

An aerial photograph of a traditional Chinese garden. The garden features a large, irregularly shaped pond with a small pavilion on a rocky island. The pond is surrounded by lush green trees and manicured lawns. A winding path leads through the garden, and a traditional Chinese building with a tiled roof is visible in the background. The garden is set within a larger urban landscape, with a road and other buildings visible in the distance.

**IFLA AAPME Awards 2023**  
**Category-Cultural and Urban Landscape**

**A FAMOUS BONSAI GARDEN  
IN WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE  
DUJIANGYAN IRRIGATION SYSTEM**

**-Qingxi Garden in Dujiangyan Scenic Area**

**Sichuan , China**



**Project Name:** Qingxi Garden in Dujiangyan Scenic Area, Sichuan Province, China -A famous bonsai garden in World Cultural Heritage Dujiangyan Irrigation System

**Project Location:** Dujiangyan City, Sichuan Province, China

**Area:** 8000 m<sup>2</sup>

Completed in 2000

**Project Statement:**

Qingxi Garden is located in Lidui Park, Dujiangyan Scenic Area of Sichuan Province, China. Covering an area of over 8000 square meters, it is the typical representative of western Sichuan natural gardens. The ingenious planning and unique conception of Qingxi Garden convey the philosophical idea of "Harmony between humanity and nature", highlight the characteristics of traditional Chinese natural gardens, and further prove the truth that "What's unique for a nation is also precious for the world".

Among the people, Qingxi Garden is known as the "No.1 Famous Garden in Southwest China" and the first "Excellent Landscape Engineering" in Sichuan Province in the landscape industry. Qingxi Garden was once praised as "a famous garden in Western Sichuan" by Dr. Les Molloy, a heritage expert from the United Nation; and also praised as "Heaven on earth" by Francesco Bandarin, the director of UNESCO's World Heritage Center.

In November 2000, Qingxi Garden was approved as a world cultural heritage by the United Nations together with Dujiangyan Irrigation System.





**Project Narrative:**

Located in Dujiangyan Irrigation System Scenic Area, Qingxi Garden was built in 2000, while “Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System” was applying for World Heritage. Qingxi Garden is located in Lidui Park and can be regarded as the Pnishing touch of Lidui Park and "No.1 Famous Garden in Southwest China" .

Qingxi Garden is a typical natural garden in western Sichuan. The uniqueness lies in the designer's clever use of terrain, takes the buildings with vernacular dwelling style of Western Sichuan as the landscape center, uses the traditional Chinese garden skill of “Stacking mountain, planning water” as the main technique; Qingxi Garden combines the construction of Chinese classical gardens, bonsai exhibition and the water culture of Dujiangyan Irrigation System to create a picturesque scenery just like nature gift.

**1.Site Analysis**

Qingxi Garden is located on the left side of Lidui Park’s entrance, covering an area of over 8000 square meters. The site was originally composed of an obsolete theatre, dilapidated building, management office building and a pond. The theatre faces north, facing lotus pond in the park. The tall and shady Phoebe and cypress forests are distributed in the west, south, and north directions of the theatre, creating a certain environmental space for garden building. Before applying for World Heritage, the theatre had been demolished, leaving the site with broken walls and desolate ruins, making reconstruction work a top priority.

**2. Design Concept**

China is an ancient civilization with a long history and developed culture, with a history of over 3000 years of gardening. Traditional Chinese gardens are known for their natural beauty, poetic and picturesque style, often adopting the plan technique of "garden in the garden, see the big in the small", achieving the artistic realm just like nature gift.

Qingxi Garden is located in the scenic Dujiangyan Irrigation System, which was built by Li Bing, an Chinese ancient water engineer. Dujiangyan Irrigation System made the Chengdu Plain densely covered with water, providing a basis for the garden style in western Sichuan.

- 1) Style: the ancient, natural, and elegant style of Sichuan gardens;
- 2) Theme: outdoor planting exhibition;
- 3) Main technique: “Stacking mountain, planning water”;Scenic Center: Natural Waterfall;Use water pavilions, various ancient tree bonsai as visual embellishments to make the Pnishing touch;
- 4)Local natural materials such as pebbles from the Minjiang River and bluestone slabs ;

5)Create a bonsai art exhibition space with characteristic boutique Sichuan Western garden style.

**3.Design of Qingxi Garden**

Overall layout: One axis, one belt, four zones

a. Central axis (virtual and real space) landscape  
Main landscape line: outside square space - main entrance - inside square space - Screen wall with a leaking window- Pool – Rockeries and waterfall  
Visitors can stop and enjoy every landscape node.

b. Water system  
The U-shaped waterscape strip naturally divides the area into different functional spaces, and most buildings and corridors can be located close to the waterscape.

c. Entrance reception area  
The main indoor exhibition area of bonsai in the garden

d. Boutique Bonsai Area  
The main outdoor exhibition area of bonsai in the garden

