



portland architecture

a blog about design in the rose city

LRS Architects designing world's largest LEED Platinum building in China



As [Amy Hsuan reported](#) in Tuesday's Oregonian as part of a five-part series, [LRS Architects](#) of Portland has been working on a design for the Zhangjiang Semiconductor Park that, if built, would be the largest LEED Platinum building on the planet. "The flooring alone could cover 17 football fields," Hsuan writes.

Founded in 1976, LRS opened its Shanghai office in 2007. But the firm has never designed anything this big. But then again, how many firms have? Still, it's a way for the firm to step up in scale.

"In Portland, we never would have been considered for South Waterfront," Paul Frank, a principal at LRS, told Hsuan. "We just don't have that kind of portfolio."

However, LRS has amassed a broad array of work in the Portland area, including the Hillsboro Civic Center and interiors for the Adidas Village as well as upcoming projects like the Havasu Memory Center in Arizona and a medical center in Bend. They also designed a mixed-use project at Martin Luther King Blvd. and Fremont Street for the Portland Development Commission that I think is less successful visually than maybe urbanistically – it looks like a concrete lighthouse. But there's no question there are very capable architects on staff. And besides, I like the look of some of these buildings, especially in the shot above. (These two renderings I got from the LRS website.)



It's apparently no guarantee that the complex will be built, but that could be said about a great many projects. In the meantime, it's worth noting that LRS won a design competition to earn the 2.2 million square foot Zhangjiang job over firms from Japan and Germany. The project's signature feature is a central lagoon that retains stormwater and acts as a 'heat sink' for cooler temperatures. I hope the China job comes through for them.

Part of the theme of Hsuan's story was that while Portland firms currently enjoy a competitive advantage in China when it comes sustainable design expertise, the Chinese are likely to catch up quickly – the rate they seem to do everything there. Is this a window of opportunity poised to ultimately close, or do Portland firms have a long future in the land of Mao and Yao?

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