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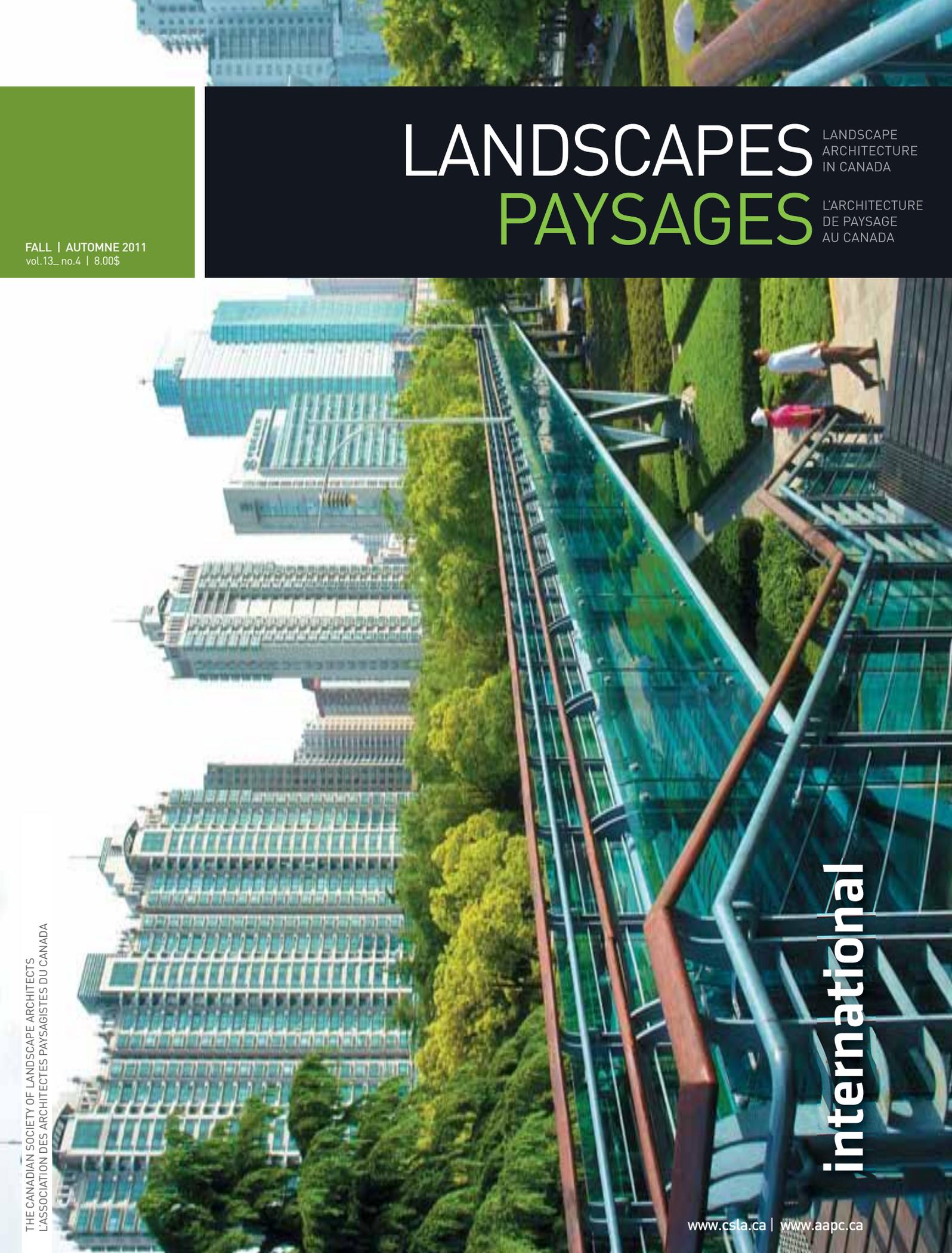
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HU YUN HUA + VINCENT ASSELIN

SHANGHAI GREEN SPACE

THERE'S MORE THAN YOU CAN SEE AT FIRST GLANCE!

En 1993, le taux d'espace vert par habitant avait grimpé à 1,15 m². En 2007, il atteignait 12,01 m².

