

### Acknowledgements

Peter Hibbard would like to thank the staff of the following libraries and archives who made this book possible—Beijing University, Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels Ltd., Hong Kong University, HSBC Group archives, Imperial War Museum London, National Library of China, Public Records Office Kew, Shanghai Bibliotheca, Shanghai Municipal Archives, Royal Commonwealth Society Cambridge, RIBA Library, SOAS London, Thomas Cook. A special note of thanks must be made to Pan Yanming, Sheng Jilin and Wang Renfang, who opened many closed doors.

He would also like to thank the following for making this book a reality—Bruno van der Berg, Bryan Brown, Nick Burns, Amber Chen, Shiatzy Chen, Chen Xueyi, Christopher Choa, Filippo Gabbiani, Michelle Garnaut, Bi Ji Gen, Mark Jared, Kate Kelly, Kelly and Walsh, Malcolm Y. S. Lai, Sylvia Lee, William Leung, Edward Liang, Kathy Lou, Ma Yongzhang, Ted Marr, Lyndon Neri, Eric Niderost, Helen Northey, Eric Politzer, Remo Riva, Ivy Soonthornsima, David Sung, Vivien Shen, Douglas Webster, Amy Wood, Ben Wood, Simon Ye, Delphine Yip. Thanks to Don Brech for highlighting my grammatical idiocies and compiling the index, and to Alex Ng for his talent and dedication in designing this book. A very special thank you must go to Magnus Bartlett and Robert Bickers for their friendship and guidance, and most importantly, I would like to thank my wife, Li Huishan, my daughter, Li Shasha, and my son Caspar Hibbard-Short for their patience and loving support.

Photographs and images by Peter Hibbard, as well as—AIG, American Express, Astor House Hotel, Magnus Bartlett, Robert Bickers, Adrian Bradshaw, 6 Bund, Bund 18, Shiatzy Chen, China Minsheng Banking Corporation, Chinese Museum Collection, Melbourne—Mellerick album (MEL 022, 023, 031, 032, 042), Filippo Gabbiani, Michelle Garnaut, Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels Ltd., HSBC, Donald Insall Associates, Ma Yongzhang (Peace Hotel), Lyndon Neri, Eric Niderost, P&T Group, Eric Politzer, RIBA, Royal Commonwealth Society, Shanghai Construction Archives, Shanghai Municipal Archives (SMA), South China Morning Post, John Swire and Sons, John Warner Publications, Wattis Fine Art, Ben Wood and Delphine Yip. (ben wood STUDIO SHANGHAI), Three on the Bund, Tongji University, Wang Gangfeng, Yang Peiming. With a special thank you to Dennis George Crow for images from his extensive and magnificent collection of rare historic photographs ([www.dennisgeorgecrow.com](http://www.dennisgeorgecrow.com)) and to Christopher Bailey, *Picture This Gallery* Hong Kong, for images from his collection, including those from Kelly and Walsh's *So This is Shanghai* (1935) and *Shanghai Today* (1928) ([www.picturethiscollection.com](http://www.picturethiscollection.com)).

With so few original photos surviving from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the author has reproduced images from printed sources, including those from the *China Architect's and Builder's Compendium*, *The China Press*, *The China Journal*, *The Far Eastern Review*, *The Illustrated London News*, *The North China Daily News*, *The North China Sunday News Magazine*, *Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury*, *The Shanghai Times*, *SMC Annual Report*, *Social Shanghai* and *Twentieth-century Impressions of Hong Kong, Shanghai and Other Treaty Ports of China* by Arnold Wright.

### A Note on Spellings

For the sake of simplicity and modern-day reference, pinyin Romanisation has been used as far as possible throughout the text. A special note must be made of the word 'Yangtze.' As such a spelling was applied to the river (Yangzi in current Pinyin transliteration), to the Bund, and was used as a company name by foreigners in old Shanghai, it has been left in its old form throughout this book.



# THE BUND SHANGHAI CHINA FACES WEST

PETER HIBBARD



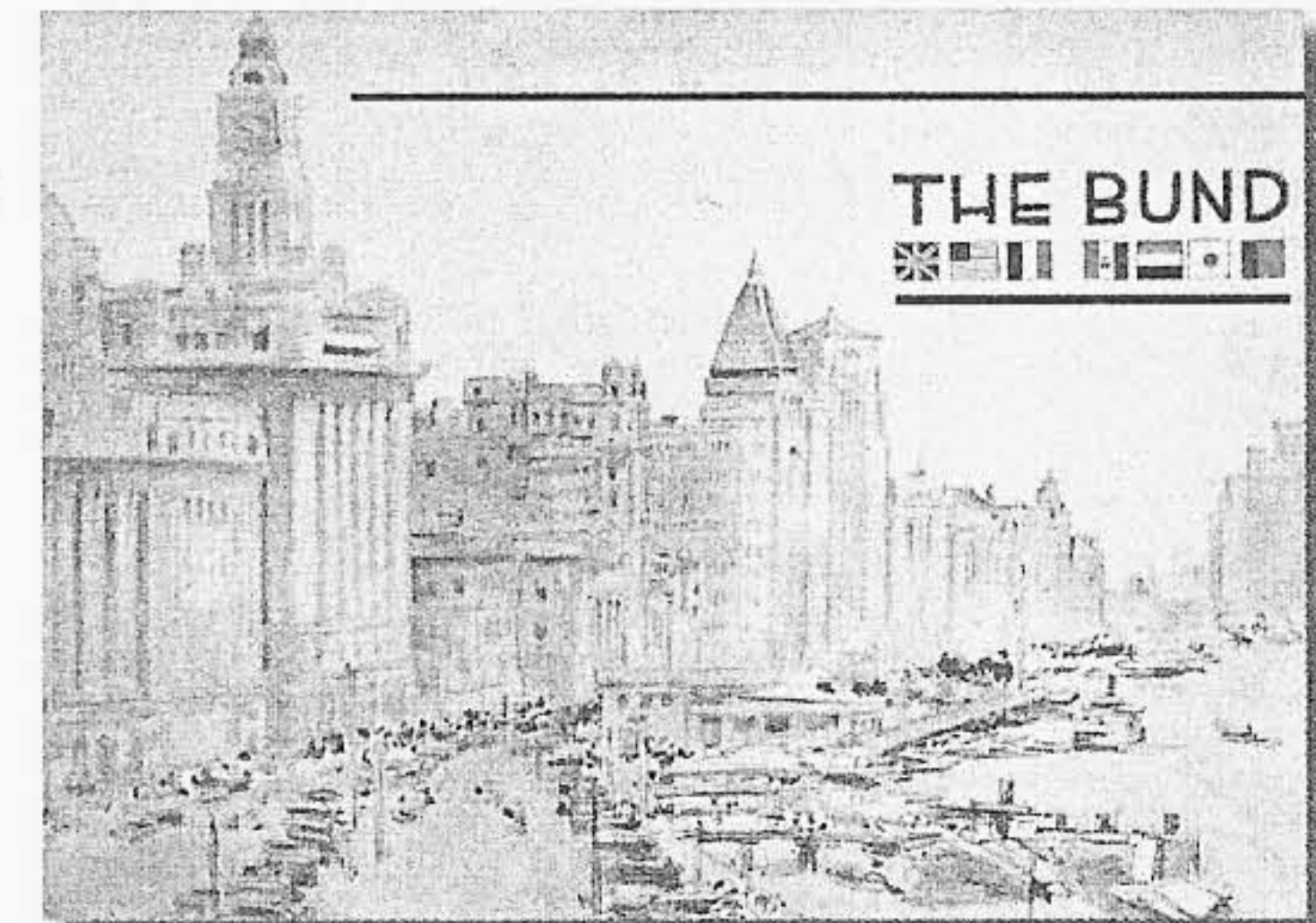




## PASSING BY THE BUND

When I took my first steps on the Bund on a grey, drizzly

February morning in 1986 it was the people and not the buildings that struck me most. I was surrounded by a slow moving procession of passing figures on their way to somewhere else. They were much more interested in me than in the architectural glories, half-baked in grime and neglect, which seemed to stand as an incidental feature to the routines of everyday life. Apart from those who worked in the buildings' moribund state-run offices, only those who could afford the crude luxuries contained within the two buildings of the Peace Hotel would find



*Sketch by Austrian cartoonist Schiff, 1940*

a way past the licentious guards who watched over every entrance. The former 'Wall Street of Asia' had been cast aside as a remnant of an imperialist past—a past that many Shanghai citizens would have liked to forget. Its buildings also told the tale of a period of chastisement and deprivation that had left the city in a state of innocent hibernation since the late 1940s. Still, despite the removal of most forms of Western ornament from their mistreated faces, they stood as a ghostly reflection of the city's former might in a far-off, but not so distant, age when the world order was of a totally different complexion.

*Cuban 'friendship' visitor on the Bund, 1950s*



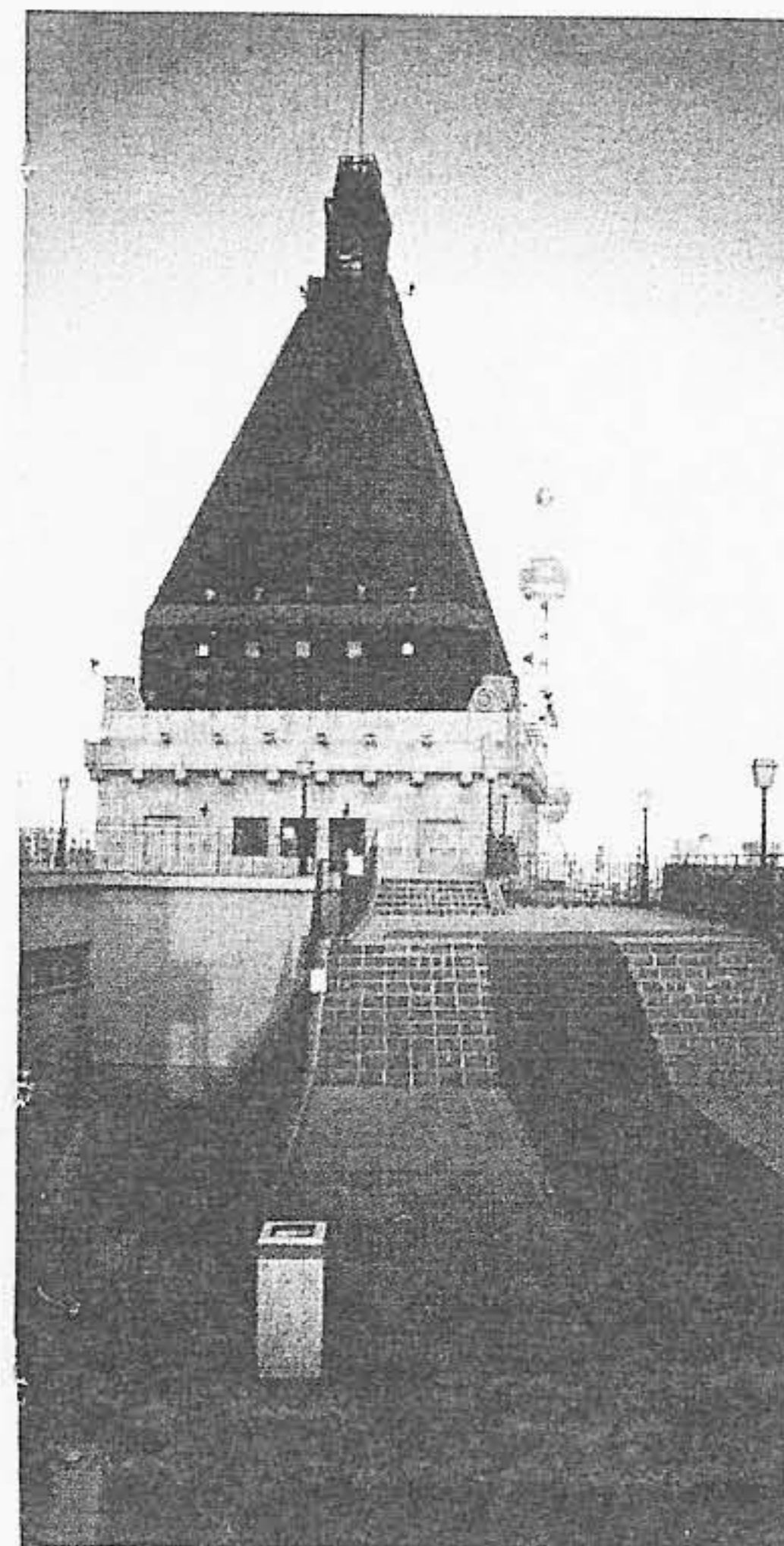




*Mass-produced silk-weaving of the Bund, 1950s*

It was living in Shanghai four years later when the new seeds of change began to blow in and the city unashamedly announced its aim to restore its former status as Asia's foremost centre of trade, finance and commerce. The frenzy of activity that followed was reminiscent of the heady, speculative years of the 1920s and 1930s when the 'Paris of the Orient' came of age. Even in those days there was public outcry over the modern apartment blocks and high-rise buildings that were springing up all over the city. Suddenly those historical legacies themselves were under threat as block upon block were turned to ashes from which modern-day skyscrapers were to arise at a hungry speed. The new Oriental Pearl TV Tower, opposite the Bund, climbed ever skywards as the symbol of Shanghai's new ambitions.

The city's rapid modernisation cast a shadow over the future of the Bund. Its buildings were further distanced from public view when an expansive highway, part of Shanghai's inner ring road system, was rolled out along its length in the early 1990s. Visitors thronged to the city's new, elevated walkway to view its 'gallery of world architecture' and to gaze



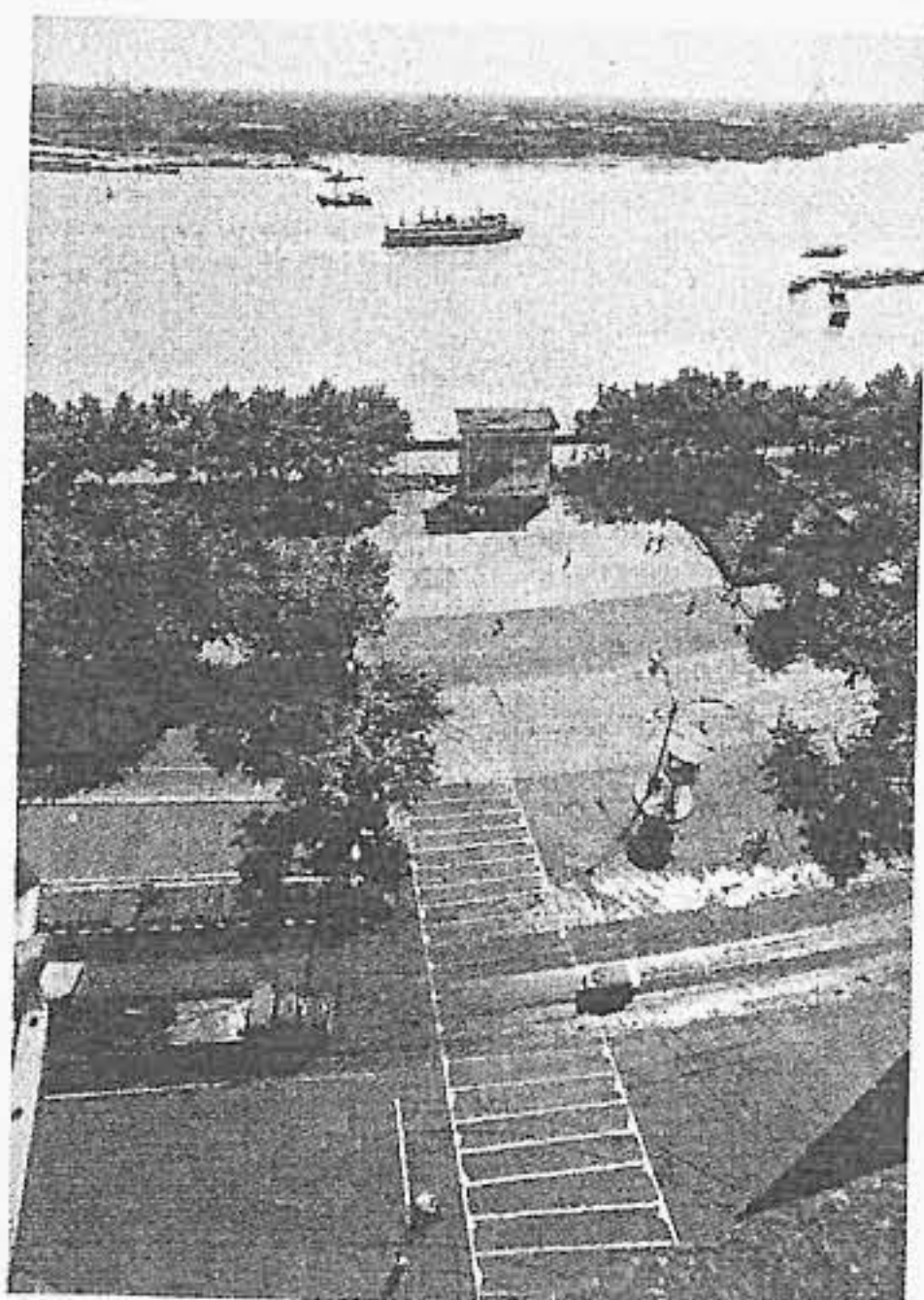
on the rise of the new Shanghai shining in the face of the old across the river. Emblazoned with a vignette of illuminations, the Bund had become a 'Disneyesque' attraction to parade by at night. During the same period a government plan was hatched to 'sell off the Bund,' and its former occupants from the glory days were invited to move back into their old premises. Many of its loss-making, state-owned enterprises were shunted out as the Bund was earmarked to become the city's premier financial and commercial centre yet again. Even the Shanghai Municipal

*Icons of 1930s and 1990s modernity—the tower of the former Cathay Hotel and the Oriental TV Tower, 1995*



Government, which was behind the scheme and had occupied the palatial premises of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank since the 1950s, found itself another home.

Things, however, didn't exactly go to plan and in the end only a handful of the old-timers moved back in. Prospective tenants were confronted with a host of insurmountable problems ranging from the political and the bureaucratic, to the titanic financial costs of renting and restoring the decrepit structures. Commentators had been pointing out the unsuitability of the buildings for modern business use as far back as the late 1930s,



View from the Peace Hotel across the Bund and Huangpu River, 1978



The Bund, 1990s

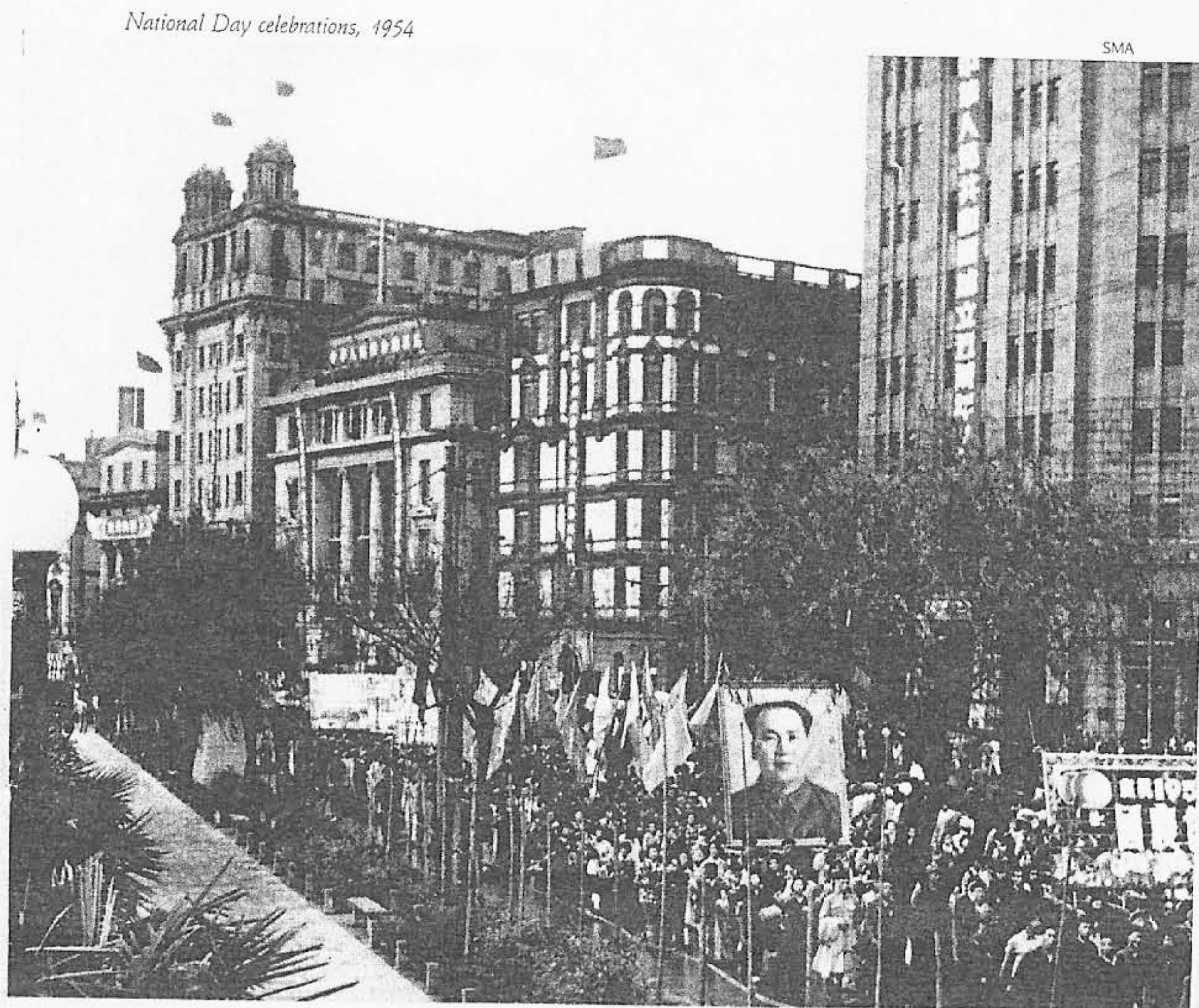
and a major stumbling block for would-be residents was the absence of any room for expansion. Moreover, while the Bund wallowed in uncertainty, many multinationals and international banks, including HSBC, were lured by financial incentives to locate across the river to the high-rise towers of Lujiazui—an area which is now firmly established as the city's key financial district. Meanwhile, a handful of state-run banks quietly moved into the vacant premises along the Bund.



1930s poster



Anti-imperialist march on the Bund, early 1960s



National Day celebrations, 1954

Perhaps the planners were asking too much. The task of restoring historical ties proved to be much more of a challenge than the restoration of the buildings themselves. As a commentator noted in 1882, 'here we transact the business of the port in buying and selling and banking, and the costliness of the establishments which line the Bund are sufficient proof of the lucrative nature of the transactions therein

despatched.' The buildings were both a symbolic and a physical expression of their owners' success—a link with the past that was lost when they were taken over by the state after 1949. When the buildings were again offered for occupation, prestige and physical

SMA



suitability held sway over sentimentality. The incoming occupants were, understandably, most interested in forging a new identity rather than reliving the past. It is interesting to note, however, that AIG, with a vested heritage in a building they occupied in the 1920s, went to considerable efforts to restore certain features which would otherwise have been lost and the proprietors of a later development at Bund 18 set out to celebrate, rather than eradicate the past.

At the end of the 1990s the Bund was ensnared in an identity crisis and many of its buildings, which were still vacant or occupied by ill-suited tenants, faced an indeterminate future. Spurred on by the glittering prize of hosting the World Expo in

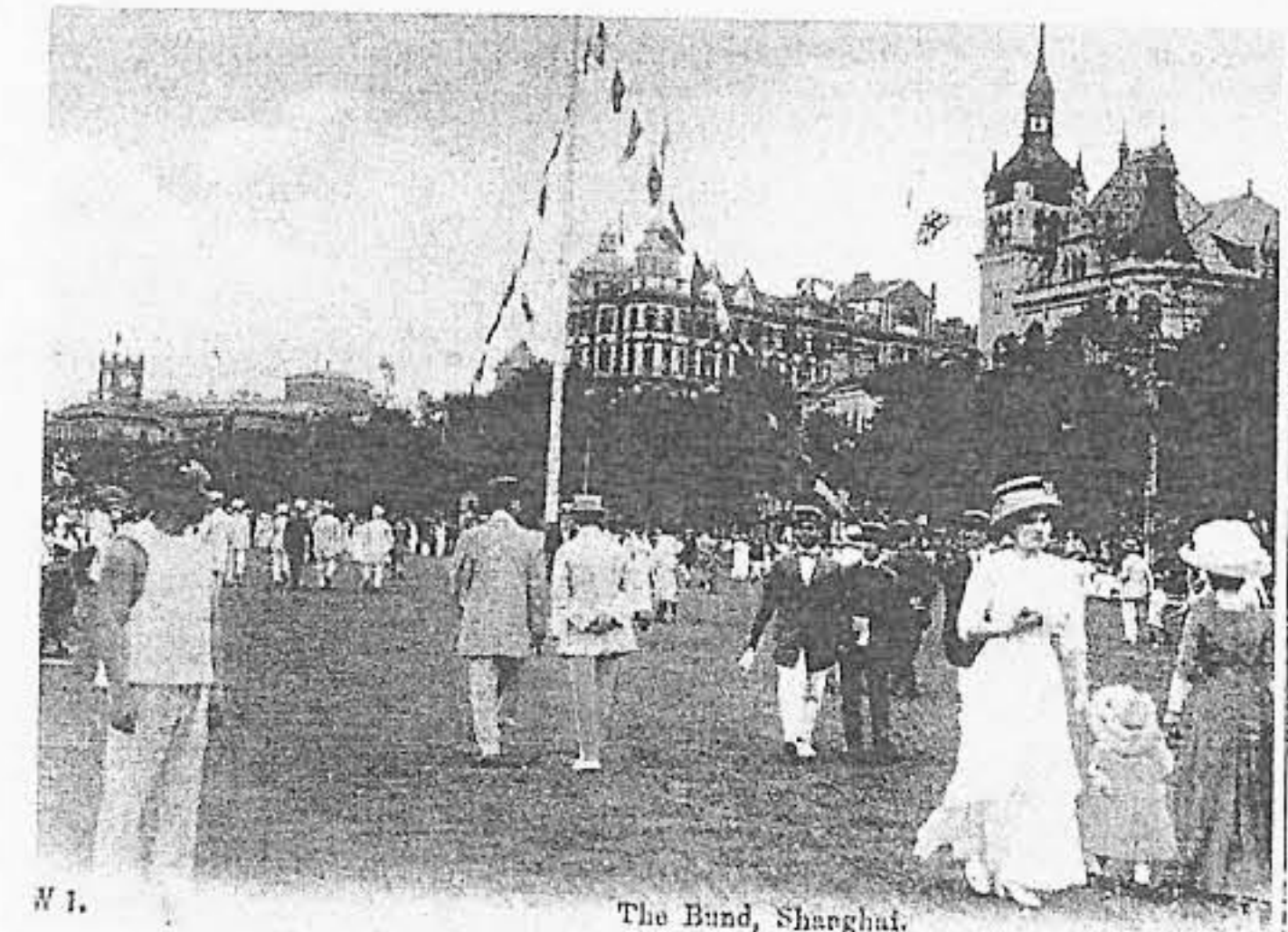


Commerce on the Bund, 1940

2010, government planners partly shifted their vision of the Bund away from its predisposition as a financial centre to that of its potential as a world-class showcase for the arts, gastronomy, leisure and retail activity. M on the Bund, the first independently operated eatery to establish itself there, opened in 1999. A host of investors, many with Chinese roots, began to take a fresh, hard and cautious look at the buildings that remained up for grabs.

The blemished face of the Bund began slowly to take on a distinctly Western look as stylishly chic, cosmopolitan restaurants and international fashion houses took up residence. Unsurprisingly, most ordinary citizens continued to walk on by.

The city fathers had, perhaps, learned something from the lessons of history. Going back to the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Bund was much more than a mere centre of trade and finance—it was the very core of foreign, and in particular British, life in Shanghai. The top floors of its buildings housed the highest and most spacious apartments fitted out with the latest luxuries and amenities, and its elite wined and dined at the Shanghai Club. Everything from York hams to New Zealand potatoes, cheeses, wines and spirits as well as Hartlepool coal could be had. The town band played classics in its English-style garden, whilst the nearby Lyceum Theatre hosted Gilbert and Sullivan and home-grown British farces. A British court, prison, museum, library and church were all to be found on the doorstep. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the hotels on the Bund housed the finest restaurants, bars and ballrooms, and the latest Paris fashions were on parade at the Sassoon House arcade. The Union Jack flew high above most of the buildings, the Custom House clock played the Westminster chimes, and British merchant



#1.

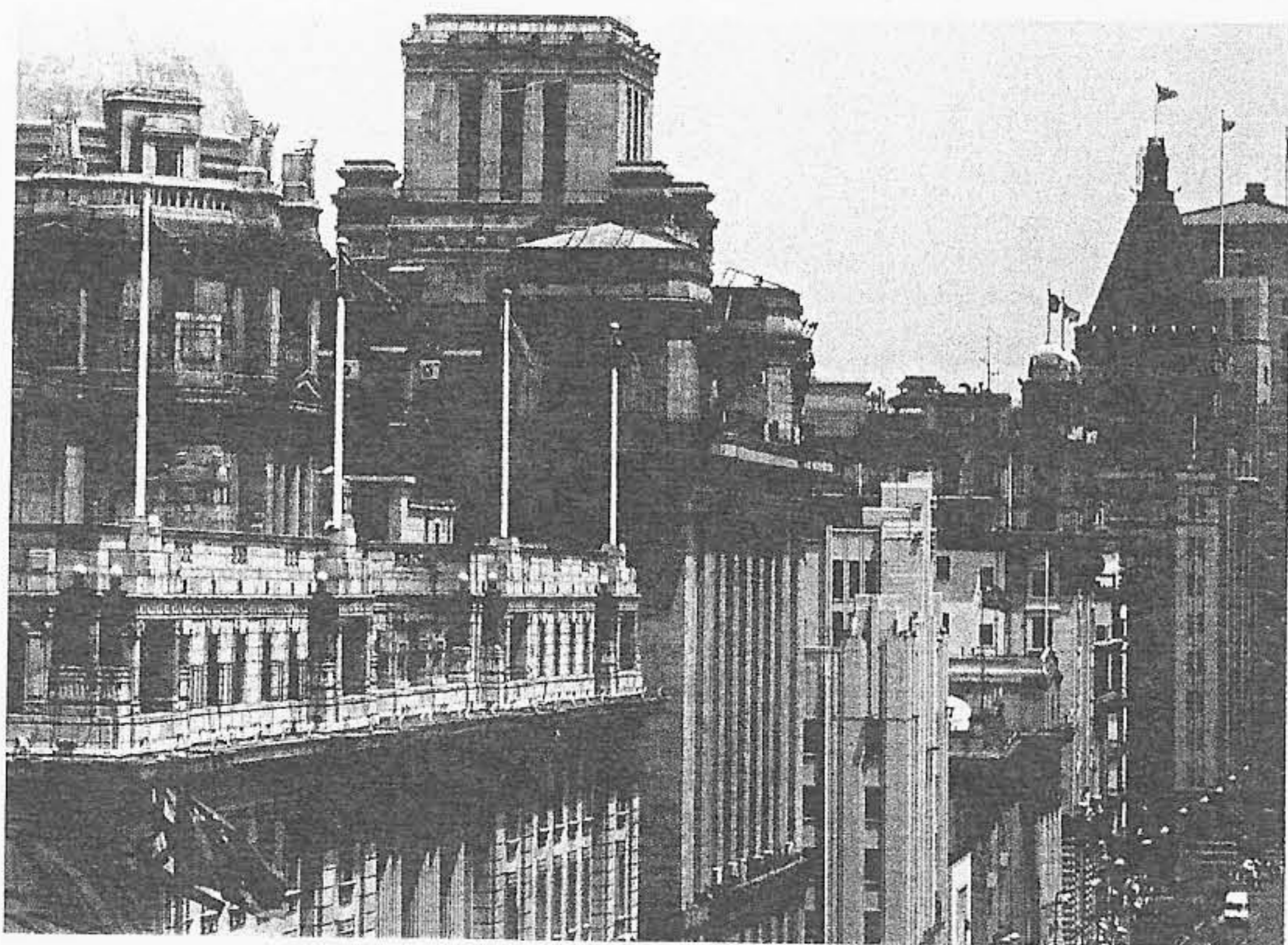
The Bund, Shanghai.

