

Introduction

The Shanghai settlement is a typical modern Chinese settlement since it was established the earliest, has existed for the longest time and has the biggest area and fully-developed management institutions. The Shanghai settlement park will exert its influence upon the present-day urban park structure and systems of culture background, planning, layout and design. Therefore, the study of the park will be of great significance towards understanding the development of Shanghai park system.

The investigating place of this study, Luxun Park is the first sports park in China and the first reconstructed memorial-cultural recreational park in Shanghai since the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). It is also the biggest settlement park to be well preserved until the present day. Thus, it plays a very important role in the history of parks in China. In 1993 the Flowering Cherry Garden was constructed within the park, widely considered to be a symbol of friendship between Japan and China. So far, Luxun Park has developed in three stages: the settlement park during the Qing Dynasty, its reconstruction and expansion during the Republic of China and its transformation after the founding of the PRC. As far as its elements of spatial composition are concerned, it is a typical park whose spatial composition is transformed as per the changing social system. Therefore it is essential to analyse the transformation of Luxun Park in order to understand the development of modern parks in Shanghai but also throughout China.

Most of the relevant studies on Luxun Park concentrate on the process of its formation (Shaozeng WANG, 1982; Goro YANAGI, 1985) and culture (Lingzhang YAN, 1995) and bandstand (Hong YU, 2004). Related information about the park can also be found in the local gazetteers, but all sources provide merely an introduction no one has closely studied its transformation after the modernisation of its spatial composition. This study’s purpose is thus to describe the transformation of Luxun Park’s spatial composition.

Methods

The literature investigated is for this study was derived from two visits to the Shanghai Municipal Archive from 15th to 30th August in 2006 and from 10th to 25th February in 2007. The document consulted was the Annual Report of the Shanghai Municipal Council, followed by an on-site survey of the park on the basis of past research papers, reports, historical literature, maps and photos.

Based on the collected by these means, six park plans have been used as the main sources of information for this research: plans for the initial design (1903) and revisions implemented (1905) during the Qing Dynasty, plans for the early stage (1922) and the late stage (1942) during the Republic of China, plans for the early stage (1965) and the late stage (1985) during the PRC (Table-I-Figure-I~VI). From the available literature on plans for the park’s transformation, four elements were selected: hills and water system, facilities, pathways and functional zoning. These features constitute the changes made to the park during the six stages mentioned above. This study investigates the park’s transformation at each stage, with reference to the available literature.

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3. Essentials of Luxun Park and Era Background

After the Opium War in 1840, the International Settlement was formed in Shanghai whose authorities constructed a park so as to introduce a new kind of landscape to Shanghai. In 1896 the Municipal Council (M.C.) purchased land in Hongkou and built the Rifle Range, which was an early version of the Luxun Park that stands today. In 1901, the construction of the sports park was scheduled, in two years later the British landscapit W.L. Stuckey took charge of creating the initial design scheme. In 1905, the park's construction was in the same year and locally in the following year. In 1909, upon its completion, it was named Hongkew Recreation Ground.

In 1912, after the founding of the Republic of China, the two Far Eastern Championship Games were held here. In 1922, the M.C. enlarged the park’s plot in its northwest corner, and in the same year it was renamed Hongkou Park (Table-1-Figure-III). In 1928, the park was opened to the Chinese, and in 1933 the M.C. again extended the park plot in its northeast corner. In 1943, after the return of the Shanghai settlement, the park was taken over by the Works Bureau (Table-1-Figure-IV).

In 1949, after the founding of the PRC, the park was taken over by the Shanghai Landscape Administrative Office (S.L.A.O.). From 1956 to 1960, the park was reconstructed and enlarged twice, in line with the design scheme jointly created by the Shanghai Planning & Architectural Administration Bureau and the S.L.A.O. Lakes were dug and hills piled up. The utilisation of the park thus changed and it became a memorial-cultural recreational park (Table-1-Figure-V). In 1981, the former S.L.A.O. was changed to the Park Administrative Office and the park that now came under its jurisdiction improved considerably. In 1988, it was renamed Luxun Park (Table-1-Figure-VI).

