

Project Title: Giant Interactive Group Campus

Project Location: Shanghai, China

Category: Design, Institutional Design

Purpose of Project:

Centered on employee well-being and environmental sustainability the Giant Interactive Headquarters has become a physical symbol of the company's business ambitions and technological aspirations. The project demonstrates the benefits of employee access to recreational open space, the success of native and adaptive plants thriving on extreme conditions, habitat creation, and green building technology. This dynamic green roof stands in marked contrast to an otherwise banal Shanghai skyline and signals the client's desire to forge a new campus identity.

Role of Landscape Architect:

The design team sought to use the landscape as an organizing framework for the master plan, part of which includes the research and operations facility of Giant Interactive Group, an online game developer and operator. The 98.8-acre master planned area was structured around hydrological processes that clean, filter, and circulate water diverted from the adjacent irrigation canal. 90% of the existing trees are salvaged, relocated to various parts of the site, and amended with a variety of other tree species to promote biodiversity richness and seasonal interests.

Half of the site contains the industrial uses and half is a park-like setting with a lake, a hotel and clubhouse, villas, and an island home for the CEO. The landscape architect's responsibility was to weave these water and wetlands habitats together with the various architectural elements of the site, including a singular headquarters building design by the architects, incorporating a green roof of folded, soaring and dipping surfaces which blur the distinction between the ground plane and the structure.

The expansive green roof of 163,853.95 square feet (15,222 square meters) envelops the structure, blurring the edges where landscape and building meet. The green roof was designed to be a low maintenance "meadow" that requires little watering and naturalizes over time. Unlike a typical green roof, the surfaces fold, soar and dip. The undulating roof structure plunges into the ground plane at points, dipping into the wildlife pond and coming into contact with the pedestrian plaza.

Significance:

In a country where the norm for a productive workplace centers around the confines of poorly ventilated, crowded cubicles in mega office towers, Giant Interactive Headquarters demonstrates an enlightened approach based on occupant comfort. The seamless integration of the building program with landscape affords the workers a multiplicity of experiences. Enhanced by abundant natural light and constant contact with the natural realm, the project connects one's inner well-being with the outer robust ecological systems.

Special Factors:

Because of the roof's folding geometry and orientation, distinct micro-climates occur in response to ridge, valley, sun, and shade conditions. After a year-long testing, and adjustments to plant species and mix percentages, 11 species were chosen based on the plant's native origin (seven species are native to China), plant rigor, ability to tolerate sun and shade, plant hardiness to dry soil and standing water, and seasonal flowering regimes. After only one season's growth, a pleasant surprise has been observed: the roofscape has become a haven for butterflies, particularly the Small Cabbage White butterfly (*Pieris rapae*).