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**Conducting heritage tourism-led urban renewal in historic urban spaces: a
case study of Datong, China**

By:

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Abstract

In order to boost the local fiscal revenue through capital investment promotion, urban renewal/regeneration led by heritage tourism has become a critical way of creating the city brand, designing tourism destination, and attracting property developers and investors to cities. However, current practice points to a lack of proper understanding and consideration in preserving and interpreting elements of authentic identity in urban China in recent times. This has led to simple *copy and paste* of historical form and urban spaces, thus resulting in an identity crisis due to the reproducibility of tangible heritage – physical form, architectural style, superficial living style and so on. Against this backdrop, this research explores the involvement of both tangible and intangible heritage rooted in historical Chinese cities which are undergoing heritage tourism-led urban regeneration. It also attempts to understand the influences of authentic intangible heritage – social activities, cultural events, collective memories and others – in designing and shaping the urban spaces to preserve and reconstruct the place identity.

This research therefore aims to explore how urban history and culture resources are made manifest in preserving and reconstructing urban spaces of historical Chinese cities and to gain insight into the heritage tourism-led renewal of an ancient Chinese urban area (and the old townscape) within the context of conservation-led urban renewal. To achieve these aims, the thesis is conducted through the following research stages: Firstly, the research will gain insight into how historical and cultural resources are integrated into the preservation and reconstruction of historical urban spaces by examining the lessons and experiences from the Western and Chinese contexts. Secondly, it will develop a methodological framework for exploring concepts and themes in relation to historical and cultural resources in the context of heritage and tourist-led urban renewal in Chinese historical cities. Thirdly, the research will examine the processes of preserving and reconstructing urban spaces in the case of the old town of Datong, China as a city undergoing heritage and tourist-led urban renewal. And finally, the thesis concludes by identifying recommendations for improved planning and design of public urban spaces to meet the requirements of both local and tourist users within the context of Chinese urban cities undergoing urban renewal.

This research contributes to the field of urban regeneration and place identity in both theoretical and practical aspects. The developing process of the conceptual framework and its findings help to provide a theoretical way of exploring the manifestation of local history and cultural resources in preserving and reconstructing the place identity of Chinese historical urban context undergoing the heritage tourism-led urban regeneration. Furthermore, the conceptual framework and its corresponding concepts and measures developed from this research could provide detailed guidelines for academic and practitioners to explore more potential aspects and concepts focusing on the research and development of other cities.

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
ABSTRACT.....	III
CONTENTS.....	V
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES	VIII
<u>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>1</u>
1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND.....	1
1.2 URBANISATION IN CHINA AND LOSS OF IDENTITY	1
1.2.1 URBAN CONSERVATION AND REVITALISATION IN CHINA.....	2
1.2.2 HISTORY AND CULTURE-LED URBAN RENEWAL IN CHINA.....	3
1.2.3 THE DILEMMA OF PRESERVING URBAN AUTHENTICITY	5
1.2.4 PRESERVING THE AUTHENTICITY AND PLACE IDENTITY IN THE HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPE OF CHINESE CITIES	7
1.3 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	11
1.4 THESIS STRUCTURE.....	12
<u>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....</u>	<u>14</u>
2.1 INTRODUCTION	14
2.2 FORMING PLACE IDENTITY IN URBAN DESIGN	14
2.2.1 PLACE IDENTITY, SENSE OF PLACE, AND PLACE IMAGE.....	15
2.2.2 CHARACTERS OF FORMING PLACE IDENTITY IN URBAN DESIGN	16
2.3 PRESERVING AUTHENTICITY IN CHINESE HISTORICAL URBAN LANDSCAPE.....	18
2.3.1 AUTHENTICITY AND INTERVENTIONS IN HULS	19
2.3.2 INTEGRATING TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN AUTHENTIC HULS	20
2.4 HISTORY AND CULTURE – SHAPING PLACE IDENTITY IN URBAN REGENERATION	21
2.4.1 USING HISTORY AND CULTURE IN URBAN REGENERATION.....	22
2.4.2 DESIGNING PUBLIC SPACE IN URBAN REGENERATION	22
2.5 MODELS FOR INTEGRATING HISTORY AND CULTURE IN URBAN REGENERATION	24
2.5.1 INTEGRATING CULTURE WITH LOCAL URBAN DESIGN	24
2.5.2 DESIGN AND PLANNING STRATEGIES FOR TOURISM DESTINATIONS	30
2.5.3 MEMORY, MEANING, AND SOCIAL SPACE	33
2.6 DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR URBAN REGENERATION IN CHINESE HISTORICAL CITIES AND TOWN AREAS	37
2.6.1 BUILT FORM AND PHYSICAL SETTINGS.....	40
2.6.2 EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES.....	45
2.6.3 MEANING AND IMAGE	49
2.6.4 TOURISTS’ EMOTIONAL PERCEPTIONS IN THE CULTURAL HERITAGE-LED URBAN REGENERATION.....	53
2.7 SUMMARY.....	55
<u>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY</u>	<u>57</u>
3.1 INTRODUCTION	57
3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY	58

3.3	DEVELOPING METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES.....	60
3.3.1	FRAMEWORK-BASED SYNTHESIS	61
3.3.2	CASE STUDY APPROACH	63
3.3.3	INTEGRATED QUALITATIVE APPROACHES	64
3.4	APPLYING METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES IN THE CASE STUDY.....	69
3.4.1	DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE STUDY	70
3.4.2	PREPARING SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	89
3.4.3	INTEGRATING THE RESEARCH METHODS IN THE CASE STUDY	98
3.5	ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH DATA	107
3.5.1	TRANSCRIPTION AND CODING.....	108
3.5.2	FRAMEWORK-BASED SYNTHESIS AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS.....	109
3.5.3	THE USE OF TRIANGULATION IN DATA ANALYSIS BY EMPLOYING ELITE INTERVIEWS.....	109
3.6	CHALLENGES AND RESEARCH ETHICS.....	110
3.6.1	CHALLENGES IN CONDUCTING INTEGRATED METHODOLOGY	111
3.6.2	RESEARCH ETHICS	112
3.7	SUMMARY.....	113

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS..... 114

4.1	INTRODUCTION	114
4.2	PHYSICAL SETTINGS & BUILT ENVIRONMENT	114
4.2.1	FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE ANCIENT CITY	115
4.2.2	ICONIC AREA AND SYMBOLIC LANDMARKS.....	120
4.2.3	FAÇADES AND FRONTAGES OF COMMERCIAL PEDESTRIAN AREAS	128
4.2.4	STREETLIGHTS, SIGNBOARDS, AND STREETScape	137
4.2.5	DESIGN AND CONNECTION – DIFFERENT SCALES OF SPACE	146
4.2.6	STREET VISTA AND BUILD HEIGHT	153
4.2.7	THE PREFERRED ROUTE FOR VISITING THE OLD URBAN CENTRE	164
4.2.8	SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS – BUILT FORM AND PHYSICAL SETTINGS	171
4.3	RESEARCH RESULTS: SOCIAL FUNCTION AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	176
4.3.1	ACTIVITIES AND QUALITY OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES	176
4.3.2	FESTIVALS, CULTURAL EVENTS, AND PLACE IDENTITY.....	183
4.3.3	OBSERVER OR PARTICIPANT?.....	199
4.3.4	COMPONENTS OF FORMING NIGHT ENVIRONMENT.....	206
4.3.5	INFLUENT FACTORS OF CREATING ATTRACTIVE EVENTS.....	216
4.3.6	SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS – SOCIAL FUNCTION AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	223
4.4	THE MEANING OF PLACE	227
4.4.1	OLD CITY IMAGE AND MEMORABLE ELEMENTS	228
4.4.2	SENSE OF BELONGING	240
4.4.3	SENSE OF HISTORICAL PROCESS	249
4.4.4	AREA IDENTITY AND ICONIC SYMBOL	257
4.4.5	INFLUENTIAL FACTORS OF CITY LEGIBILITY	266
4.4.6	SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS – THE MEANING OF PLACE.....	272
4.5	ANALYSIS OF THE ELITE INTERVIEWS	276
4.6	SUMMARY.....	283

CHAPTER 5 RESEARCH DISCUSSION..... 285

5.1	INTRODUCTION	285
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5.2 REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH FINDINGS	286
5.2.1 INTEGRATING FAÇADE DESIGN AND ACTIVE FRONTAGE.....	286
5.2.2 PRESERVATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF DIFFERENT SCALED URBAN SPACES	294
5.2.3 THE KINAESTHETIC EXPERIENCE	300
5.2.4 USERS’ ACTIVITY PREFERENCES AND URBAN BUILT ENVIRONMENT	306
5.2.5 CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS IN FORMING PLACE IDENTITY.....	314
5.2.6 COLLECTIVE MEMORIES AND THE SENSE OF THE HISTORICAL PROCESS	321
5.2.7 INFLUENTIAL FACTORS OF URBAN LEGIBILITY AND CITY IMAGE.....	326
5.2.8 SUMMARY OF REFLECTION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS	332
5.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	333
5.3.1 INTEGRATING CREATIVE CITY AND CULTURAL QUARTERS IN PRESERVING THE HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPE.....	334
5.3.2 DESIGN AND PLANNING STRATEGIES FOR TOURISM DESTINATIONS	335
5.3.3 MEMORY, MEANING, AND SOCIAL SPACE	336
5.4 SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS OF THE NEW CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	337
5.5 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH DISCUSSION	339
<u>CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION.....</u>	<u>341</u>
6.1 INTRODUCTION	341
6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH	341
6.2.1 THE SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	342
6.2.2 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN OUTCOMES	344
6.2.3 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH.....	348
6.3 THE SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	350
6.3.1 FUTURE FOCUS ON MULTIPLE CASE STUDIES	351
6.3.2 FUTURE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: INTEGRATING MULTIPLE MODELS	351
6.3.3 ENHANCING RESEARCH PARTICIPANT SAMPLING AND DIVERSITY OF GROUPS.....	352
6.3.4 EXPANDING THE QUANTITATIVE RELATIONSHIP OF THEORETICAL RESEARCH	352
<u>REFERENCES</u>	<u>354</u>
<u>APPENDIXES.....</u>	<u>372</u>
APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PROFESSIONALS AND URBAN EXPERTS.....	373
APPENDIX B. ON-SITE AND OFF-SITE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	374
APPENDIX C. CONSENT FORM AND INFORMATION LEVEL FOR SURVEY	376
APPENDIX D. APPROVAL LETTER OF RESEARCH SURVEY	379

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 2-1 Sense of Place (Image: adapted from Punter, 1991; Montgomery, 1998).....	17
Figure 2-2 Characters of Place in Cultural Quarter (Image: adapted from Montgomery, 2003) .	27
Figure 2-3 Conceptual Framework of Heritage Trail (Image: adapted from Al-Hagla, 2010)	32
Figure 2-4 Conceptual framework for the involvement of history and culture in urban regeneration of Chinese historical urban context	39
Figure 3-1 Logic model of the research	58
Figure 3-2 Conceptual tables used as framework-based synthesis	62
Figure 3-3 Role of ancient city Datong – a defensive fortress along the Great Wall (Adapted from Datong City Planning and Design Institute, 2013).....	72
Figure 3-4 Basic urban form of city Datong was formed in the Ming and Qing Dynasty (Source: Datong City Planning and Design Institute, 2013; the Evening Newspaper of Datong, 2016).	72
Figure 3-5 Evolution of the city layout of Datong (Adapted from China Academy of Urban Planning and Design, 2017).	73
Figure 3-6 Urban form of the city centre the launch of the Revival Project (2008).....	76
Figure 3-7 The physical infrastructure in many places has been improved although the old lively scene is gone.	78
Figure 3-8 Examples of venues, streets and landmarks in regenerated Datong Old City.	78
Figure 3-9 Main research area in the ancient urban centre	79
Figure 3-10 Map of historic sites and landmarks’ locations and their conditions in the past (between 1910 to 1980) in the old town of Datong. (Image adapted from Datong Urban Planning and Design Institute).	80
Figure 3-11 Map of the remaining historical sites and landmarks before the implementation of the urban renewal project (Images adapted from the Evening Newspaper of Datong).	81
Figure 3-12 Map of preserved, restored and reconstructed buildings and historical sites at the stage of urban renewal project (2018).	82
Figure 3-13 Map of the streets, urban areas, and their conditions in the course of the site investigation (2015-2018).	83
Figure 3-14 Three-dimensional aerial view of the ancient city of Datong and the research area.	84
Figure 3-15 Three research sites located on the East Street	86
Figure 3-16 Survey sites located in East-West Street of the Drum Tower	87
Figure 3-17 Survey sites located between major commercial pedestrian streets and important sightseeing places.....	88
Figure 3-18 Members of the elite interview group.....	101

Figure 3-19 Examples of photographs taken along with the conduction of non-participate observation.....	104
Figure 3-20 An example of the fieldnote recorded in the non-participant observation.....	106
Figure 4-1 Word Cloud and Categorises - Impression and Image.....	116
Figure 4-2 Comparison of old flats and reconstructed buildings.....	117
Figure 4-3 Word Cloud and Categorises - Built Heritage and Iconic landmark	122
Figure 4-4 Design of landmarks could manifest local history and culture.....	123
Figure 4-5 Word Cloud and Categorises - Building and Surroundings	125
Figure 4-6 As one of the iconic landmarks, the Nine-Dragon Screen was noted that its surroundings lacked proper design.....	128
Figure 4-7 Word Cloud and Categorises - Image of commercial pedestrian streets.	130
Figure 4-8 Both the commercial pedestrian and their adjacent streets are necessary to produce a unified image.	131
Figure 4-9 How to create commercial pedestrians with different characters is the key to forming people attractors.	132
Figure 4-10 Word Cloud and categorises - beautiful facade and active frontage	134
Figure 4-11 The South Street is a typical example of a place with mixed building styles.....	135
Figure 4-12 Presence of street vendors from observation	136
Figure 4-13 Word Cloud and Categories - Design and Arrangement of Street lights and Signboards	139
Figure 4-14 How to mix and match signage and decorations is perceived by visitors.....	140
Figure 4-15 Word Cloud and Categorises - Forming Streetscape	143
Figure 4-16 Well-designed lights and illuminations could help illustrate distinctive landmarks in the night-time.....	145
Figure 4-17 Word Cloud and Categories - Personal preference of different scaled spaces.	148
Figure 4-18 Word Cloud and Categories - Linked series of different scales of spaces.....	150
Figure 4-19 Changes in spatial feelings – ‘hereness and thereness’	151
Figure 4-20 Word Cloud and Categories - Street View and Design of Buildings	155
Figure 4-21 Different built form is affected by the culture and geography	156
Figure 4-22 The presence of taller buildings could attract visitor's attention	157
Figure 4-23 Word Cloud and Categories - Building Height and Street View.....	160
Figure 4-24 Serial views created by single storey and two or three-storey buildings along the street delivered different feelings.	161
Figure 4-25 Comparison of skyline inside and out contributes to the city image.	163

Figure 4-26 Precincts with iconic landmarks could have different visual layers	164
Figure 4-27 Word Cloud and Categories of responses from on-site locals.....	165
Figure 4-28 Factors and elements from responses of on-site local interviewees.	166
Figure 4-29 Word Cloud and categories of results from on-site tourist respondents.....	167
Figure 4-30 Factors and elements from responses of on-site tourist interviewees.....	169
Figure 4-31 Categories of the results from off-site respondents.	170
Figure 4-32 factors and elements from responses of off-site local interviewees	171
Figure 4-33 influential factors of designing the streetscape	172
Figure 4-34 user preference for spatial scale and perception of spatial change.	174
Figure 4-35 Integrating elements of the physical environment into the formation of city image	175
Figure 4-36 Word Cloud and categories of On-site Locals’ responses – Activities and influential factors	177
Figure 4-37 Playing with kids in open spaces with ancient style and appearance.	179
Figure 4-38 Word Cloud and Categories of on-site tourists’ responses - Activities and Influential Activities.....	180
Figure 4-39 Results of off-site locals - Activities and Influential Factors.	182
Figure 4-40 Word Cloud and Categories – Shows and Performances.	185
Figure 4-41 Presence of traditional shows and performances could integrate with places and venues.	188
Figure 4-42 Word Cloud and Categories – Quality of Festivals and Cultural Events.	191
Figure 4-43 The Lantern Festival is considered as the major cultural event with various shows and performances	192
Figure 4-44 Word Cloud and Categories – Contributing to Place Image.	195
Figure 4-45 Events with crowds of people could help adjacent places and small-scaled activities.	196
Figure 4-46 Word Cloud of on-site locals – Influential Factors of being Observer or Participant.	200
Figure 4-47 Word Cloud and Categories of on-site tourists – Influential Factors of being Observer or Participant	202
Figure 4-48 Stores and shops with traditional elements could provide information about local culture	204
Figure 4-49 Word Cloud and Categories of off-site locals - Observer or Participant.	205
Figure 4-50 Word Cloud and categories of Impressions of Night Environment.	208
Figure 4-51 Different images of buildings and landmarks day and night.....	209

Figure 4-52 Climatic factor has different effects on various events and activities.	211
Figure 4-53 Word Cloud and categories of Beneficial Components	213
Figure 4-54 Word Cloud and categories of characteristic features that help to improve the experience.	218
Figure 4-55 The lantern festival on the city wall could provide both visual and interactive experiences.....	219
Figure 4-56 Visitors wished to know the historical background of the reconstruction of iconic landmarks.....	222
Figure 4-57 Users' activity preferences concerning the urban built environment.	224
Figure 4-58 Influential factors of being observer or participant.	225
Figure 4-59 How to create a lively night environment in the reconstructed old town	226
Figure 4-60 Word Cloud and Categories- Memory and Impression of the Old City Image.	230
Figure 4-61 The distinctive and characteristic urban layout is impressive for visitors.	232
Figure 4-62 Word Cloud and Categories – Elements to recall memory.	235
Figure 4-63 The interaction between locals' activities and iconic places are considered as renovation of authentic urban image.	238
Figure 4-64 Word Cloud and categories of the theme – Sense of Belonging	241
Figure 4-65 Word Cloud and categories – Factors contributing to the revival of Sense of belonging	245
Figure 4-66 Residential areas in the old days and after urban regeneration.	247
Figure 4-67 Word Cloud and categories – Revival of urban history	250
Figure 4-68 Word Cloud and categories – Restoration of Historical Components.....	253
Figure 4-69 Attending events with locals are a way of being participated in the culture.	256
Figure 4-70 Word Cloud and categories – Homogenisation of City Image.....	259
Figure 4-71 Word Cloud and categories – Distinctive characteristics.....	263
Figure 4-72 Word Cloud and categories – Valuable Influential Factors	268
Figure 4-73 Factors associated with a sense of belonging.....	273
Figure 4-74 Sense of historical process and urban knowledgeability	274
Figure 4-75 Influential factors of urban legibility and city image	275
Figure 4-76 Categories and key ideas generated in responses of elite interviews.....	283
Figure 5-1 The preservation of the city's original architecture and the representation of historical and cultural elements are key to the design of the tour route and active frontage.....	288
Figure 5-2 In addition to creating street frontage with permeability by improving the transparency, the presence of street markets and vendors help to form temporal spaces with permeability by attracting people to gather in specific places.	291

Figure 5-3 New expression could integrate with the historical streets and places to form distinctive attractors in the ancient city of Datong.	293
Figure 5-4 Design of floorscape could create a sense of place associated with areas where people stop and rest. For example, floorscape and pavement in the surroundings of religious sites help to create a unique atmosphere.	293
Figure 5-5 Creating Street spaces at different scales affect the quality of the kinaesthetic experience was mentioned in the future planning strategy of Datong.	296
Figure 5-6 The old architectural style and spatial relationship are critical in forming an authentic place image.	298
Figure 5-7 Zoning plan for the Old Town Planning strategy (reported by the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design in 2016).	299
Figure 5-8 How to deal with the visual and spatial relationship between old landmarks and the surroundings is the key to improving aesthetic order quality.	302
Figure 5-9 Preserving and designing the height-to-width ratio of old streets are necessary to reconstruct the old urban scene.	303
Figure 5-10 Utilisation and integration of characteristic landmarks are necessary for designing the touring routes.	306
Figure 5-11 The quality of place affect pedestrians to conduct people-watching.	310
Figure 5-12 Lights, people attractors, and semi-public spaces help to attract users and conduct night-time activities in the old town of Datong.	314
Figure 5-13 Creating shared spaces for all user groups contribute to the quality of immersive experience	316
Figure 5-14 The dilapidated and unsafe living conditions make extensive renovation work necessary, and the loss of the original inhabitants is another problem.	323
Figure 5-15 Details relating to the old living activities and urban scene are essential in creating authenticity.....	324
Figure 5-16 Old meeting and gathering places are critical in restoring collective memories. ...	325
Figure 5-17 Material and distinctive characters are significant symbols.	328
Figure 5-18 Innovation of iconic characters contributes to the formation of authenticity.	330
Figure 5-19 The conceptual framework developed in this research	333
Figure 5-20 Primary aspects, key concepts, and recommended applicable measures of the developed conceptual framework.....	339

chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

In recent decades, urban regeneration driven by history and culture is attracting the attention of many cities worldwide, and the role of history and culture as the leading factor is also highlighted in the Chinese urban regeneration (Montgomery, 2003; Kana, 2012; Sepe, 2013; Zhai and Ng, 2013; Xie and Heath, 2017; Wang and Gu, 2020). Since the 1990s, thousands of historical towns across China have been subject to government-led rapid urbanisation and redevelopment. As a result of globalisation, the urban development of many Chinese cities has contributed to transforming the urban environment by constructing spaces and buildings with similar styles and functions, making different cities look monotonous and identical (Kinoshita et al., 2012; Sepe, 2017). Another trend in relation to globalisation and urbanisation is urban regeneration, which is defined as “comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change” (Roberts, 2000, p.17). Although urban regeneration strategies aim to explore adaptive developing modes for the urban environment in multi-perspective, the practice conducted in dilapidated urban areas is often dominated by property-led redevelopment (Healey, 1991; Sepe, 2017). It is argued that cities and urban areas which are being urbanised and subject to property-led urban regeneration are losing any differentiation between urban places, itineraries, social customs, and behavioural patterns, which together are contributing to a crisis of urban identity (Massey and Jess, 1995; Bentley, 1999; Harvey, 2006; Jiaming and Scott, 2013).

1.2 Urbanisation in China and loss of identity

Local identity, which is described as a combination of local history, culture, and meaning, can often be lost as a result of the globalised nature of urbanisation in most Chinese cities combined with the practice of market-led urban regeneration focused on the physical environment and economic growth (Yu, 2006; Pritchard and Morgan, 2006; Ye and Jeon, 2020). *Place identity* encompasses the interrelationship between elements within a specific area – physical environment, people, and events – with the area’s historical heritage and traditional characteristics (Lynch, 1960; Montgomery, 1998; Xie and Heath, 2017). The lack of proper interpretation and expression of various aspects of old place identity could cause duplicated urban areas, demolish old (and therefore undervalued) buildings, and create unrecognisable historical places (Sepe, 2013). This is arguably underpinned by the large scale

homogenisation and standardisation of cultures, which is arguably brought about by mass production and consumption in the process of globalisation and urbanisation, transcending, replacing, and even destroying local culture (Carmona et al., 2010).

As one of the fastest-growing countries in the world, China has focused on redeveloping its cities to keep up with developed countries, and critics claim that many cities under the modernisation-led urban development and regeneration have lost their unique identity (Chen, 2006). Many tall and large-scale buildings have been constructed since the 1990s to create iconic landmarks for a more competitive role in place branding and place promotion (Ward, 1998; Chen and Thwaites, 2013). Old buildings, urban fabric, and natural elements are being replaced by medium and high-rise buildings to make way for vehicles and urban infrastructure required by contemporary urban development (Yan and Tao, 2009). After decades of urbanisation and urban development, the massive scale of modern and foreign elements in forming Chinese urban landscapes has resulted in transformed urban areas and their settings, causing fragmentation and deterioration of urban heritage (UNESCO, 2011). This research takes place within a context where homogenisation and monotony are arguably caused by market-led urbanisation, which has dramatically transformed the old identity of many Chinese old cities and historic urban areas and caused the loss of authenticity.

Within such a context, it is critical for Chinese city decision-makers to explore how to reduce the risks when encountering globalisation and modernisation-led urbanisation by preserving their heritage and historical roots in the face of identity crises. In the last decade, historical and culture-led urban regeneration/redevelopment has been implemented in many Chinese cities with historical urban areas, aiming to improve competitiveness and attractiveness by preserving, reconstructing, and enhancing local identity. This research aims to contribute to this debate by examining how revitalisation through historical and culture-led urban regeneration is conducted in an area of conservation in urban China.

1.2.1 Urban conservation and revitalisation in China

In 1982, the Chinese State Council approved the *Permission for Conservation of Historical and Cultural Famous Cities in China* initiated by the State Infrastructure Commission, the Bureau of Cultural Relics and the Bureau of City Construction, which is based on the Western practice of heritage conservation (Xie and Heath, 2017). After the introduction of this document at the national level, the Chinese government organised trips to Western Europe, which were led by heritage officials and professionals, to learn how to preserve and conserve old cities with historical values. Following this, 24 cities were registered as the first patch of ‘historical-cultural famous cities’, which describe the historical value embedded within those cities (Qian, 2007; Zhang, 2008). Then, in 1985, the Chinese Ministry of Construction introduced the concept of preserving the ‘historical traditional street

district' to identify local historical-cultural zones for conservation (Zhang, 2008). Then other two waves of 'historical-cultural famous cities' patches (38 and 37 respectively in 1986 and 1994), and the number of cities on the list increased to 25 in 2014 (Xie and Heath, 2017). All of those cities and identified zones acted as basic references for the redevelopment and revitalisation of the historic old town in the proceeding decade.

In 1994, the Ministry of Construction and the Bureau of Cultural Relics formulated the Guideline for Preparing Conservation Plans for Historical-Cultural Famous Cities, which offered a general area-based urban planning strategy in historical cities and areas. Then in 2005, the Ministry of Construction enacted the *Regulation of Conservation Plans for Historical-Cultural Famous Cities*, which classified three categories of conservation: the city; the street/district; and individual structures (Ministry of Construction, 2005). Moreover, other relevant strategies were briefly defined in the regulation: the definition of boundaries, street traffic, building height controls, environmental protection, civil engineering and hazard prevention (Ministry of Construction, 2005; Xie and Heath, 2017). The guidelines and the regulations gave general and basic instructions to proposed projects conducted by the local government, design institutes, and private developers.

As Li, Ng, and Skitmore (2012, p. 344) discussed, the key factors in the regeneration projects refer to "those who can influence the project process and/or final results, whose living environments are positively or negatively affected by the project, and who receive associated direct and indirect benefits and/or losses". In this regard, the key actors in urban regeneration should include local authorities, local professionals, development companies, and local community members. However, the development and implementation of urban conservation plans based on the guidelines and regulations exhibited a 'top-down' governmental approach, in which the joint conserving strategy is affected by various and overlapping plans approved by different government authorities (Qian, 2007). Therefore, a number of key criticisms were identified in the planning process regarding China's urban conservation: namely, an unsystematic and unorganised strategy, ambiguity in the targets of conserving plan, difficulties in defining the role of conserving urban area, and conflicts between different controlling departments and the actual users (Liu and Wan, 2006, pp. 24-28).

1.2.2 History and culture-led urban renewal in China

In accordance with the idea of urban conservation in China, history and culture-led urban renewal and urban regeneration practice were seen as ways of reproducing urban authenticity and historical identity by local governments (Wang, 2011). Every Chinese municipal government has been striving to boost the local fiscal revenue through capital investment promotion, and urban renewal/regeneration has become a critical way of creating the city brand, designing tourism

destinations, and attracting property developers and investors to cities (Xie and Heath, 2017). In this way, the search for authenticity in Chinese cities with historical and cultural resources becomes the by-product of designing heritage tourism and city brands in the Chinese tourism industry. Driven by the combination of tourists' curiosity and characteristics of the Chinese traditional culture, the conservation of historical cities and old urban areas have significantly boosted local economies and created iconic city brands (Wang, 2011; Ye and Jeon, 2020). However, among the many cases of old town regeneration, only a few have been examined and found to have achieved better long-term results, such as the Ancient City of Pingyao and Suzhou, in which the *spirit* (or *genius loci*) of the city has been considered to be preserved through both their physical heritage and human culture (Wang, 2011).

As the local government plays the dominant role in leading the massive project of history and culture-led urban redevelopment or regeneration – ‘old city renewal’ in Chinese official definition – most urban heritage conservation practices in China are described as being unsuccessful in terms of preserving urban history and human culture (Zhang, 2006; Liu et al., 2020). In addition to the alteration and destruction of the original urban fabric, most urban heritage conservation in the urban renewal projects are argued to fail to form a sense of authenticity due to a lack of community involvement (Fan, 2014). Although it has been argued that the urban environment is significantly improved through urban renewal processes, the lack of proper understanding and consideration in preserving and interpreting elements of authentic identity in urban China in recent times has led to a kind of simple *copy and paste* of historical form and buildings (Wang, 2011; Zhai and Ng, 2013). In most old Chinese city renewal projects, transformed historical urban areas have become tourist-oriented places, and local inhabitants have been removed. Aside from local economic development, such tourist-led processes lead to property-led redevelopment and result in urban gentrification (Zukin, 1987; Sepe, 2017). Smith (2002) also suggested the displacement of original living patterns of local inhabitants caused by urban gentrification could destroy the essence of a place.

In this context, the history and culture-led urban regeneration and urban conservation have been taken as promotional slogans to initiate redevelopment and renewal projects for the local government's political achievement and economic gain (Zhai and Ng, 2013; Xie and Heath, 2017). A lack of proper conservation of authentic identity and historical urban spirit has posed tremendous challenges to the redevelopment-led renewal in historical Chinese cities. As Crang (1998) argues, the local distinctiveness and authentic forms of culture being displaced by mass-produced commercial forms could lead to the issue of ‘placeness’ (Carmona *et al.*, 2010). In terms of the conservation of the physical environment, the massive production of ‘fake’ historic structures and sites is argued to be serving tourism and commercial purposes, while the socio-cultural environment receives insufficient attention (Su, 2018). Therefore, the idea of ‘preserving the authenticity of place’, including

conservation of heritage, interpretation of local history and cultural resources, has been seen as a primary guiding idea in the conservation-led urban renewal practice (Xie and Heath, 2017).

1.2.3 The dilemma of preserving urban authenticity

The definition and principle of authenticity are explored and refined widely by academic researchers, professionals, and urban regeneration practitioners in both western contexts and China. Western researchers have identified the meaning and expression of the idea of authenticity in various ways: characteristic features (site and objects), levels of verification (experience and expression), and a state of being (interaction and communication between individuals, events, and other elements) (McCannell, 1973; Rodwell, 2003; Molleda, 2011; Rickly Boyd, 2012). UNESCO (2009) states it is necessary to understand the authenticity of a place in terms of a multi-dimensional aspect: location and setting; form; material and design; and ‘immaterial’ or essential qualities. Ram et al. (2015, p.111) have described the term *authentic* as being “real, reliable, trustworthy, original, first-hand, true in substance, and prototypical as opposed to copied, reproduced or done the same way as an original” in terms of its characteristics.

Developed from the Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (1999), ICOMOS China announced the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China (2000), which was released as professional guidelines for the conservation of heritage in the country. In this document by ICOMOS China, the term of authenticity is described as a historical condition and the original condition of a site, and its subsequent changes through the historical time are defined as the core theme of being authentic (ICOMOS China, 2002; Zhu, 2015). The principles were then later revised by ICOMOS China in 2015, in which the definition of authenticity is summarised as ‘authenticity resides in the original materials, workmanship and design of a site and its setting, as well as in its historical, cultural, and social characteristics and qualities’. In this regard, the definition of authenticity can be described as having close relationships with the conservation of historical urban landscapes in regard to aspects of physical environment, history, culture, and society.

In terms of conservation and regeneration topics in historical sites, the discourse on authenticity often leads to the restoration of old buildings and historical monuments (Ouf, 2001; Jokilehto, 2006). One of the most significant principle put into practice in urban conservation for preserving authenticity is to follow the idea of ‘repair the old as it is’ (Liang, 1963) or ‘repairing the old to appear old [as opposed to repairing it to look new]’ (Xiujiu Rujiu 修旧如旧, translated by Berliner, 2005, p.214). As centred on the aspect of architectural perspective, the discourse of authenticity has usually been implemented to safeguard a city’s human-made artefacts and the physical environment of historical cities (Wang, 2010; Sepe, 2017). On the other hand, discourses on the modern value of authentic

culture stem from the idea that historic cities and sites significantly shape tourists' perceptions of the authentic image of the destination (McCannell, 1973; Wang, 2011). Therefore, the conventional discourses of implementing authenticity in the heritage-led urban regeneration of Chinese cities faced several problems:

- In general, the practice and theory of urban conservation in Chinese historic cities and towns are influenced by Western concepts and approaches. However, a lack of proper modifications and adjustments of theories in practical application in the Chinese historical urban context often only focuses on the inquiry of historical experience, which is embedded in the built heritage and historical artefacts (Xie and Heath, 2017).
- Second, narratives that address authenticity in the physical environment alone tend to fossilise tangible culture (Rodwell, 2003). The focus on high art or popular culture instead of vernacular culture caused by the marketing-led and tourist-led approaches shows less concern for original cultural elements from developing patterns and historical processes of the city (Wang, 2011).
- Third, with mutually interactive activity between local residents and tourists, an over-emphasis on the authenticity of the tourist environment can undermine historical cities' social and cultural fabric for residents (Wang, 2011). As tourist activities are stimulated and influenced by external factors (such as tourism-oriented place design and commercial activities), neglect of the original fabric could result in displacing earlier indigenous activities associated with architecture and monuments (McCannell,1973; Rodwell, 2003; Wang, 2008).

In this way, it is necessary to understand the authenticity in a historic city through the dimensions of social activities and cultural characteristics rooted and generated in the historical settings: it is not enough to look at it solely through the tourists' experience. The harmony among the physical, social, and cultural environments is key to identifying the characteristic of authenticity, shown in the collective memory of a group of people (Wang, 2011). Due to the significant influence of heritage and culture-led tourism on boosting the local economy, heritage-led urban conservation of historical Chinese cities also needs to find ways to integrate with designing tourism destinations. Thus, to achieve a successful conservation-led urban renewal project of the historical city or town, it is essential to understand and find a way to effectively engage with the target's past for residents and tourists. As Sepe (2010) suggests, urban regeneration projects need to involve local pre-existing place identity properly, recover the sense (or image) of place through historical and cultural interpretations, and preserve or even reconstruct the sense of belonging to the local community. In this regard, this thesis aims to address these gaps in knowledge and explore the specific issues identified in the urban regeneration and re-designing of the historical urban context.

1.2.4 Preserving the authenticity and place identity in the historic urban landscape of Chinese cities

In order to safeguard the role of historic areas in urban regeneration processes, the concept of Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) was discussed at the UNESCO conference in Vienna (2005), and officially introduced as an urban conservation approach by UNESCO in 2011. According to the definition proposed by UNESCO (2011), the historical urban landscape is defined as an urban area which is understood as a composition of its geographical setting and a historical layering of cultural and natural values and attributes. Moreover, the preservation of HUL integrates the urban heritage conservation and the development of transforming the past of the place into creating distinctive experiences for contemporary users (UNESCO, 2011; Ashworth, 2012). In this regard, the concept of HUL focuses on conserving urban heritage and advocating the management of transformations in historical cities that are included in, but not limited to, the World Heritage List (Song and Zhen, 2011; Liu et al., 2019).

In the 21st century, massive urban development has occurred in Chinese cities with historical urban landscapes, in which different but interrelated concepts, such as historic preservation, heritage conservation and urban regeneration, have been recognised as critical practices (Xie and Heath, 2018). Moreover, the values generated and embedded within a city's historical and cultural heritage attracted the attention of researchers and planners in terms of their visible and intangible architectural features as well as the socio-economic values, especially in the aspect of place-making and tourism marketing processes (Zhang, 2018; Liu et al., 2019). Within such contexts, historical and cultural-led urban regeneration and redevelopment have become increasingly popular strategies in the last decade in China, focusing on the conservation of heritage, preservation and reconstruction of historical urban forms, and management of tourism (Xie and Heath, 2018).

1.2.4.1 Issues in preserving authentic identity

In terms of history and culture-led urban regeneration of historical Chinese cities, it is important to understand the relationship between heritage, place identity, and urban planning (Kong, 2007; Graham and Howard, 2008). *Place identity* has a close conceptual relationship with *authenticity*, which Southworth and Ruggeri (2010) define as “the quality of a place is unique, distinctive, and rooted in the local. Place identity also assumes significance in relation to its public meaning which in turn influences and stimulates citizen participation” (Sepe, 2017, p.153). The urban regeneration and renewal of historical cities and towns seek to reduce the risk of focusing solely on the original heritage and historical roots (and not how a city changes over time), which could also lead to an

identity crisis due to the reproducibility of tangible heritage – physical form, architectural style, superficial living style and so on (Erdoğanaras et al., 2013).

In the process of historical and cultural-led urban regeneration, issues were raised in terms of preserving the authentic identity of historical urban landscape, such as how to define the sustainability of local history and traditions embedded in the transformed urban spaces? How to balance the needs of residents and tourists by interpreting the values and meanings of the heritage in the historical urban landscape? And how to evaluate the authentic identity of transformed areas where the overall fabric is preserved while the original function is changed (Zhang, 2018; Wang and Gu, 2020)? Such questions are emerging alongside the urban regeneration of Chinese cities, most of which are competing to develop their historic urban landscape into tourist destinations.

1.2.4.2 Conserving tangible and intangible heritage in the historic urban landscape

According to UNESCO (2005; 2011), processes of urban regeneration and development need to expand the area of concern from tangible dimensions (physical-built fabric) to the intangible ones, such as ‘associate connections’, collective memory, continuity of culture, etc., and consider the historic urban landscape as both tangible ‘manifestations of our common cultural heritage’ and intangible assets as well (Qiu et al., 2019; Rudokas and Grazuleviciute-Vileniske, 2020). Therefore, conservation of both tangible and intangible heritage leads to preserving the authentic place identity, and it is necessary to involve urban historical and cultural elements in the urban renewal process. Such ‘traditional elements’ contribute to the structure with a high degree of commercial and social meaning and can help accommodate the city’s cultural activities (Karimi, 2000; Wang, 2011). Furthermore, traditional elements of history and culture can help to understand the roles of public structure – urban fabric and spatial form – in formulating the concept of authenticity and preserving a sense of place in a historical townscape (Wang, 2011; Xie and Heath, 2017; Piazzoni, 2018). On the other hand, designing a city brand to create a tourist destination depends on the unique experience and integral atmosphere formed by abstract place images incorporating local history and cultural resources (Ye and Jeon, 2020).

In terms of preserving authenticity of tangible dimension, the Venice Charter has indicated it is necessary to focus on the criteria of ‘original materials’, including construction materials, techniques, workmanship and manufacturing processes (ICOMOS, 1964, p.2). However, the preservation of original materials could be contested in Chinese historic urban landscape and other East Asian contexts. As a large number of traditional architectures are constructed from timber, it is necessary to conduct proper repair, replacement and maintenance (Zhang, 2018). On the other hand, how to preserve the intangible values embedded in such heritage sites has been increasingly emphasised by ICOMOS and UNESCO as such historic urban landscapes are said to embody the spiritual core of a

city or town shaped by history, local communities and their traditions (ICOMOS, 1996; Zhang, 2018; Qiu et al., 2019).

Based on such definitions, China has made efforts to guide the urban planning and conservation strategies for Chinese historic cities. In addition to the list of 'Famous Historic Cities and Towns' (历史文化名城) issued since 1982, other accompanying regulations such as the Historic City Protection Plan and Special Area Plans were published to emphasise the significance of 'preserving each city's unique characteristics, to reflect the distinctive local natural and historic features and to preserve existing land use patterns' (Wang, 2000, p.313). Although both international and Chinese academic researchers and experts are working on acknowledging the importance of historic urban landscapes, it is challenging to identify the proper preservation as such urban environments have been manifested and transformed in the urban development over past decades (Zhang, 2018). As many Chinese local governments are eager to attract investment and extract economic value from historic urban landscapes with heritage districts, the controversy over drawing lines between what is authentic historic urban fabric and what is modern 'man-made change' is becoming complicated in the preservation of historic urban landscape in China (ICOMOS, 2011).

1.2.4.3 Preservation of intangible cultural values

Intangible cultural values have been examined from different perspectives of inhabitants and tourists in the development of urban tourism, and their involvement and experiences are considered as criteria to evaluate the intangible dimension (Goldsmith and Emmert, 1991; Son and Lee, 2011; Gu et al., 2018; Qiu et al., 2019; Su et al., 2020). According to UNESCO (2005; 2011), the intangible dimension or the spirit of historic urban landscape, including associate connections, collective memory, and continuity of culture, are formed and manifested by the incorporation and identification from all stakeholders. Among all the users participating in the development and regenerating process, inhabitants, including long-time residents, migrants, or newcomers, are described as the key in conserving authenticity as their daily activities interact with the urban environment and contribute to the continuous formation of urban landscapes (Piazzoni, 2018; González-Martínez, 2019).

Based on the preservation of 'existing historic patterns' (UNESCO, 2005), the HUL Guidebook (UNESCO, 2016) indicates that culture-led urban regeneration should expand from focusing on repetition or interpretation of designing spatial patterns to preserving functional, life and economic patterns (Rudokas and Grazuleviciute-Vileniske, 2020; Wang and Gu, 2020). In this regard, the preservation and restoration of 'authentic spatial relationships' in the historic urban landscape also require an active role from the manifold community of stakeholders to preserve or recreate urban vitality (Liu et al., 2019; González Martínez, 2029). However, most historic and culture-led urban regeneration led by local governments are struggling to understand the cultural resources with

intangible values from different stakeholders and explore how to interpret them within the historic urban fabric (Xie and Heath, 2018; Liu et al., 2019; Wang and Gu, 2020).

In summary, research that illustrates history and culture in shaping place identity under Chinese urban renewal could help reduce the risk of globalisation contributing to a loss of place identity. However, as the trend of Chinese cities with historical districts redeveloping as both heritage and cultural tourism destination continues, several problems have been identified from the heritage tourism-led renewal process of planning and designing urban spaces:

- The current regeneration process of open spaces mostly focuses on reconstructing the physical environment or tangible spheres (e.g. rebuilding and repairing historical architectures) but neglects proper understanding and consideration in restoring and renovating intangible assets such as cultural character, social activities, memories and meanings. All of this plays an important part in preserving and reconstructing the place identity (Zhai and Ng, 2013; Sepe, 2017).
- As heritage tourism-led urban renewal aims to conserve heritage, improve the urban environment, and boost the local economy, restoring and interpreting the historical and cultural elements in urban renewal to meet the needs of both local and tourist users is another issue. The lack of proper understanding and consideration of socio-cultural characters and features of different urban spaces has arguably made them monochromatic and similar due to mass culture's tourism-oriented production, which results in 'homogenisation' and loss of local cultural identity (Crang, 1998; Sepe, 2017).
- There is less concern about the revival of 'authentic liveness' within the historic precinct. However, the way to reconstruct the 'authentic spatial relationship' between heritage, new buildings, and the public historical grain has been ignored (Whitehand et al., 2011; Xie and Heath, 2017). Both are formed by people who live in the urban place through interactions between daily users and distinctive settings.
- In terms of preserving local collective memory and meaning of urban places, current design and planning strategies do not pay the necessary attention to relevant concepts and theories – such as sense of belonging and place attachment – in reconstructing the place identity of the historic urban environment. As Cresswell (2004) notes, *personal memory* can be socially inscribed in the urban landscape as *public memory*. Therefore, preserving the memory of a place in tangible and intangible ways is a key factor in avoiding the risk of globalisation and marketing-led urban regeneration (McCarthy, 2006; McDowell, 2008; Sepe, 2013).

From the above problems, the current research and design ideas of urban regeneration in the historical Chinese context is limited to the investigation of historical experience embedded in the built heritage historical artefacts from the perspective of creating tourism destinations. Therefore, it is necessary to

develop a logical framework and systematic tool to provide indicators for practitioners who participate in planning urban renewal processes and designing the urban spaces to consider the influences of local historical and cultural resources in preserving authentic place identity. To explore the historical and cultural values in preserving and re-designing the historic urban landscape, this research examines one Chinese city – Datong, which has an ancient district located in its urban centre – as its study site. Similar to many other historical cities in China and more widely, there is a considerable number of historical streets and areas which have been, and are being, redeveloped in the ancient town of Datong. As the processes of heritage tourism-led urban renewal led by local government were implemented in 2010, problems identified from the heritage tourism-led renewal process will be examined in the historical city, where the mix of redeveloped areas, reconstructing sites, and undeveloped sites also provided a diverse set of comparative cases when the research was conducted in 2015.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

Based on the above problems, this research aims to explore how urban history and cultural resources are made manifest in preserving and reconstructing urban spaces of historical Chinese cities. The research also aims to gain insight into heritage tourism-led renewal of the ancient Chinese urban area (and the old townscape) within the context of conservation-led urban renewal.

To achieve the research aims, the thesis is structured around the following research objectives:

1. To gain insight into and understand how historical and cultural resources are integrated with the preservation and reconstruction of historical urban spaces in the context of heritage tourism-led urban renewal in China.
2. To develop a methodological framework for exploring concepts and themes in relation to historical and cultural resources in the context of heritage and tourist-led urban renewal in historical Chinese cities.
3. To examine the interpretation and expression of historical and cultural resources in preserving and reconstructing urban spaces in the old town of Datong, China, a city undergoing heritage and tourist-led urban renewal.
4. To identify recommendations for improved planning and design of public urban spaces to meet the requirements of both local and tourist users within the context of Chinese urban cities undergoing urban renewal.

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured into six chapters to conduct the whole research.

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter of the whole thesis. It first introduces the research's background and motivation by providing general information on urban conservation and the urban renewal of historical Chinese cities. Short reviews of relevant literature are provided and aim to set out processes and dilemmas related to the conservation-led urban regeneration in China, identifying the gaps in knowledge and setting up the fundamental concept of conserving authenticity in such a context.

Chapter 2 provides a review of existing literature, in which relevant theories relating to concepts of place identity, authenticity, and urban history and culture in the place-making process are discussed. This involves understanding the relationship between place identity and urban design as a place-making process of the physical environment, which is fundamental to the conservation-led urban renewal process. Then the concepts and theories which help to form a structured framework for further discussion are identified in the context of Chinese urban regeneration of historical cities and towns. This is followed by discussion and integration of theories to provide a theoretical and analytical framework for designing and conducting research methodology. This chapter directly achieves Research Objective 1 and sets up the conceptual and theoretical framework for the research methodology design.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodological approaches of the research. Based on the theoretical framework derived from the literature review, this chapter sets out the design of the research methods applied to address the research aim and objectives. Moreover, the introduction to the study site helps to illustrate the research background of the research aim and objectives in a detailed Chinese urban context. Then the chapter describes how the designated methodological approaches are conducted to collect data in the study site – the old town and urban centre of the city of Datong, China. The chapter shows how the study site is a typical sample of historical Chinese cities under conservation and tourist-led urban regeneration, thereby addressing Research Objective 2.

Chapter 4 sets out the research analysis and findings and reveals the analysing process of collecting data through the designated methodological approaches, which are non-participant observation, analysis of photography, and semi-structured interviews of different users. As the research methodology is formed by qualitative approaches led by structured concepts and themes of the theoretical framework, the research analysis includes categorisation and induction of data collected in multiple research approaches. Moreover, the planning and design strategy of the urban renewal project is assessed in parallel with the analysing process to provide information for comparison and reference. Due to the close relationship between methodological approaches and the inductive analysis process, this chapter addresses Research Objectives 2 and 3.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the research findings. It summarises and organises the categories and conceptual relationships emerging in the data analysis process. This chapter draws together the results by integrating outcomes from three parts: theories and concepts of literature review, inductive categories, and concepts from data analysis and interview data from urban experts and professionals. As the research explores how to get daily users involved in the contemporary government-led or municipal urban renewal trend, it is necessary to understand the opinions and gaps between users and decision-makers. This chapter directly achieves Research Objectives 3 and 4.

Chapter 6 summarises the research and reviews the research aim, methodology, and results analysed and discussed in the former chapters. In addition to listing the limitations of this research, the final chapter reviews the implications for planning and design practices, pointing to recommendations for the future, addressing Research Objective 4.

chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The research aims to explore the involvement of local history and culture resources in interpreting and shaping urban identity within the context of culture-tourism oriented urban regeneration in historical Chinese cities. The general principles of urban regeneration projects focus on improving the local economic, social, and physical circumstances of deprived and uninhabitable urban areas with poor living conditions (Evans, 2001; Garcia, 2005; Hyslop, 2014). The development of the built environment is beneficial for both local users and visitors. Tourism-led urban renewal projects are often developed to achieve this, which can fulfil the needs of different groups of users by manifesting intangible historical and cultural resources. To gain insight into and understand the role of local history, culture and tourism in influencing urban design and user behaviour, this chapter explores existing studies and theories that address relationships between critical themes of the research objectives – local history and culture, urban design and urban design identity. Moreover, understanding local residents' and tourists' experiences and feelings of the urban regeneration in the historic town or urban centre – a place that is both a permanent residence and a tourist destination – is critical in forming and shaping urban identity and place image with historical and cultural characters.

Under such contexts, this chapter firstly examines the general relationship between place identity and urban design, which aims to provide a basic understanding of how the process and aspects of place-making would affect the formation of place identity and sense of place. Section 2.3 discusses the involvement of history and culture in shaping place identity by interacting with the built environment. Section 2.4 investigates multiple theoretical models of using culture and history in urban regeneration, which provides ideas and different approaches for the manifestation of history and culture in the revival of historic cities. The final section explores the integration of relevant theories and themes within the Chinese historical urban context and forms a conceptual framework for the following stages of the research.

2.2 Forming Place Identity in Urban Design

In the past several decades, the formation and definition of urban design and relevant theories have received contributions from a clutch of researchers, designers, and writers – Kevin Lynch, Jane Jacobs, Gordon Cullen, Christopher Alexander, Aldo Rossi, Jan Gehl, John Montgomery among others. Carmona et al. (2010, p. 03) have identified urban design as a comprehensive way of describing the characteristics of towns or cities, and an integrated process of dealing with transformation and

development of the urban environment. The fundamental aspect of urban design focuses on the design of the physical environment, while other aspects of activities and meanings of the urban spaces are mentioned as influential factors in creating the ‘successful urban place’ (Jacobs, 1965; Madanipour, 1996; Montgomery, 1998). Furthermore, the urban design process of delivering and organising various elements is considered as the means of making urban places, as Buchanan (1988, p. 33) indicates: “urban design is essentially about place-making, where places are not just a specific space, but all the activities and events which made it possible”. Carmona et al. (2010) also suggest that the place-making theory aims to integrate both the physical or aesthetic dimension – buildings and spaces – and the behaviour settings created by users and activities.

Based on these concepts, the key to producing or making a good urban space is to understand the structured characteristics of the city or place and “the underlying dynamic of activity” (Montgomery, 1998, p. 95). Without a proper focus on the presence of people and activities, urban spaces could become an artefact as Benjamin (1990) suggests: “even though it (urban place) may appear exotic and picturesque, (the city) is superficial and has an effect only on the first-time visitor”. On the other hand, Lynch (1960) and Alexander (1979) stressed that ‘mental maps’ could contribute to the formation of personal senses and images of the city, which visitors and local users use as imagery signages and guides different urban places. The presence of a mental map was considered as the critical factor that distinguishes ‘place’ from ‘space’ as the urban place is the product of physical settings, activities, memories, and emotional components, and all of them offered a space with the unique meaning, sense, image, and identity (Hague and Jenkins, 2005; Sepe, 2013).

2.2.1 Place Identity, Sense of Place, and Place Image

The idea of place identity mainly refers to the embedding of characteristics and features that help express and preserve its distinctiveness. The balance and combination of different characteristic components – variant spaces and invariant users – also contribute to forming a recognisable sense of continuity and development (Lynch, 1960; Jacobson-Widding, 1983; Sepe, 2013). Relph (1976, p. 45) described place identity “as a persistent sameness and unity which allows that thing to be differentiated from others”, and another concept of “genius loci” reflects the meaning of place identity in the aspect of addressing the presence of unique characters of place (Norberg-Schultz, 1980; Stedman, 2003).

Another relevant idea of place identity – a sense of place similar to the “genius loci” – was highlighted by Lynch (1960). The sense of place could motivate people's activities and form traces of memories simultaneously. According to Tuan (1975) and Relph (1976), the sense of place is created

by the fusion of experiences in certain places, and the sets of experiences are products of interactions between people, characteristic of the place and time passing.

People and users could also form personal impressions and images as the place creates unique experiences created and delivered by characters and features. Spencer and Dixon (1983) state that the image of place comes from individuals' collected feelings about the place, which is more like a subjective perception of place than an objective identity. Furthermore, Zukin (1995) suggests that place image acts as a necessary expression of delivering urban identity formed by the 'collective stamps' from different individuals.

It is important to understand and recognise the valuable characteristics of place identity within such a context. All the characteristic components could serve as expressions of the distinctive urban place (uniqueness) and safeguarding of a sustainable urban image (continuity) in terms of facing urban changes (Lynch, 1960; Sepe, 2013 Sepe, 2018). The notion of identity is the product of both an individual's feelings interacting with specific places, which indicates the identity is a dynamic state that varies as circumstances and places change, but it is still possible to recognise and identify characteristics when integrating with the process of place-making (Relph, 1976; Sepe, 2013).

2.2.2 Characters of Forming Place Identity in Urban Design

Different theorists and designers (Lynch, 1960; Cullen, 1961; Alexander, 1979; Madanipour, 1996) have identified components of place identity, while their opinions mostly focus on the physical settings and built environment – architectural form, scale, landmarks, vistas, meeting places, open spaces and others. Relph (1976) and Canter (1977) highlight relevant ideas in fulfilling the conceptual framework of sense of place, and such components were reinterpreted by Punter (1991) and Montgomery (1998) as physical space, activity, and the sensory experience (Figure 2-1). Moreover, Carmona et al. (2008) and Sepe (2013) suggest that place identity could be enhanced by combining visual form and individual and social meaning.

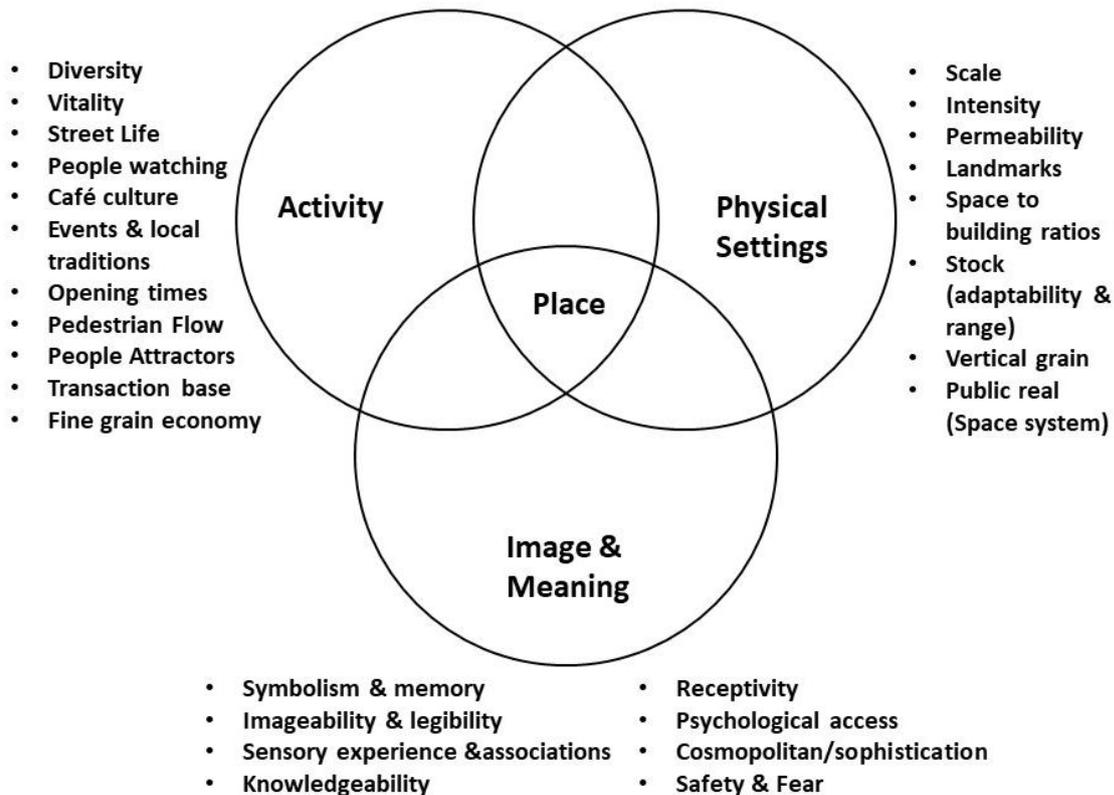


Figure 2-1 Sense of Place (Image: adapted from Punter, 1991; Montgomery, 1998)

Physical Form

In addition to the fundamental dimension of place identity and sense of place, built form and urban spaces are also physical containers and networks that offer places for various activities and form place images (Montgomery, 1998; Carmona et al., 2010; Muminovic, 2017). Streets, squares, and venues offer meeting places for local traditions and customs, such as cultural events, festivals, and carnivals. The integration of the built environment and activities helps to express meaning and identity (Gehl, 1995). Design style, scale, connection, landmarks and other physical elements act as essential components in forming a built form of places, and the functions, memories, and symbolic meanings also contribute to the forming and changing process of collected place identities (Hayden, 1995; Montgomery, 1998; Carmona et al., 2010).

Activity and Function

Both public spaces and social activities contribute to forming the ‘public realm’, which integrates public spaces and people activities, or public life (Carmona et al., 2010). According to Montgomery (1998), vitality and diversity significantly influence the presence and quality of activity and the sense of place. Urban vitality is mostly affected by the number of people walking and roaming in the city both day and night, forming a lively street scene. Moreover, the presence of events with crowds of people attending is also necessary to make urban places alive. A mix of lively places and venues –

events, bars, café, shops, cinemas and others – is critical in providing diverse participation opportunities for different user groups (Oldenburg, 1991; Mehta and Bosson, 2010).

Image and Meaning

The image of a place is a product created by different people interacting with the physical characters and events held on-site, or historical and cultural backgrounds (Lynch, 1960; Pocock and Hudson, 1978; Montgomery, 1998; Carmona et al., 2003). The extent of knowing a place or a city is described as ‘imageability’ by Lynch (1960, 1981). Moreover, understanding the place is influenced by the organisation and integration of different elements, defined as legibility by Montgomery (1998, 2003). Furthermore, the unique characteristics of a place and events could call on different individual users’ impressions and memories and transform all the elements into symbolic meanings (Montgomery, 1998; Sepe and Pitt, 2014). In general, a place image is a combination of the identity (the essence of a place) and sets of perceptions and feelings created by individuals.

Identifying and organising characters of place identity in place-making is to understand the complexity of creating a ‘successful urban place’ in urban design (Sepe and Pitt, 2014). People and their activities conducted in the built environment are affected by the characters of buildings and spaces and create meanings for places simultaneously, all of which is considered a process of revealing the built environment (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). Hague and Jenkins (2005) describe the interaction between users and spaces as the progress of receiving information or clues, reconstructing knowledge, reinterpreting personal characters, and conducting this process to transform a space into a place. In this respect, design, innovation, and creativity in urban space allow people to construct multiple identities of place, and offer a theoretical framework and planning tool of designing urban places for transforming cities (Neil, 2004; Chen and Thwaites, 2013).

2.3 Preserving authenticity in Chinese Historical Urban Landscape

The development of iconic urban environments and the preservation of historic urban landscapes can contribute to the creation and production of place identity (Sepe, 2017; Martínez, 2019; Su, 2020). As Xie (2017) stated, the historic urban landscape is formed by elements developed throughout history and culture, all of which have shaped (and been shaped by) the identity of individuals, communities, and cultural groups. Among them, historical and cultural heritage are considered critical components, which embody and generate values in the development and conservation of historic urban landscapes (ICOMOS, 1975; UNESCO, 2005 and 2011). Moreover, the perception and understanding of such heritage are not limited to their visual-aesthetic features or socio-economic impacts but also to their authentic values in tourism marketing and identity management of historical urban landscape (Rudokas and Grazuleviciute-Vileniske, 2020). In this regard, the notion of the Historic Urban

Landscape (HUL) was introduced by UNESCO in 2005 and 2011 in response to the urgent call to reconcile heritage preservation and tourism-led urban development while preserving the authentic urban identity, especially in the Chinese urban context (Ulldemolins, 2014; Liu et al., 2019).

2.3.1 Authenticity and interventions in HULs

In general, authenticity is a critical notion in defining the historic urban landscape and heritage conservation. As UNESCO (2011) stated, the integrity and authenticity of urban heritage need proper knowledge and planning tools for better protection. However, there is a significant gap between the authenticity of heritage and the public perception, which directly affects their understanding of its multiple values, including social, cultural, aesthetic and sense-of-place values (Tiesdell et al., 1996). As Wu and Wang (2012) suggested, the key points are 'interpretation and communication'. 'Interpretation' refers to how heritage authenticity communicates the changes and evolution it has superimposed over history; and 'communication' refers to how visitors' perceptions of authenticity can be improved through their experiences, how residents retain their sense of local identity, and how traders, managers and conservation professionals deal with issues of authenticity (Wu and Wang, 2012; Liu et al., 2019).

Authenticity is an abstract and complex concept, while heritage authenticity is a fluid and evolving process that focuses on aesthetic or architectural aspects and includes social, cultural, and economic attributes of the historical urban environment (Chhabra, 2012; Martínez, 2016). Moreover, some scholars see authenticity from a sociological point: rather than expressing one 'true' and 'real' conceptualisation of the past, authenticity should integrate with the broader social dimension to facilitate innovative thoughts and present the sensation of cultural attributes embedded in the historic urban environment (Yeoman and Fageraas, 2001; Guttormsen and Fageraas, 2011; Liu et al., 2019). Moreover, in 2000 the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China were proposed by ICOMOS China as professional guidelines for the conservation of heritages, which were revised in 2015 and defined authenticity as the values and attributes that resided in the original materials, workmanship and design of a site and its setting, as well as in its historical, cultural, and social characteristics and qualities (Qian, 2007; ICOMOS China, 2015)

Under such context, UNESCO in 2005 and 2011 passed the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape and proposed the notion as an integrated conservation approach as considering the HUL as the urban area with the historical layer of cultural and natural values and attributes. Moreover, the historic urban landscape approach aims to preserve the quality of the human environment and enhance the productive and sustainable use of urban space, while recognising its dynamic character and promoting social and functional diversity (Liu et al., 2019; Rudokas and Indre Grazuleviciute-

Vileniske, 2020). In this regard, the notion of HUL provides a detailed scale for the heritage conservation and preservation of authentic urban identity.

In terms of perceptions of authenticity, many concepts have been explored concerning interventions of authenticity in the historic urban landscape. For example, Zhang and Han (2017) suggested the HUL should focus on ‘Dynamic Evolution & Development’, in which the change and development patterns of a historic site should be recognised as physical and cultural spheres with flexible and plastic characters, allowing for people’s values and ideas of conservation to change over time. Similar to such concepts, Rudokas and Grazuleviciute-Vileniske (2020) examined the term of pervading authenticity, which focuses on patterns of change in urban space and predicting the possibilities of urban futures that lead to a holistic and realistic narrative about a specific urban entity. The application of pervading authenticity provides a new way for formulating a new historical urban landscape as the new-built venues and places would be influenced by the manifold events in the valuable urban development patterns (Rudokas and Grazuleviciute-Vileniske, 2020). Moreover, Martínez (2019) suggested it is necessary to recover a value-based idea of authenticity in heritage conservation, which aims to bridge the gap between conservation and redevelopment through creativity. Such concepts echo the notion of creative urban regeneration summarised by multiple scholars, which emphasises that the historic urban landscape should be seen as an entity that can generate economies of innovation, culture, education, academic research and artistic production (Carter et al., 1993; Castells, 1997; Sepe, 2017).

Within such a context, the interventions of authenticity in the Chinese historic urban landscape should incorporate both tangible and intangible values embedded in historical, architectural, cultural, social and economic layers and to form a structural expression of place identity (Carta, 2007; Hague and Jenkins, 2003; Sepe, 2017; Zhang, 2018; Martínez; 2019; Su, 2020).

2.3.2 Integrating tangible and intangible cultural heritage in authentic HULs

Both of UNESCO’s documents (2005 and 2011) aim to expand the focus on physical-built urban form and pay more attention to intangible dimensions and exercises, such as ‘associative connections’ (UNESCO, 2005), continuity of culture (UNESCO, 2005) and collective memory of communities (UNESCO, 2011). As the Valletta Principles for the Safeguarding and Management of Historic Cities, Towns and Urban Areas states, ‘historic towns and areas are living evidence of the past that shaped them’ (ICOMOS, 2011). In this regard, the historic urban landscape helps record and document history and cultural context of the city. Furthermore, the promotion of Historic Urban Landscapes helps view the historic urban areas as manifestations of the public’s cultural heritage, which is a

product of both tangible and intangible characters (Rudokas and Indre Grazuleviciute-Vileniske, 2020).

In addition to the fundamental role of material or tangible resources in preserving the authenticity of historical sites, the intangible resources and values embedded in a heritage site or the historic urban landscape, such as its traditional cultural events or the public's collective memories, cannot be replicated, and this irreducible historical information forms part of the 'authenticity' of a heritage site and urban environment (Zhang, 2018; Su, 2020). Therefore, UNESCO in 2015 promoted Ethical Principles for Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH), which emphasised that 'authenticity should not constitute concerns and obstacles in the safeguarding of ICH' (Article 8 UNESCO, 2015).

Under such context, the cultural heritage-led urban regeneration of the Chinese historic urban context requests more attention on the development of ICH tourism. As Su et al. (2020) suggested, it is necessary to assess and value both locals' and tourists' emotional experiences of the intangible cultural heritage, which significantly influence different users' behaviours. In addition to the daily activities conducted by local inhabitants, prior research indicated that the tourists' behaviours affected by the expression of ICH also contribute to forming sustainable development of cultural heritage-led urban regeneration (Chen and Chen, 2010; Liu et al., 2017; Sohn and Lee, 2017; Kim, 2018). Furthermore, concepts relating to the subjective attributes of intangible cultural heritage, such as emotion, involvement, and experience quality, are examined by different scholars to form a better understanding of integrating authenticity and ICH in the historic urban landscape (Chen and Chen, 2010; Lu et al., 2017; Gu et al., 2018).

2.4 History and Culture – Shaping Place Identity in Urban Regeneration

Urban regeneration relates closely to place identity as the transformation and changes of the built environment, social fabric and public spaces could affect residents' feelings and sense of place within the emerging globalisation (Norberg-Schulz, 1980; Boussaa, 2017). Globalisation and technological development lead to the resemblance in cities' customs, urban spaces, and behaviour patterns. All these repetitions are argued to result in homogenisation, loss of meaning, and unrecognisable cities and urban places (Sepe, 2013, 2018). The risks of becoming homogeneous – one of the severe results of the identity crisis – could lead the city or its urban district to the loss of competitiveness and damage the sustainability of urban development in the future (Sepe, 2013).

The involvement of urban history and the local culture has become a driving power as well as playing a leading role in the developing process of urban regeneration in recent decades (Montgomery, 2000; Wansborough and Mageean, 2000; Carmona et al., 2010; Sepe, 2013; Sepe, 2018). In terms of making distinctiveness and preserving the continuousness of the urban sectors of different cities, the focus has been on utilising and interpreting culture and history in response to the global urban regional

transformation. As Erdoğanaras and Erol (2013) suggested, cities under global urban regeneration planning processes are eager to find ways to counter the identity crisis issues – the loss of distinctive characteristics and features rooted in their transforming and developing patterns.

2.4.1 Using History and Culture in Urban Regeneration

Culture and history could provide city governors with reference knowledge and necessary inspirations to design and plan urban regeneration strategies. The expressions of meanings and values embedded in local culture and urban history could form individual images and enhance a sense of place as integrating with the urban environment (Montgomery, 2000). Therefore, local cultures get reconstituted in urban regeneration processes and have important implications for forming an identity as Zukin (1995, pp. 293-294) indicates: “*What is ‘culture’ to one group may be ‘repression’ to another. ... Public spaces create a variety of public cultures, and ... the overarching public culture of the city is dialogue among them*”.

Moreover, recognising the value of history as a critical component in forming place identity is necessary for urban regeneration. The historical perspective of the urban environment refers to historically significant buildings and acts as components in creating a sense of place (Oktay, 2002). The physical characteristics and features of urban places could be taken as clues of history, and historical places offer people opportunities to understand the urban environment’s evaluation (Nasar, 1998; Oktay, 2002; Stedman, 2003). Furthermore, people attached to a place are more interested in that place’s past as the amount of knowledge about the urban context could deliver a sense of continuity (Hayden, 1997; Lewicka, 2008).

Within such a context, urban history and culture not only add values to the place identity but also serves as a reference point for urban regeneration, and how to express and interpret historic and cultural resources is critical in safeguarding and constructing sustainable urban image (Carter et al., 1993; Sepe, 2013).

2.4.2 Designing Public Space in Urban Regeneration

The involvement of history and culture in the regeneration processes of old cities links to urban design in the aspect of reconstructing and transforming physical environment, where the aim is to create and develop urban landscape (Hall & Hubbard, 1996; Wansborough and Maggean, 2000; Bailey et al., 2007). The reconstruction of the historic urban environment includes restoring a traditional city’s spatial fabric – streets and squares, and the conservation of built forms – heritage and cultural venues. With respect to the distinctive characters of places with historical and cultural values,

urban regeneration should show concerns for the continuity and authenticity – critical components of place identity – of the city (Wansborough and Mageean, 2000). Under such context, urban regeneration, which is led by history and culture, is seen as a new planning strategy for forming a place identity. Moreover, it helps understand how to integrate urban spaces within the so-called “Entrepreneurial city” (Hall and Hubbard, 1996) and “renaissance city” (Evans, 2001) is critical for urban regeneration.

The idea of integrating urban design or place-making with culture-led urban regeneration needs to focus on the design and quality of the built environment and the public realm, which provides the basic venues and physical settings for expressions of urban history and culture (Punter, 1995b, Montgomery, 1998; Wansborough and Mageean, 2000; Carmona et al., 2003; Sepe, 2013). As an integral part of the public realm, which is a combination of the physical environment and social activities, public space relates to all those parts of the built and natural environment where the public has free access (Carmona et al., 2004). Therefore, the public realm experience results from the quality of public spaces and the aesthetic design of buildings. Furthermore, a well-designed public realm significantly influences forming positive perceptions of a city (Bristol legible city, 2001a). Furthermore, the quality of urban public space – streets and squares with recognisable characters - contributes to the shaping process of visitors’ images and strengthening city identity (Oktay, 2002).

As well as connecting squares, streets, and other types of ways, public spaces also act as the physical carrier of different activities conducted by people. According to Carr et al. (1992, pp. xi), public space is “the common ground where people carry out the functional and ritual activities that bind a community, whether in the normal routines of daily life or periodic festivities”. Because of the global urban regeneration trend, more research focuses on the design and quality of public space and public life in cities under urban renewal processes (Carmona et al., 2010; Muminovic, 2017).

In conclusion, the use of both tangible and intangible assets of urban history and cultural resources is becoming significant in developing urban regeneration strategies and tools for city marketing. Traditional ideas and policies of urban regeneration could not fully satisfy the changing process of the urban environment, and future design strategies not only focus on physical constructions and built environment but also connections between users and intangible elements – history, cultural identities, memories, and emotional experiences (Sepe, 2013). The next section will discuss several concepts and models of integrating history and culture within the context of urban regeneration and analyse their characters of a conceptual framework to comprehensively understand the involvement of urban history and culture resources in making and reconstructing urban spaces.

2.5 Models for integrating History and Culture in Urban Regeneration

The redevelopment and regeneration of cities include modifying existing spaces and creating new ones, and such transformations are conducted along with urban design and planning tools (Sepe, 2013). During such urban transforming processes, the involvement of local history and cultural resources could balance the relationships among various aspects such as urban policies and public participation, place identity and innovation, and sustainability of the public realm (Landry, 2006). In this regard, the interpretation of historical and cultural elements embedded within the urban fabric should get particular attention as they could attract both locals and visitors.

The history of a place, an urban district, or a city contribute to the formation and transformation of the urban environment, and Sepe (2013) advised that the tangible elements – such as urban fabric and built heritage – play critical roles in determining the future developing pattern and urban renewal. As one of the most significant elements of tangible urban history, built heritage acts as a narrative way of illustrating urban image and describing urban identity (Carter et al., 1993). Heritage buildings and iconic landmarks in the post-industrial districts with a long history could act as both brands and staples of future urban planning. Moreover, venues integrating with urban spaces would create specific places – museums, art centres, theatres – to display urban cultural resources and historical backgrounds (Mommaas, 2004; Sepe, 2018).

In such a context, four different concepts and models of integrating history and culture in urban design and urban regeneration are explored – Creative City, Cultural Quarter, Tourism Precinct, and Heritage Trail. Concepts of creative city and cultural quarter act as planning models following the idea of culture-led regeneration, which aims to revitalise the cultural identity of an urban area and re-establish the sense of history (Wansborough and Maggean, 2000; Evans, 2001; Florida, 2002; Montgomery, 2003; Bailey et al., 2004; Carta, 2004; Sepe, 2013). Furthermore, the research focuses on urban regeneration in the historic urban context. Such transformations usually lead to urban tourism development because of the distinct heritage and attractions in a specific area. Two other concepts relating to the design and planning of tourism districts and routes will be discussed to explore the interaction between history, culture, and place identity (Galt, 1995; Nuryanti, 1996; Howard and Pinder, 2003; Griffin and Hayllar, 2006; Al-hagla, 2010).

2.5.1 Integrating culture with local urban design

In terms of integrating cultural elements in the urban design, appropriate involvement of cultural resources inside urban planning strategy is able to contribute to employment and boost local economic development (Sepe, 2013). Furthermore, successful integration and innovation of cultural resources in

the urban planning process could trigger evolutionary development of the territorial system by properly interacting with social factors, thus constituting a network of culturally sustainable urban renewal (Hall, 1998; Evans, 2001; Neil, 2004; Madgin, 2010). Under such context, two concepts relating to cultural-led urban design were reviewed in this part to understand the theoretical relationships and influential factors of manifesting local culture in urban regeneration or urban renewal projects: the creativity city and cultural quarter.

2.5.1.1 Creative City

A creative city was first described by Jacobs (1961, 1984) as a creative urban economy led by innovative practitioners and enterprises and the flexible manifestation of urban history and cultural resources. The target is to achieve an urban district or milieu by integrating appropriate urban planning strategies to implement urban renewal through culture and arts (Kana, 2012). Under such context, the cultural heritage is considered a creative cultural resource, representing a substantial change in further sustainable urban management and adding distinctive values to specific urban regions (Sepe, 2013).

In this regard, the examination of the concept of ‘creative city’ aims to explore the reasons behind the creation of attractive and competitive cities after the urban development and social renewal in recent decades (Hall, 1998; Landary, 2000; Florida, 2004). According to Landry and Woods (2008), creating and maintaining a city’s diversity is significant as it involves urban history with multiple cultures to cement the urban identity. Therefore, historical and cultural resources are taken as factors in constructing a system of mediators for urban regeneration, especially urban places with distinctive districts and historical areas (Kana, 2012; Sepe, 2013).

The key to delivering creativity within the urban environment is creating a local system that contains the characteristic foundation for generating cultural innovations. The system is formed by urban districts and clusters capable of nourishing urban culture (Sepe, 2013). Furthermore, two types of clusters and districts can be defined related to the concept of the creative city:

- **Cultural clusters include innovations created with cultural activities such as cinema, fine art, architectural design and others.**
- **Clusters of events refer to diverse events and different kinds of recreational, historical, and cultural manifestations.**

Creative cities or areas should help create an attractive urban system that integrates cultural characteristics and promotes cultural activities by linking organised events, buildings, and venues (Sepe, 2013). In terms of the research objectives and manifestation of history and culture, key factors

identified in the concept of a creative city are the innovation of cultural elements, designated cultural clusters, diversity of cultural events.

2.5.1.2 Cultural Quarters

Concepts of the creative city focus on urban areas with characteristics and aim to create clusters innovations. Another planning theory – cultural quarter – intends to deal with the specific urban precincts and quarters. Most cities have distinctive urban quarters, which could be identified through their characteristic cultural elements – venues and products. Such quarters' development could act as a countermeasure against the declining inner urban areas as part of regeneration projects (Montgomery, 2003). The concept of culture quarter is described as distinct areas of cities with mixed scale, size, and types of buildings and spaces in a limited spatial area. Compared with other areas in the city, such quarters show a high concentration of cultural venues and related production and consumption (Wynne, 1989; Wansborough and Mageean, 2000).

Concepts of cultural quarters are considered theories relating to a large scale of urban design strategy, integrating with cultural and economic development (Wansborough and Mageean, 2000; Montgomery, 2000). As urban regeneration and renewal of urban spaces usually focus on specific inner urban districts, the idea of cultural quarters is seen as a deliberate model for the reconfigured public realm in the mixed-used urban redevelopment, which is also a process of place-making in urban design (Montgomery, 2003). Moughtin (1996) suggests that a creative design and regeneration strategy could reinforce the characteristics of urban districts in terms of strengthening the local distinctiveness and creating memorable places. In this regard, characteristics of cultural quarters show close inter-relationships to the process of forming an urban identity in urban design or place-making (Figure 2-2).

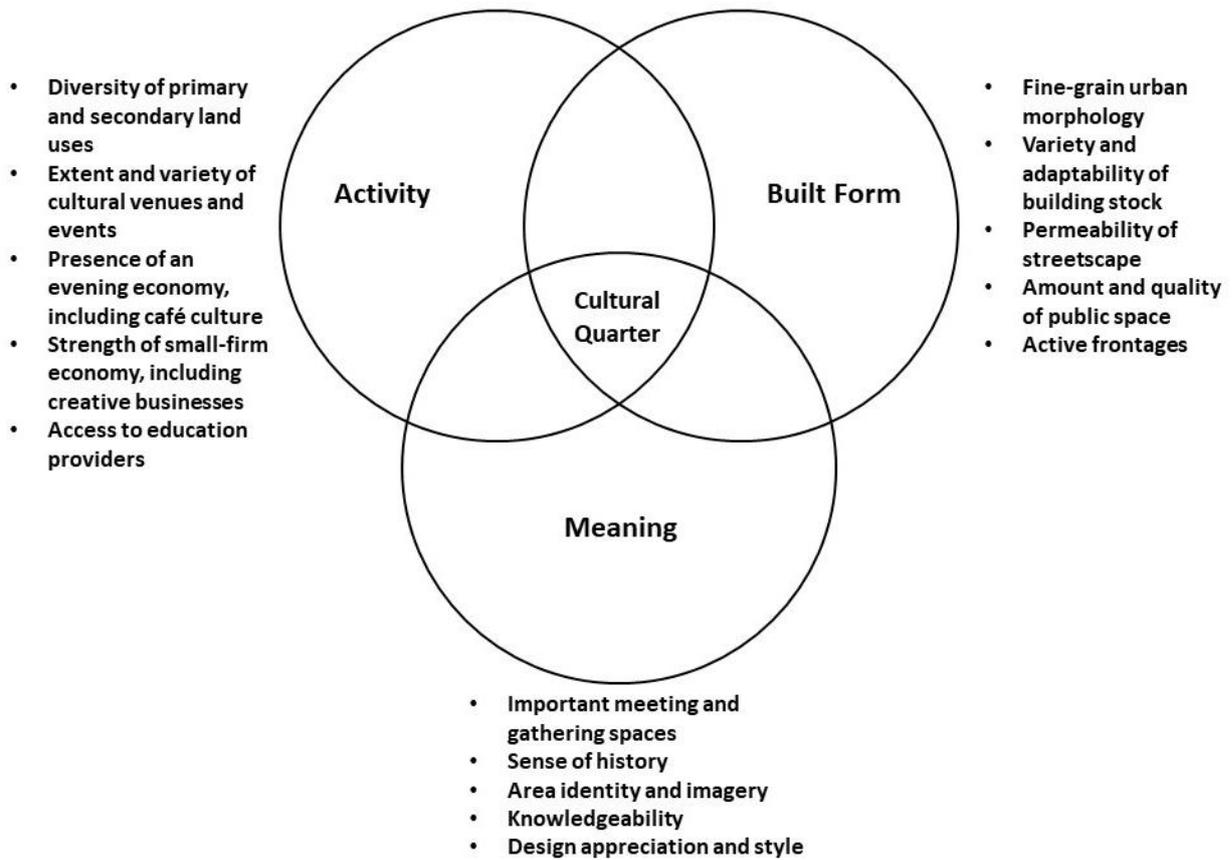


Figure 2-2 Characters of Place in Cultural Quarter (Image: adapted from Montgomery, 2003)

Built Form

As the researcher discussed in the previous section, built form acts as the basic physical environment and fundamental realm – streets, squares, and buildings – for both activities and the formation of meanings and memories. Both Jacobs (1961) and Lynch (1981) highlight concepts of ‘fit’ and ‘city diversity’ in terms of creating well-organised built forms with permeability and a mixture of buildings, and they suggest the network formed by streets, squares, and places between buildings should help to cultivate people’s activities.

- According to Buchanan (1988) and Gehl (1996), well-designed pedestrian networks in a city – acting as a movement system of the public realm – create meeting places and provide spaces for local traditions and customs, and the integration of spaces and events could represent meanings and identities at the same time.
- The presence of people attractors is necessary for creating active street life – both major ones (iconic landmarks, cultural venues, shop frontages) and minor ones (street vendors, street markets, speciality shop) contribute to the quality of urban quarters (Montgomery, 2003; Carmona et al., 2010).

- In addition to the lively street scene, permeability is necessary for defining good street views. Gehl (1994) suggests that transparency and visibility are necessary for street vistas, and a good horizontal (ground-level) grain of active frontages and vertical (above ground-level) grain of buildings will help improve the quality of streetscape (Montgomery, 1998; McCarthy, 2005; Carmona et al., 2010).

Activity

According to Montgomery (2003), the diversity of cultural activities is a critical pre-requisite, and the presence of cultural venues and active street life are necessary components in encouraging both cultural production (e.g. making handicrafts or providing services) and consumption (e.g. people visiting venues and buying products) (Comedia, 1991b). Within such a context, several necessary factors are discussed in the literature around aspects of activity:

- A strong evening economy is taken as a fundamental component in producing lively street scenes, as an attractive urban quarter or district should offer cultural and leisure consumption for users after normal working hours (Montgomery, 2003; Song et al., 2016);
- Diversity and variety of small-scale business activity help improve urban vitality by attracting small groups of people. Besides the main venues such as art galleries, museums, and theatres, the variety of meeting and resting places – coffee houses, bars, restaurants and others – are also required to fulfil people’s social needs (Montgomery, 2003; McCarthy, 2005 and 2006).

Meaning

The meaning or sense of place is an integration of material urban form and experiences, and the latter is the production of memories, events, and history that happened in specific places (Carmona et al., 2010; Dovey, 2010). The image of place relates to concepts of legibility, which is described as the interpretations or expressions of different elements in the city or urban districts and how would such elements be organised into a recognisable pattern (Lynch, 1960; Montgomery, 2003). Moreover, the information and knowledge of the place absorbed and filtered by different people also show influences on forming place image, and innovation of specific events could help re-imagining the place or the city (Carmona et al., 2010).

- In addition to memories and events that happen in the place, different visitors and users could produce individual images of the same place based on their understandings and bits of knowledge. The critical point of producing a place image is

to encourage greater knowledgeability in the urban spaces, such as historical and cultural activities, visual clues, and traditional customs (Comedia, 1991a).

- Most urban quarters' innovation and creativity are interpreted in different aspects of design appreciation: a mixture of building types and architectural styles, design of facades, and streetlights and illuminations (Urban Task Force, 1999; Montgomery, 2003; McCarthy, 2005). All elements contribute to the formation of visual appreciation, which will result in creating the place image and reinforcing the place identity (McCarthy, 2006; Carmona et al., 2010).

Based on Carter (1977), Punter (1991), Comedia (1991a), Montgomery (1998 and 2003), McCarthy (2005 and 2006), the concept of cultural quarter provided a theoretical model for the culture-led urban design and regeneration. Therefore, the cultural quarter characteristics help form a fundamental theoretical framework for this research, exploring the manifestation of history and culture in the heritage tourism-led urban regeneration. The next section will examine concepts related to the design of tourism destinations and find clues about the conservative and innovative application of local historical and cultural heritage in tourism planning.

2.5.1.3 Contributions to this research

Both concepts of creative city and cultural quarters emphasised that physical and design-related factors must be taken into account and broader concerns such as the relationship of history and culture to local identity. From prior studies of the two conceptual models, it is clear that elements of culture and cultural innovation are now firmly embedded in the practice of urban design and regeneration (McManus and Carruthers, 2014; Shi-lian, 2014; Sepe, 2018). Moreover, **culture is seen as a driver of economic regeneration**, and many cities have used culture as an additional means of achieving regeneration outcomes through **the designation of Creative Cultural Districts** (Sepe, 2018).

The applications of cultural districts and creative cities are also used as the mechanism to reflect the concept of local identity and history, coupled with image enhancement, placemaking and destination marketing. Those notions have been further elaborated with reference to Chinese cities (Yu, 2014), and offer fundamental conceptual framework and insights for the development of cultural heritage-led urban regeneration. Furthermore, those concepts are developed to consider the urban district with historical and cultural values as a visitor destination, which forms a wider **regeneration process and associated image enhancement, place marketing and branding strategies** for the historic urban landscape of Chinese cities.

2.5.2 Design and planning strategies for tourism destinations

As the research objectives aim to explore the manifestation of history and culture in heritage tourism-led urban regeneration, it is necessary to understand the relationship between urban design and tourism planning. In addition to the concept of the creative city, the local cultural and historical characteristics relate to the value of the ‘city brand’, which aims to promote distinctive characters of tourism districts and provide opportunities for future urban development (Sepe, 2013). From this perspective, creating and improving the city’s brand image as a tourist destination depends on the distinctive and integral atmosphere created by ‘abstract images that incorporate multiple tourism elements (Ye and Jeon, 2020). In order to understand the characters of designing tourism destinations in the urban context, two concepts were examined in this section: tourism precinct and heritage trail.

2.5.2.1 Tourism Precinct

Besides the concept of ‘quarters’ (Montgomery, 2003), precincts have been described as tourist districts that focus on areas with large attractions and distinct heritage (Getz, 1993a). Tourism has become a significant factor in improving the local economy, urban vitality, and quality of the built environment in many cities, especially in historical centres (García-Hernández et al., 2017). The concept of a tourism precinct or district is considered manifestation in transforming and revitalising urban districts, such as historical urban centres (Griffin and Hayllar, 2006). In general, the concept of tourism precinct is defined as:

‘a distinctive geographic area within a larger urban area, characterised by a concentration of tourist-related land uses, activities, and visitation, with fairly definable boundaries. Such precincts generally possess a distinctive character by their mixture of activities and land uses, such as restaurants, attractions and nightlife, physical or architectural fabric, especially the dominance of historic buildings, or their connection to a particular cultural or ethnic group within the city. Such characteristics also exist in combination’. (Hayllar and Griffin, 2005: 517)

A tourism precinct is a destination for tourists and local visitors and a product of both geographical environments and built form interacting with a network of meanings and images created by the built heritage and cultural events (Sepe, 2013). According to Oktay (2006), the key to making a place identity is to interpret the physical characters and features in an urban district’s aesthetic designing process with distinctive characters. Moreover, the role of the tourism precinct as a catalyst for urban renewal – in both economic and social aspects – is also considered a critical factor in describing the city’s planning and development processes (Griffin and Hayllar, 2006). Within such a context, several factors are taken as influencing the quality of tourism precinct and forming place identity (Griffin and Hayllar, 2004; Hayllar and Griffin, 2005; Griffin et al., 2006):

- Previous experience and knowledge of the precinct – which could influence visitors’ images of the city and expected experience in the precincts.
- Reasons for their visit – to understand tourists’ motivations that led them to the precincts.
- Visitors had seen or engaged in activities during their visits to each precinct.
- How users viewed the precinct as a place for locals or tourists and the relationship between two different groups.
- To ask tourists about the overall impressions and atmospheres of the precinct, which aim to find out their favourite elements and the feelings created by them.
- To know how they would describe the physical character – old buildings, iconic landmarks, design of the built form and others.
- The significance of tourists’ visits to the precinct as part of their overall experience in the city could help understand the relationship between regional identity and city identity.

The purpose of studying this concept is to understand tourism destinations from the perspective of visitors and tourists. The heritage tourism-led urban regeneration in Chinese cities aims to improve the local economy and urban brand by manifesting local tourism elements and their brand values, and the appropriate involvement of local historical and cultural resources contribute to the promotion of city branding and identity (Ye and Jeon, 2020). The next step is to explore the influence of heritage and historical sites in designing the tourism destination, and how locals, visitors, and sites interact with each other under the context of heritage tourism.

2.5.2.2 Heritage Trail

The concept of the heritage trail, or tourist trail aim, acts as one physical manifestation of the interactions between locals, tourists, and the place by providing a proper designated pedestrian route (Galt, 1995; Howard and Pinder, 2003; Al-hagla, 2010). As one of the direct applications of the local ‘bottom-up’ approaches to the creation of heritage tourism, which emphasises the interaction between users and actors, the idea of heritage trail plays a significant role in shaping tourists’ images of the place under the context of urban development in areas with unique heritage (Chang et al., 1996). The key to creating a heritage trail is to encourage tourists to explore within the destination, and concepts of ‘animation’ (Krippendorf, 1987) and ‘serial view’ (Cullen, 1961) contribute to the quality of their experiences. Furthermore, the heritage trail allows tourists to directly interact with locals within the historical urban environment. Such interactions offer opportunities for tourists to discover, experience, and consume urban history and cultural resources (Al-hagla, 2010).

How to respond to the interaction among different aspects of cultural tourism is the key for the application of heritage trail, and three primary aspects that formulate the basic conceptual framework (Figure 2-3) are defined as conservation and rehabilitation, interpretation, and local economic development (Nuryanti, 1996; Al-Hagla; 2010).

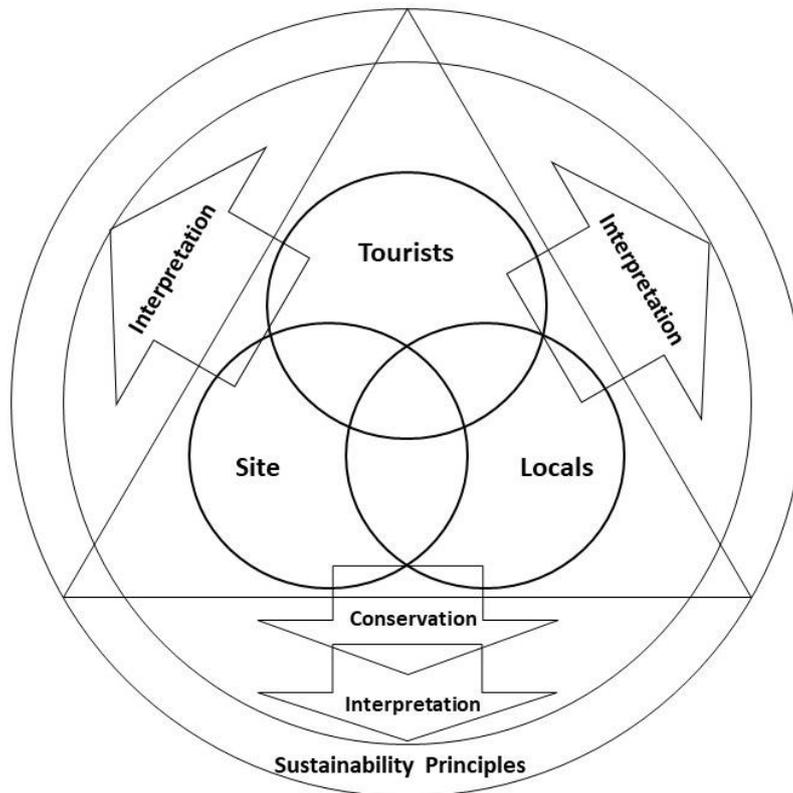


Figure 2-3 Conceptual Framework of Heritage Trail (Image: adapted from Al-Hagla, 2010)

Conservation as Interpretation

The key to meeting different needs between tourists, locals, and host place is conservation and rehabilitation of the city's values, characters, and meanings (Al-hagla, 2010). In addition to the proper sustainment of locals' daily practice and living environment, visitors travelling in the destination also wish to gain a better understanding of the original characters (Nuryanti, 1996).

Interpretation and Innovation

Interpretation is critical in expressing the characteristics of local history and culture, such as built heritage and traditional customs or events. Al-hagla (2010) suggests the proper interpretation could create a wide and dynamic area for both locals and tourists to understand the meanings of the host place, and such area could also make the link between people and place by illustrating characteristic features and provoking innovative thoughts (Stewart et al., 1998).

Local economic development

As the internal interaction between locals, tourists, and host places, economic benefits help satisfy the mutual needs through the application of heritage trail (Nuryanti, 1996). Tourism contributes to the promotion of historical areas and improves the living environment, and the revival of urban vitality assists the formation of historical and cultural atmosphere for tourists (Al-hagla, 2010). Furthermore, the development of local communities by marketing the cultural heritage could lead to sustainable tourism (Ashely et al., 2001).

2.5.2.3 Contributions to this research

In accordance with the idea of creating cultural districts for the urban regeneration, concepts of tourism precincts and the heritage trail provide consideration in terms of tourism destination for the cultural heritage-led urban regeneration. As Su et al. (2020) suggested, understanding **tourists' perceptions of tourism and visitors' perceptions** of tourism destination will provide valuable information for all potential stakeholders interested in the continued development of China's tourism brand image. Similar to many other historic cities in China and the wider region, there is a strong need for a sound basis for **the management of urban landscape change**, especially in the urban districts with historic urban landscapes (Wang and Gu, 2020). UNESCO's recommendations on historic urban landscapes have attracted increasing attention (Shao, 2016; Van Oers & Roders, 2013), however, problems remain in terms of inconsistent approaches and ineffective planning implementation. Thus, the examination of tourist precincts and the heritage trail offers critical thinking and frameworks for **sustainable planning strategies** in cultural heritage-led urban development.

2.5.3 Memory, meaning, and social space

In addition to the involvement of local cultural resources and the design of tourism destinations, the urban renewal and regeneration projects of the Chinese historical urban context need to focus on the aspect of locals. As Waston and Bentely (2007) argued, the formation and preservation of place identity matters to a wide range of people. In order to understand place identity in urban regeneration, it is significant to focus on the relationship between the set of identities related to humans and the structured diversity of meanings that affect the cultural heritage and social interactions, which were products primarily created by local users and urban environment (Harrison, 2013; Xie and Heath, 2017; Sepe, 2018; Dempsey et al., 2020). Therefore, this section will explore the meaning and memory embedded in historical and cultural heritage, and how to preserve or create social spaces for daily users.

2.5.3.1 Heritage and social memories

In terms of relating collective memories to the urban design, Rossi (1984) stated the city itself is the collective memory of people, and that memory derives from events and places with cultural and social meanings. According to Harrison (2013), specific memories relating to interaction with cultural heritage help add value to the meaning of the heritage and the accumulation of the past that the cultural heritage represents. As components of intangible cultural values, traditional events and cultural heritage are shaped by people's activities interacting with specific places (Harrison, 2013; Dempsey et al., 2020). In this regard, knowing places through social and cultural heritage help insiders to enhance their personal images of places, which are records and expressions of the cultural values and experiences of those who create and live in them (Relph, 1976; Sepe and Pitt, 2014).

Under such context, Harrison (2013) organised three issues to help illustrate the relationship between collective social memories and cultural heritage:

- The term 'absent heritage' describes the ways in which the absence of partially or fully destroyed objects are conserved actively or passively (Harrison, 2013, p.585). In this regard, heritage being destroyed or partially destroyed could be memorialised by emphasising their existences and role in ways of innovative preservation and intact preservation. Moreover, Carta (1992) asserted that preserving and adapting certain invariants (heritage and their intrinsic values) in urban change and development help to provide fundamental sources of collective memories (Sepe and Pitt, 2014).
- The value of a representative heritage site or object derives from the extent to which it can serve as a model for a category of places or objects (Harrison, 2013). Southworth and Ruggeri (2010) suggested that representative values could come from historical and political events, and Sepe and Pitt (2016) argued that public identity created by collective memories could be enhanced by visual form.
- The last key idea mentioned by Harrison (2013, p. 580) is 'one cannot properly form new memories and attach value to them without also selecting something to forget'. As the urban renewal in the Chinese historical urban context aims to form a stronger place identity by improving the urban environment, preservation of historical and cultural elements might focus on the one with unique values (Wang, 2011; Xie and Heath, 2016). As Sepe and Pitt (2016) suggested, culture and history could be seen as a unifying element that connects the inhabitants to tradition and distinguish them from the other (people or places).

The study of heritage and memories (individual and collective) helps understand the relationship between cultural heritage and local users' attachments and emotions. Such emotional values created by individual and collective memory relate to historical and cultural heritage characteristics – form,

materials, decorations, colours, smells and sounds, which are recognised and shared emotional heritage (Barbara and Perliss, 2006; Sepe and Pitt, 2016). In terms of understanding individual and collective memories in the rapid urbanisation, Southworth and Ruggeri (2010) suggested memories and experiences contribute to the formation of ‘social imageability’, which derives from the shared meanings generated by the interaction between individuals and a place. The next section will explore people’s activities and behaviours in the design of social space, which helps to understand the daily users’ experiences from the aspect of social and spatial conditions.

2.5.3.2 From ‘Third Places’ to ‘Fourth Places’

The concept of ‘third place’ as defined by urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg (1989 and 1999) as a place where people can regularly visit and communicate with others. Such places are similar to home or workplace and could provide a sense of being in the shelter, such as small businesses, cafes, bars, pubs, restaurants, groceries, etc (Mehta and Bosson, 2010). Following the concept of ‘third places’, Aelbrecht (2016) introduced the concept of ‘fourth places’ in terms of social and behavioural characteristics, which are involved in traditional public spaces and informal public realms, such as new design public and semi-public spaces. In her opinion, allowing ‘in-betweenness’ in the urban design process of the public realm could encourage new users to get involved in the undefined, empty or under-programmed spaces by conducting social activities. The aim of defining ‘fourth places’ is to create a great sense of publicness through a proper level of spatial novelty and complexity, and thereby form open and social spaces for a diversity of users (Aelbrecht, 2016).

Physical characteristics of ‘Third Places’ and ‘Fourth Places’

Although Oldenburg’s discussions about ‘third places’ mostly focused on the social components, such as the visiting frequency of customers, the purpose of their visits, how do users feel in the places and so on, researchers (Mehta and Bosson, 2010; Williams and Hipp, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2019) suggested that there are other physical characters that help to distinctive third places from other spaces. Moreover, Mehta and Bosson (2010, p.780) identified several characteristic features that support human social activities and interactions in third places: personalisation of the street front by the business, the permeability of the business to the street, seating provided by the business, and shelter provided by the business on the street space.

According to Albrecht (2016), ‘fourth places’ have similar social and behavioural characteristics with the concept of ‘third places’, while their types of users, activities, locations and spatial characters form the distinctive framework of ‘fourth places’. In addition to the primary activities of people-watching, walking, waiting and killing time, the location and spatial, temporal, and managerial characters of ‘in-betweenness’ are key in creating ‘fourth places’ (Albrecht, 2016). Under such context, multiple characteristics were identified in her concept of forming ‘fourth places’:

- Thresholds or transitional spaces between public and private spaces (Norberg-Schulz 1971; Hillier and Hanson 1984; Bobic 2004) were considered as blurring boundaries between tight and loose social spaces (Whyte, 1980).
- Edges are defined as the boundary between inside and outside (Bentley et al. 1985; Davies 2000; Shaftoe 2008), which influence types of users' social behaviours and activities. Moreover, edges could be designed as resting places for people to interact with strangers due to the 'edge-effect' described by the sociologist De Jonge (1967).
- Paths and nodes refer to functional and perceptual dimensions as they could offer a great scope of social interaction and attract social gravity by guiding and gathering people in and out of specific locations (Albrecht, 2016).
- Props include street furniture, public arts, and signages, which help triangulate or assemble social interactions in public spaces (Carmona et al., 2010; Albrecht, 2016). In addition, their scales, shapes, type, and design style could combine with other spatial characters to create optimal possibilities between users and spaces (Whyte, 1980; Albrecht, 2016).

The other key feature in identifying 'fourth places' is the sense of publicness, supported by spatial conditions of spatial novelty and complexity (Albrecht, 2016). According to her definitions, such types of public places do not show tight relationships to the local history and social culture and have great flexibility in form and scale. Hence, the understanding of 'fourth places' could contribute to the emergence of a series of small-scale and new-built public spaces in urban regeneration. Their flexibility could help deal with the formation of the public realm between preserved historical sites and reconstructed urban spaces.

2.5.3.3 Contributions to this research

The preceding discussions of memory, meaning and social space explored **the relationship between daily users, characteristics of heritage, and spatial conditions of social spaces**. As the heritage tourism-led urban renewal project in China sometimes lead to the removal of old residents, it is necessary to understand **how the locals interact with the old urban environment in multiple ways** (Lin et al., 2015). As Relph (1976, p. 65) suggested, people who live in places of low mobility build stronger bonds with the place, which **stimulate a sense of place among local communities through the interactions between people and the distinctive sites or settings** both as an individual and as a member of the community. In this regard, understanding the role of local users in the urban environment before and after urban renewal through their **memories and meanings of specific places** is critical in manifesting the history and cultural resources to preserve the authentic place identity.

Based on the theories and models of planning and designing cities and urban areas in urban regeneration, it is obvious that both urban history and cultural resources play a significant key in the process of place-making and the formation of place identity. As Sepe (2013, 2018) concludes: “The most successful urban regeneration projects are those where there is a strong involvement of pre-existing local identity and where history recovery of the sense of place and belonging to the local community is expected” (Sepe, 2013, pp. 595-613). Therefore, it is necessary to consider **the involvement of both local inhabitants and tourists** in preserving and transforming historical urban landscape in the cultural heritage or tourism-led urban regeneration, and to preserve and innovate the place identity.

2.6 Developing a Conceptual Framework for Urban Regeneration in Chinese historical cities and town areas

Based on the application of those conceptual models and their characters mentioned in the previous section, this research aims to form a basic conceptual framework for the involvement of history and culture in urban regeneration under the Chinese historical urban context. As most culture-led or tourism-led urban renewal aims to reconstruct iconic districts and develop the physical environment, the critical issue is how to combine local history and cultural resources – distinctive characteristics, traditions and customs – within the mixed modern and ancient urban context.

As the central location of urban layout and origin of urban cultural history, urban regeneration in many historic urban districts and centres face complex relationships between conservation of heritage, preserving place identity and planning strategy (Kong, 2007; Graham and Howard, 2008). Moreover, such old urban centres and districts provide locals with places to conduct their daily activities and create memories for different users. The preservation of the memory relates to representations and expressions of interactions between users and urban cultural context, which is an important factor in avoiding the risk of homogenisation caused by globalisation and property-led urban regeneration (McCarthy, 2006; McDowell, 2008; Sepe, 2018).

In designing the conceptual framework for urban regeneration, how to create the integrity between all the factors – urban spaces, urban history, cultural resources, locals and tourists – is vital in forming a sign of healthy or energetic identity. According to Southworth and Ruggeri (2010), urban renewal cannot simply rely on the reconstruction of the original form as the transformation of the social, cultural, memorial, and economic aspects all contribute to the evolutionary pattern of the city. As the essence of a city and its residents, developing pattern and cultural context with proper interpretation and preservation help to ensure a stronger, imageable, and sustainable place identity (Carmona et al., 2010; Southworth and Ruggeri, 2010; Sepe, 2013). Within such a context, the strategic framework

aims to explore concepts and factors as integrating with place-making and urban cultural context, and three primary aspects will lead the general framework – built form and physical settings, cultural events and activities, and memory and meaning (Figure 2-4).

Primary Aspects	Strategic Concepts	Factors
Built Form and Physical Settings	Built heritage and old buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architectural distinctiveness • Spatial form and scale
	Mix use and horizontal grain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active frontage • Design of facades
	Linkage series of public spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale of streets and squares • Street view and vista
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building heights and street width
	Environmental improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting and signages • Street furniture and adornment
Events and Activities	Activities and quality of space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural events and festivals • People watching
	Lively street scenes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of cultural venues • Presence of night economy
	Movement in public space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of pedestrian route • Roaming as observer
Meaning and Experience	Knowledgeability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous image and impression • Sense of history and progress
	Locals, tourists, and host places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A place for locals or tourists • Sense of belonging
	Distinctive Image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area identity and symbol

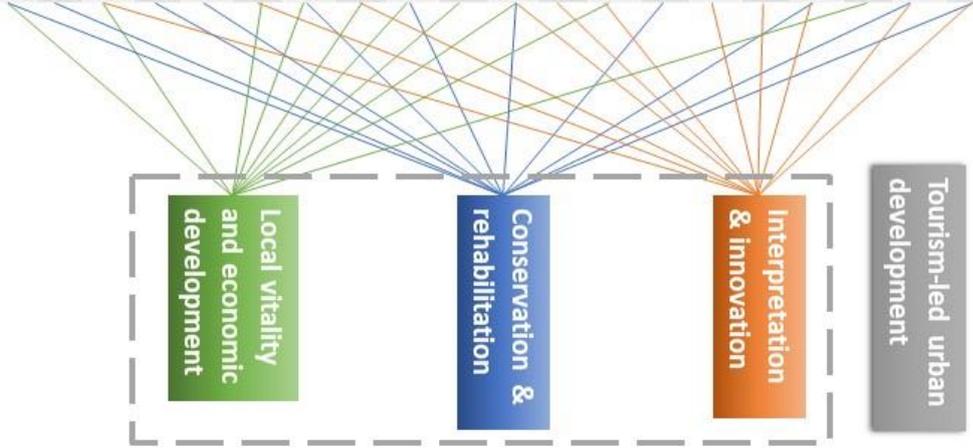


Figure 2-4 Conceptual framework for the involvement of history and culture in urban regeneration of Chinese historical urban context

2.6.1 Built Form and Physical Settings

In terms of built form, most of the indicators and factors are organised from Kevin Lynch (1960), Gordon Cullen (1960), Jane Jacobs (1961), Spiro Kostof (1991), John Montgomery (1998, 2003) and other urban design theories, and discussed in Carmona et al., (2010). Lynch (1960) put forward the concept of imageability, which is composed of elements of landmarks, nodes, paths, edges and districts. Furthermore, four essential preconditions are identified by Jane Jacobs (1961) as a diversity of primary uses, the intensity of the built form, permeability, and a mixture of buildings with various types, ages, sizes and conditions. Chinese scholars Kang (1981) and Jin (1990) defined the Chinese urban form as a composition that includes a framework or network, core or node, axes, clusters, and interface. Building on such theories, Chen and Thwaites (2013) offer a more inter-related framework of Chinese urban form with seven elements: general plan, silhouettes, street networks, urban blocks, public spaces, public buildings and houses.

Based on the above theories, the researcher organises several basic elements in the aspect of place-making and the experiences and images in the historical urban area: 1) role of built heritage and old buildings, 2) architectural distinctiveness and spatial form, 3) active frontages and facades design, 4) lights, signages, and street furniture, 5) a network of public spaces, 6) building heights, skylines and silhouettes.

2.6.1.1 Role of Built Heritage and old buildings

As essential components of forming a historic urban landscape, built heritage and old buildings with characteristic features contribute to embodying and preserving cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2011). The conservation of monuments and archaeological sites is another mode of creation – the preservation of what is existing could affect the public’s reaction to its presentation (Al-hagla, 2010). Nasser (2003) addresses the historical meanings embedded within heritage as “relics can be adapted, added to, copied, and interpreted, all of which idealise the past of the place” (Nasser, 2003, pp. 271). Furthermore, built heritage and archaeological sites could help to provide a narrative of the history and culture of their areas, and the expressions facilitate the creation and enhancement of the urban identity by “denoting particular places as centres of collective cultural consciousness” (Graham, 1998; Sepe, 2013).

In Western and Chinese contexts, built heritage is the most valuable asset with the historical and religious meanings embedded within their architectural forms, design styles, building appearances, and locations and sites (Wang, 2011; Sun, 2018). As fundamental components of the historic urban landscape, the conserving strategy needs to get involved in the processes of developing the general

plans of heritage tourism-led urban renewal (Wang and Gu, 2020). Besides built heritage and historical buildings, some public buildings constructed in contemporary cities are considered iconic landmarks as some public buildings and spaces could be the collective memories and place image of local users and represent specific periods of the urban context (Mavromatdis, 2012; Harrison, 2013; Lin et al., 2015). In addition to the lack of understanding of the memories embedded within the historical and cultural heritage, the authorised reconstruction of traditional-style buildings/places as heritage through official authentication projects relates to heritage-based tourism from the perspective of agents instead of locals (Su, 2018).

2.6.1.2 Architectural distinctiveness and spatial form

Urban architectures help define the edges of the public realm and compose the basic urban form or urban fabric. Buildings with unique characteristics and features – religious buildings, monuments, traditional residences – could act as visual attractors and iconic landmarks with distinctive meanings (Carmona et al., 2010). As one of the most significant elements in forming ‘townscape’, distinctive architectural style and appearance contribute positively to the urban context in visual and spatial aspects (Cullen, 1961; Carmona et al., 2010). Characteristic features such as colour, texture, detailing and material of the architectural surface act as unique symbols and define urban space.

In addition to the presence of characteristic or iconic buildings, the relationship with ordinary houses and buildings is also critical in preserving old urban form. As Kelbaugh (2002) suggests, such ‘collateral’ buildings could help to define the edge and shape of public spaces and strengthen the distinctiveness of iconic landmarks. Due to the traditional urban layout and fabric, ancient Chinese houses act more like edges of streets than defining the public spaces. Although Chinese house forms and architectural styles result from evolving history and culture, most of them were demolished or replaced by high-rise modern buildings, and such transformations have affected the city's visual identity (Chen and Thwaites, 2013). In the culture or tourism-led urban regeneration, conservation and reconstruction of ancient houses play key roles in re-imagining the urban environment, and well-preserved old buildings could act as iconic symbols among modern flats. On the other hand, reconstruction of traditional-style buildings in the heritage tourism-led urban renewal aimed to show the traditional characteristics of the old urban environment and streetscape for tourists and has little relationship to the memories of local residents (Sun, 2018).

Under such context, the first question raised in the section of architectural distinctiveness and spatial form is how to deal with the visual and spatial relationship between reconstructed traditional-style houses and existing modern style buildings. The other one is about the manipulated expression of local cultural elements – such as the reconstructed traditional-style spaces and buildings – that might fail to relate to the collective memories formed by the local community (Sun, 2018).

2.6.1.3 Active frontage and façade design

As essential street-view characters, both well-defined edges and visual transparency help connect public spaces and improve street life. The precondition is the presence of horizontal grain with mixed uses and active frontages (Gehl, 1996; Montgomery, 2003). Frontage is the interface between buildings and streets (or public spaces), and the presence of active frontages are necessary to generate diversity and vitality for a lively street scene (Montgomery, 2003). In the concept of ‘third places’, Oldenburg (1991) also emphasised the significant social values of small businesses – cafes, bars, restaurants, general stores and so on – in creating a lively street front. Moreover, the mixture of small to medium businesses, such as shops, performance venues, cafés, bars, hotels and others, could cultivate economic diversity and provide a human-scale environment for fulfilling different users’ needs (Wansborough and Maggean, 2000).

Buchanan (1988b) has highlighted the relationship between façade design and creating a sense of place based on the visual and aesthetic aspects. Well-designed facades act as mediators between inner-private rooms and outer-public spaces and provide people attractors (Buchanan, 1988; Carmona et al., 2010). Moreover, the distinctive or traditional characters and aesthetic coherence produce communications with adjacent buildings and places and enhance identity (Cantacuzino, 1994). Based on the social aspect of ‘third places’, Mehta and Bosson (2010) identified multiple physical characteristics, such as personalisation of the street front by the business and settings of street furniture, to connect street frontages with façade design. As necessary components of forming frontages, windows, doorways, and exterior zones of café and bars suggest the presence of human activities and help to indicate the spatial boundary between the public realm and private venues (Carmona et al., 2010; Aelbrecht, 2016).

