

# Design and Development of Smoke-Free Homestay Inn in the Post-Pandemic Era

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**Abstract:** Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the tourism industry has been hit hard, especially the homestay inn market has shrunk sharply. In China, people actively implement the Chinese government's relevant policies for pandemic prevention and control, rationally arrange travel, and strictly implement corresponding protective measures. These policies have greatly reduced the number and frequency of people's travel. Before the flu broke out, major holidays, such as the Spring Festival, Mid- Autumn Festival, Winter and Summer vacations, were peak tourist seasons. Now the entire tourist market is in a state of depression. Tourists canceled their travel plans one after another, which indirectly caused a large number of homestay inns to be unable to operate, and they had no choice but to close their stores to reduce expenses. Under this situation, the problems of the homestay inn industry itself are gradually exposed. The decoration styles of the homestay inn are similar, and the homogeneity is becoming more and more serious. Simple imitating and copying have no characteristics at all. Unclear price and low service quality also reflect management confusion. What's more serious is that some homestays do not have fire-fighting systems such as smoke alarms, and guests smoking in the rooms cause huge safety hazards. With the normalization of COVID-19 prevention and control work, the revival of the homestay inn industry is ushering in. It has become a top priority to improve quality, brand image, and develop its own cultural IP. This article will combine an architectural project in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, to study and explore the design of smoke-free homestay inn. Through the installation of smoke alarm system and fresh air system and other equipment, the circulation of indoor and outdoor air is ensured, and a smoke-free environment is created to ensure the safety and comfort of guests. And combine regional characteristics to deeply explore local culture and its own characteristics, and create a vibrant and creative brand image to meet people's growing spiritual needs.

**Key words:** homestay inn; COVID-19; cultural IP; smoke-free environment

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The concept of homestay inns originated in the United Kingdom in 1960. It is a family-style business model (Bed and Breakfast). The

homeowner provides guests with an idle room and breakfast at home. This model is very popular among road passers, drivers and backpackers.<sup>1</sup> Today,

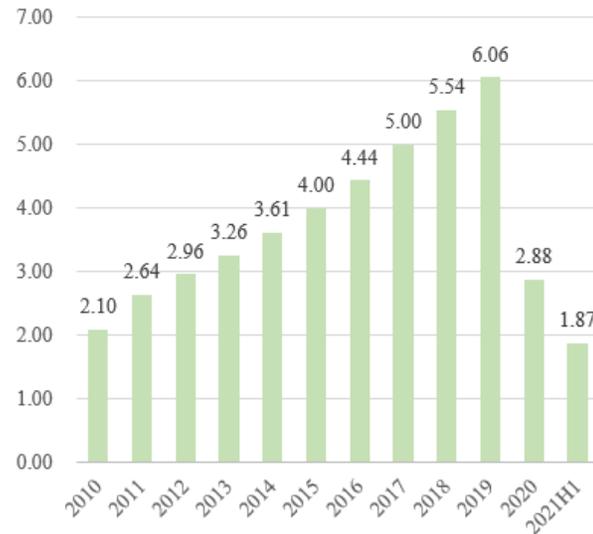
homestay inns have spread in many countries around the world. Due to cultural differences and different geographical environments, the development of homestay inns is also different. Scholars around the world have also discussed the basic concepts of homestay inns.

For example, D. Gilbert and L. Tung proposed that homestay inns should be inclined towards rural tourism, with farmers providing accommodation. Make full use of the natural scenery around the farm to create a comfortable pastoral environment, allowing visitors to experience farm life such as grape picking and horse riding.<sup>2</sup> Rivers and William P. understand that a homestay is a place with a learning atmosphere. The landlord provides the residence to international students, and the rental time is often related to the school's class cycle. Students maintain a family-like relationship with the landlord during their stay, and can effectively improve their language skills and adaptability.<sup>3</sup> Japanese scholar Hideya Ishii mentioned in his article that Japanese Minshuku are tourist accommodation facilities operated by farmers or fishermen as a sideline, and the prices are relatively cheap.<sup>4</sup>

China's definition of homestay inn is closer to Japanese Minshuku. In the early 1980s, the earliest large-scale development of homestay inns was located in Kenting National Park in Taiwan Province.<sup>5</sup> The original purpose was to solve the problem of insufficient accommodation supply. It was only a simple accommodation form and did not provide guided tours or catering services. Early homestay inn industry due to the lack of a sound management system, as well as operational level uneven, resulting in the interests of consumers can not be guaranteed.

