

Pomeroy Studio completes the tallest skygarden in the Philippines



Pomeroy Studio’s commitment to greening the urban habitat has seen them put the finishing touches to designing the tallest skygarden in the Philippines. The ‘Gramercy skypark’, located on the 36th and 37th floor of the 72-storey Gramercy Residences, is scheduled for completion in December, 2012, and will mark another first for Century Properties, a leading developer in Asia, in what will also be the tallest and most amenitised building in the country.



John Victor Antonio, Chief Operating Officer of Century Properties, approached Pomeroy Studio given their expertise in sustainable design and their ongoing research into skycourts and skygardens. Mr. Antonio stated: “We wanted to explore innovative recreational experiences for our residents that would also negate the need to travel groundward. in this super tall building. This gave birth to the idea of creating the skypark at mid-point that would be the perfect setting for our residents to work, rest or play”.



Seeking inspiration from the Gramercy Park in Manhattan, the 3,500sqm skypark acts as a recreational social space in the sky for the building’s residents and contains a host of facilities that are the first of its kind in the Philippines. In addition to lap pools, children play areas, meeting rooms, restaurant and bar, yoga decks and gymnasium, it also has fully integrated water and mist features and an abundance of vertical urban greenery to create a ‘hanging garden’ in the sky. Part of the skypark will also be home to the tallest green wall in the country.





According to Prof. Jason Pomeroy, principal of Pomeroy Studio, the starting point was the ability to evoke the sense of the original Gramercy Park in Manhattan. “Gramercy Park in Manhattan is a beautiful pocket park in the middle of the city, with mature trees and pleasant pathways, in which residents can relax, exercise or engage with others. We therefore wanted to recreate the social experience of the park setting, but replicate in the sky”. Wind speeds and the maintenance of landscaping at such a height were naturally factors that needed consideration, and provided challenges for the design team: “We needed to be realistic as to what could and could not grow given the climatic conditions. We were therefore able to abstract the curvilinear arrangement of Gramercy Park’s greenery to define the curvilinear layouts of densely foliated green walls and the planters. Indigenous species were used to clad the walls to evoke the sense of a ‘hanging garden’”.

He stresses that whilst the aesthetic considerations of the design were important, so too were balancing the environmental and socio-physiological. “Greenery can absorb the atmospheres noxious pollutants, reduce ambient temperatures and help mitigate storm rainwater run off – an important element in flood prone Philippines. Research has also shown that the presence of greenery offer psycho – social benefits that can help rejuvenate the individual” says Pomeroy.

The project comes timely for the design studio – Pomeroy is authoring a book, entitled ‘Skycourts and skygardens: greening the urban habitat’, which sees the culmination of 10 years of his research into the topic that was conceived whilst at Cambridge University. “The Gramercy skypark project provides a glimpse of the future of our urban habitat. Skycourts and skygardens help replenish the loss of open space through urban densification on the ground, by offering alternative social spaces in which interaction can take place in the sky. After all, space is a commodity worth preserving and reinforces the importance of a spatial sustainability to balance a social sustainability, thus providing spaces that can foster a sense of community”.

Since Pomeroy Studio was founded earlier this year, it has already secured significant projects in Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and in Singapore. In addition to the commercial design projects, the studio continues to forward its green design with a rigorous rooting in academic research, which Pomeroy highlights as ‘balancing a creative vigour with an academic vigour’.

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