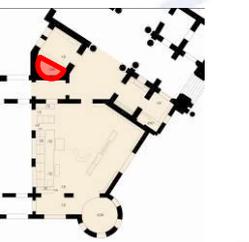
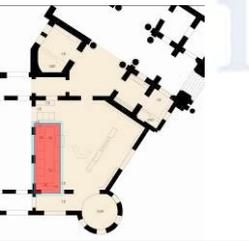
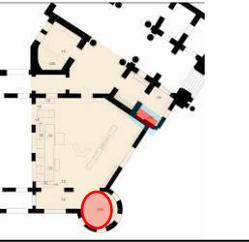
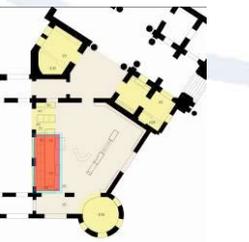
The structure of buildings decides the overall shapes and silhouette of buildings. However, it's like the bone under skin which we can seldom see it. Because the display room of the former Taipei Prefecture Hall is location on the second floor, it creates a chance to remove off a portion of the ceiling for the visitors to see the truss of the Mansard roof. Since the steep slope of the roof is monumental if looks afar, the Mansard roof became commonly used during the Japanese period.

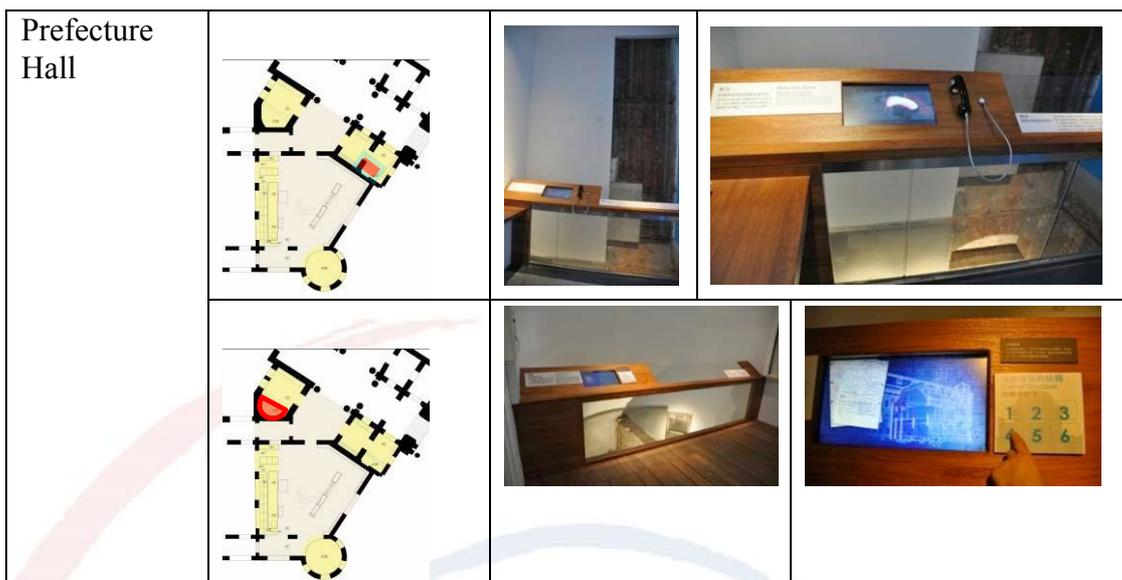
To raise the building above the ground in order to prevent the moisture and pest damage has been a common construction in the West. The Japanese learned the knowledge and applied it to the governmental buildings in Taiwan. The increase in height can also help to achieve the monumentality. In the former Tainan Prefecture Hall, four different parts of the raised foundation, which is 1 meter high, was dug, exposed and exhibited in situ. In the first stage of special exhibition, visitors are allowed to walk down to the excavated portion and see in a very close distance the arches of the foundation and their ventilation function. The concrete paved on the bottom of the foundation as a mechanism for moisture and pest prevention can also be seen in detail.

In the second stage of the permanent exhibition, the excavated parts were covered by the heavy glass and illuminated by light and the room is treated as a darker room suitable for light projection. Two display methods create different atmosphere while retaining the idea that the brick arches and beams of the foundation must be been.

