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Revitalizing Historic District: Dalian Xinglong Historic District Case Study

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After two decades of urban renewal in the 1980's that bulldozed historic landmarks in the name of progress, China began to rethink its urban-renewal plans in the 21st century. Now more focus is on the cautious renewal of historic districts in inner cities. The historic districts were the economic and cultural centers of the cities before, but now the dilapidated constructions and old facilities relegate them to ghettos, socially isolated despite their central location.

Jane Jacobs (1961) considered variety and mixed use functions in traditional districts are the key drivers for recovery of poor inner cities. Zhang Pangao (2005) summarized the spatial distribution and social effect of the community stratification in China, and advocated establishing social programs alongside urban-renewal. The author holds that progressive renovation of the historic districts while taking into account the needs of the local low-income residents is the key to avoid residential segregation and revive the historic districts in inner cities. This paper uses China's Xinglong Historic District in Dalian as a case example to study the community stratification and renovation of historic district.

Xinglong Historic District, located in the central Qingniwa CBD zone in Dalian, is a typical case. Xinglong embodies the classic Dalian Style architecture. Though famous for its long history and rich culture, Xinglong District is now an area for low income inhabitants and migrant workers, due to its decrepit buildings, poor sanitation and run-down businesses.

The author previously participated in the Urban Social Investigation Report Project and Renovation Research Project of Dalian Historic Districts. Based on these projects, this paper uses Xinglong Historic District as a case example to analyze the community stratification and inhabitants' thoughts and demands, as well as the strategies to revitalize the historic district in old town.

For the study, the author conducted site surveys and polled local residents to have a full understanding of the characteristic architecture style and the needs of the local residents and businesses. The author then performed statistical analysis of retrieved questionnaires using SPSS software to analyze the problems and challenges in the renovation process. Spatial analysis of the Dalian's low income residential areas using GIS software was carried on to find the characteristics and problems of the spatial distribution.

Based on above research, the paper presents a comparative analysis model to identify the social, cultural, economic and spatial conditions of the district. The model comprises of population demographics, local living conditions, traffic and infrastructure, spatial patterns, and economic activities. Using the model, this paper sets a blueprint for Xinglong Historic District redevelopment.
in aspects of land use, low-carbon traffic, sustainable facilities, public participation and governance policy, as well as affordable housing system and community assistance mechanisms of Dalian City to better integrate low-income groups into city life and mitigate community stratification. This research is applicable to inner cities whose historic districts are in decline and suffering community stratification.

**Synopsis** Many historic districts in China’s inner cities are now ghettos for the poor, socially isolated despite their central location. This paper uses Xinglong Historic District in Dalian as a case example to study the community stratification and renovation of historic district.

Keyword historic district
Keyword community stratification
Keyword Dalian Xinglong Historic District

Additional information