Master Thesis Course AAHM01, LTH, Spring 2019
Degree Project in Architecture
Thesis of Social Architecture - Circular Community for Homeless

Testing Location : Sham Shui Po, Hong Kong

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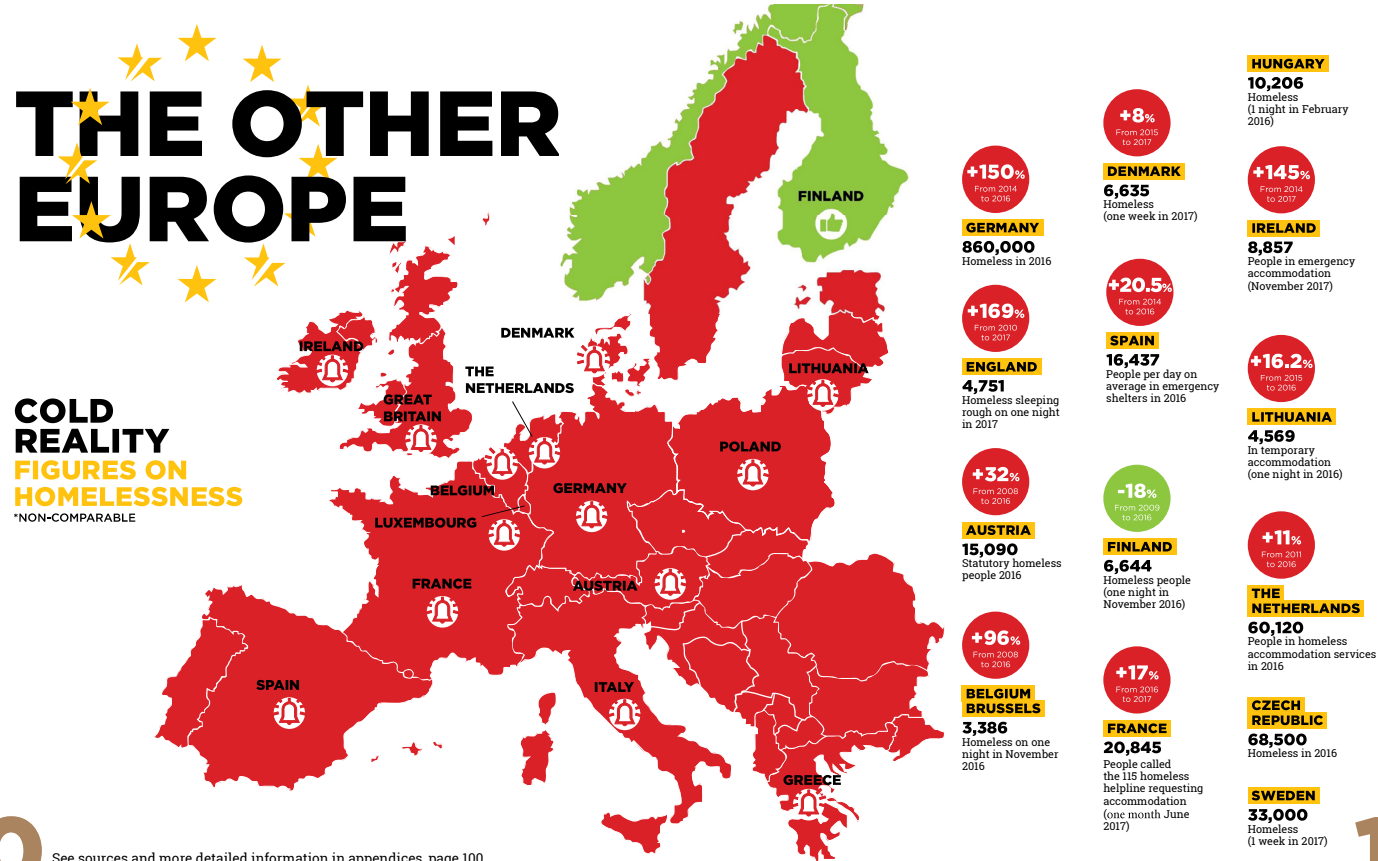Examinator: Christer Malmström

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Ida Stavenow

Introduction

'Homeless' is a general problem in the whole world. The general reason is people cannot afford a high property prices and expensive rents. Other reason is the government policy cannot cover them for help or other personal reason. That's why they will become homeless and living outside. Also, 'Lazy, not working, loser, drug addict, bad guy' those negative words will be labeled by the public. When People try to keep a distance with them and the government try to keep a distance with this problem and isolated it, the homeless people looks like abandon by the public and don't have chance to go back to the society. Therefore, some criminal behavior may happen from homeless people because they need to survive, and some people will try to mashed or attack the homeless. It will increase the misunderstanding by each other and become unsolvable question.

If we think positively, homeless people can be a kind of human resource in society. We should think about how to 'Reuse' and make it 'Sustainable'. My thesis is try to focus in Hong Kong homeless problem as a prototype to find a new idea with architecture design and programme, try to solve the problem and give a positive image in order to bring those homeless people back to society.

Homeless in Europe

In Europe, Homeless problem also getting serious. Regarding the report of THIRD OVERVIEW OF HOUSING EXCLUSION IN EUROPE 2018 from FEANTSA, they point out that the homeless as a trend to increasing in Europe except Finland. Specially the young people group, the main reason is their salary cannot affort the hounsing rent / price. Also the homeless cause another problemes like the country lost their labour source and the country need to provide a resource to support them, this is a 'double loss' situation. Another founding of this report is they don't have any accuate number of homeless even they have a very detail research. The main reason is the homeless people has a highly 'nomadic', some of them is hard to discover. Other reason may be the definition of homeless. Some people may has a place to live but the condition is very poor. Then how do we define it? It is a very difficult question.

THE OTHER EUROPE

COLD
REALITY
**FIGURES ON
HOMELESSNESS**
*NON-COMPARABLE

FINLAND

IRELAND
GREAT
BRITAIN
DENMARK
THE
NETHERLANDS
LITHUANIA
BELGIUM
GERMANY
POLAND
LUXEMBOURG
FRANCE
AUSTRIA
SPAIN
ITALY
GREECE

+150%
From 2014 to 2016
GERMANY
860,000
Homeless in 2016

+169%
From 2010 to 2017
ENGLAND
4,751
Homeless sleeping rough on one night in 2017

+32%
From 2008 to 2016
AUSTRIA
15,090
Statutory homeless people 2016

+96%
From 2008 to 2016
BELGIUM BRUSSELS
3,386
Homeless on one night in November 2016

+8%
From 2015 to 2017
DENMARK
6,635
Homeless (one week in 2017)

+20.5%
From 2014 to 2016
SPAIN
16,437
People per day on average in emergency shelters in 2016

-18%
From 2009 to 2016
FINLAND
6,644
Homeless people (one night in November 2016)

+17%
From 2016 to 2017
FRANCE
20,845
People called the 115 homeless helpline requesting accommodation (one month June 2017)

HUNGARY
10,206
Homeless (1 night in February 2016)

+145%
From 2014 to 2017
IRELAND
8,857
People in emergency accommodation (November 2017)

+16.2%
From 2015 to 2016
LITHUANIA
4,569
In temporary accommodation (one night in 2016)

+11%
From 2011 to 2016
THE NETHERLANDS
60,120
People in homeless accommodation services in 2016

CZECH REPUBLIC
68,500
Homeless in 2016

SWEDEN
33,000
Homeless (1 week in 2017)

See sources and more detailed information in appendices, page 100.

Homeless Situation in Hong Kong

Hong Kong has high property prices and expensive rents. Even the poorly owned squatters are more expensive than luxury homes. Many people in the society who can't cope with basic clothing, food, and housing. Therefore they need to sleep on the streets. Regarding the report of The Social Welfare Department, the number of homeless in 2017/18 was 1,127, a new high in 5 years. This figure accounts for only 0.016% of the population, which is far less than other countries. If this number is true, why we still see a lot of homeless on the street? Why the government doesn't take any action to solve this 'little problem'?

Regarding The Homeless Outreach Population Estimation Hong Kong (H.O.P.E.) report, they point out the statistics from the Social Welfare Department could be an underestimation of the real situation. The reason is most of the homeless people who are highly "nomadic" in order to avoid facing public discrimination and harassments from the city departmentsand, other reason is they are difficult to reach and engage or not willing to admit as a homeless people.

Hidden Number of Homeless in Hong Kong

The Homeless Outreach Population Estimation Hong Kong (H.O.P.E.) which is a 300 volunteers from university student collaboration with Salvation Army, Society for Community Organization, & St. James' Settlement. They use a very similer methodology with FEANTSA and start to do the research in 'one day' in order to statistics all the Hong Kong homeless. They planned the route by the experienced social workers. All the route were designed based on the location of the homeless people recognized by the social workers. Then they divided all the volunteer in 40 groups, each group had 3 volunteer to handle one route. Each team will conduct visits and statistics in each district according to different routes of total 180 locations, including temporary temporary summer center and temporary/emergency shelter. Social workers also lead volunteers to arrive in different district. volunteers also check the statistics outside the designated points. Beside that, they also visited 70 24-hour fast food chains to supplement observations.

They find that the number of homeless people is 1,614 in 2015 which is almost 50% higher than Social Welfare Department (881 homeless people from Social Welfare Department in 2015). That means the methodology of statistics is have a significant influence of the research.

Methodology of Statistics

Method by H.O.P.E

University's students collaboration with major Society for Community Organization

The route planned by the experienced social workers

divide all the people in different group

Each group handle different route to statistics the homeless

Method by Social Welfare Department

homeless people have to fill an application form (4 pages)

Register himself as a 'homeless people'

Regarding the methodology of Social Welfare Department, they only through the computer record to count the number, means the homeless people have to fill an application form (4 pages) to register himself as a 'homeless people'. In the real situation, most of the homeless people are not willing to disclose all the information, some of them may have difficulty of communicating, illiteracy or are uncertain.

Conclusion

Compare with the methodology of statistics and result. The result of Homeless Outreach Population Estimation Hong Kong (H.O.P.E.) is much more accurate to show the reality. This result also affected the government formulating policies to solve the homeless problem.

In here, my thesis will base on the result of Homeless Outreach Population Estimation Hong Kong (H.O.P.E.) for further analysis.

Other factor of difficult to statistics the Homeless

Through the report from H.O.P.E and FEANTSA. They also point out that the 'the definition of homeless' is not so clear. Means if the people living in a poor condiction environment, do we consider they are 'homeless'? In Hong Kong, there are a lot of people living in 'rooftop shack', 'cage house' or 'subdivided rooms'. Those place are Illegal modification or construction, therefore the living condition is not good. The place too crowded, too much people sharing one toilet, bedbug problem, hygiene issue and safty problem. Those issue not only affect their living quality, also affect their social activity. For the long term it may turn to a mental problem.

Another type of the people they call 'Potential homeless' which is they are high potentially beome homeless suddently. These group of people doesn't have a stable job and no saving to maintain life. Some of them is overburden the rent of the house. If they have any economic shock, they will cannot afford the rent and become homeless.

List of difficult to statistics the Homeless

1. Living in housing situated in an especially polluted area

2. Overburden the rent of the house

3. People don't want to recognize himself as a homeless

4. Facing severe housing deprivation

5. Difficulty to maintaining the temperatures in house

6. Living in damp condition

7. The job is not stable, no saving to maintain life

8. Living in overcrowed housing

9. Arrears on their rent or mortgage repayments

10. Homeless is highly nomadic.

The Potential Homeless

The number of the homeless is seem so little. However, if we count all the population of 'rooftop shack', 'cage house' or 'subdivided rooms'. The number will become almost 1 million (more than 14% of Hong Kong population). If the government recognized is number, it will become a very serious problem and highly to affect the image of Hong Kong.

There are same situation for other country, due to too much factor affected the result, we only can see the homeless number may be just a little part of the reality.

1,614 Homeless

All Hong Kong population

= 1 million

= Potential Homeless
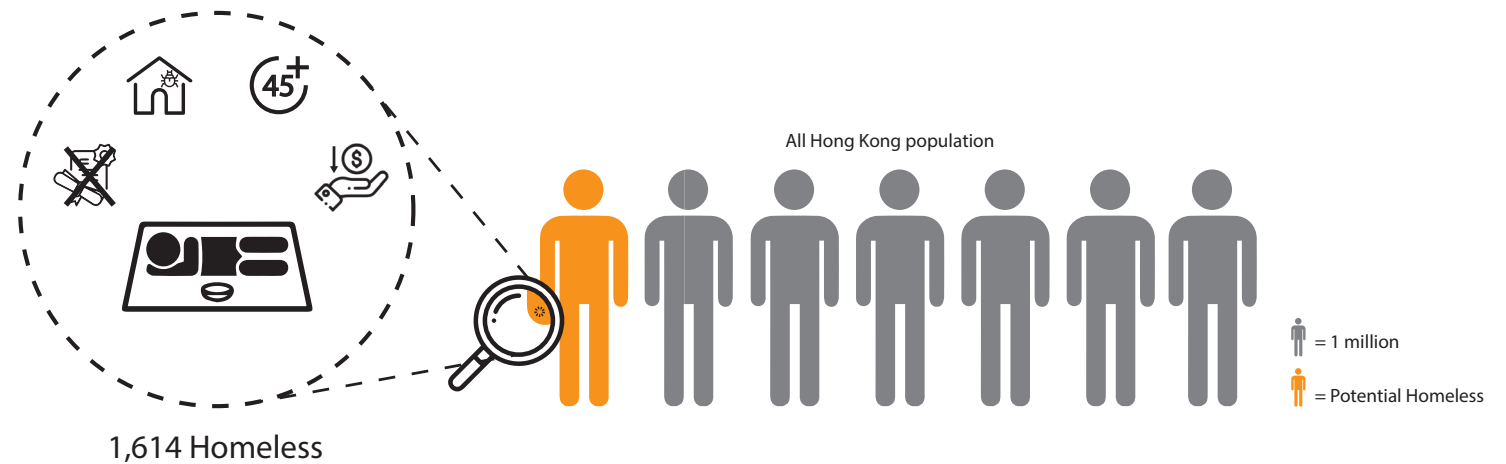
Characteristics of the Homeless People

The Homeless Outreach Population Estimation Hong Kong (H.O.P.E.) also make a questionnaire interview to the homeless people (total 945 people). However, there only 372 questionnaire (58%) can be completed and analysis, but still enough to understand their approximately situation and facing problems.

Reason of incomplete Questionnaire
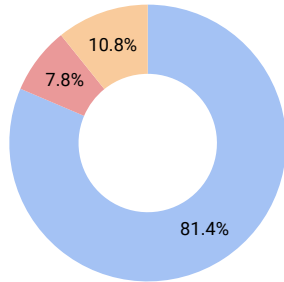
- Refusal to answer / answer the incomplete can not be analyzed
- Cannot be communicated
- Cannot speak English or Cantonese (Dialect)

10.8%
7.8%
81.4%

This result shows major reason of incomplete questionnaire isthey are not willing to tell their personal informtion to others.

Living Location of Homeless People

	2013	2015
Living on the street, park or bridge	942	780
Sleeping in 24-hours fast food chains	57	256
Residing in a temporary shelter or singleton hostel	415	578
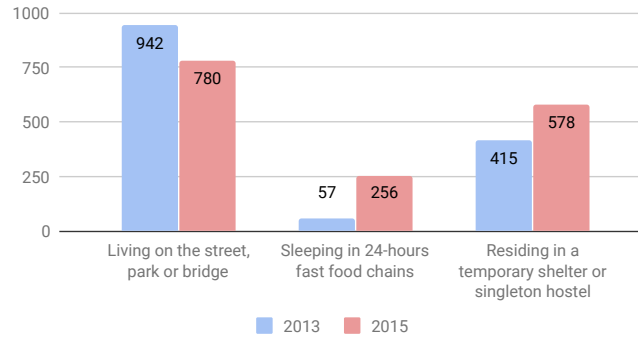
This result shows the trends to stay in 24-hours chains and temporary shelter are increasing rather than stay on the street.

Age of the Homeless

Age	
Under 25	2
25 - 34	18
35 - 44	48
45 - 54	92
55 - 64	114
Over 65	73
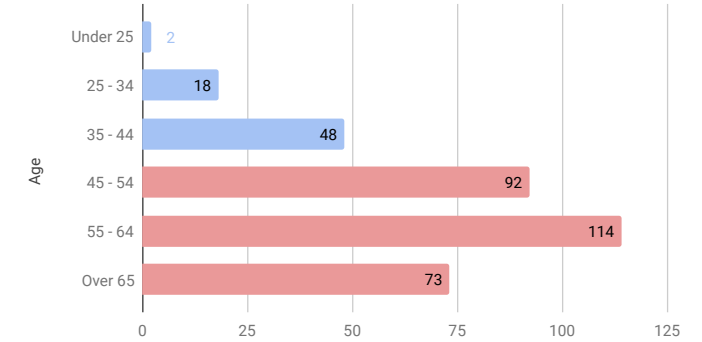
This result shows almost 60% homeless between 46 - 64 years old, 21% over 65 years old, only 20% is under 45 years old.

