



# Webinar

## New Model for Chinese Old Town Redevelopment Presented by SOM

Date: April 24, 2020

00:00:00 --> 00:00:03: The places where we live and learn,  
00:00:03 --> 00:00:06: work and play have a significant impact on our well  
00:00:06 --> 00:00:09: being and our ability to be remarkable.  
00:00:09 --> 00:00:13: How we approach the design of our city affects what  
00:00:13 --> 00:00:13: we do,  
00:00:13 --> 00:00:16: how we do it, and how we feel.  
00:00:16 --> 00:00:20: At the same time, cities must creatively adapt to meet  
00:00:21 --> 00:00:23: the evolving needs of modern life.  
00:00:23 --> 00:00:27: Today Jihong and myself were Cheryl are planning and the  
00:00:27 --> 00:00:31: design thinking for the historic Old Town area in Guangzhou,  
00:00:31 --> 00:00:33: China.  
00:00:33 --> 00:00:36: I would first like to thank Mayor Lynn,  
00:00:36 --> 00:00:39: Miss Sun and the people of Guangzhou for bridging us  
00:00:39 --> 00:00:43: the opportunity for many years of great collaboration in their  
00:00:43 --> 00:00:44: city and also to you all.  
00:00:44 --> 00:00:48: I for creating this important dialogue about design and ways  
00:00:48 --> 00:00:52: to improve the health and well being of our built  
00:00:52 --> 00:00:52: environment.  
00:00:52 --> 00:00:57: These discussions allow us to share ideas and shed light  
00:00:57 --> 00:00:59: on innovative solutions to refresh,  
00:00:59 --> 00:01:04: repurpose and restart parts of our urban centers.  
00:01:04 --> 00:01:06: For a glimpse of the future,  
00:01:06 --> 00:01:09: we started by looking to the past.  
00:01:09 --> 00:01:12: This was the opportunity and the challenge.  
00:01:12 --> 00:01:17: Facing Guangzhou, the Old Town area boasts an amazing  
00:01:17 --> 00:01:22: riverfront.  
00:01:17 --> 00:01:22: Arcade streets that shade pavements and offer a dynamic  
00:01:22 --> 00:01:23: mix  
00:01:22 --> 00:01:23: of old and new.  
00:01:23 --> 00:01:25: And like all great cities,

00:01:25 --> 00:01:28: the Old Town area is defined by the movement of  
00:01:28 --> 00:01:29: people.  
00:01:29 --> 00:01:32: These links spaces vary in scale and experience,  
00:01:32 --> 00:01:38: providing insight to better understanding the underlying  
framework of spaces  
00:01:38 --> 00:01:41: that weave throughout and define the city.  
00:01:41 --> 00:01:45: And through the course of these walks and conversations,  
00:01:45 --> 00:01:49: we began to define the principles of place as related  
00:01:49 --> 00:01:51: to history and heritage,  
00:01:51 --> 00:01:54: cultural resources, unique, architectural, open,  
00:01:54 --> 00:02:00: space and spatial qualities, and the uniqueness and  
character often  
00:02:00 --> 00:02:03: found deep within each neighborhood.  
00:02:03 --> 00:02:07: This thinking continued to guide our research by careful  
mapping  
00:02:07 --> 00:02:09: of these layers of the city,  
00:02:09 --> 00:02:12: trying to uncover the essence of the real Guangzhou.  
00:02:12 --> 00:02:16: These hyperlocal heatmaps helped us to identify the gaps to  
00:02:16 --> 00:02:20: see the relationships and unlock new ways of thinking that  
00:02:20 --> 00:02:22: would inform and inspire ideas.  
00:02:24 --> 00:02:26: This came with clear purpose,  
00:02:26 --> 00:02:28: an intention.  
00:02:28 --> 00:02:32: A vision to establish principles for preservation,  
00:02:32 --> 00:02:39: rehabilitation and reinvestment in Guangzhou's historic Old  
Town area.  
00:02:39 --> 00:02:42: A blueprint like one for the Guangzhou Old Town is  
00:02:42 --> 00:02:44: much more than just buildings.  
00:02:44 --> 00:02:48: It's deeply rooted to guangfu and the cultural identity of  
00:02:48 --> 00:02:49: the area.  
00:02:49 --> 00:02:51: It's all about the connections past,  
00:02:51 --> 00:02:55: present and future. By understanding that the Old Town is  
00:02:56 --> 00:03:00: apart of everything and critical to the vibrancy and energy  
00:03:01 --> 00:03:02: of the entire region.  
00:03:02 --> 00:03:07: We also researched the history and evolution of Guangzhou  
overtime  
00:03:07 --> 00:03:10: incrementally expanding East along the River.  
00:03:10 --> 00:03:15: And with that, the Old Town saw many contemporary  
challenges  
00:03:15 --> 00:03:19: in terms of economic mobility and aging in place.  
00:03:19 --> 00:03:24: Traffic difficulty in connecting points of interest and lack of  
00:03:24 --> 00:03:26: cultural industries and programming.  
00:03:26 --> 00:03:30: But perhaps most challenging was getting people to stay in  
00:03:30 --> 00:03:31: the area.

