

Pragmatism in Adaptive Reuse of Obsolete Industrial Land in China

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Abstract : Major cities in China has experienced a shift from production based on manufacturing industry to tertiary industry. How to make a better use of existing obsolete industrial land within urban cores has become a difficult problem for many policymakers. City governments regard old manufacturing industrial land as an important source of land to facilitate the development of the cities. Despite the announcement of policies in promoting that, a large portion of industrial land is still not properly redeveloped and most of them became obsolete. The study uses the project of Xinyi International Club as a case to examine the process of adaptive reuse of obsolete industrial space in Guangzhou, China. It attempts to elucidate the underlying mechanisms by identifying the key forces from both the government and the private sectors in influencing the process. The study found that market forces in transforming industrial space are exerting a strong impact on the existing land use planning system in Chinese cities. Pragmatic relaxation of the formal land use the regulatory framework and government supportive land-use intervention have also been crucial towards achieving successful implementation of the restructuring project and making it a showcase. This study questions whether these extraordinary measures, in particular, the use of temporary land use permit, are sustainable in facilitating the transformation of derelict industrial land, and in informing future industrial land-use restructuring policies. It concludes that, while the land use regulatory system in China is becoming increasingly dynamic and flexible, it remains ill-equipped in responding positively to the market, which is characterized by an increasing bargaining power of the private sector. A comprehensive appraisal of the overall impacts of these adaptive re-uses on society is wanting.

Keywords : China, land alteration, obsolete industrial properties, urban planning

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