

REGENERATION OF CHINESE URBAN HERITAGE:  
A CASE STUDY OF THA TIEN SHOPHOUSES, BANGKOK

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บทคัดย่อและแฟ้มข้อมูลฉบับเต็มของวิทยานิพนธ์ตั้งแต่ปีการศึกษา 2554 ที่ให้บริการในคลังปัญญาจุฬาฯ (CUIR)  
เป็นแฟ้มข้อมูลของนิสิตเจ้าของวิทยานิพนธ์ ที่ส่งผ่านทางบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย

The abstract and full text of theses from the academic year 2011 in Chulalongkorn University Intellectual Repository (CUIR)  
are the thesis authors' files submitted through the University Graduate School.

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Architecture Program in Architectural Design

Department of Architecture

Faculty of Architecture

Chulalongkorn University

Academic Year 2014

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การฟื้นฟูมรดกชุมชนจีน:  
กรณีศึกษาห้องแถวท่าเตียน กรุงเทพมหานคร



วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาการออกแบบสถาปัตยกรรม ภาควิชาสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตร์

คณะสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

ปีการศึกษา 2557

ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Thesis Title REGENERATION OF CHINESE URBAN  
HERITAGE:A CASE STUDY OF THA TIEN  
SHOPHOUSES, BANGKOK

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Field of Study Architectural Design

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# # 5573705725 : MAJOR ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

KEYWORDS: SHOPHOUSE / THATIEN / LIVING HERITAGE / CHINESE IMMIGRANT / BANGKOK / RATTANAKOSIN

SHENG-MAN LIN: REGENERATION OF CHINESE URBAN HERITAGE:A CASE STUDY OF  
THA TIEN SHOPHOUSES, BANGKOK. ADVISOR: ASST. PROF. RACHAPORN  
CHOOCHUEY, Ph.D., 119 pp.

Chinese immigrants, as one of the majority group of people in Thailand, have dominated Thai economics which shophouses also participate as important role in this part of history. By the arrival of modernization in Bangkok city, several roads were built as well as numerous shophouses built along the roads. The transportation from canal to road also stimulates development of shophouses. Chinese immigrants not only make their live as labors, they have also played the role of oversea trading and domestic trading in Thailand. Tha-tien, famous for its old markets in the city, is one of the most completed Chinese living heritage in Bangkok. Its key geographical location of Rattanakosin Island has make Tha-tien witnessing the history of Thai economic and Chinese immigrants in Bangkok.

There are several factors dominant the transformation of Bangkok shophouses which are prevailing socio-economic behavior, historical events, and the waves of Chinese migrations. This study offers a deeper picture of how shophouses have been used by Chinese immigrants with their own identities by investigating from a span in the aspect of appearance, materials, technique, spatial use in Tha-tien and complementing with the knowledge of Chinese architecture and Chinese immigration development in Bangkok.

However, due to the rapid transformation of the city especially in this touristic area, shophouses in Tha-tien are facing the threat of being wept away. The physical demolition will lead also to the social demolition of the best Chinese immigrant living archive in the city.

Lastly, based on the awareness of significance of Tha-tien and its threat of demolition, last part of this study proposes Tha-tien's future development. The design aims to preserve Tha-tien not only its physical but also social dimensions. The outcome contributes to show the significance of Tha-tien as Chinese living heritage where community itself is the main archive their authentic living to public. Meanwhile, visitors can not only acquire the knowledge of Tha-tien but also experience the authenticity by multiple senses from local life.

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Field of Study: Architectural Design Advisor's Signature .....

Academic Year: 2014

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor, Assist. Prof. Rachaporn Choochuey, Ph.D., for her guidances and expert suggestions for the past two years. It is impossible to accomplish this thesis without her supports

I would like to show my sincere appreciations to chairman of Master of Architecture, international program, Assoc. Prof. Pinraj Khanjanusthiti, as well as committee members, Assist. Prof. Vorapat Inkarojrit and Assist. Prof. M.L. Chittawadi Chitrabongs, Ph.D., for their valuable comments and excellent teachings throughout my master study and toward the completion of thesis. My special gratitude also goes to the external examiner, Dr. Supitcha Tovivch, from Silpakorn University, for her expertise, helpful comments and valuable time. I would like to extend my thanks to all of professors and office coordinators in Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University.

My great gratitude also goes to Mr. Kriangkrai Olamphanthuskul, the leader of Tha-tien community. Without his help, it would have been impossible to obtain valuable materials of Tha-tien. Also to the respectful elders from Tha-tien community, Mrs. Boondee Watthanasrimongkhon, Mr. Joon Drunwijittikasem, Mrs. Somphong Uwahamornpitak and others. Their memories of local life have contributed the important part of this thesis.

Lastly, my endless gratitude goes to my beloved parents and my brother for their loves, cares and encouragements. I would also like to thank to all of my friends in M.Arch. program, and special thank to Ms. Sujittra Yoochitcheroenporn. Without their kind supports and assistance during the study period of Chulalongkorn University, I would not have succeeded. This study is dedicated to the memories of my beloved grandmother, Mei-yu Lin, as well as my beloved sisiter, Xiao-ni Lin.

## CONTENTS

	Page
THAI ABSTRACT .....	iv
ENGLISH ABSTRACT .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
CONTENTS .....	vii
List of Tables .....	xi
List of Figures .....	1
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....	6
1.1 Problem Statement and Research Significance .....	6
1.2 Purpose of the Study .....	6
1.3 Scope of the Study .....	7
1.1 Research Methodology .....	9
1.2 Benefit of the Study .....	12
CHAPTER 2 ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCE BY CHINESE IMMIGRANTS .....	15
2.1 Chinese society in Thailand .....	15
2.2 The relationships between China and Thailand .....	20
2.2.1 Before Bangkok city established .....	20
2.2.2 Chinese settlement in Bangkok city .....	21
2.2.3 Great expansion of Chinese settlement after mid-19th century .....	22
2.2.4 The last embracement of Chinese immigration .....	24
2.3 The policy of Chinese immigrants of Thai government .....	25
2.3.1 The development of immigration act in Thailand .....	25
2.3.2 Limitation of possession of land .....	25

	Page
2.4 Chinese residence .....	27
2.5 Shophouses in Bangkok.....	28
2.6 Chinese shophouses.....	29
2.7 Development of old Bangkok and the modernization of Bangkok.....	30
2.8 Economical life in shophouse .....	32
2.9 From temporary to permanent life.....	33
CHAPTER 3 PHYSICAL STUDY OF SHOPHOUSES AND THA-TIEN COMMUNITY.....	36
3.1 The history of Tha-tien.....	36
3.2 Significance of Tha-tien.....	39
3.3 Historical transformation of Tha-tien .....	42
3.3.1 Before arrival of Chakri period .....	42
3.3.2 Early Chakri period .....	44
3.3.3 Rama I period (1782-1809) .....	45
3.3.4 Rama II period (1809-1824) .....	45
3.3.5 Rama III period (1824-1851) .....	45
3.3.6 After Rama IV period.....	49
3.3.7 Rama IV period (1851-1868) .....	51
3.3.8 Rama V period (1868-1910) .....	52
3.3.9 Rama VI period (1910-1925) .....	52
3.3.10 Rama VII-VIII period (1925-1946).....	56
3.3.11 Rama IX period (1946-2014) .....	56
3.4 Chinese immigrants and markets .....	59

	Page
3.5 Interview with local people .....	60
3.6 Urban zoning of Tha-tien: conservation as cultural identity.....	63
3.7 Multiple possessions of land .....	63
3.8 Chinese settlements: shrines, Chinese community and former Chinese language center .....	66
3.9 Shophouses in Tha-tien.....	71
CHAPTER 4 READING THA-TIEN.....	90
4.1 Reference of The Burra Charter.....	92
4.2 Case study of Chinese living museum in Singapore .....	92
CHAPTER 5 DESIGN PROCESS.....	99
5.1 Archive of Chinese living heritage in Bangkok.....	99
5.2 Users and Programme .....	99
5.3 Site analysis .....	103
5.3.1 Aecessibility.....	107
5.3.2 Surroundings .....	110
5.3.3 Existing condition.....	111
5.3.4 Law and Regulation .....	112
5.4 Design Concept.....	114
5.5 Design Development.....	115
5.6 Design Drawing.....	119
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION.....	1
6.1 Limitation of study .....	3
6.2 Suggestion of the future study.....	4

REFERENCES .....6

VITA.....9



## List of Tables

Table 1. 1 Chinese population of arrival and departures since 1881-1955 (Skinner 1957)(redrew by the author).....	25
Table 1. 2 Chronical table of Chinese- Thai social relationships.....	35
Table 1. 3 10 types of shophouses in Thatien.....	89
Table 1. 4 Site Information.....	99
Table 1. 5 Table of programming .....	100



## List of Figures

Figure 1. 1 Shophouses between Bangkok and Taiwan (taken by author).....	9
Figure 1. 2 Diagram of this thesis structure .....	11
Figure 1. 3 Expansion of shophouses in Thatien (taken by the author in 2014).....	13
Figure 2. 1 Chinese residences and migration movement. Original source: 茂木計一郎, 稻次敏郎 et al. 1996, (additional edited by author) .....	18
Figure 2. 2 Concentration of Chinese in Thailand shows the very high density in middle of Thailand. (Skinner 1957) .....	19
Figure 2. 3 Expansion of Sampheng district (Roy 2007)(Redrew by author) .....	22
Figure 2. 4 Traditional Chinese shophouse expands with Jin-luo and skywell. (Chu 2005) (additional edited by the author).....	28
Figure 2. 5 Front facade of shophouses in Taiwan with distinctive decoration which show wealth. (taken by the author) .....	30
Figure 2. 6 Fresh market surrounded by shophouse. (1982) (redrew by the author).....	31
Figure 2. 7 Historical development of Bangkok before Chakrit dynasty. (Thaitakoo 1992)(additional edited by the author) .....	31
Figure 2. 8 Roads on map of Bangkok in 1901 (Pimonsathean 2009) p.28.....	32
Figure 2. 9 Typical Chinese house in Bangkok(Coughlin 1960) .....	33
Figure 2. 10 One of piers of Tha-tien in 1956 (Source from Horace Bristol, Corbis Corporation, United States) .....	37
Figure 3. 1 Location of Tha-tien: southwest of the Grand palace .....	36
Figure 3. 2 Photo of Tha-tien market in 1911 (source from Prof. Pirasri Povatong, faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University) .....	37
Figure 3. 3 Fried seafood in Tha-tien market (taken by the author in September, 2014) .....	38
Figure 3. 4 Map of Tha-tien community in 1932 (source from faculty of architecture, Chulalongkorn University) .....	39



Figure 3. 5 Scope of Tha-tien shophouses, map of Tha-tien 2014 .....	41
Figure 3. 6 Tha-tien in Thonburi period.....	43
Figure 3. 7 Foreign communities and the city (Thaitakoo 1992).....	44
Figure 3. 8 Tha-tien in Rama 1 (1782-1809) .....	46
Figure 3. 9 Tha-tien in Rama II (1809-1824).....	47
Figure 3. 10 Rama III (1824-1851).....	48
Figure 3. 11map from 1887-1907 (source from Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University) .....	50
Figure 3. 12 map of Tha-tien in 1932 and 2002 .....	51
Figure 3. 13 Rama IV (1851-1868).....	53
Figure 3. 14 Rama V (1868-1910).....	54
Figure 3. 15 Rama VI (1910-1925).....	55
Figure 3. 16 Rama VII-VIII (1925-1946).....	57
Figure 3. 17 Rama IX (1946-2014).....	58
Figure 3. 18 Old Map of Morakot market .....	60
Figure 3. 19 Interviews with local people and showing where they live.....	62
Figure 3. 20 Tha-tien's tourist potentiality .....	63
Figure 3. 21 Possession composition of Tha-tien.....	65
Figure 3. 22 The religious beliefs of Chinese immigrants from coastal China .....	66
Figure 3. 23 Locations of 5 Chinese shrines, Chinese community center and former Chinese school .....	68
Figure 3. 24 Chinese-Thai signs in Tha-tien (surveyed by the author in May 2014) .....	69
Figure 3. 25 Red carriage for annual ritual currently storage at the backside of Tha- tien market .....	70
Figure 3. 26 Performance of Chinese traditional drama (อินทร์จันทร์, ชัยทัต et al. 2007) .	70
Figure 3. 27 Annual ritual is held in Soi Pratak Nokyang (อินทร์จันทร์, ชัยทัต et al. 2007) .....	71
Figure 3. 28 Distribution of shophouses from different period in Tha-tien .....	73
Figure 3. 29 Alleys become a part of living expansion from shophouses.....	74

Figure 3. 30 Type 01: located near the riverside, the oldest settlement of floating community .....	75
Figure 3. 31 Type 02: 1 floor shophouses built in Rama 3 as sailors' residence .....	76
Figure 3. 32 Front part of type 2 shophouses .....	76
Figure 3. 33 Type 03: 2 floors shophouses faces to river.....	77
Figure 3. 34 Palm sugar factory at the ground floor of type 3 shophouse .....	78
Figure 3. 35 Additional sheltering eave in order to fit frequent rain (left) .....	78
Figure 3. 36 Kitchen at the back side (right).....	79
Figure 3. 37 Type 04: 2 floor concrete shophouses on Soi Prasuk Nokyang .....	79
Figure 3. 38 Type 05: 3 floors shophouses located in zone 4 built in Rama 9.....	80
Figure 3. 39 Type 06: 2 to 3 floors shophouses in zone 4.....	81
Figure 3. 40 Type 07: 3 floors shophouses in zone 2.....	83
Figure 3. 41 Type 08: 4 floors shophouses opposite to type 7.....	84
Figure 3. 42 Type 09: 4 floors shophouses with shading layer.....	85
Figure 3. 43 New type as company (left).....	86
Figure 3. 44 New type as hotel (right).....	86
Figure 3. 45 New construction site in May 2014 .....	86
Figure 3. 46 Shelter and chamber above top floor provide more space. ....	87
Figure 3. 47 Corridor has been sealed with solid wall and windows can provides more space and security.....	87
Figure 3. 48 Foreign tourists come to Tha-tien for the scene of Wat Arun and Chaophraya River .....	88
Figure 4. 1 Single unit used as ice shop	91
Figure 4. 2 2-units used as company .....	91
Figure 4. 3 3-units shophouses used as palm sugar company, old photo of INN A DAY hotel (Source: Inn A day).....	91
Figure 4. 4 The current Peranakan Museum (Source from The Peranakan Museum official website) .....	93
Figure 4. 5 Former use of Tao Nan Chinese school (Source from .....	93

Figure 4. 6 Interior exhibition of living collections (source from tripadvisor.com) .....	93
Figure 4. 7 Map of Peranakan museum and its surrounding of shophouses and new buildings (source from google map) .....	94
Figure 4. 8 Plan of Peranakan Museum and its surrounding (source from AGC Singapore) .....	94
Figure 4. 9 Map of Chinatown. Red spot is where Chinese Heritage centre located. (Source: S.L.Lee, 1996).....	96
Figure 4. 10 Current map of the area. New activities within historical shophouses (Source: google map) .....	97
Figure 4. 11 Chinese heritage centre in Chinatown of Singapore where combined new activities and inherent activities. (Source: tripadvisor).....	98
Figure 4. 12 Indoor exhibition displays the old lifestyle of Chinese immigrants.....	98
Figure 5. 1 Section A-A' of programming	101
Figure 5. 2 Design area .....	104
Figure 5. 3 Tourists circulation and hotels in Tha-tien area and existing business .....	105
Figure 5. 4 Surrounding of site .....	106
Figure 5. 5 5 ways of site approaching.....	107
Figure 5. 6 Approaching passage to the site on Maha Rat road.....	107
Figure 5. 7 Approaching passage to the site through the Chinese shrine (Left).....	108
Figure 5. 8 Alley from Soi PratuKnokyang to the site (Right).....	108
Figure 5. 9 Alley from Soi PratuKnokyang to the site (Left) .....	108
Figure 5. 10 Passage connecting the site and riverside tenants (Right) .....	108
Figure 5. 11 Diagram of groundfloor circulation.....	109
Figure 5. 12 Bodee tree is currently hidden by shrine and warehouse (left) .....	110
Figure 5. 13 The oldest Chinese shrine (right) .....	110
Figure 5. 14 Current use of site and surrounding, survey in May 2014 .....	111
Figure 5. 15 Existing elements of site .....	112
Figure 5. 16 Urban Planning of Bangkok city, 1999.....	113
Figure 5. 17 Volume of building #1 .....	115

Figure 5. 18 Diagram of ground floor and surrounding shophouses.....	116
Figure 5. 19 Volume of building #2.....	116
Figure 5. 20 Volume of building #3.....	117
Figure 5. 21 Design model of ground floor .....	118
Figure 5. 22 Design model of elevation .....	118
Figure 5. 23 Site Plan .....	119
Figure 5. 24 Ground plan of design.....	120
Figure 5. 25 2 floor plan .....	121
Figure 5. 26 3 Floor Plan .....	122
Figure 5. 27 4 Floor Plan .....	123
Figure 5. 28 Roof Floor Plan .....	124
Figure 5. 29 Zones of ground floor .....	125
Figure 5. 30 Section A-A'.....	126
Figure 5. 31 Index plan of rendering images .....	127
Figure 5. 32 Perspective no. 2.....	127
Figure 5. 33 Perspective no.3.....	128
Figure 5. 34 Perspective no.1.....	128
Figure 5. 35 Index plan of elevations.....	132
Figure 5. 36 Elevation 1.....	132
Figure 5. 37 Elevation 2.....	133
Figure 5. 38 Elevation 3.....	133
Figure 5. 39 Elevation 4.....	134
Figure 5. 40 Photo of design model.....	134
Figure 5. 41 Photo of design model.....	134

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Problem Statement and Research Significance

Shophouses in Tha-tien is facing to the threat of being transformed purely into touristic area without the historical value as a development where new business could co-exist with the historical value. The transformation of shophouses in Bangkok has greatly influenced by Chinese immigrants not only in the aspect of lifestyle but also with social condition attached. However, the study of shophouses in Bangkok and the social aspect of Chinese immigrants have never been conducted in depth. Understanding the social aspects of Chinese immigrants in both China and Thailand leads this study to comprehend the whole picture of architectural transformation of shophouses in Thailand and its significance to the urban transformation of the city socially and physically.

Tha-tien is chosen as study site is its crucial location of city and unique characteristics. Its geographical location makes this community witness the whole development of old Bangkok city not only in the aspect of economic but also urban landscape. Meanwhile, because of its complexity of land ownership, it contains several layers of different periods of shophouses which is still actively used by local Chinese. These shophouses have recorded local Chinese life for the past span of 120 years in a well-defined area with distinctive architectural characteristics. It is important that Tha-tien community could preserve as a whole as a heritage of Chinese immigrants in Bangkok.

#### 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The study aims to offer an in depth analysis between the development of shophouse architecture in Bangkok in relation with social aspects of Chinese immigrant which is not yet widely investigated in order to portray the importance of Chinese

immigration and their cultural and social contribution to the city, and eventually, to the country. Tha-tien is used as a case study because of its well preserved condition with several layers of architectural development as well as the future threat of the area.

Social value in Thailand is unique that they learn to adapt another culture as their own. Tha-tien community is one of the examples as Chinese settlements in Thailand. The adaptation between Chinese people and Thai local can clearly been seen in this community. Nevertheless, the significance of Tha-tien as Chinese living heritage is not yet widely known to the public. Most of the new developments for tourism business in the area do not focus on the aspect. Rather they are just offer a sleek modern lifestyle with the perfect scenery of Bangkok's grand historical monuments of Wat Po and Wat Arun. The culture of Chinese immigrant is not in present at all in the recent developments and the future plans. All of these will lead to the social demolition as local people are expelled from rent shophouses so do their original live will gone.

The second part of this study is, therefore, to offer an alternative solution of architectural design to address the significance of Tha-tien area as a Chinese immigrant community to the public. The museum attached with community center serving cultural tourism business would help the community to display their core values. The museum and community would be a showroom to educate the public and local people the significance of whole Tha-tien. Meanwhile, the community can take its key role of operating the whole museum as well as whole Tha-tien community. The tourism business emphasizing on the Chinese culture in Bangkok such as restaurants and accommodations would support financially the museum and community centre. Meanwhile, the architectural design to preserve the buildings and its core value would be an indirect method to educate the local how to maintain their buildings.

### 1.3 Scope of the Study

Several of studies of Bangkok's shophouses have been conducted in Thai, and only a few were made in English, but none of them directly address out the issue between shophouses and Chinese immigrants. In Chatsiri's master thesis, it studies

shophouse from three parts: residents, community and related regulations. Based on those findings, this study proposes improved design of shophouse and improvement of siting without increasing construction cost.(Thanmarom 1982) Another doctoral thesis points out problems of utilizing shophouse as business space and residence. It surveys the satisfactions of shophouse residents by questionnaires. This result indicates users who live in shophouse have strong intention of doing business at that time, and shophouse has advantages for settling life (Sachakul 1982).

In this study, the author takes her advantage of reading Chinese to acquire solid materials of Chinese immigrants in Thailand as well as the studies of shophouses in China and Taiwan which are written mainly in Chinese to offer a new perspective of research in the subject. Shophouse is the most common typology of building for Chinese immigrants throughout Southeast Asia. However, the shophouses in Bangkok are distinctive in appearance and compared to shophouses in other places of Southeast Asia and coastal China. (Figure 1.1) Therefore, this study addresses out the significance of shophouses and Chinese immigrants from observation of a Chinese community in Bangkok by using Tha-tien as a case study due to its significances of location, condition and future threat.

When discussing about Chinese settlements in Bangkok, Chinatown, as known as Yaowarat, is the first perception in people's mind. Several reasons that this study chooses Tha-tien rather than Chinatown as study site are below:

1. Well-defined study area: the boundary of Tha-tien is clear. The confined area helps this study focusing on its main objective.
2. Well-preserved shophouses in various phases: shophouses in Chinatown have been transformed into different looks especially during the period Chinatown was once been deemed as the most prosperous area in Bangkok. Yet this study focuses on the issue of shophouses and how Chinese immigrants settle their live.



Figure 1. 1 Shophouses between Bangkok and Taiwan (taken by author)

The field study of shophouses limits the scope of approximately 332 shophouses in Thatien. Whereas the literature study would span from the background of Chinese immigrant in Thailand in Rattanakosin period in relation to historical events in China and Thailand and the shophouse architecture in China. Both parts of the study would help to illustrate the relationship between architectural development and social transformation of Chinese Immigrant in Bangkok, as well as the profound analysis of Tha Tien shophouses.

### 1.1 Research Methodology

Literature research of the issue of shophouses and Chinese immigrants is to comprehend the bigger picture of prevailing social status in both China and Thailand. One of the major references is Skinner's book in 1957 which contain sufficient statistical data of Chinese immigrants' population and socio-economic situation. Some references of Chinese society in Thailand are recently made by Chinese scholars and even Chinese immigrants' descendant, such as 鄭午樓, et al, 2003 and E-H Lee, 2003, provide more details of Chinese society in Bangkok and Thai policy towards Chinese.

Then Tha-tien is studied in three aspects. First, Historical transformation of Tha-tien is investigated through several books, researches and maps such as โครงการวิจัยชุมชนโดยรอบพิพิธภัณฑ์การ เรียนรู้แห่งชาติแห่งที่ 1 (ชุมชนท่าอู่เตียน-ปากคลองตลาด. The second aspects of shophouses architecture is the field work surveying the area of 332 shophouses in Tha-tien to record the physical conditions as well as interviewing the locals who dwell in the shophouses to



understand present social aspects in relation to the buildings. The third aspect is to combine the historical transformation study with the future development and offer an architectural design solution. The programs and site of the architectural design will be a result of interviews and surveys of the locals, tackling the future development threat of Tha-Tien. In this study, the author has interviewed with limited numbers of local people.

The framework of development is based on regeneration of cultural significance referring to *The Burra Charter* (The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013) with the high degree of consideration, not only architecture but also on social and cultural aspects.



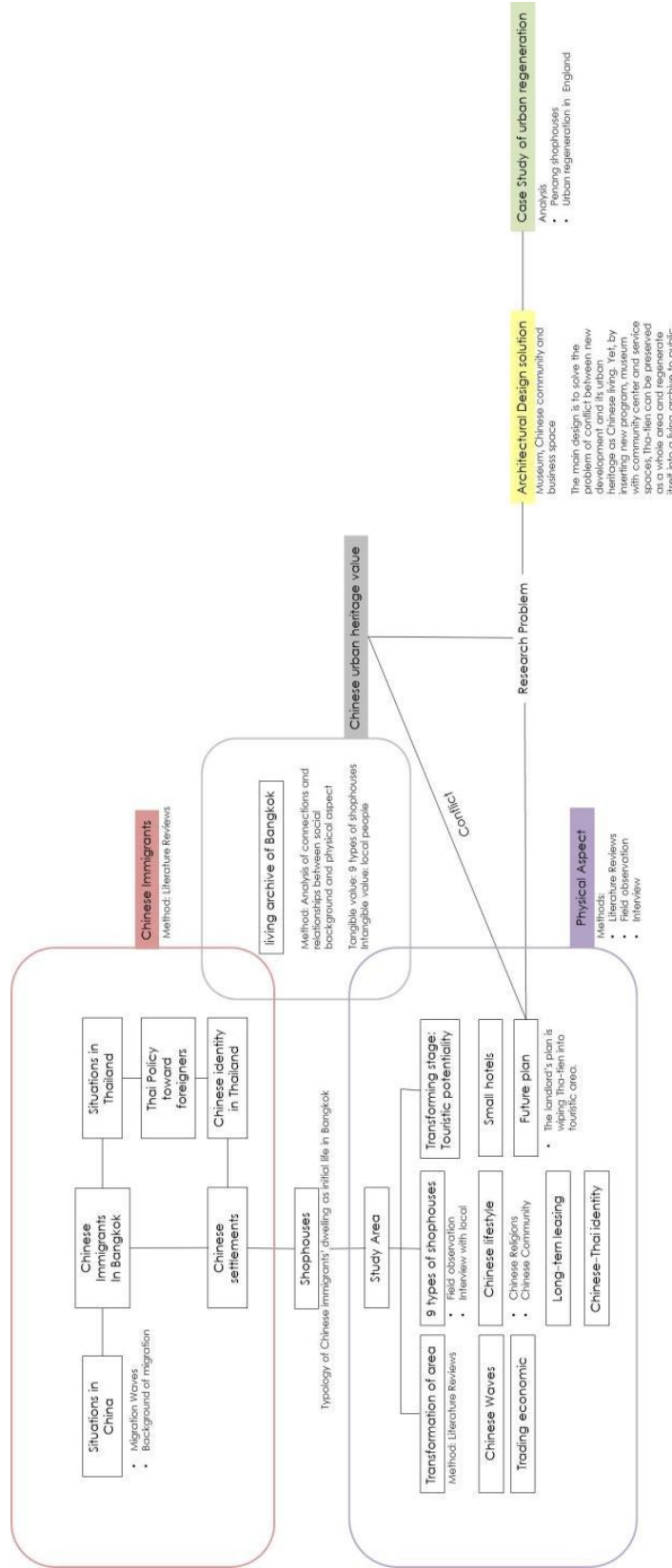


Figure 1. 2 Diagram of this thesis structure

## 1.2 Benefit of the Study

First, the study offers a profound understanding between architectural development of shophouse in Thailand in relation with social aspects of Chinese immigrants who play a very significant role in urban development in Bangkok and Thailand in the time span of about last 100 years. The study will also help to illustrate the importance of Chinese immigrant culture in the present day but is still hardly recognized by public.

The whole picture of social situation in Thailand and China can tell us two parts: from the bigger point of view, the situation between Thailand and China lead some policies towards Chinese people in Thailand. This can be reflected in the whole development of shophouses in Bangkok not only in Tha-tien. This is why lots of Chinese people have lived in leasing shophouses for decades. Then, based on this content, shophouses are used in a different way compared to shophouses in mainland China.

There are some points worth to pay attention. Firstly, expansion of shophouse is varied from shophouse in China because restriction of land possession. Not like shophouses in China, when family grow, they can buy more land from back side of shophouses and built new structure attaching to original one. Therefore, when the family grows, Chinese immigrants would expand their unit vertically by building more room above roof or corridor. (Figure 1. 3 Expansion of shophouses in Thatien) Or, they would move to another shophouses within the same community or neighboring community. This reflects Chinese people characteristic which is living closely to original family, yet the mode of living is direct result of social condition.

Secondly, the façade of decoration normally is the only part of house can express the tenants' social status. But as a lessee, decoration with elaborated ornaments might be unnecessary cost. This drab and flat façade also expresses tenants' thrifty lifestyle.

Thirdly, Chinese immigrants keep their Chinese identity with Chinese signs. All the signs in Tha-tien are in both Chinese and Thai is the policy of prohibition of Chinese

name. After several decades, Chinese immigrants have no longer seen themselves as a Chinese but Thai.



Figure 1.3 Expansion of shophouses in Thatien (taken by the author in 2014)

Fourthly, Tha-tien community has display strongly trading activity with market and shophouses utilized as grocery shop, factory and warehouses. This trading community explains the initial life of Chinese as sellers and food vendors here.

Lastly, the alternation of Chinese lifestyle can be exposed to the transformation of shophouses in 9 phases with elaborated layers and materials. This explains tenants not only take shophouses as a spare residence. From first type near river to the latest one with shading layers, the whole shophouses have transformed and fitted the social needs in each period.

Tha-tien's tangible and intangible values are the aspect of architectural settlement and people who actually live. This cohesive community provides local people a reliable place by effort of its community organization. However, most of the lessees are still under the fear of losing their home because of the landlord's upcoming developed plan.

This study proposes a design of community-run museum displaying Tha-tien's history and Chinese immigrants' lives, and attached with Chinese community center

which serving additional business and be the key of managing museum. This museum will be located in the site surrounding current Chinese community center. The main purpose of this museum is not only to telling people story of Tha-tien, yet let the young generation take their participations in local. As Tha tien is chosen as a case study for the subject, the regenerating of the area by proposing a new program and architectural design into the area will give an alternative example of how to handle the popular heritage physically and socially in a more sensitive methods with profound understanding of historical transformation.



## CHAPTER 2

### ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCE BY CHINESE IMMIGRANTS

When discussing architectural influence by Chinese immigrants, it would be too narrow if only focusing on architectural elements and technique migrated from China, yet other factors indirectly affect the outcome of Chinese architecture in Bangkok.

#### 2.1 Chinese society in Thailand

The major reference of Chinese society in Thailand is Skinner's book in 1957 among all references. This book is the guide book that has recorded socio-economic condition and statistical databases of Chinese population in Thailand in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are relatively new references in Chinese recording Chinese society in Thailand and bigger picture of Chinese immigrants from China to Thailand in the aspect of international relations of Chinese government and Thailand, and those references refer to Skinner's book and both Thai and Chinese references. It is also crucial to architectural development in Thailand because local policies and regulations directly decide Chinese immigrants' living place and lifestyle. Restriction of possession leads the way how people utilize their home whether living temporarily or permanently. Various aspects have been discussed in detail except Chinese home. This is why the author of this study would like to take advantage of capacity of reading Chinese literatures to analyze Chinese shophouse and Chinese immigrants in Bangkok.

In some researches, the importance of Chinese immigrants contribute to Thai economy through assisting Thai trades have been illustrated, and shophouse is definitely play an important role.

*“The typical Chinese house in Bangkok, and indeed in virtually all urban centres in Thailand, is a two or three-storey ‘row-house’ built of unpainted wood or of brick and concrete. Each house is but one compartment or vertical*

*section of a long building which may extend the entire length of the street. Built directly on the ground, each house abuts immediately on the sidewalk, a feature which facilitates its use for business. In Chinese neighbourhoods one solid row of shops and stores line the street on both sides from on intersection to the other, a sight which must and graphically drive home to the average Thai how thoroughly the Chinese dominate Thailand's trade and commerce.”* (Coughlin 1960) Chinese were not in Sakdina system (feudal system).

New comers normally make a living with doing small business, such as selling Chinese food and dessert on street, being artisans and growing Chinese vegetables. (鄭午樓, 鄭鷹年 et al. 2003) With the need of economic life, shophouse is the type of house that satisfies Chinese immigrants due to low-cost of construction and high-effectiveness of land use. Meanwhile, shophouse provides functions of business and living at the same time.

Related laws in Thailand and revolutionary wars in China have affected willingness of settlement which determines modes of house transactions at that time. Restriction of land ownership to foreigners is one of immigration policies, and this encouraged a unique way in real estate market, long-term lease of shophouse. Chinese immigrants have the right to use object above land but the ownership of land. This determines transformation of shophouse, and this is why they are not allowed to expand shophouse as in China. When those Chinese just arrived in Thailand, they hold mentalities of temporary life. Afterwards, wars and terrible situation in mainland impede their ways to home. Furthermore, since one moment, Chinese are encouraged to change their Chinese name to Thai name in order to achieve success in business. Their Chinese identities somehow have changed to Thai, but they still keep few ways to remind their origins.

The trace of Chinese settlement in Bangkok can be found before the beginning of Chakrit dynasty. For past hundreds of years, several waves of Chinese immigration hit into Thailand from cities of coastal China due to famine and frequent wars in mainland

China. The oversea trading between China and Thailand has brought great number of migration to Bangkok from Zhang-Lin (漳林), Swa-Tou Chao-Zhou (汕頭潮州) and HaiK'ou HaiNan (海口海南). (Figure 2. 1) According to statistical data of Chinese concentration in 1947, Bangkok and its surrounding provinces have highest concentration of Chinese. (Figure 2. 2) (Skinner 1957) Chinese community in Bangkok has expanded and gradually become dominant group for Thai economy and society.





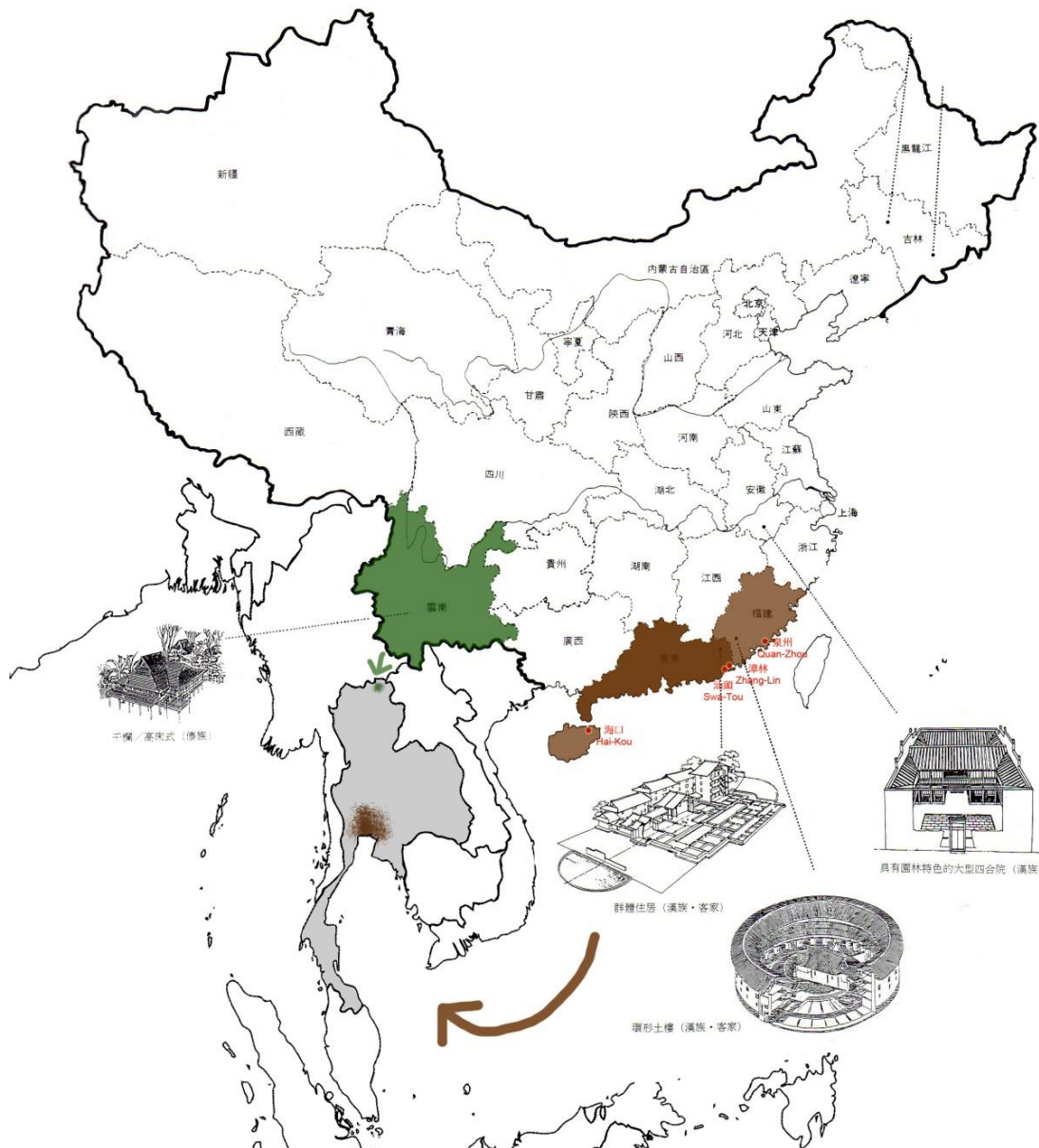


Figure 2. 1 Chinese residences and migration movement. Original source: 茂木計一郎, 稻次敏郎 et al. 1996, (additional edited by author)

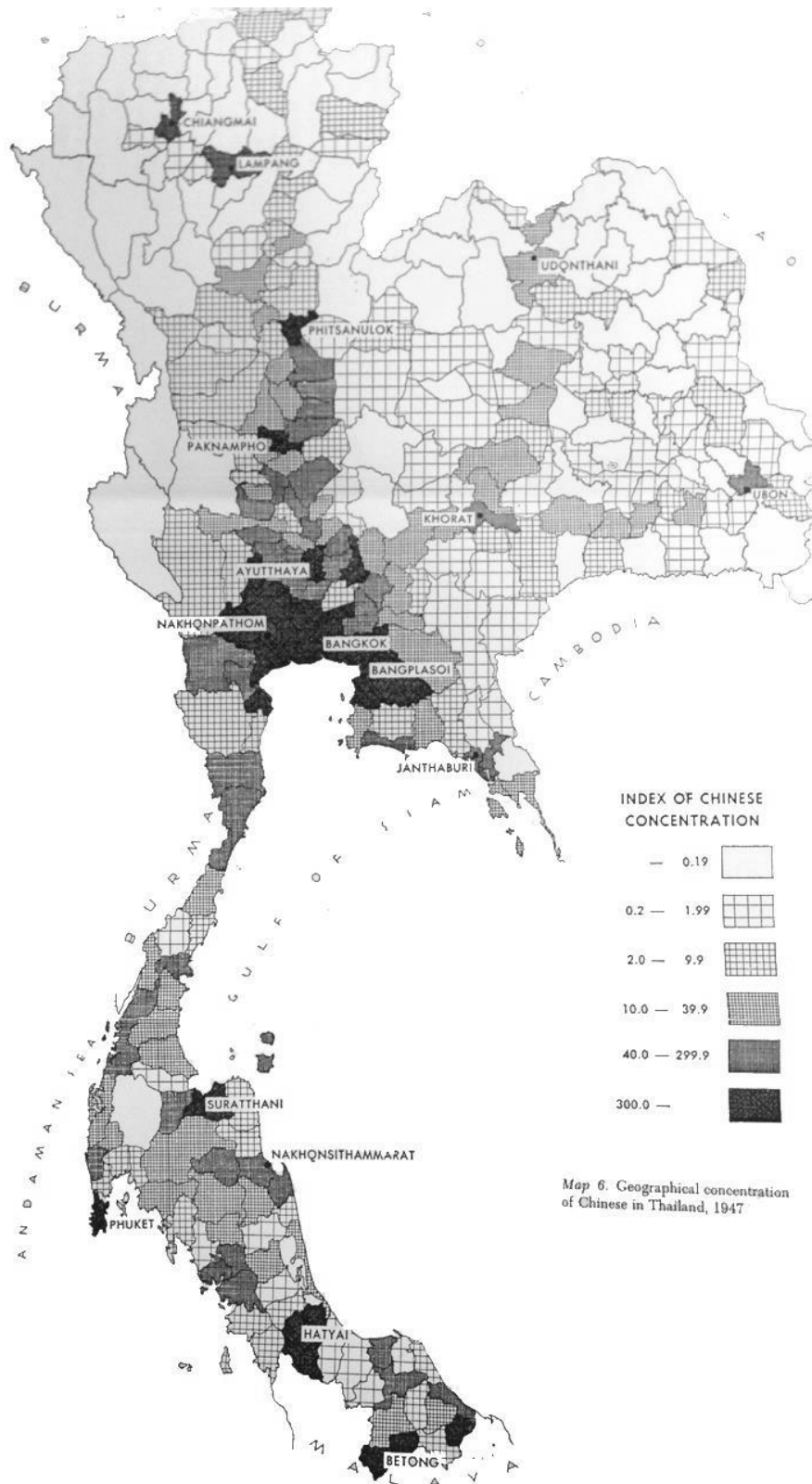


Figure 2. 2 Concentration of Chinese in Thailand shows the very high density in middle of Thailand. (Skinner 1957)

Shophouse is the most common typology of building that we can see in Bangkok and throughout the whole country, and the shophouses in Bangkok are distinctive in appearance and compared to shophouses in other places of Southeast Asia.

Great amounts of shophouses with unified style and spatial arrangement response the increasing demand of residence for immigration waves. This study focuses on the relationship between shophouses in Bangkok and Chinese immigrants in the aspect of socio-economic and architectural development of shophouse. By analyzing physical aspect of shophouses, lots of evidences can tell how those people start their expatriated lives here with their impoverished economic conditions and influence of social policy at that time. This period of history is important to Thai society so that we should understand deeper from architectural perspective as well, and Bangkok's shophouse can be deemed as the representative of this particular history. Therefore, this study addresses the significance of shophouses and Chinese immigrants from observation of an old Chinese community, Tha-tien.

## **2.2 The relationships between China and Thailand**

### **2.2.1 Before Bangkok city established**

The relationship between China and Thailand can be traced back to Sukhothai peirod starting with presenting tribute to each other. In the past, China had claimed its importance in Asia and had putted neighboring countries as subsidiary states. The mutual-presenting tributes had been held continuously between two kingdoms. It also facilitates oversea trading. At that time, people who were given privilege of trading were relatives of Chinese royalty, yet kings of Thailand had assigned Chinese merchants in Thailand as middlemen. At that time, Chinese immigrants were settled near Ayutthaya, and Bangkok was just a small village.

During KangXi's reign of Qing dynasty, numerous natural disasters cause famine in Chao-Zhou, China. In 1722, KangXi emperor had started purchased rice in order to

solve the famine in coastal China. The rice-purchase policy is the key to start the page of overseas trading between these two countries. At that time, the main gate for trading was Zhang-Lin port in Chao-Zhou. There were two kinds of people emigrated from Chao-Zhou to Thailand, which is Chinese merchants for trading and farmers with bankruptcy.

Under Sakdina system, the king is the only owner of kingdom, and people were granted fiefdom with different size based on their social status. There were four levels: noble, government officers, civilians and slaves, and only the civilians and slaves have the obligations of cultivating those lands. (Lee 2003) Chinese were excluded of Sakdina system may be the reason for their dominant role of overseas trading. Chinese had been granted the authority of overseas trading by the kings since Ayutthaya period.

The relationship between China and Thailand had developed to further step after the war in 1765. After Siamese lost their capital in Ayutthaya, King Taksin and his fellows established new capital in Thonburi, the west side of old Bangkok. The construction of new capital required lots of artisans and workers. During this time, lots of Chinese artisans seized this opportunity coming to Thailand with their techniques and construction equipment. Meanwhile, clay, cement and lime were the major outputs from China to Thailand. Chinese communities were settled along the river on both sides. (鄭午樓, 鄭鷹年 et al. 2003)

### 2.2.2 Chinese settlement in Bangkok city

The first Chinese community was located in the vacancy of the grand palace area, and most of Chinese people here were from Chao-Zhou. In 1782, Rama I established Chakrit dynasty and reset the capital from Thonburi to the east of Chao Phraya river. He gave order to Chinese community move to Sampheng area. (Bunnag 1991)

Trading is the main source of national income in the beginning of Chakrit dynasty. Thai government gave preferential treatment of tax to Chinese merchants. During Rama I to IV (1782-1853), mutual tributes were conducting frequently which retain Chinese

flow into Thailand.

Since 18 century, western countries revealed their ambitions to Asia which caused several wars and unequal treaties. Unstable situations result in Chinese waves to Thailand and other countries. The opium war in China during 1839-1842 caused lots of refugees from coastal China came to Thailand for survive. New comers would choose to live near Chinese community so that old Chinese can provide them working opportunities. The Chinese community in Bangkok had expanded gradually.

### 2.2.3 Great expansion of Chinese settlement after mid-19th century

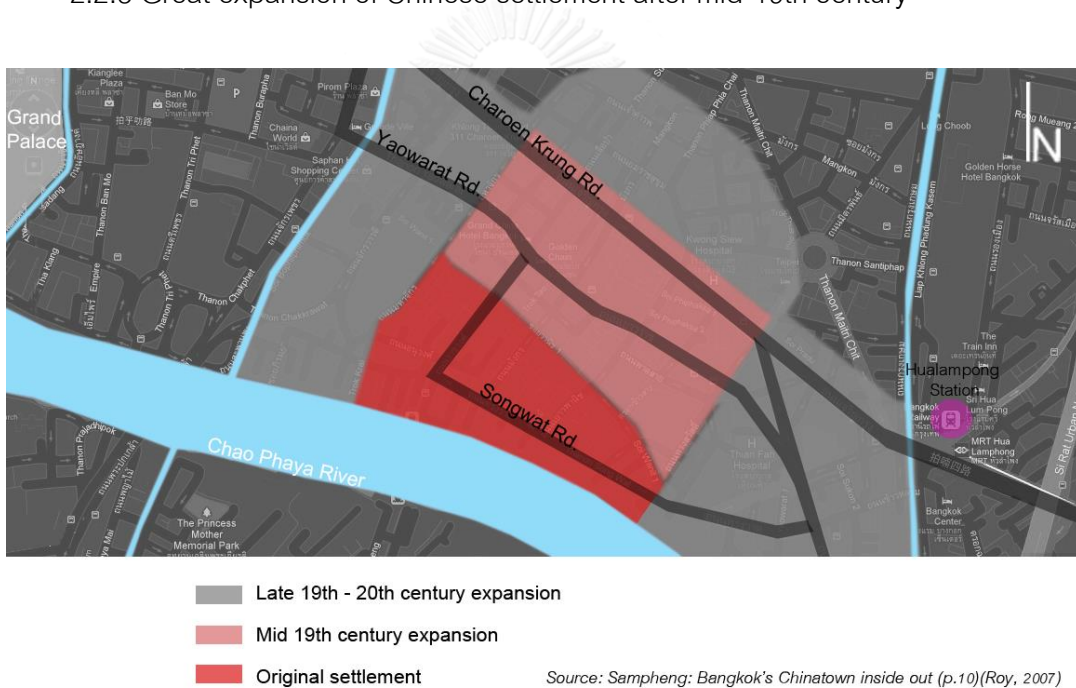


Figure 2. 3 Expansion of Sampheng district (Roy 2007)(Redrew by author)

The Chinese community in Bangkok has largely expanded due to two points, bowring treaty in 1855 and arrival of steamship. This treaty entirely opened the trading gate of Thailand to not only Chinese but the west. At the same time, Thailand was gradually changed from water-based to land-based life.

In the period following the Bowring treaty with England, the Sampheng community and neighboring area had expanded and spread out along canals and roads. The kings

gave order to construct many roads in order to serve the increasing demand of trading. Charoen Krung road in 1861, Silom road in 1861, and Yaowarat road in 1900 were built and sooner they became the most flourish area in Bangkok. With the arrival of road, electric tram was introduced into Bangkok. (鄭午樓, 鄭鷹年 et al. 2003) The arrival of road and booming commercial behavior may give rise to preference of shophouse. Shophouse definitely has a positive effect on commerce with its architectural characteristics.

The occurrence of Bowring treaty has represented a watershed of the history of Chinese immigrants' in Thailand. The king Rama IV was perceptive in the spike of trading. In his reign, several new roads were constructed outside of old city. Chaopraya River had welcomed a flock of ships with goods from China and the west. At that time, the biggest Chinese commercial area, Sampheng district, had largely expended. (Figure 2. 3) In 1860, new port, Swa-Tou port, were finished and has replaced Zhang-Lin port. The arrival of steamships replaced traditional Chao-Zhou red-head boat, which can load more people and goods than before. Oversea trading had been the king's privilege, and Chinese had assisted the king with oversea trading for hundreds of years. Especially during Rama IV and V period, trading is the major income of country. As time goes by, Chinese is in dominant place among Thai economic.

On another hand, the situation in China went from bad to worse. More and more people, especially from Chao-zhou, seeking chance to survive in Thailand. Most of Chinese people came to Thailand were impoverished. People from Chao-zhou are good at cultivating skill which had contributed to agriculture in Thailand. Productions and exports of pepper and sugar cane had reached peak during mid-19th century to 20th century. New comers normally set their feet in city, especially near Chinese settlements, and make living with jobs of construction works, small business, food vendors and cultivating high economic efficiency goods.

In this period, shophouses became the main typology of building for those Chinese immigrants because its combination of residence and business field. Many shophouses

were built along the new roads, for instance, Charoen Krung road. Furthermore, the construction of shophouses is relatively cheap and fast which correspond the increasing population and business needs. This highlights the importance of how shophouses would be an appropriate typology for Chinese immigrants' social economic status. The arrival of road and booming commercial behavior give rise to preference of shophouse. Its architectural characteristics definitely have positive effect on commerce.

#### 2.2.4 The last embracement of Chinese immigration

The ending of Qing dynasty embarked awful social situation in China. The first civil war, 1927-1937, between communist party and Kumintang party led population of Chinese emigrants to another peak. According to Skinner's statistic materials of populations of 1881—1955, during 1917-1932, populations of departure were much less than arrivals, which address the fact that the bad situation in China make Chinese immigrants cannot go back home. The second civil war during 1945-1949 had pushed Chinese people to abroad. (Table 1. 1)

Great demand of residential spaces may be the reason for great numbers of shophouses in Bangkok. Lots of shophouses were built in this period along roads and markets. From time to time, this period may be the turning point of Chinese temporary life to permanent life in Thailand.

However, due to contrary status in WWII (1939-1945), there were several confrontations in Bangkok between Chinese and Thais. More and more policies restricting Chinese in Thailand were executed. After 2nd civil war, China is ruled by the communist, they strictly controlled migration and conducting revolution within mainland. Simply stated, the history of Chinese immigrants to Thailand comes to an end.

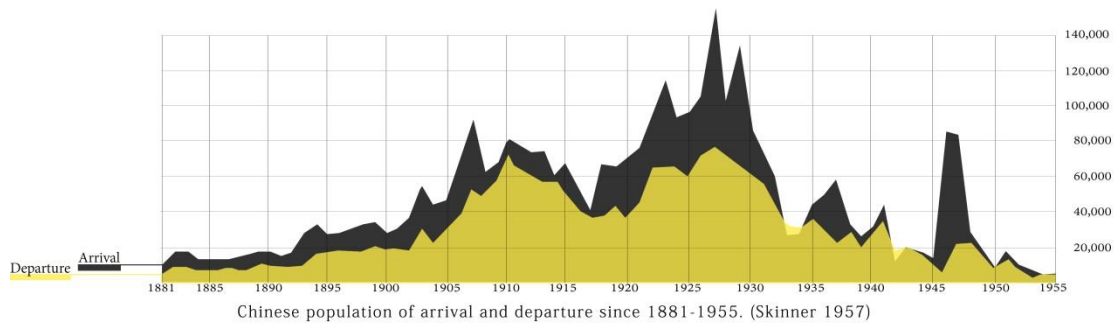


Table 1. 1 Chinese population of arrival and departures since 1881-1955 (Skinner 1957)(redrew by the author)

## 2.3 The policy of Chinese immigrants of Thai government

### 2.3.1 The development of immigration act in Thailand

With Chinese population growth, several policies of Thailand specifically toward Chinese immigrants included aspects of nationality, educations, tax, and ownership of land. Preferential treatment on customs appears Thailand's positive attitude toward Chinese immigrants.

Until the beginning of 20th century, decaying situation in China and opposite grounds in WWII cause Thai policies and alteration of Thai's attitude. At that time, lots of Chinese merchants and business dealers have Thai name and Chinese name on their signs in order to avoiding obstacles from Thai customs department. The Thai national law in 1913 stipulates that Chinese descendant born in Thailand can be Thai nationality. Chinese language was once forbidden to teach which result in shutdown of many private Chinese schools. The policies somehow stimulate naturalization of Chinese to Thai and its own identity.

### 2.3.2 Limitation of possession of land

The limitation of possession of land is closely related to urban development of shophouses in Bangkok. After 1932 Thailand has changed into constitutional monarchy,



the name of this country has changed from Kingdom of Siam to Thailand. People finally have rights to own lands. However, great majority of land are still belonged to royalty and noble.

In 1943, land pertaining to aliens act has been practiced. The land department has been requested to manage carefully all transactions for sale or mortgaging land in order to prevent land being owned indirectly by aliens. Actually before practice of this act, Chinese people and other aliens are forbidden to own land. Instead of buying land with their own names, Chinese people borrowed Thai people's name. (Coughlin 1953)

The restriction of ownership is highly pertinent to development of shophouses in Bangkok. New type of transaction pattern was long-lease land. The noble or royalty who own lands provides a long-lease contract of land to Chinese developers for several decades. This practice results in cheap construction and crowding of the land with typical compartment dwellings. Chinese people can only rent residence. And shophouse is the most economical typology in terms of land use and construction cost.

Restriction of possession brings about master plan of shophouses. Due to the great increasing population of alien in Thailand, Thai government has set this policy in order to control ownership of national property. However, the consequence is bunch of shophouses were built by landowners or constructors to provide Chinese rent them with long-term contract. In Rama V period, the king gave order to build shophouses throughout Bangkok city for lease, for example, Tha-tien market is one of the cases. This might explain the unified appearances of shophouses in Bangkok.

Furthermore, the way they expand the house while family expanding is unlike shophouses in China or other Southeast Asian cities which might also because of the possession restriction. Instead, when family growing, renting adjacent shophouse and building upper floor within same shophouse are the ways solving the need of larger space.

## 2.4 Chinese residence

The initial living unit is composed with a hall (堂) in the middle attaching to entrance and two bedrooms in left and right. Hall is the first priority among all the spaces, it is the place worshipping our ancestors and gods. Therefore, it should be the brightest space facing to the front. In Keiichirou Mogi's research of Chinese residents, he categorizes Chinese residences with sky-well into two main categories: expanding living unit and grouped living units. Basically, it reflects two type of transformation of residence when families grow. (茂木計一郎, 稻次敏郎 et al. 1996)

The first category, expanding living unit means the house enlarged with bigger hall, back yard (後院), rooms and livestock hut. The whole families still share the same entrance and hall under the same big house.

The second category, grouped living units such as shophouse expand with the same quantity of unit. When family grows, the new family moves to another unit same as original one. They have their own sky-well, hall and rooms. Shophouses are built next to water, main transportation in the past, eventually the area turn into commercial area. Front hall is provided with commercial value, and the new unit will be built with independent structure (in Chinese called Jin-luo 進落) separated by sky-well (Tien-Jing 天井) from back part of shophouse. As demand of space increasing, shophouse is expanded linearly with several Jin-luos and sky-wells. (Figure 2. 4) Shophouse with one bay is called Kai-Jian (開間). By the construction technique improved, 2 bays or 3 bays of shophouses can be seen with flexible use.

The perception of characteristics of Chinese shophouses provides us to be conscious of similarity and dissimilarity compared to shophouses in Bangkok. The dissimilarity of shophouse expansion can be related to the restriction of possession which also reform the development of shophouses.

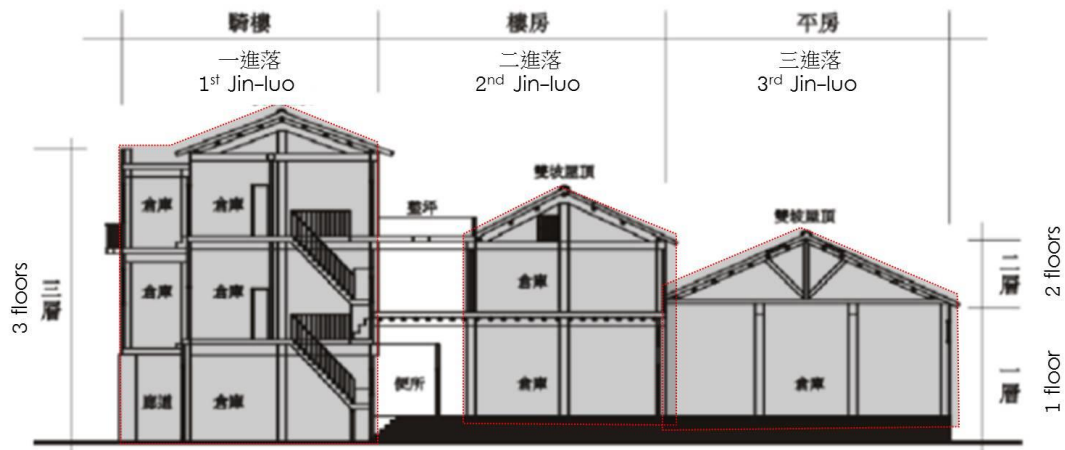


圖 4-1 泉州中山南路 9 號「騎樓式」街屋建築形態及進落區分說明圖

(資料來源：本研究依現況繪製)

Figure 2. 4 Traditional Chinese shophouse expands with Jin-luo and skywell. (Chu 2005)  
(additional edited by the author)

## 2.5 Shophouses in Bangkok

Tons of studies of Bangkok's shophouses have been made, but none of them directly address out the issue between shophouses and Chinese immigrants. In Chatsiri's master thesis, it studies shophouse from three parts: residents, community and related regulations. Based on those findings, this study proposes improved design of shophouse and improvement of siting without increasing construction cost. (Thanmarom 1982)

Another doctoral thesis points out problems of utilizing shophouse as business and residence. It surveys the satisfactions of shophouse residents by questionnaires. Most of interviewees think that the main reason they chose to live in shophouse rather than other type is because of the great location closed to transportation and convenience for family generating income. According to the survey, if business is no longer active, more than half of interviewee would move out and choose to stay in detached house. This result indicates users who live in shophouse have strong intention of doing business at that time, and shophouse has advantages for settling life. (Sachakul 1982)

## 2.6 Chinese shophouses

Some researchers declare shophouse is introduced to Thailand by Chinese immigrants.(Thanmarom 1982) Therefore, it is necessary to acquire knowledge of Chinese shophouse in order to read Bangkok's shophouse in a different perspective.

Several studies of shophouses in Quanzhou city (泉州市) with solid physical database have been made due to the significance of shophouses in commercial area. Since Song dynasty, Quanzhou used to be one of the main ports for oversea trading until the appearance of new port in Shantou (汕頭) in 1858. (Chu 2005)

In Chu Chi-ming's master thesis, Fujian-style shophouses attached to main commercial street in Quanzhou city are surveyed in depth. The findings include three parts: spatial utilizations, characteristics of structure and materials and front facades.(Chu 2005) These shophouses are typical type of shophouse in coastal China, it used to be the stereotype for shophouses in Taiwan and other cities in Southeast Asia. With this knowledge of shophouses, it explains difference of transformation with partial factors. The government policy, dissimilar socio-economic background and compositions of users can contribute factors to differences between shophouses in Bangkok and China.

In traditional Chinese shophouse, the front façade is the main symbol representing the family's wealth and reputation. (Figure 2. 5) The façade of shophouse has been discussed in an in-depth research taking scope of shophouses in Dihua street Taipei city (迪化街), it used to be a prosperous commercial street as well. The results introduce the proportion of column and window, material uses and structures. (Chang 2010)



Figure 2. 5 Front facade of shophouses in Taiwan with distinctive decoration which show wealth. (taken by the author)

## 2.7 Development of old Bangkok and the modernization of Bangkok

In Ayuthaya period, Bangkok was just a small village near Salaseena temple located the west of river. In 1522, a short-cut canal was dug for convenience of foreign merchants, and it becomes current Chao Phaya river. Community had expanded along the junction of river and canal. At that time, Chinese community was settled in the east of river until the establishment of Chakri dynasty in 1782, and they were assigned to move to south of grand palace, Sampheng area. (Thaitakoo 1992)(Figure 2. 7)

Chinese who is out of Sakdina system mostly assists the king in oversea trades. Especially after Bowring treaty in 1855, maritime trades bring flourish scene to riversides near the old Bangkok city. Sampheng district once became the biggest commercial area supporting maritime trades. At this point, numerous foreigners has settled in Bangkok as the king granted permit to live in certain area along the river.

On the other hand, the king had being aware the necessity of convenient roads in relation to booming trading. Many roads have been built during the fourth and fifth king period with modern facilities, such as Charoen Krung road and Yaowarat road. (Pimonsathean 2009) (Figure 2.8) Moreover, the shophouses were built adjacently to

roads, and Chinese community spread out with them. The new roads with modern facilities accomplish prosperities in Chinatown. It is turning point of the way of living from water-based to land-based. The commercial behavior has been changed from floating market to fresh market surrounded by shophouses with 3 sides. (Figure 2.6)

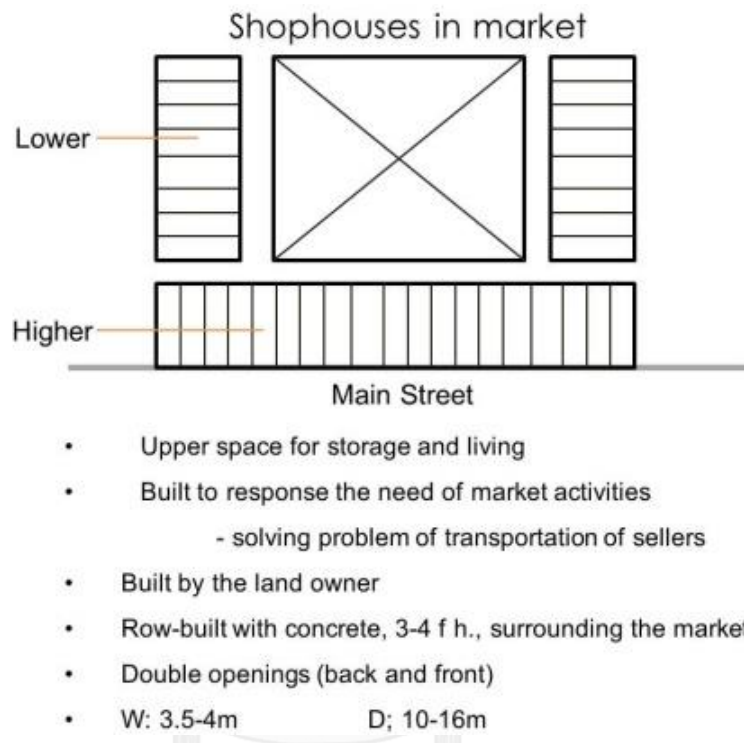


Figure 2. 6 Fresh market surrounded by shophouse. (1982) (redrew by the author)

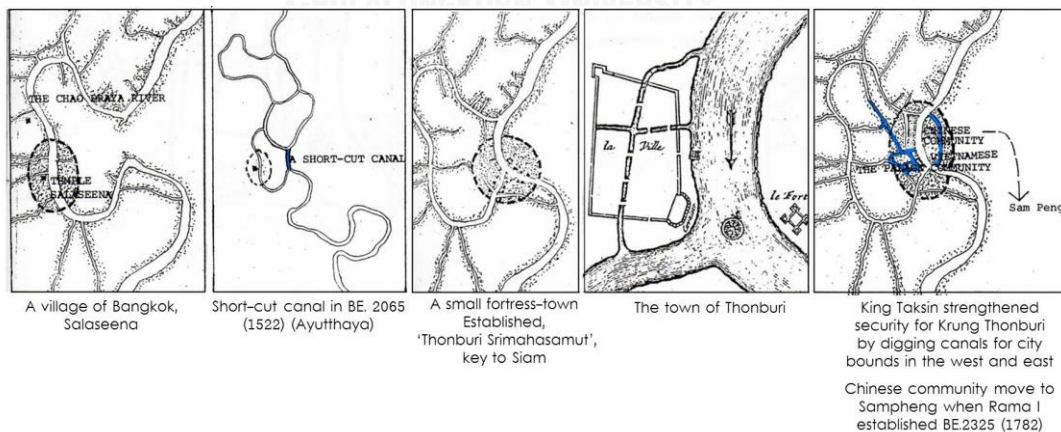


Figure 2. 7 Historical development of Bangkok before Chakrit dynasty. (Thaitakoo 1992)(additional edited by the author)



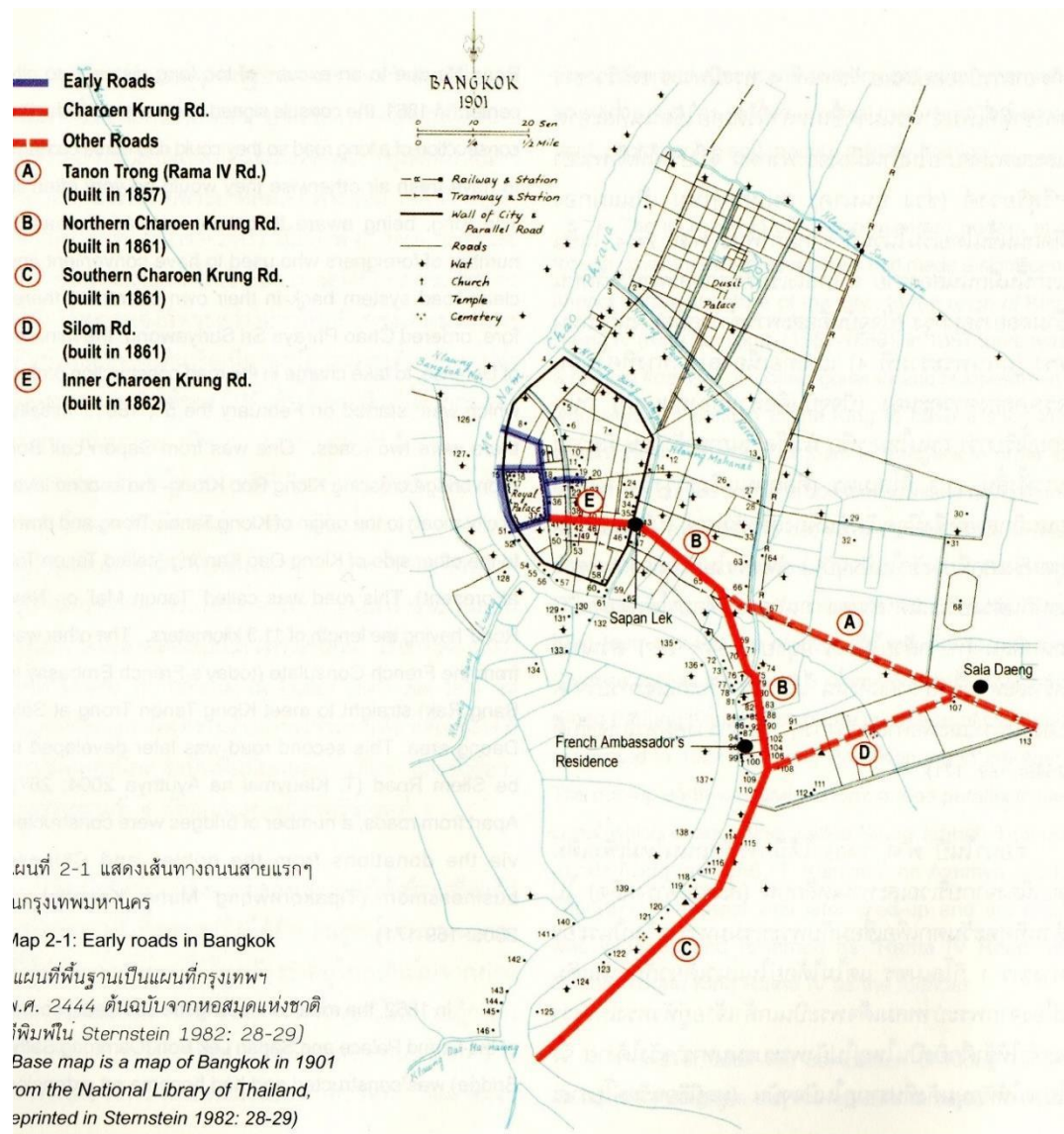


Figure 2. 8 Roads on map of Bangkok in 1901 (Pimonsathean 2009) p.28

## 2.8 Economical life in shophouse

Chinese people from China were mostly low educated from impoverished family. Their purposes to come to Thailand are making money for their family in mainland. Their initial life here are starting with small business such as street food vendors selling rice noodle with fish and pork ball, artisans, farmers of Chinese vegetable and grocery shops. Shophouses would be perfect typology of residence for them to stay due to the mixed use space and cheap rental cost. (Figure 2. 9)