Bund promenade, around 1910



Local newspaper fashion page, 1930

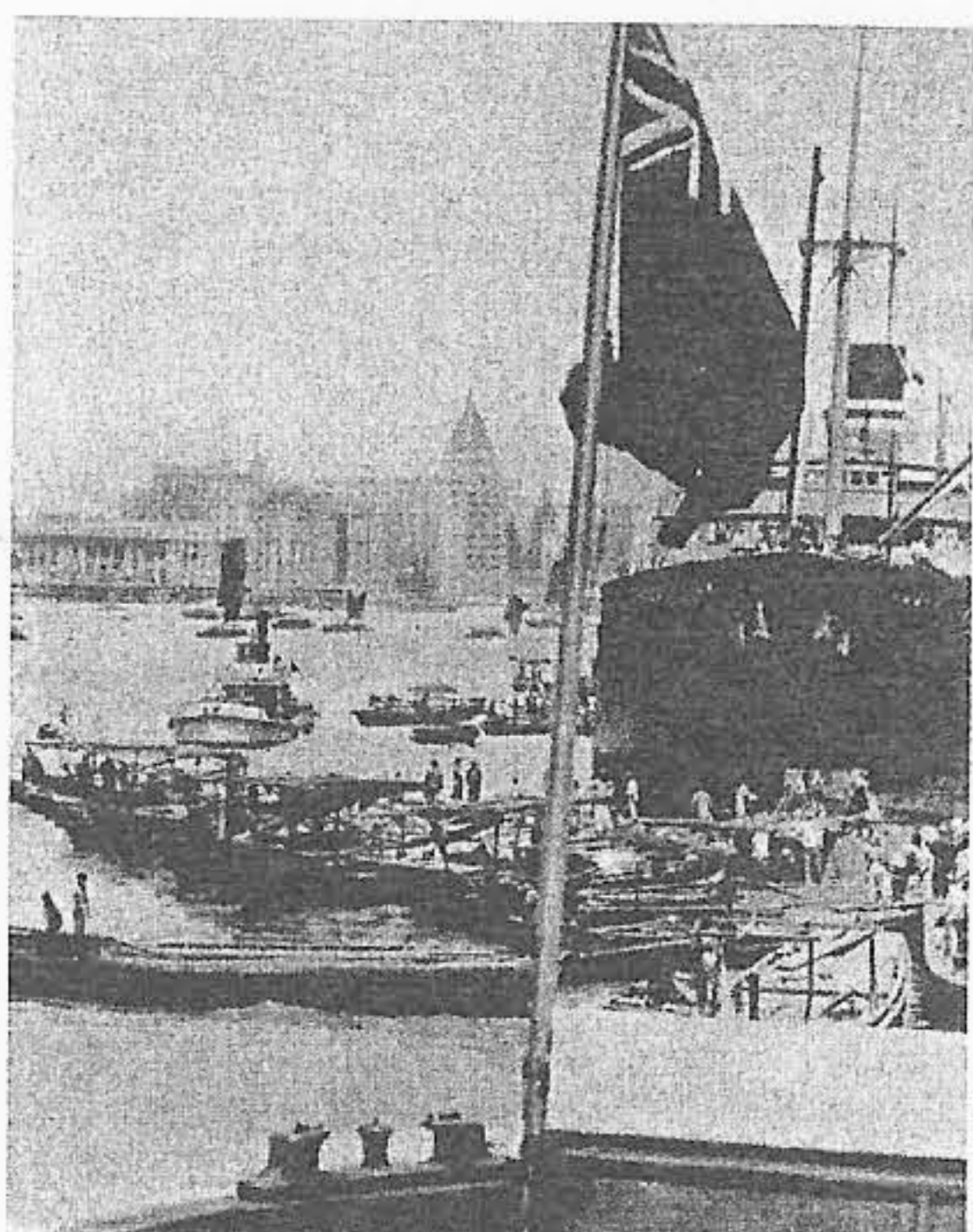




*Flying the flag, 2006*

and military vessels lined the shore. Physically, the Bund marked the boundary of a foreign controlled area from which all else emanated westwards.

Not only did the Bund provide the comforts of home, it also looked like home. It presented a Western face to visitors who



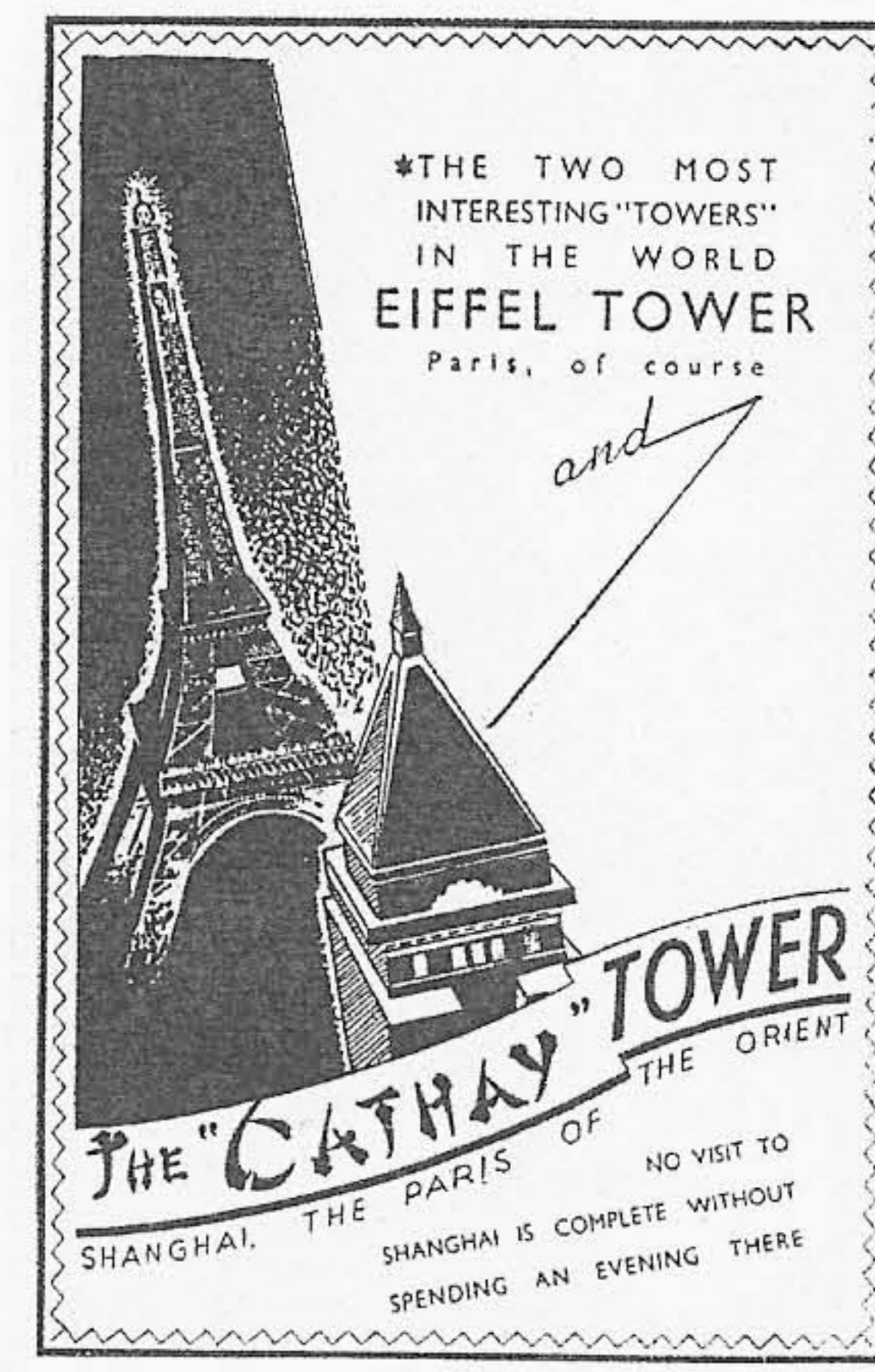
*The harbour, 1934*

were usually in some part surprised, bemused, exhilarated or disappointed by its appearance, and usually evoked analogies with European or American cities. An 1897 visitor compared it to the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, whilst Noel Coward, on his 1929 visit, viewed the face of Shanghai as a 'cross between Huddersfield and Brussels.' Philosopher Bertrand Russell saw the Bund as an example of 'ugliness and efficiency.' Fickle in identity, the interiors of its ostentatious banks could be confused with those of a grand hotel or a Monte Carlo casino by those unaccustomed to

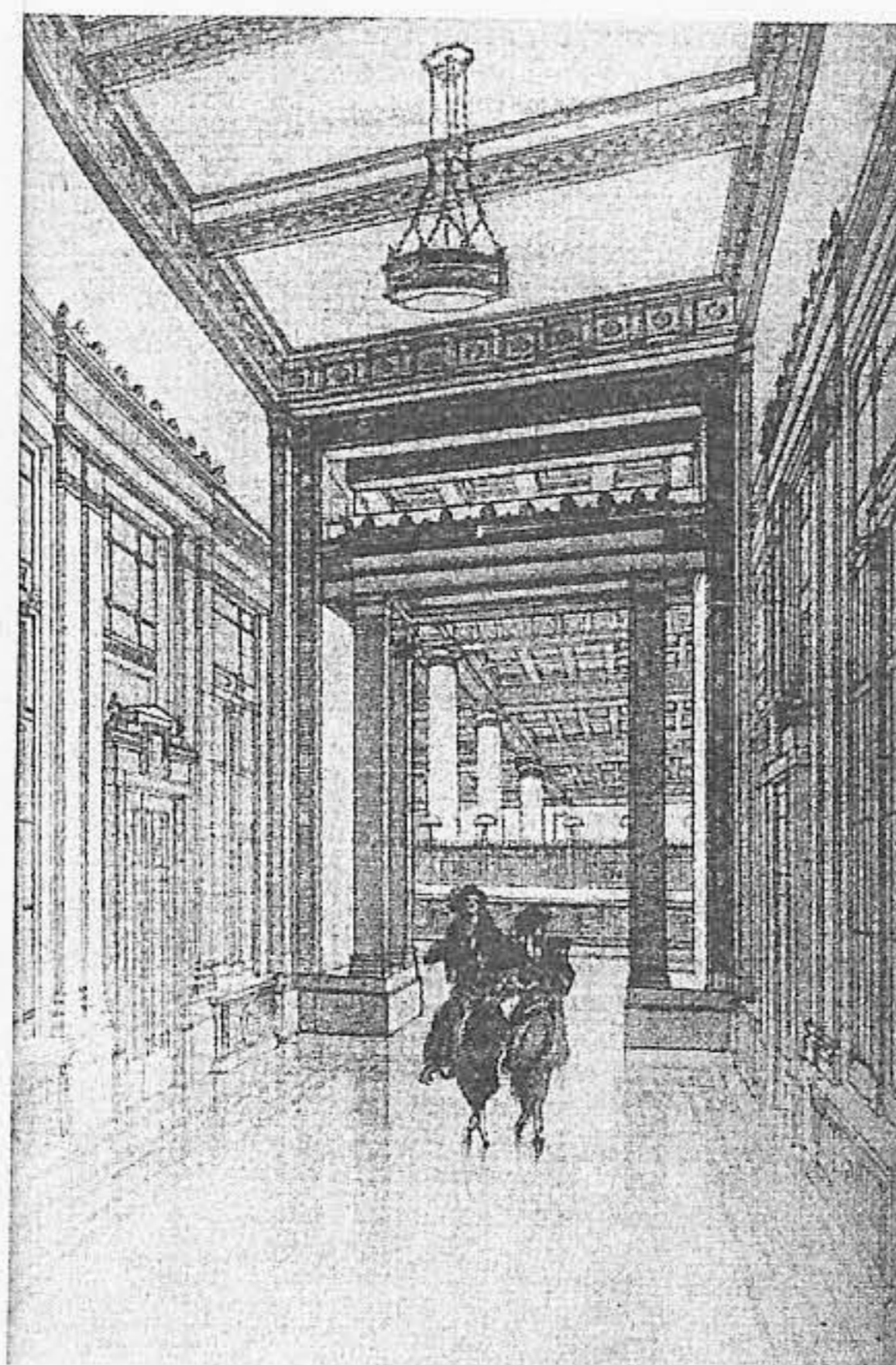
Picture This



*Flying the flag, 1934*



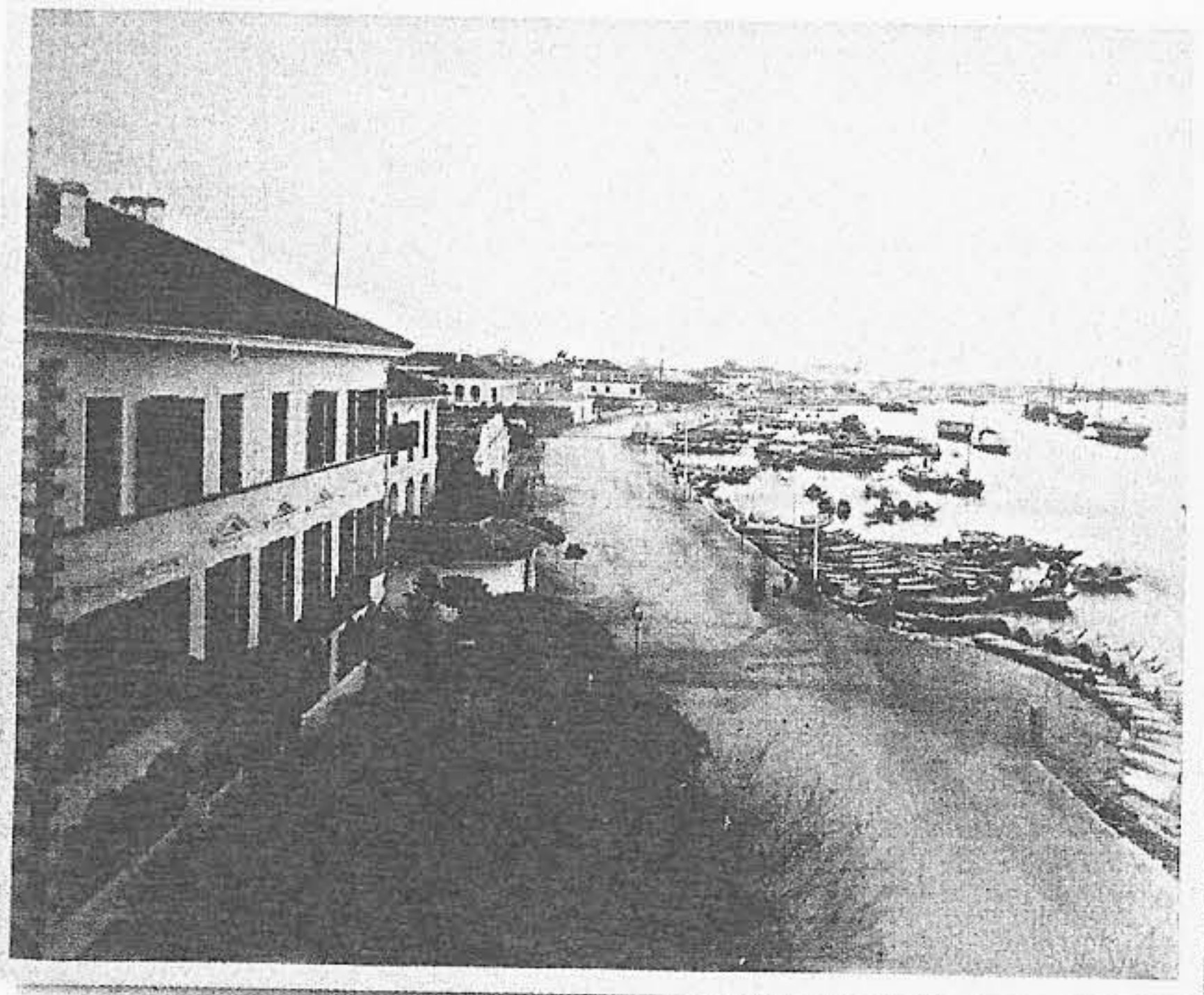
*Cathay Hotel advert, 1938*



*The sketch of the Chartered Bank's entrance hall in 1922 looks more like a contemporary rendering in its role as Bund 18*







Dennis George Crow



Dennis George Crow

Left: The Bund looking north, 1860s Right: The Bund looking south, around 1870

the style in which business had to be seen to be done on the Bund. The same charge of capriciousness may be alleged against some of the renovated buildings on the Bund today.

With some cognisance of their history, many buildings on the Bund, and indeed around the city, bear heritage plaques issued by the Shanghai Municipal Government. Despite the fact that the buildings were listed as a Modern Heritage Site at a UNESCO experts meeting in Chandigarh in 2003, the heritage protection status of all the buildings on the Bund, with a few exceptions, is only skin deep. Many renovations to date have either entirely defrocked the interiors of their historical character or have inappropriately reinvented them in inferior fabric and style. Shanghai's overpowering desire for modernity and internationalism pays scant respect to the past. As a case in point, the Bank of China, intent on removing the building's original marble, consulted a leading restoration architect on how the new marble could be made to look old. He, of course, was shocked. Moreover, swathes of the buildings' granite faces have been lastingly disfigured by unbecoming treatments.

Concerns and debates over historical conservation and restoration are becoming more poignant as development on the



Bund proceeds. However, those preservationists bent on restoring an original interior look can sometimes deny the history of the buildings themselves. All of the buildings' interiors were modified and renewed at various times during their history in response to evolving societal and practical needs, ranging from those of visiting tourists to their occupation by Japanese and American armed forces, regardless of the negligence and

maltreatment they were dealt with during and after the 1950s. Time doesn't stand still and historical misconceptions are hardly helped by the fact that most of the heritage plaques on the buildings are in some way or another factually incorrect.

In the following pages I hope to allow readers some insight and appreciation of the development of the waterfront and its

The Bund, 1950s



SMA





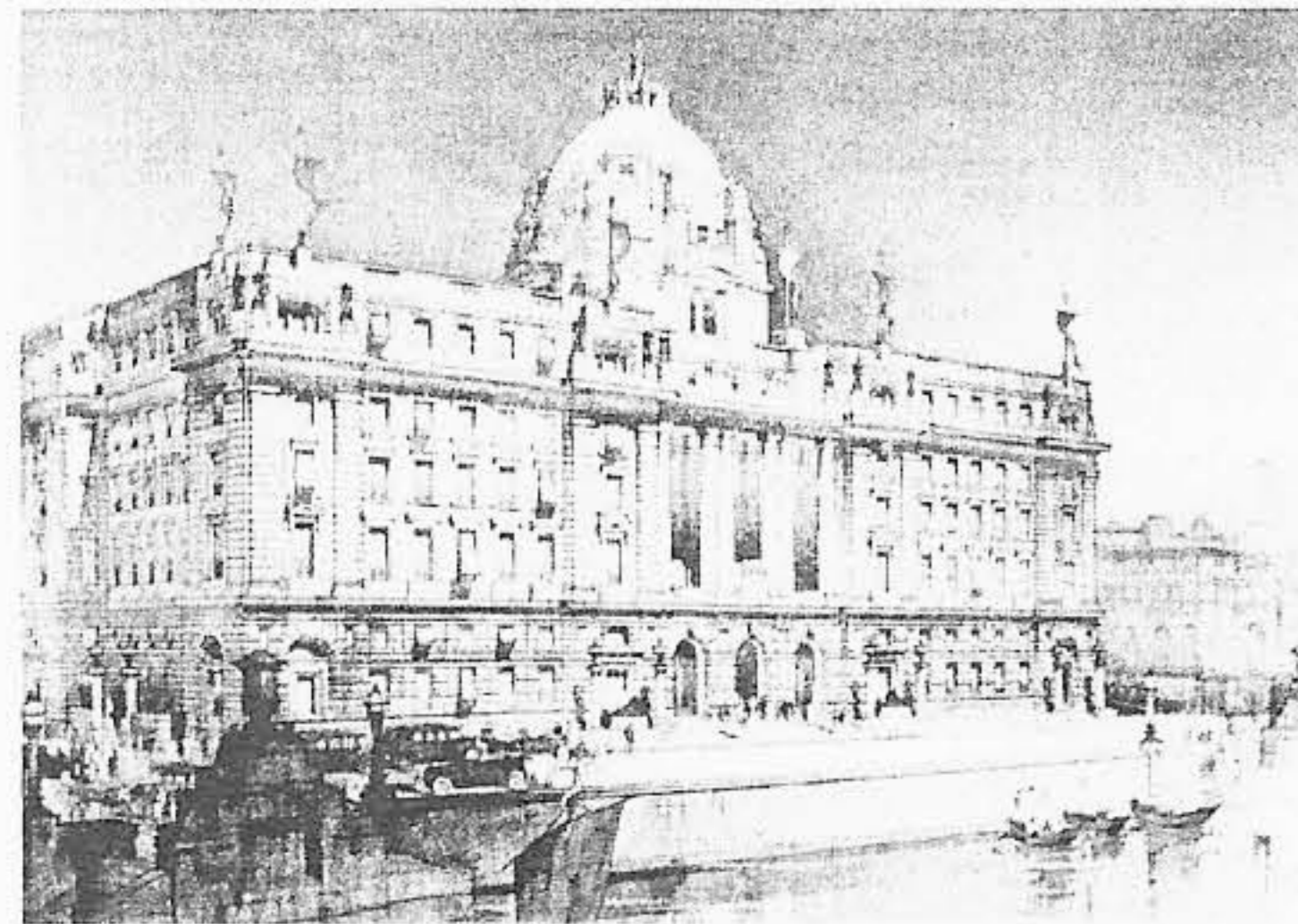
buildings as a living creation that has evolved, and continues to evolve, over time. Its physical features are a reflection of the social relations that defined its past and are redefining its future.

Special consideration is given to the Bund's two most iconic structures—the former buildings of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank and the Cathay Hotel. Although the buildings differ in terms of their recent restoration and reinvention, their

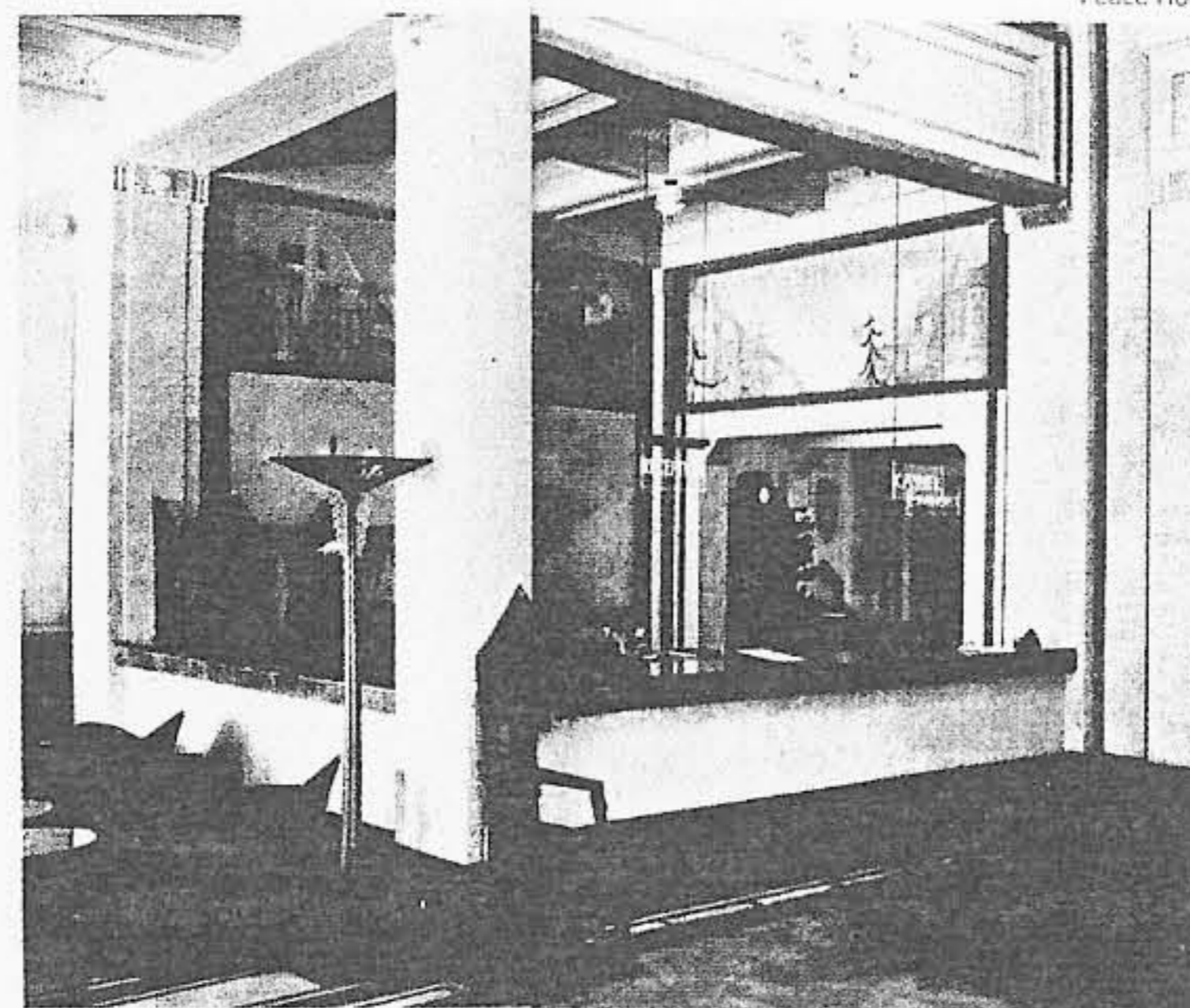
decorative riches render an ultimate narrative and a corporeal embodiment of the spirit of a bygone age. The bank's palatial interior has been thoughtfully restored and its owners are proud to show it off to the public—even outside of normal banking hours. Whilst the ground floor of the hotel was victim to a soulless and imitative modernisation in

the early 1990s, many highly evocative original features have survived on its upper floors. Its former grandeur, hopefully, is set to be restored with a multi-million dollar facelift. This book also highlights the significance of many other fine symbolic and decorative features found along the Bund which would generally not be evident to the passer-by.

The Bund continues in a transitional state and its destiny over the coming years remains far from certain. Undoubtedly additional elite service establishments will find their place in those buildings still open to outside investment, and more are likely to follow when the state-run banks, its stop-gap tenants, find more fitting ground or cyber-space. The future of the Bund crucially depends on its revival as a centre for social life rather than as a lifestyle showcase. Whilst the face of the



Artist Cyril Fahey's rendering of the Hongkong & Shanghai Bank



Cathay Hotel reception, 1930s



Bund symbolises the city's past glories and its future aspirations, Shanghai's development as a multi-centred megalopolis threatens to relegate it to the periphery of common experience. On the Bund itself, the massive highway, which bisects its public spaces, is as much a social as a physical barrier. The two sides of the road may as well be continents apart, as



The redesigned waterfront, 1990s

inexpensive fast-food outlets and tacky souvenir shops inhabit the waterside area, whilst world-class restaurants and international designer emporia parade their riches on the other side. A new middle ground is unlikely to be established as the Bund's historical predilection as home to the wealthy and successful is reasserted.

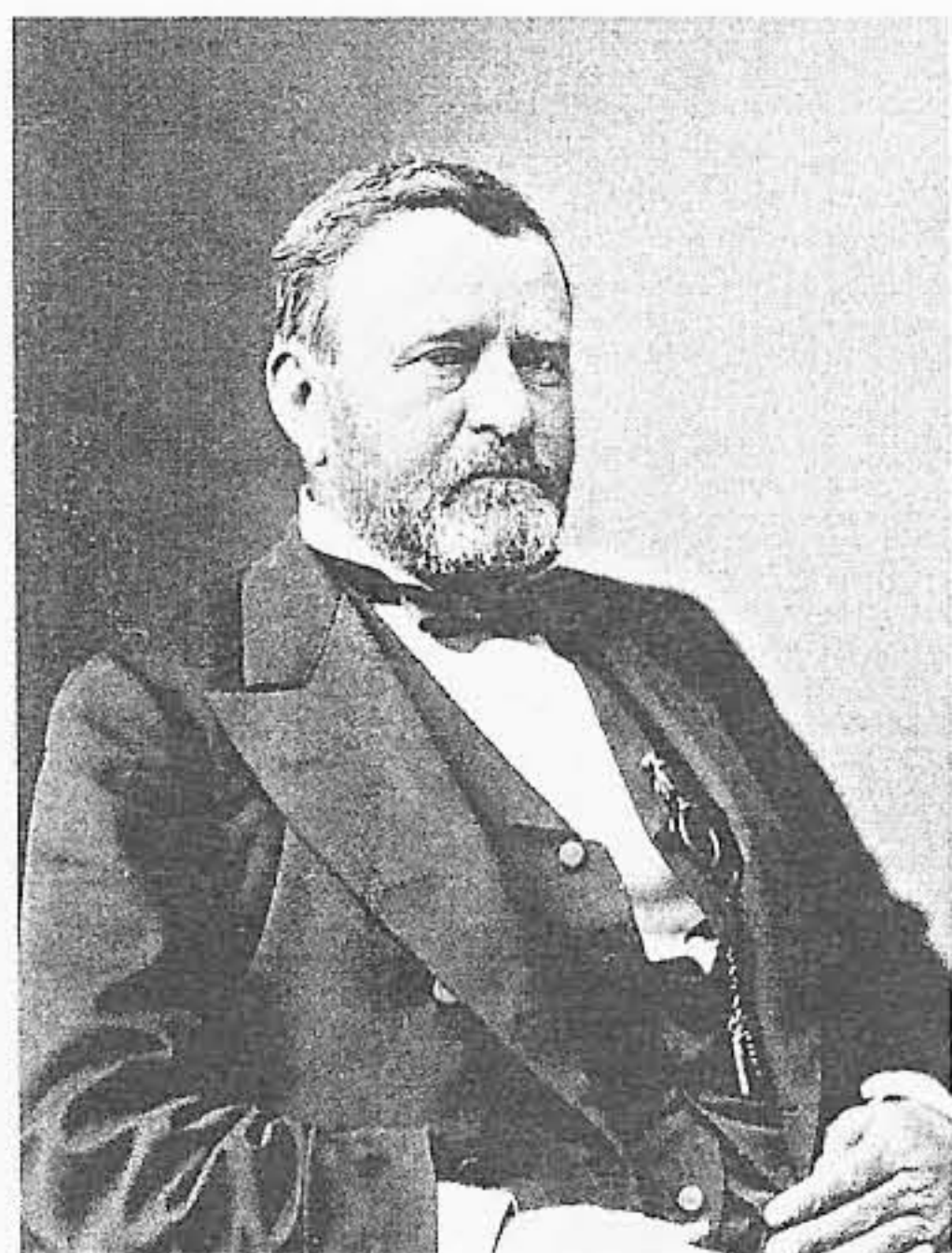
A highly impressive major redevelopment project, which is now underway at the northern end of the Bund in the 'Waitanyuan' area, holds the key to success for the Bund's reinvention. Set around parks and dotted with a wealth of historic architectural pleasures, many of which are to be preserved, the scheme carries

the prospect of rekindling the spirit of the Bund and bringing its life, energy and style back again. There is no doubt that the Bund area will increasingly attract more passers-by, from all over China and from around the globe, wishing to experience and indulge in the quintessential spirit of the city—even if they can't all afford its finer pleasures. The Bund was built as a spectacle—and that's the way it is to remain.



## ILLUMINATING THE BUND

Today the Bund is brightly illuminated with a spectacle of lights guaranteed to attract a swarm of sightseers each and every evening. It was a very different matter back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when illuminations and



*Ulysses S. Grant*

pageants were generally only reserved for special jubilee celebrations. By the end of the century, the Bund had been illuminated on three occasions; in 1887 for Queen Victoria's jubilee and again in 1897 for her diamond jubilee, as well as for Shanghai's own diamond jubilee in 1893. And whilst Shanghai society conjured up costly pageants and illuminations in honour of their far-distant

monarch, it paid little comparable courtesy to its earliest royal visitors. The first British royal visit to Shanghai by the Duke of Edinburgh in 1869 was a sedentary affair, with its highlight appearing to be the making of some new friendships with the fairer sex at a ball and with those of the sterner sex at the bowling alley. Like other royal visitors who had come before him, including those from Germany, Italy and Japan, his presence wasn't celebrated in a blaze of light or fanfare.

