

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: CHINESE COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMPLEX:
REDEFINING COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY

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Monterey Park is a small suburban community, ten miles east of downtown Los Angeles, with a population of 60,269 residents. The largest percentage of Chinese immigrants in suburban America can currently be found in Monterey Park, California. Monterey Park has rightfully earned the title as “The First Suburban Chinatown” (Fong). It is the only city in America with a majority Asian population. Bounded by three major freeways, Monterey Park serves as the gateway to the San Gabriel Valley. Though a majority of the residents are of Asian descent, the community also consists of Caucasian, Hispanic, and African American residents.

The goal of this thesis is to design a community center that will serve as a gathering space to bring the different populations together. The center will house public functions important for understanding Chinese culture. This will include a restaurant and teaching kitchen, theater, library, exhibit space, courtyard, garden, workshops, dance rooms and classrooms. The arrangement of these spaces, the choice of materials, and the expression of the façade reflect a unique Chinese-American style. This thesis explores the multi-faceted meanings of “identity” and how architecture can express the Chinese-American struggle to hold on to heritage while assimilating to a new culture.

CHINESE-AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER: EXPRESSING COMMUNITY AND IMMIGRANT IDENTITY

By
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DEDICATION

Without the support of my friends and family, this thesis would not have been possible. I would like to thank them for their love and unwavering support.

I would also like to thank my thesis committee for their constant guidance and their endless knowledge.

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INTRODUCTION

The immigrant community must struggle with finding a balance between the customs, culture, and tradition they bring from their homeland and the new customs, culture, and traditions of their host country. These different beliefs often bring about an internal struggle with what beliefs define and identify you as an individual. This struggle to find an identity continues through successive generations.

Architecture expresses cultural identity and regional influences (Al Sayyad). The large, overhanging pagoda roofs of East Asia are easily associated with the China, Japan, or Korea. Images of white-washed, Mediterranean style buildings are associated with the Greek Islands. And the Georgian manors of Colonial America are associated with American ideals.

This thesis will address the duality of Chinese immigrant identity through architectural expression and form. Just as Chinese Americans must find a balance between American and Chinese ideals, the center must find a balance between American and Chinese building traditions. Furthermore, the center will serve as a gateway between China and America, the immigrant generation and their children, and between immigrants and the native community.

I | BACKGROUND

IMMIGRATION

Chinese immigration can be broken into four major periods: 1849 to 1882, 1882 to 1943, 1943 to 1965, and 1965 to the present. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, male Chinese immigrants came to America to make money to send home to their families in China. These early immigrants came with the hope of someday returning home rich heroes. The second period of immigration from 1882 to 1943 was marked by the Chinese Exclusion Act. The Act banned further immigration of Chinese people and prevented current Chinese immigrants from naturalization and assimilation. In 1943, the Act was finally lifted and the American government set a quota for 105 Chinese immigrants per year. Exceptions were made for war brides, refugees, scientists and trained professionals. Then in 1965, Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Immigration Act, which allowed immigration based on needed skills, increasing the quota to 20,000 people for non-European immigrants each year.

Early immigrants never intended to make America their home. The current immigrant population, however, has diversified economically and educationally. Wealthy entrepreneurs and well educated young professionals comprise a majority of the new Chinese immigrants. The average Chinese immigrant has skills, education and savings that surpass those of the average American. (Zhou 47). As of 2000, sixty-five percent (65%) of Chinese immigrants come with a four-year degree. Immigration trends to America correlate with political events and strife in China. Following World War II,

emigration from Taiwan began to increase and following the return of Hong Kong to China, emigration from Hong Kong increased.

Immigrants in the nineteenth century lived in ethnic enclaves that came to be known as Chinatowns. These communities were supported by Chinese associations that supported the immigrant community financially and socially, and provided them with employment. Today, Chinese immigrants still tend to settle where there is an established Chinese community. However, new immigrants are not tied to Chinese associations or Chinatowns. The new wave of immigrants tends to settle based on family ties and employment opportunities. This has led to an increase in the number of immigrants that settle directly in suburban areas, bypassing the traditional urban Chinatowns. Furthermore, there is a migration of the Chinese community out of the traditional urban Chinatowns into suburban neighborhoods. This can be seen in the movement of Chinese immigrants from New York City's Chinatown to the suburbs of Flushing, Queens. This migration is much more dramatic in the Los Angeles Chinatown, where a majority of the immigrant population now resides in suburban communities. Monterey Park, California is a prime example of Chinese suburban community.

The migration of Chinese immigrants to the suburbs is a reflection of social status. "Field interviews confirmed that many Chinese perceived the purchase of a home in Queens or Brooklyn as a prime achievement and a symbol of success. In many cases, residential mobility was an expression of socioeconomic mobility." (Zhou 75). Having the means to move out of the city and own land was a sign of success and goal that many

Chinese immigrants strived to accomplish. Affluent and highly skilled immigrants tend to bypass the traditional urban Chinatown altogether to settle directly in the suburbs. According to the 2000 Census, less than 3% of Chinese in Los Angeles, 8% of Chinese in San Francisco, and 14% of Chinese in New York choose to live in the old inner-city Chinatown. This trend has led to the emergence of ethnoburbs, suburban neighborhoods that are comprised of a majority of one ethnic community.

These Chinese ethnoburbs are not centered around a single Chinese community association or group. Suburban ethnic communities are organized around Chinese schools, alumni and professional associations and civil rights groups. While striving to promote the Chinese community, the community has also become an exclusive society that has a tendency to isolate itself from other communities.

One of the main constraints on the ethnic community is its exclusivity. We have seen signs that Chinese immigrants are not mixing well with U.S.-born non-coethnics in ethnic enclaves or ethnoburbs. This lack of primary-level or intimate interpersonal relationships may render Chinese immigrants and their children vulnerable to negative stereotyping and racial discrimination. (Zhou 53).

The isolation of the Chinese-American and Chinese immigrant community has perpetuated societal stereotypes. America is represented by its ethnic diversity. In order to be a true melting pot it is important to foster interethnic and interracial understanding and inclusion.

Assimilation does not necessarily mean blindly adopting another culture or custom as your own. The Chinese community uses Chinese schools not only as community gathering places, but also as a means of transmitting culture and customs from one generation to another. Chinese immigrants have shown that “becoming becoming American while maintaining their Chinese ethnicity is not just a possibility but an increasingly preferred choice among Chinese Americans.” (Zhou 52). However, Chinese schools are rented spaces, usually in public schools, which means there is no space for the Chinese-American community to meet and teach.

TABLE 1_ASIAN IMMIGRANT BREAK DOWN, 2010

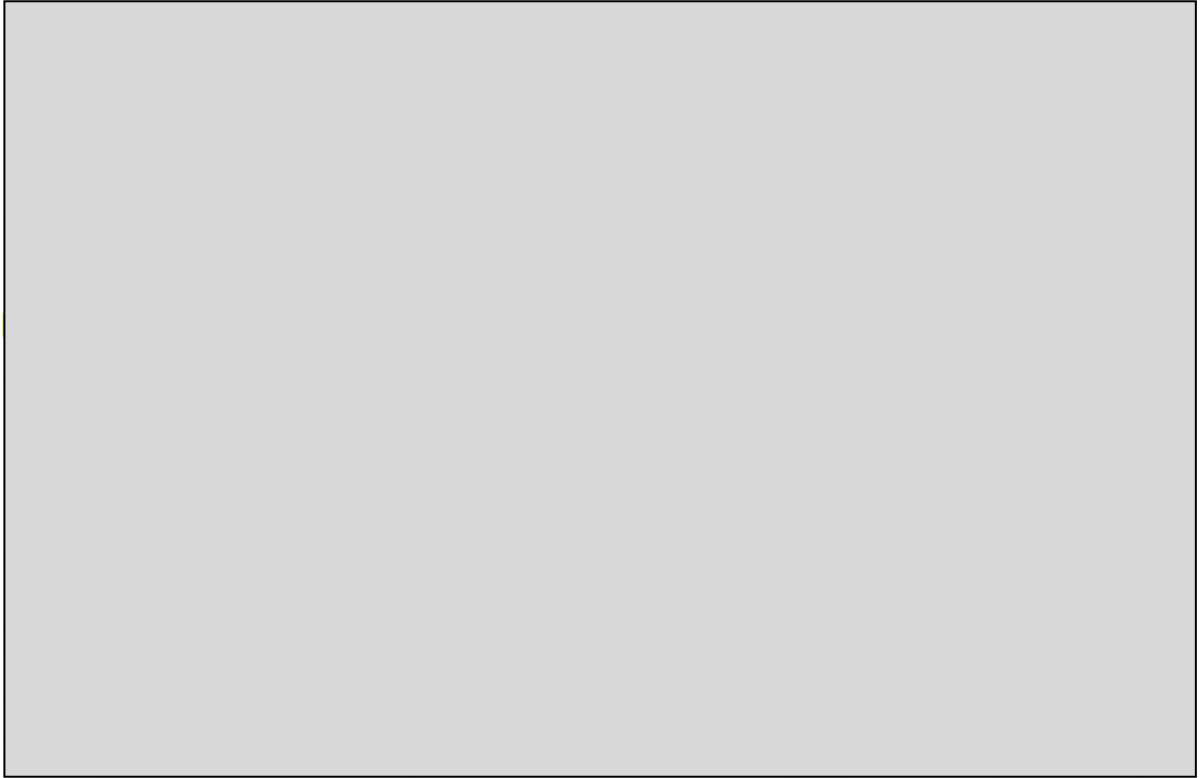


TABLE 2_CHINESE AMERICAN POPULATION BY STATE, 2000

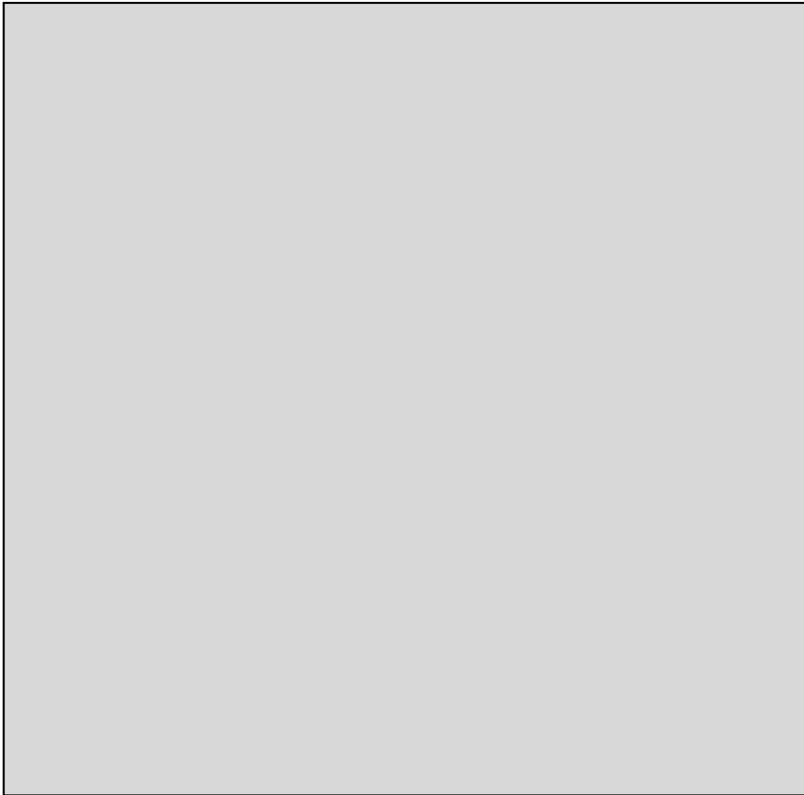
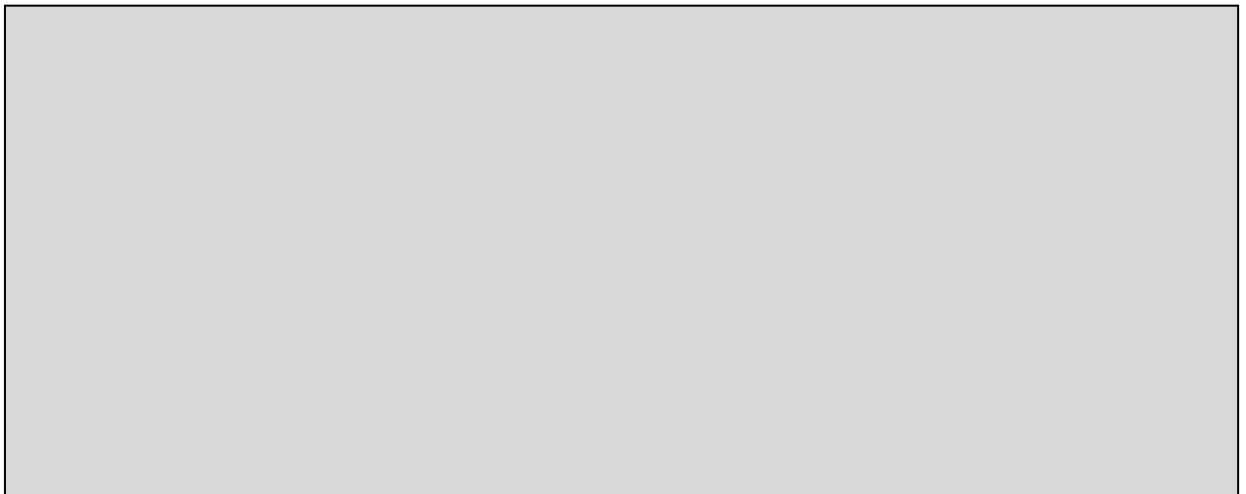


TABLE 3_CITIES WITH HIGHEST ASIAN POPULATION, 2010



COMMUNITY

This thesis will investigate the cultural and social aspects of three communities: the Chinese immigrant community, the Chinese-American community, and the Monterey Park residents. In this thesis, Chinese American, without the hyphenation will refer to the Chinese immigrant community living in the United States, while Chinese-American will refer to the children of Chinese immigrants born and raised in the U.S. The residents of Monterey Park will refer to those who own or rent in the Monterey Park municipality.

A broader meaning of the term community encompasses a “group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society”, as defined by Merriam Webster Dictionary. Thus, the target user for the Center will include more than just Chinese immigrants and their children. The program of the Center will redefine “community” by including people from various ethnic and social backgrounds, without physical limitations to who is included in the city limits. While the center will use Chinese and Chinese-American culture to organize the program for the center, it will be a community center that welcomes individuals from all backgrounds.

The Chinese community will not be limited by generational, socioeconomic, or geographic definitions. Professor of sociology and Asian American studies at UCLA, Min Zhou, writes that “the ethnic community should not be understood simply as a neighborhood where a particular ethnic group’s members and/or businesses concentrate, or as a geographically unbounded racial or ethnic identity in the abstract. Rather, it contains various ethnic institutions, such as ethnic businesses, socio-cultural

organizations, and interpersonal networks established, operated and maintained by group members.” (Zhou 160). The Chinese community in America extends beyond physical boundaries and across generations. The program will cater to the children of immigrants, as well as the elderly and new immigrants.

Furthermore, the definition of community will not be limited by ethnic background. Even within the term “Chinese immigrant”, there are a number of subgroups determined by the region of China from which the immigrant migrated. In this thesis, the term “Chinese immigrant” will refer to immigrants from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Unless noted otherwise, Chinese will refer to people from all three regions.