4. Transformation of the Park’s Spatial Composition

Hills and water system, facilities, pathways, functional zoning and plantings are integral elements of any park in China. Since the nature of plantings is significantly influenced by the varieties of plants rather than the plan and design of the park, and since local restrictions and all relevant literature to be analysed is large in quantity, this research will focus only on four aspects: forms of hills and water system, types and quantity of facilities, types of pathways and forms of ring roads as well as the types and quantity of functional zoning.

(1) Transformation of the Hills and Water System

In the initial design, W.L. Stuckey planned a lake and several creeks separately in the north and south, with an island in the southern lake (Figure-1-I). Both water systems were controlled and released separately and were used for the division of the ball-games grounds, embodying the composition characteristic of a sports and scenery park. Later, as each sports club demanded more land for their sporting activities, construction began in 1905 in line with the design scheme revised by D. Macgregor. The sports grounds were expanded by eliminating the creeks that ran through the park and changing the direction of the ground running east-west to south-north (Table-1-II-1). While the two lakes were kept as is, they were connected by a creek. The extended lake in the east stretched up to the park's northern boundary and an island was constructed in the eastern lake. By 1909, a water system layout was initially established, in a period of five years.

At stage III, the park's plot in the northwest was enlarged with no significant change in the water system except for a slight reduction in the eastern island's area (Figure-1-III-1). At stage IV, a new ball-games ground was built in the northwest and a lake was created. This caused a rise in the water level, which led to the reduction of the eastern lake and the southern island, while the eastern island was turned into a peninsula (Figure-1-IV-1). In 1933, a mound was constructed in the northern section, forming the first hill since the establishment of the park.

At stage V two larger reconstruction and expansion plans were executed in the park. In Phase I, 1957, a screen-style hill was piled east-west in the north of the Luxun’s Mausoleum (Figure-1-V-1). In the south, the lake was enlarged and a low mound was piled, forming an axial line with the graveyard. In Phase II, 1959-60, the main project was to dig a big lake and pile up a large hill. With the lake as the centre, ponds and creeks were scattered north-south, with the water system running across the park and creating a complete water system.
The area of the water surface then rose to 3.47 ha, more than double of what it was at stage IV. In the lake, two islands stood facing each other. The smaller island, Hainan Island, was in the east while the bigger one, Huxin Island, was in the west. A large hill known as North Hill was piled up, forming the major vertical scenery of the park. The branch range of the North Hill extended southward to form the Birds Hill that ran through the middle of the northern area of the park. The enlargement of the hill in the north of Luxun's Mausoleum and Birds Hill completed at stage VI can be seen in Figure-1-VI-1. At the same time, a hill was piled up separately at the northern and southern banks of the island. The layout of hills and water system in the park closely resembles the natural mountain-water. These features have largely been created on the big island of the park. The small islands in the north and south respond to dynamics composition horizontally and increase the gradation of landscape on the lake.

Overall, the formation of the park’s water system at the beginning was due to the creek connecting the two lakes and islands, with the entire layout at the south-eastern boundary of the park, which did not affect the establishment of the sports ground. The mound in the park appeared in 1933 to the north of the water system with a small scale. In the reconstruction of parks in the 1950s, the former water system was extended on a large scale on the basis of traditional Chinese landscaping techniques were adopted to create the layout of a central lake with the key features being one pond (the lake) and three hills (islands). Hills were then shaped, and piled up by digging a lake. The biggest hill lies in the north of the water system and the remaining smaller hills are distributed in its east and west and on the northern and southern sides of Luxun’s Mausoleum. This forms the entire layout that is surrounded by mountains and a river.

