

Project Title: Fuzhou Lakeside Village

Location: Fuzhou, China

Category: Design, Residential Development Design

Project Description

Purpose

Fuzhou Lakeside Village features a residential and mixed-use development nestled in the hills and natural features of the Red Cliff Scenic Area in Southeast China. The 45 hectare site is within a 30 minute drive to Fuzhou City, making it a popular area to purchase a second home for the rising class of urban professionals. Bordered by the Dazhangxi River on the east, the housing developments are embedded in the landscape so that it is minimally disruptive to the 12 hills unique to the historic natural area. The designers of Fuzhou Lakeside Village rebuff the all too common condition of rapid urbanization and erasure of history, nature, and context; this project represents a renewed sensibility for preserving the past while moving forward to a modern way of life in China.

The design team's innovative approach to sustainability unites structures, mountains, and the man-made lake in a mutually beneficial, symbiotic relationship. Perhaps the most dramatic intervention is the central lake, a waterfront open space providing a memorable walking experience for the residents. A network of neighborhood parks located in the hills above the lake act as detention areas to capture and clean storm water. The parks are interlinked by an extensive trail network to provide diverse recreational options for the residents. The natural amenities of the park perform the dual function of providing respite for people, and a sustainable green network of water detention systems.

Role of Landscape Architect

A breakthrough concept for residential development in China, this project emphasizes a pedestrian network that weaves throughout a range of neighborhood amenities. The emphasis is to create an constant relationship between residents and nature. If you are ambitious, you can abandon the car and take advantage of the trails that weave between mountains and open spaces, greeting neighbors along the way. Preserving a natural and scenic environment was ever more relevant to provide a sense of a getaway, a hyper-natural environment as a counter point to urban life in Fuzhou. The intention is to slow down the pace of life and completely surrender to the breathtaking views of the Red Cliff Scenic Area.

Significance

This project proposes a new paradigm for residential multi-family development as a place for strengthening social ties. Designed with the concept of Weaving and Stitching – a strategy for how the man-made architecture and the natural topography of the site are bound into a cohesive whole. Public parks and community centers are dispersed throughout the development, connected by walking and bike paths. Paths, walkways, ramps, bridges, seat-walls and water features are designed to provide a sense that the built programs are respectful of its surroundings. Every corner will afford a new vista of the mountains, providing a sense of privacy and respite from the city.

Special Factors

The iconic pedestrian bridge structure that surrounds the lake is of particular importance. The function of the pedestrian bridge is to take you from the lake's edge to a heightened natural experience, where one feels they are floating. The bridge is a space where kids skip ahead of their parents, with a breathtaking lakeside view and the mountains beyond. The engineering behind the bridge structure underwent iterations of study to ensure a bridge that is beautiful, well-lit, and also cost effective. The design team advocated tirelessly for an iconic feature to enhance the lakefront, a vehicle for bringing people closer to nature. The ideas of binding man and nature is strengthened by the network of public spaces that work within the order of the natural topography and waterways.

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Image Summary



Image: Fuzhou1

Site Plan: Phase 1 of the Fuzhou Lakeside Village plan, showing the designed man-made lake at center, with residential housing along the topography. Each residential unit has a unique view of the lake, with a series of inter-connected pathways and social public space in between.



Image: Fuzhou2

Before Construction: To preserve the view corridors defined by existing natural hills and valleys, the Fuzhou Lakeside Village is carefully layout in the hillside of the Red Cliff Scenic Area. The central lake was installed as a mechanism for cleaning and detaining stormwater, as well as a public open-space amenity. The vegetable patch at center is where the central



Image: Fuzhou3

Phase I completion: The lakeside bridge winds around the periphery of the water, connecting residents who want to traverse between the community center at the right, and the rest of the residential development.



Image: Fuzhou4

Playful kids on the bridge: The bridge network has been well received by the community, who appreciate the views of nature, as well as the pedestrian only space that encourages kids to play.



Image: Fuzhou5

Weaving and Stitching: The residential housing is clearly integrated with the topography and recessed for privacy, while social areas such as the community center and the bridge take prominence at the water's edge.

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Image: Fuzhou6

Bike paths within the community: Revolutionary as a concept for residential housing developments in China, the narrow vehicular circulation encourages residents to take an active approach, perhaps to appreciate preserved historic trees such as the pines at right.



Image: Fuzhou7

Lakefront Pebble Beach: Children are encouraged to interact directly with water, a chance to be in direct contact with a natural feature. The lakeside pebble beach is a stage for play, where multiple generations of users can appreciate the natural world, as well as each other's company.



Image: Fuzhou8

Deck: A different stage for residents to enjoy the water, the lotus flowers at the edge of the stair harkens to a traditional motif of Chinese garden design. However, in this garden the stairs gently bring one to the edge of the water for a more direct relationship without hindrances.



Image: Fuzhou9

Pedestrian Bridge lit at night: The pedestrian bridge is a feature in the evening, with gently diffuse lighting that brings the undulating form to life.



Image: Fuzhou10

Mountains beyond Fuzhou Lakeside Village: Perhaps the greatest landscape feature is the surrounding mountains, showing rocky outcropping and scrubby pine trees. The Fuzhou Lakeside Village is a quiet retreat from the urban life of most Chinese professionals. Through its design, the team emphasizes a motif of bridging - between generations of families, environments both man-made and natural, and the ongoing rapid modernization of the Chinese way of life.