CULTURE

Merriam Webster defines culture as the “set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization”. This thesis will explore the nuances of Chinese and American cultures in order to find commonalities between the two. In order to educate the public about the cultural traditions of Chinese immigrants, it is important to understand what attitudes, values, goals, and practices characterize the Chinese immigrant community of Monterey Park.

Chinese culture has an extensive history that has been refined over several centuries. While attitudes, customs, language, and traditions vary between the different regions of China, traditional Chinese art forms are shared nationally. Traditional art forms include, but are not limited to Chinese folk dance and music, Chinese opera, calligraphy, painting, poetry, martial arts, and games. These are the values that Chinese community centers in

China and Chinese cultural centers in America choose to emphasize. In addition to these traditional art forms, this thesis will also include cooking and food that showcases the variety of cuisine found in China and the craftsmanship found in carving, prints, and furniture making. Though dishes vary between the regions of China, it is a cultural aspect shared and loved by people regardless of their socioeconomic or ethnic backgrounds. These are the shared beliefs and values of the Chinese and Chinese immigrant communities. These values will be explored in the program for the Chinese community heritage complex.

Food will be the main focus of this community center and the piece that sets it apart from other cultural centers in the Los Angeles area. Traditionally, food has been a cornerstone of Chinese hospitality, family and business. Hosts must receive their guests with a delicious meal and guests must reciprocate with a meal of equal value and eloquence. This is a tradition the author has witnessed firsthand for twenty some years. Furthermore, business transactions and mergers are often conducted over meals. It is not considered official unless it is agreed upon over food.

Chinese-American youth culture is harder to define because of the unique blend of American and Chinese culture. According to Zhou's research in her book *Contemporary Chinese America: Immigration, Ethnicity, and Community Transformation*, the children of Chinese immigrants tend to move away from the ethnic enclave in order to integrate into American society. Traditionally, Chinese-American youth have used Chinese school as social networking that has helped the second generation form its own community and

culture. The Center will include space for classrooms and host after school programs that will also serve as gathering spaces for the youth.

IDENTITY

Immigrants, no matter their country of origin, struggle with dueling identities. Immigrants identify with their homeland; the customs and culture that helped shape them as individuals, yet they must also struggle to understand new cultures and customs. The acculturation of the immigrant population often leads to the adoption of culture, customs, and ideology from the host country. The extent to which an individual assimilates will vary, but the impression left by the host country can be subtle or dramatic.

For Chinese Americans, the emergence of a unique transnational identity began during the political strife in China in 1915. At the time, the new Chinese Republic was facing a list of 21 demands from Japan. Not only did the Chinese Republic acquiesce to these demands, but the government also considered reverting to a monarchical government. These grievances were met with outrage and defiance from the Chinese American community. The defiance came from the lower, working class immigrants rather than the social elite. This break from social norms in China was the first indication of an ideological shift and the emergence of a new identity. Furthermore, Chinese Americans fought to save the Republican government of China. This resistance and organization of Chinese in America was the first step toward identifying themselves as Chinese American.

Unlike other immigrant populations, Chinese Americans were banned from naturalization and assimilation until 1943, when immigration laws finally changed. With such a long, negative history of alienation and isolation, Chinese immigrants coped by holding onto certain cultural ideals because of a residing fear of being driven back to China. Chinese Americans valued Confucianism above all. Confucian values define social roles and act as moral codes: “the “four pillars of the nation” were *li*, decorum of rites; *yi*, righteousness or duty; *lian*, integrity or honesty; and *chi*, sense of shame.” (Chen 120). Chinese Americans blend American and Chinese political, social, and moral beliefs. This unique mix means that Chinese-Americans are neither Chinese nor American, but a new group with a unique set of beliefs, traditions, and customs.

II | PROGRAM AND SPACE PLANNING

DESIGN OBJECTIVE

The Chinese-American Center will combine public and residential facilities, in order to create a new center for the Chinese American community in Los Angeles, as well as for the Monterey Park community. The design and layout of the village will reflect traditional Chinese planning blended with modern American architecture. This synthesis will reflect the duality of immigrant identity.

The public program for the village is meant to serve as a community gathering space and educational facility that will teach the public about Chinese American heritage. Programmatic elements such as the restaurant and teaching kitchen are meant to welcome people from different communities and ethnic backgrounds. The classrooms, theater/auditorium, and exhibit space will educate the public about the rich Chinese American heritage. A series of courtyards and open spaces will serve the residents and visitors and help alleviate some of the need for public spaces in the city.

Furthermore, the design of the center will help create a sense of place and identity for the city of Monterey Park. The design of the center can serve as precedent for future development in the city.

PROGRAM

Function	Capacity	Area (sq.ft.)
Public		
Information Desk	N/A	754
Auditorium	300	8,145
Control Room	N/A	293
Coat Room		200
Dressing Rooms		906
Exhibit Space	100	3,025
Restaurant	50	4,000
Cafe	25	2212
Kitchen	N/A	1207
Community Garden	N/A	1448
Tea House	N/A	2,016
Meeting Room	25	1932
Shops/ Workshops		3776
Courtyard	N/A	11206
Garden		7545
Library	800	7313
Educational Facilities		
Classroom A	30	916
Classroom B	30	919
Classroom C	40	1123
Classroom D	30	892
Classroom E	30	919
Classroom F	40	1123
Meeting Room	14	495
Dance Studio		900
Large Dance Studio		2036
Teaching Kitchen		5265
Restrooms		3,028
Parking	53 spaces	29, 571

Private		
Offices	10	2046
Staff Kitchen	N/A	380
Dressing Room	N/A	906
Mechanical/Electrical	N/A	3600
Storage	N/A	880
Housing	90 units	90,000
Total		200, 977

THEATER

Traditionally, Chinese theater served as a means for educating the illiterate agrarian society. It was also used to for moral instruction and entertainment. In fact, Chinese theater was such a popular form of entertainment that it is performed outside the theater at birthday parties, holidays, festivals, and harvest time. During the Qing Dynasty, troupes would use tea houses as a place to rehearse. Their performances became so popular that patrons would come to the tea houses to watch performances.

Chinese theater ranges from shadow puppetry to various forms of opera and theater. Thus, the auditorium must be able to host a variety of performance types. Additionally, troupes will not be limited by their ethnicity; both local performance artists and international Chinese organizations will be welcome.

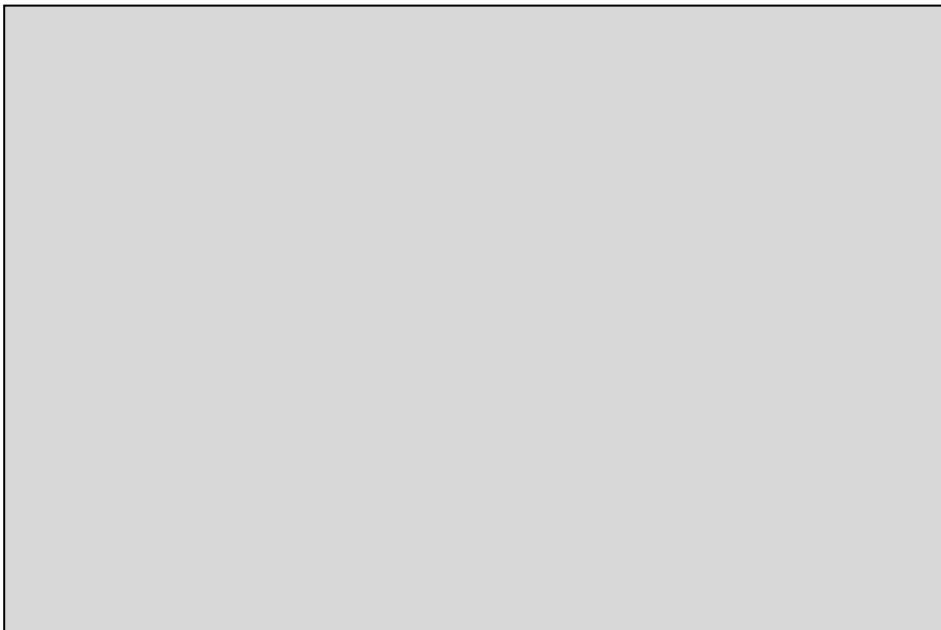


FIG. 1 MULTIFUNCTIONAL THEATER

AT THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS IN BEIJING

Source: National Center for the Performing Arts

EXHIBIT SPACE

There will be a permanent exhibit space that educates the public on the history of Chinese Americans. There will also be exhibits set up in the circulation space. These exhibits will consist of traditional Chinese art work such as paintings, calligraphy, porcelain, and paper cutting. The exhibit spaces will also be a great way to display works produced by the various classes offered in the center.



FIG. 2 CIRCULATION EXHIBIT SPACE

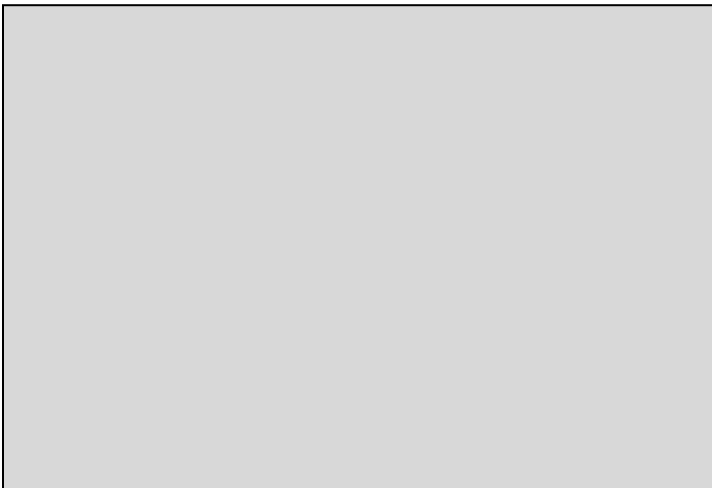


FIG. 3 EXHIBIT SPACE

Source: National Center for the Performing Arts

RESTAURANT

Restaurants serve as community meeting spaces. Chinese restaurants usually have smaller rooms set aside for private events and business meetings. Many of the conference and meeting rooms in Chinese cultural centers are private rooms with a round dining table. Restaurants play an important role in the Chinese community.

Chinese cuisine is also an important part of Chinese culture. Despite regional differences in cooking styles, people can appreciate the unique dishes from the various regions. Chinese cooking has a variety of styles and traditions based on region. The major traditions include: Anhui, Cantonese, Fujian, Hunan, Jiangsu, Shandong, Szechuan, and Zhejiang cuisines. The most prominent and well known of these types are Guangdong (Cantonese), Shandong, Jiangsu, and Szechuan. Each of these cuisines developed based on available resources, climate, history, geography, cooking techniques, and lifestyle.

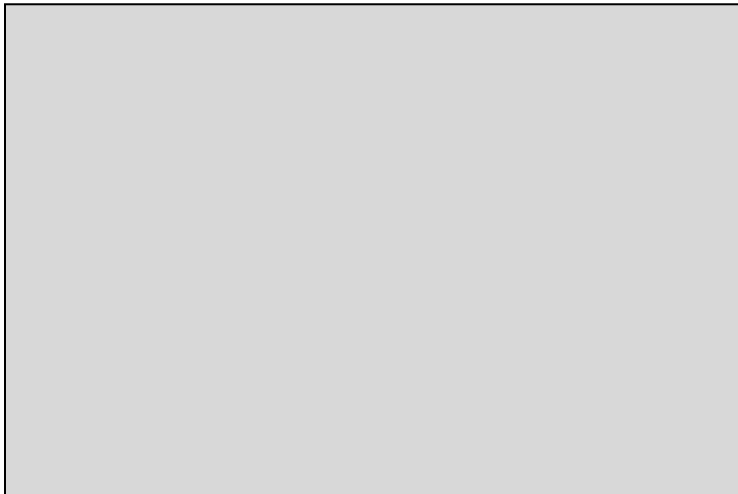


FIG.4 JIN SHA RESTAURANT

This modern imperialist Chinese restaurant in Hangzhou, China is part of the Four Seasons hotel.

Source: <http://www.fourseasons.com>

LIBRARY

The city of Monterey Park currently has one library located by Barnes Memorial Park on Ramona Avenue. This library was recently expanded and provides a number of community services including evening classes, events, and meeting spaces. The library in the village will serve as a special collection library that focuses on Asian literature, art, and entertainment. The library will also have a community lounge and gathering space for people to enjoy the collection.



FIG.5 SPECIAL COLLECTION LIBRARY

This is the lounge and special collection area for the Culture Center of Taiwan in L.A.

Source: Author



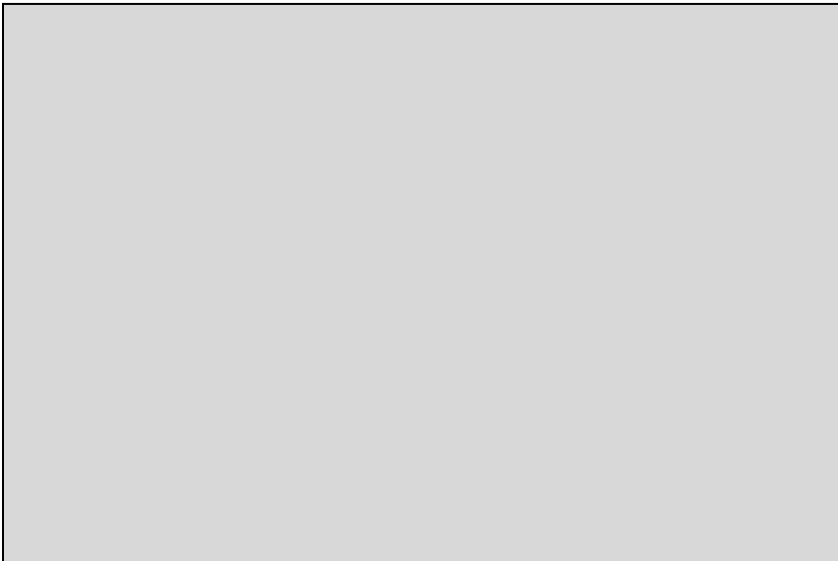
FIG.6 LIBRARY AT CULTURAL CENTER

This library is part of the Culture Center of Taiwan in L.A.

Source: Author

TEACHING KITCHEN

The teaching kitchen will not be based on culinary school kitchens. The scale will be more intimate, in order to promote a sense of community. The teaching kitchen is meant to compliment the restaurant, by allowing patrons to learn how to prepare their favorite dishes. It will also educate the public on the different culinary styles from the various regions of China.



**FIG.7 LE CHAT
GOURMET
TEACHING KITCHEN**

*This kitchen is located in Michigan and offers private classes with professional chefs.
Source:*

<http://www.lechatgourmet.com>

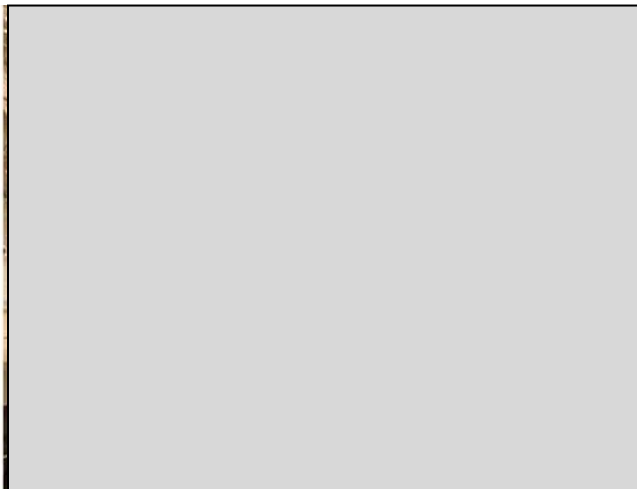


FIG.8 TEACHING KITCHEN

*AT VIKING COOKING SCHOOL IN
HARRAH'S RESORT IN ATLANTIC CITY
Source: <http://www.northjersey.com/travel/>*

COURTYARD/GARDEN

Monterey Park currently has very limited open and public space. The addition of a courtyard or garden in the midst of the denser downtown area will provide a much need break from the higher density. It will also provide a nice public amenity for residents in the northern part of the city. The design of the courtyard will reflect a fusion of American and Chinese traditions for landscaping. Inspiration will be drawn from the Suzhou Museum, the American Embassy in Beijing, and the People’s Republic of China Embassy in Washington D.C. These three modern buildings fuse Eastern and Western ideals in an elegant and subtle manner, while still responding to the immediate context of the building.



