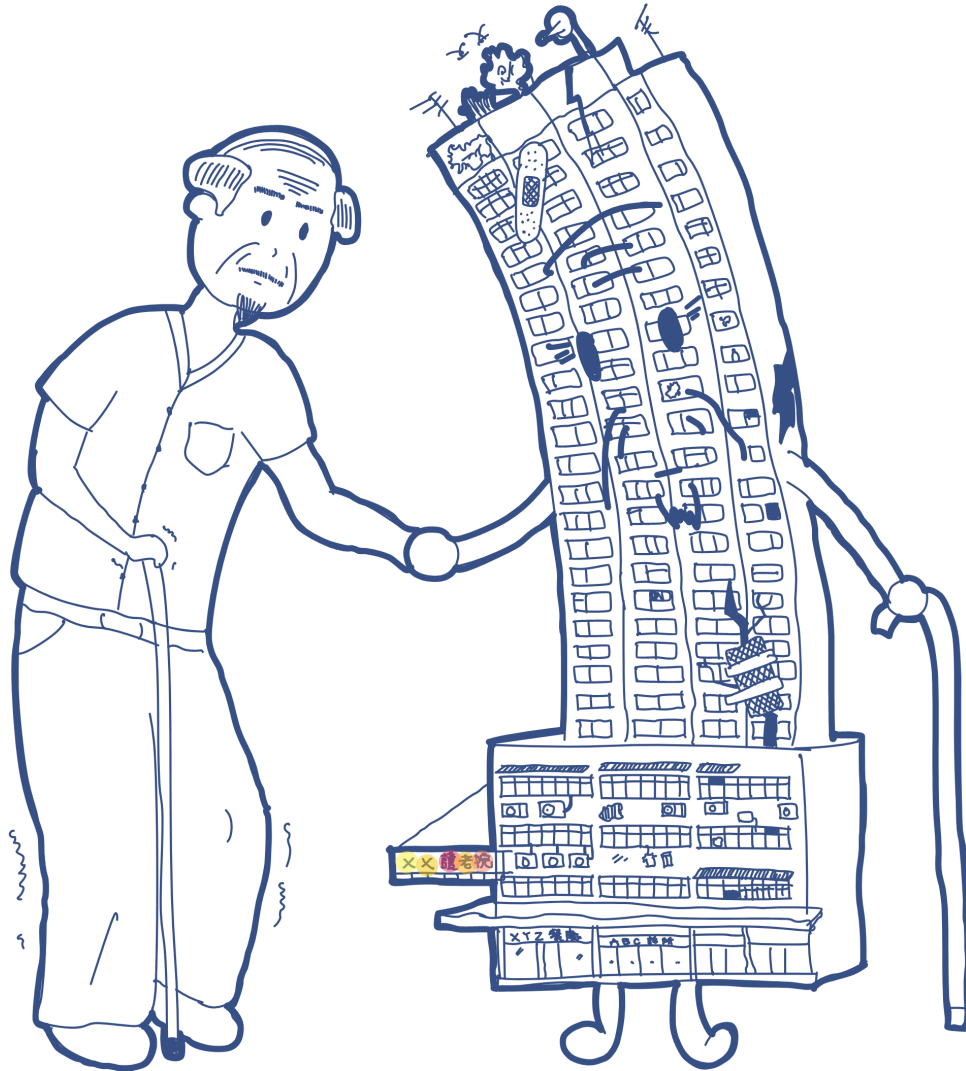


# Double Ageing in Hong Kong



**Sing-Chi Lau**

Bergen School of Architecture | Diploma 2023

Tutor :

APP | Cecilie Andersson

DAV | Eva Kun

TTA | Andre Fontes, Kim Christensen & Nancy Couling

1:1 | Vibeke Jensen

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## Background - Double Ageing in Hong Kong

This project discusses one of the social phenomenons in Hong Kong - "Double Ageing" which is the ageing of the population and building mass at the same time. It is unique in the world in terms of its scale and complexity in light of the rapidly growing elderly population and the ultra-high building density worsened by stratified ownership. This phenomenon is a combined impact that would create a variety of problems if not being addressed timely and properly such as community burdens on medical services and home may no more be a safe accommodation. It is one of the most challenging issues that Hong Kong has to conquer in the coming decade.

### Phenomenon of Residential Care Home for the Elderly

Most small and medium-scale Residential Care Home for the Elderly (RCHE), also known as nursing homes, operate an elderly service at the podium level of various "Tong Lau" (唐樓, old tenement building) resulting from the section 19 of the Residential Care Home (Elderly Persons) Regulations. No part of RCHE shall be situated at a height more than 24 meters above the street level, while the podium level is intentionally designed for non-domestic purposes. Lack of natural sunlight, autonomy and amenities, therefore, lead to numerous crucial problems that residents encounter. The residents living in RCHE feel like in prison and marionette because they are looked after with standardised care and institutional layout setting which reduce self-autonomy for their lifestyle.

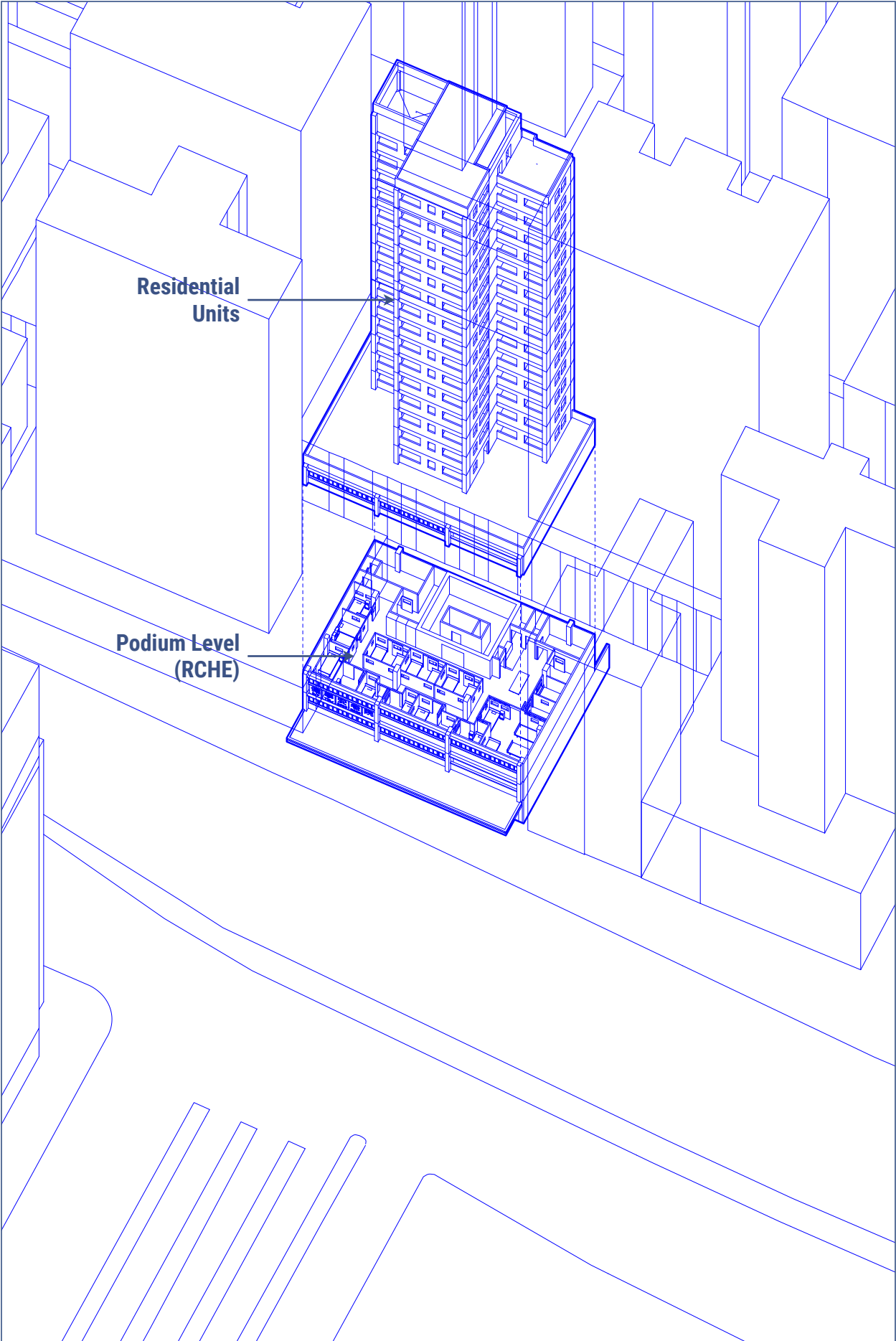
### Navigating the Inevitable Ageing Building Mass

With the development of urban renewal by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) and private developers, Tong Lau can hardly escape from being demolished because of the lifespan of concrete building and its poor maintenance. Residents with own-occupied property will be being acquiring while RCHEs will be inevitably relocated to somewhere in either the same district or other districts in Hong Kong where is characterised by high-rise buildings, bustling streets and limited available space. The scarcity of vacant land, coupled with the need to adhere to strict zoning regulations, makes it a formidable task to identify appropriate sites for operating RCHEs. Should we find other podium levels of Tong Lau to operate RCHE?

### The Impact of Ageing Population on RCHE & Elderly Care Infrastructure

According to the numbers from the Census and Statistics Department, the numbers of elderly age 65 and above will double from 1.52 million or 4.1 percent of out population in 2022 to 2.52 million or 33.3 percent of that in 2039, where around 59,000 elderly residing in various types of RCHE. A complete overhaul of our policy on residential care for the elderly is a mission that cannot be kicked further down the road. Applicants have to wait for four to five years, who may pass away before they could be allocated places in such care homes. At present, the number of elderly people waiting for subsidized RCHEs has exceeded 20,000 and it takes an average of 3.6 years to move into the subsidized housing. In addition, the quality of private non-subsidized RCHEs varies, and most of them are cramped.

