

IFLA ASIA-PAC LA Awards 2023  
Award Categories – Cultural and Urban Landscape

PROJECT BINDER

**DoubleTree by Hilton Jiangxi Fuzhou**

Project Name : DoubleTree by Hilton Jiangxi Fuzhou  
Project Address : Fuzhou, Jiangxi, China  
Area (sq.m) : 56300 sq.m  
Year of Completion : December, 2022

## Project Statement

DoubleTree by Hilton Jiangxi Fuzhou is a significant local landmark that seeks to integrate culture and commerce. The design was developed with careful consideration of the site's location, existing conditions, and cultural significance. To enhance the overall site environment, the design preserved the existing vegetation and local texture, while also incorporating traditional Eastern gardening techniques and Chinese aesthetics to add a touch of vibrancy for the project.

The designers prioritized the user's needs by using their behavior as the main starting point. Inspired by local cultural architecture and space layout, this project well incorporated functions of contemporary tourism and leisure experience. By creating a layered experience of living and exploring the natural environment, the design integrated the elements of classical Chinese drama into traditional garden-making with the poetic elegance of native literati and scholar-artists. A dramatic spatial dialogue was produced for this project.

The designers explored and preserved the site's unique local features. The existing terrain and vegetation were fully utilized to create some areas raised and others lowered with rich space variation. Bricks and tiles salvaged from old buildings were blended seamlessly with new materials to create a harmonious contrast between the past and the present.

# Project Narrative

## Project Location and Background

This project is located on the central axis of Fuzhou City in Jiangxi. During its initial planning phase, the hotel was positioned as a "city business card", and the design aimed to integrate with the hotel's reception function to create a "city reception room". With about 77,000 m<sup>2</sup> outdoor landscaping area, the design of this project drew inspiration from local cultural and historical background, explored the regional unique characteristics, implanted unique native memories onto the site to establish a new benchmark for local hotel industry and create a new cultural identity for the city.

After a thorough investigation of local urban style and features, the designers created an "Urban Mountain Courtyard" landscaping space by incorporating the elements of traditional Chinese culture, such as ceremonial etiquette and the drama "Peony Pavilion", as well as local ecological environments, natural landscapes, and humanistic memories.

## Sequential Space Creating

The ceremonial etiquette in traditional Chinese culture is based on the sequence of heaven and earth. Traditional architecture and ancient villages in Fuzhou reflects the traditional Oriental axial layout. Streets and alleys in the native villages are constructed with intersections, twists and turns, while the courtyards in between follow the hierarchical ceremonial etiquette. The design follows the ceremonial etiquette on the urban axis, with the north-south axis area forming a layered and orderly landscaping space series of "reflecting pool platform - lobby atrium - reflecting stone waterfall - peony pavilion - stone garden - back mountain", creating a sense of sequence and order. Visitors who come to enjoy the tranquil luxuriant green here will be immersed in this pleasant open and airy grand space, which endows life with more poetic qualities.

## Peony Pavilion Rebirth

Travelling in Fuzhou, visitors can appreciate the wisdom and brilliance of historical and cultural figures, and follow the memories of Jiangxi opera artists. By refining and extracting the essence of verses from poems written by native literati and scholar-artists, the designers created the most heart-stirring spatial scenes, interpreting poetic aesthetics full of philosophical thoughts.

The design was inspired by one of the four great classical Chinese dramas, called "The Peony Pavilion" (also named "Resurrected Soul"), written by Tang Xianzu, a famous Ming Dynasty playwright from Fuzhou. The designers aimed to preserve the cultural charm of this famed drama and to highlight its spiritual status. To achieve this, they purchased an octagonal pavilion in the Hui style from the Qing dynasty that was consistent with local characteristics and unified with Fuzhou's architectural elements. They carefully restored the old-style mortise and tenon craftsmanship, repaired the intricate details and patterns, and renovated the painted sculptures, combining it with the site's design. With a craftsman's spirit and sincere dedication, they meticulously carved every detail, giving the "Peony Pavilion" a rebirth and returning to its original beauty. As a result, this century-old "Peony Pavilion" continues to shine brilliantly on the project site.



