



## Monthly Commentary

August was an incredibly busy month. The Olympics saw a massive influx of international visitors to Beijing, and the world's attention was turned to everything China and Olympics related. Here at CHP we were even busier than usual, with many journalists from local and overseas newspapers seeking interviews about the Olympics developments and the impact this has had on Old Beijing.

We have also been very busy advancing our Courtyard Renovation Training Project (see this edition of our newsletter for an update on this project). We have been very lucky to have the expert advice and assistance of several architects in collaborating this project, and we will be holding our first Architect's Salon on September 2. At this Architects Salon we will discuss best practices for successfully incorporating traditional building methods into new building design. We hope to learn from these expert architects how we can maintain a balance between preserving old culture and recognizing modern development needs.

## Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center

## Project Updates

### Courtyard Renovation Training Program Progressing

Over the past few months, anyone walking in the old hutongs of Beijing will have noticed that everywhere courtyard houses are being renovated, or completely reconstructed, generally following traditional courtyard house styles. It is exciting to see this work underway, and much of it financed by government money.

But for the most part the work is being undertaken without sufficient understanding of proper courtyard house design and construction techniques. Moreover, the renovation work is not taking advantage of all the techniques that now exist to equip courtyard houses with modern comforts and conveniences, while still maintaining historical authenticity.

In our April 2008 issue of Heritage Update, entitled '[Courtyard Renovation Training Program](#)', we described how CHP is preparing a Beijing Traditional Courtyard Renovation Training Manual for use by home owners, construction workers, and architects to use in renovating courtyard houses. With the help of dedicated volunteers, work on this manual is proceeding according to schedule and is now about 70% complete. Drafts of the following sections of the manual are now complete:

- Analysis of the market value of courtyards
- Introduction to basic courtyard layouts and architectural elements
- Introduction to waterproofing and insulating technologies for traditional houses
- Courtyard construction processes

- Inventory of interior and exterior decorating (including pictures and diagrams)
- Detailed explanations of policies and regulations related to housing repairs and maintenance in the Old City

In putting together the Manual, we have consulted with several experts in the field of courtyard houses, such as Zhang Yujuan, curator of "Hutong Zhang" Old Beijing Folk Art Museum in Wanping, and we have drawn on the first hand experience of several people who have renovated their courtyard houses and have kindly cooperated, sharing their knowledge with CHP.?

In addition to finishing the writing of the manual we are at the same time putting together a documentary film on courtyard house renovation, which will appear as a DVD to accompany the manual. We would like to especially thank all those who have helped in so many ways in the production of this film, which will form such an important part of the final product.

Finally, we are preparing for an architects' salon, the purpose of which will be to promote these sound renovation techniques among the architectural profession.

CHP expects that the Manual will be ready for distribution by late September 2008.? It is CHP's hope that this manual will provide builders, architects, and home owners with knowledge of techniques that will enable them make their courtyard homes more comfortable to live in, while at the same time more faithfully following traditional designs—all done within affordable budgets.

CHP is most grateful to the Heinrich Boll Foundation for making available the funds for undertaking this project.

For more information about this project, see [the program's home page](#)

## Media mobilization

['Beijing reopens historic Qianmen shopping street one day before the Olympics starts'](#)

Author: Xinhua Source: [www.news.cn](http://www.news.cn)

Date 2008-08-07

['Beijing's quaint courtyard compounds under seige'](#)

Author: The Associated Press Source: International Herald Tribune

Date: 2008-08-24

['Beijing Olympics Highlight Chinese Values: scholar'](#)

Author: Yang Qingchuan Source: [www.news.cn](http://www.news.cn)

Date: 2008-08-26

['Symbol of North-South China Boundary to be built in Huai'an'](#)

Author: Hou Xiaoying Source: [www.china.org.cn](http://www.china.org.cn)

Date: 2008-08-28