FIG.9 HUMBLE ADMINISTRATOR GARDEN

Source: Google Images

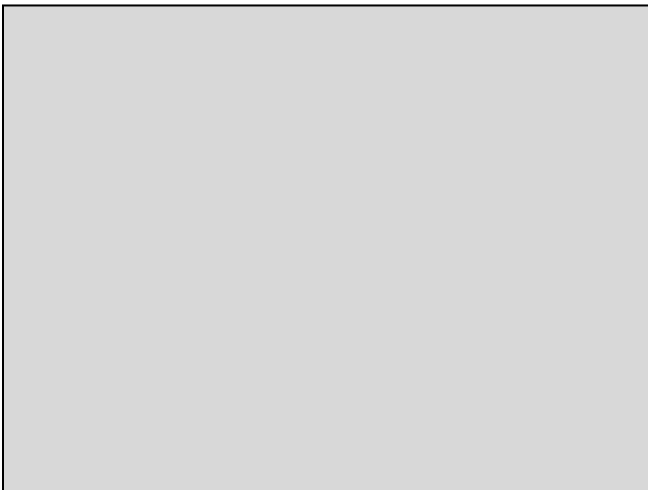


FIG.10 MUNICIPAL ROSE GARDEN

The Rose Garden at Berkeley, California was planted during the New Deal era.

Source: <http://www.berkeleyheritage.com/>

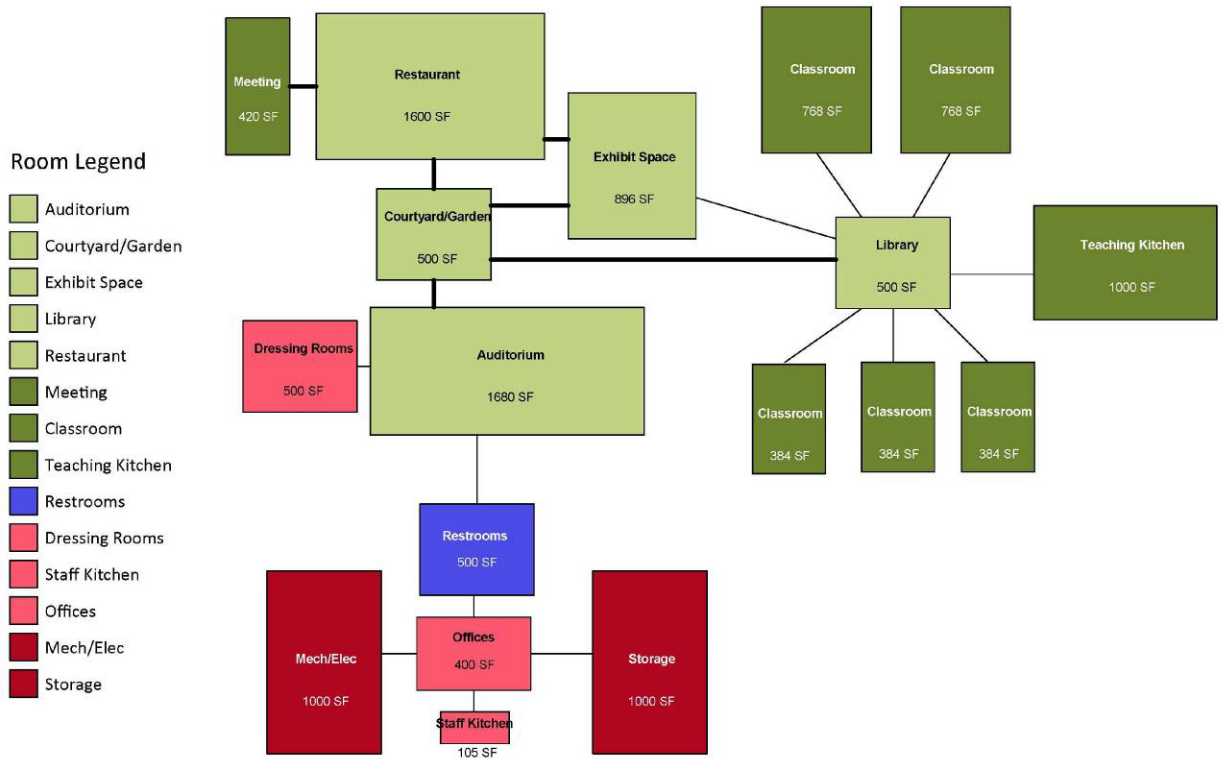


FIG.11 PROGRAM ANALYSIS 1

This initial program study groups programs based on public versus private and then general gathering versus educational facilities. The thicker black lines indicate circulation to connect key public spaces.

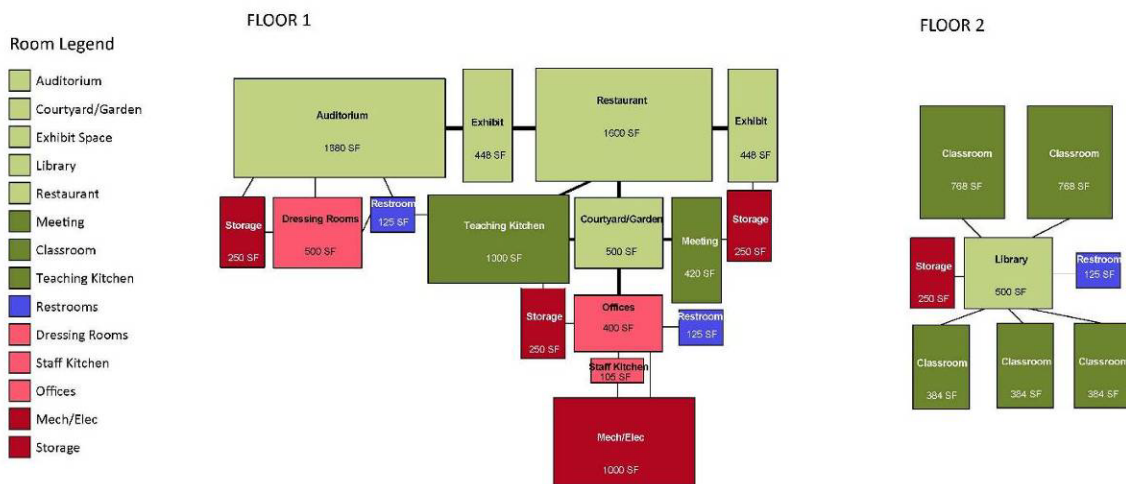


FIG.12 PROGRAM ANALYSIS 2

This second analysis starts breaking the programs into floors based on more public functions versus quieter, semi-public functions. Here, the auditorium and restaurant would be the public facilities that line the street and welcome visitors. The classrooms would be elevated from the street on the second floor, in order to provide a quieter location for instruction.

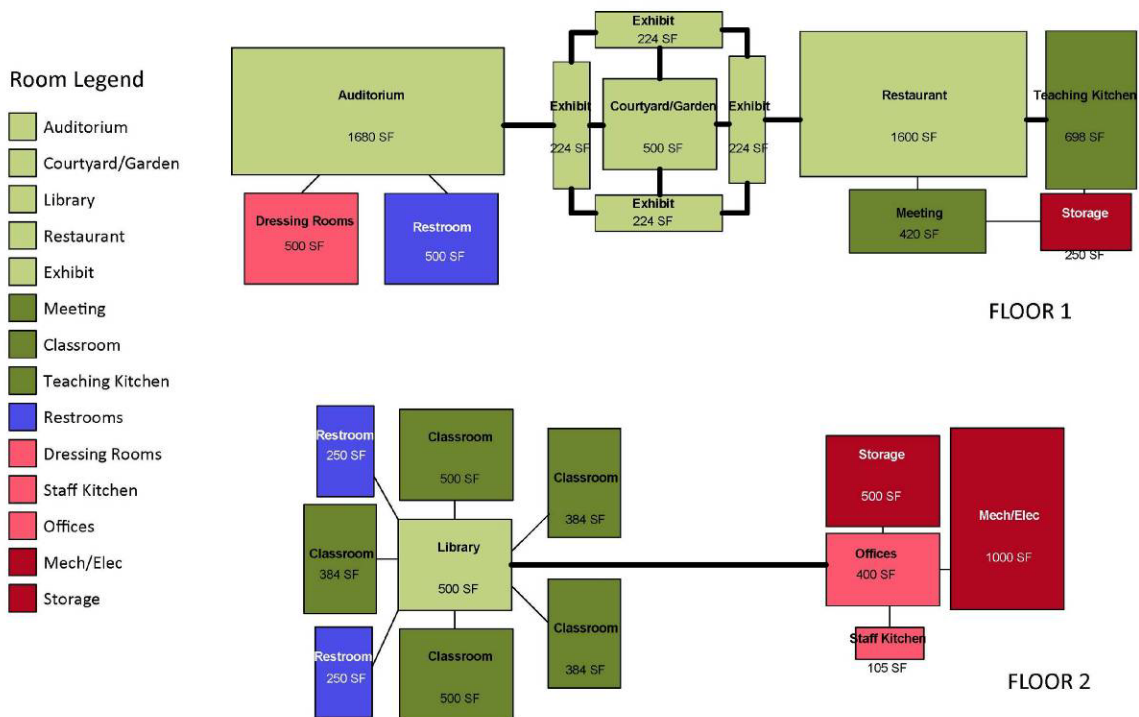


FIG.13 PROGRAM ANALYSIS 3

The third analysis of function looks more at the flow of spaces and possible circulation around the public facilities. The courtyard and garden would serve as a connection space between the two major public facilities, the restaurant and the auditorium. The exhibition space would be incorporated with the circulation. Upstairs, the functions that require more privacy and less street noise, such as classrooms, offices, and the library, could be tucked away.

STRUCTURAL NEEDS

Monterey Park is located in an area with heavy seismic activity. In order to manage earthquake loads, the building foundation will consist of base isolation bearing to allow the building to move with the ground, helping dissipate some of the transmission of forces from the ground to the building. The building will also use post-tensioned steel in a moment resistant frame. Most seismic failures have occurred at connection points due to failure to transfer loads properly and efficiently. Post-tensioned steel ensures complete load transfer between beam and column. Though further studies are still required to see how well post-tensioned steel will fare in more extreme earthquakes. Furthermore, keeping the building low the ground is another strategy to prevent extraneous forces cause by tall buildings.

III | SITE

SITE SELECTION

Several sites were considered prior to selecting a Southern California, suburban community for my thesis. The site selection process began by looking at both urban and suburban Chinese communities in America. To narrow down which areas would be considered, the 2010 Census information was used to determine the highest concentration of Chinese immigrants. This left San Francisco's Chinatown, New York City's Chinatown, Flushing, Queens, and Monterey Park, California. San Francisco and New York's Chinatowns were not selected because of the Chinese immigrant migration trend out of urban enclaves within the United States. Flushing and Monterey Park have the highest concentration of Chinese immigrants outside of an urban context. In fact, Monterey Park is the only suburban city in America comprised of a majority of minority residents. In order to better serve the target community of Chinese immigrants, locating the center in a neighborhood with a significant Chinese immigrant population is important to the use and sustainability of the center.

Once Monterey Park was selected for the site, a set of criteria was created to select a site within the city. It is important that the site have the following characteristics: 1) proximity to an educational facility such as an elementary, middle, and/or high school; 2) proximity to healthcare facilities or elderly care facilities; 3) proximity to senior housing; 4) proximity to a downtown area with high traffic; 5) easily accessible by public transportation; 6) relative ease of access from the surrounding freeways; 7) proximity to residential area to promote community activity; 8) the site should not have an existing structure, to allow for infill.

CONTEXT

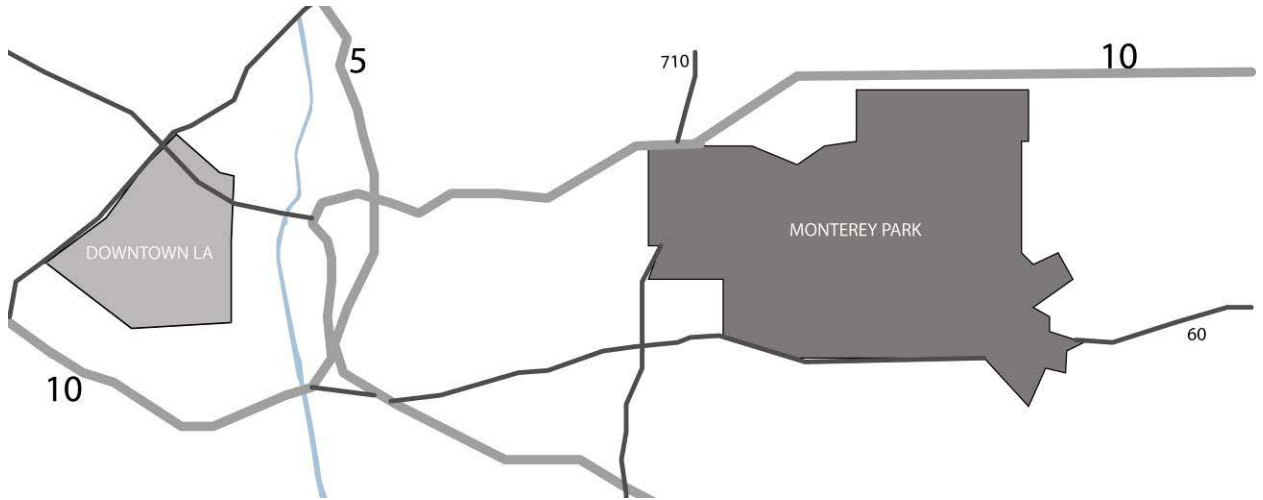
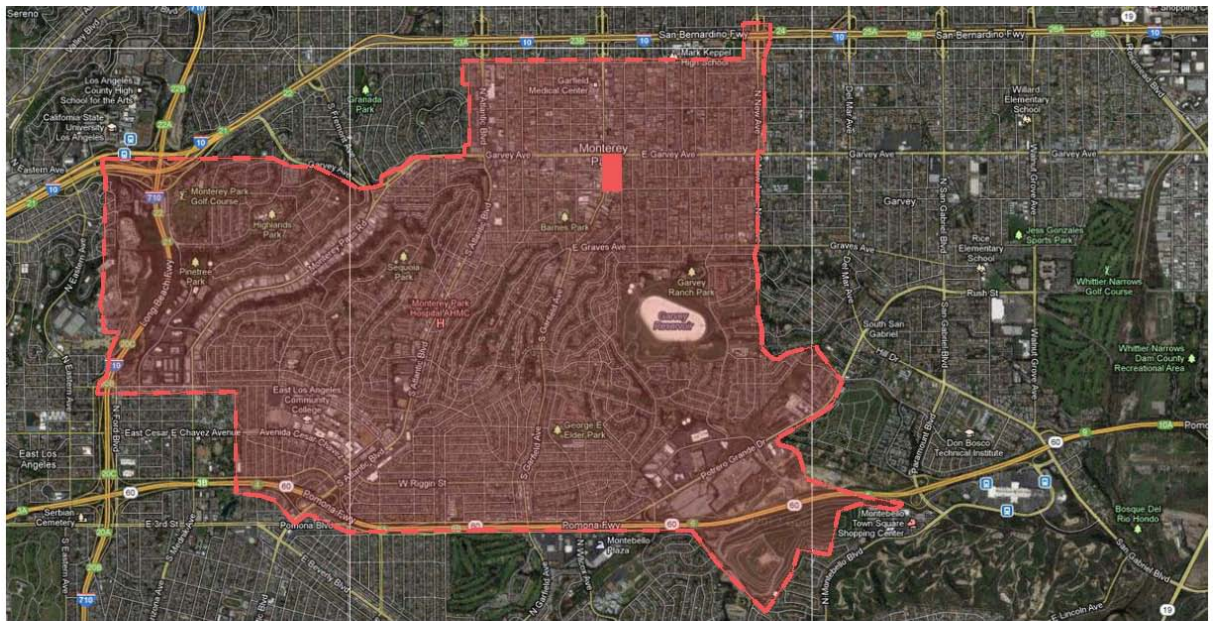


