

# Podcast Episode

**Season 1, Episode 3: Benjamin Cha, Chief Executive of Grosvenor Group Asia**

**Pacific**

**From the Voices of ULI**

Date: December 09, 2021

00:00:04 --> 00:00:08: Hi, I'm Scott Dunn and welcome to the first season  
00:00:08 --> 00:00:10: of Voices of ULIA podcast.  
00:00:10 --> 00:00:12: Brought to you by the Urban Land Institute,  
00:00:12 --> 00:00:18: Asia Pacific. In conversation with thought leaders and industry experts,  
00:00:18 --> 00:00:21: I'll be asking them to reflect personally on their career  
00:00:21 --> 00:00:22: journeys,  
00:00:22 --> 00:00:25: particularly on the actions that they've made that have had  
00:00:26 --> 00:00:30: significant impact on land use and development today and what  
00:00:30 --> 00:00:34: their vision holds for the future of our communities that  
00:00:34 --> 00:00:38: we live in. In today's episode,  
00:00:38 --> 00:00:40: we'll be talking to Benjamin Shaw,  
00:00:40 --> 00:00:44: who is the CEO of Grosvenor Asia Pacific.  
00:00:44 --> 00:00:47: Ben, welcome to voices of you all.  
00:00:47 --> 00:00:50: I I wanted to start a little bit with your  
00:00:50 --> 00:00:51: early days.  
00:00:51 --> 00:00:53: Where was it that you grew up and what were  
00:00:54 --> 00:00:55: some of those influences  
00:00:55 --> 00:00:58: that you had early in your career that really helped  
00:00:58 --> 00:01:01: you think about urbanization and real estate development.  
00:01:03 --> 00:01:05: To be here with you Scott.  
00:01:05 --> 00:01:09: I grew up in the United States and Hong Kong  
00:01:09 --> 00:01:14: so very much a bicultural childhood bicultural actually hold my  
00:01:14 --> 00:01:18: whole life in terms of early influences urbanization,  
00:01:18 --> 00:01:21: I'd probably point to two things.  
00:01:21 --> 00:01:23: One is just a lot of travel,

00:01:23 --> 00:01:26: seeing different cities, different places,  
 00:01:26 --> 00:01:30: especially both in the US and elsewhere,  
 00:01:30 --> 00:01:33: but in particular in Asia when I started.  
 00:01:33 --> 00:01:36: As a fresh grad in the Jordan grass and management  
 00:01:36 --> 00:01:37: training program,  
 00:01:37 --> 00:01:42: and I was crowded with with another empty from Hongkong  
 00:01:42 --> 00:01:43: Land,  
 00:01:43 --> 00:01:46: I was I was counted to Mandarin Hotel group and  
 00:01:46 --> 00:01:49: he was quoted to Hongkong Land and we were sent  
 00:01:49 --> 00:01:52: to go live and work in in Beijing.  
 00:01:52 --> 00:01:55: Towards sort of some of the things that you learned  
 00:01:55 --> 00:01:57: from the maths and program.  
 00:01:58 --> 00:02:01: So we were. We were doing a lot of feasibility  
 00:02:01 --> 00:02:02: studies,  
 00:02:02 --> 00:02:03: a lot of site inspection.  
 00:02:03 --> 00:02:07: We were learning about the laws at the time around  
 00:02:07 --> 00:02:09: ownership and development,  
 00:02:09 --> 00:02:11: and you know those are the early days in terms  
 00:02:11 --> 00:02:13: of property development in China.  
 00:02:13 --> 00:02:15: So we've learned a lot about the markets,  
 00:02:15 --> 00:02:19: learn a lot about how an international firm which has  
 00:02:19 --> 00:02:23: you know which has had and had this still does  
 00:02:23 --> 00:02:25: have interests all over the world.  
 00:02:25 --> 00:02:28: But in particular in different parts of Asia would look  
 00:02:28 --> 00:02:28: at.  
 00:02:28 --> 00:02:32: Markets like China, which at the time were were very  
 00:02:32 --> 00:02:36: young and and and only just starting to modernize.  
 00:02:36 --> 00:02:38: Urbanize see new office towers,  
 00:02:38 --> 00:02:43: new hotels, different typologies in terms of the built  
 environment,  
 00:02:43 --> 00:02:46: start to see you know the beginnings of of some  
 00:02:46 --> 00:02:47: pretty significant,  
 00:02:47 --> 00:02:50: but what would ultimately be pretty significant population  
 growth,  
 00:02:50 --> 00:02:55: infrastructure growth, transportation connectivity, etc.  
 00:02:55 --> 00:02:58: You're in China, kind of as this first wave of  
 00:02:58 --> 00:03:01: transformation was starting to happen.  
 00:03:01 --> 00:03:05: Where you had this amazing amount of requirement just to  
 00:03:05 --> 00:03:10: house people to create employment centers to build things at  
 00:03:10 --> 00:03:11: that time?  
 00:03:11 --> 00:03:13: What were some of the projects that you were working  
 00:03:13 --> 00:03:13: on?  
 00:03:14 --> 00:03:17: Yep, so I worked on a couple of number of

00:03:17 --> 00:03:18: different projects.

00:03:18 --> 00:03:23: But in Shanghai in particular Mandarin at the time was

00:03:23 --> 00:03:28: looking at joint venturing with Portman Group on what was

00:03:28 --> 00:03:31: one of the first generation of mixed use.

