

Academic Forum on “Innovative Practices and Critical Breakthroughs in Urban Renewal”

WANG Jianguo, ZHOU Jian, TIAN Li, HOU Lei, HUANG Huan, DUAN Degang, HUANG Jingtao, ZHAO Nannan, SHENG Ming, YU Jing, LIN Ying, LAI Wentao, ZHONG Ting, ZHANG Fan, ZHANG Man, CUI Guo, LI Peng, WEI Wen, Lisaia Daria

[Editor's Note] China's urban development has entered an important stage of stock optimization, making urban renewal a new driver and focal point of growth. After decades of rapid growth, do we truly understand the civilizational mission carried by urban renewal? As cities upgrade from physical spaces to carriers of diverse civilizations and shift from economic engines to arenas for a better life, are our planning and governance systems ready for this paradigm shift? Centering on new issues, characteristics, and ideas, this editorial department has invited multiple experts to contribute to this academic forum under the theme of “Innovative Practices and Critical Breakthroughs in Urban Renewal” to reflect on potential path dependencies and logical dilemmas.

CLC Number: TU984 Document Code: A DOI: 10.16361/j.upf.202502001
Article Number: 1000-3363(2025)02-0001-12

I. Conservation vs. Regeneration: Conceptual Debate or Collaborative Consensus?

Academician WANG Jianguo strongly challenges the conventional logic of 'large-scale demolition and reconstruction,' proposing the philosophy of 'collage, stitching, and organic growth.' Professor ZHOU Jian highlights the loss of social value in living heritage caused by 'preserving buildings while displacing residents,' while Senior Engineer YU Jing reflects rationally on the high costs associated with Shanghai's 'retaining both buildings and people' policy. Their insights prompt us to consider: What are we trying to preserve, and what does renewal intend to activate? Faced with historical and practical dilemmas, clearer evaluation metrics are needed. Conservation should not be defined by a single aesthetic or function, nor should renewal be reduced to mere physical restructuring, which risks weakening cultural memory and social cohesion.

II. Institutional Bottlenecks and Practical Breakthroughs: Disentangling Property Rights

Professor TIAN Li directly addresses fragmented property rights and institutional entanglements in self-motivated renewals. Professor HUANG Jingtao proposes technical strategies such as 'down-zoning' and 'simulated expropriation' to break the deadlock. Associate Professor ZHANG Man showcases a pilot project of rebuilding dilapidated structures that solved incomplete property rights, achieving 100% resident agreement and on-site reconstruction. These cases reflect the interplay between top-down institutional design and bottom-up practical operations. Without institutional evolution, how far can technical solutions go? And without institutional safeguards, how sustainable are these practices? Within a legal framework, re-examining the boundaries and functions of planning authority is essential to support innovative practices under complex realities.

III. Divergent Financial Logics: Aligning Public Finance with Market Engagement

Associate Professor LIN Ying establishes a financial analysis framework spanning 'primary land development, secondary real estate development, and tertiary operations' to achieve life-cycle financial balance. Chief Engineer ZHANG Fan advocates for a 'state-owned holding, market participation' model to maintain public oversight while improving private capital accessibility. Researcher ZHAO Nannan points out that community co-building funds create an accumulation mechanism for self-sustained local development. Professor DUAN Degang explores leveraging public finance and releasing collective commercial land into the market to stimulate vitality in urban fringes. Despite differing paths, these explorations address a core question: How can we build resilient financial models and diversified partnerships amid fiscal constraints and market uncertainties to resolve financing bottlenecks?

IV. Cultural Embedding and Memory Continuity: Retaining the Spiritual Dimension

Beyond technical and institutional tracks, the cultural dimension of urban renewal is critical. Planner LAI Wentao suggests integrating cultural capital through 'scenitizing communities' to foster local identity and cultural consumption. Assistant Professor Lisaia Daria stresses the role of micro-spaces like 'pocket parks' in responding to residents' daily cultural practices. Engineer WEI Wen proposes embedding cultural IPs into the integrated 'planning-construction-operation' pathway, emphasizing that space serves as a medium for cultural narratives rather than just a physical site. Collectively, they demonstrate that cultural conservation means preserving living logic and spiritual frameworks rather than merely retaining architectural symbols.

V. Renewal and Co-Governance: Preventing Multi-Stakeholder Participation from Losing Focus

Directors HUANG Huan and HOU Lei reveal that multi-stakeholder governance often turns into prolonged interest conflicts, facing institutional blocks and execution barriers. Chief Planner SHENG Ming emphasizes that collaboration among governments, enterprises, and villages requires dual institutional and technical design to align collaborative governance, spatial production, and spatial justice. Planner CUI Guo introduces a 'neighborhood master manager' mechanism in small-town renewals to build a governance framework based on embedded responsibility and mutual trust. Senior Engineer ZHONG Ting explores an autonomous process characterized by 'independent will, implementation, and financing' in dilapidated housing reconstruction. Planner LI Peng proposes a synchronized mechanism across renewal motivation, planning, approval, and implementation for integrated station-city renewals. These views show that collaborative governance requires institutional structures of shared responsibilities, benefits, and embedded rules rather than simple procedural steps.