e. Waterside Bonsai Area  
The main waterscape areas in a bonsai garden

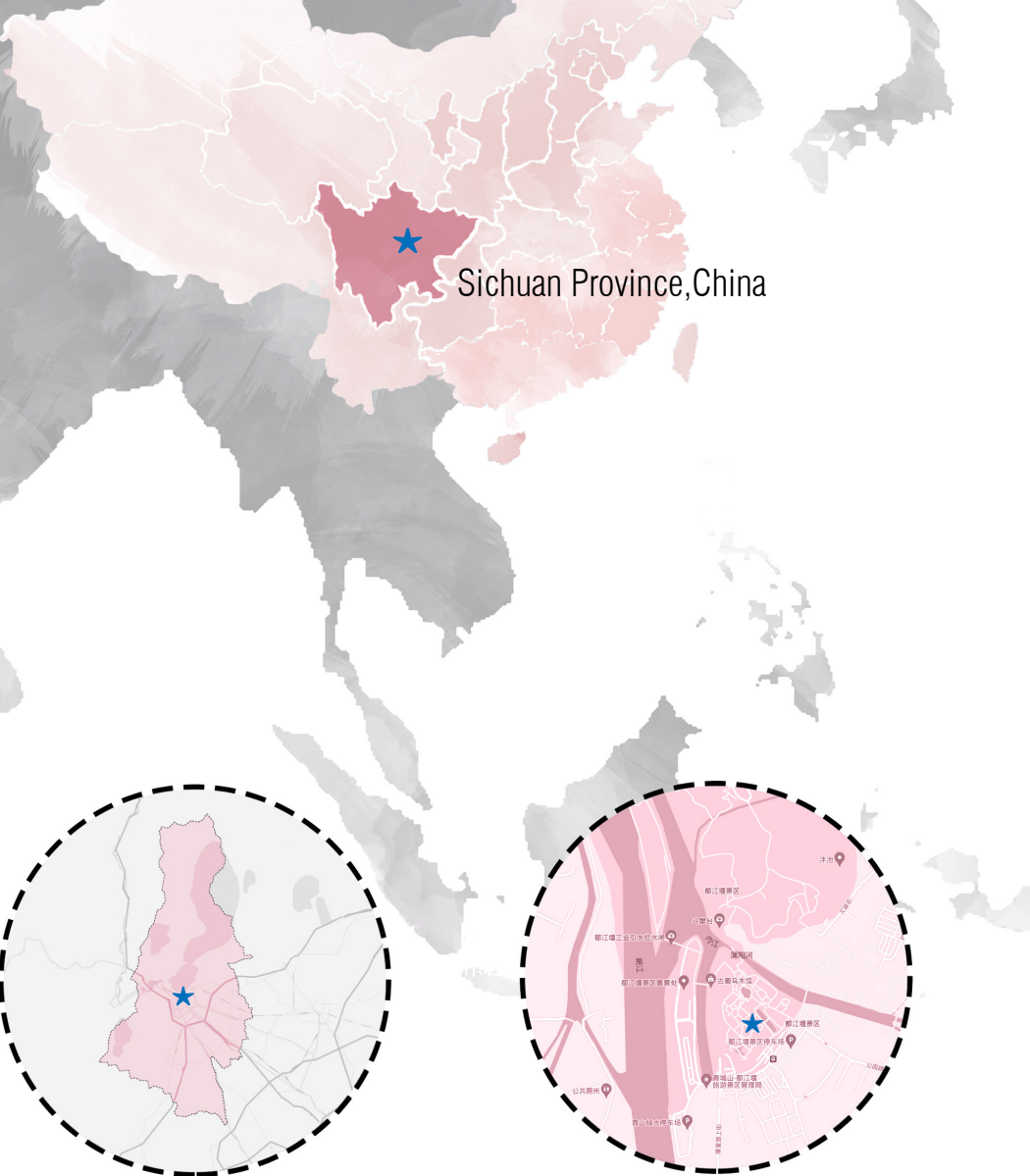
f. Forest Bonsai Area  
There is a large amount of nanmu forest in this area, decorated with various bonsai.

- g. Landscape nodes:
- 1) Entrance corridor
  - 2) Screen wall with a leaking window
  - 3) Falling Waterfall
  - 4) Qingxin Pavilion
  - 5) Sichuan style Bonsai



# DESIGN BACKGROUND: LOCATION ANALYSIS

Qingxi Garden is located in Lidui Park, Dujiangyan Scenic Area of Sichuan Province, China. Covering an area of over 8000 square meters, it stands out for its advantageous geographical location, deep cultural heritage, and superior natural conditions.



Dujiangyan City

QingXi Garden,Lidui Park,Guyan Scenic Area

## REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS



## Strong vernacular dwelling style of Western Sichuan

Dujiangyan city, Chengdu city, Sichuan Province, China

Dujiangyan City, a city with a history of more than 2000 years, was built for the weir and Bourished by water.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE



## Long history of water culture

World Cultural Heritage, World Natural Heritage, World Irrigation Project Heritage, Major Historical and Cultural Site Protected at the National Level, National Park of China, 5A National Tourist Attraction

## NATURAL CONDITIONS



## Beautiful landscape and forest field base

Flowed by the Minjiang River and its multiple tributaries Across two different physical geography areas, Chengdu Plain and Longmen Mountain The intersection area of two major botanical zone in the western Sichuan Plain and Longmen Mountain



# DESIGN BACKGROUND: SITE ANALYSIS

- **Current space analysis:**The site was originally composed of an obsolete theatre (Before applying for World Heritage, the theatre had been demolished), management office building and a pond.
- **Analysis of advantageous resources:**The theatre faces north, facing lotus pond in the park. The tall and shady phoebe and cypress forests are distributed in the west, south, and north directions of the theatre, creating a certain environmental space for garden building.
- **Elevation analysis:** The overall terrain of the park is flat, and the remaining old stage of the theatre is located at the highest point of the park (as shown in Figure 1), which is about 2.3 meters higher than the surrounding area.