Meanwhile, the existing infrastructure and facilities often fall short of meeting the needs of the elderly residents. Insufficient consideration of factors such as accessibility, community integration, and sufficient green spaces has resulted in cramped and isolated environments that hinder the overall well-being and quality of life for nursing home residents. Urgent attention must be directed towards comprehensive urban planning strategies that prioritize the creation of supportive and inclusive environments, ensuring that the elderly population can age gracefully with dignity and comfort.



## **(What) is the Project Dealing with?**

### **Reimagining future RCHEs**

The main purpose of this diploma project is to create a new typology of RCHE, in Yau Tsim Mong District, Hong Kong. It embraces a new approach to urban integration and engagement, shifting away from the traditional notion of isolating them in the podium level of various Tong Lau or on the outskirts of the city. Instead, it aims to seamlessly integrate RCHEs into the vibrant urban fabric, creating inclusive spaces with different programs that promote active participation and interaction with the surrounding community.

### **Creating Inclusive Environments**

The design intention is to prioritize the well-being and quality of life for the elderly residents in the RCHE by creating environments where enhance their autonomy, physical, emotional, and social well-being. This includes incorporating elements such as ample visual connection to adjacent environment, engaging areas and accessible green spaces that encourage social interactions and facilitate a sense of belonging.

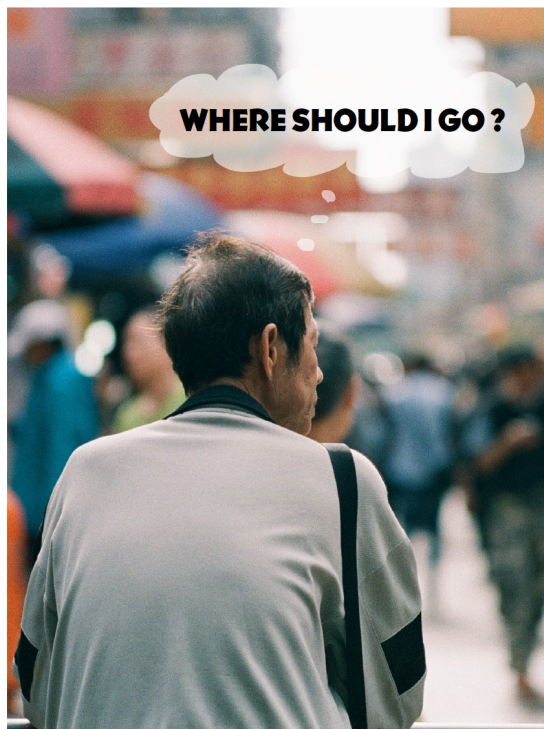
### **Intimating Spaces In-between**

A space within the RCHE should not only fulfill the functional needs of residents but also serve as a reflection of their individuality and promotes a sense of home and intimacy. When the elderly move into RCHE, they are encouraged to bring personal belongings which hold significant to them and represent themselves such as photographs, artwork, and cherished items. These personal belongings play a crucial role in establishing a familiar and comforting environment while also serving as a means of self-expression, allowing residents to express their identity and establish personal connections.

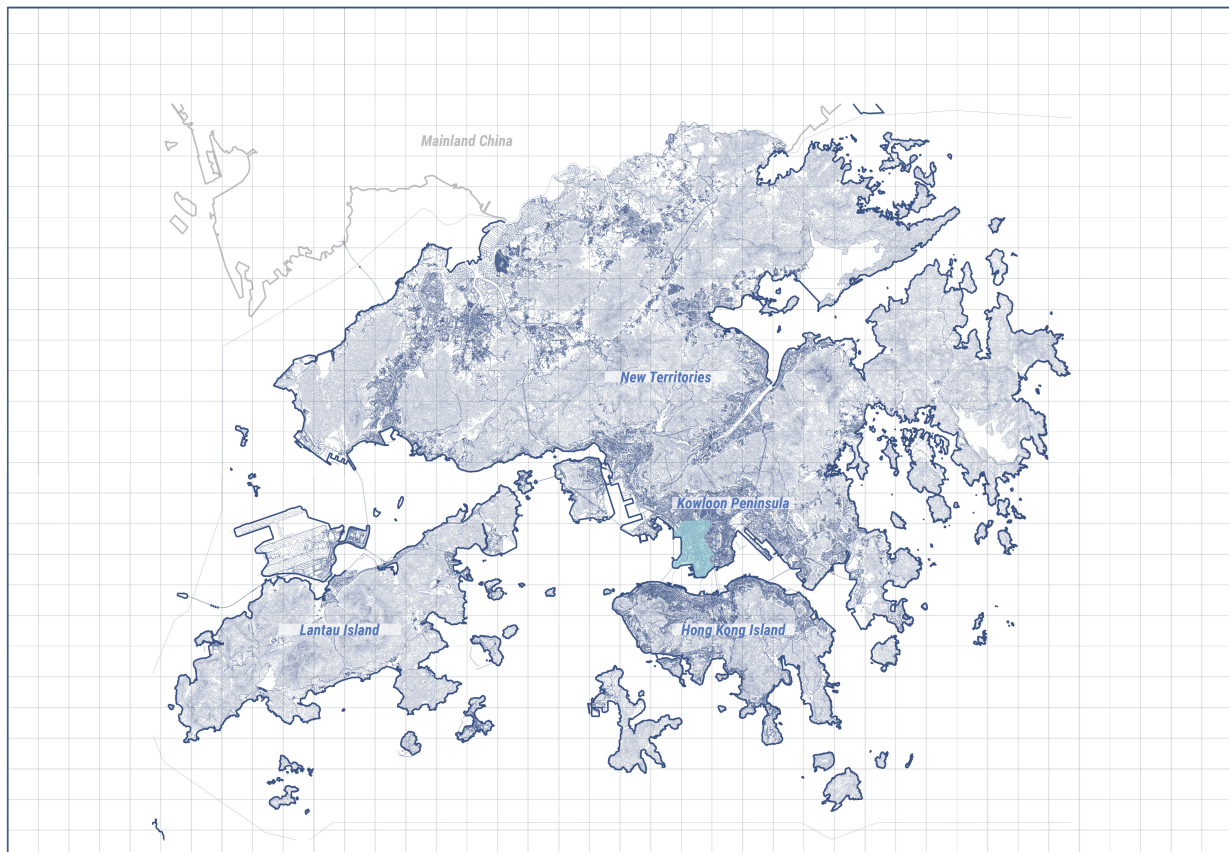
### **Catering to Varied Stakeholder Needs**

The diverse range of stakeholders will influence the types of units provided. Short-term stakeholders, including individuals in need of temporary rehabilitation after illness or surgery, require adaptable units that can accommodate their specific needs, while Long-term stakeholders, such as those with chronic conditions or disabilities like dementia or after stroke, necessitate ongoing care and assistance.

## (Why) focusing on this topic is important?



Hong Kong has never been built for the elderly, not to mention an age-friendly design has not been widely considered in future urban planning and policy. Throughout history, this issue is usually tackled as two separate subjects and hence the elderly is always being marginalized in society. Through this diploma project, we must be conscious of enabling the built environment to be adaptive to the changing needs of the population over time. This involves a change in mindset, design guidelines and public policy to achieve the age-friendly design. Given the impending demolition of old building masses in Hong Kong, it is important to proactively address the need for preparation and planning to facilitate the smooth relocation of the RCHes to alternative sites.



## Districts of Hong Kong

The districts of Hong Kong are the 18 political areas of Hong Kong that are geographically and administratively divided. Each district has a district council, formerly district boards, for which the boards were established in 1982, when Hong Kong was under British rule.

### Hong Kong Island

- A. Central & Western
- B. Wan Chai
- C. Eastern
- D. Southern

### Kowloon

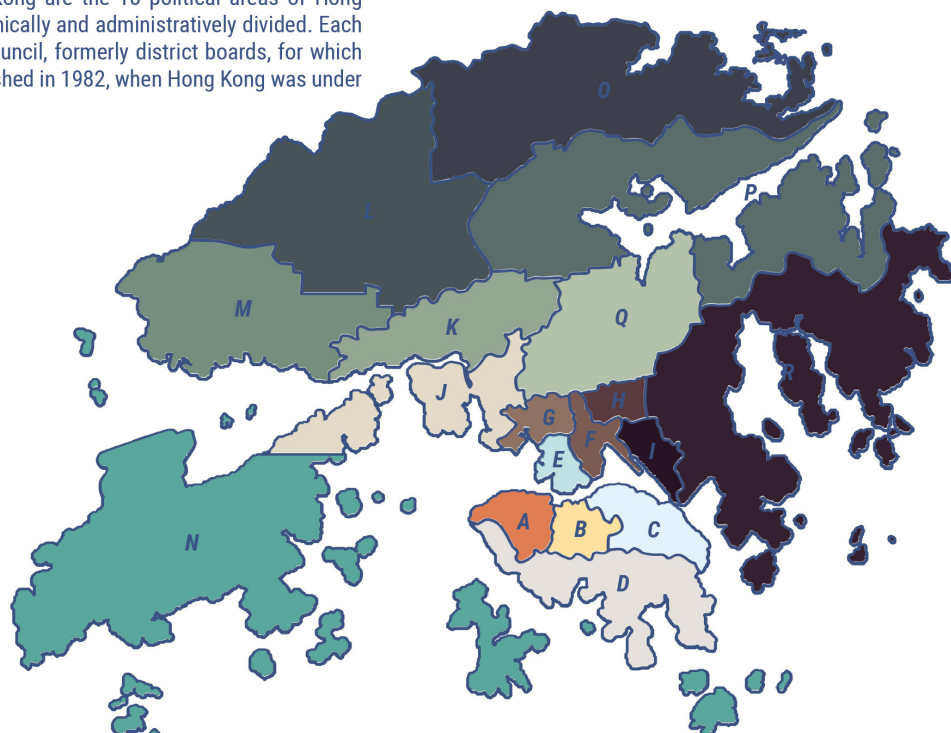
- E. Yau Tsim Mong \*\*\*
- F. Kowloon City
- G. Sham Shui Po
- H. Wong Tai Sin
- I. Kwun Tong