The dialogue and convergence of these expert perspectives mirror the multiple tensions and complex logics behind urban renewal. Future urban renewal is not only a key task for development in the stock era, but also a profound test of civilizational continuity, social consensus, and spatial justice. With the courage to restructure and the wisdom to converse, planners, managers, and researchers can find balance among diverse interests and co-shape a better urban future amid uncertainty.

Understanding the Significance and Key Implementation of Urban Renewal in China from a Theoretical Perspective

WANG Jianguo

(Academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, Professor at the School of Architecture of Southeast University, Vice President of the Urban Planning Society of China)

1. The Theoretical Connotation of Urban Renewal

Scholars globally hold mixed views on the narrow definition of urban renewal. In Western contexts, 'urban renewal' historically referred to the large-scale 'demolition and reconstruction' of the 1950s, epitomized by practices in the United States. Such massive redevelopments ignored historical urban fabrics and property fabrics, disrupting or even uprooting the chronological layers of 'collage, stitching, and organic growth' that normally define urban history. Consequently, in academic discourse, a broader interpretation comprising conservation, rehabilitation, and regeneration is preferred. Personally, I prefer 'urban regeneration' or 'urban revitalization' to express this broader scope, whereas the narrow 'urban renewal' could be more accurately translated into Chinese as urban reconstruction or redevelopment.

Urban renewal is an objective, continuous phenomenon across urban history. In the 1980s, I studied the translated Soviet text *Reconstruction of Large Cities*. Renewal and decay, incremental and abrupt shifts, preservation and elimination, order and disorder always appear in pairs within the metabolism of a city. As an urban organism grows, its functions mature, structures stabilize, and communities become integrated. However, cities also suffer from ailments, hazards, and performance degradation that hinder metabolism, occasionally forming hyper-stable systems that lack dynamism and fail to capture contemporary opportunities. This creates a need for continuous, acupuncture-like urban renewal.

Fundamentally, urban renewal is a positive intervention aimed at enhancing performance, reviving vitality, and creating community spaces during regular urban operations. In most cases, it is about 'building cities within cities,' requiring comprehensive strategies that combine 'preservation, modification, activation, utilization, and development.'

2. The Scope and Implementation Actions of Urban Renewal in China

Urban renewal in China primarily addresses the structural transition of urbanization—moving from incremental city expansion to stock-dominated quality improvement. It prioritizes delivering high-quality development that enhances residents' sense of fulfillment through 'excellent homes, quality neighborhoods, fine communities, and vibrant districts.'

The 20th National Congress of the CPC officially incorporated 'implementing urban renewal actions' into its report. On January 3, 2025, the Executive Meeting of the State Council emphasized that urban renewal is vital for improving urban landscapes and living quality, acting as a crucial driver for expanding domestic demand. The 'urban repair' component of the 'Urban Repair and Ecological Restoration' initiative previously championed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development also shares common ground with urban renewal. Today, Chinese urban renewal carries a broader connotation, embodying the national vision of building 'livable, resilient, and smart cities.' From a practical standpoint, it addresses three widespread challenges: 1) environmental disorder, loss of community vitality, and

subpar infrastructure in old neighborhoods; 2) physical aging, structural degradation, and diminished disaster mitigation capacities of long-standing built environments; 3) balancing the preservation, creative transformation, and innovative development of history and culture.

Most Chinese cities possess long histories. Urban renewal involves intricate neighborhoods, fragmented plots, operational management, and multiple stakeholders. The national policy shift prioritizing 'preservation, modification, and demolition' over the previous 'demolition, modification, and preservation' embeds a deeper commitment to cultural heritage. However, we must acknowledge that historic districts often face illegal structures, dilapidated safety conditions, concentrated low-income or aging populations, fire hazards, and severe shortages of infrastructure and public space. Recognizing that sustainable, long-term operations require moderate expansions or additions, a consensus has emerged among scholars that adaptive 'filling, supplementing, or stitching' is indispensable. Crucially, while maintaining basic urban structures, historical fabrics, and characteristic textures, contemporary design, digital integration, and low-carbon updates are equally essential. Creative interventions can reshape declining spaces into premium micro-habitats, demonstrating the value of historical conservation and injecting 'new vitality into old cities.'

We must implement 'preservation, modification, activation, utilization, and development' simultaneously to ensure that compassionate, effective urban renewal actions drive sustainable development. My team has explored these practices in projects like the Guangzhou Historic Quarter, Yixing Shushan Gunan Street, Suzhou Valve Historical and Cultural District, and Yangzhou Xiaoqinhuai River District.

In conclusion, successful urban renewal requires institutional frameworks that are problem-oriented and goal-oriented, prioritizing public welfare, spatial quality, defined boundaries, open processes, and operational implementation. It is not just an efficiency upgrade pursuing truth, goodness, beauty, and vitality, but an incremental, continuous journey of optimizing, adapting, and evolving the urban fabric.

Three Social Issues Requiring Attention Concerning Urban Heritage in Urban Renewal

ZHOU Jian

(National Engineering Survey and Design Master, Professor at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning of Tongji University, Executive Director of the Urban Planning Society of China)

1. Managing the Dynamic Evolution and Social Value of Living Heritage

Living urban heritage represents the largest and most dynamic segment of urban heritage. These are sites that remain in active use and undergo continuous change, serving as integral components of urban functionality. Concurrently, they represent the most challenged heritage type in urban renewal. In urban conservation and renewal practices, the social value of living heritage is frequently overlooked. Practices such as 'retaining structures while displacing inhabitants,' total demolition followed by replicas, or relocating historic buildings remain widespread due to various factors. How should we protect and pass down this living heritage? I offer three key perspectives.

