The West Bund Art Museum is a major new art gallery on the Shanghai Corniche, a riverside promenade that connects the Xuhui district to the historic Bund. It forms a key part of the West Bund Masterplan, which envisions a new cultural district on 9.4 square kilometres of former industrial land.

The museum occupies a triangular plot at the northernmost tip of a new public park, at the point where Longteng Avenue and the Huangpu River converge. A raised public esplanade surrounds the building, offering views of the river, with steps down to broad landing stages. The site offered the opportunity to create a freestanding structure at the same time as improving public connections to the river and the park.

The building comprises three 18-metre-high exhibition halls clad in recycled glass. The upper galleries are mainly top-lit, while the lower-level galleries are lit by clerestory windows. Large picture windows in the second-floor galleries provide views of the park and the river.

The exhibition halls are positioned at the north, south and west boundaries of the plot, leaving the centre free for circulation and support functions. This central area contains a triple-height atrium that brings daylight in to the middle of the building, and is accessible from both the riverside esplanade and Longteng Avenue.

A concrete roof, lower in height than the exhibition halls, spans the atrium and projects beyond the building line to form cantilevers angled towards the river and the road. This roof is supported in part by large conical columns, their sculptural forms acting as entrance markers.

A single-storey cafe pavilion sits along the river’s edge, with an open top-floor terrace shaded by the cantilever of the roof structure and linked to the esplanade by an external staircase. A second staircase leads down from the riverside to a sunken garden, which connects to the lower gallery level of the museum.