(2) Transformation of the Facilities

At stage I, the major task was to set up playground facilities for ball games in the middle and in the four corners of the park as well as landscaping and rest facilities at the park boundary without building facilities (Figure-1-I-2). Sports such as cricket, croquet, modern football and tennis originated in 19th-century England and the layout of the facilities for these games reflected the hobby of outdoor sports in Metropolitan England. At stage II, the challenge was to merge the ball-games grounds with the middle part of the park. The original entrance road was turned into a small golf course. When the park was opened to the local public, it had a tennis court, with hockey, croquet, cricket, football and baseball grounds as well as golf links being added subsequently. Besides, a bandstand for symphony concerts, landscaping facilities such as flower-garden and rock-garden were created at the park’s boundary along with a parking lot at the west entrance. Other rest facilities such as a pavilion, a mid-lake summer house and some parterres were also set up (Figure-1-II-2).

At stage III, the major task was to add a running track in the east in 1915 and later, in 1922, to create an open air swimming pool in the plot’s northwest corner’s extension. These two constituted some of the largest sports facilities in the park (Figure-1-III-2). At stage IV, in 1932, the park had “3 football, 2 hockey, 1 baseball grounds, 4 bowling greens, 83 lawn and 5 hard tennis courts, 1 running track and one nine-hole golf course”, which shows that the variety and quantity of sports facilities in those days were plentiful. In 1933, the north-eastern corner park plot was enlarged to set up a new ground for ball games (Figure-1-IV-2). In the early 1930s, landscaping facilities such as Flowering-plant Garden and pavilion-style wisteria trellises were added at the park’s boundary in addition to large service facilities such as moveable spectators’ stands, chairs and a rest house that enhanced the sporting facilities of the park.

At stage V, in 1951, with the completion of Hongkou Stadium in the west and the separation of the swimming pool and golf course (Figure-1-V-2), the sports facilities of the park were completely removed. In 1956, with Luxun’s Mausoleum being moved to the north of the original running track and with the completion of Luxun’s Museum and monument, the former sports park changed to a memorial-cultural recreational park. Later, pavilions, a long corridor of bamboo pavilions and other rest facilities were gradually added during the two reconstruction and expansion projects undertaken. This was in addition to new service facilities including a sales department and tearoom, a playground, nursery and other maintenance conducted to improve the new purpose of the park. At stage VI, when the Cultural Revolution took place, the dismantling of the bandstand reflected the trend of rejecting Western culture that prevailed at the time. During the 1970-80s, rest facilities including pavilions, corridors and waterside pavilions were added, most of which were distributed beside the hills and lake (Figure-1-VI-2). These reflect the characteristics of traditional Chinese landscaping: numerous buildings scattered between mountains and rivers. The Yiuyuan exhibition hall, formerly a reading-room, had a courtyard with a “garden within garden”, layout based on the classical gardens in Suzhou. In 1978, after the Economic Reform, restaurants, dock and electric game tools were set up successively. In 1984, the Memorial Clock signifying the eternal friendship between Chinese and Japanese youths was completed and unveiled at the Pine-bamboo-plum Garden. Soon after, the completion of the Flowering Cherry Garden also symbolised the political camaraderie between China and Japan.

Overall, since its establishment to the 1930s, the park has continually improved its sporting facilities, which are primarily concentrated in the middle of the park and in the park plot extended in the 1920-30s. The landscaping and service facilities were distributed along the boundary so as not to affect the sports ground. In the 1950s, the separation of sports facilities from the memorial-cultural facilities enhanced the image of the park as a memorial-cultural one. After the 1970s, the traditional Chinese landscape buildings were completed successively, comprising the rest and cultivation facilities, most of which were scattered amid hills and lakes or concealed at the boundary. This also played a role in increasing space for better and improved landscapes. Some profit-making facilities and theme gardens built up after the Economic Reform in 1978 to extent reflected the transformation of China’s political and economic systems at the time.
Figure 1: The Transformation Process of Spatial Composition and its Characteristics
(3) Transformation of the Pathways