### West New Territories

- J. Kwai Tsing
- K. Tuen Mun
- L. Yuen Long
- M. Tuen Mun
- N. Islands

### East New Territories

- O. North
- P. Tai Po
- Q. Sha Tin
- R. Sai Kung



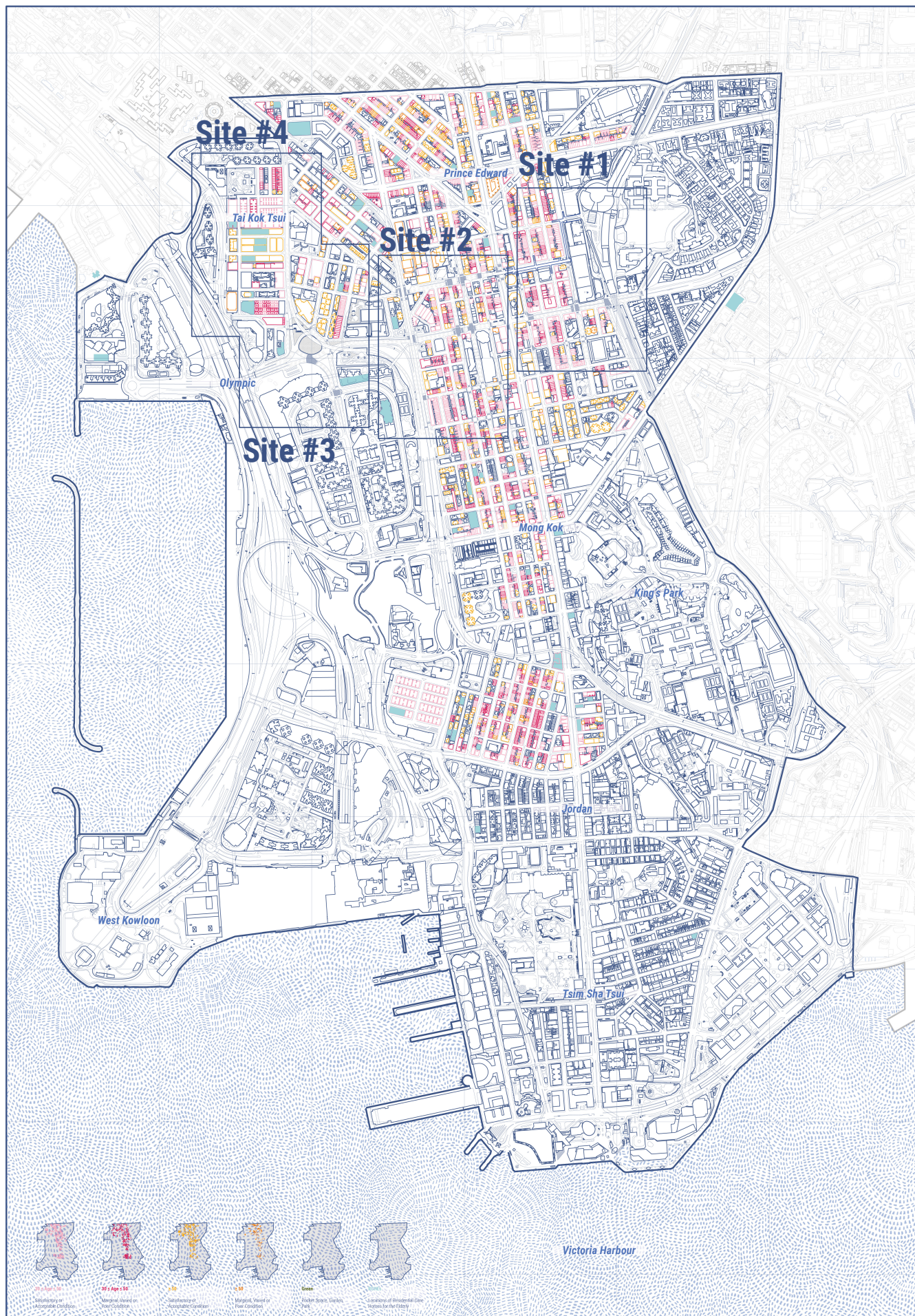
## **(Where) is the Project Site?**

Yau Tsim Mong District, located in the heart of Hong Kong and on the western part of Kowloon Peninsula, boasts a rich history and distinct characteristics that make it a vibrant and dynamic area. Originally formed by the merging of Yau Ma Tei, Tsim Sha Tsui, Mong Kok and Prince Edward, the district has evolved into a bustling hub of commerce, culture, and entertainment, where has historically been a melting pot of different cultures and communities, evident in its diverse architecture, markets, and street scenes. This district also embraces a unique blend of old and new, with traditional residential buildings standing alongside modern skyscrapers. With its lively atmosphere, vibrant street life, and an abundance of shopping, dining and entertainment options, Yau Tsim Mong District continues to captivate both locals and visitors, embodying the energy and spirit of Hong Kong.

### **Reason Behind Selecting this Particular Site**

Yau Tsim Mong District grapples with a pressing challenge of ageing population and building mass among 18-district in Hong Kong. With a population of over 320,000 residents (as of 2022 from the Population Census in Hong Kong), the district has one of the highest concentrations of elderly individuals, approximately 22% of the district's population is aged 65 or above. It is expected that the age group for 65 or above will become the largest proportion among all other age groups in 2028.

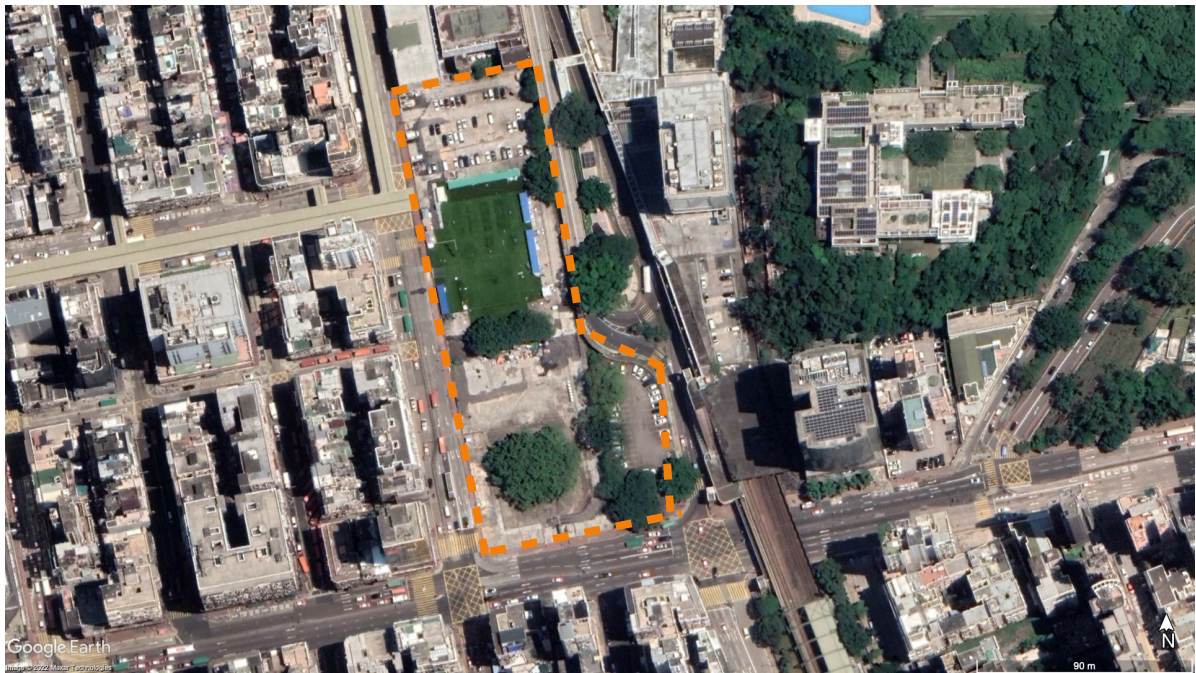
In addition, this district is characterized by a dense urban environment with an ageing building stock. A study conducted by the Urban Renewal Authority revealed that over 3,300-buildings (65% of the total residential buildings) in the district are more than 50-year old which have varying building conditions such as marginal, varied and poor. Assuming no redevelopment until 2047, it is expected that around 6,800 buildings are more than 50-year old, emphasizing the urgency to address the ageing infrastructure to ensure it meets the evolving needs of the elderly population. These figures highlight the critical nature of the challenges faced by Yau Tsim Mong District and underscore the importance of implementing effective strategies to support the ageing population and rejuvenate the ageing building mass.