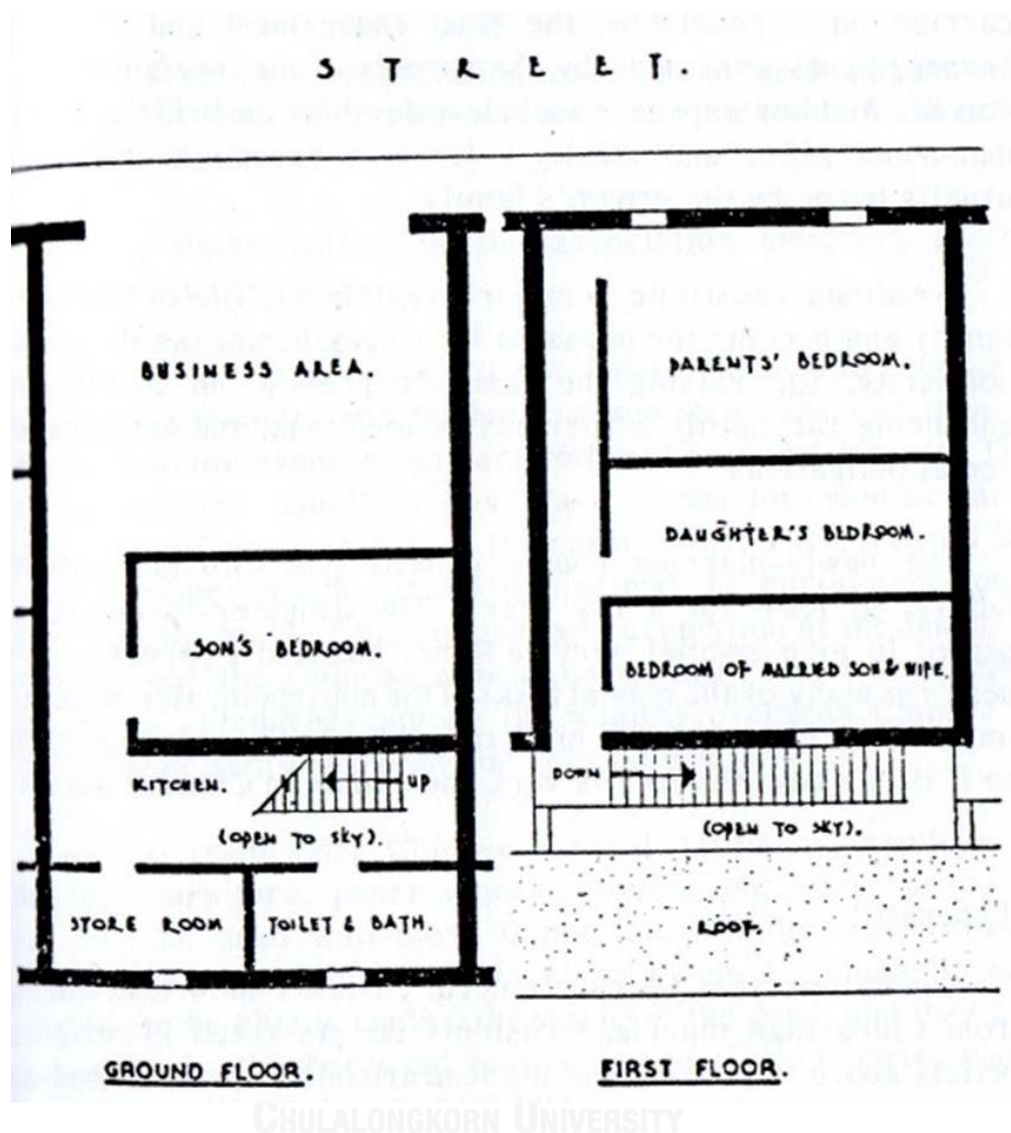


Figure 2. 9 Typical Chinese house in Bangkok(Coughlin 1960)

## 2..9 From temporary to permanent life

The first time they set their foot on the boat, they would not know that this was one way trip. In their mind, they thought it was a temporary exiling life until the declining situation in mainland China cuts their ways back to hometown. The reason this study concludes the prevailing social situation is Chinese' attitudes of life towards the way using their houses.

Compared to shophouses in other cities of Southeast Asia, most of shophouses in Bangkok have one common characteristic which is their drab looks. One of the reasons



might be the fact that residents do not own the house. Secondly, the shophouses for them are just provisional place to stay. Deep in their mind, it might not be called as home. Their main purposes are earning money and sending back to their real home.

Every demand has been simplified into the easiest way in the temporary life. However, Chinese people, just like other people around the world, rely on their religious beliefs. The necessity of their Buddhism beliefs has been shown in the form of red papers with gods' figures which posted on the main wall facing to street.

As time goes by, a few successful Chinese merchants bloom their businesses here and donated money to build Chinese Buddhist temples near Chinese communities. Chinese schools, private post offices, pawnshops, industrial organization (商會) and geo-based hometown associations (同鄉會) were appeared exclusively to serve Chinese communities. Chinese social system was gradually built among this foreign country which means their lives were turning to permanent. (潘少紅 2012)



## CHAPTER 3

### PHYSICAL STUDY OF SHOPHOUSES AND THA-TIEN COMMUNITY

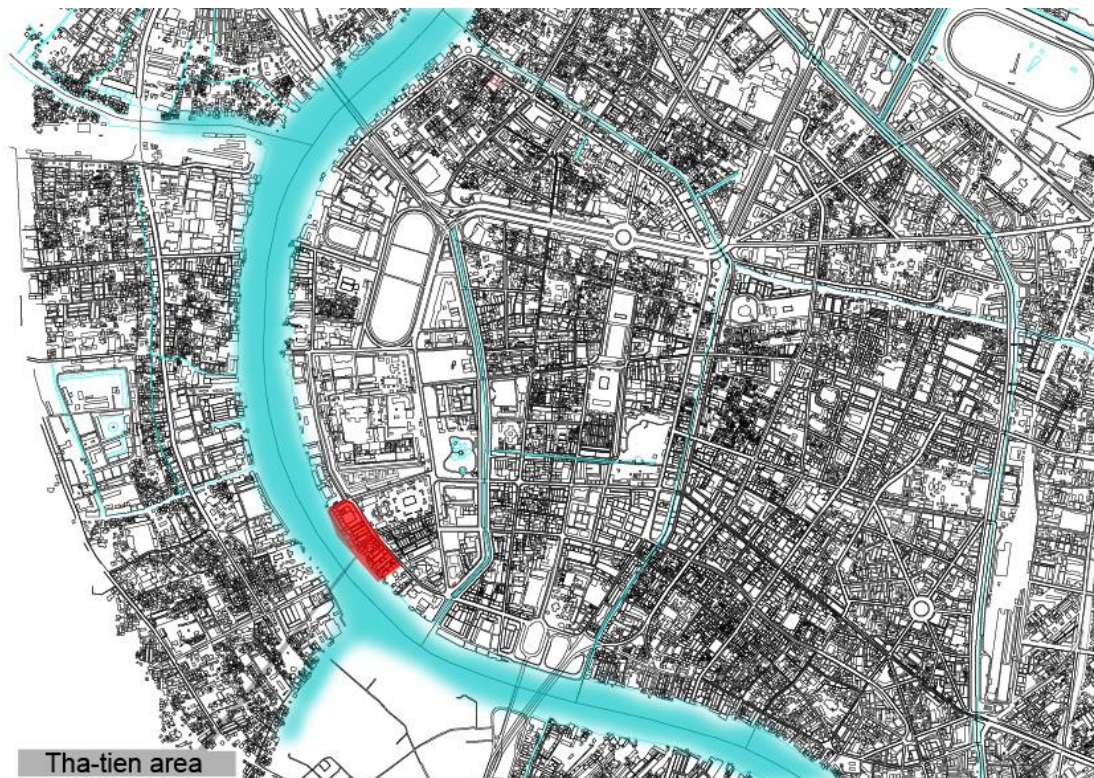


Figure 3. 1 Location of Tha-tien: southwest of the Grand palace

#### 3.1 The history of Tha-tien

Tha-tien community is a Chinese community located in the west of Wat Pho, southwest of the Grand palace. Tha-tien used to be small Chinese community before king Rama I built capital city. One of forts was located in Tha-tien, and the fort and city wall were demolished before 1932. During King Rama V period, Tha-tien market was built, meanwhile, the king gave order to expand south of the market to the river. Tha-tien market has become a main market selling Chinese foods, salty egg, palm sugar, such as dried fish and dried seafood. (Thaitakoo 1992)(Figure 3. 2, Figure 3. 3)



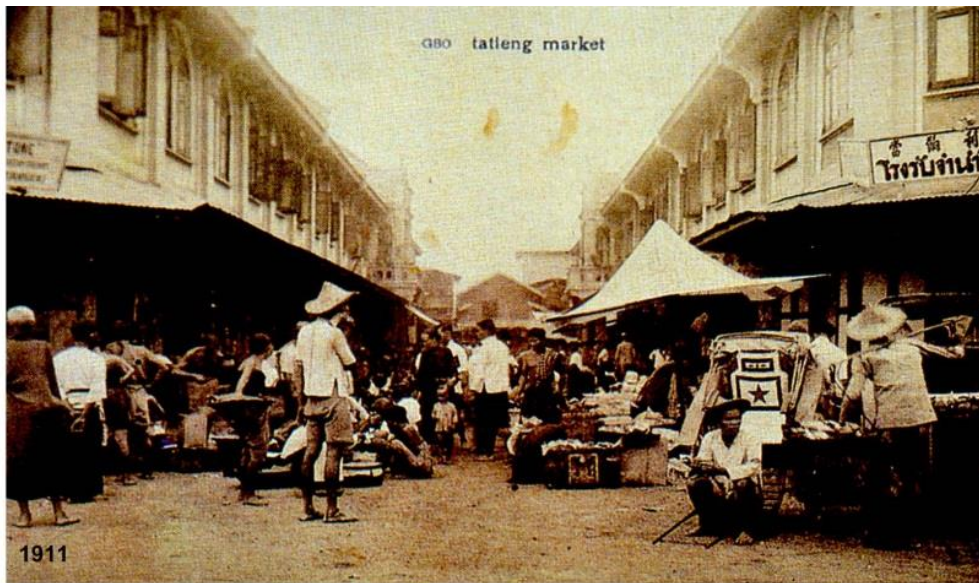


Figure 3. 2 Photo of Tha-tien market in 1911 (source from Prof. Pirasri Povatong, faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University)



Figure 2. 10 One of piers of Tha-tien in 1956 (Source from Horace Bristol, Corbis Corporation, United States)



Figure 3. 3 Fried seafood in Tha-tien market (taken by the author in September, 2014)

Tha-tien has strong connections with the Grand palace and Wat Pho in both economic aspect and religious aspect. According to local Chinese elders' oral depictions, Tha-tien used to have 6-8 piers serving trades and transportation of Wat Pho's visitors. Soi Pratu Nokyang once used to be the private aisle for monks connecting Wat Pho to the river.

There are four ancient Chinese shrines, one Chinese community center and one former Chinese elementary school currently used as warehouse. 33 Chinese signs can still be found outside of shophouses from the range of Soi Tha-tien to the south. All of these evidences confirm the truth of Chinese activities in Tha-tien.

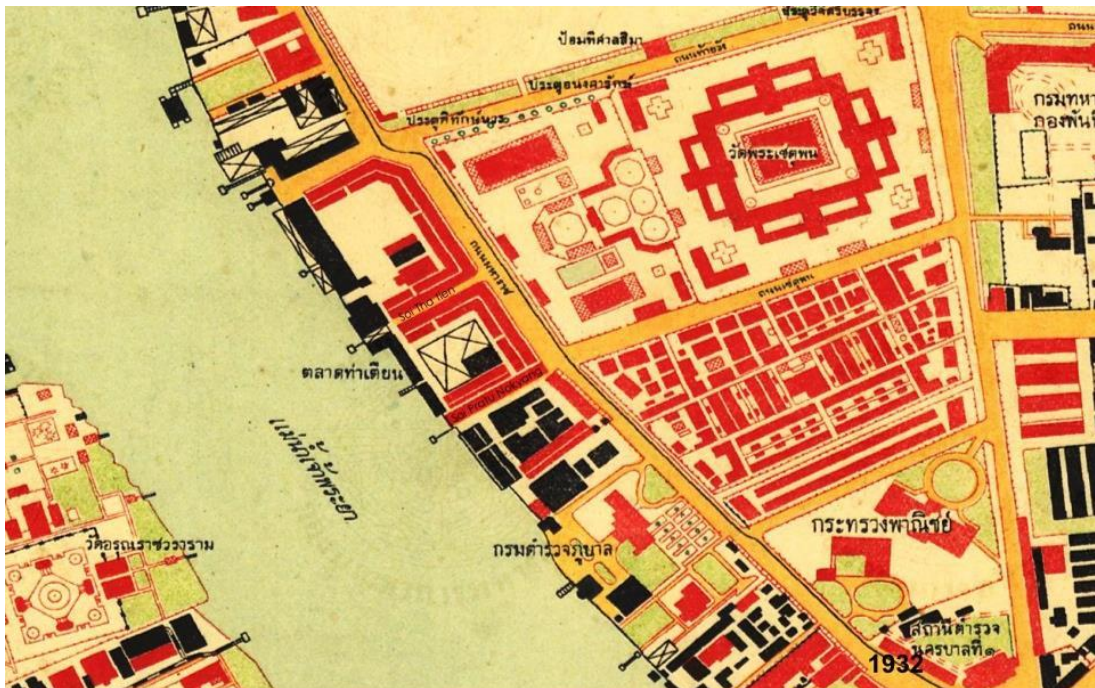


Figure 3. 4 Map of Tha-tien community in 1932 (source from faculty of architecture, Chulalongkorn University)

### 3.2 Significance of Tha-tien

When people talk about Chinese community in Bangkok, Yaowarat road, as known as Chinatown, will be mentioned at first place. However, the significance of Tha-tien should not be neglected.

Its geographical location makes this community witness the whole development of old Bangkok city not only in the aspect of economic but also landscape. Meanwhile, because of its complicated possessions of lands, it keeps several looks from time to time.

Tha-tien is composed by three parts, markets, warehouse and residences. Wooden rowhouses, the oldest settlement, can be seen near the riverside. Shophouses in Tha-tien can be categorized into 10 types based on their appearances. In the south side, contemporary buildings are built independently with own styles.

The Tha-tien community and Tha-tien market are still active as its original way. At



the same time, Tha-tien has gradually changed its position from market-community to tourism-oriented community. Tha-tien pier is the main pier for tourists who visit the Grand palace and Wat Pho. Moreover, tourists get attracted by the great perspective from Tha-tien to Wat Arun. In recent years, hotels, guesthouses and restaurants sprang up in Tha-tien like mushrooms after a spring rain. Some of these new hotels are opened in old shophouses with renovation.

There are many restrictions of development in Tha-tien controlling the landscapes in old Bangkok city for the sake of preserving the meaningful skylines there. It also contributes factors to the unique characteristics of the community.

### **Potentiality for future**

The historical value of Tha-tien is representative of initial life of Chinese immigrants in Bangkok. And the new opportunity is increasing tourist-oriented business. Therefore, the future step of Tha-tien is as a showroom of Bangkok's history. Tourists can obtain authentic experience of local lifestyle by soaking themselves here.

This study proposes new programme into decaying section, the upper spaces of shophouses, with main entrance in the old Chinese school. By inserting more hospitality spaces in original structures, it will bring prosperity again into Tha-tien. The balance between original community and new tourists is concerned carefully by physical design of hotel spaces and tourist circulation.

When discussing about architectural influence by aliens, the exotic appearance is the first thing being discussed, but it is too trivial to acquire the knowledge. Therefore, we need to know all the bigger pictures of this issue, in order to comprehend other factors indirectly influencing architecture.

This study approaches the issue by tracing historical events of mainland China, Thailand, Chinese in Thailand and Thai policy in chronology. The database of history and observation of shophouse lead us to three results. Tha-tien is a small community located in crucial spot of southwest of the Grand palace along Chao Phraya river. It

plays its role during different period. Compared to the most famous Chinese community, Chinatown a.k.a. Yaowarat, Tha-tien has higher value of study of shophouses and Chinese community due to its original look of living.

There are some meaningful factors in Tha-tien such as Tha-tien market, Chinese shrines, shophouses of many kinds and its relationship with surroundings. Lots of evidences in Tha-tien appear to be consistent with social economic behavior in the past.



Figure 3. 5 Scope of Tha-tien shophouses, map of Tha-tien 2014



The scope of study area is to the north of soi Tha-tien and to south of Chakrabongse villas. Shophouses are the main target to discuss in this study. Therefore, temporary structures and new warehouse near the river are excluded. Chakrabongse villas used to be royal palace, and now it is a hotel for tourists. (Figure 3. 5) Tha-tien market is one of crucial factors in this area that cannot be ignored. However, during the investigating period of this study, the market was under construction for renovation. For this reason, the physical aspect of shophouse in Tha-tien market is difficult to acquire.

### 3.3 Historical transformation of Tha-tien

#### 3.3.1 Before arrival of Chakri period

The junction of river and canal was the key to the gate of Ayutthaya. Every boat who wants to enter Ayutthaya has to wait here for permission. In 1522, king made demand to dig a short cut. Some Chao-zhou people had started to settle down in Tha-tien area. Later on in Thonburi period, the king assigned people to dig canals for security of Krung Thonburi. He developed the west and east side of Thonburi into rice fields. His population, Thai, Chinese, Muslim, Raman, Khmer, Laotien, Vietnamese, dispersed within the waterways. (Thaitakoo 1992)

In the study of Tha-tien community and Pakhlong market made by Dhumrangphon in 2007 for the national discovery of museum institution, it records the land use transformations of Tha-tien.

In Ayutthaya period, Tha-tien used to be the cemetery for Thai and western foreigners, and it was under the care of Wat Photharam. In king Taksin period, the frequent trading between Thailand and China contributes to Chinese tribe, mainly from Chao-Zhou. The king Taksin granted the west of Krung Thonburi land, which in present is the location of Grand palace and Tha-tien area, to Phrayarachasetthi, a Chinese with second high position of governmors. (อินทร์จันทร์, ชัยทัต et al. 2007) (Figure 3. 6)

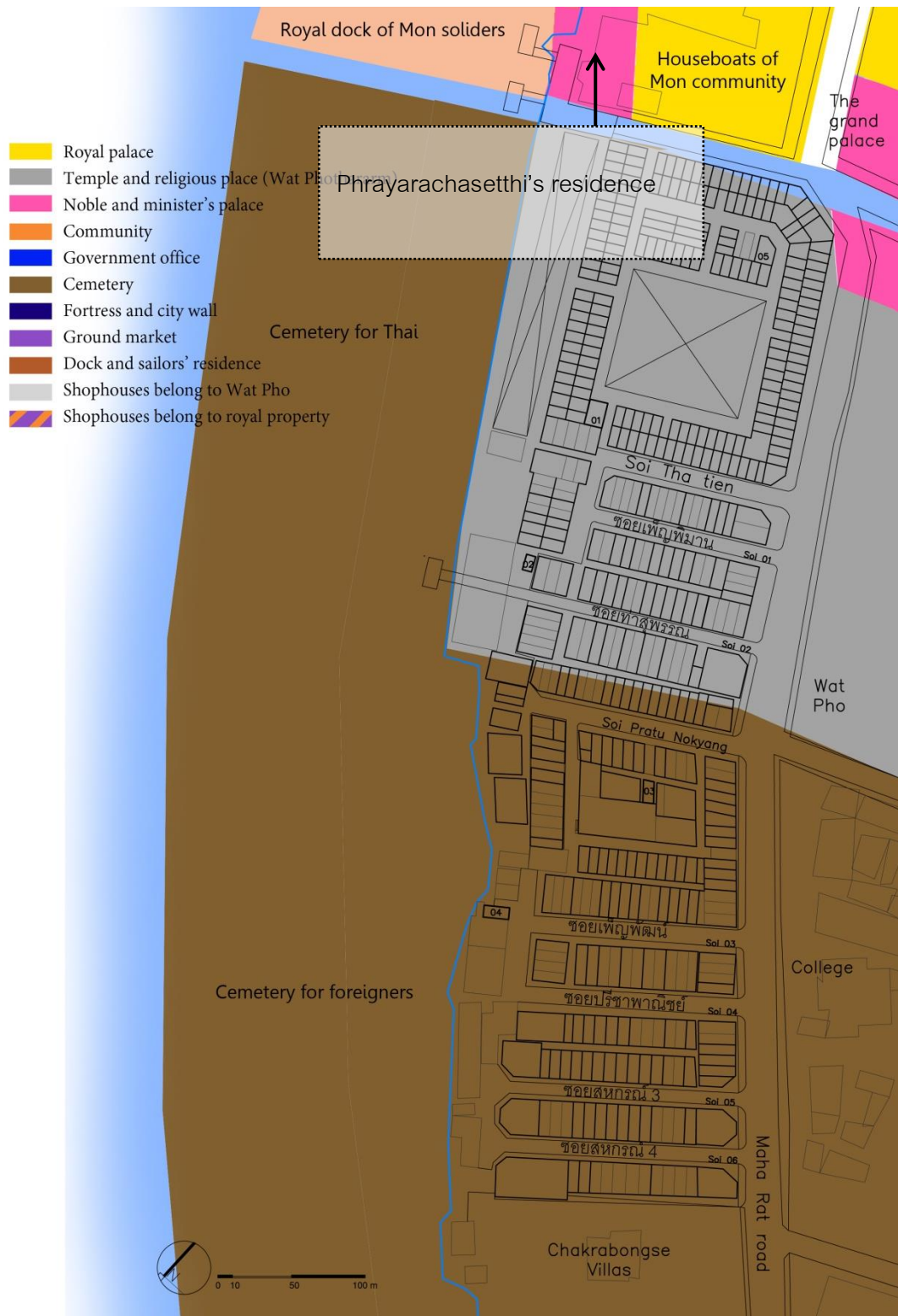


Figure 3. 6 Tha-tien in Thonburi period

### 3.3.2 Early Chakri period

The site of Grand palace was the area where Chinese people used to live. The king built city wall and forts with white-giant appearance in order to protect the Grand palace and the capital. The king also built other palaces for royal relatives surrounding the Grand palace. Foreign communities, Chinese and Portugal, scattered to the north, south and within the city for convenience of trading. (Figure 3. 7)

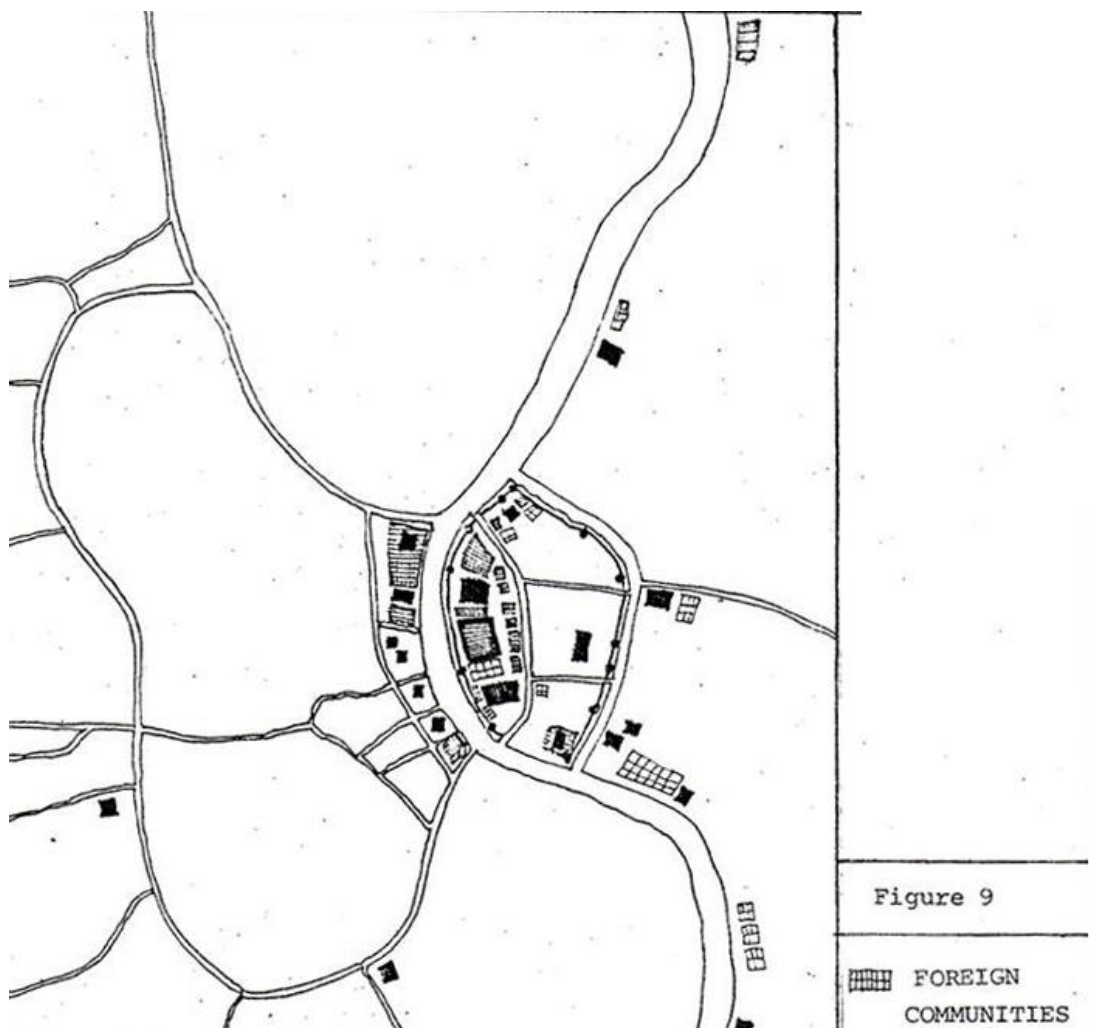


Figure 3. 7 Foreign communities and the city (Thaitakoo 1992)

### 3.3.3 Rama I period (1782-1809)

In king Rama I period, Tha-tien is in three main uses: residences for noble and ministry, community with wooden houses and a part of land belongs to Wat Pho. At that time, the north of Tha-tien was still a canal connecting from Chaophraya River to grand palace. Chinese-Thai community was settled and floating on the river outside of Tha-tien surrounding the royal pier. Two royal governors, Chaophraya Rattanathibet and Chaophraya Phrakung, were the main factor of Chinese settlements in Tha-tien. This is because they were Chinese and for the sake of demonstrating their high social status, they have to have lots of servants which mostly from China. (Figure 3. 8)(อินทร์จันทร์, ชัยทัต et al. 2007)

### 3.3.4 Rama II period (1809-1824)

In this period, spatial structure of Tha-tien wasn't changed that much. The north palace of Tha-tien was assigned to another noble. The canal was filled to land-based market outside from city wall to inside, and the palace above to the market was used as warehouse. The grand palace was expanded to the south attaching Wat Pho. (Figure 3. 9)

### 3.3.5 Rama III period (1824-1851)

In this period, a part of Wat Pho's property was used as dock and royal sailors' residences. Those residences still can be found nowadays with 1-floor rowhouse. (Figure 3. 10)

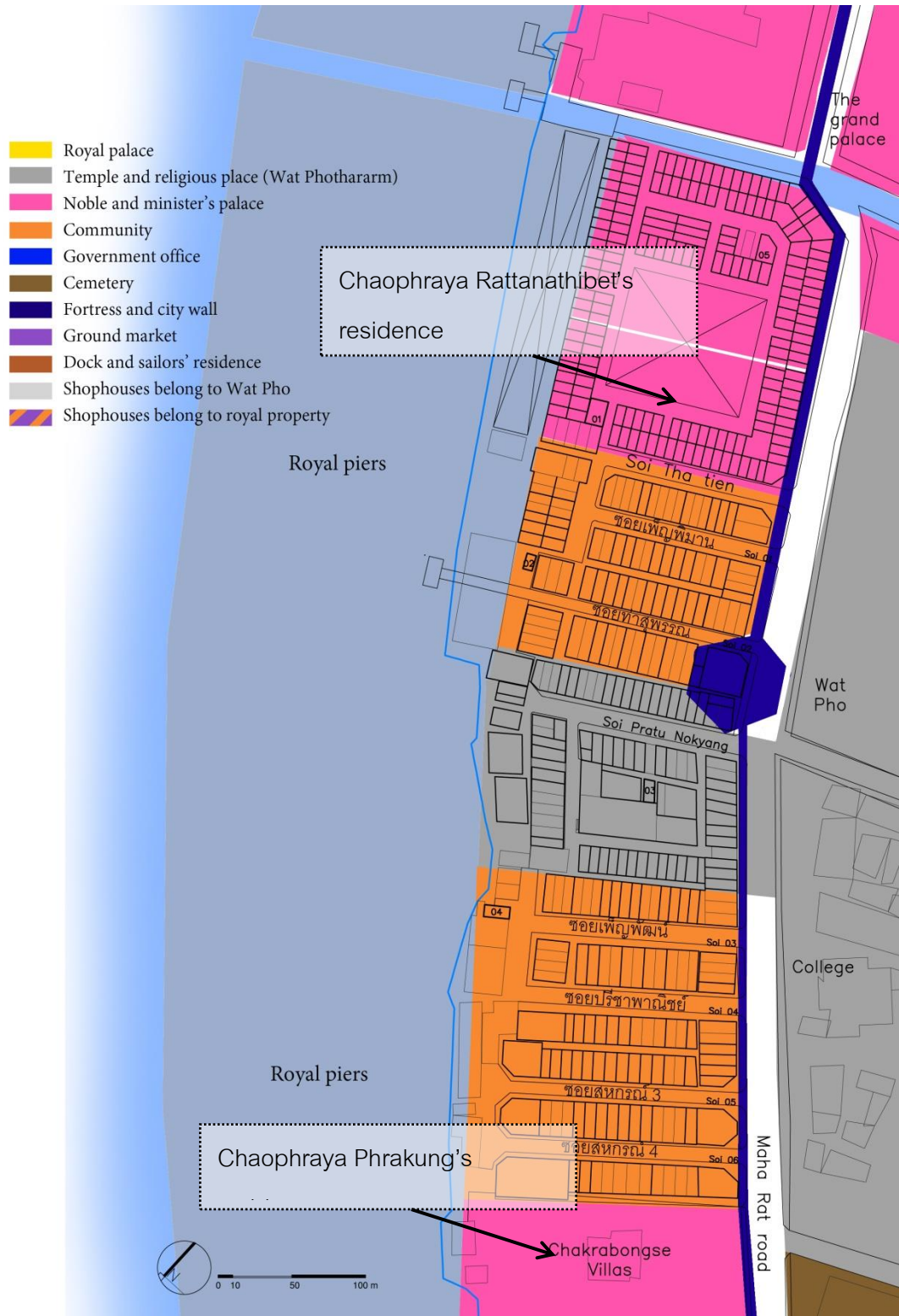


Figure 3. 8 Tha-tien in Rama 1 (1782-1809)