On July 3, 2019, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China issued the *Basic Requirements and Evaluation of Homestay Inn*. It clearly regulates the industry standards of homestay inns, and stipulates the definition, evaluation principles, basic requirements, management norms and classification conditions of tourist homestay inns, " Utilizing local residents and other related

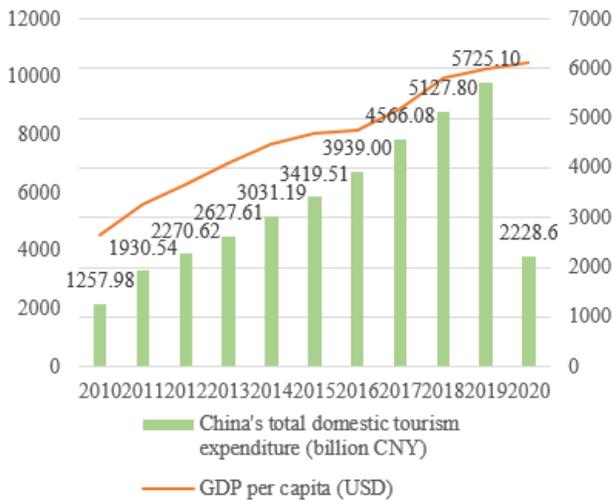
idle resources, the operating rooms do not exceed 4 floors and the building area does not exceed 800 square meters. The host participates in the reception to provide tourists with small accommodation facilities to experience the local nature, culture, production and lifestyle."<sup>6</sup>



Source: The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China

Figure 1: China's domestic tourist arrivals from 2010 to 2021 (unit: billion person- times)

With the development of China's economy and the improvement of residents' material living standards, the number of domestic tourists in China has increased year by year, exceeding 6 billion in 2019 (Figure 1). According to the *National Economic and Social Development Statistical Bulletin of the People's Republic of China in 2019* issued by the National Bureau of Statistics of China in February 2020. In 2019, China's per capita GDP exceeded the 10,000 U.S. dollar mark reaching 10,276 U.S dollars (Figure2). Diversified, multi-level tourism demand and consumer market patterns have been formed. Compared with 10 years ago, China's total domestic tourism expenditure has increased by about four times, and the number of tourists has increased by about three times. Traveling during holidays has become the choice of most people.



Source: The National Bureau of Statistics of China

**Figure 2: Annual trends of China's per capita GDP and total domestic tourism spending from 2010 to 2020**

Relying on the development of domestic tourism, homestay inns have also entered a stage of rapid development. According to the *2021 Domestic Homestay inn Industry Development Research Report* officially released by the China Tourism and Homestay inn Development Association. From 2015 to 2019, China's online homestay inn transactions expanded, with an average annual compound growth rate of 53.93%. Among them, in 2019, China's online homestay inn transaction volume was 20.94 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 63.72% (Figure 3).



Source: China Tourism  
**Figure 3: 2015-2019 online homestay inn market transaction scale (unit: billion, %)**

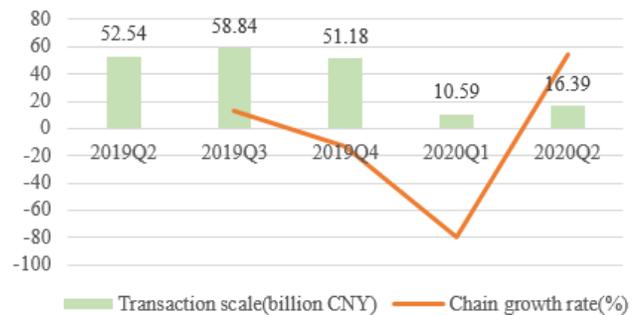
The homestay inn has gradually transformed from the early family sideline business model to the main family business model, and even attracted investment from many tenants, and a

large number of competitors poured into the homestay inn business.

Competitive market contributed to homestay inn to continuously improve quality and service quality. Homestay inns are also gradually moving towards boutique, personalized, and high-end, and their types are also showing a diversified trend, such as independent farmhouses, residential villas, etc.