First, urban heritage is inherently dynamic, and its social value accumulates over time. The significance of the urban heritage we observe today is formed through layers of history deposited during economic development and social transformation. Therefore, neither tangible spaces nor intangible content should remain completely static. We need to establish concepts, methods, and systems centered on 'managing spatial change' within a dynamic, evolving environment. The social nature of urban heritage is the foundational condition for its vitality and value, while physical spaces serve as the carriers. Only by identifying the connections between social values and physical spaces can we achieve a consensus on conservation theory, which can guide practical work—specifically answering what cannot change, what can change, and how it should change based on local conditions.

2. Implementing Self-Motivated Renewal for Residential Living Heritage

Second, residential living urban heritage faces the most complex challenges. If residents are entirely displaced, the domestic attributes and social values of the heritage are lost; if all residents remain, achieving comprehensive improvements in spatial and living quality becomes exceptionally difficult. Granted, as urban structures evolve, not every residential heritage district must retain its original residential functions. However, for those neighborhoods that align with the city's overall functional layout and continue to serve as organic parts of the urban structure, we should promote a 'self-motivated renewal' model through innovations in delivery modes, mechanism designs, and supporting policies.

Different urban development models and policy mechanisms shape distinct spatial structures and landscapes. Residential living heritage is the cumulative result of co-creation by property owners and residents. The rationale for adopting a 'self-motivated renewal' model rests on two pillars: the decentralized construction modes initiated by original owners (especially in traditional residential quarters) and the continuous modifications and value additions made by residents and merchants over time. Therefore, the most logical path to preserve living heritage is to extend its original incremental building patterns during renewal, ensuring that spatial layouts are maintained to the highest degree.

Furthermore, self-motivated renewal retains existing residents and merchants, allowing them to continue empowering the neighborhood and infusing new meanings into established social fabrics.

3. Preserving Collective Memory and the Urban Memory Network

Third, 'urban memory' is inextricably linked with urban heritage. Urban memory is a unique form of collective memory with a strong public orientation, representing the concentrated manifestation of social value within urban heritage. It stems from different social groups' perceptions of specific events and locales, acting as an imaginative reinterpretation of historical information. Preserving urban memory is vital for national and ethnic identity, heritage conservation, cultural continuity, sustainable development, creative innovation, social cohesion, and civic pride. Special attention must be paid to everyday urban memories and the collective memories of diverse communities along with their spatial carriers, as they directly influence social mores, community belonging, and civic pride.

Urban memory is the product of interaction between people and the city, possessing spatial attributes objectively and social attributes subjectively. It fades and disappears as physical carriers vanish. Memory represents an accumulation that breeds innovation. In urban renewal, we must carefully protect surviving physical carriers of memory, even if they are not yet officially listed as protected heritage. By preserving these spatial anchors, we can construct an urban memory network system that keeps the city's history alive.

Planning Empowerment for Self-Motivated Renewal: A Path to Resolving Property Rights Dilemmas

TIAN Li

(Professor in the Department of Urban Planning, School of Architecture, Tsinghua University)

1. Institutional Hurdles in Contemporary Self-Motivated Renewal

Recently, amid real estate market adjustments and local government fiscal constraints, traditional development-oriented demolition-and-reconstruction models and government-financed old neighborhood renovations have encountered severe challenges. Cities like Beijing, Hangzhou, and Guangzhou have begun exploring social-force-led renewal models where residents actively participate in on-site demolition and reconstruction, offering fresh perspectives to resolve urban renewal deadlocks.

Self-motivated renewal emphasizes collaborative participation among governments, market entities, rights holders, and the general public. However, current planning and management systems fall short in three major areas: 1) The floor area ratio (FAR) dilemma: The lack of clear regulations on allowed FAR increases for aging neighborhoods results in highly restricted additional floor space, dampening residents' motivation to participate. 2) Regulatory and technical barriers: Existing planning, construction, and fire safety standards increase modification difficulties; older neighborhoods built under obsolete codes struggle to meet modern requirements for sunlight access and fire spacing. 3) Challenges in block-level renewal: Most current pilots focus on isolated buildings, making it difficult to expand public spaces or add community amenities. Comprehensive block-level renewal requires resolving land ownership consolidation ('Gui Zong'), which is extremely difficult under self-motivated models. The Zhegong Xincun project stands as a rare exception due to its highly homogenous underlying land ownership. These pain points increase approval times and costs, presenting major obstacles to implementation.

2. The Triple Empowerment Framework: Rights, Management, and Capability

To address these dilemmas, empowerment theory suggests granting residents decision-making power and resource control through institutional design to stimulate their initiative. This requires a triple empowerment framework: 1) Rights empowerment: establishing the legal status of property owners in renewal decisions; 2) Management empowerment: providing flexible policy and technical support; 3) Capability empowerment: enhancing negotiation capabilities through community self-governance organizations.

