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Living in Place:  
Rebuilding the relationship between people and place in Jiulongpo District, Chongqing, China

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**Abstract**

Living in Place:  
Rebuilding the Relationship between People and Place in Jiulongpo District, Chongqing, China

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This research-based design thesis is an exploration of post-industrial residential district renewal in Chongqing, China. The old residential areas of this city have been gradually replaced by new gated communities with high-rise buildings. Such rapid and extensive redevelopment has compromised local residents' place attachments and the local sense of place. There are possibilities to heal the split of the urban fabrics and rebuild the relationship between people and place by creating a new open space network across the city's district including both the old areas and new ones. This thesis begins with an examination of the recent history of the Jiulongpo District, its redevelopment in recent years, and relevant case studies in Taipei and Beijing. Following this is a summary of the primary research conducted with local residents to understand their place meanings, attachments and uses of their everyday environments. This research then formed the basis for a series of design studies that included evaluations of both physical and emotional qualities of the district. Next, I propose design principles and a framework inspired by Alexander's A Pattern Language from the perspective of human experience. Finally, in terms of building a network, phasing is necessary: starting from connecting the new neighborhood to one old neighborhood, then to the big district with other old ones, and then encouraging more people, groups and organizations to engage in a community process for redesigning their neighborhoods to better suit their needs. My intention with this thesis is to outline a manual which people could adapt this thesis to their community renewal.

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## Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

Figure 1.1. On the river 1  
Source: <http://www.liweifilm.com/On-The-River-Color>

## 1.1 INTENTION

Chongqing is my hometown. I have lived in a post-industrial residential district in this city with my family, friends and neighborhoods for decades (Figure 1.2). However, most of the residential areas or districts have been gradually replaced by gated communities with high-rise buildings and the urban fabric, physical context, and local memories are largely being destroyed. Meanwhile, the old neighborhood environments, which are declining due to the lack of management, cannot fulfill the growing needs of residents and increasing population. Thus, in this thesis, I want to create a design framework for the future residential district renewal and redevelopment process to mitigate these problems and advance potential benefits for local residents.

The post-industrial residential district, for me, is a place for growing, gathering, relaxing, producing and enjoying where residents can think: “I want to get my breakfast in that shop today.” “Let’s play a game on the street or in that common space after dinner!” “Let’s go to the theater to see the performance!” or “Would you like to join us to play badminton tonight in the plaza?” All these are typical thoughts and activities during a day of my

neighborhood life, some are in current places while others are in the past. I have lived in this neighborhood for nearly thirty years, witnessing the rapid changes of my surroundings from farmlands and traditional residential areas with 6-8 floor buildings to high-rise buildings over 20 floors as well as the disappearances of the urban fabric, strong place identities and differences. Now, I live in a neighborhood whose typology was once the dominant form of residence, but has become one of the fewer and fewer remaining islands of history and memory in this rapidly developing city.

Although I understand the necessity of urban renewal both as a citizen and a designer, I also want to keep some of the lifestyle in the post-industrial neighborhood because of the physical benefits and emotional bonds that exist in these places. In this sense, my original intention is to try to find the balance point between redevelopment and the preservation or reuse of the post-industrial neighborhood. Is there a better way to develop these areas? Could we renew them without sacrificing the form of the old district? Could we even apply the principles of traditional residences to redefine the new neighborhood?



Figure 1.2. Post-industrial residential district

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

As a result of rapid urban development, the living environment is experiencing dramatic changes across the globe. Urban redevelopment is one of the most critical issues for China as a rapidly developing country. However, China's urban renewal is function driven and provides short-term benefits, causing many people to feel a detachment from a familiar environment and a loss of self-identity and sense of place. One of the most typical places with dramatic changes and identity conflicts due to renewal is the post-industrial residential districts in China's large cities. This thesis explores this type of residential district in the city of Chongqing as a case study to reconsider and rebuild place attachment, or the relationship between people and place in the context of contemporary China.

In the past thirty years, the urban fabric and contexture change dramatically in big cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Chongqing (Figure 1.3). The traditional forms of residential districts are "attacked" by high-rise building blocks. China's urban renewal may provide short-term benefits by increasing the number of commercial housing per hectare, but it also creates long-term costs in the form of loss of traditional environment, self-identity and a sense of place. Guided by standardized formulas, the new towers and blocks are being built and sold as the new reality to millions of people across China. Despite its promise of a bright future, the

"Block Attack" fails to answer people's ever-growing needs and emotional attachments to place. In this sense, what does the future hold for China's urban residential districts? In order to answer this big question, I would like to focus on the way to reconsider and rebuild the relationship between people and place in the process of urban renewal in Chongqing, China.

## 1.3 THESIS QUESTIONS

My main thesis question is: How might design help rebuild the relationship between people and place in the process of urban renewal in Chongqing, China?

My sub-questions are:

1. Why do we love our communities?
2. How do people want to use the public open space in their neighborhood?
3. How can we connect the post-industrial residential areas and the new gated-communities in the big district at a more human scale?
4. How can a public open space network be designed to invite people to use it and serve multiple purposes?



Figure 1.3. The urban fabric and contexture  
Source: <https://www.google.com/earth/>

## 1.4 CRITICAL STANCE

The post-industrial districts are important potential space for redevelopment and reconstruction in a city (Figure 1.4 to 1.5). However, they are seldom being considered as urban heritages and they are not referenced to inform future development due to their lack of functionally-oriented features. Even though there are a few existing preservation projects that transform such old areas while retaining their basic structure and historical fabric, most of them have been transformed into totally new commercial areas in order to pursue short-term economic benefits rather than considering the long-term benefits for residents and cities such as emotional bonds to place, self-identity and culture. There are few people who consider urban renewal from the perspective of ordinary residents in China. In this sense, I think it is necessary to think about a new model of urban renewal that takes into account and values the perspective of human beings in this country.



Figure 1.4. The current urban fabric aerial view  
Source: <https://www.google.com/earth/>

## 1.5 ANTICIPANT OUTCOME

This thesis aims to provide another avenue for future work on post-industrial renewal and redevelopment on a human scale in Chongqing, China. Anticipated outcomes include having more understanding of existing conditions of post-industrial residential district use as well as how local people think and feel about it. What are the future needs and how can I design a framework for future work with community? The toolkit-like product I developed through this project can be adapted to business brochures or used as a community advocacy tool.



Figure 1.5. The current urban fabric photo  
Source: <https://www.gettyimages.com/>



Figure 2.1. On the river 2  
Source: <http://www.liweifilm.com/On-The-River-Color>

## Chapter 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis examines how residents' place attachments, place meanings and recent historical uses of urban neighborhoods in China can inspire more human-scaled design interventions to mitigate the large-scale dramatic development that has disrupted the fabric of everyday life for many residents. More specifically, this thesis focuses on the industrial residential district of one city in China, Chongqing. Because of the rapid and dramatic changes to the urban neighborhoods in this city, many of the public spaces are large-scale, not very comfortable for human use or social interaction, and they feel disconnected from the city's past.

To inform my work, I reviewed relevant literature in a number of subjects, from the history of industrial residential districts in China, to the theory and research on place attachments, as well as design theory such as Alexander's (1977) arguments about pattern language to devise a set of design strategies that are more human-scaled and more responsive to current residents' uses and needs.

## 2.1 URBAN HOUSING IN CHINA

This thesis focuses on the industrial residential district in Chongqing, China. Because of the rapid and dramatic changes and development, the dominant type varies from state-owned housing to private market housing. In order to be clear about the thesis topic, let me begin by describing the background of the industrial residential district in China.

### 2.1.1 *Enterprise associated community*

There are two kinds of communities in China at present: the enterprise “associated” community and the public community. What is known as the enterprise associated community is based on the relationship of workers and large businesses; it is housing for company workers. In contrast, social community is based on the relationship of location and it is managed by local administrative institutions, not corporations.

The enterprise associated community is a residential area for workers and their families and the housing is provided by single or multiple enterprises as a social good. Such housing has been the dominant typology of residential communities in urban China before the 1980s. In fact, it was a part of the enterprises during the time of the planned economy. As a result of this strategy, the urban population typically consists of people who work together, and residential areas are located close to the work place.

### 2.1.2 *Large industrial residential district*

This thesis focuses on one such community located in the core urban area of Chongqing due to the location of the previous large industrial enterprises that separate the residential district from the factories, which have since moved to the suburban area. Industrial residential districts are located in industrial areas based on housing policies developed at the beginning of People’s Republic of China to provide housing for workers near their work place. These policies are intended to provide free or low-cost apartments to workers and their families as a social good. Due to the increasing needs for housing, this kind of residential district continued to be redeveloped until about 2000 (Hexun, 2000, available from: <http://finance.sina.com.cn/news/2000-02-24/20613.html>, January, 2018). Such residential places had the additional benefit of gathering people with similar professional backgrounds and their families in the same urban area. The transformation of old residential areas proposed in this thesis aims at improving living conditions to fulfill contemporary needs by refining space functions and reconstructing some infrastructure based on the old spatial structure. In this way, the useful life of public space can be prolonged rather than thoroughly redeveloped. Thus, the large industrial residential district is a typical form of residence in a certain stage of China’s urban history. It is a part of the industrial and post-industrial era. It is an independent living area with infrastructure and associated constructions.

## 2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

From the 1950s to 1980s, the enterprise associated housing policy and the public ownership of housing prevailed in the context of planned economy in China. The method of enterprise associated housing is based on titles or years of service in enterprises. However, after the 1980s, the national economic system was reformed and restructured from a planned economy to the market economy. Due to these economic changes, the housing policy was reformed beginning in 1978. From then until 1993, the distribution system of enterprise related housing began to be reformed. Finally, between 1994 and 1998, traditional enterprise associated housing was gradually transformed into the commercial housing market. Such transformations occurred until 2003. After that, commercial housing became the dominant type of residence in the city.

Based on housing policies, from 1949 to 1978 the enterprise-associated residences were the dominant form of housing. After the foundation of the People's Republic of China, the cities experienced great reconstructions and change. Due to the planned economy, the state arranged and distributed all the essential living resources and goods. Employees and their families were totally reliant upon these state-owned enterprises for housing, transportation, health care and other goods and services. In this sense, residential districts associated with enterprise prevailed in urban areas in China for a long period.

From 1978 to 2000, the housing system gradually disintegrated due to housing policy reform. Enterprise-associated communities were transforming into social community. The social good distribution system was replaced by the free market system. From 2001 to present, due to the prevailing free market system, the ex-enterprise-associated apartments, became owned by the enterprises privately. With the movement of large enterprises from urban to suburban areas, the residential areas of the city changed. However, the old neighborhoods and communities still remain in some large post-industrial residential areas. As the main target of housing policy reform, the quality of the enterprise-associated residences was deeply affected by these policy changes.

## 2.3 INDUSTRIAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT IN CHONGQING

In order to better understand the industrial residential district development in China, this thesis focuses on the industrial residential district of Chongqing. It is essential to first understand some background on the city and its industrial past. This part also places the current state of public spaces in the proper context.

Modern Chongqing was developed in 19th Century. Beginning with international trades, national capitalism was established as the foundation of modern industrial development in the city. During World War II, the Republic of China moved the capital city to Chongqing. The movement of the capital was accompanied by hundreds of factories moving from Shanghai and Nanjing to Chongqing as the new industrial city (CQ Webcasts, 2007, available from: <http://en.cq.gov.cn/AboutChongqing/2007/6/12/981920.shtml>, January, 2018). After development of the early five-year plans at the beginning of the People's Republic of China, Chongqing became a modern city with heavy industry covering much of the city's land.

Because of the need for convenient transportation and sufficient water supply, most industrial enterprises in the city were located along the Yangtze River. At the beginning of the modern era, these places were suburban areas, but they were gradually developed as new urban areas in order to support the growth of big industrial groups, their staff and families. However, because of increasing land prices in the free market after the Housing Reform Policy in 1978, it became more and more effective economically to relocate

the heavy industry in suburban areas while transforming the post-industrial sites into other land uses such as commercial, mixed-use or residential areas with lower environmental pollution, multiple-functions and potential economic values. In fact, since 2004, these factories have gradually continued moving to suburban areas. (Figure 2.2)

With the factories moving to the suburbs, large areas of urban land have become available. These are spaces in the urban core with good transportation and complete facilities, but the price of land is quite high. In earlier phases of the urban renewal process, most of these sites were redeveloped as new mixed-use lands dominated by residential space, which brought more economic benefits in the short-term by providing more apartments. This kind of economically-oriented urban renewal resulted in the erasure of much local history and context from the landscape. In recent years, the government and developers have gradually become aware of the detriments of such development and they have tried to transform some of the heavy post-industrial sites into innovative sites for light industry, such as the Hi-Tech industry and spaces for the creative classes, while preserving and rediscovering the history of place. However, the current transformation faces the problem of generic spatial typologies, and a lack of flexibility and potential economic rewards. Moreover, the problems resulting from the early unsustainable redevelopment are still there and need to be solved. In this thesis, I would like to focus on the issue of healing the split in the urban fabric because of the early rapid development.

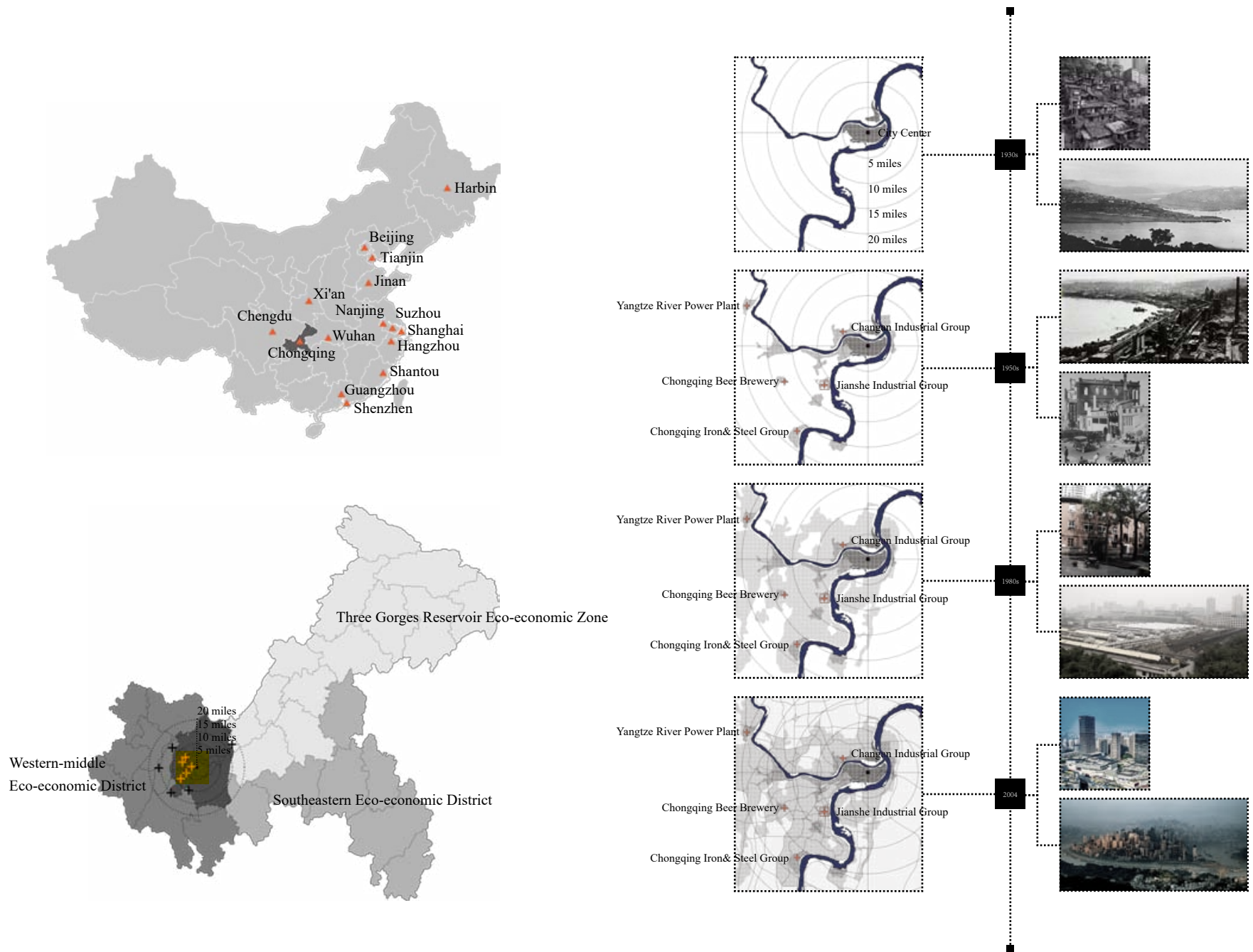


Figure 2.2. The history of Chongqing

The split in the urban fabric includes two parts: the old residential area and the new blocks. The old residential area, especially these big industrial residential areas, have associated with them complete facilities that include schools, hospitals, entertainment centers, and infrastructure. With the departure of heavy industry factories, the management of these areas has been transferred from industrial groups to local governments. Due to the physical benefits in these neighborhood and good neighborhood relationships among people within them, most of the families are still willing to live in the old places, even though there are many options to live in new gated communities. However, due to the speed of the larger-scale development, which translates literally from the Chinese as “Block Attack,” more and more of the old residential areas are being replaced by these new blocks (Figure 2.3). Even though governments and developers pay residents economic compensations or provide them with housing in other places, it can often feel as if there is no other choice for the residents but to



Figure 2.3. Build of new gated communities

accept these changes. In this sense, people are detached from their places while the history, memories and city context are lost. On the other hand, some residential areas have escaped redevelopment for the moment. To some extent, the living conditions in these older parts of the city have declined due to the lack of management and maintenance (Figure 2.4). Although most people still live in the old areas, they have to bear the declining living conditions. Some struggle with making the choice to move or stay, while others cannot make such choices because of economic limitations and other mobility restrictions. The old residential areas, which were once the dominant type of block in the urban fabric, gradually declined as lonely islands in the new urban space. In this thesis, I would like to explore ways to improve the living environment for residents in these old areas while taking advantage of these old areas as remnants of the urban history in order to heal the split between people and place, the old and the new.



Figure 2.4. old residential district existing condition

## 2.4 WHY WE LOVE OUR PLACE

Despite the rapid and dramatic changes of the quality of life and experiences in China, most people still choose to live in the old residential districts with which they are familiar. Some of the housing is replaced by new high-rise buildings, while some of the housing gradually declined due to the lack of maintenance. So why do people get attached to the places where they live and how can we design with respect for people's histories, place meanings and identities? In order to understand such phenomena and examine people's living experiences in these places, it is useful to consider two realms that influence the experience of place: physical qualities and emotional qualities. On the one hand, the physical qualities deal with tangible and material aspects of environments that influence our experience of place. On the other hand, the emotional qualities deal with less tangible aspect of our feelings, beliefs and attitudes about place, and the more spiritual aspects of places. Each of these aspects will now be explored in greater detail. Moreover, since this thesis focuses on the human experience of place, it refers to the method of Christopher Alexander's pattern language (1977), which can be used as a tool to combine both the physical and emotional evaluations of place and help guide for new design proposals.

### 2.4.1 *Physical qualities*

Since we live in a physical world, all of our living experiences take place in a physical context. In this sense, in order to explore the relationship between people and place, it is necessary to understand some basic elements related to physical qualities of space from the perspective of landscape architecture, such as traffic, green infrastructure, public open spaces and so on. Although there are measurable criteria to evaluate the physical qualities, I would like to refer to the criteria proposed by Mags Adams (Cooper et al, 2014) based on people's experience of urban space.

Traffic and streetscape is a critical aspect of urban living quality, so it is therefore one of the most important criteria to evaluate. The proximity to main streets and public transportation also have an important impact on people's evaluation of the where they live. One's living experience varies due to the distance of the traffic sound, the public light and the pedestrian walk, as Adams argues "if proximity to, or distance from, main roads is a contributing factor to the quality of life experienced by urban residents and users then this needs to be taken into consideration when determining the location of residences and services" (Adams, 2014, p.255).

Green infrastructure is another important feature that may be used to evaluate urban living conditions, related to “the combined structure, position, connectivity and types of green spaces which together enable delivery of multiple benefits as goods and services” (Forest Research, 2010). Adams concludes that there are three categories of potential health and wellbeing effects of green infrastructure: increased life expectancy and reduced health inequality; improvements in levels of physical activity and health; and promotion of psychological health and mental wellbeing” (Adams, 2014, p. 256). In this thesis, I would like to focus on the aspects of physical activity and health as well as psychological health and wellbeing from the perspective of a landscape architect to improve the living quality in the neighborhoods of Chongqing.

Generally speaking, public open spaces are available to all the public. This thesis focuses on neighborhood open spaces, which are multifunctional, providing recreational areas and enhancing the beauty and environmental quality of the area. Neighborhood open spaces include both green spaces and other “hardscape” spaces, in which people can relax, meet and interact, and as a way to fulfill the need for both individual and social activities. In this thesis, I would like to refer to the study of public open space and walking by Koohsari, Karakiewicz and Kaczynski (2013) to examine the relationship between public open space and human activities based on proximity, attractiveness and size, which “have a direct influence themselves on residents’ engagement in neighborhood physical activities” (Koohsari, et.al, 2013, p.708).

#### 2.4.2 *Emotional qualities*

In order to understand the emotional qualities of local places, I review some of the literature on the emotional relationship between people and their physical surroundings. This work considers such questions as: Why do people have emotional bonds to places? What kinds of emotional bonds could be formed? How to maintain or enhance such relationships in the context of change?

##### I. Place Attachment

In the field of environmental psychology, “place attachments” refer to the emotional bonds between people and their physical environments. Since the 1990s, the subject was a departure from research on people-place that focused more on cognition at that time. The exploration of place attachments concerns how place meaning develops based on human experience of an environment (Altman and Low, 1992). These attachments “can evoke an array of emotions from joy to grief in varying degree of strength” (Manzo & Devine, forthcoming, p.1) involving different places at different scales.

In general, my thesis focuses on strengthening the positive emotional bonds and smoothing the negative ones in the place where one lives. In this sense, it is necessary to understand these connections that “inform our sense of identity, create meaning in our lives, facilitate community and influence action” (Manzo & Devine, 2014, p.2). To be more specific, this design thesis involves two aspects based on the tripartite model of place attachments proposed by Scannell and Gifford (2010). According to these author’s one dimension of place attachment is the person dimension, referring to “its individually or collectively determined meaning” (Scannell and Gifford, 2010, p.1). The second dimension is the psychological dimension including “the affective, cognitive, and behavioral components of attachments” (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p.1). The third dimension is the place dimension emphasizing “the place characteristics of attachment, including spatial level, specificity, and the prominence of social or physical (both built and natural) elements” (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p.1). There are two main methods to study place attachments: quantitative approach and qualitative approach. In this thesis, I would like to adopt the qualitative approach to capture people’s emotional bonds to places and apply people’s place meanings and histories to the redesign of their local urban neighborhood spaces.

## II. Place Meaning

Place meanings are related to place attachments. “Meanings can be conceived of as symbolic statements about the essence, or ‘content’ of a place” (Stedman, et al, 2014, p. 141), ranging from adjectival description (e.g. This place is nice) to highly symbolic narrative (e.g. This is my home). “Whether conceived as individual cognitions or as social representations arising through social process” (Moscovici, 2000), “meanings as symbolic statements about the nature of place and populated with descriptive content and are created through human activities” (Kruger & Shannon, 2000), including interactions with both physical and social environments. On the other hand, “meanings are symbols on which attachment rest” (Stedman, et al, 2014, p. 141). We attach to the symbols which we add to the places such as safety, dangerous, important, and escape based on our experience, and “maintain meanings that we cherish and which produce attachments” (Stedman, et al, 2014, p. 141). In this sense, in my thesis, in order to strengthen the positive experiences and smoothen the negative ones, I need to find the meanings of place. Since this thesis focuses on the perspective of human scale, I would like to use the approach proposed by Christopher Alexander in his book *A Pattern Language* (1977) as my method for the study of place meanings, in order to find the symbols of the place for attachments to rest on.

### III. Place Identity

Place identity is a form of self-concept, which is “a sub-structure of the identity of a person consisting of cognitions about the physical world in which the individual lives” (Proshansky, et al, 1983, p.59). It refers to an instance when “one unself-consciously and self-consciously accepts and recognizes the place as integral to his or her personal and communal identity and self-worth” (Manzo & Devine, 2014, p.32). Place identity includes various cognitions including “memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings and conceptions of behavior and experience” (Proshansky, et al., 1983, p.59). In this sense, the debate continues about whether phenomena like place identity are under the framework of place attachments or they are their own distinct or equivalent phenomena. In this thesis, I consider place identity as one of the dimensions of place attachments, based on literature review and my own living experience.

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### IV. Community Attachment

Since my thesis focuses on place attachment at the community-level, it would be better to be clear on the meaning of community attachment. “Community scale is flexible and can mean one’s street-block, neighborhood/village, or city and environs” (Mihaylor & Perkins, 2014, p. 84). But for the purposes of this project, I conceptualize the community at the scale of neighborhood. Community attachments differ from other forms of place attachments in four main ways: “location, level, focus and behavioral response” (Mihaylor & Perkins, 2014, p.85). Community attachments involve the specific geographic area surrounding homes. They reflect “some level of agreement among community members” (Mihaylor and Perkins, 2014, p.85). Community attachments focus more on neighborhood, region or city as a whole place. The most unique feature of community attachments relates to “the complex place and social cognitions, emotions, and behaviors, in response to environmental disruptions and threats, that feed into an interpretive process at both the individual and community level and that lead to collective, community-level actions, adaptations or acceptance of the disruption” (Mihaylov & Perkins, 2014, p. 85).

### 2.4.3 *Pattern language*

“It is shown there, that towns and buildings will not be able to become alive, unless they are made by all the people in society, and unless these people share a common pattern language, within which to make these buildings, and unless this common pattern language is alive itself”----- (Alexander, 1968, p.5)

Pattern languages are shared common languages “by all the people in society” (Alexander, 1968, p.5), which indicate the life of towns and buildings. Alexander says that “each pattern describes a problem which occurs over and over again in our environment, and then describes the core of the solution to that problem, in such a way that you can use this solution a million times over, without ever doing it the same way twice” (Alexander, 1968, p.5).

The format of a pattern language includes two essential parts. One part is the narrative to present the connections among other patterns, so that I get the collection of the patterns as a whole language to create an infinite variety of combinations for the place. In this part, the language presents in a straight linear sequence from the larger patterns which come above, to the smaller patterns which come below it. The next part is about the problems and solutions of each pattern in a very general and abstract way, so that it keeps the essence no matter if I judge it by myself or modify it with the community’s input. In this thesis, I would like to use the same format in my design applications to create a new public space network as well as pattern languages.

## 2.5 CASE STUDY

After looking at the background of industrial development in Chongqing, China, the theories about living experiential qualities, the following two case studies could enhance the understanding of the translation of the theories into urban residential district renewal practices in Asia by the means of community engagement.

### 2.5.1 *Taipei: Open Green*

The first case is located in Taipei, named Open Green. It is a grass-root community engagement as a way to regenerate urban space in old residential district (Figure 2.5). As a historical city, Taipei has witnessed urban renewal focusing on the constructions and viewing green space in the past years. However, from the policy “Taipei Beautiful II” for the Flore Exposition, the public green spaces “collaborated with private NGO groups and held a series of events in response to community interests” (Pei-Yin Shig, 2015, available from: <http://www.urstaipei.net/en/article/3172>, March, 2018). With these space and community cooperation, “the geopolitical community and topic-oriented community can be integrated more effectively” (Pei-Yin Shig, 2015, available from: <http://www.urstaipei.net/en/article/3172>, March, 2018). The project called “Open Green” is one of the experimental projects on such issues in Asia, so it served as a useful precedent for this thesis project to understand how to implement such cooperative community process in similar background as my site.

Open Green is one of these programs which helps the government and community to realize urban renewal and redevelopment in Taipei in a way that is grounded in community needs and concerns. “There are 4 Open principles including ‘Create new public spaces’, ‘Open up the community boundaries’, “Break the stereotypical usage”, and “Found circular bases for small systems”” (Pei-Yin Shig, 2015, available from: <http://www.urstaipei.net/en/article/3172>, March, 2018). By using professional techniques and knowledge as designers, this organization create innovative ways to renew urban space and establish social power of urban growth, that is what I want to explore in my thesis and site.

The core sprit of Open Green is “Green life” including both environmental and social aspects. It is different from conventional ways of design in that Open Green takes a more diversified and localized method to realize and promote green life in the process of urban renewal (Figure 2.6), such as “green society, green



Figure 2.5. Open Green Taipei  
Source: <http://www.urstaipei.net/en/article/3172>

initiative, green industry, green life, green ecosystem and so on” (Pei-Yin Shig, 2015, available from: <http://www.urstaipei.net/en/article/3172>, March, 2018). For example: “Gan-Na-Zai community in southern Wanhua has topics of discussion to be promoted like the texture of traditional settlement and healthy friendly communities; therefore, it’s better to bond and connect via social welfare groups in order to develop green life of green society. As for Ponglai Cho in Shuangliang, Datong district, in order to relate to the skill inheritance issue of blacksmiths and carpenters, local craftsmen’s expertise is combined with the self-design power of new Makers with the aim to promote public space utilization like open design studio” (Pei-Yin Shig, 2015, available from: <http://www.urstaipei.net/en/article/3172>, March, 2018). During this process, citizens are encouraged to engage in transforming the public open spaces such as roofs, vertical facades, courtyards, spare spaces and even elements like water bodies, trees, and walls. With such community engagement, the trend of innovational localized placemaking begin.



Figure 2.6. The Corner of Uncle Corn" spare space transformation  
Source: <http://www.urstaipei.net/en/article/3172>

### 2.5.2 Beijing: Baitasi Remade

The second case is located in Beijing, named Baitasi Remade. It is also a grass-root community engagement as a way to regenerate urban space in old residential district (Figure 2.7). In a fast-changing city like Beijing, urban planners and designers puzzle over how to preserve the remains of historical identity while improving residents' quality of life in old neighborhoods. The project called "Baitasi Remade" is one of the experimental projects on such issues, so it served as a useful precedent for this thesis project considering the perspective of the preservation of history and the adaptation of current and future functions.