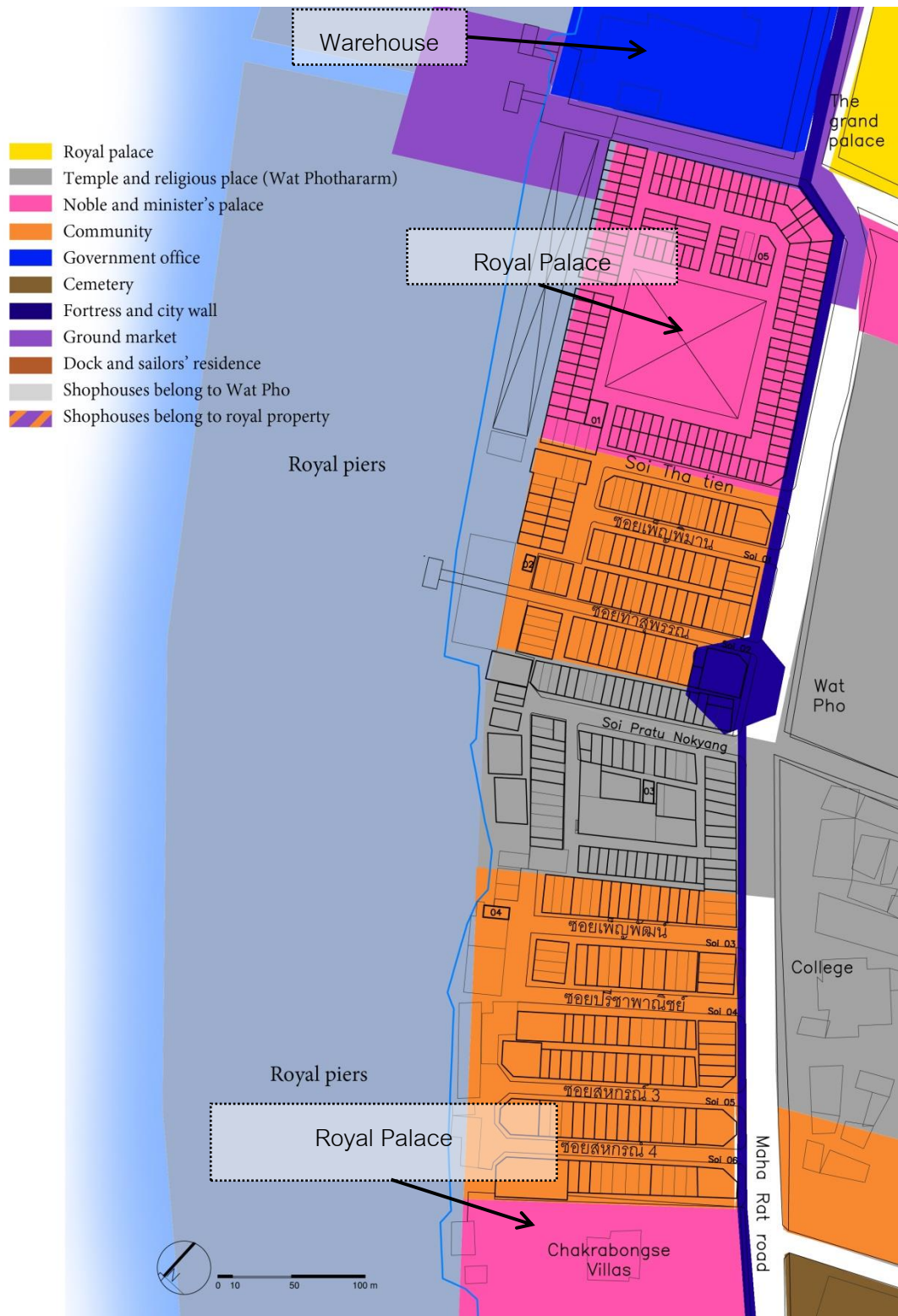


Figure 3. 9 Tha-tien in Rama II (1809-1824)

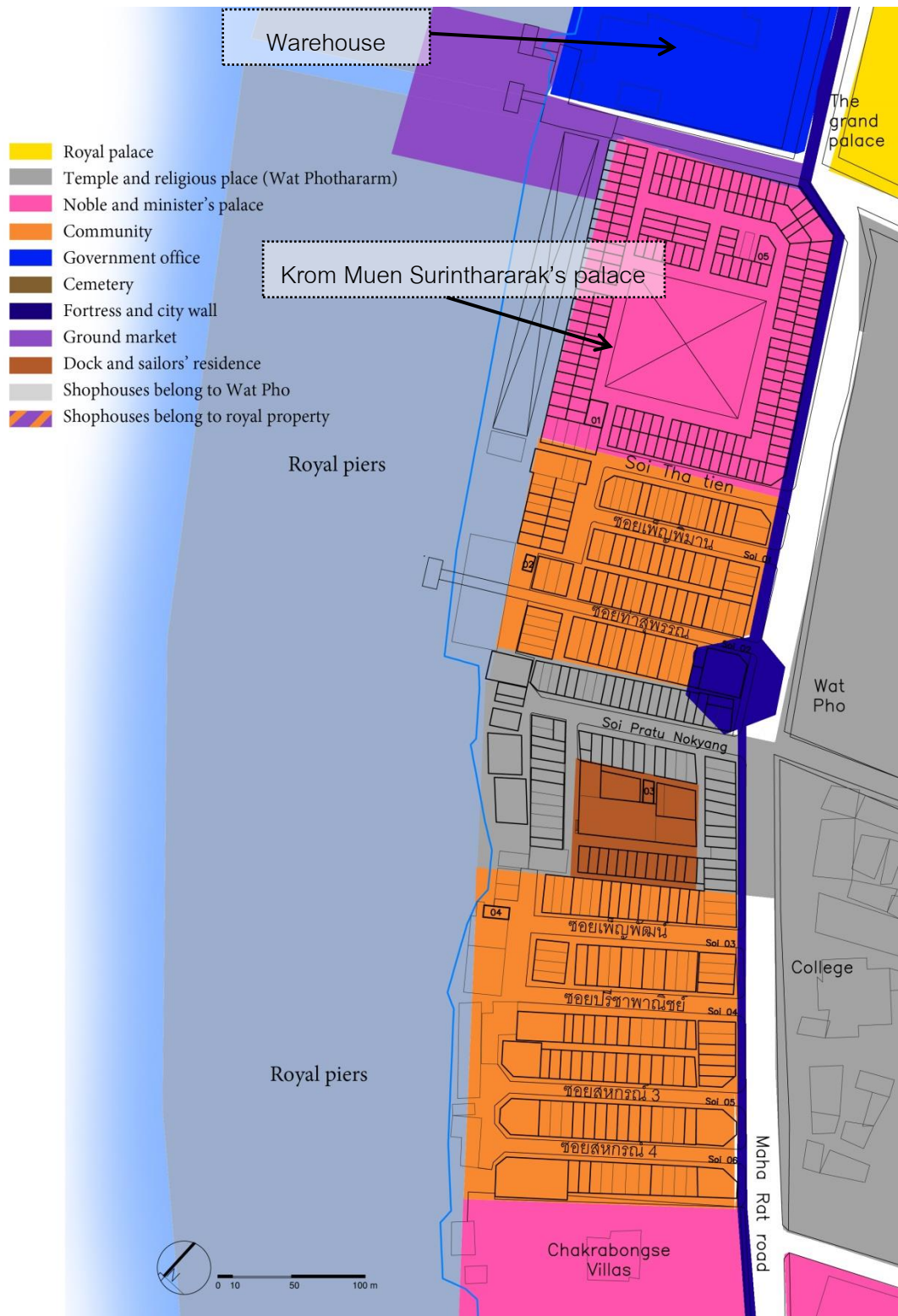


Figure 3. 10 Rama III (1824-1851)

### 3.3.6 After Rama IV period

As mentioned in previous paragraph, oversea trading between China and Thailand had gone to peak due to the presenting tributes and Bowring treaty. They earned their living by being merchants, labours, shipping labours and crews. The scene of river was numbers of boats and Chinese junks.

Those areas between river to the Grand palace were the places for loading and unloading goods. Meanwhile, the increasing numbers of people have accelerated development of Tha-tien. The need of land had increased, therefore, king Rama V made order to expand land of Tha-tien to the river.

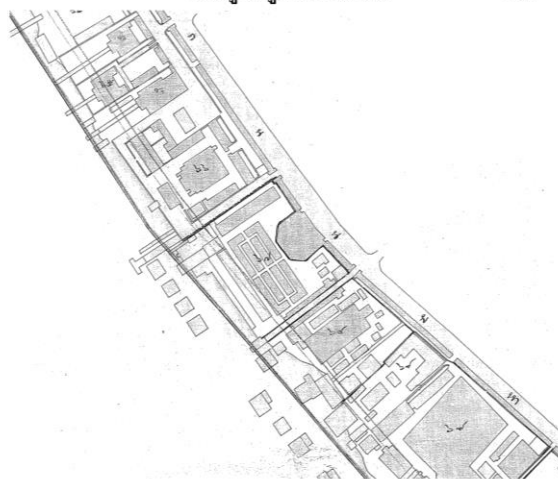
The ownerships of land of Tha-tien are complicated since this time. King Rama V assigned people to build Tha-tien market accomplished in 1911. The middle part of Tha-tien, soi Pratu Nokyang, is owned by Wat Pho since Rama I period. Once they built a private alley for monks to shower to river. The south part of Tha-tien is owned by descendants of Rama V. (Figure 3. 11) According to oral description by local elders who lived there over 60 years, Tha-tien used to have 6-8 ports serving the functions of transportation to Wat Pho and shipping goods which shows the prosperity in the past.

The complicity of ownerships has affected development of Tha-tien. Some of the shophouses are built by land owners to make long lease with cheap price. From the map of 1932 and 2002 (Figure 3. 12), it tells bunch of shophouses were built at that time which correspond to prevailing social situation. This may be the reason why shophouses in Bangkok are built in group with flat appearance. And the shophouses in Bangkok are not expanded linearly like shophouses in China because the tenants normally are not land owners.

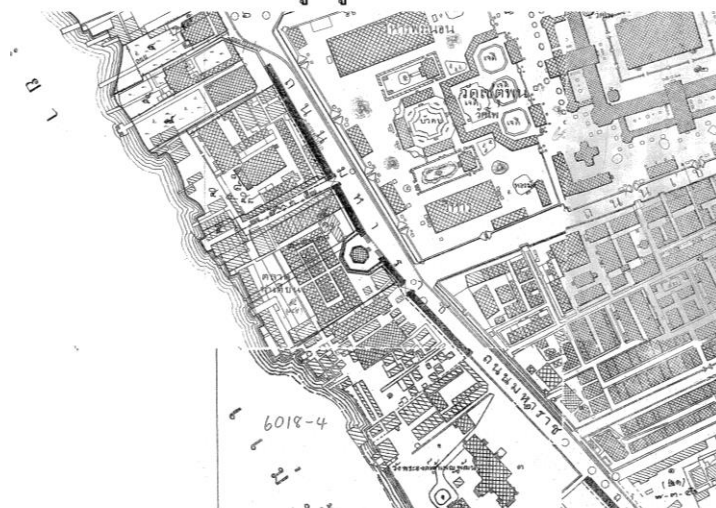




ประตุนกยูง พ.ศ. ๒๔๓๐ 1887



ประตุนกยูง พ.ศ. ๒๔๔๗ 1906



ประตุนกยูง พ.ศ. ๒๔๕๐ 1907

Figure 3. 11map from 1887-1907 (source from Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University)



Figure 3. 12 map of Tha-tien in 1932 and 2002

### 3.3.7 Rama IV period (1851-1868)

There was a huge fire demolished the warehouse and Krom Muen Surinthararak's palace in 19 September 1857 which give birth to markets in Tha-tien The king Rama IV considered the frequent fire and the great location of transportation which can be the central market of city. Based on its geographical advantage, it is convenient to acquire goods from Thonburi and abroad.

In this reign, Tha-tien has altered in two parts. In north of Tha-tien, the king set foreign court which in charge of foreign affairs. Secondly, community in south part of

Tha-tien had become the residence of Chao Phraya, the highest position among governors. Also, the range of royal pier was minimized. (Figure 3. 13)

The spatial transformation of Tha-tien in this period has obvious changed and can reflect the result of Bowring treaty. In this period, more and more western foreigners get the key into this country. Meanwhile, the rapid development generated the rising need of Chinese workers as well.

#### 3.3.8 Rama V period (1868-1910)

In this period, the city wall and fortress were demolished. Morakot market was built in the west side of fort. And in the late period of Rama V, Tha-tien market was built surrounded with 2-floor shophouses. At that time, the king gave a piece of land to noble family, Chakrabongse, but they hadn't built anything until Rama VI period. In 1902, there was a tunnel for monk showering to Chaophraya River, and Wat Pho built 45 1-floor shophouses, 11 2-floors shophouses and 40 shophouses mix 1 to 2 floors. Between grind stone field and Tha-tien market, it is a compound of houses for western foreigners. The tenants there mostly have great contribution to the king, such as English architect John Clunish and Dr. Wright. (Figure 3. 14)

#### 3.3.9 Rama VI period (1910-1925)

There were new shophouses were built in this reign. A row of shophouses were built opposite to Tha-tien market. And shophouses inside of Tha-tien market were built for its own expansion. In 1909, Wat Pho demolished sala Gakkanj, and utilized its land to build approximately 50 shophouses for leasing. In 1929, the property ministry started the projects of renovation waterside and demolished some shophouses which built in 1902. (Figure 3. 15)

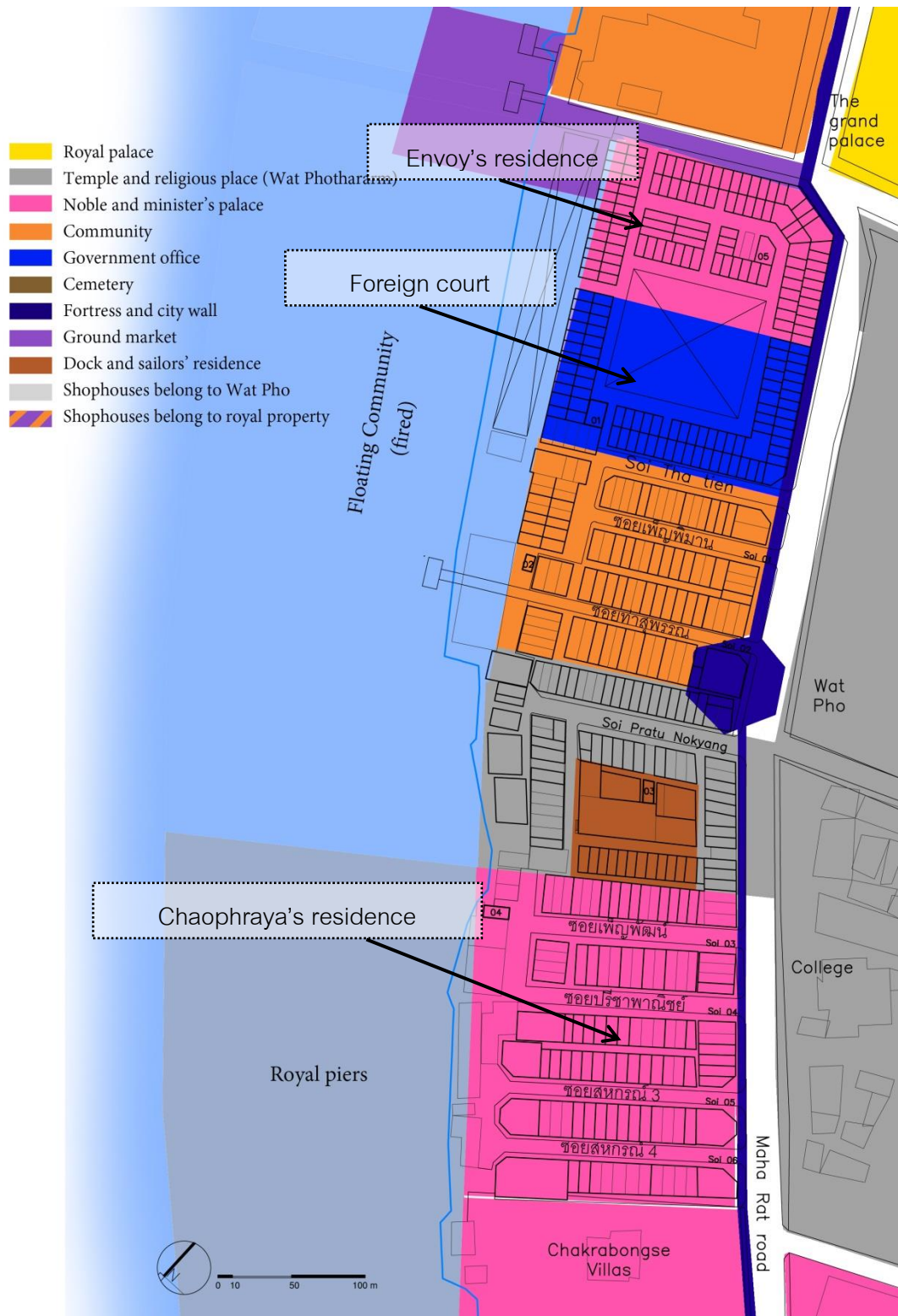


Figure 3. 13 Rama IV (1851-1868)



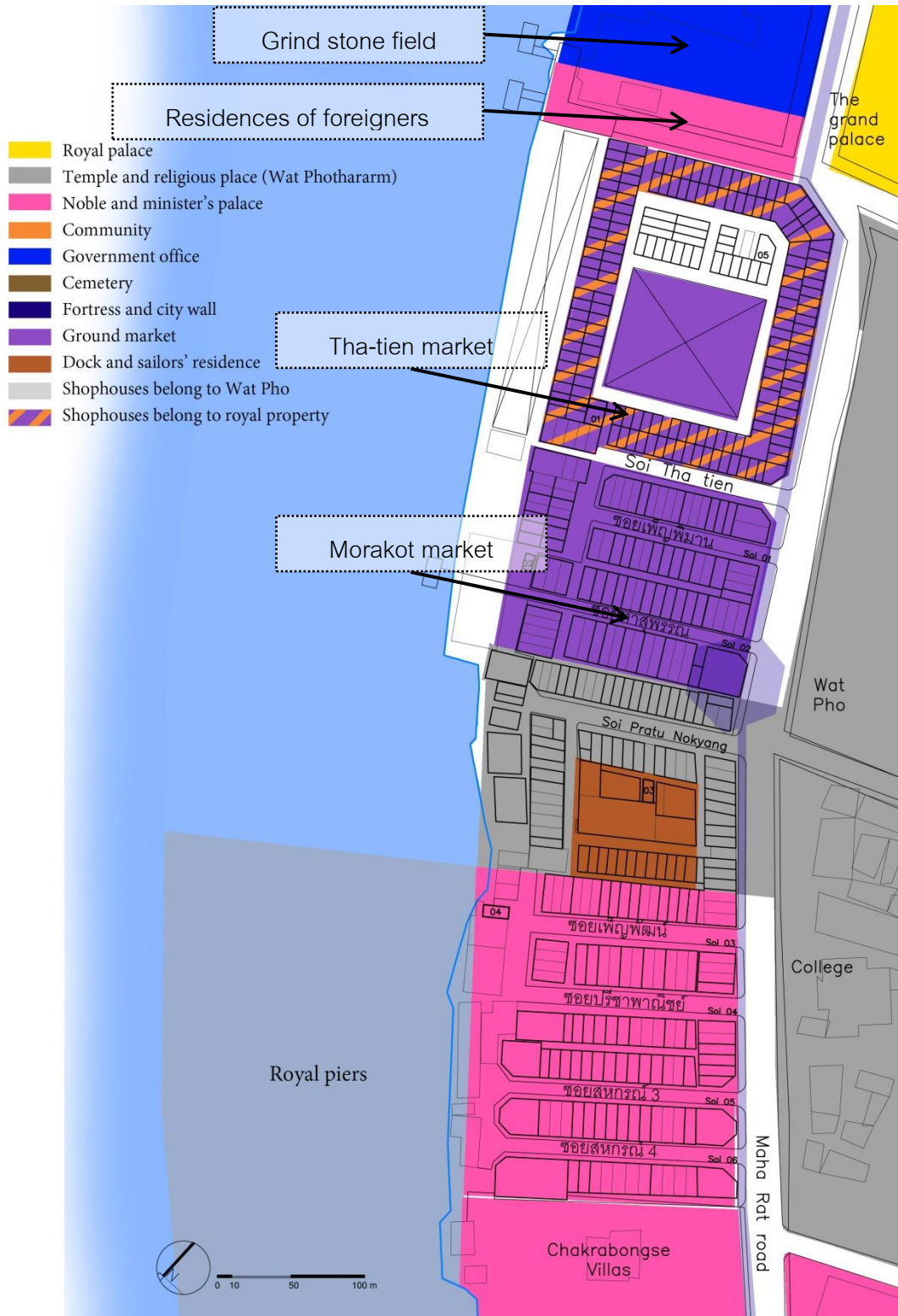


Figure 3. 14 Rama V (1868-1910)

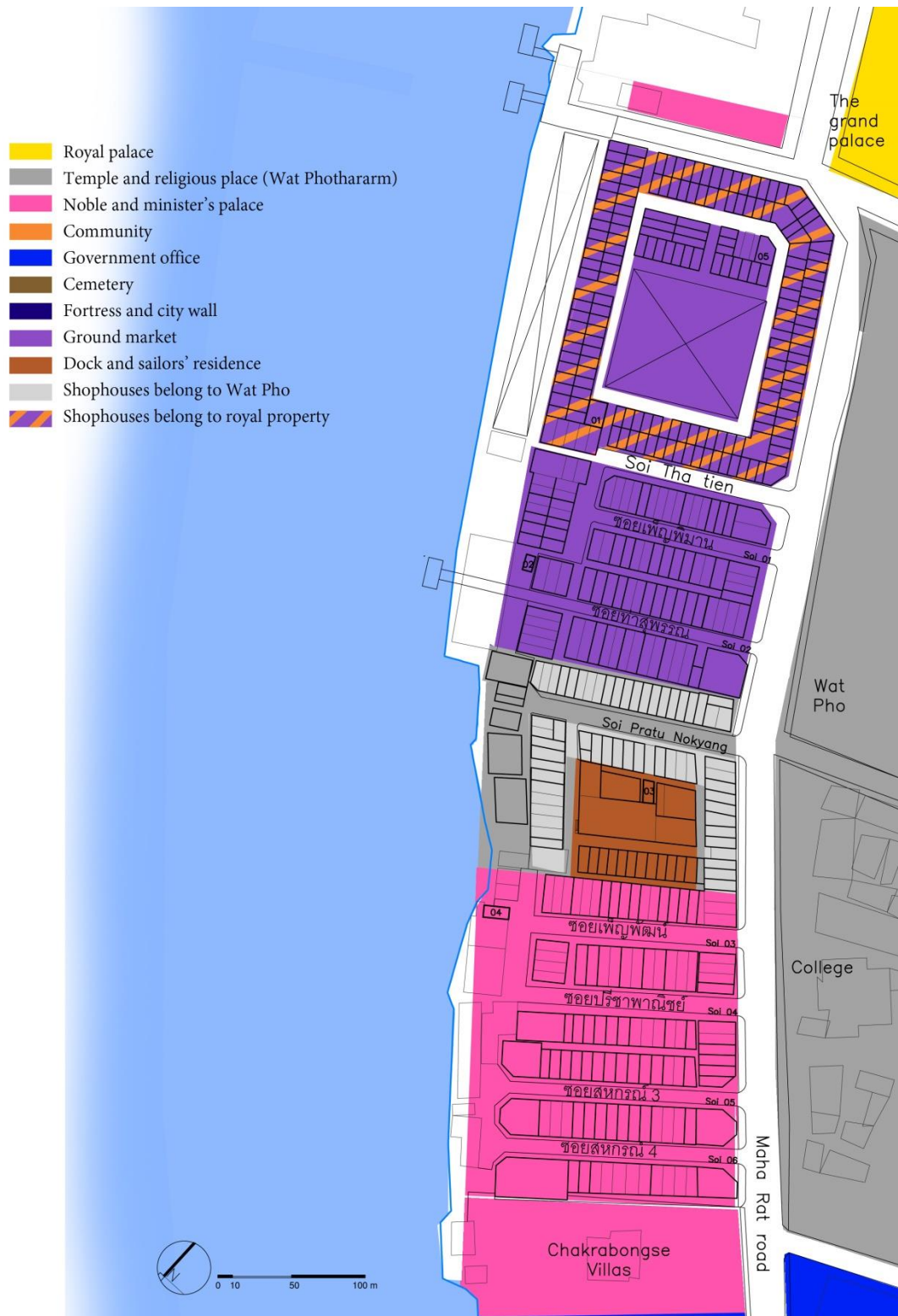


Figure 3. 15 Rama VI (1910-1925)

### 3.3.10 Rama VII-VIII period (1925-1946)

Nothing changed that much in this period. Tha-tien market and Morakot market are still well activated, and the palace below Wat Pho's shophouses has been transformed into police office. For the demand of Chinese people here, Chinese school was built in 1930s. According to the memory of interviewee, Ms. Somphong, she recalls the situation in the study of Chinese school: there were more than 80 students enrolled in its peak period. However, the situation went down since the government turned its attitude down toward foreign language school in one certain period.

### 3.3.11 Rama IX period (1946-2014)

Most of shophouses were built in this period. The land of police office was used as shophouses with 2 floors. Furthermore, a fire has burned Morakot market, according to local elder's memory, it was built in wooden structure. Afterward, concrete shophouses were built with 3 to 4 floors.

Following with the increasing number of Chinese people here, the Chinese school was erected in the middle of Tha-tien. In 1987, Chinese school was demolished due to reduction of students and old condition. Instead, Chinese community center has been built and have played an important role among Tha-tien community. (Figure 3. 17)

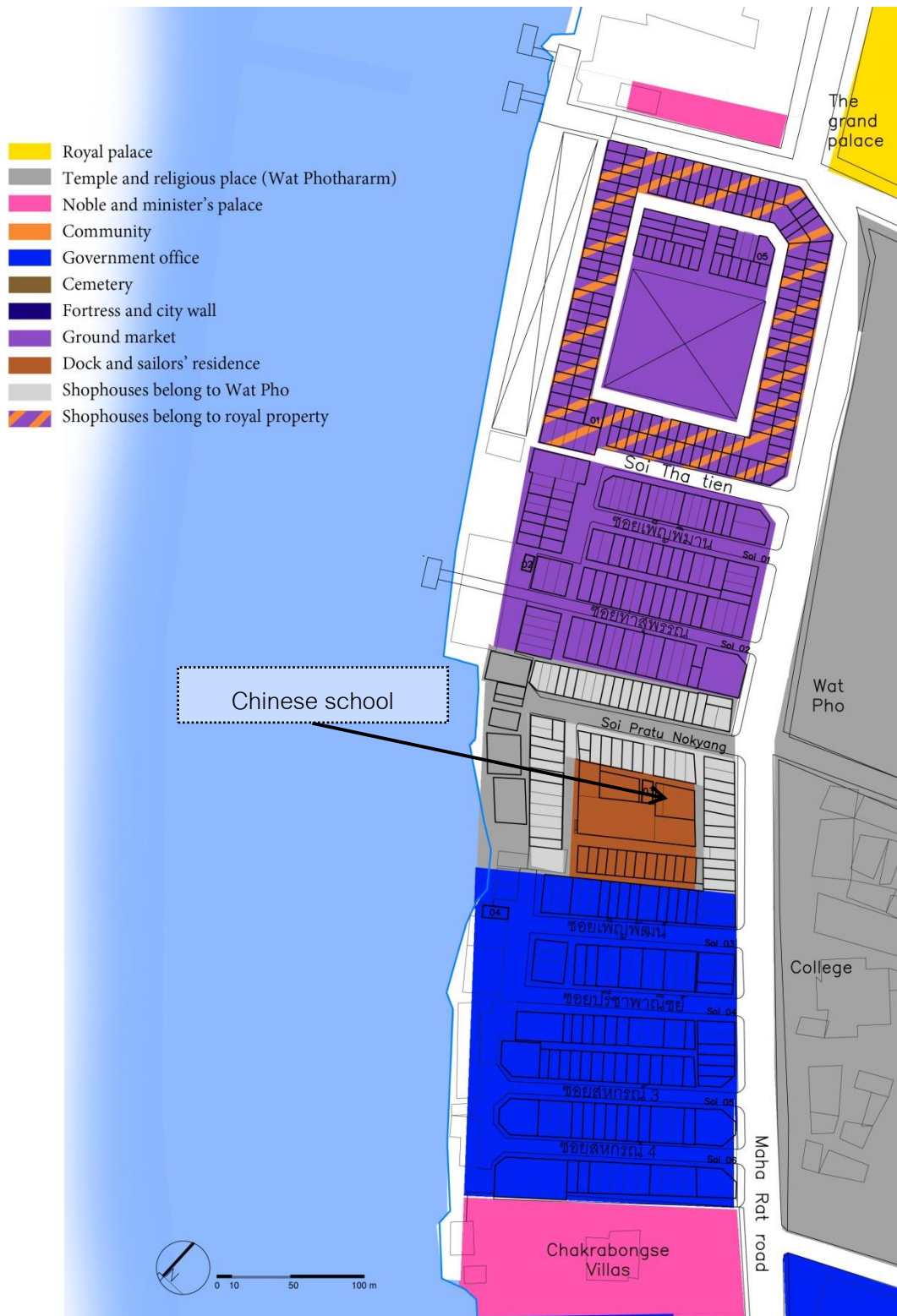


Figure 3. 16 Rama VII-VIII (1925-1946)



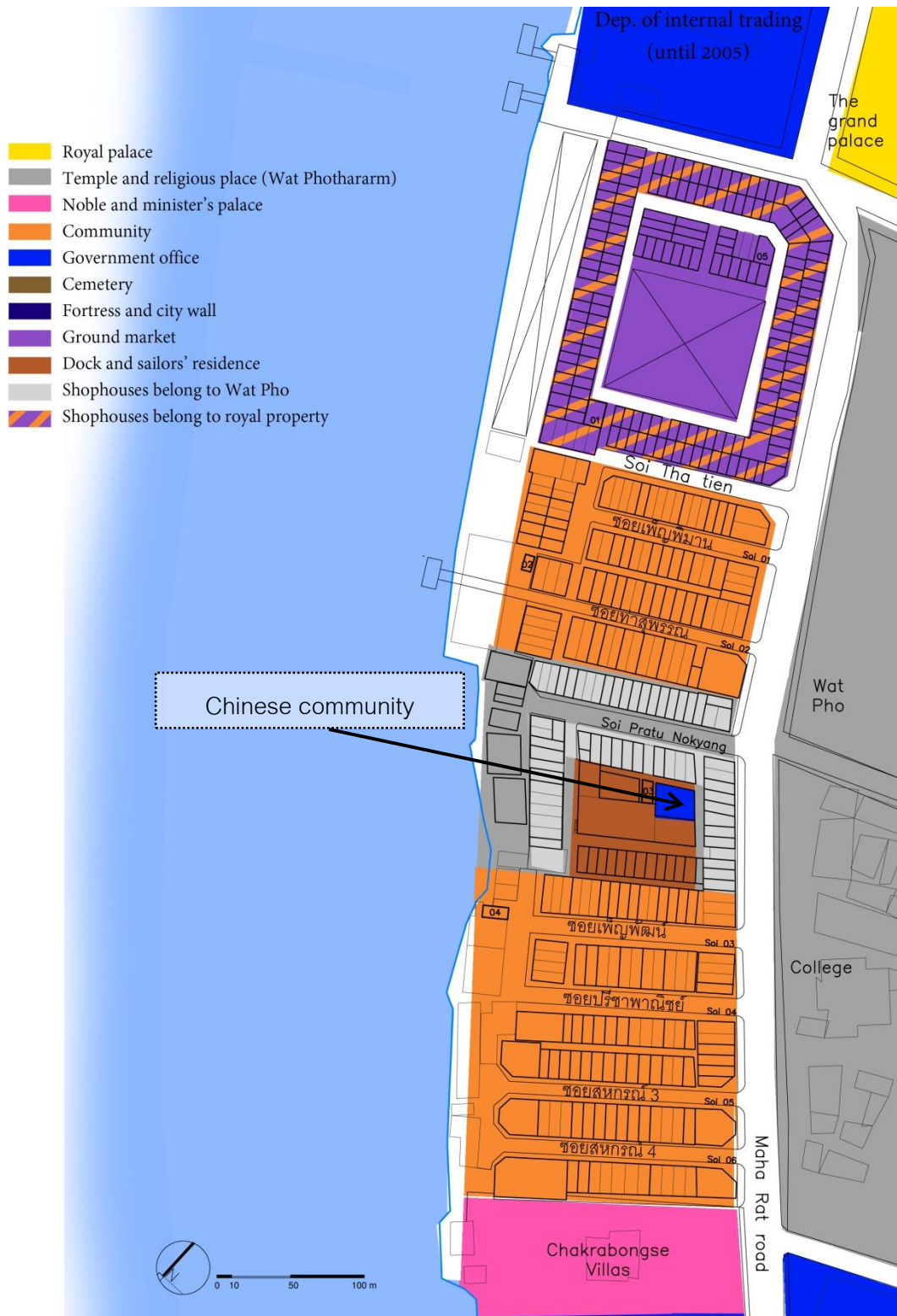


Figure 3. 17 Rama IX (1946-2014)

### 3.4 Chinese immigrants and markets

Tha-tien might not be the first place to stay for some of the Chinese people in Tha-tien, however, they have lived here since they were a child. According to memory of interviewee, Ms. Boondee Watthanasrimongkhon, 90 years old, she has lived in Tha-tien since she was 25. She was born in China and moved to Thailand to escape poverty with her family while 3 years. The first place she and her family were ashore is Si Chang Island, and they had settled in Ban Mo (บ้านหม้อ), a community out of the east side of Rattanakosin Island. At that time, lots of houses were built in wood, and because of high density of houses, there were frequently stories in Chinese communities that wooden residence is on fire. After she got married, she and her husband decided to move to Tha-tien. She and her husband had done business of coconut and pork in Tha-tien market.

Ms. Boondee's life is a typical case of Chinese people in Tha-tien. Firstly, when Chinese family expanded, they would move to another shophouse in same community or neighboring area for the sake of being close to original family. Such as her descendants grow and move to another place with 15 minutes distance.

