The Shophouse

In the urban tissue of Melaka, we would have liked to explore the distinct architectural beauty of the Shophouse. This typology evolution of the Shophouse presents a perfect balance between shop- and residential use. Several features in the Shophouse act as a place of transition between the shop and the dwelling.

Asian Urban Growth

The Shophouse, used as a commercial space or a shop with living quarters above, is typical in the context of the historical Melaka city. In the architecture however we see the tendency of building high up or at higher scale buildings. Following the techniques applied by the Chinese, the first floor is dedicated as shop and the second floor as residential use. In the Shophouse the shop and the dwelling will have a high degree of separation but at the same time to keep some unity with the traditional Chinese proportions, which can still be seen behind the modern needs.

Typological Research

A typological research is made to find the basic architectural qualities of the Shophouse. All shophouses are measured over long periods of time and the architectural evolution is traced. For example, in order to create a small scale architectural beauty of the Shophouse. In this example the water drainage system is set in the design in order to create the 'closed' composite. These principles the existing separation walls will be kept in order to create this 'closed' composite. As a final layer shutters are placed between the shop and the dwelling. On the higher level all the private rooms are placed independent but overlooking each other. As a rule residential projects tend to have a high degree of separation between the shop and the dwelling. The frame between the shop and the dwelling will be replaced by steel frames. These frames are designed in order to create a sustainable building.

The interior walls will be removed and combined with the shop. There needs to be structural reasons but also for the old building with the new. The frame between the shop and the dwelling will now have a high degree of separation but at the same time to keep some unity with the traditional Chinese proportions.

Contemporary Western architectural practices typically involve surrounding a building by an exterior space. An analysis of traditional Chinese architecture, which translates architectural traditions in building elements that bring up on entire property but places continuous interaction with a boundary line is kept in order to create this 'closed' composite. The plot of the design is a very long (+/- 70m) and only 6 meter wide plot with a 3 degree bend in it. All walls are varied making it a 'shophouse'.

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