

Title: The 4th International Conference on Brownfields Regeneration & Ecological Restoration was Successfully Held in Hangzhou, China

Author: Xiaodi Zheng, Tsinghua University, the Deputy-Secretary General and Delegate of the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture (CHSLA)

Organizing Committee of the 4th International Conference on Brownfield Regeneration and Ecological Restoration, 2023

From December 1st to 3rd, 2023, the 4th International Conference on Brownfield Regeneration and Ecological Restoration was successfully held in Hangzhou, China. It is co-organized by the Center for Brownfields Research at the School of Architecture at Tsinghua University, the School of Architecture at China Academy of Art, and the Chinese Academy of Environmental Planning. The event is supported by the Chinese Steering Committee of Landscape Architecture Education under the Ministry of Education, the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture (CHSLA), and the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA).

Special thanks go to IFLA. As part of the celebrations for the 75th anniversary of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), the conference featured a keynote address by IFLA President Bruno Marques and a comprehensive report presented by IFLA-APR (Asia-Pacific Region) President Chris Tidswell.



Brownfield issues have increasingly garnered national attention as critical environmental concerns in recent years. As urbanization continues to accelerate, the management and redevelopment of brownfields have become essential components of sustainable development strategies. The conference is hosted by the Department of Landscape Architecture at the School of Architecture, China Academy of Art, and co-hosted by the Department of Landscape Architecture at the School of Architecture, Tsinghua University; the Critical Landscape Design Lab at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University; the School of Architecture and Design at the Beijing Jiaotong University; and the Key Laboratory of Eco-Planning and Green Building (Tsinghua University) under the Ministry of Education.

Co-chairs of the conference are Associate Professor ZHENG Xiaodi at the School of Architecture in Tsinghua University who is also the Assistant Dean and vice chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture; Director of the Center for Brownfields Research at the School of Architecture, Tsinghua University; Secretary General of the Higher Education Landscape Architecture Professional Teaching and Guidance Sub-Committee; and Deputy Secretary General of the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture (CHSLA); and Professor Nail Kirkwood from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University, holding positions as Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Technology, who also serves as the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs; Co-Director and Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Technology Platform, and Co-Director of the Brownfield Research Center at the School of Architecture, Tsinghua University.



Co-chairs of the 4th International Conference on
Brownfield Regeneration and Ecological Restoration, 2023
(Left: ZHENG Xiaodi; Right: Niall Kirkwood)

The conference, themed "Looking Forward: Brownfields 2035," featured a comprehensive agenda including a main conference forum, brownfield design studio review, junior scholar forum, and brownfield projects tours. It aimed to create a collaborative platform for both domestic and international experts and enthusiasts in the brownfield sector, fostering exchange and shared learning in brownfield restoration and regeneration. The conference focused on a global perspective, theoretical frontiers, and practical experiences. It invited experts and scholars from around the world to share advancements in brownfield governance and redevelopment. The event aimed to promote the exchange and collision of multi-disciplinary theories and technical methods and to provide references and guidance for exploring brownfield regeneration pathways that align with China's ecological civilization strategy.

The conference's supporting media include "Chinese Landscape Architecture," "Landscape Architecture," "Landscape Architecture Academic Journal," and "Landscape Architecture Frontiers Journal," and it is funded by the National Key Research and Development Project (Project number: 2020YFC1807505), and the Program of Art of National Social Science Fund of China, 2020 (Project number: 20BG139). **We extend our gratitude for this support!**



Group Photo of the 4th International Conference on
Brownfield Regeneration and Ecological Restoration, 2023



Conference Venue at the Xiangshan Campus of the

China Academy of Art in Hangzhou

1 Main Conference Forum

On December 2nd, 2023, the main conference forum of the 4th International Conference on Brownfield Regeneration and Ecological Restoration was successfully held at the Xiangshan Campus of the China Academy of Art. The opening ceremony was moderated by Professor ZHENG Xiaodi. Welcome address speakers include Professor WANG Shu, the Dean of the School of Architecture at the China Academy of Art, Mrs. ZHAO Yanan, the Director of the Garden and Greening Department within the Department of Urban Construction at the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, Mr. Bruno Marques, the President of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), Mr. ZHU Xiangming, the Vice Chairman of the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture, Professor YANG Rui, who is the Chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the School of Architecture, Tsinghua University, and also serves as the Chairman of the Higher Education Landscape Architecture Professional Teaching and Guidance Sub-Committee under the Ministry of Education, and Mr. HE Jun, the Vice President of the Chinese Academy of Environmental Planning, who all delivered speeches in the order mentioned.