Baitasi is among Beijing's most historical and culturally relevant neighborhoods (Figure 2.8). Unlike the area of Dashilar (which has been the site of a pioneering project of hutong renovation since Beijing Design Week in 2012), Baitasi is one of the last remaining traditional residential areas in the city. It is also home to several



Figure 2.7. Baitasi photography marathon  
Source: <http://btsremade.com/zh/community-neighborhood/article/326>

cultural landmarks including the Archive of Buddhist Texts, the Lu Xun Museum, and the White Pagoda Temple, whose stupa dates back to the Yuan Dynasty. Although this thesis will not touch the place with such important history of a city, it focuses on post-industrial history, which is significant to urban development as well (baitasiproject, 2015, available from: <http://btsremade.com/en/baita-event#beijing-design-week>, March, 2018). In this sense, this precedent also inspired me from this perspective.

In terms of project process, Baitasi Remade (BR) is a program stemming from Beijing Design Week whose aim was to discuss the experimental ways of approaching historical preservation and urban renewal in the Baitasi district. BR was first launched in 2015, during Beijing Design Week, as a program of urban renewal led by Professor Zhang Li of Beijing Tsinghua University and a team led by World Architecture magazine. The project's primary purpose



Figure 2.8. Baitasi photo 1  
Source: <http://btsremade.com/zh/community-neighborhood/article/326>

is to integrate community engagement, and architectural and infrastructural upgrading to the neighborhood. Design and cultural thinking are the keys here to better living for the people in the area. Baitasi Remade has seen the active participation of many residents, whose profound knowledge of the area and the cooperation with the designers and architects have helped move the revitalization of the area toward a more organic renovation and it has made Baitasi a living example of healthy urban renewal (Figure 2.9 to 2.10). In this sense, it is a useful precedent for this thesis project to understand how to conduct such cooperative process in similar background in my thesis.

The Baitasi Remade project aims at emplacing unprecedented modes of collectively rethinking about the sustainability of life in the city as products of networked systems for knowledge making and sharing. This work is inspired by the human-scaled dimension of traditional settlements like Beijing's hutong areas, to eventually



Figure 2.9. A temporary art installation in this old district  
Source: <http://btsremade.com/zh/baita-event/beijing-design-week/beijing-design-week-2016/433>

shape new urban communities. Because of this it has served as an important precedent to inform my proposed designs for historic areas of the city of Chongqing. By taking Baitasi's unique urban and social formation as its prime area of investigation, BTS Remade looks at creating strategies of productive re-positioning for similarly shaped living environs within the larger ecosystem of the city and its global expanse.

The Baitasi Remade Project asks critical questions that are similar to those that I asked in my own design work for this thesis. For example, they asked, how can past and present forms of spatial thinking and social making together inform novel living standards and knowledge systems for contemporary urban residents? how can we mend the disruptions of urban conglomerations by way of rewiring connections among the desires, needs and expectations of fragmented social groups and interests? Both of these can inspire me for this thesis about the renewal and redevelopment of post-industrial residential district.



Figure 2.10. Baitasi story collection  
Source: <http://btsremade.com/zh/community-neighborhood/article/354>



Figure 3.1. Xiejiawan residential district

### Chapter 3. DESIGN STUDY

In this chapter, I demonstrate my research and focus on the first method described here---that of evaluating of a site and drawing conclusions as general guidelines for the design application in the next chapter. In particular, this chapter focuses on the physical and experiential qualities of the study sites.

### 3.1 METHOD

The method for this thesis includes four parts: (1) the background research described in the previous chapter, (2) site quality evaluations that were derived from that research, (3) design proposals, and (4) considerations of future steps. Firstly, I conducted research that examined the history of Chongqing and involved interviewing current residents about their daily rounds, place attachments and place preferences. Second, I evaluated specific places in Chongqing that I targeted for redesign based on interviewee input, my own experience as a resident of the city, and a detailed site analysis of the physical and emotional qualities of specific places based on people’s experience of urban space. These evaluations provided the basis for my design proposals, which include general strategies such as frameworks and guidelines as well as specific site designs. Based on the general design proposals, I discuss future steps, that is, the way to make all these ideas into reality. This includes how to conduct a community design process in order to engage residents in the design process so they can refine and modify places to suit their needs. My aim in the design proposal is to make every place fulfill five key principles of design: identity, flexibility, publicness, collectivity and human-scale. This chapter focuses on the second method described here---that of evaluating a site and drawing conclusions as general guidelines for the design application in the next chapter. In particular, this chapter focuses on the physical and emotional qualities of the study sites.

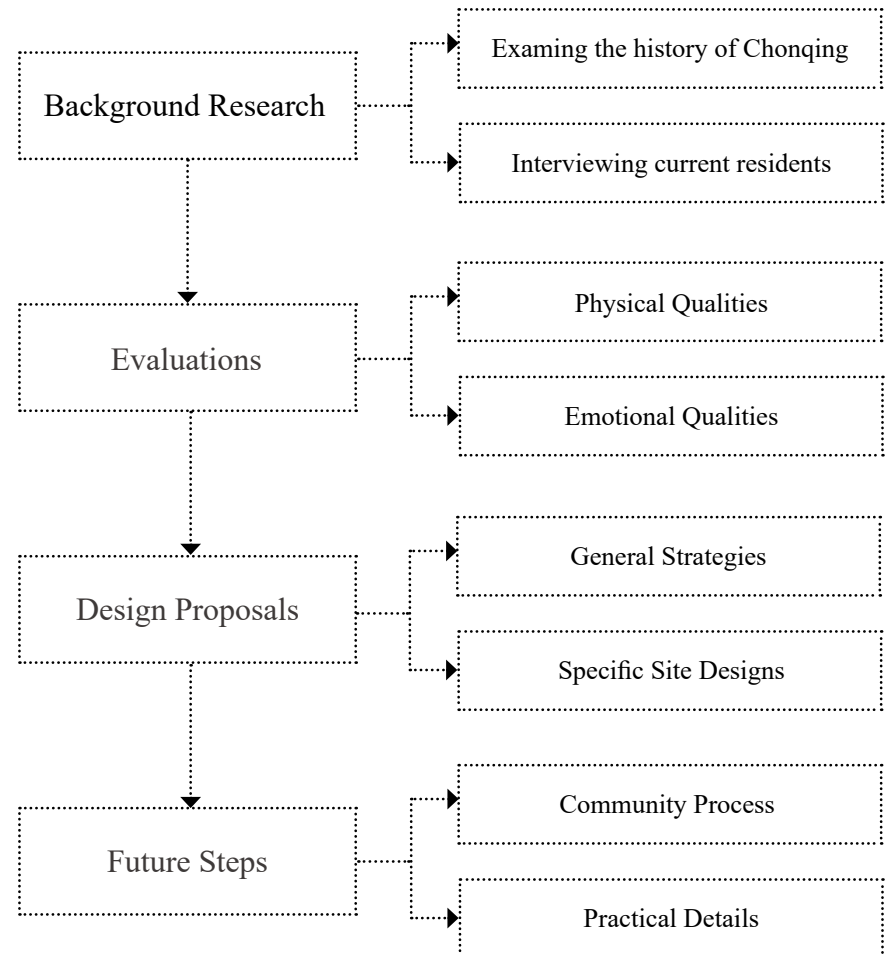


Figure 3.2. Method

## 3.2 EVALUATIONS

### 3.2.1 Background of Xiejiawan residential area, Jiulongpo District, Chongqing

Before evaluate the site, I would like to introduce the background the site briefly in order to better understand the relationship between people and place and conduct the process of evaluation.

The development of Jianshe Industrial Group can trace back to Qing dynasty (Jianshe, 2013, available from: <http://www.jianshetrade.com/wm/en/AboutUs.aspx?id=4&tag=tag4>, January 2018). After the foundation of the People's Republic of China, this industrial group was located in Xiejiawan, Jiulongpo District, Chongqing, by the side of Yangtze River. The whole group took up to 1.8 square kilometers (445 acres) with 13,000 workers. In December 2008, the main part of the factory was moved to a new industrial park in suburban area (Jianshe, 2013, available from: <http://www.jianshetrade.com/wm/en/AboutUs.aspx?id=4&tag=tag4>, January 2018). The original site of the factory (Figure 3.3) covering 0.67



Figure 3.3. Xiejiawan area historical photo  
Source: [http://www.sohu.com/a/146572187\\_768995](http://www.sohu.com/a/146572187_768995)

km<sup>2</sup> (166 acres), was developed by China Resources (Holdings) Co., Ltd. This state-owned developer transformed this industrial site into a big mixed-used area (Figure 3.4) with a total floor area of 2,000,000 m<sup>2</sup> (21,527,820 ft<sup>2</sup>) and a renovated educational area of 68,000 m<sup>2</sup> (731,945 ft<sup>2</sup>). It became a super mixed-used area with high-end office buildings, shopping mall, residential and facilitated constructions in the urban core area. However, because of the large coverage area of the industrial group, there are some residential areas that have escaped from this reconstruction frenzy, such as the Xiejiawan residential district, which is right across the main road facing this redeveloped area. Compared to the industrial sites, the conditions of the residential areas are more complicated. On one hand, it is cumbersome to resettle the huge numbers of residents and reconstruct the whole area. On the other hand, people prefer to live in the place where most of them lived for several generations with good neighborhood relationships and strong place attachments. It is easy to cause community and social problems if the redevelopment of this area is inappropriate.



Figure 3.4. Xiejiawan area current photo  
Source: [http://www.sohu.com/a/146572187\\_768995](http://www.sohu.com/a/146572187_768995)

These maps and sections (Figure 3.5 to 3.7) illustrate the dramatic change of the place as the “Block Attacks” proceeded. From the 1950s to 1980s, the Jianshe Industrial group was a closely united place with factories, residential area and other associated areas. Most of the residential buildings were townhouse with 1-2 floors. From the 1980s to 2008, some of the surrounding regions were replaced by high-rise blocks. The main region was also replaced by 6-12 story buildings in order to fulfill the growing needs of residents. However, the layout of these buildings in the main region

still followed the pattern of the old urban space. From 2008 to present, due to the out-migration of the factories and the invasion of new gated communities, this district is totally split by new blocks with high-rise buildings. Both from the plans and sections, the changes of the place from human-scaled to super-scaled is clear and obvious. However, in order to better understand and improve the site conditions from the perspective of human experience and scale, I would like to evaluate the experiential qualities both physically and emotionally as follows.



Figure 3.5. 1950s-1980s Jianshe Industrial Group plan and section



Figure 3.6. 1980s-2008 Jianshe Industrial Group plan and section



Figure 3.7. 2008-present Jianshe Industrial Group plan and section

3.2.2 *Physical evaluations of of Xiejiawan residential area, Jiulongpo District, Chongqing*

I. Quality criteria

Since this thesis focuses on design at the human scale and the human experience of place, I would like to refer to the “Quality Criteria” by Gehl Architects to analyze the existing spaces and transform some of the visions for ideal public spaces into physical reality. Based on the analysis of existing, well-functioning public spaces, and looking for common characteristics among them, the “Quality Criteria” include four categories: protection, comfort, delight and place. Each category has sub-categories that describe specific aspects of each quality. The diagram in Figure 3.8 shows the features of attractive public spaces, which are both multifunctional and flexible, providing room for a broad variety of people and a diversity of social programs. Through these design strategies, people could enjoy urban life with various activities in attractive and inviting spaces. In this sense, the “Quality Criteria” are a tool and method used to categorize the quality of public spaces. The total of 15 quality criteria provide a checklist of good public space qualities and design (Figure 3.8). Following the method of Gehl Architects, the quality of a public space can fall into one of three categories: Good quality=11-15, Average quality=6-11, Poor quality=1-5. Since I am also one of the residents living in this place for about thirty years, I can also choose the “Quality Criteria” by the means of direct observations from my own daily life there as well with my lens as a designer to evaluate the physical qualities.

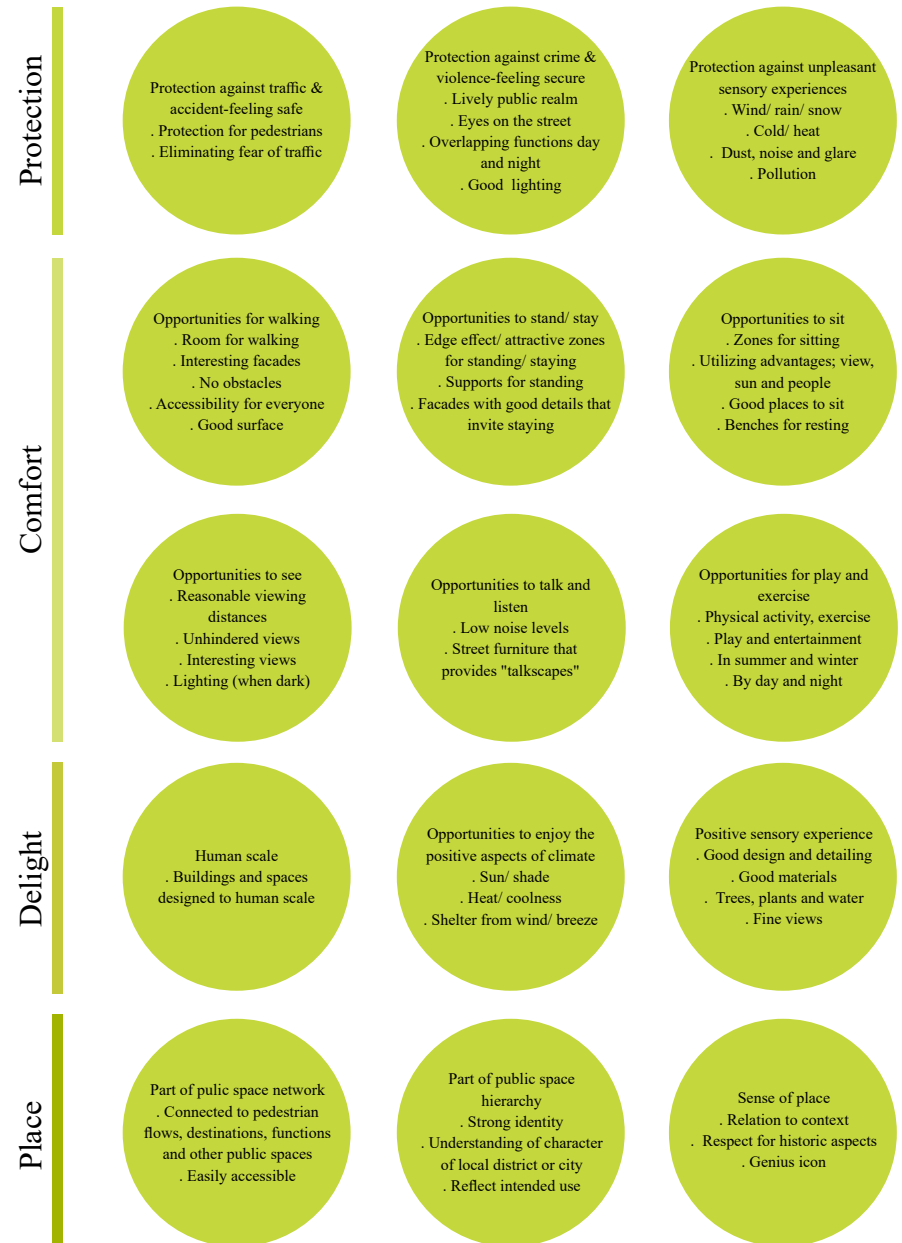


Figure 3.8. Quality Criteria

## II. City figure ground qualities

The Jianshe Industrial Group residential area has developed over decades with a boom in the construction of high-rise building over 20 stories in recent decades. In the beginning, the tall buildings were situated between the old residential district and the waterfront, hiding the river view from the old residential area. Then, high-rise buildings gradually replaced the surrounding areas, as it has been easy to get the right of land use because of the small scale of the old districts. Finally, due to the departure of the factories, a national-level developer has gotten the right of land use for a huge area of the city and transformed it into a mixed-used development with high-rise buildings. However, compared with high density and proximity of the new buildings, the 6-12 story buildings of the old residential area create smaller footprints and provide a more comfortable human-scaled space.



Figure 3.9. Old neighborhood streetscape

Due to the transformation of the buildings, this part of Chongqing has various streetscapes, characteristics, and experiences when walking from the old areas to the new ones. On the one hand, walking in the old areas (the remaining parts of the industrial associated residential areas) has a feel of livability; the buildings are at a human scale, the neighborhood streets are lined with trees providing shade in the hot weather, there is an overall comfortable pedestrian experience, and the flexible open spaces nicely blurs the boundary between private and public spaces (Figure 3.9). People feel invited to walk, linger and enjoy the streetscape, the open spaces, the community and the environment. In contrast, walking in the new area (the mixed-used area dominated by high-rise residential buildings in the post-industrial site) is mainly characterized by a monotonous experience of walking among ground floor facades of super tall buildings, which do not relate to the human scale or providing a genuine sense of a diverse and vibrant public realm. The invitations to enjoy and stay in the streetscape are very few. (Figure 3.10)



Figure 3.10. New neighborhood streetscape

### III. Open spaces & Space qualities

The existing open spaces are scattered across the whole district, in both the new and old areas of the city. In the old residential areas, they are distributed throughout the neighborhoods and are connected with each other and with the pedestrian routes. However, in the new residential district, there is no public space network connecting the open spaces and the main pedestrian routes. Most so-called “open spaces” are located in the gated communities while the outside “open spaces” are for commercial uses as private or semi-private areas for the public.

In the old residential district, all the open spaces are free for the public. Due to the reform of the industrial group, most of these open spaces are flexible and extensible. Some of them are dominated by vendors and retailers who transform the space into outdoor commercial space and “private” gardens and makes this

space decidedly less public. The actual public spaces tend to be of average to poor quality, which is unfortunate since they have the potential to become the community’s local meeting places, neighborhood squares, and small pocket parks for families with children. (Figure 3.11)

In the new residential district, most of the open spaces are actually semi private spaces, dominated by the developer or individual retailers. In general, all the semi-private spaces are well-maintained, safety and comfortable with basic functions such as walking, standing and playing. However, based on Gehl’s “Quality Criteria,” they are not good at providing delightful space for human activities with human scale, positive sensory experience, complete public network and a sense of place. (Figure 3.12)



Figure 3.11. Old neighborhood open space

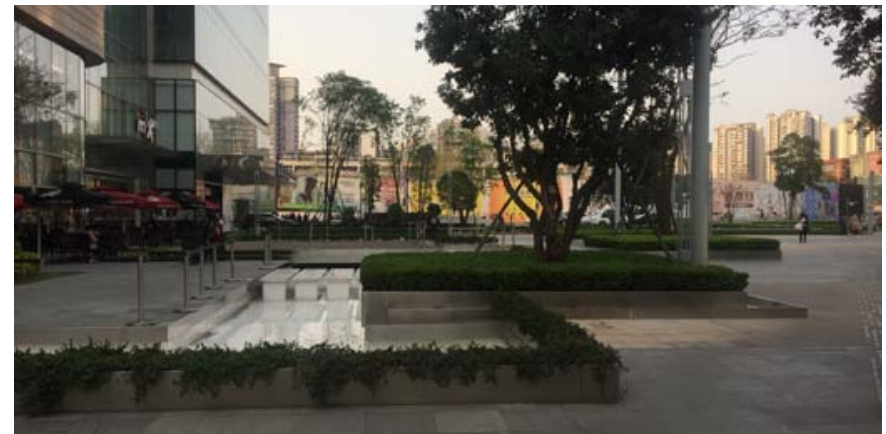


Figure 3.12. New neighborhood open space

#### IV. Public seating

When inviting people to enjoy the public realm, it is important to provide different opportunities for pausing, resting, socializing and other forms of enjoyment and recreation. The old areas typically have public benches (Figure 3.13). Meanwhile, there are a lot of retaining walls and fencing walls due to the topography that people sometimes use, which can be uncomfortable or even dangerous as they do not provide support for one's back (Figure 3.14). In fact, it is not unusual for people to build public seating spontaneously using a variety of materials, but many benches in the old area are still of poor quality (Figure 3.15). Although the public benches in the new area are of good quality (Figure 3.16). In general, the public seating is deficient in the big district, which includes both the old areas and the new ones.



Figure 3.13. A public bench in the old area



Figure 3.14. The retaining wall and fencing wall in the old areas



Figure 3.16. Public seating in the new area



Figure 3.15. Self-built public seating in the old areas

## V. Outdoor café seating

The culture of outdoor café life has developed rapidly in many countries around the world. This has significantly changed the usage patterns of new urban space including that of Chongqing. Drinking coffee is an uncomplicated way of combining several attractions: being outdoors, enjoying pleasant views, and watching people pass by. The same situation goes for drinking tea in China. China has a great tea culture, and you can easily find a tea house in every residential area (Figure 3.17). People like go to their favorite place to drink tea and meet with their friends and play cards or chess in the tea house. In fact, taking this culture to the public realm has been a custom for a long time. In the old area, some places provide outdoor seating for tea, while people also bring their own chairs and teas to enjoy the outdoors community life in the public spaces (Figure 3.18). In contrast, outdoor café seats are the dominant type of seating in the new areas of the city (Figure 3.19), and few people bring their own chair as people do in the old area. To some extent, the old areas are more flexible and public, while the new area offer more restricted uses and are more tightly managed.

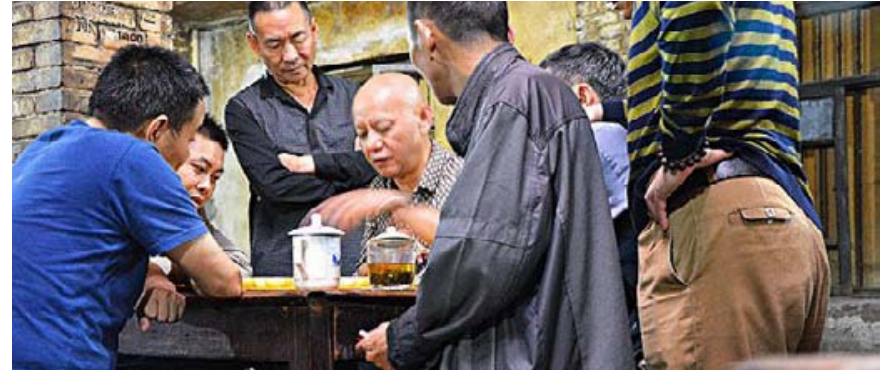


Figure 3.17. Chongqing traditional tea house Source: <http://www.023cha.cn/history/740.html>



Figure 3.18. People drink tea and play mahjong in the old area



Figure 3.19. Outdoor café seats in the new area

## VI. Ground floor frontages

The design of ground floor building frontages has a high impact on the attractiveness of the public realm, as these are the walls of the outdoor urban environment, and they contain the openings through which we see, hear, smell, and engage in the many-faceted palette of activities between the indoors and the outdoors. We experience the space most intimately on the ground floor and at eye-level. Good ground floor frontages can be active, rich in detail, and exciting to walk by. At their best, they are interesting to look at, to touch, and to stand beside. High quality ground floor frontages create a welcoming sensation and encourage people to walk and stay in the place. Other positive qualities include a high degree of flexibility enabling interaction between activities inside the buildings and those occurring on the street. Also, frontages with many small units, many openings, and a variety of functions make streets more diverse and stimulating, and thereby attractive.



Figure 3.20. Old neighborhood ground floor frontages

In order to create an attractive, lively, and people-friendly living environment, ground floor frontages need to be of high quality. In the old area, due to the lack of professional planning and design, most of the ground floor spaces in buildings are residences with low degree of privacy or they are groceries and retail spaces transformed from residences. Because of the long terms of secession and transformation, the frontages on the ground floor in the old area offer diversity and individuality, which makes for an engaging public realm (Figure 3.20). In the new area, although it looks like a well-dedicated frontage with a diversity of commercial forms, it ultimately lacks vitality and creativity because it repeats the same forms, materials and strict management policies. (Figure 3.21)



Figure 3.21. New neighborhood ground floor frontages

## VII. Street elements

In general, the old area has easily accessible and fairly wide sidewalks forming a good base for strengthening the public life unfolding in the streetscapes. The typical old area sidewalk has a width of 2-5 meters with trees lined along it. These big green canopies have the important effect of making and defining the human-scaled streetscape. However, the old area streets lack urban furniture, street elements and maintenance that would make the spaces more enjoyable. (Figure 3.22 to 3.23)

The new area also has easily accessible and fairly wide sidewalks forming a good base for strengthening the public life unfolding in the streetscape. The typical new area sidewalk has a width of 5-15 meters and leaves space for natural pedestrian desire lines plus placement of urban furniture and street elements. Crowding on the sidewalk is not a problem in general. However, the new streets lack green canopies, and due to the scale and dimensions of the high-rise building and wide streets, walking in the new area does not offer a unique sense of space; instead it feels like everywhere else, which is a generic model of new urban areas. (Figure 3.24 to 3.25)



Figure 3.22. The old neighborhood street



Figure 3.23. The old neighborhood street



Figure 3.25. The new neighborhood street



Figure 3.24. The new neighborhood street

## VIII. Green network & Green elements

The street trees and other vegetation in the whole district function as a localized green infrastructure system which is part of a larger “green” context. The cohesion of green elements in the old area is generally good, while it is lacking in many parts of the new area. A pedestrian’s overall impression of the whole area is characterized by concrete, stone, 6-12 floors buildings and high-rise buildings, and pavement. Normally, street trees and other vegetation substantially enhance the quality of space and the pedestrian experience. However, the network of green created by street trees varies widely in quality in Chongqing. The old area has thriving street tree corridors and gives those neighborhood streets a distinct character (Figure 3.26). However, all these trees lack grates around them which make the surface soil poor for growing and the walking experience uncomfortable (Figure. 3.27). The new area has relatively poor street tree corridors leading to an unpleasant walking experience, even though there are well-designed tree grates and well-maintained plants. (Figure. 3.28 to 3.29)



Figure 3.26. The green canopy in the old area



Figure 3.27. The lack of grates for trees in the old area



Figure 3.29. The lack of green canopy in the new area



Figure 3.28. The lack of green canopy in the new area

## IX. Micro-climate

People crave sun during Chongqing's winter months and seek shade in the hot summer months. Due to the orientation of buildings and their location and height, some areas see only a brief period of sun as it shines between buildings at high noon. The north-south orientation of the street grid makes it difficult to create sun banks or pleasant south-facing walls where people can stop and linger along a warm, sunny wall.

With little sun reaching the street level, some opens spaces often remain unused except during special hours or times, and as a result they often go unused and feel abandoned. Even streets with major streams of people lack protected places with positive microclimates. It is often difficult to find shelter from wind and rain, or relief from the heat and glare generated by large amount of pavement. (Figure 3.30 to 3.32)



Figure 3.30. Green street in the old area



Figure 3.31. The lack of green canopy in the new area



Figure 3.32. The lack of green canopy in the new area

## X. Pedestrian network & Pedestrian crossings

A good pedestrian network invites people to walk: it is appealing, comfortable, and provides uninterrupted links bringing people from one end of the city to another. A pleasant streetscape can also be characterized by being interesting to walk along, flexible, offering activity on the ground floor of buildings, providing good surface walking, and other amenities throughout the entire street. In the old area, there is a relatively continuous high-quality network with pleasing walking environment, but there is no continuous high-quality network in the new area. (Figure. 3.33 to 3.36)



Figure 3.33. Pedestrian crossing in the old area



Figure 3.34. Pedestrian crossing in the old area

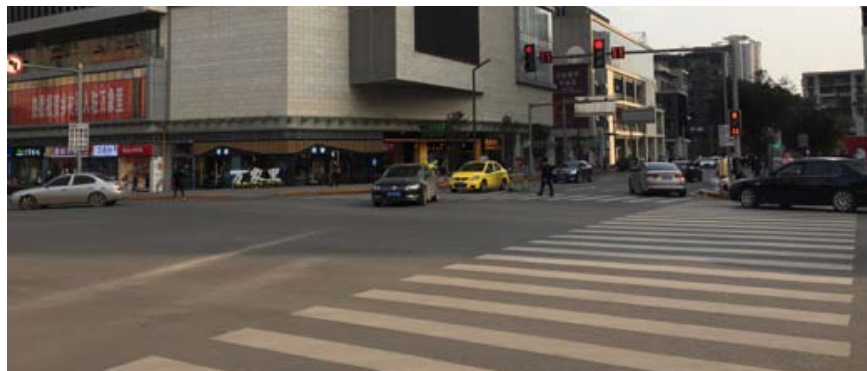


Figure 3.36. Pedestrian crossing in the new area



Figure 3.35. Pedestrian crossing in the new area

## XI. Parking (Surface Parking & Underground Parking)

Off-street surface parking lots in a residential area may be functional but do little to contribute to the public life of a city. In the old area, the surface parking spaces are generally run down and are even less attractive when filled with cars (Figure 3.37 to 3.38). These spaces have potential for much more than parked cars. With a little effort, they may be transformed into interesting open spaces.

On-street parking is generally kept at a low level in the new area because of the provision of large underground parking lots (Figure 3.39). For this reason, additional on-street parking is not recommended. Many leading cities around the world are strategizing to reduce as much surface parking as possible. The design approach taken in this thesis supports that approach for both the new and old areas of Chongqing.



