Shanghai has transformed into a liveable city where past and present thrive. How has Shanghai achieved this, and what principles will guide its future development?

Lecture Segment

Katyana Melic
00:00:06

Good morning, everyone. [It is] so wonderful to see so many people here on a Saturday morning. My name is Katyana [Melic], I’m from the Centre for Liveable Cities [CLC]. And together with URA [Urban Redevelopment Authority] we have organized today’s lecture. CLC was created in 2008 by the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources [MEWR], and the Ministry of National Development [MND], to distill Singapore’s story of sustainable urban development. And maybe URA needs no introduction but just in case, it’s Singapore’s land use planning and conservation agency with a mission to make Singapore a great city to live, work and play. And CLC and URA often jointly collaborate for such knowledge sharing, and today we’re very lucky to be able to welcome Dr Wang.
For those of you who have been to Shanghai, maybe you know about Tianzifang, for example, or M50, or the pedestrianisation of the Bund. And Dr Wang, fortunately for us, has had a big hand to play in such urban rejuvenation and conservation efforts. Currently, she’s a Professor at Shanghai’s Jiao Tong University, and the Director of China Urban Governance Institute and the Centre for Urban Studies. But for 20 years, almost 20 years, she was with the Shanghai’s Planning and Land Administration Bureau. And I’ve been lucky to be with her for a few days and she actually shared with us that when she joined in 1998, conservation and heritage was only one of the many things that she had to do. And so gradually through her efforts and the efforts of her team, it’s become a major part of Shanghai’s urban planning. So we’ll be very lucky here today to hear her stories.

I’ll just walk you through a little bit of the format today. We’ll begin with her lecture for about an hour and so it may be very exciting to ask questions but we’ll try to hold it off till the end of her lecture. And then [Kelvin Ang], the director of Conservation and Management with URA will help to moderate the Q&A [question and answer] session at the end. So please help me in welcoming Dr Wang. (Applause)

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It’s my great honour to be here. Thank you URA and CLC for inviting me here. And thank you all of you to come here on Saturday morning. It’s really my great honour. Thank you again.

Today, I would like to exchange my opinion[s] and experiences that we have done in Shanghai for many years. But what I want to say [is] that I really want[ed to] come here to learn from Singapore. I have visit here for twice just for 10 days, but I really think it’s a great country and we need to learn from it a lot. So today, I would like to talk a lot about Shanghai, but I would like to share more with you about the experiences of Singapore.
A little bit about the history. Shanghai was a small town during the past 700 years before 1840. So, after 10 years [of] rapid growth since 1840, Shanghai grew up from the foreign settlements to an East Asia centre city in [the] 1930s. In some way, that Shanghai at that age, is much more international than today’s Shanghai, in my point of view. For example, you can see the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation was set up in 1923, and the Park Hotel and the Peace Hotel—all these buildings were marvelous buildings at that age. It was the most elegant building in the world, not only in Shanghai. So for example, here is the Grand Theatre next to the Park Hotel. People who live in Tokyo will fly from Tokyo to Shanghai to the Grand Hotel, to participate [in] the opening ceremony of the Hollywood film, which was held in the same time in Hollywood. So we can call Shanghai—it’s really East Asia centre: it’s a fashion centre, it’s a recreation centre, and there is a trading centre too.

But now Shanghai is growing bigger and bigger. There’s decades of growing for the master plan but now, today for the whole Shanghai we have 6,600 square kilometres but half of the land has been occupied for construction. So, the environment for the city is very bad, so that’s a bad situation for us—so we need to do a lot of things to prevent expansion of the city.

And of course in the meantime, we have growing [transport system], we call [it] longer because we had the first line in 1993, but now we have 18 lines of about 500 kilometres. So, we plan to have more [at] about 1,000 kilometres, so that’s the same scale as London and New York, but we have more people taking the subway station.

For example, I had my car 10 years ago but 5 years ago I didn’t want to drive because it’s easier for me to take the subway to work, so it’s a big change. For the whole Shanghai, whole China, it’s a very rapid growth and we think [there is] a lot of pressure. Of course, higher is a very important thing: 10 years, and another 10 years and how about the future? Someone said we need to stop growing higher but I’m not so
sure about it. The Central Government had just issued the Shanghai master plan for 2035, which means Shanghai will not be expanding itself, means that Shanghai will not have more land to develop. So, regeneration will be a key issue in the future development of Shanghai. [This] means [that] we will pay attention to the quality of the city, to the quality...equate the quantity of the land use and to the quality of the functions, of the public space and pay much attention to the people.

Conservation in Shanghai

So what I want to talk about is that it’s really tough work to protect [and tackle] conservation issues during the past 20 years because Shanghai keeps growing larger, higher with more density and rapidly. So it’s really tough work to do that. Did we do a very good job? If you look at this picture, it seems good, right? Because fortunately we preserved each building along the Bund, the first block as you say. But why we take the picture in the night? When you look at that, because it’s when the weather is good so the image is like this. So what can we do? So I always say conservation and regeneration are the same issues. We need to regenerate the city, we need to make a rapid growth of the economy—and in the meantime we need to preserve buildings, we need to preserve our culture, we need to pay respect to the people, and also we need to pay respect to the environment.

So that’s the reason [why] I think the whole China has changed their mind. They began to pay much [more] attention to historic preservation, [when] compared with [sic to] 20 years ago. I would like to mention that 20 years ago when I graduated from the Tongji University, I’m a PhD focusing [on] historic preservation and I’m the first doctorate in Shanghai Planning Authority. I’m the only woman who [was] in charge of historic preservation, but this work is only one-tenth of my work. So, you know but I think it’s very fortunate [sic fortunate] for me because I took the advantage [of the opportunity], so I know whole story of conservation and the story and the back of it. So it’s my fortune I think.
I think it’s because it’s a casual day, I would like to... I don’t want to give a very academic report, but I think case studies are better. So I will give six case studies [to] let you know what Shanghai does, what we tried to do now and in the past. So generally speaking, I need to tell you what the duties of the Urban Conservation and Administration in Shanghai Planning Authority [are]. There are three aspects. One, listing historic buildings and areas to be preserved. That’s very important. Second, is planning for these areas—means not only [to] define the building [that] needs to be preserved, but also try to preserve the landscape of the area. This means that we not only define the old things, but we also define the new development. We want to have a sustainable redevelopment and regeneration. And in the meantime, we need to improve the legislation effects, registration and planning issued by the government. So, we do have laws for historic building and historic areas. And in the meantime, we have the planning which was even stronger for the technical files that people need to obey. I will explain it to you later.

Till now Shanghai has already set up a system—we should say conservation system for urban heritage. One is architectural heritage, second is historical areas, the third is historical streets. I should say historical streets, it was Shanghai that start[ed] to pay attention to streets in China.

So [for] historic buildings, you can look at these buildings. They’re so different, [with] so [much] variety. When CLC invited me to talk about the culture of Shanghai, at very beginning I was actually very confused because I come from China and China has a very long traditional history but in Shanghai, what culture [is prominent]? So I think there’s some similar[ities] with Singapore: Shanghai is a city [which] combined Western and Eastern together. It has all different kinds buildings in the city, traditional and Western style, and Chinese style, then they mix together. And we also have a very typical residential style called linong [里弄] that combines Western-leaning houses to courtyards. So it’s very
interesting. So I think that culture, I think, is inclusive, very diverse and liveable.

And these are all different kinds of residential areas. And of course, we defined 41 areas to be preserved. I should say in the central downtown, we preserved one-third of the area to be historical areas. But compared with other historic areas in China, Shanghai defined this area [that] they should be very active, they should combine the real life in the history life—so functions can be changed, the new facility should be added to the old building, but we should preserve it. But we should meet the modern use for the new life. So we should make the historic building, historic area be[come] one part of the real life in Shanghai. That’s a very key issue.