## Ecological Elements Integrating

Fuzhou is a city embraced by mountains and water, boasting numerous islands and undulating mountain ranges. After conducting in-depth research into the local landscape and cultural characteristics, the designers extracted regional memories and integrated them with native culture into the landscape architecture. They took inspiration from the layout of Liukeng, a local ancient village, which blends with natural mountains and rivers, to establish the landscape framework on the project site. Local special Danxia landform, which consists of a red bed characterized by steep cliffs, in Lichuan Yuhu Scenic Area and native island-surrounded geological landscape also inspired the designers to create a mountain retreat with valley-like water feature for the hotel, while incorporating the serene and rustic atmosphere of Tang Xianzu's former residence - Yuming Tang. The overall landscaping space is completely nestled into local natural and cultural ecology, recreating eternal native ecological beauty.

## Natural Landscape Retaining

The project site is located on higher ground than its surrounding roads. To make fully use of this terrain condition, the designers raised and lowered certain areas within the site to create a mountainous courtyard with a water feature that resembles a valley. They also preserved the existing poplar grove and recorded the locations, species, and names of each camphor tree on the existed site. Low-impact methods were adopted to protect the existing ground vegetation, so as to create a clean and complete green base, which reflects local traditional spatial pattern of elegant landscape with bright water feature.

The designers also made sure to retain the essence of Fuzhou culture in the design by utilizing the bricks and tiles from the old buildings on the existed site. By using these materials in a thoughtful and fitting way, they created a spatial sense that preserved the original texture and memory of the site.

## Humanistic Memory Preserving

The design of this project is deeply rooted in the humanistic cultural heritage of Fuzhou, with inspiration drawn from the city's rich cultural background. The designers infused emotions into the design, using modern techniques to create a special space ambience within a kind of traditional Chinese charm that originated from Fuzhou.

During the initial design period, the designers gathered inspiration from the local Yulong Wanshou Palace, ancient theater stages, Liukeng Village's traditional houses, and the natural landscapes of Lichuan Yuhu Scenic Area. Based on these regional humanistic textures and memories, a spatial structure of "mountains, forests, halls, gardens, courtyards, and fields" was elegantly built, well integrating the native culture into the landscape of the project. Modern design techniques were used to highlight the humanistic tradition of the site and to facilitate a dialogue between history and modernity. By creating a pleasant scene of dwelling in mountains and forests, the designers rekindled memories of the "Dream of Peony Pavilion" and evoked a splendid sense of ancient experience for visitors here.

## "Urban Mountain Courtyard" Constructing

This project built an "urban mountain courtyard" enchanting landscape space that integrates well with the Oriental aesthetic principle of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. The design sought to create a mountainous and forested paradise, blending historical and modern elements to establish a space where past memories and contemporary design can harmoniously coexist.

In the designing process, the designers drew inspiration from traditional humanistic culture to create a beautiful image of an urban mountainous forest. The overall layout is based on the spatial structure of the mountain-and-water embraced Liukeng Village, while the spatial structure extracted from Fuzhou native architecture and landscape is also well integrated into the landscape design of this project. The entrance space sequence is derived from Fuzhou's traditional courtyard system, forming a "hall to well" sequence that perfectly embodies the city's architectural characteristics. The spatial layout of mountains, water, and forests is inspired by local Lichuan Yuhu Scenic Area, and the stone garden imitates the contour of streams, interweaving the texture of the valley feature, to create mountainous scenery with lush trees. During the construction, the elements of local culture were reasonably integrated with rustic Zen aesthetics into the constructing techniques, resulting in a unique urban texture for the project site.



The project site is located on the central axis of Fuzhou City. The design of this project embodies a strong appreciation for cultural heritage and respect for local history, resulting in a uniquely textured urban landscape.