00:03:31 --> 00:03:33: You know hotel, residential, office,

00:03:33 --> 00:03:36: retail, mixed use projects. Obviously Nanjing Road so you know

00:03:36 --> 00:03:38: it's obviously still standing today.

00:03:38 --> 00:03:40: Back then that was first generation.

00:03:40 --> 00:03:43: We were looking at at getting involved in that project

00:03:43 --> 00:03:47: when they were rebranding the hotel and also looking at

00:03:47 --> 00:03:49: other projects with Department Group.

00:03:49 --> 00:03:54: Projects in Shanghai. Similar projects that didn't come to fruition

00:03:54 --> 00:03:58: or were acquisitions in Beijing and then similar formats usually

00:03:59 --> 00:04:02: smaller scale in other cities in mainland China.

00:04:02 --> 00:04:05: So you know good exposure to as you were referring

00:04:05 --> 00:04:06: to earlier.

00:04:06 --> 00:04:08: Kind of first generation mixed use projects.

00:04:08 --> 00:04:12: First generation mixed use developments.

00:04:12 --> 00:04:16: Multicomponent residential hotel office retail projects.

00:04:16 --> 00:04:20: The first Plaza 66 came up during that generation.

00:04:20 --> 00:04:23: Shouldn't ND would come up a few years later,

00:04:23 --> 00:04:25: but also of that vintage?

00:04:25 --> 00:04:28: How much was it important that the long term plan

00:04:28 --> 00:04:29: for that neighborhood?

00:04:29 --> 00:04:33: That district played a role in terms of your decisions

00:04:33 --> 00:04:35: on moving forward?

00:04:35 --> 00:04:39: Good question. I don't think the vocabulary back then was

00:04:39 --> 00:04:43: necessarily what it is today in terms of planning.

00:04:43 --> 00:04:49: But platters still had similar ideas and concepts in terms

00:04:49 --> 00:04:50: of,

00:04:50 --> 00:04:53: you know, a project and whether it be an office

00:04:53 --> 00:04:55: tower or shopping mall or whatever.

00:04:55 --> 00:04:58: The concepts we don't, so you know back then,

00:04:58 --> 00:05:00: the language wasn't really what it was today.

00:05:00 --> 00:05:03: But people still cared about hey,

00:05:03 --> 00:05:05: this needs to connect with the rest of the city,

00:05:05 --> 00:05:09: the street, the transportation. I think perhaps there was less

00:05:09 --> 00:05:13: sensitivity to it because developers didn't necessarily think that way.

00:05:13 --> 00:05:18: Again in mainland China, certainly you know shouldn't ND

00:05:18 --> 00:05:22: was  
 00:05:22 --> 00:05:25: one of the first where was very pedestrian oriented,  
 00:05:25 --> 00:05:26: very street facing, open air and many,  
 00:05:26 --> 00:05:29: many places. Most of the places,  
 00:05:29 --> 00:05:30: at least in the very initial phases of development that  
 00:05:30 --> 00:05:33: was back then.  
 00:05:33 --> 00:05:34: That was a completely different approach that wasn't a  
 00:05:34 --> 00:05:38: project  
 00:05:38 --> 00:05:40: that we were directly involved with,  
 00:05:40 --> 00:05:41: but seeing it seeing it come to life was was  
 00:05:41 --> 00:05:43: exceptional.  
 00:05:43 --> 00:05:48: And you know back then it was in today.  
 00:05:48 --> 00:05:50: You know, still very much a.  
 00:05:50 --> 00:05:52: A groundbreaking project. We, as Grosvenor we have the  
 00:05:52 --> 00:05:55: pleasure  
 00:05:55 --> 00:05:56: of partnering with Sean in Nanjing.  
 00:05:56 --> 00:05:58: They they take a lot of the same approach to  
 00:05:58 --> 00:06:00: different projects around may not trying to have done so  
 00:06:00 --> 00:06:04: for a long,  
 00:06:04 --> 00:06:05: long time. But you know,  
 00:06:05 --> 00:06:08: examples of where plating had a role to play.  
 00:06:08 --> 00:06:09: I think we're. Where parents kind of everywhere we went  
 00:06:09 --> 00:06:10: it would,  
 00:06:10 --> 00:06:14: you know, private sector developers didn't always  
 00:06:14 --> 00:06:18: necessarily think beyond  
 00:06:18 --> 00:06:22: the building boundary.  
 00:06:22 --> 00:06:27: I found it fascinating during that that time period where  
 00:06:27 --> 00:06:28: you'd have these single developments or a project like  
 00:06:28 --> 00:06:32: shanked,  
 00:06:32 --> 00:06:35: NDR, Jinji Lake, or you know these kind of milestone  
 00:06:35 --> 00:06:38: projects that someone took a little bit of an adventurous  
 00:06:38 --> 00:06:41: approach,  
 00:06:41 --> 00:06:44: often adopted a very international idea brought in.  
 00:06:44 --> 00:06:47: Usually people from from around the world to help in  
 00:06:47 --> 00:06:50: terms of executing on these projects.  
 00:06:50 --> 00:06:54: Then they would come off exceptionally well and all of  
 00:06:54 --> 00:06:57: a sudden it became this kind of gold standard to  
 00:06:57 --> 00:07:00: then repeat 'cause you had hundreds of cities kind of  
 going through the same sort of transformation also.  
 And everybody wanted attendees, everybody wanted Jinji  
 Lake and I  
 guess I speak about that in terms of trying to  
 deal with the quality of these projects as they get