The conference was structured into three distinct sections. The first section offered **a global perspective, sharing hot topics, academic research trends, and ecological restoration projects in the field of brownfields from around the world. This segment was marked by its cutting-edge scope and international breadth.** In the second section, invited speakers **presented topics such as the role of landscape architects in brownfield management and redevelopment, planning and design concepts, brownfield restoration methods, regional revitalization, environmental restoration, and related advanced theories, drawing on their representative practical experiences and professional research.** The third section featured **speakers from government sectors, design firms, construction companies, and universities, who shared their perspectives on the challenges and difficulties encountered in brownfield practice and research, as well as the progress, outcomes, and challenges in the field of education.**

The closing ceremony was moderated by Associate Professor ZENG Ying, the Vice Dean of the School of Architecture at the China Academy of Art. Associate Professor ZHENG Xiaodi, the co-chair of the conference, recapped the inspiring talks during the whole day conference and extended thanks to all participants. She emphasized the critical role of brownfield regeneration in China's pursuit of ecological civilization, highlighting the need for holistic solutions that address policy, technical support, and stakeholder balance due to the complexity of brownfield issues. In her concluding remarks, Professor ZHENG expressed a strong hope for the future of brownfield regeneration education, advocating for its inclusion throughout the pedagogical curriculum, including undergraduate studies, to better equip students for the increasingly complex environmental challenges. With these insights, the 4th International Conference on Brownfield Regeneration and Ecological Restoration in 2023 concluded its main conference forum successfully.



During the Conference



Main Conference Forum Video

2 Brownfield Design Studio Review

The conference included a dedicated "Teaching Seminar" segment, aligned with the main theme of the event, aimed at providing a platform for showcasing and exchanging pedagogical ideas in the field of brownfield regeneration.

On the morning of December 1st, 2023, this teaching seminar was successfully held at the first-floor exhibition hall of Building 12, School of Architecture, Xiangshan Campus, China Academy of Art. The design studio focused on the "Wenzhou Cangnan Fanshan Landscape Planning and Design" international workshop, which addressed the transformation of post-industrial landscape areas in and around Fanshan/Wenzhou. The primary goal is to develop a public regional landscape park and a central city park. These parks are envisioned to repurpose the structures of currently unused production facilities, such as mines, furnaces, halls, workshops, storage areas, rail systems, canals, administrative buildings, settlements, and the surrounding flora and fauna. The aim is to integrate these areas into (industrial) tourism while simultaneously creating special, attractive, and accessible recreational spaces for the city's residents. This project calls for innovative landscape architectural and urban planning strategies and design concepts to achieve these objectives.



Site Photos



Student Drawings

The instructors for the workshop include Mr. Tilman Latz, the Partner and Design Director of the LATZ+PARTNER in Germany, Associate Professor ZENG Ying from the School of Architecture at the China Academy of Art, and Mr. XU Xing, the design critic of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the China Academy of Art. The review critics include Professor Niall Kirkwood, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University, Associate Professor ZHENG Xiaodi from the School of Architecture at Tsinghua University, and Professors SHAO Jian and KANG Yin from the School of Architecture Art at the China Academy of Art, along with other faculty members from the Department of Landscape Architecture.



During the review

3 Junior Scholar Forum

On the afternoon of December 1st, 2023, the Junior Scholar Forum was successfully held at the Xiangshan Campus of the China Academy of Art. It aimed to provide a platform for young scholars and designers in the field of brownfield regeneration to showcase and exchange ideas, encouraging innovative perspectives within the landscape architecture domain.

The Junior Scholar Forum consisted of four sections, including "Urban and Rural Brownfield Reflections," which extended the focus beyond urban areas to include rural perspectives; "Industrial Brownfields: Space and Perception," concentrating on how to characterize industrial brownfields, assess their spatial value, and understand human perceptions within these spaces; "Brownfield Land Use and Potential Assessment"; and "Plant Communities and Ecological Restoration." Each section provides an opportunity for junior academicians and professionals to delve into specific aspects of brownfield regeneration and contribute fresh insights to the field.

At the beginning of the forum, as a special guest of the Junior Scholar Forum, Dr. Piet Seuntjens, a researcher at VITO and a visiting professor at Ghent University and the University of Antwerp in Belgium, delivered a keynote lecture titled "Sustainable Remediation and Reuse of Contaminated Sites.

At the conclusion of the forum, following a live vote by the three commenting guests and over 90 delegates in attendance, Dr. WEI Fang and Mr. Sun Yihao were respectively honored with the "Outstanding Young Scholar in Brownfield" and "Most Popular Young Scholar in Brownfield" awards. Other speakers received the "Excellent Young Scholar in Brownfield" award. The three commenting guests presented the awards to the young scholars who spoke at the forum and extended their warm congratulations.



Junior Scholar Forum Venue



Studio Review and Junior Scholar Forum Video

4 Brownfield Projects Tours

The conference featured a special segment for brownfield site visits, comprising two distinct routes. One led to the Grand Canal Hanggang Steel Factory Park, and the other to the rural brownfield site in Songxi Village, Baima Town, Pujiang County. Both visits were successfully carried out on December 3rd.

The visit to the Grand Canal Hanggang Park was led by Associate Professor Zheng Xiaodi, School of Architecture, Tsinghua University; and Professor Niall Kirkwood, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University. The group was warmly welcomed by Mr. Shi Weidong, Assistant Director, Soil and Water Treatment Center, Hangzhou Commerce & Tourism Group (City Canal Group), and Mr. Zhang Dading, Marketing Director, Center International Environmental Technology Co., Ltd. The delegation explored the construction site of Hanggang Park, gaining direct insight into the brownfield area, its management progress, and engaged in in-depth discussions with the team from Hangzhou Commerce & Tourism Group.



