

From the Corniche, Jumping into Vital Restoration: Sustainability Assessment of West Bund

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Abstract : Regeneration of outmoded urban forms and restorative environments are now recognized as major assets towards achieving sustainable development. Shanghai, like many Chinese cities, is now shifting from an agitated industrial past to more livable development schemes. Therefore, a sustainable approach to Shanghai development consists in turning industrial heritage into places with high potential for improving citizen's daily life as regard to the three pillars of sustainability, namely: environment, economy, and society. As such, this study focuses on the Corniche in Xuhui West Bund district; a former industrial area converted into recreational public spaces in Xuhui West Bund. This area was the birthplace of the aviation industry of China, and many of the industrial features were preserved. Unused areas have been transformed into exhibition halls and green spaces, integrating some of the original industrial, architectural forms. Our case study investigates the effects of this approach associating urban regeneration with restorative design, as well as its impact on the surrounding neighborhood. Information extracted from visitors' answers to a questionnaire survey; on-site systematic observation, counts, and measurements allowed us to assess the sustainability of this intervention in terms of accessibility, functionality, cultural and restorative qualities. In general, we found that cycling is not highly encouraged by the current design and level of connectivity, while visitors widely acknowledge the enhancement of cultural heritage resulting from the intervention. Moreover, recreational and restorative areas were found to have a very positive effect on local communities. Indeed, such an approach can provide valuable insights on how future interventions in Chinese major cities could take full advantage of existing assets in creating a more environmental, more livable, and culturally richer city.

Keywords : architectural heritage conservation, cultural urban identity, sustainability assessment, restorative environment, urban regeneration

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