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Preserving Heritage in the Face of Urban Development in Hong Kong

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Preserving Heritage in the Face of Urban Development in Hong Kong

3 January – 2 March 2013

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Course

PC1000- Hong Kong

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ABSTRACT

With some of the original Hong Kong heritage fading away, it is important to discover the roots of the issue in order to address it. We determined the original Chinese settlement area within Sheung Wan to be most vulnerable to socioeconomic change and identified critical aspects of their heritage here to preserve. We also discerned which of the changes in the area were beneficial or detrimental to the heritage preservation. The rapid westernization has led to skyrocketing rent prices that drive smaller and traditional shops away, leaving the area open for larger corporations and developers. This work is imperative to help tackle the gentrification within the area before it transforms into cosmopolitan and westernized at the expense of traditional heritage. This project allowed us to make recommendations to the Urban Renewal Authority regarding how to address the changes, directly impacting the inhabitants of our focus area. The life of the city will be strengthened by preserving heritage and highlighting its importance to the people.

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With limited real estate available on Hong Kong Island and a growing population, vertical urban development is becoming more prominent. The Urban Renewal Authority is dedicated to the preservation of the heritage of Hong Kong while modernizing the city-state through vertical urban development. The goal of this project was to provide valid recommendations on the critical aspects of the heritage to focus on for preservation. We achieved this goal by accomplishing five objectives. The first objective was to identify the heritage in two sub-districts of Hong Kong, Sheung Wan and Central. The second objective was to determine the area in these districts that is most vulnerable to cultural change. We then identified the critical aspects of the heritage to preserve, and established which changes in the area were beneficial or detrimental to the heritage preservation. Our final objective was to draw on this information to develop recommendations for the Urban Renewal Authority on how to address the changes in a rapidly changing Hong Kong.

Vertical urban development decreases the social interactions between people that are integral to the development of their heritage (Mercer, 2006). This detriment to their local heritage leads to a decrease in a sense of unity and pride for their heritage. The life of the city will be strengthened by preserving heritage and renewing pride in heritage and history. The two areas we originally began exploring were the districts of Sheung Wan and Central. Sheung Wan is located in the northwest region of Hong Kong, between Central and Sai Ying Pun. It was one of the earliest places settled by the British, but has since been largely settled by the Chinese after 1843 ("Sheung Wan," 2012). Central is located on the northern shore of Hong Kong Island and is the central business district of the island. It was a major British city during the occupation ("Maps of Hong Kong").

Due to their contrasting backgrounds, Sheung Wan and Central offered diverse viewpoints on heritage preservation. These cultural differences could be observed in many different ways, with Central being much more westernized than Sheung Wan in appearance and feel. The shops in Central are more expensive with many chain stores, bars, and restaurants. While these are tangible aspects, it is intangible values that define the core of a heritage ("Heritage," 1997). These two sub-heritages within Hong Kong set each faction apart from each other. As people come from different backgrounds and then merge into one society, they also merge various aspects of their heritage that creates their unique community. Heritage is expressed through the social interactions of people and is constantly evolving as a result (O'Neil, 2006). Artists within Hong Kong are producing works that assert their unique Hong Kong identity. They are using iconic symbols such as the Star Ferry Pier and Queen's Pier as the background for their work to showcase their importance and relevance to the heritages of Hong Kong. To the people of Hong Kong, losing these symbols would be equal to losing personal memories and experiences. The heritage of Hong Kong is remembered through these experiences rather than history (Kam, 2008).

The urban development of the city-state began when the British constructed more than 50 buildings at the beginning of their occupation in 1841. This had more than doubled by 1844, but the majority of buildings at that time were only 3 stories high ("Urban structure of"). As the development of the island continued, it largely replicated the construction of the early days, until the past few decades.

Along with the growth of the trading and financial industries in Hong Kong came rapid change within the districts. New, modern skyscrapers were constructed, much like the ones standing today. Rather than preserve the architecturally unique three-story housing from the beginning of the island's development, many have been torn down in favor of towering skyscrapers, housing modernized hotels and luxurious malls to shop in. This neglect of cultural preservation led the Urban Renewal Authority to sponsoring this project, where they needed a fresh perspective on the area to ensure personal bias was not clouding their views on the aspects of heritage that set Hong Kong apart from any other.

With input from our sponsor, we used observation as our initial method to accomplish our first objective, identifying the heritage within Sheung Wan and Central. We walked around both areas extensively to explore the various shops in each area and watch the social interactions of the people. We determined Central to be less relevant to our study due to the drastic loss of heritage and sense of community within the district. In contrast, a large portion of Sheung Wan remained only partially influenced by western heritages within the original Chinese settlement on Hong Kong. Therefore, we developed our own focus area based on our observation of the balance of traditional versus western shops to determine the area most vulnerable to cultural change. In addition to more extensive observation, we took pictures of the contrasting shops within our focus area. We went into various shops to informally interview the owners and gain their feedback on the gentrification of the area. Unlike in Central, the owners were present at all of the shops that we went into, adding to the strong sense of community and personal commitment that many of them said drew them to the area in the first place. The old Chinese settlement is prime real estate currently for new businesses, and has experienced explosive growth over the past five years. New galleries and boutiques are arriving almost daily, adding to the popularity of the area but drawing away from its original essence. This is a concern not only for the URA, but also for the current business owners in the area who are worried about the sharp rent increases that come as a result of the popularity (Anonymous 13). If this growth is not slowed, then the traditional heritage of the area will soon be lost, and the strong sense of community along with it.

The change within this area has continued unchecked over the past five years, with only the residents to keep track of the comings and goings of various shops. The only regulation imposed by the government is one restricting bars and restaurants from residential areas (Anonymous 1). Aside from this, real estate owners are allowed to do what they would like with their properties. This includes renting out the space to any business, typically the one that will pay the highest rents. This is the result of supply and demand within the area, so traditional shops are out-priced by wealthier businesses. Due to Hong Kong's free economy, there are no constraints on raising rent prices by astronomical percentages or benefits for traditional shop owners who may have previously inhabited a space for many years. For example, on a street that once was full of various printing shops, only two remain. Current shop owners are predicting rent increases for the next year to reach as high as 200% (Anonymous 5), and do not expect to continue to be able to afford the same space for more than a few years in the future (Anonymous 4), aside from someone lucky enough to lock into a multi-year lease. Not all of the change has had a detrimental effect on the area, however. The people of the area have made it prosperous and culturally diverse. With only small, unique businesses around, the area has a personal touch for all of its inhabitants. The shop owners

are familiar with each other, and give each other discounts (Anonymous 1). The intermittent mix of traditional and western shops has allowed the area to modernize while remaining true to its roots. This has also led to the controversial proposal of an escalator to span Pound Lane, a main walking route. It currently is comprised of staircase after staircase cut into the length of the hill, which is exhausting for residents and a huge deterrent for visitors. The future of the escalator remains uncertain due to the divided community, but it could largely benefit the area upon its completion due to its convenience. It could also draw away from the heritage of the area, but any conclusions at this point are merely speculation, and it cannot be classified as beneficial or detrimental to the heritage of the area without further investigation.

Over the course of our research, we have determined out-pricing of smaller businesses to be a major underlying cause of the accelerated gentrification of the area. A natural process that comes with gentrification, rent prices increase rapidly every year, making it impossible for the lower income residents and businesses to remain. We also researched additional case studies. Drawing from these not only helped us to develop recommendations, but also enabled us to use those examples as support for their actual enactment. There are numerous methods to involve the community. This includes simply surveying the residents or holding an open forum. Regardless of the method, solicit public feedback to brainstorm strategies to tackle urban redevelopment projects, such as the proposed escalator on Pound Lane. Information provided to the residents needs to be detailed and precise to give them a proper understanding of the proposal and ensure public support.

City planners could then use this feedback to develop guidelines to monitor, not prevent, the advancement of the gentrification with the goal of slowing down the process. In this manner, the area would not be completely overturned so rapidly and citizens would have time to adapt. These regulations should capture the critical aspects of the area to preserve, such as the sense of community and social interactions. Establishing these guidelines can also serve as the beginning of the process of encouraging government regulations that make them monitored under the law. Much like the protocols that restrict the height of buildings on The Peak or in Kowloon Tong, or the prohibition against bars in residential areas, there can be a better fix on the property market. One that may benefit the area could be caps on the maximum allowable rent increases yearly, or advantages for the traditional businesses in the area, perhaps based on the business type or length of time in the area. There will never be a 100% satisfaction rate from everyone, but prioritizing the people's aspirations as opposed to the economic markers could be a start.

The results of this project will play a key role in the future projects of the Urban Renewal Authority. URA officials will be able to use our recommendations developed through research to work with the residents of the original Chinese settlement to preserve the heritage that the residents value while transitioning into a modern urban development environment of the city-state. It is essential to obtain feedback from the citizens of Hong Kong so they will support the project and the future that concerns the entire island.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong is not a static entity and is expected to develop and grow as it has since its inception. The variation of national identities has affected not only how the younger generations' identify themselves but also their perception of local heritage (Ping-wa, 2011). Hong Kong especially has a unique heritage compared to other oriental regions because its heritage is a mixture of Western and Eastern customs. It is important to the citizens to preserve the identity of the city-state as it continues to modernize.

The city is implementing vertical development rather than a horizontal approach in order to accommodate more within its restricted spatial confines. This vertical city structure decreases interactions among people, which can be detrimental to the local heritage. This also can lead to a decrease in a sense of unity and pride in their heritage. As a result of these changes, this type of development is causing major gentrification of traditional districts, which is a concern to the members of the Urban Renewal Authority.

With some of the original Hong Kong heritage starting to slip away, it is important to discover the roots of the issue and to analyze the situation in order to assist the communities regain their heritage. Without doing so, Hong Kong may become a sterile and lifeless entity without any background or past support. The life of the city will be strengthened by preserving heritage and renewing pride in the heritage and history. Through this project, the Urban Renewal Authority will have the basic groundwork that it needs to assess the cultural differences between the current state and the past, and develop a plan based on our recommendations to merge the two.

2.1 Project Statement

With some of the original Hong Kong heritage fading away, it is important to discover the roots of the issue. Once this is accomplished, we can propose ways to preserve heritage in spite of the gentrification occurring within Hong Kong and discern if the changes occurring are positive or negative. Sheung Wan is a very dynamic area with a diverse community moving quickly towards westernization, causing the area to lose the sense of its heritage. The natural process of urbanization is accelerated by the constant influx of new western shops. These shops are replacing traditional ones, leading the area in the path of westernization to transform into an area similar to SoHo. SoHo is known for its cosmopolitan feel and western influence rather than a more traditional region rich in heritage. The life of the city will be strengthened by preserving heritage and highlighting its importance to the people.

Objective 1

Our first objective was to identify the heritage in Sheung Wan and Central. The URA identified these two areas in Hong Kong as especially relevant to the question of development and heritage. We initially focused on both of these two sub-districts of Hong Kong and compared how they differ due to the unique history of each.

Central is located in the Central and Western District, on the northern shore of Hong Kong Island. This area was the heart of Victoria City, although that name is rarely used today. It is the central business district of Hong Kong where there are many multinational financial services corporations' headquarters ("Maps of Hong Kong"). Consulates of many countries are also located in this area, as is Government Hill, the site of the government headquarters. The area, with its proximity to Victoria Harbour, has served as the center of trade and financial activities since the earliest days of the British colonial era in 1841, and continues to flourish and serve as the administrative center, even since the transfer of sovereignty to China in 1997 ("Maps of Hong Kong").

Sheung Wan is located in the north-west region of Hong Kong Island, between Central and Sai Ying Pun. Administratively, it is part of the Central and Western District. Sheung Wan was one of the earliest settled places by the British, and belonged to the historical Victoria City. Since 1843, Chinese have settled in Sheung Wan, while the British and other foreigners lived in Central. Today, the offices of many Chinese companies are located in this area. Additionally, Sheung Wan is a central location within Hong Kong for gathering seafood, as well as for Chinese medicine. There are also many antique shops in Sheung Wan that attract tourists from all over the world ("Sheung Wan," 2012). Recognizing the differences between Sheung Wan and Central is key to identifying the heritage in both areas.

Objective 2

Our next task was to determine the area within Sheung Wan and Central most vulnerable to socio-economic change. We ultimately decided to focus on the early Chinese settlement within Sheung Wan due to the personal, community atmosphere that has not yet been lost, as it has been in Central. Central has been susceptible to much westernization from the cosmopolitan SoHo.

Though it still contains a small segment of outdoor street markets, as a whole it is less relevant to our project. It is overwhelmed with a great number of high end shops and pricey European restaurants rather than classic Chinese establishments. While this spread is continuing into Sheung Wan, our focus area is still at a midpoint of development and has not been consumed by westernization. Our focus area can be seen outlined in red below in Figure 1. This map will be explained in more detail in the background section. Due to the rapid development of the area, it is important to determine the region most vulnerable to socio-economic change currently.

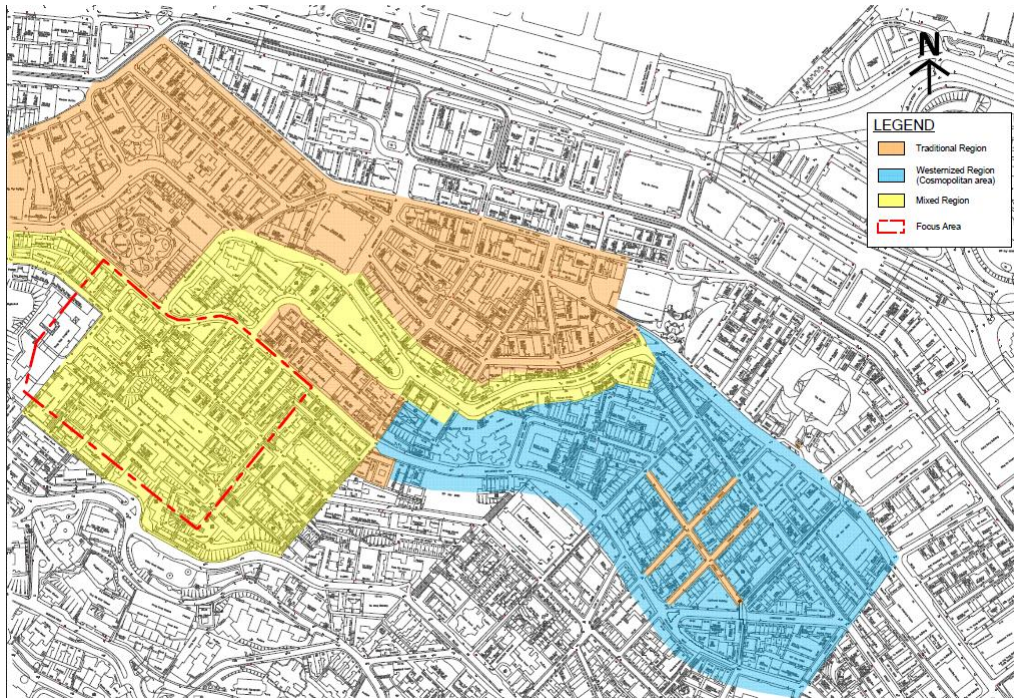


Figure 1: Focus Area map of Sheung Wan and Central

Objective 3

Once we determined the boundaries of our focus area, we identified the critical aspects of the heritage to preserve. From our discussions with various shop owners, we were able to discern what they valued about our focus area. Many chose the area because of its sense of community and friendly atmosphere. The shop owners we spoke with were all approachable and open, and the area was quiet and relaxed. Another aspect of this communal culture was the accessibility of the area.

To reach our focus area, you needed to climb a number of staircases up the hill, and vehicle access was very limited. Part of the area's attraction is also that it is not completely developed, but rather is a very up-and-coming section of the city. Many of the shops are small boutiques with unique items catering to the creativity and individuality of the citizens of the city. The area generally has a traditional feel, one that is slipping away with each passing year as the area becomes more popular with western shops. Therefore, a major aspect is the personal touch that is still experienced in our focus area. Through this project, we determined a number of critical aspects of heritage, including a sense of community, social interactions, and the unique authenticity of the area which can be seen in the various coffin, Chinese sausage, or traditional medicine shops.

