

The project's courtyard is now open to the public. — Photos by Jiang Xiaowei

the complex to better integrate it into the new design.

Chen Libin, partner and general manager at David Chipperfield Architects Shanghai, said the biggest challenge was balancing the opinions of various stakeholders.

"It took a long time to reach a consensus among the stakeholders, including the public, who are also considered owners," said Chen.

Original construction started in 1913, but was delayed due to the breakout of World War I in 1914 and was eventually finished in November 1922. It was never completed to the original design, mainly due to lack of funds.

The city government was relocated to the HSBC Building on the Bund in 1955. The building then housed the city's civil affairs, greenery, health and human resources authorities.

The renovated Bund City Hall Plaza features a mix of offices, cultural and public spaces, and commercial areas.

About 70 percent of the building is dedicated to office space, primarily for the financial sector. Another 20 percent is allocated for cultural and public venues, which will host concerts and exhibitions. The remaining 10 percent will be commercial property, including retail and dining options.

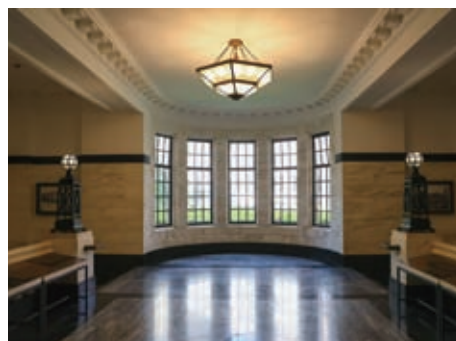
The central courtyard of the building offers a space for leisure and cultural events. The area is designed to connect with the surrounding streets, creating an inviting public space.

The project also includes about 25,500 square meters of underground space, providing about 300 parking slots and additional facilities.

One of the highlights of the project is the preserved office of Mayor Chen Yi (1901-1972), who worked here from 1949 to 1954. The original desk, chair and bookcase used by Chen are displayed to recreate a historical scene.

An exhibition features more than 80 representative historical photographs, including many personal collections of Chen's son, Chen Haosu, showcasing valuable images of the first Shanghai mayor after the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Additionally, the terrace where the national flag was first raised will be



The main hall of the building has been preserved to maintain its original appearance.



Mayor Chen's office has been returned to its original layout and decor.



Visitors get to see the desk and chair once used by the former Shanghai Mayor Chen Yi

open to the public, offering another place to relax and enjoy the view of the Bund.

"We aim to create a commercial complex that invites the public in," said Yu Wei from Shanghai Art-Designing Co, who is in charge of the exhibition arrangement in Mayor Chen's office.

"Without public engagement, the building could be forgotten in another 10 or 20 years.

"The windows and door handles are original, made from British steel and brass. Even the light switches and plaster decorations have been restored or replicated to match the original designs," Yu told Shanghai Daily.

Chen's office accepts group

reservations and offer guided tours three times a week. It is planned to open for individual visitors later this year.

The renovation is part of a broader initiative known as the "second-row building" renovation plan for the Bund area. The plan aims to preserve and rejuvenate historic buildings standing behind the Bund architecture along the waterfront, while enhancing their functionality.

The area covers about 510,000 square meters, equivalent to about seven standard football pitches, and includes 27 street blocks with about 140 historic buildings.

The goal is to make the Bund a world-class financial and cultural hub,

integrating historical preservation with contemporary development, according to the district government.

"Looking across the river to Lujiazui and the Shanghai Tower, the Bund City Hall project is a gem," said Chen Xiao'ou, chairman of F.O.G. Asset Group, and a senior analyst. "It leads the next generation of urban renewal with its cultural and historical significance."

According to him, the difficulty of attracting investment and enhancing value here is even greater than those leading office buildings such as the Shanghai Tower, the 632-meter tallest building in China.

"It is a new challenge, and we are excited to see how it unfolds," he said.