00:03:31 --> 00:03:34: And as Guangzhou continued to grow,  
 00:03:34 --> 00:03:38: the Old Town was seeing a decrease in overall population.  
 00:03:38 --> 00:03:43: Residents, families and workers were being attracted to  
 newer developments  
 00:03:43 --> 00:03:44: with modern amenities.  
 00:03:44 --> 00:03:47: Appearing in other parts of the city.  
 00:03:47 --> 00:03:51: And the city planners were asking us what type of  
 00:03:51 --> 00:03:54: investments will attract people back?  
 00:03:54 --> 00:03:56: So we asked, we created a process to find a  
 00:03:56 --> 00:04:00: deeper understanding of the real limitations for the area,  
 00:04:00 --> 00:04:03: but to also hear a range of perspectives that highlighted  
 00:04:03 --> 00:04:07: the many cultural and personal narratives of this place.  
 00:04:07 --> 00:04:11: We work collectively with the community to develop the  
 goals,  
 00:04:11 --> 00:04:15: aspirations and principles for the future of the Old Town  
 00:04:15 --> 00:04:16: area.  
 00:04:16 --> 00:04:19: And as miss soon would often remind us all.  
 00:04:19 --> 00:04:26: Old City, new dynamic Old St new activities.  
 00:04:26 --> 00:04:28: Using a series of urban priorities,  
 00:04:28 --> 00:04:33: we created approach that holistically preserves the character  
 of the  
 00:04:33 --> 00:04:38: Old Town while simultaneously creating a sustainable  
 modern city able  
 00:04:38 --> 00:04:42: to accommodate growth and attract further investment.  
 00:04:42 --> 00:04:45: And this was achieved in three simple stages.  
 00:04:45 --> 00:04:53: Nearterm demonstration projects that focus on micro  
 regeneration and wayfinding.  
 00:04:53 --> 00:04:55: A middle term of projects.  
 00:04:55 --> 00:04:59: More around preservation, adaptive reuse and infill,  
 00:04:59 --> 00:05:01: new uses and new buildings,  
 00:05:01 --> 00:05:07: including our continued collaboration with Ben Wood and his  
 team.  
 00:05:07 --> 00:05:10: And 3rd in terms of longer term ideas,  
 00:05:10 --> 00:05:13: neighborhood based Old Town strategies,  
 00:05:13 --> 00:05:20: integrating key projects, prioritizing programming and  
 elements to building place  
 00:05:20 --> 00:05:24: and defining something for everyone.  
 00:05:24 --> 00:05:29: Collectively, these strategies build upon the historic  
 resources as a  
 00:05:29 --> 00:05:34: key part for a sustainable future that is distinctive,  
 00:05:34 --> 00:05:39: livable and walkable. A framework of place.  
 00:05:39 --> 00:05:41: So in this framework plan,  
 00:05:41 --> 00:05:43: we look at 6 elements.  
 00:05:43 --> 00:05:47: I will now walk you through some of the key

