

Review Study - UNNC
New Models of Urban Housing:
The Case of Mixed-use concept and Integrated Design in Shanghai

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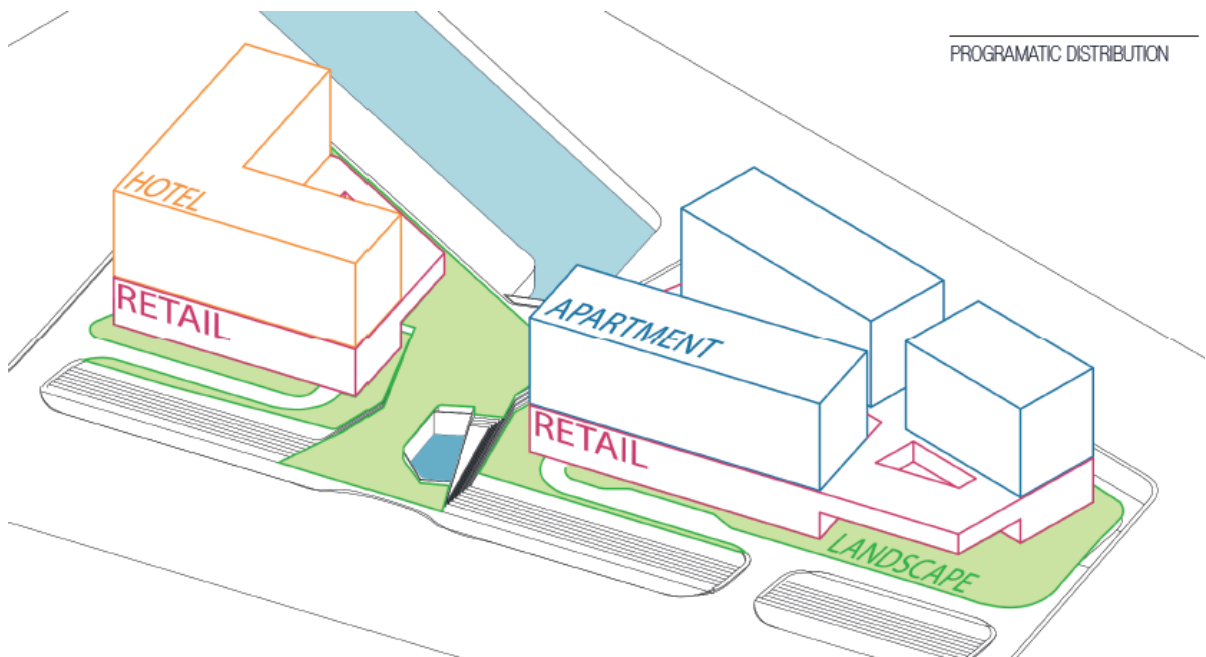
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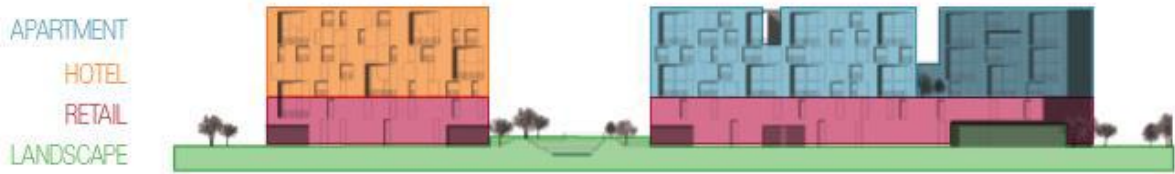
Introduction

Pu Dong Lifestyle Hub is project by ‘Slow Studio architects’, which until now just is in its conceptual phase. It is a multi-functional complex in the Pudong area in the Eastern part of Shanghai, China. According to Slow Studio (www.slowstudio.cn), the project strives “to create a vibrant, new center for living and playing”. This is a mixed-use housing development that can be used as a new model of housing in the context of compact cities in China, such as Shanghai.

The different functions include a commercial area with retail, café and restaurants, a hotel and several residential flats. The Lifestyle Hub is split into two sites. One site has commercial area in the two bottom floors while the following five stories are used as a hotel. The other site also has the two bottom floors as a commercial area (so that the two sites connect with one another), while the top five floors consist of residential apartments.