Education level (by percentage)

Never enrolled in school	4.2
Primary school and below	42.5
secondary school level	29.4
high school level	19.8
College or above	3.5
Other	0.6
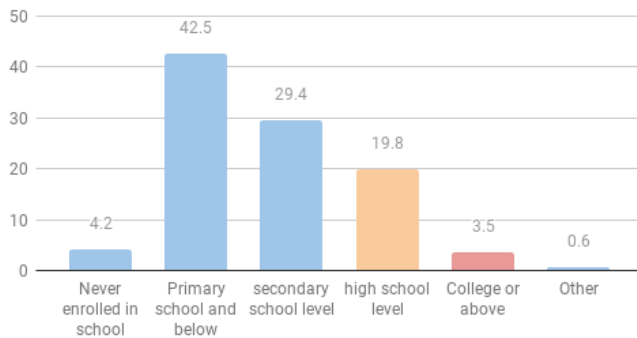
This result shows almost 80% people only have secondary school education level, means most of them may working in labour work.
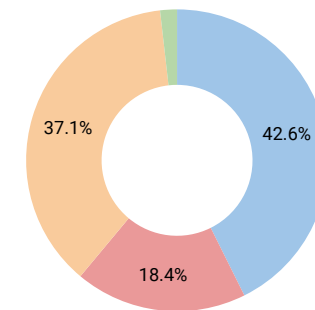
Contact with family and friends

44.8%
55.2%
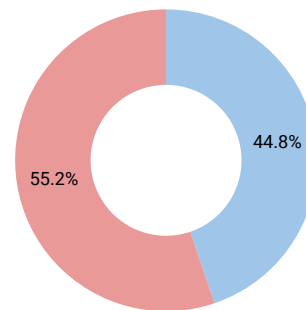
- Has a contact with family and friends
- No contact with family and friends

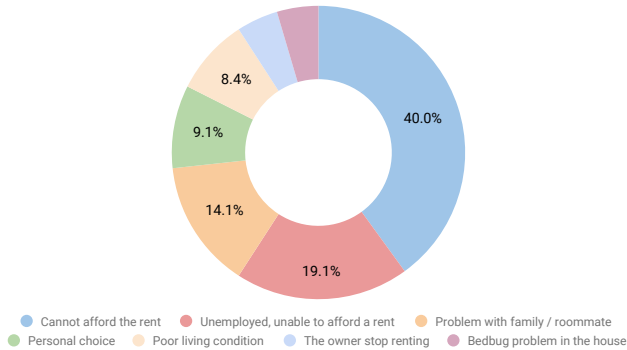This result shows only 44.8% homeless has a contact with family and friends.

Marriage Status

42.6%
18.4%
37.1%

- Single
- Married
- Separation / Divorce
- Widowed

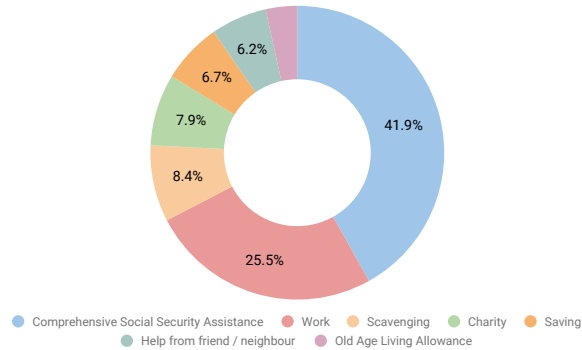This result shows almost 80% people in single status and lack of family support network.

Reason of become homeless

- 40.0%
- 19.1%
- 14.1%
- 9.1%
- 8.4%

Legend:
- ● Cannot afford the rent
- ● Unemployed, unable to afford a rent
- ● Problem with family / roommate
- ● Personal choice
- ● Poor living condition
- ● The owner stop renting
- ● Bedbug problem in the house

59.1% shows cannot afford the rent. 13% stated the living condition is poor. 4.6% stated cannot find a place to live. In general, the major reason is the rent too high or the living condition is not good. The result cause the homeless sleep on the street rather than rent a poor condition living place.

The rent allowance from Comprehensive Social Security Assistance is 1,835 HKD which is just enough to rent a bedspace apartment, board room or cage room which is without window, share kitchen and toilet and serious bed bugs problem (the rent is between 1800-2400 HKD). If they want to rent sub-divided flats with independent kitchen and toilet, the rent is start from 3,500 HKD which is totally a double price from the rent allowance. Also regarding the statistics display the homeless willing afford the rent approximately 1,500 HKD to 2,000 HKD.

Ways to maintain life

- 6.2%
- 6.7%
- 7.9%
- 8.4%
- 41.9%
- 25.5%

Legend:
- ● Comprehensive Social Security Assistance
- ● Work
- ● Scavenging
- ● Charity
- ● Saving
- ● Help from friend / neighbour
- ● Old Age Living Allowance

This section is not so clear to reflect the reality, because those factor can be multi selected. Means you can have income from scavenging and Comprehensive Social Security Assistance. But those information can let me know their major resource to maintain life.

Other finding is only have 41.9% apply Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (2,455 HKD) because some of the homeless has a name in the existing public housing with family, however due to the family problem, the homeless leave the house to the family and become homeless.

Other reason is the homeless feel shame if they apply the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA).

Income in HKD (by percentage)

HKD	Value
Under 1000	9.6
1001 – 3000	16.3
3001 – 5000	13.5
5001 – 7000	15.4
7001 – 9000	14.9
9001 – 10000	5.8
10001 – 12000	10.6
Over 12000	13.9
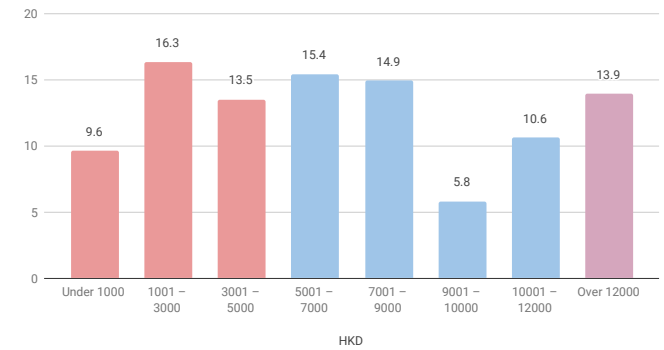
The red group (40%) is under minimum wage (5000HKD), only 13.9% has a standard wage (12000HKD) which is reach a minimum wage as a normal labour. Compare with the result of education, we know that most of them mainly work on the labour work.

This chart also shows most of the homeless their income is quite far away to fulfil the living cost (food). It cause the result of scavenging activity and eat leftovers.
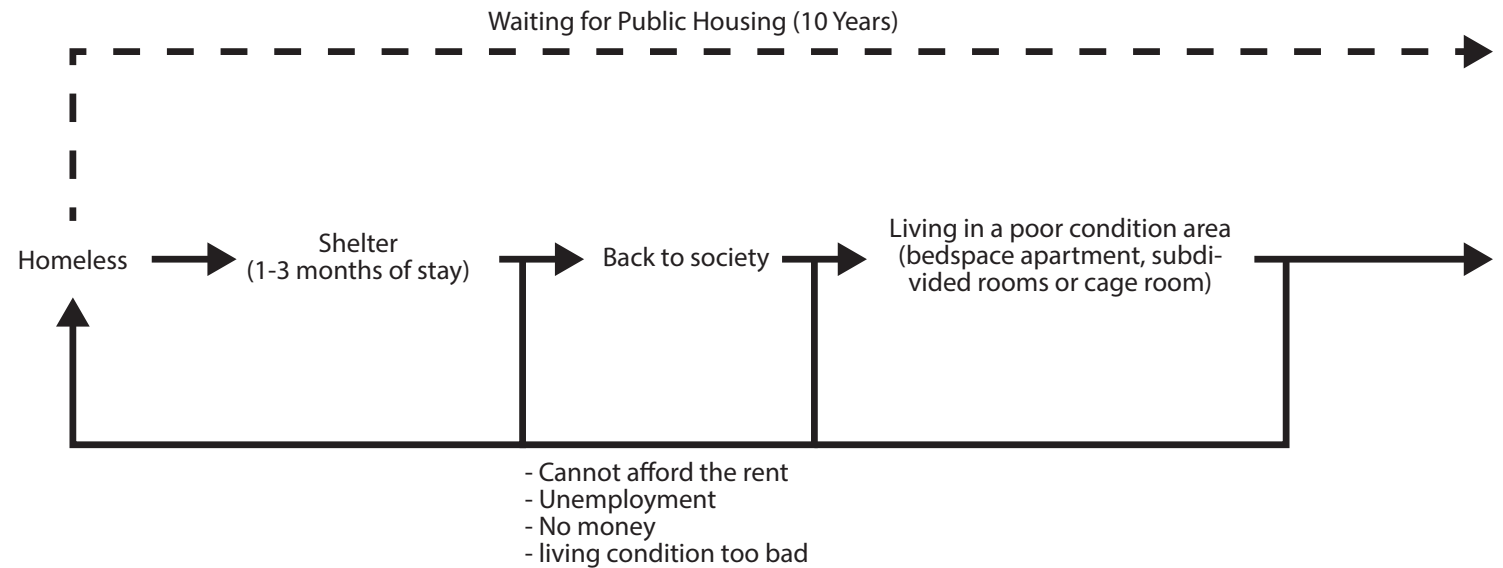

Conclusion

Through the above information, most of the homeless people a single and over 45 years old, major work as a labour because of low education level. However, they still cannot afford the rent and lack of the policy to support, therefore they need to become homeless. This situation is quite similar in Europe.

Recurring Homelessness

Except the general data of the homeless, there is more interesting finding about 'recurring homeless', means those who were homeless, subsequently found housing, and then became homeless again, for once or more.

Through the research, even the grovnment provide shelter, there still have a problem. Most of them is they cannot get along with the neighbor because they are isolated the sociality for a long time, it make them have a social communication problem. Other reason is the shelter quality is not good (like bed bugs, cockroach). Also the government doesn't provide supportive service during this peroid. The result cause they rather to sleep outside and think the government not really want to help them.

The result cause the homeless become recurrence of homelessness from this cycle. Even they already apply and waiting the public housing, however, the waiting time least take for 10 years. And it also show that the government policy cannot really solve the problem due to they don't have any supportive service and follow up.

Waiting for Public Housing (10 Years)

Homeless → Shelter (1-3 months of stay) → Back to society → Living in a poor condition area (bedspace apartment, subdivided rooms or cage room)

- Cannot afford the rent
- Unemployment
- No money
- living condition too bad

This diagram showed a typical service with the homeless who follows a cycle of temporary shelter. If the homeless people successful referred by social worker and accepted by a shelter, usually they can stay in there 1-3 months. After that, they have to back to stay in substandard housing such as bedspace apartment, subdivided rooms or cage house which the living condition is vary poor.

New living model for the Homeless

To avoid this vicious cycle, there are two suggestion. First to provide an extended-stay residences with supportive housing to solve the problem. Means the housing combine with supportive service provision intended as a cost-effective in order to help the homelessness and other co-occurring conditions such as low incomes and/or serious, persistent issues that may include substance abuse, drug addiction, alcoholism or mental illness to live more stable and productive lives.

Second is provide low rent accommodation in 3 to 5 years in order to provide enough time to rebuild or re-stabilize their lives (e.g. extended-stay facilities in the U.S. usually expect a 5-7 year stay, before moving on to more permanent housing options). The supporting service also can provide job training to help them rebuild or re-stabilize their lives.

With these two suggestion, the homeless can have more stable environment to re-training their working skill and re-stabilize their lives. Also the homeless can become new labor force to back to society.

Waiting for Public Housing (10 Years)

Accommodation + Supportive Service

- Very low cost rent accommodation for at less 3 years.
- Rebuild their social network in order to reconnect the society

- Vocational training
- Career referral
- Medical service for substance abuse, drug addiction, alcoholism or mental illness

Homeless → → Back to society →

3yr$^+$

Very low cost rent accommodation for at less 3 years.	Provide vocational training in order to match the employment Market	Medical service for substance abuse, drug addiction, alcoholism	Rebuild their social network in order to reconnect the society	Career referral not only provide a job, also more easy to review
Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	
Social Organization	Social Organization	Social Organization	Social Organization	Social Organization
			Public	Public

In Architecture side, the critical part is how to design a community in order to help them to rebuild their social network from local to society.

Reference Housing Proposal

This part is looking for some existing project who is helping people avoid to become homeless. Also try to find out which group of homeless still lack of support from the society.

1. Transitional social housing for release prisoner - "So Uk" Project
Target Group : Rehabilitated people
Living period : 1 ~ 2 Years
Rent : HKD 1,800 to 2,400

This project is focus on the new life of the release prisoner. Most of the release prisoner did not have savings when they were released from prison. They cannot afford the high rent for a house if they do not have family support. Most of them have two results, one is they sleep on the street and become homeless, but it is difficult to look for a job for their new life. Other is rely on your former friends, you will have a chance to go back.

The Hong Kong Society for the Advancement of Health has been funded by the Social Welfare Department to operate six dormitories. It provides a total of more than 100 places. 6 - 8 tenants share one unit, each tenant has own private space. Social workers regularly visit, follow up and assist rehabilitated people to practice rehabilitation programs, establish savings habits, and become independent in the future in order to get ready for new life.
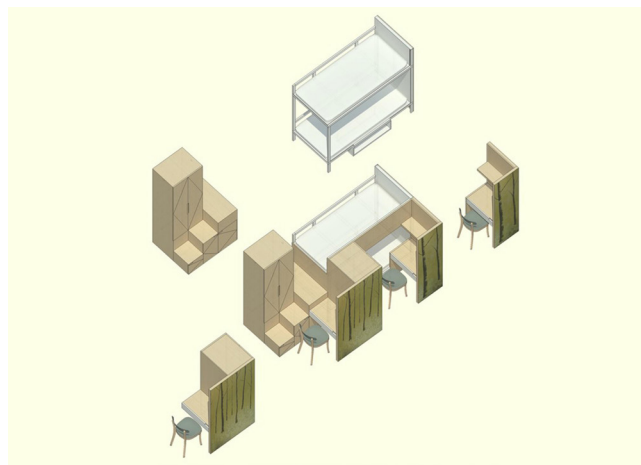
2. Community Housing Movement - Short-term transitional social housing for individuals or families

Target Group :
- Transitional housing needs (waiting for public housing for at least 3 years or other long-term
  housing arrangements)
- Currently living in an unsuitable housing
- Households with low income and urgent need for community support

Living period : 2 ~ 3 Years

Rent : Not more than 25% of income / The maximum level of accommodation for each household is equal to the maximum rent allowance for the total number of people in the unit.

This project are operated by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and supported by the Government and social welfare organisations and social enterprises. The Hong Kong Council of Social Service become a role of a housing intermediary platform in the project. It will be responsible for the lease and refurbishment of private flats, and then sub-letting the operation of the authorized operators (social services and social enterprises) and providing support services to reduce the risk of the operators and cost. By contacting different professional bodies, the HKCSS assists in conducting surveys such as unit surveys, negotiating leases, and assisting related projects.

The core concept of this project is not only provide housing, but to regard the housing problem of the citizens as a problem of housing, more importantly, they more concern does they have community life and support from the community by participating in contributing their strengths.

In addition to providing transitional accommodation, eligible social welfare agencies will provide social services and work with tenants to help them live independently in the community.