Objective 4

With a sufficient understanding of the heritage of the area, we could then establish which changes in the area were beneficial and detrimental to it. This requires a multi-faceted approach combining both research and interviews. Therefore, we were able to develop a balanced opinion on the impact of various changes to the area. Our result from this objective draws from similar scenarios such as ones from SoHo

as well as the reaction of the residents to the changes. We also drew from our conclusions from objective 3 to discern which changes were positive and negative, both socially and economically.

Objective 5

The ultimate goal of this project was to develop recommendations for the Urban Renewal Authority on how to address the changes. In order to make informed decisions, this objective also required background research from various local and international sources that have dealt with similar gentrification scenarios. We looked at both successful and unsuccessful examples so we could have a balanced outlook to compare. With this additional knowledge, we were also able to develop wider global perspective on the situation to share with the URA. These recommendations can be applied towards this project in the future as the URA begins to reach out and talk to people about it.

2.2 Discussion

The work of the Urban Renewal Authority within the old Chinese settlement will be based upon the results of this project. Their work will directly impact all of the residents and shop owners within this area and spur a vital focus on the underlying causes of the gentrification. While the government of Hong Kong is regulating the area to an extent by not allowing bars and restaurants in residential areas, there is nothing to stop western boutiques, architectural firms, galleries and the like from establishing themselves due to the vacancies from traditional shop keepers who can no longer afford to remain there. If allowed to remain unchecked, the area will soon transform into one similar to SoHo, which is apparent based upon the process of development already occurring. Much feedback we garnered from our interviews alluded to the same point, with many shopkeepers voicing concerns about the eventual demise of the tradition and sense of community of our focus area. If successful, this project will aid in investigation into this issue and towards balancing the advancing urban development with the traditional Chinese feel in order to preserve the past while westernizing districts and shops.

2.3 Summary

This project is of vital importance to the preservation of the traditional Chinese heritage that still remains intact in our focus area. In this paper, we will explore each objective in more depth. We will also analyze various changes within our focus area and draw from outside sources to develop detailed recommendations for the Urban Renewal Authority to carry out their work. Before that, however, it is imperative to understand the core of this project, which is so deeply rooted in history. Therefore, the next section focuses on an in-depth overview of the history of Hong Kong, the districts of Sheung Wan and Central specifically, and highlights the importance of various cultural monuments that remain intact on

Hong Kong Island. The next section serves to underscore the significance of tradition as it pertains to our focus area so that we are better informed to work towards its preservation.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

Once home to fishermen and farmers, modern Hong Kong is now a growing, commercially-vibrant metropolis where Chinese and Western influences combine. Ever since the return to the Chinese control, public awareness of environmental protection and cultural relics preservation in Hong Kong has been increasing (Ping-wa, 2011). The heritages of Sheung Wan and Central, the two focal points of this project, are very unique and diverse, largely stemming from their adaptation to vertical urban development due to limitations on land availability on Hong Kong Island. This project seeks to identify the critical aspects of heritage to preserve and requires an in-depth look into the history of Hong Kong, both past and present developments, in order to accomplish this objective. Through this section, we cover a distinct flow of the history of Hong Kong while narrowing it down to the heritage specific to our subject area. This information is important background knowledge in order to fully understand the impact of the gentrification of the area and the detriment to its heritage.

3.2 A Basic History

In 1841, the British came to Possession Point, which is located in Sheung Wan. This area was where the Belcher Battery was built because it was an ideal location for defense against possible enemy threat. The British settled along the northwest shore, creating what would be known as Sheung Wan, Central and Western (Ping-wa, 2011). They then started settling the mid- levels and then in the peaks near Tai Ping Shan. In this early 1800s, Hong Kong was not very populated. For example, in the Central District, there was Kwan Tai Road, a small fishing village that only housed 50 people. There was also a quarry named Shek Tong Tsui which only housed 25 people. This is a significant change in comparison to the population of Central and Western District of 257, 300 in 2009 (Ping-wa, 2011).



Figure 2: Possession Point c. 1930 (*Heritage trails*, 2013)

Since Hong Kong is so close to important business and trading centers such as Macau and

Guangzhou, it became a very important port for importing and exporting goods (Ping-wa). The British developed a business and trading center named Queen's Town. This was renamed Victoria City after Queen Victoria and now it is more commonly known as the Central District. On 7 June 1841, Hong Kong was declared a free port, allowing free entrances of ships, merchants, workers and capital (Leung, 2011). This established Hong Kong as a business and trading center in the early days. Between the years of 1842 to 1860, the economy of Hong Kong relied on the transport of goods such as sugar, opium, salt and granite (Ping-wa). The Central and Western Districts developed into the financial center, not only because of the economy involved with trading, but it became home to the headquarters of the new banks.

3.3 Chinese Settlements and the Development of Hong Kong Heritage

In 1843, the earliest commercial area in Hong Kong, Jervois Street, was open to traders and civilians to open up small shops called matsheds (Ping-wa, 2011). This was named the Lower Market because it was for small businesses that were not well developed yet. There was a Middle Market for workers who came over to Hong Kong from other areas. Because of this rapid development of other populations, an Upper Market was then created in Tai Ping Shan the laborers who came from China and Kowloon Island (Ping-wa). The Chinese civilians came over to Hong Kong and started setting up brothels and gambling. The newly formed Hong Kong government moved the Chinese civilians to this area because they did not approve of this behavior in the Lower and Middle Markets. This area became the center of the traditional Chinese heritage and religion. After the relocation of Chinese citizens, they became settled and built temples and gradually developed their own heritage. Today, both these temples and open-air markets mark the uniqueness within this area; with deep roots in the history, both are important components of the heritage.

In 1850, many Chinese citizens moved from mainland China to Hong Kong during what was referred to as the Tai Ping Movement (Ping-wa). Along with their population, they brought their trades and economy in hopes to develop their businesses there. It became a commercial, industrial community in about twenty to thirty years. The Nam Pak Hong union, guilds and associations of townsmen and chambers of commerce were established during this period of development (Ping-wa). These unions were created because the merchants from Britain valued their rights and interests because of the effort they put into growing this colony. In 1861, the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce was created. It was created on principal that was an influence of British government and Chinese policy. The British occupied Hong Kong like this for 40 years. During this time, Central was mainly occupied by British merchants and other foreigners. The Chinese citizens were only allowed to stay in areas like the Western District and Sheung Wan (Ping-wa).

After 1870, the Chinese businesses in Nam Pak Hong were running successfully and becoming economically stable. The increasing status of the Chinese merchants in Hong Kong was so prominent, that the Hong Kong Government began to offer the Chinese positions in the Legislative and Executive Councils (Ping-wa). Because the citizens originally from the mainland still had an emotional connection with China, having positions in their government offered a new perspective and different opinions and

interests into the system. This more diverse and accepting government became a useful connection for both sides because in crisis such as war or natural disaster, the people in Hong Kong and China were ready to help and stand by each other (Ping-wa).

3.4 Development after World War II to Present

Due to the Chinese civil war, refugees from all parts of China came to Hong Kong after World War II. They brought money and skills with them, which became vital to Hong Kong to develop larger industries. Hong Kong became the Far East financial center because of this new industrial status. Between 1956 and 1965, the focus of economy and the production of goods shifted from Central and Western District to other parts of Hong Kong Island (Ping-wa, 2011). Previously in Hong Kong, there was the growth with trading first, then the switch to a more industrial economy. This caused the Central and Western Districts to develop and change as rapidly as the population did. In the 1990s, the cost of hiring and land had so drastically increased that industry shifted from Hong Kong to mainland China. However, Hong Kong's trading and financial industries continued to develop rapidly. In current times, there are new, tall skyscrapers in these districts as well as large hotels and shopping malls. Because of this new modern feel of the area, the community became busy and crowded as a typical metropolitan city. There were still some of the historic buildings and with that remained the unique heritage that grew and adapted to modern needs in Hong Kong. In Figure 3, we can see the physical development of Hong Kong into an economic powerhouse.



Figure 3: Development of the Chinese settlement (“Convention”, 2010)

After control of Hong Kong was returned to mainland China in 1997, there has been an increase in public awareness of the need to protect the environment and preserve their unique heritage. Some ideas the citizens of Hong Kong had to preserve their heritage include protecting the Harbour and restoring and protecting historical buildings (Ping-wa). Within these ideas of preserving heritage, the government and

the public have different opinions and priorities (Ping-wa). For example, the government proposed to redevelop the Central Government Offices into an office building. The public supported this proposal but decided to go further and to restore and protect the entirety of Government Hill instead. Later, the government proposed to demolish the Star Ferry Pier and the Queen's Pier but the public disagreed (Ping-wa). The government started to realize their ideas were conflicting and gave more priority and voice to the public in these decisions. They set up the "Conserving Central" plan to preserve and renew public areas such as markets, police stations and churches (Leung, 2011). Through the continuous growth of the Central and Western District, there will be historical aspects and modern aspects that will create a unique combination of past and present.

In summary, China ceded Hong Kong Island to Britain in 1842 after the First Opium War. Britain later added parts of the Kowloon peninsula and the many smaller islands surrounding Hong Kong to its holdings. The former British colony became a special administrative region of China in 1997, when Britain's 99-year lease of the New Territories, north of Hong Kong Island, expired. Hong Kong is governed under the principle of "one country, two systems", under which China has agreed to give the region a high degree of autonomy and to preserve its economic and social systems for 50 years from the date of the handover. Industrialization gathered pace, and by the 1970s Hong Kong had become an "Asian tiger", one of the region's economic powerhouses. With the control now in the hands of the Chinese, the heritage developed over a hundred years of British occupation is slowly fading away as the Chinese develop their own heritage as an economic powerhouse. In the past few decades, many modernized hotels and lavish shopping centers have been erected. The streets have become busier and crowded as Hong Kong is transformed into a typical metropolis. Many of the historical buildings remaining with architectural value are falling apart with no plan for repair, or being torn down to make way for the new vertical development that allows space for more people and businesses. Hong Kong has a unique heritage that is a meeting of both Chinese and Western traditions; this appeal draws in numerous tourists from all over the world (Leung). Through our project, we can identify those aspects of heritage that the citizens value the most so as to preserve the past while still moving forward into the present; this is covered in more depth in the results.

3.5 Struck by the Plague

One of the major crises to strike Hong Kong was the bubonic plague. The outbreak first began in the Tai Ping Shan district during the early months of 1894. During its outbreaks all throughout Europe, the plague caused mass hysteria due to its nature; once sick, the patient experienced a quick, but agonizing death. The plague spread to Hong Kong through the unrestricted entry of thousands of workers and boats from Kwantung Province, and 10 May 1894 marked the day Hong Kong was officially marked as an infected port. Within a few short weeks, the outbreak had spread into a pervasive epidemic, the death toll reaching over 2400 deaths by July (Pryor, 1975).

Many hospitals were quickly established, including the famed Tung Wah hospital that is still prevalent around the city-state today. House-to-house inspections began to root out those afflicted by the

disease and sanitize the affected households. The Chinese community within Hong Kong became panicked and many immigrated to China, which ultimately negatively affected the economy of the colony. The hospitals became increasingly overcrowded, with 80 new patients daily, while the death toll racked up at an alarming rate of over 100 dead a day. Various buildings, such as a pig depot, were converted into hospitals to handle this growing need. During this initial outbreak, approximately 7000 people were dispossessed of their homes and 350 houses were condemned and sealed off from the public (Pryor).

During the cooler autumn and winter months, the plague abated, but continued to strike annually from February or March until July. The cycles continued from 1894 until 1901, with the death toll reaching 8600. This accounted for a 95% mortality rate (Pryor). Due to the epidemic nature of the plague, relentless efforts were made by the British to root out the cause, but this was increasingly more challenging as occupants of infected houses would dispose of bodies during the night to avoid detection during house-to-house tours. Though the medium of infection was not determined, the conditions under which the disease was spread remained very consistent. The Chinese settlements through which the disease spread like wildfire were overcrowded, unsanitary, and infested with rats. Strict prevention measures were therefore enforced, including the continuation of disinfecting houses, as well as control over the disposal of the dead bodies in the street and harbour. Most significantly was the measure to improve the general sanitary conditions of the settlement and control the design of the tenement blocks. These tenement blocks ran long, narrow, and dark, erected to stand 80 feet deep by 12 to 13 feet wide. In 1903, the Public Health and Building Ordinance of 1903 set new standards for the design and occupancy of buildings which remained in place until 1935 (Pryor). This led to the development of the area into its current layout and into a more grid-like pattern to allow easier accessibility; this is still in progress today, and the early stages can be seen in Figure 4.

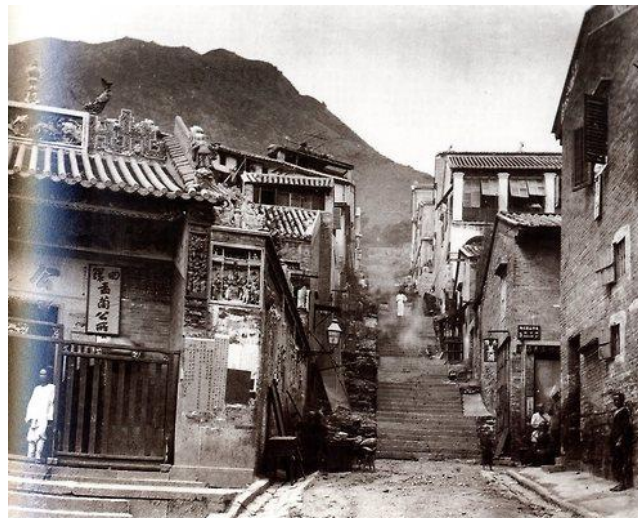


Figure 4: Restructuring of Sheung Wan (“Old Hong Kong”)

This time of great tribulation also saw the establishment of various temples, which can be seen in great numbers throughout Hong Kong. These temples served as sacred grounds to honor the dead and

pray for blessings. One of the most prominent temples in the area is the Man Mo Temple along Hollywood Road in Sheung Wan. Built in 1847, the temple contains two chairs previously used to carry the statues of the gods “Man” and “Mo” during ceremonial processions (Leung, 2011). “Man” represents reputation and leadership, and “Mo” signifies integrity, wealth, and royalty; these values align with those of the traditional Chinese. This temple became very important to the Chinese people and developed into a meeting place and arbitration tribunal (Leung). Man Mo Temple is now a famous area attraction that draws in many tourists, and is preserved as an integral establishment representative of the traditional heritage under law. The plague also directly stimulated the funeral and medicine businesses in this area that are still in place today. The Tung Wah hospital, which was the first Chinese hospital run by Chinese and not Europeans, was also the first to treat the Chinese people regardless of their low social status. The organization developed a two-fold role as a charity organization for poverty-stricken Chinese as well as a supporter of traditional community aspects, such as the Man Mo Temple. Its original location on Po Yan Street in Sheung Wan has been listed among Grade I historic buildings in Hong Kong and is preserved under law as well. This temple can also be seen on the left in Figure 4. This history of the temples also adds to their importance as critical aspects of Hong Kong’s heritage, particularly in our focus area.

3.6 Urban Development

Due to its ideal harbour, Hong Kong grew as a port and trading center. Thousands of buildings were constructed to accommodate for the increasing population and economy. As Hong Kong became less reliant on the harbour, the city expanded outwards around the island. Since the terrain is not flat and Hong Kong only has a limited amount of land, there was nowhere to build outwards. Building all the buildings higher became the only option. The buildings were being built higher than three stories and Hong Kong became more of a metropolitan city. Instead of markets and living spaces all on the ground level, there are tall shopping malls and high apartment buildings throughout the island. Hong Kong’s rapid urbanization and economic growth created a high-rise, popular city that is depicted in Figure 5.



Figure 5: High-rise development (“Monstrous carbuncles”)

After the reversion to mainland China, public awareness of local heritage preservation in Hong Kong was raised. There are numerous propositions that extend over many historical buildings, from the protection of Victoria Harbour to saving other historical structures from being demolished. In 2010, the

release of the movie “Sui yuet san tau”, or “Echoes of the Rainbow”, caused the public to clamor for the preservation of Wing Lee Street in Sheung Wan. This movie painted a picture of Hong Kong in the 1960s, leading to nostalgia for many Hong Kong citizens. Due to the attention drawn to it, Wing Lee Street has maintained its typical 1960s style. The street has 11 Tong Lau buildings, which are tenement buildings designed for both residential and commercial uses (Yeung, 2010). The Urban Renewal Authority began redevelopment plans for this area in 2008, with a proposal to preserve 3 Tong Lau buildings and transform the rest into high-rise apartments.

