Batter Landscape, Batter City
: The positive role of landscape in urban development

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1. Introduction

With the urban development in urbanization process in China, land use planning and urban design become two most critical and important issues in the planning and design field in China today. Macro urban development needs to be realized through urban master planning and controlling planning with the leading planning of land use. While detailed urban development, such as urban transportation centre, commercial streets, open space like squares and parks, water front, university campus, industry parks, project like these usually needs to be realized before working drawing through a detailed planning and design process what we call urban design. Three professionals, urban planning, architecture, landscape architecture, are all involved urban design in China. After 20 years in both theory research and practice, with the influence of landscape urbanism, the landscape architecture becomes more and more important in both land use planning and urban design in China. Particularly, for promoting the development of public space, conservation and raising the quality of ecological environment, beautification of urban images and features, the positive roles of landscape on these three aspects in urban development are obvious.

As the representative in the planning and design filed from China, based on the practice experiences of more than 30 urban development projects (Figure 1. Ecological Landscape Planning and Design Comprehensive Improvement Program for the Hutuo River, City of Shijiazhuang, China 2008-2009; Figure 2. Landscape Planning and Urban Design of Bai Lang River, Weifang City, Shangdong Province, China, 2009-2010), the author would like describe and discuss these issues by using two typical projects within this speech.

2. New town development in rural-urban fringe

During China's urbanization process, the rural-urban fringe shows the urbanization trends developing from countryside to the modern city, which leads to the main issues including the nature of land conversion and the corresponding mechanisms for supporting the policy, industrial distribution and that of the proportion in three industries, the new living environment, the change of ecology from the original countryside environment to modern urban environment, and the change in existing cultural habits, and so on(Figure 3. Question: How to develop urban area while protecting the ecological environment within rapid urbanization progress in China?).

As an upcoming urbanization area located in rural-urban fringe, Pengshan Platform, in Shengzhou City, Zhejiang Province, China, ranged about 30 square
kilometers, is one of the typical rural-urban fringe area. It is facing the same problems in its development. In its planning process, a regional planning approach of “reverse urbanization” was created: based on the regional coordination, the elements of the Feng-shui of the region, geographical features, animals and plants, landscape ecology, the visual landscape, the original inhabitants, culture, history and the others were considered. Using sustainable ecological development as the prestige, the new pattern of the urban development was discovered from the three scales, the macro-region context, middle region context of the urban-region of convergence with the old city, and the micro area context of the project, for the purpose of proper planning land use, guiding industrial development, promoting green infrastructure construction. The project provides a new way of thinking on the patterns of development and construction in the rural-urban fringe area, the development of ecological new city and landscape environment conservation and restoration (Figure 4. Urban Planning of Pengshan Platform, in Shengzhou City, Zhejiang Province, China, 2010 (30 Km²)).

3. Landscape oriented urban design as a new center of a city

Zhangjiagang Jiyang Lake Eco-park Planning & Design is a comprehensive and landscape-oriented community planning and design project. The site occupies 441.45ha. It includes conceptual planning, detailed planning, site planning, landscape and environmental planning (Short-term, Medium-term & Long-term) and construction working drawing and construction coordination work.

The planning of Zhangjiagang Jiyang Lake Eco-park is aiming to achieve the goal of strengthening eco-environment, creating three benefits, and running harmonious & effective cities. From the year of 2000 through 2010, the team of Landscape Architecture Department of Tongji University work on master planning, detail planning, site planning, alternative design, construction design and on site construction supervision, cooperating closely with Client. Gradually, we turn the blueprint of Jiyang Lake Eco-park into reality (Figure 5. Landscape Planning & Design in Urban Development: Jiyang Eco-Park, Zhangjiagang City, Jiangsu Province, China (2000-2015)).

The existing environment is an area of countryside which needs to be urbanized, and has a man-made lake of 40ha, 4 meter in depth. Two man-made canals and several water drains run across the villages, thus demonstrating the typical landscape style of southern part of China. As a final possible site suitable for urban development construction which is only 3.5km from city center, dispute of utilization is put forward, urban park, real estate or CBD. The idea of New City is settled after five-year
research & discussion, which proves to be correct today. That is to set the goal of achieving the comprehensive development of urban environment, society and economy, to create a new city gathering recreation, entertainment, tourism and dwelling in one which reflects modern flavor and traditional Chinese garden under the guide of theory of landscape ecology. In short, the project is pursuing the following characteristics.

4. Conclusion

In the past two thousands years, western architecture from ancient Greek and Rome solved human’s residence demands except the environment problems. Meanwhile Chinese landscape and Feng-shui theories which have a history of over thousands years gained lots of successful practices in building human environments. In the next generation, landscape architecture will take the leading role of human settlement construction and play more and more positive roles in urban development. As contemporary urban planner and designer, we should try to return the beautiful landscape to Cities based on rethinking of ideal human settlement environment (Figure 6. Modern city, bad Feng-shui; The “modern” come, nature gone, residential area in Shanghai 2007; Figure 7. Return the Beautiful Landscape to City: Rethinking of Ideal Human Settlement Environment).