At the beginning of 2020, the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 has brought a lot of disaster to the world. All walks of life have been severely hit, and the development of the world economy has been seriously affected.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic in Wuhan, all parts of China have actively adopted isolation measures: The government implements traffic control, restricts the movement of people across provinces and regions, and extends holidays to advise residents to reduce the number of trips; companies postpone the time to resume work and advocate "cloud office" at home; schools switch from traditional classroom teaching to online mode.



Source: Analysys

**Figure 4: 2019Q2-2020Q2 China's online accommodation booking market transaction scale (unit: billion, %)**

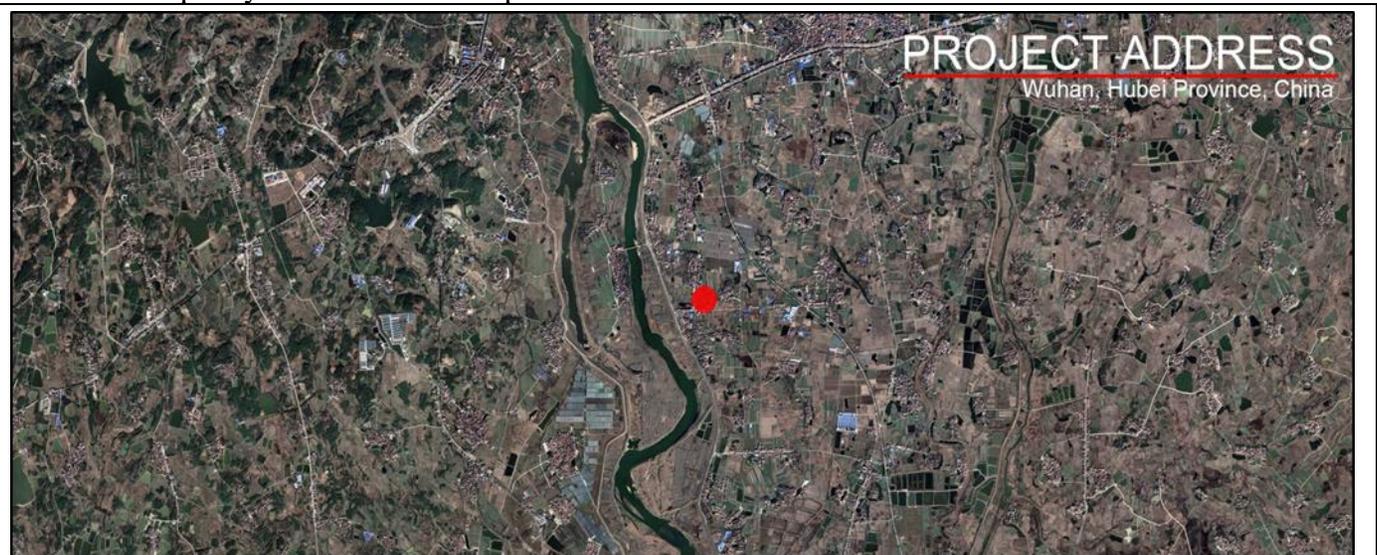
It cannot be denied that people's normal social activities have been severely affected, and offline consumption has almost stagnated from January to February 2020. The tourism industry, which relies on the flow of people, is undoubtedly entering the "winter period", and the homestay inn industry, which has a clear distinction between off-peak and peak seasons, is particularly vulnerable (Figure 4).

According to the Report on the Impact and Trends of the COVID-19 pandemic on China's Accommodation Industry jointly released by the China Hotel Association and Unihuasheng, in the first two months of 2020, the hotel and homestay inn

industry has lost more than 67 billion yuan in revenue. A large number of rooms, private rooms, and annual meetings that have been booked during the Spring Festival have been unsubscribed. 74.29% of hotels and homestay inns chose to close their stores directly, with an average of 27 days closed. The advent of the epidemic has also exposed a series of problems in the rapid development of the homestay inn industry, which has also led to a weaker ability to resist risks in response to the world's public health crisis.