Provide House — Support — Community support

House Owner — Social Housing Agency — Operating Organization — Tenant

Lessee — Rent — Rent
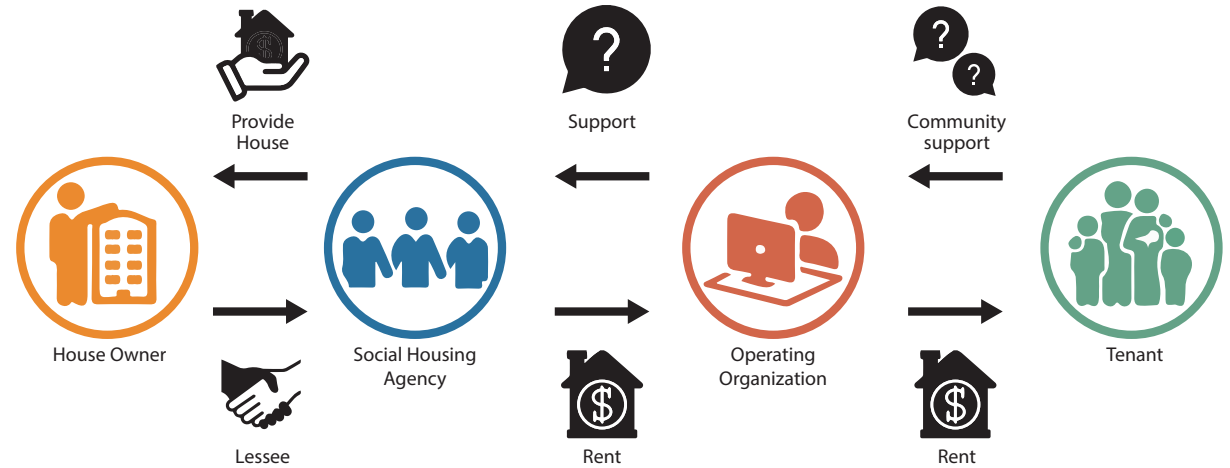
Poorest area in Hong Kong - Sham Shui Po District

Sham Shui Po District which is are poorest area in Hong Kong. There are a lot of poor people who living in 'rooftop slums', 'cage house' and street. In 2017, the results of the Hong Kong Census showed that the elderly accounted for a large proportion of the population in the district. In addition, there were many new immigrants in Sham Shui Po and the per capita income is the lowest (around 22,000 HKD) in the 18 districts of Hong Kong. Therefore, Sham Shui Po has always been the poorest area in Hong Kong. Regarding the result from Homeless Outreach Population Estimation Hong Kong (H.O.P.E.), there are totally 565 homeless people (almost 35%) who living in there which is the highest population in Hong Kong district.
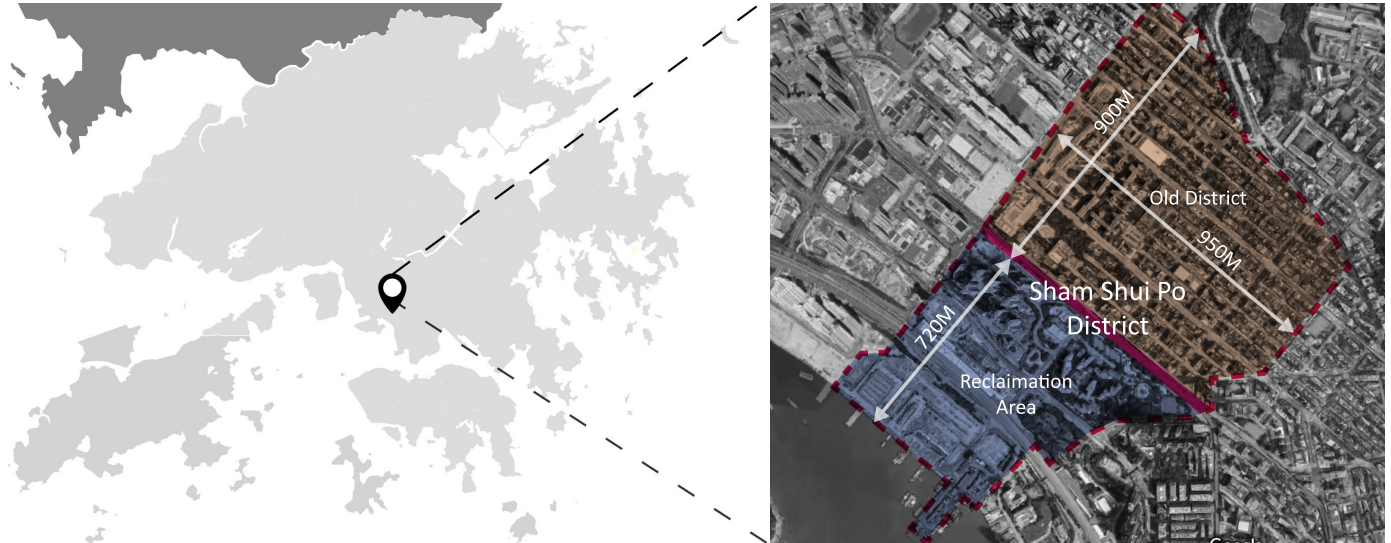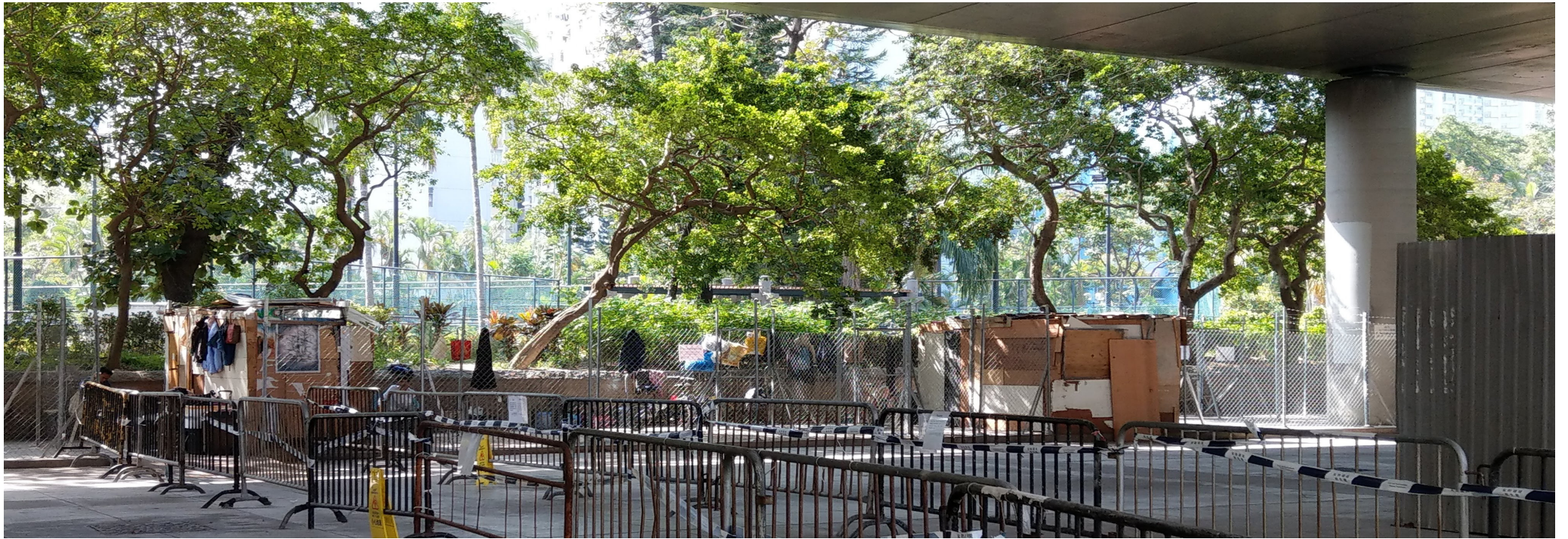
Fabric Street
Button Street
Leather Street
Food Street
Toys Street
Street Market

Fishion Road
Electronic Gadgets Street
Public Market
Construction and Recycle Shop Area
Site

Bus Station
Train Station
Main Traffic Road

Bread Factory

Computer Plaza

Shopping Mall

Fabric Hawker Bazaar

Park

Car Park

New Public House Area

Methadone Clinic

Scaffold Training Area

Site

Wholesale Street

Electronic Gadgets Street

Public Market

Recycle Shop

Folk experiment - Reactivate the site

Even the building on site is already abandoned and a lot of homeless living there. However there still have some activity and the target group is the poor people. Turn it into other angle, the site as a place for the public to understand and experiment any possible way to help the poor people and homeless.

Like the street food market, it is a good sample to tell the government that re-think the license of hawker has their value to help grassroots citizens use their ability to survive; The public movie show can provide free entertainment and education for the poor people.
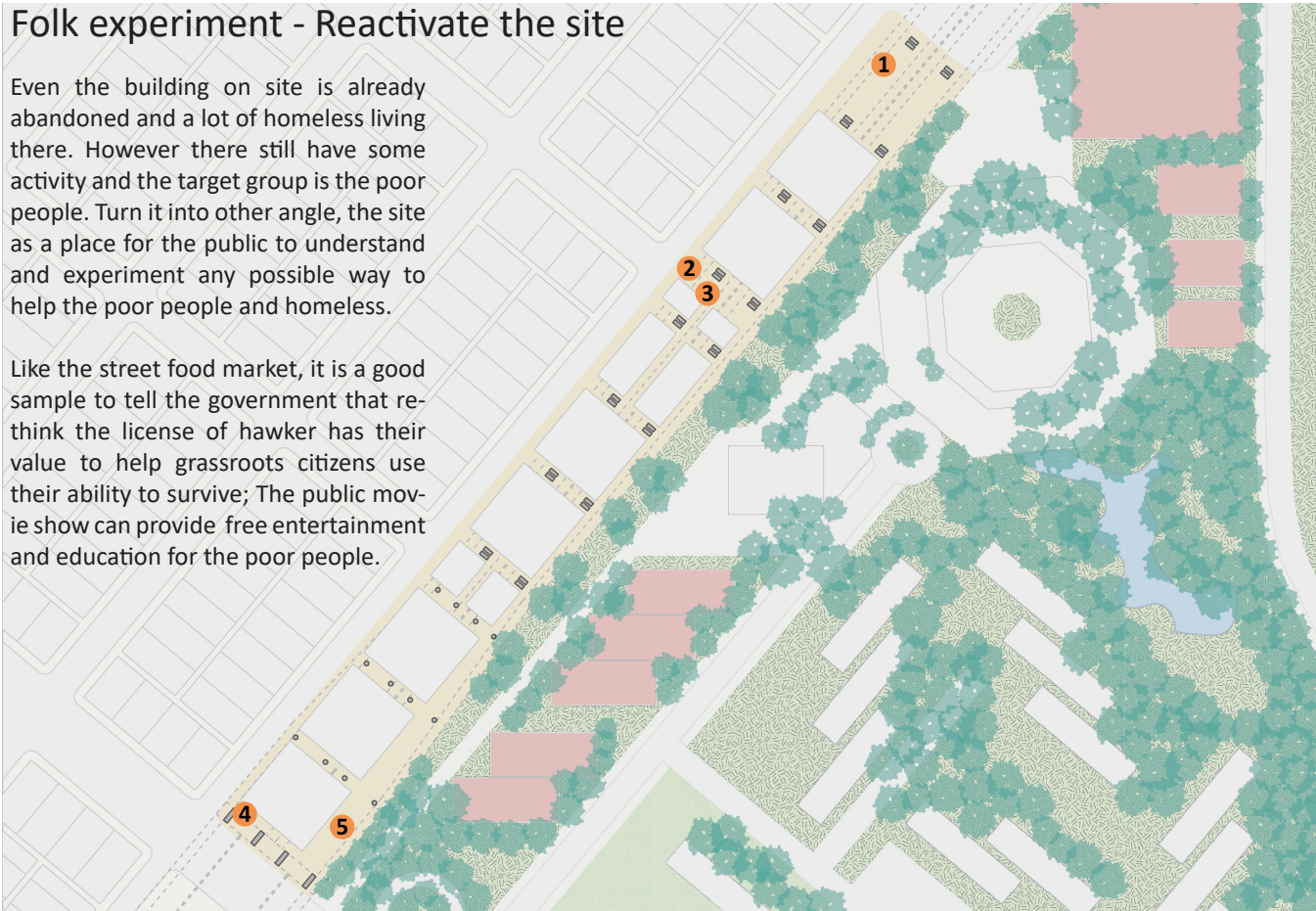
1 Member of NGO visit the homeless with teenager as a citizenship education.

2 Public movie show

5 Midnight and early morning market

4 Street food market

3 Street Pastors meet the homeless and resident

Strategy of Site Selection

There are some consideration about the site selection :

Physical Location :
The site itself is localed in a semi importmrnt area to connect the new and old district. The public can easily to access community in daily life. Which can help the homeless to rebuild their social relationhip.

From Society :
The location itself is a 'icon' about homeless, but not in 'Negative' way. It is a place for public to visit and understand their situation. If we build a community in there, it may help to other public to get more idea to help the homeless.

Form Public :
It may be get a complain from the new neighborhood if it move to other location. It also affected the governemnt consideration.

Form Homeless :
The place already had a lot of homeless living in there, they are quite sensitive to change the environment. Also they already had a neighborhood between other homeless and the local public. People can more easily to adapt the new community.

From Commercial :
The location itself is a 'low value' for the developer to build a private housing in commercial way.

Poverty line in Sham Shui Po

There are a some offical information show that the situation of the poverty line in that district. (Not included Homeless because it is hard to count their population and mostly they are out of the range of government policy.)

It show that their are 20% population living in under poverty line. In that area, 29.3% population who is an elderly. These group of people they don't have job and any income. Only useing their saving to maintain life. 18.2% population who is in the 'Working poor' situation due to the labour work with low education level. Other 14.5% is unemployment.

Even people not under in a poverty line. As you can see average income only 2800 HKD, which is quite far a way of the basic expenditure is 4050HKD per person. Beside that, the average age is around 49 years old, means the district facing a serious aging population problem.

In conclusion, that district has a serious poverty problem. People keep surviving in poor living condition with low income. And it can explain why this area have a lot of 'rooftop shack', 'cage house' or 'subdivided rooms'. Also it explain why there are a lot of homeless (30% of population of homeless) living in that district.

Sham Shui Po population

= Population who live under Poverty line

Avg 49
Average Age

Average Income : 2800 HKD

14.5%
JOB
Unemployment

18.2%
Worker

29.3%
Elderly (≥ 65)
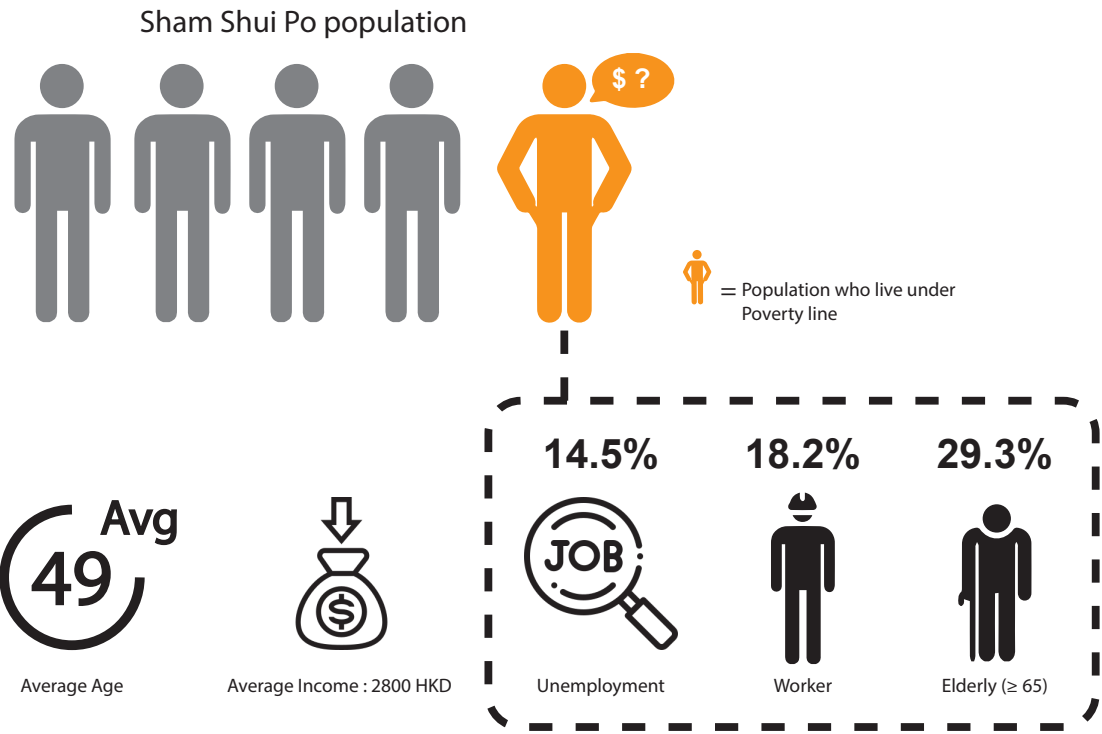
Average Expenditure / per month

I cannot buy a toys for my children, cannot go to restaurant and cannot see the doctor when they are sick.