Theatre: Demolished before applying for World Heritage



Management office building: dilapidated



Pond: Harsh and damaged revetment curve



Phoebe forest in good growth

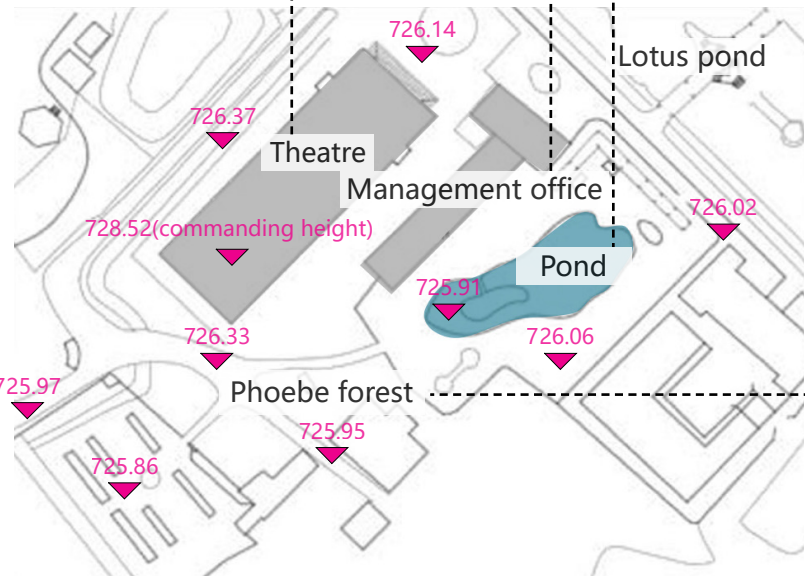


Figure 1: Plan of the site before renovation

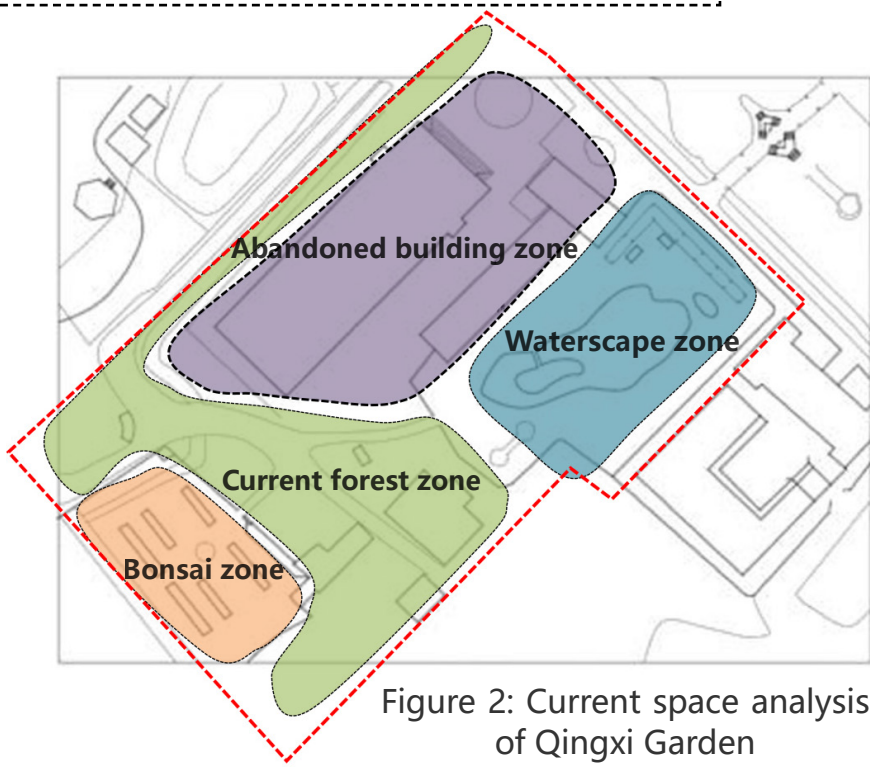


Figure 2: Current space analysis of Qingxi Garden



# DESIGN BACKGROUND: Analysis of bonsai culture

Chinese bonsai is the concentration of natural landscape

**Sichuan style bonsai is China's intangible cultural heritage and one of the four major schools of traditional Chinese bonsai.**

Sichuan style bonsai originated in the Eastern Han Dynasty and rose during the Five Dynasties. It went through the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties and eventually became a unique school of technique.

- Due to the rich and magnificent landscapes and trees in Sichuan, as well as the surrounding terrain and dangerous waters, its landscape and bonsai combine a serene, beautiful, dangerous, majestic, high hanging, and steep and deep shape within the basin.
- The bonsai of trees is condensed in the rhythm of ancient, winding, flying, and hanging upside down, concentrated in the grip of abundance.
- The Sichuan bonsai master, who is dedicated to understanding the Tao, carefully observing, and possessing unique production techniques, has formed a unique Sichuan style bonsai style and technique, distinguished from other schools by its distinct techniques and artistic features.
- The Sichuan style bonsai technique is a vast artistic system, and the production techniques of Sichuan style bonsai mainly include the following four types:
  - 1.Regular tree stump bonsai coiling technique
  - 2.Natural stump shaped bonsai techniques
  - 3.Modeling Techniques of Rock Bonsai
  - 4.Tree and rock combination bonsai techniques





# Design Background: Construction Background, Achievements and Honors

## Good timing: Construction opportunities

Qingxi Garden was built in 2000, while “Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System” was applying for World Heritage. At that time, the site was in ruins, making renovation work a top priority.

## Internal advantages: Superior natural environment

The Lidui Park, where Qingxi Garden is located, contains numerous highly valuable Sichuan style bonsai.

## Public support: Government Support

Dujiangyan Government attached great importance to the reconstruction of Qingxi Garden and gave great support.



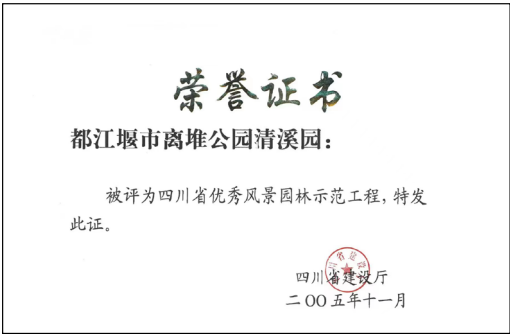
Leaders Visiting for Inspection



Photo with Dr. Les Molloy, a heritage expert from the United Nation



Opening ribbon-cutting ceremony



## Achievements and Honors

- Qingxi Garden was completed in January 2000 and praised as "a famous garden in Western Sichuan" by Dr. Les Molloy, a heritage expert from the United Nation.
- In November 2000, Qingxi Garden was approved as a world cultural heritage by the United Nations together with Dujiangyan Irrigation System.
- In 24th August 2004, Qingxi Garden was also once praised as “Heaven on earth” by Francesco Bandarin, the director of UNESCO's World Heritage Center. He also said, “The scenery makes people linger and forget to leave, and the management methods are reasonable and effective.”
- In November 2005, Qingxi Garden won the award of "Excellent landscape architecture Demonstration Project in Sichuan Province".
- Qingxi Garden is a successful example of Western Sichuan gardens and further prove the truth that “What's unique for a nation is also precious for the world”



# The largest natural landscape bonsai garden in the western Sichuan region.

### Style's Inheritance

- Continuation of Traditional Chinese Garden Landscape Style
- Exploration of vernacular dwelling style of Western Sichuan