Figure 3.37. Surface parking in the old area



Figure 3.38. Surface parking in the old area

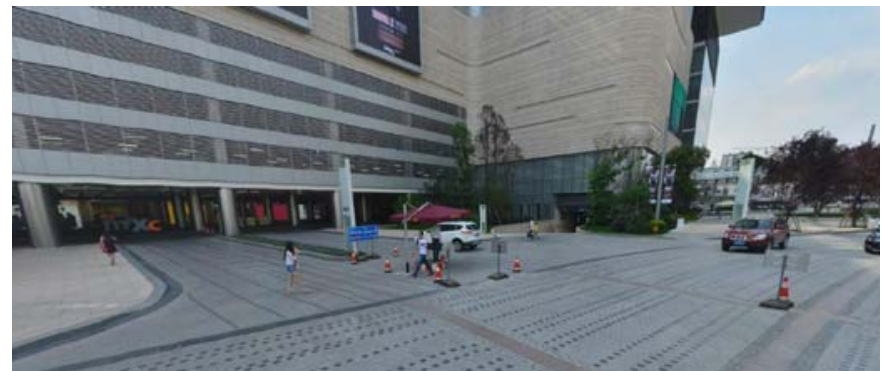


Figure 3.39. Underground parking in the new area

## XII. Public transportation

Generally speaking, public transportation in this district is really convenient with several dominant bus routes and a light-rail station, by which people could go to most places in the city. The dominant bus routes run outside of the big district with good and safe access to residential areas. However, waiting for the bus is an experience that could be improved (Figure. 3.40 to 3.41). The lack of seating at bus stops on the road is a problem. Additional shelters at bus stops along the busiest routes would protect users from weather conditions and provide a more comfortable experience. The light-rail transit hub also does not have a well-functioning waiting area above the street level. (Figure. 3.42)



Figure 3.40. The bus-stop in the old area



Figure 3.41. The bus-stop in the new area



Figure 3.42. The light rail station in the big district

### XIII. Conclusion

In general, the big district is split by two models of residence, the old industrial residential area and the new commercial housing area. A key question then is how to build the connection between each of these two areas. In fact, both of them have advantages and disadvantages. In terms of the landscape, the old area has many diverse open spaces that are connected in an open space network but they are not well maintained; meanwhile the new area has many generic open spaces with good maintenance and management, but they do not support a vibrant public realm. Attractive ground floor facades and street elements make the streetscape attractive in the old area, but it is also unpleasant due to the lack of infrastructure and management and a kind of disordered parking. In addition, the new area is less livable and human-scaled due to the large scale of the development. Connecting these two areas by renewing and refining some parts of the landscape in the old area as well as transforming the giant scale of the new area into a more human scale could strengthen the continuity of public space and public network overall.

### 3.2.3 *Emotional evaluations of of Xiejiawan residential area, Jiulongpo District, Chongqing*

In addition to evaluating the physical qualities of the city's public space. I also conducted a qualitative research investigation on the emotional qualities of these areas of the city from the perspective of residents. This approach is based on a long-established methodology of in-depth interviewing to capture people's personal experiences, perspectives about places in their lives and to explore resident's emotional bonds to the place, or their place attachments (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2013).

#### I. In-Depth Resident Interviews

Since I wanted to conduct a study on people's place attachments to guide my design strategies, I decided to employ the interview methodology. Overall, the interview covered several lines of questioning, all focusing on people's experience of, and feelings about, the everyday places of their lives. Given the considerations above, I list four categories of questions that can help structure my interviews.

First, I began with a set of questions establishing where people lived, for how long and what they value most about living there. Second, I asked questions about people's daily routines, and where they might go on a typical day. Third, I asked my interviewees about their preferred experiences by asking them what they would change, what they would preserve and how they would describe their ideal place to live. Fourth, I asked residents a set of questions about place history and place memory including any special places that were lost in the redevelopment process. (Appendix I)

Not all four categories of questions needed to be employed in every interview as some volunteered stories of place on their own. But this interview guide provided a helpful basic structure for the interviews. Moreover, I went through several rounds of piloting the interview before I settled on the final interview protocol.

## II. Enlisting Participants

In conducting this research, I sought to interview a small sample of the population which would, by and large, be somewhat representative of some larger population. Based on my own living experience in this area of Chongqing, I choose my interviewees as follows: (Table 3-1)

<b>65+</b>				
	Grew up in other cities. Work in the factory and retired. Live in the old area.	Grew up in other cities. Does not work in the factory. Live in the old area.	Grew up in other cities. Work in the factory and retired. Live in the new area.	Grew up in other cities. Does not work in the factory. Live in the new area.
	.....			
<b>65</b>   <b>45</b>				
	Grew up in Chongqing. Work in the factory. Live in the old area.	Grew up in Chongqing. Does not work in the factory. Live in the old area.	Grew up in Chongqing. Work in the factory. Live in the new area.	Grew up in other cities. Does not work in the factory. Live in the new area.
	.....			
<b>45</b>   <b>25</b>				
	Grew up in Chongqing. Work in the factory. Live in the old area.	Grew up in Chongqing. Does not work in the factory. Live in the old area.	Grew up in Chongqing. Work in the factory. Live in the new area.	Grew up in other cities. Does not work in the factory. Live in the new area.
	.....			

Table 3-1. Enlisting participants

Firstly, I chose the sample based on ages ranging from 25 to over 65 covering three main groups of local population: the younger adult generation, the middle-aged generation and the elderly population. The young adult interviewees were born or grew up after the policy of national reform in 1987. Most of them enjoy the benefit of social reform and urban development. Now they are gradually becoming the backbone for the development of the country. In this sense, their growing needs are trending future development. The middle-aged generation has experienced the dramatic change of the country from the planned economy to the free-market economy. Most of them play important roles in different fields. In this sense, they have capabilities to seek better living environments due to their economic strength. Most of the elder generation are those who have already retired. They use the current living spaces most frequently due to their free time.

Secondly, I use the place of birth as one of the criteria to evaluate people's emotional bonds to this place. Based on my living experience, nearly half of the participants were born in other cities instead of Chongqing. However, when taking age into consideration, I find that the distributions change based on different generations. Most elder generations are born in other cities and moved to Chongqing for working and living because of the national development and civic war. After that, the proportion of people born in this place gradually increased as did the now middle-age population. And the situation continues for the younger generations.

Finally, it is the place of work, which I used as another standard to vary my interview sample. Because of the reform of the industrial group, the relationship between people and place changes as well. For the elder generations, most of them come to this place as formal workers or associated family members of the big industrial group. In this sense, most of them have strong bonds to this group and place. For the middle-age generations, most of them were born, grew up and worked in this industrial group in the time of the planned economy. However, after the reform in 1987, some of them kept working in this group while some of them left to work for other businesses. In this sense, their emotional bonds are different from their parents but as strong as their parents. For the young generations, most of them were born and grew up in this place. Some of them worked in this group first and then left for other opportunities later. Some of them worked for this group at beginning. In this sense, they view this group and place fondly as the place of their childhood memories and background.

All in all, this sample can cover most of the residents in this place. However, I am also aware of my methodological shortcomings. For example, I could have considered other criteria like whether people rent or own their housing. In fact, all my interviewees are the owners of their houses. Moreover, it would be better if I get the specific demographic data. As a result, I could only make suppositions based on my sample and my own living experience and observations.



#### IV. Key Interview Findings

After the interviews, I reorganize the fragmented information and drew conclusions in five general areas: the general feelings of the place, the routines of everyday life, the major destinations and functions, the major issues of concern, and potential spaces.

##### a. General feelings of the place

The general reason most people live in Chongqing is that it meets their emotional and physical needs. The emotional aspect is related to social relations with families, friends, clients and businesses, but it is also very much related to the places themselves and how places meet people's needs. For example, one elderly man told me that:

“I think it is good for me to live in this area. Everything is familiar and convenient. I go to the farm market to get fresh food and fruits. You can see the dried kelp there. It tastes really good and much cheaper than the Yonghui supermarket and the Ola supermarket. I go there to find somethings special every week with my friends. It is easy to go. Just taking the bus in front of the plaza, we can get there directly. We also take a walk together in the afternoon or after dinner, walking around the neighborhood and chitchatting.”

Another middle-aged man, who lived in the old big industrial associated district before and lives in the new neighborhood now, told me why he chose the new district:

“I would like to live in this district because most of my friends and families live here. It is easy to get together whenever I want. The location is really good for its easy accessibility to public transportation hub and complete infrastructures, such as the supermarket, the hospital, the schools and the open spaces.”

Since most participants have strong social ties to this place and this city, they would like to live here rather move to another place. The physical parts refer to the living habitats including geographic conditions, foods, living conditions and expense, transportation and public facilities. The geographic conditions of Chongqing are not that comfortable to live for the hot summer and chilly winter. However, all the people love the food and are satisfied with the convenient transportation and location in this place. Also, the living expense in this area is relatively low, but the living conditions varies from the old area to the new area, while the two types of area disconnected from each other.

b. Routines of everyday life

The routines of everyday life vary across different generations and backgrounds. In order to get a picture of the diversity life in this place, I chose some of the typical life styles from each generation.

- The elder generation

As a typical elderly person in this neighborhood, Mr. Li is a retired worker of the Jianshe Industrial Group (Figure. 3.44). He has been living in the industrial group associated residential area for 62 years and has moved within the area about eight times. He has been living in his current neighborhood for over 18 years, as it is close to his son's previous workplace. He described his everyday life as follows (Figure. 3.45):

"I get up at about 6:00 am. After daily washing and breakfast, I go out for one hour from about 7:00 am to 8:00 am with some of my friends living nearby. We go to farm-markets or supermarkets to get some food and other daily necessities. I am back home at about 8:00 am. I do some housework, read newspapers or books and then prepare lunch from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm, staying at home. After lunch, I usually have a nap for about 30 mins to 1 hour. And then I go out with my wife or some of my friends to have a walk, from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Sometimes, we walk along the waterfront park to enjoy the beautiful view and natural environment. Sometimes we go to the pedestrian street in the closet commercial area, sit down on the comfortable bench under the trees, chitchat with friends, and enjoy the present amusement of watching people pass by. Even



Figure 3.44. Mr. Li in his home

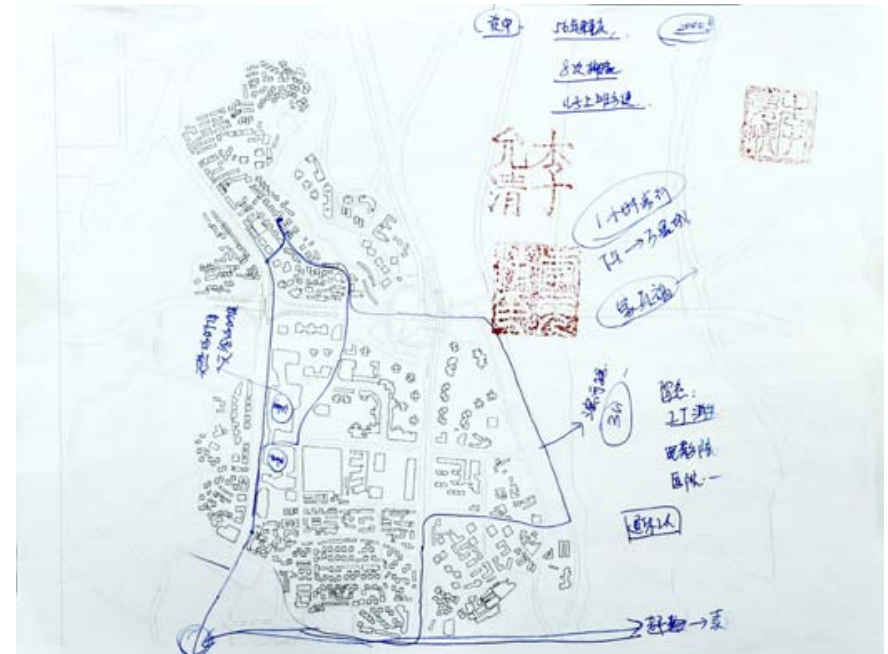


Figure 3.45. Mr. Li's map of everyday life

though there is a big shopping mall in the post-industrial site, it is a kind of lack of real public space and continuous pedestrian network due to the busy streets. At about 5:00pm, we go back to home for dinner and after a rest, go to bed.

In fact, we used to go the cinema plaza and community club, which is closer to my home, to enjoy the afternoon time or after dinner. However, due to the demolish of these constructions and the lack of maintaining, the plaza now turns to be a kind of abandon place. Even though these commercial areas can fulfill my needs for recreation, I still miss the public open space nearby with easier accessibilities especially in the bad weather and for the elders like me.”

From this typical example of the elder participants’ daily rounds, we can see that the elders actively participate the public realm most of the day time and they enjoy the urban life. Good accessibility and walking experience are important reasons for them to choose their destinations. When resting or staying in a place, safety, public infrastructure and degree of publicness of a place are the main concerns for them. In fact, they have growing needs for open spaces close to their homes with easy access and supports for their increasing age. Moreover, since most of them worked for the industrial group all their life, they have strong self-identities as members of the group and intense emotional bonds to local places, even though some of them have been reconstructed or torn down.

Different from the retired workers, another small group of older people work in services or smaller, independent/family-run businesses, such as Ms. Wang, who is the owner of family pastry store. She has lived in this neighborhood for 25 years since she went to Chongqing with her family to make a living after leaving the countryside. For an individual business owner like her, her daily life is different:

“I just stay at the store every day. At first, I rent the ground floor apartment and transformed it as a store like today. I also live in this apartment with my family. And now I buy this apartment. It is very convenient to work and live in the same place, just like a traditional individual workshop. I take account of two or more things together. When people need buy something, I come here and serve them. When no customers here, I make snacks, do housework and have lunch or dinner in the room. I do not need to go to the market to get materials. All these things are delivered by the suppliers or get by my husband and children. Since the shop open the whole day from 5:30 am to 8:30 pm 7 days a week, I seldom go to other places. But for the weekend or some specially day, I go to parks or some green spaces in other district with my family.”

Even though, this group of people is not a big part of the population, and they do not use the public realm as frequently as the retired workers do, I still found that they need open spaces or green spaces to hang out with their families. In this sense, an inviting public space with good accessibility is also important for them.

- The middle-age generation

For the middle-aged generation, they make up a large portion of people living in this place. However, due to the different background and experience, their routines of everyday life area also unique to their age group.

For example, Ms. Liu is a retired engineer of the industrial group (Figure. 3.46). She was born, grew up and worked in this big district for 60 years, and has lived in this neighborhood for 50 years. In fact, she retired at the age of 50 because of the welfare policy and she spends her time on her interests as an amateur tailor with three cats and two dogs. As a “busy” retired engineer, her daily life goes as follows (Figure. 3.47):

“I wake up at about 6:30 am to 7:00 am. After a simple daily washing, I go out to walk dogs at about 7:30 am. I walk around for about 1 hour along the neighborhood streets and go to the early farm market to get some fresh food. When I am back home at about 8:30 am, I have my breakfast, do some housework and take care of my pets. From 9:30 am to 11:30 am, I work with the clothes while checking my stocks with some operations. After that, I have my lunch and have a nap for a while. Sometimes, my friends who work nearby drop by and we have lunch together. From 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, I keep work with clothes and checking my stocks. After that, I walk the dogs again from about 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm. Since I have more time for the afternoon, I go to the open spaces in the new area or the waterfront park. Sometimes my friends or child go with me.



Figure 3.46. Ms. Liu in her home



Figure 3.47. Ms. Liu's map of everyday life

Sometimes I go alone, meet some friends of mine or friends of my dogs, standing aside and chitchatting during the process of walking. Then, I go back and have my dinner at about 6:30pm. After that, I do some housework, work with the clothes while watching TV, or read some book from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Actually, when I was young, I would like to hang out with my family and friends after dinner in the neighborhood open spaces or the commercial areas. However, the growth of age, I would like to choose some easy accessible place to stay after dinner. However, since the reform and move-out of the industry, these neighborhood places area lack of maintain and infrastructures, such as the shelters and seats. Therefore, I prefer stay at home rather than go outside.”

Mrs. Zhao is the neighborhood of Ms Liu in the old neighborhood (Figure 3.48). However, since she is a little bit younger, she still works in a company nearby. So, the routine of her life is different (Figure. 3.49):

“On a weekday, I go to work from 9:00 am to 5:00pm. It is very convenient to go with several direct buses at the nearest bus-stop. After work, when I go back, I go the farm-market or super-market to get some food. And then have dinner with my family at round 7:00 pm. On the weekends, I prefer to go the suburban area or parks with good environmental conditions to enjoy the nature.”



Figure 3.48. Mrs. Zhao in her home

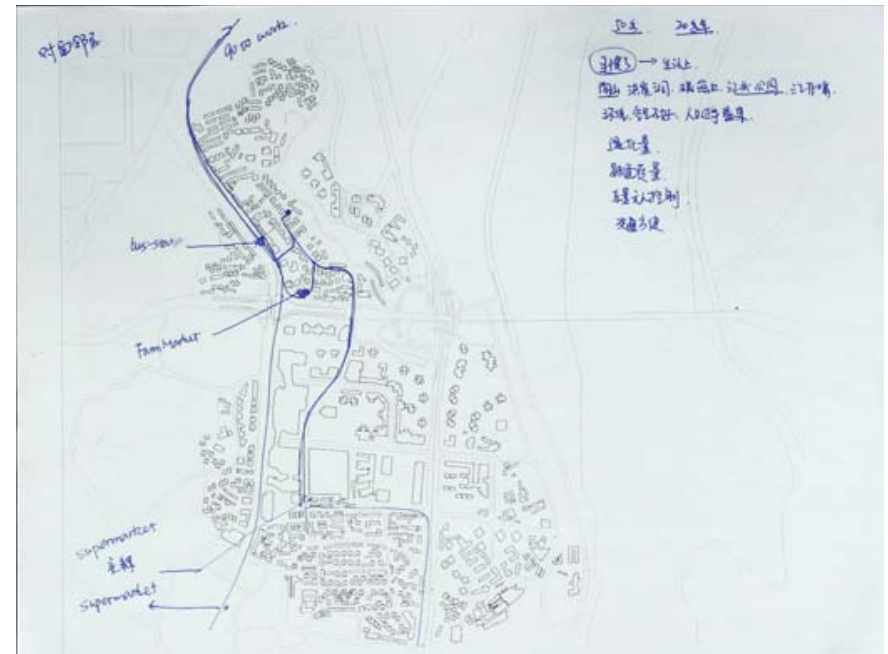


Figure 3.49. Mrs. Zhao's map of everyday life

Ms. Zhao is an individual owner of a delicatessen in the old area (Figure. 3.50). She is also one of the people making a living in the urban area after leaving the countryside for more than 20 years and live in this neighborhood for about 10 years. The routine of her life goes like this (Figure. 3.51):

“I get up early in the morning, like about 4:00 am to prepare the food for today. The shop opens at about 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. I stand in front to the delicatessen to serve the customers. Then I go

back to my home, have lunch, have a nap and do some housework from 12:30 pm to 4:00 pm. And then, the shop opens again from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. After that, I go back home, have dinner with my families at about 7:30 pm. And then I hang out with my families or my friends to go to the pedestrian street in the old commercial area to enjoy the pleasure of urban life or go to the sports park to do some easy public-free exercises from 8:00pm to 10 pm. After that, I go back home and go to bed.”



Figure 3.50. Ms. Zhao in her shop

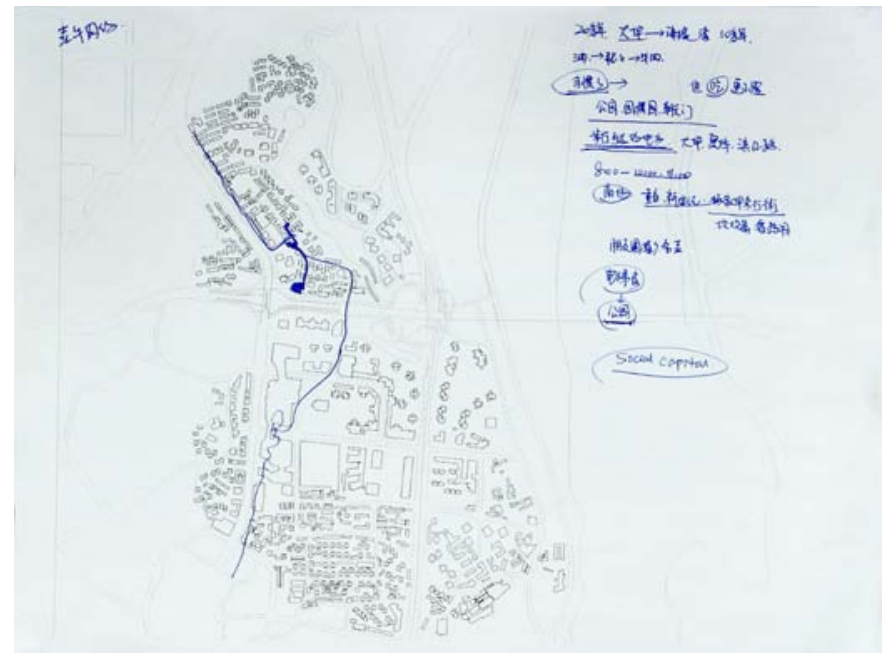


Figure 3.51. Ms. Zhao's map of everyday life

From the interviewing, I find that although different people with various backgrounds and experiences have different needs for living environment, they are all eager for public open space with good accessibility and a pleasant environment. For the retired and self-employed people with welfare guarantees such as Ms. Liu and Mr. Yi, who are middle-class and have good education, they have more free time to enjoy the urban life, concerning more details about what they need for a public space as well as their emotional bonds and memories of the place. For the people like Mrs. Zhao, who is also middle-class and has a good education, but still works regularly, they do not have time to go far away for leisure during the weekdays, so it is important to have a pleasant open space with plenty of green elements just like their ideal garden close to their apartments to rest and relax for a while after work at night. For people like Ms. Zhao, who come from the countryside and do not have strong welfare guarantees like the workers for the industrial groups, most of them have to work longer. In this sense, they do not have time to go anywhere, they just stay in the shop. However, they also enjoy the urban life, to enjoy livable pedestrian streets or go to the sports park for exercise.

- The young adult generation

The young generation consists of people with diverse background due to dramatic urban development. For the families of the Jianshe industrial group, who were born and grew up in this district, some have worked in the factory while some have not. For the people who do not have a relationship to the Jianshe industrial group, some of them live in the old area, while other live in the new area. Due to the expansion of housing in the new area, most of the younger generation living in the new area are new residents here, while some of them live in the old area temporarily for the low-rent. Meanwhile, some of the younger generation associated with the industrial group live in the old area, while some live in the new area or other areas or cities. For this group, I chose two participants to show the general daily life of the younger generation in the big district.

Ms. Zhou is also the new residents in the new neighborhood. She is 39 years old mum with two kids: one is 10 and the other is 5. She is a native Chongqing person and lives in this new neighborhood for 4 years. Because of her business, she and her husbands have to stay in other cities for about 10-15 days per month. When she lives in this place, her daily life goes like this (Figure. 3.52):

“On the week day, I send my children to the kindergarten and elementary school. And then I stay at home most of the time, working online and doing some housework. Sometimes I go to meet with my friends, go shopping to go to the supermarket in the big shopping mall nearby. At about 4:00pm, I pick up my kids from

school and prepare dinner. And then stay with them until go to bed. On the weekend, sometimes I drive to suburban area with my family to enjoy the nature; sometimes I hang out with my friends and families together.”

Ms. Jiang was born and grew up in this old neighborhood and has lived there with her parents for 30 years. But she works in a new company which is close to her home. One of her typical days goes like this (Figure. 3.53):

“On the weekday, I drive to work at about 8:00 am, and then back home at around 6:30 pm. After that, I go to the fitness club or have a walk with my parents to the waterfront park. However, sometimes I hang out with my friends or colleagues directly after work and

back home at about 10:00pm or later. On the weekday, I usually hang out with my friends in other districts.”

For the younger generation, the residential district is the place to fulfill their basic needs of living in a good environment, with complete infrastructure, and convenient transportation to other places. They are not the main population of the old area but they take up a large part in the new area. For the people living in the new area, living in the gated community can satisfy their basic needs on weekdays. For the people living in the old area, it seems that they do not use the open space in the old community. However, they also have needs for open spaces after work even not with that good accessibilities such as the waterfront park.

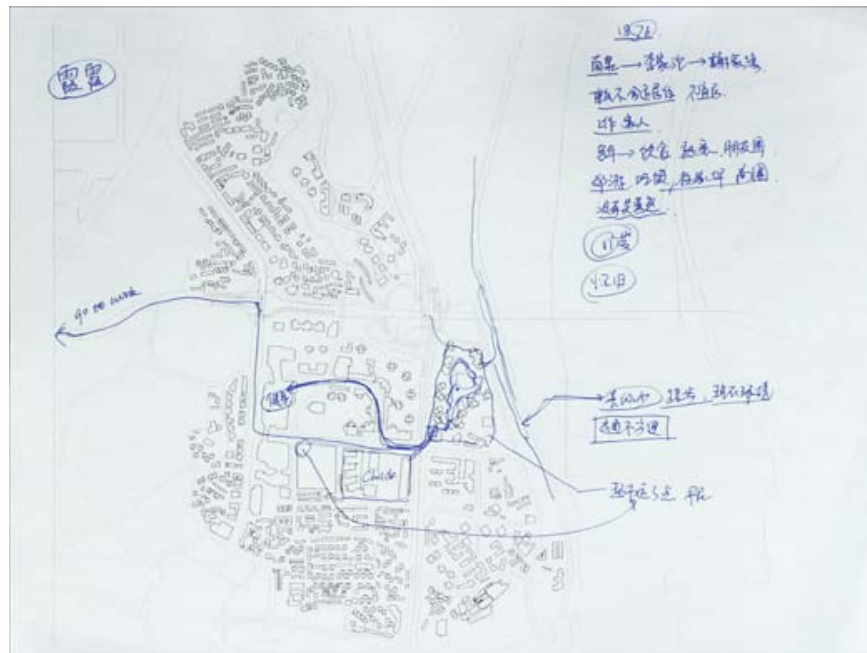


Figure 3.52. Ms. Zhou's map of everyday life

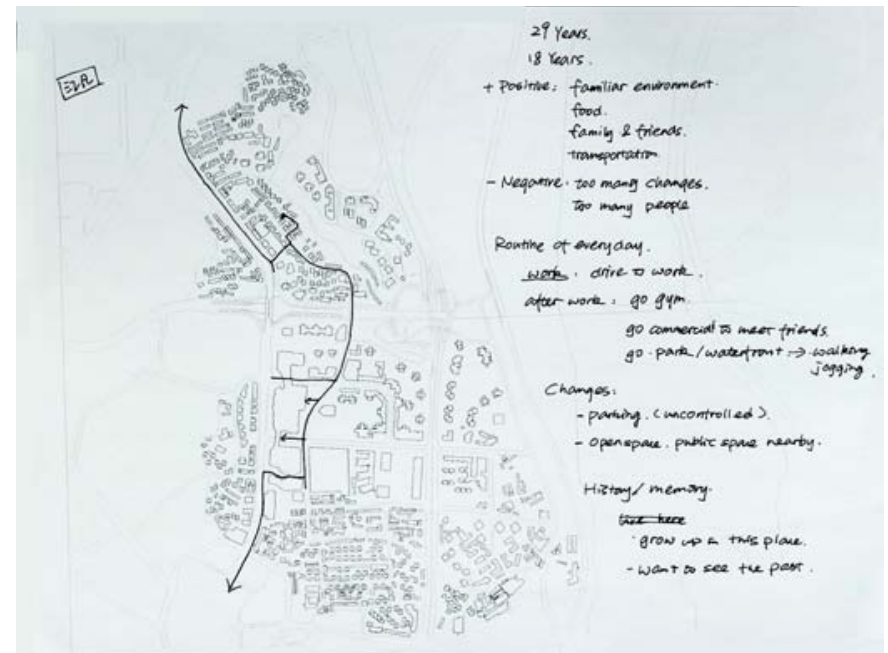


Figure 3.53. Ms. Jiang's map of everyday life

c. Major destinations and functions

From the interviews, I found some important places in the district as major destinations for daily life with various functions. Some of them are historical places, which need to remain or be rebuilt, while some of them are existing places which need to be refined or reconstructed and others are new places. In this section, I summarize the key destinations that were discussed by interviewees and I provide a composite map of these places which, in turn, informed my design process. This map (Figure. 3.54) formed a sort of base map to inform the specific spaces I chose for specific site design interventions.

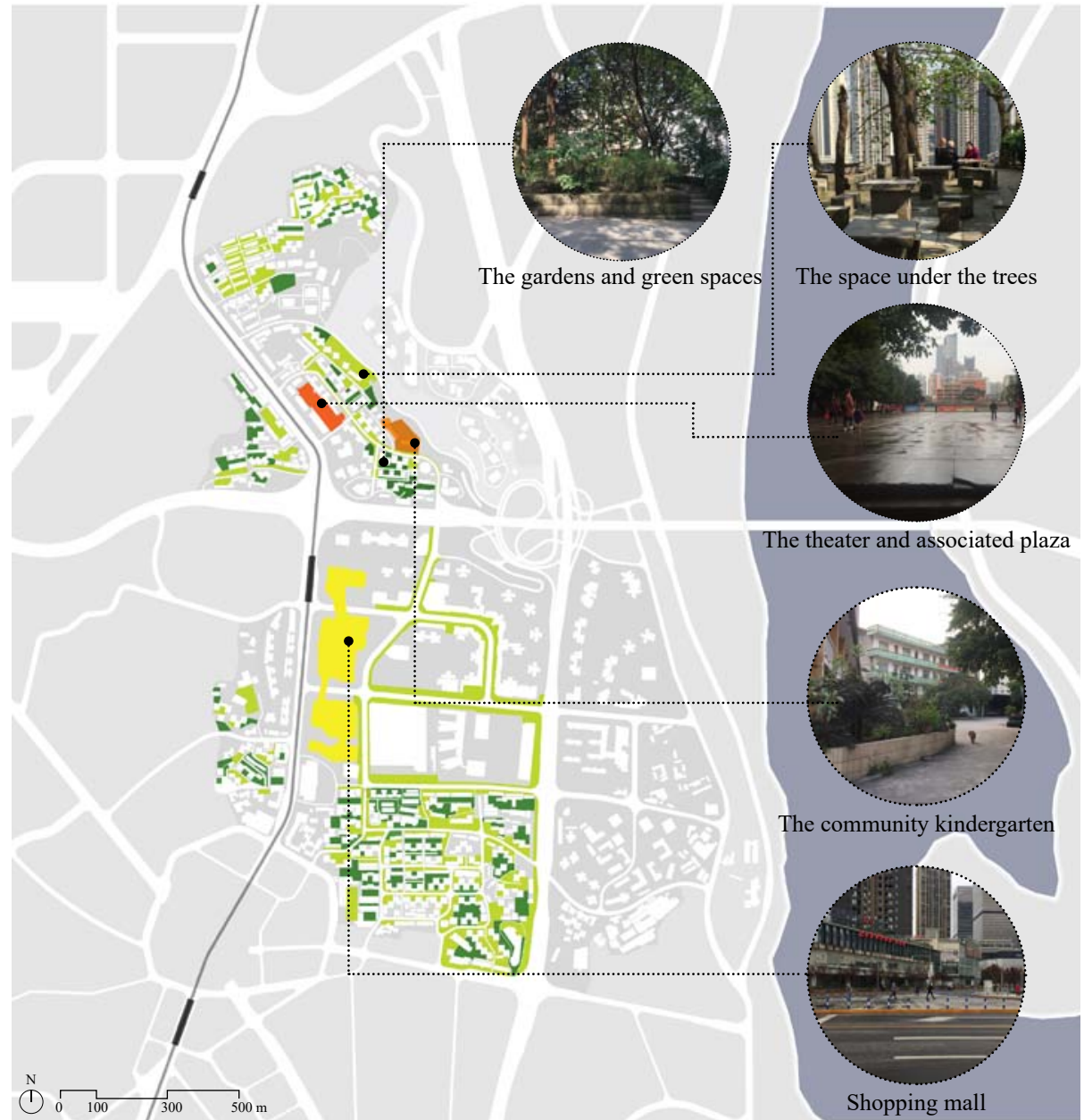


Figure 3.54. Map of major destinations and functions

- The theater and associated plaza

The theater and associated plaza used to be the landmark and center of the community. At this location there were a lot of ceremonies and activities ranging from morning exercise to annual entertainment and sports events, from children's entertainment parties to the Spring Festival carnival, from community programs to industrial formal meetings. Ordinarily, people like to gather in this plaza after dinner in the weekdays. If it is a good day on the weekend, the plaza would be crowded all the time.

