

# **CHUNGKING MANSIONS**

**3D [IN]FORMALITY**

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Contemporary City Institute

in collaboration with  
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**DRAFT**  
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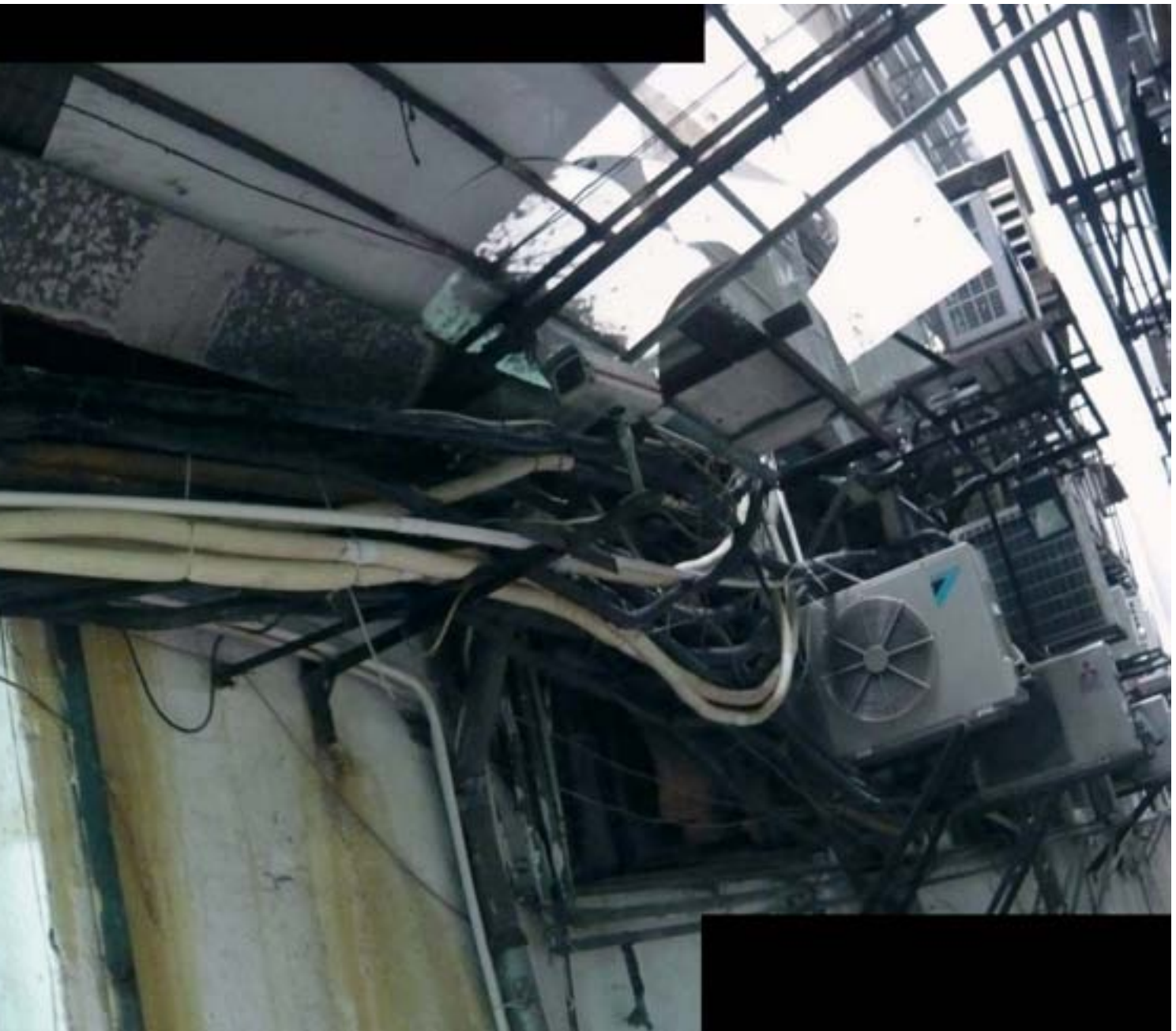
CHUNG KING SALOON

重慶理髮屋 13字A-8

13/FA-8





























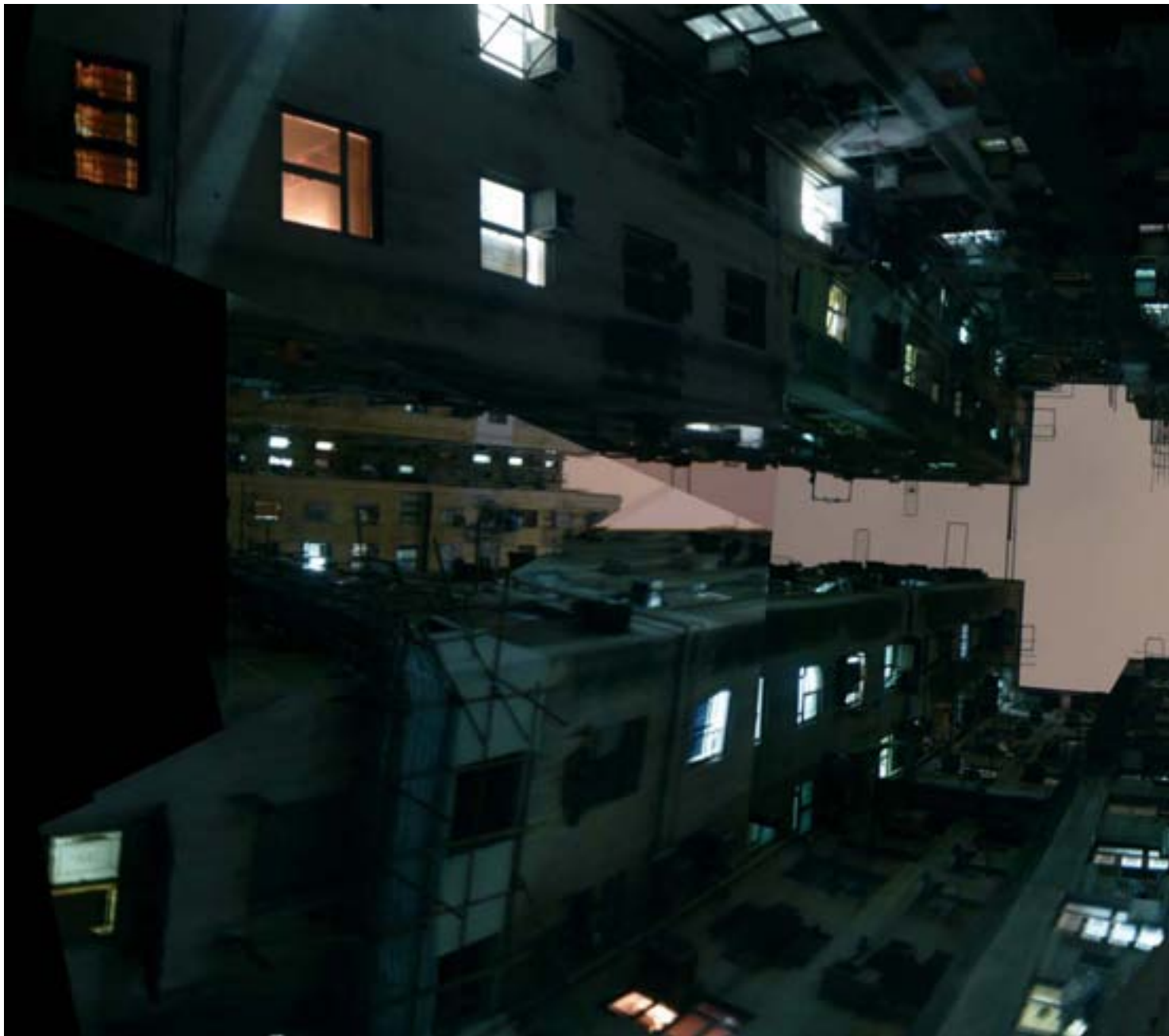


















*“Chungking Mansions is not part of Hong Kong but an  
island of the developing world in Hong Kong’s heart.”*  
Gordon Mathews



# CONTENT

## INTRODUCTION

## FACTS & FIGURES

## CORPUS

- INTRODUCTION
- HISTORY OF CHUNGKING MANSION
- MEGASTRUCTURES
  - CATALOGUE OF ARCHITECTURE
  - COMPARISON OF TYPOLOGIES
  - BODY CARE
  - BODY DEFENSES
  - FACELIFTS
  - IMPLEMENTATION
- PROGRAM
  - PRIVATE-PUBLIC TOWERS
  - TOWER USE CHARACTERISTICA
  - MOBILE PHONE STORY
  - TRICKY BUSINESS
- POPULATION
  - PORTRAYS
  - ZOOM-IN

## HABITAT

- INTRODUCTION
- HISTORY OF TSIM SHA TSUI
- USE ZONES
- 36-44 NATHAN ROAD
- URBAN RENEWAL

## ENGINES

- POPULATION CONDITIONS
  - IMMIGRATION
  - VISA POLICY
  - MINORITY OCCUPATION
  - DENSITY
  - SECURITY
- ECONOMICAL CONDITIONS
  - GLOBAL MARKET
  - REAL ESTATE MARKET
  - TOURISM
- ARCHITECTURAL CONDITIONS
  - DESIGN ISSUES
  - BUILDING MANAGEMENT

## CONCLUSION

# INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong has ever been a city where the presence of transnational migration is specific and peculiar. The range of immigrants includes all social classes and ethnicity. Ethnic minorities have several degrees of presence within the city. Most of all, there are small-scale indices like shops or restaurants. On the other hand, there is a visible distinction between temporary and permanent spatial segregation or spatial occupation by minorities within the City.

In regard to their enormous scale and outstanding character in the city, the most remarkable cases of this phenomenon are the Sunday Filipino gathering in the Central Business District as well as the Chungking Mansions Building in Kowloon. They both occupy and transform particular spaces in the city fabric to fulfil their needs in a very pragmatic way.

Maybe the most obvious difference between these two cases is the fact, that the Chungking Mansions are profiting in ways that we could perceive as informal or semi-informal, whereas the Filipino gathering is a social happening, limited to their own community. The spatial surrounding of these phenomena tells us something about their character in relation to time. The Chungking Mansions are a permanently present phenomena, the Filipino gathering is on the other hand limited to one day in the week.

We will concentrate our work on the Chungking Mansions, an internationally famous/infamous urban icon of Hong Kong, a place where a “3D megastructure” is occupied with a indescribable mixture and intensity – smells, sound, cluttering goods and groups of traders, workers, inhabitants, backpackers, shoppers and asylum seekers anywhere from Africa, India, Pakistan to Europe. With its endless corridors and labyrinthic floor plans harbouring even spaces beyond view or reach, one has an impression of a place that runs according to its own rules, a peculiar hybrid space at the limits/border of it’s legality.

As iconic and famous as it is, it will be taken as an initial point of focus, where issues of migrations, minority cultures and (in)formal work come together in an architecturally remarkable mega-structure.

Our work will deal with the question what kind of Hong

Kong conditions and impacts creates niches for the occupation and transformations of urban space and how these conditions specifically work or influence the Chungking Mansions. The question of interest about the autonomy of Chungking Mansions is raised to show whether the Chungking Mansions are “the end or out of the range” and create therefore a special zone which works as a autonomous spatial, organisational and societal entity.

In the first part we will present a description of the organic body of Chungking Mansions including its architecture, the people and functions/programs. Furthermore we will say analyse the Chungking Mansions habitat in Tsim Sha Tsui, the southern tip of the Kowloon Peninsula.

The chapter “engines” will analyse and interpret the specificity of the Chungking Mansions for Hong Kong.

## 導言

香港歷來是各國移民混居之處，這使得香港有著其獨具魅力的特徵。這些移民來自社會的各階層和各種族。即便是少數族裔，他們也都不同程度的存在於城市中。通常在一些小地方，如商鋪或者餐館，能夠找到他們的蹤跡。另一方面，少數族裔在城市中對空間佔有或者分割，臨時性與永久性的區別是顯而易見的。

在這一係列城市現象中，最值得注意的有兩個典型例子。一個是週日菲律賓人聚集在中心商業區，另一個是在九龍的重慶大廈。他們都是以一種實用主義的方式，佔據並改變著城市結構中的特定空間來滿足他們的需求。

也許這兩個例子最明顯的區別就在於重慶大廈發生的活動，我們可以把牠理解為得利於非正式或半非正式的方式。而菲律賓人的聚集是發生在他們自己社區內的社會性事件。同時，這兩個現象的空間載體告訴我們一些由時間產生的特徵。重慶大廈永遠是現在進行時，而菲律賓人聚集卻僅限於一週裏的一天。

在此我們將關注重慶大廈，這個香港著名的城市標記，一個三維的鉅大結構體，充斥著難以描述的混合——氣味、聲音、雜亂堆放的貨物、成群結隊的小販、勞工、居民、背包客、購物者以及來自非洲、印度、巴基斯坦乃至歐洲的尋求避難所的人們。無止境的走廊和迷宮似的平面，隱藏了一些無法看到或者到達的空間，給人的感覺是，這是一個根據牠自己的規則運行的場所，也是一個合法與非法的特殊混合。

由於重慶大廈的知名度，移民、少數族裔文化與（非）正式的活動彙聚在這個建築意義上的超級鉅大的結構體，這也將是我們的出發點。

我們將著手解決的問題是，什麼樣的條件和影響為城市空間的轉型提供了活動範圍，以及這些條件是如何作用或影響到重慶大廈的。重慶大廈的自發性問題也由此產生。重慶大廈是否是超越了某個範圍創造了一個特別的區域，一個自發性的空間、組織與社會實體，這是否將是一個終點。

第一部分我們將闡述重慶大廈的建築、人及其使用。此外我們也將介紹重慶大廈的所在地，九龍半島南端的尖沙咀。

“創造力的發動機”一章將分析和闡釋重慶大廈對於香港的特殊性。

# FACTS & FIGURES

## HONG KONG



## CHUNGKING MANSIONS



### STATUS

Special Administrative Region

Special Informal Zone

### GEOGRAPHY

Position Mouth of Pearl River, China  
Area 1'104 km<sup>2</sup>  
Highest Point Tai Mo Shan, 958m  
Clima tropical humid  
Average Temperature 22,5° Celsius  
Grade of Urbanization 25%  
Legal Entrances 10  
Biggest free space Kowloon Park 13,47 hectares

Tip of Kowloon Peninsula, Hong Kong  
0,0042 km<sup>2</sup>  
Roof Top, 50m  
tropical humid  
ca. 25° Celsius  
ca. 99%  
7  
Podest roof 1'200m<sup>2</sup>

### POPULATION

Number 7'013'832 persons  
Density 6.355 person/km<sup>2</sup>  
Growth 1961: 3'133'131 persons  
2006: 7'013'832 persons  
Life expectancy 80 years  
Ethnic background 93,0% Chinese  
1,7% Filipino  
1,6% Indonesian  
0,4% British  
0,3% Indian  
Visitors 69'178 persons/day  
Asylum Seekers 2'500 persons  
Gender 47,5% male  
52,5% female  
Average Age  
Religion Buddhism, Confuzianism, Christianity  
Official Languages Chinese, English  
Drug Addicts  
Sex workers

ca. 4'000 persons  
ca. 952'381 persons/km<sup>2</sup>  
1962: 500 families  
2007: 4'000 persons  
unknown  
40% Africans  
30% South-Asians  
15% White people  
15% Chinese

ca. 10'000 persons/day  
several hundreds  
mostly male

ca. 20-45  
Hinduism, Christianity, Islam  
English, Calculator  
40 (1%)  
80 (2%)

### HOUSING

Public housing 49,0%  
Private housing 50,3%  
Temporary housing 0,7%

0%  
50%  
50%

### EDUCATION

Infrastructure 1'015 kindergardens  
553 primary schools  
411 secondary schools  
63 special schools  
8 universites

1 christian mission school (for asylum seeker)

### HISTORY

Establishment 1842  
Handover 1997 (UK-China)

1962  
2000 (old-new management)

### ORGANISATION

Legislation Legislative Council of Hong Kong  
Executive Chief Executive  
(IN)formal Leader President of the PRD China

Incorporated Owners of Chungking Mansions  
Management Office of Chungking Mansions  
920 different owners  
Inhabitants of Chungking Mansions

## HONG KONG

### CITY TRAFFIC

Rail Systems	Public Transport
Company Number	6
Lines	25
Stops	143
Length	186km

### ECONOMY

System	Free Market Economy
Currency	Hong Kong Dollar (HK\$)
Total Labour Force	3'640'000 persons (51,9%)
Unemployment rate	4,8%
GDP	198'577 HK\$ (person/year)
Financial Market	142 licensed Banking Institutes
Tourism	139 hotels with 51'505 rooms
Agriculture	0,1% (only 60km <sup>2</sup> farmland)
Trade Goods	38,8% clothing accessories 14,5% office machines 10,0% electrical machinery 3,8% plastic in primary form 3,1% textile yarns

#### Major Markets

29,9% mainland of China
24,6% United States of America
5,9% Netherlands
5,8% United Kingdom
3,7% Germany

### ARCHITECTURE

Length
Width
Height
Volume

#### Structure

Number of tower units
Number of rooms
Number of shops
Number of floor space
Number of storeys

Number of staircases
Number of courtyards
Number of entrances
Average shop size
Average shop rent

Average shop selling price
Average flat size
Average flat rent

## CHUNGKING MANSIONS

Elevator
1
5
80
0,25km

Free Market Economy
Hong Kong Dollar (HK\$)
3000-4000 persons (75-100%)
low
40'000 – 1'200'000 HK\$ (person/year)
18 Exchange offices
77 guesthouses
0.01% (only a few plant pots)
garments
mobile phones
watches
building materials
construction machines
mining tools
used car parts
furniture
custom-made whirlpools
diamonds
Third World

84,65m
57,35m
50m
147'000m <sup>3</sup>

podest
towers built on top of podest
column and slab

480 units
1'980 rooms
293 shops

total 19
15 (towers)
3 (podium)
1 (basement)
10
16 (depth: 37m; width: max. 2,5m)
7
15m <sup>2</sup>
64 HK\$/m <sup>2</sup> per month (1960s)
830-1'050 HK\$/m <sup>2</sup> per month (2008)
2'000'000-4'000'000 HK\$
80 sqm for a 3 room flat
6'000-7'000 HK\$





# I. CORPUS

*“Ask anyone in Hong Kong about Chungking Mansions and you are likely to receive a variety of responses, ranging from ‘it is dangerous’, ‘it is a hellhole’ and ‘I would never go there alone’ to ‘it is a backpacker paradise’ and ‘it has the best curry in town’.”*

Cassandra Chang, filmmaker

The manifoldness and liveliness of Chungking Mansions creates tales and urban legends as well as personal destinies. These stories have their own dynamics within the city. They shaped the appearance and presence of the Chungking Mansions for decades.

Even the name of the building sounds like a modern tale. During World War II, the provisional Civil War capital of Chungking was bombed by the Japanese. The building developers gave their building the name of the city in order to mark a new beginning and a bright future.

Chungking Mansions nowadays is branded by these endless range of stories and attracts through this different groups of people.

