**Semi-private open space:**

**Size:** About 3,000 m²

**Location:** Between buildings. No access from the main street. 3 accesses from the community streets

**Uses:** some seating, walking

**Successful features for use:**
- Pleasant place for walking

**Successful features for comfort:**
- Good sense of enclosure.
- Quiet environment
- Running water cools area

**Challenges for comfort:**
- Lack of seating options
- Bad water quality

**Challenges for use:**
- Possibility of disturbing people at home

**Successful features for safety:**
- Visible from many housing units

**Challenges for safety:**
- Dense landscaping may hinder visibility

**Successful features for visual quality:**
- Natural landscaping
- Stream

**Successful features for access:**
- Easy access from the adjacent apartment buildings

**Challenges for access:**
- People who live in other parts of the development may feel uncomfortable here

Source: Vanke

---

2. Next to the backyards of the apartment buildings.  
*Source: Liang Zhao*

3. Foot path  
*Source: Liang Zhao*

3. Water between buildings.  
*Source: Liang Zhao*
CONCLUSION

Based on our analysis of successful features of open space, the open spaces in Vanke developments should be designed as a system of integrated, connected parks creating a more livable and attractive development for all residents. To do this, Vanke will need to fully understand the uses of different age groups and genders of the Chinese middle class, the preferred scales of different activities (large groups, small groups, or as individuals), and the frequency of such uses within the development. For example, more playgrounds should be built in a variety of open spaces in a development with a large number of children. A detailed survey of all of the residents in a few of Vanke’s developments could be a useful way to gather this data.

We recommend the following:

Provide a variety of scales of open space in a given development
Provide a variety of uses as appropriate according to scale
Differentiate between spaces to establish a sense of place
Provide a variety of materials and features
Make spaces comfortable for all age groups
Consider conflicts of use and anticipate undesirable use

Vanke should consider how to facilitate healthy social interaction through open spaces. The spaces that encourage the most social interaction often include the following features (Carmona, Heath, Oc, and Tiesdell):

- Located on busy routes
- Physically and visually accessible

Streets are incorporated as parts of social space
Built on a level even with the pavement
Contain implicit (steps, low walls) and explicit (benches) places to sit
Contain movable seats to enable different kinds of interaction

Key Issues

1. Problems with use of open space
Vanke should consider what kinds of undesirable behavior can be anticipated and therefore prevented, accommodated, or controlled. Consider again the example of skate parks to accommodate and contain undesirable behavior of teenagers. Skateboarding no longer is undesirable if the activity no longer disrupts circulation or damages property. By designing spaces for certain uses and attempting to control undesirable uses, Vanke can affect residents lifestyles. Rather than minimizing this influence, Vanke should consider what kinds of activities, and in general what kind of lifestyle, it aims to promote in its development by providing the physical environment and design elements necessary to live that lifestyle.

2. Integration as an open space system
Vanke should consider how best to integrate these open spaces as a system. First, this will create efficient circulation throughout the site. Additionally, a single park can serve a small number of residents in some dimensions, but one park cannot serve all the needs of those users without conflict and competition over space. Creating a system of easily accessible open spaces is a way to address the widest variety of uses and provide all residents with suitable open spaces.

Sources:


