

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: RECLAIMING COMMUNITY THROUGH MULTIPLE
GENERATIONS: MIXED-USE HOUSING IN PORTLAND'S
CHINATOWN

Kimberly Anne Lee, Master of Architecture, 2004

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For over half a century, the traditional Chinatown, typically located in an urban context, has become an isolated entity in which generations of Chinese and Chinese-Americans are fleeing to the suburbs. This project will focus on creating an inter-generational mixed-use housing complex that provides for community resources and services. The goal of this thesis is to encourage a reactivation of a deteriorating community through the interaction between first, second, and third generation Chinese and Chinese-Americans. This project will investigate the greater cultural context of how the family unit is composed, how an eastern typology may be adapted to the western society, and how to deal with issues concerning an “identifiable place.”

The site is located in Portland, Oregon's Chinatown. It is situated just north of downtown on the edge of the Willamette River. The site is nearly desolate, but shows immense promise for an activated community.

RECLAIMING COMMUNITY THROUGH MULTIPLE GENERATIONS: MIXED-
USE HOUSING IN PORTLAND'S CHINATOWN

by

Kimberly Anne Lee

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Thank you to all of my family and friends for giving me so much
love and support through the course of this semester!

I could not have done it alone :
Mom and Dad
Tanya, Sean, and Kaia
Jason
With all my love, Thank You!

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Introduction

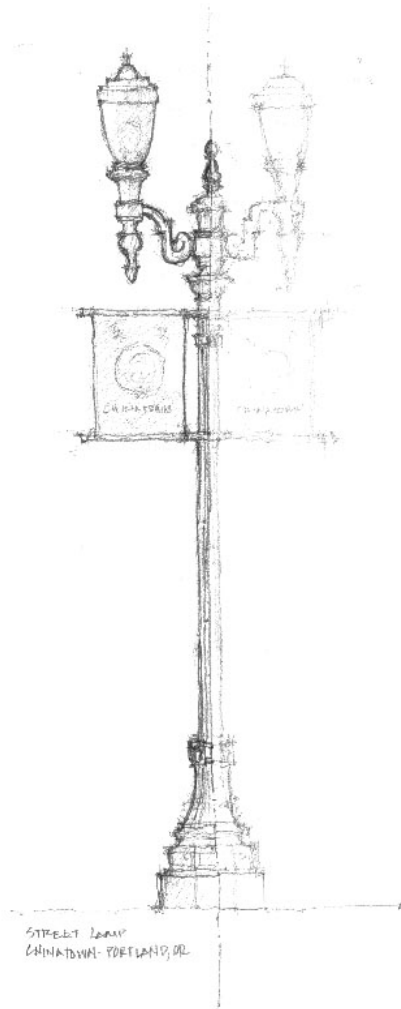
The current condition of most Chinatowns in the United States has been affected by urban sprawl and is facing severe disjunction between the social climate in the community and the culture of the Asian community in general. Since the nineteenth century industrialization and the advancement of transportation, the desire of suburban living became so popular that city dwelling was almost extinct. Communities became less social and more isolated entities. For the past decade, Chinatowns have had to watch generations of Chinese and Chinese Americans escape to seek residence outside of the neighborhood. The ones that choose to remain in these communities stay because they are provided with affordable food and lodging, friends, and a familiar place. In turn, these businesses in Chinatowns can only survive with a population that can manage and support them. The current state of Portland, Oregon's Chinatowns, like many other Chinatowns, is a community that is quickly fading away.

The question of how to knit this once thriving urban community back together becomes a highly difficult puzzle. It is a synthesis of how to moderate between two very different cultures-East and West. What was once the second largest Chinatown in the United States now has a dwindling Asian population of only 2.2 percent. The answer has to address what the existing community may be lacking that is allowing for its residents to move to alternate locations and how to bring them back. The solution needs to conform to a larger urban fabric, as well as, specific building programs and community services.

A housing project that allows for the interaction between the various generations of Chinese and Chinese Americans can reunite the strong bonds that exist in the traditional Chinese nuclear family that may be lacking as a result of urban sprawl. It is important that this project not only attract Chinese and Chinese Americans back to this area, but that it also leads in future growth initiatives to activate the community. It is also important that through this integration, there can be a reintroduction of cultural traditions and values. A component of housing for the aged can accommodate those Chinese and Chinese Americans who want to be in close proximity to the younger generations and vice versa. The elderly, who are held in the utmost regard within the Chinese family structure, will be able to provide stability for multiple generations to live together within one complex.

Chinatowns have historically been guided by form, rather than aesthetics. These societies still have an inherent sense of place that makes it a community. They often use elements that remind its residents of their culture. Essentials such as small grocery stores and outdoor and indoor community spaces are lacking in Portland's Chinatown. By incorporating community activities and meeting spaces into the building program, it can aid in activating the interaction between generations and also the community. This project will show that the formation of a viable programmatic and culturally defined urban fabric that can support its residences, existing and returning, that can begin to animate a community that is need of an answer.

**CHAPTER 1:
URBAN CONTEXT**



STREET LAMP
CHINA TOWN - PORTLAND, OR

4 JULY, 2007

(Illustrated by author)

Portland, Oregon

Oregon is located on the Pacific Northwest coast of the United States bordered by Washington and California to its north and south, respectively, and Idaho to the East. The city of Portland was founded in 1853. It is situated on the northern border of Oregon, along one of Oregon's major waterways, the Willamette River valley. At the time it was established, it offered a convenient port of ocean-going vessels near the juncture of the Willamette Valley and the Columbia Gorge.



Figure 1. Oregon Counties including Portland location. (State Maps)

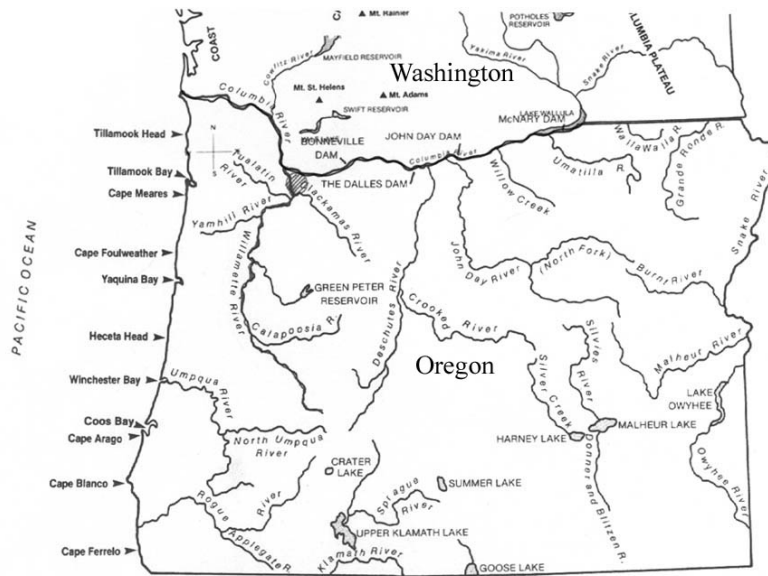


Figure 2. Major Waterways (State Maps)

Oregon's topography is highly diversified with major waterways, mountain ranges, forest areas and deserts. The Willamette River valley is surrounded by significant desert to most of Eastern Oregon and forested, mountain ranges to the South and West. This explains the growth of population density along the valley. By 1940 an additional 400,000 people lived in the Portland urban region from the early settling in 1900, and continued to expand farther along the extensions from downtown Portland which had begun to appear before the turn of the century. In 1975, the Portland urban region spread to over 1600 square kilometers and contained more than one million people, including 150,000 Washingtonians in and around Vancouver. The population had doubled between 1940 and 1970, but the area of the urban lands had quadrupled. This led to vigorous building activity extending in every direction-north, south, east and west.¹

¹ Atlas of Oregon. Portland, Oregon: University of Oregon Bookstore, 1976. p.133.

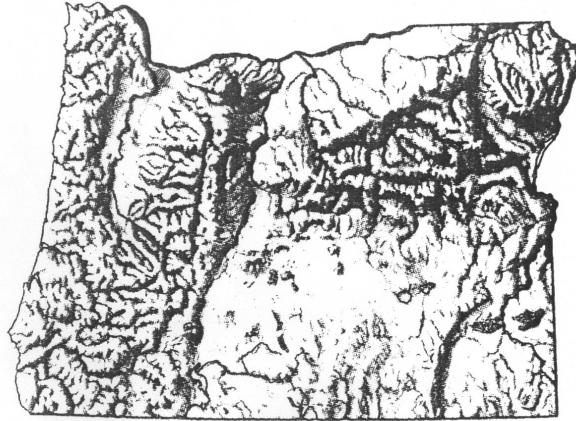


Figure 3. The topography of Oregon changes drastically from west to east. The western and northern areas show immense mountain ranges, while the southeast is mainly desert. (State Maps)

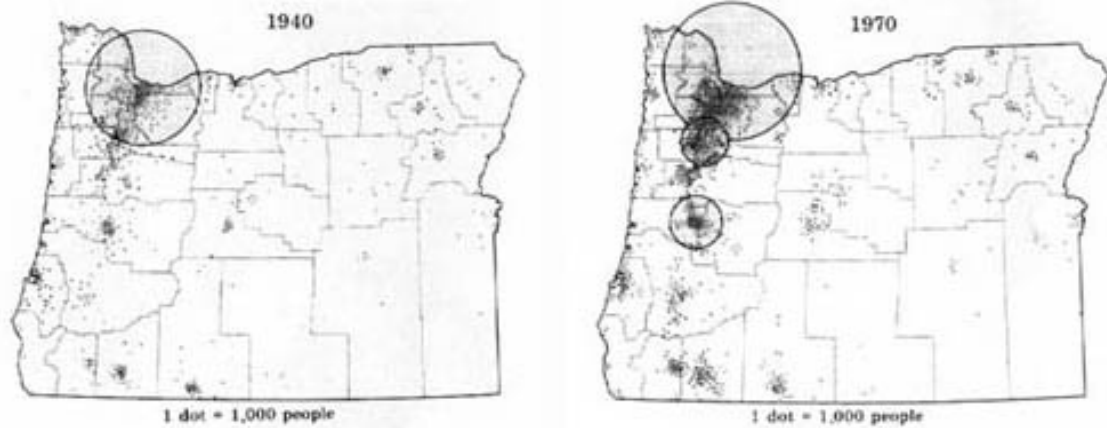


Figure 4. Population Growth Pattern from 1940-1970. (Atlas of Oregon)

The History of Portland

“Within a relatively small downtown district can be found nineteenth-century cast-iron-front buildings, skyscrapers, old brick warehouses, and 1890 train station with a 150-foot clock tower, five historic bridges over the Willamette River, and an assortment of museum, government, and retail buildings.”²



Figure 5. Aerial Photographs of Portland. (www.PortlandMaps.com)

Historically, the Pacific Northwest in the 1800s was an area claimed by Russia, Spain, Great Britain, and the United States. By the 1840s, the latter two were players, and the Anglo-American Oregon Treaty used the 49th parallel as a dividing line between American and British interests. The area Portland was a mere acre of land that was used as a resting place between travels. Stripped of its oak, cottonwood, and fir trees, it was appropriately named “The Clearing.” There were no buildings, except for a small log hut and the broken mast of a ship. In 1842, Oregon’s first wagon train arrived, bringing approximately a hundred immigrants into the area. They were mostly farmers, but also

² King, Bart. An Architectural Guidebook to Portland. Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 2001. p.. vii.

opportunists and capitalists who recognized a potentially valuable real estate prophet at the meeting points of the two rivers-the Willamette and the Columbia.

Portland was built on a small, dense scale. Its original 1846 plat established sixteen city blocks, measuring two hundred square feet in order to maximize prized

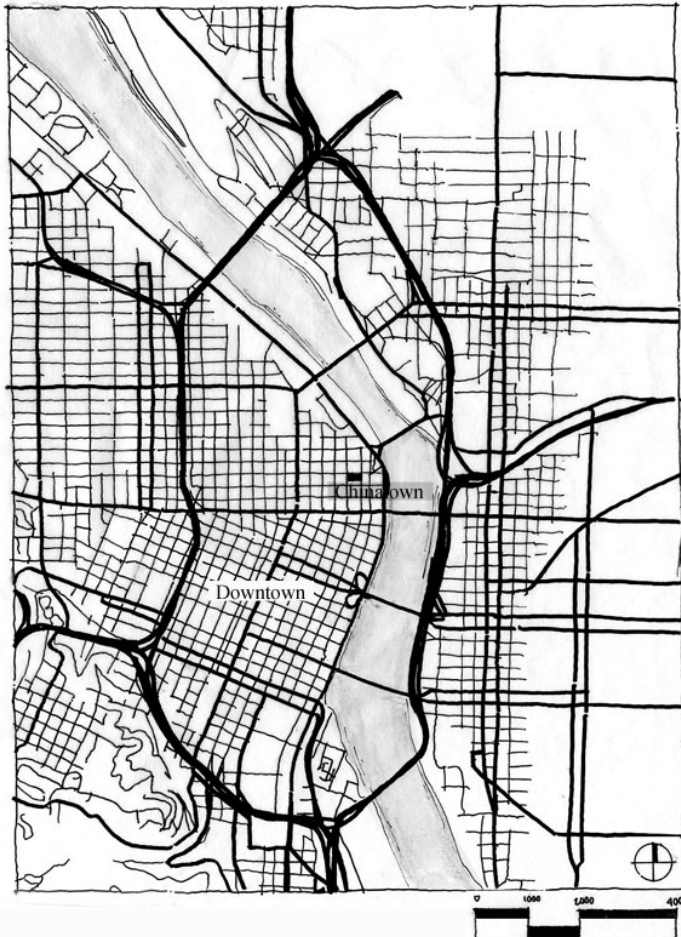


Figure 6. Portland Street Network. (Illustrated by author)

corner lots and to provide better access to the Willamette River. Showing no signs of the original wooden residences, Portland's modern downtown is primarily generated out of the popularity of the 1860s cast-iron fronted buildings with masonry construction. Since Portland experiences overcast skies through the winter, fall and spring seasons, the cast iron construction of the buildings and large amount of street volume allow for the most abundant

sunshine to enter its spaces indoors, as well as, outdoors. In 1872 the Great Fire blazed through thirty city blocks. By the mid-1870s, most buildings were stone or brick edifices.

Beginning in 1893 and continuing into the early twentieth century, there was a nationwide swell of support for the “City Beautiful” movement (also known as “American Renaissance”), a movement whose goal it was to improve cities through conscious civic planning. This movement led to subsequent design improvements in addressing issues of a maximum exposure of light and air. In 1978, the City’s Metropolitan Service District was created as an experiment in regional planning. It has authority over three counties and is best known for drawing the nation’s first urban growth boundary in order to contain suburban sprawl and keep the city’s core alive.



Figure 7. Figure/Ground Reversal Showing Portland’s Street and Urban Space Considerations. (Illustrated by author)

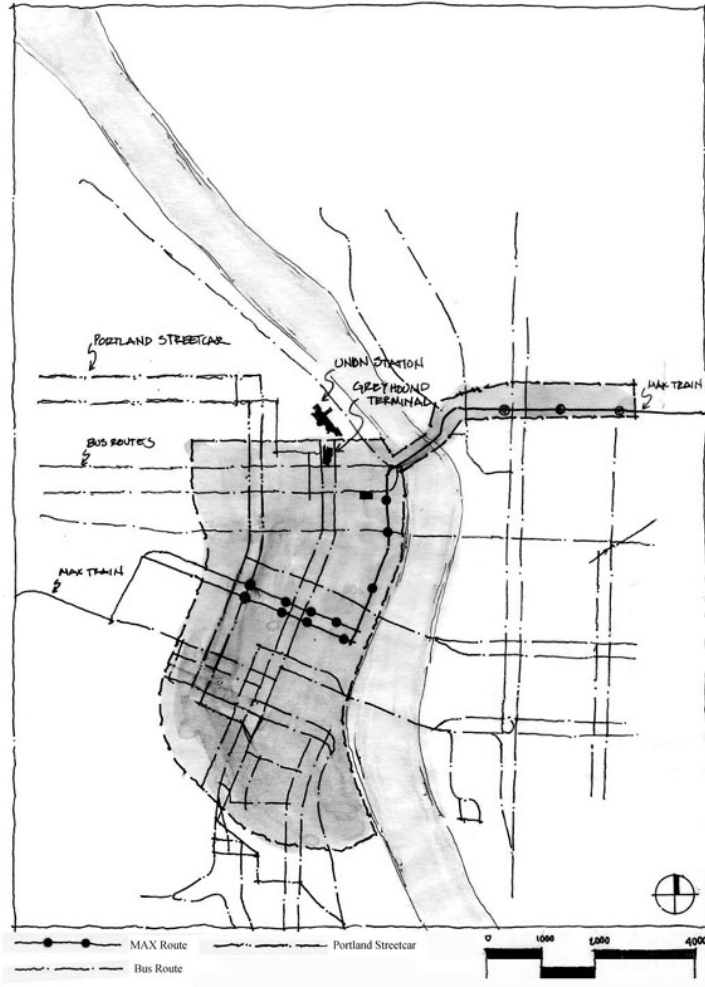


Figure 8. Diagram-‘Fareless Square’ provides free transportation within these boundaries. (Illustrated by author)

History of Portland's Chinatown



Figure 9. Entrance Gate on Burnside Road and Second Avenue. (Photographed by author)

The earliest Chinese to come to Oregon can be tracked to 1851 with the discovery of gold in its southern counties and the establishment of a steamer connection between Portland and San Francisco. By 1857, there were several hundred Chinese miners working in Jackson and Josephine counties. With growing number these laborers faced anti-Chinese sentiments, with the perception that the Chinese were going to invade the job markets leaving Americans without employment. Despite discrimination, a number of Chinese still entered Portland, showing the greatest influx in the 1860s. Many laborers came to Portland to construct the Oregon Central Railroad in 1868. After the project was finalized, the Chinese either traveled elsewhere along the rail lines, returned back home to China, or stayed in the area if they could not afford the travel. By 1870, four rail lines were being constructed in Oregon, attracting Chinese from California and China through the Portland lines³.

³ “Chinese Development Plan.” Portland, Oregon: Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, 1984. p. 4.

The Chinese have been in Portland almost since its establishment in 1853. Direct trade between Portland and China began in 1851. The first business began operating that year as well. As a result of good relations, the Burlingame Treaty was signed in 1868 between the United States and China, guaranteeing free entrance and equal treatment for nationals of both countries. Soon after, ships were bringing in immigrants directly from Hong Kong to Portland in numbers, avoiding direct entrance into San Francisco first. Interestingly, with growing anti-Chinese sentiment along the West coast, in 1886, citizens of Oregon formed militias and prevented the ousting of Chinese in Portland, creating a refuge for the persecuted Chinese of other states.

By the mid-1870s, the Chinese had become the largest ethnic group in Portland. At the time, the community of 5,000 occupied twenty-seven blocks of the now existing



Figure 10. Chinese Funeral in Portland's Original Chinatown, 1888. (Ho)

downtown. The Chinese settled in this area as a response to the working opportunities that were available as Portland had become a regional economic and transportation center along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers.

After the flood of 1894 and the completion of Union Station, some Chinese migrated to the current Chinatown (then, a Japanese district, later called "Little Tokyo"), while others stayed in the original settlement.⁴

⁴ Ho, Nelson Chia-Chi. Portland's Chinatown: The History of an Urban Ethnic District. Portland, Oregon: Bureau of Planning, 1978. p.4-10.

The Japanese came to America at a time when their national political system had felt the influence of Western thought and ambitions after the Meiji Revolution. Like the Chinese, most of them came to assist in construction of the railroads. By 1900, there were more than 200 Japanese in Portland. In 1910, Oregon's Japanese population reached approximately 3,418. They worked as merchants, lodging –house keepers, hotel and restaurant workers, tailors,

shoemakers, dyers, cleaners, factory workers, and farm hands. After the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Japanese were seen as

the “enemies.” President Roosevelt issued Executive



Figure 11. Chinese Restaurant in Original Chinatown. (Ho)

Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, forcing the evacuation of all persons of Japanese ancestry from California, Portland, and Washington into concentration camps.

Adjustment was extremely difficult during the post-war period with continued discrimination and hostility against the Japanese. Today, there are approximately 4,000 Japanese Americans in Portland, but the current population in today's existing Chinatown is almost extinct.⁵

⁵ Ho, Nelson Chia-Chi. Portland's Chinatown: The History of an Urban Ethnic District. Portland, Oregon: Bureau of Planning, 1978. p.27-33.



Figure 12. Japanese Railroad Section Hands, 1900s. (Ho)

The earlier Chinatown district is currently replaced by new buildings and parking lots adjacent to the downtown waterfront. The current ten-block Chinatown is located in an area “that is known as “Skid Road” or “Old Town.” A large portion of the area has been declared “historic” by the community legislators.

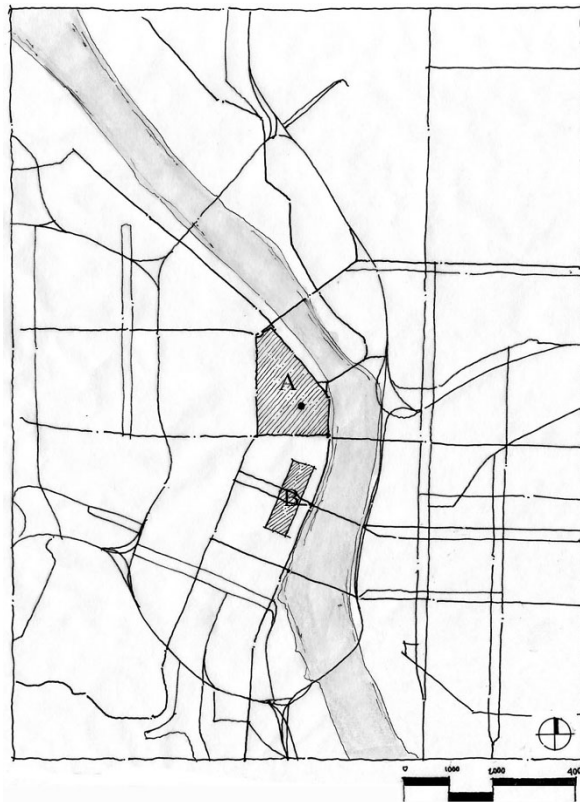


Figure 13. New (A) and Original (B) Chinatown Neighborhoods. (Illustrated by author)

Today, the population of Chinese and Chinese Americans is significantly low, and continues to diminish in size. During the two decades following World War II:

Nearly all the Chinese residents of Chinatown moved to neighborhoods throughout metropolitan Portland. By the early 1960s, the Chinese district consisted of a few restaurants, grocery and wholesale stores, family association halls, a church and Chinese language school. The move to the suburbs, demolition of buildings for parking lots and the general decline of the Burnside neighborhood into “Skid Road” severely weakened Chinatown⁶.

In 2000, the population in Portland’s Chinatown totaled 2,916 which are equal to only twenty-two people per acre of land. Of this total, the white population (2,258 people) composes 75.2%, African Americans (267 people)-8.9%, Hispanics (201 people)-6.7%, and Native Americans (112 people)-3.7%. Surprisingly, only 67 of 2,916 people represent the Asian community which comprises an astonishing 2.2% of the total population in the Chinatown neighborhood.⁷ In Portland’s Chinatown, the largest

Race	Portland’s Chinatown	Portland, Oregon	United States
White	75.2%	77.9%	75.1%
African American	8.9%	6.6%	12.3%
Hispanic	6.7%	6.8%	12.5%
Asian	2.2%	6.3%	3.6%
American Indian	3.7%	1.1%	0.9%
Native Islander	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%
Other	30%	3.5%	5.5%

Figure 14. Table of population percentages for race in Portland’s Chinatown, Portland, Oregon and the United States.⁸ (By author)

⁶ “Chinese Development Plan.” Portland, Oregon: Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, 1984. p.5.

⁷ Census Bureau Information 2000 for Oldtown/Chinatown. See Bibliography.

⁸ Census Bureau Information 2000 for Oldtown/Chinatown, Portland City, Oregon, and the United States. See Bibliography.

age group is the ages *40-64* group, comprising 46.2% of the total population. The *22-39* age group is slightly smaller (42.7%), while the *65 and older* age group is 4.9%, the *18-21* age group is 4.4%, the *5-17 age group* represents 1.2% and the *under 5 years-old* group is only 0.7% of Chinatown's population.⁹

Efforts were once planned to resurrect "old" Chinatown. In 1961 plans were drawn up for the development of a new Chinatown at the site of the old waterfront area. But the project was never realized as the last Chinese housing establishment was sold. Currently the Chinese and the Chinese American community are committing to revitalize the existing conditions of Portland's Chinatown. Confidence in the area has been renewed. Substantial private investments have been made and public improvements are planned. The Chinese and Asian community, which is geographically spread throughout the metropolitan area, is coming back to Chinatown to shop and eat while the interest of non-Asians in the Chinatown offerings of food and culture continues to grow¹⁰.

The Site

The proposed site is located in the heart of Portland's existing Chinatown. It is approximately one hundred-feet by two-hundred feet (20,000 square feet). It is currently occupied by the Chamber of Commerce for the Chinatown with a seventy- five by one hundred corner lot for its parking. It is situated on a relatively flat site, two blocks from the waterfront on its east and a privately-owned Chinese garden across the street to the north. This site is located on Glisan Street, between Third and Fourth Avenues.

⁹ Census Bureau Information 2000 for Oldtown/Chinatown. See Bibliography.

¹⁰ "Chinese Development Plan." Portland, Oregon: Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, 1984. p.5.

