

CHINATOWN

Identity Revitalization for Winnipeg Chinatown
through Placemaking and Cultural Vitality.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

01

PRELUDE

Setting the Scenes	6-7
Global Scene First Waves of Chinese Immigrations	8-9
Urban Scene Root and History of Chinatown	10-11
Chinatown Blues	12-13
Statement of Purpose	14-15

02

DIALOGUE

Research Inquiries & Findings	16
Literature Review Sense of Place, Placelessness, Urban Vitality	16-17
Local Scene Winnipeg Chinatown	18-35
Synthesis	36-37
Urban Case Study Analysis	38-49

04

EPILOGUE

Landscape Framework	50-59
Landscape Design Intention	60-87
Reflection	88

FIGURES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	90-95
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ABSTRACT

This practicum aims to re-envision Winnipeg Chinatown through identity revitalization and placemaking. The design research focuses on re-envisioning Chinatown to celebrate the history and culture of Chinese Winnipeggers while embracing Canada's diverse mosaic. Through placemaking, the study seeks to redefine Chinatown as a distinct character district within Winnipeg's Downtown CentureVenture area and propose a series of landscape framework and design intentions to the revive urban decay around the King Street and Pacific Avenue axis.



FIGURE 1.0 "Prelude Chinatown"

01 PRELUDE: Setting the Scene

The emergence of ethnic enclaves such as Chinatown are a fascinating development within urban sceneries globally, including Europe, North America, and even Southeast Asia. Each ethnic district accentuates its fusion of cultures, localities, and authenticities that are on the fine line between tokenism and authenticity. These demarcated districts are formatted to signify the presence of ethnic minorities, which eventually developed as part of urban planning trends and became what we know as Chinatown.

Beginning from the Chinese Diaspora, Chinatown across North America and other parts of the world stems from the evolution of Chinese settlements and ethnic and systemic discrimination. The acts of discrimination and stigmatization transcend both time and border in the United States and Canada, especially within the immigration laws and policies pertaining to Chinese migration and have caused a tremendous impact on the lives of the Chinese socially and economically.

FIGURE 2.0 “Exodus of Chinese Immigration and Community.”

GLOBAL SCENE | CHINESE IMMIGRATION

The height of the gold rush in the 1850s was an era of massive Chinese international immigration as people ventured out to seek economic opportunities. San Francisco became one of the early American destinations for Chinese immigrants due to the California Gold Rush. Notably, they were instrumental in constructing the Transcontinental Railroad in the United States. Meanwhile in Canada, the Fraser River Gold Rush and the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) construction brought waves of Chinese immigrants as a bypass of San Francisco, leading to the emergence of Chinese communities across the Prairies and in the towns of central North America between the 1870s to 1900s.¹ Initially welcomed as a reservoir of cheap and often severely needed labour, Chinese immigrants faced discrimination and repressive legislation, including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (in the United States) and the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 (in Canada), which restricted their rights and removed their citizenship.² The Great Depression led to increased anti-Chinese sentiments and violence including mass murders and expulsions across the United States. Many immigrants sought refuge within ethnic enclaves, a sanctuary that became known as Chinatown, to escape persecution. The majority relocated to San Francisco’s Chinatown for security, becoming America’s first fledgling Chinatown located at the heart of San Francisco and a hub for trade and commerce. However, the 1906 earthquake and subsequent fires devastated San Francisco. The tragedy was viewed as an opportunity for the relocation of Chinatown by City Hall from its prime location.³ In contrast, the entrepreneurial Chinese residents sought a chance to rebuild Chinatown because of the advantage of a previously thriving economy providing significant income for the city through import tariffs and trade relations with Chinese Americas.⁴ Hence, the Chinese merchants as a collective restored their reputation while retaining the location at the heart of the city.

1 Gunther Baureiss and Julia Kwong, *The History of the Chinese Community of Winnipeg* (Chinese Community Committee, 1979), 2-3.
 Joseph Du, *Winnipeg Chinatown: The Revitalization of a Community*. (Winnipeg Chiantown Development Corp, 1988), 4-6.
 2 Vox, “The Surprising Reason Behind Chinatown’s Aesthetic.” May 10, 2011, YouTube Video, 1:52 to 2:56, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EiX3hTPGoCg>
 3 Ibid, 7:23 to 8:05.
 4 Ibid, 7:23 to 8:05



ARTI FICE

SERIES : SAN FRANCISCO CHINATOWN AESTHETIC



FIGURE 3.0 "Series: San Francisco Chinatown Aesthetic" Google Earth images

URBAN SCENE | Re-creation of Chinatown

Addressed in my landscape topic's course, the initial plans for the aesthetic re-creation of San Francisco's Chinatown were actualized by the proposal of a merchant named Look Tin Eli. He hired American architects to re-imagine an exoticized "theme park" version of urban China.⁵ The stereotypical conceptualization of Chinatown was the distinguishable but faux Chinese architectural characteristics. Ornamental elements such as curved eaves, colourful pantile roofs, detailed facades and Chinese pagoda gate were utilized to create a loud contrast to the rest of the city. From then onwards, San Francisco's Chinatown became a cultural and commercial hub and a tourist attraction. The transformation redefines Chinatown from an urban ghetto into an urban space with several distinctive heritage features, offering an attractive place for social interaction among city dwellers and recreating the "iconic look" of Chinatowns worldwide.⁶ Ultimately, San Francisco's Chinatown became a universal model for Chinese settlement across North America and non-western cities and a strategy formulated to preserve elements of the Chinese immigrants' culture.

Chinatown is deeply rooted and intertwined with the social history of Chinese immigrants. They continue to serve as a place of comfort, familiarity, and security for newly arrived people. However, they also represent the resilience that overcomes decades of ongoing violence, expulsions, and xenophobia. Historically, Chinatown was painted with narratives of being filthy, mysterious, and unsafe, garnering more fear and stigmatization. Still, the Chinese residents collectively fought for the survival of their community for generations.

Yet, the pandemic came with lots of sentiments and attitudes. They continue to face discrimination and stigmatization, for example, being treated as the source of Covid-19 and being targeted for their prime location. The rise of racist attacks across North America have significantly risen, mainly targeting the Asian community, and Chinatowns became the target of direct anger and violence affecting the community's safety.

⁵ Vox, "The Surprising Reason Behind Chinatown's Aesthetic." May 10, 2011, YouTube Video, 1:52 to 2:56, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EiX3hTPGoCg>

⁶ Ibid, 7:23 to 8:05.



FIGURE 4.0 "Chinatown Blues"
Collage of Newsletters about the Disappearing of
Chinatown across the United States and Canada

CHINATOWN BLUES

Across the United States and Canada, Chinatowns are disappearing and constantly facing systematic displacement due to urban planning policy, gentrification, and/or placelessness, as well as the increased prosperity and resulting mobility of the Chinese population. They face the possibility of becoming mere historical remnants preserved only in memories. The threat of displacement is particularly prevalent in densely populated cities such as LA, Boston, New York, Quebec, and others. Examples include Chinatown in Montreal and Seattle, which have been affected by the construction of freeways that cut through the neighbourhood, leading to isolation and expropriation for other developments.⁷ Meanwhile, in the Chinatowns in Vancouver and Winnipeg, the community and progressive planners successfully combated displacement and the bisection with freeways, ensuring the preservation of Chinese's character and culture, and the integrity of the downtown core. Chinatown in Quebec, on the other hand, was not retained with the construction of Autoroute Dufferin-Montmorency Highway cutting through what was once its location.

According to a 2013 study, the Asian demographic in Chinatown across the United States experienced a decline from 1990 to 2010.⁸ In the case of Washington, D.C. (an example of gentrification) and Winnipeg (an example of placelessness), the Asian demographic in both cities is evidently on a downward trend from a majority to a minority. The challenges faced by smaller or declining Chinatowns are exacerbated by difficulties in organizing community support and investments, as younger generations and Chinese people are increasingly uninterested and prefer suburban areas. Although Chinatown is a form of manifestation of racism, in the outlook, it is a symbol of identity, culture, and survival that reflects Chinese traditional values and customs. Associations like ACCT Foundation (Action! Chinese Canadians Together) and remaining interested communities are the rare advocates that are fighting to preserve Chinatowns and to support the Chinese Canadian communities. These organizations work towards preserving the physical infrastructure and historical landmarks, highlighting Chinatown contributions to the multicultural fabric of Canadian society through community outreach, cultural events, educational initiatives, and advocacy campaigns.

These acts of preservation serve as a testimony to the overall treatment towards the Chinese and other immigrants while continuing to provide a unique cultural centre and place that can showcase the Chinese community's art, history, and traditions.

7 Kathryn Mannie, "The Rise and Fall of Chinatown: The hidden History of Displacement you were never told." *Global News*. Last modified May 26, 2022. <http://globalnews.ca/news/8793341/chinatown-history-to-onto-vancouver-montreal-canada>.

8 Alana Semuels. The End of the American Chinatown. *The Atlantic*. Last modified February 04, 2019. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2019/02/americas-chinatowns-are-disappearing/581767/> Arthur Acolin and Domenic Vitiello. "Who owns Chinatown: Neighbourhood preservation and change in Boston and Philadelphia," *Urban Studies*, 55, no. 8 (April 2017): 1690-1710. <https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0042098017699366>

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Following the natural urban development process due to factors such as placelessness, gentrification, modernization, and especially the shifting social preference for sub-urbanization, downtowns are declining, and within that, many Chinatown districts across North America are experiencing substantial change and are reduced in size and importance or ultimately disappear. As a consequence, the question of “Should we allow the disappearance of Chinatown?” arises. However, this practicum proposes re-revitalizing Winnipeg’s Chinatown through the restoration of place identity in an effort to preserve the remaining cultural heritage, bring back a sense of place and nostalgia including the tradition and history of the Chinese. The intention of this research through design is to re-establish Winnipeg’s Chinatown into a more defined character district within Winnipeg’s Downtown Centureventure through placemaking (defined in the next chapter). The goal is to reverse the urban decay at the core of Chinatown by promoting the axis of King Street and Pacific Avenue and to create a cultural space by providing a sense of belonging for Chinese residents and immigrants for day-to-day activities and offering a space for cultural exchange and in return, creating economic opportunities for small businesses, restaurants, and cultural events, benefitting both the local Chinese community and the broader population.

As our society is experiencing a demographic shift and is increasingly becoming more diverse and interconnected with more migration and movement between places and more interactions between people from diverse cultural backgrounds, the role of landscape architects must be able to recognize and address the cross-cultural dynamics involved in

placemaking.⁹ Through observation and understanding of the needs and aspirations of the site and community, effective placemaking can create a ‘great’ public realm that facilitates creative patterns of use and serves as a vital community resource for people of all ages, abilities, and different social and economic backgrounds.¹⁰ Placemaking involves comprehending the construction of culture and place and the contested identities and place; it is a collaborative process to create a revitalizing urban design that acknowledges a place’s physical, social, ecological, cultural, and even spiritual qualities.¹¹ Margarita Hill emphasizes the importance of multiculturalism in landscape architecture and placemaking and by seeing the landscape through cross-cultural eyes, introduces transculturality to generate a more sensitive design that can engage with the global society.¹² From the perspective of an international student and to question the role of environmental design professionals whilst acknowledging and celebrating cross-cultural exchanges, I want to ask and address:

How to design an appropriate character for Chinatown that can celebrate the history and culture of Chinese Winnipeggers and represent the diverse fabric of Canadian society through thoughtful placemaking?

How to design and create spaces that cater to ethnically and culturally diverse communities to avoid generic solutions while ensuring inclusivity?

9 Margarita Hill, “Teaching with Culture in Mind: Cross-Cultural Learning in Landscape Architecture Education.” *Landscape Journal* 24, no. 2 (2005): 117-124

10 “What Is Placemaking?” *Project for Public Spaces*. Updated 2007, <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

11 Ibid.

12 Margarita Hill, “Teaching with Culture in Mind: Cross-Cultural Learning in Landscape Architecture Education.” *Landscape Journal* 24, no. 2 (2005): 117-124

02 DIALOGUE: Research Inquiries & Findings

The objective of the practicum is to stimulate dialogue by integrating primarily qualitative research and analysis which will include:

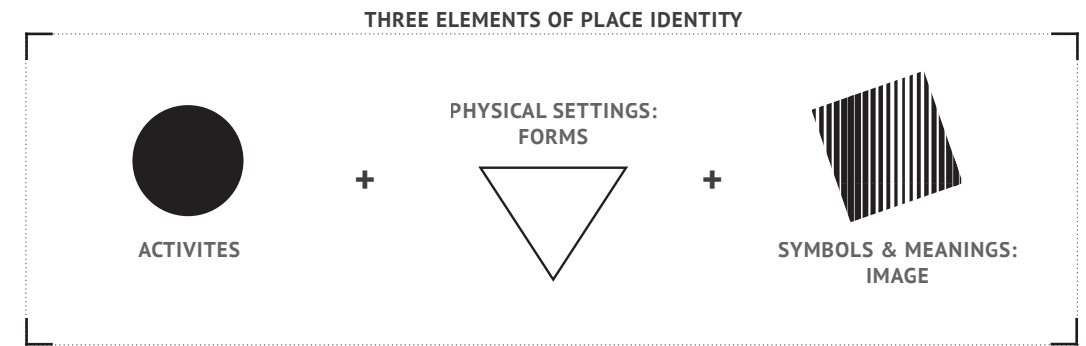
- A literature review is undertaken to establish a theoretical framework and gain insights into urban design concepts such as 'sense of place', placelessness, and urban vitality.
- Site analysis to gather information on the urban form and spatial organization of Winnipeg, Winnipeg downtown, Chinatown, and Fort Richmond Area. Various mapping strategies and walking the site with photographic exploration are utilized to better understand the urban scenes in Winnipeg Chinatown, offering a graphic analysis of the nature and distribution of the urban spaces.
- A comprehensive case study analysis is conducted, focusing on Chinatowns in San Francisco, Vancouver, Malaysia and Singapore. This analysis aims to analyze the district's legibility and the essential elements for fostering a vibrant Chinatown district within downtown.

LITERATURE REVIEW | Search for the 'Sense of Place' or Place Identity

Based on the premise of gaining an understanding of the concept of "sense of place" the research design process, a literature review was conducted referring to the work of Yi-Fu Tuan, Edward Relph, Roger Trancik, and JB Jackson to comprehend space, place, and placelessness, and the spirit of the place or genius loci in relation to the 'sense of place'.

Trancik and Tuan suggest that the conventional notion of understanding 'spaces' pertains to the physical extent of an area. However, when space is differentiated and imbued with significance and distinctions, then 'space' becomes a 'place'.¹³ Ralph further expands on this idea by suggesting that

13 Roger Trancik, *Finding Lost Space: Theories of Urban Design*. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986), 112.
Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. (Minneapolis: the University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 5,179.



▲ FIGURE 5.0 "Three Elements of Place Identity"

the identity of the place comprises three essential components: the activities, the physical setting, and the symbolism or meaning. He elaborates that the 'sense of place' arises from the physical environments when given a contextual meaning derived from a cultural or regional influence and the interplay of experiences, activities, and people's personal connection with a particular space.¹⁴ In essence, place identity, akin to Lynch's notation, is a combination of people's perception of place, which forms the mental representation or 'image' built from memories and experience through sensories.¹⁵ To further understand the 'sense of place' J.B. Jackson "...translated (the sense of place) as 'the genius of a place', meaning its influence and... of describe the atmosphere to a place, the quality of its environment. Nevertheless,...certain localities have an attraction that gives us a certain indefinable sense of well-being that we want to return to time and again.¹⁶ Hence, it is the awareness of time, the hidden rhythm of a community, and the shared experiences resulting from the regular recurrence of events and celebrations that contribute to and reinforce the 'sense of place'. Moreover, people have an inherent tendency to deliberately search for out-of-place or authentic experiences which mark a place unique.

However, when an area lacks identity or identifiable spaces and becomes indistinguishable from other places, it loses its "sense of place" and becomes "placeless"¹⁷; it becomes bland and homogenous with no distinct characteristics. The eventual re-occurring scenario of "Placelessness" can be found in the modern approach, especially in the mid-century development of cities and suburbs because of the adoption of non-place-specific patterns in urban planning and buildings. Therefore historical preservation is integral to maintaining a sense of identity or locality as people are drawn into authentic places and experiences.

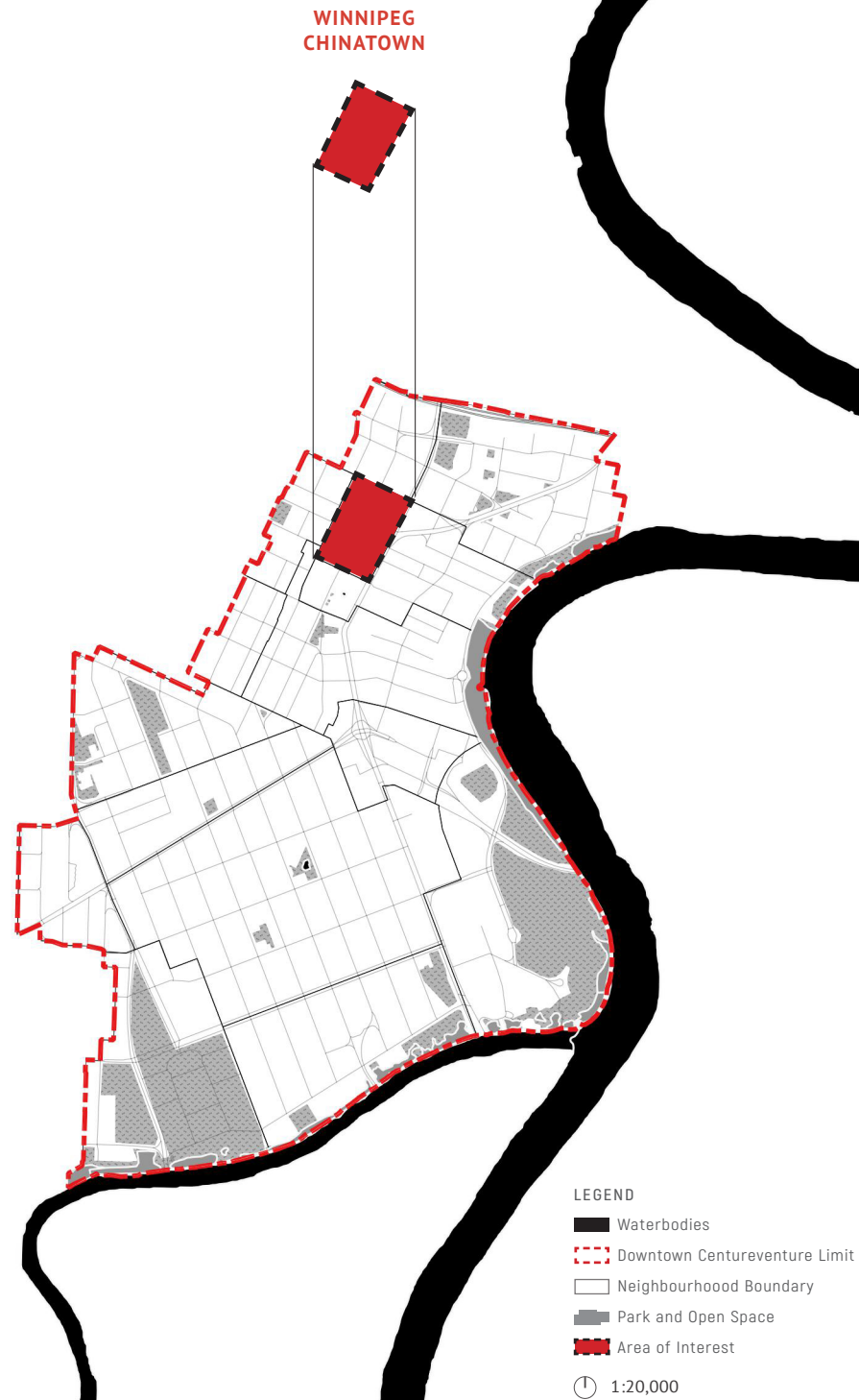
14 Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness*. (London: Pion Limited, 1976), 44-45,63.

15 Ibid, 47-48
Kevin Lynch, *Image of the City*. (London: The MIT Press, 1960), 6-8.

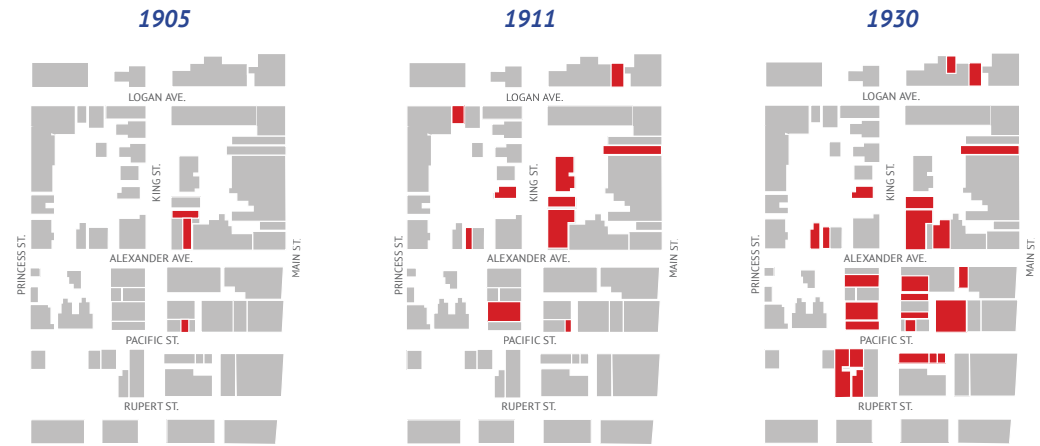
16 Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 157-158.

17 Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness*. (London: Pion Limited, 1976), 79-80.

CONTEXT MAP | AREA OF INTEREST



▲ FIGURE 6.0 “Context Map: Winnipeg Chinatown”



▲ FIGURE 7.0 “Winnipeg Chinatown: Chinese Owned Buildings 1905-1930” ⌚

LOCAL SCENE | WINNIPEG CHINATOWN

The first acknowledgement of Winnipeg’s Chinatown was in 1905, with three Chinese businesses established along Main Street and Pacific Street. The area is described as a place of mixed-use with mainly factories, warehouses, and apartments.¹⁸ Around 1911, Winnipeg Chinatown eventually took on its distinctive character, with the district’s core remaining on the axis of King Street and Alexander Avenue.¹⁹ However, due to the passing of the Chinese Immigration Exclusion Act in 1923, Winnipeg’s Chinatown remained stagnant throughout the 1920s, resulting in the dispersal of Chinese-owned businesses along King Street and Alexander Avenue in the 1930s. Eventually, the heart of Chinatown moved from the intersection of King and Alexander to the intersection of King and Pacific.

Since 1971, Winnipeg’s Chinatown, particularly the block of James Street, has seen various revitalization efforts, including the construction of a seniors housing block, low-income housing complex, community center, office building, Chinese Garden, and a ‘Pai-lau’ or Chinese gateway. All of these structures still stand today, serving as the entrance and symbolic representation of Winnipeg Chinatown. The latest initiatives are the construction of the housing development Peace Tower, Soho Flats, and the expansion of the Red River College with the development of the Social Innovation Centre. The Marketlands project is the next envisioned plan, on the site of the former Public Safety Building, part of the revitalization towards the south end of the neighborhood.

18 Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness*. (London: Pion Limited, 1976), 79-80.