- The community kindergarten

The community kindergarten used to be the place for young children under seven years old to attend school. It served as a kindergarten for two generations. However, now it is turned into a restaurant for BBQ, which is too noisy and air-polluted for the residential area. Residents always complain about strangers invading their place. Some residents suggest that it would be better if the kindergarten could be transformed as a community dining hall for the elders and the middle-aged residents, rather than a totally commercial place.

- Shopping Mall

The shopping mall and the associated plazas are places where people like to go. Most of time, they do not go to buy anything. Instead, they wander inside and outside the shopping mall just to walk after lunch or dinner. If there is free public seating or gathering places, people like to sit there to enjoy the lively urban atmosphere.

- The space under the trees

This is the most typical scenario in this city: people gathering under the tree canopy for shade in the hot daytime or for chitchat after dinner. The shapes of the trees are so special and strong that they create a clear sense of space and identity. Even though there is no infrastructure or furniture under the trees, people would take their own seats and gather there, playing cards, chess or just chatting. However, although the trees are in good conditions in the old area, the other street elements need to be refined eagerly, such as the pavement, the benches and the shelters.

- The gardens and green spaces

In the process of interviewing, one of the most frequently mentioned key words is "garden". People described their ideal place of living with gardens close to their apartment or within a walkable distance. In the old area, there are a plenty of green spaces. However, people do not treat them as their ideal garden, since most of the green spaces are only for viewing and are surrounded by fences to prevent people to go into. In this sense, these spaces could be more popular and inviting if the fences are removed and terrace or resting spaces add in the green vegetations, just transform them into real gardens.

d. Areas of major concern issues

- The lack of infrastructure

In order to create an inviting and pleasing place for the public, the infrastructure plays a significant role. For the new neighborhood, even though it seems to have plenty of well-designed and well-maintained infrastructure inside the gated community, it is hard to satisfy the full needs of the residents while it is also lacking public infrastructure outside the gates. The same conditions happen in the old neighborhood. Due to the lack of governmental management and maintenance, most of the old areas do not have enough basic infrastructure. But again, because of the lack of control, people make some infrastructure like seats, terraces or shelters on their own spontaneously. Different from the well-ordered gated communities, the old open communities are kind of disordered or perhaps more accurately, have their own kind of ‘messy’ order as lively combinations of collectivity and individuality.

- Safety

People have different ideas about the issue of safety. On the one hand, some prefer the gated community with more monitoring facilities, a controlled access system and regular security patrol, while others argue that it is hard to maintain a sense of support and safety to the high density, the diversity of the population, and the lack of open spaces and programs for communication. On the other hand, some people think that the old neighborhood is safer with less density, less diversity and “eyes on the street” since most of residents know each other, while some argue that it is too open as a residential area to be safe.

- The surface parking

For the old area, a main concern is the lack of control of the surface parking. Due to the reform of the industrial area, some aspects of community management are neglected. Now, nobody knows which organization or department of the local government is responsible for managing the surface parking. Since it is free to park in the old area, most of the people living around the area park here, which makes the typical neighborhood streets narrow, uncomfortable and unsafe for pedestrians. Moreover, it is also a potential risk in emergencies, since the width of the street with surface parking does not now allow for a fire engine or ambulance to pass. In this sense, it is necessary to move or control the surface parking in the old area.

- The loss of identity, history and memories

When I asked interviewees questions about the history of this place, most people said they cared about this history. However, when I dove into the details of the interview data, I realized there were some key distinctions. For example, people who once had employment relationships with the industrial group really have a strong sense of place identity here and cherish the history of the industrial groups because their own lives are also part of that history. In this sense, they want the history of this place to be presented in an appropriate way, as a way to see the past of their life. The new residents or young generations, who do not have such strong bonds to the industrial history, think that to present the history of the place is important in general, but they do not have more detailed thoughts about the history what need to be represented and what could be ignored.

e. Potential spaces

Based on the interviews and spatial evaluations, I found 12 potential spaces as starting points to try to reconsider and rebuild the relationship between people and place. These places include the places in the old area such as post-industrial associated constructions, squares, gardens, and parking lot, the places in the new area such as the promenade, commercial public space, and semi-private space, and the common places in both area such as the green streets and vertical gardens. (Figure. 3.55)

Inspired by the book by Christopher Alexander, A Pattern Language, and based on the specific potential spaces, I would like to conclude with proposed pattern languages for this place I have studied. The pattern language includes two parts: one is the public conditions like transportation, health, entertainment, education, food and history; the other one is the living conditions like open spaces, green spaces, neighborhood and routines of everyday life. The public conditions are the essential elements to support people's growing needs for living in this place, while the living conditions related to the qualities of the spaces as ways to provide various activities and programs that reflect a vibrant public life.

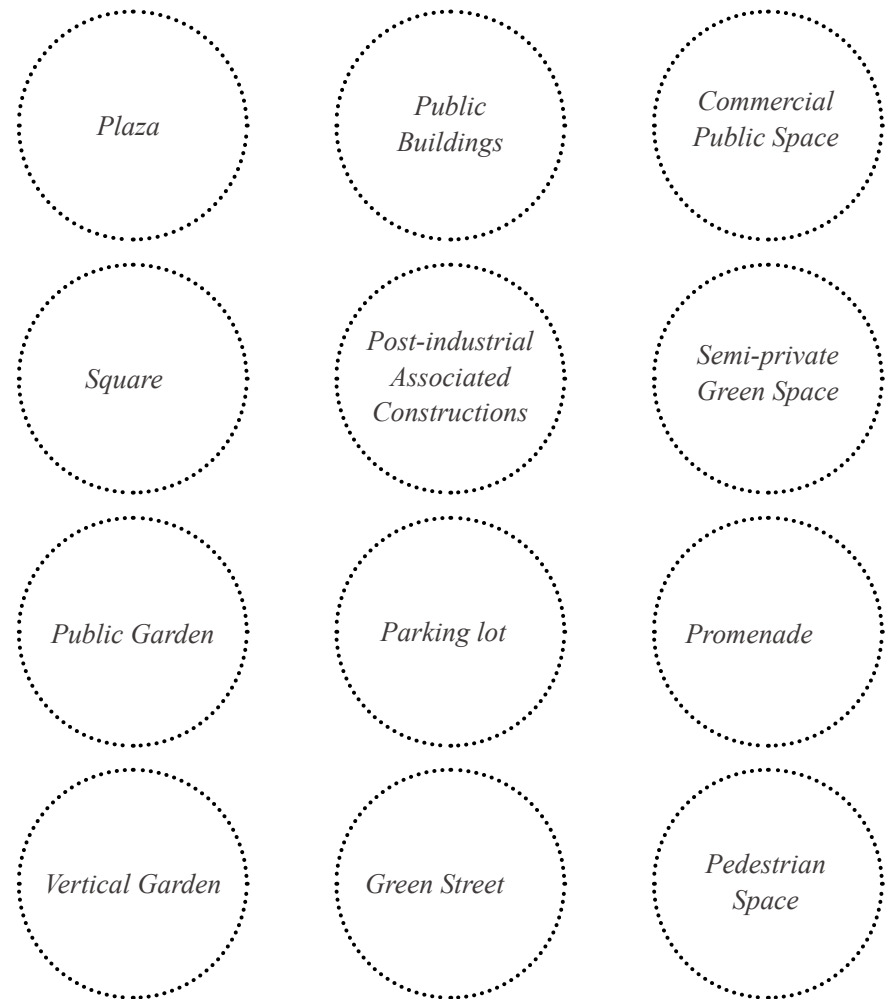


Figure 3.55. Potential spaces

### 3.3 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

I would like to heal the split of the district by renewal and refine the landscape while creating new pattern languages for this place. Just as Alexander did, the new pattern language could describe the design proposal from design principles to design applications including frameworks at the district scale to street elements at the human scale. I would like to start with the design principles which are drawn directly from the design study and could instruct the design applications in the next chapter.

This big district, including the old areas and the new ones, has a fine physical base for inviting more people to walk and stay of being outdoor to enjoy the urban life time. The streetscape and the public open spaces basically have the factors that are needed for creating a more livable urban space. The most important findings of the evaluations could be outlined in five overall themes as below, which need to be addressed in order to create a livable residential district and could be used as design principles for the next chapter as design application.



Figure 3.56. People in the post-industrial residential area

### 3.3.1 Identity

Identity is one of the typical features of attractive communities and districts. Inhabitants have similar backgrounds, share the industrial culture, and follow the similar routines and programs in this place. From generation to generation, as elements of one big integrity, the industrial group, these collective identities generate social pride of this community. (Figure 3.57)

“Every community has an IDENTITY; offering a Coherent reflection of the CHARACTERISTICS of its inhabitants, culture, and programme and lifestyle through a PARTICULAR physical form. This collective identity engenders mutual social PRIDE based on INTEGRITY, recognizable both by its inhabitants and visitors. The strength of identity of a place can be measured by its overall visual coherence and recognizability.” (MVRDV, 2012)

“A healthy social life is found only, when in the mirror of each soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the whole community the virtue of each one is living.” (Rudolf Steiner)



Figure 3.57. People in the post-industrial residential area

### 3.3.2 Flexibility

Flexibility is another feature of good communities and districts. As distinct from the short-term construction of the new “Block Attack,” most of the old residential districts are built gradually and experience several times of regeneration in order to fulfill the gradually increasing needs of residents. Because of such long-term modification, communities and spaces become more extensible and adaptable in order to response to various changes and needs rather than short-term planning. (Figure 3.58)

“Communities are FLEXIBILITY; they ACCEPT the inevitability of changing needs and wishes over time. Flexible communities are EXTENSIBLE and ADAPTABLE, which allows them to be responsive to immediate needs using the resources available as PROTOTYPES for future possibilities. Flexibility can be measured by the ability to modify one's own surroundings, an ability enabled by ownership and the absence of planning or regulatory controls.” (MVRDV, 2012)

“We are more concerned with “flow” than with “measure”. We have to create architecture and town planning which, though built form, can make meaningful the change, the growth, the flow, the vitality of the community.” (Alison and Peter Smithson, ‘Cluster City’, The Architectural Review, 1957)

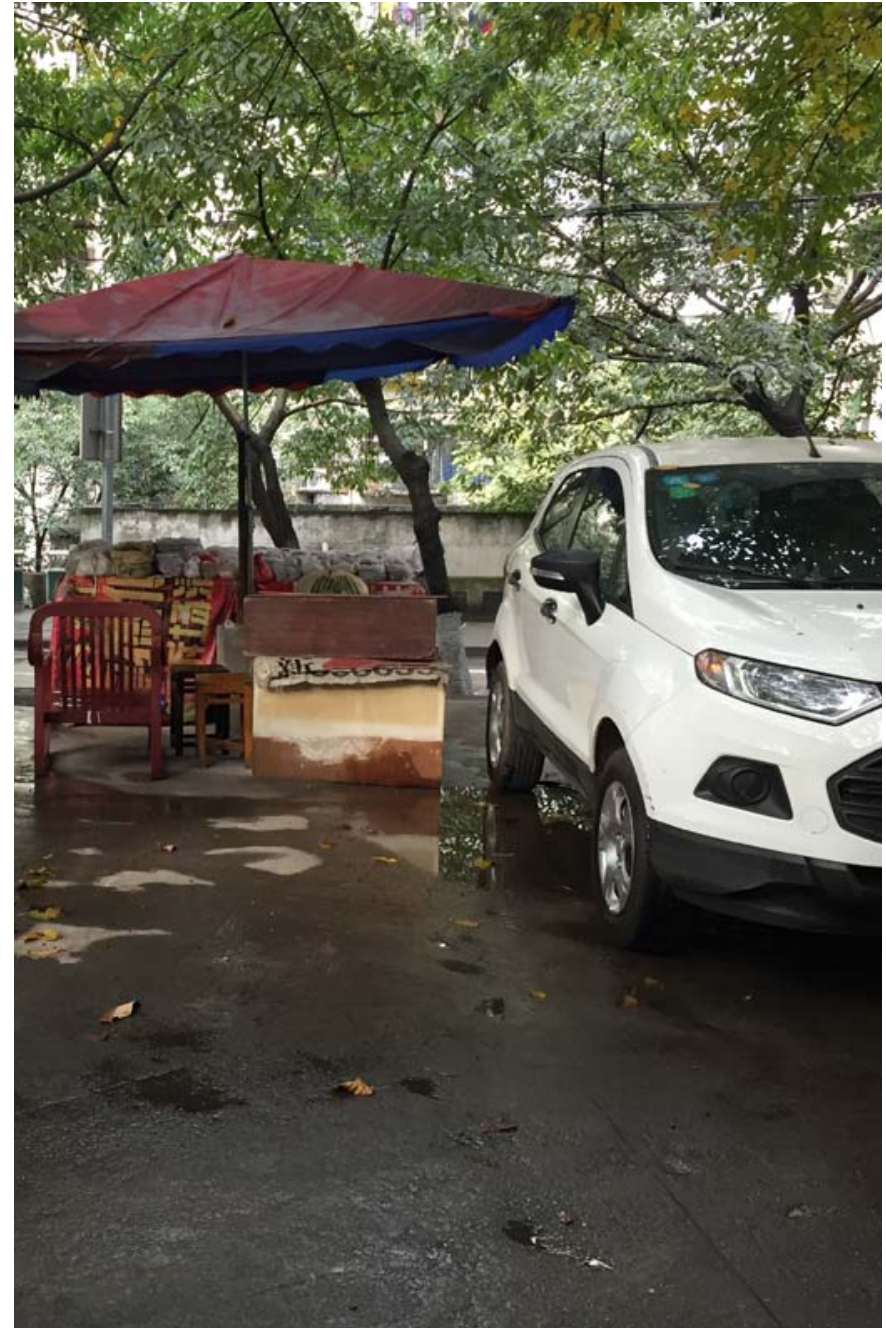


Figure 3.58. Flexible space use in the post-industrial area

### 3.3.3 Collectivity

Collectivity is also a feature of the good communities and districts. Based on the community identities, just like the relationship of collaboration in work in the factories, they extend this kind of relationship in their living space, sharing the way of living and qualities. In this sense, the communities become more safety and supportive with such social capitals with more semi-public common spaces. (Figure 3.59)

“Communities are COLLECTIVE; they offer the feeling of being part of a safe and mutually SUPPORTIVE group, with SHARED ways of living, ambitions, characters and qualities, tied together by a dense social fabric Spatially they are often organized around a SEMI-PUBLIC common space, with shared facilities or resources. Collectivity can be measured by the mix of private to public space and the presence of common programmes.” (MVRDV, 2012)

“The urban, architectural and civil wealth of a city is that of its collective spaces, that of all the places where collective life develops, is represented and is remembered.” (Manuel de Sola-Morales, ‘Public Spaces, Collective Spaces’, La Vanguardia, 1992)



Figure 3.59. Collective space use in the post-industrial area

### 3.3.4 Publicness

Publicness is another feature focusing more on open space and free or democratic program and activities. It might be because of the nature of workers, it is hard to be autocratic in such a big-scaled industrial group, even in the face of a less tolerant political sphere. Compare with the blur boundary of public and private as collectivity, publicness is more like to provide common functional space and program to the public. (Figure 3.60)

“Communities are PUBLIC; they are FREE and OPEN, offering space for SOCIAL activities, collective debate and even dissent. Well-considered public space carries the power to reinforce the DEMOCRATIC values of an open society, even in the face of a less tolerant political sphere. Publicness can be measured simplistically as the proportion of space dedicated to common functions compared with private function.” (MVRDV, 2012)

“One may describe the city, in its social aspect, as a special framework directed toward the creation of differentiated opportunities for a common life and a significant collective drama.” (Lewis Mumford, ‘What is a City?’, Architectural Record, 1937)



Figure 3.60. Public space use in the post-industrial area

### 3.3.5 Human-scaled

Design at the human-scale is one of the most common features to good communities and districts. Due to the lack of planning and designing for these old communities, most of them are built based on living experience and are modified to meet growing and changing needs. In this sense, the built of environment follows the traditional way of making a livable place. Although it could have many short-comings and is less efficient, these communities are built according to the perspective of people living in the place. (Figure 3.61)

“Communities are HUMAN-SCALED, offering a PROPORTIONAL, material and SPATIAL INTIMACY that is appropriate for dwelling and organizing daily life. Human-scaled spaces are space of SOCIAL encounter and engagement; the foundations of a health CIVIC sphere. Whether or not a space is human-scaled is determined by its proportions; space that are low in height, narrow and modulated can be considered human-scaled.” (MVRDV, 2012)

“It is a great pleasure to walk on the paved narrow streets of an old town and hear the sound of one’s own footsteps reflected back from the surrounding walls; I touch the city with my ears, and grasp the scale of its spaces ...”

(Juhani Pallasmaa, ‘Inhabiting Space and Time-the Loss and Recovery of Public Space’, 2007 in Avermaete, Havik & Teerds (ends.) Architectural Positions)



Figure 3.61. Human-scaled space use in the post-industrial area

### 3.3.6 *Conclusion*

There are no definitive criteria or rules that define ideal urban living qualities, but there are broad principles, each representing different strengths and opportunities. However, in order to learn from these principles, it is important to be able to evaluate them, and to assess a community's spatial qualities. Based on the background research and spatial evaluations I conducted for this thesis, I developed the Urban Community Quality Wheel to capture these key qualities. The Urban Community Quality Wheel is offered as a tool in this paper to assess projects researched and produced, and to test what works, and what does not. The quality of communities is their ability to combine two seemingly competing characteristics: density and individuality. Good urban communities are dense, public and collective; they also have a clear identity and yet show flexibility. The challenge for the future design of urban living spaces is to combine density and individuality, serving both the general needs of the environment, and the personal needs of the inhabitant.

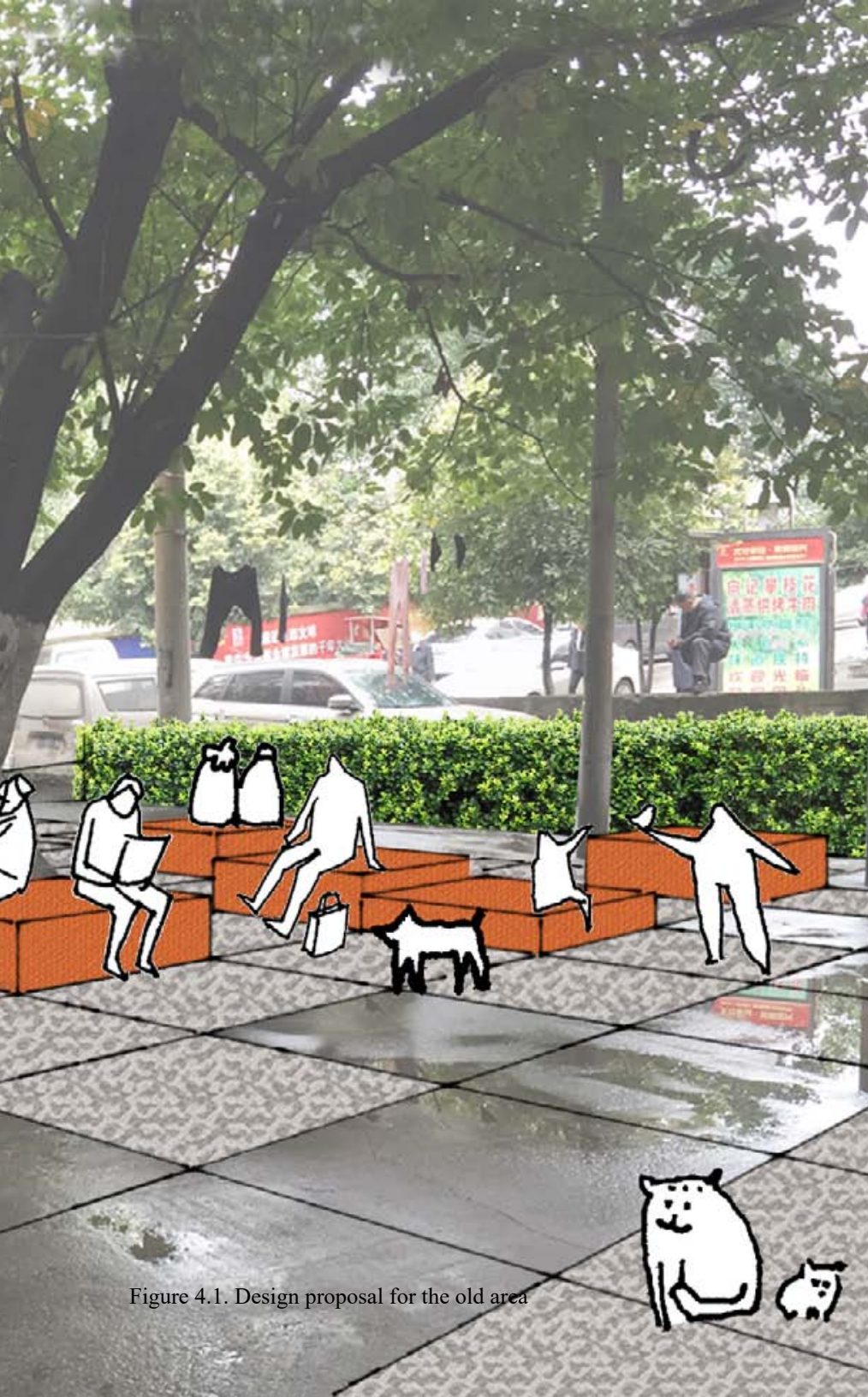


Figure 4.1. Design proposal for the old area

## Chapter 4. DESIGN APPLICATION

In this chapter, I demonstrate how I implemented the research described in Chapters Two and Three into my design proposals. The design applications include two different aspects. On the district scale, I have developed design principles, strategies, and a framework. On the human scale, I offer specific site designs and associated programs that would enable new routines of everyday life to emerge.

## 4.1 DESIGN STRATEGIES

Based on the conclusions from the design studies described in Chapter Three, I put the potential spaces targeted for design intervention into three categories in order to form an overall framework and design strategy. The three types of spaces are community hubs, open space and linear space based on their scale and dimensions (Figure. 4.2).

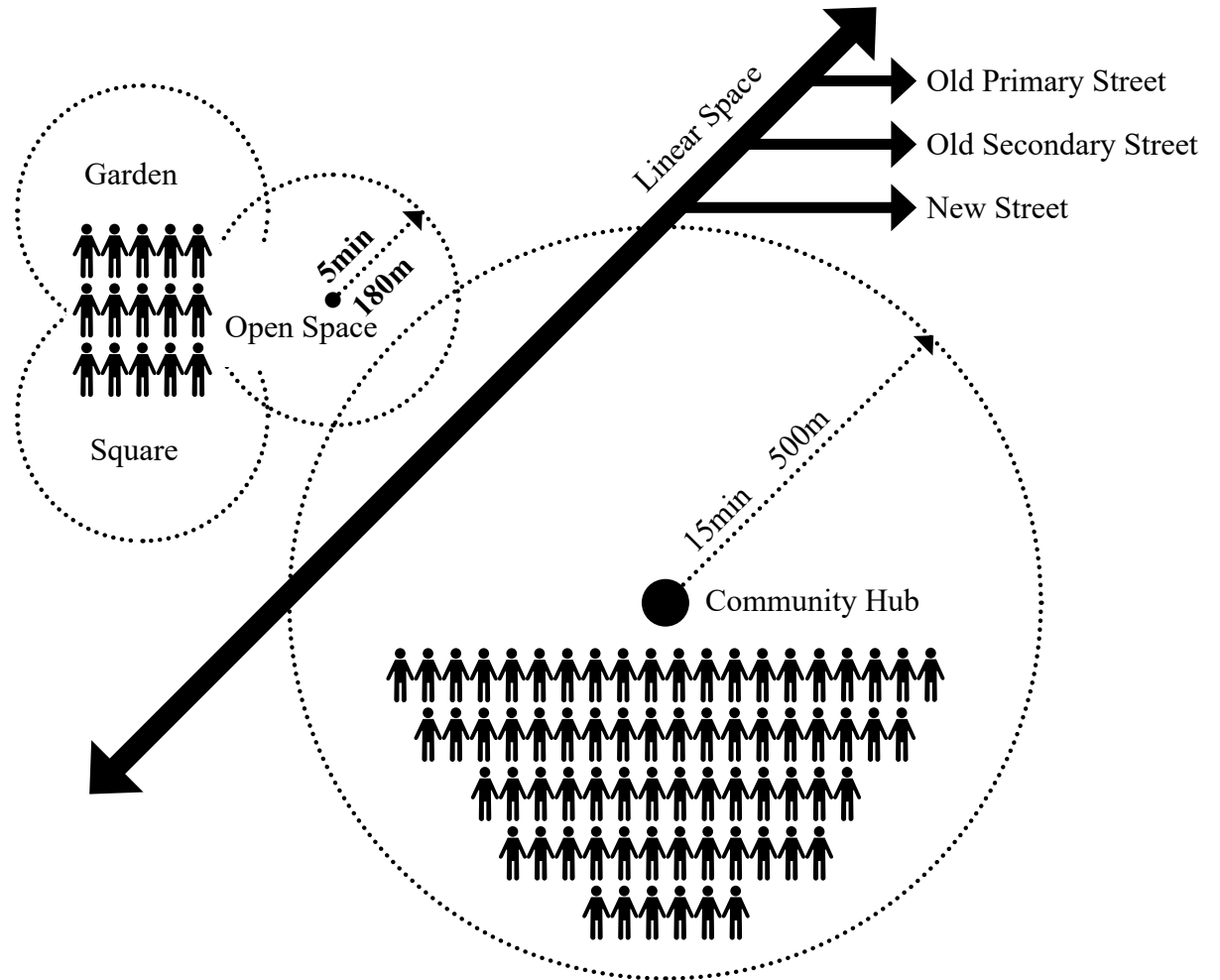


Figure 4.2. Design strategy-three types of spaces

#### 4.1.1 *Community Hubs*

For the purposes of this project, I define “community hubs” as the places where people can walk within 15 minutes. A community hub is often with a radius of 500 meters (1640 ft) and can provide space for over 50 people. Community hubs usually are landmarks in an area or district, which provide room for a broad variety of people and a diversity of social activities, ranging from morning exercises and night plaza dances to festival programs such as Spring Festival Carnival and Children’s Day party. Community hubs are also the places, to which most people share strong emotional bonds, because of the accumulation of experiences in those places day after day, year after year. In this sense, each community hub is unique based on its history, scale and users.

#### 4.1.2 *Open Spaces*

In this project, “open spaces” are the places near people’s housing, usually within a five-minute walking distance. The service area of an open space is often within a radius of 180 meters (590 ft). An open space provides room for about 10 to 30 people. Most open spaces are flexible and extensible common lands between the residential buildings. Broadly speaking, and for the purposes of this project, I categorized open spaces into two types: squares and gardens. Squares tend to have more area of hard pavement, providing more room for certain human activities such as playing cards, mahjong and chess within their own tables and chairs, or for temporary vendors or night street food. Gardens have less hard pavement and more vegetation and are more suitable for individuals

or small group activities in a more natural environment, such as morning exercise, jogging, reading and more intimate conversation. All in all, open spaces are closely related to people’s daily life at an intimate scale. Although they may seem similar to each other, they are also different in their main features, and because of their location and dimensions as well as the specific experiences and memories that they may afford to different users.

#### 4.1.3 *Linear Spaces*

Here, linear spaces refer to the pedestrian space along the neighborhood streets. They differ from the other two spatial categories in that most linear spaces serve as transition zones between streets and public green spaces to the more private or semi-private spaces like balconies and the lower floors of buildings that are close to streets. Linear spaces in the district can be categorized into three types: old neighborhood main streets, old neighborhood secondary streets and new neighborhood streets. These three different kinds of streets share some elements, such as rows of trees, public benches, pavements and other infrastructure. In this sense, the linear spaces play an important role as a network in the district and as a connector of the open spaces and community hubs. However, they are also different based on the dimensions, scales and the frontages of buildings.