The impact of the pandemic outbreak was huge, and now the homestay inn industry is in the recovery phase. In the post-pandemic era, solving the problems of severe homogeneity and low service quality that have been exposed has

become the focus. How to stand out among the many homestay inns and design a homestay inn with a certain degree of innovation and strong brand recognition is one of the difficulties. At the same time, with the improvement of people's living standards, the requirements for health also increase. "Exposure to tobacco smoke is still one of the leading preventable causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide" "Policies to promote smoking cessation and prevent initiation are the gold standard to reduce tobacco harm"<sup>7</sup>. This article describes the design of a smoke-free homestay inn in the context of Wuhan's economic recovery. According to the actual situation and the demands of the homeowner, the designed house needs to meet the functions of work, life, and operation.



**Figure 5: Project Address**

## METHODS

### Data Analysis

This project is located in Xinzhou District, Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China (Figure 5). The author came into contact with this project in 2020, and successively carried out field investigations, surrounding inspections and other related design work. The scope of the design is the homestead of the homeowner, the homestead refers to the land owned and used by the collectively owned by farmers or individuals in the countryside as a residential base<sup>8</sup>, covering a total area of approximately 536

square meter. The homeowner has a high degree of autonomy for the space within the scope. Through communication with the homeowner, we learned about its core needs and transformed the original residence into a multifunctional building that can have both daily life and homestay inn reception capabilities. The difficulty in transforming ordinary residential buildings into a homestay inn with a reception function is not the building, but whether the building can be integrated with the surrounding environment, and whether there are natural scenery or tourist attractions that attract tourists<sup>9</sup>.

The project is located in the northeastern part of Wuhan, about an hour's drive away, far from the

center of the city, and has a good natural environment. In addition to the beautiful environment, the adjacent Jushui River has a long history. Since 1949, nearly ten prehistoric cultural sites have been discovered in the Jushui River Basin. The earliest neolithic period can be found as early as 7000 years of money. In recent years, the stone tools, pottery wells, arrow clusters, bronze seals and a large number of ancient coins that have been discovered successively on the Jushui River bed have even more proved the splendor and glory of the human civilization bred by the Jushui River<sup>10</sup>.

Faced with natural advantages and deep cultural heritage, the local villages have not fully tapped its commercial value. For example, Songdu Village. Tuokeng Village has no infrastructure facilities and mature commercial formats. It is more difficult to develop large-scale homestay tourism in a short period of time. The homestay design this time is different from the homestay design under the traditional business model. We focus on the building itself,

take the homeowner's hobbies and lifestyle as the starting point, and combine the surrounding environment to tailor the micro-homestay.

Through careful inspection of the original house, we found that there are many problems in it. For example, the stairway is too narrow, the internal storey height is unreasonable, the roof rafters are rotten, the toilet is not connected to the municipal sewage, and the functional partition is not perfect(Figure 6). Taking into account the actual building conditions and the needs of the homeowner, our assessment of the building is that it needs to be demolished. For the demolition work, we require as much as possible to maintain the integrity of the building materials, and use the materials that can be used in the new building. The first is cost saving, because the place is located in the suburbs, and the transportation and processing costs of materials are relatively high. The second is that the original building was built by the father of the homeowner, and the new building was built with the demolished building materials, which has a certain cultural heritage and symbolizes a spiritual sustenance.