So [to] just give some very good examples. For example, Old Shanghai Town Area is just like most of Chinese downtown. I call this the only Chinatown in China. (Laughter) Yes, really. Yes, you can feel it. That’s The Bund—the fabric, the streets, [are] totally different because it was built as a British concession at the very beginning in 1840s, but later become the public concession. But it has been a financial trade centre for decades in Shanghai, in China actually, but not now. This is the Hengshan-Fuxing historic areas which were residential areas. You can look at the streets—it’s a former French concession so its [a] beautiful residence. You can feel that it’s so different.

And of course, in the suburb, Shanghai actually has a lot of water towns—but not as famous as Zhouzhuang [Water Village, Jiangsu Province]. But actually, we have very good ones [but] because they are in Shanghai, they are not so famous, okay? But yes, I would like to mention [to] you about the historical streets. I would like to tell you a story because I should say, I gave the suggestion to my Director of the Planning Authority and to the Mayor that we need to have historic streets.
In 2005, Shanghai had only two subway lines. And at that time, the traffic was very bad. So, the government decided to widen the streets in the central downtown. And there is a very famous street. If you are Shanghainese you should know that: Fuxing Lu [Fuxing Road], Fuxing Xi Lu [Fuxing West Road], Fuxing Zhong Lu [Fuxing Central Road]. There’s a very famous residential [area], we should say, it’s the main street from west to east. It’s a very important street in Shanghai. But at that time, we tried to widen this street from 60 feet to about 100 feet. But when you look at the Fuxing Dong Lu [Fuxing East Road], the east part of the Fuxing Lu, it had already been widened. I felt so sorry about it. So when they talked about me, because they all know I’m a very stubborn person because there’s a lot of building, heritage building around Fuxing Lu. So, the infrastructure department director came to me, he wanted to tell me that, “Is it possible for us to tear it down, just very few heritage buildings and try to widen it?”

But when I went with him, I said, “No, it’s not good.” Because I think historic streets are very important for the image of the city. When you visit a city, it’s not just the individual buildings—of course individual buildings will give your image of the city, but for most of people, the streets, the image of the streets, the scale of the streets, and texture of the streets; when you walk down there, you have a better feeling for the city. And for historic areas historic streets are very, very important. If you destroy that, you destroy the landscape of these areas. That’s the key issue.

So I gave a report to my Director, I say, “We need to pay attention to historic streets, we need not widen them because there are more than 10 lines subway under construction. We just need to be patient.” That’s the only way for the metropolis to resolve their traffic issues—the only way. And I say metropolis cities always have traffic, bad traffic. That’s the issue. It doesn’t matter! But I was very fortune because my Director accept[ed] the idea and we did a research. At that time, we defined more than 144 streets [that] will never be widened again. And we
submitted this report to the mayor because it was a big issue—not just an issue for planning, but also for the whole city. We needed to get the support from the Director, from the Mayor.

Fortunately, we got his total support. So I should say, Shanghai has a very good landscape in Puxi compared with Pudong, as my point of view, very human-based, and very comfortable and still have a history memory. I think the historic streets really did a very good job. Of course, after we defined, we started to do research. We started to do all the research and to try to protect [the historic streets]. I think Singapore has already done a lot of such kind of work, to much further detail than we have but we just tried to protect all the scale of the streets, and about the texture, and even the pedestrian and the trees. And this is something that we are doing now, we are trying to...how to say, make a better land for the historic buildings. That’s the project I just finished in a very...because it’s a boutique shops [spanning] about 15 square metres, it’s a very famous supermarket. But it’s very hard work because we dealt with them about six times, but finally we got his support and he said it’s better.

Planning in Shanghai: The Bund

Okay that’s the story. And that’s the general story of the Shanghai planning. So we have architecture, we have areas and we have roads, have streets. What I want to say is that after we defined the historic areas, the most important thing I just mentioned was—because for the Bund, for the Xuhui [徐汇] district, for the People’s Square, and for the Nanjing Xi Road, Nanjing Dong Road, all these streets are very active streets, and very [much a] luxury land for people [who] tried to own it. So, the most important thing is that we need to not only define which building we should preserve, but also to define what kind of regeneration we should do.

So in China we have historic, different levels [of] planning. Master planning; for zoning we call it “controlling detail planning”, but it’s like
zoning. And we have “construction detail planning project plan and design”. That means everyone needs to submit a plan to the planning department to get permission, or else they cannot do any construction. So that’s the reason why we’re so strong—because of our department. So in 2005, we set a department like you have, it’s a department called historic department, so 10 people work for this department. And we do planning for this area and we give project permission. That’s the key point—because it’s very powerful.

But generally speaking, at that time, we did not have any planning for this area. Why? Because every planning was for new development, not for the old ones. But look at these two pictures: we have a building code, Shanghai has a building code. That means no matter where you build your building in the central part of Shanghai, within the same area, you can have the same FAR [floor area ratio], you can have the same height and you can have the same coverage rate. So that’s kind of ridiculous because you can build a higher building in the Bund, but if you put this higher level to Hengshan Road, that will be a disaster to the landscape.

But because we did not have any planning or we did not have any building code to support that, that means I could not stop people from building high-rise buildings in Hengshan Road. So that’s a very tough issue for us. So, we decided to stop giving permission in this area until we finished the detailed planning. So, we did finish the detailed planning, we combined zoning, combined urban design, combined landscape and historic preservation together—and provided a guideline to redevelopment, renew[al] and new construction in this urban area, of course.

So the key issues that I would like to point [out is] when you look at this image, you can see different colours of the building. That means we defined, we measured every building. For the red one, that’s the listed building, it means heritage had already been listed by the government. It’s a heritage, legal heritage—the red one. But do you realise that we
have a yellow one. That yellow one is the building that you cannot demolish without permission by the Planning Authority. That means all these buildings are not so elegant or so...it’s not—maybe not as good as the heritage but the image, the landscape, is very important for the area. And if you demolish all of them, then that area will have no historic image or historic landscape.

So we defined each building. So when you look at this building, you’ll find that almost two-third of the historic buildings were defined not to be demolished. So that’s the key issue for the historic areas because we paid attention to the whole landscape, not only individual buildings. So that’s the final decision that what we need to do [sic make]. First, because every construction needs to have a detailed...have a zoning, so we did zoning like FAR, building coverage and height control. And of course, green is essential. In the meantime, just I mentioned we defined building by building, block by block—to not only building. We also defined some special historic spaces like gardens or like pedestrians or inside the block—so all these should be preserved.

And in the meantime, we added the urban design sectors. What you mean urban design? For example, in Shanghai if I build a new building, we need to setback from the streets, three to nine metres back. But when you look at the historic buildings, each building is built right next to the streets, right? So, if we obey the rule of the historical area, we disobey the building code. So in this planning we defined [that] if there are no subway stations underground or if there is nothing very special, the setback guideline is zero. It’s better for you to just build the building next to the street. That’s [a very] important thing. Of course, we have different control[s] for the height. For example, in the Bund we can have a higher height control [of] like 40 to 50 metres, like six to seven floors [around] the streets and we have a lower height in the yard, right? That’s the image of the Bund.
And in the meantime, in the Hengshan-Fuxing Road because it’s a very good residential area, so we have lower height control along the streets and we permit some reconstruction behind that street if you cannot see it—that means you can be a little bit higher if it does not destroy the image of the streets, so that people have benefit to do regeneration. So we have different control of the building along streets and not along streets. Of course, we permit greenery coverage, no less than original. For example, most of the traditional Chinese towns do not have greenery space in each block. And at The Bund, they do not have green space but we think it’s good—it doesn’t matter if you don’t have, that’s very important.