## 4.2 FRAMEWORK

Combining design principles with potential spaces on-site, I build the framework for the district's site design. As the general strategy maps show (See Figure 4.3), the process of site design includes two steps which I have color coded: the orange phase is Phase 1 and the yellow phase is Phase 2. The big circle refers to the service radius of 500 meters (1640 ft) of community hubs. The small circle refers to the service radius of 180 meters (590 ft) of open spaces.

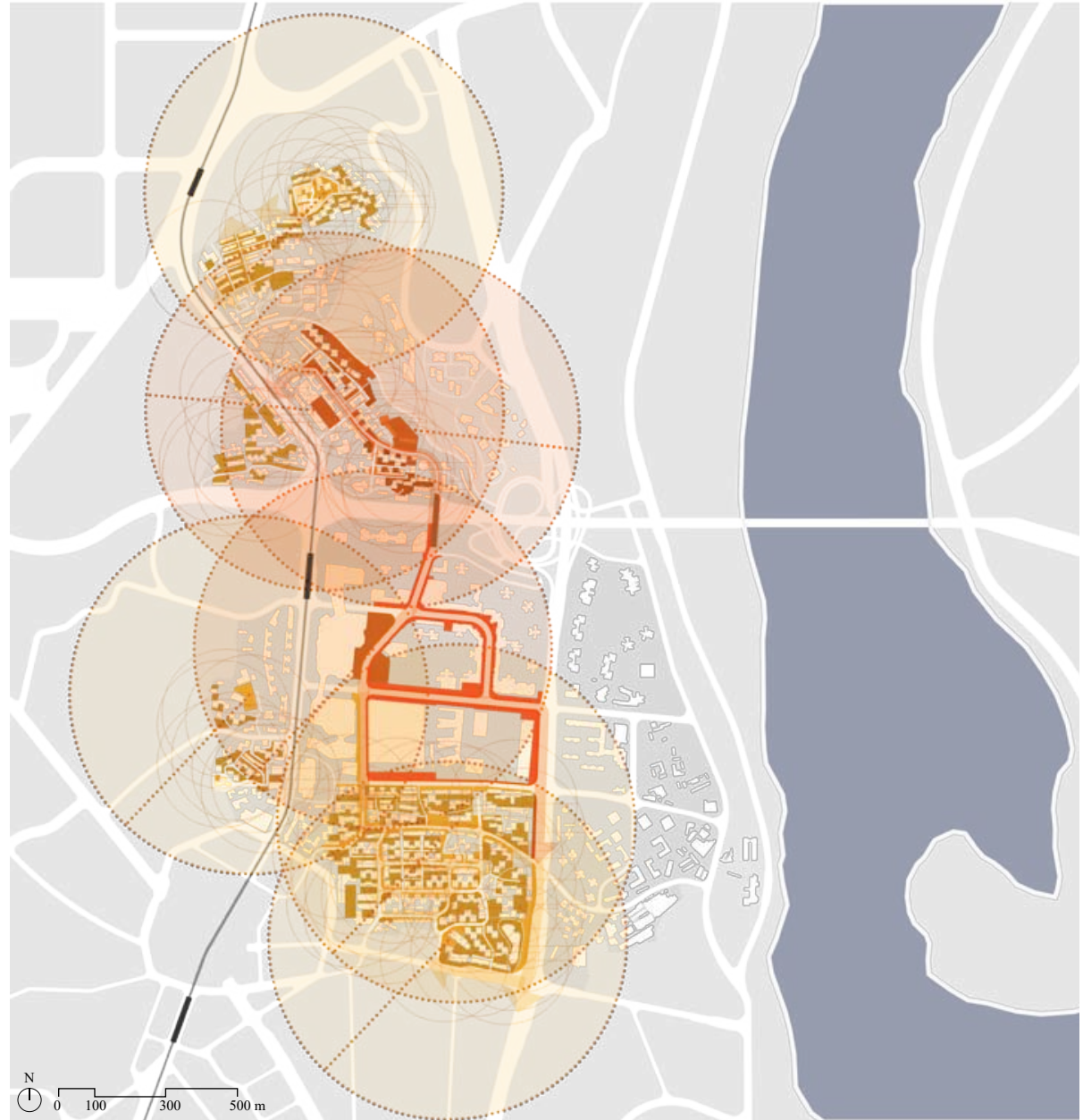


Figure 4.3. Framework-general

The first phase (Figure 4.4) aims to refine or transform some public spaces in both one old area and the new area in order to create a human-scaled public corridor, and to rebuild the relationship between people and place. In this process, I examined and refined the design principles and strategies by the mean of practical practices. The second step (Figure 4.5), of the design process, is based on the previous experiences of phase I and refined design

principles, rebuilding the relationship between people and place by creating continuous open space corridors. In this thesis, I would like to focus on Phase 1 of the design, where I experimented with design strategies as a way to put into design practice the lessons I learned from my research, draw conclusions and refined design principles for the further design.

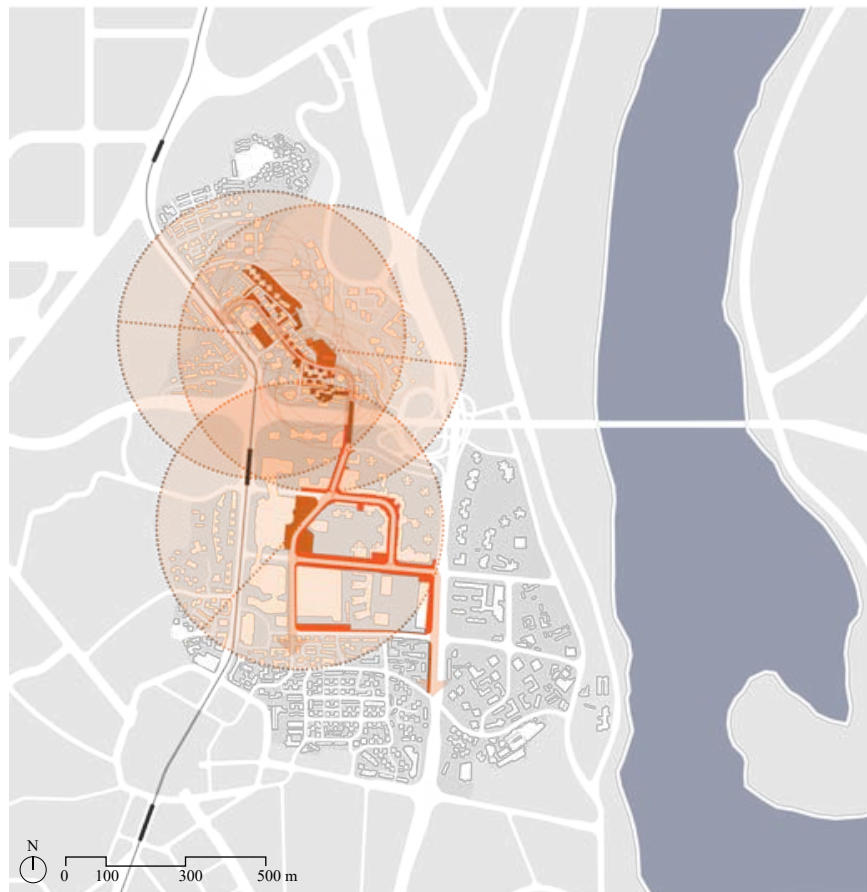


Figure 4.4. Framework-phase I

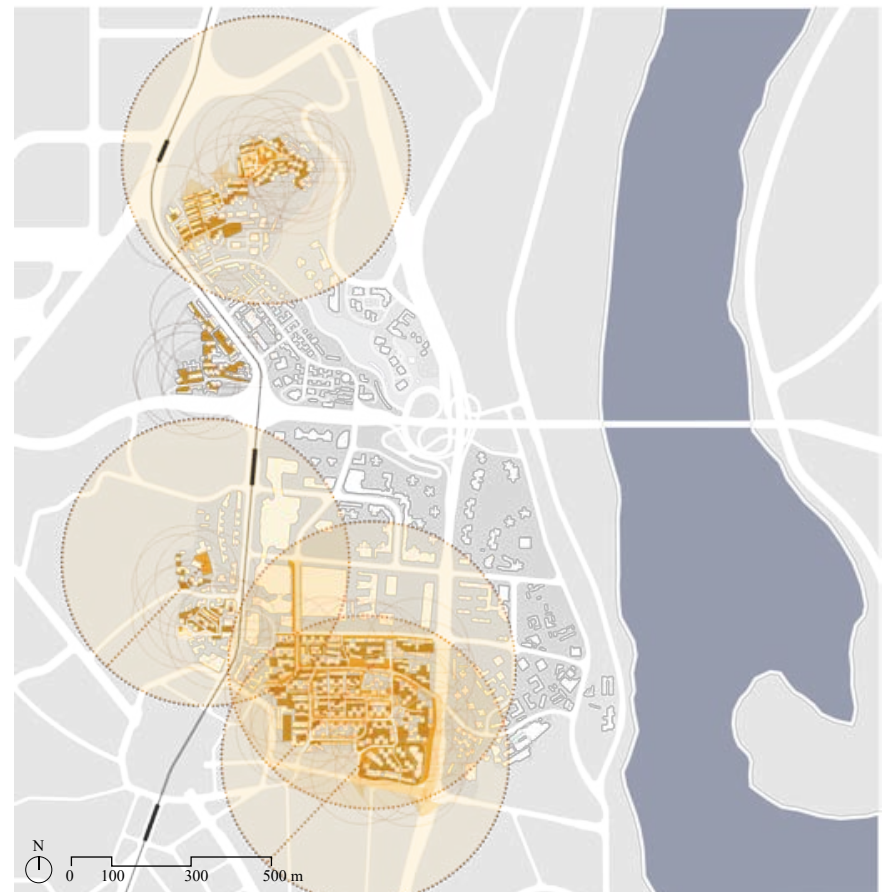


Figure 4.5. Framework-phase II

### 4.3 SITE DESIGN AND ASSOCIATED PROGRAMS

Based on the framework, the demonstration of site design and associated programs would follow the hierarchy and order. This part focuses on Phase 1, which includes design strategies for community hubs (cinema plaza, community club and the new plaza), open spaces (one square and one garden), and linear spaces (one old neighborhood main street, one old neighborhood secondary street and one new neighborhood street) as the maps shows (Figure 4.4).

#### 4.3.1 Community Hubs

Essentially, community hubs are local, informal “landmarks” of sorts, as they are important locations for residents, they serve multiple functions and they are richly complex. Because of this, each community hub is unique. I choose three different community hubs in Phase 1 to demonstrate the implementation of the design principles that I developed. The community hubs designed in Phase 1 include the Cinema Plaza, the post-industrial community kindergarten and the new commercial plaza (Figure 4.6).

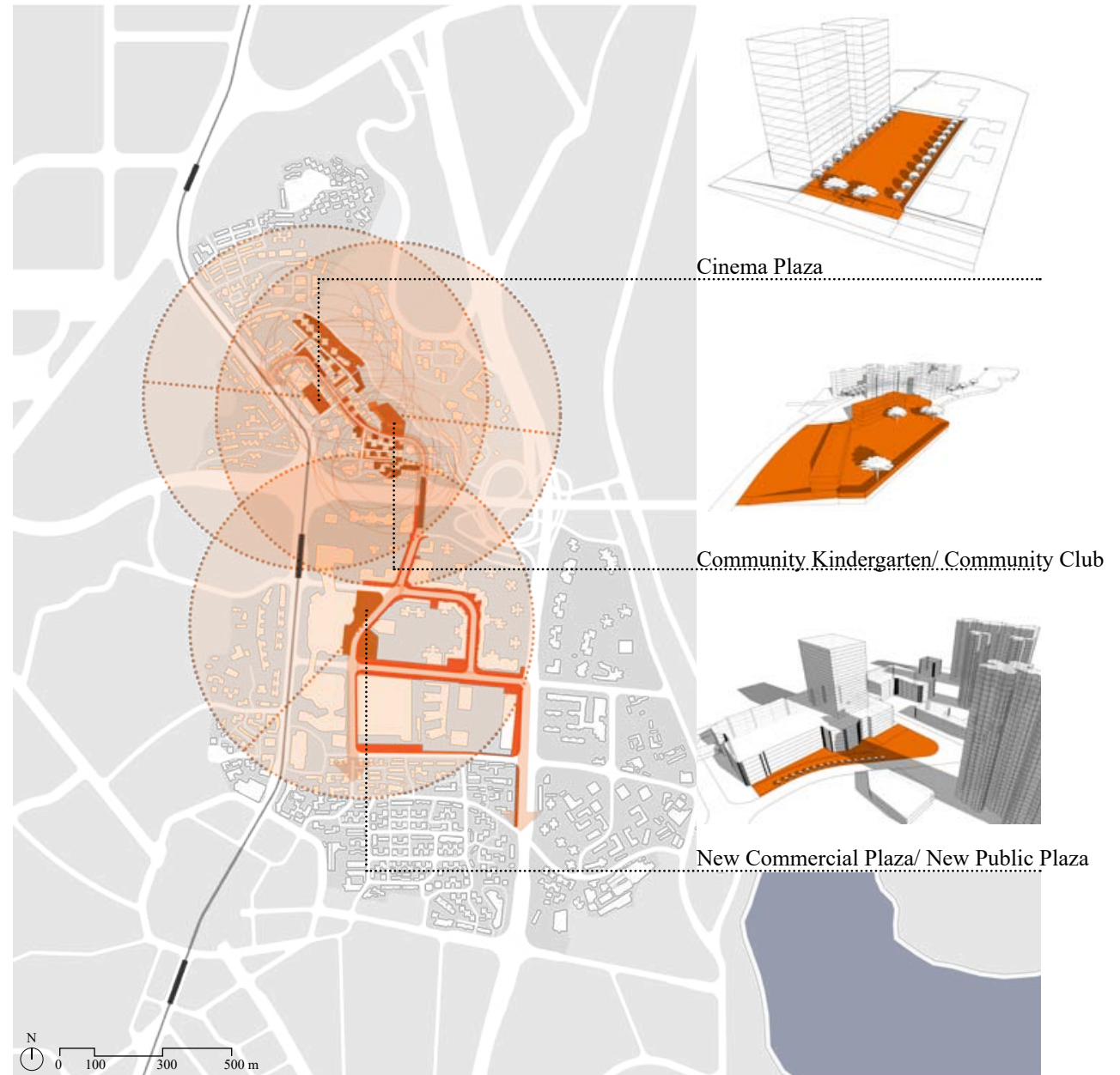


Figure 4.6. Map of community hubs

## Cinema Plaza

Cinema Plaza is the site where previously a very popular theater existed for the local workers. This theater and the plaza outside of it used to be the hub of the district. A broad variety of events and programs took place here, from the industrial group's annual and seasonal meetings, to regular movies and performances, from Spring Festival to the party on Children's Day, from morning exercises to night walking and entertainments. In fact, the theater and plaza witnessed the development of the industrial group, the change of this district and the growth of several generations.

However, due to reforming the industrial group and the closing and relocation of the factories, the theater and the plaza declined due to the lack of management and maintenance. Finally, in 2015, after three years of being abandoned, the theater was torn down. Moreover, due to the local development strategies, several residential buildings and the community club near the theater, which were still used at that time, were torn down and fenced. In this sense, the Cinema Plaza is the only remaining community-level

open space to demonstrate the history of this place and provide room as a community hub for the public.

Currently there are fewer and fewer people using the plaza for their daily activities due to the absence of a functional community building nearby, the lack of management and maintenance, and the disadvantage of accessibility because of the reconstruction and fences. The Cinema Plaza transforms from a community hub to a common public space, only serving the people nearby. Considering the lack of community-level public space in this district, such abandonment of critical community resources is wasteful. Moreover, it reflects the loss of local history and culture. In this sense, it is necessary to revitalize this place by transforming it back to its function as a community hub in order to provide room for the growing-needs of residents while extending the history and memories of this place and the people living in this place. (Figure 4.7 to 4.8)



Figure 4.7. Cinema plaza existing photo 1



Figure 4.8. Cinema plaza existing photo 2

Figure 4.9 illustrates the existing conditions of the old Cinema Plaza, which is symmetrical with a clear axis to the theater. Firstly, the proposed design (Figure 4.10 to 4.11) seeks to redefine the center of the plaza as the terrace surrounding the two existing typical local trees so that people can gather under the landmark trees. In order to strengthen the two trees as one of the new elements of landmark, I suggest using some vertical structures, such as shelters, tree-terraces and art installations (Figure 4.12). Secondly, the proposed redesign expands the pattern of terraces into the plaza by renewing the pavement and providing public seating, so that the new center space for gathering would be clear.

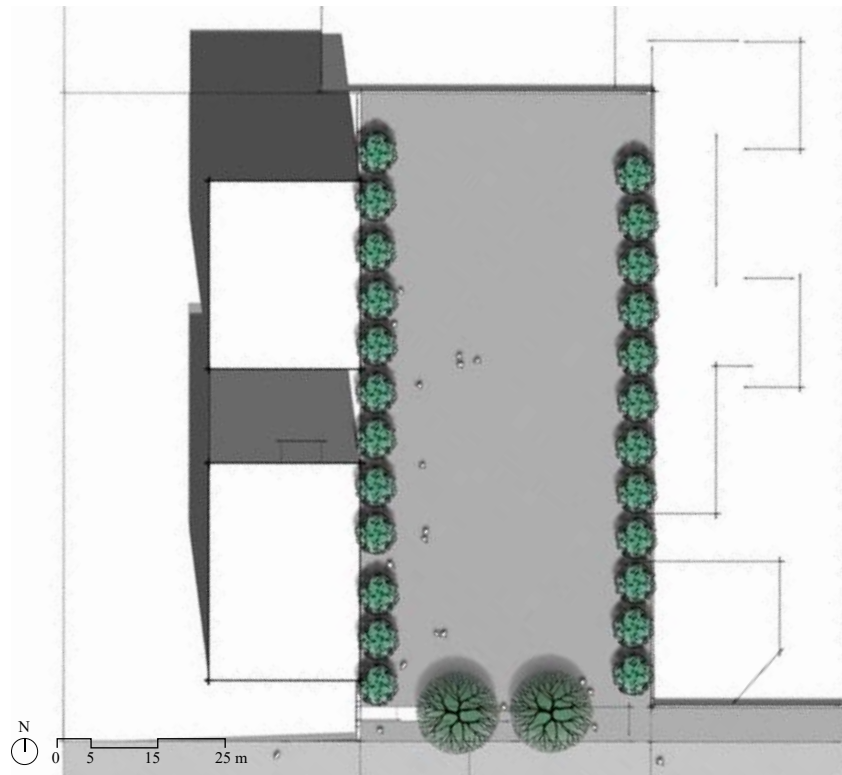


Figure 4.9. Cinema plaza existing plan

Then, the design proposal defines some areas as sport courts to offer more active use of the space. Meanwhile, I propose to make use of the fence wall by transforming it into the exhibition wall as a way to encourage the public to engage with one another and with community life again as the previous poster kiosk had done. Besides offering daily programs, I also propose programs for specific times and events, such as outdoor movies or evening performances (Figure 4.13), which would not only enliven the space with active use but it would extend the history of movie going and theater performances in this space. Additional programming would include community celebrations and carnivals on the special days in the plaza.



Figure 4.10. Cinema plaza proposed plan

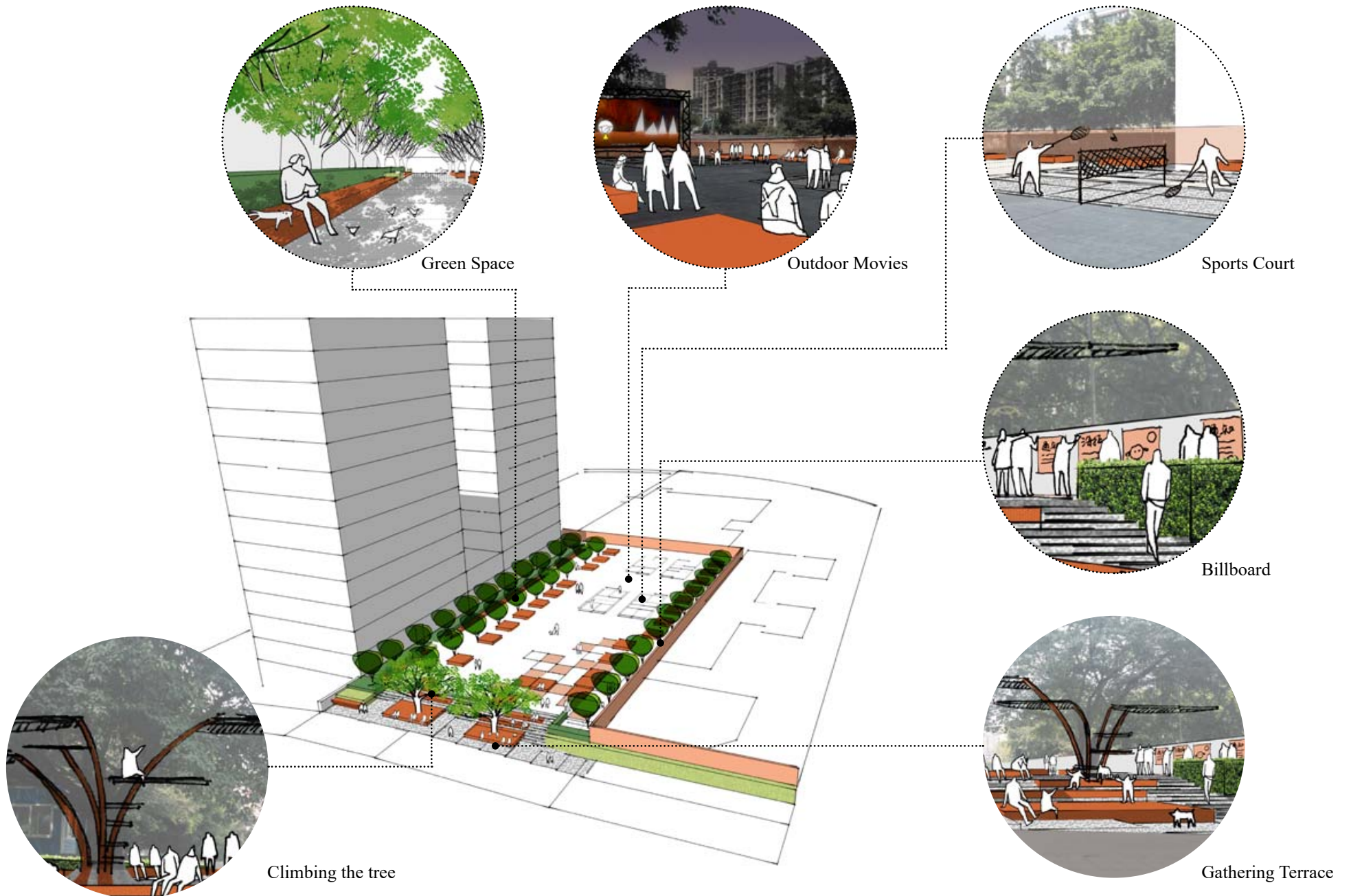


Figure 4.11. Cinema plaza proposed programs

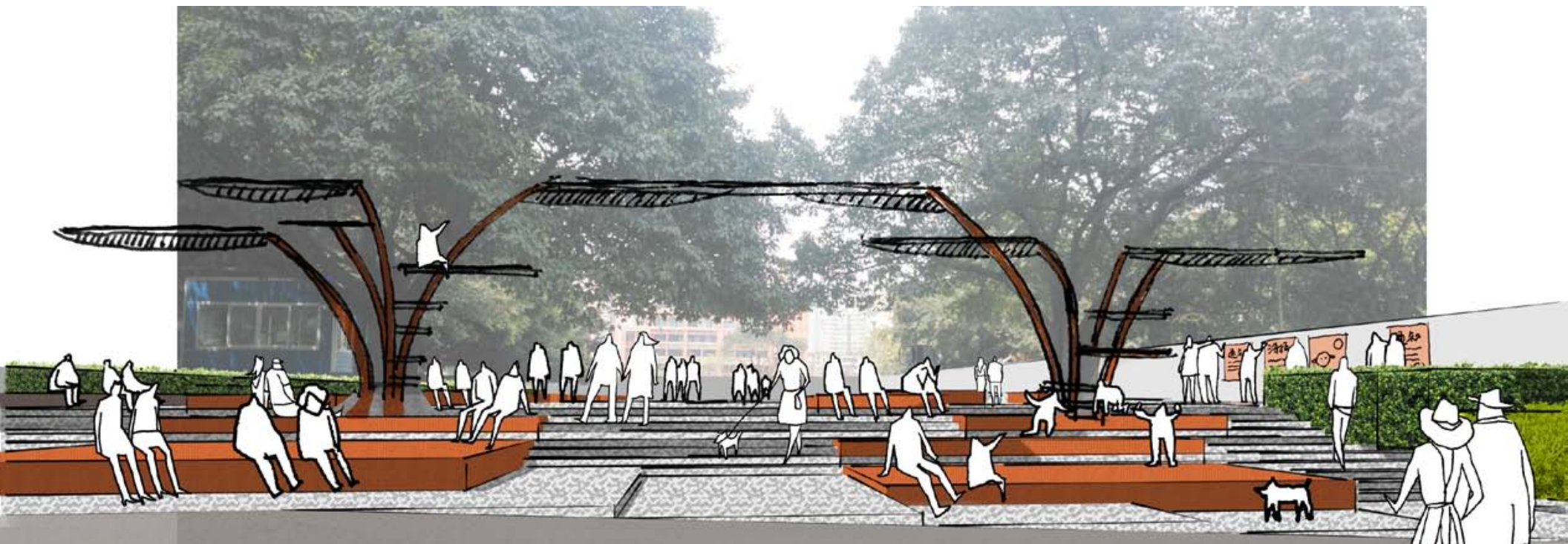


Figure 4.12. Cinema plaza proposed terrace and structure



Figure 4.13. Cinema plaza proposed design-night

## Community Kindergarten/ Community Club

The community kindergarten has served industrial families with important child care for decades. But now it is transformed into a grill restaurant after being abandoned due to the reforming of the industrial group years ago. Since it was constructed for the children of industrial group workers, it is located in the neighborhood with good access to residential buildings. However, such a geographic advantage has become a problem for residents because of the noise at night and the pollution and odors from the busy grill. Even though the physical place remains, people's emotional response to this place gradually change from happy and sweet as a part of their childhood memories to annoying and dislike as a part of the invasive restaurant, just as they reflect in the interviews.

Meanwhile, due to the growing elderly population and the demolition of the local community club, the need for a place that could provide room for various programs and essential activities such playing cards, playing musical instruments, writing Chinese calligraphy, having snacks and dinners, and so on, has increased. Therefore, I propose transforming the current grill restaurant into the community club by taking advantage of the existing physical construction and space (Figure 4.14 to 4.15). The new community club is composed of a community dining hall and an urban farm. The current building would be transformed into a place for community workshops and educational events, aiming at providing various options for the seniors and other neighbors to engage in community life again.



Figure 4.14. Community kindergarten existing photo 1



Figure 4.15. Community kindergarten existing photo 2

In Figure 4.16, the plan on the left shows the existing conditions, with the buildings providing room for the grill, the courtyard as the parking lots, and the green space just for viewing. The current space is a private commercial space with simple functions. Given the growing needs and increasing complains of residents, it is necessary to transform this place into public realm. I suggest the transformation of this place as follows (Figure 4.17 to 4.18): Firstly, use the rooms of these buildings for community workshops and meetings of community clubs and a community dining hall, and, to some extent, continue and extend the functions of the

kindergarten in response to the history and memories of this place as community public education space. Secondly, transform the courtyard from a parking lot to a multifunctional space with a terrace, seats and a stage. In this way, people can enjoy the outdoor space, sitting or lying on the terrace or gathering and playing cards, chess, and musical instruments, while children can play games on the terrace (Figure 4.19). Finally, the redesign would transform the fenced green space into a community urban farm, which can not only provide food for the community dining hall, but also be used as a community agricultural education space for both adults and children (Figure 4.20).



