Transforming inner-city station areas in China: Shaping vibrant urban places in Chinese Inner-city Station Areas

Keywords: inner-city station areas, spatial performance, station area redevelopment in China, integrated strategy

Architecture Department (Complex Project)

Area of Research: Urbanism

Research Summary: Cities in China are embarked on ambitions plans to create renewed inner-city station areas, particularly evident after a series of redevelopment projects; these projects mainly focus on the development of transport infrastructures, rather than turning station areas into vibrant urban space. Therefore, a general lack of citizen’s daily activities have turned these areas into urban ‘enclaves’, which are merely transport nodes with interior spaces only used by travelers, rather enclosed and segregated from their surroundings. This problematic asks for physical and spatial solutions to alleviate isolation phenomenon around inner-city station areas, especially for future redevelopment projects. This research aims to provide an explanation, through an analytical process, how some particular nodes accommodate urban life and act as urban places via providing attractive environment, and to propose suggestions to Chinese problematic cases which are isolated from urban space. Selected cases in this thesis are several referential inner-city station areas in Europe and Asian cities in terms of function as vibrant urban space, as well as Tianjin station and Beijing West station surroundings in China, which are representative in terms of architectural, urban and social significance in China.

Research Methodology: The main investigation is particularly concerned with assessing what spatial factors improve urban vitality in inner-city station areas. A combination of morphologic, spatial and functional analysis is used to examine how the station complexes are spatially embedded in its surrounding area, and how station area play an active role as urban public life hub within the larger scale urban grid.

Main Question: What spatial configuration can ameliorate urban isolation and turn inner-city station areas into both effective multimodal transport hubs and urban life centers within Chinese urban contexts?

Key Publications:

Inner-city station areas in Chinese cities Paper presented on COMPOSITE CITIES EUROPEAN

Deliverables: To provide design guidelines towards integrated inner-city station areas in terms of functional setting, spatial linkage and scale control.

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SHAPING VIBRANT URBAN PLACES IN CHINESE INNER-CITY STATION AREAS: A CASE STUDY OF BEIJING WEST STATION AREA Paper will be presented on 48th International Conference of the Architectural Science Association 10-13 December, 2014 Genoa, Italy (Forthcoming)