

STORIES FROM PENANG

STORIES FROM PENANG — UQ Architecture Field Experience 2016

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Cover photo by Yaseera Moosa

Back internal photo by Maddisen O'Donahoo

Consultants & Studio Leaders pages compiled by Ryan Browne

Design by Bec Stables

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THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

**school of
architecture**

FOREWORD

On the 25th of April, 2016, a group of 18 students in their third year of the Bachelor of Architectural Design at The University of Queensland (UQ), Australia, arrived in the UNESCO Cultural World Heritage Site of George Town, the capital city of the Malaysian state of Pulau Pinang, for the start of a 10-day study program. The Australian Federal Government's New Colombo Plan Mobility Program funded 16 of the students on the trip with the broad reaching aim of lifting knowledge of the Indo-Pacific in Australia.

For architecture students George Town provided a unique opportunity to experience a diverse multi-cultural society within a well-preserved South East Asian colonial heritage site of significant civic, religious and shophouse buildings that date from the 18th Century settlement by the British East India Company.

Despite the heat and humidity - many locals told us it was the worst they had ever experienced - with cameras and field journals at hand, the students were intrepid explorers of George Town and its local cultures. They visited well-known heritage buildings such as the Blue Mansion, and sites including Penang Hill. Some students chose to hike rather than take the funicular, I kid you not! They were enthusiasts of the local food with many meals eaten at local hawker stalls.

Our group was extremely fortunate to have been so enthusiastically supported by local architects and heritage practitioners with many making time to meet with us and discuss their understanding of George Town. It was through these discussions that students were able to develop a critical approach to the fieldwork. In particular, Dr Gwynn Jenkins' presentation on concepts of George Town's tangible, intangible and sub-tangible cultural heritage highlighted the current dangers faced because of rapid change brought about by shifts in economics and the gentrification that followed the UNESCO World Heritage Site status received in 2008.

In response to their fieldwork observations and findings, students were asked to create a small design proposition during a master-class with UQ School of Architecture Adjunct Professor Kevin Low (University of Malaya). Kevin's distinctive approach to teaching architecture, encouraged students to understand what was the question they were trying to answer. His energetic personality added to the overall experience bringing to the fore the importance of both formal and informal learning. How often do students have the opportunity to discuss the big and small questions of their discipline over dinner or a morning cuppa with an internationally renowned practitioner?

Travelling to new places is seen as a way of expanding our understanding of the world. Reflecting on the trip, students commented that what they most valued was the chance to immerse themselves in a place and how the people they met had shaped this experience. The students' stories of their Penang experiences are told in this catalogue to accompany an exhibition at the Zelman Cowen building at UQ in July.

—
Leonie Matthews

Course Coordinator
July 2016

STUDENTS

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FIELDTRIP ADVISER

Dr James Davidson
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MASTERCLASS

Adjunct Professor Kevin Mark Low
/ Arkitek, Kuala Lumpur

GUEST PRESENTATIONS

Dr Gwynn Jenkins
/ Consultant in Architectural
Heritage & Cultural Anthropology

Laurence Loh
/ Director, Laurence Loh
Architects Arkitek LLA

Lin Lee Loh-Lim
/ Conservation Consultant at
Arkitek LLA

Ooi Lye Huat
/ Architect and Publisher

Tan Yeow Wooi
/ Director, Tan Yeow Wooi Culture
& Research Studio

CONSULTANTS & STUDIO LEADERS

Dr James Davidson

Principal, James Davidson Architect, Brisbane.

Having worked in George Town for Laurence Loh Architects in 1996 and 97, during his 'year out' from his architecture studies at UQ, James helped form the backbone of our fieldtrip when he joined us in Penang. James's knowledge and experience of Penang were highly valued as were his introductions to a number of the key figures in architectural heritage in Penang.

Jorge Deustua

Photographic Artist and Academic, Brisbane.

Associate Professor of Photography, University of Lima,

Jorge's preparatory masterclass is evident in the quality of images captured on the trip. The three-hour 'principles of photography' class provided a foundation for making images that captured a sense of people and place.

Ooi Lye Huat

Principal, OI Design, Penang.

Publisher of Luxurious Magazine Asia

Mr Ooi brought a real world perspective of Penang, discussing his practice and commercial architectural growth within south-east Asia, as well as his new venture into publishing. His generous hospitality will also be remembered by all.

Dr Gwynn Jenkins

Consultant in Architectural Heritage & Cultural Anthropology, Penang.

Author of *Contested Space: Cultural Heritage and Identity Reconstructions.*

Conservation Strategies within a Developing Asian City (2008)

Gwynn provided the context for our fieldwork in George Town. Her experience and understanding of the city inspired us all, particularly the notions of tangible, intangible and sub tangible heritage, and the lessons learnt are evident in our work.

Doris Lim

CAD Designer, Laurence Loh Architects, Penang.

Freelance Writer for Luxurious Magazine Asia

Doris was invaluable, recommending places to eat, hang out and indulge in the contemporary cultures of George Town. Her character and vast network in Penang opened up many unexpected and beneficial opportunities.

Lin Lee Loh-Lim

Heritage Consultant, Historical and Social Researcher, Laurence Loh Architects, Penang.

Author of *The Blue Mansion: The Story of Mandarin Splendour Reborn* (2002)

Lin Lee shared with us her passion for the heritage of George Town in the telling of the story of the Blue Mansion (Cheong Fatt Tze), as she guided us on our tour of the building.



VISIT TO UNIVERSITY SCIENCE MALAYSIA, SCHOOL OF HOUSING, BUILDING AND PLANNING

Laurence Loh

Principal, Laurence Loh Architects (LLA), Penang.
Adjunct Associate Professor, University of Hong Kong.

Laurence gave us a broad overview of Penang and the changes he has seen over his forty year career. He was instrumental in achieving the UNESCO World Heritage joint listing for Malaka and Penang, and is now focussed on developing ways to provide affordable housing for the island residents. We were inspired by his dedication to his work and his wisdom.

Kevin Mark Low

Architect, Small Projects, Kuala Lumpur.
Adjunct Professor, The University of Queensland.
Author of *Small Projects* (2014)

We feel honoured to have had the opportunity to be taught by Kevin. His teachings and ideas about small interventions were inspiring and his approach encouraged us to think of architectural heritage in a whole new light.

Dr Robert Riddel

Principal, Conrad Gargett Riddel, Brisbane.
Adjunct Professor, The University of Queensland
Author of *Robin Dods: Selected Works* (2012)

Rob Riddel gave a preparatory presentation on heritage practices, including an introduction to some of the key texts, as well as exemplars from his own practice. Most importantly, we learnt that understanding place is the first task before any intervention is made to heritage buildings. This became instrumental to our fieldwork in George Town.

Tan Yeow Wooi

Director, Tan Yeow Wooi Culture & research Studio, George Town, Penang.
Author of *Leong San Tong Khoo Kongsi: The History and Architecture* (2003), *Kapitan Chung Keng Kwee's Shen Zhi Jia Shu and Hai Ji Zhan* (2015) and *Penang Shophouses: A Handbook of Features and Materials* (2015).

Tan's documentaries and presentation gave us a very special insight into life in George Town, a life that is slowly disappearing. We were touched by the sensitivity Tan showed towards the people and their everyday practices, from filming a woman having her hair washed at Chew Jetty to two young boys watching a puppet show in the street.



TIMOTHY BAUER WORKING WITH KEVIN LOW

STORIES FROM PENANG

18 Students, 10 days, 1 UNESCO World Heritage Site. These are our Stories from Penang.

George Town, Penang, named after the British King George III, is rich in history as a trading port for the lucrative 18th Century spice and opium trade between the east and west along the Straits of Malacca. Situated on the North-Eastern cape of the island of Penang, Malaysia, George Town was founded in 1786 by Captain Francis Light, after being sent by the British East India Company to establish better trade relations between the East and West. Its development into today's vibrant city of 55,000 inhabitants is a result of British colonisation and the migration of communities from various parts of the India-China trade route as they established their own neighbourhoods, or quarters, within George Town, particularly the Malay, Indian and Chinese communities.

On July 7, 2008, George Town, along with the town of Melaka, was given the status of a UNESCO Cultural World Heritage Site. These historic cities of the Straits of Malacca were jointly recognised as an example of multicultural trading towns where the fusion of different cultures generated a unique architecture, culture and townscape. The George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site is comprised of a core zone of 109.39 hectares, bounded by the coastline on one side and the buffer zone of 150.04 hectares on the other. Early shophouses sit alongside Anglo-Indian bungalows within the core zone with mosques, temples and the European administrative-style buildings and provide the multicultural framework of the city.

Following initial research into the history of George Town before departing Brisbane, we each went to Penang with preconceived ideas of what the cultural, and specifically, the architecture and landscape of George Town would be like. However, after immersing ourselves within the place, these perspectives shifted, adapted and a deeper understanding was generated beyond the surface of George Town's history and how that history shaped the architecture. We delved into the cultural history embodied within the built environment and the living, intangible culture that deserves preservation.

This publication presents the experiences, perspectives and outcomes of the students as we discovered the hidden depths of the dynamic city of George Town, rich in both tangible and intangible culture. The first chapter – Stories from Penang – retells our experiences of interacting with the place and the people who call Penang home.

Chapter Two – Mapping, sketches our observations after navigating the streets of George Town. Finally, small design interventions are presented in the third chapter. Throughout our time in George Town, we posed questions and sought to deliver solutions that address issues pertaining to people and place, the tangible and intangible culture and the effects that gentrification, as a result of the UNESCO listing, is having on the city.

We hope you enjoy discovering Penang through our eyes and the design proposals to support and enable the culture and heritage of George Town to be sustained for generations to come.

Alyce Giebel
2016 UQ Architecture

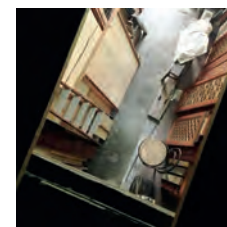
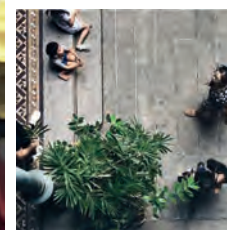
CHAPTER 1

—
Stories



1		2	3
		4	5

- 1 SHOPHOUSE SPRAWL
2 WAN TON MEE
3 OVERFLOW
4 FENG SHUI
5 MR LEE'S SHOPHOUSE



LOOKING DOWN

—
Timothy Bauer

Chaos...

At first it seemed unorganized, making me feel cautious and hesitant. Every little detail catching my eye and drawing my attention. Closer and closer.

Glowing lights and vibrant signs pulsed in every direction. Strange smells seemed to sit in the air in front of each stall, an advertisement for what was cooking inside, some appetising, some making me quiver and hold my breath. Sizzling fry pans exploded with smoke and steam blurring my vision as I walked past each hawker stall. Voices speaking unfamiliar words

amplified through the space making it sound alive. People scrambled between the city of tables, carrying plates of food, dashing through the sprawl in search of a vacant table to gather. Moments past as I continued to observe. Unconsciously my feelings of cautiousness slowly dissolved, allowing my senses to absorb the new environment surrounding me. At first, movement filled the space, but I now felt a stillness. Maybe I was taking it all in, or maybe the hot humid air floating around my head was drifting me into a daze.

Calmness.



1		2	3
			4
			5

- 1 STREET FRONT
- 2 INSTITUTIONAL DETAIL
- 3 SHOP HOUSE ROOF
- 4 FRONTAL DEFINITION
- 5 HIDDEN DETAIL



IN SIGHTS ABOVE

Ryan Browne

“Look up” I think as I walk Penang. The principle is key to understanding the city, yet as I walk I notice I am alone in my endeavour. I photograph parapets, roofs and gable ends; noting their beauty and significance. Whilst walking through the gentrifying George Town I find looking up gains insights to the past. I note the core understanding the roof gives to each building: decay, conservation, rich, poor, old, new. The unchanging datum is a counterpoint to an ever-changing ground plane. Providing sectional and historic understandings that are undoubtedly intrinsic.



1		2	3
			4
			5

1 FIVE FOOT WAY
2 GUTTER BOUNDARY
3 STEPS ACROSS
4 GREEN GREEN GREEN
5 SCOOTER



WATCHOUT, DON'T FALL

Charlotte Bryant

It's hot. My hand sits in a salute, shading my eyes from the glare. There's no shade. Walking the streets, the scratchy fabric of my dress softens as I sweat. I'm hot. I need to find some shade.

As I walk, dodging a scooter or two, I spot a green car parked against a green house with green shutters, my camera shifts to my eye. But be careful, watching your step is essential in Penang. If you lose your eye to a chance at an instagram, you will surely miss a step.

As I turn and take my next stride, I realise only halfway that my foot is about to land in the middle of an open drain! Shifting my weight I leap forward, off the road, across the suspect black stream, landing in the shade of a five foot way. It's still hot.



