



Monthly Commentary

The arrival of the scorching June heat heralded the highly anticipated “Cultural Heritage Day” and the frantic preparation of the “Friends of Old Beijing” Phase II report.

With stretched resources and limited time, CHP staff and volunteers managed to successfully execute a “Heritage Research Event,” which involved investigating the status of cultural protection today and endeavoring to disseminate new information. In particular, volunteers strove to raise public awareness for the 10 Historical and Cultural Protected Areas located outside of Beijing’s Old City. In the lead up to Cultural Heritage Day, we held cultural heritage research trips to these lesser-known areas over three consecutive weekends. We had over 180 volunteers participate in the heritage events and this project was so successful that we hope to hold similar research events to continue building knowledge and raising awareness about the Historical and Cultural Protected Areas outside of Old Beijing.

The “Friends of Old Beijing” Phase II report was our other central focus for June. After many months of research, the final report has been completed on time and presented to the Beijing City Government, National People’s Congress, Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, and other related branches of the Government. All of the FoOB Phase II volunteers (over 100) agreed that finishing this report was of momentous significance and not just because of how much effort they all put into it, but because of the impact it could potentially have on government legislation. In mid-July we plan to call these volunteers back together to provide a final summary of the project as a whole.

For the coming month, we have organized many interesting events, so be sure to keep your ears open, and we hope that you continue to support us in our work!

Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center

Articles

Demolition of Beijing's Ministry of Foreign Trade Buildings

In the early years following the establishment of the Peoples Republic of China, a group of architects sought to embody the artistry and style of the Chinese people in their contemporary architectural designs. The result was the construction of some fine buildings that incorporated regional and traditional elements. The two most outstanding examples of this effort dating from the 1950s are Shanghai's Memorial Hall of Lu Xun and Beijing's Ministry of Foreign Trade Bureau (now site of the Ministry of Commerce or MOFCOM). The Ministry of Foreign Trade Buildings, designed by Mr. Xu Zhong and built in 1954, adopted a northern vernacular architectural style, using gray brick and tiles, curved roof lines, out-reaching eaves, traditional balustrades, and pure lines to create a modern building for public administrative use.

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Summary of Heritage Survey Report on Protected Areas outside of Beijing Old City

The government has done excellent work over recent years in preserving and presenting to the public well-known sites of archaeological, art history, and cultural importance, including a number that have been listed as UNESCO World Heritage sites. However, with the government and media focusing so intensely on already well-known sites, other equally important but less well-preserved and less well-known places have been neglected or have not been properly looked after. The 10 Historical and Cultural Protected Areas located within Beijing Municipality, but outside of Beijing's Old City, are victims of this situation - overlooked by the public and not attracting attention or funding from the government, they easily fall into neglect.

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Media mobilization

[It Only Takes a Village An Interview with He Shuzhong](#)

[The Renovation of a Courtyard House in Zhuzhong Hutong](#)

[Farewell to the Hutongs](#)