

landscape architecture

Throughout the world, a new level of landscape design is transforming urban office projects.

While high-rise buildings create instant identity from afar, their landscapes often evoke first impressions and most lasting “sense of place”. Edges, entries, drop-offs, water features, and open spaces – as well as the placement of buildings, circulation, and parking – establish the pedestrian realm of the workplace and connect to the surrounding city fabric. Well-designed office landscapes – whether they are tiny green roof gardens or expansive parks – are proving to increase worker productivity and add the greatest value for the lowest cost.

Projects designed by SWA Group, an international landscape architecture, planning and urban design firm, confirm the importance of high quality site planning and landscape design for office and mixed-use development. SWA’s work emphasizes strong, form-giving design from concept through implementation, based on comprehensive understanding of site conditions and rigorous attention to programmatic and functional requirements. Equally important is close collaboration with architects and other team members to insure unified design solutions that complement the building’s identity and create enduring beauty and character.

From Los Angeles to Beijing, these examples illustrate how office landscapes create social and community spaces and connections, achieve environmental sustainability, and improve aesthetics and quality of the workplace.

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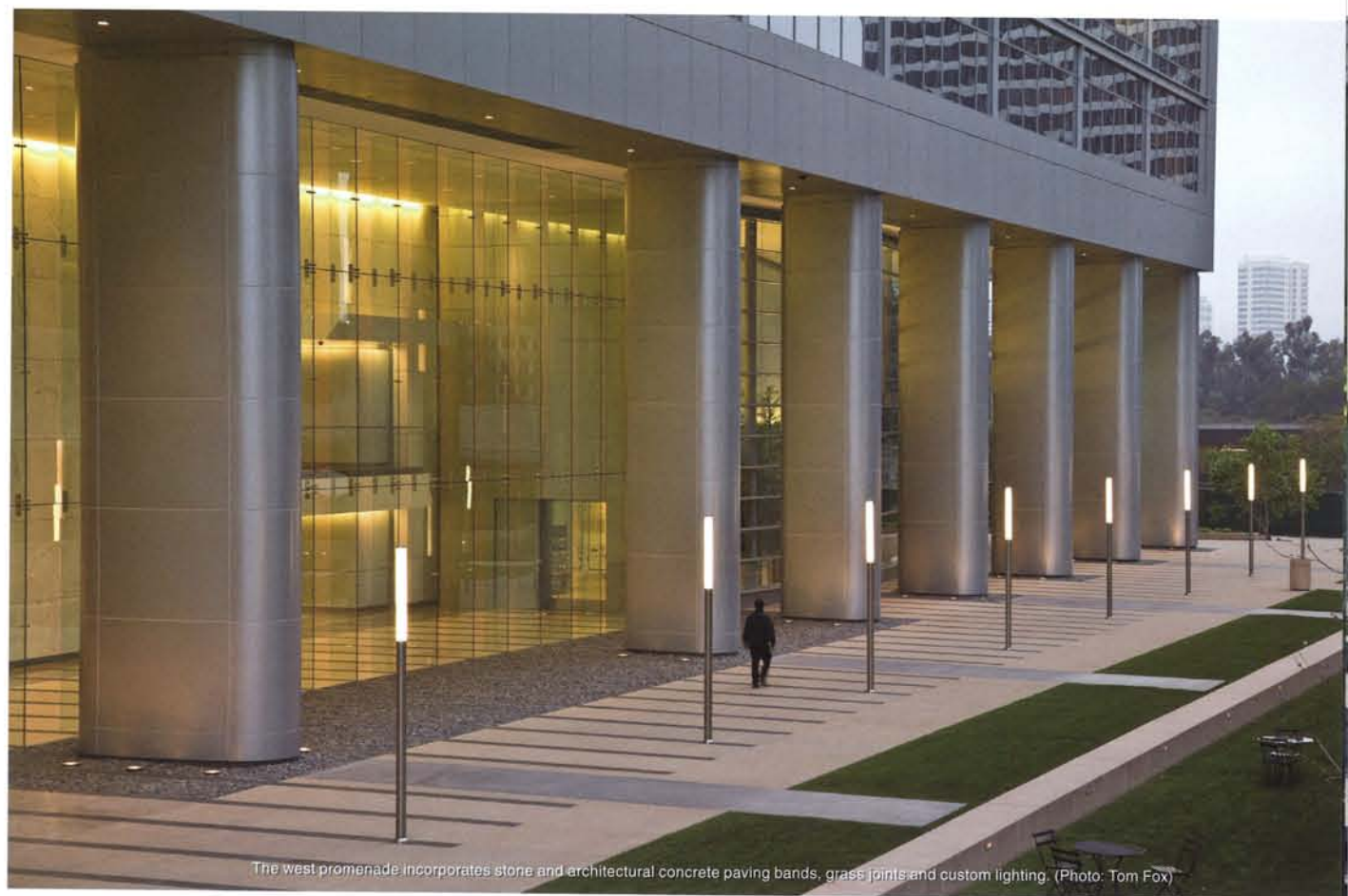
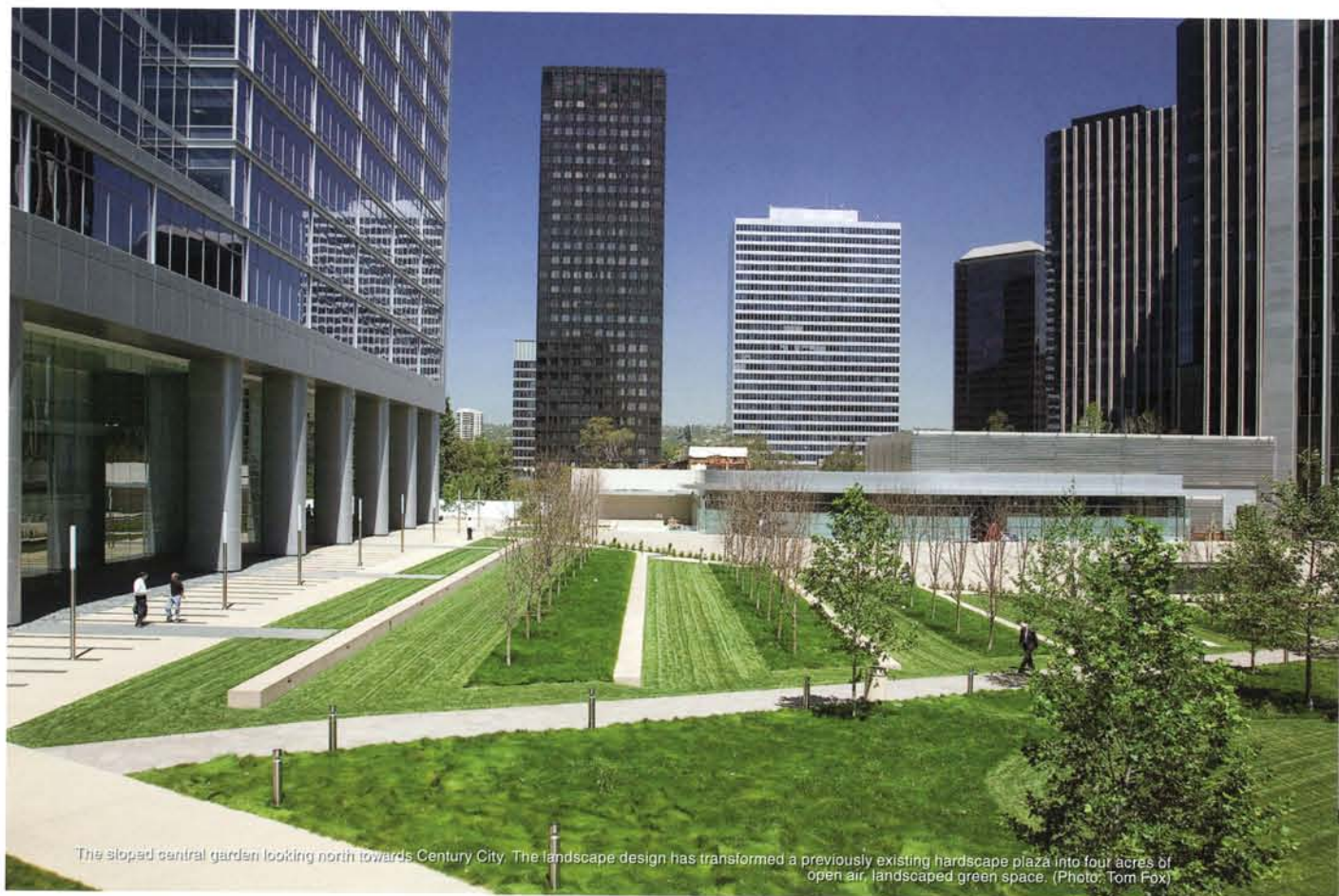