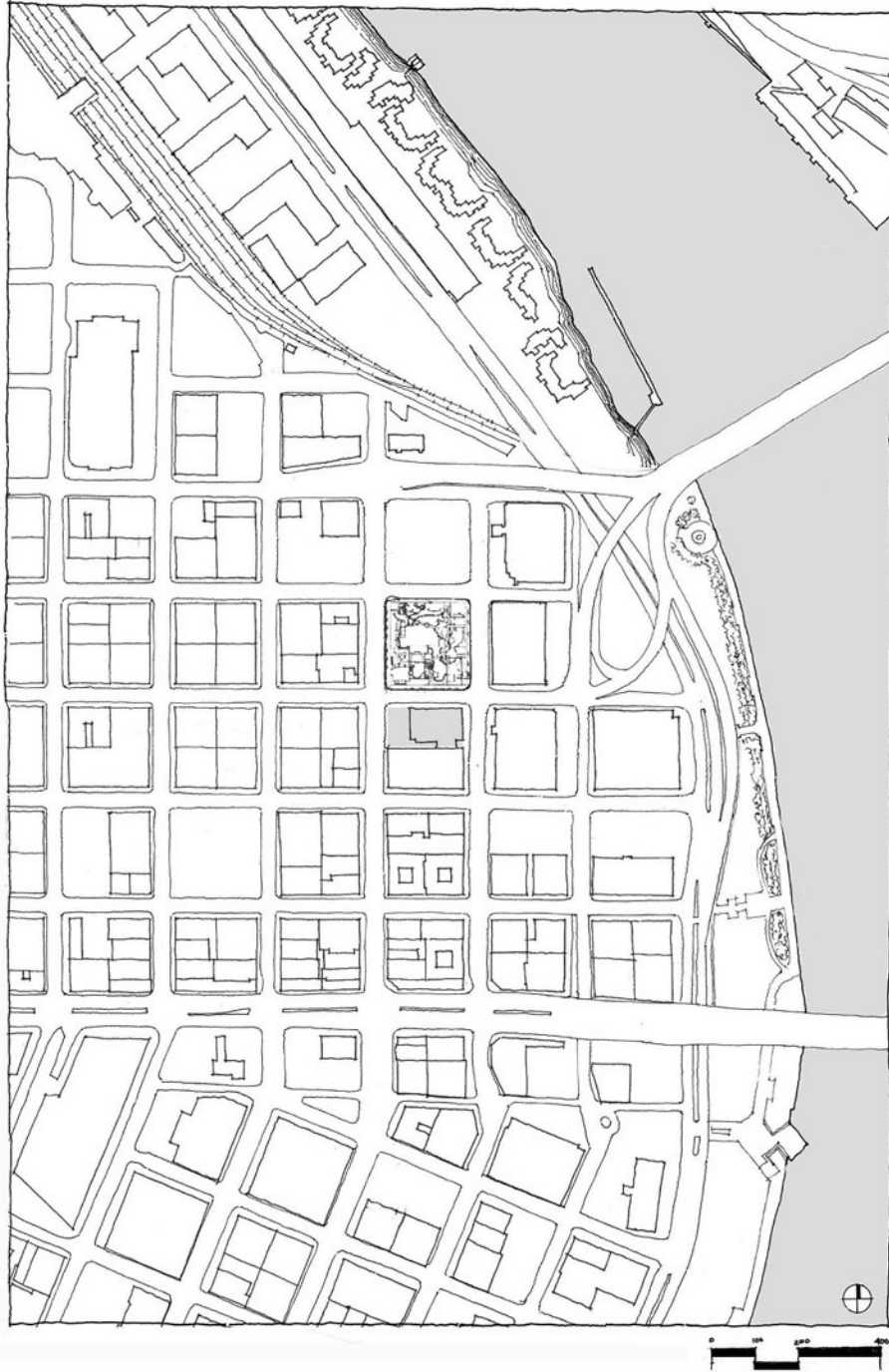


Figure 15. Proposed Site on Glisan Street, between 3rd and 4th Avenues. (Illustrated by author)

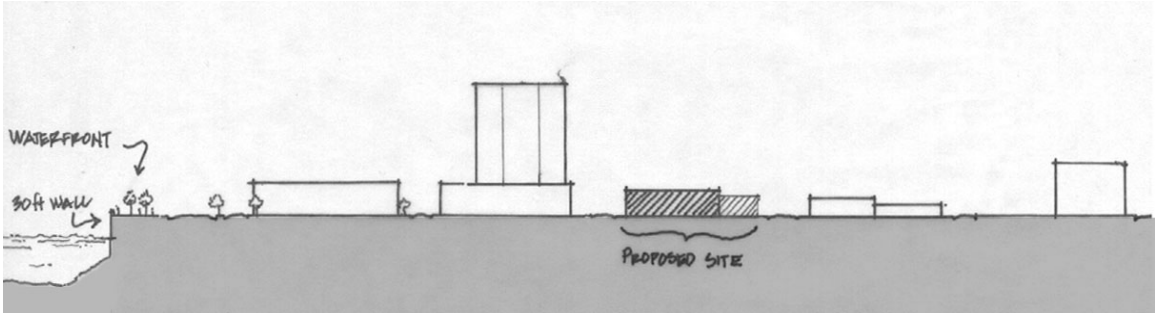


Figure 16. Diagram-Site Section facing south shows abrupt 30 feet level change of waterfront and the Willamette River. (Illustrated by author)



Figure 17. Views of the Chamber of Commerce Building from the East and West. (Photographed by author)



Figure 18. Site: Glisan Street and Corner Lot. (Photographed by author)



Figure 19. Site: Corner of Glisan Street and 3rd Avenue. (Photographed by author)

The Surrounding Context

The Portland Classical Chinese Garden encompasses the entire block between Glisan and Flanders Streets, and Third and Fourth Avenues. It is bordered by 6-foot wall with an occasional punched opening. It is a privately-owned park which requires a small



Figure 20. Exterior of Chinese Garden. Its main entrance is on the corner of Glisan St and 3rd Ave. (Photographed by author)



Figure 21. Interior of Chinese Garden. (Photographed by author)

The Northwest Natural Gas Building/One Pacific Square is located directly east of the site, occupying the corner of Glisan Street and Fourth Avenue. This 23-floor



hexagonal tower is one of the tallest buildings in the neighborhood and stands out with its use of a completely reflective external skin. To the south and west of the site, the building fabric consists of simpler, traditional mixed-use housing buildings with retail and restaurants on the ground floor and housing above.

Figure 23. Northwest Natural Gas Building. (Photographed by author)



Figure 24. Context building south of Site on Third Street. (Photographed by author)



Figure 25. Street Block West of Site on Glisan Street and Third Avenue. (Photographed by author)

The Larger Context

The larger context of building and street fabric that encompasses the site lays on the two-hundred-foot by two-hundred-foot block grid. Each block is typically composed entirely of building fabric. The small block dimensions result in service streets that are located along city blocks, rather than creating small alleys. It is also interesting to note the consistent building heights of three to four stories in the neighborhood with the exception of a few buildings which reach up to 220 feet. Many of these buildings are mixed-use buildings with retail or restaurants below and housing above. However, a large number of the businesses and housing are either out of commission or abandoned. A number of the businesses consist of adult book stores, impersonation clubs, and tourist shops. Also, only a small percentage of the restaurants are Chinese-owned. Additionally, most of the restaurants cater to an Americanized-cuisine, making it undesirable to attain authentic Chinese meals. Other buildings in the area are dedicated to community services and office space.



Figure 27. Aerial Photograph of Chinatown District. (www.PortlandMaps.com)



Figure28. Diagram: Figure/Ground shows the small city blocks as figures.
(Illustrated by author)

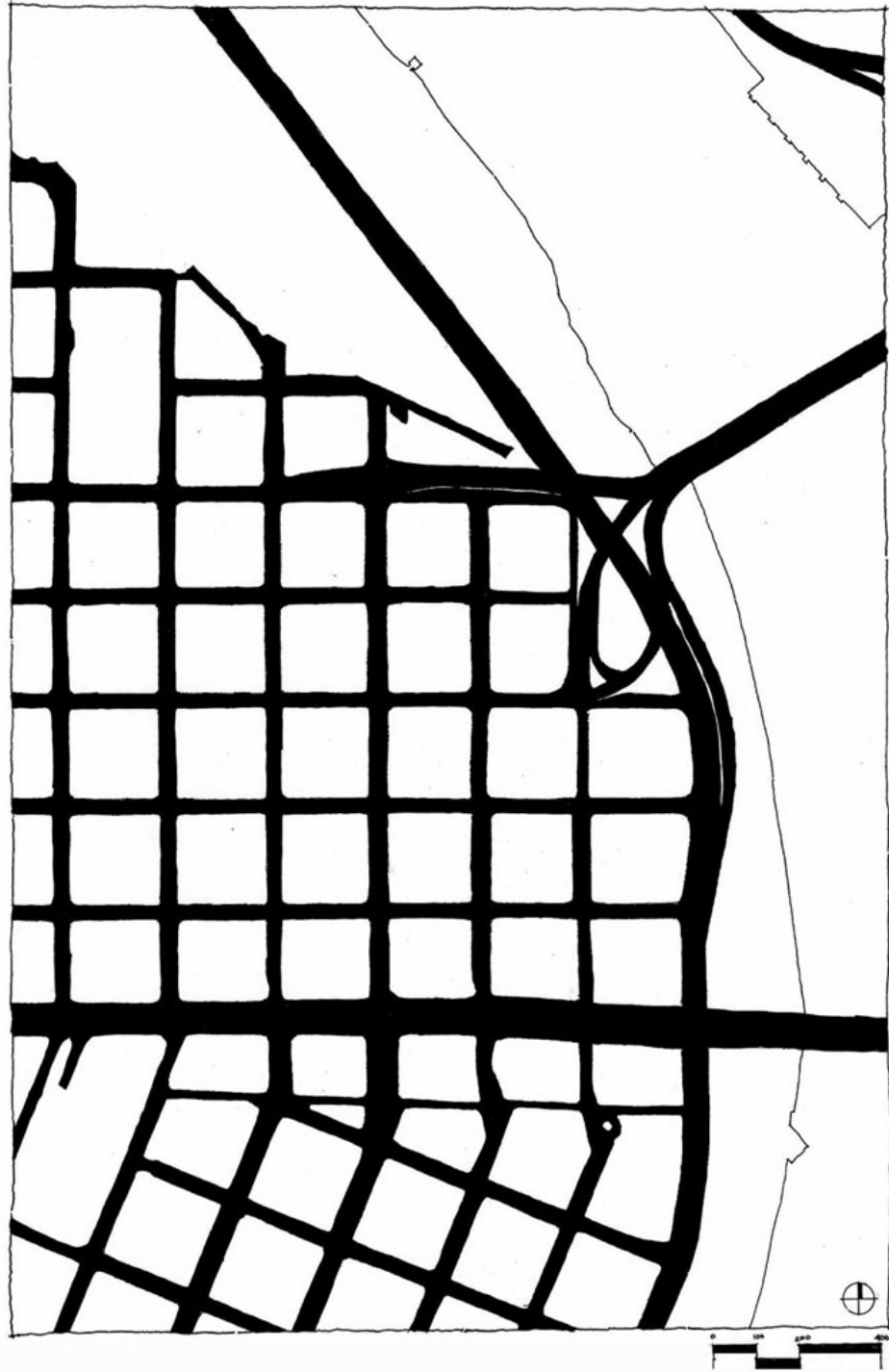


Figure 29. Diagram: Street Network. Streets are wide along city blocks to allow for maximum exposure of light to the buildings and spaces. (Illustrated by author)

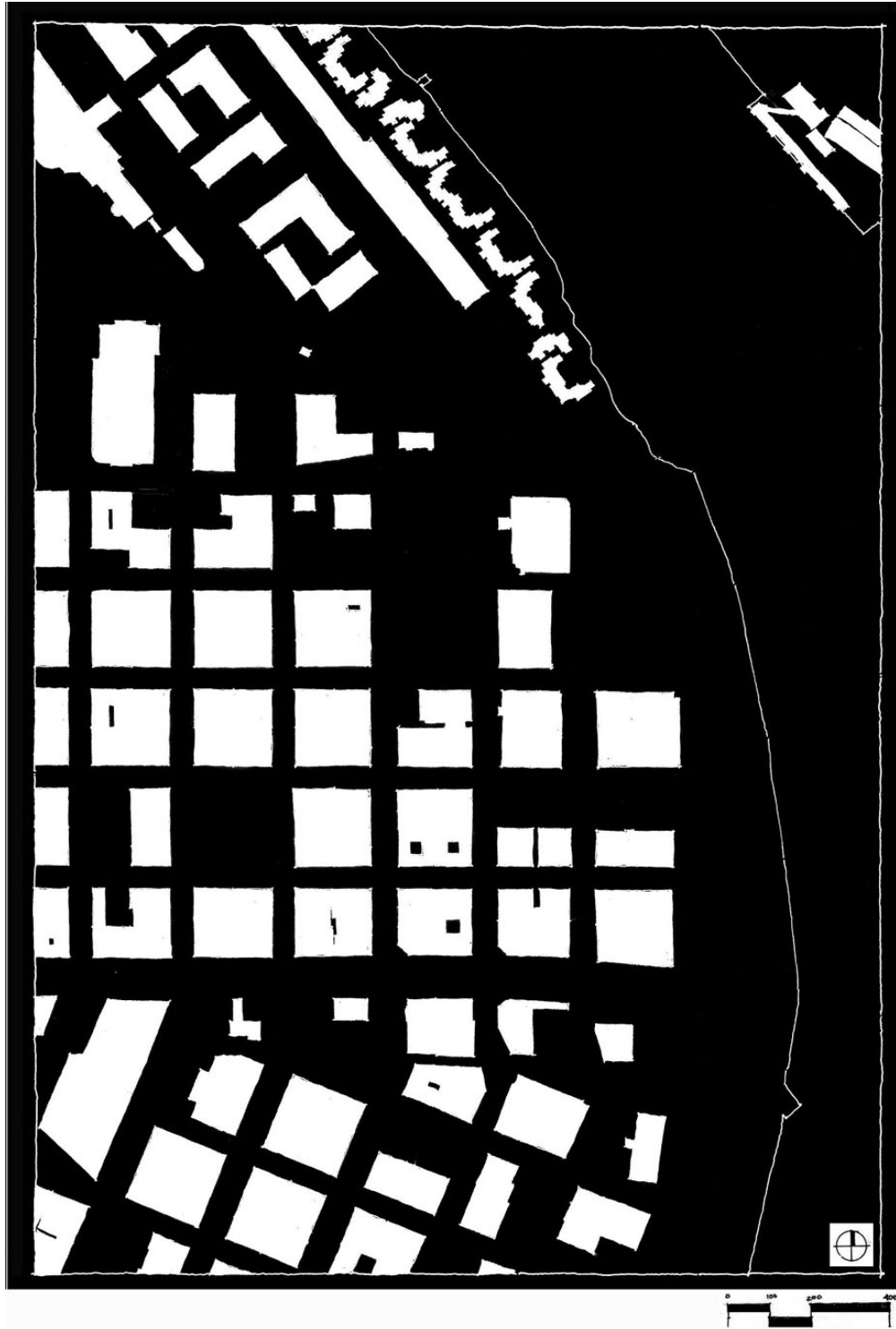


Figure 30. Diagram: Figure/Ground Reversal. Although many of the building blocks are built on, there is still a large amount of excess space. (Illustrated by author)

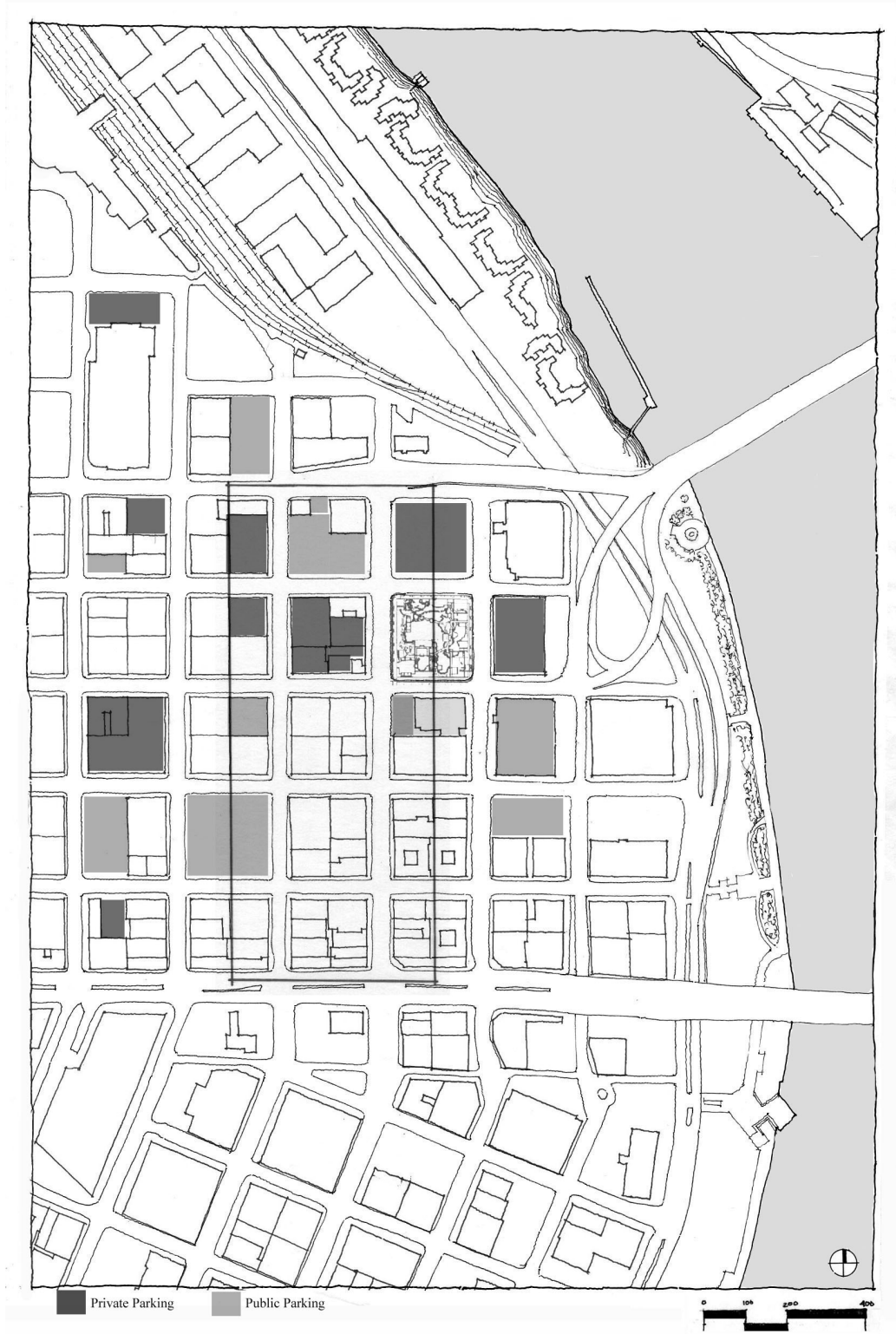


Figure 31. Diagram: Private and Public Parking Spaces. Much of the buildable area of the city blocks are currently occupied by vacant parking lots. (Illustrated by author)



Figure 32. Diagram: Green Space. The site shows great opportunity for a larger quantity of green spaces which can help to relate to the waterfront property. (Illustrated by author)

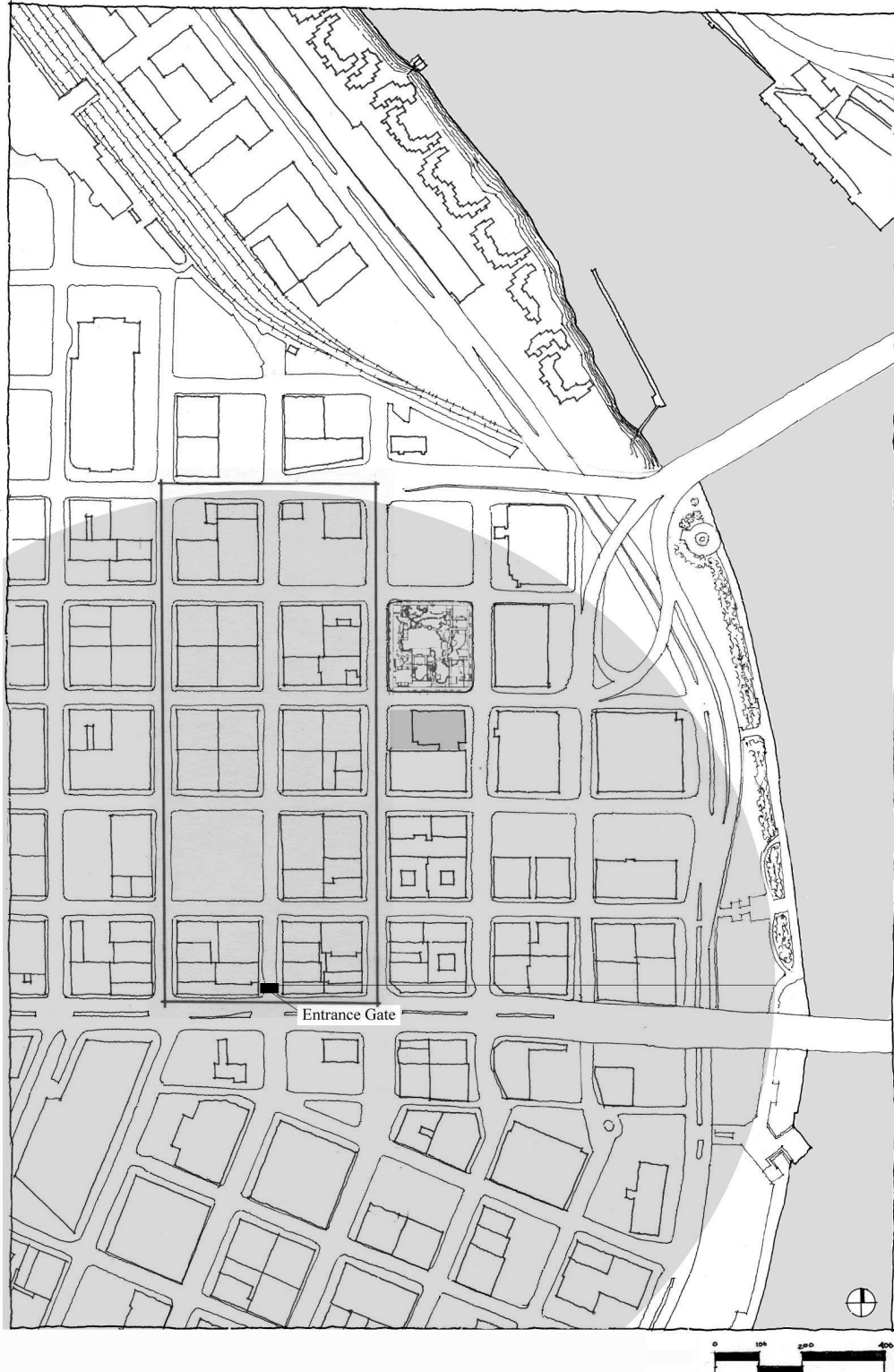


Figure 33. Diagram: Pedestrian Walkability. From the entrance gate, a pedestrian can enjoy a brisk 5-minute walk (one-quarter of a mile) to the waterfront. (Illustrated by author)

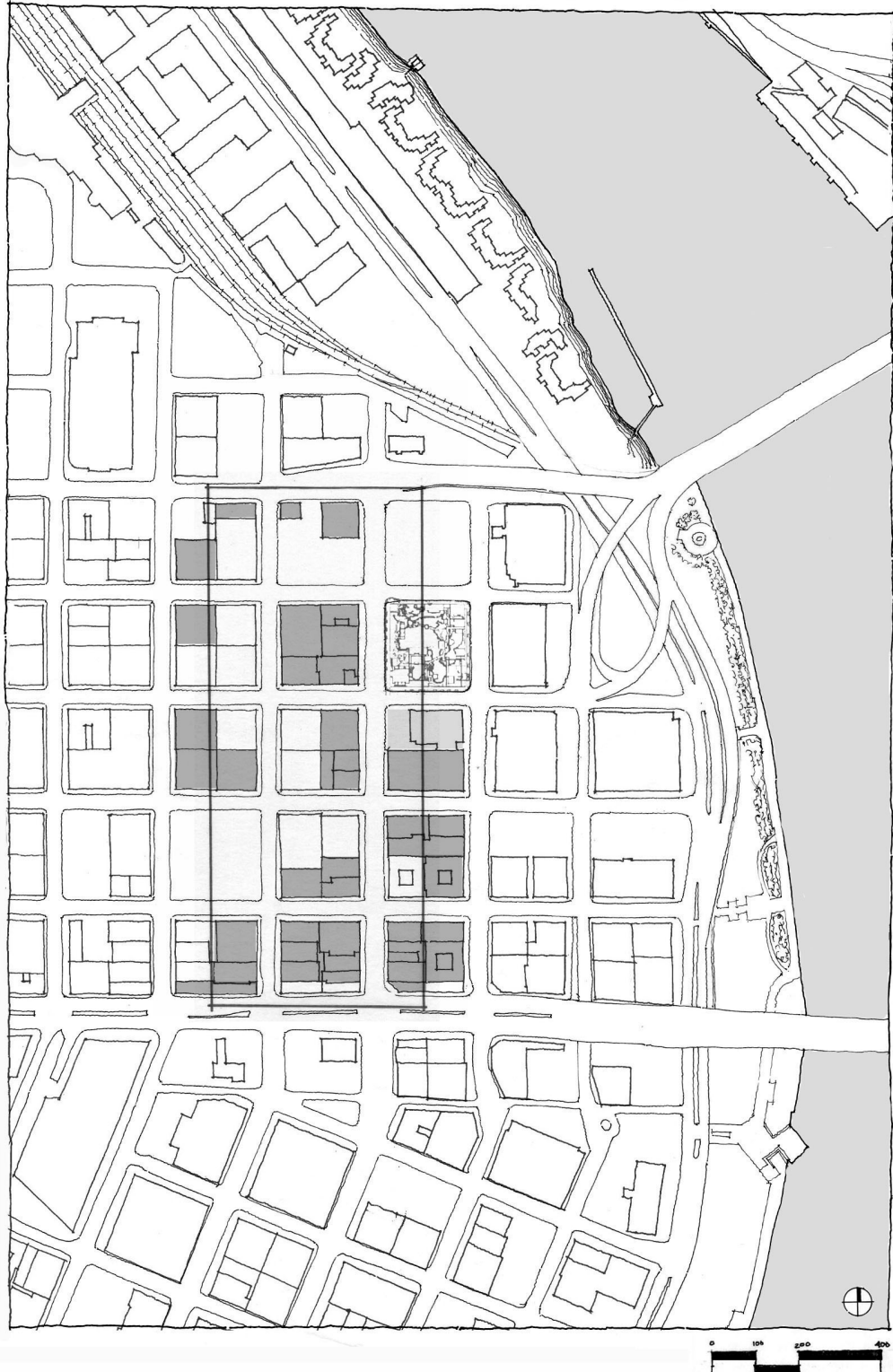


Figure 34. Diagram: Historic District. About seventy-five percent of Chinatown's ten city blocks are declared as historic buildings by the city planning office. (Illustrated by author)