### Cultural display

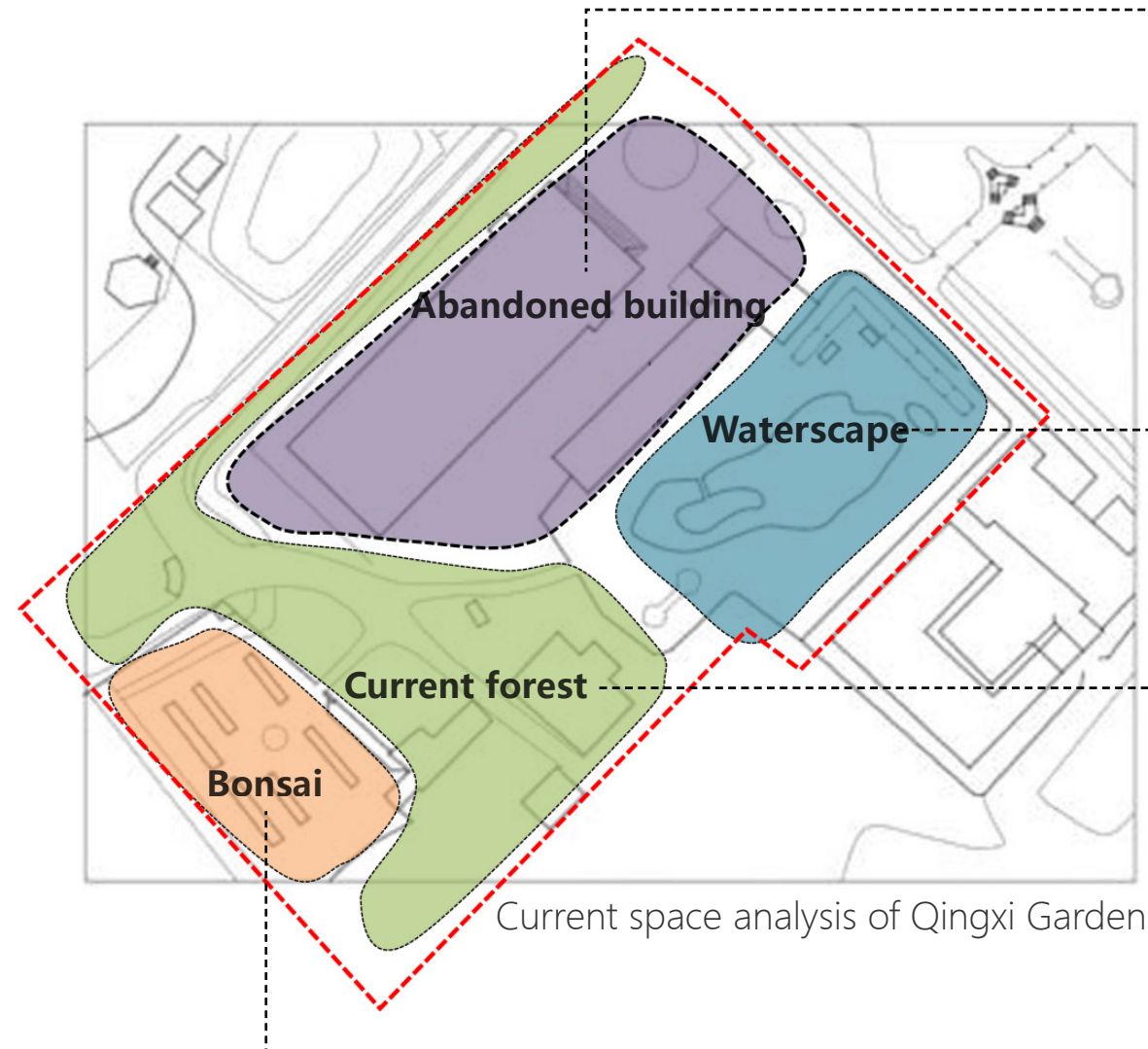
- Charm of Sichuan style bonsai culture
- Millennium Water Culture in Dujiangyan Irrigation System

### Site memory

- Respect the current terrain
- Preserve existing trees



# Design: Strategy



## reconstruction

- Clean up construction debris and organize spatial layout
- Utilize the highest point of the abandoned stage to create a waterfall landscape according to the situation
- Set the main entrance of the park on the north side of the waterfall opposite the scenic axis, forming the entrance axis space

## renovation

- Renovation and optimization of revetment
- Integrate elements such as pavilions, corridors and landscape bridges to form a leisure water landscape space

## improvement

- Protect existing phoebe and cypress forests
- Add lawns and shrubs
- The current forest is a natural exhibition hall for bonsai.

## optimization

- Protect existing bonsai
- Combine the existing bonsai in the area with the newly transplanted bonsai in the Lidui Park



# Design: Overall plan

"Clear, marvel, tranquil and elegant" are the main features of the traditional Western Sichuan garden landscape and graceful style is the spirit. All of the above are presented in Qingxi Garden.