GLIMPSE

—
Yannan Cai



1 VIEW THROUGH
2 SCAFFOLDING FACADE
3 HIGH-RISE BEHIND
4 HIGH-RISE BEHIND
5 HIGH-RISE BEHIND

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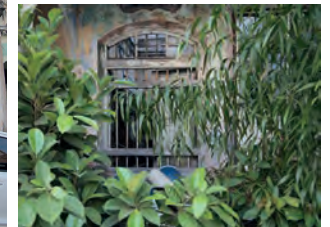


Chinese is a language with a stronger sense of hierarchy for its speakers than English. I often feel shy when I talk to strangers in Chinese even though it is my first language. However, the point is, I started talking with local people. The question, why we take efforts to protect the heritage, which I have asked myself and my fellows many times, is always superficially politically correct, but I cannot find out an exact reason especially when it comes with materialised conflicts. I brought this question to my interviewees and hoped to see local people's attitudes towards the heritage protection in George Town.



1		2	3
			4
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- 1 SHOPHOUSE FACADES
- 2 LEFT BEHIND
- 3 GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE?
- 4 DEATH SUPPORTS LIFE
- 5 DOWN AND OUT



TO STAY OR GO?

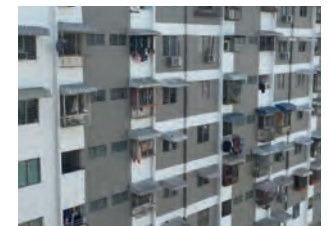
—
Gianni Cummings

The pace of life in George Town can be brisk, everything is in a state of motion. The situation around is dynamic, but what about the simple shophouse? Even these are changing, yes, but are they changing to meet a contemporary time? Maybe it is better to forget, a relic of the past no longer relevant. If you are not keeping up then you will need a guide. Someone to respect and appreciate you whilst bringing you along on this journey. Even without, as you gently fade away, you may still find a way to support those around you.



VERTICAL PENANG

Olivia Daw



1 HIGHRISE TO BELOW
2 SHOP BELOW THE HIGHRISE
3 FIRST IMPRESSION
4 LOOKING IN
5 HIGHRISE

1	2	3
		4
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As I wander along the streets of Penang, the high-rise buildings overshadow the rows of narrow, low level shophouses that guide my journey. The red roofs, equally spaced and common in form express a language that represents Penang and its history. Each house recounts a story; the culture is embedded in the architecture. I continue along the guided path and the high rise buildings continue to intimidate from above, displacing the tale told at eye level. The contrast is at first abrupt but then goes on to intrigue.

Intrigue leads me closer to the apartment block behind. Culture begins to ooze from the communal courtyard redeeming the generic lifeless facade. Family run shops and community conversations are reminiscent of the George Town I had just left. Maybe I am still here: a new dimension. Conversation strikes curiosity and leads me to look up, to explore. From above things become clear. Families, gardens, spaces for sitting, eating and playing just like below: a reinterpreted tradition.



HIDDEN CULTURE

Alyce Giebel

1		2	3
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- 1 FIRST LAYER OF DEFENCE
- 2 STREET VENDOR
- 3 WATCH OUT FOR THE BIKES!
- 4 STREET ART
- 5 TRISHAWS



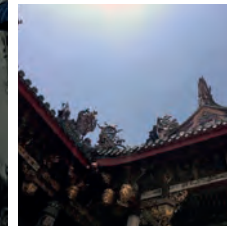
Walking down the street, swarms of people block my view as they vie for their spot next to the bicycle street art. Navigating between the people and the open street drains takes my full concentration and the sweltering heat makes the crowds narrow in. Dodge motorbikes; dodge cars; dodge trishaws. Taking refuge in the shade is essential to go on and as I walk to the side of the narrowed street, a door behind a screen of trees emerges from behind the crowd. The tourists stream past with their cameras around their necks, the privacy of the locals is slowly peeled away and it's only behind the screen that intangible culture is able to survive.



UNPREDICTABILITY

—
Leah Hartley

1	2	3	6
		4	7
		5	



- 1 FIVE FOOT WAY
- 2 JUXTAPOSITION
- 3 OVERGROWN
- 4 BREAKFAST ON THE STREET
- 5 KHOO KONGSI TEMPLE
- 6 ROOF SILHOUETTE
- 7 WORKING TOGETHER

The extreme heat overwhelms me and sticks to my skin as motorcycles and cars zoom past. I must be cautious as I walk and try to navigate the uneven footpaths and dodge the deep, open drains with their overwhelming smells. I go down busy streets, empty streets and then into shady walkways in refuge from the harsh heat. I pass beautifully decorated buildings and ones that have been neglected and abandoned, their walls overtaken by vines of green leaves. I watch the people going about their work and see delicious foods sizzling in front of my eyes.

After my first few glimpses of this place I begin to realise that there is very little order and rules. Nothing is hidden and everything is truthful and unpredictable. With each step I begin to better understand the mixtures of unrelated spaces and competing cultures that make up this vibrant city.



TRANQUILITY TRUMPS TOURISM

—
Rebecca Holmes

1		2	3
		4	5

- 1 TRANQUIL SPACE
- 2 TOURISTS
- 3 TAN JETTY
- 4 JETTY HOUSING
- 5 JETTY PILLAR DETAIL



Strolling down the Clan Jetties; jetty one, jetty two, jetty three, jetty four.

Sitting at the end of Chew Jetty, jetty four, I check the time, finally! This sweltering hot afternoon is coming to an end.

As I turn to retrace my steps, the walkway seems to disappear beneath the bustling feet of tourists which has now occupied the five foot way.

Weaving back through the crowd, my elbows bent, nudging past tourist after tourist, my brow heavy with sweat, eager to escape, my thoughts turn to New Jetty, jetty one and Tan Jetty, jetty three.

Jetty one and three, home to a mixture of cultural backgrounds, participating in normal daily activities, occupying their own space and collectively sharing a singular walkway.

New and Tan Jetty, were calm in their simplicity, tranquil in their state, comfortable in contrast to Chew.



PENANG HAS A SECRET

—
Adam Holmes-Barry

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		4	
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- 1 SECRET OF THE SHOPHOUSE
- 2 MOSQUE LANEWAY
- 3 SHOPHOUSES OF COLOUR
- 4 ORIGINAL SHOPHOUSES
- 5 CLAN JETTIES



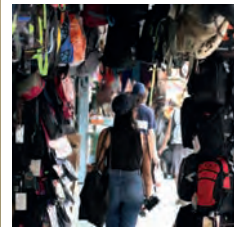
The idea that the shophouse is the natural progression of culture adapting to tourism is untrue. Despite the ever changing meaning of what the shophouse is in George Town, there is a very raw reality of life behind the shop that has always remained consistent. We let our eyes deceive us into thinking that the shop is somehow elegantly connected to the front of the house, however this is not always the case.

Where most people notice and observe the shop, it is often that they will ignore the house aspect. There is bustling behind the scenes, families trying to maintain their lives while still running a shop. There is a whole other world five feet back from the five foot way.



WALK THROUGH

Alice Langholt



1 ILLUSION OF ENDLESSNESS
2 HUMAN ENGAGEMENT
3 MOTOR BIKE OBSTRUCTION
4 DISPLAY OBSTACLES
5 RESTAURANT OCCUPANTS

1	2	3
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Step through. Let your mind give in to the joys of childhood. Explore. Fall through each void. Savour the shade. Feel the relief of escaping the thick heavy air.

Continue. Step up, step down, step through. A progression of shrines, vegetation and architectural character flickers in front of your eyes as you delve deeper. Only you can break the pattern, but the allure is compelling. You move forward.

Stop. Squeeze past the motorbike obstructing the passageway. Brush through a display of hanging clothes and bags, avoiding eye contact of awaiting shopkeepers. Reluctantly weave around stationary restaurant customers as the seductive smells draw you in.

You've lost yourself and the hours have past. Forever chasing the imagined end.



CULTURE IN UNREST

Felix McCabe



- 1 SHOP FRONT
- 2 CAMPBELL STREET
- 3 SHOPHOUSE SIGNAGE
- 4 REFURBISHED SHOPHOUSES
- 5 TRADITIONAL SHOPHOUSE

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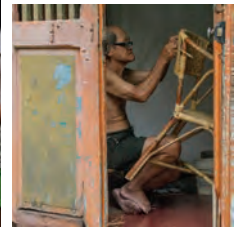
Trendy bars, boutique hotels and tourist shops take residence in the historic shophouses of Armenian Street, all the while mosques, temples and churches perform their religious rituals. I walked through the street, oblivious to what was actually happening around me.

Naivety blinded me from the true implications of George Town's UNESCO World Heritage Listing. It was not until the teachings of one person witnessing the changing culture and identity that my eyes were opened to its consequences.



OCCUPYING THE CITY

Nino Middleton



1 HIGH-RISE
2 LEBUH CINTRA MARKETS
3 COCONUT VENDOR
4 CRAFTSMAN
5 PENANG ROYALTY

1	2	3
	4	
	5	

One of the most striking elements of the George Town cityscape, for me, is the extent to which residents utilise and occupy the urban landscape that surrounds them.

I meander through the clustered corridors of high-rise apartments, where the foliage of scattered gardens beside each door both comforts and surprises me (the closest one gets to having a front yard at twenty-two stories above ground); to a secluded alleyway where an elderly man repairs wicker furniture, meeting my

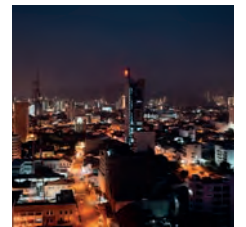
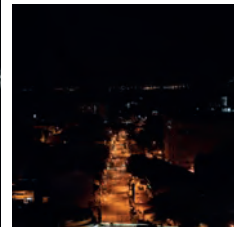
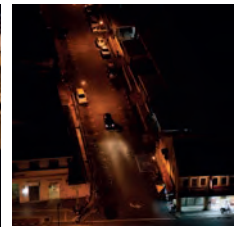
eye and looking away as I point the camera through a gap in the pastel doors.

A culture of visibility exists within this city, apparent in a manner that I have never observed before, and one that makes a significant contribution toward making George Town a vibrant and dynamic city that I cannot wait to immerse myself in.



FIRST LIGHT

Yaseera Moosa



1 07.14.36
2 06.57.14
3 06.44.12
4 06.47.13
5 06.42.13

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At 5am the sky was dark and the streets were silent. Dawn arrived slowly, veiled by an overcast sky. The stillness was interrupted by the call to prayer. Windows across the city began to light up like tiny fireflies. The darkness remained apparent, but the streets had begun to stir. A motorcycle sped down the road precariously close to a man crossing the street; even dawn was not immune to Penang's chaotic road habits. First light had arrived and soaked the streets in a soft pink glow. The city became itself.



KEVIN AND ME

Maddisen O'Donahoo



1 PENANG SKYLINE
2 PENANG SKYLINE
3 KEVIN AND ME
4 ACROSS TO THE SEA
5 SHOPHOUSE ROOVES

1	2	3
	4	5

I woke up to start my day and headed into the communal kitchen. The smell of Hokkien noodles filled the room, and sitting at the table were two of the staff enjoying their breakfast. Kevin, who I met the night before when I had come home early from a night out, said “Oh Maddi you just missed out on noodles! Would you like to try?” I politely declined his offer but thanked him for being so thoughtful. “I want to show you something this morning” Kevin told me. My curious self instantly said yes and I followed across the road directly up a block of building flats.

As we reached the peak of the building, the skyline opened up in front of my eyes. I gazed at Penang in awe. From the hills to the waterfront, the chaotic city seemed calm and beautiful from above. No noise was heard, just the sights of the locals going about their morning rituals. Kevin pointed out the wet markets and insisted I look at the fresh produce on offer. We talked about his hopes of becoming an architect and moving to New Zealand. These things so personal yet so simple meant the world to me, and to experience them with such a backdrop was an absolute dream. All it took was a smile and a moment to ask his name, now I have some local knowledge and a new friendship.

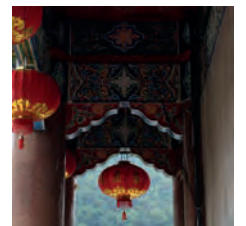


KEK LOK SI

Thandi Paterson

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		4	
		5	

- 1 PAGODA OF TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS
- 2 COLOURFUL GARDEN
- 3 ROW OF BUDDHAS
- 4 BURNING INCENSE
- 5 HANGING LANTERNS



Kek Lok Si, a temple stretching up and out from thick, dense rainforest looks down over Penang and the sea beyond. Weaving together Chinese, Thai and Burmese architecture; above all else, this sacred place demands the attention of your senses. Colours in their most saturated forms reach out to you, made smoky by the perpetual burning of incense. Spicy, earthy perfumes float about you, dancing along to the Buddhist chants which reverberate off the walls from a set of tinny speakers. Coating it all is an inescapably thick kind of heat. It radiates from the soil, beats down from above, and drips from your skin.