19 Gunther Baureiss and Julia Kwong. *The History of the Chinese Community of Winnipeg* (Chinese Community Committee. 1979), 31-32



FIGURE 8.1
"Figure-Ground"



FIGURE 8.2
"Chinese Associated Building"



FIGURE 8.3
"Building Type"

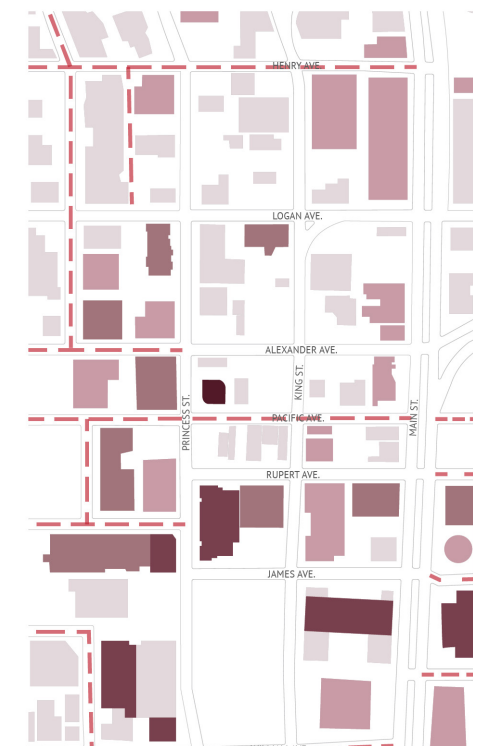


FIGURE 8.4
"Circulation and Building Heights"

▲ FIGURE 8.1-8.4 "Winnipeg Chinatown: Figure Ground Analysis" 🕒

SITE ANALYSIS

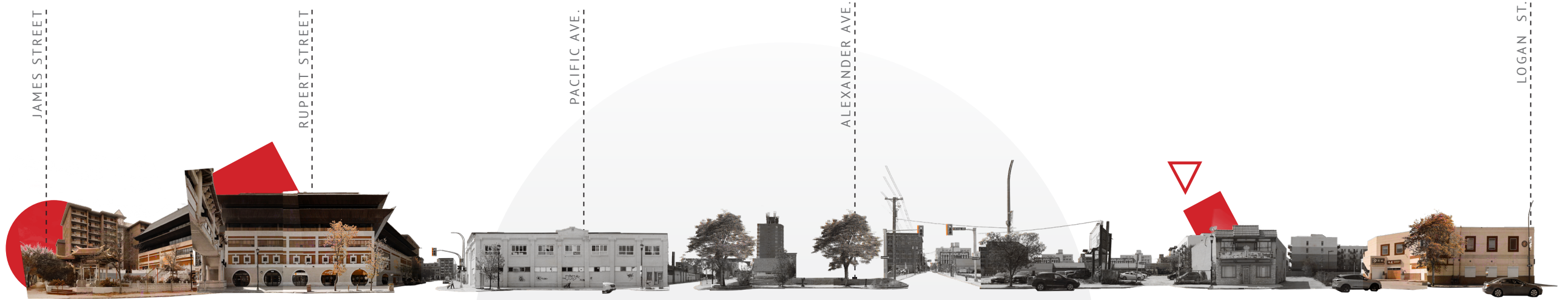
The foremost problem and concern identified is the urban decay at the core of Chinatown along the axis of King Street and Pacific Avenue. The dispersal of Chinese-owned businesses (see Fig 8.2) and the proliferation of abandoned or vacant buildings (see Fig 8.3) are evident at the neighbourhood's core, contributing to losing its identity and grittiness. The noticeable gaps or antispaces of vacant land, surface parking, and the overall lack of cohesiveness of building types and densities had led to in Winnipeg's Chinatown losing its presence as a defined character district within the downtown Centureventure

area. Other concerns include the lack of local economical activity within the community, poor infrastructure, and large gaps resulting in a lack of visual cohesion and pedestrian links to other districts. Hence, Winnipeg Chinatown is on the verge of placelessness, leading to the district becoming more void than solid - more space than place (see Fig 8.1). Furthermore, the historical identity is limited as one of the key anchors, the Shanghai Restaurant, was demolished. Only a few such buildings remain such as the Mandarin Building and the Ching Wu Athletic Association Building. However, the only current notable and identifiable

landmarks in Chinatown are Kum Koon Garden and the Sun Wah Supermarket. Besides these main commercial activities, the district occasionally serves as a social center that provides places for cultural activities such as the annual Folklorama, Chinese New Year, the Mid-autumn Festival, and Night Market, which seek to provide a sense of identity and place.

Additionally, it is worth noting that:

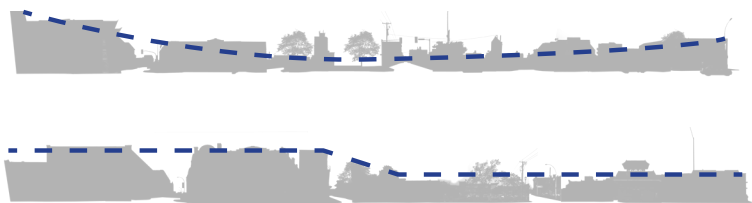
- Princess Street has the potential to become more of a residential street.
- Rupert Avenue and James Avenue within Chinatown District are often temporarily adopted for events.
- Missed opportunity on King Street with the Chinese Gate as a main commercial street.
- Building types within Chinatown are primarily industrial, civic use, warehouse or vacant.
- Chinatown contains a number of social support facilities such as Siloam Mission and Salvation army.



▶ KING STREET - LEFT



▶ KING STREET - RIGHT



LEGEND

- COLOR - OCCUPIED BUILDINGS
- GREYSCALE - VACANT BUILDINGS & OPEN SPACES
- ACTIVITIES - WHERE PEOPLE GATHERED
- FORMS - ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST / HISTORICAL BUILDING
- SYMBOLS & MEANINGS - CHINATOWN ARTIFICE
- URBAN VOID

ELEVATION TRANSECT | URBAN SCENE AT KING STREET

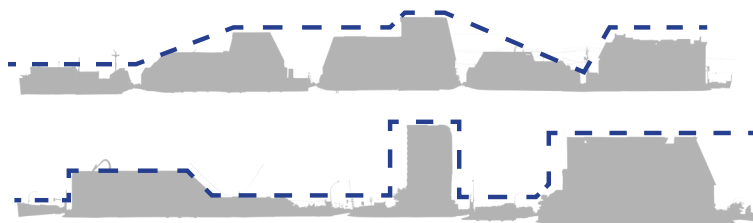
Portraying the present urban street on what is supposedly the main street in the Chinatown district, the transect conveys an impression of emptiness and vacancies, contributing to the ambience of abandonment. Overall, low density manifests with a lack of landmarks and notable architectural features. Additionally, buildings are of a limited height, with the tallest building serving as the entrance along with the Chinese Gateway.



▶ PRINCESS STREET - LEFT



▶ PRINCESS STREET - RIGHT



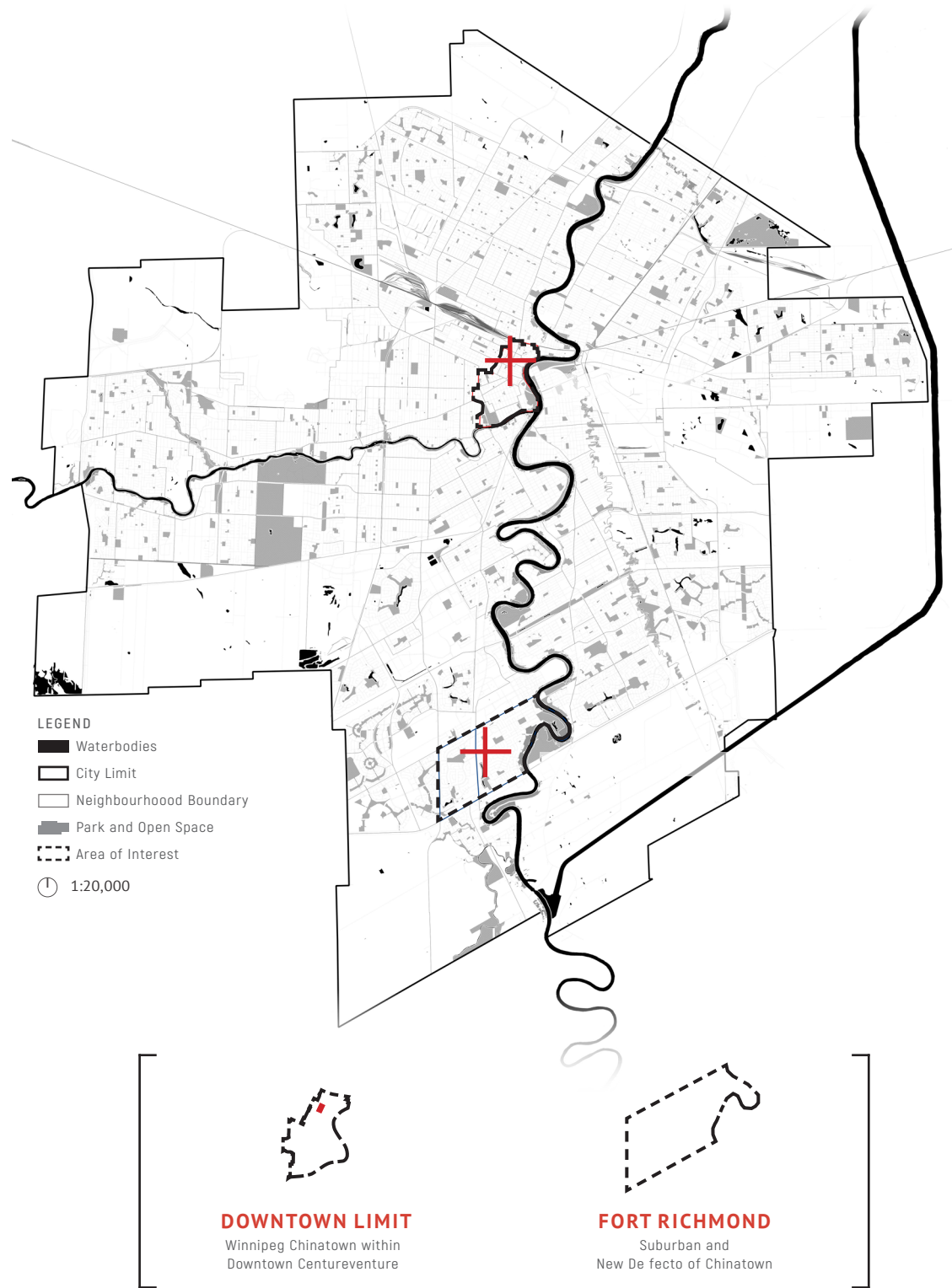
LEGEND

- COLOR - OCCUPIED BUILDINGS
- GREYSCALE - VACANT BUILDINGS & OPEN SPACES
- ACTIVITIES - WHERE PEOPLE GATHERED
- ▽ FORMS - ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST / HISTORICAL BUILDING
- ◆ SYMBOLS & MEANINGS - CHINATOWN ARTIFICE

ELEVATION TRANSECT | URBAN SCENE AT PRINCESS STREET

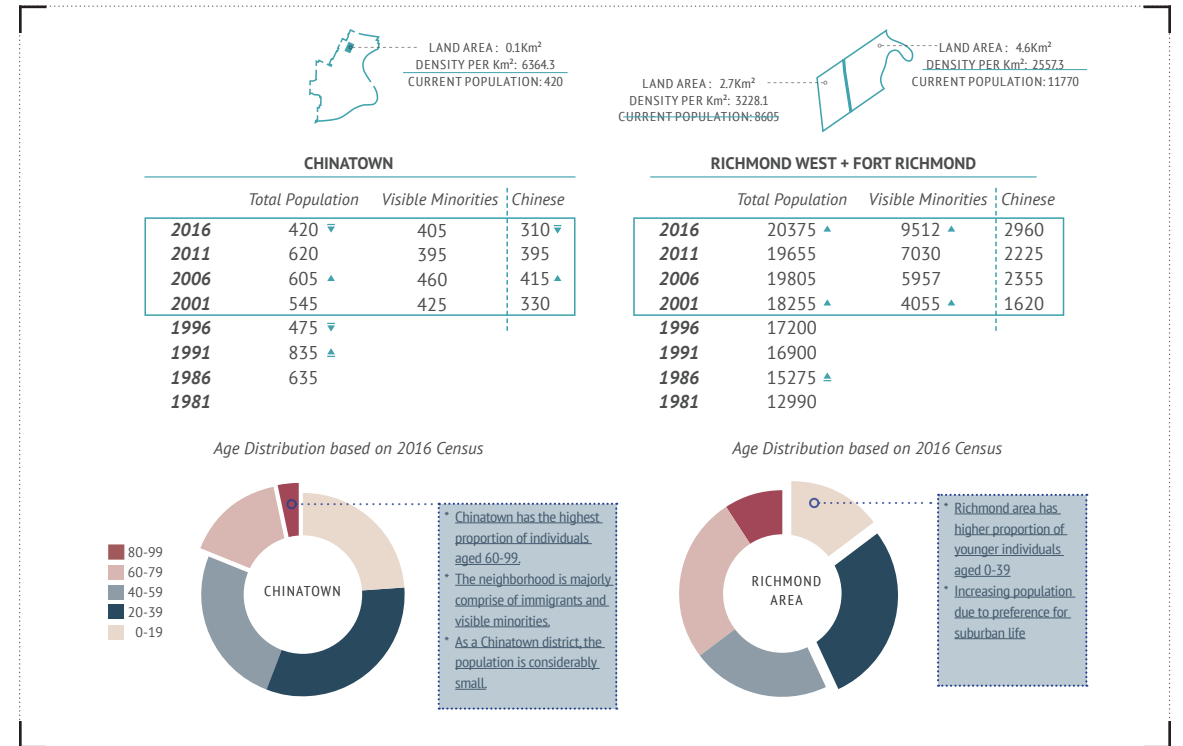
Princess Street features both older and recently constructed residential buildings. The street exhibits diverse heights spanning from high-rises to single-floor structures, including the distinctive Chicago School Style (of Richardson Romanesque Warehouse) architecture. The street is lined with a mix of uses, incorporating commercial spaces on the ground floor and office spaces above, although primarily residential. This combination contributes to a varied and dynamic urban scene along Princess Street.

CONTEXT MAP | CHINATOWN + FORT RICHMOND



▲ FIGURE 9.0 “Context Map: Winnipeg Chinatown & Fort Richmond”

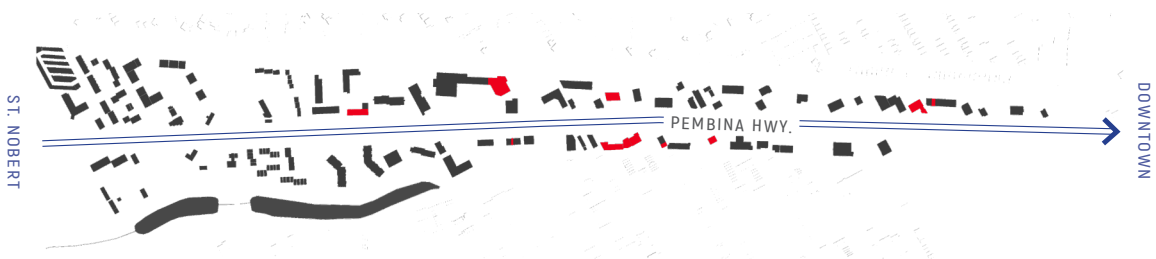
SITE ANALYSIS | CURRENT WINNIPEG CHINATOWN



▲ FIGURE 10.0 “Population Trend Study | Winnipeg & Fort Richmond Area”

DEMOGRAPHIC

Chinatown’s demographics derived from the 2016 Census reveal a downward trend, which is reflected in the closing of businesses and the general loss of buildings over the last 15 years. The neighbourhood primarily consists of immigrants and visible minorities, serving as a transition place for people or newcomers with limited means to establish themselves. The Census shows that Chinatown residents belong to various income levels and ethnic groups, which could encourage a more diverse and multicultural community. Just as Chinatown offers the first stop for first-generation immigrants, the demographic survey shows that Chinatown comprises a higher proportion of individuals aged 60-99. In contrast, the Fort Richmond area experiences a continual increase in ethnic Chinese residents, with a higher proportion of younger individuals aged 0-39. This comparison signifies the younger generations’ preference for suburban living and increased mobility. It also hints at the decentralization trend, with the preference of shifting to the suburbs as the south provides a safe environment in comparison. With the increasing number of Chinese enterprises opened along the Pembina Strip, Fort Richmond is becoming a new de facto Chinatown, rendering a visit to Chinatown unnecessary as goods and services can be obtained in the south end.

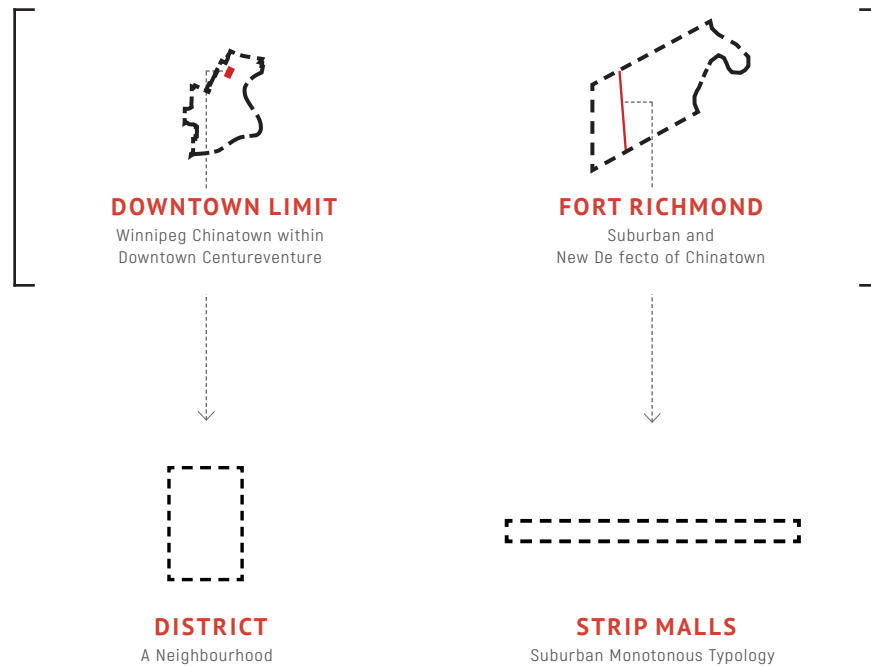


LEGEND

- COLOR - CHINESE-OWNED BUSINESSES
- GREYSSCALE - BUSINESSES
- ◆ SYMBOLS & MEANINGS - CHINATOWN ARTIFICE

ELEVATION TRANSECT | URBAN SCENE AT FORT RICHMOND

A prominent commercial strip in Winnipeg, Pembina Highway has grown sporadically and predominantly consisted of 1-2 storey buildings until recent years. It currently consists a series of commercial strip malls (a common trend across North America) to cater to adjacent neighbourhood developments. It mainly comprises a mix of fast-food, retail establishments and an increase in the number of residential buildings along with corporate and medical services buildings, prompting a shift to a more suburban character. Commercial strips like Pembina Highways are emerging as competitive alternative locations to places like the traditional Chinatown. Yet, it lacks the presence of plazas or cohesive open spaces for gathering.



CONNECTION TO FORT RICHMOND

The key distinction between the Old Chinatown District in Downtown and the new de facto Chinatown at Fort Richmond lies in the former's nostalgic aspects of preserving the tradition and memories of the Chinese immigrants since the 1950s. However, the original Old Chinatown falls short in having the essential strip of businesses at its core, in contrast to Fort Richmond's existing and more vibrant economic hub. Notably, the primary attractions within the old district include the Kum Koon Garden and Dim Sum Place, which provide venues for hosting significant events and banquets, along with programming of cultural celebrations and festivals to attract people to Chinatown. However, the food scene in the area falls short when compared to the diverse array of Chinese and other restaurants available along Pembina Highway. Nevertheless, both the new and old Chinatowns grapple with a lack of authenticity and identity in architecture and urban design, prompting contemplation on the evolving concepts of authenticity and identity amidst changing cultural landscapes.



▲ FIGURE 11.0 “Winnipeg Chinatown Characteristics”

CHARACTERISTICS

As a neighbourhood that accommodates new immigrants seeking to establish themselves, Chinatown is a transition place for people or newcomers with limited means to develop themselves. This further explains Chinatown's coexistence with its proximity to essential social services catering to marginalized and lower-income populations. Support organizations such as Siloam Mission, Main Street Project, and the Salvation Army have established a presence nearby, defining a part of Chinatown's characteristics to an extent. Similar to Chinatowns in places like Montreal and Vancouver, they are “bearing the brunt of the high number of homeless people in the city.”²⁰ The prevalent issues of homelessness and other problematic individuals are prominent throughout downtown and especially in Chinatown, affecting the overall safety perceptions in the neighbourhood, which becomes a challenge to the growth and development of Chinatown as well as the downtown as a whole.

20 Grillo, Matt. “Chinatown residents renew plea to Montreal mayor to address homelessness and crime in CHinatown.” *CTV Montreal News*. Last modified Sept 18, 2023. <https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/chinatown-residents-renew-plea-to-montreal-mayor-to-address-homelessness-crime-1.6562231>

Fig 12.1 - Malaysia



Fig 12.2 - Singapore



Fig 12.3 - Thailand



Fig 12.4 - North America

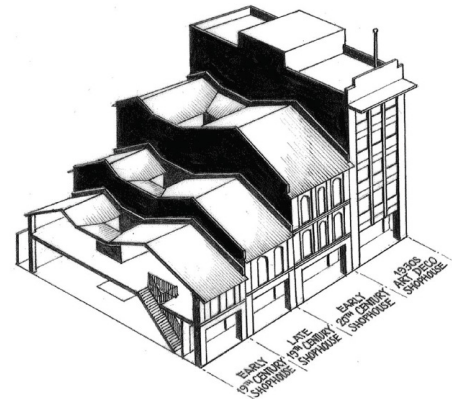


Fig 12.15 - Typical Shophouses

▲ FIGURE 12.1 - 12.5 “Typical Shophouses Archetype in Chinatown”

ARCHITECTURE

The social fabric of Chinatown influences the main housing archetype, which is manifested as ‘Social Housing’ - a fusion of Chinese regional Asian Shophouses with Western construction styles and techniques.²¹ This archetype gained prominence and later flourished as an iconic trend in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and North America. Originally conceived as a hub for socialising and a casual space for trading among acquaintances, ‘Social Housing’ eventually expanded into a structured institution offering vital services like welfare support, social security, job assistance, and affordable housing.²² Through these multifaceted initiatives, Social Housing played a pivotal role in fostering a sense of belonging and community among its members, evidently in Chinatowns like San Francisco and Vancouver.

However, this archetype is not influential in Winnipeg while the aesthetic and character of Chinatown still reflects the ‘theme park’ trend set forth by San Francisco. A closer examination of the architectural forms (see Fig 13.0) within Winnipeg’s Chinatown reveals a scarcity of historical structures. The demolition of the Shanghai Restaurant, once a significant landmark, and the Ching Wu Athletic Association building represented the architecture type in this context. Meanwhile only a handful of historical buildings, such as the McLaren Hotel and Salvation Army Building, still stand. The symbolic characteristics of the street furnishings, signage, and landmarks, such as the Cultural Mandarin Building, the Chinese Garden, and the Chinese Gate, serve as a threshold for entering Chinatown. These observations raise questions in the exploration of preserving or bringing out the ‘sense of identity’ for the future of Chinatown amidst the changing cultural landscape.