Secondly, the strong connection between market and Chinese immigrants can be seen in the use of shophouse. Tha-tien used to have two markets, Tha-tien market and Morakot market. Both of them were built in the period of king Rama V. Morakot market was located around the area between Soi Tha-tien and Soi Pratum Nokyang and was demolished after a fire during Rama IX period. In the old map of Morakot market, it records what kind of business Chinese people do in the past. (Figure 3. 18) (อินทร์จันทร์, ชัยทัต et al. 2007) Chinese people start their life with small business which only required a small amount of capital such as noodle, desserts, vegetable, fish, betel, cloths, salty egg and coconut palm sugar.

Shophouses in Tha-tien are mainly used with 4 ways, shop, warehouse, residence and factory. Residence is for the basic need of space. Then, tenants use their houses to start business which can save extra cost and taking care of their families. Warehouse is

a frequent concomitant of prosperous business. Some of shophouses has become the field for manufacturing products, such as coconut sugar and salted duck egg.

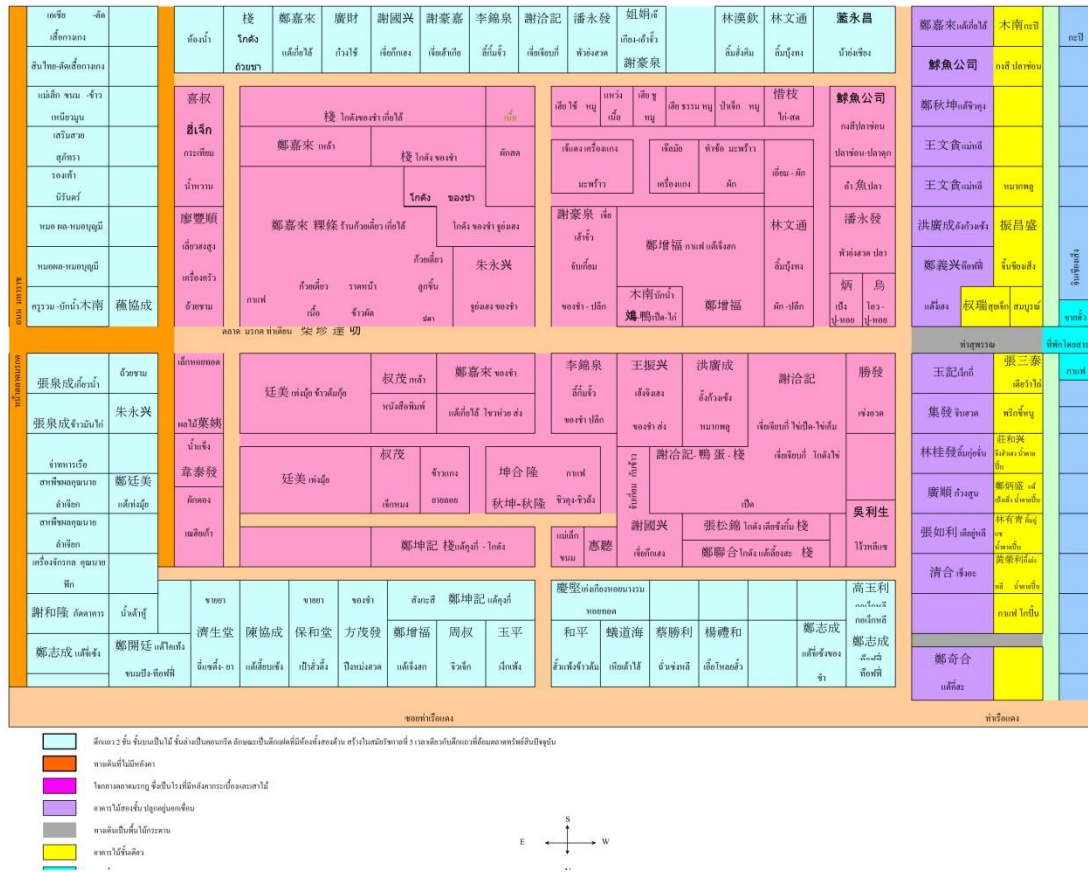


Figure 3. 18 Old Map of Morakot market

### 3.5 Interview with local people

Interviews have been conducted in order to acquire the living in the past and prevailing circumstances of their Chinese family settlement here. Certain interviewees' stories and expectations of Tha-tien somehow match the thought of most of the people.

#### Community leader

The official community leader, Mr. Kiangkrai Olarnphanthuskul, has served Tha-tien community for the past 18 years. He provides that now approximately 1800 population live in Tha-tien including tenants and registered resident. And the major career of local people is about trading, for instance, markets and whole seller. The community is well organized with their own rules to maintain clean and safe environment. The main role of

community organization is to create the intimate neighborhood. A community patrol in charge of secure the whole community ensure that no drug and fire in the dark corner of Tha-tien. In the end of the year, community also plays the key role of holding annual ritual of appreciating gods of 5 Chinese shrines.

#### **Local elders**

Thanks to community leader's introduction, the author was able to talk to local people briefly. Most of the questions being mentioned concern of their live in the past. The memories from elders are like puzzle pieces. Putting all together of them help to capture the pictures of Tha-tien and Chinese immigrants' life in the past.

Mrs. Boondee Watthanasrimongkhon, 91, has lived in Tha-tien since 25 years old after she got married, and had involved her job of coconut milk seller in Tha-tien market. She was born in China and moved to Thailand with her parents when she was 3. At that time, the new comer always choose place near Chinese settlements. Chinese people would help each other to launch essential life in Bangkok. Before she got married, she lived in Ban Mo (บ้านหม้อ) where not far from Tha-tien. When she just arrived Tha-tien, she lived in wooden-built house near Tha-tien market. According to Mr. Qing, the owner of Inn A Day hotel as well as the former palm sugar company, his memory also conform this part.

Mr. Qing, age approximately 65, a Chinese born in Thailand, has lived in Tha-tien with his parents when he was young. He remembers that Tha-tien used to be lots of wooden-built houses. Yet several fires destroyed the wooden-built houses. Afterward, the concrete shophouses were built. Based on his memory, he declares Tha-tien used to have 8 piers in the peak for trading, shipping and for visitors to Wat Pho and Wat Phra Keaw. In 2013, he has transformed his palm sugar company into hotels with the great viewpoint of Wat Arun. His attitude towards tourists is welcoming so do the other interviewees' attitude.

Mr. Waithaya, a Chinese-Thai, involves business in whole sell thinks that trading business is not as easy as before. Another problem is the traffic in the small alley and main road. It is a common issue in relation to shophouses and old use as trading

business.

Tha-tien might not be the first settlements for Chinese immigrants in Thailand. Sooner after they arrived Thailand, the Chinese in Thailand are rapidly expanding to the neighboring area. Tha-tien, with its two markets and important location, is chosen to live in order to set business in the market. Secondly, when their family grew, they would move to some place near their inherent home but incapable to expand rental shophouses. Lastly, they are aware Tha-tien is transforming, yet they do not want to lose the place they rent for most of life now, Tha-tien has already become the place they would called home.

From the interviews with those people, it is clear that they do not want to leave Tha-tien because of strong bond with their own memories of places for whole life. Yet some of them are living as leasing tenants. Their memories and their continuous live here are the reasons brighten Tha-tien as one of the Chinese living heritage in the city.



Figure 3. 19 Interviews with local people and showing where they live



### 3.6 Urban zoning of Tha-tien: conservation as cultural identity

Tha-tien nowadays has become a tourist-oriented community due to its great location and its advantage of waterway transportation. (Figure 3. 20) However, the restriction of development in Tha-tien is quite unique because it is in conservation zone as cultural identity. The height of Tha-tien is strictly controlled in order to preserve magnificent outline of Rattanakosin Island.



Figure 3. 20 Tha-tien's tourist potentiality

In my opinion, this restriction gave this site a good chance escaping from high-speed urban development. This study would like to highlight the importance of Tha-tien area by pointing out its architectural value to history of Chinese in Bangkok.

### 3.7 Multiple possessions of land

The spatial transformation of Tha-tien shows that the possession of Tha-tien has owned by royalty, Wat Pho and noble. (Figure 3. 21) After 1932, Thailand has become

constitutional monarchy country, and the land of this country can be purchased by citizen. Most of the tenants here rent shophouses for very long time. Based on its current situation, it can be categorized into 4 zones.

Zone 1: Tha-tien market is still well activated, and shophouses around it are under renovated construction for their preservation value until February 2015.

Zone 2: Rama 9-period shophouses in royal property are mostly used for company and warehouses which supporting Tha-tien market. However, according to the interviewee, Mr. Waithaya, the grocery dealer who lived in this zone for 55 years above, in the past, the trading business was not that competitive as now. Although the transportation has been developed, the traffic jam has become a problem which cost more time on delivering.

Zone 3: This zone has owned by Wat Pho since King Rama I period. The shophouses around here are the oldest settlement in Tha-tien. The wooden houses built above water might be the trace of floating community in early Chakrit dynasty. Rama 3-period shophouses for sailors' residence and shophouses built in 1929 for increasing income of Wat Pho. One of the oldest Chinese shrines is located in this zone.

Zone 4: The former use of this land was the office of government ministry. In early period of king Rama 9 period, 2 to 3-floor concrete shophouses were built and separated with 4 alleys named Soi Penphat, Soi Pricha Phanichy, Soi Sahakorn 3 and Soi Sahakorn 4. Compared to physical aspect of shophouses, the shophouses of zone 4 might be older than shophouses of zone 2. Some of shophouses in zone 4 are privately owned and have been rebuilt into new buildings as company, residence and hotel.

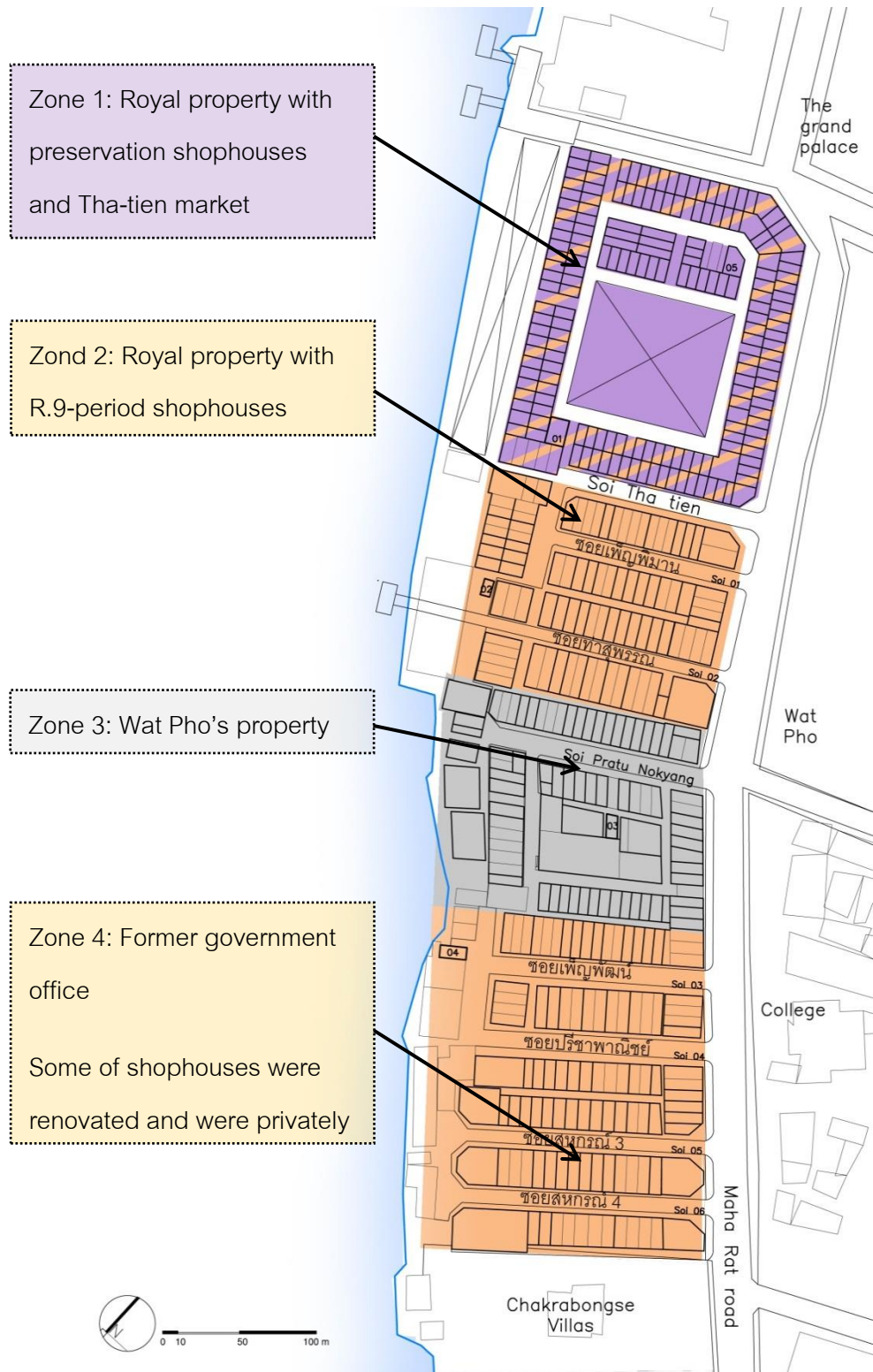


Figure 3. 21 Possession composition of Tha-tien



### 3.8 Chinese settlements: shrines, Chinese community and former Chinese language center

There is a crucial element in Chinese community cannot be ignored which is their religious beliefs. Chinese temple and shrine can be recognized as a sign of Chinese settlement due to intimate connection between Chinese and their belief. In Tha-tien area, there are five Chinese shrines located from market to Soi Phanphet. (Figure 3. 23) The main gods of these shrines are Sam-bo, Matsu, god of earth and Guan Yu. (Figure 3. 22)



Shrine 01: Jade emperer and Matzu



Shrine 02: Sam-bo



Shrine 03: God of earth



Shrine 04: Sam-bo

Figure 3. 22 The religious beliefs of Chinese immigrants from coastal China

Sam-bo (三寶): Sam-bo, as known as Zheng-he, 1371-1433, who was a famous voyager in Ming dynasty of China. Due to his great contribution to maritime trading between China and South-east Asia, Chinese people especially who is involving trading business believe that he protects people and goods along voyage.

Matzu (媽祖): Matzu, as known as Lin Mo-niang, who was born in Fujiang province

of China. Some scholars give different versions of her legends. Nevertheless, one thing we can be sure is her significance to maritime trading business.

God of earth (土地公婆): In Chinese people's notion, god of earth can bring agricultural harvest of land. Minnan people, people from south of Fujian, believe that god of earth not only bless homeland but also trade and voyage.

Guan Yu (關羽): Guan Yu was a talented General in ancient China, and his loyalty and justice have been highly respected by his believers. He was reputedly gifted at accounting. Therefore, people also believe that their business can be blessed by him.

All of these gods are related to the field of oversea trading and business, which can proof the flourishing commercial activity in the past and living trace of Chinese immigrants. Besides, there are 33 signs both in Chinese and Thai can be found in Tha-tien, which in total are 63 units of shophouses. (Figure 3. 24)

Until now, these five shrines are still the beliefs of this community and blessing local people. According to the interview with community leader, Mr. Kriangkrai Olamphanthuskul, who has been in this position for 18 years, there is a ritual in the end of the year gathering Gods statues from five Chinese shrines to the Bodee tree shrine (no. 3). Believers use a red carriage to carry statues and walk all around Tha-tien community. (Figure 3. 25) Furthermore, they set a stage and perform Chinese traditional drama to show their gratitude toward gods. The main purpose of this ceremony is to appreciate the blessing of Gods among this community. (Figure 3. 26, Figure 3. 27)

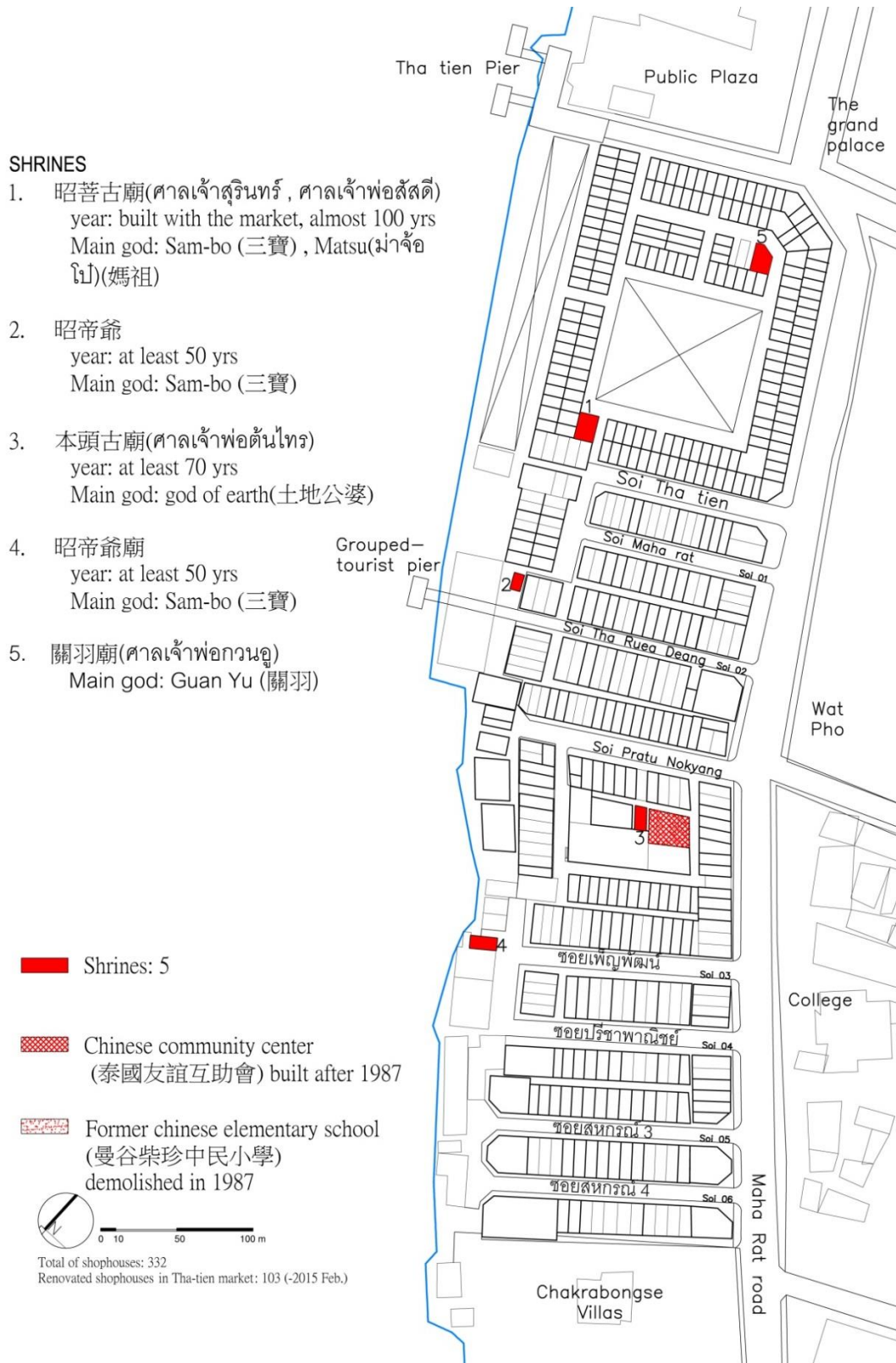


Figure 3. 23 Locations of 5 Chinese shrines, Chinese community center and former Chinese school





Figure 3. 24 Chinese-Thai signs in Tha-tien (surveyed by the author in May 2014)



Figure 3. 25 Red carriage for annual ritual currently storage at the backside of Tha-tien market



ภาพที่ 4.23 โรงงิ้วจะตั้งอยู่บริเวณปากทางซอยท่าเรือแดง ทัศนหลังให้กับถนนมหาธาตุ

Figure 3. 26 Performance of Chinese traditional drama (อินทร์จันทร์, ชัยทัต et al. 2007)



ภาพที่ 4.22 บรรยากาศการตั้งขบวนแห่อัญเชิญเจ้า ในงานขอบคุณเจ้าหรืองานประจำปี

Figure 3. 27 Annual ritual is held in Soi Pratuk Nokyang (อินทร์จันทร์, ชัยทัต et al. 2007)

### 3.9 Shophouses in Tha-tien

Shophouses of Tha-tien can be categorized into 10 types in different phases based on their physical aspect. The history in span of 150 years can be seen in 10 types of shophouses in Tha-tien.

The first type of residence is built in wood and constructed above the water which might be settlements representing the evidence of activities on river in the past. (Figure 3. 30 Type 01) Matching with the study of Tha-tien's history, shophouses as the former sailors' residence in Rama 3 period has existed and still been used. (Figure 3. 31 Type 02) It is one floor building built with brick and elaborated architectural style. A row of shophouses build in brick, concrete and wood are located near the type 1 and 2. (Figure 3.33 Type 03). The later one is shophouses built by concrete with 2 floors along Soi Pratuk Nokyang are for leasing (Figure 3. 37 Type 04). These four type of shophouses are located in Wat Pho's land which is the core of community center with oldest Chinese shrine and gigantic Bodee tree. This zone is the place still maintains oldest settlements in Tha-tien.

Most of the shophouses are for residential use in this zone. The widths of alleys are approximately 3 to 3.6 meter which might be the factor of commercial devaluation of shophouses. (Figure 3. 29) Furthermore, during king Rama V period, the transportation has gradually developed from water to road, shophouses facing to river are no longer used. Tenants use those alleys as a part of living space, such as kitchen and showering space.

Shophouses of type 5 and 6 are 2 to 3 floor and located in zone 4. And shophouses of type 7 to 9 are 3 to 4 floors and located in zone 2 which built later than type 5 and 6. The number of shophouses highly increased during king Rama 9 period which corresponds to the fact of peak wave of Chinese immigrants during civil wars. The ground floors of those shophouses are commonly used as shop, warehouse and company. And normally the owner and staffs live above floor. Meanwhile, some people rent attached units and tear down partition. In this case, the spaces are more flexible than previous types of shophouses.





Figure 3. 28 Distribution of shophouses from different period in Tha-tien

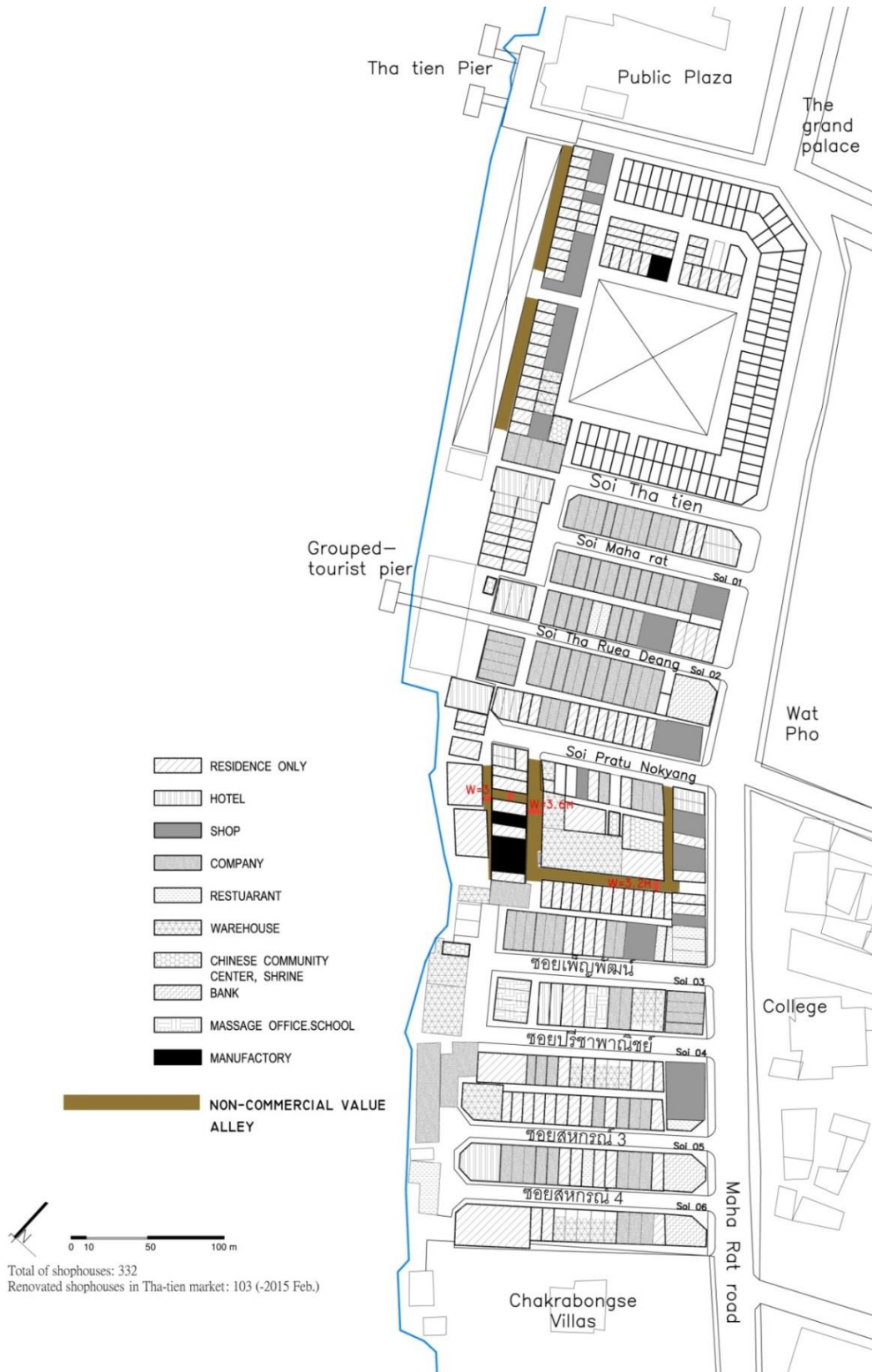


Figure 3. 29 Alleys become a part of living expansion from shophouses

**Type 1:** Wooden rowhouses built above water still exist and are used as residence. The house was widely open to the river and the single door is facing to the road. In the front part, they are built with ventilating façade. We might not say this is the oldest settlement in Tha-tien, but it shows a lifestyle in the past.

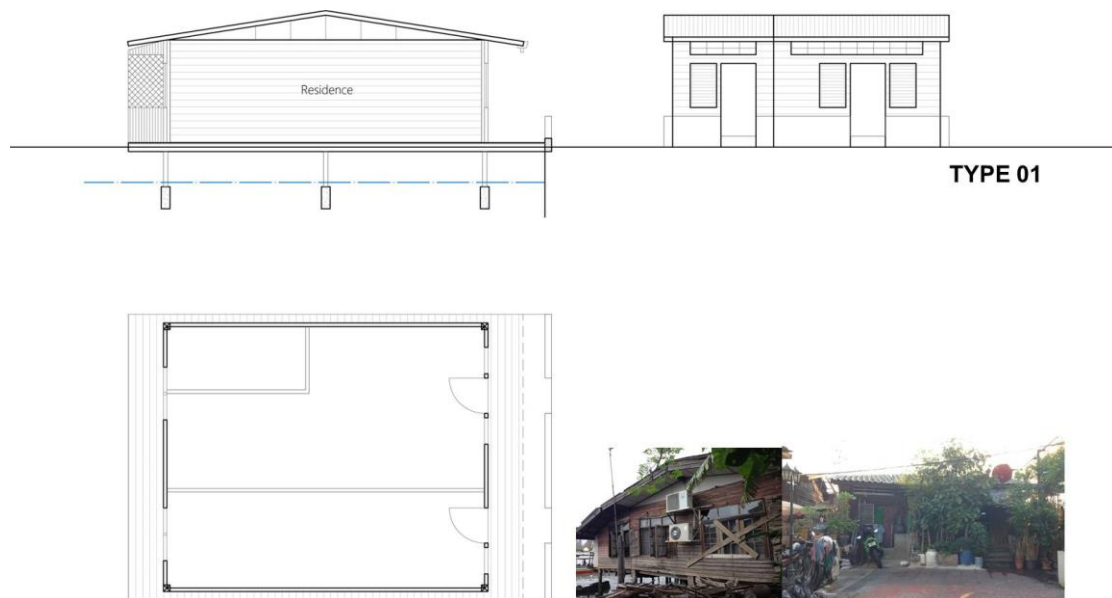


Figure 3. 30 Type 01: located near the riverside, the oldest settlement of floating community

**Type 2:** The former sailors' residence built in Rama 3 period, according to the community leader's word, it is the oldest shophouses in Tha-tien. It is wall-bearing shophouse built in elaborated architectural style with ventilating transoms. The dimension of this is relatively small with width in 3 meter and length in 8 meter. Some units are added 2<sup>nd</sup> floor with wood structure above.

These shophouses are no longer used as shop and house. Even though the shophouses still attach to a road, tenants use the front part as a part of living space, such as kitchen and laundry area.(Figure 3. 32)



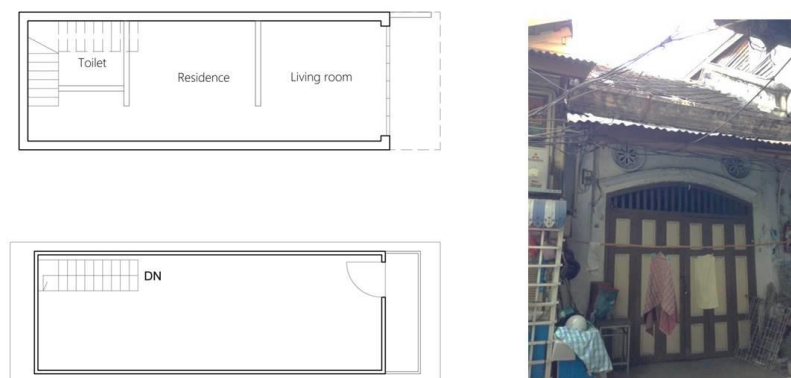
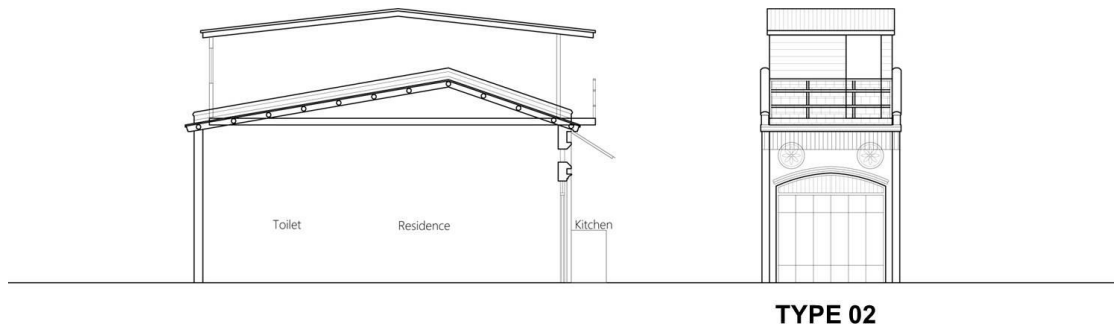
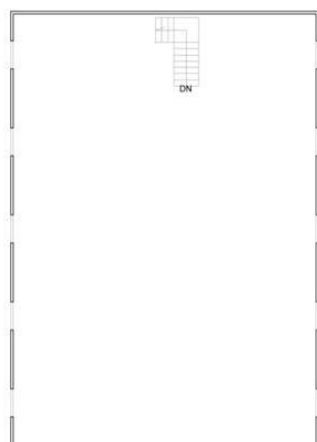
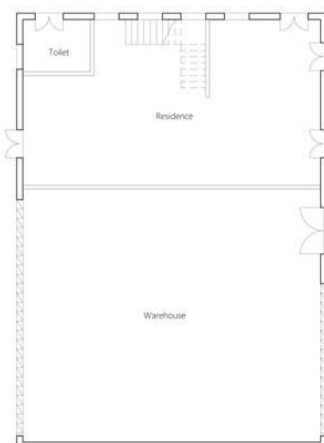
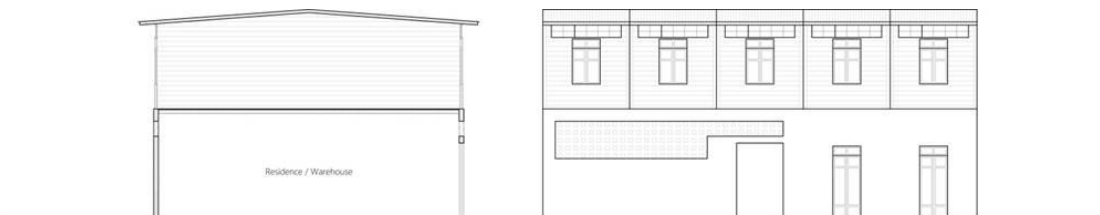


Figure 3. 31 Type 02: 1 floor shophouses built in Rama 3 as sailors' residence



Figure 3. 32 Front part of type 2 shophouses

**Type 3:** The shophouses might be originally built with 1 floor and the front part was facing to river. The second floor are built in wood with transom and wooden windows. Partial space of ground floor is used as palm sugar factory.(Figure 3. 34) The rest spaces are used as residence. Tenants here have pushed out their private zone to outside with disorder storage of necessities.



### TYPE 03



Figure 3. 33 Type 03: 2 floors shophouses faces to river



Figure 3. 34 Palm sugar factory at the ground floor of type 3 shophouse

**Type 4:** Shophouses along soi Prasuk Nokyang are Wat Pho's property. It is built in 2 to 3 store with post-beam structure. The 2 floor is built in wooden plate. The original material of façade is ventilated net and wood. Nowadays, some tenants have changed the opening into enclosed materials such as glass in order to use air-condition. The roof serves as drying-cloths area. The kitchen is normally on the back side of ground floor as the front side serves as business area. Shophouses here are used as barbershop, grocery store, herb medicine shop, warehouse and restaurants and coffee shop. But a few of units are entirely used as residence. Metal-sheltering eaves are added later due to the frequent rain.