Your sticky hands glisten as you scrawl your name on a prayer ribbon and with gentle consideration, offer it to a tree. Even the simple task of tying your wish to one of its kaleidoscopic branches has an ethereal headiness to it. When you can see and smell and hear and touch and feel so much, there comes a messy kind of clarity. A clarity that allows you to be wholly receptive to your surroundings and the present moment; in all of its colour, texture and warmth.

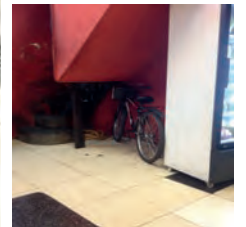


PENANG BY PUSHBIKE

Brendan Roffey

1		2	3
		4	5

- 1 RIDING, BLUE MANSION
- 2 ARMENIAN STREET ARTWORK
- 3 SKETCHING BY BIKE
- 4 MY LOCKLESS, STOWED RIDE
- 5 BIKING FOR DINNER



Penang Road is no pretty, Parisian Street. Pedestrians test the patience of the Penang Island drivers.

Perhaps, the most productive method of pursuing Penang is on pushbike. Primal instincts take over and you are no longer a lone rider, but part of the pack. Pretentious as it is, I persevere against the odds every time I ride, probably coming perilously closer to danger more times than I imagine.

But there is no pleasure to be had without a predetermined risk. Prowling the streets on a bicycle can also be peaceful as it doesn't make you feel like another pesky tourist.

From Pintal Tali to Pitt Street, I can always appreciate a place of worship, shophouse or jetty with my foot on the peddle and my phone taking the photos.



GRADIENT OF TOURISM

Bec Stables



- 1 BURNT DOWN BUILDING
- 2 STREET BUSTLE KUALA KANGSAR
- 3 INCENSE BURNER
- 4 STREET BUSTLE ARMENIAN
- 5 INFO MARKER



$$1 \mid \begin{array}{c|c} 2 & 3 \\ \hline & 4 \end{array} \mid 5$$

The UNESCO listing is what brought me to George Town. But the status has had its downsides.

Outside the heritage zone, I am immersed in the local hustle and bustle, and get lost in the everyday lives of other people. Walking through an early morning wet market, I instinctively know how to weave in and out of the stalls, gliding past people and motorbikes. Abandoned shophouses are everywhere, the decaying facades adding to the atmosphere of the place. This side of George Town is real, authentic.

Cross the line into the heritage zone and the difference is immediate. Tourists overrun the streets as they dash across to get photos with street art, ignoring the intricate beauty of the shophouse facades. Locals are pushed out of their homes, no longer able to afford the exorbitant rent this area now demands. Their abandoned shophouses are quickly converted into boutique hotels and cafes for the tourists. If it does not make money, it no longer has value.

A building burns down five years ago. An arbitrary dotted line has decided its fate.

CHAPTER 2

—
Mapping/Sketching



- 1 KE-LAN-TAN HOUSE
- 2 ARMENIAN STREET
- 3 BLUE MANSION
- 4 BEACH TO VICTORIA STREET



KE-LAN-TAN HOUSE

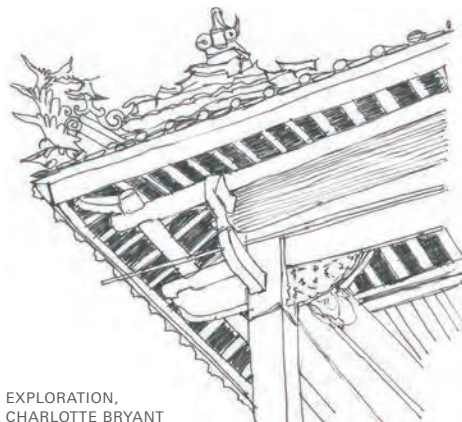
DRIPPING RAIN, YANNAN CAI



COURTYARD VIEW, FELIX MCCABE



HIGH-RISE, NINO MIDDLETON



EXPLORATION,
CHARLOTTE BRYANT



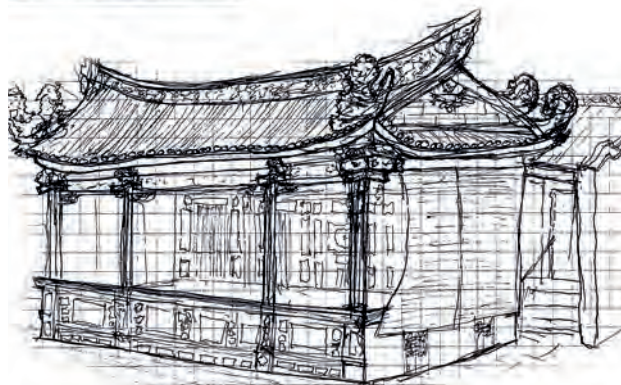
LANTERN, LEAH HARTLEY



FIVE FOOT WAY, ALYCE GIEBEL



IMPEDE, REBECCA HOLMES



OPERA HOUSE FOR THE GODS, RYAN BROWNE

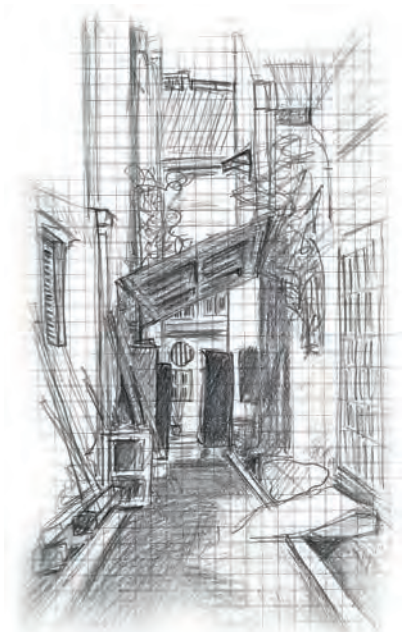
ARMENIAN STREET



SMALL SHRINE, FELIX MCCABE



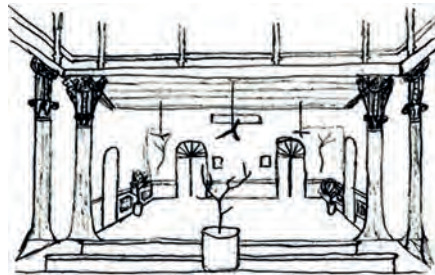
BACK ALLEY, BRENDAN ROFFEY



VIEW TO STREET, BEC STABLES

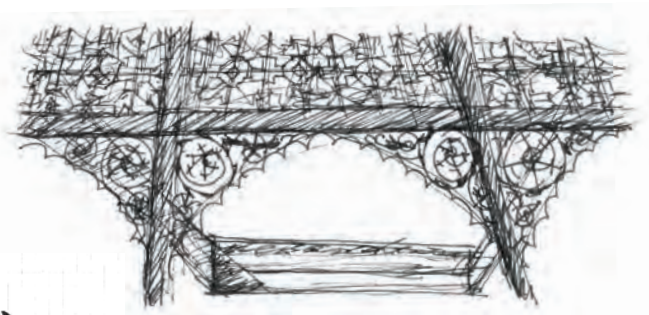


ROAD SIDE, OLIVIA DAW



CENTRAL COURTYARD, ADAM, HOLMES-BARRY

BLUE MANSION



DETAIL, ALICE LANGHOLT



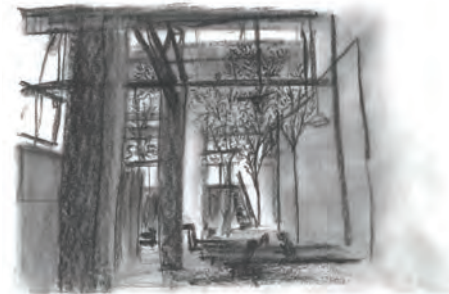
FRONT FACADE, MADDISEN O'DONAHOO



SIDE COURTYARD, YASEERA MOOSA

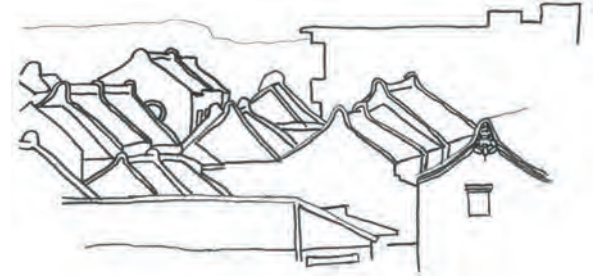


ENTRANCE, THANDI PATERSON



RESPIRE, CHARLOTTE BRYANT

BEACH TO VICTORIA STREET



ROOFTOPS, GIANNI CUMMINGS



OPEN AREA, YASEERA MOOSA



MOON GATE THRESHOLD, TIMOTHY BAUER

CHAPTER 3

—
Propositions



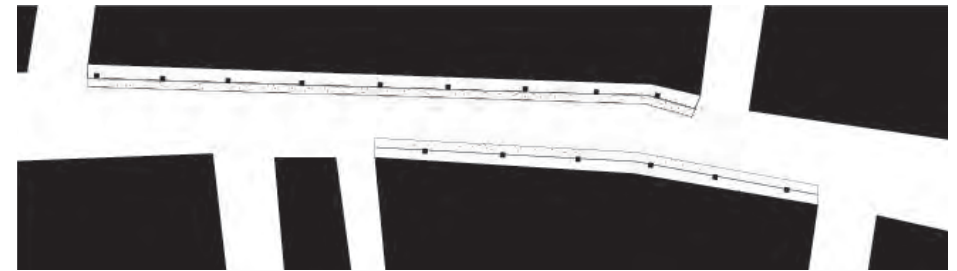
- 1 BRIDGING
- 2 UNFILTERED COMMUNITY
- 3 REVITALISING PENANG
- 4 LINEAR PARK
- 5 WEDGED BETWEEN
- 6 NOW SHOWING:
THE COLOUR OF CULTURE
- 7 POOLS OF PENANG
- 8 THROUGH THE ALLEY
- 9 SECOND SKIN
- 10 LAUNDRY GARDEN
- 11 TUCKING AWAY



BRIDGING

Timothy Bauer & Olivia Daw

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM



Penang is famous for the five foot way, a place where the public meets private leaving behind a vague threshold of occupiable space traditionally used as a place for work, ritual and social activity. The tangible heritage is conserved through Penang's UNESCO world status but what is often forgotten in the process of preservation is the intangible and sub-tangible activity that fills these spaces.

From observing the Chulia Street edge over the course of a day, it was evident that work space transitioned to social space as the shops closed and food stalls opened. Sprawling activities extended from the street,

intruding into the five foot way and up against the shophouses making circulation near impossible. This was the problem we needed to solve: limiting sprawl whilst maintaining the intangible activity.

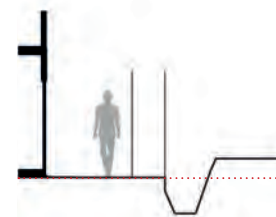
It became obvious that the large drains bordering the five foot way and street were ambiguous transitional zones that when simply covered, promoted the blocking and sprawl.

To solve this we needed to focus on the small space in between – the exposed drain – another key characteristic of Penang.

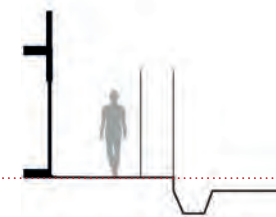
DOCUMENTING THE CONDITIONS



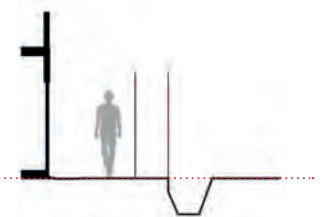
CONDITION A



CONDITION B



CONDITION C



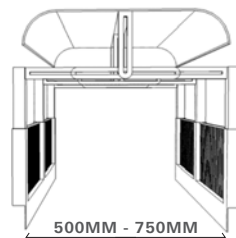
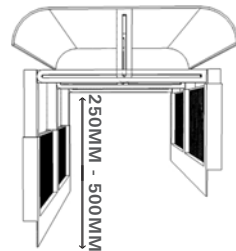
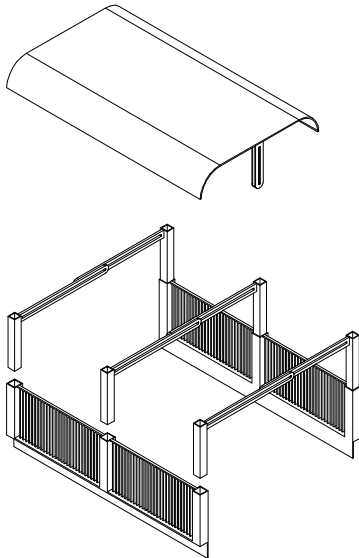
After measuring the different drain variations we identified three conditions, and recorded the following:

MIN DRAIN WIDTH: APPROX. 500MM
MAX DRAIN WIDTH: APPROX. 750MM
MIN DROP (5FT - STREET): 0MM
MAX DROP (5FT - STREET): APPROX 220MM

This *intervention* aims to regain the five foot way as a path through the activity without the loss of the intangible; by condensing the activity into a new territory identified between the column and the exposed drain there is a new dimension of street life which aims to encourage the use of the space through a functional modular element.