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# HISTORY OF A CHUNGKING MANSIONS





**Time Magazin** 2007 "Best Example of Globalization in Action"

**Police Raids** 1996 "Operation Sahara" 59 people arrested - 1995 52 people arrested

**Cheap Labour Forces** some asylum seekers and visitors on a short-term visa work illegally under poor conditions

**Christian Action Service Center** Services for Asylum seekers

is running the Hong Kong Asylum Program until today / due to the long-term waiting period the asylum seekers have to take, they start doing jobs illegally

**Brand Africans** Chungking profits of its myth and becomes a brand for young, fashionable Hong Kong people, who visit restaurants the appeared in the late 90s, trade goods in a small amount

ever had the most ethnically mixed population in Hong Kong and is nowadays known as the most international borough of an Asian City

**India** after departure of the well-off, Chungking became a place for the indians and their restaurants etc. / now they deal on a global scale with goods from China

INDIVIDUAL VISIT SCHEME

SARS 2002

st whiskey in town

HANDOVER 1997

**CHINA** AS WORLDS MANUFACTURER

Deng Xiaoping embarked China on the road to Economic Reforms and Openness

Chungking / built in 1962, the building was intended to be a luxury apartment estate for some 500 families of western and chinese origin

economy, visa policy / the Hong Kong dream as symbol for working hard over decades to create successful business

of what is now Granville Road; it's villagers were resettled further north near Yau Ma Tai after the British took possession of kowloon in 1860

lands Chungking Mansions as the cheapest place to stay

**Low-End Globalization HUB**

developed itself from a production place for rather cheap goods to an Asian Tiger and is nowadays mainly a service center and a interface between China and the world market

ASIAN FINANCIAL CRISIS 1997

OVER 1997

e lack of residential space / Public and private housing generated living space by developing typologies for the mass.

els and shopping arcades

bers of Mahjong houses

ubdividing large flat space by creating guesthouses for soldiers, backpackers, sailors and others / the amount of guesthouses raised all over the last decades / large competition/most of the time booked out

Rebuilt the Kowloon mosque 1984 - the mosque remain the only and major mosque serving Kowloon and New Territories

**Space Museum** 1980 established on the former land of kowloon station - 1989 Cultural Center

**Kowloon Station** 1998 established with the airport express

1981 Shangri-La - InterContinental - Sheraton Hotel - 2009 Hyatt Regency

n for a modern airport was released **Chek Lap Kok** building height restriction for Tsim Sha Tsui is set out

s a couple of small fires / 1988 Fire kills 13 People / 1988 Fire killed a danish tourist

**Chungking Express** 2004 shopping mall implementation in Chungking

**ELECTRICITY** 1993 Chungking Mansions lost power for ten days

**Chungking Express** 1994 Wong Kar-Wai

**Management Change** 2000  
RENOVATION 2002

80

1990

2000

*“Chungking Mansions was built in 1962, intended for the well off by many accounts. But with no unified ownership, unlike most buildings in the area, each owner could do as he or she pleased, and the building rapidly deteriorated.”*

Gordon Mathews



Rendering of the luxury apartment estate Chungking Mansions, view from Nathan Road

*“This summer, there were more battleships on the harbor that I can ever remember seeing. Dad says the Americans have to continue the war in Vietnam, and that Tsimshatsui is turning into a red light district because of it.”*

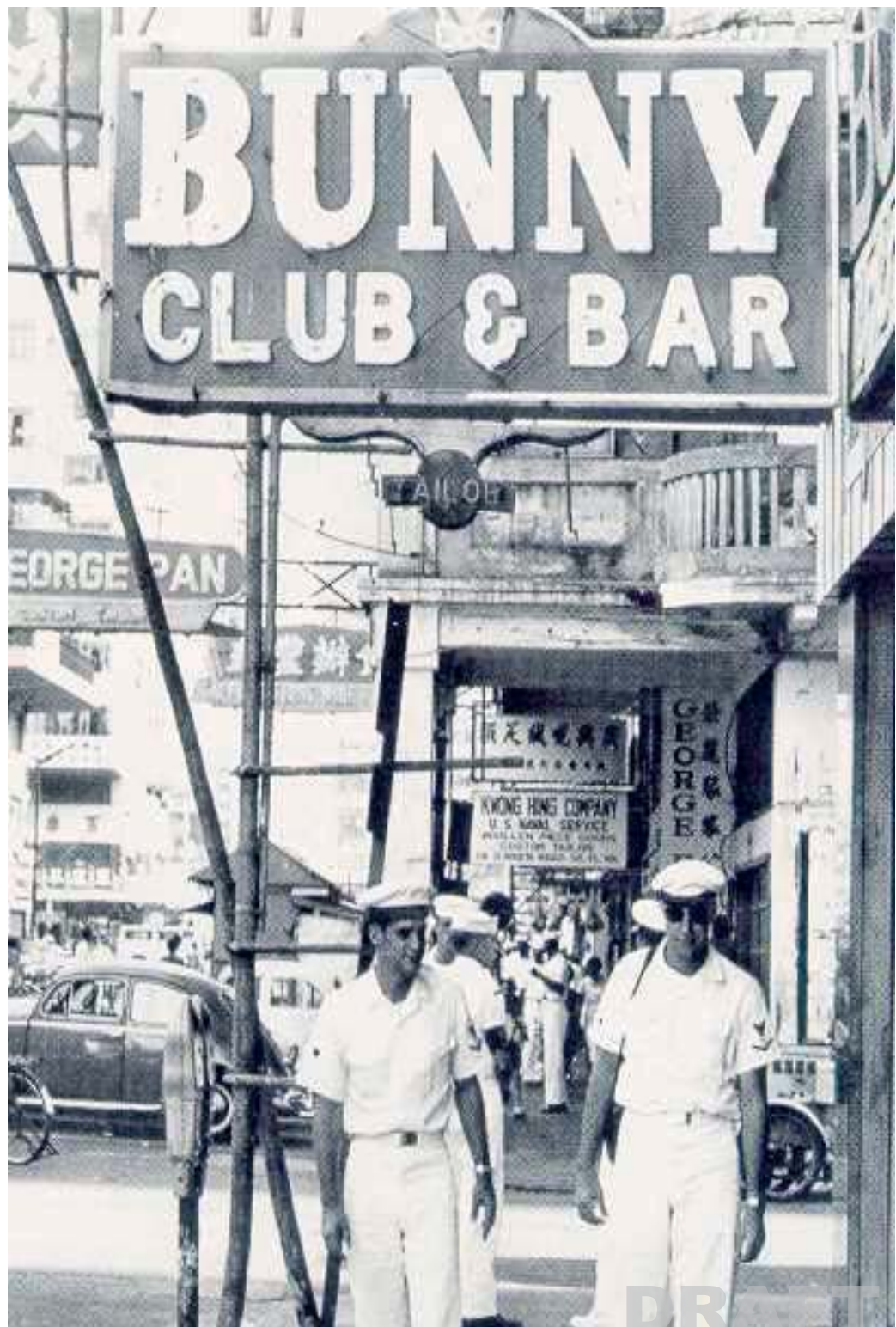
*„Singing voices rise from the streets below. I can't quite see them, because it's still dark, but I can tell there are two sailors singing and walking along Nathan Road next to the Peninsula Hotel. Their voices ring out clearly. They're drunk. As Mum says, men sing when they're drunk. I suddenly hate all U.S. sailors. They don't belong here, making so much noise in the middle of the night.”*

*“Sailors mill around the streets, like ants surrounding a dead cockroach on our verandah, looking and leaving and returning again. The sailors don't seem to be going anywhere in particular. But they're there, always there. Like ghosts who must come back to haunt us here on earth.”*

Xu Xi

“History's Fiction: Stories from the City of Hong Kong”



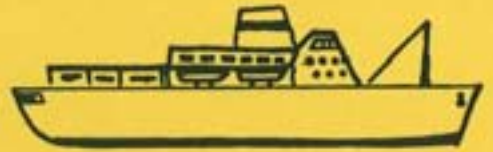


Nathan Road, early 1970s

*“Say budget accomodation and Hong Kong in the one breath and everyone thinks of Chungking Mansions, a place like no other. Still the cheapest place to stay in Hong Kong, it is the place to meet fellow travellers and soak up a unique souk-like atmosphere. This huge, ramshackle high-rise dump of a place in the heart of Tsim Sha Tsui caters for virtually all needs - from finding a bed and a cheap curry lunch to buying a backpack and getting your hair cut.”*

Lonely Planet “City Guide Hong Kong” Edition 2008

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# A burning question of public safety

ARE high-rise buildings more than 20 years old such as Chungking Mansions and Mirador Mansions safe places to live?

This question has been asked time and again without a satisfactory answer.

Over the years fatal incidents, such as the fires at Mirador Mansion this month and Chungking Mansions six months ago, have been followed by renewed public debate on the sink these buildings represent.

District boards and community groups complain that efforts to remedy the problems have been little more than piecemeal.

Few disagree the buildings are fire traps.

Various elements, including illegal structures, dense population, bad security, unauthorised electrical wiring, dirty environments, lift breakdowns, blocked fire escapes and old safety installations, have contributed to the danger.

Many owner-occupiers don't care about the value of their properties. The poor participation of owners in building management has resulted in a widening gap between them and the management committee, housing experts said.

Taking Chungking Mansions as an example, there are about 178 cheap-price guest houses, 10 licensed and two unlicensed food premises and 74 workshops.

These establishments take up almost half of the 15-storey, five-block, 28-year-old building's 253 residential flats.

Two blocks north along Nathan Road is the 29-year-old Mirador Mansion.

About 19 guest houses, 313 workshops, two licensed and three unlicensed food premises operate seven days a week.

Such a mix has resulted in serious management deficiencies, poor hygiene, bad security, and health and fire hazards.

Why is it allowed to go on? A Buildings and Lands Department official earlier said lease arrangements stipulated Chungking Mansions could be used for any purpose other than industrial. This means the commercial establishments including guest houses are permitted.

"They are allowed to do business there," the official said. "All they have to do is to comply with requirements laid down by other Government departments concerning fire safety, hygiene and structural safety."

So nothing can be done to remove the commercial elements from these buildings.

But the existence of the workshops is the result of Government tolerance.

Government policy allows workshops established before 1976 to carry on, conditionally, under a programme which places them to eventually phase them out. But many are still there.

This, together with the loopholes in land leases, has created a major obstacle to improving conditions in the buildings.

The extent of the problem is unknown as the Fire Services Department has yet to survey

## Timetable of tragedy

Below is a partial list of the fatal and near-fatal fires that have raged through Hongkong residential blocks in the past five years.

■ February 28, 1983: Four killed and 59 injured in a Toim Sha Tin blaze.

■ September 26, 1983: An eight-year-old girl killed in a Sham Shai Po apartment block fire.

■ December Eight, 1983: Four killed and 13 injured in a blaze in an eight-storey Mong Kok apartment block.

■ September 23, 1984: One person killed and two injured in a Sham Shai Po apartment block fire.

■ November 23, 1984: Two killed in a Van Ma Tei apartment block fire.

■ January 14, 1985: Two killed in an Kwai Tsing apartment block fire.

■ February One, 1986: Sixty people rescued from a blaze in Chungking Mansions.

■ August 22, 1987: Nine-year-old boy killed in a Kowloon apartment block fire.

■ February 21, 1988: One killed as a fire again rips through Chungking Mansions.

■ June One, 1988: Two killed in a Van Ma Tei apartment block fire.

■ July Two, 1988: One killed in a Mong Kok guest house fire.

■ August seven, 1988: Two killed in a fire in Mirador Mansions.

Hongkong's 300 pre- and post-war buildings.

Chief fire officer Mr Li Kwok-choi said: "We don't know how many buildings of this type are in the territory. We hope through this survey we will be able to gauge the extent of the problem."

Various departments are responsible for different aspects.

The police fight crime, the Urban Services Department maintains environmental hygiene and the Fire Services Department monitors safety in

installations and enforces fire prevention measures.

Maintaining structural safety is the task of the Buildings Ordinance Office (BOO). But an inter-departmental team under the Van Tsim Dong Office is responsible for co-ordinating these departments.

The involvement of so many bodies appears to have a serious drawback — the lack of high-level co-ordination, said Van Tsim Dong Board member Mr Gary Ahjoo.

The Government might argue

the building management co-ordination team under the district office had already been doing the job. But it acted on a complaint basis which made the team's role passive, he said.

The only way to resolve the long-standing problem would be for the Government to take over the management of Mirador Mansions and Chungking Mansions and set up a high-powered task force to oversee the implementation of remedial measures, Mr Ahjoo said.

But deputy chief fire officer Mr Chow Wing-chong reportedly told an inquiry into the death of a Danish tourist killed trying to escape a fire in Chungking Mansions in February that more could be done to improve conditions.

He said the relevant authorities had the power to draw up regulations for boarding and guest houses, but it had not been done.

The Government appears to be strengthening its efforts to resolve, or at least contain the problem.

An inter-departmental task force set up after the Chungking Mansions fire has compiled a report on preventative measures in sub-standard hotels. The report is reviewed to include proposals for tighter legislation and a compulsory licensing system for more than 1,500 sub-standard hotels in Hongkong.

Principal assistant secretary for security Mr J MacKinlay said the task force had also examined the fire hazard problems in

Chungking Mansions and similar buildings.

"The report is being considered within the Government," he said.

The BOO has also taken action in the wake of the 24-hour fire at Mirador Mansion, one of about 30 buildings in Toim Sha Tin and Van Ma Tei identified as having illegal structures.

The BOO has served demolition orders on the building requiring owners of illegal structures to pull them down by the end of this year.

The Buildings and Lands Department said it simply did not have the manpower to remove all unauthorised structures. There are an estimated million illegal structures in 60,000 private buildings in Hongkong.

The BOO can only concentrate on those posing an immediate danger. These are Mirador Mansion were not considered high priority.

Some suggested the best way to deal with Chungking Mansions-type buildings was to ask the Land Development Corporation (LDC) to redevelop them.

The LDC believes its re-development proposals would make land use more compatible by removing residential buildings from predominantly commercial areas.

It is preparing schemes on 16 proposed urban plan projects, covering about 30,000 square metres of land, located mainly in old districts such as Mong Kok, Wan Chai and Sheung Wan.

## Laws planned to curb fires in guesthouses



The Government is planning to introduce new laws to curb fires in guesthouses, officials said today.

The new laws will require guesthouse owners to install fire escapes, fire extinguishers and fire alarm systems.

The laws will also require guesthouse owners to conduct regular fire safety checks and to provide fire safety training for their staff.

The laws will be introduced in the coming months.

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## Clubs keep a sober profile

The management of new clubs which do not have liquor licences is expected to be more stringent under the new laws.

The laws will require club owners to install fire escapes, fire extinguishers and fire alarm systems.

The laws will also require club owners to conduct regular fire safety checks and to provide fire safety training for their staff.

The laws will be introduced in the coming months.

## Many fire hazards in Chungking Mansion

More than 150 fire hazards were identified in Chungking Mansion, officials said today.

The hazards included unauthorised electrical wiring, blocked fire escapes, and unauthorised structures.

The hazards were identified during a survey conducted by the Buildings Ordinance Office.

The survey found that many of the hazards were caused by the building's poor maintenance and lack of safety measures.

## South China Morning Post

Published in 1983  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 1988

## Fire safety standards must be improved

The Government must improve fire safety standards in Hongkong, officials said today.

The standards should be improved to meet international fire safety standards.

The standards should include requirements for fire escapes, fire extinguishers, and fire alarm systems.

The standards should also include requirements for fire safety training and fire safety checks.



*CHUNGKING EXPRESS*

*(1994)*

*Director: Wong Kar-Wai*

*Chungking Express consists of two stories. The first starts out in the Chungking Mansions, a shabby shopping-arcade-cum-flophouse with a reputation as a den of thieves. An unnamed, blonde-wigged Drug Smuggler hires some Indian locals to hide a heroin shipment for her, only to have her couriers sneak out on her at the airport. After running around the city looking for them, the weary Smuggler bumps into a lovelorn cop, and the two spend a night together at a hotel. The second story is set around a fast-food take-out joint called the Midnight Express. A second cop is dumped by his flight-attendant girlfriend, who leaves his apartment key at the take-out. Working there is a free-spirited young woman who is secretly in love with 633. Rather than tell him her feelings, repeatedly uses the key to break into 633's apartment and gradually redecorate it, until the cop catches her.*

Robert M. Payne ([www.ejumpcut.org](http://www.ejumpcut.org))



film still, "Chungking Express"

*“Since the management changed things getting better and better. It is a more likeable place now. And I do make more money.”*

Peter Li, guesthouse owner





The semi-transparent door of the Management Office of Chungking Mansions

*\*There is no place in Asia quite so multicultural as Tsimshat-sui - not Roppongi, not Xintiandi, not even Khao San Road. And from the center of the area's polyglot hordes rises the great sleepless citadel known as Chungking Mansions"*  
Liam Fitzpatrick, "Best example for globalization in action", TIME Magazine, 2007



Illustration for TIME by Peter Arkle

*“More young Hong Kong people coming to our restaurant  
and enjoy our indian food. We are almost full every night.”*

Alex, Restaurant Manager, Khyber Pass Mess Club



Young Hongkongnese in the Corridor in front of the Khyber Pass Mess Club, Block E, 7<sup>th</sup> floor

# MEGASTRUCTURE

Hong Kong has a long tradition in building megastructures. After World War II and the end of the Japanese Occupation Hong Kong did undergo an intense population and economy growth. Due to its lack of space the city got more and more compressed. Developed out of the process of aggregation megastructures appeared all over the city.

Megastructures exist in different types in the ambit of residential, public and commercial buildings. One can distribute them into three groups.

The historical ones. They consist of a wild mix of overlapping functions. They are forming an interplay of addition and autonomous to the surrounding.

The housing, office-towers and shopping-malls which are located at the crossing of transport infrastructures. This idea of initiation of megastructures combined together with public transport networks a system to advance the city development, rose up in the 80's. Exemplified for this development is Kowloon Station and the Tung Chung structure.

The third group is often mono-functional and isolated from the surrounding. Exemplified for that is Festival Walk and Disneyland.

Chungking Mansions is an example for a historical megastructure. Built in the 60's, proposed as a high-end residential building with a three floor shopping arcade podium, it developed to a megastructure due to its wild mix of functions with a self-sustaining system.

Comparable to Chungking Mansions as a historical megastructure is Walled City. Walled City was in contradiction to Chungking Mansions an organically grown megastructure. But like Chungking Mansions it developed over the years to a megastructure by becoming dense and creating overlapping functions.

In contradiction to this is the process of using megastructures to channel the urban development since the 80's. It is the discrepancy of bottom up and top down planned megastructures.



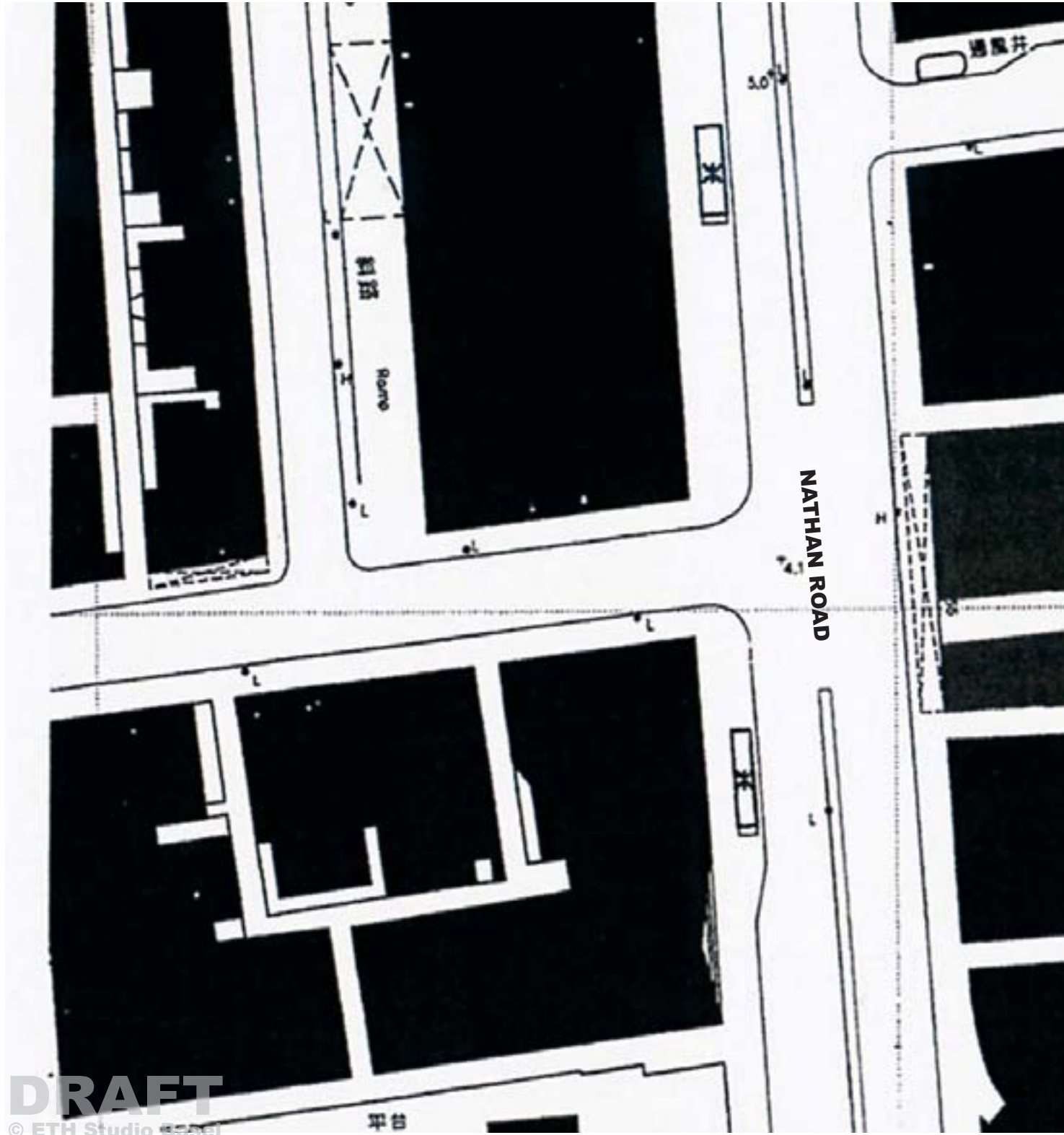


**DRAWN** **Invisible bigness** The body of Chungking Mansions is almost completely enclosed by  
© ETH Studio Basel





the surrounding buildings. Its real bigness is only tangible on the podest, standing between the towers.