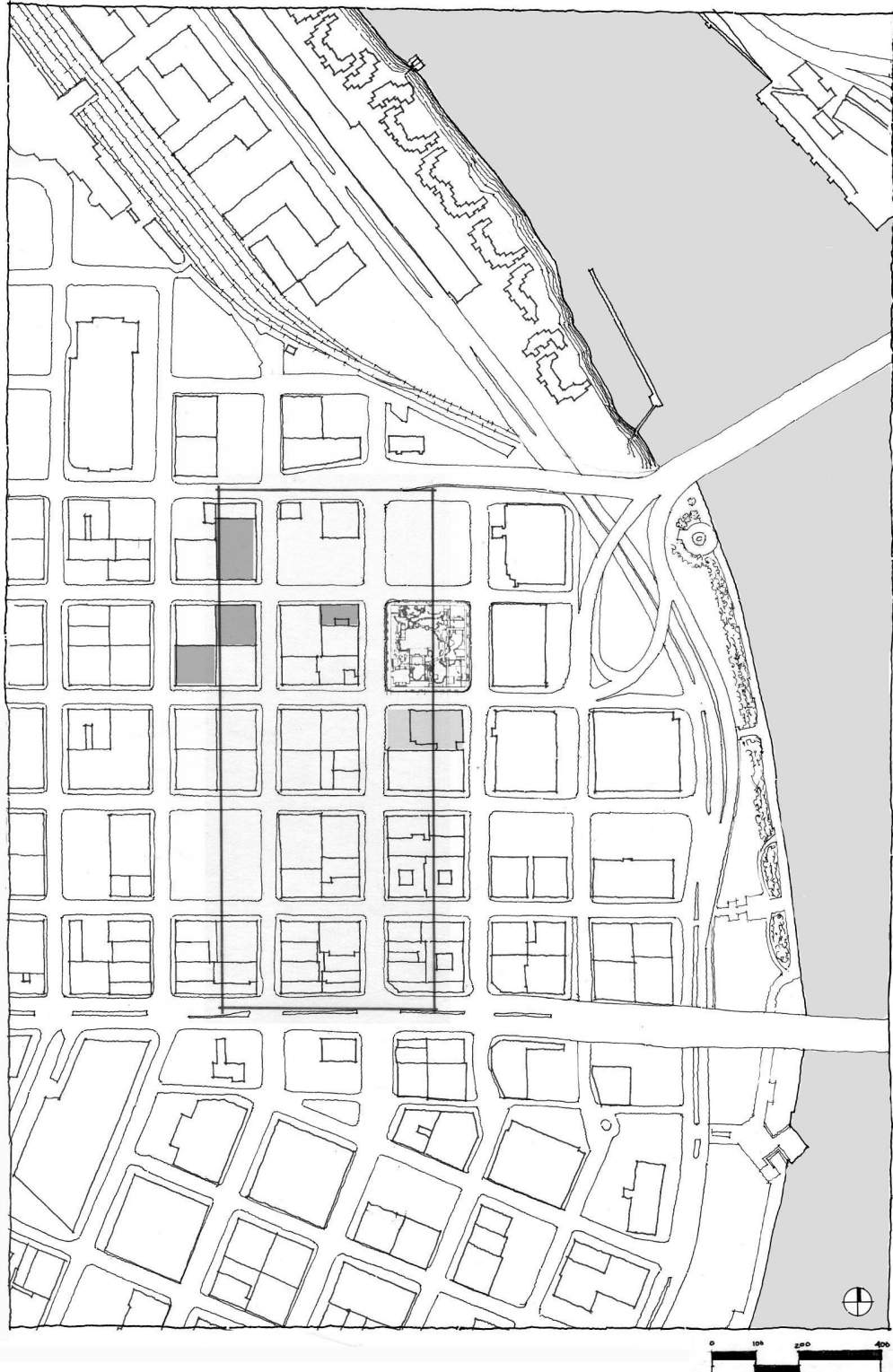


Figure 35. Diagram: Ground Floor Housing. Most of the ground floor uses belong to retail, restaurants, and small businesses. (Illustrated by author)

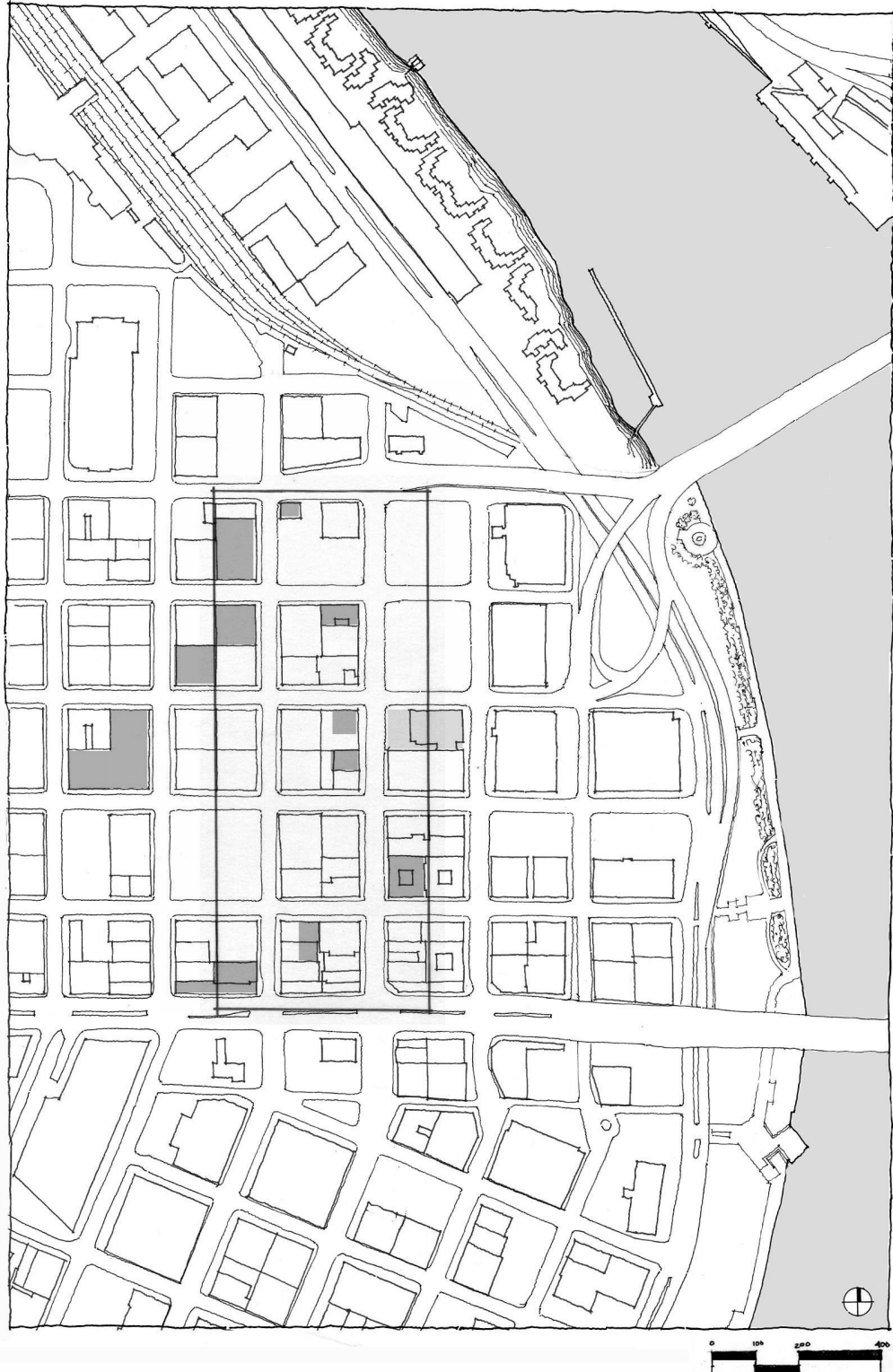


Figure 36. Diagram: Second Floor Housing. Even with mixed-use residential fabric, Portland's Chinatown shows a significant deficiency in housing in comparison with other Chinatowns. (Illustrated by author)

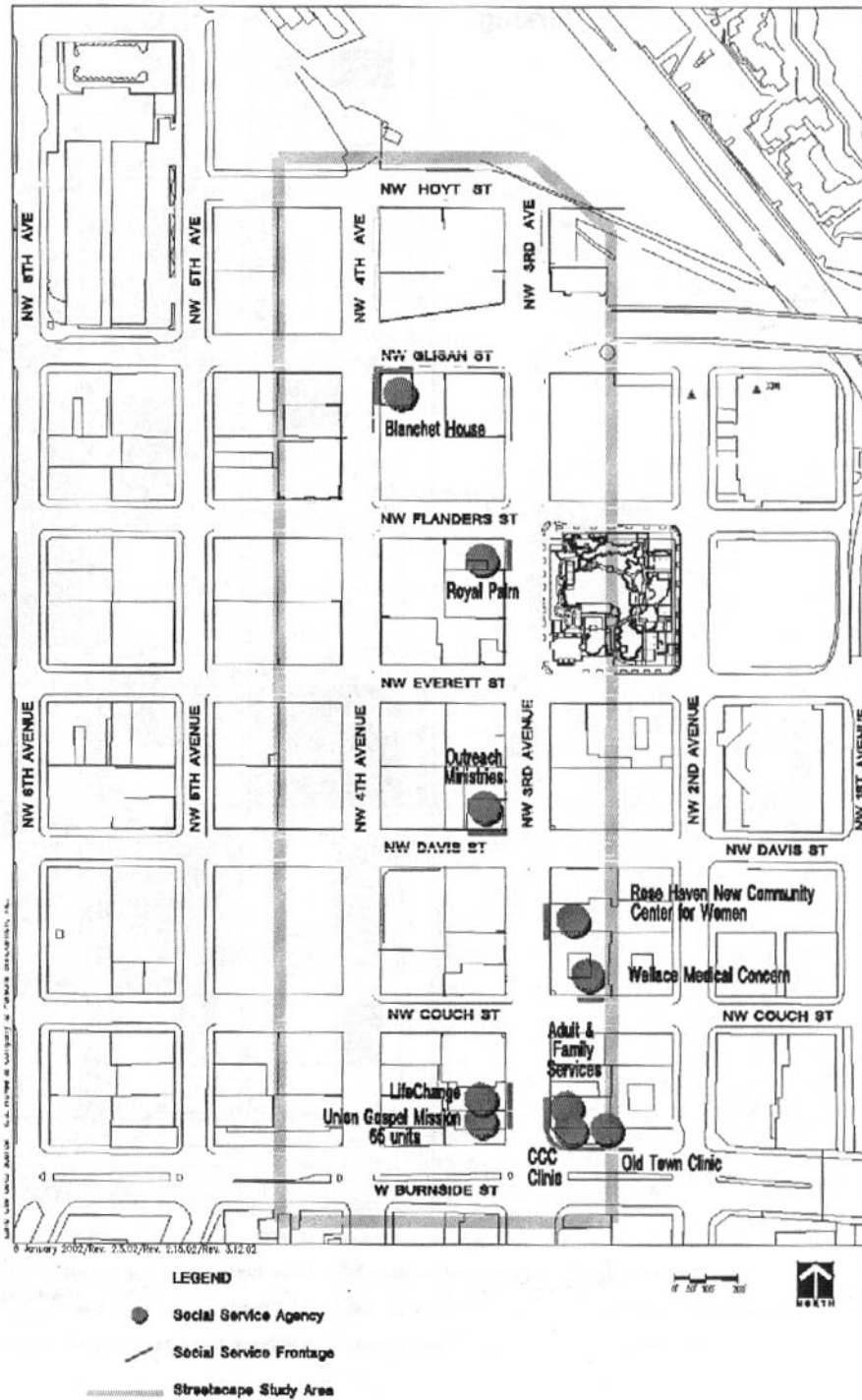


Figure 37. There are few Social Services provided within the Chinatown neighborhood. (Old Town Chinatown 3rd & 4th Avenue Streetscape Plan: Final Report)

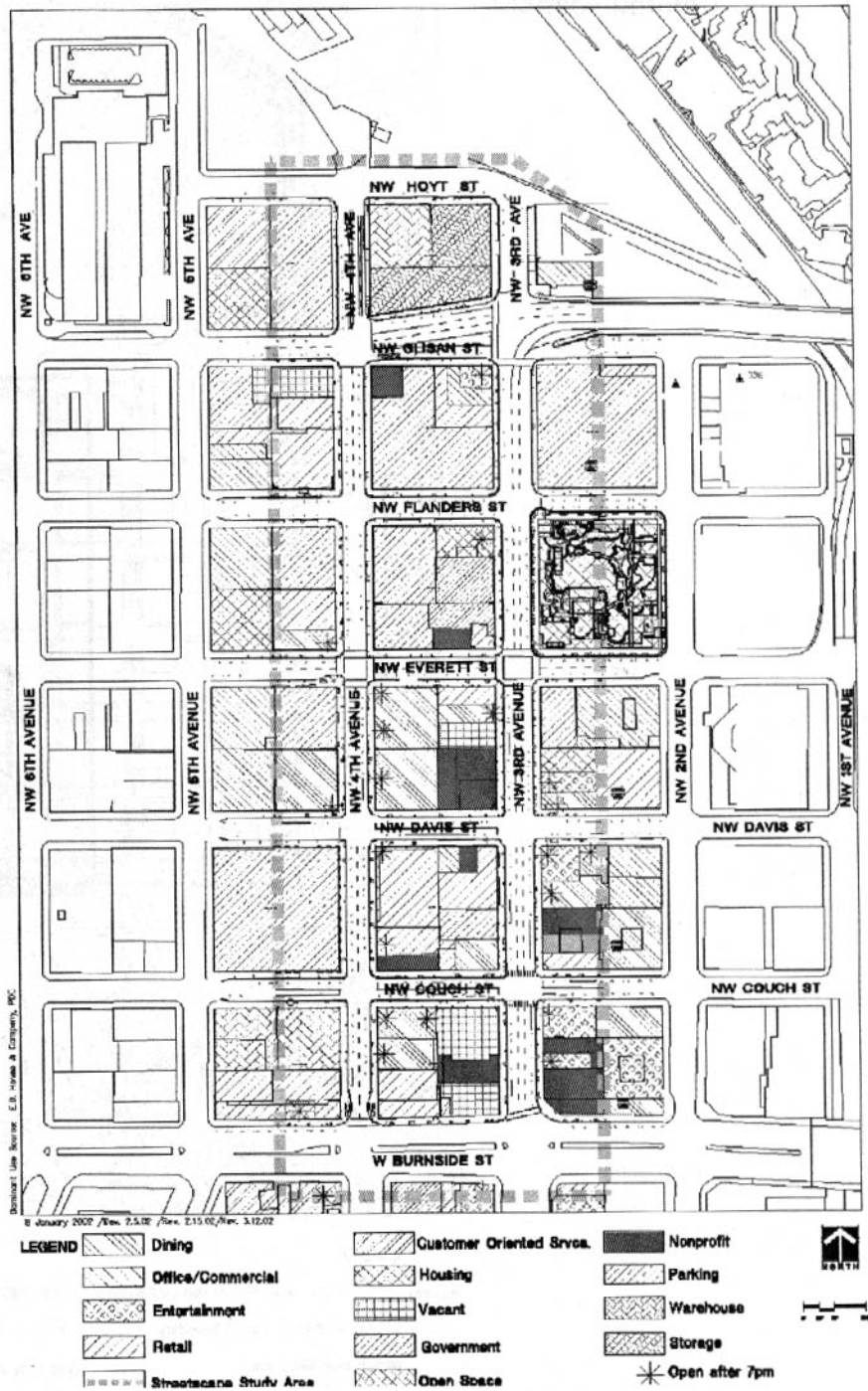


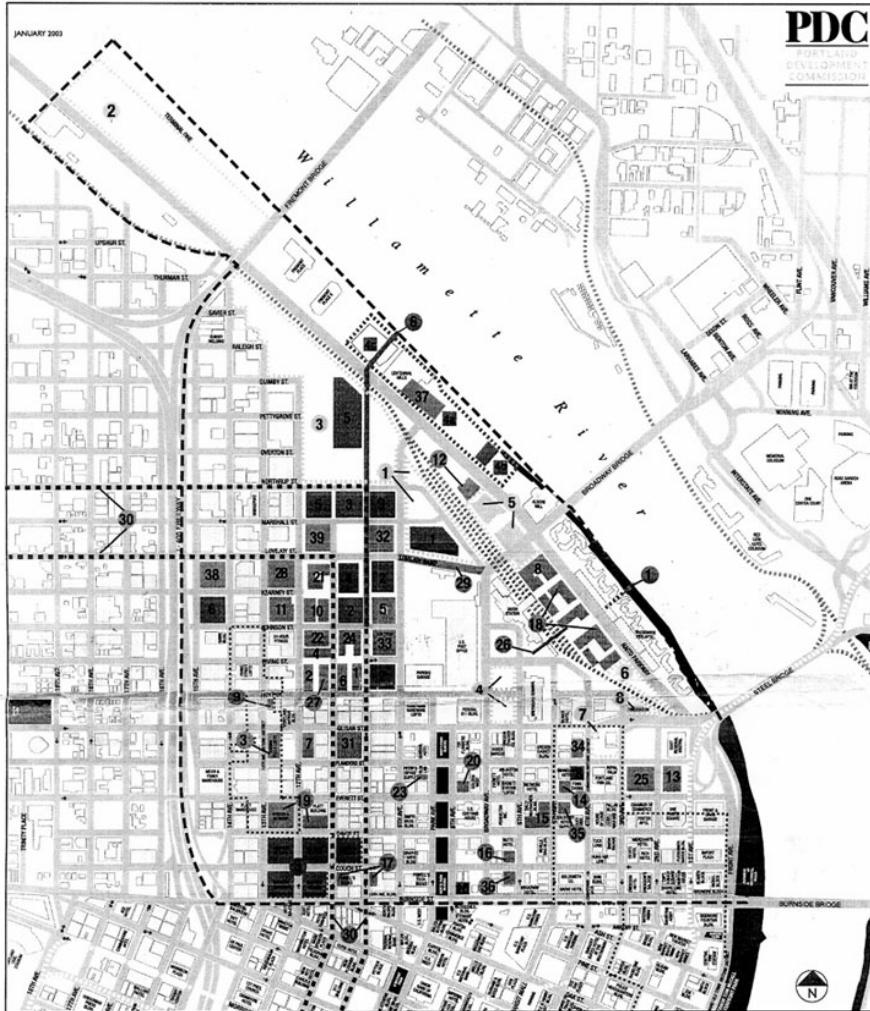
Figure 38. Ground Floor building uses consist of mostly restaurants and stores that often only attract tourists. Many of the storefronts are vacant or destroyed. (Old Town Chinatown 3rd & 4th Avenue Streetscape Plan: Final Report)

Existing Redevelopment Studies

In the past five years, the city of Portland, the Portland Development Commission, and the community of Portland have produced various development strategies that target the city's significant economic and political growth potential in each of its districts. Among them, Chinatown has remained a priority for many to revitalize the existing state of the community and to begin to draw the Asian and Asian-American population back into Chinatown. Two essential redevelopment studies that are relevant to Chinatown are the River District Development Project and the Third and Fourth Avenue Streetscape Plan.

The River District Development Project has been produced by the Portland Development Commission of Oregon as a major revitalization project adjacent to downtown Portland. It was developed in the late 1990s and will continue to be constructed through the next five years, a major portion of which contains the existing Chinatown. Its main focus lies in the northwest region which encompasses major waterfront development near Union Station and the Greyhound terminal. This plan begins to introduce new building types and uses that will be created upon the large number of existing vacant lots around the area, including housing and community service projects. What is interesting is that the study begins to address the addition of much needed green spaces to the area that provide a much needed link from the inner city to the edge of the waterfront.

RIVER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



COMPLETED PROJECTS, YEAR	COMPLETED PROJECTS, YEAR	COMPLETED PROJECTS, YEAR	UNDER CONSTRUCTION / PERMITTED	OPEN SPACE/PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS
1 Peaf Lofts, 1994 27 condominiums	16 McDonald Center, 1999 54 elderly assisted living units	30 Central City Streetcar, 2001 Structural route connecting MM with downtown and PSU	1 Station Place 175-unit senior affordable apartments, 30,000 sq. ft. retail with 425-car garage	1 North Park Square, under design
2 Hoyt Commons, 1995 48 condominiums	17 Powell's Book Expansion, 1999 50,000 sq. ft.	31 The Gregory, 2001 140 condominiums and 42,000 sq. ft. of retail/commercial space	2 Burlington Tower 182 rental units	2 Waterfront Park Phase 1, a band of proposed park
3 Chewen Pella, 1996 83 condominiums	18 Yards at Union Station, Phase B, 1999 377 units	32 Lovejoy Station, 2001 181 rental units, mixed-income	3 Brewery Blocks Redevelopment site. Mixed-use redevelopment of five blocks - under construction	3 Neighborhood Park, planned
4 Irving Street Townhomes, 1996 14 townhouses	19 Walden & Kennedy Headquarters, 1999 with adjoining parking facility	33 Jean William National Capital Center, 2001 50,000 sq. ft. office/retail space	4 Park Place Condominiums 134 condominiums, under construction	4 River District Boardwalk, planned
5 Peaf Court, 1997 199 rental units	20 North Park Lofts, 2000 67 condominiums	34 Old Town Lofts, 2001 80 mixed-income condos, units	5 Bridgeport Condominiums 123 units, under construction	
6 Peaf Townhouses, 1997 10 townhouses	21 Kearney Plaza, 2000 131 rental units	35 Creative Services Center, 2001 60,000 sq. ft. office space	6 The Edge 161 & 124 condominiums, under construction	
7 McKenzia Lofts, 1997 67 condominiums	22 Johnson Townhouses, 2000 13 town houses	36 6th and Couch Apartments, 2001 13 rental units with retail	7 NW 10th & Hoyt Condominiums 176 rental units, under construction	
8 Yards at Union Station, Phase A, 1998 156 rental units	23 Park Northwest, 2000 18 condominiums	37 Police Mounted Horse Patrol Facility, 2001	8 Pacific Tower 156 affordable rental units	
9 Modern Confectioners' Building, 1998 8 condominiums	24 Tanner Place, 2000 121 condominiums	38 Marshall Wells Lofts, 2002 164 condominiums	9 Park 103 138 rental units	
10 Riverstone, 1998 123 condominiums	25 Classical Chinese Garden, 2001	39 Structural Lofts, 2002 120 mixed-income condominiums	10 The Damrosch 180 low-income units	
11 Pacific Northwest College of Art, 1998 368 local faculty	26 Pedestrian Bridge, 2000 Across rail tracks at Union Station			
12 Food Innovation Center, 1999 40,000 square foot (bc-ft) office/lab, for the Oregon Department of Agriculture	27 Peaf Townhomes, 2000 10 townhomes			
13 Port of Portland Headquarters, 1999 100,000 sq. ft. office	28 riverTAC, 2000 75,000 sq. ft. of office space rehabilitation			
14 Fifth Avenue Commons, 1999 70 rental units	29 Lovejoy/10th Avenue Ramps, 2001 Rebuilt ramp to level at 3rd, with at-grade street beginning at 8th			
15 Fifth Avenue Court, 1999 94 rental units				

Figure 39. River District Development Plan. (Portland Development Commission)

The Chinatown Third and Fourth Avenue Streetscape Plan is the current study for the renovation of the existing streetscape of Chinatown. It was developed in 2002 as a schematic design that would provide a foundation for an urban design solution for the Chinatown neighborhood in which construction is expected to begin as soon as 2004-2005. This project was produced by local landscape architects, architects, and the community as the first step in a larger collaborative effort to revitalize the existing conditions of Portland's Chinatown.

Deemed as the "Refined Jewel Box Approach," this project focuses on creating special "festival" areas within Old Town/ Chinatown while also providing continuous elements that unify the entire neighborhood. This includes the introduction of two major festival streets along Davis and Flanders Streets. Each will be denoted by various paving patterns and streetscape décor. These "festival" streets provide celebrated spaces that are not currently provided for at the moment in Chinatown. The "festival" street concept responded to a need evidenced in other Asian, urban neighborhoods for flexible, public space to serve pedestrians, street festivals, shopping fairs and special events, while accommodating the need for traffic movement.¹¹ Another interesting element is the landscaping of traditional Chinese trees around the neighborhood, as well as, designed marquees on plaques that will be strategically placed on certain buildings. These are additional elements that hope to provide for a 'place' that is distinctly Chinatown.

¹¹ "Old Town Chinatown 3rd & 4th Avenue Streetscape Plan: Executive Summary." Portland, Oregon: City of Portland, 2002.