Most Chinese cities’ urban regeneration with historical urban context would combine with tourism precincts, and mixing and balancing old horizontal grains and new ones is the key to creating streets with diversity and activity at all times (Xie and Heath, 2017). As the traditional architectural forms and materials focus more on the privacy and social class of the feudal construction system (Liang, 1998), it is necessary for urban regeneration in traditional Chinese cities to integrate traditional built forms and active frontages. In terms of architectural distinctiveness and authentic urban form, the critical issue is to balance old buildings with modern facades and preserved traditional houses, as both are the products of the city’s developing patterns. On the other hand, it is necessary to identify elements in forming lively street frontages in the past as they play key roles in shaping new street scenes and social relationships (Zhang et al., 2021).

2.6.1.4 Linked series of public spaces

Public space is defined as the network or system with free access, and streets and squares are the two most important elements in the system: offering places for users to roam and watch others; providing necessary meeting and gathering spaces (Wnasborough and Maggean, 2000; Carmona et al., 2010). As the width-to-height could affect pedestrians' spatial feelings, streets and squares produce two different senses – intimacy and grandeur (Montgomery, 1998). In terms of function, streets encourage movement and show directions, while squares provide necessary gathering and social spaces. The interaction between streets and squares forms the unique urban fabric of each city and provide different images of the city, which are created by kinaesthetic experience and routes (Cullen, 1961; Bosselmann, 1998; Montgomery, 1998; Carmona et al., 2010).

Different designers and researchers (Sitte, 1889; Cullen, 1961; Moughtin, 2003) suggest that twisting and winding streets combined with irregular street frontages contribute to the strength of sense-of-enclosure. Such theories closely relate to the Western medieval urban context, and it is not suitable for every city, especially for traditional Chinese historical cities following strict planning theories and forms (He, 2004). The chessboard urban layout with crossing streets network of most Chinese ancient cities is one of the authentic elements of traditional urban form, and public spaces formed by hutongs provide limited spaces but close relationships for public communications (Wang, 2011; BIAD, 2016). However, due to the rapid urbanisation and urban development, fragmented public space without mixed-use caused the lack of popularity (Kana, 2012; Niu et al., 2018). Therefore, how to deal with the issue between the old public realm and reconstructed open spaces is the key to producing distinctive linked series of public spaces.

2.6.1.5 Signages, adornment and street furniture

The design style, quality and distribution of street furniture and signage show a close relationship between the quality of urban space and the expected standard of a city (Carmona et al., 2010). Organisation and clutter of such elements could result in different street views: on the one hand, proper integration of signages and street furniture with the places help to enhance the identity; on the other hand, the clutter of them could lead to the innovation of new image (Sepe, 2013).

Traditional Chinese architectural form is represented by the combinations of advanced structural elements, modulus-oriented building parts, and adornments with religious or cultural meanings (Chen and Thwaites, 2013). Abstract or simplified methods are often used in landscape design to reflect traditional cultural connotations, and a variety of forms are used to combine traditional Chinese cultural symbols with garden features, such as inlaid in landscape walls, gates, corridors, ground paving, seating benches, lighting, or individually in the form of landscape features (Meng, 2012; Yan,

2015). Under the context of heritage tourism-led urban renewal of historical sites, how to preserve and renovate these valuable and symbolic elements are necessary to re-imagining the historical urban context, and re-interpretation of them contributes to urban innovation. In the scheme of redeveloping Qianmen Hutong in Beijing, the design team suggested that the design and placement of street furniture and lights should follow the style and characteristics of the old streetscape without interfering with pedestrian traffic (BIAD, 2016). Moreover, how to interpret traditional elements, such as design style, materials, colours, etc., in the old townscape and streetscape will be examined in this research.

2.6.1.6 Building Heights and Skyline

Heights of buildings not only create shapes of urban forms but also define the spatial volume of streets. As Carmona et al. (2010) suggest, the continuity made by street facades and height-to-width ratio could form a sense of enclosure within the street. The ratios between width and height could deliver different spatial and visual experiences. Based on the concept of ‘third places’ (Oldenburg, 1991), Mehta and Bosson (2010) suggested pedestrians experience pleasure and safety from a sense of enclosure, which is created by the characteristics of street edges defined by buildings. Moreover, Aelbretch (2016, p. 137) identified the sense of boundary formed by the thresholds and edges of streets could provide increased opportunities for social interactions and offer conditions for street life.

In historical Chinese urban contexts, the relationship between streets and houses/buildings contributes to establishing urban forms and social orders (Wang, 2010; Xie and Heath, 2016). Compared with the sense of enclosure and vertical emphasis created by the old width-to-height ratio, many streets were reconstructed and widened after urban regeneration. The open wide spatial feeling created by new-built squares and wide streets could result in the loss of a close relationship with the facades as pedestrians could only see the outline of the streets (Carmona et al., 2010).

Silhouettes or skylines refer to the outline and shapes of single or clusters of buildings and physical objects meeting with the sky, which is shaped by the clusters of buildings with different heights (Kostof, 1991; Chen and Thwaites, 2013). The factor of the skyline is examined as many historical Chinese urban layouts are defined by the city wall, which could be used as public spaces and viewpoints for different users. In addition to the streetscape formed by clusters of houses, the city layout also contributes to the characteristic features of skylines. The traditional urban layout includes open streets acting as the city’s axis and narrow streets interweaved as the original pedestrian system (Wang, 2011; Xie and Heath, 2016). Although Oktay (2002) suggests that the city public spaces provide more detailed information by showing the city’s characteristics, skylines are considered urban signatures and brands of cities.

For the identity crisis in urban regeneration of historical Chinese cities, the critical issue is finding the balance between old flats built in the past decades and traditional reconstructed houses. How to deal with the skyline made of such mixed built forms relates to the forming of symbols and then contributes to the imageability of the city (Kostof, 1991; Chen and Kevin, 2013).

2.6.2 Events and Activities

In general, activities and social interactions are important in characterising successful urban spaces and lively public spaces closely related to a place's urban vitality (Jacobs, 1961; Montgomery, 1998; Carmona et al., 2010). Unlike squares and plazas in the Western urban context, public space in traditional Chinese urban form refers to the street network, as the streets have long been the primary places for residents to conduct their social activities. More open spaces such as squares and plazas were built through urban regeneration to fulfil social needs, and how to retain the shared social meanings and collective memories of residents is the key (Wang, 2011).

Based on the above theories, the researcher organises several basic elements in the aspect of social function and cultural events in the historical urban area: 1) role of built heritage and old buildings, 2) architectural distinctiveness and spatial form, 3) active frontages and facades design, 4) lights, signages, and street furniture, 5) a network of public spaces, 6) building heights, skylines and silhouettes.

2.6.2.1 Activities and design quality of space

The relationship between people's activities and design quality of space was highlighted by Gehl (1996), and he put forward three types of activities by considering the physical settings and weather:

- Necessary activities refer to compulsory work such as going to school and work, and physical setting and weather show slight influence on the motivations behind such activities.
- Optional activities include walking or roaming in the city, stopping by people attractors, people watching, and travelling in the tourist destination. Moreover, the quality of space and presence of shades (against bad weather or strong sunlight) could deliver a sense of "invitation" (Carmona et al., 2010, pp.207).
- Social activities depend on their interactions with others, such as playing with friends or children, and chatting with acquaintances. Although the key factor is about people involved in the same activities, the design and quality of spaces could improve their experiences.

In addition to the traditional components of urban public spaces – streets and squares, Aelbretch (2016) suggested that the temporal and managerial spaces provide extra places for social activities and behaviours, which refer to the public settings used by people during temporary periods. In this regard, well-designed public spaces could spontaneously encourage the presence of various activities as meeting users' social needs is the essential function of urban space (Su, 2018). If human behaviour is neglected and isolated from life, the construction of urban landscapes will lose its meaning. In the design process of the urban landscape, a sense of life can be integrated with public space, and the interaction between people and landscape, people and city can be achieved by providing open places for public activities, social behaviour and gathering (Zheng et al., 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to identify factors relating to different activities under the context of historical Chinese urban form.

2.6.2.2 Festivals and cultural events

A cultural festival is a culture-led event with organisation and arrangement, which contributes to the preservation and innovation of authentic cultural characteristics (Frey, 1994; Getz, 2008). As such events and festivals are hosted in specific periods and frequency, their presences could create a distinctive temporary environment (Richards and Wilson, 2006). A key asset of such a festival is that the versatility offers the individual participant a chance of having an immersive and non-routine event experience (Kirillova et al., 2014). In order to manage and market the diverse events, the concept of events portfolio was introduced by Getz (2005), in which a pyramid of four tiers/layers was set to describe the variety of socio-cultural events (Mariani and Giorgio, 2017).

For historical Chinese cities and urban areas, the presence of diverse cultural events and festivals can help boost other economic activity and consumption of cultural activities – performances, events, movie week, and other celebrations (Wansborough and Maggean, 2000). People attending cultural events in the host area could also use other facilities, such as restaurants, cafés, bars, and hotels. In these regards, cultural events and festivals are necessary for old cities and historical areas to interpret local historical and cultural resources. On the other hand, a growing number of cultural activities and performances were brought in the area under heritage tourism-led regeneration to attract tourists. Although diverse cultural performances and events bring opportunities for residents to work as participants, staff, or performances, the problem is that they might distinguish the cultural festivals and events designated for tourists from their own culture (Su, 2018). Under such context, it is necessary to understand the collective memories embedded within cultural events and interpret their traditional features for both tourists and local residents.

2.6.2.3 Diversity of cultural venues

Besides the diversity of cultural venues (such as cinema, theatre, art gallery and others), the successful urban areas often have well-organised networks or trails to connect all the places (Montgomery, 2003). In this regard, streets and squares act as the public realm's physical interface and form a network. Furthermore, the public realm and associated semi-public spaces could provide a transaction base for other culture-related venues (the traditional market, the local grocery, and sidewalk cafe) and incidental elements (street performances, street vendors, and temporary food fairs), and all of them help to cultivate a dynamic and lively cultural environment (Montgomery, 2003).

In addition to preserving old social and cultural places, rebuilding existing buildings with cultural functions such as museums and theatre sites is necessary to create cultural exhibition events, which help promote community identity (Niu et al., 2021). Kochergina (2017) suggested that the design of museum quarters could give additional advantages and add value to the city. Preserved museums provided citizens with meeting places and gradually became the core of socio-cultural activities/events in the old urban centre or town. One of the issues is about the new-built museum located in the historical sites as the developing scheme of such quarters could lead to the lack of development in the remaining parts of the city (Kochergina, 2017). On the other hand, the government-led strategy of cultural quarters could lead to the creation of new cultural events and the loss of traditional ones. Local cultural activities might lose their original meanings and collective memories if they were separated from old social and cultural places or presented in a different fashion designated for tourists (Wang, 2011). Therefore, the question of how to make appropriate use of cultural places and quarters as a catalyst to drive the urban renewal on a large urban scale need to be discussed (Niu et al., 2018).

2.6.2.4 Observer and people watching

In describing the visual experience in the urban environment, Cullen (1960) argues that visitors' movement is critical in experiencing the city in his concept of 'Serial Vision'. Furthermore, Bacon (1992, pp. 20) suggests that 'endless walking' is a way to get pedestrians involved in an urban space's dynamic experiences. The Project for Public Space (PPS, 2000, pp. 51) defined the relationship between observing and experience in space as "when you observe a space you learn how it is actually used, rather than how you think it is used".

Besides being an observer, people would look for passively involved in the physical settings and place, and people-watching is the primary form of so-called passive engagement (Carr et al., 1992; Carmona et al., 2010). Resting settings, such as benches and steps, could provide great opportunities for people-watching and other passive engagement – from observing the physical environment and watching

street performances (Carmona et al., 2010). Creating new spaces and utilising existing ones, such as squares, corners, and doorways (or other semi-public spaces), is the key to provoking people-watching and other activities. In the concept of ‘fourth places’, Aelbrecht (2016) suggested that the in-between spaces could create boundaries with potential places for different users to conduct social behaviours and interactions. For example, edges of spaces and paths with appropriate shelters could provide good vantage points for people to watch others (Aelbrecht, 2016).

Under the context of urban regeneration, the landscape design of most new squares in China is overly focused on the shape and scale, while ignoring the basic principle of meeting users’ needs (Gao and Zhou, 2015). Pedestrians who pass by or walk in the plaza and need to take a rest could find that there is a lack of suitable resting facilities, such as elevated terraces, benches, or semi-public spaces provided by cafés or tea houses. On the other hand, the placement and design of some resting facilities lack the necessary shade, making users unable to use them because they do not want to be exposed to the sun or rain. According to Gehl (1996), Mehta and Bosson (2010), and Albretch (2016), the quality of such spaces shows close relationships to users’ social interactions and sense of safety. In such regards, the design quality of resting facilities will be examined, and how would people-watching could link to the expression of urban history and cultural resources is another key issue in this research.

2.6.2.5 Presence of an evening economy

The metropolis can offer plenty of hedonistic experiences at night in urban commercial and cultural areas such as waterfront, shopping boulevards and cultural districts (Yeo and Heng, 2013). In contrast to this post-modern scene of contemporary nightlife is the mundane night-time activity that fills the everyday spaces of ordinary people and daily users (Song et al., 2016). Therefore, a lively night economy contributes to the vitality of streets and the urban environment by attracting pedestrians’ flows in the night time. Besides the diversity of cultural and entertainment venues opening at night, the quality and design of street lighting – streetlamps, borrowed light from buildings, shop signs, and others – make users safe and secure and form people attractors (Carmona et al., 2010).

Under the context of heritage tourism-led urban renewal processes, a lively night-time economy could boost the attractiveness of historical sites and urban areas at night to offer opportunities for tourists and tourism investments. On the other hand, instead of giving necessary concern for the experience of night economy and urban vitality at night, existing public design research of Chinese cities mostly focuses on the day-time use of urban spaces (Song et al., 2016). In addition to commercial, recreational, and social functions carried by types of public spaces, the diversity of activities conducted in different spaces also contributes to the formation of a lively night environment, such as providing activity venues for residents to relieve their stress of work (Zhao, Altrock and Schoon, 2011; Hao, Geertman, Hooimeijer and Sliuzas, 2012). Moreover, the presence of active frontages helps to

provide opportunities for people passing by to look into the buildings or the exterior spheres as Carmona et al. (2010) suggested such views could create a sense of the lively and safe street. In such regards, the quality of the urban environment and public spaces directly affects the quality of users' experiences and residents' life (Song et al., 2016). Under the context of urban regeneration in historical Chinese cities, the key to creating a lively night environment is to explore the design quality of public spaces and cultural venues in influencing different user groups' activities and experiences.

2.6.2.6 Route for pedestrians

In general, the design of pedestrian routes aims to encourage people's movement as moving in urban spaces as they are significant components of the public realm (Carmona et al., 2010). Therefore, the design and function of pedestrians relate to the physical setting and the activity happening within it as the characteristics of the physical environment is a consequence of human actions and management (Mehta and Bosson, 2010). According to the theoretical framework of 'Space Syntax' (Hillier and Hanson, 1984; Hiller, 1988, 1996a, 1996b; Hillier et al., 1993), the movement is more determined by urban layout grids than affected by the presence of people attractors. In this regard, the key to designing successful pedestrian routes is to integrate the preservation and expression of authentic characteristics with the cultivation of social activities.

Well-designed travelling routes or a network of them help to form an interface for visitors and daily users to interact with each other. As Al-Hagla (2010) suggests, the routes or trail aims to link all the layers with historical, cultural, social, spiritual, and artistic contexts and create a comprehensive and animated scene for different users to perceive the city. The presence of traditional anchor elements should get involved in the design of the pedestrian systems as paths and landmarks are strongly associated with physical settings (Wang, 2011). Moreover, traditional paths and iconic landmarks with characteristic features and meanings help to form an authentic sense of place, which was reflected in the everyday 'interplay between buildings, spaces, social activities, and ritual commemorations' (Nasser, 2003, p. 77). Planning and design of pedestrian routes in Chinese historic urban context should focus on the integration of elements including authentic urban fabric, distinctive architectural style, spatial expressions, leisure and outdoor activities, and traditional cultural crafts, and all of them could have effects on visual permeability and imageability of the city (Carmona et al., 2010; Xie and Heath, 2016).

2.6.3 Meaning and Image

As the previous section discussed, the image and meaning of place closely relates to place identity. To individuals, a place's image is a product of feelings and impressions created by their perceptions and

understandings of the place identity (Spencer and Dixon, 1983; Montgomery, 1998). Therefore, the presence and expression of history and culture would contribute to the amalgamations of cognitions and perceptions, then move to affect the formulation of people's image and meaning of place (Sepe, 2013). Under such context, expressing the characters of the destination (interpretation) and the extent of understanding that different visitors have (knowledgeability) in the destination are two critical factors in forming personal image and meaning of place.

In Chinese cities with historical urban areas, local residents and visitors would form different images and meanings because of their perceptions, memories, and experiences formed in the places. Uzzell (1989) addresses the significance of the people and their activities conducted in historical areas in creating a sense of place – a way of illustrating the area's heritage. Furthermore, public spaces in such historical areas could act as the foundation surface by providing interactive places for visitors, architecture, and activities. As Oktay (2005) suggests, streets and squares with unique and distinctive characteristics show a strong influence in developing local image and forming a personal identity.

2.6.3.1 Previous image and impression of the area

Social activities shape the authenticity of a historical city and cultural characteristics expressed in historical settings and then established in a harmonious relationship between physical, social, and cultural aspects (Lynch, 1961; Wang, 2011; Sepe and Pitt, 2014). The expression of authenticity is shown in the form of the collective memory of a group of people, and socio-cultural events create the sense of place in the historical city within its physical settings through space and time (Wang, 2011). Therefore, it is significant to explore the characteristics and meaning of place from the collective memory of local residents to obtain traces and anchor cultural elements in the urban renewal process.

By gathering information about different aspects of the place, individuals create a personal image and a 'frame of reference' as a framework to describe the destination (Montgomery, 1998; Sepe, 2018). As background and information generated from the place's identity, previous image and knowledge of the area could affect the formation of such a frame of reference when people visit the destination. Gaps between visitors' imaginations and the real form of the city could raise their interests and create new images, and even local users could have such gaps made by the transformation of the urban environment, especially in the historical urban context (Wang, 2011; Harrison, 2013). In this regard, urban design and place-making could act as important tools for guiding heritage tourism-led urban regeneration. Then, the involvement of existing historical and cultural elements in aspects of physical settings, social activities, and collective memory help to reconstruct the unity and continuity of urban images and identities (Wang and Gu, 2020).

2.6.3.2 Sense of history and progress

According to Nasar (1998), people generally prefer historical places to modern buildings because of their distinctive architectural styles and iconic roles. Moreover, historical sites with built heritage and old buildings contribute to strengthening place identity by creating a sense of continuity with the past and embodying group traditions and collective memories of local users (Devine-Wright and Lyons, 1997; Hayden, 1997; Hay, 1998). On the other hand, modern buildings and other built forms in the city also represent specific periods of developing urban progress, and some of them could become iconic landmarks by integrating with social activities and traditional customs.

In addition to preserving and reconstructing the physical environment and built form, it is significant to encourage associational activities and traditional events in the historical urban context. As Comedia (1991a) and Montgomery (2003) address, the critical point is to generate knowledge about historical events and develop patterns of a place. Another way of examining the knowledgeability of the city is to understand the relationship between people and places through the description of different places based on individual and collective memories (Wang, 2011). On the other hand, tourists' satisfaction has become a priority in the developing process of heritage tourism-led urban renewal schemes, which resulted in the conservation and reconstruction of local buildings and monuments being set in a designated era (Su, 2018). The sense of 'frozen history' in the historical urban areas as opposed to the aim of preserving authentic urban image: to ensure the continuity of history and express developing urban pattern in the redevelopment process (Wang, 2011, p.28).

2.6.3.3 Sense of belonging

According to Montgomery (1998), a sense of belonging comes after interactions between place identity and users in the same area. In this term, residence length and social ties with the place significantly influence the sense of belonging through expressions of physical features and symbolic meanings (Stedman, 2003).

As tourism-led urban regeneration in Chinese cities needs to deal with the relationship between locals and tourists, it is necessary to understand the sense of belonging among local residents and utilise this attachment in place-making and restoration. Lewicka (2005) shows that the place's past (urban history) is the key for people to merge the sense of belonging and preserve and interpret historical elements to enhance their attachment and improve knowledgeability of the city.

In the research of preserving the authenticity of Pingyao's ancient city, respondents' memories of places were significantly affected by the variety of their life experiences (Wang, 2011; Wang and Gu2020). The ongoing interaction between people and certain places within the city cultivated individual and collective memories, and experiences based on memories form a strong relationship

with traditional historical and cultural elements (Wang, 2011). Thus, traditional elements relating to different users' memories act as anchors to remind them of specific parts of their daily lives in occasion places and eventually form a sense of belonging (Wang, 2011; Sepe, 2018). Therefore, understanding the formation of a sense of belonging depends on users' memories (individual and collective). Moreover, certain historical and cultural elements could get designed and set as 'anchors' in the redevelopment of public spaces to trigger the memories of residents or other group users.

2.6.3.4 A place for locals or tourists

As concepts of tourism precinct (Griffin and Hayllar, 2006) and heritage trail (Al-hagla, 2010) addressed in the previous section, interactions between locals, tourists, and places are necessary for developing successful urban design in historic urban areas. Tourists wish to interact with local people and places by observing them doing daily activities and sharing the same events, which are considered positive ways of encountering locals' real lives (Griffin and Hayllar, 2006). Furthermore, the feelings and experiences created by the interactions lead to atmosphere or ambience, and engagement with such atmosphere improves tourists' images of the destination (Griffin et al., 2006). Furthermore, it is critical to preserve and interpret the interactions between locals and places. Al-hagla (2010) addresses the quality of life of locals and the conservation of the urban environment, arguing both are necessary for affecting the ambience, especially in historic urban areas with cultural heritage.

In terms of heritage tourism-led urban renewal in China, large external capital such as property developers and tourism investors have the support of the local government, but local residents benefit little from the tourism-led development (Ying and Zhou, 2007; Su, 2018). Therefore, heritage tourism-led developing strategies show little consideration for retaining local residents and their lifestyles in the historical areas, and the displacement of local residents resulted in fewer original inhabitants living in the traditional urban area (Wang and Gu, 2020). Therefore, in terms of tourism development in urban areas, it is critical to realise that the city is primarily a lived space for and created by local residents (Simmons, 1994). Under such context, the design of public spaces in heritage tourism-led urban renewal cannot differentiate tourist sites from local spaces, and the involvement of residents and their activities need to integrate with future design strategy (Wang and Gu, 2020).

2.6.3.5 Area identity and symbol – Landmarks, important meeting and gathering spaces

In addition to essential functions such as providing places for activities and gathering, space and buildings can take on symbolic meaning by interpreting elements (Migliorini and Venini, 2001). Furthermore, place identity could be interpreted by the relationship between social activities and

urban built environment and concrete symbolic expressions of the city, which creates a recognisable urban image (Piccolo, 1995). In these regards, the presence and formulation of symbolic identity are critical for creating successful urban regeneration in historical Chinese cities to avoid homogenisation. According to Montgomery (1998), places represent memory and meaning for different groups of users, and buildings and landmarks with unique historical and cultural backgrounds could deliver certain meanings about various events. Meeting places and gathering spaces are places with shared memories from all the users and their activities conducted on-site, and such spaces locate in historical urban context often symbolise customs and traditions (Oktay, 2002; Montgomery, 2003).

While streets are the primary public spaces in the traditional Chinese urban form, some squares were built to create more meeting and gathering places in the past decades. Such civic spaces contain social activities and memories from amounts of users, which can make them iconic landmarks and starting points of the 'mental maps' (Montgomery, 1998), and it is necessary to consider them as an essential element in a city's identity. Moreover, characteristic features and expressions of different user groups' memories and experiences could get integrated with landmarks and meeting places as personal or collective identities and then span from a single building to the configuration of an entire town or city (Wang and Gu, 2020, p.10). Therefore, it is necessary to understand the memories and meanings relating to landmarks, important meeting and gathering spaces as their characteristics could be used as the basis for development control of each zone or quarter.

2.6.4 Tourists' emotional perceptions in the cultural heritage-led urban regeneration

As mentioned in the section 2.3.2, both tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage can have significant influences on the tourist's experiences and behaviours. In 2018, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) had issued 40 projects in China, and the concern of managing different layers of tourism development were discussed in almost all of those ICH projects. In line with the concept of tangible cultural heritage, the intangible resources and values embedded in a heritage site, such as its core cultural traditions, cannot be replicated, and this irreducible historical information forms part of the 'authenticity' of a city or other heritage site (Su et al., 2020). While the development of ICH tourism has the potential to generate the necessary income, there is still some debate as to whether tourism development can effectively contribute to the safeguarding of ICH, which has become an important topic in the sustainable development of ICH (Rodzi et al., 2013). In this regard, it is necessary to explore the relationship between tourists' emotional and perceptual experiences and the values of

cultural heritage, and concepts such as emotions, involvement, and experience quality were discussed in the aspect of tourists.

2.6.4.1 The effect of emotion on tourists' behaviours

In general, the emotion of tourists when visiting the destination is the result of specific events and visual attractions, which are sporadic and temporal stimulus (Farber and Hall, 2007). Various studies have confirmed that emotional experiences affect tourists' decisions as emotion is a significant motivation and experience for tourists who participate in sightseeing, cultural activities, and even choosing tourism products (Pearce, 2009; Ene and Schofield, 2011; Prayag, et al., 2013). Some researchers (McCabes and Priskin, 2018; Zhang and Wang, 2019) argued that tourists or visitors are more likely to express their emotional attitudes towards value perceptions of tourism environment and products by using a series of positive, negative, or mixed emotional words. In general, the quality of tourism destinations with tangible and intangible cultural heritage affects visitors' emotional attitudes, and people with greater emotional well-being are more likely to express positive attitudes towards the experience and willing of participation (Vinzencz, et al., 2019).

2.6.4.2 Tourists' involvement

Involvement was defined by Zaichkowsky (1985) as the individual's relevance in relation to the needs of the object and the individual's perceptions of the value of, and interest in, the object. Moreover, Goldsmith and Emmert (1991) stated that involvement is the degree to which visitors focus on an object, movement or activity, and their resulting interest and enthusiasm. In the aspect of tourists' perception, involvement is considered to be the degree to which a person is interested in leisure and tourism activities, and their emotional responses associated with this interest (Gu et al., 2019). Therefore, in relation to the context of this study, Su et al. (2020) defined the involvement of ICH as the level of interest and associated emotional response of tourists to ICH items and projects.

Within such a context, the involvement of tourists needs to be conserved in the process of tourism development, especially in relation to cultural heritage tourism. Multiple studies have hypothesized that this involvement will potentially influence visitors' attitudes, activities and decision-making processes. For example, Prebensen et al. (2013) conducted a study on tourists' perceptions of experience at tourist destinations and found that the involvement of tourists has a significant and positive effect on the perceptions of experience at tourist destinations. Altunel and Erkurt (2015), and Altunel and Koçak (2017) also found that visitor involvement has a positive and significant impact on the quality of the experience, which in turn forms a positive impact on satisfaction, willingness to recommend and propensity to revisit. Moreover, Prayag and Ryan (2012) examined the antecedent variables of tourist preference and found that the involvement in behaviours that help improve the

emotional experience leads to attachment to the destination. In these regards, it is necessary to encourage tourists' participation and involvement in ICH activities, which has a positive impact on improving visitors' experiences and thus contribute to the sense of place and place identity.

2.6.4.3 Tourists experience quality

The notion of *quality of experience* refers to the emotional response of tourists (in the present context) to their desired psychological advantage (Lian Chan & Baum, 2007; Su et al., 2020). In other words, quality of experience is the psychological outcome of tourists' participation in tourism activities (Chen & Chen, 2010). The emotional responses, value perceptions and behavioural intentions generated by tourists' experiences are characterised in the study of tourist behaviour and are the focus of tourism marketing (Kao et al., 2008). In summary, these previous findings suggest that the quality of the experience may have a direct impact on visitors' sense of place and willing of participation. Moreover, the expression of cultural events, design of spatial scale, and even the presence of music could create a sense of place and form components of the place identity (Han and Jeon, 2013; Song et al., 2015; Cotter et al., 2018).

In their study on heritage festivals, Kao et al. (2008) found that the quality of a visitor's experience has a positive impact on their sense of involvement and willingness to participate. Although Chen and Chen (2010) argued that the effect of visitor experience quality on behavioural intentions was not significant, they found that perceived value and satisfaction of the destination mediated the effect of experience quality on behavioural intentions. When considering the urban environment, experience continuously evolves as the urban landscape changes and transforms, which requires a new way of seeing the spaces of production and consumption as dynamically changing entities that seek to continually attract consumers (Chen, 2021). In this regard, it is necessary to understand the values and characters embedded in the historical urban landscape that contribute to improving the experience quality of tourists, especially within the context of cultural heritage-led urban regeneration.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings from a review of different literature that introduces and describes the relationship between place identity, place-making, and urban history and local culture in urban regeneration. Furthermore, relevant concepts and models have been outlined to form a theoretical framework that aims to define the inter-relationships between different aspects of designing urban spaces for historical cities. Based on all the reviews and discussions of relevant theories, which describe the relationship between heritage, place identity, and urban planning, it is important to understand the urban history and cultural resources of the historical Chinese urban context. Preservation and interpretation of urban history and cultural resources contribute to the

formulation of distinctive and authentic place identity, which is the main factor to avoid the risk of globalisation (McCarthy, 2006; McDowell, 2008; McCarthy and Wang, 2016; Sepe, 2018).

Based on aspects and factors of the conceptual framework, the next chapter will explain the methodological methods developed for this research and how would different approaches meet the research aims and objectives. A conceptual framework with all primary aspects, concepts and designed factors will get integrated with organised approaches and modified in response to the reviews of relevant theories. In addition to the place-making dimension, key components such as urban history, cultural resources, locals, tourists, and host places and their inter-relationships will be explored through organised research methodology. Furthermore, designed methodological approaches aim to understand and analyse the roles and values of different factors in re-imaging authentic and continuous place identity for urban renewal in historical Chinese cities or towns.

chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research aims to examine how urban history and cultural resources are involved in public open spaces and to gain insight into the revival of a Chinese historic urban centre in the context of urban regeneration. The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodology applied to identify the relationship between urban regeneration and the place-making process, and to assess factors of local history and culture integrating with the historic urban context. In this regard, the methodology used in this research needs to focus on categorising the relevant conceptual factors from the literature review chapter, and evaluate both existing and potential elements through the methodological framework. Moreover, how the case study was selected to provide a detailed and intensive analysis of the historic urban centre is presented, and the integration of both conceptual framework and research site could help to conduct developed research methodological approaches.

Based on the logic model, research strategy, and conceptual framework developed from reviewing process of relevant works of literature and theories, this chapter outlines the design structure of the research and developed methodological approaches conducted in the PhD process – framework-based synthesis, case study, and the mix of qualitative research methods. It is structured as follows:

- Section 3.2 examines the logic of developing the research methodology by relating to the research questions and objectives and provides an overview of the framework-based synthesis.
- Section 3.3 discusses the integration of the case study and associated qualitative research approaches by reviewing the literature on relevant methods derived from this research.
- Section 3.4 explains the progress of conducting the integrated methodological approaches along with discussions about ethical considerations.
- Section 3.5 presents the process of analysing data obtained from multiple sources and approaches conducted throughout the project.
- Section 3.6 discusses the challenges encountered in the progress of implementing the methodological approach and how ethical considerations were dealt with in the research process.

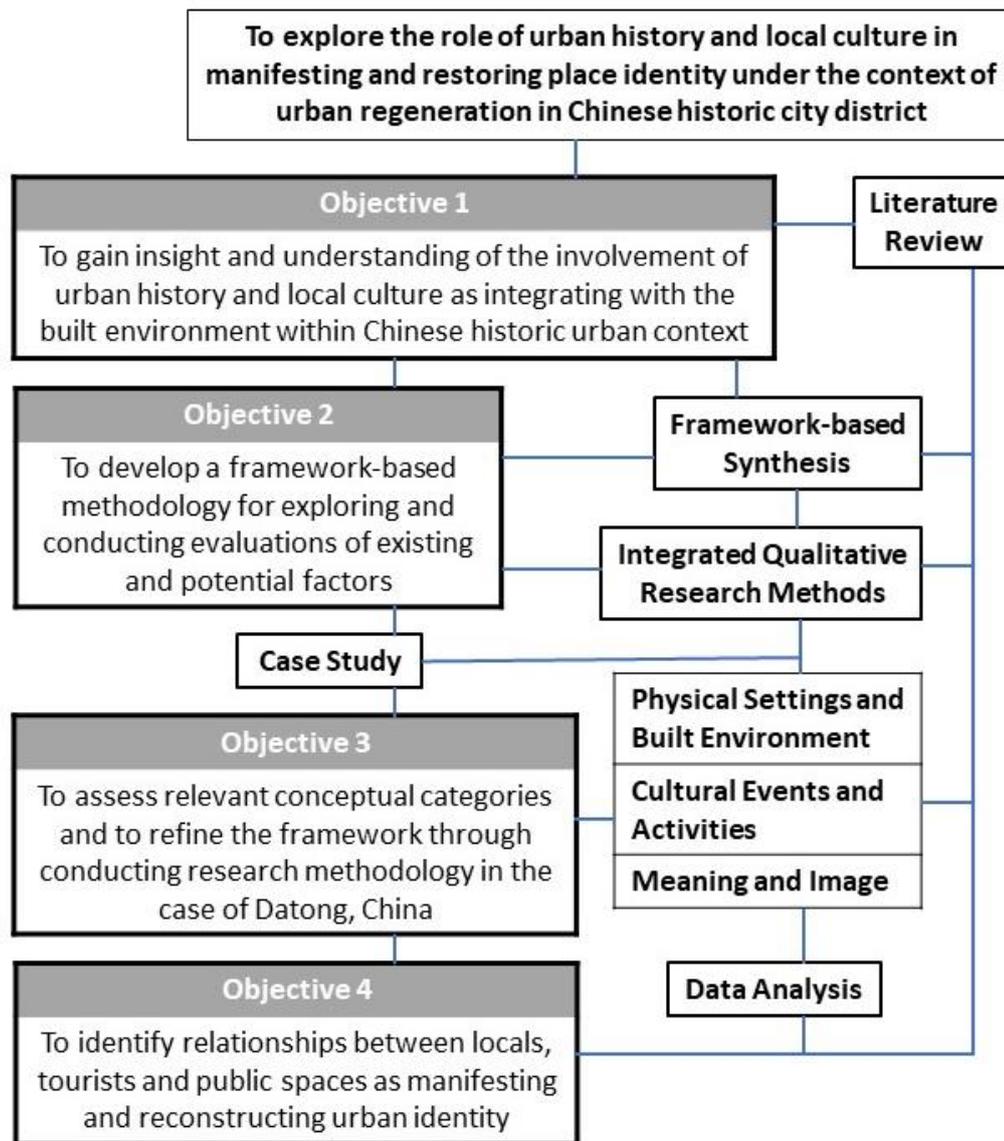


Figure 3-1 Logic model of the research

3.2 Research Questions and Overview of Methodology

According to the literature review in the previous chapter, the research has developed a conceptual framework for the manifesting and involvement of history and culture in reconstructing place identity of the Chinese historical urban context, particularly for ancient Chinese cities and towns under tourism-led urban renewal. The role of urban history and cultural resources in influencing place-making and forming place identity were identified and explored by many researchers and designers (e.g. Carter et al., 1993; Madanipour, 1996; Montgomery, 1998 & 2003; Evans, 2001; Wansborough and Maggean, 2001; Carmona et al., 2010; Sepe, 2013). However, there is little discussion about such involvement and interaction in the Chinese historical urban context. To address this gap in knowledge,

the research required the development of a practical methodology to connect the theoretical framework and the specific cases to get a structured and comprehensive analysis process.

As discussed in the literature review chapter, urban regeneration of the historical urban context mostly targets the physical renovation of the urban environment along with various sub-projects located in the ancient urban areas. Furthermore, the reconstruction and rehabilitation of public spaces – iconic landmarks, squares, pedestrian areas, old markets, and street places for vendors – often focus on meeting needs from the dimension of tourism instead of reviving authentic cultural and social characteristics. Because of the lack of a proper manifestation of history and culture in designing urban spaces, most urban renewal projects are led by local governments, where the involvement of citizens is not well promoted. In such a context, several research questions have been identified in this research:

- How can the factors and values of urban history and cultural resources in designing urban spaces be identified and evaluated to meet different user groups' needs and preferences?
- How can the opinions of different groups of users be involved in the place-making process to contribute to the revival of urban vitality and place image in urban regeneration?
- How can urban history and local culture be successfully manifested in reconstructing and restoring authentic place identity to avoid being homogenised?

Therefore, this research aims to develop a practical methodology to obtain and examine opinions and values from different users – local users, tourists, local visitors, and decision-makers. Based on primary research questions, the main research methodology used in the research is a combination of framework-based synthesis, case study, and integrated qualitative methodological approaches.

According to Bryman (2016), qualitative research relies on words rather than numbers to explore the relationship between the theory and research. Moreover, the analysis of qualitative data requires a systematic procedure taking an inductive view, which describes the practice of generating theories out of the empirical research as guided by specific objectives. As the research aims to explore the manifestation and interpretation of urban history and culture in reconstructing place identity in the context of Chinese urban regeneration, these relevant objectives were set in response to the research questions above:

- To gain insight and understanding of the involvement of urban history and local culture as integrating with the built environment within Chinese historic urban context.
- To develop a framework-based methodology for exploring and conducting evaluations of existing and potential factors.
- To assess relevant conceptual categories and to refine the framework through conducting

research methodology in the case of Datong, China.

- To identify relationships between locals, tourists and public spaces as manifesting and reconstructing urban identity.

In addition to the term of history, culture and place identity, this research also intends to obtain data about experience, memory, and values from different user groups interacting with public urban spaces. Under such context, the methods used in this research needs to provide the researcher with inductive approaches to identify and record intangible factors. As Gorman and Clayton (2005) suggest, qualitative research methods help collect and describe data from the context of occurrence. Furthermore, detailed and textual descriptions of such intangible data (experience, memory, impression and image) obtained for the research are important in dealing with the complexity of perceptions and values.

According to Bryman (2016), designing measures of concepts is critical in qualitative research as concepts developed from research questions could form corresponding indicators. Based on the conceptual framework of integrating urban history and local culture in the urban design process formed in the literature review chapter, it is also critical to develop a corresponding research methodology for the theoretical factors and indicators to identify and assess systematically. In this context, the framework-based synthesis was selected as a suitable methodology to form a mixed methodological approach. According to Dixon-Woods (2011), this methodology creates a multi-dimensional framework for synthesising and analysing public opinions from different user groups about the involvement of urban history and culture resources in urban design research. This method's key characteristic is that the framework-based synthesis employs an iterative process involving a review of the literature: it gradually develops a theoretical or conceptual framework from the review questions and the empirical literature (Dixon-Woods, 2011).

Moreover, the design of research approaches needs to provide opportunities for both practitioners and academics to interact with different user groups. Such interactions between different values could refine the theoretical framework through the conduct of the analysis process. In the meantime, on-site users such as residents, tourists, and local visitors must design "bottom-up" research approaches. A mix of qualitative approaches is combined with the theoretical framework to form a workable methodology to achieve the research objectives of developing a systematic methodology to identify and assess historical and cultural factors in shaping place identity.

3.3 Developing Methodological Approaches

The methodological approach of this study derived from findings and conceptual models of the literature review, and qualitative research has been chosen as the main methodological framework for

the data gathering process. According to Flick (2009), qualitative research helps to examine the interpretations and experiences of users, and perspectives derived from the involvement of participants to share their experiences, perceptions and interpretations. Within the general qualitative approaches, it is necessary to form structured methodology by relating the research aim, objectives, and the key concepts in this thesis: design and use of public spaces, shaping and reconstruction of place identity, the manifestation of urban history and cultural resources, experiences and perceptions from different users.

In accordance with the specificity of the research aim and objectives, mixed approaches were used as led by a theoretical framework-based synthesis. Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted in research sites alongside document analysis, observations and photography. The semi-structured interviews focused on different groups of residents, tourists, local visitors, and urban experts and practitioners to obtain detailed and textual descriptions from multiple aspects. In order to comprehend the methodological structure, non-participant observation and photography are designated to be implemented in the research area. Moreover, the analysis of official documents and historical archives could contribute to the completion of a theoretical framework by being included as part of the literature review process.

3.3.1 Framework-based synthesis

The concept of framework-based synthesis was first developed by the UK-based National Centre for Social Research during the 1980s, and this methodology explicitly targeted the application of policy questions (Dixon-Woods, 2011). According to Ritchie and Spencer (1994), framework analysis is a matrix-based method for constructing thematic conceptual categories into a structured data coding system. The idea of definitive concepts is typified and identified in quantitative research as each concept is going to be fixed through the elaboration of indicators (Blumer, 1954; Bryman, 2016). In most cases, the researcher frequently starts their qualitative research progresses with a broad outline of a concept, which might be revised and narrowed during the following stage of data collection and get employed in different social contexts (Bryman, 2016). In this regard, framework-based synthesis identifies themes and concepts as coding categories in the initial stage and then combines them with other themes and concepts that emerged in the deductive data analysis process (Dixon-Woods, 2011).

In this research, concepts and factors were identified and organised from the process of reviewing relevant works of literature and theoretical models. As the research objectives intend to form a conceptual framework to identify and assess indicative values of history and culture in reconstructing place identity, the synthesis of methodological approaches interacted with analysis of literature through an iterative process at first. A conceptual framework was gradually developed based on

concepts organised from the review of research questions and theoretical models, and constructed charts including key dimensions were distilled from all the relevant studies and documents. According to Dixon-Woods (2011), the charts or tables developed from the analysis of literatures could help to map the range and nature of public involvement and to find associations between themes. Based on the chapter of literature review, this research has formed conceptual tables leading by the framework-based synthesis:

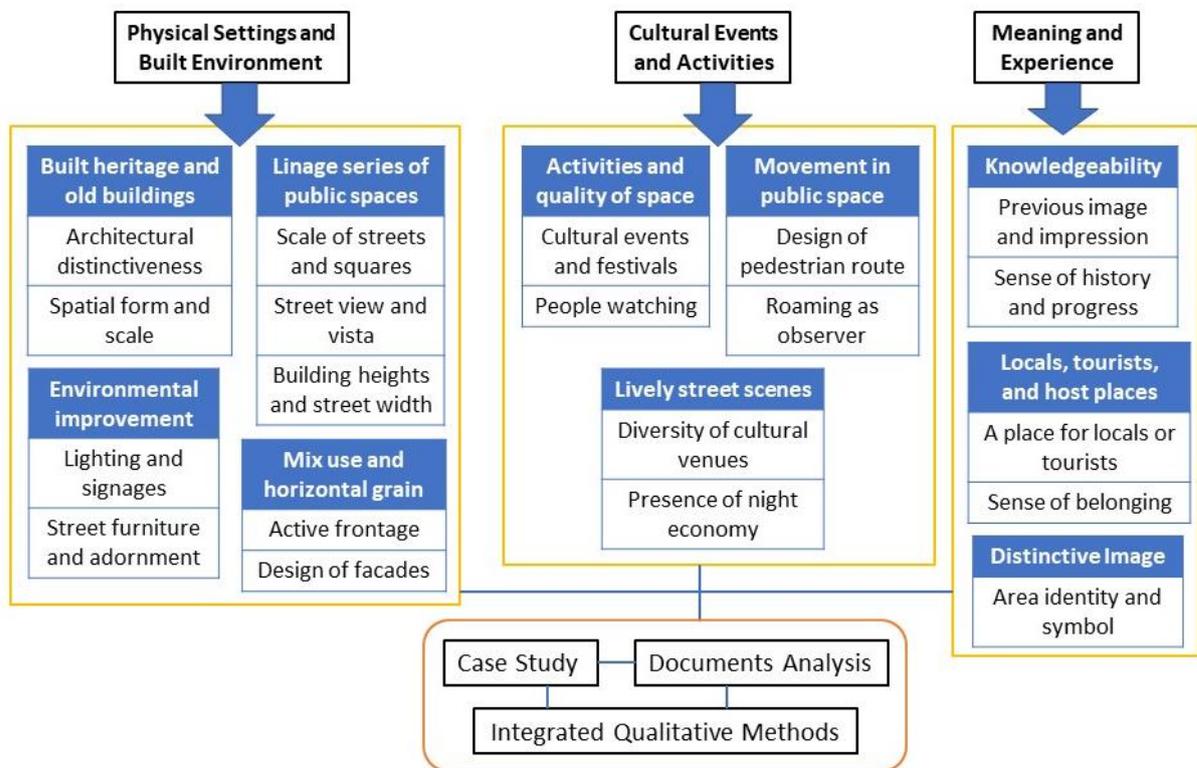


Figure 3-2 Conceptual tables used as framework-based synthesis

In this research, conceptual factors developed from the multiple aspects of urban design and place-making theories were considered indicators attributed to landscape design and representations of historical urban spaces. Moreover, such concepts could provide a basic structure for further research of exploring how to preserve and reconstruct place identity in designing urban public spaces of the Chinese historic urban areas. The utilisation of analytical framework was employed by various research relating to urban design and place-making processes: Mady and Chettiparamb (2017) used theoretical framework to identify transformative potentials in shaping place identity from the perspective of civic engagement and social activities; Raaphorst et al. (2020) employed analytical framework for visual content analysis to explore the interpretation of landscape design representation; Goosen and Cilliers (2020) developed a theory-based framework to enhance social sustainability through the planning of Oldenburg’s concept of ‘third places’ (1991); Zhang, Kang, and Koo (2021) employed the DEMATEL methodology (Decision-Making Trials and Evaluation Laboratory) to form the analytical framework for analysing the complex relationship of various urban regeneration project

factors. Under such context, this research developed an analytical framework for manifesting local history and cultural resources in developing and reconstructing urban landscape or townscape under the context of heritage tourism-led urban regeneration.

In terms of the data collecting and analysing process, the framework-based method is taken as an appropriate method for analytic research strategy as the analysis of the framework could manage different categories in advance of the data collection (Dixon-Woods, 2011). The utilisation of chartings and schematic maps could lead to the coding progress and work with other analysing approaches. According to Oliver et al. (2008), this approach could be refined by the further review of documents and relevant topics identified by users (such as different groups of interviewees), which meet the request of a "bottom-up" method – people involved in the research could assess and refine the conceptual framework along with the researcher.

The downsides or disadvantages of this framework-based synthesis are about the motivations to recover and strictly follow the designed conceptual models from the researchers (Dixon-Woods, 2011). Due to the review of works of literature and theoretical models invested in the formulation of a conceptual framework, the researcher needs to avoid neglecting the presence and emergence of further valuable data or evidence. To deal with such disadvantages, Oliver et al. (2008) suggest it is necessary to specify the model by integrating with a wider range of literature reviewed that relates to the research questions. Moreover, the multiple groups of stakeholders contribute to improving the legitimacy and validity of conducting the synthesised research methodology (Dixon-Woods, 2011).

This research employed the case study and other qualitative research methods of the semi-structured interviews of various user groups, observation and photography. Integration of framework-based synthesis and multi-dimensional approaches aims to form a suitable strategy with variability for policymakers, practitioners, or other decision-makers to provide detailed answers and structured results while retaining the "interpretative creativity and vividness" (Dixon-Woods, 2011, p. 2). The following sections will discuss the case study and other qualitative approaches to achieve each research objective.

3.3.2 Case study approach

Based on the framework-based synthesis developed from the literature review, this research uses a case study to achieve the research objective of analysing and assessing such a conceptual framework in the context of urban regeneration of Chinese historical cities and areas. This section discusses using a case study in this research and then describes the research sites in the ancient urban centre of Datong, China.

In general, the case study acts as a common research strategy used in various fields – psychology, sociology, community planning, political science, urban design and landscape, and it allows for the examination and understanding of complex practices and complicated issues in many social science studies (Gilgun, 1994; Francis, 1999; Gulsecen and Kubat, 2006). In general, a case study approach aims to “offer a richness and depth of information by capturing as many variables as possible to identify how a complex set of circumstances come together to produce a particular manifestation” (Institute of Lifelong Learning, 2009, p. 34). Moreover, the case study is seen as a practical strategy in conducting research that involves empirical investigations and intensive analysis of cases with complexity and particular nature (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009).

The case study used in landscape architecture acts as an appropriate and valuable approach which is "a well-documented and systematic examination of the process, decision making and outcomes of a project, which is undertaken to inform future practise, policy, theory, and/or education" (Francis, 1999, p. 19). As the research aims to explore and identify both tangible (physical environment and activity) and intangible (experience and place image) dimensions of history and culture in shaping urban identity, using the case study intends to deal with "the limitation of quantitative methods in providing holistic and in-depth explanations of the social and behavioural problems in (research) questions" (Zainal, 2007, p. 1).

According to Flick (2014), the critical issues in selecting a case is to identify its significant characteristics in accordance with the research question, and to examine what methodological approaches would be appropriate for the reconstruction and evolution of the case. The use of the case study approach can help to obtain a clear understanding of how the design and use of physical spaces are related to different users' experiences and images of the places (Stake, 1995). Moreover, to achieve the research objective of identifying and assessing conceptual factors in urban regeneration through interviews with both laypeople and experts, a case study can provide the necessary and suitable experiment field. The design of this research methodology employs the conceptual framework presented earlier, which is then integrated with a case study to establish a larger scale of analysis for the research, within which other qualitative approaches and data collection methods are employed.

3.3.3 Integrated Qualitative Approaches

Based on the research aim and objectives, this thesis uses a combination of qualitative methods as part of the main approach to examine and analyse people's interpretations of feelings, perceptions, and lived experiences about how history and culture are involved in urban renewal. Both Flick (2009) and Starman (2013) advise that qualitative research has beneficial characteristics in emphasising

subjective experiences from the individual user and the meaning in a given research context. Moreover, qualitative research based on interpretative approaches can help make sense of social reality by involving the manifestations and descriptions of human experiences (Flick, 2009).

This research seeks to obtain opinions and views about culture-led or tourism-led regeneration from both residents and visitors, and to understand the inter-relationship between conceptual factors as identified in the framework. Although both local residents and visitors should be considered within the designing and decision-making process of urban regeneration, their involvement has not been clearly identified or actually promoted in the Chinese urban context. However, it is necessary to understand how the urban regeneration project contributes to the quality of residents' life and visitors' experiences (Wang, 2011; Xie and Heath, 2016; Su, 2018; Wang and Gu, 2020; Dempsey et al., 2020). Therefore, this study takes a 'view from below' or 'bottom-to-up' perspective in designing the methodology, which allows the researcher to "look at daily life with its spontaneity, difference, and disorder" and "add a new dimension to the understanding of urban space by acknowledging the different groups and life forms that can only develop in the city" (Madanipour, 1996, p. 73).

3.3.3.1 “Walk Through” and “Walking methodologist”

To connect the research methods and the conceptual framework and provide opportunities for the involvement of other topics and concepts, three qualitative methods are adopted: adaptive *flânerie* (or roaming between selected sites), photography, and narration. The combination of these three approaches allows the researcher to act as a "walking methodologist" (Jenkins, 1995, p. 153), which is described by Yeo and Heng (2014) as the researcher roaming streets of the city, encountering potential interviewees, and partaking in the functional performance of place. Deinet and Krisch (2006) developed a methodology – "Walk Through" – to guide researchers who intend to seek and assess social reality quality. In this researcher approach, participants are guided to walk around the study sites and ask questions or describe their feelings on specific targets, and their responses and opinions got recorded for later investigation. Both the "Walk Through" method and combination of *flânerie* (or roam), photography, and narration are used to explore specific subjective perspectives, which could only be experienced when people are physically interacting with the site (Deinet and Krisch, 2006). Approaches of *flânerie* (or roam), photography, and narration focus on the active role of the researcher as travelling through the study site, using equipment such as a notebook for observation records, a camera for taking photos, and an audio recorder for conducting interviews (Yeo and Heng, 2014). The walking methodologist or researcher gathers all the data from three qualitative approaches conducting in frequently field visits over a prolonged period of time, and all the discoveries and recorded data help shape a "montaged account of urban life" (Highmore, 2005, p. 160).

In addition to comprehending the research framework by focusing on a specific case study, multiple qualitative research approaches also provide a means of collecting views and opinions from lay people or daily users. As one of the research questions is about the lack of involvement and the manifestation of preferences and values from local residents and visitors, the methodology design needs to focus on the interrelationships between locals, tourists, and host place, thereby offering a structured "bottom-up" analysis, in which views and experiences of the actual users (residents, local visitors, and foreign travellers) could influence the urban design project and strategy in accordance with urban experts and decision-makers.

3.3.3.2 Semi-structured Interviewees with multiple user groups

As the research aim and objectives require understanding how different users' preferences and values are involved in interpreting and potentially shaping the place identity, this study has developed an appropriate methodology to investigate groups with diverse cultural backgrounds and attachments to the case study site. In this regard, this research incorporates semi-structured interviewees, developed from the conceptual framework, as the primary approach to collect and gather verbal data. The reason to use semi-structured interviews is that the researcher and participants could follow an interview guide while sharing a great deal of flexibility in asking and responding (Bryman, 2016).

In order to obtain comprehensive responses and views of interpreting history and culture in the urban regeneration process, interviews of residents were divided into two groups – residents who lived in the old urban centre before and after the urban regeneration and locals who now live outside the city core in other urban districts or suburbs. Old residents who stay in the case study faced a tremendous change in their living environment, which could have effects on their place attachment and sense of belonging because of the change or loss of old memories and images (Tuan, 1975; Relph, 1976; Sepe, 2013). Furthermore, the massive regeneration also led to the demolition of many old flats and reconstruction of new buildings, and the interviews of this group focus on older residents' experiences of interactions with characteristics of the place and time passing. This research also intends to explore how the transformation of the urban environment is considered by locals living outside the study case. For the locals who only visit the ancient urban centre, the built environment and their destination may act more like iconic landmarks and 'collective stamps' in shaping urban identity (Zukin, 1995; Wansborough and Mageean, 2003; Sepe, 2013). In this regard, this research also aims to understand their thoughts and views of influences on themselves and other groups of users who spend time in this changing environment.

As both dimensions of culture and tourism drove the urban regeneration, it was also necessary to engage with groups of tourists in the research process to allow them to offer their views and opinions. In addition to the interaction between locals (residents and visitors), tourists, and host places, tourists'

impressions and experiences are critical in understanding the authenticity and distinctiveness of the urban regeneration, which are made by the preservation of both built heritage and revival of urban vitality (Hall and McArthur, 1993; Nuryanti, 1996; Stewart et al., 1998; Al-hagla, 2010).

In addition to local inhabitants, local visitors, and tourists, this research also employed semi-structured interviews with decision-makers, urban design practitioners, and local history and culture researchers. The interviews with these city-level experts offer opportunities to obtain their pre-existing knowledge and views on current urban regeneration progress as synthesising with the conceptual framework. According to Tansey (2007), experts or professionals' interview (or elite interview) shows a close relationship with case study research. The integration of other qualitative research methods contributes to analysing practical development and information from the municipal level. Furthermore, the 'elite interview' can help to contribute to the research framework and resonate with other data collected from other interviews as Tansey et al. (2007) advise: "conducting interviews with elites can therefore serve the purpose of confirming the accuracy of the information that has previously been collected from other sources".

This research explores and identifies the interrelationships between culture-led or tourism-led regeneration by examining different user groups' views and responses rather than measuring the economic impacts. In this regard, using a semi-structured interview allows the researcher to start the investigation in the fieldwork with a focused conceptual framework and address more specific issues (Bryman, 2016). The semi-structured interviews were set to obtain detailed information about users' experiences and needs of the case study synthesising this with the framework-based concepts, and multiple groups of interviewees designed in this research intended to ensure its overall strength (De Vaus, 2001).

3.3.3.3 Observation, Fieldnotes and Photography

Other important research methods selected in this research are observation and photography, which were conducted by the researcher while roaming in the urban spaces. According to Zeisel (1981), observation is an appropriate technique for comparing and contrasting the quality of different urban settings in urban environmental studies. The observation of the urban environment can help understand social life and cultural activities in urban spaces. The literature review chapter has discussed the concept of 'serial vision', which Cullen (1961) used to describe the visual experience. In his research on townscape, Cullen found that the visual observation of specific objects, spaces, and activities conducted by various users can contribute to a better understanding of the urban environment and photographs taken by the researcher. Similar to the observation approaches taken in Townscape, Whyte (1980) uses observation as the research strategy to analyse urban settings and explore users' activities in urban spaces.

Following the observation approach, field notes and photographs were also taken to record and describe specific objects and events. According to Bryman (2016), field notes with brief information recorded on papers or notebooks are often conducted with observed social settings. Moreover, the use of photographs in observation helps to record both characteristic objects and transient events. As Cartier-Bresson suggests in his theory – 'decisive moment' – the employment of photographs could instantly capture all the characteristic elements of an event within the frame of the shot. The researcher could use this approach to illustrate specific features of the objects – physical settings, events and activities – by inviting the readers to "recognise simultaneously and within a fraction of a second – both the fact itself and the rigorous organisation of visually perceived forms that give it meaning" (Cartier-Bresson, 1999, p. 16). Therefore, both field notes and photographs help to support observation by taking detailed records of valuable events relating to the research objectives and conceptual framework.

3.3.3.4 Document Analysis

As the research aims to conduct methodological approaches in a selected case study, it is significant to explore more information from various materials and archives of the municipal-led project and its history and culture. As Bryman (2016) advises, official documents deriving from both state and private sources provide a great deal of information of potential significance for social research. In addition to the official records and programme documents of the urban regeneration project, reports of different stages were selected to provide opportunities for the researcher to explore information from the aspect of urban design and planning strategy. Such information can be critical for the research as integrating with conducting qualitative interviews and observation in the case study (Bryman, 2016).

The major issue faced in analysing documents is representativeness, as the people and organisations who write documents are likely to have a particular viewpoint that they would like to be manifested and understood. Those official documents are often produced within the context of the reader/ user being a decision-maker (e.g. planners or designers and practitioners) instead of focusing in terms on understanding how daily users interact with reconstructed urban spaces. To deal with such challenges, the researcher uses framework-based synthesis as guidelines and integrated qualitative approaches – "flânerie (or roaming), photography, and narration" – to form ways of collecting data from both the case study and different users.

As the conceptual framework of various aspects was set from the literature review chapter, this has led to the design of qualitative research methods that could properly explore history and culture in culture or tourism-led urban regeneration. The integrated research approach design helps form a valid methodology with supportive literature to assess and discover the pre-set concepts and other corresponding categories in the case study. To deal with the limitations and drawbacks of existing

research methodologies, this researcher aims to develop an integrated methodology formed by multiple qualitative approaches. Fragmented approaches could be integrated to overcome their disadvantages, and the combination of qualitative approaches could make a workable method to fully fit the research aim and objectives. The next section will describe how to conduct the developed methodology in the case study.

3.4 Applying Methodological Approaches in the Case Study

In this thesis, a broad mixed-methods approach was used, and evidence was gathered through semi-structured interviews with urban experts and residents. In addition to the interview transcripts as primary data sources, records of observation, photographs, and analysis of documents act as secondary data sources that illustrate the themes and concepts. In order to get detailed information of the culture and heritage tourism-led urban regeneration projects in historical Chinese cities and urban areas so as to guide the implementation of research methodology, the author has investigated multiple planning and design strategies of multiple Chinese historical cities or towns with the similar context of urban regeneration from reviewing relevant researches, such as urban regeneration of the Drum Tower Muslim District of Xi'an (Zhai and Ng, 2013), improvement of the streetscape of Qianmen Hutong in Beijing (Beijing Institute of Architectural Design Group, Ltd., 2016), conservation of Pingjiang Street of Suzhou (Xie and Heath, 2017), heritage authentication, conservation, sustainability of the Ancient City of Pingyao (Wang, 2011; Su, 2018; Wang and Gu, 2020), examining stakeholders' perceptions in the urban regeneration of Nanluoguxiang in Beijing (Zhang, Kang and Koo, 2021). Moreover, relevant policy and government reports relating to the culture or tourism-led urban renewal in the case of the old town of Datong were examined to get a comprehensive understanding of its heritage tourism-led urban regeneration, including Strategic Planning Study on the Protection and Development of Historical and Cultural City of Datong (Cao et al., 2008), Report on the Stage Results of the Protection Plan of Datong Historical and Cultural City (Datong Urban Planning and Design Institute, 2014), An Exploration of the Conservation and Use of the Ancient City of Datong (Datong Ancient City Preservation and Development Committee, 2013), Urban Landscape Design and Streetscape Improvement Scheme for the Crossing Streets of the Ancient City of Datong (China Academy of Urban Planning and Design, 2016).

Most of the reports and strategies focused on dimensions of economic profits, growth of tourism, and environment improvement while expressing the authenticity of local history and culture and enhancing the vitality of the city remain at the basic policy (as outlined in the case study Chapter 3.4.1). In this regard, it is necessary to design the research methodology for exploring views from different users, and to recognise and analyse the relationship of various factors within the urban

regeneration. Therefore, the researcher decided to undertake integrated methods to explore residents' personal experiences, feelings, and memories about urban regeneration conducted in the study case.

In order to conduct the integrated qualitative approach, multiple sites and precincts were selected within the study area. In addition to observing and photographically recording the activity behaviour of different groups of people using the site, the researcher selected potential participants and conducted semi-structured interviews based on the idea of purposive sampling. The researcher had previously observed high levels of locals' and tourists' activities and movements in various places, which provided a necessary criterion for selecting survey sites or spots.

3.4.1 Description of the case study

To achieve an understanding of the involvement of history and culture in culture-tourism oriented urban regeneration and to explore different groups of users' views of the urban renewal progress in shaping and reconstructing place identity, a case study method was adopted for this research. The case study method can offer a specific target and investigate how the historical and cultural elements could form impacts on urban regeneration progress.

Within this context, this research has identified several selection criteria which the selected urban area fulfilled:

- To recognise the practical historical and cultural impacts on urban regeneration, the area needs to experience a significant transformation in the urban environment (e.g. out-migration of local residents, demolition of old buildings, reconstruction and repairment of memorial landmarks).
- To gain opinions from multiple angles in the aspect of culture and tourism-led urban regeneration, people from various groups that were directly involved (e.g. residents who lived in the transforming area, locals who observed the changing process, and tourists who visited the area before and after the regeneration project) in the changing urban environment are needed.
- The presence of different local historical and cultural characteristics and features (e.g. built environment, cultural events and activities, and users' behaviours and experiences as interacting with the area) is necessary to understand each component of the conceptual framework in the urban regeneration.

As a result of the above characteristics, the site selected for this research was the ancient urban centre of Datong, China. Since 2008, the old city centre has been the subject of a government-led urban regeneration project focusing on cultural tourism. In 2015, the researcher began work on investigating

the expression of local history and culture in the renewal of the old city centre, and several typical issues relating to the research questions were identified.

3.4.1.1 Cultural tourism-led urban regeneration in the ancient city of Datong

This section introduces the case study area that forms the basis for the research – the ancient town of Datong in China. This chapter outlines the geographical and historical context of city, the changing socio-economic profile, and the recent urban regeneration process of the historical urban landscape. This section provides information to develop an understanding as to to what extent historical and cultural elements are influential factors in the heritage conservation-led urban regeneration and tourism-led urban regeneration in the ancient town centre of Datong. In brief, decision-makers involved in the regeneration of the ancient town centre of Datong, despite experiencing gradual urban deprivation through the urban transformation in the past decades, have attempted to utilise urban regeneration schemes to boost urban development as integrating with its cultural heritage.

The location and history of Datong

Datong is the second-largest city in Shanxi Province, located in the northern part of the province, and lies at the junction of Jin, Hebei and Mongolian provinces. The city has four districts and seven counties under its jurisdiction, with a total area of 14,176 square kilometres and a total population of 3,375,000. The central city area (the ancient fortress of Datong) has a construction land area of 150.41 square kilometres and a resident population of 1.145 million. The ancient city of Datong is one of the first 24 historical and cultural cities approved by the State Council of China in 1982 and has a history as the capital for hundreds of years. It was also the capital of the Northern Wei dynasty, which was founded by a minority group from the north to dominate the Central Plains, and later became an important companion capital during the Liao and Jin dynasties. Due to the long history of over 1,600 years, the ancient city of Datong incorporated the characteristics of many ethnic groups, which brought the city a unique combination of historical and cultural identity. As the defensive fortress along the Great Wall, the city's basic urban layout was formed in Ming and Qing Dynasties (Figure 3-3 & 3-4).

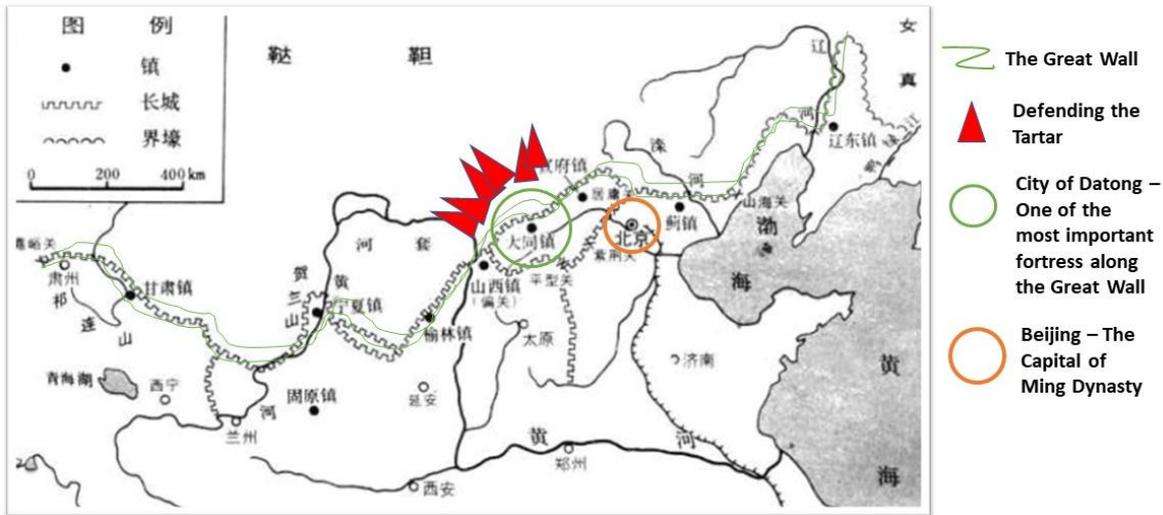


Figure 3-3 Role of ancient city Datong – a defensive fortress along the Great Wall (Adapted from Datong City Planning and Design Institute, 2013).

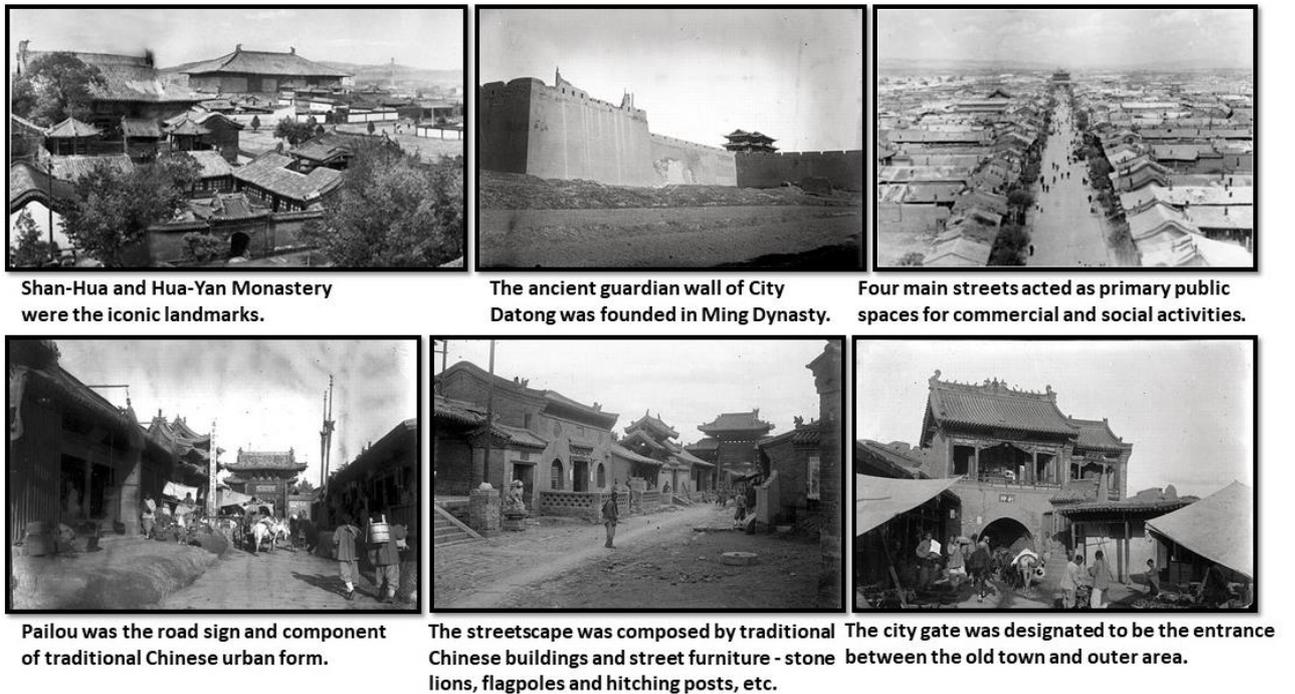


Figure 3-4 Basic urban form of city Datong was formed in the Ming and Qing Dynasty (Source: Datong City Planning and Design Institute, 2013; the Evening Newspaper of Datong, 2016).

In terms of urban form, the ancient capital of Datong was one of the major landmarks with various distinctive characteristics in Chinese city buildings. Many of its important plans and establishments as the Northern Wei Dynasty's capital influenced the subsequent capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang in the Tang Dynasty and parts of Japan and Silla (one of the ancient Korean Peninsula countries) (An and Li, 2010). Based on its role as a border fortress, the city has a square and chessboard layout with a perimeter of 13 miles. The city walls are 4 feet 2 feet high, with corner towers at the four corners and watchtowers on all sides. The city is surrounded by four gates built with towers, and outside the gates

are built with urns, drawbridges and trenches. On the outside of the four corners of the city wall, corresponding to the corner towers, a military control platform was used to guard the city. To strengthen the military defence of the city, three sub-defensive cities were built outside the city, namely the East, South and North Small Cities. As a valuable historical and cultural manifestation, the urban form and city layout acted as a physical foundation for the subsequent expansion and development of the city in the next hundreds of years (Figure 3-5).

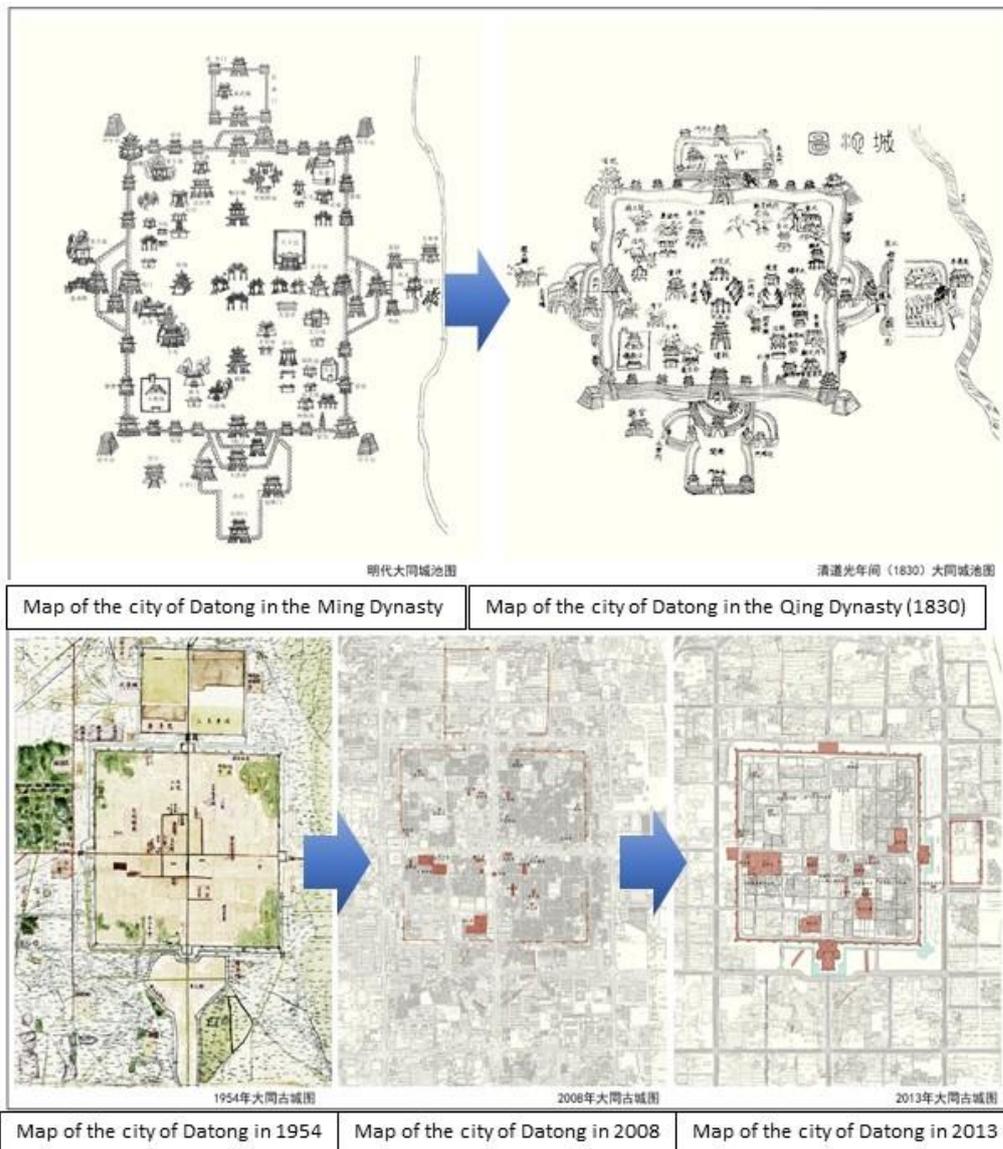


Figure 3-5 Evolution of the city layout of Datong (Adapted from China Academy of Urban Planning and Design, 2017).

The social and economic profile of the ancient city of Datong

Datong's economy has been transformed from largely mining industries towards tourism activities over the past decade. Initially, the coal mining industry was a key driver for economic growth, which shifted the focus of urban development from the old urban centre to the mining and surrounding areas

(Datong Urban Planning Bureau, 2013). However, with the decline of the coal mining industry and the need for future urban development, the local government was struggling to find a new way to revive the old urban centre and improve the local economy (Ibid.). Notably, another developmental catalyst is the conservation of cultural heritage, which has been considered the primary focus of future urban development (CAUPD and Datong Urban Planning and Design Institute, 2013).

In 2008 before the urban regeneration project began, the population of the old town of Datong was over 100,000, with a population density of over 30,500 people per square kilometre. By October 2013, this had reduced dramatically with 22,840 households were living in the Old Town. This included 12,356 households in buildings and 10,484 households in bungalows, with an average household size of 2.6 persons (Datong Urban Planning Bureau, 2013). After five years of relocation, the inhabitants who still live in the old town area are about 59,000, with a population density of 18,000 people/km² (Ibid.). However, the young and strong population in the old urban centre has moved out to areas for a good living environment, and the current population is mostly aged between 40 and 60 years old, which is leading to a significant ageing population (Ibid.). Furthermore, the southern part of the old town area's extensive renovation and relocation has meant the relocation of a large number of residents. In contrast, the northern part of the city has been less intensively constructed and relocated than the southern part at the point of conducting the research, resulting in an uneven spatial distribution of the population in the north and south, with the northern part being densely populated and the southern part being less densely populated (Ibid.).

On-site field research conducted by Datong Urban Planning and Design Institute (2013) compared the current situation of the old town area of Datong before 2008 and in October 2013, in their aim to understand the land-use status after the first five-year process. They found that the composition of the ancient urban centre has changed considerably after the reconstruction of the old town area in the past years, with a relatively large adjustment in all types of land uses (Datong Urban Planning and Design Institute, 2016). First, in general, within the 5.05 square kilometre area of the old town area involved in restoration and regeneration, the total amount of residential land has been reduced by 139.1 hectares due to the relocation of a large number of original inhabitants of the research area, and the new construction of many courtyard buildings has increased the type of residential land in recent years. Second, as a result of environmental improvement around the cultural heritage of the old town of Datong, some commercial buildings were demolished in large numbers, which saw a reduction of 22.8 hectares of land for commercial service facilities. Thirdly, the relocation of industrial and storage buildings, which were seriously affecting the appearance of the Old Town, resulted in a total reduction of 16.3 hectares of industrial and storage land. Fourth, a large number of heritage sites have undergone restoration activities in their original historical form in recent years, resulting in an increase of 29.2 hectares in the area of some heritage sites. Fifth, 83.3 hectares of urban green space and plaza land are increased due to the extensive construction of green belts inside and outside the

ancient city walls. At last, a large amount of vacant land has been vacated after the demolition of public buildings and residences, and 115.6 hectares of land is still waiting for greening, remediation and development (Datong Urban Planning and Design Institute. 2013 and 2016).

In terms of preserving the urban vitality, the local government noticed that the key factor in the vitality of the old town is the people, who are the source of its vitality (Datong Urban Planning Bureau, 2013). In this sense, people in the old town area include those who live there (the residential population), those who work there (the service population), and those who visit the destination (the tourist population). However, most of the schools, hospitals and other services in the Old City have been gradually relocated to new sites outside the area in the past years. At the same time, as the renovation of dilapidated buildings and the restoration of the old town area, the population has been gradually evacuated. Furthermore, many demolished and renovated places have become a vacuum of vitality in the old town area. The renovation and renewal of dilapidated courtyards in the historic district have to a certain extent interrupted the physical context of the streets with fewer commercial activities to attract people, especially at night when it seems more deserted. In terms of the commercial activities, the newly built commercial shops in the historic district have a high vacancy rate, lack of industrial planning and industry guidance, and a slow gathering of popularity. For example, due to the restoration project of the West City Gate and the environmental improvement project of Huayan Temple and its surroundings, all the multi-storey commercial buildings have been demolished, and the former prosperous commercial scene has disappeared.

In such a context, it is necessary to restore the old town area's urban vitality and improve the socio-economic activities for all users. The regeneration of the old city of Datong aimed to be a renewed and attractive part of the historic city but it is not clear to what extent that has been achieved.

Heritage conservation and urban regeneration of Datong

In the past 20 years, China has been experiencing large-scale urbanisation: most historical cities had developed by conducting large-scale construction of modern buildings. The urban form and city layout of the ancient city centre (also known as the old city of Datong) have evolved and developed over a long period, and more modern buildings and flats were built while many old houses and landmarks disappeared due to the various demands on the local population and local government. Before implementing municipal urban regeneration, the historic urban centre was not a place that sufficiently fulfilled the social functions and living conditions required by different users. The whole urban centre was covered with subdivided plots of land, crowded old and modern buildings, and narrow and interweaved streets in poor conditions. As the most iconic symbol of the old city, the city wall only remained in ruins and rammed earth, and most of the masonry from it had been taken by the neighbouring residents to build houses (Figure 3-6).

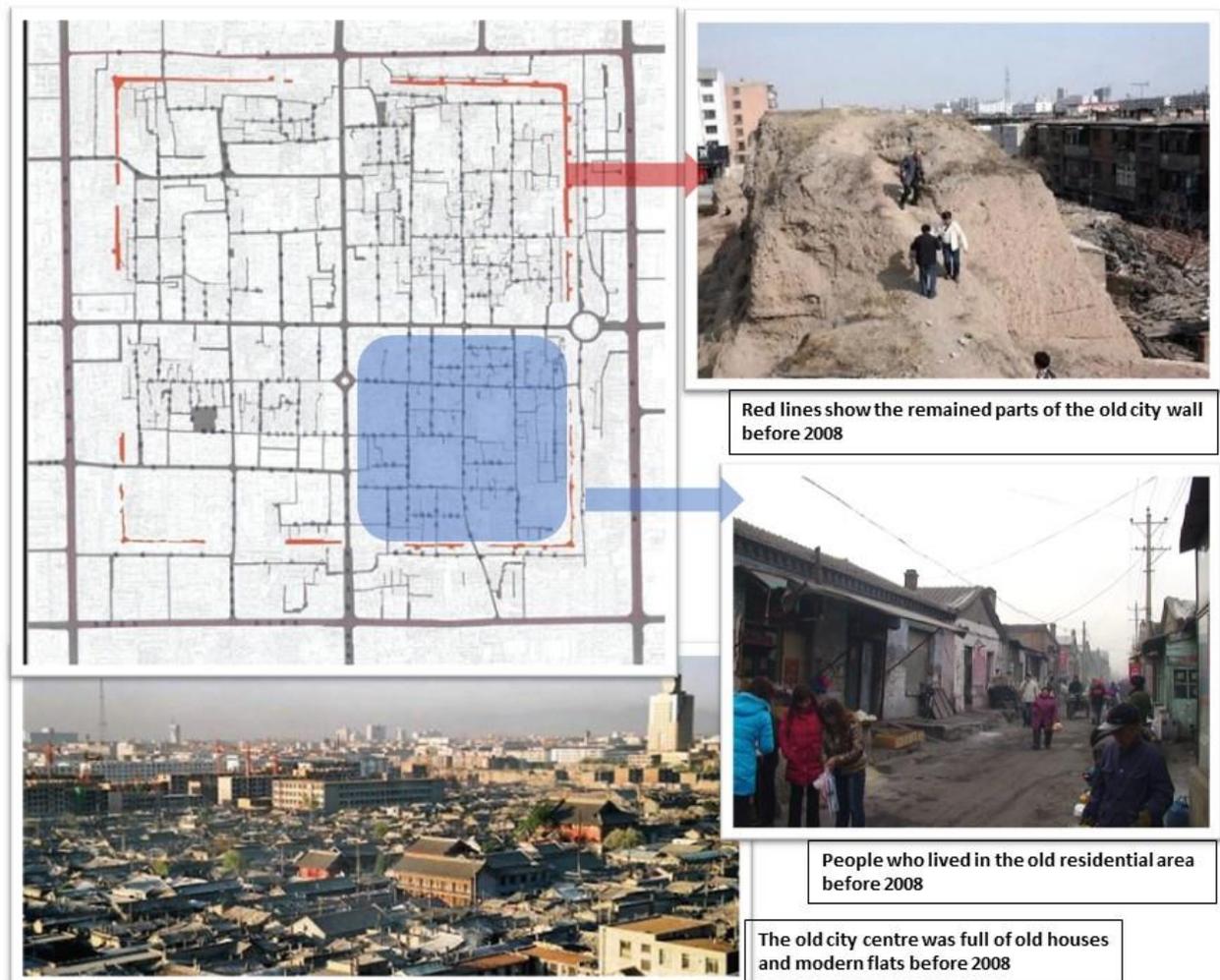


Figure 3-6 Urban form of the city centre the launch of the Revival Project (2008).

To deal with the issues of the urban centre and utilise the local historical resources, the government of Datong decided to implement a project of urban regeneration, which also aimed to follow the trend of cultural tourism-oriented urban regeneration that was popular worldwide at the time. Alongside the conduct of different stages in the whole project, a series of planning strategies and reports were commissioned by the government and jointly studied and prepared by various design institutes.

Guiding principles of preserving the content relating to the historical urban districts were set in the ‘Historical and Cultural City Conservation Plan of Datong’, which was written and compiled by China Academy of Urban Planning and Design and Datong City Planning and Design Institute (2017). The China Academy of Urban Planning and Design is a national centre for urban planning research, design, and academic information, established in 1954 after founding the People Republic of China. Multiple guiding ideas and principles are presented in the conservation plan, including to:

- Preserve the urban plan form, overall pattern, and spatial relationships of the historic district.
- Retain the chessboard-shaped road pattern with Cross Street as the backbone and skeleton of

the old town.

- Design historical landscapes with traditional residential buildings as the mainstay, and landmarks such as temples, monasteries, buildings, and pagodas act as sightseeing spots.
- Protect and repair cultural heritage, register immovable cultural relics, and historical buildings in each historic district.
- Preserve the overall style of historic and cultural districts and other historical landscape areas that were formed during the Ming and Qing dynasties and continue to this day.
- Preserve and create historic environmental elements such as walls, gateways, stone steps, paved areas, ancient wells, and trees that reflect the historical style.
- Consider the view areas from the ancient city to the surrounding hills and between the high points within the old town area and along the main axes.
- Focus on the natural landscape and environment interdependent with the historic district.
- Pay attention to preserving intangible cultural heritage in the historic district, etc.

In both aspects of planning strategy and implementation of urban regeneration, the physical environment received the most attention while the intangible dimensions (activities, experiences, meanings, etc.) received less attention and is therefore lacking any real manifestation in the whole project. Urban vitality and authenticity were two major issues encountered when the researcher conducted a pilot study in Datong – a place with elegant buildings and an improved environment with few users compared to the past, and both locals and tourists questioned the city's 'original image' (Figure 3-7 & 3-8). In accordance with the research aim and objectives, the issues emerging in this example of the progress of culture-tourism oriented urban regeneration meant that the ancient city centre of Datong provided a suitable site to conduct the research.

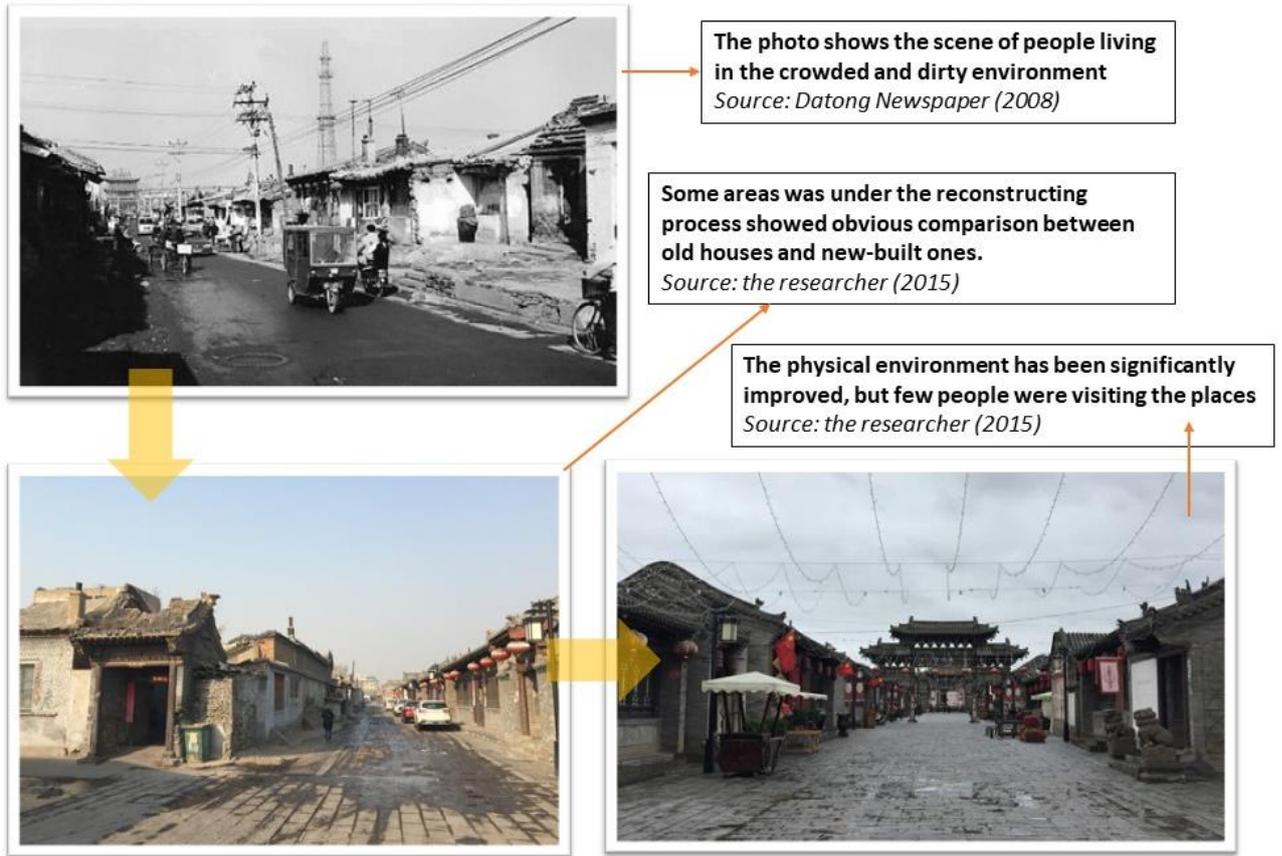


Figure 3-7 The physical infrastructure in many places has been improved although the old lively scene is gone.



Figure 3-8 Examples of venues, streets and landmarks in regenerated Datong Old City.

3.4.1.2 Selected locations in the research area

In the regeneration of historical urban centres, it is necessary to avoid only focusing on the urban planning's structural logic of reconstructing functionality and physical settings (Kana, 2012). This study aims to interpret the revitalisation of the old town centre from a new perspective and explore how local historical and cultural elements can address the problems of urban vitality and authenticity. In the literature review chapter, the researcher identified a conceptual framework formed by multiple aspects to act as guidelines for the investigation of local history and culture in designing public spaces. As primary components in forming public space and containers of the public realm, streets, squares, and the buildings around them are the main venues for the researcher to conduct methodology. In general, Gehl (1989) argued that successful urban places act as settings for the presence of street life and various activities. Moreover, the design quality and characteristic features of streets and squares reflect the image of the cities and can affect people's experiences in the formation of place identity (Bently, 1992; Jacobs, 1993; Montgomery, 1998; Carmona et al., 2010).

In order to select multiple sites to conduct the qualitative approaches, it is necessary to have a general image of the old town and the urban fabric. The following maps show the past and present of the street layout, landmarks, and historic sites in the old town of Datong (Figure 3-9, 3-10, 3-11 and 3-12):

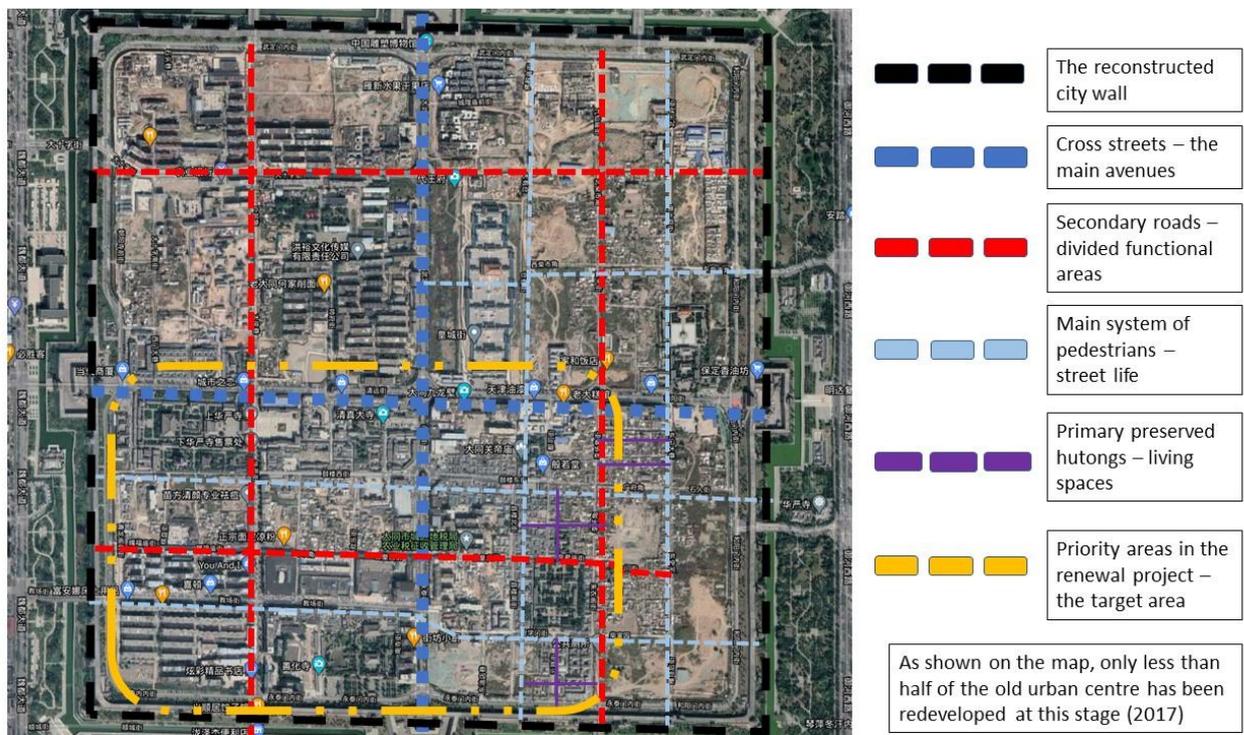


Figure 3-9 Main research area in the ancient urban centre

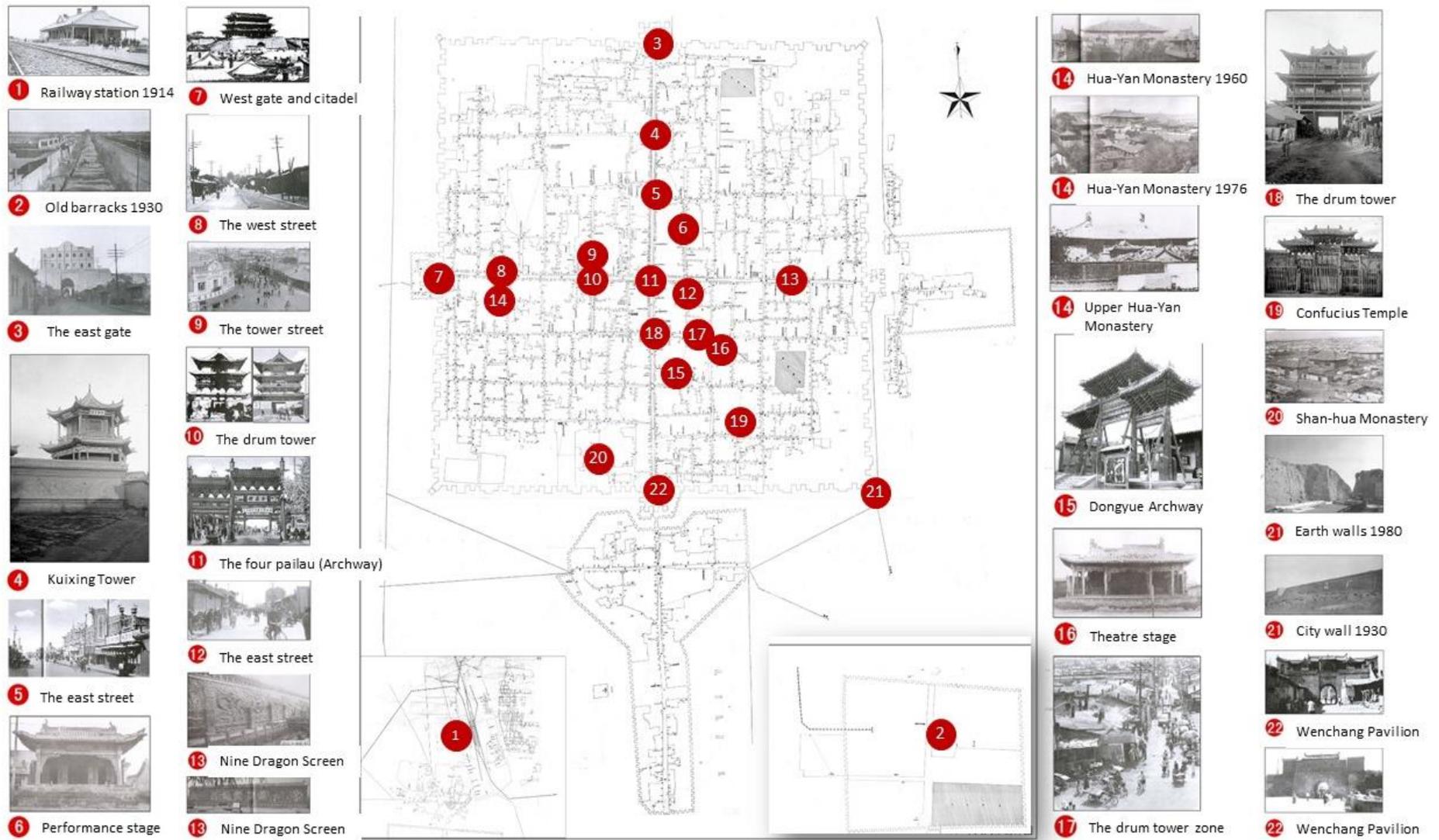


Figure 3-10 Map of historic sites and landmarks' locations and their conditions in the past (between 1910 to 1980) in the old town of Datong. (Image adapted from Datong Urban Planning and Design Institute).

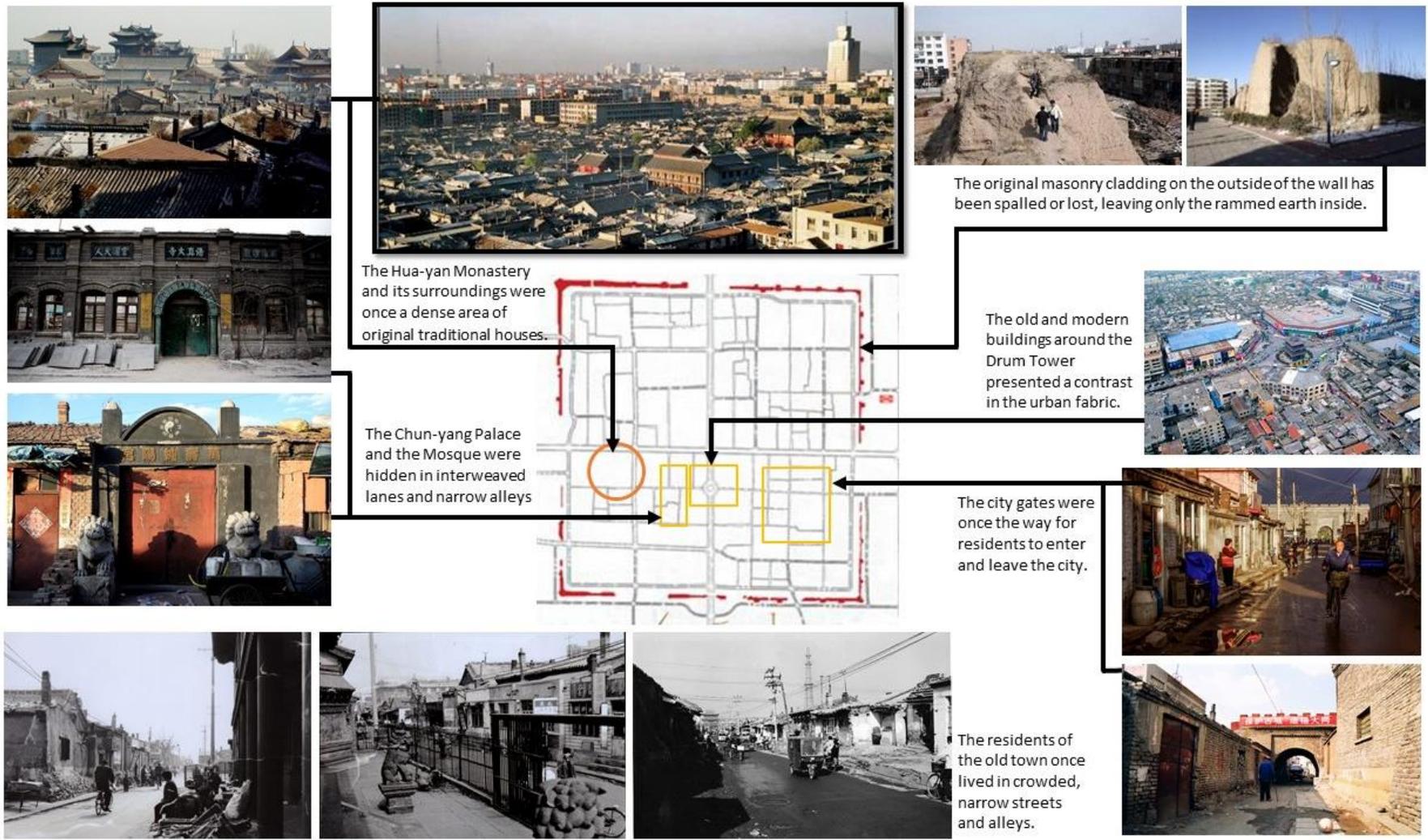


Figure 3-11 Map of the remaining historical sites and landmarks before the implementation of the urban renewal project (Images adapted from the Evening Newspaper of Datong).

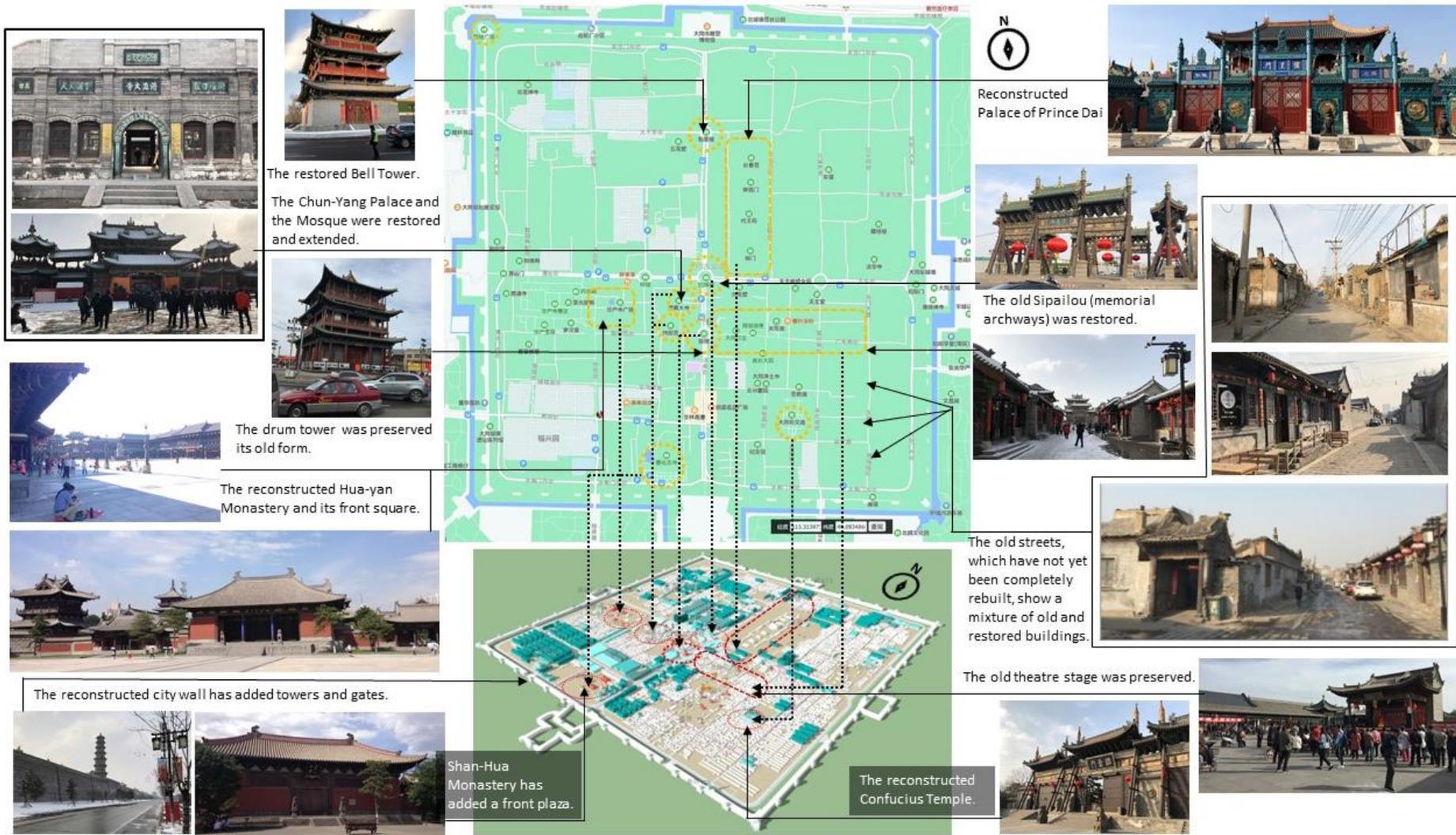


Figure 3-12 Map of preserved, restored and reconstructed buildings and historical sites at the stage of urban renewal project (2018).

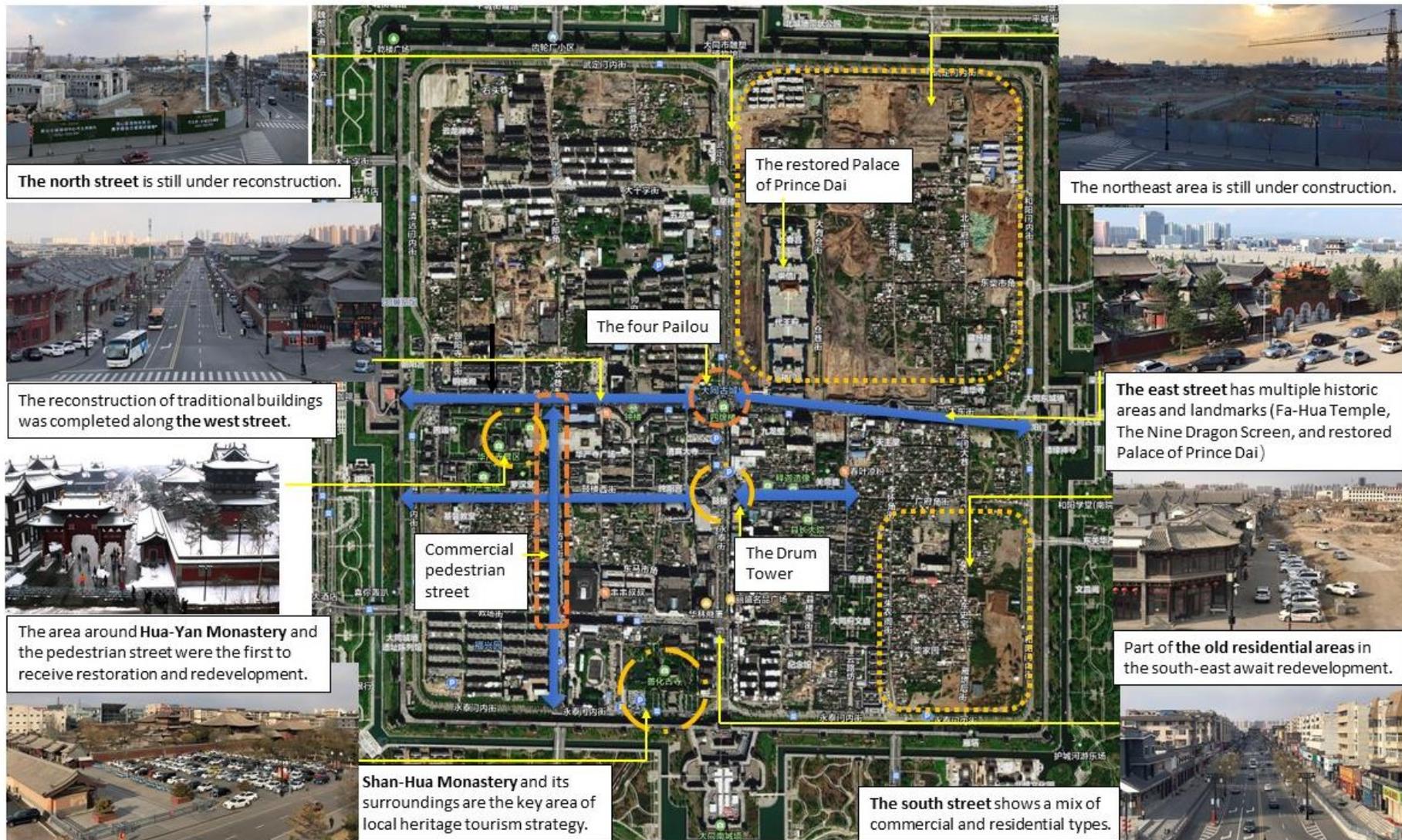


Figure 3-13 Map of the streets, urban areas, and their conditions in the course of the site investigation (2015-2018).

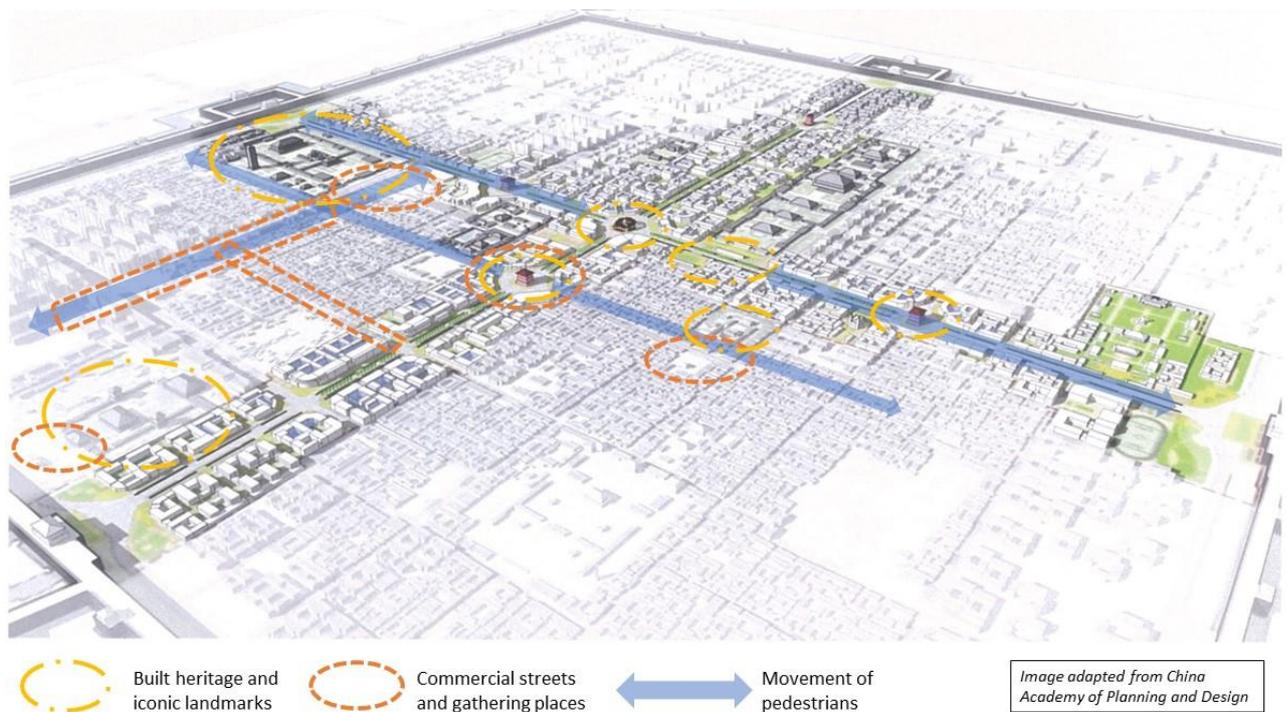


Figure 3-14 Three-dimensional aerial view of the ancient city of Datong and the research area

Under such context, the researcher selected multiple sites in the ancient city centre of Datong to conduct the research methodology, identifying characteristic features which were representative of these sites for the research project’s conceptual framework. After identifying the site characteristics and conducting the pilot studies at the first stage of the whole research progress, seven sites were selected to conduct further research approaches. The chosen areas all have famous sightseeing spots or built heritage and were designated to become the iconic precincts for future tourism and attract more visitors to improve the local commercial environment. In addition to the characteristics shared by the target sites, the researcher also identified the different cultural and historical elements that they and their surroundings have.

The East Street – historical sites and fractured walking space

The East Street was the primary research section because it was considered as the major access to the old town area and the city wall from the pilot study (observation, interview, and academic report of the urban renewal process). Although several iconic landmarks are located on the East Street – primary entrance to the city wall, Fa-Hua Monastery, the Nine Dragon Screen, and restored Place of Prince Dai, only a few visitors and residents were observed to linger in various locations on the street. In addition to the unfinished reconstructing process of the façade design, the lack of rest and assembly

areas leaves no place for pedestrians to stay. On the other hand, the broken pedestrian system caused by mixing with carriageways also makes several tourist attractions unconnected (Figure).

