

## ADEPT AND URBANUS WIN INTERNATIONAL SKYSCRAPER COMPETITION IN SHENZHEN

On November 7th, 2011, the winner of a large international architectural competition, 'The Two Towers', was announced in Shenzhen, China. The team selected to design this new Shenzhen landmark – comprising 100.000 square meters in total – is a constellation of ADEPT (DK) and Urbanus (CHN) with VSA (HK), Max Fordham LLP (GB) and Beijing CCI Architectural Design Co, LTD (CHN). The jury meeting was hosted at the Shenzhen Municipal Planning Building with Pritzker Prize winner Thom Mayne as chairman of the jury.



*Caption image: The Two Towers (ADEPT/URBANUS)*



*Caption image: Active, public ground floors (ADEPT/URBANUS)*

As the competition title suggests, the project is comprised of two towers, the CDB Tower (150 meters) and the Minsheng Financial Tower (120 meters), functioning as new headquarters for the two financial institutions. The challenge of designing two new towers in Shenzhen raised the question as to what kind of tower could be added in the context of an already impressive skyline. Analysis of this context suggested considerable emphasis has been placed in recent years on achieving extravagant, visually unique forms amongst the towers themselves – a situation that has generally occurred at the expense of the quality and liveliness of the urban spaces at their base.

In addressing this, 'The Two Towers' project attempts to articulate the skyscraper not as a purely visual landmark, but as a functional landmark welcoming and embracing citizens and visitors. In this way, the skyscraper as a type is capable of contributing toward a future urban culture by stimulating the urban area that it is rooted in. The focus of the design therefore has been the activation of the ground floors by placing active and public-oriented programs in visible positions, closely connected to the surrounding public realm. By shifting the volumes around a sunken plaza, a dynamic shaded public space is created underneath, supporting a clear identity for the two institutions. Furthermore, the volumes are broken down into a human scale on the ground floor, creating a remarkable three-dimensional public space on many levels. Green and blue elements generate a pleasant micro-climate in these stacked spaces. Not only complying with the urban regulations and conditions of the local context, the scheme creates a diverse public space that exceeds the expectations implied in the brief.

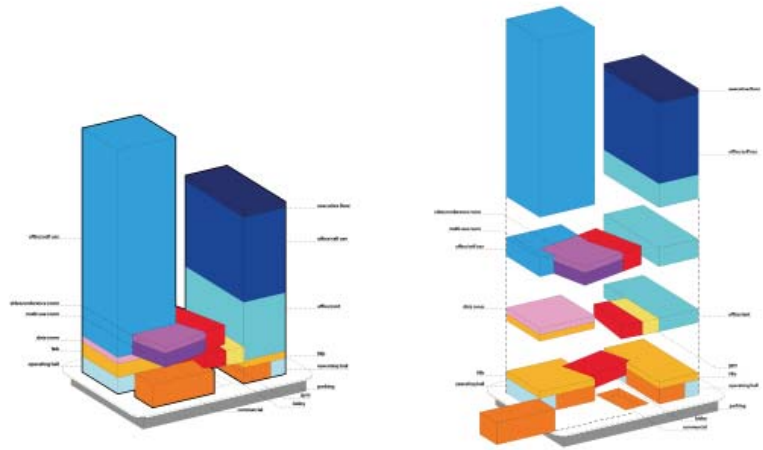
A key factor for the clients has been the representation of a stable image for the financial institution. With this in mind, the expression of the towers themselves reflects strength combined with an image of generosity. Both towers are designed with structural cores and load-carrying façades leaving the office spaces in the towers open and free of columns. The expressions of the towers are related, but differentiated to convey the separate identities of the two institutions. The façades are finished in two different types of stone – the CDB Tower in a darker tone and the Minsheng Financial Tower in a lighter tone. The glazing system on each tower underlines the two different tower typologies – the vertical point and the rectangular slab.

The façade design of both towers reacts to the amount of sunlight and energy each façade is exposed to. Detailed studies of sun conditions led to the design of an energy performing façade offering more shade to sun-affected areas. This results in a changing façade that offers a soft gradient that is reflected differently at each time of the day. Furthermore, the positioning of a series of atriums in the towers is based on views to the surroundings. In the atrium areas the windows expand to offer better views and more light to the interior spaces. Additionally, the atriums create interior gardens and recreational spaces in the office towers, generating greater spatial variety and improved social interaction amongst the buildings' users.

International interest in the competition has been extensive, with a large field of established architectural offices competing for the project including Wilkinson Eyre, REX, Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture, and Rocco Architects.



Caption image: The Two Towers (ADEPT/URBANUS)



The Two Towers: The diagrams illustrate the distribution of program and the idea of creating public spaces between the towers (ADEPT/URBANUS)

**ADEPT** is founded in 2006 and based in Copenhagen, Denmark. ADEPT is founded and lead by Anders Lonka, Martin Laursen and Martin Krogh. The office works within the fields of architecture, urban planning and landscape design. ADEPT's professional approach is about creating a close relationship between architecture and urbanism. To rethink the relationship between the city and the building - between the built and non-built environment. It is an engagement with city spaces and the limits of the public realm that creates value and generates new forms of space in ADEPT's work. Rather than perceiving buildings as a facade and a two-dimensional stacking of floors, we try to move the urban space into the architecture in order to challenge the three-dimensional space. Our projects thus meet both the individual needs of the projects and add value and innovation to the urban environment.

Recently, the office won two planning competitions in Norway, the city centre of Asker, and Oppdal that are now in progress. Furthermore, early in November 2011, the office won 'The City in the Building' – 12,000 square meters of sustainable, social housing dwellings in Aarhus, Denmark.

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**URBANUS** is founded in 1999, under the leadership of partners LIU Xiaodu, MENG Yan and WANG Hui, URBANUS has become one of the most influential architectural design firms in China. More than a design practice, URBANUS is also a think tank. It aims to formulate architectural strategy from the urban environment in general, and the ever changing urban conditions in specific. URBANUS always focuses on the urban reality in China and seeks architectural solutions based on its research of the emerging urban problems. URBANUS has achieved international recognition with projects such as Shenzhen Dafen Art Museum, the social housing Urban Tulou, Tangshan Urban Planning Museum, etc. URBANUS' works have been widely exhibited internationally in New York, Paris, Barcelona, Lisbon, Rotterdam, Sao Paulo, Rome, Brussels and Hong Kong. URBANUS has won prestigious awards and published its works in domestic and international design magazines.

URBANUS recently won many 1st prizes in international competition including Shenzhen Crystal Island (collaborated with OMA), Southern Technology University Architecture Design, Beijing CBD Core District Urban Design and Architecture Design, and China Guangdong Nuclear Headquarter Building.

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