21 Kelty McKinnon and Inge Roecker, “Urban Acupuncture: A Methodology for the Sustainable Rehabilitation of Society Buildings in Vancouver’s Chinatown into Contemporary Housing.” *CMHC ERP Report*. City of Vancouver. 2006. 48-49

22 Ibid, 49

SHANGHAI RESTAURANT (DEMOLISHED)

A two-storey brick building built in 1883. One of the original configuration contains 7 retail spaces on the main floor, while the second floor is dedicated to apartments.

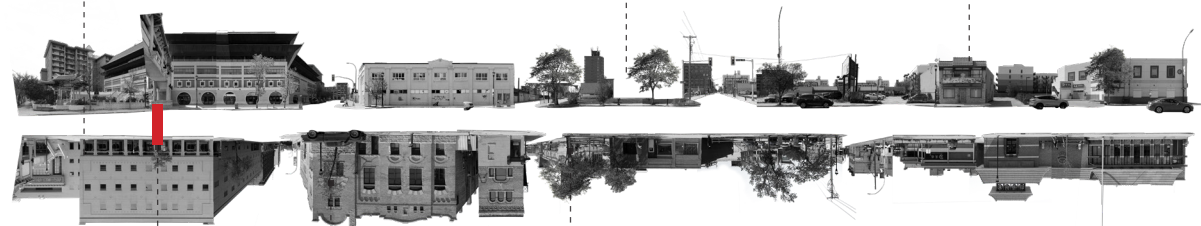
- 1883-1886 - Occupied by Winnipeg City Council (Renamed Robert Block and later Coronation Block)
- 1940s-2011 - Home to the Shanghai Restaurant
- 2012 - Building was demolished (to be replaced with seniors' housing)



THE CHINESE GARDEN



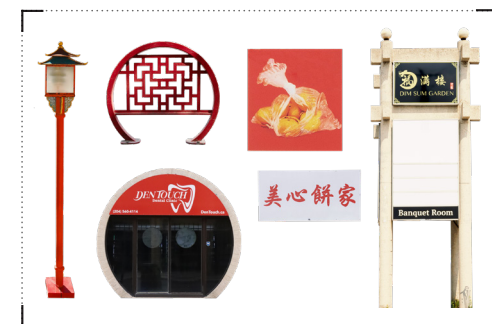
VACANT BUILDING



▼ CHING WU ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



▼ MCLAREN HOTEL

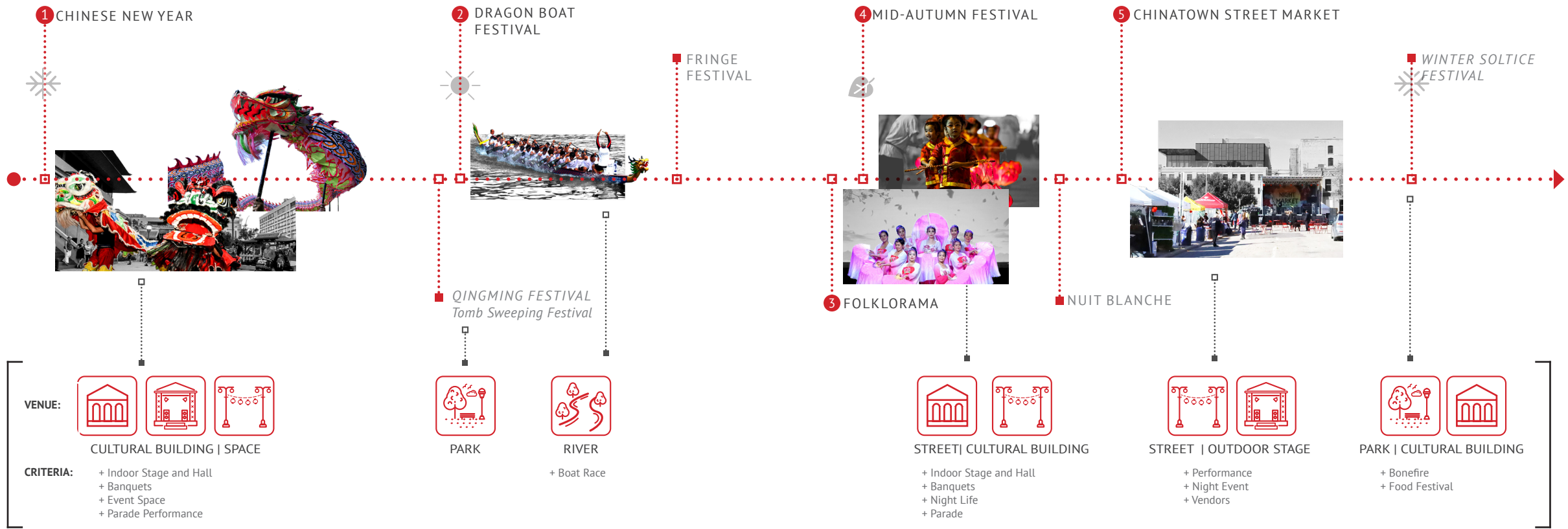


FURNITURE & SIGNAGES

▼ SALVATION ARMY BUILDING

▲ FIGURE 13.0 “Winnipeg Chinatown: Form, Symbol & Meaning”
Collection of architecture forms and style at Winnipeg Chinatown. NTS.

LEGEND
▼ HISTORICAL BUILDING



▲ FIGURE 14.0 “Seasonal Cultural Events: Timeline and Space Settings”

<p>① CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION</p> <p>Occurrence: February Venue: Chinese Cultural Centre</p> <p>About: Celebration to bring forth luck and prosperity to a New Year. A time of year to feast and to visit family member.</p> <p>Featuring: Firecrackers, Fireworks, Red Clothes and Decoration, Performance Shows, Lion Dances, Dragon Dances, and more.</p>	<p>④ MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL</p> <p>Occurrence: August 15th Venue: Pavilions (Assigned venue per Culture)</p> <p>About: One of the four traditional festivals of China. A day of family reunion served with mooncake, a dessert pastry traditionally eaten during the Moon Festival.</p> <p>Featuring: Mooncake demonstration, music, dance, crafts, story time, and learning about the customs and traditions celebrated during this festival.</p>
<p>② THE RIVER CITY DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL</p> <p>Occurrence: Setember Venue: Manitoba Canoe & Kayak Center (80 Churchill Dr)</p> <p>About: The annual event started in 1996 and has since grown to a 50 participating teams each year.</p> <p>Featuring: The Red River Dragon Boat Festival is unique for its pursuit race format around the course. Manitoba School Dragon Boat Challenge is a competitive war canoe event between teams from different schools.</p>	<p>⑤ CHINATOWN STREET/NIGHT FESTIVAL</p> <p>Occurrence: September/October 2 Day Events Venue: Winnipeg's Historical Chinatown (120 King Street)</p> <p>About: Open-air market to reintroducing Chinatown and the spirit of the place, and reclaim the safe space in the public realm,.</p> <p>Featuring: Merchant Market, Multicultural Performances, Chinese Kung Fu, Chinese Dance, Food trucks/ stalls, Mahjong, Game Area and more.</p>
<p>③ FOLKLORAMA</p> <p>Occurrence: Early August 2 Week Event Venue: Pavilions (Assigned venue per Culture)</p> <p>About: A festival with 40 venues to present and celebrate the Canada's diverse culture, ethnic heritage of people and food. Each pavilion presents a show.</p> <p>Featuring: Cultural song and dance, along with trademark ethnic cuisine and a cultural display, and more.</p>	<p>OTHER CHINESE ANNUAL FESTIVALS:</p> <p>Spring Festival Parade (Chunjie) Lantern Festival (Yuanxiao jie) Winter Soltice Festival</p> <p>OTHER EXTERNAL EVENTS:</p> <p>Nuit Blanche Fringe Festival</p>

SEASONAL CULTURAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING

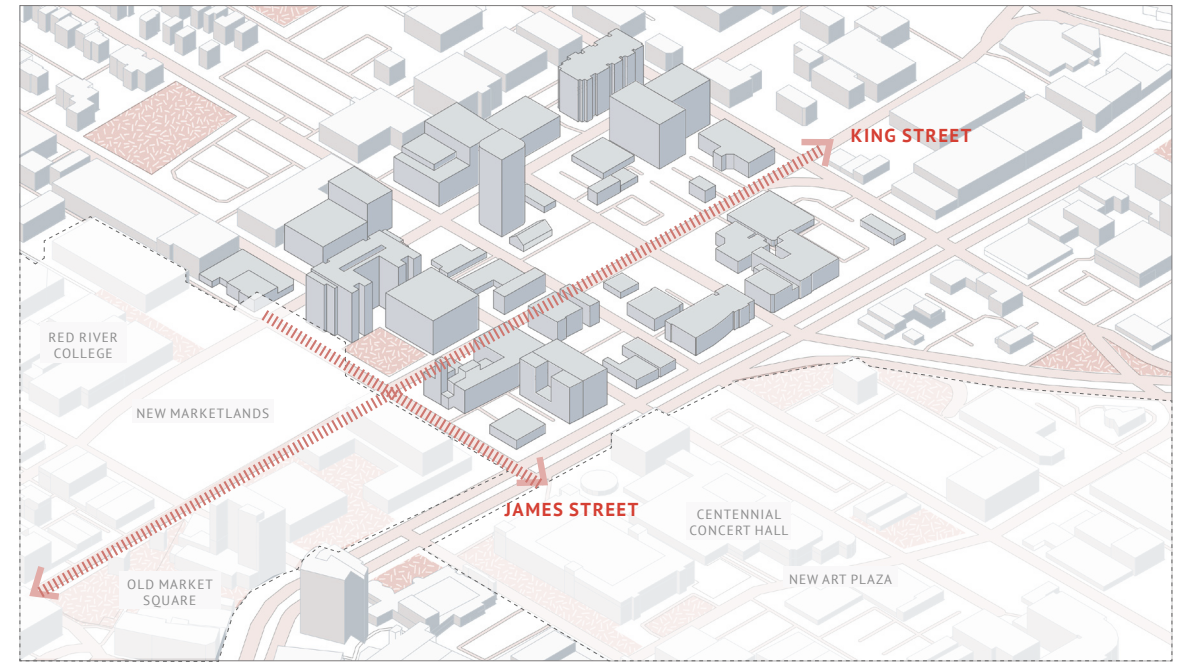
Cultural activities such as the Annual Folklorama, Chinese New Year, Mid-autumn Festival, and the Night Market events significantly shape the sense of identity and belonging within Winnipeg Chinatown. By deconstructing the events and analyze the venue settings and necessary criteria, it reveals a common need for versatile spaces, including indoor and outdoor stages for performances, along with temporary street closures to accommodate vendors, markets, parades, and various activities

The programming of Chinese festivals and events caters to a diverse audience. It acts as a 'cultural celebration' for Winnipeg's Chinese residents to honour their heritage and a 'cultural exchange' in connecting the Chinatown community with the broader city. Much like Folklorama, the aim is to promote understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives while preserving and passing down cultural traditions to future generations and fostering community engagement.

It is important to note that each festival has unique origins and customs, reflecting Chinese culture's rich traditions and values. The Chinese festivals are celebrated outdoors, often spanning streets adorned with parade-like festivities. Grand performances like the Lion Dance or the Dragon Dance are performed outdoors and indoors to bring blessings and prosperity. Streets are often illuminated with lanterns or host lantern parades to signify a symbolic release from the past and a celebration of a new future. Accompanied by street vendors and food trucks, these festivals create lively, festival-like atmospheres during both daytime and nighttime.



▲ FIGURE 15.0 "Mapping the infra-and-social structure of Winnipeg"



▲ FIGURE 16.0 "Stronger Street Hierarchy"

SYNTHESIS: MAPPING INFRA & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

When exploring the present and future infrastructure and social dynamics of Winnipeg Chinatown, its connectivity to three distinct neighbourhoods—the Exchange District, the Centennials, and the Shed—becomes evident. Events and programming predominantly unfold along specific streets and areas: King Street, Arthur Street, and Old Market Square in the Exchange District; Concert Hall and theatres in Centennials; and True North Square and Canada Life Center in the Sheds. Within Chinatown, these recurring events often lead to the temporary closure of Rupert Avenue and James Avenue or at venues like the Chinese Garden and the Cultural Dynasty Building/Cultural Chinese Centre.

Moreover, the significance of existing and upcoming public spaces such as Marketlands, New Art Plaza, and Odeon Parks emerges as pivotal landmarks shaping downtown Winnipeg's future. They play a crucial role in bridging the gap between the Shed districts and Chinatown, between the northern and southern parts of downtown. Meanwhile, the new Art Plaza, integral to the Centennial Cultural redevelopment plan, will establish an east-west connection to the waterfronts.

Therefore, James Avenue and King Street become part of the strategic and vital thoroughfares to connect the districts (See Fig. 16). However, the critical challenges are rooted in the absence of a commercial street, a fundamental component essential for the flourishing of Chinatown in other cities and in the Fort Richmond area. This absence poses a significant threat to the current status of Winnipeg Chinatown and questions its existence.



FIGURE 17.0 "Malaysia Chinatown"

DIALOGUE | URBAN CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Four distinct Chinatowns in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, San Francisco, and Vancouver are analyzed as case studies to understand the district's legibility and the essence of fostering a vibrant Chinatown district within downtown. The analysis is based on three main criteria:

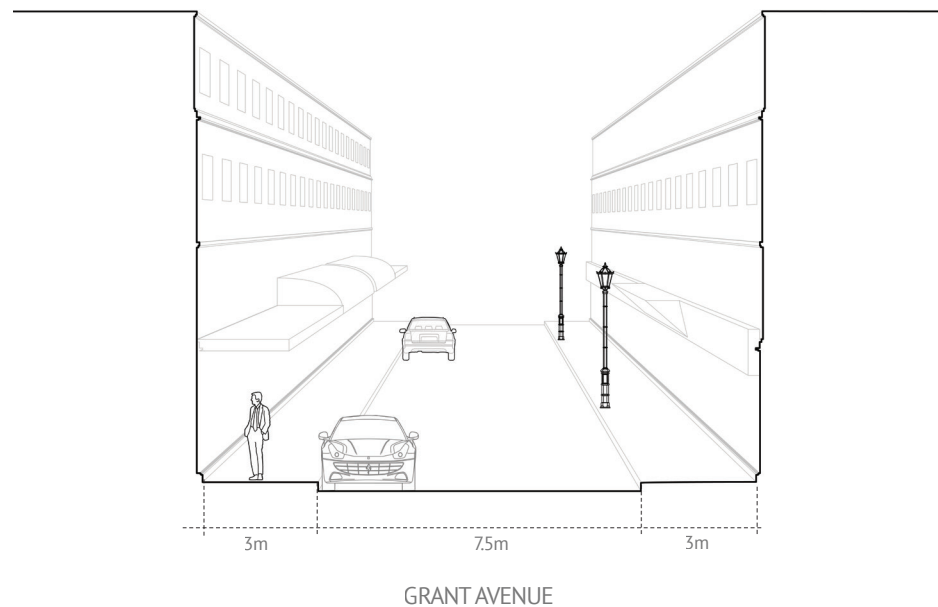
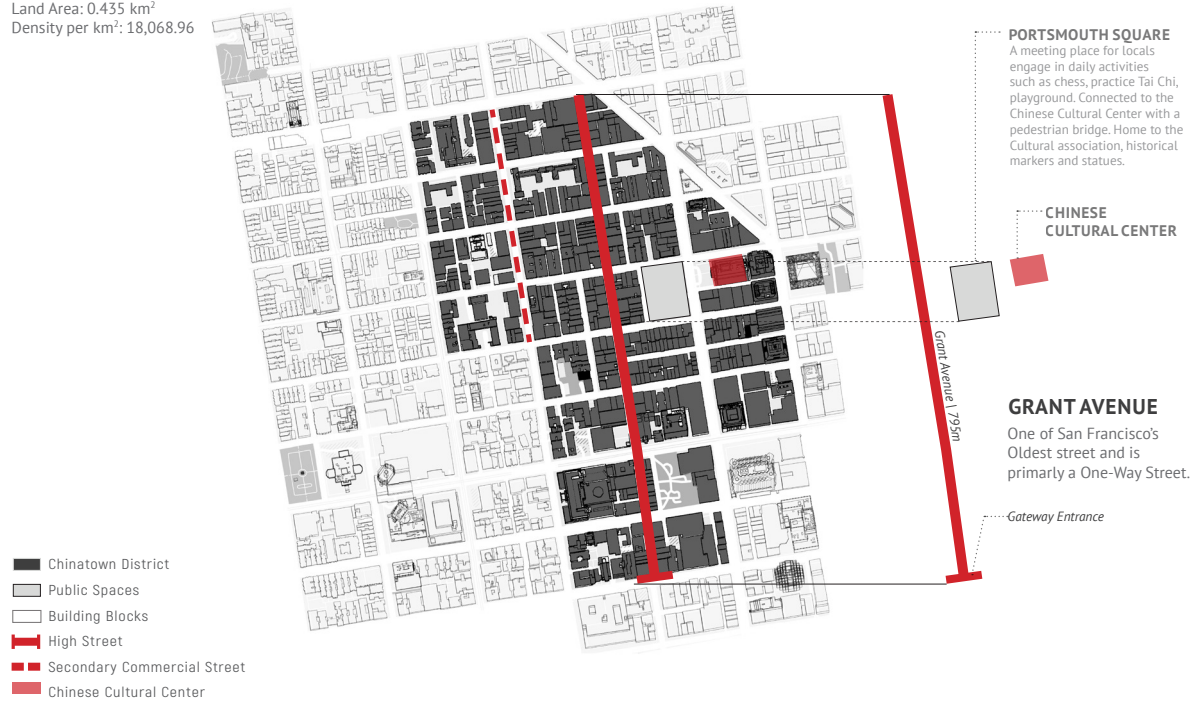
1. Social Identity: encompassing density and activities.
2. Spatial Structure & Type: involving landmarks, primary streets, building functions/ land-use (mixed-use)
3. Enclosure: the ratio of street width to vertical elements such as buildings. The proportion of street walls and skyviews determines the enclosure level.

The investigation incorporates on-site visits and analysis through tools such as Google Earth and online resources. These cities exhibit diverse populations, socioeconomic structures, and scale/size of the district. Similarly, these cities are culturally diverse, with Chinese being one of the significant minorities in each country.

SAN FRANCISCO

Californai | United State

Population: 7,860
 % City Population: 0.91%
 Land Area: 0.435 km²
 Density per km²: 18,068.96



CASE STUDY | San Francisco

San Francisco Chinatown presents a dichotomy of authenticity and artifice, with one of its iconic gate entrances at the intersection of Grant Avenue and Bush Street. Grant Avenue offers a bustling street stretching eight blocks, establishing itself as Chinatown's main tourist artery. Running parallel is Stockton Street, serving as the quieter but more authentic counterpart that Chinese residents frequent for their shopping needs, offering a glimpse into a more authentic atmosphere.

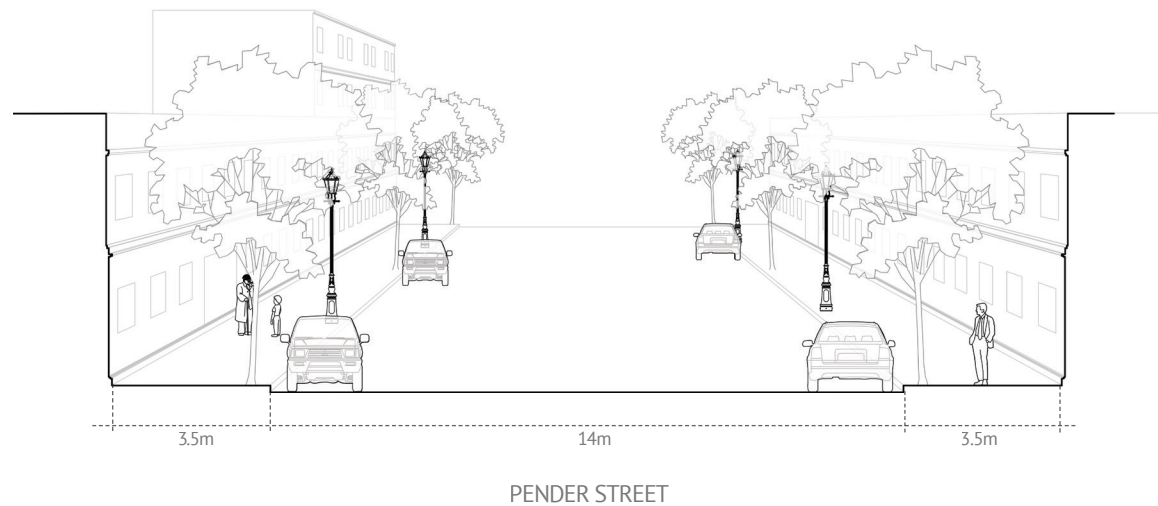
Portsmouth Square and St. Mary Square provide open green spaces for the residents to gather for daily activities such as tai chi, chess, and more. Additionally, the street offers spaces to host events such as street fairs and celebration festivals. A series of landmarks found across the districts, such as the Chinese-American War Memorial, the Statue of Sun Yat-sen, Old St. Mary's Cathedral, the iconic artifice building Sing Chong, and more. Grant Avenue's building height and street width are in a 1:1 ratio, within the recommended for comfortable human-scale streets.

Regarding the essential components of good urban vitality, San Francisco has diverse land uses throughout the portion of Broadway along Chinatown. Most streets are mixed-use buildings with retail spaces on the ground floor and housing above. While the architecture spans various eras and styles, its urban fabric maintains continuity and consistency within various buildings. Overall, it is a much denser and compact living area with 18,068.96 residents per km².

▲ FIGURE 18.1 "Case Study | San Francisco Chinatown Plan & Section"

VANCOUVER
British Columbia | Canada

Population: 3,378
% City Population: 0.91%
Land Area: 0.127 km²
Density per km²: 26,598.43



CASE STUDY | Vancouver

Vancouver Chinatown is North America's third-largest Chinatown. Clan associations were formed to help newcomers assimilate into Canada with the help of programming, funding, and social housing was created to provide the support. This has influenced many of the archetypal buildings found in Vancouver Chinatown.