FIG.14 LOCATION

Monterey Park location in relation to downtown Los Angeles
 Source: Author



MONTEREY PARK BOUNDARY



FIG.15 MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES OF MONTEREY PARK
 Source: Author over Google Map underlay

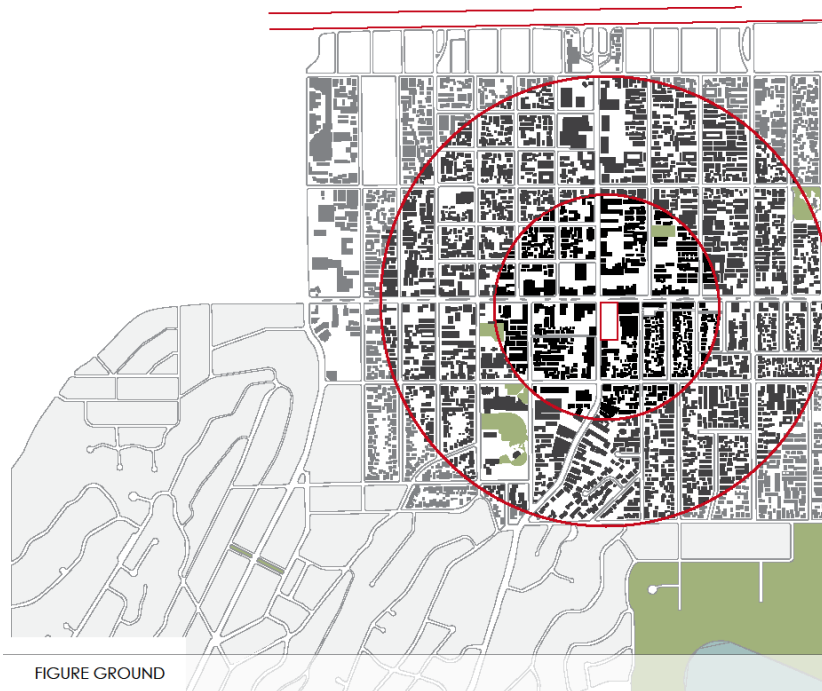


FIG.16 FIGURE GROUND

PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Monterey Park, California is a 7.73 square mile plot of land, eight miles east of downtown Los Angeles. The city is serviced by the San Bernardino Freeway (10), the Long Beach Freeway (710), and the Pomona Freeway (60). The city is serviced by 12 freeway ramps that connect to the three surrounding freeways. The city is bordered by East Los Angeles to the south and east, El Monte to the west, and Pasadena and Alhambra to the North.

HISTORY

Monterey Park began as a 30,000 acre Spanish land grant known as Ramona Acres. In 1879, Richard Garvey purchased 4,000 acres of that land that used to be along his old mail route. Garvey constructed the first road, developed a water system, and built a dam to irrigate the land. Garvey Avenue is now the historic downtown shopping street. Prior to incorporation, Monterey Park consisted of parcels of farm land. As the population continued to grow, the parcels were sold to individuals hoping to own their own land and home.

In the early 1900's, Ramona Acres was threatened with the possibility of being annexed by the neighboring cities of Alhambra, Pasadena, and South Pasadena. In order to protect itself from becoming the sewage wasteland of its neighboring cities, the residents of Ramona Acres decided to incorporate the town on May 16, 1916. Later that year, on June 2, 1916, the city was officially renamed Monterey Park. The city's population continued to grow over the next few decades, but experienced lulls during the Great Depression and the World Wars. By the 1950's, Monterey Park had become a white, suburban bedroom community in Southern California. The few minorities that settled in Monterey Park were hoping to assimilate into American society by living the American dream. (Fong)

Beginning in the 1970's, the first wave of Chinese immigrants began to settle in Monterey Park. The influx of Chinese immigrants during this time was a result of changes in America's immigration policy and political unrest in China. Entrepreneur

Frederick Hsieh funded the development of banks and retail in order to stimulate growth. It was his hope to make Monterey Park the ‘modern-day mecca’ for Chinese immigrants. He even traveled to China in order to advertise Monterey Park as the ‘Beverly Hills Chinatown’. Hsieh’s efforts proved to be extremely successful as Chinese immigrants poured into Monterey Park.

Early immigrants were comprised of investors and entrepreneurs from Taiwan. The businesses set up by these early investors attracted more Chinese immigrants to the area. By the mid-1980’s there were Chinese immigrants from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia. The next wave of immigrants consisted of young professionals. As the Chinese community grew, other residents of Monterey Park began to feel increasingly alienated. The influx of Chinese businesses and residents resulted in “white flight” from Monterey Park. The residents that chose to stay fought for English as the official language of Monterey Park. Tension between old residents and new Chinese immigrants continued to escalate. A number of residents fought growth and development, especially new businesses opened by Chinese immigrants. However, by 1992, the transition to a dominantly Chinese community was nearly complete. Monterey Park, in partnership with Alhambra, sponsored its first ever Chinese New Year Parade, celebrating the Chinese community. Today, though the landscape is dominated by a Chinese signs and businesses, four of the seven elected city officials are of Asian descent, and the city continues to work toward a harmonious future.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2010 Census, the total population of Monterey Park is currently 60,269 residents. Sixty-seven percent (66.9%) of the population is of Asian descent. Table _ below breaks down the different ethnic backgrounds of the Asian community based on the 2010 Census. The Chinese population indicated in the table does not differentiate between Taiwanese, Hong Kong citizens, or mainland China. The number of Asian residents in Monterey Park increased five percent since the 2000 Census, from 61% in 2000 to 66.9% in 2010. The most dramatic increase was seen in the Chinese community.

The average household size in Monterey Park, as of 2010, is about 3 individuals per home or rented unit. Forty one percent (41%) of the households in Monterey Park are comprised of individuals 65 years or older. However, only four percent (4%) of those 65 years or older live with other members of their family. Most of the residents fall within the age range of 40 to 54 years old, while the median age is 37 years old. More than half of these residents (55%) rent rather than own (45%) their own home. As of 2001, the average household income is \$59,437 within a five mile radius of the city.

Fifty-five percent of Monterey Park is foreign-born residents, most of these immigrants entered before 2000. The Chinese immigrant population in Monterey Park comes from various regions across China. The early arrivals consisted mostly of highly skilled and capital-rich Taiwanese immigrants. As of 1990, 40% had professional occupations, which is significantly higher than the 27% nationwide. Though early immigrants to

Monterey Park were wealthy and well-educated, the Chinese immigrant population today comes from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds.

TABLE 4_ COMPOSITION OF THE ASIAN COMMUNITY

Ethnicity	Number of People	Percent
Asian	40,301	
Asian Indian	152	.3
Chinese	28,883	47.9
Filipino	1,165	1.9
Japanese	3,515	5.8
Korean	768	1.3
Vietnamese	2,629	4.4

CHARACTERISTICS

Monterey Park’s high concentration of Chinese and Asian immigrants has allowed for unique Chinese-American atmosphere to develop in the city. A visitor driving through the city is greeted with signs in both English and Chinese. The signs in English do not serve as translations for the Chinese signs or vice versa, rather they help market the variety of businesses and customers that reside in Monterey Park. Monterey Park’s unique Chinese-American community extends beyond the signs and businesses scattered around the city. The citizens also show an exceptional amount of comfort maintaining habits from they practiced in China. For instance, residents can be seen strolling through the city carrying umbrellas that act as parasols. This is meant to shade their skin from the sun and prevent unwanted tanning. This practice that many other Chinese immigrants

(including my parents) gave up in order to assimilate into American society is still readily and proudly practiced in Monterey Park.

Monterey Park is also home to variety of architectural styles and one of the only suburban areas to show a Chinatown theme on some of the commercial buildings. The Evergreen Cultural Center, which is actually a strip mall, located on Garvey Avenue in Downtown Monterey Park, demonstrates the use of kitschy Chinese eaves, in order to create a sense of place and character. This cliché application of Chinese architectural details can be seen throughout the city, yet fails to provide any real sense of place or character for the city. Thus, while there is a strong cultural presence that can be seen in the lifestyle of the residents, Monterey Park still lacks any architectural presence or character that matches the unique qualities of its citizens.



**FIG.17 MONTEREY
PARK SUPERMARKET**



FIG.18 MONTEREY PARK SIGN
Images from Author

Despite such a strong Chinese American presence, Monterey Park only celebrates one Chinese festival, the Lunar New Year. There are several secular festivals celebrated by Chinese people throughout the year, some of which include the Dragon Boat Festival, Lantern Festival, and the Mid-Autumn Festival, just to name a few.

LAND-USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Monterey Park is a suburban community that is 60% residential, 12% industrial, 10% commercial and retail, and 18% for schools and recreational facilities. The residential portion consists of mostly single family homes, located in winding suburban neighborhoods. The current Euclidean zoning plan, in conjunction with small land parcels and strict construction limits, has stifled economic development in the city. The

city has adopted a new general plan to revitalize and redevelop the commercial and business sectors of Monterey Park.

The city of Monterey Park does not have its own school system, but is part of its neighboring cities' school districts. These districts include: Alhambra School District to the north, Montebello Unified School District to the south, Garvey School District to the east, and Los Angeles Unified School District to the southwest (see FIG.22).

Monterey Park is serviced by a commuter train (Metrolink) and regional (Metro) and local buses (Spirit). Metrolink connects Monterey Park to downtown Los Angeles, as well as other metropolitan areas such as Oceanside and Moorpark. Five regional buses run through the city: 30/31 (Pico/1st Street), 68 (West Los Angeles/ Montebello Town Center), 70 (Los Angeles/El Monte), 258 (Arizona Ave/ Fremont Ave/ Alhambra), and the 260 (Pasadena, Artesia Blue Line Station) (see FIG.20).

Monterey Park is relatively flat, but is surrounded by the San Gabriel Mountains to the north and hills to the south (see FIG.24). There are few open spaces in Monterey Park and none in downtown Monterey Park. The major open spaces are occupied by the city's reservoir (see FIG.23).