Old Town/Chinatown 3rd & 4th Avenue Streetscape Plan The Refined Jewel Box Approach

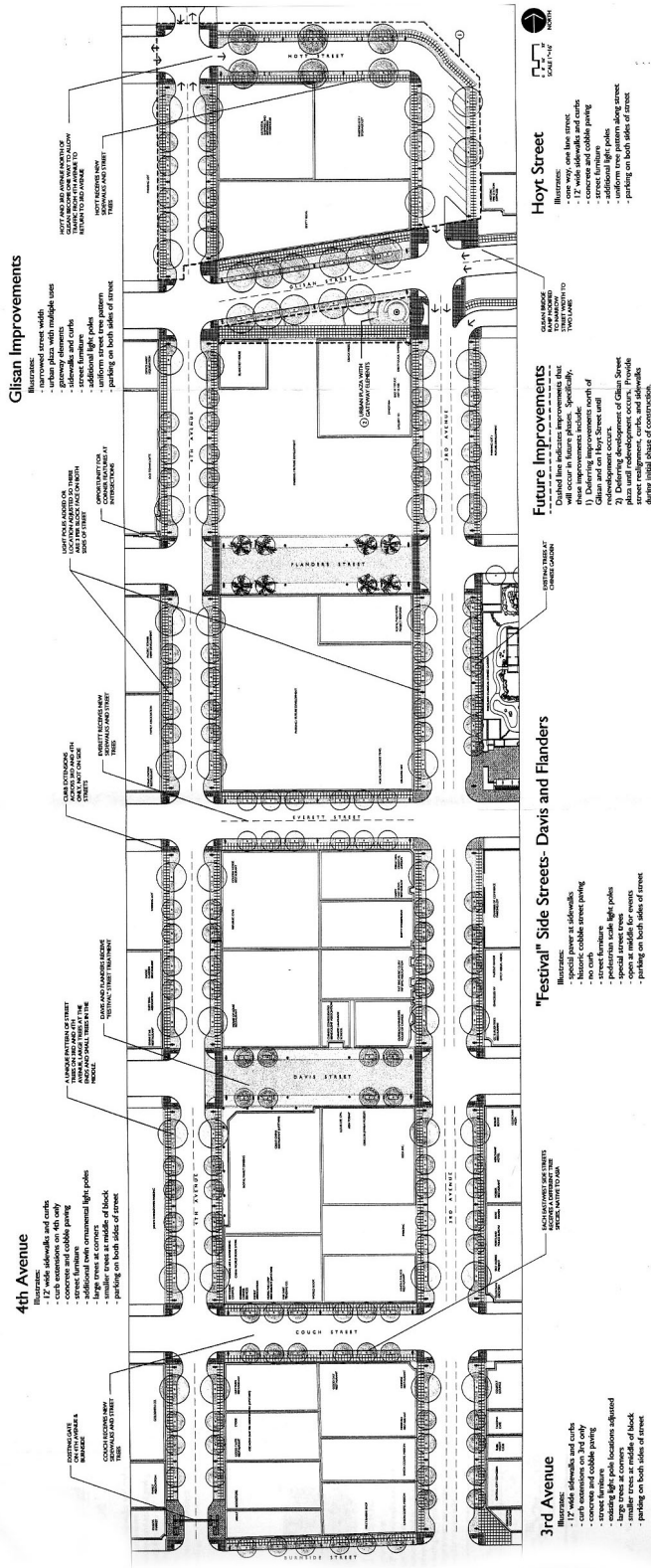
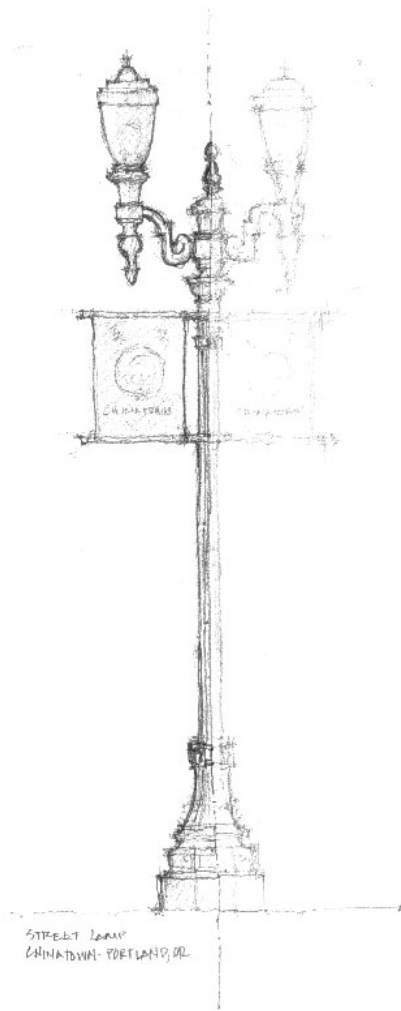


Figure 40. Third & Fourth Avenue Streetscape Plan. (Ben Ngan Associates)

CHAPTER 2:
CHINATOWNS: A CONTINUUM OF
FAITH AND CUSTOMS



STREET LAMP
CHINATOWN - PORTLAND, OR

4 JULY, 2007

(Illustrated by author)

Chinatowns: An Urban Enclave

“They conceived of themselves as members of local extended kin units, bound together by ties of blood and their local dialects, and only secondarily, if at all, as “citizens” of the Chinese Empire.¹²”

-Nelson Chia-Chi Ho

Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, China had a major trade advantage over the Western nations. Although the Western nations desired access to China's number of luxury products, including silk, porcelain, and tea, China had little interest in opening its trade to the West. In 1839, Britain launched Opium Wars as a means to force China to open its doors to opium trade, and in effect, upon defeat, opening China's larger port and trade markets.

With a deteriorating economy, a series of natural disasters, food shortages, and internal government corruption, domestic unrest and violence culminated in what was called, the Taipei Rebellion. Thousands of Chinese travelled to the Americas as a result to escape the poverty and chaos of their homeland. Because of this original influx of Chinese immigrants, the United States and Canada became home the two largest concentrations of Chinese in the Western Hemisphere.

Chinese immigration to the United States and Canada can be divided in four stages: unrestricted immigration propelled by labor needs of the host country, exclusion, restricted immigration, and equal basis immigration. The Chinese hoped for the prospect of wealth and fortune with news spreading back in China of jobs and gold in America

¹² Ho, Nelson Chia-Chi. Portland's Chinatown: The History of an Urban Ethnic District. Portland, Oregon:**,****, p.2.

(also known as *Gum San* or “Gold Mountain). These immigrants were usually peasants from the T'ai-Shan district in southern China-Kwantung¹³.



Figure 41. Region Origin of Chinese Immigration. (Ho)

Early immigration swarmed to Sutter’s Mill in San Francisco in 1848 after the discovery of gold was reverberated in China. At this time, San Francisco saw a rise in population from approximately 50 immigrants in 1840 to 25,000 by 1852, and 100,000 in 1880. In the 1880s, the early Chinese mainly consisted of laborers who came to the Pacific West to find work constructing either the Transcontinental Railroad in the United States or the Canadian Pacific Railway in Canada. Together, the two railways brought over 40,000 immigrants to the west coast. The immigrants were primarily male because of the arduous work of mining and building railroads, but also because of strict immigration

¹³ Transitions: The Changing Profile of New York Chinatown. 1st ed. CD-ROM. New York: Museum of Chinese in the Americas (MOCA), 2001.

laws that restricted entry of Chinese women. These resulted in the formation of Chinatown's "bachelor societies."

After completion of the railroads, many laborers settled along the routes which they worked on. Others traveled along these routes to settle throughout the continental United States. They were soon able to establish small businesses utilizing their skills in agriculture and fishing, and filling needs such as laundries and restaurants. However,

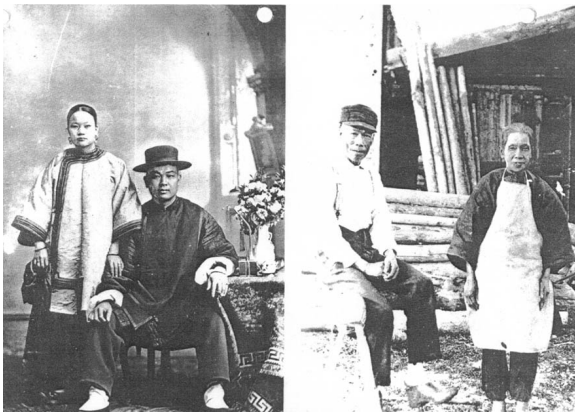


Figure 42. Wealthy Couple and Laboring Couple. 1872. Portland, Oregon. (Ho)

with the economic depression of the 1870s, anti-Chinese sentiment was beginning to escalate as the laborers were being blamed for the country's economic woes. In 1882, the United States passed the Chinese Exclusion Act banning all Chinese laborers into the country exempting diplomats, tourists, merchants,

teachers, and students. Chinese in Canada faced similar exclusion with the establishment of the Chinese Immigration act of 1923 which allowed no more than two dozen Chinese to enter into Canada in the subsequent twenty-four years.

Chinatown communities became economic, political and cultural centers where immigration could find safety, security, sustenance and support to help cope with the hardships imposed by exclusion and discrimination. In these communities, immigrants could receive medical treatment and at the same time, find familiarity and friendship among one another. Chamber of Commerce, as well as, civic and political groups were established to help small business owners and community interaction. Chinese

Benevolent Associations (CBA) were created to address the general needs of the community and to act as representatives and spokes persons. As a result, Chinese businesses were able to flourish, as the Chinatowns became popular locations for tourism and dining.

After World War II, the positive engagement and support of the Chinese helped to shift anti-Chinese sentiment and paved a way for new legislation that would open up Chinese immigration to America. The United States repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943; however, continuing to restrict Chinese immigration to a quota of the entry of 105 immigrants per year. These quotas were finally lifted with the Immigration Act of 1965. Population growth of Chinese in the United States has increased from approximately 725 Chinese in 1970 to 1,645,472 in 1990. Similarly, Canada's revoking of their exclusionary legislation in 1947 allowed for increased entry into the country. A greater influx was evident when Canada's government officially adopted a national ideology of multiculturalism in 1970. Canada has seen their Chinese population rise from 4,383 in 1881 to 586,645 in 1991.¹⁴

Chinese Philosophy and Thought

“Traditions of devotion are central to Chinese and Chinese American life, although religious affiliation and the nature of home traditions may vary.¹⁵” In many households, both young and grown children are instilled with reverence for ancestors. Chinese popular religion is a mix of ancestor worship, animism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Each person can worship multiple gods, each one bringing its own

¹⁴ Transitions: The Changing Profile of New York Chinatown. 1st ed. CD-ROM. New York: Museum of Chinese in the Americas (MOCA), 2001.

¹⁵ Where is Home?: Chinese in the Americas. New York: Museum of Chinese Americans, 2002. p.24.

message and influence in everyday life, each fulfilling a different circumstance or need. In addition, the Chinese may also worship gods come from different religions or beliefs. In this world view, the mortal and immortal are seen as interdependent of each other.

The gods possess supernatural powers, but have common human needs, and must rely on the ritual offerings of human worshippers. The idea of a reciprocal relationship

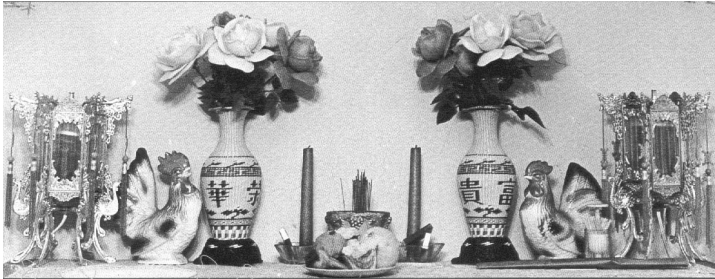


Figure 43. Family altar honoring ancestors. (Where is Home?)

with the nether world also includes ancestral spirits, who look after their descendants.¹⁶

Many households still keep family altars where the

ancestors are honored, others simply rely on photographs. Although these worshipping practices may differ, the ancestors are always held in high regard.

Taoism is seen as a mystical philosophy introduced in the first century B.C. by Lao-Tzu. The Taoist seeks to “become one with Nature, which he calls the *Tao*.¹⁷” The term *Tao* stands for the totality of all things, equivalent to what some Western philosophers have called “the absolute.” It encourages the belief in divination and usage of charms. It also encourages the embrace of many gods. Taoism concentrates of the individual life and tranquility-encompassing the beginnings of all things and the way in which all things pursue their course. When the Tao is possessed by individual things, it

¹⁶ Where is Home?: Chinese in the Americas. New York: Museum of Chinese Americans, 2002. p.25.

¹⁷ Creel, H.G. Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tse-tung. New York: The New American Library of Canada Limited, 1953. p.87.

becomes its character or virtue and thus the ideal life for the individual, the ideal order for society, and the ideal type of government are all based on it and guided by it.¹⁸

Around the Christian era, Buddhism spread from India to China. This philosophy taught the significance of practicing an honorable life at all times-the life was a cycle of celebrated deaths and rebirths, a step toward nirvana. “The Buddha’s image holds a bag containing future happiness

for all. He laughs because he knows, no matter how bad things may look now, how wonderful everything will be in the blessed future.¹⁹”

Among the many ideals of Buddhism, the worshipping of ancestors was also

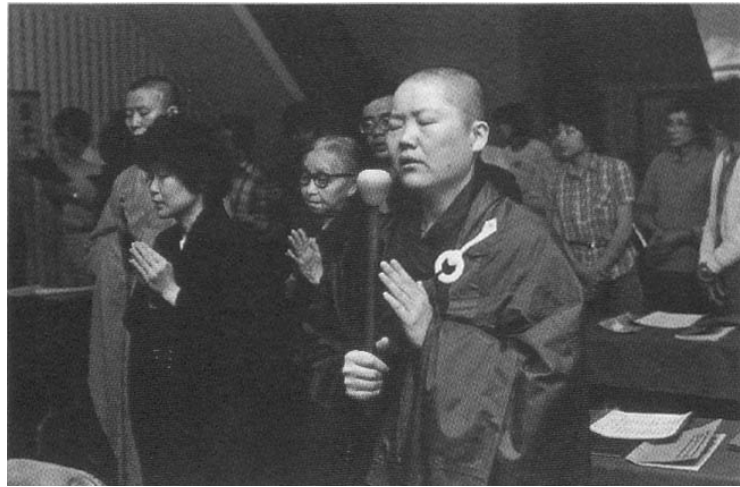


Figure 44. Buddhist monk at a temple in New York. 1965. (Where is Home?)

encouraged. This apparently was a major influence in the honorable perception of the Chinese afterlife, the ancestral community and the living elders.

Confucianism, closely related to ancestor worship, is derived from the teachings of Confucius who lived from 551 to 479 B.C. He taught about *humanism* and that the main purpose in life is to learn how to live with our fellow men.²⁰ He did not talk about spiritual beings or even about life after death. Instead, believing that man ‘can make the

¹⁸ Chan, Wing-Tsit. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. New Hampshire; The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1963. p.136.

¹⁹ Creel, H.G. *Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tse-tung*. New York: The New American Library of Canada Limited, 1953. pp.161-162.

²⁰ Dowdell, Dorothy and Joseph. *The Chinese Helped Build America*. New York: Julian Messner, 1972. p.72.

Way (Tao) great,' and not that 'the Way can make man great,; he concentrated on man. His primary concern was a good society based on good government and harmonious human relations. To this end, he advocated a good government that rules by virtue and moral example rather than by punishment or force. For the family, he particularly stressed filial piety and for society in general, proper conduct or propriety.²¹

In most Chinese and Chinese American families, the Christian religious doctrine exist side-by-side with these Chinese cultural practices. In many cases, Christianity has become the main religion of most Chinese Americans, although some attend the Buddhist or Confucius Churches. Superstitions and symbols of good and bad fortune are still believed in, but taken more lightly.²² "Home religion" and public communal ceremonies endure in a host of customs that preserve the vibrant embellishments of Chinese culture, from Lunar New Year and other seasonal celebrations to the rituals of marriage.

Festivals and Holidays

In 'Old China,' people held festivals to celebrate many different things. They celebrated the changing of seasons and paid respects to their ancestors. In the Chinese calendar, there were no weeks, so there were no Sundays as days of rest, as in the Western world.²³ It was the festivals that gave the people a chance to enjoy themselves by forgetting about the work day.

Although China has adopted the Western solar calendar, all holidays are still based on the lunar calendar, a system based on cycles of the moon. Falling anytime

²¹ Chan, Wing-Tsit. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. New Hampshire; The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1963. pp. 14-15.

²² Dowdell, Dorothy and Joseph. *The Chinese Helped Build America*. New York: Julian Messner, 1972. p.73.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 75.

between January 21 and February 19, the Lunar New Year brings forces of *Yang*, warmth and light, to overcome the forces of *Yin*, cold, dark winter.²⁴ It is a time of celebrating



Figure 45. Lion Dance during the Chinese New Year. (Dowdell)

new beginnings and is probably the most important holiday for the Chinese in the United States. Although customs may vary in each household, it is a time for everyone to chase away bad tidings and usher in good ones. It is celebrated by family reunions, large feasts, gifts of *hong bao/ laih sih* (lucky red envelopes of money) from older generations to younger, unmarried generations, and most importantly, large public festivities along major streets. These often involve fireworks for their properties of light, fire, and noise for signs of vibrant life, parades of Chinese dancers, and the essential Lion Dance.

The Lion Dance is a stylized choreography in which large numbers of performers gather under large paper-mache- and fabric-made lion and dragon sheaths to symbolize

²⁴ Where is Home?: Chinese in the Americas. New York: Museum of Chinese Americans, 2002. pp.29-30.

the mythical stature of these creatures in ancient Chinese thought. The lions were introduced to the Chinese court as acts of tribute from ancient Persia and are seen as symbols of purity and protection. According to legend, it awakens from a year's sleep and appears on earth at the New Year²⁵. The lion can measure to about fifty-feet long. During the New Year, they can be seen in the streets as they are performed for merchants in return for lucky *hong bao/ laih sih*. In addition to the Chinese Lunar New Year, the Lion Dance is performed for occasions such as weddings and grand openings.

Ch'ing Ming, or Pure Brightness Festival, in the spring is Chinese Memorial Day. It is also called the sweeping of the tombs. The oldest member of the family sweeps the graves with willow branches, which are supposed to drive away evil spirits. Families clean the graves and pull up weeds. The dead are honored again at Spirit's Festival, which takes place during the seventh Chinese month. The family visits the cemetery and burns paper money and clothing.²⁶

Feng Shui

The science of *feng shui* is based on principles that synthesize the harmony and balance between the forces of nature and influences of man. These principles play an important role in the creation of the various environments of the Chinese culture. The art of Feng Shui lies in the placement of objects or buildings with reference to a sense of

²⁵ Dowdell, Dorothy and Joseph. The Chinese Helped Build America. New York: Julian Messner, 1972. p.76.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p.76.

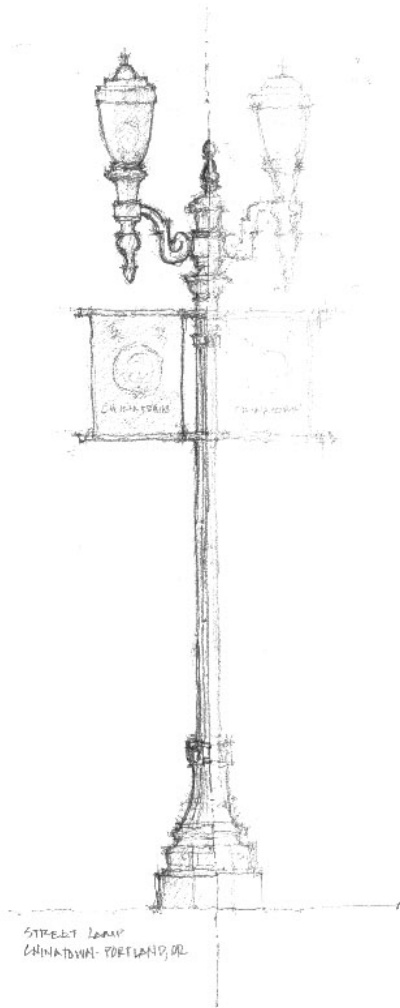
balance, the theory of *yin* (negative) and *yang* (positive), the orientation of the sun, the direction of wind and the flow of water courses.²⁷

In the interpretation of traditional classical architecture, the concept of *yin* and *yang* is expressed in dualism in architecture. Masculine qualities are *yang* and feminine qualities are *yin*. Thus, built-up areas, sun-lit roofs, protruding structures and front elevations are *yang*, and void areas, shadowed eaves, set-back structures and rear elevations are *yin*. When there is too much of *yang* in anything it will turn to *yin* and vice versa, and therefore, will be imbalanced and undesirable. When there is balance in an environment there is *qi* or rejuvenating energy. Thus, it is of vital importance that buildings should be correctly sited, appropriately related to surrounding buildings and balanced in construction materials and design elements.

Today, the practice of *feng shui* in small and large scale buildings is not as common as it used to be in ancient Chinese dwellings and palaces. With the growing number of Chinese American generations, these principles have begun to lose their clarity and understanding of the various aspects of *feng shui*. However, despite the lack of Chinese Americans using *feng shui* in current society, for some reason many non-Asians have begun to follow a current “trend” of combining *feng shui* and dwelling together as one.

²⁷ Lip, Dr. Evelyn. *Feng Shui: Environments of Power: A Study of Chinese Architecture*. Singapore: Academy Group Ltd, 1995. p. 67.

CHAPTER 3:
ARCHITECTURAL THEORY



STREET LAMP
CHINA-TOWN - PORTLAND, OR.

4 JULY, 2009

(Illustrated by author)

Placemaking

“The power of place-the power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizens’ public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory- remains untapped for most working people’s neighborhoods in most American cities, and for most ethnic history...²⁸”

Place is seen as a qualitative, holistic entity which cannot be broken down into its individual properties without losing its concrete nature out of sight. It is more than just location.²⁹

The deterioration of the nation’s Chinatowns is disturbing the nature of the traditional close-knit family unit, contradicting the original notion of a “Chinatown” community. Strong intergenerational ties, language, commercial interests, discrimination, and other factors have kept the Chinatown community tightly knit. The character of Chinatowns should be distinct and relate to the homeland. However, when there is no idea of an identifiable *place* for which people can gather and communicate within a community, then the notion of a “Chinatown” becomes fragmented. Open spaces, stemming from historical, cultural, and geographical factors, have become a primary element in the reintegration and interaction of the multiple generations of Chinese and Chinese Americans around the United States. Unfortunately, Portland’s Chinatown is deficient in providing proper community services, affordable grocery stores, and most importantly, it lacks any type of major public spaces for gathering. The effect of urbanization on this community and the creation of closed- community suburbs

²⁸ Hayden, Dolores. The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1999. p. 9.

²⁹ Norberg-Schulz, Christian. “Phenomenon of Place.” Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture : an Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995. Ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York : Princeton Architectural Press, 1996. p.414

and have negatively impacted all of the generations of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Chinatown. A significant issue that must be addressed is how to create a sense of *place* within an almost barren community. Also, it is important to understand how Portland's Chinatown may be able to regain the valuable culture and history that it once had as recent as twenty years ago.

In his discussion of *Phenomenology*, Christian Norberg-Schulz's talks about the term as a method that urges a 'return to things.' He describes architecture as "the ability to make the environment meaningful through the creation of specific places," or what is

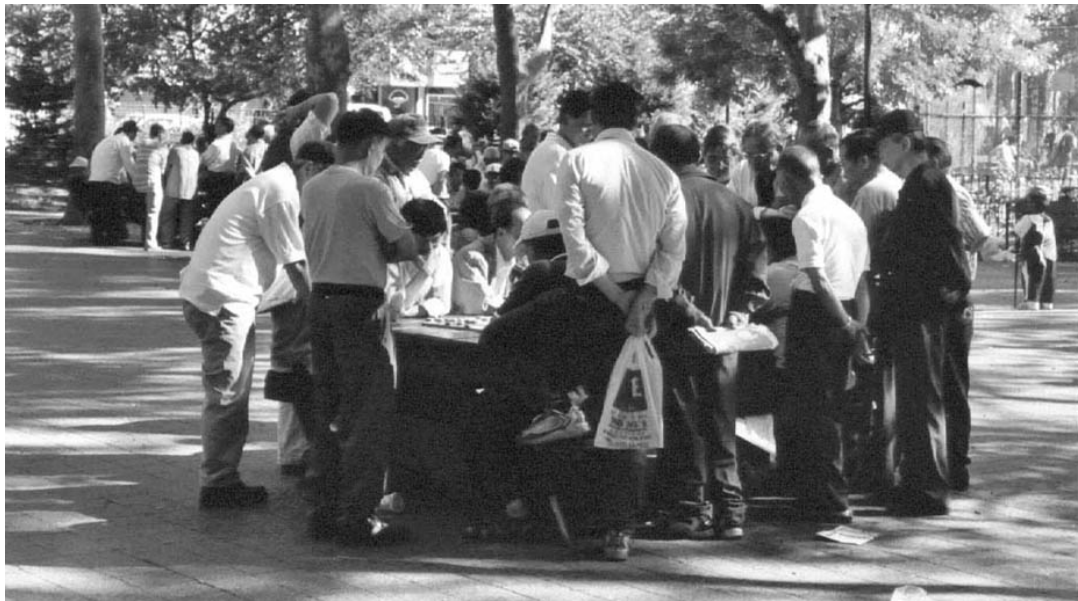


Figure 46. Chinese seniors engaged in a Chinese Chess game at one of six crowded chess tables in New York's Liberty Park. (Photographed by author)

known as *genius loci*.³⁰ These spaces should receive their being from locations and not from the actual physical space and, in addition, they should possess a varying degree of extension and enclosure. Martin Heidegger further emphasizes the idea of place by

³⁰ Norberg-Schulz, Christian. "Phenomenon of Place." *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture : an Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*. Ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York : Princeton Architectural Press, 1996. p.413.

comparing poetry to architecture. He suggests that *place* extends to the greater environment where the sky is the ceiling and the earth is the ground-and idea of inside versus outside.³¹ The combination of these thoughts seems to be well described in the following statement:

“The bridge gathers *being* into a certain ‘location’ that we may call a ‘place.’ This ‘place,’ however, did not exist as an entity before the bridge...The existential purpose of building (architecture) is therefore to make a site become a place, that is, to uncover the meanings potentially present in the given environment.”³²

Chinatown’s urban spaces originally acted as such places that have been described by the previous theorists. These spaces are social gathering places where the Chinese families spend their leisure time to

interact with each other and with friends. For Chinese American elderly, leisure is often viewed as an inseparable part of daily life and serves many functions including the maintenance of ethnic culture and identity.³³



Figure 47. Older Chinese women gathering to play cards in San Francisco’s park. (Photographed by author)

³¹ Norberg-Schulz, Christian. “Phenomenon of Place.” *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture : an Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*. Ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York : Princeton Architectural Press, 1996. p.417-418.