00:07:00 --> 00:07:02: replicated in multiple cities.  
 00:07:03 --> 00:07:05: Yeah, no, you're absolutely right.  
 00:07:05 --> 00:07:07: D bowl. You know very much tried to take a  
 00:07:07 --> 00:07:09: cookie cutter approach.  
 00:07:09 --> 00:07:13: Uhm, I think along the way as I think you're  
 00:07:13 --> 00:07:18: suggesting some of the authenticity or the sensitivity too.  
 00:07:18 --> 00:07:21: This surrounding environment. May have gotten lost.  
 00:07:21 --> 00:07:24: Uhm? But I think, yeah,  
 00:07:24 --> 00:07:27: I mean the the positive way to look at it  
 00:07:27 --> 00:07:30: is that people saw that a certain formula or certain  
 00:07:30 --> 00:07:34: approach to quality and sensitivity to their surrounding  
 environment worked  
 00:07:34 --> 00:07:36: and try to do it elsewhere.  
 00:07:36 --> 00:07:38: I think the negatives are obviously I think is you're  
 00:07:38 --> 00:07:39: alluding to,  
 00:07:39 --> 00:07:42: you know just transplanting something that worked in one  
 place  
 00:07:42 --> 00:07:45: to another city with a different historical,  
 00:07:45 --> 00:07:50: architectural, built environment context. Didn't,  
 00:07:50 --> 00:07:53: you know, wasn't a guarantee of success and also.  
 00:07:53 --> 00:07:55: It's kind of a little bit of a Disneyland approach,  
 00:07:55 --> 00:07:57: which you kind of build the same thing no matter  
 00:07:57 --> 00:07:58: where you are in the world,  
 00:07:58 --> 00:08:00: and that that has a lot of limitations.  
 00:08:01 --> 00:08:05: You know? Discovery Bay, I think is an incredible example.  
 00:08:05 --> 00:08:08: Early on I I lived in Discovery Bay for a  
 00:08:08 --> 00:08:09: couple years,  
 00:08:09 --> 00:08:12: so I kind of understand the nuances in terms of  
 00:08:12 --> 00:08:15: lower carbon pedestrianization no cars.  
 00:08:15 --> 00:08:19: So maybe what was special about that kind of development  
 00:08:19 --> 00:08:20: model?  
 00:08:20 --> 00:08:22: And how did you take some of those parts and  
 00:08:22 --> 00:08:24: then be able to expand that?  
 00:08:24 --> 00:08:26: There's other types of projects,  
 00:08:26 --> 00:08:29: yeah, I mean, I had had the privilege and pleasure  
 00:08:29 --> 00:08:31: of working on a number of projects with in Discovery  
 00:08:31 --> 00:08:32: Bay and it was.  
 00:08:32 --> 00:08:34: It was always hugely exciting,  
 00:08:34 --> 00:08:39: but also a real eye opener in terms of the  
 00:08:39 --> 00:08:44: challenges of mixed use at a very large scale.  
 00:08:44 --> 00:08:49: And the complexity of having to deliver a service amenity  
 00:08:49 --> 00:08:55: product in in a very large scale residential environment and

00:08:55 --> 00:08:59: all of the in particularly infrastructure,  
00:08:59 --> 00:09:05: transportation, ferries, buses. You know the restrictions on private car  
00:09:05 --> 00:09:06: ownership,  
00:09:06 --> 00:09:08: golf carts, getting people in.  
00:09:08 --> 00:09:12: It was a real eye opener and and and a  
00:09:12 --> 00:09:14: real wake up call.  
00:09:14 --> 00:09:18: In many ways, on the less glamorous kind of nitty  
00:09:18 --> 00:09:21: gritty of how do you actually deliver quality in a  
00:09:21 --> 00:09:24: in in that format in in a large scale,  
00:09:24 --> 00:09:27: mixed use format. In particular,  
00:09:27 --> 00:09:29: I think mixed use that has it.  
00:09:29 --> 00:09:34: It's very heavy in terms of residential and also in  
00:09:34 --> 00:09:35: terms of you know,  
00:09:35 --> 00:09:37: how do you deliver that financially?  
00:09:39 --> 00:09:40: You know very, very challenging,  
00:09:40 --> 00:09:43: but you have to run and build the infrastructure.  
00:09:43 --> 00:09:46: And also have the cash flow,  
00:09:46 --> 00:09:50: which doesn't necessarily generate a lot of cash flow sometimes  
00:09:50 --> 00:09:52: is is is loss making and then be able to  
00:09:52 --> 00:09:55: continue to build a place that sort of Discovery Bay  
00:09:55 --> 00:09:59: encapsulated. So residential development for strata sale,  
00:09:59 --> 00:10:04: selling residential units by phase was a way to generate  
00:10:04 --> 00:10:09: cash flow to continue to build infrastructure in a normal  
00:10:09 --> 00:10:10: urban environment.  
00:10:10 --> 00:10:14: The infrastructure is usually delivered by the government.  
00:10:14 --> 00:10:15: Transportation is run by, you know,  
00:10:15 --> 00:10:19: the subway company MTR. In the case of Hong Kong.  
00:10:19 --> 00:10:24: Uhm, but having it be such large scale and it  
00:10:24 --> 00:10:26: was just it was.  
00:10:26 --> 00:10:28: It was a phenomenal privilege and opportunity.  
00:10:28 --> 00:10:30: But also it was it was.  
00:10:30 --> 00:10:34: It was a real eye opener in terms of complexity.  
00:10:34 --> 00:10:39: Uhm, you know that the district councillor Discovery Bay became  
00:10:39 --> 00:10:43: very anti development which gummed up a lot of the  
00:10:43 --> 00:10:47: work of HK are in terms of delivering certain things  
00:10:47 --> 00:10:51: to residents transportation always complex,  
00:10:51 --> 00:10:53: phasing always complex. So  
00:10:53 --> 00:10:54: I was going to ask you about  
00:10:54 --> 00:10:56: a boat West Cologne actually.  
00:10:56 --> 00:10:58: I mean maybe could you could talk a little bit

