Since the reform and opening-up policy in 30 years ago, Chinese city has undergone enormous changes. For the purpose of improving productivity and achieving prosperity, they focus too much on economic development and globalization, which lead to urban area rapid sprawl, and numerous high-rise going up. As one of the largest cities and economic centres in China, Shanghai is a good example.

In 1990, Lujiazui Finance & Trade Zone was established as the only national developing zone in Pudong, Shanghai. Thanks to the planning and PPP development model (Fig. 1&2), a image of tall buildings and high density became really from a piece of farm land in less than two decades. Lujiazui’s skyline is an important symbol of economic strength and urban ambition of Shanghai. Lujiazui is already a high and vertical world, which look like several candles standing on a thin pancake (Fig. 3). However, the urban quality has been badly ignored in between buildings and environment, and urban public space is lost. Mono function, spatial separation and privatisation, inaccessible and so on, these problems are saying “the public space here is no more public!”

How to re-public? A horizontal relationship (Fig. 4) is required, which could connect the spaces between these high-rise buildings, and link building area and waterfront, as well as it could integrate all these fragmental icon-buildings. Moreover, the new horizontal relationship should not another pancake but a cake of full taste.

First, to prepare materials. Against with crowded Puxi, Pudong can provide a new and different experience to public. What will appear here is not just a park, not just a culture ghetto, but variety of public life which mixed with culture and green (Fig. 6). And all the possible programs are classified into five type of public space: Green Open Space, Public Space, Waterside Square, Public Building and Semi-Public Space.

Second, to organize the spatial distribution and conformation of these materials.

1. Strategy (Fig. 7): The main structure is the skeleton of the planning, where most programs located with maximum openness and attractive. And the general structure provide semi-public space and accessibility to support and complete the structure.

2. Three layers (Fig. 5): To enrich the “pancake” part, the new design will be illustrated by three layers: topography, green open space and public buildings. The three layers are not separated with each other but related by a strong correlation.

3. Learning from Chinese Garden: space organizing and routing experience (Fig. 8-13). While the vertical world shows more globalization style, the horizontal relationship could go with a Chinese way which is more suitable for Chinese people’s behaviour.

Reviewing this project, it started with a strategy planning, but finally shows more output on urban design. Interestingly, it does not mean the project is fail but successful. In China, traditional urban planning way is not enough. People requires more from public life and urban environment which happen in between the planning and architecture scales. Exactly, this is the urban design’s responsibilities!