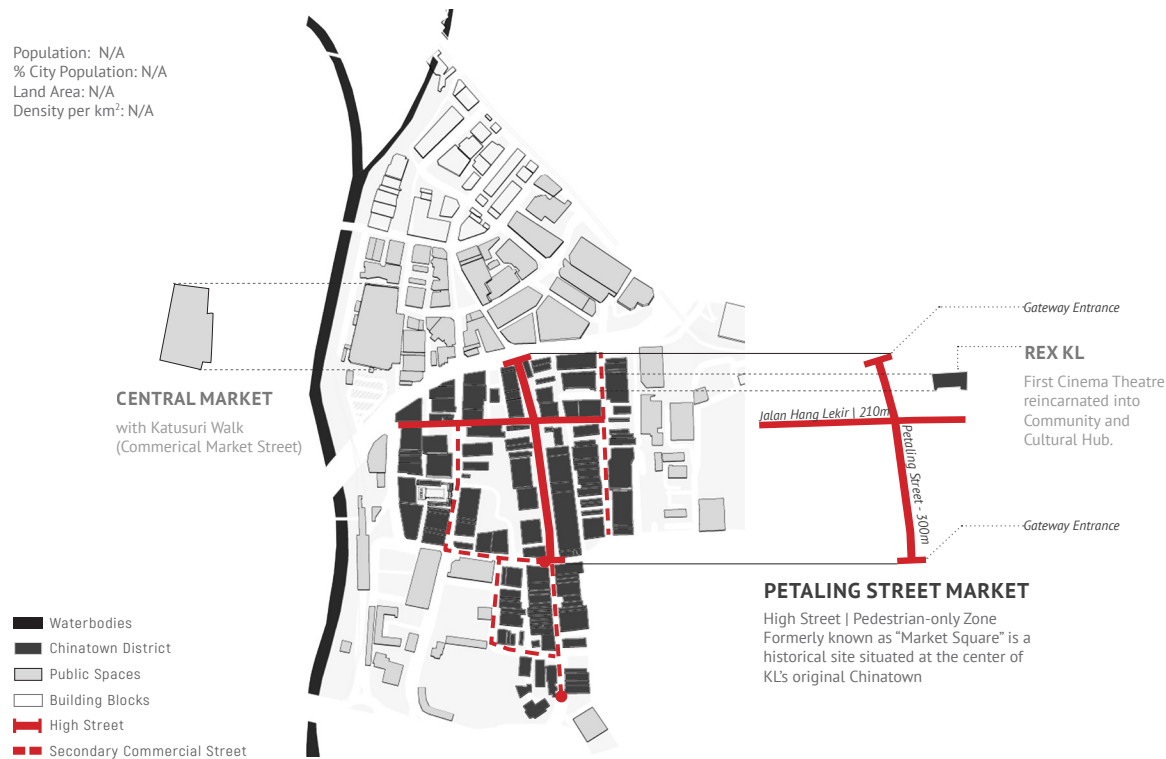
Following the traditional 1880s grid patterns, most two to four storey buildings provide commercial, institutional, and residential space. The main commercial street is Pender Street, while Keefer and Columbia Street offer a more residential street where the Chinese festivals are held annually. Other historical landmarks include classical Chinese gardens (Sun Yat-Sen), The Millennium Gate, The Sam kee Building (the Narrowest Commercial Building), and the Historic Shanghai Alley, one of the earliest settlement neighbourhoods with numerous commercial and cultural activities including restaurants, shops, and Chinese opera entertainment.

The overall building height and street width are in a 1:9 ratio. The various building heights are from 2-storey heights to 135' highrise buildings and the typical width of the street is 25 feet, contributing to an uncomfortable walking experience, yet being more traffic-oriented. Similarly, Vancouver Chinatown has diverse land uses with mixed-use buildings with retail spaces on the ground floor and housing above. The overall residential density per km² is 26,598.4 per km², more dense district with many underlying issues such as gentrification and the issue of homelessness.

▲ FIGURE 18.2 "Case Study | Vancouver Chinatown Plan & Section"

KUALA LUMPUR
Selangor | Malaysia

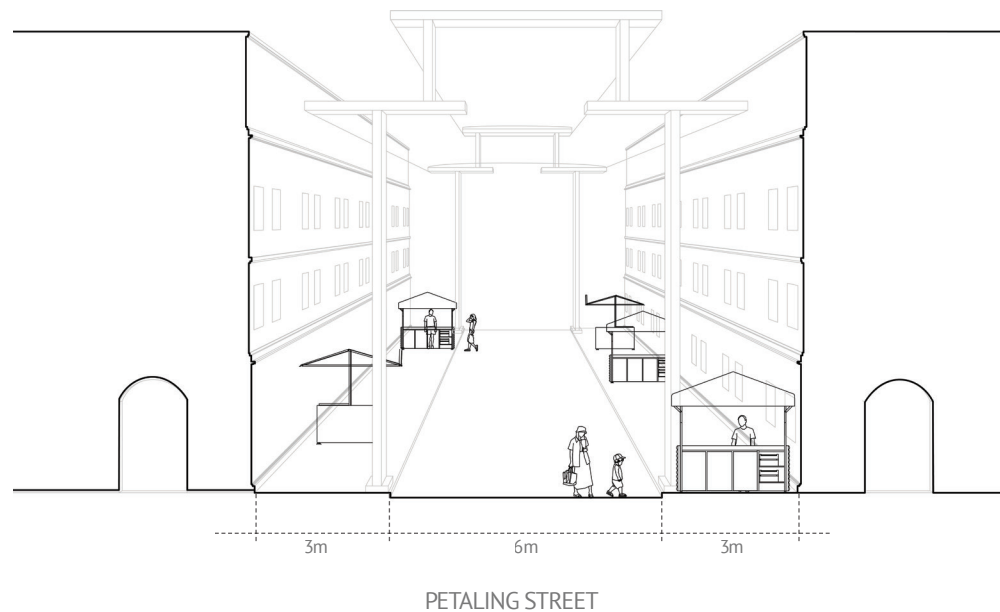
Population: N/A
% City Population: N/A
Land Area: N/A
Density per km²: N/A



CASE STUDY | Malaysia

Malaysia Chinatown has an organic pattern but consists of a linear form with two main high streets lines with shophouses and terrace houses. The main commercial street is Petaling Street, a thriving market street with tight-knit vendor stalls selling goods and culturally diverse culinary throughout the day and night. In 2003, Petaling and Jalan Hang Lekir Streets were transformed. The two streets were converted into pedestrian-only zones, paved with red tiles, and a green canopy known as the "Green Dragon" was constructed to provide shade.

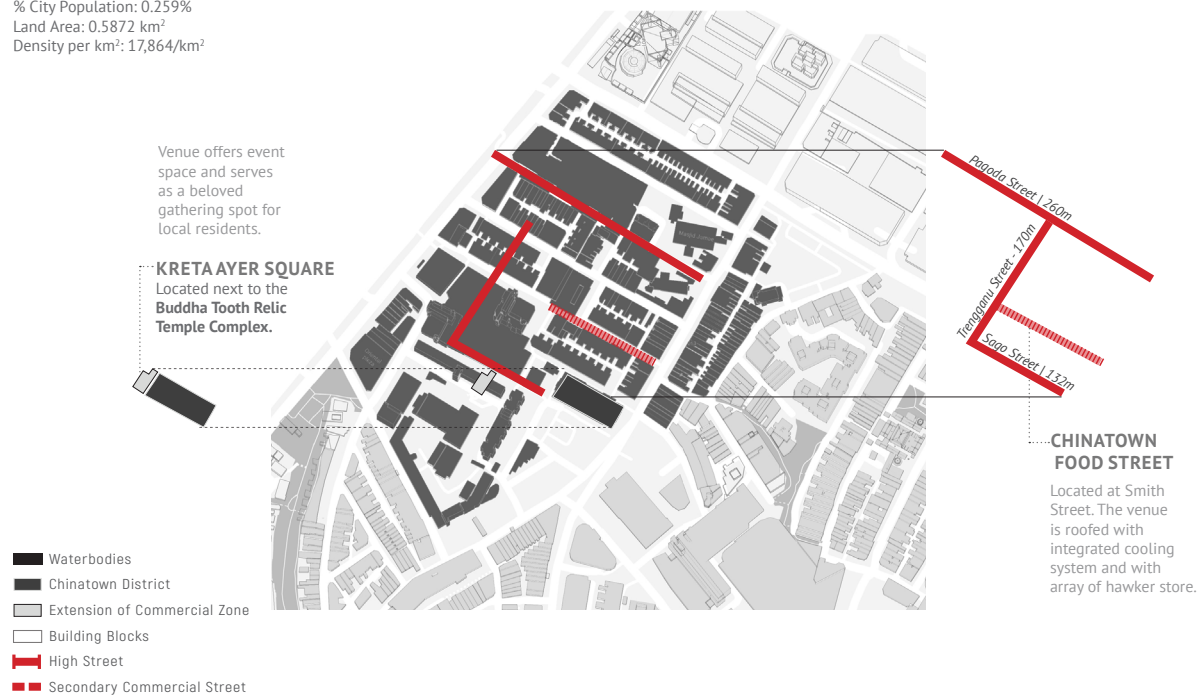
Chinatown continues to evolve with a significant turn over of businesses from a diverse array of trades (hardware and other assorted merchandise) into enticing food, beverage, and gift shop establishments. One notable observation is the meticulous renovation of individual shophouse interiors and exteriors, showcasing shopowners' distinct and culturally diverse architectural preferences - an architectural celebration of different cultures. However, this has brought a discussion of how Chinatown is losing its identity while, at the same time, it is a celebration and adaptation of mixed cultural transformation. The overall building height and street width are 1:3 ratio, also providing a much more comfortable and walkable environment.



▲ **FIGURE 18.3** "Case Study | Malaysia Chinatown Plan & Section"

SINGAPORE
Central Region | Singapore

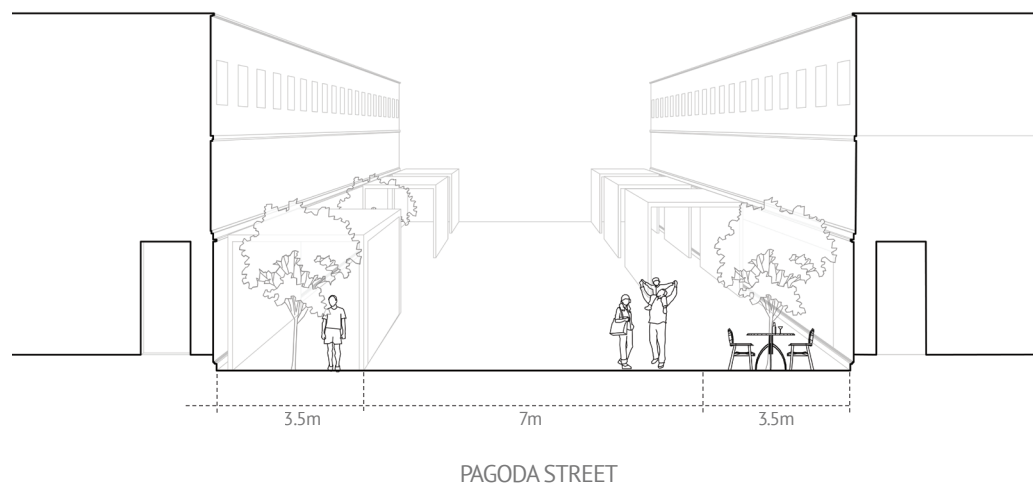
Population: 10,490
% City Population: 0.259%
Land Area: 0.5872 km²
Density per km²: 17,864/km²



CASE STUDY | Singapore

Chinatown in Singapore is a historical district comprising of four distinct sub district, each housing established clan association, temples, and other institutional buildings. Collectively known as the Greater Town of Singapore because of their historical and social significance, and notably due to the architecture. These districts boast a high concentration of original shophouses dating back to the 1840s and were restored to their original glory. The architectural design of the shophouses dates back to the Raffles Town Plan of 1822, which mandated that shophouses include a covered walkway approximately five feet wide along their street front. These walkways were intended to shield pedestrians from the intense tropical sun and rain.

Presently, Chinatown in Singapore is part of the vibrant downtown that offer visitors an immersive experience. The streets like Terengganu Street, Sago Lane, Smith Street, and Temple Street, contribute to the commercial and vibrant lifestyle, attracting visitors who can immerse themselves within the traditional shops, trendy boutiques, and modern cafes. One noteworthy location is the Pagoda Street, which have been transformed into a pedestrian mall and is now an integral part of the Chinatown Heritage Centre. Overall, the district provides an overview of the life of early Chinese settlers in Chinatown. The coexistence of ornate Chinese, Buddhist, and Hindu temples along side with museums and shophouses, creates a blend of tradition and modernity and contributing to the dynamic atmosphere of the area. Although is a full fledge tourist attraction, the district still able to cater to the daily needs of the long-term residence. Furthermore, the overall building height and street width adhere to the 1:3 ratio, also providing a much more comfortable and walkable environment.



▲ **FIGURE 18.4** “Case Study | Singapore Chinatown Plan & Section”

SYNTHESIS

The case studies investigating Chinatowns in different countries reveal diverse conditions but disclose similar patterns. Generally, all Chinatowns exhibit a relatively concentrated and compact layout, explaining how ethnic enclaves nestle within the urban fabric. Additionally, Chinatowns often have a central commercial street or market area that follows a linear pattern, serving as a focal point for economic activities, with a mix of traditional shops, eateries, and markets. The strong linkage is established through the concept of a 'megaform', explained by Fumihiko Maki's discourse of 'Investigation into Collective Form'. This megaform emerges from the physical linkage of individual components or landmarks connected along a linear framework - resulting in a "hierarchical, open-ended, and interconnected system".²³

The individual components or landmarks found in Chinatown typically include Cultural and Community Centers or associations that serve as focal points for cultural events, celebrations, and social activities. Historical markers, statues, and public spaces are often present in Chinatowns, providing areas for community gatherings and events. These spaces may include Chinese Gardens, Parks, Squares, or Plazas to accommodate the daily urban rhythms.

In terms of authenticity, the urban scenery within the typical Chinatown juxtaposes old historical buildings, contemporary high-rise structures, and social housing archetypes, forming unique contrasts that increase the neighbourhood's diversity. Chinatown is a mixed-use development, typically a blend of residential spaces and commercial establishments. These structures include government facilities, commercial blocks, transportation hubs, institutional structures, and religious buildings, as well as being known as the center of food hub, all of which create livable, efficient, and sustainable communities and encapsulate the idea of good urban vitality.

However, regarding the architectural elements or the stylization, Chinatown frequently showcases distinct architectural elements, including traditional Chinese designs, signage and facades, which contribute to the area's distinct cultural identity and visual appeal. Yet, one may argue that the

commercialization of the area is evidently through the proliferation of faux Chinese architectural characteristics, ornamental signboards, and landscape furniture, which create an artificial historical landscape reminiscent of a theme park. These elements cater to the preference of tourists in searching for what they perceive as an 'authentic' yet segregated experience.

It is apparent that Chinatowns across various countries demonstrate an intricate tapestry of cultural, architectural, and social components. However, one of the consistent highlights is the linear commercial streets, an element found in Chinatowns, but which is entirely missing in Winnipeg's Chinatown. The streetscape within each of the examined Chinatowns reveals prioritization of pedestrian-friendly environments, with narrow streets typically adhering to a 1:3 vertical to horizontal ratio for a sense of comfort. Additionally, the streets often limit vehicular traffic or are fully transformed into pedestrian-only zones, creating a more accessible and enjoyable pedestrian experience.

However, these characteristics do not apply in Vancouver's Pender Street, which was expropriated by the widening of the street in 1912. Nevertheless, these Chinatowns serve as living testaments to the resilience and adaptation of cultural heritage in the changing cultural landscapes.

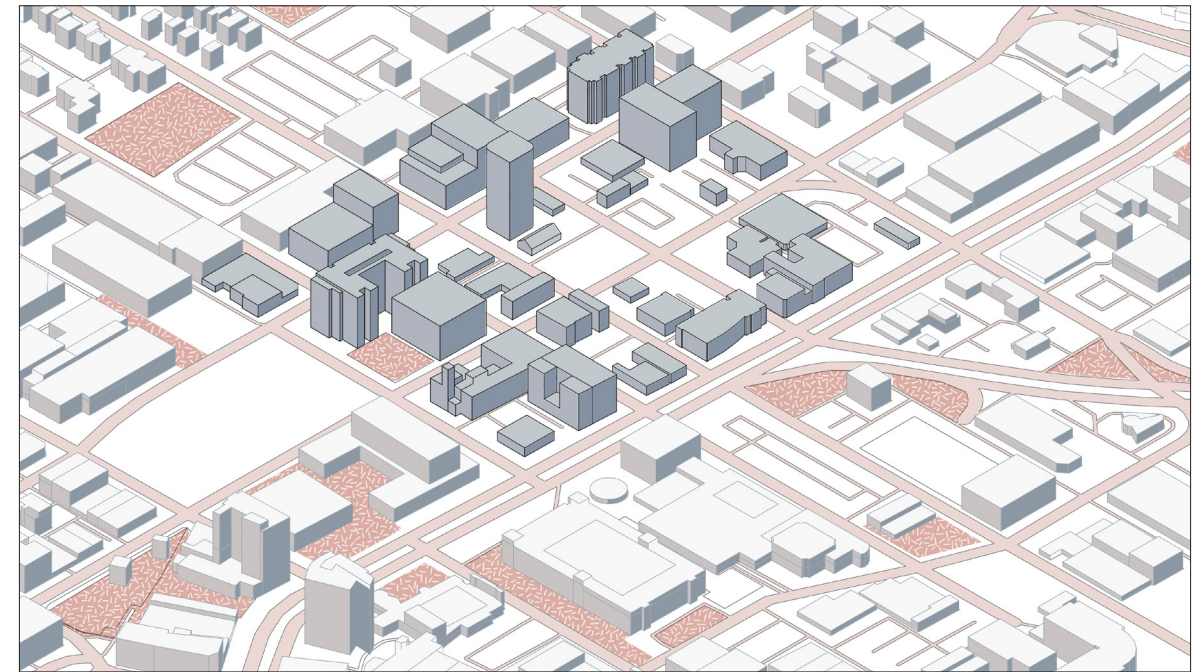
²³ Roger Trancik, *Finding Lost Space: Theories of Urban Design*. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986), 106.

03 EPILOGUE: LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK

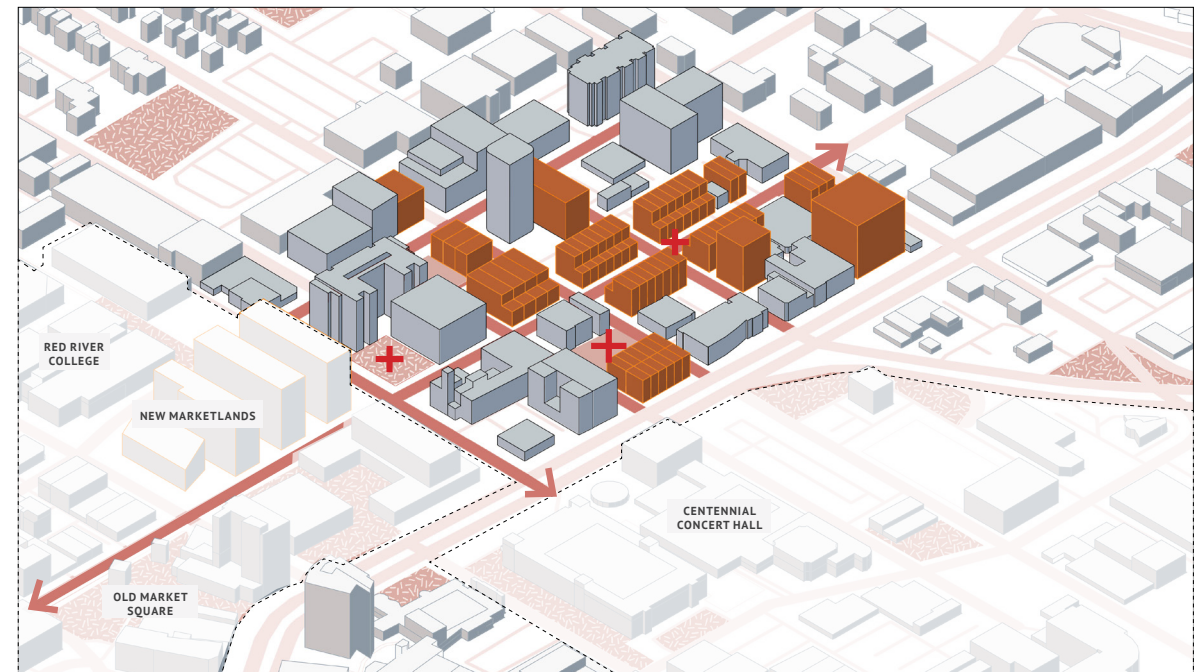
Winnipeg Chinatown faces significant challenges, leading to its current status as a more symbolic rather than distinctive place (See Figure 18.1). This practicum aims to reimagine the future of Winnipeg Chinatown as an integrated destination and a neighborhood that resonates with and supports the Chinese communities to live, work, study, and play. I propose a series of landscape frameworks and design intentions to create cohesive places characterized by high-quality public realms and infrastructure (See Figure 18.2). The proposed design intention aims to provide more experiential and robust spaces, catering to the evolving diversity of the community while remaining culturally relevant to the Chinese community amidst the ever-changing cultural landscape.

The overarching aim for Winnipeg Chinatown is to foster cohesion between districts by establishing a stronger street hierarchy and facilitating a positive trajectory in urban development within Chinatown. To achieve this goal, the following series of urban design strategy proposals are outlined:

- ① Close the Gaps with Mixed-use - involving the integration of mixed-use developments to fill vacant spaces and create a dynamic streetscape. These developments will accommodate various functions, including residential, commercial, and cultural spaces.
- ② Improving Legibility and Connections - enhancing overall mobility network and accessibility to Chinatown by expanding public transportation options as well as enhancing and maintaining urban tree canopy.
- ③ Enhancing and Activating Public Realms - Investing and upgrading the streets and public spaces to be more inviting and functional for social gatherings and events. This will involve the introduction of seating, lighting, and public art installations to create attractive and comfortable environments, along with programming events and activities to cater to diverse interests, encouraging community engagement.