Source: Slow Studio, Shanghai



Source: Slow Studio, Shanghai

Critique on Pu Dong Lifestyle Hub

Context

by Bettina Vernimmen Olesen (year 2 exchange student at UNNC)

The design and massing of Pu Dong Lifestyle Hub has been heavily influenced by the surroundings of the site. The neighbouring site also has commercial space in the bottom of the building with residential buildings above. Slow Studio wished to create a complementary connection between these two commercial spaces. Along with this Slow Studio also wished to recreate an old waterway close by in between their two sites. The main idea in their design is to create a visual corridor between the neighbouring commercial area and the old waterway.



Source: Slow Studio, Shanghai and year 2 students Architecture Course, UNNC

Shanghai is a city which has been under rapid growth the last 30 years, which has resulted in an enormous globalization of the city. This globalization has highly influenced architecture – it has brought with it western architectural forms, many of them without any sense of critical view on the context of them in China. The Nordic Journal of Architectural Research (Vol. 21, 2009, p. 5) states that “many Chinese architects are still lost in translating Western aesthetic forms for a Chinese public”. A large amount of new architecture in Shanghai is an imitation of western building style and forgets the Chinese context. This can also be seen in relation to the Pu Dong Lifestyle Hub. It needs to be related more critically to its context – e.g. from the eyes of a critical regionalist.

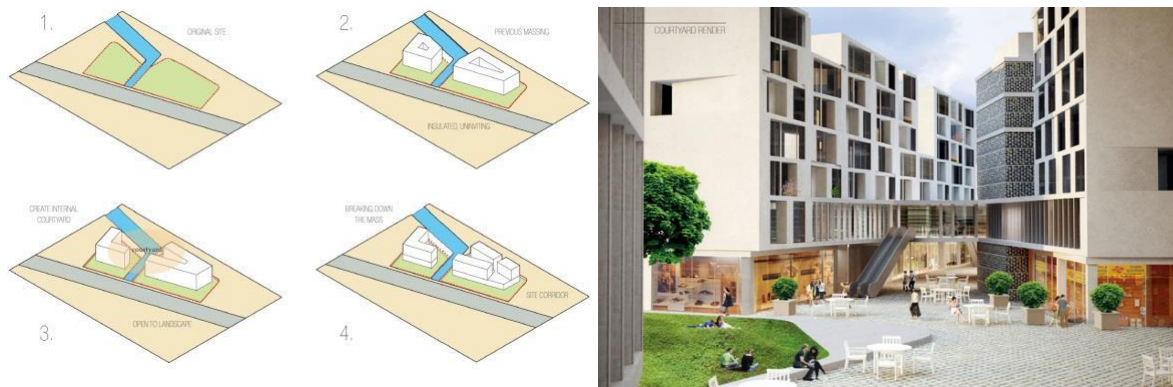
The design of the Hub seems to be very contemporary and depersonalizing for the residents. There is no shared semi-public space for the residents - the choice is either being private in the apartments or being public in the ground floor courtyard in between the retail areas. When comparing this to the historical area of Ningbo which contains traditional Chinese elements such as the shared courtyards between several families the Pu Dong Lifestyle Hub again seems to lack the regionalist approach.

Typology

by Jerry WANG Shuang (year 2 Architecture Student at UNNC)

Pu Dong Lifestyle Hub is designed for people who want a convenient lifestyle. There are three main functional spaces: residential apartment, hotel and commercial center. The strategies of creating an interactive relationship and circulation for different clients will be analysed in a critical way.

