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# BLENDING MODERNISM AND NATURE

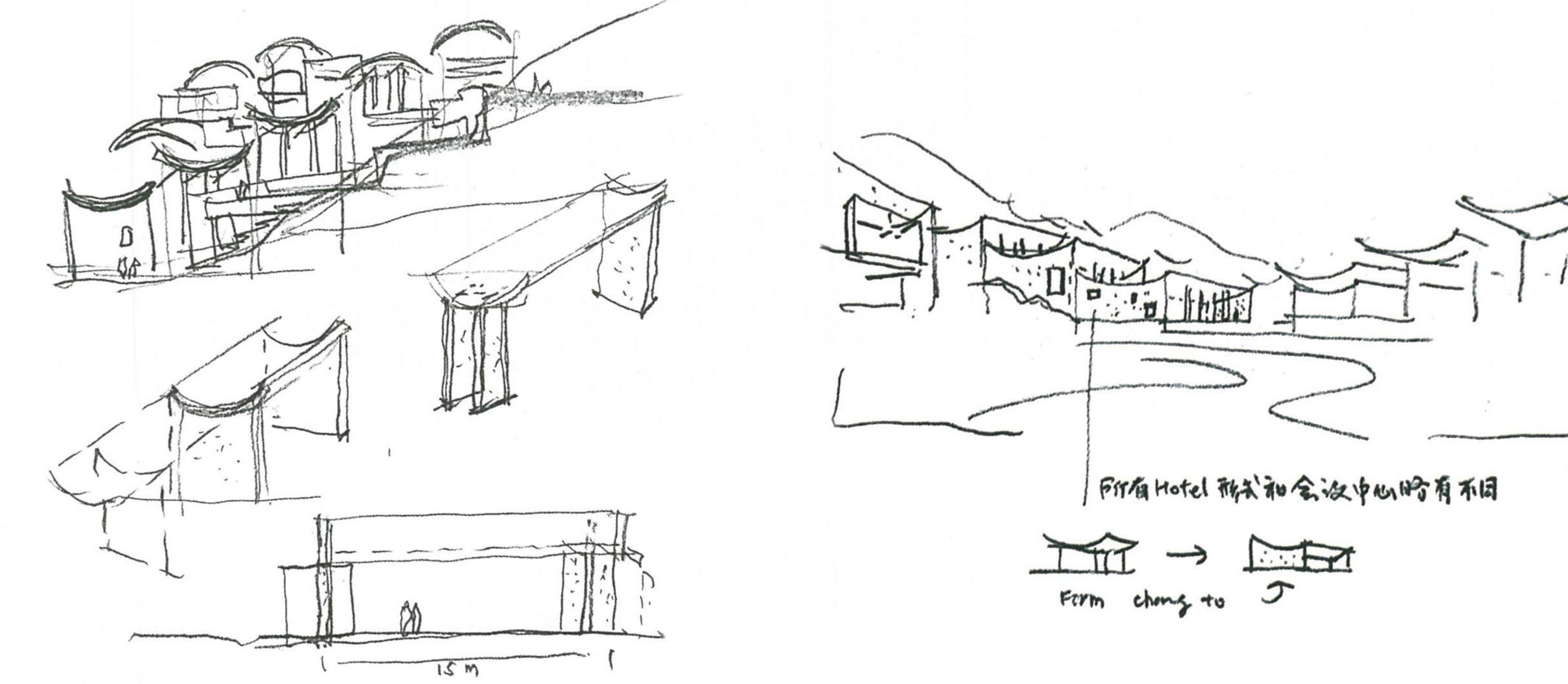
JINGDEZHEN, JIANGXI, CHINA

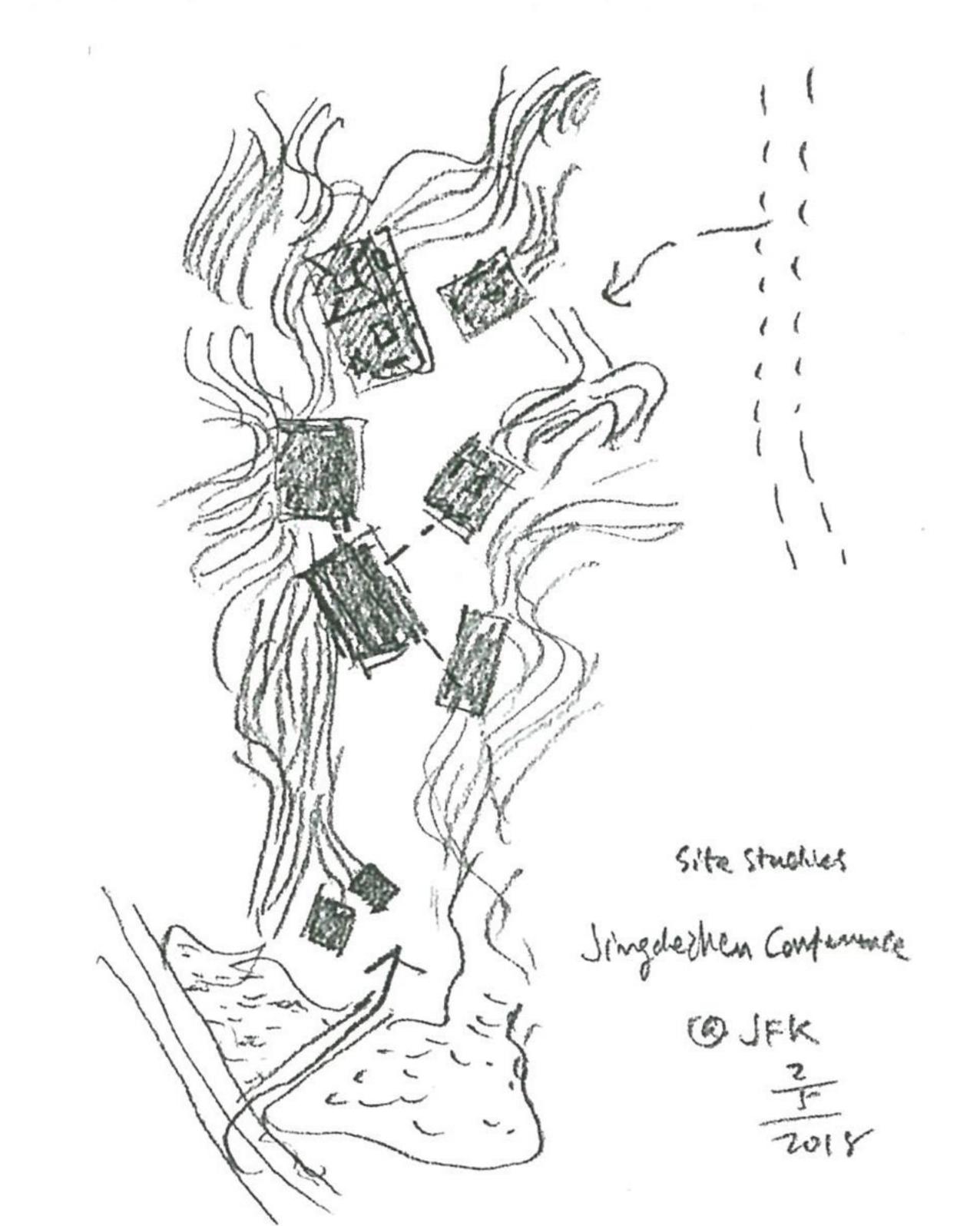
## Studio Zhu Pei

Founded in 2005 in Beijing, the practice focuses on art and cultural projects, blending forms, spaces, light and materials with great contextual sensitivity.











Jingdezhen, the porcelain capital of southern China, has become a major landmark on the country's contemporary cultural landscape, its ancient, often intangible artistic traditions blending effortlessly with the modern language of today. Its recent urban renewal, which includes the development of a large cultural project called Ceramic Art Avenue Taoxichuan, has put the city on the tourism map. The refurbished buildings of the Taoxichuan project, the BingDing Wood Kiln by Zhang Lei and the Imperial Kiln Museum by Zhu Pei (*THE PLAN* 126) are now joined by a new conference camp, an architectural complex, again by Zhu Pei, in a lesser-known natural setting offering visitors a unique experience immersed in a peach tree garden.