Figure 3. 35 Additional sheltering eave in order to fit frequent rain (left)

Figure 3. 36 Kitchen at the back side (right)

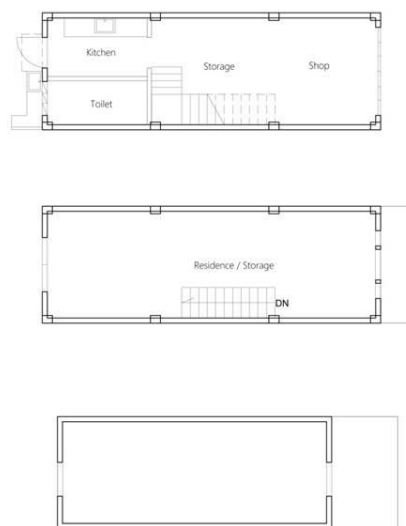
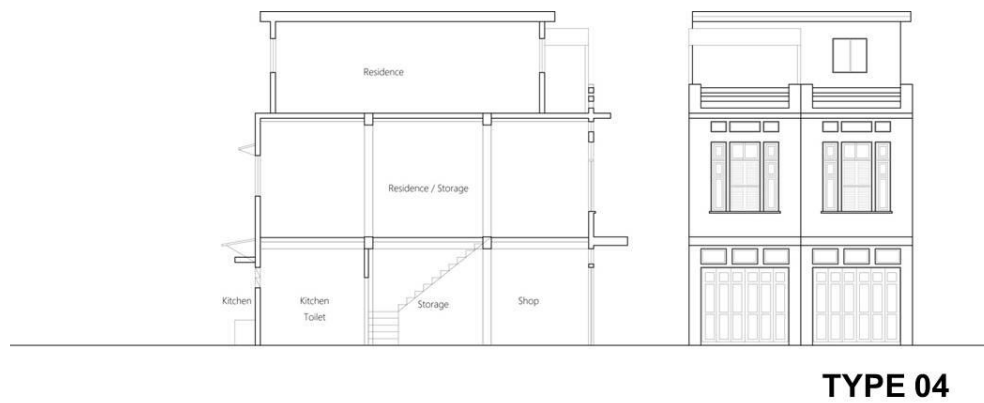
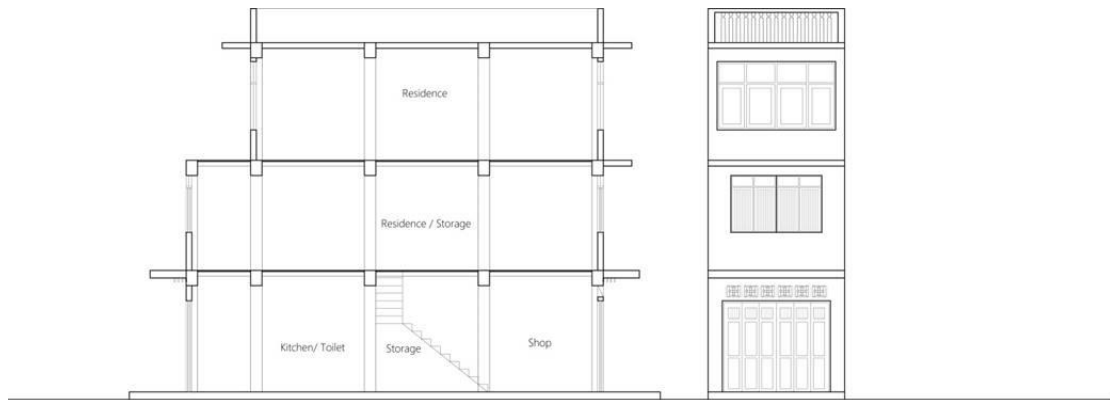


Figure 3. 37 Type 04: 2 floor concrete shophouses on Soi Praturuk Nokyang

**Type 5 & Type 6:** 3-store shophouses built in post-beam concrete structure, Compared to the previous type of shophouses, the materials of windows have altered from wood to glass. And the handrail is also appeared since this type. The widths are approximately 3.4- 3.6 m which became wider than pervious type. It is obvious that shophouses in this period starting to be more sensible design in terms of use. The ventilating materials are gradually replaced by enclosed materials which tells the coming of air-condition and the improvement of economic situation of Chinese people.

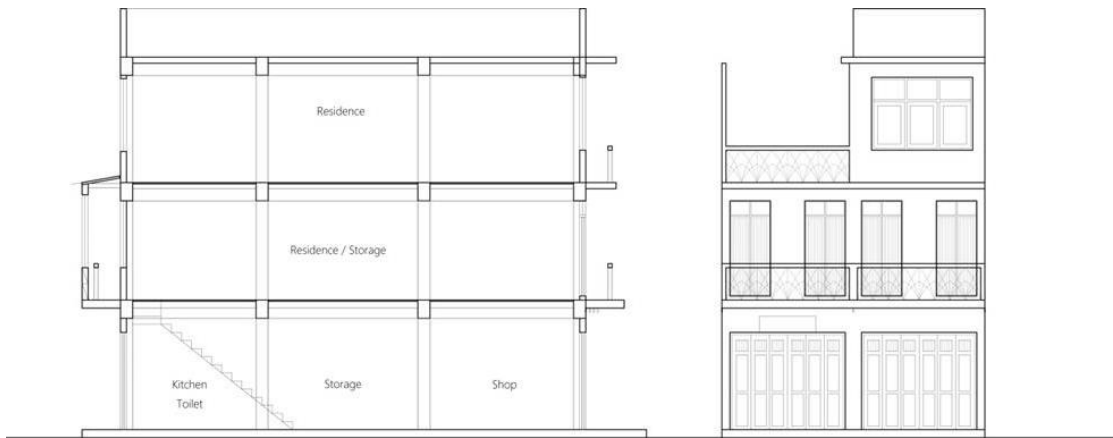




## TYPE 05



Figure 3. 38 Type 05: 3 floors shophouses located in zone 4 built in Rama 9



**TYPE 06**

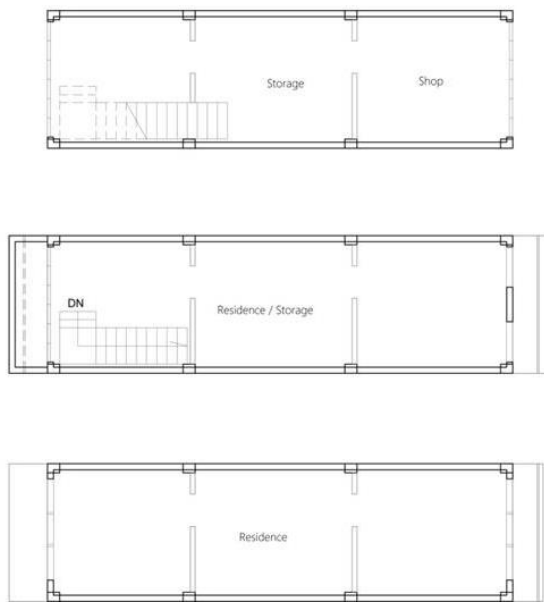
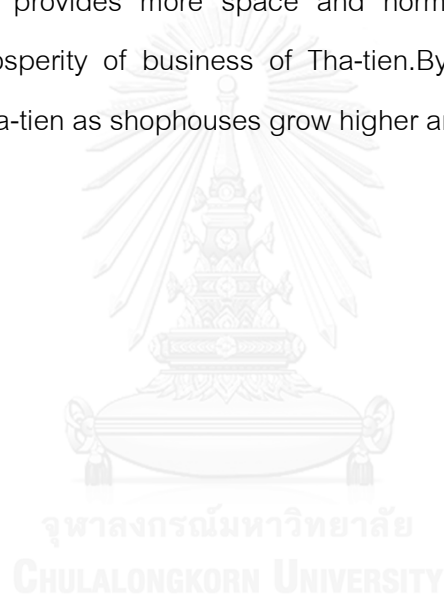
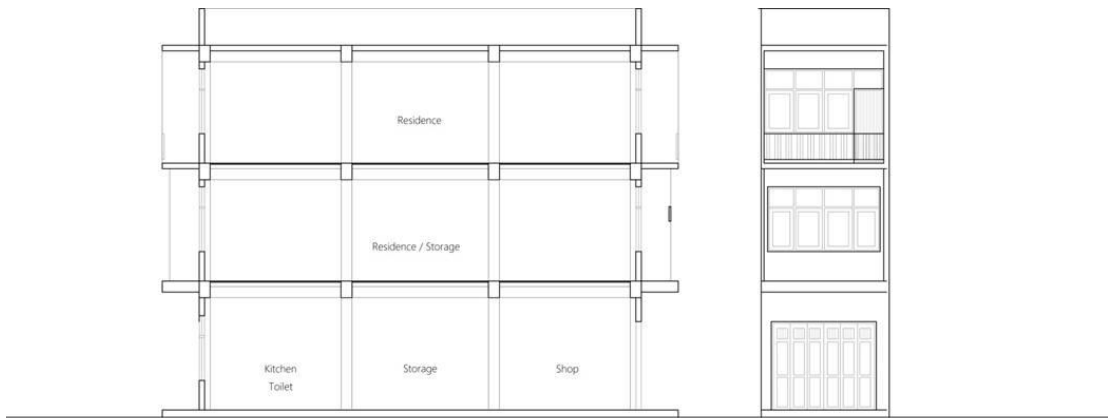


Figure 3. 39 Type 06: 2 to 3 floors shophouses in zone 4

**Type 7 & type 8 & type 9:** These three shophouses are 3-4 floors buildings with length of nearly 14 m and width of 3.6 to 3.8 m. The absence of ventilating openings, such as hollow bricks and net, can be seen as the watershed of air-condition's arrival. Their front windows are wider with more portion of glass. Furthermore, between each shophouse, a plate between windows has provide more privacy to each unit as well as provide shading.

Type 9 is the latest shophouses among the unified one. Its design of shading layer and mezzanine is distinct from other. The mezzanine is a space between ground floor and second floor. It provides more space and normally served as storage. This demonstrates the prosperity of business of Tha-tien. By time to time, the increasing population flows in Tha-tien as shophouses grow higher and bigger.





**TYPE 07**

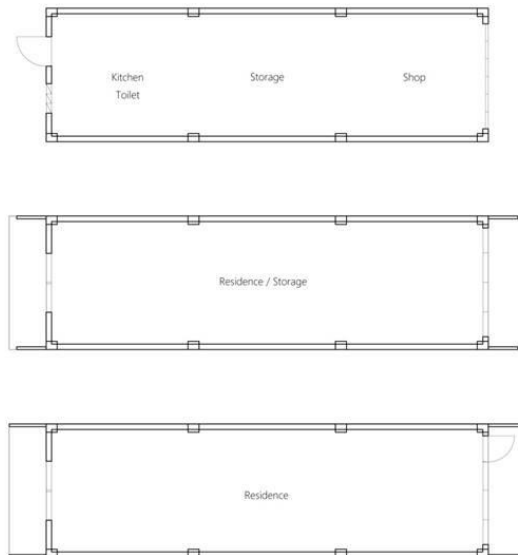
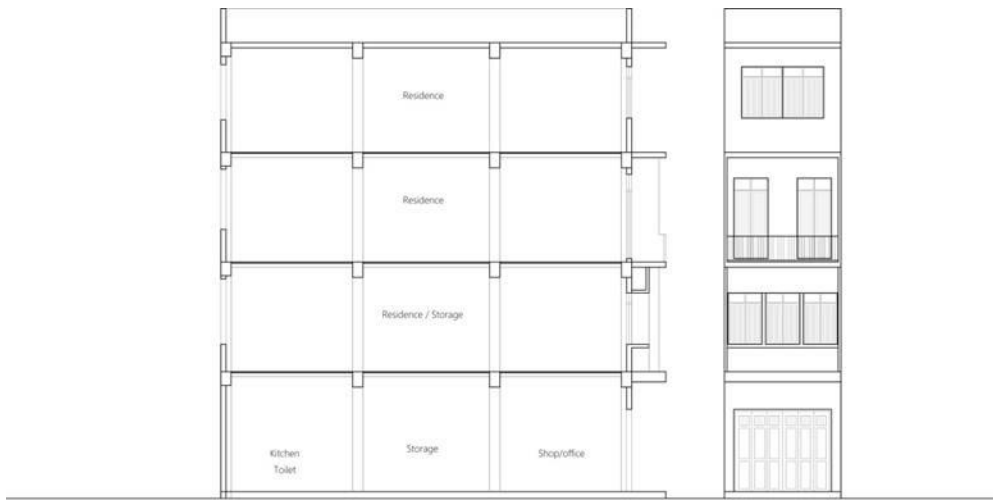


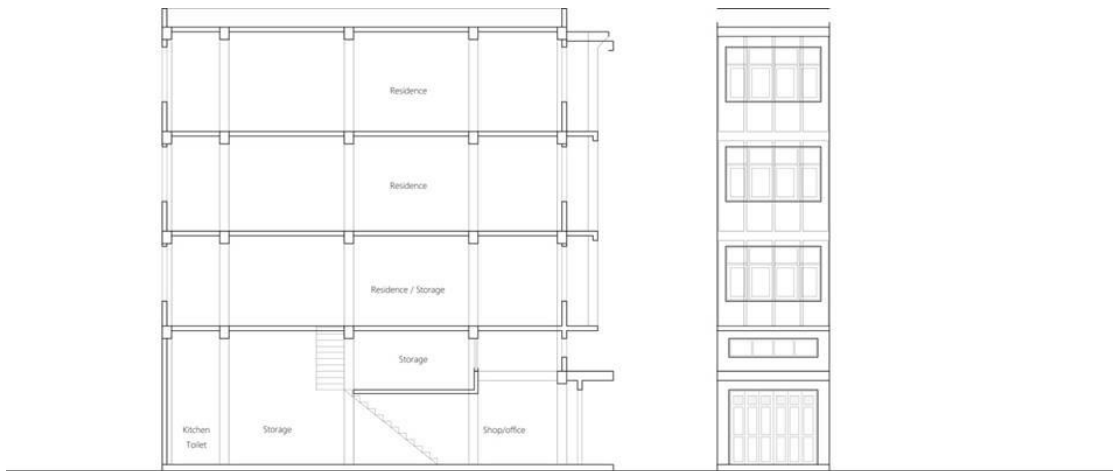
Figure 3. 40 Type 07: 3 floors shophouses in zone 2



**TYPE 08**



Figure 3. 41 Type 08: 4 floors shophouses opposite to type 7



**TYPE 09**

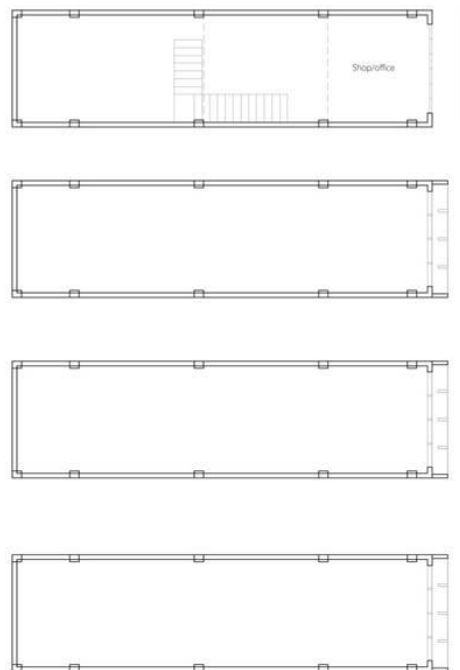


Figure 3. 42 Type 09: 4 floors shophouses with shading layer

**Current type of shophouse:** In the south of Tha-tien, the land gradually becomes private-own. Some units of shophouses are sold to individual person and are rebuilt in the modern type of shophouses. Those new type of shophouses still remain with bigger scale with modern design style. Mostly, they are used in company, hotel, residence and warehouse.



Figure 3. 43 New type as company (left)

Figure 3. 44 New type as hotel (right)



Figure 3. 45 New construction site in May 2014



When the tenant's family grows, the expansion of shophouse goes vertically more than horizontally. Unlike shophouse in China, it is because people here mostly rent house, they do not have rights of owning land here. In type 2 to 7, lots of shophouses are additionally built with shelter or chamber above top floor. Secondly, hanging clothes outside of façade can be seen in the back side of shophouses.



Figure 3. 46 Shelter and chamber above top floor provide more space.



Figure 3. 47 Corridor has been sealed with solid wall and windows can provides more space and security.

While many places in Bangkok have rapidly metabolized, Tha-tien has gradually changed by rising tourism industry. In recent years, Tha-tien is under a transformed stage to tourism-oriented community. Due to its great location to Wat Arun and Wat Pho, and the advantage of Tha-tien pier, there are more and more tourists come to visit Tha-tien to enjoy riverside view. (Figure 3. 48)

Tha-tien pier is the main port for Wat Pho and the Grand palace visitors. Lots of tuk-tuk and taxi drivers would wait for customers at the corner of Tha-tien market. In May 2014, there are 7 hotels reusing the old shophouses structure have attracted tourists into each corner of Tha-tien.

The significance of Tha-tien is not only the aspect of architectural settlement, but also the people here. The reason why Tha-tien can be maintained in a completed condition with full activity is the emotions of locals. The old people rather stay in this community and not willing to move to new area. Tha-tien community has also played a crucial role contributing to cohesion of this community.



Figure 3. 48 Foreign tourists come to Tha-tien for the scene of Wat Arun and Chaophraya River



## CHAPTER 4

### READING THA-TIEN

When discussing of history of Thai society, Chinese immigrants are extremely important as a part of it. Especially during the period of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese immigrants move to Thailand and once became the major part of society. In considering earning money as the only purpose to Thailand, impoverished Chinese have no choice but get on ship with nothing in the pocket. Under this circumstance, it is hard to see straight influence of architecture with Chinese architectural feature. That is why this study approaches the issue of Chinese architecture in Thailand from a social-economic perspective. (Table 1. 2)

Great number of Chinese immigrants in Thai society affects urban transformation of Bangkok city. The restriction of possession toward Chinese contributed development of shophouses in the past. Most of land owner would build shophouses to lease. Thanks to the characteristics of shophouses as low-cost, advantages of living and working and high efficiency of land use, shophouses once became the perfect typology to poor Chinese immigrants. Chinese immigrants living in shophouses as leasee with the notion of temporary life here could explain the development of shophouses as a group with unified façade and the drab decoration of shophouses. Unlike other shophouses in China or Southeast Asian cities, shophouses in Bangkok are relatively bleak and rigid dimension. The transformation of shophouses also help us to illustrate how Chinese immigrants' life in Thailand. It can be seen as an outcome of history.

Under the limitation of land, it is noticeable that shophouses, as the common typology in Bangkok until now, has its flexible characteristic to fit into many kind of business. The newer types of shophouses in post-beam structure can be used with more than 2 units. The 1-floor partition are reduced in order to enlarge space. Shophouses used as company of goods are common with 2 to 3 units. Although



shophouses in Bangkok are unlike linear-expanding shophouses in other places, they still find their way expanding. This flexibility of space contributes users to utilize shophouses. Almost every kind of business can be established.



Figure 4. 1 Single unit used as ice shop

Figure 4. 2 2-units used as company



Figure 4. 3 3-units shophouses used as palm sugar company, old photo of INN A DAY hotel (Source: Inn A day)

#### 4.1 Reference of The Burra Charter

This charter is from The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013. The charter is for all types of places of cultural significance in the aspect of natural, indigenous and historic places with cultural values.

*“The Burra Charter advocates a cautious approach to change: do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it useable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that its cultural significance is retained.”*

The cultural significance of Tha-tien, as mentioned in previous chapters, is its relationship between Chinese immigrants' life and well-preserved shophouses of various phases which proves Tha-tien is Chinese living heritage in the city.

*“Conservation Principles, Article 3. Cautious approach,*

*3.1 Conservation is based on a respect for the existing fabric, use, associations and meanings. It requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible.*

*3.2 Changes to a place should not distort the physical or other evidence it provides, nor be based on conjecture.”*

By following conservation principles of The Burra Charter, this study firstly addresses its significance. Instead of adding other program, the policy toward execution of final design is to make the inherent values of Tha-tien, which is shophouses and Chinese immigrants' live as the main part of the exhibition. Conserving places of cultural significance not only focus on outsiders but also awake local people itself.

#### 4.2 Case study of Chinese living museum in Singapore

##### Case 1: Peranakan Museum, Singapore

Singapore, the same as one of city containing large number of Chinese immigrants, has The Peranakan Museum exploring the cultures of Peranakan communities. *Peranakan* means the descendants of Chinese immigrants and local people. This word is widely used in some cities of Malaysia, Singapore, Malacca and Indonesia.

The Peranakan Museum is located on Armenian road. It exhibits the lifestyle and

history of Peranakan mixing with Chinese cultures. The former use of this museum is Tao Nan Chinese School, built in 1912. The museum possesses one of the finest collections of Peranakan objects, such as living accessory, Chinese-style wedding outfit, furnitures and old photos record the history.(Figure 4. 6)



Figure 4. 4 The current Peranakan Museum (Source from The Peranakan Museum official website)



Figure 4. 5 Former use of Tao Nan Chinese school (Source from



Figure 4. 6 Interior exhibition of living collections (source from tripadvisor.com)





Figure 4. 7 Map of Peranakan museum and its surrounding of shophouses and new buildings (source from google map)

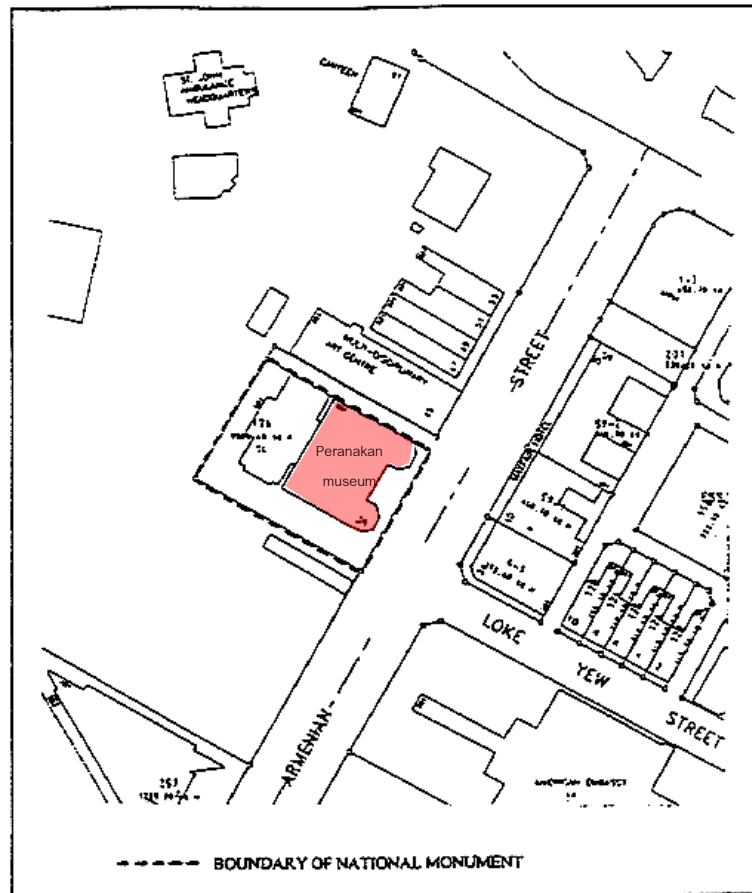


Figure 4. 8 Plan of Peranakan Museum and its surrounding (source from AGC Singapore)

The Peranakan museum does tangibly reappear the living environment of Peranakan culture. Yet in Tha-tien's case, the whole area including local people and physical aspect is deemed as a living archive. Not only tangible but also the intangible significance shall be present among this area.

Tha-tien shophouses, as many other shophouses in Bangkok, are facing the the problem of being demolished into touristic project with only profits but no value of its soul. For example, shophouses on Phra Chan road, the north side of Wat Phra Keaw, were renovated before. After the renovation, it becomes a row of shophouses with souvenir shop and chain brand convenience store. The preservation should not only see the physical of shophouse but also the people inside. Without the original people inside, the real soul of shophouse is gone. They should be recognized as an important part of living heritage as preservation value. And people in Tha-tien are under the threat of moving.

Therefore, the design project proposes a program of new buildings in shophouses. This project tries to find how to fit in new buildings in several shophouses layer in area. Instead of kicking tenants out of shophouses, the design project provides a space for not only exhibit the local value as living heritage to the public but also a place to regenerate shophouses in Tha-tien.

#### **Case 2: Chinatown Heritage Centre, Singapore**

Chinatown Heritage Centre is another museum exhibiting Chinese living heritage in Chinatown of Singapore (牛車水). The museum is in 3-units of shophouses in the area compound with numerous historical shophouses. (Figure 4.11)

Chinese is one of three major ethnic groups of Singapore's population mainly migrated from Fujian, Guantong and Hainan. Chinatown of Singapore is one of the historical areas in Singapore representing Chinese settlements. This area was created in early 19<sup>th</sup> century when Stamford Raffles applied his urban plan at Singapore. The distinctive architectural characteristics of shophouses are also the important value as influenced by Chinese Fujian style as well as that of the Straits Chinese who came from Malacca. The shophouses of Chinatown of Singapore display diversity from the original

Early Shophouses Style (1840-1900), Late Shophouses Style (1900-1940) with more flamboyant, and Urban Redevelopment Authority (undated) which is a great feature of great interest to tourists. (Henderson 2000)

The numbers of Chinese population just over 1,000 in 1821 and almost 14,000 in 1836 are 25 and 46 per cent of Singapore's total. With the trading opportunities brought to the port, Chinese settlement of 164,041 populations has expanded to south and west with some land reclamation offshore. (Henderson 2000)

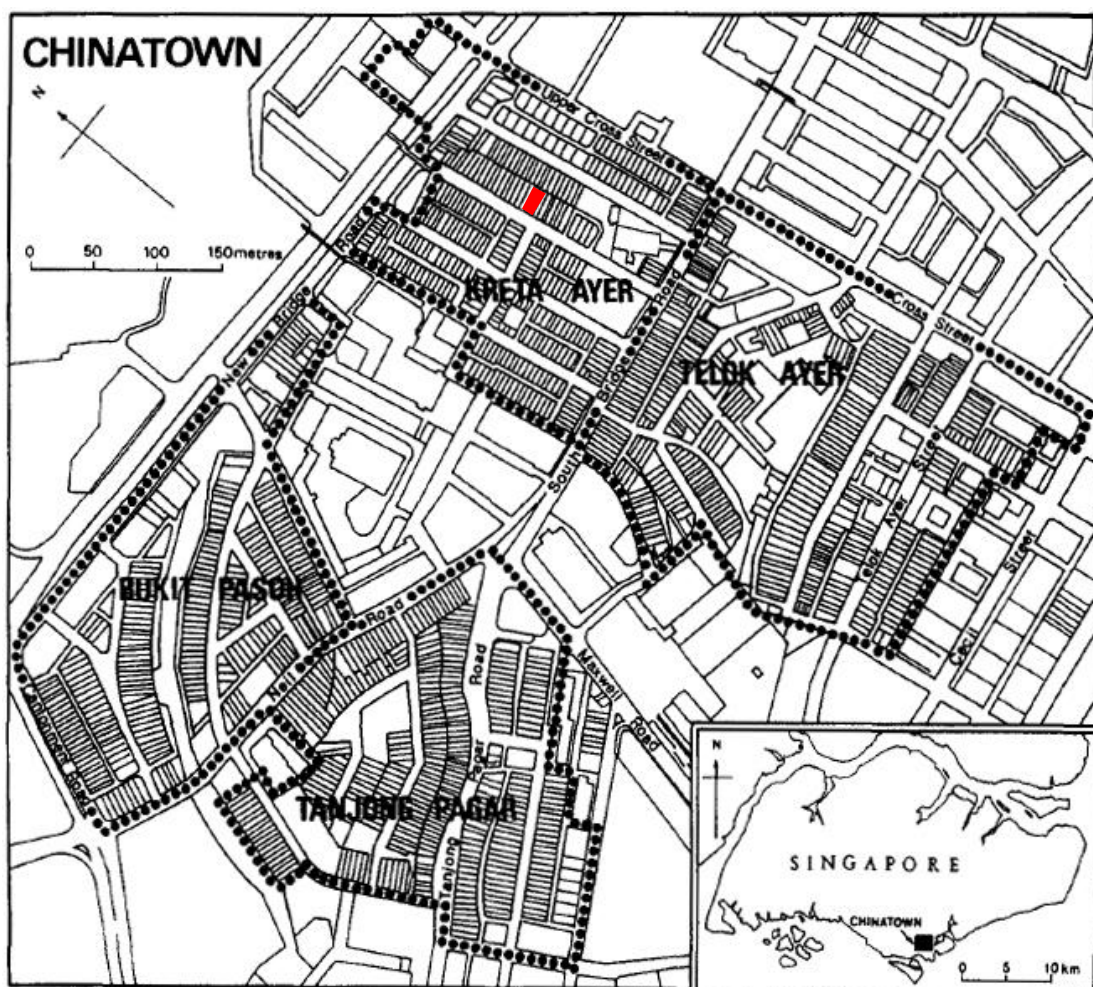


Figure 4. 9 Map of Chinatown. Red spot is where Chinese Heritage centre located.

(Source: (Lee 1996))

Since 1980s, with recognizing the demolition of its social and cultural values by urbanization, conservation became the key theme of Singapore organizations. Sooner after, a conservation plan was devised for Chinatown with following objectives: (Henderson 2000)



- (a) To retain and restore buildings of historical and architectural significance.
- (b) To improve the general physical environment and to introduce appropriate new features to further enhance the identity of the area.
- (c) To retain and enhance ethnic-based activities while consolidating the area with new and compatible activities.
- (d) To involve both the public and private sectors in carrying out conservation projects.

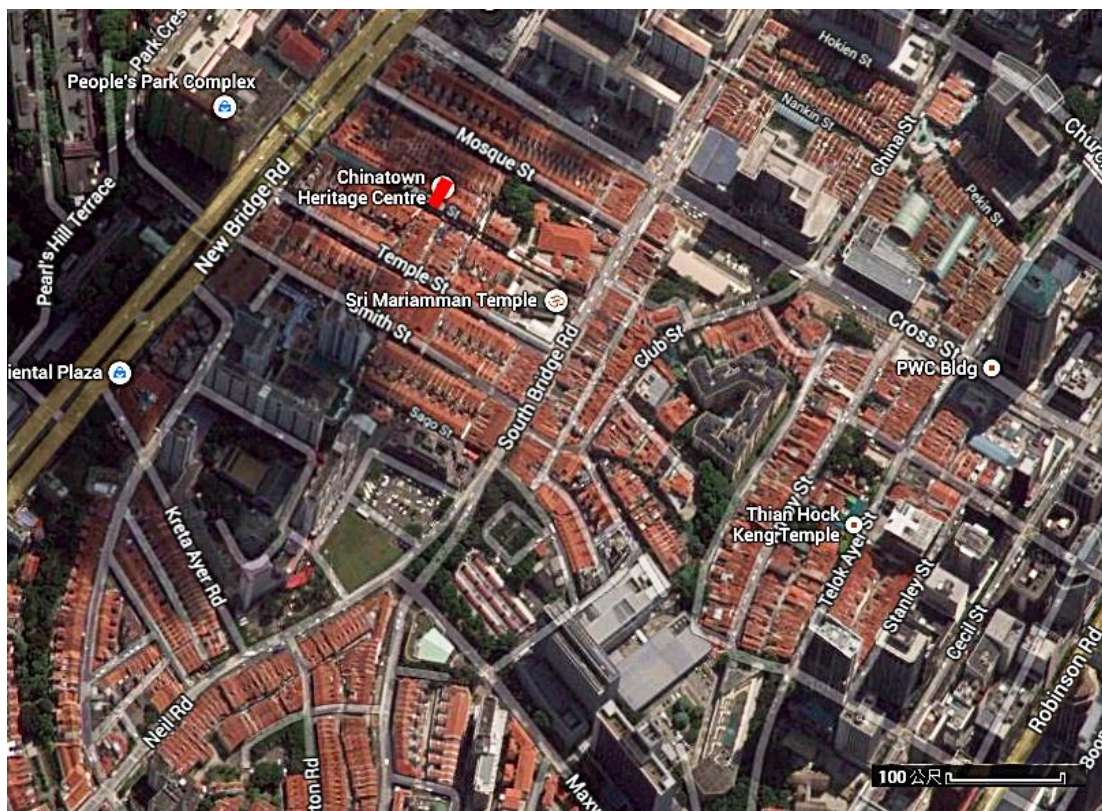


Figure 4. 10 Current map of the area. New activities within historical shophouses

(Source: google map)

With the comprehensive policy toward Chinatown of Singapore, the current Chinatown has become an attractive place where displaying the harmonious case to fill the demands of tourist industry as well as satisfy the needs of residents.

Chinese Heritage Centre is located in the middle of shophouses compound. The indoor space of shophouses displays lifestyle of Chinese immigrants in the past with old furniture, old photos, text board introducing history. Chinese Heritage Centre is now a place where visitors obtain the completed knowledge of Chinatown as well as young

generation of Singapore learn the history of their country and their ancestors. Furthermore, visitors can experience the authentic living scale by flowing the inner part of shophouses.



Figure 4. 11 Chinese heritage centre in Chinatown of Singapore where combined new activities and inherent activities. (Source: tripadvisor)



Figure 4. 12 Indoor exhibition displays the old lifestyle of Chinese immigrants.

In the case of Chinese Heritage Centre, the similarity of social context and the method of conservation will be a good case that Tha-tien can refer to. It is not only a place record old living and educating significance of its area, but also attracting people and regenerating the community socially and economically.