From the study in the pilot study stage, the researcher found that these sites attracted more tourists than daily users, and many visitors mentioned themes of authenticity and memories, which are explored in more detail in the Chapter research analysis. The researcher selected east street as one of the research sections due to three characteristics:

- The north and south parts of East Street were once major residential activity areas, which made East Street a commercial street with various groceries and shops. At the current stage of reconstructing project, the old streetscape and diverse shops were demolished, resulting in the loss of daily users.
- After the first stage of reconstruction, the widening of the carriageway aimed to solve the past traffic congestion in the old town of Datong. However, as the east street was considered as the primary traffic road, the old pedestrian route was broken. For example, the traffic roundabout where the Four Pailou is located was completely isolated from the surrounding pedestrian space, and pedestrians lacked a suitable route to interact with the Four Pailou.
- Several historical sites and landmarks along East Street were restored and repaired in the previous phase of the urban renewal project, such as Fa-Hua Monastery, the Palace of Dai, and the Kuixing Tower. These restored historic buildings occupied larger spaces because of their expanded scale and form, thus causing changes to the original urban fabric (before the implementation of the urban renewal project). On the other hand, the restoration of such sites did not create enough public spaces for actual users.

In this context, the author selected East Street as a specific site to explore users' behaviours and views in the context of reconstructed historical sites with limited public spaces and fractured pedestrian systems. Three interviews and observation sites were set up along the main road into the ancient town – East Street (Figure 3-15). The first point is set up at the entrance to the wall, which was also just above the gates. The reconstructed city wall acts as the symbol of the city and provides large open spaces for users to take a walk and enjoy the great view of the whole urban form. According to interview responses from the pilot study, there are few resting places and settings, resulting in a tiring and uninteresting walking route on the wall. Continuing along East Street, the second point is set between the well-preserved Nine Dragon Screen and its accompanying reconstructed Palace of the Prince of Dai, who once was the ruler and administrator of the city. The third one is the central point of the whole urban layout – the intersection of four streets. This area has been and still is a hub of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and many traditional handicrafts, dining rooms, and shopping malls were located around this intersection. An iconic landmark was located in the centre of the streets as archways, but it was demolished nearly 50 years ago due to the rapid urban development. The

growing number of motor vehicles has placed a heavy burden on the traffic within the old town of Datong, and the intersection where the Four Pailou locates requires more street space to allow for vehicular traffic. In the urban regeneration project, new archways have been reconstructed as one of the central landmarks.



Figure 3-15 Three research sites located on the East Street

West and East Street of the Drum Tower – the contrast between the reconstructed and old streetscape

Through the observation and analysis of user tour routes in the pilot study, the following research areas are the west and east streets of the Drum Tower and the primary commercial pedestrian precincts (Figure 3-16). The west and east streets between the Drum Tower located in the old residential areas were redeveloped to become commercial streets, which also intend to offer interactive areas for both residents and tourists (China Academy of Planning and Design, 2017). In order to get the necessary information and data, the researcher travelled back and forth between East and West Streets to conduct observations and interviews. The researcher had observed crowds of people moving around the Drum Tower, while not many people show up on East-West Street on

weekdays. According to the pilot study conducted by the researcher in the old town of Datong, three characters were identified in the west and east streets of the Drum Tower:

- Although both streets are located on the main touring route for visitors, the design quality of the streetscape is different. More visitors are attracted to the East Street of the Drum Tower, which has more shops and coffee houses, and the West Street, which still has many vacant houses.
- The area around the well-preserved Drum Tower was where local restaurants gathered before and during the urban renewal program, and it also gathered many diners. Although the adjacent plazas in front of the Chun-Yang Taoism Palace and the mosque provide public open space, fewer visitors stayed on the east-west street than the number of diners in the Drum Tower quarter.
- The Guandi Temple and the theatre stage in front of it are located at the boundary between renewal zones (in 2016) and the old residential area. Although such places provide public spaces for local users, the contrast between reconstructed streets and the rest of the southeast area with dilapidated houses and narrow lanes would be the key issue in the following research process.

Under such context, this research area was set to explore the design of active frontage as integrating with local historical and cultural elements. Moreover, how to connect new streetscapes and the unconstructed residential area in dimensions of aesthetic, social function, and meaning emerges as a key topic in the research.



Figure 3-16 Survey sites located in East-West Street of the Drum Tower

Quarters of Hua-Yan and Shan-Hua Monastery – landmarks and commercial pedestrian street

There are two ancient monasteries located in the main commercial area, and they are also priority sites for tourists. New front plazas built for them integrate with surrounding façades, forming two quarters in the first stage of the renewal project (Historical and Cultural City Protection Planning of Datong, 2013). This shopping street was one of the lively places in the city before the implementation of the urban renewal project in 2013, which once attracted many residents from the surrounding area (including citizens living out of the old town area). The new plazas in front of the Hua-Yan Monastery and Shan-Hua Monastery have become the new gathering and social spaces for many elderly residents by providing stairs and benches. According to the pilot study, the researchers found that visitors simply went from north to south directly from one attraction to another but rarely showed any curiosity about the shops along the route (Figure 3-17).

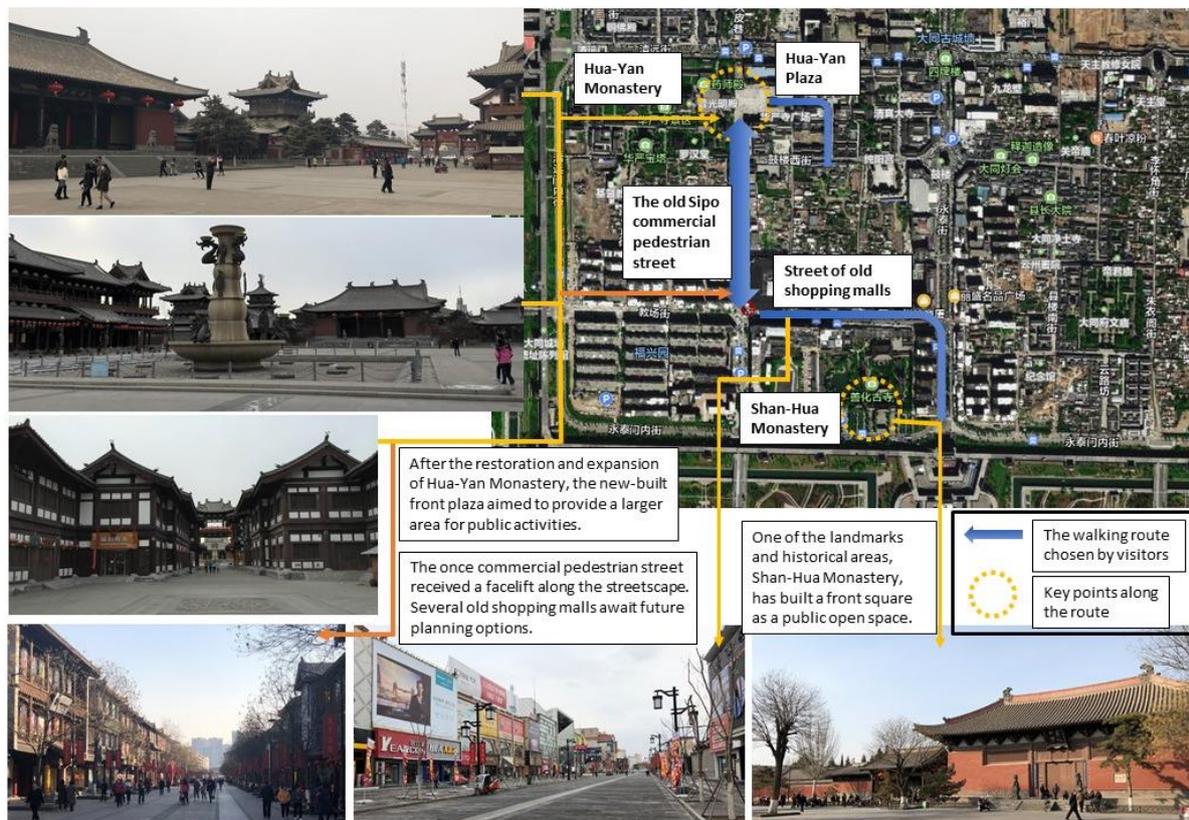


Figure 3-17 Survey sites located between major commercial pedestrian streets and important sightseeing places

In this regard, observation and photography of this research area focused on pedestrians' movement and behaviour patterns of different users. In order to conduct further methodological approaches in the section of those two iconic historical quarters and old commercial pedestrian street after receiving repairment and construction in the previous stage of urban renewal, multiple characters were identified from the pilot study:

- The two new front squares created public open spaces on a large scale in the old town of Datong and occupied the old streets and houses, thus possibly destroying the original urban fabric. The research will explore how different user groups would use and assess the public spaces in this research section through their observed behaviours/activities and views from interviews.
- How to solve the relationship between traditional Chinese architecture and modern shopping malls in the redeveloped shopping street, while using local historical and cultural elements to create a vibrant streetscape is a problem that needs to be faced in this area.
- As this section has several iconic historical sites and the primary shopping streets and venues before implementing the urban renewal project in 2013, the significant transformation might cause issues of preserving the sense of authenticity and memories.

Therefore, interviews were conducted in this research section – historical quarters linked by commercial streets – to obtain information about memories and images of the city, and observation with photography could explore how different user groups use the new-built spaces and the reconstructed streets.

The use of the case study – the reconstructed urban centre of Datong – helped obtain a firm understanding of how physical spaces are related to people's sense of place identity and the manifestation of urban history and cultural resources. Furthermore, all the specified locations in the ancient city centre of Datong allowed the researcher to conduct semi-structured interviews and observations over time to help understand cultural uses in redesigned public spaces with historical and specific physical features.

3.4.2 Preparing semi-structured Interview questions

As the primary data collection method, interview questions were developed from corresponding aspects and themes based on the conceptual framework for all participants – on-site local residents, on-site tourists and local visitors, off-site locals, professionals and practitioners. As the research aims to understand the involvement of urban history and local culture in shaping place identity, the framework-based interview questions are used as tools to guide the participants or interviewees to reveal their own experiences and feelings about the study case and urban regeneration progress. Following the conceptual framework, the design of questions includes three primary categories – physical settings and built environment, cultural events and activities, and experience and meaning. This section includes three parts – piloting and pre-testing interview questions, interview questions for on-site and off-site groups, and interview questions for decision-makers and professionals.

3.4.2.1 Piloting and pre-testing interview questions and fieldnotes

As Bryman (2016, p.260) suggested, it is desirable to conduct a pilot study before implementing a self-administered questionnaire or structured interview schedule in any research project. In this sense, this research uses a pilot study to test the efficacy of the design and presentation of the semi-structured interview as all the interview questionnaires are administered by the researcher. Moreover, since there are multiple respondent groups in the research methodology, it is necessary to conduct the pilot study to help test the interview questions and ensure a desirable and efficient interviewing process. In this way, the desirability of the piloting study not only helps ensure the operation of the semi-structured interview but also contribute to integrating the research approaches as a whole and well functional methodology (Bryman, 2016). In addition, any potential and persistent problems that emerged in the pilot study (e.g. in relation to questions that were difficult for interviewees to answer, or the use of terms that interviewees did not understand) could be addressed and modified before such problems apparently occurred in the implementation of formal interviews.

In order to conduct the formal interview properly and efficiently, the researcher has selected a small sample of pilot respondents to test the semi-structured questionnaires. In each group of on-site locals and tourists, the researcher selected six respondents for the pilot study, and three interviewees were selected for the groups of off-site locals. All of the respondents in these three groups interviewed in the pilot study were included in the main study as there were very few changes made to the interview questions post-pilot. This meant that the responses were valid and therefore included in the overall sample (Bryman, 2016). In this sense, all the interviewees in the pilot study were selected randomly following the same routine in the formal process, which helped ensure all the respondents showed comparable characteristics but only conducted in different stages (ibid.). In addition, the researcher only selected two members for the piloting study of interview questions for the experts by sending emails due to the total small sample size of urban experts (n=12) and the challenges in arranging the face-to-face meeting time. The reason for this is to avoid results of the selecting-out interviewees affecting the representativeness of any subsequent responses in the main process (Bryman, 2016). Moreover, it is necessary to ensure the small set of respondents selected in the pilot study is comparable to interviewees from the main body (Ibid.). In this sense, all the interviewees in the pilot study were selected randomly following the same routine in the formal process, which helped ensure all the respondents showed comparable characteristics but only conducted in different stages. On the other hand, the researcher only selected two members for the piloting study by sending emails due to the total small sample size of urban experts (n=12) and the challenges in arranging the time of face-to-face meetings.

Testing and refining semi-structured interview

In this research, the reason for conducting a pilot study is to provide the interviewer experiences of using the semi-structured interview questions effectively. As Bryman (2016) stated, the pilot study help identify and address the question that replies in the same way as such problems could affect the variability of the results. Moreover, questions that are not answered as expected could be identified and get modified, such as the ones that might make respondents confused or reduce the interviewees' interests in the study (Ibid.). In this regard, the researcher conducted the pilot study and found multiple problems, such as the degree of familiarity with the site that differed between locals and visitors, tourists' lack of understanding and inability to answer certain questions due to their first visit, and the difference in the memory and focus of place between those who now live in the old town and the former residents who moved out. Based on such issues emerging and identified in the pilot study, the researcher modified the interview questionnaires to form a much applicable and desirable process of conducting the semi-structured interview (see Section 3.4.2.2).

When interviewing urban experts, the researcher has found that members of this group intend to organise several questions together and provide more comprehensive responses. Therefore, the interview list for urban experts and decision-makers was refined into several primary sections with fewer but critical questions to obtain precise and concise responses in a limited interviewing time. Moreover, the terms and phrases in the semi-structured interview questions were refined to form smooth and efficient interviews with members of the professionals and urban experts, which aim to obtain the desirable research data (see Section 3.4.2.3).

Testing and modifying on-site observation

The researcher also conducted a pilot study for the non-participant observation to help test its applicability and feasibility both on the site, and in terms of the data collected. Two types of categories of field notes were used along with the on-site observation: mental notes and written (scratch) notes, and photography was also used to record the temporal events and users' activities in different spaces to meet the research objectives. As the research aims to understand users' behaviours and activities in specific urban places, the notes and photography recorded certain events and notes without affecting the user's original behavioural patterns and routines (Adler and Adler, 2009). On the other hand, scratch notes produce very brief notes, such as little phrases, quotes, and keywords, written in a notebook to jog the researcher's memory about events that happened during the observation process (Loftland and Loftland, 1995). These scratch notes were conducted inconspicuously to avoid affecting behaviours and activities of the people being observed (Adler and Adler, 2009; Bryman, 2016). In this sense, photography also contributes to refining and

supplementing the field notes by recording specific events in an unobtrusive way, given the popularity of photo-taking by visitors and tourists.

In general, the pilot study of this research helped ensure the feasibility and operability by testing the research methodology in situ, and to obtain the desirable data from the implementation of main or formal methodological approaches (Bryman, 2016). In this sense, the piloting study help refines and modify the interview questions as well as the functional and practical process. Moreover, the non-participant observation was optimised by comparing the field notes obtained in the testing stage and the expected results of the researcher. Finally, the pilot study provides valuable guidance for integrating with the document analysis as discovering potential foci and directions for the subsequent data analysis.

3.4.2.2 Interview questions for on-site and off-site groups

This part of the interview questions focuses on various on-site groups – local inhabitants, tourists, and local visitors (who live in the city region but outside the ancient urban centre), and for this reason, there are slight differences between precise questions between different groups for comprehensive responses. For example, questions that aim to obtain views of architectural distinctiveness and streetscape of specific locations (where the interview is conducted) might be difficult for off-site participants to answer. Therefore, some interviews were modified to provide sufficient responses, such as changing the specific locations to broader areas or precincts with similar characteristic features. Moreover, questions about memory of place and sense of belonging could be difficult for tourists to answer, and interview questions will focus on how such themes relate to their knowledge and improvement of experiences.

In order to get the comprehensive responses in a limited time, the sequence of semi-structured interview questions that developed from the theoretical framework has been adjusted according to the feedback of the pilot study.

Built Environment and Physical Settings:

1. *First impression or overall evaluation* – How would you describe this place to others who have never been here before?

As the starting point of the whole interview, the first question aims to obtain a first impression or general image of the site or the whole urban centre. For local residents, they might offer a description from their memories, while tourists could pay more attention to the architectural style of built heritage (Wang, 2011; Dempsey et al., 2020; Wang and Gu, 2020).

2. *Built form and architectural distinctiveness* – How would you evaluate the built heritage and landmarks in this place (or the ancient urban centre)? How would you describe the spatial relationship between buildings and their surroundings?

As an influential character of tangible elements of urban history and culture, built heritage and landmarks are critical in composing place identity (Boussaa, 2017; Sepe and Pitt, 2017). This question aims to obtain users' opinions about their characteristic features and quality after reconstruction and rehabilitation. Moreover, 'how would redesigned built form and spatial layout affect participants' views about the preservation of authenticity?' is another key point in the theoretical framework.

3. *Façade design and active frontages* – What do you think of the commercial pedestrians after the urban regeneration project? Do you think there is any way to combine elegant facades and active frontages?

The design of façades and active frontages is argued to be necessary to create a lively street scene (Gehl, 1998; Mehta and Bossonn, 2010; Aelbrecht, 2016), especially for commercial pedestrians, to attract large crowds of visitors. Residents could compare the old scenes and the new streetscape, and visitors might give opinions about the design quality of such pedestrians from their travelling experiences.

4. *Environmental improvement of streets and squares* – What do you think of the design of signages, streetlights, and street furniture (benches, sculptures, public art, etc.) on this street and the others (or streets in the city centre)? How would you describe their roles in forming streetscape?

In addition to the design of facades, other elements – signages, illuminations, streetscapes, street furniture – also contribute to the quality of streetscapes in both visual and functional aspects (Ye, 2015; BIAD, 2016). Moreover, whether the design and arranging of those elements on the streets could reappear the old street scene or create a new streetscape is another area of research interest.

5. *Linkage series of public spaces* – Do you prefer public spaces with large and open scale (squares and streets), or small and private scale (lanes and corners)? How do you think public spaces with different scales should connect with each other in this ancient city centre?

The linkage series of public spaces with different scales is important for pedestrians as roaming in the city, which could affect the kinaesthetic experiences in the visual-aesthetic dimension (Cullen, 1961; Appleyard et al., 1964; Frederick, 2007; Carmona et al., 2010; Wang, 2011; Niu et al., 2018). This section of questions aims to understand how different participants would assess preserved and reconstructed public spaces, and to explore users' preferences of the connection and link between streets and squares.

6. *Street vista and building silhouette* – Do you prefer a horizontal view of the streets or a vertical design of buildings, and why? How would you describe the architectural height, building outline, and skyline in the ancient city centre?

Both architectural elements – building height and vertical design – contribute to the formation of street vista in visual and kinaesthetic aspects (Cullen, 1961; Cao et al., 2008; Gehl, 2013). The old urban form includes a mix of low-rise houses and modern flats built in the past several decades, while the urban regeneration aims to demolish most tall buildings and keep an overall low building height in the city (Chen and Kevin, 2013; Xie and Heath, 2016). Transformation of width-to-height could have an influence on travel experiences in terms of visual and spatial feelings.

7. The design quality of the route travelled – What route have you chosen (or would you choose) to take in the ancient city centre and why? What do you think the design quality and access to such routes should be?

The final question of this part – built environment and physical settings – wishes to understand how different groups of participants would assess the travelling routes in both visual-aesthetic and functional aspects (Gehl, 2013; Xie and Heath, 2016). As most streets and spaces are designed for pedestrians, the responses to these questions in the urban spaces will help to illustrate the movement from different groups of participants.

Cultural events, festivals, and activities:

1. *Types of activities and quality of public spaces* – What is your reason for coming here (going to the ancient city centre), have you enjoyed your time (and why)? How do you think the quality of the built environment and architectural style has affected your activities?

The first section of interview questions aims to obtain information about the relationship between users' activities and the condition of venues. As Gehl (1996) organises three primary types of activities – necessary, optional, and social ones – and influential characters of places, this research intends to understand how residents, visitors, and tourists would conduct their activities in preserved and reconstructed historic urban landscapes (Mehta and Bosson, 2010; Aelbrecht, 2016).

2. *Traditional performances and cultural events* – What is your opinion of the traditional shows, folk performances, and cultural events in the ancient city centre? How do you think these activities could provide better experiences?

As the key components of culture or tourism-led urban regeneration, diverse cultural events, shows, and festivals can help improve urban vitality and attract crowds of visitors to the ancient city centre (Montgomery, 2003; Sepe and Trapani, 2010; Barrio et al., 2012; Mariani and Giorgio, 2016). This

section of interview questions aims to understand how different groups of participants would assess those events and explore their characters that strengthen place identity.

3. *Active and passive engagement* – When you visit this place (or go to the urban centre), do you prefer to watch others, or do you wish to participate in any specific activities?

As two types of activities supported and facilitated by the design of the place, the primary form of passive engagement is people-watching, while active engagement offers a more direct experience with a place and the people in it (Carr et al., 1992.; Carmona et al., 2010; Aelbrecht, 2016). This section of interview questions will explore the relationship between the quality of physical settings, the nature of events, and the preferences of users.

4. *Night-Time Economy* – What do you think a lively night environment means to the city centre? In your opinion, what elements should be considered when creating a successful night-time economy?

Following the literature review (Mariani and Giorgio, 2016; Song et al., 2016), interview questions about night-time economy and nightlife aim to reveal how a lively nightlife could produce a public realm with diverse historical and cultural perspectives characters. Moreover, such investigations of the night-time economy aim to explore influential factors that the place identity by communicating with local policymakers, planners, and communities (Yeo and Heng, 2014; Song et al., 2016).

5. *Characteristic features and people attractors* – What characteristic features and elements could attract people to the ancient city centre? How would such elements help to improve people's experiences when conducting or participating in diverse activities?

The final section of this part aims to find more potential characteristic features or elements that may positively contribute to users' experiences. In addition to the design quality of the physical environment and nature of diverse events, the atmosphere, ambience, and place image created by the interaction between people, activities, and places might be discovered, as per the literature review (Wang, 2011; Sepe, 2013; Xie and Heath, 2016; Ram et al., 2016).

Meaning, memory, and place image:

1. *Old city image and memorable elements* – What is your image of the old city centre before the urban regeneration? To recall memories (or improve travelling experience), what original or authentic elements do you think should be preserved or recovered?

The comparison between the old urban centre and the reconstructed urban environment is critical in affecting the formation of place identity. As discussed in the chapter of literature review, individuals could produce a 'frame of reference' based on their understanding of the place (Montgomery, 1998; Wang, 2011). In this regard, participants' descriptions (locals) and pre-images (visitors) of the old city

centre and opinions about memorable elements relating to urban history and culture will be significant in the preservation and reconstruction of place identity (Wang and Gu, 2020).

2. *Sense of belonging* – Do you think the ancient urban centre after the urban regeneration could give you (or local inhabitants) a sense of belonging? What elements do you think could help strengthen this sense for locals (or preserve the sense for visitors)?

Sense of belonging is the result of individual interacting with the interpretation and presence of the place's past, and such interactions between people and places could get affected by other themes such as place attachment, residence length, and important places in memory (Lewicka, 2006; Sepe, 2013). For tourists, the presence of such a sense could relate to the expression of authentic travelling experiences (Al-hagla, 2010; Su, 2018).

3. *Sense of history and progress* – What do you think of the presence and recovery of urban historical elements and progress in this city (such as historical events, iconic landmarks, historical figures, etc.)? What elements do you think could help to bring back your memory (or improve your travelling experience) in the ancient city centre?

Both distinctive architectural characters and historical events contribute to the manifestation of history (Wang, 2011; Sepe, 2013). The mix of old buildings and modern flats is the result of the developing process of the city, and historical events and cultural festivals – traditional ones or renovated ones – illustrate specific periods of urban history (Xie and Heath, 2016). This section of interview questions aims to understand the influence of those factors and explore more elements that help comprehend historical progress.

4. *Area identity and symbol* – what do you think the overall design style and built form of this place (or the ancient city centre) compare with other cities' old urban centres? What elements or factors do you think could act as iconic symbols to attract people?

Area identity (or regional identity) constitutes the identity of urban centre by forming symbolic expressions of the city (Altman and Low, 1992; Piccolo, 1995; Migliorini and Venini, 2001), such as the presence of distinctive landmarks, functions of streets and precincts, host of cultural events (Wang and Gu, 2020). By comparing with other old urban areas that have been through similar culture or tourism-led urban regeneration, the second interview question is going to know participants' opinions about their preferences of symbolic elements.

5. *Influential elements for the place image* – If you could change or choose any element to improve the image of the ancient city centre, what would you change and why?

The last interview question of the part of image and meaning aims to comprehend the conceptual framework by exploring potential elements provided by various groups of participants. Following

previous questions, this final question wishes to investigate how users assess various factors and determine what influential ones might get missed.

3.4.2.3 Interview questions for decision-makers, professionals, and practitioners

In addition to the semi-structured interviews with laypeople, this research also obtains views from elite participants at the city level (i.e. urban experts, academic professors, practitioners and officials involved in the urban regeneration project). According to Tansey (2007), the use of elite interviewing is often incorporated into case study research and in the field of urban regeneration. Groups of elites can provide critical sources of detailed information about the political process and considerations of thematic issues. The design of the interview questions aims to access experts' pre-existed knowledge and assess their views on the topics within the conceptual framework and their involvement in both political and practical aspects of the whole urban renewal project.

In accordance with the conceptual framework, several key themes are outlined for which the elite group can provide a comprehensive review: planning policies and strategies, planning and design of public open spaces, historical buildings and iconic landmarks, place designed for tourists or locals, city image and place identity, personal preference and assessment. The questions asked are as follows:

1. Planning policies and strategies:

What are the relevant planning strategies and research methods in the context of culture and tourism-oriented urban regeneration in historical city areas? What is your opinion of the implementation of strategies and policies as part of the process of urban regeneration in the ancient city centre of Datong?

2. Planning and design of public open spaces:

What is your opinion of the condition and quality of public spaces after being preserved and reconstructed during the urban regeneration process? From your perspective, are there any unresolved issues in the redesigned public spaces? If so, what are they, and how would you suggest dealing with them?

3. Historical buildings and iconic landmarks:

What is your opinion of the condition of old buildings and their spatial relationships with surrounding areas? How do you assess the values and influences of 'authentic' built form and architectural distinctiveness of built heritage, buildings, and landmarks in urban regeneration?

4. Places designed for tourists or locals:

What is your opinion of how well the redesigned and reconstructed public space will meet visitors' and locals' needs? What elements or features do you think would help meet various users' needs and enhance the interaction between them?

5. City image and urban legibility:

From your perspective, what historical and cultural elements do you think contribute to the preservation and reconstruction of city image and impression? How do you think these elements should be expressed in order to meet the official definition of urban identity – ‘a cultural tourism destination’?

6. Personal preferences and assessment:

How do you assess the urban regeneration project's progress in aspects of the physical environment, cultural events, and city image? From your perspective, what elements would you consider to be predominant or favourite, and why?

Semi-structured interview questions designed for laypeople and elites aim to obtain views of the involvement of urban history and local culture in shaping place identity in the case study. The key to designing all the interview questions is to investigate both the interviewees' positive feelings and negative feelings that they could have on the specific sites and the whole urban centre. The case study assessments help interpret factors from the conceptual framework to make sense of the distinctiveness of place identity in different aspects. Responses from different levels (daily users and urban experts) could help to form a comprehensive structure of themes and concepts based on the framework. All the questions were delivered face-to-face and recorded on paper together with a signed consent form (see appendix). Conducting them face to face with oral interaction between the interviewer and interviewees helps to guarantee the progress of interviews and obtain more information (Finch et al., 2014).

3.4.3 Integrating the research methods in the case study

The overall process of conducting the research methodology in the case study was separated into three major stages – the first pilot study, the first part of formal conduct of fieldwork (with iterative modifications), and the second part of formal conduct of fieldwork. Designing multiple stages of fieldwork surveys and interviews enabled the researcher to obtain data during different seasons and festivals or events. In accordance with implementing progress of the whole research methodology, the interviews in the pilot study at the first stage were conducted to test their feasibility and explore possible and emerging issues or problems with the question-wording. After the interview questions

for all groups received specific modifications based on former experiences, another two rounds were conducted in the formal stage to investigate the research aim and objectives in more depth.

3.4.3.1 The sample size of the interview participants

Based on choosing equal numbers of both males and females with multiple age groups, interviews were conducted in selected locations in the ancient urban centre where people usually come and use the spaces and facilities. The sample size is critical in providing the number of interviewees to get the necessary responses and data for the research. According to Bryman (2016), the size of the sample needs to support convincing conclusions and might vary from different research backgrounds and situations in purposive sampling terms. In this regard, the researcher focused on the engagement that happened among the number of research interviews, which Onwuegbuzie and Collins describe (2007, p. 289) as ‘sample size in qualitative research should not be so small as to make it difficult to achieve data saturation, theoretical saturation, or informational redundancy at the same time, the sample should not be so large that it is difficult to undertake a deep, case-oriented analysis’. Furthermore, Mason (2010) examined the abstracts of doctoral thesis derived from interview-based qualitative research methods and found a mean of 31 and a median of 28 from 560 samples.

In qualitative research, it is common to have a large amount of variation in the amount of time and scale of sample size (Bryman, 2016). People who agreed to take the interviews in the first place could become alert to audio recorders or quit in the middle of the progress because of their time schedules or other unpredicted events. Among the participants who finished the whole interview process, some failed to meet the needs of the research aim and objectives due to a lack of necessary information. In addition to the groups of 15 elite interviews, 60 on-site interviews and 15 off-site interviews were completed in and out of the old urban centre during the fieldwork. Based on the theories mentioned by Bryman (2012), several considerations were taken in choosing the final sample size for conducting interviews:

- Relationships and differences between theoretical saturation and data saturation are key to properly connect data collection to the theoretical framework to achieve the pre-set themes and concepts.
- The methodology implemented under the research aim and objectives – an adequate sample size was carried out as the research approaches tend to inquire data from conservation analysis of life story, experience, and memory.
- The heterogeneity of population – although the qualitative methodology in this research requests a smaller sample size compared with quantitative approaches, it is necessary to employ a proper number of interview participants from various groups (occupation, location,

age, gender, certain experience) to reflect its inherent variability.

- Snowball sampling and variability – a wide range of participants, separated into different groups to satisfy multiple criteria, and random selection of interviewees in each group contribute to further snow sampling method and maintain systematic variation.

In these regards, the sample size of interview participants (laypeople) is composed of 39 male interviewees and 36 female interviewees. The total amount (N=75) of participants includes the following age groups: 20s (N=23), 30s (N=15), 40s (N=14), 50s (N=8), 60s (N=10), 70s (N=5). In both on-site and off-site interviews for residents and local visitors, there are three types of respondents: residents who still live in the city centre (N=15), residents who used to live in the city centre but have since moved out (N=21), residents who have never lived in the city centre but live in the urban district of Datong (N=9). In the group of tourists (N=30), 19 participants said it was the first time they had been to the study case, while 11 participants had visited the ancient urban centre more than once. Among the interviews of on-site tourists, five sets (Individual respondents or teams of two interviewed together) are foreign visitors: a couple from Eastern Europe (Ukraine and Russia), two French students, visitors from France and America, international students from Australia and America, and a couple from the UK (Leicester). Both the interviewer and these respondents could communicate in English, which ensured the interviews' successful processing.

In addition to interviews of on-site and off-site respondents (laypeople), elites or urban experts' interviews aim to provide a rich quality of responses and detailed information from the professional and academic aspects. To explore the current condition and circumstance of culture-tourism oriented urban regeneration of the ancient city centre of Datong, interviews with urban experts and practitioners involved in the policy-making, practical planning and design process, and academic research contribute to in-depth knowledge of strategy and challenges. After many attempts and long-term communications, the final number of experts interviewed was 12. They were labelled as codenames with descriptions of their occupations and roles in urban regeneration because most people do not want their real names to appear in the thesis and future publications. Urban experts and professionals include three sub-groups: planning strategy makers, practitioners designing urban spaces, and researchers and readers of local history and culture (Figure 3-18).

Code Name	Position of Urban Experts
P-01	Deputy Director, Department of Cultural Tourism, China Academy of Planning and Design
P-02	Head of Ancient Cities Conservation Section, Datong Planning and Design Institute
P-03	Director of Datong City Planning Department
P-04	Deputy Director of the Planning Institute, Datong City Planning Department
P-05	Head of Institute of Landscape Architecture, Datong City Planning Department
P-06	Chief engineer of the Planning Institute, Datong City Planning Department
P-07	Associate Engineer of the Planning Institute, Datong City Planning Department
P-08	Editor-in-Chief, Culture & Tourism Newspaper of Datong
P-09	Writer and Reader of Local cultural and historical context
P-10	Collector and researcher of local urban and suburban history
P-11	Blogger of Local cultural and historical memory
P-12	Writer and Radio anchor of Local cultural and historical events

Figure 3-18 Members of the elite interview group.

Although people demonstrate different feelings and experiences about the actual sites they were physically at or not, the formation of place identity includes images, memories, and perceptions from various groups of users. As this thesis focuses on exploring and assessing multiple aspects of history and culture involved in shaping place identity, the views and ideas of the study case from different groups of participants are necessary for the identity to be identified and investigated. Moreover, the viewers' opinions from on-site and off-site investigations show significant impacts on the valuation of quality and meaning of place identity, and the uniqueness of interviewees' views provides the ability to comprehend the theoretical framework in each aspect and theme.

3.4.3.2 Conducting the integrated methodology – “flânerie, photography, and narration”

The immersion in the ancient urban centre of Datong included two stages – from January 2018 to March 2018 and from August 2019 to July 2019. In order to experience and capture various types of activities, cultural events, and festivals, all the interviews and most of the observations were conducted between the hours of 10:00 and 19:00 on weekdays and weekends, which are the times that most people (both locals and tourists) conducted their activities. This section introduces the implementation of the semi-structured interview, non-participant observation with photography, the integrated research field methods, and the elite interview as an individual part.

Semi-structured interview

The interviewer had an interview guide that is used as a checklist of questions in sequence with specific themes and factors developed from the conceptual framework and modified after the pilot study. The order of interview questions was often substantially modified by both the researcher and the preferences of interviewees, and additional questions were asked to follow up on unplanned themes and unexpected responses from interviewees.

In order to record detailed responses from respondents, the researcher employed a mobile audio recorder to help implement the interviews of various participants as they move around their environment and conduct activities. Some of the observation and photography were implemented between the hours between 19:00 and 21:00 in winter and between 19:00 and 22:00 in summer. During the roaming in the research field, the researcher intended to participate in the 'urban rhythm' (Yeo and Heng, 2014), which includes various scenes created by the interaction between different users, the physical environment, and specific events. Acting as the 'flaneur', the researcher was wandering through the streets and squares of the old city centre and looking for specific events that meet the research objectives - elderly people sitting and relaxing around the square, children and their parents playing on the square, tourists visiting different sightseeing sites, people observing or attending cultural activities and so on. A total number of 60 semi-structured interviews were implemented when the researcher found the opportunities to present himself to potential participants, providing a random and spontaneous way to start the conversation in terms of diverse places and occasions.

The audio recording of conversations and interviews is essential in conversation analysis and discourse analysis (Bryman, 2016). During the semi-structured interviews, the researcher was not only interested in what people said but also in the way that they expressed their opinions. To get more details from each interview based on the questions, the interviewer paid attention to various aspects – following up on interesting points made by the respondents, prompting and probing necessary details, and drawing attention to the inconsistencies or absences of key information in the interviewee's answers. In interviews that could only be recorded by papers (17 of 75 in the laypeople group, and 5 of 12 in the elite group), it is necessary to avoid distracting the respondents' expressions by having their attention on what the researcher was writing down.

Non-participant observation and photography

The research methodology adopted non-participant observation as this research-led observation approach could provide a deeper understanding in terms of considering the design quality of public space. The most obvious advantage of non-participant observation is that this approach's

implementation would not invade other users' privacy or interrupt their patterns of use (Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris, 1992). Compared with participant observation, non-participant observation helps the observer be aware of repetitive activities and behaviours without being directly involved in participants' activities or their interactions with the environment. According to Zeisel (1981, p. 14), patterns of 'place-specific activities' (shopping in commercial streets or resting at the edge of squares) show a close relationship to each other than patterns of behaviours in other places. On the other hand, the same behaviours and activities could become different due to the socio-cultural background and the design quality of physical settings. For example, people might prefer sitting in spots with proper shelters instead of being exposed to the sun when looking for a place to rest. The observation could show how people behave and use the environment, and the patterns of activities from non-participant observation provide information to support research objectives and questions, such as how historical and cultural interpretation in the design of public spaces, such as specific location or seating spot, could affect the pattern of particular behaviours and activities. While conducting non-participant observation, the researcher took appropriate notes and records to understand the site and the event. The use of photographs as a record of non-participant observation sites was a key point described in the study (see chapter 3.4.1.2).

In addition to the use of an audio recorder for interviews and taking notes for observation, the researcher employed a camera to capture scenes and events that resonate with the research aim and themes from the conceptual framework. Events formed by various elements got captured within the frame of the camera's shot enable the researcher to "recognise – simultaneously and within a fraction of a second – both the fact itself and the rigorous organisation of visually perceived forms that give it meaning" (Cartier-Bresson, 1999, p. 16). In this way, the researcher intended to produce images to manifest the interaction between the design of public spaces and users' activities, which is one of the primary objectives of this research (Figure 3-19).



The new-built yard in front of the Shan-Hua monastery provides an open space for people to take a rest and play cards, and users prefer locations with shade.



The ancient stage has been repaired for various folklore performance, and new-built corridors around it provide resting facilities for people.



Visitors prefer taking photos in front of the iconic buildings and characteristic street furniture. How they feel about the reconstructed streetscape and whether locals feel differently about the buildings and places will be explored in the semi-structured interviews.

Figure 3-19 Examples of photographs taken along with the conduction of non-participate observation.

Implementing integrated qualitative methods in the field

This section introduces the implementing process of the integrated methods in the field. As Parkin (2000) argued, the uncertainty of fieldwork often occurs in the gap between the ideas held by the researcher and the process of constantly questioning the validity of those ideas while conducting empirical research. In this regard, implementing the fieldwork requires the researcher to improvise according to any and all uncertainty while following the structured methodological framework.

When conducting the main study of the research methodology, a total number of 75 laypeople were interviewed alongside the non-participant observation and photography. In general, when conducting the fieldwork, the researcher roamed between those observing spots selected as described in section 3.4.1.2, looked for observation opportunities and identified potential candidates for the on-site semi-structured interview. 30 locals and 30 tourists or visitors were randomly engaged and selected in the field depending on their activity at the time, such as people taking rest and enjoying sunbathing, people standing near the researcher while watching shows or cultural events, people passing by in obvious tourist behaviour (taking a camera, looking around with curiosity, or stepping down from the tourist coach). In this sense, the researcher could experience face-to-face encounters with respondents

or participants in a spontaneous way and obtain responses to the listed interview questions. Due to the limited time of different participants, the researcher rapidly labelled the keywords and brief phrases in notes and used an audio recorder to fully record the entire dialogue for the later data transcribing and analysis. When participants refused to be recorded due to personal concerns but still wanted to participate in the research, the researcher wrote down all the possible keywords and segment points as quickly as possible after the interview and then repeated the dialogue from his own memory and recorded it on the recorder. For the off-site interviews, the researcher employed two different sampling techniques: first, conducting the interview in the area around the old town, e.g. in cafes or restaurants around the old town area and adjacent residential areas; second, conducting interviews with local contacts, including acquaintances, and past classmates who are original old town residents and now live in residential resettlement communities. The latter way is to ensure the smooth running of the interview and the safety of the researcher.

As the interview questions were designed in English and then translated and refined into Chinese, there might be difficulties of understanding in the specific terminology. In this regard, the researcher administered the implementing process of semi-structured interviews in different ways. For the on-site locals and tourists, the interview was led by short conversations outlining the general description and assessment of the research scenario. In this way, respondents could have advanced thinking of the following interview questions, which could narrow their thoughts to a specific scale relating to the study. For the off-site interview, a short conversation about how respondents would think and describe their favourite places and events in the old town area was added to prompt and refresh their memories of the old town's past. Therefore, although the off-site participants might not be familiar with the specific places and activities as they were not residing in the old town area anymore, this measure was effective in making the interviewees better able to recall the site.

In implementing on-site and off-site interviews, the researcher managed to use keywords and themes to administer the process. Some academic words and themes might be difficult for the laypeople to understand in the first place (e.g. street vista, ambience, vertical design, night economy, sense of belonging). In this regard, the researcher chose synonyms with simple meanings for the participants to get the point and answer the question more easily. For example, the term authenticity was replaced by the phrase 'the original feel of the place (这个地方原本的感觉)', the theme of street vista was explained as 'how do you see the street from this point (从这个位置看你觉得这个街道怎么样)', the term of vertical design is illustrated as 'building height, building appearance, and roof design (建筑高度, 外观, 与屋顶设计)', the term of night economy was introduced as 'The commercial activity and liveliness at night (夜晚的商业活动状况和热闹程度)'. Moreover, academic ideas with complex meaning, such as the sense of belonging, were expanded and explained in several simple but interrelated themes – 'the feeling of home (家的感觉)', 'familiarity and intimacy (熟悉感与亲切感)',

‘Is your connection to this place still strong? (这个场所与自己的关系是否还很紧密?)’. All replacements and illustrations aimed to provide an easy way for the interviewees to understand the question and then provide honest and reliable responses.

For the non-participant observation, although multiple observing spots were selected for implementing the research methods, it is critical in identifying what elements to be observed and recorded. As Wolfinger (2002) stated, the researcher’s interests, background and expectations are likely to influence the choice of what is recorded, such as the events that are particularly relevant and have significant relevance to the research objectives. However, all events that occurred during the data collection time period were observed, and the integrated approaches outlined above helped collect and generate more potential elements to enhance the data collection further. For example, the on-site observation could only collect visual elements and events during a certain time, while the photography could record other events and activities at the same time for later analysis, and the interviews helped discover the users’ inner thoughts and mental activity, all of which contribute to generating comprehensive and in-depth data for the research analysis. In such a context, the field notes focused on the tangible sphere of the observation, such as the visual quality of urban spaces, the interactions between users’ activities and the physical settings, and pedestrians’ movements and the presence of cultural events (Figure 3-20).

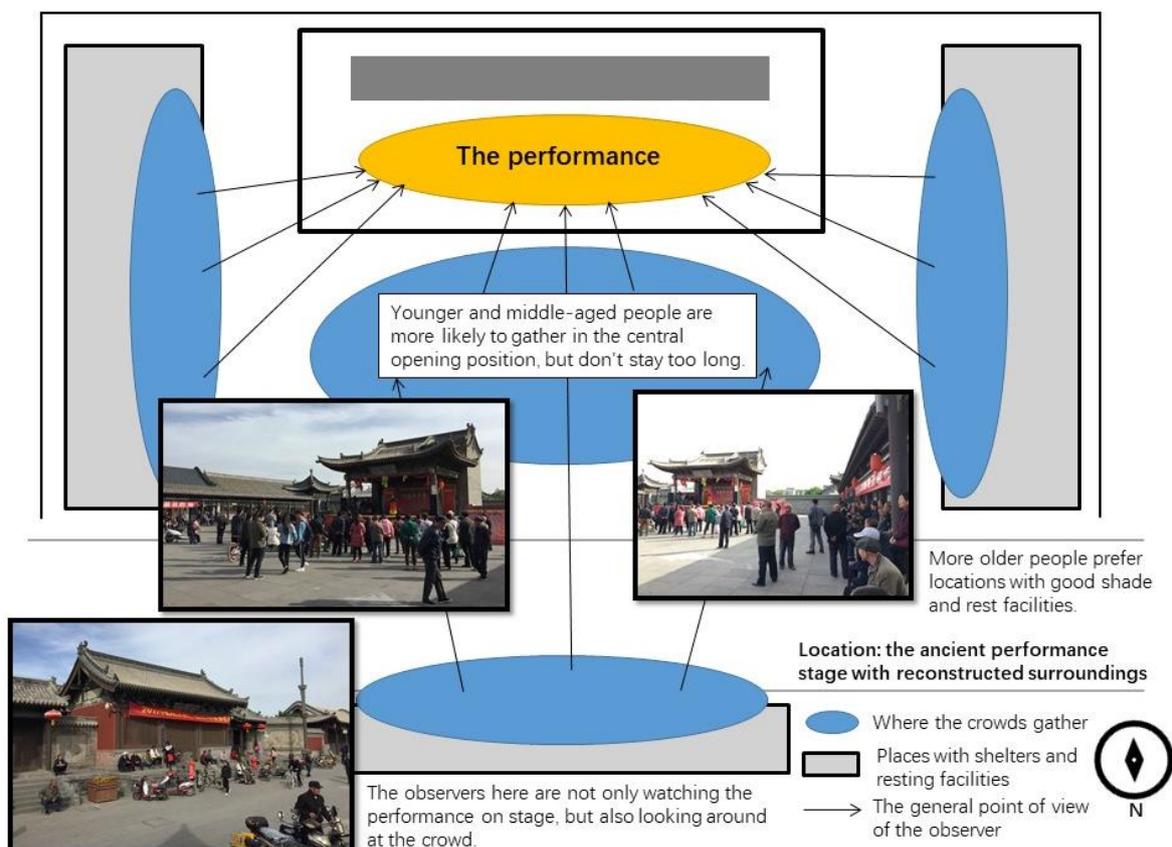


Figure 3-20 An example of the fieldnote recorded in the non-participant observation.

Elite Interviews

To gain access and approval from multiple departments before having direct contact with members of the elite group, the researcher had sent emails and made phone calls to get permission to conduct interviews and arrange for the schedules. Some local practitioners and urban experts are concerned about the uncertainty of future progress in the redevelopment process, which is caused by the involvement of large-scale investment practices by real estate developers and the lack of scientific and detailed planning and design measures. Under such context, most interviewees wished to have their names recorded anonymously, while they agreed to show the abstract description of their occupations in the thesis. Moreover, they were labelled as specific code names to distinguish them from other interviewees (from P-01 to P-12). Significant time limitation and unsettling events during the interviews (such as temporary interruptions caused by their works) affected their responses as strictly following the organised questions, and the researcher had implemented an audio recorder to get information as much as possible with getting their verbal consent in advance. Several potential candidates showed up in the conversation and provided the researcher with more choices to prepare for further interviews, which fit the snow sampling method supported by Bryman (2016).

To gain a better understanding of elites' views, the researcher's background in landscape architecture and urban design was helpful critical in conducting the interviews. The in-site and off-site interviews of laypeople could show more responses from their personal perspectives and memories of incidents, while elite interviews provide some pre-set or foregrounded views of the design and planning strategies. Compared to the non-elite interviews, the pressing issue was the access to elites as they can "establish barriers that set their members apart from the rest of the society (laypeople)" (Hertz and Imber, 1993, p. 3). In this regard, the researcher used former knowledge and an organised theoretical framework to obtain detailed information of values and assessments of the urban regeneration and ensure flexibility as encouraging for more personal opinions from interviewees.

3.5 Analysis of the research data

The raw qualitative data collected from recordings, notes, and transcriptions created a vast amount of data. Therefore, it is necessary to organise the management of all the collected data for the further process of interpretation and analysis (Spencer et al., 2014). In this regard, this section describes steps of the data analysing process: transcription of raw data, coding through NVivo software, and integrating coding concepts with the analytic framework.

3.5.1 Transcription and Coding

The transcribing of interviews was a time-consuming process as it could take two to three hours for the transcription of each interview (20-30 minutes). As the transcriptions of interviews were coded in the following stage, the researcher made vast numbers of pages to get the necessary details for the designed interview guidelines. For some of the interviews with long conversations, it was better to listen to them closely first, get an abstract, and then transcribe only those portions that the researcher deemed to be useful or relevant to the research. The researcher went back over the recordings at a data analysis stage to refine the results and explore something that emerged as significant. In addition to the pilot study stage, the translation of the interviews was carried out in conjunction with the implementation of the research methodology. The researcher followed Lofland's advice (1995) that qualitative data analysis is not left until all the interviews have been completed and transcribed. During the ongoing progress of transcribing, analysing, and conducting methodological approaches, the researcher became more aware of the emerging themes in both modifications of interview questions and refinement of the conceptual framework.

After the transcribing and preliminary classification stage, the researcher had gained a clear understanding of themes and issues relating to the research questions and objectives, which formed an initial coding structure that could integrate with the conceptual framework in later processes of analysis and discussion. To gain clearer data coding results, the researcher used NVivo software to assist in classifying categories and drawing out relationships among all the responses. All the interview data went through the coding process of NVivo, and a variety of nodes were created as the 'routes' to classify necessary information. A node is defined as a collection of references about a specific theme, place, person, or other areas of interest' by the latest version of NVivo, and the nodes will incorporate references to those portions of documents in which the code appears (Bryman, 2016).

In the transcribing process of each interview record, the researcher attempted to identify concepts and themes in accordance with the theoretical framework. In transcribing and coding, it is critical to understand the differences between looking at 'stories as presented' and 'realities as were' (Wengraf, 2001, p. 28) because those two types of information could deliver different meanings and experiences from various groups of users. According to Mason (2002), a practical way to solve this is coding at different levels as considering what counts as data. Based on the conceptual framework and semi-structured interviews, codes in the transcribing process were developed on an iterative basis, in which the researcher could get a general image of how different users assess specific factors and underlying values.

3.5.2 Framework-based Synthesis and Thematic Analysis

As the implementation of research methodology used framework-based synthesis to conduct multiple approaches, the analysis of coding data focused on categorising into various groups of aspects and themes led by the conceptual framework. Due to the large number of codes produced from the transcribing and coding stage, the researcher sought to reduce the number of codes by elaborating them into themes for further analysis. Memos and summaries were written down, and themes were given specific names as the results began to show some information and meanings relating to the conceptual framework. In the meantime, some codes were combined into higher-order groups of themes while others were divided into different sub-themes to form structured trees of codes or nodes. Furthermore, it is necessary to examine possible links and connections between themes and explore how the concepts vary in interacting with different concepts manifested in the case study (Bryman, 2016).

Respondents showed different perspectives on the same topic or theme, which resulted in multiple labelled and organised trees of nodes (Baseley, 2007). In this regard, it is necessary for the researcher to focus on categorising and identifying all the nodes in shaping the analysis structure based on the research background. Furthermore, it is critical in remaining open and flexible as the relationship between nodes can change and get refined during the analysis. Comparisons between factors from the conceptual framework and emerging ones from interview results created categories of nodes for the analysis stage. To avoid being lost in all the data and nodes, the researcher must always be aware of the close connection between the data analysis process and the purpose of the research (Bryman, 2016).

3.5.3 The use of triangulation in data analysis by employing elite interviews

In addition to the qualitative approaches employed in the research methodology, the elite interviews request a different analysing way compared with other semi-structured interviews of laypeople. According to Natow (2020), elite interviews can be an important source of data for the study of public policy, politics and power relations as the group of elites hold the powerful position that gives the researcher a unique knowledge or privileged perspective on information (Chaban et al., 2013; Goldman and Swayze, 2012; Kezar, 2003; Petkov and Kaoullas, 2016; Stephens, 2007). Therefore, the elite interviews could form a way of ‘studying-up’ to perceive professional knowledge and provide the researcher with valuable information, which combines with the ‘studying-down’ process

of interviewing the laypeople to comprehend the research methodology (Kezar, 2003; Desmond, 2004; Darbi and Hall, 2014).

A research methodology consisting of various qualitative analysis methods was designed and used in this study, which is led by the conceptual framework developed from the literature review. In this sense, the use of multiple methodological resources or practices is consistent with the idea of triangulation, which helps to determine the research aim and objectives with different points (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). As Davies (2001) stated, triangulation is particularly important in studies involving elite interviews in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the situation under investigation, especially when studying politically sensitive areas. Due to the role of local government in leading the heritage tourism-led urban regeneration, this research could be considered as exploring the design and planning of historic urban landscape from a political perspective. Moreover, the elite interview, which acts as one critical methodological resource of the triangulation, can address research problems by providing 'corroboration' of initial findings and 'incorporating additional information' on top of what a single data source might provide (Davies, 2001, p.78).

In this research, the inductive analysis is the primary way of analysing themes emerging from data collected by multiple methods, and the elite study helps demonstrate unique and privileged views of the reality of the research target. In this sense, the elite interviews integrate with interviews of laypeople, observation, and document analysis to pinpoint themes and concepts relating to the research aim and objectives. Moreover, the analysis of elite interviews is different from the interviews of laypeople as elite interviews can provide 'information that is not necessarily public knowledge' (Kezar, 2013, p.398). Due to the small sample size of urban experts and powerful standpoints of their responses, the analysis of elite interviews in this research will be discussed with data analysed and organised from other resources – interviews of laypeople, on-site observation, official documents and local archives.

3.6 Challenges and Research Ethics

In addition to challenges and difficulties encountered in conducting the research methodology, challenges in research ethics are highlighted in this research. Principles of autonomy and confidentiality relating to the treatment of participants will be noted to meet the requirements of social science research ethics (Punch, 2014).

3.6.1 Challenges in conducting integrated methodology

Challenges in conducting the research methodology were noted in three stages: recruitment of interview participants, conducting semi-structured interviews, and non-participant observation and photography. The following sections will examine details in dealing with such challenges to conduct the methodological approaches.

3.6.1.1 Recruitment of interview participants

The biggest challenges in conducting on-site interviews were around the recruitment of participants and ensuring the heterogeneity of the population. Most tourists refused to accept the invitation due to several reasons (schedule, no interest, not being in the mood to talk, etc.), and many participants' short stays in each location meant that some of the interviews were rushed and ended prematurely. For the recruitment of on-site residents, it was much easier to start conversations with locals from both groups (residents who still live in the urban centre) and visitors (locals who live out of the urban centre).

Two main issues were encountered in the interviews of local inhabitants: one is that many locals refused to be recorded by the audio recorder due to privacy concerns; the other one is some participants intended to talk about topics unrelated to the research questions, resulting in long delays in starting the interview as planned. To deal with those issues, the researcher had to write down notes, including the keywords and themes, while trying to use other appropriate phrases and topics to ensure the integrity and focus of the interview. For the groups of off-site locals, participants' recruitment is not so hard as the locally born researcher had numerous local contacts. Although it is convenient to use friends, classmates and relatives, the researcher relied on a snowball effect, paying attention to the principle of heterogeneity and selecting participants based on a variety of criteria – age, gender, locations of former residence, and length of residence in the urban centre.

3.6.1.2 Conducting semi-structured interviews

There was a range of unpredicted challenges in the progress of implementing interviews, which were caused by the lack of participants' own consideration of their cultural background and expression of specific themes (such as the description of cultural events, their own involvement in the daily activities, or understanding of impacts or meanings of the urban regeneration). To deal with these issues, the organised semi-structured interview questions based on the conceptual framework offered a variety of keywords from theoretical definitions and themes to act as a trigger and reminder of each section. Moreover, each interview question was set to feed into the next one, so the interviewees could get more understanding in progress (Willig, 2001; Kavle and Brinkmann, 2003).

Each interview was set at 15-20 minutes in length, while most of the interviews turned out to be more than 25 minutes due to several difficulties encountered in the process. Many on-site group participants experienced difficulties expressing their views due to their time schedules and difficulty communicating their own roles and feelings in the environment, and some of them acted passively as they were growing uneasy as the interviews progressed. Furthermore, the presence of an audio recorder could disconcert respondents, who may become nervous and self-conscious at the prospect of their words and expressions. To address these issues and concerns, the researcher tried to communicate with both tourists and local respondents to conduct daily conversations to ease their anxiety. The interviewer offered several examples to help open respondents' minds and draw their opinions in a more comfortable atmosphere, which worked well.

3.6.1.3 Challenges in observations and photography

The most obvious advantage of the non-participant observation approach is its directness, as the researcher does not need to interact with people but only need to record their behaviours and activities. The significant challenge in using non-participant observation is the extent to which the observer affects the environment under observation. The key to reducing this effect is to ensure the observer's presence does not disturb the interaction between the observed and the physical settings or events. In addition to ensuring that the observed is not aware of being watched or recorded, it is necessary to seek opportunities for the observed being accustomed to the presence of the observer and carry on their activities, as if the observer was not there (Lee, 2000, p. 46).

The challenge in taking photographs with observation is that the whole process tends to be very time-consuming. The observation and photography approaches aim to obtain scenes and events that could illustrate the interactions between users and their environments at different times. However, the researcher needs to roam between multiple potential sites and seek proper opportunities to record representative scenes.

3.6.2 Research Ethics

Before starting each interview, information on the research project was distributed as introducing the purpose of this research. An indication of types of interview questions was included in the following progress, and a privacy statement was provided for each interviewee. Moreover, the distinction between anonymity and confidentiality was presented in the participant consent form, in which the participants were notified that their participation was voluntary and their anonymity could be safely protected. The paper also included the availability of transcriptions and details on how the audio recordings would be used only for analysis and translations purposes, along with information on the

university and the supervisory team. As most respondents were reluctant to write down their names, verbal consent would get recorded in the form of an audio recording.

All information and audio records were stored and accessed only by the researcher, and all contact details got deleted after the project was completed. Regarding the nature of this research and political issues (such as policies or planning strategies that respondents feel are inappropriate), the researcher avoided expressing any political comments, ensuring the researcher was in a neutral interviewing role when conducting the interview process. Before conducting any fieldwork, the project was approved by the Ethics Committee in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Sheffield.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has explored the research strategy, design of integrated methodology, and data collection methods used throughout this research project. The methods used in this research were aimed at investigating the spatial and temporal dimensions of public space interacting with different user groups. Following the pre-set conceptual framework, integrated research approaches were designed to generate data from multiple sources.

Although people show different feelings and experiences of the actual sites they were physically at or not, the formation of place identity includes images, memories, and perceptions from various groups of users. As this thesis focuses on exploring and assessing multiple aspects of history and culture involving shaping place identity, the views and ideas about the case study from different groups of participants were necessary to identify and investigate the place identity. Moreover, the viewers' opinions from on-site and off-site investigations show significant impacts on the valuation of quality and meaning of place identity, and the uniqueness of interviewees' views provides the ability to comprehend the theoretical framework in each aspect and theme.

The following chapter will report the data analysis findings, and the results will resonate with the concepts and themes of the theoretical framework and analysis of the literature review. At the end of the data analysis process, the findings and results will be compared and synthesised with the literature review and the analysis of the design project to comprehend the theoretical framework.

chapter 4 Results of data analysis

4.1 Introduction

The methodology of this thesis focused on applying framework-based analysis to gather thematic research data, which would be analysed to achieve research objective 3 – to examine the processes of preserving and reconstructing urban spaces in the case of the old town of Datong, China as a city undergoing heritage and tourist-led urban renewal.

The researcher coded all the gathered data from interview questions through NVivo to obtain detailed information about each framework-based thematic analysis. The analysis of coded results in this chapter is divided into three categories based on the framework-based synthesis, including Physical Form, Activity and Event, and Memory and Experience. Responses from different user groups – on-site, off-site, and professionals and practitioners – for each question of the different themes are analysed comparatively.

Due to the vast amount of data gathered from the multiple research approaches, it was necessary to standardise all the data through the organising process. One of the efficient ways of analysing those fragmented and scattered data is to categorise and process them using NVivo software, which aims to extract relevant information from large datasets – which resulted here from semi-structured interviews. The interview transcripts were analysed and transferred into a simplified and explicit structure so that various themes and factors with values could be easily identified and then interpreted. Moreover, this chapter's data analysis process is also part of the overall methodology developed in the research. Photos taken as part of the integrated qualitative approaches were analysed together with notes of non-participant observation, and the combination of both help to provide illustrations that demonstrate points made by interviewees as part of the analysing process of interview transcripts.

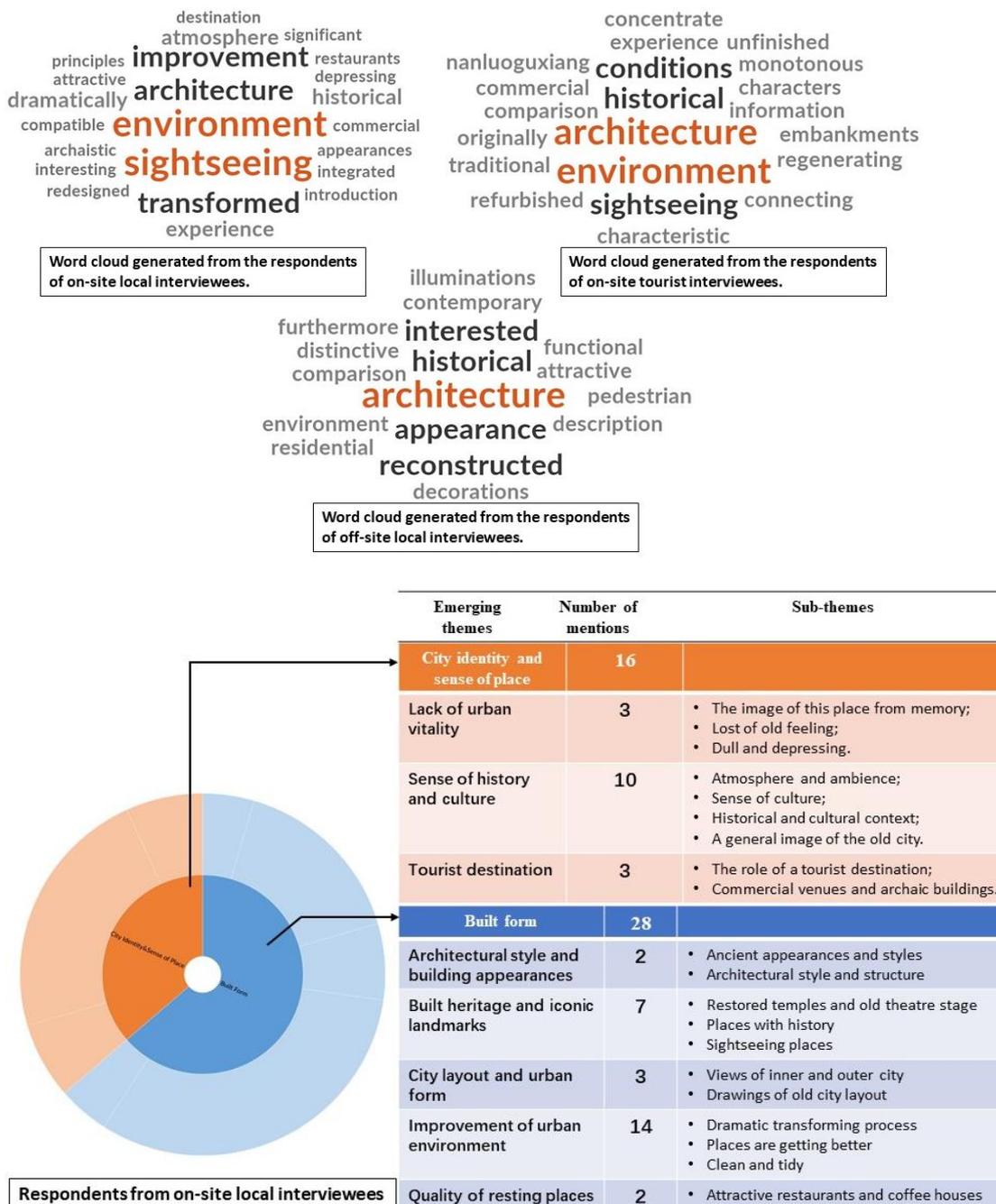
4.2 Physical Settings & Built Environment

The first category of the framework-based structure of interview analysis is about the themes related to physical form and spatial relationship, aiming to obtain knowledge of how users use, see, and feel the regenerated urban environment of the research area. Since the research focus on the interpretation of urban history and cultural resources in public open space, the study of streets and squares, as well as the connection between them, it is necessary to provide a basic understanding of how culture and history would help to affect the urban form and public realm within. The part of the analysis includes seven thematic sections – impression of the destination, symbols and iconic landmarks, visual

aesthetic of active streets, the design quality of streetscape, series of spaces, street vista, and design of tourist routes.

4.2.1 First impression of the Ancient City

As a starting point of the overall interview, the first question aims to obtain a first image or impression of the urban environment, which would be described by different interviewees. Moreover, various interviewees' personal preferences relating to their senses of the ancient city could help provide a draft framework of place images of different research sites (Figure 4-1).



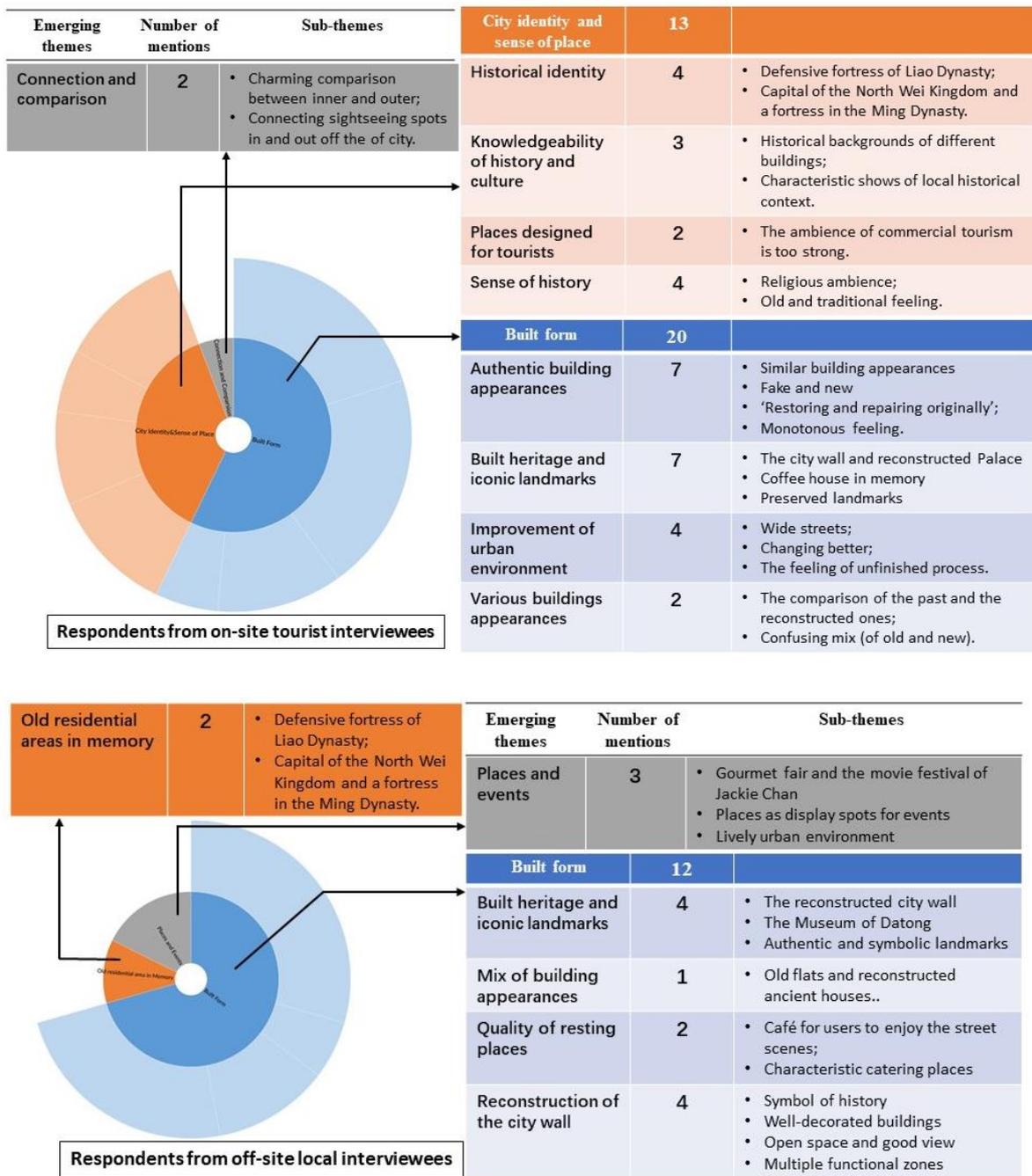


Figure 4-1 Word Cloud and Categorises - Impression and Image

4.2.1.1 Urban Environment and Built Form

Analysis of responses from both on-site groups showed two categories – Built Form and Sense of Place, and the off-site local interviewees suggested that the preservation of iconic areas and events are critical components of the city image. In terms of the description and idea of the built form, both on-site groups confirmed there were significant improvements of the urban environment, which is the result of long-term urban regeneration:

I would mention the dramatic transformation process in the past ten years. If my foreign friends ask me about this city, I will talk about the significant improvement of the physical environment of both the inner-city core and outer-urban area. (On-site Local-02)

In the aspect of the physical environment, this place has improved a lot. I may introduce those famous sightseeing sites combining with information about their history based on my knowledge. (On-site Tourist-24)

Architectural style and building appearance act as visual attractors for on-site interviewees and visitors, which is encapsulated in the idea of following the principle of "restoring and repairing the old buildings as following their authentic appearances" (On-site Tourist-20). Tourists questioned the "authenticity" as some rebuilt buildings "look similar to those in Beijing, and other ancient Chinese cities" (On-site Tourist-29), and the presence of modern and ancient-style buildings provided a confusing comparison to visitors and locals (Figure 4-2):

I like the rebuilt architecture, although I cannot be sure if they were rebuilt or original ones. On the other hand, I have seen many old houses in poor condition, so comparing the past and new physical environment is strange. (On-site Tourist-16)

The whole inner-city environment has been rebuilt for a long time, which brought a feeling of comparison between the old modern avenues and reconstructed buildings with historical styles and appearances. (Off-site Local-02)



Figure 4-2 Comparison of old flats and reconstructed buildings

All the built heritage and landmarks contributed to the formation of interviewees' impressions of the ancient city. Participants in all three groups suggested the presence of iconic landmarks, which remain after being rebuilt or reconstructed, is necessary to produce the historical urban image and meet their expectations of the urban identity the ancient city should have:

In general, this city is a place with a long history and rich cultural assets, such as several famous sightseeing sites – Yun-Gang Grottos and the Nine-Dragon Screen. Some rebuilt things – the city wall and the palace of prince Dai – help to form a brand-new urban image of this city. (On-site Local–15)

My description will focus on the built heritages since they are authentic and symbolic landmarks of the city. (Off-site Local–12)

As one of the most significant landmarks of the ancient urban form, the reconstructed city wall helps to produce iconic symbols as well as integrate with cultural venues such as the history museum:

It is good to see the city wall got rebuilt, and all the places designed in the same style and appearance. Furthermore, the city wall has different functional sections, which provides places for contemporary users to enjoy various historical and cultural events. (Off-site Local–14)

In addition to the built heritage and ancient buildings, areas with distinctive characters could become iconic landmarks for specific users, such as youngers interested in well-designed cafés or visitors who wish to find a nice restaurant to rest. Moreover, off-site local advised the famous and characteristic local food should integrate with the design of urban form: "*Those areas should become the most distinctive sections in the old city area, which contain both interesting shops and attractive catering places*" (Off-site Local–08). Visitors who had been there several times indicated some venues with specific locations could also become their preferred landmarks: "*This street has changed every time I came here, while that coffee shop is still there*" (On-site Tourist–04).

4.2.1.2 Urban Identity and Sense of Place

The terms "sense of history" and "ancient atmosphere" were reported in most responses from interviewees from the on-site local group, and they suggested the metropolitan museum is an appropriate starting point as "it provides a general image of this city" (on-site Local–23). On the other hand, tourists also advised such a sense of history is critical in forming their first impressions of the ancient city:

I can feel a sense of history in this place. The atmosphere seems quite strong as I have seen several temples and related architecture. (On-site Tourist–14)

I am fond of the archaic and traditional atmosphere here and on the ancient wall and among different elegant temples, and their architectural styles are different from other places that I have visited before. (On-site Tourist–18)

The old city area looks different now. Most of the rebuilt buildings are fine, but some old modern buildings still need to be refurbished to fit the general atmosphere. (On-site Tourist–19)

This city's historical identity is an initial part of the impression from various responses, and interviewees would describe the city image as "a defensive fortress" and "the capital of the Northern Wei Kingdom". Furthermore, tourists wished to know more about the historical background:

I wish to know more traditional characteristics to experience the local history and culture, and more shows should help to describe the history in a better way than only seeing all these buildings" (On-site Tourists–13 and 25).

Locals prefer to witness better interpretations of traditional characteristics while were aware that the ancient city was re-designed as a tourist destination – "an integrated area with commercial pedestrians, reconstructed buildings, various temples and sightseeing" (On-site Local–20).

Local interviewees advised that the old residential area with characteristic houses needs better preservation as it was their shared memory: "when I was a kid, my friends and I were playing among those hutong" (Off-site Local–05). On the other hand, they suggested that open spaces are necessary to hold various cultural events:

That place (plaza of the city wall) provided a central display location for most events, such as the lantern festival and the auto show, which attracted many visitors. (Off-site Local–11)

That area (Hua-Yan Square) is alive in the old city centre, and several major events are held there, such as the gourmet festival and the Jackie Chan movie festival. (Off-site Local–13)

Tourists consider the comparison of the ancient urban centre and outer metropolis as "a charming sense of history and modern" (On-site Tourist–11), and tourist interviewees also advised there should have the necessary connections between the ancient city and surrounding sightseeing:

There are several famous sightseeing spots in the vast regional area of Datong (other towns), and I think it is essential to concentrate on connecting all the places. A good way is to create a well-organised tourist route instead of piling all those separated sites together without any order. (On-site Tourist–15)

Participants who were interviewed on the city wall talked about comparisons of visual aspects because of their unique locations. The ancient inner-city aimed to preserve or reproduce its old

skyline with low-rise buildings in contrast to the outer urban metropolitan, full of tall blocks and skyscrapers. Both sets of on-site participants thought such visual difference was an attraction as well.

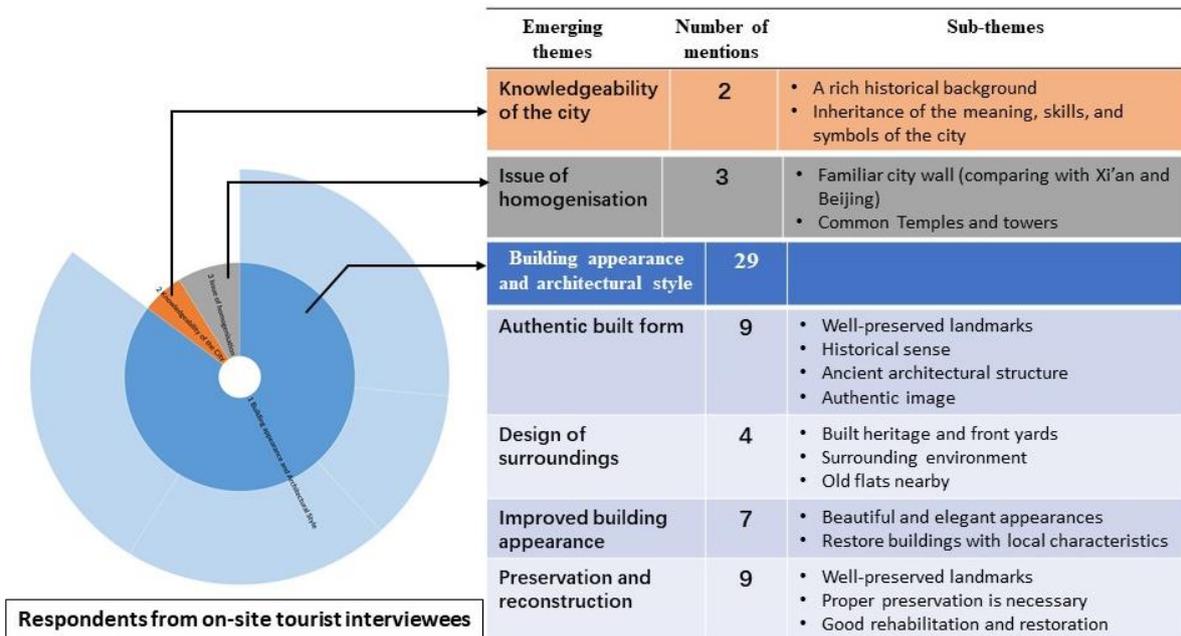
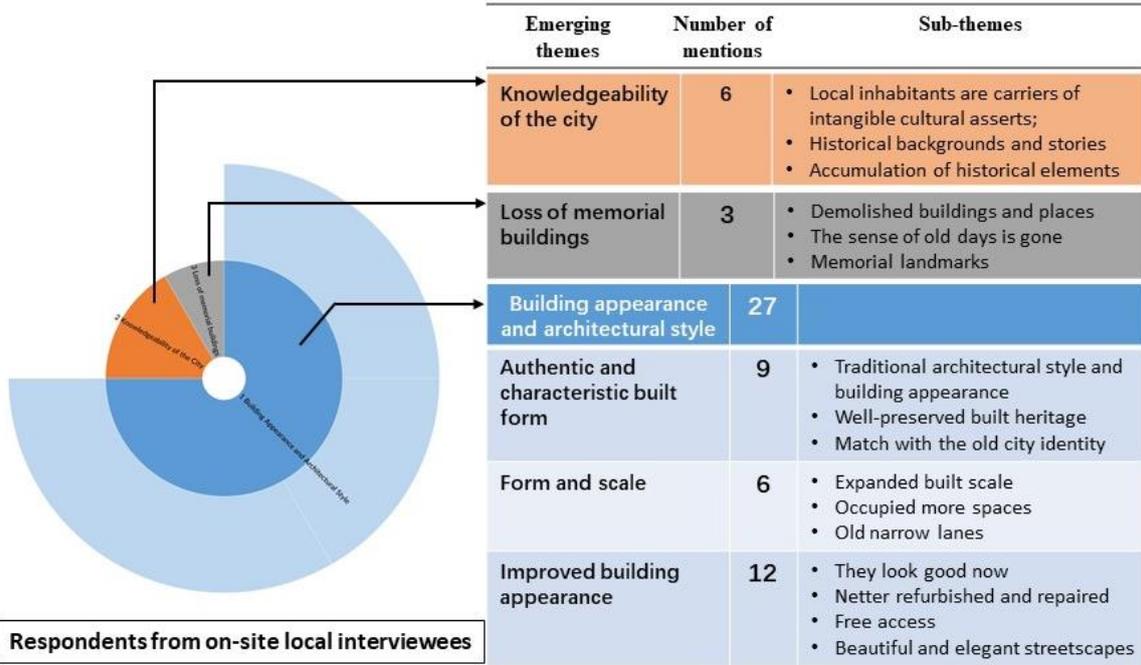
4.2.2 Iconic Area and Symbolic Landmarks

The second section explores the perceived influence and characters of built heritage, iconic landmarks and areas, which are considered to be fundamental components of each city in history and culture. As the most influential character of tangible elements of urban history and culture, built heritage and landmarks are critical in composing place identity. This interview question aims to obtain users' opinions about their characteristic features and quality after reconstruction and rehabilitation. Moreover, another key point in the theoretical framework is how re-designed built form and spatial layout affect participants' views about the preservation of authenticity.

4.2.2.1 Built Heritage and Iconic Landmark

The preservation and repair of significant built heritage, such as several temples and monasteries, reinforce their wooden and brick structures (Figure 4-3). According to the local government, the building's appearance and architectural styles improved as they followed the original form. The first question aims to obtain opinions from different interviewees about their personal preferences for preserving and reconstructing some demolished ancient landmarks.





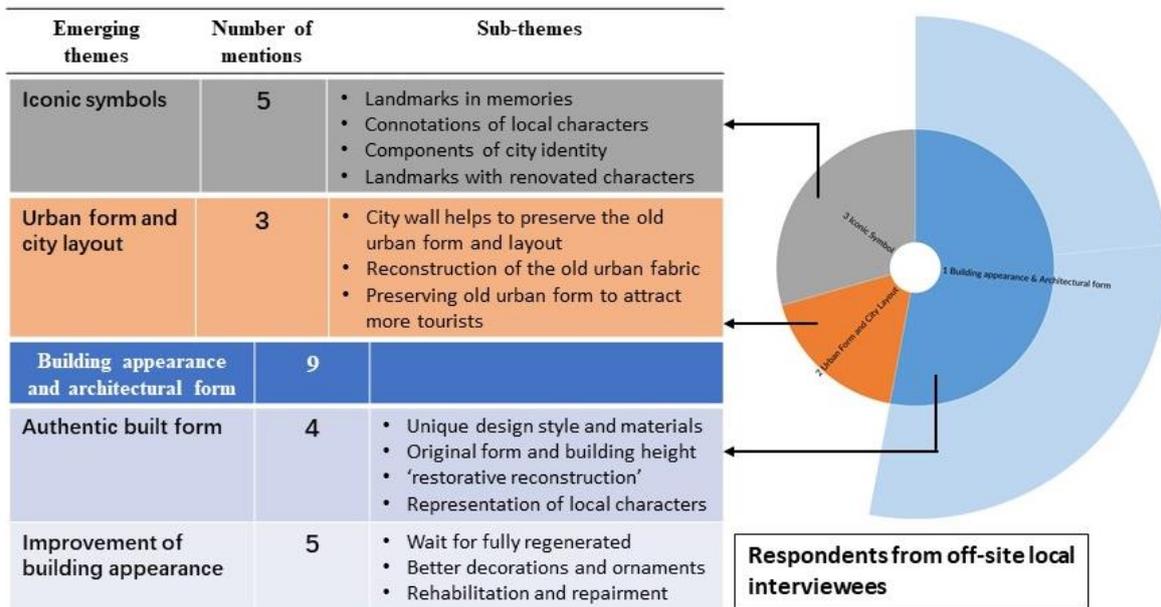


Figure 4-3 Word Cloud and Categorises - Built Heritage and Iconic landmark

• Architectural Style and Building Appearance

In general, interviewees from all three groups confirmed the improvement of both built heritage and urban environment. However, they were aware that the unfinished progress could lead to the further transformation of the ancient city. In addition to improving the visual aspect, the local interviewee suggested another benefit for the built heritage is that "most of the old landmarks have received repairment to reinforce their structure, which made them seem strong now" (On-site Local-17). Tourists also advised that proper preservation and repair "must follow the old and traditional form and construction process" (On-site Tourist-19). On the other hand, the presence of traditional and characteristic building appearance is critical in delivering the authentic image for interviewees from all groups:

The most critical issue is strictly following their old architectural styles and appearances to reproduce the original image of this city. (On-site Local-02)

The urban regeneration project has rebuilt many old houses and repaired preserved built heritage in the past few years, and it is good to see historical scenes that are formed and reflected by all of them. (On-site Tourist-03)

Most of the city wall is rebuilt during the regeneration project, while its construction process follows the old form and layout to reproduce the old image of this city. (On-site Tourist-27)

I miss the Five-Dragon Screen near my old home. After so many years, the unique design and materials of that symbolic place still give me a sense of history, like an observer of the city.
(Off-site Local-02)

Interviewees also considered the design of the surrounding area of built heritage as elements that contribute to the formation of the characteristic precinct: *"The surroundings of Wen Temple have several problems – the buildings are a bit taller than the original height, and too many houses got crowded in that area, while the architectural details and decorations are better than other places"* (Off-site Local-15). Furthermore, the expansion of built form of some landmarks after been reconstructed could affect an old ambience of the place as *"most of them have occupied massive spaces after the regeneration"* (On-site Local-10).

In the meantime, the proper preservation of building appearance is necessary to form tourist attractions as such characteristic buildings serve as *"cultural symbols for foreigners"* (On-site Tourist-11). Off-site local interviewees advised that the presence of iconic landmarks act as memorial symbols, which help to illustrate the historical and cultural background of the city (Figure 4-4):

There is various built heritage in the old city, which were built in different periods. Such a combination is rare to see compared with other Chinese cities, and all those built heritages and some historic buildings need more research to find out their background stories. (Off-site Tourist-03)

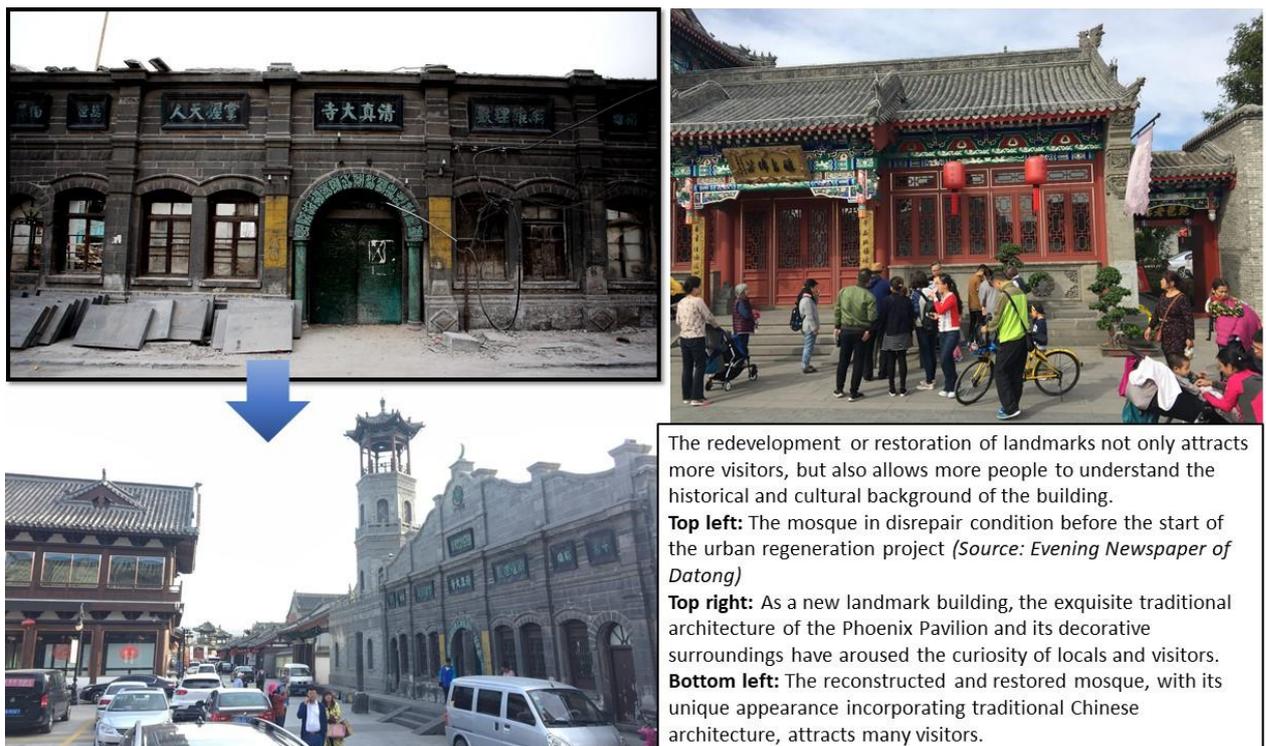


Figure 4-4 Design of landmarks could manifest local history and culture.

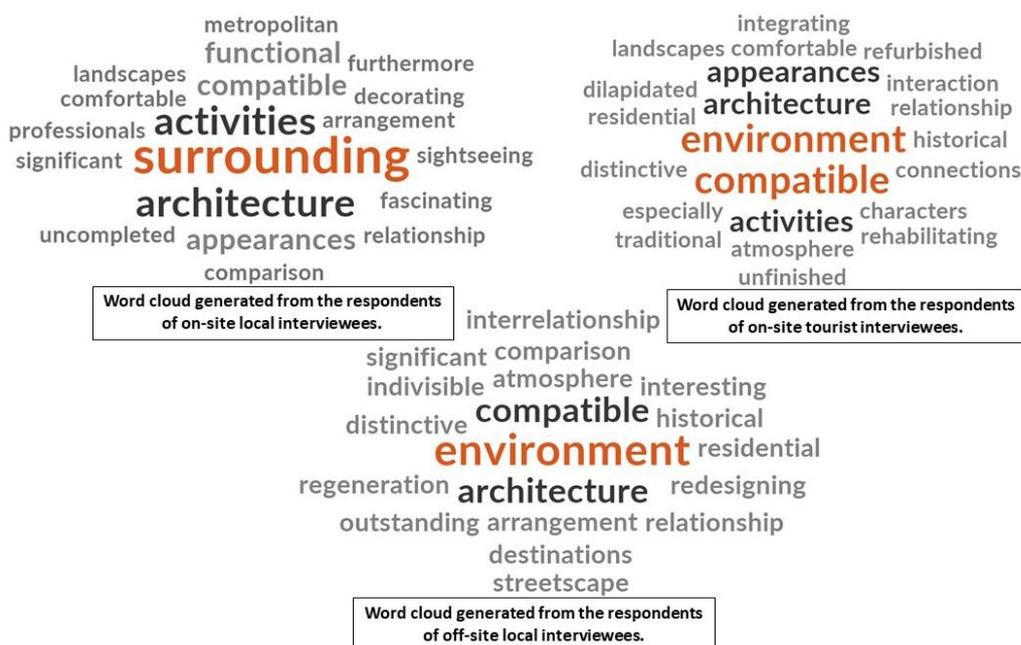
Under such context, both on-site groups of interviewees suggested the history and culture behind each landmark. Even their unique construction process could contribute to their knowledge of the city. According to their responses, all ancient landmarks in the city are "*products of works from serial generations, and it is critical to inherit the meaning, building skills, iconic symbols of them*" (On-site Tourist–30). Locals also mentioned the history and culture such built heritage represent are necessary for the next generation:

I support the rebuilding and repair of all the old houses as they are tangible carriers of local historical and cultural characters. They are necessary for the next generation to have detailed understanding of their home. (On-site Local–02)

In terms of urban form and city layout, off-site local interviewees were satisfied to see the revival of the ancient urban layout – "*it is good to have many old landmarks reconstructed as they help bring back the ancient urban form*" (Off-site Local–10). On the other hand, on-site local interviewees complained that "*the sense of old-time*" – which is made by some demolished modern buildings in their memories – has been wiped out. Tourists also questioned the reconstructed authenticity as "*many landmarks look familiar to those in other old cities*" (On-site Tourist–17).

4.2.2.2 Buildings and Surroundings

The second interview question of this section explores the spatial and visual relationship between iconic buildings and their surroundings (Figure 4-5). Due to the massive urban regeneration project, most built heritage sites were re-designed to provide matched plazas and front yards. Therefore, how interviewees define a "successful" relationship between building and surroundings is the aim of this question.



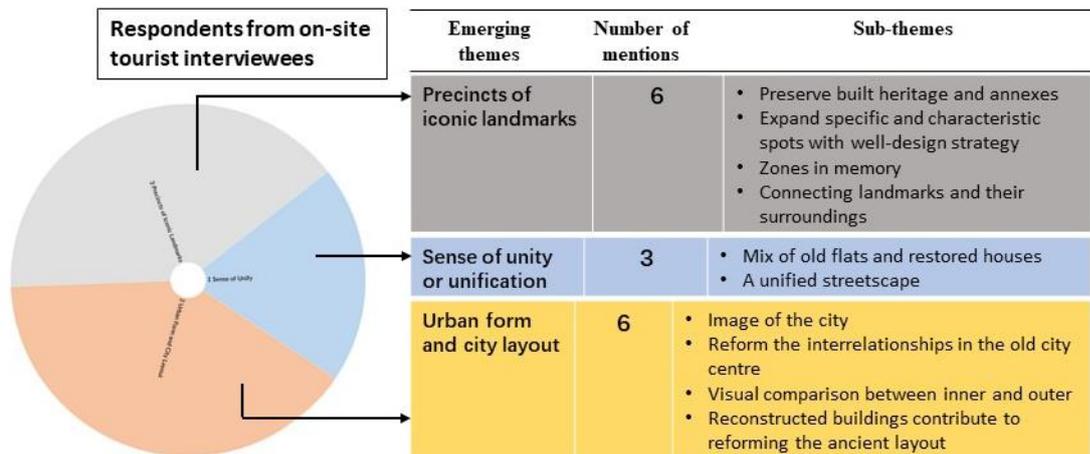
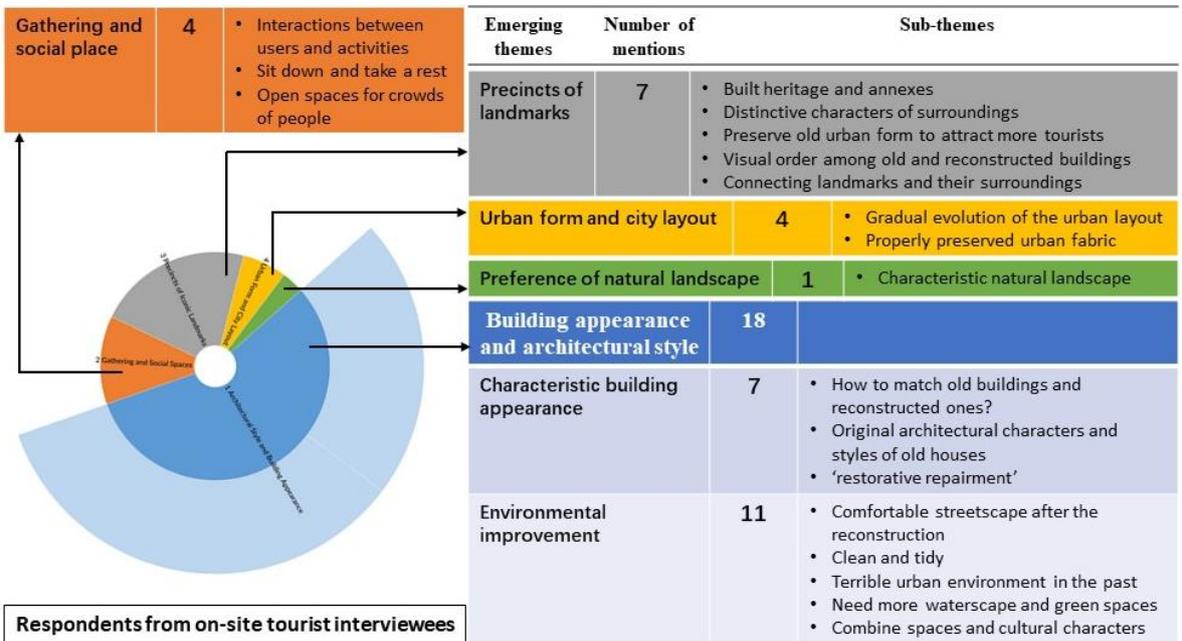
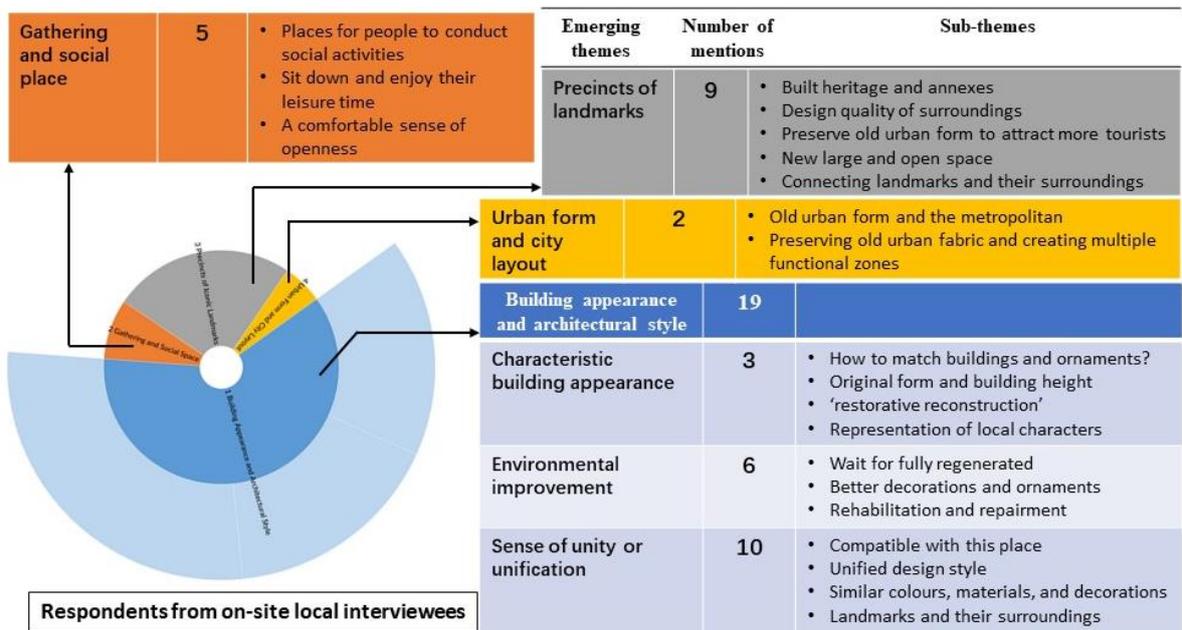


Figure 4-5 Word Cloud and Categorises - Building and Surroundings

In general, environmental improvement is the priority for both sets of on-site groups of users. Compared with the crowded and messy urban environment in the past, the current urban regeneration process in several sightseeing sites helps to form a "*clean and tidy environment*". Tourist interviewees suggested the proper development is necessary for most places in the ancient city as "*it is confusing to enjoy the ancient urban scenes of different built heritage while standing in a messy environment*" (On-site Tourist–20). In terms of the old and reconstructed buildings and re-designed spaces, tourist interviewees advised that the key is to integrate cultural contents into the built environment, which is a way to preserve the sense of place:

They (architecture and spaces) all need a bit more time, like ten years, to become more natural as integrating with living activities. The most important thing is to keep the cultural context within the urban environment. (On-site Tourist–30)

For local users, plazas and front yards are necessary as providing gathering and social spaces where they can chat with others, play with children, and enjoy sunbathing.

- **Characteristic Building Appearance and Sense of Unification**

In addition to environmental improvement, characteristic building appearances are another influential factor. Both on-site groups mentioned the mix of old and reconstructed buildings, and how to balance such "visual confusion" is one of their concerns:

I think some old modern buildings could need better preservation since they are part of the evolution of this city. If the regeneration project aims to transfer the whole inner-city core into a 100% ancient style, it could confuse me. (On-site Local–12)

There should be some ways to balance them, like some cities in England, the old buildings, buildings with modern style, and their surrounding areas are much compatible with each other. (On-site Tourist – 08)

I am not sure if most areas still follow their original style. We have been to the old residential district, and those houses seem to have different architectural styles and appearances compared with rebuilt architectures here. (On-site Tourist–28)

In terms of different building appearances, both groups of local participants advised it is necessary to create "*a sense of unification*". Such a unified feeling of built form and design style is caused by "*similar colours, building materials, and architectural styles*" (On-site Local–17).

- **Precincts of Iconic Landmark and Urban Layout**

Interviewees from all three groups advised that iconic landmarks and built heritage should act as the standard of visual unification in each of their precincts. Furthermore, due to the characteristics of those landmarks, the design of their surroundings should follow the specific design style to "*deliver strong spatial connections between building and surroundings*" (On-site Local-15). Furthermore, the presence of authentic building appearance, patterns, and old functions of reconstructed iconic landmarks also helps to create an "*ancient precinct with characteristics*":

Although the Si Pai-Lou can no longer act as the original role, it still stands in the middle of the crossing point of those two main streets while working as a symbol. (On-site Local-27)

Tourists may like the appearance around the Drum Tower, while I prefer some old food streets. Although their physical environment is dirty, they still are critical parts of the city culture. (Off-site Local-04)

It is necessary to define the influence of different old buildings, and those with unique architectural forms or symbolic meanings need better preservation because they are already inseparable parts of the city. (Off-site Local-15)

On the other hand, unsuccessfully designed spaces could damage visitors' impressions of attractive buildings. The nine-dragon screen is one of the most famous sightseeing sites in the ancient city, while tourists complained about the quality of its front yard (Figure 4-6):

the Nine-Dragon Screen should be paired with a better open space to fit its elegant design style, instead of being surrounded by a boring wall and a horrible metal fence. (On-site Tourist-19)

On the other hand, the creation of surrounding spaces or re-design of precincts is argued to need to follow the old urban form and city layout, as such renovated spaces could help to rich the urban fabric:

The critical thing is to reproduce the old layout of the whole inner-city area. The current situation has achieved the primary request of revealing the functional division from what I can tell. In the aspect of the general urban structure, I think such spatial arrangement is good to see. (On-site Local-14)

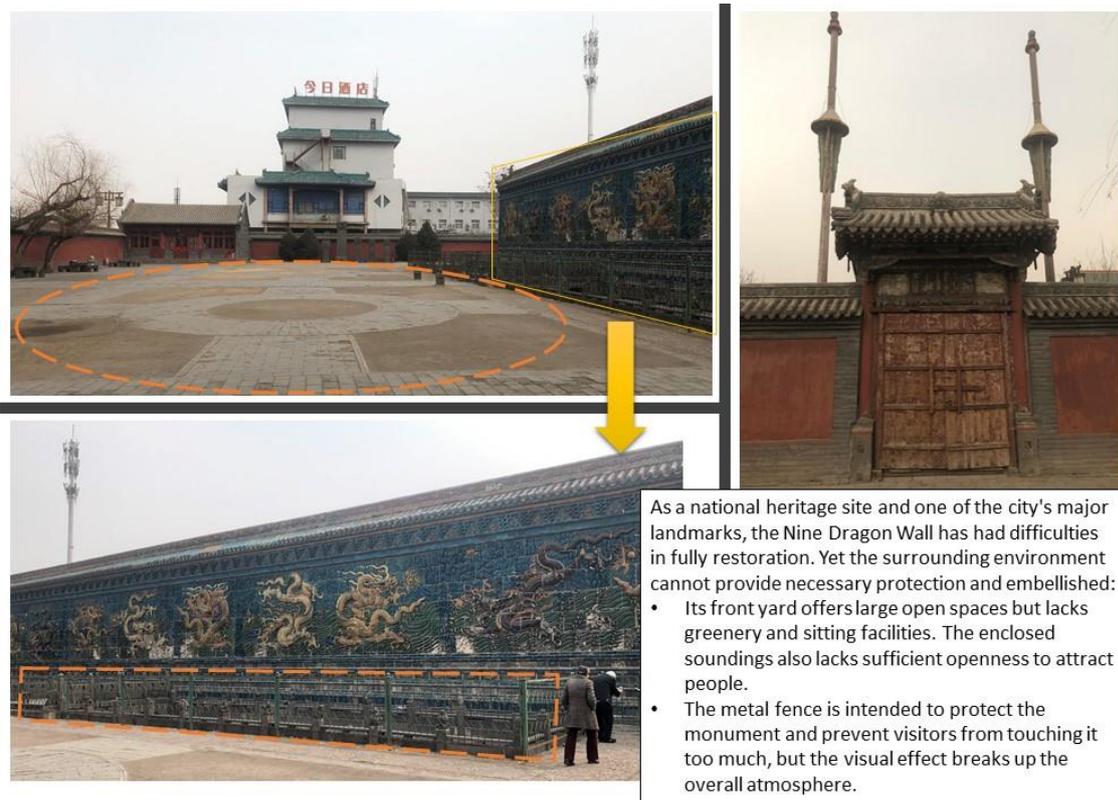


Figure 4-6 As one of the iconic landmarks, the Nine-Dragon Screen was noted that its surroundings lacked proper design.

4.2.3 Façades and Frontages of Commercial pedestrian areas

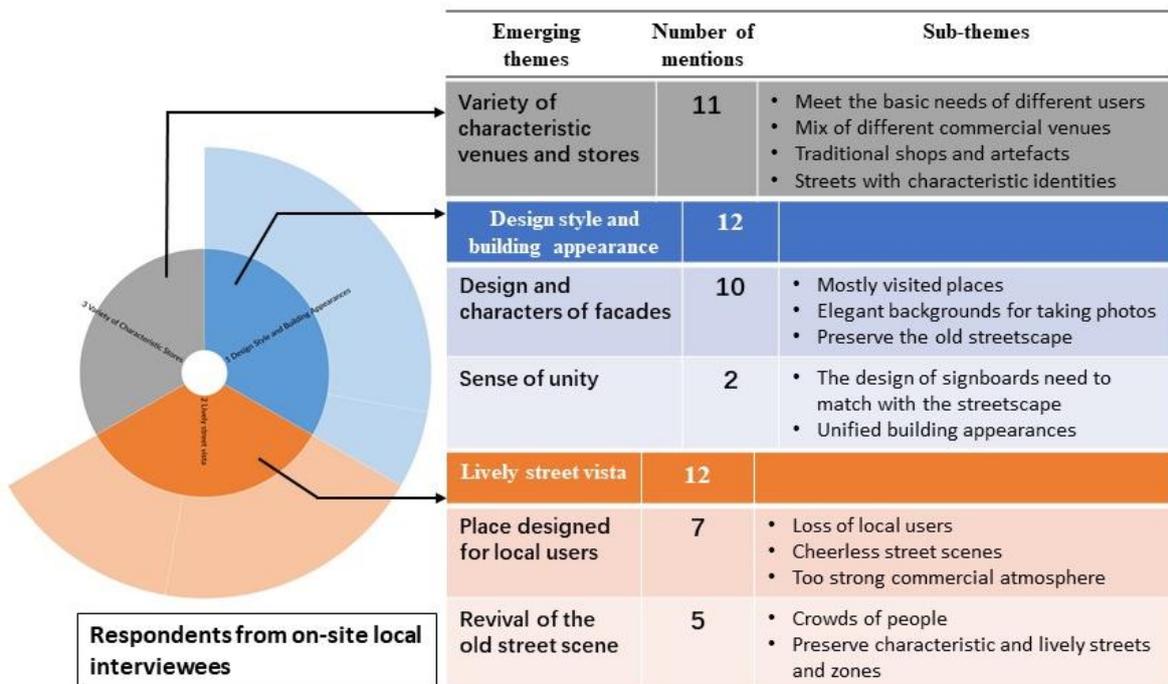
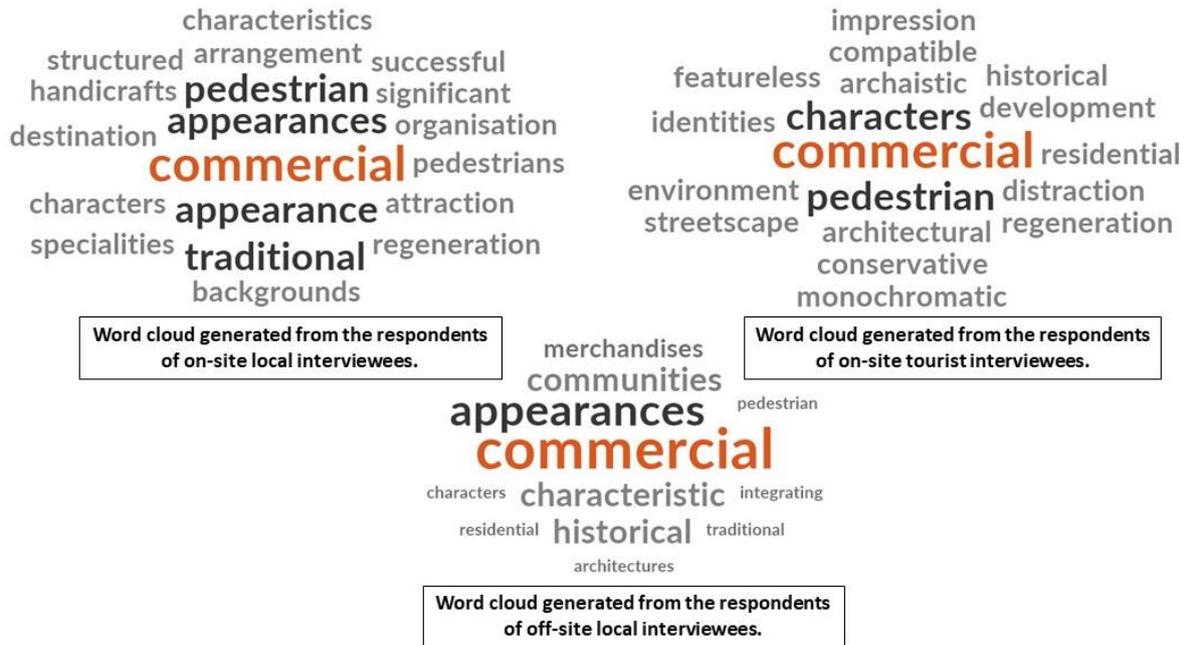
As one of the most basic and common elements of every tourist destination, commercial and pedestrian streets are an important part of the urban form. The façades and active frontages are discussed as being necessary to create a lively street scene, especially for consumer pedestrians, to attract large crowds of visitors. Residents could compare the old scenes and the new streetscape, and visitors might give opinions about the design quality of such pedestrians from their travelling experiences. This section aims to obtain views of users' impressions and evaluations of the pedestrians and explore their preferred design quality characters.

4.2.3.1 Image of Commercial Pedestrian Streets

The first interview question is about the image of several shopping streets located within the southern half of the ancient inner city. All interviewees' responses were divided into several primary aspects – design style and characteristics of façades, lively street view, sense of authenticity, and the presence of active frontage.

- **Design Style and Façade Characteristic**

Responses from interviewees of all three groups advised that facades' design created the image that an ancient streetscape should have (Figure 4-7).



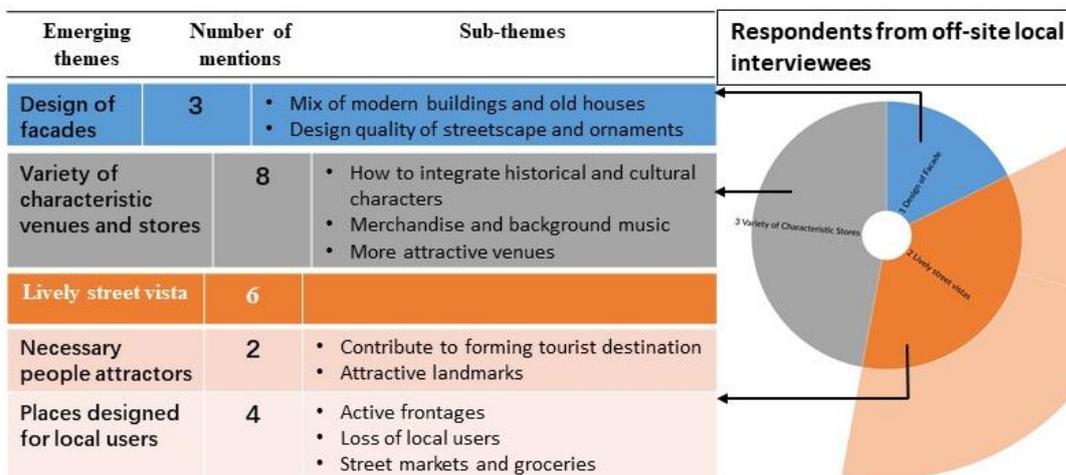
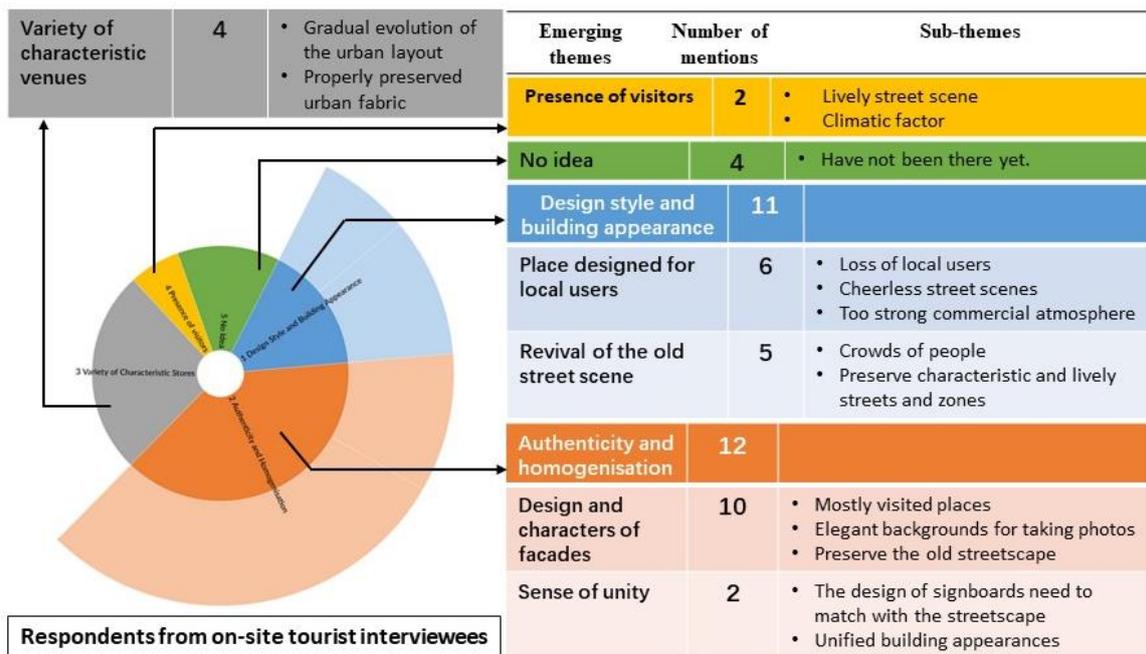


Figure 4-7 Word Cloud and Categorises - Image of commercial pedestrian streets.

