

Project Name: Historic House Renovation in Suzhou

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Project Name	Historic House Renovation in Suzhou
Project Location	Suzhou, China
Element	Residence
Architect/s	Shuhei Aoyama, Yoko Fujii, Lingzi Liu, Liman Wei, Shiting Zhang, Guang Yang / B.L.U.E. Architecture Studio
Lighting Designer	-
Client	-
Site Area	2500m ²
Building Area	2500m ²
Design Period	01.2017 - 05.2017
Construction Period	05.2017 - 10.2017
Photography Credit	Eiichi Kano

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Concept	<p>Located in the core of the historic town of Suzhou, China, the site covers about 2,500 sqm, once was the residence of family Bei. The traditional Chinese garden consists of four ancient wooden structure architectures with courtyards built in the Qing Dynasty, dating back over a hundred year of history, and other four buildings built in the 90s of concrete structure. The renovation project aims to transform the historical house into a modern apartment.</p> <p>For the renovation of the four old houses, all the original wooden structure is preserved with simple reinforcement and restoration. Since the lack of maintenance, the building status no longer suits modern lifestyles, the main focus is to resolve functions that can meet the needs of modern daily life, such as air conditioning, heating system, shower room etc. The red paint from the original wood structure is removed and changes to black paint using the traditional lacquer process, together with natural wood frame of the windows and doors, reflect the beauty and elegance of the old architecture. Materials with natural textures such as stones, walnut wood are used for the interior space, setting a simple and natural tone. For the renovation of the concrete structure buildings, the design goes for a more relaxed and modern atmosphere using pure and minimalist language. Comparing to the old houses, materials with lighter color are used such as oak wood and light grey terrazzo floor. By boldly introducing the modern design into the historic garden, the juxtaposition of old and new shows an interesting dialogue between the tradition and the modern lifestyle.</p> <p>The main theme of the design is to inherit the spirit of the historic house not just by preserving and restoring its appearance but most importantly by recreating its spatial experience. Even though the house is to be transformed into a modern apartment, we do not want it to be separated into several isolated rooms, in fact, more than half of the space is used as public space, such as shared kitchen, shared study room, art galley, public bars and spa... Apart from the private room, the guests will also have the whole garden as the extensions of their home where they can communicate with the others. The definition of home have been expanded both in terms of concept and space.</p>

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Concept	<p>The renovation of courtyard is another focus of the design. For the rooms had no courtyard in the original plan, we also set a space used as a garden or terrace, the open relationship between the courtyard and the interior diffusing the boundary between the indoor and outdoor space and at the same time achieved the transition from public to private. The design of the courtyard at the entrance also takes inspiration from the classical garden which seeks to recreate natural landscapes in miniature, we transformed the original parking lot into a modern waterscape courtyard with a sunken seating area in the middle of the water, bringing people closer to the nature and creating a unique view and experience.</p> <p>The house renovation project is an experiment and exploration of urban regeneration of historic area, by introducing new and high-quality lifestyle into the old architectures, offers an opportunity for the historic town to revive under the modern context.</p>
