

THE HUMBLE ADMINISTRATOR'S GARDEN PROJECT BRIEF

Brief Component

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Project Brief

Presented by



Abstract

Launched by digital technology company Mian, this night tour of the Humble Administrator's Garden is intended to give audiences an immersive journey through the culture of the Dream of the Red Mansions, while experiencing a combination of ancient and modern styles and gaining an insight into the history and culture of the Humble Administrator's Garden.

Project Opportunity

This project aims to provide audiences with cultural tourism opportunities within Chinese market. Audience can experience the advance latest technology situating in Chinese traditional narrative way, both the Humble Administrator's Garden and the story of *The Dream of Red Mansions*.

The Humble Administrator's Garden

Located in the Gusu District of Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, the Humble Administrator's Garden is one of the representatives of traditional Chinese gardens. The garden is set in a landscape with water as the central feature, surrounded by rockeries and exquisite courtyard architecture, with a variety of plantations. It is known as one of the 'Four Famous Gardens of China', along with the Summer Palace in Beijing, the Summer Palace in Chengde and the Liu Garden in Suzhou, listed as a World Heritage Site.

The entire garden is exquisitely designed and can be visited 'one step for one scene', with the reflection of the charm of lower reaches of the Yangtze River. The paths in the garden are winding. For each porch, each pavilion, and even each carving on stone walls and windows, the designs of pattern vary. As the final location for this project, the architectural, cultural and aesthetic value of the Humble Administrator's Garden cannot be overlooked.

The Dream in Red Mansions / The Story of the Stone

The Dream of Red Mansions, also known as *the Story of the Stone*, is a masterpiece of Chinese literature written by Cao Xueqin during the Qing Dynasty. It tells the story of a wealthy family, the Jia family, and their decline over the course of several generations. The novel is known for its realistic depiction of 18th-century Chinese society, as well as its poetic language and intricate storytelling.

The novel takes place in the luxurious and opulent world of the upper class. The Jia family's patriarch has three wives, and their complex relationships and struggles for power and status are one of the many plotlines in the novel. The main character, Jia Baoyu, is a young man who struggles to find a place for himself in this world of decadence and corruption.

The novel is a complex work of literature that explores themes of love, power, wealth, and the transient nature of life. Its poignant ending, which sees the Jia family's downfall and the scattering of its members, has cemented *The Dream of Red Mansions* as a timeless classic of Chinese literature, as how deep it reflects the real world.

The relationship between the garden and the book

It is likely that Cao Xueqin, the author of *the Dream of the Red Mansions*, has lived in the Humble Administrator's Garden. Cao Xueqin's grandfather, Cao Yin, was an administrator of weaving in Suzhou and bought a part of the Humble Administrator's Garden for his family to live in. When he was promoted to the post of Jiangning administrator of weaving, he recommended his wife's brother, Li Xu, to live there, and the Li family lived there for decades. During this time, Cao Xueqin's mother, who was pregnant and passing through Suzhou, gave birth to Cao Xueqin there. Later, Cao Xueqin accompanied his mother to Suzhou to stay in the Humble Administrator's Garden on many occasions. He was so impressed by the garden as a child that when he wrote *the Dream of the Red Mansions*, there were many references to it in the Dagan Garden.

When Cao Xueqin depicted the Dagan Garden, he referred to the layout of the Humble Administrator's Garden. Detailed research is listed in the appendix. In modern times, this connection still exists. Film and television adaptations of *the Dream of the Red Mansions* have also been set here. For example, the classic "Daiyu buries the flowers" was filmed at Qu Bridge.

The client

Jing Tian Cheng is an enterprise focusing on the promotion of cultural tourism. Its main business includes service design, route planning, project development and operation management of cultural tourism.

Company scale: The company has a professional team with strong service development and operation management capabilities in the tourism industry.

Main customers: Tourism-related industries are then the main stakeholders of most of their services, with young people attracted by modern technology to be the audience.

Specific areas: They mainly focus on the cultural tourism sector, with the promotion and transmission of traditional Chinese culture as the main objective.

Limitations of the company: The tourism market is competitive with a limited market share. While the degree of differentiation of cultural tourism products is relatively small, and all the creations might be influenced and limited by policies and government.

Our approach: Immersive Garden night tour

A. Immersive atmosphere and lighting

This part will discuss the cultural technology to be used during the tour, to create an immersive atmosphere.

The projection aims to create an immersive experience for the audiences by recreating scenes background from *the Dream of The Red Mansions*. The projection mapping should be applied to both indoor and outdoor zones. The projection should interact with architecture to fully utilize artistic expression and features of Chinese traditional buildings. The scenes should be set up with projection mapping (software: MadMapper & HeavyM Live). Season changes in the story can be demonstrated by projection mapping. The projection will lead to the main lighting effect in this route, a dark display environment is required.