00:10:58 --> 00:10:58: about your role.

00:10:58 --> 00:11:01: I know that the museum is opening up.

00:11:01 --> 00:11:05: In November, I mean that must be incredibly proud moment

00:11:05 --> 00:11:07: for you in terms of that actually happening.

00:11:07 --> 00:11:10: 'cause West Kelowna as a district as being you know,

00:11:10 --> 00:11:14: talked about planned for quite some time now,

00:11:14 --> 00:11:17: so maybe talk a little bit about your role and

00:11:17 --> 00:11:19: how it's progressing now.

00:11:19 --> 00:11:22: So I sit on the board of both the West

00:11:22 --> 00:11:24: Kowloon Cultural District,

00:11:24 --> 00:11:26: so it's the main governing body for the entire district.

00:11:26 --> 00:11:28: And then I also sit on the board of the

00:11:28 --> 00:11:29: M Plus Museum,

00:11:29 --> 00:11:32: which is obviously it's specific to the M Plus.

00:11:32 --> 00:11:34: Museum which which will open in November.

00:11:34 --> 00:11:36: So just to be clear,

00:11:36 --> 00:11:42: the ICC and the office tower there is the shopping

00:11:42 --> 00:11:42: mall.

00:11:42 --> 00:11:46: The airport from airport station Mgr,

00:11:46 --> 00:11:51: but that that's outside of the West Kowloon Cultural District

00:11:51 --> 00:11:52: is adjacent to it.

00:11:52 --> 00:11:54: And the high speed rails also adjacent to but not

00:11:54 --> 00:11:56: part of West common cultural districts.

00:11:56 --> 00:12:01: So they're not sort of within the best Kowloon Cultural

00:12:01 --> 00:12:02: District mandate,

00:12:02 --> 00:12:06: but they are absolutely important in terms of.

00:12:06 --> 00:12:11: The district connecting with. Close the high speed rail which

00:12:11 --> 00:12:16: connects with with Shenzhen and Guangzhou and mainland

00:12:16 --> 00:12:19: China,

00:12:16 --> 00:12:19: but also in terms of ICC.

00:12:19 --> 00:12:22: And just where you know less colon is on the

00:12:22 --> 00:12:22: waterfront,

00:12:22 --> 00:12:24: its face is the harbor.

00:12:24 --> 00:12:27: It's a 40 hectare district.

00:12:27 --> 00:12:32: And it it connect that I see the high speed

00:12:32 --> 00:12:32: rail,

00:12:32 --> 00:12:36: the street access to even you know.

00:12:36 --> 00:12:38: Eventually Canton Rd, for example.

00:12:38 --> 00:12:42: This is how this district connects with the rest of

00:12:42 --> 00:12:46: this part of the Calvin Peninsula and the population and

00:12:46 --> 00:12:49: the life of the rest of Hong Kong.