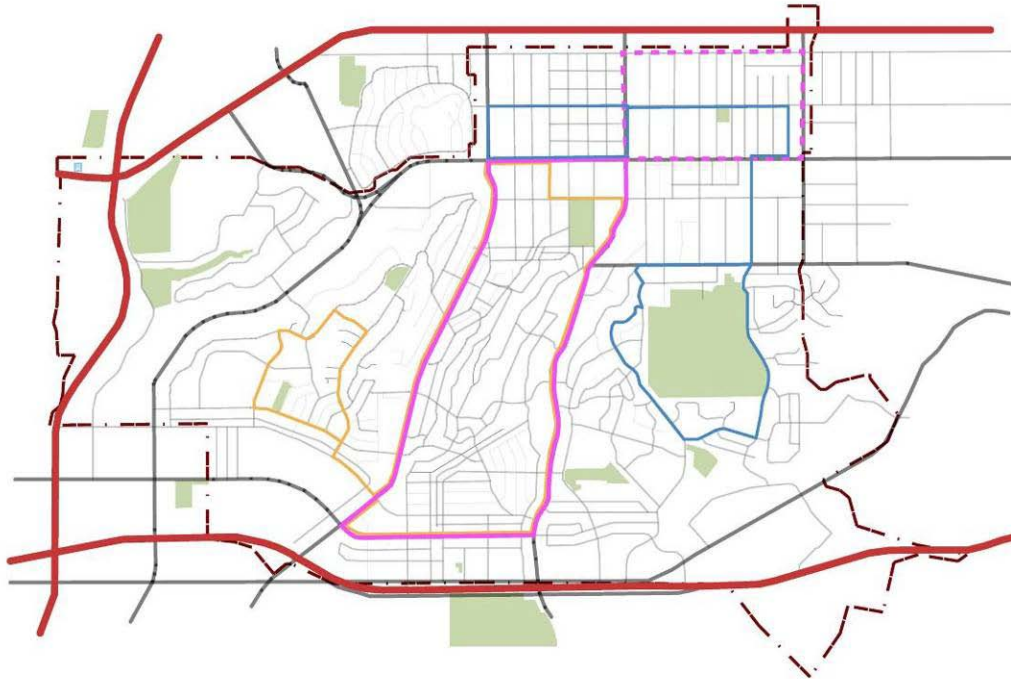


FIG.19 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MAP
 Source: Author

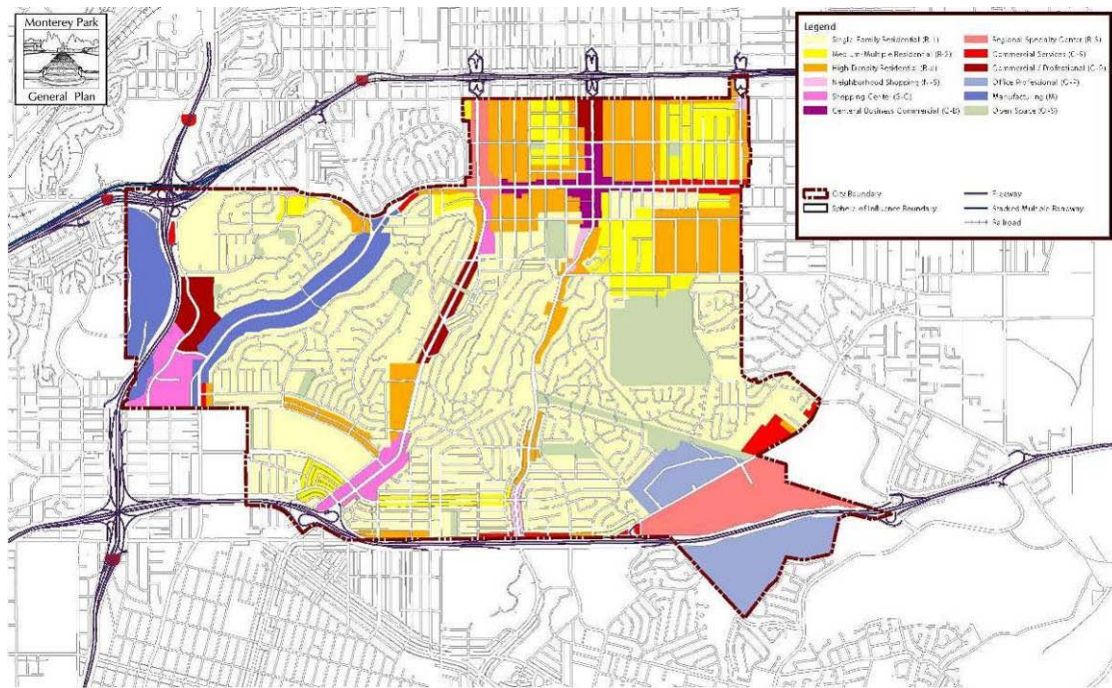


FIG.20 ZONING MAP
 Source: City of Monterey Park, Department of Planning

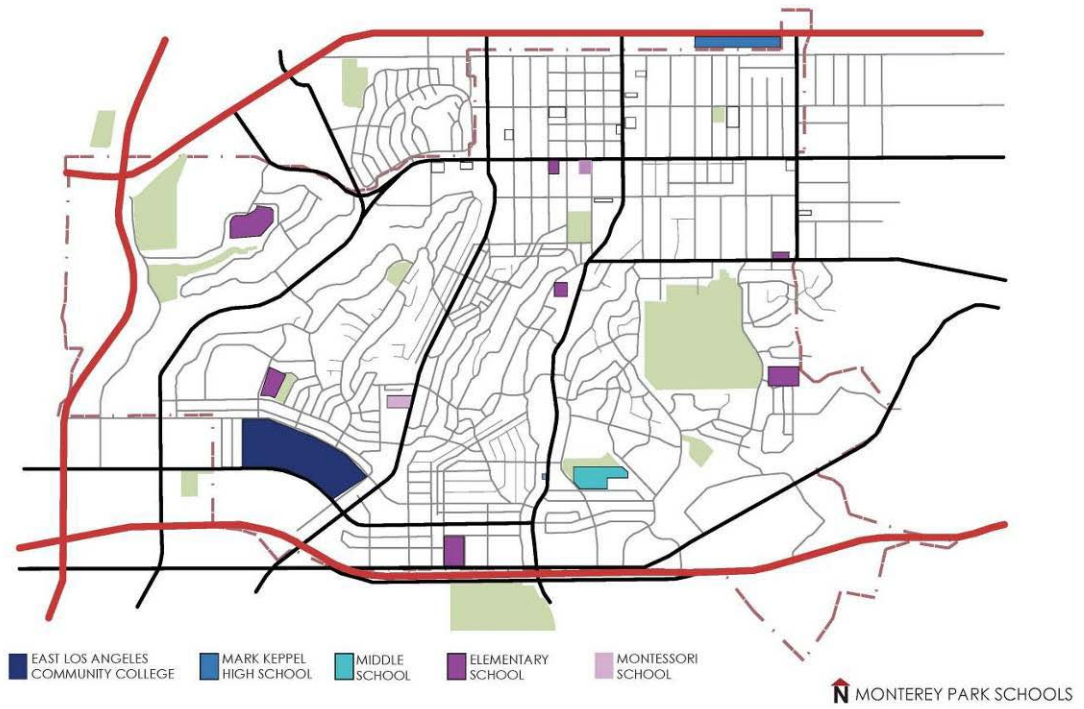


FIG.21 SCHOOLS DIAGRAM.

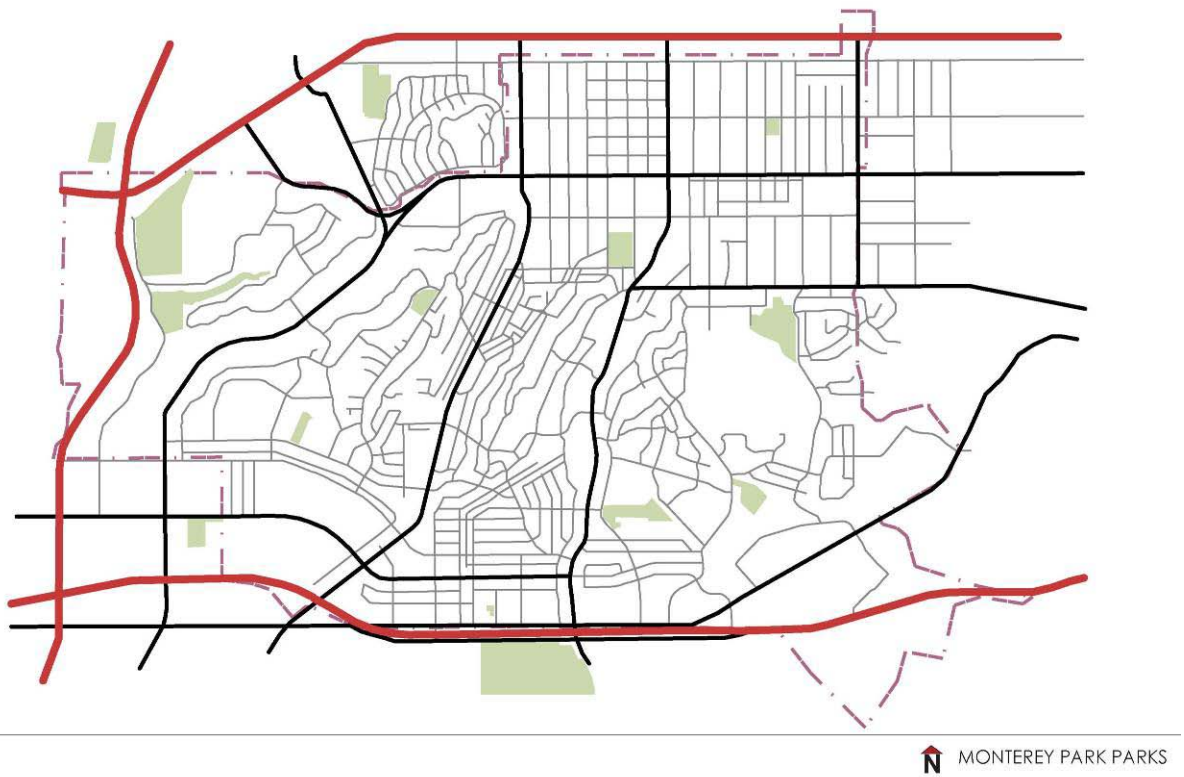


FIG.22 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

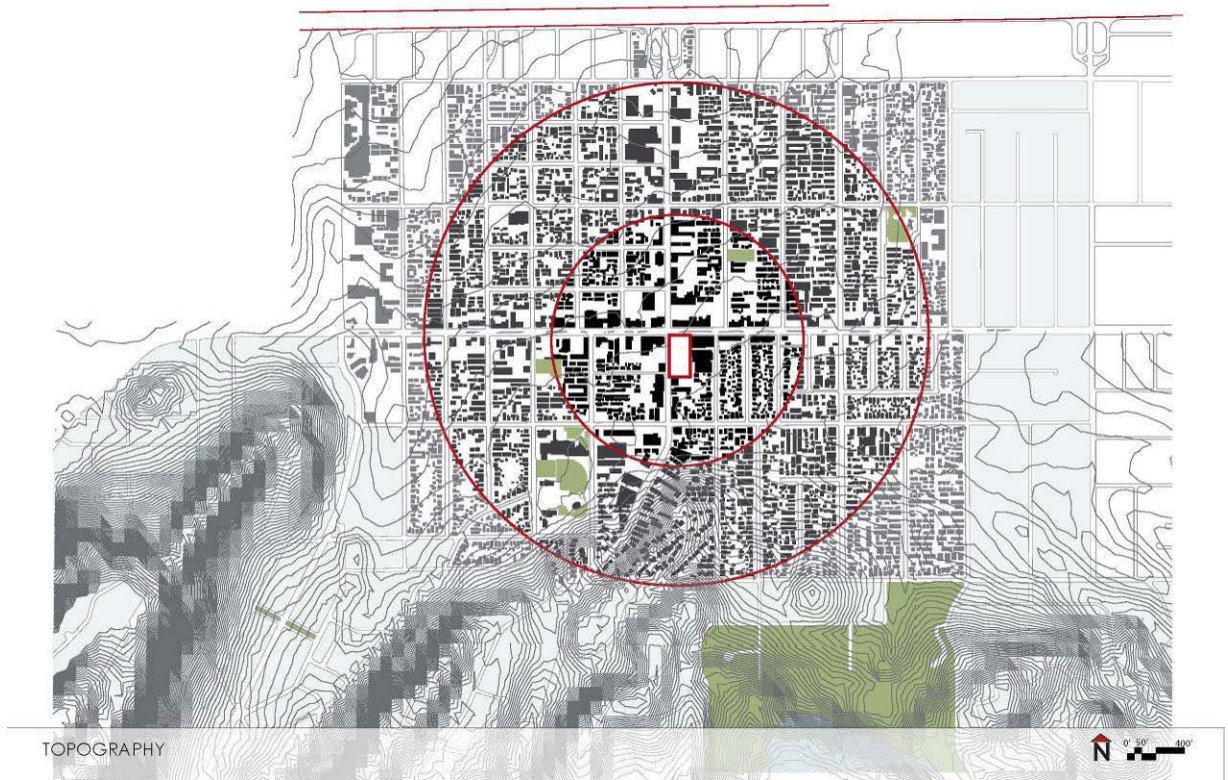


FIG.23 TOPOGRAPHY

REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

The General Plan for Monterey Park will focus on six key elements: land use, economic development, circulation, housing, safety and community services, and resources. The city is currently rewriting its zoning laws in order to promote growth and increase density. The new zoning laws will finally allow for mixed use development in downtown Monterey Park, which is located at the intersection of Garvey Avenue and Garfield Avenue. Other areas of focus include Atlantic Boulevard, Monterey Pass Road, Saturn Park, and Oll/Edison.

In order to improve pedestrian pathways, the city will be widening sidewalks along commercial corridors from the current five foot width to 15 to 20 feet wide. Street trees

will also be planted to improve the aesthetics of the main thoroughfares, as well as provide a barrier between the street and the pedestrians. The new general plan will also allow for an increase in building height and FAR in the core downtown area. The code allows for a 75' building height maximum and 1.00 FAR or 1.25 FAR for mixed use developments.

In addition to new zoning ordinances, the city has also adopted design guidelines that require new developments to follow a design theme, in order to create a sense of place and city identity. The city has elected to use a 1950's design motif for the color scheme and design details.

Part of the redevelopment and improvement process includes updating the housing for the city. The city currently has 245 housing units that maintain Section 8 rental status, which the city hopes to increase the amount of affordable housing offered. A contract for another 125 units at the senior housing facility of Lions Manor is still in effect. Monterey Park also has several programs to help fund the rehabilitation and maintenance of existing single family homes. The price range of these single family homes ranges from \$132,000 for a single bedroom home to \$650,000 for a multi-bedroom home. Rent ranges from \$488 per month for a studio to \$1,560 per month for a three-bedroom home.

Another important part of the redevelopment plans is providing enough open space and recreational facilities to support the increase in population. As of 2000, the city had approximately 1.77 acres of park per 1,000 residents. With a desired growth by at least

10,000 residents, the city needs to consider how to maintain existing parkland and open space, while creating new pockets for the community in the higher density downtown area.



FIG.24 REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

The areas highlighted in light red are the areas planned for redevelopment. The civic core of the city is highlighted in blue.

Source: Author

CURRENT PROPOSALS FOR THE SITE

As Monterey Park begins to implement a new economic development plan, more mixed use buildings will be appearing along the historically low rise downtown strip. Within the past year, a new mixed use development has opened at the corner of Atlantic Boulevard and Hellman Avenue. Another mixed use development at the southeast corner of Garvey and Garfield, known as the Monterey Park Towne Center, is currently being developed. The Towne Center will offer 71,366 square feet of retail space on the first

two floors with 109 condominiums above. The total building area will be 190,000 square feet on a total lot size of 95,470 square feet, which is under the allowed 2.0 FAR.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The chosen within Monterey Park is at the southeast intersection of Garvey and Garfield.

The Garfield/Garvey intersection represents the heart of Downtown Monterey Park and indeed the City itself. On most Saturdays, Downtown pulses with shoppers visiting Downtown's specialty stores, particularly the stores offering unique imported goods and groceries sought by recent and first-generation Asian and Latin immigrants.

This intersection experiences a high volume of traffic during rush hour. Garvey Avenue serves as an east-west connection when the 60 and 10 freeways are congested. The site is serviced by the 70 and 770 buses, which provide local and regional access. The 80,000 square foot site is currently a vacant lot surrounded by one and two story shops, banks, and medium density residential complexes. The historic Lincoln Plaza hotel is located directly east of the site, and is the only building to rise above five stories.



FIG.25 CIVIC BUILDINGS

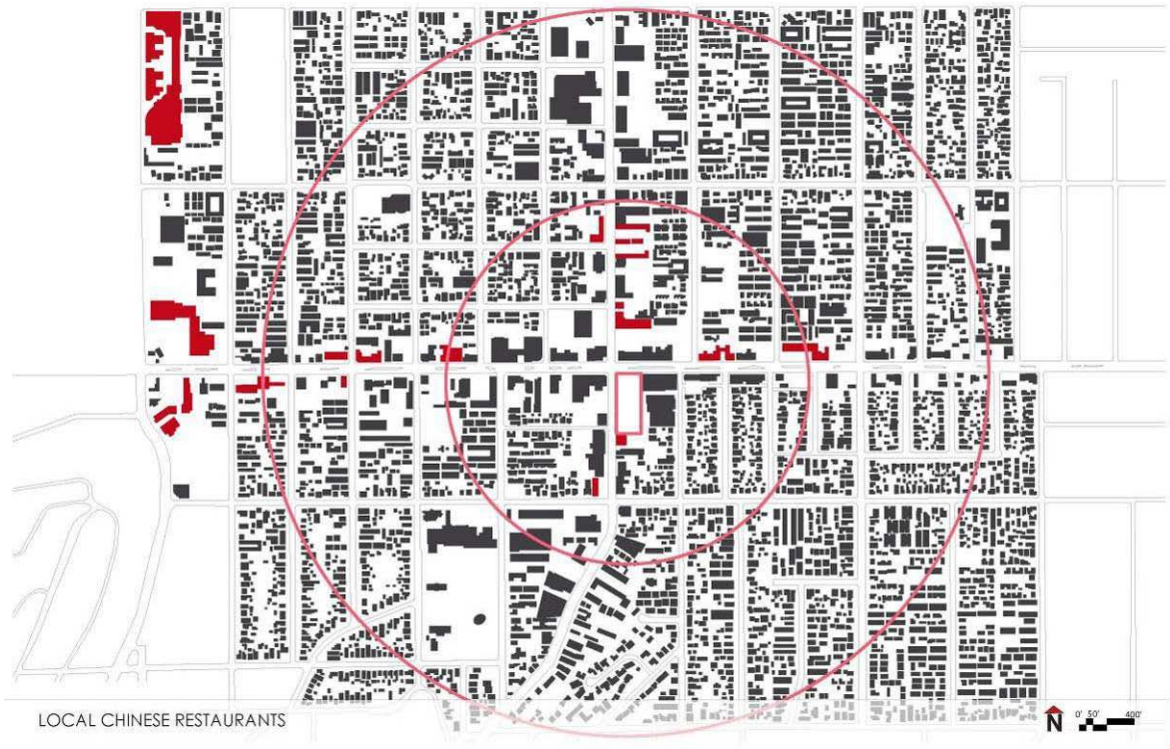


FIG.26 LOCAL CHINESE RESTAURANTS

There are a number of local Chinese restaurants scattered throughout Monterey Park. These are all small mom and pop shops set up by immigrants. Some businesses have been in the city for nearly twenty years, while others have just recently opened. Monterey Park is renowned for the variety and quality of Chinese cuisine. Although there are a number of Chinese restaurants already located in Monterey Park and around the selected site, the community center will be the only restaurant to offer an open kitchen or a teaching kitchen.