00:05:47 --> 00:05:50: principles and the ideas of behind.  
00:05:50 --> 00:05:54: The first plan, elements is heritage.  
00:05:54 --> 00:05:56: We look beyond the buildings,  
00:05:56 --> 00:05:58: take account of paper space,  
00:05:58 --> 00:06:02: the city traffic and the neighborhood characters.  
00:06:02 --> 00:06:05: And as all this come together.  
00:06:05 --> 00:06:09: We found that we should emphasize on people's activities  
and  
00:06:09 --> 00:06:12: rebuild a smaller scale urban space.  
00:06:12 --> 00:06:15: To build a walkable hotel.  
00:06:15 --> 00:06:19: The Guangzhou Otang has about 20 square kilometres,  
00:06:19 --> 00:06:23: about 5 kilometers West to the current Guangzhou CBD.  
00:06:23 --> 00:06:26: It's framed by the Pearl River on the South side.  
00:06:26 --> 00:06:30: The urban fabric of the Old Town is very diverse  
00:06:30 --> 00:06:30: and organic,  
00:06:30 --> 00:06:34: and the Asian city structure is still exist in the  
00:06:34 --> 00:06:35: past 20 to 30 years.  
00:06:35 --> 00:06:38: The pop sound many large buildings randomly,  
00:06:38 --> 00:06:42: which has big impact to the traditional character though town,  
00:06:42 --> 00:06:46: the scales, the historic rabbit and the community space.  
00:06:48 --> 00:06:52: There are so many historical sites and buildings that are  
00:06:52 --> 00:06:55: spread out in the entire Old Town area.  
00:06:55 --> 00:06:59: Conditions are various. And many of them are not that  
00:06:59 --> 00:06:59: accessible.  
00:06:59 --> 00:07:03: The values of these places were not recognized through  
serious  
00:07:03 --> 00:07:04: site investigations.  
00:07:04 --> 00:07:08: We find that the challenge of this framework plan is  
00:07:08 --> 00:07:10: how can we create a plan that can add value  
00:07:10 --> 00:07:12: to the historical sites and buildings.  
00:07:15 --> 00:07:18: We were impressed by the very final grade Alice in  
00:07:18 --> 00:07:20: the Old Town area.  
00:07:20 --> 00:07:22: These areas were built in very human scales,  
00:07:22 --> 00:07:25: anorganic embedded in the fabric.  
00:07:25 --> 00:07:29: However many are disconnected from neighborhoods to  
neighborhoods and many  
00:07:29 --> 00:07:32: of his dogs side of buildings are hidden deeply in  
00:07:32 --> 00:07:34: that neighborhood.  
00:07:37 --> 00:07:40: By carefully looking at the site,  
00:07:40 --> 00:07:44: we decided to prioritize The Walking experience an stitched  
the  
00:07:44 --> 00:07:48: broken passes together and form a hyper walkable network.  
00:07:51 --> 00:07:55: We also look at the major St for better streetscape

00:07:55 --> 00:07:59: to enhance the historical city structure links the district to

00:07:59 --> 00:08:00: district.

00:08:03 --> 00:08:05: When the base is reestablished,

00:08:05 --> 00:08:09: we then create a continued walking trails that links the

00:08:09 --> 00:08:13: three districts together from the North Mountain Park to South

00:08:13 --> 00:08:16: Waterfront area and to the West Seagren area connecting the

00:08:16 --> 00:08:21: popular cultural attractions, Parks, retail streets and museums together recalled

00:08:22 --> 00:08:24: this Guangzhou historic cultural child.