00:12:49 --> 00:12:50: Yes, it's taken a long,

00:12:50 --> 00:12:53: long time. It has been delayed multiple times,  
 00:12:53 --> 00:12:56: and it's been, and it will continue to be a  
 00:12:56 --> 00:12:58: very very super long term project.  
 00:12:58 --> 00:13:01: And I think anything of the scale by nature will  
 00:13:01 --> 00:13:02: be long term.  
 00:13:02 --> 00:13:06: Part of it though, does have to do with the  
 00:13:06 --> 00:13:13: ambition and also the original Norman Foster designed the  
 00:13:13 --> 00:13:13: master  
 00:13:13 --> 00:13:16: plan,  
 00:13:16 --> 00:13:18: the MLP for the project,  
 00:13:18 --> 00:13:20: and what the district this is a little bit,  
 00:13:20 --> 00:13:22: but this is definitely not a little bit.  
 00:13:22 --> 00:13:26: This is definitely before my time,  
 00:13:26 --> 00:13:27: the commitment of the district in terms of key design  
 00:13:27 --> 00:13:31: decisions.  
 00:13:31 --> 00:13:35: So just give you. To actually just give you one  
 00:13:35 --> 00:13:39: design decision which is ambitious,  
 00:13:39 --> 00:13:44: transformative, but also has has created a lot of delays,  
 00:13:44 --> 00:13:45: the Norman foster plan called for making the district primarily  
 00:13:45 --> 00:13:49: pedestrian,  
 00:13:49 --> 00:13:52: so that one principle immediately moved,  
 00:13:52 --> 00:13:54: all roads, carpark, vehicular access,  
 00:13:54 --> 00:13:59: with the exception of fire access,  
 00:13:59 --> 00:14:02: Eva Underground moved everything. Underground,  
 00:14:02 --> 00:14:03: right? So and Scott, you'll notice much better than I  
 00:14:03 --> 00:14:08: do,  
 00:14:08 --> 00:14:13: right? You do that on Harbourfront land on Harbourfront  
 00:14:13 --> 00:14:20: landfill  
 00:14:20 --> 00:14:24: in your construction times is going to be much longer.  
 00:14:24 --> 00:14:30: The geotechnical, the physical infrastructure that you have to  
 00:14:30 --> 00:14:34: develop  
 00:14:34 --> 00:14:37: in order to support that as a design principle is  
 00:14:37 --> 00:14:41: enormous and keep in mind you have multiple existing  
 00:14:41 --> 00:14:44: subway  
 00:14:44 --> 00:14:48: lines crisscrossing the basement, so if they build around that  
 00:14:48 --> 00:14:52: stuff but in terms of what that will do in  
 00:14:52 --> 00:14:54: terms of place making in in making a district which  
 00:14:54 --> 00:14:57: is pedestrian friendly primarily pedestrian?  
 00:14:57 --> 00:14:58: Early again, but there there is on grade vacul access.  
 00:14:58 --> 00:14:59: There will be electric minibuses.  
 00:14:59 --> 00:15:02: There's no mono rail or anything like that.  
 00:15:02 --> 00:15:05: And then of course there's the VA emergency and fire  
 00:15:05 --> 00:15:08: access,



00:14:58 --> 00:15:00: but otherwise it's going to be.

00:15:00 --> 00:15:01: It's going to be pedestrian,

00:15:01 --> 00:15:03: completely pedestrian oriented

00:15:03 --> 00:15:06: so you think the cost benefit was is going to

00:15:06 --> 00:15:07: be worth it then.

00:15:07 --> 00:15:10: Well, I think as a as a gift to Hong

00:15:10 --> 00:15:12: Kong as a project for Hong Kong,

00:15:12 --> 00:15:14: the outcome will be phenomenal.

00:15:14 --> 00:15:17: It has been painful, will continue to be painful in

00:15:17 --> 00:15:20: terms of delivering this project in terms of costs.

00:15:20 --> 00:15:23: I don't. I'm not sure a private sector developer would

00:15:23 --> 00:15:26: have the appetite or the private sector developer,

00:15:26 --> 00:15:32: shareholders, owners and financial ability to kind of withstand  
or

00:15:33 --> 00:15:38: commit to something like this would really pass any.

00:15:38 --> 00:15:40: For most boards, but from a from a city from

00:15:40 --> 00:15:42: Hong Kong point of view from a city point of

00:15:42 --> 00:15:42: view,

00:15:42 --> 00:15:44: from a built environment point of view,

00:15:44 --> 00:15:48: I think it's a hugely powerful commitment and decision.

00:15:48 --> 00:15:49: We

00:15:49 --> 00:15:52: talked about the model of development and that that initial

00:15:52 --> 00:15:55: village center and that idea of bringing people together I

00:15:55 --> 00:15:58: guess gets into the also an idea in terms of

00:15:58 --> 00:16:00: some of these earlier developments about the,

00:16:01 --> 00:16:04: you know, the neighborhood revitalization.

00:16:04 --> 00:16:06: And how do you attract people in those kind of

00:16:07 --> 00:16:07: places?

00:16:07 --> 00:16:08: We talked a little bit.

00:16:08 --> 00:16:12: Washington D and you know more of the the adaptive

00:16:12 --> 00:16:13: reuse.

00:16:13 --> 00:16:15: Some of the arts and culture and how you use

00:16:15 --> 00:16:17: culture to draw people together.

00:16:17 --> 00:16:20: And I think this is something that you know in

00:16:20 --> 00:16:24: your current role was grown or that's a component to

00:16:24 --> 00:16:24: it.

00:16:24 --> 00:16:27: And maybe if you can talk a little bit about

00:16:27 --> 00:16:28: how your role is,

00:16:28 --> 00:16:31: is CEO now and and how you think about our

00:16:31 --> 00:16:34: culture and community within the work that you do?

00:16:34 --> 00:16:39: Sure, so it's it's very near and dear to.

00:16:39 --> 00:16:44: Grosvenor, to to take a holistic approach.