Shanghai's first major public display of illuminations was reserved for a regal, rather than a royal personage. It came on the occasion of former US President Ulysses S. Grant's visit in May 1879—which just so happened to coincide with Queen Victoria's birthday. Grant, who was two years into his round-the-world trip with his family, viewed a spectacular torch-lit procession along the Bund from the balcony of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank. The Settlement was heavily decorated with bunting, and the offices of Jardine, Matheson & Co. alone were decorated with 1,500



*Decorations for the Duke of Connaught's visit, 1890*

Chinese and Japanese candle-lit lanterns. Ships anchored in the Huangpu River set the stage for enormous firework displays. The event was unfortunately marred,

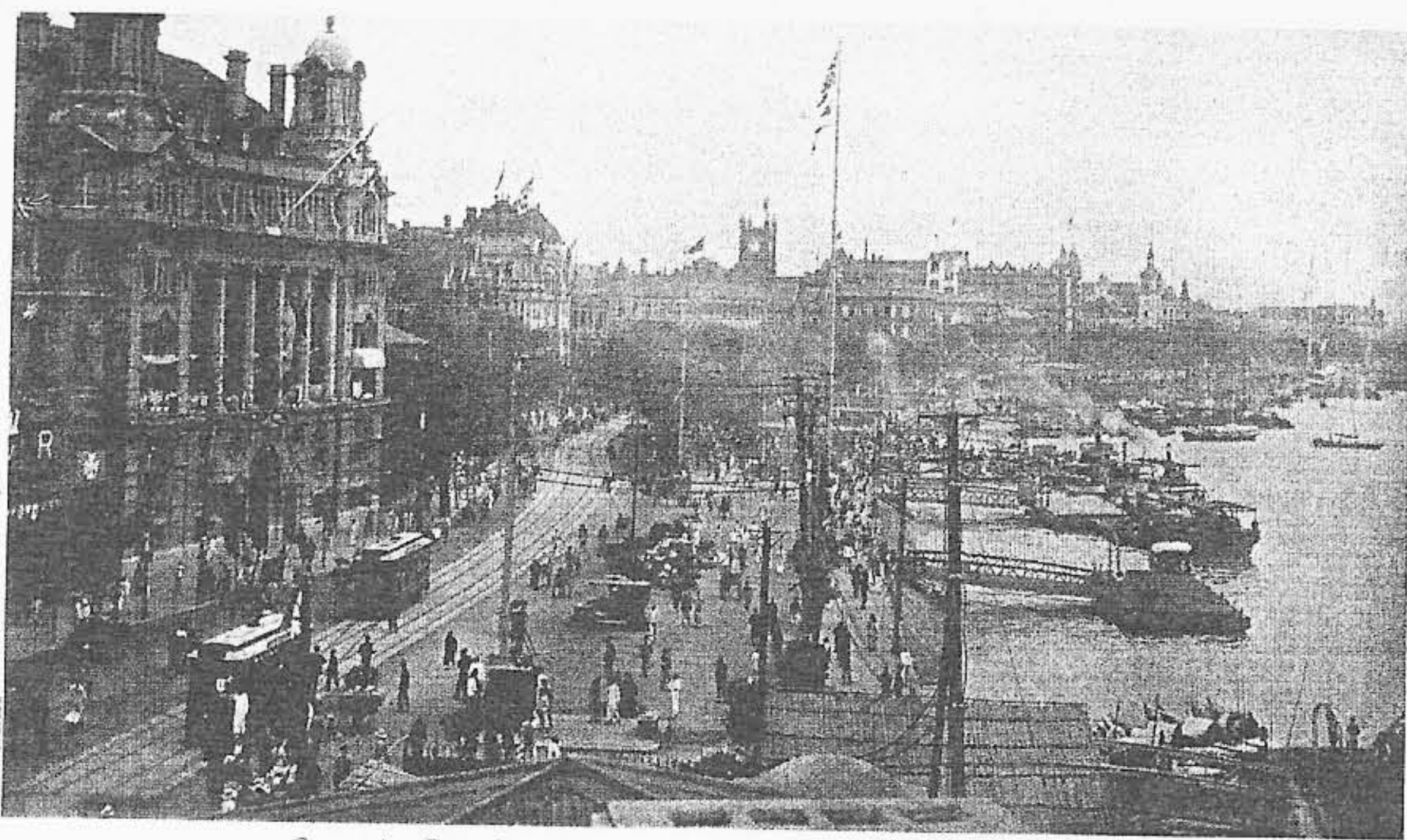
as was commonplace on such occasions, by a serious firework accident injuring nine people.

There was only one other man who would have received such a brilliant welcome and that was Prince George, heir to the British throne. So when the Shanghai community learned that he was to visit the city in 1881, they set about arranging a suitable reception, including the use of gas illuminations. Their extensive preparations, however, were disappointingly thwarted as the prince and his brother, who were under the orders of the Captain of their



*Left: First display of electric light, with the Astor House Hotel in the background, 1882*





Coronation Day, June 1911

man-of-war, were unable attend the pageant. The celebrations were further dampened by heavy rain and a very poor turnout by Shanghai's Chinese residents.

Even though the first trial of electric light in Shanghai took place just days after Ulysses S. Grant departed, it wasn't until 26<sup>th</sup> July 1882 that the first electric lights, courtesy of the Shanghai Electric Co., were to be seen on the Bund. In order to avoid disappointment, the Chinese were advised to cast aside their preconception that one electric lamp was going to fill the whole city with radiance. They weren't disappointed and thousands gazed on the moon-like lamps with 'evident admiration and complacency.'

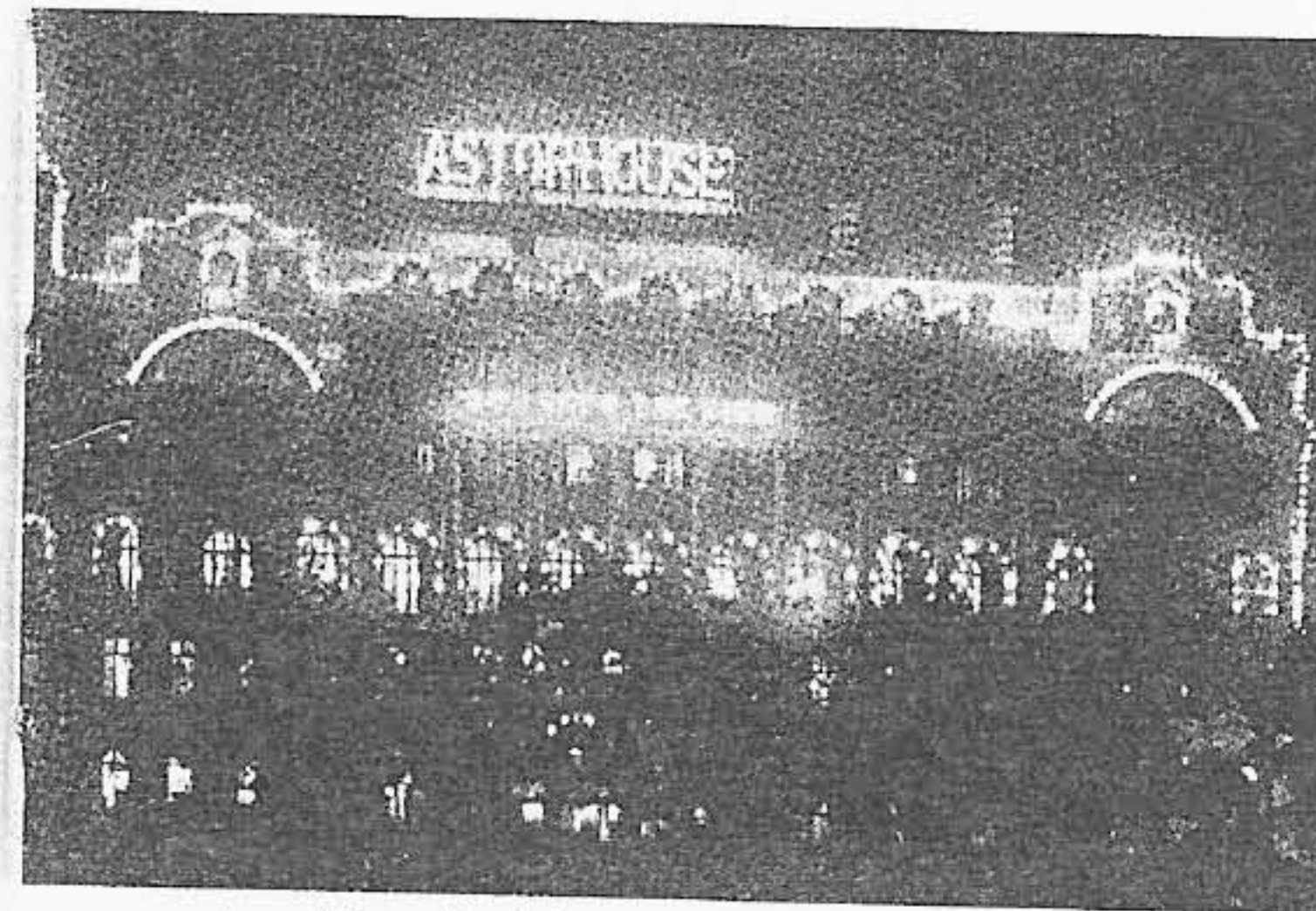
The illuminations and celebrations for the next royal visit, that of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught for one

day in April 1890, were the best ever seen in Shanghai and there were no disappointments. A ladder carriage of the fire company, with a huge dragon snorting fire and smoke perched on it, stole the show.

Underneath, fiery letters displayed the motto 'say the word and down comes your houses.' Soon after, electric lighting was used for the first time as part of the illuminations to celebrate Shanghai's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a treaty port in 1893, though yet again the events were spoiled by heavy rain. Furthermore, the events

Early 1960s illuminations

Yang Peiming



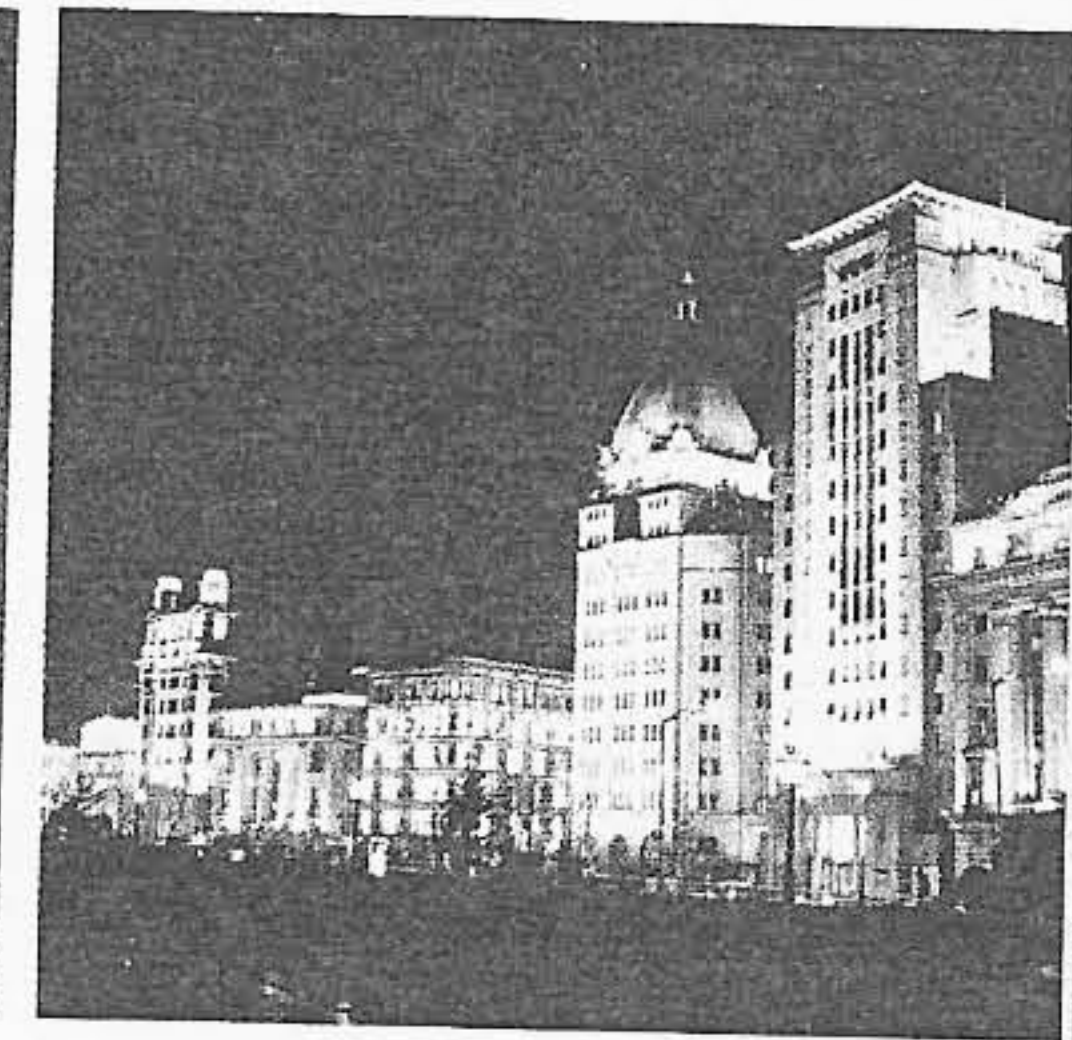
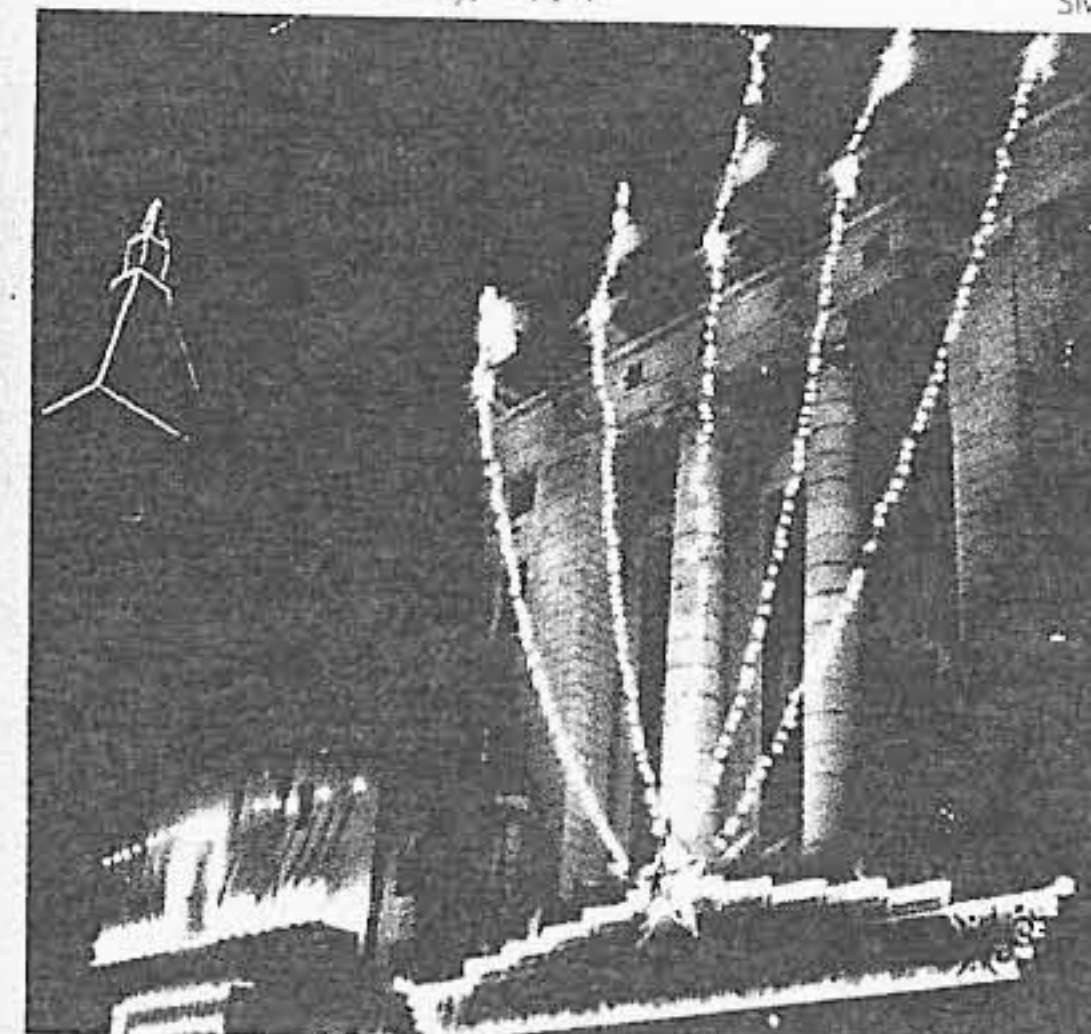
Astor House Hotel decorations, June 1911

were also 'spoiled' by the Chinese community refusing to parade as planned.

Perhaps the most magnificent celebrations in Shanghai's concession-era history were staged for the coronation of King George V in June 1911. Ribbons of coloured electric lights transformed the Bund from a business centre into 'a fairy like scene.' Chinese lanterns bearing the Union Jack were hung from all the trees and Chinese characters proclaiming 'God save the King' were hung below the Custom House clock. The British, as well as the

National Day, 1954

SMA



Present-day illuminations

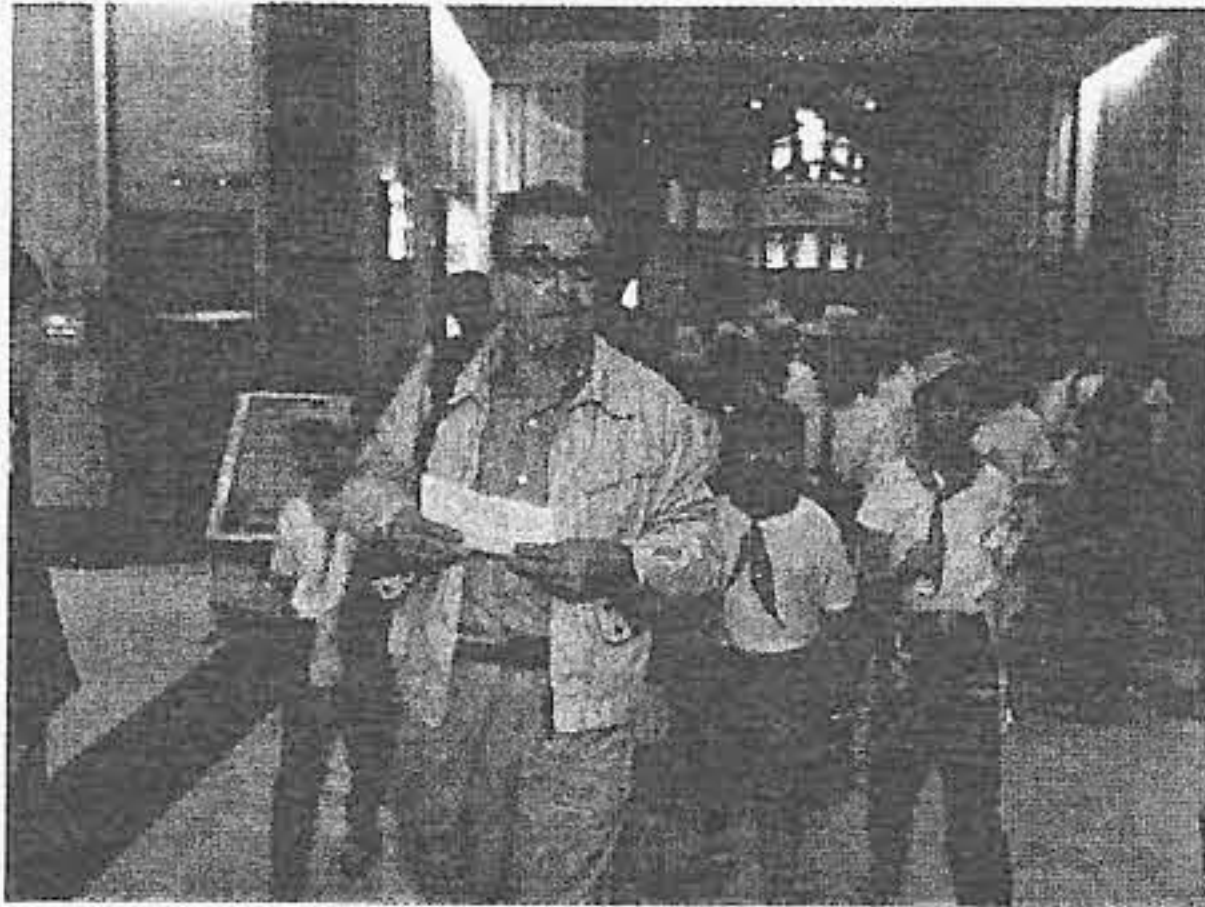
Chinese, were out celebrating like never before.

Faint ribbons of light outlining the features of the Bund's buildings and white on red banners, bearing Chinese slogans, set the backdrop for the nationalistic and patriotic rallies and marches that the wide avenue afforded after 1949. That was until one night in September 1989 when, unannounced, the Bund instantly and majestically was brought to life in a blaze of flood lighting. It was a trial run for the upcoming 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. By chance, I happened to be there and the response from the crowds was charged with the same euphoria that must have been evident when the first electric light on the Bund shone well over a century ago.

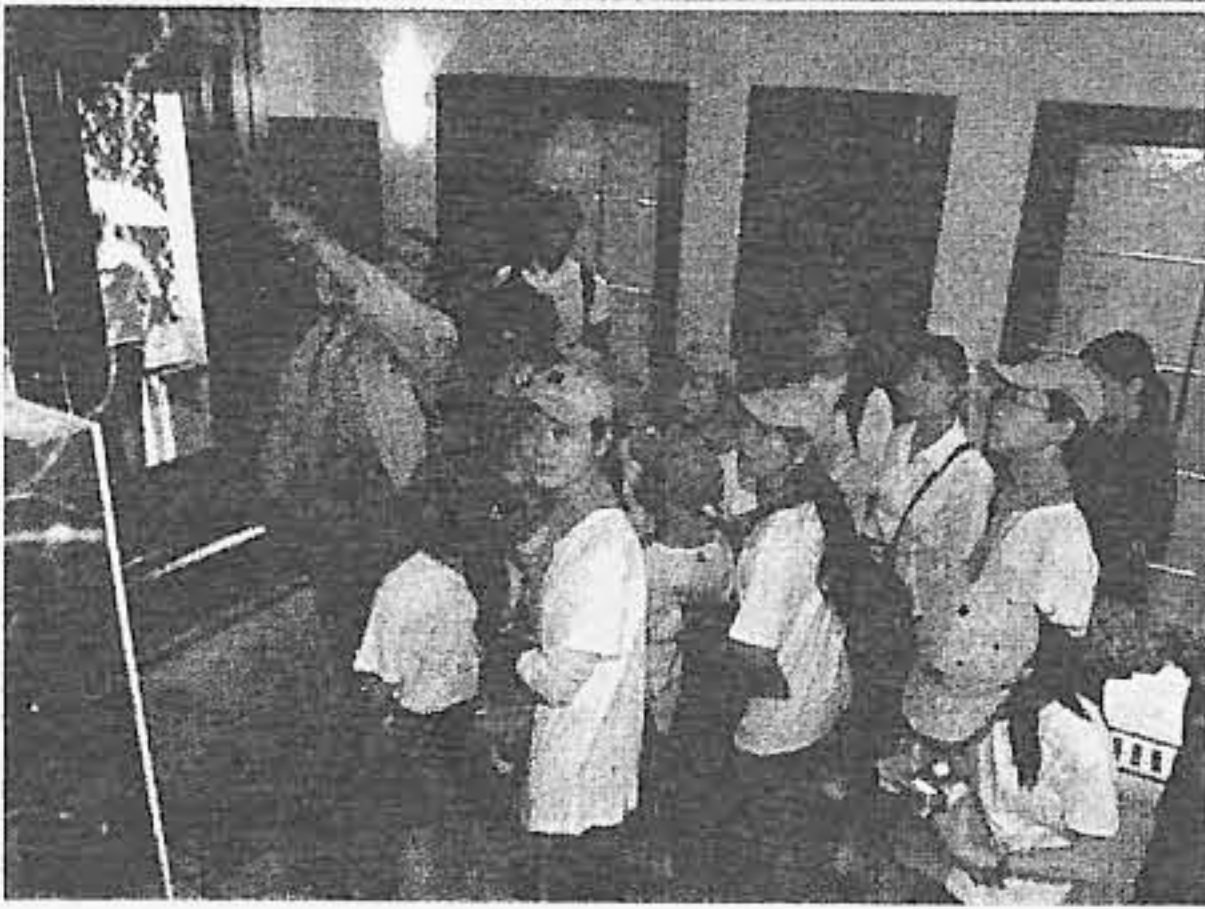




## NEW KIDS ON THE BUND



Three on the Bund



Three on the Bund

Exploring the Peace Hotel and Bund 18

In a charity event, organised by Three on the Bund and the Huangpu District Government in May 2006, and led by myself, a group of local school children were given the opportunity to visit some buildings on the Bund, which hitherto they had only seen from the outside or read about in books. They were in for a few surprises as they explored the upper floors of the Peace Hotel and the dusty and

neglected interior of the former Shanghai Club. Adoration and astonishment soon shone on their faces as they played out their adventure in this alien territory. Some of the children compared their journey to that of being aboard a time machine passing through a series of historical porches—as entrances to buildings holding dreamlike stories.

One message that they all came away with was that the importance of the Bund was not only bound up in its history—but also in its future—and for a future happy ending, an appreciation of and respect for the past was indispensable. Wang Kai, a student at Guangming High School, called the Bund 'Shanghai's name card' and declared that 'yesterday's Bund is beautiful, today's Bund is still beautiful, tomorrow's Bund will be even more beautiful.' There is hope that the next generation will have a greater awareness of the importance of Shanghai's unique historical inheritance and of the need for its careful preservation.



# STREETS AND SETTLEMENTS—CHRISTENING THE BUND

The word Bund, often mistaken for a German expression, actually derives from the Hindustani word *band* meaning an artificial causeway or embankment. In the early 1860s there were, in fact, four roads following the waterways surrounding the British Settlement on all its four sides that were also described as 'bunds.'

So what was this British, or English, Settlement? The establishment of British communities on the China coast following the First Opium War of 1839-1842 has been well documented. In short, upon the signing of the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, British residents were given rights to reside and trade in Shanghai and in four other, so-called, treaty ports, which were subsequently imbued with 'extraterritorial' status leaving their foreign residents immune from Chinese sovereign jurisdiction. Similar treaties were granted to the Americans and the French in 1844.

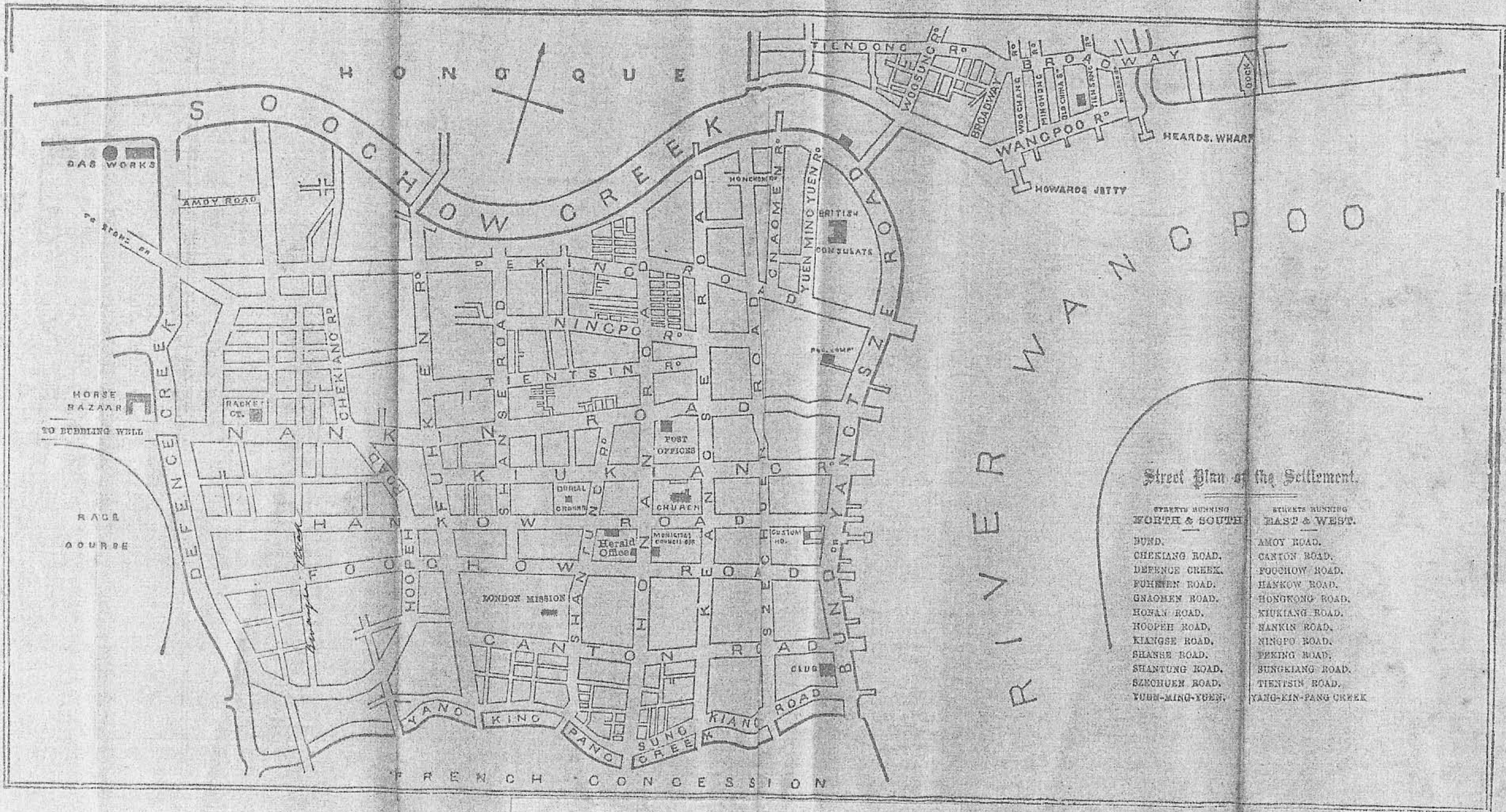
Captain George Balfour, the first British Consul, agreed a set of 'Land Regulations,' which had been drawn up by the local Chinese authorities in 1845, that were to lay the ground rules on how the British inhabited area was to be managed and administered. Balfour wanted to secure an exclusive British zone and regulations were drawn up to define its boundaries and to deal with matters such as building codes and land taxation. In 1846 Balfour had secured 138 acres of British Settlement land running



# STREET PLAN

OF THE

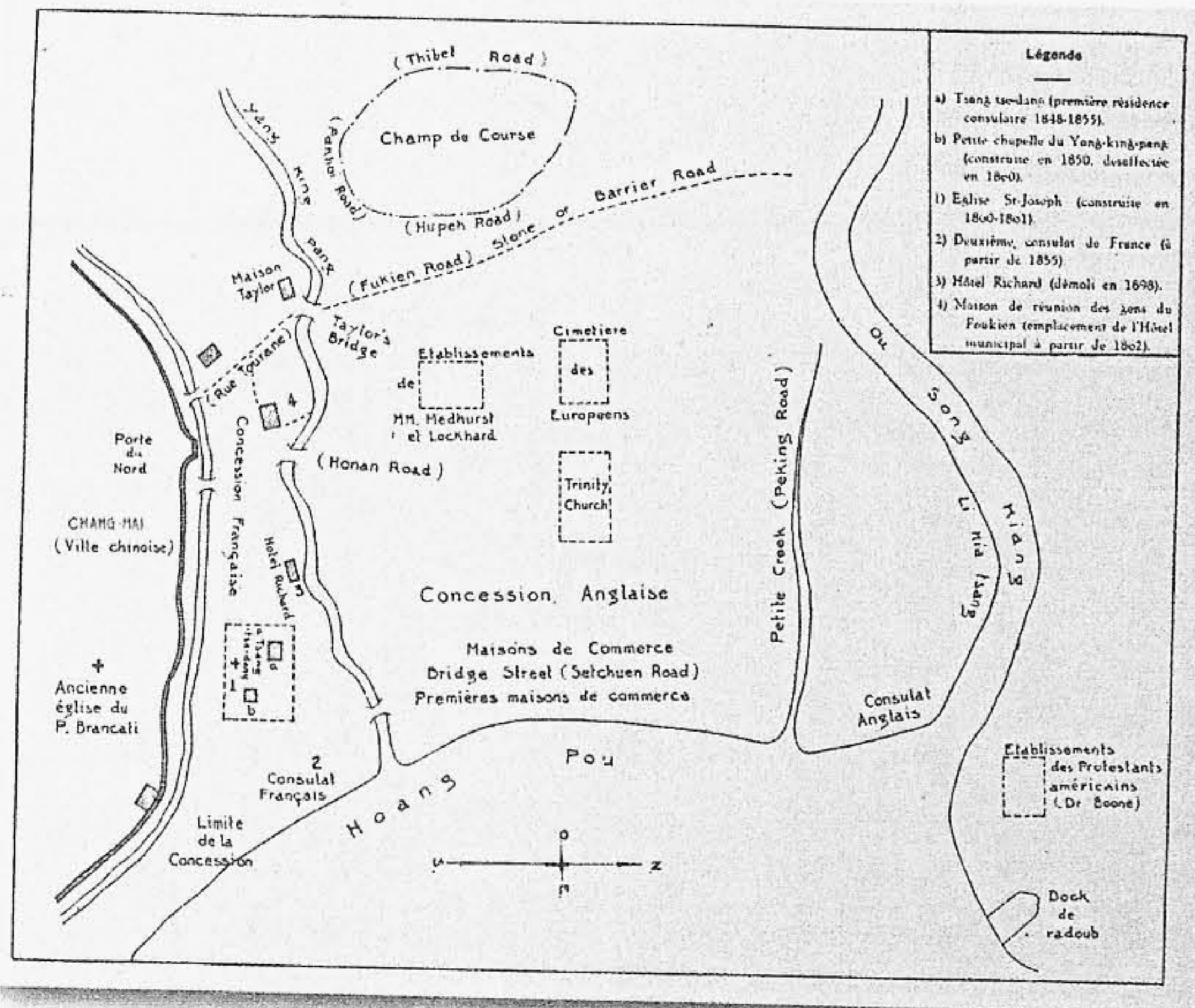
## English and American Settlements, Shanghai.