For rights empowerment, local governments can draw on Guangdong's 'Three Olds' renewal experiences. Rules should clarify the legal standing of property owners' assemblies and committees as decision-making bodies. A registry system for self-motivated renewal could allow projects to launch once a substantial majority of owners consent. Furthermore, designing a competitive mechanism for self-motivated renewal is vital to break collective action deadlocks. Under planning guidance, the government evaluates which communities qualify for self-motivated modification. Residents then negotiate internally to reach a consensus on reconstruction areas and cost-sharing before applying to launch the project. This 'pre-negotiation' model lowers transaction and negotiation costs, while competitive dynamics accelerate projects and create demonstration effects.

For management empowerment, the general principle is to strengthen planning flexibility and reduce rigidity. Regarding FAR, local governments should specify acceptable ranges for floor space increases and clear guidelines for land premium payments on additional areas, correcting owner expectations. Regarding codes, ministries should authorize local authorities to draft flexible technical guidelines that relax sunlight and fire safety requirements for self-motivated renewals based on site realities. For instance, Xiamen adopted a planning principle of 'treating current site conditions as the baseline,' balancing safety and renewal through engineering measures. To address block-level land consolidation challenges, central ministries should issue optimized land consolidation guidelines to give local governments clear operational frameworks. Local authorities should innovate in regulatory plan compilation and approval, relaxing rigid controls on FAR and building intervals while accelerating local updates to provide legal backing.

For capability empowerment, sub-district offices and community committees can intervene to coordinate and establish self-governance and co-governance mechanisms. A combined 'commercial and public' model can introduce a co-ownership proxy mechanism. Social organizations or market enterprises can serve as proxies to unlock the commercial value of community assets. To incentivize private enterprises, they can be granted clear property rights incentives or priority usage rights for designated public spaces within the neighborhood.

In summary, urban self-motivated renewal relies on a synchronized empowerment of 'rights, resources, and capabilities' via property rights and institutional reforms. Future efforts must focus on legislative guarantees (renewal ordinances, technical guides) and management systems innovations to achieve the dual goals of spatial quality improvement and sustainable development.

Government-Led, SOE-Managed Whole-Process District Renewal: The Case of Xiamen Hubin District

HOU Lei

(President of Xiamen Urban Planning & Design Institute Co., Ltd., Professor-Level Senior Engineer)

1. Project Background and Key Characteristics

The Hubin 1st to 4th Neighborhoods in Xiamen, built between the 1980s and early 1990s, comprised multi-story residential blocks constructed on reclaimed land. Many structures utilized precast concrete slabs, and some incorporated sea sand. By the 21st century, issues emerged including uneven structural settlement, substandard seismic resistance, and severe shortages of parking and public amenities. In 2020, the municipal government opted for a comprehensive demolition-and-reconstruction model with full original resident resettlement, managed entirely by the state-owned enterprise (SOE) C&D Real Estate Group. The project covered approximately 30 hectares, with a total gross floor area of 400,000 m², comprising 4,898 apartments, 130 retail shops, and about 20,000 residents. Without increasing government fiscal investment, the project was successfully completed within the contractually mandated four-and-a-half years, displaying several distinct characteristics:

First, respecting resident preferences to maintain social stability through maximum re-settlement. Rigorous social surveys and policy publicity were executed early on, alongside detailed archiving and mapping of the existing 323,000 m² of residential space. Resettlement options included monetary compensation, property exchange, ready-house allocation, and transitional subsidies. Due to the area's premium location and excellent schooling options, the vast majority of residents chose local resettlement, resulting in 469,000 m² of re-allocated residential space. The master plan aligned closely with the compensation scheme, reserving the prime lakefront land for resettlement housing. Residential designs integrated extensive resident feedback, offering 17 area ranges with 3 distinct floor plans each to accommodate diverse needs, alongside modular, flexible options for changing family dynamics.

Second, upgrading public infrastructure and urban capacity while maintaining neighborhood fabric and commercial vitality. Through the renewal, public facilities including administrative services, cultural centers, community services, and parks expanded from 50,000 m² to 150,000 m². The project added 2,000 school seats and 7,754 parking spaces, extending services beyond the immediate neighborhood. Integrated underground development introduced a subterranean school pickup system, relieving school-zone traffic congestion. Reflecting 40 years of local history, the fine-grained street network had fostered a vibrant street life and commercial atmosphere. The master plan preserved this spatial layout, locally resettling 25,000 m² of streetfront retail to retain the neighborhood's daily life energy. Surplus resettlement housing (19,000 m²) was converted into affordable housing for talent.

2. Policy Integration, Capital Balance, and Operational Efficiency

Third, advancing policy integration while strictly controlling compensation standards. Backed by rigorous SOE financial oversight, the project strictly enforced government compensation and resettlement rules, preventing excessive payouts driven by purely market-based negotiations and avoiding hyper-dense FAR outcomes. Legal structures applied early for compensation, while unapproved extensions entered enforcement tracks. In practice, implementation rules were innovatively tailored: a 'deliberation before

expropriation' model was deployed, where pre-signing launched only after a 90% favorable consensus in opinion surveys, and official announcements followed a 90% pre-signing rate. Breaking the convention of adding a flat 15 m² per unit regardless of size, the project offered residents a choice between an extra 15 m² or a 20% area increase per apartment. Residents could also purchase an additional area tier (approx. 7 m²) at preferential rates, addressing space shortages. Furthermore, backed by headquarters guarantees, the project coordinated with fiscal and banking sectors to use compensation agreements as collateral, resolving mortgage transition challenges for residents during the interim period.