Figure 4.16. Community kindergarten existing plan



Figure 4.17. Community kindergarten proposed plan

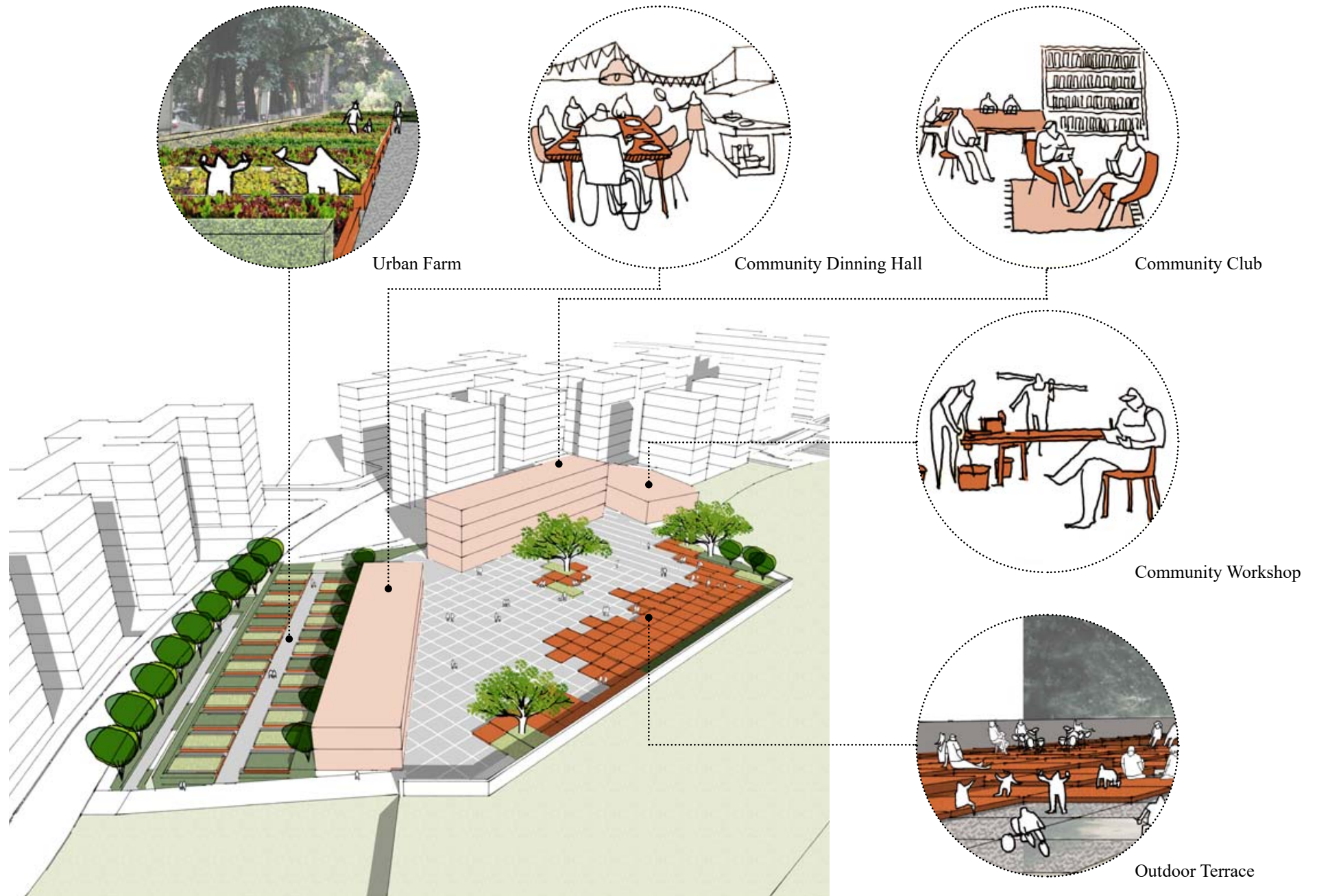


Figure 4.18. Community kindergarten proposed programs

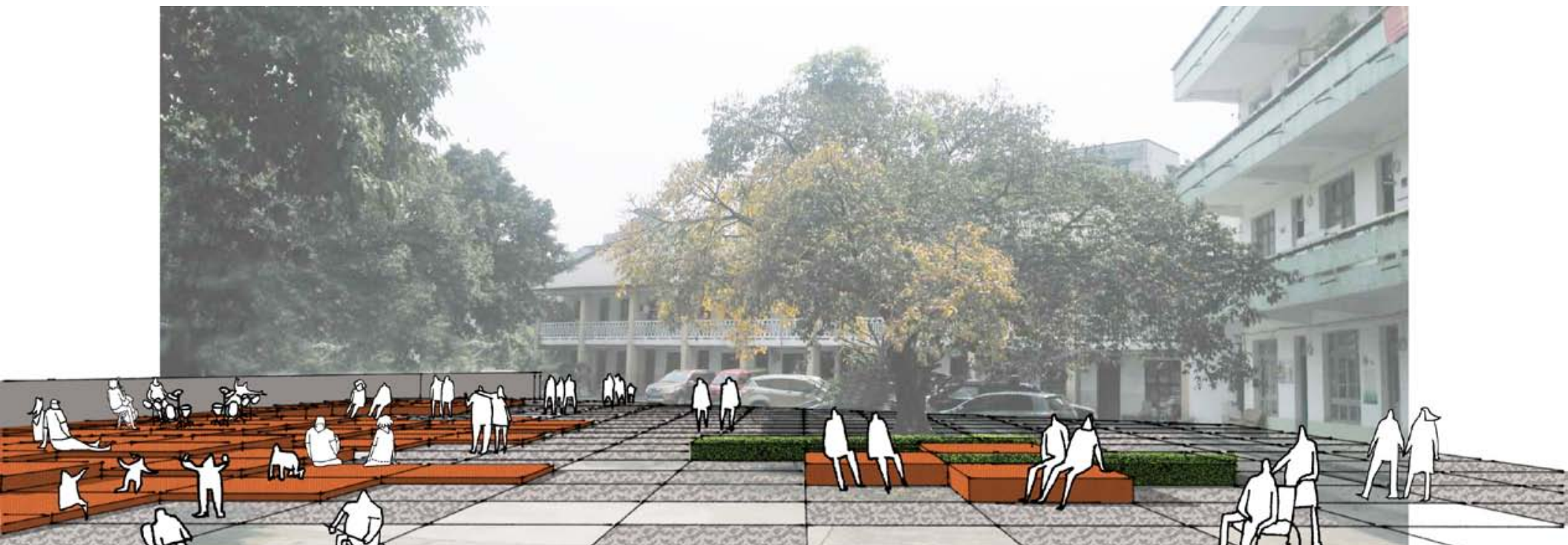


Figure 4.19. Community kindergarten proposed design-courtyard



Figure 4.20. Community kindergarten proposed design-urban farm

## New Commercial Plaza/ New Public Plaza

In Figure 4.21 to 4.22, the new public plaza is one of the commercial plazas in new area with well-designed water features, vegetations, pavements and outdoor café seats. However, it is necessary to transform this plaza into a community hub for the new area, due to the lack of community-level public space and the overabundance of commercial plazas. This very plaza is located between the mall and the residential areas with good access to the residences. As noted in the interviews, people want public open space with public seating, green canopies and room for various activities for weekdays, weekends and festivals. In order to enjoy their urban life in such places, interviewees reported being willing to go to the commercial areas that are further away to visit their public plaza and pedestrian street, providing safety and lively public space. In this sense, the transformation of the new plaza could benefit both the residents and commerce. On the one hand, the public can access public space within a shorter distance. On the other hand, the commercial area would change to invite people in.

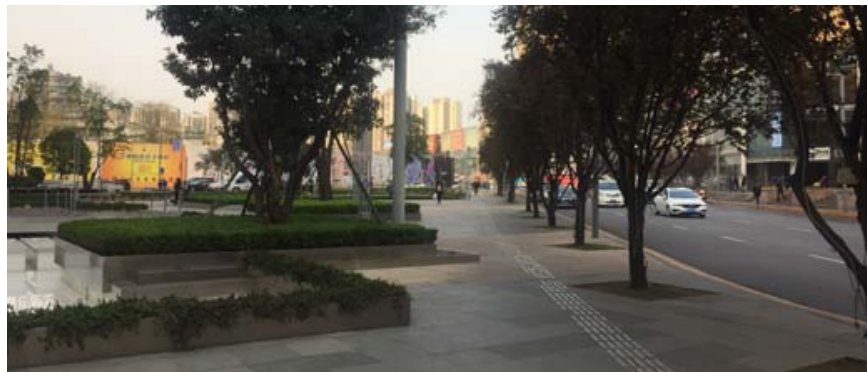


Figure 4.21. New commercial plaza existing photo 1

Figure 4.23 shows the comparison of the transformations. The plan on the left shows the existing conditions with the traditional commercial model. The plan on the right (Figure 4.24 to 4.25) illustrates the transformation proposal. The proposed design calls for the replacement of the big water feature into a functional plaza with fountains, so that people can play with the water directly and safely while using the plaza for other commercial or public activities. In terms of programming, I suggest that the water feature has open hours that are actively managed. Secondly, this design proposal calls for a decrease in the space for commercial outdoor seating and an increase in the more fully public seating with green canopies, in order to provide more room for a variety of people to engage in the diversity of public realm and programs (Figure 4.26). In addition, I propose the use of public art such as street music, painting and other performances. Moreover, transforming the green space into a pocket park enables people to have good access to the natural elements and engage in the public green space within a short walking distance from their homes, rather than going down to the waterfront by going through complex pathways, streets and roads.



Figure 4.22. New commercial plaza existing photo 2



Figure 4.23. New commercial plaza existing plan



Figure 4.24. New commercial plaza proposed plan

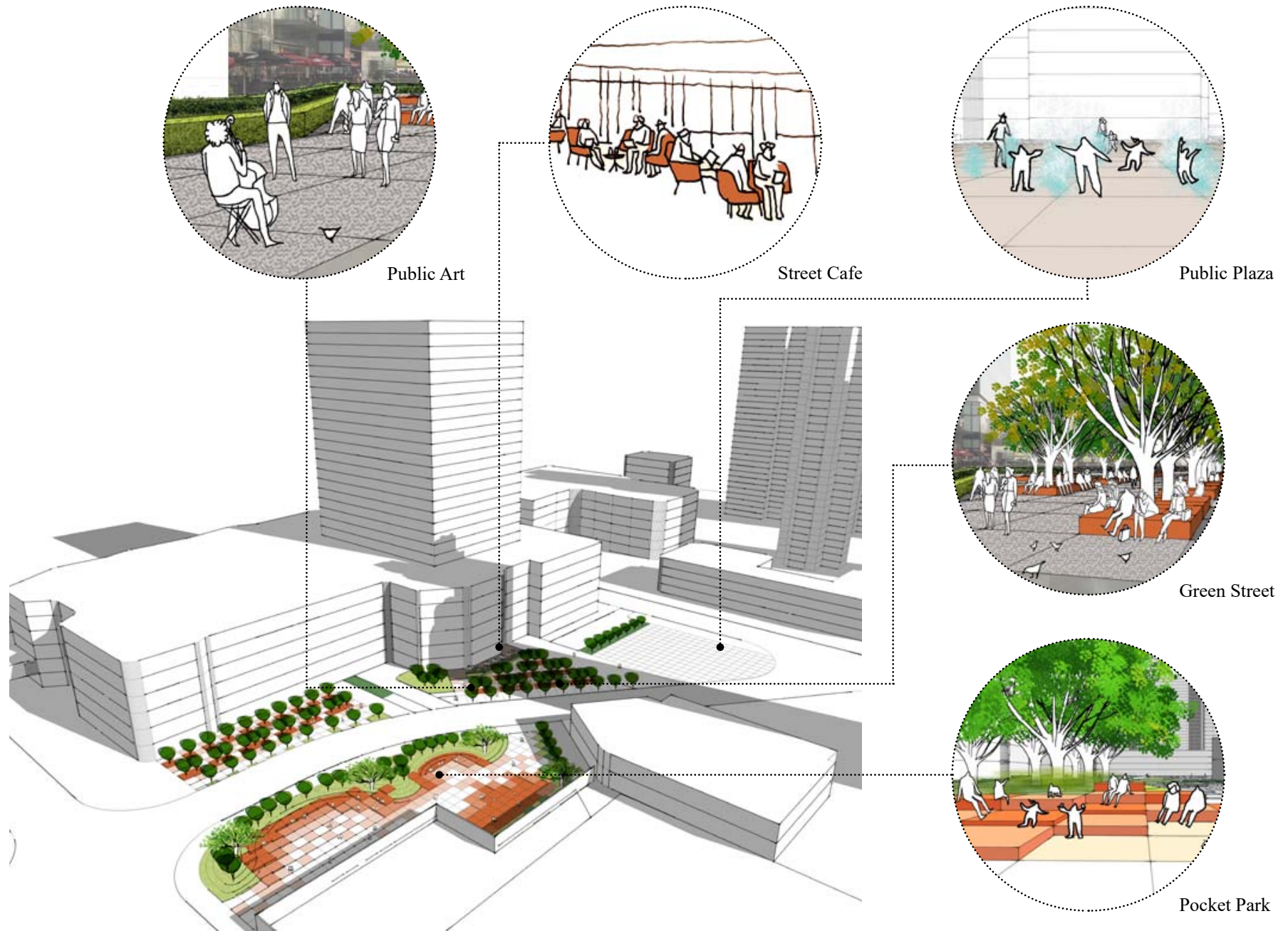


Figure 4.25. New commercial plaza proposed programs



Figure 4.26. New commercial plaza proposed programs-green street

### 4.3.2 Open Spaces

Open spaces refer to the common lands between buildings. In the old area, there are many such common lands with simple pavements, infrastructure and vegetation. Thanks to the simple landscape due to the lack of design and planning, these spaces have become flexible and extensible so that people can use or redefine such spaces as they want. To some extent, such use or re-definition is a kind of community engagement. In contrast, in the new area, people live in gated-communities that are well-designed and planned with relatively fixed, functional common spaces, that enable the developer to get a higher price for each apartment. Meanwhile, in order to get more economic benefits, most spaces outside of the gated communities are private or semi-private commercial spaces. Thus, in the new area, people do not have much opportunity to engage in community life. In this paper, I focus on the open spaces (Figure 4.27) in the old neighborhoods. For the new area, I would like to discuss the space outside of the gates, which are the linear spaces, as the next type of space to redesign.

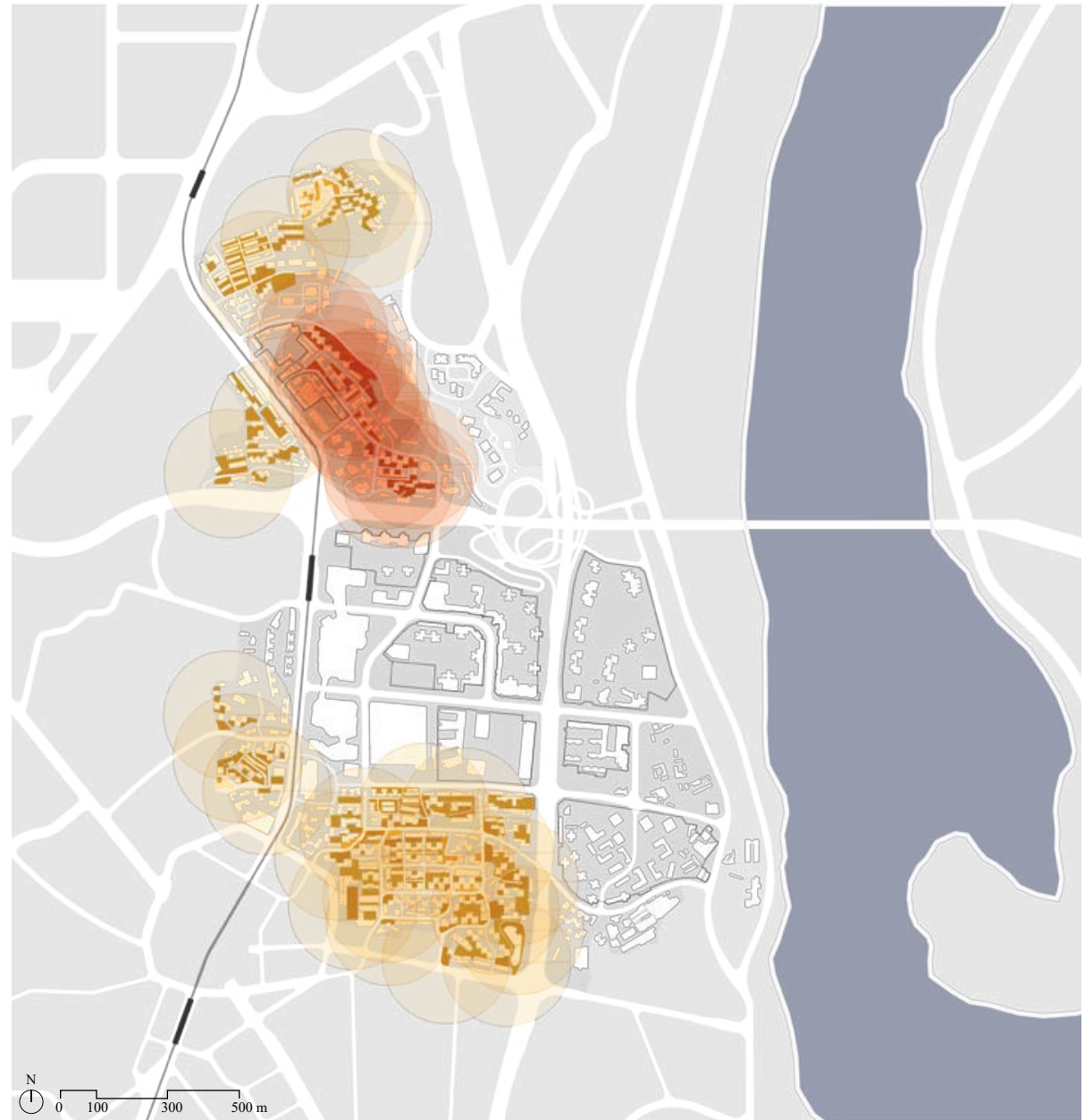


Figure 4.27. Map of open spaces

## Squares

*Squares* refers to one type of open space with more pavement and ideally more human activities (Figure 4.28). Because of the local climate, which is hot in the summer, people tend to prefer to stay under the tree canopies and enjoy the shade. In fact, most squares have trees to offer shade to users. On the one hand, due to the lack of design and planning, most of the squares only have simple pavement and infrastructure, which invite people to rest and stay. On the other hand, people have more opportunities and freedom to use or modify these spaces to fulfill their needs by bringing their own chairs and tables or building public seats and tables with a diversity of materials. (Figure 4.29-4.34) However, it should also be noted that people's improvisational use of the space also suggests that the current design of many squares is not completely addressing their needs, particularly in terms of seating.

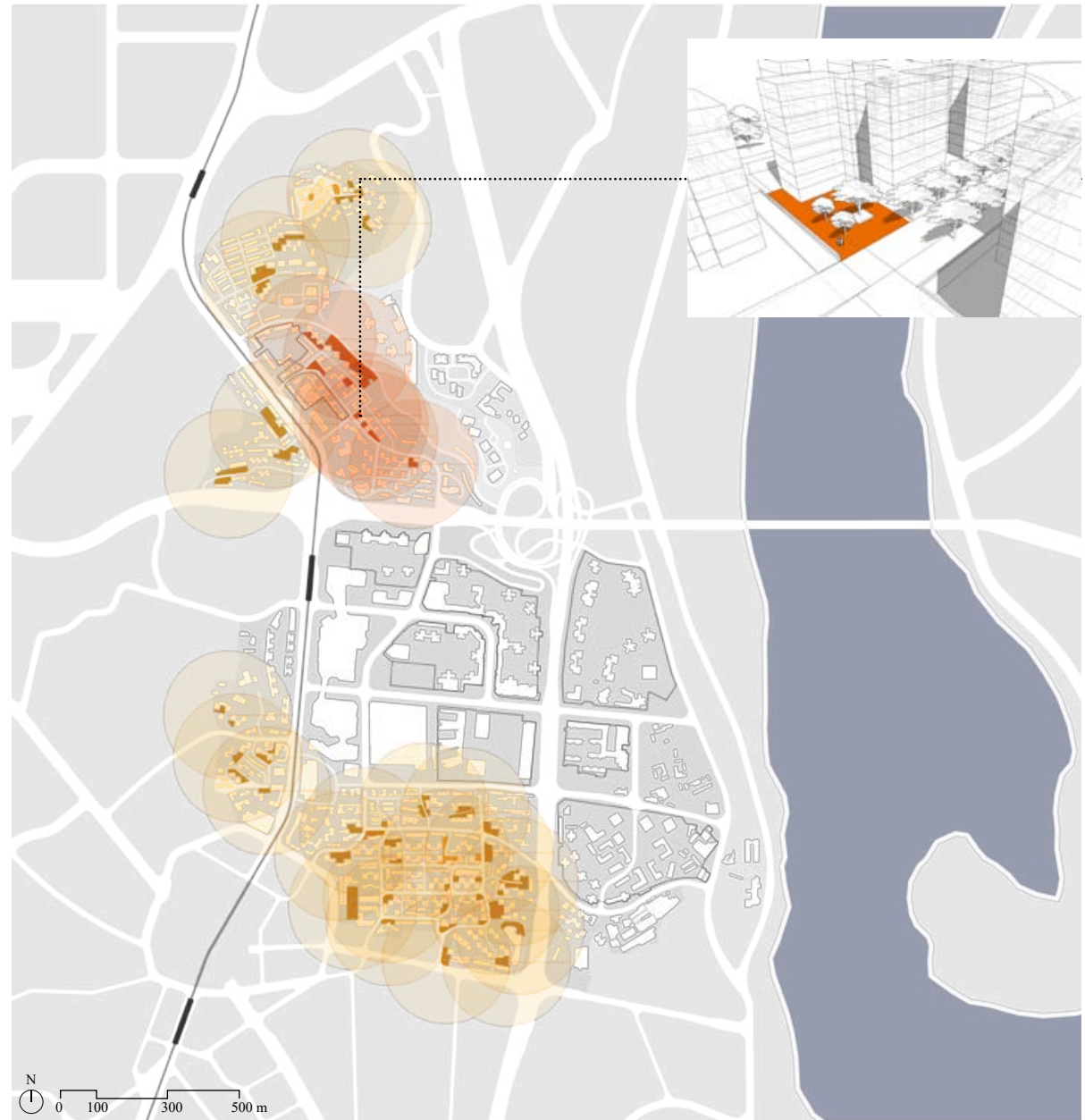


Figure 4.28. Map of pen spaces---squares



Figure 4.29. Squares' existing photo 1



Figure 4.30. Squares' existing photo 2



Figure 4.31. Squares' existing photo 3



Figure 4.32. Squares' existing photo 4



Figure 4.33. Squares' existing photo 5



Figure 4.34. Squares' existing photo 6

To illustrate the proposal for such squares, I would like to choose one site to design. This is one of the typical squares in the old area, which is close to the residential buildings with one big tree in the center (Figure 4.35). Although people like to use this space for gathering, conversing and playing cards or chess, such frequent and free uses of the space also presents some challenges for the ground-floor residents, such as the low degree of privacy and constant noise. In this sense, it could be refined as follows (Figure 4.36 to 4.37). Firstly, add green hedges as buffers around the ground floor

in order to improve the degree of privacy as well as decrease the noise from the square. Secondly, renew the pavement and add some seating around the central tree to strengthen the definition of the area for gathering and to improve the overall experiential quality of the space (Figure 4.38). Then, I recommend, keeping that portion of the space that is closest to the street and farthest from the buildings empty so that people can use it flexibly and continue bringing their own chair and tables for playing mahjong, and having temporary street food market and the like.



Figure 4.35. The square existing plan

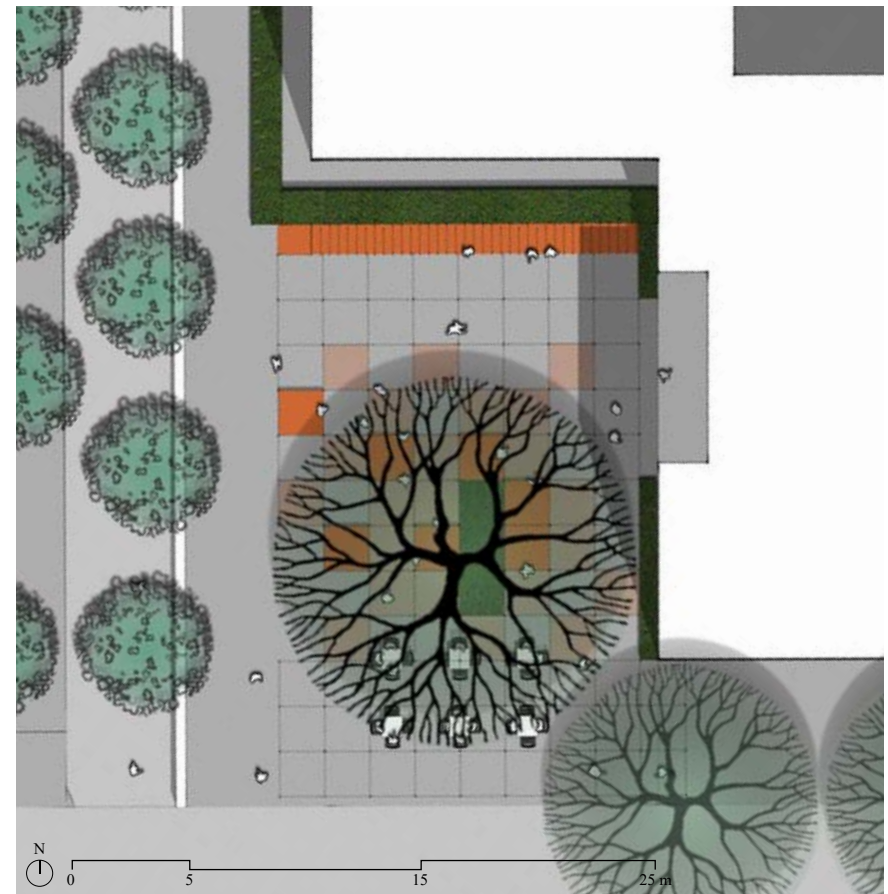


Figure 4.36. The square proposed plan

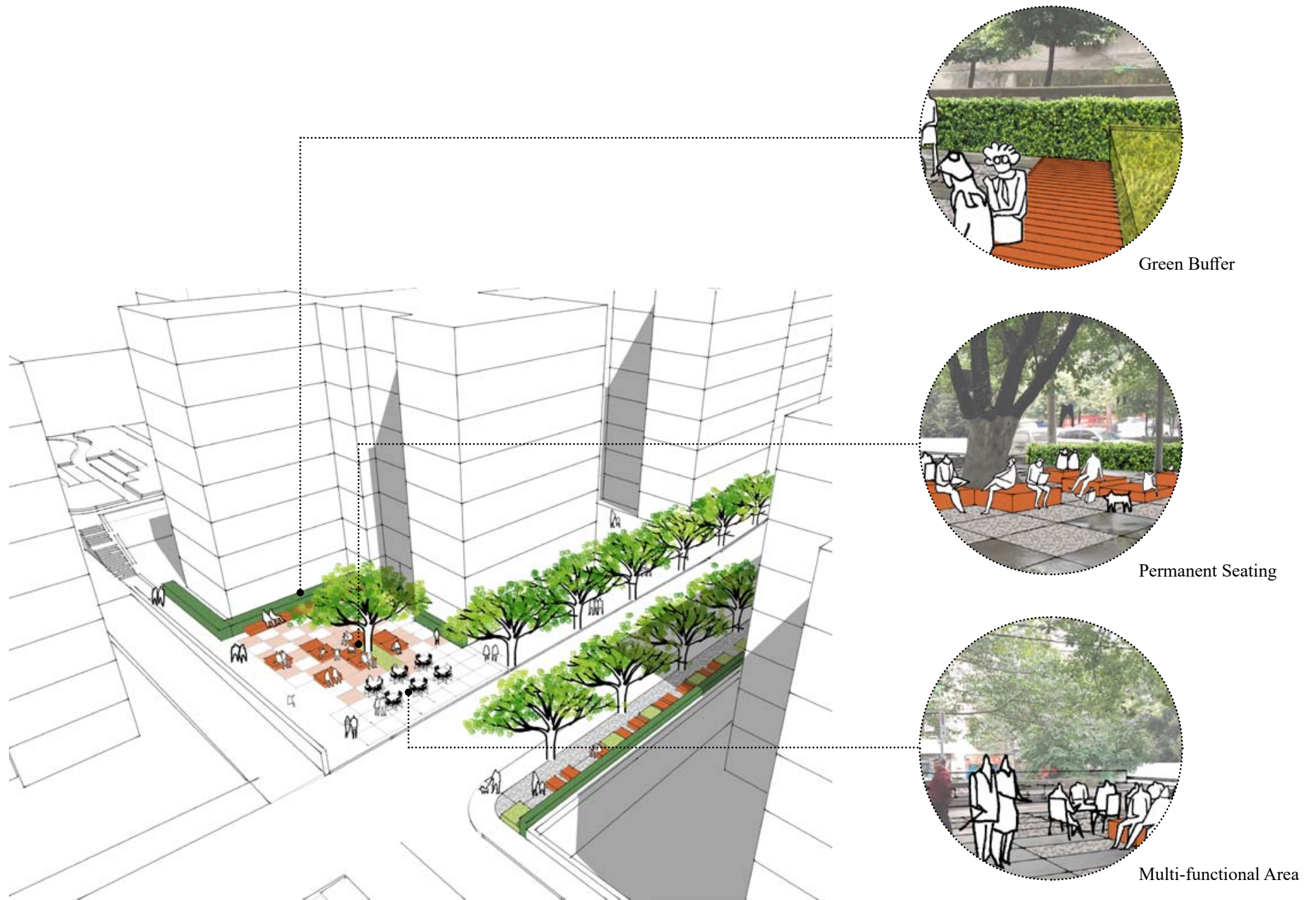


Figure 4.37. The square proposed programs

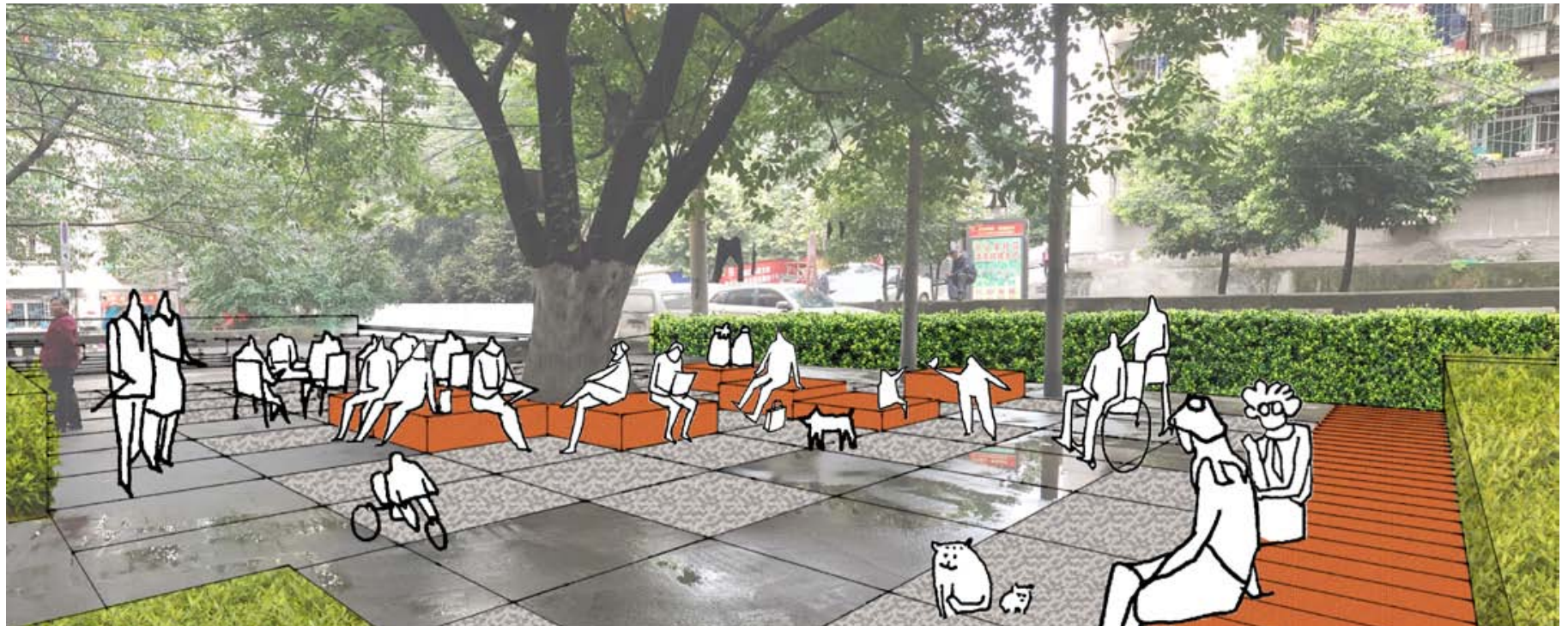


Figure 4.38. The square proposed gathering space

## Gardens

*Gardens* refer to another kind of open spaces with more trees and vegetations and less pavements and activities. In the interviews, many people said that one of the most important elements of their living environment is a garden (Figure 4.39). Some interviewees also thought that the old area does not have as much green open spaces as the new area. However, as noted earlier, most of the gardens in the new area are inside private gates, so the area still lacks real green open space for the public. On the other hand, there are plenty of green spaces in the old area (Figure 4.40 to 4.45). However, most of these spaces are fenced or only have one narrow pathway going through. To some extent, such green spaces are not designed for people to enjoy and engage in. Because of this, I would like focus on the green open spaces in the old area and choose one specific site to implement the design principles and strategies.

