

## Affordable Housing in Prato / studiostudio architettiurbanisti

Location: **Prato, Province of Prato, Italy**

Architects In Charge: **Elisa Palazzo, Bruno Pelucca**

Area: **3,211 sqm**

Year: **2012**

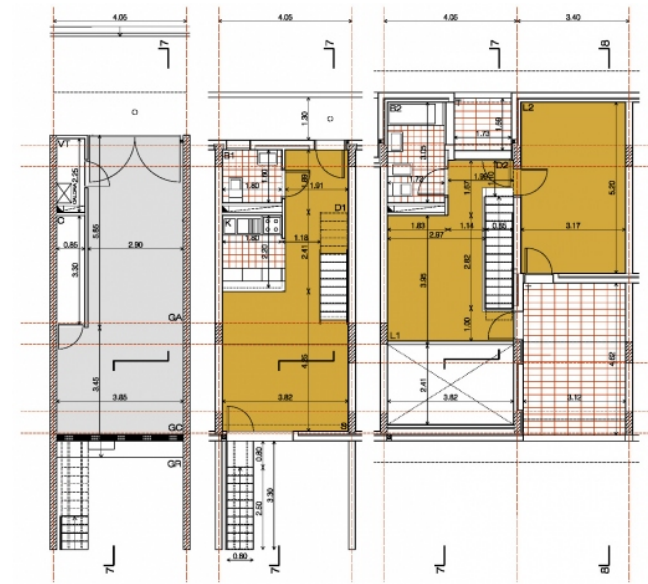
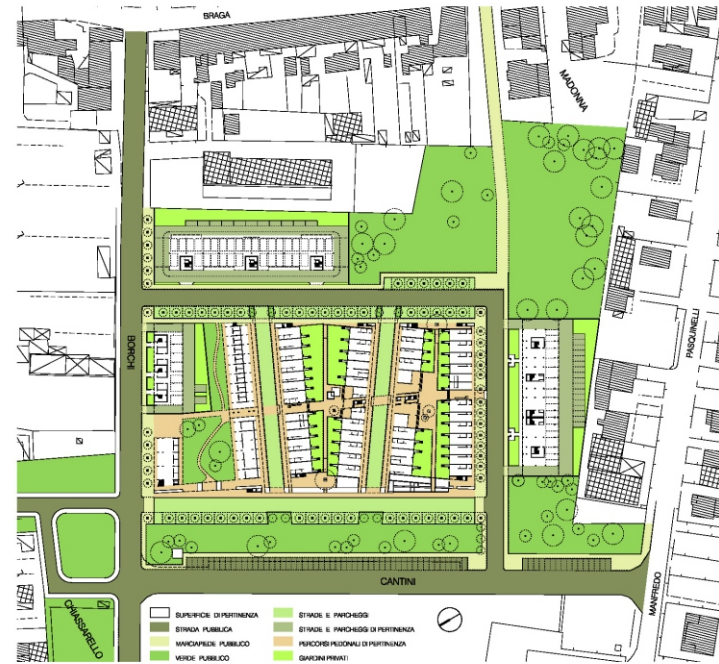
What is successful and what is not? It was successful in my point of view. The idea of private vs public was well established by having the galleries in front of the site, a public park shared by the three apartments, and giving each unit a private garden and outdoor kitchen.

How it addresses the three primary goals listed above-this project covers the first goal and the second goal. It is a simple house built with simple materials, and it develops a strong relationship between their residents because of their public and private spaces.

How it feels to live in this environment- I think the whole design is simple but very organized. I would feel very relaxed and free because of the shared spaces between the other units. Also, the easy access to each unit and without the necessity of the use of technology.

How does this precedent study fit into its environment? I think pretty well. The façade was designed according to the history of the site and the design of the units look like they belong to the site.

Any other thoughts/design principles uncovered



## Tulou Housing Guangzhou / URBANUS Architects by Iwan Baan

What is successful and what is not? It is successful. It was designed for people whose monthly income is below 1,500 yuan (USD 219) and who would be very reluctant to spend more than 200 yuan to stay at any place.

How it addresses the three primary goals listed above-this project covers the first goal and the second goal. The urban Tulou has been seen as a unique experiment in low-income housing and the transformation of vernacular dwelling to suit contemporary living environments.

How it feels to live in this environment- I think people will feel safe, however I feel that it is very enclosed, but for the people who will live in China they are used to living in small spaces. There is a lot of population living in China and I think it is a good project especially if we think about people with low income who live in unorganized areas and inhuman conditions.

How does this precedent study fit into its environment? Their design was based on the traditional Hakka Houses. This housing typology corresponds to 300-year-old houses in the south of China.

The entire structure is wrapped in a perforated concrete shell punctuated by wooden lattices that shade the balconies, giving each unit a secondary living space. The design translates the visual monotony inherent to an "e-shaped loop" with richly textured inner and outer facades.





## Via Verde – The Green Way; Bronx, New York / Dattner Architects and Grimshaw Architects

What is successful and what is not? This project won the Excellence in Affordable Housing Design Award.

How it addresses the three primary goals listed above-this project covers all the three goals. The project was carefully crafted to accommodate the scale of the existing neighborhood and adjacent housing while adding both housing and green space to a brownfield site in the South Bronx. Residents can grow their own fruits and vegetables as well as enjoy the evergreen grove and fruit orchard. In addition, photovoltaic panels are integrated into the south-facing areas of the project, providing enough energy to power all common areas and exterior lighting. Rainwater is collected on-site and recycled for irrigation of the gardens throughout the year. In addition, it promotes physical fitness; stairs are located near elevators and are designed as colorful interior spaces with natural light and ventilation.

How it feels to live in this environment- I think people will feel safe, happy and relax. They can feel free to have their own green spaces.

How does this precedent study fit into its environment? This project is a good example for the community in the Bronx. It integrates housing and health.

The project was constructed using 20% recycled materials with more than 20% of total building materials having been manufactured locally, minimizing transportation energy and supporting the local economy. In addition, more than 80% of the construction and demolition waste was recycled.



## Siheyuan

A siheyuan (Chinese: 四合院; pinyin: *sìhéyuàn*) is a historical type of residence that was commonly found throughout China, most famously in Beijing. In English, siheyuan are sometimes referred to as Chinese quadrangles. The name literally means a courtyard surrounded by buildings on all four sides.

Contemporary Western architectural practices typically involve surrounding a building by an open yard on the property. This contrasts with much of traditional Chinese architecture, which involves constructing buildings or building complexes that take up an entire property but encloses open spaces within itself. These enclosed spaces come in two forms, the:<sup>[2]</sup>

- *Courtyard* (院): The use of open courtyards is a common feature in many types of Chinese architectures. This is best exemplified in the Siheyuan, which consists of an empty space surrounded by buildings connected with one another either directly or through verandas.
- *"Sky well"* (天井): Although large open courtyards are less commonly found in southern Chinese architecture, the concept of a "open space" surrounded by buildings, which is seen in northern courtyard complexes, can be seen in the southern building structure known as the "sky well". This structure is essentially a relatively enclosed courtyard formed from the intersections of closely spaced buildings and offer small opening to the sky through the roof space from the floor up.

These enclosures serve in temperature regulation and in venting the building complexes. Northern courtyards are typically open and facing the south to allow the maximum exposure of the building windows and walls to the sun while keeping the cold northern winds out. Southern sky wells are relatively small and serves to collect rain water from the roof tops; performing the same duties as Roman impluviums, while restricting the amount of sunlight that enters the building. Sky wells also serve as vents for rising hot air, which draws cool air from the lowers stories of the house and allows for exchange of cool air with the outside.