Hanggang Steel Factory Site Visit Group Photo



Hanggang Steel Factory Site Visit Video

The rural brownfield site visit in Songxi Village, Baima Town, Pujiang County, was led by Associate Professor Zeng Ying, School of Architecture, China Academy of Art. The group was hosted by Mr. Xu Junjie, a local expert from Songxi Village. This visit provided the delegation with an opportunity to understand the long-standing exploration of harmonious coexistence between humans and brownfields. It highlighted how local wisdom in water and soil management can be used to live in harmony with the natural environment while utilizing its resources. Songxi Village serves as a prime example of this symbiotic relationship between people and brownfields.



Rural Brownfield Site Visit Group Photo



Rural Brownfield Site Visit Video

In Summary, the 4th International Conference on Brownfields Regeneration & Ecological Restoration accommodated over 200 attendees in person, with related online content reaching nearly 15,000 views, garnering widespread attention, and generating enthusiastic academic responses. Following a successful series of events held respectively in 2016, 2018, and 2021, this year's conference marked the first post-pandemic offline gathering, allowing domestic and international guests to meet, engage in meaningful discussions, and exchange ideas. It was a fascinating and significant academic feast in the field of brownfield regeneration. **Under the theme "Looking Forward: Brownfields 2035," the conference fostered hopes for future collaboration among various sectors, and united efforts to create a healthier and more beautiful earth for all.**

5 Highlights of Past Brownfield Conferences

Since its inception, the International Conference on Brownfield Regeneration and Ecological Restoration has been successfully held three times respectively in 2016, 2018, and 2021. Each conference focused on themes relevant to the evolving discourse in brownfield regeneration. The themes were "Brownfield Regeneration and Healthy Cities," "Sustainable Brownfield Remediation and Site Design to Advance the Livable Urban Landscape," and "Multidimensional, Collaborative, Innovative," respectively. These conferences received active responses and support from experts and scholars across various fields, providing an international platform for cross-departmental and interdisciplinary collaboration in brownfield regeneration.

The first conference included five keynote speeches and five forums, covering topics including policy and regulation, cooperative win-win strategies, design and technology, ecological restoration, and international experiences and exchanges. The invited speakers comprised experts in landscape architecture and environmental engineering restoration from both domestic and international spheres, along with leaders from related enterprises, scholars from universities worldwide, and officials from government and environmental protection departments. Over 200 attendees from various fields and countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Israel, and others, engaged in in-depth discussions and analyses of the conference topics. They shared their perspectives on interdisciplinary collaboration, public participation, and pressing issues like health in China. We are especially grateful to Mrs. Kathryn Moore, then President of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) and Professor at Birmingham City University in the UK, for attending and presenting at the conference. At the end of the event, the executive chair of the conference, Professor ZHENG Xiaodi, read the "2016 Declaration on Brownfield Regeneration and Ecological Restoration," which was unanimously endorsed by all attendees.



2016 Group Photo of Attendees at the 1st International Conference on

Brownfields Regeneration and Ecological Restoration

The second Brownfield Conference, held as a sub-event of the 2nd China Sustainable Environmental Restoration Conference, closely aligned with the main conference's theme of "A New Era for Sustainable Environmental Restoration." It focused on fostering effective collaboration between environmental restoration and landscape construction. The conference was attended by over 140 attendees from academic and professional realms both within China and internationally. Thirteen

invited speakers delivered academic presentations and participated in two round-table discussions. The speakers included experts in landscape architecture and environmental engineering restoration, leaders of related enterprises, and scholars from universities both in China and abroad. The guests and attendees engaged in in-depth discussions and analyses around two main topics: interdisciplinary collaboration and future trends. They also shared their perspectives on how to better address the challenges of sustainable development and the construction of ecological civilization.



2018 Group Photo of Attendees at the 2nd International Conference on Brownfields Regeneration and Ecological Restoration

The third Brownfield Conference was themed "Multidimensional, Collaborative, and Innovative." It featured three main sessions, including international perspectives, theoretical frontiers, and practical experiences, aiming to establish a platform for exchange among professionals, scholars, and enthusiasts in the field of brownfield regeneration and restoration, both domestically and internationally. For the first time, the conference included a special Junior Scholar Forum, designated to showcase and facilitate the exchange of cutting-edge research and design achievements by young scholars and designers in the brownfield sector.

The conference attracted over 160 attendees in person, and related online content garnered more than 20,000 views, indicating widespread interest from various sectors, and generating a strong academic influence. This enthusiastic engagement underscored the conference's success in fostering dialogue and sharing insights on brownfield regeneration across the globe.



**2021 Group Photo of Attendees at the 3rd International Conference on
Brownfields Regeneration and Ecological Restoration**

Note: Unless specifically noted, all images are provided by the Organizing Committee.