**清** Clear: A clear spring surrounds the garden

**奇** Marvel: Marvel views at different levels

**幽** Tranquil: Deep shade and tranquility

**秀** Elegant: <Travel notes of Qingxi Garden> and inscription written by local author reflect elegance

**飘逸** Graceful: Graceful style is the spirit of the Sichuan style bonsai

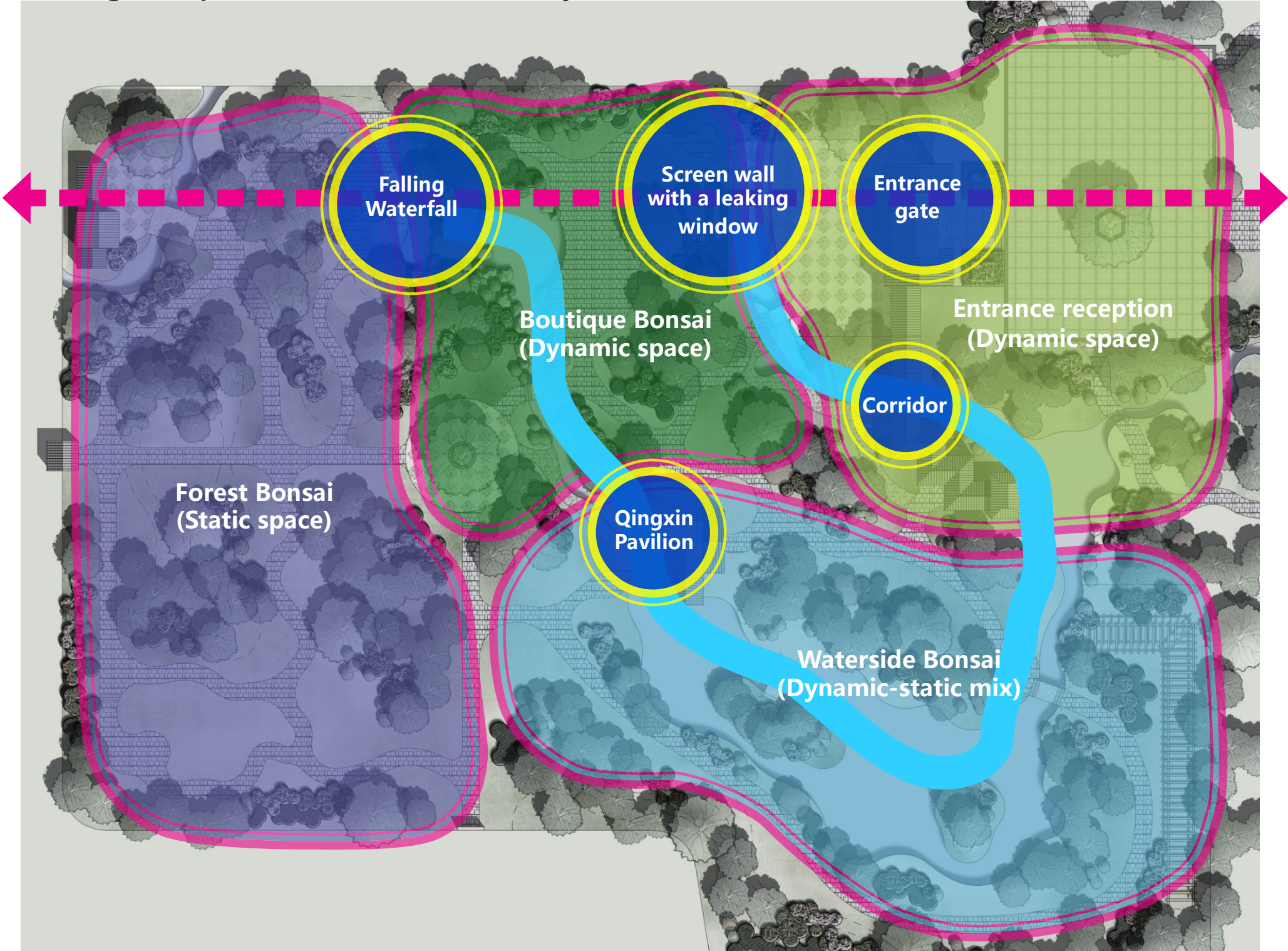


- A** Front door
- B** Corridor
- C** Qingxin Pavilion
- D** Lanxiu Pavilion
- E** Management Office

- 1** Entrance Square
- 2** Pool
- 3** Screen wall with a leaking window
- 4** Falling Waterfall
- 5** Bonsai Exhibition
- 6** Natural revetment
- 7** Flower rack
- 8** Side door
- 9** Back door



# Design: Space structure analysis



## Central axis (virtual and real space) landscape

Main landscape line: outside square space - main entrance - inside square space - Screen wall with a leaking window- Pool – Rockeries and waterfall  
Visitors can stop and enjoy every landscape node.

## Entrance reception area

The main indoor exhibition area of bonsai in the garden.

## Water system

The U-shaped waterscape strip naturally divides the area into different functional spaces, and most buildings and corridors can be located close to the waterscape.

## Boutique Bonsai Area

The main outdoor exhibition area of bonsai in the garden

## Waterside Bonsai Area

The main waterscape areas in a bonsai garden

## Forest Bonsai Area

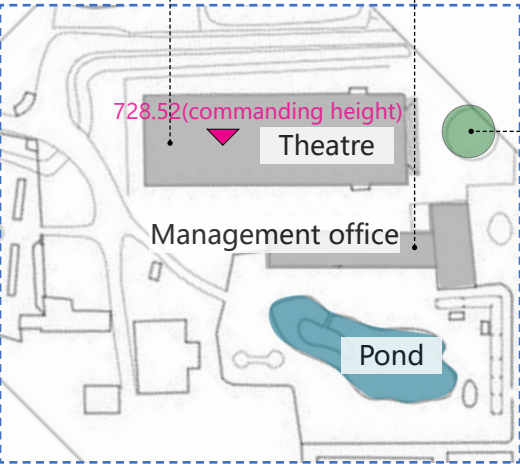
There is a large amount of nanmu forest in this area, decorated with various bonsai.



# Design: Main axis design

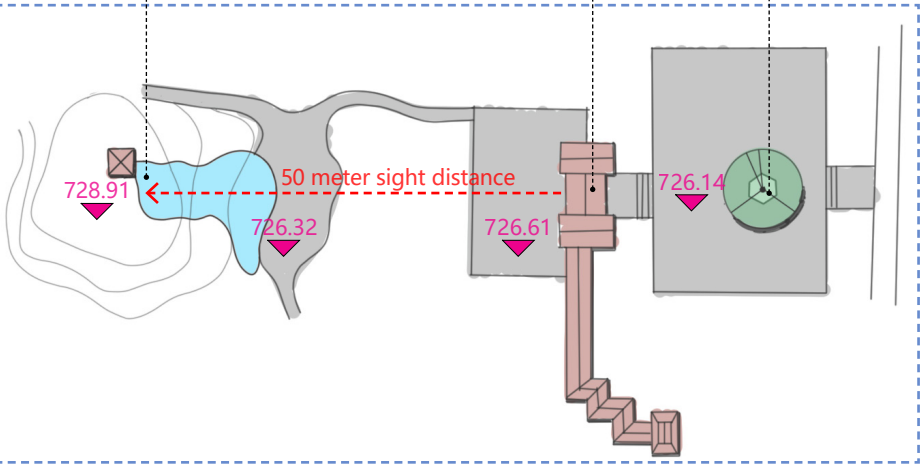
## Space division - Five level of landscape space

- The remaining old stage of the theatre is the highest point in the park
- The dilapidated management room occupies the center of the park.
- Large arbor