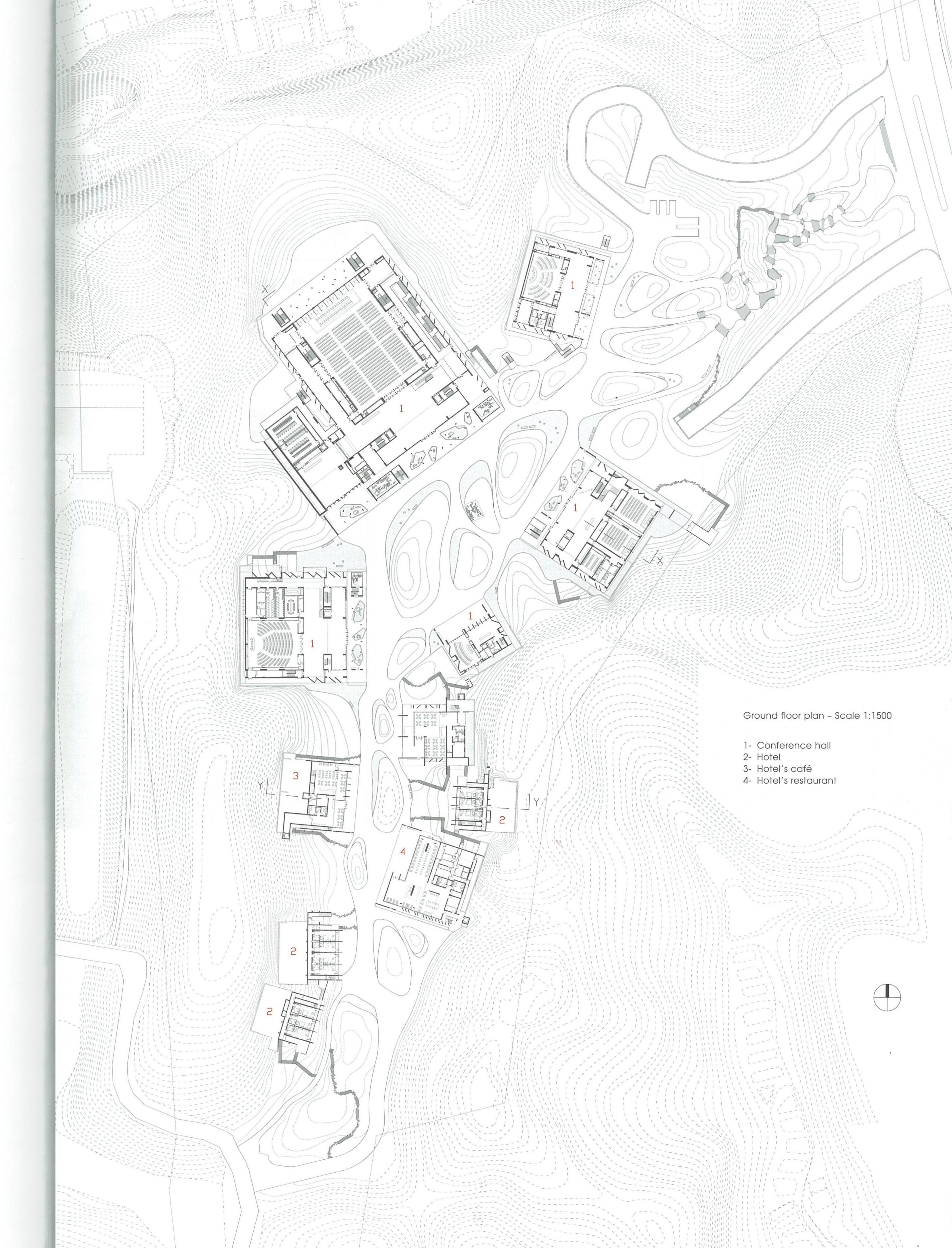
The project posed a complex challenge for the architect: how to place a large new complex made up of closed meeting environments and camp accommodation facilities in a serene natural environment, without negatively impacting the spirit of the place. The challenges were inspirational for Zhu Pei's design.