1 A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF YAN'AN ROAD IN SHANGHAI (A PROJECT OF WAA) **2** SHANGHAI RING GREENSPACE | **1** VUE AÉRIENNE DE L'AUTOROUTE YAN'AN DE SHANGHAI (PROJET DE WAA) **2** CEINTURE VERTE DE SHANGHAI
PHOTOS 1 INMAGINE

FR_

L'ESPACE VERT DE SHANGHAI

Ce que nous voyons à Shanghai est essentiellement ce qui est énoncé dans les manuels occidentaux sur la planification scientifique. Dans les années 1980, le Bureau de la planification de Shanghai a élaboré la première version d'un plan de réseau d'espaces verts, établissant – à partir de zéro – un système complet, y compris des ceintures vertes le long de toutes ses voies routières principales, des coins de verdure, des ceintures bleues le long de ses 2000 rivières et canaux, et une typologie complète de parcs et de jardins. Les auteurs décrivent l'évolution du plan et sa réussite spectaculaire. En 1949, lorsque la Chine nouvelle a été fondée, les espaces verts de Shanghai n'occupaient que 0,132 m² par personne. En 1993, ce taux avait grimpé à 1,15 m², malgré la montée en flèche de la population. La ville a pris des mesures radicales afin d'accélérer le changement : en 1999, elle a déménagé quelque 10 000 personnes pour faire place au parc Yan'an Zhong Lu.

En 2007, le taux d'espace vert par habitant était de 12,01 m². La ville espère porter ce taux à 15 m² ce qui fait d'elle un modèle pour les autres villes chinoises sinon pour le monde entier.



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SHANGHAI HAS EVOLVED from a small fishing village into an international metropolis striving for recognition in economics and finance as well as in shipping. With rapid urbanization over the past three decades, the city leaders have concentrated on improving living conditions for their 23 million citizens, and demonstrating to the world that this city is serious about its environment.

In fact, what we are seeing in Shanghai is essentially what is spelled out in western text books on scientific planning. The first major urban renewal projects, which were intended to provide efficient access to the downtown area of Puxi, were not realized easily. To create new and modern roadways including Yan'an Zhong Lu, the North-South expressways and various ring roads, the city moved thousands of people, leaving scars in the urban fabric.



Shanghai



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What we are seeing in Shanghai is essentially what is spelled out in western text books on scientific planning.

Initially, the Shanghai Planning Department opposed the Park Bureau's concept for concentrated green spaces within the city's core: the idea did not seem practical or easy to achieve. Of course it was not easy! It wasn't until the birth of Yan'an Zhong Lu Green Space in 1999, the first major green space to be realized, that things moved on.

A GREEN SYSTEM - FROM SCRATCH

In the 1980s, the city planning bureau developed the first version of a green space network plan. Again, if you want details about components of the plan, look up your planning principles in any western text book. The city created—from scratch—an entire Green System including green belts along all its major roadways, green wedges, blue belts along its 2,000 rivers and canals, and a full typology of parks and gardens.

Shanghai has set clear goals for 2020: green space of 15 m² per person, 35 per cent of green space and overall, 40 per cent green coverage. This ultimate green network will include urban parks at the heart of the system, suburban large-scale ecological forest, green belts along roads, transport corridors, rivers, lakes and the sea: an overall layout composed of "ring, wedge, corridor, garden, park, forest and ecological and conservation areas."

RINGS, WEDGES AND CORRIDORS...

The green rings include the 98 kilometre long outer city ring surrounded by a 500 metre wide green belt, and a 180 kilometre long suburban ring flanked by a 500 metre wide forest green belt on both sides. Individual suburban town green rings will have a 50 to 100 metre wide green buffer around each town. Eight wedge-shaped greenspaces penetrate from the outer city into the downtown, supplying fresh air and green spaces to alleviate the heat island effect.

The corridors include massive plantings along the city's main roads, the rivers, the power lines, the railway and major municipal pipelines. Along both sides of the Huang Pu River, a green belt of up to 200 metres wide is underway; along secondary rivers, 25 to 250 metre wide green spaces are planned. A very good example of the impact of such spaces would be evident to any landscape architect who visited Shanghai during the World Expo. Expo's most successful landscape projects were the waterfront green spaces along the Huang Pu River. The historical public space called the Bund was rehabilitated with greatly improved accessibility, and its modern counterparts were built on both sides of the river as well as along the Expo site.

A MODERN TYPOLOGY

The Master Plan defines three types of parks: city parks, outer city parks and suburban town parks, which are graded by size. First level parks are over 10 hectares; second level are 4 to 10 hectares, and so on. Parks are evenly distributed to ensure that all citizens have access to a park of at least 3,000 m² within 500 metres of their homes. This is no simple task in a dense, old urban fabric.