Besides in situ display, the exhibition of the structure was achieved by the help of projection display. In the special exhibition, the process of the restoration was projected on the white wall above the in situ display. In the permanent exhibition,

visual interactive facilities are provided so that the visitors can touch the bottom to select the structure information they want to know. In order not to waste space, diagrams of the Mansard roof truss are presented on a piece of small wall which also has decoration effect.

Building	Location	Exhibition status	
The former Taipei Prefecture Hall			
The “special exhibition” of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall			
			
			
The “permanent exhibition” of the former Tainan			



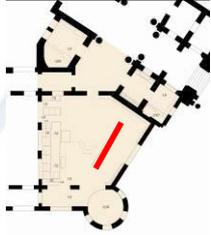
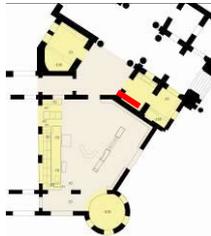
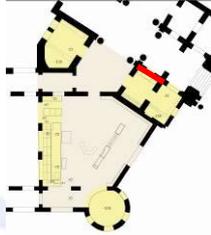
### 5). Architectural elements and building materials

The scale of the architectural elements and building material varies.

They can be as large as a tower or as small as a brick. Where the architectural elements are located is crucial to our understanding of their features. On the display panels of former Taipei Prefecture Hall, the enlarged drawings and photos are arranged around the building with line connecting to respective locations. The details of the original roof tiles, metal objects and ceilings can be seen. The fireplace is preserved in situ.

In the first stage of special exhibition of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall, architectural elements and building materials, including bricks, roof tiles, joints and metal objects, are collected and displayed on a specially designed wall. They are indexed to a façade photo to show where they are located on the building. A model of roof truss is hanged above the display wall to indicate the location in the building. Furthermore, a sash window is mounted on the display wall to reveal the construction and parts of the installment. The window is so designed that visitors can experience the lightness of the window when they lift the window personally.

To preserve the sash window in a very limited space in the second stage permanent exhibition, concise explanation is inscribed directly on the glass of the window. Other small elements and building materials are placed on a transparent shelf that the entrance lobby can be seen and form an integrated part of the display scene. The big scale elements are arranged by an interactive display which will show the information of the elements by allowing the visitors to choose and touch the elements they want to know.

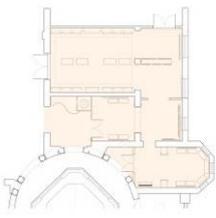
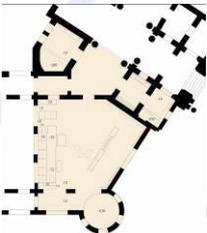
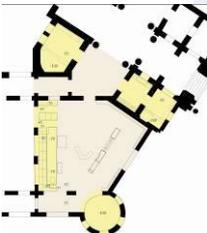
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6). Adaptive reuse concepts and methods

Both former Taipei Prefecture Hall and Tainan Prefecture Hall are preserved as cultural heritage by means of adaptive reuse. The significance of the reuse is shown on the display of processes and strategies. In the former Taipei Prefecture Hall, panels with the reuse process, especially the searching for the original black tiles and reproduction of them become the focus of the story.

In the special exhibition of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall, multi-media images are used to display the motivation and process and restoration focuses. The finishing of a

wall was removed to show the hidden restoration form an in situ display. The reinforced structure enables visitors to understand the importance of the structure. In the permanent exhibition, this part of display is expanded to become a display shelf containing visual and narrative descriptions as well as the films of scholar interview. The interview explores the feature of the building, historical meaning and the significance of the reuse. The display of reuse becomes more educational.

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The “permanent exhibition” of the former Tainan Prefecture Hall			

