

Urban Development Issues in China's Cities: Part Four
Large-scale construction projects return to city centres

Redefining Shanghai: bringing old and new together for World Expo

By Wang Kai and Zhu Wen Yi

From *Sanlian*, No. 12, 2007

Abstract: The future site for the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai has finally been selected following the examination of several proposals. The site will be built at the edge of the Huangpu River, marking a renewed focus on the urban environment. Three projects were retained in a selection process which began in 1999, all involving sites far from the city centre. The suburbs have become the location of choice for large-scale construction, with more and more undeveloped land being cleared as the city expands outwards. A predictable choice would therefore have been to host the World Expo not in densely urbanised Shanghai, but in an underdeveloped suburb that could reap the benefits of a project requiring low levels of investment but yielding high-profit results.

By choosing the banks of the Huangpu River, the Organising Committee has, after measuring uncertainties and looking abroad for inspiration, opted for the less travelled road. This decision was partly motivated by what has happened in other international cities when event buildings and related services such as transport were built in the suburbs - these facilities were not integrated into city life after the event. Input from experts abroad also contributed to this shift from the old habit of building new zones, to a new focus on the edges of the Huangpu.

The future World Expo site will cover an area of 5.28 km² located right in the city centre and replace the city's oldest industrial district, where a few run-down residential buildings also stand. This project is more urban-friendly than the traditional method of building up from nothing in suburban areas. The two sides of the Huangpu River for example, which are currently divided into different zones (factory, port and residential areas), will become a unified public space. Most of the area's abandoned factories will be made into exhibition halls, and the old machines-cum-sculptures will decorate the fairgrounds. Aside from providing a showcase for the historic buildings that symbolise Shanghai's 150-year industrial history, the World Expo site is also an opportunity for the city to take a new look at urban planning.

[End]

« Redefining Shanghai: bringing old and new together for World Expo », Wang Kai, Zhu Wen Yi, *Sanlian*, No. 12, 2007



<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/2.0/fr/deed.fr>