Some young participants showed their preference for such ancient-style streetscape as "they are perfect places to act as elegant backgrounds for us (wearing vintage or old traditional clothes) to take photos" (On-site Local–20). On the other hand, local interviewees thought it was good to see some of the old and memorable buildings preserved as they are "parts of their memories of this place" (On-site Local–23). Tourists also suggested there should have ways to connect old buildings and streets to the re-designed commercial pedestrians:

The street over there (Xia-sipo Street) is not so bad, and I am looking forward to experiencing how the old residential area would become after the regeneration since they will integrate with the commercial environment. (On-site Tourist–15)

In terms of the building appearance, both on-site groups advised the "sense of unity" is necessary to produce a harmonious streetscape, and this sense was affected by both the quality of design style and the continuous street view of the commercial street and its surroundings (Figure 4-8):

I believe the ancient style should be much more suitable to those retailers because they all provide a stronger feeling of unifying and antiquity at this stage. (On-site Tourist-18)

The main section of the pedestrianised street is not bad. Various stores and booths have beautiful frontages, while the other parts (junctions) look pretty messy and neglected. (On-site Tourist-20)



Figure 4-8 Both the commercial pedestrian and their adjacent streets are necessary to produce a unified image.

- **Variety of Characteristic Stores and lively street scene**

In terms of the types of stores and shops, most participants thought the current conditions of each commercial street could only provide monotonous feelings because "most stores have no characteristic merchandise or local specialities" (On-site Local-16). Moreover, how to integrate folk culture and historical characters into the streetscape and frontage and create a distinctive identity of the street is considered as an issue faced by many other old cities:

Every ancient city or town has a commercial pedestrianised area, and those here are like the others in Xi'an and Pingyao. I suppose each street could have an identity or unique feature – common stores and shops, handicrafts, local catering and snacks. (On-site Local-21)

The commercial streets are full of regular and ordinary elements, while most visitors would prefer to see features with local and traditional characteristics. (Off-site Local-11)

For the tourist, stores without attraction along pedestrians became distractions for visitors to enjoy the rebuilt street vistas with ancient-style facades, which did not fulfil the expectations of the so-called destinations with the ancient urban image for most tourists.

For both groups of local on-site interviewees, the revival of lively street views in the old days was essential in forming attractions and bringing back memories. In addition to attracting tourists, various street markets and groceries help to meet the life needs of residents: "*such active frontage with stores and shops selling merchandise would support lives of residents (who are living in the ancient city area)*" (Off-site Local-03).

- **Authenticity and Homogenisation**

Due to the lack of characteristic stores and folk culture elements, the streetscape of commercial pedestrianised streets was considered similar to streets in other old towns or cities, such as Pingyao and Beijing. In terms of preserving or recreating authentic street views, tourist interviewees advised it is significant to have a few streets with well-preserved buildings to act as the iconic symbols instead of piling up similar or identical elements (Figure 4-9):

There are too many ordinary stores and shops, which become a distraction for me to enjoy the historical streetscape that an ancient city centre should have. (On-site Tourist-16)

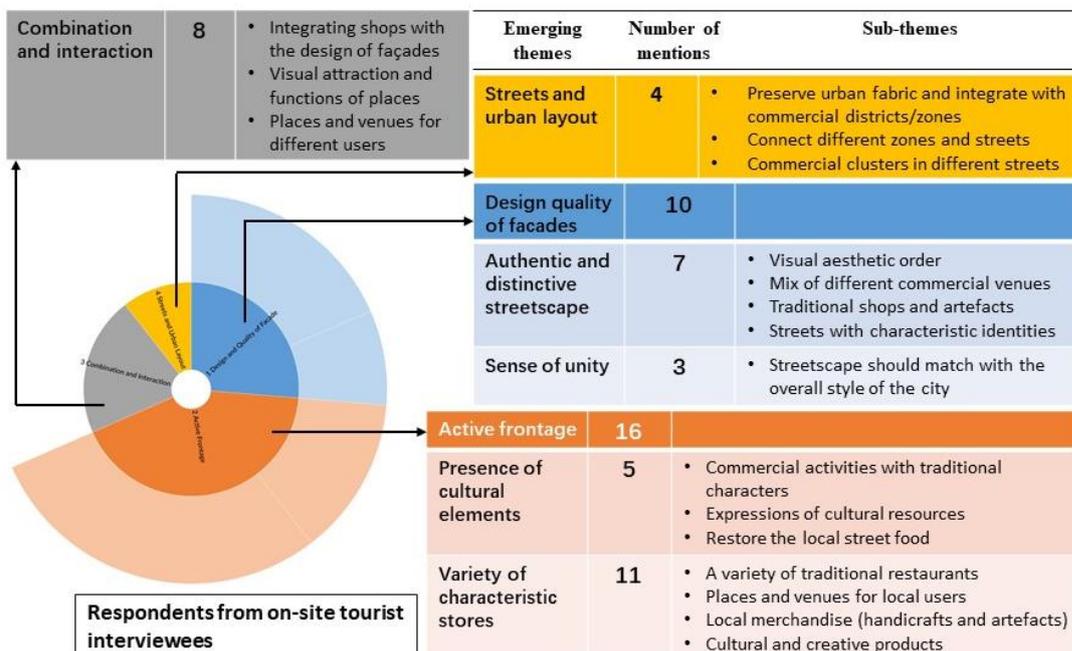
There cannot be too many commercial pedestrians (with similar characters or identities), or the average quality of all the streets could be affected. (On-site Tourist-30)



Figure 4-9 How to create commercial pedestrians with different characters is the key to forming people attractors.

4.2.3.2 Relationship between Façade and Frontage

The design of facades and active frontages contribute to the lively street scene, especially for commercial pedestrianised streets, to attract large crowds of visitors. Residents could compare the old scenes and the new streetscape, and visitors might give opinions about the design quality of such pedestrians from their travelling experiences (Figure 4-10). As the previous interview question aimed to provide descriptions of the commercial pedestrians from various interviewees, this section's second question will present more information about what components a well-designed commercial street should have. Except for the presence of beautiful facades and active frontages, combining both is another emerging topic in this section.



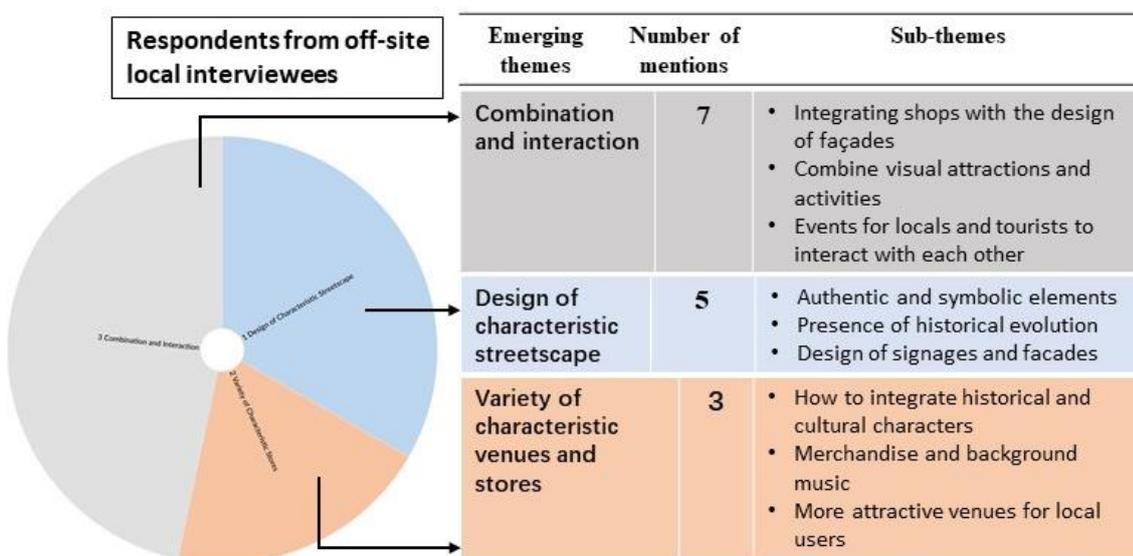
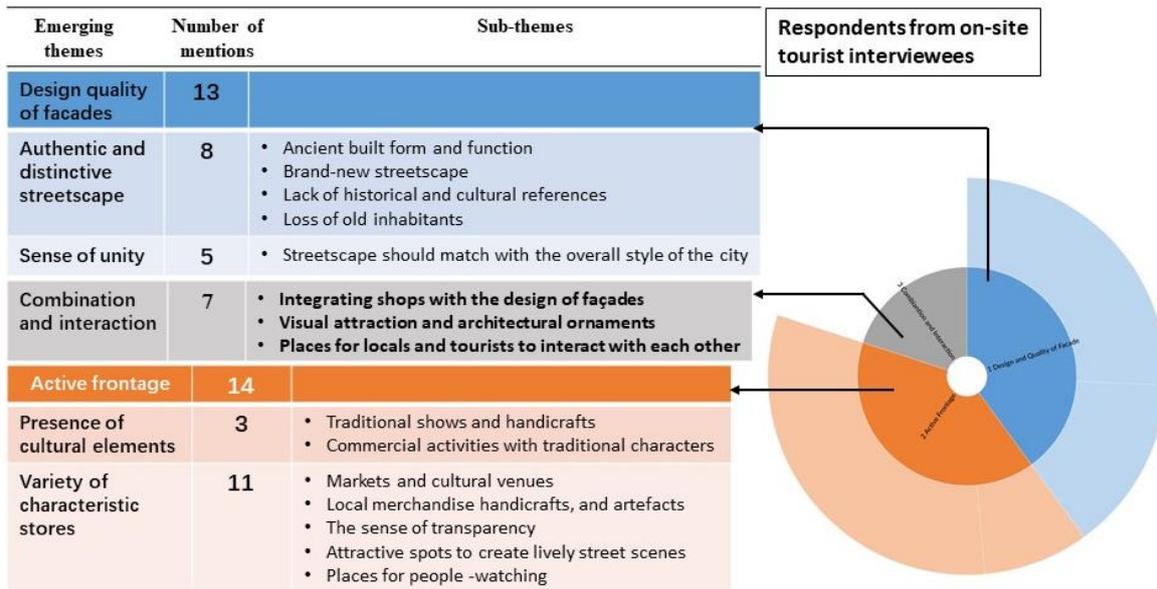


Figure 4-10 Word Cloud and categorises - beautiful facade and active frontage

- **Design and quality of façades**

The same with the previous research question results, interviewees from all three groups advised that a well-design façade should have authentic building appearances and distinctive characteristics. The presence of local cultural elements integrated with elegant building appearances could deliver a feeling of "walking in an old movie" (On-site Local-10). On the other hand, the design of ancient-style facades with some well-preserved iconic buildings contribute to the formation of the authentic streetscape for different visitors:

I wish to see a more elegant and beautiful streetscape. if streets only provide a commercial atmosphere, it might damage the overall ancient experience. (On-site Local-20)

Those commercial streets are critical parts of the inner-city area to attract crowds of tourists and locals. If they could not be compatible with the local historical and cultural features, visitors might question the authenticity of the whole city. (Off-site Local-02)

The Phoenix Restaurant is a good example of combining its attractive architectural form and functions, and I guess the most important thing is to preserve the authenticity of this city. (On-site Tourist-11)

Off-site local participants suggested it might help integrate historical symbols from various stages, such as the architectural style of Ming and Qing dynasties, into those reconstructed facades as "they are significant historical periods for forming the basic urban form" (Off-site Local-12).

Both on-site local and tourist interviewees advised the design and arrangement of facades should provide a sense of unification to match with the general urban form, while tourists suggested how to mix and match building appearances with different details is also necessary (Figure 4-11):

I think Xi'an has better integration of buildings and stores. The mix of old buildings and built heritage is much better and more unified, and there are many attractions for younger users. (On-site Tourist-01)

I think the repair and rehabilitation process needs to focus on maintaining its old appearance, so every house or facade could have some tiny differences or features. (On-site Tourist-20)

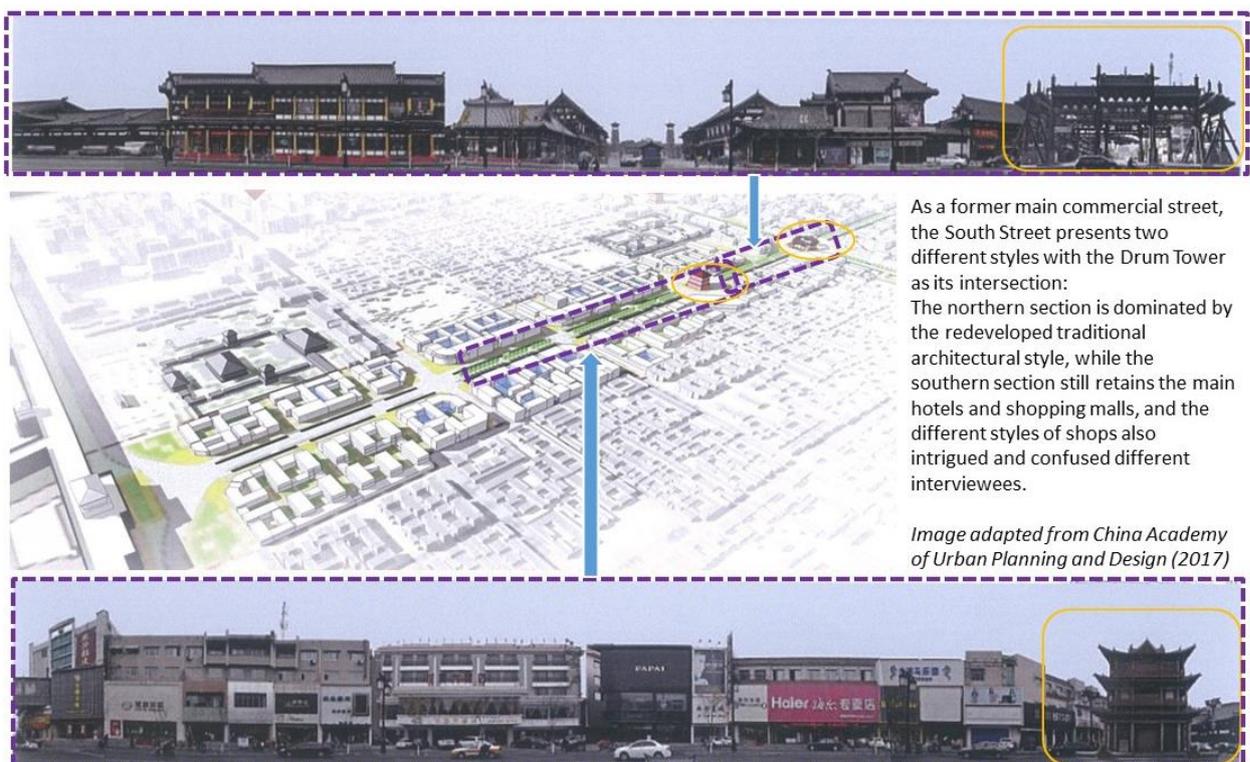


Figure 4-11 The South Street is a typical example of a place with mixed building styles

- **Active Frontage**

One necessary factor of forming active frontage is the variety of characteristic stores and shops, such as traditional handicrafts, street markets, and well-designed café and catering places. According to interviewees from all three groups, such elements with distinctive characteristics of folk culture need to "get arranged in various clusters" instead of "locating in different sites alone" (On-site Local-19)

Cultural events and local traditions are components of re-imagining a lively streetscape, and the presence of street vendors selling local food with poor sanitary conditions in the old days are memorable elements of living street life for some residents:

Once there was a street of local snacks. The environmental situation was terrible with all the smoke and dirty oils, but it represented this area's symbolic place. (On-site Local-19)

- **Combination and Interaction**

In terms of continuity of visual style and design, various types of stores are necessary to form active frontages and lively street views. Interviewees from all three groups suggested that the presence of distinctive local characteristics is the priority as "attractive design of facades [which] could raise visitors' interests and the cultural products would keep them stay longer in the street" (On-site Local – 06 & Off-site Local-07). Moreover, tourists suggested the arrangement of stalls and vendors is another component of creating lively street views, but how to "blend them into the whole streetscape" (On-site Tourist-16) is a critical task (Figure 4-12).

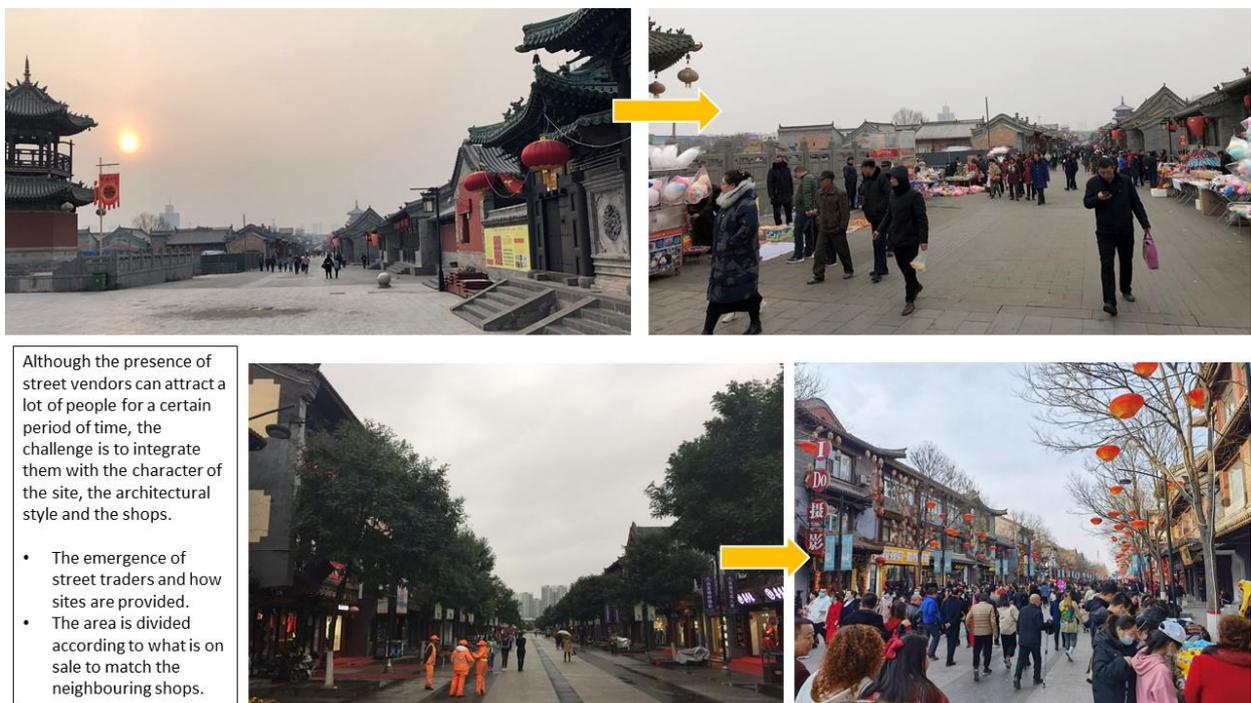


Figure 4-12 Presence of street vendors from observation

- **The layout of Characteristic Streets**

Local interviewees also suggested that commercial pedestrianised street design and renovation need to follow the city's old urban layout, such as digging up authentic elements in old commercial streets and manifesting them in street design. Furthermore, various pedestrianised streets with different functions and iconic landmarks could help to form a network within a lively urban environment:

I guess our future planning could learn from Suzhou and Hangzhou – to focus on the distinctive characters first, such as integrating commercial districts or streets with their unique urban layout of the river network. (On-site Local-02)

I believe the commercial streets need to blend in with the physical environment. After the regeneration, it is critical to forming a comprehensive network so the commercial streets will have better functions than standing alone. (On-site Local-07)

4.2.4 Streetlights, Signboards, and Streetscape

Streetlights, illuminations, and signages of stores and shops along streets (old and new) are components of façade design and urban environment. Moreover, whether the design and arranging of those elements on the streets could reappear, the old street scene or create a new streetscape is another key for the research. The design style and quality of these elements are critical in forming the distinctive and characteristic streetscape. This section aims to obtain opinions from different groups of interviewees about influential factors of those elements, and how would they help to affect and improve the quality and image of street vista is another essential research question.

4.2.4.1 Design and Arrangement of Street lights and Signboards

This section's first research examines how different users would evaluate the new quality and design of streetlights, building illuminations, and signboards in various research sites (Figure 4-13).

sightseeing atmosphere advertisements traditional consistent illuminations appearance signboards connection modernised archaic organising compatible

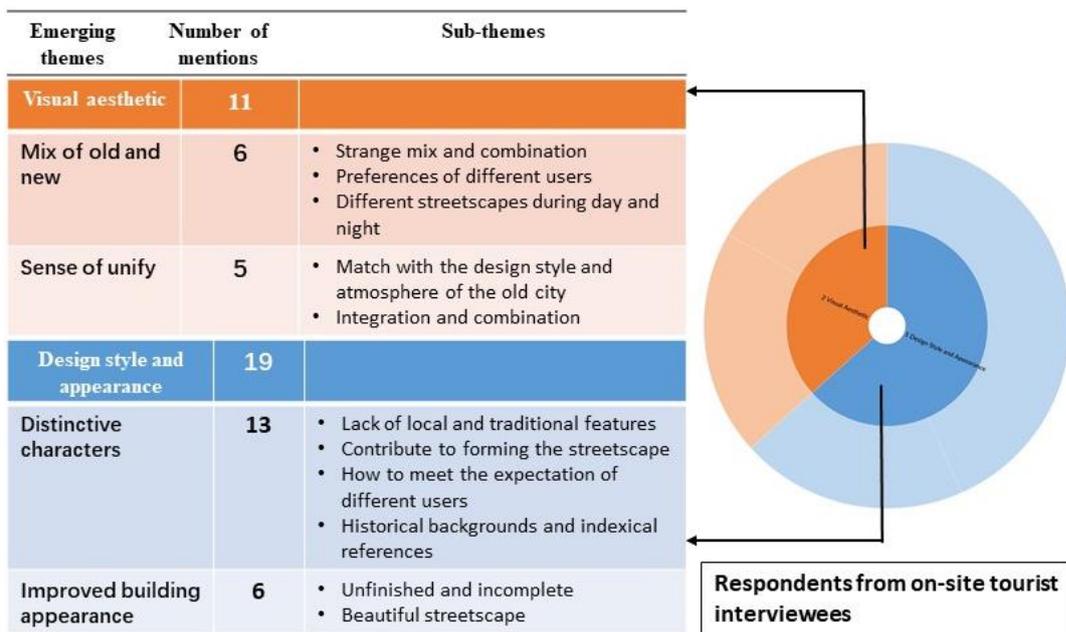
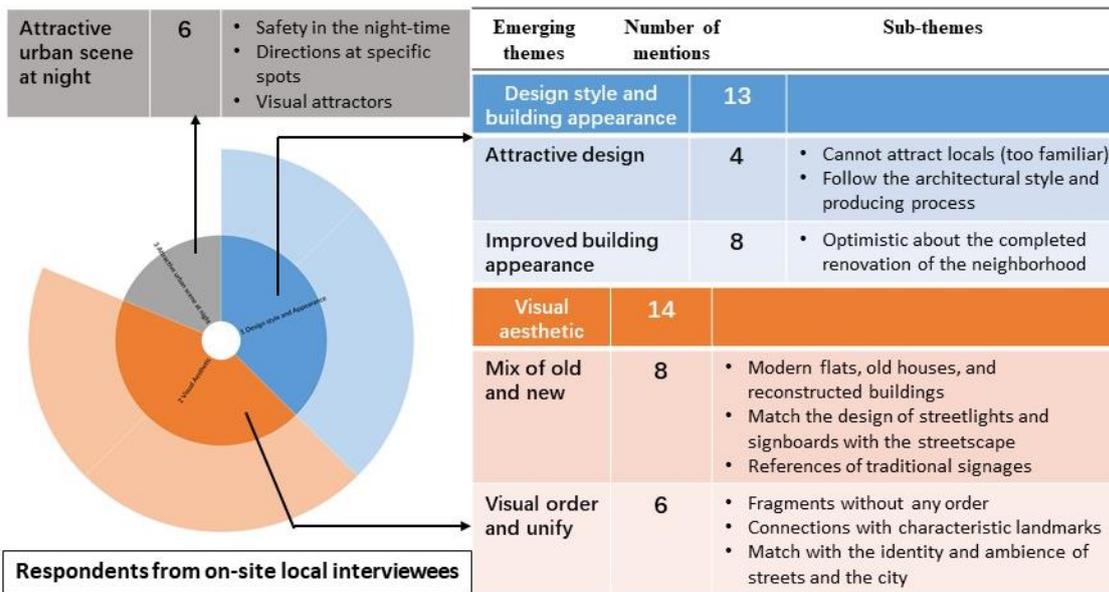
Word cloud generated from the respondents of on-site local interviewees.

characters decorations compatible appearance expectation incomplete advertising conditions environment reproduced combination

Word cloud generated from the respondents of on-site tourist interviewees.

historical arrangement especially attractive compatible atmosphere unification illuminations appearances difference disappointing characters environment integrating architectural

Word cloud generated from the respondents of off-site local interviewees.



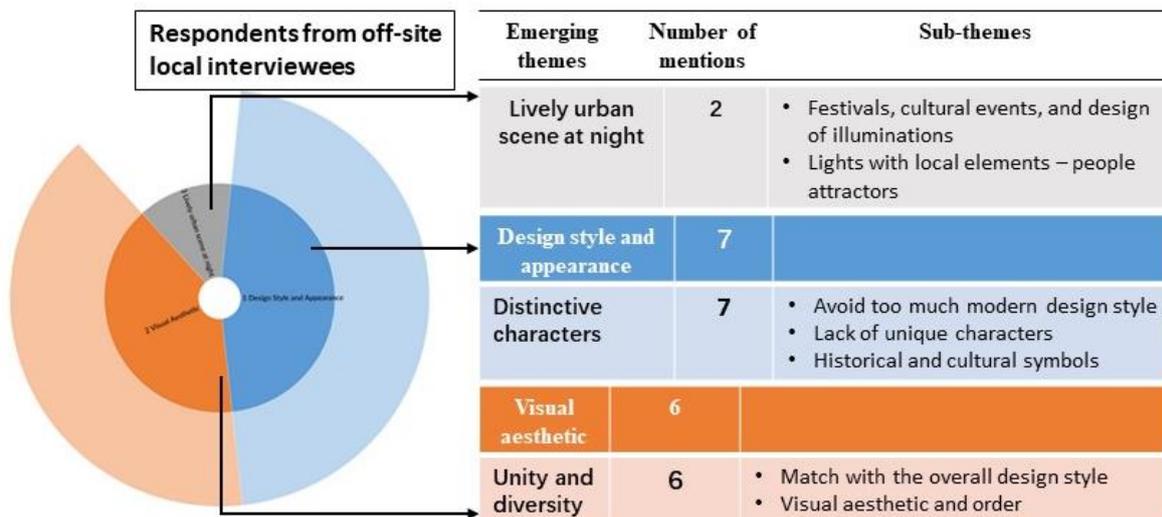


Figure 4-13 Word Cloud and Categories - Design and Arrangement of Street lights and Signboards

- **Design and Appearance**

On-site local interviewees and tourists who had visited the ancient city in the past confirmed the significant development of those elements and the overall urban environment. Participants from all three groups mentioned terms of characteristics and attractive design style and appearance. According to various interviewees, the lack of proper interpretation of traditional characteristics would damage the sense of history and result in the issue of "homogenisation":

The lights and illuminations are fine, but most shop signs or boards are designed too modern and familiar like any other place. Such an issue could damage the overall image of the inner-city core or disappoint tourists as they would like to see a distinctive image in the first place. (Off-site Local–02)

Those signs, illuminations, and advertising things remind me of Indian cities, which lack local features. (On-site Tourist–08)

I do not like them. All such things look ordinary and common, which are not the same as my expectation of an ancient Chinese city should be. (On-site Tourist–28)

- **Visual Aesthetic**

Various responses showed two visual aesthetic orders – a mix of old and new and a sense of unifying. Due to the unfinished nature of the project, signboards' appearance has both the modern-style appearance and ancient style, as the latter aimed to match the old facades. The most confusing image for local visitors is the mix of those two different styles, although some tourists suggested such mix

and match could create unique street scenes as they are all parts of the authentic or original elements of the city (Figure 4-14):

The lights and illuminations are fine, while some shop signboards look too modern. I suggest they learn something (design style and appearance) from some famous traditional shops in Beijing. (On-site Local-21)

It depends on the aspects of different users. For me, the fewer over-decorated illuminations here, the better this place will be. While I guess younger people might like to see more beautiful lights at night. (On-site Tourist-13)

I wish to see some (places) with old and traditional styles and others with modern design styles, which could help produce two different scenes day and night. (On-site Tourist-21)



Figure 4-14 How to mix and match signage and decorations is perceived by visitors

Another aesthetic order is the sense of unifying, which includes themes of "order of continuity", "match with the city", and "unify in diversity". In general, the design style and appearance of streetlights, illuminations, and signboards need to "match with the overall architectural style of each precinct" (Off-site Local-06 & 07). Moreover, it is critical to "avoid too many similarities in the form of different signboards and lights" (Off-site Local - 04 & On-site Tourist-10), and a framework that could "organise and arrange all those fragments and integrate them into a continuous structure" (On-site Local-06).

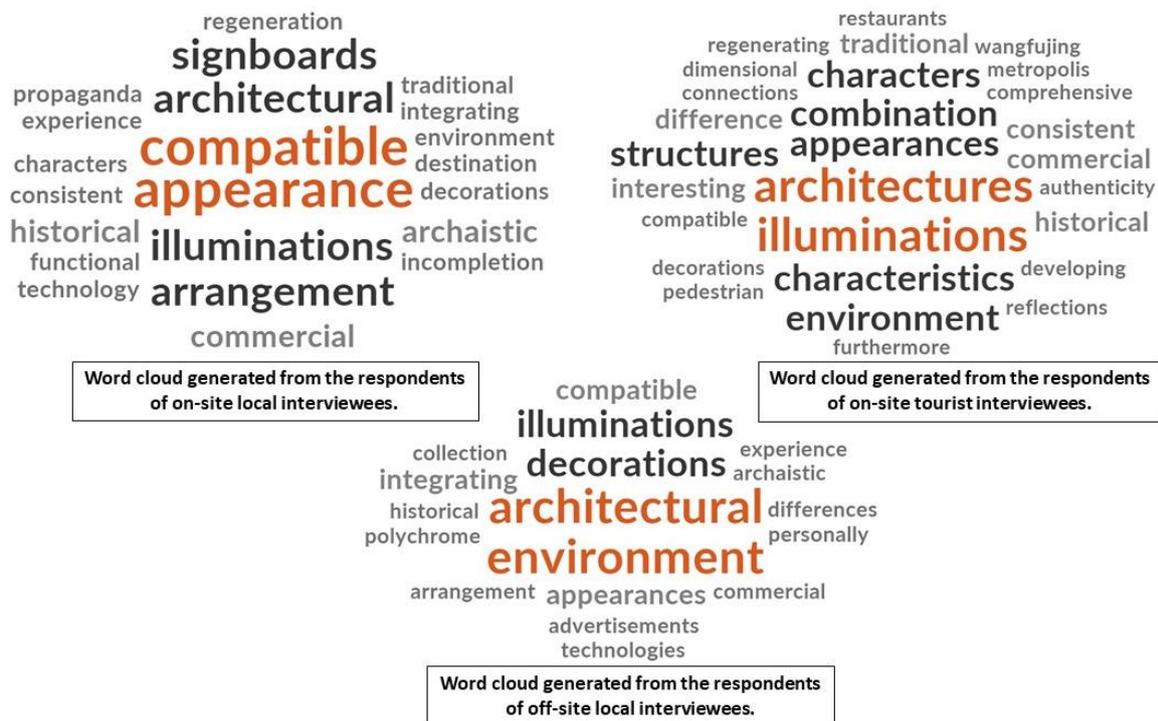
- **Lively Night Scene**

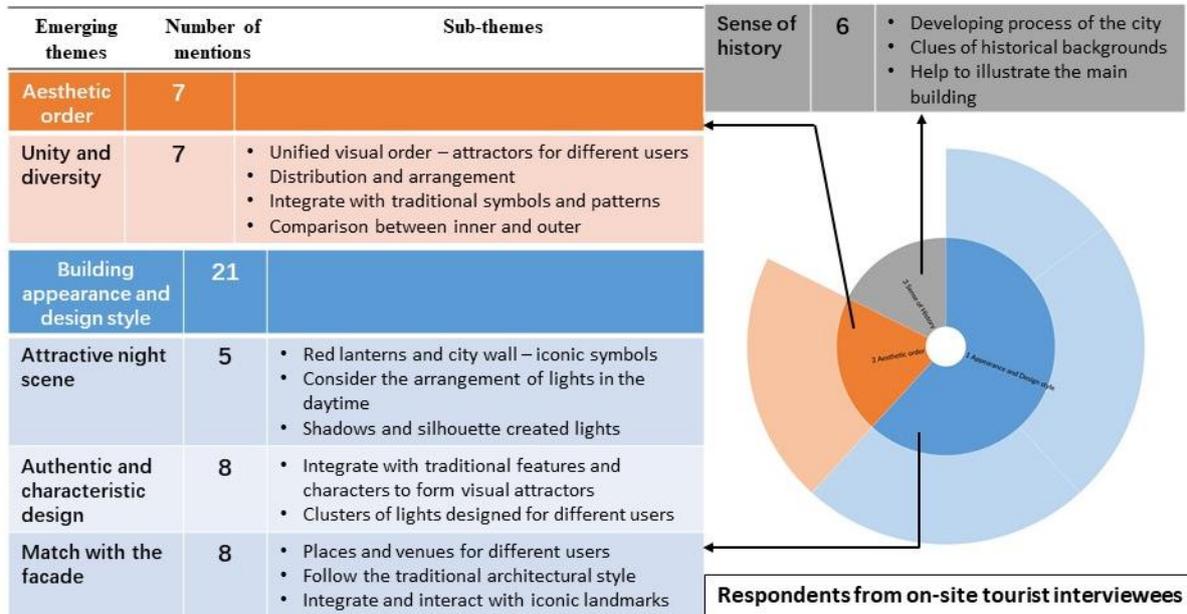
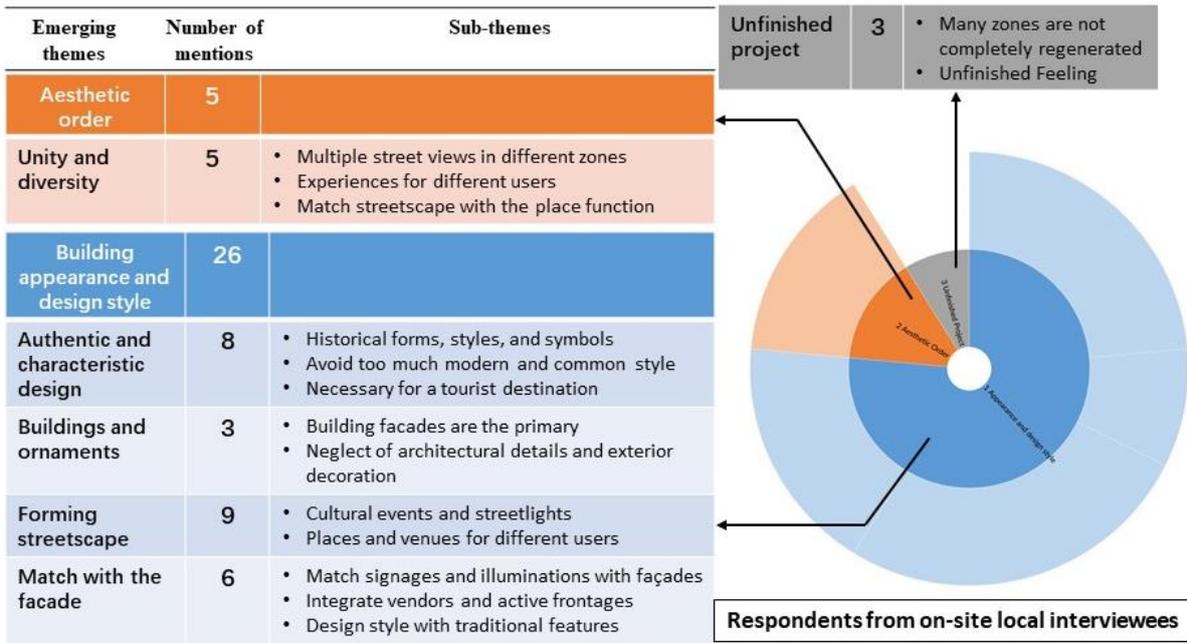
Both on-site and off-site local interviewees suggested the presence of well-designed lights and signboard help to create a beautiful streetscape at night, which could attract visitors to come to the sightseeing places and bring back the lively night scene:

I think the design of the lights is quite good, and the Lantern Festival is a show of all kinds of lights, which attracted many people. Such events are integrating with the historical and dreary physical environment help to create an animated scene. (Off-site Local-08)

4.2.4.2 Forming Streetscape

As the previous interviewee question is about interviewees' opinions and impressions of all the streets lights, building illuminations, and design of signboards in different research sites, the second part of this section aims to explore influential factors of how those elements would contribute to the formation of streetscapes. According to the respondents, the design style and visual order are two primary categories (Figure 4-15).





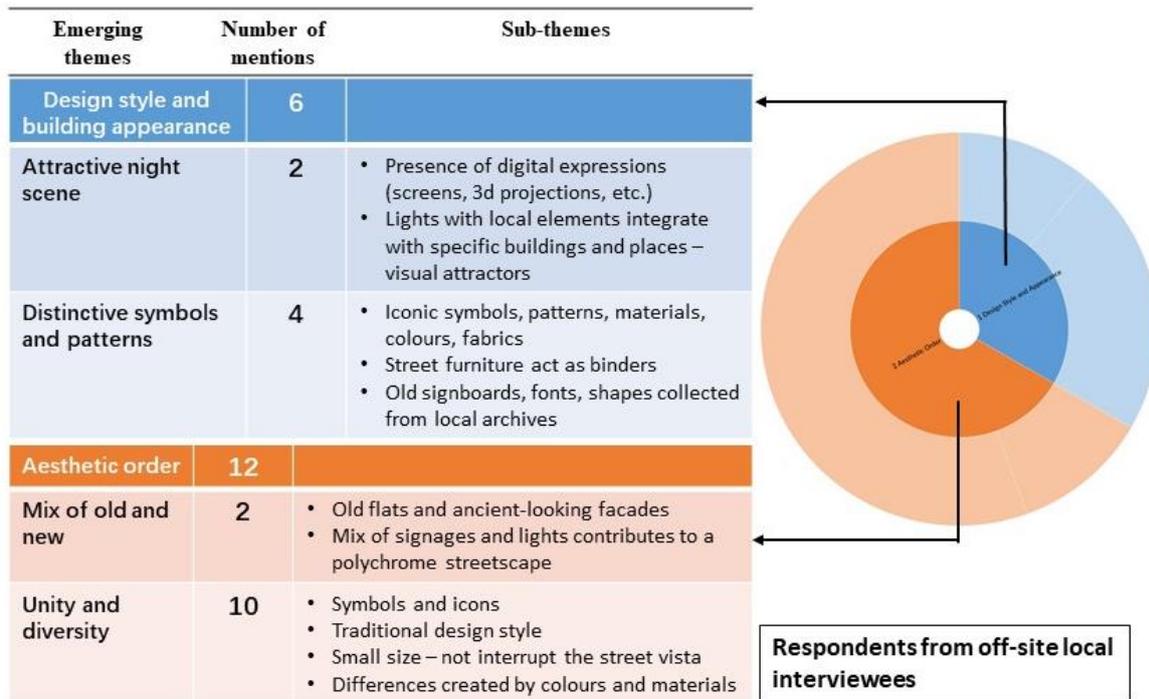


Figure 4-15 Word Cloud and Categorises - Forming Streetscape

- **Design Style and Appearance**

In general, interviewees' priority is the presence of ancient-style appearances of streetlights, building illuminations, and signboards. All on-site interviewees advised it is necessary to follow ancient architectural forms, and the modern design appearance might be challenging to incorporate in the old-looking streetscape. Furthermore, how to make those elements along the street obvious and attractive while maintaining their ancient appearances is also critical:

The arrangement of those characters is complicated to meet all users' needs. If there are too many modern styled signs or lights, some users might feel this place has no sense of history, while if most stores or restaurants have old but less apparent signs or illuminations, users might lose interest to stay and consume here. (On-site Local-07)

On the other hand, the presence of symbols and patterns with traditional characteristics also helps to enhance the sense of authenticity as they are distinctive and original signs that could remind visitors of the history and culture of their destinations, for off-site locals:

I hope their design could integrate with more local symbols, colours, and fabrics to blend those facades into the physical environment, and such integration could also create a unique urban landscape. (Off-site Local-02)

Those shops along the commercial streets could have distinctive styled signs or lights based on the overall architectural styles, including symbols or decorations of local history and cultural resources. (Off-site Local-04)

The collection of more old shop signs or boards with unique styles and appearances will help form a basic framework of local symbols and patterns, and we could try to integrate them into the physical environment. (Off-site Local-15)

For some on-site local participants, the presence of such symbols, patterns, materials, and even colours need to match with the buildings at first because they "*served more like ornaments or decorations than attractions by themselves*" (On-site Local-23 & 30). The mix of different signboards and their facades is another issue, and the presence of old shops, street markets, and restaurants along with their facades could help to provide attractive elements for the whole streetscape:

There should be ways to let all the vendors selling local artefacts and traditional snacks or foods get in those commercial streets, and they might also bring back some old signboards. (On-site Local-19)

The regenerating project has not finished yet. When the facades and illuminations on this street are consistent with the east street, they could produce a lovely street scene with the Drum Tower. (On-site Tourist-27)

Both streetlights and illuminations were perceived to form lively and attractive night scenes in the city centre because of their original functions. In addition to the utilisation of modern technologies to integrate with a variety of lights, such as three-dimensional projects and digital screens, interviewees suggested well-designed illuminations help to decorate and illustrate iconic landmarks as visual attractors in the night (Figure 4-16):

I think the streetlights are fabulous to see at night, and some places with red lanterns are also beautiful from the city wall. (On-site Tourist-02)

Sometimes, the light itself and the shadow they have created are important. (On-site Tourist-19)



Figure 4-16 Well-designed lights and illuminations could help illustrate distinctive landmarks in the night-time

- **Aesthetic order**

The visual aesthetic feeling of unifying and diversity was mentioned by all three groups as visitors wish to enjoy walking in a unified ancient streetscape while noticing characteristic differences brought by the design of facades and signboards, such as symbols, colours, and materials:

A unified ancient style is necessary, while such style also needs to be put into some unique and traditional patterns or symbols to make them distinctive. (On-site Tourist-01)

Attractive signs, lighting, and illuminations could attract them to pay attention to the traditional architectural forms, details and decorations. The most critical thing is how to unify them, or they might look a bit messy. (On-site Tourist-21)

It is necessary to integrate well-designed illuminations and signs into the urban environment, as all of them should produce a sense of ancient Chinese cities. (On-site Tourist-26)

Furthermore, interviewees suggested the design style should match the streetscape and show characteristics relating to the functions of the streets or precincts in which they are located – "*different divisions and precincts should have various thematic characteristics*" (On-site Local-02).

In addition to the theme of unifying, off-site local interviewees advised the proper mix and match of ancient-style and modern style is another factor. For example, some facades and buildings with ancient appearances were built in the past few years while modern-style flats have a long history. Under such context, dealing with the issue of "creating a diverse streetscape" (Off-site local-15) is critical for arranging signboards with different design appearances. On the other hand, the size of signboards and illuminations could affect the facades in different ways:

Those elements must follow the overall design style of that place, and a lot of digital screens will be not so good. those shop signs cannot be too large, which may stand out and disrupt the facades. (Off-site Local–07)

- **Sense of History**

For on-site tourists, the sense or presence of history is significant in delivering the authentic street scene. Both the traditional design characteristics and the reason for choosing such style and appearance are necessary as tourists would like to know "*the connections between those signboards, facades, and the buildings behind them*" (On-site Tourist–11). Furthermore, the music played by some stores and shops to attract visitors could act as components of the old atmosphere, and a tourist participant indicated loud pop music would damage the "*sense of harmony*" (On-site Tourist–07).

Finally, the presence of the developing process of streetscapes is another target need to get interpreted by all the streetlights, building illuminations, and signboards. As components of forming streetscape, interviewees also mentioned that "*those elements might become a unique combination after ten years though they look a bit brand-new now*" (On-site Tourist–30).

4.2.5 Design and Connection – Different Scales of Space

The study site – particularly the ancient urban centre – has a basic chessboard urban layout, and most streets, roads, and lanes formed the public realm of the city. Several new built large and open spaces, such as front yards of iconic landmarks and expanded precincts, have occupied some spaces that once belonged to now-demolished houses through the regeneration process. This section aims to learn about the personal preferences of different scales of spaces from interviewees and obtain more opinions about how various scales of spaces link and connect to create a public realm with character.

4.2.5.1 Personal Preference of Different Scales

Responses from all three sets of interviewees were in four significant categories: a sense of exploring, social and gathering spaces, places designed for different users, and original urban form and city layout. Parts of interviewees' preferences of large and open spaces or small and private ones directly related to the function of place and spatial perception. Participants who prefer squares and plazas emphasised that they could provide social and gathering spaces for all users to conduct leisure activities such as "*chatting with my friends*", "*enjoy the sunbathing*", "*play with my skateboard*", "*stay with my children*". As there were no such open spaces in the ancient urban centre before the

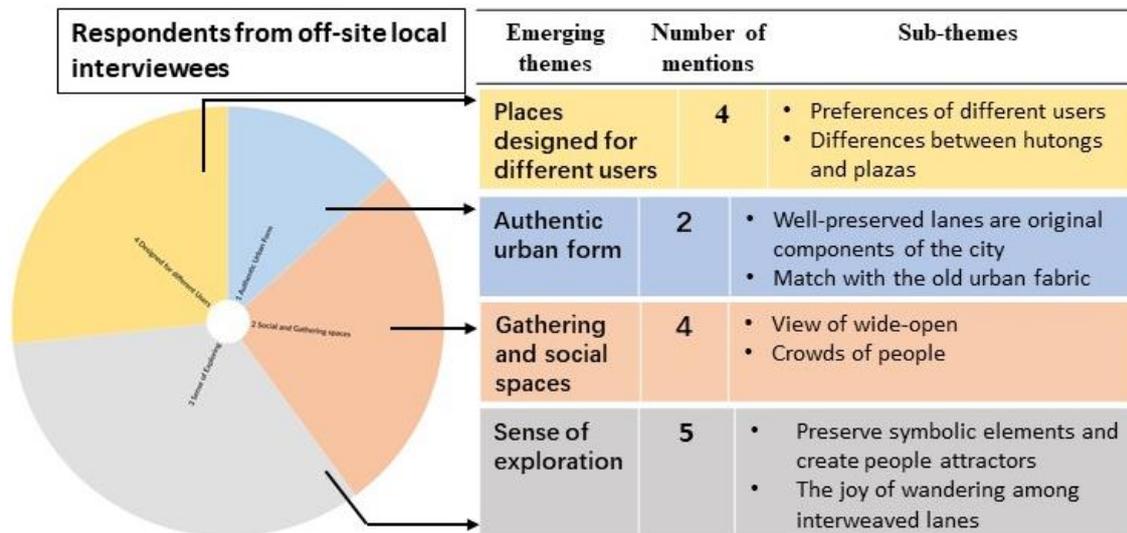


Figure 4-17 Word Cloud and Categories - Personal preference of different scaled spaces.

Interviewees who prefer narrow streets and lanes paid attention to the sense of exploring, which happened in roaming among interweaved hutongs. Tourists advised that the quality of such networks of travelling routes is critical as "they could produce a nice and cosy environment for all visitors to explore while encountering traditional elements or cultural symbols" (On-site Tourist–30).

The preservation of old urban forms and city layouts is necessary for visitors to travel in the ancient urban centre. Moreover, tourists suggested an old urban environment "without many large and open spaces" could match with "the expected image of an ancient Chinese city" (On-site Tourist–01). Visitors could form their own expected city identity based on the information they have got, and the presence and preservation of authentic urban form are influential factors:

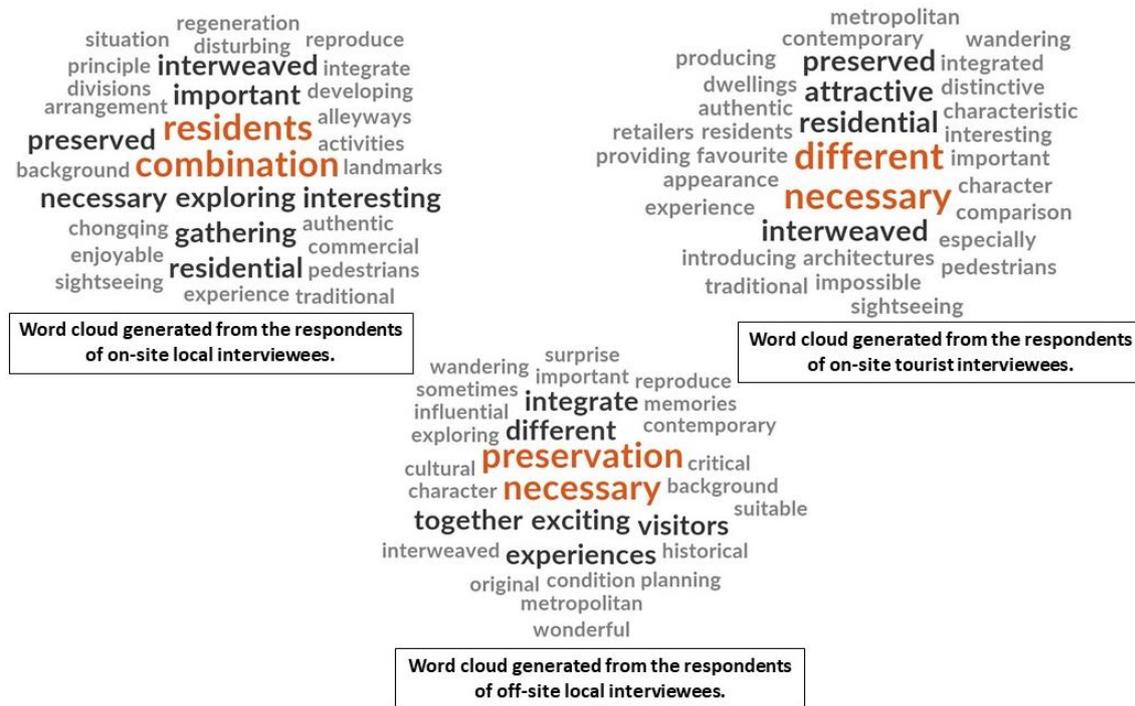
I would prefer both, and the choice also relates to my mood. Tourists could have a pre-image of their destinations, significantly influencing their preferences and moods. Furthermore, such impressions would come from history and culture. (On-site Tourist–14)

On the other hand, the revival of the old residential area might help to bring back the old living scenes as "those precincts were the original places where residents were conducting their daily activities" (On-site Tourist–08).

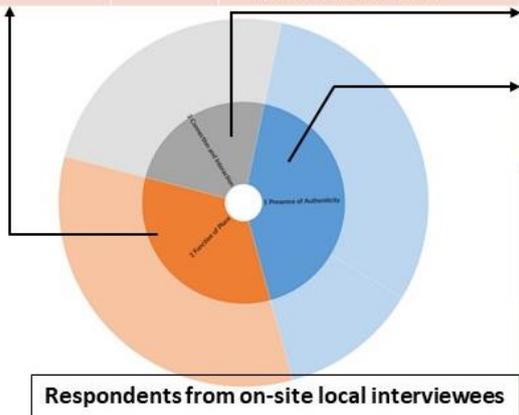
Interviewees also suggested that scales of spaces are necessary for different users as various spaces could provide multiple functions, such as travelling routes and areas of holding events. Interviewees also indicated that their moods might influence their contemporary preferences of different spaces as "the comparison of old hutongs and new squares also delivered a unique change of spatial feelings" (On-site Tourist–07).

4.2.5.2 Linked Series of Different Scales of Spaces

As all groups of visitors indicate they would like to roam in the ancient city centre, the experiences of moving through different scales of spaces could contribute to the quality of their urban images. This interview question will find out how various interviewees think of the linked series of spaces and what influential factors would affect the connection of different scales of spaces. In addition to the relationship and interaction of various spaces, the function of place and authentic urban form are also factors defined by interviewees (Figure 4-18).



Function of place	11		Emerging themes	Number of mentions	Sub-themes
Social and gathering places	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City wall act as the visual background for open spaces Small-scaled plazas Resting settings and enjoy sunbathing Walking system between different open spaces 	Connection and interaction	8	
			Experience of exploring and gathering	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate with commercial events to create people attractors The joy of wandering among interweaved lanes and moving into large open spaces Preferences and needs of different users
			Presence and expression of authenticity	14	
			Old city layout and urban form	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow streets and lanes are original components of the city Restoration of the old residential area Characteristic houses act as landmarks in memory
			Revival of old urban image	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recover the sense of history Created several plazas for the surviving inhabitants of the city Recreating the life scene



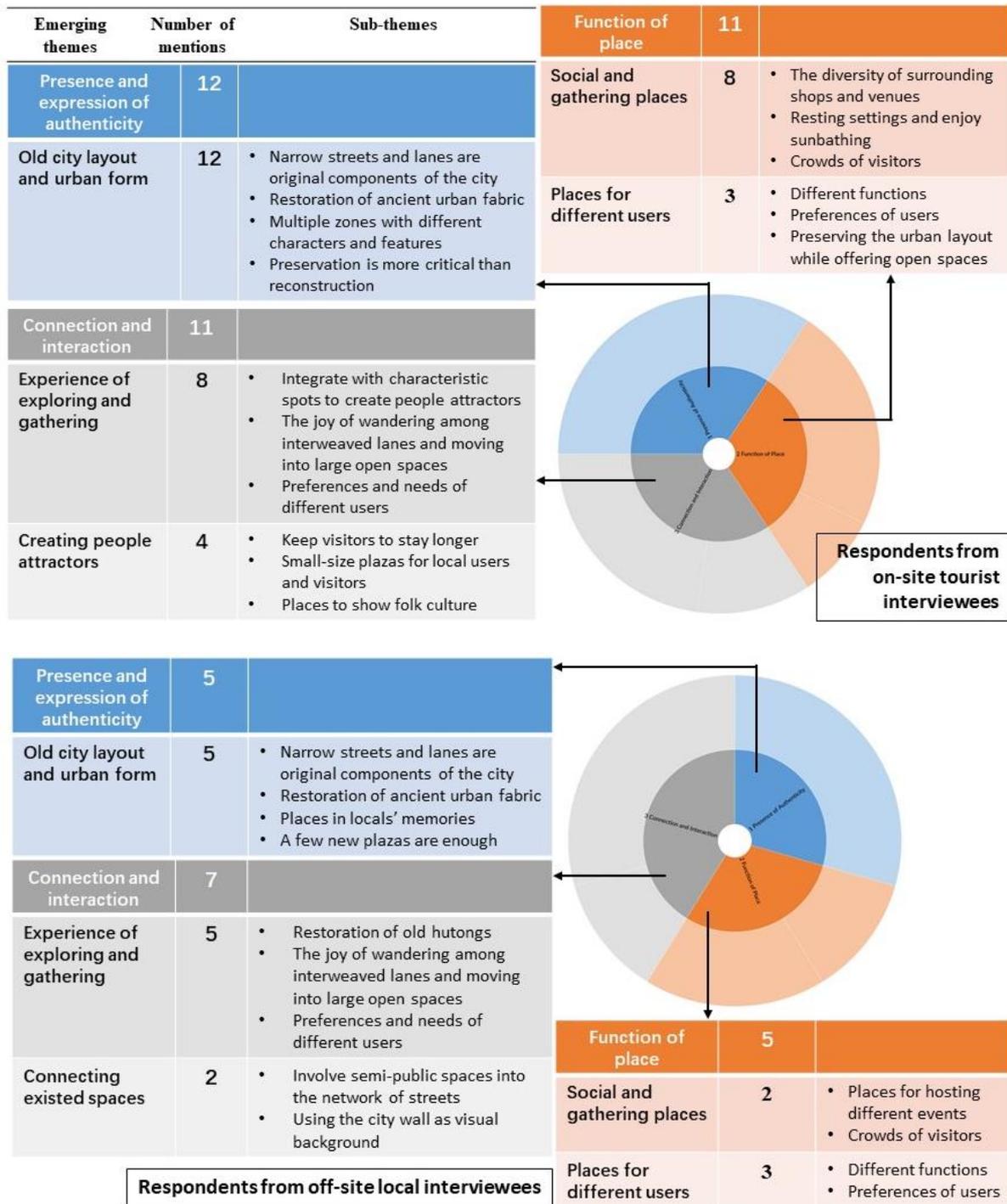


Figure 4-18 Word Cloud and Categories - Linked series of different scales of spaces

- Connection and Interaction**

In terms of linking large and small scales, interviewees from all three groups mentioned that the change and transition of spatial feelings are attractive for them to enjoy visiting the research area. In such a context, the changing feelings between roaming in the space enclosed by the building and

gathering in the open spaces was a critical factor in affecting visitors' experiences and moods (Figure 4-19):

The small spaces could provide an exciting experience while I am exploring among them. I have been to Chongqing before, and there is one ancient town full of well-preserved alleys interweaved with each other, and it is delightful to wander in all the narrow streets to feel the old sense of that town. (On-site Local-21)

The integration of them should depend on the flow rate of visitors, and sometimes their moods are another influential character. I like wandering in small streets and exploring some exciting places or stores, and such feelings and experiences of surprise are also fantastic. (Off-site Local-02)

I wish to see the unique theme of local history and folk culture in each narrow street and lane, and then it will be nice to walk through all the small alleys to a large open space, which could provide a different feeling. (On-site Tourist-14)

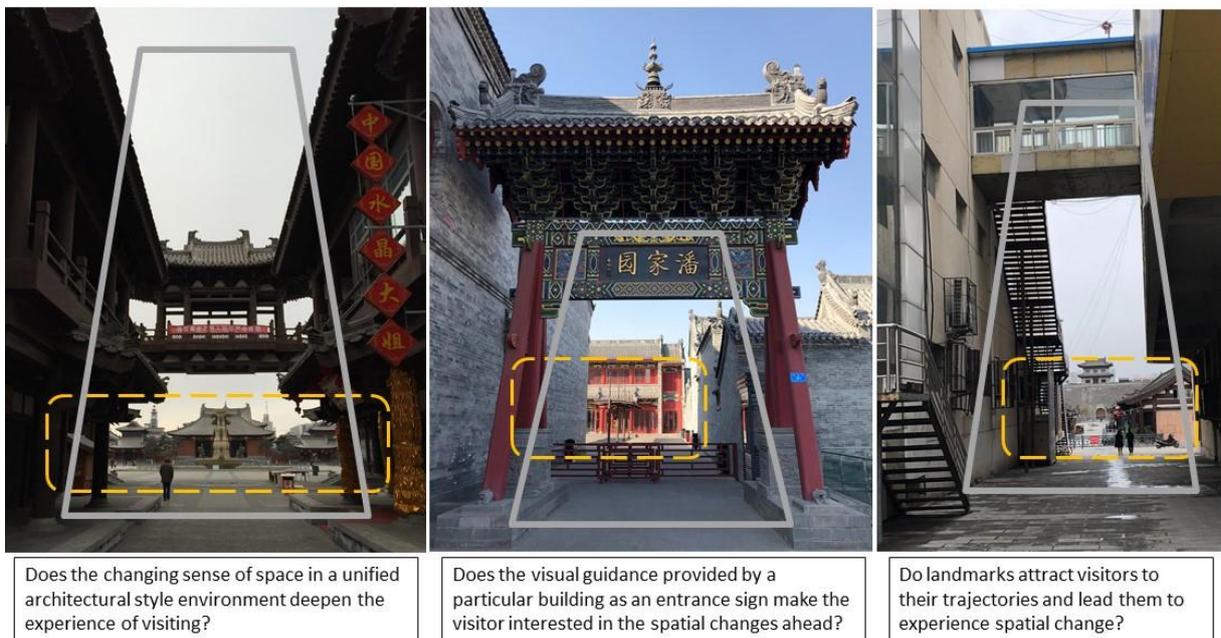


Figure 4-19 Changes in spatial feelings – 'hereness and thereeness'

The presence of attractive spots, such as shops, stores, or old residential houses with traditional and distinctive characteristics, is another factor that could help to improve visitors' travelling experiences. According to both sets of local interviewees, integrating commercial events and residents' activities into the old hutong to create a lively street scene is necessary for visitors. Furthermore, well-designed Home-stay Inns modified from old houses with good locations are "good ways of introducing local culture and history" for tourists as offering them "immersive experiences" (On-site Tourist-18). Off-

site local interviewees also suggested it is necessary to connect the existed open spaces to the whole road network (or public realm):

I think new large and open spaces like plazas and squares are more suitable to locate outside the inner-city core, and they could combine with the city wall to create a place with a background, just like the moat park. (Off-site Local–15)

- **Function of Place**

Interviewees referred to the theme of place function, where they wished to have large and open spaces for users to rest, gather, and hold various events. Due to the principle of following ancient urban form, interviewees suggested such squares and plazas need to "*remain in small and medium scale*".

Interviewees argue that new designed open gathering spaces should connect to iconic landmarks and old residential areas because such sites and precincts could attract large numbers of visitors. Furthermore, those spaces' surroundings need to integrate with resting places and settings such as "*variety of traditional artefact retailers, snack bars, and café*" (On-site Tourist–10), and they could help improve the quality of resting experiences.

- **Preservation of Urban Form**

According to interviewees from all three groups, preserving and restoring ancient urban forms prioritise creating and connecting a series of spaces. In addition to the recovery of the old residential street network, the arrangement of different functional sections of the area was mentioned to provide a way of balancing new-built open spaces and old streets:

I hope to see some different sections in the inner-city area, so most small streets and lanes would be located in one old section while some large and open spaces are in another. (On-site Tourist–03)

More alleys and hutong should be suitable to the original layout and planning as it is essential to follow the old rules (principles relating to the traditional urban form). We can divide the whole core into different sections, and those original forms and layouts of old households need to be well preserved, which is our unique identity. (On-site Tourist–19)

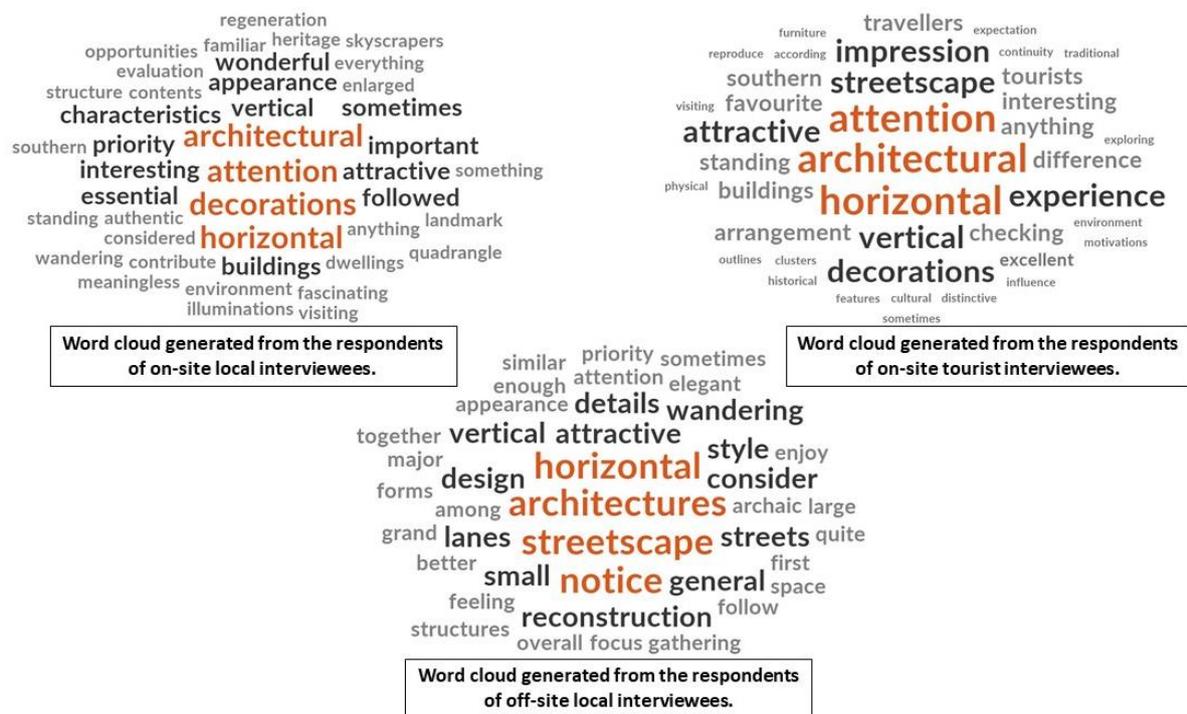
In arranging small-scaled plazas in the old residential area, local interviewees advised that such spaces "could provide places for tourists, visitors, and residents opportunities and venues to interact with each other" (On-site Local – 19). Such interaction in the traditional atmosphere and environment is a way of delivering urban scenes and "*reappearance of the old image*" (On-site Local–13).

4.2.6 Street Vista and Build Height

Two architectural elements – building height and vertical design – contribute to the formation of street vista in visual and kinaesthetic aspects. The urban regeneration strategy in Datong specified that most buildings are at a low building height (one or two storeys) except for several iconic landmarks, such as the drum tower and reconstructed city wall. Visitors travelling in the urban centre would encounter a flat horizontal view in the historic centre compared to walking outside where skyscrapers dominate. Moreover, the transformation of width-to-height could influence travel experiences in terms of visual and spatial feelings. As the previous section explored aspects of different public spaces, this section explores spatial feelings of horizontal and vertical dimensions.

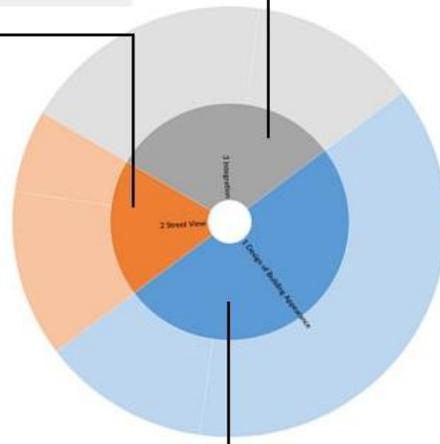
4.2.6.1 Street Vista and Vertical Design of Buildings

The first research question is going to understand interviewees' preferences of street view and design of buildings, which aims to find out influential factors of different users' feelings about the open vista and detailed design of buildings (Figure 4-20).



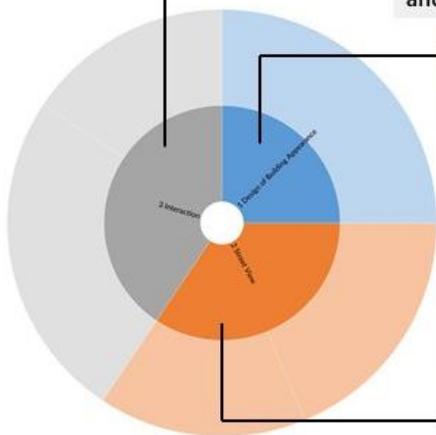
Emerging themes	Number of mentions	Sub-themes
Integration	10	
From the street view to buildings	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A general impression of the street – interested or not Distinctive and characteristic details
Quality of street vistas	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resting settings Keep visitors to stay longer
Street view	6	
Sense of place	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impressions and vistas Street scenes and urban fabric
Skyline and silhouettes	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The city wall is an important viewpoint Visual contrast between inner and outer
Design of building appearance	16	
Authentic and characteristic appearance	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-designed facades could attract more people Clusters of buildings Expression of traditional characters and features
Distinctive built form	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From attractive facades to architectural details

Respondents from on-site local interviewees



Emerging themes	Number of mentions	Sub-themes
Integration	13	
From the street view to buildings	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinctive and characteristic details Moods, feelings, and experiences
Sense of roaming and wandering	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resting settings Keep visitors to stay longer
Design of building appearance	8	
Presence of characteristic appearance	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve traveling experience Meet visitors' expectations Sense of historical process Expression of traditional characters and features
Street view	11	
First impression	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling of openness General evaluation of the place
Urban form and city image	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Layers of street vistas Old building heights and urban fabric

Respondents from on-site tourist interviewees



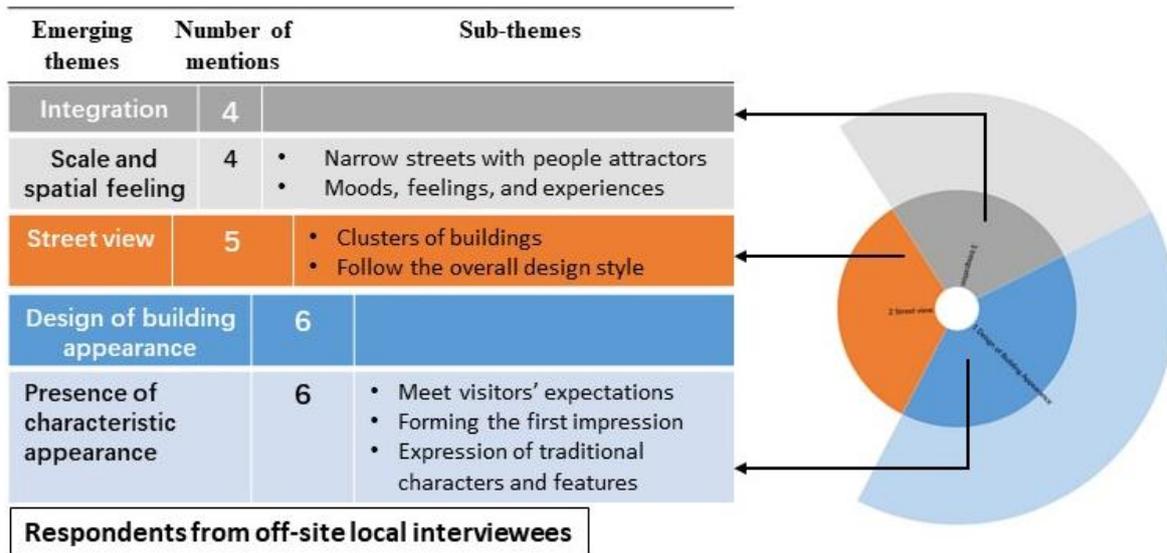


Figure 4-20 Word Cloud and Categories - Street View and Design of Buildings

- **Design and Characteristics of Building Appearance**

The design and characteristic appearance are critical in creating visual attractors in the built form and architectural style. According to interviewees from all three groups, the presence of characteristic features, including architectural detailing and ornaments, need to match with the historical urban identity, as "the successful design of local characteristics" could contribute to "the formation of a better sense of place" (On-site Local-09). On the other hand, participants also mentioned that the quality of the new design is not good enough when compared with old towns in Southern China (Figure 4-21):

When I was in some ancient towns in Southern China, they were fascinating with their original local features and characteristics. While in this place, I could not find any attractive details or contents to check. (On-site Local-22)

In my opinion, the vertical view and the architectural details and decorations are far worse than those in southern Chinese old cities. The reason behind this could be the loss of historical and cultural continuity. (On-site Tourist-15)



Due to the different architectural characters evolved from local historical backgrounds and cultural context, the building appearance and architectural detailing of southern Chinese towns look more elegant than northern ones such as city Datong.
 Top left and bottom left: the ancient city of Datong. Top right and bottom right: the streetscape of Suzhou.

Figure 4-21 Different built form is affected by the culture and geography

The preservation of the authentic built form of iconic landmarks, built heritage, and impressive buildings with distinctive appearances are also necessary for interviewees to raise their interests:

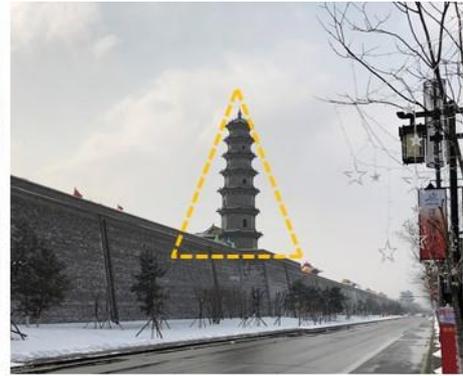
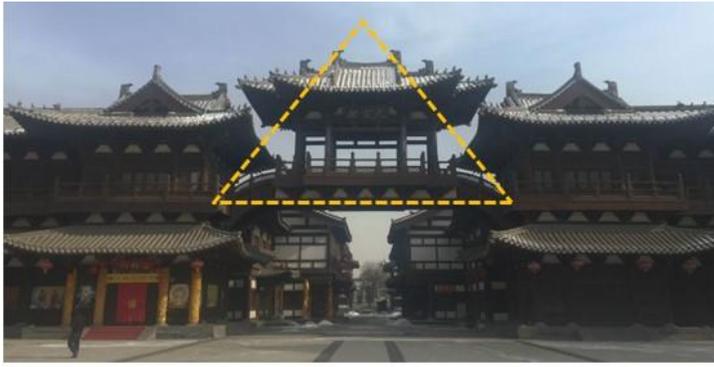
If I were looking at some old or rebuilt architecture, I would pay more attention to their details.

But for those modern buildings, I might just notice their outlines. (On-site Tourist-22)

If I visit a built heritage or significant landmark, I will pay more attention to their old decorations or ancient structure. (Off-site Local-02)

- **Street View**

Interviewees who prefer open vista and street view suggested that place and city image are the priority, and streetscape with "clusters of buildings with ancient appearances" is critical in delivering the urban scene in the old days. Furthermore, tourists advised the change of building heights could help to produce visual attractors as "the presence of taller buildings among mass low-rise old houses will attract visitors' attention" (On-site Tourist-24) (Figure 4-22).



Interviewees who visited the city felt that a small number of taller buildings would attract attention and add to the experience.

The reconstructed city walls provide an excellent viewing platform where visitors can experience the visual appeal of several landmark buildings. Moreover, the height of the walls themselves and the towers above them form a higher visual points.

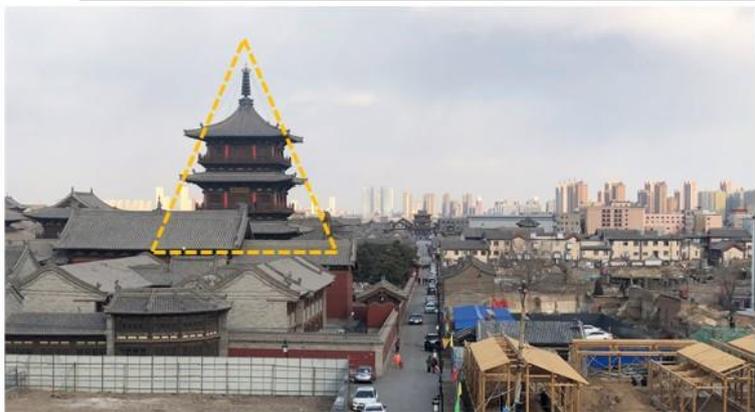
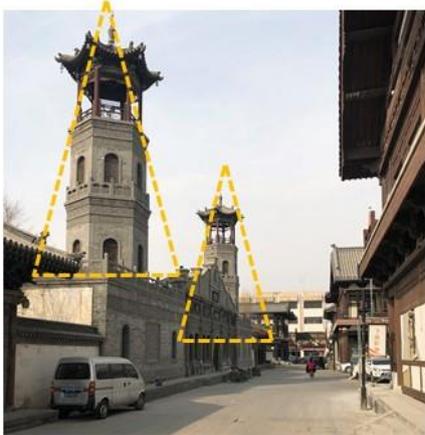


Figure 4-22 The presence of taller buildings could attract visitor's attention

Participants also mentioned the comparison of different skylines between the ancient urban centre and outer metropolis. Such difference, which is caused by the reconstruction of old buildings and streets, could produce a sense of "*standing in places at various historical periods*" (On-site Local-24).

- **Integration and Interaction**

Interviewees from both on-site groups advised that the overall street-view style could attract their attention in the first place, which provides clues for visitors to create an image based on their evaluations. Then they are more likely to notice design quality of building appearance and architectural detailing:

I will pay attention to the horizontal view first to have a general evaluation of any scene. After that, I will move on to details, such as architectural decorations and horizontal aspects. (On-site Local-17)

I want to enjoy the overall streetscape first, and then I would move on to some more details, such as the vertical design, architectural decorations, and street furniture. (On-site Tourist-16)

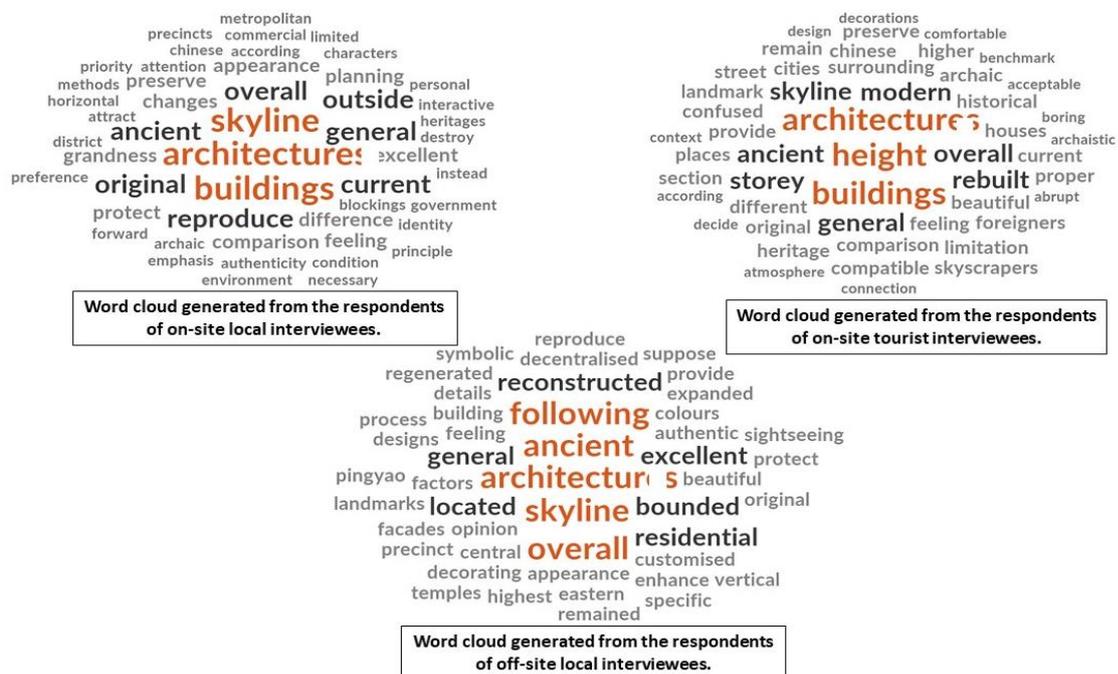
I would like to see the horizontal view first and the general layout. Then I will move on to the vertical view and small details, and they could also influence your experience and mood. (On-site Tourist–19)

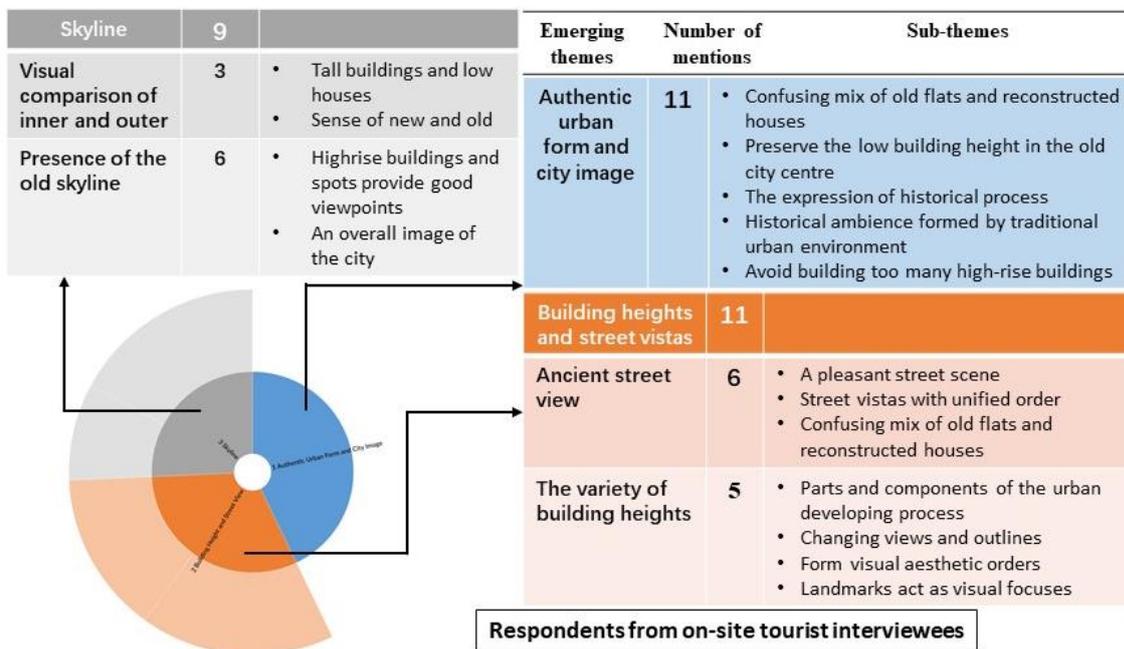
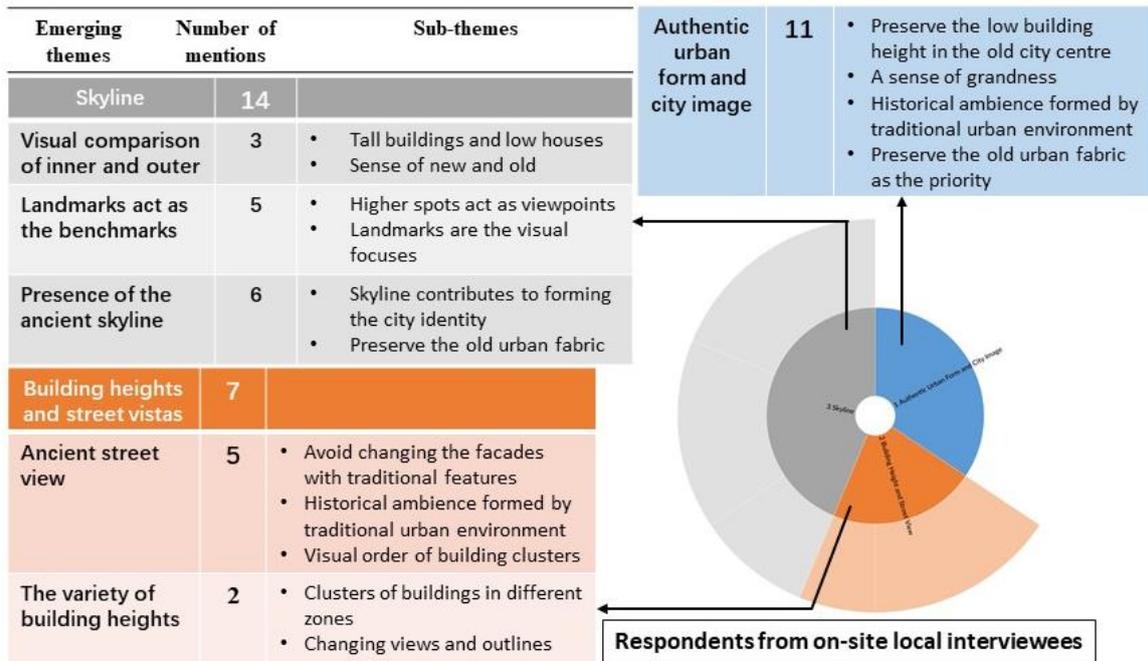
In addition to the "kinaesthetic experience" mentioned by participants, each group showed various thoughts about integrating street view and the design of buildings. For on-site local users, the quality of streetscape and presence of well-designed street furniture is necessary for them as "*compared with the old streetscape in the past, we (local users) get better places to sit down and enjoy the improved urban environment*" (On-site Local–03 & 23). On the other hand, on-site tourists paid attention to the sense of roaming in the ancient city and "do not want to miss anything with attractive and distinctive characteristics" (On-site Tourist–03 & 08).

Because the interviewees conducted in places outside of the ancient urban centre, off-site participants showed more descriptions about the presence of different spatial feelings: "*If I were in a large open space, I would pay more attention to the general horizontal view, while in narrow streets and small lanes I would notice more details and building appearances.*" (Off-site Local–06)

4.2.6.2 Building Height and Skyline

As many streets and precincts of the ancient urban centre got reconstructed to re-create the old urban image, which was formed by clusters of low-rise houses, the contemporary situation showed a flat urban form compared with surrounding tall buildings. Under such context, this interview question explores factors that could affect the ancient city's skyline and the relationships between building heights and the formation of street view (Figure 4-23).





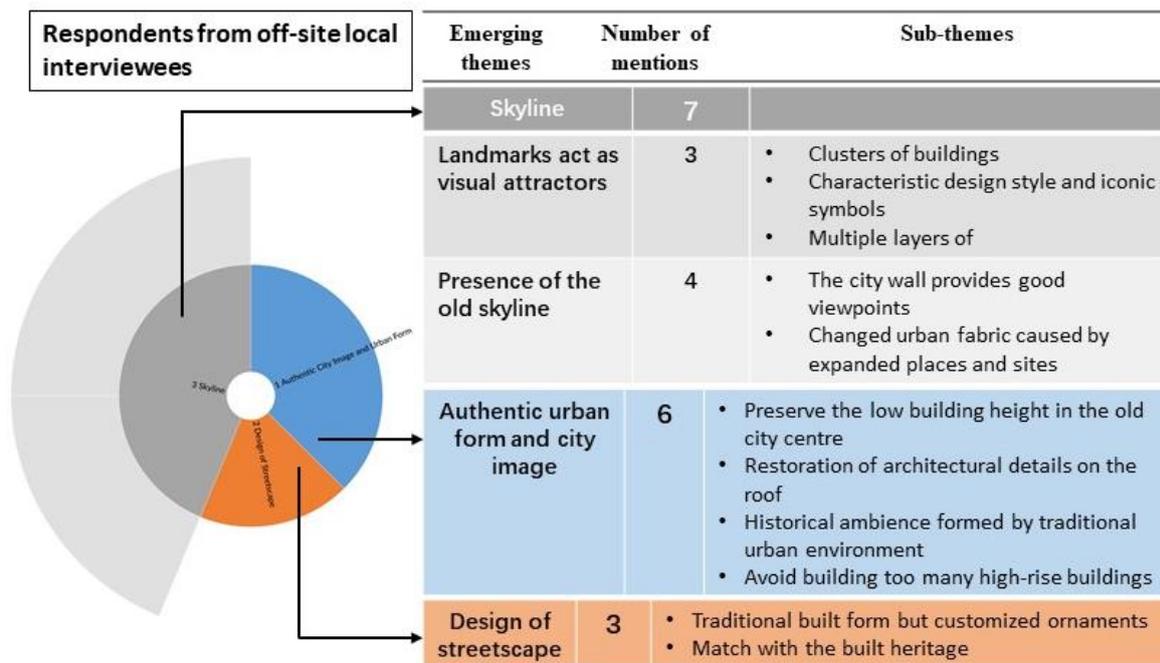


Figure 4-23 Word Cloud and Categories - Building Height and Street View.

- **Authentic Urban Form**

In general, interviewees considered the revival of ancient urban form to affect different users' opinions about building height design. Participants advised that the reconstructed and repaired low-rise and one-storey houses need to match an old Chinese city's traditional form and layout. Moreover, tourists indicated the preservation or recovery of authentic urban form would help to create 'the historical ambience' and deliver 'the sense of history' in a proper way:

The traditional Chinese urban planning principle focuses on the horizontal layout rather than the general height level, so I think those characters' current qualities (in the inner-city area) are just fine. (On-site Local-14)

Most buildings cannot be too high since the original height of basic residential houses are just one floor, and more buildings with more than two floors could damage the overall image and sense of the city core. (Off-site Local-01)

The limitation of all the buildings within this inner urban core is reasonable. My hometown is a historical city, and most buildings are one or two storeys, and there cannot have any architecture higher than the main one (landmark or built heritage). (On-site Tourist-15)

- **Building Height and Street View**

In terms of the relationship between building height and streetscape, interviewees from all three groups wished to see authentic street-view formed by low-rise houses, and the design and characteristics of building appearances could act as visual attractors or indicators of history:

I think the most vertical design and decorating details look customised, and they are too new to give me a feeling of old age. (Off-site Local-02)

Some architectural decorations and details on the roof are quite beautiful, while I wonder if they were something original or not. (On-site Tourist-29)

Moreover, the mix of different building heights (one and two-storey) acts as a method of creating a "vista of multi-layers" and "sense of pattern", while the serial visual connections of scale and balance between houses with two different heights are the key factors (Figure 4-24):

I wish to see a few multi-storey buildings, such as two or three spread in different precincts. I suppose such changes in height could create a sense of multi-layers or rhythm. (On-site Local-02)

It is good to see that most of the architecture are not too high, and some modern buildings are also impressive. However, I think their mix is confusing since they look separately and without any connection. (On-site Tourist-11)



Figure 4-24 Serial views created by single storey and two or three-storey buildings along the street delivered different feelings.

- **City Skyline**

As a major component of the visual dimension of authentic urban form, the old city skyline's presence is critical in creating or reviving the urban image. Interviewees from all three groups advised that the key to preserving the authentic skyline is to keep most of the buildings at a low height, and the reconstructed city wall acts as both the boundary of the city centre and the perfect viewpoint:

The overall height is not bad since too many high buildings could damage the skyline of this inner-city area, which is not consistent with its identity. (On-site Local-05)

When I stood on top of the Hua-yan Temple tower, it seemed most surrounding places were under rebuilt now. I came here to see the ancient urban scene, and it is a bit sad to see some old modern buildings mixed with the rebuilt architecture. (On-site Tourist-06)

In terms of the skyline, the inner-city core remained the old area bounded by the wall while many buildings, temples, and houses got expanded than their old forms, which made the new skyline a bit fatter than I thought. (Off-site Local-15)

Moreover, the comparison between the flat skyline of the ancient city and the tall outer urban skyscrapers creates another visual attraction for both on-site groups because of their locations. The different images could act as an iconic symbol of the whole city region as the comparison delivered a sense of history (Figure 4-25):

The old inner-city core needs to remain at a low height level, and I am looking forward to seeing the outside metropolitan area become better, which could provide an excellent comparison of views. (On-site Local-11)

On the other hand, it is good to compare the modern metropolitan city with skyscrapers and this old city core with low and old houses. Such a difference could pass a sense to various generations because people would miss old stuff when they grow older. (On-site Tourist-21)

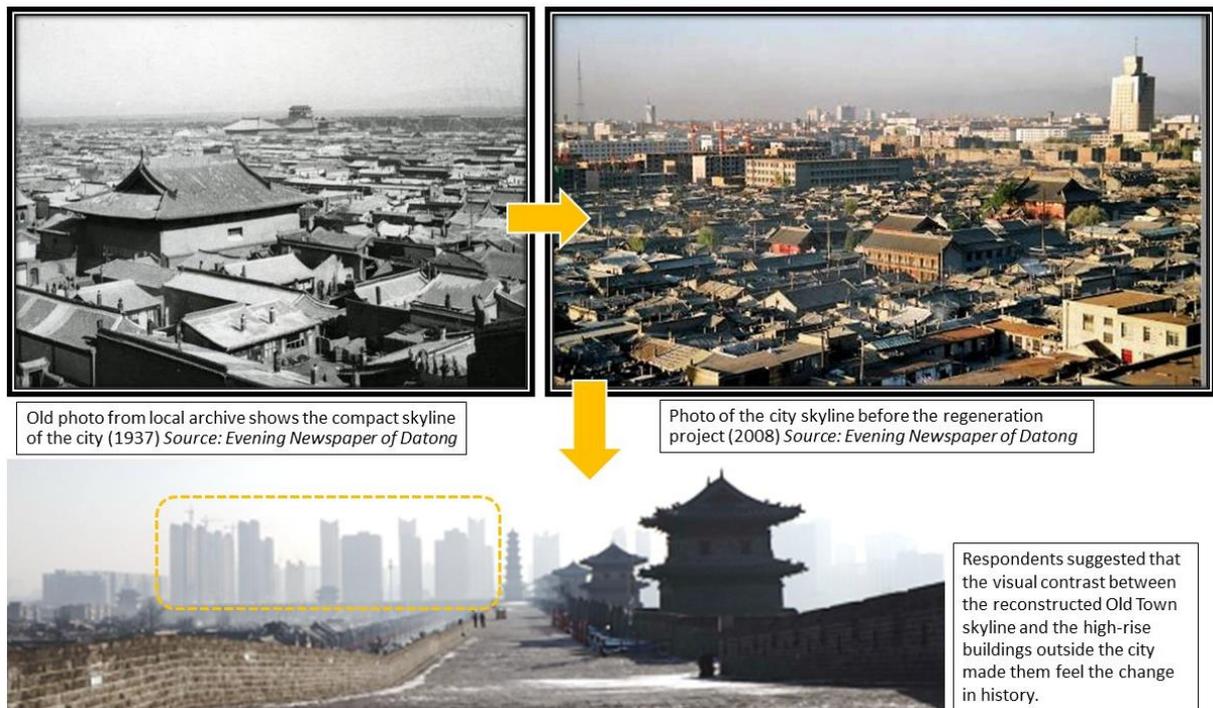


Figure 4-25 Comparison of skyline inside and out contributes to the city image.

In terms of the presence of old landmarks and built heritage, on-site participants suggested their built form and building height were the benchmarks of their precincts, which could develop a distinctive sense of diversity:

I heard the general height of all buildings in this old city cannot be higher than the Drum Tower and the Wall, blocking all built heritages and destroying the whole skyline. (On-site Local-27)

I suggest there could have multiple height standards in each section, and the height of landmark buildings or architecture in every section could act as the benchmark. (On-site Tourist-19)

Some old modern buildings look too high than preserved heritages and rebuilt architectures, so if I stand on the city wall and look at the skyline, those tall buildings might be abrupt. (On-site Tourist-23)

Furthermore, off-site local interviewees indicated that precincts with slightly different height limitations, which based on the location and building height of iconic landmarks, could create a visual structure or hierarchy of the city skyline (Figure 4-26):

I wish to have one central point with the highest height in the ancient inner-city centre. It seems most tall buildings are located decentralised at this stage (of regeneration). (Off-site Local-04)

In my opinion, specific sites like famous sightseeing locations need multi-layers and symbolic designs to enhance the view. (Off-site Local-15)



Figure 4-26 Precincts with iconic landmarks could have different visual layers

4.2.7 The preferred route for visiting the old urban centre

The final section of this part – built environment and physical settings – aims to investigate the preferred routes of the different groups of respondents when visiting the city. Moreover, views and evaluations of users' selected travelling routes, in aspects of design quality, visual aesthetics, and functions, are critical in providing valuable assessments for urban regeneration. As most streets and spaces are designed for pedestrians, the responses to these questions in the urban spaces will illustrate the movement from different groups of participants.

4.2.7.1 Preference and assessment of travelling routes – on-site local respondents

According to the responses from local users, local respondents paid more attention to the function of different spaces and the state of environmental improvement (Figure 4-27). Places for gathering and social activities as the primary destinations were requested by many respondents. Moreover, the reconstructed city wall was considered a perfect viewpoint for visitors who wish to enjoy the whole picture of the old city. Precincts of Drum Tower and Hua-Yan temple focused on restoration and design in the early stage of the urban regeneration project, and they became the most attractive sites for the interviewees. In addition to those two significant sites, the southern half of the old city was the

places for people when taking a rest, while the lack of people attractor (events or shows) shows a negative influence on the evaluation of gathering spaces. Through several major gathering places in the Hua-yan Temple and Drum Tower area, respondents suggested the unified building appearances is necessary to create "the sense of order" (On-site Local-04). Besides the city wall, most respondents selected their walking routes in the south half of the old city, and the mix of new-built houses with traditional architectural styles and remaining modern flats is the primary concern for many visitors.

For those who did not have a specific route, the improved physical environment was confirmed as a necessary factor, while the lack of people attractor was the critical issue:

I feel that the overall atmosphere in town is gradually becoming stronger, but the areas that are not yet fully built look very cluttered. (On-site Local-27)

Due to my work's nature (tourist guide), I'm a bit tired of seeing the old buildings, and I'd still like to see more attractive activities. (On-site Local-22)

In summary, local respondents did not have a clear itinerary and were more concerned with their destination or activity area. The influential factors and elements were shown in the three-dimensional view of the old city (Figure 4-28):

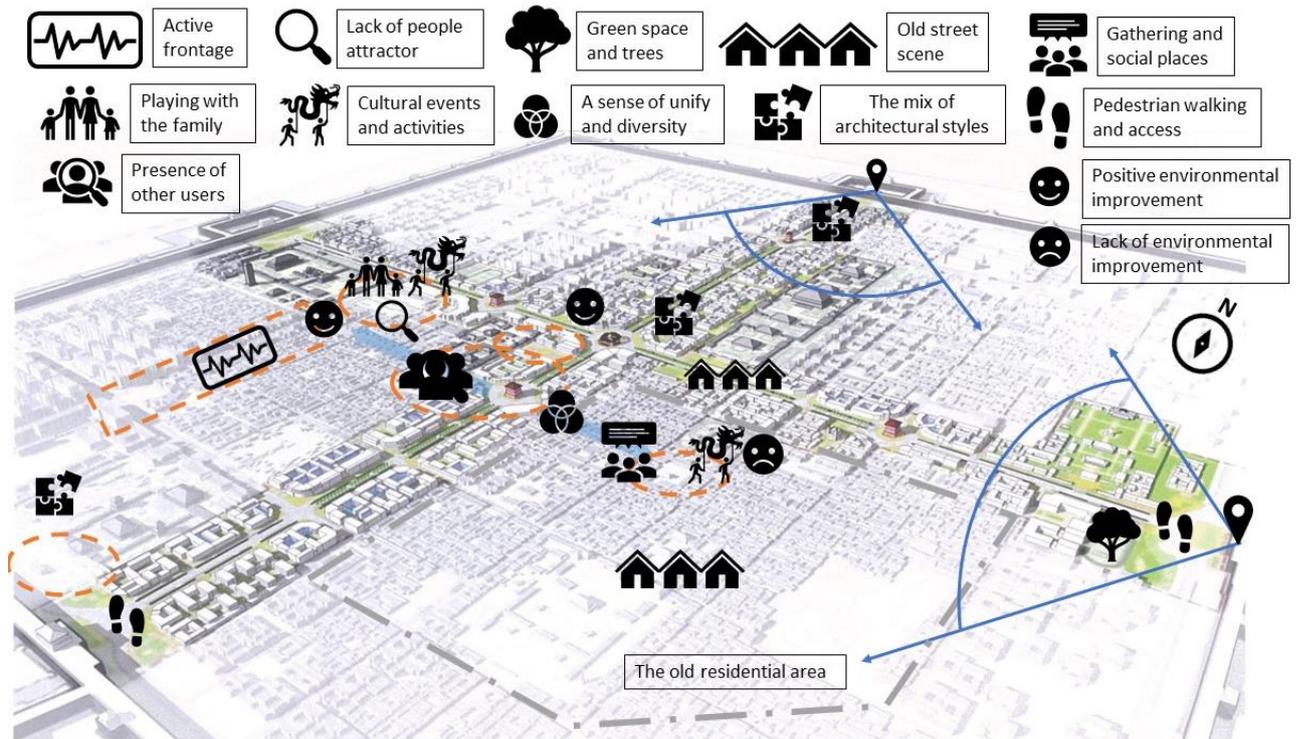


Figure 4-28 Factors and elements from responses of on-site local interviewees.

4.2.7.2 Preference and assessment of travelling routes – on-site tourist respondents

The walking routes chosen by the on-site tourist respondents are concentrated in the southern half of the Old Town. In contrast to local users' choices, most respondents' choices were based on the fixed routes of tour operators concentrating on the Nine-Dragon Screen, the Drum Tower, the Shan-Hua Temple and the Hua-Yan Temple (Figure 4-29).

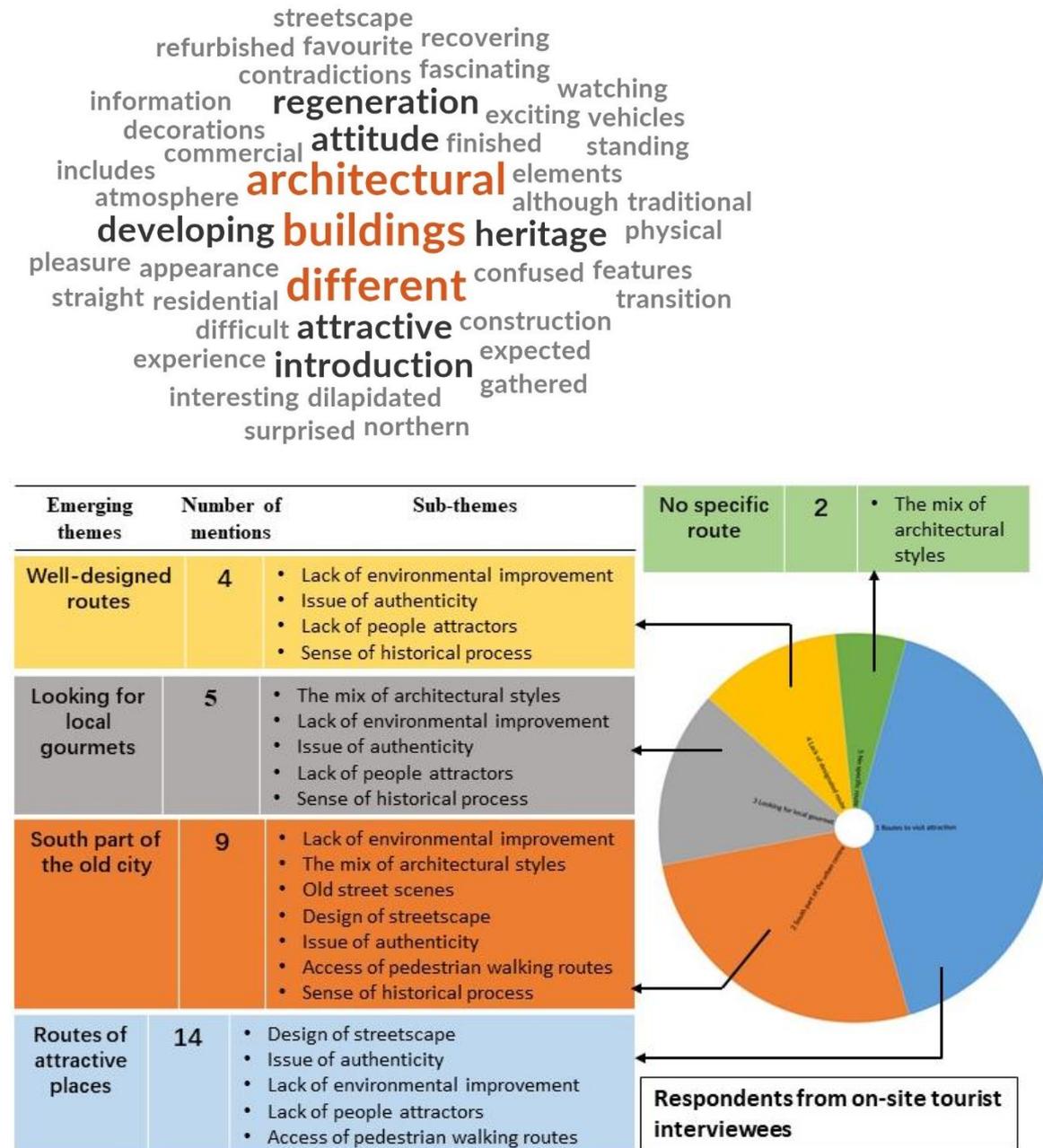


Figure 4-29 Word Cloud and categories of results from on-site tourist respondents

Many respondents mentioned lack of people attractor as they intended to find more interesting and unique characters that could "make us stop and explore more elements of the destination" (On-site

Tourist–04 & 14). Part of the tourist participants came to the sites by tour bus, which let them not have too much to say about assessing the overall pedestrian system. On the primary walking routes, the mix of different architectural styles confused tourist participants. Some of them were not familiar with the developing process of the old city – *"The mix and difference between build heritage, such as the Nine-Dragon Screen, and brand-new reconstructed buildings is very confusing"* (On-site Tourist–20). Moreover, tourist respondents complained about the lack of necessary improvement in several iconic landmarks and their surroundings:

The Nine-Dragon Screen needs a better plan. I was surprised to see such a beautiful heritage hidden in a small and dilapidated yard without any decorations or proper introduction of its background. (On-site Tourist – 11)

I think there should be some more exciting things like introductions instead of only standing here and watching the screen. (On-site Tourist – 22)

Sense of history and authenticity issues were common themes mentioned by respondents in their choices of different routes or views. Building appearances and preservation of old houses are the key components in forming an authentic presentation of local history, which was a way of showing the developing trail of the city:

The old residential area and this street have a similar architectural style but with different ages, which made me feel like exploring more. (On-site Tourist – 03)

I suppose there should have old residential areas in this inner-city core, and walking through those places, as I did in Pingyao, can be quite fun as having an experience in the past. (On-site Tourist – 09)

I wish to see the evolving pattern and developing trail of this city, but from what I can see now, most places look unreal as the rebuilt building appearances are all too similar. (On-site Tourist – 14)

Several issues made by the unfinished regeneration project – lack of environmental improvement, the mix of architectural styles, presentation of local history – were the main reasons for visitors' dissatisfaction with the design of the tours. Most respondents assessed aspects of the Old Town are based on their visual perceptions, with only a few participants citing the impact of the music played in the shops on the street on their experience of visiting – *"there are so many stores playing very loud and noisy music, which is not what I have expected to feel in a traditional Chinese city"* (On-site Tourist–17).

As one of the main features of the region, the food has a large appeal to many visitors. The survey results show that the environment and character of the surroundings also impact the experience of

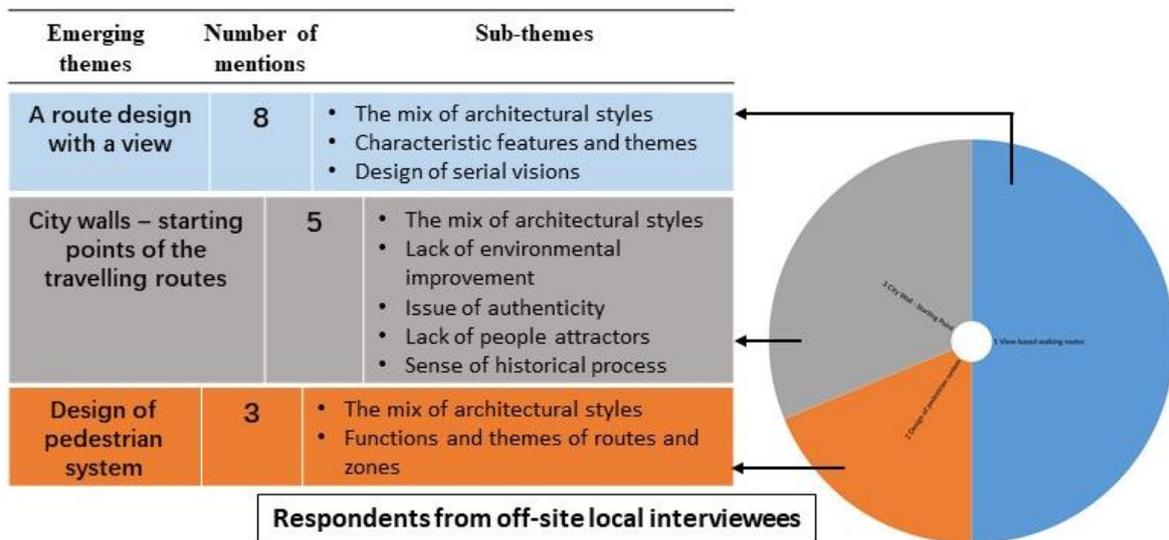


Figure 4-31 Categories of the results from off-site respondents.

Some of the respondents considered the city wall as their starting point of the whole route because standing on the wall could have a great view of the whole city. Instead of walking around the city wall, respondents suggested that they would then move to the specific sites in accordance with their choices:

I would like to get on the wall first to have a magnificent view of the whole city centre. Then I will start wondering about every small part while enjoying the good food. (Off-site Local-08)

The first stop would be the city wall since I can have an excellent overall view of the whole inner-city core. After that, I prefer going to the Drum Tower and HY Square because they are lively places. Furthermore, the new-built North-West district should become a new attraction. (Off-site Local-13)

The design of the pedestrian system and the view-based walking routes were affected by three primary factors – the mix of architectural styles along the routes, the function and characters of different routes, and the design of serial vision. According to the responses, a unified architectural style in the old city contributes to a unified sense which helps to improve visitors’ experiences, while the mix of modern ones could deliver an image of diversity:

There are not any other attractions besides those temples, and I wish to see some more modern styled stores or facades mixed with traditional houses. (Off-site Local-10)

I cannot feel a solid feeling of unified historical sense, which was resulted from the mix of old modern buildings and rebuilt architecture. (off-site Local-11)

Based on the unified street view, the design of different routes should focus on the presentation of multiple characteristic features. Moreover, such a design process should integrate with the old function of each street or route – historical landmarks, cultural presentations, and shopping. The

influential factors and elements were shown in the three-dimensional view of the old city (Figure 4-32):

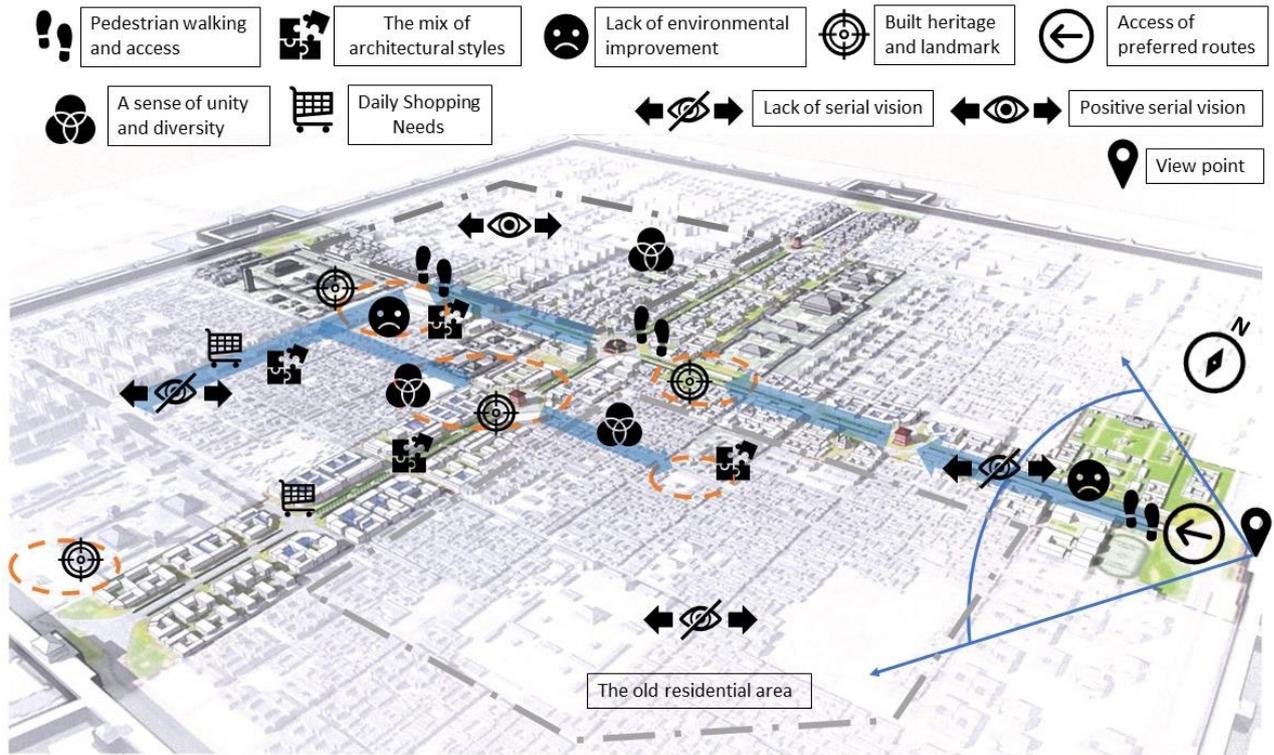


Figure 4-32 factors and elements from responses of off-site local interviewees

4.2.8 Summary of analysis – built form and physical settings

The analysis of this section focused on the design quality of public open spaces – streets, squares, and spaces around the building. In addition to the visual aesthetic of designing public spaces, the analysis explored how places work to meet the needs of different users. Based on the analysis of the results in this section – urban built form and physical settings, several main theoretical frameworks are derived: influential factors of designing the streetscape, user preference for spatial scale and perception of spatial change, the relationship between the constituent elements of urban form and the formation of the urban image.