The roof garden as seen from the lobby of the office building looking east shows the walkways flanking the central lawn and the stairs leading to the cultural area. The landscape plan required the removal of buildings, creating an open podium for the green roof garden, which now provides ample space for outdoor events and gatherings. (Photo: Tom Fox)

2000 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, California
This project adds 183,000 m² of new Class A office space, restaurants and cultural centre while tying together twin 44-storey towers with a “green oasis” that fosters social gathering and interaction. Built over underground parking, the rooftop landscape offers outdoor space to 15,000 on-site tenants as well as local residents. Towers rise above a sloped podium that covers the majority of the site. Seat walls step beneath formal rows of pear trees, with drifts of native sycamores on the south side to provide seasonal shade. Promenades extend into the office lobby, inviting use of this green oasis for casual relaxation as well as programmed events.



The site plan for 2000 Avenue of the Stars transforms an existing hardscape plaza into four acres of open green space, providing a respite from the concrete office surroundings.

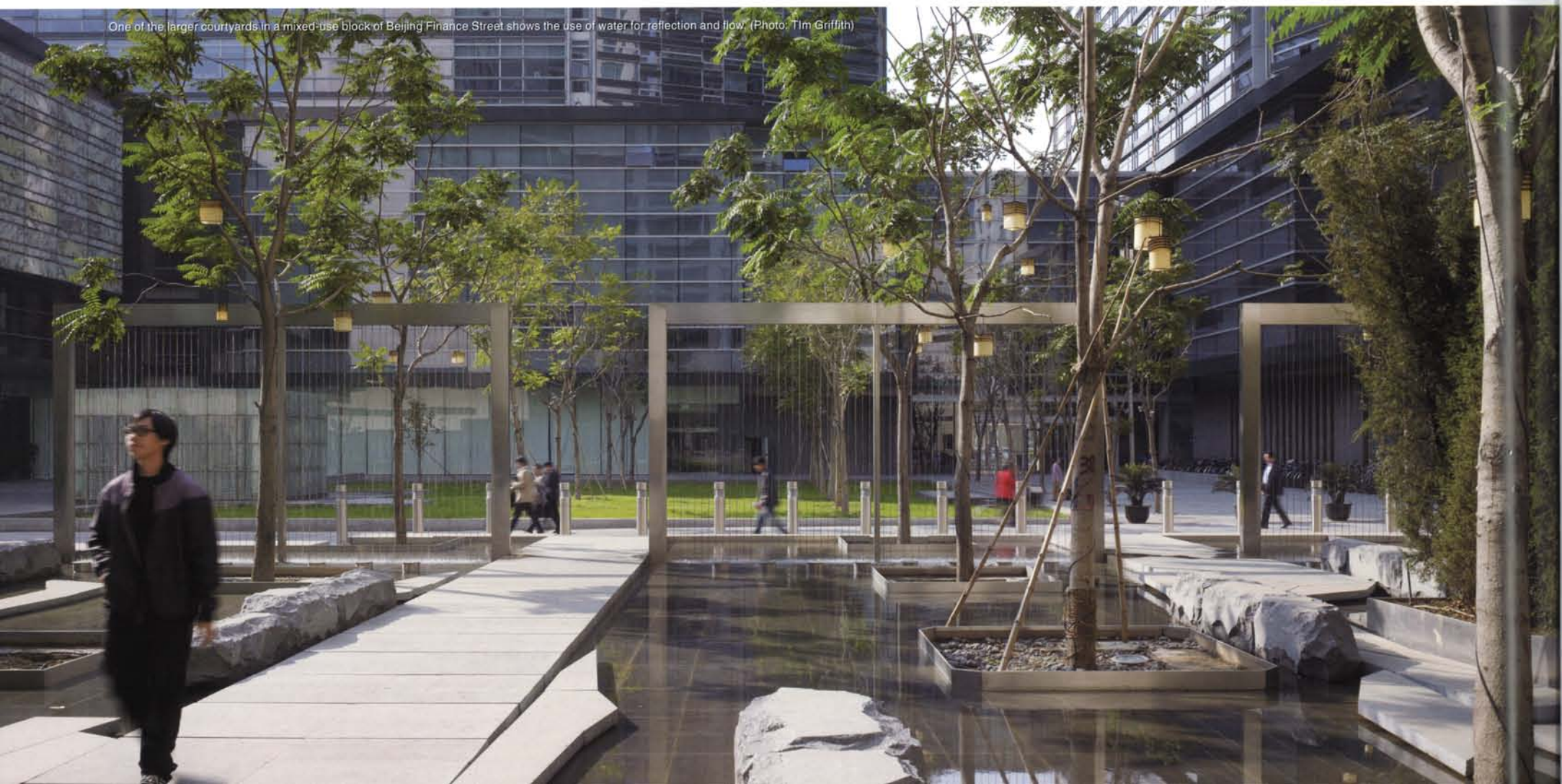




Beijing Finance Street, Beijing, China

Known as the “Wall Street of the East”, BFS provides a home for over 1,000 financial institutions and 18 city blocks of office, retail, entertainment, and residential uses, all clustered around an eight-acre public park. The project orients buildings to optimise day lighting and ventilation while creating open spaces that range from monumental to intimate in scale. Water elements echo Chinese traditions, while locally-sourced landscape materials, indigenous plant material and zero storm water discharge establish a high level of sustainability. The result is a tremendously popular community landscape at the heart of an international cutting edge destination.

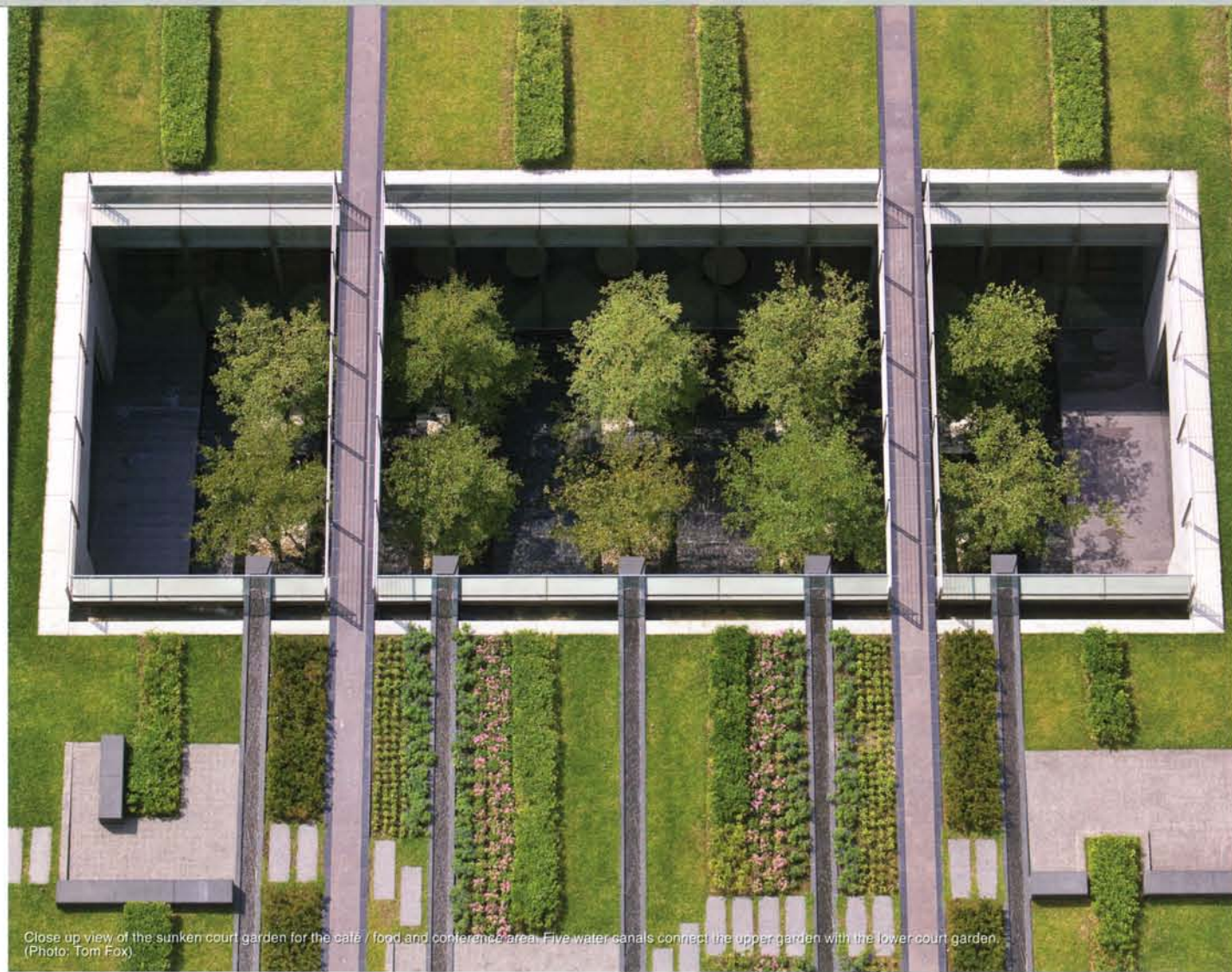
Fountains at the main civic plaza of Beijing Finance Street announce important civic events and celebrations. (Photo: Tim Griffith)