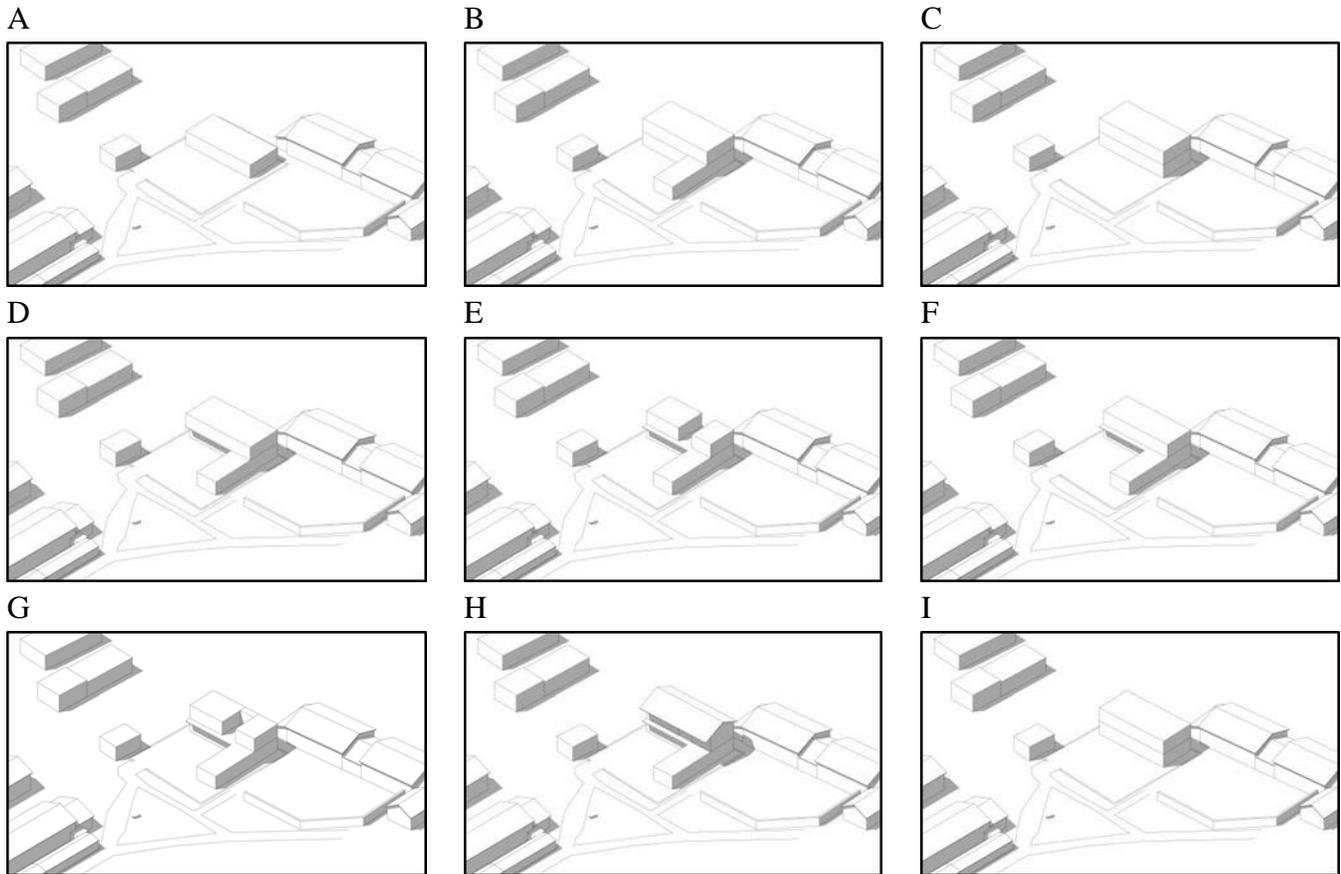
**Figure 6: Construction Status**

The courtyard has been deserted for many years, weeds are overgrown, and shrubs are planted irregularly. Although the bottom surface is not much ups and downs, it will be muddy after the rain. We mainly proceed from two aspects, one is to increase part of the hardened pavement, and the other is to sort out the vegetation in the planning courtyard to form a four-season scenery, and learn from the

gardening technique of moving one scene in the Chinese courtyard design.

**Measures**

After the investigation, we drew the plan drawings and used *SketchUp2020* to simulate the volume to find a suitable architectural appearance(Figure 7).



**Figure 7: Volume Simulation(A- I)**

Through the deduction of the volume, we balance the proportions of the functional partitions. When the partitions of each part are clarified, we design the appearance of the house(Figure 8). For the exterior design, we use materials suitable for the environment, such as tiles and wooden structures, and the roof structure is also a sloped roof unique to the south. The building designed this time is a three-story building, and the second floor is relatively simple in use function, so it will not be shown in this article. In the design of the ground floor, we mainly

considered convenience and interactivity.