4.2.8.1 Influential factors of designing the streetscape

The streetscape design is critical in influencing local users' and visitors' experiences and feelings, and the design quality of facades and presence of active frontages contribute to the expression of local history and cultural resources and improve the urban vitality. According to the conceptual framework organised in this section, the researcher has identified connections and interactions between various factors (Figure 4-33):

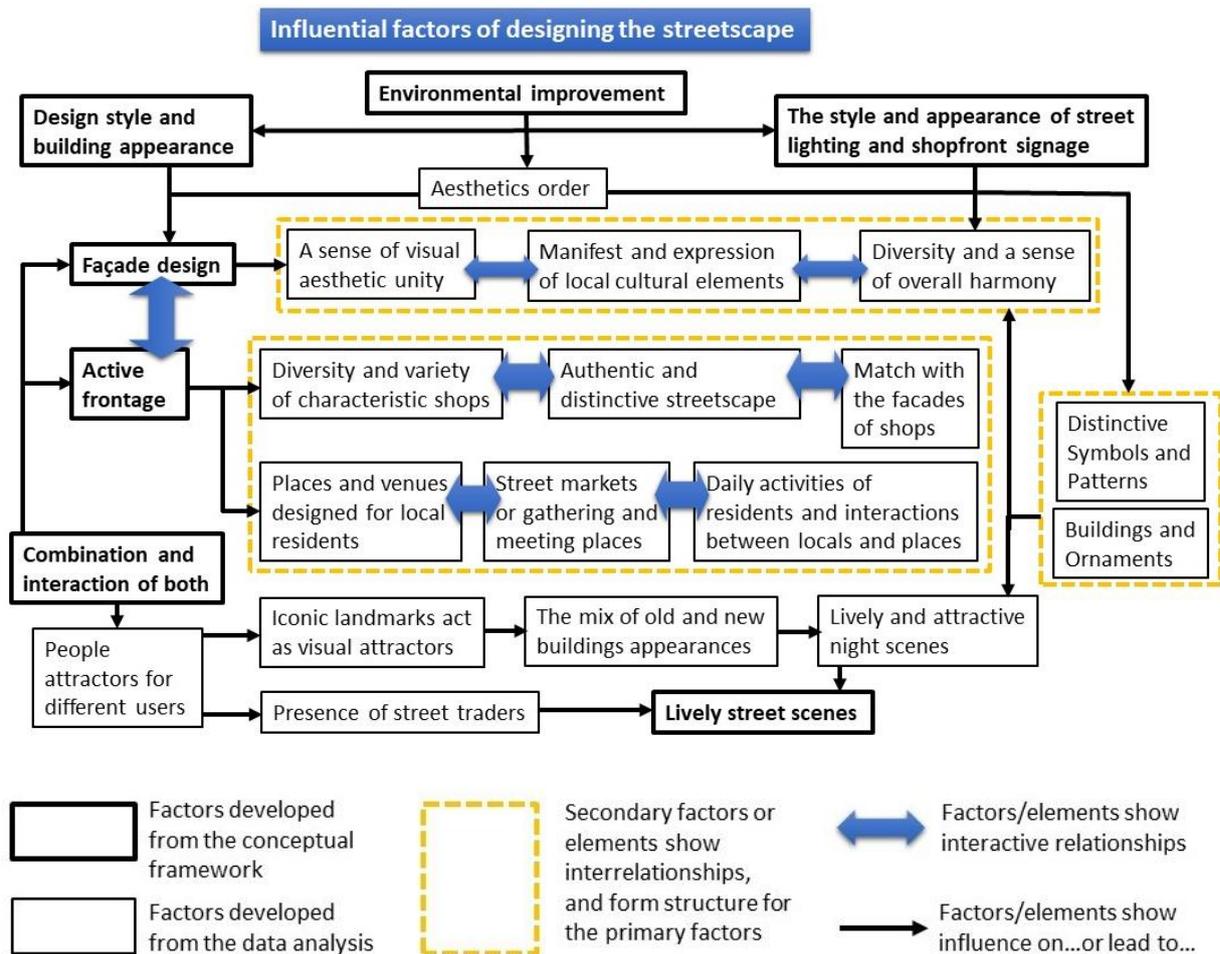


Figure 4-33 influential factors of designing the streetscape

- In general, the culture and tourism-led urban regeneration project had led to significant improvement of the urban environment. In the aspect of design style and building appearance of streetscapes, the key to integrating local historical and cultural elements is to **use visual aesthetic expressions**.
- The design of facades needs to integrate with street settings – street furniture, signages and advertisements, streetlights and illuminations. **The presence of distinctive symbols, patterns, architectural decorations, or ornaments with iconic traditional style and cultural meanings could act as visual attractors while dealing with the relationship between these elements.**
- In addition to the visual aesthetic of the façade design, the diversity of characteristic shops also provides necessary attractors for different users and help to produce active frontage. **The presence of street vendors also acts as active actors in creating lively street scenes.** Moreover, **street markets and well-designed resting places** (open and semi-open spaces) **create opportunities for local users and tourists to interact** (conservations or participating in the same events).

- The combination and interaction between façade design and active frontage should focus on reproducing authentic street scenes, which is formed by both **shops and venues** (such as traditional dining places, street markets and groceries) **with traditional character features and new types of places to meet the needs of the public** (café, bars, fast food, and stores from high streets). In the meantime, the design style and building appearance of different venues and shops need to illustrate their characteristics while preserving the unified feeling of visual aesthetic.
- The mix of old and new building appearances, which is formed by reconstructed buildings with traditional architectural styles, ancient built heritage, and old houses with modern style, can be found in many parts of the old urban centre. Each group of participants suggested such **a mix of different buildings could affect the visual perception of unified feeling**, while many interviewees advised that buildings of different periods help to **indicate the development and history of the city**.

4.2.8.2 User preference for spatial scale and perception of spatial change

Before implementing the urban regeneration, the primary public open spaces in the old urban centre were street spaces. However, as more squares were built and took over the old streets, it is necessary to explore the spatial relationship between the preserved urban fabric and new large spaces from different users' perspectives. Moreover, resident's and visitors' preferences and feelings of roaming in sites of different scales help to assess the design quality of travelling routes and streetscape (Figure 4-34):

- **Both narrow streets and alleys are basic and original components of the urban form and fabric**, while the reconstruction of these elements needs to consider the preservation of old streetscapes and scales. On the other hand, the design of new-built squares, plazas, and front yards of iconic landmarks need to draw on **the architectural style and appearance of the original street and adjacent characteristic buildings**.
- In the old days, street spaces and crossing areas were primary places for local inhabitants to conduct social interactions. According to the analysing progress, **new squares and front yards of built heritage now act as social spaces for different users**. In terms of place function, such open spaces allow people to gather and conduct social activities.
- According to users' preferences and feelings of roaming in different scales and styles, the narrow streets and alleys could provide pedestrians with the sense of exploring in old street scenes, and open spaces provide them with an open and clear vision. **How to preserve the scale of old streets and combine with reconstructed public spaces is the key to creating the public realm in the traditional urban form and city layout**.

- Building height along the street significantly influenced forming characteristic street vista. Although clusters of low-rise buildings are critical in reproducing the authentic urban image, **the rhythm and rhythm of the streetscape is influenced by the roof decoration, façade design, and other decorative elements under the low-rise buildings.**

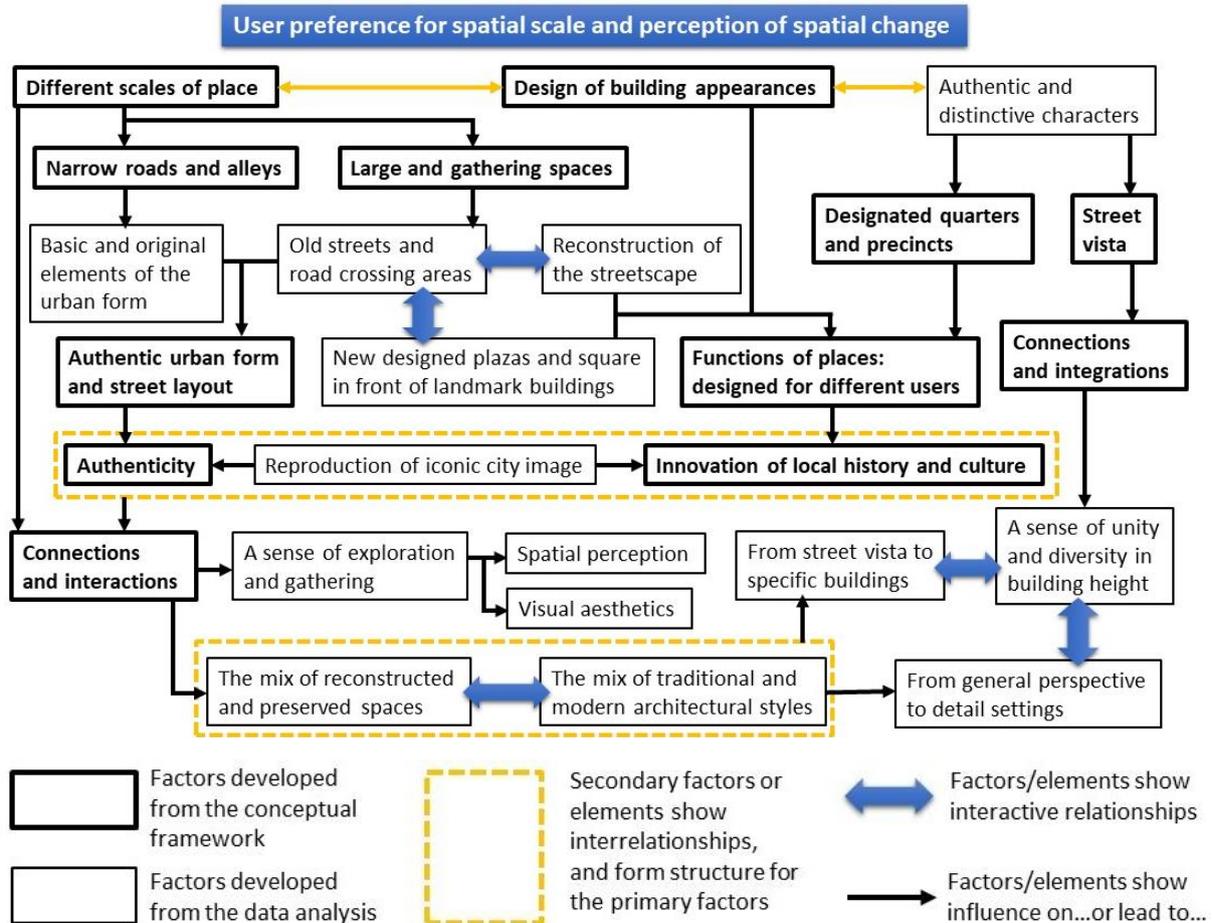


Figure 4-34 user preference for spatial scale and perception of spatial change.

4.2.8.3 Integration of different elements of urban form in the formation of city image

As the most fundamental and important aspect of the urban regeneration project, change and improvement of urban form and physical environment played an important role in influencing the imagery of the city. The environmental improvement has been accompanied by a reduction in the height of most buildings, resulting in a change in the city skyline. Moreover, elements of the built form and physical settings should integrate with local history and culture to strengthen the sense of place (Figure 4-35):

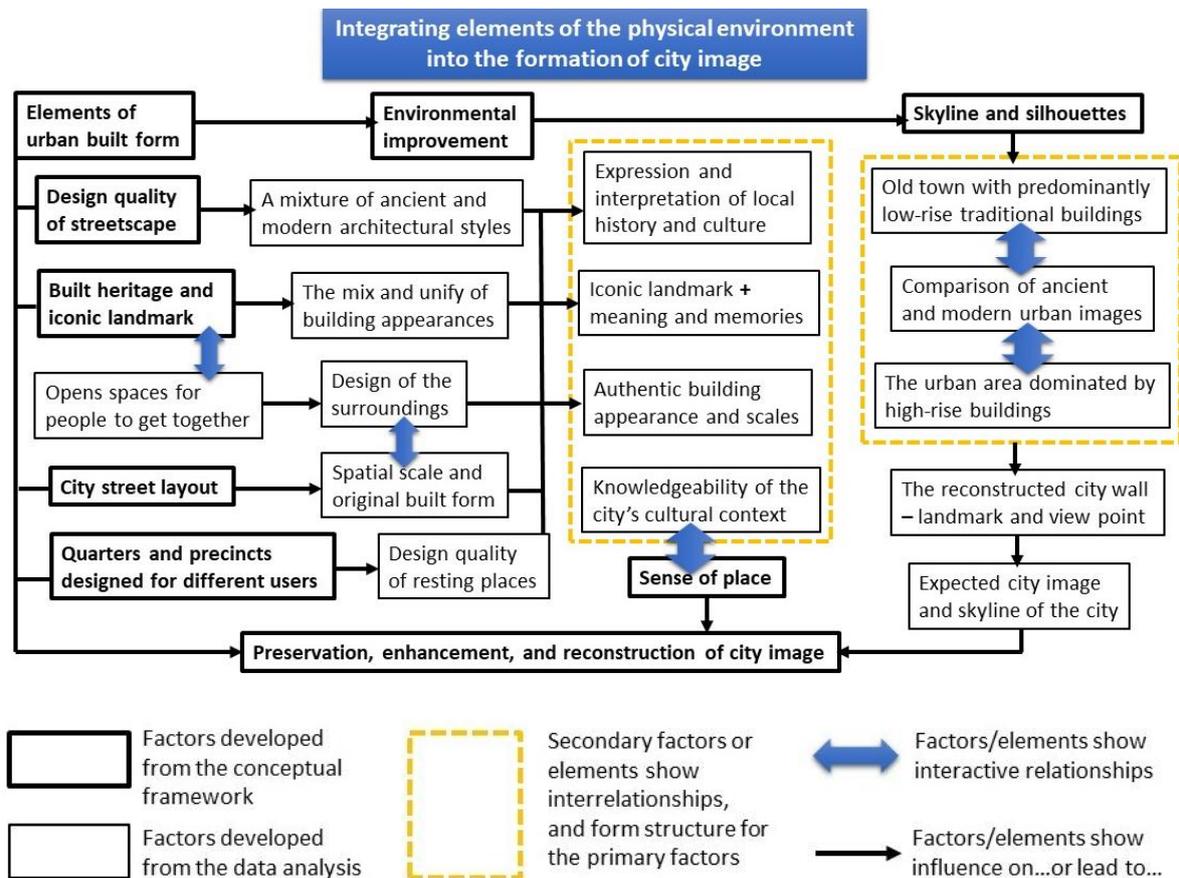


Figure 4-35 Integrating elements of the physical environment into the formation of city image

- The streetscape's design quality should draw on the adjacent built heritage and iconic landmark, and the old street layout and urban fabric should get properly preserved as much as possible. **Therefore, setting zones and quarters based on functional, historical, and cultural characteristics are considered an important planning strategy.**
- Aesthetic appreciation and preferences of different users showed significant relationships with the design style of facades, the mix of building appearances, the spatial scales, and the sense of unifying. In addition, responses indicated that the components of intuitive capacity for aesthetic appreciation – **the sense of rhyme and pattern, appreciation of rhythm, and recognition of balance and unity** – link closely to the expression and knowledgeability of local history and culture tangibly and visibly.
- The skyline and silhouette of the city and street vistas contribute to the enhancement of the city image, while **the setting and design of the viewpoint are critical in providing viewers with a stronger feeling and wide-open view of the old urban centre.** Furthermore, the layering of the skyline, which is formed by different building heights and tall landmarks, and **the contrast between inside and outside the old city play a key role in deepening the urban imagery.**

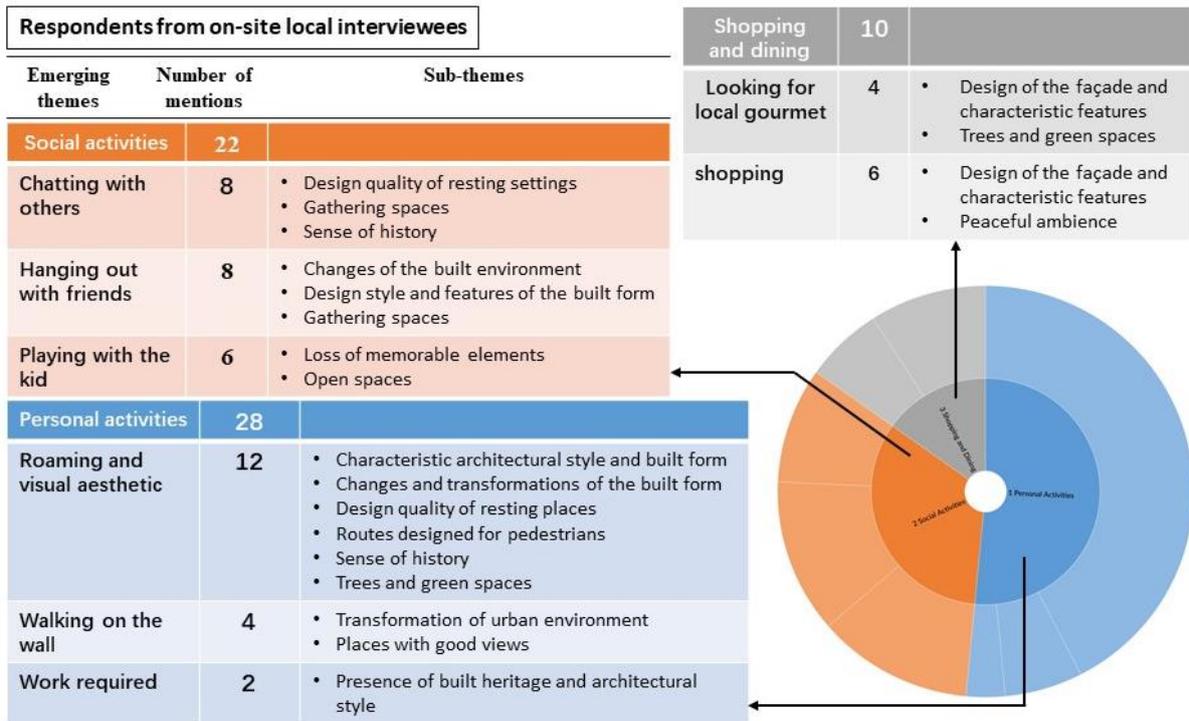


Figure 4-36 Word Cloud and categories of On-site Locals' responses – Activities and influential factors

4.3.1.1 Activities and Influential Factors of On-site Local Users

Three categories were identified from responses of local users – personal activities, social activities, shopping and dining. Local users who prefer walking and roaming in the case study areas by themselves were affected by factors of ancient design style and changes of built form (building appearance, streetscape, and open spaces), quality of resting places, and the historical sense of place. Although most buildings with ancient formations were built or recovered, their qualities and design style still act as critical factors that affect their roaming experiences:

I prefer roaming in this inner-city while keeping an eye on what kind of elements have changed, disappeared, or got created along my route. (On-site Local–05)

There is nothing too much to see. Many architectural details and decorations got worn out already from my observation. (On-site Local–06)

We enjoy wandering in the city and taking a break in this roofed gallery, and you cannot imagine doing this here in the old days with the horrible environment. (On-site Local–07)

The old-style buildings and spaces combining with activities could attract a lot of visitors to come here. (On-site Local–15)

The presence of trees and green spaces and designed route for pedestrians were advised by individual participants as elements that could help to improve their walking experiences. The historical sense of

the city could get identified from terms of "historical feeling", "lovely ambience", and "atmosphere" from various responses, and interviewees considered enjoying those senses as their motivation. One interviewee who works as a tour guide in the ancient city area complained about the unfinished regeneration project. However, he still agreed that "*the recovered built form attract tourists to see the reconstructed buildings and experience the urban form*" (On-site Local-22).

Findings from interviews conducted on the city wall showed that locals prefer walking on it because the wall "*is a perfect location for people to take a walk while enjoying the open view of the ancient city*" (On-site Local-02). Furthermore, observing the skyline of the city centre provided them with a "historical ambience" as well, and to find out "*the changing and developing process of the whole project*" (On-site Local-01) is also fun for them.

For interviewees who liked to hang out with friends or play with their children, the presence of open spaces and quality of resting places are the most influential factors:

In the old days, we could not find a nice open space to have a seat, so it is good to see more places like here. (On-site Local-15)

This place and its surroundings are unique, so I like to bring my friends here, which makes me feel proud. (On-site Local-17)

A place large enough for us to get together and chat with each other is good enough, while if we could see more shows or similar activities here, it should be better. (On-site Local-19)

According to responses from interviewees, who prefer chatting with others or playing with kids in open squares, the sense of history acts as "*what an ancient city should have*" (On-site Local-03). Moreover, such a feeling could also create an "*improved environment of sitting among historical elements while watching kids playing*" (On-site Local-14) (Figure 4-37). Changes in built form during the regeneration and urban development act as attractions for old users who prefer chatting with others. In contrast, one local who lived in the city centre indicated the development of the old residential district "*does not look familiar anymore compared with the image in my childhood*" (On-site Local-14).

At last, interviewees preferred shopping and looking for local food intended to pay attention to the characteristic built form, as "*the beautiful buildings and preserved built heritage*" made the way to their destinations "fascinating to enjoy" (On-site Local-09). Furthermore, tourists suggested that roaming and strolling in "*a peaceful ambience of the ancient area*" (On-site Tourist-03) is another factor that affects their activities.



Figure 4-37 Playing with kids in open spaces with ancient style and appearance.

4.3.1.2 Activities and Influential Factors of On-site Tourist Users

In terms of on-site tourists, only two categories of their activities in the research area were identified as sightseeing only and the city's image. Based on tourists' preferred sightseeing sites, three sub-groups were mentioned in their responses – buildings, built heritage, and landmarks in the ancient city centre, sightseeing places outside the centre, and on the city wall (4-38).



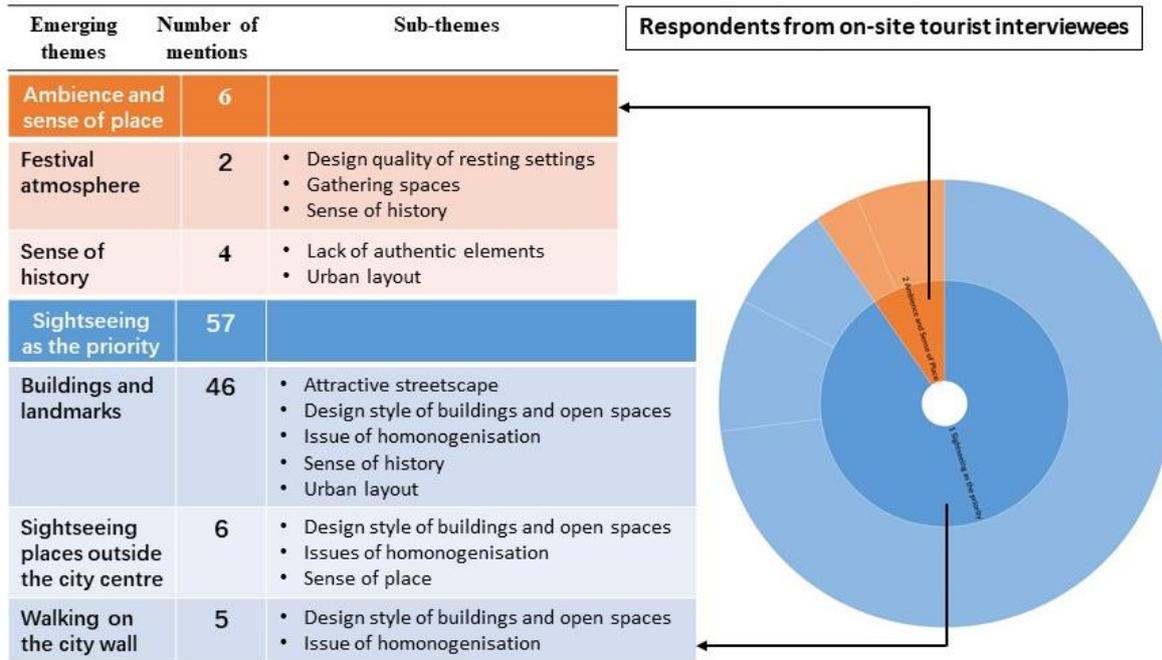


Figure 4-38 Word Cloud and Categories of on-site tourists' responses - Activities and Influential Activities.

All responses of tourist interviewees who focus on sightseeing mentioned that the ancient design style and building appearances worked as major visual attractors for them:

If the old city were as messy as in the past, I would not have the mood to enjoy the view. (On-site Tourist-02)

At least in the aspect of vision, such old design architecture and spaces are attractive. (On-site Tourists-15)

Yesterday we went to the Yun-gang Grottos, which is so amazing. The archaic Chinese urban form is the main reason we came here. (On-site Tourist-26)

The design style of the built form also leads to the theme of homogenisation as tourists wish to experience local traditional elements, which should distinguish the city from others. Furthermore, the urban layout and form were considered as significant components to create a unique city image as well:

It is necessary to preserve the original style of this old city, which will help distinguish it from other places, and such a unique urban form can provide a beautiful view as standing on the wall. (On-site Tourist-01)

It is good to take a walk in this old town, and I guess this place is similar to Zhangjiakou and some cities in Inner Mongolia as they all share the culture of the frontier fortress and nomadic culture. (On-site Tourist-06)

Sightseeing only, but the main reason I came here is to see the ancient volcano clusters outside the city, and I think this place looks just the same as other northern ancient cities. (On-site Tourist-07)

We are here to see the ancient inner-city area, and its overall layout and urban form are beautiful to us than the other so-called old towns or urban districts. (On-site Tourist-20)

Tourists had mentioned the theme of a sense of the city as they wished to encounter "authentic ambience that an ancient Chinese city should have", and responses indicated such ambience or sense of place was created by "buildings with ancient styles and appearances" (On-site Tourist-16). In contrast, others complained, "*the image does not meet his expectations*" (On-site Tourist-17) due to the lack of attractive events.

In terms of the presence of various events and users, tourist interviewees thought they could help to produce a lively street view combined with a designed streetscape:

We came to see all the built heritage and architecture, and it is good to enjoy the streetscape in such an old city centre. (On-site Tourist-11)

Although most places are full of rebuilt architecture, it still offers an excellent place for younger people with all the lights and illuminations. (On-site Tourist-13)

We would like to see the original liveness formed by residents doing their daily activities, such as shopping, chatting with each other, or walking on the streets. (On-site Tourist-28)

To experience and enjoy the historical atmosphere and festivals are another category, and the presence and interpretation of local elements are the priorities. Interviewees suggested there should have more events and buildings with authentic characters. In addition to comparing the city with another world-famous heritage in the rural area, and the presence of old buildings with modern appearance is also necessary as "*they are parts of the developing process*" of the urban form (On-site Tourist-20).

4.3.1.3 Activities and Influential Factors of Off-site Local Users

Like the results of on-site local participants, responses of off-site interviewees include three categories: looking for attractive events, roaming and observing, and necessary activities (Figure 4-39).

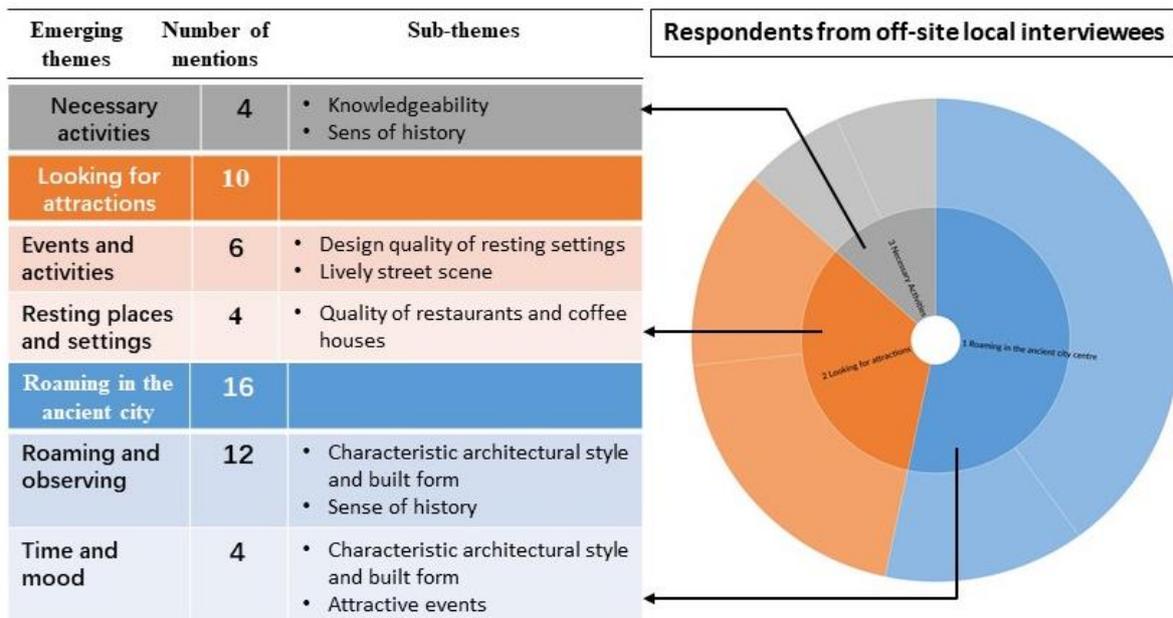


Figure 4-39 Results of off-site locals - Activities and Influential Factors.

Off-site local interviewees who would like to find and attend various events paid attention to the design and quality of built form, including café and restaurants with attractive characters:

The urban environment and atmosphere of this place are the main reasons for me to stay, and the quality and design style of the coffee also influence my mood. (Off-site Local-06)

I would come here to do all the things you've mentioned, like going to see the Lantern Festival, meeting with friends, or wondering in different places. I think the quality of the built environment should be the priority. (Off-site Local-08)

In addition, the presence of crowds of users and events could form a lively street view for visitors, which could provide "more places and opportunities for people to stay instead of taking photos only" (Off-site Local-04).

For the group of interviewees who prefer roaming in the ancient city centre, the design style and building appearance act as the visual attractor. Moreover, the sense of history was also necessary as it has a close relationship with the ancient style and appearance of the built environment:

A good physical environment is necessary, and I enjoy the feeling of watching the city wall while walking around, which offers me a sense of history. (Off-site Local-01)

I would prefer walking around the old city area as the reconstructed built environment provides a historical ambience as wandering in the ancient city. (Off-site Local-14)

Respondents who cited mood as an influencing factor wished to see more attractive events as they are "tired with seeing (the built environment of) the inner-city area", because of the perceived loss of attractive events and venues with features (Off-site Local-13).

Several participants went to the ancient city centre because their jobs, and children's education indicated the distinctive city image acts as "a production of historical ambience compared with outer metropolis" (Off-site Local-15). The sense of historical urban image would contribute to personal experience and educational meanings when conducting their necessary activities in the city.

4.3.2 Festivals, Cultural Events, and Place Identity

The presence of festivals and traditional cultural events are critical components of an ancient city. This section aims to explore how the variety of events would contribute to the formation of different users' experiences in the research area. On the other hand, how would traditional festivals with distinctive characteristics help enhance or renovate the city's historical identity is another section that would get discussed in this section.

4.3.2.1 Presence of Shows and Street Performances

As the basic elements and most common types of events, traditional shows and street performances can produce various temporary attractive spots to attract different visitors (Figure 4-40). The first question of this section aims to obtain opinions from all groups of interviewees about the quality, characteristics, and arrangement of such shows and performances.



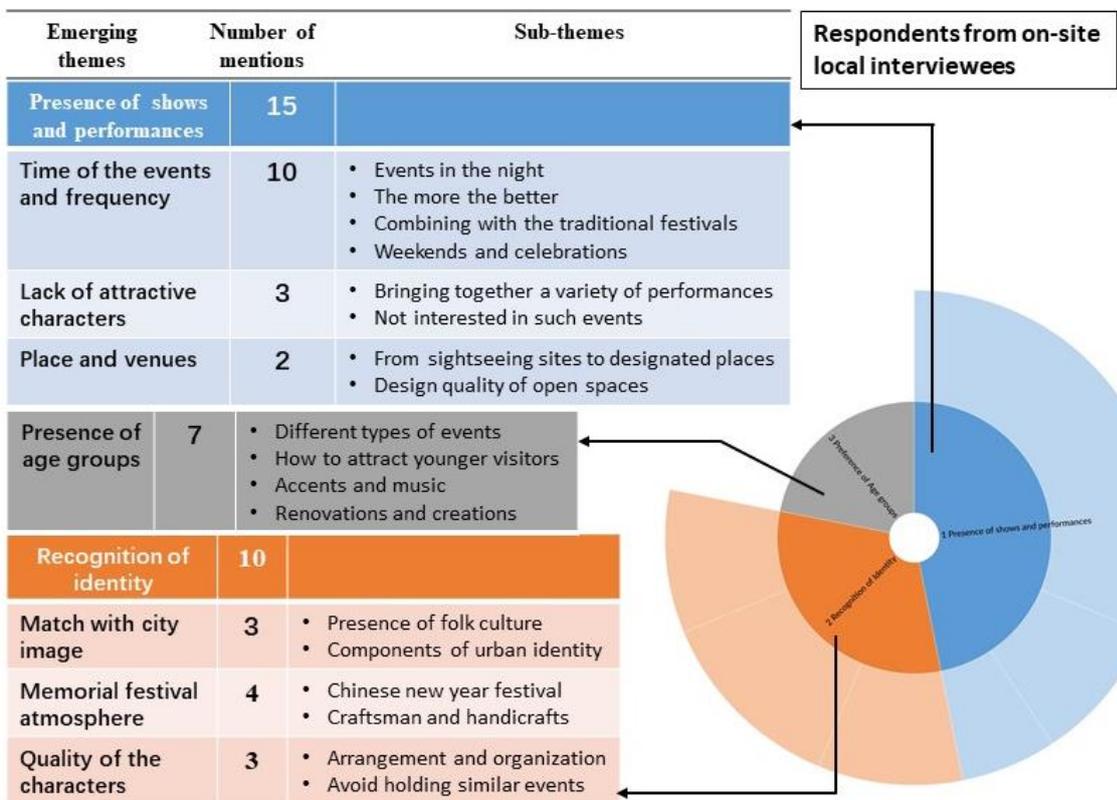
Word cloud generated from the respondents of on-site local interviewees.



Word cloud generated from the respondents of on-site tourist interviewees.



Word cloud generated from the respondents of off-site local interviewees.



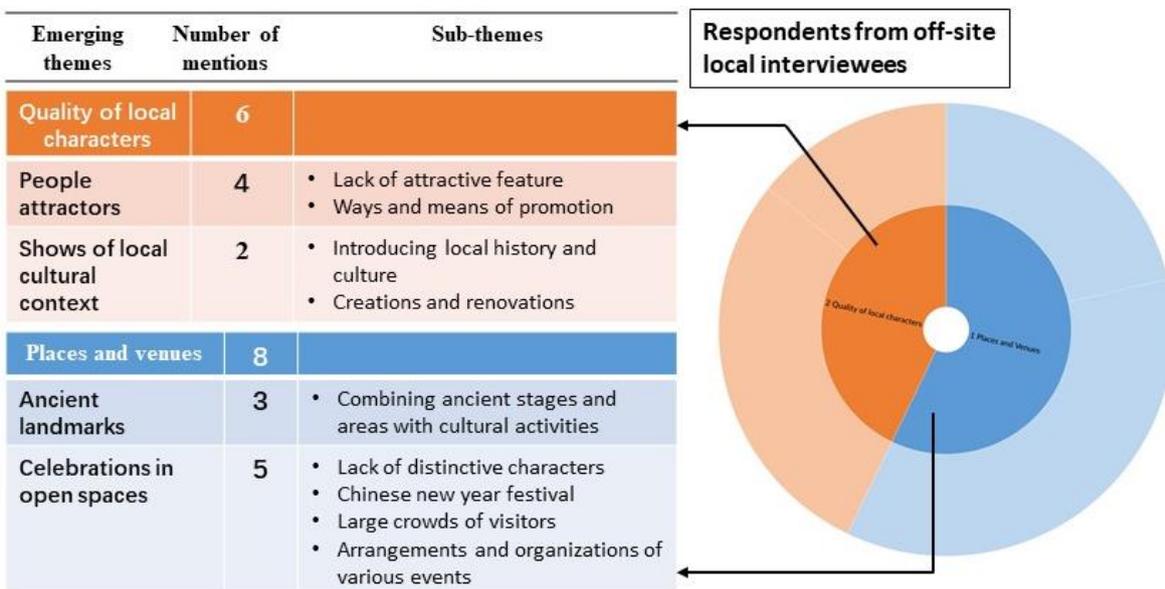
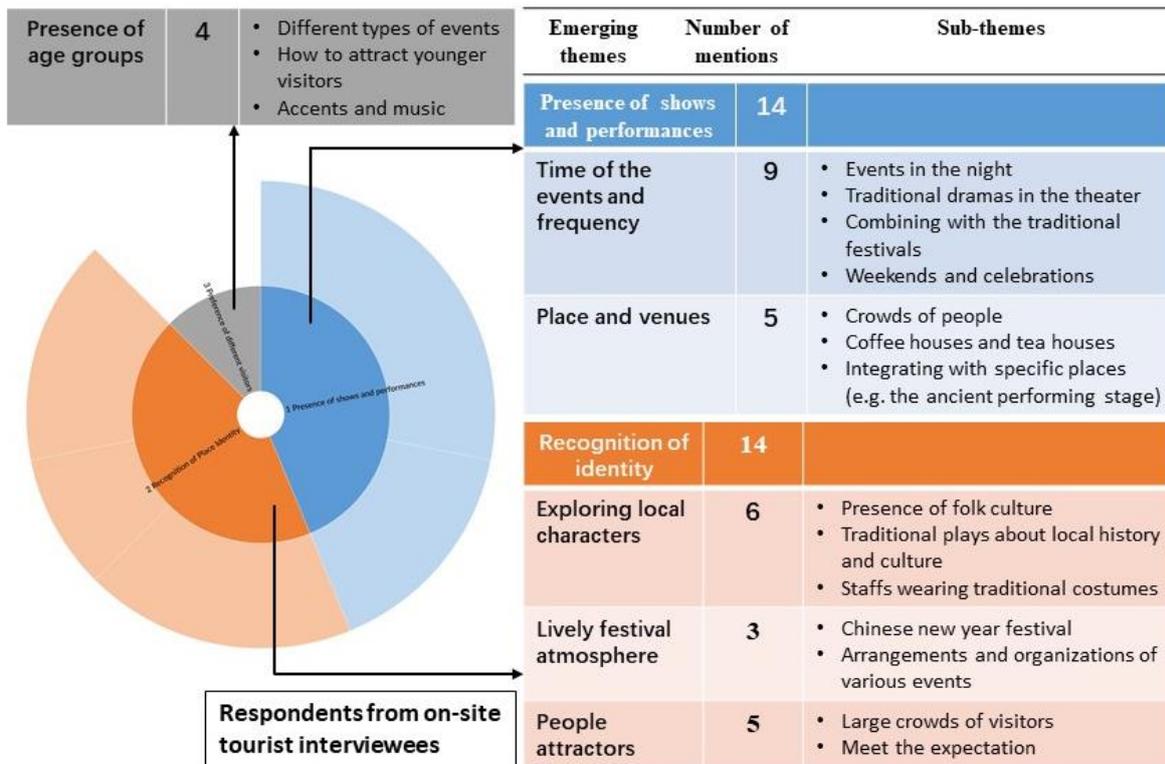


Figure 4-40 Word Cloud and Categories – Shows and Performances.

Presence of Shows and Performances

Responses of both on-site local and tourist interviewees include three aspects – Presence of shows and performances, recognition of place identity, and preference of different age groups. Local participants mentioned the theme of holding time and frequency of small shows and street performances as they wish to encounter more events on the weekends than only witnessing them in festival periods.

I think most shows would hold in the first month of the traditional Chinese calendar (the Spring Festival), but I could not see any of them at other times. (On-site Local-09)

Last week I saw several shows held in the recovered Palace of Princess Dai, but I think there should have some more kinds of events at the weekends. (On-site Local-11)

On the other hand, a higher frequency of such events each weekend acts as another way to form attractions for users to visit the ancient city centre.

I do not have much time to check them because of my job, but I wish shows and performances could become more frequent, such as during off-work or on weekends. (On-site Local-10)

I have heard that there are some during January (Traditional Chinese Calendar), and I wish to see more events and activities of folk culture more frequent. (On-site Local-22)

Results of on-site tourists also include the theme of holding time and frequency, and most tourist interviewees complained about the lack of various shows and performances, and their responses advised the term "*holding time*" is a crucial factor:

I have not seen any of them since it is not the right time (Spring Festival), and I wish to see more on weekends. (On-site Tourist-02)

There should have more shows and performances at different times for tourists like us, such as weekends. (On-site Tourist-12)

I saw some events here today (on the square), but I'm afraid you can only see them at this specific time. (On-site Tourist-16)

I did not see any other events or activities conducted or even information about those. Maybe it is not the right time. (On-site Tourist-18)

Events and Built Environment

The theme of *places and venues for events* is critical for tourists as they look for attractive events "*interacting with built environment*" (On-site Tourist-09). According to local interviewees, ancient landmarks with large and open front yards, such as the ancient performance stage, Hua-Yan square, and plaza surrounded by the city wall, are interactive places for various events in festivals and celebrations. The arrangement of all the small shows and performances is necessary to "*gather them together to form celebrations of festivals or carnivals*" (On-site Local-22), which could help to produce a major event and attract visitors. Under such context, several local interviewees thought the priority of organising all the shows and performances is to "*interact with local famous sightseeing places*" (On-site Local-24), which are the major attractions for most visitors. In the physical environment aspect, sightseeing sites with surrounding open spaces could "*provide suitable venues for*

various activities and events" (On-site Local–24) as such spaces can contain large numbers of people. Another interviewee also indicated that *"it is good to see crowds of people getting together and enjoy the shows"* (Off-site Local–13) in those well-designed spaces. How to utilise indoor places such as traditional tea houses and bars to hold small shows and performances is another way to produce *"indoor attractions with local traditional elements"* (On-site Tourist–09) in freezing winter weather.

Preference of Different Users

The preference of different users is another factor that affects participants' opinions about the quality of shows and performances. Interviewees considered the group of younger visitors as users who are eager to look for distinctive and attractive cultural characters, and responses indicated their tastes and interests could be the key to renovating some traditional elements:

I am not very fond of listening to some music performances like young ones, and those old traditional local operas are my favourite. (On-site Local–03)

I wish to see them more often, but I think they might need to have proper development to meet the taste of youngers. (On-site Local–23)

Being different from youngers, old people like traditional elements combined with quiet places with fewer visitors: *"I did enjoy watching them in the old days, but now I prefer staying at home because of my age"* (On-site Local–25). On the other hand, the theme of local accent was another influential factor, as such traditional folk shows could be difficult for some immigrants and the young generation as they *"could not fully understand some traditional dramas because of their accents"* (On-site Local–07). Moreover, according to tourist interviewees, the accent of local dramas and performances could influence their touring experience, and a tourist from Southern China indicated that *"their (performers) tones need to match with the city"* (On-site Tourist–07).

Recognition of Place Image

Responses from all three groups indicated the relationship between shows, performances, and recognising place images in three sub-themes: quality of local cultural characters, how the features match the city, and how those events contribute to the creation of memorial festival atmosphere. According to an on-site interviewee (Local–02), their *"arrangement, frequency, and location"* affected the quality of shows and performances. At the same time, events with similar characteristics should not get *"organised together in the ancient city centre around the same period"* as they could lead to the issue of homogenisation (On-site Tourists–01 & On-site Local–16). Furthermore, another interviewee suggested, *"more traditional shows and folk performances seem to match with the built*

environment" (On-site Local-16) as the integration of both contribute to the historical image that an ancient city should have (Figure 4-41).



Traditional events – folk shows and performances – could integrate with the ancient built environment in a natural way, but how about other events such as music festival or carnival?

Figure 4-41 Presence of traditional shows and performances could integrate with places and venues.

The group of off-site local participants advised that well-organised shows and performances with local cultural characteristics could act as "*driven power to show visitors the historical background and cultural context of the city*" (Off-site Local-04). The quality and arrangement of those events could attract numbers of visitors to stay in the ancient city area and look for more attractive elements. Compared with the group of locals, tourists are more interested in exploring the local historical background and cultural elements from all the shows and performances since they would contribute to their touring experiences:

We would like to see more local folk cultural elements since exploring all the distinctive characters is our goal of visiting here. (On-site Tourist-01)

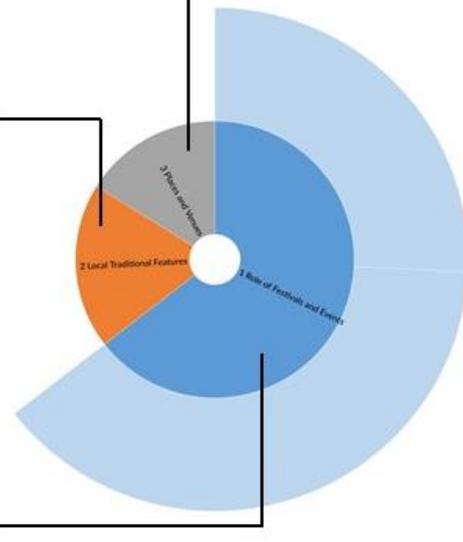
I have seen several of those performances, but it seems they are too common to show the local features. (On-site Tourist-03)

I passed by a small theatre before and wished to see some local dramas, but it closed. Every time I visit a place, the local traditional shows or dramas will always be on my list. (On-site Tourist-06)

Traditional folk events are memorable components of festival periods for many locals, such as the Chinese Spring Festival. On the other hand, participants advised that it was not the "right time" to see various shows and performances when asked about such events. In their opinion, the spring festival month is the only time for different shows and performances to get held in a higher frequency. On the other hand, another local interviewee wished to see "*more local craftsman and their handicrafts that he knew since he was a kid*" (On-site Local-21). Responses from tourists also suggested that the

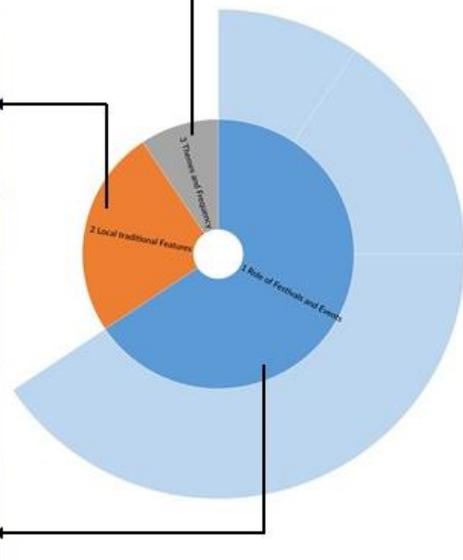
Emerging themes	Number of mentions	Sub-themes
Places and venues	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combination of spaces and events A variety of places and events designed for different users
Local traditional characters	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration of traditional elements Avoid holding many similar events and activities Specific time and frequency
Role of festivals and events	20	
Festival atmosphere	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The more the better Combining with the traditional festivals Weekends and celebrations
Symbolic traditional event	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need major ones to act as the driving power Innovation of traditional celebrations

Respondents from on-site local interviewees



Emerging themes	Number of mentions	Sub-themes
Themes and frequency	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carnivals, traditional food markets, antique markets Attract visitors from other areas
Local traditional characters	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combining traditional events and restored built environment Reinventing the old urban scene of the past Improve the travelling experience
Role of festivals and events	20	
Catalyst for local economy	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boost local economy Arrangements of organisation of various events
Events act as people attractors	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract visitors to pay attention to other events Improve the urban vitality
Symbolic traditional events	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lantern festival Image of the city

Respondents from on-site tourist interviewees



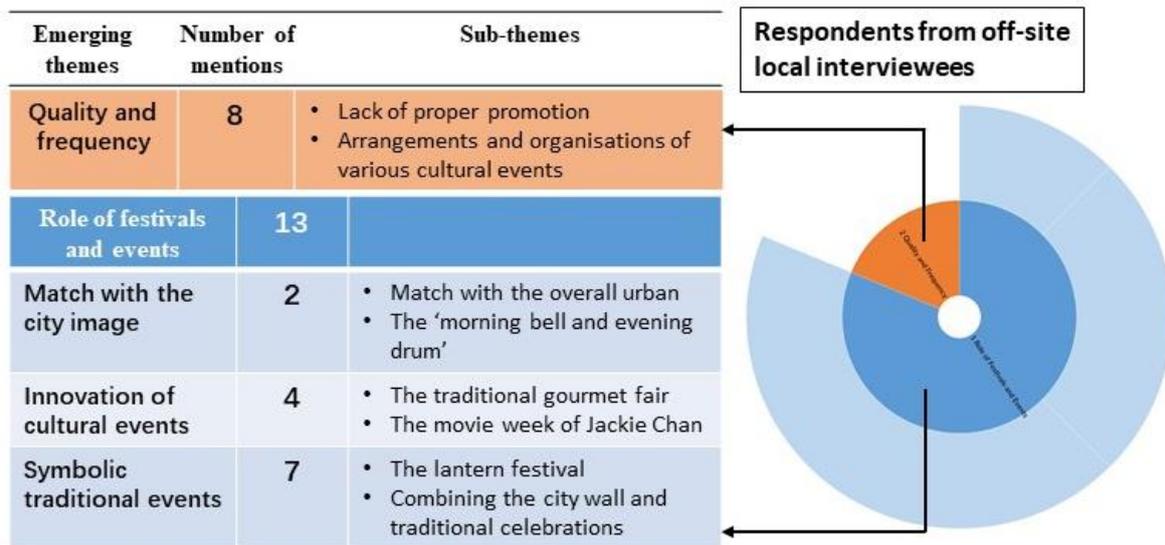


Figure 4-42 Word Cloud and Categories – Quality of Festivals and Cultural Events.

Role of Festivals and Cultural Events

Responses from all three groups fall into the same categories – the role of festivals and events, which includes various themes: traditional symbolic events, festival atmosphere, the catalyst of the local economy, people attractors, and the variety of cultural events. When asked about the most impressive festival and cultural event, participants of all three groups mentioned traditional events of the lantern festival and recovered temple fair:

The Lantern Festival is fascinating, and I have seen it several times in the past few years. (On-site Local-08)

The current Lantern Festival is quite good. There was a traditional lantern festival in my childhood, but it was very small, and the place was very crowded. (On-site Local-27)

The lantern festival is excellent as I love the combination of the city wall and traditional characters. (Off-site Local-10)

I'm not familiar with other events except for the temple fair' on January 8th (traditional Chinese calendar) and the lantern exhibition on the wall. (Off-site Local-14)

Last year I went to see the Lantern Festival on the city wall. I feel it still has some unique characters and features, and I guess the topic or theme would change every year. (On-site Tourist-06)

A couple of days ago, the Lantern Festival was very grand and impressive. (On-site Tourist-19)

Compared with groups of on-site and off-site locals, some responses from tourists showed that the lantern festival is quite famous among foreign visitors who had not seen it yet:

We did not see it because of the time, but I suppose it should look nice as enjoying various lanterns on the wall. (On-site Tourist-01)

I just heard that there was a lantern festival a couple of days ago, and it is a shame that we missed it. (On-site Tourist-08)

For on-site locals, all the traditional festivals and cultural events not only create a "good time for people to celebrate traditions" but also "attract more visitors to come and make the whole city lively" (On-site Local-06 & 29). Off-site local participants considered some new-invented events as memorable and iconic symbols, such as Film-Week of Jackie Chan and Gourmet Festival. However, they also advised that those new-invented cultural events need to "match with the overall image and ambience of the ancient city" (Off-site Local-07). An interviewee who works as a professional urban planner suggested the recovery of events "Morning Bell and Evening Drum", which are traditional ways of informing citizens the time every day, could contribute to the revival of urban image.

On-site tourists paid more attention to the characters and features of those cultural events as they are the main elements that attract their attention, and the combination of major events and small-scale shows "are necessary for the city to become alive during festival periods" (On-site Tourist-05) (Figure 4-43). Furthermore, tourists thought those characteristic major events could act as "leading power" or "catalyst" as providing opportunities for all the local shows and street performances as well as attracting large numbers of visitors to the city, which would help to "boost regional economy and consumption" (paraphrasing On-site Tourists-09 & 23).



Figure 4-43 The Lantern Festival is considered as the major cultural event with various shows and performances

Presence of Traditional Features

Responses from both on-site local and tourist participants indicated the term of local traditional characters or features, which is the key factor that influenced the quality of various cultural events as to create a "matched ambience" with the ancient city:

The lantern festival is quite good, but the Temple Fair needs more traditional and historical characters since it provides a modern sense. (On-site Local-02)

the issue is to integrate with local traditional features and characteristics. (On-site Tourist-07)

the scene of various activities or shows held in such a historical environment is unique. (On-site Tourist-11)

all the lanterns located all over the city combined with traditional music and songs made a delightful travelling experience. (On-site Tourist-17)

In terms of topic or theme of cultural events like the lantern festival, local interviewees from both on-site and off-site groups suggested it is critical to avoid holding events with similar characters and features because "*they can only integrate with specific celebrations and festivals*" (On-site Local-18 & Off-site Local-07). Tourists also wished to see more events with different themes, such as carnivals, traditional food markets, and antique markets, which could "*happen in various specific times or weekends*" to attract more visitors from surrounding regions (On-site Tourist-15).

Combining with the Built Environment

The combination of events and venues is attractive to local users as "*attending various events in a well-organised built environment with ancient architectural appearance is also an impressive character*" (On-site Local-18). On the other hand, tourist participants questioned how to choose and organise a variety of small-scale events with local features to "*recover the historical city scenes*" that is "*acceptable by the public*" (On-site Tourist-17).

4.3.2.3 Contributing to the formation of Place Image

This section explores the relationship between different cultural events and the city image from responses of all three groups of participants. Various major aspects have been identified through the classifying process of responses, such as people attractor, local character, variety of events, city identity and place image (Figure 4-44).

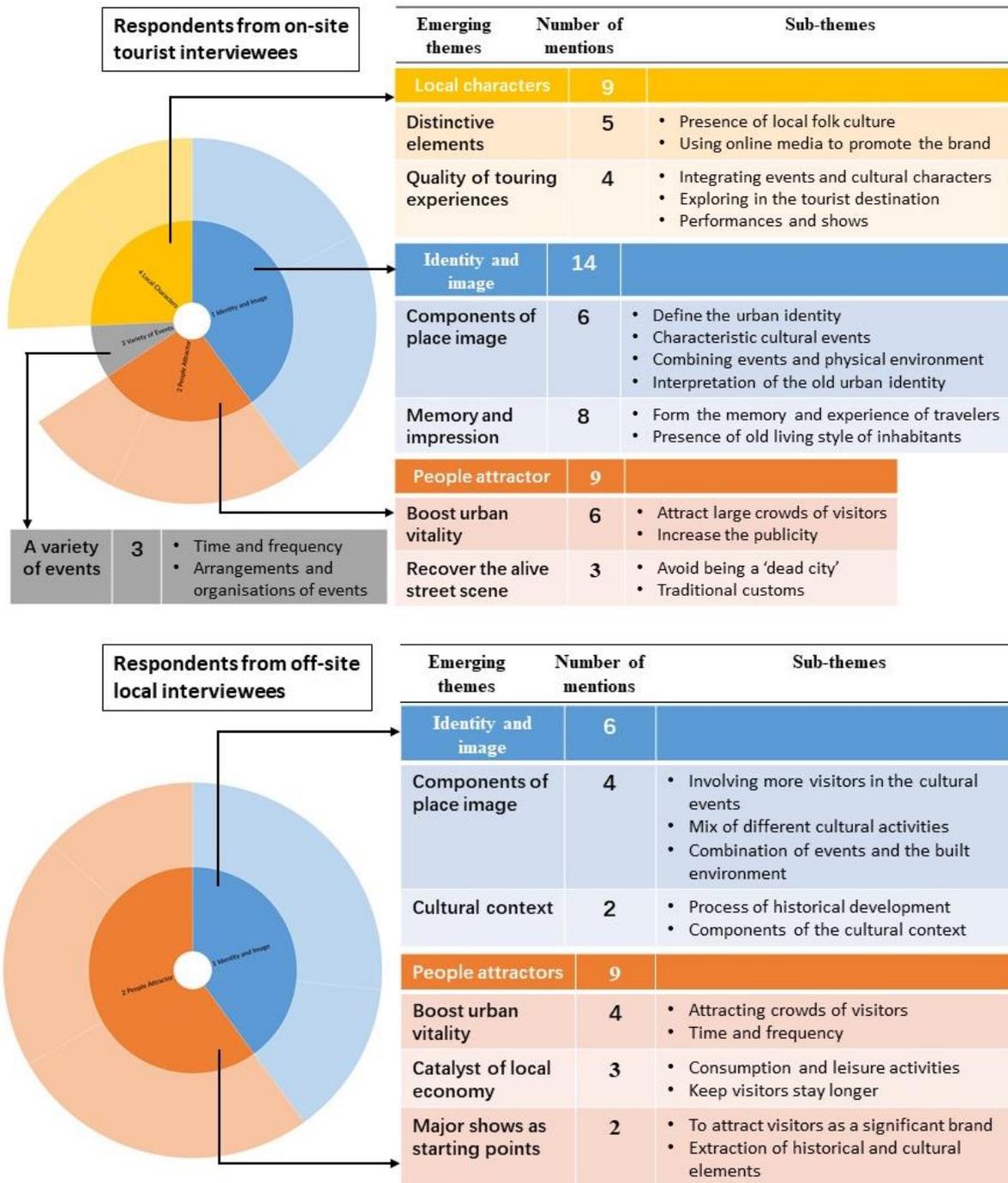


Figure 4-44 Word Cloud and Categories – Contributing to Place Image.

People Attractor

All three groups of interviewees mentioned that the presence of various events could act as necessary people attractors to bring more visitors (locals and tourists) to roam and stay in the ancient city district, which helps to boost the vitality of different places:

They are necessary to create a lively urban environment as they could attract many visitors from surrounding towns and suburbs. (On-site Local-09)

They could attract more visitors here, and nothing could be better than seeing the number of people wandering in the city core. (On-site Local-19)

More events and activities could attract large numbers of visitors, and such lively scenes will be very attractive. (Off-site Local-05)

If there were more famous events to attract large numbers of visitors, more foreign tourists would know the city. (On-site Tourist-24)

In addition to various activities conducted by visitors, participants suggested that the presence of "the hustle and bustle" images in the ancient city is also an attractive scene. Moreover, tourists advised those events with local traditional features are as necessary as recovered ancient-style buildings in terms of "*reproducing the traditional city liveliness*" (On-site Tourist-29).

Local interviewees from both on-site and off-site groups considered well-organised events with local historical and cultural elements as the "*starting points of tours in the ancient city*" (On-site Local-14) for most visitors. Major events with good quality and characteristic features that are "*extracted from local historical and cultural background*" could act as "*leading powers*" (On-site local-12) to raise visitors' interests in the city at first and bring them in, and then both local and tourist users could have more chance to explore the other parts of the city. Furthermore, large numbers of visitors roaming and staying in the city could help to boost other commercial activities such as catering, café, or other traditional handicrafts sellers (Figure 4-45).

- Could street vendors and small restaurants get enough attraction by being integrated with some major events and crowds of people?
- Street performances could form small-scaled and temporary people attractors, and interviewees thought major events could help them in various ways



Figure 4-45 Events with crowds of people could help adjacent places and small-scaled activities.

Distinctive Characters and Features

The variety of events act as a critical factor in forming place image by multiple interviewees, and on-site locals put forward the issue of personal preferences from various kinds of users:

They are quite good for people my age, but still, they might need to find ways to attract more youngers, so those traditional events could influence them and pass on to the next generation.

(On-site Local-14)

A very critical issue is the acceptance of the public. Many folk cultural performances are not so easy to get attention from most tourists because of their unique accents and simple content.

(On-site Local-23)

In addition to the issue that if the public would accept all the traditional character of local events, on-site local interviewees indicated more well-organised events with both traditional elements and renovated characters would help to improve the city image:

The old craftsman is critical to reproduce the skill and products of local handicrafts, which could become a significant major event component. (On-site Local-02)

the minority get considered to create some new events with artistic characters, such as the International Photography Festival in Pingyao and the International Drama Festival in Wuzhen. (On-site Local-14)

Compared with responses from local interviewees, tourists are interested in *the distinctive characters those events have*, which are one of the main attractions that they are looking while visiting the ancient city centre:

I do not think this old inner-city core could become the priority since I could not find any distinctive character. (On-site Tourist-07)

They will only if such events could show unique local characters, or they will be the same as the ones in other cities. (On-site Tourist-12)

According to their responses, the presence and quality of local cultural elements embedded in various events contribute to *the touring experience* as "they (cultural events and activities) are natural parts of the history and culture of this city" (On-site Tourist-23). Moreover, on-site tourists confirmed the significant influence of well-organised events. More events with good quality to integrate with celebrations and festivals could help locals "get used to such activities and start to treat them as part of their daily life" (On-site Tourist-21).

Forming Urban Identity and Place Image

Responses from various interviewees of all three groups have mentioned terms of "identity", "image", "memory", and "impression", and their opinions about how the variety of cultural events and activities would contribute to the formation and improvement of city image. Participants from on-site locals and on-site tourists suggested that various events and festivals with unique characters could become their memories and create distinctive impressions:

It should be part of our lives as living in the old city, and all those events and festivals allow us to have a memorial time and attract more visitors to here. (On-site Local-16)

Such events could help more than architecture alone to create a better impression since the whole Shanxi Province has a similar architectural style and appearance. (Off-site Local-01)

Such excellent events will become parts of our memories if they are attractive, which could form the city's overall image. (On-site Tourist-17)

Taking part in such events or activities could leave me with unique memories, which will be part of the experience and image of this place. (On-site Tourist-23)

On the other hand, responses from both on-site tourists and off-site locals highlighted the influence of characters and elements that different events and festivals have, which could make them become the key components of the city image and identity:

Compared with the physical environment, various activities and events have a better chance of interacting with visitors, which could become a significant component of their identity or image. (Off-site Local-02)

There should have many local show groups and troupes, and it is necessary to provide them with more opportunities and avenues in the inner-city core. They are essential components of local culture and could help to form the identity of our city. (Off-site Local-06)

some of those events could become major ones depending on their characteristics. All of them will help to form a lively identity of this place. (On-site Local-15)

If they could integrate with unique historical and cultural characters, such as acting as an essential frontier fortress, they would help form a significant identity. (On-site Tourist-26)

It is significant for a city to form its own identity. At the same time, I thought the general identity of Shanxi Province is all the built heritage, including ancient architecture and modern buildings. (On-site Tourist-30)

Under such context, on-site interviewees indicated that the presence of characteristic events could not only raise visitors' attraction to the city but also provide opportunities for them to "have a better

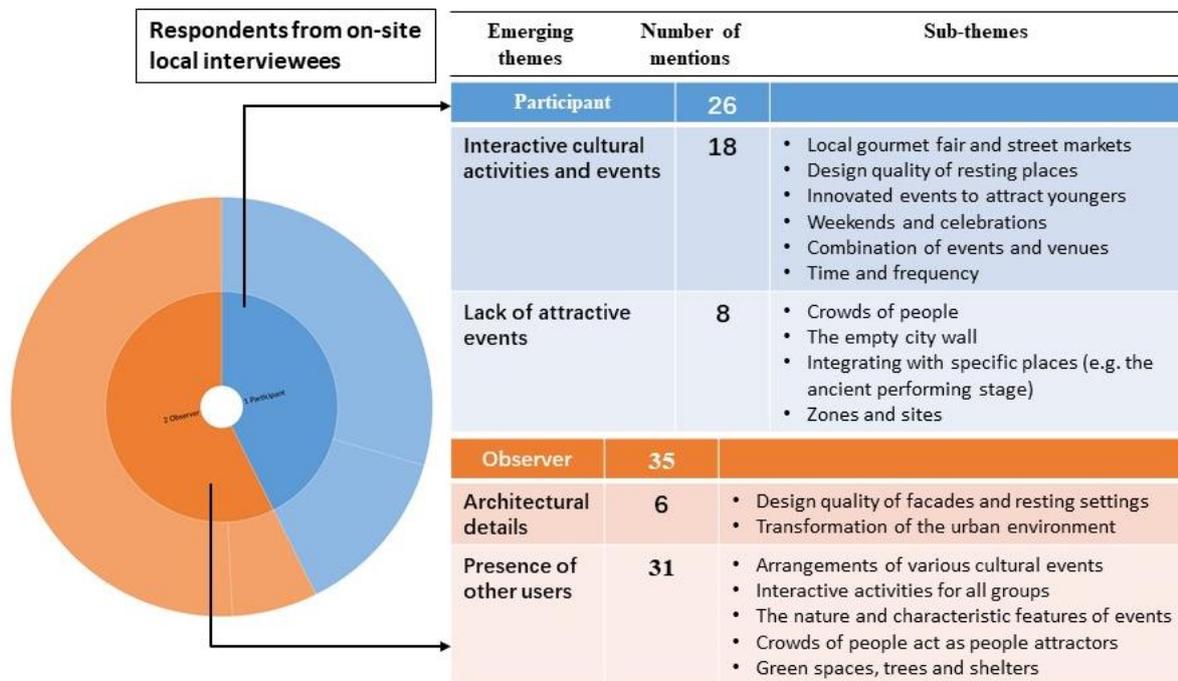


Figure 4-46 Word Cloud of on-site locals – Influential Factors of being Observer or Participant.

Local interviewees wished to act as observers mentioned architectural details and the presence of other users as the most relevant factors. In the meantime, interviewees that prefer observing building appearances and ancient-style architectural details suggested the arrangement of resting places, such as street furniture and places with tree shades, are necessary for them to take a rest:

The quality of the environment is a critical character, and more rest places would be nice for parents like me to sit down and watch my kids playing. (On-site Local–12)

Responses also indicated that the presence of other users is significant for observers, and the local characters and features of activities and events that other users are attending would help to attract observers' attention and improve their experiences:

Good quality of those activities with better arrangement will certainly attract me. (On-site Local–06)

The nature of those events or activities is the key. If they could integrate with local cultural characters, then more visitors would like to join in since such different experiences are what they are after. (On-site Local–07)

In addition to the characters those events have, when to hold the events in different types of open space are mentioned by local interviewees. On-site local interviewees suggested that the presence of iconic events and celebrations need to focus on creating the festival period, which could contribute to the festival atmosphere:

Since we only like to see others attending all kinds of events, it would be nice if many kinds of activities gathering at a certain period each month. (On-site Local-20)

The design and quality of resting places are critical for interviewees to act as observers as well, and except resting settings such as street furniture, shades provided by trees are also necessary for sunny days:

the built form and view are necessary, but I could not find any tree when I stood on the city wall. (On-site Local-01)

Some more shading places should be good because the sunshine is quite strong in the summertime. (On-site Local-18)

At last, the lively street view is another scene to see for observers as they suggested that "*streams of pedestrians are necessary to create a street scene with both quiet and alive ambience*" (On-site Local-13).

Local interviewees who wished to act as participants when visiting the ancient city have their responses categorised into the presence and quality of interactive events. Interviewees that complained about the lack of proper events in various ways, such as necessary attractive characters, times and places for different events, and lively street scenes:

If there are any interesting events, then I would like to join them. (On-site Local-02)

I believe the more people still living here and doing their daily activities is the priority, such as shopping in the market. (On-site Local-24)

I guess it depends on the location. As you can see, this place is full of old locals to kill their time, and tourists would not stay here for too long. (On-site Local-25)

According to the responses, interviewees also request more "interactive events" for users to get involved, and the "nature and variety" of those events are the key factors to produce attractions. In addition to the quality of events, one local interviewee suggested it is necessary to "*find new ways to attract the attention of younger users*" (On-site Local-23). In terms of hold times, participants would like to see and attend events in the night-time and every weekend as "*most locals need to work or study on weekdays*" (On-site Local-08).

The large scale of open spaces to host diverse activities and events is necessary for local participants. The presence and design of such places could affect the number of users to gather as interviewees advised: "*If this site (Front yard of Shan-Hua Temple) is too small, all major events holding here could be very crowded*" (On-site Tourist-26).

On the other hand, observers who wished to enjoy a lively street scene emphasised the significance of illustration, which should match with their "existed impression" and "expected image" of the tourist destination:

It is necessary to have more settings to introduce information about the background of history and culture, such as a map with information about each site, which could provide more content to this street. (On-site Tourist–05)

In my opinion, most visitors who came here already have an existed impression of various kinds of built heritage, which would be the priority for them to check here, and it is necessary to fulfil their expectations first. (On-site Tourist–30)

In addition to the idea of knowledgeability of the city, tourist observers also paid attention to traditional cultural characters of both buildings and events because they could help to improve their touring experience. Tourist interviewees who had been to the research area in the past said they would pay more attention to "the quality of old buildings" and "changes of old places".

For tourists who prefer attending a variety of events, local characters and features, integration of places and events, and holding times are also necessary to improve the experiences:

If my friends come here, it would be better to bring them to participate in some interesting events with local cultural features. (on-site tourist – 04)

Combining both events and venues is critical, and the quality and character of those activities are also important. (On-site Tourist – 09)

The opening time is critical. We could not usually come here on weekends like locals for visitors like me, so if there could be several specific dates holding any major events, it would be interesting. (On-site Tourist – 22)

According to tourist interviewees, the theme of having a comprehensive understanding of the city is the critical factor for being a participant in different events and activities. Furthermore, the interviewee mentioned that "visiting fascinating shops and stores with local historical and cultural character and information" (On-site Tourist–02) is considered as another way of being a participant (Figure 4-48).



Stores selling traditional Chinese musical instruments also act as people attractors



Shops with traditional events or settings could attract users' attention



Old quadrangle dwellings are re-designed as places teaching traditional cultural lessons

Figure 4-48 Stores and shops with traditional elements could provide information about local culture

Compared with the results of locals, the group of tourists showed another category of acting in both observer and participant when visiting the research area, and there were two influential factors – Personal mood and from observer to participant – that showed significant effects. Responses from both major factors indicated the significance of local characters and features for users to act as observers and participants:

When we first came here, it was nice to watch others. After we are familiar with this place (after some time), it would be lovely to participate in some activities. If the events are interesting enough, then we would have a better time enjoying them. (On-site Local-12)

The quality of those events is essential. Although the media trending effect is quite amazing to attract attention, the nature of events is the key factor to decide how long they could last after the trending period. (On-site Tourist-15)

We want to be observers in the first place. If the events or activities are interesting enough, we might wish to participate in them. (On-site Tourist-17)

It depends on my mood in general. When we encounter something unique, such as how people cook traditional foods or make local handicrafts, it would be nice to watch and even participate in them. (On-site Tourist-28)

In the meantime, the presence of events or dramas that could offer "more ways to know more about local culture and history" (On-site Tourist-23) is necessary for tourist interviewees to improve their touring experiences. Furthermore, well-organised events integrating with the built environment could

activities act as visual attractors, and the arrangement of various events in well-designed places also matters:

The nature of the events is critical, and more people crowded together here is also fun. (Off-site Local-01)

I like to watch other interesting events, such as major events. The quality of events and crowded visitors are influential. (Off-site Local-10)

Both the physical environment and the quality of events are the factors. (Off-site Local-11)

The keys are the physical environment and the design quality of what I am observing. (Off-site Local-12)

One interviewee stressed the importance of improvement of the built environment of the research area as it made the inner city become "*a nice place to enjoy roaming and observing others*", where has "*many elegant and peaceful places after the reconstruction*" (Off-site Local-14).

In terms of attending various events and activities, local elements and attractive characters are the most frequently mentioned factors from the responses of off-site users. Furthermore, the well-designed events could provide a chance for different users to understand the city:

I wish to attend all kinds of them with my kid to know all of them, which is a good way to understand the history and culture of our hometown. (Off-site Local-03)

If the events or activities are attractive, then I would like to attend with my kid. I wish to see more small ones with local cultural characters, like some street performances. (Off-site Local-04)

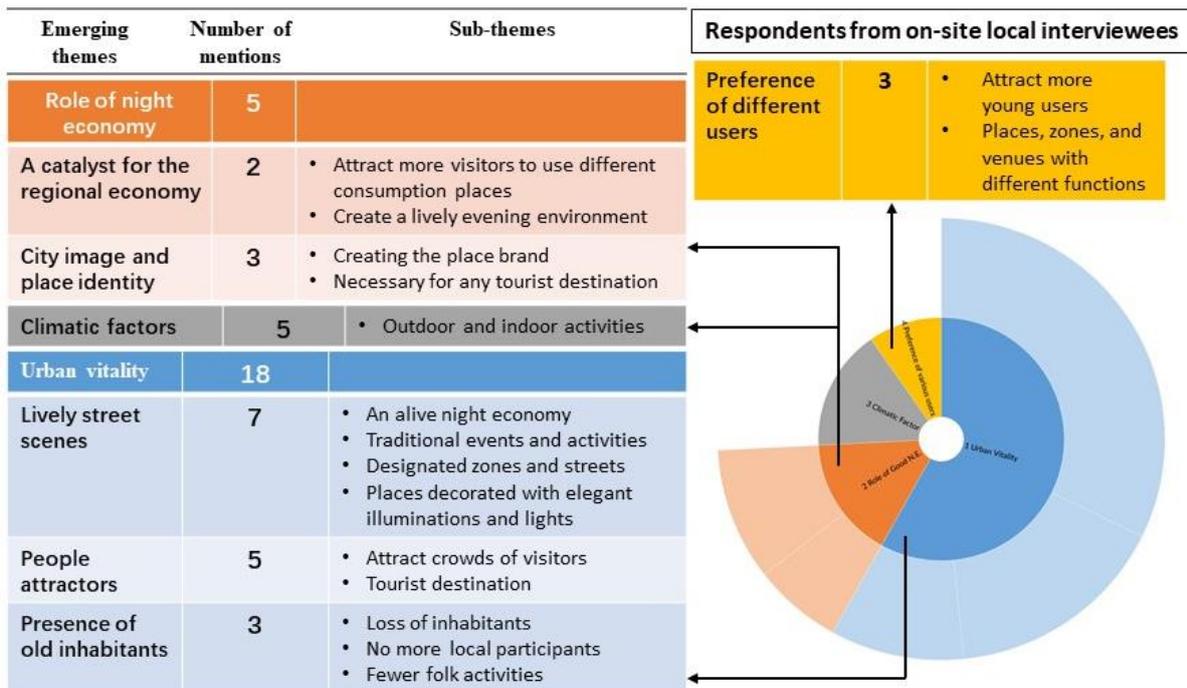
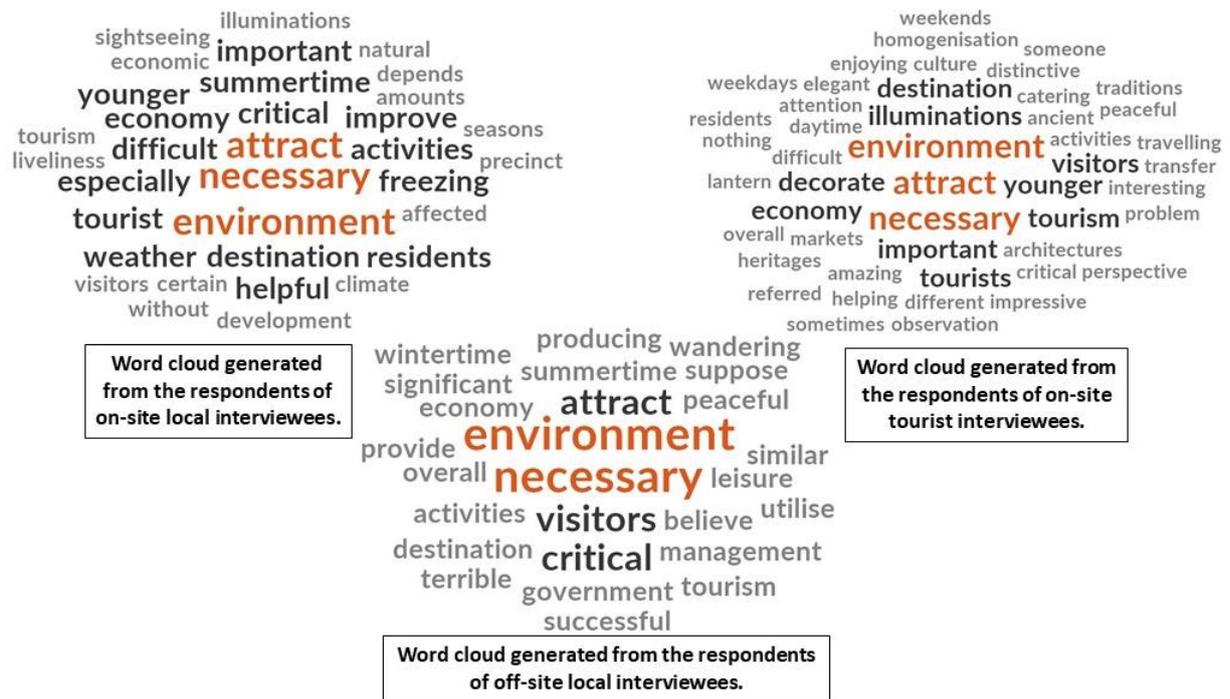
On the other hand, whether the events and activities with local historical and cultural elements are attractive or not is also the critical factor for an interviewee whose role depends on the mood. For example, another interviewee considered eating in different catering places as "a way of participation", and the design of "combining food and architectural style" (Off-site Local-12) is the most influential factor for them.

4.3.4 Components of Forming Night Environment

This section aims to obtain opinions about the night environment and evening economy of the research area and explore potential beneficial components of the night environment in terms of improving the quality of local characters and matching with the ancient style-built environment.

4.3.4.1 Impressions of Night Environment and Evening Economy

All three groups of participants focused on the theme of urban vitality, and they all agreed that a well-designed evening environment should help to form various attractions and then bring more visitors to the ancient city centre (Figure 4-50).



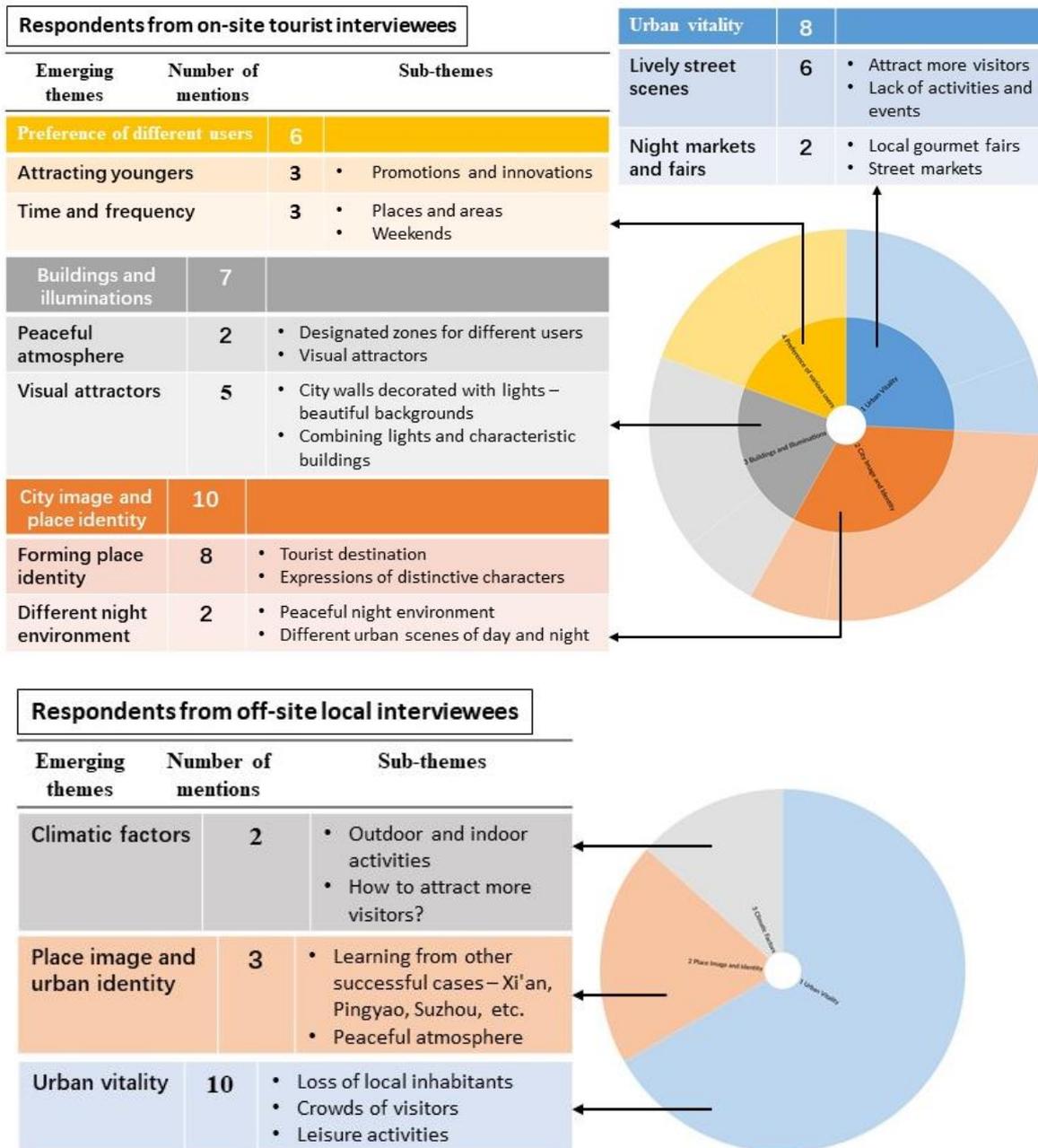


Figure 4-50 Word Cloud and categories of Impressions of Night Environment.

In general, lively street scenes are critical to bring back vitality to the city after regeneration as “*the night environment is not as alive as it was in the old days*” (On-site Local-05). On the other hand, interviewees advised that a lively night economy needs to limit in designed precincts. The interviewee indicated that the city wall was lively at night as it is decorated by “all the elegant lights and illuminations”, which is considered a beautiful scene in the evening.

Lively Night Scene as People Attractor

Groups of off-site local and on-site tourist participants suggested more attractive events for all visitors to enjoy. Tourist interviewees did not hold a positive attitude to the night environment or evening economy as they could not find anything attractive in the daytime:

The night environment is a big issue now, and I think a lively night environment relates to the locals who live in the inner-city core. (Off-site Local-03)

Most tourists prefer visiting the city in the daytime, but a lively night-time could gather residents here first, then the tourists might come here too. (On-site Tourist-05)

It would be nice to see a lively night in the inner-city core, while I guess it is not so well from my observation in the daytime. (On-site Tourist-29)

Furthermore, night markets or night fairs are considered a significant attraction for tourists. According to their responses, the famous local food and catering economy could help to bring more visitors to design places that have "night markets of local food". Moreover, the contrast of city image between daytime and night-time was an attraction from the tourist aspect because visitors suggested: "*meeting with another image of the city at night can create a different experience*" (On-site Tourist-01). (Figure 4-51)

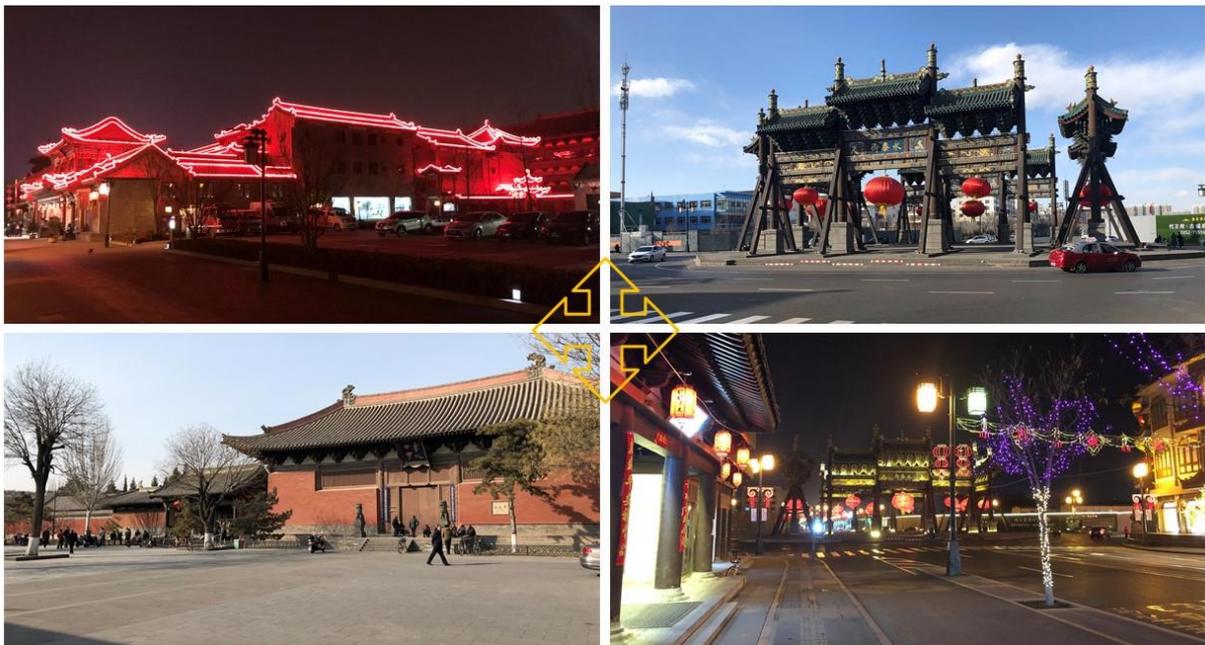


Figure 4-51 Different images of buildings and landmarks day and night.

The local interviewee also suggested that the attractive evening economy should start by focusing on locals' needs because "*the (contemporary) evening economy is not good enough to attract more tourists*" (On-site Local-07). Moreover, local participants thought the loss of old residents who were

living in the ancient city area had a significant influence on recovering the lively scene as "*it is difficult to have many residents conducting daily activities at night*" (On-site Local–21).

In terms of the role of the night environment, participants from all three groups have agreed that the lively night environment and evening economy with local characters and proper organisation would contribute to the formation of city image and identity – an ancient city centre and a tourist destination:

a lively night should be exciting when travelling in such old areas. (On-site Tourist–08)

As more and more places try to transfer their night environment to pub culture, it is quite challenging to become distinctive. (On-site Tourist–18)

The government should learn from similar cities to successfully manage the night environment. (Off-site Local–02)

It is critical for the old inner-city core if it needs to act as a tourism destination. (Off-site Local–10)

In the meantime, local participants wished that such well-designed events and activities in the night-time could act as a catalyst, which would improve the surrounding economy and boost the vitality of different precincts.

Attracting Younger Users and Visitors

Both on-site groups advised the idea of social and meeting activities of different users, and how to attract more young users to the ancient city centre is considered one critical method as "*young users are fond of playing outside in the evening time*" (On-site Tourist–12). In the meantime, it is necessary to arrange both holding times and places (designed quarters or precincts) for various events in terms of considering other groups of users who wish to take rest or simply enjoy a peaceful ambience:

The lively night economy is necessary, but you could not make all the inner-city areas alive at night. (On-site Tourist–06)

I think the lively night environment is only good at the nights of weekends because people living here will need to rest on weekdays. (On-site Tourist–27)

According to responses of both groups of local interviewees, the climate significantly influences the quality of the evening economy. Due to the geographic location of city Datong, visitors would encounter dry and freezing winter, which could set limitations for most users to attend outdoor events and activities (Figure 4-52):

A lively night environment is good, but it is affected by the seasons, and our wintertime is freezing for me. In the summertime, I would like to see more busy places in the evening after the whole day's hard work. (On-site Local–16)

It is necessary for summertime, but in the wintertime, I am afraid that how to utilise the indoor economy is the critical factor. (Off-site Local-12)

During summertime, the night environment in the inner-city core is quite lovely, while in winter, it is terrible – few people are wandering around. (Off-site Local-15)



A well-designed open space with events could still attract amounts of visitors in wintertime, but at night no one would be there because of freezing weather and lack of attractive events.

A well-organised major event – the traditional lantern festival – could form people attractors regardless of freezing weather; while how to utilise stores, pubs, and cafes in commercial streets is another issue.

Figure 4-52 Climatic factor has different effects on various events and activities.

4.3.4.2 Beneficial Components of Night Environment and Evening Economy

The second part of this section explores and identifies components and elements that could contribute to forming the "successful" night environment and evening economy from all interviewees' responses. Among the results of various categories, several major ones – a variety of events, night market and night fair, quarters and streets, and design of lights and illuminations – are mentioned by all three groups (Figure 4-53).

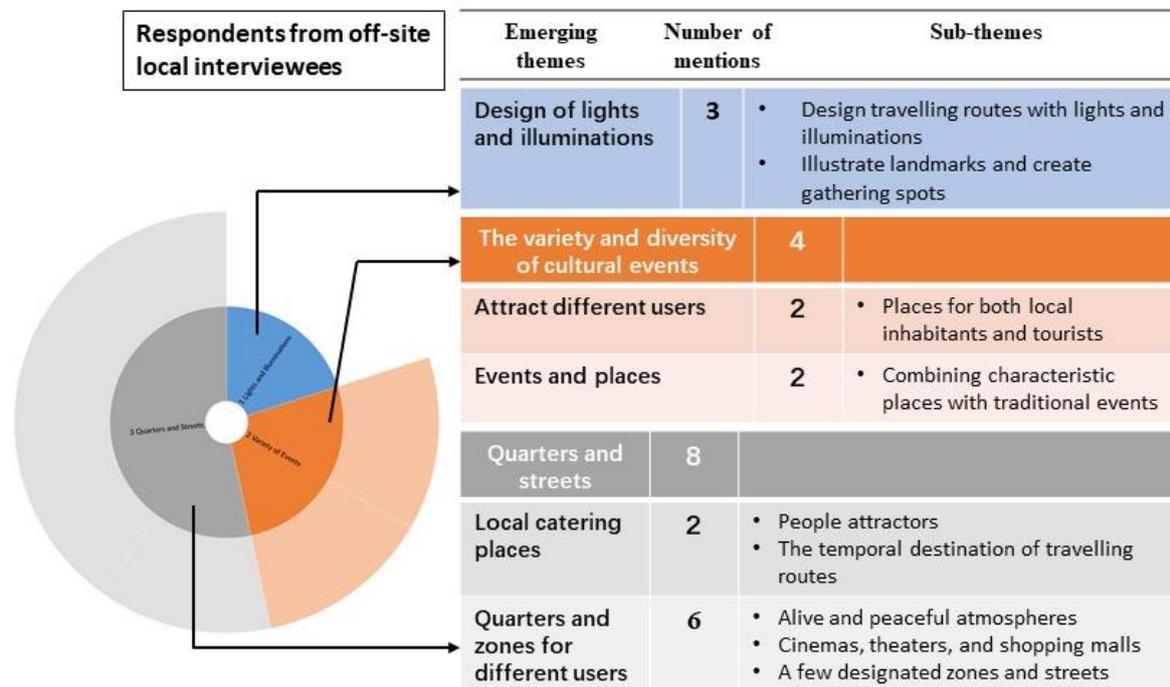
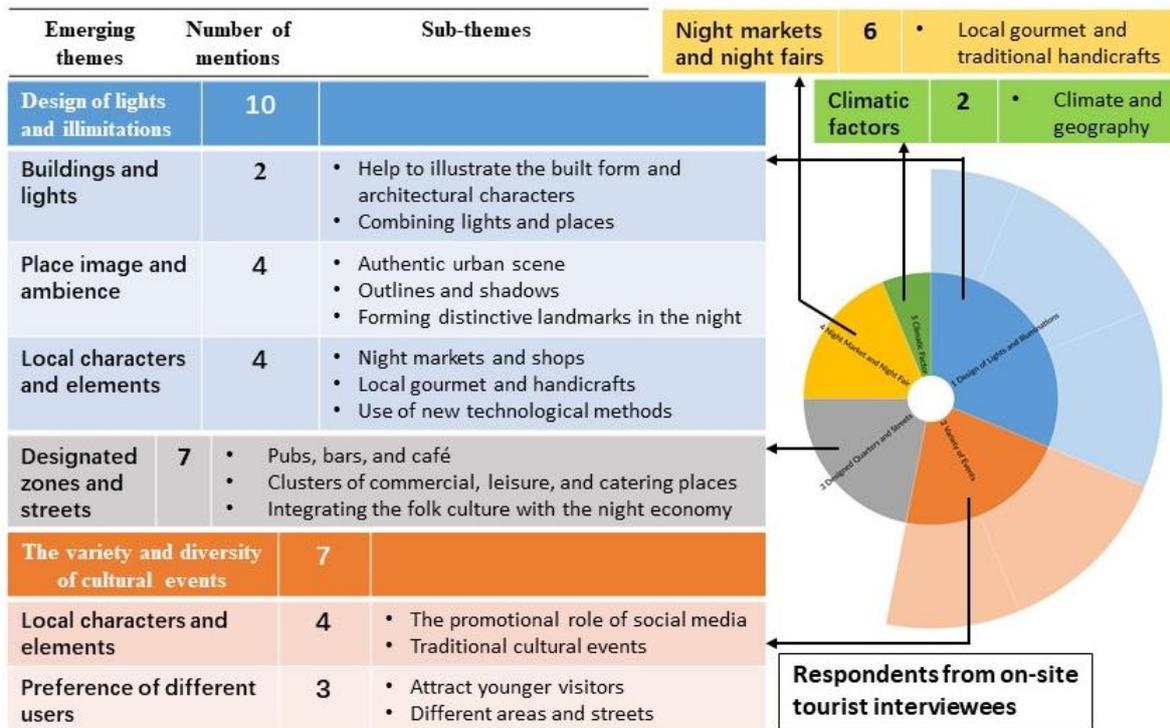


Figure 4-53 Word Cloud and categories of Beneficial Components

Variety and Diversity of Events

In terms of the category – a variety of cultural activities and traditional events, responses of all three groups all mentioned it is necessary to create various attractions and meet needs of different users (local or tourist, young or aged):

More illuminations and lights, some traditional night markets, and more shows (will be necessary), because different groups would ask for a well-designed presence of them. (On-site Local-18)

There should have various types of elements at night to attract different groups of users, such as shows for tourists, night markets for locals, and some other events for both. (Off-site Local-03)

The city needs some events with trending themes that could attract younger people to come at night, and sometimes they could also bring their friends and families. (On-site Tourist-04)

The opening time is one character, and the culture of bars or KTV may not be very friendly to middle-aged users like me. (On-site Tourist-27)

Furthermore, the presence of various events, activities, and celebrations could attract more visitors in both day and evening time. In terms of traditional cultural events, an old local interviewee described them as people attractors in the past: "when I was a kid there were several lanterns shows in designed places, and they could attract crowds of people as we didn't have too many events to do at night at that time" (On-site Local-27). In addition to local historical and cultural characters mentioned by on-site tourists, local interviewees considered proper integration of holding places and characteristic events as the priority of creating a characteristic and lively night environment:

Except for festivals, there should be more shows or performances at night, and they could hold on to the stage or even in some specific quadrangle dwellings. (Off-site Local-01)

How to use interior spaces during winter, and to collaborate with events held in open spaces, such as the Temple Fair or the Lantern Festival, are critical to deal with. (Off-site Local-15)

Precincts and Quarters

In terms of designed quarters and streets, interviewees of all three groups suggested that well-designed and organised clusters of consumer and entertainment precincts, such as areas of various restaurants, cinemas, pubs and bars, are fundamental components that contribute to forming a lively evening economy. Both the local catering industry and famous landmarks are vital factors in creating attractive quarters and streets:

Some streets – such as this one (east street of the Drum Tower) and other commercial ones – could be utilised as holding night markets of local foods. (On-site Local-09)

a commercial pedestrian area with various local foods and snacks is very necessary as this city is famous for its catering expertise. (On-site Tourist-01)

better designed symbolic precincts will help, such as the Drum Tower will be famous as its catering and that small theatre. (On-site Tourist–05)

Not every place could produce a precinct of pubs like the old city of Lijiang and Houhai in Beijing, and it is necessary to consider local folk culture to build a night economy. (On-site Tourist–09)

Responses from on-site local and tourist participants advised that the climatic factor has significant influences in creating a lively night environment. Commercial quarters and streets are critical in winter as "*clusters of consumption sites, and cultural venues could attract visitors in cold nights*" (On-site Tourist–26).

Interviewees from the group of off-site locals suggested it is essential to keep such quarters and streets in certain areas, and "*a small number of them with attractive characters and features*" (Off-site Local–05) are enough to form specific people attractors for visitors. Otherwise, the overall sense of place could get disturbed by "*all the loud noises and drunk people*" (On-site Tourist–16) made by restaurants and bars.

According to on-site local interviewees, night markets are necessary to attract visitors in the evening time. Both local and tourist users suggested that the critical factor of producing attractive night markets and night fairs is to gather local elements with traditional characters together, such as traditional handicrafts, local food, and second-hand stuff.

Another significant component of forming a lively night environment is the design of lights and illuminations in the ancient city centre. Interviewees of all three groups indicated that well-designed lights and illuminations could integrate with other elements in many ways – decorating building appearances, forming old atmosphere, and acting as visual attractors by themselves:

The lights and illuminations are the priorities since they can help to decorate built heritages and form gathering places. (Off-site Local–14)

It would be lovely to see a quiet night environment with a few archaic style lights, which could form an authentic feeling. I do not like too many strong or modern style illuminations as they might destroy the sense here. (On-site Tourist–13)

I like the combination of lanterns and the city wall as all kinds of lanterns help decorate the wall and make it so beautiful while walking on the wall watching such events and the number of people is another wonderful and unforgettable experience. (On-site Tourist–18)

I wish to see the locals doing leisure activities in those landmarks with excellent illuminations at night, which would be a unique city scene. (On-site Tourist–20)

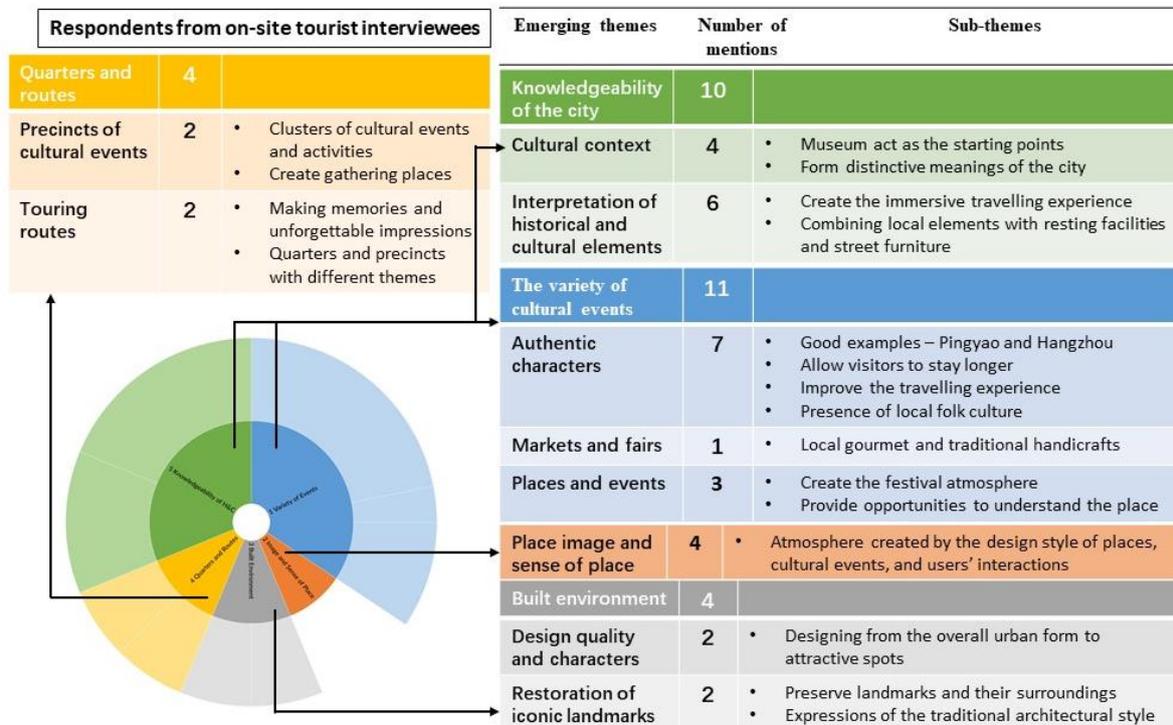
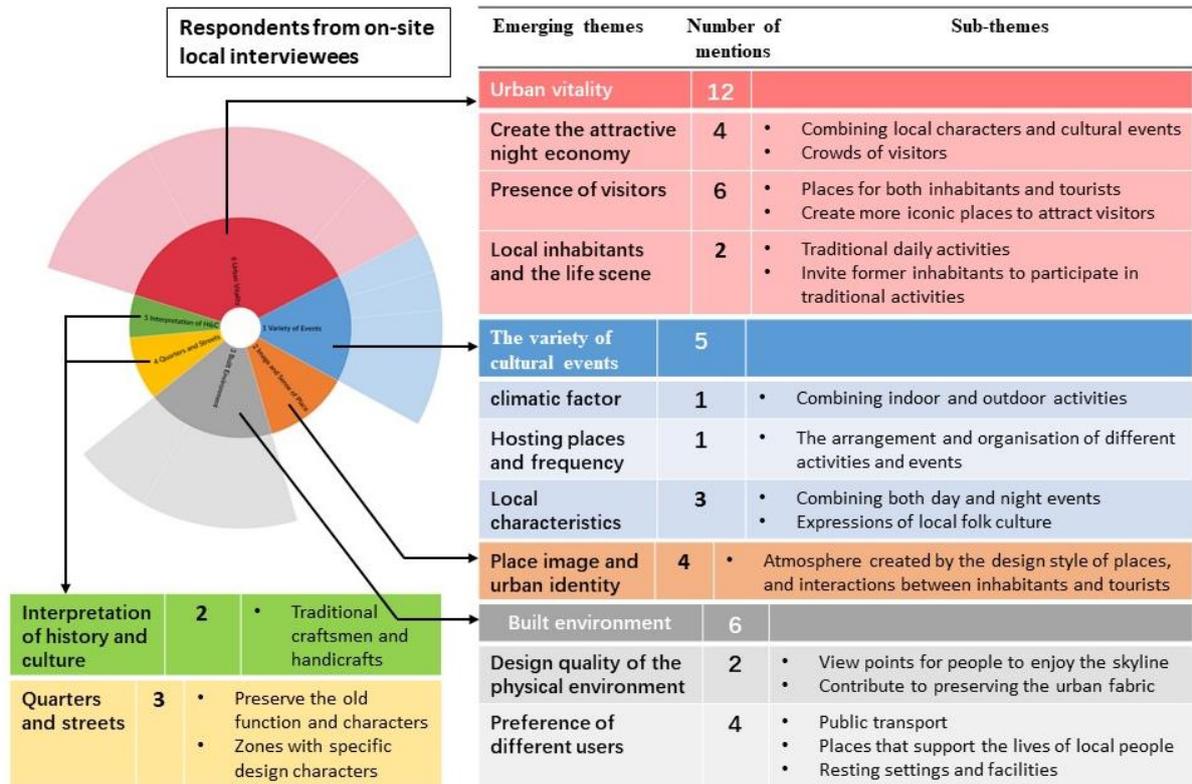
In the opinion of tourists, the design of lights and illuminations could integrate with other popular

elements such as big screens and projections. In the meantime, how to create characteristic sites and use online social media applications act as propaganda methods. The new ways of interpretation could help to attract younger users who are fond of exploring new places with elements that "*match with the architectural style of the built environment and meet their expectations*" (On-site Tourist-04).

4.3.5 Influential Factors of Creating Attractive Events

The last discussion point around cultural events and activities aims to understand what elements or characters attract participants mostly to conduct their activities in the research area, and how such elements would affect interviewees of all groups in terms of improving their experiences (Figure 4-54).





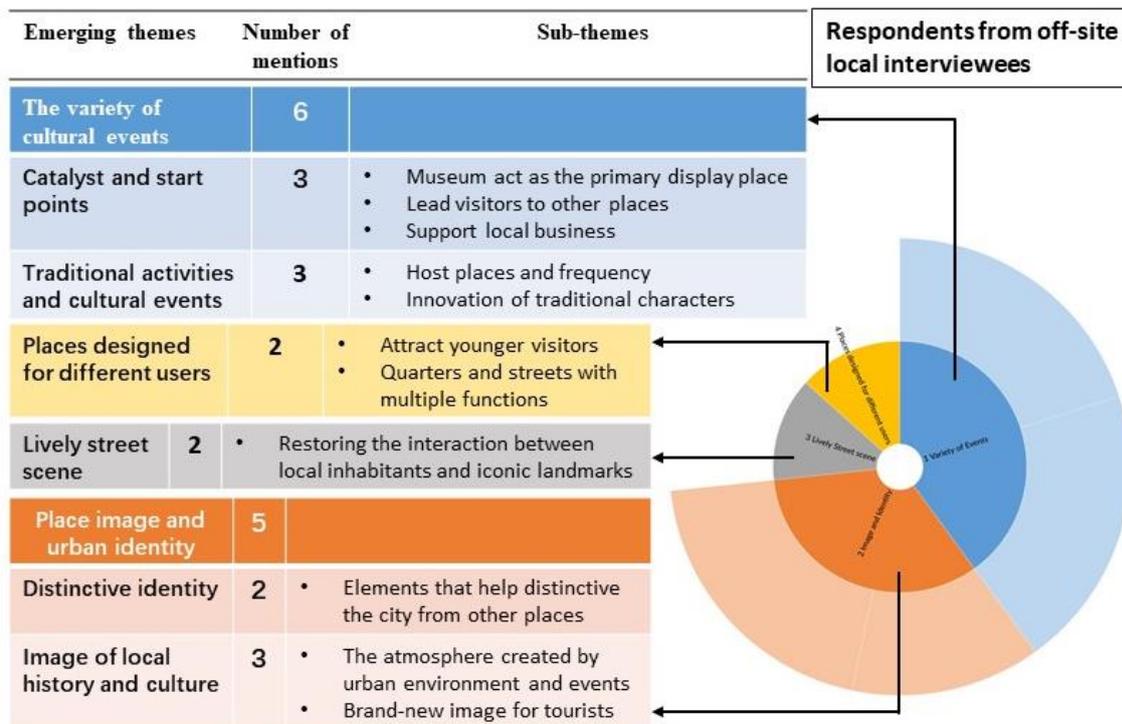


Figure 4-54 Word Cloud and categories of characteristic features that help to improve the experience.

Presence and Characteristics of Events

A variety of events and activities were considered as a significant category by all three groups, while responses from each group showed different opinions. Local interviewees suggested various events and activities need to integrate with "urban history" and "folk culture", and tourist interviewees wished to see more elements relating to "authentic and original scenes" of how old residents lived in the ancient city. On-site groups wished to see the presence of shows and dramas held in theatre because they thought such events could act as exhibitions of significant elements of the city. Off-site local interviewees suggested that both the presence of various shows and the local museum could act as the starting points of touring in the city:

I have heard that some other places acting tourist destinations have various kinds of shows or performances almost every day, and I guess that would attract more visitors here and make this place much lively. (On-site Local-20)

I think how Pingyao and Hangzhou did about their history are amazing as creating some big shows, which help to reproduce a series of old urban scenes and stories. (On-site Tourist-01)

I have heard the Museum has a lot of excavations, which are unique and characteristic, and I hope to see the interpretation of them in different places to help people get a better understanding and have a more distinctive experience. (Off-site Local-02)

Several major shows aim to introduce the brief history and culture that should help, leading visitors' interests to other shows or performances. (Off-site Local-04)

For on-site tourists, the combination of recovered ancient-style buildings and various events contributes to the improvement of their visiting experiences, and the lantern festival held on the city wall is a good practice because "exploring all the lanterns provided a different experience and understanding of the wall" (On-site Tourist-18) (Figure 4-55)



Acting as a traditional event, the lantern festival held on the wall could attract large numbers of visitors every year. In addition to all the lanterns, lights, and illuminations that contribute to the formation of visual experience, a variety of events also help to create a "different understanding of the city wall" by attracting visitors to walk on it.

Figure 4-55 The lantern festival on the city wall could provide both visual and interactive experiences

In terms of holding times and places of different events, local interviewees wished for schedules to help people enjoy all the events by order instead of "*crowding together to see several ones at the same time in a small place*" (On-site Local-24). Compared with the results in the previous section of creating a night environment, only two interviewees mentioned climatic factors and the presence of street markets as the important elements.

Quarters, Streets, and Routes at Night

In addition to the presence of various events with local characters, interviewees from both on-site groups suggested having different designed districts and streets to gather places and venues with similar functions and feelings. Such districts could transfer into touring routes with high-quality events and built heritage for tourists.

Some characteristic commercial streets located in the old precinct would be pleasant to see, which could integrate the urban form with traditional handicrafts and foods. (On-site Local-02)

I would like to have a designed visiting route, which could connect all the sightseeing sites and events one by one, and such a sequence could offer me a memorable image and exciting experience here. (On-site Local–03)

As the central location of the whole urban area, it is critical to gather various cultural and folk characters and elements from surrounding towns and suburban areas. (On-site Tourist–15)

It is important to create districts for holding various events, which would become the central location of a whole area. (On-site Tourist–17)

Quality of Built Form

Design quality and characters of the built environment and open spaces is another critical factor that different users of all three groups consider. Among their responses, old local interviewees paid more attention to the arrangement and quality of resting settings in each open space, and younger interviewees wished to see places with characteristic attractions. On the other hand, tourists took the recovered buildings, preserved landmarks, and designed spaces in the ancient city as the main attraction, which is their priority as roaming in the tourist destination.

For me, I do enjoy the overall rebuilt physical environment. Furthermore, this city wall provides a perfect spot to view the old city as well as the outer metropolis. (On-site Local–01)

There are too many places focusing on the need for tourists, and they sell stuff or food at high prices. I think the city core should also be the living place for local users. (On-site Local–18)

We are too old to take participate in any activities. The only thing we like to do is find somewhere nice to sit down and enjoy watching crowded people doing some activities or events. (On-site Local–30)

Some more interesting places could attract the younger to go and stay in the old inner-city core. (Off-site Local–06)

In my opinion, the physical environment is the priority to attract me. Then, I will check some interesting spots with traditional local characteristics. (On-site Tourist–14)

The first thing is to preserve built heritage and some old buildings, and many old buildings, a house with local historical features will need better protection. (On-site Tourist–29)

Urban Vitality

Both on-site and off-site local interviewees mentioned the influence of lively street view, which could attract visitors to the ancient city centre. Among various themes, the lively night environment and evening economy, which could be created by places and events with local characters and features, was

considered the key to improving urban vitality, especially on weekend nights. On the other hand, the living scenes made by residents (living in the ancient city area) conducting their daily activities would help to improve urban vitality. Responses from young local interviewees who do not live in the centre wished to see "old and traditional life activities and how would they celebrate each festival" (Off-site Local-12) as they suggested such scenes are components of "reproducing the old liveness". Furthermore, how to revive the liveness of old commercial places, such as four main crossing streets in the city, is another way to attract old residents who no longer live in the ancient city area.