In the initial design there was only one south entrance. At its north, via the carriage road, stood one entrance ring road at whose northern end two main pathways stretched to the west and north of the park, forming one stroll-style main ring road (Figure-1-I-3). On the way were built four secondary ring roads and one lake-stroll-style secondary ring road; Besides, two secondary ring roads were built in the northwest and northeast corners of the main pathway, on which one could stroll around the ball-games grounds at both ends of the north boundary. At this stage, the pathway’s layout featured an entrance avenue ring road along with a stroll-style main ring road and inner- and outer-secondary ring roads. At stage II, there were three great changes. First, due to the shaping of the park boundary, the original two secondary ring roads were removed and one could stroll around the entire park via just one main ring road (Figure-1-II-3). Second, the location of the south entrance was changed to occupy a golf course in the southeast corner. A ring road at the south entrance and a secondary pathway to the west entrance parking lot also added. Third, in the middle of the park, one secondary main pathway going from south to north and another east to west were added to divide the ball-games grounds. At this stage, the pathway’s layout featured an entrance ring road along with a stroll-style main ring road, inner- and outer-secondary ring roads and a secondary pathway.

At stage III, as a running track was added in the east and the original secondary pathway was removed, a secondary pathway to the swimming pool and a secondary ring road around the parking lot were added in the northwest corner (Figure-1-III-3). Compared with the previous stage, the layout of the pathway at this stage featured the elimination of the outer secondary ring road. At stage IV, one entrance ring road was added thanks to the extension of a ball-games ground in the northeast section, one pathway of which led to the eastern peninsula (Figure-1-IV-3). Moreover, growing facilities in the western part of the park were connected to the main pathway by building several footpaths. The pathway’s layout at this stage featured a ring road at the north and south entrances along with a stroll-type main ring road, an inner-secondary ring road and an outer-secondary pathway.

At stage V, the original north and south entrance roads and running tracks were approximately the same (Figure-1-V-3). The middle part of the ring road at the south entrance was divided into a main pathway with several secondary ring roads at its end, from which tourists could be guided to the two popular spots, Luxun’s Mausoleum and Luxun’s Museum. The form of the pathway net was changed from the previous single-line stroll to the plentiful “8-like” ring pathway similar to the main pathway. Reciprocatng secondary pathways to each boundary facility were also added. The total length of the pathway thus rose to 4.49 km, approximately double of what it was at stage IV. The pathway’s layout at this stage featured ring roads at the north and south entrances along with net-like stroll-style ring roads and an outer-secondary pathway. At stage VI, the net-like segmentation of the pathway became more apparent, and the total length of the pathway rose to 6.54 km (Figure-1-VI-3). The secondary pathway to each facility at the park boundary was also changed from being reciprocating pathways to ring roads, thereby improving the tour routes. The pathway’s layout at this stage featured ring roads at the north and south entrances along with a net-like stroll-style ring road and an outer-secondary ring road.

Overall, prior to the reconstruction of the park in the 1950s, the pathway was primarily composed of the ring road at the entrance and one stroll-style main ring road; as building facilities were mostly distributed outside the main ring road, they were connected by the secondary pathway. As a whole, the pathway tended to be more simplified since the park was primarily intended to serve as a sports ground. Later, the pathway was reticulated while the original ring pathway at the entrance of the park and running track kept as is. The main pathway that ran through the north and south was added in addition to several secondary pathways leading to each facility and net-like secondary ring roads that were winding, deep and serene pathways as in the traditional Chinese landscapes.

(4) Transformation of the Functional Zoning

The initial design, with the exception of one entrance zone and two lake zones, was primarily composed of the five ball-games ground zones in the middle and four corners of the park (Figure-1-I-1-4). When revisions were implemented, the entrance zone in the south was turned into a golf course zone, the southern cricket zone was turned into the entrance zone and the temporary and scattered ball-games grounds zones were merged to form the central ball-games grounds zone (Figure-1-II-4). Article 9 of the Regulations promulgated in 1909 stipulated that the division of a sports ground and administration method will vary with the seasons. It is evident from this that the park made arrangements for sporting events as per the habits of Europeans.