*4500 HKD   0 HKD

2000 HKD   0 HKD

200 HKD   100 HKD

500HKD   **0 HKD

7448 HKD
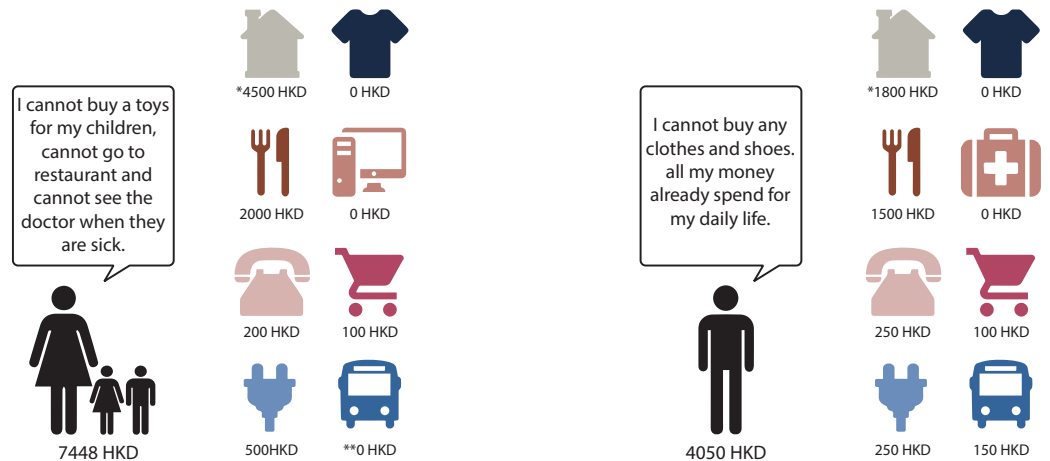
* Only rent a 13.9m² Room
**Go to School by walk

I cannot buy any clothes and shoes. all my money already spend for my daily life.

*1800 HKD   0 HKD

1500 HKD   0 HKD

250 HKD   100 HKD

250 HKD   150 HKD

4050 HKD

* Only rent a 2.79m² Room

Outdoor Social Activity

Although Sham Shui Po is a poor district - people living in a bedspace size room which is not allow them to place a refrigerator and cooking equipment. But the local restaurant try to do something to help the poor people - they offer a very cheap and diversify meal for them. Therefore the local people like eat in the local reataurant, or they like stay in there at the day time and have a social activity.

With this reference, I would like to propose some commercial activity in my site to provide some service for the local people. Not only easy to attract the local resident to come for stay, it also can help the homeless to interact with public.

Traditional Local Shop is a Community

The traditional local shop more like a extension of their living room, the owner put their stuff out of their boundary. Not only for drawing attention, also they blur the boundary in order to generate more social activity.

The traditional local shop extent their goods in horizontal way like a visual catalog. People can start to find what they need from out of the boundary.

The shop owner sitting outside and watch TV, the resident can buy a drink and join him or just talk to him.

Losing the Traditional Craftsmanship

Those traditional craftsmanship only in that district. Some of them push thier technique into extreme way to become art. Some of them try to recreate the traditional taste. Some of them innovate the traditional skill and got a foreign appreciation. Actually their product itself is a part of the Hong Kong people daily life. However they are facing those technique will be lost due to no next generation to inherited.

Praying Mantis - THE BREEDER Art Exhibition

Studio of Paper Offerings Shop

Fermented Tofu

Studio of Fermented Tofu

Handmade Pure Copper Shop

Studio of Handmade Pure Copper Shop

Local Story - Restaurant become community to help the local poor people

There are a lot of local helping the local poor people. One of the famous is Peiho Restaurant. He start to provide free lunch box once a week to the local elderly and homeless from 2008. His action get a lot of local resident support, they start to donate money and become a volunteer to join his activity. After that it bring a lot of good feedback from society. Some rich people start to sponsor his activity, a lot of organization join his activity as volunteer. Now he can donate lunch box four times as a week. Through the interaction with poor people with is activty, the public not only helping the poor people, it also let the people understanding what's the situation of the poor people. He spirit also influence other shop owner to do the similar things.

Local Story - 77 years old woman reject CSSA and selling a small dishes: self reliance is honored

Miss Ying is running a small local shop in Sham Shui Po district. She come from from China, in the beginning people recomment that she should apply CSSA. She reject it and start to work in a restaurant. After 6 years later, the owner don't want to keep running the restaurant anymore. The estate agent recomend her to take the restaurant and keep running. With her daughter and local resident support, she decide to keep running the shop.

Due to there are a lot of poor people who don't have enough space to cook a food, so she decide to provide a good quality food with low price in order to help the local people have a health meal.
Her act makes a lot of resident support wherefore she also win a good neighborhood relationship. Now some customer go to she restaurant not only for food, the restaurant more like a social area, or like a family sharing their experience or helping each other.

雲吞麵$18

Scavenging

Scavenging is a general work in homeless people do, mostly they like pick valuable stuff on the street and sell them to the recycle factory. A lot of wholesalers and recycle factory in Sham Shui Po district. The wholesalers keep throwing the material (like carton packaging), homeless people will take it and sell it to the recycle store.

If we see more detail, we will find that every homeless people has their own 'district' and planning to collect stuff. Therefore, some wholesalers will perpare those material and wait for homeless to collect it, the recycle factory also know when the homeless come to the factory and sell material. The recycle system start to be generated. Beside that, the homeless people only pick their specific 'stuff' in order to make it more efficient and earn more money.
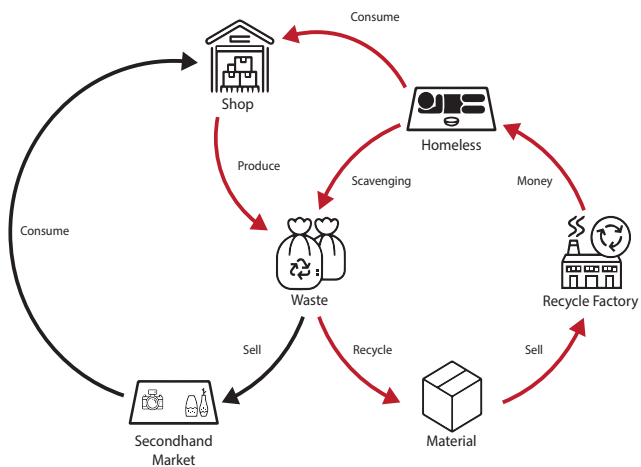
Secondhand market (Apliu Street) - give a second life of the waste.

Sometimes they pick the stuff from the waste and sale them in second hand market, they just put the stuff on the floor and let people come to have a look and buy it. People can find some very old stuff with cheap price in there, therefore the second market attached a lot of people to visit. In the other way, this market also provide a place to bring the recycle stuff back to the market and most of the social activity happen in there.

As a result, although Sham Shui Po District is a poorest area in Hong Kong, however it is also the area with the most diversified social activities.

Homeless people seem 'invisible' in Hong Kong, but they still provide their function in the society. My Idea is try to take this situation as a sample to formulating a new type of a community.

CIRCULAR COMMUNITY
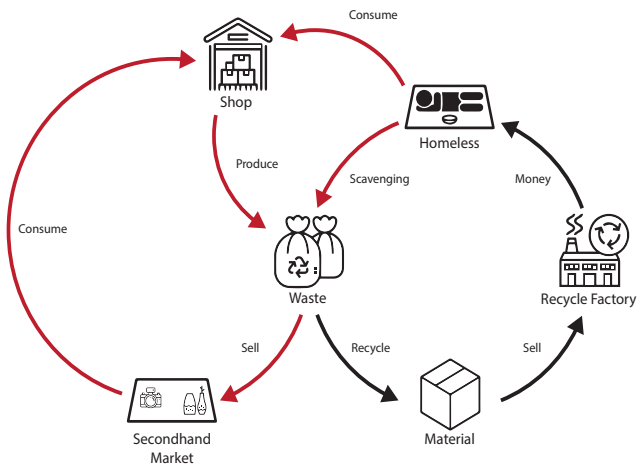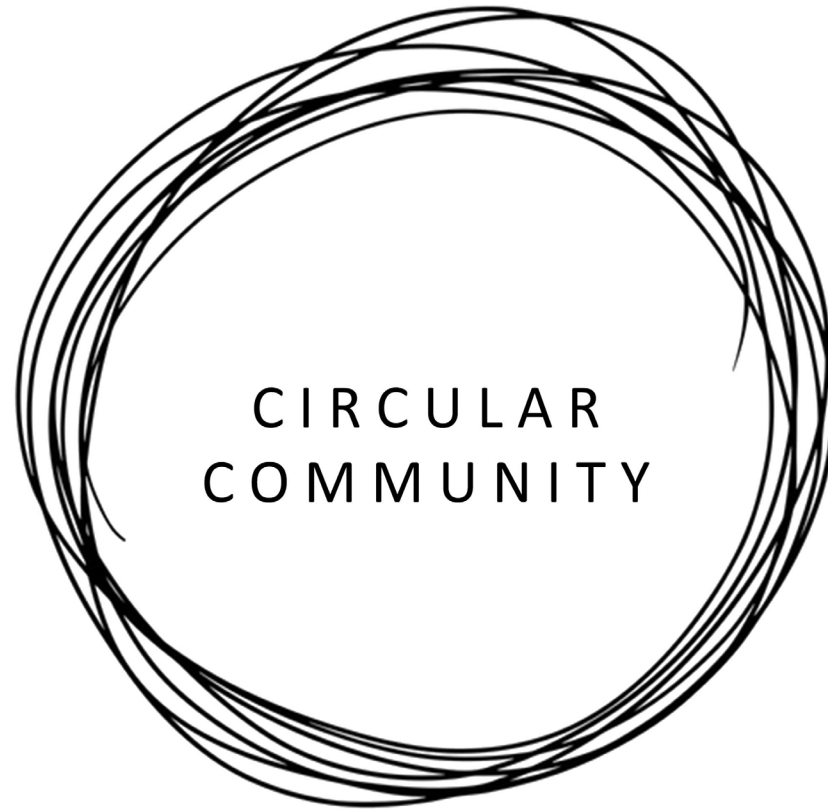
What if we can design a community to provide a second life for the product and homeless in order to create more elegant, effective, creative and sustainable solutions for the circular community?

Strategy of Circular Design Concept

Compare with 'Recycle' concept, 'Circular' concept is more focus on how to add up the existing value and put it back the to market. This method also avoid to produce wast due to materialise something as 'Recycle'.

The Circular Design Concept is to design a 'circular system' in the field of the social activity, commercial activity, and public relationship, means they can keep production and contribution back to the system in order to generate a sustainable, resilient and long-lasting value in the community.

To achieve the 'circular system', we have to consider and identify the actual needs of the community with the surrounding content. From mega scale (city structure, social structure and economic structure) to micro scale (social activity, commercial activity, community behaviour and public relationship). Also the community should be designed as a part of the district, not only provide their own function, it also can contribution to the society.

DEFINE

CREATION

Discover and Combine the new Solution with Social Structure

Social Structure and Problems

Redesign a Community

UNDERSTANDING

CONTRIBUTION

District

Strategy of Circular Design Concept for Community

Idea of Circular Community

This idea is through of my studying of the relationship between the homeless behaviour and the surrounding content and activity. The homeless community not only provide a accommadition and supportive service to help the homeless, it also provide some product to serve the public and generate a diversified community and contribute to the society. As result, the whole community become mutualism and only less wast left.

The circular community diagram combine with 3 circular model (exising living model of homeless, new living model of homeless and circular product design model) and it generate a lot of circular system which is like a chemical reaction - A lot of things keep generating and contribute to other elements. It shows how sustainability, resilient and long-lasting value in the community.
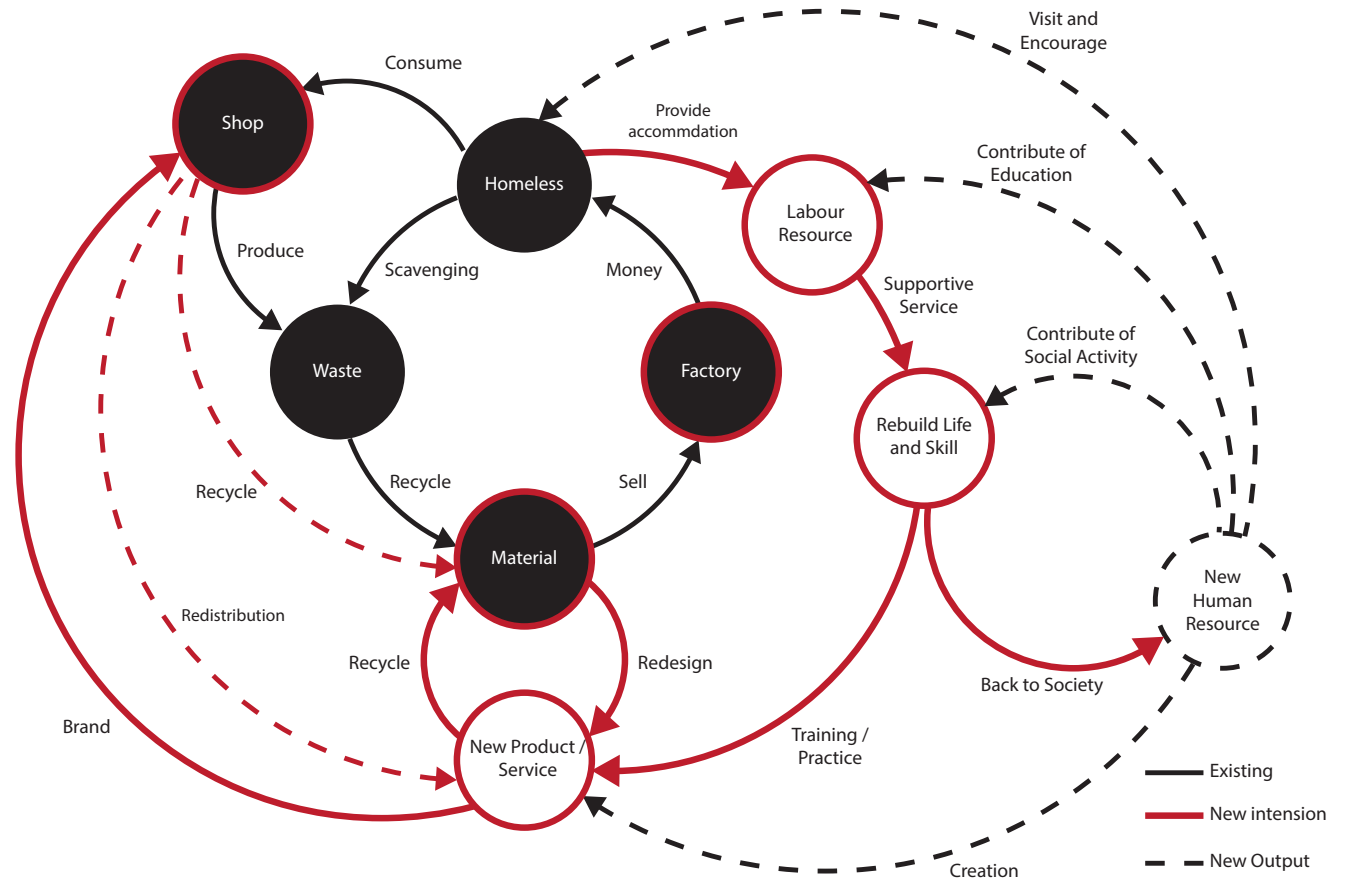
The circular community diagram
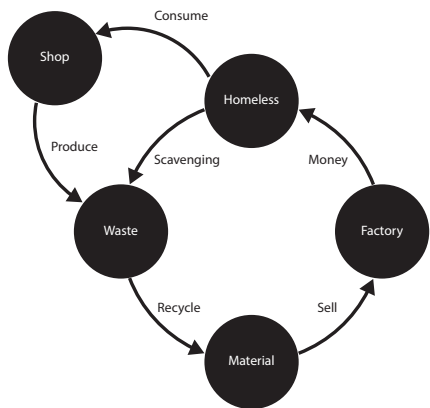
Existing living model of homeless
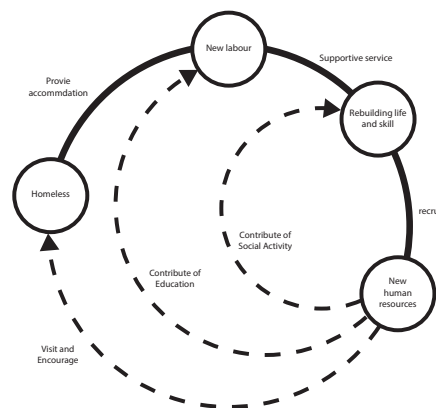
New living model of homeless