³² *Ibid.* p.423.

³³ Zhang, Tingwei and Gobster, Paul H. “Leisure Preferences and Open Space Needs in an Urban Chinese American Community.” *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 14.4 (Winter, 1998): 341.

These places allow for the older generations to inform their children and grandchildren about their personal stories of history and culture, something that they would not necessarily experience being raised in the United States. In designing an intergenerational housing project, it will be imperative to apply the idea of place through exterior urban spaces, as well as, interior and exterior building and unit spaces. Holistically, these spaces will aid in developing the character of a fading Chinatown.

In most Chinatowns, it is the elderly Chinese and Chinese Americans that remain in the community while the younger generations flee these communities. The older generations thus, are the most stable elements in the constantly changing Chinatowns. For this reason, identification of *place* is important for the Chinese and Chinese



Figure 48. Elderly Chinese shown sitting together as a place of social gathering in New York's Liberty Park. (Photographed by author)

American senior citizens to feel a sense of security and dignity in the spaces that are created within the building and the greater community..

“Man needs to be able to “orient” and “identify” himself with the environment, to feel secure within a place...To belong to a place means to have an existential foothold, in a concrete everyday sense.³⁴” In designing such spaces, it is important to realize that it is not only the physical boundaries of the space that creates a sense of security, but rather it is also the character and richness of the space that can provide for that as well.

Regionalism

Critical Regionalism “proposes *resistance* to the homogenization of the built environment that results from the modernization of product manufacturing and construction techniques.³⁵” This issue of regionalism becomes extremely significant when understanding a site and then sufficiently designing a building to occupy that site. The current state of modern architecture is resulting in an inescapable aesthetic of blandness from which universal design in buildings are made to respond to such quick demand for dwelling spaces. In the same respect, ideas about what may be “authentic” or “traditional” design are becoming so superficial in that the architecture does not respond to the true culture or site any longer. Frampton expresses these concerns when he addresses the issue of the consumer and architecture:

“...the manipulation of the consumer (‘admass seduction’) and the problem of architecture conceived and perceived as fashion (‘individualist forms of narcissism’) or scenography. This commodification of shelter negates local identity and expression.³⁶”

³⁴ Norberg-Schulz, Christian. “Phenomenon of Place.” *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture : an Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*. Ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York : Princeton Architectural Press, 1996. p.423

³⁵ Frampton, Kenneth. “Prospects for a Critical Regionalism.” *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture : an Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*. Ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.p.468.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p.468.

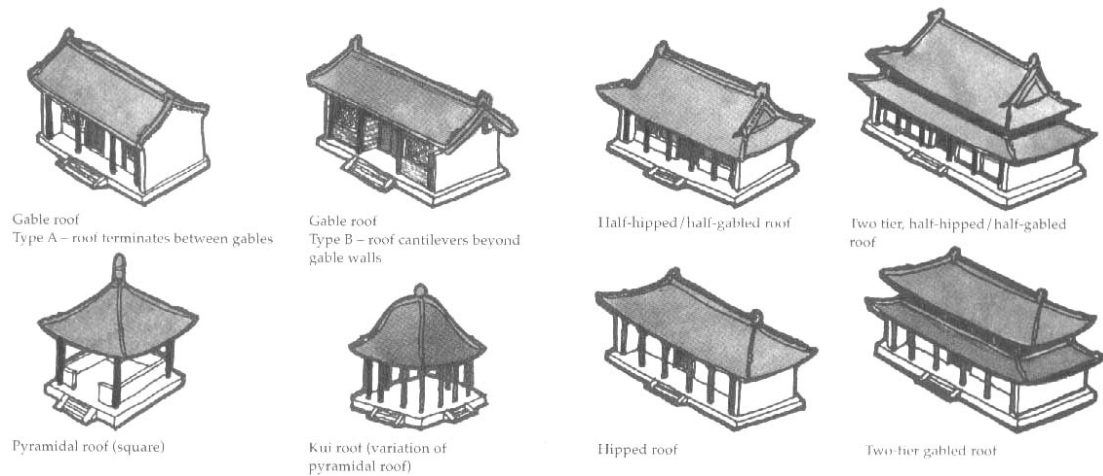


Figure 49. “Traditional” Chinese architecture that is often reproduced in modern neighborhoods in an attempt to truly represent ethnic aesthetics and space planning. (Lip)

Frampton continues to note that ‘authentic architecture,’ would be based on two essential aspects of architecture: an understanding of place, and tectonics. The use of local materials and craftsmanship, and responsiveness to light and climate are points that promote architecture that is spatial and experiential, rather than image-oriented. In addition, he seeks an architecture “with the capacity to condense the artistic potential of the region while reinterpreting cultural influences coming from the outside.³⁷” The responsibility to create designs that utilize these concepts and that are truly responsive to the environment and the community lies in the hands of the architectural design field. Unfortunately, architects often forget the significant impact, both negative and positive, that they create in each community they touch.

It seems that there is an ever-increasing trend of American architects who create “traditional” buildings in ethnic urban areas, such as, Chinatown. However, the issue of

³⁷ Frampton, Kenneth. “Prospects for a Critical Regionalism.” *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture : an Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*. Ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996. p.468.

regionalism is reintroduced when attempting to understand what really is “traditional” when understanding a buildings place in a community. In Portland’s Chinatown, there



Figure 50. The streetlamps of are among the only reminders in this neighborhood that is a Chinatown. (Photographed by author)

are red streetlamps that line the streets and Chinese restaurants that have curved eaves of bold green, red, and gold. There is the Chinese garden which is the only public space in the community; however, that requires an admission fee. The intentions of these elements, buildings, and spaces were, by assumption, supposed to ‘make’ this place feel like “China.” Unfortunately the result is

just the opposite. Instead, this community seems to be composed of an eclectic collection of tourist attractions and *disneyesque* ornamentation, lacking

a large population of Chinese and Chinese Americans.

To understand the creation of Chinatowns, one needs to analyze the true meaning of the idea of *placemaking* within the idea of regionalism. The history of the Chinatowns is significantly based on the composition of building uses and public spaces, rather than building aesthetic. The neighborhood people would rely on affordably priced stores that would sell the essential necessities from herbs and tea, to clothing and groceries-reflecting cities back in China. Moreover, current modern cities in China are not built of “traditional” temples and houses, but rather they seem to be characterized more so by the modern industrialized city. Instead of relying on building aesthetics, Portland’s Chinatown would greatly benefit by implementing the much needed businesses, housing,

and public spaces. This would seem to produce a sufficient base from which the Chinese and Chinese Americans might be more inclined to live in without the feeling of living in a 'false' environment.

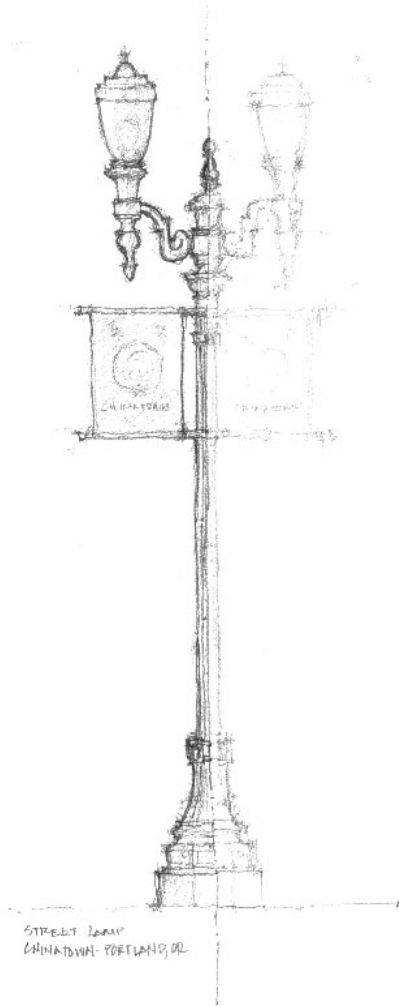


Figure 51. Tuck Lung Grocery and Restaurant (1977) in Portland's Chinatown attempts to portray 'authenticity' of Chinese culture through elevation. Its disneyesque appearance only reflects the true use of the building-a tourist attraction. (Chinatown Historic District)



Figure 52. Murals used as placemaking tools in San Francisco's Chinatown. These successfully provide 'character' without excessive embellishment of Chinese cultural aesthetics. (Photographed by author)

CHAPTER 4:
PRECEDENT STUDIES



STREET LAMP
CHINA-TOWN - PORTLAND, OR.

4 JULY, 2009

(Illustrated by author)

Urban Streets in Other Chinatowns

In every successful Chinatown, there is always a distinctive virtue of the value of urban form. In this case, it is the composition of building and street use that activates these towns. The streets become engaged with their structures to pull the community out of their protective shelters and into the social atmosphere that they conceive. What is amazing is that these bustling spaces are generated from small-scale, privately-owned grocery stores and markets that extend from inside the building and out to the sidewalks to grab the passer-by's attention. They sell a wide variety of goods, from cheap Chinese vegetables and fresh livestock to herbal medicines and teas. These are extremely difficult to get in any grocery store in the American city, for such low prices and such accessibility. For most Chinese and Chinese Americans, it is important to be able to have Chinese foods and products within reasonable access in order to provide for the often elaborate large families meals.

In many Chinatowns, the first generation Chinese has never been able to obtain a driver's license. In these cases, the need to have these amenities close by becomes more of a necessity. The cheaper prices of products that these stores offer reflect the markets and stores in China that the Chinese are used to. In turn, Chinese Americans, although raised in the United States, still face the same concerns. Probably most detrimental to the survival of Portland's Chinatown is that it lacks any type of the affordable retail stores.



Figure 53. Sidewalk extension of grocery stores in San Francisco's Chinatown selling dried foods, fresh fruits and vegetables, and roasted whole pigs and chicken adds to the character of Chinatown. (Photographed by author)

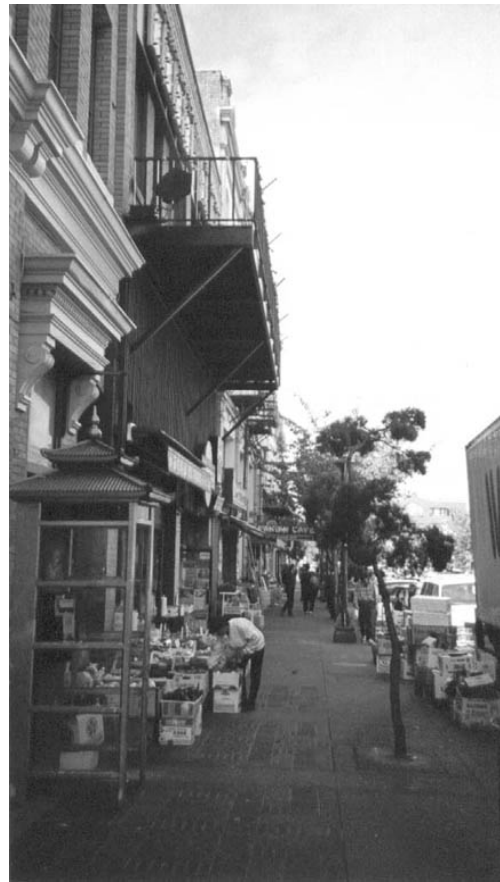
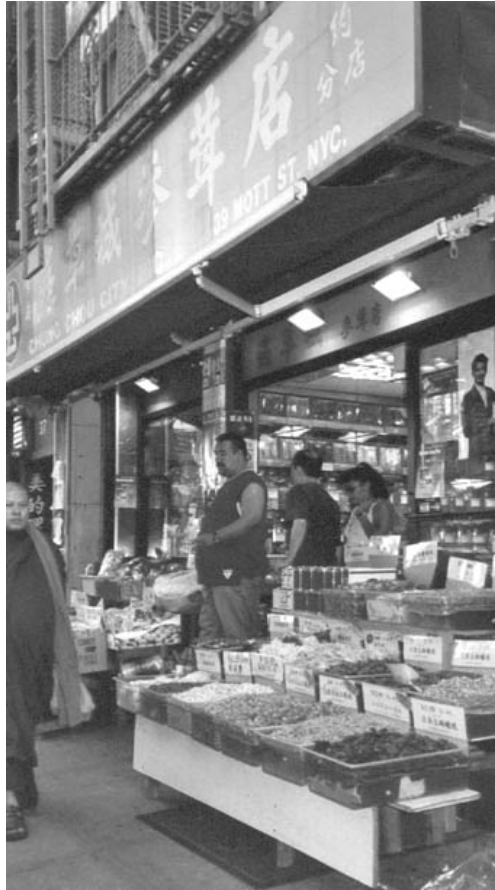


Figure 54. New York (left) and Victoria, BC (right) Chinatown Grocery Stores extending to sidewalk are also good examples of activating the street. (Photographed by author)

Urban Spaces in Other Chinatowns

Urban spaces as outdoor communal “rooms” are also significant in activating the Chinese community. In cities such as New York and San Francisco, their Chinatowns offer a main large outdoor plaza among many smaller outdoor spaces. These parks act as social gathering spaces where the elderly can socialize while watching the younger generations in the playgrounds. Often times, these are places of recreation, where the elderly gather in groups to play Chinese Chess or play card games. Younger generations often occupy themselves by engaging in sports such as tennis or basketball. Regardless of the activities, these spaces provide settings for discussions of culture and history. They allow for places where each generation can relax and interact.



Figure 55. Plaza in Seattle’s Chinatown. Although this large space is provided for its residents, because of the lack of furniture, it does not seem to fulfill its intention. (Photographed by author)



Figure 56. Portsmouth Square in San Francisco consists of various tiers providing for ample seating and children's playgrounds. (Photographed by author)



Figure 57. Portsmouth Square in San Francisco continues to be an outdoor “living room” to its residents. (Photographed by author)



Figure 58. Liberty Park in New York is a large gathering place where the elderly gather to play chess and sing opera amongst friends. They also come and enjoy watching the young children play in the adjacent playground, and teenagers play basketball and tennis in the courts next to the space. (Photographed by author)

Traditional Chinese Housing Typology

Understanding the basic building typologies of the Chinese region and culture is essential in understanding how the daily activity of family lifestyle is accommodated through building circulation and spaces. The traditional Chinese housing type can simply be described through a system of courtyard and building, whose spaces interact with each other, often housing similar functions. The courtyard has always played a significant role

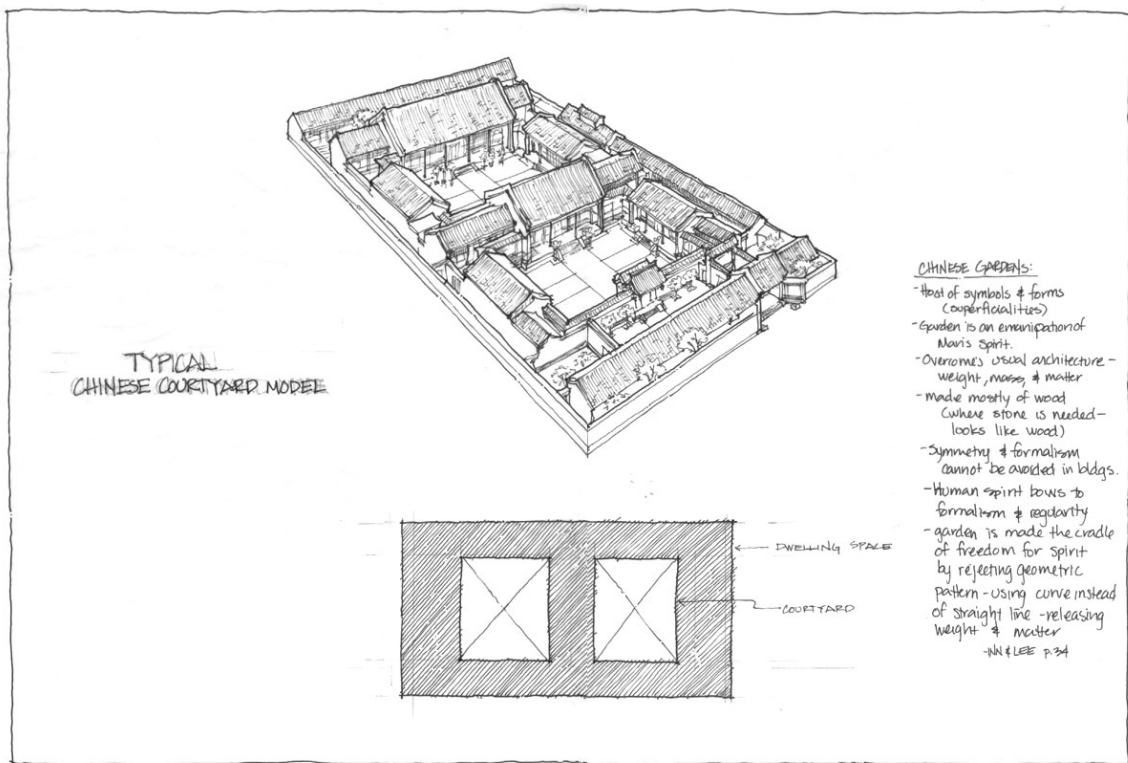


Figure 59. Traditional Chinese Housing Type: Courtyard. (Illustrated by author)

Chinese architecture as it serves the multiple purposes of providing privacy, ventilation, and light. The number of courtyards within a building and the accompanying sense of privacy and space reflect the importance of the building and the social status of the

occupants. This courtyard concept can be classified according to symmetry, axial



Figure 60. Interiors of Courtyards within the Complexes. (Chinese Houses)

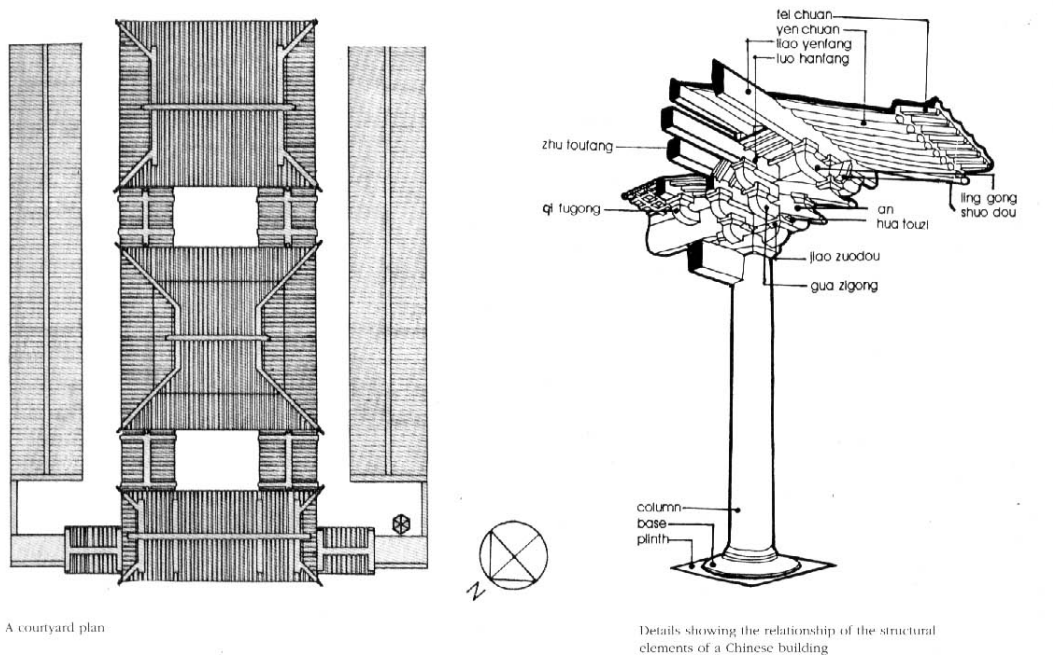
planning, north/south orientation and walled enclosure, or formation with a front courtyard. Chinese plans may be rectangular, square, round, or a combination of geometric shapes.³⁸ In contrast, the Chinese culture views the garden as the emancipation of man's spirit. The courtyard, or the garden, thus often rejects the geometric patterns of straight lines and uses curved lines as a physical and/or symbolic release of weight and matter.³⁹

The idea of construction and structure plays a major role in traditional Chinese architecture, as well. The abundance of timber in China makes it the most popular material used for construction of low-rise buildings. Moreover, with the high incidence of earthquakes in China it was found to be the most suitable material. This type of material would allow for flexibility of joints. Three basic systems of construction methods were ultimately developed were the post and beam system (most commonly used), the column and tie beam system, and the log cabin system.⁴⁰

³⁸ Lip, Dr. Evelyn. *Feng Shui: Environments of Power: A Study of Chinese Architecture*. Singapore: Academy Group Ltd, 1995. p. 25.

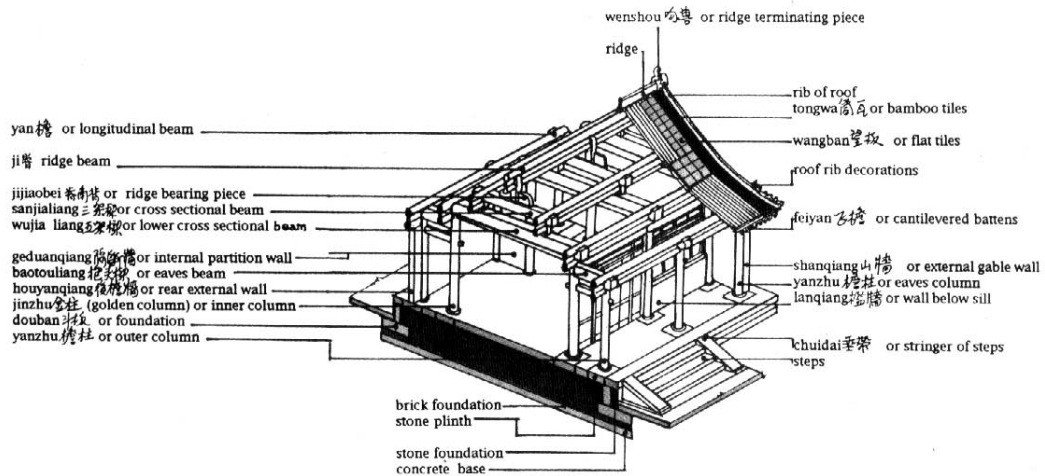
³⁹ Inn, Henry and Lee, S.C. *Chinese Houses and Gardens*. London: Kegan Paul, 2001.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p.25.



A courtyard plan

Details showing the relationship of the structural elements of a Chinese building



Three-dimensional drawing of the structural post, roof, wall and foundation

Figure 61. Courtyard plan, details of structural elements in composition (Chinese Houses)

Precedent for Housing Accommodating an Asian Population

555 Ellis Street, San Francisco, CA
Asian Neighborhood Design
Orsee Design (Landscape Architect)

Affordable Family Housing
122 units/acre

Studio (3 units at 500sf)
Studio + loft (6 units at 420sf + loft)
2-BR (10 units at 800-850sf)
3-BR (19 units at 1,000-1,120sf)
4-BR (6 units at 1,200sf)
Total Units: 38

Community: 1,875sf (7 community rooms)
Courtyard: 4,280 + 1,200 roof deck
Commercial: 1,017sf
Parking: 10 spaces, garage
Total site area: 13,517sf (.31 acres)⁴¹



Figure 62. Street Elevation of 555 Ellis Street Housing complex. (Jones, Pettus, and Pyatok)

The housing complex on 555 Ellis Street is an affordable housing family complex in San Francisco, California. It was developed to accommodate for a constantly increasing influx of recent immigrants from Asian countries in this area. The major draw to this site is the excellent public transportation, proximity to downtown and a public park, and new recreation center across the street. The building consists of mainly two- and three-bedroom units for families. It also includes nine studio apartments for single adults and couples.⁴²

⁴¹ Jones, Tom, Pettus, William, and Pyatok, Michael. Good Neighbors: Affordable Family Housing. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995. p.109.

⁴² *Ibid.* p. 108.

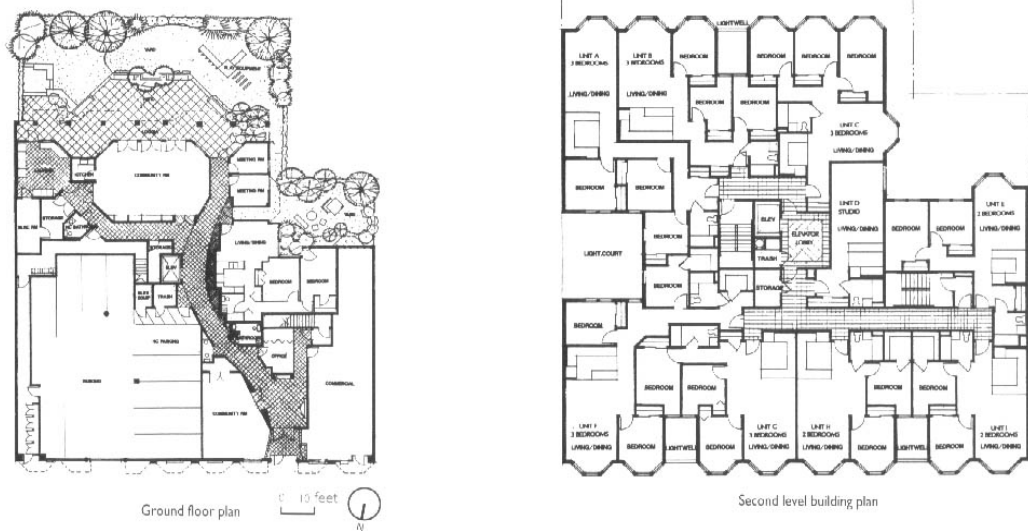


Figure 63. 555 Ellis Street Housing: Ground Floor Plan and First Floor Plan. (Jones, Pettus, and Pyatok)

The mixed-use project uses community functions to activate the ground floor and engage the residents. The designers have incorporated a large courtyard for the residents—a space that is extremely essential when housing Asian residents. The courtyard is

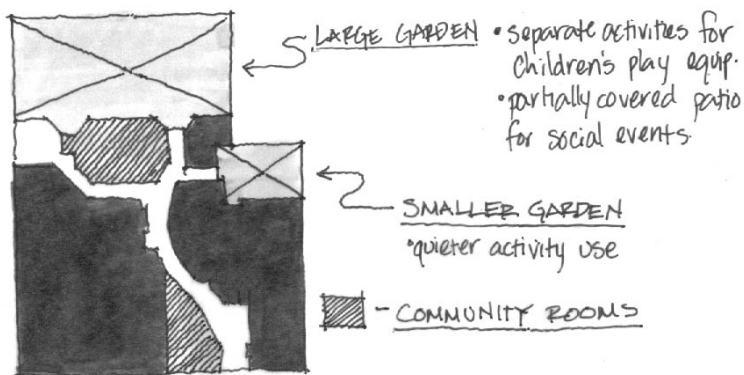


Figure 64. Diagram-Courtyard spaces and Community rooms. (Illustrated by author)

divided into two main spaces: a larger garden for more public social gatherings and children's play areas, while a smaller courtyard accommodates quieter activities. In addition to the outdoor spaces, there are two interior community/recreation rooms that play major roles in the social activities that relate to the Chinese cultural traditions. At ground level, the project also consists of commercial retail stores that



Figure 65. Interior Views of Community Rooms. (Jones, Pettus, and Pyatok)

showcase designs by residents on a rotating basis. This seems to successfully blend the activation of the street frontage using both building use and aesthetics. Not only does this engage the passerby, it also allows for the residents to feel a sense of pride and commitment to the building.