Fourth, controlling development intensity based on localized financial balance. Located in central Xiamen by the lake, the project consolidated multiple plots to shape an optimized layout with dense clusters alternating with wide open spaces, creating multiple lake-view urban corridors. Detailed site mapping enabled fine adjustments to boundaries, bypassing isolated holdout buildings to reduce implementation friction. Refined financial calculations indicated a total investment of 9.5 billion RMB, balanced by 7.4 billion RMB in land premiums and 2.6 billion RMB in parking space sales, achieving fully localized funding balance. To manage density, newly built commercial housing totaled 172,000 m²—only 21% of the total plot ratio GFA. The post-renewal above-ground GFA reached approximately 810,000 m², roughly double the original volume.

Fifth, driving cost reductions and efficiency gains through SOE whole-process management under government oversight. A dedicated headquarters led by a municipal party standing committee member handled policy setting, design approvals, departmental coordination, and rapid decision-making. Simultaneously, a single SOE managed planning, expropriation, construction, merchant recruitment, and property management, shifting coordination from a multi-party setup to a streamlined entity. This unified management facilitated consolidated accounting and allowed overlapping workflows. For instance, geological surveys, detailed design, engineering bidding, and project filings ran concurrently with expropriation negotiations, enabling immediate construction post-demolition. Municipal infrastructure design and bidding were accelerated to ensure synchronized delivery with residential buildings, while commercial kitchen exhaust ducts were pre-installed during the structural phase to accommodate future F&B operations.

The Hubin renewal demonstrates that successful practices require leveraging government guidance in planning and policy while harnessing SOE capabilities in whole-process delivery. Creative breakthroughs emerge from workflow engineering and policy innovation, though the underlying coordination mechanisms warrant further academic study.

“WISCO Cloud Valley 606”: Industrial Renewal Under a Multi-Stakeholder Co-Governance Model

HUANG Huan

(President of Wuhan Urban Planning & Design Institute)

1. Context and the Evolution of Industrial Renewal

Industrial renewal is a core focus in urban and regional development. As a traditional industrial base in China, Wuhan's industrial renewal has evolved through several stages: on-site factory retrofits, central-district de-industrialization ('relocating the secondary sector to grow the tertiary sector'), industrial heritage conservation, and the transformation of old industrial zones into technology and smart parks. Correspondingly, delivery models have shifted from singular government-led or market-led approaches toward a 'multi-stakeholder co-governance' framework.

The 'WISCO Cloud Valley 606' Industrial Park illustrates this shift toward smart park transformation. Established in 1954 and spanning 606 mu, the facility halted operations in 2016 amid industrial restructuring and capacity reductions. In 2022, Phase I (100 mu) commenced under the philosophy of 'conserving original features, spatial stitching, and functional completion,' integrating artistic retrofits and infrastructure building. Today, Phase I is fully operational, serving as a landmark for industrial transformation and cultural dissemination in Wuhan. The project consistently implemented co-governance principles from planning through to operations.

2. Core Co-Governance Mechanisms in Cloud Valley 606

First, executing integrated spatial planning through multi-party collaboration to align overall and localized systems. The project formulated a master concept covering the park and its surroundings (1.56 km²) to blend the park with broader urban functions. Internal plots feature flexible designs with open interfaces for external infrastructure. At the project level, a 'demand-driven supply' model combined forces with operating enterprises to formulate customized designs. Using urban design as a foundational blueprint, the project integrated specialized plans for industry, transport, municipal utilities, public services, and open landscapes, blending commercial energy with artistic character.

Second, aligning the accounts of government, enterprise, and land reserves to achieve financial balance. The district government managed investment promotion, internal infrastructure, and surrounding environmental upgrades, offering early tax concessions to reduce corporate financial burdens and capturing long-term tax revenues. Wuhan Iron and Steel Co. (WISCO) handled factory renovations and immediate environmental maintenance within its property boundaries, drawing revenues from operations and rentals. The land reserve agency managed surrounding land acquisition and primary infrastructure development, capturing gains from primary land markets. Managing these three separate financial records effectively mitigated short-, mid-, and long-term financial risks. Functionally, a clustered layout bundled high-yield and low-yield projects, adopting a phased implementation strategy to avoid the financial strain of large-scale, simultaneous development.

Third, responding to diverse stakeholder demands across the entire life cycle to maximize spatial and social value. During planning, the team interviewed former factory workers to trace historical narratives,

aligned with government departments to integrate major municipal construction plans, mapped industrial value chains to target enterprises, and conducted preliminary interviews with over 140 firms. Industry experts, sub-district representatives, and community members contributed ideas.

Architecturally, elastic layouts accommodated different corporate growth stages. During construction, a 'simultaneous building and leasing' model offered operators and tenants services from basic fit-outs to turnkey options, reserving adaptable spaces for leasing flexibility. In operations, the park joined WISCO's red education network, collaborating with nearby universities for study tours and salons, and hosting major urban events and exhibitions to enhance its social value.

The WISCO Cloud Valley 606 project demonstrates an industrial renewal paradigm characterized by enterprise self-motivated execution, strong government support, and broad social participation under a co-governance framework.