When the Garden Bureau organized an international Competition for the design of Yan'an Zhong Lu Park in 1999 (won by WAA Inc), it was to be 23 hectares. This expanded to 28 hectares, but eventually, with the addition of smaller plots, the park developed into a green axis crossing the downtown and reaching the Huang Pu River. Together with the People's Park and surrounding public institutions, it created a major green core in the city. The response to this risky undertaking was so positive that it stimulated a push to increase the pace of Green Network development,

In 1993, Shanghai's greenspace per capita had increased to 1.15 m²... By 2007, greenspace per capita had reached 12.01 m².



1 IN XUJIAHUI PARK, HU YUN HUA DISCUSSES GREEN NETWORK MODERNISATION (VINCENT ASSELIN BACK CENTRE) **2** YAN'AN ZHONG LU PARK, GARDEN OF SENSES **3** CHANGFENG PARK, A MODERNIZED RIVERFRONT PARK **4** XIUAHUI **5** DOWNTOWN XINTIANDI **6** THE DRY RIVER GARDEN, YAN'AN ZHONG LU PARK **7** A WELL CRAFTED RIVER PARK AT EXPO **8** TRADITIONAL AREA OF OLD CHANGFENG PARK **9** MAGNOLIA PARK, A MODERN POCKET PARK DOWNTOWN ALONG THE N-S EXPRESSWAY **ABOVE:** PARKS WITHIN 500 M OF EVERY HOME | **1** DANS LE PARC XUJIAHUI, HU YUN HUA EXPLIQUE LA MODERNISATION DU RÉSEAU DE VERDURE (VINCENT ASSELIN DERRIÈRE, AU CENTRE) **2** PARC YAN'AN ZHONG LU, JARDIN DES SENS **3** PARC CHANGFENG, PARC RIVERIN MODERNISÉ **4** XIUAHU **5** CENTRE-VILLE DE XINTIANDI **6** LE JARDIN DE LA RIVIÈRE SÈCHE, PARC YAN'AN ZHONG LU **7** UN PARC RIVERAIN BIEN CONÇU À L'EXPO **8** PARTIE TRADITIONNELLE DU PARC DU VIEUX CHANGFENG **9** PARC DES MAGNOLIAS, ENCLAVE DE VERDURE AU CENTRE-VILLE, LE LONG DE LA VOIE RAPIDE NORD-SUD **CI-DESSUS** DES PARCS À MOINS DE 500 M DE CHAQUE HABITATION **PHOTOS 1** JEAN LANDRY **2-10** VINCENT ASSELIN

and was soon followed by the 10 hectare Xujiahui Park (designed by WAA Inc), which replaced an obsolete industrial site in the French Concession. The Shanghai Green Network Plan had quickly become as relevant and necessary as the new modern Public Transit System. Soon after, Mayor Han Zheng, the official who had been the vice-mayor responsible for the Green Network, came into office. He pushed forward the implementation of 125 stations of the Metro System in time to serve the city needs of Expo! These initiatives moved Shanghai in the same direction, creating a more livable and modern city.

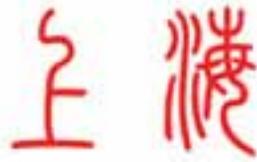
FROM 0.132 M² TO 15 M² OF GREEN SPACE PER PERSON!

In 1949 when New China was founded, the greenspace in Shanghai totalled only 0.132 m² per person. By 1993, the greenspace per capita had increased to 1.15 m². At the same time, the city population was

ballooning. By 1999, when the city moved residents to make way for Yan'an Zhong Lu Park construction, they relocated more than 10,000 people and about 400 businesses and institutions. In the historic and cultural Xujiahui district, they relocated old factories that had caused serious pollution to create a much needed greenspace. By 2007, greenspace per capita had reached 12.01 m².

At the same time, work was underway on the outer ring green belt, corridor plantings and suburban woodlands. More recent numbers suggest that Shanghai has eclipsed Singapore with its green ratio surpassing 13 m² per capita. This demonstrates how serious the undertakings were, but in fact, the city is not competing on numbers! They have established a vision, and they are implementing it.

The staggering scope of the change becomes clear when the population dynamics are



Shanghai



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factored in. In 1949, when the population of Shanghai was a fraction of today's, the green network was simply a handful of small historical green spaces. Today, Shanghai's green spaces are all public spaces. In addition, planning regulations require private developers to provide up to 35 per cent of green space within residential projects and often more than 10 per cent in commercial projects. All of these actions contribute to making the city more sustainable.

