

OCT Loft Renovation

Enping Road, OCT East Industrial Park,  
Nanshan District  
Shenzhen, China

Architects	Urbanus Architecture & Design / Liu Xiaodu Beijing, China
Clients	Shenzhen OCT Real Estate Company Shenzhen, China
Commission	2003
Design	2003 - 2009
Construction	2003 - 2009
Occupancy	2009
Site	55,465 m²
Ground floor	n.a.
Total floor	59,000 m²
Costs	6,510,445 USD

*Programme* This industrial zone in Shenzhen dates from the 1980s when the rapid urbanisation of this fishing village began. The ten buildings on the site were manufacturing facilities that have since relocated inland, leaving a large residual space surrounded by residential areas. The catalyst to redevelopment was the decision to set up a contemporary art centre in one warehouse. Curators and artists worked with the architect and developer on a broader planning strategy for the whole site that aimed to simulate the organic growth of a city. The other warehouses are being appropriated with new buildings between them, creating rich, experimental spaces lacking in standard developments.



From the early 1980s, Shenzhen has grown rapidly from a small fishing village with 30,000 people to becoming today an international urban metropolis with a population of over 13 million. Manufacturing was the main industry in the early stages of the city's development; now these old factory areas have become a new focus of urban reconstruction with the development of Shenzhen city.

Shenzhen became the pioneer when China opened its door to the world in early 1980. OCT (Oversea Chinese Town) was established by the company which owned 5 square kilometers' land. Over years, OCT area has grown into the midst of a mixture of middle to high class residential areas and amusement park zone. The OCT east area has planned as a light industrial zone. The site contains ten existing buildings (factory-warehouses and dormitories), all built in the early 1980s. These factories remain as residual spaces in this fast growing city, after the wave of manufacture business moved to inland. In 2003, Hexiangning Fine Arts Museum -- one of the leading national modern art museums in China--decided to set up a contemporary art center in one of these warehouses. Such a decision couples well with the idea to gradually transform this area into a trendy mixed-use district, with the construction of an art museum being the catalyst. The development strategy involves all parties: the museum, developer, artists, curators and the architects. The planning strategy is to simulate the natural growth of the city, starting from the linear addition to the existing warehouse that will accommodate the new art center. The empty lots between these buildings are to be gradually filled up with galleries, bookshops, cafes, bars, artist studios, and design shops, along with lofts and dormitories. These new additions fill the gaps, setting up new relationships between buildings by wrapping and penetrating the existing fabric. They also create a second layer of interconnected urban spaces and public facilities. The planning does not intend to define a clear boundary or fixed new forms. Instead it tries to set up a dynamic, interactive and flexible framework to constantly adapt itself to the new conditions posed by the vast changes of the city.