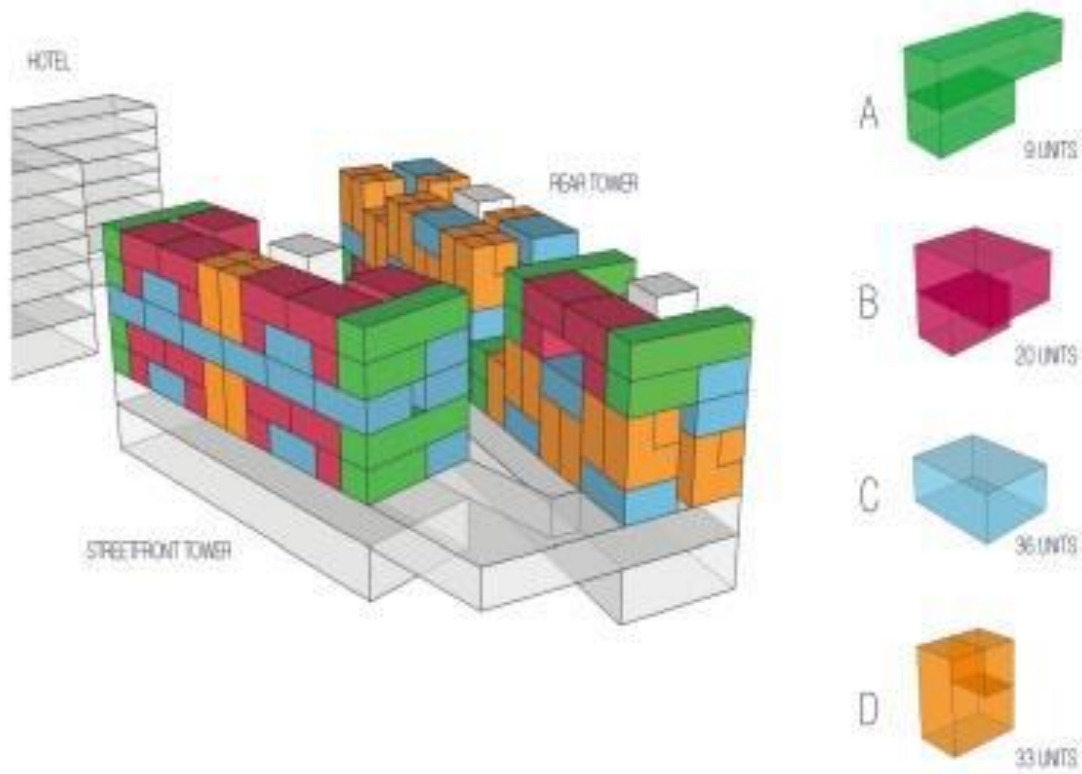
Firstly, this project has two main strategies to connect different functional areas in horizontal and vertical ways. The first design strategy is the public courtyard. The central courtyard includes a plaza and retails, it is similar to the traditional Chinese courtyard with regard to the shape and idea, but the hub is more contemporary and has more functions. The advantage of this design is that the three functional parts are connected closer through this public plaza and the retail below the housing, therefore, people from all zones can easily access to the commercial space. In addition, more small communal spaces are created around the 'courtyard'. Another advantage is that the river goes through the plaza; the open 'courtyard' results in a wide view of the landscape. Therefore, views from these three buildings facing the river side are attractive.



Source: Slow Studio, Shanghai

The other strategy is the mixed unit distribution of the apartment. There are four types of units distributed in 5 levels, the advantage is that the 2-floor units can fit in the volume efficiently and more interesting spaces can be created between different units. Although the units are connected in a nice shape, the 4 typical units are not connected in a reasonable way and there is no consideration in social connection when they designed the apartments for clients. For instance, there are no relations among same units, no communal spaces for the apartment compared to the ground floor. However, Talebi (2009) states that “*Creating suitable environment for families is the first priority of the residential complex. Physical structure of the environment in different levels of design including site designing, façade designing and details of environmental elements should considered for providing social*

communications". Hence, the client narratives and social communications should be considered in the design process.