NATHAN ROAD

道路

Rouge

通风井

相位

**DRAFT**

© ETH Studio **case1**  
Urban context with entrances

45 壓地道

MODY ROAD

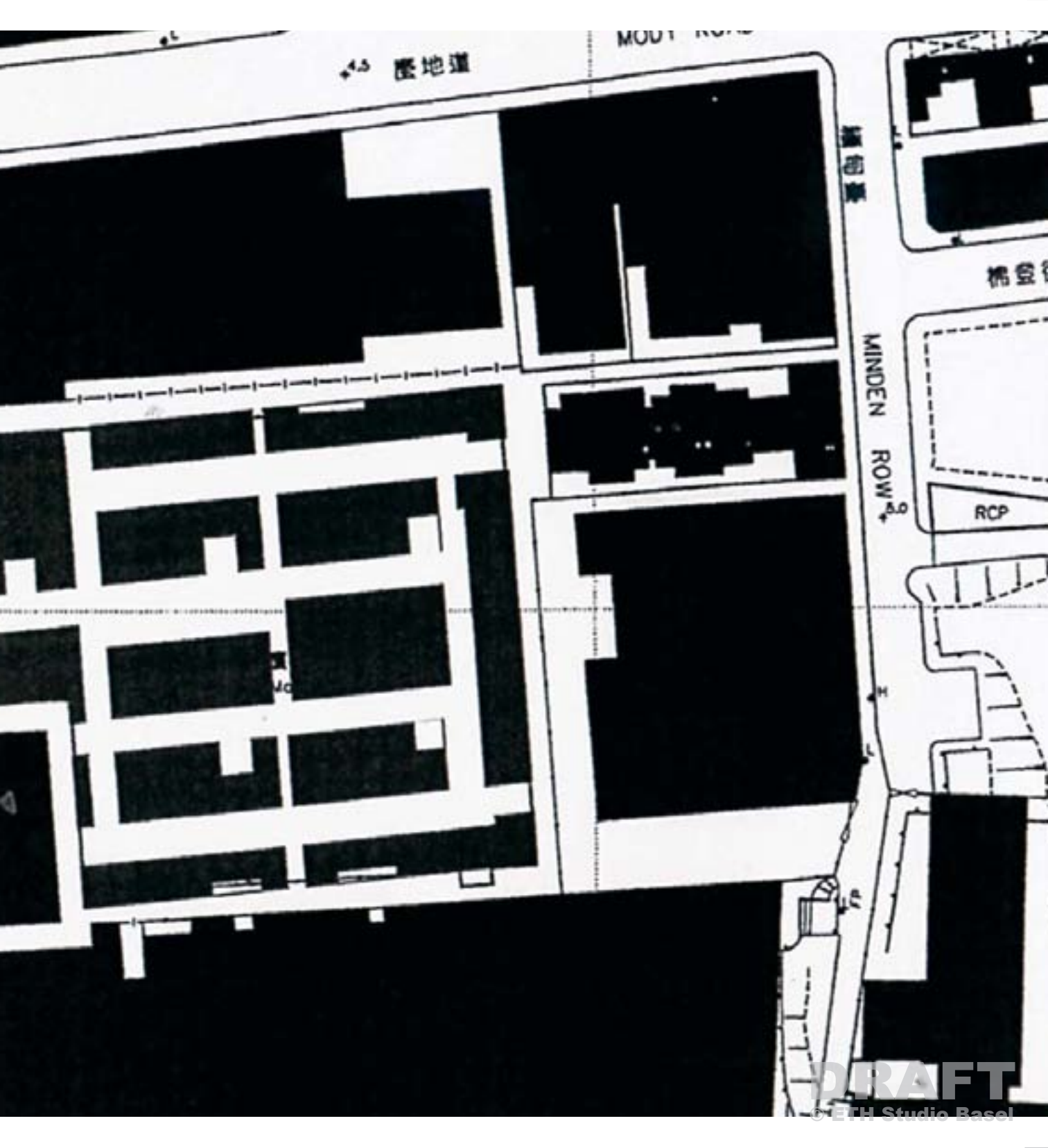
樓層圖

樓層圖

MINDEN ROW

RCP

DRAFT  
© ETH Studio Basel



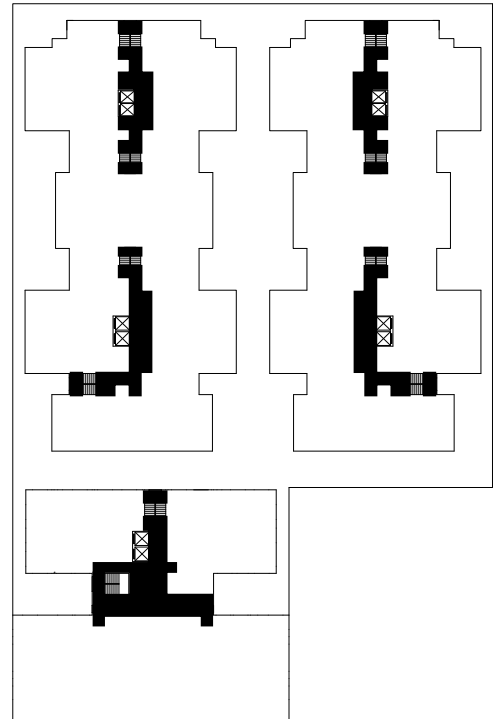
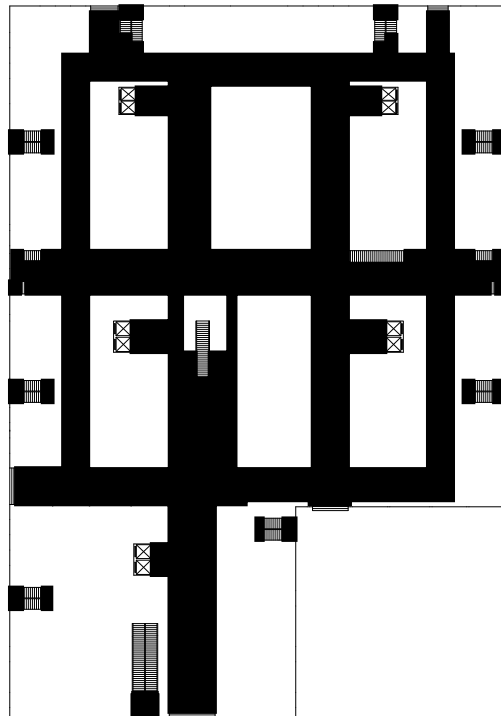
**CIRCULATION**

Chungking Mansions feature seven entrances. The main entrance is situated on Nathan Road.

The Circulation area of the podium consist of seven rectangular ordered alleys. Afiliated to the alleys are the five elevator cores. Each core consist of a pair of low speed elevators. One serves the odd and the other the even numbered floors.

Ten staircases serve the towers, three of these are accessible from the shopping arcade in the second floor. Two extra staircases which are located in the alleys serve as bond between the two shopping arcade floors.

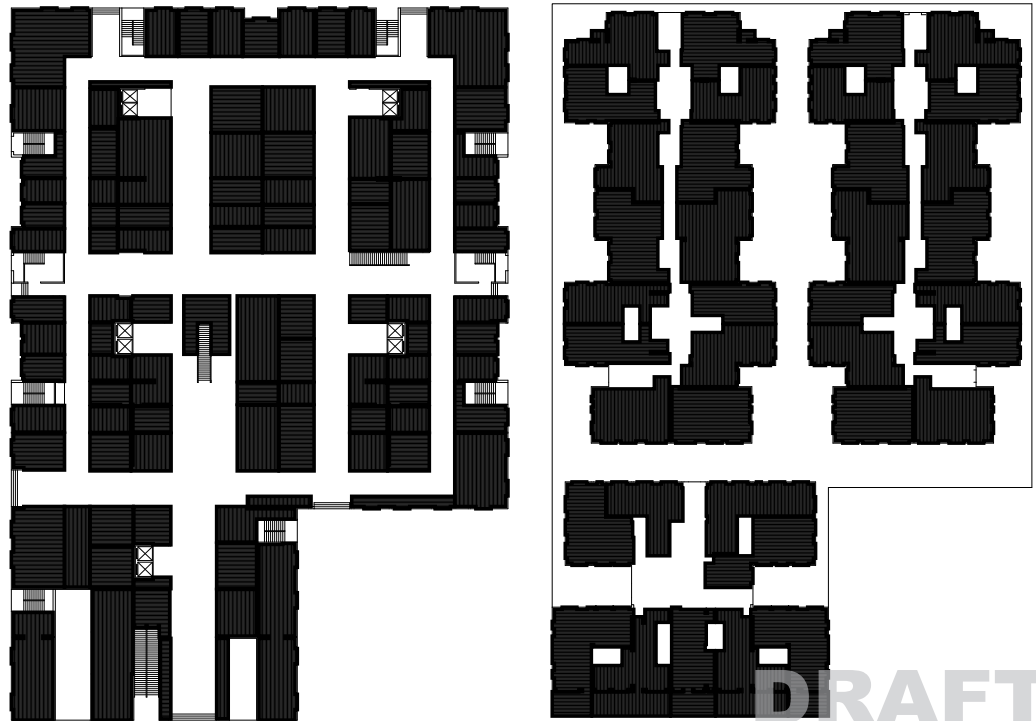
The circulation of of the towers is a mix of punctual and corridor circulation.



## UNITS

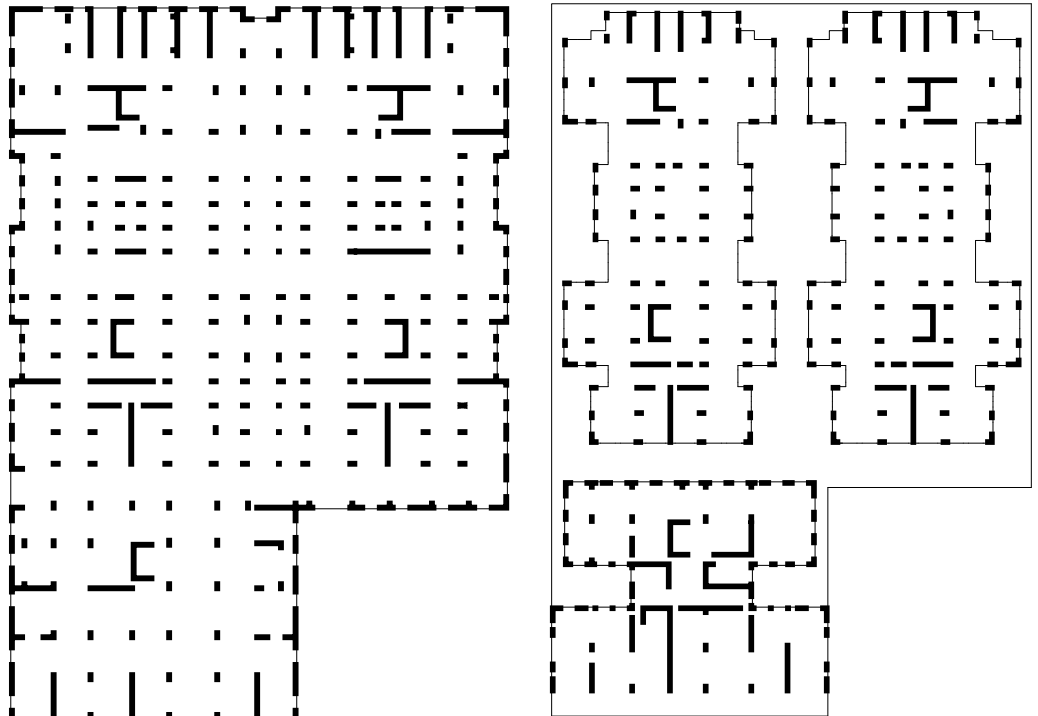
The two floors of the podium composed of 200 hundred shop units with a size of 5-50 square meters.

The fifteen tower floors featured originally around 185 units with a size of 60-100 square meters. Today there are approximately 480 tower units.



**BEARING STRUCTURE**

The bearing structure is a column slab system. The raster differs from 2-10 meters. The bracing is warranted by concrete walls on the eastside and the lift cores. The staircases and courtyards are not belonging to the bearing structure.



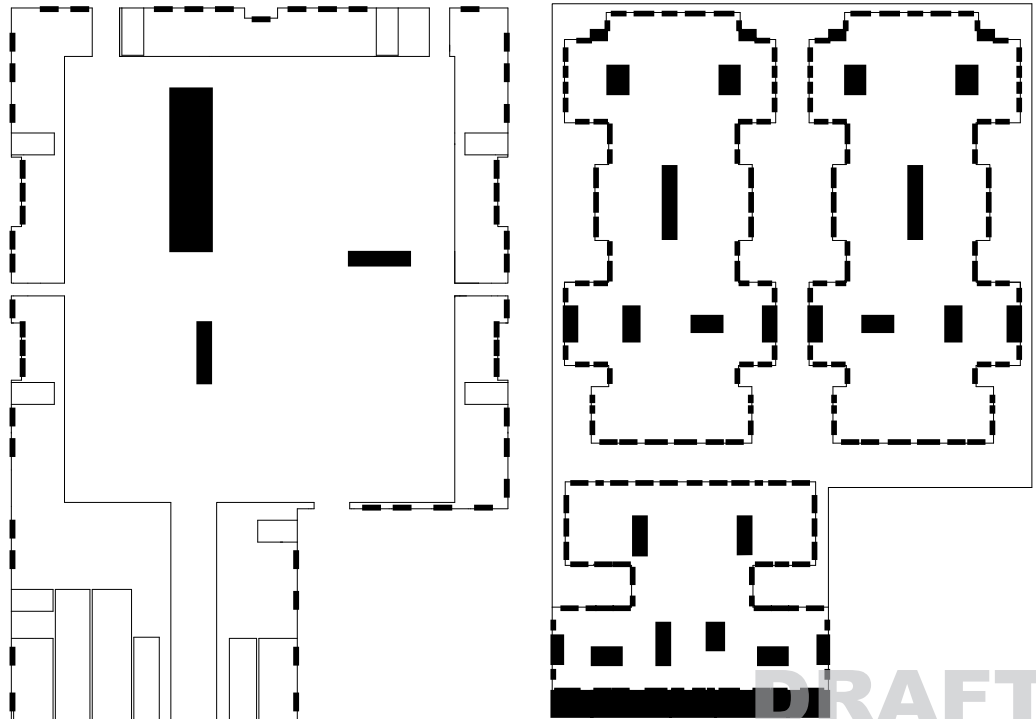
## EXPOSURE TO LIGHT

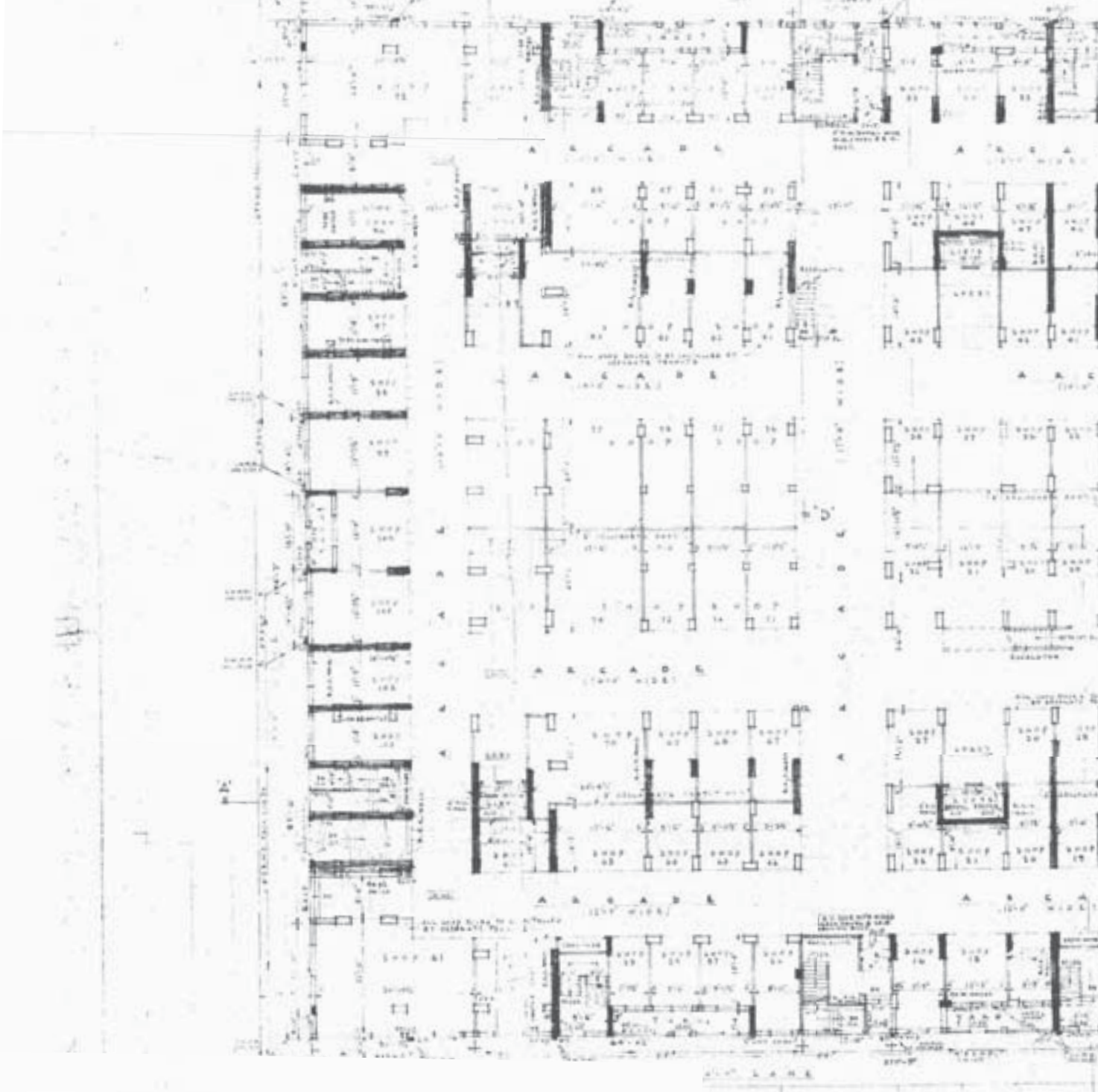
The lightning exposure in Chungking is mainly a matter of artificial light.

The deepest place in the podium is about 30 meters away from the facade. The windows on the podium are disguised with air-condition machines or shelves.

In the shopping arcade one big void creates a connection to the other shopping floor.

The situation in the towers is familiar. The spatial depth exceed mostly not more then five meters but due to the closeness to the other towers and the adjacent building is the exposure insufficient. The courtyards are 37 meters depth and the maximal width of 2.50 meters.



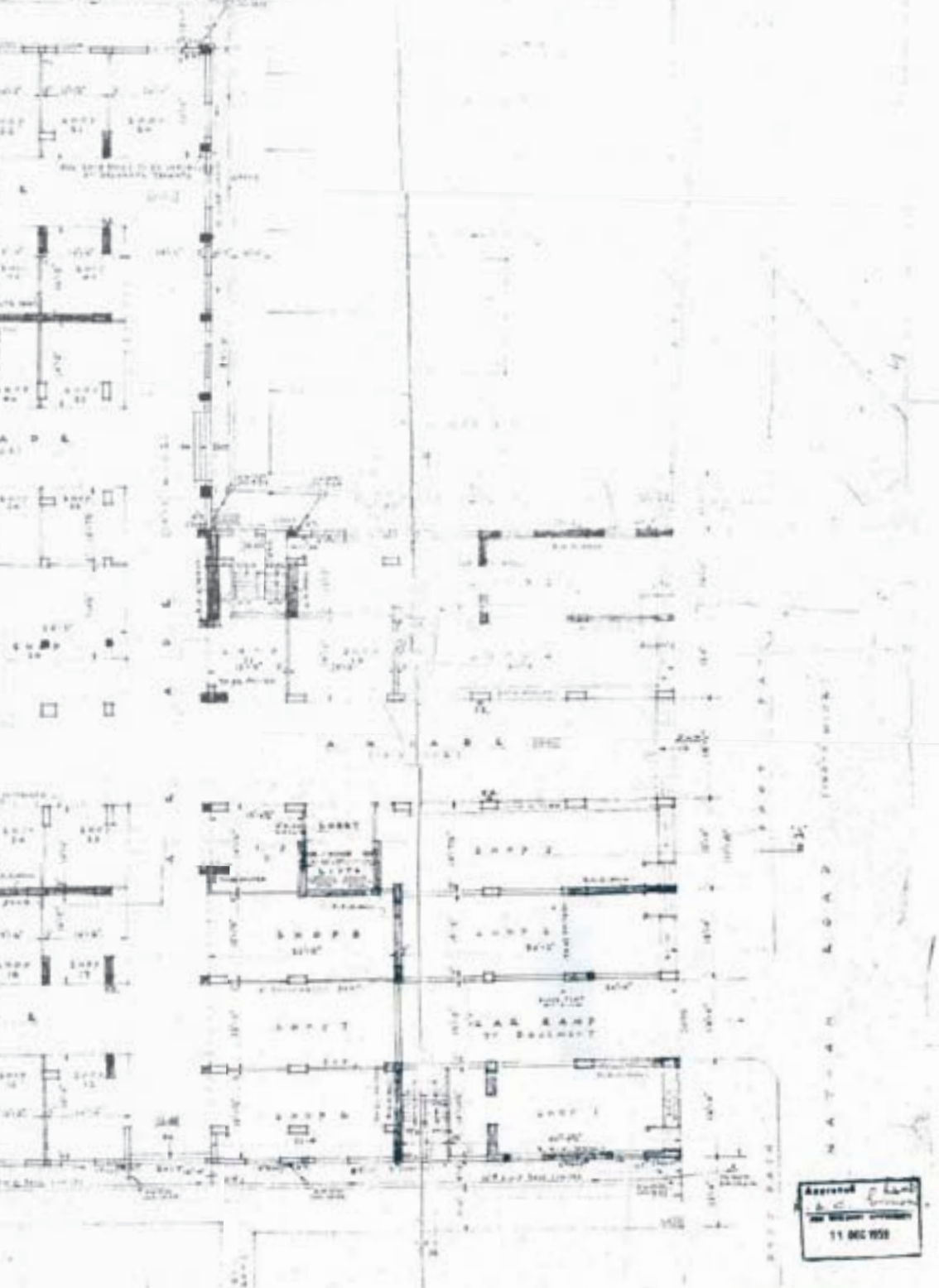


**DRAFT**

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original groundfloor plan, 1959