## CHAPTER 5

### DESIGN PROCESS

#### 5.1 Archive of Chinese living heritage in Bangkok

Based on the awareness of significance of Tha-tien as Chinese living heritage of the city and the threat of losing it, the design project aims to address the significance of Chinese living to the public which is not only physical heritage but also intangible heritage. It will be a place where community can hold their activity as a part of their living. In this project, the boundary between visitors and community is ambiguous. It is where community can exhibit the 'Chinese living heritage' by preserving living and also regenerating its local economic.

#### 5.2 Users and Programme

Selected Site			
Address	Soi Pratuknokyang, Maha Rat, Phra Borom Maha Ratchawang, Bangkok		
Landlord	Wat Pho		
Land Size	869.28 sqm		
Urban Zone	Conservation and support for Thai culture		
Height Limitation	< 16 meter		

Table 1. 4 Site Information



	Programming					
	SPACE	QUAN.	AREA	PURPOSE OF SPACE	Users	FL
			(sq.m.)			
COMMUNITY	Office (5 seats + meeting table)	1	43.2	Reception and community center	Community	1
	Snooker Club (1 pool table)	1	38.4	Community entertainment	Community	1
	Auditorium	1	21.4	Community entertainment and displaying video	Community and Visitors	2
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103</b>			
		Quan.	Area		Users	FL
MUSEUM	Exhibition Hall					
	1F Exhibition Hall	1	111.2	Exhibiting beginning of Tha-tien and information center		1
	(Service Core: Toilet)	1	7.24	Toilet and cleaning	Community and Visitors	1
	(Service Core: Elevator and staircase)	1	11.89	Connecting vertical spaces	Community and Visitors	1
	(Chessing Corner: 4 tables)	1	15.26	Community entertainment	Community	1
	(Exhibition of Chinese Shrine)	1	10.51	Exhibiting 5 shrines and store gods' carriage	Community and Visitors	1
	Experiencing Shops: Salty Egg	1	25	Producing, selling and teaching salty egg	Community and Visitors	1
	2F Exhibition Hall	1	54.6	Exhibiting R.4-6 of Thatien	Community and Visitors	2
	(Service Core: Elevator and staircase)		17.3	Connecting vertical spaces		2
	3F Exhibition Hall	1	54.6	Exhibiting R.7-8 of Thatien	Community and Visitors	3
	(Service Core: Elevator and staircase)		17.3	Connecting vertical spaces		3
	4F Exhibition Hall	1	48.48	Exhibiting R.9 of Thatien and present	Community and Visitors	4
	(Service Core: Elevator and staircase)		17.3	Connecting vertical spaces		4
	Roof Viewpoint	1	54.6	Viewpoint of whole Tha-tien	Community and Visitors	RF
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>348.5</b>			
		Exhibition Units	6			
	(2F Unit)	1	25.83	Exhibiting type 4 shophouse	Visitors	
	(Auditorium)	1	21.4	Displaying video of Tha-tien	Community and Visitors	2
	(3F Unit-1)	1	17.43	Exhibiting Thatien market and morakot market	Visitors	3
	(3F Unit-2)	1	35.34	Exhibiting type 5 and 6 shophouses	Visitors	3
	(3F Unit-3)	1	34.08	Exhibiting type 7 and 8 shophouses	Visitors	3
	(4F Unit)	1	44.8	Exhibiting type 9 shophouses, new hotels and Wat Arun	Visitors	4
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>178.9</b>			
	Service Business	Quan.	Area		Users	FL
SERVICE	Café	1	27	Selling beverages	Community and Visitors	1
BUSINESS	Library	1	24.8	Providing literatures and books relevant to Tha-tien	Community and Visitors	1
	Vendors Booth	18	32.04	invite local sellers sell foods and beverages	Sellers	1
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>83.84</b>			
	Total Floor Area (sqm)		714.2			

Table 1. 5 Table of programming

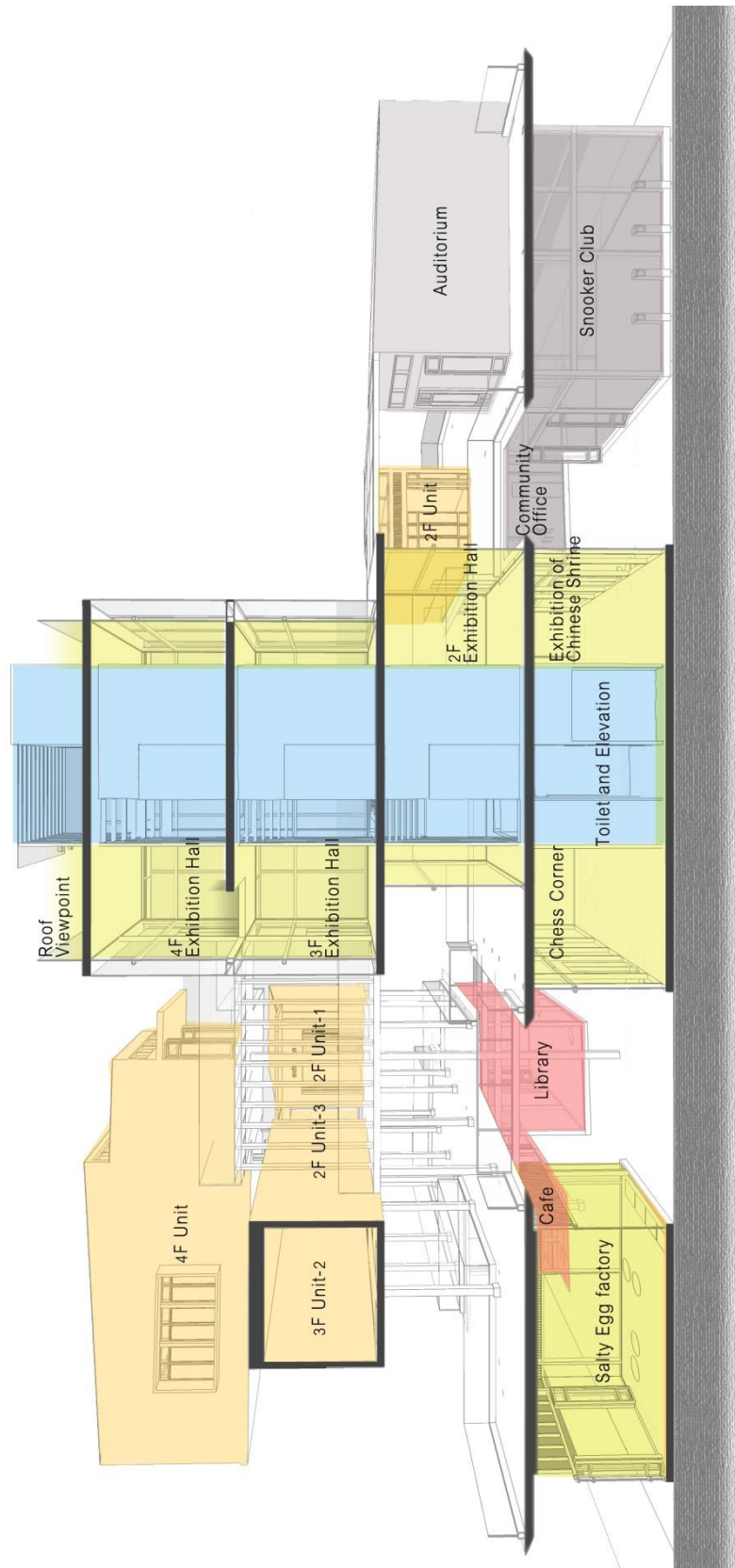


Figure 5. 1 Section A-A' of programming

**Community:** community center where they can hold ritual activities inside. Community office, snooker room, salty-egg factory and palm sugar factory can tell the story to visitors by showing them. The existing community center is compound by three parts: community office, meeting space and snooker club.

**Tha-tien home-stay center:** The upper spaces of shophouses are normally in less utilization. Tenants of Tha-tien who can provide their empty room in their shophouse, they can register in Tha-tien home-stay center. And visitors who looking for accommodation are welcomed to check out in home stay center, which will be located in the same space of community office.

**Museum of Tha-tien:** The main purpose of museum is to exhibit the knowledge of Tha-tien as well as providing different perspective to observe physical aspect of Tha-tien shophouses. Museum is compounded with two parts, the ground floor and upper parts. For the ground floor, people can flow into the site occasionally. And some focal point can be a spot to observe the surrounding. The upper floors, exhibition spaces, are intentionally separated into shophouse-shape units with different height. It is designed from imitating the same scale of shophouses in different period. So that visitors can experience the scale of space in shophouse as well.

**Experiencing factory of salty egg and palm sugar:** Tha-tien market is famous for salty egg and palm sugar, until now, you still can see people producing salty egg in front of shophouse of Tha-tien market. This is a place that people can keep producing it as a famous product from local. Meanwhile, visitors can try to produce their own and are taught by community. It would be a good way of communication between community and visitors.

**Café and library:** Café and library are located near the Bodee tree. It is relatively a peaceful zone for visitors and local can grab a cup of coffee. The valuable books and studies will be displayed in library. People are freely to read and acquire solid knowledge of Tha-tien.

**Booth for vendors:** There are some spaces for leasing to vendors of street food, medicines, drinking and so on. Street vendors are the feature of Chinese-thai society. Therefore, it does not only provide the service of business but also as a part of authenticity of Chinese living.

### 5.3 Site analysis

The site is choose in the middle part of Tha-tien where community center is. This is the area that contains multiple type of shophouses where is the back side of Tha-tien. Compared to other area, this area has lowest commercial value. It's scale doesn't allow cars to reach. Visitors can approach here from three ways.

Tourists approach Tha-tien from Tha-tien pier the most. Some tourists in grouped tour reach Tha-tien from the another pier at the end of Soi Prasuk Nokyang. Most of tourists would focus on Wat Phra Keaw and Wat Pho. A few tourists would flow through the south of Tha-tien because of hotels and restaurants. The selected site is surrounded by shophouses which become the missing corner of Tha-tien.

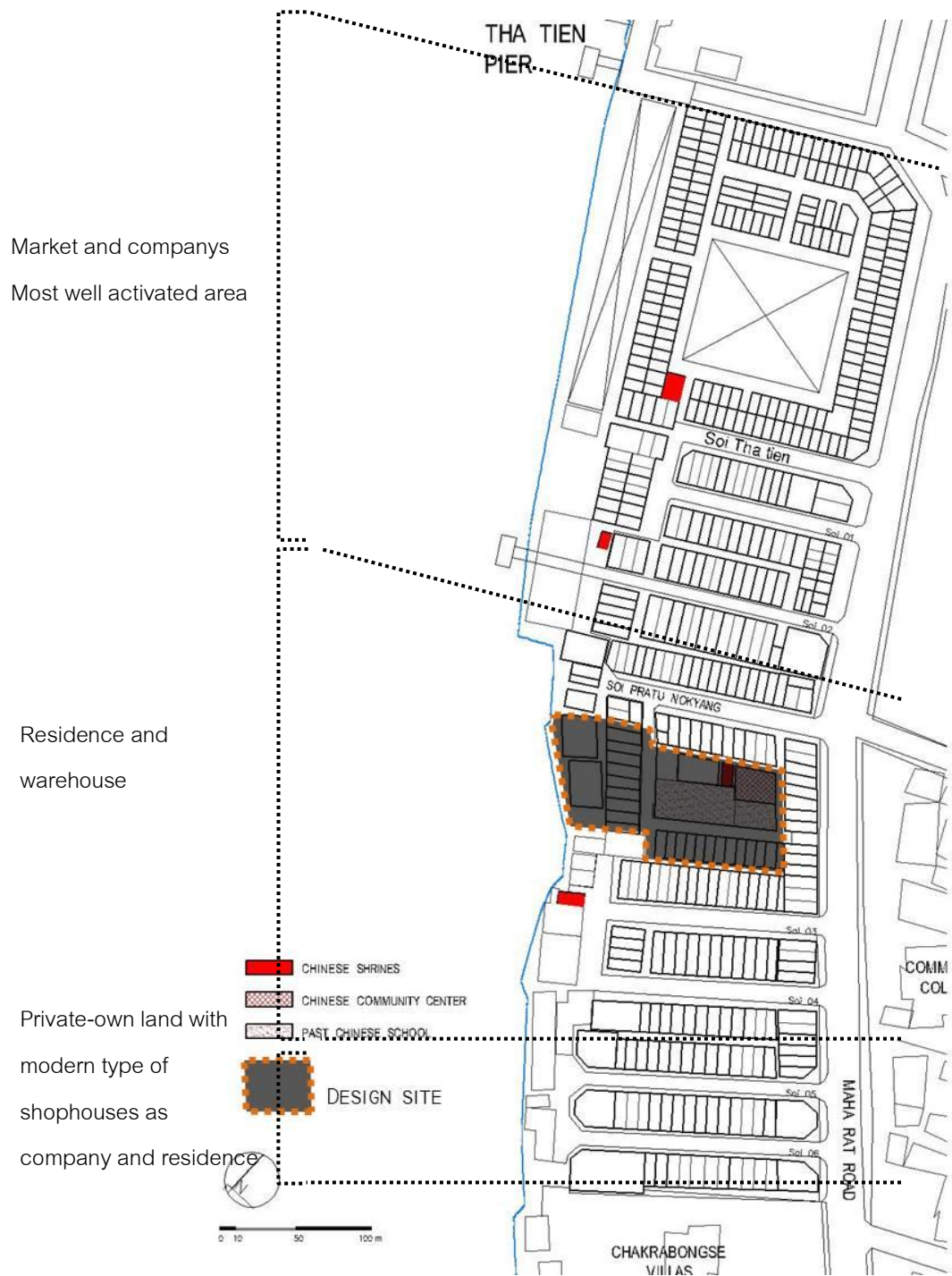


Figure 5. 2 Design area

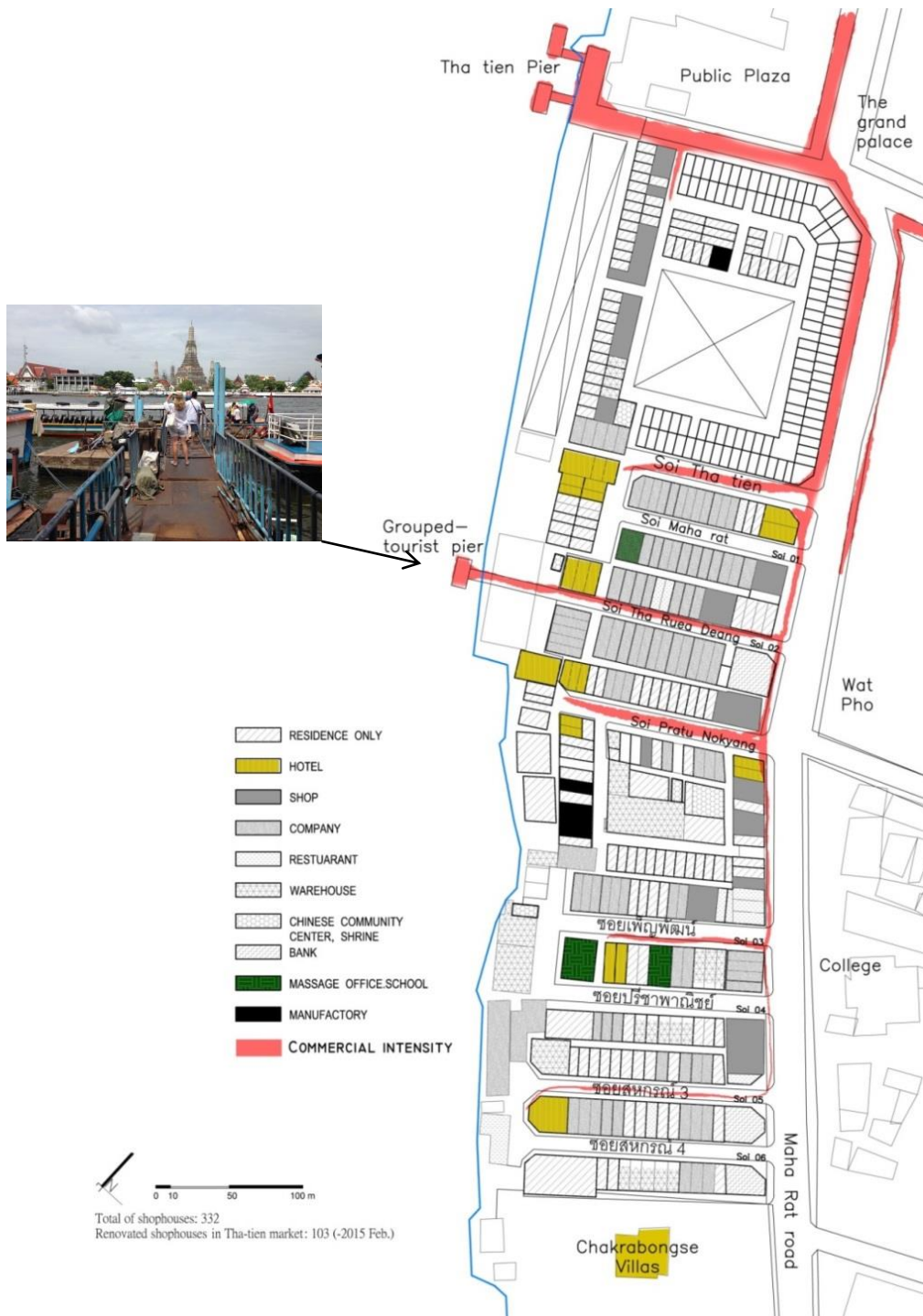


Figure 5. 3 Tourists circulation and hotels in Tha-tien area and existing business



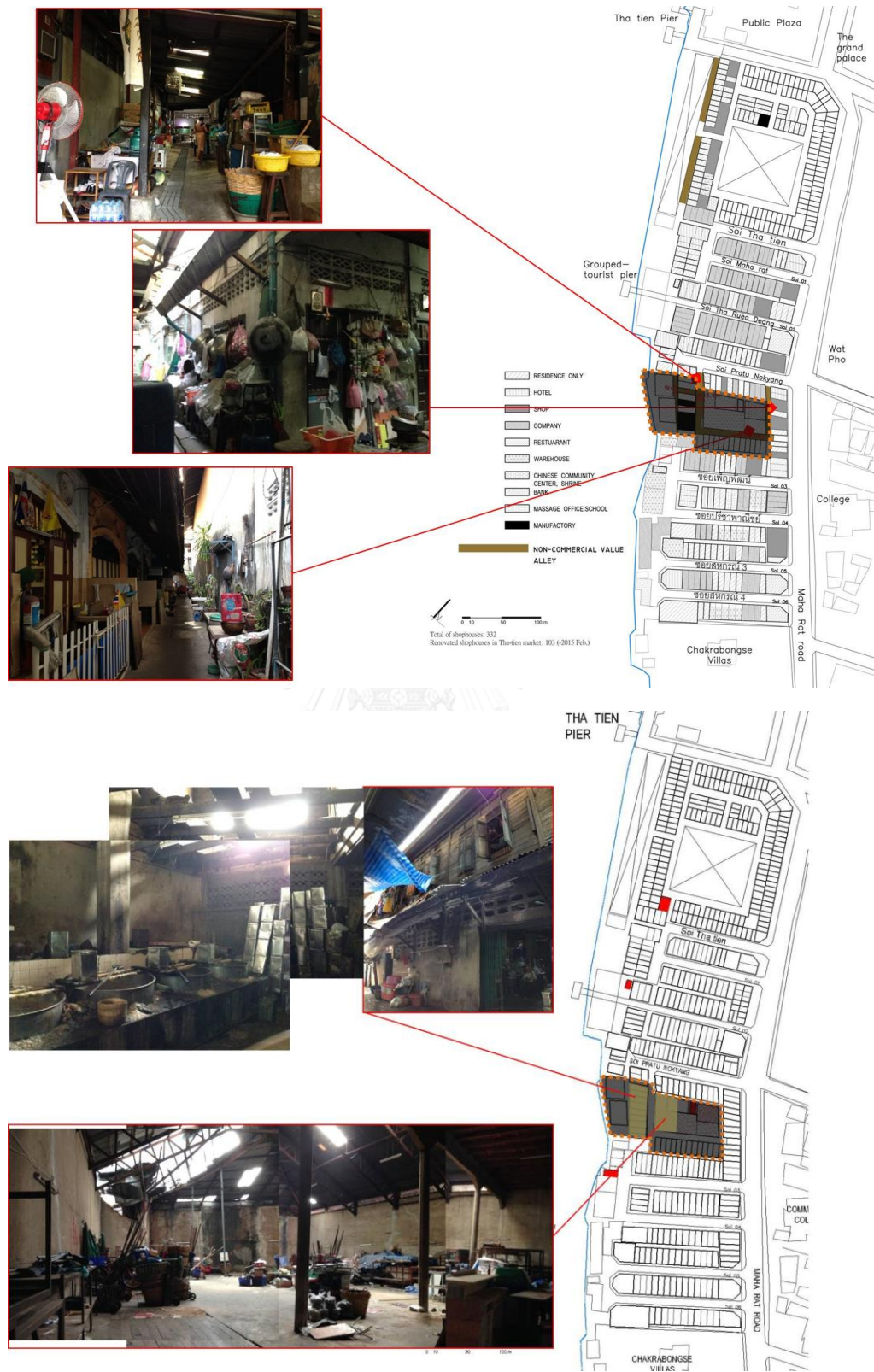


Figure 5. 4 Surrounding of site

## 5.3.1 Accessibility

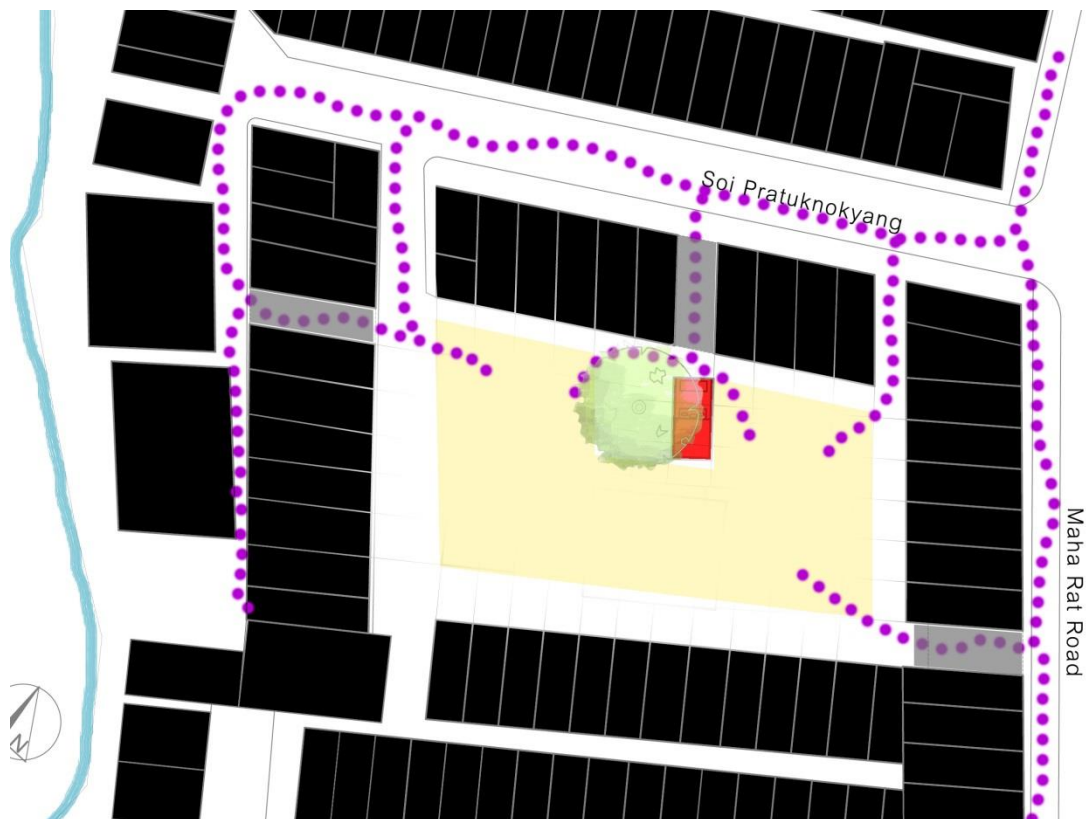


Figure 5.5 5 ways of site approaching

The site is surrounded by shophouses, and it can be accessed by five ways. Mostly people enter the site through passage of shophouses from the main road, Maha rat road.(Figure 5. 6) Some people approach by two alleys connecting to Soi Pratuknokyang.(Figure 5. 8, Figure 5. 9) Chinese shrine is also a way to enter the site from Soi Pratuknokyang.(Figure 5. 7) Lastly, tenants living near river approach the site from passage of shophouses.(Figure 5. 10) Some focal points of ground floor are created on purposed in order to provide wider perspective of observing the surrounding. (Figure 5. 11)



Figure 5.6 Approaching passage to the site on Maha Rat road





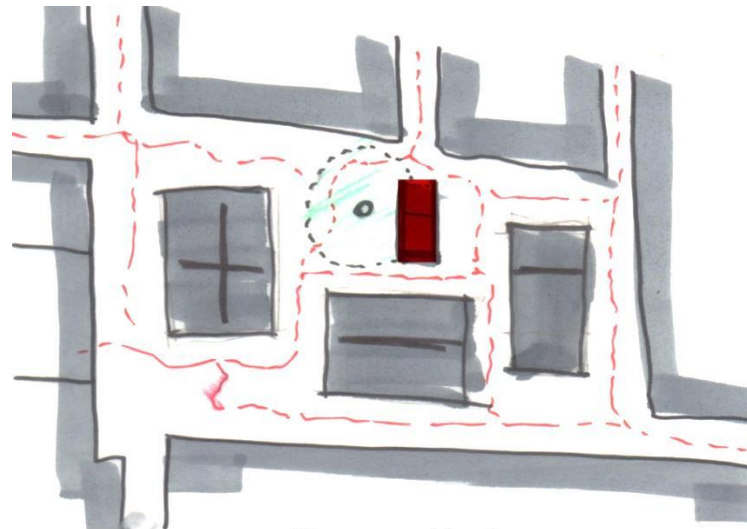
Figure 5. 7 Approaching passage to the site through the Chinese shrine (Left)

Figure 5. 8 Alley from Soi Pratuknokyang to the site (Right)

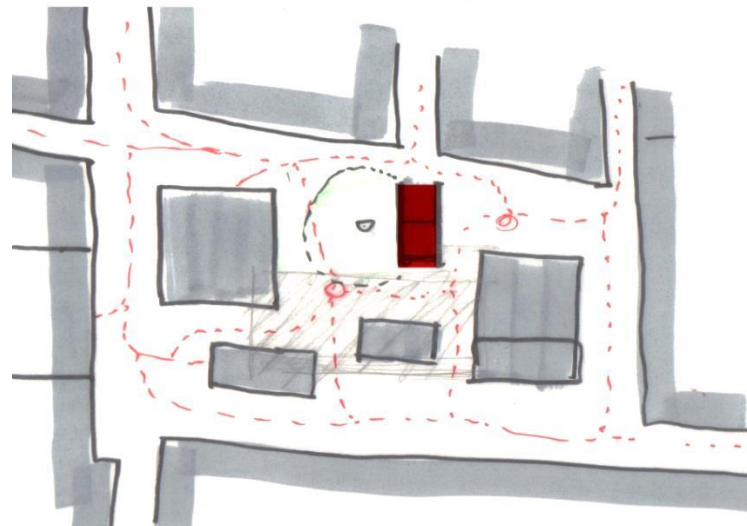


Figure 5. 9 Alley from Soi Pratuknokyang to the site (Left)

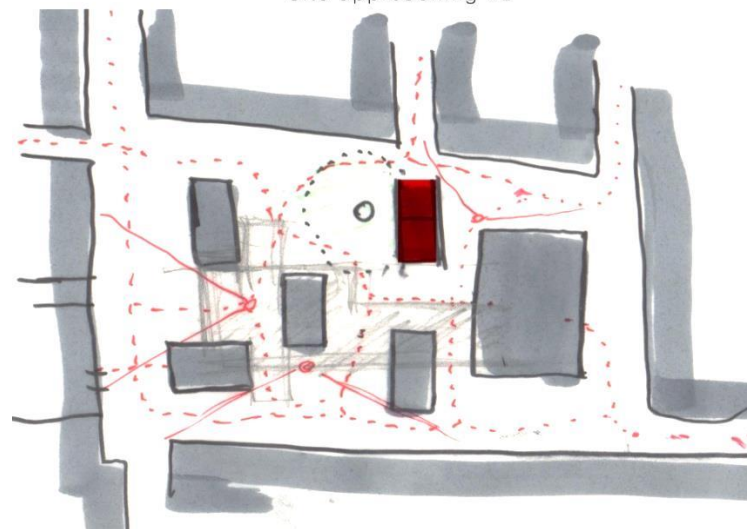
Figure 5. 10 Passage connecting the site and riverside tenants (Right)



Site approaching #1



Site approaching #2



Site approaching #3

Figure 5. 11 Diagram of groundfloor circulation

### 5.3.2 Surroundings

East: Back side of shophouses of type 4

South: Front side of shophouses of type 2

West: shophouse of type 3, 1<sup>st</sup> floor is used as palm sugar factory

North: Back side of shophouses of type 4, the oldest Chinese shrine and Bodee tree.



Figure 5. 12 Bodee tree is currently hidden by shrine and warehouse (left)

Figure 5. 13 The oldest Chinese shrine (right)

5.3.3 Existing condition



Figure 5. 14 Current use of site and surrounding, survey in May 2014

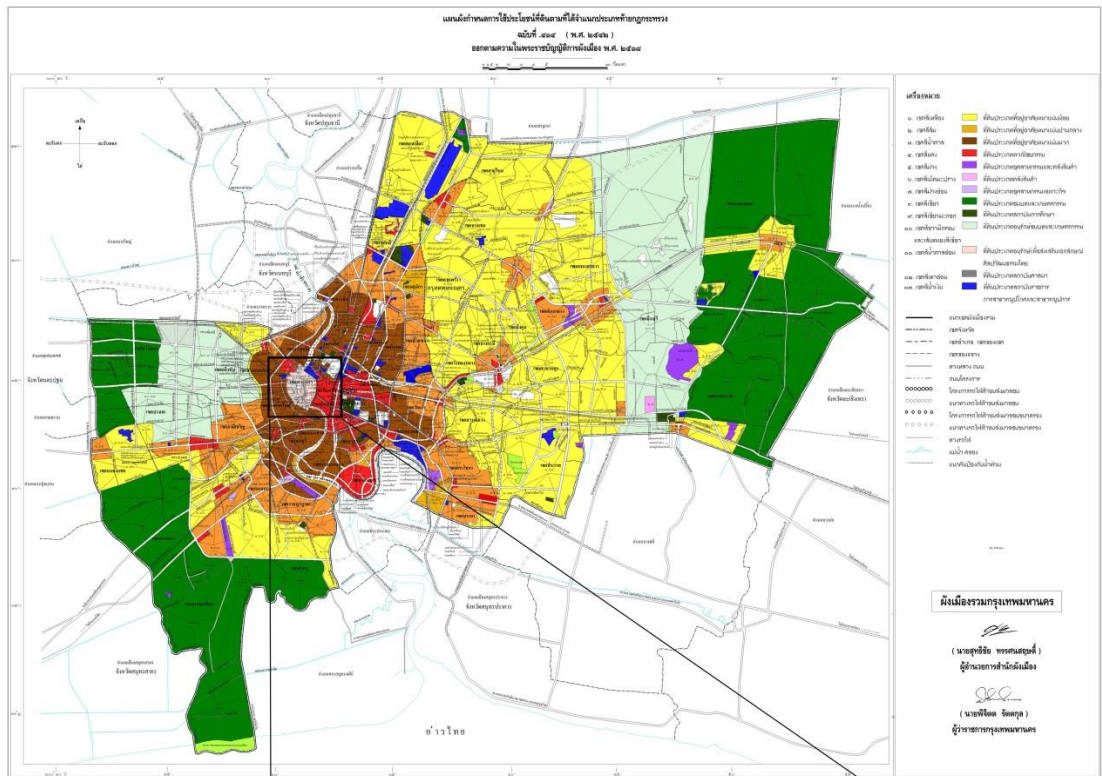




Figure 5. 15 Existing elements of site

#### 5.3.4 Law and Regulation

The whole area of Rattanakosin Island is assigned for the conservation zone for its cultural significance of this country. Tha-tien is located in the zone use of conservation for cultural value. Therefore, the height would be limited within 16 meters in order to maintain skyline of Rattanakosin Island. (Figure 5. 16)



Design Site: Tha tien

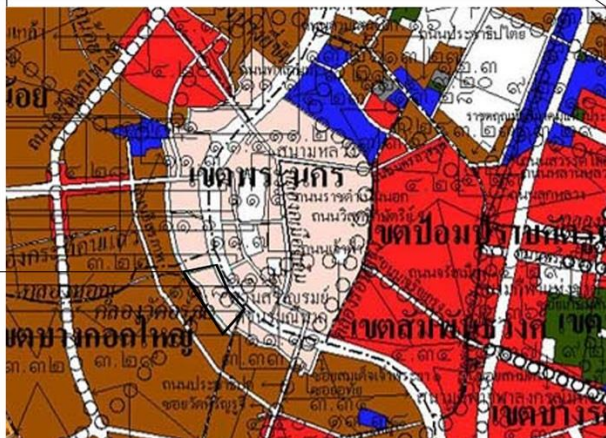
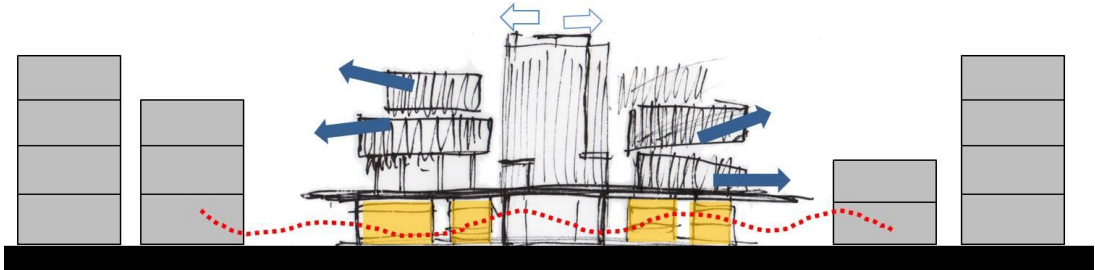
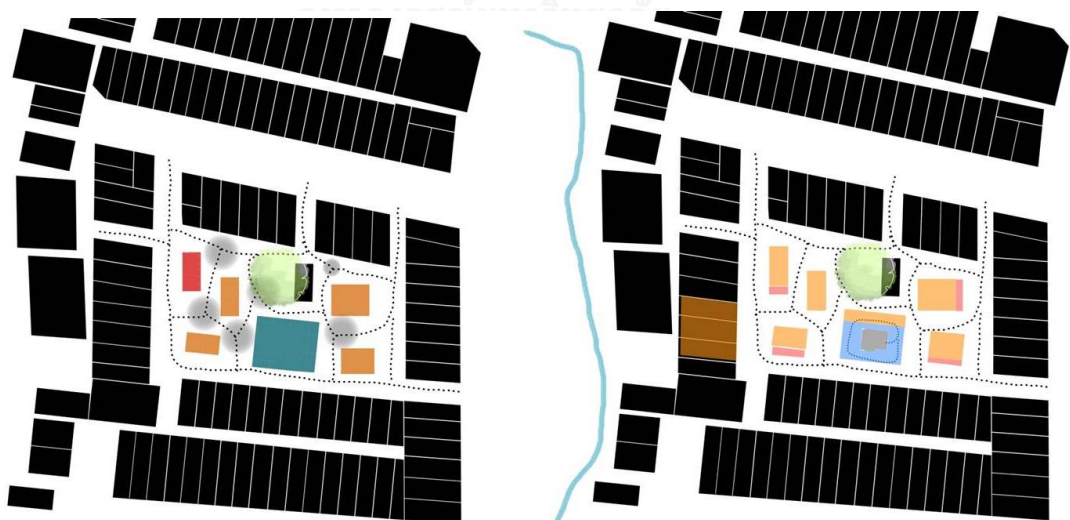


Figure 5. 16 Urban Planning of Bangkok city, 1999

## 5.4 Design Concept



By following its original scale of shophouses, this project aims to create not only the sense of visual but also physical experience of local people's life. The ground floor is composed with small unit of space with different purpose in order to let visitors can see through what Tha-tien's people do in their daily life. Local people can share their living skill as making salty egg and palm sugar to visitors. Or they would grab a cup of coffee and sitting in library where lots of literatures related to Tha-tien's history can be found. The upper parts, 2 to 4 floors, have their own topics to see by using different floor height. As a museum of Chinese living heritage in Bangkok, it is a place for Tha-tien's people keep exhibiting their life by living sustainably.