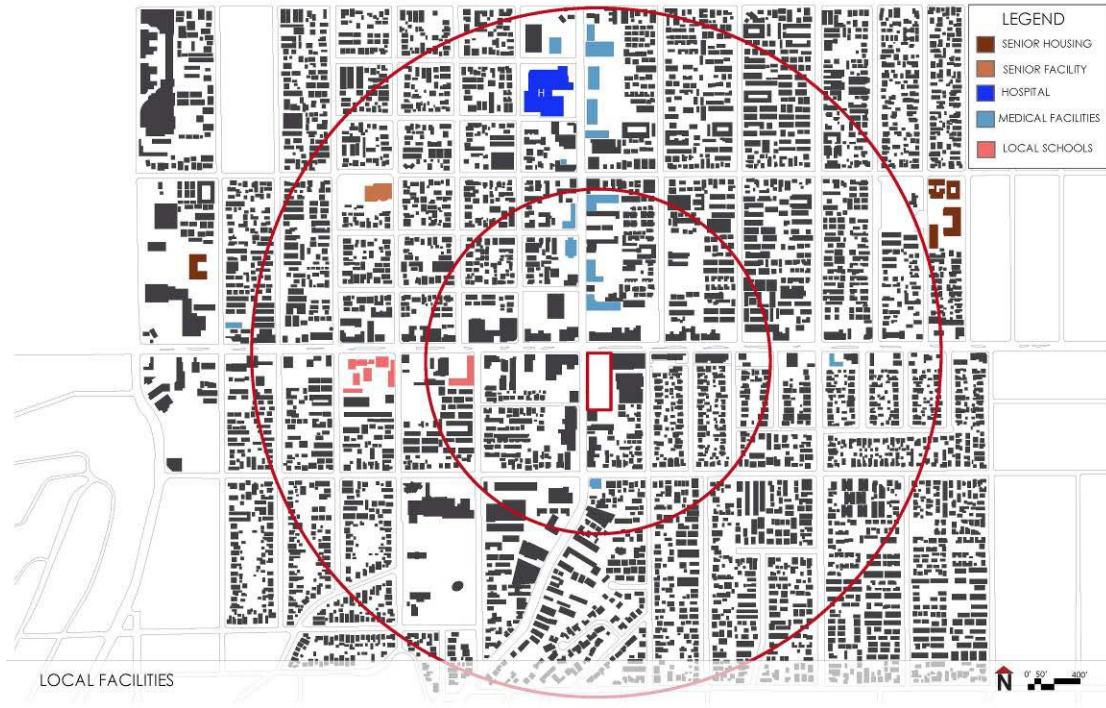


FIG.27 LOCAL FACILITIES

The new community center will serve several generations, from young children to the elderly. Figure 27 shows that the site is located near several medical facilities as well as local elementary schools. This is ideal for providing senior housing, as well as after school functions for children.



FIG.28 ELEVATION ALONG SOUTH GARVEY AVENUE

The site is the vacant lot to the right, with the Lincoln Plaza towering in the background.

Source: Author

IV | PRECEDENT ANALYSIS
MATERIAL/CULTURAL PRECEDENTS

Weeksville Heritage Center (2011)

Brooklyn, NY by Caples Jefferson Architects, PC



FIG.29 AERIAL VIEW OF CENTER

Source: Google Maps



FIG.30 BUFFALO AVE. ELEVATION

Source: Caples & Jefferson Brochure



FIG.31 GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Source: Caples & Jefferson Brochure

Weeksville Heritage Center

The Weeksville Heritage Center is located in Brooklyn, New York. The site is located on an old freedman's settlement. The remaining houses on the site serve as an African American heritage site. Architects Sara Caples and Eduardo Jefferson were tasked with designing a new building that would act as a gateway. This new building would house classrooms, offices, an exhibit space, a performance space, and a small library.

The building pays homage to the historic structures on the site by remaining low, so as to not obstruct views of the historic buildings. Furthermore, West African patterns are woven into the design details. The patterns in the stone and paving joints, the glazing joints, and the vegetal fence posts are modeled after these traditional West African patterns.

The subtlety, with which this building weaves tradition with modern building principles, provides an elegant example of how materiality and texture can pay homage to traditional Chinese building practices.

Weeksville Heritage Center

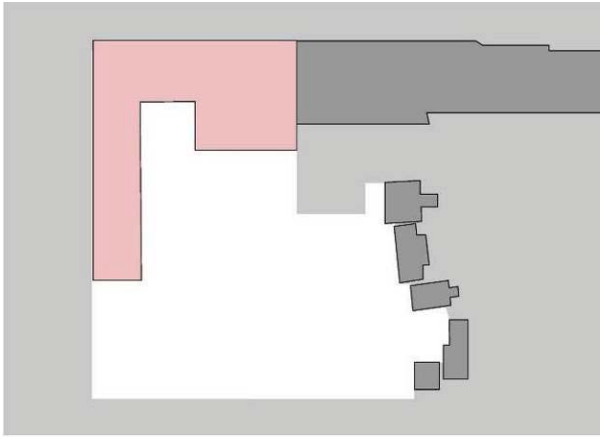
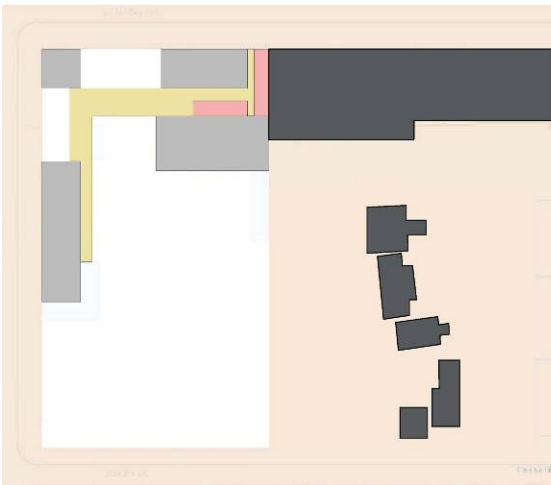


FIG.32 DIAGRAM OF OPEN SPACE
The white space shows the open space






-  CIRCULATION
-  PUBLIC SPACE
-  PRIVATE

FIG.33 PROGRAM ANALYSIS



FIG.34 PATTERN ANALYSIS

People's Republic of China Embassy (2008)

Washington, D.C. by I.M. Pei

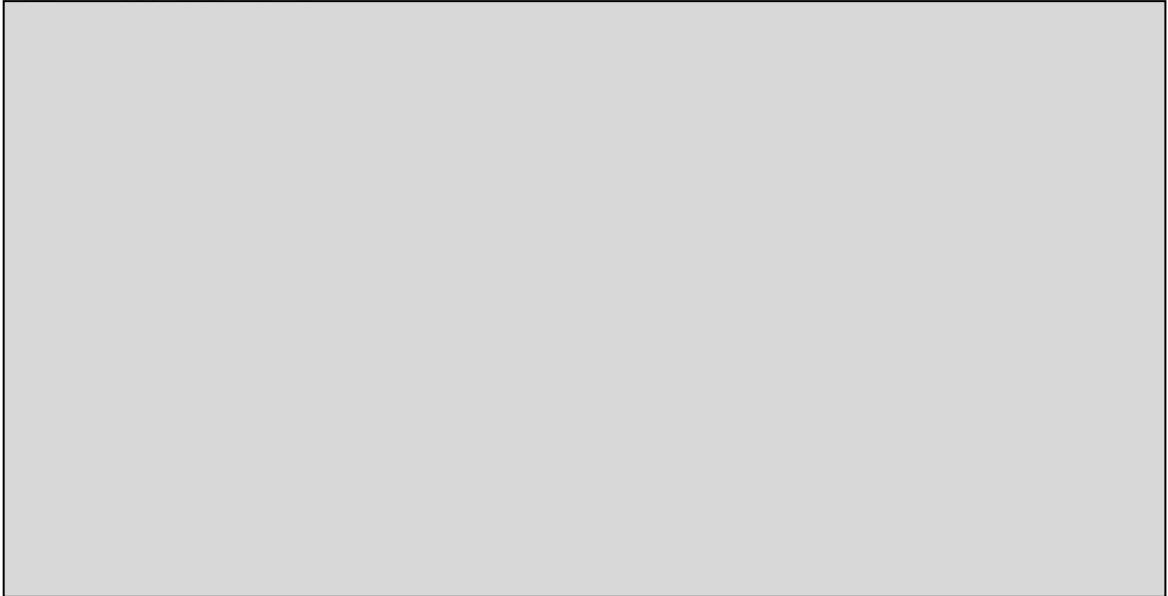


FIG.35 FLOOR PLAN OF THE EMBASSY



FIG.36 EMBASSY LOCATION

Source: Google Maps

People's Republic of China Embassy



FIG.37 AERIAL VIEW OF THE EMBASSY
Source: Google Maps



FIG.38 MODEL FOR EMBASSY
Source: Google Images



FIG.39 ENTRANCE TO THE EMBASSY
Source: Pei Partnership Architects

People's Republic of China Embassy

The People's Republic of China embassy is located in a diplomatic enclave in the northwest quadrant of Washington D.C. by the Van-Ness UDC metro stop. The embassy was designed by Chinese architect, I.M. Pei. This 10,796 square meter Chancery Building began construction in June 2005 and opened in 2008. Pei's design incorporates elements from Chinese and American building traditions. Influenced by the limestone buildings of Washington D.C., Pei uses a beige limestone throughout the building. Furthermore, the scale and texture of the building is meant to respect and blend with its surrounding.

The overall design is a contemporary interpretation of traditional Chinese architectural planning principles. Symmetry is an important harmonizing principle in Chinese architecture (Fig 42). While the building as a whole is not symmetrical, the grand entrance is symmetrical. More importantly, the entrance to the building is south facing, which is an important feng shui principle. Furthermore, there are a series of gardens and open spaces that mediate between the building and landscape.

The public functions of the embassy unite the east and west office wings on either side of the entrance (Fig 40). The public portion of the embassy includes: reception rooms, banquet halls, an auditorium, and a Grand Hall for diplomatic functions. For authenticity, the embassy was built entirely by Chinese construction workers, who came specifically for this project.

People's Republic of China Embassy

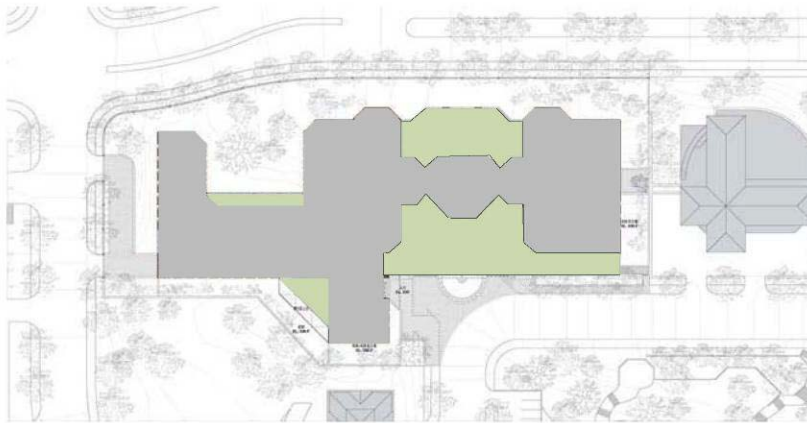


FIG.40 COURTYARD SPACE DIAGRAM

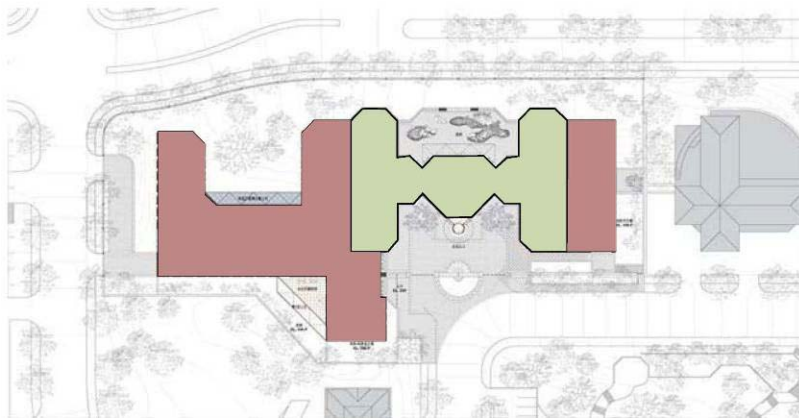


FIG.41 PUBLIC PRIVATE DIAGRAM

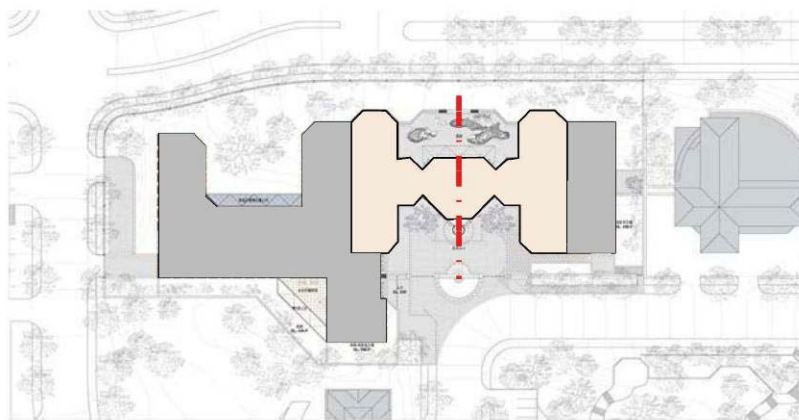


FIG.42 SYMMETRY DIAGRAM

American Embassy in Beijing (2008)

Beijing, China by SOM

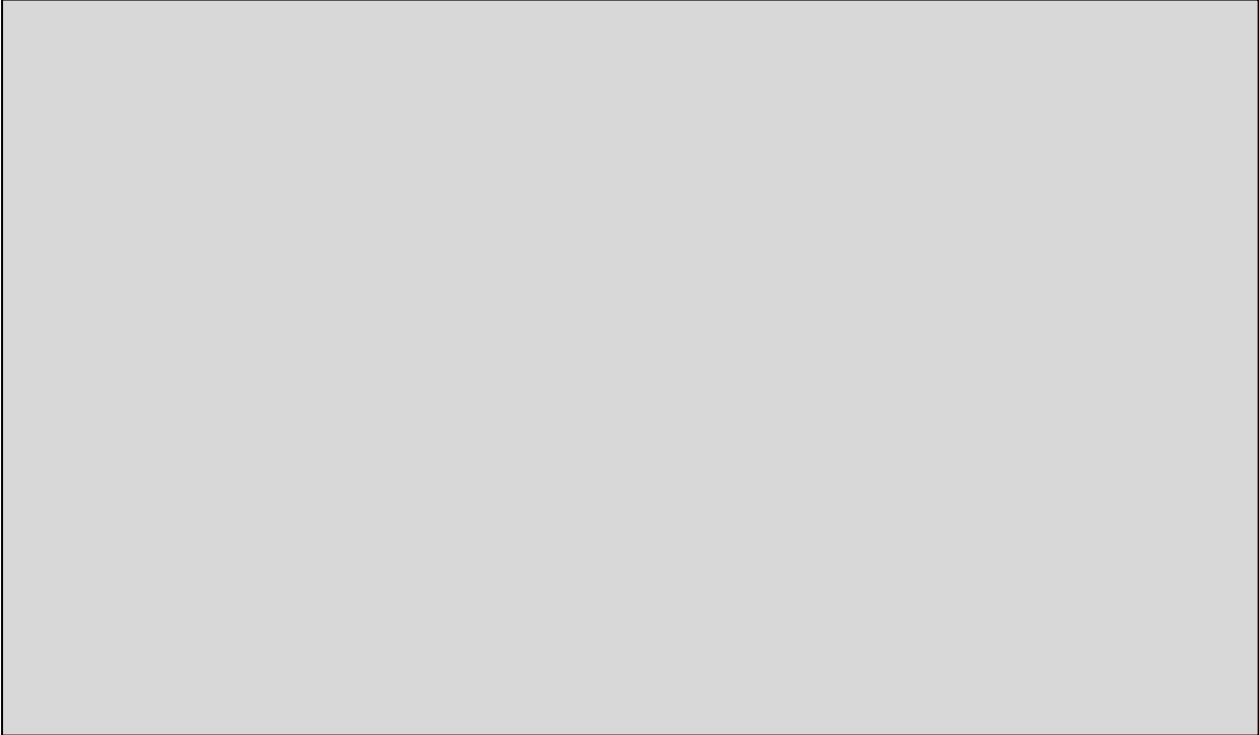


FIG.43 AERIAL VIEW OF EMBASSY COMPOUND
Source: Google Maps



FIG.44 VIEW OF EMBASSY
Source: SOM



FIG.45 MODEL OF EMBASSY GARDEN
Source: Peter Walker and Partners

American Embassy in Beijing

The 500,000 square foot, American Embassy in Beijing by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill was completed in 2008. The embassy is located just outside the first ring of Beijing's major roadways, in a diplomatic enclave. This is the second largest complex ever constructed. The scale was broken down into several neighborhoods based on the function of the building.