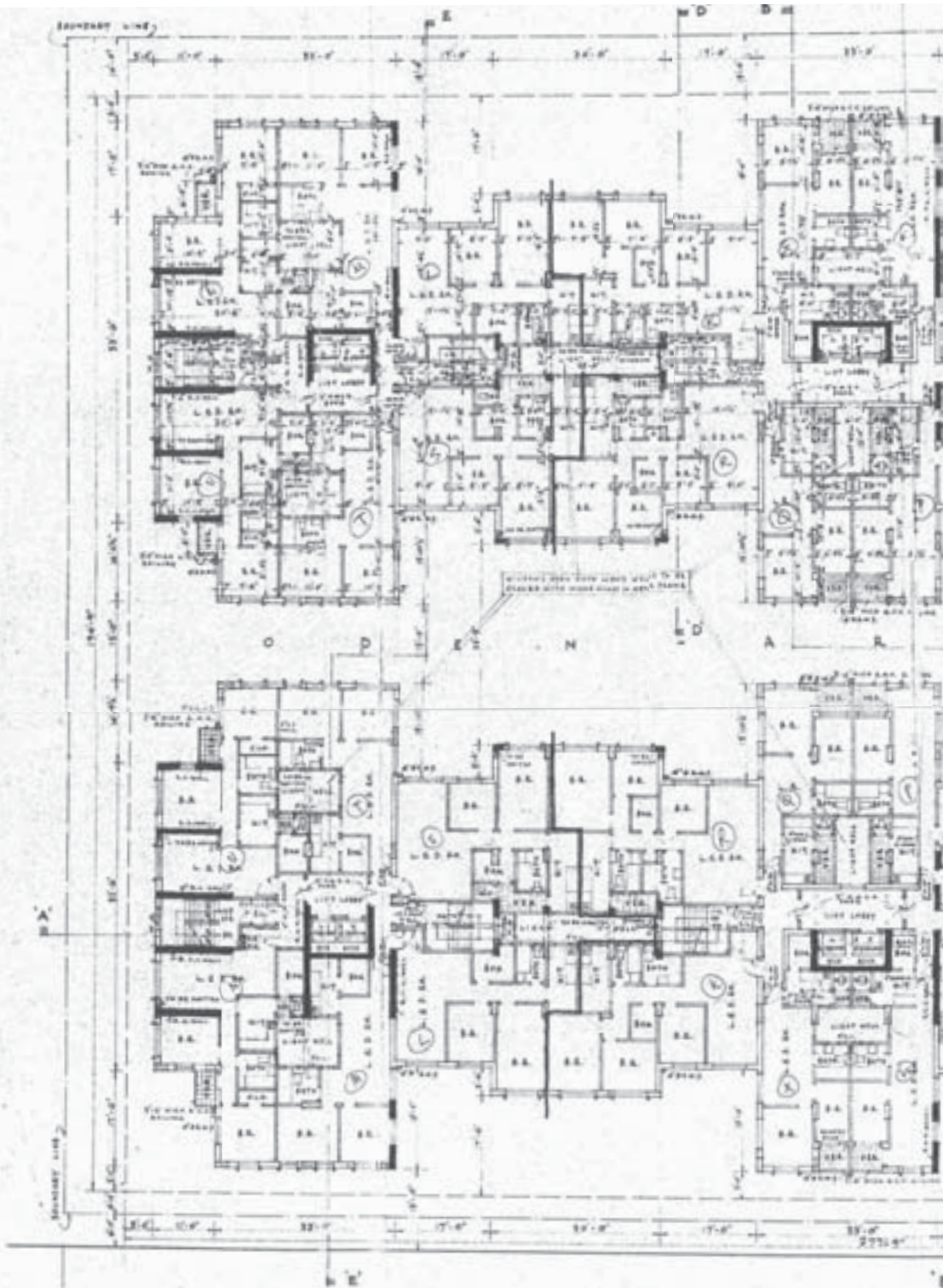


NOTE: ALL EXIT PATHS AND AREAS TO BE INDICATED BY ILLUMINATED EXIT NOTICES IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE CHARACTERS.

Approved  
 11 DEC 1998

11 DEC 1998

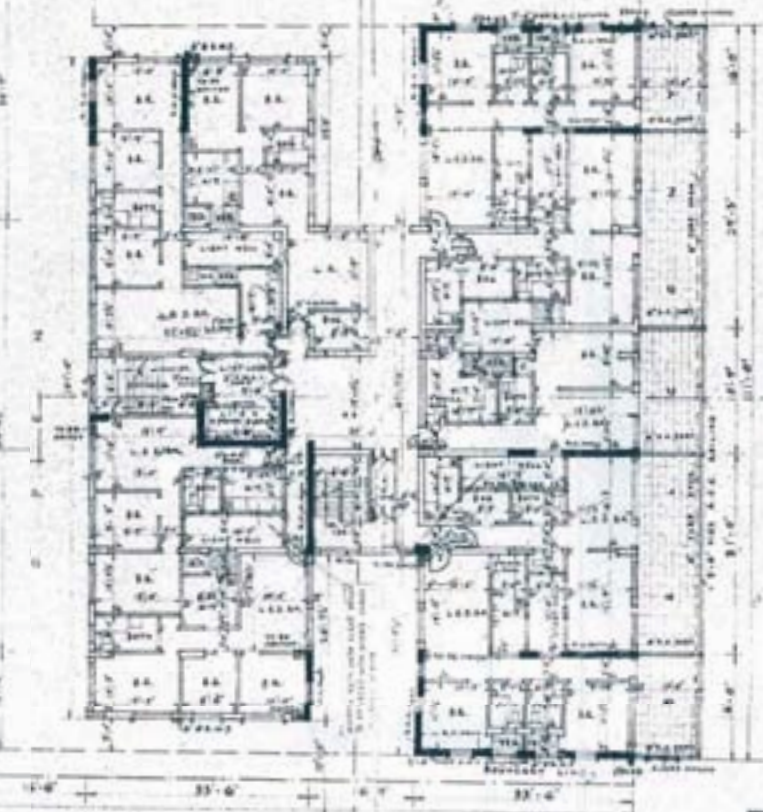
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 © ETH Studio Basel



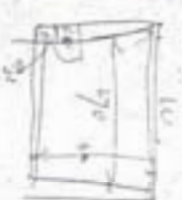


NOTE:

1. ALL BRICK WALLS AND 8" VENEER BLOCKS TO BE SET IN NO. 4000 MORTAR, S. & C. TO N.
2. NO S. & C. WALL TO BE LESS THAN 12" THICK.
3. ALL SIGN NOTICES BY THE BUILDING AUTHORITY.
4. DRAINAGE, W.P. AND ALL PLUMB TO BE INSTALLED FIRST.
5. W.P. CLASS FRONT UNDER THE DECK TO BE 12" W.P.
6. ALL WINDING STAIRS TO BE SET IN NO. 4000 MORTAR, MORE THAN 1" AND "READY MIX" LESS THAN 1" AND TO BE SET IN NO. 4000 MORTAR.
7. ALL WINDING STAIRS TO BE SET IN NO. 4000 MORTAR, MORE THAN 1" AND "READY MIX" LESS THAN 1" AND TO BE SET IN NO. 4000 MORTAR.
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11 DEC 1958



Approved  
11 DEC 1958

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FLOOR PLAN



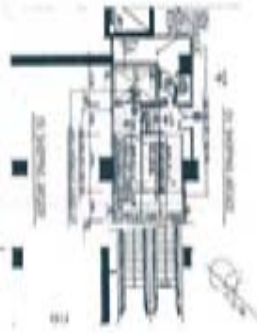
BLOCK PLAN

NOTES:  
 1. THE PROPOSED BUILDING IS TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE BUILDING ACT, 1984 AND THE BUILDING REGULATIONS, 1985.  
 2. THE PROPOSED BUILDING IS TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FIRE PREVENTION ACT, 1988 AND THE FIRE PREVENTION REGULATIONS, 1988.  
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 8. THE PROPOSED BUILDING IS TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SAFETY ACT, 1994 AND THE SAFETY REGULATIONS, 1994.  
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 10. THE PROPOSED BUILDING IS TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT, 1996 AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, 1996.

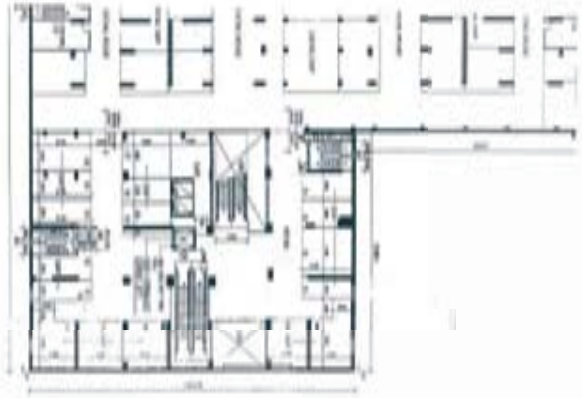
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SECTIONAL PLAN OF GROUND FLOOR

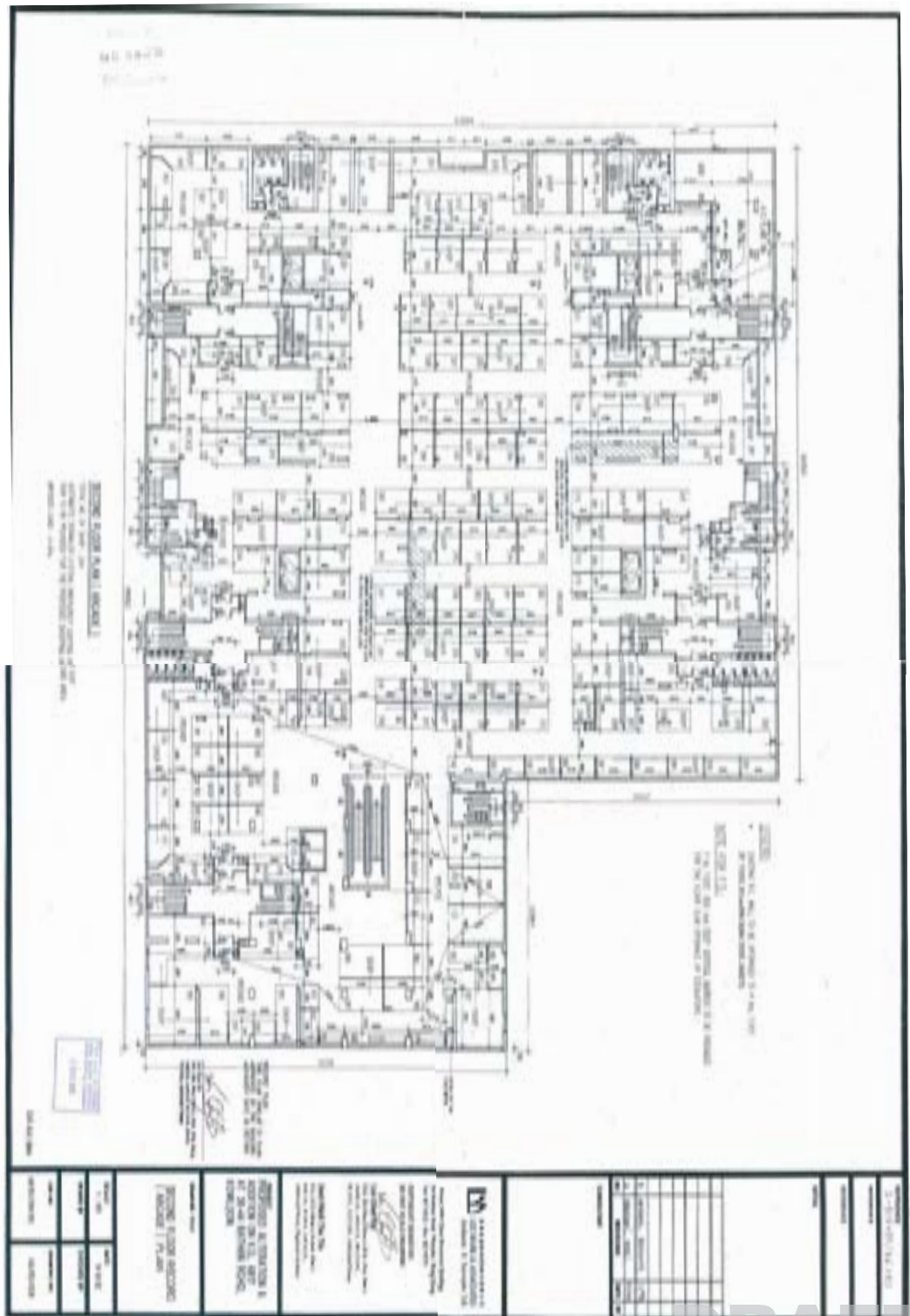


FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

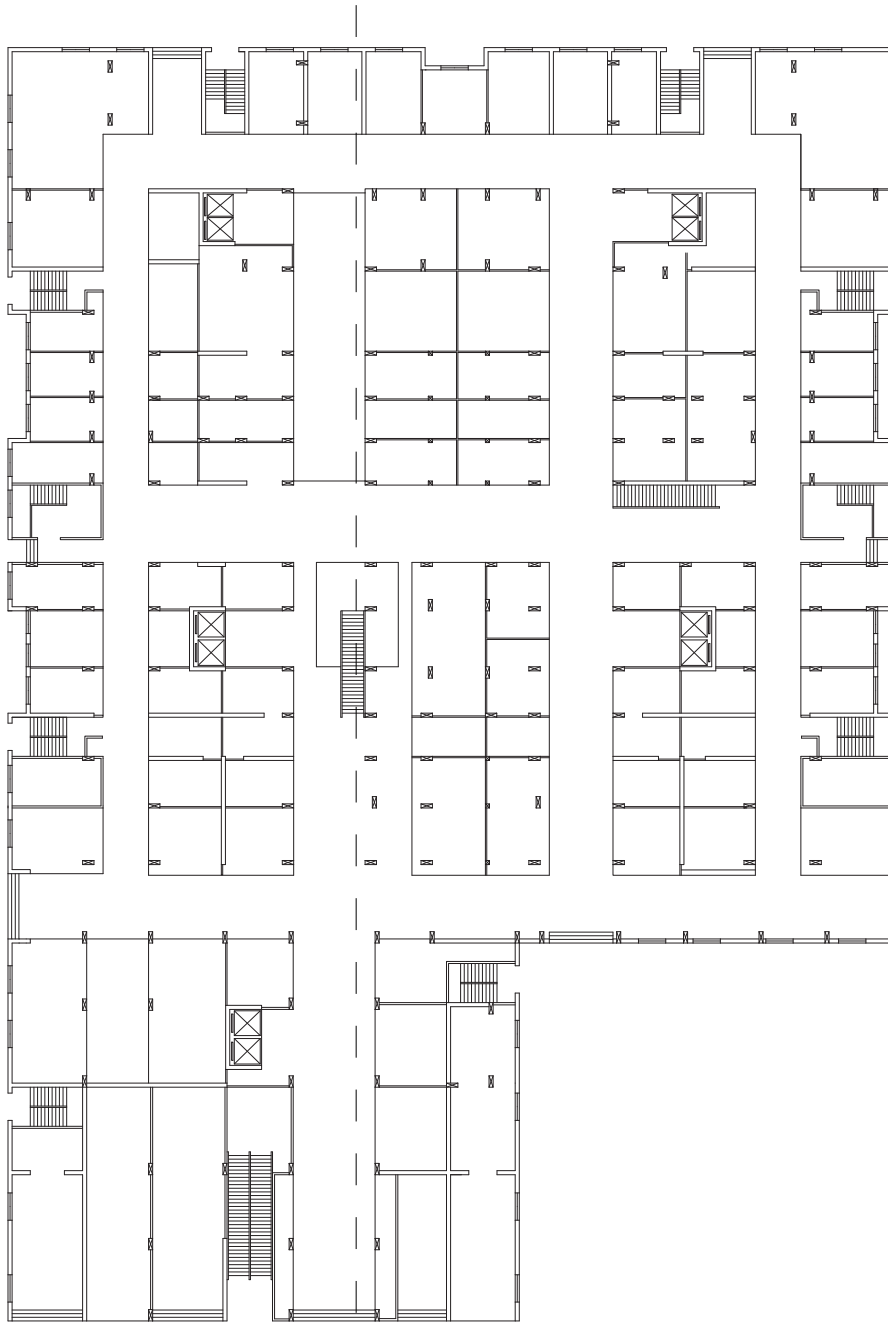
<p><b>FOR B. D. SUBMISSION</b></p> <p>APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY FOR PERMITTING PURPOSES ONLY. THIS DRAWING IS NOT VALID FOR CONSTRUCTION.</p> <p>DATE: 1994</p>		<p><b>ETH STUDIO</b></p> <p>ARCHITECTS</p> <p>100, ROBINSON ROAD, #02-01, SINGAPORE 119034</p> <p>TEL: 6733 3333</p> <p>FAX: 6733 3334</p> <p>WWW.ETHSTUDIO.COM</p>
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third floor plan, Chungking Express, 1994

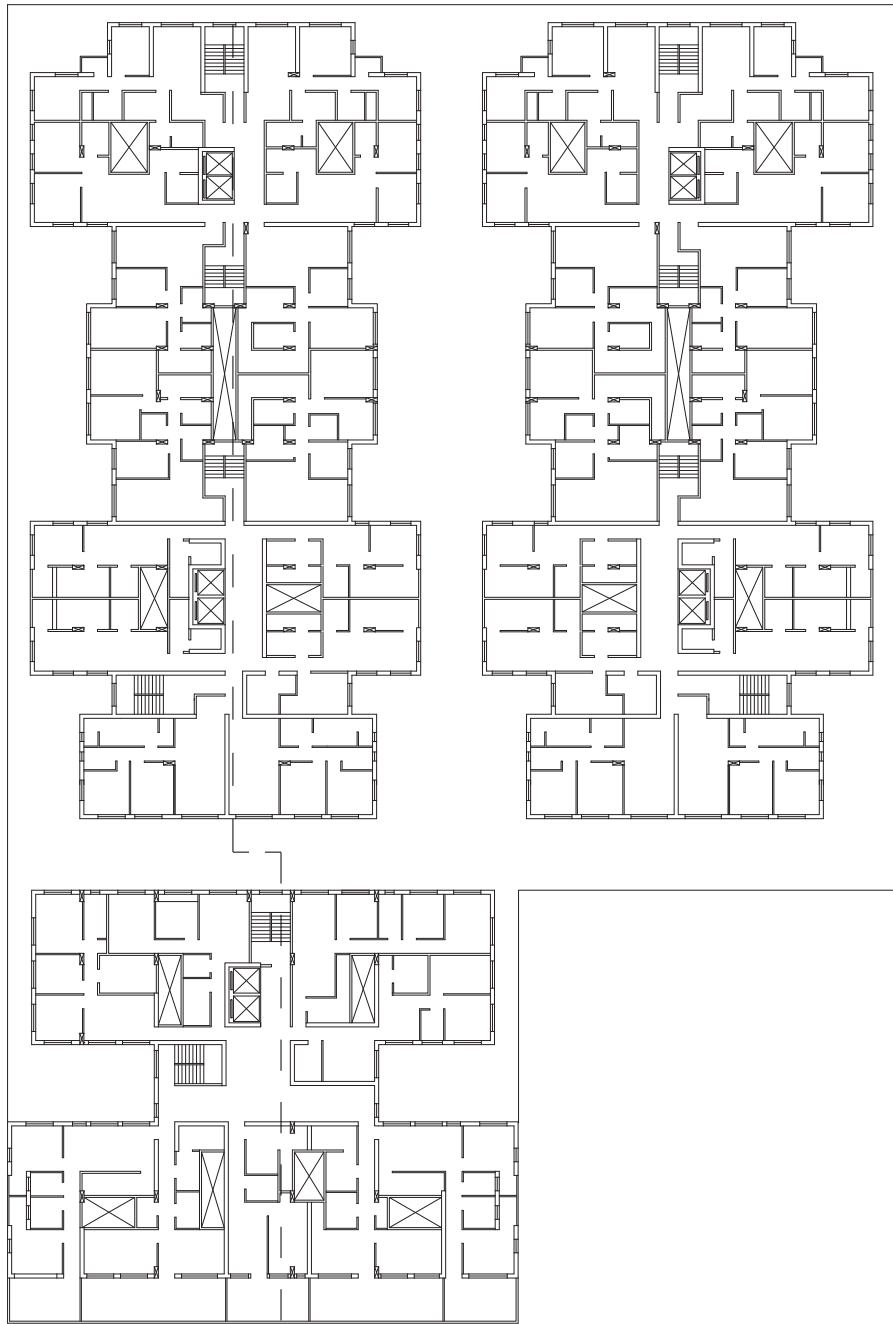
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**CORPUS**



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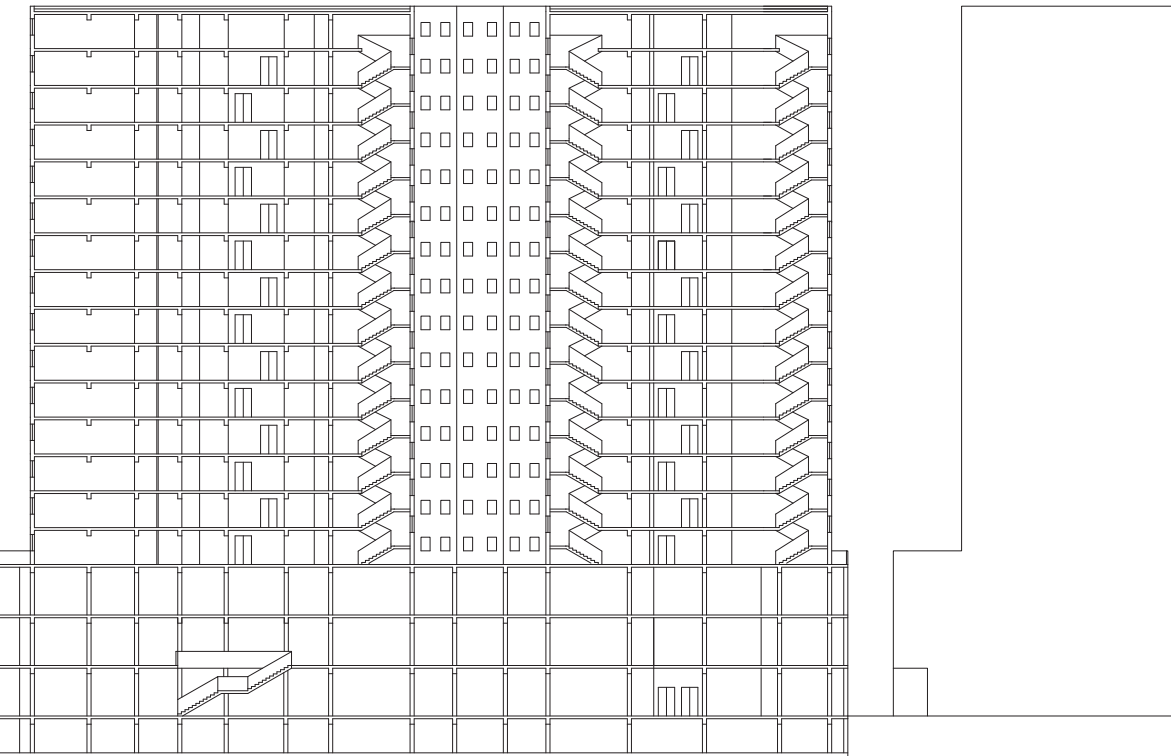
regular tower floor plan, 1:500



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## COMPARISON OF TYPOLOGIES

Chungking Mansions position in the development alignment of public and private housing in Hong Kong can not be clearly defined. On the one hand typical design issues of housing in the 60`s are apparent in Chungking Mansions. On the other side, Chungking Mansions can be seen as a precursor for housing typologies nowadays.