#### 4 Potential Sites

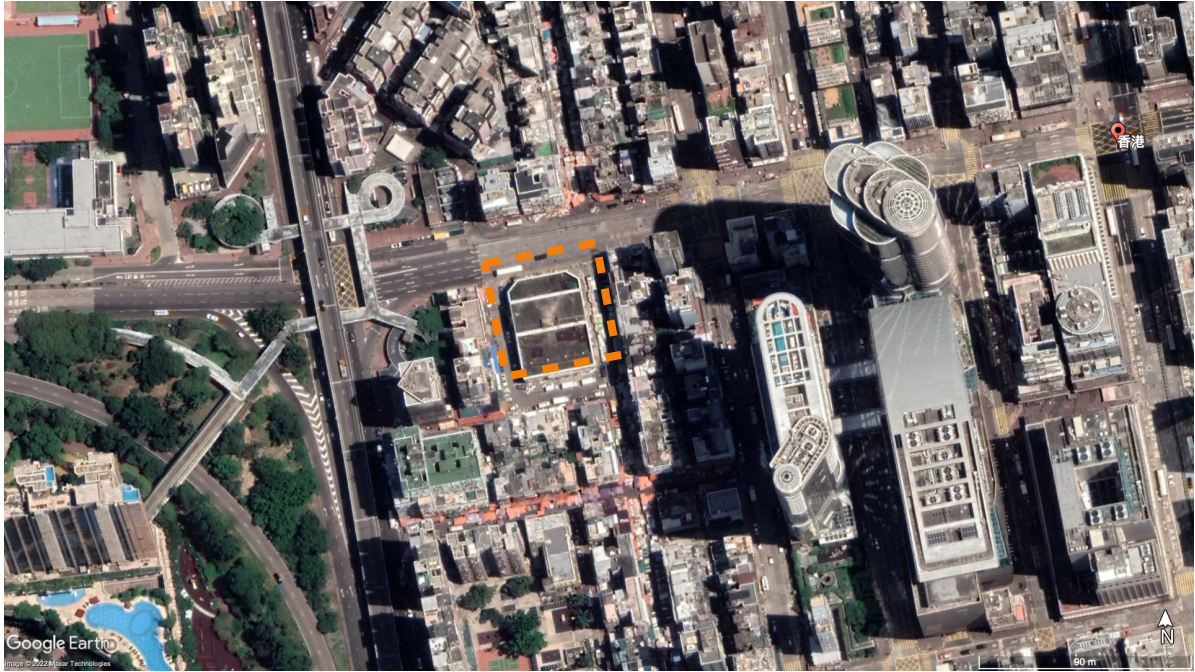
With a focus on four potential sites within the Yau Tsim Mong District, each corresponding to a different scenario, serving as platforms for in-depth exploration of the district's distinctive characteristic such as diverse street life, community programs and social issues. Three of these sites will demonstrate the development of design proposal for the critical aspect of future relocation for certain RCHes, with two sites (site#1 & site #3) focusing on schematic design and one site (site#2) involving detailed design exploration.

#### **Potential Site #1 - Empty Plot | Master Plan Scale**



After the demolition of the Water Supplies Department in Sai Yee Street and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the resulting vacant plot remained abandoned for more than 15-year. However, last year marked an exciting development for the site when an event called "Mongkok Oasis" took place, offering a temporary rental of the plot for a short period. This initiative provided an opportunity for the public to engage in a lively carnival atmosphere and make use of the space. The "Mongkok Oasis" event brought vibrancy and community participation to the once neglected area, offering a temporary respite from its long-standing vacancy. It served as a reminder of the potential that lies within vacant plots, highlighting the importance of activating such spaces to foster community engagement and enhance the urban environment.

## **Potential Site #2 - Mongkok Market Complex | Revitalisation**



Mongkok Market Complex, situated in the vibrant district of Mongkok in Hong Kong, holds a significant place in the city's history. Originally built in the 1960s, the market complex served as a bustling hub for local vendors and shoppers, offering a wide array of goods ranging from fresh produce to clothing and electronics. However, over time, changes in consumer preferences, urban development plans, and the rise of modern shopping malls led to a decline in the complex's popularity. The market complex gradually fell into disuse, and its outdated facilities and limited amenities rendered it less attractive to both vendors and visitors. As a result, it has remained abandoned for an extended period, awaiting revitalization efforts to restore its vibrancy and reclaim its position as a thriving community marketplace. The rich history and central location of Mongkok Market Complex present a valuable opportunity for its transformation into a dynamic, revitalized space that captures the spirit of the district and meets the changing needs of the local community.

### **Potential Site #3 - Roundabout | Testing the Limit**



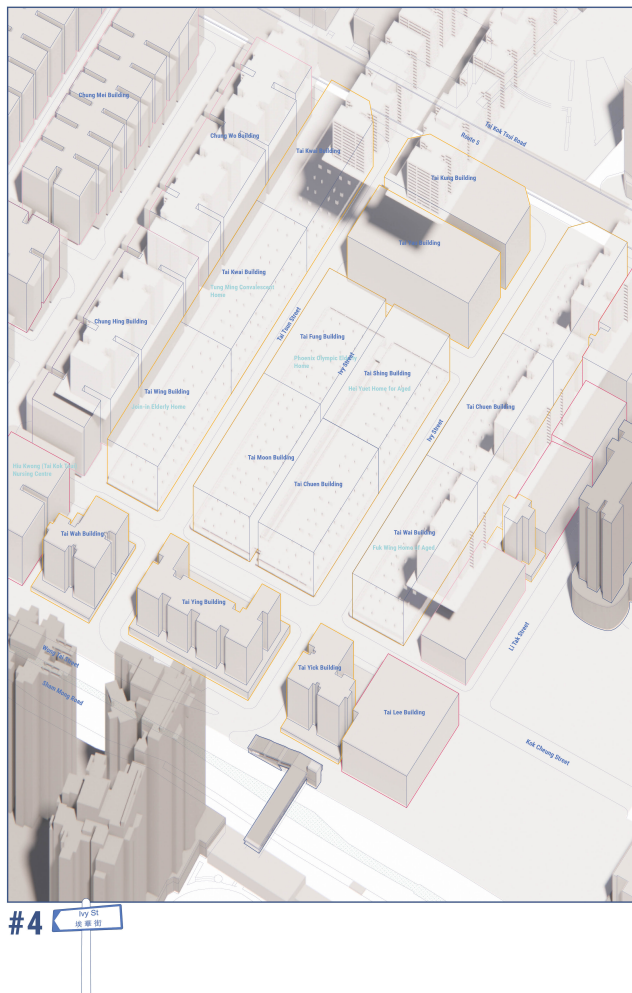
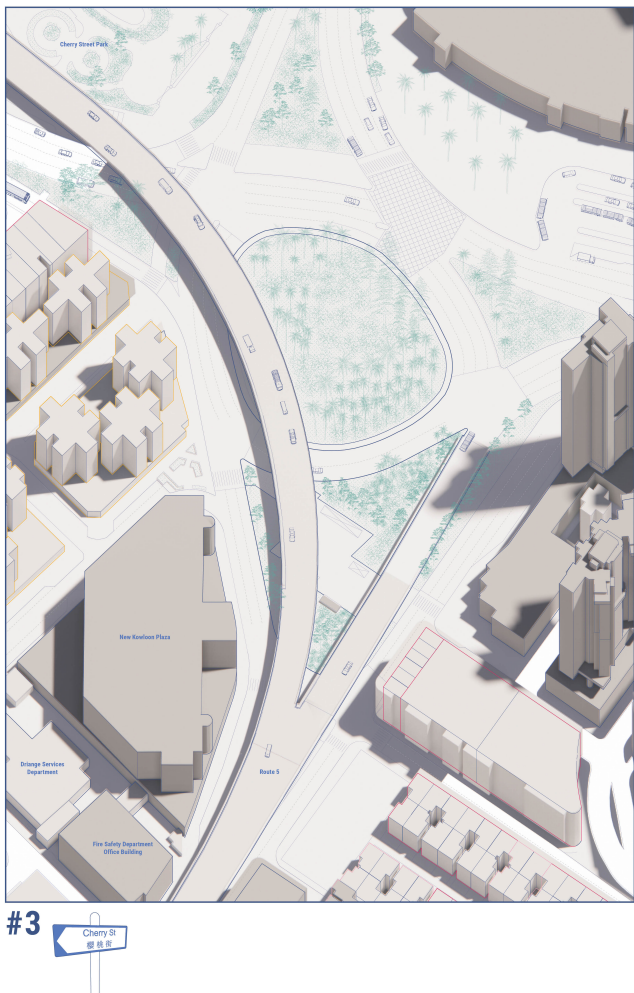
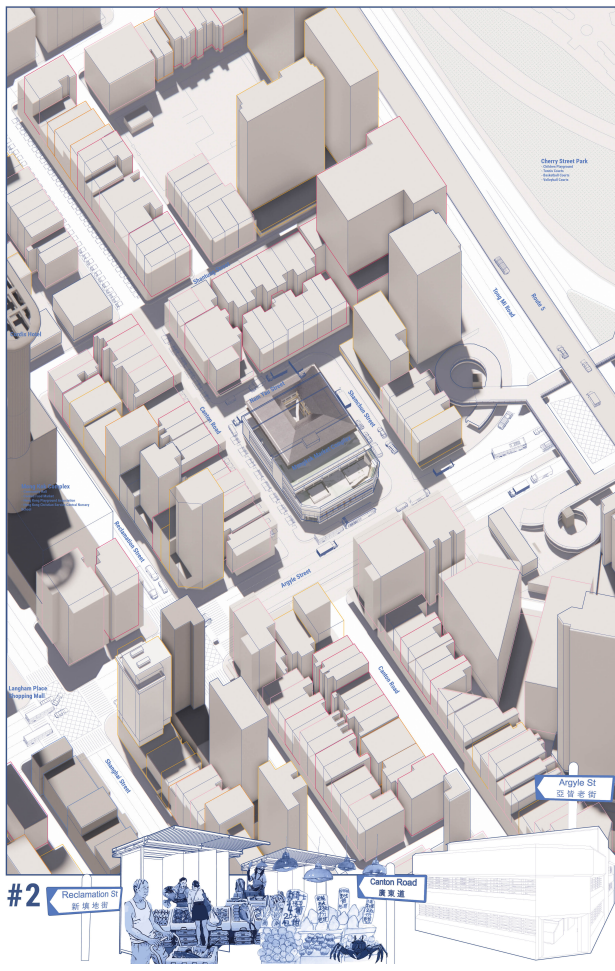
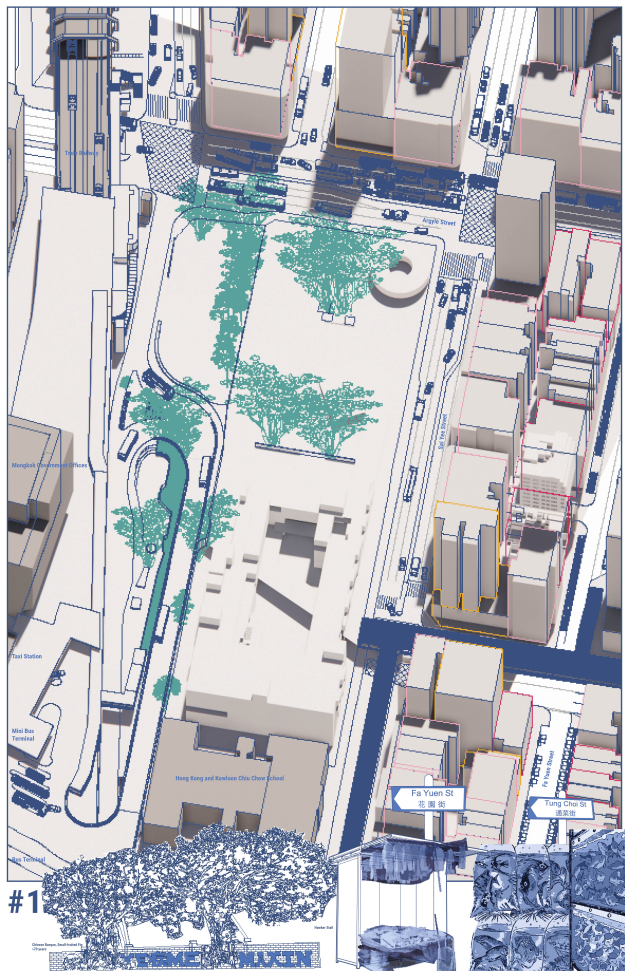
One of the project sites under consideration is located within a roundabout, presenting a unique and challenging opportunity for the construction of a nursing home. The decision to explore this site stems from the difficulty in finding a suitable plot to accommodate a nursing home within the densely planned urban environment. By choosing a roundabout as a potential location, the project aims to test the limits and push the boundaries of traditional site selection. This unconventional choice demonstrates the innovative and creative approach taken by the project team to overcome the constraints of limited available space. Through careful design and thoughtful adaptation, this site example will serve as a testbed to explore the feasibility and effectiveness of utilizing unconventional spaces for nursing home construction, ensuring that the needs of the aging population are met within the constraints of the urban landscape.