00:16:44 --> 00:16:47: To all the projects that we do across the globe,  
00:16:47 --> 00:16:50: this has a lot to do with kind of our  
00:16:50 --> 00:16:53: company DNA and history in terms of.  
00:16:53 --> 00:16:54: The West End of London,  
00:16:54 --> 00:17:00: Mayfair, Belgravia, in particular. So the sensitivity,  
00:17:00 --> 00:17:05: the level of commitment. The experience the track record the  
00:17:05 --> 00:17:06: you know.  
00:17:06 --> 00:17:11: Working with a very wide range of tenants or partners  
00:17:11 --> 00:17:14: of the local council.  
00:17:14 --> 00:17:18: Uh, that's very much part of the Grosvenor DNA.  
00:17:18 --> 00:17:21: We take that approach, even if it's a single building.  
00:17:21 --> 00:17:26: We recently started investing into Ginza in Tokyo,  
00:17:26 --> 00:17:28: so that was three and a half years ago.  
00:17:28 --> 00:17:30: We now have two investments.  
00:17:30 --> 00:17:34: We're looking at a third in this part of Tokyo,  
00:17:34 --> 00:17:37: and the approach is is very much is very similar.  
00:17:37 --> 00:17:39: We want to know where we're investing.  
00:17:39 --> 00:17:40: We want to know what's going on.  
00:17:40 --> 00:17:44: We want our assets or investments to be sensitive to.  
00:17:44 --> 00:17:48: Streetscape, the neighborhood, DJ's and buildings.  
00:17:48 --> 00:17:52: Buildings across the street. We want to know what's  
00:17:52 --> 00:17:53: happening  
00:17:52 --> 00:17:53: in terms of.  
00:17:53 --> 00:17:58: The demographic. Other owners, the local population.  
00:17:58 --> 00:18:00: What NGOs are active? What does the needs of that  
00:18:01 --> 00:18:02: community or does it needs?  
00:18:02 --> 00:18:05: Or are there any groups in particular that that might  
00:18:05 --> 00:18:08: be recipients of some of our philanthropic giving?  
00:18:08 --> 00:18:10: So so we take a holistic approach,  
00:18:10 --> 00:18:13: going back to your question about arts and culture.  
00:18:13 --> 00:18:14: You know, in in Mayfair,  
00:18:14 --> 00:18:17: we have a lot of arts and culture,  
00:18:17 --> 00:18:20: whether it's private sector, whether it's institutional,  
00:18:20 --> 00:18:22: I've involved in Hong Kong,  
00:18:22 --> 00:18:25: obviously in a number of.  
00:18:25 --> 00:18:28: Projects that are mostly so quasi government.  
00:18:28 --> 00:18:31: Well I guess one of them is Jockey Club not  
00:18:31 --> 00:18:33: government which are adaptive.  
00:18:33 --> 00:18:38: Reuse formats where traditional building background in  
00:18:38 --> 00:18:42: particular.  
00:18:38 --> 00:18:42: So that's mean these types of projects are there a  
00:18:42 --> 00:18:43: lot of fun,  
00:18:43 --> 00:18:45: but certainly without. You know,

00:18:45 --> 00:18:48: with this hunk of drug club uncle government,

00:18:48 --> 00:18:51: without government support, that you know the business case in

00:18:51 --> 00:18:54: terms of private sector development is is usually quite challenging.

00:18:55 --> 00:18:58: Something I wanted to talk about in terms of cycles

00:18:58 --> 00:19:02: of the market and being able to smooth out some

00:19:02 --> 00:19:03: of those cycles.

00:19:03 --> 00:19:05: So a lot of the cycles you know,

00:19:05 --> 00:19:08: pressured from from financial markets in terms of how it

00:19:08 --> 00:19:09: goes up and down,

00:19:09 --> 00:19:12: and you can see against the backdrop of what's happening

00:19:12 --> 00:19:15: in China right now where they haven't had this kind

00:19:15 --> 00:19:15: of real.

00:19:15 --> 00:19:17: Pressure on a development cycle.

00:19:17 --> 00:19:20: If you look at London and how it's transformed over

00:19:21 --> 00:19:23: time and then you compare it to kind of what

00:19:23 --> 00:19:27: we started with in terms of the transformation of a

00:19:27 --> 00:19:29: lot of the Asian cities and how they've grown very

00:19:29 --> 00:19:32: quickly and they're starting to go through these cycles now,

00:19:32 --> 00:19:36: so maybe he talked a little bit about that experience

00:19:36 --> 00:19:39: in terms of what Grosvenor is being through as a

00:19:39 --> 00:19:40: company,

00:19:40 --> 00:19:44: the commitment to be having a long term view.

00:19:44 --> 00:19:50: Quality and commitment to thinking holistically about an asset building

00:19:50 --> 00:19:50: project.

00:19:50 --> 00:19:53: I think these you know,

00:19:53 --> 00:19:57: and I would extend this a thinking about neighborhood and

00:19:57 --> 00:19:59: community and thinking holistically,

00:19:59 --> 00:20:03: I would. I would put environmental sensitivity into that category

00:20:03 --> 00:20:05: into that bucket if you will.

00:20:05 --> 00:20:08: These things exactly, everything we're talking about is very much

00:20:08 --> 00:20:09: part of the legacy.

00:20:09 --> 00:20:11: The history of the DNA,

00:20:11 --> 00:20:15: the philosophy, and the culture of Grosvenor after.

00:20:15 --> 00:20:17: 300 plus years and you know,

00:20:17 --> 00:20:20: I think we we take great pride in that it

00:20:20 --> 00:20:23: permeates everything we do across the globe.

00:20:23 --> 00:20:27: I'm pretty safe. It's saying that what's happened in China

00:20:27 --> 00:20:28: in one generation,

00:20:28 --> 00:20:30: and you know, in the past 30 years,

00:20:30 --> 00:20:33: in terms of built environment has been historic.

00:20:33 --> 00:20:37: So what you've seen is in a very short span

00:20:37 --> 00:20:38: of time,

00:20:38 --> 00:20:42: the creation of a huge middle class and the creation

00:20:42 --> 00:20:42: of.

00:20:42 --> 00:20:48: The building, literally the building of you know dozens of

00:20:48 --> 00:20:52: amazing huge significant cities of scale you over,

00:20:52 --> 00:20:58: over 100, a hundred new centers of significant population.