Circular product design

Old District
Consume
Shop
Homeless
Produce
Scavenging
Money
Waste
Factory
Recycle
Sell
Material
Site
Less Connection
New District
Google
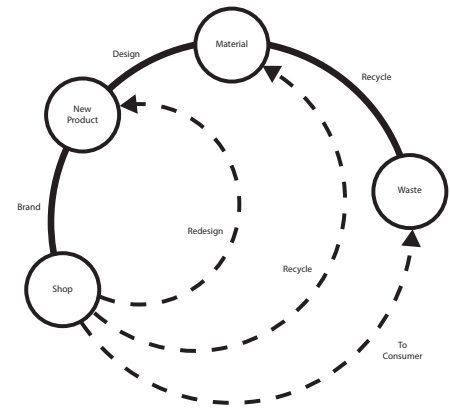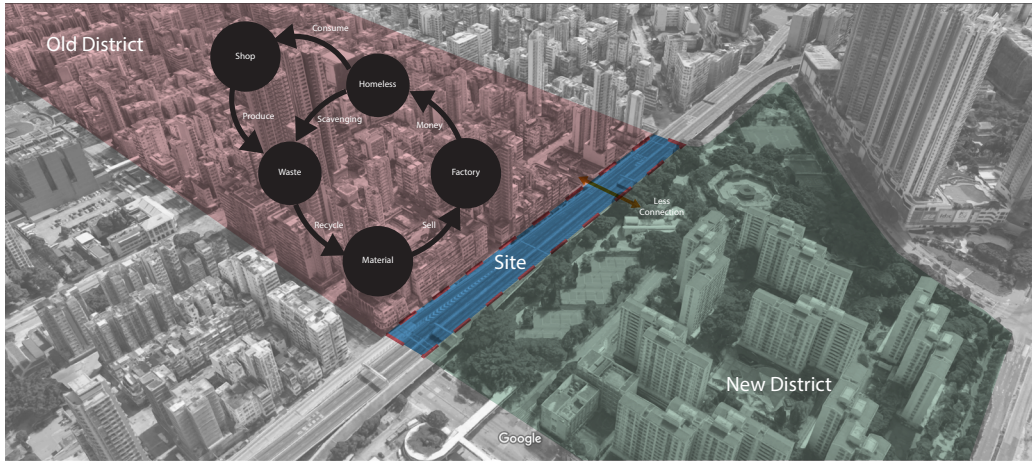
Circular Hub Community

The site like a barrier to separate the old and new district. My concept is using the 'circular design' to build a self sustained homeless community with surround content. This community like a showcase to solve the homeless problem with new innovation idea. The community not only provide accommodation and supportive service to help the homeless back to society, also the working studio, exhibition and commerical element provide a positive image and invite both district of resident join together.

Compare with the existing situation in old district, the relationship in new idea is more like a chemisty reaction. And it can be happen layer by layer (Red to blue to green). It also show that the architectural element is a import first o start up the circular community.

Visit and Encourage

Contribution by Experience and Skill

Provide Accommodation | Counselling | Training Service

Homeless → Labour Resource → Rebuild Life and Skill → 5 Years Later → New Human Resource

Recycle | Creation | Experience Sharing | Provide Service

Visit and Encourage

Public to Join or Visit

Consume | Money

Shop / Wholesaler | Recycle Factory

Recycle

Scavenging

Recycle | Creation | Redesign | Consum | Contribution

Recycle

Waste → Material → New Product → Brand

Studio | Shop

Existing Situation in Old District

New Community (Site)

— — Establish neighborhood with Accommodation, Studio, Medical Facility and Shop etc
∙∙∙∙ Supportive manpower with skill
∙∙∙∙ Contribution
— — Community Site

The Recycle studio

The recycle studio can provide different possibility of the waste. People not only can fix, renew the suff, also they can create totally new product or art to sell it in market or hold a exhibition for the public.

The public can join the studio, through the interation in workshop with homeless, public can more under-standing the background of the item or the homeless. For the homeless is a chance to get in touch the socity. The knowadge also can be shared and inherited the next generation.

Renew

Old → New

Creation

Material → New Product

Redesign

Old Parts → New Product
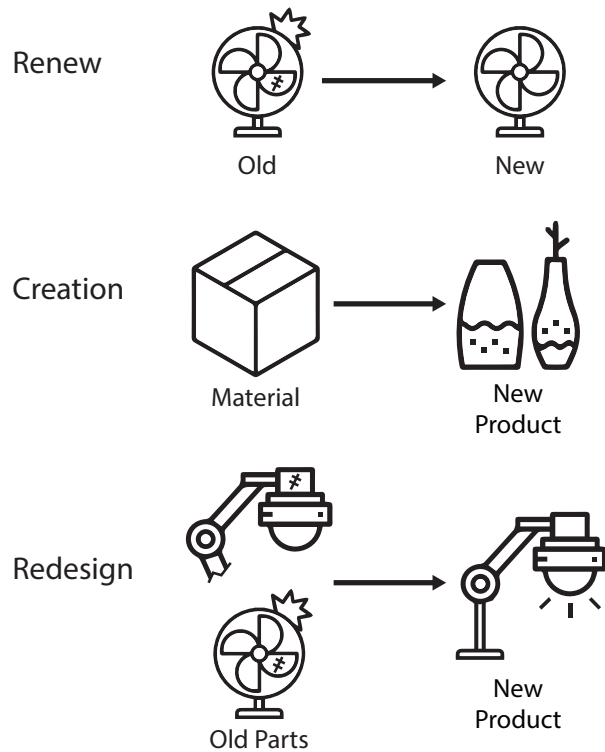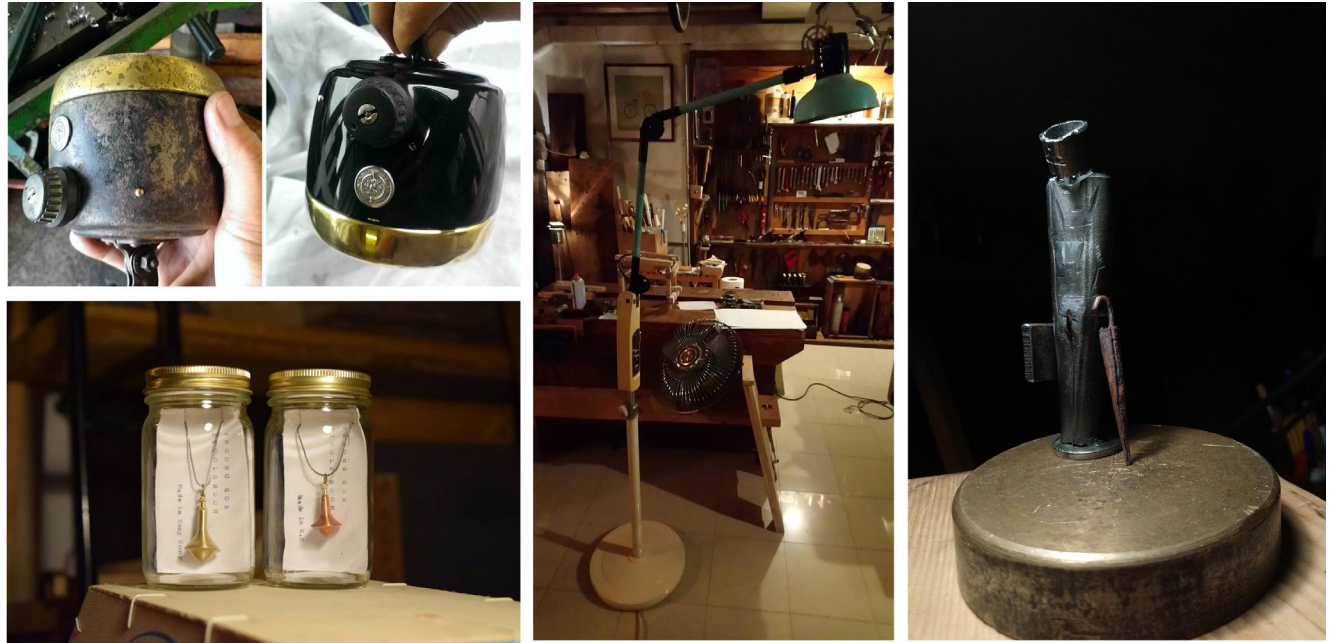
Stone mill Machine

This machine combine with the stone mill, bicycle parts and sewing machine. It can mill the bean to make a tofu or soy milk.

The True Community Design for Homeless

Regarding to the finding of the needs for the homeless. The critical part of the community is how to create a public friendly environment in order to help the homeless to rebuild their social relationship.

Regarding a lot of architecture project, most ot them is designed in enclose form, those project is trying to create a inter-community for the homeless, other consideration is the mental and drug problems. However, that intension makes the community is labeled 'homeless', Public still not willing to understanding them. They are still label as a 'homeless' and detacted from the socility. Only different is they become visible and grouped in one area call 'homeless community'

To avoid this situation, the first step is coordinate with social work organization to evaluation the homeless in order to find out our target group. Once they are evaluated as a safety, the community can be allow the design become more open to the public. That is the first condition to design a open community. On the other hand, the public access this community not only let the homeless have a chance to interact with the public, also it help to trun down the label of the 'homeless', means the homeless is just a part of that community.

Typical Homeless Community
Enclose Community

Enclose and Labeled

Public

Not wecloming the Public to access
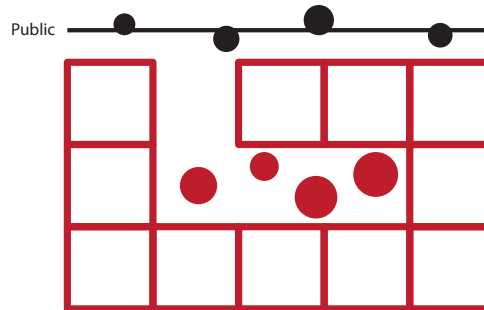
Less internation with Public

New Idea of Homeless Community
Open Community

Public   Open to Public
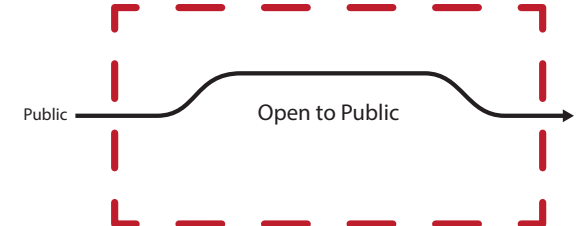
More wecloming the Public to access
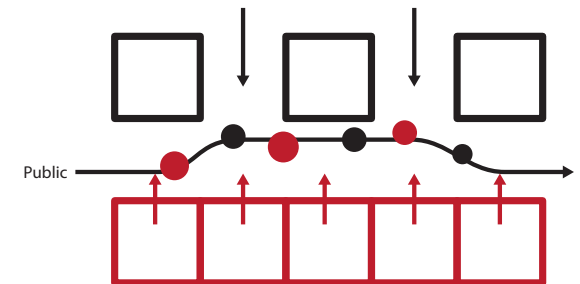
Public

More Interaction with Public

Strategy of Street Experience Design for the Community

In the public side, the community should be designed as their part of the experience. In more detail, the community should provide some local commercial element like restaurant, studio or small stroe. Which is easy to attract the public to come and trun down the image of 'homeless community'. Beside that, the shop also provide a good environment to generate social activity which can hepl the homeless close to the public naturally.

Buy Daily Cleaning Stuff

Pass through the Food Street / Buy Some Street Food

Typical Experience of Resident on the Street

Pass through the Food Street

Shopping in Market Street

Buy Daily Cleaning Stuff

Pass through the Food Street / Buy Some Street Food

Experience of the Homeless Community become a part of Public Life

Pass through the Food Street

Social / Commercial Activity

Strategy of Street Planning

Circulation

People from other district

People back from market

From Park

People back from market

Through the park from residential to the market

From park to the market (Major path)

Resident Path (Less use)

Grid
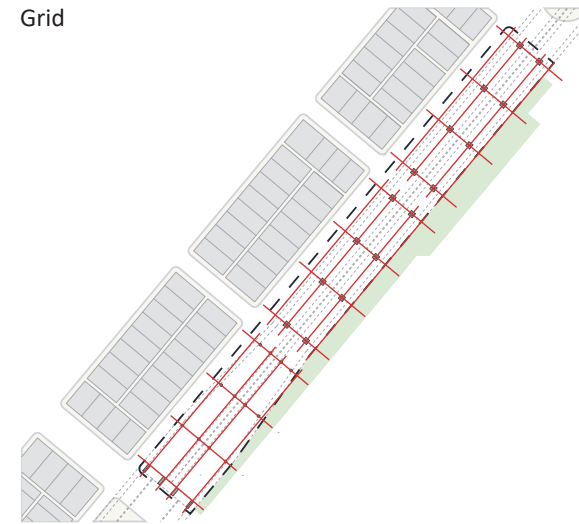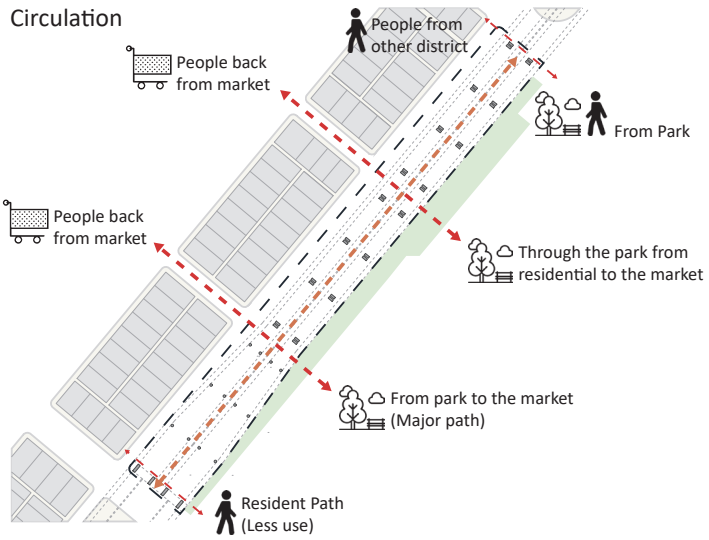
Extend Surrounding Element into the site

Commercial Element

🌳 + 🏠 Residential and Greenery
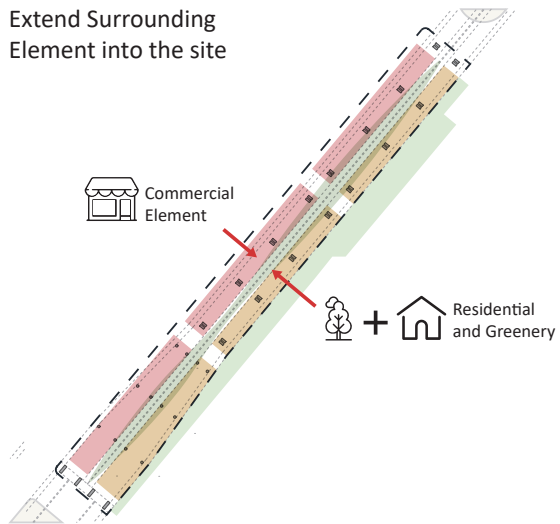
Facility for Homeless Community

Recycle Studio

Counselling

Job Training Service

Integrate the Element to form a new Community
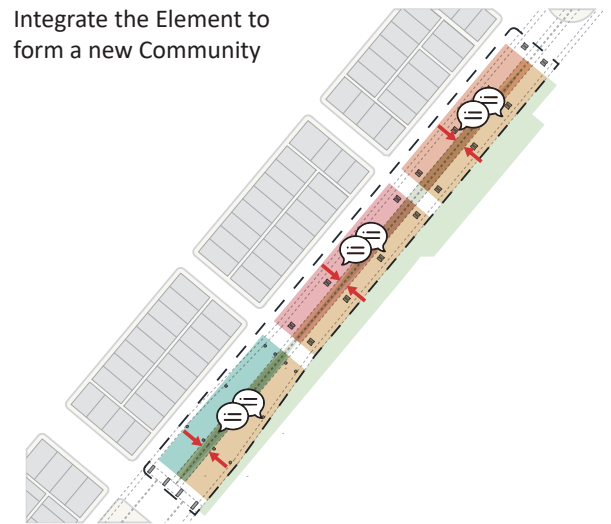
Street Typology

Typical Street
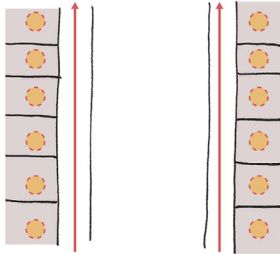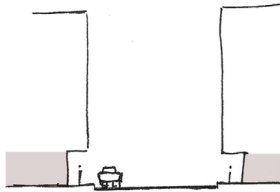
Shop belong to both side, the community only happen in the shop.
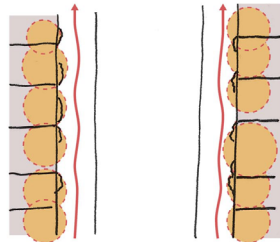
Shop put their stuff on the pedestrian to extend their boundary

Typical Street in District (Shared Space)
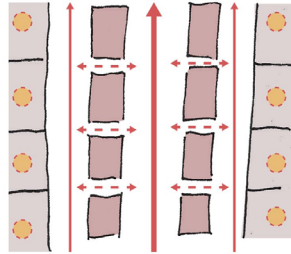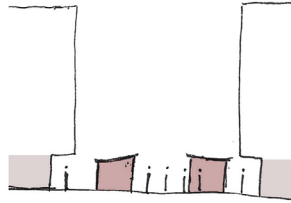
Hawker as a shop extension to the low usage rate road to create a shared space for public.
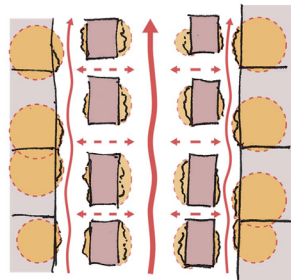
Hawker put their stuff out of their boundary to attract the public, a lot of small group community will be generated and affect the circulation.

