

# Housing Prototypes for a Landscape of Change

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Qing Cun is one hour to the south of downtown Shanghai. Shanghai has gone through a period of rapid urbanization in the last 25 years, and while seemingly the opposite, Qing Cun is as much a landscape of change as the city center. Most of the working age population has left to find jobs elsewhere, leaving behind the elderly and migrant workers who rent the cheap housing. Qing Cun is a modest example of a traditional Jiangnan “watertown”, which dot the region just south of the Yangtze River. The town government has replaced some of the historic structures with new ones, and while they are an improvement for the inhabitants, they represent a tremendous loss of architectural and material richness. The studio focuses on the design of housing prototypes, inspired by the following themes:

Vernacular architecture: the typology of the regional watertown.

Material layering and re-use: ingeniously constructed assemblages of building materials are found all over the site, testifying to the creativity and resourcefulness of the residents.

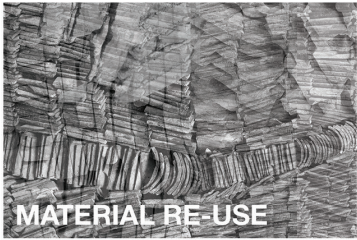
Chinese architect Wang Shu, who won the Pritzker Prize in 2012, and Chinese artists have worked with the debris of destroyed buildings in response to the demolition of older urban fabric following rapid urbanization.

Paper-cutting: the area is known for paper-cutting. For us, “cutting” relates both to sectional site studies, and to tectonic investigations and reinterpretation of the traditional craft through new technologies.

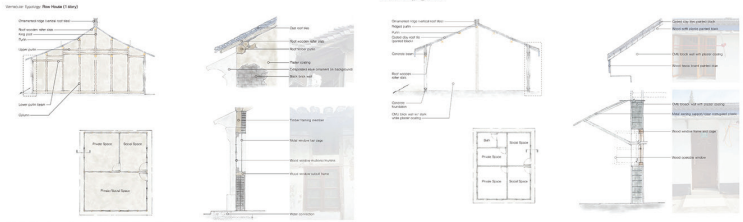
Liang Feng (“cool breeze”): the Mayor of Qing Cun, who grew up on the Old Street, shared how residents used to bring bamboo chairs out on to the street itself after dinner on warm evenings, to cool down, and to socialize and tell stories. He also spoke fondly of playing hide and seek as a child and being able to thread from courtyard to courtyard, sometimes passing through other people’s homes. We relate the idea of a “cool breeze” to notions of porosity or openness in terms of social connectivity, researched through interviews or ‘stories’, as well as passive cooling.



**VERNACULAR**



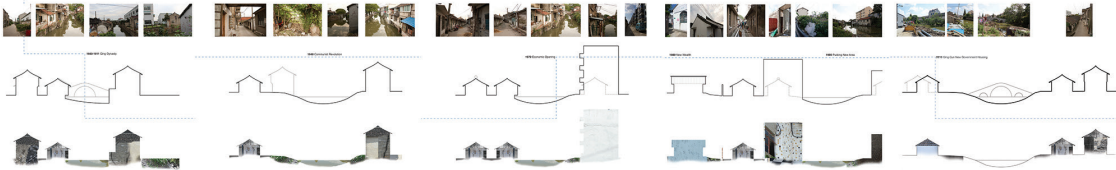
**MATERIAL RE-USE**



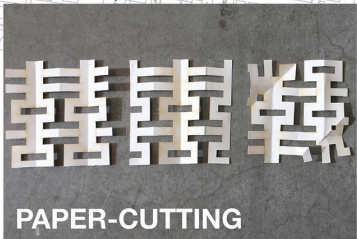
Underlying image from Prof. Patrick Zhang, Tongji University Architectural Conservation Studio, 2011



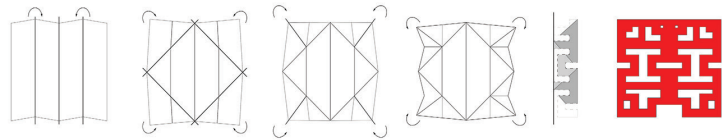
**STORIES**



**MATERIAL LAYERS**



**PAPER-CUTTING**



WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY | MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE STUDIO | FALL 2016  
**HOUSING PROTOTYPES FOR A LANDSCAPE OF CHANGE**

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