And also with building scale, texture, colour and material guidelines, so if we can define, we try to define everything. That is really good. But of course, we do a lot of historic measures. So it’s a very important thing. So looking at this, after all this research, we have a guideline for each block, for each building. There’s pictures, image and there’s zoning and all kinds of things. For example, you can look at this: it’s a green corridor, [which] means people can walk along the corridor, no matter which land, the land use, who owns the land. But if you redevelop this area, you still own the land but you need to give the corridor to the public. I think Singapore has done a lot of such kinds of things—very good, open to the public, no matter who is the owner, right? So that’s what we’re trying to do.

Okay, so I will just talk about the detail planning, that means each block, each building has its guidelines. So no matter who you are, if you want to do some regeneration or redevelop[ment] of this area, you can check this guideline because all this planning has been issued by the government and can be open to the public.

Okay, let’s go to another interesting place, the Bund. The Bund is famous, is very famous. That’s the place that you got to visit when you are in Shanghai—or else that means you have not been to Shanghai. But
this image [is something] you cannot see again because I took this picture about eighteen years ago. It was demolished about ten years ago, I think. Because when you look at this, there’s a bridge, right? But we do not have this bridge now—we put this bridge underground. There is The Bund, and we call [it the] Bund Tunnel. Okay, I will tell the story about it.

I should say generations always happen. No matter if [sic whether] you preserve the building or not, generations is the issue that we will [be] doing [sic dealing with] forever for the city. And so, when I just told you that in history, The Bund was the CBD [central business district]. But after the revolution, when People’s Republic came in, all the government took these buildings. So for example, this building was formerly the city hall. But back in the 1990s, the government decided they [were going to] move to a modern building in the People’s Square. [So] they built a new building, and gave this building back for financial use. So they started to build the main traffic streets and started to replace the building—The Bund building, to give the function back to finance, to banking.

But unfortunately, because the old building didn’t fit very good [sic well] for the modern functions of today’s bank, it’s not so successful. So in 2002, we started to do the redevelopment of the waterfront of Huangpu River. I think Liu Thai Ker, Mr Liu Thai Ker was invited to participate to be [sic as] a judge of the competition. Because I’m the person, like Katyana to make, [to] organize the competition—exactly, I’m the...yes. It’s a very interesting thing. That was the first international competition [organized] by the government in Shanghai in 2002. So, we were going international, not so much, and of course and later, they [were] determined to do planning for the historic preservation of The Bund, so that’s [a] record history of The Bund.

But I want to tell you a key point in 2007. Because we tried to do...you know, when you look at this picture, it doesn’t exist [anymore], like that
A bridge. It’s a high elevated building. But the reason is that we started a plan, because when you look at the history’s Bund, we have [a lane to] turn right for the car which is about 100 metres wide. But we decided to put six lanes underground and put four lanes on the ground. But that was right before the world exhibition, Shanghai World Exhibition. The construction was very complicated, because we needed to stop the traffic, and there were so many heritage buildings where they still have very weak waterproof wall along the Bund. So, it’s so complicated! So the infrastructure department didn’t want to do that, so they stopped doing that—especially the traffic department didn’t want to do it too.

When this happened—I would like to tell a story. Because we started to do the renovation of The Bund origin. What do you mean Bund origin? In Chinese, it’s wai tan yuan [外滩源 “original Bund”]. That’s a project. That project is a redevelopment, regeneration and historic preservation, and this piece of land when you look at this, that’s the history. And this is the first land for lease to the British, which means the British Council, the former British Council is settled here. And this is the first land for The Bund to…first piece land of the concession. But for a long time, a lot of offices occupied this and you can look at this. There were a lot of modern buildings that were built during 1970 to 1990s, but we decided to regenerate this area and to…so that’s the feature today. It’s black, but it’s very…because it looks like the former Bund, you know. Because when you look at it, you will see. Here, we demolish this highrise building, we demolish…

If you know the Youyi Shangdian [友谊商店 Shanghai Friendship Store], if you are friendship shops, I would demolish all the high buildings, okay? So, after we turned down so many modern buildings, we gave a space for Peninsula Hotel. (Audience laughter)

But it was really tough work because I changed their design 19 times in order to get the permission—not only from the mayor, but also because
the mayor paid much attention to this project, and I also needed to persuade the experts who focused on historic preservation of the skyline of The Bund when you look at that. So, you can understand me, I don’t want to do that, but it’s my job.

But at that time, the local government had signed a treaty with the Peninsula, [that] they will demolish this bridge before 2008. Or else, they will have a very bad view, right? They direct here. We demolish one and build one, so the bridge will just tchoo! cut their...(laughs), so they don’t want to do any structures because the tunnel, The Bund tunnel stopped. So, when I gave the report to the mayor about the design of Peninsula [Hotel], I said the design today is good, we can [ap]prove it. I suggest [to] the mayor, “[Ap]prove it.”

And in the meantime, the local mayor asked the...he suggested to demolish this bridge, and he said, “We have signed treaty with Peninsula.” But there was a big argue [sic argument], so the mayor asked, “What’s your opinion to the different directors of different departments?” They all sat there; no one answered. So, because I’m the little guy (laughs), I’m the people who give the point-point [point by point/Powerpoint?], so I say...Fortunately, that time because it’s urgent issue, my director asked me to go directly to give the report. So, I said, “Can I give you my own opinion? It’s not, I cannot answer on behalf of planning authority.” I cannot. I should tell you that even [within] our planning department, we have different opinions. So, I said, “I think I would like to say something. I know someone said because we put six lines underground and leave four lines, so totally [sic in total] it’s ten lines. So, we do the tunnel, Bund tunnel, it’s not for traffic. We are doing that for public space. We will give more space to public space because it will narrow the lane—we will set free 15 metres, half of the width, to the public.”

So, that means we give the space to the public. And that means we will make a very good connection with The Bund and the waterfront. You
know, before that, no one could go across on the road. We needed to go to a dark tunnel and walk through, to go up to The Bund. So that’s...we did not do that for traffic. We did that for public space, for the image of Shanghai because The Bund is image of Shanghai—and for the people.

And I know, it’s very compl[i]cated...we’ve already comp[l]eted construction, so we needed to gather support from the people. So, my suggestion was that we give our design to the public. Let the public make the decision. So, after one month, announcement [showed that] we get 95% support. But the other 5% said we need more trees on the Bund because it’s too hot when we walk along the Bund. So, congratulations. That [is] not my suggestion, but the people made the decision.

Good. So, okay. That’s the image today now. But not the final image. So, we preserved all these buildings and all these buildings. They were not heritage buildings that time, but now it counts to be a heritage building, but we will have new construction next to it, it’s residential because we are trying to keep the economic balance for this redevelopment. So, that’s a big conflict.

Some experts said, “You cannot do these things because we need to preserve all these images for the city.” But as my point of view...if we preserve what we should preserve, we can build something new, right? I think it’s [what] we call the generation and conservation. We combine [both] together to make a better life for the future. We preserve culture, we preserve the building, but also we need to meet the needs for the new...for the future. So, okay, that’s the story about the Bund.

**The Story of Tianzifang (田子坊)**

But I have a suggestion that this is a very good place, but because there is a very huge garden. A lot of people are afraid of going in, but actually it’s opened to the public. (Audience laughter) And (laughs) yes, and have
a very good lunch—tea. Xiawu cha \([\text{下午茶} \text{ afternoon tea}]\), is it? Yes, in the basement. Terrific. So, [you’re all] welcome to come.