In consideration of the site location, the architects dealt with issues of building context, street frontage, and opportunities for light and air exposure. To address the park which sits across from the site, the building mass is set back at the top to allow for sunlight to reach into the space. This is a very important factor when understanding how a building will be situated on a space. In addition this, the setback also allows for multiple views of

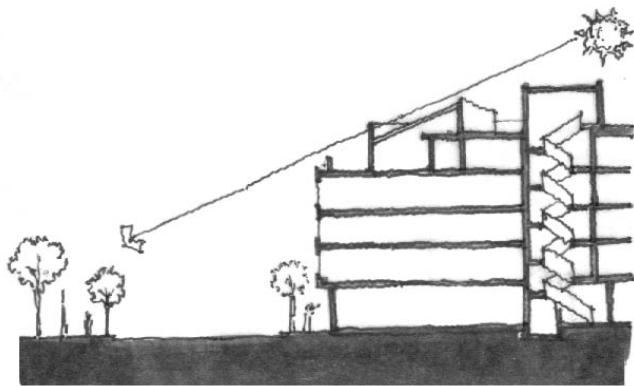


Figure 66. Section showing building slope that allows for light to hit the park across the street. (Jones, Pettus, and Pyatok)

the garden from the bedroom units. Along this edge, the building also uses the composition of repeating elevation bays to break up the front elevation and activate the

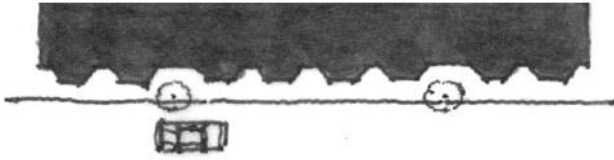


Figure 67. Diagram-Elevation bays provide for variation along the street frontage. (Illustrated by

street front. This maximizes the amount of square footage of the site, without having to sacrifice any buildable area by creating multiple

volumes. Last, it is also very important to observe the individual unit layout. The standard three-bedroom unit is designed in such a way that each bedroom can have access to light and air by placing light wells between the elevation bays. The rather simple plan of the unit retains the living room as the main space, an idea that is similar to the courtyard element. This space is significant for private family functions and gatherings for the Chinese and Chinese Americans. The placement of the living room also allows for ample light and air to be able to circulate throughout the apartment.

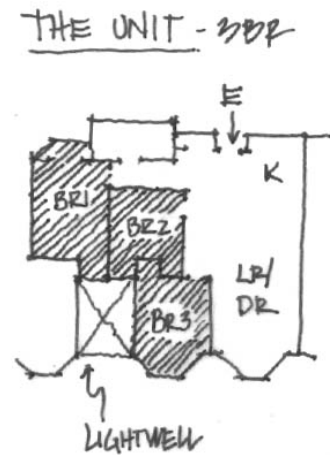


Figure 68. Diagram-3-bedroom unit plan. (Illustrated by author)

Multi-generational Housing Precedent

Frank G. Mar Community Housing, Oakland, CA
MacDonald Architects
Gee Architects-Assoc.Arch. for Constr. Observation

Affordable Family Housing
Family 55/Senior 270 units/acre

1-BR (51 units at 500sf)
2-BR (35 units at 800sf)
3-BR (27 units at 1,000sf)
4-BR (6 units at 1,200sf)
Total Units: 119

Community laundry: 1,100sf
Courtyard/play: 14,000sf
Commercial: 12,500sf
Parking: 310 (200 public) 94,700sf
Total site area: 39,700sf⁴³



Figure 69. Frank G. Mar Community Housing exterior. (Jones, Pettus, and Pyatok)

The Frank G. Mar Community Housing project in Oakland, California addresses the need for Oakland's growing population of Asian families by providing large three- and four-bedroom apartments to accommodate an influx of large families. There are 119



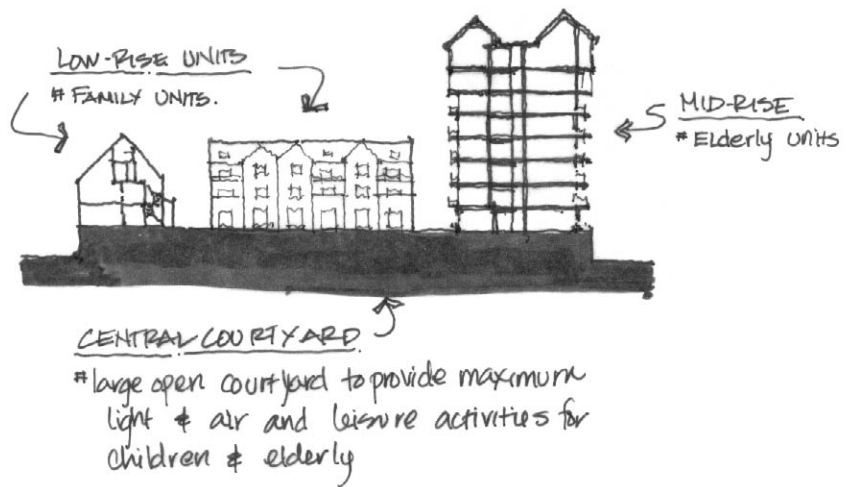
Figure 70. Frank G. Mar Housing: Elevation and Section. (Jones, Pettus, and Pyatok)

⁴³ Jones, Tom, Pettus, William, and Pyatok, Michael. Good Neighbors: Affordable Family Housing. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995. p.113.

units placed above commercial space and two levels of parking garage. To keep from projecting the image of a large housing project, the architects of this project sought to give the development a sense of individuality through gable roofs and varied heights of the building masses to provide a ‘village-like’ appearance.

The building is also broken down into three masses: two are dedicated to low-rise townhouses for larger families and one is a mid-rise building that accommodates for elderly residents. A

large central courtyard is located between the buildings as a public space for the residents. The courtyard element also allows a



maximum amount of

Figure 71. Diagram-Building mass variations. (Illustrated by author)

light and air to enter each of the building masses. The courtyard also allows for security of small children during the day and quiet for seniors later in the day. At a smaller scale, each of the 54 units of the designed townhouses has separate entrances, eliminating the need for double-loaded corridor and allowing for natural light and ventilation⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Jones, Tom, Pettus, William, and Pyatok, Michael. Good Neighbors: Affordable Family Housing. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995. pp.112-115.

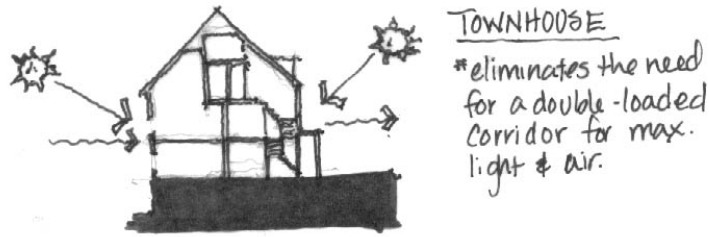


Figure 72. Diagram-The townhouse units accommodate larger families and provide for light and air. (Drawn by author).

At grade, Frank G. Mar Community Housing Parking for the residents is provided on three floors, two levels are underground and one is on the ground floor. By placing

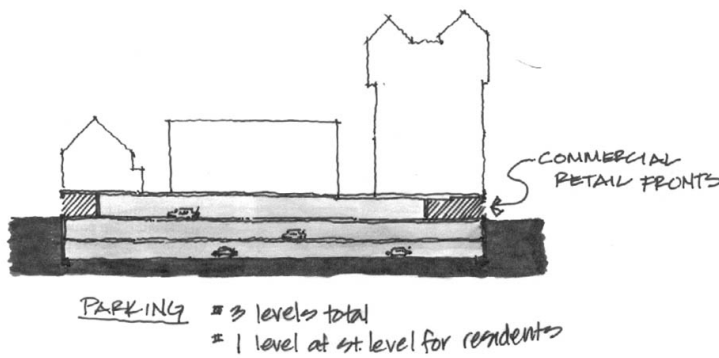


Figure 73. Diagram-retail frontage and parking levels. (Illustrated by author)

parking at grade level, the building complex is raised off of the ground floor. This disengages the residents from the street level and provides for additional privacy to the residential units above. There is also commercial space that is used to activate the ground plane for street frontage and pedestrian accommodation.

Housing Precedent

Cascade Court Apartments, Seattle, WA
GGLO Architecture and Interior Design

Affordable Family Housing
151 units/acre

Studio (39 units at 400sf)
1-BR (35 units at 600sf)
2-BR (14 units at 740sf)
3-BR (12 units at 1,200sf)
Total Units: 100

Courtyard/play: 13,309sf
Parking: 138 spaces
Office/lobby: 9,400sf
Total site area: 28,827sf (.66 acres)⁴⁵



Figure 74. Cascade Court Apartment exterior view. (Jones, Pettus, and Pyatok)

The Cascade Court Apartments in Seattle, Washington is an affordable housing project that consists of 151 units for families of lower incomes. It accommodates for a very diverse clientele by providing for multiple unit types, ranging from studios to three-bedroom apartments. The mid-rise, five-story building is built entirely of wood-frame. This factor added to the regional economic advantage of wood and also was important in determining the building's scale. Also significant is the success of the project within a deteriorating neighborhood. The attractive qualities of the housing complex have significantly reduced the amount of crime in the neighborhood.

⁴⁵ Jones, Tom, Pettus, William, and Pyatok, Michael. Good Neighbors: Affordable Family Housing. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995. p. 117.

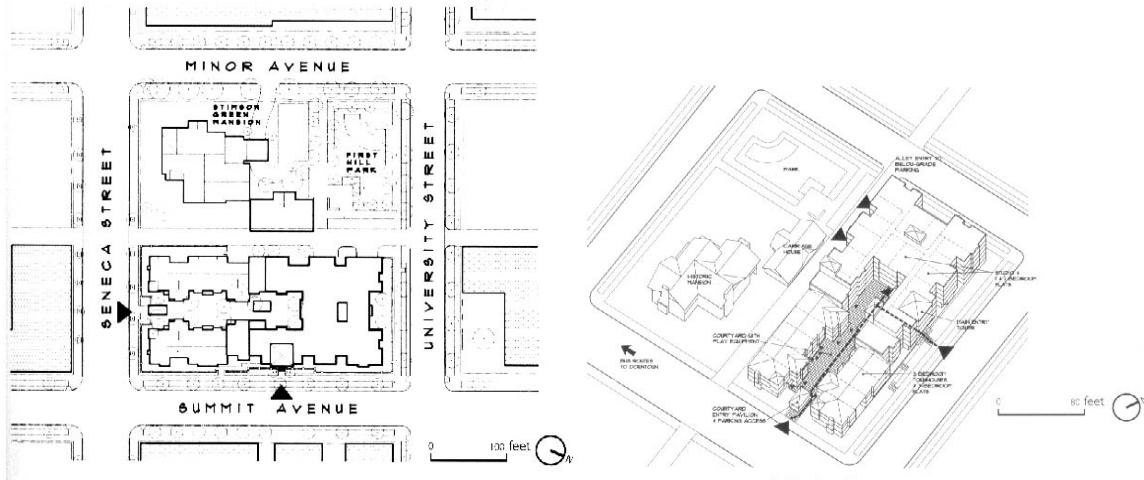


Figure 75. Cascade Court Apartments: Site plan and axon. (Jones, Pettus, and Pyatok)

The primary issue that this project had to deal with was its contribution to a historic context. With older historic buildings occupying the site, the project approached

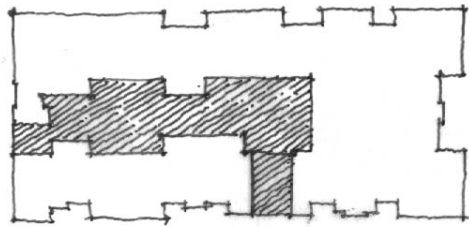


Figure 76. Diagram-Courtyard of the Cascade Court Apartments. (Illustrated by author)

the design by being sensitive to the context, rather than intruding the neighborhood. One approach to addressing this issue is through the use of the courtyard. By placing it at the center of the development and penetrating it through the western edge, the courtyard is able

to divide the façade into two pieces, breaking down scale to relate to neighboring historic mansion.

The Cascade Court Apartment development is divided into two main building types-townhouses and apartments. The south side of the site consists of three-story townhouses which allow for increased light and air exposures. Adjacent to these townhouses, the large central courtyard includes a major play area for the children to

accommodate for these larger families.⁴⁶ To the north, there are five-story flats, along with a smaller courtyard that provides a setting for more quiet activities for the residents.

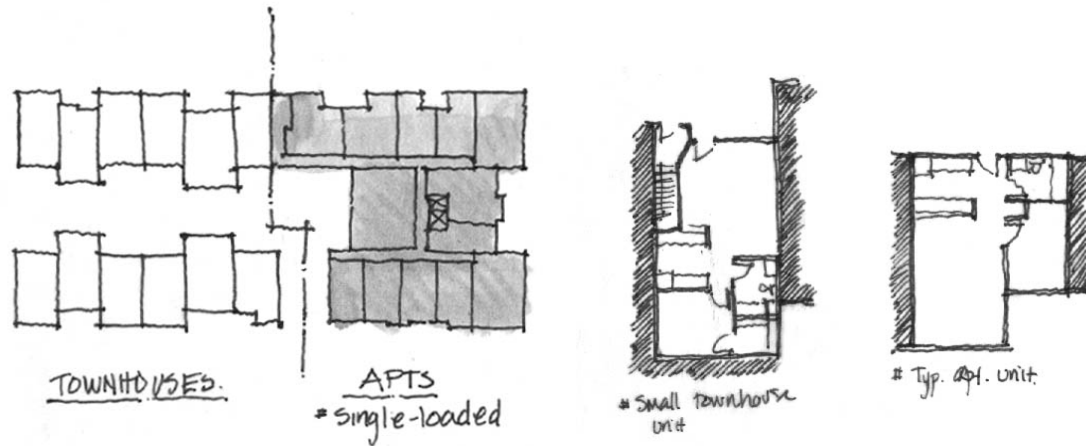


Figure 77. Diagram-Townhouse and Apartment building types and unit design. (Illustrated by author)

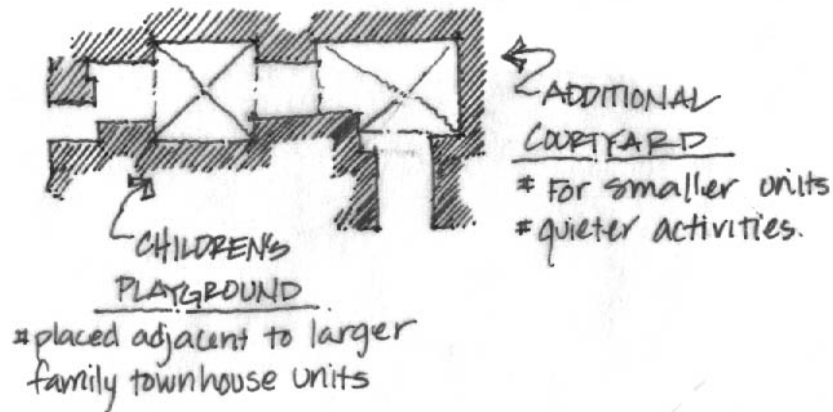


Figure 78. Diagram-Courtyard functions. (Illustrated by author)

⁴⁶ Jones, Tom, Pettus, William, and Pyatok, Michael. Good Neighbors: Affordable Family Housing. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995. pp. 116-119.

Elderly Housing Precedent

Housing for the Elderly, Diemen, The Netherlands
Mecanoo Architecten

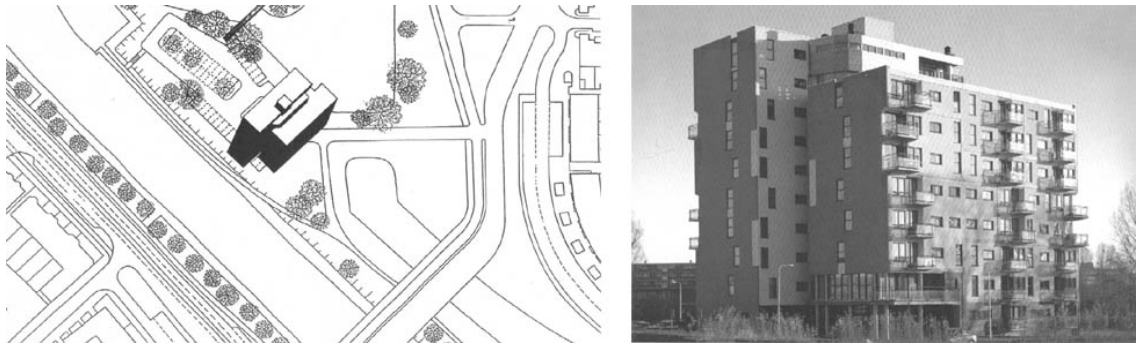


Figure 79. Diemen Housing: Site plan and Exterior View. (Mostaedi)

The Housing for the Elderly in Diemen is an independent living project for the elderly. Its orientation to the water, bridge, and significant views were primary design guides when developing this building. It is composed to two main masses, one is seven-stories high and the other is nine encompassing a total of 47 units.

In addressing the needs of the clients, this building focused on issues of orientation, light and air, and universal design and access. Outdoor spaces were a major consideration for the design. It is important to provide spaces for the elderly who spend most of their time indoors. For example, an outdoor area on eighth floor was created to take advantage of the views of Amsterdam skyline. Also, each unit has ample window area and a balcony space. Light and air

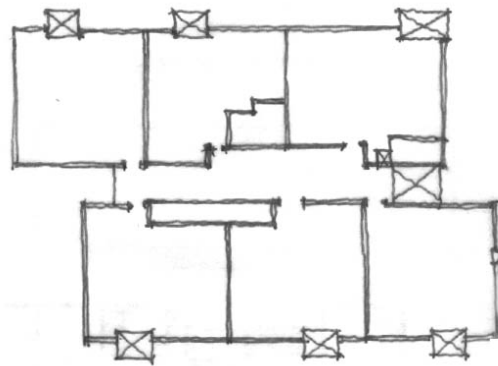


Figure 80. Diagram-Balcony spaces in each unit. (Illustrated by author)

exposure is also a key concern when designing elderly housing. By shifting the two masses slightly, the circulation areas and apartments located at the ends receive a great

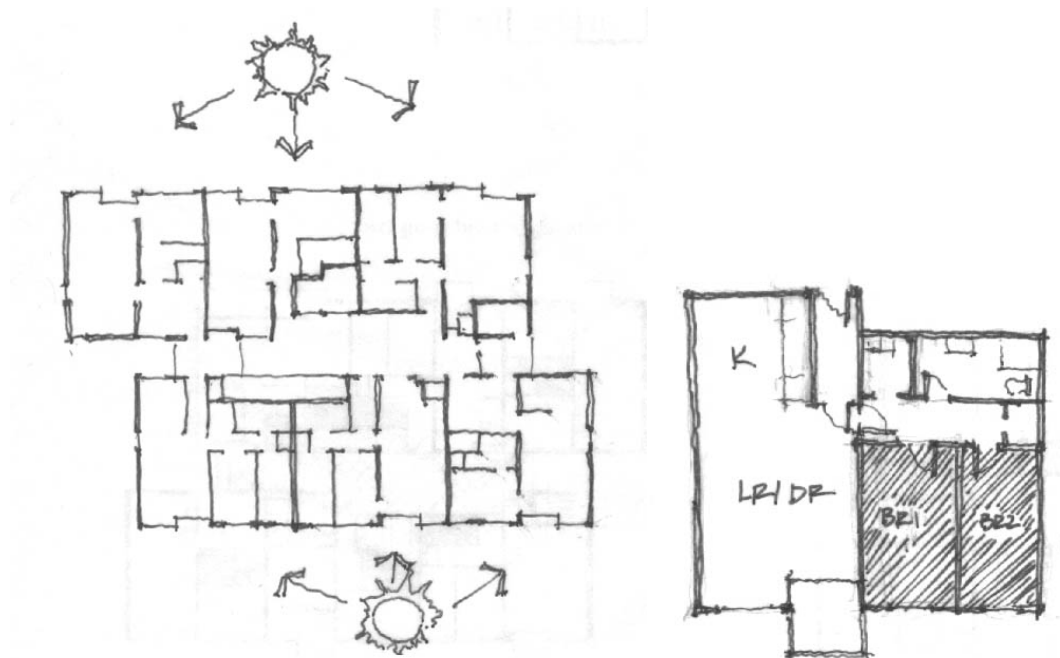


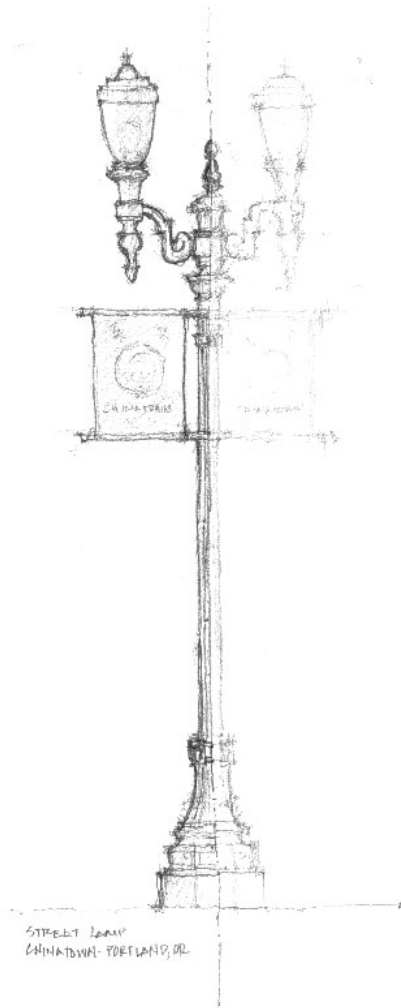
Figure 81. Diagram-Light and air exposure in typical floor plans. (Illustrated by author)

amount of natural light. The vast amount of glazing in this building allow for light to reach the interior circulation as much as it penetrates the individual units.



Figure 82. Interior Views of Circulation Spaces. (Mostaedi)

CHAPTER 5:
FUNCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PROGRAM



STREET LAMP
CHINA TOWN - PORTLAND, OR.

4 JULY, 2007

(Illustrated by author)

Who are the Users?

The most successful tool in designing a building is in understanding its intended users. Knowing their needs and wants is important when designing spaces that will contribute to the greater whole of the project, now and in the future. There can be four target groups identified for this project. They can be categorized as the following: Chinese American Youth (ages 21 and below); Chinese American Starter- and Established-Families (ages 22-64); Chinese American Elderly (ages 65 and older); and First Generation Chinese (those who were born in China and immigrated to the United States).

The 'age 21 and below' group of Chinese Americans are those youth who have the greatest opportunities for benefiting from interaction with older generations of Chinese and Chinese Americans and also from educational programs. This particular age group is still young and impressionable. They are still experiencing various stages in their life in which they are searching for an *identity*. The *21 and under* age group will be able to develop knowledge of Chinese culture and history that is so difficult to obtain thoroughly in the western school system. Moreover, it is a remarkable phenomenon when grandparents and grandchildren can bond on a continuous basis. There is nothing more sacred or more influential than the nurturing and support of the tight-knit Chinese family unit that needs to be emphasized in this project.

The Chinese American Starter- and Established-Families (ages 22-64) represent the largest group of second and third generation Chinese in the United States. Many of the people in this age group have grown up with first generation parents and have

experienced the difficulties of living in households where eastern and western cultures clash (the generation gap). Many of them grew up in the United States at a time when the Chinese culture was still very foreign to non-Asians. They were seen as outcasts and were still discriminated against and were unable to have such opportunities as today's youth has. As this generation is getting older, most of them are beginning to have children. Thus, there is an increasing desire to be able to share the significance of the Chinese culture with these youth, something that will be extremely difficult with successive generations.

The Chinese American Elderly (ages 65 and older) are those who are becoming grandparents, and may be considering living among the younger generations and others within the same age group for social interaction. They may be those elderly who are living in suburbs and wanting to return to a place where they can be among people of similar cultures and have easier access to public ethnic amenities.

Some of these elderly may require assisted living facilities. This population may face difficulties such as: inability to reach; loss of reserve capacity of organs and systems; increased tendency to fall; decline in sensory input and maintaining body temperature; incontinence; immobility; and mental frailty. There is an emphasis in the need for privacy of daily activities, life-style, and of thought. In addition, the units should be designed in such a way that independence and freedom of mobility should be provided. The temperature should be warm enough to allow for maximum comfort. Most importantly, due to reduced sensory skills and tendency to be confined to the unit, light is an extremely significant design consideration for each unit. In addition, since

Portland has such a high percentage of overcast days per year, architecture in this area, in general, tends to be constructed with mass expanses of glazing.