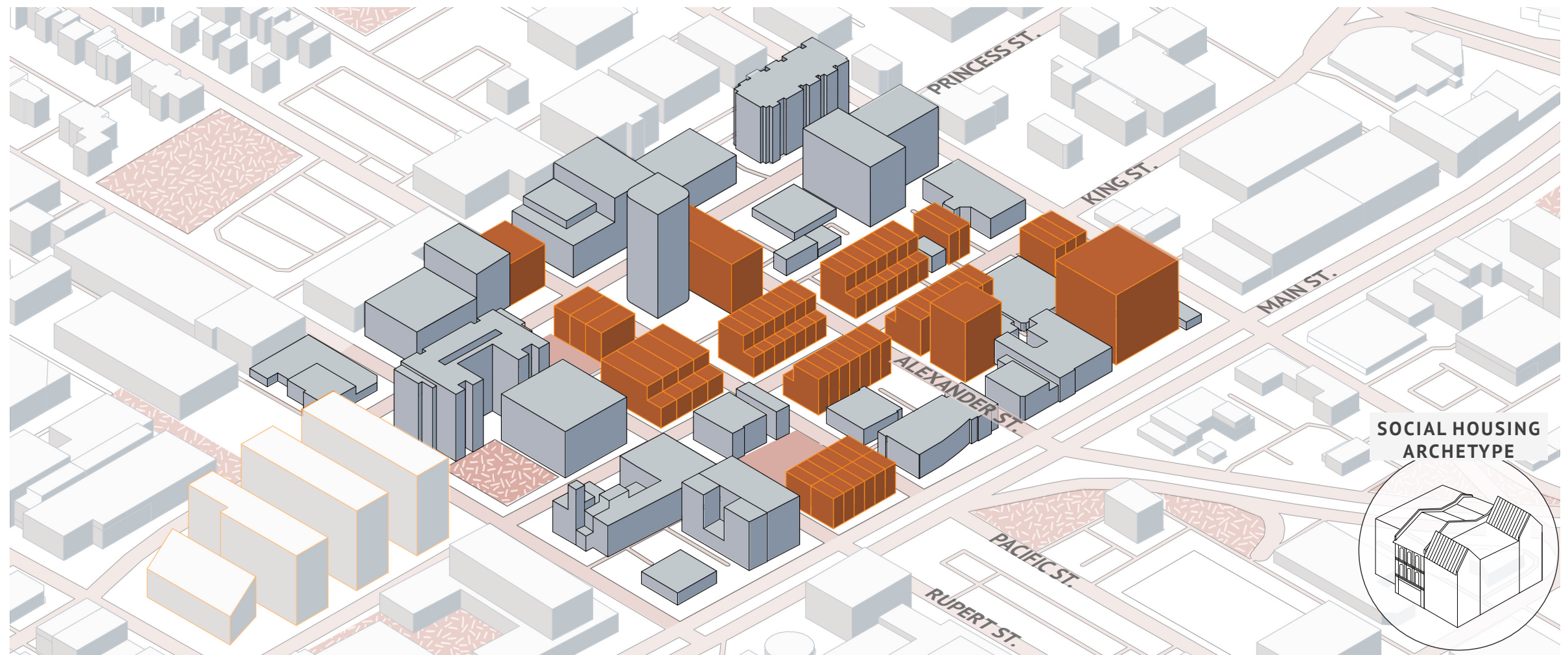


▲ FIGURE 19.1 “Isonometric View of Winnipeg Chinatown 2024”



▲ FIGURE 19.2 “Proposed Vision for Winnipeg Chinatown”

LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK:
CLOSE THE GAPS WITH MIXED-USE



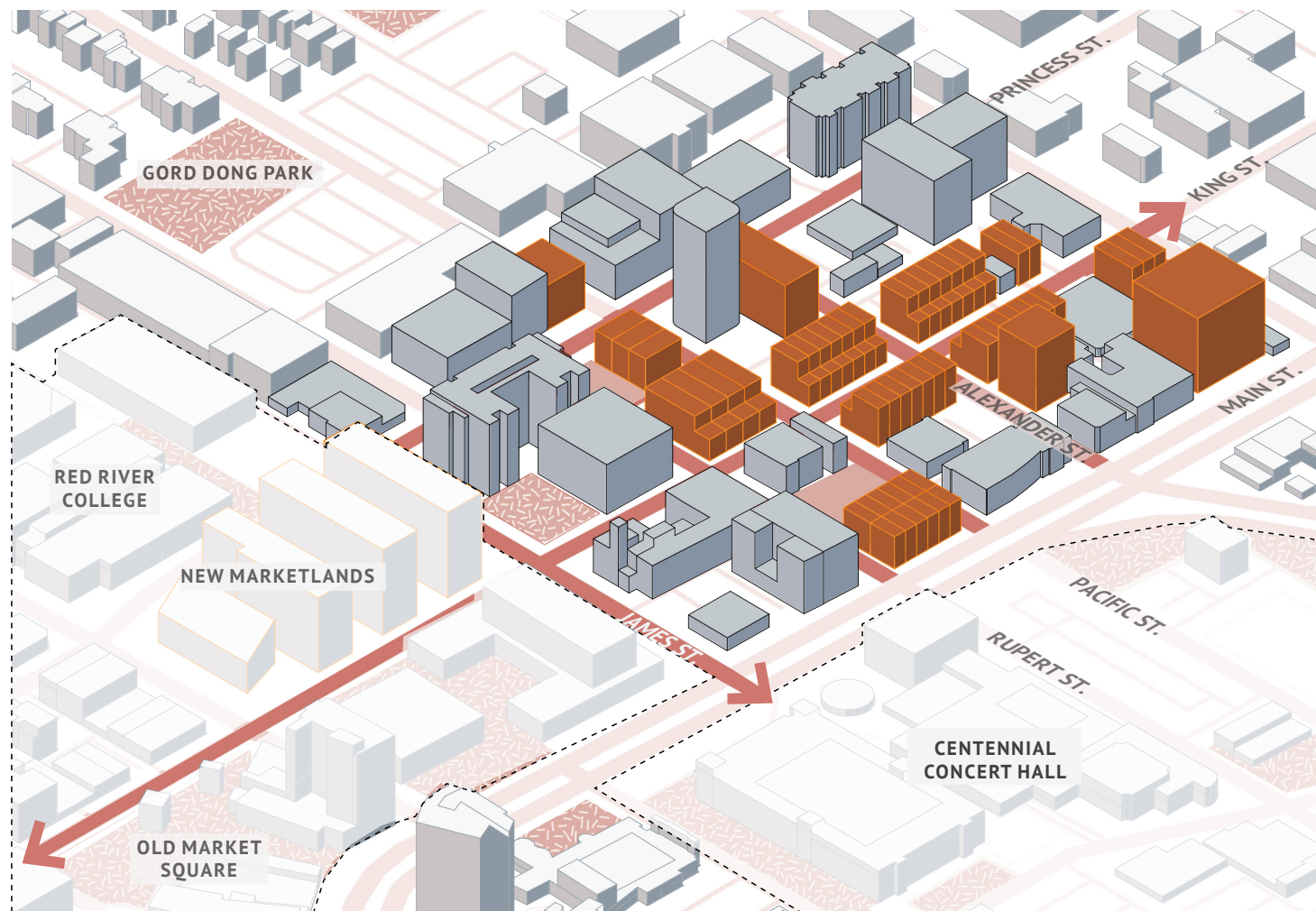
CLOSE THE GAPS & MIXED-USE

Chinatown requires the necessary density to bring out the 'sense of place' found within the daily urban rhythm and event celebration. Therefore, the first and foremost step is to focus on the development of buildings to eliminate empty spaces, with a particular emphasis on creating a continuous street frontage along King Street. The upcoming infill project aims to introduce mixed-use developments that meet the community's needs and offer affordable spaces for services and entrepreneurial ventures, drawing inspiration from the 'Social Housing' archetype.

The proposed guidelines for the infill emphasize respect for Winnipeg Chinatown's existing fabric and strategically placing mid-to-high-rise buildings to enhance the skyline while blending harmoniously with the surroundings. Additionally, mid-rise structures will be introduced along key streets, maintaining a human-scale environment and visual coherence. Keeping a 1:3 street ratio further enhances the pedestrian environment's comfort and aesthetic appeal.

LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK:

IMPROVE LEGIBILITY AND CONNECTIONS



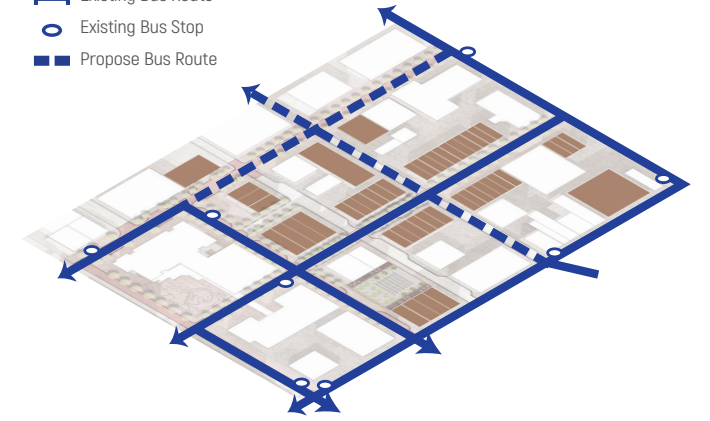
IMPROVE LEGIBILITY & CONNECTIONS

The objective is to cultivate a more accessible, pedestrian-friendly, and green neighbourhood and bridging the Chinatown with neighbouring districts like the new Marketlands down to the Shed and the Centennial Concert Hall area. The framework aims to improve Chinatown's transportation network by integrating additional and more efficient bus routes, establishing well-defined pedestrian and cycling paths, and enhancing the urban tree canopy. Moreover, a pivotal aspect involves converting King and Princess Streets from one-way to two-way thoroughfares. This conversion will ensure better and safer traffic flows in light of the potential revitalization of Portage and Main Street for pedestrians. Furthermore, the ripple effects of the transformation lead to higher levels of development, increased residential populations, and a conducive environment for pedestrian activities and economic development. Overall, these initiatives contribute to the livability of the area and promote increased community engagement and safety through greater pedestrian and to-and-fro traffic presence.

▲ FIGURE 20.2
"Proposed stronger
Street Hierarchy"

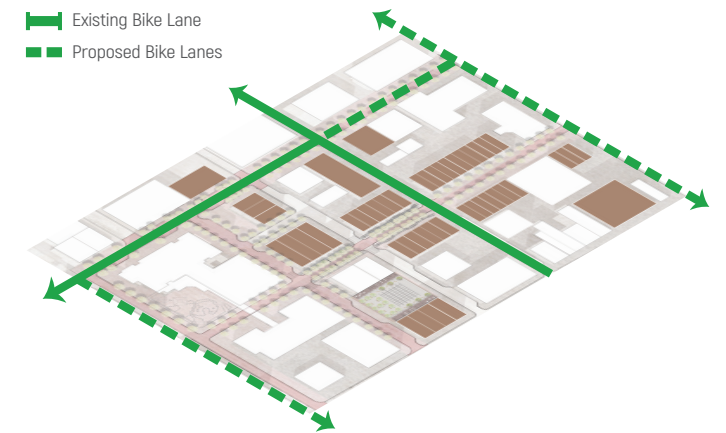
BUS ROUTES

- Existing Bus Route
- Existing Bus Stop
- Propose Bus Route



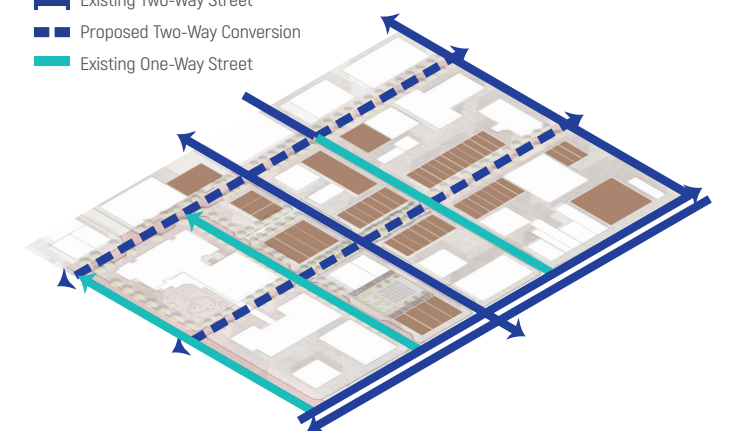
BIKE LANES

- Existing Bike Lane
- Proposed Bike Lanes

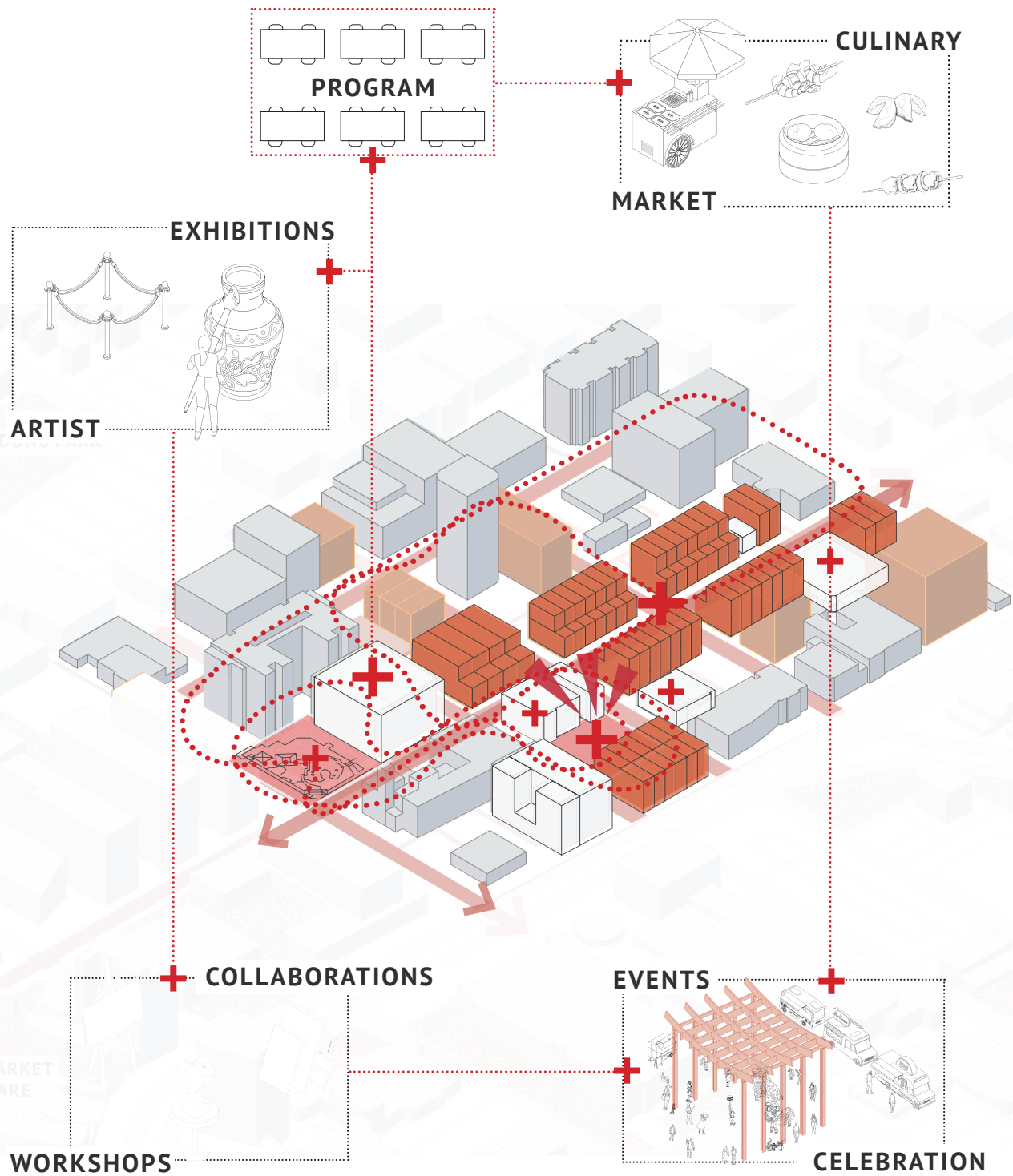


2-WAY STREET CONVERSION

- Existing Two-Way Street
- Proposed Two-Way Conversion
- Existing One-Way Street



LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK:
 ENHANCE & ACTIVATION PUBLIC REALM



PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVATION

The framework proposes prioritizing investment in the enhancement and activation of the public realm to revitalize Chinatown into a vibrant cultural and community hub for gathering and celebration. The distinction between the two lies in their focus: Public Space Enhancement aims to improve the aesthetics and quality of the space. Public Space Activation, on the other hand, seeks to enhance the quality of life and community awareness through dynamic programming.

In response to the inadequate infrastructure in Winnipeg's Chinatown, I present a series of design intentions as part of the public realm enhancement, especially to improve the streetscape along King and Princess Street. This involves reimagining these thoroughfares as unique spaces of their own, while also creating a transcultural plaza that embraces future diversity while honoring the presence of the Chinese community. The overarching goal is to establish a high-quality, cohesive, and welcoming pedestrian realm in Winnipeg Chinatown that remains adaptable to accommodate various forms of public space activation.

Public Space Activation involves purposefully designing and programming public areas to enhance community engagement, social interactions, and cultural activities. This vision anticipates increased permeability and activation throughout the neighborhood, with initiatives like organizing markets to showcase culinary experiences and celebrating Chinese traditions and heritage through festivals and events. Furthermore, fostering greater community involvement and collaboration with Chinese Canadian artists, residents, businesses, and organizations can lead to more exhibitions or workshops celebrating the rich history, art, culture, and tradition of the Chinese communities, thereby fostering a stronger sense of place and community within Chinatown.

▲ FIGURE 20.3 "Enhancement & Activation of Public Space through Programming"

LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK:
 ENHANCE & ACTIVATION PUBLIC REALM



1. *Sounds of the rain* by Xiaojing Yan
2. *Dwelling* by Xiaojing Yan
3. *Mash-Up / Pâté chinois* by Karen Tam
4. *Woodcut Printing for Chinatown* by Sylvia Wong
5. *Printmaker & Mix Media* by Sylvia Wong
6. *Life Blood III* by Sylvia Wong

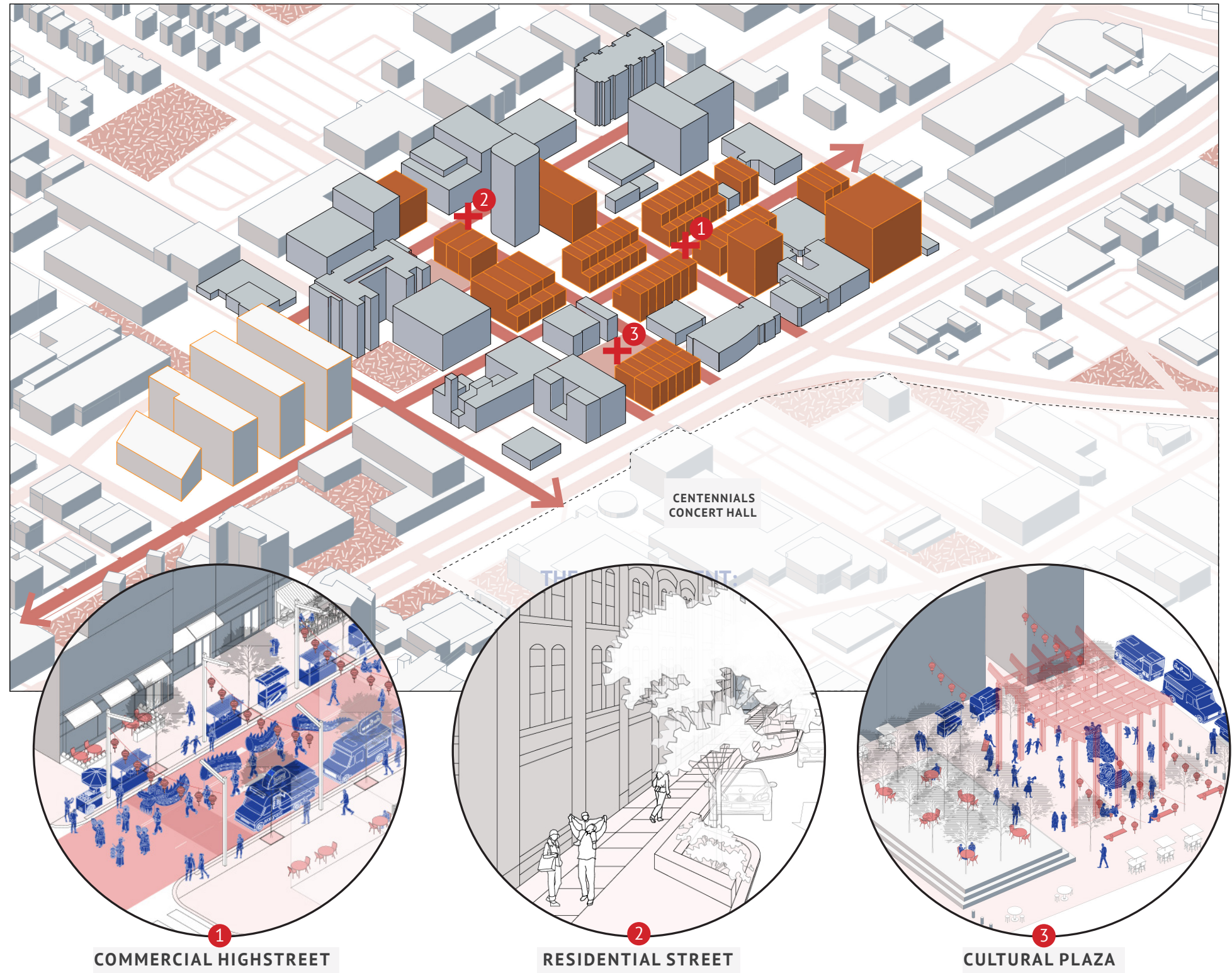
Another vital aspect of thoughtful placemaking for Winnipeg Chinatown involves collaboration with Chinese-Canadian artists to infuse creativity and expertise into the project. The goal is to reimagine Chinatown as a distinctive place that preserves its Chinese roots and embodies the essence of Chinese culture and heritage without resorting to stereotypes. Artists such as Xiaojin Yan, Karen Tam, and Sylvia Wong bring unique perspectives and artistic styles that can enrich the cultural fabric of Chinatown, from street furniture to paving patterns. These artists can bring unique perspectives and artistic styles that can enrich the cultural landscape of Chinatown and create a more authentic and engaging environment for residents and visitors alike.

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS: THE PROPOSE KEY AREAS

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS

The proposal offers a more resilient and inclusive approach for Winnipeg Chinatown that integrates with the surrounding and provides the key cultural elements that embraces the history and traditions of the Chinese community. With the driving force for this framework is to establish a cohesive and welcoming pedestrian realm, the site design intention for key areas in Winnipeg Chinatown are the following:

- ① Proposed Commercial High Street at King Street.
- ② Revitalize Princess Street as a Residential Street with mixed-use.
- ③ Proposed a cultural plaza by transforming the existing parking lot, reimagine it to accommodate year-round activities, and serve as a cultural space.