A Community Renewal Paradigm for Rural Revitalization in Urban Fringes

DUAN Degang

(Professor at the School of Architecture, Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology)

1. Re-Defining the Substance of Rural Construction in Urban Fringes

Urban fringes are experiencing a value restructuring, shifting from mere 'land reserves' to 'functional enclaves.' Historically treated as transitional zones for urban expansion driven by real estate models, their role must transform due to the end of the incremental expansion era and the progress of de-agriculturalization policies (such as rural-to-urban administrative reclassifications). Rural construction in urban fringes is not about reshaping physical spaces, but re-defining functional value: 1) Governance priority: leveraging existing space to control fiscal spending while optimizing industrial patterns and public services; 2) Value sharing: replacing functions in stock spaces to unlock new values, using benefit-distribution mechanisms to secure community sustainability; 3) Urban-rural synergy: treating fringe villages as extensions of urban functions to relieve metropolitan pressures and achieve genuine two-way integration.

2. The Transformation of Baolong Village: From Ordinary Settlement to Urban Organism

Baolong Village, an ordinary settlement on the fringe of the Xi'an metropolitan area, faced development lags, vacant spaces, and deficient infrastructure under the dual pressures of Qinling ecological protection and rural transition. In 2019, it entered Changan District's 'Garden Rural' pilot program to explore development pathways under strict ecological mandates.

In line with Qinling protection policies, the master plan designated a development positioning summarized as 'telling stories inside the mountains, experiencing life outside.' Inside the valley mouth, regulations ensured unchanged conservation status, sustained ecological functions, zero additions to construction land, and restricted industrial boundaries, leveraging natural landscapes to attract hikers and sightseers. Outside the valley mouth, efforts focused on infrastructure upgrades, environmental enhancements, and the adaptive reuse of vacant assets, crafting premium spaces that contrast with neighboring villages. An influx of market capital was guided by the entry of the state-owned 'Shanshui Cultural Tourism' enterprise, generating a brand effect known as the 'Xi'an Southern Suburbs Boutique Homestay Cluster.' Once enterprises settled, a governance alliance spanning universities, local authorities, villages, and enterprises was launched. The operational focus shifted from spatial construction to social governance, balancing relations among villages and businesses to ensure harmonious co-existence among indigenous residents, new settlers, and visitors.

Financially, the government initially allocated nearly 30 million RMB to improve village infrastructure and public services, creating a high-quality modern rural environment. During operations, the state SOE invested 1600 million RMB to launch leisure cultural tourism industries, reinforcing market confidence. Subsequently, diverse private capital entered, with cumulative investments exceeding 8000 million RMB to date, significantly appreciating the assets generated by initial public expenditures.

3. Spatial Reproduction, Social Restructuring, and Policy Implications

Through collaboration among government, market, and village collectives, Baolong Village achieved industrial development and a successful social transition. Reusing vacant spaces to capture urban leisure demands attracted operators and tourists, boosting space utilization efficiency. Dual-resident populations among indigenous inhabitants gained confidence to remain, accelerating the village's transition into a premium peri-urban residential quarter. Indigenous residents unable or unwilling to migrate to cities transformed into homestay operators (accounting for 40% of local operators), found employment within the homestay supply chain, or secured new livelihoods by supplying agricultural products to businesses and tourists.

Urban fringe villages can adopt low-cost renewal tracks: combining vacant asset reuse with integrated policies can break dependencies on land finance, while co-building, co-governing, and sharing mechanisms protect original resident rights and avoid gentrification traps. The policy value of this model lies in offering a replicable urban-rural integration solution: positioning fringe villages as 'urban functional enclaves' to host non-core functions like housing and recreation; leveraging market vitality via fiscal capital and land tenure innovations (such as bringing collective commercial land into the market); and building collaborative frameworks based on 'government guidance, market operations, and community participation.'

Spatial Expression of the Innovated “Jinjiang Experience”: Self-Motivated Renewal of Yangguangli Old Neighborhood

HUANG Jingtao

(Professor at the School of Architecture, Tianjin University)

1. Project Background and Institutional Breakthroughs

The 'Yangguangli' project in Qingyang Subdistrict, Jinjiang City, represents the first resident-funded demolition-and-reconstruction self-motivated renewal project in Fujian Province, ranking among the top five nationwide. Through renewal, a disadvantaged neighborhood lacking property titles, amenities, and school zoning transformed into a premium community with clear property rights, convenient facilities, and quality education. Operating under a framework of 'government guidance, resident financing, market development, and self-sustained balance,' the project finalized agreements in July 2023 and is currently under construction.

Built in 1993 as a unified development by the village committee, Yangguangli secured land certificates in 2004 to transition from collective to state-owned land. Currently, 25% of owners are public servants. The buildings possessed land certificates but lacked individual property titles. Spanning 2.2 hectares with 284 apartments and 229 shops, over 90% of properties were rented out, causing severe separation between residents and owners. Restricted by military airport height limits, options for expanding floor areas were extremely narrow, making financial balance unachievable through traditional government expropriation or market development. Consequently, Jinjiang executed an innovative practice:

First, precision targeting: using property title regularizations to stimulate resident willingness. To resolve the incomplete title issue, a model of 'land re-expropriation, allocation, and title re-issuance' was deployed, restarting a 70-year property right term post-renewal. The government guided relocation negotiations and stored the land before issuing a conditional lease via public bidding to confirm developers and supervise construction. Owners repurchased units as designated, fixed-price commercial housing, securing complete property titles with a 70-year term, unrestricted trading rights, and premier school zoning.