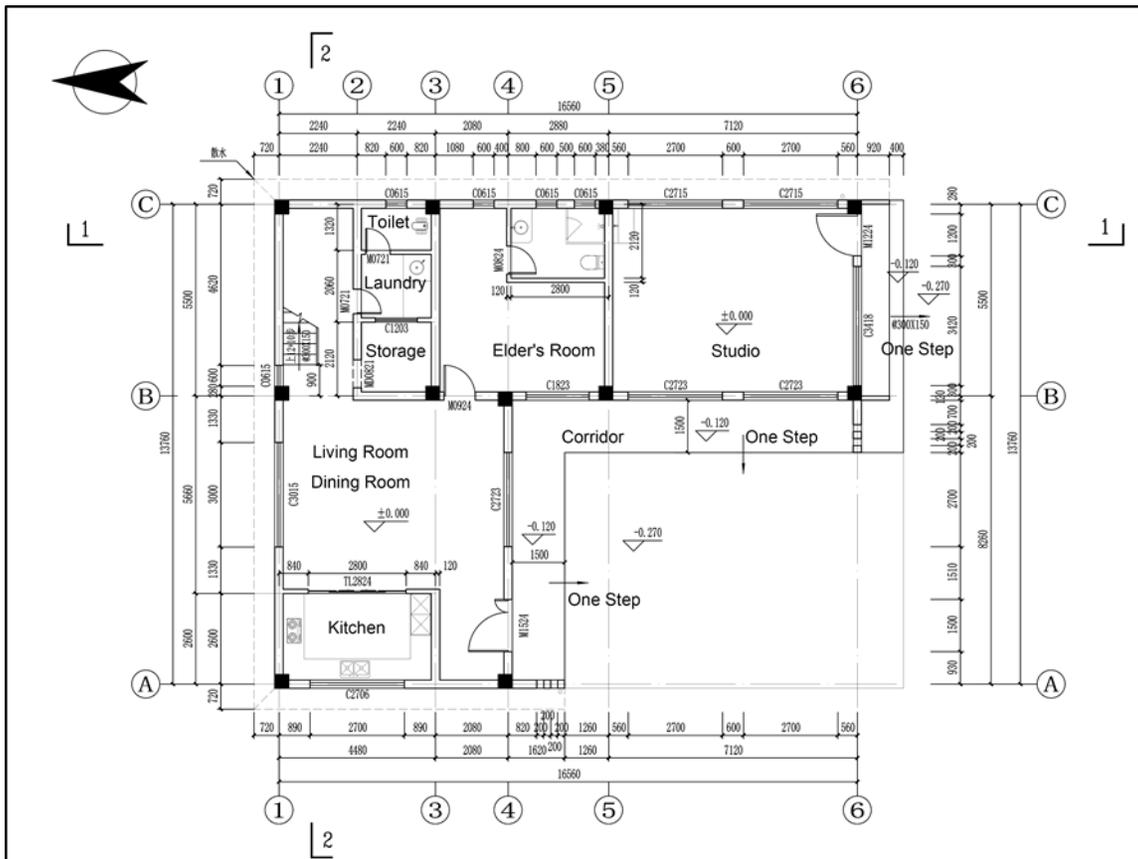
First of all, the center of the house is the room reserved for the elders, and the distance to each room is relatively close, which is convenient for the family to take care of(Figure 9). Interactivity is mainly embodied by two points. One is that the spacious living room and dining room can provide reception capacity and meet the needs of large-scale events such as living together and holding parties. At the same time, it can also meet the daily gatherings of friends organized by the homeowner. Second, based on the homeowner's personal hobbies, we designed a studio with the best lighting and view on the ground

floor. The homeowner can enjoy the work while admiring the scenery of the courtyard. Compared with traditional home studios, our design is larger in size, which can meet a variety of needs. As a photography enthusiast, the homeowner can also photograph and create in the studio, so that hobbies and career can be organically compatible.

The design purpose of the first floor is mainly to ensure a quiet rest environment(Figure 10). The master bedroom and guest rooms are placed on the first floor, which separates the dynamics and statics of the functional partitions, and is a place to relax and rest. The terrace design on the first floor is the core existence. People standing or sitting on the terrace can enjoy the rich plants in the courtyard, and they can also overlook the forest in the distance.



Figure 8: Single Building Renderings





brand of homestay inns, and continuously grows and enriches itself. Such a model will not cause heavy losses due to some uncertain factors in the early stage of the operation of the homestay inn. And in the process of development, there is a strong image recognition.