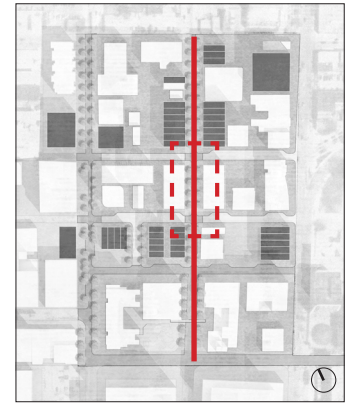
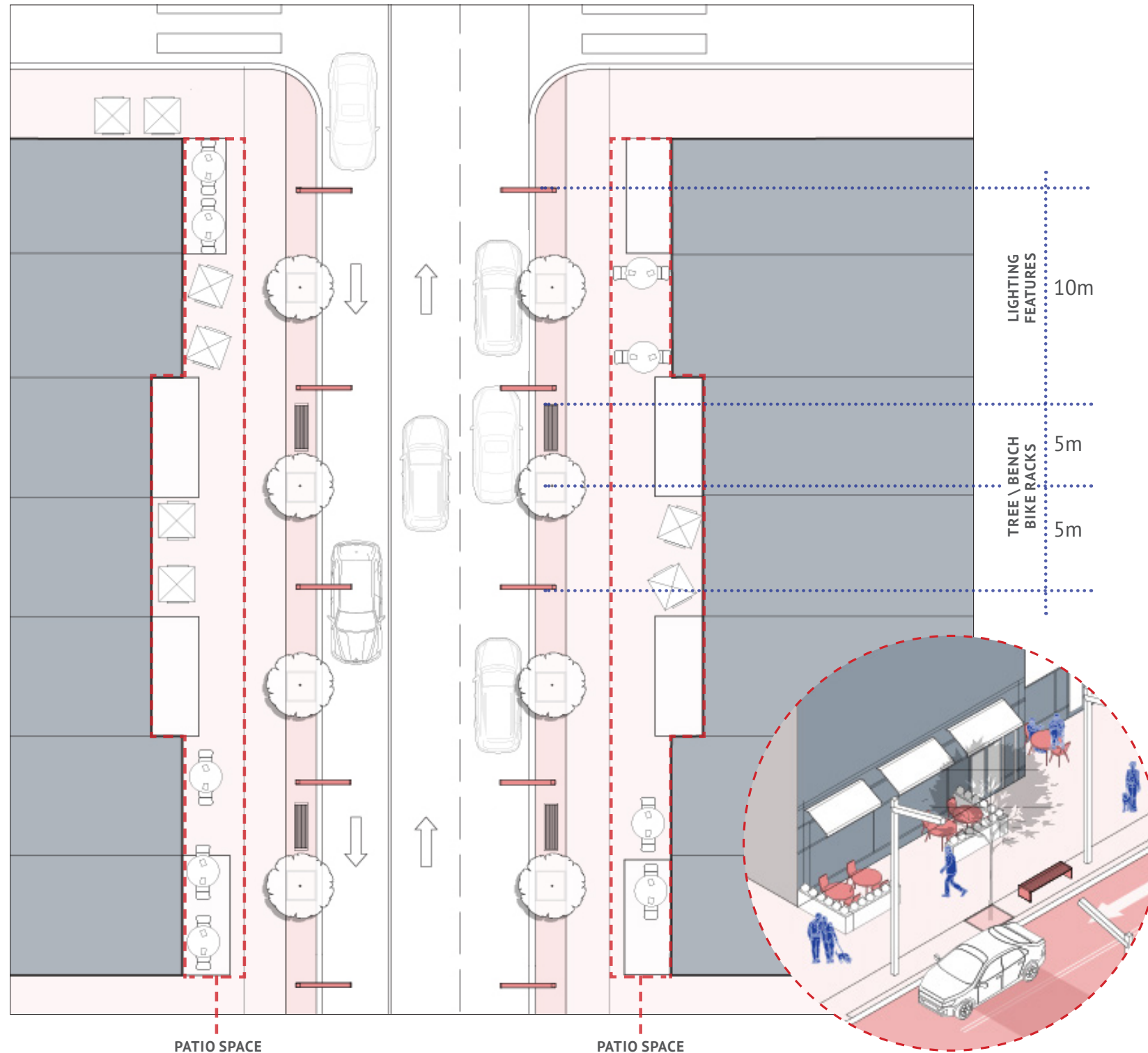


1
COMMERCIAL HIGHSTREET

2
RESIDENTIAL STREET

3
CULTURAL PLAZA

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:
KING STREET PROPOSAL

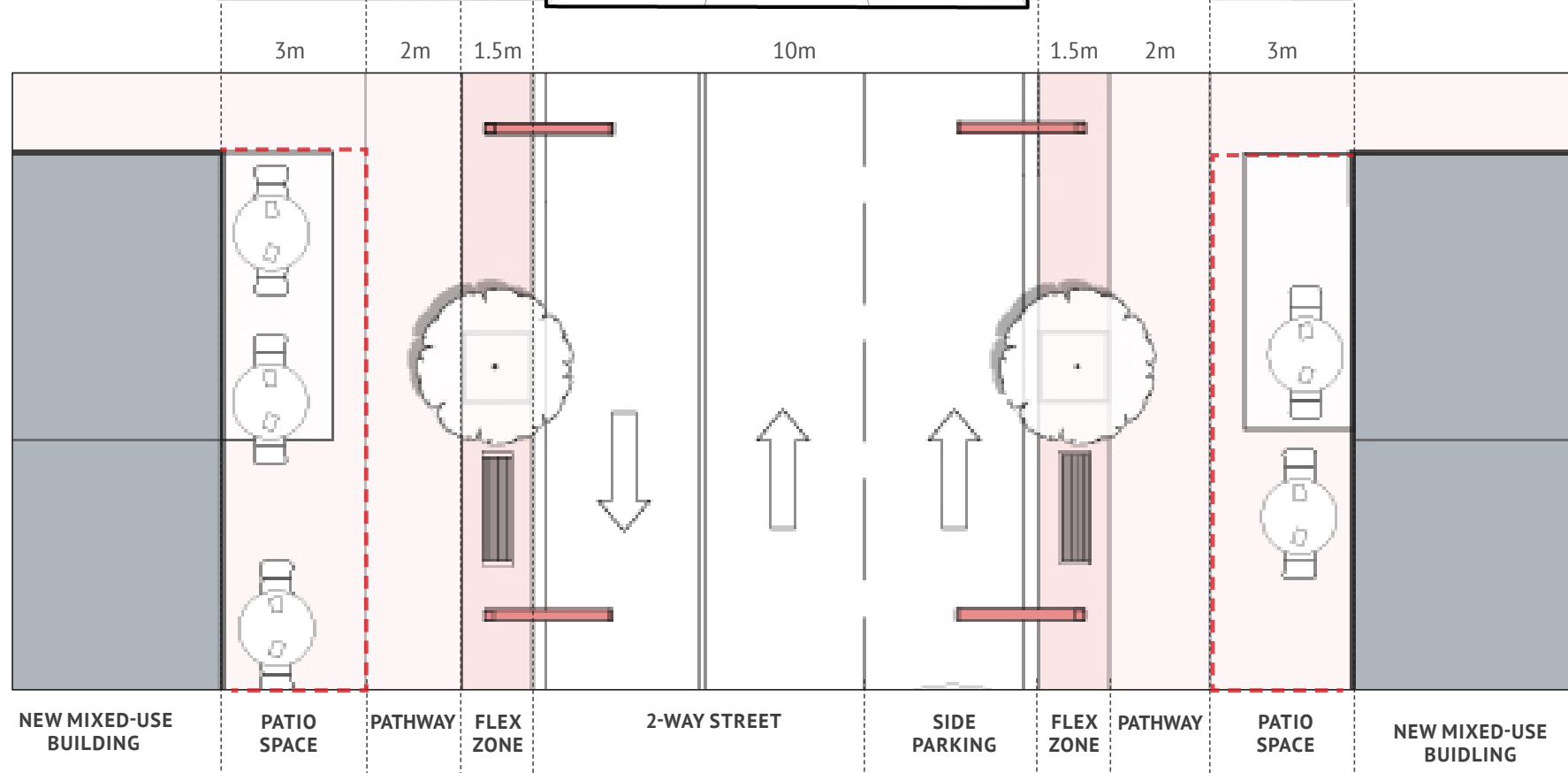
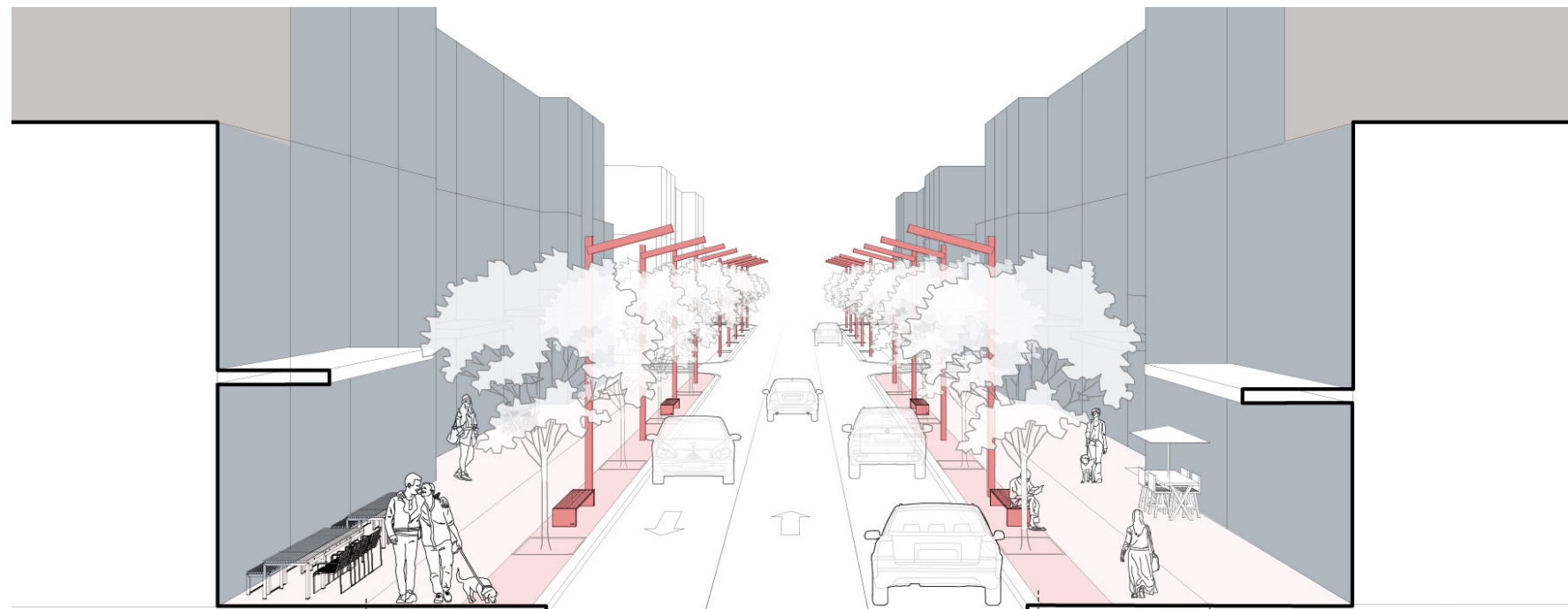


PROPOSED KING STREET

In re-envisioning Chinatown into a vibrant community with a concentrated commercial High Street, I proposed converting King Street into a two-way thoroughfare, reducing the street down into three lanes (an extension from the entrance of Chinatown). The redesigned streetscape prioritizes pedestrians, offering a spacious walkway, inviting patio areas, and flexible zones to accommodate street amenities like lighting, benches, bike racks, and trees. To enhance the urban atmosphere and create a distinctive place of its own, I propose installing streetlamps at 10-meter intervals, alternating with trees. The streetlamps and trees provide the necessary verticality and aesthetic appeal while maintaining and continuing the urban tree canopy. Additionally, the proposed buildings have various setback fronts to increase outdoor spaces, breaking the streetwall by adding variation to the streetscape for more opportunities and a dynamic urban environment.

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:

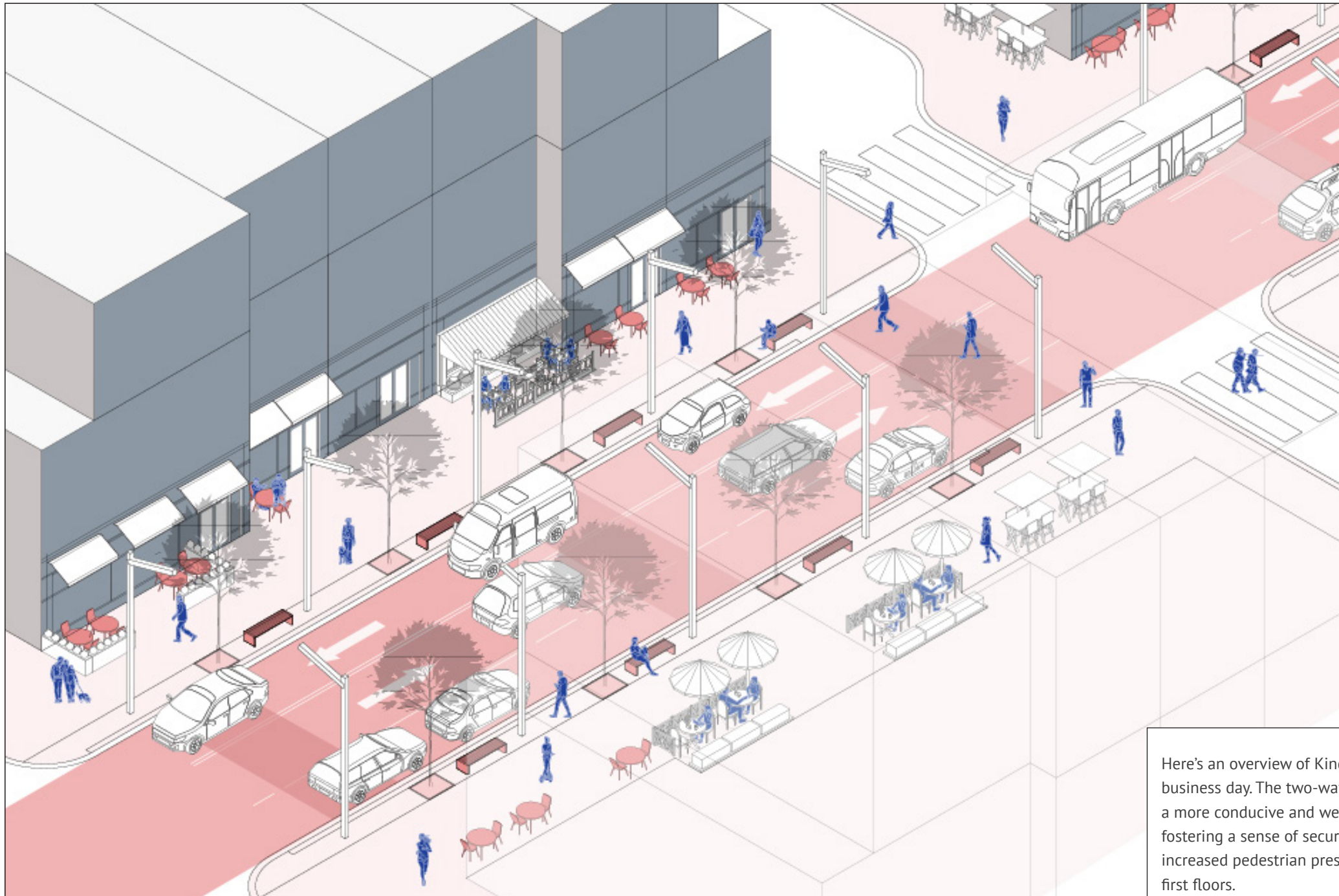
KING STREET PROPOSAL



The design prioritizes the pedestrian experience and creates an Avenue that is adaptable and versatile, offering a 3-meter wide patio space, 2m wide pedestrian walkway, and 1.5m flex zone for the trees and street furniture on each side of the road. The proposal aims to create a vibrant streetscape and foster a livable urban environment that is pedestrian-oriented street. This entails reducing traffic speed to ideally less than 50km per hour, adjusting street width to approximately a 1:3 building ratio or less, and advocating for the construction of more affordable mixed-use buildings.

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:
KING STREET PROPOSAL

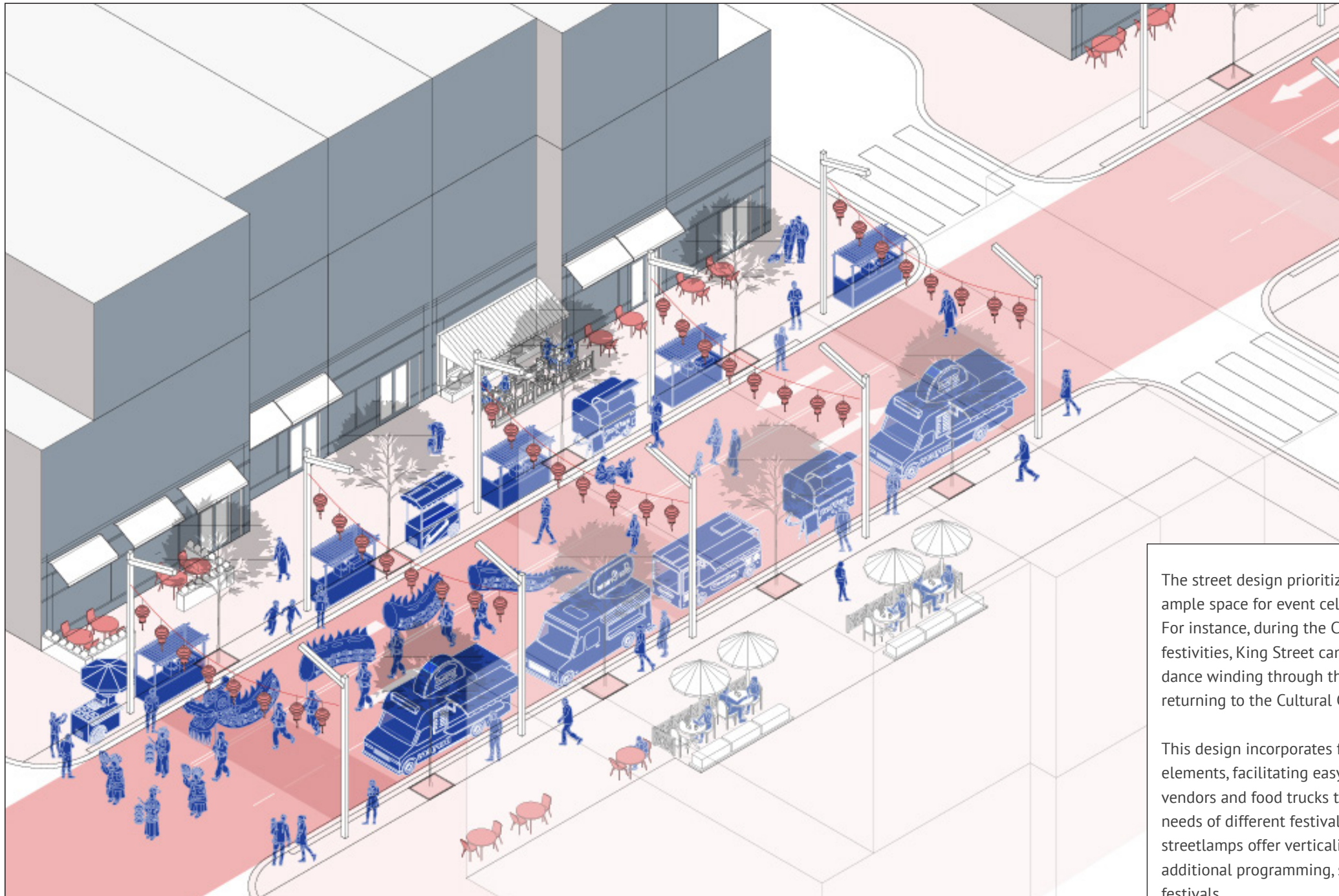
● **ACTIVITY | DAILY RYTHM**



Here's an overview of King Street on a typical business day. The two-way traffic flow generates a more conducive and welcoming environment, fostering a sense of security and activity with the increased pedestrian presence and commercial first floors.

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:
KING STREET PROPOSAL

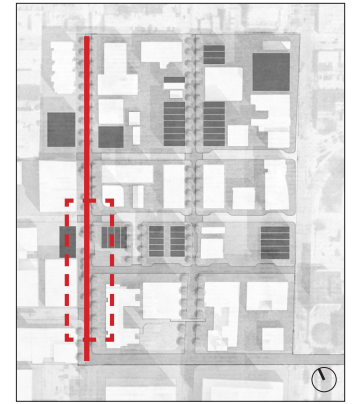
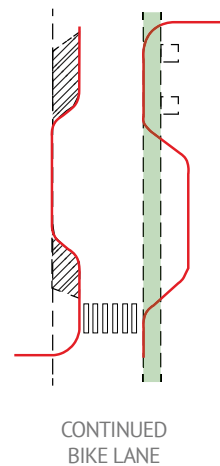
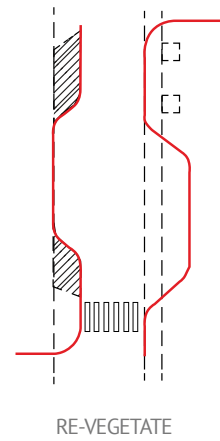
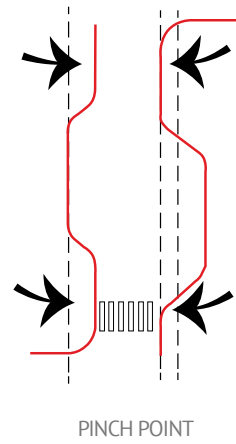
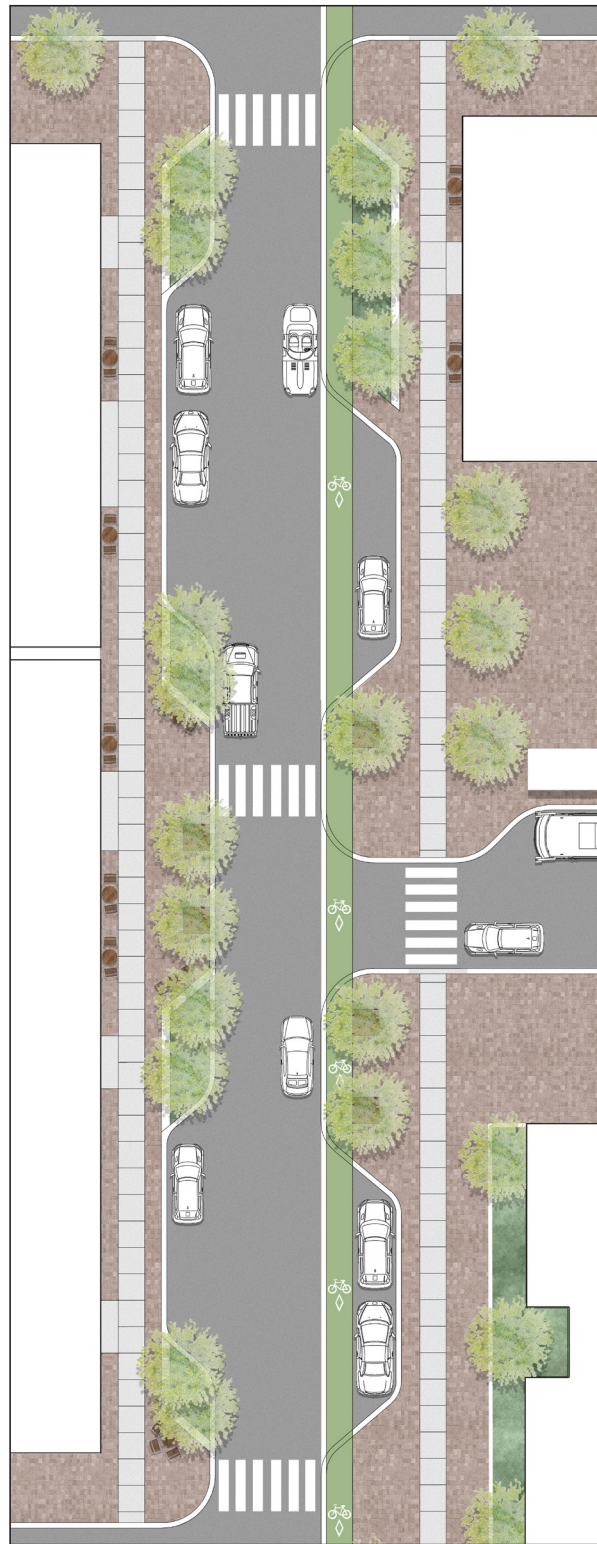
● **ACTIVITY | CULTURAL SPACE**



The street design prioritizes adaptability, ensuring ample space for event celebrations and parades. For instance, during the Chinese New Year festivities, King Street can accommodate a dragon dance winding through the thoroughfare before returning to the Cultural Center.

This design incorporates flexible street furniture elements, facilitating easy reconfiguration for vendors and food trucks to cater to the diverse needs of different festivals and events. The streetlamps offer verticality to accommodate additional programming, such as Chinese lantern festivals.

