

Heritage site for first helicopter airport



Shanghai Longhua Airport was built in 1917 for both civil and military use. [File Photo]

Shanghai's first helicopter airport will be built at the former Longhua Airport in Xuhui District by early 2019, officials said yesterday.

Longhua Helicopter Airport will cover 30,000 square meters at the riverside area of Xuhui and will have aprons and hangars for 21 helicopters.

Terminal buildings, an air traffic control tower and helicopter maintenance facilities will be built.

The airport would mainly serve helicopters used by urban management and for emergency rescues, said Zhou Ming, secretary general manager of the airport said.

It is estimated that more than 4,000 helicopters would take off and land at the airport by 2020. In peak periods, three helicopters would take off or land hourly, he said.

"The helipad can also serve some commercial intercity flying, but sightseeing services will be forbidden," Zhou said.

Longhua Airport was built in 1917 for both civil and military use. By 1935, it was said to be the biggest airport in the Far East. The airport was later used only for pilot training and airships because its central location meant it was no longer suitable for fixed-wing take-offs and landings.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China will establish an East China General Aviation Service Center by 2018 in an office building beside the airport.

“The center will offer one-stop services for flying routes applications and other general aviation services,” said Bao Weiguo, the general manager with the airport. Currently, helicopters and business jets owners had to apply to fly at government bodies in different places.

The center will also open an online application platform to the applicants in future to save time and cost for clients, Bao said.

Meanwhile, Xuhui District government plans to turn one of the former Longhua Airport’s two runways into a park featuring bicycle lanes and jogging tracks.

The runway park on Yunjin Road, which runs along the west bank of Huangpu River, will have trees, flowers and an artificial creek. Some relics will be kept to serve as reminder of the park’s aviation heritage, the district government said.