And of course, we now come to a story about Tianzifang \([\text{田子坊}]\). Everyone likes Tianzifang. A lot of people when they went and they will...they told me they loved Tianzifang. That’s a good thing, but I don’t like today’s Tianzifang. It’s not so [sic as] good as before, as my point of view.

So, I can tell you the story because it was the image of 2003. That picture I took. You know, \(\text{linong}\), when you went to a gate, this building was originally designed for one family because when you enter a gate, one family owns that unit. But when [sic as] time went by, five to ten families shared one unit. So, that’s the terrible thing. That you can look at the situation and I should tell you that they do not have their private toilet for each family. So, at that time, people who lived there, fought every year to [sic with] the government, [to] try to move out. They asked for [sic to] move out.

So, the local government signed a treaty with the developer, who is a Taiwan developer called \(\text{Riyueguang} \,[\text{日月光}\text{ ASE Global?}])\) group. So, they... But during that time, there was a economic crisis, so they did not have money. And then so, during that time, some artists came in, and they rented the warehouse and the plant in the block—not the residential area. When you take a serious look of Tianzifang, you will find there is a lot of high...not high-rise, it’s six-floor buildings and some buildings like this. They are factories, they are community factories originally, not for residential [purposes]. So, a lot of artists rented it with very low prices. It was about one point...zero point one yuan per day. Can you imagine that?

Okay, that’s because they know this land had already [been] sold to the developer, they will [have to] move out at anytime. So, they just rented temporarily. But from 1999 to 2003, about 100 artists gathered
together, they have their own studio, there’s a real studio. They paint there, they sold their paintings there and sometimes they added some space to sleep there. So, that’s a real studio and it’s very fashionable. For example, this is a studio; it’s [by] a very famous Shanghaiese photographer, Dongqiang. And another space is very famous painter, Chen Yifei, who had already gone.

But two of them wrote a letter with 100 artists’ signatures, and this letter went to the mayor. Because in 2003, the developer had the money and they asked the local government to pull people out, [so that] they could go down the redevelopment. But the artists didn’t want to move—that’s a very good location, so they didn’t want to move. So, that letter goes to the mayor and the mayor asked my director and the director asked me to do a report. (Audience laughter) My God, hard work!

So, I went to this place to talk with [the] local people, to talk with the artists, to talk with the developer and the local government. You will know that there’s a big argument, right? Because the people who lived there really wanted to move out. There’s a saying that if you want to be rich, it’s better to be removed, right? (Laughs) It’s a very good chance to be getting rich, right? Yes, for ordinary people. So, okay, so finally, I had to write a report. So, I gave a report for the conservation [of] Tianzifang. But actually I should tell you, I did not say preserve Tianzifang for almost ten years. The reason I can tell you later.

First I gave the reason, historic preservation is *linong*, but this *linong* is not very good *linong* in Shanghai. So, that’s only one reason. Secondly is the public space: when you look at that here, there is a open space, there’s a coffee, and there’s free wifi. 12 years ago, that was amazing, right? That was a public space, but at that time, there’s almost no people, right? But now, when you look at it, it’s very crowded. And here, we call[ed it the] initial creative industry that just emerged in China. I think that’s a very important issue in Shanghai.
And of course, I think what made this happened is, I gave a suggestion because the developer owned two pieces of land, and the land is right south of that block. So, that’s the reason why someone criticised “Why [did] you build such high-rise buildings right in front of Tianzifang?” Yeah, but because we...my suggestion is saying we transfer FAR of Tianzifang to that block. But the local government fought, [and] said “No. Because these residential [people] will argue, and if you preserve, I will tell the address of your office, let the people go to your office, okay? If you say [that] we will preserve.” Okay, so I did not say for ten years. (Laughs) That [is the] truth.

So, I just said, “We will not demolish now. We will build on that part.” Okay, so we... In my mind, I think it will be preserved. And I tell people that, “Let the future tell us, we cannot [and] we do not need to make the decision now. Let the future make the decision for us. So, that’s the strategy. So... (laughing)

Of course, after 2004, something interesting happened. Because people knew that they would not move very soon, they began to rent their house[s out] because most of them do not live there. They already moved out. So, because it was kind of very popular with artists, so this is an image that you cannot find today. It was [taken] in 2010, okay? I took the picture myself. That’s [the] reason why a lot of people love Tianzifang because...there’s a picture taken by MIT professor Turner Lee—someone will know him—he took the picture and sent it to me because it was a really nice image. Because people still lived there so that meant people could make their own decisions [on whether] they want to stay there, or they want to move out. And so, sometimes there’s big arguments because there’s a bar on the first floor, and sometimes there’s some water thrown from the second floor. (Audience laughter) Because it’s too noisy. So, interesting.

Okay, so when we go back to...but now, Tianzifang is kind of a very popular thing. So when we look back, no one will say we’ll demolish
Tianzifang, but is there a way that we can copy [this] in other parts of Shanghai? Because we have so many linang’s. We need to preserve [them] but we have no money. What can we do? So, I’m rethinking about these things. I think, most of the time, the government really wants to do something good for the citizens. But sometimes, we can sit back, a little back, and let people make their own decisions. That might be a wise strategy. But of course, later you will find that government really needs to do something, so after Tianzifang became very popular and they rent their house to...

So, I think that government still do very good things. They began to renew the public infrastructure, electric, water supply, and drainage and et cetera. So, okay, so...

**Historical Preservation of Warehousing Industry**

The last case study is historical preservation of warehousing industry. I like this building because I persuaded the mayor—now the vice-president of China, to preserve it. (Audience wows). That’s true. That’s a true story. (Laughs) That was my first project in Shanghai Planning Authority, because the mayor had decided to demolish this and build green space along the Suzhou Creek. He’s right, because he did not check the building, right? I checked it for him. Okay, so a Taiwan architect did the interior design and I found it, and I persuaded the mayor to preserve it. And later it won the UNESCO Asian Pacific Heritage Award in 2004. And he phoned me [and said,] “And this prize should go to you.” I said, “Thank you, thank you. I do want to do something didiao [低调 Chinese for “low-key”], how to say? (Chorus of answers from audience) Huh? Okay, dui [对 Chinese for “right”] if I still want to preserve something, so that’ll be...I really appreciate.

So, what I’m doing is, I don’t want to argue or persuade mayor[s] again and again—so what I’m doing is that I went along with a lot of experts and designers along Suzhou Creek to find more than 100 warehouses...
and plants that should be preserved and put a chapter on planning, landscape planning. So that there is a chapter [where] historic buildings need to be preserved. So, next time the developer, the local government needs to argue with me, needs to make negotiation with me because all these buildings are preserved in the planning—and the planning is approved by the mayor, by the government. So, it’s a legal file that everyone should obey.

So, I talked with the officer, with URA, [and] I think planning is a good way to preserve historic buildings, rather than heritage building because yeah, heritage buildings...so, what happens all this comes out, okay, beer factory becoming a boutique hotel, and M50—of course, I wrote the report five times to get permission, which is very popular now; and of course, No. 8 Bridge—you should go when you...(laughs) and the slaughterhouse [Shanghai's 1933 Slaughterhouse]. I found the newspaper who found this building and we defined, we protected it. And also, I’m the developer of Hongfang [红坊], the Red Town. It’s a Shanghai sculpture centre because I protected this building and made it to be a Shanghai sculpture centre for the Planning Authority, and I’m [part of] the Department of Historic Building and Public Arts in the meantime. So, that’s the reason I can do that.