SOM collaborated with Peter Walker and Partners for the landscape portion of the complex. Extensive gardens and a series of courtyards help mediate between the built environment and nature. These gardens were influenced by both Eastern and Western traditions. The presence of wood bridges, lotus ponds, Chinese weeping willow, and water formed stones reflects Chinese influence. The raised grass circle, fountain of oxygen jets, alley of Elm trees, and American rose beds tied in American elements to the gardens.

The Chinese Heritage Village can draw inspiration from how East and West were blended through landscaping. Furthermore, the embassy's diplomatic representation of American architecture will influence the village's interpretation of what architectural details will make the village American.

American Embassy in Beijing



FIG.46 PLAN OF EMBASSY COMPLEX
Source: Peter Walker and Partners

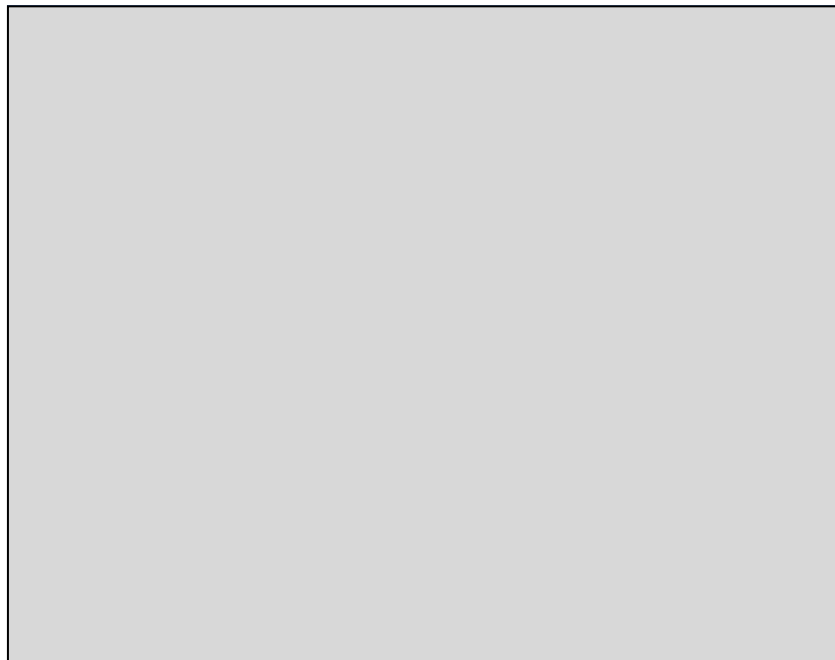


FIG.47 ENTRANCE TO THE EMBASSY
Source: SOM

COMMUNITY CENTER/ PROGRAM PRECEDENTS

Three Courtyards Community Center, China (2009)

Yangzhou, China by Zhang Lei



FIG.49 FLOOR PLAN

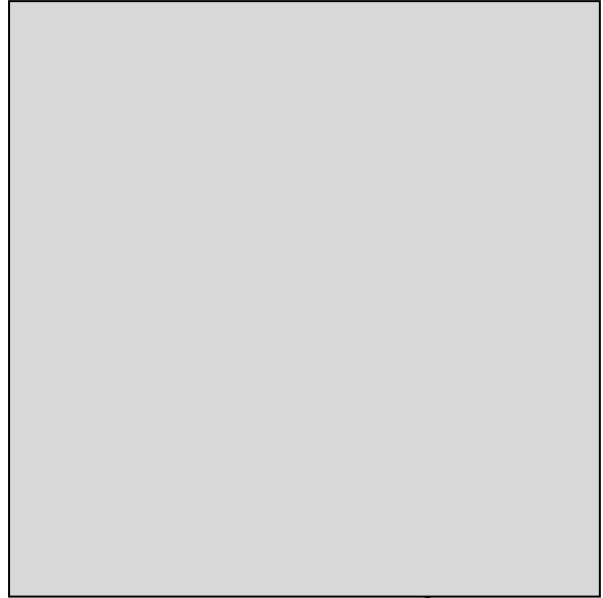


FIG.48 SITE PLAN

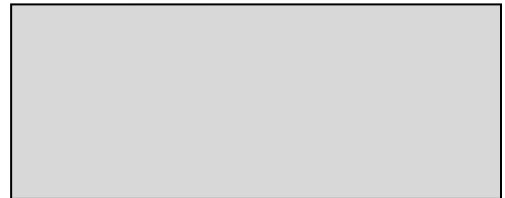


FIG.50 SECTION AND PLAN ANALYSIS

Three Courtyard Community Center

The Three Courtyard Community Center is located in Yangzhou, China. This city is located in the South of China, just off the banks of the Yangtze River. This 1,900 square meter center sits in the middle of park, which is surrounded by a business park on one side and a agricultural village on the other. The roofline and form take inspiration from the traditional village. The massing of the building is meant to look like a community of homes clustered together. Materials such as brick, tile, and the intricate ice lattice seen in the courtyard screens are inspired by traditional Chinese building materials. The program for this community center consists of a number of restaurants that also serve as private meeting rooms that serve the business community nearby.



FIG.51 ICE LATTICE SCREEN



FIG.52 BRICK COURTYARD PATHWAY

Taiwan Culture Center

El Monte, California

This 60,000 square foot building is a rehabilitated warehouse that now serves as a cultural center for Chinese and Taiwanese Americans in Southern California. The center is funded by the Taiwanese government and hosts only Taiwanese organizations, but welcomes people of various ethnic backgrounds. Despite its location in an old warehouse area of El Monte, California, the center is able to draw visitors from all over southern California. This Center served as a programmatic precedent for the Village.



FIG.53 STAFF MEETING ROOM

Source: Author



FIG.54 ENTRANCE

Source: Author

INTERPRETING HISTORY

Suzhou Museum

Suzhou, China by I.M. Pei



FIG.55 AERIAL VIEW OF MUSEUM

Source: Google Maps



FIG.56 PLAN OF MUSEUM

Source: <http://www.szmuseum.com/>



FIG.57 BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF MUSEUM

Source: Pei Partnership Architects

Suzhou Museum

The Suzhou Museum by I.M. Pei shows similar qualities and characteristics as Pei's Embassy in Washington D.C. The same geometric roof forms define this building. The main difference is his response to context. Unlike the embassy in D.C., the materials chosen for the museum reflect the local material palette of white plaster walls, dark grey roof tiles, and traditional Chinese garden. The gardens of the Suzhou Museum help mediate between the contemporary museum and the historic Humble Administrator's Garden located directly adjacent to the site. Again, symmetry and a south facing entrance play an important role for this public facility.

The 15,000 square meter project includes an exhibit space, auditorium, study library, storage, and administrative offices. The arrangement of programmatic elements around a central courtyard and then the division of those spaces into smaller courtyard spaces will inform how spaces relate to one another in my thesis.



FIG.58 ENTRANCE TO THE MUSEUM

Source: Pei Partnership Architects

Traditional Chinese Courtyard Home (Si-He-Yuan)

The traditional Chinese courtyard comes in a variety of sizes depending on the region in China the home is located. No matter what region of China the courtyard home is in, the same basic principles apply. There is a linear progression from public to private and from less important family members to the more intimate rooms for the head of the family. Rooms (jian), serve as a measure for the size of the house and are used to enclose an outdoor space used by the family.

Figure 59 below shows a typical courtyard home in southern China. The entrance to the home can be seen in the lower right. This simple door leads to a small reception space, which then spills into a larger public courtyard space. There is a hierarchy of spaces, organized around open spaces in a symmetrical arrangement.



FIG.59 TYPICAL CHINESE COURTYARD HOME
Source: Google Images

Traditional Chinese Garden

Gardens have a long tradition in China. While they were originally a luxury reserved for royalty, they were eventually added on to the homes of wealthy social elites. Unlike traditional Chinese homes, Chinese gardens create a romantic landscape. Gardens are designed based on a series of views and experiences. Unlike the open courtyard space in the traditional Chinese home, the Chinese garden strives to create a series of smaller spaces to create the illusion of a larger space. The winding paths help create private moments within a larger space. These spaces serve as places for reflection and meditation rather than a large gathering space found in courtyards.



FIG.60 WANG SHIH YUAN | SUCHOW, CHINA
Source: The Craft of Gardens by Ji Cheng

Within this winding series of spaces are scenes captured through lattice frames. These frames can be part of doorways, windows, or gates.

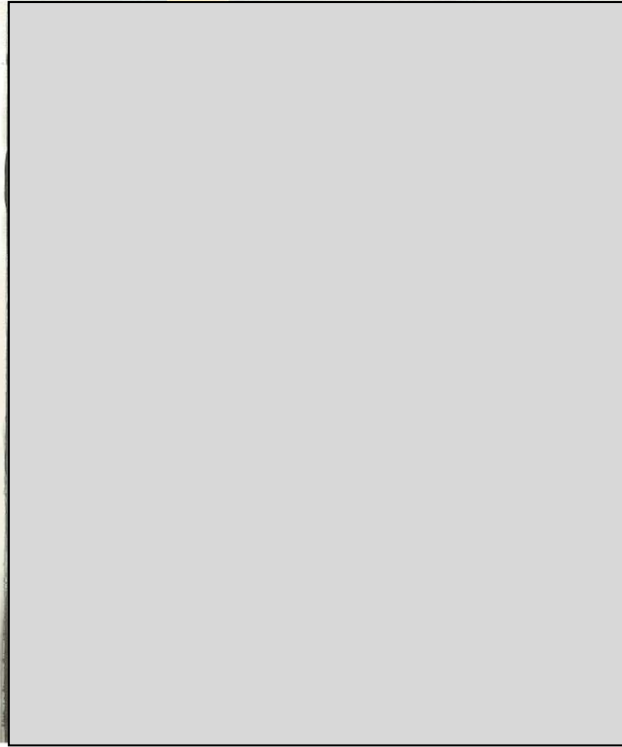


FIG.61 GARDEN GATEWAY
Source: The Craft of Gardens by Ji Cheng



FIG.62 LATTICE WORK
Source: The Craft of Gardens by Ji Cheng

V | ARCHITECTURAL THEORY

DESIGN APPROACH

This community center will serve both the immigrant and greater community by acting as a gateway to Monterey Park and the United States. It is important that the architectural expression of the facade welcomes both Chinese immigrants as well as people from other backgrounds. The plan for the center reflects the hierarchy and organization seen in a traditional courtyard home and uses the principles of Chinese gardens to inspire the pathways and circulation through the building.

The use of the courtyard home for inspiration subtly draws on traditional Chinese architecture, while still allowing for modern interpretations both structurally and on the facade. Furthermore, the use of the traditional Chinese home for design inspiration alludes to the idea of the immigrants coming home to America. Since the center is also meant to invite people from other backgrounds and areas, the center is also alluding to the idea of immigrants inviting others into their “home”.

In addition to the figural inspiration of a courtyard home, there will also be a housing component adjacent to the community center. After a number of studies, the housing component was not added on the same site as the community center for security and day-lighting reasons.



FIG.63 SITE PLAN

The community center will blend California and Chinese architectural styles in the materiality and facade of the building. The use of green roofs and Spanish tile roofs recall the traditional Spanish architecture found throughout California. The white stucco applied to the facade throughout the building, not only acts as a back drop for the garden, like a Chinese painting, but it also reflects the stucco material applied through housing complexes in California.

Lastly, the community center in conjunction with the housing complex across the street will serve as a self-sustaining live-work complex for immigrants. The community center

will allow immigrants of various generations to demonstrate and share their skills with the community at large. The location of the center close to a major freeway, in the heart of the historic downtown region of Monterey Park, symbolizes the importance of the center as a gateway, not only to the city but also to the community.

VI | CONCLUSION

DESIGN

The main approach for the building will be from the north, since this is the face of the building that meets the traffic exiting 10 Freeway. The main northwest corner will house the “welcome” program, which is the restaurant/food component. The first floor will have an open kitchen, a cafe at the northwest corner, and a restaurant to the south of the open kitchen. The northern face of the building will house workshops and stores, which continue the commercial front that currently exists on Garvey Avenue. The first floor of the north and northwest facade fold open, which allows the street life to flow into the building, but also lets the building’s activity flow out into the city. The malleability of the facade expresses an immigrant’s need to change and adapt to his/her surroundings. It is also a reaction to the Lunar New Year Festival held on Garvey Avenue just in front of the center every year.



FIG.64 NORTH ELEVATION



FIG.65 PERSPECTIVE OF THE NORTHERN FACADE

Application of the ice lattice pattern throughout the facade is used to signify entry or important programmatic pieces. Lattices are used as decorative elements in Chinese gardens and Chinese homes. The use of latticework recalls traditional Chinese art and doubles as a shading device.



FIG.66 PERSPECTIVE OF NORTHWEST FACADE

The northwest corner is symbolic gateway to the center and city. This portion of the building is elevated to resemble an abstracted Chinese pagoda. The extensive use of glass is meant to create an open and inviting feeling. The western facade uses a series of four foot windows to create a series of views into and through the building. This idea is based on the Chinese garden principle of framing views and moments within a larger context.



FIG.67 WEST ELEVATION | LONGITUDINAL SECTION EAST

Beneath the western elevation are the two longitudinal sections that lie directly behind that facade. These sections highlight the activities found within the community center.



FIG.68 PERSPECTIVE OF WEST ELEVATION

The portion of the building seen closest to the viewer in the west elevation represents the library facade. The lattice pattern is applied to the windows of the reading room in order to signify a ceremonial space and second as a shading device. Further down, the elevation of the theater and gallery entrance, which protrudes from the rest of the facade, uses lattice work to denote the entry point.