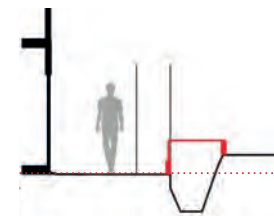


TECHNICAL DETAIL

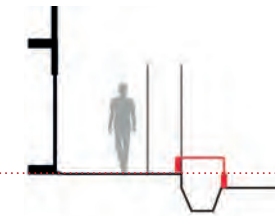


The concept: a bridging seat. Functioning foremost as a vertical grate to filter water runoff from the street, whilst doubling up as a usable element that aids the intangible activities taking place: a chair to eat on, a bench to work on, a stall to place your belongings.

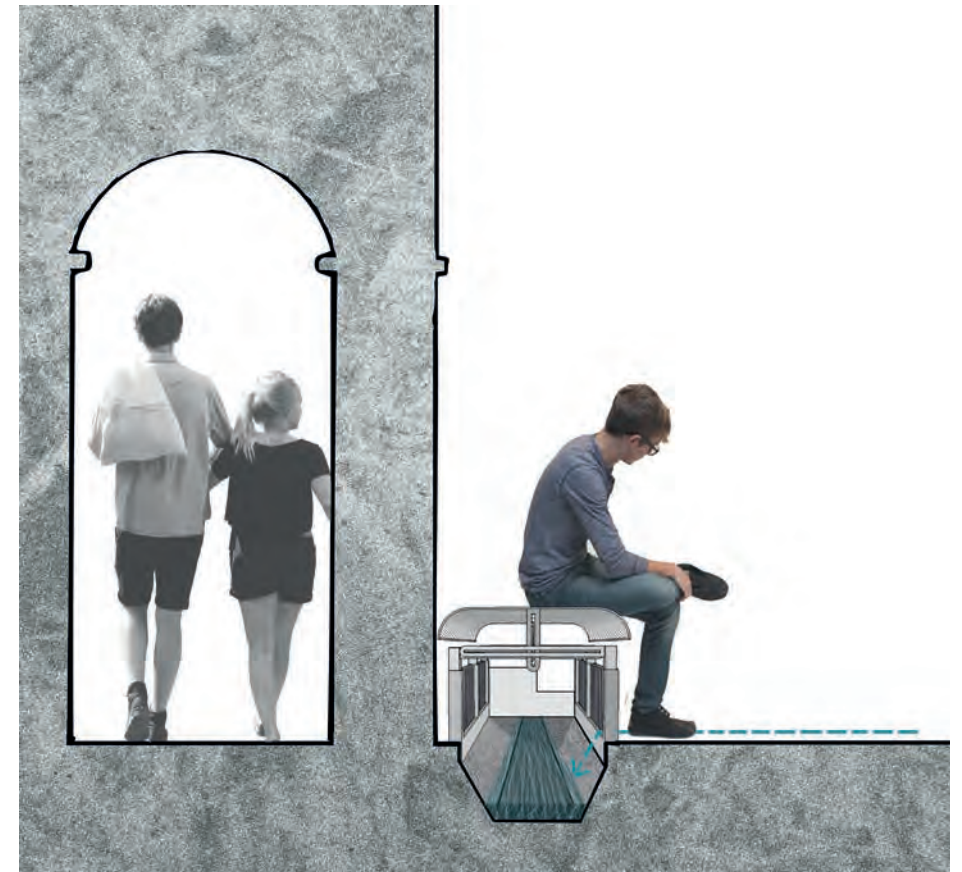
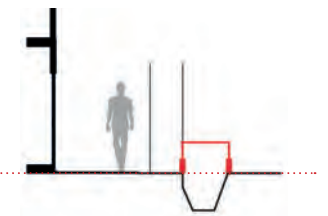
CONDITION A



CONDITION B



CONDITION C





NEW PROPOSITION

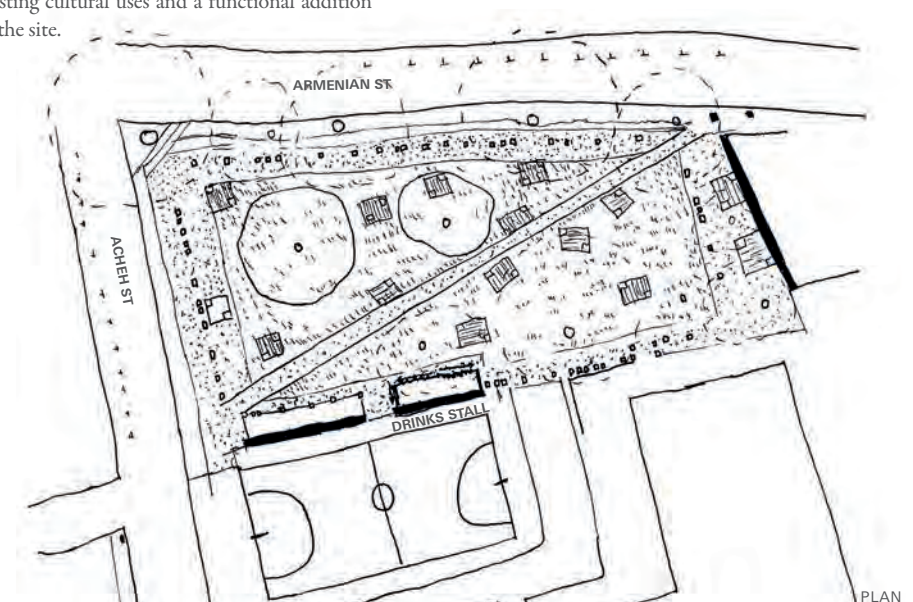
UNFILTERED COMMUNITY

Ryan Browne

The Armenian Street Park proposition aims to attract the community back to the gentrifying area. Previously a flea market, the latest iteration of the park is a bland revisioning. Taking its place this proposal creates a community hub defined by a post system based boundary, and plinths to provide spaces to sell from, sit on and eat at.

A single 'cow track' connects Armenian Street to Acheh Street, following the commonly trekked route, and a gravel path wraps around the site. Along with the introduction of a booth stall, the park provides means for interaction from the local community allowing it to be customised to the needs of each user, a typical characteristic of high use public space in Penang.

The rest of the park is left to grass space and tree shelter – maintaining its inherent typology and creating a comfortable microclimate. The post provides a functional way to hang curtains, lights and posters, opening and closing the space as seen fit. The plinths are extensions of the original blankets used to sell from – an extension of existing cultural uses and a functional addition to the site.