### 5.5 Design Development

The design concept is always clear. The first design of volume #1 is too rough that doesn't fit the architectural context of surrounding shophouses. (Figure 5. 17) Therefore, the adjusted design chooses to make it more sensitive way by following the context of surrounding.(Figure 5. 19) The spaces would be similar to scale of shophouses which is approximately 3 meter to 4 meter width. (Figure 5. 19, Figure 5. 20)

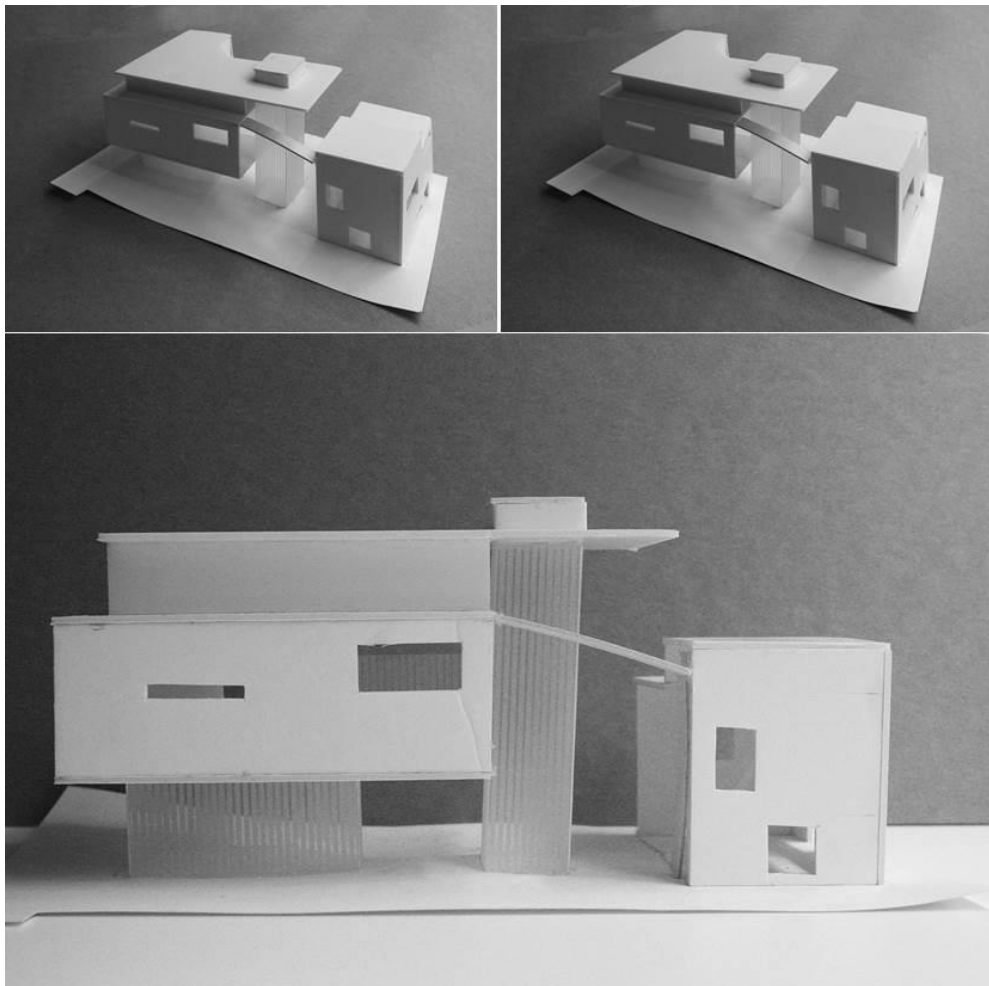


Figure 5. 17 Volume of building #1



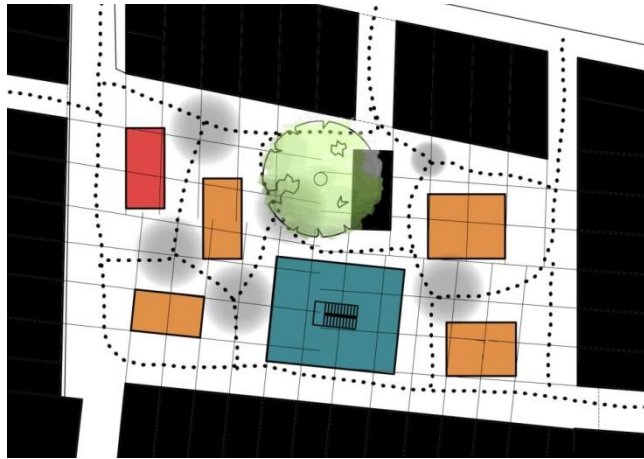


Figure 5. 18 Diagram of ground floor and surrounding shophouses

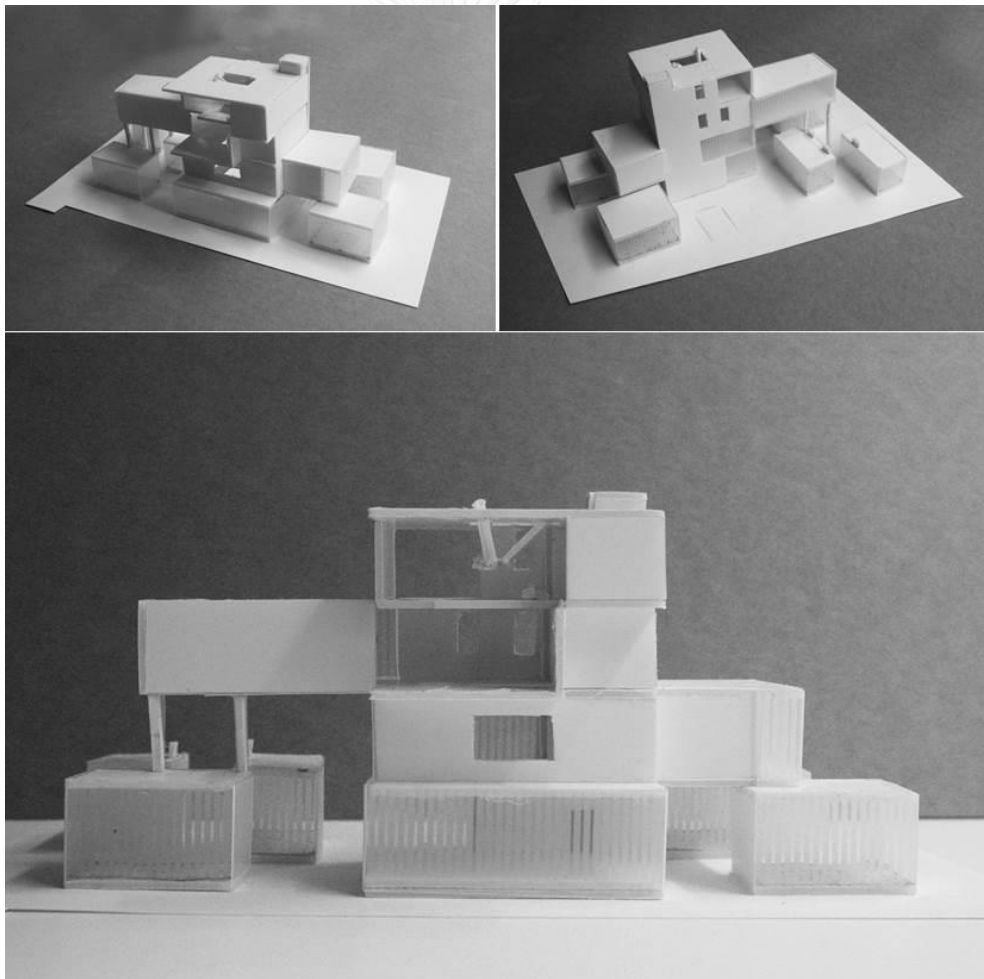


Figure 5. 19 Volume of building #2



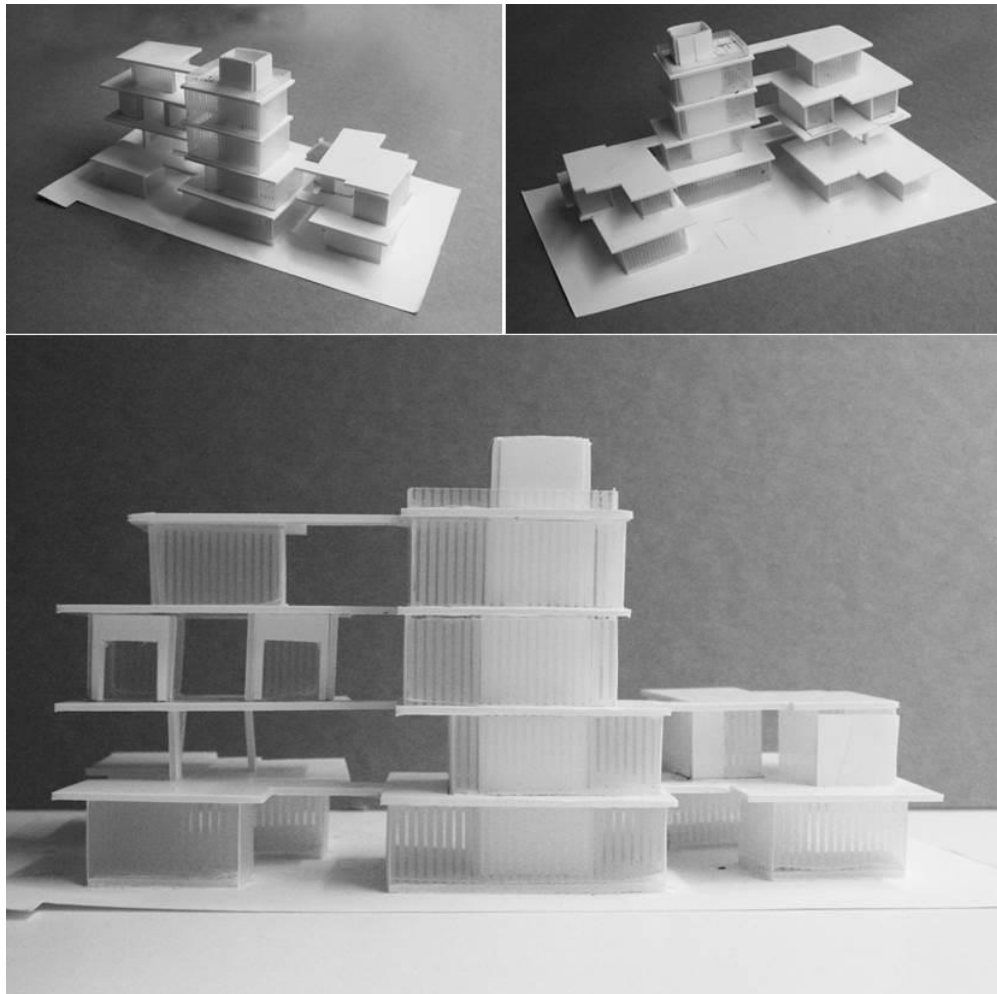


Figure 5. 20 Volume of building #3

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The upper exhibiting spaces are designed toward to specific part of Tha-tien. Shophouses of Tha-tien have developed from 1 floor to 4 floors. The exhibiting route starts from the oldest part of Tha-tien, as visitors go higher floor, they can understand Tha-tien's shophouses and history in time order. The end of exhibiting route is the roof floor as viewing point acquiring Tha-tien and glorious landscape of old Bangkok city.



Figure 5. 21 Design model of ground floor



Figure 5. 22 Design model of elevation

5.6 Design Drawing



Figure 5. 23 Site Plan



Figure 5. 24 Ground plan of design



Figure 5. 25 2 floor plan





Figure 5. 26 3 Floor Plan



Figure 5. 27 4 Floor Plan



Figure 5. 28 Roof Floor Plan

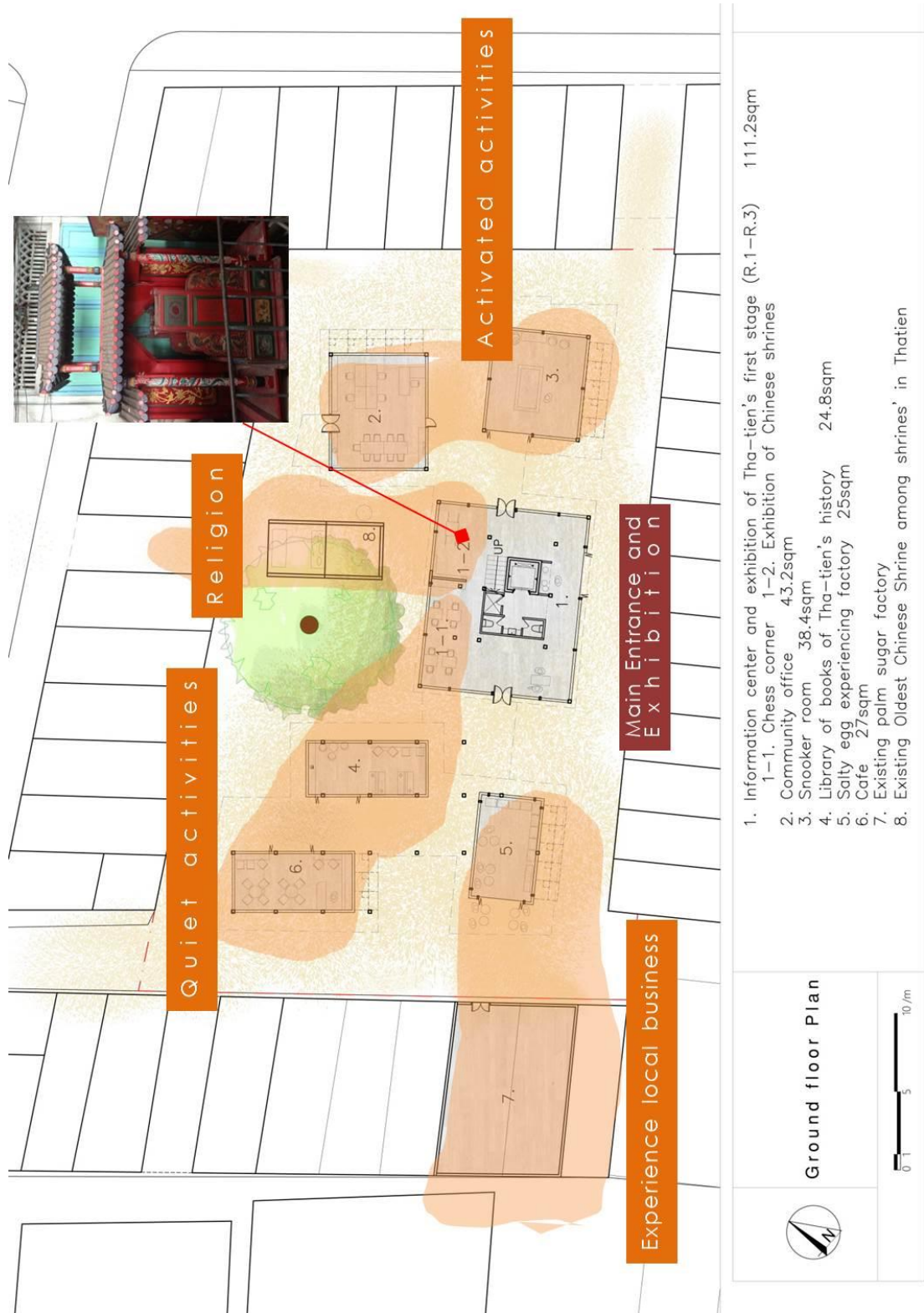


Figure 5. 29 Zones of ground floor

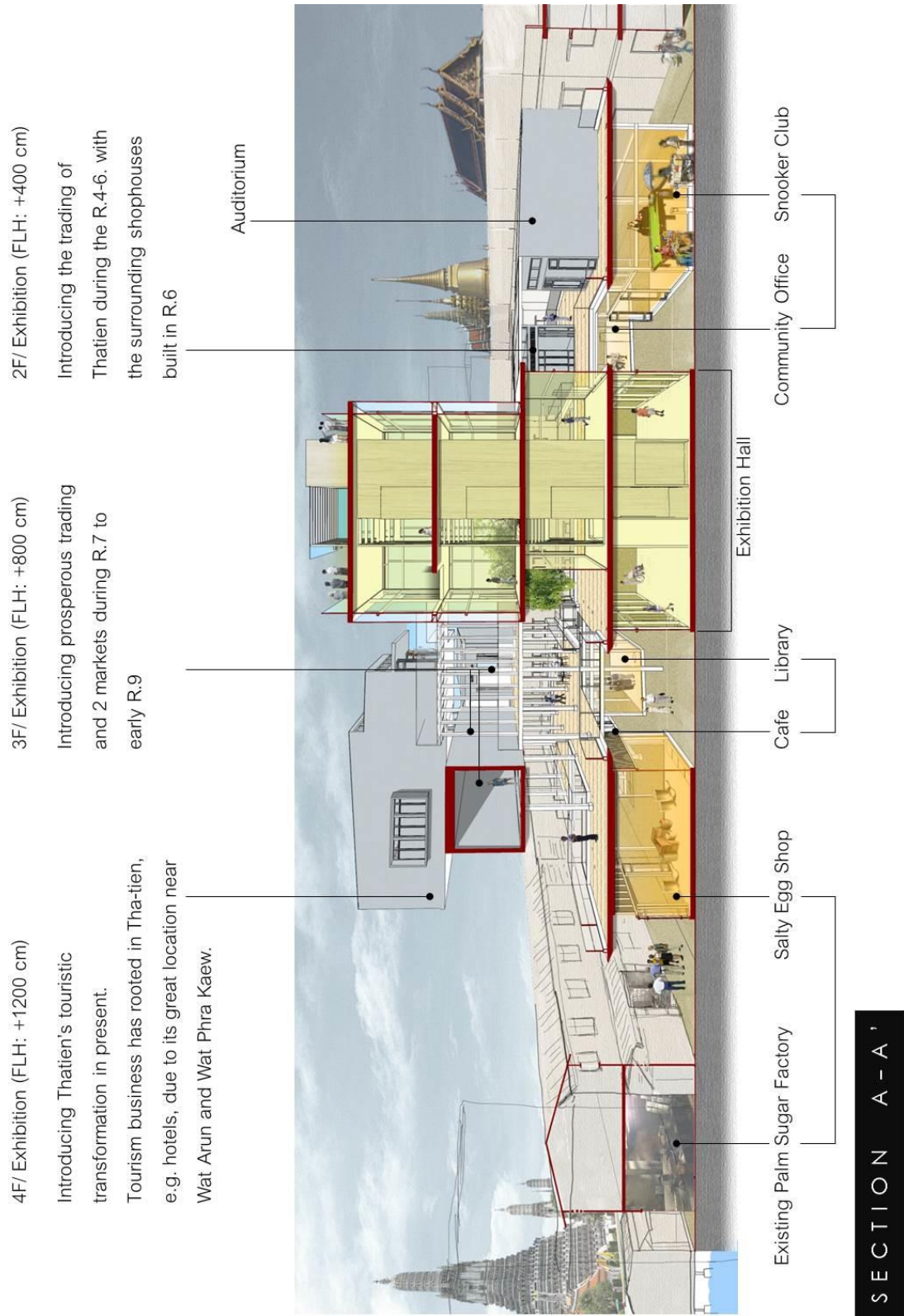


Figure 5. 30 Section A-A'





Figure 5. 31 Index plan of rendering images



Figure 5. 32 Perspective no. 2



Figure 5. 33 Perspective no.3



Figure 5. 34 Perspective no.1





2FLH: 4.00M /Exhibit the beginning of markets during R.4-5 /Exhibition space Width: 330-340 cm

2 f l o o r z o n e s



3FLH: 8.00M/ Exhibit trading and two markets during R.6-8/ Exhibition space width: 360-370 cm

3 f l o o r z o n e s



3F Exhibition Units -1 -2 -3

3 f l o o r z o n e s



4FLH: 12M/ Exhibit the current Tha-tien, tourist-oriented development, hotels/  
Exhibition space width: 390 cm with height 450 cm

4 f l o o r z o n e s

The materials of ground floor is transparent glass with white frame. So that when people approaching the site, they can see the fulfill of activities happening at ground floor. The architectural language are totally different to the upper part. Every unit with different height exhibits different topic of Tha-tien. While visitors read the exhibiting materials, they can feel the spatial scale of shophouses of certain period and can see the shophouses on Tha-tien from the winkow.

The fourth floor is imitating the shophouses of type 9 which has mezzanine inside with the height of 4.3 m. By emulating the shophouses in the aspect of spatial scale and style of windows, the multiple senses of experience can be provided to the visitors.



Elevation

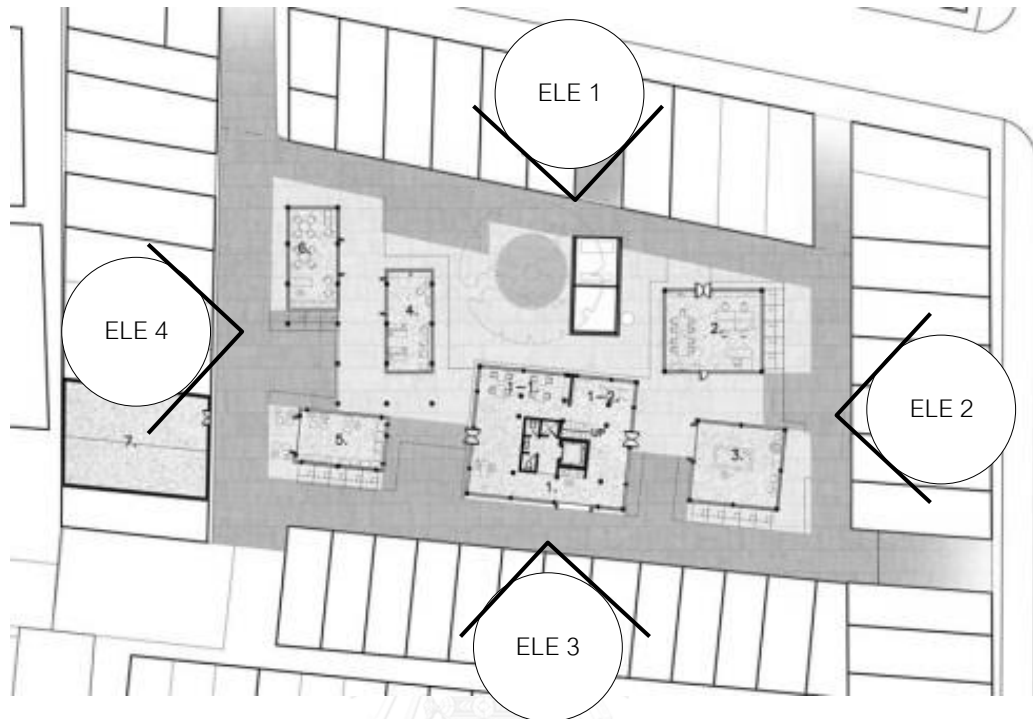


Figure 5. 35 Index plan of elevations



Figure 5. 36 Elevation 1



Figure 5. 37 Elevation 2



Figure 5. 38 Elevation 3



Figure 5. 39 Elevation 4



Figure 5. 40

Photo of design model



Figure 5. 41

Photo of design model

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The development and transformation of shophouses in Tha-tien demonstrate the whole picture of Chinese life in Bangkok in the aspect of social and cultural conditions. The transformation of shophouses in Bangkok has direct relationship with huge amount of Chinese immigrants in the past. The well-defined compound of Tha-tien contributes the good maintenance of shophouses in each phase. Shophouses in Tha-tien should be kept as a whole which representing the complete story of Chinese living heritage in Bangkok. However, Tha-tien is facing the threat of being demolished due to the potentiality for tourists. Instead of roughly destroy of Tha-tien, this study approaches the issue of preservation of Chinese urban heritage with a sensitive way. Considering local people are also a crucial part of heritage should be preserved, the study proposes a program of regenerating local without expel anyone there.

The thesis proposed a museum exhibiting with the 'real life' from local. The museum required high participation from the community. The communication between community and outsiders are rather intimate. The design concept hopes to make community people and visitors interflow naturally on the ground floor. Secondly, visitors can also experience the physical aspect of shophouses by emulating the scale of space. The community also plays the role as home-stay center which can stimulate the utilizing of shophouses in Tha-tien as guesthouse. In this way, it can help community create more income as well as letting visitors can understand deeper aspect of Tha-tien.

In the first part of study, I've reviewed lots of literatures of Chinese life in Thailand in both Chinese and English. It found out that Chinese architectural influence cannot directly be told with transport of Chinese ornaments and decorations. Chinese architectural influence toward Bangkok is discussed in the bigger picture of relationships between Thailand and China.

There are two main factors dominant why shophouses would look like this today.

The first one is limitation of possession. This law prohibits Chinese immigrants to own the land. Therefore, plenty of shophouses in Bangkok were built by landlord for leasing with the unified appearance. Chinese immigrants were poor to afford any luxury life. Even the residence would be the most economic way.

Secondly, Chinese immigrants' lives in Bangkok were temporary to permanent. Their temporary-living can be shown in the way they decorate their house. The signboard in Chinese and the evidence of Chinese gods are the only remain Chinese identity in shophouse. Near mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, their life in Thailand has become temporary to permanent. So does the physical condition of shophouse is more elaborated with shading layers and alternation of materials, as the economic condition of Chinese immigrant is better.

Furthermore, once Thai law against Chinese immigrants to expose their Chinese identity by using Chinese name and speak Thai, Chinese immigrants in Bangkok are gradually considered themselves as Thai but not Chinese.

I've investigated Tha-tien community by my own field observation as outsider. And eventually, I've got in touch with community leader and elders. During the interviews with local elders from China or Chinese descendant, I've acquired small talks from local Chinese elders. Those stories based on their memories have completed the puzzle piece of Chinese immigrants in Tha-tien and have conformed the prevailing social context. Many Chinese evidences can be observed in Tha-tien, such as religious settlement and existence of market correspond the prosperity of trading in Tha-tien.

During the beginning of field observation, I was questioned with aggressive attitude by some local elders. They considered me as a developer. This addresses Tha-tien's threat that they are under the fear of moving. However, the local people do not want to leave Tha-tien because their strong emotions to the place. Tha-tien community has played crucial role as making Tha-tien better and better. Based on the interview with Mr. Kriengkrai, position in community leader for 18 years, he declares that Tha-tien has its own system which takes care of all the new comers to join Tha-tien. Tha-tien community



is active in maintaining Tha-tien in its original way. Although they are welcomed tourists visiting Tha-tien, they rather show themselves in the original look of living. Tha-tien is a place that makes them feel proud, it is their home for decades, it contains their lifetime story. Based on the understanding of community and its' willing, the thesis proposes a community-run museum. The purpose of museum is to exhibit Tha-tien's authentic value as Chinese living heritage of Bangkok in aspect of architectural context to history and their live.

The design outcome can regenerate community and bring young generation of Tha-tien back to community. They would proudly show themselves and their houses as the significance of Tha-tien. The architectural language of community-museum is in between modern and tradition. The concept of Tha-tien is to make community's living as additional part of plot. The ground floor compounded with spaces with food vendors with visual contact with Chinese shrine, Boddee tree and aged shophouses surrounded. Many activity of life will be displayed on the ground floor naturally. The second part of museum provides a footpath to understand Tha-tien with higher point of view, yet the exhibiting units are emulated in space scale of shophouses with different types. The home-stay service center can help to enhance the utilization of shophouses, meanwhile, it can let visitors to be closer to the authenticity of Tha-tien life.

### **6.1 Limitation of study**

The thesis is a starting point of the topic of Chinese architectural influence in Thailand in referring to Chinese and English literatures. I use the social-economic point of view to observe the cultural condition of Chinese immigrants in scope of one architectural typology, shophouses. It is advantage of mine that be able to refer to Chinese literatures. However, there are plenty of valuable Thai studies of shophouses of Bangkok. This study can be better if can include some related studies of shophouses. It might lead this study to a wider but more precise theory.

Secondly, the limitation of this study is my Thai-language and study time. This study would go further and more solid if more interviewswith Chinese immigrants in Tha-tein

can be conducted and be able to record interior part of every shophouse in Tha-tien. With deeper observation of shophouses and information of Chinese life, this study can be improved and identify deeper picture of Chinese living heritage of Tha-tien.

## 6.2 Suggestion of the future study

This study is focus on the relationship between shophouses in Bangkok and Chinese immigrants during mid-19<sup>th</sup> to late-20<sup>th</sup> century. It identifies shophouses in Tha-tien as one of the most completed Chinese living heritage in Bangkok city. However, the rapid urban development is destroying its significance due to public ignorance of this issue. In the last part of this study proposes the design, a community-run museum, in order to spontaneously regenerate Tha-tien community based on their own strength and educate people its significance.

The research part can be improved with following suggestions:

1. More studies of shophouses in Thai can be referred in order to acquire various aspects of shophouses in Bangkok.
2. More interviews with local elders and young generations. This would be lead into statistic data to prove more evidences as Chinese living heritage. Their thoughts and expectations of Tha-tien will be one of the keys toward the design proposal.
3. The design proposal can be improved if it can be discussed to local people and also the landlord. After several discussions have been made with local people and landlord, the design can be shaped into a precise solution regarding comprehensive comments.

As an architect, we should not only see physical aspect as value of urban landscape. All in all, the value of urban is based on the activity of human being. Street-living is the soul of urban landscape but not only architecture itself. Before we insert new program into a site, it is necessary to understand the transformation of local in depth and humbly listen to the local users in order to develop good concepts of sense of place,

respect of local culture and authenticity of place which can thoroughly contributes the architecture to the real users.



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APPENDIX

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
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## VITA

Sheng-man Lin, also known as Addy Lin, was born on 14th July 1988 in Taipei, Taiwan.

She processes her Master degree of Architecture at Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University. In 2010, she received her Bachelor degree of Architecture in National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Taiwan. Before that, she also graduated with a major in Architecture from Taipei Municipal Da-an Vocational High School.

In 2011, she had finished and been certified the community planner training program which held by department of urban development, Taipei city government. She and her team successfully designed and carry out a route-walking activity in the end of that training program at Dalongdong, Da-tong district, Taipei city. The main purpose of that activity is indicating the local's cultural values, meanwhile, recalling and promoting the local memory of an old community to public.

She presents the paper entitled "The study of contemporary temples adapt in high-density condition: The case study of temples in Chinatown, Bangkok" at ICOMOS Thailand International Conference 2014, on 11-13 December 2014, Bangkok, Thailand.

Working experiences:

- 2012 Design Sardini Co. Ltd., Taiwan, as Interior Designer
- 2011-2012 Pauian Archiland group, Taiwan, as Assistant Designer to Japanese architect, Imada Haruo
- 2010-2011 Inno Vation architect & associates, Taiwan, as Architectural Designer
- 2009 Inno Vation architect & associates, Taiwan, as Intern, duration for 2 months