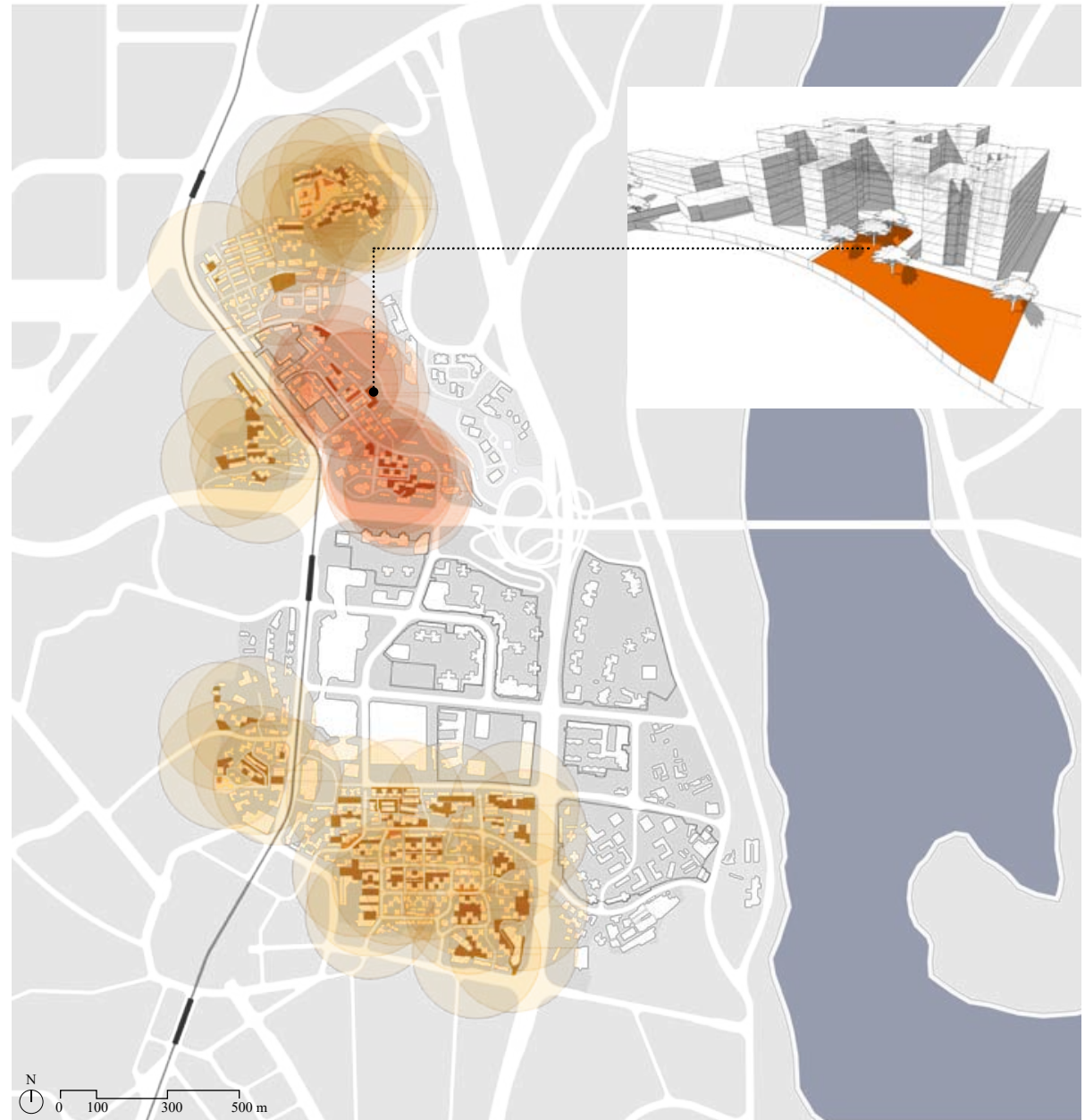


Figure 4.39. Map of pen spaces---gardens



Figure 4.40. Green spaces' existing photo 1



Figure 4.41. Green spaces' existing photo 2



Figure 4.42. Green spaces' existing photo 3



Figure 4.43. Green spaces' existing photo 4



Figure 4.44. Green spaces' existing photo 5



Figure 4.45. Green spaces' existing photo 6

The specific site I selected to redesign in this category has a pathway wandering through the green space, which is dense and disordered, as the plan shows on the left in Figure 4.46. In order to create more space for people and a diversity of programs, I suggest the transformation of this place as follows (Figure 4.47-4.48). Firstly, expand some part of the pathway so that people have more activities in this micro-natural environment, for such activities as

morning exercises and jogging. Secondly, add some public seating for people to have a rest or stay longer to read or converse (Figure 4.49). Moreover, reorganize vegetation and remove some of the shrubs and trees to decrease the density while adding other popular vegetation for garden. However, it is also necessary to keep general planting plan low-maintenance and economically effective.

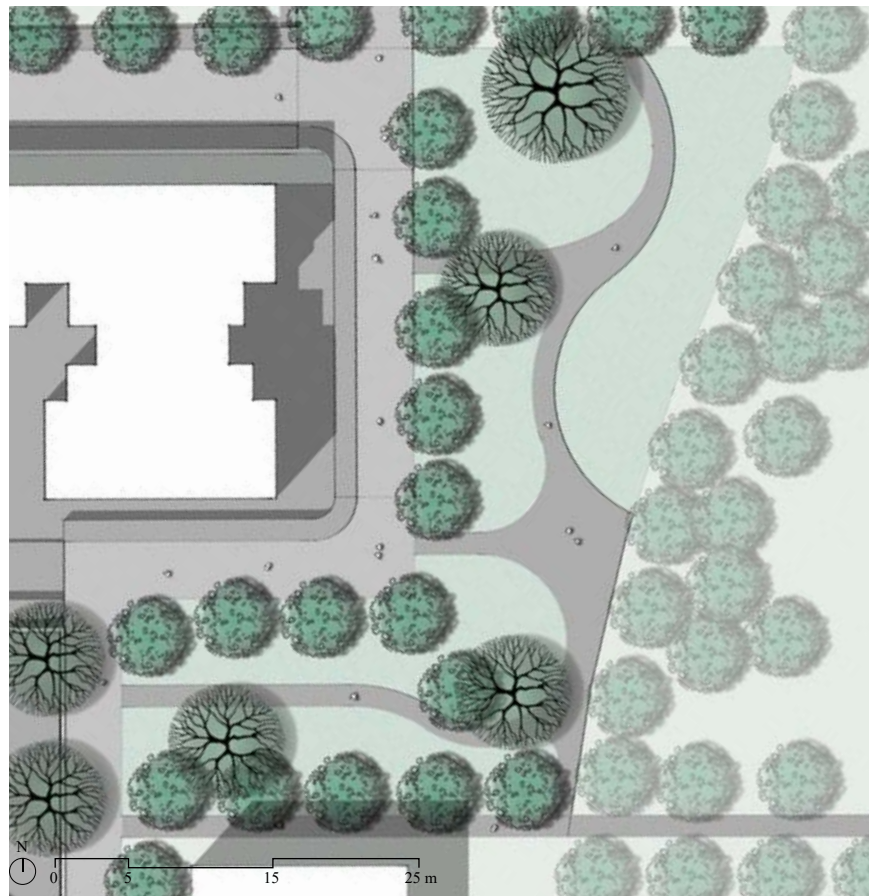


Figure 4.46. The garden existing plan

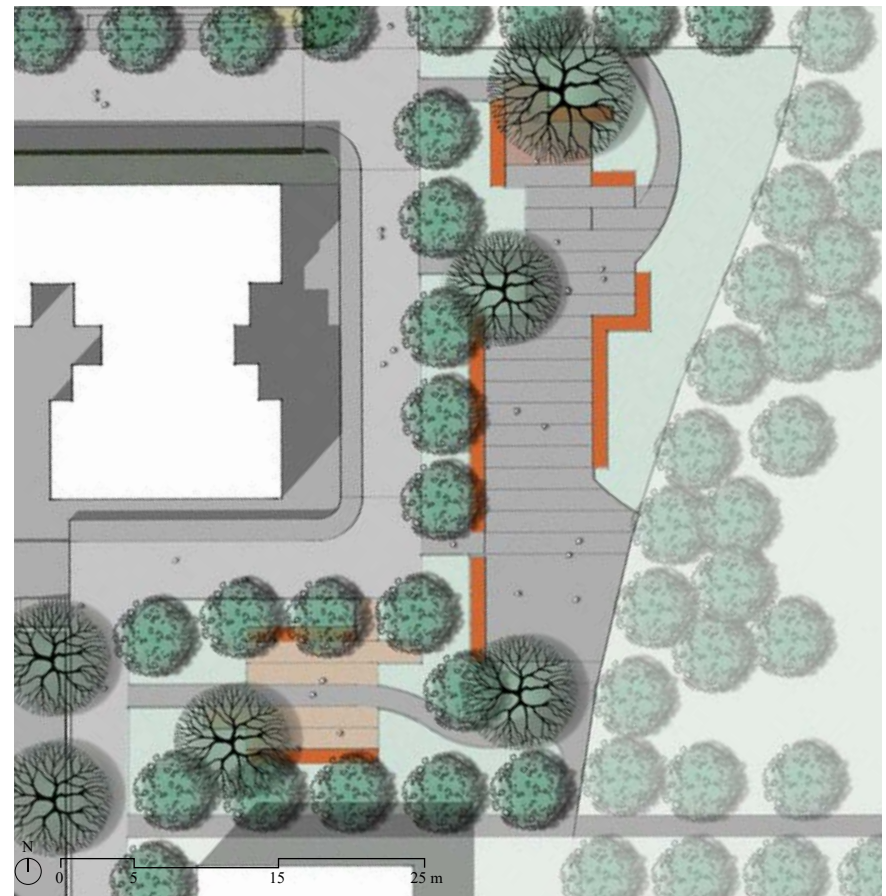


Figure 4.47. The garden proposed plan

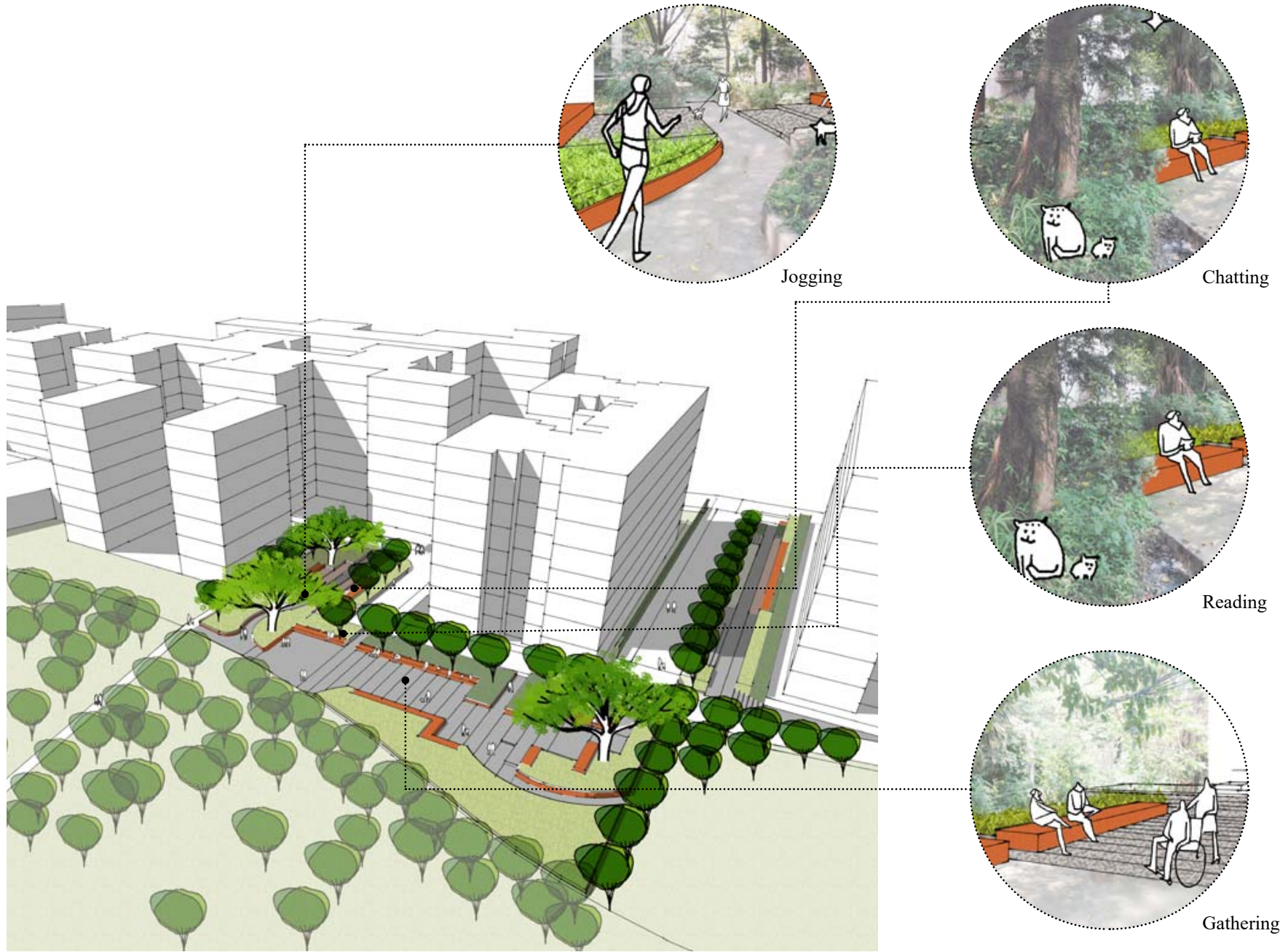


Figure 4.48. The garden proposed programs



### 4.3.3 Linear Spaces

Linear spaces are the pedestrian spaces along the neighborhood streets. Linear spaces can be categorized into three types based on the level of neighborhood streets, including old secondary neighborhood street, old primary neighborhood street and new neighborhood street (Figure 4.50 to 4.56).

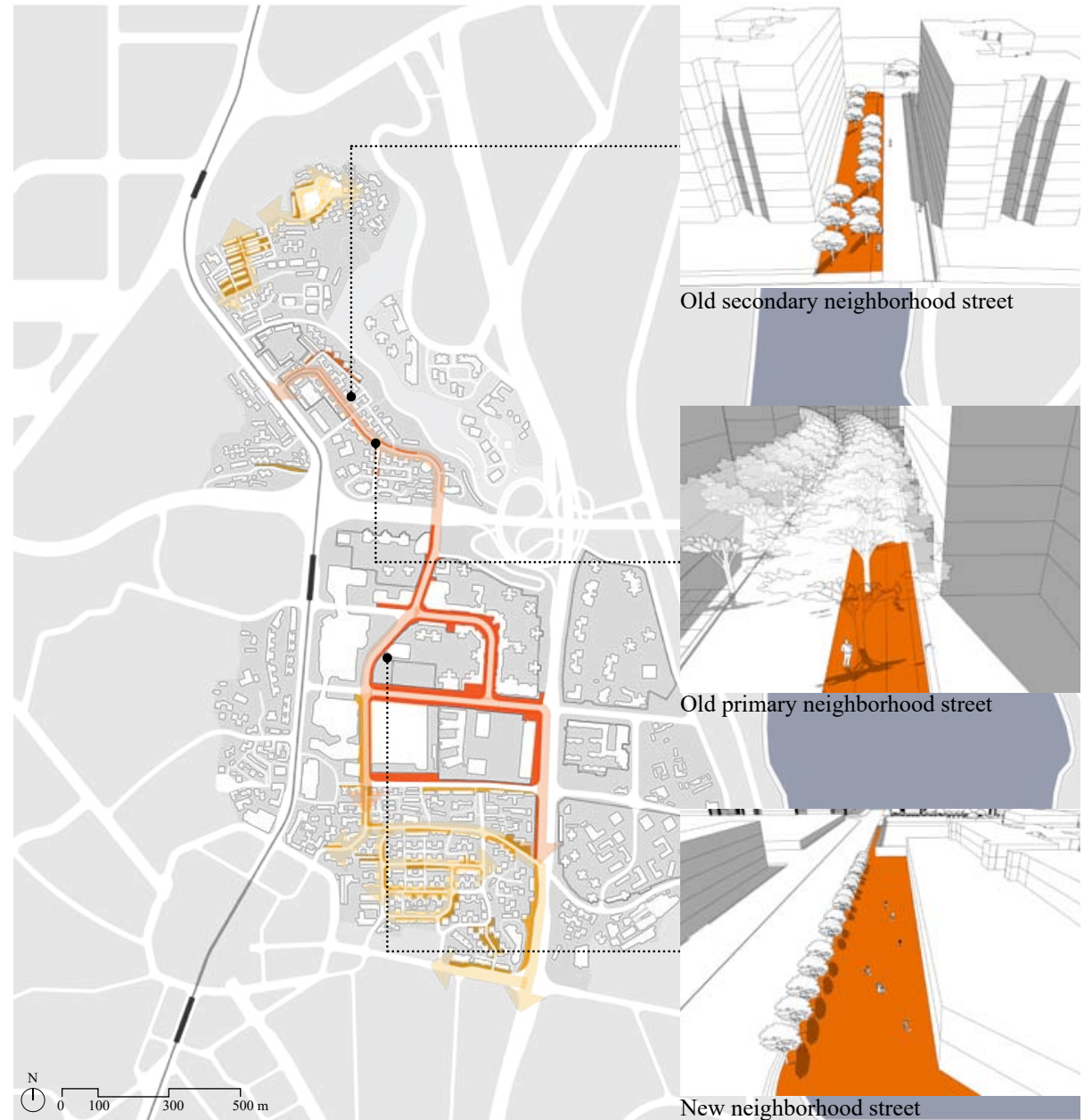


Figure 4.50. Map of linear spaces

### 4.3.3 Linear Spaces



Figure 4.51. Old secondary neighborhood street's existing photo 1



Figure 4.52. Old secondary neighborhood street's existing photo 2



Figure 4.53. Old primary neighborhood street's existing photo 1



Figure 4.54. Old primary neighborhood street's existing photo 2



Figure 4.55. New neighborhood street's existing photo 1



Figure 4.56. New neighborhood street's existing photo 2

## Old Secondary Neighborhood Street

*Old secondary neighborhood street* refers to the neighborhood street with less traffic but more surface parking in the old area. This street locates between two residential buildings with narrow sidewalks with relative big green buffer space or retaining walls and fencing walls. However, due to the lack of management of surface parking and vegetation maintenance, this street become less comfortable and less safe for pedestrians, especially as the way to go home. In this sense, it is important to consider how to make full use of this space for the residents.

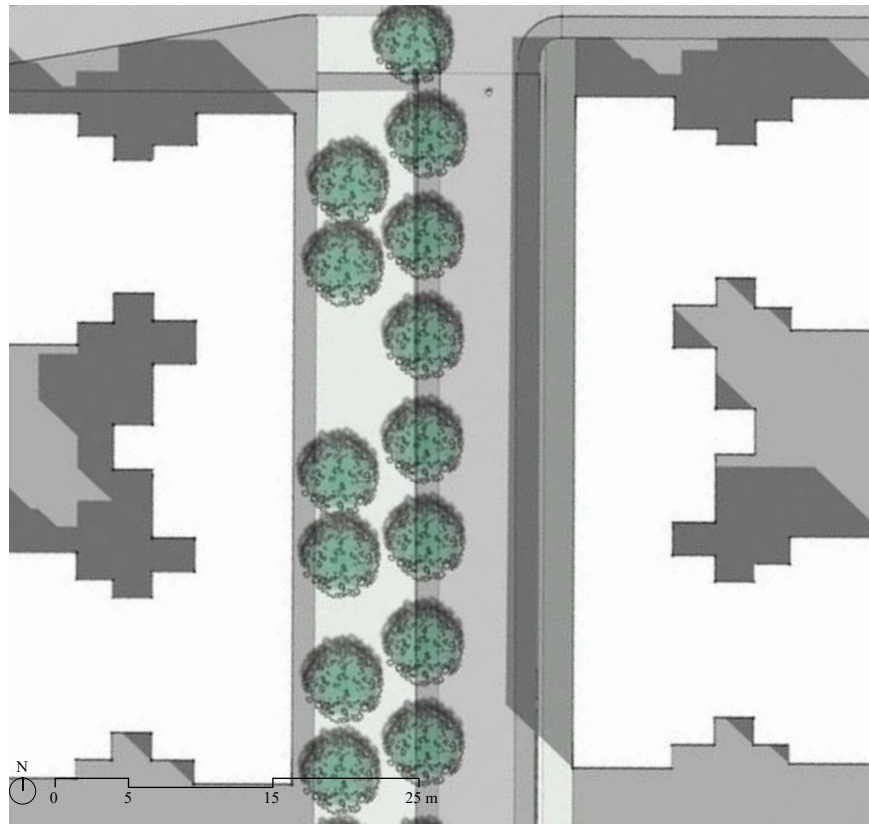


Figure 4.57. The old secondary neighborhood street's existing plan

The plan on the left in Figure 4.57 shows the existing conditions of the linear space with landscape to deal with the boundary space between two buildings. In order to make full use of this space, I suggest the following redesign (Figure 4.58 to 4.60). Firstly, remove the surface parking from the street, or add some buffer blocks to manage the number of parking spots. Secondly, refine the green space by adding green hedges as buffers for the ground floor occupants, adding some terraces and public seating thereby providing small-scale open space for the people living nearby.

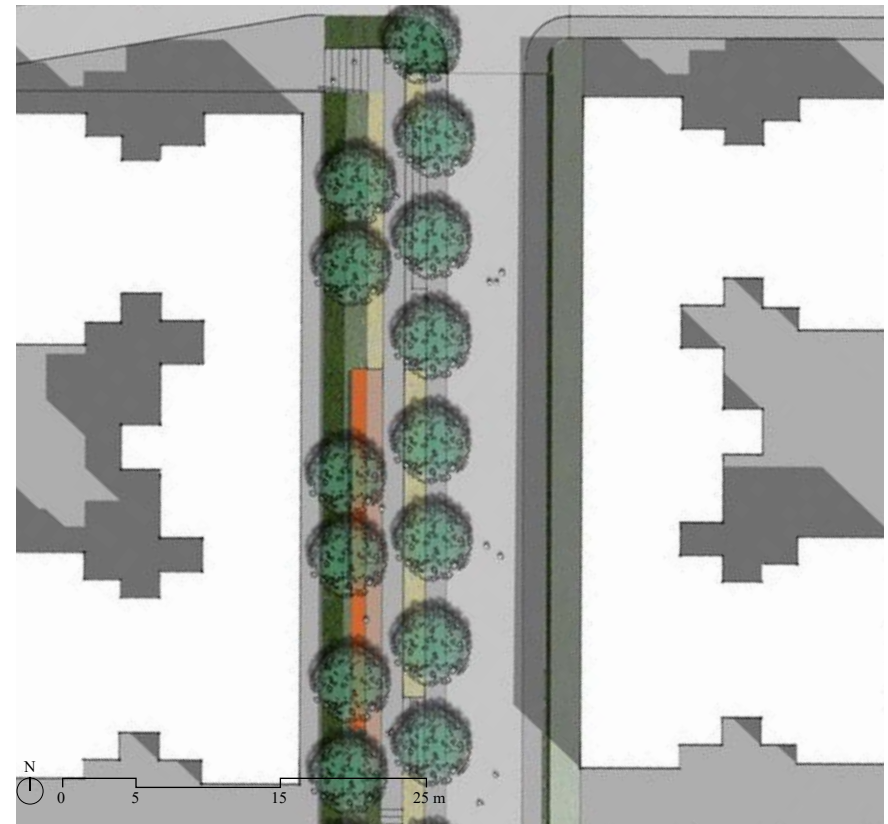
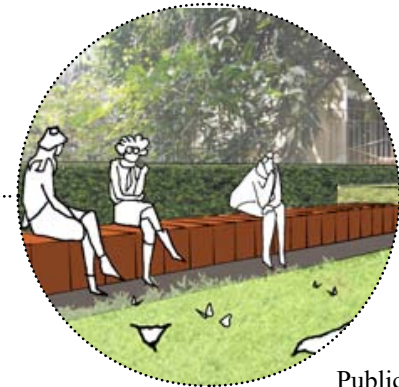


Figure 4.58. The old secondary neighborhood street's proposed plan



Public Seats



Green Buffer

Figure 4.59. The old secondary neighborhood street's proposed programs

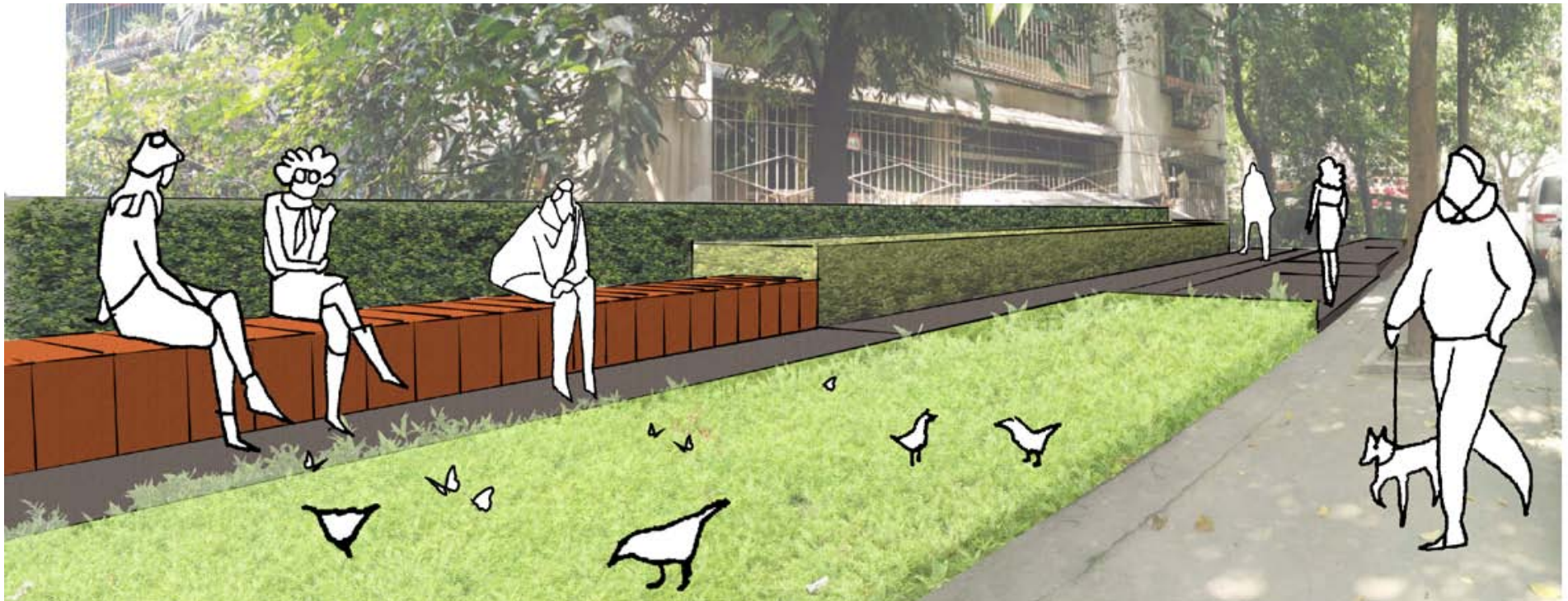


Figure 4.60. The old secondary neighborhood street's proposed perspective

## Old Primary Neighborhood Street

*Old primary neighborhood street* refers to the neighborhood main street with relatively busy traffic and wider sidewalks. On these streets, there is no space for surface parking due to the blocks lined in the center of the street. Thanks to the green canopies and wide pedestrian space, it is a pleasant experience when walking on this street. However, due to the lack of infrastructure and maintenance, people just walk on this street. They seldom linger in this space since there are few public seats and no protection from the high retaining walls.