Street on Site
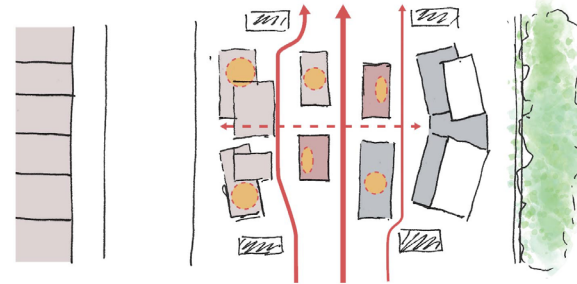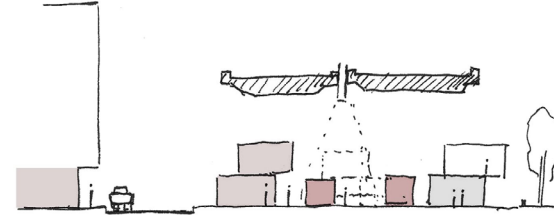
The building arrangement provide similar but different experience and privacy of circulation for different user.

Commercial Area | Shared Space | Accommodation Area
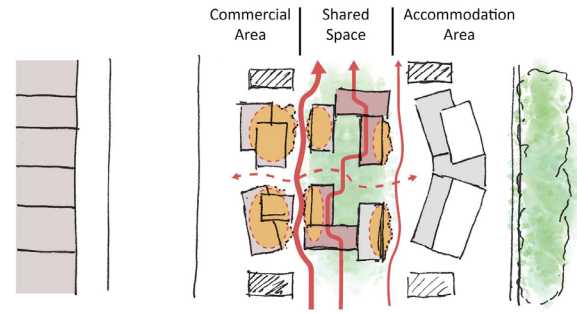
The outerstuff from the Studio / Restaurant and greenery to create a outdoor community for the public. Also it attract more public to use the path.
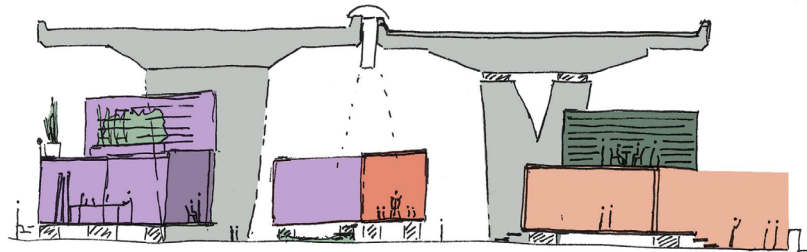
Building Concept Sketch

Sun Light

waterproofing cover

Light pipe.

Reflected Sun Light.
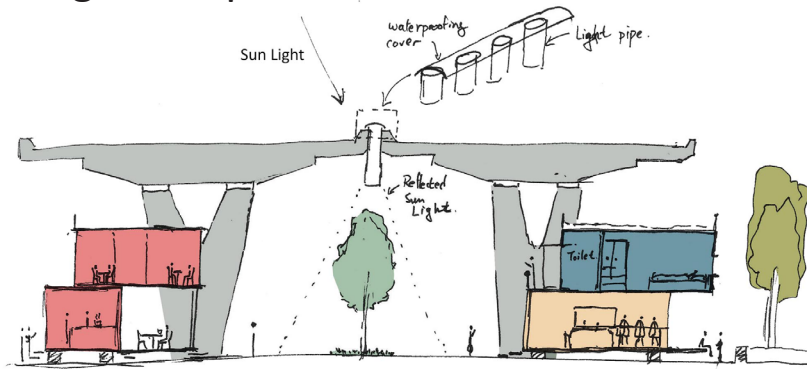
Commercial Area
(Homeless can work in there to practice their skill)

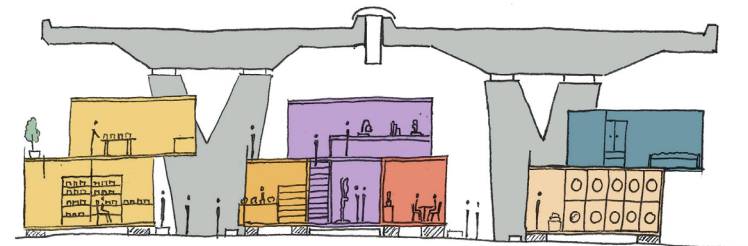**Public Space**
(Homeless manage the green)

Accommodation Area
(15 unit as a group with private toilet, shared kitchen and lounge)

Studio Area
(Redesign a product)

Shared Space
(Some story telling and sharing from homeless for public)

Accommodation Area
(semi-public)

Traditional Food Production Studio
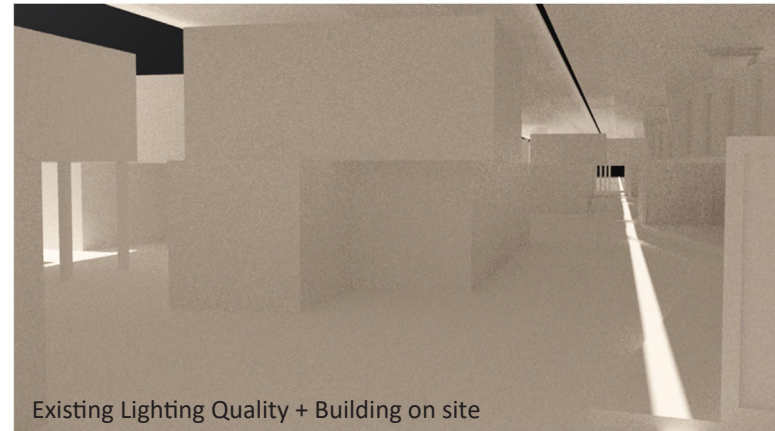(inherited the traditional)

Mixed Space
(Small store, exhibition and public facility)

Accommodation Area

Solar Tube Testing Rendering

Existing Lighting Quality

Existing Lighting Quality + Building on site

Solar Tube in the Community

Recycle Factory
(To manage the recycle material)

Counseling and Medical Center
(Provide supportive service for the homeless)

Recycle Studio
(Provide studio and shop for redesign product with their knowledge, people can also join the workshop for experience sharing)

Mix Used Area
(Extend the exhibition Studio, provide public space, greenery)

Other Studio
(Provide studio and shop for traditional craftsmanship, people can also join the workshop for inherited)

Accommodation Area
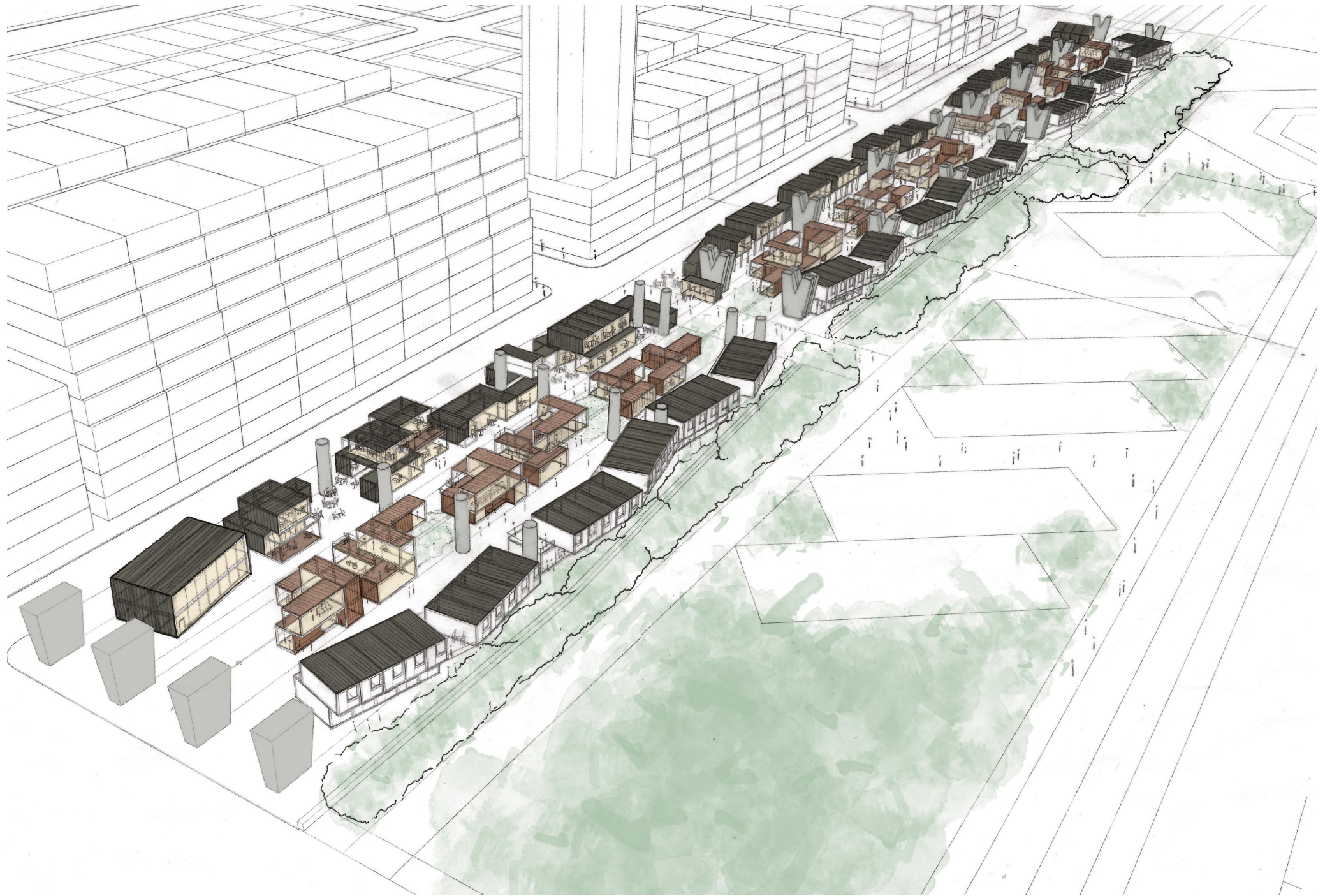(Provide room with toilet, share kitchen and laundry room)

Mix Used Area
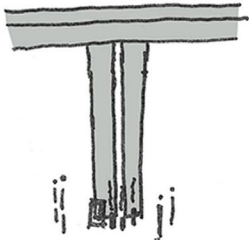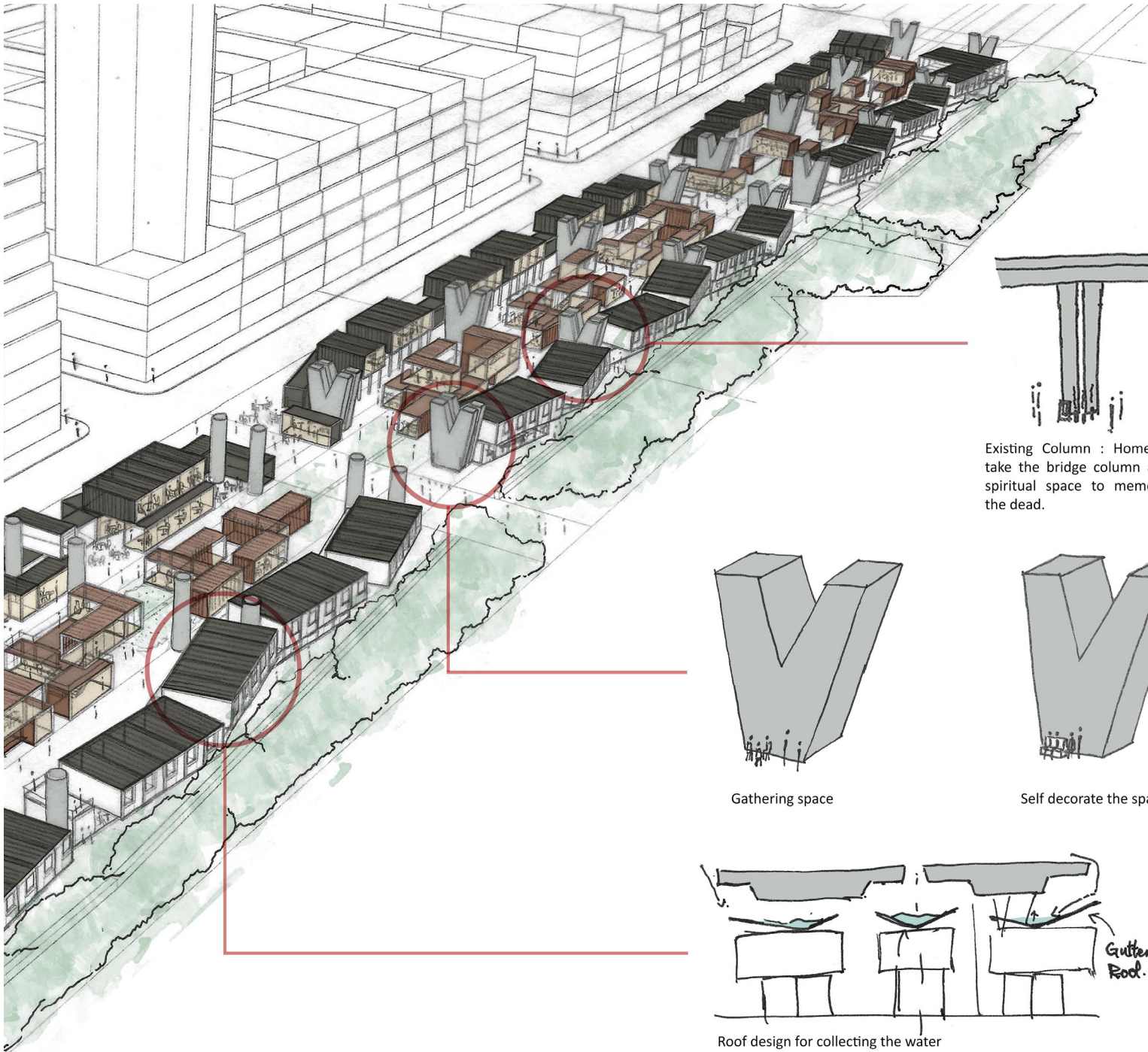(Provide exhibition area, public space, greenery and multi function space)

Restaurant
(Coordinate with local shop to provide job practice)

Mix Used Area
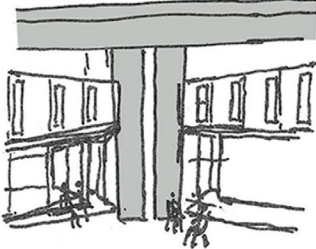(Extend the exhibition Studio, provide public space, greenery)

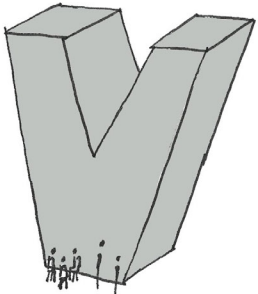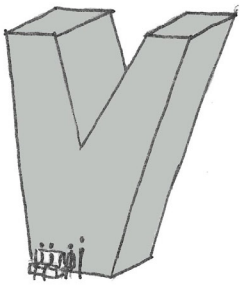Job Training Center
Provide job training

Existing Column : Homeless take the bridge column as a spiritual space to memorial the dead.
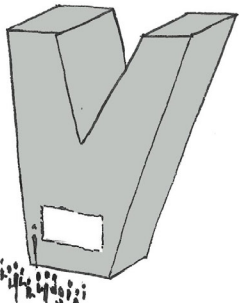
New intention : Accommodation combine with the bridge column to re-form the spiritual space for the homeless.