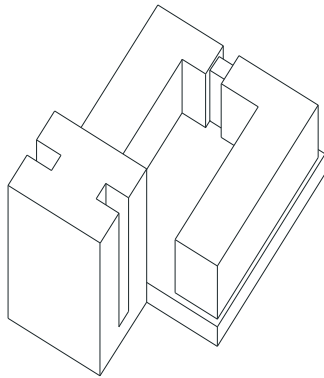
The meandering surface of Chungking Mansions for example is already used for other private buildings to improve exposure and ventilation. This type came up in the 50`s and Chungking Mansions was one of the earliest projects which use this method.

Also in reference to the density aspect, Chungking Mansions is not special in Hong Kong. Its exhibit a comparable density to the "man wah typology."

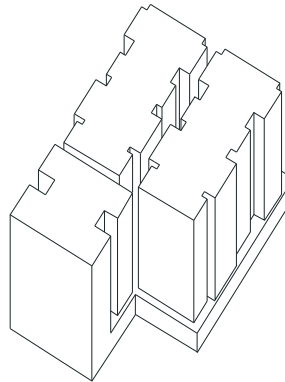
The bearing structure of a column and slab construction was also common in Hongkong.

The circulation of Chungking Mansions is a mix of punctual and corridor circulation. Therefore it is a example for circulation in residential towers nowadays.

The main difference is the use of the ground floor. For buildings in the 60`s it was normal that the first floor was used for shops, car park or other facilities. In Chungking Mansions it was proposed as a big scale shopping arcade over three floors. Chungking Mansions is maybe the first building in Hong Kong which consist of this type of podium use.



original design concept in 1957



executed design concept in 1962  
(change of original concept due to a maximization of space for higher rentability)

## Briar Avenue

year of construction  
location  
storeys / units  
ground floor  
circulation  
unit size  
bearing structure

middle 1950's  
Hong Kong Island  
12 / 8  
1 storey / car park - entrance  
corridor 3 staircases / 2 lifts  
80 - 120 sq.m.  
column slab construction



Due to its relatively generous design of indentations, the private groundfloor and the clear circulation area and its adequate distance to its neighbours the building works as a appropriate house for middle income group.



year of construction	1964
location	Kowloon
storeys / units	18 / 24
ground floor	1 storey / shops
circulation	punctual 1 staircase / 2 lifts
unit size	30 sq.m.
bearing structure	cross wall construction



Despite to its high density, the small flat size, the public and uncontrollable access situation and the unimproved exposure and ventilation the “man wah typology” works still as a building for low income group.



## Wyler Garden

year of construction	1980
location	Kowloon
storeys / units	13 / 8
ground floor	3 storeys / car park - shopping...
circulation	punctual 1 staircase / 2 lifts
unit size	30 - 55 sq.m.
bearing structure	column slab construction



*“Wyler Garden, built by Hang Seng Bank in 1980, was the first private housing estate consisting of the podium and tower pattern. It has become the most popular morphological form in Hong Kong since then.”*

Beisi Jia, A Morphological Study on Housing Transformations in the Colonial Period of Hong Kong, 2007





**Chungking adenoids**  
© ETH Studio Basel



**DRAFT**  
© ETH Studio Basel



**CRAFT**  
**Chungking light**  
© ETH Studio Basel











# Chungking time zone

compression of space and time





**DRAFT** Chungking alleys outside - inside

© ETH Studio Basel





**Chungking fauna** plastic world  
© ETH Studio Basel





Chungking Mansions has a bad reputation as a deteriorated building. It's bad state is one of the major reasons for a lot of people to be terrified. They simply avoid going there.

The management office as the day-to-day representative of the incorporated owners is responsible for the building maintenance. Its function is to organise accessibility, security, waste disposal and improvement works in the "public" space. Furthermore they deal with complaints and public relations. The management office is also the direct interface to the city of Hong Kong and its administrative bodies.

For a long time, the building maintenance have had a low priority for the owners. The difficulties of such a widespread ownership without a strong agenda was becoming visible in the condition of the building, they were not able to control the building.

Especially in the 1980s and early 1990s the buildings state created a myth of the Chungking Mansions as a death trap. In 1988 Chungking Mansions attracted worldwide media interest because of the death of a Danish tourist, who jumped out of his guesthouse window in order to escape from a fire. There has been numbers of other fire hazards, which killed several persons. A few years later Chungking Mansions was affected by a 10-days power loss. Around that moment in time, a lot of Hong Kong people expressed the wish to tear the building down.

Compared to the situation 10-20 years ago, the situation nowadays has highly improved. Due to the management change in **2000**, a lot of efforts has been putted into the buildings amelioration. For example a new flagged floor has been placed in the shopping arcade, which highly improved the hygienic situation. There are also new fire security installations like automatic fire alarms, fire sprinklers and fire extinguisher in the staircases. Smoking is prohibited now.

Nevertheless they still suffer of the spaghetti syndrome produced over the last decades. New electricity lines fulfill the legal requirements of the City of Hong Kong, if they are done under the control of the management office. That means all engineering works have to be authorized by the management office and their external engineering experts. Due to this is a self-imposed regulation, there cannot be a full control. There are regulations of the Hong Kong Government concerning safety issues and labour conditions, which are -in the Chungking Mansions- tested in rare samples.





13 樓  
Floor



**DRAFT**  
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**BODY'S DEFENCES**

Since the management change in the year 2000, security issues are on top of the priority list. Beside other improvements a CCTV system with 300 cameras was installed to observe the building.

The guards of Chungking Mansions are controlling the flow of people in front of the elevator, giving a helping hand to visitors, prevent fights and intermediate between the different stakeholders.

They try to regulate the system on their own, nevertheless they have to work together with the Hong Kong police in serious cases, for example robbery.

In the night the main entrance is closed except a small door. They started to keep off sex workers, willing to enter Chungking Mansions.

Hong Kong police is daily present on patrol in the shopping arcade. Every 3-4 months they do large scale operations in the towers, trying to catch overstayers, illegal immigrants and other suspicious people.





**FACELIFTS**

There are two large scale projects on the Chungking Mansions. The first one is an upgrading renovation of the basement, which served just in the early start of the building as a car park. This huge space will become part of the shopping area. The relatively small number of owners simplified the process. The other one is the renovation of the façade, which is now under consideration. The owners hired a professional mediator to coordinate this early phase, because there the situation is much more complex in reason of the vast number of owners.

On the individual owner scale (apartments, shops, guesthouses, etc.) the major problem of carrying out renovation projects is the transportation of building materials. The construction workers and their helping hands bring them all upwards with the low speed elevators. There is always a pushcart with materials waiting in the queue, beside the backpackers, residents and the others.

Due to their new agenda, the owners have to authorise their projects by the management office and their external engineering experts. There are some main restrictions corresponding with the regulations by the city. For example the regulations on electricity installations. Furthermore one is not allowed to use bricks in the upper floors, because they are too heavy.

The renovation works are carried out by two main types of workers: the legal and the illegal ones. Mak of Mak's Construction Company said, that "*normally investors take constructors from their ethnic group by recommendations*" and because there is a huge gap in price "*some take the illegal ones, mostly the Pakistanis.*"

The actual project his company is doing is a renovation of a guesthouse owned by an investor from Shanghai. They are changing the room division, adding single toilets to each room and enhance the surfaces by making a new floor, exchange windows etc. The works will take three months and the budget incl. material and work is about 400'000 HK\$.

His company is doing 8-10 projects of the same scale in the Chungking Mansions. Most of them are alterations.



Mak (2nd from left) and his staff

## IMPLEMENTATION

Parts of the first floor and the whole second floor of the podium are occupied with the “Chungking Express”-shopping mall, named after the famous film by Wong Kar-Wai.

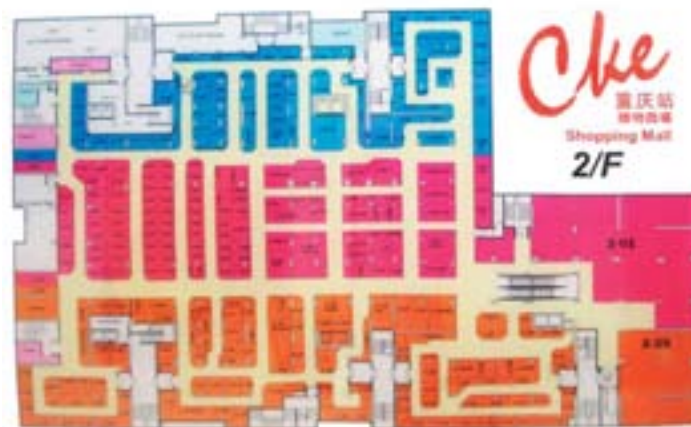
This shopping arcade is spatially still the same like the Chungking Mansions shopping arcade, nevertheless they both do not have any relation beside using the same cleaning department and other infrastructures. All doors between the two arcades are closed.

Chungking Express has 100% Hongkongnese owners and managers, the customers they want to attract are also Hong Kong people.

The space was bought in 1998 by an investor for 200 million HK\$, after a facelift for 50 million, the 330 shops were putted again on the market and were sold within a few hours. It is said, that there is a lack of small retail units in Tsim Sha Tsui.

*“Apart from earning rental yield, some investors took a proactive role, by injecting new ideas into the property – the bulk floor space would be re-decorated as mini shopping arcade and put on market with new marketing strategy. Re-zoned as separate small units, it lured a surge of investment flow; the well-received market sentiment was reflected with the sudden increase of registration volume for low-end price range in this quarter.”*

Centaline Property Agency





Entrance of Chungking Express with escalator (left) beside entrance of Chungking Mansions



# **DRAFT** Chungking sequel

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25



PAV BHAJI

28



MAYSORE



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GOOD MASS

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管理處 Management Office

黃龍濤 經理  
Anthony Wong Manager

管理處地址 Management Office Address

九龍彌敦道36-44號重慶大廈A座3樓6室  
Rm. A6, 3/F, Block A, Chungking Mansions, 36-44 Nathan Road, Kowloon.  
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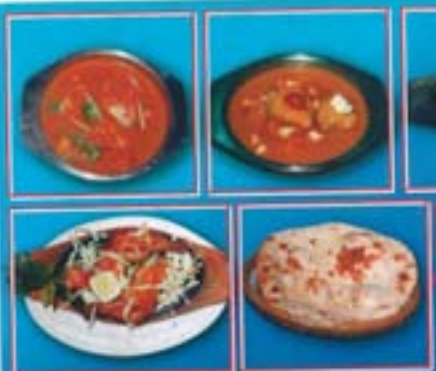
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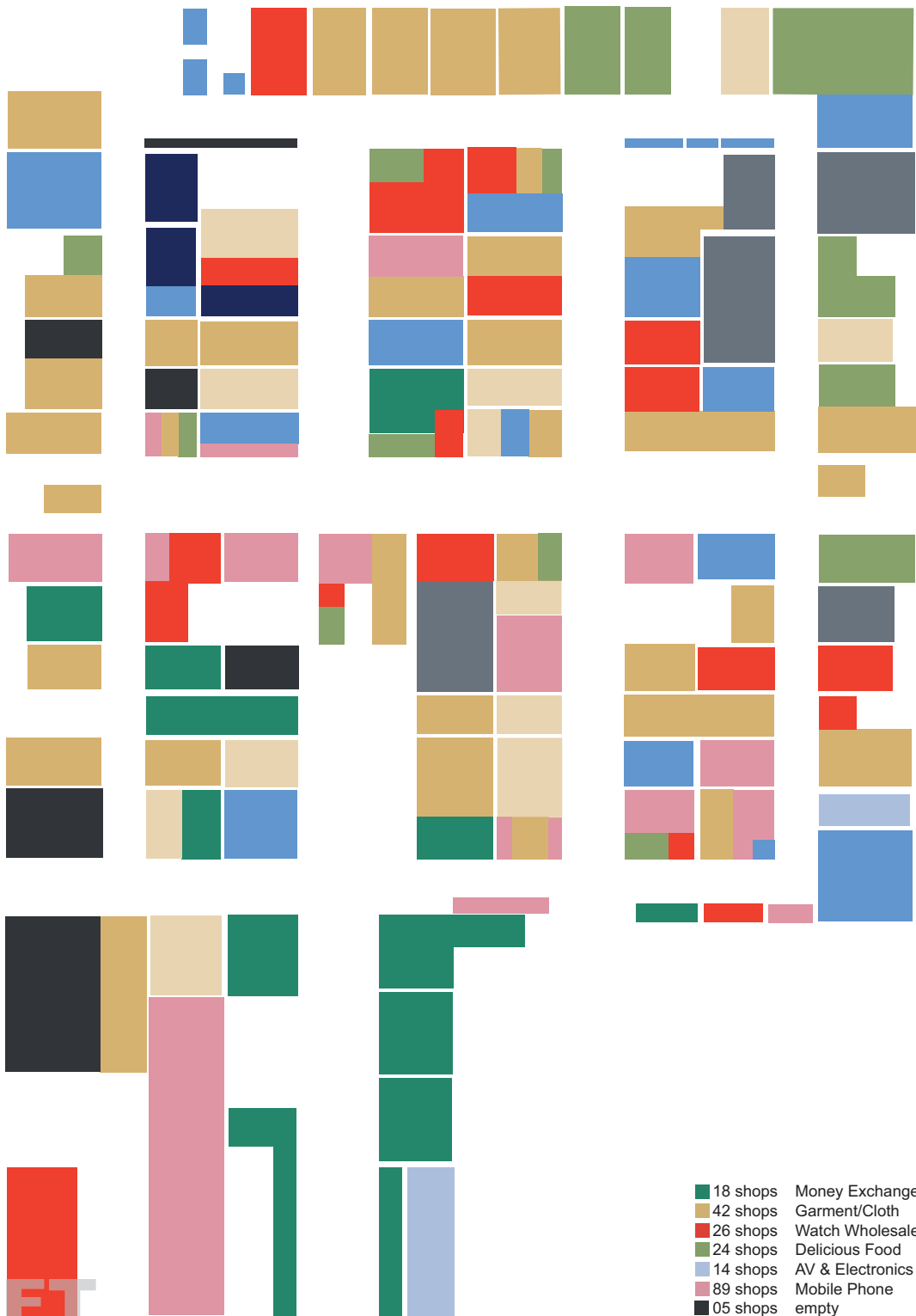
Chungking Mansions is an endless accumulation of functions and programs within an endless, labyrinthical spatial megastructure. Its self-sustaining and complementary aspects of market-driven system are balanced in highly fragile way, benefiting in various ways from informality.

There are several key aspects of use of space. First, the spatial distinction between the podium and the towers is visible in the matters of program. The shops in Chungking Mansions are all located in the two shopping arcade storeys in the podium. The towers, originally intended as residential area, are nowadays infiltrated with public and semi-public uses such as guest-houses, restaurants, offices and workshops.

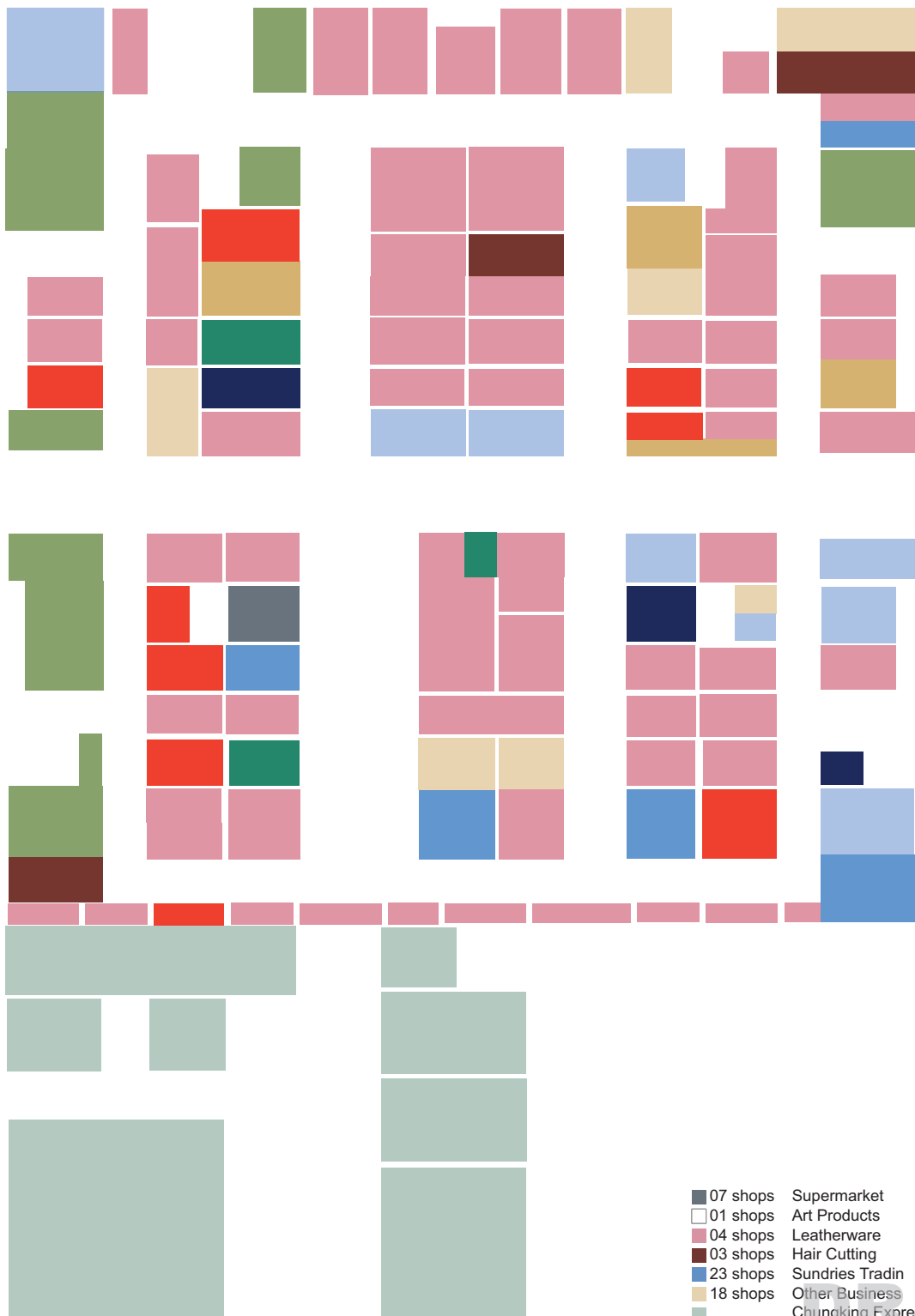
The Chungking Mansions extended in recent years its spectrum from a backpackers paradise and indian gourmet temple to a hub for low-end globalization. Traders mostly from Africa, operating on a rather small volume business stay in Chungking, do there their business (mostly in mobile phones, garments etc.) or go directly to the chinese factories. Chungking Mansions are serving as a intersection between China and the developing world.

There is a wide range of facilities to serve these major customers. One can easily get sex or drugs in the Chungking Mansions as in whole Tsim Sha Tsui.