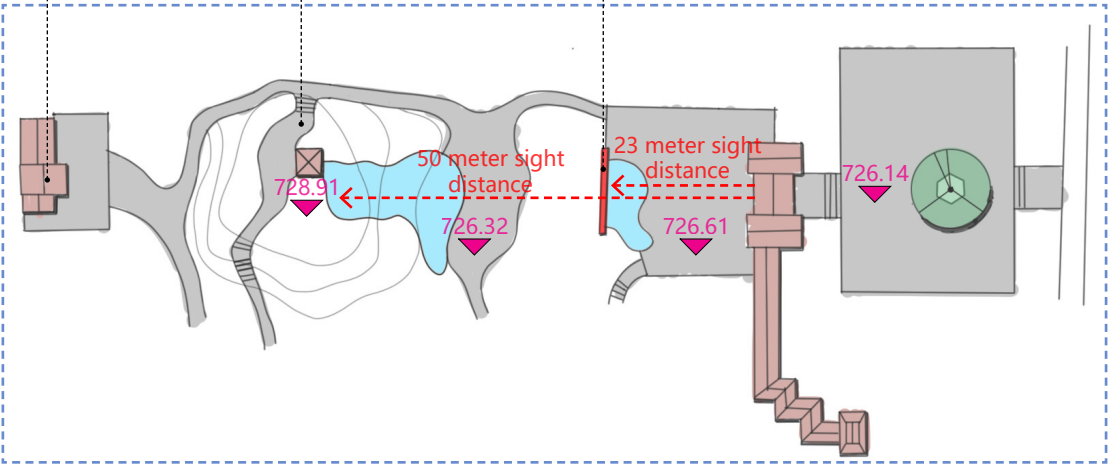
Current status of the main axis: Abandoned building

- Utilize the height to place waterfall, rockeries, and pavilion
- Set the main entrance on the north side of the park, facing the waterfall, to form the main axis landscape of the entrance.
- Add the tree pool and keep the original large arbor



Main axis design: Opposite scenery between the main entrance and the falling waterfall

- The newly built management room is located in the southern corner of the park, forming an independent ofPce space.
- Add garden paths to allow visitors to climb up and observe the scenery
- Add screen wall and pool to enrich the viewing level.



Optimization Design: Add water pool, garden paths, and management office to form a five-level landscape space.



