



Aga Khan Award for Architecture

Chinese Project on 2019 Shortlist for Aga Khan Award for Architecture

Master Jury to decide share of US\$ 1 million prize

Beijing, China, 25 April 2019 – The **Courtyard House Plugin**, a prefabricated modular system first developed as a prototype for installation within courtyard houses in Dashilar, in Beijing, has been shortlisted for the 2019 Aga Khan Award for Architecture. The announcement was made by Farrokh Derakhshani, Director of the Award, in a ceremony in Kazan, Russia, today.

For information about the other 19 projects on the shortlist, please see www.akdn.org/architecture and the full on-line press kit, which includes briefs on each project and high-resolution images: www.akdn.org/2019ArchitectureAward.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture is one of the oldest major awards in the field of architecture. It selects projects – from slum upgrading to high-rise “green” buildings – that not only exhibit architectural excellence but also improve the overall quality of life. The Award rewards architects, but also identifies municipalities, builders, clients, master artisans and engineers who have played important roles in the realization of a project.

“The modular plug-in both improves the residents’ living conditions and preserves the original architecture,” said Farrokh Derakhshani, Director of the Award. “The plug-in represents a radically new approach to urban upgrading in China.”

In a dense historic neighbourhood that is home to disadvantaged communities who do not have the means to renovate the buildings, the **Courtyard House Plugin** initiative aims to upgrade dilapidated structures in an adaptable and cost-effective way. It uses a prefabricated modular system that was first developed as a prototype for installation within courtyard houses in the traditionally Muslim district of Dashilar, in Beijing. The modules comprise the structure, insulation, wiring, and interior and exterior finishes in prefabricated panels. Installation and assembly takes no more than one day and does not require specialised labour. The central government approved the first two prototypes, and to date, some 15 houses have been upgraded.

The sites will now undergo a rigorous investigation by experts who visit and evaluate each project on-site. Their reports are the basis for the Master Jury’s selection of the eventual laureates. It should be noted that projects commissioned by the Aga Khan or any of the institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) are ineligible for the Award. To be eligible for consideration in the 2019 Award cycle, projects had to be completed between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2017, and should have been in use for at least one year.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture was established by the Aga Khan in 1977 to identify and encourage building concepts that successfully address the needs and aspirations of communities in which Muslims have a significant presence. The Award recognises examples of architectural excellence in the fields of contemporary design, social housing, community improvement and



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development, historic preservation, reuse and area conservation, as well as landscape design and improvement of the environment. Since the Award was launched 42 years ago, 116 projects have received the award and more than 9,000 building projects have been documented.

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Notes

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). It currently operates 1,000 or so programmes and institutions in 30 countries.. It employs approximately 80,000 people, the majority of whom are based in developing countries. The AKDN's annual budget for non-profit development activities is approximately US\$ 950 million. Its economic development arm, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED), generates annual revenues of US\$ 4.3 billion, but all surpluses generated by its project companies are reinvested in further development activities, usually in fragile, remote or post-conflict regions.