However, with the release of “Echoes of the Rainbow”, the wishes of the public overrode these plans in lieu of conserving the entire street. Due to its terrace setting, this street is one of the few authentic remaining that serve as a common ground for the community to come together and meet (Yeung). However, experts estimate that Hong Kong lost 160 million Hong Kong dollars profit without the rebuilding, in addition to the 100 million Hong Kong dollars drawn from the public fund to fix and maintain the Tong Lous. Wing Lee Street is one of many rebuilding projects found throughout Hong Kong. It is important to establish a balance between urban development and local heritage preservation, and even more so to establish criteria to discern what should be rebuilt and what should be replaced. As is depicted in Figure 6, the landscape of Hong Kong has been developed into a high-rise, distinctive coast, leaving no trace of the past in its urban scene.



Figure 6: Hong Kong landscape today (“Hong Kong skyline”, 2011)

3.7 Central and Sheung Wan

Geographically, Central and Sheung Wan are both located in the western part of Hong Kong Island. Central is located in the Central and Western District, on the northern shore of Hong Kong Island. Central (also known as Central District) is the central business district of Hong Kong. As the central business district of Hong Kong, many multinational financial services corporations have their headquarters in the area. Sheung Wan is part of the Central and Western District, also known as the Upper

District because it is built on relatively higher ground compared to other regions of Hong Kong. When the British took control over Hong Kong, Sheung Wan was one of the first places settled because it was a part of Victoria City. Since 1843, Chinese settled in Sheung wan while the British settled in Central. Sheung Wan became the business district because that was the location of the offices of many Chinese companies. It was also a location for gathering seafood and medicine. There are many antique shops that attract tourists from all over the world. Central and Sheung Wan, with regard to the official mapping of Hong Kong, are two clear districts. Central shows more of the economic side of Hong Kong while Sheung Wan shows more of the unique Western and Chinese heritage fusion. These two regions are a great example of the diverse aspects of Hong Kong, which we will further break down now.

We isolated our study area based on our observations of the current state of the region. It is located within the Sheung Wan district. From north to south, it runs roughly from Hollywood Road to Pound Lane; from east to west, it is from Kui In Fong to Po Yan Street. This can be seen in Figure 7.

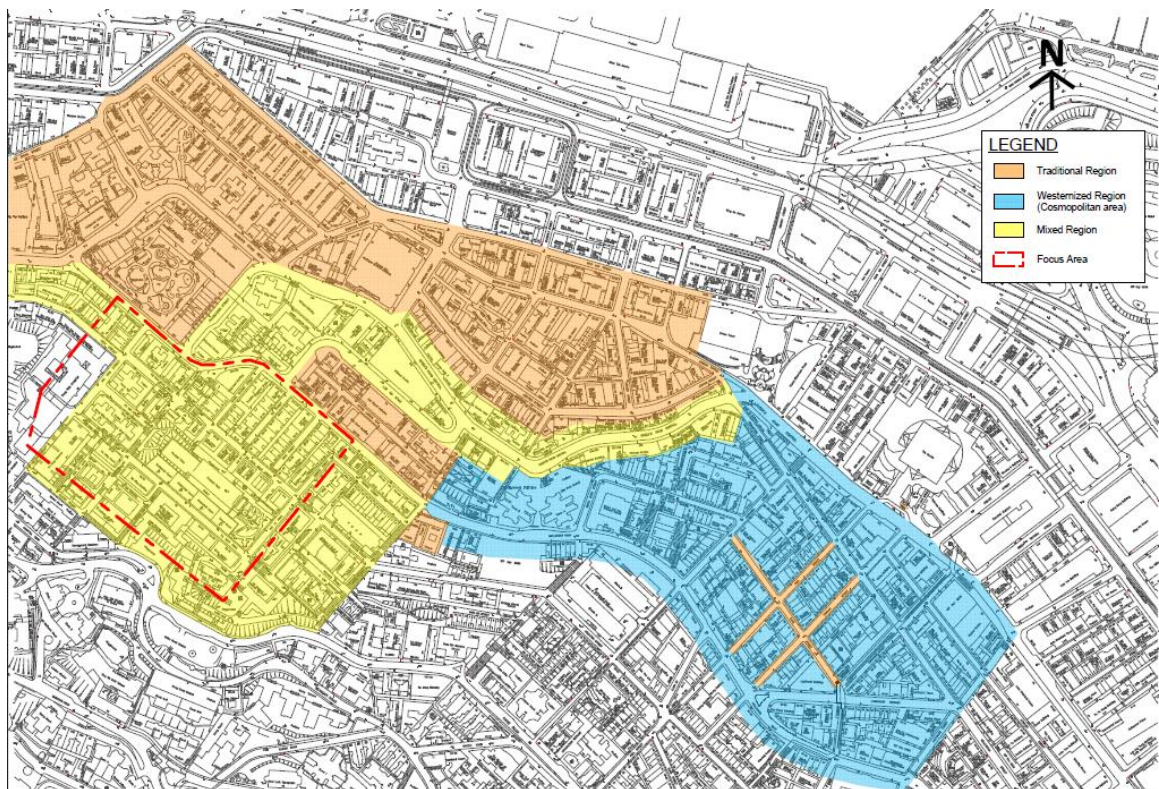


Figure 7: Breakdown of Focus Area

Today, in our focus area outlined in red in Figure 7, passerby can witness a dynamic mix of old and new. Not only are there traditional coffin shops, temples, and antique shops, there are also boutiques and modern art galleries. Since the rent is rapidly increasing in this region along with its popularity, many traditional businesses cannot afford to remain and move away. This is a very dynamic area undergoing substantial changes. Many independent and creative businesses, including various boutiques and cafés, have moved in and replaced warehouses and traditional stores. There has also been a recent proposal from

the government about constructing an escalator on Pound Lane (Uttam, 2012). This is still under consideration and it is a controversial topic amongst the residents of the area.

The area indicated in orange in Figure 7 is the traditional region of the Central and Sheung Wan districts. This contains many typical Chinese medicine shops, dry seafood shops, and bird nest shops. These businesses are a mix of wholesale and retail shops. The Chinese dry seafood shops truly capture the scope of traditional Chinese food heritage. The products range from the exorbitantly expensive shark fins to more affordable dried shrimp. The Chinese medicine shops are also very typical, selling products that include valuable deer antlers, Lingzhi mushrooms, and assorted herbs. The cross section of orange contained in the blue area is where the street markets are located. It is a vibrant and bustling space full of stands selling fresh vegetables, fruits, meats, seafood, and flowers. It is a representation of traditional Chinese grocery shopping. Though the government has moved some street markets, like the Sheung Wan market, into buildings due to hygienic standards and street rebuilding, several symbolic streets such as Gage Street in Central are still in operation today. The difference in vibrancy of these two locations is striking. While the Sheung Wan market is indoors, it still lacks pristine sanitary conditions, despite its purpose. It receives much less foot traffic than the outdoor markets such as the one on Gage Street. A market similar to the Sheung Wan market was built on Bridge Street and has since closed due to the lack of business.

The area shown in blue is the cosmopolitan region of our initial study area prior to narrowing it down. This area is important to analyze because it is a strong indicator of where our focus area is headed within the next few years if the gentrification continues unchecked. In the blue area are many cafés, exotic restaurants, bars, and high end shopping centers with numerous chain stores. A large portion of this area is known as SoHo. SoHo is located in the Central district south of Hollywood Road, and is a highly cosmopolitan segment of Hong Kong. Its development dates back to 1993 with the installment of its mid-level escalator. This escalator links the Central and Mid-level districts of Hong Kong Island, and is used to transport commuters and other residents through the congested and steep parts of the city (Gold, 2001). Initially, restaurants and businesses opened at the lower levels of the escalator and gradually began to extend up along the escalator and north of Hollywood Road. Currently, the areas on its outskirts are experiencing “SoHo-ization”, which involves skyrocketing rent prices. This leads to the departure of traditional businesses, while pricier western shops come in to take their place. This area is one of the main reasons why there is so much controversy over the proposed escalator on Pound Lane. It is strongly opposed by those who wish to see the area maintain its personal, community vibe, while the elderly and others support its convenience (Anonymous 10). This area is now very impersonal, and stands in stark contrast to the progression of the westernization of our focus area.

3.8 Summary

With such a vast history, there are many factors to consider when analyzing the heritage of Hong Kong, even within our smaller focus area. Understanding the past is integral to progressing into the future while still preserving heritage. One of the most important factors to consider is the opinion of the

residents of an area, as they will be directly impacted by any changes and can offer or withdraw their support for a project. This was imperative for us to consider while developing our recommendations for the Urban Renewal Authority. Areas such as SoHo also served as prominent comparison factors and provided a forecast of what to expect from our focus area in the future. In the next section, we will give a detailed description of how we covered each of our objectives using different methodologies of our project.

4.0 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

Our sponsor's main goal is to work on redevelopment while conserving the intangible elements of life. Hong Kong was once known to have vibrant street markets, but traditional trade is now shrinking. The fading of traditional business may be attributed to the rapid "organic growth" in the district (Ma, 2013). Our sponsor aims to complete five more distinct objectives. The breakdown of the methods used to accomplish these objectives will be analyzed in greater detail in throughout this section. The objectives consist of identifying the culture in Sheung Wan and Central and identifying key aspects of the culture. Once we completed those two objectives, we determined the area of Sheung Wan and Central which seems to be most vulnerable to change. Moving forward we established which changes are beneficial and which are detrimental to the local culture and proposed any ideas to address the detrimental changes. There are four main methods that we have used to accomplish our objectives. These methods consist of interviews, field research, surveying, and background research.

The richness of culture and history in the districts of Sheung Wan and Central provide perfect study areas to conduct an in-depth heritage analysis that compares different cultures within the same country. Both were settled by diverse people and developed in such an independent manner that the culture in each of the districts varies. The research techniques we have implemented focus on observing and analyzing the landscape, the residents, and their culture and the businesses in the area. To understand a country's culture one must submerge themselves in it by experiencing it first-hand. The Urban Renewal Authority wishes to identify the aspects of culture with which both areas are mostly recognized. One of the examples proposed to us by our sponsor was that of Louisiana and how it is most commonly associated with its music and cuisine. This aspect of our project must be done directly through field work. We have visited these areas during their peak hours and during its more calm hours. Both areas boom with activity between the hours of 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. While the methods used to accomplish each of the goals may be the similar, they were each implemented in different ways. Our data collected consists of mostly qualitative data but we have also incorporated quantitative data to support our findings. The actual findings and evaluation of our research will be analyzed more in depth in the results section; this section only serves as an explanation of how we came to our conclusions.

4.2 Background Research

The first method we used was that of background research. This consisted of researching first the broad history of Hong Kong then focusing more on our specific study area. We also researched our area and its development in more recent years consisting of the past ten years. We researched the background of our area by using books recommended to us by our sponsor as well as websites, and direct conversational input from our sponsor. Websites helped mostly to study our area in more current times, while the books offered more of a historical background. Historical research was used in order to add

depth in our analysis of culture in different regions of our study area. This was explored in our background section.

Some examples of historical data that are relevant in identifying the culture in Sheung Wan and Central consist of knowing what areas were known to be Chinese settlements, what areas were occupied by the British, and knowing which areas were hit hardest during the Hong Kong bubonic plague. The history of Sheung Wan and Central offer us insight on the reasoning behind the locations of temples, hospitals and museums. They also offer us insight on the reasoning of the types of businesses in the area. An example could be that there may be an abundance of printing shops or coffin shops in certain areas and the history of those areas may shed some light on the decision pertaining to their location.

The conclusions made on which aspects of the local heritage are crucial directly influence our opinions on what changes seem to be positive versus negative. If certain changes are negatively affecting the key cultural elements stated in objective 3 then those changes are not beneficial for the local heritage.

In order to further distinguish which changes in the study area could be detrimental or beneficial we geared our research in slightly different manner. We researched similar scenarios like that of current SoHo. SoHo went through a similar gentrification process as our study area is currently undergoing. We analyzed what changes have brought benefits to SoHo either socially or economically, as well as what changes were not so beneficial. We must balance the benefits; this means that while certain changes are economically beneficial, they may be greatly damaging culturally and socially. We also researched our focus area and came across various parallels to SoHo that will later be analyzed in the results section.

Coming up with recommendations for our sponsors is a culmination of all of the objectives. From our analysis of what changes are positive and negative we have come up with some suggestions to continue the positive changes and stop or slow down the negative changes. We have done research on other areas both in Hong Kong and internationally that have met the similar cultural challenges. Not only did we focus on the successful examples of preserving heritage but we also studied examples that were not successful in preserving the heritage. This has given us a view from both sides of the challenge presented. We analyzed what measures were successful and what measures did not fare as well. We have also taken into consideration the feasibility of our recommendations. Some measures may not be able to be implemented due to funding or other external reasons; therefore we did our best to propose the most viable recommendations on how to approach the changes that our focus area is undergoing.

4.3 Covert Observations and Field Research

Once we had a general understanding second hand sources we decided to proceed with covert observation. We wanted to go in to each area with no bias and purely analyze the heritage from a neutral standpoint. We walked around the study areas first just to get a feel for each of them. Due to the size of our study area and the numerous streets it took us about four days to fully walk around the entire study area. This enabled us to orient ourselves and start forming a mental map in our heads of what areas are attributed to certain characteristics. An example could be that the east side of our study area could stand out to be a noisier region than the west. This is considered covert observation. When we walked around

the first time we did not have any sort of recording instrument. No one knew that we were conducting a study through observation (Maxwell, 1996). The number of western expatriates has increased over the past few years, so our foreign appearance had no effect on the local day to day activities (Wassener, 2012). Once we covered our whole area we each did an exercise in which we identified different regions within Central and Sheung Wan associated with different characteristics. We limited this exercise to only a couple minutes so we wrote down the first things that came to mind about different regions. This exercise was suggested to us by our sponsor.

We gradually began making our observations more formal. This time when we walked around our study area, we began to take pictures of anything that stuck out to us. We used a quality caliber Cannon EOS 60D 18.0-Megapixel DSLR camera with 18-135mm lens to record our observations. This allows us to offer a more comprehensive analysis to people that may not be familiar with the area or culture. This also allows us to add more detail in our maps used in analyzing some of our other objectives. Inclusively we wrote down notes on every picture we took and discussed it among our group and our sponsor. This is still considered covert observation again due to the high amount of tourists in Hong Kong. Many of the shop keepers have no problem with pictures being taken because they are so used to the tourist activity in the area (Ma, 2013).

When conducting covert observations throughout the study area we attempted to mentally form different regions within the area classified by the feel that we got in these regions and backed by other factors as that will be mentioned in our results section. To determine which area is most vulnerable to change we were looking for the most diverse area, an area that had a mix of both traditional and western influence. Overall the results from our covert field research helped us develop conclusions on all our objectives.

4.4 Overt Observations and Surveying

While covert field research influenced the results and conclusions of all of our objectives, overt observations and surveying offer a more systematic approach to our analysis. When conducting overt observation the participants, in this case the local people, know they are being observed. Covert observations consists of the complete opposite, the subjects do not know they are being observed (Maxwell, 1996).

This time, when we walked around we were equipped with the following instruments: maps of our area provided both by our sponsor and Google maps, an iPad to take notes using the Notability app, the previously mentioned camera, and a pen and notebook just in case we ran into any technical problems with the iPad. We informed the shop owners that they were being observed and briefed them about our project. We also informed the people that were curious about our note-taking. This ensured that our surveying was in fact considered overt.

We focused on the appearance, smell, feel, noise and even the cuisine, and we wrote down the dates to all of our notes to ensure validity. We experimented with different restaurants in the study area when we went out for lunch and noted any trends.

We began to write down any trends with the demographics of the people as well and their activity in certain regions of our study area. We noted the locations of key cultural spots such as temples, hospitals, markets, schools, museums and churches. Not only did we observe them but we also experienced them. We would go inside the temples and light incense as is customary to do. We went into the Museum of Medicine located in Sheung Wan. We also experienced the different markets that offer an array of goods from fresh poultry to Chinese souvenirs. We were even fortunate enough to take part in a Chinese New Year's traditional lunch on Wing Lee Street terrace.

While surveying we focused on the type of establishments located in different regions or on different roads. We categorized the establishments by either being traditional or cosmopolitan. The different types of establishments are made up of schools, businesses, temples, markets, museums, hospitals and churches. A more detailed list of the types of traditional and cosmopolitan businesses and markets is given in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, respectively.