PLAN

HISTORY



ORIGINAL PARK



ORIGINAL FLEA MARKET



CURRENT PARK

INTENTIONS



INTEGRATE TEMPORARY SCREENING

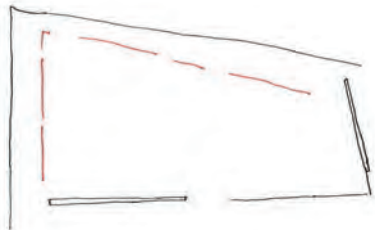


KEEP PARK TYPOLOGY

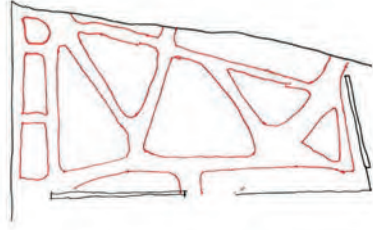


CREATE CULTURAL HUB TYPOLOGY

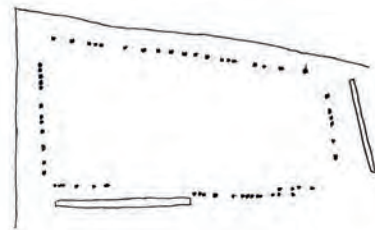
KEY SITE STRATEGY



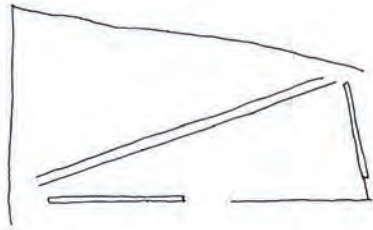
REMOVE EXISTING FENCE



REMOVE EXISTING PATHS



INTRODUCE NEW BOUNDARY TYPE



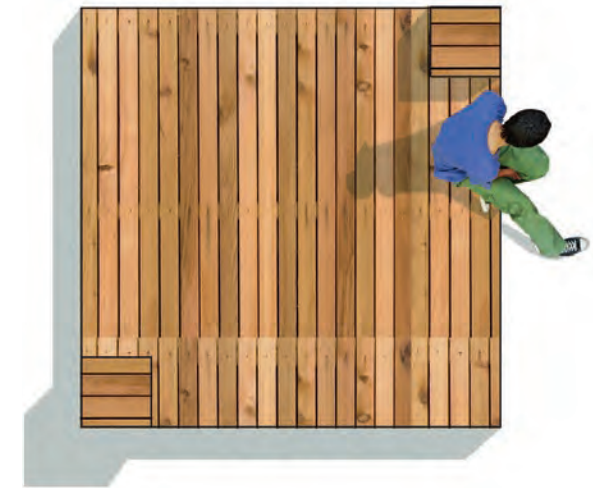
INTRODUCE COW TRACK



PLINTH NEXT TO BOUNDARY



FLEXIBLE USE OF POSTS



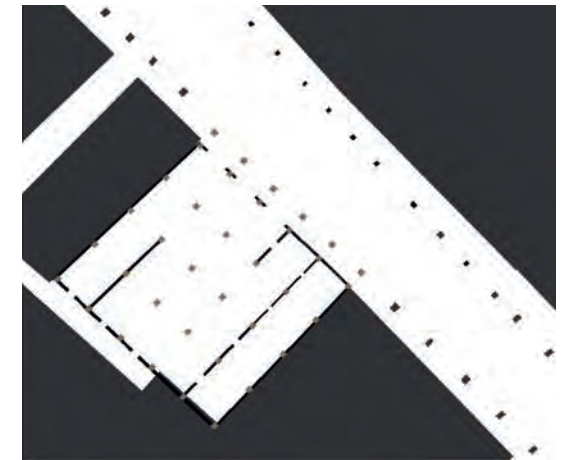
PLINTH PLAN



REPOPULATING FORGOTTEN SPACE

REVITALISING PENANG

Charlotte Bryant and Rebecca Holmes



FENCED OFF



SURVIVING



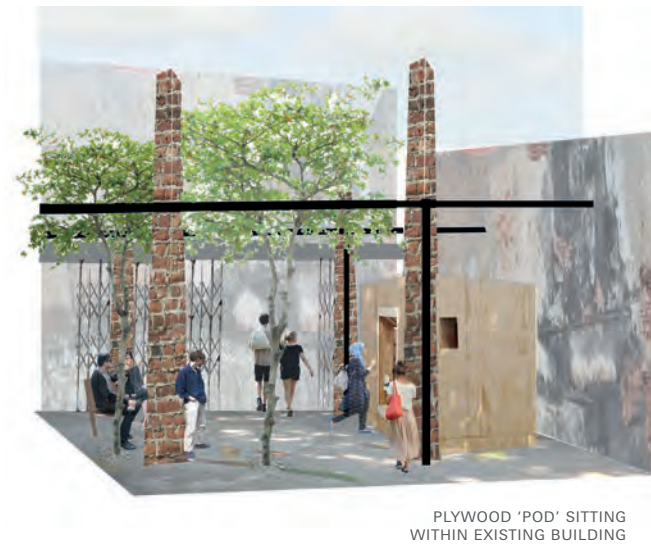
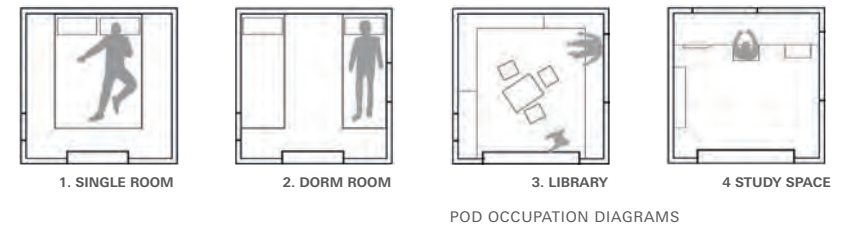
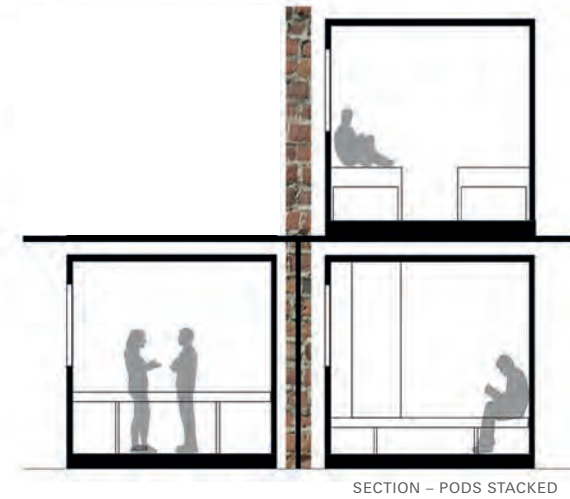
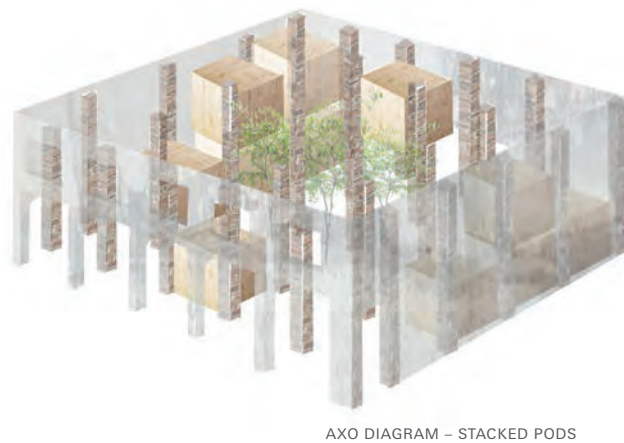
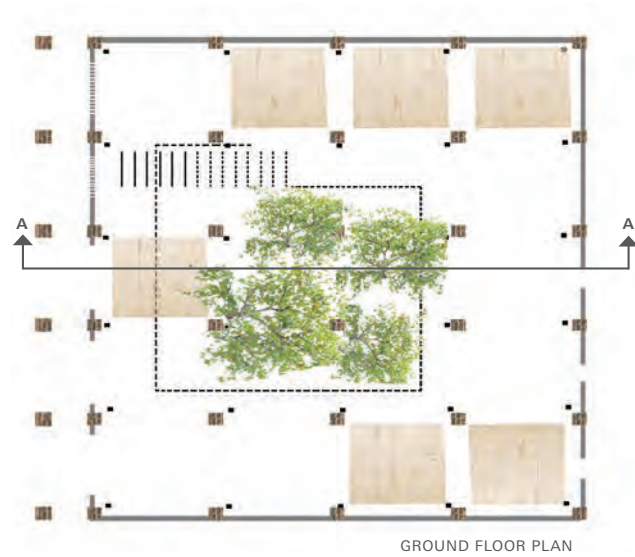
EMPTYNESS

The UNESCO World Heritage listing has caused the price of housing in George Town to skyrocket. The loss of the permanent population has become evident with the increase in shophouse conversions to hotels and stores. Young adults, studying and working within George Town, face long commutes to their homes on the outskirts of the island or on the mainland.

This project aims to provide cost efficient student housing, which will exist within a historically significant city in a sensitive and semi-permanent way. Parasitic pods can be built within the city's numerous burnt-out building shells, as they sit abandoned, waiting to be bulldozed or rebuilt. The pods can be occupied in different ways, allowing versatile layouts.

These could include double beds or dorms and they can also be fitted out as bathrooms, small libraries and study spaces. This simple architectural base of plywood pods can be stacked within the buildings, creating diverse and interesting communities. Additionally, the simple structural requirements will ensure the conservation of George Town's historic architecture.

To help foster a collaborative environment, temporary occupancy can be provided for both locals and international students. This project has learnt from the historic communities of family Klans in the surrounding city. The space will provide a base from which students can learn from George Town and contribute to its sensitive development into the future.





LINEAR PARK

Yannan Cai

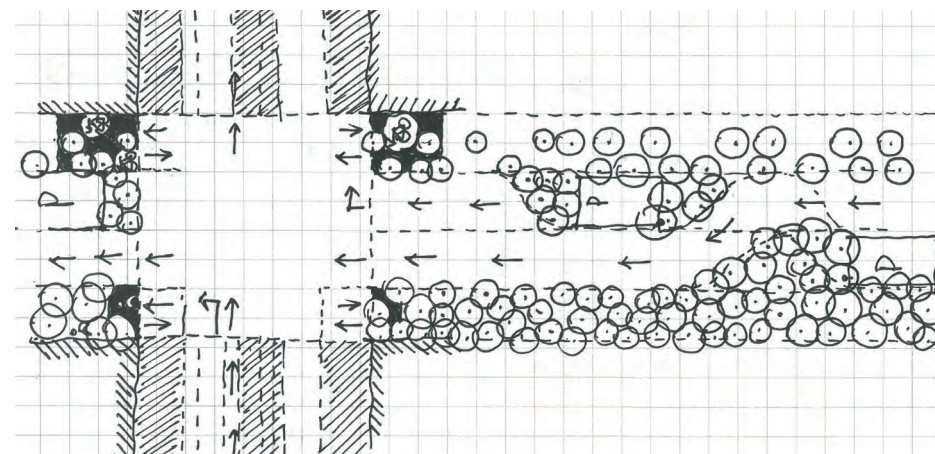
Problems: Though bicycle riding is allowed on Campbell Street, which can be seen from the discontinuous signs on the floor, the experience is far from safe, let alone enjoyable. There are two reasons for the dissatisfying condition – on one hand, there is no specific lane for bicycles; on the other hand, cars parked on two sides of this one-way street illegally, narrow and crowd the originally wide street. Apart from this, there is no shading and so riders do not stay long. More time and energy is required to appreciate the unique architecture of Campbell Street.

Strategies: Make the entire Campbell Street into a linear park by dividing the width of the street into four equal lanes, which are dedicated to pedestrians, bikes, cars, and parking respectively, and introducing trees into all lanes except the vehicle lane. Furthermore, there are two points that need emphasis. One is the density of trees decreases from pedestrian lane, via bike lane, to parking lane. The other one is, responding to the crossings with other one-way streets, the car lane and parking lane are always swapping along the Campbell Street. Achieving that, we could slow the speed of cars, and more importantly provide lots of parklands for pedestrians and bicycle riders.

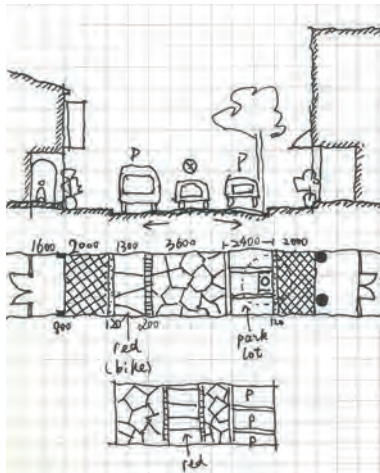


SITE MAP

PLAN OF A TYPICAL CROSSING



STREET SECTION AND PLAN BEFORE



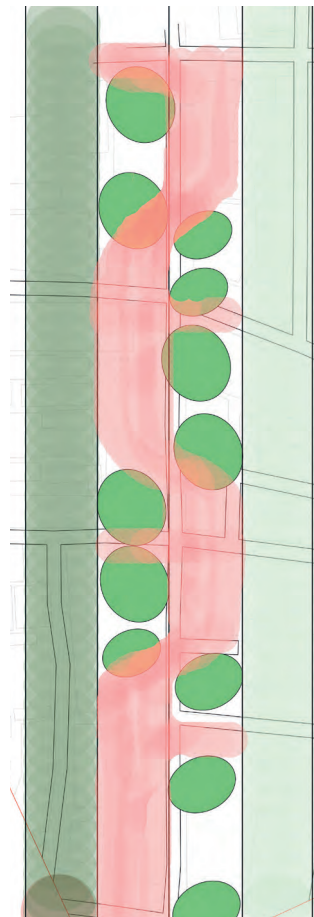
PROPOSAL PLAN



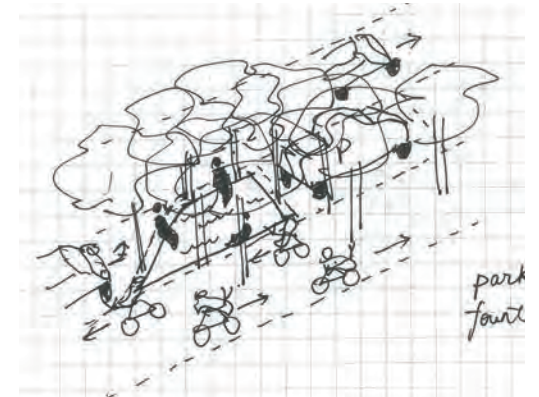
FOUR LANES BUILT INTO CONDITION



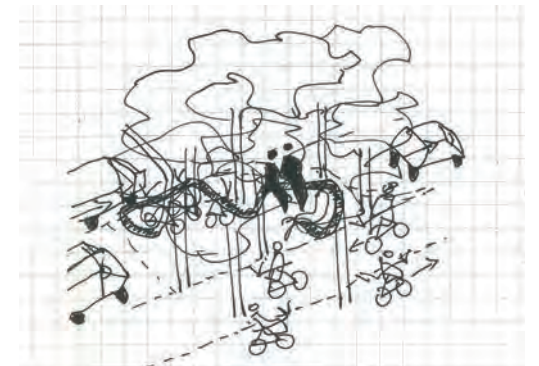
PARKLAND AND S-SHAPED CARWAY



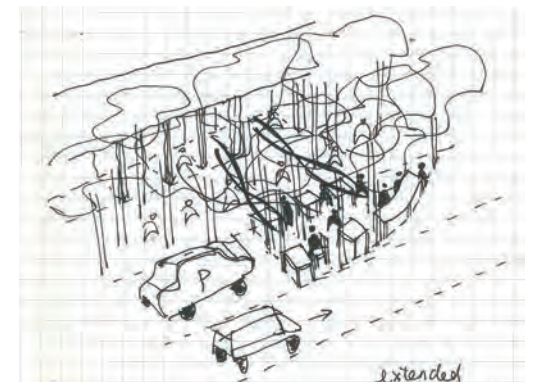
PARKLAND: FOUNTAIN



PARKLAND: BIKEPARK



PARKLAND: STREET FOOD





WEDGED BETWEEN

Gianni Cummings

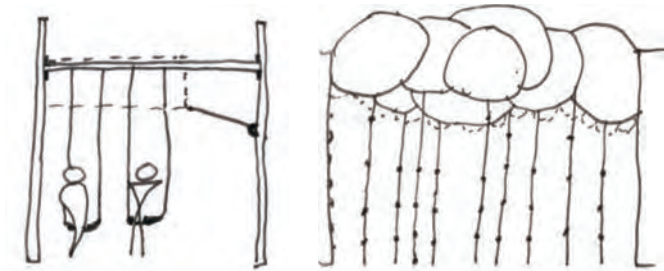
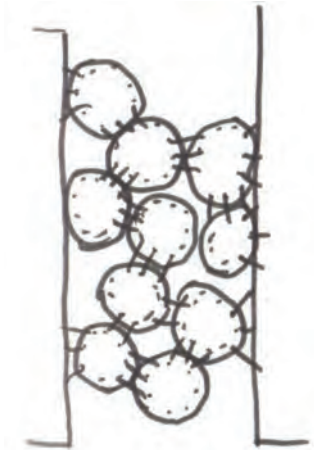


George Town is a dense settlement with limited green spaces and natural shade in the UNESCO World Heritage Zone. Some of the largest open green/shade spaces are on the edge of this area in Fort Cornwallis and the Protestant Cemetery. This suggested ways to consider how spaces in the inner city could have more shaded public spaces.

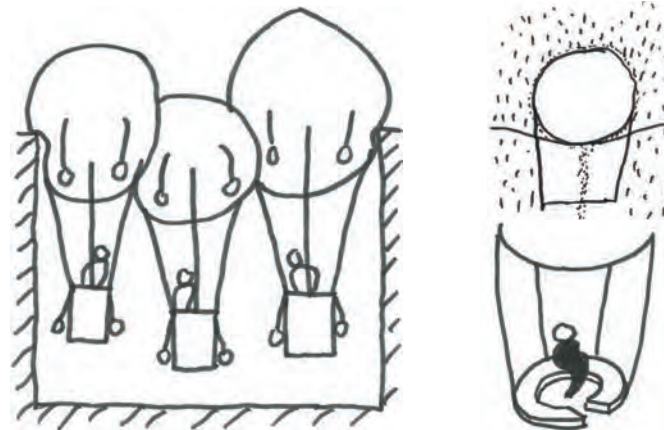
Throughout George Town there are a number of alleyways which, though used for access, are underutilised. A series of explorations considers the kinds of activities that could take place in these areas. This proposal seeks to introduce a temporary intervention of a shade and seating space. The setup could be repeatable across similar sites in the city. The proposal is like the canopy of a dense forest, literally wedged between the buildings.