JANUARY 1872.

Map from a Shanghai street and business directory, 1872





The Concession areas, 1847 to 1851

along most of the length of the present-day Bund and three blocks westwards to today's Central Henan Road. His successor, Rutherford Alcock, extended the area to 470 acres in November 1848.

The Settlement then stretched all the way along the Bund, westwards to today's Central Tibet Road (the former West Bund or Defence Creek), northwards to Suzhou Creek (the North Bund) and southwards to East Yan'an Road (the South Bund).

With a familiar, tenacious sagacity the British disposed of their desires to maintain exclusivity and pushed forward new Land Regulations, adopted in 1854, which allowed Chinese to buy and rent land. For the first and not the only time in its history Shanghai had become 'hot' as a safe refuge from China's wars and alarms. During the murderous rage of the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864) and particularly after the fall of the neighbouring city of Suzhou in 1860, the Settlement was overrun with high-profit

yielding Chinese, and Consul Medhurst came up with a scheme to keep everybody content by renaming the thoroughfares within its confines in 1862.

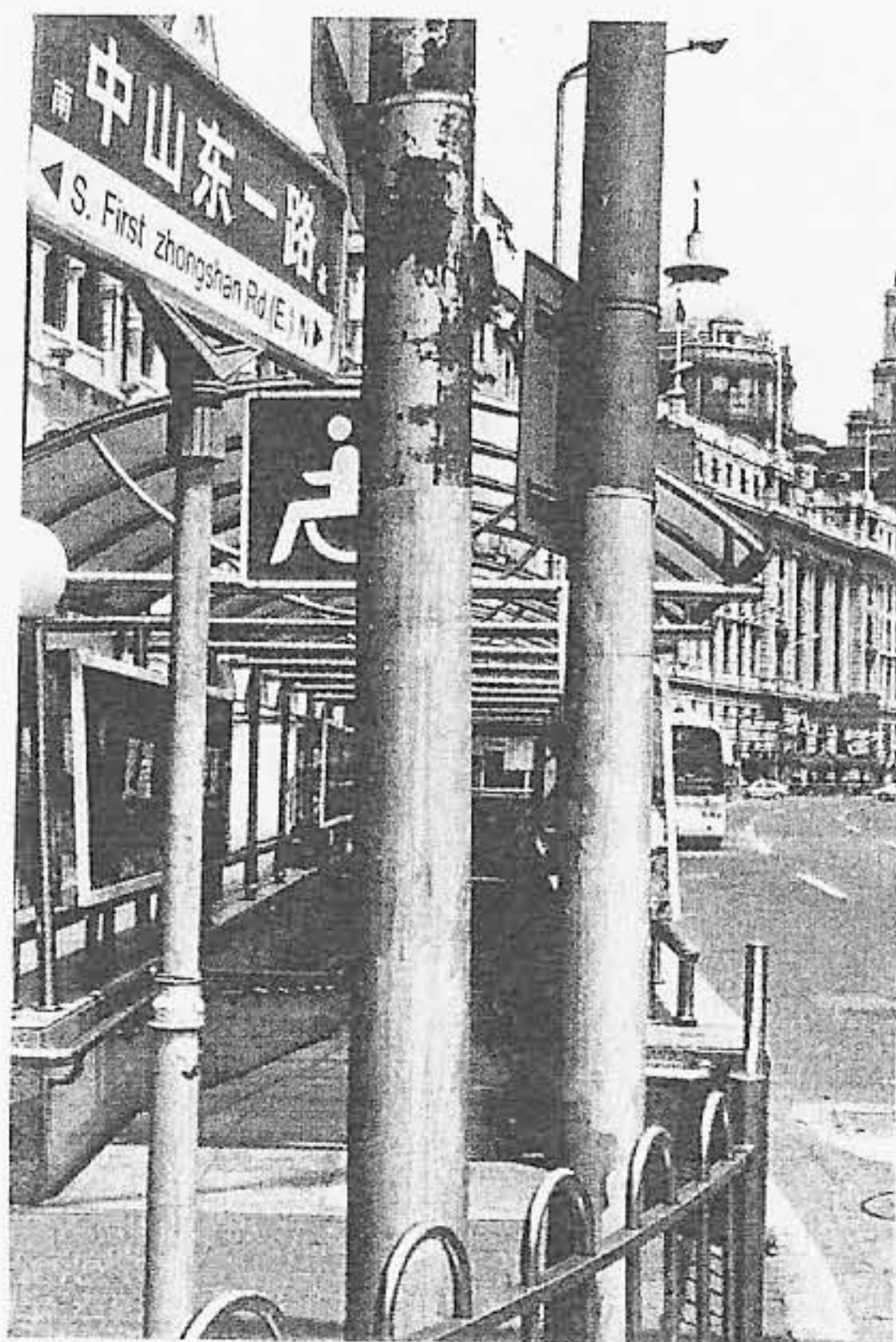
The Bund itself was officially renamed as Yangtsze Road, after Shanghai's life-giving river, and the streets running off it were named after Chinese cities running in alphabetical order from south to north. The South Gate Street became known as Canton Road, Mission Road as Foochow Road, Custom House Road as Hankow Road, Ropewalk Road as Hangchow Road (changed to Kiukiang Road in 1864), Park Lane to Nanking Road and Consulate Road to Peking Road. Later, and with no regard for the order, Jinkee Road, appeared between Nanking and Peking Road. The Chinese chose to adopt a numerical rather than an alphabetical order, with Nanking Road being designated as the Great (or number one) Maloo (horse road) and the four roads running south of it known as the second to the fifth Maloo—the latter being today's Guangdong Road.

The street names in their modern Chinese versions, though slightly disruptive of the original alphabetical order, survive to this



SMC map showing the four bunds, 1863





Present-day street sign

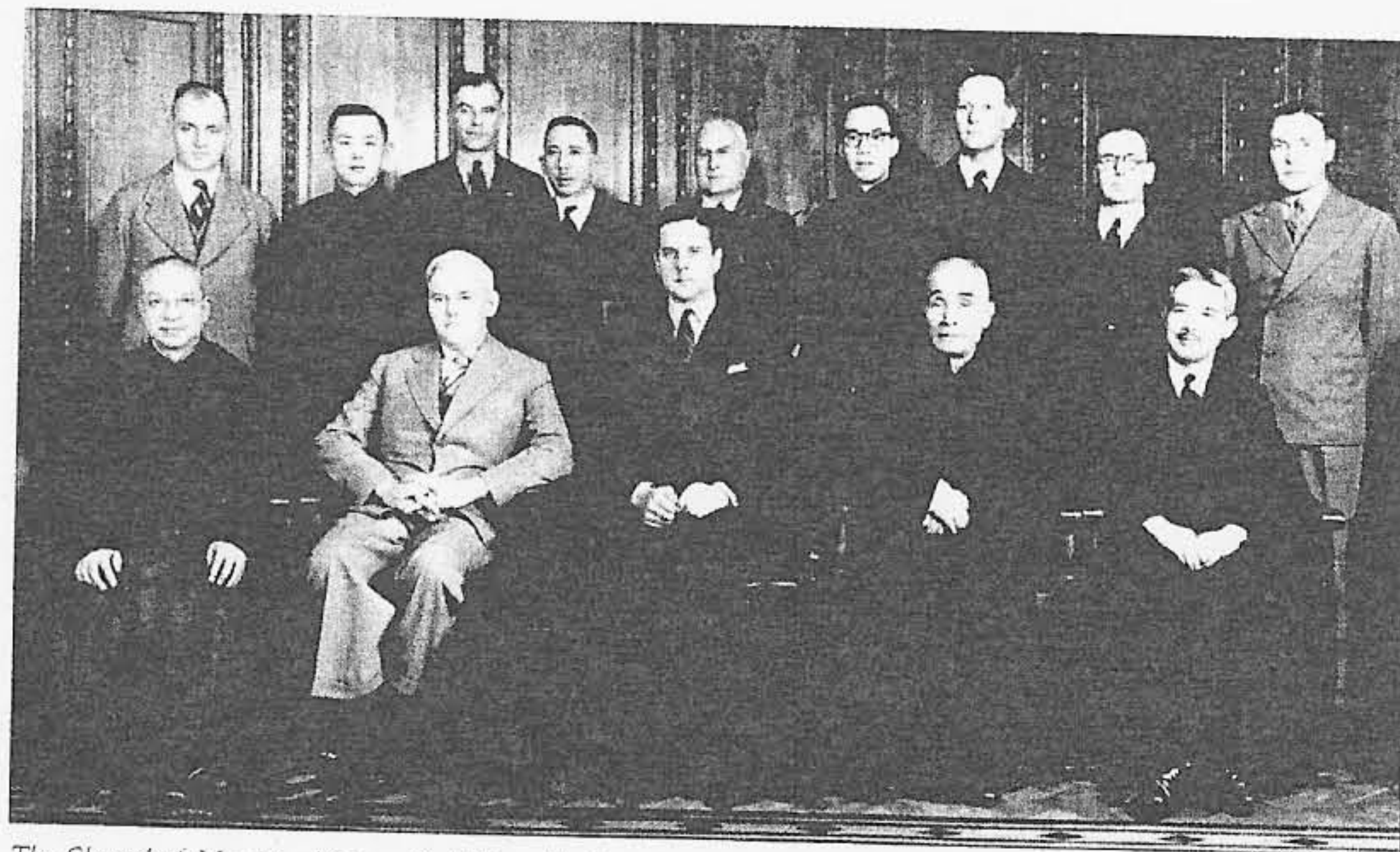
day—as does the use of the Maloo assignations by some Shanghai residents. It appears that the use of Yangtsze Road, in place of the Bund, was never commonly adopted by foreigners or Chinese. The assignation 'The Bund or Yangtsze Road' had disappeared from most foreign maps by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly, despite its official designation as Zhongshan Road No. 1 (E.) in December 1945 (First Zhongshan Road (E.) today), the area continues to be known by its old familiar name of the 'Waitan' (meaning outer shore) to the Chinese and as the Bund to foreigners.

In much the same vein, the area of the 1848 British Settlement was still referred to as such well into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century despite the fact that it had been amalgamated with the American Settlement to become the International Settlement in 1863. In 1899 the International Settlement was extended to form an area of 8.3 square miles. The early Land Regulations had laid the basis for the formation of the Shanghai Municipal Council in 1854 (referred to as SMC hereafter) which was to govern and administer this area. The SMC, that was largely representative of big British business interests, had no less than five and no more than nine members until 1928. Prior to the election of the first three Chinese members in that year the British held five seats and the US and Japan each had two.



The SMC seal

Consul Medhurst left another legacy to Shanghai. He suggested that all thoroughfares be called roads, as the Chinese pronunciation of the word road was similar to its Chinese name. To this day very few 'streets' are found in the city and the present-day Shanghai Municipal Government has been in a quandary over how to present a consistent Romanised version of Shanghai's road names that are intelligible to a vastly expanding and profitable foreign public. As part of a larger campaign on street naming matters, city bureaucrats have recently raised concerns over properties using the Bund as a street address, as in days of old. However, it is far from likely that this signature historic area will ever be popularly associated with its cumbersome Chinese street name by foreigners. In this book I refer to the buildings by the name of their original owner or occupier, alongside their respective old Bund addresses—which still correspond to the present-day street addresses.



The Shanghai Municipal Council, 1940, with Tony Keswick in the chairman's seat

John Swire and Sons



## OFFICIAL STREET JUSTICE

The entire area of land comprised within the British limits having now come into the possession of foreigners, either by purchase or pre-emption, the time has come for the adoption of a useful and uniform nomenclature for the streets and roads, as well those which are now open, as those of which the line has only been laid down. The former are already provided with names, both the foreign and native population, having severally adopted such designations, as the practical disposition of the one, or the grotesque fantasy of the other, has suggested. But it is obvious that the municipal and social needs of so large a community of two peoples, who are daily being brought into more and more intimate contact one with the other, cannot be satisfied so long as the streets they inhabit are differently named by both, neither party being able to pronounce or comprehend the term adopted by the other.

The foreigners being the dominant portion of the community and charged with the order and security of the Settlement, while the Chinese are but recent immigrants, who have swarmed in for their own conveniences and safety, it follows, that, if either has the right to enforce on the other a system of nomenclature as near as possible adapted to the necessities of both, the foreigners possess that right: and it is one which must be exercised, or the Chinese part of the population, with their usual sagacity for mutual combination, will ever long make the entire settlement a Chinese city, and we shall find such names as, if translated would read, "Virtue and Benevolence Street", "Painted Silk Lane," "Justice and Harmony Road" intruding themselves in flaming characters alongside the less modest appellations the Municipal Council has already posted up.

This is no imagination, but a most probable contingency, as any one may judge of, who will take the trouble to walk the back streets, and read for himself, presuming him to be acquainted with the Chinese character.

Granting then that the foreign portion of the community is entitled to decide on the system of nomenclature best adapted to both, it is I

think due to the Chinese and a matter of public utility, that such terms as they are more familiar with, and can pronounce, should be adopted if possible, and this may be done by taking the names of their own Provinces, Cities and Rivers, which are equally well known to ourselves, and this is the scheme I have to recommend to the acceptance of the Municipal Council.

*Consul Medhurst*  
*British Consulate*  
*5 May 1862*

*Part of a handwritten 'Memorandum on Naming of the Shanghai Streets, Consul Medhurst, British Consulate, 5 May 1862'*





# North-China Sunday News

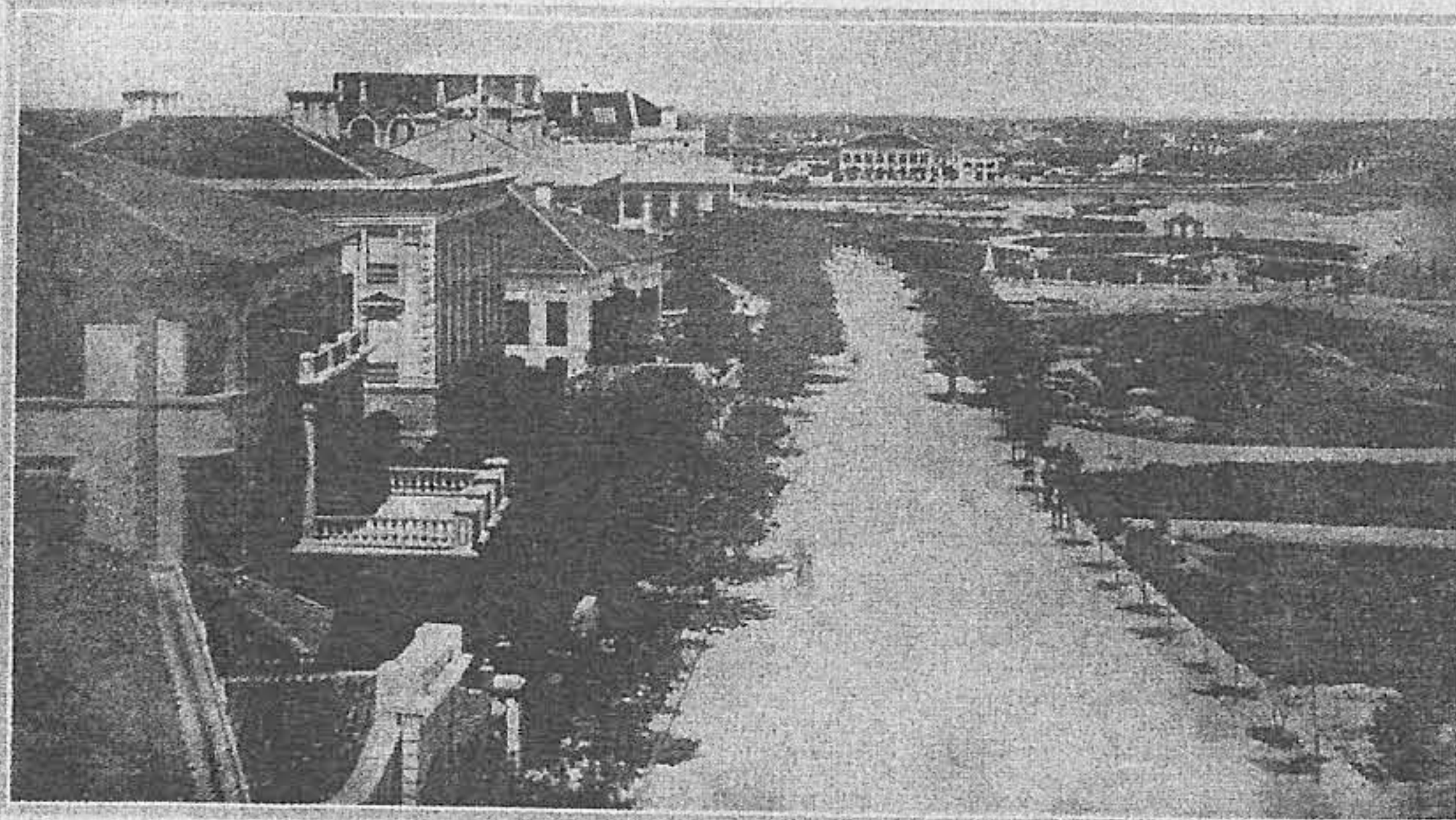
## MAGAZINE SUPPLEMENT

Vol. 1, No. 23

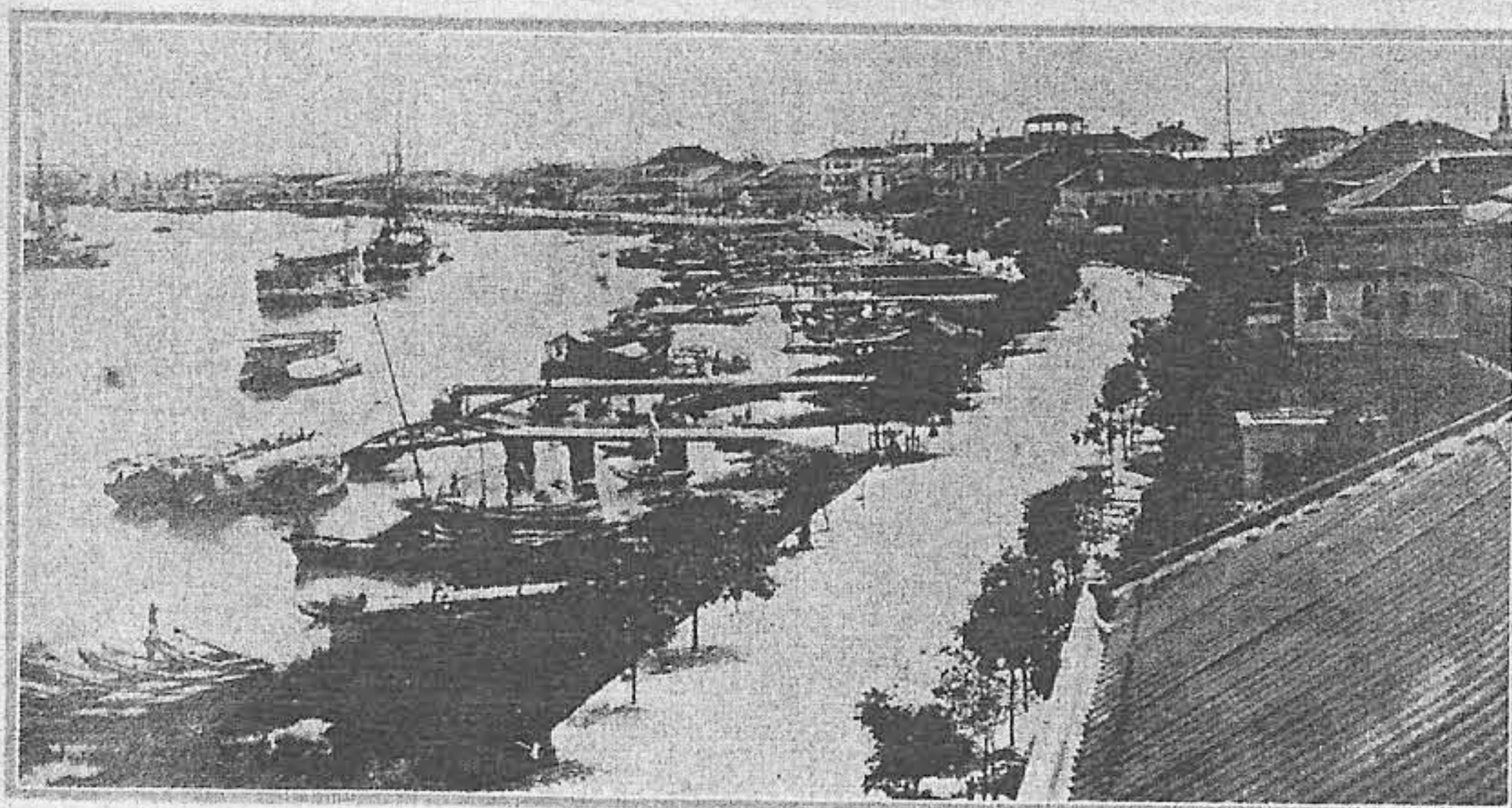
SHANGHAI, SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 1930

GRATE

### The Bund in the 'Sixties



THE BUND LOOKING NORTH



THE VIEW SOUTHWARD ALONG THE FRONT

These two old photographs give an excellent idea how the Shanghai Bund looked in the 1860's, and of the tremendous development which has taken place since. Very few of the buildings here shown are still in existence. The upper view, looking north from the vicinity of what is now Nanking Road, shows the Soochow Creek and the Bund Gardens. In the lower picture the view is southward from near the same spot, showing the bridge over the Yang King Pang which joined the International Settlement and the French Concession. The Chinese-style building, part of which is seen in the foreground, was the Custom House; a marked contrast to the imposing building which now stands on the same site.

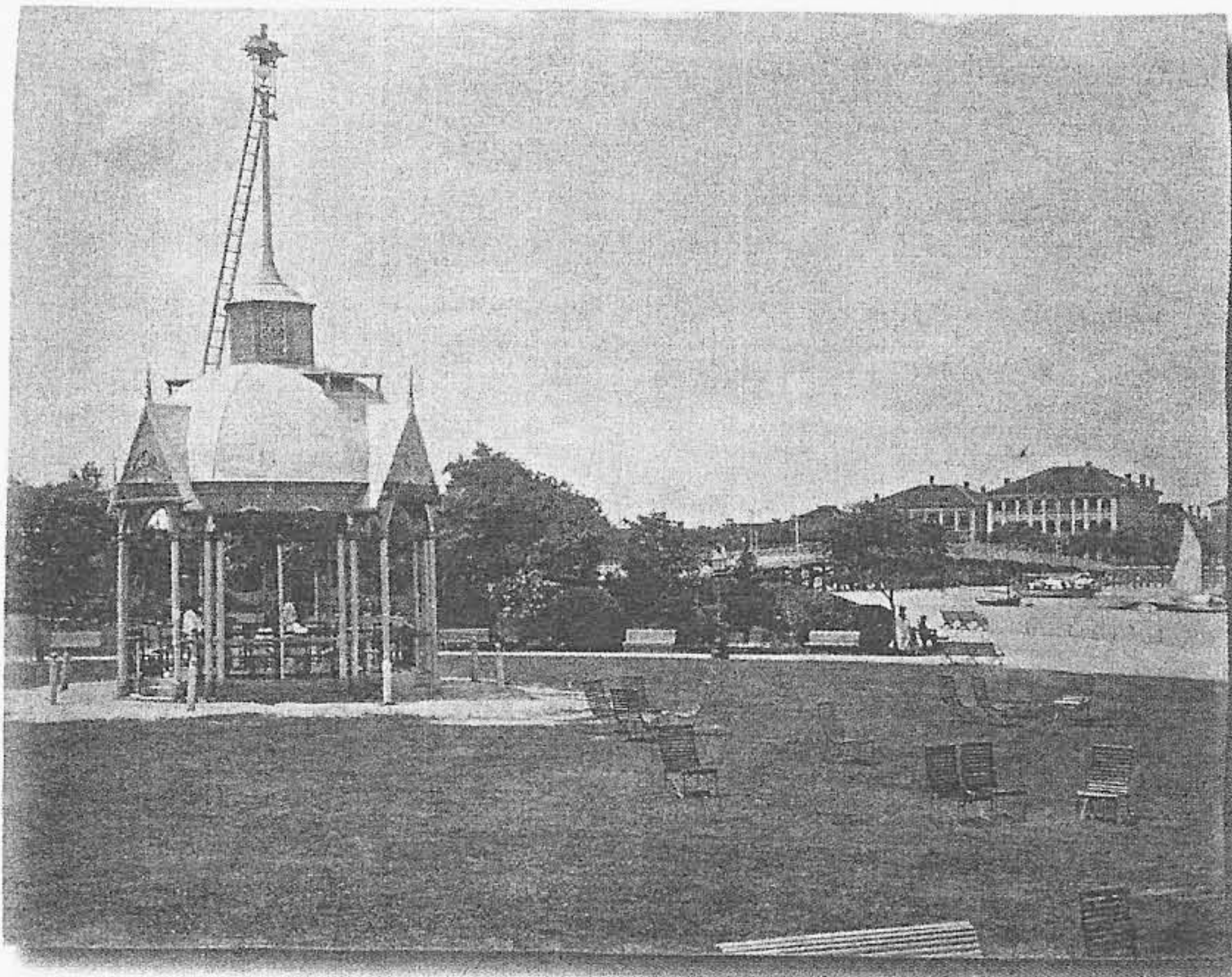


# YAWNS, LAWNS AND DREAMS— THE MAKING OF THE BUND

It's hard to imagine that the Bund as it is today, with its 11-lane highway and elevated walkway overlooking the Huangpu River, was little more than a muddy towpath in the 1840s. A road, 30 feet wide, was originally planned in front of the properties of the Bund's earliest foreign inhabitants but, in 1856, the incipient SMC decided that a further 50 feet should be reclaimed to make an 80-foot-wide esplanade. Several of the Bund's occupants objected and the plan was revised to allow for an esplanade, with a granite facing, just 60 feet wide. The result of the work which was quickly undertaken, perhaps too quickly, was far from attractive. When exposed at low tide the flotsam and stench of the sloping muddy shoreline, which was steadily expanding as silt accrued, infested the fine 'hongs,' as the foreign companies and their premises were known, along the Bund. Despite proposals, in 1860, to turn the Bund into a proper esplanade with an inner part reserved for vehicles and the conversion of the ugly muddy foreshore into a fine promenade with gardens, it wasn't until three long decades later that such a vision became a reality.

The first concrete proposals, in 1869, to create a protected river bank with an attractive curvature, or Bund line, came to nothing. The SMC finally began its 'bundling' or filling in of the foreshore, in the 1880s. Along with the new waterfront came modern amenities including the introduction of the first





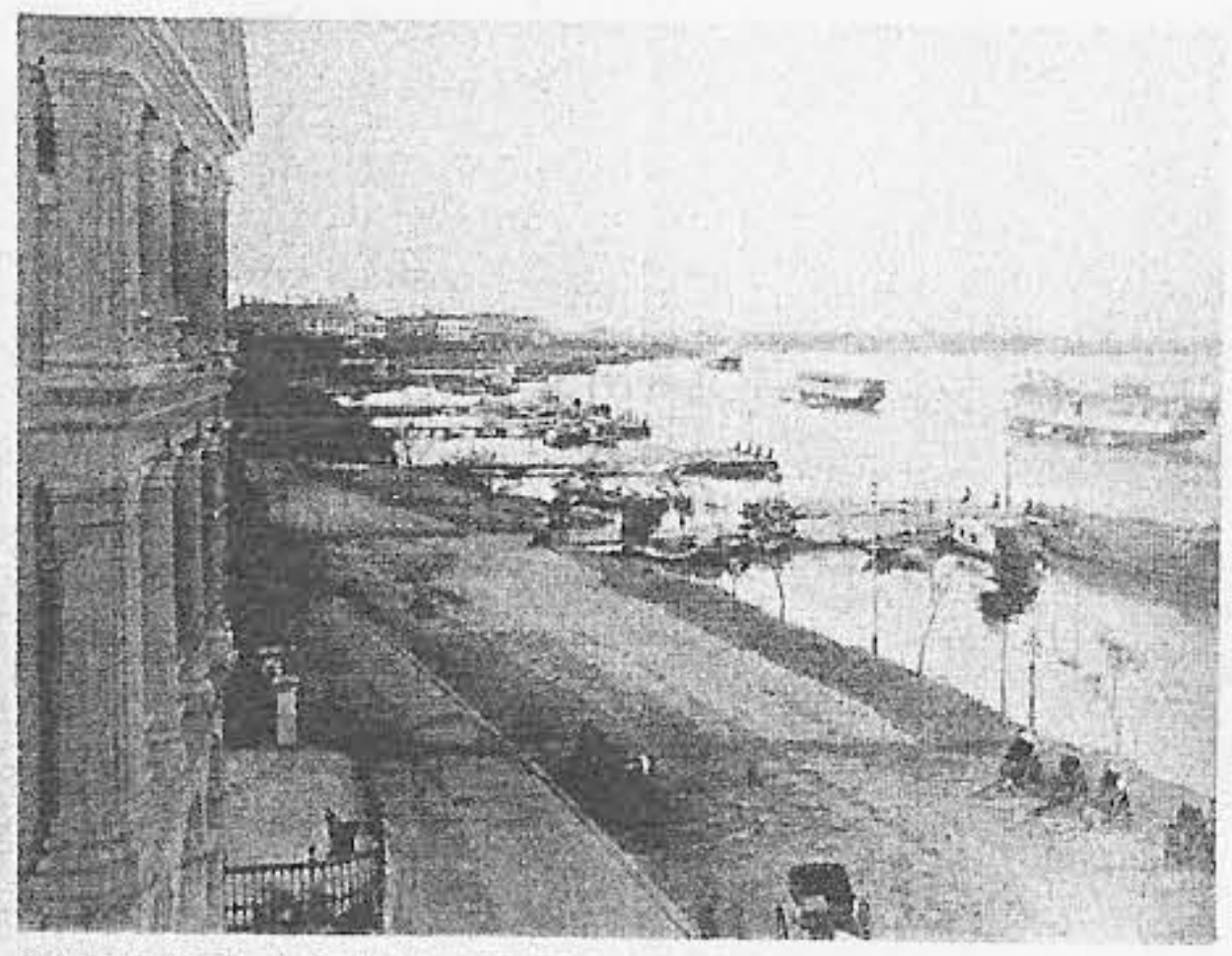
Melbourne Chinese Museum Collection

*The Public Garden bandstand with its electric light on top, 1886*

telephones in 1881 and electric lighting in June 1883. The bandstand in the Bund's Public Gardens was the venue for the first public demonstration of electric light in Shanghai almost exactly one year earlier.

In May 1886 grass lawns extending from the Public Gardens to the north of the Bund to just south of the present-day Hankou Road were opened to the public. In July 1888, the lawns were extended to Yangjingbang Creek (today's East Yan'an Road), on

the southern boundary of the International Settlement with the French Concession. An 1889 SMC order allowing 'respectable and decently dressed natives' to use the lawns was shortly afterwards revoked as so many Chinese



Dennis George Crow

*The Bund looking north with the Shanghai Club to the left, late 1870s*



Melbourne Chinese Museum Collection

*The newly created lawns, with the Central Hotel on the Nanjing Road corner to the left, 1886*



Dennis George Crow

*Cutting the lawns, 1880s*





SMA

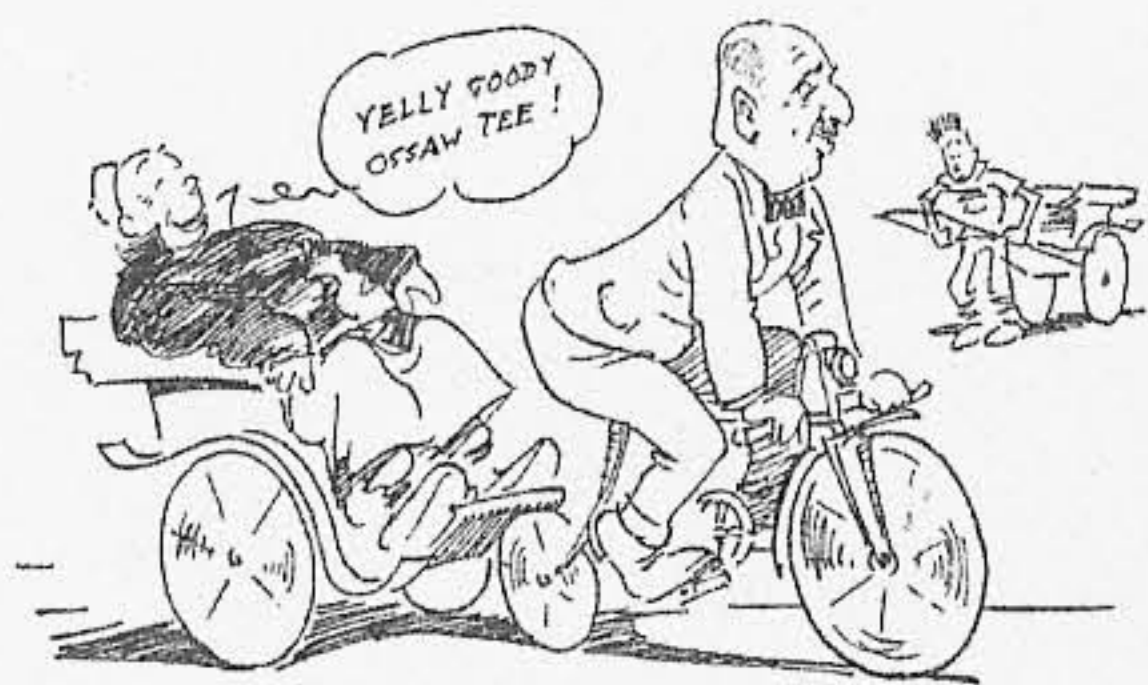
The new lawns at the southern of the end of the Bund, late 1880s

were using the seats to slumber on. Work on completing the new Bund line continued until 1896. Around that time, the French and Chinese administered bunds to the south were also paved following a large fire in 1894 when many wretched waterfront buildings were destroyed. However, as an 1896

commentator noted, 'passing the Shanghai Club the Bund crosses a bridge to the French Settlement, where it ceases to be interesting to the traveller, and loses itself in regions where English feet seldom tread.'