Residential allocations matched 80% of original areas, first-floor retail matched 100%, and second-floor retail matched 50%. During construction, transition subsidies were provided to owners, while teams helped tenants locate alternative housing and secure rent discounts. Qingyang Subdistrict pioneered a 'simulated expropriation' model, signing conditional compensation and resettlement agreements with owners to evaluate feasibility. The project launched automatically once the signing rate crossed 90%; otherwise, it was terminated.

2. Smart Renewal, Financial Balance, and Lifestyle Upgrades

Second, smart renewal through down-zoning modifications. Rather than inflating floor area ratios to achieve financial balance, the project met allocation needs while reducing large units, increasing small units, and adding saleable inventory to balance costs. The site's original FAR of 2.7 decreased to 2.65 post-renewal, yielding over 10,000 m² of surplus saleable area. To address the challenge of old neighborhoods failing to meet modern technical standards, regulatory departments collaborated to

evaluate indicators, moderately relaxing requirements for building setbacks, FAR, and green space ratios relative to current codes.

Third, precise financial calculation to achieve localized asset balance. Based on the principle of 'beneficiaries pay,' residents served as the primary funding source, with zero financial input from the government. Calculations indicated a total life-cycle expenditure of 264 million RMB and a total income of 266 million RMB, achieving self-balance within the plot. Expenditures included developer buybacks for housing, shops, and parking, transitional subsidies, and education/administrative/brokerage/land compensation costs. Revenues comprised 196 million RMB funded by owners and community committees, alongside 70 million RMB from the Jinjiang municipal government's return of 80% of land premiums.

Resettlement charges billed owners based on a cost-recovery baseline, quantified using inverse cost calculation and post-renewal value gains. Ultimately, residential area adjustments cost 4,600 RMB/m² and commercial spaces cost 2,900 RMB/m²—far below Jinjiang's concurrent market rates. This made the financial layout acceptable to residents, who anticipated property appreciation post-renewal.

Fourth, premium living to improve public welfare. Leveraging post-renewal property appreciation to secure resident investments essentially unlocks suppressed land values by correcting the misalignment between high public service access and low property quality. It explores a micro-profit, sustainable 'commercial backfeeding of public welfare' model. Post-renewal configurations include a 1:1 parking ratio, community senior care facilities, a courier delivery center, and outdoor fitness areas, matched with premier educational resources like the Experimental Primary School and Overseas Chinese Middle School. Public spaces utilize commercial LED advertising facades to generate ongoing revenue, while designs incorporate Maritime Silk Road cultural aesthetics to strengthen community belonging.

Governance Innovation and Insights in Community Renewal from the Perspective of Co-Production Theory: The Community Co-Building Fund Model in Dongfeng Village, Shunde

ZHAO Nannan, RUI Guangye, ZHOU Yawen

(School of Public Administration of South China University of Technology / School of Art and Design of Guangdong University of Technology / School of Architecture of South China University of Technology)

1. Institutional Innovation: Composite Financing Models Reshaping Community Co-Governance

Since 2021, Dongfeng Village in Shunde has executed public space retrofits and infrastructure upgrades through participatory design. By partnering with the Guangdong Desheng Community Foundation to establish a community co-building fund, the project restructured relationships among government, market, and society. It formed an inclusive co-production governance alliance among community participants and diverse social organizations, establishing a tripartite framework of 'diversified composite financing, community co-building and co-governance, and sustainable renewal' to resolve financing constraints and governance failures in community renewal.

The establishment of the community foundation broke conventional dependencies on public finance, forming a sustainable 'principal preservation, revenue backfeeding, and rolling development' mechanism. An initial principal of 6 million RMB was raised via resident crowdfunding, corporate donations, and social contributions, managed by professional institutions to achieve capital appreciation. The innovation of this institutional design manifests in two aspects: 1) A matching mechanism formed via foundations set up by local enterprises, offering up to a 1:1 capital match for projects aligned with strategic plans, amplifying the effect of community welfare funds. 2) An 'intact principal' model ensuring capital safety while using appreciation yields to fund sustainable community updates, bolstering resident trust and engagement. Local authorities, community party organizations, professional planners, the community foundation, and local activists formed a cross-scale governance alliance to promote an innovative framework centered on creating public spaces, integrating external assets, and building collaborative platforms.

2. Technical Empowerment and Value Restructuring

Second, technical empowerment using participatory tools to drive a paradigm shift in community planning. The project constructed a tripartite governance chain of 'technical tools, organizational vehicles, and institutional safeguards.' At the technical level, it matched resident needs precisely. Professional planners collected villager feedback through activities like 'Micro Spatial Trips' and 'Functional Mix-and-Match,' integrating local knowledge into renewal plans across multiple participatory workshops. At the organizational level, it nurtured community self-governance capabilities. Initiatives like the 'Co-Deliberation and Co-Building of Dongfeng Village Deep Water Park' continued to attract social funding and technical support, popularizing community affairs and sustaining local self-governance.