Okay, so, that’s history that when we go, we define a lot of building and now this is kind of a very popular thing in Shanghai. In the meantime, we define not only buildings [that are] more than 100 years that should be preserved, [but also] any history building [where] if they record the history of the industry, they should be and could be preserved. So, that’s [what] you call ying xiong jin bi [英雄金笔 Chinese for “hero’s gold pen”], a hero pen, right? Hero pen. It was decided to be demolished, but after we did historic research, we gave a report to the mayor, and we preserved almost every age’s: beginning from 1950—the first building is 1950— to 1960, to 1970, to 1980, to 1990. So, we preserved all of them. For the new function, it’s okay. But all these...
Industrial Heritage & Regeneration

So, Shanghai is a very...what I want to talk about is...we started to do individual building, industrial building regeneration. But there’s a big issue for Shanghai [where] we still have one-third of the land for industry but it’s impossible. So, what we should do: we defined a lot of industry areas that should be preserved. Okay? So, that’s a new...that’s a research done by me after I left the government to do research. I did the research for the...so I gave a report on what happens to the industrial heritage—what’s important and I suggested that we should not only preserve individual buildings; we also need to preserve area.

And there is a lot of people [who] say that Shanghai has set a good example for its industrial heritage conservation. But in my point of view, there are still a lot of problems and challenges. So, I gave a report to the municipal government of construction. They really agreed with me, and they said that they will do something for that. So, I started to do a very interesting...so, I think we needed to do it, not only on individual buildings—we need to do a strategy position, general survey evaluation over the planning urban design and policy innovation to all these areas. So, that’s the location of this area, about 24 kilometres, it’s about 300 different companies on that land. But generally speaking, they [are] facing transition.

The most famous is the Baosteel company. This part has been totally...they did not work anymore last...at the end, last June they stopped [working]. So, when you look at this picture, is that great? And this is the history. So, I protect regeneration, creation, so general speaking, it’s overall transformation. Okay, so I need to do landscape issues to establish the foundation and the full information network for the whole—[which] means for each building, no matter whether it will be demolished or not, will be measured, we will set the 3D. So, that’s a big issue. So, each building has its record. I think that’s a very important thing. So this steel making area was built in 2009, but it was never used.
Should we turn it? Should we demolish them all? Okay, so that’s a marvelous building which can [be utilised] for all kinds of use. Why do not...we should...that’s me. That’s me. (audience laughter)

Woah, I was so excited about that, so I tried to persuade them, but they, the Bao[steel] company say “Woah, we’re tired fir [sic of] this. Why should you preserve this?” So, okay, we measured, we did 3D, we sketched up, so we can look at them at any...so, it’s amazing, right? It’s exactly what it like. Okay, it’s good, right? Just take a look of [sic] it.

So, we defined that the orange one should not be demolished—and not only the building but the landscape; the road, the railway. How...isn’t that amazing? Yeah. And is that amazing places if you demolish? So, we added to the roads in a big block, so that’s what I want to do. I defined all these areas and then of course, new development should come. So, we did it as a city, not an industrial area. We added a lot of streets inside. So, that’s the image of preserving something and green space and the green park. Okay? So, [the] steel plants [was] decided to be[come] the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts now. Okay, so we need policy, okay? So, there’s a lot of policy [that] we need to....(audience laughter) Alright, so finally, [we] needed to develop [the] innovation updating policy. So, I need to learn from you.

And final image. This is a factory? Restaurant? Could you point out? It’s [an] office. Do you know what kind of office? Facebook. New office, which was just designed by Frank Gehry. Can you believe that? So, it’s totally—so it has two levels. The first level is parking space and the facilities. About three thousand seven hundred people stay in one platform like this. And they have a roof, they call it the economy roof where people go outside. That’s a Frank Gehry design. I cannot believe it! Yes, I went to the front, I’m a Loeb Fellow for Harvard, so we took a Harvard study trip to take a look at it in the weekend. So, that’s what I want to say. Industrial heritage preservation and regeneration is for the
future. It is the future space that has unlimited possibility, constant change and multiple choice. So, that’s my point of view.

So, finally, can you see China Bank? But can you see? It’s the China Bank in The Bund. So, we have [a] relationship. I should tell you [that] they are [designed by] the same architect: China architect, famous architect, Dong Dayou. This bank is [the] only [building designed by the] Chinese architect in The Bund. And he built the same building in Singapore. So, I’m so glad, so I take a picture.

Thank you for your CLC and URA colleague[s for] bringing me there, so I needn’t find you. Thank you. (Applause).

Thank you so much, Dr Wang, for your fascinating stories. I’m sure you will agree with me that we learned a lot, especially the productive fights, if you will, that she had in government to make Shanghai the way we know it today.

Katyana Melic

Dr Wang and Kelvin will now have a moderated discussion, following which we’ll then open it to the floor for questions.

Mr Kelvin Ang

Thank you, Dr Wang. For any of you who are new to Singapore, this is very important. I’m so happy that CLC has given us a glass jug and a glass of water because...not just no plastic. We should be so, so proud that we have got drinkable water from the tap. It is a basic element of life that we have the privilege of using everyday, and don’t forget our soft power, and the hard work behind the water. Cheers. (Audience laughter and applause).

Thank you, Dr Wang, I mean I feel really...I think we’ve learned so much this morning from the development of Shanghai in the past 20, 30 years. So, I would like to have the privilege of asking a couple of questions to get the conversations going before the floor...it’s opened to the floor.
I was just thinking, Shanghai is this city that you said is different from the rest of China because it’s so relatively young, and very open to the world. It’s a mixture of east and west. So, in the rapid change in China since liberation in ’49 and subsequent opening up in the ’80s, has the Shanghainese perception of built heritage changed in some way? You know, between maybe the old city or the Bund, et cetera. Do you mind sharing a little?

Dr Wang Lin

Thank you, Kelvin. Actually, I think it’s really good to share, but I think I need to learn from...I mentioned that I’m really thinking about...compared with other cities in China, actually Shanghai people, a lot of people and a lot of experts really pay attention to historic preservation. So that’s the reason [why] Shanghai is the first city to build up historic buildings for less than 100 years. Yeah, and we have the first law, first act for historic buildings in...for young, modern architects. And we also sometimes get a lot of letters or we have newspaper [articles] that people will say [sic tell us that] they need to preserve something.

Of course, actually during the past decades we have demolished a lot of buildings, valued buildings. No matter how many we have preserved, but we still demolished a lot. So, now people began to pay a lot of attention to historical preservation, especially the leaders. You know, today no one can say historic preservation is not important. But 20 years ago? It was nothing, right? Compared with economic development, historic preservation is like...it’s a bad thing, it’s not good for economic [development] because you stop rapid [growth] when you preserve something. So, it’s a totally big change.

But actually, when you’re facing the real issues, there’s still a lot of complex[ities]. So, I would like to say that we need to give strategies for historic preservation because culture takes money, and heritage takes money—because it’s true that when you preserve building, you need to cost [sic spend] more money: three to five times [more] than you just demolish it, [and] build new one. So, people, for the government too, I think we need to give funding or support, bonus to historic preservation.
In the meantime, we need a lot of strategies, for example, FAR-free...it’s my point of view, right? (laughs) For historic buildings, right, because if you preserve, you can still have your own new development FAR because it really takes money to do that. Or a lot of the things we need, because people can work together and to share some funding, so that’s very important. That means we need to not only say we need to preserve, but we need the strategy, we need the policy, we also need the taxation refunds or something like that. That’s my point of view.