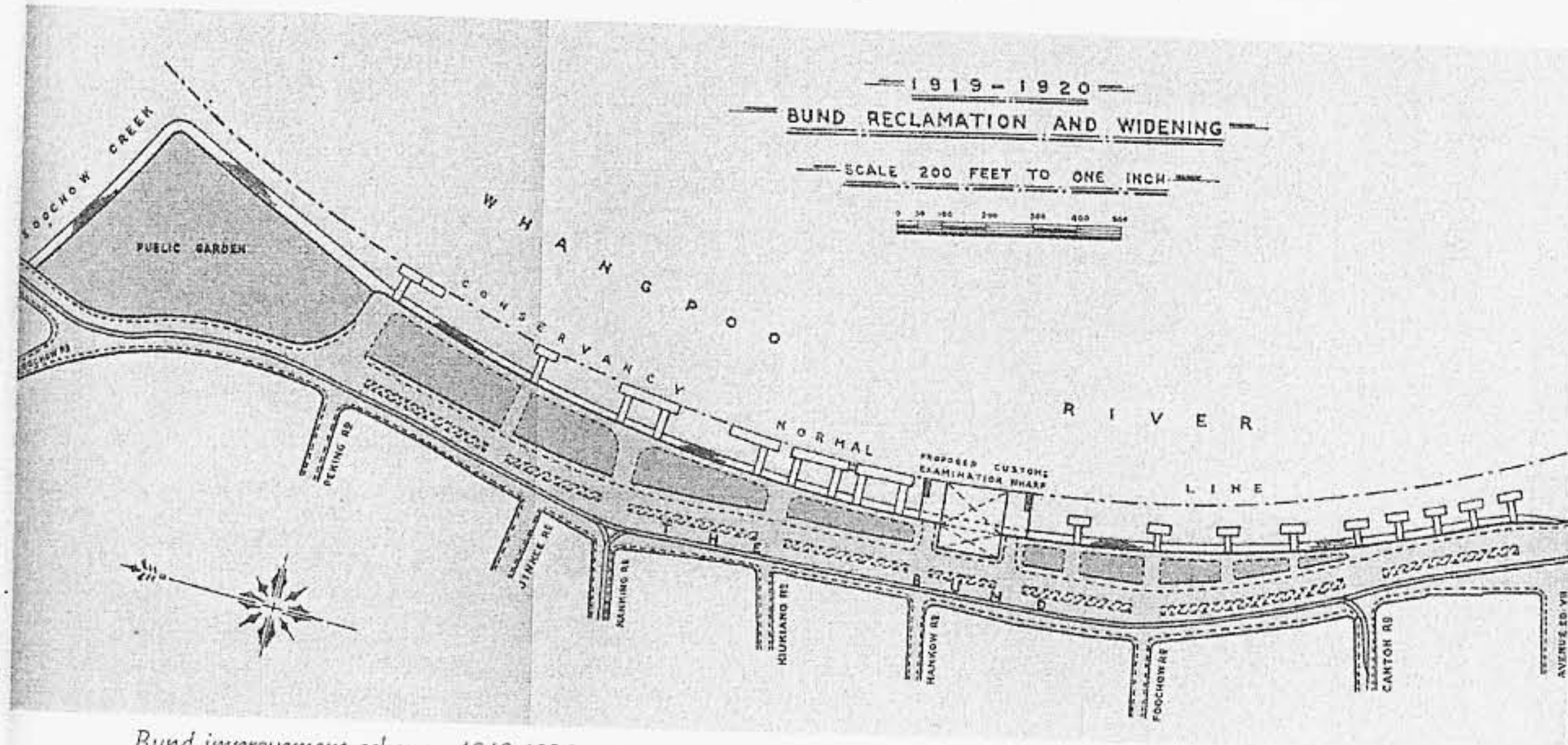
Following a hectic couple of years of building on the Bund and the introduction of tramways, which necessitated the laying of wood block paving, the SMC again seriously considered a widening scheme, over a one-year period, in 1908. Although that proposal was rejected on account of cost, the SMC had little choice but to further reclaim and widen the Bund some ten years later as the demands of modern motor transport made their impression. Just as in recent times, a sudden explosion of vehicle numbers was threatening to bring gridlock to the city's streets. A massive increase in the number of large trucks on the streets brought about by the city's rapid industrialisation was particularly alarming. The number of trucks in the International Settlement

rose from around 80 in 1919 to over 700 in 1926, whilst the number of cars increased from around 1,200 to 3,500 over the same period. By 1929 there were around 5,400 cars and 1,500 trucks registered.



Cartoon by Sapajou, March 1924

It was not just motor transport that was causing havoc, however, as the streets of Shanghai were littered with rickshaws, primitive wooden wheelbarrows and all manner of slow-moving homemade conveyances. A report from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century commented that 'the Bund is crowded at all hours of the day by foot passengers and vehicles. Neat broughams, victorias, dog carts, drawn by sleek Chinese ponies, and driven by Celestial coachmen in strange liveries, pass and repass; flocks of jinricshas, some running swiftly and smoothly along on spider wheels,



Bund improvement scheme, 1919-1920

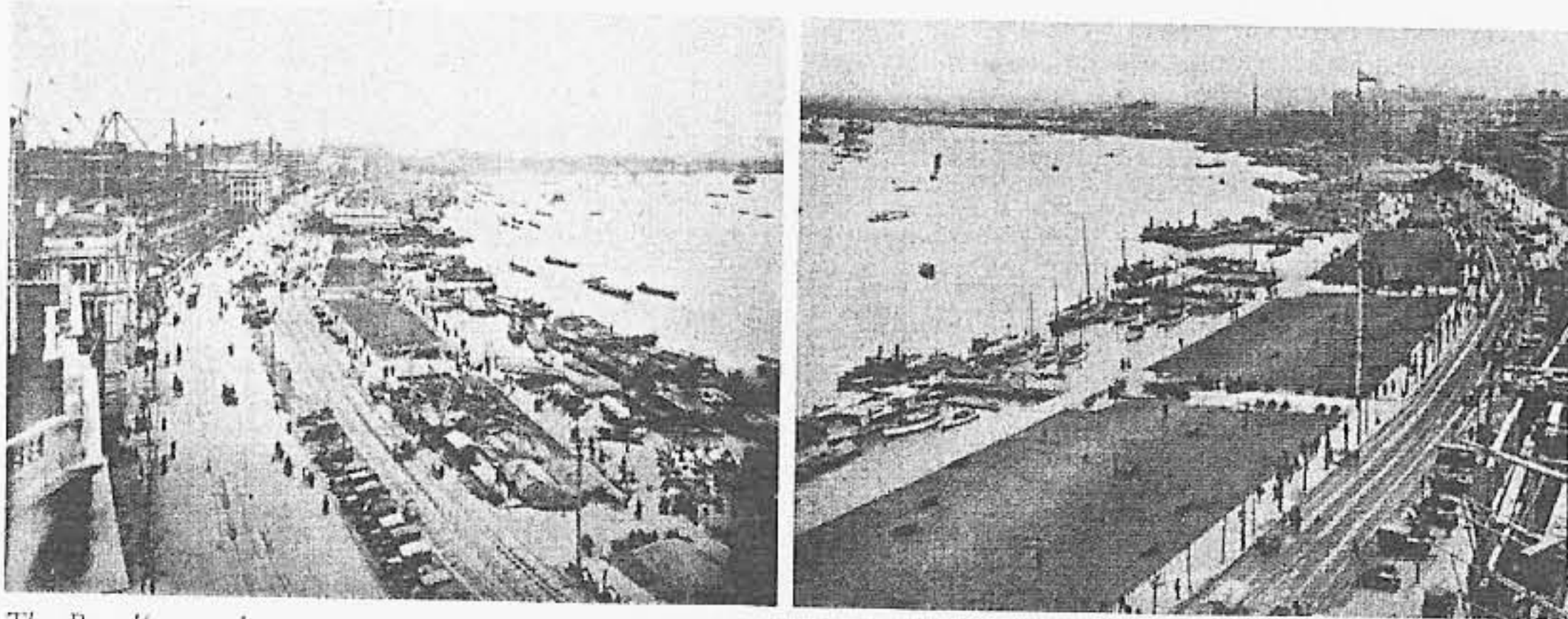
hand-carts pushed by panting coolies, and the celebrated vehicle of China, the only one not imported by the foreigner—the passenger barrow, with seats arranged over the wheel like those of an Irish jaunting car, on which sometimes a whole family sits and is whirled gaily along by a muscular coolie.' Despite certain restrictions, the sight of wheelbarrows carrying anything from tubes and timber, to teddy bears and toddlers is not uncommon today. Shanghai's streets are also still lumbered with three-wheeled cycle rickshaws, a prototype of which was introduced to the city in 1924, capable of carrying the load of a small van.

The SMC's plan to widen the Bund to 120 feet, which was put forward in March 1919, aroused a hitherto unheard of level of conflict and debate amongst Shanghai's foreign community. Most of the widening work, which involved a 55-foot





The Public Gardens before they were remodelled, 1919

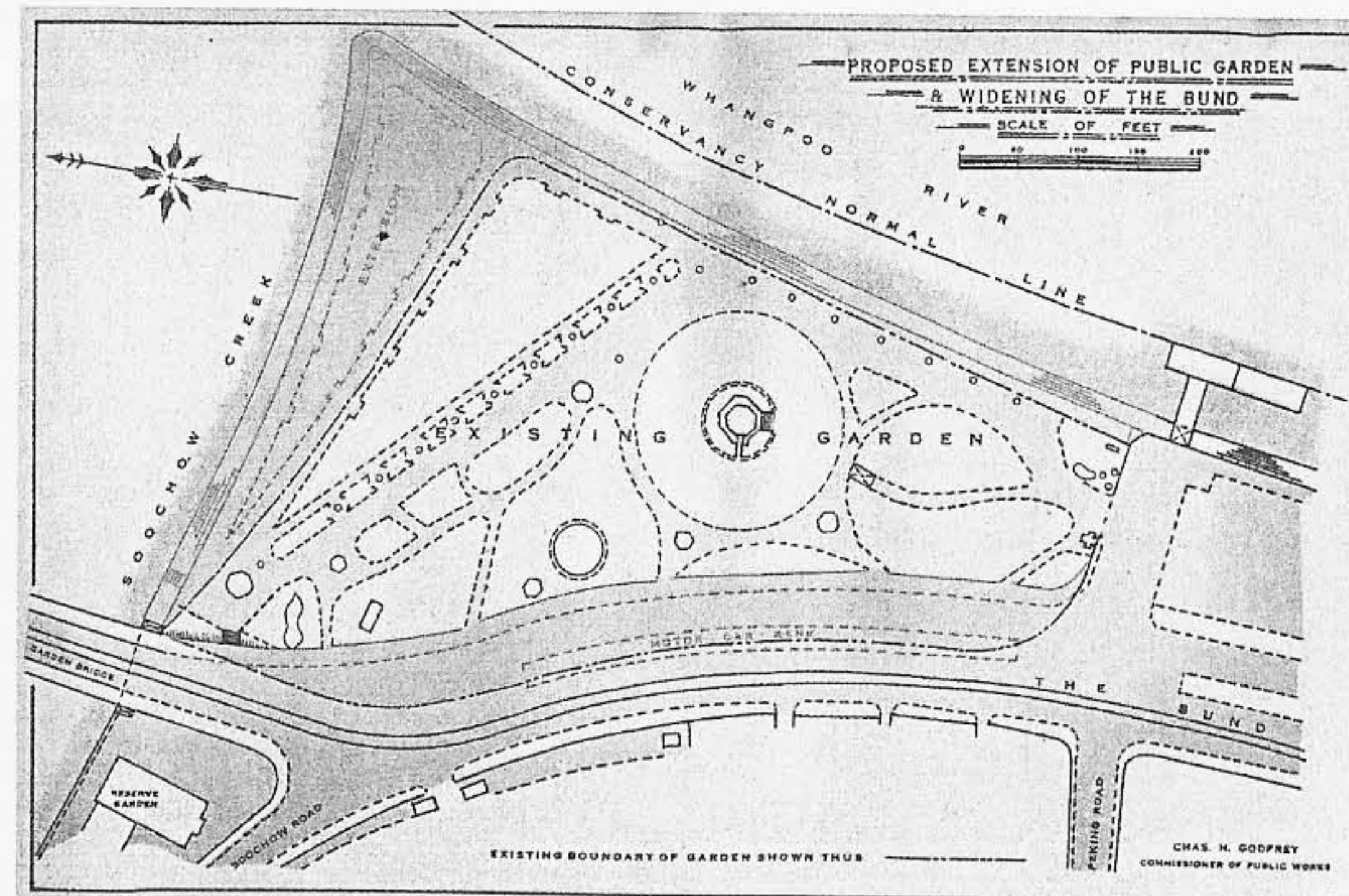


The Bund's new lawns, 1924

carriageway for trams and fast traffic and one 30 feet wide for slow traffic as well as car parking ranks, and laying of new lawns, was completed by the end of 1920. As part of the scheme an extra 25 benches, marked 'reserved for foreigners' were ordered for the Bund and the Public Gardens. Higher railings were also placed around the Public Gardens as many 'vagrants and drunken sea-men' were in the habit of spending the night there. Work on the most contentious aspect of the scheme, which involved shaving off 60 feet from the Public Gardens and the destruction of many historic trees, was left to last.

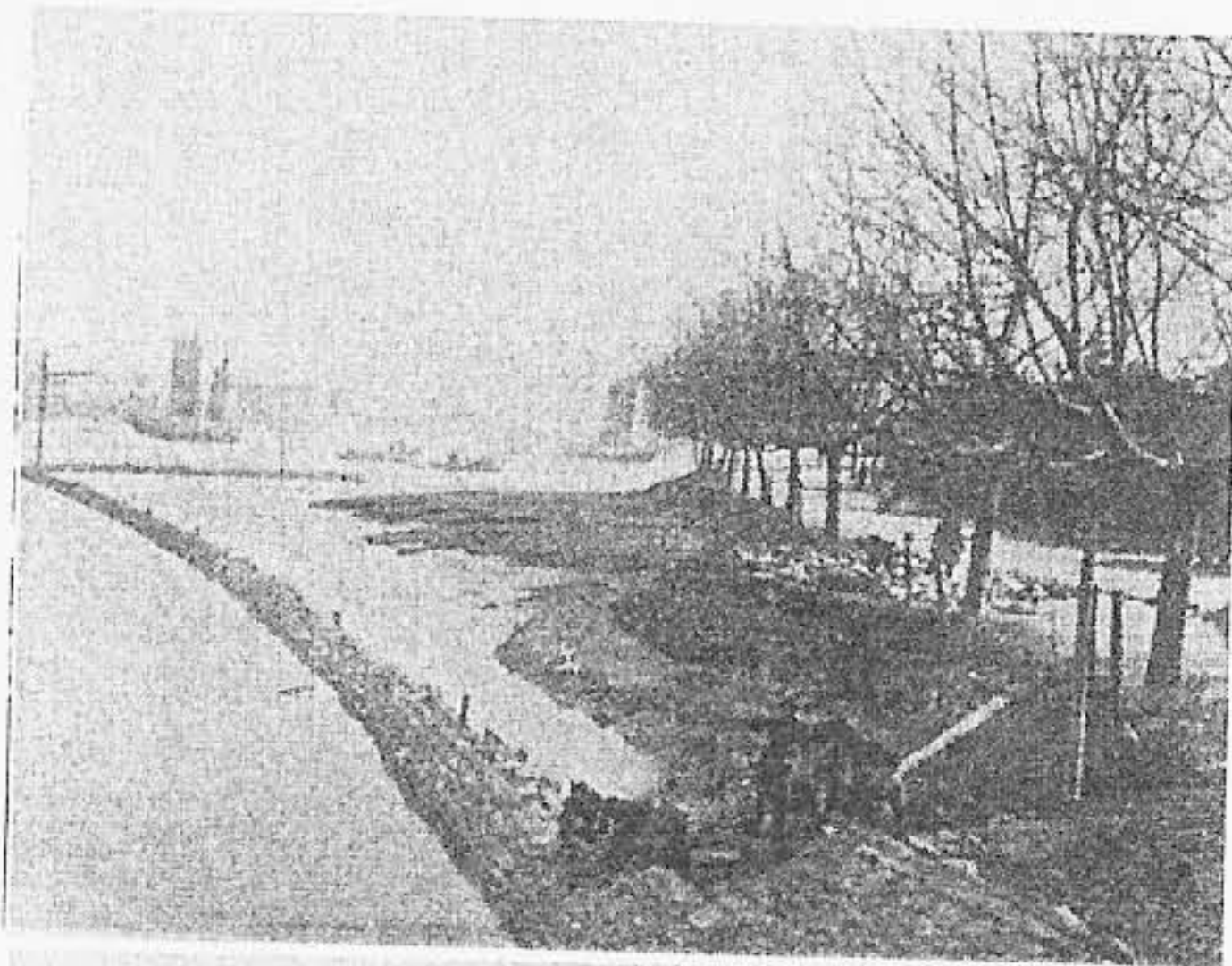
Work was suspended for a couple of weeks in late June 1921 while the SMC went through the motions of reviewing two petitions it had received. The Shanghai Civic League, which purported to represent all foreign residents, had gathered together over 200 names of those against any attempt to widen the road at the expense of the garden. They felt that the widening or the rebuilding of the Garden Bridge was required. The names of two of the city's leading architects, R. A. Curry and Arthur Dallas, were on the list. Another petition received in favour of the scheme included the names of M. H. Logan of Palmer and Turner, and G. H. Stitt, manager of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank.

There was little doubt as to who would triumph as the final decision on such matters lay in the hands of a relatively small quorum of the Settlement's wealthiest foreigner ratepayers. The scheme was approved at a ratepayers' meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July even though only 100 of the 1,800 eligible to vote were in attendance. In its defence the SMC pointed out that the gardens were actually to be enlarged as part of the reclamation scheme, and sent a letter to the Civic League pointing out that, although 1,700 ratepayers were absent, it by no means inferred that they were in sympathy with the organisation's aims. The League was also informed that,



Plans for the remodelling of the garden





The Public Gardens before and after reclamation work in 1905

whilst residents were entitled to sign petitions, they had no entitlement to an 'authoritative mandate.' Not only were Chinese excluded from having a say in the running of the International Settlement, but the majority of foreigners were as well. In 1920 the Settlement population comprised 759,839 Chinese and 23,307 foreigners.

A similar scheme to enlarge the garden, involving the bunding of the northern shore of the Suzhou Creek, which was drawn up in 1882, was initially deferred on account of cost but ultimately denied by the Chinese authorities. However, a strip of land on its western perimeter was shaved off to widen the

adjoining road in 1905, as part of a scheme which considerably enlarged the garden. On that occasion there were no protests.

The work on widening the road outside the gardens, involving the introduction of car parking spaces and the planting of magnolia trees, was finished by the end of 1921. However, even the Commissioner of Public Works, in a letter to the Secretary of the SMC in 1923, had to concede that 'the Bund had become ugly since widening as the removal of the old trees in the garden had brought into very great prominence all the poles carrying overhead cables.' The newly planted magnolia trees had also all died.

It wasn't long before the competing interests of recreational amenity and motor traffic were to reach even greater heights when the question of opening the foreshore to the Chinese was raised. As pressure was mounting on the SMC to throw open the neighbouring Public Gardens to the Chinese in 1926, the



Commissioner of Police, Edward Ivo Medhurst Barrett, took a pragmatic stance in telling the Council that he was personally in favour of opening the path along the river bank and the lawns to the Chinese. At that point the Bund lawns were guarded by chain railings, which would only be removed for the convenience of foreigners in the summer. Barrett noted that it was proving almost impossible to restrict Chinese wearing foreign dress from walking along the footpath near the river.

Perhaps the British public viewpoint could be summed up in the words of an angry resident who, in a letter of March 1925 to the *North China Daily News*, questioned whether the stretch was for foreigners or not after spotting five Chinese using the seats marked 'reserved for foreigners only.' He called for the return of foreign policing in the form of a big Scottish officer who had kept matters under control in years gone by.

However the lawns, like the Public Gardens, were opened to the Chinese in June 1928. The Chinese could now rest a little more comfortably—at least for a while. The upkeep of the lawns was proving difficult after they were opened to everyone and, in 1930, the SMC considered turning them all into flower beds with paved walkways. The plan was abandoned soon after in favour of turning all the five lawns south of Jiujiang Road into parking lots. The surviving lawns then became even more crowded, and when they were re-laid in 1932 police were given instructions to 'restrict the use of lawns as far as possible within their discretion.' Their powers of discretion, however, were annulled by the power of the masses. An SMC survey of the Bund lawns between Jiujiang Road and Beijing Road in July 1936 found that 70% of the 4,500 people using them were asleep at any given hour between 9.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m.



Policing the Bund, early 20th century





Following the new, relaxed regulations in 1928 more hawkers, who were generally seen as harmless in small doses, and beggars, who were generally accused of spoiling Shanghai's foreign show street, were to be found on the Bund. The 130 members of the SMC Police, all but six of them Chinese, who held responsibility for the Bund in early 1940, were kept very busy. They were making around 4,500 arrests monthly for obstruction and 350 arrests for loitering, which invoked a jail sentence of four to ten days. Of the other nuisances, arrests for hawking totalled around 700, whilst those for begging were fewer than 30 a month.

On the traffic front, two major road projects, which were to temporarily ease congestion in the Settlement, had been completed before the widening of the Bund in the early 1920s. The Yangjingbang Creek, which in its early days had been designated as the South Bund, was filled in during 1914 and 1915 and converted to a 90-foot-wide road. Controversy between the French and the British over whether it should be filled in had gone on for over 50 years. However the SMC's suggestion to name it as Avenue Edward VII, after it was culverted, was agreed by the French Council in a desire 'to perpetuate the local memory of the illustrious sovereign.' Naturally the street was known as Avenue Edouard VII on its southern side.

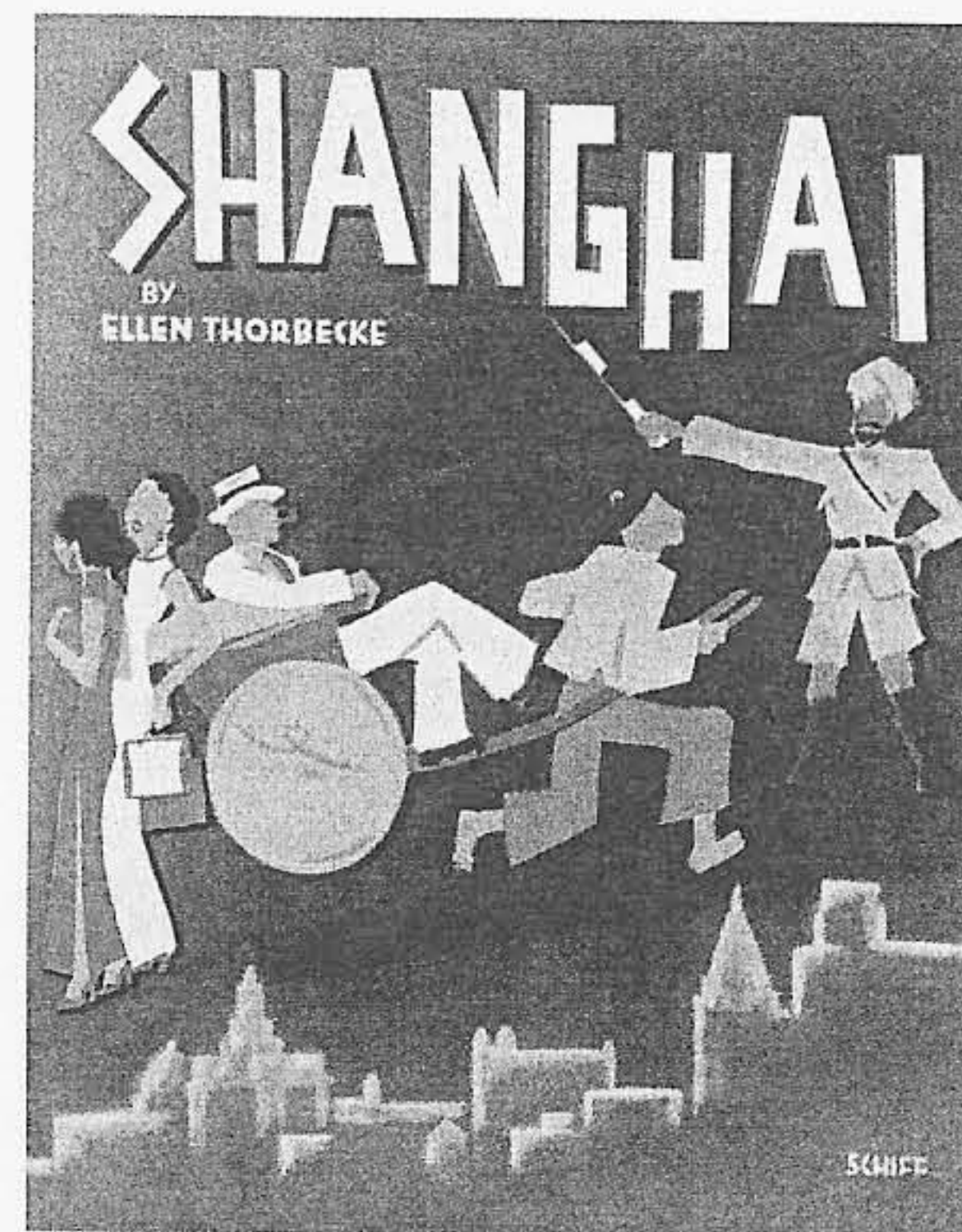
The avenue became a playground for the Chinese who could taunt the opposing French and International Settlement police forces on each of its sides with impunity, but was considered by many to be too wide. The SMC retorted to its critics in 1920 saying that 'perhaps twenty years hence this road will not be considered any too wide and the foresight shown in providing such a road will be commended.' In a connected scheme, work on filling in the Tibet Road Creek, the Settlement's earlier West Bund, to help ease north-south traffic flow and pressure on the Bund was completed with the opening of a new 80-foot-wide road in 1920.



Strong Chinese protestations over the building of a regular tramway network in the early 1880s gave way to a call for building some form of overhead railway system in the city. The suggestion found favour with the editor of the *North China Daily News* in January 1882 when he pointed out that 'Chinese coolies and the other classes who crowd our streets are eminently terrestrial bodies, and an elevated tramway would not interfere with their pursuits or recreation.' The idea was picked up again in June 1921 when a British resident suggested in a letter to the *North China Daily News* that an end to the traffic woes of Shanghai could be solved by building an overhead, light electric railway along Avenue Edward VII, westwards to the Hongqiao district. The idea was rejected by local professionals who considered it impossible to make foundations for the supports that would be necessary for such a scheme.

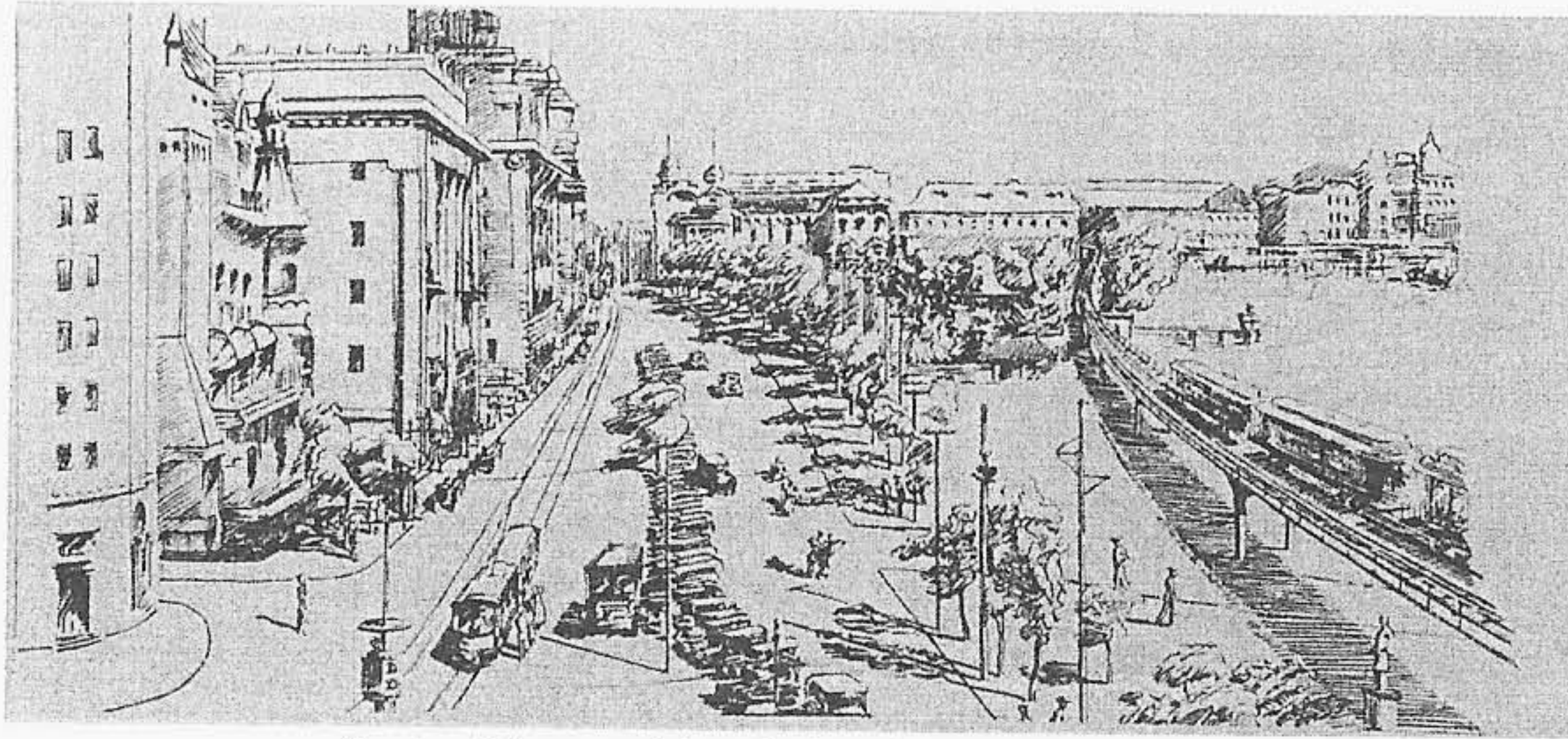
Avenue Edward VII from the Bund to Tibet Road, however, was remodelled in 1928 with a 28-foot-wide central section

being resurfaced to provide a motor vehicle only thoroughfare. Shanghai's, if not China's, first urban highway had been created. Known locally as the 'Speedway,' four Chinese pedestrians who had loitered within its perimeter were killed, being their own fault of course, before the road was officially opened at the end of that year. The numbers of those killed and injured in traffic accidents in the Settlement rose from 53 and 1,005 respectively in 1920 to 142 and 10,973 in 1930. The SMC reported that 'the majority of accidents were due to the carelessness and indifference of pedestrians and their lack of traffic sense.'



Cover of a book by Ellen Thorbecke, 1940, with illustrations by Schiff





*Drawing of the proposed elevated railway along the Bund, November 1932*

Even with all the road improvements the traffic situation on the Bund had become so chronic by 1933 that the SMC was considering measures including staggered lunch hours for firms in order to reduce midday congestion. The idea of an elevated



*Mr. Sidney J. Powell*

railway, traversing the Bund and extending far into the Shanghai suburbs, was raised again in 1932 by Sidney J. Powell, a respected professional engineer and architect based in the city. Powell envisaged the use of silent rubber-tyred vehicles crossing the city 20 feet above ground level on tracks supported by arches at intervals of 100 feet. He promised journey times of ten minutes from the Bund to the furthestmost western reaches of the International Settlement or to the new civic centre of the Chinese controlled Greater Shanghai Municipal Government to the northeast

of the city at Jiangwan. In 1935, the scheme was looked on favourably by all the relevant administrations across the city, but was ultimately thwarted by its ambition to cross too many political and administrative barriers, as well as by the extensive destruction of the northern part of the city caused by the 1937 hostilities.

