

# CHINA CROSSROADS

Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 19:30 – 21:00

## Rebuilding China's Historic Walled Cities: Bringing the Past to Life

**Wang Yiwen**

Senior Associate Professor

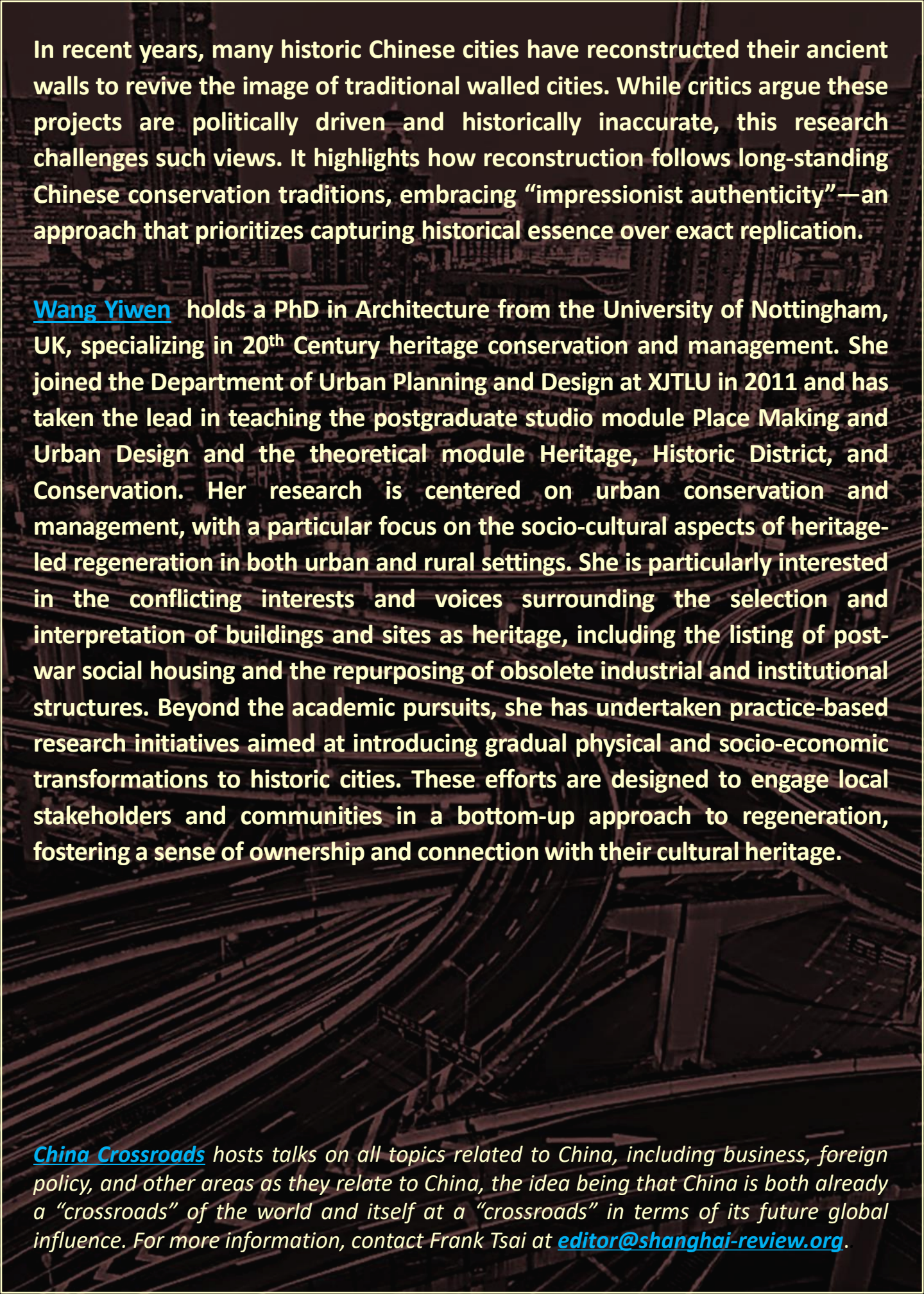
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In recent years, many historic Chinese cities have reconstructed their ancient walls to revive the image of traditional walled cities. While critics argue these projects are politically driven and historically inaccurate, this research challenges such views. It highlights how reconstruction follows long-standing Chinese conservation traditions, embracing “impressionist authenticity”—an approach that prioritizes capturing historical essence over exact replication.

[Wang Yiwen](#) holds a PhD in Architecture from the University of Nottingham, UK, specializing in 20<sup>th</sup> Century heritage conservation and management. She joined the Department of Urban Planning and Design at XJTLU in 2011 and has taken the lead in teaching the postgraduate studio module Place Making and Urban Design and the theoretical module Heritage, Historic District, and Conservation. Her research is centered on urban conservation and management, with a particular focus on the socio-cultural aspects of heritage-led regeneration in both urban and rural settings. She is particularly interested in the conflicting interests and voices surrounding the selection and interpretation of buildings and sites as heritage, including the listing of post-war social housing and the repurposing of obsolete industrial and institutional structures. Beyond the academic pursuits, she has undertaken practice-based research initiatives aimed at introducing gradual physical and socio-economic transformations to historic cities. These efforts are designed to engage local stakeholders and communities in a bottom-up approach to regeneration, fostering a sense of ownership and connection with their cultural heritage.

[China Crossroads](#) hosts talks on all topics related to China, including business, foreign policy, and other areas as they relate to China, the idea being that China is both already a “crossroads” of the world and itself at a “crossroads” in terms of its future global influence. For more information, contact Frank Tsai at [editor@shanghai-review.org](mailto:editor@shanghai-review.org).