Mr Kelvin Ang
01:17:17

Well, yes, I suppose investing in the future means we have to have an entire system to invest in the future—even though it would cost a lot more in terms of resources. But I suppose what you’re hinting at is that the people of Shanghai have a certain set of value systems that then support the planners and the researchers to try to find a new way forward for historic buildings in the city.

But I suppose part of the work in making historic buildings workable for the future is down to the knowledge and I guess the manpower of the artisans, the craftsmen, the technicians, in the transformation of these buildings. And of course in Shanghai, you have the Chinese buildings, the lilong [alternative pronunciation for linong] buildings and the skyscrapers of The Bund. They’re all designed in different periods with different technologies and different skills.

Could you share a little bit on maybe some of the challenges in the technical reuse of these buildings for the future? You mentioned [a] little bit that the government wanted to repurpose The Bund back to be the financial centre of Shanghai, but these buildings no longer meet the current technical expectations. So, could you share a little bit on some of these challenges? For example, is it easy to find the specialists to do the restoration in China? Or the building codes, et cetera.

Dr Wang Lin
01:18:51

Thank you. It’s a very technical question. (Nervous chuckle). Actually, I think we really [have a] lack of technical experts for historic preservation. The reason why Shanghai pays much attention is because we have some very famous universities, like Tongji University—I
graduated from there—and also Fudan University, [where] they have a lot of professors who focus on that like my professor Ruan Yishan, he was very, very famous in historic preservation. So, but we now have...more education is very important.

In the meantime, the craftmen for traditional building skills are very rare. So, I think it’s very important for us to do such kinds of education and protection for them. And in the meantime, I think it’s really, really important that we educate the people—young people, young generation, [because] they have the real awareness of what is the culture means. So, that’s very, very important. There’s a spirit[ual] thing, a cultural thing is the culture not...I like the word, “Historic preservation is not for the past, it’s for the future.” So, there’s a word...hmm...URA or CLC? mentioned. So, that’s a real one. It’s not for the past, it’s for the future. So very important[ly], we need to educate more people, train more people for skill, for the protection.

But also actually, we have a lot of boundar[ies] in regulation. For example, fire protection does not permit wooden rebuilding, right? But actually, that’s a very traditional Chinese way to build the new...but why don’t we support that? But actually, if you rebuild a building, wood is always forbidden, generally speaking. Okay, that’s a problem for people to rebuild the building with traditional method[s]. So, we need to innovate and be creative for historic buildings. That’s a lot of [the] problem [that] we face because then people, if we pay a lot of...actually, we really want to protect it, but [we have to] obey the law. So, it’s ridiculous, but that’s a fact.

I suppose what you have shown in your case studies is that the historical preservation or regeneration projects often do challenge us to review existing mindsets, frameworks, policies and regulations to really be performance-based in that sense, what we want. But in this journey, we really do need many more partners from the various industries to come on board and then to create this economy of the future.
Now, with regards to the future and the economy, and for the...you know, very often in Asia in particular, I think we’ve reached a stage where most people can understand the value of heritage buildings. They do appreciate it somewhat, and more owners of especially traditional towns and buildings, buildings in towns—they quite like it because they do see an economic value. But very often the value as you’ve shown in Tianzifang is...or maybe the Yu Yuan or The Bund, it’s got to do with tourism.

Now, tourism is a tool. It can be for good or it can have some side effects. In Singapore, sometimes we do face the challenges: how do you balance tourism and other forms of economic activities in heritage area? What is the best value to the owner and what’s the better value to the city?

Shanghai, you know, tourism in Shanghai is supposed as a growth industry. I remember going to the Yu Gardens district and it was really amazing. There were tourists from the rest of China wanting to see this beautiful garden. But I’m not used to that number of people so I felt quite overwhelmed. So, I was thinking if I lived on that street, maybe I would think carefully, do I want my neighbourhood to be a touristic neighbourhood, you know?

**Are there any particular concerns or new ideas about managing tourism in Shanghai as an industry for the city, especially in the old areas? What are your thoughts on gentrification?**

Dr Wang Lin 01:24:27

That’s a tough question. But good question. I always say good question.

Tourism is always argue [sic arguable] with historic preservation, but I think generally speaking when you preserve a building and when a lot of people take a look of it, maybe that’s a good way to educate people. So, I think it’s a conflict, but we can control it with management. For example, the Forbidden Palace in China, which was very crowded. But I promise you, if you go to the Forbidden Palace today, it will be a very overwhelming experience, that’s not the...But of course, you need to register ahead, you know? They control the amount of the...with
tourists. That’s one way that we can [use to] control and give people a better experiences, like Yu Yuan, right? Because if we control the...we have the...control the entrance and the amount of the tourism, we will give a better [experience]. There’s always a way to do that. But for example for the community, how can you control that? That’s a problem.

In my point of view, you cannot stop people to [sic from] visiting, but we can have more places to visit. (Laughs) So, if we have ten kinds of Tianzifang, it will not be so crowded, okay? (Laughs).

And the next question is about gentrification, right? Actually, I don’t like [to] talk about gentrification. I think sometimes, or general[ly] speaking, when a place that...when we say it’s a little bit gentrified, that means this area is very well preserved, or...yes. For example, Tianzifang had ever been gentrified, but not now. So, I like the gentrifications [sic gentrified] Tianzifang. (Laughs) I have...yes, at that time, Tianzifang is for very boutique shops, for tea...for...

Mr Kelvin Ang 01:27:32

For teahouse?

Dr Wang Lin 01:27:33

Teahouse, and for very well-designed design studio[s]. I think that’s good. It’s good for the historic buildings. But now, it’s too commercial, maybe so...that, is that gentrification?. I think sometimes it depends. So, that means I think it is a really good way that if you don’t make good use of this building, people will move out and the building situation will be bad. So, I think gentrification is not a[n] issue. It’s a fact. You need to accept the facts, and I think no matter [whether] it’s good or not, it’s reality. You just...but sometimes you cannot stop people to change [sic from changing] their places to gentrification and from gentrification to commercial, so it’s kind of a...you cannot stop that. So, I think it’s a fact.

So, the key issue is that is that good for historic preservation? Is that good for conservation of the building? Is that good for the conservation
of the area? If it’s good, we should support it. If not, we try to give some strategy[ies].

For example, I think we still cannot find a strategy to protect Tianzifang to be [sic from being] too crowded. And it’s in a very urgent situation for fire because there are too many restaurant[s]—except for Chinese restaurant[s]. But why Thai food is good? (Laugh) They still need a fire! So, that’s interesting. But they have a regulation: no Chinese food because need big fire. But Thai? Why Thai food is good? Need fire, too! So, interesting, right?

Mr Kelvin Ang

Yeah, interesting. Thank you for sharing that. Yes, sometimes things are just facts, and we have to see what is best for the preferred outcome for an area.

I’d like now to welcome questions from the audience. There are so many of you, it’s so good to see that you [have] all came and stayed, and perhaps I could ask of the audience to do introduce yourself, and to keep your questions shorter so we can have more participation. So, who would like the first question?

Okay. One, two, three, four. So, one, two, three, four. Okay, I just take these four first. Maybe I’ll take two-by-two perhaps, and then we can continue? So, the first gentleman in front? Oh, okay yeah. Sorry.

James

Hello. My name is James Ng. I’m a retired project manager, engineer. I was gratified to see the Facebook, beautiful Facebook office in Shanghai in a factory, right? And beautifully designed. When Singaporeans travel to Chinese cities, the usual comment is that we are quite hooked on connectivity on our iPhone or iPad. Is Facebook a work in progress or is it very efficient now in China?