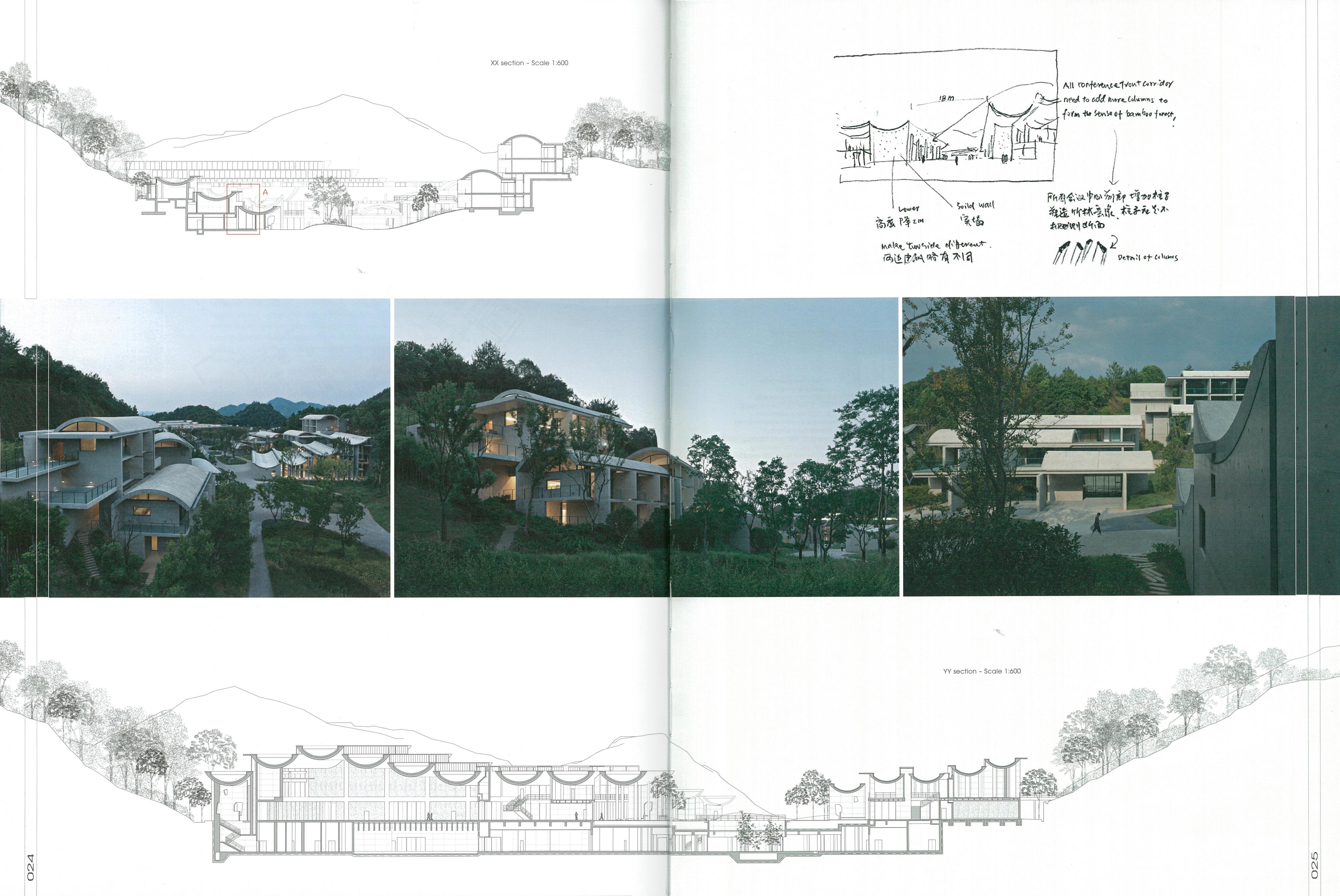
Many traditional Chinese villages are characterized by winding roads and paths that follow the unevenly sloping terrain, creating ever-shifting, often surprising and visually dramatic spatial experiences. This same template was skillfully and sensitively adopted to create the spatial model for the whole complex, which, both a conference as well as a residential center, becomes a metaphor for human communication and living together, the essence of human interaction. The beautiful natural setting in which these activities take place lends a poetic quality to human endeavor.