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:
PRINCESS STREET



PROPOSED PRINCESS STREET

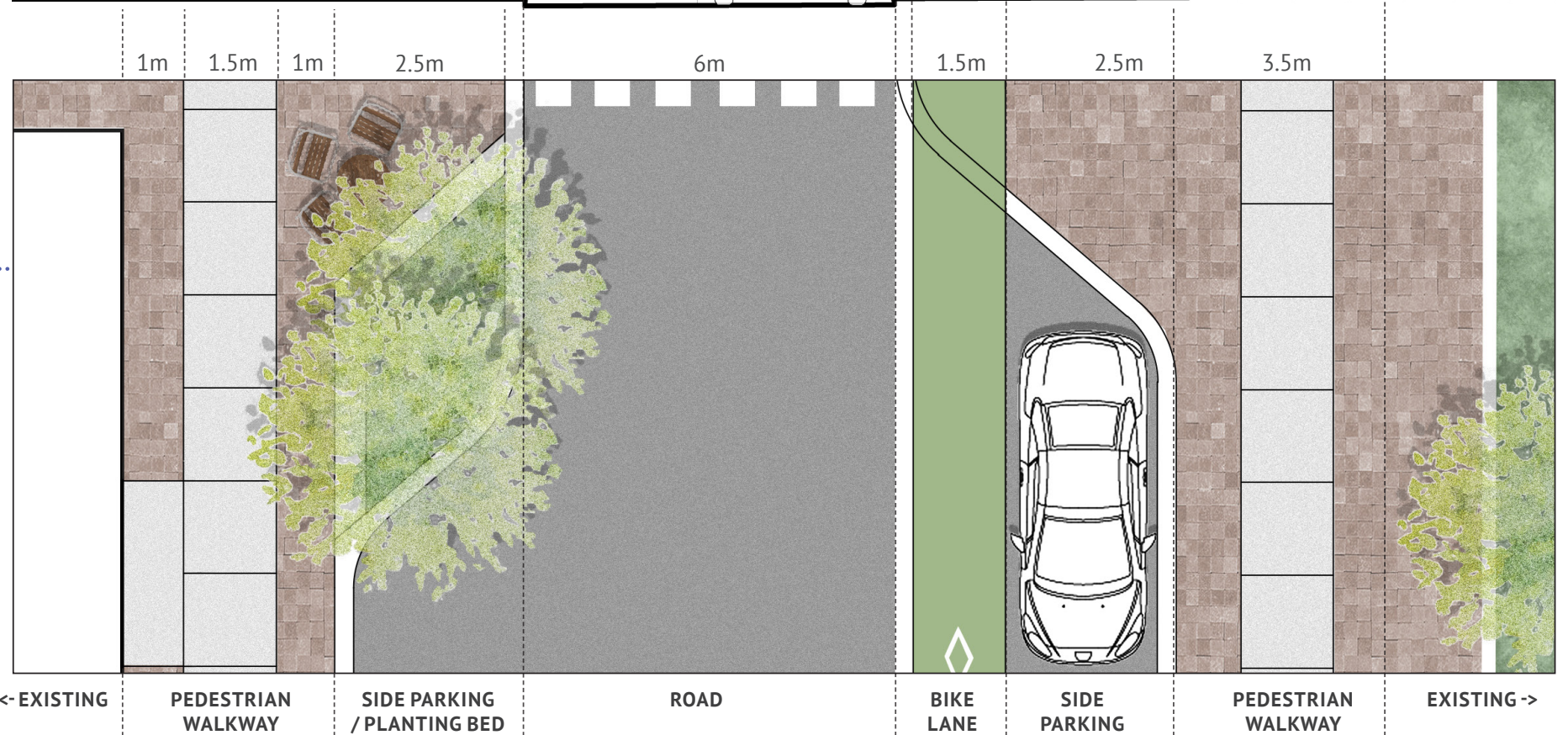
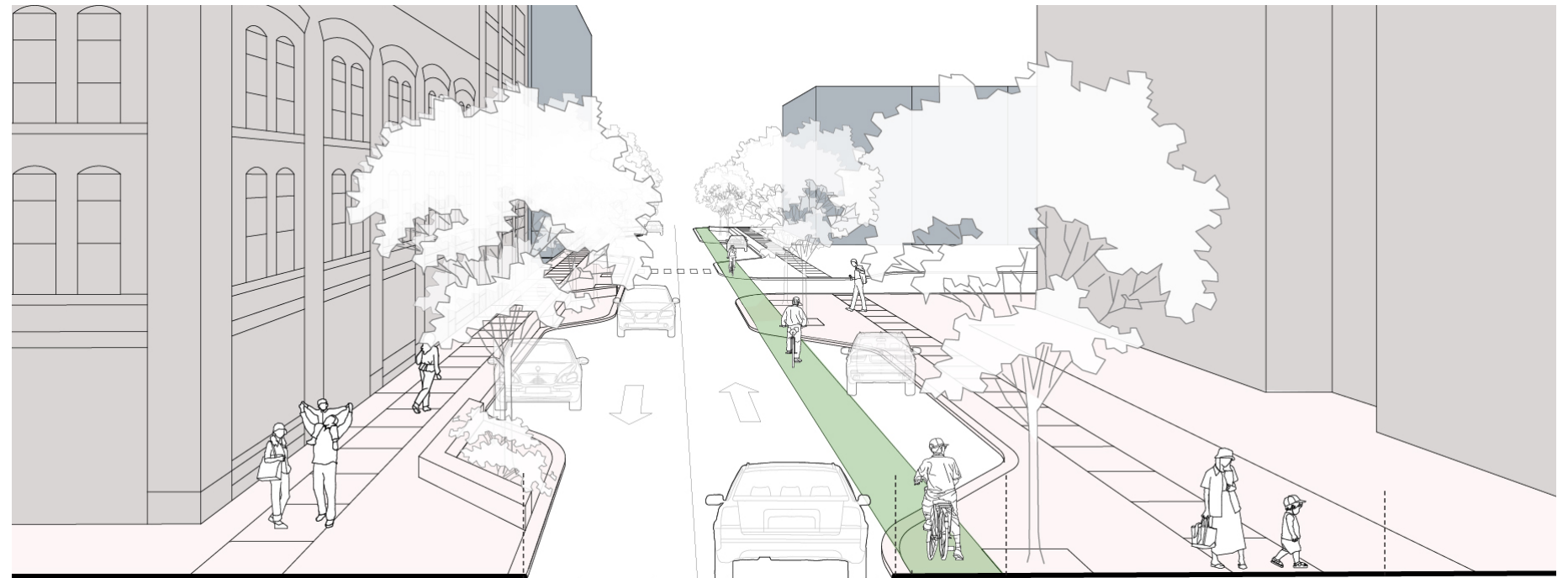
In contrast to High Street, Princess Street has been redesigned using the concept of a 'Pinch Point' to create a more intimate, human-scale environment. This redesign maintains parallel parking spaces while streamlining pedestrian crossings to just two lanes instead of four. By reducing crossing distances and lowering vehicle speeds, 'Pinch Point' contributes to a more walkable environment, ensuring greater pedestrian activity and supporting local businesses. As part of the streetscape enhancement and reimagining the street as part of the urban space, Princess Street is transformed with a strong green identity through a series of planting beds with concrete meandering seats to enhance ecological and social benefits. The 'Re-vegetate' enhancements create opportunities for community gathering spaces, fostering social interaction and a stronger sense of community. Furthermore, designated bike lanes are continued and elevated to improve mobility within this residential street and promote sustainable transportation options.

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:

PRINCESS STREET

The design aims to create a distinctive ambience that deviates from the linear nature of King Street. The pedestrian walkway spans 3.5m wide, with 2.5m allotted for side parking and planting beds, employing the pinch point concept. On the right side of the road, a designated 1.5m bike lane extends along Princess Street. The initial material plan for Princess Street emphasizes the rustic and industrial atmosphere of Chinatown.

Plant selection prioritizes salt-tolerant species, including a variety of perennial and ornamental grasses, serving as a dual-purpose stormwater management system. The chosen tree species include Manchurian Alder and Common Hackberry.



TREE LIST:



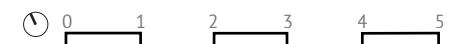
Manchurian Alder
Alnus hirsuta



Common Hackberry
Celtis occidentalis

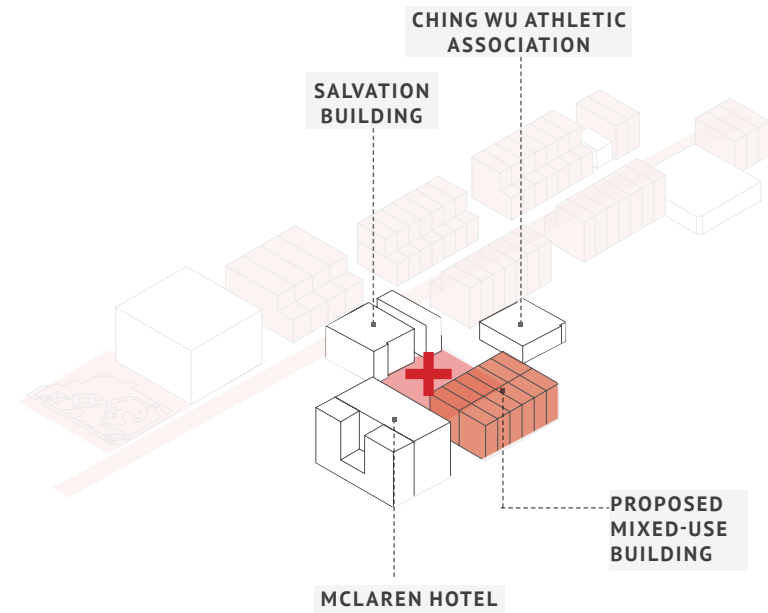
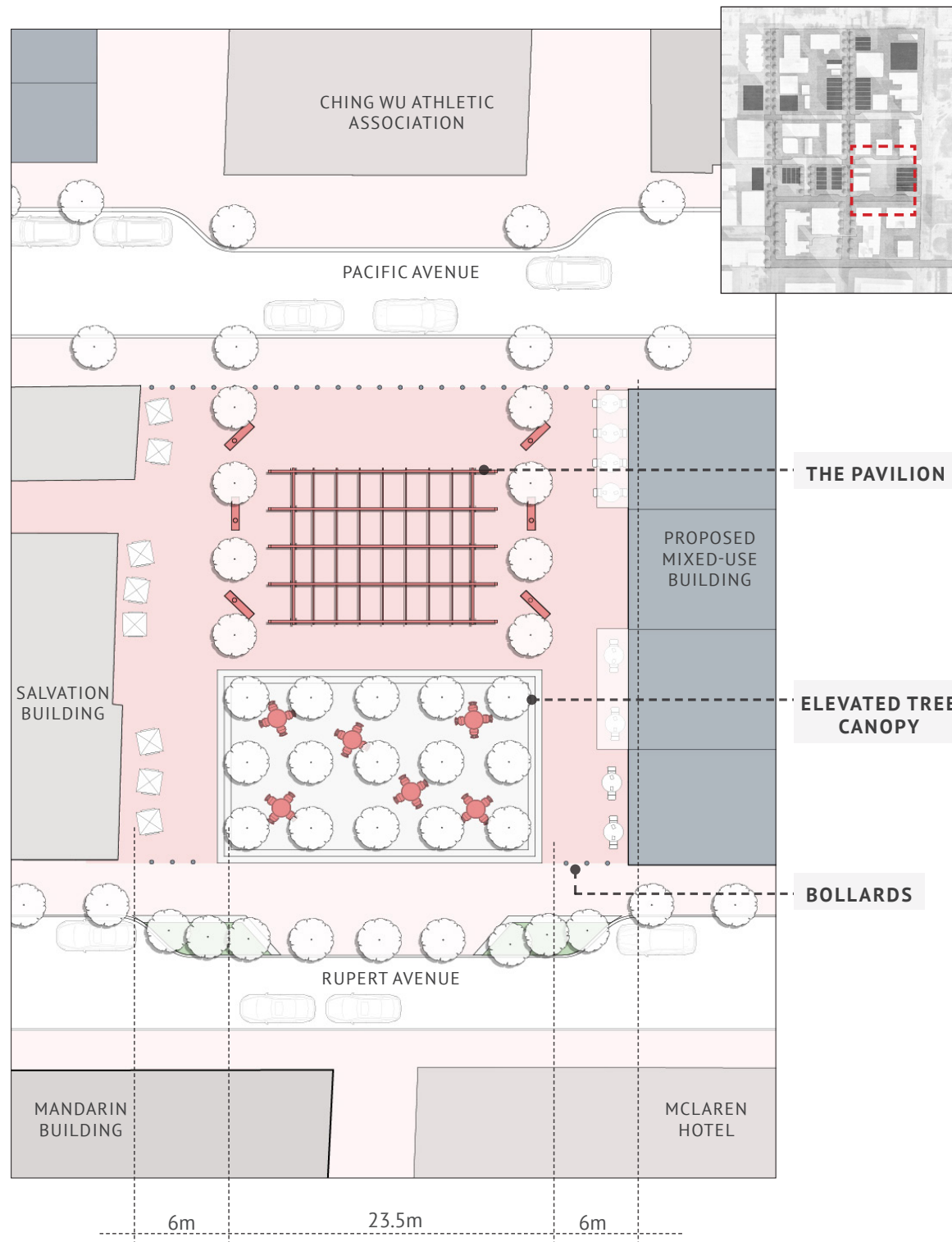
SHRUBS LIST:

- Golden Alexander
- Blue Vervain
- Swamp Milkweed
- Joe Pye
- Narrowleaf Sunflower
- Flat Top Goldenrod
- Ironweed
- New England Aster
- Tufted Hairgrass
- Switch Grass



SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:

THE CULTURAL PLAZA

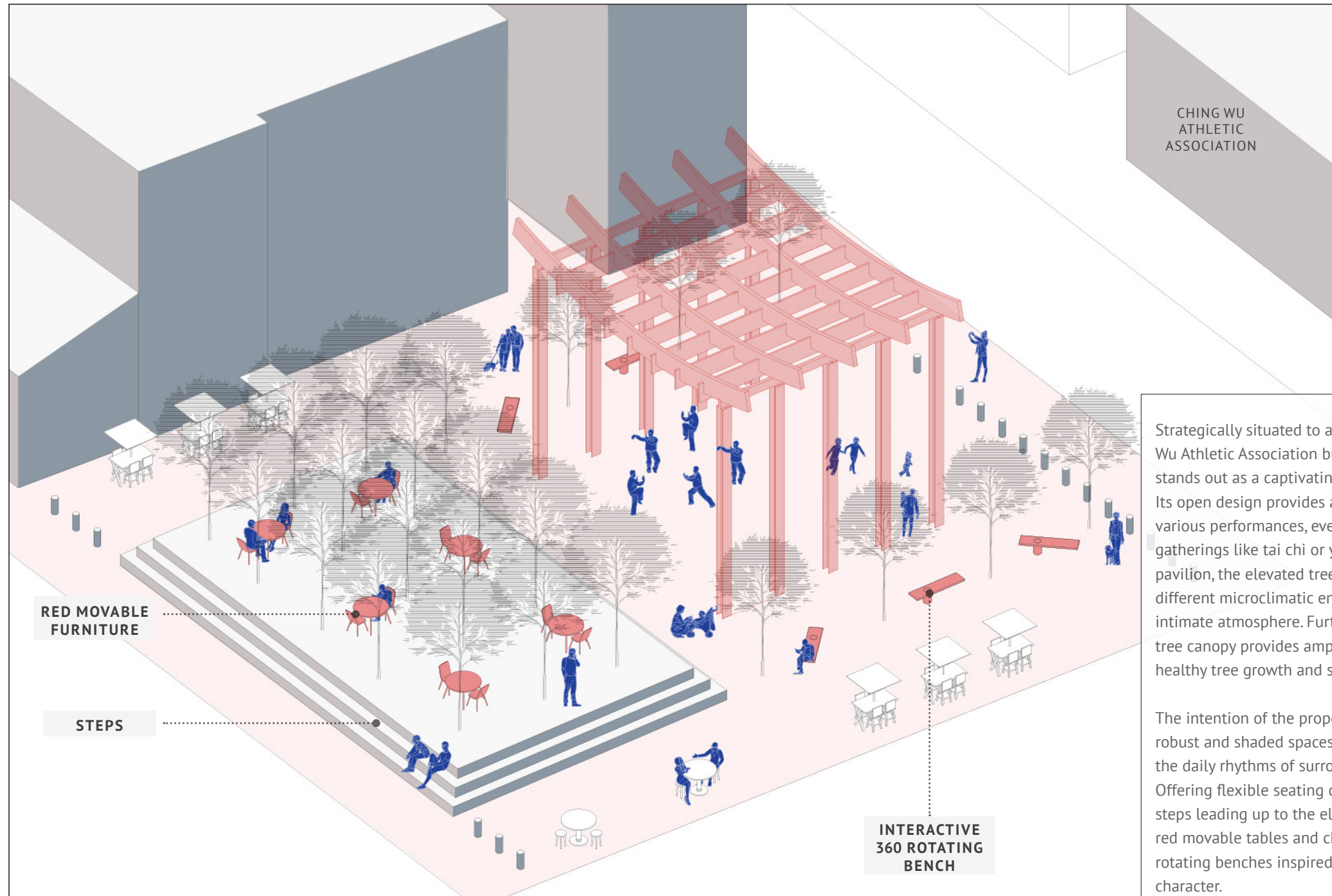


PROPOSED CULTURAL PLAZA

I propose the development of an open plaza that caters to the needs of both the community and local businesses. The existing parking lot is repurposed and transformed to facilitate year-round activities, serving as a transcultural performance space to invigorate the essential vibrancy of activities within Chinatown. Distinct from the existing Chinese Garden, the plaza serves as a welcoming urban retreat, highlighting the historical significance of key buildings such as the Ching Wu Athletic Association, the McLaren Hotel (potentially repurposed for supportive housing), and the Salvation Army Citadel building. These buildings, each with its unique architectural style, contribute to the diverse historical fabric of Winnipeg's Chinatown. In addition to enhancing safety and security, visibility and natural surveillance will be prioritized through strategic design elements, including an elevated tree canopy and an open-concept pavilion. The plaza maintains six-meter-wide pedestrian and patio space on each side to accommodate the vendors and food trucks for events. It is also bounded by bollards with few removable bollards to allow for occasional vehicular access.

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:
THE CULTURAL PLAZA

ACTIVITY | DAILY RHYTHM



CHING WU
ATHLETIC
ASSOCIATION

RED MOVABLE
FURNITURE

STEPS

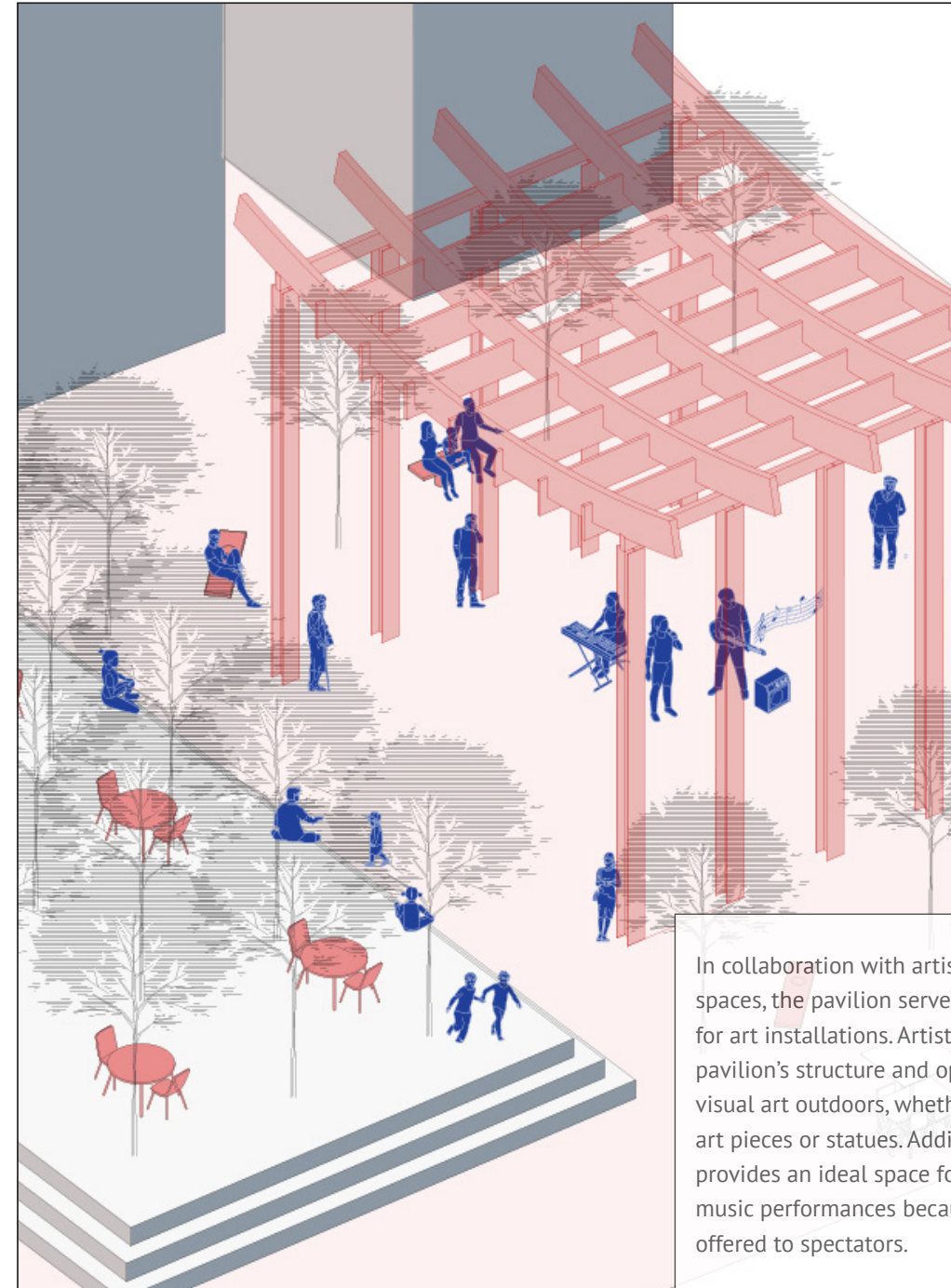
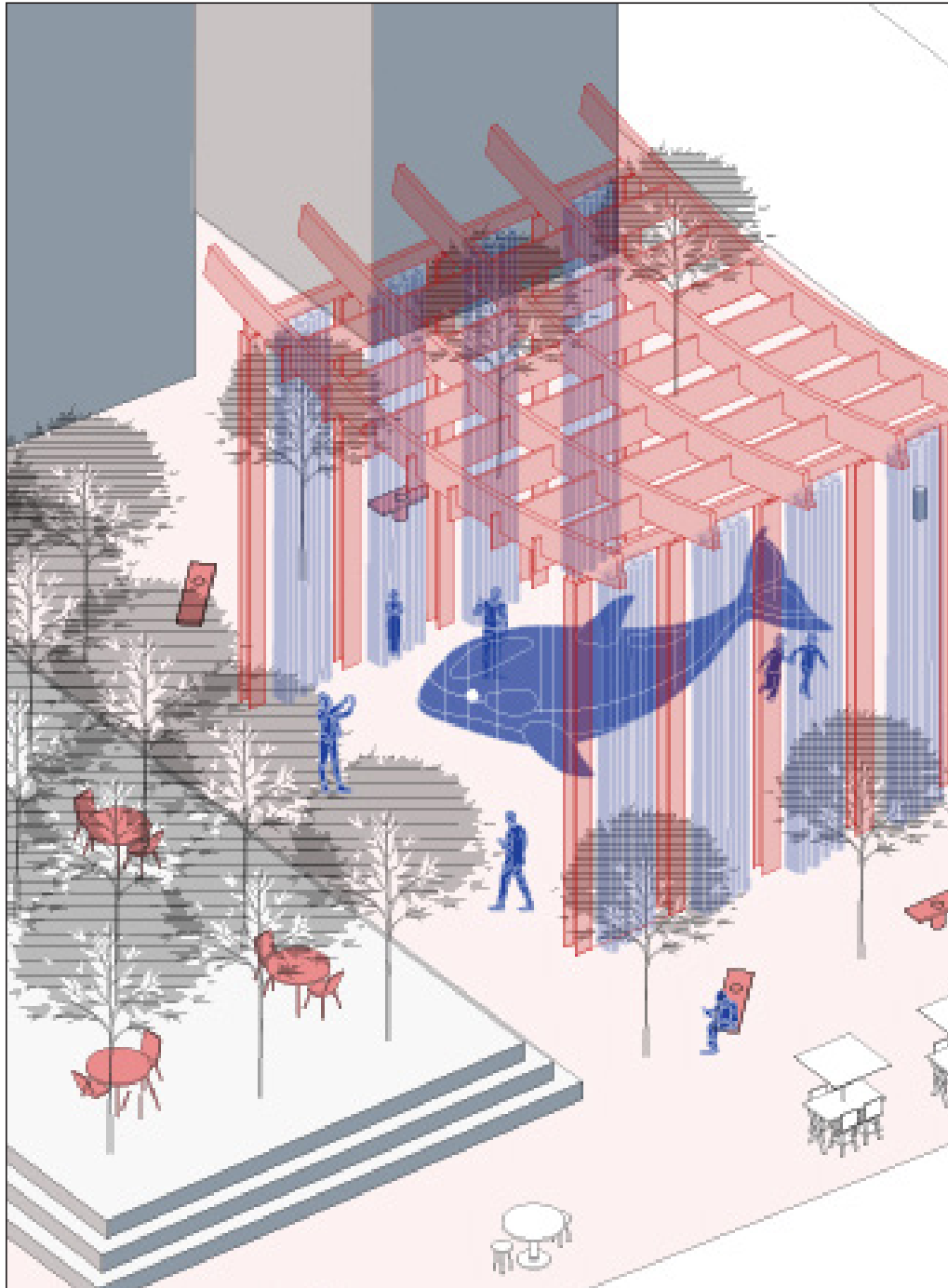
INTERACTIVE
360 ROTATING
BENCH

Strategically situated to accentuate the Ching Wu Athletic Association building, the pavilion stands out as a captivating visual centrepiece. Its open design provides a versatile setting for various performances, events, or local community gatherings like tai chi or yoga. Adjacent to the pavilion, the elevated tree canopy provides a different microclimatic environment and a more intimate atmosphere. Furthermore, the elevated tree canopy provides ample soil volume to ensure healthy tree growth and survival.