And the second question is how about WhatsApp? So, WhatsApp, Facebook...that’s very important to me. Thank you.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Wang Lin</td>
<td>01:31:35</td>
<td>Sorry, I think that’s a mistake. That’s my mistake. I did not point [out] that that factory is not in China. It’s in the San Fran...it’s in the Los Angeles, in the Bay. Yeah, sorry about that. (General laughter).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Kelvin Ang</td>
<td>01:32:03</td>
<td>But sometimes in our work, why we have a collaboration with Shanghai is that we do need a platform to share ideas on what’s possible elsewhere, so it can trigger thinking of what’s possible in our own cities as well. Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Chee Tiong      | 01:32:36 | I’m Tan Chee Tiong, I’m a practicing architect and town planner. I had the benefit of staying in Shanghai for 10 years, practicing there from 2004 to 2014. So, all the projects that Dr Wang has mentioned—I’m very surprised you were all behind it. Yeah. So, I’m very, very grateful to meet you in person, and such a young lady, and have been involved in such a wonderful project. I’ve been to Tianzifang ten times. Everytime I have friends, I bring [them] to Tianzifang. I don’t bring them to Xintiandi [新天地]. I think Tianzifang represents more [of] Shanghai. I can see how people live in Shikumen [石库门] style of buildings, you know. So, I’m very impressed with that, and I’ve been to The Bund and know the underpass and all that, you know. It’s great. Now, you mentioned at the end about gentrification. I have a little bit of disagreement with you on that, you know? I think everybody [who is] doing conservation know[s] what is gentrification. I think gentrification, it means that it actually affects the original life of the people. You uprooted them. Okay? To me, Tianzifang has no gentrification because you allow the people to stay there [and] operate irrespective of all the shops nearby, upstairs. Life goes on. That is great! That’s why I used that as an example. Even right now, I’m doing a conservation project in Haikou, to revive the old city of the Fuchen in Haikou. I’m using Tianzifang as a case study. Sorry, yeah, it’s great. And my students—I’m an adjunct professor at NUS teaching urban planning and urban design—I tell my student[s] to study the Shanghai Street design guideline published last year. Right? Shanghai is the first
city in China to publish a street design guideline. I mean you are one of the first to publish the urban design guidelines. But the street design guideline was very complete. In fact, I would urge URA to study that. (Audience laughter) Okay? I think we have not done… (Audience applause).

Mr Kelvin Ang
Surely you know it’s not just URA who is to looking at street design.

Chee Tiong
No offend [sic offense] to...

Mr Kelvin Ang
A whole group of partners! Collectively. Collectively, we’ll look at it.

Chee Tiong
No offend [sic offense] to Kelvin because we worked together some years back on Serangoon Road, Balestier Street, you know? So, I think Shanghai has done a fantastic study on streets. And I love Puxi and I hate Pudong. I never want to go to Pudong, I love Puxi. Okay? So, that is because of the streets and Singapore hasn’t done enough. So, I really wish that. I just cut my question short here. Okay, thanks.

Dr Wang Lin
Is there a question? That’s good. It’s good. Yes, I’m one of the consultants of the street guidelines, yes. I think Shanghai really paid attention to that part because actually, every time when I meet someone from foreign countries, I would like to take them to Puxi. And from Puxi, take a look at the Lujiazui. That’s great, but they always ask me why not go to Pudong? I say, I spend an hour to go [there]. If you go, you go yourself. (General laughter)

You know, recent[ly] I have a friend from New York Times and later he decided to go by himself. So, when he was on his airplane, he wrote a letter criticising Pudong. “I hate that. Do [sic Did] you plan that part?” So, when you compare Pudong and Puxi, you will find...because I think Puxi is designed not for car[s], right? Because at that time, we did not have cars. Pudong is designed for cars. So, you can totally feel what kinds of things happen. The strategy is that we tried to change our mind to pay attention to the...not the bird’s view of the city, right? To pay attention to the personal feeling of the street.
So, I think the street guideline, I have one, I can send one to you. But I think actually, I like this part, right? It’s a new building but [with] a lot of old streets, so it’s very active. So, generally speaking, Singapore is a walkable city, a walkable in the downtown, but not the new part, right? But I think, it’s generally speaking, it’s very comfortable compared to Shanghai—which is starting to think of it, but Singapore has already done a lot.

Mr Kelvin Ang

Well, thank you. You’re very kind. I think that…I think Singapore is also interesting because of the different waves of building and planning philosophies being implemented in our country. We have various models that we can now explore. I think planning and fashion sometimes also driven by...okay, planning is also sometimes driven by fashion, I would say. But within it, we should take the best of each period and to see how to get a better future.

So, I do think that for Singapore at the moment, we are moving towards more car-lite, more car-free [streets]. We are investing a lot in public transport, in mass transport. But the lessons we have learnt from our conserved districts, is that it’s not just because of the buildings—but it is the idea of how this scale of urbanism can be adapted to new demands with 21st century city. So, I think we also think that our old fabric is not just for the past, but is to draw lessons for new planning. So, it is always good to think about that.

Now, the other ST. Yes? You have a question at the back. Yes?

ST

My name is ST, I’m a retiree but interested in heritage issues. I’d like to echo what the last speaker said in that how can someone so young as you, Professor Wang Lin, actually be almost single-handedly responsible for the conservation of Shanghai, and obviously in all the other regeneration of life, of the buildings, of the districts, of the areas in Shanghai. So, if you ever think in terms of relocating yourself, (audience laughter) I think Singapore will very warmly welcome you. (Applause).
I think there are just two issues that I’d like to bring up from your presentation. One is about street[s], preservation of the street scene. And as you were talking, I was trying to think of roads or streets in Singapore that is equivalent to maybe some that you have shown. And I can’t think of one. I mean we often think in terms of Orchard Road as the shopping centre if you like, economic shopping centre, life of Singapore. But other than that, I can’t think of an equivalent of say, The Bund. I mean, our shoreline was in the area of Beach Road and Bras Basah Road. But then, everything has shifted, at least a mile towards the sea! So, whatever is currently actually lively in terms of the arts scene in Singapore, et cetera, is actually in the sea! Along the Esplanade! So really, there’s no equivalent as far as I can think of, other than Bras Basah and Beach Road. And if you see what transformation, if you like, rather than preservation of what’s been done in Bras Basah, I think it falls very far short of whatever you have done as far as The Bund is concerned. Because the civic district, the open areas in Bras Basah are all gone. So it’s a sadness for me because I grew up knowing Bras Basah Road for what it is—but it’s no longer there.

Now, the other issue that you brought forth beside the preservation of specific buildings, of areas, is the environment issue that you brought forth. And I think that the fringe areas, as far as the conserved areas in Singapore is something that has been, to my mind, totally neglected. Although we have identified the conservation areas in Singapore—Chinatown, Little India, et cetera, we have not actually given much thought. I mean, Kelvin, (audience laughs) really to the fringe areas, you know, so that a beautiful area like Duxton Plain has got this huge concrete wall just next to it. I think you all know. Singaporeans will know what I mean. The Pinnacle—seven blocks of 50 storeys next to Duxton Plain. So, my question to you, Professor Wang, is what do you think about fringe areas, in terms of identified conservation areas? Should they be protected as well? Thank you.

Dr Wang Lin
01:43:32

Thank you for your question. Actually, I think it’s my fortune that I sit in my position and do something I need to do, and it’s my fortune I get
support from my leaders. So, that’s my fortune. So, I really appreciate your...

So, about the questions. Actually, I have just been [to] Singapore twice and this is...so I spend here for only ten days [al]together, but I really think it [would be] good if we have a[n] area to be preserved and then, we have area next to it, to be controlled in the landscape issues.