We split up the Central and Sheung Wan area into three main regions. The three areas consisted of a traditional area, a westernized area and an area with a mix of both. We surveyed sections of 25 different streets to see how many traditional shops there are versus western shops. With these numbers we formulated three separate pie graphs, one for each of the regions.

The boundaries of each of the regions were determined purely on observation and loosely defined. We covered as much of the assigned area as possible, and we focused on the areas with the most activity. It is important to state this in order to reassure validity. Our sponsor's direct request was to enter the study area from a completely unbiased point of view and to create our own boundaries consisting of our own criteria. Our criteria are elaborated more in the results section.

In order to identify the critical aspects of Sheung Wan and Central we guided our attention to the interaction between the people on the streets. Traditionally business interactions are very personal, while in more cosmopolitan or chain stores they tend to be more superficial. We also took note on what is most prevalent in the each of the areas or what they lack. Examples include an abundance of dry fish shops or the lack of traffic and noise in some areas.

Surveying helped us mostly with identifying the heritage in Sheung Wan and Central, determining the most dynamic region that is most vulnerable to change, and identifying the critical aspects of heritage in the focus areas.

4.5 Interviews

Interviews were a crucial part of our research and offered a more solid and complete basis to draw conclusions from. We conducted mainly anonymous and informal interviews except for one, where we interviewed the Director of Planning and Design for the Urban Renewal Authority, Michael Ma.

We decided to take a more conversational approach to the interviews we conducted. This made our group more approachable and gave a more natural feel to the interview. To facilitate and enhance our interview process, we came up with a general outline of key questions we wished to cover, which can be seen in Appendix 9. The interview questions were used as guidelines to ensure that we covered all the

topics we wished to discuss, but due to the open-ended nature, additional questions may have been added to make it more of a comfortable and conversational environment. There is evidence that a conversational style of interviewing produces more accurate data (Russell, 2011).

By structuring our interviews more like conversations, people were more willing to engage in our project. Due to confidentiality and the cultural nature of the project we did not include names of people or businesses we interacted with. The reassurance of confidentiality further encouraged the locals being interviewed to participate. Questions such as “Why did you pick this location for your business?” and “How long has your business been in this location?” gave us good input to analyze the heritage of Central and Sheung Wan. Those questions were also useful when determining the most dynamic area within Central and Sheung Wan and to identify the critical aspects of heritage in the area.

We worked questions into our informal interviews to help us understand the vulnerability to change of the previously established regions. The question of “How long has your business been in this location?” enabled us to reach our conclusions. For example if one of the areas has a mix of businesses that have been there a long time and new businesses, this could mean that this area is starting to change. On the other hand if an area has all businesses that have been there for over a decade then it would lead us to believe that the area is not too prone to change.

We asked shop owners in each of the areas questions such as “How has this area changed since you located your shop here?” and “What do you plan to do with your business in the next few years?”. The first question offered us a first-hand account of the culture of the area it gave us a sense of the individual’s attitude toward certain changes as well. If the interviewee was excited to discuss the changes it could mean that they approve of the changes; if they were not too enthusiastic about the changes then they may not agree with the changes. Sometimes they would out-right tell us whether they agreed with the changes or not, even if we did not prompt the question. We used their answers as insight to form our conclusions. Since this subject is very objective to what is considered good and bad, we will back our reasoning of our choices in the results section.

The second question gave us insight on where the shop owners think the future of the area is headed. Due to the conversational nature of our interviews many shop owners went off on tangents that offered a good amount of valuable information which we used in our analysis of the key cultural elements in need of preserving.

Through our interviews we were able to get a sense of what changes were good and what changes were bad. When describing the changes in the focus area, shop owners would often willingly express their feelings towards certain changes. Many of them were also familiar with the changes that occurred in SoHo and were able to express their concerns on how certain changes that happened in SoHo seem almost inevitable in our focus area.

4.6 Validity

Invalid evidence can lead to a misleading conclusion. This emphasizes the importance of validity. The approach we take must be viewed more as reducing validity threats rather than increasing validity.

When dealing with qualitative data validity threats are mostly assessed once the research is underway (Maxwell, 1996).

To ensure the validity of the study, it was essential for us and our questions to be completely unbiased to the participants. We had a list of set questions as a basic outline to make sure that all important points were covered. As we found counterexamples to our conclusions, we were prepared to be flexible and ask additional questions to ensure that we covered a wide enough range of topics (Maxwell). To ensure that we did not set any bias in our respondents, the research team critically reflected on its assumptions to become aware of any pre-formed expectations and then we took precautions to avoid swaying our respondents. This has allowed us to discover and consider issues that we did not predict in our preparatory work, and produce a stronger conclusion. Possible threats to our validity can include the participants not taking us seriously, not being knowledgeable or not being honest in their answers. The best way to deal with these challenges would be to present ourselves in a professional manner and to note any speculations or thoughts that we may have of a participant and address those speculations in our assessment (Maxwell). There are many factors, such as how long the person has lived in the area, where did they live before they moved into the area, how long has their family been in the area, the age of the participant, outside influences from places like work or school, and the list can continue. These factors can contribute to getting invalid results, but the most important aspect is to be able to recognize what is valid and what is not. The daunting task of dealing with these factors has been dealt with by standardizing our results. One method to recognize validity is through simple observation of the participant's manner of how they present themselves and through their responses to the questions (Maxwell).

Additional steps have been taken to ensure less validity threats in our results are as followed. We recorded our interview with Michael Ma and took detailed notes on the rest of the participants. We also took pictures and paired each with a small explanation about their significance.

The participants were asked for feedback on how they perceived us and what this study means to them. This is known as a member check and this helps you understand the reactivity that takes place in during the research. Reactivity is known as the influence the researcher may have on the participant. Reactivity is inevitable during interviews and mostly any other direct contact methods; thus we could not focus on eliminating it but we made note of when interpreting our research results. On the other hand, when it comes to observation, reactivity is nearly inexistent (Maxwell, 1996).

Due to our background research we had an idea of what each district may have had to offer in terms of culture. It was important to keep our personal perspectives separate from our data. By being outspoken with our perspectives we are addressing any bias that could potentially occur involuntarily when analyzing the data and coming up with a conclusion.

Since our project is a multi-site project we could compare the data from each site to the other. By comparing the data from the three regions our project group has something to evaluate against. Another form of comparison we have conducted is the comparison of our collected data versus that of the cases researched in our last objective.

Finally the triangulation has further lowered validity threats. Triangulation is the use of various methods to come up with conclusion. This helps "avoid systematic bias." Triangulation does not ensure

your validity threats to go down because you may still come to the same misleading conclusion, but it does offer the possibility (Maxwell, 1996).

4.7 Summary

Clearly, there is a very wide range of research methods that have benefited our team and our project. It was advantageous for us to have such flexibility in how we conducted our research. We understand that there are positives and negatives to each method, but we chose the most effective methods we could to conduct our research. We recognized the importance of keeping our sponsor fully aware of our progress and data to ensure we were staying within the boundaries of their goals and ours. At the conclusion of our project, we have an extensive foundation of our research that has enabled us to make the best recommendations possible to our sponsor. It is important to acknowledge and point out the methods used in our study in order to offer insight on the process that lead us to our results and ultimately our conclusions.

5.0 RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Through the use of all the methods mentioned in the previous chapter we were able to critically analyze the heritage in Sheung Wan and Central and come to several conclusions. It is difficult to come to definitive conclusions about heritage due to its qualitative and expansive nature. While we did use some quantitative data, the vast majority of the data is qualitative. In order to fully understand the heritage of any area it is essential to experience it first-hand. It could take years before you fully grasp the core elements of an area's cultural make-up. We aim to provide the most direct and concise picture of the heritage in Sheung Wan and Central given the limited time we had to research. We would like to identify what changes in this heritage are occurring and which ones could be beneficial or detrimental. Once the pros and cons of the shift in heritage are identified, we hope to offer viable solution in order to slow or stop these detrimental cultural changes.

5.2 Field Work

When facing the task of identifying the heritage in Sheung Wan and Central, we quickly noticed that the two districts are not so cut and dry when it comes to their heritage. Both Central and Sheung Wan have many regions that vary in heritage. Some areas are known for selling funeral products while other areas are better known for selling other products such as dry fish. The heritage and feel of an area can change in just one block; this is how diverse heritage is in these two districts.

From conducting our covert observations, which consisted of our team walking around to get a sense of the two districts, we began to notice some trends. One of the main trends that we began to notice is the gradual change from traditional areas to more westernized areas. Starting in the western most part of Sheung Wan and moving towards the eastern region of Central; the heritage goes from being very traditional to nearly not traditional at all. A few things that lead us to feel this way consisted of the different types of shops. Central tended to have more cosmopolitan shops such as Ben and Jerry's and hookah bars. Sheung Wan had more traditional shops such as dry fish shops and antique shops. The figures below depict the difference between Central and Sheung Wan. Figure 8 was taken on Bonham Street West, located in Sheung Wan. Figure 9 was taken at the end of Gage Street going east, located in Central.

Figure 8: Dried Fish Shops



Figure 9: Cosmopolitan Eateries



The demographics of the people shopping in each of the areas were also a big influence on this feeling of traditional versus cosmopolitan influence in each area. The people that shopped in Sheung Wan tended to be locals, and most of the signs for advertisement and pricing were only in Cantonese. On the other hand, the advertisement and pricing signs in Central were mostly in English and there were many more westerners shopping in this area. This can also be seen in the figures above.

Another thing we quickly came to realize was the trend of clustering similar shops in one area. There are whole streets full with dry fish shops and other streets completely full of antique shops. A few of the dried fish streets include Bonham Strand West, Ko Shing Street, and parts of Des Voeux Road West. All though most of the dry fish shops are locate in this area, there are still a few other dry fish shops that are sporadically locate in other parts of Sheung Wan and Central. Upper Lascar Row and parts of Hollywood Road, Queen’s Road Central and Lok Ku Road are full of antique shops. An image from Upper Lascar Row is depicted in Figure 10 below.



Figure 10: Gentrified antique shop next to traditional stand

Within these streets we began to notice some trends and patterns. We began to notice gentrification in these areas. Many times the gentrification process is thought to have a negative connotation, but in reality not all gentrification is bad. The definition that The Oxford Dictionary of English gives for “gentrify” is “renovate and improve (a house or district) so that it conforms to middle-class taste” (Stevenson 2010). Some positive examples of gentrification we encountered were the layout of different shops that sold the same products. If you take a look at Figure 8 again, you can see the difference between the middle shop and the shops on either side. In the example on your right both the stand on the street and the store behind the stand advertise selling antiques. This is a prime example of how gentrification can have little to no effect on the heritage of an area. In this example the shops are adjusting to the modernization of Hong Kong. An example where gentrification had unforeseen consequences is given later in this chapter when we talk about the Sheung Wan Market.

Many restaurants and bars were also clustered in the same general area. When walking through both districts the buildings seemed to be lower the farther you moved from Central towards Sheung Wan. With all the activity happening on the ground floor, it was often difficult to realize what was going on in

the upper floors. The quieter and more traditional areas had more of a residential feel to the upper floors. It was common to see resident's laundry hanging out to dry from windows. While in the more westernized areas, the upper floors tended to be more geared towards offices and even if there were residential areas you did not see much laundry hanging from their windows. The more cosmopolitan an area seemed to be the more traffic there tended to be. In the more traditional areas traffic was mostly caused by the trucks that came to unload goods for the stores such as dried fish.

The traffic and the shopping activity also contributed to the level of noise in the streets, the more traffic and shopping in an area the noisier it tended to be. Our senses were stimulated in many ways while doing a walkthrough of these areas. We encountered a variety of smells as well as visuals. During our overt observations we began to write down the different sensory stimulations we came across and in what areas we came across them.

When conducting our overt observations we noted which establishments were considered to be traditional and which establishments were considered westernized. A list of each is given in Appendix 1 and 2, respectively. While walking around different areas we began to jot down the patterns we noticed.



Figure 11: Fish drying on a construction rail

On streets such as Bonham Strand and Ko Shing Street, where the shops are so prevalent, the smell of fish is very strong. It can be described as a strong, pungent fish smell that can be overwhelming after several minutes of exposure to it. We found it particularly surprising how the shop owners used everything they could to their advantage. Figure 11 above exemplifies how these shop owners used left over construction rails to dry their fish out on the street. The noise level in the dry fish region is moderate, it is not completely quiet but it's not obnoxiously noisy. Visually the retail shops tend to focus more on appealing their customers, while the wholesale shops do not put as much effort in their appearance. Some examples are that most wholesale shops kept all their merchandise in big white sack, while the retail shops would have more elaborate wrappings for individual products especially delicacy such as shark fin. Big light signs are not really utilized to advertise their shops. This is can most likely be attributed to the fact that most dry fish shops close around five or six in the evening. The buildings in this area seem to be lower in height and used more as residential buildings on the upper floors. The closer you go towards Central or towards the bay, the taller the buildings get.

As we move along Wing Lok Street towards Central we came across the Sheung Wan Market. The Sheung Wan Market is an indoor market that sells fresh produce, meat, and poultry, and has a cafeteria on the top floor. From the outside it seems like a relatively modern building. As soon as we

entered we could instantly smell the scent of raw meat and chicken. As we walked around we noticed the importance of freshness to the locals. There is live fish kept in tanks and bins for customers to take their pick. Live chickens can also be found there and are being killed on the spot for sale that same day. As for the vegetables, the workers at each stand would water them every now and then to make them appear fresh. The first floor is where the fish and poultry are sold; meat and produce can be found on the second floor. A few things that stood out to us were the sanitation of the area. Blood could easily be found on the floors of the second level. Workers also tended to leave meat on the floor instead of hanging it or placing it on a counter. After several minutes in this market the smell of raw meat can become nauseating, poor ventilation also adds to this effect.

A meeting with our sponsor further enhanced our knowledge of the market. The Sheung Wan Market used to be out doors but because of government intervention it got moved into the building that it is currently in. The justification of making this move is that it would make the market cleaner. Many people were not happy with this move and preferred the outdoor market because there was less regulations and it was more accessible. Numerous things resulted from the movement of this market from outdoors to indoors. The amount of stand owners decreased due to the increase in regulation. One evident example is the selling of fresh poultry. We only came across one stand that sold freshly slaughtered chicken; when the market was on the street there was many vendors that sold freshly killed chicken. Another factor that contributed to the decrease in the selling of freshly killed chicken was the outbreak of the avian flu. Countless restrictions were applied to stands having live chickens during the outbreak. By moving the market inside a part of local heritage was lost, instead of having a booming street full of activity and human interaction, there is now a building that is fairly calm when it comes to transactions and the sanitary issue was not really fixed but more so hidden from plain sight.

Alternative solutions to moving the market inside consist of enhancing the conditions for hawkers on the streets. For example the government could provide them with electricity or make it more accessible. Outdoor markets offer good ventilation and allow for easy and quick cleaning because it is as simple as washing the street down with water and letting the drains do the rest of the work. Outdoor markets are a significant part of Hong Kong's heritage and history, but they are slowly disappearing. Currently there are only a handful of outdoor markets left in Hong Kong and they have been on the decline lately (Ma, 2013).



Figure 12: Sheung Wan market



Figure 13: Gage Street market

In this case gentrification took a toll on the local heritage of Sheung Wan by taking away the outdoor markets. Above you can see a comparison between the outdoor market on Gage Street and the indoor market in Sheung Wan. Instead of moving the Gage Street Market into a building the Urban Renewal Authority has helped enhance the stands by offering easier access to electricity and running water. Both pictures were taken during the peak business time for both markets, which is from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Gage Street Market seems to be livelier and have more customers, while the Sheung Wan Market looks calmer with fewer customers.

The next area we analyzed was on Wing Lok Street heading towards Central. From Sheung Wan market all the way down to the intersection of Wing Lok and Hillier Streets; the street is full of restaurants and eateries. Most of the eateries in this region are traditionally Chinese and sell things such as beef brisket and dim sum. Most meals are inexpensive and start at only 20 Hong Kong dollars. This area is always full of people but more so between the hours of 12-2 p.m. This is due to the fact that people tend to have their lunch break within this period of time. Figure 14 below depicts Hillier Street; this was taken slightly before noon. All the restaurants are traditional and the signs are all in Cantonese. There seems to be a good amount of activity in the area as well.