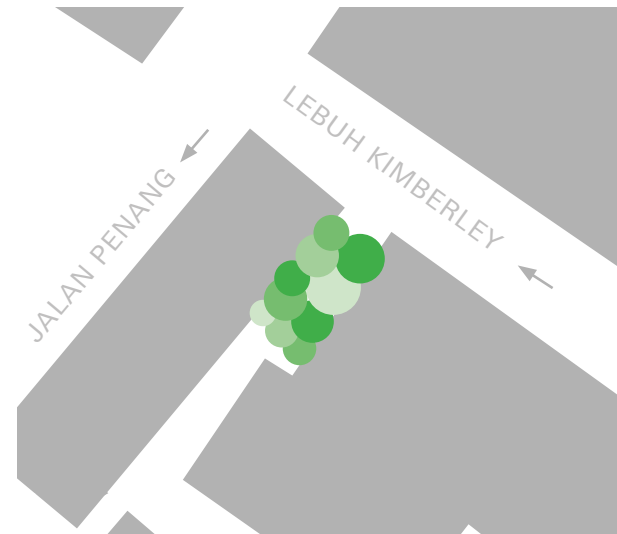
DISC/FOLD



OPEN/CLOSE



INFLATE



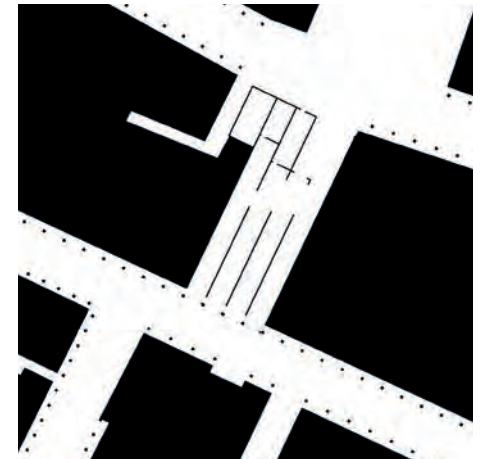
POSSIBLE SITES ACROSS THE CITY



NOW SHOWING: THE COLOUR OF CULTURE

Alyce Giebel & Maddisen O'Donahoo

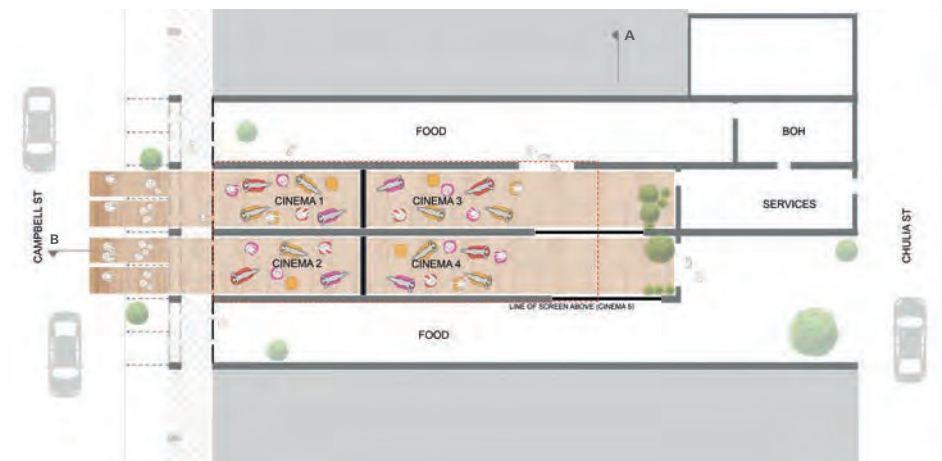
Roll up, roll up to the greatest show in Penang. Bright lights and luminous colours light up the night sky. Showcasing the talents of a dying tradition, a home is given to the puppet shows that enthrall the captive audience. Whether you want to lie down, relax and see the spectacle unfold above, or sit on the street and observe from afar, this space offers new life to the ruins of a burnt past. But get in quick! It's only showing for a limited time! So get your coconut and roasted chestnuts, or perhaps some Hokkien Mee, tune in your headphones and let the show begin. Tonight is all about colour, image and culture. 3, 2, 1... Action.



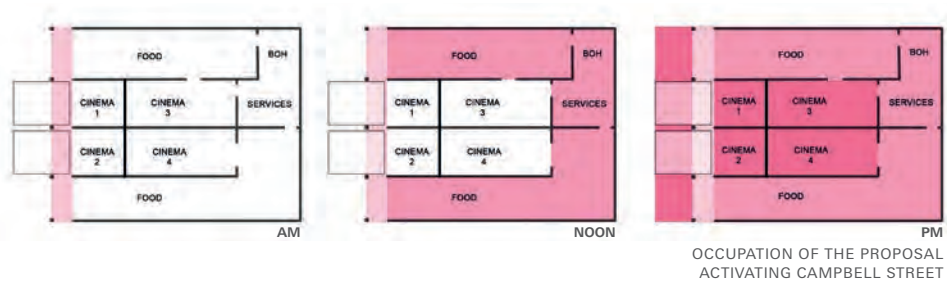
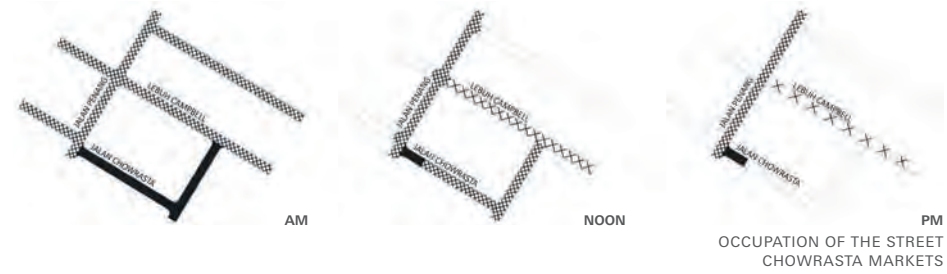
PUPPET SHOWS
ENTERTAINING
THE STREET



EMERGING RUINS
UNINHABITED
LEFT WITHOUT
A PURPOSE



PLAN



SECTION A



SECTION B





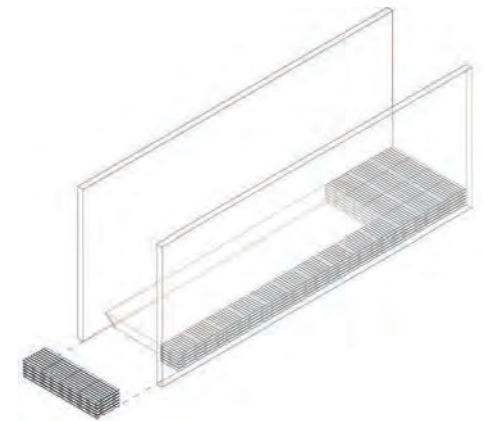
POOLS OF PENANG

Leah Hartley & Felix McCabe

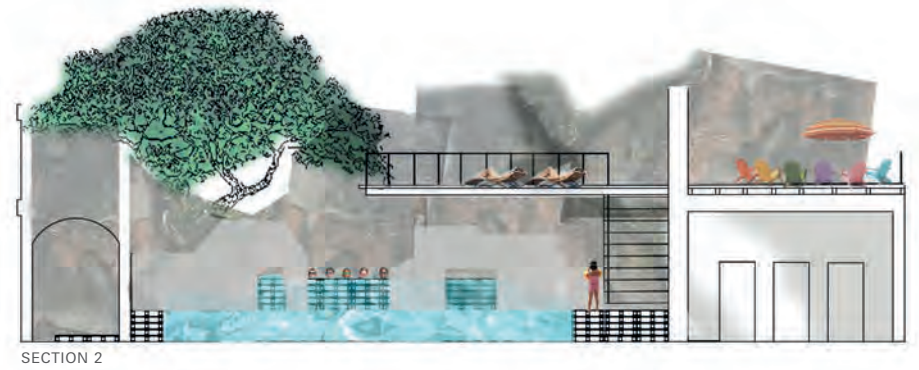
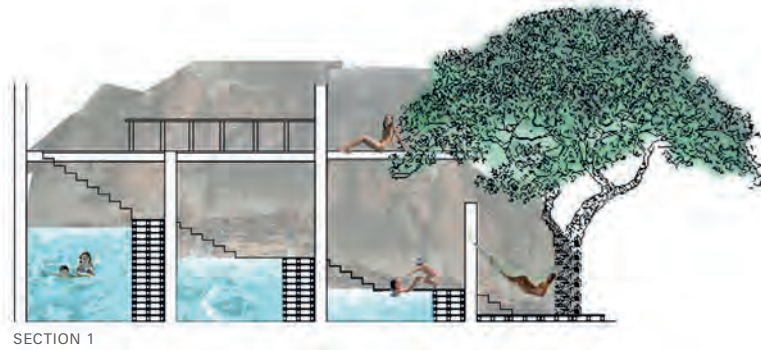
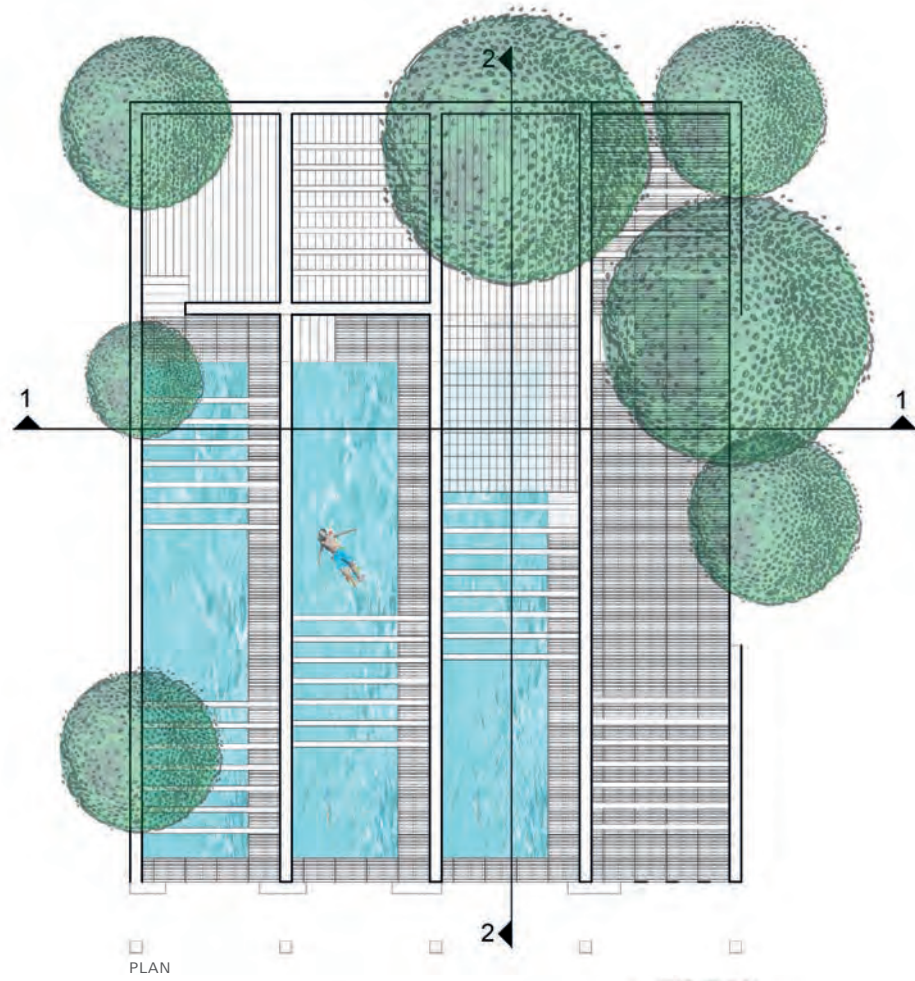
Fire has brought destruction and ruin to many areas throughout George Town, Penang. Burnt down buildings have remained scattered across the city and in their decay, lush vegetation has overgrown the spaces, creating an environment of rich textures and shadows.



The Penang Pools intervention aims to strengthen the social fabric of the city by taking back these abandoned spaces. Public bathing spaces not only offer relief from the harsh heat, but are a landmark to draw people together and strengthen cultural ties.



In order to minimise investment in materials, recyclable pallets have been implemented into the design. The pallets are stacked and used to suspend a waterproof silicon membrane that will hold water. The use of pallets allows the structure to be varied and utilised in a variety of spaces and can therefore be installed into any abandoned site in order to reconnect the city.





