

“A TERRACOTTA FACADE AMONG HONG KONG’S SKY-
SCRAPPERS: NERI&HU TRANSFORMS THE MANDARIN
ORIENTAL THE LANDMARK”

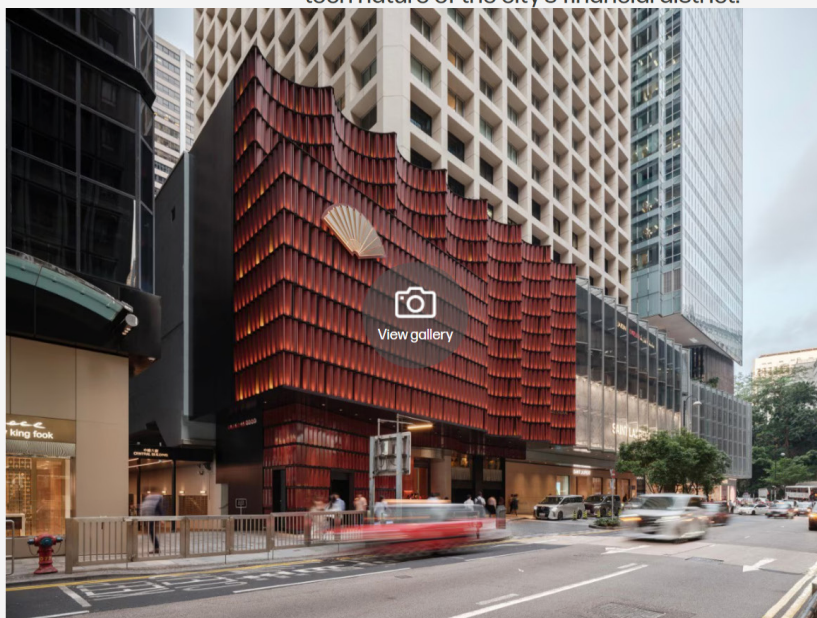
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A terracotta facade among Hong Kong’s skyscrapers: Neri&Hu transforms the Mandarin Oriental The Landmark

The Chinese architectural firm Neri&Hu has designed a new façade for one of Hong Kong’s most prominent luxury hotels. The existing building has been clad in terracotta, which contrasts with the high-tech nature of the city’s financial district.



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An undulating opaque terracotta structure appears to flow like fabric amongst the reflective surfaces of Central’s towering skyscrapers, in Hong Kong’s financial district. This is the new exterior of the Mandarin Oriental The Landmark, one of the most iconic addresses in Asian luxury hospitality. It is the group’s second hotel in the city, following the historic Mandarin Oriental, which opened in 1963 and became a symbol of Hong Kong’s hospitality.

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Neri&Hu, Mandarin Oriental The Landmark project, 2026. Photo by Zhu Runzi. Courtesy of Neri&Hu

The project was designed by the Chinese studio [Neri&Hu](#), which was founded in Shanghai by Lyndon Neri and Rossana Hu. For the facade redesign, they chose to move away from the architectural language that

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made the island’s skyline famous. This unusual choice in the heart of one of the world’s most recognisable urban landscapes is, however, perfectly consistent with the studio’s research over the past twenty years.

The Mandarin Oriental The Landmark has been restyled

There are two Mandarin Oriental hotels in Hong Kong. The first opened in 1963, when it was the tallest building on the island. It is the hotel that helped build the brand’s international identity. The second is located inside the Landmark complex, one of Central’s main commercial and business hubs, where the headquarters of banks, multinationals and luxury brands are concentrated.

[Read also: Relic Shelter: a tea house among skyscrapers in Fuzhou by Neri&Hu](#)

Opened in 2005, this boutique hotel is a more contemporary interpretation of the group’s style and is now at the centre of a major redevelopment plan, which includes restyling the façade. With just over a hundred rooms, Michelin-starred restaurants and one of the city’s most highly regarded spas, the Mandarin Oriental The Landmark has undergone a complete redesign of its interiors by [Joyce Wang Studio](#). Meanwhile, the Tomorrow’s Central project, promoted by Hongkong Land, is transforming the entire Landmark complex.

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Neri&Hu, Mandarin Oriental The Landmark project, 2026. Photo by Zhu Runzi. Courtesy of Neri&Hu

This initiative is one of the most significant investments in Central in recent years and aims to renew the district without altering its function. The plan involves the progressive redevelopment of the Landmark buildings, incorporating new retail spaces, offices, pedestrian connections and public areas, with the aim of updating one of the financial district’s most important complexes. In this context, Neri&Hu have been tasked with redefining the hotel’s external image by designing a new façade and entrance on Queen’s Road Central.

The façade as an urban tapestry

[Neri&Hu](#) is currently one of the most influential Asian studios on the international scene. However, selecting them for this project might have seemed an unusual choice, given the Mandarin’s aesthetic and history. Nevertheless, the studio has always focused on transforming existing spaces through the expressive use of materials.