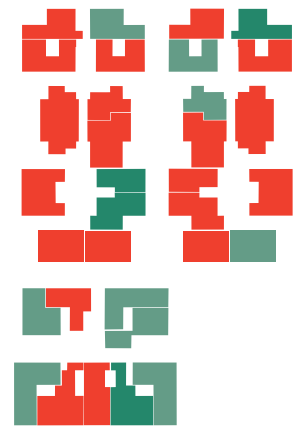
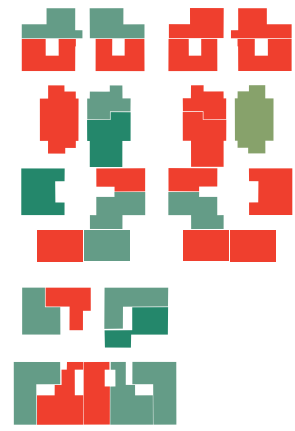
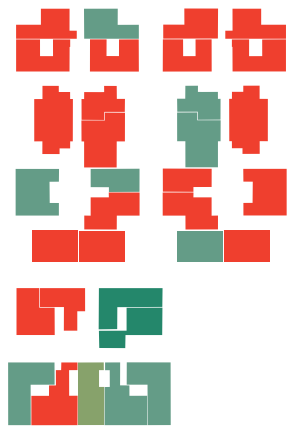
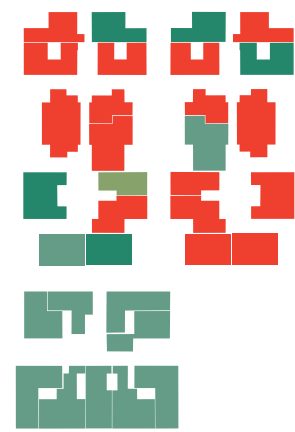
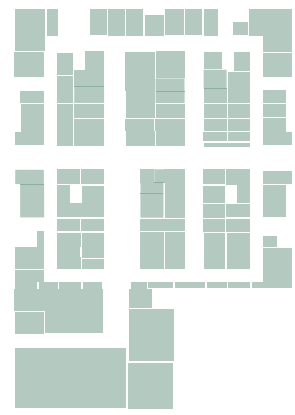
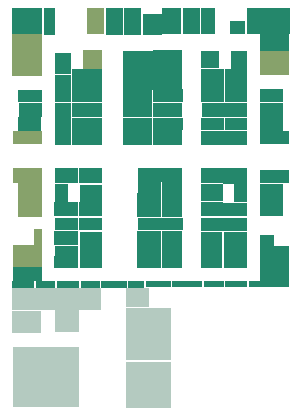


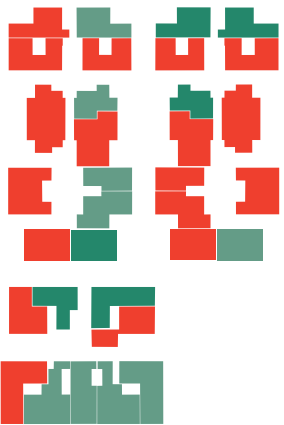
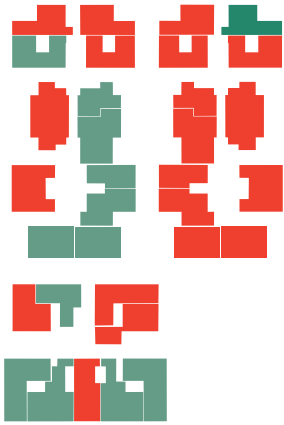
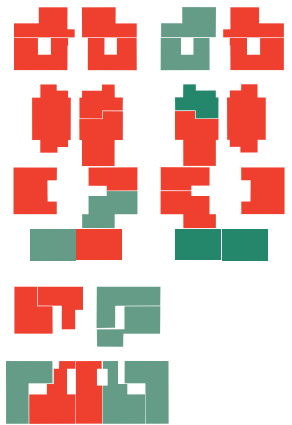
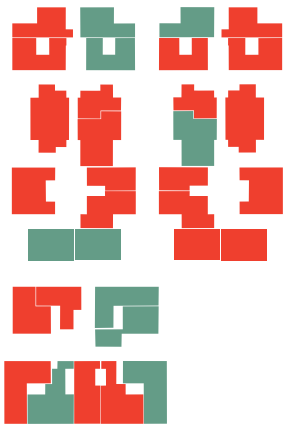
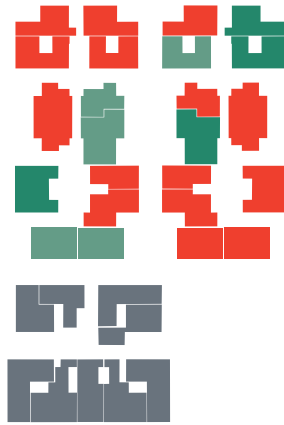
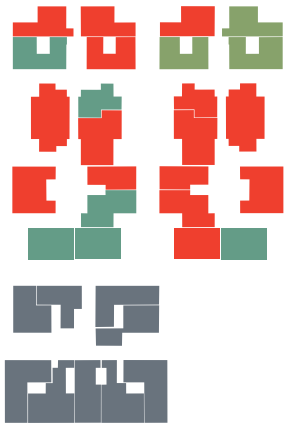
**DRAFT**



Program first floor

- 07 shops Supermarket
- 01 shops Art Products
- 04 shops Leatherware
- 03 shops Hair Cutting
- 23 shops Sundries Tradin
- 18 shops Other Business
- Chungking Express





- Restaurant
- Guesthouse
- Business
- Residential

**PRIVATE PUBLIC TOWERS**

The towers of Chungking Mansions are legally a residential zone. Nevertheless there is a huge number of non-residential use of space by different groups. This leads to a functional mixed-up situation where everything can be everywhere. Beside private residential apartments, which are most often well-ensured by heavily gittered doors, the most defining elements are the guesthouses

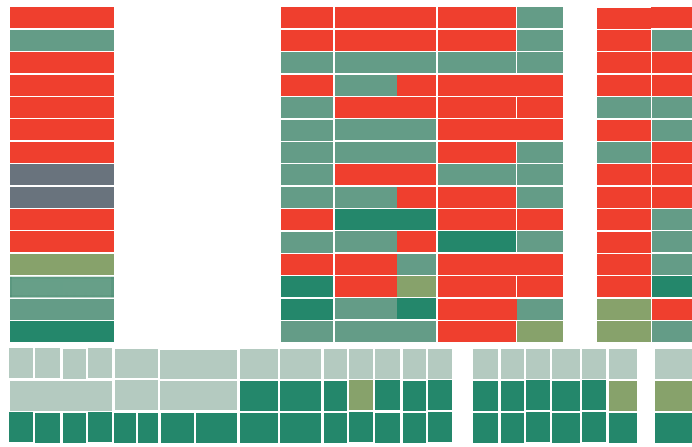
The guesthouses and restaurants avoid prosecution because there are legally no hotels. Same with the restaurants, they use the corporate body of a club to be not a restaurant. That means as a customer one get a "Club Membership Card".

Chungking Mansions has its own open-door policy, every-one can come and go into the Mansions as he or she likes. These flows can hardly be controlled, especially during the day, when there are thousands of people. There aren't any physical barriers or controls like in other buildings with commercial use on the groundfloor.

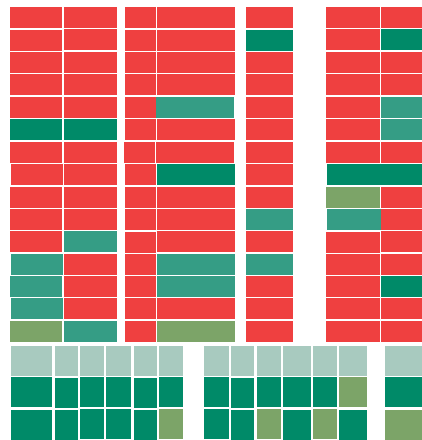
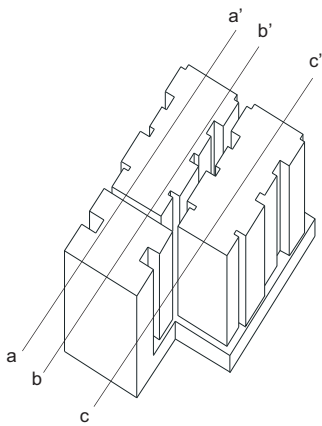




aa'



bb'



cc'

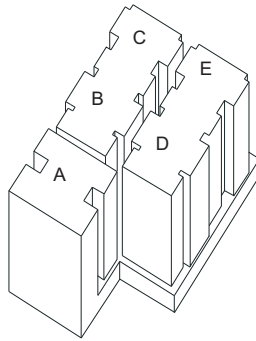
- Restaurant
- Guesthouse
- Business
- Residential

TOWER USE CHARACTERISTICA

The most prominent tower of Chungking Mansions is tower A, with its presence toward Nathan Road and the City. He consists of 135 spatial units.

Most of the guesthouses are located in tower A and assists his busy character. Nevertheless, there are two floors, the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> assumed to be empty.

The blocks B-E consist of 90 units. Block B just beside is a bit less crowded and busy, but still vibrant. Block C and D are both equally less busy than the one before. Finally block E, the farthestmost of Nathan Road, is also the most calm one. There are some restaurants and a few guesthouse but most of the units are in a private residential use. The blocks B-E consist of 90 units.



Time Travel  
Time Travel  
Chungking Saloon  
New Mei Wah Workshop  
Yat Shing Trading Co.  
Fan Young Gems Company  
Bestcom Trading Co.  
Mabell Time Co. Ltd.  
The Incorporated Owners of Chungking Mansions  
The Incorporated Owners of Chungking Mansions  
The Management Office of Chungking Mansions

New Super Guesthouse  
Travellers Hostel  
Travellers Hostel  
Travellers Hostel  
Travellers Hostel  
Park Guesthouse  
Ocean Guesthouse  
Spring Guesthouse  
Kyoto Guesthouse  
Four Seasons Guesthouse  
Four Seasons Guesthouse  
TOKYO & HAWAII GUESTHOUSE  
TOKYO & HAWAII GUESTHOUSE  
TOKYO & HAWAII GUESTHOUSE  
Rhine Guesthouse  
Ashoka Guesthouse  
Capital Guesthouse  
Capital Guesthouse  
New Peking Guesthouse  
New Peking Guesthouse  
Super Guesthouse  
Fortunate Guesthouse  
Fortunate Guesthouse  
New International Guesthouse  
New International Guesthouse  
New International Guesthouse  
Sun Ying Guesthouse  
Tom's Guesthouse  
New Asia Guesthouse  
New Asia Guesthouse  
New Mandarin Guesthouse  
First Guesthouse  
Welcome Guesthouse  
Double Seven Guesthouse  
Pay Less Guesthouse  
Pay Less Guesthouse  
Pay Less Guesthouse  
London Guesthouse  
London Guesthouse  
CHUNGKING HOUSE DELUXE HOTEL  
CHUNGKING HOUSE DELUXE HOTEL  
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CHUNGKING HOUSE DELUXE HOTEL  
CHUNGKING HOUSE DELUXE HOTEL

Tower A

PRO-RICH FIBER INTERNATIONAL LIMITED  
Wing Kwong Hong  
DATESUNS OPALS MFY. LT.  
Wing Wah Opal Co.  
Dicky International Co.  
Hang Fong Opal Co.  
Mandarin Guesthouse  
New Yan Yan Guesthouse  
Yan Yan Guesthouse  
Yan Yan Guesthouse  
Holiday Guesthouse  
Hoover Hostel

Tower B

Duni's International  
Duni's International  
V-Good Jeans Company  
New Shanghai Guesthouse  
New Guangzhou Guesthouse  
New China Guesthouse  
New China Guesthouse  
City Guesthouse  
Paris Guesthouse  
Fortuna Guesthouse  
Holiday Guesthouse  
Royal Plaza Inn Guesthouse  
Royal Plaza Inn Guesthouse

Tower C

Carlton Guesthouse  
Las Vegas Guesthouse  
Tom's Guesthouse  
Garden Guesthouse  
Osaka Guesthouse  
New Grand Guesthouse  
Lucky Hotel  
New Kowloon Guesthouse  
Shaker Guesthouse  
Kowloon Guesthouse  
New Harbour Guesthouse  
Wah Sing Guesthouse  
Hwa Fai Guesthouse

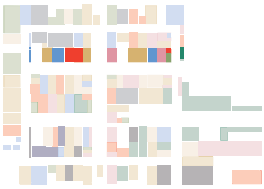
Tower D

SUPREME WATCH MFY  
WING WAH HING CO underwear  
Chung King Lodge  
Hang on Tailor  
Traveller's Friendship Hostel  
Shangri La Guesthouse  
China Guesthouse  
Carlton Guesthouse  
Cosmos Guesthouse  
Cosmos Guesthouse  
Cosmos Guesthouse  
New Washington Guesthouse  
New Washington Guesthouse





02.00 p.m.



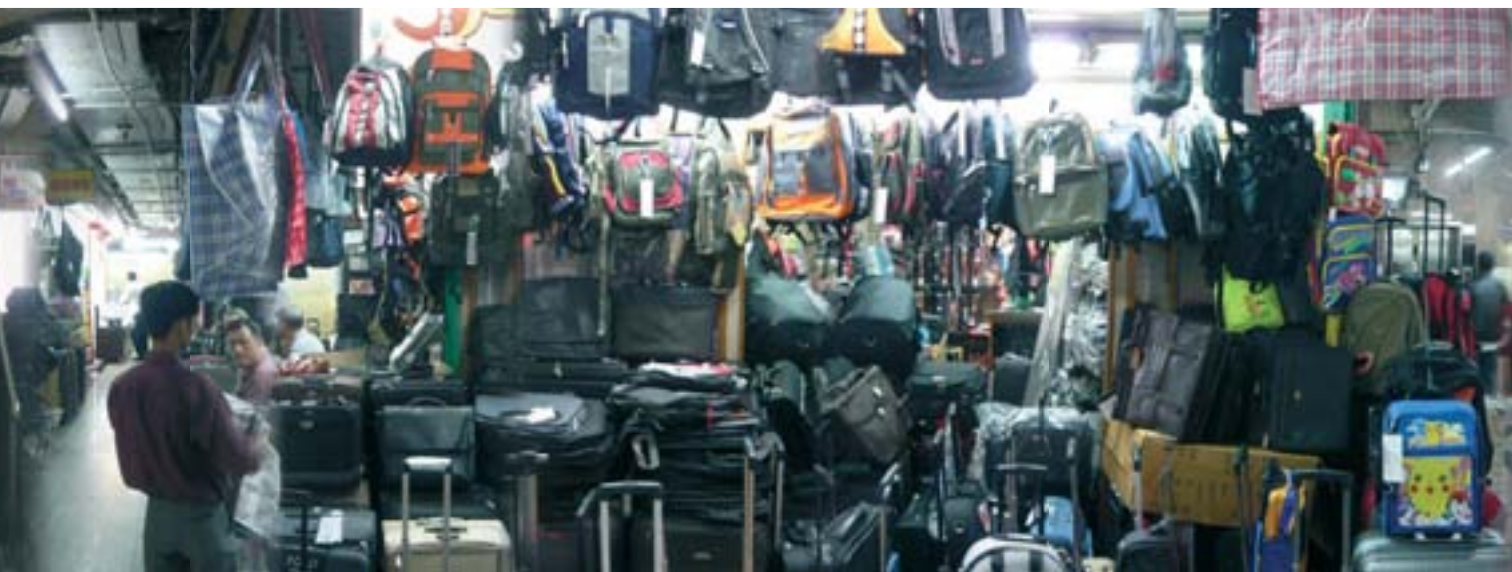
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**DRAFT**  
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**MOBILE PHONE STORY**

Mobile phone business is a big deal in Chungking Mansions. Traders from all over the world, but mostly Africans come to Chungking Mansions to buy mobile phones, transport them to their homecountry and sell them there. This flow of mobile phones is only one example for low-end globalization.

*"I define "low-end globalization" as "the transnational flow of people and goods involving relatively small amounts of capital and informal, sometimes-semi legal or illegal transactions, commonly associated with the developing world."*

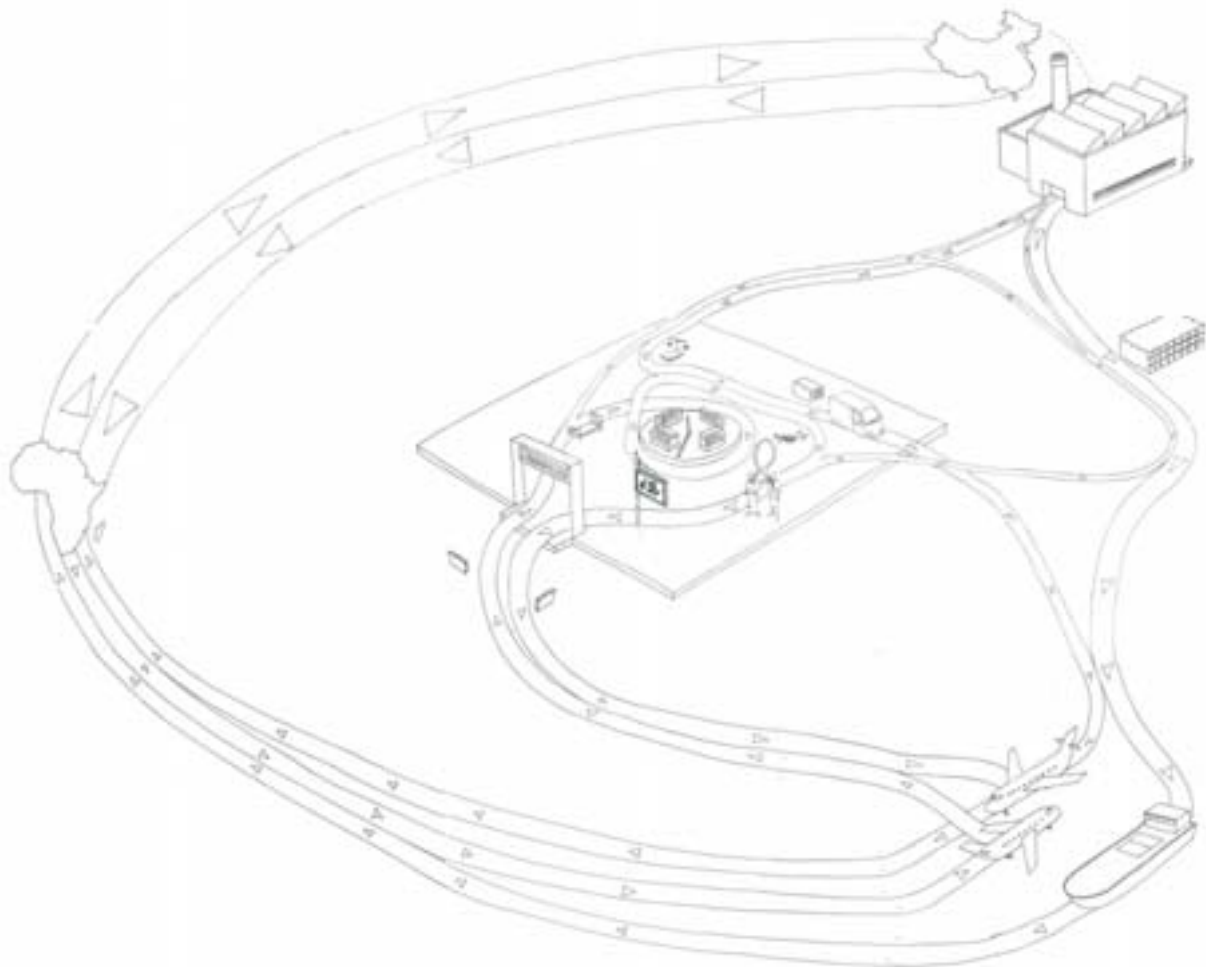
Gordon Mathews

The trade is not limited on mobile phones, also other electronic products and garments for example departure from Chungking Mansions through the world.

The main cause of this is that China serves as a powerhouse for low-end manufacturing. Goods produced in China, primarily from the pearl river delta, are low priced and the fact, that most countries in the developing world do not feature electronic industry makes China for them as well to a powerhouse.

Products from China are handled over Hong Kong via the airport or the Hong Kong Port.

Chungking Mansions serves in this system as a mix of a trade fair and infrastructure hub for the developing world. Traders from Africa and Southasia come to Hong Kong staying in Chungking Mansions either getting a visa for China to buy their goods directly in China or staying in Chungking Mansions buying their goods over the sellers in Chungking Mansions.



## TRICKY BUSINESS

The goods one can buy in Chungking Mansions differ from quality and price. Mobile phones take a large part of Chungking trade goods. Some of them are used or re-fabricated phones, others are new, unknown are fake.

*“The fake ones are mostly smuggled into Hong Kong over the border with China. In Chungking Mansions, the sale of fake phones is discreet but ubiquitous.”*§

Gordon Mathews

*“Every buyer of mobile phones knows what a real phone and what a fake phone is, but no seller can directly say that.”*

a Central African trader

Everything works over the price.

Negotiating and bargain is always a question of experience , if one does not have a well understanding of the phone market, one will instantly get tricked. After asking a few questions the seller can judge on the knowledge of the buyer and then make the price.

**14-day phones**

European warehouse models with a 14-day guarantee

**re-fab phones**

have had their motherboards repaired or replaced in China

**new phones**

made by mainland China companies

**used phones****fake phones “A”**

made by mainland China companies

**fake phones “B”**

made by mainland China companies

**fake phones “C”**

made by mainland China companies



J-Max

J-Max

推  
PUSH

**DRAFT**  
© ETH Studio Basel

## POPULATION

The population of Chungking Mansions is a wildley mix of people from all over the world.

There is a incountable number of countries present in the Chungking Mansions, creating an extremly international atmosphere.

There are six major groups of people in Chungking Mansions. Shop manager, businessmen, backpackers, asylum seeker, workers and residents.

The different six groups are in their composition mostly homogenous in sence that the majority shares the same ethnical background.

Interaction between the different groups is very distinctive in sense of doing business together. One can say, that the official language of Chungking Mansions is the calculator and english. Beside the business interactions the ethnical groups stay among themselves.