Figure 14: Hillier Street eateries

When we continued down Wing Lok we noticed the prevalence of medicine shops. The medicine shops sell a mix of both traditional Chinese medicines and modern prescription drugs. Two forms of traditional medicine that stood out were the Lingzhi mushroom and the cordyceps sinensis. Both have been used for many years; some say that the use of Lingzhi mushroom helps fight cancer, and it has been used for over 40,000 years (Anonymous 15).

When we walked east on Hollywood street from Man Mo Temple, we noticed an overwhelming influence of cosmopolitan shops. Many cafés line Hollywood Road in this general direction. If you continue along this same path, just a block north is the Gage Street market. At the Gage Street market you can find fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, fresh meat, fresh fish, as well as a few flower and clothing stands. This market is one of three remaining fresh fruit markets in Hong Kong (Ma, 2013). This market is like an oasis of heritage because it is located in a very westernized part of Central. A picture of the Gage Street market can be seen above in Figure 13. As soon as you reach either end of Gage Street, you can easily spot a cosmopolitan shop. On one end you have a whole corner consisting of a Turkish restaurant,

an Australian Restaurant, a hookah bar, a Middle Eastern rug shop, an American ice cream shop and a bar. A picture of this corner can also be seen in Figure 9. On the other end there is a cosmopolitan clothing store. Many chain stores such as Ben and Jerry's, 7 Eleven and Mr. Bing can be found in this area. This area is also full of high rise buildings serving more as offices than residence.

To summarize our walk through, if you move from east to west starting in Central, the feeling gradually goes from very cosmopolitan to very traditional. From walking around these two districts we noticed that the cosmopolitan aspects of Central are spreading towards Sheung Wan.

5.3 Surveying

Once we concluded our walk through and analyzed our observation notes we decided to break up our study area into three different regions. We decided to break them up into a cosmopolitan region, a traditional region and a region that had a balanced mix of cosmopolitan and traditional influence. In order to sub-divide the two districts we took into consideration the feel we got from each of the areas and the businesses located in it. A list of the streets can be found in Appendix 3 through Appendix 5. Our goal was to survey the busiest streets in each of the regions while also taking into consideration our limited time. For these streets we counted how many cosmopolitan and traditional shops were located on them, we then formulated pie graphs for each of the sections to give a more visual representation of our numbers. The tables can be seen below in Figures 15-17.

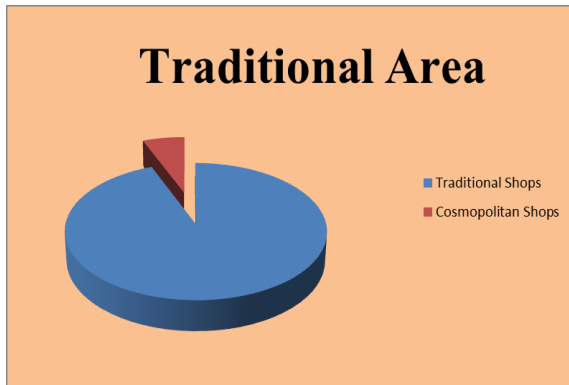


Figure 15: Traditional area

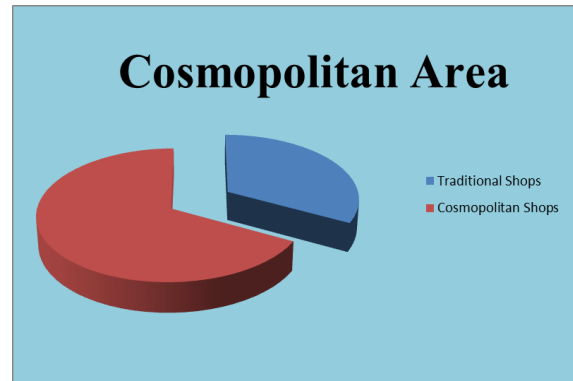


Figure 16: Cosmopolitan Area

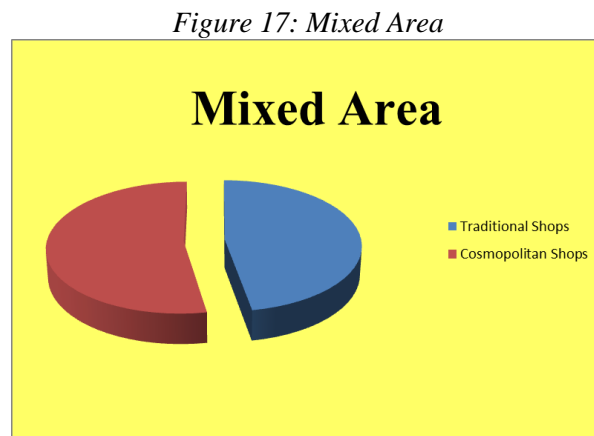


Figure 17: Mixed Area

The background colours of each pie graph correspond to the respective areas in the map of our focus region. By using our field research experience and by surveying we were able to come up with the map below that we referenced earlier in the paper, shown again in Figure 18.

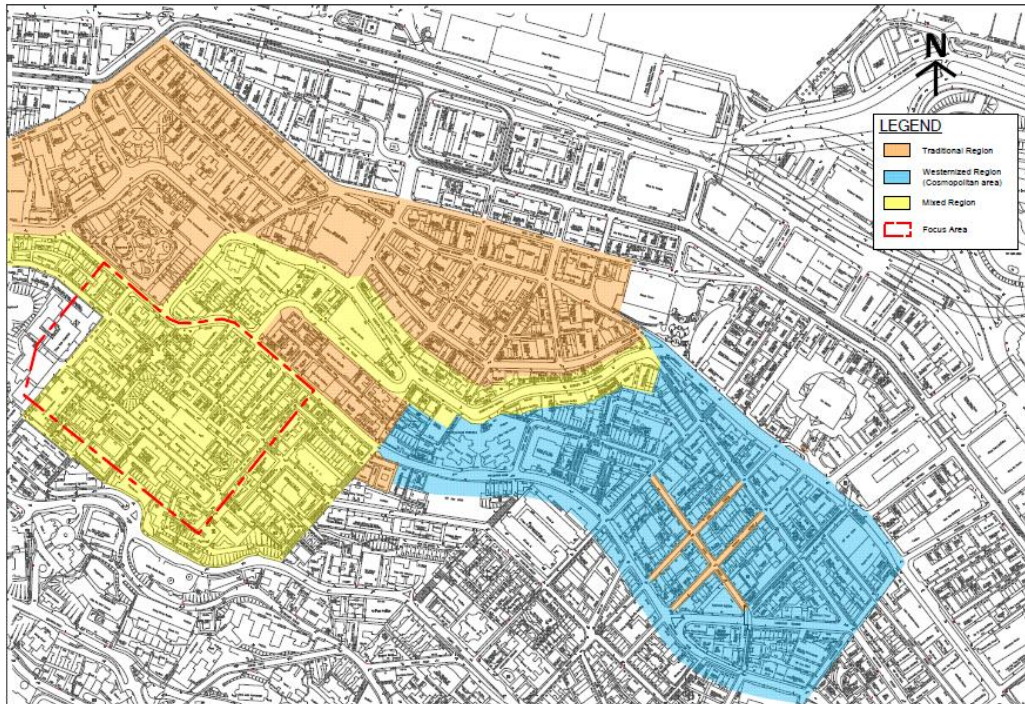


Figure 18: Map of Project Focus Area

We decided to focus on the area enclosed in the red because it seemed to be the most dynamic and prone to change. While researching the Sheung Wan area we came across news articles that named our focus area as “PoHo”. This is a variation of SoHo; the reasoning behind this nickname is due to its rapid come up in the social scene of the area (Uttam, 2012). Several local shop owners refer to it as “PoHo” as well; they say it is the place to be (Anonymous 13). PoHo stems from a combination of Po Hing Fong Street and SoHo. The three most prevalent types of shops that are beginning to sprout in our study area are galleries, cafes, and design stores. Design stores sell a variety of things such as clothing, home décor, and artwork. Some prevalent traditional shops in the mixed area are, funeral shops, coffin shops, antique shops, frame shops and printing shops.

A way some businesses in the mixed area are adjusting to change is simply by changing the name of their businesses or delving into new endeavors. An example of this is that some of the antique shops have labeled their shops as galleries. For some shops, like the coffin and funeral shops, it is more difficult to make such adjustments.

5.4 Interviews

The guideline we used to structure our interviews can be found in Appendix 9. The style of each of the interviews was dependent on the reactivity and response of each of the participants. Hong Kong is a

very fast moving city where people are very busy, and thus sometimes some shop owners did not have too much free time to talk. On the other hand some of the shop owners offered to schedule interviews, which typically lasted about an hour.

From a total of 94 establishments in our study area we were able to get feedback from 18, which consist of about one fifth of the establishments. We categorized ten of the shops as cosmopolitan while the other eight were categorized as traditional. From the ten cosmopolitan shops that we interviewed only two had local owners, one of which only a co-owner. Several of the cosmopolitan shop owners viewed Hong Kong as an ideal place to start up a business. Geographically it is in a prime position to access many countries in Asia. They also viewed Hong Kong as a “stepping stone” to mainland China (Anonymous 7). Some have plans to branch out in the future to Beijing, while others are already doing business in mainland. We found that the traditional shop

A supporting reason behind the reasoning of our group to choose our study area has to do with the recent and constant change that it is undergoing. The first gallery has only been in the area for less than six years while the first café has only been in the area for less than three years. Both traditional and cosmopolitan shop owners agree that the area has undergone a lot of change in the past two to three years (Anonymous 1). From all of the cosmopolitan shop owners that we had the chance to talk to, the time that they had in the area ranged from five years to only three months. Most of them were in the two to three year range. In contrast the traditional shops range anywhere from two years to over forty years. Some of the traditional shop owners have been handed the business from their parents to continue with it.

In more recent years, the children of these shop owners are not as interested to keep the business going so the shops are liquidated when the owners retire (Anonymous 3). This lack of continuing traditional businesses can also affect the heritage of an area. Our study area used to be famous for the amount of funeral and coffin shops, but now there is only a handful left. In Figure 19 below you can see the contrast between the coffin shop and a cosmopolitan restaurant.



Figure 19: Traditional coffin shop next to cosmopolitan eatery

The shift in the type of businesses and heritage cannot solely be blamed on one thing. There are many factors that contribute to the change of the area. Things that could directly influence the change in heritage and that could be considered push factors include the lack of interest to continue the business from the shop owners family, cosmopolitan shops attract more cosmopolitan shops, gentrification, and the demand for goods from the traditional shops has decreased. The traditional shop owners openly expressed their concerns about how the business for shops selling wooden frames and antiques is moving more to mainland China (Anonymous 10 and 3).

We did take a look at the rent prices in the area to see if we could see any trend and over all we did notice that prices had an upwards trend. While some may see rising rent prices as a reason for cultural change, they are only one of the push factors. Push factors are factors that encourage people to migrate from where they are from (Ma, 2013). In our case we found that both the traditional shop owners and cosmopolitan shop owners are dealing with push factors. The traditional shop owners are getting pushed out of the our study area located in Sheung Wan and we found that many of the cosmopolitan shop owners used to be in Central in the SoHo area but they also came across push factors. The cosmopolitan shops are causing rent prices to go up, sometimes even doubling once the lease has expired (Anonymous 7).

Some of the cosmopolitan shops underwent the same factors in SoHo. Many of the streets in SoHo are owned by only three people. The three people that do own these streets can thus control the prices of rent by talking to each other and agreeing on different price points. In a way they sometimes gamble by driving the price of rent up so high. They are willing to leave spaces empty for a period of time until someone comes along and decides to pay the new price.



Figure 20: Bustling Lan Kwai Fong

An example that was given to us by one of the shop owners had to do with a bar located in Lan Kwai Fong. Lan Kwai Fong is known as the center of night life in Hong Kong. In Figure 20 you can see a picture of Lan Kwai Fong at night, lined with bars and filled with many young expatriates. There is a club that paid 600,000 Hong Kong dollars a month but once their lease ran out the landlords doubled the price of rent. The owners of the nightclub refused to pay that much money and closed the club. The space spent a few months empty until the same owners came back offering 800,000 Hong Kong dollars a month. The landlord accepted the offer and the club reopened under a different name (Anonymous 7). Another

example consists of a traditional Vietnamese food restaurant located off one of the side streets in Lan Kwai Fong. This restaurant has been in the area for over fourteen years and is now most likely shutting down. Their landlord is going to double their rent once their lease runs out. The landlord told the restaurant owners that he had a long queue of bar owners that have given him offers for this space. If there was not such a demand for space in this area then rent prices wouldn't go up. This example demonstrates how the type of business can also be a push factor. Many restaurants are not able to pay the rent due to the mark up of their food; it simply is not high enough. Conversely the mark up for a drink at a bar is much greater. Without such high mark ups bars and clubs would not be able to afford these spaces either (Ma, 2013).

Similar situations are occurring in our study area now. This can be seen as a supply and demand problem. Since the demand for an open space is increasing, the equilibrium market price will also increase. In a free market the equilibrium price point is located where the demand curve and supply curve intersect. Hong Kong is currently considered to have the freest market in the world, and it has held the first place for the past 18 years ("HK ranked", 2013). Below in Figure 21 it is shown how the increase shift of demand causes the new equilibrium price point to go up. In real life it is difficult to model supply and demand curves in such a simple manner.

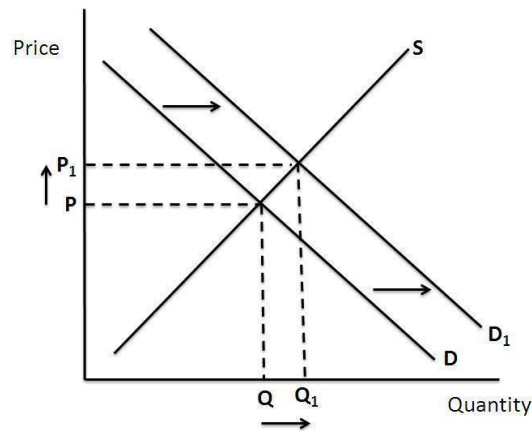


Figure 21: Supply and Demand curves demonstrating a shift in demand (2011)

This is why the prices that the landlords set fluctuate so much; they are simply looking for the equilibrium price point. If the price is set too high not as many people will be willing to rent the space out. Even though the owners could get in theory get someone to rent their space for a higher price than the equilibrium price, this is a risk they take of losing money. One way they can lose money is through leaving the space empty, this is an opportunity cost that some of the owners can take because they own multiple spaces (Smith, 2013). This economic analysis helps us illustrate the reasoning behind the rising price and how they are not the problem but more so the result from an even deeper core problem.

The pull factors for the cosmopolitan shops to Sheung Wan are similar to the push factors that the traditional shops have. For the cosmopolitan shops the rising prices in our study area are more affordable to them than they are to the traditional shop due to the products they sell. These higher prices in our study area are significantly lower than the prices in SoHo according to many of the cosmopolitan shop owners

we talked to. 6 out of the ten mentioned to us how they looked in to opening up their businesses in SoHo but that the rent prices that the landlords purposed were too high. Another pull factor for the current cosmopolitan shops is the general feel of the area. Our focus area has a unique quiet feel to it. While it is a very quiet place a lot of business still occurs in the area (Anonymous 1).

5.5 Critical Aspects

While conducting our researche we came across a few key aspects that we thought should be conserved to maintain the local heritage of our focus area. One of the key aspects is the preservation of historically relevant sites such as temples, museums, schools and hospitals. Our focus area is located where the first Chinese settlements were started on Hong Kong Island, so there is a lot of history in it (Ma, 2013). Historical sites are a key component to the heritage in the area because they were some of the first cultural characteristics that Hong Kong heritage was linked to. They offer a reminder to the people of the roots of traditional culture in Hong Kong as well as how Hong Kong has evolved over the years. These historical spots add a unique twist to Hong Kong heritage.

The uniqueness and authenticity of the area should also be preserved. In our focus area many of the stores seemed to be very authentic and unique. Even the cosmopolitan shops are unique from one another. An example is that of the two cafes in our area, they both sell coffee and pastries but they are very different. One coffee shop aims to have a very authentic Vienna café feel to his shop. He even attended Café School in Vienna to prepare to open his shop. He offers an array of authentic recipes that have been used for over a century. His attention to detail is incredible; he even has lamps from the early 1900's that enhance that traditional Vienna Café feel. The other coffee shop is aimed to be very modern and more of a French café. It also focuses much more on its bread rather than its coffee (Anonymous 7 and 12).