One of the larger courtyards in a mixed-use block of Beijing Finance Street shows the use of water for reflection and flow. (Photo: Tim Griffith)



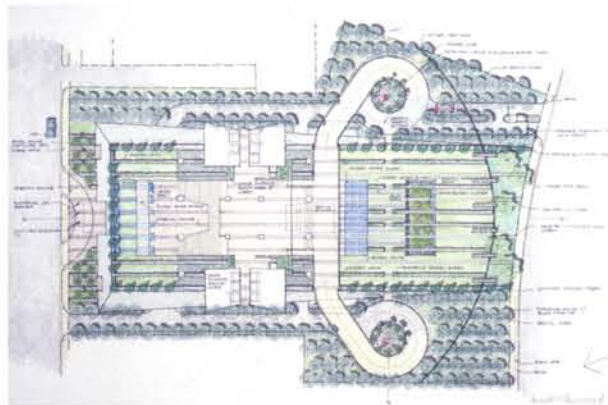
Detail of waterfall from the five roof terrace canals above. (Photo: Tom Fox)



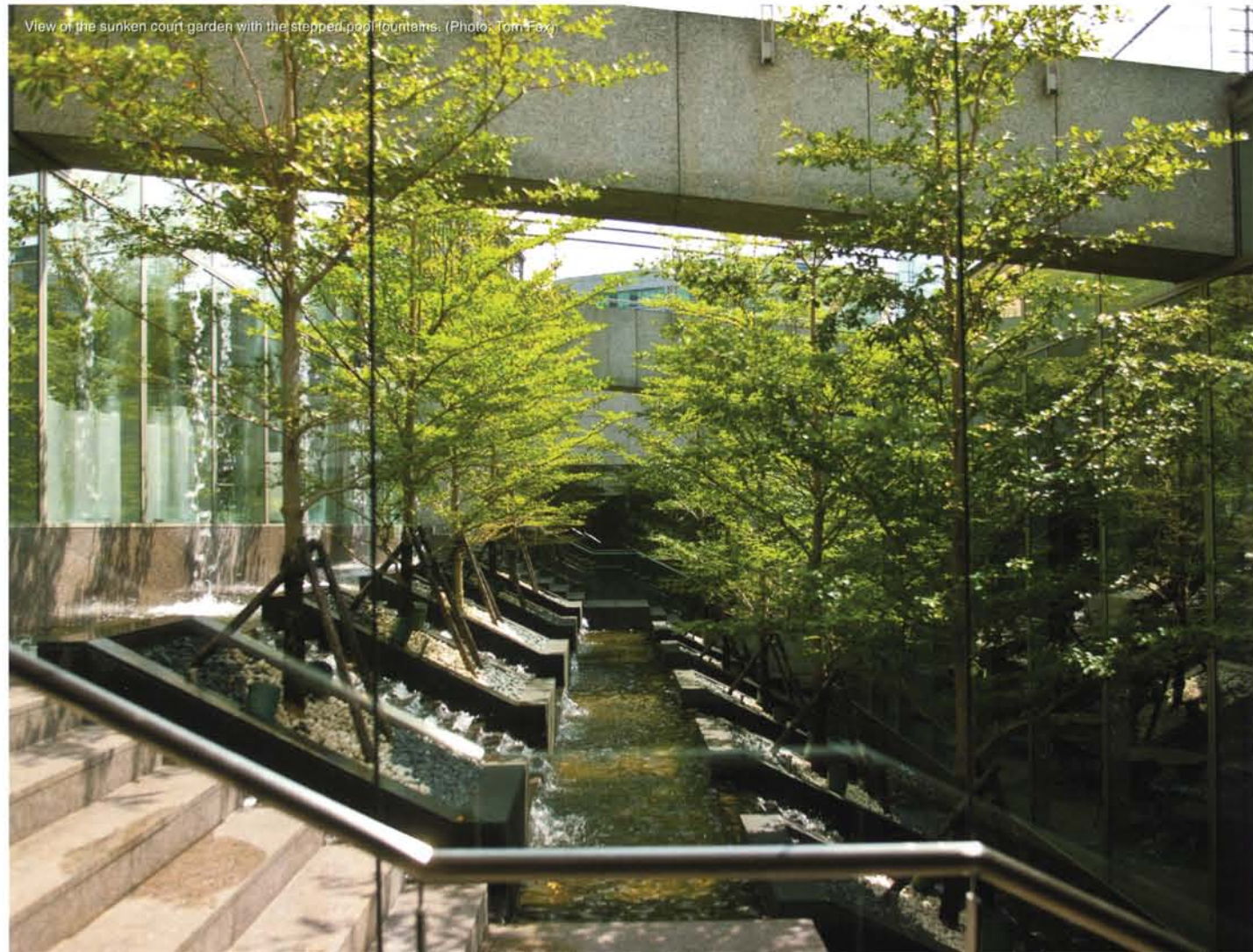
Close up view of the sunken court garden for the café / food and conference area. Five water canals connect the upper garden with the lower court garden. (Photo: Tom Fox)

Lite-On Electronic Headquarters, Taipei, Taiwan

This landscape achieves environmental sustainability without compromising the highest level of aesthetics. With origins in the LED/flat panel lighting industry, the client envisioned a green, energy-efficient project—the first of its kind in Taipei. The 25-storey tower maximizes views of city and river from a sloping green roof podium that retains and reuses storm water for irrigation. Linear planting beds, lawn panels, and granite walkways connect interior/external spaces and reinforce views, while gardens provide seating and outdoor gathering space. A light well opens to a courtyard with stepped fountains and a grove of Ginkgo trees visible from the cafeteria or pedestrian bridges.



The landscape plan for Lite-On Corporate Headquarters shows a sloped roof garden for the visitor entry/drop-off at the right centre, a rectangular high-rise tower at the left centre, and a lower court entry/drop-off for the exhibition hall/theatre auditorium to the left.



View of the sunken court garden with the stepped pool fountains. (Photo: Tom Fox)



A covered causeway links the buildings and defines a the portal to Field Garden beyond at Poly International Plaza. (Photo: Tom Fox)