The architectural program is a skillful weave of small, scattered monoliths that successfully ensconces the complex in its natural setting, blending it into the undulating topography like the buildings of a traditional village. The architectural style speaks to Zhu Pei's signature modernist language. Both the tall colonnaded spaces and the long, inverted arched roofs are reminiscent of the architectural splendor of Le Corbusier's Capitol Complex in Chandigarh, India. It might well be, however, that in Le Corbusier's case, the long shadows cast by the tall gable were just created to provide shade in a vast open space, and the semi-open interior spaces merely facilitated cool air flows through the building. For Zhu Pei, the language of modern architecture serves more as linguistic architectural ploys to blend the manmade with nature. It is the need to integrate with nature that lies behind the wonderful perforated open flowing spaces through the whole scattered complex, but also the through-views between roofs and columns, and the rhythmic staggering of the roof reverse arc construction.

Looking at the development of Zhu Pei's architectural vocabulary – from the latent pinwheel composition of the OCT Art Center (THE PLAN 140) through to the combination of courtyard and wing-like space of the Imperial Kiln Museum in Jingdezhen, the garden/courtyard in the castle-like volume of the Shou County Cultural and Art Center (THE PLAN 118), and the organic shapes of the Yang Liping Performing Arts Center (THE PLAN 131) – it is clear that he has always explored the relationship between architecture and nature. The Zijing International Conference Camp project takes the leap from a single building to a cluster, delicately weaving together the classic language of modernism and the concept of natural architecture. In doing so, he has added another masterpiece to China.

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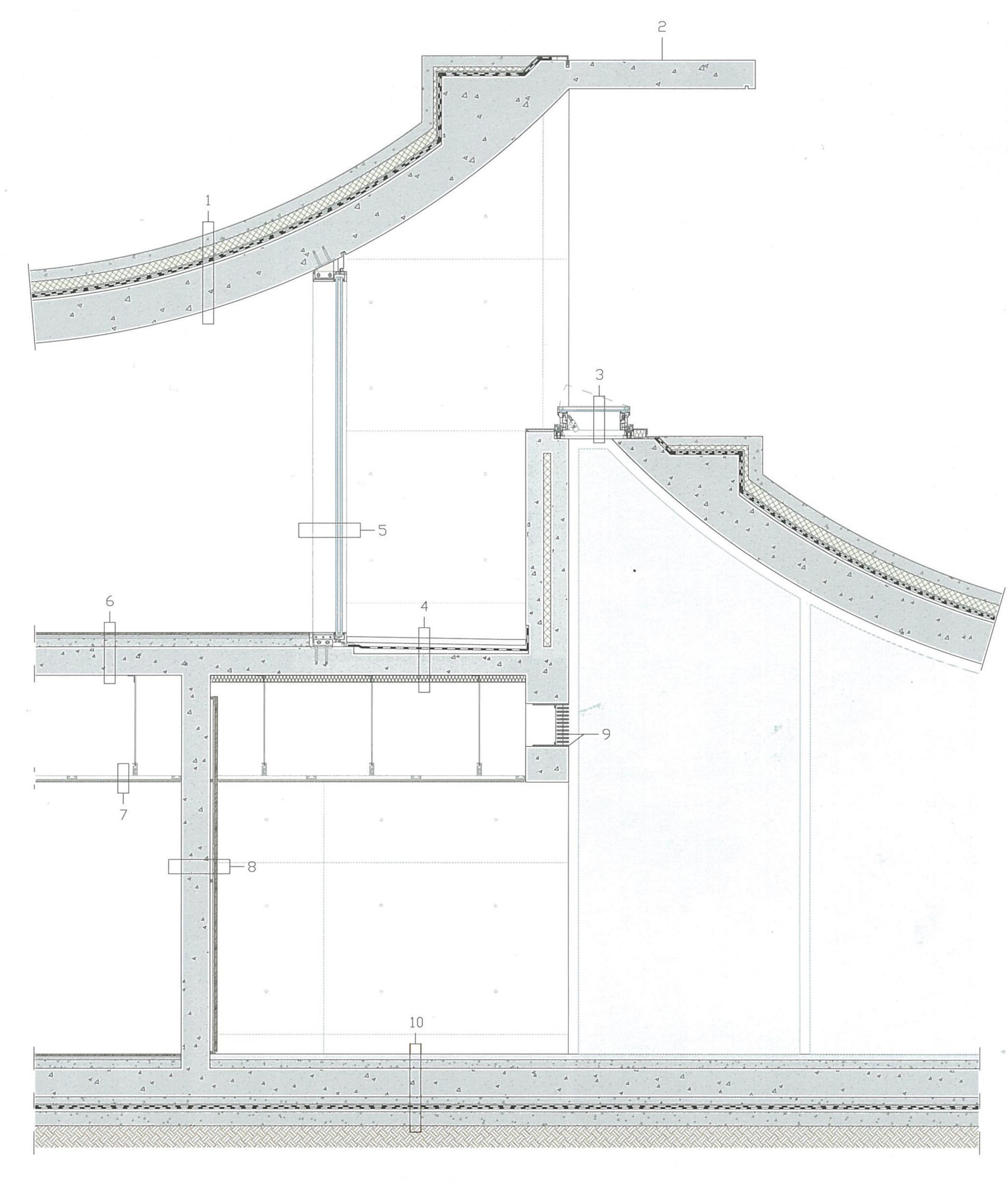
#### Detail A: construction system Vertical section - Scale 1:40

