

No. 81 China Street, Penang

(ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT)

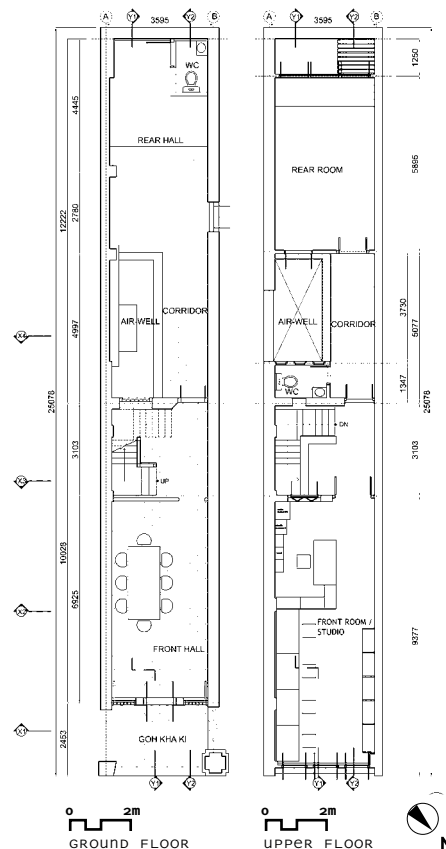
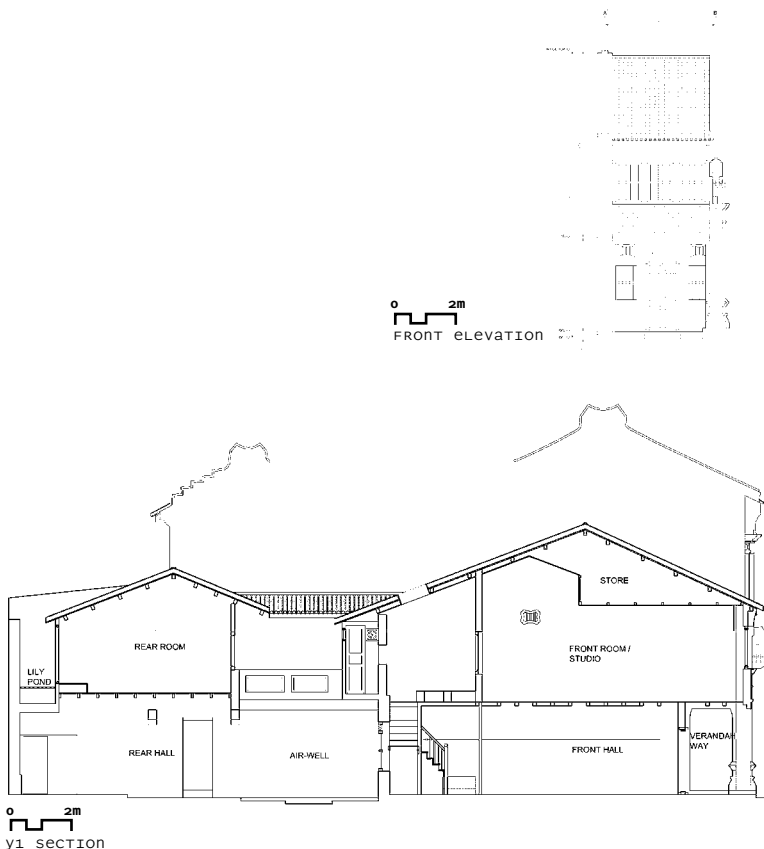
➤ No. 81 China Street is a small shophouse owned by Cheng Hoe Seah, a member of an old Chinese Society who bought the building from a revenue farmer and tin miner for extension purposes. Since the 1930's, the shophouse was rented out to a number of tenants and was previously used as a barbershop, a mamak store, and is also a place of residence for more than 60 years.

This late 19th century double-storey shophouse is narrow and short without a back alley, leaving only a door that is connected to House No. 83, which belongs to the Chinese Society. The house saw through many unrefined alterations and additions, all of which were poorly done and inflicted upon by previous tenants.

Upon the termination of tenancy agreements in 2003, Cheng Hoe Seah took the building back into his own custody with the purpose of using the ground floor as storage space.



- 1 The façade after renovation
- 2 Framed view of the airwell
- 3 View of the staircase
- 4 View of the upper floor staircase
- 5 View of the front hall
- 6 The external façade in context





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DESIGN & CONSERVATION
 Tan Yeow Wooi Culture &
 Heritage Research Studio
MAIN CONTRACTOR
 Yashi Renovation Works
ELECTRICAL WIRING
 HL Electrical & Air-Condition
 Service
AIR CONDITION FITTINGS
 Sky Air Engineering
CARPENTER FOR NEW
WINDOWS & BOOK SHELVES
 Look Chek Choi Furniture
STONE WORK
 Teik Hin Stone Factory
CLIENT
 Cheng Hoe Seah

Due to a very tight budget and Mr Cheng's simple wish for the house's function, the project started out merely to repair the damages done to the house. However, with the confirmation of a new tenant (Tan Yeow Wooi Culture & Heritage Studio), it soon saw the house revitalised as a conservation and adaptive re-use project. The shophouse's ground floor front hall is now used as a meeting hall for Mr Cheng, while the rear has been converted into a storage area. A new tenant's office occupies the first floor.

After setting the principle for restoration of the shophouse, a lot of effort was put into the sourcing of materials to recreate a sense of place which was relevant to the nature of the old shophouse, with some of the timber and tiles used are made of recycled materials. The interior of ground floor is finished with cement, which imitates the feel of terracotta tiles. The project took 7 months to complete, and was unveiled in May 2004. 