00:20:58 --> 00:20:59: You know China is urbanized.

00:20:59 --> 00:21:02: You have mega cities. You have smaller cities,

00:21:02 --> 00:21:05: are quote unquote smaller cities or cities of like a

00:21:05 --> 00:21:07: million million and a half people.

00:21:07 --> 00:21:09: But that's like same population in San Francisco.

00:21:09 --> 00:21:12: Now obviously you add up Silicon Valley and Oakland,

00:21:12 --> 00:21:13: East Bay, and so on it.

00:21:13 --> 00:21:16: Obviously gets much bigger, but.

00:21:16 --> 00:21:18: So it's been absolutely historic.

00:21:18 --> 00:21:23: I think what's interesting about that pace of urbanization is.

00:21:23 --> 00:21:26: Where to next and and we're trying to figure this

00:21:26 --> 00:21:26: out as Grosvenor,

00:21:26 --> 00:21:29: we are continuing to invest in mainland China.

00:21:29 --> 00:21:33: We've we are focusing on the Greater Bay Area.

00:21:33 --> 00:21:34: In addition to Hong Kong,

00:21:34 --> 00:21:38: we are focusing on the Wired magazine River Delta region.

00:21:38 --> 00:21:42: We've invested twice in the past.

00:21:42 --> 00:21:45: 2 1/2 years. Three years in that drink.

00:21:45 --> 00:21:48: We're actively looking at projects in Shanghai.

00:21:48 --> 00:21:51: We'd love to do something in Guangzhou or Shenzhen or

00:21:51 --> 00:21:53: elsewhere in the Greater Bay.

00:21:53 --> 00:21:57: Uhm, we also recognize that urbanization and some of the

00:21:57 --> 00:22:03: old formats mixed use office developments or mixed use

00:22:03 --> 00:22:08: components,

00:22:03 --> 00:22:08: mixed use developments. Residential office hotel this

00:22:08 --> 00:22:14: typology because of

00:22:08 --> 00:22:14: technology because of lifestyle patterns work patterns

00:22:14 --> 00:22:18: because of e-commerce.

00:22:14 --> 00:22:18: They are also changing, So what format is of the

00:22:18 --> 00:22:20: future for the future?

00:22:20 --> 00:22:23: What what will happen to buildings that were built in

00:22:23 --> 00:22:24: the last generation,

00:22:24 --> 00:22:26: whether they're relevant or as strong?

00:22:26 --> 00:22:30: Are they prepared environmentally? For you know,

00:22:30 --> 00:22:32: for warming, for, for the,  
00:22:32 --> 00:22:35: for the future. These are these are all part of  
00:22:35 --> 00:22:38: the moving parts were certainly trying to figure it out  
00:22:38 --> 00:22:40: and price continued to invest and develop.  
00:22:40 --> 00:22:41: And  
00:22:41 --> 00:22:42: I guess that's where  
00:22:42 --> 00:22:45: I think there will be a lot more adaptive reuse.  
00:22:45 --> 00:22:49: Like you said, in terms of some of these older  
00:22:49 --> 00:22:52: Gray buildings and then to your point earlier on adding  
00:22:53 --> 00:22:56: value that it seems to me that the cities that  
00:22:56 --> 00:22:59: are investing and you could see this in the last  
00:22:59 --> 00:23:02: five or six years that are investing more in the  
00:23:02 --> 00:23:05: environmental aspects of the city and the cities that are  
00:23:05 --> 00:23:09: getting that mixed right and allowing for that bitter bigger  
00:23:09 --> 00:23:10: fabric.  
00:23:10 --> 00:23:15: And I ideally attract better quality developers into those cities.  
00:23:15 --> 00:23:18: To be able to participate in that building out of  
00:23:18 --> 00:23:20: this next evolution of river form,  
00:23:20 --> 00:23:23: absolutely, I would agree with that wholeheartedly.  
00:23:23 --> 00:23:25: I mean, there's a shift going on in China right  
00:23:25 --> 00:23:28: now with the development community and on balance sheets  
and  
00:23:28 --> 00:23:29: those kind of things.  
00:23:29 --> 00:23:32: But ultimately people will survive.  
00:23:32 --> 00:23:33: They'll come out of it,  
00:23:33 --> 00:23:38: and there will be a continued their strong fundamentals in  
00:23:38 --> 00:23:41: terms of the growth of middle Class A flight to  
00:23:41 --> 00:23:42: quality,  
00:23:42 --> 00:23:44: improvement of the urban environment.  
00:23:44 --> 00:23:46: So in all of that.  
00:23:46 --> 00:23:48: There is a lot of competition between us.  
00:23:48 --> 00:23:50: Yes, you know all of these cities,  
00:23:50 --> 00:23:53: so is there certain things that would help in terms  
00:23:53 --> 00:23:56: of what cities could do to attract developers?  
00:23:56 --> 00:23:57: Know? Certainly I think. Well,  
00:23:57 --> 00:23:59: I think first of all I'd say a lot of  
00:23:59 --> 00:24:01: the city governments are doing a lot of the right  
00:24:01 --> 00:24:01: thing,  
00:24:01 --> 00:24:04: so they're making their cities greener.  
00:24:04 --> 00:24:09: They're making their cities more livable for local populations.  
00:24:09 --> 00:24:11: Infrastructure build I think speaks for itself.  
00:24:11 --> 00:24:15: If you look at the connectivity between cities as well