- 1- Roof comprising 3 1/8" (80 mm) fiber-reinforced micro-concrete, 3" (75 mm) extruded polystyrene insulation layer, 3/8" (10 mm) cement mortar insulation layer, double SBS-modified asphalt membrane, 3/4" (20 mm) cement mortar insulation layer, 11 3/4" (300 mm) exposed concrete roof with wood-effect finish
- 2- 7 7/8" (200 mm) thick projecting eave with drip molding
- 3- Operable aluminum skylight with 1/4 5/8 1/2" (6/16/13.5 mm)

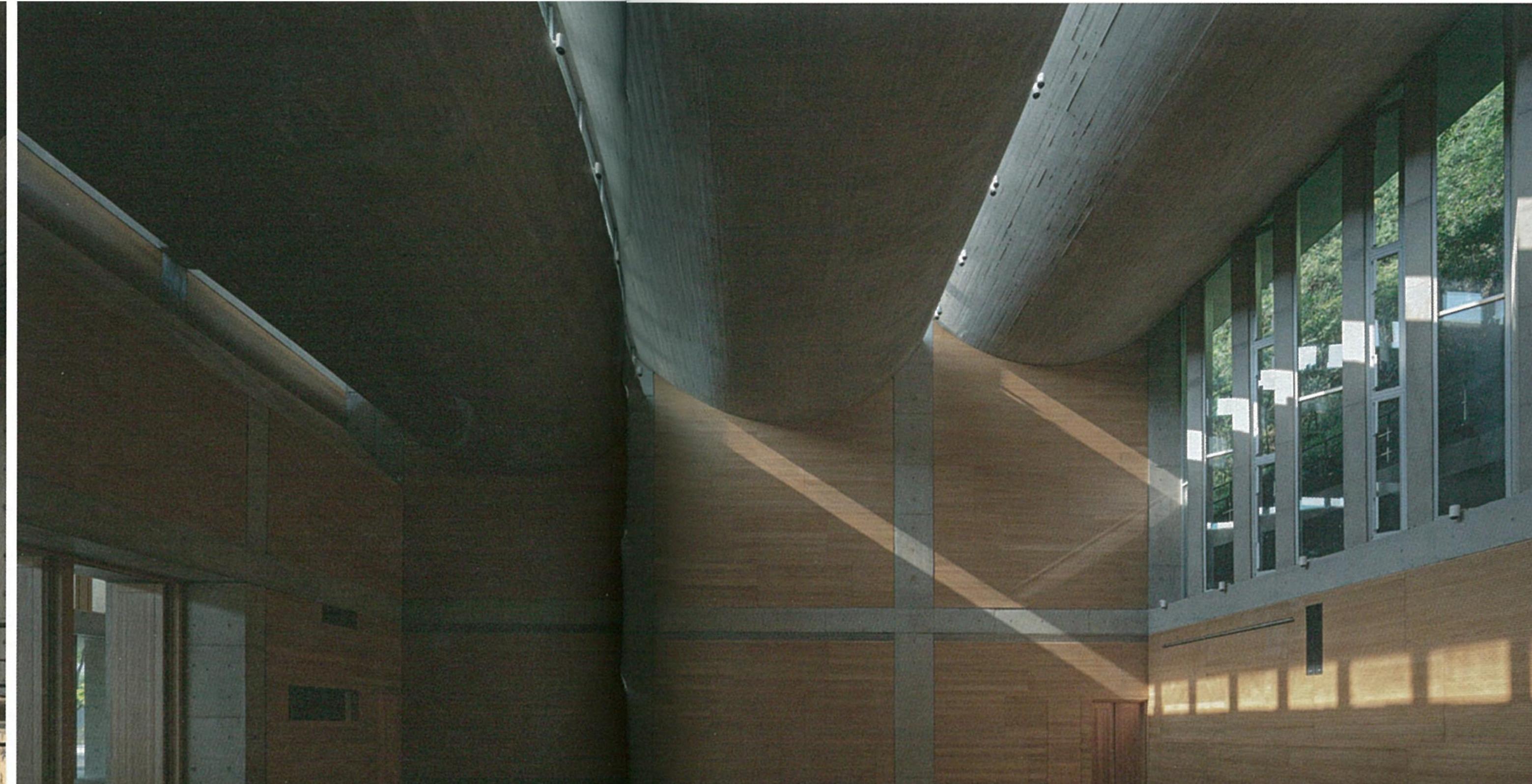
- toughened glass glazing unit with 2 x 1 1/8" (50x30 mm) steel box profile framing
- 4- 3/4" (20 mm) granite slab paving, cement mortar insulating screed, waterproofing membrane, tapered screed, 5 7/8" (150 mm) reinforced concrete slab, 2" (50 mm) rigid insulation
- 5- Full-height glazed façade with aluminum 9/16 5/8 9/16" (15/16/15 mm) double glazing units and 4 x 9 7/8" (100x250 mm) aluminum box profile façade framing anchored to floor
- slabs by steel L-profiles 6- 5/8" (15 mm) engineered timber

- flooring, waterproofing 3/8" (10 mm) subfloor, 3/4" (20 mm) screed, 2 3/8" (60 mm) lightweight concrete fill, 7 7/8" (200 mm)
- reinforced concrete slab
  7- Suspended ceiling comprising
  3/8" (9 mm) plasterboard,
  3/8" (9 mm) plywood backing
  board, 2 1/2 x 1" (65x25 mm)
  aluminum C-profile framing, steel
  droppers suspended from slab
- 8- 3/4" (18 mm) wood paneling, 1/2" (12 mm) plywood backing board, 3/4 x 3/4" (20x20 mm) aluminum profile framing, 7 7/8" (200 mm) reinforced concrete structure
- 9- 3 1/8" (80 mm) steel grille
- air-conditioning vent

  10- 1 5/8" (40 mm) granite slab
  flooring, 2 3/8" (60 mm) screed,
  7 7/8" (200 mm) reinforced
  concrete slab with waterproofing
  and seepage prevention
  treatment, 2" (50 mm) topping
  slab, 3/8" (10 mm) insulating
  cement mortar layer, SBS-modified
  asphalt membrane,
  3/4" (20 mm) cement mortar
  insulation layer, 4" (100 mm)
  concrete fill, subgrade



