

ORIGINALITY, VARIETY, AND ENERGY-EFFICIENCY

An Interview with Fritz Hubert

With the launch of the renovation project of the old district of Qingdao including Zhongshan Road and Zhejiang Road, we are fortunate enough to get the opportunity to interview Fritz Hubert, the chief consultant of this project. With white hair, a mild smile and a pair of glasses, he looks kind and gentle.

When asked about his ideas concerning the renovation, he answered, "The plan is to showcase German architecture by creating German shops, art galleries, theaters and so forth. We'll also study traffic patterns to avoid congestion. And finally, we should harmonize old German houses with new Chinese houses and buildings."

Traffic is almost always a problem here in Shinan district. Concerning this problem, Mr. Hubert also gave us some of his ideas: "I'm thinking about letting Zhongshan Road remain a pedestrian street while making Zhejiang Road a mixed one with both pedestrians and vehicles."

What about the parking problem? You must not have failed to observe those cars clustering on both sides of the road. Mr. Hubert answered that there are basically two solutions -- one is to build an underground parking lot, making use of a nearby concrete field somewhat like a park; the other is for the community to contract with a nearby skyscraper whose underground floor is vacant to make it a public parking lot.

In spite of the traffic, Mr. Hubert is also willing to add a little human flavor to this district. Just like the essayist Hilaire Belloc, he prefers crooked streets to straight ones. It appears that the rectangular style does not appeal to him so much. He wants people to take a walk along a crooked street where they could be here at one moment and there at another. He'd like people

to be amazed by frequent surprises, instead of being able to view the whole street at a glance. Actually, back in 1900, his grandfather had participated in a project adopting this "crooked street" concept.

"The surroundings of the old buildings such as gardens with old trees, courtyards, walls and iron fences, are as important as the buildings themselves. It is necessary to preserve them, too."

Then what's the fate of those ugly-looking electricity wires hanging in the air? "They are not only ugly, they are dangerous. A flying kite caught by the wires can kill a child," Mr. Fritz answered. "These wires will be buried underground together with other facilities such as water and drainage. Consequently, the road will be paved with plaster instead of concrete in order to facilitate their maintenance."



When we moved on to the renovation of the old buildings, he stressed that it should be as energy-efficient as possible. He suggested that a second layer of windows be installed with certain distance from the outer windows to retain the heat and keep warmth in winter

or the cool in summer, instead of merely depending on heaters and air-conditioners. "If you want to be healthy and comfortable, just go outside and start jogging. Depend on your own body instead of the house," he added. After all, houses need to breathe, too.

Mr. Hubert pays much attention to keeping the originality of the old buildings. He takes it as a maxim to keep as much as possible the original ones instead of replacing them with new ones in a rush towards renovation. Rather than changing the window-frames, balconies and old wooden doors into modern ones made out of aluminum or steel, he prefers to keep and restore the original accessories. Of course, it's not possible because of the bad condition, and then they should be replaced in the traditional manner. Yet will those wooden ones remain in good condition for a long time? "They would last for a hundred years. What's more, if they are made of oak, they can stand for five hundred years. So it won't be a problem using wood as the material."

Take tiles as another example: only the damaged ones, instead of the entire roof, will be replaced. Again, how long will these new tiles stand the wear and tear? "The new tiles would probably last for 40 years, or perhaps 60 years if under good care," Mr. Fritz said. Furthermore, he suggested that when building a new house, extra tiles should be stored so that the damaged ones can be replaced without being too conspicuous.

In addition to originality, Mr. Hubert also attaches great importance to the variety of the living environment. "Rich and poor together make the city function. There ought to be shoemakers and people who make and sell bread in a community. Leave the residents in the building. Do not

throw them out. Actually, there is a chance that they can help with the renovation and maintenance of these buildings."

Though he appreciates Qingdao's efforts to renew the old district, he still has some disagreements. When asked about his opinion with regard to decorating all the shops in German style and rendering the entire street into European style, Mr. Fritz said, "Generally speaking, Chinese have a misunderstanding about 'German architecture.' They are not renovating or constructing real German buildings. They are doing it in accordance to the 'German architecture' in their mind. Lots of special German buildings clustered together are not German in reality. You cannot find a street like that in Germany."

"One more point: it appears a little bit strange to me to decorate them in the so-called 'German style.' We Germans do not make the new old," he said. "Personally, I would combine the modern with the ancient."

Differences are unavoidable, but fortunately we can draw lessons from those differences. "A Master Plan is a must," Mr. Hubert urged, "What Chinese are doing now is restoring one spot and then another

in an isolated fashion. We also have to consider the city plan, traffic, pedestrian zones, the synergy of living, services, shops, and so forth. You have to be far-sighted. You must see beyond the boundary of merely several years."

The laws here should also be more comprehensive, according to Mr. Hubert. "In Germany, those who construct buildings without required facilities such as heating to go with them would face punishment by law. It seems that this does not happen here in China. What's more, when you want to build a high building, you are required to negotiate with your neighbors, such as perhaps a kindergarten, and pay them a certain amount of money; otherwise you could be punished."

Chief consultant of the renovation project as he is, Fritz Hubert does not work here in Qingdao. He works most of his time in Germany, though, he usually comes to Qingdao about every six weeks to present his draft plans and talk with other consultants as well as the decision-makers for about a week or so. During the six weeks in Germany, he stays in contact with them through e-mail.

Unlike most architects, Mr. Hubert works half-independently. He

works in his office alone, but in the meantime he has independent and creative" employees". He would designate certain parts of the project to certain employees; while still have a firm hold over a project on a whole. "But you have to know them. You have to know what they are good at. And they also have to know me. Most of my 'employees' have been working with me for 10 to 15 years."

As an architect, how does Mr. Hubert conceive Chinese architecture? "Where are your Chinese buildings?" he asked. "I can't find many Chinese characteristics in Chinese buildings now. Chinese architects should develop their own modern Chinese-style buildings rather than merely learning from other countries."

Architecture, what's more, is not the only subject Mr. Hubert is enthusiastic about. As we have seen in the previous paragraph, he lays great emphasis on energy efficiency. "To produce energy by wind, tide, sun, and especially hot underground water," are among his futuristic ideas. "Energy-efficiency is not merely a kind of knowledge. You have to do it!"

"You have to do it!" With this exclamation, our interview



concluded. Let's keep our fingers crossed concerning the renovation project! -Laura Wu

包括中山路、浙江路在内的青岛老城区修缮工程已然拉开序幕，在此契机下，我们荣幸采访了该工程的首席建筑咨询师——弗里茨·休伯特。

雪白的头发、温和的笑容再加上一幅眼镜，他看起来温文有礼。

当被问及对本次修缮的想法时，他说道：“我们计划，将德式建筑糅入进来，也就是说，开设德国商店，画廊、剧院等等。我们还会研究一下交通方案来避免交通阻塞。最后，我们会努力使古旧的德式建筑同崭新的中国的房屋和建筑和谐起来。”

在市南区，交通几乎总是个难缠的问题。关于这一问题，弗里茨也给出了一些自己的想法：“我正在考虑仍保留中山路步行街，而浙江路则为人、车混行。”

那么停车问题呢？总是有大量的车挤在路旁。基本上有两种解决方法：一个是利用附近一块类似于公园的混凝土空地，建一个地下停车场；另一个则是社区可联系附近的一座摩天大楼，他们的地下一层是空的，可用来建造公共停车场。

除交通以外，弗里茨还十分乐意给这一区域加上点人文气息。就像散文家希莱尔·贝洛克一样，比起笔直的街道，他更喜欢曲折的街道。看起来，方方正正的风格并不足以吸引这位建筑师。他更愿意人们能时不时地因一些小惊奇而欣喜，而非仅一眼便望到了街道的尽头。实际上，早在1900年，弗里茨祖父辈们就参与了一项采用“曲线”理念的工程。

“老建筑的周边环境，例如种满古树的花园、庭院、院墙以及铁栅栏都同这些老建筑一样重要。保留它们也是必须的。”

那么悬在半空的丑陋的电线又将何去何从呢？“这些电线不仅丑，还很危险。飞翔的风筝一旦被电线挂住，就能害死一个孩子。”弗里茨回答道。“这些电线将同其它设施如自来水管及排水管道一起埋入地下。相应地，路面将由灰泥铺就，而非混凝土，以便维修这些设施。”

当谈及老建筑的修缮时，他强调说应该尽量节能。他建议在离外窗一些距离的地方安装另一层窗子，夏天可取下，冬天则可保温。这样，就不用仅依赖暖气和空调了。“如果你想健康舒适，出去慢跑一下。要依靠自己的身体而不是房子。”他补充道。不管怎样，房子也需要呼吸。