One additional important note is that the roundabout site is strategically adjacent to Cosmopolitan Estate in Tai Kok Tsui, which is currently home to several existing nursing homes. This presents a significant opportunity to consider the roundabout site as a potential relocation option for these nursing homes when the Cosmopolitan Estate undergoes demolition as part of the upcoming urban renewal plans in the coming decade. By leveraging the proximity and accessibility of the roundabout site, there is a possibility of seamlessly transferring the operations of these six existing nursing homes to the new location, ensuring the continuity of care for the elderly residents. This potential solution addresses the challenges posed by urban renewal while providing a viable option to safeguard the well-being and comfort of the residents who currently reside in the Cosmopolitan Estate nursing homes.

### **Potential Site #4 - Cosmopolitan Estate in Tai Kok Tsui | Understanding community**



Cosmopolitan Estate in Tai Kok Tsui presents an intriguing opportunity for investigation and exploration of miscellaneous programs on both the street level and podium level such as commercial shops, churches, institutions, RCHes, and so on. Rather than providing specific proposals, the project aims to delve into the potential of these areas and examine how they can be activated and utilized to enhance the neighborhood. By conducting in-depth research and analysis, the project seeks to understand the existing urban context, pedestrian patterns, and community needs. This investigation will pave the way for identifying diverse and dynamic programs that can be integrated into the street and podium levels, fostering a sense of vibrancy and creating inviting public spaces. The ultimate goal is to contribute to the revitalization and enrichment of the Cosmopolitan Estate site, transforming it into a thriving hub that caters to the diverse interests and desires of the local community.

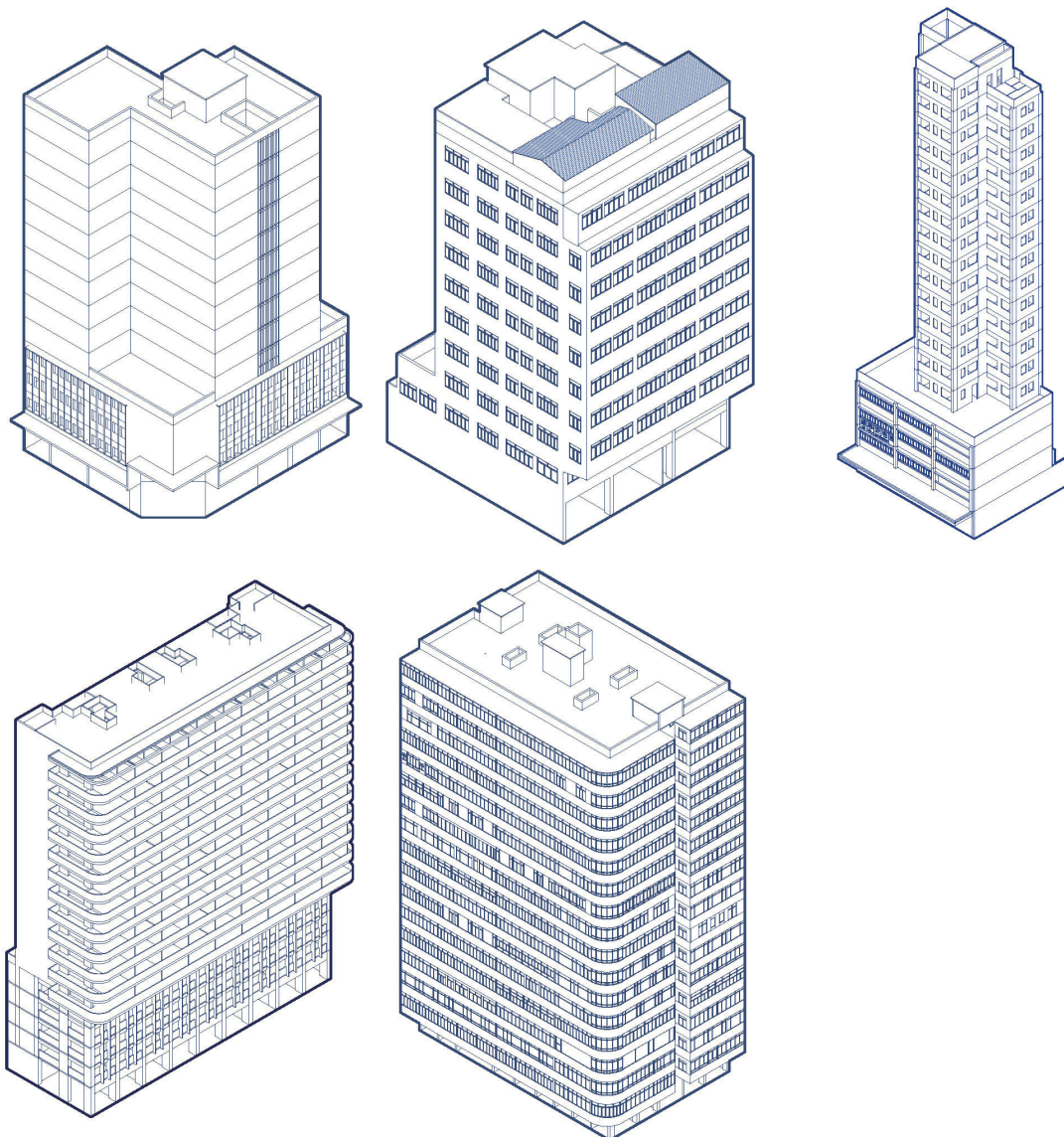


## (How) to Approach it?

### A. Research Approach

#### A1. Existing RCHE Typology

In order to capture a comprehensive understanding of the Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (RCHEs) in the Yau Tsim Mong District, a research approach will be implemented. This approach involves registering a total of 63 RCHEs within the district, accompanied by detailed documentation. This documentation will include isometric drawings, floor plans, and interior photographs, providing a comprehensive visual representation of the spatial qualities of these facilities. By analyzing these visual materials, valuable insights can be gained regarding the layout, design, and functionality of the RCHEs. Furthermore, this documentation will shed light on the relationship between the indoor and outdoor spaces, highlighting any existing shortcomings or lack of connectivity. Additionally, it will provide a clear overview of how residents share common spaces within the RCHEs, allowing for a thorough evaluation of the current communal dynamics. This comprehensive research approach will enable a deeper understanding of the RCHEs' physical environment and inform future design interventions that prioritize improved spatial qualities and enhanced connections between indoor and outdoor spaces.