THROUGH THE ALLEY

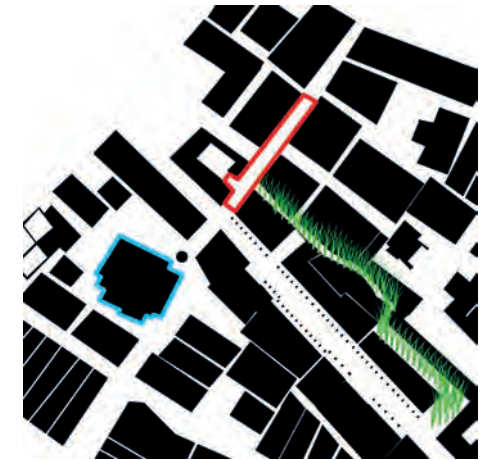
Adam Holmes-Barry

Penang is a wondrous place, rich in art and culture. Walking the streets of George Town fully immerses you in its majesty.

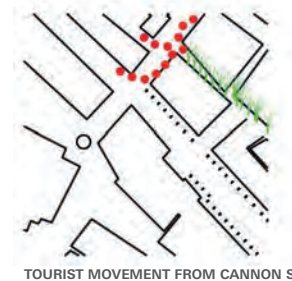
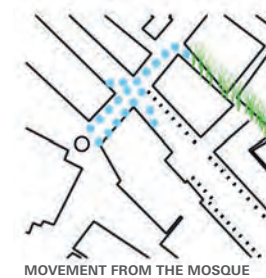
However, walking the streets does have one downside, the heat. Being a tourist or a local there is no escaping it. Many choose to hug the shaded areas of the five foot way or run to the next undercover area, however, there is no place to sit down and be comfortable in the shade.

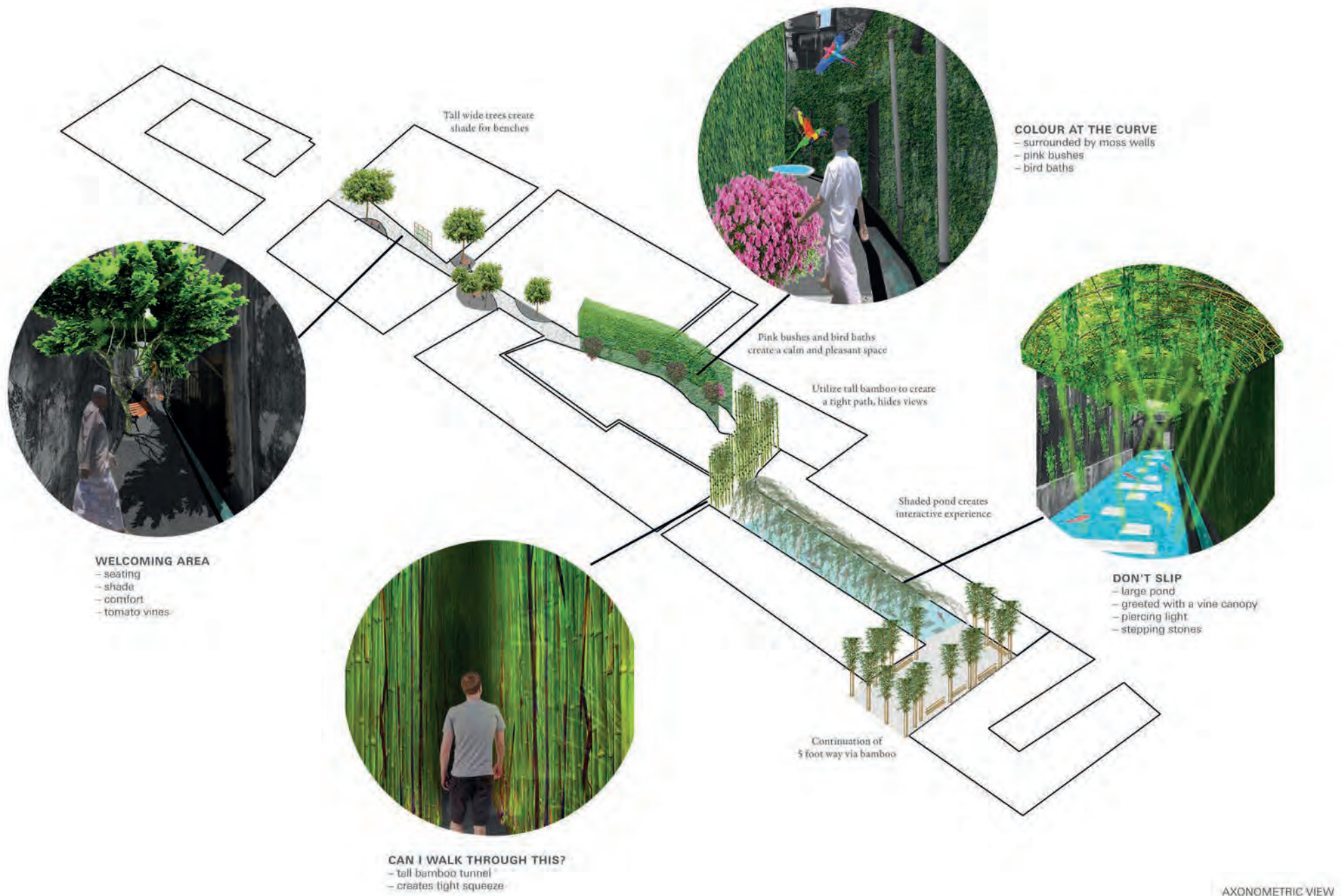
Whilst studying the movements of Cannon street I noticed this behaviour common to the locals, a vast amount of whom would hurry quickly to their cars after call to prayer; as well as the tourists, who would jog across the hot streets from the shophouse to their next street art destination (in this case, the boy and the chair).

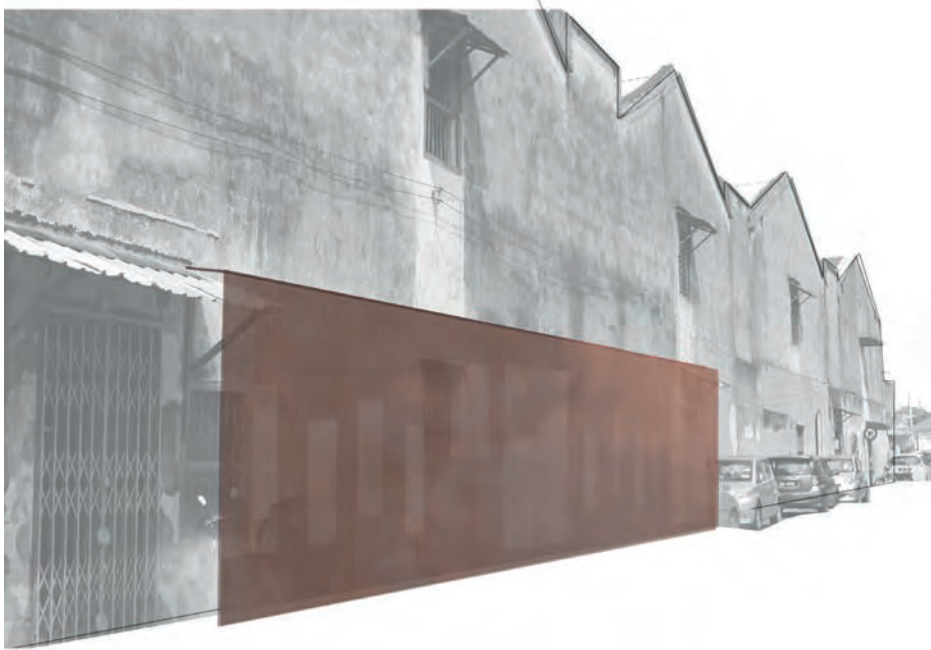
All these people, hurrying to avoid the heat, are moving past the multiple side alleys without the slightest regard. But what if those side alleys could be used to provide that comfortable space, where locals and tourists alike could congregate to escape the heat? Not only that, what if this walk could be a special experience?



ACHEEN STREET MOSQUE
TOURIST POPULATED AREA
PROPOSED GREEN WALKWAY





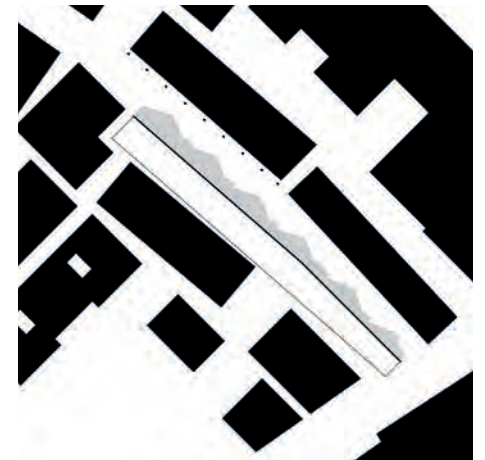


SECOND SKIN

Alice Langholt & Thandi Patterson

This intervention serves to nurture an efficient, comfortable and more productive environment for market store holders positioned along the site.

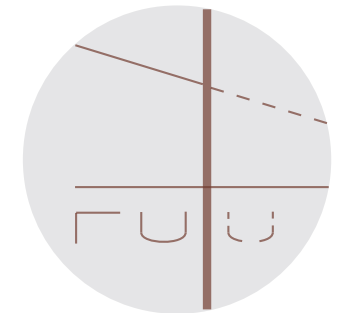
A second skin is added to a length of the original wall, celebrating and enhancing its materiality whilst providing a function beyond afternoon shade for passing pedestrians. The added facade creates space for storage which can be suspended and protected from the rain and the rats. It additionally serves as an awning and opens up to a modular market stall and seating area. Copper mesh has been used as the primary material. The colour references George Town's roof typology and it changes over time, just like Penang and its people. This adaptable skin caters to a variety of programs; from retail, to hospitality, to seating, relaxation and observation. The opportunities provided by this activation of space will encourage and support the local community and add to the sensory experience of the streetscape.



