

COLLOQUIUM BY DONIA ZHANG

COURTYARD HOUSING AND CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY :
A DISCUSSION ON HOUSING RENEWAL AND REDEVELOPMENT IN BEIJING AND SUZHOU

TIME: 5:00-6:00 PM, WEDNESDAY, 10 MAY 2017

VENUE: ACADEMIC BUILDING 1079

Courtyard Housing and Cultural Sustainability

A discussion on housing renewal and redevelopment in Beijing and Suzhou

Speaker: Donia Zhang, PhD, Ontario colleges, Canada

ABSTRAT:

This presentation highlights my doctoral research findings on renewed and new courtyard housing projects built in the inner cities of Beijing and Suzhou since the 1990s. It looks at the architectural, environmental, spatial, constructional, social, cultural, and behavioral aspects of the housing, to see whether it is culturally sustainable, and whether it facilitates residents' traditional cultural expressions.

The study is based on empirical data collected in 2007 through a number of research methods, including field surveys, interviews, time diaries, architectural drawings, photographs, planning documents, conversation and observation notes, journals, real estate magazines, brochures, and related material.

The findings suggest that communal courtyards foster social interaction and private courtyards facilitate self-cultivation. Neighborly relations are partly influenced by the form and space of the courtyard housing, and partly by a changing and polarizing society, socio-economic differences, housing tenure, modern lifestyles, community involvement, common language, cultural awareness, and the cultural background of the residents. The communal courtyards help sustain some traditional Chinese cultural activities. The primary function of a communal

courtyard is to maintain health and natural healing. However, many cultural activities are much less or no longer partaken in the communal courtyards, likely due to such factors as time, climate, courtyard ownership, yard size, facilities, and so on. Moreover, community/city parks/gardens have become important places for cultural activities in China.

BIO:

Dr Donia Zhang has over 20 years of research experience in interdisciplinary studies of architectural humanities and social sciences, in particular the interrelations of housing, health, happiness, and cultural sustainability. She has authored four scholarly books: *Courtyard Houses of Beijing: Past, Present, and Future*, *Schoolyard Gardening as Multinaturalism: Theory, Practice, and Product*, *Courtyard Housing and Cultural Sustainability: Theory, Practice, and Product*, and *Courtyard Housing for Health and Happiness: Architectural Multiculturalism in North America*. Donia has 7 years of work experience in the architectural industry in Toronto and Chicago, and 10 years of teaching experience throughout Ontario colleges in Canada. The subjects she has taught include: History of Art and Architecture, Interior Design, and AutoCAD, among others.

This event is open to all and entry is on a first come, first served basis. For any queries email yg73@duke.edu or call 3665 7149.