

Zhejiang Museum of Natural History

Anji, China 2014–2018

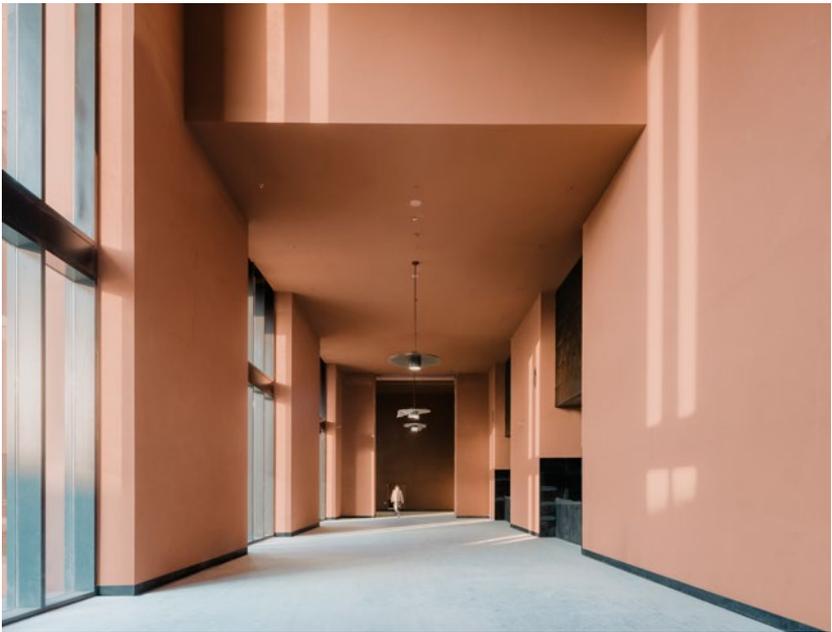
Founded in 1929, the Zhejiang Museum of Natural History has a collection of over 200,000 specimens covering geology, ecology and palaeontology. The eastern Chinese province is the site of many important discoveries from the Cretaceous period and this new, second branch of the museum is the centrepiece of a new cultural district in Anji, Zhejiang. The large visitor numbers expected, combined with the scale of some of the exhibits, gave rise to a loose infrastructure of generous circulation and spacious exhibition halls.

The new museum is set on a sloping site in a large natural park surrounded by bamboo forests and overlooking rice fields in the valley below. A composition of eight, single-storey, bar-shaped pavilions step down the hillside framing an open space conceived as a central garden. Set at right angles to the slope and staggered horizontally, the pavilions follow the natural topography, negotiating a 12-metre difference in height from north to south, and minimising the impact on the landscape. A loggia, or covered walkway, reminiscent of medieval cloisters, mediates between the central garden and the exhibition pavilions.

At the northernmost point, an entrance pavilion welcomes visitors and offers views across the central garden and landscape beyond. On either side of the garden are the exhibition halls which can be visited independently by crossing the garden or in sequence following the stepped loggia. The southernmost pavilion faces a lake at the bottom of the site and includes the education facilities.

The solid forms of the pavilions are immersed in dense landscaping through the central garden and the surrounding area. All buildings feature green roofs and water is used extensively in the landscape design. The pavilions themselves are rendered in red ochre matching the clay earth of the hillside site in which they are embedded, reinforcing the relationship between the museum and the landscape.

Project start	2014
Construction start	2015
Completion	2018
Opening due	2019
Gross floor area	58,000 m ²
Client	Zhejiang Museum of Natural History, People's Government of Anji County
Architect	David Chipperfield Architects Shanghai



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Architect	David Chipperfield Architects Shanghai
Partners	David Chipperfield, Mark Randel (Design lead), Libin Chen
Project architects	Alessandro Milani (Competition), Miguel Angel (Schematic design and design development), Shen Huiwen (Design development), Chuxiao Li (Site design supervision)
Project team	Hans Christian Buhl, Zhexu Du, Tianyuan Fan, Jinghui Hou, Andrew Irvin, Han Li, Huiqun Liu, Jidi Pan, Fengjuan Sun, Nora Wuttke, Liping Xu, Zhixun Zhou
Local design institute	<i>In collaboration with</i> Zhejiang South Architecture Design Ltd.
Structural consultant	Ove Arup and Partners Ltd., Shanghai
Structural engineer	Zhejiang South Architecture Design Ltd.
Services engineer	Zhejiang South Architecture Design Ltd.
Lighting consultant	Sunlux Lighting Design
Exhibition planning	Triad China Ltd.
Landscape architect	Levin Monsigny Landschaftsarchitekten (Schematic design), Zhejiang South Architecture Design Ltd. (Design development)