The intention of the proposed plaza is to provide robust and shaded spaces to accommodate the daily rhythms of surrounding businesses. Offering flexible seating options, including steps leading up to the elevated tree canopy, red movable tables and chairs, and 360-degree rotating benches inspired by the area's industrial character.

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:
THE CULTURAL PLAZA

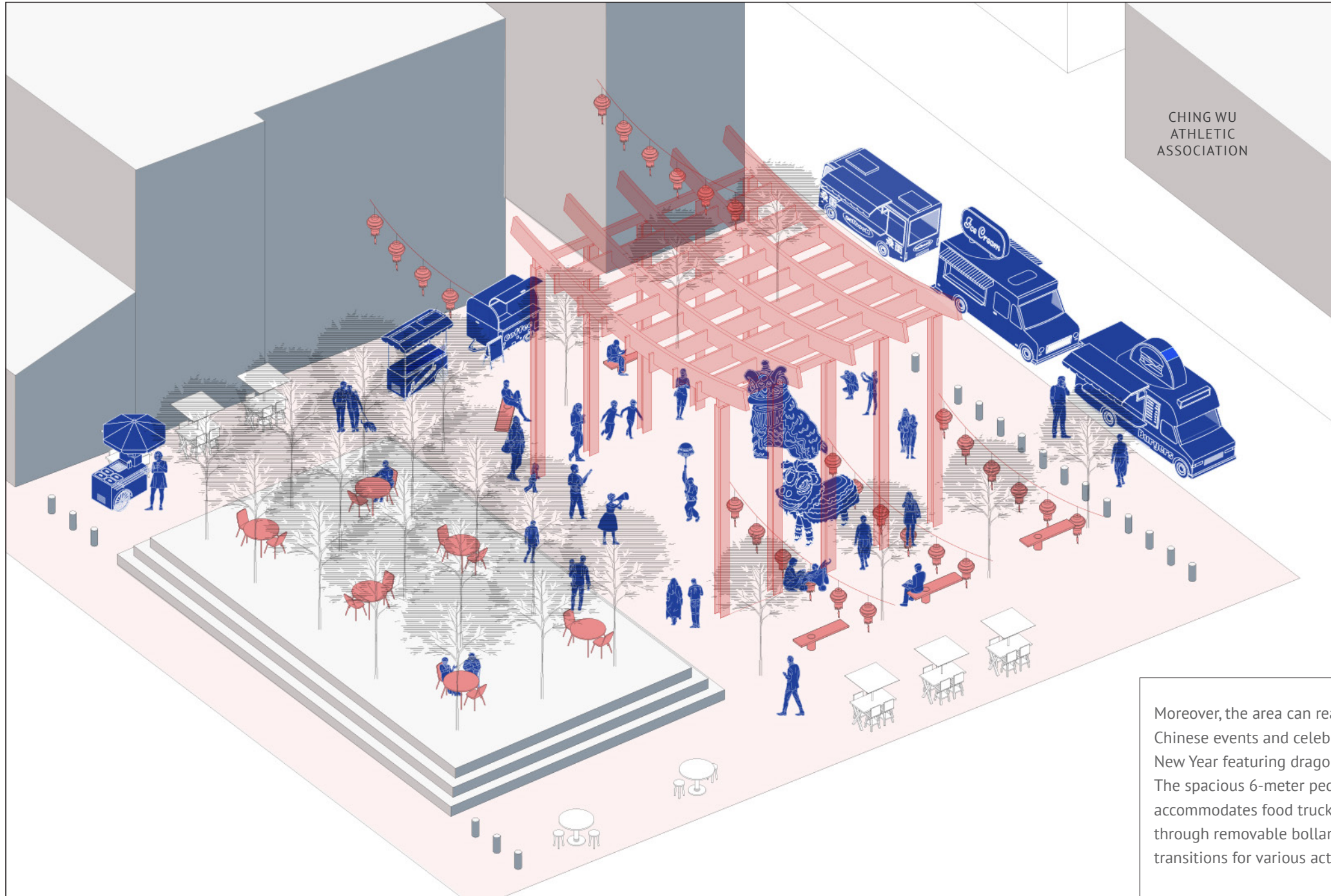
● **ACTIVITY | ART & PERFORMANCE**



In collaboration with artists to activate public spaces, the pavilion serves as a versatile venue for art installations. Artists can utilize the pavilion's structure and open-air design to exhibit visual art outdoors, whether through hanging art pieces or statues. Additionally, the pavilion provides an ideal space for busking and live music performances because of the ample seating offered to spectators.

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:
THE CULTURAL PLAZA

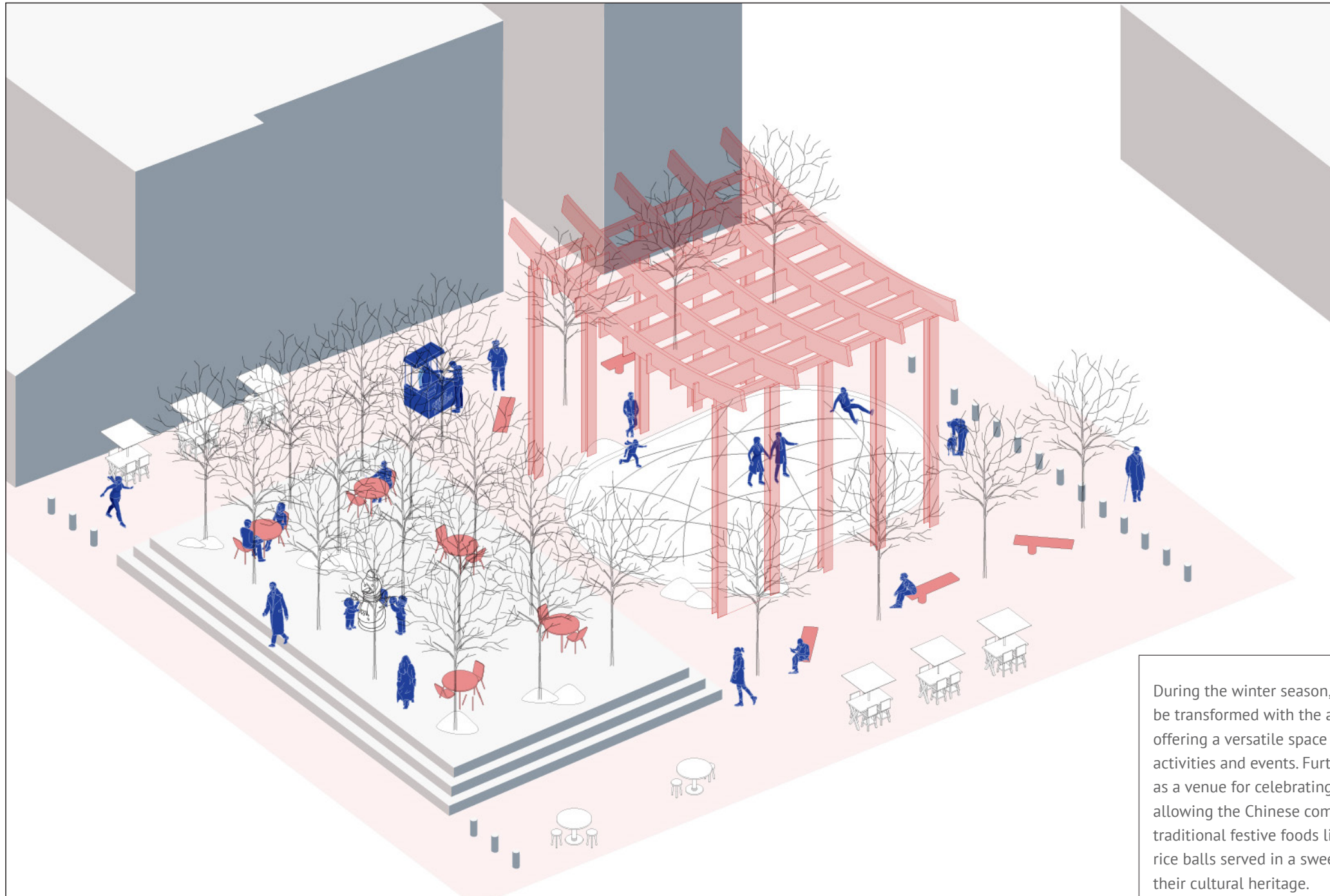
● **ACTIVITY | CULTURAL SPACE**



Moreover, the area can readily adapt to host Chinese events and celebrations, such as Chinese New Year featuring dragon and lion dances. The spacious 6-meter pedestrian walkway accommodates food trucks and vehicular access through removable bollards, ensuring easy transitions for various activities and festivities.

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:
THE CULTURAL PLAZA

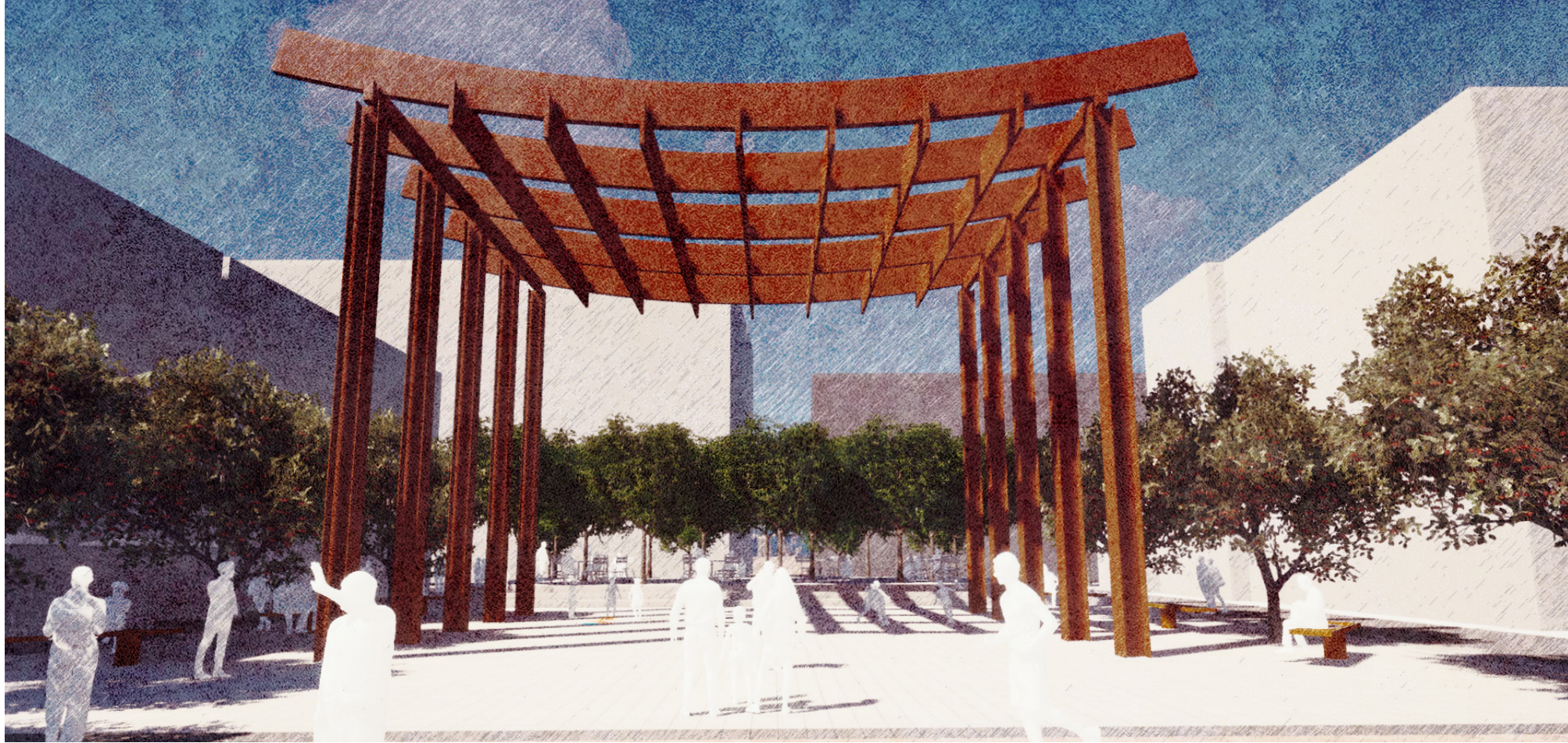
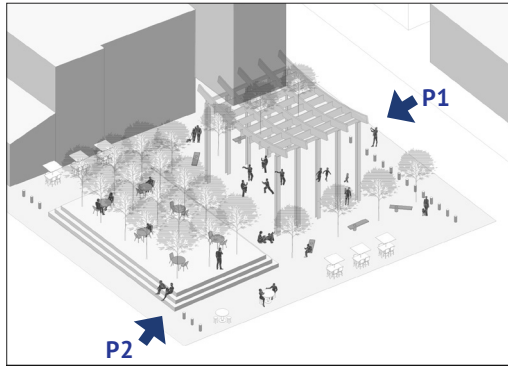
● **ACTIVITY | WINTERSCAPE**



During the winter season, the cultural plaza can be transformed with the addition of a skating ring offering a versatile space for various seasonal activities and events. Furthermore, it can serve as a venue for celebrating the Winter Solstice, allowing the Chinese community to enjoy traditional festive foods like tangyuan (glutinous rice balls served in a sweet soup) and continue their cultural heritage.

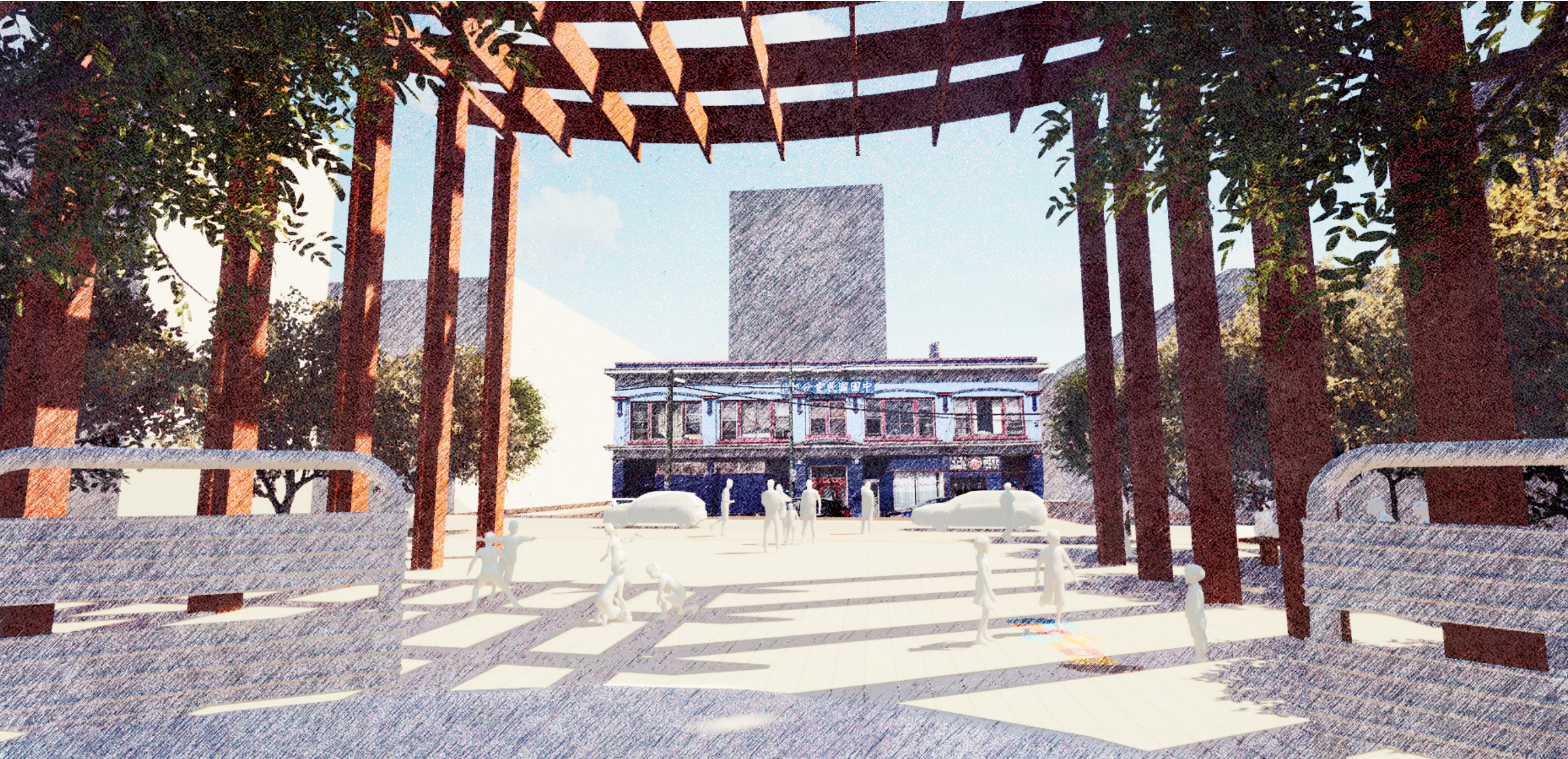
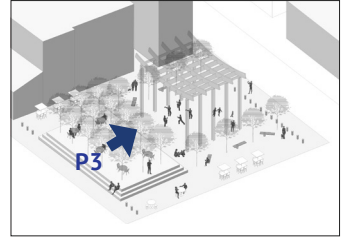
SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:
THE CULTURAL PLAZA

▼ **FORMS | CULTURAL PLAZA**



Here is a rendering displaying the grandeur of the pavilion, standing tall at a height of 15 meters. The materiality and the architectural reference to the history of the construction of railways as well as the surrounding industrial character of Winnipeg's Chinatown. Another perspective to showcase the lush and elevated tree canopy with steps designed to double as seating.

SITE DESIGN INTENTIONS:
THE CULTURAL PLAZA



REFLECTION

The objective of this practicum is to revitalize Chinatown by providing a sense of belonging to Chinese residents and immigrants while offering a space for cultural exchange and understanding. It is part of the preservation of cultural heritage, bringing back a sense of place and nostalgia while highlighting the traditional and cultural aspects of the Chinese. Overall, I find it challenging to navigate the fine line between creating a place of identity and avoiding stereotypes or kitschiness in Winnipeg Chinatown. The proposal ensures a more dynamic and robust public realm that is not exclusive to the Chinese but still ensures and validates the Chinese community's cultural heritage and historical narratives, which is a crucial aspect in the consideration of the design. Furthermore, in recognizing that demographic trends may evolve beyond the Chinese community, revitalizing Winnipeg Chinatown requires a collaborative placemaking approach involving various stakeholders to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all residents. While there's no universal solution, ongoing dialogue and efforts are essential in addressing the challenges in order to create spaces that reflect lived experiences and cater to the community's needs.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Please Note

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FIG 2.0

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FIG 3.0

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FIG 4.0

Leong, Karina. "Chinatown Blues". [Collage] News Headlines Modified from:

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FIG 6.0

Leong, Karina. Context Map: Winnipeg Chinatown. [map]. Map adapted from:

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FIG 7.0

Leong, Karina. Winnipeg Chinatown: Chinese Owned Building 1905-1930 [Map]. Modified from:

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FIG 9.0

Leong, Karina. Context Map: Winnipeg Chinatown & Fort Richmond. [map]. Map adapted from:

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FIG 10.0

Leong, Karina. Population Trend Study | Winnipeg & Fort Richmond Area. [Diagram]. Modified From:

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FIG 11.0

Leong, Karina. Winnipeg Chinatown Characteristics. [Collage Superimposed Map]. Adapted from:

Google Earth, Winnipeg Chinatown. 2024. Screen Capture.

LIST OF FIGURES

Please Note

Photographs and drawing have been produced by the author, unless otherwise specified.

FIG 12.1 - Fig 12.5

Leong, Karina. Typical Shophouses Archetype in Chinatown. [Diagram]. Adapted from:

Fig 12.1:

Google Earth Street View, Malaysia's Chinatown. 2024. Screen Capture.

Fig 12.2:

Google Earth Street View, Singapore's Chinatown. 2024. Screen Capture.

Fig 12.3:

Google Earth Street View, Thailand's Chinatown 2024. Screen Capture.

Fig 12.4:

Google Earth Street View, San Francisco's Chinatown 2024. Screen Capture.

Fig 12.5:

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FIG 13.0

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FIG 14.0

Leong, Karina. Seasonal Cultural Events: Timeline and Space Settings. [Diagram]. Adapted from:

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FIG 15.0

Leong, Karina. Mapping the infra-and-social structure of Winnipeg. [Collage Superimposed Map]. Adapted from:

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FIG 21.0

Leong, Karina. Collaboration with Chinese-Canadian Artists [Collage]. Adapted from:

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