In general, all the events and street views aim to bring more visitors to the ancient city centre will contribute to forming urban vitality, and the key is the presence of amounts of visitors:

First, we would like to see the regeneration project of this old city area be fully finished. After that, more people (visitors and tourists) can be lured into this place and help to increase the liveness. (On-site Local-24)

More people living in this city area, even if they are not original residents, will help to improve the liveness of the whole area. (On-site Local-27)

Interpretation of urban history and cultural resources

How to interpret local history and cultural resources in various events and built environment is a critical factor for on-site interviewees, while tourists had offered more detailed options to involve the background and information in their touring:

Since the architecture and physical environment are not as good as those in southern China, I think more events of local unique cultural characters should be combined with trending social media methods. (On-site Tourist-07)

Before we came here, there was very little information about where we could find the other attractions except for built heritage. I think some more interesting tea houses or even cafés with unique characters would also help to improve our experience. (On-site Tourist-11)

The architectural environment is the first thing that attracts us here. If there could be more detailed information and interpretations of local history, like some shows and dramas in small theatres would be better. (On-site Tourist-16)

Under such context, tourist interviewees also emphasized the term "cultural context", which need to get interpreted by illustrating the backgrounds of different old buildings or recovered landmarks as "such detailed content could give buildings distinctive meanings" (On-site Tourist-12). (Figure 4-56)

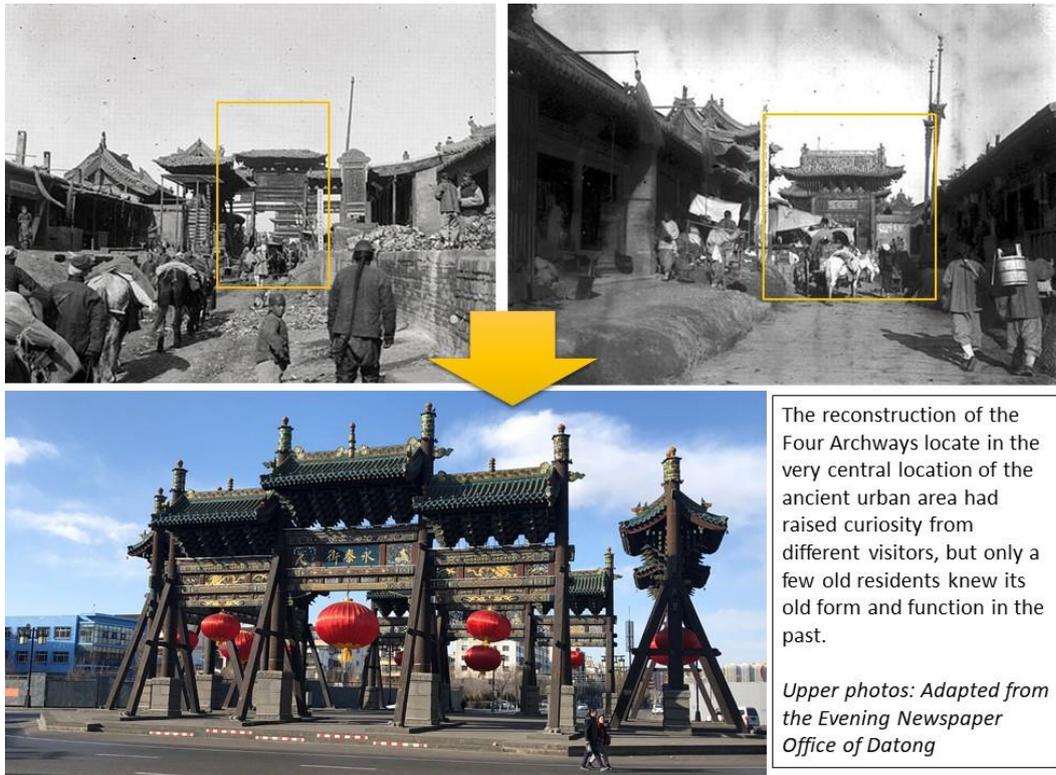


Figure 4-56 Visitors wished to know the historical background of the reconstruction of iconic landmarks.

City Image and Sense of Place

All three groups mentioned themes of "ambience or atmosphere" and "sense of history", and the proper combination of activities and built form could help to create "distinctive image" to improve different users' experiences when observing or participating in various events:

I think the beautiful urban form combining with a certain number of visitors in the inner-city core is good for me to enjoy the atmosphere here. (On-site Local-13)

Various kinds and types of events with characters of different historical periods can make the city distinctive and readable. (Off-site Local-12)

The priority is the well-preservation of built heritage, and I believe the other reconstructed buildings are also essential components as help to form the local historical image. (Off-site Local-14)

I think the old ambience is necessary. When we walk in this ancient city centre, it is quite nice to enjoy more traditional events that we cannot see in other places. (On-site Tourist-12)

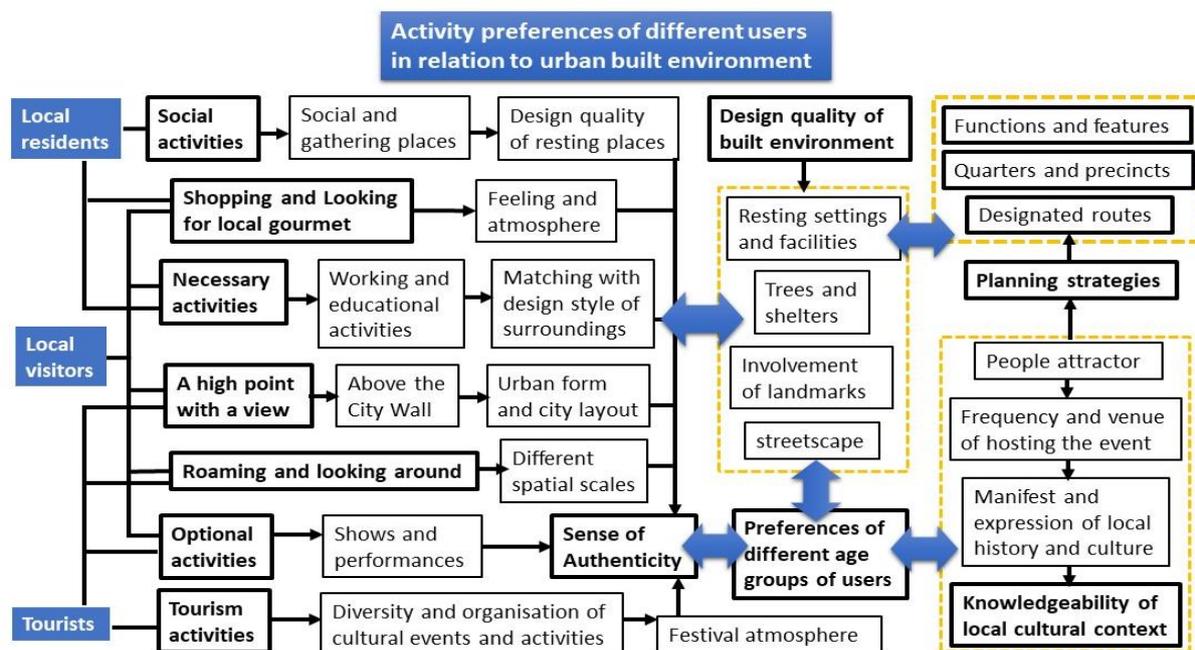
The overall ambience of the celebrating period of the Chinese New Year festival is quite attractive, and those folk cultures in such period seem more authentic than other tourist destinations. (On-site Tourist-27)

4.3.6 Summary of analysis – social function and cultural activities

This section explores the relationship between social and cultural aspects of public open spaces and the formation of city image and urban identity. In general, the movement of pedestrians and social use traditions are fundamental to understanding the functional aspect of public spaces, and cultural activities and diversity of events help improve urban vitality. As the old urban centre played the role of primary social and gathering areas in the past decades, it is significant to preserve the urban vitality and create necessary open spaces for all users. Three conceptual frameworks were organised in the analysing process: activity preferences of different users about the urban built environment, participant or observer, night environment and evening economy.

4.3.6.1 Users’ activity preferences and urban built environment

In the previous section of the built environment and physical settings, the design quality of public spaces and streetscapes influenced pedestrians’ movement in the old town. As the relationship between the design of spaces and users’ activities was manifested by Gehl (1996), this section’s analysis explored how cultural events and activities participated and conducted by different users could get affected the change and mix of the old built environment. Moreover, interpreting local history and cultural elements into the designing and planning of events is critical in enhancing visitors’ experiences and feelings (Figure 4-57):



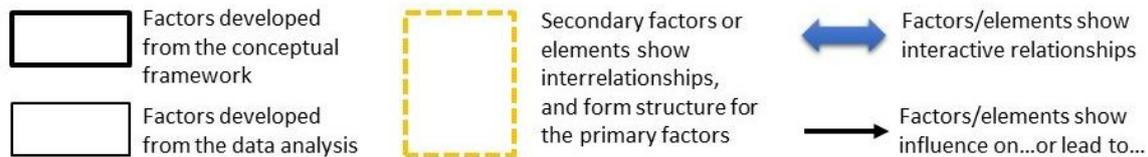


Figure 4-57 Users' activity preferences concerning the urban built environment.

- The environmental improvement significantly influenced local residents' activities as people wished to have more open spaces to conduct social activities. In this regard, **the design and arrangement of resting settings and facilities are necessary to provide proper shelters.**
- Local visitors (outside the old town) preferred to take the whole urban centre as a huge theme park. While the same shopping activities were done in the old town as for the locals, the local visitors paid attention to **the experience and atmosphere** when they visited, created by **the combination of characteristic shops and ancient building style.**
- Some residents and local visitors had to work in the old town or take their children to educational activities and events. Although such activities are necessary, **the design style and ancient built form of the townscape could give them better experiences.**
- As local visitors and foreign tourists take the old town as a theme park, viewpoints are necessary for them to enjoy the skyline and city layout. In this regard, the reconstructed city wall is perfect for providing view spots and open spaces for all visitors. Moreover, **iconic landmarks with characteristic form could act as people attractors in the close range and become visual attractors in the long range of view.**
- Tourism activities are similar to the definition of optional activities, which are participated in if there is a wish and if time and place make it possible (Gehl, 1996). According to the research result, tourists only explore more in the old town unless there are enough characteristic attractors. Both local visitors and tourists mentioned the experience of roaming in narrow alleys and gathering in open spaces. Moreover, **the key to improving their travelling quality is the design style of streetscapes**, combining spaces of different scales, and the presence of people attractors (characteristic shops and venues, traditional activities).
- By properly integrating with expressions of local history and culture, the design and arrangement of diverse cultural activities, traditional events, and festivals contribute to forming a sense of authenticity. On the other hand, **planning the innovative events needs to focus on users' preferences** from different age groups, designated routes, and specific zones with characteristic features.

4.3.6.2 Participant and observer

According to Carmona et al. (2010, p. 201), where people choose to sit or linger in public space is often based on opportunities for people-watching, which could be related to the life and activity within the space and the movement of pedestrian flows. As the old town aimed to attract more visitors, the design quality of spaces and characters of diverse activities are key factors for observers and participants. The analysis of this section has identified a conceptual framework and relationships between the various elements and themes (Figure 4- 58):

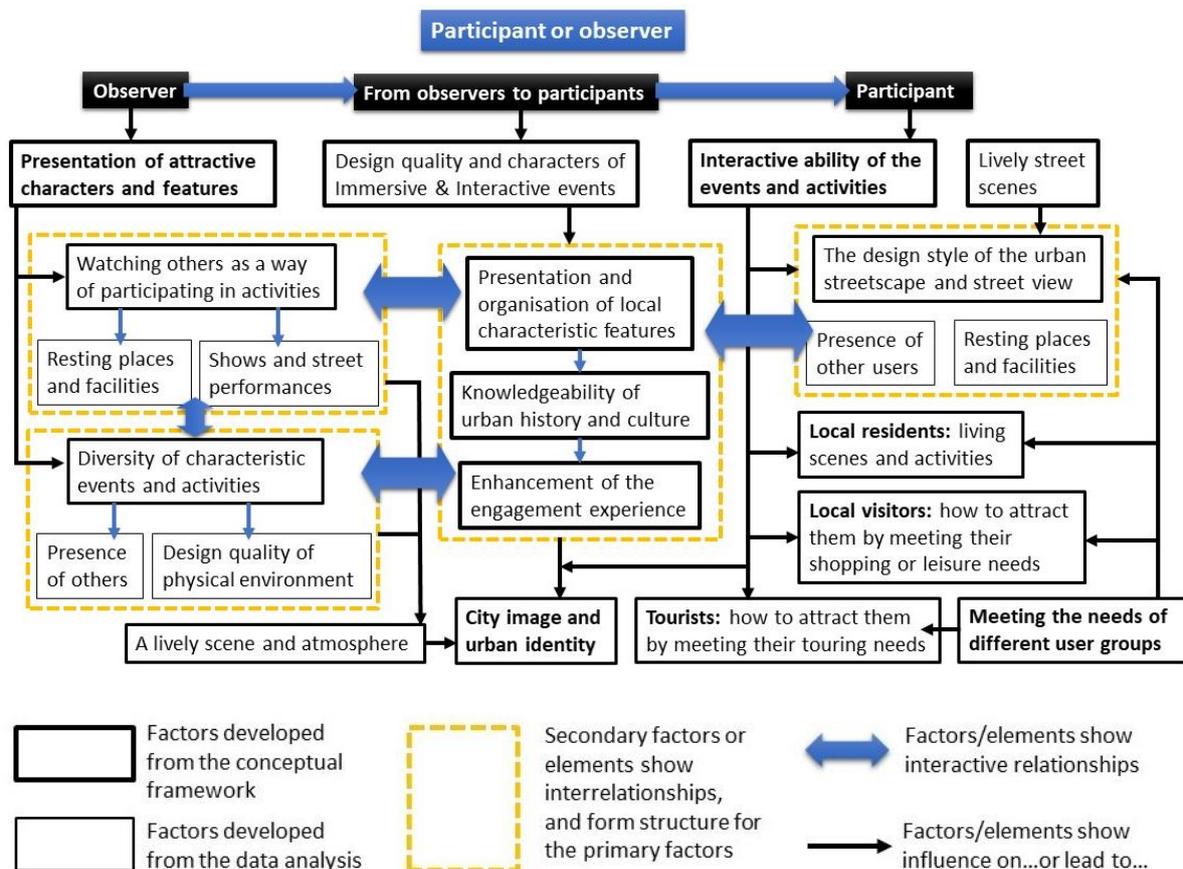


Figure 4-58 Influential factors of being observer or participant.

- As the primary form of passive engagement, people-watching is mainly triggered by the presence of other people and their activities (Carr et al., 1992; Carmona et al., 2010). Therefore, **the diversity of events and activities are the major attractors for observers to conduct people-watching**. The resting settings and facilities (benches, stairs, open-air coffee seating and so on) with shelters could provide a better experience for the users or observers. Furthermore, responses pointed out that **people-watching is also a way to get involved in the events and activities**.
- The key to participating in specific events is the nature and characters of the activity and event. According to the analysis of research results, **the atmosphere and lively street scenes could inspire visitors to engage in activities as the crowd that gathers is a powerful attraction**.

- Pedestrian movement between places is the basic element in creating a lively urban scene. When well-organised events and activities show expressions of local characters and features relating to history and culture, **pedestrian flows could get attracted, pause, and stop to watch or engage in the event.**

4.3.6.3 The lively night environment and evening economy

According to the literature review chapter, the urban nightlife is regarded as an integral part of modern living and urban vitality (Liempt, Aalst, & Schwanen, 2015; Song & Siu, 2011). Therefore, in addition to varied events and activities, the research of public life in this section also explored views of creating successful nightlife for the public. The key to creating a good urban environment at night is to understand how urban spaces are used and assessed by residents and visitors in the course of reconstructing the old townscape. Under such context, the analysis of the lively night environment identified several conceptual themes in strengthening the place image and identity (Figure 4-59):

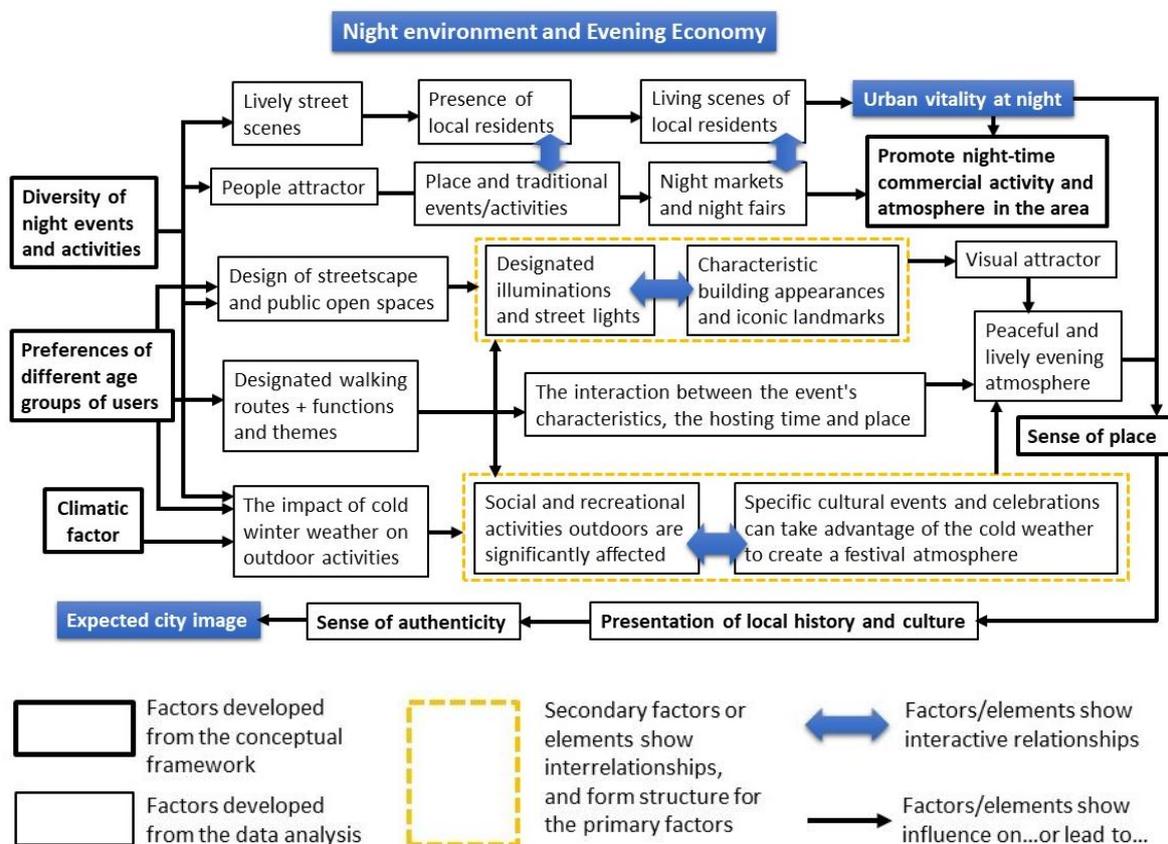


Figure 4-59 How to create a lively night environment in the reconstructed old town

- **The nightlife is different from life in the daytime as users' visibility and their motions are affected by the dark environment in the public spaces.** Therefore, it is significant to utilise the streetlight, illumination, and presence of signages and advertising for the visual perception and the need to feel safe. In this regard, dividing and designing specific streets and zones for night-

time activities (commercial and leisure) could help create lively urban areas in the old town. On the other hand, some areas were requested to act as **quiet places with well-designed illuminations for middle-aged users** as they wished to have a peaceful night-time experience.

- Besides traditional cultural events and festivals held at night, respondents suggested that activities with locals' involvement are critical in providing lively urban scenes. **Traditional night markets and local food festivals are good examples of creating opportunities for visitors to get involved in the locals' daily activities.** Furthermore, these folklore events combined with well-designed venues and places can **attract more visitors and boost the commercial vibrancy of the surrounding area.**
- Different respondents mentioned the climate factor many times as **the winter temperatures** in Datong are at freezing point, which **showed an obvious impact on outdoor activities.** In addition to **using indoor activities to connect and interact with outdoor spaces** (such as the outdoor business space of a bar and restaurant), the presence of **specific cultural festivals and activities are necessary to create unique experiences.** The lantern festival and numerous folklore performances during the Chinese New Year, which are held on the iconic city wall and in the old townscape, are thought as good examples to create a sense of authenticity.

As one of the fundamental dimensions of creating a place, social interaction and function is also necessary in forming a place identity. According to Carta (1999), social activities between users and the urban environment help define the area together with users' perceptions and feelings. Both organised cultural activities and spontaneous social activities help to improve urban vitality by attracting crowds of visitors and encouraging the movement of pedestrian flows. Furthermore, reproducing cultural activities and traditional events are ways of expressing local social and cultural values as integrating with urban history to shape the area identity.

4.4 The Meaning of Place

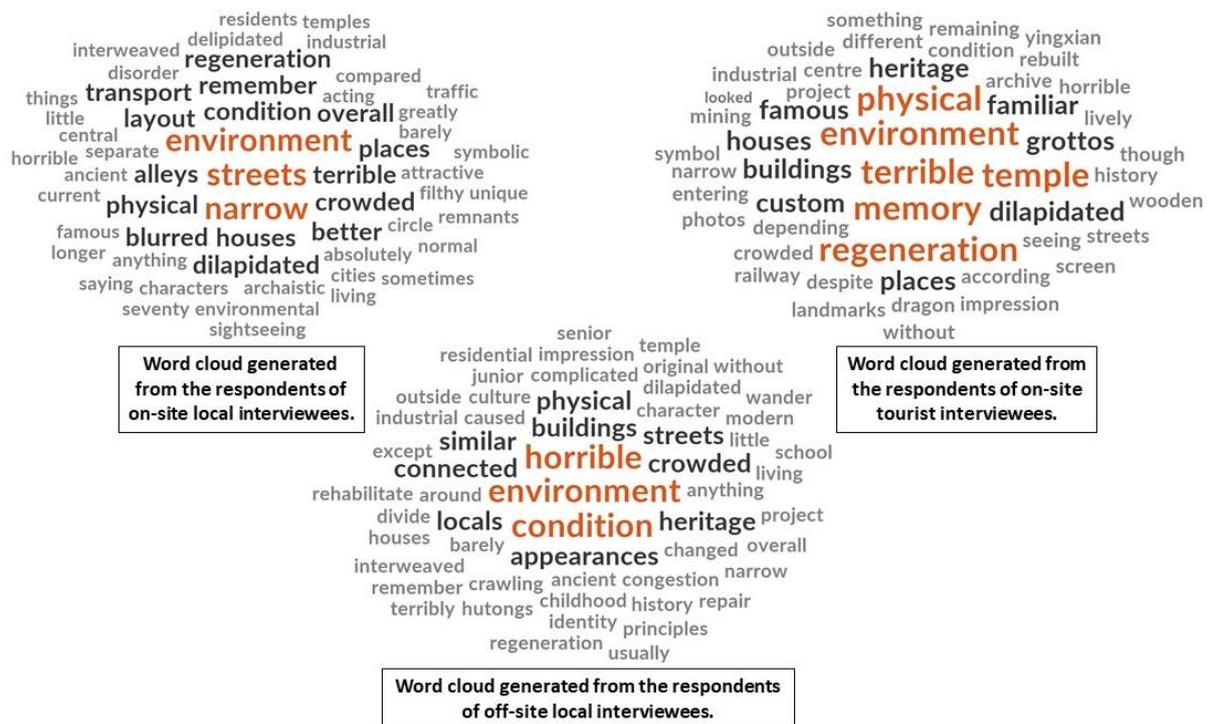
As Carmona et al. (2003) suggested, the place image is a combination of the identity with the perception of the place, which the individual forms with their own set of feelings about and impressions of the place. In the case of urban regeneration of the city Datong's old townscape, different users' feelings – residents' memories and visitors' experiences – contribute to the formation of mental images of the reconstructed urban environment. Furthermore, social meaning and individual experience could integrate with the visual form of the urban environment to strengthen the place identity (Southworth and Ruggeri, 2010). Under such context, the analysis of this section will focus on the relationship between expressions of local cultural context and the combination of personal experience and memory of place.

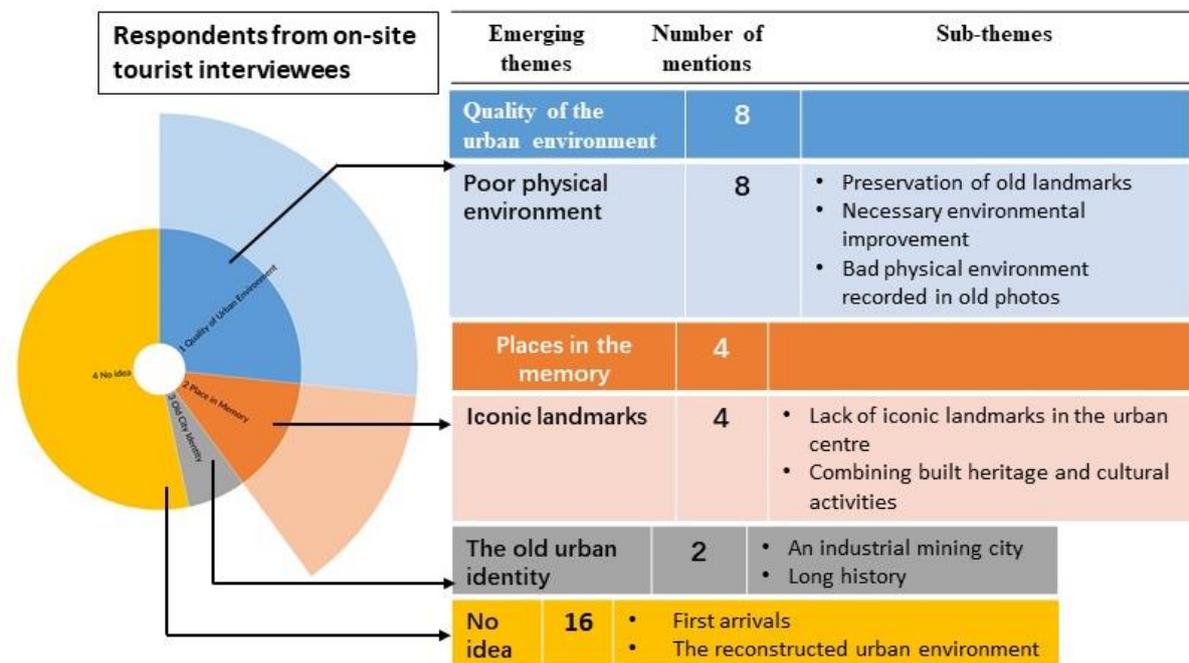
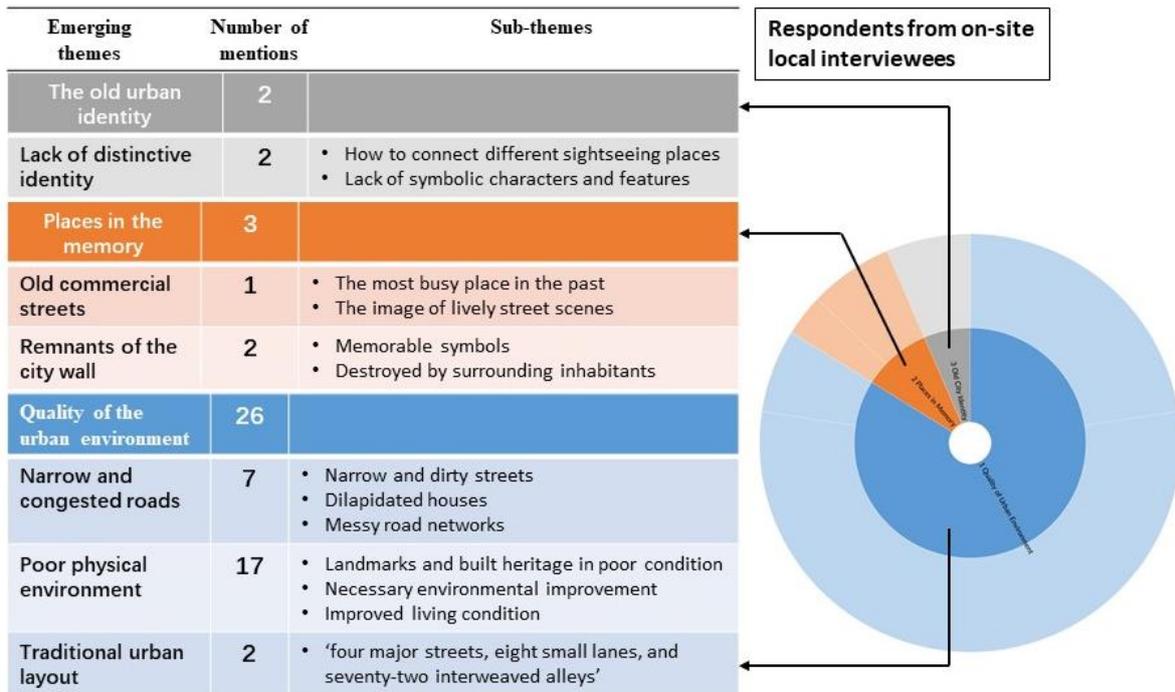
4.4.1 Old City Image and Memorable Elements

The first section aims to obtain opinions from various interviewees about the place images of the study site before the urban regeneration project. In addition to the city image or impression, another research topic is what memorable elements different users would prefer to have in the ancient city centre after the urban regeneration from their memories.

4.4.1.1 Memory and Impression of the Old City Image

All three groups of interviewees show similar responses in various categories: Quality of urban environment, place in memory, and old city identity. However, more than half of the on-site tourist participants were not familiar with the old city image because they had just arrived there when the interviews were conducted (Figure 4-60).





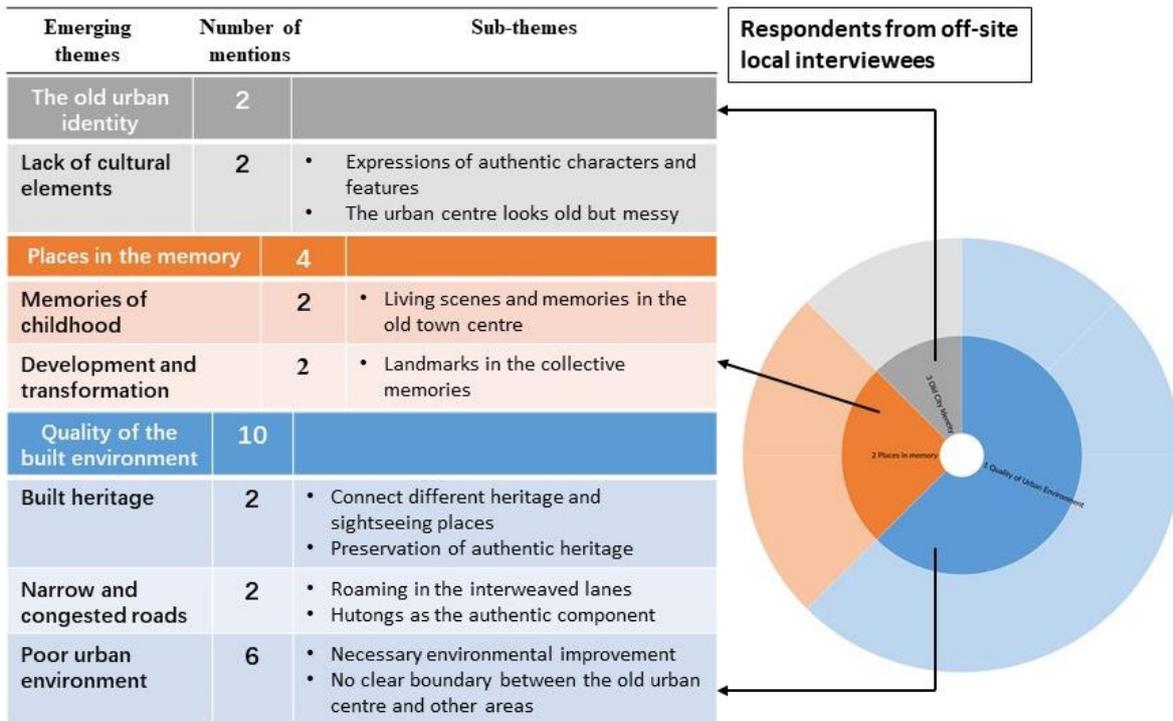


Figure 4-60 Word Cloud and Categories- Memory and Impression of the Old City Image.

Improvement of Urban Environment

All three groups of interviewees had talked about the poor quality of the built environment in the old time. The most common image from their description was crowds of people stumbling among dilapidated houses and dirty small roads, and all the built heritage were in terrible condition:

The whole environment was terrible – super narrow alleys, crowded old houses, and terrible environmental conditions. The overall environment is much better now. (On-site Local–05)

There were too many dilapidated residential houses crawling over the old inner-city. There was no standard or principles of repairing and rehabilitating them back in that time, which caused the inner-city to be a total mess. (Off-site Local–01)

Back then, I could not divide the inner-city with the outside urban areas without the city wall, and all the modern buildings had similar appearances. (Off-site Local–04)

Tourist interviewees who had visited the ancient city centre before showed a positive attitude to the developing process. Some tourists who had not seen the old city also learned different scenes from old photos and preserved buildings to form a basic image of the city as well:

We don't have any impression of this place, but depending on some remaining buildings, this place looks not so good. (On-site Tourist–08)

I was not familiar with this place before the regeneration though I did learn something from some old archive photos. And according to them, buildings like temples and Pai-Lou were in bad condition. (On-site Tourist–18)

Although interviewees from all three groups have confirmed the need for the development of the urban environment, the loss of urban vitality was another result caused by massive urban regeneration project:

It was messy in the old days, but this place (after being reconstructed and improved) seems not so alive as it was in the past. (On-site Local–28)

There were not too many huge temple buildings in the old-time, and the air quality is much worse. While on the other hand, the old inner-city area was much more alive than now. (Off-site Local–08)

Despite the terrible physical environment, this inner-city core before the regeneration was quite lively compared to now. (On-site Tourist–04)

Elements of Old Urban Form

In terms of the poor condition of built heritage in the old days, local interviewees complained about the lack of "*proper connection between each of them*" (Off-site Local–02), and some participants thought "*most built heritage were in their original form*" (Off-site Local–01). The narrow and congested interweaved roads are another significant image of the old city centre in the past. Both on-site and off-site local interviewees mentioned the "terrible physical condition" of all the narrow and dirty roads and lanes, which are fundamental components of the city's historical urban layout:

Most small streets and lanes are very narrow, and those old and dilapidated houses look like they could not hold any longer. (On-site Local–07)

The whole city core area was full of small streets and narrow alleys, and old and crowded houses surrounded those delapidated temples, sometimes you could not find the right way when walking among them. (On-site Local–19)

I would not like to wander in those small streets and back lanes because of their terrible physical environment. (Off-site Local–04)

On the other hand, such interweaved roads and lanes compose vital parts of the city's basic form. The old resident also indicated there was a traditional description of the ancient city as "*four major streets, eight small roads, and seventy-two interweaved lanes*" (On-site Local–06) (Figure 4-61).

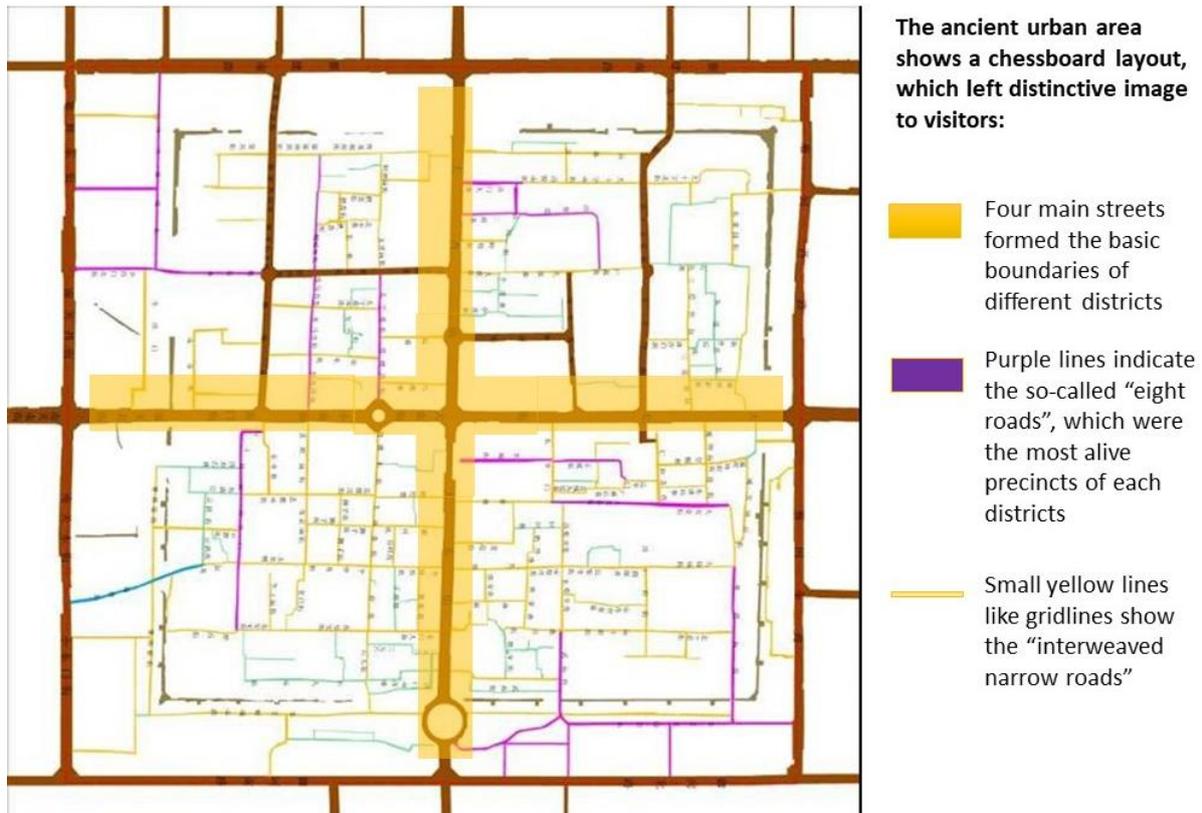


Figure 4-61 The distinctive and characteristic urban layout is impressive for visitors.

Images and Memories of the old urban centre

Despite the poor urban built environment, some specific places or buildings are mentioned by different users as images or impressions of the old city centre in the past. On-site local interviewees took the old commercial street and the remnant earth wall as iconic landmarks in their memories because those places are where they went and saw in their daily lives. Due to the massive urban regenerating process and development of the urban environment, off-site local participants could barely remember anything besides schools they were studying in childhood. One local interviewee who was living in the ancient city area showed a complicated feeling of his impression of the city as *"half of it was living in the terrible environment while the other half is scenes from his childhood"* (Off-site Local-05).

For on-site tourist interviewees, famous sightseeing site (within or outside the city centre), built heritage, and iconic landmarks formed their impressions of the old city:

I had been to the region of this city many years ago, that trip was to visit all the famous sightseeing sites outside this city – Yun-gang Grottos and Yingxian Wooden Tower. The only place I had stayed in the city was the railway station. (On-site Tourist-06)

I still remember that every time I went to the Drum Tower, the first thing I did was to stomp on the floor before entering it, which was said to be a traditional custom. (On-site Tourist–19)

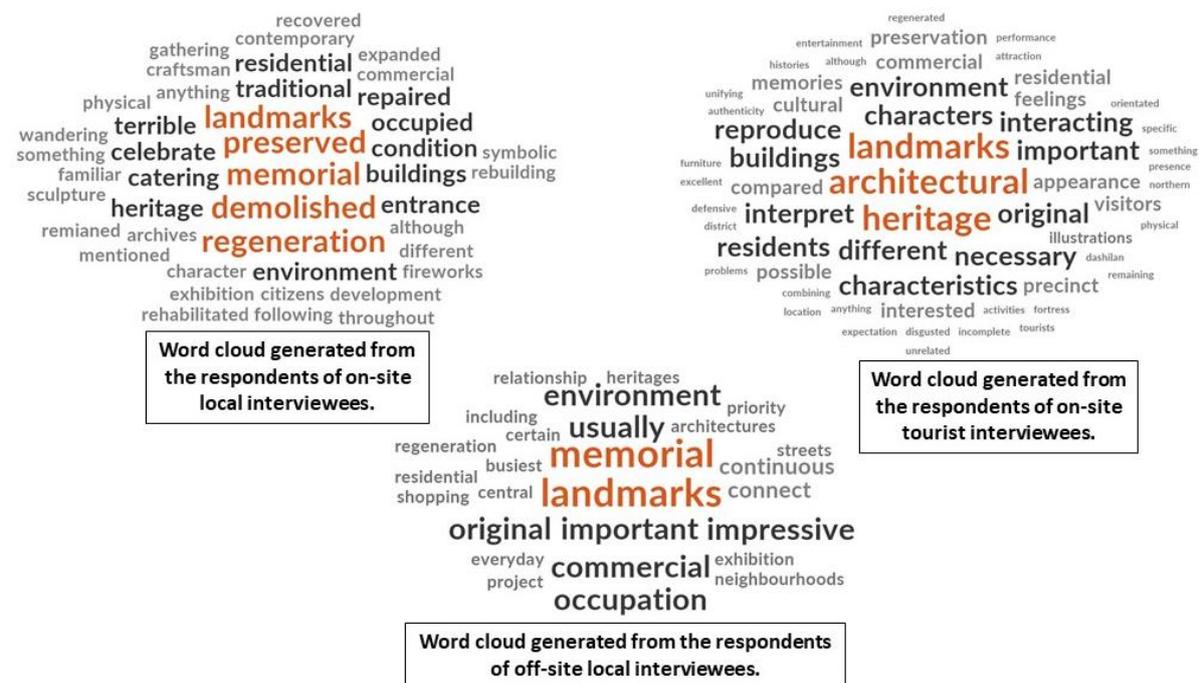
I would think this is a different place without seeing Nine-Dragon Screen and San-Hua Temple. (On-site Tourist–30)

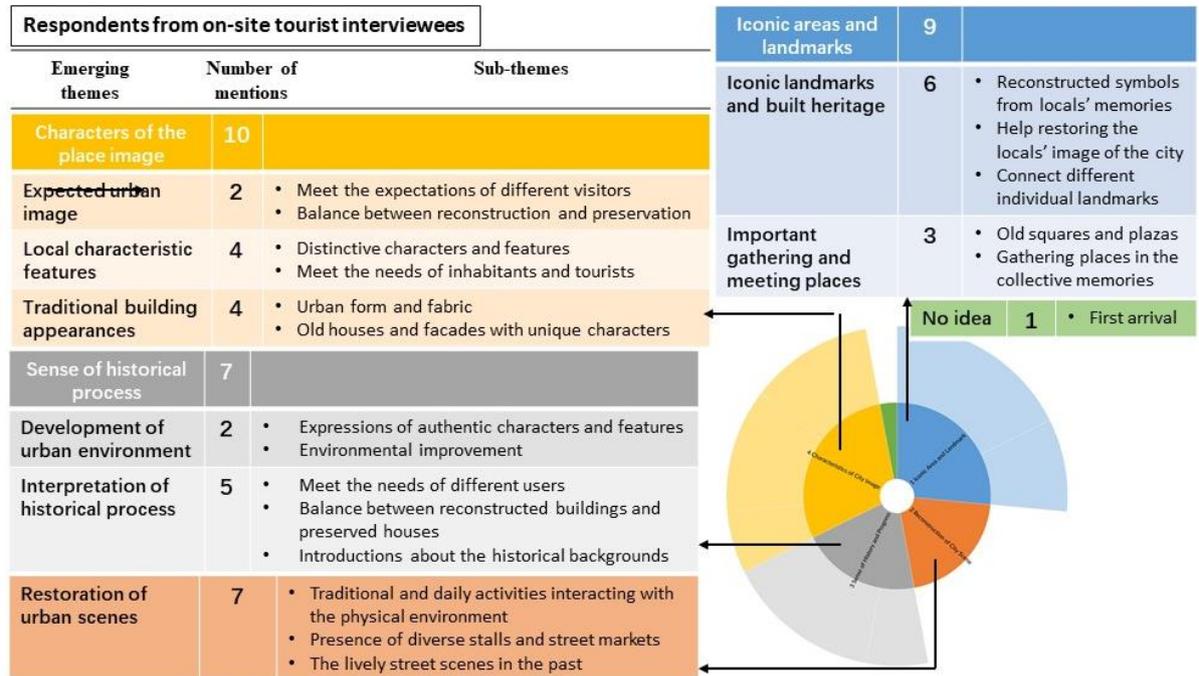
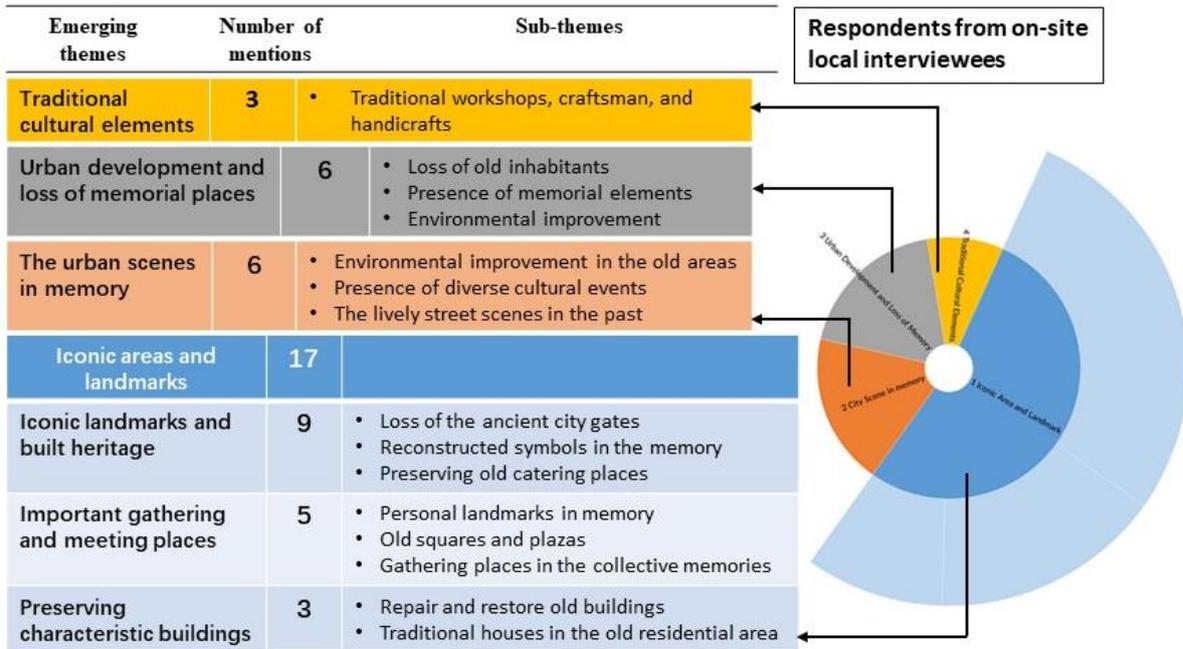
Based on different aspects and historical periods of the city's identities, interviewees from all three groups described old city images in their memories as "industrial city with several sightseeing sites" (On-site Tourist – 06), "common and ordinary city centre without a sense of history" (On-site Local–22), and "a place with a long history but no cultural characteristic" (Off-site Local–05). The image in their descriptions of the research area in the past is a messy urban environment with ancient built heritage and characteristic city layout.

4.4.1.2 Elements affecting memory of place

As the previous part aims to understand the old city image of the research area, the second question is to explore what kind of elements different users would like to bring back to the ancient city centre after the urban regeneration. Moreover, how different memorable parts contribute to the evolution of old city image to contemporary one is another aspect discovered from all the responses.

All three groups of interviewees shared similar opinions about the elements in memory and elements to recall memory, and most on-site tourist interviewees showed their preference for memorable elements. At the same time, more than half of them had no idea of the old city image before the regeneration (Figure 4-62).





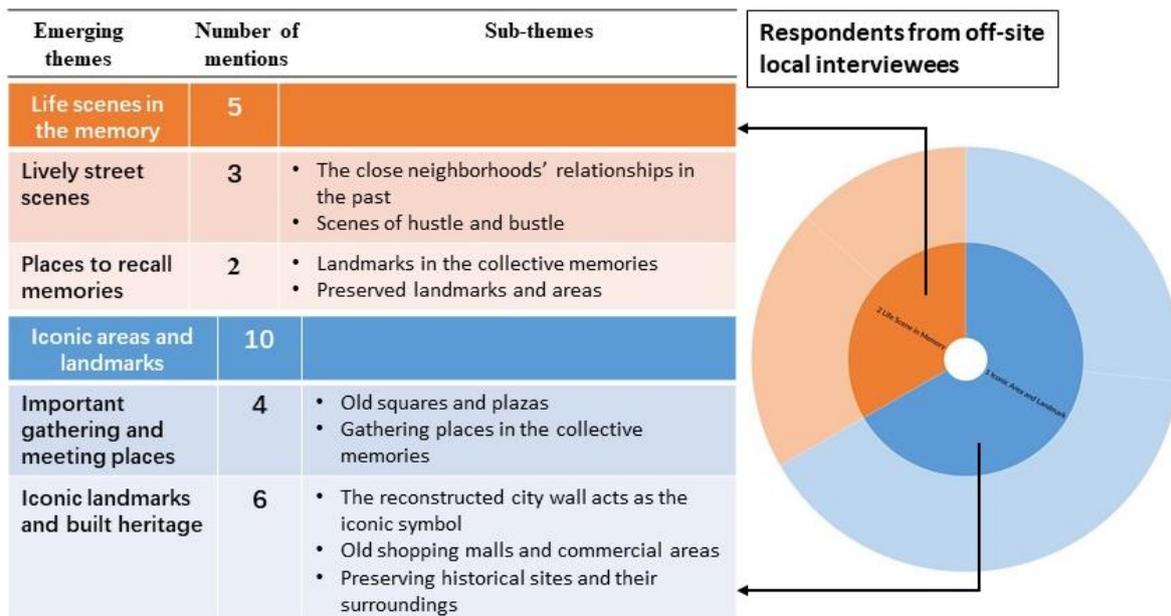


Figure 4-62 Word Cloud and Categories – Elements to recall memory.

Iconic Area and Landmark

In the categories of iconic area and landmark, the presence and quality of built heritage and landmarks are essential according to participants from all three groups. According to their responses, iconic landmarks and famous built heritage represent the authentic symbols of the city in the past and now for interviewees, and they act as parts of everyday life for locals as they could see them every day in the old time:

The Si-Pai Lou was demolished when I was young, so I barely had any memory of it, and it is good to see it got rebuilt. (On-site Local–05)

I can only think of the Drum Tower since I saw it almost every time in this area. (On-site Local – 08)

I do miss Hong-Qi Square, the famous sculpture and the big bell tower there. All of them were the symbolic memories of the city before. (On-site Local–17)

The most memorial landmark is the city wall, which was an earth wall before the regeneration project, and locals could see them in their everyday lives. (Off-site Local–03)

I can only talk about this topic based on my occupation. In my opinion, all built heritages are the priority, then some of the old architectures with certain meanings are important. (Off-site Local–15)

I believe some old landmarks are necessary because they are unique as representing the memories of locals. (On-site Tourist–05)

For tourists and some local interviewees, the quality of building appearance and ancient architectural style are both necessary to provide meanings and act as visual attractors to remind users of the old-time:

Since most built heritage had been destroyed or demolished, and the physical environment was terrible, I think the only way is to rebuild most of them as following the old drawing from archives. (On-site Local-14)

Some old landmarks are memorials to me, and it would be nice to have a way to connect them to form a continuous scene. (Off-site Local-02)

I believe the original looking of this city should help. Even though many buildings are not looking so old, I think they still mean something to locals. (On-site Tourist-08)

Hua-Yan Temple and Shan-Hua Temple are excellent (built heritage), while I wish to see more old landmarks combined with the rebuilt physical environment. For now, the overall urban form still looks incomplete. (On-site Tourist-10)

Another common memorable element mentioned by participants of all three groups is important gathering and meeting places. For both on-site and off-site locals, such places with crowds of people formed a shared memory, while tourist participants who had been to the city centre before the regeneration project indicated the lively scene of such places are impressive:

There was an old famous catering house around here (near the street entrance), which I wish to see preserved. (On-site Local-11)

Hong-Qi Square is the memory of most old citizens because of its role as an important meeting place, but it has been demolished to make room for the city wall. (On-site Local-02 & 22)

I miss Hong-Qi Square and West Street, where I had usually been to because of the large number of people there. (off-site Local - 04)

On the other hand, on-site local interviewees considered some old houses and buildings in the old residential area with traditional characteristics as iconic elements to form an old area image of the city's past:

I would like to see some old buildings, but only if they are in good condition. Too many old buildings without proper repair could lead to a shabby image. (On-site Local-04)

I miss those old residential houses, while they still need to be repaired or rehabilitated to provide a nice image for the whole inner-city area. (On-site Local-10)

Revival of the lively city scene

The loss of old lively city scene is another element mentioned by interviewees of all three groups, and in this category responses from locals focused on how to revive old lively street scene, which depends on the number of locals who are living in the ancient city area:

The West street (the old commercial street before the urban regeneration, see chapter 3.4.1.2) was very lively, and it has been rebuilt now with new stores and a huge antique market settled in, so I hope it could be better in the future. (On-site Local – 09)

I think one important thing is about how the original residents living in that area, now there are more commercial kinds of stuff but less original living sense. (Off-site Local–08)

I can still remember the hustle street scenes of commercial streets, while the whole environment just made me feel quite messy. (Off-site Local–09)

Another element mentioned by local participants was the recalling of a certain scene or image in the past, and such images have a close relationship with landmarks:

The way they celebrate each traditional festival is very memorial, such as many stalls selling traditional foods and fireworks throughout the day. (On-site Local–11)

The Drum Tower is the one that has been well preserved (memorial landmark), and I remembered there were crowds of birds flying and staying on it (memorial scene). (On-site Local–20)

My senior high school and its surroundings, including the old West Street, are the most impressive memories. (Off-site Local–07)

In addition to the revival of the lively street scene, tourists also wished to see the interactions between various local activities and specific places or buildings, which they considered as a proper way to experience the authentic image of the ancient city centre (Figure 4-63):

I guess the most important thing is to reproduce its old urban scenes as much as possible, which is also an issue of authenticity. (On-site Tourist–11)

I would like to see some old living scenes with unique folk cultural characteristics, and it should be interesting to see locals interacting with this whole new urban environment. (On-site Tourist–20)

you can see a similar architectural style in Beijing while we could see original residents living in the small residential district like Hutong, and the presence made the city much alive. (On-site Tourist–28)



Left: Traditional performances and shows in front of the Hua-Yan Monastery.	According to tourists' responses, traditional events and activities holding in spaces with iconic landmarks and built heritage could help to form a feeling of authenticity.	Right: Locals are playing cards under trees' shadows in the front yard of Shan-Hua Temple
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Figure 4-63 The interaction between locals' activities and iconic places are considered as renovation of authentic urban image.

Urban Development, Sense of History and Progress

Both on-site groups suggested the urban regeneration project did bring significant changes to the ancient city centre. Local interviewees indicated the improvement of the built environment and living conditions also resulted in the loss of urban memories, and tourists wished to explore more historical details of the progress:

Some old landmarks could help since the tremendous regeneration and rebuilt process have wiped out my memory little by little. (On-site Local-29)

It has been too many years since the regeneration began, so you could barely remember anything, but the contemporary environment is better. (On-site Local-30)

Now there is merely anything left compared with the old-time, and I do hope to see some parts of remaining heritages, or there could be some way to translate such rich histories into current building forms. (On-site Tourist-18)

Maybe it is possible to find a way to compare the new scene and the old image, and then use the difference as an attraction to bring back some old memories at the same time. (On-site Tourist-19)

This city has a unique history from my understanding, and it is necessary to find ways to interpret different periods of the past in future design. (On-site Tourist-30)

Local Cultural Characteristics and City Image

To have a better visiting experience of the city, tourists advised there should be a variety of local cultural elements, which could help form a new and distinctive place image of the ancient city centre. On the other hand, local interviewees mentioned that some traditional elements with cultural characteristics need to show in the city:

I think the design style and appearance of street furniture are essential to visitors' sense of unity. (On-site Tourist-01)

This place looks like other old cities in northern China, and I wonder if any local element could make this place different from other similar towns. (On-site Tourist-11)

The street of Qianmen and Dashilan in Beijing faces similar problems: the loss of old feelings and too many unrelated tourism-orientated commercials. (On-site Tourist-13)

I was a craftsman before, and my job is to create air below, so I wish to see something that can be preserved and recovered. Although they have no use now, I wish there was a way to show them to others. (On-site Local-27)

Similar to on-site local interviewees' opinions about preserving old houses with traditional characteristics, tourists are also advised to preserve and recover buildings with distinctive style and appearance as they act as essential components of forming iconic place image:

The old residential precinct needs well-preservation since it is a place with local cultural characteristics and features. Although only a few old residents are living in that place, the architectural forms and styles are still worth seeing. (On-site Tourist-15)

I am very interested in the area full of old and shabby houses, which seem to have some very old and unique characteristics. (On-site Tourist-16)

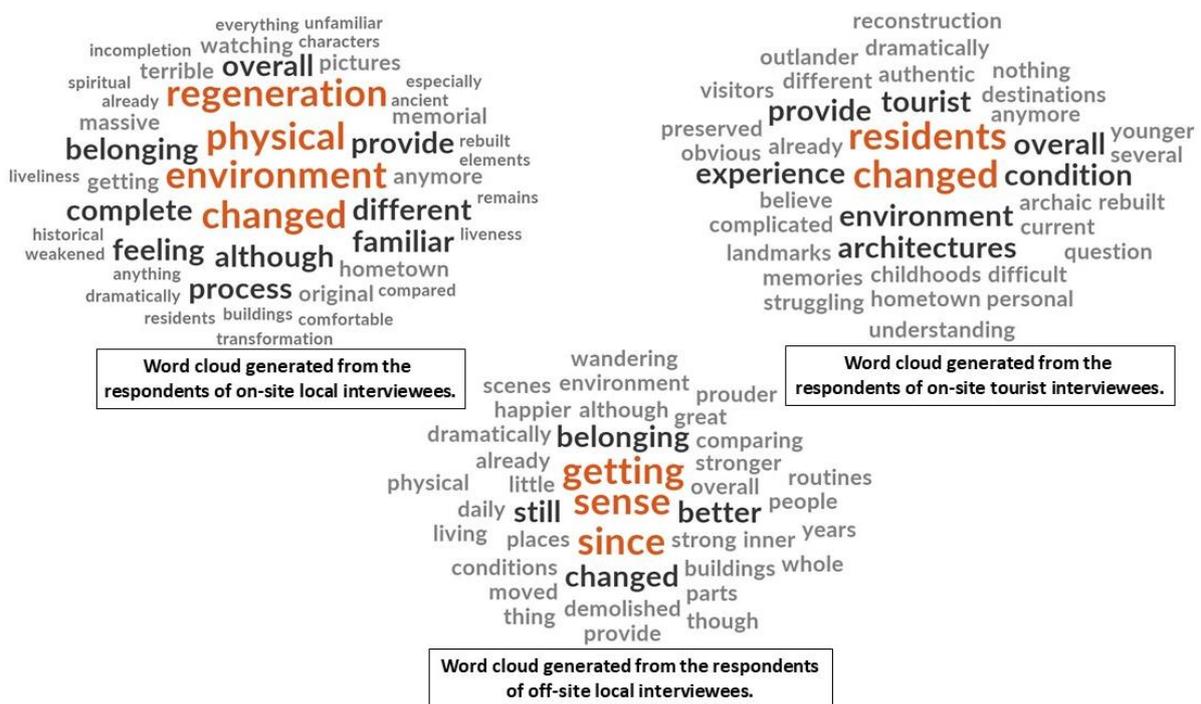
Finally, tourists advised that the design style and building appearance are the keys to evaluating if the city meets their previous expectation of the historical identity – “a defensive frontier fortress”. In addition, some tourists stated it is good to see various districts with different characteristics in the city as “the city has been through many wars and chaos because of its location and original identity” (On-site Tourist-13). Under such a context, the city centre could have received development processes in each historical period.

4.4.2 Sense of Belonging

This section provides a comprehensive understanding of the sense of belonging and explores various necessary components and influential factors of forming a more vital sense based on the responses from different groups of users. Furthermore, the opinions from tourists could help to contribute to the retention of belonging to a different perspective.

4.4.2.1 Loss or Retention of Sense of Belonging

The first question aims to know how users would evaluate the sense of belonging after the urban regeneration, and what kind of element could have effects on the change of such sense (Figure 4-64). All three groups of interviewees reported their worries about the loss of sense of belonging: both on-site and off-site local participants showed their ideas of the retention of belonging, and tourists showed other different opinions in their perspectives.



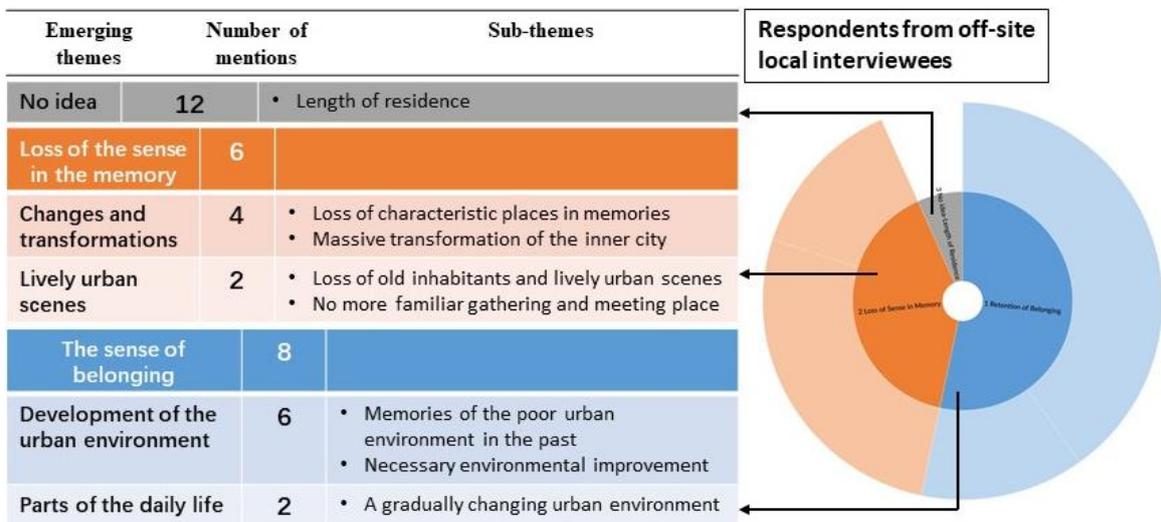
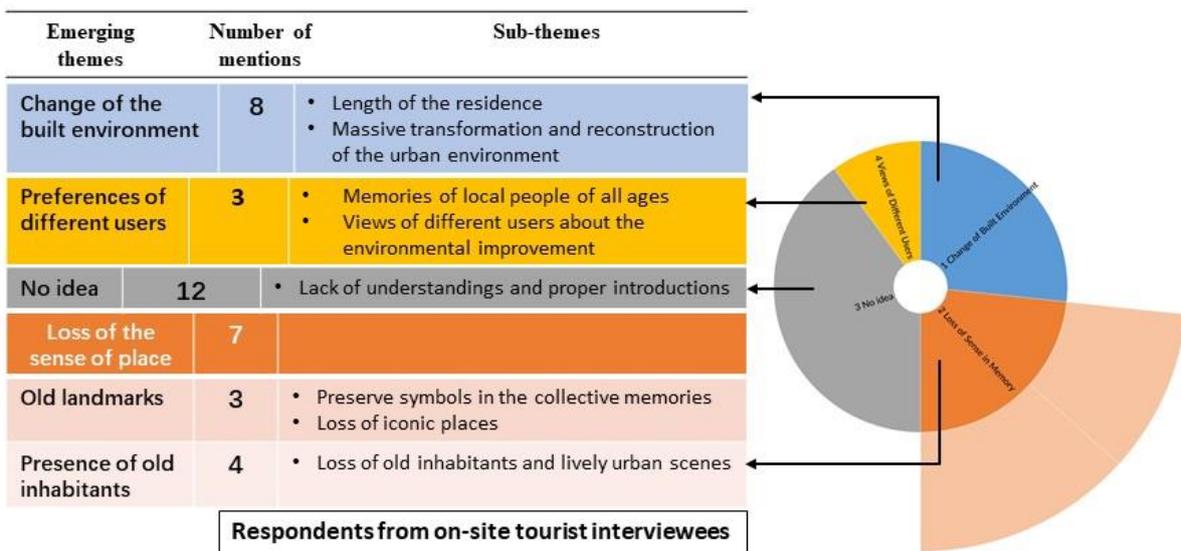
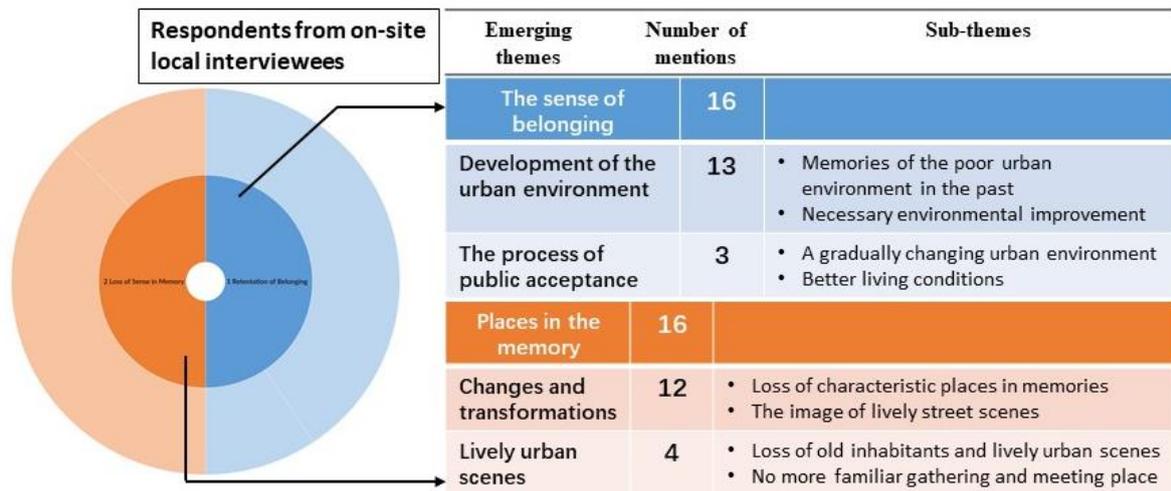


Figure 4-64 Word Cloud and categories of the theme – Sense of Belonging

Change of Urban Environment and Loss of Urban Vitality

According to interviewees from all three groups, the significant change brought by massive urban regeneration is the main reason for the loss of belonging. The presence of old landmarks and buildings in memories of local participants play a critical factor in forming personal scenes in the past, and some tourists mentioned the effects of old landmarks in preserving the sense of belonging based on their experiences:

if there were enough old landmarks that had been kept, then locals might still have some memories like that. (On-site Local-05)

The sense of belonging remains in the aspect of local history as there are few elements in memory after such massive urban regeneration. (On-site Local-12)

It has changed a lot that I could not find the right way from my memory. (On-site Local-15)

Although I like the physical environment and rebuilt buildings now, it is different from its past image. (On-site Local-16)

Despite the awareness of significant changes in the urban environment, on-site tourists who had been to the city before regeneration could rarely provide any opinion about the loss or retention of belonging. In the meantime, tourists agreed that “*a well-preserved hometown can be combined with the memories of its inhabitants to create a better sense of belonging*” (On-site Tourist-01).

Another key element that affects such sense is the lively city scene in the old days, and the loss of old residents living in the ancient city centre acts as the most influential factor:

The whole environment was good during this regeneration, but I could no longer find the original liveness. (On-site Local-04)

There are no familiar places or old acquaintances that could remind me of the old days. (On-site Local-19)

I do not think they would have such sense anymore since most old residents are not living here. (On-site Local-07)

Development of Urban Environment and Belonging

In contrast to the idea of loss of belonging, local participants from both on-site and off-site groups advised that they could still feel the belonging while the urban environment changed. In their perspectives, such a massive transformation of the urban environment, especially in terms of the built environment, helped the ancient city improve its physical condition and revive the historical ambience. Both contributed to the enhancement of the sense of belonging:

The memory of this old city core was not very good in the past, while now I feel a strong sense of belonging as if this is the original environment the city should have. (On-site Local-01)

Even though the whole city core has changed a lot, a better physical environment still makes me feel much better than in the old days. (On-site Local-18)

Although it has changed a lot, it still provides me with a sense (of belonging). When I served in the army, once I saw some nice pictures of my hometown online, it made me so happy and proud to see it become better than the one in my memory. (On-site Local-21)

Although most places have changed, I still have that feeling of belonging because the overall conditions are getting better. (Off-site Local-04)

The acceptance process is another key factor mentioned by on-site local interviewees as they could witness different stages and detailed changes in the transforming process “day by day and little by little” (On-site Tourist-08, 22 & 29). On the other hand, off-site local interviewees who usually went to the city suggested that “the old city has become parts of their daily routines” (On-site Local-25 & 27), which also forms a solid sense of belonging.

Also, tourist participants advised that the different age groups of locals were another influential factor based on their knowledge and travelling experiences in other places:

For younger [people], I believe they should have that sense since the rebuilt architecture and places are almost ten years old, which could already be some parts of their childhoods. (On-site Tourist-23)

In many tourist destinations that I have been to, it seems the view or aspect of tourists is different from the ones of local users. Visitors prefer seeing the old and authentic environment, while residents might be struggling as living in poor conditions. (On-site Tourist-30)

4.4.2.2 Factors helping to preserve and enhance the sense of belonging

The second question of this section aims to explore more elements that could contribute to the revival of the sense of belonging. In addition to factors mentioned in the previous section that relate to the sense under the process of urban regeneration, this section also intends to understand what kind of elements various users would choose as elements contributing to the forming of belonging in the future (Figure 4-65).

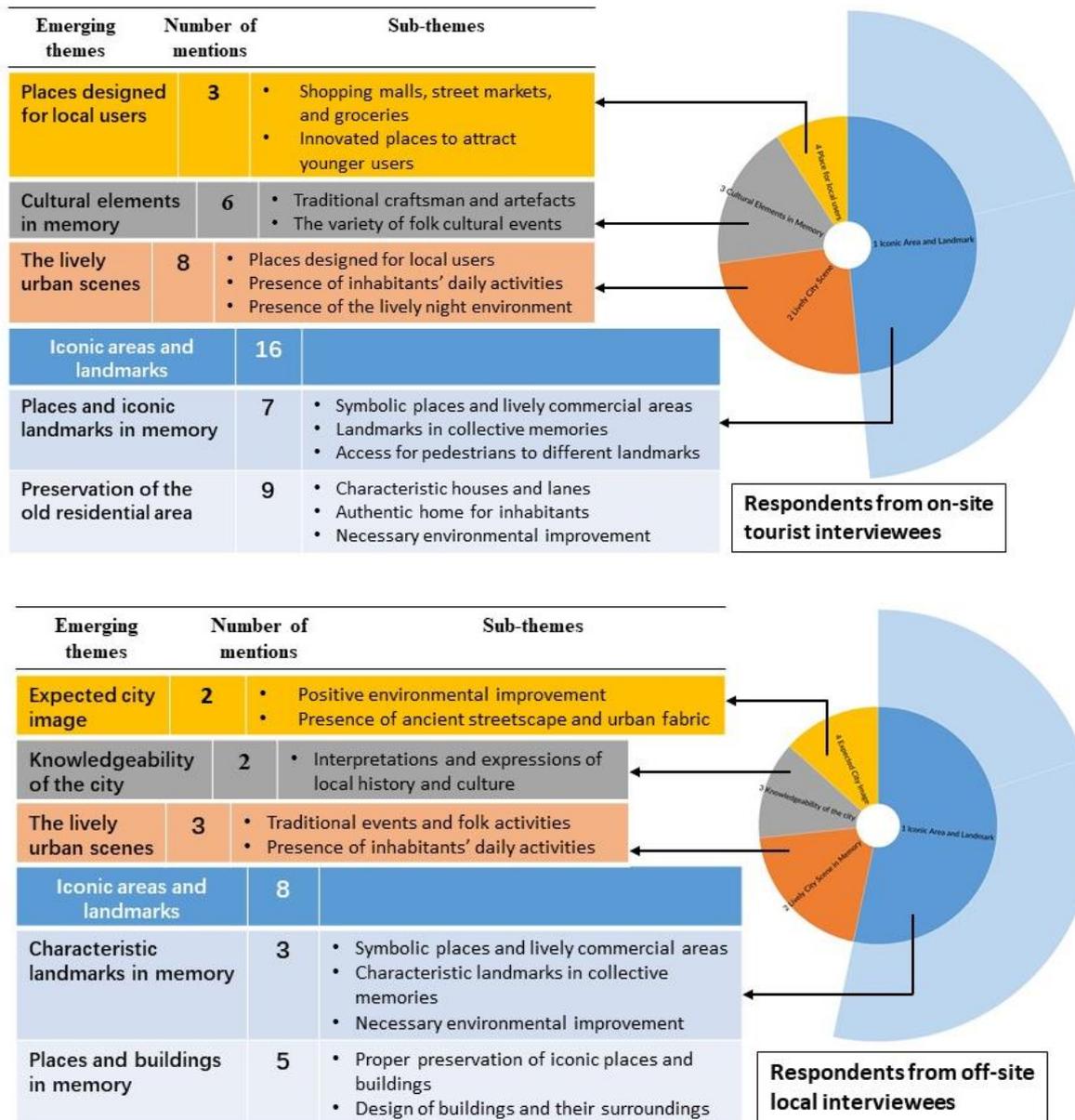


Figure 4-65 Word Cloud and categories – Factors contributing to the revival of Sense of belonging

Preservation and Reconstruction of Iconic Area and Landmark

Similar to the results in the previous question, interviewees from all three groups confirmed the preservation and rebuilding of iconic areas and landmarks are the key categories. Conservation of memorable landmarks and reconstruction of characteristic buildings contribute to forming the old urban image for both on-site and off-site locals. Furthermore, tourists also advised such procedures could help to bring back memories for local users and visitors who had been there before:

Some old buildings could remind me of the old days. For example, only when I see a dilapidated house under demolishing would I find out that it was a familiar place in my memory.

(On-site Local–30)

Those old residential houses and some landmarks need better preservation as they are parts of the lives of locals. (Off-site Local–11)

Some old buildings might be helpful as in Europe we have many old architectures remained and preserved, which sometimes remind us of the past days. (On-site Tourist–16)

Some original landmarks are not what they were in my memory anymore. In the past, passengers and carriages could pass through this Si Pai-Lou, but now it could not let pass through anymore. There should be routes designed for pedestrians to walk below it to reproduce the image. (On-site Tourist–19)

Old shopping malls, city parks, and the central city square were the alive places in memories of local interviewees where they “usually visited in the old days” and felt the loss as witnessing their demolition. While some local interviewees suggested the old scenes in their memories could not be recovered, such as demolished restaurants and relocated schools. Moreover, both on-site and off-site local participants indicated it is difficult to “re-create the sense of time changing” (On-site Local–26 & Off-site Local–03). However, those memorable landmarks got reconstructed based on their old forms and appearances.

Interviewees from the group of off-site locals prefer to see well-preserved built heritage and landmarks with distinctive characters and features, and they insisted the preservation and reconstruction of them could also “provide old signs and symbols to senior citizens” (On-site Local–30).

The old residential area is another critical place closely connecting to locals’ common memory. Both groups of local interviewees suggested the area was an alive district because of the “hustle and bustle scene” created by residents who were living there. On the other hand, the variety of characteristic houses located along interweaved roads and lanes is attractive for both locals and visitors (Figure 4-66):

Some old living quadrangle dwellings are very typical in my memory, and they should get better preservation to show the original image of this city core. (On-site Local–21)

When I was a kid, I spent a lot of time playing and wandering through those interweaved alleys and lanes. I could remember some old houses with characteristic styles and appearances, unlike those brand-new houses along the streets. (On-site Local–26)

While there are still amount of old and shabby residential places around the historic precinct, where the physical environment even the physical environment looks terrible. I think the whole regeneration project should be very helpful for developing local residential's living conditions. (On-site Tourist–18)

In terms of utilising the residential area after the urban regeneration, tourist participants suggested that “some old houses with local characteristics could transform into commercial homestay” (On-site Tourist–21). Other old houses with central locations could act as “gathering spaces for visitors and display spaces of local folk culture” (On-site Tourist–14).



Residential area before urban regeneration project has a terrible environment, but both locals and tourists suggested the “bustle and hustle” living scenes are memorable and authentic. *Image: the Evening Newspaper office of Datong*

Bottom Left: Idle places after most residents had moved out of the ancient urban centre



Bottom Right: Visitors wish to see the well-preserved houses with characteristics and the presence of residents



Figure 4-66 Residential areas in the old days and after urban regeneration.

Lively City Scene

In addition to preservation and reconstruction of the built environment, local participants advised that how to bring back the busy living scenes of residents in the old days is an essential factor to contribute to the revival of belonging:

The old residents are the critical ones. Back in the old days, we lived in a poor environment, but people all knew each other, and we talked about everything together, and those are very warming memories. (On-site Local–06)

I think more original residents living in this old city area should be significant to bring back those familiar scenes in the old time. (On-site Local–27)

The lively scenes are critical components of improving their travelling experiences for tourists. The ancient city centre with elegant buildings and well-preserved built heritage but lack of people conducting daily activities were described as “not real enough” by visitors:

I do not know how the residents would think about it. However, living activities are what I would like to see instead of watching all these rebuilt buildings without any unique characteristics. (On-site Tourist–07)

The old residents prioritise producing such sense with their daily activities. I suppose the most practical way is to discover several distinctive intangible cultural heritages and make a place to show them. (On-site Tourist–15)

Tourist interviewees advised that there should be more places or venues, such as markets or groceries, to support the lives of residents who were still living in the city. They also complained about the contemporary role of the ancient city mostly focused on “becoming a tourist destination” or “creating carnivals for younger locals” (On-site Tourist–30).

Cultural Elements and Knowledgeability

In addition to the revival of the historical sense, the presence of folk culture is considered a contributing factor as well by on-site local and tourist participants. Elements such as traditional handicrafts, food, and cultural events in the old days could help to bring back memories because “they are products of local culture integrating with time” (On-site Local–27). Furthermore, the revival of both historical and local cultural elements is also necessary for locals to “obtain a much comprehensive understanding of their hometown” (Off-site Local–01).

Change of Urban Environment

In terms of changes in the urban environment, on-site local participants confirmed the significant improvement of the city centre. They suggested the slow progress of the urban regeneration project (more than ten years and not finished yet) provided them time to accept the transforming process:

I have been living here for too many years, and I am getting used to the regeneration process, seeing the old city core change little by little. (On-site Local–13)

At last, local participants advised that the sense of belonging could be enhanced by developing the urban environment. They suggested the proper regeneration help to revive a historical city image that meets their expectations – “an old city with ancient landmarks and built heritage”, and “the old city form looks different with the outer-metropolitan environment” (Off-site Local–07 & 09).

4.4.3 Sense of Historical Process

In terms of the urban regeneration process of urban historical elements, this section aims to obtain different opinions about the recent revival progress of history along with the folk culture in various aspects. Furthermore, what kind of characteristic factors would users of different groups prefer to encounter in future regeneration, and how to arrange and interpret such factors for both improving and recovering the sense of history in the ancient city are other essential parts of this section.

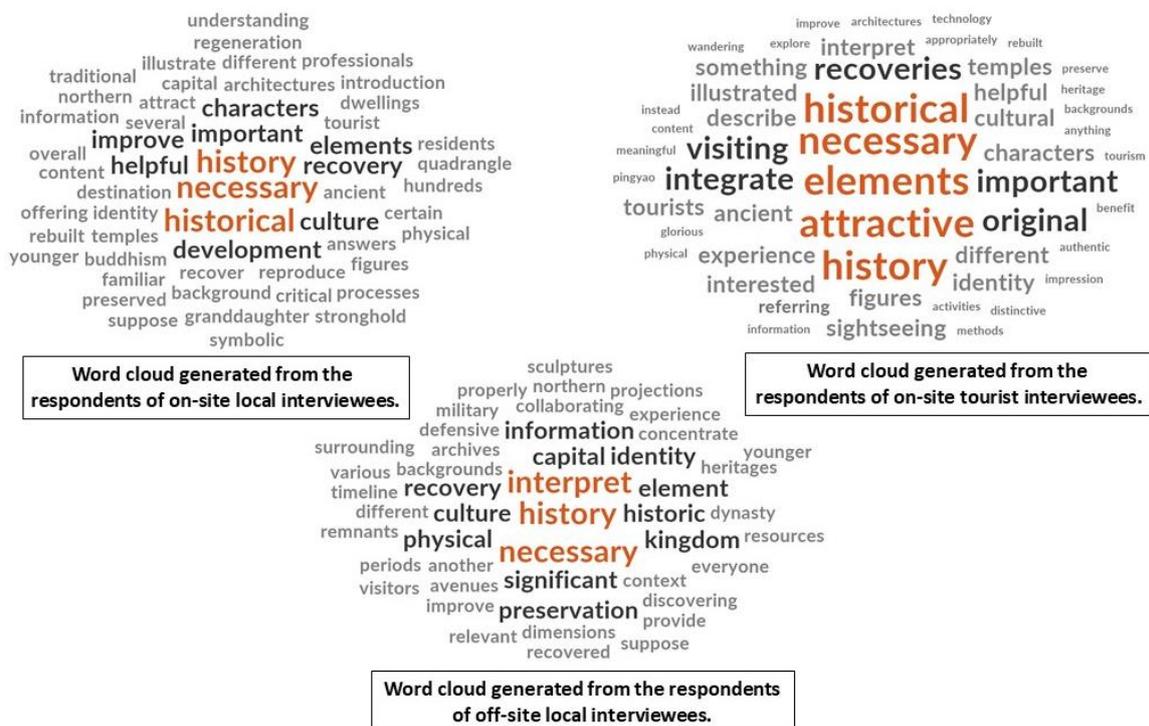
4.4.3.1 The Expression of Urban History

Among various categories of all the responses, responses from all three groups mentioned Identity and City Image and knowledgeability of the ancient town area (Figure 4-67). Terms of “tourist destination” and “distinctive identity” were mentioned by on-site local and tourist interviewees, as local participants had accepted the official identity of the ancient as a tourist destination, and tourist participants wished to see “characteristic” components of a distinctive city image:

It (revival of urban history) should be helpful as offering a new identity of a certain historical period of the city to this tourist destination. (On-site Local–24)

They are unique components forming the city image, and they are the reason that attracts us to come to this place as we would love to see anything distinctive. (On-site Tourist–01)

They are very necessary if I bring any friend to here, we all want to see something different, something that other places do not have. (On-site Tourist–04)



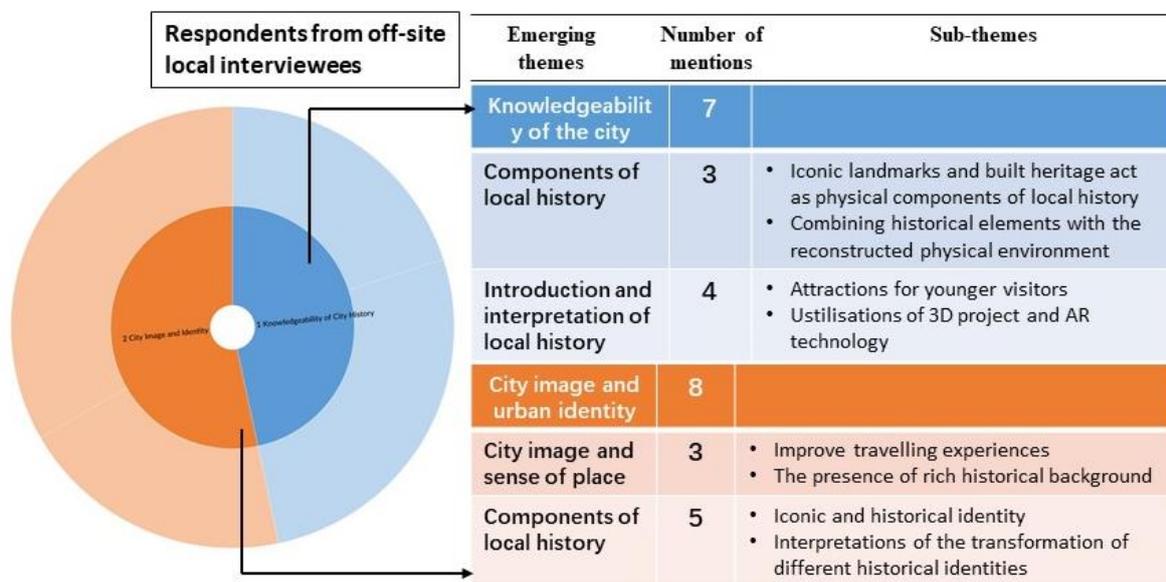
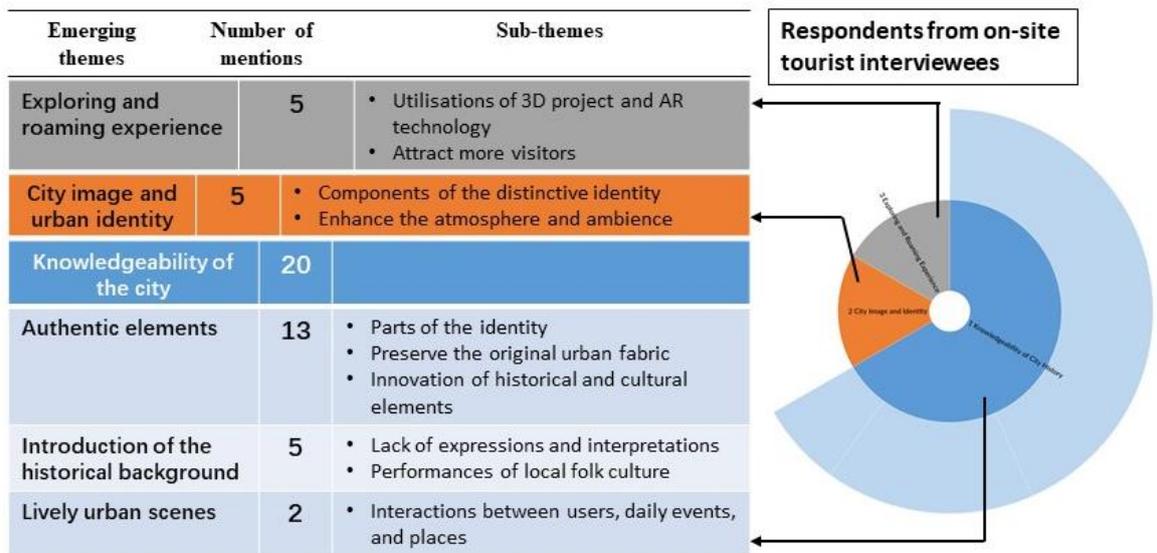
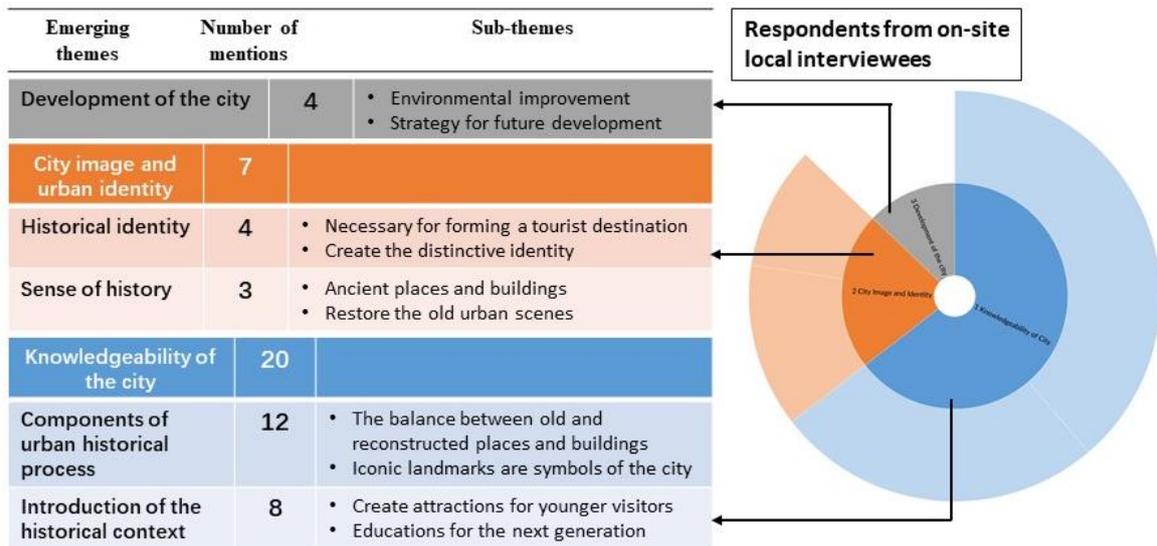


Figure 4-67 Word Cloud and categories – Revival of urban history

Both groups of local interviewees mentioned the famous city identity in history – the capital of Northern Wei Kingdom – as the priority of restoring ancient city image, and the role of acting as defensive fortress along the Great Wall is another distinctive identity of the city:

Our city has acted as the northern stronghold of capital for hundreds of years, and it is essential to recover this symbolic identity based on history. (On-site Local–27)

The history of being the capital of the North Wei Kingdom is one significant period of the local timeline, which should get interpreted more. (Off-site Local–02)

It is essential to interpret the historical context of the city – what was it like when it was the capital and the military defensive town. (Off-site Local–03)

In addition to the characteristics of those historical identities, local participants of both on-site and off-site groups indicated the contemporary revival of historical elements are necessary to “re-image the ancient urban scene” because those elements help to describe the “historical background and development of urban history” of the city (On-site Tourist–30).

In the category of knowledgeability, interviewees of all groups wished to learn more about the ancient city, including its historical development and local folk culture. In addition to the tangible elements – “rebuilt city wall and temples” – that could get “copied and pasted”, participants suggested intangible factors such as information of history and culture were critical components of “authenticity”. Furthermore, how to introduce and interpret such elements are also necessary to transform them into people attractors as there was no well-designed ways or methods to illustrate them at the current stage:

It is good to see more new and rebuilt stuff, such as those quadrangle dwellings, while those traditional and historical elements are also important. (On-site Local–03)

They will help improve the cultural content, and some more introduction of historical figures will let me better understand this city. (On-site Local–13)

More recovery of such historical elements is necessary, but how to properly interpret them as well as collaborate with surrounding physical settings could be another issue. (Off-site Local–15)

If you are referring to some element that could significantly benefit local tourism at this stage, I am afraid there is no one worth discovering. (On-site Tourist–15)

On the other hand, off-site local interviewees advised that proper interpretation of history could help form attractions for younger visitors as they are not fond of “looking up information in archives” (Off-site Local–07). Places and venues with well-designed illuminations as decorations and integrating with “three-dimension projections” will create visual attractions, traditional events and

activities combining with a variety of lights could contribute to the “renovated street scene in the old-time” (Off-site Local–12) to raise visitors’ interests.

Interviewees considered the revival of urban history as a necessary factor in future urban development. They suggested the proper interpretation of historical elements could act as people attractors for visitors because “such historical information will help enrich the content in the city” (On-site Local–13). Tourists would prefer roaming and wandering in the interweaved roads to explore and encounter “attractive points relating to urban history” (On-site Local–10), which could provide an exciting travelling experience.

4.4.3.2 Restoration of Historical and Cultural Components

In addition to evaluating the contemporary revival of urban history from the previous research question, the second question of this section aims to explore more information about influential factors of future urban regeneration from interviewees' responses. The organisation of various elements and characteristics mentioned in both questions would help to provide a basic framework for the revival of urban history. Moreover, the gap between responses from both questions could give information on users’ preferences in a different stage of the historical and cultural revival progress (Figure 4-68).



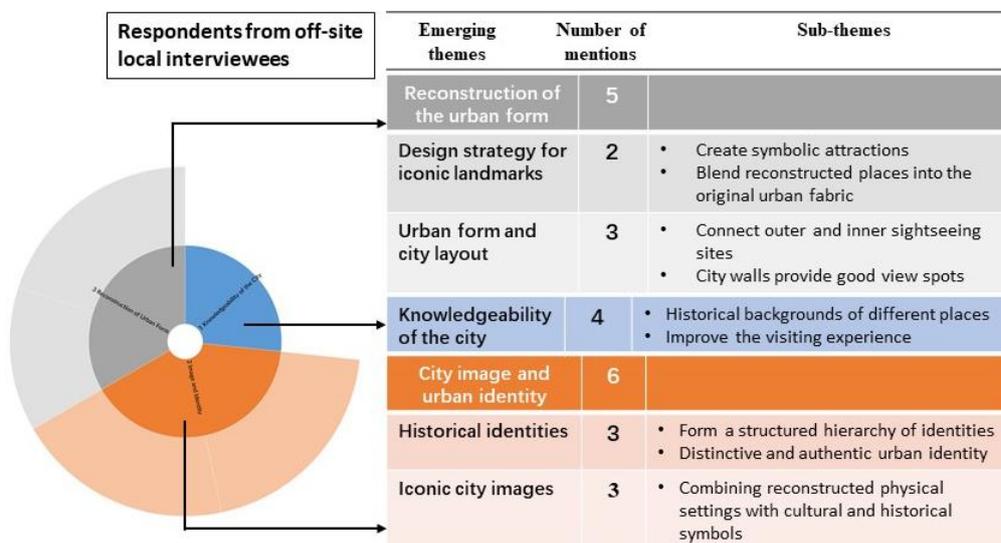
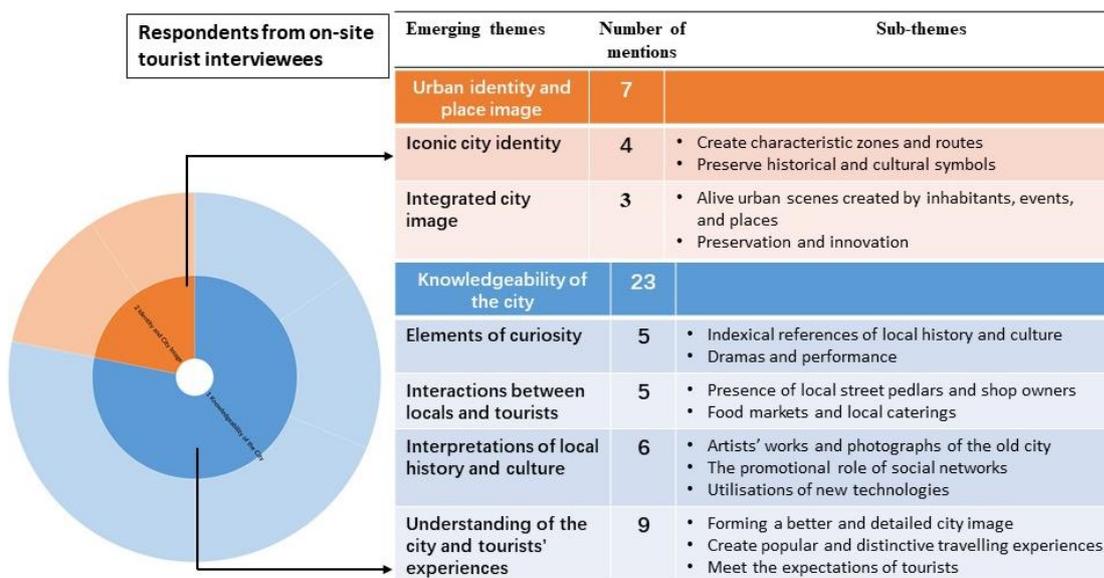
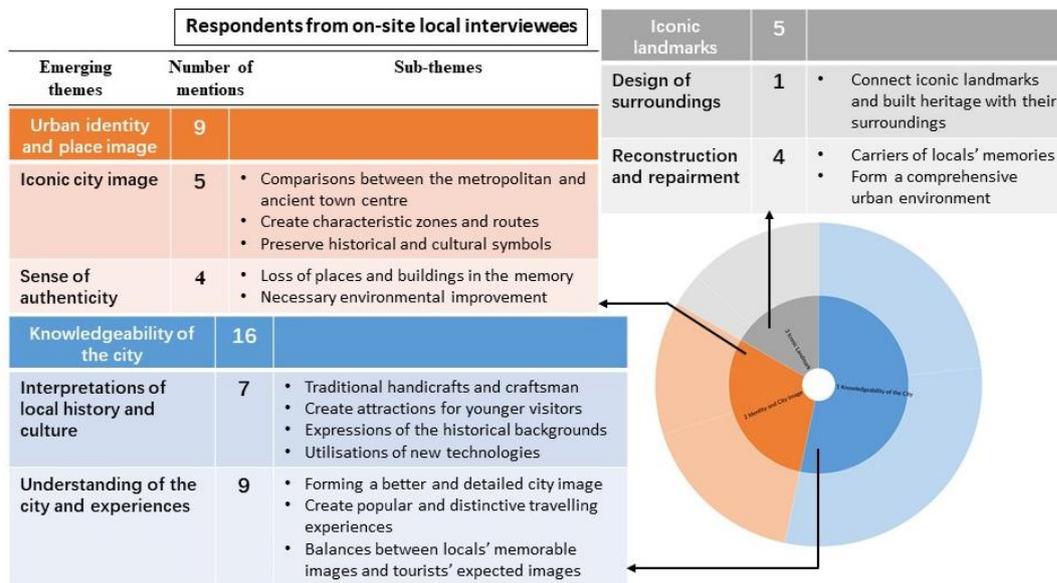


Figure 4-68 Word Cloud and categories – Restoration of Historical Components

Knowledgeability of the City

According to responses from interviewees of all three research groups, the way to learn more about the historical background and folk culture is critical in both the current stage and future regeneration. How to interpret characteristic elements of urban history and culture in the ancient city centre and how those elements should integrate with the design of buildings and spaces play a critical role in forming attractions for all visitors.

In addition to the former residences of historical figures acting as basic components, the presence of traditional handicrafts and skills is a way of showing their distinctive technology and producing process. Such elements help revive old residents' memories as well as inform younger generations:

As I said before, the reproduction of traditional handicrafts and the producing process are all necessary to bring back elders' memories. Furthermore, their introduction would have an educational function as showing the younger generation of the old days. (On-site Local-02)

We just went to the former residence of a famous local scholar, which gave us some information about part of this city's local folk culture and history. (On-site Local-07)

The utilisation of modern technologies, such as well-designed illuminations, electric screens, and three-dimensional projections, could act as visual attractors, especially in creating a lively night-time environment. Furthermore, social media could help to interpret such people attractors in a specific aspect to get younger visitors' attention:

Those elements could combine with some new technologies, such as illuminations, or electric screens, to make better interpretations. (On-site Local-16)

Those historical and cultural elements are fine, but more new and popular things are needed to integrate with them. Like some rebuilt buildings could use some lightings and illuminations to attract more visitors at night, which could improve the experience too. (On-site Tourist-22)

I think some artists and photographers could help bring new forms to the historical scenes or symbols to tourists and younger users, and the use of modern social media could help make them popular. (On-site Tourist-16)

According to various responses, the interpretation of historical periods with distinctive cultural characters contributes to the re-imagining urban identity process. Participants suggested it is necessary to identify and filter various elements to meet the authentic image (such as acting as a defensive fortress), and some shows or dramas would help to recover iconic events of local "cultural context":

there are many shows to reproduce historical events, which help tourists better understand local history and culture. (On-site Tourist-13)

I have heard that various minorities formed our city because of its location, so it is critical to find out more information about such cultural diversity. Although people are all known of the history that this city was once the capital of the Northern Wei Dynasty, there are few things to tell us what it is. Those elements are our unique characters, and they need to get fully interpreted. (Off-site Local– 04)

Both on-site local and tourist interviewees confirmed that the presence of various places with proper introduction and illustrations of local cultural context would contribute to their touring experiences by offering more attractive sites to explore and stay. Moreover, for local visitors and residents, a better understanding of their hometown helps to form a “detailed and comprehensive city image” (Off-site Tourist–09). On the other hand, tourists advised that the presence of attractors with local characteristics, such as well-designed drama, traditional events, and historical figures, would trigger their curiosity to explore for more information:

Some big shows to reproduce all the old and historical scenes could raise visitors' interest. After watching them, we might want to explore more about the other parts of this city. (On-site Tourist–01)

Suppose this place has any famous figure who had done anything well-known or made significant changes in history. In that case, people might be attracted to explore the details and search for more information. (On-site Tourist–15)

On the other hand, how tourists could interact or communicate with residents in the ancient city area were considered a way of knowing the city. According to tourist interviewees, scenes of “*chatting with peddlers and old residents*”, “*living in a well-designed business B&B Inn located in the well-preserved residential area*”, and even “*sharing traditional food with locals*” (On-site Tourist–09, 17 & 18) are ways of interacting with residents, and such interactions could contribute to improving visitors touring experiences (Figure 4-69).



Left: Visitors are roaming in the re-designed roads and pedestrians, and tourists suggested the way visitors chatting with peddlers is some kind of interaction.



Right: The traditional food fair not only plays the role of attractive event, but also act as a way of interacting with local culture and history.

Figure 4-69 Attending events with locals are a way of being participated in the culture.

Reconstruction of Urban Form

Urban form, city layout, landmark and built heritage are the key factors for both groups of local interviewees. In terms of preservation and reconstruction of iconic landmarks in memory, on-site local participants advised that both the restoration of authentic materials and the design of surroundings are key to bringing back or even enhancing the sense in memory:

I think such historical elements, such as this Nine-Dragon Screen, will need to be matched with the better surrounding environment, architectural details and decorations, which could offer a better feeling than now. (On-site Local-23)

At the beginning of the regeneration, the government asked people to return old bricks as much as possible to rebuild the wall. I think it is a proper way to recover our old buildings. (On-site Local-27)

For example, there was a plan to rebuild the sculpture of a famous historical figure last year. Its location became a problem – how to blend it into the surrounding environment so they could create a proper place together? (Off-site Local-15)

In terms of the design strategy of urban form and city layout, off-site interviewees mentioned three significant elements of urban form – Crossing main streets, the city wall, and the connection of iconic landmarks between inner and outer environment:

Those four main streets with lively scenes should be helpful. (Off-site Local-10)

There should have ways to interpret distinctive elements from world-famous heritages outside the urban centre and connect them with the inner-city core. (Off-site Local-11)

In terms of recovering the city image, I believe there is no other way better than to observe and walk in the tangible form or climb on the city wall are the best ways to feel the historical feeling of this city. (Off-site local–14)

Identity and City Image

This category identified three themes: a sense of authenticity, iconic city image, and historical identity. Based on the responses from all three groups, the presence of old buildings and living scenes are the key to revival the authentic feeling, although on-site locals suggested their memories of the old urban environment “is not good because of the dirty and messy scenes” (On-site Local–18), they also indicated that such scenes could act as tourists’ preferences of “sense of authenticity”.

In terms of creating an iconic city image and identity, all three groups advised that restoring characteristic elements from different historical periods is the key to forming a “distinctive city image and impression”. Furthermore, interpretation of urban history with “iconic symbols and cultural features” (such as acting as capital and defensive fortress) could become an essential strategy in future regeneration. Furthermore, tourists advised they wish to see various characters of the tourist destination as meeting their expected image, and the way how various elements integrate with the built environment and urban form is also essential:

We live in Suzhou currently, and that city is charming and full of traditional sense. Its layout is one memorable character as it follows the interweaved river nets, and there are various attractive places with local characteristics. Moreover, the stores and shops sell stuff like traditional artefacts or crafts. They all meet our expectations of what a traditional Chinese old city should be. (On-site Tourist–17)

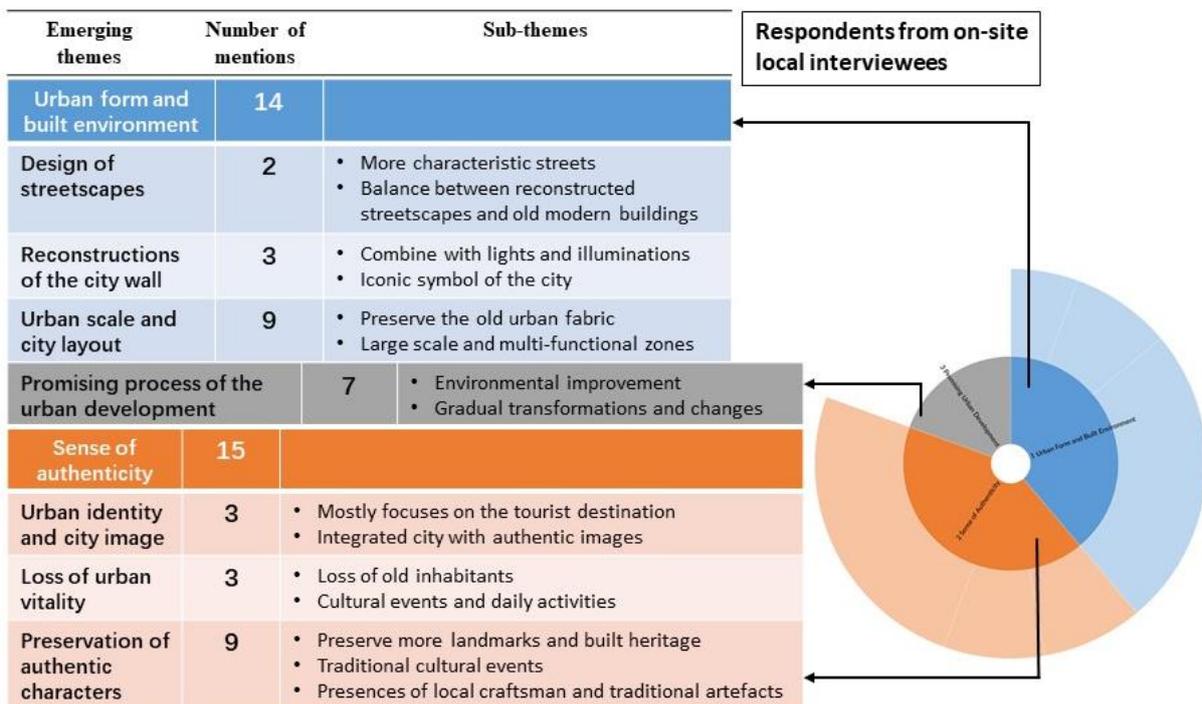
The character that left me with the most impressive image is the architectural style from Liao-Jin Dynasty, which I had never seen before at any other place. Oh, the Exhibition of Lantern is very impressive, too. And about the local food, I enjoy the traditional shaving noodles here. (On-site Tourist–18)

4.4.4 Area Identity and Iconic Symbol

Questions asked in this section intend to obtain opinions about the issue of homogenisation that had been identified in the research area and to find out reasons behind such problems from different groups of interviewees. Furthermore, this part also intends to explore beneficial components that contribute to forming a distinctive and authentic city image, which could help to re-image the old city centre for all groups of visitors.

4.4.4.1 Distinctive Urban Image

According to the research of related literature and pilot study of the research area, the lack of distinctive city image is the main reason that resulted in the issue of homogenisation. Therefore, the first question is going to explore more detailed answers from different visitors. The key is to obtain their opinions about what kind of elements the ancient city should have and how such components work to avoid the city becoming similar or even identical to other ancient cities or areas (Figure 4-70).



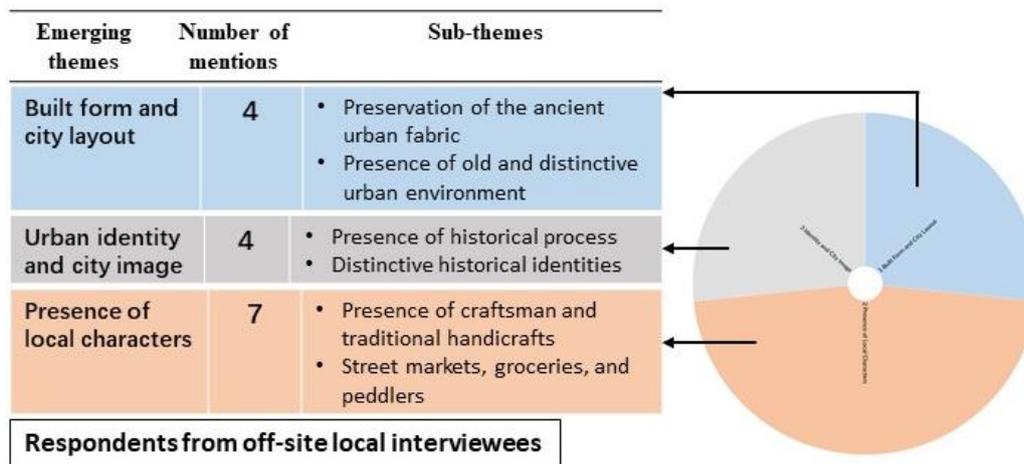
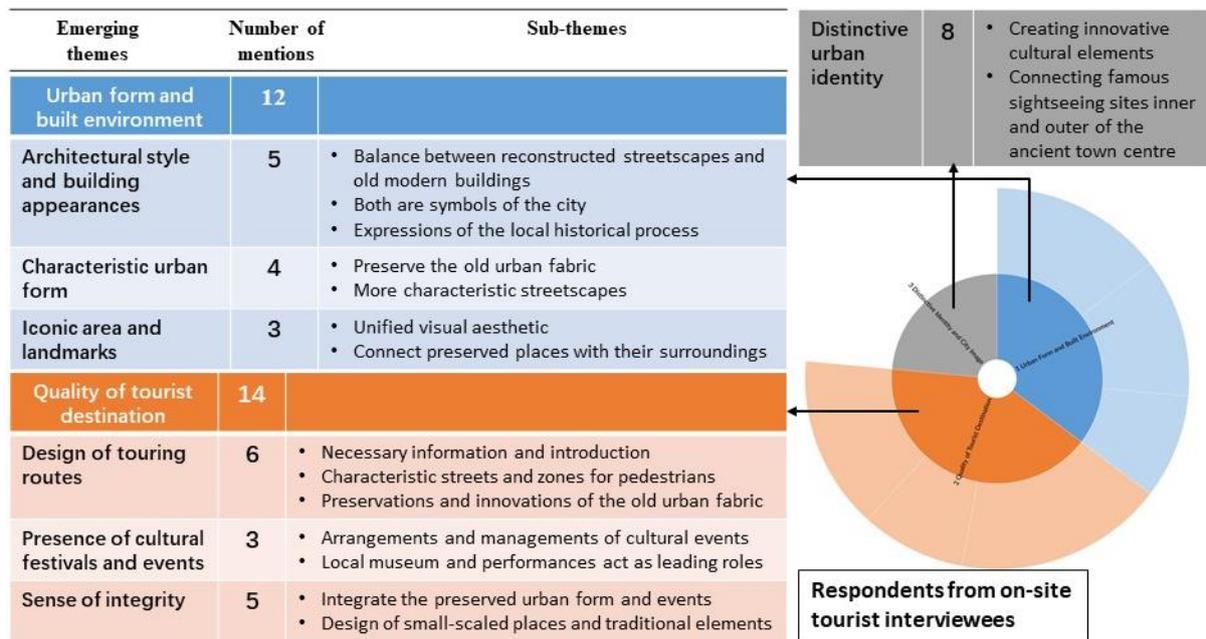


Figure 4-70 Word Cloud and categories – Homogenisation of City Image

The authenticity of City Image and Urban Identity

In general, both on-site and off-site groups of tourists advised that the key to preserving the authenticity of identity and city image is to focus on the revival of the old urban scene and the renovation of historical urban identity. In addition, local interviewees advised the preservation and interpretation of elements with local characters from the past of the city could act as successful methods for other two ancient towns with similar urban forms – Beijing, Xi’an, and Pingyao:

This old inner-city is different from the old city of Pingyao, which is well-preserved from the start. While many ancient and original characters of our city had been lost in the past decades.

(On-site Local-06)

I think we still need more local characters to create an original sense instead of piling up archaic buildings only. (On-site Local-16)

we need some major events or big festivals to act as the leading power, attracting more tourists and improving the local economy. (Off-site Local-07)

In addition to the lack of traditional characteristic elements, the revival of urban vitality is another key factor in creating the sense of authenticity as “despite the improved built environment, how to bring back the scene of people living and conducting daily activities in the city centre is necessary” (On-site Local-09). Tourist interviewees suggested that compared with some ancient districts of Beijing, the image of locals showing up in the old residential areas could create an “authentic feeling” for them.