#### 4. Conclusion

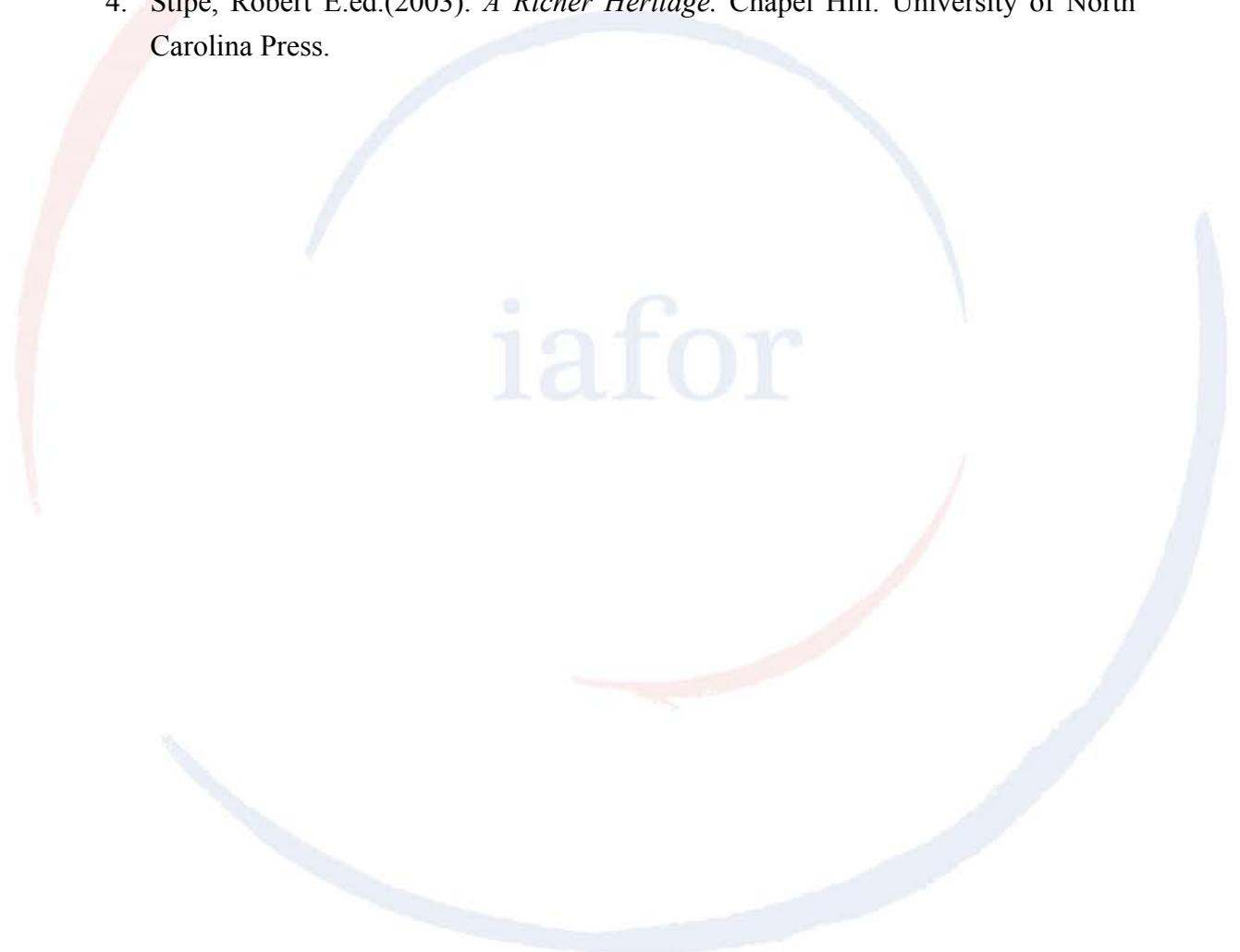
The architectural history of former Taipei Prefecture Hall and Tainan Prefecture Hall is a history of Japanese Colonial Taiwan in miniature, indicating the modernization of Taiwan during that period. The damage of these building during the WWII reflects similar situation of the whole Taiwan. The development of Post-war Taiwan, the respect to the cultural heritage witness the increasing positive attitude toward the reuse of old building.

This research concludes that adaptive reuse is not to passively preserve a structure or a shelter. Successful reuse examples can be enhanced by the establishment of a display room in a cultural heritage. The display room in the former prefecture halls in Taipei and Tainan tells the story of building themselves as well as of a specific period of Taiwan. It is the hope that after hundreds of buildings are listed as cultural heritage according to the Cultural Property Act of Taiwan, more attention should be paid to their reuse and how their stories are told because those stories will become the best

mechanism for historic and cultural education of Taiwan.

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The logo for the International Association of Arts and Humanities (iafor) is centered on the page. It consists of the lowercase letters "iafor" in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is enclosed within a circular graphic composed of two overlapping, thick, curved lines. The upper line is light blue and the lower line is light red, creating a sense of motion or a stylized 'O' shape around the text.

