

Press release

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Shanghai waterfront gets an upgrade with Foster + Partners and Heatherwick Studio's new Bund Finance Center

The Bund Finance Center – a major new mixed-use development jointly designed by Foster + Partners and Heatherwick Studio – is set to revitalise Shanghai's waterfront. Occupying a prominent site on the Bund, the buildings define the 'end point' to Shanghai's most famous street. The 420,000-square metre masterplan is highly permeable for pedestrians, with the design conceived as a point of connection between the old town and the new financial district.

Inspired by this urban context, two 180-metre landmark towers are placed in the south of the site, while the buildings facing the waterfront are staggered in height and relate in scale and rhythm to the grand nineteenth-century landmarks along the Bund. At the heart of the scheme is a flexible arts and cultural centre, home to the Fosun Foundation, which combines exhibition and events halls with a performance venue, inspired by the open stages of traditional Chinese theatres.

Gerard Evenden, Head of Studio and Senior Executive Partner, Foster + Partners commented: "The Bund Finance Center creates a pivotal connection between the old town and the new financial district. Developing the massing strategy for the buildings was an interesting challenge, in terms of relating to the context of old and new architecture,

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reflecting the scale of the waterfront and the character of the historic quarters.”

Thomas Heatherwick, Founder of Heatherwick Studio, said: “The opportunity to make something new in this prominent location that had formerly been the river gateway to Shanghai’s Old Town was extraordinary. With a project that would create 420,000 square metres of space, we felt a great duty to look for fresh ways to connect with China’s amazing built heritage and make a meaningful public place for thousands of people to work and come together.

Influenced by the materiality and scale of the existing historic buildings along the Bund we have built a series of simple office, shopping and cultural buildings that combine high performance glazing systems with hand carved stone building frames. These structures in turn surround new public spaces and speak to the heritage of the historical Bund buildings.”

The 420,000-square-metre development of eight buildings combines premium offices with a boutique hotel, a cultural centre and a wide variety of luxury retail spaces, all arranged around a landscaped public plaza. The retail spaces are vertically layered with boutiques, concept stores for international brands, a luxury shopping mall and restaurants. A palette of crafted stone and bronze details gives the buildings a jewel-like quality. The edges of each volume are made of richly textured, hand-crafted granite and become slimmer as they rise, giving the impression of solidity at the base and transparency at the top.

The social focus of the scheme is the cultural centre, conceived as a platform for international arts and cultural exchange, as well as a place for brand events, product launches and corporate functions. The building is encircled by a moving veil, which

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adapts to the changing use of the building and reveals the stage on the balcony and views towards Pudong. Developed in collaboration with local engineers Tongji University, the façade is a veil organised along three tracks and made up of layers of 675 individual magnesium alloy 'tassels' – a reference to the traditional Chinese bridal headdress. The tassels range in length from around 2 metres to 16 metres so that as each track independently moves, the veil rotates with the tassels overlapping and producing different visual effects and levels of opacity.

“The cultural centre is an optimum blend of craft and technology. It is inspired by traditional Chinese weaving, while incorporating the latest cutting-edge technology that helps withstand earthquakes, typhoons and severe weather. Its unique form provides a memorable and extraordinary experience for visitors, while the illuminated stage and the motion of the moving veil creates a unique backdrop to the theatre of city life,” added Evenden.

Notes to editors:

Foster + Partners is a global studio for architecture, urbanism and design, rooted in sustainability, which was founded nearly fifty years ago in 1967 by Lord Foster. Since then, he and the team around him have established an international practice with a worldwide reputation for thoughtful and pioneering design, working as a single studio that is both ethnically and culturally diverse. The studio integrates the skills of architecture with engineering, both structural and environmental, urbanism, interior and industrial design, model and film making, aeronautics and many more – our collegiate working environment is similar to a compact university. These diverse skills make us capable of tackling a wide range of projects, particularly those of considerable complexity and scale. Design is at the core of everything that we do. We design buildings, spaces and

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cities; we listen, we question and we innovate.

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Heatherwick Studio is a team of 180 problem solvers dedicated to making the physical world around us better for everyone. Based out of our combined workshop and design studio in Central London, we create buildings, spaces, master-plans, objects and infrastructure. Focusing on large scale projects in cities all over the world, we prioritise those with the greatest positive social impact.

Working as practical inventors with no signature style, our motivation is to design soulful and interesting places which embrace and celebrate the complexities of the real world. The approach driving everything is to lead from human experience rather than any fixed design dogma.

The studio's completed projects include a number of internationally celebrated buildings, including the award-winning Learning Hub at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University and the UK Pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo 2010.

The studio is currently working on approximately 25 live projects on four continents. Current projects include a landmark for Hudson Yards in Manhattan, major new headquarters for Google in both Silicon Valley and London (in collaboration with BIG), and Coal Drops Yard, a 100,000 sq ft retail quarter in London that makes use of two historic coal drops buildings.

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