## A2. Spaces in-between for Enhancing Intimacy in RCHEs

After a thorough understanding of the characteristics of the four potential sites in the Yau Tsim Mong District, it becomes evident that their unique qualities hold significant influence and potential for synergistic interactions. By recognizing the distinct attributes of each site, this project seeks to explore how they can complement and influence one another, fostering a cohesive environment that blends various programs and possibilities together. This interplay between the sites allows for the integration of diverse functions, encouraging the creation of vibrant spaces that cater to the needs of the elderly residents and the broader community. By harnessing the collective strengths of these sites and promoting their harmonious coexistence, the project aims to maximize the positive impact on the urban fabric, creating a dynamic and inclusive environment that benefits all stakeholders involved.

## **B. Design Approach**

### B1. Shifting Focus from Interior-scale to Architectural-scale or Urban-scale

It is understandable that most RCHEs have done their best to run this healthcare service with different limitations and challenges such as constraints of space, finance, regulation and so on. To improve the future RCHEs, it is essential to shift away from an interior-scale approach at the podium level of Tong Lau buildings and instead, shift toward a more architectural-scale or urban-scale perspective. This is because the existing layout setting podium level leads to constraints on facilitating local engagement within RCHE and opportunities for meaningful community interaction.

Overcoming these constraints requires a meticulous strategy with RCHE to break down barriers and incorporate inclusive design principles and programs so that RCHE can create inviting and integrated environments that promote social engagement, enhance the well-being of elderly and foster meaningful interactions with the broader community.

### B2. To Age in Place within the Same District

Elderly often express a strong reluctance to move to other districts when considering a change in their living situation. Several reasons contribute to this sentiment:

**Familiarity and Comfort** - They have likely lived in their current environment for a significant portion of their life. They have established a strong connection to the neighbourhood such as friends, neighbours and familiar places. Moving to a different district can disrupt these established relationships and uproot them from the comfort of their familiar surroundings.

**Social Support Network** - Many elderly rely on a strong support network within their community, including family members, friends and neighbours. They have already built a sense of belonging and trust within their existing social circle, which provides emotional support, assistance with daily tasks and companionship. Keeping them in the same district maintains vital network and then their relatives can easily visit them.

**Nostalgic Reason** - Elderly develop emotional attachments to their homes and surroundings. Their residence often holds sentimental value and serves as a repository of memories and personal history. Particularly in Hong Kong, the vibrant surroundings and dynamic atmosphere of the city, ambient sound and light, make it

especially significant for the elderly to live in the same district. Otherwise, moving away from their current district would require letting go of these emotional ties, which can be difficult and emotionally distressing.

### **B3. Elderly Centric & Age-friendly**

There isn't anyone here my age

" The metropolis only caters to the young, the up-and-coming, and those who can afford it instead of a mix. Older seniors, artists, writers, teachers, and service people all can't afford to live in the city. " (Yeh, 2022, 105)

Avoiding profound impacts of gentrification to the local community is one of the critical aspects. This project will focus on how we can combine the local contexts and invite local residents to participate certain design developments.

When designing architecture for the elderly, it is crucial to not only address their physical needs but also foster opportunities for social interaction and community engagement. Spaces should be designed to encourage social gatherings, such as communal areas, multipurpose rooms, and gardens where residents can come together, interact, and form connections. Incorporating seating areas that promote conversation and relaxation, as well as shared facilities like libraries, recreational areas, and cafeterias, can facilitate social bonding and combat feelings of isolation. Furthermore, incorporating age-friendly features like benches along walking paths and outdoor exercise equipment can encourage intergenerational interactions, creating a sense of belonging and promoting a vibrant community. By considering the social aspect of elderly individuals' daily lives in architectural design, we can help enhance their well-being and create spaces that foster a sense of unity and camaraderie among them.

The demand for eldercare services is on the rise, amplifying the urgency to address this issue. Overcoming the constraints of space and navigating through complex urban planning processes is essential to ensure that the growing population of elderly residents in Yau Tsim Mong can access the necessary care and support within their local community.

## History - Development of Elderly Care in Hong Kong

Understand the development of elderly and institutional care in Hong Kong from the transition to the current situation.

### Tradition | Ageing in Place

Repaying parents for their upbringing and taking care of elder family members is one of the filial pieties of offspring and traditional obligation in Hong Kong and Chinese family structure. Based on the self-sufficient agricultural and fishery economy of traditional society, filial piety has become an important part of stabilizing social order and regulating the relationship between family members because of its close relationship with individuals, families, and society.

From the perspective of sociological theory, family care for the elderly or ageing in place has its inevitable reasons of social and economic foundations in the past. 'Family' acts as a unit of social organization, which undertakes a variety of functions such as economy, education and protection. Family members living together and cooperating with each other is one of the important ways to maintain the economy, reduce the cost of living, and increase family productivity (income). For the elderly, home/ family is not only a place for passing on knowledge and experience but also a shelter for ageing in their later years.



### Tradition | Ancestral Temple

The functions of the Ancestral temple are relatively diverse, i.e. collective rituals and festivals in honor of ancestors, family- and community-related purposes such as weddings and funerals. More importantly, the ancestral temple becomes a social meeting place for different generations.



### 1850 | Kwong Fook i-tsz 義祠 (Pak Shing Temple)

Kwong Fook i-tsz was built in 1856 and is also known as the Pak Shing Temple where the words Pak Shing means 'people' and 'various family names'. The purpose of the temple was not only to offer palliative care to dying elderly and patients with advanced diseases at the end of their lives but also functioned as a clinic for Chinese patients refusing treatment by Western doctors.

During the 19th century, numerous Chinese who left home in search of better horizons died overseas and wish to be buried in their hometowns because of the wish of Chinese tradition. Therefore, the temple used to store corpses awaiting burial in China and serve as a public ancestral hall for those who could not afford the expense of bone repatriation.

### 1926 | St Joseph's home for the Aged

St. Joseph's Home for the Aged (SJHA) is the first premises dedicated to taking care of and serving the poor and homeless elderly in 1926 in Hong Kong, which established by the Little Sisters of the Poor who is a French-based charitable body and Roman Catholic



order for women. Crédit foncier d'Extrême-Orient was in charge of the expanding development of SJHA in the 1930s because of a bulge in population.

In the early 1990s, SJHA had to carry out maintenance and improvement projects to comply with the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance. Due to the inability to afford a large amount of money, they decided to exchange the land from Ngau Chi Wan to Sheung Shui in 1996 with a private developer who funded the construction of a well-equipped institutional building.

#### 1960s - 70s | Prototype of Homes for the Elderly

Homes for the elderly in Hong Kong began in the 1960s. Some religious organizations had provided residential care services for the elderly living alone. In order to respond to the needs of society at the end of the 1960s, a variety of voluntary organizations (non-governmental organizations) introduced institutional care services from western countries such as community nursing services, domestic helpers, a dormitory for the elderly and so on. In the 1970s, the elderly population increased significantly, and non-government organizations began to operate residential care homes for the elderly.

#### 1980s - Current | Institutional Care

In response to the needs of society, RCHes operated by private organizations came into being during the 1980s since an ageing population became a crucial social issue in Hong Kong. After the establishment of the Hospital Authority in the early 1990s, the development of private RCHes entered an unprecedented "boom period". In order to make more effective use of public medical beds, the Hospital Authority used cots all over the hospital corridors, and those patients with long-term bedridden and chronic diseases who have lived in the hospital for a long time have been referred to private nursing homes one after another.

## The Nursing Home not as a Home

### The Ambiguous Boundaries

*" This analysis reveals how both interior symbols and the use of the common living room reflect unclear and somewhat inconsistent expectations. The boundaries between the public and private spheres are ambiguous and thereby differ from the comparatively sharp boundaries characterizing a home. " (Hauge & Heggen, 2008, 464)*



The overall perception of the common living space is arranged as a multipurpose room at school or a waiting area at clinic, with television, armchairs, Chinese painting and colorful dado wall, rather than a home. The mundane layout and arrangement do not facilitate a distinct contrast between bedrooms and common living space. They use the living space as a private space for eating meals, watching television, taking a nap on the armchairs and talking to themselves. When we carefully look at each items in the common living space, the room had no visible signs such as family photographs and items and more importantly that the most conspicuous sign was the obvious lack of a personal touch (Hauge & Heggen, 2008,

463). Therefore, residents intentionally withdraw from the coming living room because they are not able to express their wishes and trapped in the room all day., without any private items to rest their eyes on. Most of the day they sleep in their wheelchairs, and occasionally one or two of them became anxious and called for help. (Hauge & Heggen, 2008, 465)

### Fragile relationship

*" Social-network size is reduced in old age due to focusing on the closest social partners such as family and confidants. Thus, compared to younger adults we expect older adults to pursue fewer social encounters, particularly with persons who are not close. " (Nikitin et la, 2012, 3)*

*" The lack of communication between residents who spend hours, days and weeks together in the same room seemed strange and gave the impression of a strained atmosphere. " (Hauge & Heggen, 2008, 464)*

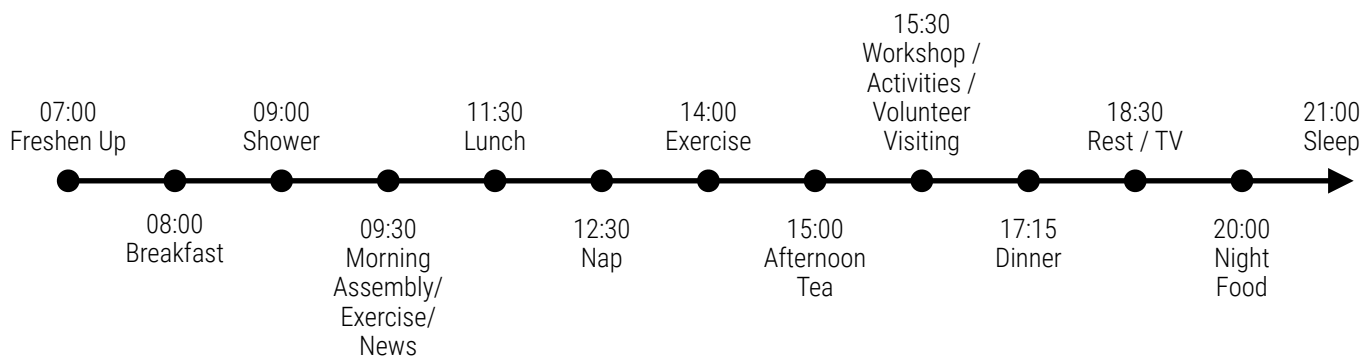


Unless the staff members and volunteers present in the same occasion, social interaction between the residents rarely happens in the common living space where is inflexible for facilitating private conversation with numerous listeners sitting around all the time. It is interesting to understand the reason why they do not chat with each other probably because the others are too old, half-dead people and in a world of their own. Particularly, some new move-in residents suffer from obstacles of communication even though a designative staff communicate with them.