00:08:29 --> 00:08:33: The ideas of improving the streetscape is to transfer The

00:08:33 --> 00:08:37: Walking system into a network of connecting proper space so

00:08:37 --> 00:08:41: we can improve the environment of the historical tank and

00:08:41 --> 00:08:45: also increase the property values.

00:08:45 --> 00:08:50: The Alice connecting the neighborhoods that expanded activity from the

00:08:50 --> 00:08:52: major St to the neighborhoods.

00:08:52 --> 00:08:57: That unfolded opportunities for adapting new uses for historical buildings.

00:08:57 --> 00:08:59: And in public space.

00:09:03 --> 00:09:06: Streets are upgraded to serve pedestrians.

00:09:06 --> 00:09:10: The guidelines, including expanding the sidewalk and St Furniture,

00:09:10 --> 00:09:15: smart amenities and incorporating the new cultural child design.

00:09:18 --> 00:09:23: We designed the signage that unified the wayfinding system is

00:09:23 --> 00:09:28: provide a very simple solution where creating an identical element

00:09:28 --> 00:09:31: to Old Town in the short term.

00:09:31 --> 00:09:33: The second element is neighborhood.

00:09:33 --> 00:09:37: The neighborhoods in the Old Town are distinct and diverse.

00:09:37 --> 00:09:41: However, some of dilapidated buildings and dense space are not

00:09:42 --> 00:09:44: suitable for new urban lifestyle.

00:09:44 --> 00:09:46: It leads to the loss of populations,

00:09:46 --> 00:09:48: especially young generations.

00:09:52 --> 00:09:56: There are needs to renovate summer area to bring back

00:09:56 --> 00:09:58: the vitality of the neighborhoods.

00:09:58 --> 00:10:03: Our approach focus on incremental retirement strategy to maintain the

00:10:03 --> 00:10:05: Oringinal neighborhood characters.

00:10:08 --> 00:10:13: We also recommended to refine the community

administrative boundaries to form 5 minutes walking distance.

00:10:13 --> 00:10:16: Scale neighborhoods.

00:10:16 --> 00:10:17: Three key neighborhood principle are defined.

00:10:20 --> 00:10:24: First, ensure the walkability second improved quality of proper space.

00:10:24 --> 00:10:29: Dirt allow Kate amenity within 5 minutes walking distance in the neighborhoods.

00:10:29 --> 00:10:33: So the introduction of new public space sort of simultaneously

00:10:33 --> 00:10:34: enhanced the value of the historic building renovation.

00:10:37 --> 00:10:41: So to bring more opportunity for adapted uses.

00:10:41 --> 00:10:45: Allow some of the buildings to be reconstructed in an ordinary manner with respect to the community scale.

00:10:45 --> 00:10:48: For mix of new and old buildings that can stimulate growth of the community.

00:10:51 --> 00:10:56: Guangzhou has a long history of Commerce and train.

00:10:56 --> 00:11:00: However, the traditional business faced a challenge as the economus

00:11:00 --> 00:11:04: come comes in.

00:11:04 --> 00:11:06: The third element will focus on his heels is the regeneration of their business.

00:11:06 --> 00:11:10: So the traditional business in Guangzhou grew in the linen arcade buildings,

00:11:10 --> 00:11:17: which is unique to the city,

00:11:17 --> 00:11:18: but now. Many of them are unoccupied due to change of the business and the limits of the space and quality.

00:11:18 --> 00:11:21: Our framework reactivated Archi Street by upgrading the buildings and

00:11:21 --> 00:11:23: adapting the new users.

00:11:25 --> 00:11:29: We like to take advantage of space and scale.

00:11:29 --> 00:11:30: Creating more shade, shared public space and promote new users

00:11:30 --> 00:11:32: in the buildings.

00:11:32 --> 00:11:36: We see the potential here could become a place that checked him young generation.

00:11:36 --> 00:11:40: An also became a new incubators of new cultural and business in the hotel.