Level 5: Management ofPce space

Level 4: Highland View

Level 3: Falling Waterfall

Level 2: Entrance opposite scenery

Level 1: Main entrance square



# Design: Main axis design

## Photos

Level 1



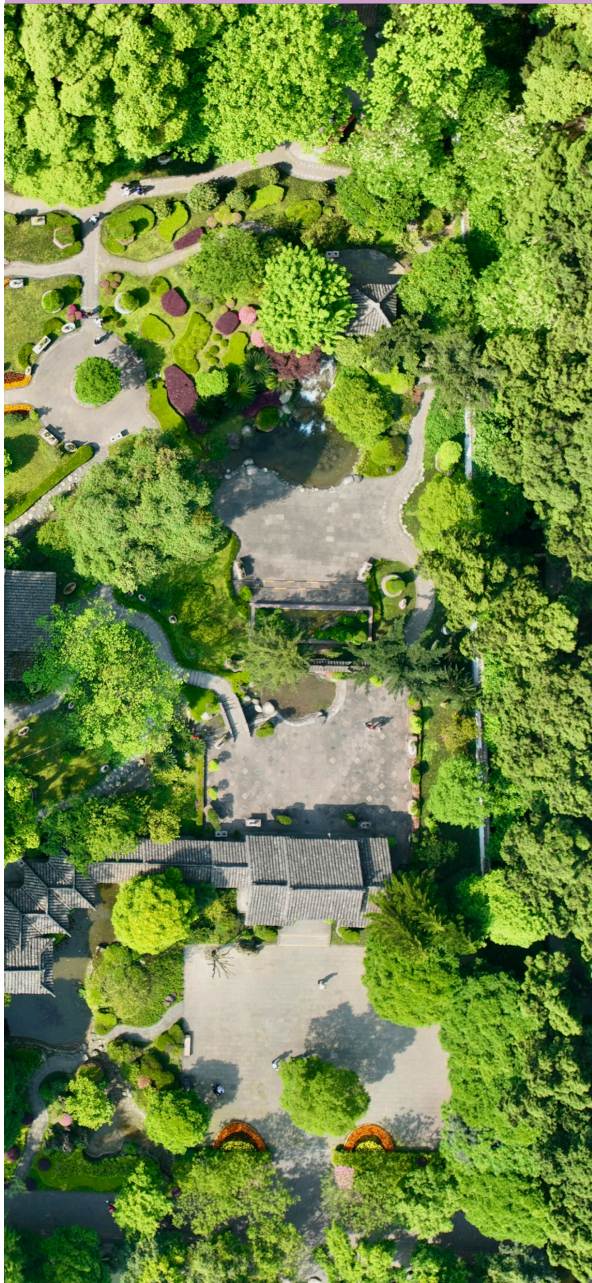
Level 2



Level 3



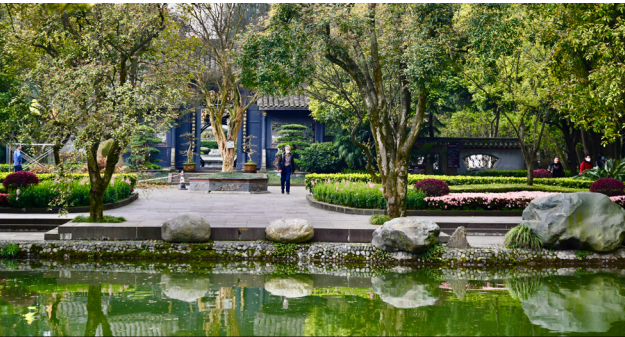
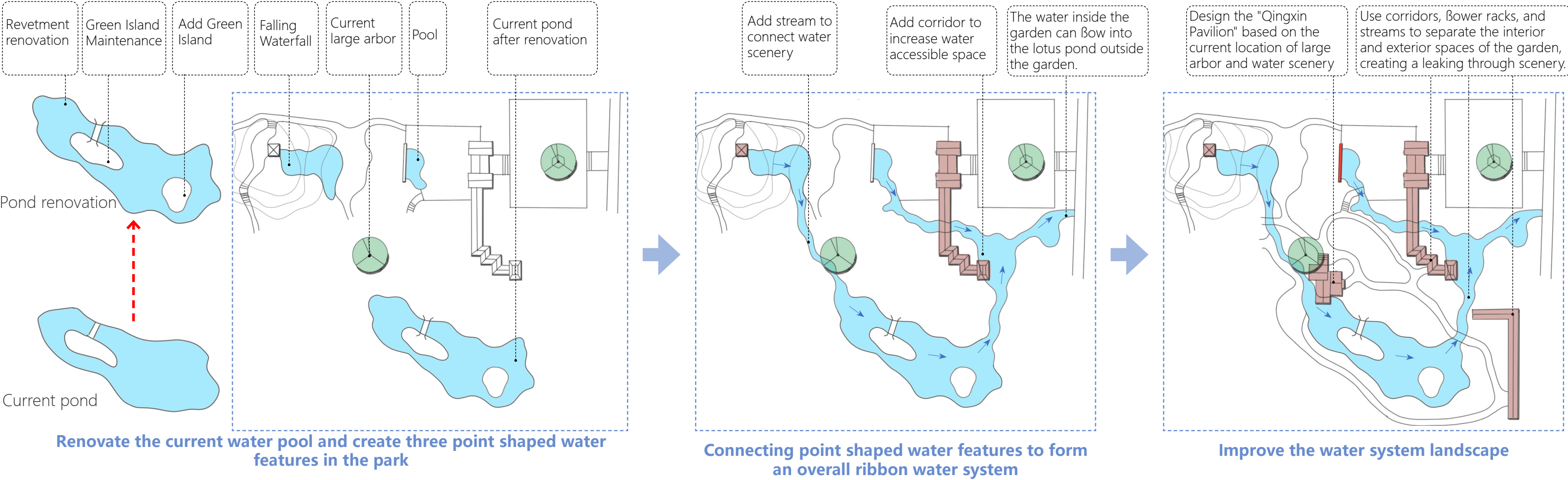
Bird's-eye view of the main axis





# Design: Water Landscape

## Scenery of the flowing stream



Lotus pond, entrance square



Leaking through scenery between the corridor and flowing stream



Corridor for rest and water



Falling Waterfall



Qingxin Pavilion

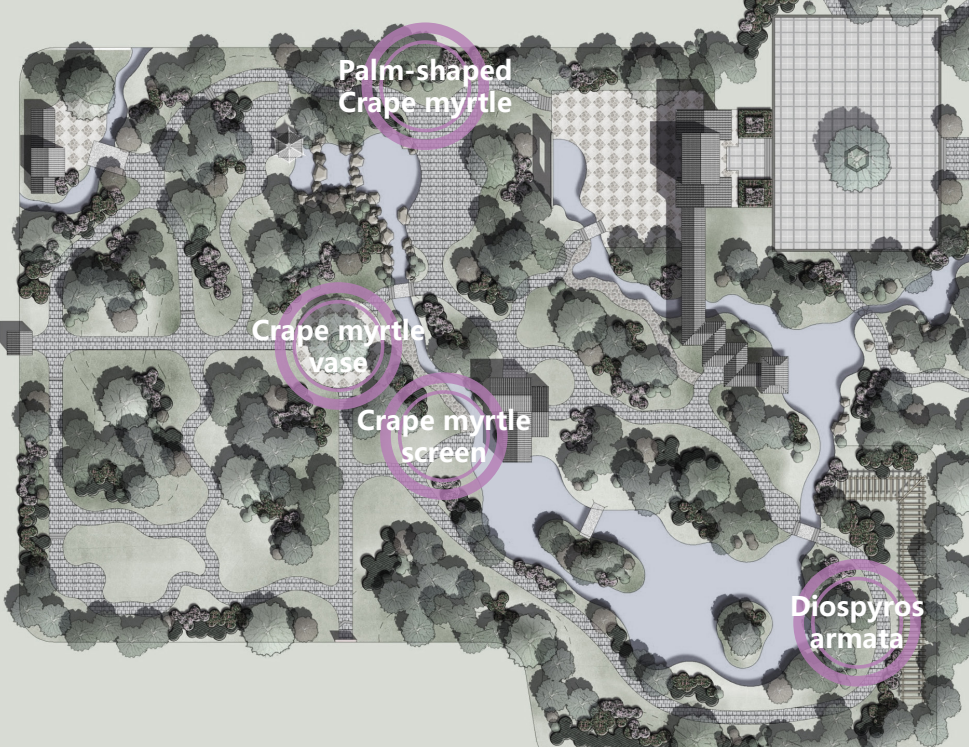


Stream



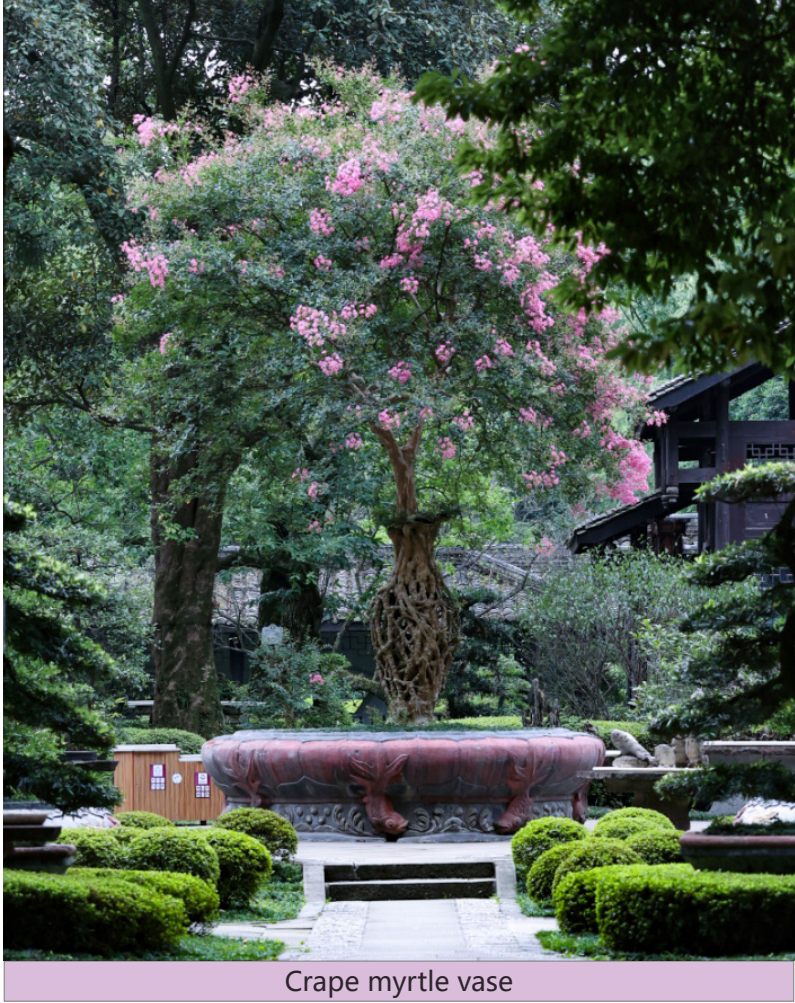
# Design: Sichuan style bonsai exhibition design