In Shanghai, we have...we defined 12 areas—[we] not only control the individual buildings, but also the whole areas, the height. But Shanghai’s just like Singapore because the boundaries are so small, and actually there are so many people mov[ing] in. We cannot stop it, especially in Shanghai, so we still need to build new buildings. So, I do, I really think that Singapore, in my point of view, of course you mentioned there are a lot of problem[s], but I still feel that Singapore—although there is a lot of area with very high density, it’s still very walkable and very comfortable. And you have so many green space[s]. Huge green spaces among the high-rise buildings, towers. It’s a very good strategy to keep high density and to have a lower high density for greenery. So, it’s a very good strategy.

I think Shanghai lost its...yes, we cannot demolish buildings and build greenery space, so we lost our chance. But I think we need to learn a lot. But of course, I think maybe we can make a better quality for the streets, for people to walk. That’s a very important thing for Shanghai, and for Singapore. Okay, thank you.

**Mr Kelvin Ang**
01:43:50

Maybe just the final two questions and then the gentleman in... and then Gabriel at the back. So, these two final questions please.

**Eng Huat**
01:46:39

Hi, my name is Chew Eng Huat. I’m an architect and planner. I saw the plan you first started with your talk, the circular wall of Shanghai City. I was recently in Beijing—not doing a project in Beijing, I did a lot of work in China, still doing it, mostly in urban design. While I’m not doing a project in Beijing, but I went there because of some related issues in Beijing. But when I was in Beijing, I realised that Beijing actually has lost
a lot. Especially this straight-line geometry, this great wall city wall. And I was told that the last thing remaining on this wall is actually the gate. The southern gate. Only one gate left. The rest are rebuilt or not original. But then when I looked at the city plan of Shanghai, the wall, you showed, it was actually...not seeing it for the first time, but each time I look at it, I thought it’s something spectacular. To me, it’s almost like a fantastic deviation from the straight line, from the square. And as most of you know, the square and the circle represent a lot in Chinese planning and symbolism and so much. It’s like heaven and earth. Heaven is the circle. The square is the earth.

So, in Shanghai, I would like to ask you, have there been any visions or any plans or any proposals which have been inspired by this wall? And if you were to do it, what would you like to do about this wall? Any chance of bringing it back or somehow inspired by it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr Kelvin Ang</th>
<th>01:48:16</th>
<th>And the next question please.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eng Huat</td>
<td>01:48:19</td>
<td>And first thing is how do you help us locate it as a kind of overlay, over city, where is it? I do not know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Kelvin Ang</td>
<td>01:48:28</td>
<td>That, and then the final question by Gabriel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel</td>
<td>01:48:36</td>
<td>Hi, my name is Gabriel, I’m from the ICOMOS [International Council on Monuments and Sites] and I just want to... Actually, the study that you’ve done is I believe part of the historical urban landscape strategy for China, isn’t it? So, I think that’s quite commendable. My question is primarily on the types of heritage or buildings that you’re looking at. I know that you’ve shared the industrial heritage as something that you’re looking at, but have you studied housing estates or more high-rise housing estates as something that you want to preserve as well? Thanks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Wang Lin</td>
<td>01:49:22</td>
<td>Thank you. That’s a good question. First question is about the round city wall, right? Actually, we still have some original round city wall heritage there. But I think [when] compared with other wonderful Chinese heritage walls, I think it’s a principle not to rebuild [a] realm if it [had] already been demolished. We just protect what we should protect, what</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
has already... still exists. So, it’s a general principle that we do not do that kind of things. Sometimes we do that for tourists, but I don’t like it, generally speaking. That’s my point of view.

The second is about the...means not only industrial heritage but some residential area. Actually, two years ago, we defined more than 200 blocks, so to be as a block, they need to be preserved. So, about 20 communities, like working house communities, Chaoyang Xin Cun [朝阳新村], was preserved. And we have also high-rise, the first high-rise residential building in Xujiahui, Chao Xibei Lu [徐家汇,朝西北路] was preserved, are in the listed building[s].

And also, some village, that we call village, which was built in 1970 to 1980, was preserved. So, we started to do that kind of things. And in the meantime, we also preserved some building[s] which are very typical buildings which were famous in the late 1990s. But a developer wanted to demolish this building [and] transform it from office building to a hotel. But because this building was the image of Shanghai modernization, a lot of artists, a lot of citizens did not agree to demolish it and build a new one—although the FAR is the same. So, finally we renovated, we changed the three floors to two floors, because the rate is really lower, right? So, we still preserved the image of the high-rise building. So, it’s [these] kinds of things that [sic where] we preserve something not only because of its beauty, but also because of its memory of a group of people or of the citizens. So, that’s one thing I need to do, we need to do.

I think, with that I thought it’s something to think about. I mean I will ask this final question. For Tianzifang and this 1990s building of Shanghai’s modernity, you always mentioned people and artists, as sort of driving factors in shaping public perception. And you talked about the image of the city, like the street, the image of the city for its citizens. This image, to what extent do you think the artists have a role in shaping the understanding of the people of their own city? I mean the artists, you
know, what they paint, what they write, I don’t know. And with that actually, between Pudong and Puxi, looking in the future, do you see that they will continue to compete in terms of which side represents Shanghai? Between, you know, what the Shanghainese saying “This is my city.” You know, “my city is Pudong”, or “my city is Puxi”. This interaction between the artists’ creation and the citizen’s own feeling[s]. Perhaps you could share on that?

Dr Wang Lin 01:54:32
Really a tough question. (General laughter) Yes. For me, of course, I like Puxi very much. But actually, a lot of foreigner[s], they like to live in Pudong because the atmosphere is good, the road[s] are wide, are wider. (Laughs) And yes, but generally speaking, people don’t like the Lujiazui [陆家嘴], the CBD. Because [when] compared to here, the high-rise building is good, but the pedestrian space, public space is too bad, is too bad for people... So, we...there’s some professor[s] in universities [who] start to think that we need to add some FAR between buildings to narrow [the] streets. Yes. I think [that] might not be legal, right? But why not, right? Maybe someday we need to narrow the streets and transit the public space to private space because [it’s] for the...for people, right? So, for the good urban space.

So, I think...I always say that we need to do something with innovation like art. They always have [the] dream and innovation, that dream to do something that really good for the city. So, I think we need to do some research, and also we need to challenge our regulation[s]—if the regulation[s] are good or are still good and are good for today’s life. So, I think it’s very important. We should, we can argue and we can still have a very...how to say, open-minded. To be open-minded to any change which is good, real good for the city. It’s not the law, not the act, not the regulation. We should develop, we should explore what is really good for the city.

So, that’s a very important thing. (Applause)

Mr Kelvin Ang 01:57:10
Thank you very much, Dr Wang, for reminding us to be open. Please, another round of applause for Dr Wang. (Applause)
[Transcript ends at 01:57:18]
LECTURE INFORMATION

TITLE
Shanghai: Lessons in Urban Regeneration and Heritage Conservation

SPEAKER
Dr Wang Lin
Professor, Architecture Department, Design School, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

MODERATOR
Mr Kelvin Ang
Director, Conservation Department (Conservation Management), URA

DATE
21 April 2018

LOCATION
URA Function Hall

DURATION
1 Hour 57 Minutes 23 Seconds

Note:
Readers of this document should bear in mind that the transcript is a verbatim recording of the spoken word and reflects the informal, conversational style that may be inherent in the process. The Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC) is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the text nor the views expressed therein; these are for the reader to judge.

[ ] are used for insertions, after the interview. The information is not necessarily contained in the original recording.

All rights in the recording and transcript, including the right to copy, publish, broadcast and perform, are reserved to the CLC. Permission is required should you wish to use the transcript for any purpose.