1. Context

In 2019, the urbanization rate in China has exceeded 60%. People's academic and social discussions on urban design have become more and more populated. Unlike the urbanization in Western countries that has gone through many centuries, China's rapid urbanization has occurred in recent decades. Faced with this rapid development, people need to summarize this process more systematically and grasp various experiences from a historical perspective. In the context of the rapid transformation of social, economic and cultural elements, the spatial structure, history, and culture of Chinese cities are all facing the requirements of transformation.

Global cities are in a special period of transition. Public life has been paralyzed for almost two years since the Covid-19 outbreak. Planners and urban researchers have been speculating for months about the consequences of the pandemic for urban development and urban planning, for mobility in the city, for work and living, for culture and the cultural economy, as well as for the budgets of the municipalities. The consequences for tourism and rural areas are also discussed, but above all the question of whether everything will stay as it was after the pandemic, or whether and what and where something will change.

2. Aims of conference

The International Conference on "People-oriented Urban Design" provides an important platform for Sino-foreign exchanges, aiming to discuss the significance of urban design in the world. The conference also aims to promote a global dialogue on urban design and deepen the discussion from different methodological perspectives. In the context of sustainable urbanization, there is a trend of renewed attention to urban design in the world. The speeches during the conference discussed a series of major issues in urban design, which can also be regarded as the core challenges faced by cities in different regions of the world.

Since more than five decades, and under the label of urban regeneration or urban revitalisation, many cities in western countries have initiated urban renewal policies and
strategies. Urban design practice also experienced a series of transformation. Learning from successes and failures they have experienced how to process regeneration projects, which meet the expectations of public and private stakeholders while considering the obvious fears of residents, small businesses and property owners. What can be learnt from these cities, from their policies and strategies, their projects, their successes and their failures? What are the mechanisms of regeneration processes, what the legal and financial instruments to address the manifold challenges with which cities in US and Europe are confronted when initiating and implementing regeneration projects.

The development of urban design has always relied on the exchange of international experience. Whether it is historical or today’s urban design practices and ideas, they are all creative activities based on local conditions. Emphasis on learning from the international community and acting locally! What must be pointed out here is that urban design is not just to find new spatial forms. Urban design itself must integrate the demands of all aspects of society, taking into account the overall needs of society, economic development, and respect for history and culture. Urban design cannot only be considered from an academic perspective, but must always respond to current urgent tasks.

3. Structure of the Symposium

The symposium will cover the three dimensions in three half days. The keynot speakers from China and western countries will give introduction into the conference. Due to the pandemic, participating speakers will participate online. For each sub-theme, one speaker from foreign country and three more spekares in China will contribute Chinese reflections on the respective field.

The suggested symposium will explore the implications for China, thereby focussing on the implications for cities and regions. Roughly the implications are in three fields:

Section 1 Contribution to maintaining the diversity and social cohesion of cities and regions

Section 2 Placemaking between built heritage and living city:

Section 3 Urban design models in technical transition:

The conference will explore people oriented urban developments in China in these three fields.

Yi Xin, Nanjing, 25.09.2023