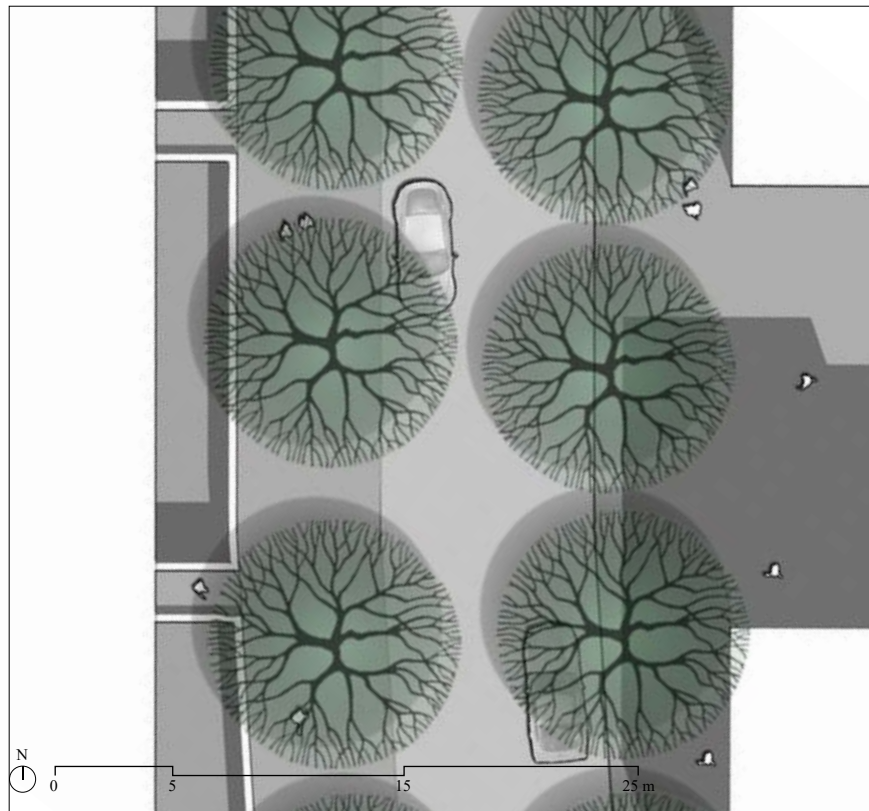


Figure 4.61. The old primary neighborhood street's existing plan

The plan on the left in Figure 4.61 shows the existing conditions of the linear space. In order to make full use of this space, I would suggest the following design strategies (Figure 4.62-4.63). Firstly, renew some of the pavement and redefine distinct areas for a quick walk, and for resting and staying. Secondly, set up the vertical garden at the base of the retaining wall in order to protect people from the high retaining wall. Finally, set up movable seats in the slow-down area, so that people can move the seats as they wish to create spaces for sitting and socializing as they see fit (Figure 4.64).

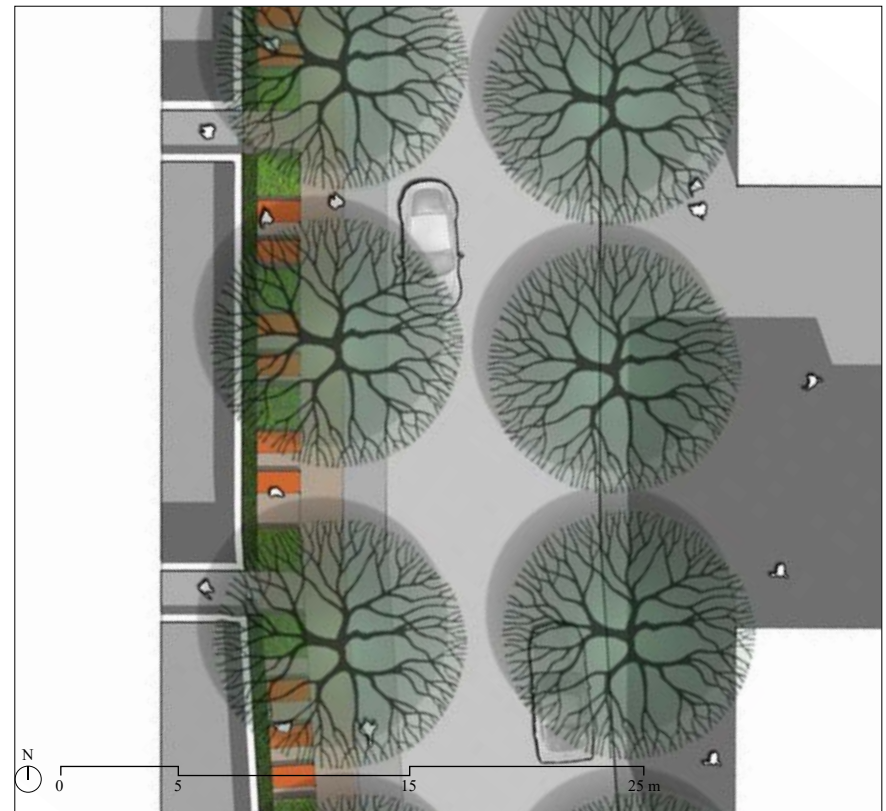


Figure 4.62. The old primary neighborhood street's proposed plan

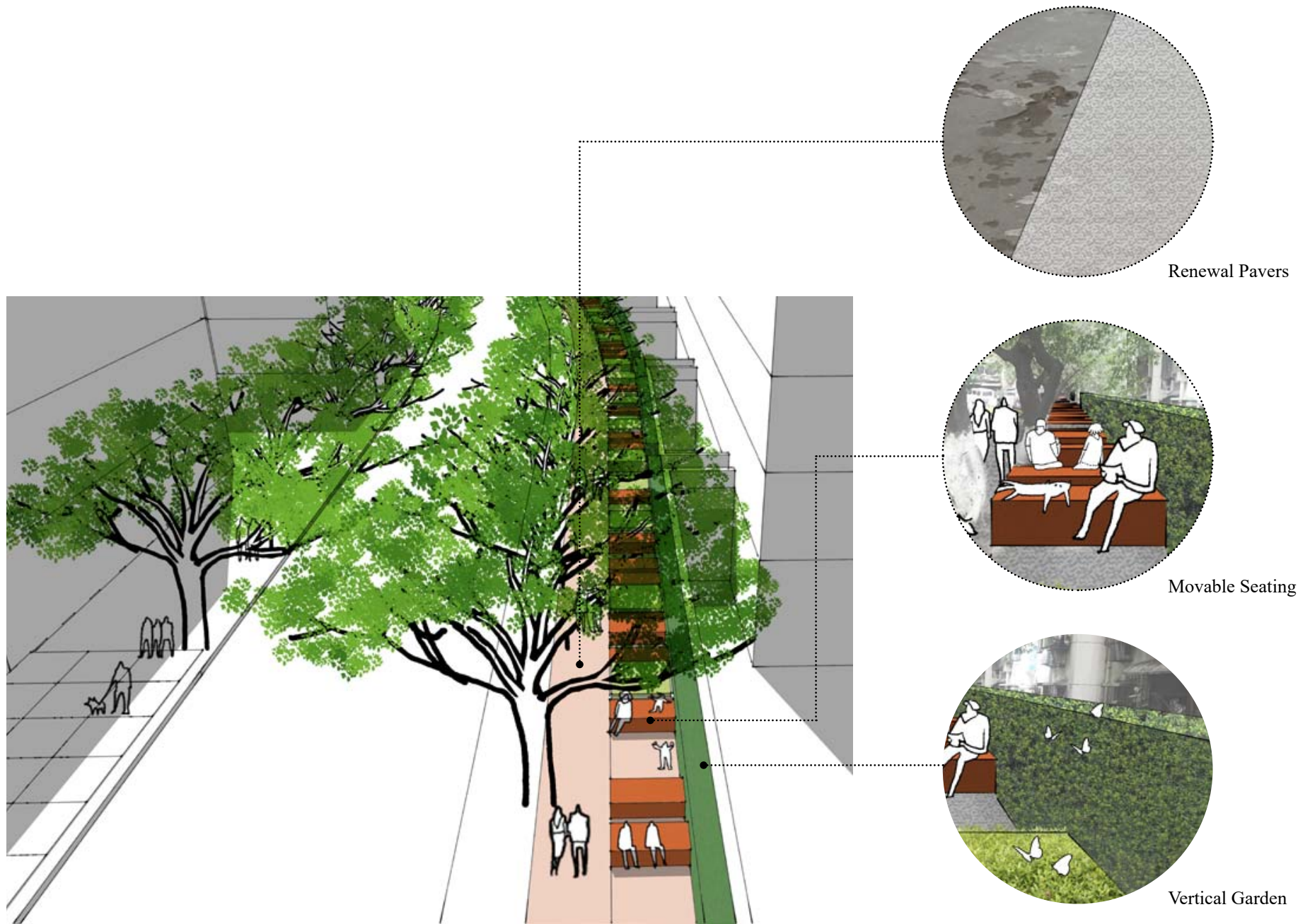


Figure 4.63. The old primary neighborhood street's proposed programs



Figure 4.64. The old primary neighborhood street's proposed perspective

## New Neighborhood Street

*New neighborhood Street* refers to the neighborhood street with busy traffic and wide sidewalks (about 15 meters wide for each side). Because of strict management in the new area, most of the vehicles use the underground garage for parking. As a result, the wide street provides plenty of room for multiple people to walk or linger, and for ground floor commerce. However, such an active street does not have any free public seating or shelters to invite people to stay. Some people only stand under the trees, talking or waiting for someone, sharing space with motorcycles.

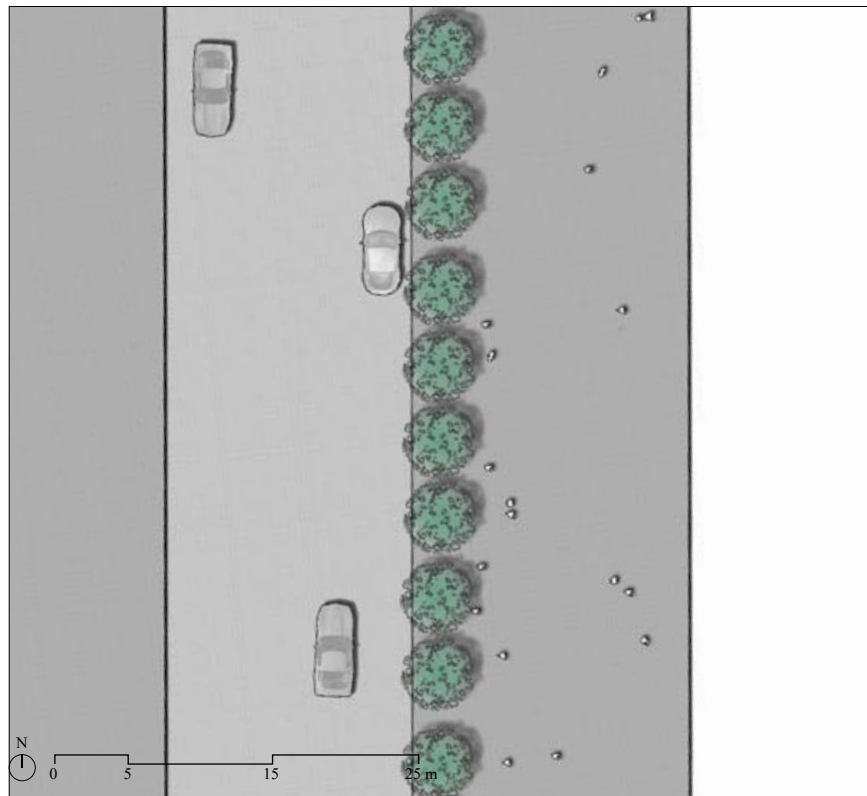


Figure 4.65. The new neighborhood street's existing plan

The plan on the left in Figure 4.65 shows the existing conditions of the linear space. In order to make full use of this space and improve its experiential qualities, I suggest the following (Figure 4.66 to 4.68). Firstly, add planters under the trees, which could be used as a green buffer on the busy street as well as providing public seating for people. Secondly, transform some of the pavement along the planter and the seats to expand the area for lingering and encourage slowing down.

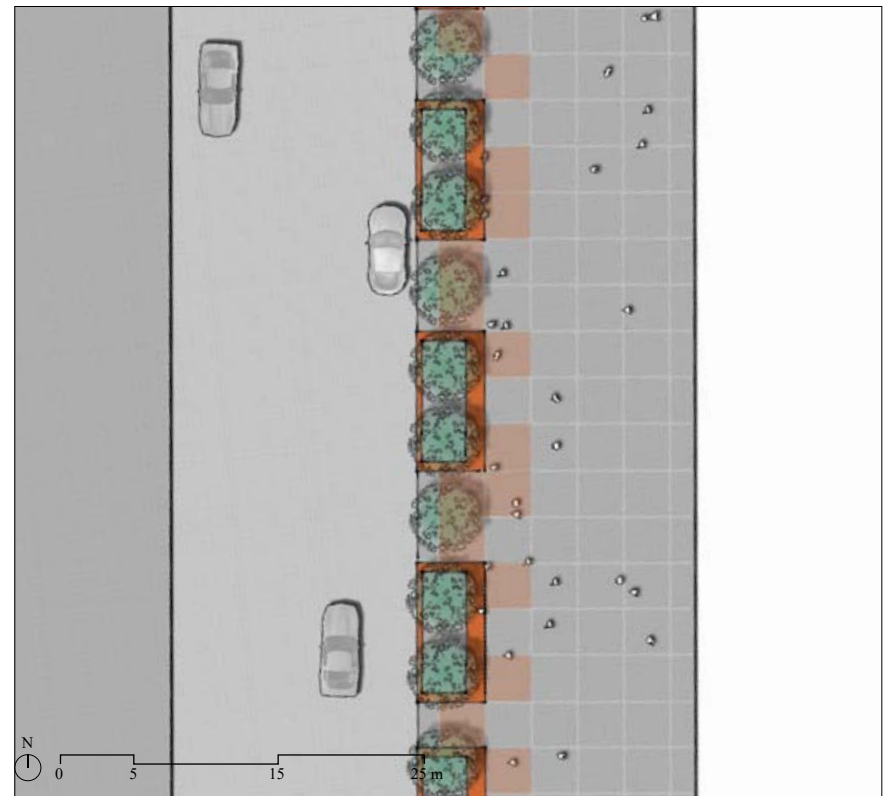
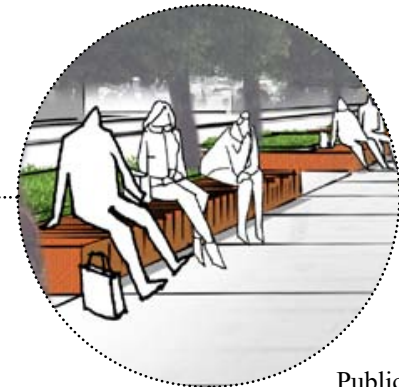
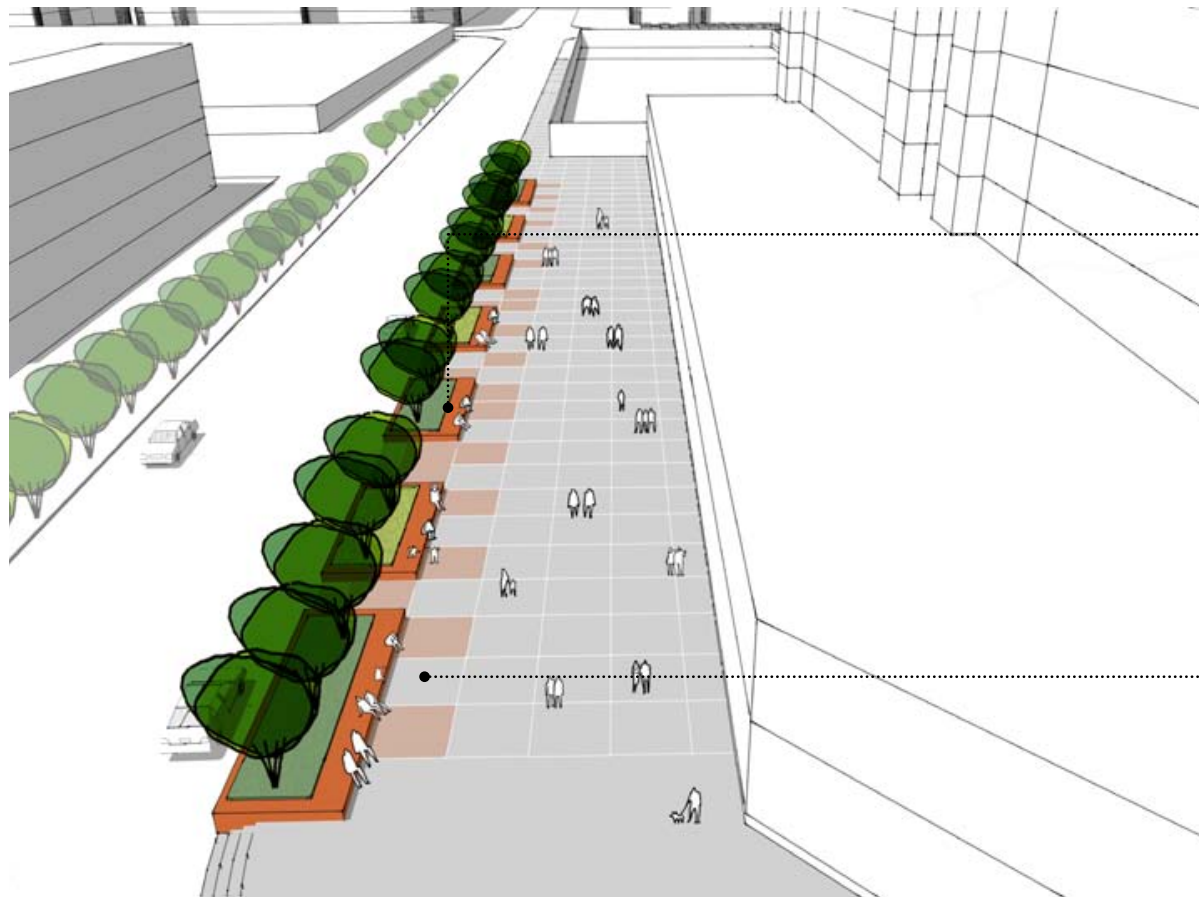


Figure 4.66. The new neighborhood street's proposed plan



Public Seating



Slowing Area

Figure 4.67. The new neighborhood street's proposed programs



Figure 4.68. The new neighborhood street's proposed perspective

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION: NEW ROUTINE OF EVERYDAY LIFE AT THE HUMAN SCALE

In this section, I consider the detailed information about people's everyday urban routines that I learned about in the interviews and translate this information into how their everyday lives might play out in these proposed designed spaces. Below I offer a scenario for what a senior's everyday routine might look like if the proposed designs were implemented. This is followed by a profile of a day in the life of a middle-aged resident and then a daily routine for a young adult.

##### *4.4.1 A New Routine of Everyday Life for a Senior*

The new routine of everyday life for a senior like Mr. Li, retired from the industrial group with regular pension every month, could go like this. He gets up at about 6:00am. After washing and having breakfast, he goes to the farm-market or supermarket with his friends to get some daily necessities between 7:00 to 8:00 am. Then, after housework, lunch and noon-nap at home. Sometimes, he might go to the community dining hall to have lunch if his family is not at home and then go back home to take a nap. Then he starts to enjoy his afternoon. Sometimes he could go to the new public plaza or new neighborhood street within a 15 minutes walk. There he could find a seat under the trees, chitchat with his friends and enjoy the present amusement of watching people pass by in the lively urban space. Sometimes, he could just walk around the

old area, find a square to play cards or chess with neighborhoods, or just stay in one of the gardens with his friends, or just be alone to read. Sometimes, he goes to the community clubs to enjoy writing the Chinese calligraphy with his friends. Or he does some craftwork just for fun in the community workshop, as a way of extending his proud previous life working as a senior technician in the factory. In the good weather, he could sit on the terrace in the Cinema Plaza to enjoy the outdoor environment and meet some old friends or neighbors in the old place, talking about their memories of this place and the current events on the exhibition walls. If there is an outdoor movie in the Cinema Plaza, he might like to go there, enjoying the community entertainment while meeting with friends.

Of course, not all seniors may be as active as Mr. Li. Some of them might just choose to go to some of these new public places. But Mr. Li is one of the typical retired workers in this district, who make up a large portion of the population. However, there are also some other seniors such as Ms. Wang, who does not have such retirement pay and keeps working for her own business. Such people have much less free time. However, they can also enjoy their public life if there is good access to diverse open spaces with complete infrastructure and elements.

#### 4.4.2 *A New Routine of Everyday Life for a Middle-ager*

The new routine of everyday life for a middle-ager like Ms. Liu, retired from the industrial group in her fifties and conducting her own business online, could go as follows. She walks her dogs at about 7:30 am. Since there are more open spaces in this area, she could do some morning exercises while the dogs are playing in the garden. Then, she walks along the newly designed continuous corridor from the old area to the new area, go to the farm-market to get some things and then go back home at about 8:30am. Since her family goes to work on the weekdays, she could go to the community dining hall and have lunch with friends and neighbors rather than preparing and having lunch alone. After returning to work after lunch she can then go to the new linear parks to walk her dogs. Sometimes, she can return to the community club to work alongside her neighbors at the urban farm. Sometimes she goes to the new public plaza in the new area since her dogs like to play with the dry fountains. Sometimes, she goes to the Cinema Plaza in the old area, sitting on the terrace to enjoy the outdoor environment and talk with her old friends or neighbors occasionally. Sometimes, she just walks along the open space network, for a while sitting wherever she wants. Due to the good condition of the green network, she could enjoy the natural environments within a comfortable walking distance rather than walking far away to the waterfront.

Ms. Liu is also one of the typical middle-aged workers in this district. However, there are also other middle-aged residents, such as Mrs. Zhao, who works regularly for a company, and the individual owners as Ms. Zhao, who works for her own business. Those who work do not have much free time. However, they, too, can enjoy their public life after work, if there is good access to diverse open spaces with complete infrastructure and elements.

#### 4.4.3 *A New Routine of Everyday Life for a Young Adult*

The new routine of everyday life for a youth like Ms. Xia, who works as an accountant and lives in the new area, could be like this. She goes out for work from 8:00am to 6:00pm. After dinner and necessary housework, she hangs out with her family or friends. Sometime, she just walks around in the gated-community, goes to the pocket park with her children or finds a seat in the public plaza to enjoying the lively plaza with a variety of people and a diversity of social activities at night. On the outdoor movie nights, she can go to the Cinema Plaza to enjoy a film in the different atmosphere of the industrial community and the history of this place.

In fact, the routine of everyday life for young adults like Ms. Jiang, who works as a designer and lives in the old area, is almost the same. But she might choose the open spaces for rest and to stay after dinner in the old area if she does not want to go far away that day.

#### 4.4.4 Conclusion

All in all, the designs proposed in this thesis aim to offer people of different ages and backgrounds more opportunities to enjoy community life in a livable district. These redesign strategies refine and adapt the physical environment and extend some of the existing habits, programs, culture and context for generations in this place. I do not deny the necessity of urban renewal and redevelopment to fulfill the needs of the growing public. However, since people have emotional bonds to the places where they live, we risk losing such emotional bonds, along with our memories, our history and culture and even our sense of self if we just thoughtlessly demolish all existing community spaces in the service of development. Such broken and lost connections have already happened in many cities like my hometown in China during the process of urban renewal. In this sense, the design applications proposed here could be one of the potential ways to heal such a split between people and place.



Figure 4.69. Birdview of proposed design



Figure 5.1. Community meeting

## Chapter 5. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have tried to find a way to design a public open space network that could rebuild the relationship between people and place in the process of urban renewal in Chongqing, China. The public open space networks I propose, which are based on people's needs both physically and emotionally and the existing conditions, are my experiment to try out the possibility of carrying out a method of community engagement in China. It is important to design an open space system as a living object, that could record the history of ordinary people, change with people's needs and reflect the urban development while connecting with the new spaces and systems. Redesigning the open space system as a starting point to provide space for people to linger and participate in a broader community life while working as a corridor connecting the old neighborhoods and the new ones, enables us to embrace the history of the place and its future possibilities.

## 5.1 RETURN TO THE THESIS QUESTION

The first research question I posed was “Why do we love our community?” In order to understand such a phenomenon, it would be better to consider it in two realms: physical qualities and emotional qualities. However, due to tangibility and materiality of the physical aspects, most people lack awareness of the significant role of the emotional qualities of place and its value in our lives. Although some people have awareness of their emotional bonds to place, they do not know how to express their feelings and what they should do to preserve such emotional bonds, or the places themselves. It is a dilemma for many people to make the choice between the familiar old neighborhood and the new ones. On the one hand, they are eager for new gated communities with bigger apartments, well-maintained landscapes and 24-hour guards. On the other hand, they enjoy the familiar existing environments with complete facilities, friendly neighborhoods and open communities. In this sense, it is important to start promoting the open spaces in both old and new urban areas and show people the “ideal” space they need based on the interviews.

The second question was “How do people want to use the public open spaces in their neighborhood?” The results I found in the interviews show that almost everyone wants to use the open spaces to enjoy the outdoor environment and social life in urban space no matter what their age or background. Public open spaces provide room for a variety of people and a diversity of activities and programs. The interviewees’ responses included a lot of creative

ideas and ambitions for how to refine the public open spaces. One of the most popular needs is to increase the quantity and quality of public infrastructure, such as the shelters, seating and pavements, so that people would have a better walking experience and enjoy more inviting spaces for staying and gathering. Another important need is for nearby nature and green spaces. Although both areas have different kinds of green spaces, most of them are just for viewing and need to be well-maintained and managed. People want to engage in the green spaces to fulfill their desire to be close to nature, rather than just watching the garden from far away. Moreover, there is a need to extend some of the historical activities and programs of the old areas, such as the annual community celebrations and sports meetings, Children’s Day Parties and community movies, which were mentioned especially by those related to the industrial group. In this sense, it is important to extend or transform some of the previous programs and activities in some open spaces to satisfy the needs of people both for entertainment and for nostalgia, such as the outdoor movie as the extension of the former popular movie theater.

The third question was “How can we connect the post-industrial residential areas and the new gated communities in the big district at a more human scale?” In general, the big district is split by the two models of residence with different landscapes and forms of community spaces. Both of them have advantages and disadvantages. However, the results I found in the design study

indicate that both of them lack important infrastructure such as public seating and shelters inviting people to rest and stay. On the one hand, the old residential area has a complete open space network on the human scale but lacks maintenance. On the other hand, the new residential area has good community management but lacks a continuous open space network and human scale space. In this sense, the proposed designs could be an effective way to connect the old area with the new one by means of infrastructural elements that extend the public open space to the new area, while strengthening the management in the old area in return.

The last question that this thesis strove to address was: “How can a public open space network be designed to invite people to use it and serve multiple purposes?” The public open space system is designed to invite people in and serve many purposes by considering the diverse needs and programs that will gather people together. Based on the design study, I found that a good open space network involves five elements including identity, flexibility, collectivity, publicness and human scale. Using these elements as design principles, I proposed my strategy for three types of spaces: community hubs, open spaces, and linear spaces based on their function, scale and dimension. From this general strategy, I built a framework for development phases and chose the specific site from each spatial type as a sample to test the design principles and revise them. In this way, a public open space network forms.

## 5.2 NEXT STEPS

There are still many things that need to be considered. For me, this project is an on-going process that will lead me closer to my vision for community-engaged public open space networks in Chongqing, China. In order to do future work on public open space networks, in the general perspective, alternative policies for community engagement need to be researched, such as how much the local government can support a redevelopment budget, as well as what kind of organization is permitted to conduct grassroots projects, and what kind of form should effective community meetings in this city and this country take. From the detailed perspective of design, alternative materials and professional technological research should be done, for example, on the local vegetation, sustainable local materials, and cost-effective construction. Finally, how to conduct the design and build, working with the residents to make each proposal of open space into a reality, is the next step in my work.

### 5.3 PERSONAL REFLECTION

The intention of this thesis project has been to design a process and framework that can gather people together to enjoy neighborhood space and community together. Due to my experience and interests, I chose to use public open spaces as the stage for gathering people by the means of landscape architecture. I wanted to know why people like the traditional neighborhood spaces, how people think about them, how people use them and what is the dilemma of the current neighborhood space, how people want to use their public space in the future, and what can I do with these questions to promote socially responsive design. I learned a lot while discovering different ways to approach these questions. Different professors have different ways to do their research and design. Friends have also helped me learn more of what I know. I believe every community has their own way to deal with every public space as well. This thesis is just a starting point.

This is a project that is different from other projects I have done before. It is different from the functionally-oriented design that is more typical from the perspective of designers. In this thesis, I tried to think about different ways to build design principles and strategies from the perspective of human experience and emotional bonds to place. I also learned about alternative ways to study and apply design by the means of pattern languages, qualitative investigation and community engagement.

There are more and more studies about post-industrial residential district renewal and urban redevelopment in recent years in China. Some government policies related to old residential district renewal projects have also been established. I believe the post-industrial residential district renewal process will not be confined to this thesis but will reach out to the community and create an innovative public open space system in the city.

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# APPENDIX I

## Field Research Questions

### 1. Questions about the general topic---start with:

How long have lived in Chongqing?

Which neighborhood do you live in?

What does this city or neighborhood mean to you? (+)

What makes the city or neighborhood special to you?

What are the most valuable aspects of living here?

Are there any specific places within the city that are your favorites? What are they? What do you like about them?

Chongqing has been changing a lot over the years, what about these changes concerns you the most? (-)

Have you ever lost any place in the city that was special to you?

Physical demolish or change

Symbolic meaning change

### 2. Questions about spatical practices and preferences:

Of all the places in your neighborhood, which are the most important to you? Why?

Describe the routine of your everyday life, including the important public spaces and pathways.

Think about a typical day, what are some of the place you go to/ visit most frequently? Why?

What pathway do you like most? Why?

### 3. Questions in relation to a hypothetical scenario:

If you could change anything along this pathway, what would it be?

If you could preserve anything about along this pathway, what would it be?

### 4. Questions about the history/ place memory:

Why would you say that you are attached to this neighborhood? In what way?

How have recent changes?

Given all changes to the city and this neighborhood, do you think any local history has been lost? If yes, how?

Is there anything that can be done to recapture that history?