Emergency plan:

The projection and lighting equipment should have a rain shelter arrangement to ensure proper operation in exceptional weather.

In the event of a breakdown, the mobile team should immediately contact IT staff for repairs.

Signs should be placed around the perimeter to remind the audience not to touch it. For large equipment, additional protection should be provided with appropriate isolation measures, with the consideration of aesthetics.

Prior to the official opening of the park, staff should check the operation of the equipment daily to avoid disruption to the experience.

B. Immersive acting

In this section, we will introduce the main service that our audience is going to receive in our immersive Garden night tour.

All the tourists will be suggested to divided into groups of 10 ~ 12 people (larger scale is acceptable). For indivial visitors or smaller groups, they will be assigned to reach that group size. They can choose to wear traditional clothes to have a better experience. Each group will have a guide to explain everything when touring (It will be discussed in section C).

To avoid a boring walk-through tour, we have set up a check-in list. On the designed routine, apart from installations/projections, there will be random NPCs who play the character in the book. The audience can interact with them to get a sticker. That could be answering questions related to the book, taking a photo, doing some easy acting, and so on. By collecting several amounts of stickers, they could get a small gift in the end. This is not compulsory, but we hope most of the audience can engage in it to have a more immersive experience. All interactions will be space specific, which is to say, have connections with the plot in the book.

Emergency plan:

For inclement weather, such as rain or snow, the garden will lend Chinese traditional umbrellas and rain ponchos for audience. For extreme weather, such as typhoons, performances will be cancelled to protect both the actors and the audience.

If any staff or audience has any health problems, the mobile team should contact the relevant medical personnel to deal with the situation and send them to the hospital for treatment in a timely manner if needed.

C. Guided tour service

This part is in fact a subsidiary part of section B. However, as it is not entirely dependent on external resources and is relatively important, we have created a separate section for its discussion.

Guided tours can make use of the original guided tour staff and services in the Humble Administrator's Garden. Of course, in order to complement the services described in the previous section, the guides need to wear special traditional clothing and require additional training. For example, at least they need to be familiar with the gardens and understand the basic plot of *the Dream of the Red Mansions*, especially some famous stories like "Daiyu buries the flowers". They should also introduce all the game rules and provide explanations for all the small NPC involved scenes.

It is also the guide's duty to inform the audience to watch their step and keep an eye on their belongings. Guides should also look after the equipment. If visitors have inappropriate behaviors, they should be warned or stopped in time.

D. Cultural creative product

This section focuses on the non-visit experience of the visitor. We

believe that cultural creative products can provide memorable value to visitors while drawing them closer to the main narrative and providing some additional income for the project. However, this is not the core of the project, so we have chosen some simple options for the client to choose from. The IP refers to *the Dream of Red Mansions*. They can be sold in the onsite gift shop or online platforms.



IP based blind box



IP based ice-cream

Appendix

曹雪芹写大观园时，参考了拙政园的布局。以下为例：

1. 书中第十七回大致讲的是贾政带着众门客与贾宝玉来参观新建好的大观园，并为其题词。书中写到：“贾政先秉正看门，只见正门五间，上面桶瓦泥鳅脊，那门栏窗隔俱是细雕时新花样，并无朱粉涂饰。一色水磨裙墙，下面白石台阶凿成西番花样。左右一望雪白粉墙下面虎皮石砌成纹理。”这和拙政园的老大门入口如出一辙：一样的进门先一山阻拦视线，一样的有几条小路可供不同年龄、不同体态的人选择行走。
2. 走进拙政园荷塘边的藕香榭里，书中是这样描述的：“原来这藕香榭盖在池中，四面有窗，左右有曲廊可通……一时进入榭中，只见栏杆外另放着两张竹案，一个上面设着杯箸酒具……一面又看见柱上挂的黑漆嵌蚌的对子，命人念。湘云念道：芙蓉影破归兰桨，菱藕香深写竹桥……”（见第三十八回）藕香榭是一个建筑群，而不是单一的水榭。这个建筑群是由水榭、水亭子、曲廊和曲折竹桥所共同构成。水榭房中柱子上挂着一幅对联“芙蓉影破归兰桨，菱藕香深写竹桥”。
3. 书中有写：“贾政等走了进来，未进两层，便都迷了旧路，左瞧也有门可通，右瞧又有窗暂隔……及至门前，忽见迎面也进来了一群人，都与自己形相一样，却是一架玻璃大镜相照。及转过镜去，益发见门子多了（见第十七回）。到苏州园林会发现在某些特定的位置，放置一面大镜子，也会看到有些许游客对着镜子自拍，来营造整个园子芥纳须弥、庭院深深的意境。而这一景象也在大观园中有

写到：网师园的月到风来亭中，有一面镜子就起到了将整个园林复制一倍的效果，让人感觉方寸之间另有天地，空间有尽，而意蕴无穷。