Interviewees of all three groups advised that the authenticity of the city image needs to be rooted in the history of the city. Tourists paid more attention to the term “unique and distinctive urban identity”, and they suggested elements with local traditional character are necessary to produce a sense of authenticity, and the presence of rare elements could also lead to a different impression of the city:

The inner-city core looks like Beijing or Xi'an but has nothing unique compared with those two old capitals. Finding something unique, or even strange events is necessary to create a distinctive identity. (On-site Tourist-07)

I have seen too many old towns and cities with the architectural style of the Ming and Qing Dynasty, and I suppose this city could discover more information from older history to form a distinctive identity. (On-site Tourist-30)

Urban Form and Built Environment

Design style and quality of built form are another major categories identified from responses of all three groups. For both groups of local interviewees, the urban form and city layout of each ancient city or town played critical roles in their recognition of city image as elements “are results of tangible history and culture integrating with the geographic condition” (On-site Local-11). Tourists who were aware of the historical background advised the city centre should have an essential role in the future planning project:

While this city has been through a large-scale demolition and rebuilt process, the old inner-city core has a different urban plan strategy (tourism destination) compared with its surrounding metropolitan area. (On-site Tourist-13)

On the other hand, different scales could lead to the design of functional divisions. Local interviewees advised that the scale of Datong ancient city could be used to produce “a multi-functional urban centre” (On-site Local-22). As a critical component of urban form, the reconstruction of the city wall

is an iconic symbol for locals, and to utilise it with “proper illuminations and well-designed events” (On-site Local–24) could improve the attractive effect of the wall in both the day and night.

The architectural style and building appearance are considered as characteristic elements of authentic city image by tourist interviewees. As the built form of the ancient city is a result of historical context, it is critical to choose the most representative historical period:

This city is a bit like Xi'an, where I had been before, though they are quite different in many aspects, including architectural styles. The ancient city in Xi'an was built on the Tang dynasty, while the precinct was constructed mainly from the dynasty of Liao and Jin. (On-site Tourist–18)

On-site local interviewees who had no idea of the comparison between their hometown and other ancient cities confirmed the improvement of the urban environment after the current urban regeneration process, and they thought the overall condition of the city was on the right way.

Quality of Tourist Destination

On-site tourist interviewees mentioned various aspects about the quality of the ancient city as a tourist destination – focusing on the design of the touring route, the presence of festivals and events, and a sense of integrity. One or several well-designed travelling routes are necessary for tourists as they suggested such routes could provide “attractive elements and information of the city”:

At the current stage, the content of the inner-city area and outside the urban area is not so rich. Compared with Xi'an and Pingyao, I suppose it might take another 4 or 5 years to connect all those spots to form a proper travelling network. (On-site–15)

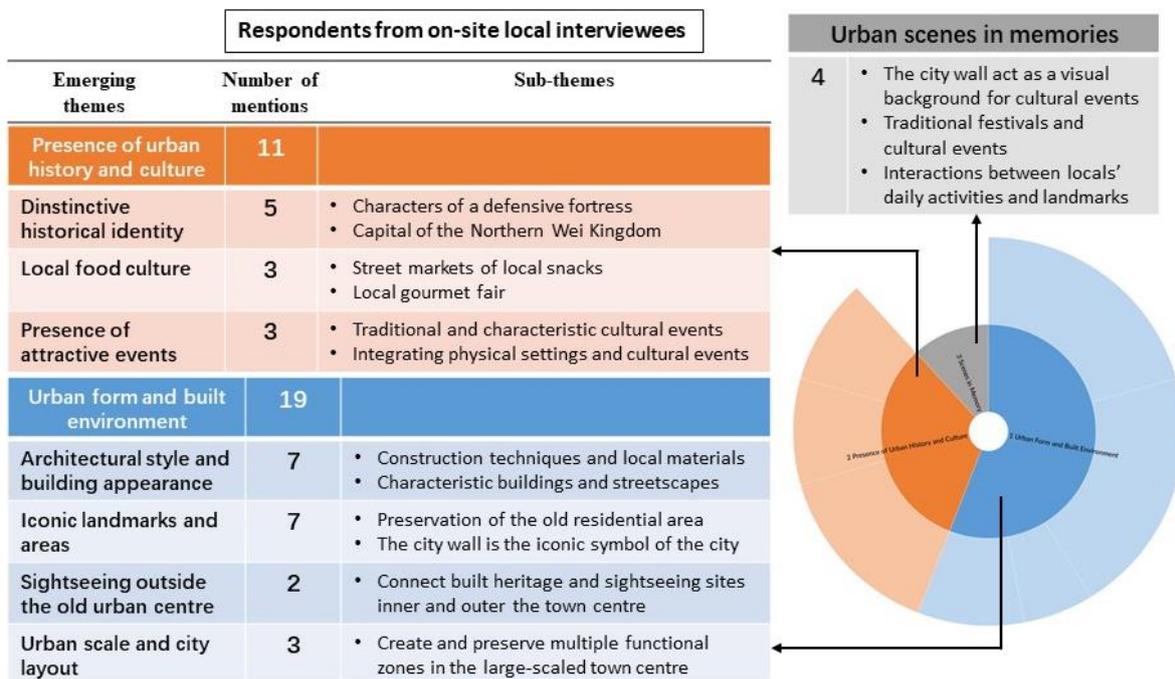
In addition to the design of touring routes and the presence of traditional festivals and events, tourist interviewees advised that a successful tourist destination should be able to offer “a sense of integrity”. According to the successful examples they provided, this feeling could come from the proper integration of various aspects – well-preserved urban form, presence of characteristic events, and a unified view of streetscape:

I can think of two good examples – Wuzhen and Chengdu. Those two places have many attractive traditional events and elements while preserving the old urban form properly. Furthermore, Wuzhen also integrates with the international drama festival each year, which also created a successful cultural event. (On-site Tourist–09)

Many characters we saw here remind me of those in the old town of Pingyao, and the whole scale of this city area is large. Sightseeing spots of Pingyao gathered on a small scale, and many stores selling fascinating local products with folk cultural features. (On-site Tourist–12)

4.4.4.2 Symbolic Characteristics and Expressions

As the responses from the previous interview question focus on the theme of authenticity and homogenisation of urban image, the second question aims to obtain information about the distinctive characteristics and elements that an authentic city should have and help form the unique city image of the ancient urban centre. Two major categories were identified from the results – Urban form and Built environment, and the presence of urban history and culture (Figure 4-71):



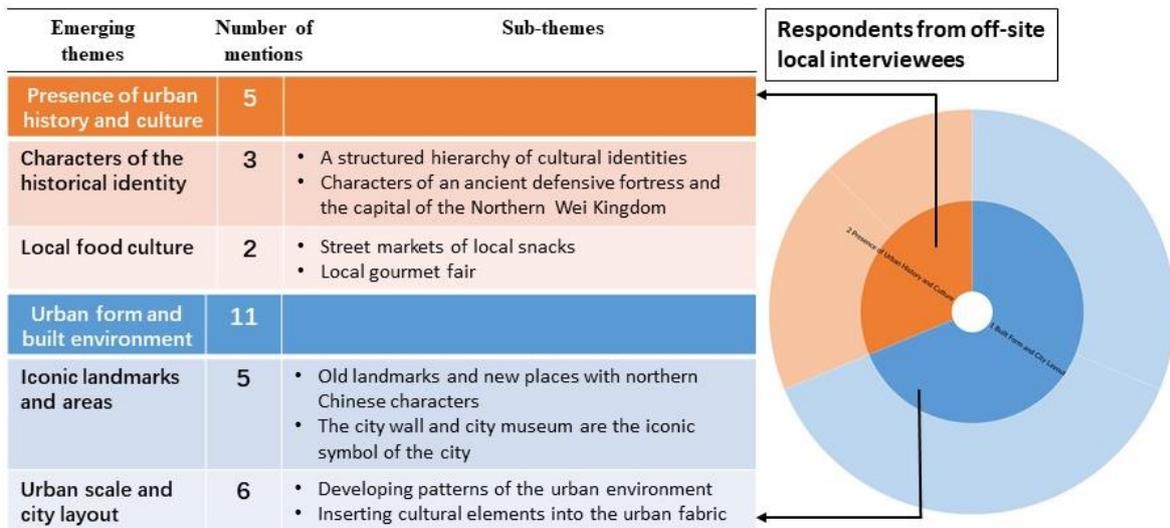
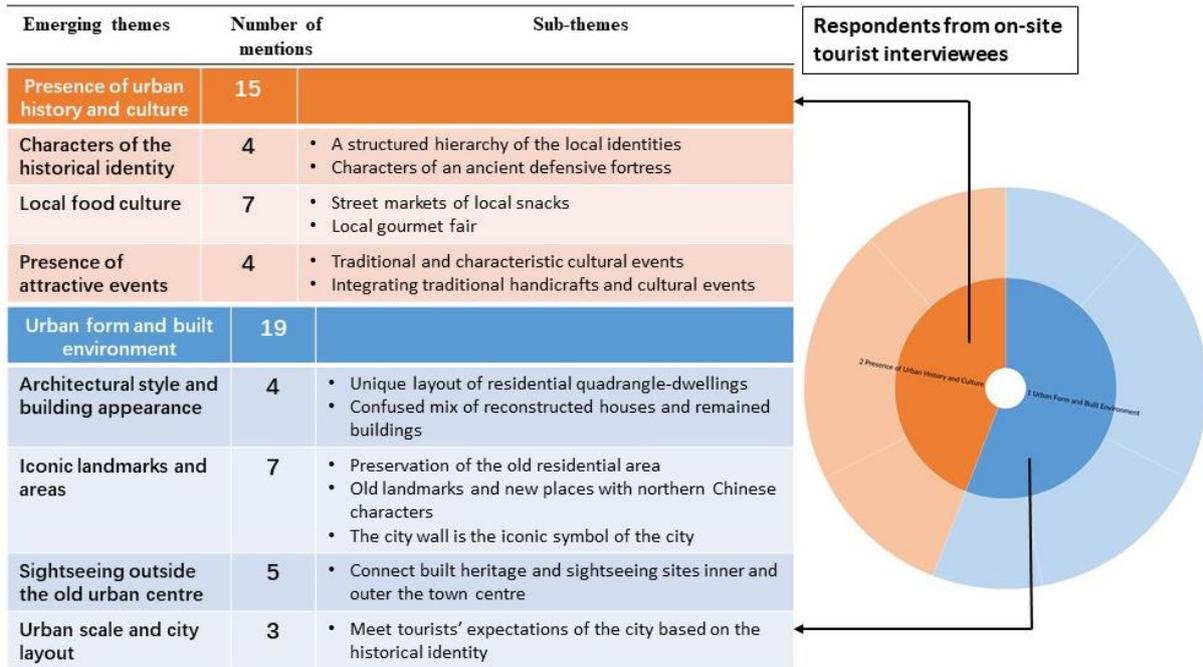


Figure 4-71 Word Cloud and categories – Distinctive characteristics

Urban Form and Built Environment

In this category, themes of building appearances, Presence of landmarks, and urban layout were mentioned by most interviewees. In general, interviewees from all three groups advised that the urban layout left them with an impressive image as the chessboard pattern of the old urban centre area is considered as a typical traditional Chinese urban layout with represented characteristics. Both tourists and local visitors prefer roaming in narrow streets interweaved with each other, which provided a sense of “walking in the history of the city” (On-site Local–14) as finding out elements from a different pattern of the urban development. Furthermore, interviewees who had been to the ancient

city of Pingyao suggested that the scale of the ancient urban centre could provide spaces for “various functional precincts” (On-site Local–02).

Tourist interviewees advised the presence of landmarks and built heritage is necessary to form a historical city image as all of them are iconic symbols with distinctive architectural characteristics:

The ancient performing stage is unique as its appearance, structure, and details are different from others in southern China. (On-site Tourist–05)

Several ‘Pai-Lou’ (traditional archways with decorations) on various streets give me a feeling of local history. One more important thing is the exhibition of lanterns, which is very beautiful and full of local traditional features. In general, this historic precinct gave me an impression of historical alteration. (On-site Tourist–18)

On-site and off-site local interviewees indicated the reconstruction of the ancient city wall helped to improve the urban environment compared to its past, which was only “some remnants of the broken earth wall” (On-site Local–26). Another off-site local interviewee thought the design of embedding the museum in the wall was a “perfect combination” (Off-site Local–06). In addition to landmarks and built heritage in the ancient city centre, tourist interviewees also suggested some world-famous sightseeing located in the countryside should get more attention because of their “original and authentic beauty without any modifications” (On-site Tourist–29).

The built form of old and reconstructed buildings in the city centre includes architectural style and building appearance, which is considered another factor contributing to the distinctive urban image. On-site local interviewees paid more attention to the improved quality of the built environment, while tourists were interested in the unique building appearance of old houses with local characteristics:

One of the most significant cultural characteristics in Shanxi province is the architectural style of traditional buildings, including their forms, materials, and the layout of those quadrangle-dwellings. (On-site Local–15)

The city has beautiful rebuilt architecture and very old and poor residential areas, which has provided a unique comparison. (On-site Local–16)

Presence of Urban History and Culture

The presence of urban history and culture refers to themes relating to both the sense and interpretations of historical identity and cultural elements. Interviewees from all three groups wished to have a better understanding of characteristic city identity in history, such as when it had become the capital city of North Wei Kingdom and how the city was designed as a frontier fortress:

I have heard that various minorities formed our city because of its location, so it is critical to find out more information about such cultural diversity. Although people are all known of the history that this city was once the capital of the Northern Wei Dynasty, there are few things to tell us what it is. Those elements are our unique characters, and they need to get fully interpreted. (Off-site Local–04)

Its unique history and culture are very attractive to me. For example, this place was one fortress of the general frontline to defend nomadic minorities from the north, and the culture based on such historical background should have been shown to tourists from the central plain areas and southern China. (On-site Local–30)

Furthermore, ancient cities' distinctive and historical identity could provide a basic planning strategy for future urban regeneration. Tourist interviewee advised that the well-designed district with local history and culture should act as the central area of exhibition and the starting point of touring routes:

I want to use Hangzhou as a good example. First, it has a distinctive core of both natural and cultural resources – Xihu (the West Lake), which could act as a central point of the plan and strategy. Second, there are two major shows to describe every historical and cultural detail and event of that city, which became a starting point of every visitor's travelling route. (On-site Tourist–09)

As a famous impression of the city, local food culture, as a kind of mix-up from various districts and minorities, had been identified by interviewees from all three groups. Locals took the food culture as a “characteristic feature and critical component of urban culture” (Off-site–08), and tourists advised that such mixed culture could help to form attractions with “well-designed venues and arrangement of streetscape” (On-site Tourist–19). Moreover, local food culture could integrate with various events and traditional festivals to create a distinctive cultural ambience, contributing to “the city's live scene” (On-site Tourist–20).

Scenes in Memory

According to responses of on-site locals, preservation of old buildings and iconic landmarks could recall certain memories of local interviewees, and old traditional events will help to bring back scenes in the past:

When I went to the old city of Xi'an, which is also surrounded by a city wall and a moat, the most impressive image is seeing fishes swimming in the moat after a heavy rain, and that experience is very memorial. (On-site Local–11)

Emerging themes	Number of mentions	Sub-themes	Interpretations of local history and culture		
Places for local users					
Environmental improvement	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Properly restoration and repairment Improved living conditions 	Presentations and integrations	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of the catering culture Organisations and managements of historical and cultural features Creations and innovations to attract younger visitors Promotional roles of the social-media
Presence of old inhabitants	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Places designed for local users Preserve meeting and gathering places 			
Resting places and settings	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide places for families with kids to enjoy their leisure time 			
Planning strategy					
Sections and precincts	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrians and places are designed for holding cultural events Quarters and routes with different functions and characteristic themes Public transportation and access for pedestrians 	Traditional street markets	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of local craftsman and traditional handicrafts Traditional food
The structure of urban identities	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect between different place identities Expressions of multiple historical identities 			
Urban environment and built form					
Architectural style and building appearance	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preservation and restoration of old buildings and re-design of the surroundings 	The variety of events and festivals	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk shows, performances, and other kinds of events to introduce the local historical background
Authentic urban fabric and city layout	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve the old residential areas in locals' collective memories Express different historical periods 			

Respondents from on-site local interviewees

Emerging themes	Number of mentions	Sub-themes	Interpretations of local history and culture		
Planning strategy					
Touring routes and precincts	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect characteristic landmarks and built heritage Quarters and routes with different functions and characteristic themes The leading role of urban museum 	Presentations and integrations	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boost local economy Organisations and managements of historical and cultural features Promotional roles of the social-media
Connecting inner and outer areas	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect between different place identities Expressions of the historical development 			
Urban environment and built form					
Authentic building appearances	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characteristic building ornaments and the main buildings Balances and connections between old houses and reconstructed buildings 	Knowledgeability of the city	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of distinctive historical periods and urban development Museum and performance act as exhibitions of local cultural context
Design of streetscapes	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The diversity of venues and places Facades and street furniture 			
Iconic landmarks	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The city wall provides a large open spaces New landmarks act as gathering places 	The variety of events and festivals	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibitions, performances, and other kinds of events to introduce the local historical background Managements of gourmet fairs and shows Innovations of new and interactive cultural events
Old and reconstructed buildings	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconstructed buildings and their surroundings 			

Respondents from on-site tourist interviewees

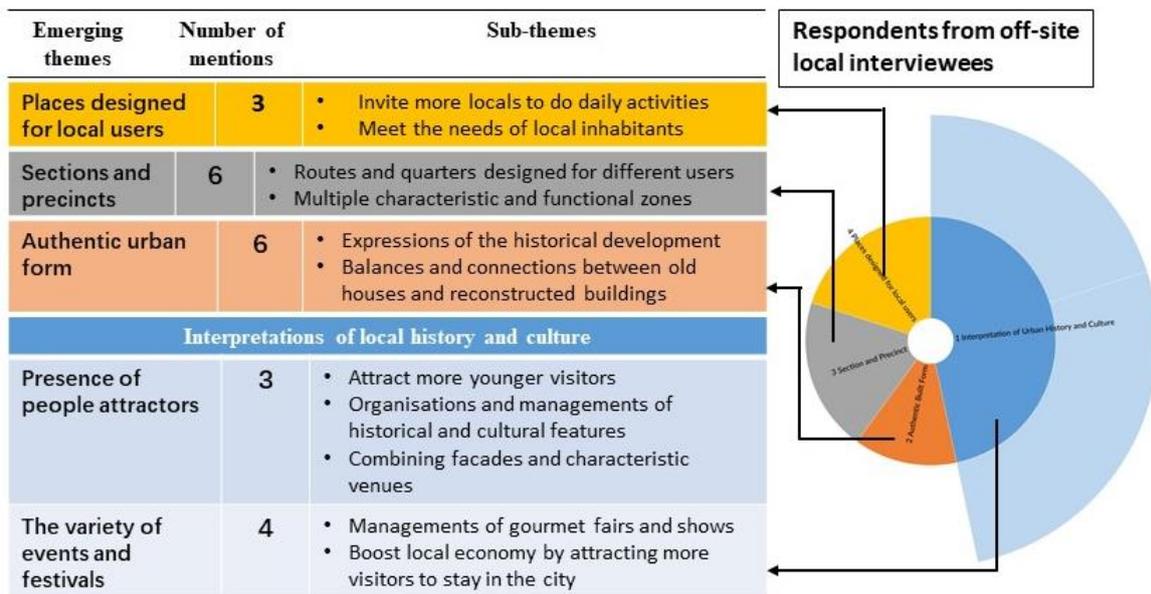


Figure 4-72 Word Cloud and categories – Valuable Influential Factors

Interpretation of Urban History and culture

Responses from all three groups emphasised the proper interpretation of urban history and culture was significant in affecting the meanings of place and quality of travelling experience. In general, both on-site interviewees advised the way of expressing and illustrating local characteristics and elements is necessary, while those responses only provided general thoughts, such as integrated framework and strategy, instead of offering detailed methods:

The general atmosphere is too commercial for both locals and tourists, and it is essential to express our own cultural and historical characteristics throughout the overall environment instead of visiting sightseeing sites. (On-site Local–13)

I suppose the critical thing is about integrating historical and cultural resources into the overall strategy and plan, even if the regeneration project aims to raise the local economy through the tourism industry. (On-site Tourist–09)

The variety of festivals and cultural events were considered as good examples of introducing local history and culture by participants from all three groups, and how to choose and renovate events with distinctive characteristics is the key, especially for tourists who wish to experience novelty elements:

Furthermore, some more backgrounds or stories of each temple, tower, or sightseeing place need to show to visitors, and they could integrate with some traditional talk shows or comic shows. (On-site Local–03)

For example, the catering industry has many good types of food, but the government needs to build their brand. If visitors would have to come here to enjoy their unique and original taste,

then some related commercial activities – accommodation, transportation, and local retailing – would also benefit. (On-site Tourist–19)

Tourist interviewees who had taken part in some new-invented events questioned about their impacts because of the lack of authentic characteristics:

The Movie Week of Jackie Chan is just a purely commercial event manipulated by those real estate developers. It could attract fans or visitors while the boost effect to the surrounding areas is quite limited. (On-site Tourist–15)

Off-site interviewees advised that the presence of “**well-organised cultural events**” could form a long-term people attractor as “visitors might come back again to attend them instead of stopping by and taking a photo” (Off-site Local–04). Furthermore, clusters of resting places, such as cafés, tea houses, and restaurants, with ancient facades and renovated cultural elements in commercial precincts could attract more young visitors.

The proper introduction and information of local history and culture is another key factor mentioned by on-site tourists, and such ways of knowing their destinations are vital in forming images of places. Moreover, streetscape and building appearances act as basic elements in illustrating the specific historical identity of the city:

I have heard that this city was the capital of the Northern Wei Kingdom, but I could not find any relevant elements or scenes that refer to that period. I think Xi'an has done much better in this aspect by showing its history as the capital of the Tang Dynasty. (On-site Tourist–07)

I can tell many of rebuilt architectures and streets based on the style and appearance of the Ming and Qing Dynasty, while this city has a long history more than that. To illustrate and interpret the older period of its history will help make this city distinctive. (On-site Tourist–30)

Urban Environment and Built Form

Building appearance and architectural style are critical factors affecting interviewees' images of place and experiences when touring in the ancient city centre. Tourist participants preferred the authentic streetscape formed by well-preserved facades with traditional characteristics, and local participants from both groups advised that the old built form, which includes both scale and layout, is vital to bring back the urban scene:

As the frontages and facades are critical to improving the visiting experience, I think repair and rehabilitation are necessary. Moreover, they should preserve their old appearances and details instead of the same brand-new style. (On-site Tourist–20)

I think it is nice to see many old buildings have expanded with matched architecture and decorations, and they all help to produce a historical sense compared with the urban area outside this inner-city core. (On-site Local–11)

The next stage of the regeneration project needs to demolish the rest old flats and replace them with more buildings with ancient appearance, and then the whole inner-city core should show its original ancient scenes. (Off-site Local–11)

According to responses from tourists and off-site locals, **the reconstruction and repair of old landmarks and built heritage must follow their old form based on old blueprints and drawings from historical archives.** As each of the iconic landmarks was built in different historical periods, the presence of authentic built form could contribute to the formation of “cultural context”:

In my opinion, it is critical to protect every built heritage in this city and to strictly follow their original forms, structures, and appearance from ancient drawings, blueprints, or archives to conduct further repair and rehabilitation. (On-site Tourist–29)

I wish to see more architecture rebuilt based on their original forms, such as the Northern Wei, Ming, and Qing architectural styles and appearances. It is necessary to show the context of local history. (Off-site Local–12)

In addition to preserving built form, on-site locals suggested the old city layout and urban fabric would help deliver old street scene as “**all the interweaved roads and streets are parts of memories**” (On-site Local–21 & 25). For tourists, new functions of iconic landmarks, such as providing gatherings and spaces and viewpoints, can help them have interactive experiences instead of visual attractors.

Mixed building appearances made confused streetscape for tourists as they wished to see a “unified sense of street view with a good balance of old and new buildings” (On-site Tourist–01 & 08), and presence of characteristic restaurants and design of street furniture could contribute to delivering such sense of unifying:

Some small stuff, such as chairs, bus stations, even trash bins, should have a better design to be compatible with the whole physical environment. (On-site Tourist–21)

The place for local users

The lack of places designed for local users, especially those still living in the ancient urban centre, was emphasised by on-site and off-site local interviewees. Although locals considered the process of repair and reconstruction taken in old residential areas as necessary methods to protect most dilapidated houses, participants from both groups indicated the loss of old residents did result in the

“lifeless street scenes”. Furthermore, well-designed café and street furniture were necessary for local visitors “who wish to spend their time in the old hometown” and “parents who play with their children” (On-site Local–18 & 30).

Planning Strategy

At last, interviewees from all three groups put forward several ideas of planning strategy in the future. Design of various touring routes, precincts, and sections with functions and themes were considered as ways of assembling characteristic elements in organizations and creating iconic areas by integrating with landmarks:

I would like to see one or several pedestrians with various local foods and snacks. Such pedestrians could act as central points of attractions, and they could help gather a lot of visitors and raise the liveness of adjacent areas. (On-site Local–02)

I wish to see several visiting routes, such as in various aspects of religion, culture, folk, or history. On the other hand, different groups of users, like older people and teenagers, might request specific routes to fulfil their needs. (Off-site Local–03)

For foreigners like us, it seems necessary to have a starting point of understanding this city's historical and cultural backgrounds first, which should help us have a better understanding before travelling in the city with so many doubts. (On-site Tourist–17)

This old city has several interesting sites, such as the Palace of Prince Dai and this Ning- Dragon Screen. There should be ways to connect them with other places and form a route or network to have an exciting experience. (On-site Tourist–21)

In terms of improving the touring experience, tourists advised that comparing the inner ancient city centre and outer urban metropolitan could deliver “a distinctive sense of time-travelling”, and the connection between built heritage in and out of the city centre could form a comprehensive network of city identity. In the meantime, on-site local participants also suggested there should have a structured framework of urban identity, which includes various components in a primary and secondary relationship:

I feel the city lacks a proper identity. It has various characters at the current stage, but most of them are just fragments...and I think it is necessary to find a major identity (acting as the leading power) to connect the other characters through a designed route or a travelling network. (On-site Local–14)

I wish to see more information and details about the historical period of the Northern Wei since it was a significant transforming dynasty for this city. From what I can tell, we already have

sites full of characteristics from Ming and Qing, so I suppose the regime of the North Wei will help this city be distinctive from other cities. (On-site Local-26)

4.4.6 Summary of analysis – the meaning of place

Urban history and cultural expression are critical in creating continuous interpretative mediation. The public could absorb and filter pieces of knowledge to form their understandings, feelings, and image of the urban area. In addition to symbolic expressions brought by public spaces' physical form and social nature, the city's characteristic events and historical moments show the mutual belonging between inhabitants and places (Magnaghi, 2005). Under such context, the analysis of this section – meaning and experience – has identified multiple conceptual frameworks of influential factors and city image: forming a sense of belonging, sense of historical process and cultural context, and influential factors of city legibility.

4.4.6.1 Memory, experience, and sense of belonging

Sense of belonging shows the mutual relationship between the individual and the urban environment within the respective cultural context (Piccolo, 1995; Lewicka, 2006; Sepe, 2013). It is an evolving relationship closely related to the history and development of the city, and the residence length of local users and important places in memory act as fundamental components and derivative products. For tourists, the feeling of such a sense is necessary to provide them with the authentic travelling feeling. To explore elements of users' memory and experience in shaping the sense of belonging, the analysis of this section has identified related conceptual framework (Figure 4-73):

- In the aspect of the physical form of the urban space, participants advised that preserving characteristic built form and street layout is necessary for different group users to enjoy the old urban scenes. **Narrow streets and alleys with traditional houses bring back residents' memories of the past and show visible or tangible parts of the city's history and culture for local visitors and foreign tourists.**
- The environmental improvement brought by the ongoing urban regeneration must focus on preserving the local character of buildings and social spaces in residents' memories. Important meeting and social places, such as old city squares, shopping malls, and their surroundings, help form 'social imageability' (Southworth and Ruggeri, 2010) **derive from the shared meanings generated by the individual's involvements** (both resident and visitor) with a place.
- Some residents approved the improved living environment brought about by redevelopment, and they wished to have more places to meet their daily needs. In this regard, the presence of **street**

markets, groceries, and daily dining places are necessary to fulfil their needs and provide opportunities for visitors to interact with locals.

- The old likely urban scene is another critical factor in enhancing residents' and local visitors' sense of belonging. Moreover, tourists wished to see **lively urban scenes produced by locals' daily and social activities interacting** with the preserved urban environment and physical form within the context of local history and culture.

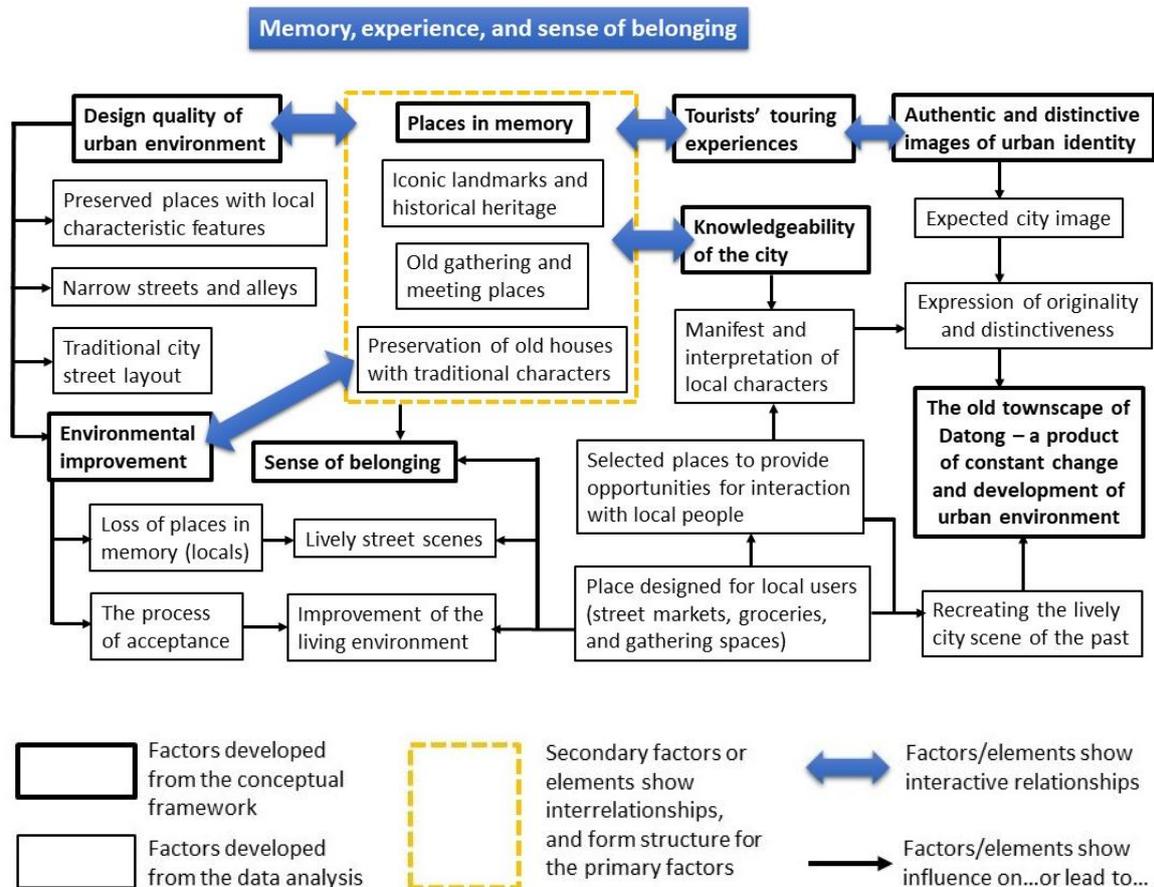


Figure 4-73 Factors associated with a sense of belonging

4.4.6.2 Sense of historical process and cultural context

In general, the place identity is defined by the history of a place in aspects of physical and material dimension through continuous stratifications (Lo Piccolo, 1995; Sepe, 2013). In addition to the physical form and morphology of the urban environment, the presence of historical events and traditional elements contribute to the interpretation of urban historical context. After a long period of multiple dynastic changes, the urban history and cultural context result from a symbiosis between various invariants. Defining the authentic sense of the historical process is challenging as respondents from each group showed different views (Figure 4-74).

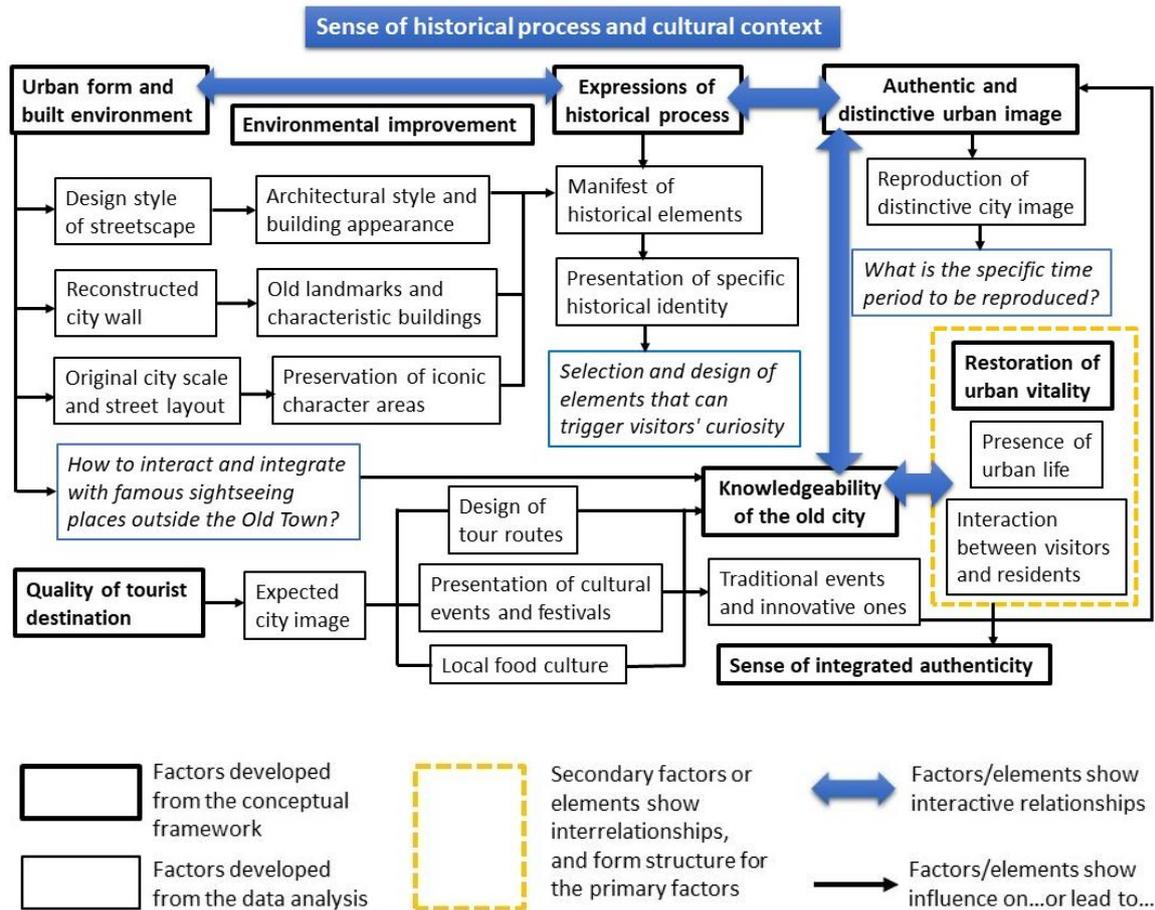


Figure 4-74 Sense of historical process and urban knowledgeability

- Built heritage and iconic landmarks are essential in forming area identity in each precinct. According to responses from different group users, the key is to **determine the design style and building appearances of the surroundings to create a sense of unity**. On the other hand, unifying and linking areas and streets with different dynastic architectural styles in the old town is critical in creating a **sense of historical change**.
- The selection and interpretation of specific characters and features relate to the design of symbolic icons for local visitors and tourists. The design and arrangement of such elements need to fit in with the built environment and act as attractions to **generate the curiosity and attention of visitors, which is a way of understanding the details of the city**.
- Recreation of cultural activities and traditional festivals help to boost urban vitality and provide opportunities for all users to become interested in their historical and cultural background. **Innovated activities combined with traditional architectural styles and site design could create unique experiences where tradition and modernity meet**, such as local food culture and carnivals held in the square surrounded by traditional buildings.

4.4.6.3 Influential factors of urban legibility and city image

Lynch (1960, 1981) defines the legibility of a city in the first place, describing the extent to which the different elements of the city are organized into a coherent and recognizable pattern. In addition to the physical attributes (built form, architectural style, streetscape, and landmarks), the diversity of social and cultural activities influences visitors' experiences and fulfil users' needs. The urban legibility closely relates to the image of the city as the former has a significant influence on the formation of the latter, which makes a stronger impression on individuals. Under such context, the analysis of this section – meaning and experience – has identified multiple theoretical relations of different factors in affecting urban legibility and the formation of city image (Figure 4-75):

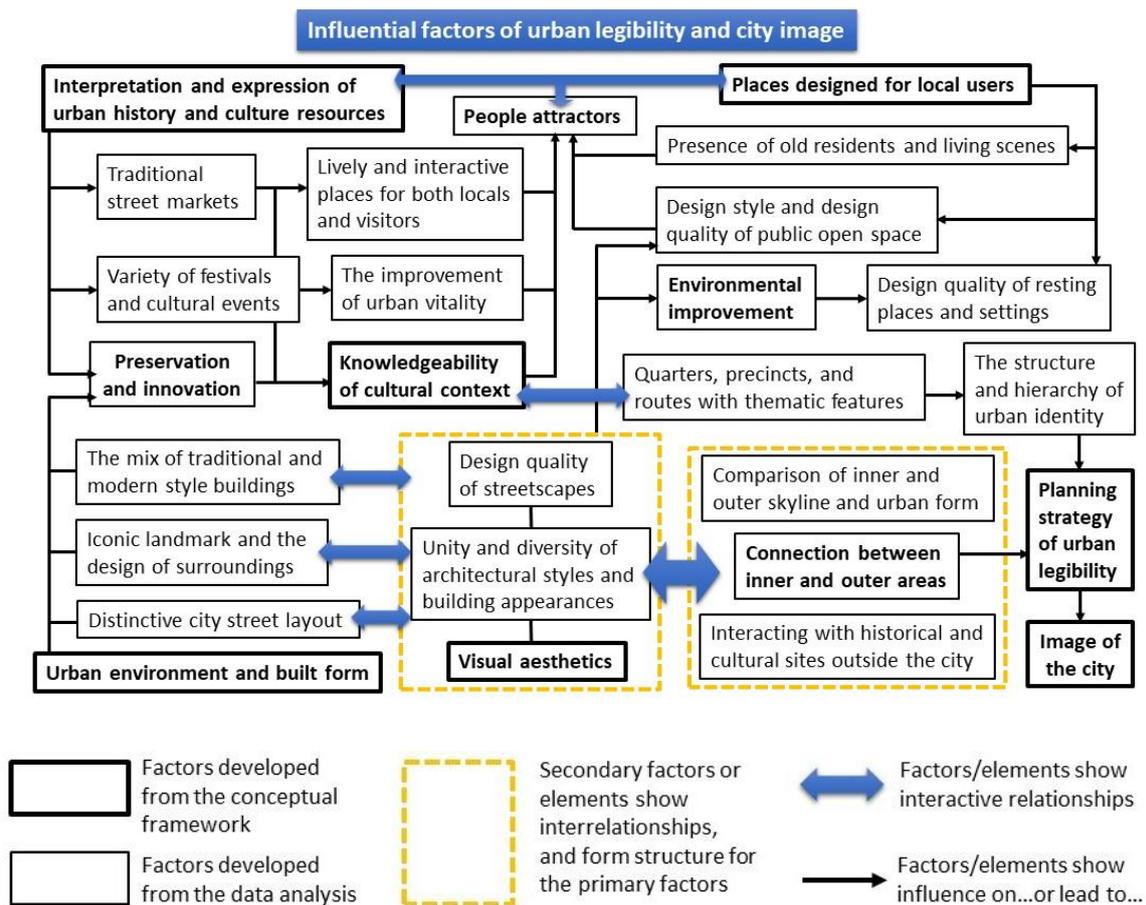


Figure 4-75 Influential factors of urban legibility and city image

- The interpretation and expression of urban history and cultural resources are necessary to attract people, which could impress visitors and form a place image. According to the participants' responses, cultural activities that could provide interactions between locals and tourists are essential in creating a lively urban environment. Moreover, **the historical and cultural background of the old town needs to get involved in the preservation and innovation of cultural activities.**

- In the aspect of physical form and built environment, interviewees showed **different opinions about the mix of traditional and modern style buildings**. Tourists questioned the authenticity of the reconstructed landmark and the restoration of the old building. On the other hand, residents and local visitors advised that **creating the streetscape with unified visual order** is necessary. How to preserve the authentic streetscape and define the authenticity of building appearance are issues that cannot be clarified.
- Interviewees mentioned a few suggestions for the future planning strategy with professional backgrounds – tourist guide, urban planner, and travel vlogger. In their opinion, **the designated travelling routes and zones with specific functions and old characters could help to create multiple area identities in the old town**. Such a combination of area identities could act as the basic layer of the structure and hierarchy of urban legibility and then interact with famous historical and cultural attractions located outside the Old Town and on the outskirts of the city.

In the analysis of this section – meaning and experience, several related themes have been identified: memory of place, sense of historical process, knowledgeability of the city, and urban legibility. The image and meaning of place derive from the activity conducted in specific places interacting with the built form for different group users. Expression and interpretation of urban history and culture in diverse activities and urban public space design and the knowledgeability of place and urban legibility could strengthen users' feelings and experiences in return. The interaction between the involvement of urban cultural context in place-making and the understanding of the city then results in the formation of city image.

4.5 Analysis of the elite interviews

In addition to the analysis of other qualitative methods, this research employed the elite interviews and gathered data as a method of triangulation led by the analytic framework. To achieve the research objectives, opinions and views of different users and interviewees could form the cross comparison from both perspectives of 'top-to-bottom' and 'bottom-to-top'. The interviewing of diverse categories of laypeople respondents required a large number of individuals (N=75) from different backgrounds (locals and visitors), in different sites (on-site and off-site), and at different points of time (weekdays, weekends, and festivals). In this sense, the analysis of laypeople provides a way of 'studying down' (Gusterson, 1997) or 'interviewing down' (Desmond, 2004). Providing data for triangulation, the elite interviews formed a way of 'researching up' (Darbi and Hall, 2014), focusing on particular themes and concepts developed in the framework and generated from the analysis and categorization of other research data. Moreover, the results show that the elite interviewees – professionals, academic researchers, and opinion leaders – preferred to demonstrate knowledge and responses by articulating

their views in a ‘more open-ended perspective’ (Darbi and Hall, 2014, p.833). In this sense, the interaction between interviewing up and down contribute to the triangulation of research aims and objectives by comparing, comprehending, and integrating the research data from multiple sources.

The elite interview responses help better understand how historical and cultural elements are manifested in the historic urban landscape and heritage tourism-led urban regeneration in relation to planning practices and tourism management. Six themes emerged through the responses of the elite group: planning strategy and policy, design and reconstruction of public open spaces, historical landscape and urban authenticity, places designed for locals or tourists, preservation of place image and urban identity, and personal preference and assessment of the research area (Figure 4-76). Based on the categorising process of elite interviews’ responses, the results indicate that the interviewing of elites is of particular importance in both municipal-led urban regeneration and tourism management. In addition to the academic research of heritage tourism-led urban renewal, the interviewing of elites frame the aspects of business practices and responsibilities to a certain extent. Moreover, other relevant dimensions which emerged when interviewing laypeople were also discussed and mentioned, such as shaping the tourism destination, encouraging community participation, developing policies and decision-making. Furthermore, the analysis of elite interviews provides discussions of concepts developed in the literature review and the analysing process of laypeople interviewing, such as destination branding, infrastructure development, representative characters of cultural heritage, and understanding of the authenticity.

Although the elite interviews offered a variety of concepts and views of preserving and reconstructing the historic urban landscape under the context of heritage tourism-led urban regeneration, it is obvious that most of the interviewees with civil service backgrounds tended to focus their answers on improving the urban environment in the perspective of management and development of tourism destination, including shaping tourist flows and movement, improving consumption experiences, and balancing the preservation and creation of urban spaces to meet the needs of different users. In such a context, the elite interviewing could integrate with the results from laypeople interviews and other on-site research approaches to form an interactive and comprehensive methodology for achieving the research aim.

1. Planning strategy and policy

Strategies and principles	Keywords and concepts mentioned in the response	
Basic planning principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving original architectural style and building appearances – Reconstruction and restoration of the city walls based on ancient archives. • Classification of public places – squares and plazas, roads and streets, waterfronts, green spaces and the city wall itself acts as a circular site linking the surrounding premises. • The contradiction and balance between design the tourism destination and livable city. • Considering both tangible and intangible resources as valuable asserts for the city's development. 	
Preservation and restoration of the old urban fabric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to combine necessary environmental improvement with preserving the old urban fabric. • Spatial relationships between iconic landmarks and their surroundings. • Focus on the most famous and well-preserved historical stage (such as the Ming Dynasty). 	
The old residential areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to create access by re-designing the pedestrian routes and public transport to connect different spots in the area? • How to preserve the old and characteristic houses while expressing their unique features? • Preserve the old streets with the old signs, streetscape, and width-to-height ratio. 	
Zones and precincts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different precincts and zones with historical and cultural identities. • Preservation and expression of cultural characters and features. 	
A multi-layered urban identity design strategy	<i>The primary layer – urban fabric and city layout</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid creating too many medium and large open spaces. • Spreading green spaces in different spots or intersections – follow the principle of 'homogeneity'.
	<i>The secondary layer – cultural nodes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add small spaces, such as street corners or pocket spaces, at the axis of the whole urban layout (primary avenues and secondary streets). • Adding corridors, resting facilities, and street landscape around the gathering and meeting spaces. • Use streetlights and illuminations at specific locations and places to form people attractors.
	<i>The basic layer – street frontages</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine facades and street furniture • Integrating traditional symbols and patterns into the design of architectural adornments and street spaces.

2. Planning and design of public open spaces in the city

a. Suggestions and ideas of designing public open spaces	Keywords and concepts mentioned in the response	
Architectural style and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve the original street building heights and limit new buildings to two or three floors. • The sprawling and enlarged building pattern has an impact on the original urban fabric. • New buildings built by estate developers are not based on historical records and can damage to the landscape of the old town. 	
Preservation and restoration of old layout and urban fabric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on both physical environment (tangible) and socio-cultural elements (intangible). • Preserve the primary traffic functions of the four main avenues. • The original urban layout had only a few of public open spaces. • Restore and reconstruct the Li-Fang system. 	
Streetscape and walking system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reconstructed and restored city wall should act as a critical part of the whole pedestrian walking system. • Design the facades as following the architectural style of each street and section. • Connect different commercial streets and pedestrians with each other. • Preserve the close and private sense of space. 	
Places designed for locals and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create social and gathering spaces for local users and restore the lively urban scene. • Blend old open spaces into the new spatial system. • Places with good shelters and resting facilities for elders. • Divide the old town area into different zones. 	

2. Planning and design of public open spaces in the city

b. Identified problems and suggested solutions	Keywords and concepts mentioned in the response
Loss of urban vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract visitors and locals outside the old town area. • Reconstructed buildings and enlarged places have occupied parts of the old residential areas. • Need more places to support locals' daily activities – groceries, markets, catering places. • The old inhabitants are critical carriers of local traditions and memories.
Preserving the old function of place or meeting users' needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way people use the spaces in current days are different from the past – the old city gates are no more the access but the visual landmarks of the city. • More places and events to encourage interactive activities between locals and tourists – e.g. local gourmet festival or the lantern festival. • More hotels, inns, and restaurants serving for tourism but no more traditional elements.
Lack of expression of local history and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of the making process of traditional handicrafts or food. • Compilation of specific regulation or guidance to guide the land developers for preserving local historical and cultural asserts. • The hierarchy and structure of cultural elements. • The acceptance of public users for the innovated cultural events.
Pedestrian system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect the old routes with the city wall and other sightseeing sites. • Integrating fire and delivery access into the old town road network plan. • The pedestrian routes should integrate with the visual aesthetic of different streetscapes.

3. Historic Urban Landscape and authenticity

a. Urban spaces and built heritage	Keywords and concepts mentioned in the response
Assessment of new-built public open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded and enlarged built form could damage the old urban fabric. • Lack of historical and cultural links between the restored and old built environment. • Need more green spaces or dynamic places (such as gathering places and pocket spaces) to create a vibrant urban environment. • Design places to encourage all users' activities (trees, street arts, resting facilities, pavement, etc.) instead of only emphasizing the solemn ambience.
The traditional spatial order and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve the traditional form, unifying the architectural style of the main building and its surroundings, and balancing the general building height in the old town area. • Design zones based on iconic buildings and places, and form clusters with similar functions and characters.
Expressions of local history and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and extract valuable symbols and languages. • How to select key elements from Chinese archives or documents as most of them record the description of urban environment and buildings only by words. • Selecting and illustrating key symbols and patterns from preserved iconic buildings.
The functional aspect of public open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to balance the need of different users and the preservation of old urban form. • Create necessary gathering and meeting places. • Create and utilize existed buildings (and their walls, roofs, and building appearances) to form multiple visual layers for holding cultural activities.

3. Historic Urban Landscape and authenticity

b. Assessing the role of cultural values in designing public open spaces	Keywords and concepts mentioned in the response	
Defining the concept of cultural context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to innovate the cultural elements and events to attract more users and avoid anti-popularisation? • How to identify and make use of high-valued IP (Intellectual property) or events?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing the continuous forming process and evolution of local culture. • Re-imaging the urban scenes from the historical urban development and cultural change. 	
The revival of urban vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The loss of old inhabitants and the presence of idle street frontages. • Environmental improvement but loss of old urban sceneries. • Too large spatial feelings in the reconstructed areas might disrupt pedestrians' movements. • The diversity of cultural events. 	
Creating people attractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional urban fabric and layout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve the unique and characteristic form of urban spaces and buildings. • Integrating re-designing urban form with the traditional Chinese concepts – Feng-Shui, Li-Fang, and the mix of religious cultures.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users' emotions and experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combining spaces and cultural events to create exhibition spaces. • Designing and organising activities with characters of local folk culture. • Concepts of behaviour economy and the value of emotion.
Creating shared spaces for locals and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating places to encourage the interactive activities between locals and tourists. • Using well-designed lights and illuminations to decorate the places. 	

3. Historic Urban Landscape and authenticity

c. Authentic urban environment	Keywords and concepts mentioned in the response	
Integrating urban history and culture with the new-built urban spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The famous and significant urban identity in history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The old urban fabric and city layout recorded in archives, old drawings, and what's left of the urban form. • Components as an ancient fortress.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authenticity is a dynamic and developing process of the urban environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The built heritage could become a changing form embedded with various preferring shapes, details, or styles from different times. • Characters, symbols, patterns, and activities from the collective memories.
Preservation and reconstruction of HUL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification of buildings in the old residential area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houses and streetscapes with historical meanings and collective memories. • Select and extract symbolic characters to understand their values and meanings .
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating old and new urban spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New buildings should be no higher than two-storey to avoid affecting the overall original appearance of the old town. • Considering the preservation of built heritage and its surroundings as integrated processes. • How to deal with the differences between the original built form recorded in archives and the reconstructed/expanded scale?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving the characteristic and symbolic architectural details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings built with woods and earth require regular restoration. • Focusing on preserving the characteristic building appearances. • Repairing the iconic buildings with traditional materials or new materials with similar appearances.

4. Places designed for locals and tourists

a. The needs of different users when using the premises	Keywords and concepts mentioned in the response	
Places with different functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create places support inhabitants' daily activities and preserve their memories, instead of elegant but unaffordable quadrangle dwellings or tidy and wide-open streets. • Groceries, street markets, shops, and so on. • Open spaces with well-designed environment and resting facilities could encourage locals' social interactions and provide places for cultural events. • Necessary environmental improvement. 	
Local inhabitants act as carriers of local folk culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical backgrounds of different places, and folk tales and legends are components of cultural context. • Old inhabitants could provide better understanding of the local culture and history. 	
Shared spaces for locals and tourists	Cultural presentation and interactive spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spaces designed for cultural activities and performances. • Necessary resting places with street furniture. • Tourists could have better chance to feel being involved in activities. • Photographs documenting scenes from past lives.
	The combination of everyday living areas and small gathering spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There could have 5 or 6 small street spaces (pocket spaces) located in the residential areas act as gathering points. • The principle of 'equity' – scale and locations of such spaces. • Integrating iconic buildings with their surroundings. • Tourists might see the old residential area as a symbolic zone, which could affect forming their impressions and experiences.

4. Places designed for locals and tourists

b. The needs of different users when using the premises	Keywords and concepts mentioned in the response	
Places providing opportunities for interactive activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street furniture, flowing water, green spaces, and topographic change. • Characteristic cultural events and activities – key components of forming place identity. • Restoring the old living scenes and daily activities. • Encouraging interactions between locals and tourists – participating in same activities and verbal interactions. • How to transfer negative spaces (enclosed spaces, pocket spaces, and places with poor physical environment) into gathering spaces? 	
Places for local residents and business owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places of showing local artefacts and process of making handicrafts. • Small shops and street markets with improved urban environment and organised pedestrian routes. • Diverse events and activities could attract more visitors and support local business. 	
Expressions of historical and cultural characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting and extracting symbolic elements to enhance the urban identity. • Considering the preservation and development of cultural context as the growth pattern of a city instead of simply putting too many irrelevant or imaginary details or elements. • Necessary introductions of local history and culture for different visitors. • Restoring critical places – the Screen Wall, wells, archways and so on – from locals' collective memories. • Memories of old inhabitants reflect components of the place identity and affect visitors' experiences. 	

5. Places image and urban identity

Historical and cultural characters in forming the urban image	Keywords and concepts mentioned in the response
Expressions and interpretations of cultural characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix and interpretation of different ethnic cultures. • Preservation and restoration of old street frontage and characteristic venues – blacksmith, tailor, horse market (replaced with sculptures and street furniture). • Considering the old inhabitants as the carrier of folk culture. • Preservation and innovation of distinctive characters.
Preserving HUL in the environmental improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving the HUL by limiting the building height. • Signs, symbols, and building facades – elements should be sought from historical documents and records. • Necessary environmental improvement for making better living conditions.
Sense of place and the urban identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places with characters relating to the historical identity – an ancient military fortress. • Focusing on forming a structure of different layers in expressing the urban identity. • Driving power for creating shows or exhibition of cultural context and attract more visitors. • How to balance the preservation of HUL and the management of tourism destination. • The old city was once one of the largest cities in history.
Planning strategy of constructing the urban identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to express the cultural context from different historical stages? • Avoid only focusing on short-term economic income based on rapid expansion, but neglecting the 'liveliness', 'story' and 'background'. • Integrating architectural form, cultural activities, and living scenes in the network of multiple zones and quarters.
Tourists' perceptions and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the modern social media to promote the destination and attract more visitors. • City brand and tourist destination – a well-organised travelling routes. • 'In-depth tourism' and immersive experience. • The current propaganda might just focus on the key word - 'old', and there should be more popular elements adding to the designing process of different places. • The city core could act as this role as more locals living in there as their daily activities and interaction with the surrounding environment is also the attraction that tourists would like to see and experience.

6. Personal preferences and assessments

a. The urban environment before and after the heritage tourism-led regeneration	Themes, concepts, and key opinions
The lost authenticity of the old city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although most residential areas were in poor condition back in that time, the layout of streets, roads, and lanes remained in its old appearance, and the scale and spatial relationships between most buildings are still good. • Different people (or communities) has (have) their own memories of the place – Sense of belonging. • There are fewer shops and avenues selling kinds of stuff for residents, but all became restaurants, souvenir shops, hotels and inns that serving for tourists. • Should the wall be rebuilt only based on partially remaining earth dam, or should it be fully recovered to the image of its most integrated form? • Preserve and restore unique areas with significant features – creating representative and characteristic spots to attract visitors. • The layout of the ancient city was a typical one as the defensive structure of the Great Wall system, and elements of such frontier culture should find ways to integrate them with the design of public spaces.
Fourth dimension of the public open space – heat (vitality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are trying to find ways to bring more locals back in that section to reproduce the liveness and vitality, which could help to attract more tourists as well. • The physical environment has been improved but the image of bustle and hustle has disappeared. • The improved environment requires more spaces for local inhabitants to conduct their leisure activities. • More display spaces to show characters of local history and culture.

b. Key characters in re-designing the HUL	Keywords and concepts mentioned in the response
The design quality of urban spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active frontages – preserving and restoring traditional shops, local artefacts, and catering places. • Integrating the old urban fabric with the recreation and innovation of cultural characters. • Restoring symbolic landmarks in small public open spaces instead of creating large spaces in the old town, as the latter could damage the traditional urban fabric. • Combining iconic symbols and patterns with the design of urban environment.
The diversity of cultural events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging and organizing cultural activities and celebrations as leading power to attract more visitors. • The climatic factor – more cultural events and activities to deal with the freezing winter.
The perspective of different users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Bottom line’ – we should know or find out the critical role of each category in our city that cannot be changed or rebuild. • The urban regeneration should put users' needs in the first place during the preservation and design of historic urban landscape. • The method of ‘bottom-up’ –considering the needs and request of different groups of users in the first place, then using such information of preferences to induct future planning and designing process.

Figure 4-76 Categories and key ideas generated in responses of elite interviews.

4.6 Summary

This data analysis chapter has processed the collected data and categorised them into different themes and elements corresponding to each aspect of urban history and cultural resources in forming place identity. The process of data categorisation provides the fundamental analysis structure for identifying and assessing the various themes and elements. Moreover, the process of analysing and categorising research data draws out common preferences and views across different participant groups on the same theme or factor relating to the framework-based interview questions. The categorising process of research data analysis also indicates sub-groups of respondents and sub-themes in each designed section, which provides more depth of understanding relating to the aspects of the conceptual framework in relation to Datong. The analysis of photographs taken along with the observation data helps illustrate specific elements and sub-themes and aims to provide an understanding of the case study’s urban context.

The elements and views of each thematic concept shown in different Figures in this chapter indicate the perspective that each selected group users’ assessments and preferences on designed themes from each aspect. Furthermore, cross-comparison between sub-groups (first-time and repeat visitors) leads to richer opinions and assessments of different topics. Based on elements that have been categorised and interpreted, the summary of each aspect explores the links between the different themes and local historical and cultural resources in the process of shaping the impression of the city. The theoretical framework derived from the analysis of the data is explored in the next chapter along with the newly identified issues, and will be compared and integrated with the framework-based theories to set the findings of the research into the context of existing knowledge.

chapter 5 Research Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter integrates the previous three chapters' results, connects the research results to theory by evaluating the data collected in the case study, and links these results to the theories discussed in the literature review in chapter two. The discussion highlights and analyses generated the key findings to support the aims of this study and explains how this extends the knowledge of the field of heritage tourism-led urban regeneration, and in particular, examining and exploring theories and how these theories could be culturally embedded within the context of historical Chinese cities.

This chapter is conducted to discuss the analysis and findings that emerge from the previous chapter of research analysis, which focuses mainly on the findings obtained from the observation and semi-structured interviews in the chapter of methodology. As the research data were collected by following the conceptual framework developed in the literature review chapter, the analysis and findings of the research were examined according to the prior studies.

Under such context, the discussion of research analysis and findings examined the findings as integrating with the theories and concepts developed in the literature review to provide a comprehensive assessment and form the theoretical relationships between previous studies and new concepts. In such regards, seven primary aspects were categorized and discussed in this chapter as follows:

- Integration of façade design and active frontage.
- Preservation and reconstruction of different scaled urban spaces.
- The kinesthetic experience.
- Users' activity preference and urban built environment.
- Cultural activities and events in forming place identity.
- Collective memories and the sense of historical process.
- Influential factors of urban legibility and city image.

Furthermore, concepts and criteria of each primary aspect will be discussed and examined in order to obtain detailed results and findings. By connecting and linking the results and findings to the theories discussed in the literature review, the new concepts and criteria examined in this section help develop the theoretical framework generated in the prior studies for applying in the context of historical Chinese urban areas undergoing heritage tourism-led urban renewal. Moreover, the developed conceptual framework with factors and measures suggested in this chapter could offer indicators for the future works of other Chinese cities undergoing similar urban regeneration processes.

The outcomes of this chapter form a core part of the research and achieve the research objectives of 3 – to examine the processes of preserving and reconstructing urban spaces in the case of the old town of Datong, China undergoing the heritage tourism-led urban renewal, and provide indicators for the achievement of objective 4 – to identify recommendations for improved planning and design of public urban spaces to meet the requirements of both local and tourist users within the context of Chinese urban cities undergoing urban renewal.

5.2 Reflection on the research findings

Based on the conceptual framework developed in the literature review, several findings were obtained from the data collection conducted in the case study, including semi-structured interviews of different groups, non-participant observation and photography. All the findings emerging in the chapter of research analysis focus on examining the significant concepts and factors with regard to designing urban public spaces in the context of heritage tourism-led urban regeneration of the ancient city of Datong. In accordance with the findings obtained in the research analysis, this section aims to discuss the relevant concepts by integrating them with the conceptual framework and prior studies. The findings were organised and categorised based on their focuses and interrelationships as follows.

5.2.1 Integrating façade design and active frontage

This section discusses the visual-aesthetic dimension of urban design and place-making as the design quality of the physical environment is the primary attraction for locals and tourists when travelling in ancient parts of towns and cities. Theories such as ‘townscape’ (Cullen, 1961), ‘valuable city’ (Lynch, 1984), and urban design integrating with art forms (Nassar, 1998) suggested that the visual-aesthetic characters derived from the combination and interaction between spatial and visual qualities. In order to explore local history and culture integrating and expressing in the reconstructed streetscape, the research analysis organised three primary findings: delivering the sense of unity and diversity, creating street frontage as social spaces, and designing street furniture as indexical characters.

5.2.1.1 Delivering the sense of unity and diversity

As mentioned in the research analysis, the design of streetscapes is critical in influencing local users' and visitors' visual experiences and movements by forming a sense of unity and diversity. According to the research analysis, several research findings were identified as follows:

- In general, the culture and tourism-led urban regeneration project had led to significant improvement of the urban environment. In the aspect of design style and building appearance of

streetscapes, the key to integrating local historical and cultural elements in the façade design is to use visual aesthetic expressions.

- Aesthetic appreciation and preferences of different users showed significant relationships with the design style of facades, the mix of building appearances, the spatial scales, and the sense of unifying. In addition, components of forming visual orders, such as the sense of rhyme and pattern, appreciation of rhythm, and recognition of balance and unity, show close relationships to the expression and knowledgeability of local history and culture in a tangible way.

In terms of the relationship between façade design and active frontage, urban experts were confused by the future planning of integrating façade design and frontage with reconstructed houses and remaining modern buildings (flats and shopping malls). However, they did not intend to involve the opinions and views of daily users (local inhabitants and tourists). According to the research analysis, unity not only refers to the order of visual aesthetic created by the design of facades but also indicates a sense of historical progress, which is created by the mix of buildings built in different periods of the developing urban pattern (see chapter 4.2.2.2 and 4.2.3.1).

Iconic elements in delivering the sense of unity

The literature review described the appropriate expression of symbolic elements as a key requirement of a good streetscape by enhancing the legibility of urban areas (Liang, 1998; Carmona et al., 2010). In terms of urban regeneration in historical Chinese cities, Zhang and others (2021) suggested that identifying memorable elements in the past helps form an authentic streetscape and reconstruct social interactions. Within this context, this research explored the views and opinions of different users to obtain information about elements. There are two themes in creating such a way – the first is to **identify inseparable components from urban history and local culture**, and the second is to **manifest those elements in different orders** (see chapter 4.2.8.1). Although interviews of laypeople showed limited knowledge in describing the details of preferred elements, both local users and tourists argued **the expression of characteristic elements should show iconic symbols and meanings** (see chapter 4.2.3.1). In the opinions of urban designers and planners, such elements could get collected from ancient archives and old photographs and offer references for refining iconic elements.

Personalisation of street frontage

On the other hand, it is necessary to interpret and express characteristic local elements in the façade design to identify buildings' functions and shop's features. Based on the concept of 'third places' (Oldenburg, 1991), Mehta and Bosson (2010) suggested that the personalisation of street frontage help to create the sense of 'distinctive and identifiable' in a familiar setting. Similar to such theories, the research analysis shows that **the personalisation of shops and venues along the streets should**

match each place's type and function. As most of the streets had received or are undergoing reconstruction, it is necessary to avoid creating many similar or even identical streetscapes without locally specific or identifiable characteristics or features (see chapter 4.2.3.1). Moreover, old buildings, landmarks, and objects with characteristic local culture and history features could help form distinctive and identifiable street frontage (Figure 5-1).

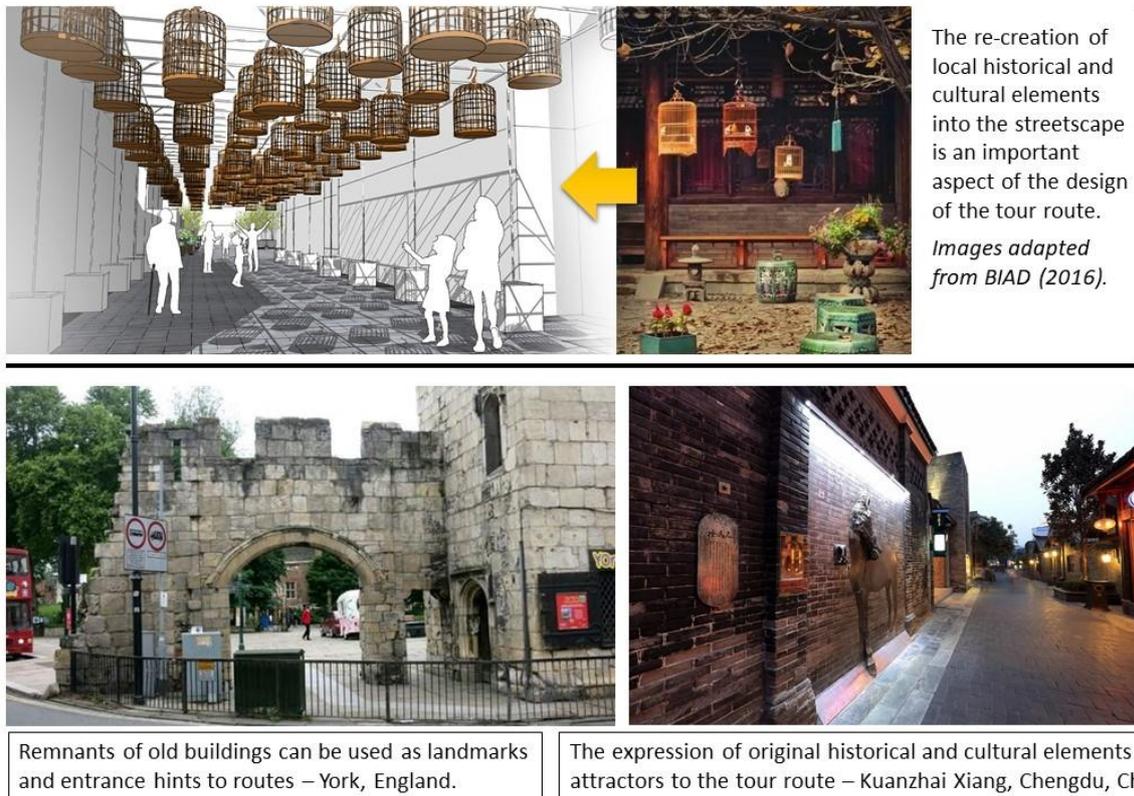


Figure 5-1 The preservation of the city's original architecture and the representation of historical and cultural elements are key to the design of the tour route and active frontage.

In terms of developing the sense of unity and visual aesthetic order in delivering the active frontage, local user and tourist research participants share the idea of preserving, filtering, and manifesting the traditional elements. In their opinion, the presence of such cultural and historical characters extracted from local heritage strengthens the distinctive and authentic place image. Moreover, the recreation and personalisation of symbolic patterns and details combined with the design of street facades were seen as critical measures to create attractive and active frontage. As preserving the heritage and historic urban landscape is now defined as **a process of creation, and a motivator for development** (Martínez, 2019), such views of considering the streetscape in both conservative and creative aspects are held by both locals are consistent with the similar rule. Therefore, the ideas shared by all the research participants show the interest in **transforming the past into experience**, as Ashworth (2012) suggested that the purpose is not limited to preserve but to use the past in the present design based on the users' needs.

5.2.1.2 Active Street Frontage – places for social interactions

In addition to designing quality facades with the interpretation of local history and culture, active frontages and street spaces were considered key factors in improving urban vitality by creating social spaces. According to the research analysis, several research findings were identified as follows:

- **The combination and interaction between façade design and active frontage should focus on reproducing authentic street scenes**, which is formed by both shops and venues (such as traditional dining places, street markets and groceries) with traditional character features and new types of places to meet the needs of the public (café, bars, fast food, and stores from high streets).
- **The presence of street vendors also acts as active actors in creating lively street scenes.** Moreover, street markets and well-designed resting places (open and semi-open spaces) create opportunities for local users and tourists to interact (conversations or participating in the same events).

In addition to the diversity of shops and other commercial venues on commercial streets, respondents from the laypeople group suggested that **diverse venues relating to local culture and social activities should be preserved** to create a lively street scene (see chapter 4.2.3.1). Such findings show consistent views with the general concept of active frontage identified by Montgomery (2003) and Carmona et al. (2010), in which the generation of diversity and vitality for a vibrant street scene.

Historical context expressed in the diverse horizontal grain

The variety of stores and shops with traditional characteristics and features are the key factors to creating a lively street scene with active frontages (see chapter 4.2.3). Among all kinds of venues and stores, old shops with unique historical backgrounds and characteristics are the most significant components of producing an authentic sense of the urban scene. According to planners and practitioners involved in the following design projects of the ancient urban centre, **those old shops are essential parts of the tangible aspect of local culture regarding their building forms and products such as traditional handicrafts.** Moreover, the historical backgrounds and specific producing skills of handicrafts are intangible resources. Such findings echo with the research of streets in Suzhou (Xie and Heath, 2019), in which they suggested the historical context needs to get involved in the planning of ancient streets to create active and authentic street scenes.

Urban planners and practitioners paid more attention to the recovery of old shops and handicraft workshops, which is consistent with the conceptual model of ‘heritage trail’ (Al-hagla, 2010). Moreover, actual users and researchers of local culture suggested that old street markets and groceries are significant places to boost social interactions for both local inhabitants and tourists as such places act as ‘third places’ to retain the original inhabitants and their lifestyle, which echo with the idea

mentioned by Zhang et al. (2021, p. 8): ‘residents and merchants played a key role in shaping new street scenes and social relationships’.

Permeability of street frontage

In addition to the presence of different stores and venues, the connection between different streets, or the permeability, is critical in creating a series of active frontages (see chapter 4.2.3.1). Based on the characteristic of permeability of streetscape developed by Montgomery (2003) in designing cultural quarter, creating permeable street frontage is necessary to support social behaviour and create continuous street frontage.

On the other hand, urban designers suggested the idea of improving the permeability of street frontage, which is consistent with the characteristic that Mehta and Bosson (2010, p.781) advised: ‘permeable street fronts are those that actively reveal the interior to the exterior such that people on the street are able to sense what is going on and understand the activities inside the buildings’. Although this conclusion was not evident in the interview question responses section of the research analysis, observation with photographs indicated that **visitors intend to roam and stay in the streets with better transparency conditions** (see chapter 4.2.3 and 4.2.4).

From the perspectives of laypeople and urban experts, the presence of designated places and cultural activities provide opportunities for all user groups – residents, local visitors, and foreign tourists – to engage with each other in the same active venues or ‘shared spaces’. The idea of shared space emphasises the social centrality and commercial and leisure opportunities in the city centre (Rallings, 2014). One of the fundamental characters of such public spaces is to **create access for events and everyday activities of different users**. In this regard, creating spaces with a well-designed physical environment and activities for both daily users and visitors is the key.

In terms of attracting visitors and inviting them to get involved in the living sceneries, the design plan needs to offer spaces and venues for tourists to interact with residents in different ways – sharing traditional food in an old restaurant and food stalls, resting in well-designed spaces with the presence of older residents and doing shopping in street markets (Figure 5-2). Such designated spaces for commercial and leisure opportunities in the old residential area could act as a key element in creating spaces for events and everyday activities (Rallings, 2014).



In the regenerating scheme of Qianmen hutong in Beijing, designers suggested to remove the wall of old Siheyuan (quadrangle dwellings) for better permeability of streetscapes but preserve the gate of yard as old symbols of the area.
Upper left: BIAD (2016)



Vendors and street markets help to guide pedestrians' movements and attract the visitor's attentions by creating the temporal 'shared space'.

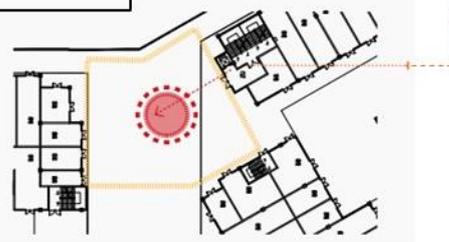
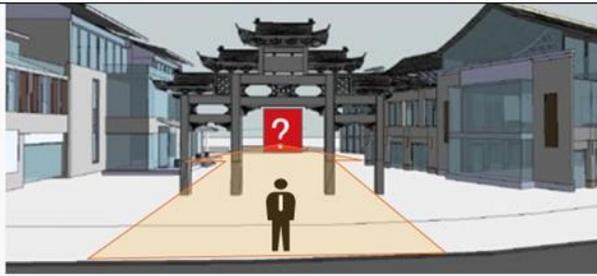


Figure 5-2 In addition to creating street frontage with permeability by improving the transparency, the presence of street markets and vendors help to form temporal spaces with permeability by attracting people to gather in specific places.

In terms of balancing the proportion between 'shared space' and real living residents, a designed route with an arrangement of stores, characteristic houses, and landmarks is the key. According to practitioners of the urban planning institute, parts of the old residents with a unique history and cultural character could be transformed into visiting sites. On the other hand, tourists might see how the life scenes are in such places (P-05). Moreover, the variety of shops selling traditional artefacts should combine with handicraft workshops, and tourists could see and experience the production process at the same time.

5.2.1.3 Street furniture acts as iconic and indexical characters

According to the research analysis, **street furniture (public arts, resting facilities, signages, and streetlights) is necessary to form a distinctive and characteristic streetscape.** The research finding suggested the design quality and arrangements of these elements could act as visual attractors:

- The design of facades needs to integrate with street settings – street furniture, signages and advertisements, streetlights and illuminations. The presence of distinctive symbols, patterns, architectural decorations, or ornaments with iconic traditional style and cultural meanings could act as visual attractors while dealing with the relationship between these elements.

As mentioned in the literature review, signages and signboards with local traditional features contribute to the place identity and interpretation of characteristics (Carmona et al., 2010; Meng, 2012; Sepe, 2013). According to research results, signboards and signages need to follow the design style of facades and the function of venues to create an aesthetic order of unity and diversity between street furniture and streetscape (see chapter 4.2.4). In the aspect of creating the sense of unity, urban planners and practitioners suggested the first step is to **preserve and collect old signboards and signages and to extract characteristic elements, such as symbols, patterns, and colours, and then to use them in further design** of other new signages and signboards. The selection of symbolic characteristics is associated with authentic objects (Grayson and Martinec, 2004; Ram et al., 2016), which includes iconic and indexical characteristics to form an authentic link to the place's past.

The development of the combination of well-preserved old shops and their signages, such as old caterings, street markets, and places making traditional handicrafts, are the basic components of authentic and characteristic street scenes for visitors and daily users (see 4.2.3.2 and 4.2.4.2). Such elements of the old town of Datong could provide iconic cues for the past living style, and the term of iconicity was identified as 'assess whether something's physical manifestation is similar to the mental template plate created by local history and old things' (Ram et al., 2016, p. 112). Similar to research results of laypeople, local urban designers and bloggers suggested **the revival of the other street elements (blacksmith, tailor, or horse market in the ancient time) can be renovated and employed as iconic symbols**, such as patterns and specific objects, and then integrated with public arts or street furniture (Figure 5-3).

On the other hand, designers and practitioners of the local urban planning department suggested that floor space's material and arrangement could help form a sense of place and strengthen the atmosphere (Figure 5-4). In such a context, the design and arrangement of street furniture should focus on integrating with iconic and indexical characteristics as such clues that could create a sense of conservation between people, history, space and local identity (Wang, 2011; Ram et al., 2016).

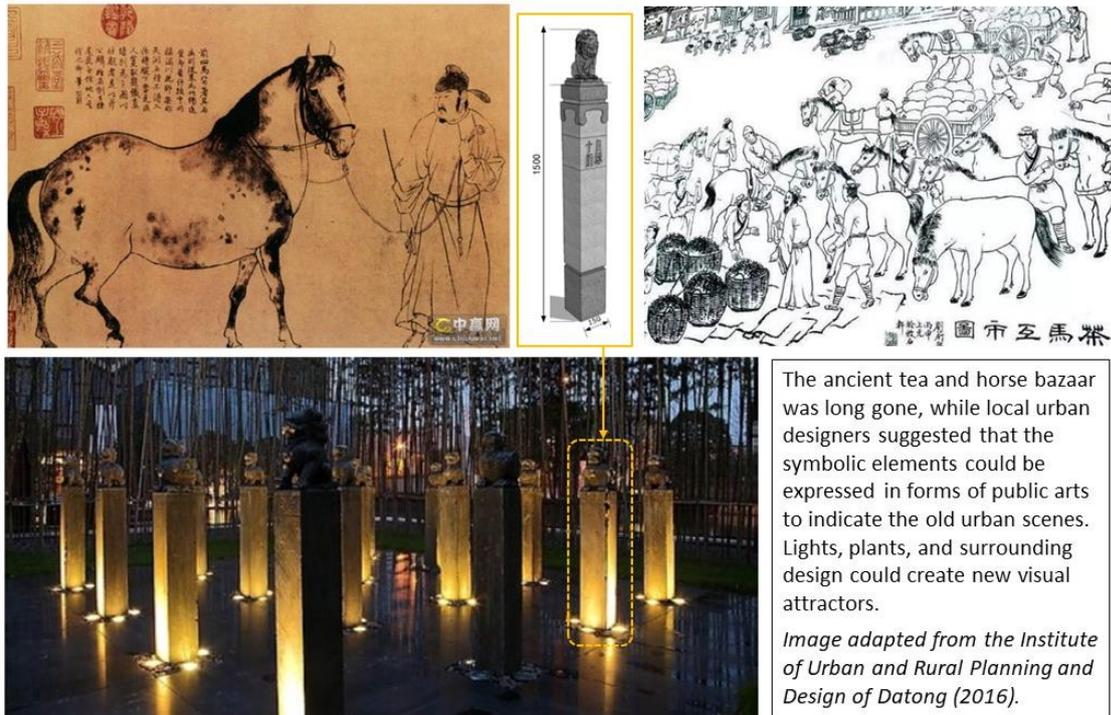


Figure 5-3 New expression could integrate with the historical streets and places to form distinctive attractors in the ancient city of Datong.



Figure 5-4 Design of fountainscape could create a sense of place associated with areas where people stop and rest. For example, fountainscape and pavement in the surroundings of religious sites help to create a unique atmosphere.

5.2.2 Preservation and reconstruction of different scaled urban spaces

As mentioned in the literature review, the linked series of public spaces with different scales contribute to the formation of the public realm, in which two significant components were identified: the places for users to roam and watch others and social places for people to gather and meet (Wansborough and Maggean, 2000; Carmona et al., 2010; Kana, 2012; Aelbrecht, 2016, 2019). In accordance with such concepts, the research analysis developed two primary findings: developing ‘fourth places’ for social interactions and reconstructing characteristic quarters and routes.

5.2.2.1 Developing ‘fourth places’ for social interaction

According to the research analysis, street spaces and crossing areas were primary places for residents to conduct social interactions in the old days. Therefore, how to **preserve the social function of old public spaces and encourage different user groups to conduct social and cultural activities in the new urban spaces** is mentioned in the research findings:

- New squares and front yards of built heritage now act as social spaces for different users, and such open spaces allow people to gather and conduct social activities.

He (2008) and Wang (2011) pointed out that hutongs form the traditional Chinese urban form, and such enclosed public spaces provide a close relationship for social communication. In contrast, the research results showed that after being widened by the reconstructing project, multiple pedestrians had changed the old spatial feeling of private and close. Such transformation could result in the loss of old social spaces, and local researchers suggested that new-built large squares and plazas could become unnatural to ‘fit in’ the surrounding areas (see chapters 4.2.5.1 and 4.2.5.2).

Preserving old social and leisure activities

For old residents and local visitors, **all the streets played a critical role in providing open spaces in the old days and important connections between different scaled spaces after the urban renewal.**

The daily activities and busy street scenes were memorable elements for both on-site local interviewees, while all groups of users intend to have more spaces for gathering, meeting, or even showing cultural customs, and such places could contribute to the improvement of urban vitality.

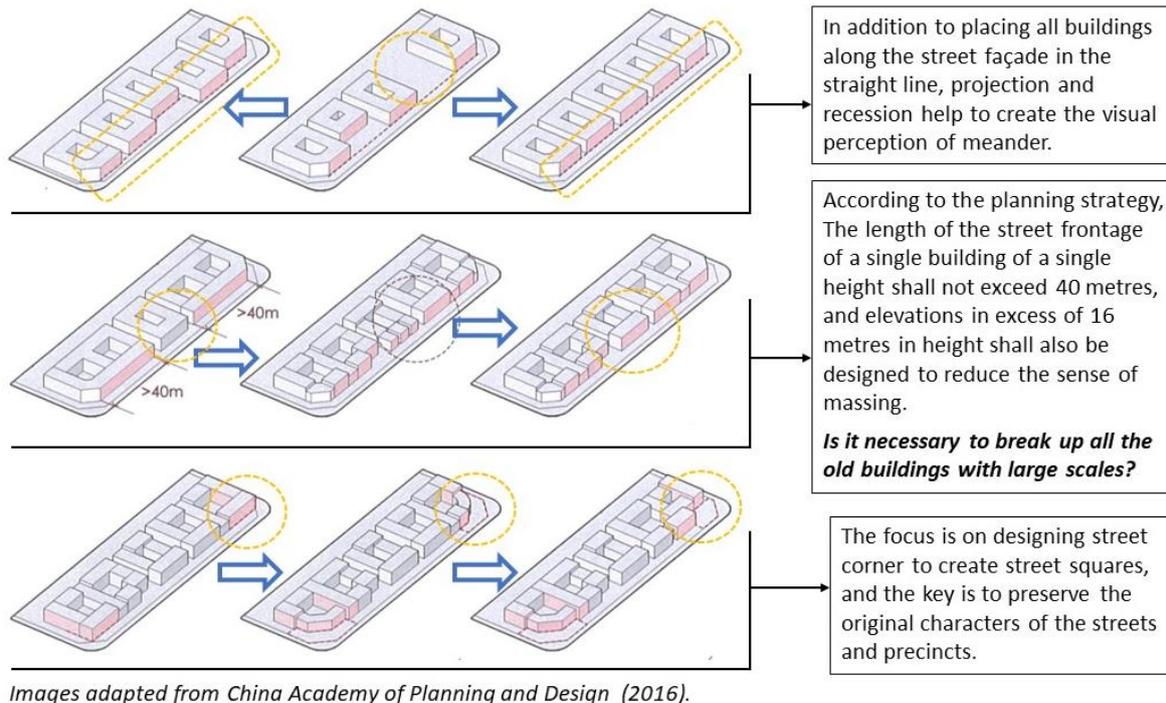
After the renewal, how to transform the narrow streets and lanes in the old residential area into social and functional spaces is necessary to form a vibrant public realm in the old town. Both locals and tourists wished to have more open spaces for social needs and activities as the old urban layout offered limited spaces in the past (see Chapter 4.2.1 and 4.2.5). The observation showed that elderly residents prefer enjoying sunbath and chatting with each other ‘in an old fashioned way’ (described by

the former chief of the urban planning bureau of Datong), while younger users enjoyed the lively scene of people gathering in squares and plazas. For example, the front yard of Shan-Hua temple attracted many elderly users to chat with each other and play chess, but the researcher observed few younger users as there is no other attraction such as shops, café, dining, and the presence of cultural activity. Therefore, the younger age groups show a higher frequency of movements between each open space. Therefore, it is important to understand how to create necessary attractors for them when designing public spaces and creating vibrant street scenes in the old town.

Designing street spaces as ‘fourth places’

In addition to the request for more social spaces, laypeople interviewees suggested such small spaces embedded in the street network show little influence on the old urban layout and city fabric (see chapter 4.2.5.2), which show the consistent idea of avoiding damaging the old authentic urban form by many fragmental spaces (Kana, 2012; BIAD, 2016). Furthermore, urban planners advised that the distribution and arrangement of middle-sized open spaces (around 600m²) could mediate old residential areas full of traditional residential houses and quadrangle dwellings that have not been reconstructed. As the consultants for tourism planning advised, the way people use urban public spaces in current days are different from the past, and the design of public spaces needs to meet the social needs of daily users. Meeting the needs of different age groups is critical in the functional aspect of designing urban public spaces. Such design thoughts show similar core concepts with the characteristics of ‘fourth places’ (Aelbrecht, 2016), in which the public spaces constitute new types of public spaces and help to breed new social habits. The design and locations of such spaces provide temporal gathering spaces for visitors and provide exhibition spots to show folk culture (built form and living scenes) to travellers (Figure 5-5).

In terms of designing street spaces and pocket spaces, local user and tourist research participants mentioned that resting and social spaces are necessary to meet their needs and improve the experience. Local users wished to have more resting facilities and open spaces with good shade/ shelter as most of them conduct leisure and social activities (sunbathing, skating, playing with kids, etc.). At the same time, tourists prefer more well-designed coffee houses, dining places, or even fast-food restaurants to take a rest and watch others. Such different preferences relate to how each user group intends to conduct their activities – for example, the local users consider the old town as a place of their daily activities (such as a grand community park) while tourists wish to find ways to improve their travelling experiences through this tourism destination. In this sense, the provision of both street spaces and resting places is critical in creating attractive spots. Furthermore, the design quality of such pocket spaces could act as the display spaces of folk culture and social opportunities shared by all users.



Images adapted from China Academy of Planning and Design (2016).

Figure 5-5 Creating Street spaces at different scales affect the quality of the kinaesthetic experience was mentioned in the future planning strategy of Datong.

5.2.2.2 Reconstructing characteristic quarters and routes

As the basic components of each city and town with a long history, iconic landmarks are essential in forming the urban form and sense of place. Moreover, built heritage and iconic landmarks also act as narratives to describe and illustrate place identities and surrounding areas. In such a context, the relationship between landmarks and the design of the surrounding built environment is critical in creating unified images and enhancing shared cultural and historical consciousness (Sepe, 2013). Based on the research analysis, several research findings were mentioned as follows:

- **The streetscape's design quality should draw on the adjacent built heritage and iconic landmarks**, and the old street layout and urban fabric should get properly preserved as much as possible. Moreover, **setting zones and quarters based on functional, historical, and cultural characteristics is an important planning strategy.**
- Built heritage and iconic landmarks are essential in forming area identity in each precincts. According to responses from different group users, the key is to **determine the design style and building appearances of the surroundings as to create a sense of unity.** On the other hand, unifying and linking areas and streets with different dynastic architectural styles in the old town is critical in creating a sense of historical change.

In line with the literature review, the research findings show that built heritage and archaeological sites could help to provide a narrative of the history and culture of their areas, and the expressions

facilitate the creation and enhancement of the urban identity by 'denoting particular places as centres of collective cultural consciousness' (Graham, 1998; Sepe, 2013). In addition to the role of being the symbol of collective memories, the research analysis showed that built heritage and iconic landmarks could act as central points of each precinct and quarter because of their features, characteristics, and old functions such as religions, life-supporting, or meeting and gathering.

Using iconic landmarks for zoning

In terms of the creation of precincts and quarters by iconic landmarks and new-designed surrounding spaces, the relationship within such forming process can be described as 'building up from spots to areas' or 'zooming in on specific spots' by local urban planners, in which the characteristic built heritage, and historic buildings could act as central points and key spots of each precinct, quarters, and streets. Such planning strategies are in accord with the idea of 'from a single building to the configuration of an entire town or city' (Wang and Gu, 2020). For local users and visitors from the outer urban area, **the quality of public open spaces should be the primary factor** as well-designed ones could provide places for gathering and conducting socio-cultural activities. According to responses from both local residents and visitors, **built heritage plays a leading role in interpreting the meaning and shared memories** (see chapters 4.4.1.2 and 4.4.4.2). This finding reflects other existing research in the literature review, in which built heritage and iconic landmarks were seen as components of forming cultural landscape and help form socio-cultural identity and interact with their surrounding built environment to deliver a place image (Wansborough and Mageean, 2000; Mavromatidis, 2012; Liu et al., 2015).

On the other hand, Wang (2011) and Sun (2018) argued that *built heritage acts as the most valuable asset with historical and religious meanings embedded within the architectural forms, design styles, building appearances, and locations and sites*. The research findings further support this idea by emphasising several themes relating to the design style and built form of built heritage – aesthetic order of unifying, old built form and urban layout and creating gathering and social functions for local users (see chapter 4.2.2 and 4.4.5). For example, the Nine-Dragon Screen is one original part of the palace located on the central axis of the layout, and it acted as the decorative wall corresponding to the front door (Figure 5-6). As the Palace of Dai was reconstructed, it is essential to restore the original spatial relationship, and architectural style between surroundings as the conserving strategy should get involved in the process of heritage tourism-led urban renewal (Wang and Gu, 2020).



Figure 5-6 The old architectural style and spatial relationship are critical in forming an authentic place image.

Zoning in conjunction with landmarks and the old urban form

In addition to designing zones by using built heritage, another planning strategy mentioned by both urban experts and laypeople is **zoning the old town area based on old function and character** (see chapter 4.3.4.2), in which the whole old town could get divided into four or five zones based on the functions in the past. Due to the traditional chessboard layout and street system, the main crossing streets act as the boundary of each zone and the essential commercial street district (Figure 5-7).

According to the zoning plan developed by the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design, each zone needs different planning and design strategies in accordance with the function, historical background, and cultural characteristics. As the valuable expression and interpretation of tangible historical and cultural products, iconic landmarks and significant built heritage could provide references for architectural style and built form of reconstructing and repairing houses. For example, the dilapidated but well-preserved old residential area in the southeast quarter provide valuable information on the old urban fabric and original built form. Moreover, local researchers and planners suggested the old residential area is necessary for showing the traditional Chinese town planning system – Li-fang, which is also a symbolic icon of the old town of Datong. Such ideas not only demonstrate consistency with the concepts of preserving the traditional Chinese urban fabric formed by the historical process (Wang, 2011; Chen and Thwaites, 2013; Lin et al., 2015) but also indicate

further support for the idea of preserving collective memories and place images (Mavromatdis, 2012; Harrison, 2013; Sepe and Pitt, 2014).

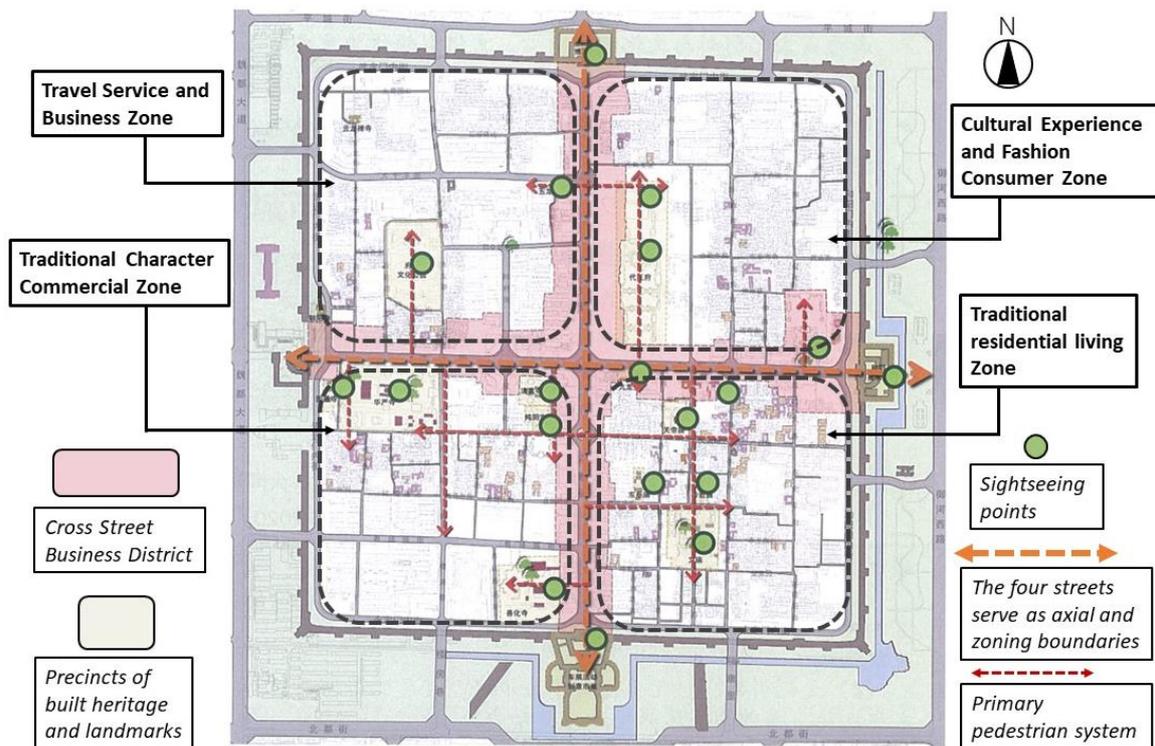


Figure 5-7 Zoning plan for the Old Town Planning strategy (reported by the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design in 2016).

According to the research results, local and tourist interviewees both suggested that the old town should have different zones, quarters, and streets with traditional characters and functions, which is consistent with the view of urban experts and planning practitioners. In general, preserving the traditional urban fabric is agreed upon by all groups of interviewees who consider to be one of the most authentic morphological characters of the old town. In addition to providing a basic physical layer for the zoning strategies, the old urban fabric and layout were considered by all user groups to provide valuable references for creating zones and streets.

Local users and visitors however held different opinions about the reconstruction of landmarks in such zoning strategies. Most locals were happy to see iconic landmarks reconstructed as parts of the old urban image and collective memories. In contrast, visitors questioned the authenticity of the reconstructed landmarks which they described as brand-new thereby not meeting their expectations and show limited historical connections to the city's past. The divergence of opinion was affected by whether interviewees felt that such landmarks present authentic building appearances a introduce the historical context properly. For example, after being reconstructed, all interviewees consider the city wall to be a magnificent symbol of the old town as it is the fundamental component of any ancient Chinese fortress.

5.2.3 The kinaesthetic experience

Responses from interviewees of all groups mentioned that they prefer enjoying the “kinaesthetic experience” when touring in the ancient urban centre. Cullen (1961) described such visual experience as “serial vision”. In this research, the pedestrians are the primary focus who has the greater scope to observe the environment while moving in the old town, and such characteristics offer visitors and users more opportunities to engage with the streetscape and frontages of public spaces. In such a context, the research analysis organised two primary findings to understand the kinaesthetic experiences in the heritage tourism-led urban renewal: integrating old and new street vistas and creating a sense of exploring and gathering.

5.2.3.1 Integration of old and new street vistas

According to the research analysis, the mix of old and new streetscapes formed by reconstructed buildings with traditional architectural styles, ancient built heritage, and old houses with modern style resulted in controversy between different user groups. In addition, the different street vistas created by mixed streetscapes and building heights brought several research findings in terms of preserving and reconstructing street vistas:

- **Building height along the street significantly influenced forming characteristic street vista.** Although clusters of low-rise buildings are critical in reproducing the authentic urban image, the rhythm and rhythm of the streetscape is influenced by the roof decoration, façade design, and other decorative elements under the low-rise buildings.
- Each group of participants suggested such **a mix of different buildings could affect the visual perception of unified feeling**, while many interviewees advised that buildings of different periods help to indicate the development and history of the city.
- Both narrow streets and alleys are basic and original components of the urban form and fabric, while the reconstruction of these elements needs to consider the preservation of old streetscapes and scales. On the other hand, the design of new-built squares, plazas, and front yards of iconic landmarks need to **draw on the architectural style and appearance of the original street and adjacent characteristic buildings**.

Prior studies in the literature review have mentioned the importance of the height-to-width ratio in creating the sense of enclosure and preserving the old street vista (Kostof, 1991; Carmona et al., 2010; Mehta and Bosson, 2010). In terms of traditional Chinese urban layout, the city layout and urban fabric also contribute to forming the characteristic silhouettes and skyline of the city (Wang, 2011; Chen and Thwaites, 2013; Xie and Heath, 2016). Based on such concepts, the research findings show that **the pattern of building heights and street vista also contributes to developing the authentic streetscape** when travelling in the research area (see chapter 4.2.6). Moreover, visitors indicated that

they expected to see narrow streets with low-rise buildings and characteristic facades – “clusters of buildings with ancient appearances”, which was considered a necessary urban scene relating to the sense of place created by the traditional urban layout. In terms of the building height of those reconstructed pedestrians, urban planning practitioners advised that it is necessary to keep their heights strictly on one floor, which is a way to preserve the authentic urban form and identity. On the other hand, on-site interviewees mentioned subtle changes in heights, whether such changes come from visual differences made by one and two-storey facades or the presence of landmarks. Such different ideas suggested by urban experts and actual users indicate **subtle differences in opinion between preserving the unified street vista based on a specific historical period and visual aesthetic appreciation relating to a sense of historical progress.**

Strengthen the sense of place by integrating street vista and building heights

In terms of the perceptions of authentic sense of place, all user groups agreed that the street vista formed by building heights and characteristic landmarks illustrates the sense of history in different urban areas and streets. In addition, existing iconic places and landmarks offer a sense of old and authentic rhythm as integrating with the new and reconstructed street facades. As Smith (1980) put forward the components of intuitive capacity for aesthetic appreciation, the differences of heights could form visual orders of both rhythm – repetitions of varied building heights – and the pattern formed by the presence of similar characteristic styles and symbols. Based on such concept, the interviewee from the Culture-tourism Department of the China Planning and Design Institute considered the unified building height defined by the form and symbols as “the unified building appearance with common features and characteristics is also a way of emphasising specific ideas”. In order to emphasise the characteristics and the sense of place, new-built surroundings and open spaces need to match the architectural style and appearance with the built heritage and iconic old buildings. Furthermore, such a unified design style aims to make each precinct, formed by main buildings and surrounding areas, compatible with this city’s general atmosphere. To **preserve authentic street vista, the re-designed public open spaces need to match the old urban layout, old built appearance, and building height of the landmark**, such as the junction where the Drum Tower locates (Figure 5-8).

Similar to the ideas proposed in section 5.2.2.2, users and urban experts both suggested that each area’s iconic landmark and historical places could be integral in offering indexical symbols and visual foci for the reconstructed streetscape and street vista. Among the laypeople interviewees, local users showed positive attitudes to the reconstructed streetscape as they were familiar with the places in their daily life. Moreover, the improvement of the physical environment was considered a necessary measurement for creating better living conditions. However, tourists wish to see more preserved old houses and venues instead of a whole new street vista even formed by buildings with ancient style.

Once the overall street image attracted tourists' views, they tend to explore more details (see chapter 4.2.6.1). In such regards, the preservation and redecoration of built heritage and old landmarks (old stores, handicraft workshops, groceries, and other places supporting locals' daily life) could contribute to resuscitating the streetscape in users' memories and imaginations. Furthermore, the activities encouraged by such places boost the urban vitality and form the sense of place by recovering the lively street view for both locals and tourists.

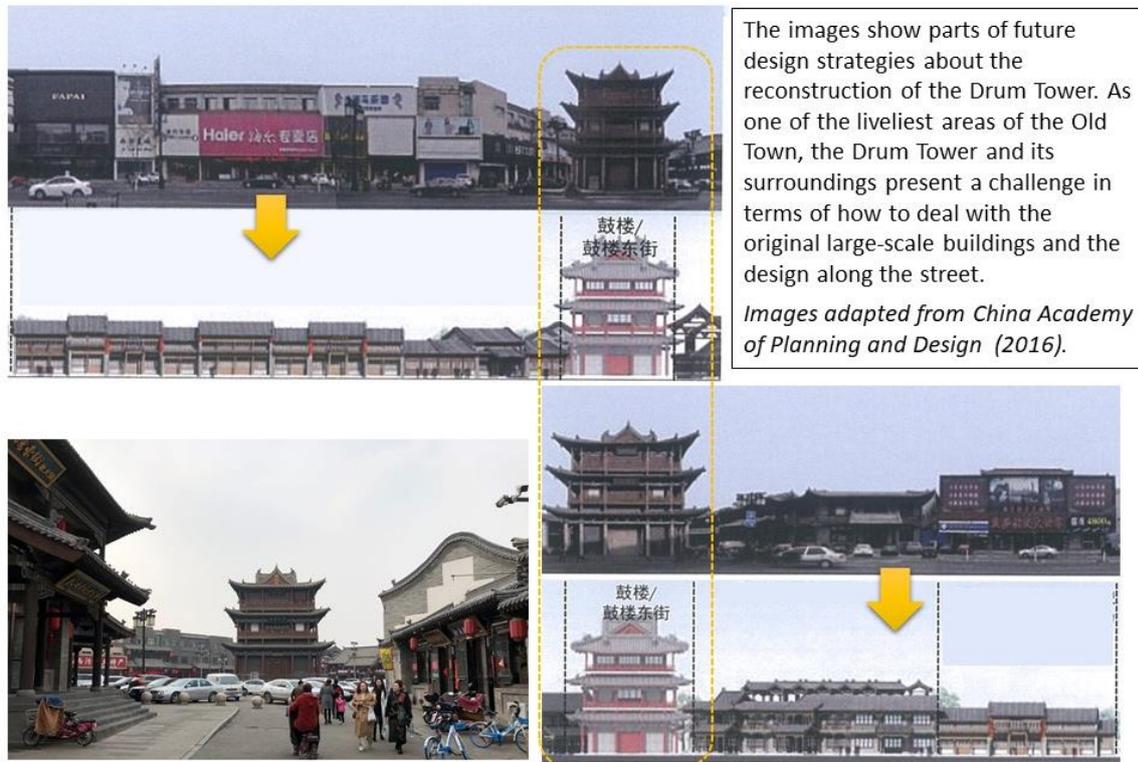


Figure 5-8 How to deal with the visual and spatial relationship between old landmarks and the surroundings is the key to improving aesthetic order quality.

Preserving the old street vista and sense of enclosure

As mentioned in the literature review, the interweaved narrow streets act as the primary pedestrian system in traditional Chinese cities, emphasising the sense of enclosure influenced by the urban form and social order (Wang, 2011; Xie and Heath, 2016). Consistent with such concepts, visitors interviewed in this research suggested spatial feelings about scales are results of the ratio between the width of streets and heights of both sides (see chapter 4.2.6.2). According to local urban planners and practitioners, several commercial pedestrians after the reconstruction showed a ratio of 1:4 (height-to-width), which provided an open view of the streetscape and created a weak sense of enclosure (Carmona et al., 2010). Such the width ratio could provide large spaces for various events, and some interviewees and practitioners advised it is necessary to preserve the old height-to-width ratio of 1:1.2, which was examined from local research of Datong (Cao, 2008). In such a context, **the closer spatial**

feeling could bring back the old urban scene and the stronger sense of enclosure, contributing to the reconstruction of authenticity (Figure 5-9).

Such ideas were supported by laypeople interviewees, who show interest in exploring the narrow and old streets and lanes. However, tourists prefer travelling in the well-preserved streets with the old streetscape, while local users who show strong attachment to the old town focus on improving the living condition. Therefore, the key to providing a sense of authenticity and a good travelling experience is balancing environmental improvement and preserving the old streetscape. As the chessboard city layout is one of the fundamental characteristics of the northern Chinese traditional (Cao, 2008; Xie and Heath, 2017), it is necessary to integrate more attractive places and street settings, such as street corners and pocket spaces, to form the multi-layered streetscape while preserving the straight street vista for both locals and tourists.

With different heights and forms of spaces, buildings, and landmarks, the vertical design also helps to form street views with multiple layers. Urban planners suggested utilising spaces as integrating with the design of serial small street furniture – benches, trees, and landscape settings – to create a lower level. Streets and adjacent squares could hold some celebrations or festival events, and surrounding facades can play the roles of backgrounds (P-04). The facades and their silhouettes act as the middle level, and research results showed that the general height of all new and old buildings within the city core needs to be lower than the city wall and the Drum Tower. The high level is formed by landmarks, such as the Drum Tower and City Wall, and urban design practitioners suggested such a multi-layer structure of vertical design help protect the skyline and view on the wall (P-09).

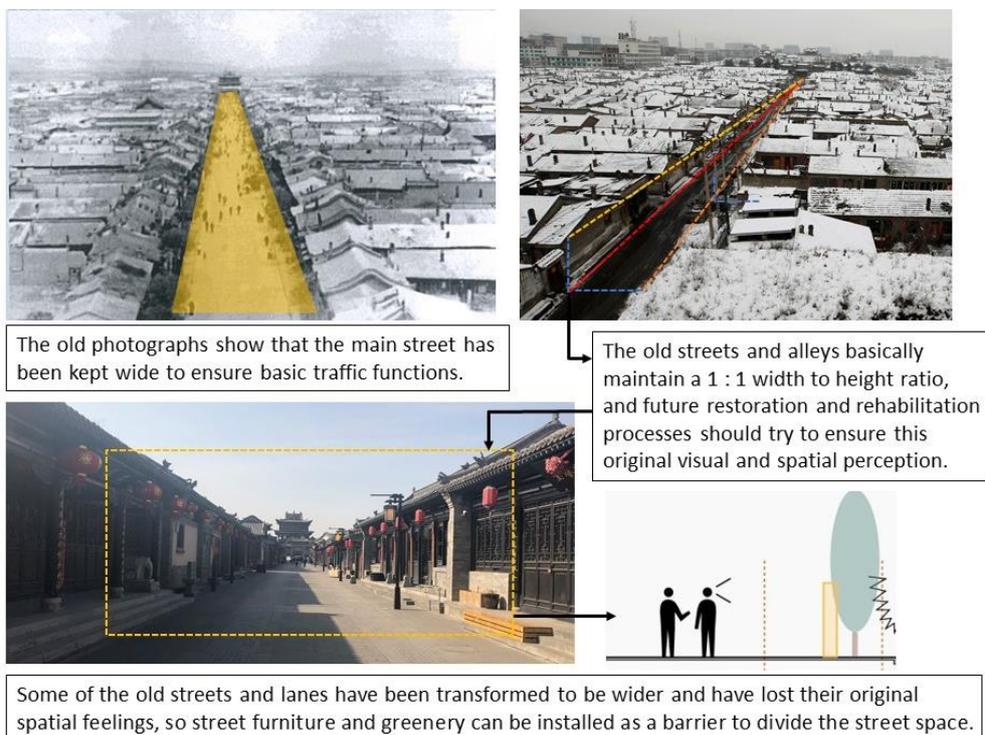


Figure 5-9 Preserving and designing the height-to-width ratio of old streets are necessary to reconstruct the old urban scene.

5.2.3.2 Creating the sense of exploring and gathering

The feelings of exploring in the old narrow streets and gathering in the open spaces were identified in the research results as both experiences were affected by spatial conditions and the quality of the streetscape. In addition, findings related to influential factors in creating the sense were generated as follows:

- According to users' preferences and feelings of roaming in different scales and styles, **the narrow streets and alleys could provide pedestrians with the sense of exploring in old street scenes, and open spaces provide them with an open and clear vision.** To preserve the scale of old streets and combine with reconstructed public spaces is the key to creating a public realm in the traditional urban form and city layout.
- Tourism activities are similar to the definition of optional activities, which are participated in if there is a wish and if time and place make it possible (Gehl, 1996). According to the research result, tourists only explore more in the old town unless there are enough characteristic attractors. Both local visitors and tourists mentioned the experience of roaming in narrow alleys and gathering in open spaces, and the keys to **improving their travelling quality are design style of streetscapes, combining ways in spaces of different scales, and presence of people attractors** (characteristic shops and venues, traditional activities).

Research results showed the connections and interactions between the different scales of spaces are mainly affected by the spatial feelings – a sense of exploring and gathering, which relate to the movement of visitors (see chapter 4.2.5). Such findings are partially associated with relevant concepts identified by multiple researchers (Sitte, 1889; Cullen, 1961; Collins and Collins, 1965; Moughtin, 2003; Xie and Heath, 2016), who suggested the sense-of-enclosure help to strengthen the pedestrians' experiences. When wandering among interweaved streets and roads, users wish to look for hints of anything with distinctive characteristics and wait for exciting attractors hidden in corners, such as the emerging view of open squares and plazas.

Preserving old street vistas by designing street spaces

However, the research results indicated the comparison between narrow streets and wide spaces could deliver a sense of being here and there (see chapter 4.2.5.1 and 4.2.5.2), which shows a new finding compared with the literature review. In the literature review part, He (2004) and Wang (2010) argued that **the traditional layout of Chinese cities shows significant differences with Western cities with the medieval-based layout.** Although the city layout of some southern Chinese towns (such as Nanjing and Suzhou) has more curved streets and roads (Chen and Kevin, 2013; Xie and Heath, 2016), northern Chinese cities (such as Beijing, Pingyao, and Datong) with traditional chessboard-shaped

layout show the strict governance-led planning system (Shin, 2010; Wang, 2011; Sun, 2018; Zhang et al., 2020). Therefore, **it is difficult to form street spaces with irregular frontages in the old town area of Datong**, and the local designers suggested the construction of new street spaces should find a way to integrate with the surrounding built environment.

In this regard, local visitors and tourists suggested that the appropriate connection between narrow streets (hutong) and small or medium-scale spaces (plazas or front yards) could create a sense of rhyme and pattern (see chapter 4.2.5.2). On the other hand, creating a series of public spaces along straight streets could integrate with the idea of projection and recession in both European and Chinese contexts (Cullen, 1961; Carmona et al., 2010; Xie and Heath, 2016). Such findings could relate to the concept of ‘fourth places’ (Aelbrecht, 2016), in which **the characteristics of thresholds (boundaries), edges, and props (landscape settings) contribute to the formation of different social spaces**.

Improving pedestrians’ emotions by creating people attractors

Another concept – the value of emotion – was mentioned by the consultants for tourism planning to describe the relationship between the design quality of public spaces and behavioural economy from the reconstruction of Nanluoguxiang in Beijing. As Duff (2010) proposed, ‘feeling’ is an ephemeral and elusive concept in understanding the historical urban landscape as the feeling of life, the sense of place, and emotional resonance defines much of the routine and turbulence of urban life. In this regard, the quality of the public realm should focus on rational aspects of planning strategy and the temporary aspects of users’ behaviours and movements. In research developed by Aelbrecht (2019), the motions influenced by the quality of public spaces could lead to different body language and movement of orientation, and then such behaviours help define public spaces in the aspect of social interaction.

The research results showed that different factors triggered the emotion and feeling of locals and tourists. In addition to preserving and designing the quality of streetscapes and urban spaces, locals paid more attention to conducting activities in old and reconstructed social and gathering places. As there were only a few large open spaces existed in the old town area, part of the locals suggested a few old and new ones could provide social spaces and preserve the memory of the past. On the other hand, tourists wish to explore more attractive events with local characteristics when wandering in the old and narrow streets, which could provide the feeling of an unexpected encounter. Therefore, how to deal with the connections between small-scale streets and large-scale gathering places is critical in influencing different user groups’ emotions when conducting activities and interactions. The research results suggested that the design of active street frontage and the presence of social places with appropriate design of surroundings (café, shops, resting places, etc.) and distinctive landmarks as people attractors could help to improve their travelling experiences (see chapter 4.2.5.2). Moreover,

landmarks with local characteristics could act as marks to indicate the direction and emphasis the sense of place (Figure 5-10).