*"I do not like the Pakistanis here; they are not my friends. But I am here to make money, as they are here to make money."*

Indian shop manager

*"The pursuit of profit makes ethnic and religious discord no more than an unwelcome distraction."*

Gordon Mathews

People in Chungking Mansions have a intuition that the place is something special in Hong Kong but Chungking Mansions diversity and fast changing composition of population do not enable to generate a community.

More visible is class tension in Chungking Mansions.

*"The gap between the well-off and the poor-between owners and temporary workers, between the large entrepreneurs and the small traders - is enormous in Chungking Mansions."*

Gordon Mathews

Chinese owners employ southasian or fillipinos, they employ among others illegal workers which stay on tourist visa in Hong Kong from there homecountries or else where.

But everyone who comes to Chungking Mansions is in a way privileged because he has enough money to fly to Hong Kong.

*"Chungking Mansions is basically a "club of the third-world successful."*

Gordon Mathews



**PORTRAIT: SHOP MANAGER**

Most of the shop managers rent the space from one of the owners, who has withdrawn from day-to-day management, through a real estate agency. Some of the shops are led in a family business scheme. The average shop size is somewhere between 10-20m<sup>2</sup>. The average rent is 830-1'050 HK\$ per month.

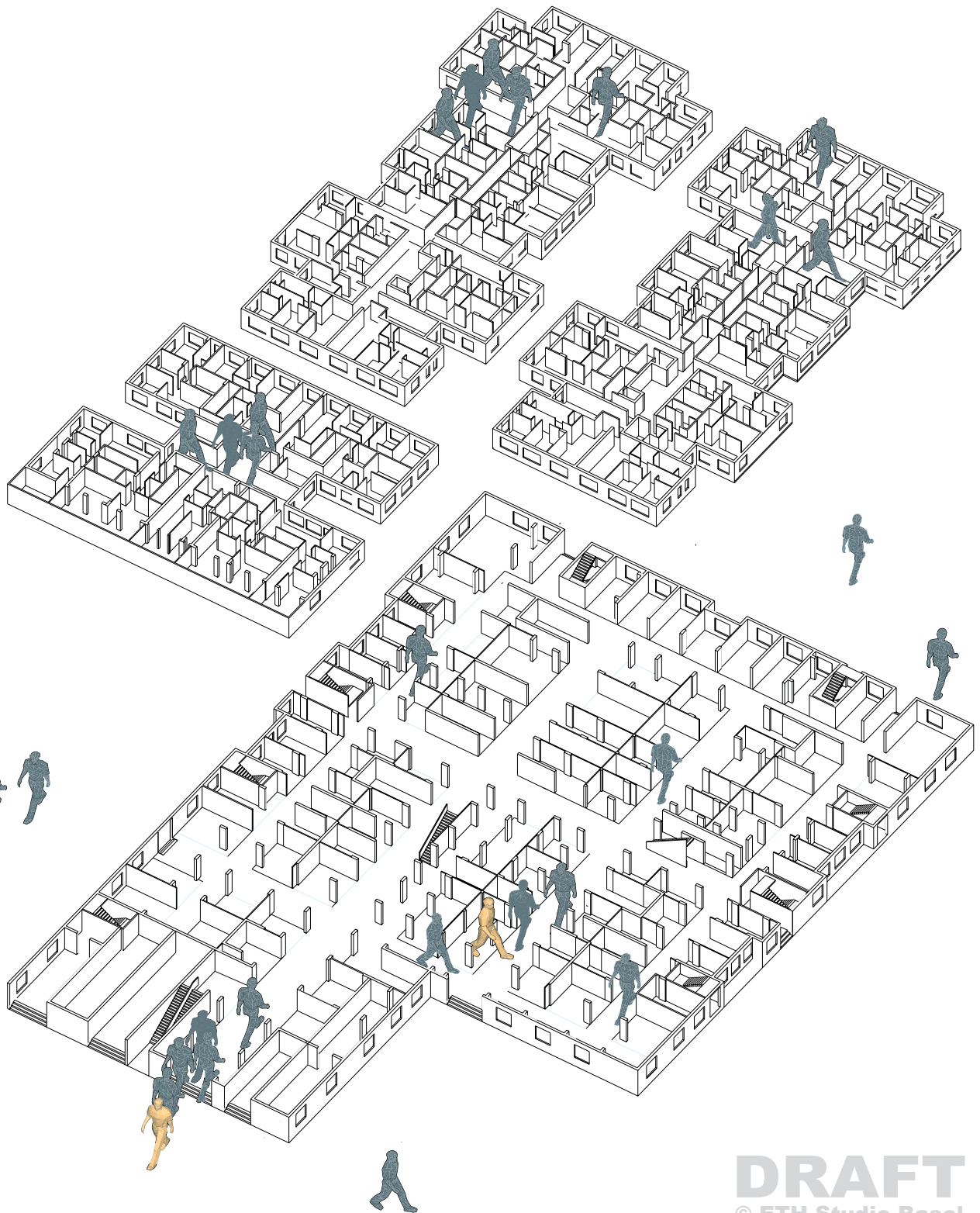
Mr Singh grew up in Hong Kong and is a resident here, as all of the shop managers.

He is doing most of his business -mobile trade- with Africans. As he announced, the bargain is quite tough. His customs compare prices in different shops the whole day, before they take the best offer.

His storage is partly in the building, partly outside in a larger storage.





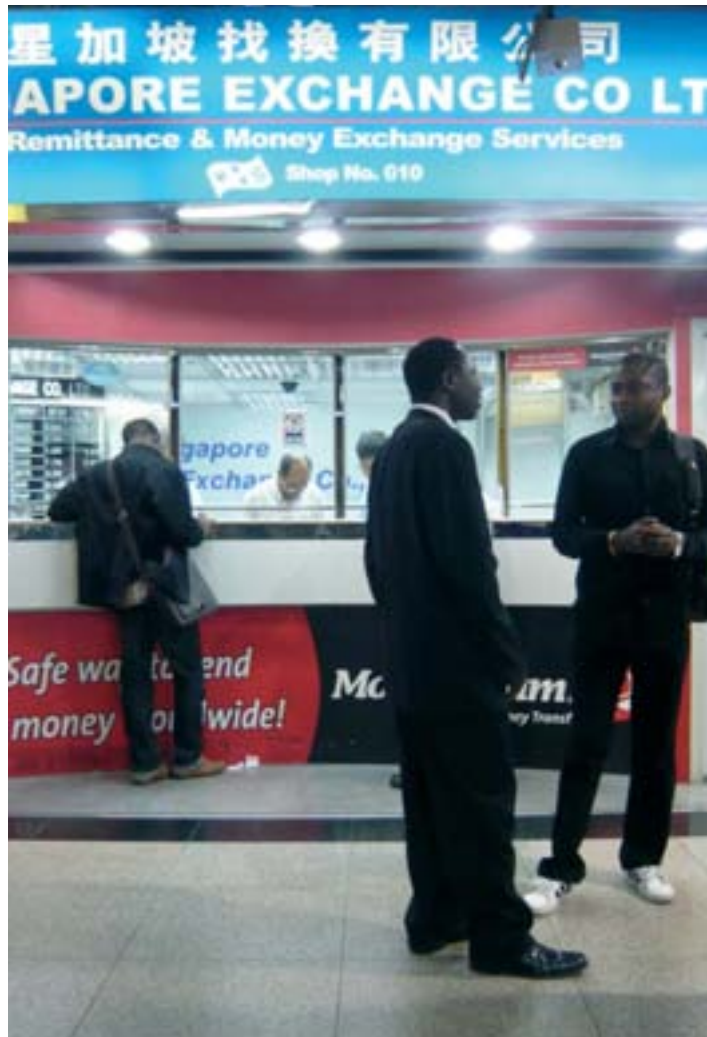


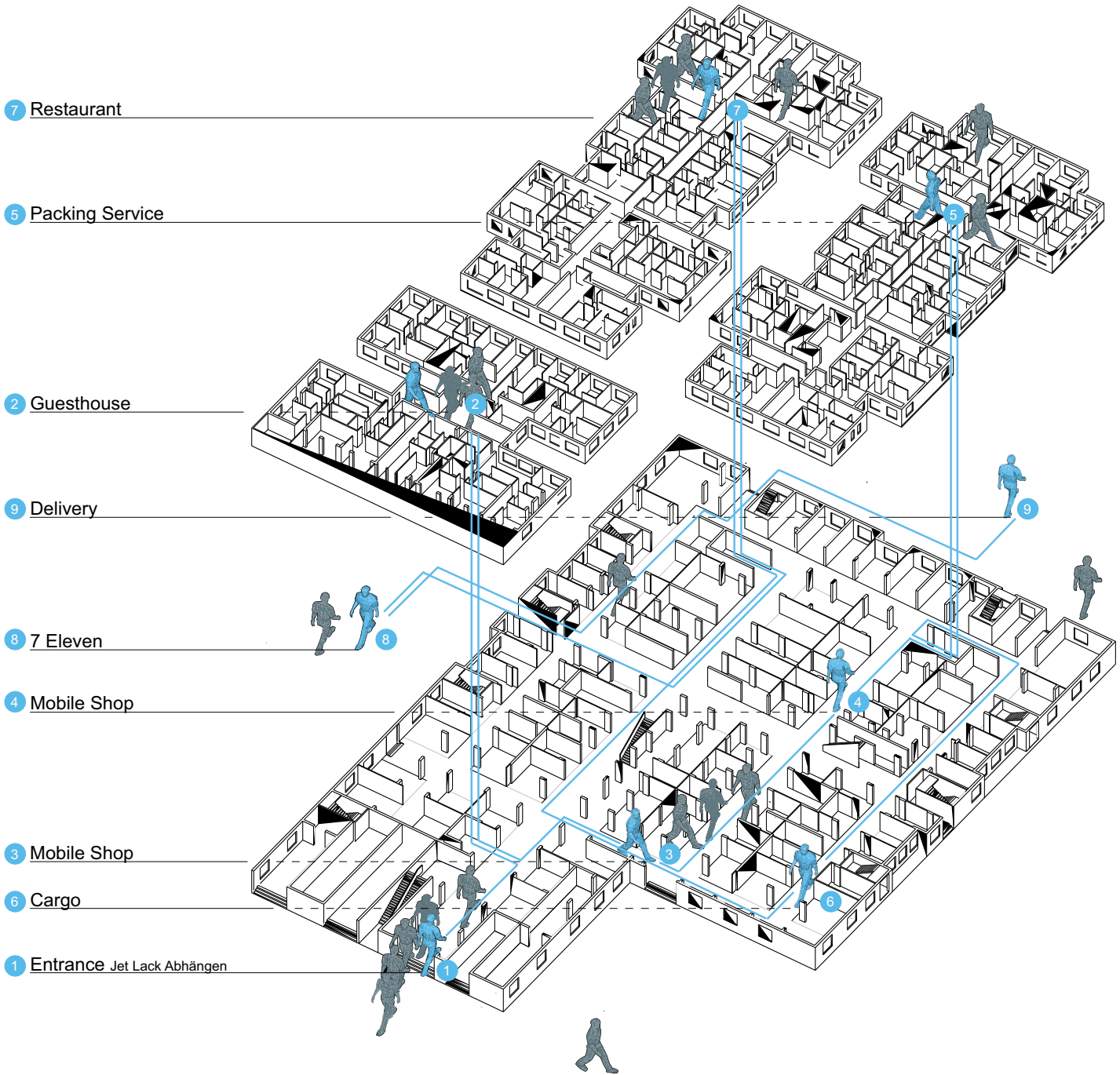
**PORTRAIT: BUSINESSMAN**

Most of the people one can see in Chungking Mansions are businessmen, mostly from sub-Saharan Africa. During the trade fairs in November and April in Guangzhou and Hong Kong, they take almost every available bed in Chungking Mansions.

Depending on the scale of their trades some of the traders carry their bought goods in their hand-luggage back to their home country. The alternative would be shipping or airplane.

They like the place because of its centrality. Most important, they feel at home.



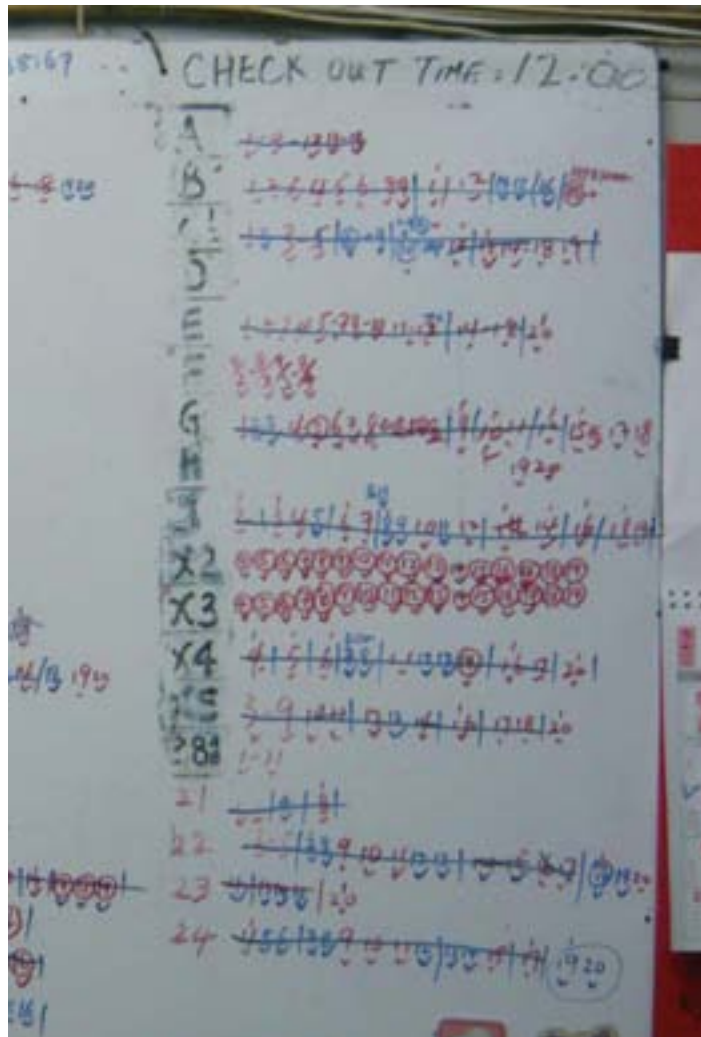


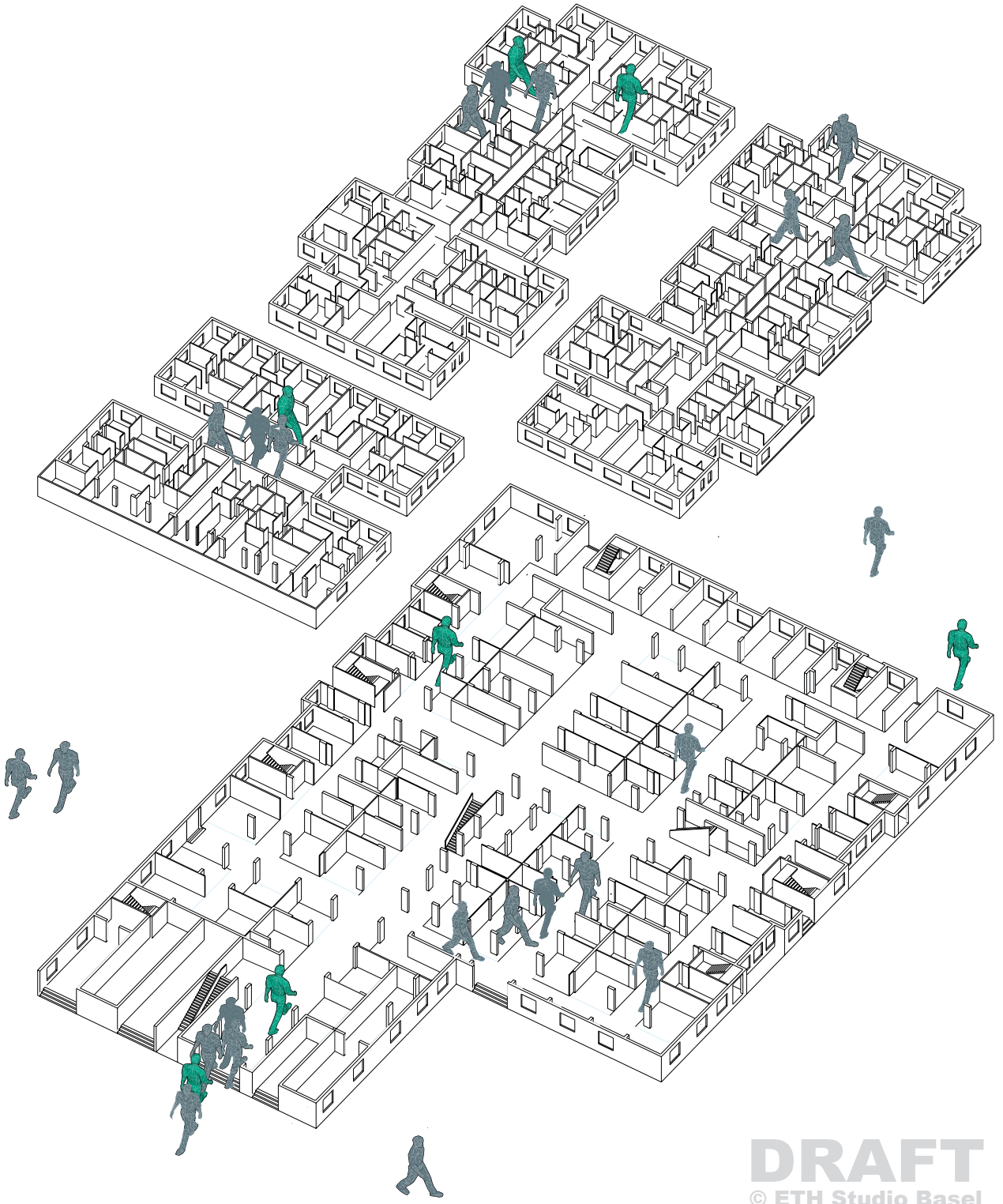
## PORTRAIT: BACKPACKER

"I particularly love the suicidal rats that throw themselves from the 16th floor windows. Most fun i've had in China probably!!"  
(Emma Bentley)

"I went to the African restaurant Marena Club. It is in Block B, 3/F. I had mutton with rice. Delicious! Reasonable price."  
(Marc Flewelling Wathen)

"... it's the SCARIEST place I have ever stayed in my life... So glad to get out of there alive...avoid the top floor.... the bed bugs were immense and management was doing nothing about it... made great friends though and in spite of my whinging I'd definitely go back...."  
(Louise Fisher)



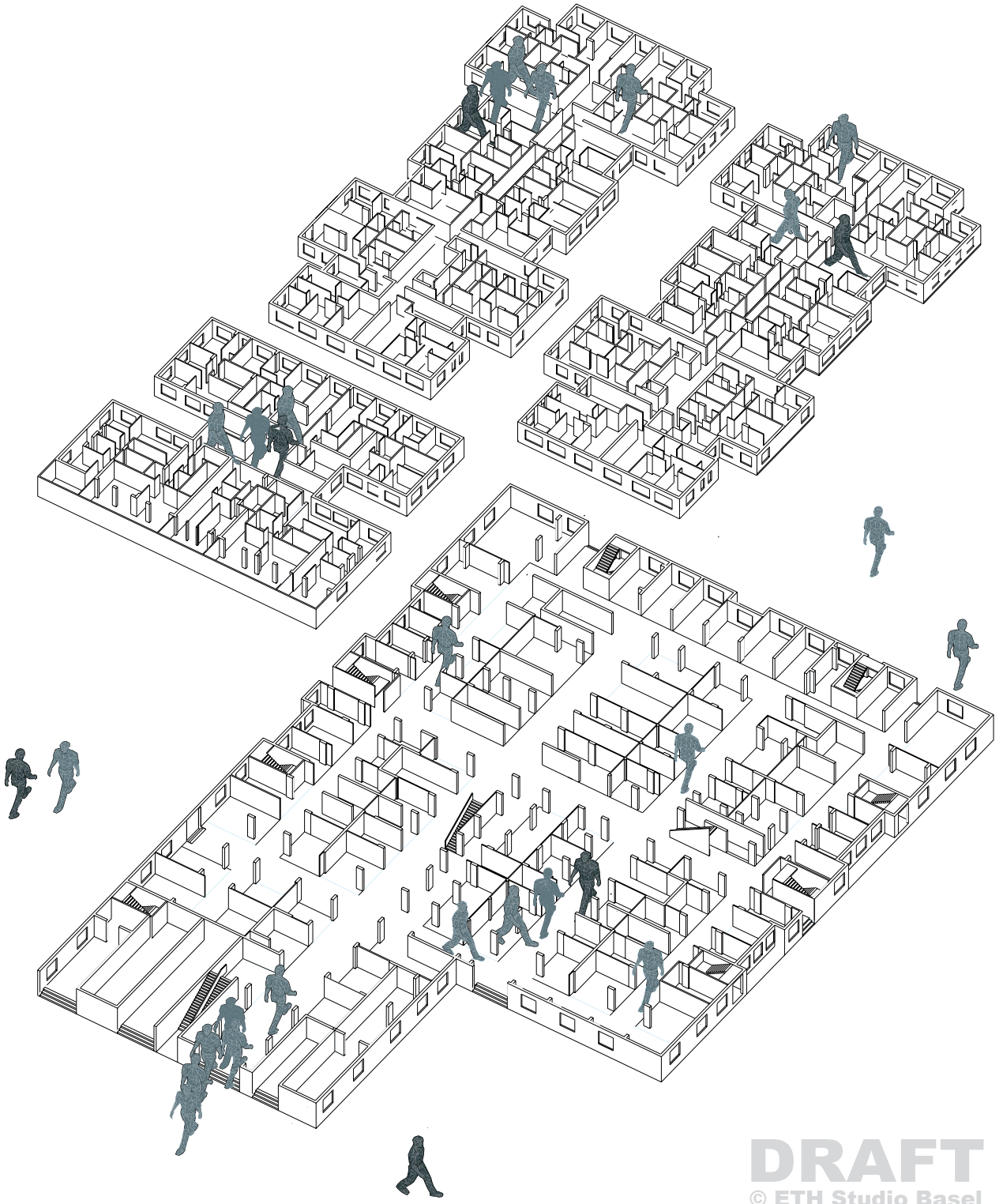


**PORTRAIT: ASYLUM SEEKERS**

Asylum seekers face great hardship in Hong Kong because they are not recognised by the Immigration Department and prohibited from earning any income. Asylum seekers arriving in Hong Kong make an application to the UNHCR and are resettled in a third country if their application is approved. The application process can take up to several years and during this time even basic survival is a challenge.