The final group is the *First Generation Chinese*, or those who were born in China and later immigrated to the United States. This group is particularly significant in stabilizing and educating the community. It is also important that the proper amenities are provided in order to accommodate this group. Affordable markets and public spaces for social gatherings becomes an essential for this group. This group is often inhibited to assimilate into the western culture, often because it is too difficult or by choice. Therefore, it is important that this community provides a setting where people who have just immigrated to the United States can feel comfortable.

Design Approach

The design of this project will address the deficiencies of the existing site and attempt to provide solutions that will aid in unifying the Chinatown community. It will focus on the building uses and relationship to the existing context. Most importantly, it is important to develop a design that will create a reason for the Chinese and Chinese American community to return to this once thriving community.

There exists a need to activate the ground plane in order to create a viable and prosperous development. Through a mix of commercial business, community programs, and housing, this project will aim to provide for services for all age groups to understand and develop their sense of identity within the Chinese culture. It will provide for

educational programs where the younger generation Chinese Americans, as well as, non-Asians can learn about the various aspects of the Chinese traditions and culture.

Garden and courtyard spaces will be essential in designing an intergenerational housing complex, both large- and small-scale. Currently, there is a void of any type of public spaces in the urban context of Portland's Chinatown. Additionally, there is no strong relationship to the waterfront which is only two blocks to the east of the site. Public green spaces will have to be designed into the larger urban plan. This will aim to increase the amount of connections of buildings and spaces, thus providing a sense of cohesion within the neighborhood. The Chinese Garden is currently controlled by paid admittance, making the park more of a tourist attraction than a public space. The project will consider making this park into a public amenity for leisure activities. It will also be important to introduce some form of public space within the complex. This will accommodate for the residents of the complex to interact and communicate. It is essential in providing the nurturing of the Chinese culture among a westernized generation of Chinese.

The overall design considerations of the complex will deal with a maximum exposure of light and air. Portland experiences seventy-five percent of overcast days every year. This leads to increased cases of depression among its residences. For this reason, larger windows and single-loaded corridors are major elements in preventing such conditions. Also, with large overhangs to deter rain from entering the building and a very temperate climate in which it is situated, there is an opportunity to make this building relatively free of air-conditioning needs, unless absolutely necessary.

Program Tabulation

Total Site Area-20,000sf

100	Community Program		27,650sf
101	Entry Lobby		400sf
102	Reception/ Security Control Area		600sf
103	Community Lounge		1,200sf
104	Mail Room		150sf
105	Small Meeting Rooms (2 @ 700sf each)		1,400sf
106	Large Meeting/Community Rooms (1 @ 1,000sf each)		1,000sf
107	All-Purpose Room/ Youth Recreation Center		1,000sf
108	Public Courtyard Space		19,600sf
109	Kitchen		700sf
110	Dining Room		1,000sf
111	Restrooms (4 @ 150sf each)		600sf
200	Administration Program		1,000sf
201	Resident Services Director (Marketing)		250sf
202	Accounting		150sf
203	Manager		250sf
204	Activities Director		250sf
205	Monitors		100sf
300	Healthcare		1,100sf
301	Nursing Office		300sf
302	Physical Therapy Office		200sf
303	Exercise Room		600sf
400	Housing Program	28,520	69,800
401	Guest Rooms (4 @ 500sf each)	2,000sf	2,000sf
		<u>min.40 units</u>	<u>max. 100 units</u>
402	Assisted Living Units (15% @ 500sf)	6,000sf	15,000sf
403	1-BR Units (40% @ 600sf each)	7,200sf	18,000sf
404	2-BR Units (25% @ 800sf each)	6,400sf	16,000sf
405	3-BR Units (20% @ 1,000sf each)	6,000sf	15,000sf
500	Parking		
	5 Spaces for staff, can be on-street parking		
	1.5 Parking Space per apartment shall be provided for (with exception to assisted living units) in addition to on-street parking		

Mechanical and Circulation 15% of total net sf	6,625sf	12,818sf
<hr/>		
Total Gross Square Footage	50,795sf	98,268sf

Program Description

100 Community Program 27,650sf

101 Entry Lobby 400sf

Located near easy access drop-off points, this room must allow for places to wait and sit for residents and visitors.

102 Reception/ Security Control Area 600sf

It will include desk area for receptionist and closed area for security.

103 Community Lounge 1,200sf

This room needs to be large enough to accommodate large family gatherings in the event that the community rooms are in use.

104 Mail Room 150sf

105 Small Meeting Rooms (2 @ 700sf each) 1,400sf

These rooms should fit up to 20 persons and be available for use by the local Chamber of Commerce and Chinese Benevolent Associations to conduct meetings, hold classes, or provide community services.

106 Large Meeting/Community Rooms (1 @ 1,000sf each) 1,000sf

This room needs to be large enough to accommodate large family gatherings on a fairly consistent basis. It is customary that an entire family visit their elderly as a

unit, rather than individually. It is also common that a family visit as much as possible to care for their relatives.

107 All-Purpose Room/ Youth Recreation Center 1,000sf

This room would be used for after-school activities and classes for the younger generations to study their culture and to interact with seniors who might volunteer to help.

108 Public Courtyard Space 19,600sf

This space will be a rather large outdoor space that will provide places to sit and contemplate, play games, or even do Tai Chi in the mornings. There will be smaller spaces within this that will have large potters where each tenant can tend their own garden. This space is significant to creating an outlet for the elderly Chinese. In Chinese culture, gardening is not only a way to generate your own meals, but as an outlet to every day stresses and negative emotions. In every Chinese household, there is often a large garden to follow. These gardens do not consist of flowers, but rather herbs and Chinese vegetables.

109 Kitchen 700sf

110 Dining Room 1,000sf

This room will allow for families who are visiting to congregate in places other than in their apartments.

111 Restrooms (4 @ 150sf each) 600sf

200 Administration Program 1,000sf

201 Resident Services Director (Marketing) 250sf

202	Accounting	150sf
203	Manager	250sf
204	Activities Director	250sf
205	Monitors	100sf

Offices for the staff should be located near the director's office, directly off of the main lobby.

300	Healthcare	1,100sf
301	Nursing Office	300sf
302	Physical Therapy Office	200sf

This is the core of the assisted living services. They will be open during regularly scheduled office hours, and the residents are encouraged to make appointments to discuss any health questions or problems they may encounter.

303	Exercise Room	600sf
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The exercise room will be located on the ground floor and will be able to be accessed only by the residents.

400	Housing Program	28,520-69,800 sf
401	Guest Rooms	2 @ 500sf each
402	Assisted Living Units	500sf
403	1-BR Units	600sf
404	2-BR Units	800sf
405	3-BR Units	1,000sf

406 4-BR Units

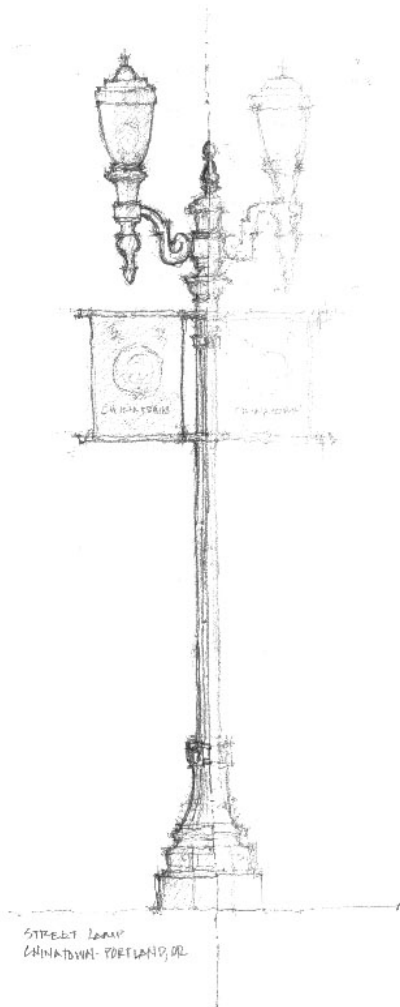
1,200sf

These units are to provide for the accommodation of various generation groups, ranging from 1-bedroom units to larger 4-bedroom family units. These units will provide interior spaces for social gatherings and functions. These units will also maximize the amount of exposure to light and air.

500 Parking

There will be 5 Spaces for staff which can be located along the street. One parking space per apartment shall be provided for (with exception to assisted living units) in the building parking garage, in addition to on-street parking

CHAPTER 6:
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN STRATEGIES



4 JULY, 2009

(Illustrated by author)

Parti Study A

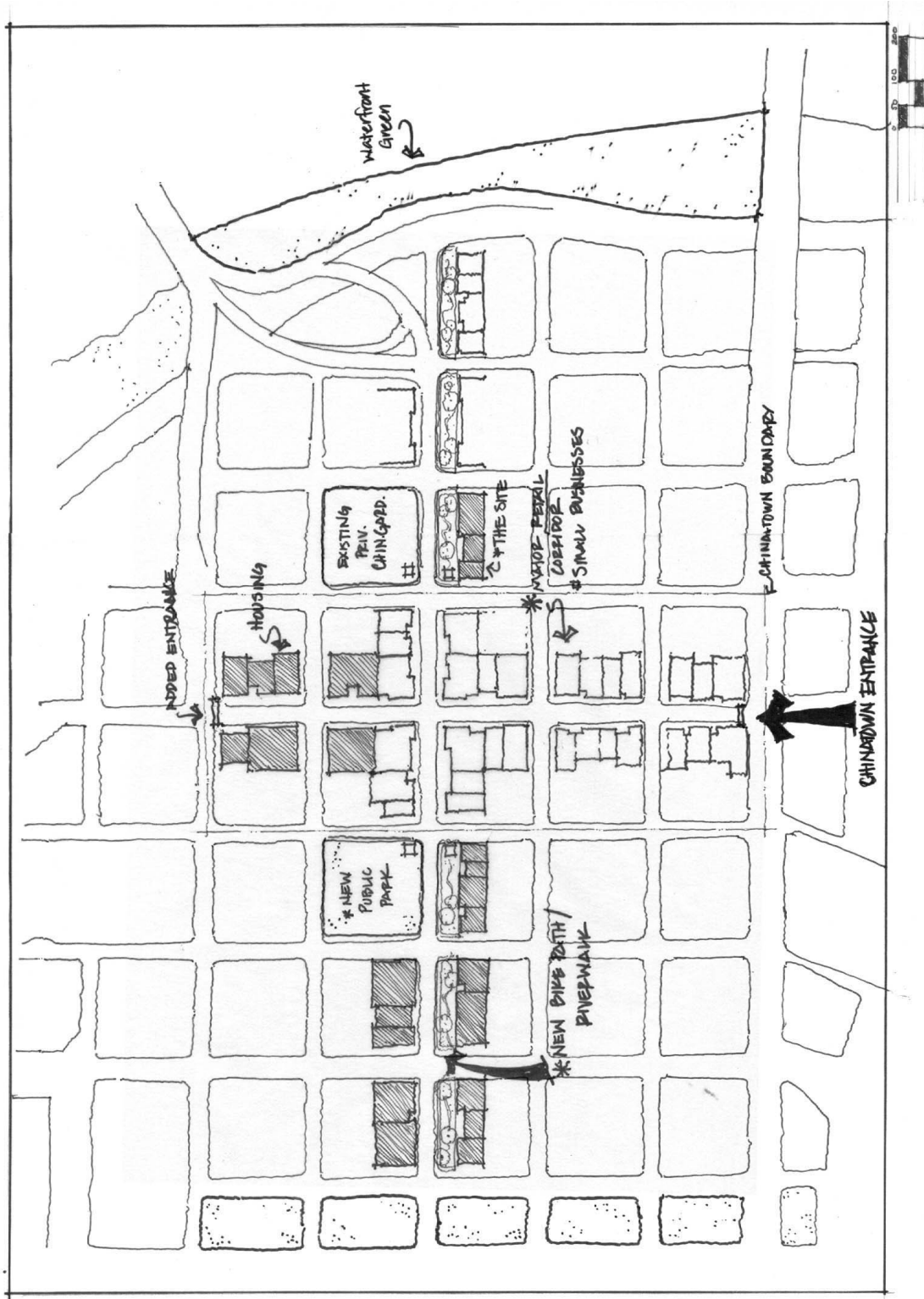


Figure 83. Urban Parti Study A: Retail vs. Green Streets. (Illustrated by author)

The 'Retail Streets versus Green Streets' parti is primarily based on the concept of a greenway strip which connects the existing Mid-town green blocks to the waterfront edge. These series of greens provide an activated promenade for pedestrians and bikers of the community. This design also proposed that Fourth Avenue become a major retail street for small markets, stores, and restaurants with housing above. In addition to the existing Chinese Garden which requires paid access, a new public park is suggested to be added just to the east of the Chinatown boundaries.

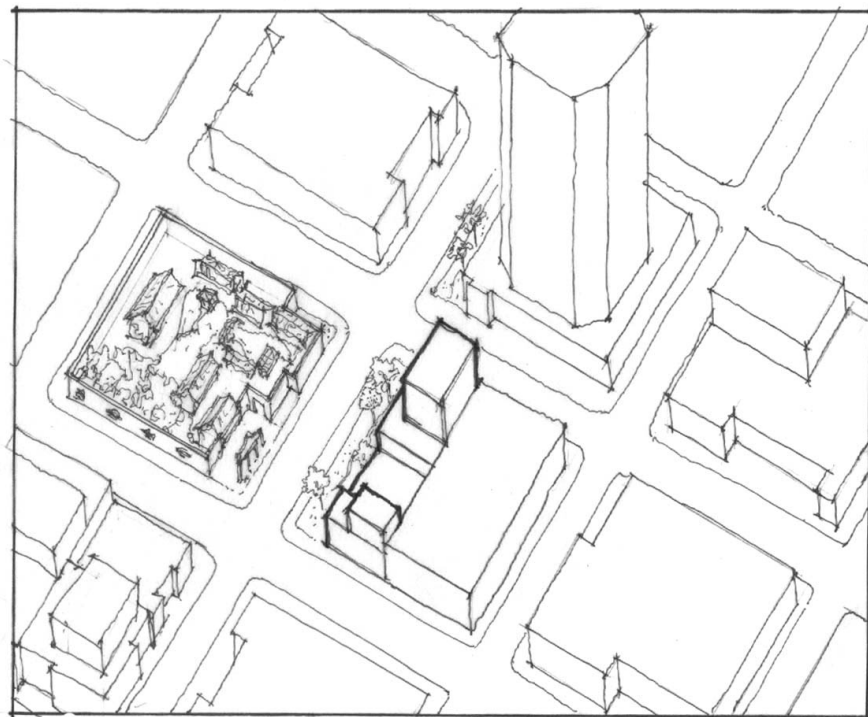


Figure 84. Building Parti A. (Illustrated by author)

Parti Study B

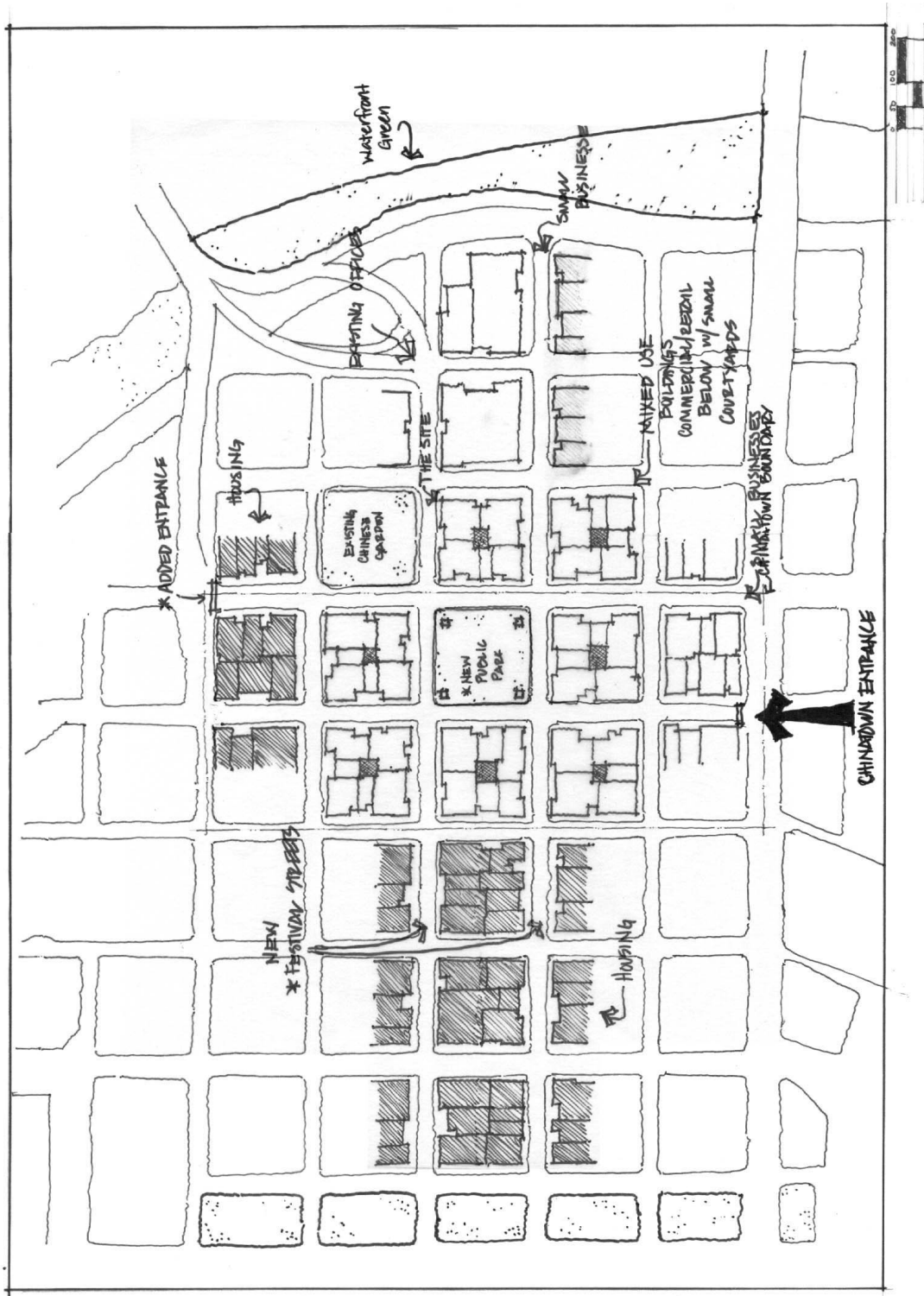


Figure 85. Urban Parti Study B: Node Concept. (Illustrated by author)

The 'Nodes' parti is based on an added entrance to the north of the Chinatown neighborhood on Third Avenue. This entrance will provide a 'gateway' element predominantly for the heavy automobile traffic arriving from the north. Two gateway streets are thus, tied together by the proposed public park for the Chinatown neighborhood. Small stores, markets, and restaurants will surround this square with housing above.

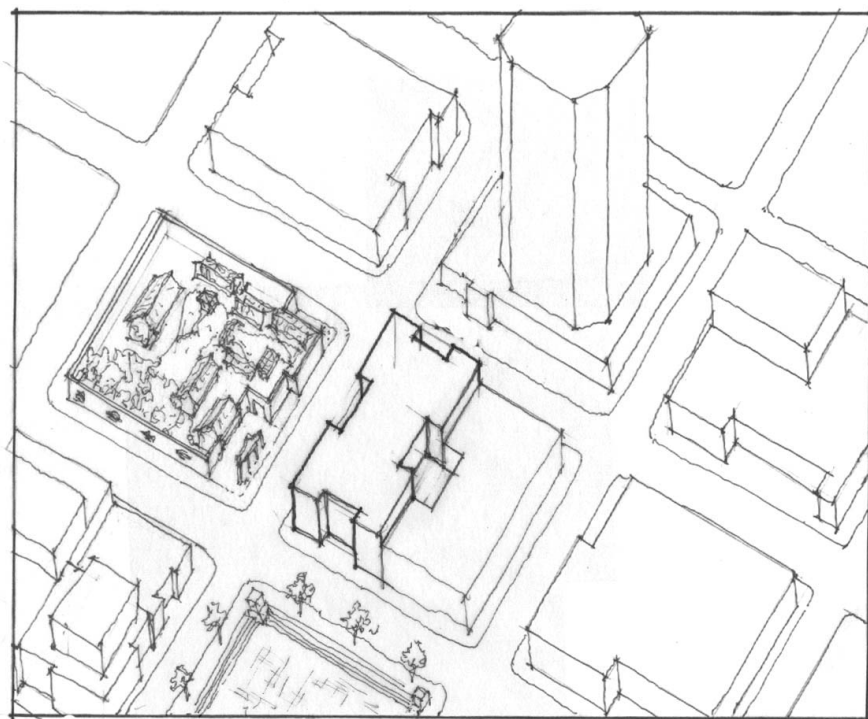


Figure 86. Building Parti B. (Illustrated by author)

Parti Study C

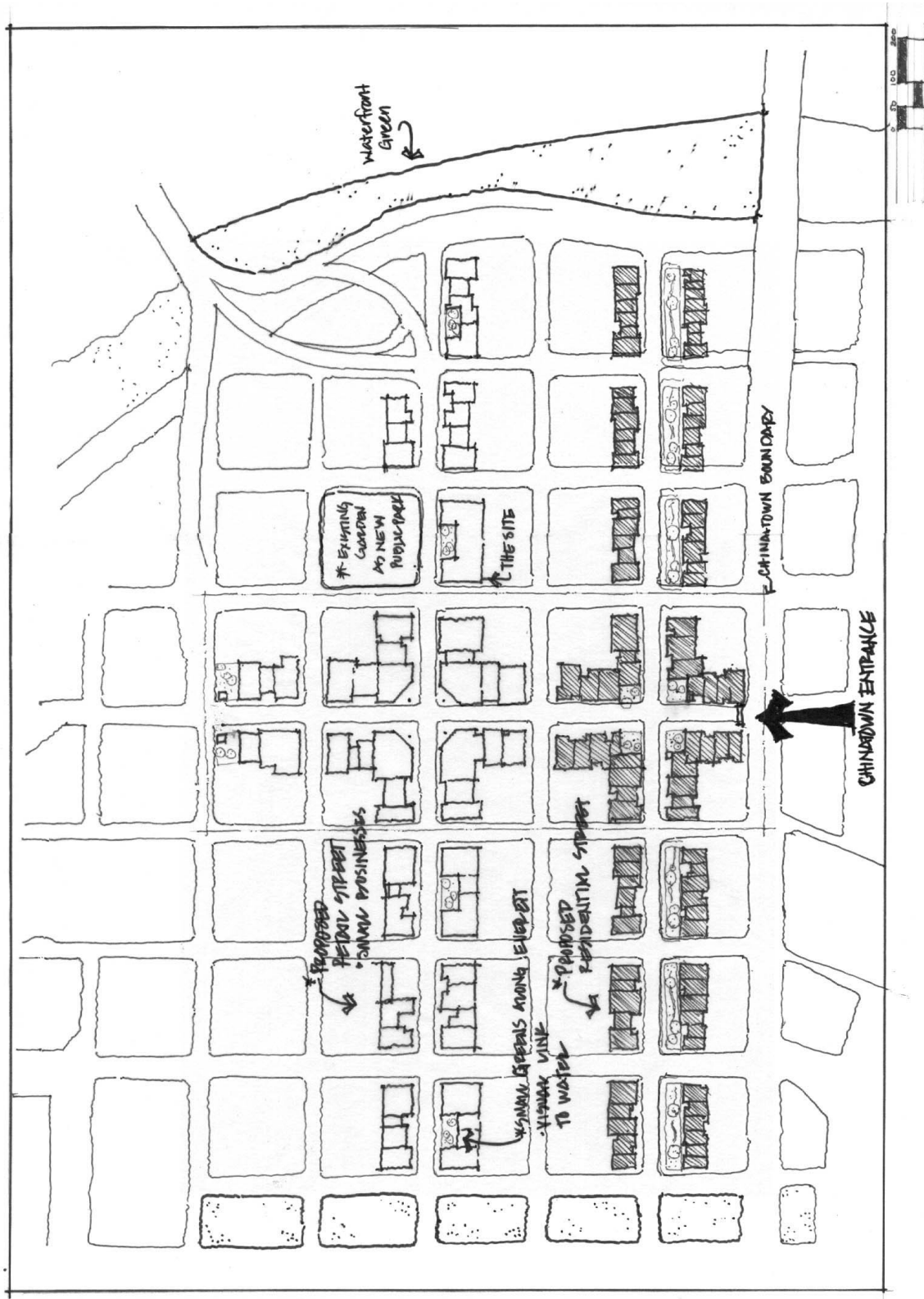


Figure 87. Urban Parti Study C: Retail vs. Residential Streets. (Illustrated by author)

The 'Retail versus Residential Streets' parti is based on two main streets that provides for more connections from the Mid-block parks to the waterfront. These two streets develop very different characters: one is composed of small retail stores, markets, and restaurants; the other is predominantly housing. The retail street contains a series of smaller green spaces that provide a visual link along the street; whereas, the residential street consists of a larger strip of greens for biking or walking to from the park blocks to the waterfront, or vice versa.