Figure 22: Po Hing Fong



Figure 23: Café Loisl

Above in Figures 22 and 23 you can see the contrasting coffee shops. These are both within a block from each other and even though they sell similar products, they are each unique and different from one another. Examples of traditional shops that are unique to our area are antique shops, dried fish shops, Chinese sausage processing shops and frame shops. The business for antiques used to be booming in

Hong Kong but as of recently has been declining (Anonymous 3). Dried fish shops that sell local delicacies such as shark fin are also very unique to our area. While a few dried fish shops can be found all over Hong Kong, they are not as abundant as in Sheung Wan.

The language most prevalent in Sheung Wan seemed to be Cantonese, while the language that is more prevalent in Central seems to be English. We noticed not only more people talking English in Central but also most of the signs were completely in English. We think that conserving the Cantonese language is important. We acknowledge that some shops might be trying to adjust to the increasing number of expatriates but by changing shop signs from Cantonese to English some of the culture is lost. Some of the best and most traditional places we have experienced have had limited to no English. Language is such a big part of culture and the heritage of an area, it is one of the most basic and superficial forms of describing the local color of an area.

Along with the language we noticed that the way people interacted was also different between the two districts. In Central where there tended to be more chain stores and everything seemed to be much faster pace, the interactions between people seemed to be very superficial and meaningless. It is pure business and not personal at all. In the more traditional areas in Sheung Wan and in our study area the interactions seemed to be much more personal and real. The interactions had a very human feel to them and are genuine. We were able to walk into most of the shops in our focus area and ask for the owners of the shops. Not only were we able to find the owners of the shops but they were very open to talking to anyone that came in as well. In Figure 24 you can see a traditional shop owner that we had the opportunity to talk to. She offered us a seat while she talked to us. While we were talking she went about her business sorting a certain type of root used for teas. She was very personable and even offered us to drop by more often. If the owners were not around the people working would be educated about the business and were able to give us a lot of information about the shop. The workers often knew the customers on a first name basis. In Soho we were not able to talk to any of the owners and the workers were not too informed about the business they worked for. These personal interactions add a human aspect to business and are a major part in the traditional heritage of the area.



Figure 24: Traditional shop owner sorting roots

This type of interaction has led our focus area to develop a sense of community. Most of the shop owners know each other in the area and talk to each other often. They even put on a community event around Christmas time where they all come together for dinner. They offer each other discounts and

watch out for each other (Anonymous 1). They do not seem to focus on competing against each other but instead focus on their shops. The sense of community is prevalent even in our focus area where about half of the shops are cosmopolitan. This sense of community is essential to maintain such human interactions that were previously mentioned. The sense of community is so strong in Sheung wan and our focus area that it is almost family-like.



Figure 25: Traditional family-style lunch on Wing Lok Terrace

Finally the family focus in the more traditional areas is important to preserve. Businesses seemed to be more geared towards family in the more traditional areas opposed to the cosmopolitan areas. Businesses such as bars and cafes concentrate on gatherings among friends and are more suitable for individual interactions. Many of the traditional shops are family owned and are geared to be more suitable for families. We also noticed that many of the cosmopolitan shops remained opened through Chinese New Year's, which is known to be the biggest Chinese holiday and very family oriented. On the other hand all of the traditional shops closed for the New Year, some even for up to two weeks. Above, Figure 25 illustrates a traditional family-style Chinese New Year lunch that took place on Wing Lok Terrace.

5.6 Gentrification Case Studies

In order to develop strong recommendations for the Urban Renewal Authority, we examined numerous case studies from around the world to explore gentrification and its international impact. We also were able to see how a country handled the gentrification, such as if the area became extremely over-gentrified or if the government established a plan to monitor the development of the gentrification. The following case studies are the ones we found most relevant to our focus area in Hong Kong and serve as background information on global gentrification cases.

Macau, China

Much like Hong Kong, Macau developed first as a colony under foreign rule before reverting back to Chinese sovereignty. Initially, its vibrancy began as a Portuguese trading post before becoming an official Portuguese colony under the Sino-Portuguese Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1887 ("Macau

history”). After many years of occupation, the cultural revolution of mainland China sparked a riot on Macau in 1966. The people’s dissatisfaction with the Portuguese government was also a main underlying factor. As a result of this riot, a more implicit recognition of the Chinese identity was developed along with equal treatment of the Chinese.

In 1974, the Portuguese government chose to relinquish control over all of its overseas colonies, and in 1976, Macau was redefined as a “Chinese territory under Portuguese administration” (“Macau history”). In April 1897, “the Joint Declaration of the Government of the People’s Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Portugal on the Question of Macau” was signed (“History of Macau”). Sovereignty was finally returned to China in 1999, with Macau operating as a Special Administrative Region (“U.S. Relations”, 2012). Like Hong Kong, Macau currently operates under “One Country, Two Systems” until at least 2049, 50 years after its reversion to China.

Not only historically relevant to Hong Kong, the prominent gentrification of Macau can also be used as a comparison point for the progression of gentrification within Hong Kong. Culturally, however, all has been lost on Macau. Indeed, the gentrification of Rua des Paulo can be compared almost directly to that occurring along Hollywood Road in Hong Kong (“Macau”). Long gone is the glorified colonial city, a peaceful and beautiful resort town, and in its place stands a tourist hotspot rife with ritzy casinos and glamorous hotels (Poon, 2007).

Even at the fast pace that Hong Kong seems to be progressing, Macau seems to have transformed almost overnight into a cosmopolitan area without a hint of its heritage, aside from the crumbling façade of St. Paul’s church and the Camoes Garden. These precious landmarks are seemingly the only remaining signs that Macau was ever an area other than bustling with tourists and gamblers. The cherished tranquility of traditional Macau has slipped away, never to be reclaimed (Poon). If allowed to progress at its current rate, the gentrification within Hong Kong will reach the same indistinct, cosmopolitan feel as that on Macau.

Singapore

Singapore has many similarities to Hong Kong that make it an ideal point of comparison. Much like Hong Kong, Singapore is a city-state island around smaller islands in south-east Asia. It is technically advanced, and is now one of the most prosperous areas in the world. It is an applicable case study because it was also previously occupied by Britain. Currently, Chinese compose over 75% of the population, but there are also Malays, Indians, and many foreign workers who make up the rest. Singapore is also comparable to Hong Kong in its role as one of Asia’s economic “tigers”.



Figure 22: Landscape of Singapore (“Rollite rollscreens”, 2011)

Even looking past the similar cultural composition, Singapore’s urban development is also focused on vertical development, as depicted in Figure 22. Much research conducted has proved that a neighborhood is the basis for heritage, with the residents sharing their values and way of life (Yuen). Singapore is focusing on preserving this heritage, which fell to the wayside while it focused on economics but is becoming increasingly more important to its citizens now that they have established their place economically (Yuen). Heritage is what gives an area its identity, an aspect Singapore is focusing on trying to restore now.

Singapore is using the input of its citizens as the means for improvement (Yuen). Its citizens are defining the critical aspects of heritage that they would like to preserve. The public is also being called on to brainstorm ways to preserve these historical aspects of Singapore (Joan, 2012). Various conservation programs are also being encouraged to participate in the planning (Joan). In this way, Singapore is ensuring that the people remain true to their identities that they have established within their communities.

Singapore quickly transformed from a British colonial port into a modern city, and now aims to become a world-renowned city. As is true in Hong Kong, Singapore has destroyed many of the historical monuments so as to make way for urban modernization. One such monument was its oldest boys’ school, Raffles Institution. Built in 1837-41, it was torn down and replaced with Singapore’s tallest hotel and mega-shopping mall, Raffles City, in 1986 (Chan). Many other historical buildings have been demolished to make room for towering residential buildings built for a high density population. However, with the establishment of Singapore in the world’s economy, the demand for cultural preservation rather than westernization is prominent throughout the city-state.

Since 1971, Singapore has used an established blueprint of its development, known as The Concept Plan (Yuen). With revisions every ten years, The Concept Plan establishes the focal points of the preservation within the city-state. While the original focus was on distinctive relics, such as those within churches, the plan is evolving into one that brings every day relics into play. This is where the input of its citizens is taken into account. Area communities brainstorm strategies to identify conservation methods during the development of Hong Kong. They want to preserve many aspects, such as the old world charm

of familiar neighborhoods, the unique character and identity of each neighborhood, and expansion of current and future community social activities (Yuen). The challenge that arises from this is that Singapore is encountering the same real estate issues as those found in Hong Kong, and therefore needs to overcome the struggle between preservation and vertical urban development so they can compensate for the growing population.

Covent Garden, London

At the end of the 1960s and start of the 1970s, there were numerous urban renewal proposals centered around Covent Garden in Central London. Rather than serving as an enhancement of the character of the region, the proposals were to be a detriment to its inhabitants, mostly lower to middle class residents and small shopkeepers. The residents came together in resistance to the many plans, and as a result of their efforts, the Covent Garden Action Plan was created in 1978. This served to transform the area into a conservation space at the time of its inception, highlighting the preservation of its architectural heritage. However, as the years drew further into the 1980s, the district drew in an influx of tourism, which naturally stimulated the gentrification of the area. Covent Garden succumbed to the gentrification and eventually lost its authenticity that the inhabitants had tried to preserve (Sampaio, 2007). The area impacted in London is quite similar to our focus area, so this serves as a comparable example to draw conclusions from regarding where its development is heading in the future.

SoHo, New York

SoHo, New York is located “South of Houston Street” in Manhattan, and carries many similarities to Covent Garden in terms of noteworthy industrial architectural heritage. This area was also the focal point for many urban renewal projects at the same time as Covent Garden, threatening its dynamic urban trajectory. The proposals directly caused a mass migration of numerous commercial enterprises out of the area, leaving open warehouses available for repurposing.

The gentrification in this area established a gradual foothold, beginning with pioneering alternative art galleries and lofts. As the area became more well-known, it attracted higher tourism and increasing property values. Eventually, those businesses that began the gentrification in the area moved away. They were replaced by high end art galleries and wealthier residents, leading to a steady influx of bars, restaurants, and cafés along with a still increasing inflow of tourists (Sampaio, 2007). Unlike in Covent Garden, there was not resident opposition to the proposals, and the gentrification occurred in both areas just the same. The fact that opposition from the residents did not make a difference in the long run is a strong indication that it is impossible to stop gentrification as it is a natural process, and therefore rules out that option for our focus area. SoHo, New York and Covent Garden, London are two strong comparison points that illustrate both sides of the spectrum with regards to community involvement, but the same conclusion for each region.

Pelourinho, Brazil

Designated as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the renewal plans for Pelourinho led to much controversy. Salvador da Bahia's historic center, its inhabitants were mainly lower class families, and the area as a whole was associated with prostitution and delinquency. The revitalization proposal was outlined in 1991. The area contained many historic buildings that the proposal aimed to restore and improve, along with various public spaces. This project would ultimately enhance the urban infrastructure of Pelourinho, and was necessary to tackle the rapid decline of the physical landscape, and economic and social states of the region (Sampaio, 2007).

The plan was initiated in 1992 within the oldest area, Maciel. This area contained a vast amount of buildings with proposed remodeling. However, the inhabitants of the area were not taken into account with the development of the plans for the region, so the project resulted in the displacement of the residents. While they were compensated for the trouble, no efforts were made to develop alternative housing for them, and thus they were forced to move away (Sampaio).

This left the area open for industry, and was quickly overtaken by commercialism and tourism, leading to the complete deterioration of the traditions of the area. The lack of regard for maintenance of the everyday life of residents within the area caused much controversy over the project. Rather than enhancing the heritage of the region, the project replaced the history with commercialism, converting 91% of the buildings into marketable space and leaving only 9% as residential units (Sampaio). The revitalization of Pelourinho became a convenience project, rather than one aimed at restoration. This case study is very useful to analyze when making recommendations regarding gentrification as it involves designated an area as a World Heritage Site, which would be a potential option for our focus area.

Cape Town, South Africa

Though not a dilapidated or run-down area that so typically calls for gentrification, Cape Town is the center of many changes that call for establishing a balance between heritage and development. Known and promoted for century-old traditions, including vibrant minstrels and Muslim calls to prayer, this region is full of unique heritage and the feel of authenticity is advertised in tourism guides. The inclusion of new small and medium-sized businesses promotes a robust economy, but larger development projects are also looming, and draw away from the community feel. In some areas, the gentrification is positively advancing housing to lodge more people in affordable accommodations, but in others can be seen forcing people out, like in Pelourinho. As the area is gentrified, there is a focus on ensuring that the public sector is working in conjunction with the property market to implement affordable housing strategies hand in hand with the other improvements (Fataar, 2012).

Cape Town's gentrification has also drawn in increased activity to the city. New businesses have created a hub for workplaces and a hotspot for the weekends. The public is working alongside the private sector to work with the gentrification, rather than against it. They are striving to generate an appeal to gentrification that enables Cape Town to reap the benefits and maintain its communities. In this way, they can work the inevitable gentrification into their plans for the development of Cape Town instead of being taken aback by its progression along the way. This allows them to establish guidelines to follow and involve the community in the urban planning in place of the government usurping redevelopment

(Fataar). This case study is important to stand as a contrast to Covent Garden, London, where community involvement had a short-lived impact. The major difference here is that rather than attempt to completely halt the gentrification, Cape Town developed a plan to work with it, allowing the process to be monitored and structured. There are many variables that could be considered within Hong Kong for them to develop a similar plan, and it would require extensive input from the inhabitants.

Over-gentrification in Cambridge, MA and Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Gentrification is a natural process that is ultimately impossible to prevent. Major issues arise mainly due to the over-gentrification of an area. One occurrence of this is in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Throughout the 1990s, a city ordinance mandated the prohibition of chain stores in and around Harvard Square. This enabled the enhancement of the local flavor of the area. Following the repeal of this law, however, commercialism struck the area, and it is now a snapshot of many other blocks around Boston. Though it still retains patches of the vibe given to the area from the local chess players and street musicians, it has ultimately become just another neighborhood rather than a unique space to experience (Fitch, 2009).

Even within Hong Kong, there are patches of over-gentrification. One example of this can be seen at the Star Street area of Wan Chai. This district has once been largely quiet and inaccessible, very similar to our study area. A “classic example of what not to do”, Wan Chai was quickly transformed into a commercial, westernized area. It is now overrun with new high-rise buildings and is the focus region for many big developers (DeWolf, 2011). The integrity of the area was lost alongside this development, to the point that “it now feels sterile” (DeWolf). This area is a clear demonstration of the impact of high-rise development and gentrification of a community.

5.7 Implications of Gentrification

Positive Effects

Gentrification is becoming integral to the fabric of many cities globally. Supporters of gentrification laud its benefits as it improves many facets of everyday life and indicates economic growth. The beautification of an area has a huge impact in numerous cases, with buildings and parks undergoing facelifts (Roos, 2011). In many cases, gentrification of an area leads to more homeowners rather than renters, offering the area more stability (Briney, 2009). Gentrification has also been tracked to lead to a decline in crime rates (Roos). The improvements lead to increased property value and demand, so there are fewer vacancies. This increase directly benefits the funding for local public schools (Roos). Moreover, the businesses drawn into the area also bring a strong customer base with them; the area is benefitted as a whole due to more people visiting the area and spending more money (Briney). In addition to the consumers drawn to the area, the job market increases with the influx of construction sites and new businesses. Neighborhoods experience a newfound diversity of inhabitants and cleaner, safer streets (Roos). However, not everyone agrees on the benefits of gentrification.

Negative Effects

There are two sides to every situation. The beautification leads to larger developments, and a loss of the authenticity that made the area unique, drawing away from any historical context that may remain in the area (Briney, 2009). The increase in property value also has a detrimental effect of many of the residents in gentrified areas; many inhabitants are low income who eventually cannot afford the area and are sometimes left with no backup housing option (Briney). Many critics support that the new arrivals to an area benefit from the gentrification at the expense of the current residents (Roos, 2011). Even retail chains undergo the same out-pricing and are eventually replaced with high end businesses that can afford higher rent prices. Gentrification has more than just physical effects on an area, and can eventually fuel racial and class tensions (Roos). The new inhabitants arrive with their own traditions and influence the area with their heritage, not only economically, but also socially marginalizing the previous residents of the area. Therefore, it is imperative to develop a balance between the two sides of gentrification.