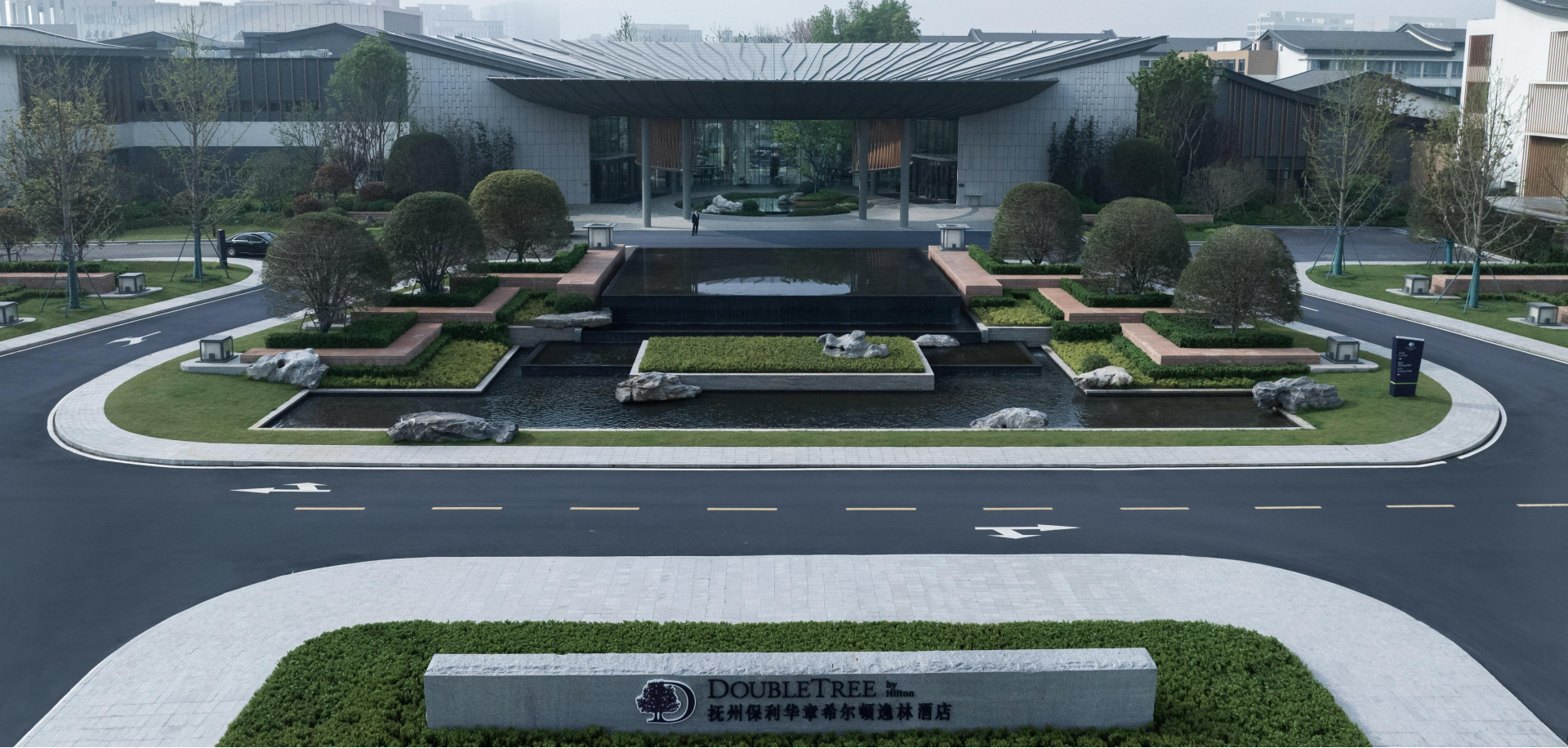
The designers investigated distinctive local features, recording terrains' elevations and trees' heights, species and names, also incorporating original vegetation plant palette. Old bricks and tiles were carefully selected for the project to preserve original texture and memory of the site.





An enchanting "urban mountain courtyard" landscape is created by extracting regional memories and incorporating them into the design with special Oriental courtyard gardening techniques.





[Entrance] The entrance design follows classical style of traditional gardening, while incorporating contemporary design with elements of artistic aesthetics and refined luxury. Surrounded by luxuriant plants, the entrance features a grand landscape layout with cascading water terraces and flowing streams.





[Atrium] The design of lobby atrium drew inspiration from the traditional Chinese architectural concept of "harmony between heaven and earth," with the tree-branch structure forming an impressionistic landscape painting that reflects the essence of a garden-style hotel.