Third, value restructuring through sustainable mechanisms to cultivate endogenous growth dynamics. The participatory co-governance process activated social capital, creating two sustainable mechanisms. Materially, it revived community scenes by inventorying vacant plots, optimizing low-efficiency land resources, and modifying public spaces to stimulate new lifestyles and cultural customs. For instance, modifying the 'Community Kitchen' transformed traditional banquet spaces into regular senior dining services, while retrofitting the 'Dongfeng Village Youth Base' facilitated intergenerational human capital transfers through age-inclusive designs. Socially, it translated emotional bonds into institutional pacts. By mobilizing collective co-investment, it established new governance entities and deliberation platforms, institutionalizing self-motivated renewals through the community co-building fund. From a 100% favorable vote for kindergarten modifications to sustained contributions from 78 enterprises, a long-term co-building mechanism emerged, linking spatial optimization positively with community development.

The Dongfeng Village practice demonstrates that community renewal relies on restructuring social relations rather than merely retrofitting physical structures, aiming to build a new governance ecosystem characterized by 'government guidance without dominance, market participation without control, and social collaboration without dependence.' The case offers three contributions to urban renewal research and practice: 1) Institutional flexibility: The Desheng Foundation acted as a resource intermediary and, through grass-roots party embedding, localized collaborative planning and co-production models successfully. 2) Combining techniques with rules: Participatory planning tools integrated resident decisions into institutional frameworks, converting spatial governance from simple policy tools into binding community rules. 3) Capital appreciation driving renewal: The co-building fund model created a capital accumulation mechanism for autonomous community development, shifting urban renewal from fiscal dependency to endogenous growth logic.

Government-Enterprise-Village Collaboration Driving Industrial District Renewal: Insights from the Yongkang Ceramics Factory Project

SHENG Ming, SHEN Danting

(Shenzhen Urban Planning & Design Institute Co., Ltd. / College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University)

1. Multi-Dimensional Explorations in Institutional Synergy and Spatial Adaptation

Updating low-efficiency industrial land has become a core task for high-quality urban development. The renewal of the Ceramics Factory District in Yongkang City, Zhejiang Province, utilized a multi-dimensional framework of 'classified property rights integration, policy incentive-restraint loops, and precise spatial adaptation' to resolve complex ownership structures and industrial alignment challenges, offering a replicable paradigm for stock renewals at the county scale.

First, a classified strategy mechanism for property rights integration. The project constructed a collaborative toolkit for 'state-owned, collective, and private' property rights. For the state-owned land of the original ceramics factory, an 'evaluation, acquisition, and industrial supervision' model allowed the Industrial Investment Group to develop standardized factory buildings under complete state ownership, securing industrial control. It guided five private enterprises, including Wanda Group, to execute 'asset exchanges,' consolidating land while maintaining its industrial classification. Concurrently, it innovated a collective land 'property return and revenue sharing' model, lifting the annual income of Suxi Village's 1.2-hectare plot to 6 million RMB, turning local resources into active assets.

Second, an 'incentive-restraint' policy closed loop. The project advanced a policy loop comprising 'FAR rewards, tax commitments, and dynamic monitoring.' It established a post-renewal FAR floor of 2.0, awarding enterprises meeting targets 20–120 RMB/m², while overlaying a life-cycle industrial project monitoring mechanism to verify tax commitments. To address fragmented property rights, adjacent plots were permitted to undergo unified planning and development, breaking individual parcel boundaries and enhancing spatial integration efficiency.

Third, a production-driven logic for spatial production. Aligning production space with value chains, the project prioritized anchor project recruitment to drive supporting enterprise entry. Engineering loads, building heights, and freight routes were customized based on manufacturing requirements, utilizing vertical layouts to enhance spatial efficiency. Developing technical transformation centers and shared laboratories formed a composite park integrating 'production, R&D, and community.'

2. The Triple Paradigm of County-Scale Industrial District Renewal

County-scale industrial updates can draw on three core experiences from this project: 1) Breaking dependencies on single-track public acquisitions: Differentiated models like state-supervised industrial operations, equal-volume private asset swaps, and collective revenue sharing balanced multi-party rights dynamically, offering strong reference value for county seats with complex property ownerships. 2) Transcending singular incentive approaches: Positive incentives like FAR rewards and tax sharing combined with negative constraints like life-cycle monitoring and industrial admission lists formed an interconnected policy loop, reducing or eliminating benefits for enterprises failing tax commitments. 3)

Steering away from race-to-the-bottom cost competitions: 'Industrial buildings in the sky' (vertical factories) represent efficient spatial organizations aligning value chains vertically based on dominant county industries rather than simple architectural stackings. Integrating 15%–20% R&D and service functions resolved the traditional shortcomings of manufacturing-heavy, service-poor industrial zones.

Importantly, private equal-volume asset swaps should pair with land performance evaluations to prevent low-efficiency cycles. Furthermore, linking village collective revenues dynamically with park tax growth proves highly applicable in regions with active collective economies.

These actual cases offer new angles for stock renewal research. Regarding institutional flexibility, while non-standard tools like negotiated swaps and property returns improve delivery efficiency, they may weaken the statutory authority of master planning. Balancing institutional flexibility and planning rigidity requires further interdisciplinary research across planning, law, and economics. In theory, the interaction logic between space and production warrants deep refinement; aligning front-end design, mid-term construction, and back-end park operations remains a vital topic as we cultivate new quality productive forces.

(AI 辅助翻译)