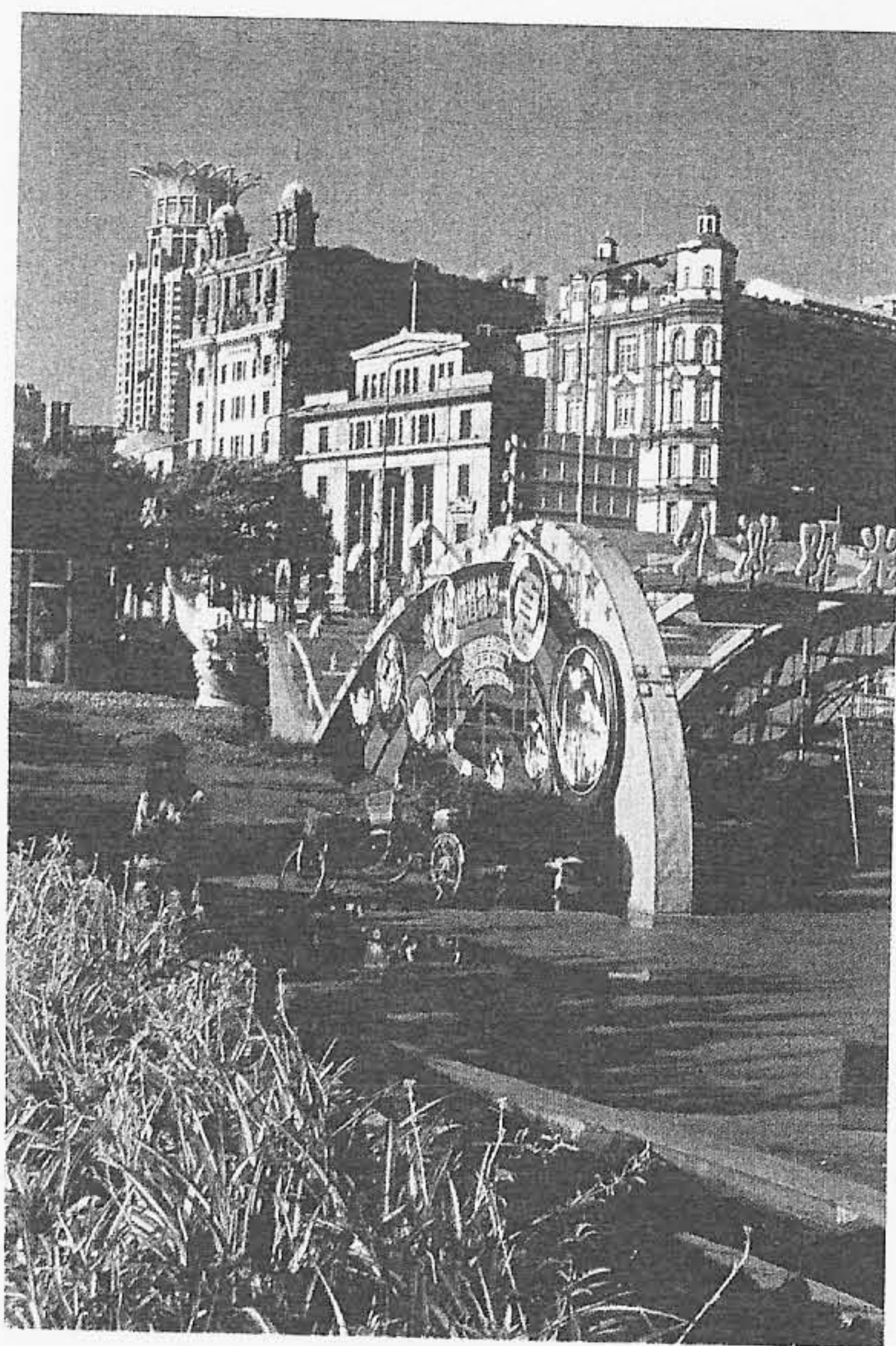
A final solution to relieve overcrowding and congestion by the construction of a bridge across or a tunnel under the Huangpu River and the development of the Pudong area on the other side had been seriously talked about since the late 1920s. At that time the only way to cross the river was by passenger ferry, and the SMC thwarted plans by the Greater Shanghai Municipal Government to introduce vehicle ferries landing near the Bund in the 1930s. Passengers arriving from Pudong had no choice but to pick up their hire cars at designated points along the Bund. Coincident with further ill-timed plans to develop the Shanghai civic centre, plans for a bridge were announced by Mayor Wu in 1936. It wasn't until after the Second World War that plans for a tunnel or bridge were again seriously considered by the new Shanghai City Council which finally approved a plan to build a bridge in 1947 using a massive loan from the American government. The substantial austerity and uncertainty of the times, however, left the scheme high and dry.



*The heart of the International Settlement and the Huangpu River, around 1930*



Many dreams lost in the somnolence of Shanghai's years of abandon have been uncannily reawakened in the 1990s. The Nanpu Bridge, the first to cross the Huangpu River, was completed in 1991. The first elevated section of the city highway, albeit carrying cars and not trains, was completed along the former Avenue Edward VII and Avenue Foch, now Yan'an Road, to Hongqiao in 1995. An elevated, light railway line, although not running along the Bund but still terminating at the same point envisaged in the 1930s, opened in 2000. The Bund, which was yet again widened in the early 1990s has been criticised by some as being too wide and traffic planners have been dreaming up schemes to rid it of its hordes of motorised pests. Some have suggested submerging the vehicles in the river alongside the Bund,



*Fairground entrance to the Bund Sightseeing Tunnel, 2006*

some have insensitively mooted the idea of building an elevated highway along the Bund, and others have talked about bringing back the trams. It will be necessary to pedestrianise the area if the Bund is really going to come back to life in the future.

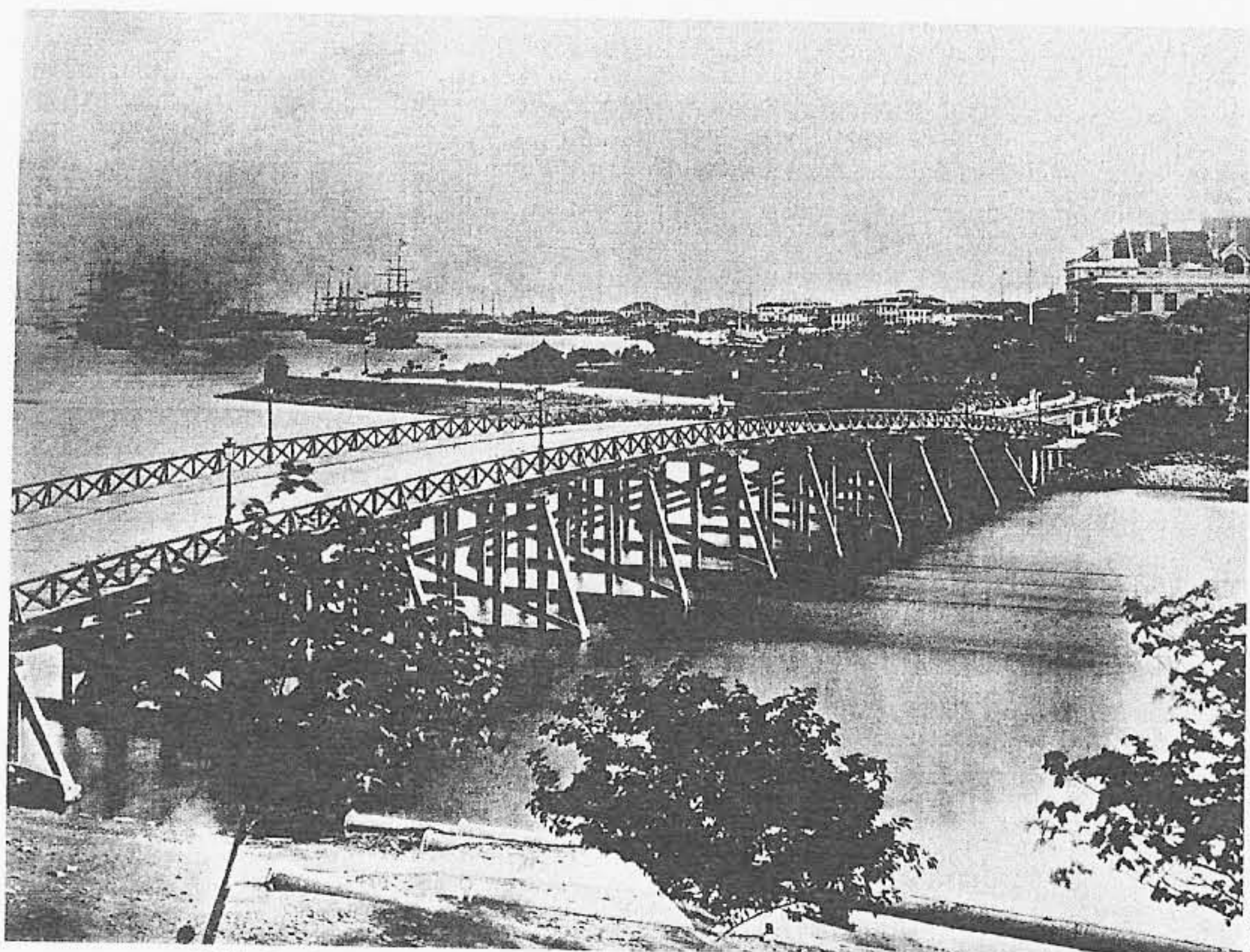
The recent widening of Central Tibet Road is again seen as key to relieving congestion on the Bund. With a similar aim, there is talk of converting the only direct tunnel link between the Bund

and the foreshore on the other side of the Huangpu River in Lujiazui, which in typical Shanghai fashion was opened as an expensive tourist attraction featuring a sound and light show in 2001, into a much needed regular means of commuter transport.

A most astounding proposal to relieve the Bund of its traffic woes, and to enhance its commercial viability, was announced in early 2006. Raymond Shaw, a Beijing-born engineer now resident in the USA, wants to raise the buildings along the Bund using hydraulic jacks to allow the creation of more than 200,000 square metres of prime shopping and entertainment space below. In so doing the Bund promenade could be restored and the traffic concealed below. Despite past experience in such affairs, including shifting the historic Nanking Theatre in Shanghai some 70 metres from its original location in 2003, Shaw admits that the huge scale of the project might not receive official consideration before 2014. Sceptics there may be many, but it would be well to bear in mind the lessons of history, even if the scheme is not realised for yet another Cycle of Cathay, or 60 years hence.

For the present, the Bund's promenade, which was reinvented as an elevated walkway in an effort to shore up the city's flood defences in the early 1990s, will stand high as a barricade between the buildings and the riverside. As in times past, the promenade is perpetually overcrowded, and even though there are caged plots of flower beds and foliage alongside, real lawns are nowhere to be seen. And even if they were reintroduced to the Bund area there is no doubt, as elsewhere throughout the city, that everybody would be barred entry—apart from the odd itinerant dog.





*Will's Bridge, 1875*

John Warner Publications

## BRIDGES AND BLUNDERS

The Garden Bridge, that crosses Suzhou Creek to the north of the Bund, was expected to have a life span of around 40 years when it was completed in 1908. Even though its British engineers admitted that it was by no means an ornamental structure it has continued to carry traffic to and fro to the present-day. Its predecessors didn't fare so well.

The first bridge to cross the Suzhou Creek was erected by the Soochow Creek Bridge Company in 1857. Wills Bridge, named after its advocate, was a

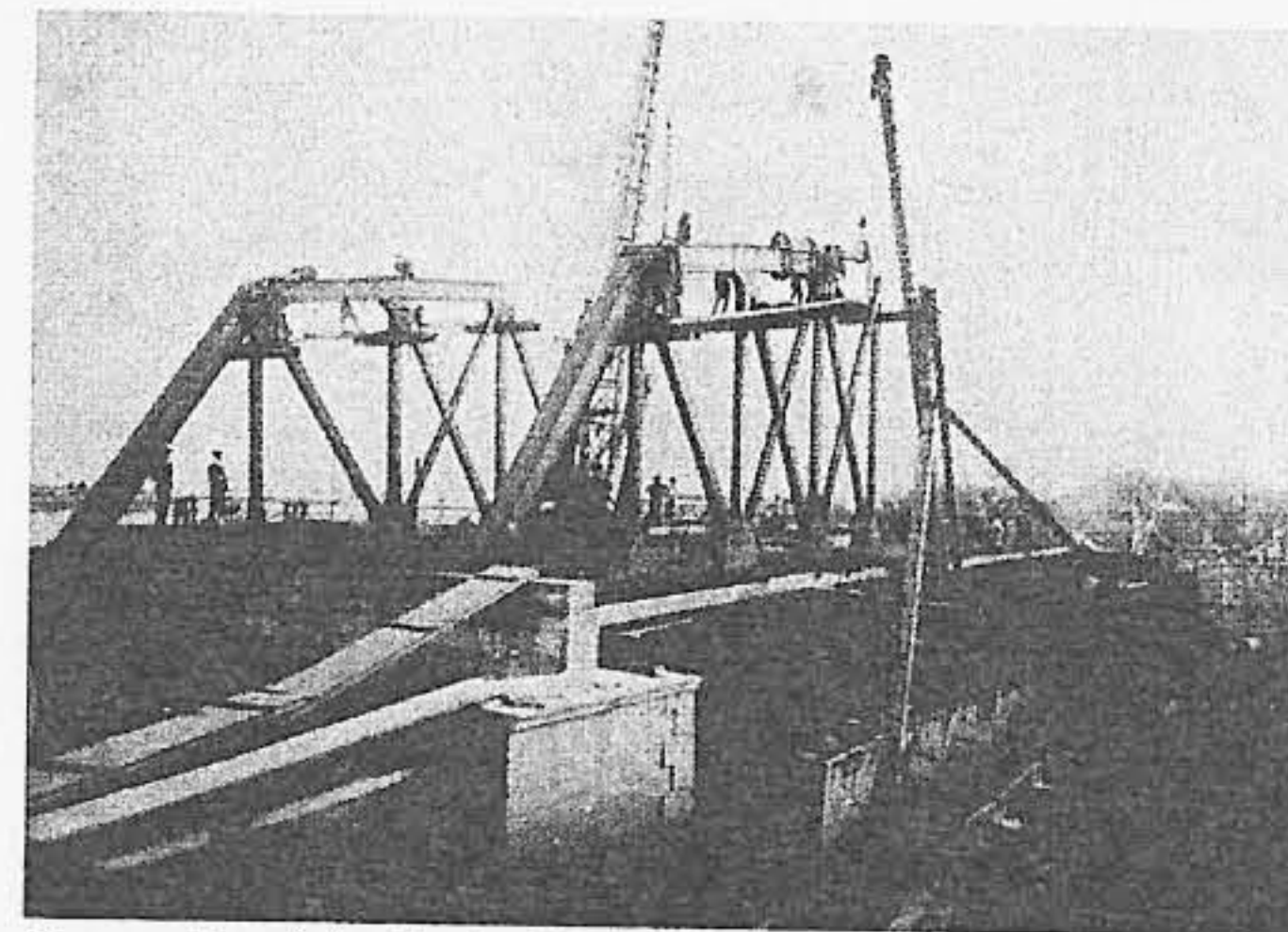
wooden draw-bridge funded by foreign merchants who were soon handsomely rewarded from the proceeds of its costly toll fees. Before that time the only way across was by ferry, and few foreigners made the trip. As soon as the bridge was completed the shores on its northern side were reported to 'have become the favourite resort of constitutional walkers.' The advent of the bridge allowed the foreign settlement, which was becoming crowded around the Bund, to spread across the creek to an area that

was then unofficially designated as the American Settlement. It also bestowed civilising influences on a lawless area, often compared to America's Wild West, which was renowned for the rough antics of its 'floating' drunken seafarer population.

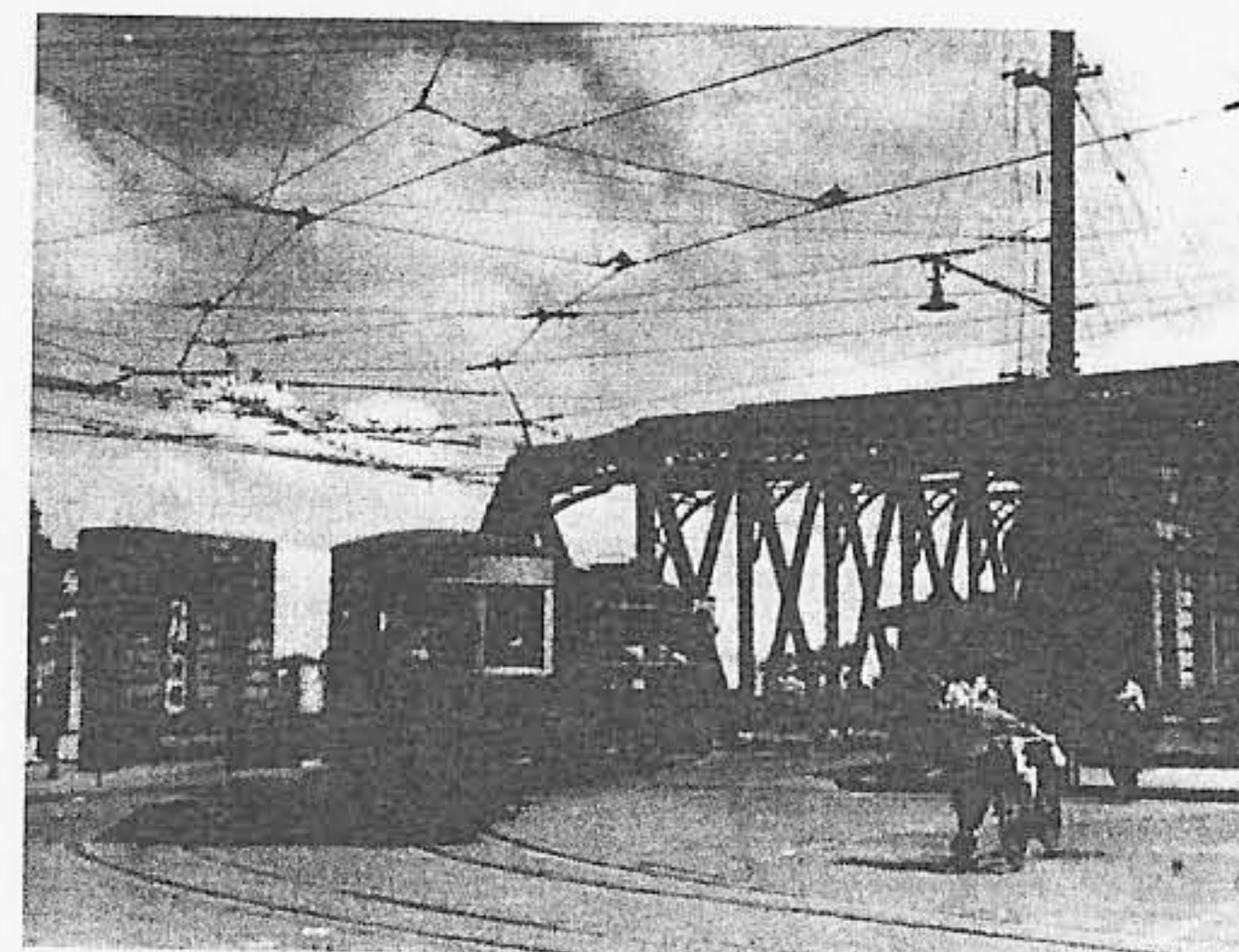
Wills had a great incentive to build the bridge, as he and others were to benefit from a faster connection to a dock where opium vessels discharged their valuable cargoes. He also owned land across the bridge, including a lot that he sold at a huge profit for the building of the Astor House Hotel, which was completed in 1858 (see page 212). However, by the end of the 1860s the foreign population, which had grown from around 300 when the bridge was completed to over 1,600, were becoming tired of paying their annual fees—as were the Chinese who were forced to pay in cash every time they crossed.

The Suzhou Creek Bridge Company set about the construction of the first iron bridge across the creek in 1871. The SMC's plans to purchase it came to nothing when the half-completed structure fell apart and sank into the water in May that year. What was left of it was

later sold off as scrap. The SMC now took matters into their own hands and erected the first Garden Bridge, made of wood, in 1873.



*Construction of the Garden Bridge, 1907*

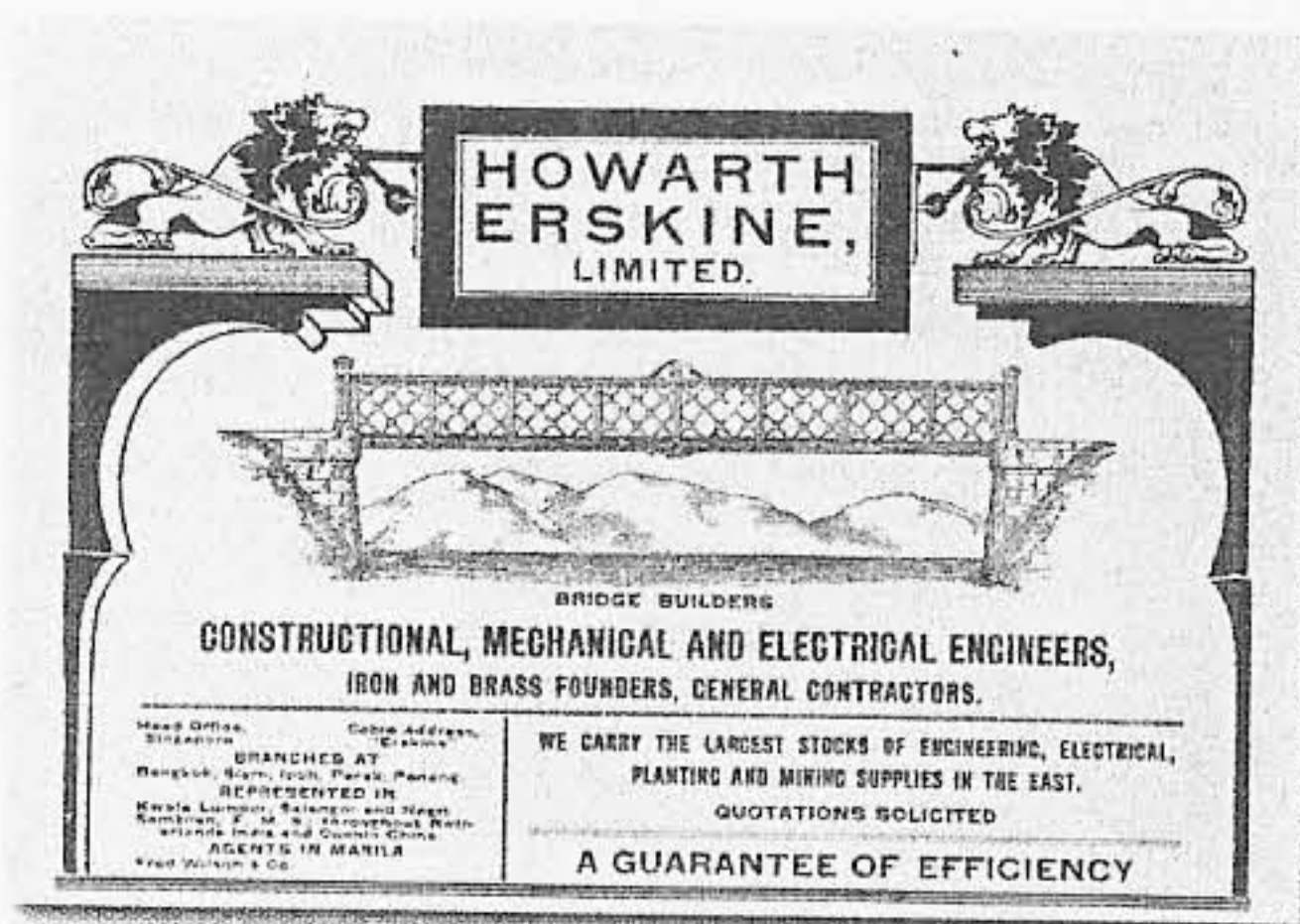


*Tram crossing the bridge, 1950s*

SMA

The bridge proved costly to maintain and in 1888 the SMC was looking to replace it with a more permanent iron or steel structure. However, none of the 31 plans submitted was approved by the Council on account of their high cost and what the Council called their 'unsuitability.' It wasn't made





Advert, 1905

plain to the public that all of the designs would have proved failures had they been built as the Council's engineer had failed to provide the companies concerned with adequate technical information. Yet another engineering blunder had been made. In 1890 the Council decided on repairing the Garden Bridge so that it could continue to function for a further ten years.

In fact, more than ten years had passed when the absolute necessity of replacing it with a steel bridge arose in 1906 when the tramway system was being introduced to the city. The new Garden Bridge, designed by the Municipal Engineer's Department and constructed by Messrs. Howarth, Erskine Ltd. of Singapore, had two equal spans of just over 171 feet, with

30-foot tall girders at the centre. All the steelwork was manufactured by the Cleveland Bridge Company in Darlington, England. The bridge, with its wood-block paving, was opened to traffic on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1908.

There were strong calls from a civic lobby to enlarge or rebuild the bridge when the Bund was being widened in the early 1920s. On that occasion the Council disagreed, and if it weren't for the events of the Pacific War the bridge might have disappeared long ago. The Council put forward proposals to eventually replace it with a new bridge no less than 80 feet wide in 1933, with the expectation that a 'centenary memorial bridge' would be completed in 1942 or 1943. Following the outbreak of Sino-Japanese hostilities in 1937 the bridge was manned by Japanese army sentries to the north and by their British counterparts to the south. The tram service over the bridge, which was suspended in August of that year, wasn't restored until June 1942.

## NO DOGS AND HARDLY ANY CHINESE

The origins of the anomalously assigned Public Gardens go back in legend to 1860 when silt began to build up around a sunken ship on the shores fronting the British Consulate at the northern end of the Bund. In 1864, demands were made for the unsightly Consular mud-flats, as they were called, to be filled in and converted into a botanical garden. The SMC had planned to get the preliminary work done by the end of 1865 using mud from the Yangjingbang Creek at the

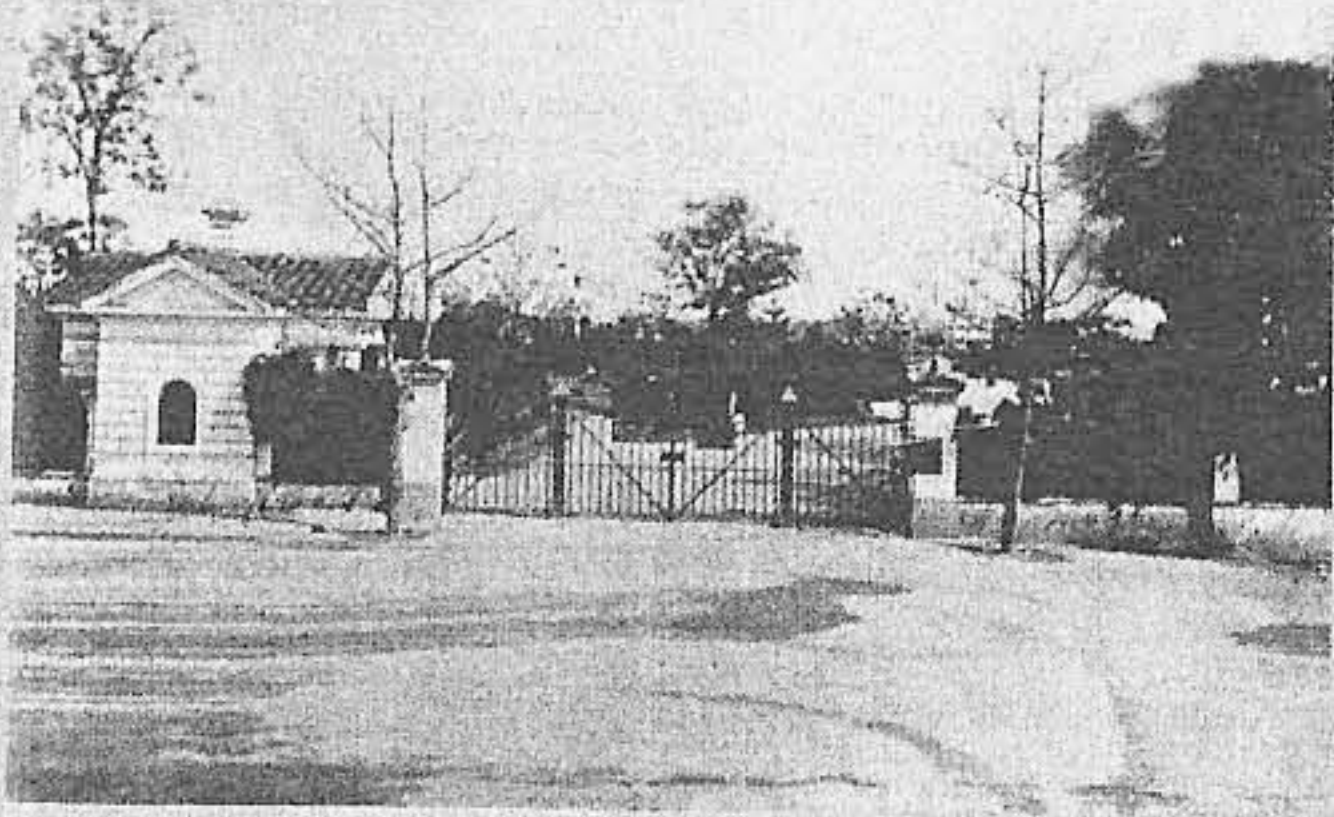
southern end of the Bund. But, as usual, things went more slowly than expected and one of Shanghai's first British architects, Henry Lester, was reprimanded for his unsatisfactory building work. By 1868, however, all was well and the garden was completed, fenced and thrown open to the public.

However the definition of public that was used largely excluded those of local origin, the SMC having made it clear in 1871



The Public Gardens, early 1880s





Entrance to the gardens, 1880s



Gardens under heavy snow, 1880s



that 'the garden was to be invested with the atmosphere of a quiet English park.' From its earliest days the garden was barred to most Chinese, although police were originally given orders to admit respectable and well-dressed Chinese and those accompanied by, and in the service of, foreigners. Even so, there were incessant complaints by foreigners over the numbers of Chinese in the park despite further measures to restrict entry.

Matters came to a head in the 1880s as 'Chinese Gentlemen, of high character and intelligence' who had lost their right to enter the grounds made their views heard. An editorial in the *North China Daily News* of November 1885 put forward the case for keeping the garden beyond the bounds of Chinese patronage. It insisted that 'all reasonable persons will acknowledge the great obstacle of opening the gates of the Garden indiscriminately. The little enclosure would swarm with Chinese to such an extent as to render it unavailable as a foreign promenade; the air would resound with the strident yells which pass among the natives for conversation, foreign ears and stomachs would be offended by sights and sounds inseparable from a code of etiquette which

does not insist upon the use of pocket handkerchiefs or forbid stentorian cleaning of the throat and grass, flowers and shrubs would soon show signs of hopeless deterioration. All this is undeniable.' The editor did, however, suggest that a ticket system be introduced to allow entry to those Chinese conversant with foreign ways so as not to confront good taste. The editor's conciliatory tone changed just a few months later when he proclaimed 'the affairs of this Settlement bristle with anomalies. Chinese rentpayers who are clamouring now for equal rights, have no voice whatsoever in the Government of the place, and no place at the meeting of voters. The garden, moreover, is laid out exclusively after foreign taste, and was notoriously designed for foreign use.' The 'better class' of Chinese found further affront in that other Asiatics, including Japanese and Koreans, some of whom were far from respectable, as well as dogs on leashes were permitted entry to the gardens at that time.

The SMC resolved to set up a separate Chinese Public Garden, between Huqiu Road and Sichuan Road on Suzhou Creek, which, in 1890, was opened to all without prejudice.

The senior Chinese official in Shanghai named the garden as 'China and all the Nations Rejoice Together.' However, few of the well-dressed Chinese elite, or foreigners—apart from those who had their houseboats moored alongside—ventured past its gates where members of the lower classes of Chinese society would congregate in their multitude. The respectable

Chinese classes were thereafter barred from the Public Gardens. They did, however, have recourse to their own far grander pleasure gardens to the west of the International Settlement.

Even with the new regulations, complaints by foreigners about the nuisances caused by those Chinese still permitted to enter the Public Gardens continued in abundance. Many

*Chinese admitted to the Public Gardens for the first, and only time, on the occasion of the coronation of King George V, 1911*







Breaking the rules—seated amahs during a band performance, early 20<sup>th</sup> century

SMA

were directed at the 'amahs,' or nannies, who were often accused of letting foreign children in their charge run riot, spoiling flower beds and causing havoc during musical performances. Other recurrent objections were raised as to why dogs were sometimes permitted to enter.

