

PRESS RELEASE MARCH 07, 2022

CLOU | CapitaMall Nuohemule Hohhot: from an abandoned building to an immersive garden



Capitaland Nuohemule stands as a new, comprehensive kind of contemporization: far beyond a simplistic mall refurbishment with superficial re-application of materials, it is about extracting the essence of a building and converting it into a new, adventurous, and futureproof concept that manages to withstand and challenge the strong competition of urban retail precincts with its unique offer.

A model for the fusion of commercial spaces and indoor gardens

The revitalisation of an abandoned mall at Hohhot's Nuohemule station has successfully transformed a dark and barren seven-story concrete structure into a vibrant and diversified experience of plants, greenery and water - an attraction that has become a visitor magnet far beyond its local neighbourhood. Already the opening day generated a visitor flow of over 100,000 people.

To counteract the 'winter blues' induced by a harsh climate of long, arid seasons devoid of green and daylight, CapitaMall Nuohemule emerges as the first garden mall in Inner Mongolia: Lush multi-level interior landscaping spreads skywards through a series of atria

and out into the horizontal circulation zones, to provide an enjoyably rare public green experience for the surrounding communities.

Challenging the often sterile atmosphere of conventional shopping malls, the retail centre was conceived as a green and natural indoor space. A spirited contemporary interpretation of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, it incorporates horizontal gardening strategies across all retail floors to create social meeting and gathering spots with a fresh identity, interactive potential, and affective qualities.

The outlines of the existing atria were re-drawn into clear geometric shapes that vertically overlap, to dissolve the rigidity and verticality of the space. Reconfigured edge zones, together with newly inserted connecting bridges, were converted into lush landscaped planters across all levels, in an innovative approach towards the positioning and functioning of commercial space.

A building to constantly grow and change

Together with green 'pocket-park' type islands along the mall's corridors, the planted spaces amount to a total of two thousand square meters, incorporating varieties such as stream landscapes, rock gardens, and rain forests, all in line with the respective commercial theme of their location.

This optimised microclimate creates high ambient comfort through the synthesis of natural light and planting, while the atria assist in vertical distribution of oxygenated, moistened air that contributes to a pleasant interior climate. Air flow and temperature control are naturally instigated and enrich the standard mechanically induced climate control.

The central islands along the mall's ground floor offer meandering trajectories offset from the main circulation: along elevated platforms, they combine water features and lush planting into an immersive environment that even has become home to fish and ducks.

Evoking a feeling of a small tropical escape in visitors, these islands have developed into popular event spaces and social media hotspots for more than 100 events and counting: Regular performances and cultural shows foster community activity and encounter in a dense jungle of experiential nature within the heart of the city.

Looking upwards, horizontal bands of fashion retail, kids' entertainment and education, sports facilities, and dining reach out across the seven levels like roots and branches of a tree. Spatial extension and planar shifts generate well-useable floorplate sizes for circulation, events, and encounters. This even distribution of attractions directs curiosity towards the previously unprofitable upper floors.

On the fourth floor, an energetic public sports zone exposes the original building structure in its industrial style. Apart from that, various cultural and promotional events and even performances have taken place. The contemporary basement with its convivial food street theme connects directly to the metro station.

Already in its first year of operation, Capitaland Nuohemule has proven to be Capitaland's second most successful mall of Northern China in 2021 and headed the Dianping ranking as Hohhot's number one popular shopping and leisure destination.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name: CapitaMall Nuohemule
Type: Shopping Centre
Client: CapitaLand
Built Year: 2021
Location: Hohhot, Inner Mongolia
Construction Area: 102,000 sqm
Interior Design: CLOU Architects
Design Team: Jan Clostermann, Jianyun Wu, Sebastian Loaiza, Yadi Zhong, Christopher Biggin, Kyra Zhao, Wenlei Ma, Tianshu Liu, Javier Pelaez Garcia, Nan Zhang, Valentina Kholoshenko, Yaxi Wang
LDI: China Institute of Building Standard Design & Research
MEP: Beijing Fenglin Engineering Consulting Co., Ltd
Lighting: KEEY Lighting (Shanghai) Co., Ltd
Signage: Roden Mona High-tech Co., Ltd
Plants: Meize Landscape Decoration Engineering (Heilongjiang) Co., Ltd
Interior Contractors: Beijing Jinyuan Architectural Decoration Engineering Co., Ltd;
Beijing Dongfangxunteng Architectural Decoration Engineering Co., Ltd
Photography: Chill Shine

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ON CLOU ARCHITECTS



CLOU is an award-winning international design studio with multi-disciplinary expertise in master planning, architecture, interiors, and landscapes. The team design their projects on a variety of scales around community connectors and social spaces.

At CLOU, a team of more than 65 experienced architects from China and all over the world enjoy working collaboratively and imaginatively on a wide range of projects. Clients include retail and mixed-use developers, residential investors, hotel operators, and governmental and educational institutions. Across design and implementation, CLOU architects strive to create projects that positively influence the people involved in the making, the immediate and extended environment, and the communities that occupy and inhabit them.

ABOUT JAN CLOSTERMANN

Jan Clostermann is the Principal of CLOU and an award-winning architect with 20 years of international experience. Following his architectural studies at the Technical University in Berlin, Jan received his Diploma in 2001 from the Architectural Association in London.

Before founding CLOU in 2015, Jan collaborated with a Stirling Prize winning practice from their studios in London and Rotterdam, later leading their Singapore, Shanghai, and Beijing offices, and had the opportunity to realise a broad range of projects worldwide.

Since his move to Beijing in 2005, he has conceptualised and delivered numerous high profile mixed-use and retail projects, as well as masterplans and interiors.



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