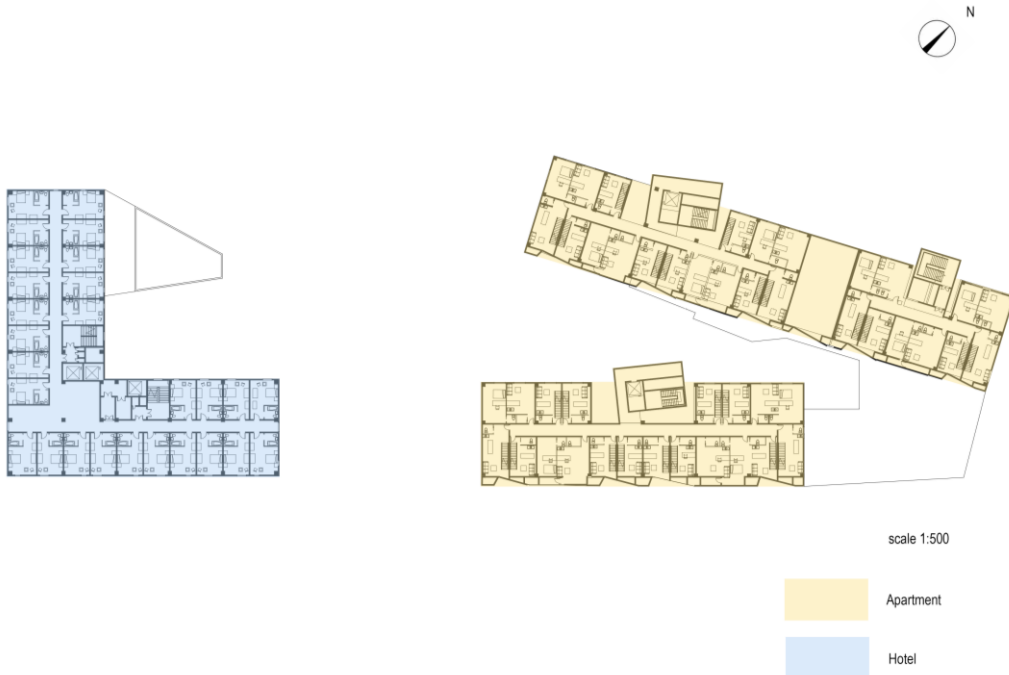


Source: Slow Studio, Shanghai



Source: Slow Studio, Shanghai

Residential Unit sizes and layout

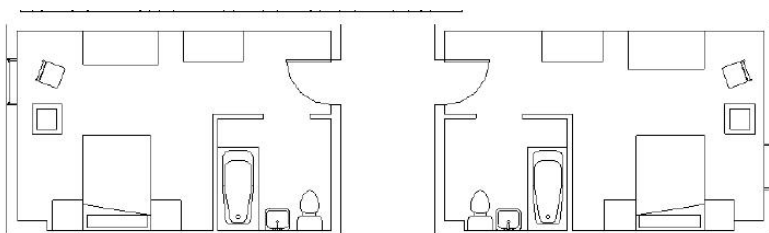


Daylight Analysis

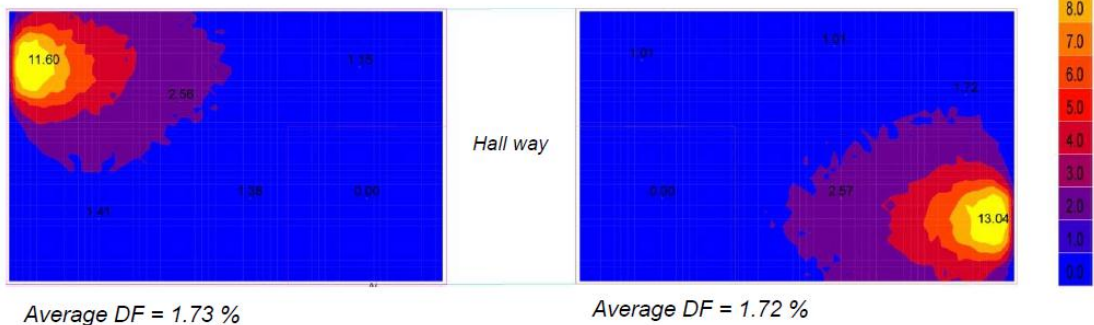
The environmental aspect of the building has been investigated through the analysis program Eco-tect. The main focus has been the level of daylight in the rooms.

Hotel rooms

Two hotel rooms across the hall from each other on the third floor (6.65 meters above ground level) have been chosen. These two were chosen to be able to investigate the impact of the orientation of the hotel rooms. In Eco-tect the typical hotel rooms have been modelled and they were “lifted” to the height of 6.65 meters because the height of the room also has an impact on the level of daylight. The location and interior of the investigated rooms is shown below.



The modelling and results in Ecotect are as seen below.



References

Books

- ABEL, CHRIS (2000) *Architecture and Identity*, New York: Routledge
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Journals

- Botz-Bornstein, Thorsten (2009) Wang Shu and the Possibilities of Architectural Regionalism in China, *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, Vol. 21, No. 1., pp. 1-14.

Websites

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- <http://www.slowstudio.cn/> (accessed on 30-11-2014)

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