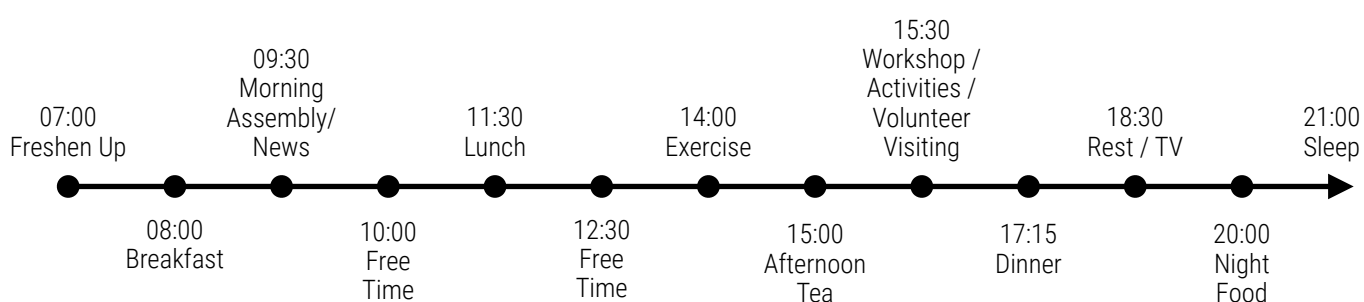
On the contrary, the residents are always eager to talk to several staffs and volunteers while RCHEs regularly arrange a wide range of activities and workshops to meet the social and recreational needs of residents and promote interpersonal relationship among residents in the home with different organizations, but it may be the only golden moment happening in the common living room. Sometime, when the favorite people have not visited them for a long time, they spontaneously seek for a private chat such as everyday matters, stories of heroic deeds and life experience.

## Institutional Lifestyle

### Immobility :



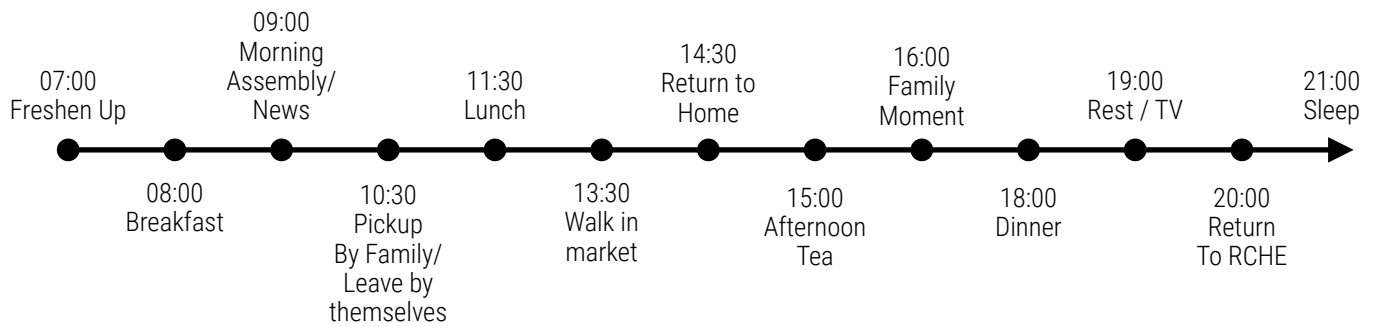
### Mobility :



Most RCHes implement a strict and unified timetable because of manageability. Though RCHes provide 24/7 and necessary care services to the elderly such as distributing medicines by nurses and designing healthy meals by dietitians, but activities arranged by social workers and therapies by different specialities may not take place every day. Therefore, the residents' life consists of the humdrum and identical activities of everyday existence and they spend most of their day in the common living room no matter whether the residents are mobility or immobility.

A drought of adequate exercise and stretching cause a number of negative impacts and degenerate into residents' health condition like bad appetite and poor sleep quality. If some of them suffer from cognitive impairment, they are usually restrain a safety cloth to prevent them from wandering, which worsens their physical and mental condition to the great extent. More seriously, doctors will prescribe psychotropic medication to control their emotions.

The schedules of RCHes have to be accommodated themselves to alleviate the staff shortage during the night shift, which goes against the residents' circadian rhythms because they have dinner at 4-5 p.m. and go to bed at 8 p.m..

Weekend :

Weekend may be the only special day that differs from the mundane weekdays, which allows family to come over and visit to maintain vivid lifestyle. The purpose of the weekend schedule is to maintain certain movement and meeting instead of a cramped with activities. Thus, their relatives can apply for going out with the residents for family day. It is a high time for the elderly to do their favorite things such as having a short gathering at home, having meal in Chinese restaurant and buying grocery in market, especially on some special days such as festivals, birthday and anniversary. Otherwise, the elderly usually think that they are isolated and disconnected from the society due to less contact with the outside world.

## Stereotyped Behaviors & Mindset

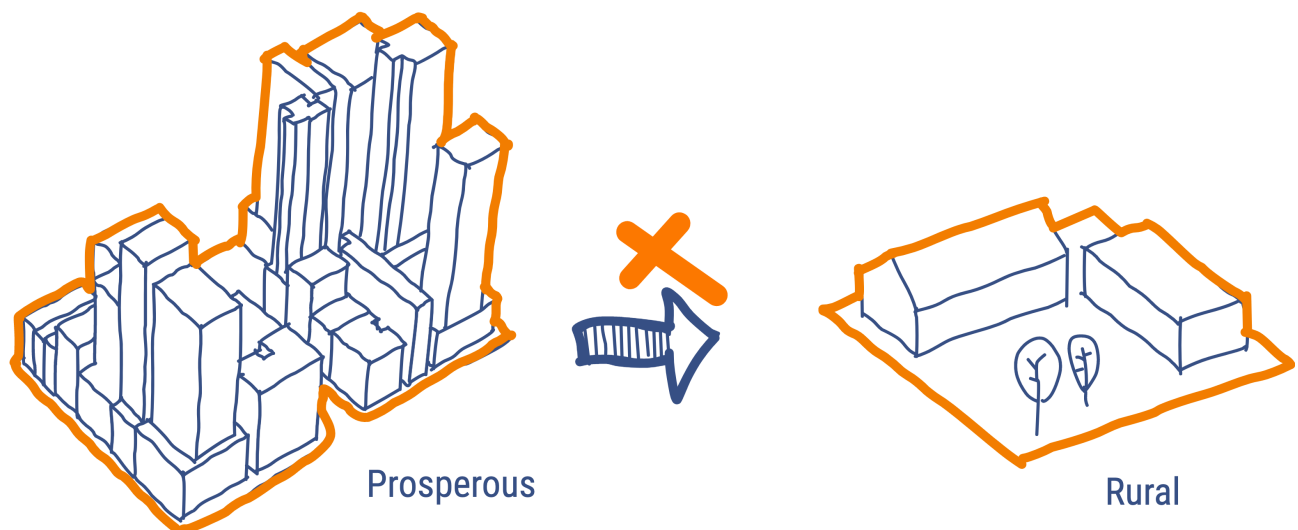
### Won't Become a Burden to Family & Others

*"In the context of conflicts with social partners, older adults seem to avoid conflict and negative behavior more frequently than younger age groups, and they profit more from avoiding conflict than younger adults. Thus, older adults are expected to report fewer negative (own and others') behaviors than younger adults, as they are particularly motivated to avoid conflict." (Nikitin et al, 2012, 3)*

It is a paradox that most elderly with a traditional mindset expect their children to be filial and take care of them, while they are not willing to trouble others for seeking help and then bury their emotions as they do not want to be a burden to family and friends. Particularly, the elderly have gone through the rigorous life after postwar that can not easily change their stubborn mindset since everything has to be done by themselves.



