

A tale of two bookstores in a domain under strain



Second edition: Fudan Used Bookstore is moving to a new location with more space and its own shop front. — Ti Gong

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The Fudan Used Bookstore on Zhengsu Road shut down late last year because of a local urban renewal project, but that didn't mean the end of a lifetime dream for owner Zhang Qiang.

He is now planning to reopen at a new location, brushing aside the risk of starting a new venture in poorer economic times.

Three months after the 20-year-old shop closed, interior decorating work on the new venue is under way. If everything goes to plan, the bookstore will open for business in late April on Weide Road in Yangpu District.

"It's fortunate that the store is not just a dream of my own, but also of my former patrons and readers," Zhang said. "We received a lot of help and encouragement. And after viewing several new sites for relocation, we made our decision."

The original bookstore was on the second floor of a streetside building. Its signboard was squeezed between those of an Internet café and a serviced apartment. Its interior was too small for the vast volume of used books, either purchased from readers or collected by Zhang and his wife.

"There were books everywhere, from the ground to the ceiling," said Sophia Fan, a regular at the old shop. "There were books piled on the spiral staircase as well. It was hard to maneuver inside the shop when there were a lot of people there."

The new bookstore will be about a five-minute walk from the east gate of Fudan University. More spacious inside, it will have its own shop front and a music record store as a neighbor.

The success of bookstores has been severely impacted by online retailers and by the coronavirus pandemic. To survive, many of the shops were forced