5.8 Recommendations

The extensive global examples we researched, in addition to our personal observations, enabled us to develop a strong foundation to make recommendations to the Urban Renewal Authority. Each case study can be examined as a parable with a moral underpinning. It is important to focus on this project before no trace of the heritage remains, as seen in areas such as Macau, Wan Chai, and Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The basis on gentrification developed in Singapore is integral to our project. An important element highlighted in Singapore that we focused on in our project is the involvement of the population. The citizens need to contribute their own input in order to establish their own identity. The situation with Wing Lee Street is a perfect example of the necessity of public contribution. The participation of the population in the preservation efforts will also enable the Urban Renewal Authority to garner public support for their efforts, especially because the people will have a personal investment in the preservation efforts. Each individual involved will truly have an impact on the final project and the way that the Urban Renewal Authority decides to move forward with their efforts. In this way, the Urban Renewal Authority will be able to compensate for the delicate balance between cultural preservation and modernization.

The importance of public support is highlighted in numerous cases in addition to Singapore and Wing Lee Street. The community in Cape Town is coming together to establish necessary guidelines to monitor and bring the gentrification into their control, so that they have a plan to advance the city. It is vital to a community to recognize the inevitable impact of gentrification. As the inhabitants of Covent Garden learned, it is impossible to permanently halt gentrification; you can only delay its progression. The District Council plays a significant role in this process of slowing down gentrification through measures such as restricting liquor licenses; if the people appeal to them with an idea of what they want, the District Council will be better equipped to respond to public demand.

Another method of delaying or diverting the gentrification of our focus area would be to declare it a UNESCO World Heritage Site, like in Pelourinho, Brazil. This is not a foolproof plan, since the businesses looking to open within the area would simply find locations on the outskirts and, over the years, close in on the area. For example, if a specific building is declared a preservation area, it bears no impact on the building right next door to it. Heritage sites also draw in tourists, which in turn attracts commercial businesses looking to exploit the high trafficking throughout the area. Therefore, this method would simply deter businesses from our focus area and lead them to relocate somewhere else, which solves nothing.

Another option that is not particularly feasible due to the free market in Hong Kong would be working with the property market to ensure reliable and affordable pricing for the people there. Oftentimes, rents have been seen to soar to astronomical levels, drawing the lower income residents and businesses out as they are out-priced by larger corporations. Regulations can be established in the best interests of the people, rather than the best interests of the economic status of the area. If price ceilings are established, a wider range of people will be able to continue to afford to remain in our focus area rather than just the businesses that earn more money and can afford to pay more. Without regulation, areas can also experience the over-gentrification that is so prominent in Wan Chai and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Chain stores and large corporations will take over an area without any prohibitions against it, so the government can control the advancement and culturing of many areas with regulations for preservation, even just ones that restrict the height of new developments, like the ones that exist for The Peak or in Kowloon Tong (DeWolf).

Our recommendations can be summarized into four key points:

- Appeal to and work with the District Counsel to establish basic regulations
- Involve the community to get their opinions and support
- Declare the area a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Potentially establish price ceilings for rent in specific areas

First of all, it is important to involve the community. The inhabitants have the right to voice their opinion and work with policy makers to choose the critical aspects of an area to preserve so as to maintain their identity. Secondly, it is impossible to altogether to halt the gentrification, but rather the people and the District Council can work towards establishing guidelines to monitor and plan for its development. This could include implementing price ceilings or designating it a heritage site. However, the most important, and feasible, option is the impact the community can have on the area's preservation. If the people rally together to preserve an area, it stands a much stronger chance of success than one where the government is monitoring its progress.

Implementation

Drawing from case studies not only helps us to develop recommendations, but also enables us to use those examples as support for their actual enactment. There are numerous methods to use to involve the community. This includes simply surveying the residents or holding an open forum. Regardless of the method, solicit public feedback to brainstorm strategies to tackle urban redevelopment projects, such as

the proposed escalator on Pound Lane. Information provided to the residents needs to be detailed and precise to give them a proper understanding of the proposal and ensure public support.

City planners can then use this feedback to develop guidelines to monitor, not prevent, the advancement of the gentrification. These regulations should capture the critical aspects of the area to preserve, such as the sense of community and low rise buildings. Establishing these guidelines can also serve as the beginning of the process of encouraging government regulations that make them monitored under the law. Much like the protocols that restrict the height of buildings on The Peak or in Kowloon Tong, or the one prohibiting bars in residential areas, there can be a better fix on the property market. One that may benefit the area could be restrictions on the maximum allowable rent increases yearly, or advantages for the traditional businesses in the area, perhaps based on the business type or length of time in the area. There will never be a 100% satisfaction rate from everyone, but prioritizing the people and not the economic development could be a start.

5.9 Personal Experiences

Michael Guzman

Throughout my extensive research of my project I have come to my own conclusions. I have traveled to many places all over the United States from Texas and California to New York. Being of Mexican-American descent and having traveled to Mexico and Canada several times I consider my cultural knowledge to be rather developed. I have not had any other experience like Hong Kong but I do think that understanding different heritage helps me understand it a little more when it comes to Hong Kong.

To fully understand the heritage of an area I truly think that one must immerse oneself into the heritage for several years. There is a huge difference between growing up in an area to living in an area for three years. I tried to do my best to grasp as much of the heritage in the study areas as I could in order to give the most useful report I could.

In this report I found that while gentrification is often looked upon as negatively, it does not always have to be seen that way. If you improve conditions in an area while preserving the heritage in it then gentrification can be a very good thing. A perfect example was the one our sponsor, Michael Ma, gave us about air conditioning. Air conditioning is thought of almost as a necessity in the summer here in Hong Kong but people did not always have access to it. By simply enhancing conditions I think that heritage can remain unharmed.

I do not believe that the growth of new cosmopolitan areas can continue at the rate it is going. Eventually cosmopolitan shops will stop spreading because there won't be enough demand for such shops to continue investing in them. When this pattern will slow down though is a difficult question. I think that because of the diversity of the population in Hong Kong, it is good to have some areas that tailor to expats. Many foreign business people have lived in Hong Kong for many years and they need something that may remind them of home. I see it as almost like the many China town's that have sprouted in the United States. Boston is a city in the US that is very rich in history and heritage in yet there is a decent

sized China town located in it. The only problem with this comparison is that for the most part the number of expats that are coming to Hong Kong is increasing while the number of Chinese migrating to the US is not as great when taking into consideration the size of each of the areas.

When coming up with a solution I think that this problem must be seen more from social point of view. I think that the area that is designated for cosmopolitan shops should be contained in some sort of way, or at least the areas like Lan Kwai Fung should be definitely contained. While there may be many bars in Lan Kwai Fung, Soho, and Wan Chai, only a handful really get a significant amount of customers on a regular basis. I would not be surprised if bars and night clubs close often and new ones emerge in their spot. I was not in Hong Kong long enough to witness this occur, but this it is just a speculation.

To address our area more specifically, I believe that the balance that is currently in place is a good balance to have but I would not encourage more cosmopolitan shops to enter this area. I do not think our area would necessarily become another Soho and let alone anything near to what Lan Kwai Fung is but I do believe that it has the potential to change. The building of the new escalator in the area along with the new MTR station will have a direct effect on our study area. I think the fact that many people know what happened in Soho, both shop owners and the government, will encourage people with authority and power to be more involved to preserve the heritage. I think the more awareness is shed on the effects certain shops have on local heritage the more people will be concerned. Preserving culture is a very difficult task, especially in today's world. The world we live in today is becoming more and more connected. The idea of globalization is a thought that many people do not agree with but still participate in it without even realizing it. A lot of the music people listen to and movies people watch are the same all over the world. That being said I think it is important to maintain an identity within your neighborhood, regardless of where you are from.

Arianna Niro

From the moment we arrived in Hong Kong, it was apparent that I was the most sheltered out of the three of us in the group. Though I have travelled internationally, it has been limited to more commercial ventures in France, Italy, and on cruises. However, during any travel, both local and international, I have always delved into the heritage of an area with my family; this has encompassed various military forts and historical ruins. Therefore, while I am used to a more modern lifestyle, I have experienced firsthand culture from around the globe.

Coming to Hong Kong was an eye-opening experience for me, one that I did not foresee as such. There were certainly ups and downs along the way, but overall it has shaped me into a more open and adventurous person, willing to try new things. This was an important milestone for me personally to hit, so that I could allow myself to become immersed in the culture of our focus area, rather than be distracted by menial things, such as seeing chicken blood splattered on pavement like in the Sheung Wan and Gage Street markets. I would not taste food because of its appearance, and my mind was definitely closed to the idea of fully immersing myself in the culture here. Once I began broadening my mind, I could more clearly relate to the people who live and work in our focus area and understand the impact of the gentrification of the area.

During our first few days of the project, I honestly believed that it was going to be easy. I established my point of view right off the bat: gentrification is natural, so we should just let it happen since it's going to anyways. I strongly preferred the more cosmopolitan areas since this is the social aspect that I am most accustomed to. I am honestly relieved to say that my opinion is now completely altered after this experience. I have a strong familiarity with the history of the background and the cultural ties to specific aspects of the area, such as temples and residences. I was able to personally experience the community feel in this area and became familiar with a number of shopkeepers. I enjoyed going to it just to get away from the fast pace of the main roads and experience the quiet and relaxing atmosphere. Po Hing Fong became a favorite street of mine just to walk down since it was shady, saw limited vehicle traffic, and we became friendly with the shopkeepers there.

Our focus area truly feels like a small, residential community, and I can now understand the drive of people in the area to preserve these aspects of the heritage. It was also very interesting to me to experience various temples and light incense, and witness the number of people going to these temples every day. Initially, I also was drawn to the restaurants with English writing and menus I could understand, not only for the familiarity of the language but also for the reassurance that I knew exactly what I was ordering. I can now value the traditional restaurants frequented by the locals of the area and not the westernized businesses, and am more willing to try different foods.

This area is unique to others I have experienced within Hong Kong. Many of the other regions are very cosmopolitan and have no individuality to them. You see the same shops repeating themselves on many different city blocks, whereas in Sheung Wan, no two stores are alike. The unique essence of this area is one that is beginning to rapidly slip away as traditional shops are out-priced or the real estate is simply sold to the highest bidder after a Chinese family member's passing. Sheung Wan is a distinctive little town of its own within the confines of the city-state, and I would be sad to see it turn into another area like SoHo. I am grateful now to have had the opportunity to complete this project so that our findings can enable others to effect change within the area and slow down the gentrification so that its original heritage does not disappear overnight.

Anqi Tong

During our two months research, we walked everywhere in the Central and Sheung Wan districts. We talked to the shop owners and local residences, and tasted the local food; we also witnessed dynamic changes in our study area. I have a lot of feelings. And I would like to talk about my experience to this research project and my own opinions.

I grew up in Shenzhen, Mainland China which is the nearest city to Hong Kong. I went study abroad to the United States four years ago. Since my Chinese culture upbringing and experience of traveling to the major cities in the United States, Canada, Australia and several European countries like Germany, Austria, Greece and etc., I am sensitive to culture and urban structures in Hong Kong.

In the two months observation, I found Central, where skyscrapers, shopping malls and bars are erected, is very busy and cosmopolitan, while Sheung Wan, where dry seafood and Chinese medicine gathering sites, antique shops, temples and new coming westernized shops like cafés are located, is rich

with Chinese tradition and low key. However different kinds of changes are happening in Sheung Wan now. Numerous westernized shops like café and galleries merged in our study area. These at a very quick pace happened in front of me. It is a fantastic feeling for me to walk up hills from the Hollywood Road, passing by traditional antique shops and temples to the galleries and European-style cafés on the trace of history. I enjoy the quietness and views along the way. In my view, the area now has a very good balance of the amount of traditional shops and westernized shops. However, with the proposal of building an escalator in Pound Lane, I have the same concern as some shop owners we have talked to that it will become another SOHO---full of westernized shops, busy and noisy. I am also concerned that it will cover the trace of history in the area. I think the history trace, the meeting of different cultures and quietness in this area, is the treasure in Hong Kong.

It seems that after all this comes the question “How to preserve these treasures?” In my point of view, I totally agree with the regulation being strict on releasing the liquor license in our study area. These will impose restriction on human behavior and activities. In the process of urban development, profits always become the first place. However, it could become a drawback to the whole urban structure. I believe that we do not want to see bars and clubs taking away the quietness of the neighborhood and being totally “sohonzation”. It will be beneficial to draw comprehensive plan and regulations for the area.

Moreover, I think the public should be involved in the process of the changes. In recent years, the public raised their awareness to conserve their group memories. We participated in a big bowl feast event on Wing Lee Street in Sheung Wan. The movie “Echoes of the Rainbow” shot a scene there. The movie remade the picture of Hong Kong in 1960s. It recalled many memories of Hong Kong citizens. Nowadays, Wing Lee Street still keeps its Hong Kong typical 1960s style. It has 12 Tong Lau buildings, which are used to describe as tenement building and have a design for both residential and commercial uses. Wing Lee Street is located in a golden area. It has been enclosed by middle and high-class apartment in a long time and very near to SOHO area. Wing Lee Street was in one of the rebuilding projects of Urban Renewal Authority (URA) in 2008. The project planned to preserve 3 Tong Laus and redevelop the rest into high-rise apartment. Since the movie “Echoes of the Rainbow” aroused the strong wishes of conservation of Wing Lee Street, URA complied with the opinion of the public and cancelled the original plan to preserve the whole street. I encourage the public be more active and be involved to manage the changes.

After I traveled different cities, what most impressed me in Hong Kong is the history and cultural scent and its special urban style that is different than others. Today, the cities are urging development in economics. Globalizing and urbanizing are happening at an amazing pace. Central and Sheung Wan should keep their special style. Cosmopolitan and modern in Central and historical heritage with traditional Chinese smell mix with exotic cultures in Sheung Wan is very attractive. Our area is now facing changes. I think in the future development; it should preserve its beautiful figure and uniqueness.

5.10 Summary

Based on our results and recommendations, the Urban Renewal Authority will be able to implement our perspective while continuing their own work in our study area. Drawing from the community will play in integral role in their progress as they work with the gentrification seen occurring at such a high frequency in Sheung Wan and Central. They will also need to work closely with the Hong Kong government in order to prioritize the needs of the people and preserve the community the inhabitants know and love. This project was of vital importance to highlight that the identity of a community belongs to the people, and not to a corporation that is appealing for its positive economic impact. In this way, the Urban Renewal Authority will be able to preserve the critical aspects of the heritage as determined by the residents of Sheung Wan and Central and work towards developing guidelines to better control the gentrification overwhelming the area.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The impact of technological advancements, even with regards to urban development, can have a significant impact on the heritage of a country. This can clearly be seen in Hong Kong, particularly in the areas of Sheung Wan and Central, which the Urban Renewal Authority deemed the focal points for this study. Due to the limited real estate on the island of Hong Kong, a vertical approach to urban development has become the norm, but some aspects of heritage are being sacrificed to allow that. We identified which aspects of Hong Kong's heritage are the critical ones, according to its citizens, so they can better modernize the city while preserving the past. This project also drew from global case studies on this topic so we could draw relevant conclusions on how to best approach the issue of preservation.

The background research played a key role in understanding the development of the island and the heritage in Sheung Wan and Central, given the differences in their individual backgrounds. After completing all the background research as a basic foundation for the project, the next task was to actually tackle our objectives and become immersed in the heritage of Hong Kong.

We employed various methods to accomplish this project. As the residents of Sheung Wan and Central were our team's most reliable source of information, much of our focus for information was to obtain it from the citizens. We interviewed many shopkeepers, both western and traditional, and additionally based much of our research on general observations. These observations stemmed from both what we personally experienced as well as third person observation, namely pictures. This project helped provide a concrete foundation for future research to be conducted by the Urban Renewal Authority. An important part of validity, we focused on reactivity. While it is impossible to avoid when interviewing someone, we strived for objectivity in our interviews in order to have as objective results as possible, not influenced by our personal bias or understanding of the subject. We kept our questions flexible and open-ended, allowing the shop owners to lead the conversation. The aim of our project was not to solve the problem while we were in Hong Kong, but to provide recommendations to the Urban Renewal Authority as to how best continue their work in our chosen focus area. As such, our work will ideally play an important role in the future development within Sheung Wan and Central when the Urban Renewal Authority applies our recommendations as the groundwork for their future work within those sub-districts.