At stage III, the sports and ball-games grounds zone was separated from the central, and a swimming pool zone was added in the northwest corner (Figure-1-III-4). At this stage, two Far East Sports Games were held in the park. The functional zoning of the park developed from a single ball-games grounds zone to several sports zones for various sporting events. At stage IV, a ball-games grounds zone was constructed in the northeast corner and the rest facilities zone was separated from the swimming pool zone (Figure-1-IV-4). After the park was opened to the Chinese in 1928, the total number of visitors rose from 251,3996 in 1927 to 904,9178 in 1933. At this stage, as a result of a significant increase in the number of visitors, we can see the park administration’s efforts at making adjustments to the functional zoning so as to improve its sports and rest facilities.

At stage V, the four zones in the west and the golf course zone in the southeast section were separated from the park. The ball-games grounds zones at the north and south entrances, the southern lake zone and the sports and ball-games grounds zone were kept as is. Five new zones were added while the north lake zone was enlarged and the nature of the functional zoning became more diversified (Figure-1-V-4). This is because the park’s planning at that time was primarily based on the former Soviet planning theory of a cultural-recreational park10, whose functional zoning was based on the
content of its activities. This approach was also taken when reconstructing Luxun Park. At stage VI, there was no significant change in the functional zoning, except for the reading-room zone in the southwest being replaced by an exhibition hall zone (Figure-1-VI-4) where exhibitions of flowers and plants, tray landscapes, paintings, calligraphy and handicraft articles were held. This served to enhance the cultural flavour of the park.

Overall, the functional zoning at stages I-II was based primarily on the ball-games grounds zone in the middle, supplemented by the lake zone at the park’s boundary and entrance zone. At stages III-IV, the sports zone was added in the middle and a plot was extended so as to improve the sporting facilities in the park. At stages V-VI, with the separation of the sports zone from the park and with the influence of the theory of former Soviet cultural-recreational park zoning, the nature of the functional zoning became diversified. The key mountain-water zone and the two memorial zones were distributed in the middle of the park with a triangular layout, and the auxiliary zones were located on both sides of the entrances to the south and north, ensuring the improvement of the park’s usability, without affecting the view from the major zone.

To take a panoramic view of the above, we find that at stage I, the sports ground and water system were dominant features of the park, the key characteristics of spatial composition as a sports and scenery park, in addition to the influence of English-style planning and layout. From the establishment of the park up to stages III-IV, sports facilities including a swimming pool and a track were added and the water system and pathways were simplified, highlighting its transformation into a comprehensive sports park. At stages V-VI, the construction of mountain-water and memorial-cultural recreational facilities was dominant, in addition to a network of pathways and zoning with abundant spatial composition, highlighting its transformation into a comprehensive park.

5. Conclusion

In this study, the following conclusions have been drawn: (1) The evolution of Luxun park from a proprietary park for foreigners in the settlement period to a park open to the general public has been expounded in terms of its utilisation. (2) The park’s evolution from a sports park in its initial period to a comprehensive park with memorial-cultural recreational facilities has been expounded in terms of its type. (3) The park has evolved from an early English-style outdoor sports park to a modern park with traditional Chinese style has been expounded in landscape architecture style.

Luxun Park is one of the urban parks in China, its establishment and development have been influenced by the politics and economy, especially the culture during the different historical stages. As one of the settlement parks in Shanghai, Luxun Park has experienced the amalgamation of Western and Chinese culture, which is reflected on the transformation of park’s content, form, character and function. In the future, a further study of the park’s transformation through the addition of features such as plantinga and views will be conducted.

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Notes and references

1) Shaozeng WANG (1982) : Settlement Parks and Open Spaces in Shanghai, Beijing Forestry University, 75pp, Beijing.
12) The self-governing organization under municipal administration of International Settlement which was established by the U.K., the U.S.A. and the French settlement authorities in 1854.
13) S.M.C. (1933) : A.R of the S.M.C. (1933), p234, Shanghai.
17) S.M.C. (1933) : A.R of the S.M.C. (1933), p239, Shanghai.