## Overall plan - A natural bonsai exhibition hall that integrates with the environment



There are numerous rare tree bonsais that have thousands of years in the garden, as well as landscape bonsais that reflect the beautiful natural scenery of Sichuan region. They complement each other with the landscape in the garden, just like a fairyland.

The crape myrtle vase, Palm-shaped crape myrtle, crape myrtle screen, and Diospyros armata that serve as the finishing touch are all exquisite works of Sichuan style bonsai in the garden.



Sichuan style landscape bonsai

A natural bonsai exhibition hall that integrates with the environment

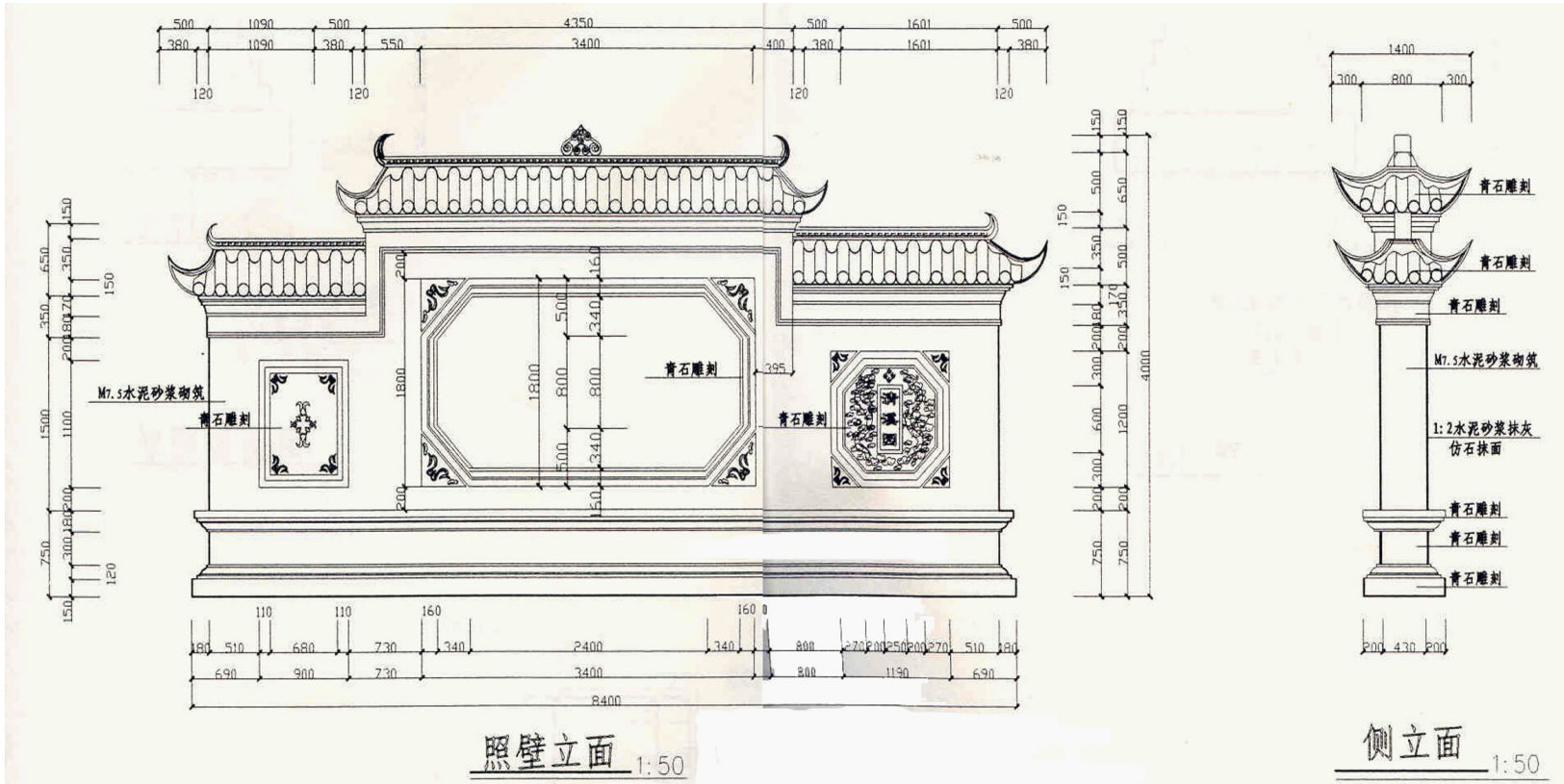


# Design ingenuity: Screen wall with a leaking window at the entrance

## The Hiding and Revealing of Space: The Innovation of Traditional Chinese Garden Techniques



The ingenious design of one wall and one leaking window not only enhances the visual level of the landscape, but also provides greater buffer space for utilization; at the same time, the integration of landscape bonsai and the overall environment further developed this traditional gardening technique.



The design did not follow the common form of traditional screen walls, leaving a leaking window in the middle to create a clean picture for the overlapping water and bonsai scenery in the garden, which can be described as "paintings with different landscapes, a wordless poetry".





# Reproduction of Natural Gardens in Western Sichuan:Materials and Processes



Complete planning  
and construction plan



Respect and  
preserve the on-site  
environment



On-site guidance



On-site control of  
building quality



On-site processing of  
local materials



Bluestone  
slab



Cobblestone



Planter



Grey tile



Nearly 50  
types of  
materials and  
components  
reflect the  
authentic  
Western  
Sichuan  
garden style.