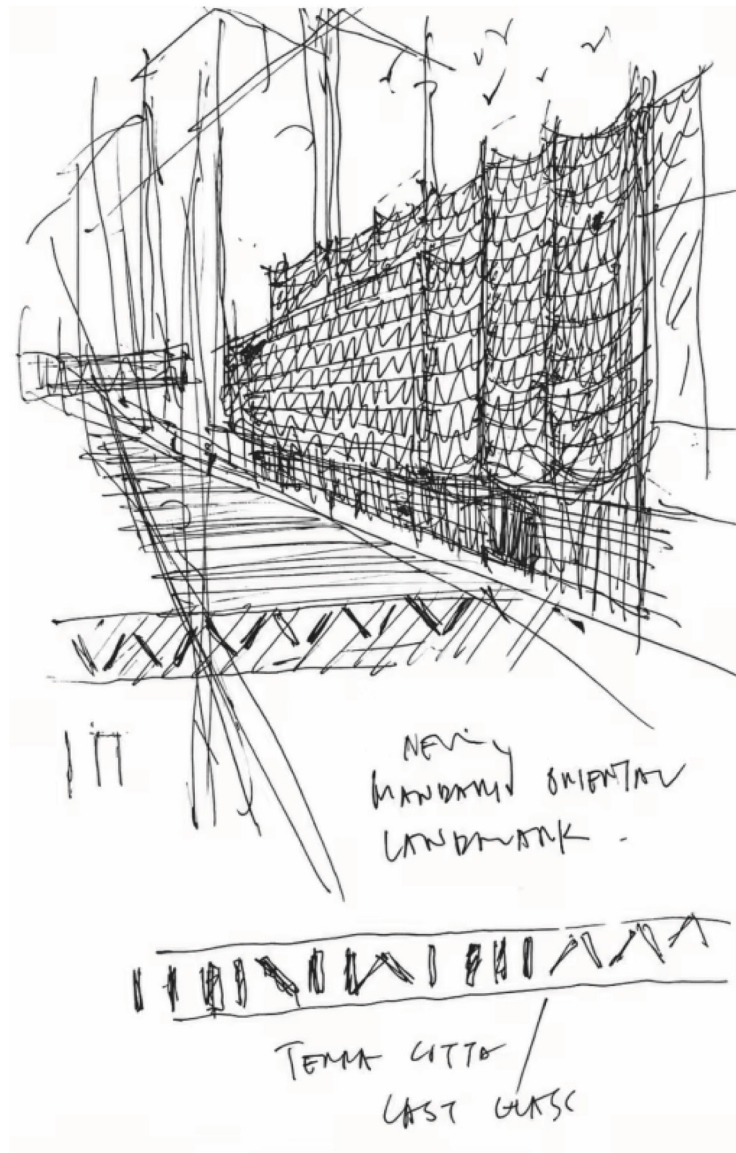
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This can be seen in some of the studio’s most notable projects, such as the Tsingpu Yangzhou Retreat, a boutique hotel created by renovating buildings near Slender West Lake in Yangzhou, and the Waterhouse at South Bund in Shanghai, where a 1930s harbour building has been transformed to allow the original structure to coexist with contemporary additions. Rather than creating new iconic structures, Neri&Hu often blend memory with new interventions.



Neri&Hu, Mandarin Oriental The Landmark project, design drawings by Lyndon Neri, 2026. Courtesy of Neri&Hu

The architects explain that they envisioned the building as ‘a bodily frame that needed to be re-clothed’, maintaining its structure while completely transforming how it is perceived.

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The design references the theory of cladding developed by Gottfried Semper in the second half of the nineteenth century. According to this theory, one of the original elements of architecture — the wall, which defines space — derives from textile techniques of weaving and braiding. For Semper, cladding is not simply a decorative layer applied to the structure, but rather a ‘skin’ that can express the building’s nature through its textures, materials and assembly methods, much like the warp and weft of a fabric.

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Neri&Hu define this concept as an “urban tapestry”: a tapestry at street level composed of custom-made terracotta elements arranged in a staggered pattern that recalls the weave of a textile. Each row is supported by burnished bronze brackets and interspersed with glass inserts that add depth to the entire façade when illuminated at night.

Bringing tradition back to the Hong Kong skyline

As well as the restyling of one of Central’s most photographed buildings, this could prompt a broader reflection on Hong Kong’s architecture. For decades, the city has built its identity on glazed curtain walls, crystalline geometries, and high-tech surfaces — one need only think of I. M. Pei’s Bank of China Tower or [Foster + Partners’](#) HSBC Headquarters.

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Neri&Hu, Mandarin Oriental The Landmark project, 2026. Photo by Zhu Runzi. Courtesy of Neri&Hu

However, the new façade of the Mandarin Oriental The Landmark chooses terracotta not as a nostalgic citation of the past, but as a contemporary reinterpretation of a local building tradition that includes the use of ceramic cladding, tiles and metalwork. Unsurprisingly, the studio itself describes the project as a tribute to the city’s “rich traditions”.

[Read also: Neri&Hu: “We design from architecture”](#)

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