SITE PLAN



EXISTING MARKET SPRAWL



PENANG'S UNDULATING LEVELS



PENANG'S ROOF TYPOLOGY



MATERIALITY



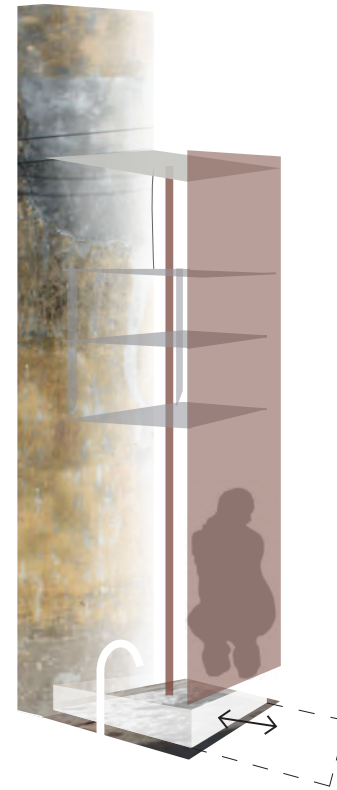
UNPACKED OCCUPATION



UNPACKED ELEVATION



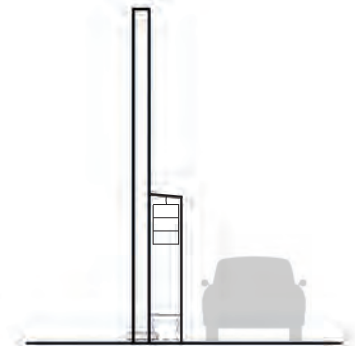
PACKED ELEVATION



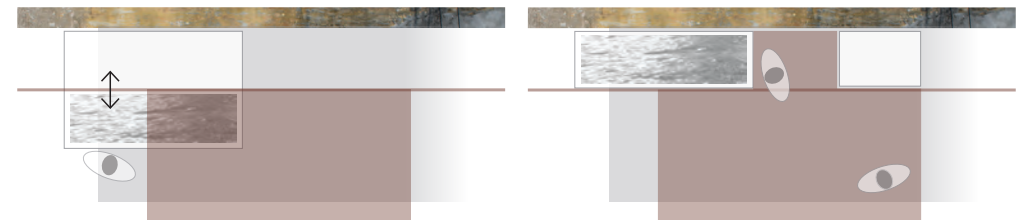
WATER SYSTEM DIAGRAM



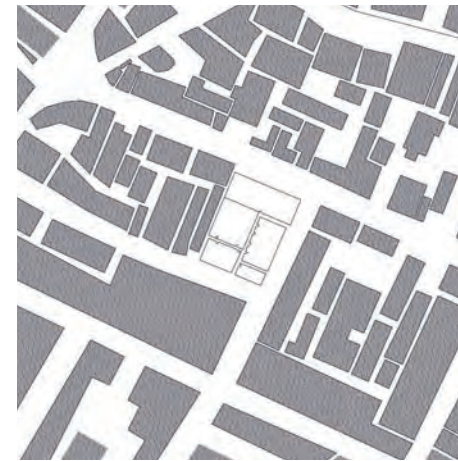
UNPACKED SECTION



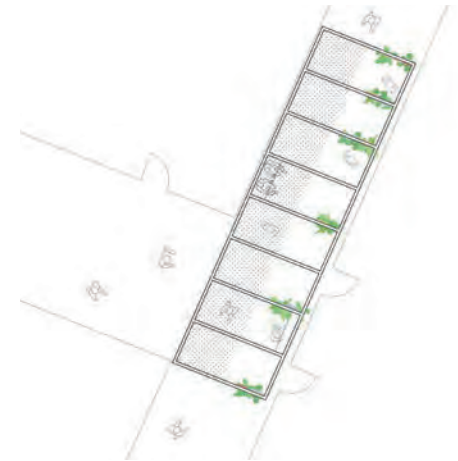
PACKED SECTION



OCCUPATION DIAGRAMS



CONTEXTUAL NOLLI MAP



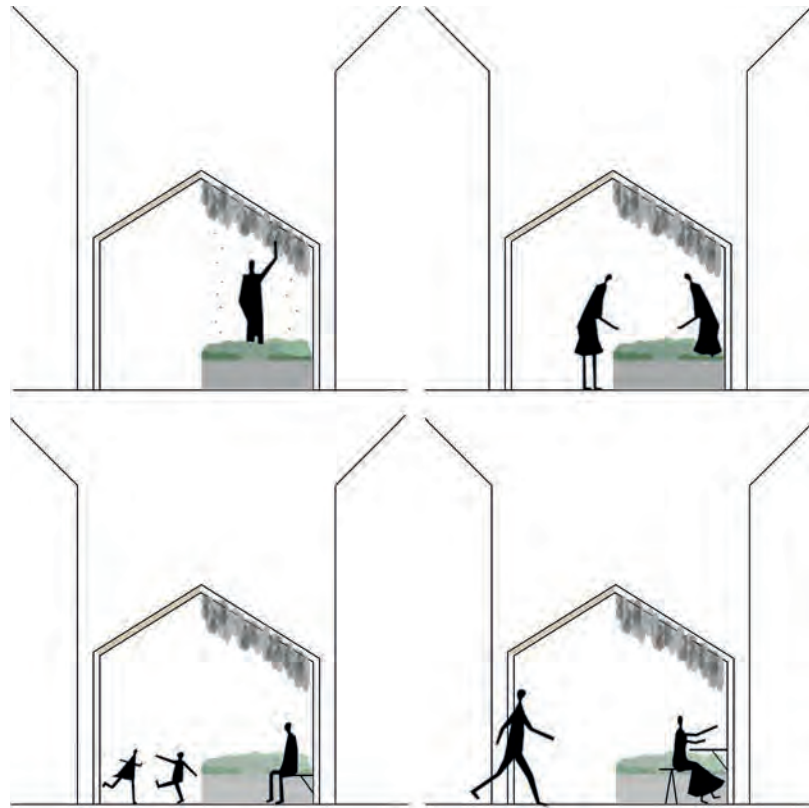
SITE PLAN

LAUNDRY GARDEN

—
Yaseera Moosa & Nino Middleton

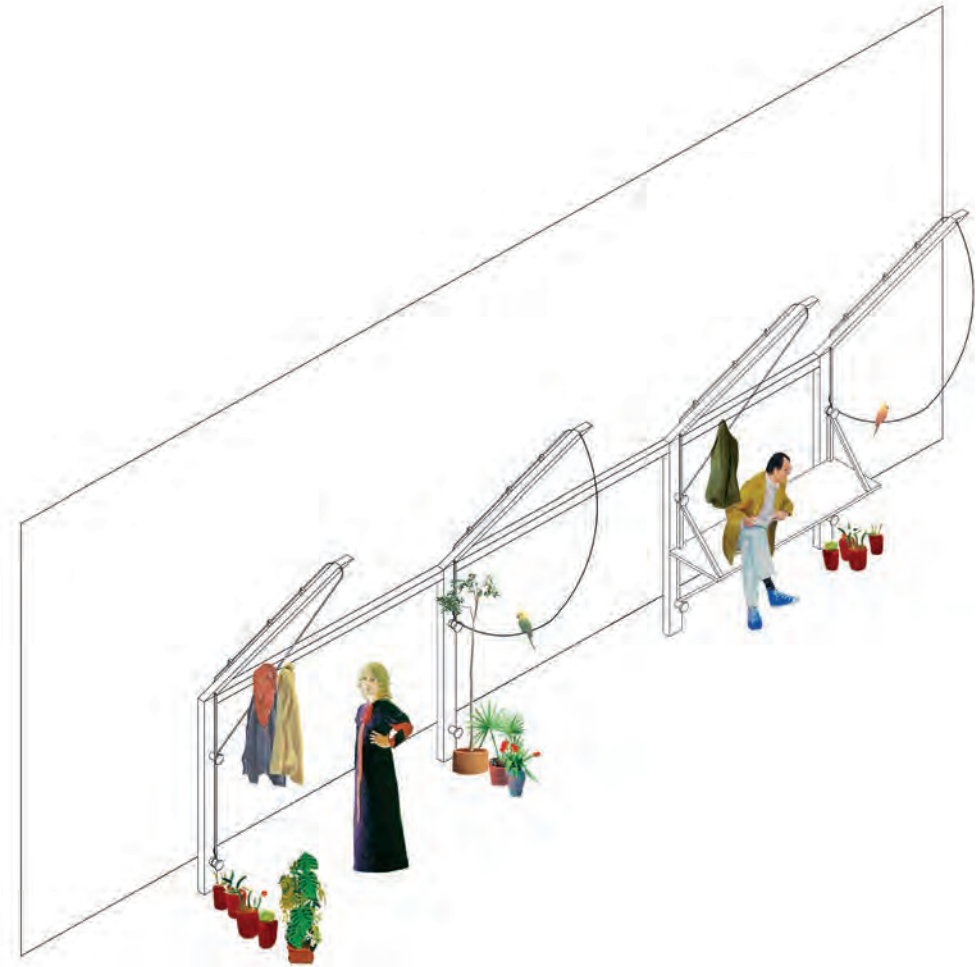
The most valuable aspect of George Town's heritage is its people. A recurring theme across the architecture, food, and culture we have observed is the presence of humanity and community. Any intervention must ensure that the city retains this strong value of community.

Our design came about as a result of a series of observations – the presence of laundry and gardens outside, in the realm of the public. Laundry is a universal activity, much like food and music, and it can be harnessed as an activity to promote community. We examined the traditional forms of the laundry line and garden, imagined what else they had the potential to be, and investigated the benefits of combining them. The resulting space is one that unites the inhabitants of a series of shophouses, due to the amenity it provides for all.



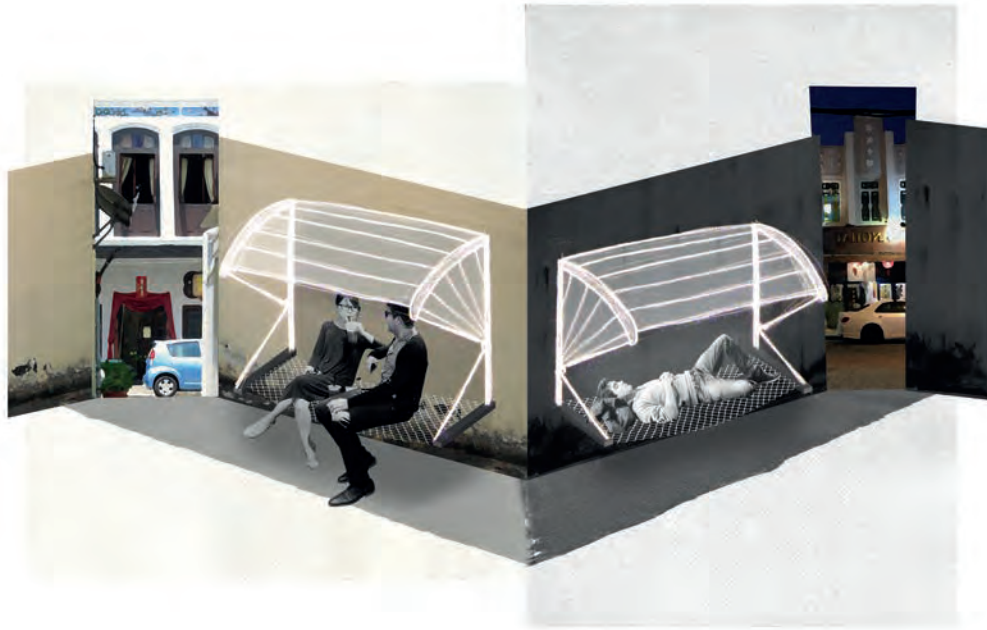
CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAMS

1. LAUNDRY / WATERING
2. GARDENING
3. CHILDMINDING
4. WORKING / CIRCULATING



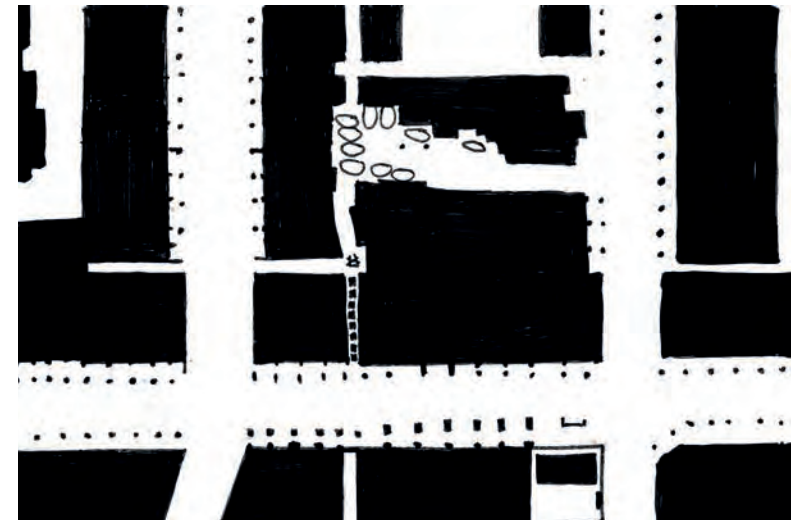
The Laundry Garden is a space that adapts to the needs of the inhabitants that use it. Its laundry function encourages community interaction in a variety of ways that we have predicted; and additionally, in ways we have not.

Simplicity, operability, and affordability are all key aspects of the design. The Laundry Garden can be thought of as a simplistic kit of parts (steel poles, rope, timber shelf, etc.) that can be assembled in differing ways in order to accommodate changing conditions (such as residents moving out/in). This modular design also allows for the possibility of locating the Laundry Garden in multiple sites that need similar community spaces, across the entirety of George Town.

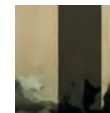


TUCKING AWAY

Brendan Roffey & Bec Stables



It's 2PM.



The city pulsates from the movement of people and traffic. The Penang heat beats down from above and blinds your path ahead. A dark silhouette between buildings beckons you; tempts you with its promise of shade.

Relief. Through the alley, your weary feet lead you to a sturdy hammock with a flowing canopy of silk overhead. As you tuck in to your seat, you can feel the slack of the net taking the weight of the world off your shoulders.

It's 2AM.



The usual bustling of the city has been displaced by eerie echoes and the scuffling of vermin. A treacherous darkness settles over Penang, fouling your every step. A glowing aura between buildings beckons you; tempts you with its promise of sanctuary.

Relief. Through the alley, your weary feet lead you to a sturdy hammock with an illuminated canopy of silk overhead, drawn down like curtains. As you tuck in to sleep, you can feel the protective embrace of the net, enveloping you from the world outside.



DAY MODE



NIGHT MODE



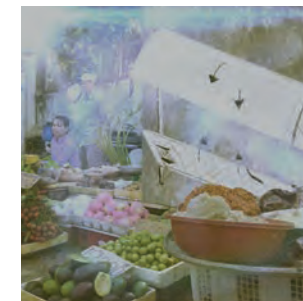
MORNING MARKET



MIDDAY REST



NIGHT SHELTER



THE CYCLE CONTINUES

AFTERWORD

As I arrived in George Town my mind was overwhelmed by, firstly the prevailing heat, and then by the allure of colour, culture and religion that all seemed to define the architecture. There was little that did not inspire awe and fascination, from the detailed carvings of a shophouse sign to the sight of the expanse of pink crimson roofs from above. As outsiders we observed and questioned, always seeking to understand why. We sought to contemplate a design intervention, which was in direct response to a problem or opportunity we each identified. I found that the culture and vibrancy of food provide endless design possibilities. Conceived interventions varied from the creation of an adaptable seat that bridged over the drains of the five foot way to the introduction of a second skin to hold storage, water connection and waste within and unfold to house the stall. Now that I have returned home I've started to notice parallels in the blended architecture and culture of both Brisbane and Penang. It is important to remember that architecture even as small as an intervention must cater for the tangible, intangible and sub-tangible needs of its users. Without life architecture is without purpose.

Alice Langholt

2016 UQ Architecture