### Not Receptive to New Things

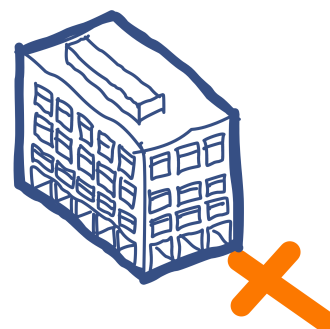


Another characteristic of the psychological changes of the elderly is that their ability to accept new things will gradually decrease and they are not used to learning new things. The elderly are less likely to learn and absorb new ideas or new technologies. They tend to stick to the old rules, traditions, conventional methods and even want to adapt to changes without change. This is an understandable psychological tendency of ageing and a form of adaptation. If the elderly show a tendency to be stubborn in their personal life, it must consider the situation, slow down the pace of changes in the living environment of the elderly, and let them slowly learn to keep up. This includes specific household appliances, such as the use of a newly purchased TV set, complicated telephone and answering machine equipment, and new social concepts. In fact, it is unwelcome for the local elderly to move to other districts as they prefer to get along with a stable lifestyle, have established a strong connection to the community and meet friends easily.

### Resist to Live in RCHE

There are various reasons why some elderly individuals may resist the idea of living in RCHEs. One primary concern is the loss of independence and a sense of autonomy that comes with transitioning to a care home setting. Many elderly individuals value their freedom and prefer to maintain control over their daily routines and decision-making processes.

Additionally, some may have emotional attachments to their current homes, where they have created memories and built a sense of familiarity. The prospect of leaving behind cherished belongings, sentimental items, and a familiar environment can evoke feelings of anxiety and resistance. Furthermore, there might be apprehensions about the quality of care and the level of social interaction provided within RCHes. To address these concerns, it is essential for RCHes to focus on creating environments that promote independence, personalization, and social engagement, while also offering high-quality care and support services to meet the diverse needs of the elderly residents.



## Reflection | Toward a More Humane RCHes in “Hong Kong Context”

Throughout the entire diploma semester, one challenge I encountered in designing RCHes was ensuring that they were truly reflective of the Hong Kong context and background. Despite studying various nursing home precedent studies in European countries for inspiration and understanding their design approaches such as “Furuset Høgeby, Norway by 3RW” and “The Hogeweyk Dementia Village, Amsterdam by Molenaar&Bol&VanDillen, I felt that my designs were merely transplanting successful projects from other countries into Hong Kong without a comprehensive understanding of Hong Kong’s culture, history, and living conditions. In response to this realization, I turned to a book titled “Portraits from Above - Hong Kong’s Informal Rooftop Communities” by Rufina Wu & Stefan Canham. One particular chapter focused on the rooftop communities in Tai Kwok Tsui which is adjacent to sites #3 and #4. The chapter extensively explored the in-between spaces, studying how people in these communities live, negotiate neighborhood boundaries, and express their unique characteristics through the arrangement of personal belongings. This book served as a reminder of the importance of using local materials, colors, and spatial organization to enhance the sense of home, especially in relation to the elderly residents’ memories. It has left a profound impact on me, particularly one paragraph that resonated deeply. It describes how the corridors of these communities serve as miniature running tracks for the children living there, and how a resident keeps a watchful eye on them as they pass by her place. The imagery of her crouching outside, peeling vegetables and scaling fresh fish from the nearby market, paints a vivid picture of a vibrant community and a sense of connection to the neighborhood. This passage has inspired me to strive for a more “humane home” approach in designing institutional RCHes, where residents feel a sense of belonging and engage in activities that foster a warm and familiar environment.

In addition to the architectural aspects, it is crucial to consider the types of programs, activities, and events that can enhance the well-being and quality of life for the elderly residents. These elements are essential as they address not only the physical aspects, such as spatial quality, but also the psychological well-being of the residents. One effective approach is through the implementation of musical therapy, which has shown to have a positive impact on elderly individuals, including those with dementia. Music has the ability to evoke memories, even when the lyrics may be forgotten. The melodies can be easily hummed or recognized, providing a sense of connection and emotional engagement for the residents.

Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (RCHes) highlights the dedicated efforts and commitment of the staff and management to operate these facilities to the best of their abilities.

The individuals working in RCHes play a crucial role in providing care, support, and a nurturing environment for elderly residents. Their compassion, expertise, and tireless dedication contribute to the overall well-being and quality of life of the residents. The staff members prioritize the physical, emotional, and social needs of the elderly, ensuring their safety, comfort, and engagement in meaningful activities. Through their continuous efforts, RCHes strive to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where residents can feel valued, respected, and cared for. The commitment of these professionals deserves recognition and appreciation as they work diligently to make a positive difference in the lives of the elderly individuals they serve.



**Cantonese Opera (Music)**

## Reflection | Choosing Final Site among the Potential Sites

Initially intrigued by the diverse potential of the four sites for RCHE development, I assessed their respective characteristics and challenges. I have eventually chosen site #2, the abandoned Mongkok Market Complex, as the focal point of detailed development based on its reflection of the realistic situation and feasibility in Hong Kong, distinguishing it from the other options. Site #1 consists of a large vacant plot which is a rarity in urban cities unless extensive residential unit acquisitions take place. While it presents numerous design possibilities including the presence of significant green element - banyan trees, offers unique opportunities for exploration.

## Reflection | Choosing Final Site among the Potential Sites

Working on healthcare-related projects has been a transformative and enlightening journey, requiring a comprehensive understanding of various disciplines beyond traditional architecture. During my bachelor's degree, I had contemplated working on this topic, but I realized that I lacked the necessary experience and literature support at that time. The complexity of designing spaces that prioritize the well-being and quality of life for individuals necessitates a broad knowledge base encompassing fields such as anthropology, social science, and psychology. This interdisciplinary approach enables a deeper comprehension of the diverse needs, cultural backgrounds, and social dynamics that shape the experiences and interactions within healthcare environments. By delving into these realms, I have gained valuable insights into the intricate interplay between physical spaces, human behavior, and overall health outcomes. This journey has highlighted the importance of integrating empathy, compassion, and evidence-based research into the design process, ultimately leading to the creation of environments that positively impact the lives of individuals and contribute to the advancement of healthcare practices.

# Sing Chi, LAU

## PERSONAL DETAILS

### DATE OF BIRTH

13/JULY/1993

### CONTACT NUMBER

+47 46 500 734 /

### EMAIL

sinlau@student.bas.org  
sinjixx88@yahoo.com.hk



## AWARDS

- Outstanding Performance Award**  
Architectural Design Graduation Exhibition 2020  
Hong Kong Design Institute
- Best Technical Design Award**  
Architectural Design Graduation Exhibition 2020  
Hong Kong Design Institute
- Outstanding Performance Scholarship 2019/20**  
HKSAR Government
- Award of Finalists - Tertiary Group in 2018-2019 Social Innovation Inventor - Competition for Innovative Design**  
World Green Organisation
- Nomination - Vocational Education Scholarship For Degree Study Overseas 2019/2020**  
The Hong Kong Jockey Club
- Muses Foundation for Culture and Education Scholarship**  
VTC/HKDI Design Student Exchange Programme
- Scholarship for Outstanding Performance 2016/17**  
HKSAR Government
- Scholarship Fund 2017/18**  
Reaching Out Award  
HKSAR Government
- Outstanding Service Award**  
Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (Kwun Tong)

## EXPERTISE

- Adobe Package
- Rhinoceros
- SketchUp
- Revit
- Blender
- 3D Print & Lasercut
- AutoCAD
- Enscape
- V-ray
- QGIS
- Microsoft Office
- Luthier & woodwork

## LANGUAGE

- Cantonese - Native
- English - Fluent
- Mandarin - Conversational
- Norwegian (Bokmål) - Beginner

## EDUCATION

- 09/2021 - Current**  
**Master in Architecture**  
Bergen Arkitektthøgskole (BAS)
- 09/2019 - 09/2020**  
**Bachelor of Arts in Architecture**  
University of Lincoln (UoL)  
First Class Honours
- 09/2016 - 08/2019**  
**Higher Diploma in Architectural Design**  
Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI)  
Cumulative GPA 3.64 (Distinction)
- 01/2018 - 06/2018**  
**Exchange Program for Spring 2018 in Master of Architecture**  
Bergen School of Architecture (BAS)  
Grade : Pass
- 09/2014 - 01/2015**  
**Corporate Patient Care Assistant (Clinical Assistant) Training**  
Module A : Blood-taking training Course  
Module B : ECG Training Course  
Module C : IV Cannulation Training Course  
Hospital Authority
- 09/2013 - 11/2013**  
**Certificate in Care-Related Support Worker Training**  
The College of Nursing Hong Kong

## WORKING EXPERIENCE

- 08/2022 - Current**  
**Architectural Intern (Part-time)**  
MLKK Studio Limited
- 11/2020 - 06/2021**  
**Architectural Assistant (Year-out)**  
One Bite Design Studio Limited
- 05/2019 - 11/2019**  
**Phlebotomist (Part-time)**  
Yan Chai Hospital of the Hospital Authority - Clinical Wards
- 08/2019 - 06/2019**  
**Summer Architectural Intern**  
The Oval Partnership Limited
- 12/2018 - 08/2018**  
**Architectural Intern**  
MLKK Studio Limited
- 12/2015 - 08/2016**  
**Anaesthetic Assistant**  
Caritas Medical Centre of the Hospital Authority - Operating Room
- 04/2014 - 12/2015**  
**Phlebotomist**  
Yan Chai Hospital of the Hospital Authority  
Accident & Emergency Department & Out-Patient Clinic
- 06/2012 - 07/2013**  
**Account & Shipping Clerk**  
Perriland Limited

## ACTIVITIES

- 2022** — **Silos Buenos Aires : Architecture Competition**
- 2021** — **Design Competition for Transformation of Sensory Garden at Kwun Tong Promenade**  
Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA)  
**Project Book for Island Peripheries**  
University of Lincoln
- 2020** — **In Plain Sight | Designing to rejuvenate Urban Voids**  
Architecture Competition - UNI
- 2019** — **Moonception 2019**  
Architecture Competition - Certificate of Appreciation