00:11:40 --> 00:11:45: We have created a serious guidelines for redesigning the traditional

00:11:45 --> 00:11:47: shop houses.

00:11:49 --> 00:11:54: Bring it, bring naturalize in,

00:11:54 --> 00:11:59:

00:11:59 --> 00:12:00:

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00:12:06 --> 00:12:10:

00:12:10 --> 00:12:11:

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00:12:19 --> 00:12:21:

00:12:21 --> 00:12:25: increase ventilation and create more flexible space to meet the

00:12:25 --> 00:12:26: need for new business.

00:12:29 --> 00:12:33: Our goal is to preserve the historical urban fabric,

00:12:33 --> 00:12:38: but encourage a new dynamic to stimulate regeneration energy.

00:12:38 --> 00:12:42: So new lifestyle needs to be provided accommodated.

00:12:42 --> 00:12:46: While the identity of the places can be also appreciated.

00:12:50 --> 00:12:54: The old city was positioned in between the mountain and

00:12:54 --> 00:12:58: water water flow through the city to the River.

00:12:58 --> 00:13:01: Today there are still a few canals are exist and

00:13:01 --> 00:13:03: performing general function,

00:13:03 --> 00:13:09: but many of them are covered under the walkways.

00:13:09 --> 00:13:12: We propose to restore the water system,

00:13:12 --> 00:13:18: daylight and historical canals, and incorporate the modern stormwater management

00:13:18 --> 00:13:21: system to reconnect the ecosystem.

00:13:23 --> 00:13:28: The East Houchang River was the East most of the

00:13:28 --> 00:13:28: Old city.

00:13:28 --> 00:13:32: We re imagined this could become a place that can

00:13:32 --> 00:13:35: celebrate the natural part of the city of place for

00:13:36 --> 00:13:36: people.

00:13:36 --> 00:13:39: From the beginning we were asked to help find the

00:13:39 --> 00:13:44: real Guangzhou and provide a comprehensive strategy to adapt the

00:13:44 --> 00:13:48: historic Old Town area through a systematic and coordinated

00:13:48 --> 00:13:49: road

00:13:48 --> 00:13:49: map.

00:13:49 --> 00:13:53: And at the heart of this were several design opportunities

00:13:53 --> 00:13:55: that would highlight the beauty,

00:13:55 --> 00:14:01: the cultural importance and the human scale of this amazing

00:14:01 --> 00:14:01: place.

00:14:01 --> 00:14:05: We have seen the potential and positive impact this kind

00:14:05 --> 00:14:07: of thinking can have in our cities.

00:14:07 --> 00:14:11: It starts with a careful understanding of the unique qualities

00:14:11 --> 00:14:15: the organization of spaces and the relationships between buildings and

00:14:15 --> 00:14:16: nature.

00:14:16 --> 00:14:19: There are many examples of how cities are building a

00:14:19 --> 00:14:21: city future on a city pass.

00:14:21 --> 00:14:24: We need to take new approaches and how we design

00:14:24 --> 00:14:27: and how we want to live in these re imagined

00:14:27 --> 00:14:31: spaces where old buildings in the public realm are

transformed  
**00:14:31 --> 00:14:33:** into new places of exchange.  
**00:14:33 --> 00:14:38:** Places that are known globally and loved locally.  
**00:14:38 --> 00:14:43:** Hopefully today's presentation has shared some ideas that can be  
**00:14:43 --> 00:14:47:** adapted and applied to other cities facing the increasing demands  
**00:14:47 --> 00:14:52:** to improve livability and create environments that place human health  
**00:14:52 --> 00:14:56:** and well being as essential to our urban future.  
**00:14:56 --> 00:15:00:** And in doing so, create a bespoke solution to every  
**00:15:00 --> 00:15:06:** community that embodies the ambition and the aspiration of its  
**00:15:06 --> 00:15:07:** residents.  
**00:15:07 --> 00:15:12:** Old City, new dynamic. Old St new activities.

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