FIG.69 PERSPECTIVE OF THE MAIN COURTYARD



FIG.70 PERSPECTIVE OF THE GARDEN

The main features of the community center are the outdoor spaces that tie together the different programmatic elements of the building. The main courtyard space is open so that impromptu performances that happen in the space can be viewed throughout the building. Whereas the garden at the southern portion of the center creates a series of smaller spaces and incomplete views in order to create a more private setting for contemplation.

The design of the main courtyard is a more rectilinear interpretation of a wandering path. Drawing inspiration from the High Line's ability to blend man-made structures with natural landscape, the larger courtyard uses rigid stone, floor patterns to continue the structural grid of the building.

The garden, on the other hand, uses small stone pavers that do not conform to any grid formation. The plantings and rocks do not follow any rectilinear forms and flow freely with the space and water. The classrooms on the lower level of the library open and spill out into the garden to use it as an outdoor teaching space.

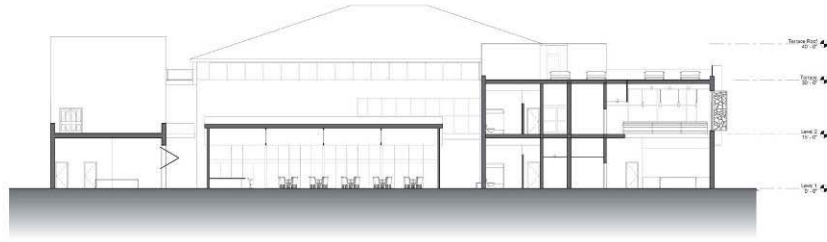


FIG.71 SECTION THROUGH RESTAURANT AND TEA HOUSE

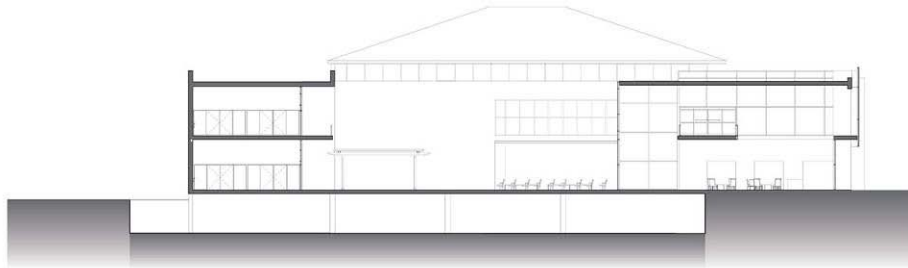


FIG.72 SECTION THROUGH DANCE STUDIOS AND RESTAURANT

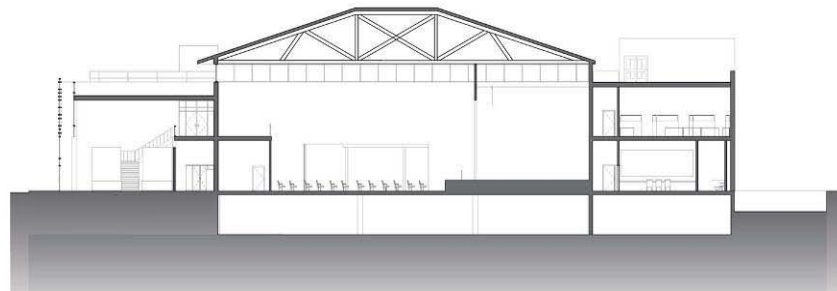


FIG.73 SECTION THROUGH THEATER

This series of sections shows the changing height and flow of spaces through the center as the visitor progresses south through the site.

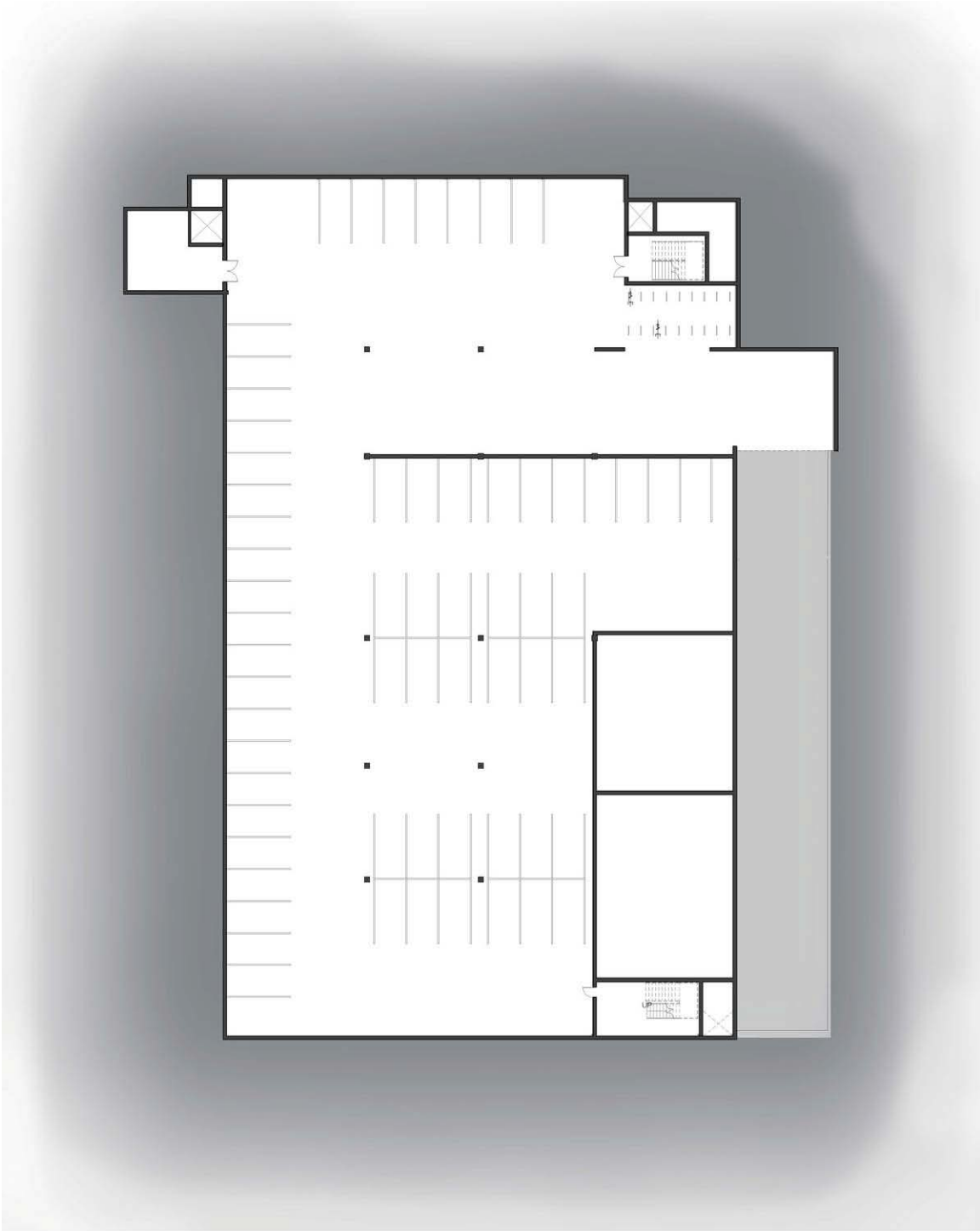


FIG.74 GARAGE FLOOR PLAN

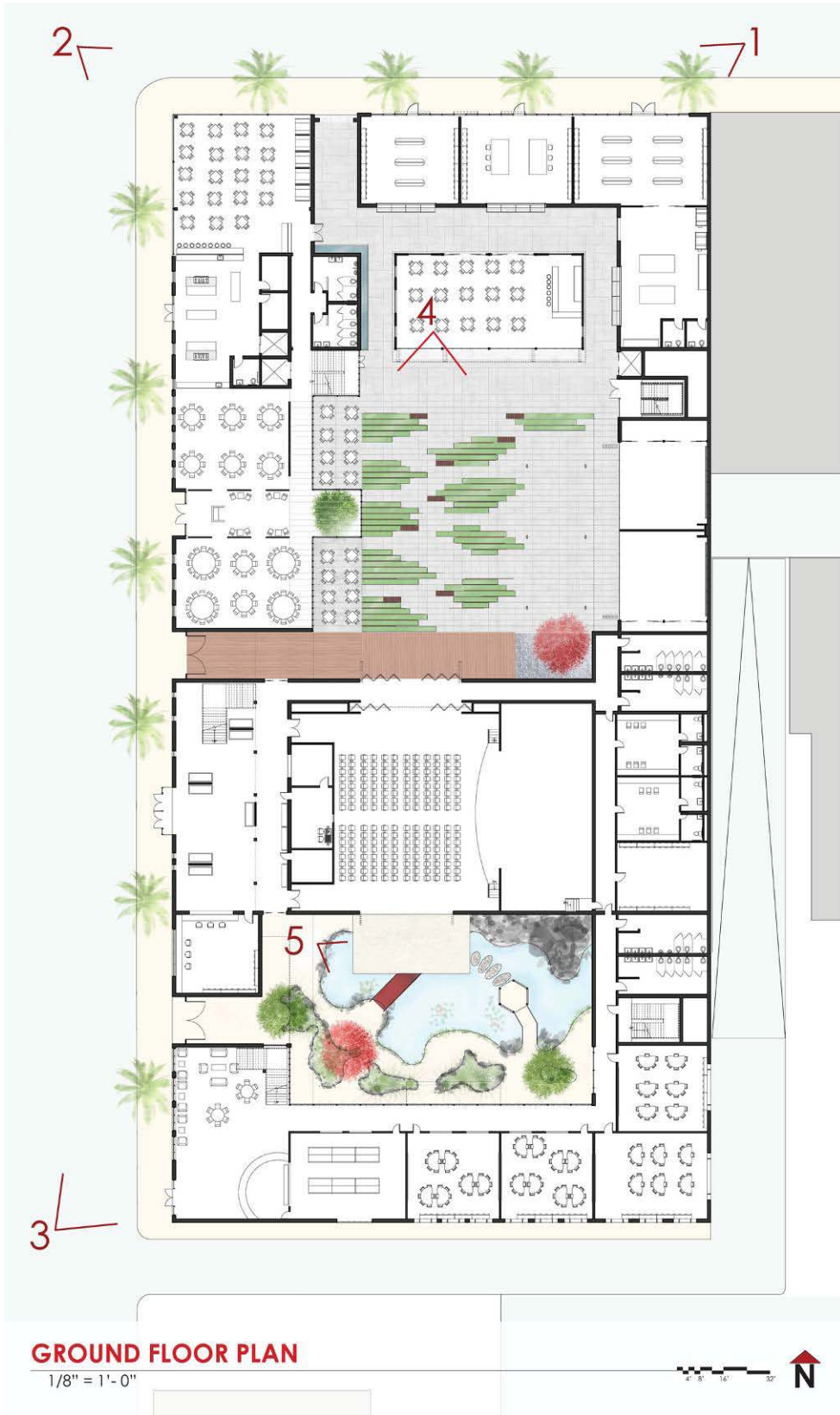


FIG.75 GROUND FLOOR PLAN

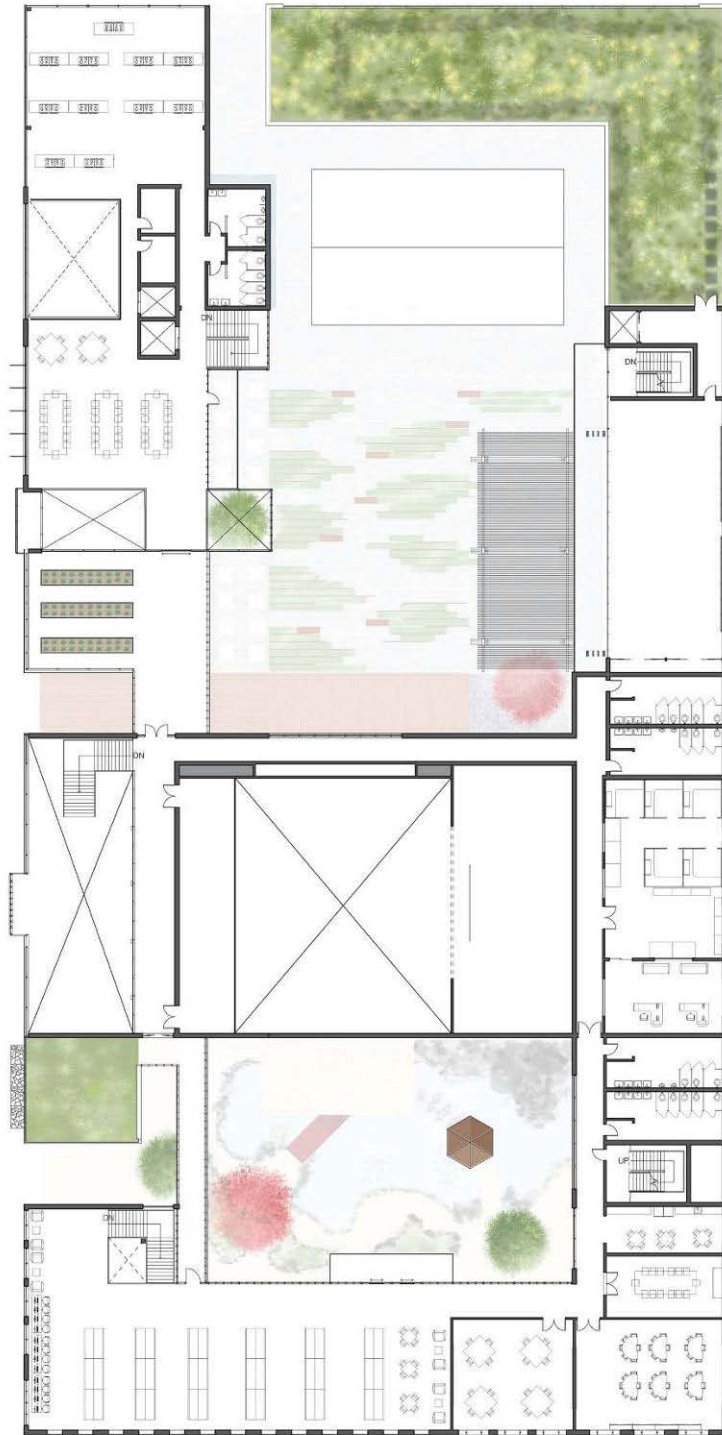


FIG.76 SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIG.77 TERRACE PLAN

The final floor plans show what a strong influence the traditional courtyard home had on the design of the building. The layout draws on what is familiar for immigrants, but creates an American variation by making larger courtyard spaces than what would be found normally in China.

From north to south, there is a progression from louder more public activities to quieter more private activities. Most of the dancing, music, and other performances that entail a larger social gathering will be focused around the larger courtyard. The quieter classroom and learning activities are centered around the garden on the southern portion of the site. The library is the final ceremonial piece at the southern end of the center. The theater is the uniting piece that opens to both outdoor spaces through a series of folding doors.

The Chinese-American community center subtly blends American and Chinese architectural elements in a place that caters to newly arrived immigrants and their subsequent generations. However, a kitschy Chinese approach would be unwelcoming to people from other cultural backgrounds, so a modern, American interpretation of Chinese traditions was applied in order to create a more welcoming and universally acceptable facade.

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