## DISCUSSION

Due to the epidemic, a large number of homestay inns were closed. There were funding problems, as well as the design and positioning of homestay inns. According to the report of China Tourism B&B Development Report (2019): In 2019, the scale of China's online accommodation market reached 20 billion RMB, a year-on-year increase of 36.5%. The number of homestay inns in mainland China reached 169,800, an increase of 217.06% compared to the 50,000 overdue in 2016.

At present, the total number of homestay inn listings in China is about 1.6 million. Behind the huge number, it faces the problem of serious homogeneity and lack of personalized design. The design of most homestay inn is the same and does not fully integrate regional cultural characteristics. This is the current status of domestic homestay inns and lacks original design products.

The design of a homestay inn should be tailored to local conditions. It is necessary to have an in-depth understanding of the local customs, combine with the local environment and culture, and form a unique style based on this. For example, the homestay inn in Gubei WTown in Beijing was developed based on the historical and cultural heritage of Simatai, and has a mountainous courtyard building in the style of the Ming and Qing Dynasties and the Republic of China<sup>12</sup>. The homestay inns in Mogan Mountain in Zhejiang Province have better natural scenery. Through the transformation of the original villages and the retention of the village mechanism, the homestay inns can be integrated into the nature, and tourists can also experience the distance from the hustle and bustle of the city. Rural life<sup>13,14</sup>. Homestay inns are showing a branding trend, and good brand benefits can attract

more customers and enable operators to better establish themselves in the market.

China has a vast territory and tourists come from all corners of the country with different needs. In addition to making full use of regional advantages, the design of the homestay inn should also be diversified. For example, with China's opening of the "two-child policy", more and more families have a second child, and parent-child homestay inns have gradually emerged, forming more interesting homestay inns designed with children as the center. The Qiyu Sports homestay inn in Mogan Mountain incorporates some sports and fitness equipment into the design of the house. Visitors can exercise and entertain in the room while staying. Landlords with experience in sports will also lead tourists to outdoor sports. Only with the diversification of themes can the design of homestay inns bloom to meet the needs of different age groups and different audience groups.

IP (Intellectual Property) originally meant intellectual property rights<sup>15</sup>. With the rise of new media, cultural IP has become a connection and integration between cultural products, with high recognition, self-contained traffic, strong realization and penetration capabilities, and long realization period. Cultural symbols. Network traffic is a term commonly used by people in the era of big data. The amount of network traffic represents the degree of attention to a person, thing, or event. During the COVID-19, the Internet has become an important social place for people and an important way to understand the world. There are 940 million Internet users in China. The network traffic brought by IP is huge, and the economic benefits it produces are incalculable.

In November 2020, Ding Zhen became a tourism ambassador of Litang County due to a series of portrait photos accidentally becoming popular on the Internet, contributing to local tourism. On the 25th of the same month, Ding Zhen's promotional film *The World of Ding Zhen* for his hometown was officially launched. In the lens, he rode a horse on the vast grassland, showing his way of life and the folk culture of his hometown, which attracted millions of netizens. Yearning. The economic potential of "Ding Zhen IP" is huge, and it has become an opportunity to publicize and promote the

development of tourism in Litang County. Establishing the homestay inn's own cultural IP is one of the future development trends<sup>16</sup>.

Judging from the current situation, China's epidemic prevention measures have achieved remarkable results, and all walks of life have successfully resumed work. Although the epidemic has brought many difficulties, the homestay in industry has undergone a major reshuffle of the "winter period", and the remaining ones are high-quality homestay inns and operators with relatively strong funds. In addition to its own brand is strong enough, it should also actively seek support and help from the local government to reduce the losses caused by the epidemic. After the epidemic, a new round of challenges is coming. With continuous development, future homestay inn management will exceed the norms, and the types and themes of homestay inns will be diversified. The future homestay inn will be full of flowers. Moreover, the development of homestay inns is inseparable from the Internet, and the development of both offline and online modes is an inevitable trend. In today's diversified development of homestay inns, the definition of homestay inns is not just a place to live, but more like a medium or carrier, which can be endowed with different attributes. The Internet has greatly shortened the distance between people and the barriers between various industries. Regarding homestay inn as a medium, 'homestay inn +' is a mainstream in the future. Smoke-free homestay inns also provide a more comfortable environment for the health of customers.

### Author Declaration

This research is not funded by any organization related to tobacco production.

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