WHAT MORE FOR THE FUTURE?

The pace of green modernization cannot continue with the same intensity. Relocation costs are becoming overwhelming: it will be more difficult, if not impossible, to create new public green spaces by removing old buildings. Yet Shanghai's land is limited. Therefore, the city is adding vertical greening and green roofs to add more green to the city core. To increase the green cover, the city is using trees and planting as much as possible.

Even future parking structures, built to alleviate parking problems in the city core, will contribute to the ecology: the structures will be partly buried and covered with vertical green and green roofs.

Green is Ecological! China is a Landscape Society, and people appreciate nature and planting, valuing the positive impact of new landscapes. In the city, the heat island effect has gradually eased, air quality has greatly improved and the urban landscape is more beautiful. When international businesses consider establishing themselves abroad, they consider various key indicators such as quality of life and greenspace. By providing a comprehensive green network for their citizens, the city leaders are in fact creating highly favorable conditions for their city's economy. Shanghai emerges as a modern green metropolis and model to other Chinese cities – if not the world.

A SILVER MAGNOLIA

Following the design of Yan'an Zhong Lu Park, Mr. Asselin received the Magnolia Silver Medal, the highest distinction given by the city of Shanghai to foreigners for their contribution to the development of the city. This was the first time that a LA received this honour. Since this was also the first time the Garden Administration's proposal for a nominee was accepted, it was an immensely proud moment for the Garden Administration Bureau, and then-Director Hu Yun Hua.



BEIJING OLYMPICS PHOTO VINCENT ASSELIN

VINCENT ASSELIN

HISTORY DOES NOT MARCH BACKWARDS!

YES, CHINA IS A COUNTRY of superlatives! But neither the statement, «*I have seen the future!*» nor «*What a an environmental catastrophe!*» can really sum it up. We westerners are too quick to judge. Too many of us come to China (or indeed, any other place in the world) with preconceptions that prevent us from understanding the local cultural context. Too often, we make superficial judgements and unfair evaluations, failing to see that in China, there is a different way of appreciating the world. As Corinne Thibaut explains in her essay (page 18), the Chinese perspective on Nature and Landscape has very little to do with our own.

For example, I believe Beijing's Olympic Park is a success story. Some time ago, Beijing decided to preserve the old structure of the city while rebuilding a new central district. Then came the Olympics and the opportunity to further modernize the city along its traditional north-south axis, both by adding major buildings and creating green spaces.

Critics were quick to deplore the destruction. Both the Forbidden City and the Heavenly Temple lie on this north-south axis, and the critics alleged that the harmonious balance of the city had been lost, the old Hutongs have disappeared, and so on. Yes, most of the Hutongs are indeed gone: this is the subject of many books. But if you take a close look at the city plan, you will notice that the new opera building spared this historic axis. To the Chinese, the modernization was not destructive, but exactly the opposite. They had actually improved on the original idea, emphasizing the north-south axis while meeting new challenges!

I tend to fully agree with them! *L'histoire ne connaît pas de marche-arrière!* In fact, this is quite similar to the case in Paris when the city

built along its 10 kilometre historical axis from the Arc de Triomphe, to create La Défense, the prime high-rise district of the city. It is also true that the Beijing Olympic Park, like so many other Olympic sites, is out of scale. It is huge – not human scale at all. But I must say that when I was there, I couldn't believe how Chinese this site was. Its very size reflects the local culture, and the taste of northern Chinese for their public places. Thousands of appreciative people visit the site daily, proving how well it fits.

I have many more reservations when I think of Shanghai's Expo 2010 legacy. Forget the LED lights of Expo! Yes they are beautiful, but they hide the reality. Expo 2010 did not succeed in demonstrating the "BETTER CITY - BETTER LIFE" concept to the world. The fair's timing was perfect, but the results were not there.

Ironically for those of us who work in Shanghai, EXPO 2010 failed to reflect the principles of its host city. Quite the opposite! Shanghai is making a major effort to craft and implement a Green Master Plan of substance, which goes well beyond competitive number-crunching (see page 22). China's cities, like so many others around the world, are facing tremendous pressure from expanding urbanisation and climate change. These are the real issues; these are the things we should be debating. Only then will we build understanding and hopefully, offer better solutions as professionals.

Through this issue of LP, I invite you bright people hiding out there to add your critical voice to the discussion. Email us!

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