

MERGE WITH NATURE



AT A HONG KONG SEWAGE PLANT, A SELF-SUFFICIENT NATURE RETREAT PUTS WATER INTO FOCUS.

BY CHERMAINE LEE

When ADI's team of three landscape architects accepted the challenge of turning a human-made ash lagoon at the far-west end of Hong Kong into a water retreat next to a sludge facility, they spent a year working to combine practicability and aesthetics into the final design. The result was T·Park, a welcoming water garden adjacent to a mammoth new sewage processing facility.

T·Park's design, which achieved 70 percent coverage in terms of vegetation and won a 2018 award from the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects, links a designed wetland, a leisure garden, and a central fountain. Capping a lagoon

filled with pulverized fuel ash (PFA), the design follows the theme of its adjacent utility facility, which turns 1,200 metric tons of sludge from 11 sewage treatment centers into electricity, enough for the entire facility and then some.

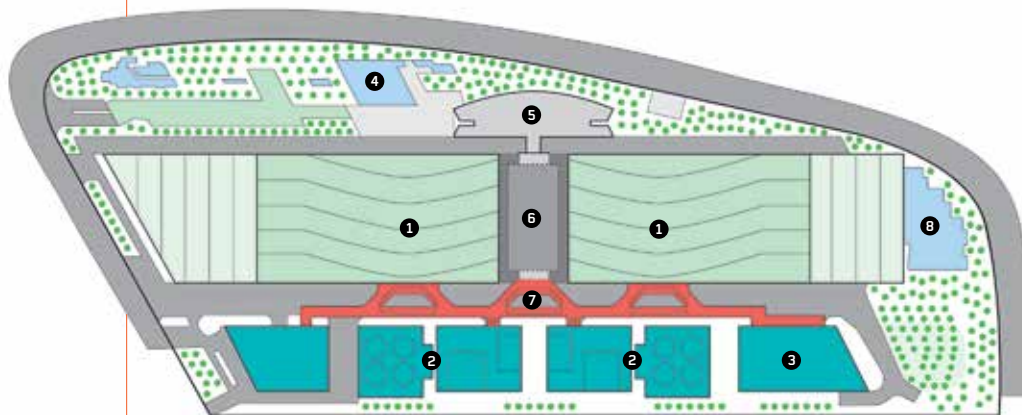
The facility's signature, ground-level T·Garden, as the landscape outside the facility is known, features a linear "water axis" that serves as a link between the fountain, wetland, and leisure garden. The wetland pond is designed to re-create a natural habitat with three types of depth, mimicking their variegated nature. Visitors can view pygmy water lily, common reed, and other aquatic plants.

ABOVE

The Grebe Pond is part of T·Garden's aims to re-create a natural environment that attracts migrating birds from the North.

T·PARK

T·PARK SITE PLAN



LEGEND

- ❶ SLUDGE INCINERATORS
- ❷ POWER GENERATION UNITS
- ❸ PROCESS WATER AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS
- ❹ T·GARDEN
- ❺ T·ROOF
- ❻ T·SKY
- ❼ T·GALLERY
- ❽ T·HABITAT

“There’s no specific filtration [here] because we wanted to keep it natural. Some animals like channel apple snails that come with the plants also stay here,” says Barry Lo, one of the landscape architects on ADI’s team. Another notable feature is the lack of a railing around the pond, which is common in other government-owned parks. This edgelessness is designed to encourage interactions between visitors and the wetland, which is circumscribed by a recycled timber walkway punctuated by scattered solar blocks that provide ambient illumination.

Next to the wetland are a woodland plaza and a splash pad for children, which uses desalinated seawater from Hong Kong’s Deep Bay. Using that same source is the main fountain, which serves as the focal point and endpoint of the garden and a place for photo ops. A small addition to the water axis is a footbath where visitors can unwind. T·Park’s operation spokesperson, Rachel Tang, says that the water used for plants is treated wastewater, suiting the self-sufficient goals of the facility.

T·Garden’s geometric design and its more contemplative extensions—the Zen Garden, Grebe Pond, and the rooftop garden—provide a sense of spaciousness. Lo says that the team also filled the gardens with coastal species and salt-tolerant plants in response to T·Park’s location near the bay. “The biggest challenge was that we have to retain the PFA here,” he says. “Since the material is not suitable for planting, we have to cover that up with the design instead.” ●

BELOW

The Leisure Garden, part of the water axis of the T·Garden, features seating among manicured plantings.



T·PARK