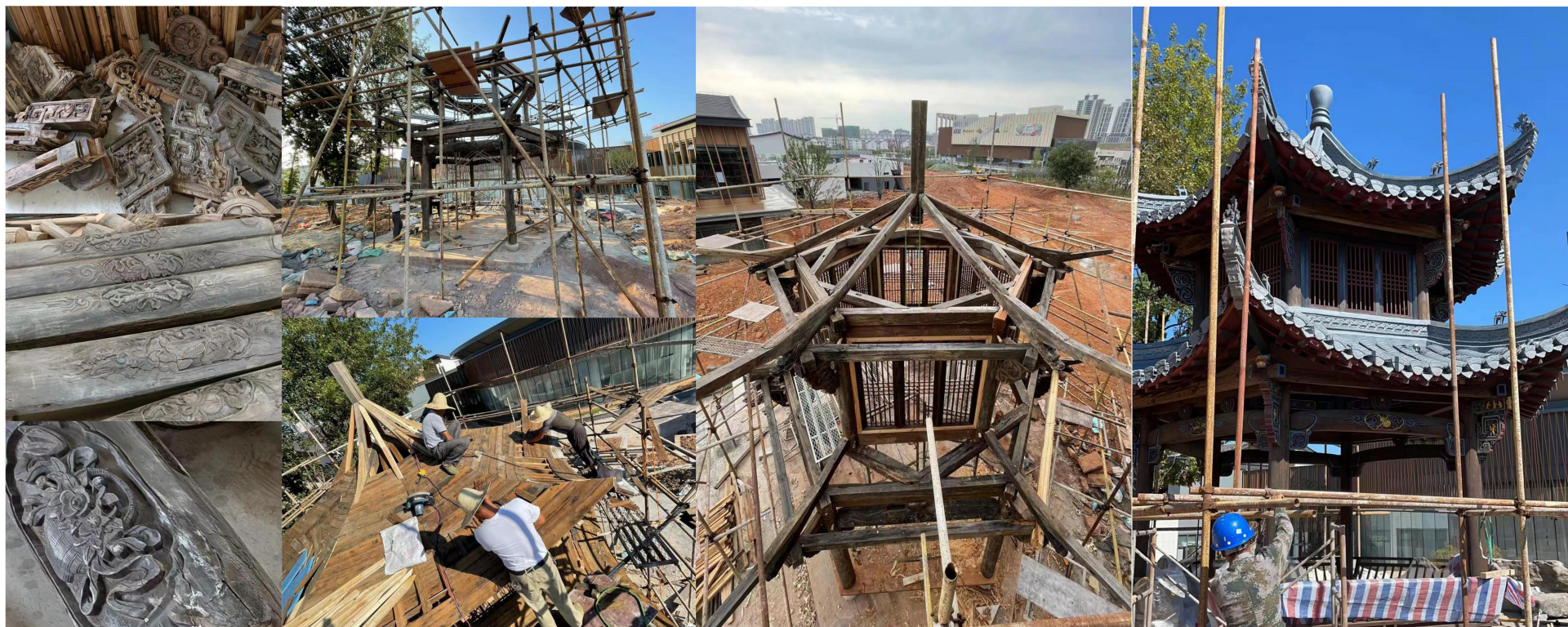
[Forest] In contrast to surrounding urban characteristics, the designers expected to create a luxuriant inner courtyard. The design was inspired by luxuriant terrain, featuring valley-like cascading waterfalls, which well reflects traditional spatial pattern of elegant forest landscape with bright water feature.





Glass-material extensive use on the building facade provides grand visual penetration for the landscape appreciation, blurring boundary between indoor and outdoor spaces. Water features and plants are well placed with reflecting stone waterfall, which is a stunning sight to behold.





A Hui-style octagonal pavilion from Qing dynasty was selected within the design. Through careful restoration of intricate old-style mortise and tenon craftsmanship, also detailed painted sculptures, the designers gave classic "Peony Pavilion" a rebirth and returning to its original beauty.





“Peony Pavilion” is built by the water with its ancient traces on the red bricks, grey tiles, overhanging eaves, carved wood and painted sculptures. Through designers craftsman-spirit and sincere dedication, this century-old “Pavilion” continues to shine brilliantly on the site.





"Peony Pavilion" shows its brilliance in the forest landscape with cascading waterfall. A platform is set nearby to provide a pleasant environment for visitors to have a rest, with a seating area by the water for chatting and enjoying scenery.