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8.0 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: Traditional Establishments

- Antique Boutiques and Antique stands
- Dried Fish Shops
- Dried Fish processing warehouses
- Printing shops
- Traditional Chinese Restaurants
 - Serve Dim Sum
 - Bakeries
 - Do not tend to serve Coffee
- Medicine shops
- Flower Shops
- Coffin Shops
- Funeral product Shops
- Chinese sausage processing shops
- Hospitals
- Museums
- Chinese New Year's Shops
- Metal Shops
- Frame Shops
- Temples
- Schools
- Churches
- Markets

8.2 Appendix 2: Westernized Establishments

- Cafes
- Bars
- Chain Stores
- Chain Restaurants
- Western Cuisine Restaurants
- Hookah Bars
- Galleries
- Western Clothing stores
- Pet Shops (selling toys)
- Jewelries
- Convenience stores

8.3 Appendix 3: Streets Surveyed in Traditional Region

- Ko Shing Street
- Des Voeux West
- Queen's Road West
- Bonham Strand West
- Wilmer Street
- Upper Lascar Road
- Lok Ku Road
- Possession Street

8.4 Appendix 4: Streets Surveyed in Westernized Region

- Wellington Street
- Bonham Strand
- Kau U Fong
- Gough Street
- Cochrane Street

8.5 Appendix 5: Street Surveyed in Mixed Region

- Hollywood Road
- New Street
- Tai Ping Shan Street
- Upper Station Street
- Sai Street
- Tung Street
- Po Hing Fung
- Poland Lane
- Po Yan Street

8.6 Appendix 6: Sponsor Description

In February 2011, a new Urban Renewal Strategy was promulgated by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government. The new strategy places greater emphasis on community engagement and it broadened the URA's role in urban renewal.

The URA is committed to:

- Addressing Hong Kong's acute urban decay problem and improving the living conditions of residents in dilapidated urban areas
- Adopting a "people first, district-based, public participatory" approach in its work
- Adopting 'Redevelopment and Rehabilitation' as its core activities, preserving buildings with heritage value, and revitalising areas which are within URA's project sites
- Implementing best-practices with regard to sustainable development; and building a quality city through appropriate development density, land use planning, urban design, greening, local culture, heritage preservation and revitalization

Directly cited per sponsor's request

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8.7 Appendix 7: Map of Initial Project Area in Sheung Wan and Central

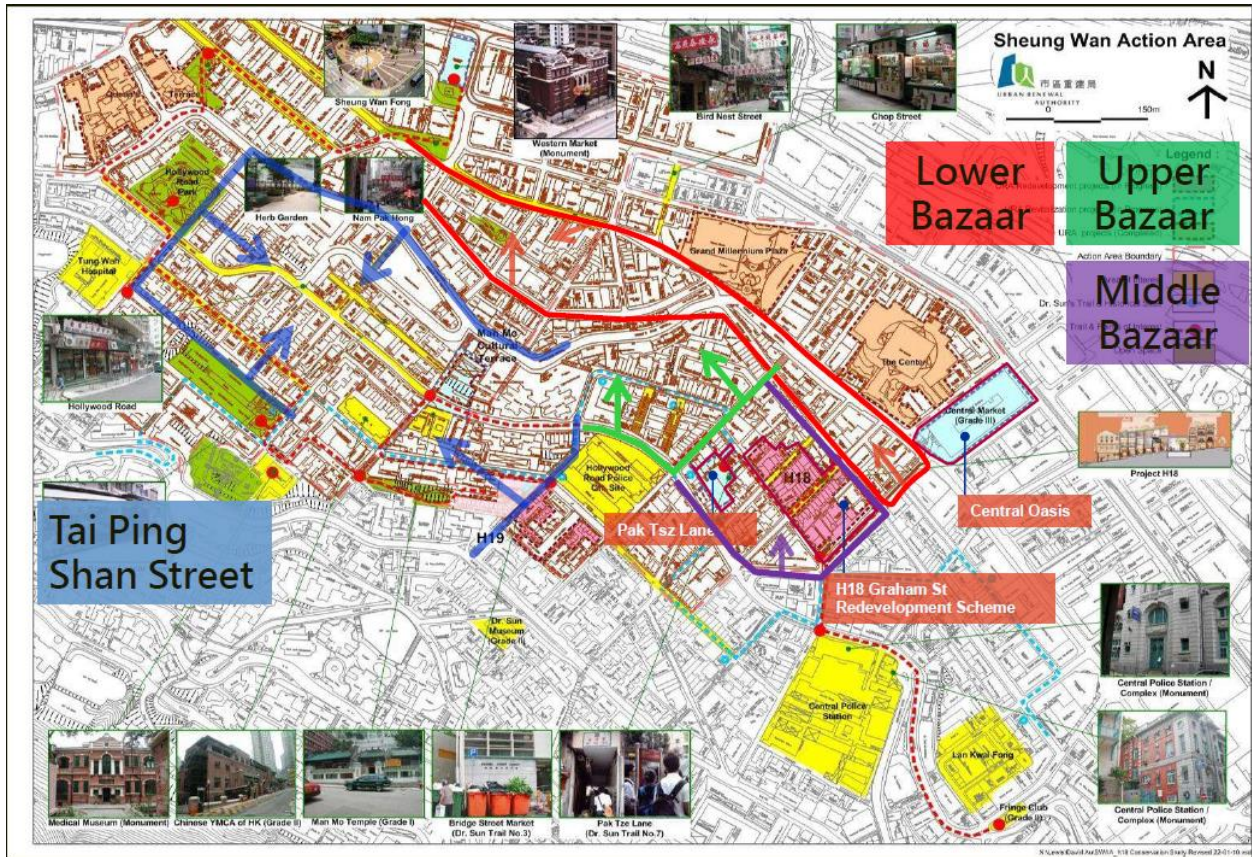


Image courtesy of the Urban Renewal Authority

8.8 Appendix 8: Interview Transcript

URA Team

Interview 25 February 2013

Interviewee: Michael Ma, Urban Renewal Authority

Team: We are wondering how long you live or work in this area Central or Sheung Wan?

Michael: Live, I never live in central or Sheung Wan, but since Sheung Wan is one of the oldest area. There has been a lot of redevelopment. In the past 3, 4 decades, URA definitely as part of the statutory redevelopment agent in Hong Kong. We do have numbers of redevelopment projects and schemes in Sheung Wan, so I have been here for 7 years, I have been working here in past 7 years.

Team: So for you what comes to mind when you think of heritage in Central and Sheung Wan?

Michael: It is originally one of the oldest areas in Hong Kong. Since before became British colony in the 1840s, again it is part of CBD, part of expanding CBD, that's the area under tremendous pressure for development, because of the CBD expansion is part of economic development in Hong Kong. That's a lot of traditional area has been put on tremendous pressure in terms of culture, in terms of urban fabric. The area has been changing. And been changing rapidly, since the turn of the century.

Team: So is there any change you seen in the past, well most recent years in culture of the areas?

Michael: Yes in sense that Hong Kong is getting more cosmopolitan to certain degree. A lot of expats have been coming to Hong Kong, bringing different values and cultures. The expansions of the CBD particular the fringe of the Central and Sheung Wan areas we see a lot of pressure in terms of traditional values and traditional cityscape is part of the CBD expansion. Hong Kong is a very small island. Land is very pressure. And that the CBD expansion is going to erode some traditional areas in Sheung Wan. And some of the traditional trades and traditional shops has been push and pull away through the whole organization process.

Team: What do you have personal feelings for the changes? Do you have any in mind that are good, or not?

Michael: Well. It is no "yes and no" answer to such change. It is a crucial factor. If we have to accept economic development, urban expansion and some of the area has to change. To what degree, and how it is going to be changed. It really depends on social aspiration and social value. To me there are certain areas that should be preserve or could be preserve because of certain historical reason particularly the early Chinese settlement area could be something that's related to the 1911 revolution that overthrew the

previous imperial government. So I think what we need to do in the present moment is to identify certain area that need to be protected or protected from being rapidly eroded by urban expansion and economic development.

Team: From current culture, are there any aspects that you would to see been conserved?

Michael: Yes and no. It is very difficult question in sense that population been changing. It is getting cosmopolitan. How we measure culture, it depends on the people right? When the combination of the people, the residences are changing, it is really hard to define what is local culture. I think more research and study on people's aspiration it's important. Previously, I mean Hong Kong is predominated by Chinese. When Hong Kong become more cosmopolitan. There are more international expatriates coming into Hong Kong. That's the population sort of composition change slightly over the past 4, 5 decades. That's I think it is important to study and look at how people see and value local heritage.

Team: Do you see any obstacles in the conservation process?

Michael: Yes, definitely. Physical side I said expansion means redevelopment. Redevelopment definitely will losing out some of the historical sites. And secondly, more on [special] elements, the special aspect is related to traditional trade, being sort of [outbid] by [inarticulate], galleries and shops which is able to pay high rent. And that's you see a lot of traditional shops, traditional trades disappearing. Just because they could not compete with businesses that could pay higher rent.

Team: How do you see the area in the future in your opinion?

Michael: How do I see? Definitely it is going to change. But to what degree, we can manifest the change. I think it is a big question. It is easy to manage to hardware. That is the physical side. But as far as the [inarticulate] aspect that is people running the business. Traditional trade is really difficult to foresee how they operate and how they perform in the next 10 years. Because the whole economic is changing, the whole urban structure is changing and that's really difficult to anticipate what [inarticulate] elements will be in 6 or 7 years down the road. SOHO is something popped up in past 15 years, no one anticipated. I mean SOHO is what SOHO in Hong Kong. Today, so it is really difficult to see you know those traditional areas which are under tremendous pressure will be like in 10 years down the road.

Team: Do you have any recommendations for this process?

Michael: No. It is really, I would say managing process, we haven't got any [recommendations] on how this process need to be manage at this special moments.

Team: Do you have any extra remarks you would like to share?

Michael: Extra what?

Team: Remarks

Michael: Remarks. I think remarks is to understand more about the areas. OK. People patronize SOHO, think SOHO it is part of Hong Kong culture. They have never been able to understand what the area is like or how important the area was to Hong Kong. I think it is really getting people to know the history, how Hong Kong change. So that we can start discussing how we manage the change. People go to see SOHO now having a drink after work will definitely enjoy the atmosphere, the openness and the lively [inarticulate] of the area. But then I think they need to know more about the past and the change of the area that they can put more inputs and opinions. So that there will be a fair discussion on how the future of the area could be managed. So understanding the history is important.

Team: Thank you very much.

8.9 Appendix 9: Informal Interviews Guide

- How long has your store been here?
- Why did you choose this area?
- What was here before?
- Who's your target market?
- What is the owner's background (nationality)?
- How is the business going?
- Did you look into placing your business in SoHo?
- Do you have any extra remarks you would like to share?

8.10 Appendix 10: Interview/Observation Notes

Jan. 18 2013

- Some shops have seats, others don't
- Some seemed more organized and concerned with appearance than other
- Some people come in and sit down, have a conversation then do some business
- Deer and fish sold together
- Both can be considered delicacy fungus also commonly sold together
- Soups can be made of all three of the above
- Few places accept credit cards, they tend to have a fancier look to them
 - Fancy packaging
- No restaurants on the streets that sell dry fish
 - Could be the smell that is not appealing to consumers
- The whole street smells like dried fish
 - Very strong scent
- A lot of cargo trucks
- Not too many transactions occur in the bigger more warehouse looking locations
- Deer fetus?
- Chinese sausage processing
 - Extremely strong taste
- Dark eggs
- Strong raw chicken smell in Sheung Wan market
- Many transactions occurring in the market
- Frogs, eels, fish, meat, live chicken killed on the spot
- Blood on the floors
- Beef tails?
- Raw food often placed on the floor
- Smell of fish and raw meat is very overwhelming and can be nauseous over an extended period of time

Discussion with our sponsor after this observation day

- Sheung Wan market use to be outside
- They moved it inside for sanitary reasons and to make the area look cleaner
- Still not that sanitary
- Market doesn't allow for a good flow of fresh area to clear the smell of raw meat and fish
- Government moved it inside
- People were not too happy
- More regulations

- Indoor market makes it less appealing
 - Some people don't know about it because its inclosed
 - I almost missed it
 - Less traditional by moving it inside
- Another approach they could have taken is enhancing the outdoor markets by providing electricity

Upper Lascar Row

- Antique shops
- Antique and souvenirs booths
- A few metal shops
- Not many “western” stores
- Some antique shops are labeled as “galleries”
- Stores would be side to side and would have boutiques in front of them
- Business did not seem to “booming” but there did seem to be people making transactions

Notes from meeting with Michael

- Lower Bazaar
 - Chinese trade
 - People go there to buy foot
- Tai Ping Shan
 - Packed and poor living condition
 - First bubonic plague
- Chinese were not allowed to live in certain areas
 - Forced to form clusters
- Public bathrooms became common because cluster did not have bathrooms
- Escalators have made SoHo and NoHo more accessible
 - Has affected the nature of the areas
 - Not as native anymore
- Redevelopment
 - Working towards fixing slums
 - Don't want substandard living conditions
 - Big fire hazard (big problem)
- Disappearing shop houses
 - People use to live upstairs from their shops
 - Heritage loss
 - Culture has been “destroyed”
- Only three fresh fruit markets left in hong kong

- SoHo has expanded in the last 10-15 years
- Hong Kong has become more cosmopolitan

More Observations

- Bridge street market empty
- Melting pot of the east and west

Jan. 4 2013 More sponsor feedback

- Queens college bombed during WWII
- Most of Hong Kong too
- Used site to build police quarters
- Now it is a center for art and design
- Doctor Sun studied in Queens College
 - Baptized across the street

Jan. 10 2013 Observations in Traditional area

- Busier by the Harbor
- Lower buildings away from Central
- Main roads busier
- Sound of big truck is common
 - Loading and unloading packages of dry fish
 - A lot of movement in the area
- All shops are very visual beside whole sale shops
- All the shops and activity keep you distracted from the rest of the buildings
 - Hard to notice things on upper floors
 - Have to step back and look up
- People nap from noon-2
 - Often in parks

Observations in Blue area

- Ben and Jerrys
- Hookah
- Bars
- Cafes
- Turkish cuisine
- Australian Cuisine
- Gage Street Market
 - Fresh goods

- No dried fish
- Everything is in English
- Significantly more western people
- Jewelries, eateries, clothing stores, tailors, banks

Feb. 20 2013 Traditional shop interviews

Art gallery

- Selling Chinese painting and calligraphy
- Opened two years ago
- According to the owner the business is OK
- Have no idea what was before the gallery
- A lot of galleries opened around recent year
- Took SOHO area as consideration before, but the owner think there are too many people in SOHO area.
- For the future plan, he think he will stay
- For the escalator likely build in Pound Lane, he thinks it is very good because it will be more convenient.

Incense street stand

- Selling incenses and the worship stuff for the prayer
- In old times was put the incenses and the stuff on the bamboo stick and walking everywhere to sell it
- Received street stand license since her grandmother
- Helping to sell since she born (she looks 50+)
- Clients are from HK. Since the temples are very famous attracting people from all over HK to come
- The surroundings changed a lot this year. Galleries around started to move in 3, 4 years ago.
- The rebuilding building behind her street stand was residential building. Have not rent out yet, do not know the uses.
- Her business depends on the dates, for example the recent days having a good business since the Chinese new year which it is the good time to pray for the goodness for the income year.
- For the escalator probably built in the future, she thinks it is very good, it will more convenient, it talks a lot of energy to walk up.

Wood frame carpenter shop

- The shop has been open for about 40 years, it was in Ladder St. and moved up to Po Qing Fo in 1972

- Making wood Chinese painting frame. Customers most from Hong Kong, few from Mainland or Taiwan (not directly selling to them, but contacting by agency)
- Business is Ok. Not much people doing it in Hong Kong now, most of them moving away to Mainland.
- A lot of old residences, moved away because it not convenient too many stairs. The shop owner who talked to me is 60+, he is still living here because of the shop is here.
- He thinks it is very good to build the escalator, it will be more convenient.

Clothes shop for the deceased

- 1973 moved from another part of Hollywood Road to current location
- Talked to the shop assistant who work there more than 10 years
- Business now is not as good as before
- Customers are all from HK
- The shop owners the shop and estate, so they can be here these years
- Maybe rent it out in the future.
- For the escalator, she thinks it is very good, it will be more convenient