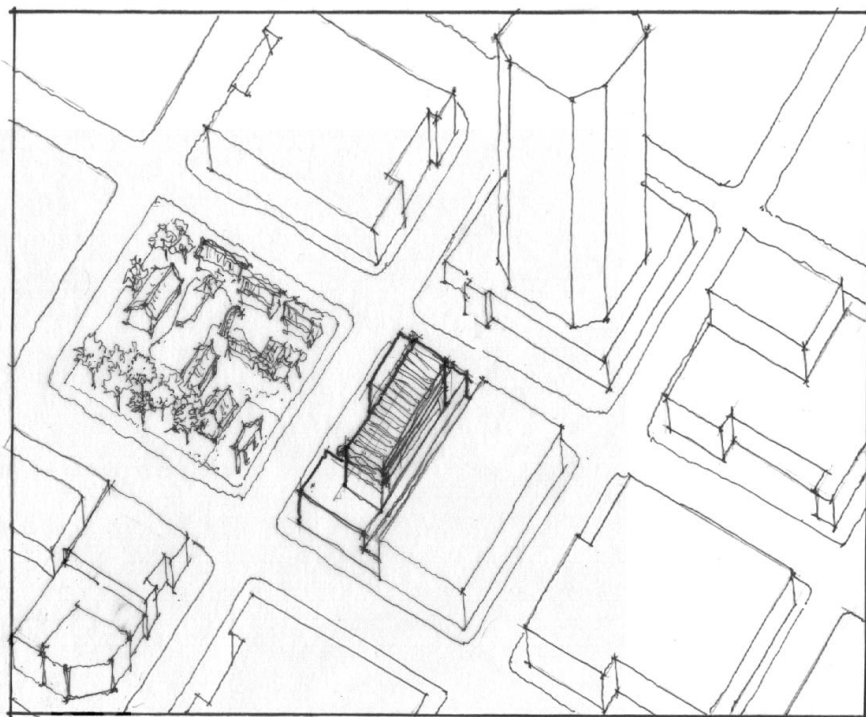
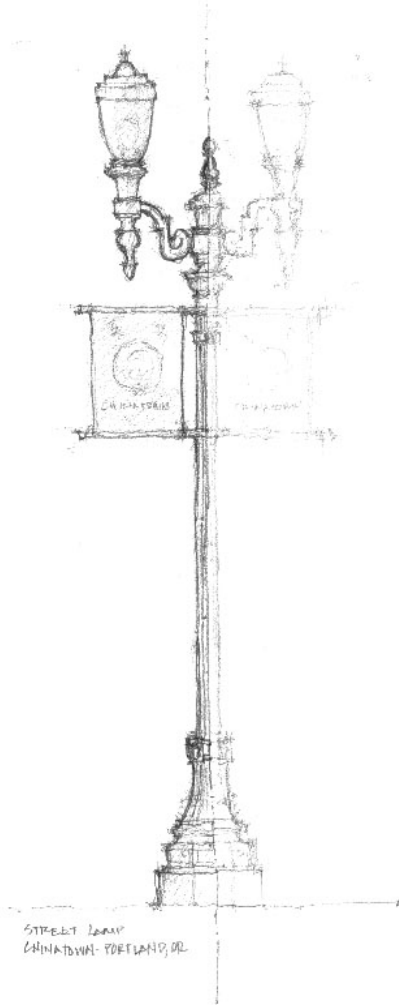


Figure 88. Building Parti C. (Illustrated by author)

CHAPTER 7:
FINAL DESIGN CONCLUSIONS



STREET LAMP
MINATONWA - PORTLAND, OR

4 JULY, 2009

(Illustrated by author)

The final design solution is a six-story inter-generational mixed-use housing complex on a block located at the entrance of Portland's Chinatown. The total unit count for the design is fifty-two units, which mostly consists of one-bedroom units. Through extensive research, the decision was made to move from the original 100-foot by 200-foot site on Glisan Street to the current site occupying the entire block of 200-foot by 200-foot between Couch Street and Davis Street, and Fourth Street and Fifth Street. The current site provided for more opportunity to allow for a greater connection between the North Park Blocks and the Japanese Memorial Plaza on the Willamette River waterfront with little to no major highway interruption. In addition, the existing parking lot seemed to be a perfect site to create a more efficient and significant program in a prime location—with the idea of this building being a new 'center' of the community.

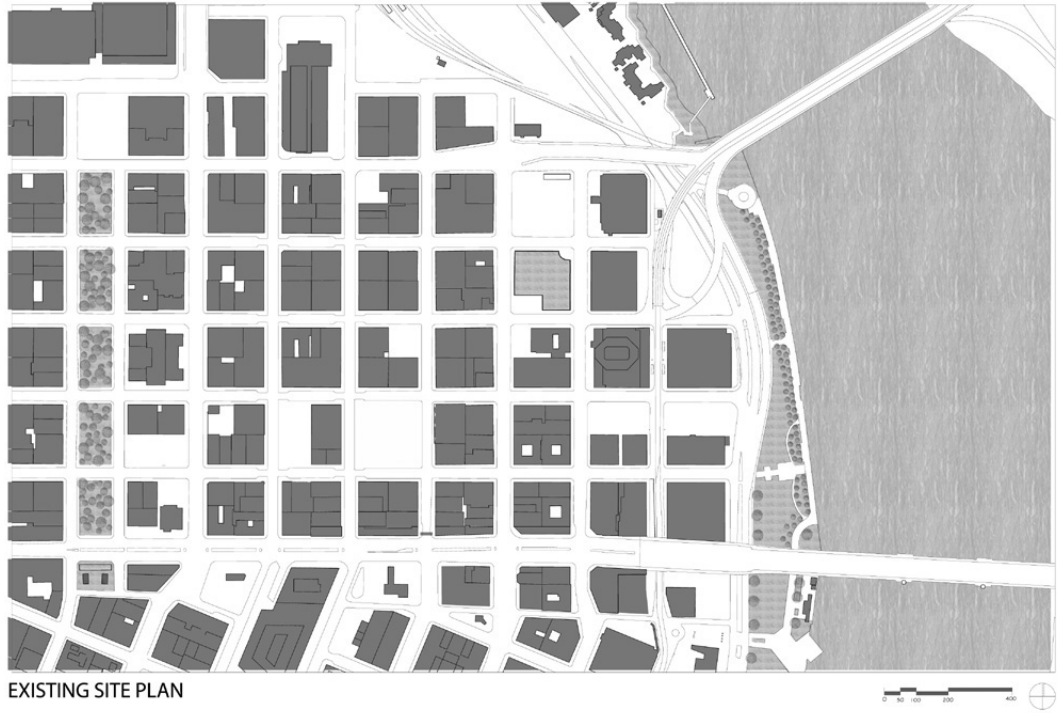
The greater urban decisions were derived from the relationship of the site and its relationship in the Chinatown district to the surrounding neighborhoods. The most important visible conflict in the existing plan was a clear disconnection between the city blocks and the waterfront from Burnside Street and north of that. The problem of Chinatown is a result of the large number of paved parking lots in the neighborhood that ultimately begins to deactivate the nature of the streetscape. To improve this, the urban design initiative proposes that these parking lots along Couch Street and Fourth Avenue be infilled with larger buildings that assist in densifying the area. In addition, it is proposed that the Davis Street parking lots would be replaced with green spaces that creates a green link along Davis Street from the North Park Blocks to the Waterfront.

The design consists of two major program components: a community and a residential portion. Each facet is organized by layers and controlled ultimately by a main element—the courtyard. The courtyard, as understood and translated from early Chinese courtyard buildings, is a community space which is essential to the Asian and Asian American family and social lifestyle. In this project, the courtyard is introduced as a large, public form that serves the greater community and provides areas for social gatherings and functions, as well as, contemplation areas. This courtyard then transforms itself into an indoor multi-purpose room for community functions. At a much smaller scale, the courtyard is mimicked in the “flex spaces” within most units which accommodates for families that often fluctuate in the amount of extended family stays and changing family lifestyles.

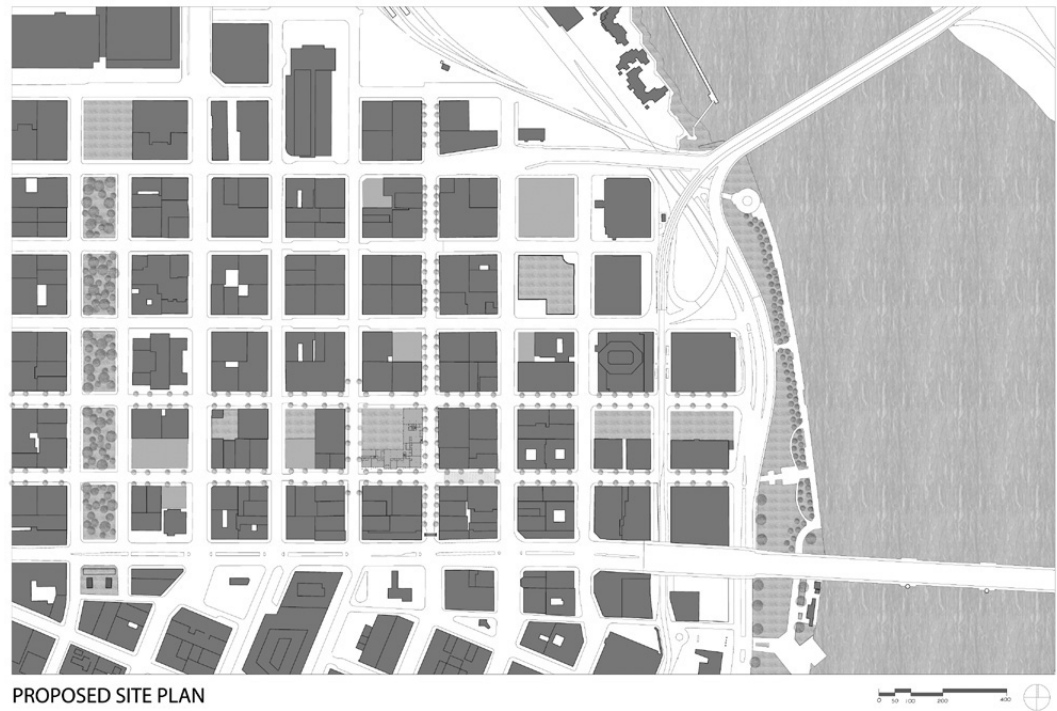
The building’s layers can be seen in both community and residential programming. The ground floor which services the main Chinatown corridor has small retail spaces lining Couch Street and Fourth Street that imply spaces for typical Chinatown markets that can encourage activation of the streets in Portland’s Chinatown. Along with the multi-purpose room on the Fourth Avenue and Davis Street ‘wing’, there are community meeting rooms on the second floor, and a daycare on the sixth floor. The residential component is also organized vertically by floors. The second floor accommodates for seniors who require assisted living. These units are one-bedroom efficiencies with small kitchenettes. On this floor, there is a large communal dining room and a wellness center to service the residents. The third floor is dedicated to seniors who are able to live independently, but want to live with other seniors like themselves. These units are typically one-bedroom units (with 3-two bedroom units on the floor) with a flex

space central to the plan. These flex spaces can be used for extended family, home offices, dining rooms, or even open to the balcony and become a deep porch. These units are imitated on the fourth and fifth floor family living floors. These floors are exactly the same as the third floor, with an exception of six duplexes on the Fourth Avenue and Davis Street 'wing' that allows for three-bedrooms in each unit along with a flex space, as well, in each.

The final solution of this project is a complex that attempts to integrate many very different types of program into one compact design. The program deals with providing community spaces and functions that are otherwise lacking in the current state of this Chinatown. By providing such needs and also allowing for more housing, this building is designed to act as a catalyst for future growth and activation of a community that has not yet lost its identity and place completely. It is designed to be a center for the community and an icon for future development of a community that is fully represented by its Asian and Asian American community.

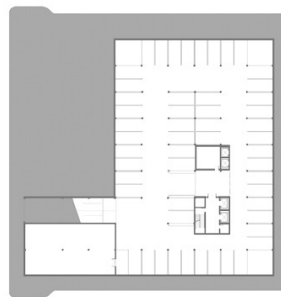
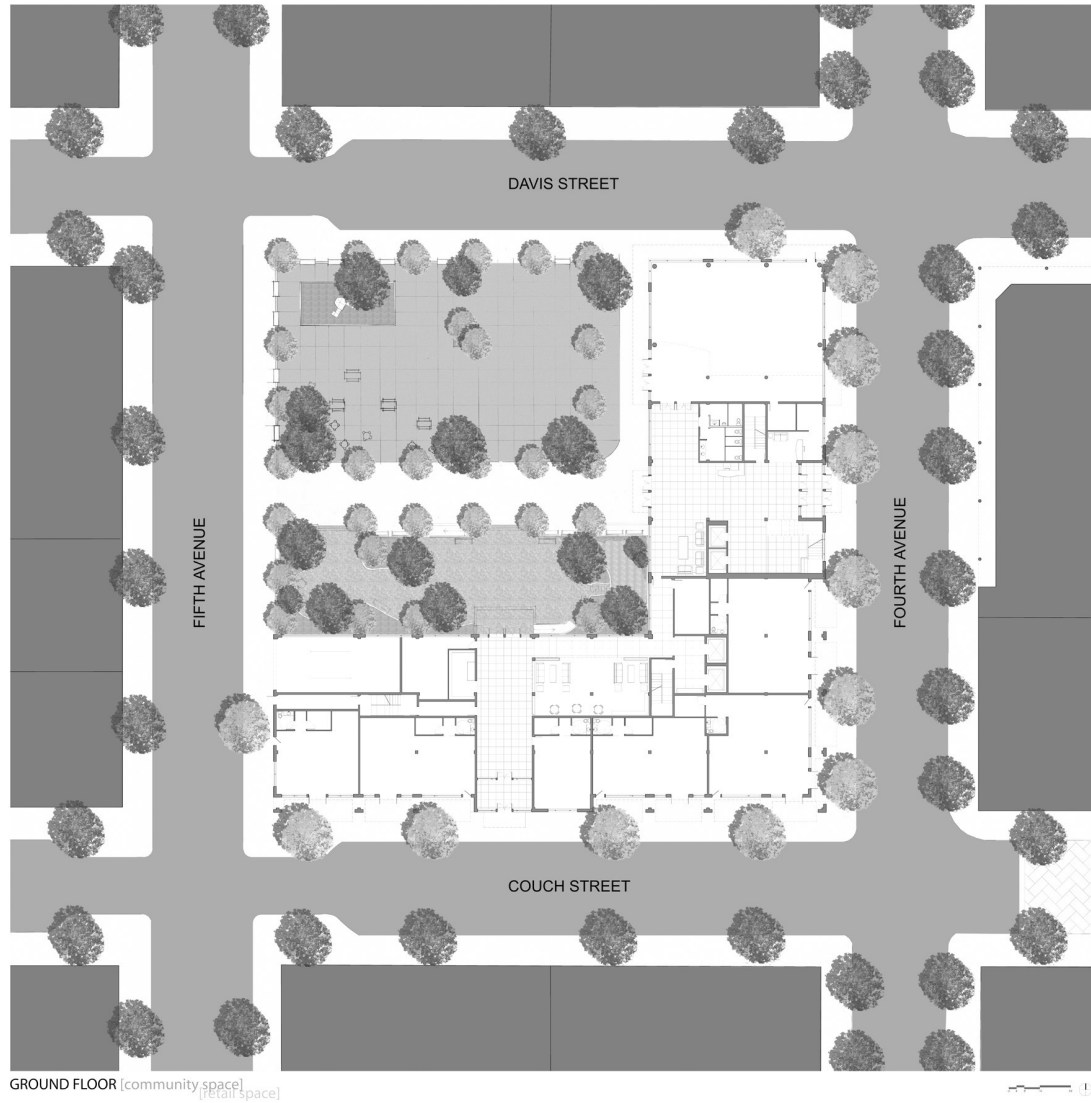


EXISTING SITE PLAN



PROPOSED SITE PLAN

Figure 89. Existing and Proposed Site Plans: The urban design decision links the North Park Blocks to the Willamette waterfront edge. The proposed site plan also suggests that existing parking lots be replaced by green spaces along Davis Street and by buildings along Couch Street and Fourth Street. (Illustrated by author)



GARAGE FLOOR [residential parking]

Figure 90. Basement Floor and Ground Floor Plans. The Basement floor provides for residential parking and mechanical space. The ground floor entails retail spaces and the community multi-purpose room. (Illustrated by author)

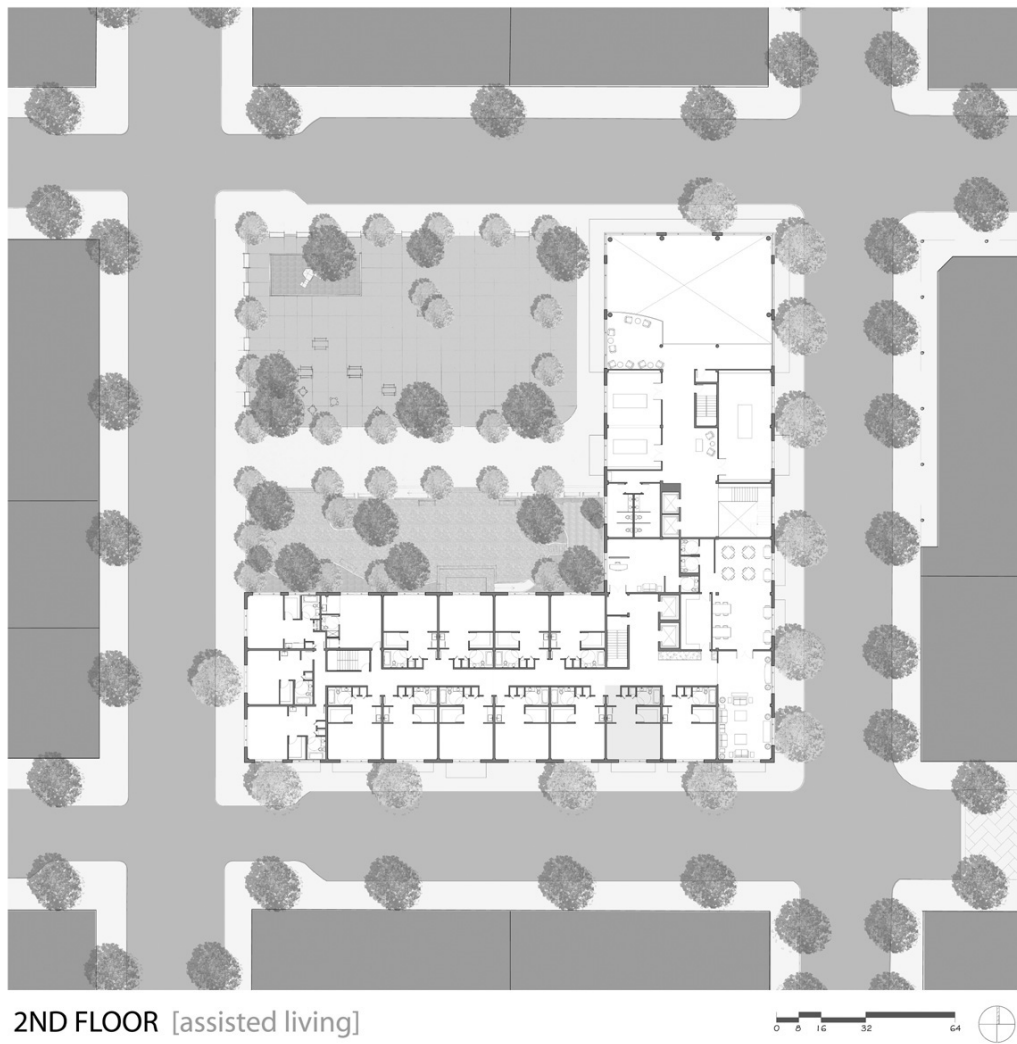


Figure 91. Second Floor Plan: Assisted Living program and Community meeting rooms. (Illustrated by author)

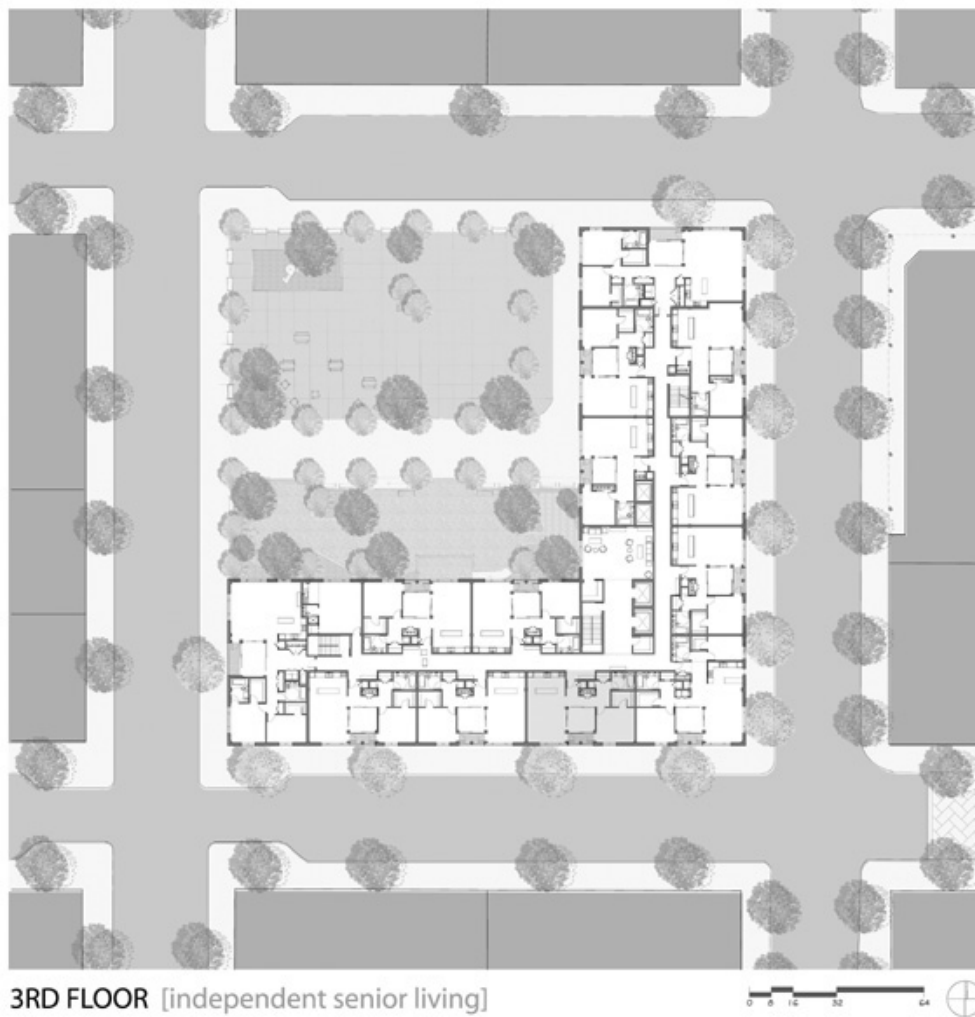


Figure 92. Third Floor Plan: Independent Senior Living units are typically 1-bedroom with a flex space for accommodating the possibility of extended family stay. These units are also typical on the family living floors (4th and 5th floors). (Illustrated by author)

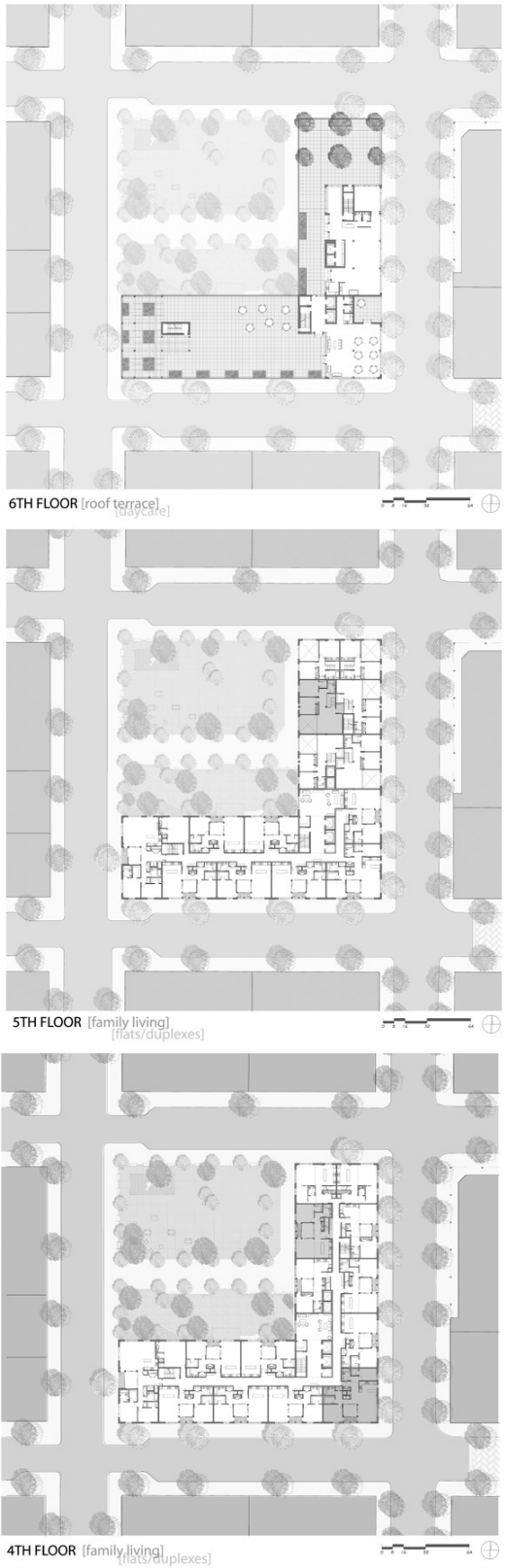


Figure 93. Fourth through Sixth Floor Plans: Fourth and Fifth floor Family Units; Sixth floor Daycare and Roof Terrace. (Illustrated by author)



Figure 94. Couch Street and Fourth Avenue Elevations. (Illustrated by author)



Figure 95. Section Elevation A: showing the separate zones of the public courtyard. (Illustrated by author)



Figure 96. Section Elevation B: showing relationship of interior multi-purpose room to the public courtyard. (Illustrated by author)



TYPICAL UNIT PLANS



Figure 97. Typical Unit Plans: shows flex spaces and the ability to accommodate various family types. (Illustrated by author)



Figure 98. Wall Section. (Illustrated by author)



FOURTH AVENUE

Figure 99. View of corner of Fourth Avenue and Couch Street. (Illustrated by author)



COURTYARD VIEW

Figure 100. View of public courtyard on Davis Street and Fifth Avenue



ROOF TERRACE

Figure 101. View of Roof Terrace: shows large planters for residents to garden. (Illustrated by author)

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