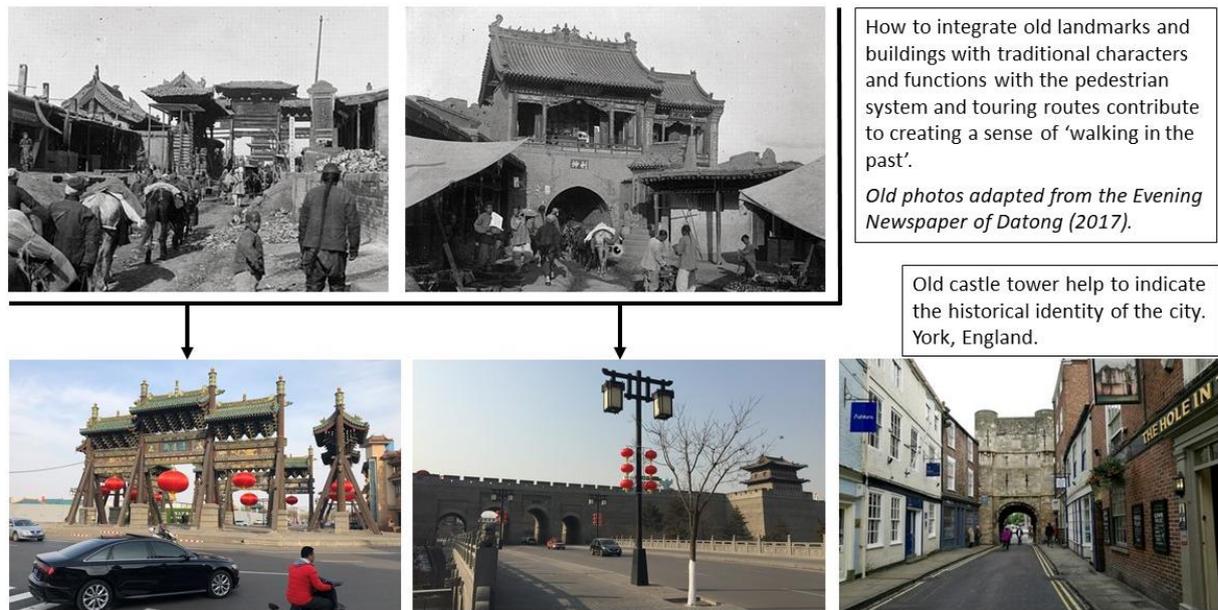


Figure 5-10 Utilisation and integration of characteristic landmarks are necessary for designing the touring routes.

5.2.4 Users' activity preferences and urban built environment

According to the research results, arrangement, types, and characteristics of various events are the key factors that could determine users' roles (participant or observer) and their emotions. As Carr et al. (1992) noted, people who prefer more direct contact could take the events as opportunities for social interactions with friends, families, or strangers. Moreover, the design quality of open spaces also contributes to people participating in such socially interactive activities. As on-site interviewees suggested, playing with their kids or skateboarding with friends in open spaces with well-designed spaces provided them with satisfaction (see Chapter 5.3.3). Three primary findings were discussed in this section: social and leisure activities and the quality of public spaces, designing places for participants and observers, and the night environment and night-time activities.

5.2.4.1 Social and leisure activities and the quality of public spaces

The design quality of public spaces and streetscapes influenced pedestrians' movement in the old town, as Gehl (1996) mentioned in his study of exploring relationships between the design and activities. The research analysis explored how cultural events and activities participated and conducted by different users could get affected the transformation and reconstruction of the old built environment, and several findings were identified:

- The **environmental improvement significantly influenced local residents' activities** as people wished to have more open spaces to conduct social activities. Moreover, the design and arrangement of resting settings and facilities are necessary to provide proper shelters.
- **Local visitors (who live outside the old town) preferred to take the whole urban centre as a huge theme park or shopping village.** While the same shopping activities were conducted in the old town as for the local residents, the local visitors paid attention to the experience and atmosphere when they visited, created by the combination of characteristic shops and ancient building style.
- Some residents and local visitors had to work in the old town or take their children to educational activities and cultural events. **The design style and ancient built form of the townscape could contribute to a better experience for residents and local visitors conducting their necessary activities.**

Based on the theory of outdoor activities from Gehl (1996), the research results show two major types of activities conducted by residents, local visitors, and foreign tourists – optional activities and social activities (see chapter 4.3.1). Moreover, prior studies have noted that the quality of public spaces is closely related to conducting social activities (Rallings et al., 2014; Zheng et al., 2015; Aelbrecht, 2016). Therefore, the research results from interviews and observations are in line with such studies, such as emphasising the necessary presence of open spaces with shelters and resting facilities in helping people's social and leisure activities.

Similar to the context discussed in previous section 5.2.3.2, the research results of laypeople interviewees also indicated the factor of emotion, which is affected by the quality of the built environment and sense/ambience of the place and shows significant influence in determining and guiding different user groups' activities as roaming in the old town of Datong (see chapter 4.3.1). In addition to the 'mood' and 'atmosphere' described by people who prefer conducting social and leisure activities, **tourists suggested the quality and presence of people attractors had a significant influence on triggering their emotions further activities** (see Chapter 5.3.1). For example, if tourists felt the surrounding environment was not attractive enough or failed to meet their expectations of place image, they would prefer finding a café or restaurant to rest instead of exploring other places of the destination. For locals, the well-designed resting facilities, catering places, and shopping venues are the primary factors to affect their moods when doing the activities. Moreover, the design quality and ancient building appearances show influences on forming the local users' moods and the place's atmosphere when integrating with specific types of activities (social, leisure, shopping, etc.). Therefore, the key in creating a vibrant ambience is to **ensure that the locals' needs are met, and then the crowds of locals conducting activities could improve tourists' experiences.**

Under such context, the research explores relationships between the design of fun and pleasure public spaces to identify relevant characteristics. The importance of creating fun and pleasure objects was mentioned by Norman (2005), who suggested the products should evoke emotion when the user is interacting with them. Guo and others (2021) identified three levels for a good design: pleasing perception, behaviour and experience, and reflective design leading to users' satisfaction. Such characteristic levels are in accord with the prior studies organised by various researchers (Gehl, 1996 and 2013; Montgomery, 2003; Carmona et al., 2010; Aelbrecht, 2016). In terms of promoting various activities, the research findings organised multiple attractive elements, including characteristic built form, lively streetscape, and the design appearance of iconic landmarks, which show consistency to the emotion-centred design.

In terms of creating the ambience/atmosphere or sense of place, the research analysis showed that the cultural events and historical processes embedded within the built environment are critical factors (see chapter 4.3.1). The atmosphere of cultural events/festivals and the diversity of urban form are considered interpretations and expressions of the sense of history or image of multiple places. In such regards, the sense of place helps distinguish the whole urban centre from other old cities or towns under the culture-led regeneration and then help to promote different user groups' activities by influencing their emotions.

5.2.4.2 Designing places for participant and observer

According to Carmona et al. (2010, p. 201), where people choose to sit or linger in public space is often based on opportunities for people-watching, which could be related to the life and activity within the space and the movement of pedestrian flows. As the old town aimed to attract more visitors, the design quality of spaces and characters of diverse activities for observers and participants should be considered critical elements. The research analysis has organised several findings as follows:

- As the primary form of passive engagement, people-watching is mainly triggered by the presence of other people and their activities (Carr et al., 1992; Carmona et al., 2010). **Therefore, the diversity of events and activities are the major attractors for observers to conduct people-watching, and the resting settings and facilities (benches, stairs, open-air coffee seating and so on) with shelters could provide a better experience for the users or observers.** Furthermore, responses pointed out that people-watching is also a way to get involved in the events and activities.
- Pedestrian movement between places is a basic element in creating lively urban scenes. **When well-organised events and activities show expressions of local characters and features relating to history and culture, pedestrian flows could get attracted, pause, and stop to watch or engage in the event.**

- The key of being participated in specific events is the nature and characters of the activity and event. According to the analysis of research results, **the atmosphere and lively street scenes could inspire visitors to engage in activities as the crowd that gathers is a powerful attraction.**

In reviewing the literature, people-watching was identified as the primary form of passive engagement, influenced by the quality of physical settings (Carr et al., 1992; Carmona et al., 2010; Gehl, 2013). Based on such concepts, research analysis shows that active engagement (directly interaction and participation) and passive engagement (people-watching) could be transformed reciprocally as influenced by users' moods and the quality of the space (see chapter 4.3.3). In the research case of the ancient city of Datong, tourists consider people-watching as a specific way of interacting with the place and locals. Moreover, both participation and people-watching of specific activities and events contribute to the knowledgeability of the destination.

People-watching – a way of Interacting with the place and local users

According to the research results, **elements the different user groups encountered when walking in the ancient urban centre provide them with a first-hand experience (or first impression) and another way of interacting with the built environment.** In addition to participating in events and celebrations, research results showed that visual encounter with various activities and events without active involvement is a way to interact with the environment. Most street performances and shows are more for passengers to stay and watch for different users.

In addition, the presence of observers also acts as a way of participating for both performers and other visitors. Local interviewees wish to see more cultural activities with folk cultural characters to get attracted and stay longer in the old town, which is a good way of killing their time. On the other hand, tourist interviewees prefer considering the presence of locals and their activities as key components of the folk culture and characteristic local features. In this aspect, crowds of people act as a significant component in creating lively street scenes. Furthermore, the presence of crowds of people is seen as the symbolic image of urban vitality by visitors, and such clues of lively street scenes could attract more people to get involved in various events and places (see Chapter 5.3.3).

The arrangement of elements – fountains, sculptures, and coffee carts – could act as spots for all users and pedestrians to conduct social interactions in different ways, such as gathering or watching others. Such arrangement of street furniture and public arts is consistent with the concept of 'prop' (Aelbrecht, 2016), which help to triangulate social interaction in public spaces. Research results also showed that interviewees consider the quality and design style of venues and settings for people to rest, such as steps, benches, and street cafés, as factors that affect their experiences when observing others. **In addition, creating places with different height levels could produce**

viewpoints at the edge, such as the perimeter and upper level. Such ideas are consistent with the idea of utilising thresholds and edges to create places for social interaction and people-watching (Aelbrecht, 2016).

On the other hand, **traditional Chinese architecture emphasises a sense of enclosure and privacy and thus lacks permeability to the outside space** (Wang, 2011). **On this basis, places such as coffee, tea houses, and restaurants need to make full use of doors and windows to create opportunities for internal and external views to interact** (Figure 5-11). Such thoughts echo with the relevant concept developed by Mehta and Bosson (2010) as they suggested the permeability of street frontage help to improve pedestrians’ experiences by boosting the opportunities of people-watching.

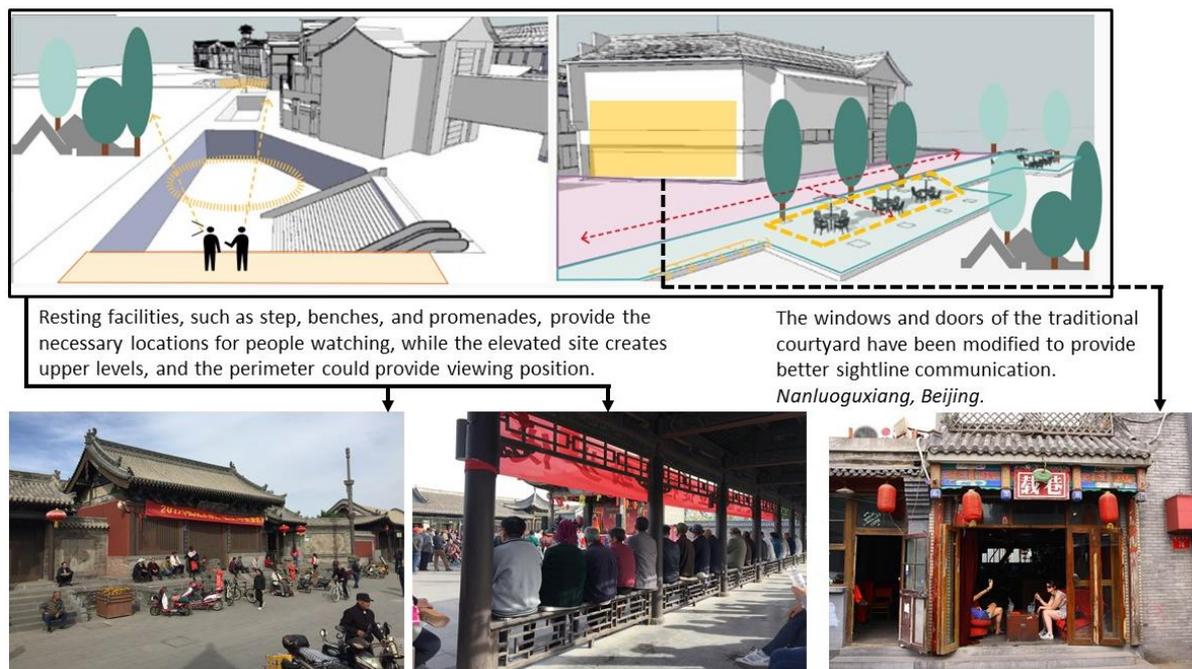


Figure 5-11 The quality of place affect pedestrians to conduct people-watching.

People-watching and participation – knowledgeability of place

As mentioned in the literature review, people-watching provides a way of understanding how other people actually use the urban space (Project for Public Space, 2000), and the research analysis shows that the presence of characteristic events and activities could provide opportunities for different user groups to know the place (see chapter 4.3.3). Both participant and observer offered ways for different interviewees to understand the urban history and culture and improve their experiences when touring in the ancient urban centre. How to properly interpret and express the local characteristic – traditional customs or innovative elements – are critical in influencing visitors’ roles. In addition, professionals advised that the old residential area with interweaved lanes and characteristic houses could become

the ‘display sections of local history and culture’ (Former chief of Urban Planning Bureau). The creation of display sections and surrounding resting facilities help deal with the problem of ignoring users’ needs of rest and safety raised in the literature review (Gehl, 1996; Gao and Zhou, 2015).

In addition to the design quality of place and settings for people to conduct activities in public spaces, the research analysis suggested that the diversity of events is significant in creating a vibrant atmosphere (see chapter 4.3.3). The design of successful places should provide opportunities for various types and varying degrees of engagement, and the characteristic interpretation of traditional events and activities contribute to the knowledgeable of the old town. Before the renewal project, the old town was dominated by the network of streets and lanes, which acted as the primary public space for residents to live in and interact with each other. After reconstructing the urban environment, all user groups discussed using the new public spaces instead of conducting daily activities in the dilapidated narrow streets and alleys (see chapter 4.3.3). In this regard, the professionals advised the area could offer avenues for users (local and foreign visitors) to have spaces and opportunities for engagement with the old urban scenes. As the authentic urban scenarios are products of social interactions and daily activities, the old residential area is the key in acting as a designated section of showing different elements of local folk culture and urban history.

The key to providing better opportunities for different user groups to conduct people-watching is to create active street frontage and public spaces for cultural events with well-designed resting facilities and venues. In addition, the traditional characteristics of the streetscape and different cultural activities help to improve the experiences of people-watching and act as display spaces for showing historical and cultural elements of the city.

5.2.4.3 The lively night environment and night-time activities

In addition to varied events and activities, the research of public life in this section also explored views of creating successful nightlife for the public. The key to creating a good urban environment at night is to understand how urban spaces are used and assessed by residents and visitors in the course of reconstructing the old townscape. The analysis of the lively night environment and night-time activities has identified multiple findings as follows:

- The nightlife is different from life in the daytime as users’ visibility, and the motion is affected by the dark environment in the public spaces. **It is, therefore, significant to utilise the streetlight, illumination, and presence of signages and advertising for the visual perception and the need to feel safe.** In this regard, dividing and designing specific streets and zones for nighttime activities (commercial and leisure) could help create lively urban areas in the old town. Some areas were requested to act as quiet places with well-designed illuminations for middle-aged users as they wished to have a peaceful night-time experience.

- Besides traditional cultural events and festivals held at night, respondents suggested that **activities with locals' involvement are critical in providing lively urban scenes**. Traditional night markets and local food festivals are good examples of creating opportunities for visitors to participate in the locals' daily activities. Furthermore, these folklore events combined with well-designed venues and places can attract more visitors and boost the commercial vibrancy of the surrounding area.
- Different respondents mentioned the climate factor many times as the winter temperatures in Datong reach freezing point, which impacts outdoor activities. In addition to **using indoor activities to connect and interact with outdoor spaces (such as the outdoor business space of a bar and restaurant)**, the presence of specific cultural festivals and activities are necessary to create unique experiences. The lantern festival and numerous folklore performances during the Chinese New Year, which are held on the iconic city wall and in the old townscape, are thought as good examples to create a sense of authenticity.

Night Environment and Climate Impact in Winter

As mentioned in the literature review, creating a lively night environment is classified into two major types – night economy organised in the commercial and cultural areas and the night-time activity that fills the everyday spaces of daily users (Yeo and Heng, 2013; Song et al., 2016). In accordance with such concepts, local urban designers and actual users suggested **the design and distribution of multiple quarters with different functions and characters – entertainment, catering service, and cultural tourism at night – are critical in creating people attractors and lively urban scenes** (see chapter 4.2.2, 4.3.4 and 4.4.4). Moreover, the design of characteristic zones – leisure and entertainment – should consider the night economy and night-time activity as fundamental functions to meet the needs of different user groups and create a vibrant urban environment.

According to research results from all interviewees, the local geographical **climate** is a big issue for visiting the research area in winter (see chapter 4.3.4.1). The on-site observation conducted in the winter showed that windy, dry and freezing weather strongly influenced the usage of public open spaces as fewer trees or green spaces would be usable for sheltering. However, the indoor activities (catering, drinking, shopping, entertainment, etc.) could attract a number of visitors and help create a lively night environment by increasing the number of visitors and users in the old town. Therefore, creating a lively night environment under such weather conditions requires a strategic integration of different components: places to attract users, cultural events, appropriate streetlights, and illuminations. In addition, urban experts and users both mentioned the cold and windy weather conditions that characterise the local nights in autumn and winter, making it challenging to organise night-time activities (see chapter 4.3.4.1). However, the laypeople interviewees suggested that the

places and venues with locals conducting their daily activities (shopping in groceries and street markets, dining, and other cultural activities) could improve the urban vitality.

Designing zones with open-air, semi-open, and indoor public spaces

According to the analysis of interviews and observation, **‘eating’ and ‘shopping’ are two primary activities conducted by different user groups at night** (see chapter 4.3.1). The weather condition partially influenced such activities as most of them were conducted indoors, but interviewees argued that **the quality of the physical environment and streetscape would affect their emotions in doing such activities**. Moreover, the crowds of people attracted by the social (chatting) and optional activities (roaming and resting) are influenced by the quality of the physical environment and streetlights or illuminations (see chapter 4.3.4). Therefore, the design quality of places and venues for various events should provide enough shelters for users, and the external public spaces need to provide an amount of “pocket spaces” (small-scale open spaces), which could offer places to vendors and stalls (Song et al., 2016). Such findings are associated with the creation of ‘fourth places’ (Aelbrecht, 2016) and suggested the presence of various lively street scenes created by integrating small open spaces and street markets or street fairs could form people attractors at night (Figure 5-12).

Based on the observation, areas and zones with a high density of pedestrians were occupied with street vendors and stalls, considered components of the street market by locating in the same street. According to the research analysis, interviewees from all groups suggested that night markets (open-air and indoor) are critical in creating a lively night environment and delivering the old urban scene (see chapter 4.3.4.2). On the other hand, most younger interviewees indicated that commercial facilities – such as shops, dining rooms, and coffeehouses – should arrange their semi-public space with tables and seats in the restricted area (see chapters 4.3.4.1, 4.3.4.2 and 4.3.4). Such findings support the characteristics of ‘third places’ and ‘fourth places’ mentioned by Oldenburg (1991), Mehta and Bosson (2010), and Aelbrecht (2016). Furthermore, people eating and drinking outside the room could contribute to the vibrant urban images and help blur the boundary between inner private and outer public spaces.

Moreover, the street market and groceries are considered half commercial and half social places by providing places for different consumers or visitors to interact at night. As Song et al. (2016) suggested, such low-end commercial venues integrating with cultural facilities (theatres, cinemas, etc.) could satisfy the everyday needs of the residents by integrating multiple functions as commerce, recreation, entertainment and information exchanges. In such regards, the night environment with commercial, social, and cultural venues and different types of public places could boost residents’ activities and improve visitors’ experiences.

As mentioned in the literature review, designated entertainment districts and catering precincts are necessary to attract more people in the night, and the presence of crowds (noises and scenes) can form lively street scenes (Yeo and Heng, 2014; Song et al., 2016). Moreover, research analysis of interviews and observation suggested the events and celebrations with well-interpreted characteristics and features (such as the lantern festival held on the city wall in Chinese New Year), the presence of proper lights and illuminations with historical and cultural backgrounds, could form a festival atmosphere attracts visitors (see chapters 4.2.4.1, 4.3.2.2 and 4.3.4). However, it should be noted that some ageing locals and current habitants prefer a peaceful and quiet night environment, which raised the requirements for the placement of the different zones.

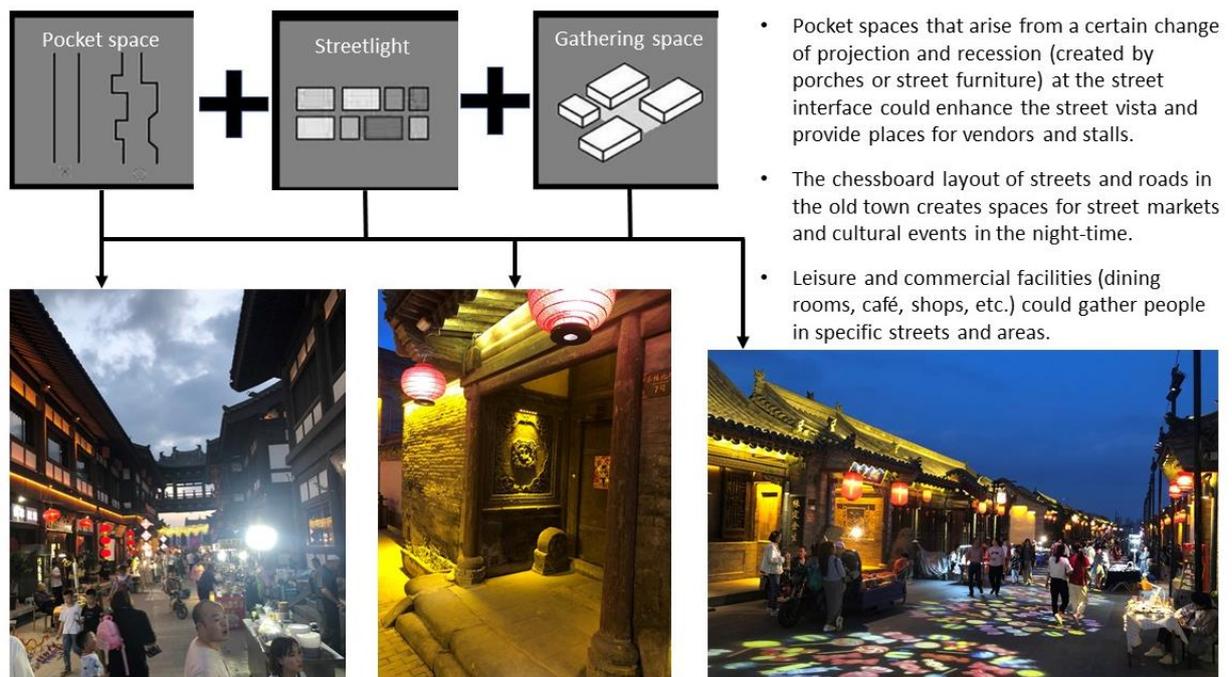


Figure 5-12 Lights, people attractors, and semi-public spaces help to attract users and conduct night-time activities in the old town of Datong.

5.2.5 Cultural activities and events in forming place identity

According to the research results, cultural events and activities are necessary for improving urban vitality and creating lively public spaces. Vitality is also a critical element that could help to form a distinctive and successful urban image (Montgomery, 1998). Local media practitioners also suggested that public open spaces, including streets, squares, and the city wall, are the essential venues for the presence of all kinds of cultural events, historical celebrations, and daily activities. Furthermore, different cultural events and festivals help create a temporary lively urban scene by attracting pedestrians moving in and around streets and squares. Therefore, preserving and innovating the character of cultural events and festivals to form continued people attractors and illustrate the local

cultural context is significant in preserving, enhancing, and reconstructing the urban identity. The research analysis of cultural activities and events organised two primary findings: creating ‘shared space’ and display space.

5.2.5.1 Creating ‘shared space’ and display space

The idea of shared space emphasises the social centrality and commercial and leisure opportunities in the city centre (Rallings, 2014). As the heritage tourism-led urban renewal of the ancient city of Datong aims to arrange various cultural activities, traditional events, and historic festivals to attract more people, the design and distribution of the hosting places are necessary to meet the requests from each other user group. Therefore, the research analysis showed two findings as follows:

- **By properly integrating with expressions of local history and culture, the design and arrangement of diverse cultural activities, traditional events, and festivals contribute to forming a sense of authenticity.** Moreover, innovative events need to focus on users’ preferences from different age groups, designated routes, and specific zones with characteristic features.
- Some residents approved the improved living environment brought about by redevelopment, and they wished to have more places to meet their daily needs. In this regard, **street markets, groceries, and dining places are necessary to fulfil their needs and provide opportunities for visitors to interact with locals.**

From the perspectives of laypeople and urban experts, the presence of designated places and cultural activities provide opportunities for all user groups – residents, local visitors, and foreign tourists – to engage with each other in the same display space (indoor venues and open-air space) that shared by different groups of users to understand the city (see chapters 4.3.3 and 4.3.4.2). Such findings are in accord with the idea of producing shared space, which emphasises the social centrality and commercial and leisure opportunities in the city centre (Rallings, 2014).

Integrating locals’ activities with visitors’ experiences

In terms of attracting visitors and inviting them to get involved in the living sceneries, the design plan needs to offer spaces and venues for tourists to interact with residents in different ways – sharing traditional food in an old restaurant and food stalls, resting in well-designed spaces with the presence of older residents and doing shopping in street markets. Locals prefer to conduct their leisure and social activities in well-reconstructed urban spaces, and tourists suggested that the “hustle and bustle” scenes formed by characteristic places and venues and local users are attractive components in improving their travelling experiences. Furthermore, such a vibrant urban atmosphere significantly

affects their mood in participating in the cultural activities (see Section 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.2.2). For example, the Lantern Festival held on the reconstructed city wall was highly rated by tourists and suburban visitors because of its unique gathering places (along the city wall), magnificent views (various lights, lanterns, and crowds of people), and distinctive characters relating to the folk culture (local snacks, traditional handicrafts, and craftsmen). Therefore, **combining the reconstructed urban space with characteristic cultural activities for local inhabitants, tourists, and local visitors is critical in creating attractive cultural events and delivering the place image** (see Section 4.3.4 and 4.3.5).

In accordance with results collected from the on-site observation, such designated spaces for commercial and leisure opportunities could act as a key element in creating spaces for events and everyday activities (Rallings, 2014; Niu et al., 2021). In this sense, designing public spaces for different users to interact and enjoy commercial and leisure opportunities fit the description of ‘shared space’ (Rallings, 2014). Moreover, traditional street markets and old groceries, which are necessary for memorable meeting and gathering places, could integrate with surrounding areas to create interactive and lively spaces (See chapter 4.3.5 & 4.4.1). This finding further supports the idea of understanding ‘third places’ in daily life (Oldenburg, 1991) and the importance of ‘informal’ public life in designing the public realm (Carmona et al., 2010). In such regards, **the distribution and arrangement of “display spaces” could help for distinctive and “immersive experiences” for tourists and local visitors and form an authentic urban scene** (Figure 5-13).



Figure 5-13 Creating shared spaces for all user groups contribute to the quality of immersive experience

Designing quarters of cultural facilities

In terms of creating formal and informal places to boost the interaction of activities between different user groups, designing quarters and zones with clusters of cultural venues were required by the laypeople. In addition to the large open spaces designed for celebrations and traditional festivals, locals and tourists suggested specific streets and zones could integrate with frequent street performances and fairs, which help form the vibrant street scene occasionally (see 4.3.2.1). Therefore, at irregular intervals, cultural activities and events create temporal streets, quarters, and zones with small and medium scales. On the other hand, interviewees from the laypeople group mentioned that the cultural quarters or precincts formed by cinemas, theatres, museums, and other cultural venues are the key to creating intensive cultural activities for locals and tourists. Moreover, the streetscape and buildings with traditional architectural characters improve all users' emotions and experiences.

Under such context, **creating spaces with a well-designed physical environment and various cultural activities for both daily users and visitors is the key** (see chapters 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). In general, the design quality of such places needs to provide a better living physical environment for locals to conduct their leisure and social activities. Moreover, the functional design of the surrounding premises (museum, café, shops, dining places) help to enhance the sense of places for tourists or visitors. This finding is consistent with the idea of designing quarters based on old museums and other iconic cultural venues (Kochergina, 2017; Niu et al., 2021). In accord with such views, local residents and visitors wished to preserve many old functional and iconic venues, such as the old museum, activity centre for children, and cinema moved out of the old town instead of being preserved for the original use. Moreover, the variety of shops selling traditional artefacts should combine with handicraft workshops, and tourists could see and experience the production process at the same time.

5.2.5.2 Integrating cultural events into the urban development

As mentioned in the research analysis, cultural and social activities are components of the old urban scenes and show clues to the traditional lifestyle. In addition to preserving such activities and events, daily users and urban experts suggested the renovation of specific events might be necessary to meet different user groups' requests. Therefore, relevant findings were identified as follows:

- The interpretation and expression of urban history and cultural resources are necessary in creating people attractors, which could impress visitors and form a place image. According to the participants' responses, cultural activities that could provide interactions between locals and tourists are essential in creating a lively urban environment. Moreover, **the historical and cultural background of the old town needs to get incorporated into the preservation and innovation of cultural activities.**

- Recreation of cultural activities and traditional festivals help to boost urban vitality and provide opportunities for all users to become interested in their historical and cultural background. **Cultural activities combined with traditional architectural styles and site design could create unique experiences where tradition and modernity meet, such as local food culture and carnivals held in the square surrounded by traditional buildings.**

As mentioned in the literature review, the organisation and arrangement of cultural-led events and festivals could create a unique temporary environment and provide participants (or observers) chances of having an immersive and non-routine experience (Richards and Wilson, 2006; Kirillova et al., 2014). The research results show that cultural activities and events could form temporal people attractors provide opportunities for locals and visitors to interact with each other (see chapters 4.3.2.2 and 4.3.2.3), which further support the prior findings. Furthermore, interviewed researchers and readers of local history and culture suggested that diverse types of interactions between different groups of users (participating in specific events, conducting people-watching, and chatting with each other) provide opportunities for different users to understand the city's history and culture.

Contributing to the knowledgeability of the destination

Prior studies have shown that cultural festivals are culture-led events with organisation and arrangement, contributing to the preservation and innovation of authentic cultural characteristics (Frey, 1994; Getz, 2005 and 2008). The research results examined the characteristics of different users' cultural events and activities – the design quality of holding places, higher hosting frequency, and appropriate ways of expressing local traditional elements in the events and festivals.

In addition to the traditional architectural style of hosting places, the time and frequency of different events are two of the most frequently mentioned themes from the research results that help to illustrate the authentic characteristics (see chapter 4.3.2). Both locals and tourists suggested that traditional celebrations, such as the lantern festival and temple fair, need to show and present their traditional features in the festival periods as such events will only get held over a particular period. In addition to tourists' preferences of traditional festivals, locals show interest in engaging in the well-designed cultural events and celebrations as they could deliver a distinctive identity of the old town and help recover local characters in the collective memory. Such findings contrast with those of Su (2018), who mentioned that performances in the ancient city of Pingyao are only for tourists as some commercial and cultural activities and festivals show limited attachment to the local residents. In this regard, this research has found that **the higher frequency of cultural events held in the ancient city could create sustainable vitality by enhancing its historical and cultural identities and attracting visitors.** As there used to be only a handful of festivals, the presence of clusters of cultural events and

activities could improve the urban vitality, and using the expression of traditional characteristics contribute to forming authenticity.

In terms of properly expressing and interpreting historical and cultural characteristics, tourists complained about the difficulties in understanding the folk shows and traditional performances because of the local accent and lack of introduction (see chapter 4.3.2.3). Moreover, professionals argued that culture always relates to the acceptance of the public. Therefore, **the design and arrangement of characteristic cultural events should consider the public's acceptance (locals and tourists)**. For example, if the restoration of specific events only paid attention to strictly recovering the old characteristics without properly developing, it might cause **anti-popularisation**.

On the other hand, adapting and recreating cultural events to attract younger users is necessary, and interviewees from all groups advised young visitors is the most active users to attend various events. Moreover, based on previous data collecting implemented by the urban planning and design institute of Datong, local practitioners suggested visitors under 40s are also the primary user group to a lively night environment. Under such context, the research results showed that **well-organised events after being innovated**, such as Interactive scenarios or shows which integrate illuminations and three-dimensional projection, **could act as a leading power and attract more visitors to come in here and encourage locals to participate in it** (see chapter 4.3.2 and 4.3.4).

Event Tourism and Destination Branding

Previous studies have noted that the presence of diverse cultural events and festivals can help boost other economic activities and the consumption of cultural activities – performances, events, movie week, and other celebrations (Wansborough and Maggean, 2000; Liu, 2015; Su, 2018). The research results further support such findings by emphasising the importance of the characteristic events (or high-value Intellectual Property defined by local urban planners) in planning and designing local cultural tourism. Maggean, 2000; Liu, 2015; Su, 2018). The research results further support such findings by emphasising the importance of the characteristic events (or high-value Intellectual Property defined by local urban planners) in planning and designing local cultural tourism. Laypeople interviewees from different groups also suggested such occasional events and celebrations can act as leading powers and catalysts to help boost the surrounding economy and improve urban vitality by attracting large numbers of visitors. For example, locals prefer more traditional celebrations and cultural activities to enjoy the festival ambience or atmosphere. Moreover, tourists also wish to enjoy such characteristic events and other performances to learn more about the destination, contributing to forming a general image of the place's folk culture. The idea of utilising cultural events in developing cultural tourism is consistent with the concept of experience economy developed by Richards and

Wilson (2006), and Liu (2015), and they suggested cultural events also connect the global space of flows with the local space to become an integral part of everyday life.

On the other hand, the structured layers and tiers of different cultural events and festivals are considered as beneficial methods of forming place identity (see chapters 2.3.2 and 4.3.5). A similar theory of events portfolio was introduced by Getz (2005) and Mariani et al. (2017) and described as “the strategic patterning of disparate but interrelated events taking place during the course of a year in a host community that, as a whole, is intended to achieve multiple outcomes through the implementation of even joint strategies” (Ziakas, 2013; p.14). In terms of arranging different types of events to improve urban vitality, the event portfolio could be manipulated to illustrate historical and cultural in the research discussion as below:

- **Local events are the basic layer of local cultural events.** They are the one-time/temporary and periodic events such as street performances and vendors, which are characterised by low tourism and local demand. They are embedded in one place or random place in designated zones.
- **Regional events are the intermediate tiers.** They are periodic events that are characterised by medium value and demand and are rooted in one place and appeal mostly to residents and a few tourists. Local food fairs, temple fairs, and religious rituals could become a routine activity for locals but not a major attraction for tourists.
- **Periodic ‘hallmark’ events and festivals are the top tier of the structure.** They represent local culture’s high value and symbolic characteristics, making them the leading power and engine of local tourism. Due to their limited duration and designated role in boosting awareness, such events and festival celebrations are critical in forming iconic impressions and images of the old town. The traditional lantern festival, the movie week of Jackie Chan, and the Motor Show were mentioned by many tourists, and urban experts suggested such events are necessary to attract more visitors to the old town and lead them to other attractors.

Therefore, the audience could see and experience different stages of the urban history in various designed locations, and the distribution of different venues of such organised shows could help form precincts or quarters with characteristic themes and unique features, and movements of attendants will improve the urban vitality. Such findings show further support with the concepts of delivering a sense of historical process (Wang, 2011; Su, 2018), creating cultural quarters or tourism precincts (Wansborough and Maggean, 2003; Hayllar and Griffin, 2005; García-Hernández et al., 2017), and then contribute to image creating, place marketing and destination branding (Getz, 2005).

5.2.6 Collective memories and the sense of the historical process

In terms of exploring the sense of belonging, collective memories of residents and visitors and the knowledgeability of certain places are critical elements in improving foreign visitors' experiences of encountering the expected place image (see chapters 4.4.1 and 4.4.2). According to the research analysis, forming a sense of belonging is affected by the reconstruction and improvement of the physical environment in users' memories, lively urban scenes, and knowledgeability of the old town's past. Therefore, the research analysis organised two main findings for further discussion: forming relationships between old and new urban images and examining influential factors of urban legibility and city image.

5.2.6.1 Forming relationships between old and new urban images

According to the research analysis, most original residents and local visitors described their impression of the old town's past as overcrowded and chaotic. The environmental improvement, iconic landmarks, and changes in the urban fabric were the primary factors forming their image of the old town in the past and present. On the other hand, the design quality of the built environment, memories of places, and traditional cultural events are critical factors in influencing foreign visitors' comparison between the current situation of the townscape and their expected image of the city (see chapter 4.4.1 and 4.4.5). Therefore, the research results suggested preserving the old urban environment and scenes of lifestyle contribute to the sense of belonging and knowledgeability of the destination:

- In the aspect of the physical form of the urban space, interviewees advised that **preserving characteristic built form and street layout is necessary for different group users to enjoy the old urban scenes**. Narrow streets and alleys with traditional houses bring back residents' memories of the past and show visible or tangible parts of the city's history and culture for local visitors and foreign tourists.
- **The old urban scene is another critical factor in enhancing residents' and local visitors' sense of belonging**. Moreover, tourists wished to see lively urban scenes produced by locals' daily and social activities interacting with the preserved urban environment and physical form within the context of local history and culture.

Prior studies have shown that the formation of place image closely relates to the collective memory of different stakeholders, and the information gathered by individuals about different aspects of place helps to create a cluster of 'frames of reference' to describe the destination (Montgomery, 1998; Sepe and Pitt, 2014; Sepe, 2018). As most local inhabitants and visitors described the old town area of

Datong as ‘chaotic and overcrowded’, the research results showed that the environmental improvement, iconic landmarks, and changes in the urban fabric were the primary factors forming their image of the old town in the past and present (see chapter 4.4.1).

Preserving the old place image for locals and visitors

In general, the primary city brand with imagery references prompted by the local government is an ancient city and a variety of religious buildings located in the old town and outskirts of the city. In the meantime, most on-site tourists and some local visitors described the difference between their expectations of this tourism destination and what they encountered in the old town, which is created by the similar streetscape and building appearances. Moreover, tourists suggested that the well-preserved streetscape and iconic landmarks with distinctive characters imply the sense of the historical process of the destination. In addition to meanings and memories embedded within the old places, locals’ daily activities observed in the reconstructed urban spaces also suggest a dynamic authenticity as people are still using the new places in their old fashion (see Section 4.4.1). Such findings are consistent with Su (2018), who suggested **tourists’ satisfaction has become a priority in the developing process of heritage tourism-led urban renewal schemes**, which resulted in the conservation and reconstruction of local buildings and monuments set in a designated era.

As mentioned in the research findings, the design quality of the built environment, memories of places, and traditional cultural events are critical factors in influencing visitors’ comparison between the current situation of the townscape and their expected image of the city (see chapter 4.4.1 and 4.4.5). For foreign tourists, the expected image of the old town is mainly delivered by social media (for the younger user group) and promotion by the travel agency (for the middle-aged and older user groups). On the other hand, memories of specific places and old urban fabric before the urban renewal are key factors in forming the old urban image for inhabitants and local visitors. Although in their opinion, the environmental improvement of the old town is essential to improve the poor quality living conditions of previous times, the ancient urban fabric needs proper conserving strategy as it is the fundamental layer of daily activities and iconic symbol of the authentic urban image. In addition, the research analysis also indicated that **preserving memorable landmarks and important meeting and gathering places could help local users reconstruct the emotional connection between the city image in the past and present** (see chapters 4.4.1.2 and 4.4.2.2).

Under such context, the key in dealing with old and authentic city images and the environmental improvement is to form a sense of historical process instead of creating ‘frozen history’, which was seen to be opposed to the aim of preserving the authentic urban image: to ensure the continuity of history and express a developing urban pattern in the redevelopment process (Wang, 2011).

Restoring elements relating to the old living scenes

During the implementation of urban renewal progress, a large number of former residents were moved to new-built flats with the government compensation as their old houses were no longer safe to live in (Figure 5-14). Fewer people live in the old town area, which has understandably led to fewer daily activities being conducted by locals, thus affecting the sense of urban vitality. In the opinions of local urban planners, former residents who got what they perceive to be a better living environment are unlikely to go back as the overall reconstructing and repairing process could take another five to ten years. On the other hand, although the developing process of the urban environment and public space is necessary to create a better physical environment for travelling, visitors and tourists tend to look for authentic and distinctive elements relating to the old living scenes (see chapters 4.4.1.2). Therefore, balancing environmental improvement and preserving the authentic urban landscape is the key.



Figure 5-14 The dilapidated and unsafe living conditions make extensive renovation work necessary, and the loss of the original inhabitants is another problem.

In addition to preserving the old urban fabric, urban design practitioners of Datong and local researchers suggested that **local habitants are carriers of local history and culture as their activities, memories, and customs form the structure of cultural context**. In this regard, the well-preserved residential area is considered the fusion of original urban characters and residents' activities, all seen as authentic symbols of the old town. Such findings are consistent with the prior studies of generating knowledgeability by understanding the relationship between people and places by describing different places based on individual and collective memories (Comedia, 1991a; Montgomery, 2003; Wang, 2011; Harrison, 2013). In addition to restoring the old physical environment, the design and arrangement of social venues and public places – street markets, old

groceries, and gathering places – in the old residential area could help former and current residents reproduce the old scene.

In terms of restoring old living scenes to the old town area, the laypeople interviewee suggested the design and arrangement of social venues and public places in the old residential area (street markets, old groceries, and gathering places) could help former and current residents reproduce the old scene (see Section 4.4.3.2). In addition, such old places relating to social activities and collective memories could provide places and opportunities for visitors and tourists to get involved in their expected living scenes of the old town. Moreover, elements with social and cultural meanings could be restored and renovated to provide indexical clues to generate better knowledge and place images of the destination (figure 5-15). Therefore, **the authentic image of the old town is not entirely rooted in the materiality of the historic site but is fluid and linked to the everyday practices that take place in and are shaped by the architectural fabric** (Madgin et al., 2018).



Figure 5-15 Details relating to the old living activities and urban scene are essential in creating authenticity.

5.2.6.2 Preserving and restoring anchor elements in collective memories

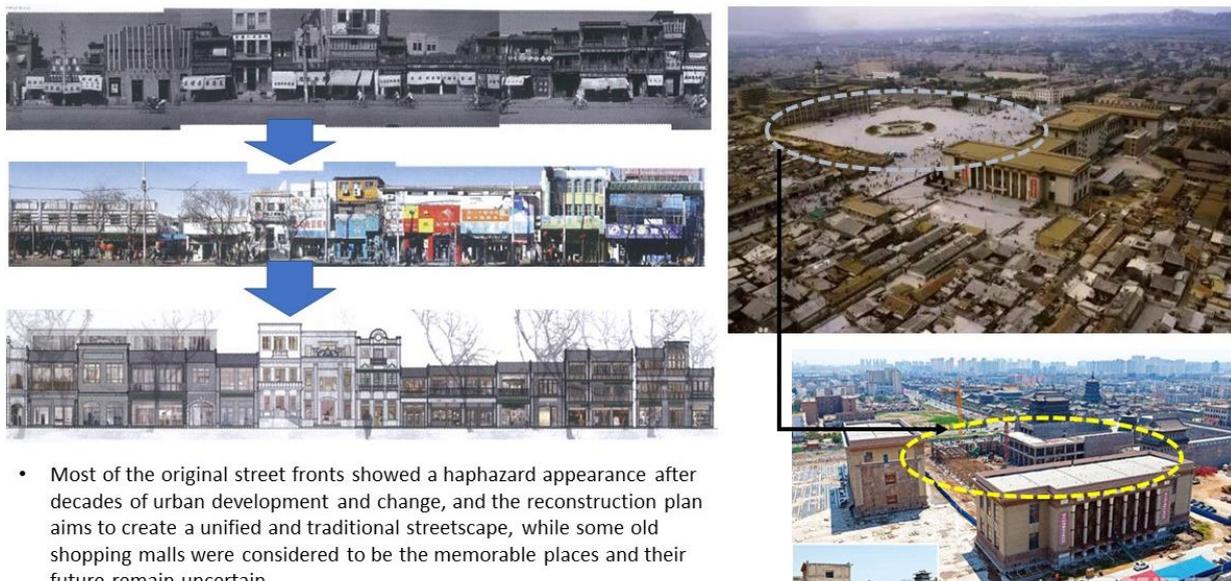
According to research analysis, local users' memories relate to the venues and places and the activities conducted in or with them, such as going to the old movie theatre and playing with friends and families in the square. Although parts of the foreign tourists had no idea of this theme, some tried to think about the issue from the perspective of being a local inhabitant. In their opinions, places and buildings in local users' memories are the primary factors to reconstruct the sense of place. In this regard, the research results organised findings as follows:

- **The environmental improvement brought by the ongoing urban regeneration must focus on preserving the local character of buildings and social spaces in residents' memories.**

Important meeting and social places, such as old city squares, shopping malls, and their surroundings, help form ‘social imageability’ (Southworth and Ruggeri, 2010) derive from the shared meanings generated by involving individuals (residents and visitors) with a place.

- **The interpretation and expression of urban history and cultural resources are necessary in creating people attractors**, which could impress visitors and form a place image. According to the participants’ responses, cultural activities that could provide interactions between locals and tourists are essential in creating a lively urban environment. Moreover, the historical and cultural background of the old town area needs to get involved in the preservation and innovation of cultural activities.

As mentioned in the literature, the authenticity of a historical city is expressed by organised historical and cultural characteristics, which are closely influenced by collective memories (Lynch, 1961; Wang, 2011; Sepe and Pitt, 2014). The research analysis shows consistency with such findings as users’ image of the old town refers to the contents of people’s memories and the description of a place by different user groups (see chapter 4.4.5). Furthermore, locals and tourists who remember the old urban scene before launching the urban renewal paid more attention to monuments, the architectural style of buildings, descriptions on the city walls, and cultural events in their memories (Figure 5-16). These results further support the concept of **‘urban reminder’, which describes the traces of places and events in the memories of people who reside or were used to living in the old town** (Lewicka, 2008; Wang, 2011).



- Most of the original street fronts showed a haphazard appearance after decades of urban development and change, and the reconstruction plan aims to create a unified and traditional streetscape, while some old shopping malls were considered to be the memorable places and their future remain uncertain.
- The old Hong-qi Square was one of the most significant social and meeting places. The majority of local respondents felt sorry for the demolition of Hong-qi Square due to the wall enclosure project.

Image adapted from Datong Institute of Urban and Rural Planning and Design (2016)

Figure 5-16 Old meeting and gathering places are critical in restoring collective memories.

In addition to the displacement of old residents, important gathering places, loss of old landmarks, living scenes, and environmental improvement are influential factors in generating inhabitants' and local visitors' sense of belonging (see Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2). Moreover, local urban planners suggested that local users' memories relate to the venues and places and the activities conducted in or with them, such as going to the old movie theatre and playing with friends and families in the square. These results reflect the ideas of Montgomery (1998), Wang (2011), Sepe (2018), and Dempsey et al. (2020), as they mentioned that traditional elements relating to different users' memories act as anchors to remind them of specific parts of their daily lives in occasion places and eventually form a sense of belonging. Therefore, **restoring elements in locals' collective memories provide opportunities with the sense of 'sincere invitations' to former residents**, which corroborate the ideas of retaining local inhabitants and their lifestyles in the historical area (Yang and Zhou, 2007; Su, 2018; Wang and Gu, 2020).

In such a context, old meeting and gathering places and social activities (squares, street spaces, parks and so on) relating to such venues are the key factors in acting as urban reminders or anchor elements. Moreover, iconic landmarks and heritage sites in shared or common memories of different group users need to be reconstructed and restored in the original building form and architectural style. As Ram et al. (2016) suggested, the preservation and reconstruction of old urban scenes (urban reminders) created by residents interacting with different public spaces (such as playing chess, enjoying sunbathing, shopping in street markets, etc.) contribute to the authenticity of local visitors' memories and tourists' experiences.

5.2.7 Influential factors of urban legibility and city image

The quality of urban legibility significantly influences the city image, which is formed by a variety of historical and cultural elements from different dimensions in a coherent and organised pattern. The pattern and arrangement of each element are necessary in expressing and interpreting the distinctive and authentic urban identity by providing place images and personal impressions for the individual user. Reconstruction and innovation of urban reminders are the keys to preserving the locals' memories and improving visitors' experiences. Moreover, it is significant to form a hierarchical and networked structure of place identity. Therefore, the following discussions have identified two primary findings: extracting symbolic elements to form city legibility and designing the structure of multiple place identities with the sense of the historical process.

5.2.7.1 Extracting symbolic elements for the formation of city legibility

The research results suggested that elements with characteristics in shaping the urban landscape could act as symbols and signs, representing something shared within the inner relationship, constructed through social and cultural systems (Carmona et al., 2010; Ram et al., 2016). In terms of selecting and interpreting iconic elements in the urban design of the urban renewal in Datong, two findings were noted in the research results:

- **The selection and interpretation of specific characters and features relate to the design of symbolic icons for local visitors and tourists.** The design and arrangement of such elements need to fit in with the built environment and act as attractions to attract the curiosity and attention of visitors, which is a way of understanding the details of the city.
- **The setting of viewpoints is necessary for local visitors and tourists to enjoy the skyline and city layout.** In this regard, the reconstructed city wall is perfect for providing view spots and open spaces for all visitors. Moreover, iconic landmarks with characteristic form could act as people attractors in the close range and become visual attractors in the long range of view.

As mentioned in the literature review, the place image is a product of feelings and impressions created by individuals' perceptions and understandings of the place identity, which is formulated by the presence and expressions of local history and culture (Spencer and Dixon, 1983; Montgomery, 1998; Sepe, 2013). As one of the most integrated expressions of history and culture, the urban landscape is composed of symbols, meanings, and values (Carmona et al., 2010). The research results organised multiple symbolic elements in delivering place images for different users, including urban form (architectural distinctiveness, streetscape, and urban fabric), iconic landmarks, social spaces, cultural activities, quarters and zones (see chapters 4.4.3, 4.4.4 and 4.4.5). These results further support findings in the literature review and provide more detailed information for selecting symbolic signs, which represent something shared within the inner relationship, which are constructed through social and cultural systems (Montgomery, 1998; Migliorini and Venini, 2001; Montgomery, 2003).

Iconicity and indexicality of legible place image

In addition to the collective memories embedded within socio-cultural activities and social places, the research results relating to symbolic signs indicate how the ancestor creates such objects at specific times in history and what cultural and historical context could create such symbolic signs the construction skill. According to the response of local inhabitants and former residents, the overall architectural style and building appearances of the townscape, formed by existing buildings and reconstructed places, are critical components in delivering a sense of the distinctive urban image. Moreover, tourists show less interest in the reconstructed urban environment but prefer well-preserved

heritage and iconic landmarks because of their iconic characteristics and symbolic expressions (see Section 4.4.5). In addition, the urban layout and fabric are considered the fundamental symbol of the old town by inhabitants, local visitors, and tourists, as it is the product of local history and culture after many generations (see Section 4.4.5). In this regard, **the symbolic icons help to form the authenticity of the place, which is communicated through heritage and links with past events** (see chapter 4.4.4). These results show consistency with the concept of defining authenticity in both iconic and indexical ways (Grayson and Martinec, 2004; Ram et al., 2016), as mentioned in the discussion of street furniture and urban reminders.

According to the planning strategy of the ancient city of Datong (2016), the reconstruction of traditional houses and streetscapes needs to re-create the old built form and appearances by using materials with similar colours and textures. The major material for the reconstruction is a combination of red brick, grey brick and stone, which is similar in colour to the original clay wall panelling but more robust (Figure 5-17). This method provides an example of creating iconic and indexical symbols in material and physical appearance, which shows a similar idea in the design of the Suzhou Museum. Such ideas are in line with the finding of Molleda (2010), who argued that objects are described as “authentic” when their physical manifestation resembles something that is indexically authentic. Furthermore, laypeople indicated the authentic streetscape includes well-preserved urban form and reconstructed facades with traditional characteristics, historical features, and cultural symbols (see Sections 4.4.4.2 and 4.4.5). In these regards, **meanings attached or attributed to the built environment are modified as social values change in response to changing patterns of urban life and the development of the urban environment** (Carmona et al., 2010).

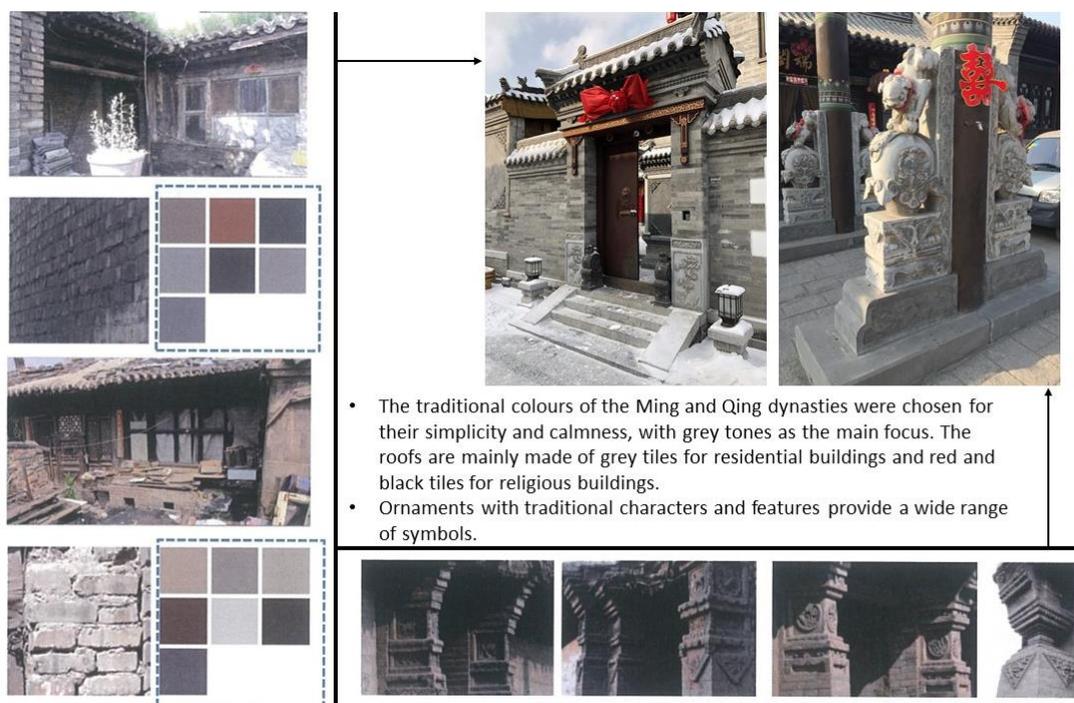


Figure 5-17 Material and distinctive characters are significant symbols.

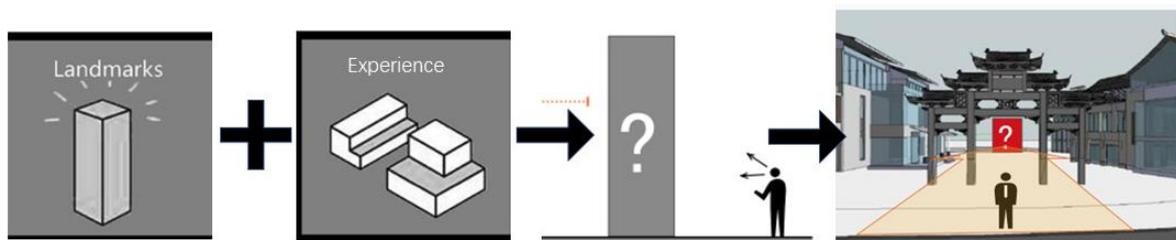
Creating visitor attractions

As mentioned in the literature review and discussion of shared space for locals and tourists, the destination should constitute an experiential value for local visitors and foreign travellers (Ashworth, 2009; Ram et al., 2016). In the old town area context, research results of the laypeople described heritage experience value as determined by historical and cultural significance, presented in introductions of historical background, traditional rites and events, characteristic landmarks and local artefacts (see chapter 4.4.4 and 4.4.5). These elements have their own value and are valued as components of different individuals' contextual images or experiences (Heras et al., 2013). Moreover, Wang and Gu (2020) argued that the design of public spaces in heritage tourism-led urban renewal could not differentiate tourist sites from local spaces. Therefore, local residents' involvement and activities need to get integrated with the future design strategy.

In terms of selecting and interpreting symbolic signs and characters, practitioners from the Urban Planning and Design institute suggested the current propaganda only focus on the designing process of restoring 'the ancient streetscape and urban setting'. According to the practitioners who get involved in the culture and tourism-led urban regeneration, their data collection results showed that youngsters form the major group of visitors under 30s, who were defined as 'groups of users prefer looking for novelty and trendy elements'. In this regard, they suggested that a certain percentage of popular elements should be included in the reconstruction of urban spaces.

However, their findings from urban experts are contrary to previous literature review studies and results of actual users. The laypeople suggested that preserving and interpreting historical and cultural elements is necessary to attract people's attention and enhance their experiences and perceptions of the old town's authentic past (see Section 4.4.5). In addition to the physical and tangible dimension of the old town, places for encouraging locals' activities and reviving collective memories are critical for inhabitants and local visitors. Moreover, tourists suggested cultural activities and traditional events help attract their interests and offer a vibrant urban image of the tourist destination (see Sections 4.4.4 and 4.4.5). In such regards, place identity could be interpreted by the relationship between social activities and urban built environment, and concrete symbolic expressions of the city, creating a recognisable urban image (Piccolo, 1995; Migliorini and Venini, 2001). Key factors of the expression of the historical process, old lifestyle, and scenes in collective memories are in accord with prior studies. Such findings from the research result indicated that meanings attached or attributed to the built environment are modified as social values change in response to changing patterns of urban life and the development of the urban environment (Knox, 1984; Oktay, 2002; Wang, 2011; Wang and Gu, 2020). Therefore, the symbolic icons help to form the authenticity of the place, which is communicated through heritage, cultural activities, and links with past events in collective memories (see chapter 4.4.4).

In this regard, **both the iconic and indexical characters need to link with pre-existing knowledge and expectation of the place, which raises different user groups' interests and creates interactive dialogues over history, place, and place identity.** Therefore, the key to attracting people are integrating iconic characters and indexical expressions in the preservation and reconstruction of urban spaces (Figure 5-18).



The use of iconic symbols combined with the spatial character of the site itself to reinforce the appeal of the historical and cultural elements.



Symbolic language on buildings with traditional architectural style. *Datong.*



Re-innovation of local cultural elements. *Kuanzhaixiang, Chengdu.*



A display of traditional cultural and living elements. *Qianmen, Beijing.*

Figure 5-18 Innovation of iconic characters contributes to the formation of authenticity.

5.2.7.2 Designing the structure of multiple identities with a sense of the historical process

As the research objective aims to deal with the issue of homogenisation, the formation of distinctive place identity is seen as one of the keys in distinguishing the old town of Datong from other urban areas or towns with similar backgrounds and urban renewal. The research analysis showed that the interpretation of local history and culture closely relates to the legibility and knowledgeability of the old town, and then different group users' feelings and experiences will contribute to forming the place image (see chapter 4.4.3 and 4.4.5). From the perspective of local urban planners and practitioners, a notable problem with the urban renewal process is the difficulty of determining its historical and cultural identity, especially in distinctive and authentic ways. Therefore, the hierarchy and network of forming urban identity could be a beneficial strategic model to identify zones and routes' historical and cultural characters. According to the research analysis, the preservation of old urban form and characteristic zones were identified as follows:

- The skyline and silhouette of the city and street vistas enhance the city image. At the same time, the setting and design of the viewpoint are critical in providing viewers with a stronger feeling and wide-open view of the old urban centre. Furthermore, **the layering of the skyline, which is formed by different building heights and tall landmarks, and the contrast between inside and outside the old city play a key role in deepening the urban imagery.**
- Interviewees mentioned a few suggestions for the future planning strategy with professional backgrounds – tourist guide, urban planner, and travel vlogger. In their opinion, **the designated travelling routes and zones with specific functions and old characters could help to create multiple area identities in the old town.** Such a combination of area identities could act as the basic layer of the structure and hierarchy of urban legibility and then interact with famous historical and cultural attractions located outside the Old Town and on the outskirts of the city.

As mentioned in the previous discussions of research results, the zoning strategy of creating multiple characteristic quarters and routes (see chapters 4.2.2, 4.2.7, 4.4.1, and 4.4.4). In accordance with the findings from laypeople, the elite group suggested it is significant to understand and respect the historical process and cultural context of the old town and the city of Datong in a multi-layered perspective. The ancient city of Datong has undergone almost 2000 years of history and many dynasties of change, which created diverse characteristic features and anchor elements from each period. The presence of traditional anchor elements should get involved in the design of the pedestrian system, as paths and landmarks are strongly associated with physical settings (Wang, 2011; Su, 2018; Zhang et al., 2021).

Urban form as the basic layer of forming place identity

From the perspective of laypeople and urban experts, the general plan or city layout is considered one of the primary symbolic signs of the old town as the general plan contains basic information about the city. As mentioned in the prior studies of different researchers (He, 2008; Wang, 2011; Chen and Kevin, 2013; Xie and Heath, 2016), basic elements of city layout, such as the location topography, size, shape, axes, built-up fabric, and the boundaries (city wall or moat), are affected by the traditional Chinese historical and cultural principles – Fengshui and social order. These findings were supported by the research results, which emphasised the importance of the ancient city skyline as a symbolic image (see Sections 4.2.6.2 and 4.4.5). Local urban design and planning practitioners also suggested that the historical and cultural background in guiding the urban fabric and city layout, **including fengshui, li-fang system, and the mix of various religious sites, contribute to better knowledgeability of the city.** Therefore, **the preserved urban layout and built-up fabric could act as the basic layer of urban identity.**

According to the analysis of archival documents and interviews with local researchers, multiple minorities who lived in the ancient town contributed to developing diverse architectural styles and blend cultures. Moreover, interviews of laypeople showed that the urban layout and fabric is one of their primary foci in preserving and reconstructing the city identity as the urban form is the product of multiple cultural minorities and different historical periods (see Sections 4.4.4 and 4.4.5). Therefore, **the future planning strategy needs to focus on developing structured systems or hierarchies of place identity, which will link to ongoing historical changes and cultural contexts.** Moreover, the formation of multi-layered urban identity will request different planning strategies, such as zoning functional and stylistic divisions, designing characteristic routes, and integrating surroundings with iconic landmarks to create specific quarters.

Designing quarters and routes in accordance with the mental map

As discussed in the previous discussions, locals and tourists use the same historic urban landscape and visit the same cultural events, and then derive personal meaning and experience from forming the place image by reading the expression of historical and cultural elements. In terms of preserving the authentic urban identity, the laypeople suggested integrating specific areas (quarters and streets) and cultural activities (traditional and innovated) help improve the experience of different users and form a knowledgeable place image of the old town (see Section 4.4.5). Therefore, **a multiple layer/tier structure of interpretation of place identity could integrate streetscapes, social relationships, cultural events, collective memories and expected place images together.** Each element in the structured system could act as urban reminders or anchor elements (Wang, 2011) and get perceived by individual users and form personal ‘mental maps’, which is described by Montgomery (1998) as places and spaces shaped by socio-cultural activities, collective memories, and meanings.

In addition to the expression of historical and cultural elements in urban spaces and places, local designers and planners also advised that the presence of locals is necessary to create authentic urban scenes as local users (inhabitants and local visitors) are carriers of traditions and customs. Their interactions with the urban environment strengthen the function of the place and create distinctive and authentic scenes for tourists (Ashworth, 2009; Griffin and Hayllar, 2006). Therefore, knowledgeable of the old town needs gets to be formed by the proper expression of each symbolic icon and pattern relating to the background of urban places and the built environment.

5.2.8 Summary of reflection of the research findings

The above discussions reveal the concept and the criteria of designing the urban spaces for preserving and reconstructing place identity in the heritage tourism-led urban renewal of historical Chinese cities

and contribute to developing the relevant theories and concepts developed from prior studies. Discussions of concepts and themes generated from the research result contribute to the cross-comparison between views of different interviewee groups. Moreover, new concepts and ideas generated in this section of discussion will help to develop a new conceptual framework for the research aim, which will be discussed and compared with previous theories in the next section.

5.3 Development of the conceptual framework

Based on the previous discussions of concepts and criteria set in the theoretical framework, research findings help to generate and organise new concepts, and then develop a conceptual framework for the research aim (Figure 5-19). This new conceptual framework was modified on the analytic conceptual framework developed in the chapter of literature review, in which the relationship between place-making and urban regeneration, and corresponding criteria in the Western and Chinese context were examined to lead the research.

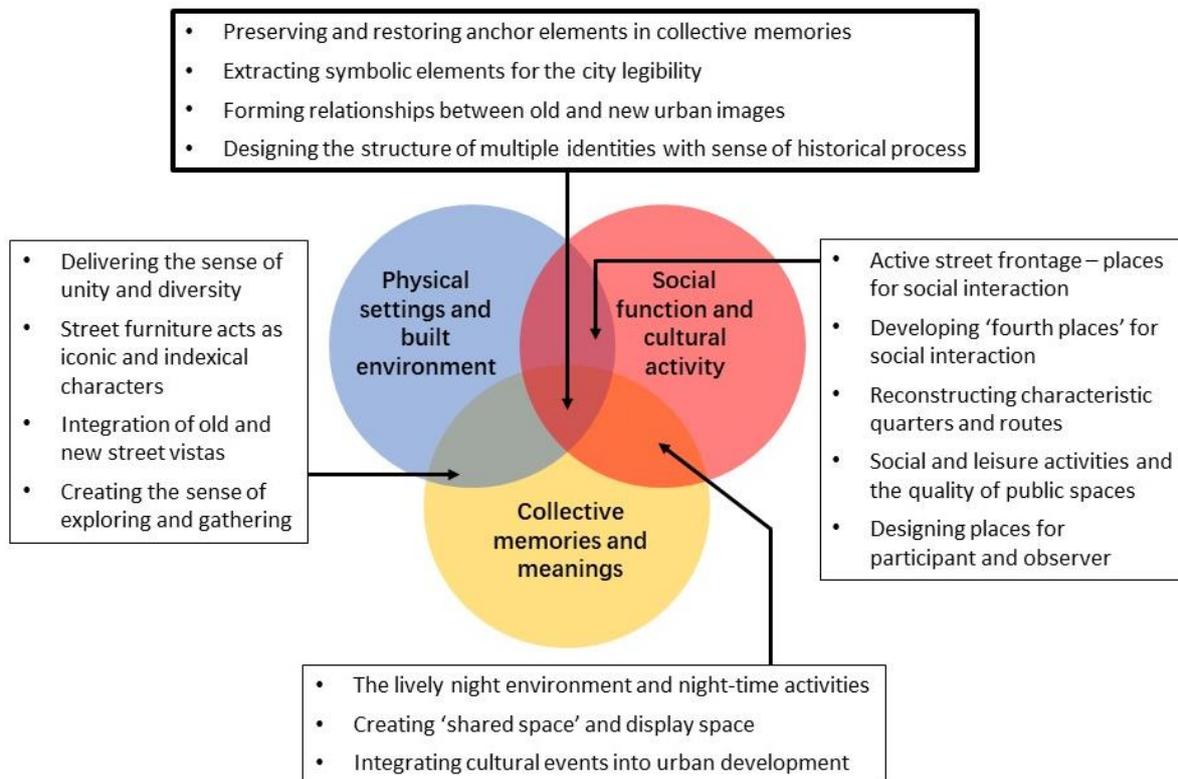


Figure 5-19 The conceptual framework developed in this research

As the research aims to explore how urban history and cultural resources are made manifest in preserving and reconstructing urban spaces of historical Chinese cities, the conceptual framework developed in this research offers an integrated aspect of interpreting historical and cultural elements in the historic urban landscape. Moreover, the research also aims to gain insight into heritage tourism-led renewal of the ancient Chinese urban area (and the old townscape) within the context of

conservation-led urban renewal. In this sense, this newly developed conceptual framework provides new themes and concepts for the old town of Datong and other cities with the historic urban landscape and undergoing heritage tourism-led urban regeneration.

In addition to clarifying the development process of the conceptual framework through the Chinese cases with similar research context, the following sections will explain the concepts in each aspect of the framework as compared with prior studies and concepts to understand its improvements and significances. Then, the illustration of such concepts will help form a detailed table with key factors and applicable measures, which aim to understand and assess the interpretation and involvement of historical and cultural resources in preserving and reconstructing the place identity of the historic Chinese urban landscape.

5.3.1 Integrating creative city and cultural quarters in preserving the historic urban landscape

As mentioned in the prior studies, appropriate involvement of cultural resources inside urban planning strategy is able to contribute to employment and boost local economic development (Sepe, 2013). Both concepts of ‘creative city, and ‘cultural quarter’ aimed to achieve an urban district or milieu by integrating with appropriate urban planning strategy in the aspect of implementing urban renewal through culture and arts (Evans, 2001; Wansborough and Maggean, 2000; Montgomery, 2003; Landry and Woods, 2008; Kana, 2012). Moreover, creating and maintaining a city’s diversity involving urban history with multiple cultures is significant to cement the urban identity (Landry and Woods, 2008). Both concepts suggested the clusters of cultural events and venues should integrate with the urban landscape as to preserve the distinctive urban identity. The characters of place in the cultural quarter pointed out that the integration between activity, built form, and meaning showed close inter-relationships to forming an urban identity in urban design or place-making (Montgomery, 2003).

Based on the fundamental concepts of place-making in urban design, the conceptual framework developed in this research has incorporated the relevant aspects in accordance with the research aim, objectives, and results in the context of urban regeneration in the Chinese historic urban landscape. In general, the challenges of authenticity were the foci of many historians and academic researchers in conserving the urban heritage of historic Chinese cases (Xie and Heath, 2017; Weng et al., 2019; Wang and Gu, 2020). In this sense, the conceptual framework considers the historic urban landscape as an integrated product, and its evolving process of physical form and urban fabric is examined as the authentic and dynamic components of preserving the urban heritage.

In addition to designing the ancient city of Datong as a whole city with multiple historical and cultural quarters, the conceptual framework focuses on the interaction between different aspects and the

integration of various criteria. Moreover, the involvement of historical and cultural resources was made manifest in the integrated dimensions of making, preserving, and reconstructing urban spaces to provide targeted strategic thinking for understanding the authentic place identity in a sustainable way. In this regard, this framework is consistent with the idea of creating a culturally sustainable urban renewal, in which successful integration and innovation of cultural resources in the urban planning process could trigger evolutionary development of the territorial system by properly interacting with social factors (Hall, 1998; Evans, 2001; Neil, 2004; Madgin, 2010). Furthermore, the conceptual framework provides suggestions for the management of urban heritage conservation in the historic Chinese cities undergoing the heritage tourism-led urban regeneration. It recognises the dynamic changes in the physical and cultural realms of the sites themselves, emphasises the flexibility and plasticity of the associated planning and management, and realises that people's values and conservation trends change over time (Zhang and Han, 2017; Wang and Gu, 2020).

5.3.2 Design and planning strategies for tourism destinations

As the research objectives aim to explore the manifestation of history and culture in heritage tourism-led urban regeneration, it is necessary to understand the relationship between urban design and tourism planning. Therefore, in order to explore the role of tourists in urban renewal, concepts of tourism precincts and tourism trails were examined. Both concepts aim to promote distinctive characters of tourism districts, improve the city's brand image as a tourist destination, and provide opportunities for future urban development (Al-Hagla, 2010; Sepe, 2013; García-Hernández et al., 2017; Ye and Jeon, 2020). In such regards, the concepts offered ideas of marketing and managing the cultural heritage tourism in a sustainable perspective of preserving the distinctive urban identity.

Although both concepts provided valuable criteria (such as the mixture of activities, nightlife, urban fabric and others) for the urban revitalisation in historical urban context from the perspective of tourists, the conceptual framework developed in this research emphasizes the significance of integrating locals and tourists in the assessment of the urban renewal. In addition to considering locals (residents and visitors) and tourists as key actors in shaping the place image, the methodology in examining the fundamental criteria of this framework show consistent characters with the other two concepts in the aspect of offering 'bottom-to-up' approaches to the creation of heritage tourism.

According to existing studies, urban regeneration led by heritage tourism in historic Chinese cities is characterised by conserving a few distinctive heritage buildings and redeveloping large-scale urban quarters into commercial and gentrified sectors by the private land developers (Zhu, 2004; Zhai and Ng, 2013). Therefore, there is little consideration for the local cultural and historical identity of the local population to be expressed in a homogenised official 'heritage' discourse (Su, 2018; Zhang et al.,

2021). Under such context, this conceptual framework analyses tangible and intangible aspects of preserving the overall historic urban landscape and the relevant characters as an integrated process of understanding the place identity. Moreover, all the aspects of the conceptual framework explore the effects of heritage conservation and tourism branding on the formation of local residents' positions, by illustrating the changing perceptions of local residents and tourists in relation to spatial and socio-cultural activities. In this sense, the conceptual framework illustrates the authentic and distinctive place identity by examining the role of heritage in affecting, and being affected by the resource administration, tourist, and local community.

5.3.3 Memory, meaning, and social space

In addition to the involvement of local cultural resources and the design of tourism destinations, the urban renewal and regeneration projects of the Chinese historical urban context need to focus on the aspect of locals. As mentioned in the introduction of this research and case study, one of the severe problems in the heritage tourism-led urban renewal in the Chinese historical urban context is the overlook of local residents. Moreover, it is significant to focus on the relationship between the set of identities related to humans and the structured diversity of meanings that affect the cultural heritage and social interactions, which were products primarily created by local users and the urban environment (Harrison, 2013; Xie and Heath, 2017; Sepe, 2018; Dempsey et al., 2020). Under such context, relationships of collective memories and cultural heritage (Harrison, 2013; Dempsey et al., 2020), 'third places' (Oldenburg, 1991) and 'fourth places' (Aelbrecht, 2016) were examined in the research to provide new perspectives and criteria for the understanding of locals and social activities in the urban design.

Based on their concepts, the new conceptual framework and its criteria explored the section of memory, meaning, social space, and the relationship between daily users, heritage characteristics, and social spaces' spatial conditions. Furthermore, as the heritage tourism-led urban renewal project in China sometimes leads to old residents' removal, it is necessary to understand how the locals interact with the old urban environment in multiple ways (Lin et al., 2015). Therefore, the conceptual framework contributes to understanding the role of local users in the urban environment before and after urban renewal through their memories and meanings of specific places, which is critical in manifesting the history and cultural resources to preserve the authentic place identity.

On the other hand, as a result of the relocation of all public infrastructure and transforming the public realm in the heritage tourism-led regeneration of Chinese historic urban landscape, residents are spatially disempowered and have to share culturally significant public spaces with visitors (Su, 2018; Weng et al., 2019). In this regard, the conceptual framework provides views of understanding local

users' attitudes that influence the sustainability of heritage sites. Furthermore, the inhabitants surrounding a heritage site carry the living culture of the site and 'own' this heritage in the aspect of forming personal and collective mental maps, which also influence the tourist's travelling experiences in illustrating the place image. Therefore, the use and interpretation of historic urban landscapes as infrastructure for liveable cities, formed by local inhabitants' collective memories and meanings described as the 'story-scape', is essential to ensure the continuity of local culture and to reconnect the people and places that together make up a cultural tourism destination (Xie and Heath, 2017; Wang and Gu, 2020).

In such a context, the developed conceptual framework is finalised based on results from three stages: a basic conceptual framework formed to explore history and culture's involvement in urban regeneration under the Chinese historical urban context, the research outcomes of the chapter of research analysis, and organised concepts through the research discussion. Based on the prior studies of relevant theories and concepts, the findings of the developed conceptual framework aim to provide concepts and criteria for integrating the role of locals, tourists, and professionals in the urban renewal process. The next section will discuss the suggested applicable measures developed from the research findings in suggesting and guiding future works.

5.4 Suggested applications of the new conceptual framework

In addition to the key concepts and conceptual framework developed in the research findings, various relevant applications were suggested to show methods in applying the conceptual framework into practice (Figure 5-20). In accordance with the other studies and key concepts in the framework, the applicable measures recommended in the research findings help to provide a structured perspective for preserving and reconstructing place identity in the heritage tourism-led urban renewal in the historical Chinese cities.

The final research objective is to identify recommendations for improved planning and design of public urban spaces to meet the requirements of both local and tourist users within the context of Chinese urban cities undergoing urban renewal. Therefore, the recommended applicable measures could help both academics and practitioners understand, identify, and assess the local history and culture characteristics in preserving and reconstructing local identity in different stages of the heritage tourism-led urban renewal.

First, the methodology of obtaining concepts and findings could help to understand the research background of other cases with similar contexts. In addition to the design of methodological approaches, the conceptual framework and applicable measures could provide a tool to assist

practitioners and academics in identifying the key factors before the implementation of urban renewal in the historical Chinese context.

Second, the relationship between studies of both Western and Chinese theories, concepts developed in the research findings and recommended applicable measures offers a structured framework for assessing values of different elements in other Chinese historical cities. Moreover, the assessment of relevant applicable measures could provide indicators for evaluating the historical places and tourism destinations that have been fully or partially regenerated.

Primary aspects	Concepts developed in research findings	Interpretation of the conceptual framework in Datong
Integration of façade design and active frontage	Delivering the sense of unity and diversity	Filtering and innovating iconic elements in delivering the visual order of unity. Personalisation of street frontage + old and new commercial premises and functional venues along the street.
	Active street frontage – places for social interaction	Preserving the historical context expressed in the diverse horizontal grain. Permeability of street frontage + design of pedestrian routes.
	Street furniture acts as iconic and indexical characters	Selecting symbolic characters from authentic objects and iconic landmarks. Restoring and renovating characteristic places and cultural venues.
Preservation and reconstruction of different scaled urban spaces	Developing ‘fourth places’ for social interaction	Preserving and restoring old gathering and meeting places for locals and tourists to conduct social and leisure activities. Designing street spaces as ‘fourth places’ – pocket spaces, street corners, and places with shelters and resting facilities.
	Reconstructing characteristic quarters and routes	Using iconic landmarks as the key (architectural styles, building heights, and meanings in collective memories) to zoning the urban area. Designing quarters and routes in conjunction with cultural heritage, the old urban form, and the original city layout.
The kinaesthetic experience	Integration of old and new street vistas	Strengthening the sense of place by integrating street vista and building heights. Preserving the old street scale and the original sense of enclosure.
	Creating the sense of exploring and gathering	Preserving old street vistas by integrating street spaces, characteristic places, and socio-cultural venues. Improving pedestrians’ emotions by creating people attractors for both locals and tourists.

Primary aspects	Concepts developed in research findings	Interpretation of the conceptual framework in Datong
Users' activity preferences and urban built environment	Social and leisure activities and the quality of public spaces	Restoring and creating important and pleasure places in the collective memory of local people. Creating the ambience and atmosphere of specific places formed by traditional and cultural activities.
	Designing places for participant and observer	Considering people-watching as a way of Interacting the physical setting with different users' activities. People-watching and participating in socio-cultural activities contribute to enhancing the knowledgeability of place for locals and tourists.
	The lively night environment and night-time activities	Integrating open-air, semi-open, and indoor public spaces to form a vibrant night environment for cold weather in autumn and winter. Commercial and entertainment areas designed and planned to take into account the nightlife needs of local inhabitants.
Cultural activities and events in forming place identity	Creating 'shared space' and display space	Considering the interaction between locals' activities and visitors' participations as a way of improving different users' experiences. Restoring important cultural facilities and re-designing existing functional and gathering places to form cultural quarters.
	Integrating cultural events into urban development	Innovated cultural events and activities require the well-organised strategy to form the knowledgeability of the city. A structure of multiple levels of cultural activities contributes to managing the event tourism and improving the urban vitality.

Primary aspects	Concepts developed in research findings	Interpretation of the conceptual framework in Datong
Collective memories and the sense of historical process	Forming relationships between old and new urban images	Preserving the old iconic places and memorable buildings for locals to reconstruct the emotional connections with the city. Restoring elements and streetscapes relating to the daily activities to restore the old living scene.
	Preserving and restoring anchor elements in collective memories	Exploring and designing urban reminders as anchor elements to evoke local memories of the place Integrating local visitors' memories of places and tourists' travelling experiences.
	Extracting symbolic elements for the city legibility	Iconicity and indexicality of legible place image help illustrate the authentic and distinctive urban image in the past. Creating visitor attractions linked to the pre-existed knowledge and expectation of the place.
Influential factors of urban legibility and city image	Designing the structure of multiple identities with sense of historical process	Considering the old urban form and the historical development as the basic layer of forming place identity. Designing quarters and routes in accordance with the mental map of different users, including physical settings, social relationships, cultural events, and collective memories.

Figure 5-20 Primary aspects, key concepts, and recommended applicable measures of the developed conceptual framework.

5.5 Summary of research discussion

This chapter set out to discuss and answer the research questions around three issues. The first section discussed and answered how the outcomes from this research reflected and achieved the research aim and how they were developing from the data result and explored the current theory. This section also discusses and emphasis the new contribution and the significance of them in theoretical and practical development in 7 themes, through answer how the outcomes reflected and contributed to these

insufficient fields of theoretical development identified in chapter 2 based on literature review, and it also illustrated the unique contribution of this research.

The second section built the new conceptual framework to integrate seven main new findings and provide a special and holistic understanding of the heritage tourism-led urban regeneration to build the new systematical development of urban cultural regeneration in a fundamental approach. This section discusses the significance of this holistic contribution and illustrates the extended part of the theoretical foundation.

The third section applied the outcomes from this research to the insufficient field of practical issues identified in the literature review and case study and give holistic and evidenced suggestions in 7 aspects—16 concepts—32 factors system for use in 3 application scenarios.

chapter 6 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the whole research and provides recommendations for future work, and two sections are set in this final chapter. The first section aims to offer an overview of the research in aspects of the theoretical framework, the design of methodological approaches, the main research outcomes, and the research limitations. The second section is to provide new scope for the future planning strategy of heritage tourism-led urban renewal.

6.2 Overview of the Research

The research aims to explore how urban history and culture resources are manifest in preserving and reconstructing urban spaces of historical Chinese cities and gaining insight into the heritage tourism-led renewal of the ancient Chinese urban area (and the old townscape) under the context of conservation-led urban renewal. To understand the involvement of urban history and culture in the urban renewal process and to explore the preservation and reconstruction of place identity through interpreting historical and cultural elements, this research is conducted in a study case – heritage tourism-led urban regeneration in the ancient town of Datong, China.

In accordance with the research aim, the thesis has set four research objectives to form the research structure:

1. To gain insight into and understand how historical and cultural resources are integrated with the preservation and reconstruction of historical urban spaces in the context of heritage tourism-led urban renewal in China.
2. To develop a methodological framework for exploring concepts and themes in relation to historical and cultural resources in the context of heritage and tourist-led urban renewal in historical Chinese cities.
3. To examine the interpretation and expressions of historical and cultural resources in preserving and reconstructing urban spaces in the case of the old town of Datong, China, which is a city undergoing heritage and tourist-led urban renewal.
4. To identify recommendations for improved planning and design of public urban spaces to meet the requirements of both local and tourist users within the context of Chinese urban cities undergoing urban renewal.

To achieve the above research objectives, the researchers conducted a series of research procedures as below:

Firstly, the researcher explored the literature review about the concept and relevant theories of place identity, especially the relationship between the formation of place identity, place-making in urban design, and conservation of authenticity. Moreover, concepts and relationships raised from those theories got integrated with the context of Chinese urban renewal, including preserving and reconstructing urban spaces and socio-cultural environment. A structured theoretical framework is generated as the foundation for the design of research methodology and data analysis.

Secondly, the design of research methodology, which is developed from the conceptual framework, is formed by non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of photographs and documents. The methodological approaches were conducted in selected sites of the study case – the ancient town of Datong – to discover different user groups' views and assessments of the ongoing process of urban renewal. Implementation of the framework-based methodology aims to obtain different users' opinions about the value of historical and cultural elements. Moreover, different users' responses illustrated the interpretation of urban history and cultural resources in parallel to the analysis of photographs taken in the non-participant observation.

Thirdly, the literature review results and implementing methodological approaches combine with the responses of elite interviews and analysis of urban planning strategy, which the local government and academic institutes developed for the urban renewal of the ancient town of Datong. The comparison and discussion between daily users and urban experts help deal with the gap between decision-makers and actual users and provide a “bottom-to-up” mode for the heritage tourism-led urban renewal of historical Chinese cities by involving the views and assessments of daily users.

6.2.1 The Summary of Research Methodology

An integrated methodology formed by multiple qualitative approaches was designed and applied to achieve the research objectives. As leading by the conceptual framework developed in the literature review, qualitative approaches of non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of photographs and documents were designed to play crucial roles in exploring the concepts and themes in the study case.

The literature review of the research methodology has contributed to revealing the experiences and theories from the Western context in the first place. The reviewed theories and concepts help deliver the appropriate methodological approaches in exploring the relationship between ideas of place identity (sense of place and authenticity) and place-making in the context of urban design (heritage

tourism-led urban renewal). Therefore, the information and lessons from the Western context form valuable and practical experiences in designing the conceptual framework-based methodology.

There are three main contributions to the method:

- Integration of both literature review and designing methodology provided a structured conceptual framework for developing the research approaches.
- Moreover, data collected through implementing the research methodology could help fulfil the conceptual model for the research aim and objectives.
- The availability and limitations in applying methodological approaches were explored and identified through the practical pilot study and the implementation process stages.

Specifically, each research approach connects and complements the other, together with answering and achieving the aims of the different phases of the study.

Firstly, a literature review, this study establishes a conceptual framework for the embodiment and participation of history and culture in reconstructing place identity in the context of historic Chinese cities, particularly for ancient Chinese towns in tourism-led urban regeneration. The findings of this approach fill a gap in research on participatory and interactive discourse in urban contexts with Chinese history and where the reconstruction and restoration of public spaces - iconic landmarks, squares, pedestrian areas, old markets and street places for hawkers - have focused on meeting the demands of the tourism aspect rather than restoring authentic cultural and social identities. The literature review builds out an effective methodology to connect conceptual frameworks in Western theoretical contexts with specific cases of urban regeneration in China, providing a structured basis for the study and further leading to the design of the research methodology.

The literature review and semi-structured interviews work together to answer the research question:

- How can the factors and values of urban history and cultural resources in designing urban spaces be identified and evaluated to meet different user groups' needs and preferences?

Secondly, semi-structured interviews, this study captures and examines the views and values of different users - local users, tourists, local visitors and policymakers - through semi-structured interviews based on a conceptual framework. Based on the main research questions, the main research methods used in this study are a combination of framework-based synthesis, case studies and integrated qualitative methods. The design of the research methodology needs to provide opportunities for practitioners and academics to interact with different user groups. This interaction between different values can be channelled through the analytical process to refine the theoretical framework. At the same time, on-site users, such as residents, tourists and local visitors, are necessary for the design of a 'bottom-up' research methodology. In this way, the study develops a systematic approach to identifying and assessing the historical and cultural factors that shape place identity,

which is used to explore the representation and interpretation of urban history and culture in reconstructing place identity in the context of urban regeneration in China.

Semi-structured interviews and observation methods work together to answer the following questions.

- How can the opinions from different groups of users be involved in the place-making process contribute to the revival of urban vitality and place image in urban regeneration?
- How can urban history and local culture be successfully manifested in reconstructing and restoring authentic place identity to avoid being homogenised?

Thirdly, this study uses observation to record, summarise and conclude scenes that cannot be described and embodied in verbal communication, combining the framework context provided and iterated by the literature review and semi-structured interviews to provide an in-depth analysis of scenes across history and culture, providing a realistic basis for the historical and cultural positioning of place identity.

In summary, the findings from the literature review, semi-structured interviews and observation are integrated into the achievement of the first three research objectives and the integrated discussion set out to achieve the last research objective. Therefore, integration of literature review and semi-structured interview designed to answer the first research question, and integration of semi-structured interview and observation designed to investigate the last two research questions. The advantage of this research process is a more direct focus on the research aim and objectives in a more comprehensive and solid result.

6.2.2 Summary of the main outcomes

6.2.2.1 Theoretical contribution

To understand the role of local history and urban in preserving and reconstructing place identity of heritage tourism-led urban renewal, the literature review examined the relationship between place identity and place-making in urban design. To generate the necessary knowledge and concepts for conducting the research aim involved exploring relevant concepts in the context of the historical Chinese cities or urban areas, theories and concepts related to designing urban spaces as tourism destinations with historical and cultural resources from the Western context. Moreover, a conceptual framework was generated from such theories with multiple key factors and concepts and then examined and discussed with relevant theories in Chinese urban design and conservation.

The conceptual framework generated from the literature review and its key factors formed the structure for the design of the overall methodological approach, such as providing references for

preparing the semi-structured interview questions for different groups and conducting non-participant observation with photography. Based on the conceptual framework, analysis of the research results obtained and categorised from the data collection were discussed and examined in the discussion chapter.

New findings contributed to developing a new conceptual framework, which has shown significant relationships and development of existing/ past studies. In addition to the contribution to understanding of the involvement and manifestation of local history and culture resources in shaping place identity in the heritage tourism-led urban renewal in the traditional Chinese urban context, the conceptual framework also identified seven key concepts in terms of offering indicators for designing urban spaces in the urban regeneration:

- **Integration of façade design and active frontage** are important components of the visual-aesthetic dimension of urban design and place-making, acting as the design quality of the physical environment, and is the primary attraction for locals and tourists when walking in ancient parts of towns and cities. In this sense, **active frontages and street spaces** need to integrate with expressions of local historical and cultural elements to restore and reconstruct the traditional urban fabric and help improve urban vitality by creating social spaces. Moreover, *street furniture* (public arts, resting facilities, signages, and streetlights) is necessary to form a distinctive streetscape by designing iconic and indexical elements.
- The *linked series of public spaces* with different scales contribute to the formation of the public realm. Therefore, preserving old urban quarters and routes needs to integrate to create more social spaces for different users. Moreover, the tangible cultural heritage act as landmarks should be reconsidered as **critical benchmarks in linking the surrounding areas** and the **‘mental symbol’ in restoring the urban image** instead of preserved as individual heritage.
- In addition to the visual aesthetic order, this research has shown that the **pedestrians are the primary participants** who have the greater scope to observe the environment while moving in the old town, and **mixed streetscapes** with different scales offer visitors and users more opportunities to engage with the streetscape and frontages of public spaces. Furthermore, designing pedestrian routes should also integrate street spaces, street furniture, and socio-cultural venues to encourage interactions between locals and tourists **and improve their emotional experiences**.
- In addition to boosting social and cultural activities for local users, the research indicated that the **design quality of open spaces and resting facilities contributes to improving people’s emotions and preferences in observing or participating in such socially interactive activities**. Moreover, locals conducting their daily activities help encourage people-watching and then **add a sense of place and ambience to the historic urban landscape** for different visitors.

- In terms of creating a lively night environment, specific zones, quarters, and streets with commercial and entertainment functions should focus on **combining cultural venues and surrounding urban spaces**. Moreover, **the open-air, semi-open public spaces should connect the indoor places to create a vibrant streetscape at night**.
- This research has confirmed that cultural events and activities are necessary to improve urban vitality and create lively public spaces. Vitality is therefore formed by **the interaction of both locals and tourists, and characteristics of traditional and renovated cultural activities** help to form a distinctive and successful urban image. In such regards, **the design of the ‘shared space’ and a structure of multiple levels of cultural activities and traditional events** help restore a lively urban image for both locals and tourists.
- The investigation of sense of belonging and place image has shown that important places and socio-cultural activities in locals’ **collective memories help restore and strengthen the emotional bond to the place**. Moreover, **lively urban scenes and knowledgeability of the old town’s past** contribute to forming individual images of the place and preserving the historic urban landscape.
- The research has also shown that the **arrangement of iconic and indexical elements with historical and cultural characteristics** are necessary for expressing and interpreting the distinctive and authentic urban identity as linking to the knowledgeability of the city. Moreover, **a structure of multiple layers of place identities integrating with urban reminders and the mental map**, including physical settings, social relationships, cultural events, and collective memories, are critical in preserving the locals’ memories and improving visitors’ experiences.

The findings of the developed conceptual framework aim to provide concepts and criteria for integrating the role of locals, tourists, and professionals in the urban renewal process. Moreover, the developing process of the conceptual framework and its findings help to provide a theoretical way of exploring the manifestation of local history and cultural resources in preserving and reconstructing the place identity of the Chinese historical urban context undergoing the heritage tourism-led urban regeneration.

6.2.2.2 Practical contribution

In accordance with the research objective - to identify recommendations for improved planning and design of public urban spaces to meet the requirements of both local and tourist users within the context of Chinese urban cities undergoing urban renewal, this research has developed a new conceptual framework with corresponding concepts and measures for understanding history and culture in the heritage tourism-led urban regeneration of Chinese cities. In order to achieve the research aim and objectives, the research was conducted in the case study of the ancient city of Datong as guided by the previous conceptual framework generated from the prior studies of the

Western context. A range of literature was examined to form the fundamental conceptual framework, including place identity and urban design, culture and history in place-making, tourism in the urban regeneration, and social spaces and collective memories. In this regard, this research provides a structured way of understanding each aspect relating to the history and culture in urban regeneration, especially in preserving and reconstructing the traditional Chinese urban spaces.

Furthermore, the conceptual framework and its corresponding concepts and measures developed from this research could provide detailed guidelines for academics and practitioners to explore more potential aspects and concepts focusing on the research and development of other cities. Moreover, the integration of multiple qualitative approaches contribute to triangulating the research aim and objectives, and involvement of elite interviews helps gain a more comprehensive understanding of the situation under investigation, especially when studying politically sensitive areas. Therefore, individual concepts and clusters of factors could be shaped, modified, and refined for different cities with diverse backgrounds but facing similar issues caused by heritage tourism-led urban renewal. In this regard, this research helps to provide a structured perspective for further works with similar backgrounds and targets – to preserve and reconstruct place identity in the heritage tourism-led urban renewal in the historical Chinese cities.

6.2.2.3 The contribution to knowledge

The theoretical contribution of this research provides a systematic and in-depth understanding of the theoretical development of the heritage tourism-led urban regeneration in China. This has been lacking to date in the context of local history and urban efforts to preserve and reconstruct the identity of heritage tourism-led urban regeneration in China. The research provides new knowledge about the relationship between place identity and place creation in urban design within the specific context of heritage tourism-led urban regeneration in China, as in this way contributes to developing knowledge, concepts and theory of tourism-led urban regeneration largely produced in a Western context. This western-oriented literature is analyzed in relation to the integration and preservation of Chinese historical and cultural resources and the perception of people in a specific cultural and historical context to propose a new comprehensive framework for the extension of the theory in line with Chinese characteristics. The study also extends the depth of the theoretical junction of the original triadic theory of multi-focal integration and methodologically explores relevant measures and refines a set of indicators for evaluating this particular urban context. The study results combine top-down theoretical with bottom-up multi-group perception extraction and comparison to build a comprehensive and reliable theoretical extension that provides strong support and guidance for the future regeneration of China's historical and cultural cities for tourism purposes. The research provides an important theoretical basis for further quantitative exploration of the degree and mechanism of influence on heritage tourism-led urban regeneration in China and future efforts in

cultural revival, with recommendations about how this might be addressed. It also provides an important theoretical basis for further exploration of the extent and mechanisms of the impact of heritage tourism-led urban regeneration in China. This theoretical contribution can be used not only in China's historic cities but also in East Asia, where similar cultural and historical backgrounds exist, to provide ideas and theoretical support for urban regeneration.

The practical contribution of this research is very important, especially at a time when China is strengthening its internal visitor economy and enhancing its cultural and tourism industry. An effective and systematic approach with comprehensive considerations can provide guidance for the development of new historical and cultural cities, while avoiding the destruction of resources or over-development that can lead to a decline in the sense of place and belonging of local residents and the 'gentrification' of urban regeneration. Thus, the contribution of this research in practice provides a comprehensive and effective approach to the integration of multiple group perspectives as a means of providing guidance in heritage tourism-led urban regeneration in China through an approach of synthesis to help enhance the role of cultural and historical values in urban regeneration

6.2.3 Limitations of research

The research methodology includes framework-based synthesis, case study, and integrated qualitative approaches as triangulation in data analysis. The framework-based synthesis is conducted to analyse the coded data, which was primarily guided by a conceptual framework to categorise them into groups of aspects and themes. The limitation of this synthesis is that all the data were collected following the themes generated in the conceptual framework, which may result in the type and characteristic of data collected being limited by a pre-designed conceptual framework. In addition, research methods underpinned by qualitative approaches may be limited by the relatively small amount of data compared with the quantitative approach. In such a context, the methodology also employed triangulation, formed by multiple approaches including semi-structured interviews of different user groups, non-participant observations, and document analysis, to ensure the diversity and robustness of collected data. Furthermore, the case study helps the integrated qualitative approaches conducted in the targeted research area obtain accurate results. Therefore, while there were limitations with the research design employed, it helped determine the research aim and objectives with different points and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the cases study under investigation.

In detail, the methodology of this research encounters three types of limitations: limitations of research time and adequacy of data; limitations of the research instruments; and limitations of the application of the research outcomes.

6.2.3.1 The limitations around research time and data

Due to the limitation of research time when conducting a PhD, the research focused on one old town and urban centre (Datong) only, within which different sites were selected. As the research explores the usage pattern and views of different user groups in relation to the design of urban spaces after preservation and reconstruction, implementing the research methodology in the onsite investigation required non-participant observation and the use of photos, and on-site semi-structured interviews of locals and tourists, all of which have their own limitations as methods (e.g. difficulties in recruiting participants as outlined in Chapter 3). In addition to the time spent observing and taking photos in different sites, the semi-structured interviews were conducted while the author was roaming in each research site were time-consuming and may have encroached on the time and experience of the visiting tourists (particularly those on tight schedules). Therefore, the number of people interviewed in this research was limited by the time schedule and the number of people willing to participate, and this may have affected the adequacy of the data collected from observations and semi-interviews.

To mitigate the limitation of both time and adequacy, the researcher used photographs to record illustrative and descriptive events through non-participant observation and arranged multiple interview groups – onsite locals, onsite tourists, offsite locals, and urban experts – to get diverse responses for achieving the research objectives. Moreover, key factors to observe and the purposeful interview questions developed from conceptual framework synthesis help provide clear criteria and structure for recording influential events and understanding the interviewees' views, assessments, and insights.

Although the research only focused on one case study, methodological approaches synthesised with the conceptual framework help form a structured process of implementing methodology and obtaining data for other targeted places with the same background and context of heritage tourism-led urban renewal. Had the research focused on multiple case studies, this would have allowed for comparison (e.g. if the case studies were in different parts of the country or if they were in cities at different stages of regeneration). This does point to the scope for further research (discussed in 6.3).

6.2.3.2 The limitations of the research instruments

As mentioned in the research methodology chapter, there were challenges and issues in implementing multiple approaches in this research, such as observer bias, the time-consuming nature of implementing semi-structured interviews, and issues of identifications in the thematic analysis. To reduce the limitations of different research approaches, the research approaches were tested through the pilot study, which helps test the interview questions and ensure a desirable and efficient interviewing process before implementing the formal data collecting process of the research. After

refining and modifying the research approaches through the pilot study, the researcher then applied the integrated methodology to obtain accurate data, and the analysis of research data was processed through NVivo software to ensure adequacy.

Although Nvivo software has preserved the objective analysis and integrity of the data as clearly and completely as possible, there are some limitations, such as the need to identify and categorise the data through manual review by the researcher, which, although more accurate and logical and innovative in the coding process, is labour-intensive and time-consuming. If the number of interviewees is to be expanded in the future, the amount of data generated will be enormous, and the analysis work will increase exponentially. In the current era of digitalisation and rapid development of artificial intelligence, improving the recognition of basic data is an important way to break the limitations of this tool, but how to carry out an orderly and effective recognition through machine learning based on rooting theory is still a problem that needs to be solved. Therefore, this study has provided a mature and effective technical route for future research to be set, so it is one of the data recognition loops.

6.2.3.3 The limitation of the application of the research outcomes

The findings of this study can be directed, evaluated and recreated in terms of overall and distributed specific aspects for integrated guidance and special enhancement. However, the limitations of the application of the research results arguably exist mainly in the regional cultural and spatio-temporal context. As the spatio-temporal context of the case study is clear, the theoretical results obtained are also specifically directed, and further verification based on quantitative analysis may be needed to determine whether they have a general realistic connection. The exploratory and abstract nature of the qualitative analysis opens up the extension of existing theories, while the theoretical models explored in this way provide the theoretical basis and ideas for the quantitative analysis, and the science gradually moves forward in this iteration of exploration and verification.

6.3 The scope for future research

The scope for future research has three fields: multi-cases selection, multi-technologies selections, and diversity of participants to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the heritage tourism-led urban regeneration theories. Moreover, the findings now provide a new, more comprehensive and in-depth direction and guidance for future quantitative research.

6.3.1 Future focus on multiple case studies

In this research, the exploration and assessment of involving historical and cultural elements in shaping place identity of urban regeneration were only carried out in one case study – the ancient town/urban centre of Datong. A wide range of Chinese cities in heritage conservation and tourism-led urban renewal could be selected to conduct the research based on the developed methodology in the future study. The first stage might include historical towns, cities, and urban areas with similar historical, cultural, geographical, and morphological backgrounds and characters. This might include the comparative analysis of the historic urban centre of Xi'an, the ancient town of Pingyao, and the historical streets and districts of Beijing, as those targets could show better compatibility with the research methodology. The next stage could move on to the historical urban context of cities and towns in southern China, such as Suzhou, Lijiang, Fuzhou and others. Targets with different morphological characters and cultural contexts could provide information and data in different aspects, contributing to developing and refining a comprehensive research methodology. Moreover, applying the research methodology in multiple sites with different environmental conditions could also form a cross-case analysis, in which the results would be compared and integrated to improve the validity and adequacy.

6.3.2 Future Research Methodology: integrating multiple models

Multiple qualitative approaches form the research methodology framework, and the conceptual framework-based synthesis was employed to construct the thematic analysis. Although the methodology provided a combination of qualitative research methods and repetition/frequency of certain elements, future research could employ quantitative methods to assess the value of each factor, which were formed in the qualitative methodological framework. Furthermore, other intermediate methods and models, such as Space Syntax, GIS, VR, AR, and 3D technologies, could help to visually interpret the historical and cultural elements on the map of the different research areas.

- Theoretical and practical models like Space Syntax could provide a more detailed and smart way to record different groups of users when walking in the urban spaces, and the tracking of users' movements could integrate with the design quality of the built environment and arrangement of cultural activities.
- GIS and 3D methods could use to comprehend the data resources and integrate the landscape visualisation models with the design of urban spaces and planning strategy of preserved or reconstructed areas and precincts. Moreover, such methods could contribute to the formation of mapping models as integrating with the Space Syntax model.

- As one of the latest research methods of visualisation, Virtual Reality (VR) could help obtain direct information by simulating research objects in relation to heritage conservation, such as visual comparison of built heritage and old landmarks before and after being preserved and reconstructed in the aspect of the built form and architectural appearance. In this regard, future research could collect detailed views and assessments of preserving and innovating history and culture in the urban renewal context.

Due to the limitation of qualitative approaches, the employment of other intermediate methods could help to enhance the research findings and provide a variety of ways to measure the concepts and themes relating to the research focus and objectives.

6.3.3 Enhancing Research Participant Sampling and diversity of groups

As multiple qualitative approaches form the research methodology framework, the semi-structured interviews include 75 laypeople and 12 urban experts. Three groups were designated in the laypeople interviews: onsite locals, onsite tourists, and offsite locals. The overall number of the interview was set in accordance with the discussion of sample size and the analysis of the case study from literature review of social science research. To improve the research methodology's adequacy and validity, future research could employ a larger sample size and more groups of participants.

The arrangement of four interviewee groups helps to provide a diversified sampling population and capture the majority of data in relation to views, assessments, memories, and experiences, which were formed by different users conducting activities and interacting with the preserved and reconstructed urban spaces. Moreover, interviews of urban experts and professionals were examined as integrating with the planning strategy of urban renewal, which provides academic opinions for the research and comprehends the research results. However, future research could employ a large sampling size and groups with detailed criteria – occupation, educational background, range of activities in the city – to provide diverse participant samplings.

6.3.4 Expanding the quantitative relationship of theoretical research

The theoretical extensions obtained through the qualitative approach in this study can be used as a theoretical basis and theoretical guide in subsequent studies to deepen them in a quantitative manner. For example, the weighting of the indicators applied to the assessment of this holistic framework, and the extent to which the different aspects of the new framework have a greater impact on the psychological and perceptual aspects of residents' and local visitors' mental health, sense of belonging, place attachment, etc., could be verified and measured by means of data calculations.

The wide scope of this thesis for future research is clear. The present study clearly provides a new and more comprehensive, and in-depth examination of heritage tourism-led urban regeneration in China, which makes a contribution to knowledge and paves the way for extensive future research.

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Appendixes

Appendix A. Interview questions for professionals and urban experts

1. Planning policies and strategies:

Within the context of culture and tourism-oriented urban regeneration in historical city areas, what are the relevant planning strategies and research methods? What is your opinion of the implementation of strategies and policies as part of the process of urban regeneration in the ancient city centre of Datong?

2. Planning and design of public open spaces:

What is your opinion of the condition and quality of public spaces after being preserved and reconstructed during the urban regeneration process? From your perspective, are there any unresolved issues in the redesigned public spaces? If so, what are they, and how would you suggest dealing with them?

3. Historical buildings and iconic landmarks:

What is your opinion of the condition of old buildings and their spatial relationships with surrounding areas? How do you assess the values and influences of 'authentic' built form and architectural distinctiveness of built heritage, buildings, and landmarks in urban regeneration?

4. Places designed for tourists or locals:

What is your opinion of how well the redesigned and reconstructed public space will meet visitors and locals' needs? What elements or features do you think would help meet various users' needs and enhance the interaction between them?

5. City image and urban legibility:

From your perspective, what historical and cultural elements do you think contribute to the preservation and reconstruction of city image and impression? How do you think these elements should be expressed in order to meet the official definition of urban identity – 'a cultural tourism destination'?

Appendix B. On-site and Off-site Interview questions

Built Environment and Physical Settings:

1. *First impression or overall evaluation* – How would you describe this place to others who have never been here before?
2. *Built form and architectural distinctiveness* – How would you evaluate the built heritage and landmarks in this place (or the ancient urban centre)? How do you think of the spatial relationship between buildings and their surroundings?
3. *Façade design and active frontages* – How do you think of the commercial pedestrians after the urban regeneration project? Do you think there is any way to combine elegant facades and active frontages?
4. *Environmental improvement of streets and squares* – How do you think of the design of signages, streetlights, and street furniture (benches, sculptures, public art, etc.) on this street and the others (or streets in the city centre)? How do you think their roles in forming streetscape?
5. *Linage series of public spaces* – Do you prefer public spaces with large and open scale (squares and streets), or small and private scale (lanes and corners)? How do you think public spaces with different scales should connect with each other in this ancient city centre?
6. *Street vista and building silhouette* – Do you prefer the horizontal view of the streets or a vertical design of buildings? How do you think of the architectural height, building outline, and skyline in the ancient city centre?
7. *The design quality of travelling route* – What travelling route you have chosen (or would you chose) to take in the ancient city centre? How do you think the design and access of such routes should be?

Cultural events, festivals, and activities:

1. *Types of activities and quality of public spaces* – What is your reason for coming here (going to the ancient city centre) and enjoying your time? How do you think the quality of the built environment and architectural style would affect your activities?
2. *Traditional performances and cultural events* – How do you think of traditional shows, folk performances, and cultural events in the ancient city centre? How do you think these activities should provide better experiences?
3. *Active and passive engagement* – When you visit this place (or go to the urban centre), do you prefer watching others, or do you wish to participate in any kind of activities?
4. *Night-Time Economy* – How do you think a lively night environment means to the city centre? In your thought, what elements should be considered in creating a successful night-time economy?

5. *Characteristic features and people attractors* – What characteristic features and elements could attract people come to the ancient city centre? How would such elements help to improve people’s experiences when conducting or participating in diverse activities?

Meaning, memory, and place image:

1. *Old city image and memorable elements* – What is your image of the old city centre before the urban regeneration? In order to recall memories (or improve travelling experience), what original or authentic elements do you think should get preserved or recovered?
2. *Sense of belonging* – Do you think the ancient urban centre after the urban regeneration could give you (or local residents) a sense of belonging? What elements do you think could help to strengthen the sense for locals (or preserve the sense for visitors)?
3. *Sense of history and progress* – How do you think of the presence and recovery of urban historical elements and progress in this city (such as historical events, iconic landmarks, historical figures, etc.)? What elements do you think could help to bring back your memory (or you wish to improve your travelling experience) in the ancient city centre?
4. *Area identity and symbol* – how do you think this place's overall design style and built form (or the ancient city centre) compare with other city’s old urban areas? What elements or factors do you think could act as iconic symbols to attract people?
5. *Influential elements for the place image* – If you could change or choose any element to improve the image of the ancient city centre, what would you like to do?

Appendix C. Consent form and information level for survey



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Title of Research Project: The socio-cultural values in Chinese historic urban space under culture-led regeneration – a case study of Datong, China.

Name of Researcher: Hao Lei (雷浩)

Department of Landscape, University of Sheffield

Participant Identification Number for this project: Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet/letter (delete as applicable) dated *[insert date]* explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. *Insert contact number here of lead researcher/member of research team (as appropriate).*

3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential (only if true). I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.

4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in the research thesis, And I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future publications and presentations relating to this research.

5. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

(or legal representative)

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

(if different from lead researcher)

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies:

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am a PhD student in Department of Landscape in University of Sheffield in UK.

You are invited to take part in a study exploring **the historical and cultural values in Chinese historic urban space under culture-led regeneration.** The aim of the study is **to find out how socio-cultural aspects are manifest in public spaces within the culture-driven urban regeneration process of Chinese historic urban context.** Questions will be asked about your perceptions towards social and cultural activity as using urban public spaces under the regeneration project.

Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and you are under no obligation to take part in this study. You are free to withdraw at any point if you wish. All data collected will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

There are no trick questions in this interview! There are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your opinions on the sense of place in this historic part of the city.

Your name and any identifying characteristics will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous and will not be made available to anyone, other than my research supervisor and me. All data will be destroyed after my project has completed by the end of 2019.

If you have any questions you may contact me on (Tel:+44 7706262923; Tel: +86 18614024324; Email: hlei2@sheffield.ac.uk or 514838605@qq.com)

Researcher: Hao Lei

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Department of Landscape

University of Sheffield

Supervisor: Dr. Nicola Dempsey, BA PhD

Email: n.dempsey@sheffield.ac.uk

Phone: +44 (0) 114 222 0616

Department of Landscape

University of Sheffield

Participant Signature:

Appendix D. Approval letter of research survey



Downloaded: 10/08/2021
Approved: 14/02/2018

Hao Lei
Registration number: 140281363
Landscape
Programme: Research data collection

Dear Hao

PROJECT TITLE: The socio-cultural values in Chinese historic urban space under culture-led regeneration
APPLICATION: Reference Number 013557

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 14/02/2018 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 013557 (form submission date: 08/12/2017); (expected project end date: 31/10/2017).
- Participant information sheet 1029060 version 3 (08/12/2017).
- Participant consent form 1029061 version 4 (08/12/2017).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

See above but particularly the fact that the information sheet still does not say HOW the data will be used.

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Helen Woolley
Ethics Administrator
Landscape

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

- The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/approval-procedure>
- The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.671066!/file/GRIPPpolicy.pdf
- The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Administrator (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.
- The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.
- The researcher is responsible for effectively managing the data collected both during and after the end of the project in line with best practice, and any relevant legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements.