



Promote the Integration of a Livable Environment for the Elderly into the Renovation Process of Old Communities

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Abstract. With the proportion of the elderly population exceeding 30 percent by 2035, Beijing, as an international metropolis, should lead the way in building a global age-friendly city. It is recommended that, building on the foundation of the barrier-free construction after the Winter Olympics, the government should plan and accelerate the renovation of a livable environment for the elderly, with relevant departments stepping up the preparation of construction standards, creating age-friendly model communities, exploring new models of renewal and renovation, and giving play to Beijing's leading role as a harmonious and livable capital.

Keywords: elderly livability · environmental construction · old communities · renovation

1 Introduction

Liveable environments originated from overseas research on liveable cities and living environments for the elderly, and in particular the active promotion of elder-friendly cities in the international community. The World Health Organisation has also introduced the concept of 'age-friendly cities', which aims to promote the physical, mental health and vitality of older people in cities, reduce barriers to participation in family life, groups and living, and create an urban environment that is friendly to them. With this concept, the General Office of the National Working Committee on Ageing has given a new definition of "age-friendly living", it will actively promote the creation of a liveable environment for older people in China.

2 Concepts of a Livable Environment for the Elderly and Existing Problems

Aging-friendly natural environment is a comprehensive umbrella term for residential spaces and external environments that cater to all groups of elder people. In terms of content, the construction of a livable environment for the elderly should cover three levels: the city, the region and the street community, and the street community environment being the microscopic core of the livable environment for the elderly. In China's

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current “home as the basic, community as the reliance” modern social elderly service system, most elderly people will choose the community elderly service, the community has become the most important home living platform for the elderly. However, as the current residential planning and design codes in China do not provide comprehensive and specific regulations on the ageing-friendly design of the community environment, the current community environment cannot satisfied with the activity and travel needs of the elderly in China. This is particularly evident in older settlements with older construction years and relatively outdated equipment.

Information from the fourth National Sample Survey on the Living Conditions of Older People in Large and Medium-sized Cities shows that the satisfaction of older people with the community environment and services is generally low. Among them, satisfaction with the security situation is the highest, but less than 60%, and satisfaction with the public Satisfaction with the use of toilets is the lowest, at 17.24%. Meanwhile, the rate of community accessibility is low, with Nearly 60% of the communities are not equipped with any accessibility facilities. Only 20% of communities are equipped with ramps and clear signage, and only 4.2% of them have accessible stairs. This shows that the current situation of uninhabitable and age-inappropriate communities environments has come to the fore, it needs to be changed. For new community, the ageing requirements can be taken into account in the planning and design process. In recent years, various districts have started the renewal and renovation of old communities, it is recommended to take advantage of this reform to work in parallel with the ageing-friendly reform to build a community environment suitable for the elderly.

3 Suggestions for the Development of Age-Friendly Communities

3.1 Preparation of Construction Standards for a Livable Environment for the Elderly

In recent years, the country has made certain breakthroughs in the field of building a livable environment for the elderly, for example, a series of technical specifications and industry standards have been developed for elderly care institutions and medical institutions, while a regulatory system for building a livable environment for the elderly has not yet been formed in the larger scale areas of residential communities and streets. At present, some age-friendly reform projects are aimed at improving the indoor environment of a very small number of problematic elderly people, and cannot form an effective synergy to promote the construction of a livable environment for the elderly at the city level. it has many problems can even arise in practice. For example, the screening of poor housing is not representative, and the improvement of indoor environment is not in line with the habits of the elderly. The root cause of this is the need to strengthen the exploration of a wider and broader system for a livable environment for the elderly, to combine accessibility regulation policies with policies for the construction of a livable environment for the elderly, and to develop a more practical assessment system and construction specifications for a livable environment for the elderly.

3.2 Creating a Model Community for Seniors to Live in

The construction of a livable environment for the elderly is highly comprehensive, it is relatively difficult to promote the work as a whole. It is recommended that, in conjunction with the follow-up to the Winter Olympics, communities with good conditions for implementation be selected to carry out in-depth assessments and optimise designs based on the standards for the construction of a liveable environment for the elderly, and to create model communities for the elderly. The specific methods are: firstly, to strengthen publicity and “tell the Chinese story” on an international level; secondly, to expand the influence and raise the willingness of residents in other communities to retrofit and reduce the difficulty of implementation; and thirdly, to explore and summarise experience and identify the key points of ageing-friendly retrofitting.

3.3 Actively Exploring Construction Implementation Models

In recent years, the government has carried out pilot projects around age-appropriate renewal, barrier-free facilities construction and old residential renovation in various streets, but the projects are all scattered, mostly focusing on infrastructure renewal, failing to produce a clustering effect and neglecting community environment optimisation. It is recommended that in the process of renovation and implementation, attention should be paid to the daily behaviour of the elderly in the community and to the ageing-friendly construction of places used by the elderly, so as to create a people-oriented model of renewal and renovation.

4 Specific Examples of Age-Friendly Community Building

4.1 “Preserving the Basics” is the Basis for Transformation

At present, most of the cities’ old communities are still in the mode of renovation to meet the basic needs of the residents. As for the governance level of long-term management, residents generally lack awareness and autonomy. How the government can fully mobilise residents’ willingness to renovate is an important part of the renovation process in old districts. The first step is to do a good job in collecting public opinion, sorting out the environment, promoting policies and mobilising residents before the renovation process; the second step is to bring together social forces, such as introducing property management, social organisations to provide front-end services and encouraging the replacement of social enterprises with resources, so as to build an operating platform for joint construction, governance and sharing; the last and most important step is to guide residents’ self-governance and explore a sustainable blood-making model of public services. Lastly, the most important part is to guide residents’ self-governance, and to explore sustainable and blood-generating public service models to build a community of good homes. For example, in Beijing, the following methods were introduced in the

renovation of the residential building at No. 3 Zhenwuguan Wuli, No. 3 Zhenwuguan Wuli:

Introduction of Social Capital

The Xicheng District Housing and Construction Committee introduced Vision Group, focusing on issues such as lack of property management and ageing hardware, to encourage and support Vision Group's participation in old district renovation projects in the form of lease replacement.

New Model of “Lease Replacement”

Vision Group focuses on three types of communities residents, providing them with replacement services in different forms. Social funds will seamlessly undertake the property management work in the old communities, while using the residential market-based rental levels as a benchmark, and organically integrating the land replacement programme with the renovation of the old communities to ultimately achieve the objectives of improving the environment, optimising the functions and balancing the workplace and housing. Specific implementation methods include:

Rent replacement: mainly for landlords whose main need is to obtain rent, paying rent to the landlord at the market-based rental price of the house;

Improvement and exchange: mainly for landlords who need to improve their housing environment, using the rental platform to bring long-term stable sources of improvement and exchange services, supplemented by value-added services such as free house-hunting, moving and cleaning;

Ageing replacement: mainly for all elderly owners who have settled with their children and the need for an ageing business, and offers optional houses in the community where their children live as well as joint nursing homes of different grades in Beijing, Hainan, Shaanxi and other places, and assists owners in signing long-term service agreements.

4.2 Building a Comprehensive and Healthy Environment for Elderly Services

To build a comprehensive and healthy environment for the elderly, it is necessary not only to have facilities and a living environment suitable for the elderly at home, but also to provide various elderly-friendly services in the community so that the elderly can step out of their homes and happily participate in various social activities. For example, in the Huayang Road community, we have started to build the “396 elderly-friendly community”, which integrates the resources of “one street, one product”, the construction of high-quality communities and the renovation of ageing-friendly homes in Changning District, with the Huayang Road community elderly service station being built as the centre and the “396 community Gathering” doorstep elderly service station as the basis, radiating to the nearby The centre of the community is the Huayang Road Senior Service Station, and the “396 community Service Station” is the base of the “396 community Gathering”.

The construction of a livable community for the elderly takes the design of the old frontage on 396 Changning Road as a starting point and gradually builds up landmark facilities rich in the characteristic charm of the elderly community, including: the graphic

image of the community street garden as the identity of the Huayang Road street. The traditional iron barriers on the road are all removed and replaced with new barriers, interspersed with bar stools for the elderly to rest on. The road is paved with an accessible walkway for the disabled and there is no horizontal drop in the middle of the road and the carriageway to facilitate the passage of elderly people with poor legs and wheelchairs. The area is also designed as an activity area for the elderly, with stepped flowerbeds, to beautify the environment and at the same time serve as a place for exercise and leisure for the elderly, and as a public living room for the city. The bulletin boards on both sides of the road have been transformed into a “Filial piety wall” to show the smiling faces of the elderly in the community and to add to the sense of ageing in the community. 396 residential blocks will also have a “light-transmitting construction” in their janitorial rooms, which will allow light to shine through at night to facilitate the movement of the elderly. Meanwhile, in the Changning Road area, in conjunction with the renovation of old shop signs, the Huayang Road community has taken the lead in forming the “Older and Newer Friendly Merchants Association”. Eleven service companies, including Chain Home Property, Quick and Easy, and Namdaemun Korean Cake, have lit up orange wall lights outside their shops, exclusively for the “Older and Newer Friendly Merchants” on Changning Road, bringing exclusive senior consumer discounts and health care advice to the elderly in the community.

5 Conclusion

The ageing retrofitting of old communities is an important livelihood project and an important response to the expectations of the public to improve their living conditions and increase their quality of life. It is of great significance in enhancing the image of the city and promoting regional development and construction. Through extensive publicity to create an atmosphere, full consultation with residents, strict formulation of rectification plans, and coordination of joint efforts to increase rectification efforts, the project will take multiple measures to promote the transformation of residents’ “living conditions” into “livable conditions”, and comprehensively improve the level of public services and the living environment. It create an age-friendly, safe, comfortable and convenient model city for the elderly.

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