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# Living and Sustainability: An Environmental Critique of Design and Building Practices, Locally and Globally

## Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

### 1. Paper / Proposal Title:

Urban redevelopment and dilapidated housing regeneration in historical cities in China, insights from Xi'an

### 2. Format:

*Written paper*

### 3. Author(s) Name:

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### 4. University or Company Affiliation:

Politecnico di Milano/Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology

### 5. Abstract (300 words):

Key words: culture sustainable approaches, self-build practice, dilapidated housing regeneration, inner city redevelopment, revitalization of urban center

Since the economic reform in 1978 and then the vastly expansion of the real estate sector re-orientation of urban governance in the 1990s', property-led urban redevelopment in contemporary Chinese cities results in the large scale demolition and

reconstruction in a certain short period. It was not only a process of damaging the physical environment of a 3000 years old historical city's fabric, but also damaging the matrix of culture formed by local residents and business with social consequences. A close study on the practices and policies currently in Xi'an reveals some of the sharpest urban redevelopment problems Chinese cities is facing, such as the quietly and graduate self-build practice and transformation of dilapidated housing in the inner city. It's urgent now to discuss the issue of how to maintain the traditional architecture of the modernizing city of Xi'an, how to keep its local identity in a broader urban context, and how to uphold its social values in the changing built environment. Under the needs of regenerate dilapidated housing, protecting the local history and tradition, then to continue local culture context in revitalizing the inner city, we may need a culture-led urban regeneration strategies, which we could identify as culture sustainable approach.

This article examines physical, social, economic challenges related to revitalization and rehabilitation of historical center in Xi'an focusing on dilapidated housing redevelopment issues. Factors and policies may impede the culture sustainable approaches such as local authorities and stakeholders are also discussed, to realizing the problem as the first step before solving the historical inner city redevelopment issues in currently China.

#### **6. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

My name is Xu LU, who is now working parallel as a PhD candidate in Politecnico di Milano and lecturer of Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology. I gained my master degree in Chalmers University of Technology. My professional interests lie in the urban design and regeneration in contemporary historical cities in China. Main PhD research topic is "Regeneration of Chinese Urban Fabric: The Case of Xi'an Walled City Core". With the master thesis "Urban acupuncture-urban interventions in Barcelona", the aim falls on other ways of arguing and interacting with the problem beyond the confines of architectural literature, or beyond the conventional parameters of architectural professional practice. Emphasis was placed on seeking bottom-up solutions within unexpected places, local knowledge, habits, traditions, movement networks, evolving habits and highly specific perspectives and how the bottom-up approach can directly impact architectural materialization, in terms of concept orientation, tectonics and embedded or external technologies or strategies. Thus, my professional focus is bond for the urban regeneration and rehabilitation with vernacular approaches in a contemporary context and built environment.