弗里茨很注重保持建筑物的原貌。比起用新的替代原有的，他更偏好尽可能多地保留原有的。他并不愿将原有的窗框、阳台以及木门换成现代的铝制或钢铁制的东西。他更倾向于“保留并修复原有的配件儿”。“如果确实状况太差，不能保留，那就按照传统的样式去修缮。”但那些木料能存留很长时间吗？“它们能够存留一百年。而且如果是橡木的话，可以存留五百年呢，所以用木料完全没有问题。”

原汁原味、多姿多彩、节能高效

— 弗里茨·休伯特专访

另一个例子是瓦。只有被损坏的瓦而非整个屋顶将被修缮。那么，这些新瓦又能抵挡多久的风霜雨雪呢？“新瓦差不多能坚持40年，维护的好，将近60年。”弗里茨说道。不仅如此，他还建议，在建新房子的时候，应将多余的瓦存储起来，这样损坏的瓦可以用这些替代，而且不易被人发觉。

除原汁原味以外，弗里茨还十分注重生活环境的多样性。“富人、穷人共存，城市才能运转。必须要有制鞋的、卖面包的。让这些居民仍旧住在这些建筑里，不要把他们赶出来，再去安置他们。实际上，他们很可能还能够帮助这些建筑的维护和修缮呢。”

尽管他很欣赏青岛市为修缮老城区所做出的努力，但他还是有一些不同的意见。当被问及对于用德式风格装饰街上的店铺，进而将浙江路建成一条欧洲风情街道的看法时，弗里茨说，“一般来说，中国人对德式建筑有一种误解，他们并不是在修缮或是建造真正的德式建筑，他们只是在根据自己头脑中的德式建筑做这一切。大量特别的德式建筑物挤在一起并不是真正的德式风格。在德国，这样的街道你一条也找不到。”

“另外还有一点，我觉得把

所有的商店装饰成所谓的德式风格有点奇怪，德国人不会把崭新的东西变旧。”他说道。“照我个人来说，我会把现代感与古老感糅合起来。”

差异是不可避免的，但幸运的是我们可以从这些差异中汲取教训。“总体的规划是必需的，”弗里茨强调说。“中国人现在是分散地修复一个又一个建筑，我们还必须要考虑城市规划、交通、步行区、协同生活、服务、商店等各种因素。必须要将目光放长远，而不是仅仅看到最近几年。”

根据弗里茨的观点，这儿的法律也应当更加健全。“在德国，建筑商建造楼房时如果未建造必要的设施例如暖气，他们就会受到法律的惩罚，这种情况在中国好像不会发生。另外，当你想要建一座高楼时，你也必须得跟周围邻居（例如幼儿园）协商，付给他们一些钱，否则你也会受到惩罚。”

尽管是修缮工程的首席建筑咨询师，弗里茨却并不在青岛工作。他是回德国工作，每六个星期他会来青岛一次，提交他的草案，跟其他咨询师还有决策者商议一周左右的时间。在德国的六个星期中，他就通过电子邮件与他们联系。

跟其他建筑师不同，弗里茨的工作是半独立式的。他独自自在自己的办公室工作，但同时他也有独立的富有创造力的“员工”。在对工程总体把握的前提下，他会把工程的特定部分指派给特定的员工。“但你必须得了解他们，你还得知道他们擅长什么。同样他们也必须得了解我，我的大部分‘员工’已经跟我一块工作了10年甚至15年了。”

作为一名建筑师，弗里茨是怎样看待中国建筑的？“中国建筑，你们在哪里？”他问道。“我现在很难能在中国建筑中找到中国特色。中国的建筑师应该设计出他们自己的现代的中国风的建筑，而不是仅仅是向其他国家取经。”

此外，建筑并不是弗里茨唯一感兴趣的事情。就像我们在前面段落看到的一样，他还很重视节能。“可以利用风力，潮汐，太阳，尤其是地下的热水，来制造能源。”他建议说，“节能不能仅仅是作为一门知识来研究，你必须去做！”

“你必须去做！”伴随着弗里茨的这句呼吁，我们的采访画上了圆满的句号。让我们预祝工程成功！- 吴欣欣