00:24:15 --> 00:24:19: as connectivity and transport infrastructure within cities,  
00:24:19 --> 00:24:21: I think both are impressive.  
00:24:21 --> 00:24:25: I think we would love to see local governments continue  
00:24:25 --> 00:24:26: to do that.  
00:24:26 --> 00:24:30: We would we would like to see local governments to  
00:24:30 --> 00:24:35: continue to make cities less car dependent to continue to  
00:24:35 --> 00:24:36: make cities greener,  
00:24:36 --> 00:24:42: decarbonize. But I think the commitment from the central  
government  
00:24:42 --> 00:24:45: and local governments is is pretty strong.  
00:24:45 --> 00:24:48: We'd love to see, I think in certain cities a  
00:24:48 --> 00:24:51: little bit more control in terms of office supply,  
00:24:51 --> 00:24:56: a lot of cities are oversupplied in terms of office.  
00:24:56 --> 00:24:57: That's probably a little bit at the margin.  
00:24:57 --> 00:25:01: UM, but, uh, I think we're we're very positive in  
00:25:01 --> 00:25:02: terms of what?  
00:25:02 --> 00:25:05: You know what, what, what local governments are doing.  
00:25:05 --> 00:25:06: We just encourage them to do you know,  
00:25:06 --> 00:25:08: to do more? Keep pushing the envelope.  
00:25:09 --> 00:25:11: So voices of Vuelie  
00:25:12 --> 00:25:16: ties in with the mission for Urban Land Institute,  
00:25:16 --> 00:25:19: which is really around shape the future of the built  
00:25:19 --> 00:25:22: environment for transformative impact in communities  
worldwide.  
00:25:22 --> 00:25:25: Ben, what does this statement mean to you?  
00:25:26 --> 00:25:29: Uhm, it it means a ton to me.  
00:25:29 --> 00:25:31: I think it's it. It means the world to me.  
00:25:31 --> 00:25:32: It's a it's a powerful mandate.  
00:25:32 --> 00:25:36: It's a relevant mandate and it's an exciting mandate.  
00:25:36 --> 00:25:39: So cities are where it's happening.  
00:25:39 --> 00:25:41: I don't think that'll change.  
00:25:41 --> 00:25:45: I think Asia is a place that has a ton  
00:25:45 --> 00:25:46: of activity,  
00:25:46 --> 00:25:48: but there's a ton of exciting,  
00:25:48 --> 00:25:52: interesting things that are happening everywhere in the world  
outside  
00:25:52 --> 00:25:53: of Asia,  
00:25:53 --> 00:25:55: in Asia, North America, Europe.  
00:25:55 --> 00:25:57: Elsewhere, I think the line mission is.  
00:25:57 --> 00:26:00: Is is compelling? Again, it's it's powerful,  
00:26:00 --> 00:26:03: it's relevant, it's exciting and fun.  
00:26:04 --> 00:26:09: Yeah, I think the integrated disciplined nature of ULI is  
00:26:09 --> 00:26:09: quite

00:26:09 --> 00:26:11: compelling in terms of being able to bring a lot  
00:26:11 --> 00:26:12: of different  
00:26:12 --> 00:26:16: stakeholders to help to solve some of the complex  
challenges  
00:26:16 --> 00:26:19: that we're facing in our communities.  
00:26:19 --> 00:26:22: And it's being explosive the way  
00:26:22 --> 00:26:25: in which the cities have transformed over the last 20  
00:26:25 --> 00:26:27: years as being incredible.  
00:26:27 --> 00:26:30: And I think over the next 20 years to see  
00:26:30 --> 00:26:32: what will happen is we're incredible  
00:26:32 --> 00:26:35: place to participate in that.  
00:26:35 --> 00:26:35: Yeah,  
00:26:35 --> 00:26:37: totally agree. Absolutely great. So  
00:26:37 --> 00:26:39: Ben thank you  
00:26:39 --> 00:26:40: very much for joining us.  
00:26:40 --> 00:26:41: So I'm voices of your life today.  
00:26:41 --> 00:26:42: It was a great discussion.  
00:26:42 --> 00:26:45: We covered many parts of Asia and it'll be incredibly  
00:26:45 --> 00:26:48: exciting to see where we go from here.  
00:26:48 --> 00:26:50: Thank you Scott. It's been a pleasure,  
00:26:50 --> 00:26:50: a real pleasure.  
00:26:53 --> 00:26:56: Thank you Ben for joining us on this episode of  
00:26:56 --> 00:27:00: Voices of Uli and thank you everyone for listening.  
00:27:00 --> 00:27:03: You're probably listening to this podcast at the ULI Asia  
00:27:03 --> 00:27:08: Pacific Reimagine and I hope you're enjoying this unique  
interactive  
00:27:08 --> 00:27:12: event and find inspiration in reimagining conventional ideas  
about our  
00:27:12 --> 00:27:15: city's business and the life in the ever changing world  
00:27:15 --> 00:27:16: of real estate.  
00:27:20 --> 00:27:21: In the next episode will be  
00:27:21 --> 00:27:27: interviewing Hiromori son, who's the director and executive  
Vice president  
00:27:27 --> 00:27:31: of Maury Building and the chair of you like Japan.

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