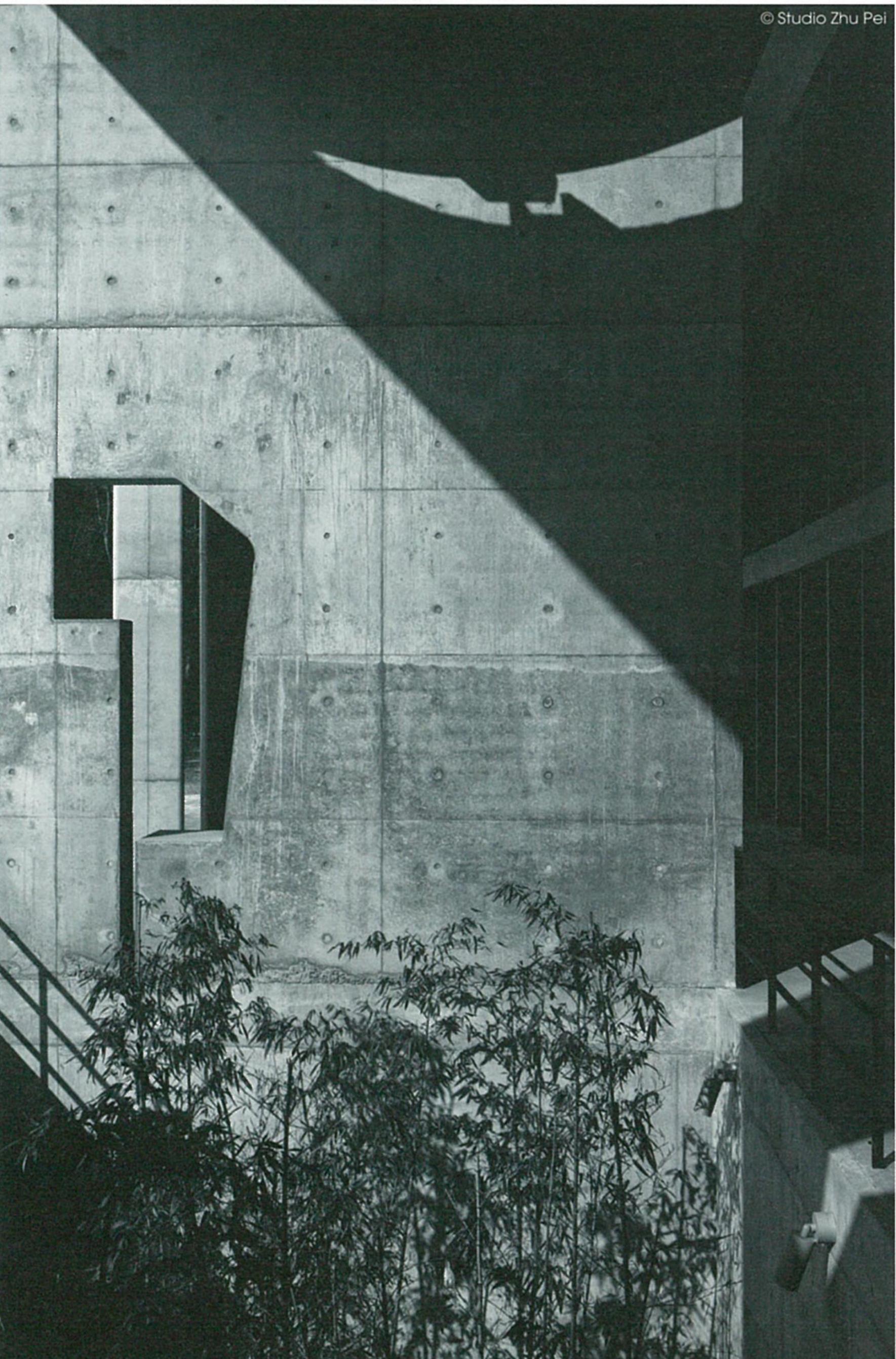












### CREDITS

Location: Jingdezhen, Jiangxi, China - Client: Black Cat Group Completion: 2022 - Site Area: 71,550 m² - Gross Floor Area: 40,110 m² - Architecture, Interior and Landscape Design: Studio Zhu Pei Design Principal: Zhu Pei - Main Contractors: China Construction First Group Corporation, Huajiang Construction of China Construction First Group

#### Consultants

**Structures, MEP, Landscape, Interior**: The Design Institute of Landscape & Architecture China Academy of Art - **Façade**: King Glass Engineering **Lighting**: Ning Field Lighting Design - **Acoustics**: Hangzhou Zhida Architectural Science and Technology

Unless otherwise indicated, **photography**: Su Shengliang **All images** courtesy of Studio Zhu Pei