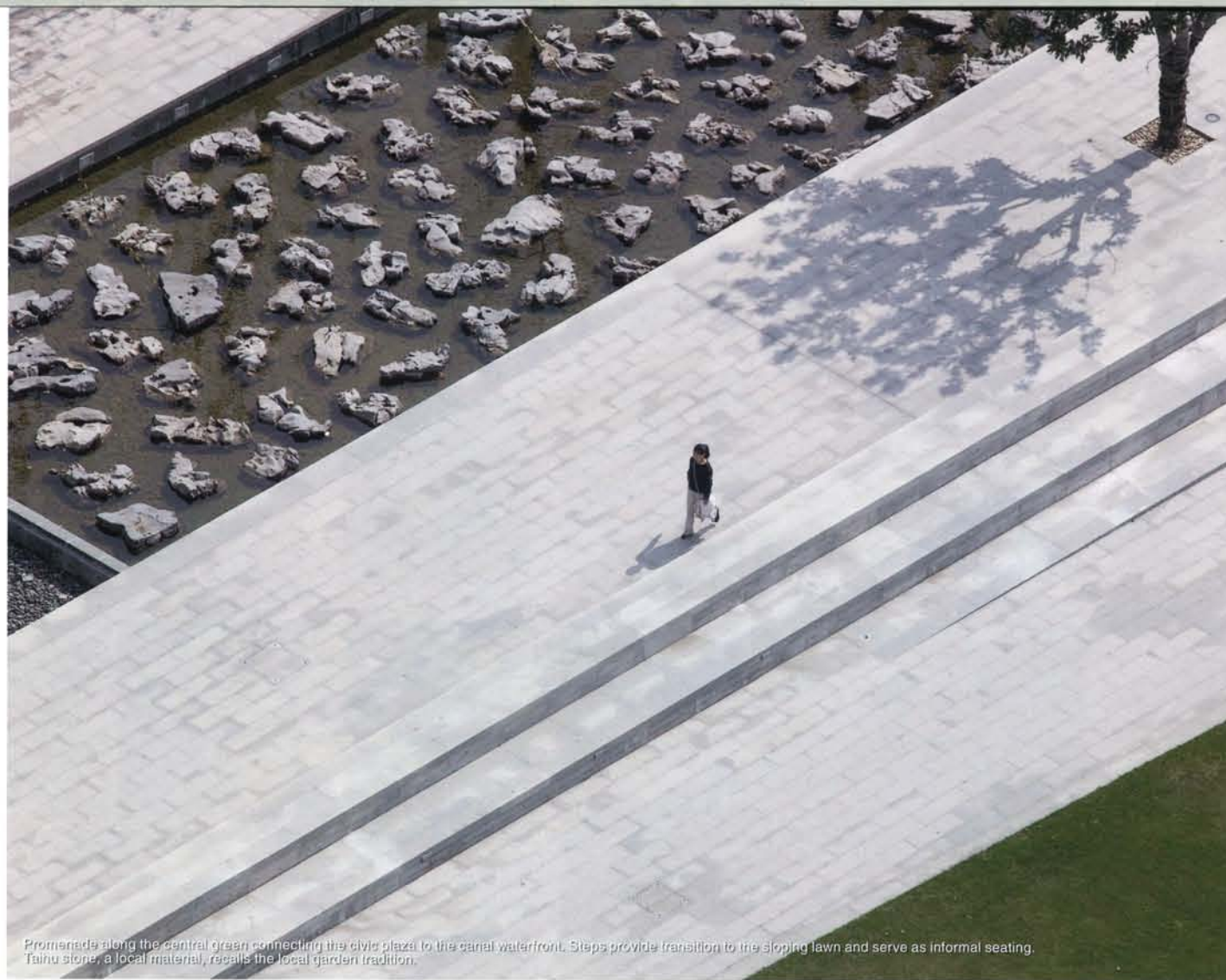


View of the linear fountain basin showing green canopy of trees creating shade across visitor parking areas. (Photo: Tom Fox)

Poly International Plaza, Guangzhou, China

The Poly International landscape provides a high level of clarity, orientation, and identity for the workplace. The site plan for this 180,000-square meter office and retail complex forms a series of gardens and plazas. A major north-south promenade connects to offsite hotels and convention hall, while a diagonal axis enhances views of Pagoda Park and Pearl River. The design integrates Southern Chinese landscape traditions with a modern sensitivity toward local context, climate, flora and SOM's modern architecture. Continuous tree canopies and water features moderate climate by providing shade and capturing breezes.

Overall master landscape plan for SIP Administrative Center.



Promenade along the central green connecting the civic plaza to the canal waterfront. Steps provide transition to the sloping lawn and serve as informal seating. Taihu stone, a local material, recalls the local garden tradition.

SIP Administrative Center, Suzhou, China.

SIP demonstrates how landscape creates positive work environment—in this case, a 28-hectare government campus on the east bank of Jingji Lake. The design for this “City of Canals” uses water as the primary focus of civic plaza, parks, central green, canal waterfront and streetscape. Landscape elements such as trees, fountains, lawn panels, and promenades create a variety of spaces that convey the monumental nature of the project while offering respite and refreshment in intimately-scaled courtyards and gardens. The project represents a shift in Asian work culture from building-focused to recognizing landscape an essential part of the work environment.



A pair of canals and fountains frames the central green and the park to recall Suzhou's reputation as the 'City of Canals' and connect the civic administrative center to the waterfront.