The Public Gardens Regulations which were posted next to the entrance gate were very clear on these matters. And even though the infamous phrase 'Dogs and Chinese Not Admitted' was never found amongst them, there were separate regulations with regard to dogs, the control of children, the use of seats and rights of entry. It is interesting to note that whilst the 1903 regulations

stated that 'no Chinese are admitted except servants in attendance upon foreigners,' the 1917 regulations (reprinted on page 63), took a more neutral approach and made no mention of the Chinese whatsoever. No doubt this was a move to defuse growing resentment and friction with the local community. However, in the latter regulations, which were operative until the gardens were opened to all, the Chinese seem to be denied any existence at all and are demoted to the category of 'others.'

Regardless of the taxonomy, the message and the greater insult was clear to those that sought it. Dogs and Chinese were accorded equal status. The

association of a dog, itself a term of debasement in Chinese culture, coalesced in popular consciousness to become a potent epithet for the wrongs of foreign imperialism in China. Many Chinese were educated to believe, and still believe, that a sign containing the term 'no dogs and Chinese' actually did exist.

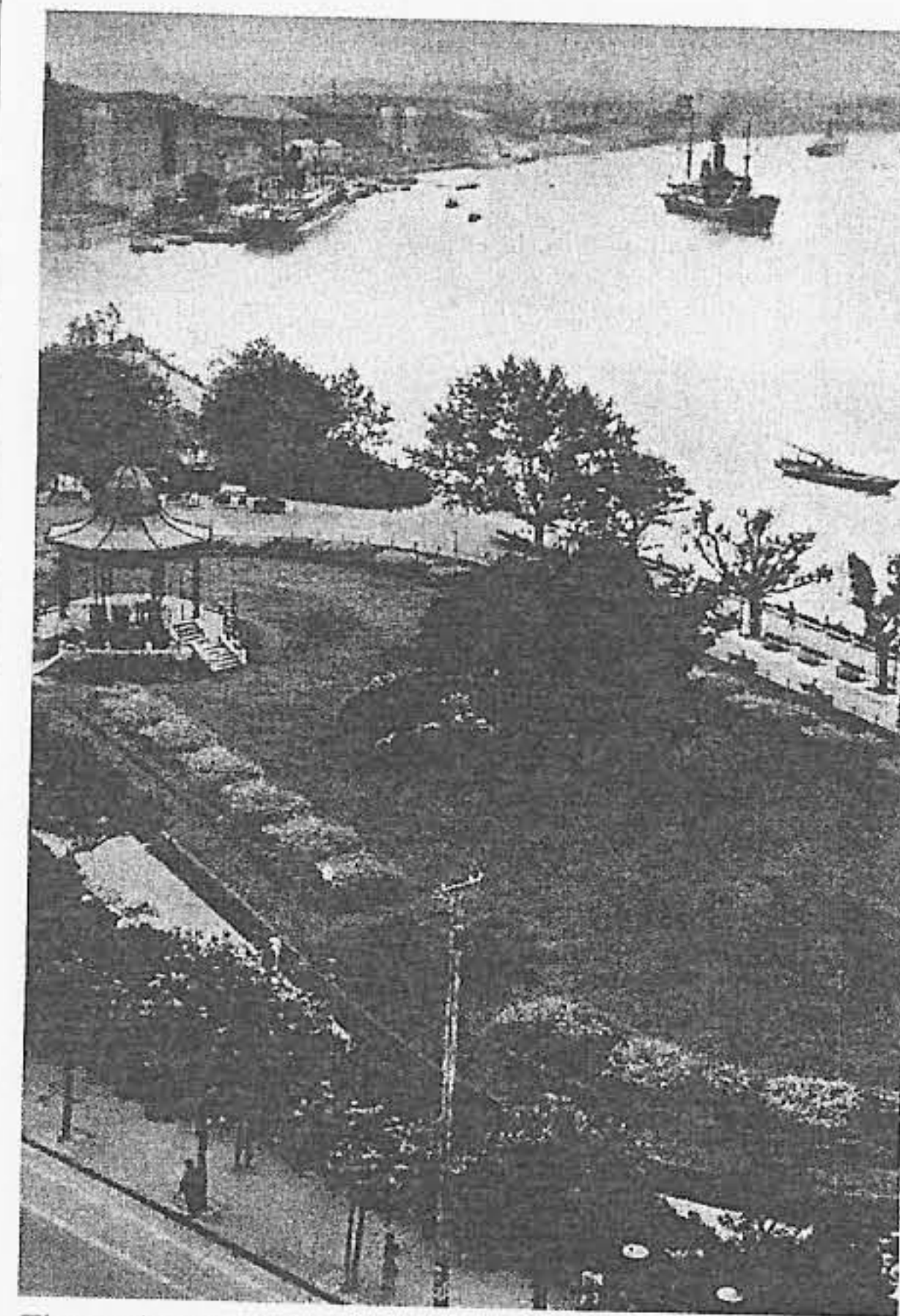
Serious consideration of the admission of Chinese to the Public Gardens, and indeed to all the other foreign parks in the Settlement, began in 1926 when three members of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce started discussions with the Parks Committee. But British officialdom would not accept any resolution until the period of severe unrest and anti-foreignism, which was sweeping China, came to an end. It wasn't until the beginning of June 1928 that the gates were finally opened to all. Well, they were not actually open to all as a ten copper cent admission charge was imposed. The expense, equivalent to half a day's labour or more, effectively kept out the poorer class of Chinese, as well as the less advantaged elements of the foreign community, including the stateless White Russians. Dogs were still not admitted.

Even a reporter from the *North China Daily News* had to



The gardens in 1900

Dennis George Crow

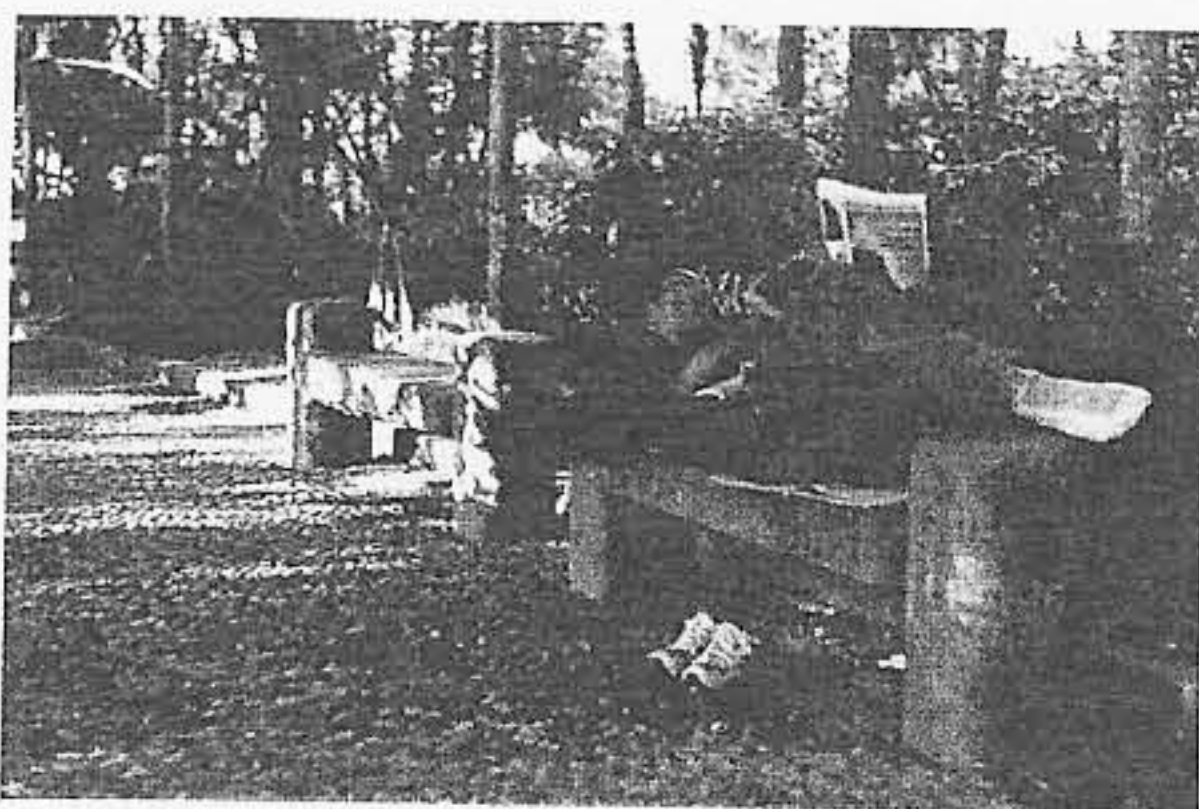


The gardens in 1934

Picture This

admit that the park had an atmosphere of normality, despite the overwhelming number of Chinese visitors, after it opened. However he couldn't refrain from pointing out that a small number of Chinese youths were sprawled full length on the benches. Again, complaints,





Some habits never die, Huangpu Park, 2006

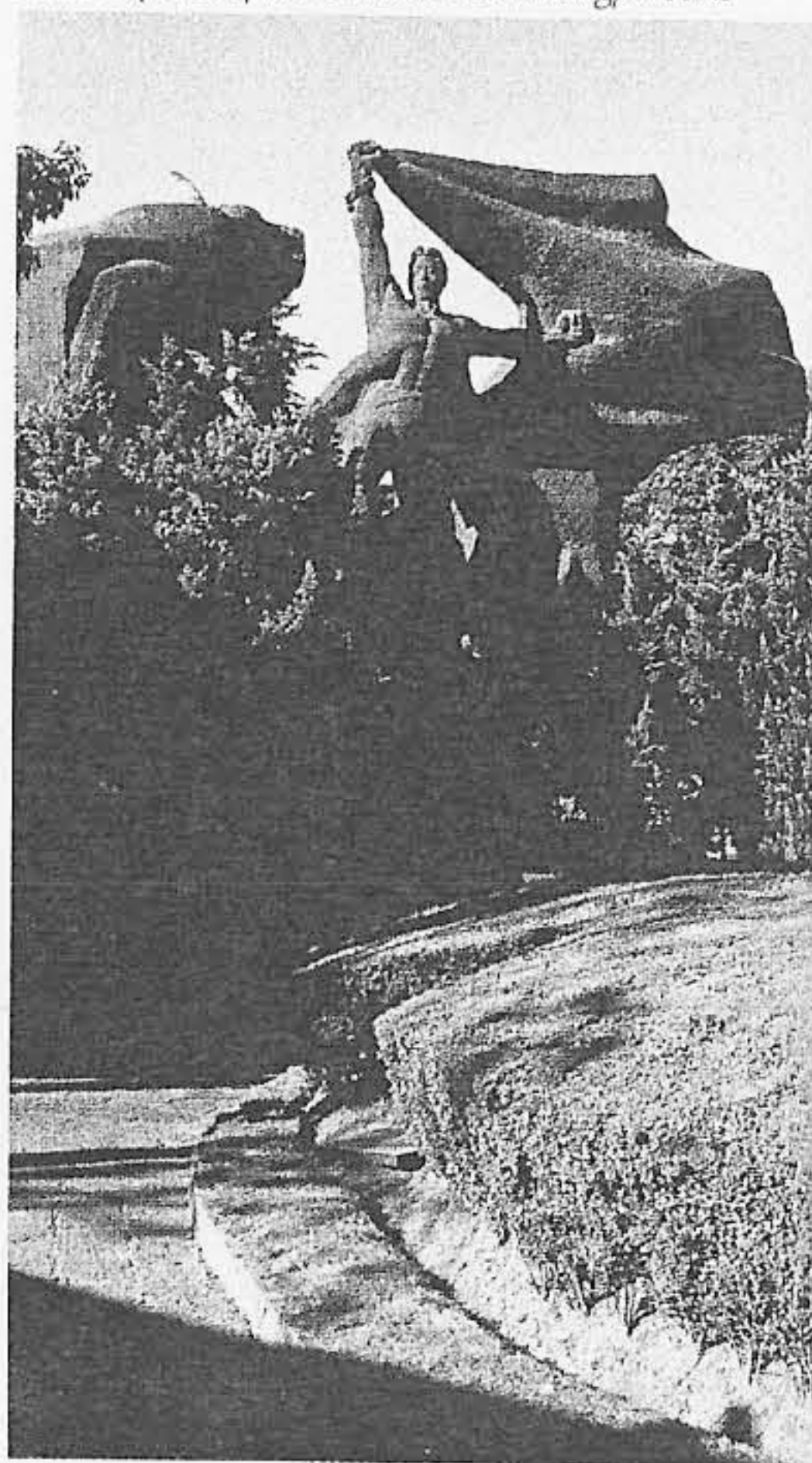
largely relating to overcrowding, began to be heard. The pricing policy certainly restricted visitor numbers, but with a city population of well over three million it was normal for around 1,800 entrance tickets to be sold on an average day in 1933!

Special use of the garden was granted free of charge to members of the Japanese Army Water Police and the Japanese Gendarmerie for their early morning exercises in 1939 and 1940, and they insisted on taking their dogs with them. As a sign of the changing times, little heed was taken of the advice by British members of the SMC that dogs were not allowed. Following the retrocession of the International Settlement on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1943, the collaborationist City Government opened the gardens with free entry to all just two days later. They also simultaneously set about eradicating all Anglo-American

signs and street names from around the city.

Today the former grounds of the Public Gardens are largely covered with paving and known as the Huangpu Park. The park houses the Bund Historical Museum, which is located at the base of the early 1990s Monument to the People's Heroes, and has a collection of photographs chronicling Shanghai's modern history and a copy of the SMC's records reporting the admission of the Chinese to its confines. The former grounds of the Chinese Public Garden have recently been transformed into an attractive recreational area.

Statue of a People's Hero in the Huangpu Park



## Public and Reserve Gardens REGULATIONS

1. The Gardens are reserved for the Foreign Community.
2. The Gardens are opened daily to the public from 6 a.m. and will be closed half an hour after midnight.
3. No persons are admitted unless respectably dressed.
4. Dogs and bicycles are not admitted.
5. Perambulators must be confined to the paths.
6. Birdnesting, plucking flowers, climbing trees or damaging the trees, shrubs, or grass is strictly prohibited; visitors and others in charge of children are requested to aid in preventing such mischief.
7. No person is allowed within the band stand enclosure.
8. Amahs in charge of children are not permitted to occupy the seats and chairs during band performances.
9. Children unaccompanied by foreigners are not allowed in Reserve Garden.
10. The police have instructions to enforce these regulations.

By Order.

N. O. Liddell.

Secretary.

Council Room. Shanghai. Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>. 1917

### 外滩风景区管理通告

外滩是上海重要的风景游览区。为保证外滩的环境整洁和良好社会秩序，根据有关法规，特通告如下：

- 一、外滩风景区系指北至外白渡桥、南至新开河的中山路一路、中山路二路的沿江地区，包括人行天桥和地下人行通道。
- 二、任何单位和个人在外滩都要自觉地遵纪守法，文明游览，维护社会秩序尊重社会公德。
- 三、保证环境卫生，爱护公共设施和绿化，禁止随地吐痰和乱扔杂物，不准损折花木和践踏草坪花坛。
- 四、未经外滩风景区管理办公室批准，辖区内不准举办公共活动，不准设摊设亭从事经营活动。
- 五、禁止任何扰乱社会秩序和有碍市容观瞻的活动和行为。
- 六、任何单位和个人都要自觉遵守本通告的规定，服从执勤人员的管理，违者由有关部门视情节轻重予以批评教育或依法处理。

上海市黄浦区人民政府一九九五年一月

### THE BUND SIGHTSEEING AREA NOTICE

The Bund sightseeing area is a major scenic spot in Shanghai. To guarantee clean and tidy surroundings and peaceful social order, we hereby give a public notice of regulations as follows:

- 1) The Bund sightseeing area refers to the river-side Zhongshan Road (N. Zhongshan Road (N.Z.)) ranging from the North Garden Bridge to the south entrance, including overpasses and underground passages.
- 2) Any person or organization visiting the Bund should conscientiously observe the law, maintain good manners, follow social order and abide by social morals.
- 3) No keep the environment clean and protect public facilities and greenery, spitting, littering, picking flowers, ruining trees and walking on lawns and flower beds is prohibited in the area.
- 4) Any person without the license given by the Administrative of the Bund Sightseeing Area is not allowed to carry any social activities. This also applies to commercial activities such as setting up stands or booths in the area for trading or offering service.
- 5) Any activity or action against social order or repugnant to the eye is prohibited.
- 6) Any person or organization in the area should abide by regulations in this notice and follow the instructions of patrols in the area. Any one who violates the regulations will be dealt with according to the seriousness of his or her case.

SHANGHAI HUANGPU DISTRICT PEOPLES GOV

1995

Present-day regulations





*The Bund looking south, 1860s*

Dennis George Crow



*The Bund looking north, 1880s*

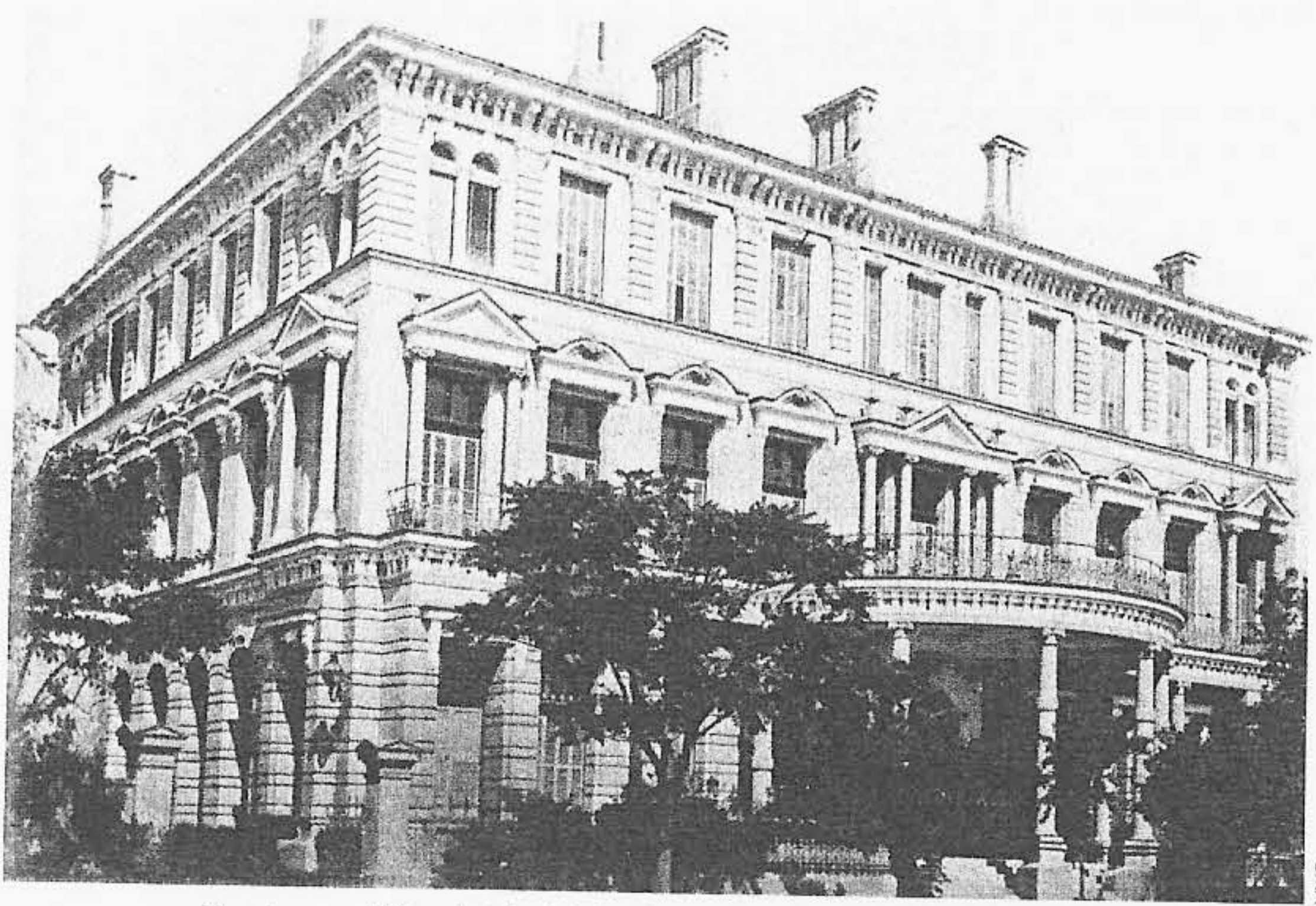
SMA

## SETTLING DOWN— THE ARCHITECTS OF THE BUND

The architectural profession enjoyed modest esteem in 19<sup>th</sup> century Shanghai as landowners generally saw little need for their skills or expense. As demonstrated by the early development of the Bund, direct dealings with Chinese contractors to supervise construction often produced practical, if not particularly successful, results. Such arrangements didn't bode well for the professional practitioner. Little money from the huge cost of building the Shanghai Club in the early 1860s found its way into the pocket of Charles St. George Cleverly, the Colonial Surveyor of Hong Kong, for his design work. Other more modest pioneering Bund residents, including W. R. Adamson, decided to design and build their premises themselves.

A Scotsman, Mr. Strachan, was the first professional architect accredited to work in the city after his arrival in 1849. Apart from the fact that he employed Ningbo craftsmen and produced Greek-styled buildings, little is known of his work and certainly none of it survives. William Kidner, who came to Shanghai to supervise the construction of the Holy Trinity Church (later cathedral) near the Bund from 1866–1869, was the first British architect of any importance to work in the city. During his three-year sojourn, amongst other buildings, he completed the British Consulate prison on the Bund and the nearby Lyceum Theatre in 1867. He paid several return visits to Asia and his Shanghai practice passed into the hands of his British partner, J. M. Cory, soon after he had designed the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank building on the Bund in 1877. Nothing of his work on the Bund survives, but the





Hongkong and Shanghai Bank's first building on the Bund

cathedral does. The last sign of Cory's work on the Bund, the second generation Custom House, was demolished in 1924. He assisted Mr. J. Chambers in the design of the building and died during the course of its construction in 1893.

The most enduring and financially successful British architect in Shanghai, Henry Lester, arrived in 1863 to carry out a survey of the International Settlement for the SMC. Lester, a London-trained architect and land surveyor, had set up his own practice by 1872 and went on to construct many buildings around the Settlement. However, his main activity was in land dealing and by the time of his death in 1926 he was probably the largest landowner in Shanghai with an estate valued at three million pounds. His company, which combined architectural services with land and property dealings, set a precedent which was to be followed by many others up to the 1940s. And today many foreign architectural practices in the city are following the same path yet again.

Shanghai's architectural fraternity began to grow and take on new importance towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the demand for larger and more advanced buildings required their professional services, as well as those of professional engineers. In 1890 there were just three professional architectural practices in the city. By 1900 there were seven and in 1910 a total of 15. In

1925 this number had risen to 46 and in 1937 there were 54, predominantly foreign, offices in the city.

The Shanghai Society of Engineers and Architects, which had been founded in January 1901 by Mr. Gabriel James Morrison to 'promote the science and practice of Engineering and Architecture in all their branches,' had attracted over 100 members by 1904. At that time only around a third of its members had any form of professional qualification. An Institute of Architects in China was established in the city soon after and was incorporated in Hong Kong, with the approval of the Royal Institute of British Architects, in 1907. However on its home ground the Institute, which represented most of Shanghai's leading architects, had no luck in securing their desire for an obligatory registration of professional architects in the city. Even though the Institute was recognised by the SMC in 1907, Shanghai's consular officials decided in 1909 that they 'did not find sufficient reason for the registration of architects and conceived that by so doing it would give them a monopoly of business.' On the same day the decision was reported, a letter to the *North China Daily News* expressed the view that 'the best built houses are built without the help of architects using a Chinese contractor.' That such a view, and lack of regulation, still prevailed and, indeed, continued to prevail over the following decades is in part why Shanghai's historic architecture is so unusually eclectic. And, of course, money was a major consideration as architects would expect a seven percent commission on the total cost of a new building.

The early builders and architects of the Bund had no notion of what engineering difficulties were to confront their 20<sup>th</sup> century successors. In the 1920s boreholes were sunk to nearly 1,000 feet in depth without the discovery of any bedrock. The Shanghai soil, or to be more precise its alluvial silt with a fifty percent water content, presented new challenges to those seeking to build high. Mr. Sidney J. Powell, quoted in 1920, asserted that 'Shanghai can only stand six floors, London sixty floors, New York and Hong Kong any number.' George Leopold Wilson, the architect of many of the Bund's large surviving structures





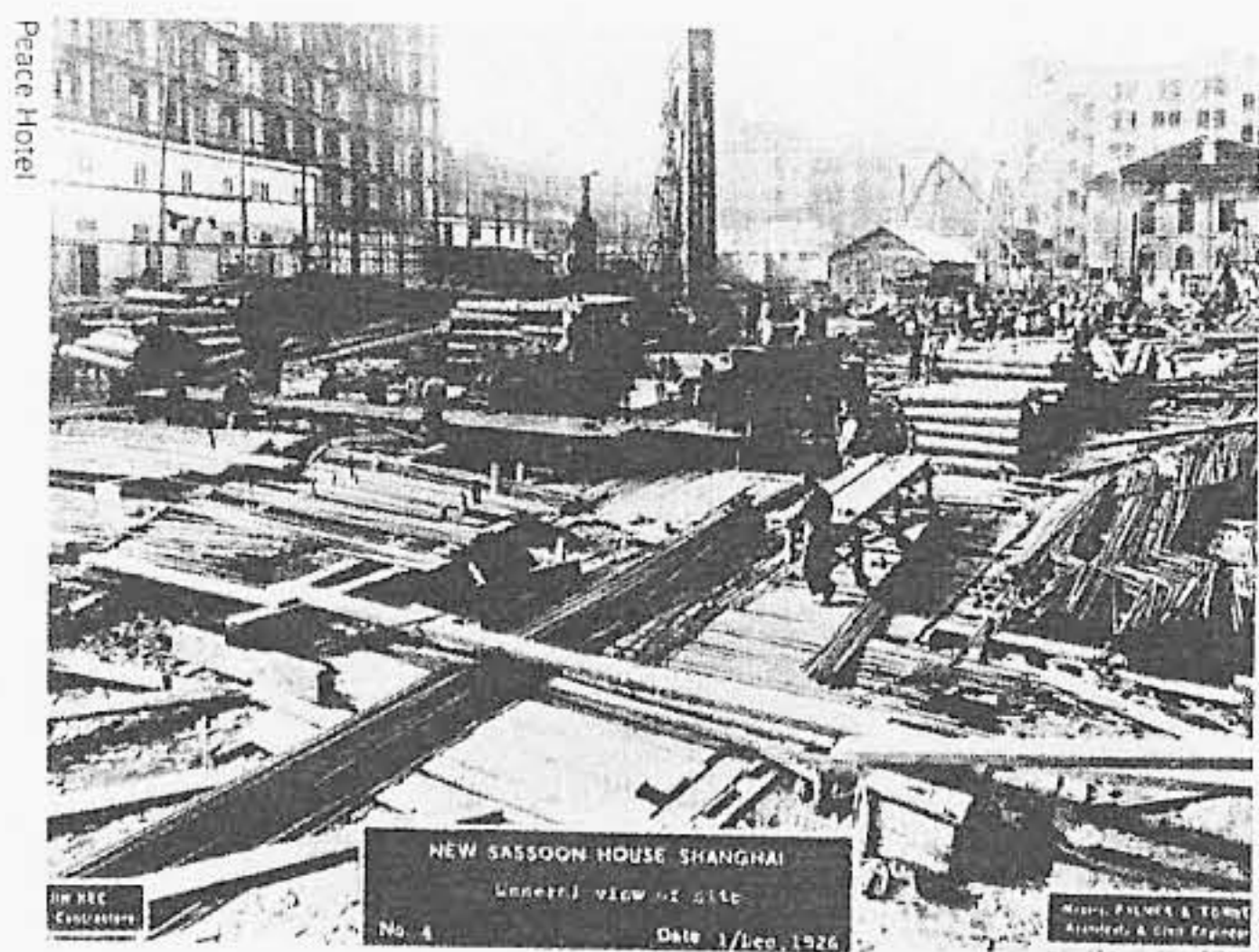
remarked that 'there are few other cities in the world, if any, which present such difficulties regarding the foundations for buildings of any magnitude...even though the weight is spread over the whole site, it is usual for a building to sink about six inches, and sometimes more. So long as it settles evenly there is nothing to worry about, but when the settlement is uneven the architect and engineer have a few sleepless nights.'

The buildings on the Bund are effectively floating on a sea of mud. It was, of course, usual to estimate beforehand what the settlement would be. In designing buildings for the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, the Chartered Bank and the Yokohama Specie Bank, the ground floor was set 12 inches above where it was expected to rest. Temporary steps were erected from the street and removed one at a time. The settling process could take several years and, to compound matters, the footpaths in front of the buildings were themselves raised on occasions—notably in the early 1920s and the early 1930s.

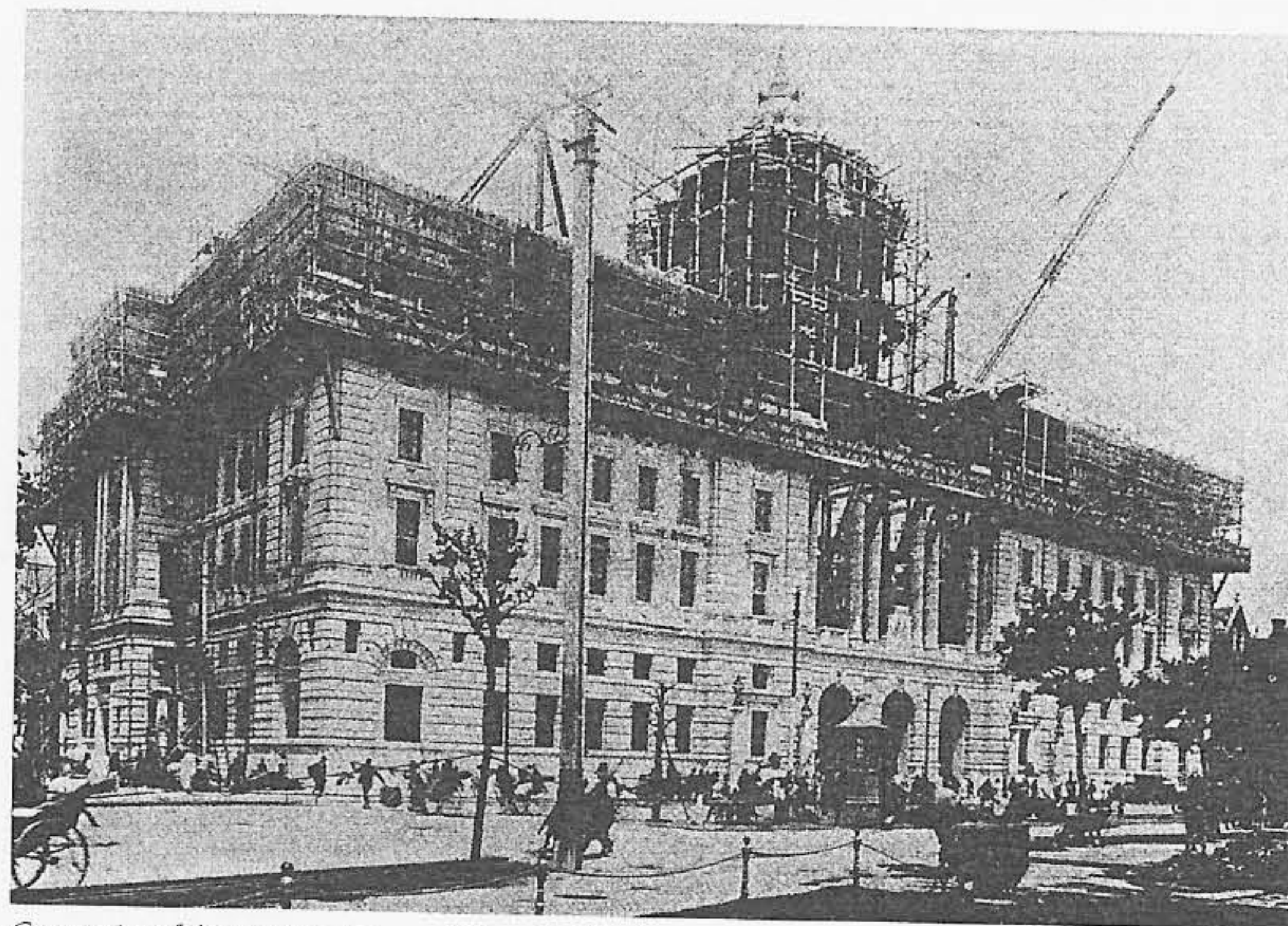
The major buildings on the Bund are resting on huge concrete rafts underpinned by wooden piles up to 100 feet in length. Huge quantities of imported Oregon pine (Douglas Fir) were used for this purpose. Some 1,600 piles were used in the construction of Sassoon House and over 2,600 piles supported the huge mass of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank.

And it wasn't just the piles that were imported. Amazingly, the bulk of the materials used for the

construction and decoration of the Bund's buildings were too. That included tons of rare Italian marble, granite from Hong Kong and Japan, and just about everything from pre-fabricated structural steel to Crittall metal windows, and from pre-moulded ceilings to Shanks sanitary ware from England.