Gathering space

Self decorate the space

Public movie show
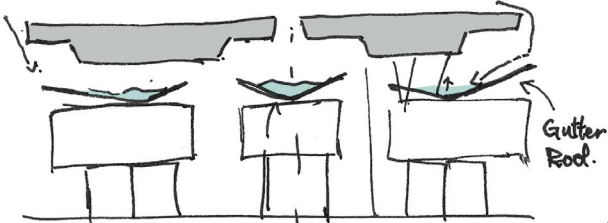
Roof design for collecting the water
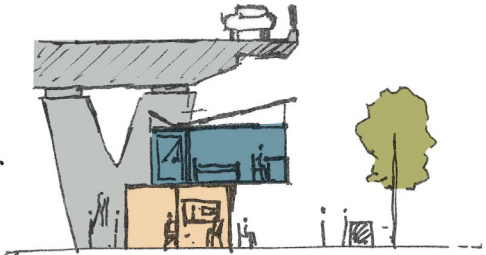
Public Community - Understand the homeless and change the image in their mind.

In public community side, the restaurant and studio can attract the public to come here and generate social activity. The homeless can work in the shop and interact with the public. Which can help them to practice their skill and rebuild their social network in order to ready to back to socity in the future.

Through the public interact with the homeless worker, they will more understand the homeless and change the image in their mind.
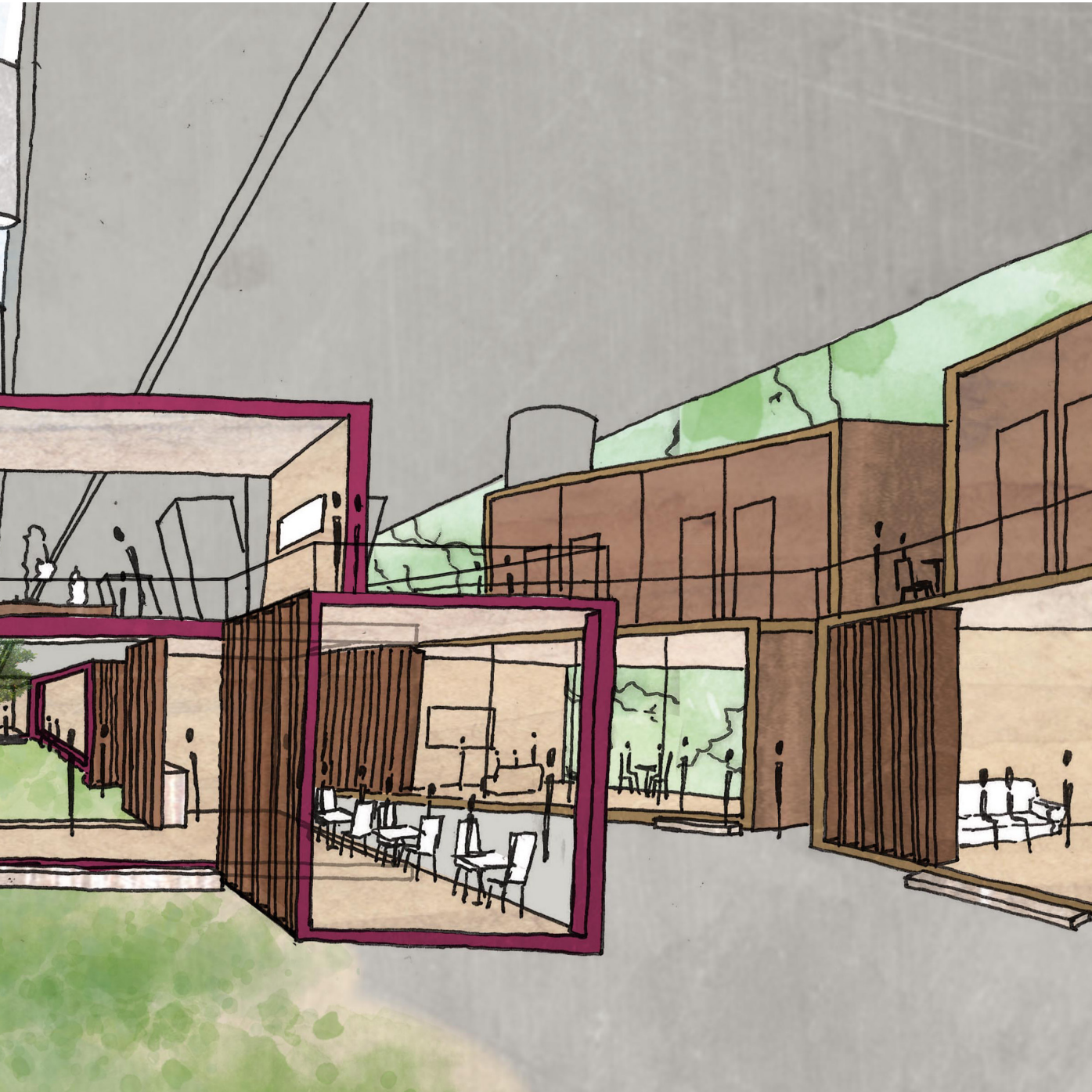
Homeless Community - To encourage sensitive homeless interact with the public

To consider the homeless quite sensitive to interaction with the public. This area will be designed more static and less public activity, like reading room and library. The intention is not only provite seim private space to homeless, also to encourage some sensitive homeless to bring their first step to interact with the public.

Further Design - Stalactite Garden

Sun Light
Stalactite Garden
Greenery
Plant like Stalagmite
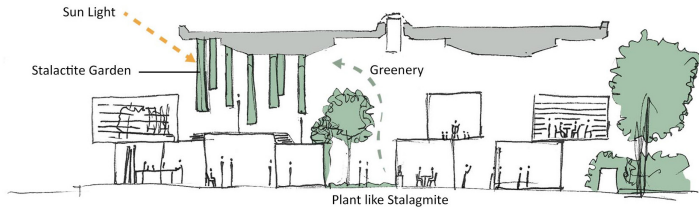
The Stalactite Garden is a vertical greenery to hanging under the bridge. It allow the green growing on the sky. On the other hand, the greenery on the ground like a stalagmite and extend to the sky and connect to the stalactite. Also the Stalactite garden can keep the public ground free for public activity.

Vertical Garden in Pérez Art Museum Miami, United States

The garden not only add an aesthetic punch of greenery to the façade, it also act as a natural air purifier and block heat. The gardens are fed with water from the bridge, making for a self-sufficient system that gives the community a lovely green aesthetic.

Stalactite Garden - Viewing Platform

The Stalactite Garden also provide a viewing platform in order to see the whole community in different angle. Also the garden as a signature to attract the public in different area.
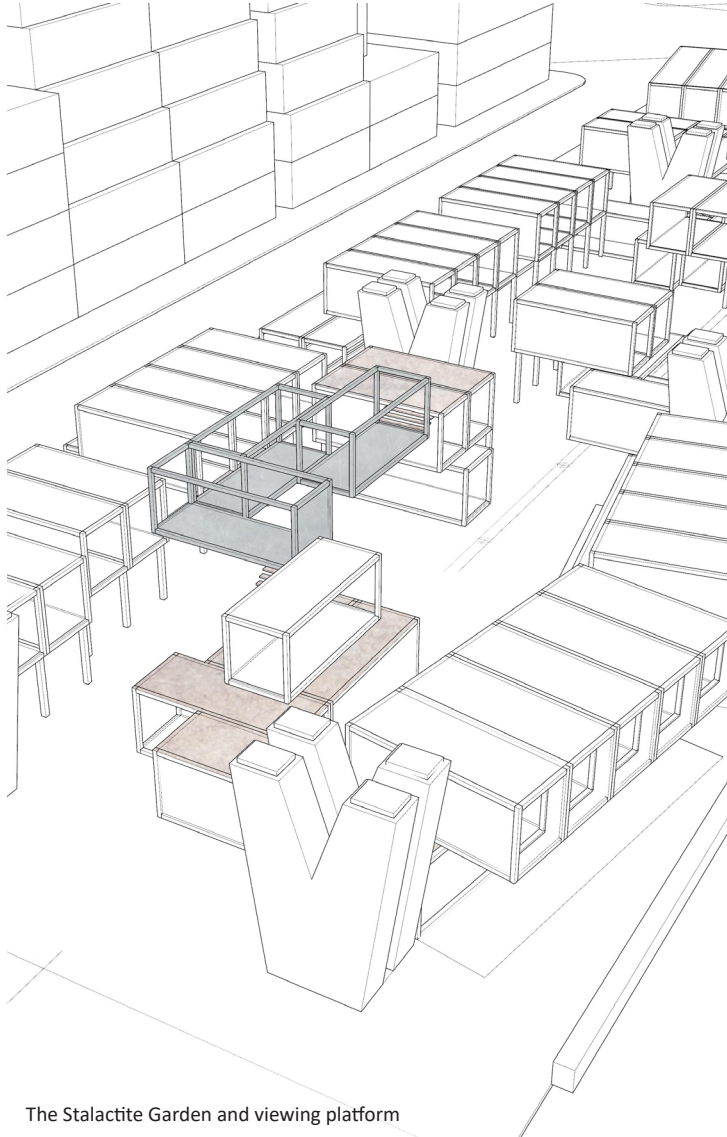
The Stalactite Garden and viewing platform
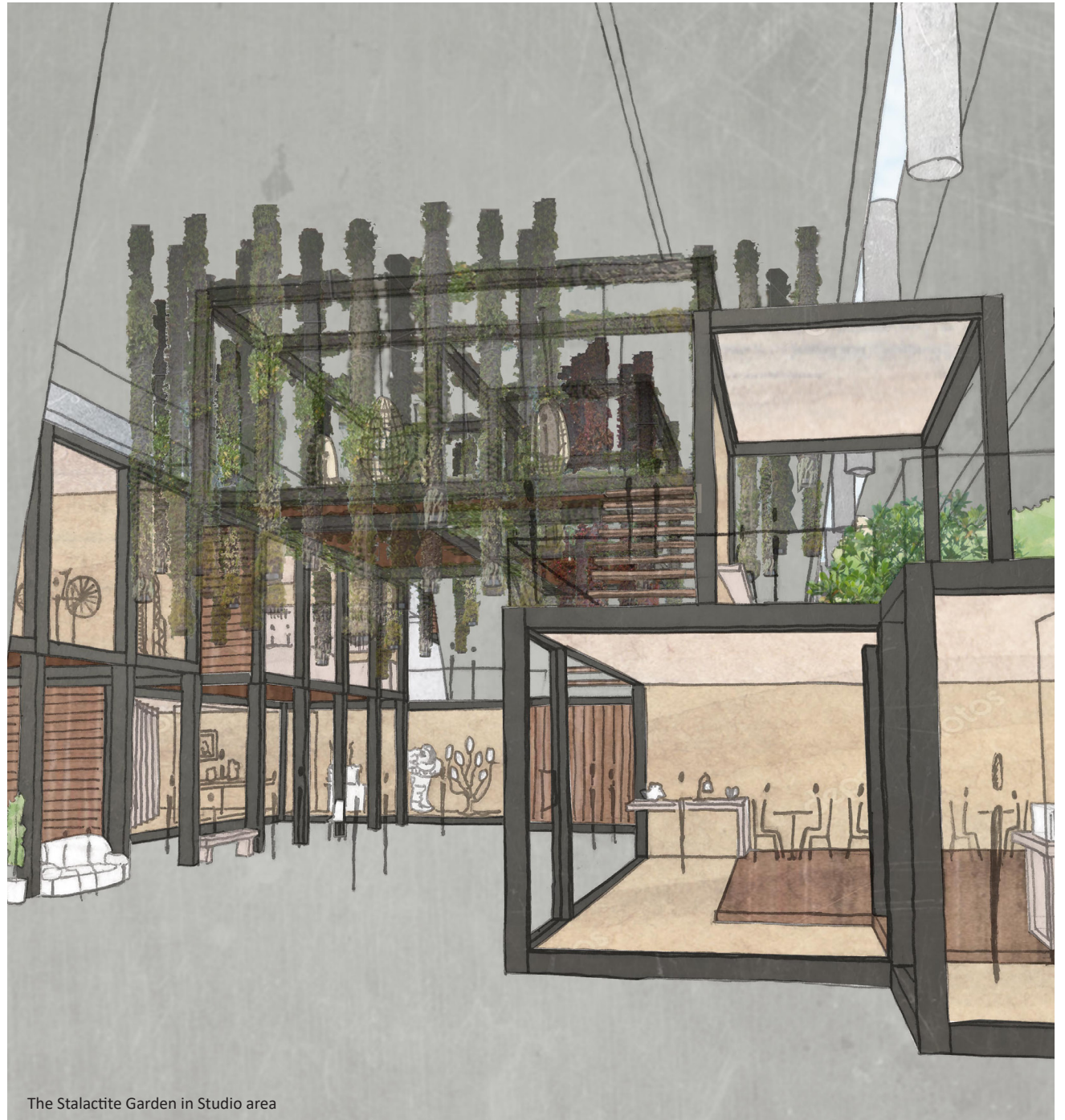
The Stalactite Garden in Studio area

Primitive Material, Structure and Construction

To achieve the community itself become more sustainable. The unit is based on the container structure and the facade is using recycle material with mechanical fixing. Once the unit disassembly, all the material can be resue or recycle as a material again.

Waste Material

Mechanical Fixing →

Building Facade
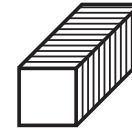
Deconstruct →

Recycle Material

Any Wood Panel

Glass / Window

Stone / Brick

Metal deck with wood floor panel

Glass window

Abandoned Glass or window to form a Facade.

Glass window in back side, metal tray with squashed glass bottle.

Glass Window

Gabion or galvanized steel cage with other material.

Metal frame structure with insulation material. Metal sheet on surface, then install the cladding material.
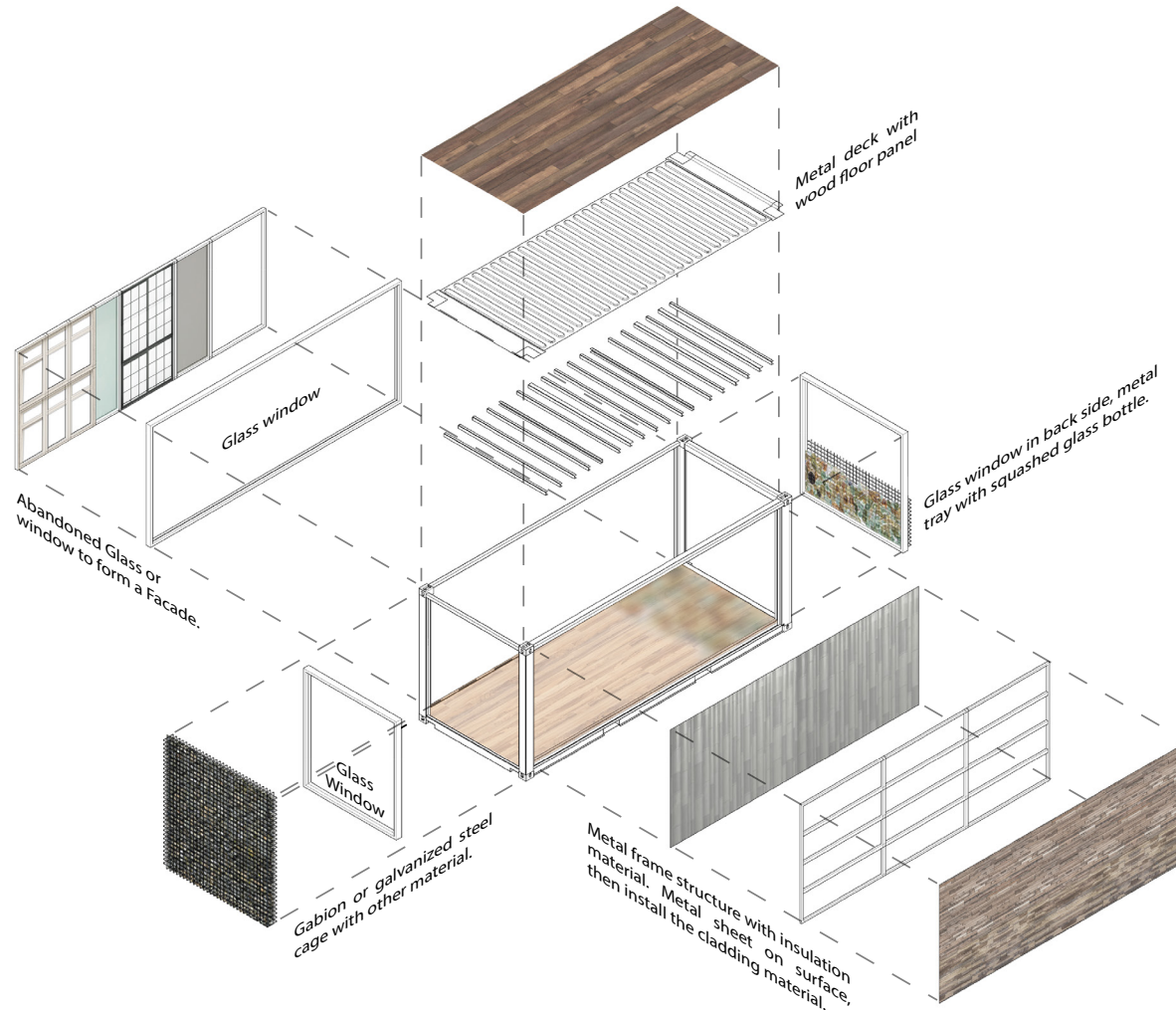
Glass Bottle

Pipe / Bamboo

Any Wood Tile

Foundation

Q & A

Q1. How did you come up with this project? (by Laura Liuke)

A1. Everytime when I go there, I saw a lot of homeless living in there. Also there are a lot of media and documentary video how the government treat the homeless. I feel really sad because I cannot do anything to help with my profession, and I don't see any Hong Kong architect try to help them in any way. Unit the thesis project, I try to take it seriously to really think about how the architecture can help the homeless. Not only design, it also have to consider some reaility situation like costing, construction method, policy etc. And I also want to through this project tell people homeless is not 'beggar', they just have a problem about living only.