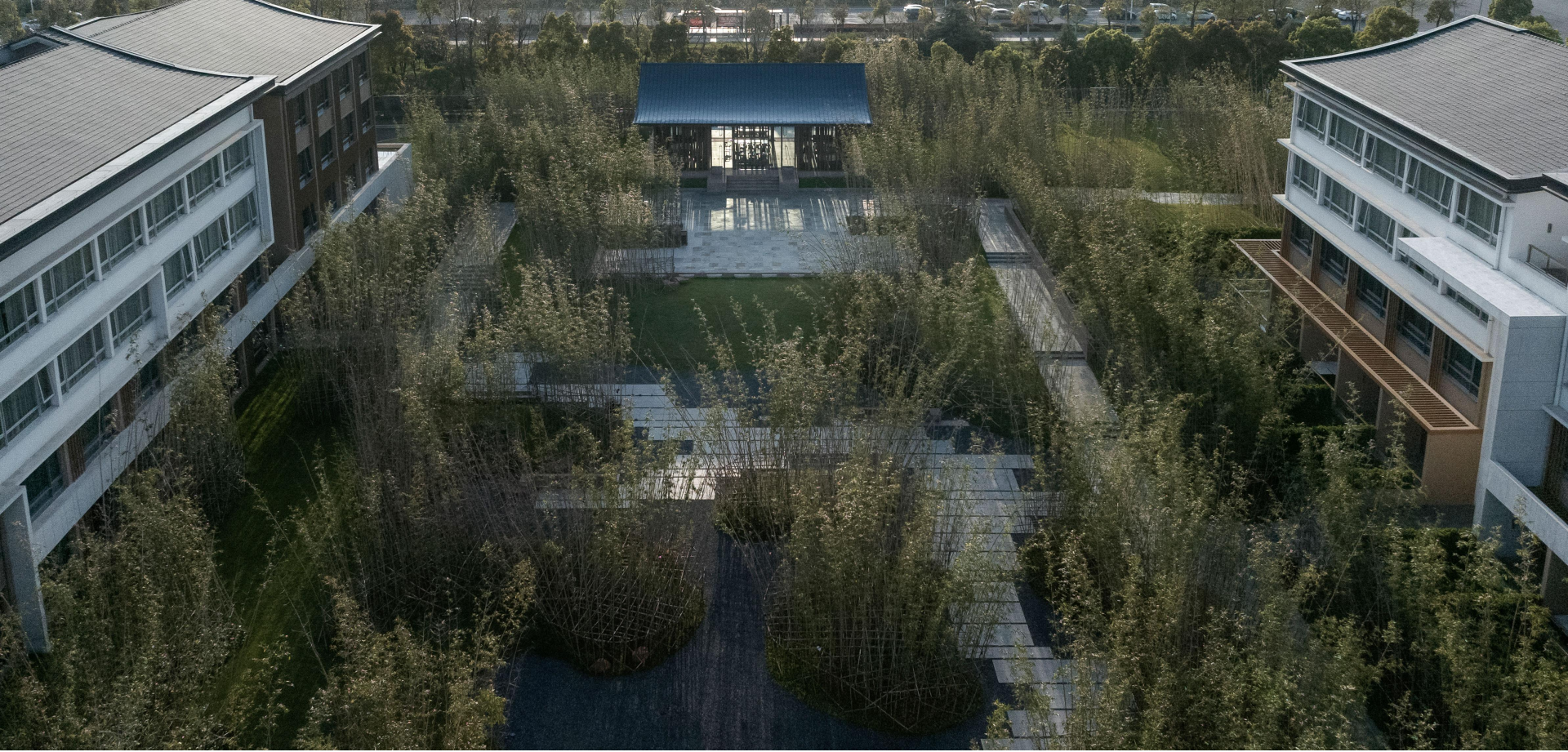
[Garden] A winding path is built through the garden, with minimalist plant palette and rhythmic stone-bench layout along it. Secluded healing atmosphere is presented within a hidden mountain forest. Following the path, visitors can enjoy the beauty of "Peony Pavilion". The density and rhythm of the plant palette, optimized for the site, help to create a longer and wider spatial vision, controlling the space and extending the depth of the view.





[Orchard] A pear orchard is enclosed by the arrangement of plants and rocks with a picturesque artistic ambience, providing visitors with a unique thought-provoking experience while staying here.





[Courtyard] The lush green of the bamboo forest and the meandering paths create a rhythmic spatial sequence, highlighting the poetic charm of the bamboo forest on the Danxia landform.





Bricks and tiles from old buildings on the existed site are blended seamlessly with new materials to create a harmonious contrast between the past and the present.