Piling operations underway at Sassoon House, 1926



Construction of the new Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, 1923

Modern equipment was rarely used in the construction of buildings before the arrival of the London contractors, Messrs. Trollope & Colls on the Bund in 1921. Before that time heavy materials were raised by block and tackle and mechanisation was viewed in terms of how many cheap Chinese labourers were on hand. Trollope and Colls introduced modern construction methods and imported the first tower cranes ever to be seen in China. It wasn't, however, until around 1930 that the widespread use of electric cement mixers was adopted.

The Bund's architects were drawn from a small number of foreign architectural practices in the city. In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the first major buildings appeared, Atkinson & Dallas stood out as the city's leading architects and civil engineers. Mr. Brenan Atkinson, who had been practising as an architect in the city since the early 1890s, was joined by the former Assistant Municipal Engineer, Mr. Arthur Dallas, to form the partnership in 1897. Mr. Atkinson died in 1907 just before the completion of their Great Northern Telegraph Company Building on the Bund, after which his brother took his place in the firm. They went on to design the Banque de L'Indo-Chine, which was completed six years later.





Buildings on the northern section of the Bund, mid-1920s

Picture This

Other architects of this period included the Munich educated Mr. Heinrich Becker who designed the Russo-Chinese Bank, the German-Asiatic Bank (rebuilt in 1948) and the Club Concordia (demolished in 1935), and the British firm of Scott & Carter who designed the Palace Hotel. The latter partnership ended when Mr. Carter died during the course of its construction.

But it was the firm of Palmer and Turner which, soon after their arrival in 1912, went on to dominate the architectural nomenclature of the Bund. They designed nine landmark buildings, commencing with the Union Building in 1915 and concluding with the Bank of China, which they had direct involvement with until 1939 when their Shanghai office closed. In the intervening years they designed magnificent buildings for the Yangtze Insurance Association, the Glen Line, the Chartered Bank, the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, the Yokohama Specie Bank, the Chinese Maritime Customs and Sassoon House, incorporating the Cathay Hotel. They also presided over a major conversion of the Palace Hotel in the mid-1920s and were consulting architects for the monumental Broadway Mansions just to the north of the Bund on Suzhou Creek.

Other major British architectural firms were to claim few spoils on the Bund. However, Messrs. Stewardson & Spence designed the Jardine Matheson & Co. Building and the McBain Building—whilst Lester, Johnson & Morriss were to erect three buildings in the early 1920s. Although Henry Lester retired in 1915, he was still alive to see his company's achievements in the form of the NKK Building, the Bank of Taiwan and the North China Daily News Building. The firm was established in 1913 when the businesses of Mr. Lester and Mr. George A. Johnson were amalgamated and Mr. Gordon Morriss was taken into partnership. Messrs. Lester and Morriss were also directors of the *North China Daily News*.

Henry Lester was often mimicked as being one of the most miserly members of the British community. Despite his wealth, he lived in modest accommodations and was reported to use public trams to get around the city. In his early Shanghai days he kept residences at a number of Bund addresses including the Masonic Lodge and the Shanghai Club. He was renowned for his daily stroll along the Bund and, although he was the oldest member of the Shanghai Club, he was said to never go into its bar except on Christmas Eve when the boys of the club treated the members to cake and wine. Although he had made many bequests unbeknown to the public before his death, his fortune was posthumously passed on to a trust, which, among numerous worthy causes, built grand educational institutes in the city, including the Lester Institute of Technical Education which offered courses in engineering and architecture.



## PALMER AND TURNER— STANDING THE TEST OF TIME

In his 1985 book *Tall Stories* Malcolm Purvis, a former partner of Palmer and Turner, traced the company's long and illustrious history to 1868 when its progenitor, Englishman William Salway, arrived in Hong Kong. Salway formed a partnership with Wilberforce Wilson that was joined by Lieutenant Sotheby Godfrey Bird in 1878, after which Salway announced his retirement. Wilson retired soon after new arrival Clement Palmer, a remarkably talented 23-year-old British architect, had drawn up plans for the hugely successful new premises of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank in 1883. The project secured the fortunes of the Bird and Palmer partnership and a host of other landmark buildings in Hong Kong followed. Sadly, virtually nothing is left of these today. Little is known about Arthur Turner, who joined Palmer and Bird to act as structural engineer, but following Bird's retirement, the company took on the name of Palmer and Turner in 1891.

The Bird family link with Palmer and Turner, however, was to endure over three generations, with G. V. Bird becoming a partner at the Shanghai office in 1937 shortly before its closure at the outbreak of the Second World War. Following the events of 1937, things were desperate for the firm and George Leopold Wilson, the company's doyen architect and senior partner, was considering closing it down. He was largely talked out of it by the manager of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank. The bank had enjoyed a long and close relationship with the firm and Wilson had designed their landmark buildings in Hong Kong and Shanghai.

In a letter to a retired partner in 1938 Wilson states 'I have never been so worried, struggling to keep the firm after paying out so much in capital and goodwill during the past few years and having no partners with any cash and anyone with their money tied up in property in Shanghai does not know

whether they have a bean in the world today ... I do not expect there will be building work of any magnitude in Shanghai for at least two years so I propose cutting down the staff to a man and a boy.' (Reprinted from *Tall Stories*)

Their Shanghai office closed in 1939 and the Hong Kong office followed in 1941. Whilst the Hong Kong office reopened following the War, Palmer and Turner's long overdue return to Shanghai didn't take place until July 1990. Although Palmer and Turner reformed its corporate structure to become the P&T Group in 1982, establishing it as not only the oldest but also the largest architectural engineering practice in South East Asia, most people in Shanghai just refer to the company by its old familiar name, one that is engraved on the finest historic buildings in the city. The P&T Group today is occupied with major projects in Shanghai and throughout China. On the Bund the Group was involved with proposals for



Mr. Clement Palmer, partner 1884-1909

the enlargement of their own former Hongkong and Shanghai Bank building. However, HSBC decided not to reoccupy the building. They also put together proposals for the Peninsula Hotel Group in the same building, which is now occupied by the Pudong Development Bank. A new Peninsula hotel is now being established further up the Bund.



# TUG WILSON—MASTER ARCHITECT AND MAN OF MORES



Mr. George Leopold Wilson and Mrs. Wilson

George Leopold Wilson had a long and distinguished career in the Far East. Born on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1880 and educated in London, he began his career when he was articled to H. W. Peck Architects in 1898. During his time as assistant to E. B. J. Cluson from 1901–1908 he made frequent trips to France

and Italy. His love of new places and challenges saw him leave England's shores in 1908 to take up an assistant's post with Palmer and Turner in Hong Kong.

Wilson accompanied Lt. Col. M. H. Logan to Shanghai in 1912 to open a branch office where they both became partners in

1914. They took up offices in the Union Building, at No. 3, after they had completed it in the following year. Wilson personally designed, or assisted in the design, of six of the nine Palmer and Turner buildings on the Bund. Wilson spoke of good architecture as 'creative expression inspired by the beauty of the past.' His ideal combination of proportion, mass and form with simple interior decoration, colour and lighting was epitomised in the creation of Sassoon House and the Cathay Hotel (now the north wing of the Peace Hotel). His other landmark buildings in the vicinity of the Bund—the Metropole Hotel, Hamilton House and the Royal Asiatic Society buildings—still stand today as testament to the inimitable and progressive nature of the city in the early 1930s. Whilst on vacation in Europe and America in 1931, Wilson wrote in a letter that 'there is not a great deal which Shanghai can today learn from elsewhere which would be in the direction of improving practice here.'

RIBA

A.

[FELLOW.]

### CANDIDATE'S SEPARATE STATEMENT.

Every Candidate desirous of being admitted a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects must furnish the Council with information suggested in the items hereinafter printed.

ITEMS	DATE	DESCRIPTION
I.—The names in which he received his professional education, and the date of completion.	1898	Articled to H.W. Peck & Co. Architects 27, Dover St. London.
II.—Particulars as to his professional career, and the date of his admission to practice.	1901-1908 1908-1914	Assistant to E. B. J. Cluson Esq. F.R.I.B.A. do. to Messrs Palmer & Turner Travelled in France & Italy periodically between 1901 & 1908 when I left for the Far East.
III.—The name of the firm in which he has been engaged, and the locality.	1914	Admitted a partner in the firm of Messrs Palmer & Turner Shanghai, China.
IV.—A list of the principal buildings in the various countries, showing their location, dimensions, and of which he has been or is engaged as architect, and the date of completion.	1914 To present date	Hongkong & Shanghai Bank. Shanghai do. do. do. Hankow Chartered Bank of India Shanghai 1914 To present date Toshaman Specie Bank do. Sassoon House Building do. Wing See Departmental Store do. Yangtze Insurance Co's Building do. International Recreation Club do.
V.—A list of illustrations or other works of which he is the author.		

I hereby declare that the above statement made by me this 15<sup>th</sup> day of August 1926, is a true account of my professional education and works; that I have attained the age of 45 years\*; and that the buildings referred to in item IV above have been designed by myself.

Signature of Candidate

*George L. Wilson*  
Palmer & Turner 1 Canton Rd. Shanghai

Address

\* A Candidate for Fellowship must have completed the age of thirty years, and he must here state his age at the date of application.

Wilson's application to become a fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, 1926

Tug Wilson was unusually civic minded. He was an active council member of the Royal Asiatic Society and largely responsible for the collection of funds to build its premises. He was also president of the Union Club of China for many years. The Club was an adventurous undertaking when it opened in 1919 in that it 'promoted social intercourse between Chinese and foreign members of the business world.' Originally only open to British, Americans and Chinese nationals, it later was open to all



## Early Architecture in Shanghai

Written by the late Thomas W. Kingsmill about twenty years ago

### Roads in the Forties

IN the early days of Shanghai the main requirement of a house in China was then supposed to be a wide verandah with round brick pillars running round, or at least on three sides, and this was the type generally adopted. In some cases architectural aid was procured from the Southern colony, but the greater number of the houses were of the type referred to. A characteristic specimen of this style survived till within a few years ago in the

house inhabited by the firm of Shaw, Ripley & Co. at the junction of the Rope-walk Road, now the Kikiang Road, and the Bund. As land was cheap an open space generally surrounded these primitive houses, and the compounds were planted with trees, mostly willows. As the growth of a city was not contemplated the passages were never denominated streets but were called simply roads, and of these the first laid out were the Consulate, now the Peking Road; Park Lane, now the Nanking

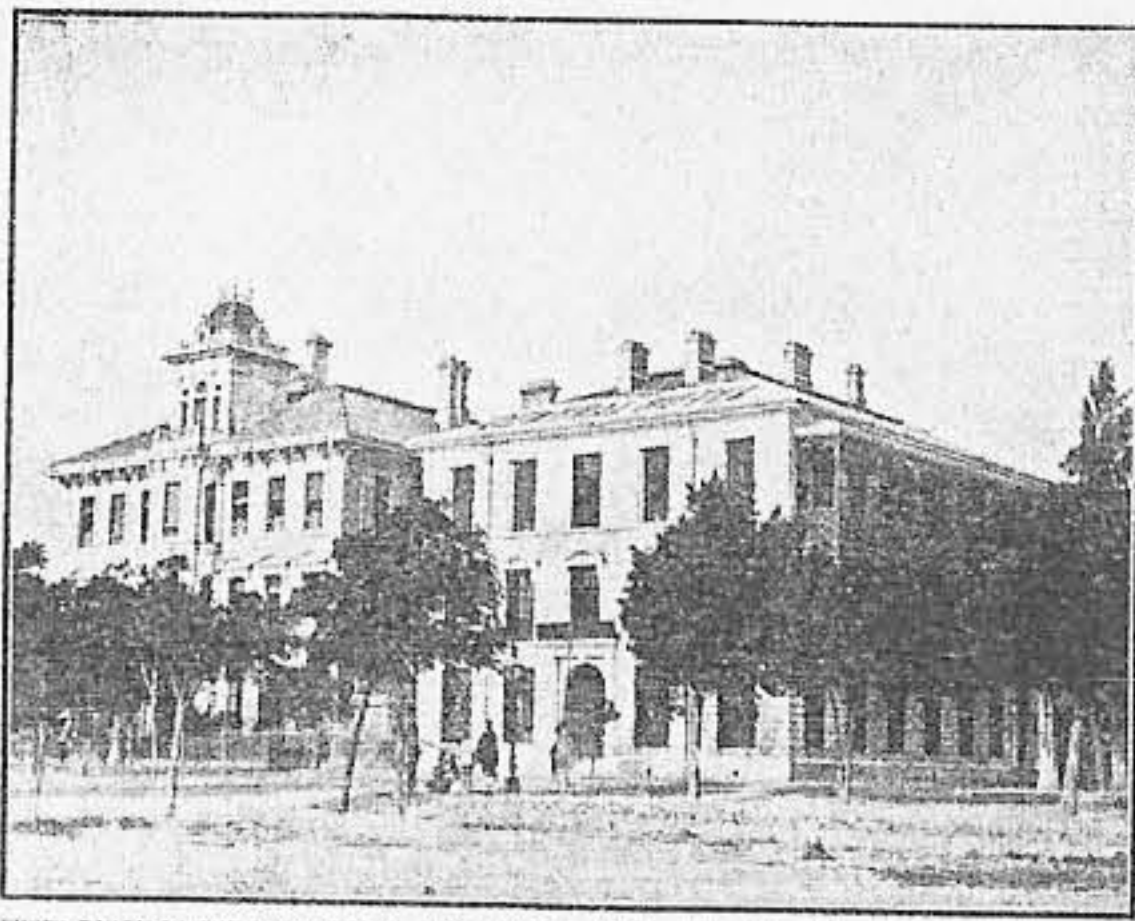


PHOTO TAKEN IN THE SEVENTIES OF THE ORIENTAL BANK—NOW THE CHARTERED BANK OF INDIA, AUSTRALIA AND CHINA—AND THE CENTRAL HOTEL, FORMERLY OCCUPIED BY THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI BANK

Article from *Social Shanghai* magazine, 1911

and by the time it was closed in 1934 Wilson noted that it had 'fulfilled its purpose.' He was a member of most clubs in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, played polo and adored steeple-chasing. His charming wife, with whom he had one son, was also notable as one of Shanghai's great socialites.

At the outbreak of the Second World War he had managed to get his wife safely out of Shanghai. On his attempt to return England, though, he was less fortunate. His ship was bombed and he found himself

shipwrecked on a small island near Sumatra. Surviving the incident, he spent the war years in England as a volunteer with the Ministry of Works, before returning to Hong Kong to rehabilitate the Colony. He returned to England following his retirement as senior partner of Palmer and Turner in 1952.

Wilson's plans for his retirement home were started whilst he was in Shanghai. He purchased Hatch Farm at Lindford, in the English county of Hampshire, in 1934, and drew up plans for its conversion. Short periods away from Shanghai were spent visiting the house, and the renovation and decoration work was completed during his retirement. Paintings by Le Meyeur, the Belgian artist, hung on the walls and treasures from the Far East were to be found in abundance. Wilson died there in September 1967.

# SHANGHAI MUD, SHANGHAI GOLD— BUILDING THE BUND

IN the early years land was cheap on the Bund and it wasn't long before the first crude, rambling houses of foreign 'hongs,' or firms, began to spread haphazardly along the waterfront. The earliest buildings on the Bund, including those of the first lot holders, Jardine Matheson & Co and the Oriental Bank, were based on designs from the 'south' featuring wide verandas with round brick or wooden columns on all four sides. In 'compradoric style' they would feature large grounds populated with willow trees. The first major building contractor to establish his presence on the Bund was a Cantonese gentleman who employed a staff of Cantonese workmen, and was known to his foreign clients as 'Chop Dollar.'

In the early 1860s Shanghai was experiencing a most extraordinary land and property boom as up to 700,000 Chinese citizens flooded into the British and American Settlements to escape the atrocities of the Taiping rebels raging outside the city. Huge profits were being made by the British in providing accommodation for the new population, and drinking champagne by the case was the order of the day. Many extravagant plans were laid, including those for the Shanghai Club on the Bund. That building, and others to follow, represented a new ostentation indicative of the times and featured three floors, overly thick brick walls and Chinese roof tiles. Chop Dollar began work on the Shanghai Club in 1861. However, by the time of its completion in 1864 many defects had appeared and its top





*The Shanghai Club, 1886*

veranda collapsed. It was described by Club officials 'as a stately structure, which in spite of all the scientific abuse lavished on its architectural peculiarities takes up so much room on the Bund.' But it wasn't only physical defects that afflicted the building. Like many others built during that period it was soon in deep debt as land values on the Bund plummeted and businesses were turned upside down following the departure of around 500,000 Chinese after the troubles were quelled in 1864. Some reports put the number of Chinese in the area as just 80,000 in the following year.

The good times were over, at least for a short while. Other grand edifices were, however, soon to follow—including the Hongkong and Shanghai's Bank's second premises on the Bund, which, after its demolition in the 1920s, was described by the Bank's chief as 'a very pretentious building,' that was 'too large.' Many smaller buildings, in the old compradoric style managed to survive alongside until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. The last such building, belonging to Dent & Co. on the corner of Jiujiang Road and the Bund, was torn down in 1915.

On adjacent Nanjing Road some of the hastily built three-storey structures, which were designed to accommodate refugees from the Taiping Rebellion, survived until 1901. The Chinese had generally never felt comfortable in these elevated structures and after the Rebellion their top floors were chopped off.

Again, it was an increasing influx of Chinese into the protectorate of the International Settlement towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that resulted in a tremendous increase in land values in the city. The actual cost of lots along the Bund went up over tenfold between 1890 and 1911. This, in turn, had a tremendous effect on the nature of building activity along the Bund. Investors were thinking big and tall and the construction of the city's highest building (at 94 feet), the Palace Hotel, was underway in 1906, as were huge new premises for the Great Northern Telegraph Offices and the Club Concordia (the German Club) nearby. The Palace Hotel was the



*Artist's impression of the new Palace Hotel*



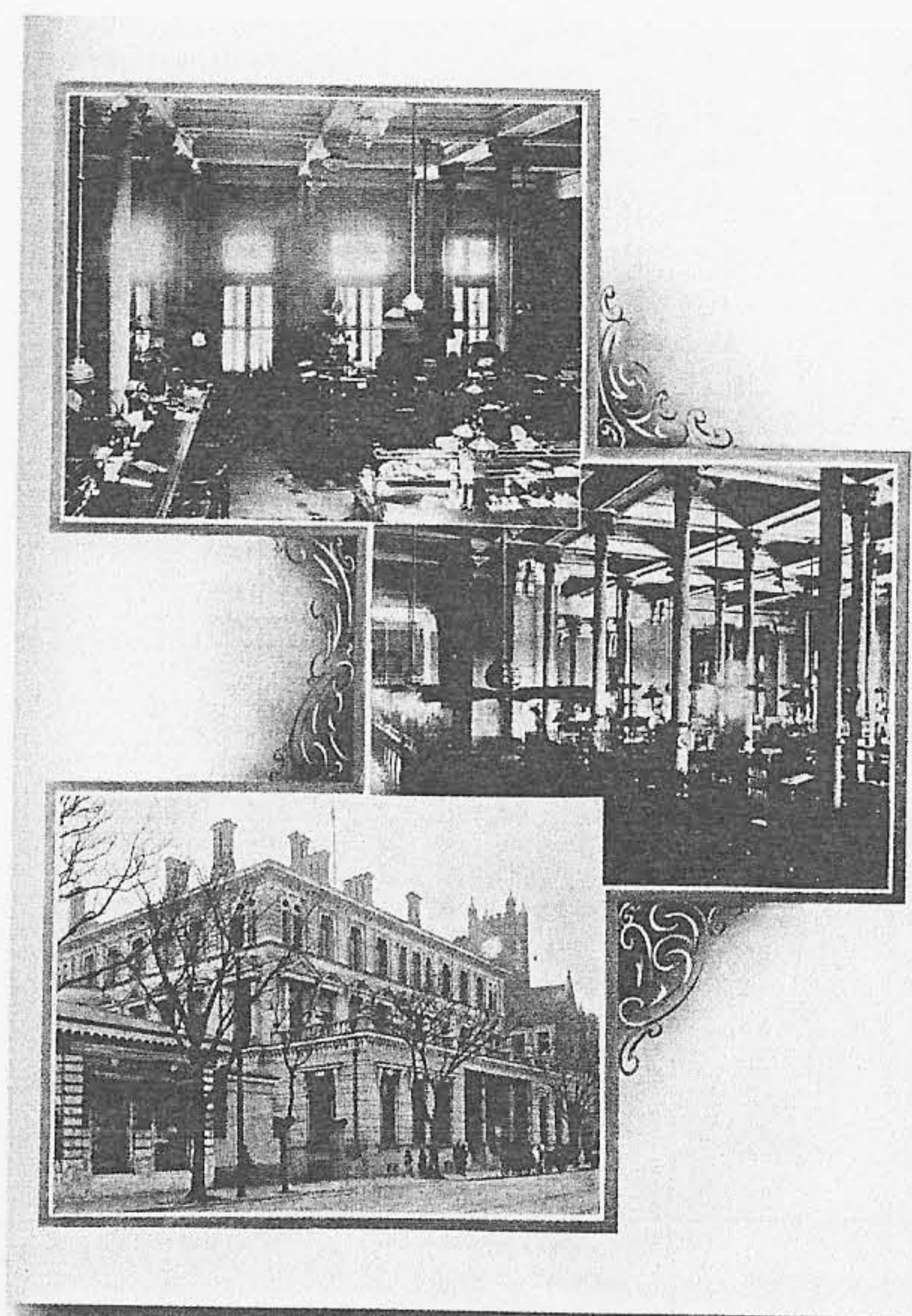


*The Dodwell & Co. premises, 1908*

first in a long line of buildings on the Bund to seize the accolade as the tallest building in Shanghai, and barring Chinese pagoda structures and the odd cathedral spire, the tallest in China.

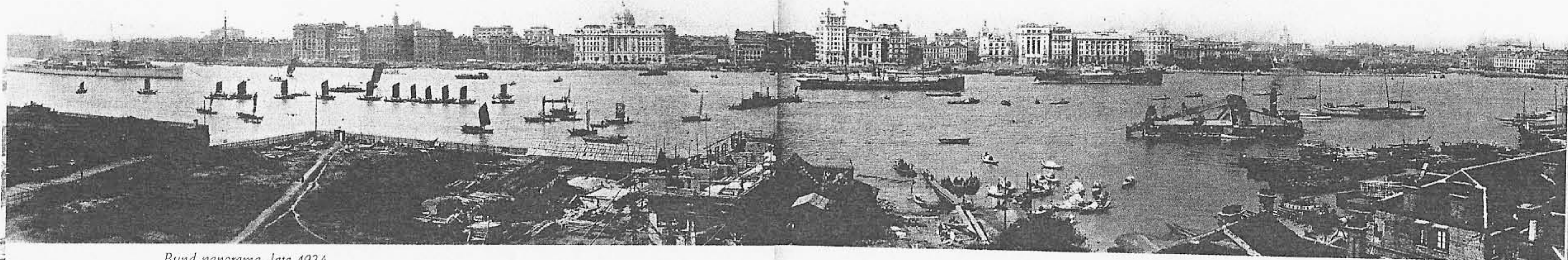
In 1904, the year that plans were drawn up for the Palace Hotel, an even more ambitious scheme was submitted to the SMC by Dodwell & Co., a major British merchant house engaged in importing, exporting and shipping which had its premises on the present site of No. 3 the Bund. Their proposal to build a 115-foot, steel-framed structure was well received by Mr. Mayne, the SMC Engineer and Surveyor. In a letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> January 1905 to J.O.P. Bland, the Secretary of the SMC, he wrote that 'when a firm is willing to sink such a large sum of money in an enterprise of this kind, I think it should be encouraged, provided the public rights are not interfered with.' He went on to say that such a building 'will undoubtedly be an object lesson to the Chinese in rapid and scientific building construction—a lesson badly needed—it will furnish excellent office accommodation in a very central location and will add a very fine building—designed by one of the best firms in America—to our Bund frontage.' The Council accepted

the proposal, but only on the condition that the plans were modified to allow the neighbouring street to be widened by ten feet. Dodwell & Co. were forced to abandon their ideas owing to the extra expense involved. It wasn't long, however, before new plans were drawn up for the company by Moorhead & Halse, Engineers and Architects, for an even taller building. Their plans for a nine-storey, 123-foot-high structure which were submitted in June 1910 were again approved with conditions, but Dodwell & Co. yet again decided not to go ahead on account of the additional costs involved.



*The old premises of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, 1908*





Bund panorama, late 1924

Picture This

In 1910, an even more extraordinary proposal for an entertainment centre housed in a 300-foot pagoda-style building near the Bund was endorsed by Mr. Mayne's successor, Mr. Godfrey. Godfrey said 'the whole question of the erection of tall buildings in Shanghai rests upon the present application.' He foresaw the day when Shanghai would become a city of skyscrapers and decided to leave it to the community to decide if 'Shanghai would be better served by tall buildings with more open spaces, than low buildings with little, or nothing, but narrow roads.' The scheme was duly passed by Shanghai's foreign ratepayers. Even though it was never built, it affirmed that the foreign public who had the power to change the face of the city were in favour of modernisation and that engineering difficulties involved with such a project could be

challenged. Mr. Godfrey has turned out to be something of a futurist as his vision of Shanghai is only comprehensively taking shape today.

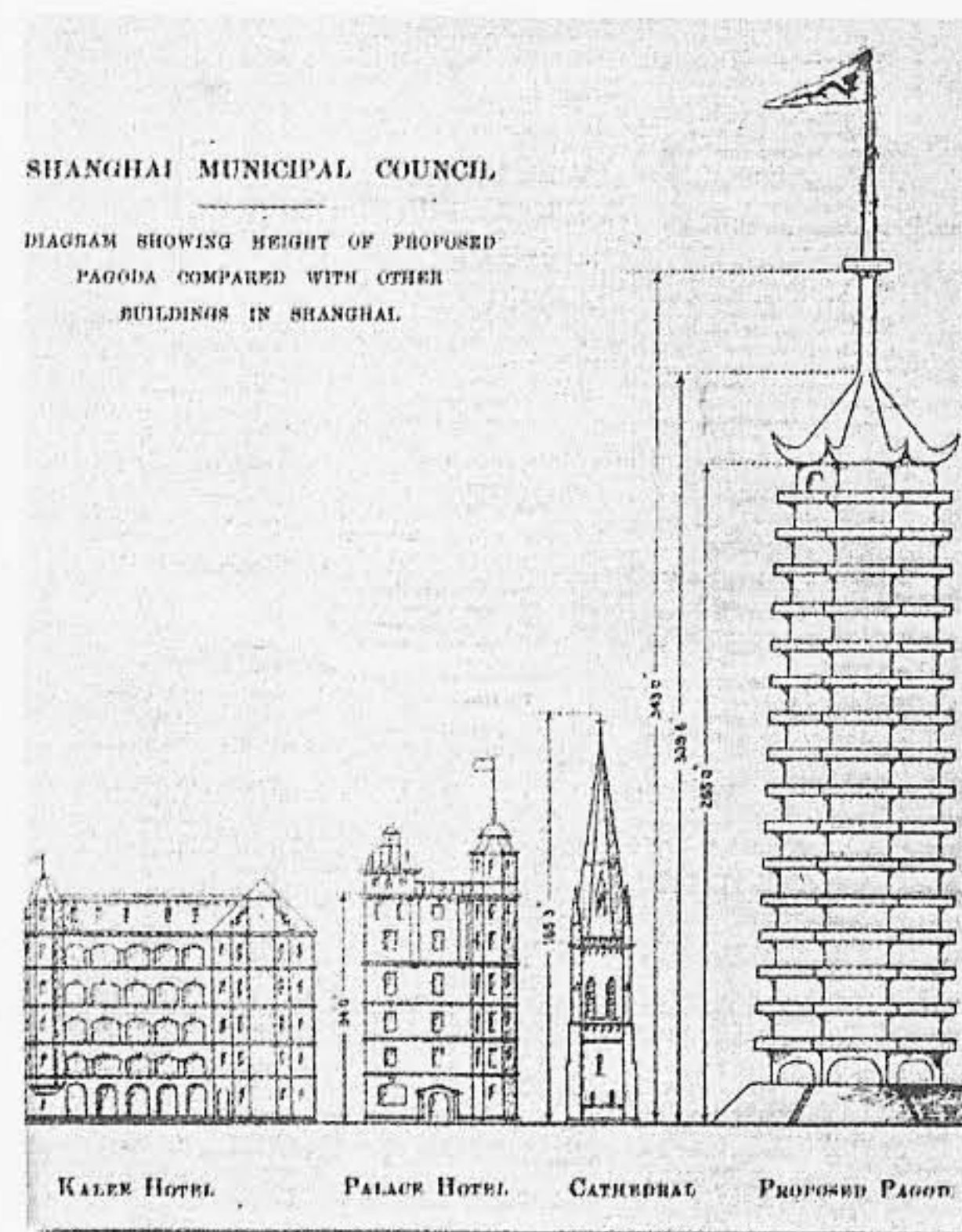
As in times of uncertainty and turmoil in the past, the years following the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911 saw a large influx of well-to-do Chinese to the city. Shanghai experienced a period of unprecedented growth and its rapid industrialisation also attracted a large number of Chinese workers and Japanese

nationals to the city. The construction industry was booming and, despite a temporary lull in foreign building activities on account of the First World War, three large buildings were completed on the Bund between 1915 and 1918, including the Union Building at the present-day No. 3—which eventually claimed its title as the tallest in the city.

Business confidence was also booming after the war—as was the city's foreign population. In the International Settlement this had more than doubled to over 23,000 between 1910 and 1920, with the American community seeing a particularly large increase from 940 to 2,264. Meanwhile, the Chinese population in the Settlement had risen by more than 150,000 to over 750,000 in the same period. It was no surprise that a host of prestigious companies along the Bund announced grand plans to rebuild their outdated premises around 1920.

Despite the SMC's earlier recognition that the Shanghai skyline was set to rise higher, there was some debate over the new proposals for buildings along the Bund. The SMC was concerned that such a large concentration of tall buildings along the limited frontage of the Bund would have an adverse effect on the amenity of the streets that ran off it. There were inadequate regulations in place when the Union Building was built and its height along the adjoining Guangdong Road was the same as its Bund frontage.

Whilst no restrictions were placed on the height of the buildings facing the Bund, regulations were shortly after drawn up to restrict building height on the adjoining and comparatively narrow streets. Buildings were only allowed to maintain the height of their Bund frontage for a maximum of 80 feet along the



Sketch of proposed pagoda skyscraper, 1910





A period of great change on the Bund, 1924

Picture This

adjoining streets. However, all the proposals or statements of intent submitted to the SMC in 1919, including those for Jardine, Matheson & Co, Nisshin Kisen Kaisha and the Bank of Taiwan, required at least a 160-foot frontage. Fortunately the Council made special concessions based on the rather weak assertion that the roads opened on to 'unlimited space' and 'enjoyed an extra amount of light and air.' If it weren't for the SMC's flexibility the major buildings that we see along the Bund today might have looked totally different to what they do now.

Between 1921 and 1925 no less than seven new buildings were erected on the Bund. Despite the tumultuous events in the city, commencing with the May 30<sup>th</sup> Massacre in 1925 and the strikes, boycotts and anti-foreign demonstrations that followed, to the killing of thousands of suspected Communists by Nationalist troops and Green Gang members in April 1927, it didn't take long for business to return to normal. Indeed it was the scions of Chinese big business that supported, voluntarily or not, the new Nationalist Government. The Bank of Taiwan and the new Custom House were completed on the Bund in 1927.

In the late 1920s everything was booming again. Foreign and Chinese money was flooding into the city. Sir Victor Sassoon spearheaded the foreign crusade by transferring vast amounts of his fortune from Bombay to Shanghai. The price of land on which his Sassoon House and Cathay Hotel was being built on the Bund doubled over the course of its construction from 1926 to 1929. The last was by far the most outstanding year in terms of land values and property transactions in Shanghai's history, and the old saying of 'Shanghai Mud, Shanghai Gold' had never rung so true.

Yet the sounds of war were never far away. The Sino-Japanese hostilities in Zhabei district, to the north of Suzhou Creek, during the first five months of 1932 served as a wake-up call and delayed major building projects around the city. The impact of the events was compounded by a rapid depreciation in the value of silver soon after. Whilst there were no building projects underway on the Bund in 1932, some buildings behind the northern section of the Bund, in what is now known as the 'Waitanyuan' area, were affected. The more devastating events of 1937, however, delayed the completion of the Bund's last pre-war building, the Bank of China, and stalled plans for the Art Deco form of the Commercial Bank of China, which weren't fully realised until 1948.

ver, Shanghai's *raison d'être*, had been / and the great port hed in idleness.

gh Shanghai  
most as normal in  
months of 1937, the  
rials of war grew  
louder. The mighty  
apanese tightened  
Shanghai. However,  
status of the  
il Settlement, though  
impoverished, was  
ght up until the  
tack on Pearl  
8<sup>th</sup> December  
me) 1941.



cover of a 1941 guidebook