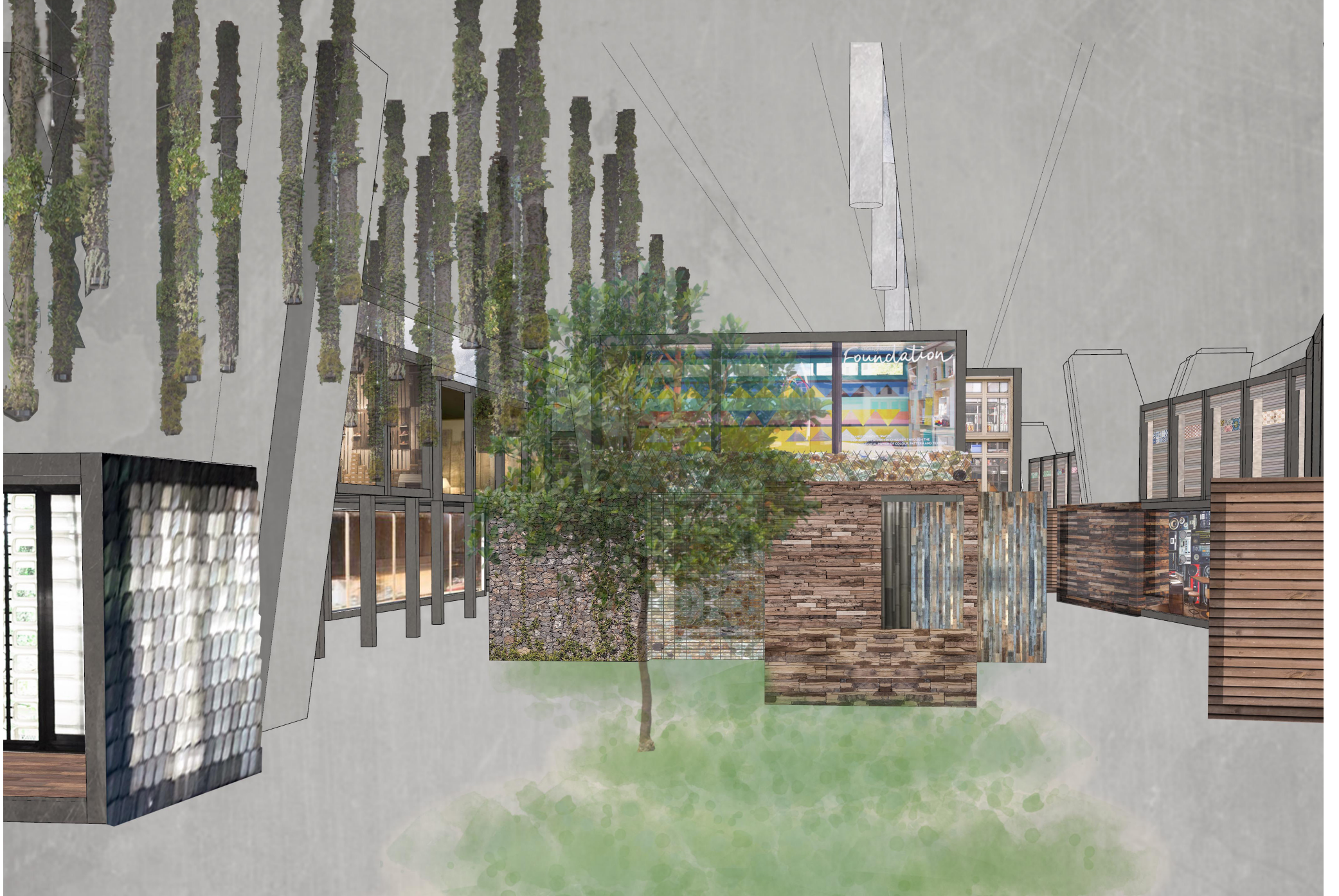Q2. What if the community become famous for tourist? Is it good for the homeless who living in there? (by David Andréen)

A2. When the homeless living in that community, they have accommodation, they have job and social activity, 'homeless' already become a past tense. In there the public can see is a new living model for those 'resident' to live, work and how they contribute back to the society. And the community should anly call 'Circular Community'.

Q3. Who will take this project? (by Ida Stavenow)?

A3. This project should be ran by NGO, the budget can sponsored by some famous celebrity. One of the famous artist in Hong Kong is Chow Yun Fat, he is a very good kind of people, always go to help the small local restaurant, like visit there, take a photo and have a small talk with the owner in order to understand their story. After that the media will automatically report his news and the story. The public will go to there to support the restaurant. If the project sponsored by Mr Chow, the community not only got the financial support, even by image is more positive for the public. The biggest beneficiary will be the homeless.

Q & A

Q4. Did the homeless can stay longer in the community? like live in there for more than 3 years or permanent? (by Ida Stavenow)?

A4. 3 years is only a propose period to stay in the community. Because the community need to give a enough time for them to learn or upgrade their working skill, practice and rebuilding their social network. After the homeless leave the community, they can came to contribute the community like teacher or helper or committee etc. My final goal is the homeless can become a part of committee in order to manage their own community. Then the community will become more suit the user, I believe the user is more understand the designer what the community need. This is the real Sustainability in the true sense.

Q5. How do you price your scheme? because there is a strong case to be made that the cost of these kinds of projects is actually LESS than the cost of doing nothing which leads to all the problems we see today of - lost workforce, policing, crime, social issues etc...? (by Matthaw Green)?

A5. Regarding the homeless research, they mention they can offer the rent around 1,800 HKD to 2,000 HKD. I would like to take this as a reference to design the community and make it self financing. To consider the construction method, costing , material and programme. I decide to use a truck container as a unit to design the community. For 20ft container with fit-out, it takes around 50,000 HKD (without utilities) to 80,000HKD (with utilities). For the programme, the communical area not only rent to the local shop owner to run their business, also there are some profit from the restaurant business and selling the redesign item. For the long term running, it may be can reach my target.

Opposition - By Matt Green

SUMMARY

Jaspers project centers around the issue of homelessness, specifically within the Sham Shui Po district of Hong Kong. His aim is to provide a means to tackle the homeless situation through a holistic approach that encompasses both material and immaterial issues affecting and arising from the homeless population. These include, but are not limited to, the physical needs of shelter, the cost of accommodation, and the lack of social integration into the wider community.

His project is founded on a well-researched assessment of the homeless situation, and builds upon local characteristics and cultures of the area in order to provide a scheme that responds to its context and thus integrates the homeless users back into the community - a core concept of Jasper's 'Circular Community' proposal.

Situated in a 'dead-space' zone under a major highway bridge, Jasper's arrangement of shipping containers maximizes the unseen potential of this location in an affordable and practical way. A well-thought out balance between the needs of commerce, training and accommodation further breaks the site down so that the various needs of the homeless can be addressed and tackled as well as providing a new piece of city to give back to the wider community.

Overall, the presentation and report was clear and well-researched. The proposal itself is convincing owing in great part to the preceding extensive research. Aspects that could be considered more include; expanding upon the explanation of the site choice; and going into more detail of the nature of the physical spaces provided.

One further comment I would make is that a key aspect that detrimentally affects the lives of the homeless is the transient nature of their lives and a lack of stability and permanence. I therefore would argue that Jaspers proposal should provide a degree of unconditional permanency to its residents in terms of its built form and tenancy arrangements.

Jasper's project had a certain open-endedness to it, which is not to say it was incomplete, rather, this is a good thing, as it has the potential to be developed further and respond to some of the critiques outlined above and given by others during the presentation.

IN-DEPTH CRITIQUE

Research and Outline Proposal:

Jasper's report and oral presentation started with a brief look into the global problem of rising homelessness. He then delved into an extensively researched assessment of the specific characteristics and problems facing the homeless in Hong Kong.

Jasper shared insights into the problems of data collection, demonstrating that a large part of the problem is the inadequate methods that the government uses to determine statistics on its homeless population.

Using the HOPE Foundation's methods as a more accurate benchmark, he established that the problem is potentially much greater than previously thought (or admitted). He also provided detail into the complexities of why, who, and how people are homeless within the area. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the situation to be garnered e.g. age, sex, income, education, family status etc.

Following this, Jasper also looked into the positives and negatives of various precedents that have previously attempted to alleviate this crisis. He showed that despite their good intentions, they often fall short of the mark when it comes to solving the problem. A key component that he believes is missing is the reintegration of the homeless back into society. Jasper's solution differs from others in that it tackles the problem from three different aspects simultaneously; 'architecture', 'social organization' and 'public' which are outlined a little more below. This is in contrast to the conventional method of providing facilities that are enclosed unto themselves and often small in scope compared with the scale of the problem.

a. 'Architecture' - Provide low rent, long tenancy accommodation.
b. 'Social Organization' - Provide training and support.
c. 'Public' - Integrate with the wider public through commerce.

Site Analysis:

The Sham Shui Po district of Hong Kong is one familiar to Jasper and he did a good job of sharing with us the local characteristics of the site with examples of how the residents live and work.

He also provided information on the make-up wof the retail and commercial streets within the district using different media including maps, photos, and anecdotes. This last aspect added a nice personal touch, enriching one's understanding of the local culture, not just its physical composition.

An area that was slightly lacking was the transition from this district level analysis down to the site-specific level. On further questioning it was evident that his initial analysis supported his choice of site and program. However, this could have been clearer from the start as although the research and logic behind its choice had been considered, it was not immediately obvious

Detail Proposal:

Jasper's presentation of his detail proposal starts with diagrams to explain the systemsbased approach to his design. Taking time to carefully go through these reveals a great depth to his thought process. However, this complexity is also a problem visually as the diagrams are initially quite hard to understand. This could easily be remedied by breaking down the images and building them up point-by-point, so that the complexity of the final image is less overwhelming.

His masterplan for the site is logically laid out and there is a clear link from his research and analysis through to the design implementation.

His use of 3D visuals, 2D masterplan, and diagrammatic sketches allow one to easily understand the physical composition of the built elements, programming, and how his system of a circular community will work on site.

He digresses from his main issue at times to focus on some aesthetic consid-

erations such as his 'public-ceiling' concept and use of 'lightchimneys' but not so much that it detracts from the main story. While these could certainly be developed further, they are not the main selling point and therefore it is appropriate to leave them at a sketch-level of detail.

Where more detail would be appreciated is in the arrangements of groups of shipping containers and their interiors. We are given only a masterplan level of detail for these and one axonometric showing how a single container might be constructed and given exterior finishes. This is useful but it would be great if we could see how three or four of these containers might go together for each of his three main programmatic typologies of; commercial space, training area, accommodation unit; or what the quality of the interior space might be.

Opposition - By Lea Nussbaumer

The presented thesis by Au Siu Pang elaborates on the resocialization of homeless people and their struggle with being stigmatized. The research part was well elaborated and explained. While reading the report the presented examples of housing options for homeless people along with the facts and numbers helped to get a deeper understanding of the situation in Hongkong since it differs in certain ways from the situation in Europe. In addition I personally enjoyed reading the stories of people that are active within the community to help the homeless or managed to start a business of their own having dealt with poverty in the past.

The decision to work with an existing community and therefore use the bridge in the Sham Shui Po district as the design site is well thought through. Furthermore a container structure that can be disassembled is used as the main design element to build the community where homeless people can extend their skill set in order to be reintegrated into society. The structure also offers living and working possibilities and public services such as restaurants or shops. In doing so the neighborhood is also drawn to the site. However it raises the question ifthe architecture could respond more to the proximate surrounding. In the current design the containers are aligned within the boundaries of the bridge. A possibility would be to let the volumes break out of the ridged outlines of the bridge from time to time in order to reach out into the neighborhood (see diagram to the left). By doing so new public spaces could be formed extending the streetscape towards the existing blocks or new meeting spots between the volumes related to the neighboring green area could be created.

It would have been nice to get a deeper understanding of the thoughts that were put into the building process of the community as well of the design aspects of the different container typologies. How does the container that serves as a living space differ from the studio container? Are some containers only labor related or are certain livelihood opportunities also connected to housing? The floorplans and sections that were presented during the discussion would have helped to understand some of the aspects. Therefore, I would recommend to include those in the report. Furthermore, it would have been interesting to elaborate a little more on the process of how the community would be built and developed. Since the structure consists of simple elements that can be easily put together and reassembled it would be possible to integrate the future inhabitants into the building process. This would give them practical training and teach them how to maintain the structures over a longer period of time. Moreover, it would also create personal ownership and therefore assure that the community can be self-maintained.

During the presentation it also became more evident that Siu Pang has a clear vision and understanding of how this project could be realized and developed in a real setting. Working with a private investor would bring the necessary founding and kick-start the project. In the future the people trained within the program could take over certain responsibilities and therefore be included in the organization of the project. This does not only give the program participants an opportunity to get in contact with people from the outside and other professionals but also an opportunity to start a life outside the community.

In general the project is a really relevant contribution to today's society. It addresses the issues and stigmatization of the homeless people and tries to find a way to break the barrier of a parallel society. It also raises the question of the position of the architect when dealing with social issues. How can we as professionals help to contribute to the discussion or take an active part in it? The analysis showed in the report and during the presentation was carried out really well. The presented diagrams and illustrations helped the audience to understand the complex processes and the organization that goes into planning the circular community.

As mentioned before it would have been interesting of getting more insights of the design part and the execution of the community development. However during the presentation it seemed like Siu Pang was able to meet all the questions. I am therefore sure that the material does already exist and just needs to be included into the report.

Reflection

This thesis project remind me what is the responsibility as a architect and how can we contrubite back to the commuity. As a architect, we are not only design a 'beautiful building', more critical is how to make a 'unique' design to achieve 'beautiful architecture'. It should contain very comprehensive research, consideration and explanation.

In the beginning, I found out the 'truth' of the problem is more complicated then I expect during my research. I need to spend a lot of time to rethink and redefine the actual question and solution.

During the process, I found that only 'building' itself cannot solve the social problem, it should start from three different aspects simultaneously - 'architecture', 'social organization' and 'public', to tackles the problem.

Through this idea, architecture design not only just only focus on a physical object, it also like a spider net to linking a lot of context strongly, like programme, social activity and public. Those factory makes the design be come 'unique'. Then my design may create some new architecture and I believe that is how to make architecture keep evolution.

Through the discussion with my supervisor, examiner and jury, I more understand how the Europe architect think about my project, something may be very normal in Asia, but for them is so interesting and they don't know why it works (like the secondhand market and the social ecology between the homeless and the society). I am so enjoy to explain to them the situation, but on the other side, I would think about 'why it doesn't happen in Europe?'. Those things doesn't reflect on my thesis but It's makes me learn a lot. It makes me have more angle to see the things.

In final, I am so appreciate that my supervisor, he give me a lot of suggestion which inspired me a lot of idea. He also tell me a lot of interesting story about his country, like the supermarket disappearing because people don't want to cook. That make me found out there are some situation in my project. For me this is a very good experience.

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