Having witnessed these needs, Chungking Mansions seemed an ideal location to serve both ethnic minority residents and asylum seekers.



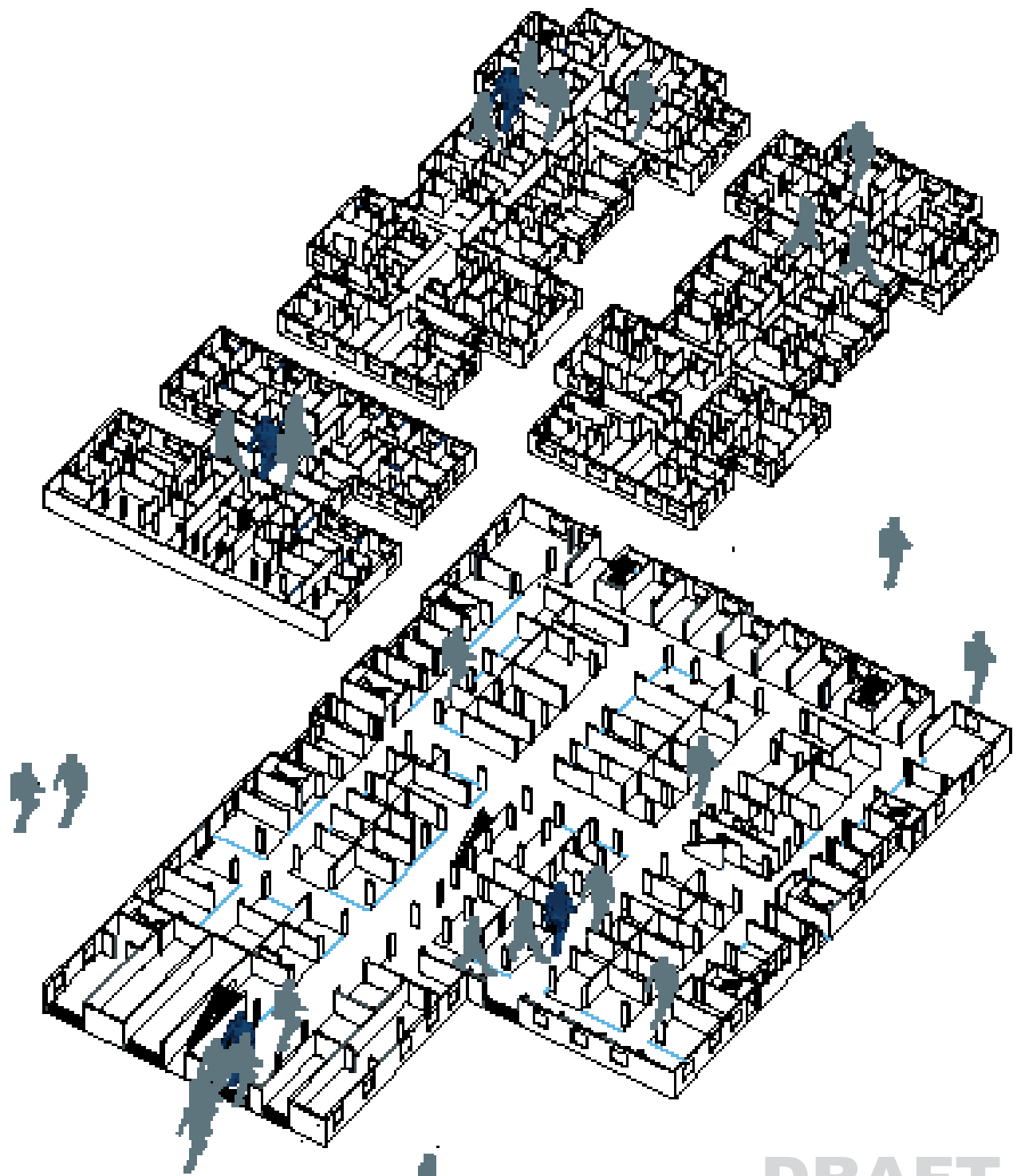


**PORTRAIT: WORKER**

Workers coming mainly from South Asia are working illegally on 14 days tourist visa. They finance their flight by bringing goods like Indian rice and spices to Hong Kong and on the backflight mobile phones to India.





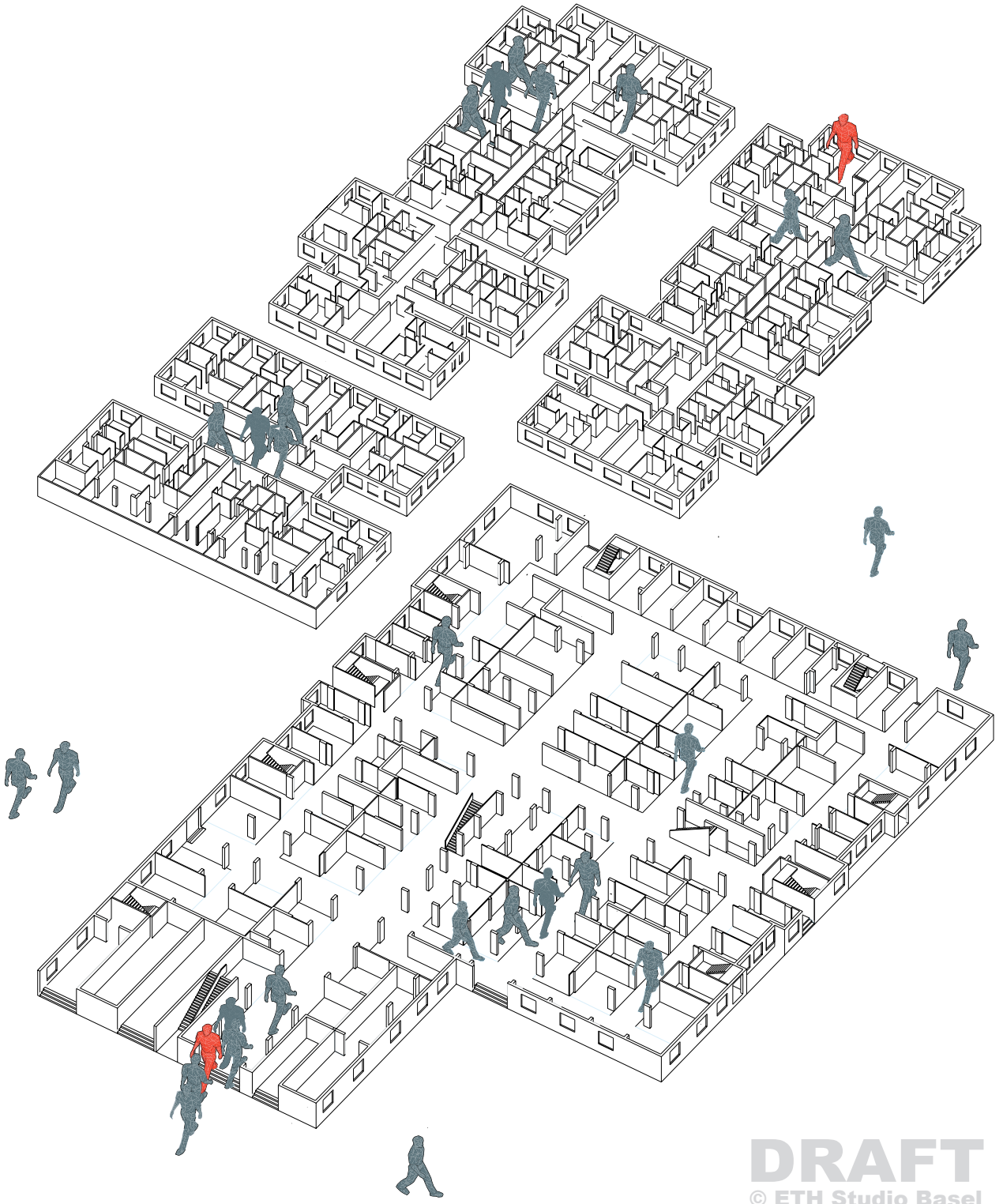


## CORPUS

### PORTRAIT: RESIDENT

There are two main groups of permanent residents in Chungking Mansions. Residents, which attend on the economic life and a few which are excluding.









*“You know I am able to afford better hotels, better accommodation, but I prefer staying in the Chungking Mansions, because it’s all about feeling at home here.”*

Hamshaikh, businessman from Bombay, India







ZOOM IN: GUESTHOUSE





**ZOOM IN: DELIVERY**





**ZOOM IN: MONEY EXCHANGE**





**ZOOM IN: ENTERTAINMENT**



**ZOOM IN: SEX WORKER**

*"In the late 80's / early 90's I frequently stayed in Chungking Mansion. When I wanted to I could ask the front desk and could get a decent young south asian girl in less than an hour. Great place."*

"isaan boy", [www.sex41.com](http://www.sex41.com)

*"We put a stop to solicitation if they do so in public. If they rent a guesthouse and conduct their business there privately and quietly, however, there is nothing we can do. The police raid the area every four months, so they might catch them instead."*

Choi, the security guard

*"There are some 80 sex workers...drawn by the heavily male, transient population of Chungking Mansions."*

Gordon Mathews





## ZOOM IN: DRUG SELLER

*Chungking's back alleys are regularly scenes of trouble and often used to settle disputes, but the situation is better than it used to be. Murders and stabbings hardly occur these days. Drug smuggling still exists, but in small quantities, and among Nepales immigrants, not locals. In fact, there are very few local triads in Chungking. They do not ask for protection money nor commit other crimes here. They simply want to distinguish themselves from 'outsiders'."*

Choi, the security guard

Most of the Nepalese are sons of Ghurkas, who have residence in Hong Kong, so the police cannot banish them.





10.00 a.m. : Police arrival - Car departure



**10.05 a.m. : Police departure - Car arrival**





PEKING GUEST HOUSE  
北京宾馆  
A2

SUPER GUEST HOUSE 超级宾馆  
CLEAN ROOM WITH BATH, KITCHEN, TV  
QUIET  
CHEAP  
A2

PEKING GUEST HOUSE  
北京宾馆  
A2



## **II. HABITAT**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Beside its global relations, Chungking Mansions is of course highly connected to its neighbourhood Tsim Sha Tsui, the southern tip of the Kowloon peninsula.

Historically Tsim Sha Tsui was a area within the city of Hong Kong, where a lot of "second-class" foreigners settled.

The harbour with the sailors and the barracks with its Gurkha soldiers characterized the area for a long time. They also influenced Chungking Mansions.

Land extensions have took place on the eastern and western seaside of the peninsula. Most of the larger new buildings are located there, offering a wide range of hotel and commercial use. Chungking Mansions belongs to the older part of the area, where a lot of buildings have a similar deteriorated appearance.

Traffic Infrastructure is on a high level, so Chungking Mansions sits within a network of fast accessible traffic nodes.

The lively international and functional mixture of Chungking Mansions is also appearing in Tsim Sha Tsui. One can see high-end luxury stores beside shopping malls, street markets and indian food stalls. There are also the most hotels in Hong Kong and therefor a lot of tourists are present in the area.

The area of Tsim Sha Tsui is in urban planning reports mentioned as a future spot for a new high-rise building concentration. The tallest tower of Hong Kong -the ICC- will be in this area.

The people of Chungking Mansions are using the space of Tsim Sha Tsui mostly for entertainment. Most of the business connections are kept inside.





Asylum Seekers United Na

the Portuguese establishing schools and churches

expanding eurasian population, racially mixed community Tsim Sha Tsui

SOUTH ASIANS  
BRITAINS

most came in as soldiers in the British Empire Army from India, Pakistan and Nepal / getting their residency, they started to set up own business

VIETNAM WAR 1956 - 1975 Hong Kong serves as a US Base

PRD 1949 Mao Tse Tung proclaims the PRD - wave of refugees capture Hong Kong

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WHISKEY the "Edinburgh" shop in Chungking Mansions sells the cheap

RIOTS 1966/67 series of disturbances over british colonial rule

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SECOND OPIUM WAR 1860 Kowloon becomes British

FIRST OPIUM WAR 1842 Hong Kong Island

small villages

Chungking Mansions  
Hong Kong  
Tsim Sha Tsui

enormous density / market-driven society / laissez-faire policies regardin

quarrying building stone for use in the new city of Victoria 1840s - 1880s

a very long - established village located around the eastern e

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY / FINANCIAL CENTER

Lonelyplanet

HARBOUR

BUILDING BOOM large scale immigration and enormous population growth lead to a hu

tourist industry prewar apartment blocks gradually gave away to multi storied h

economic downturn gambling Increasing n

Star Ferry 1888 regular transport between Central and Tsim Sha Tsui

Whitefield Barracks 1890 built for the gurkhas and indian garrisons with 85 barracks and a mosque - 1970 redeveloping of the barracks into kowloon park

Kowloon Mosque 1896 established Stanley mosque 1940 's established Chai wan mosque 1960's established

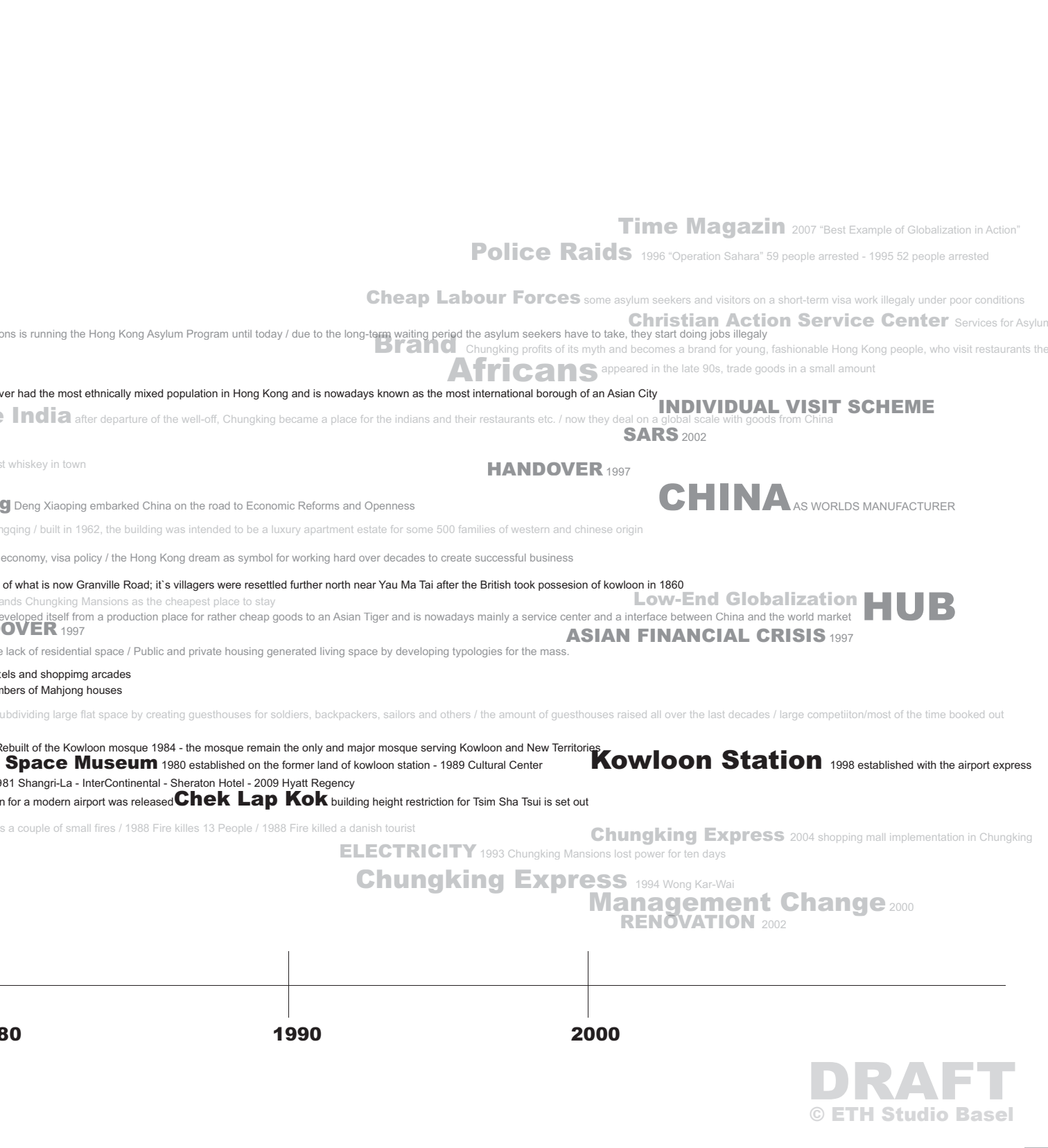
Kowloon Station 1910 established - southern terminus of the Kowloon-Canton Railway 1974 relocation to hung hum

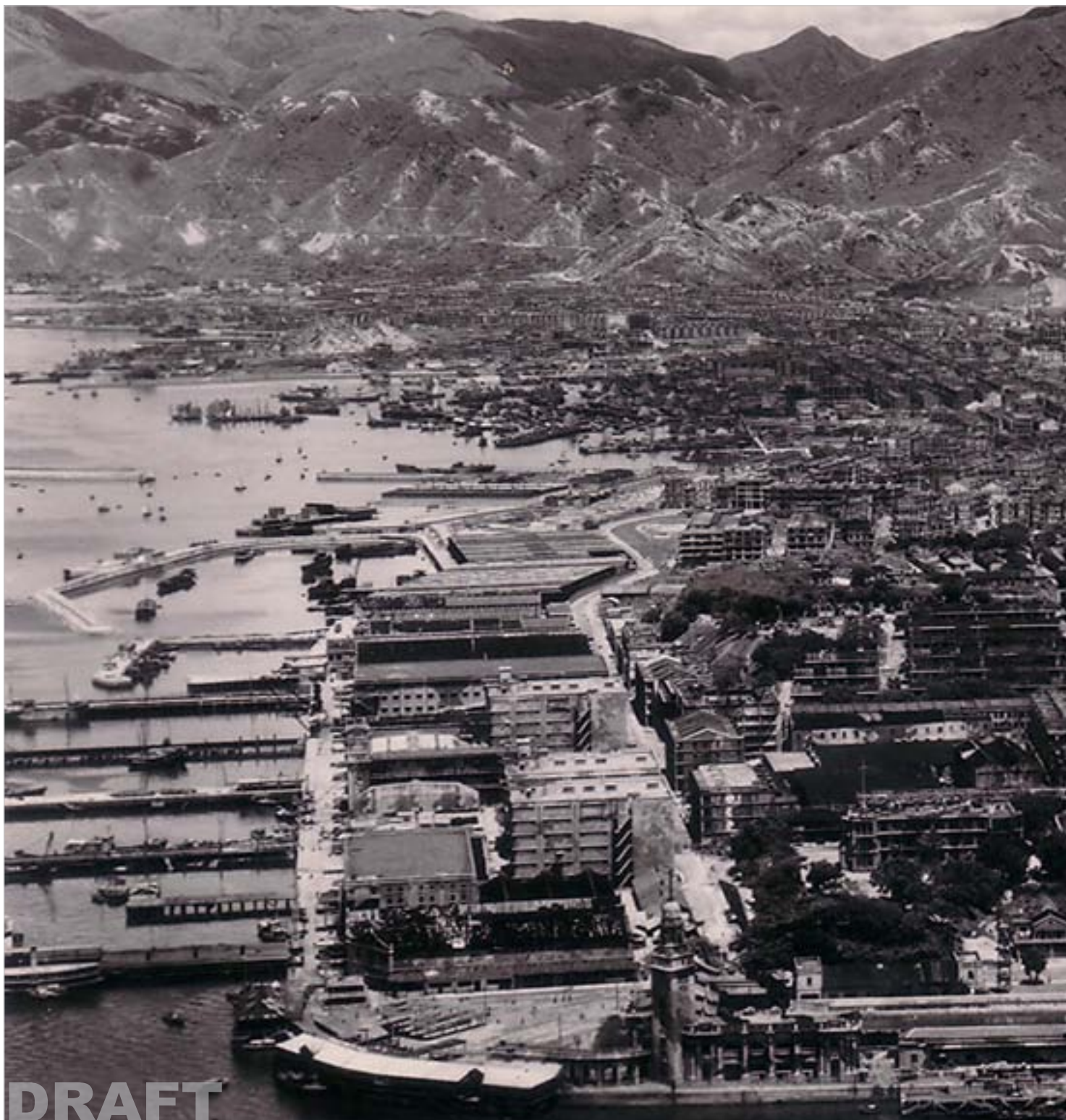
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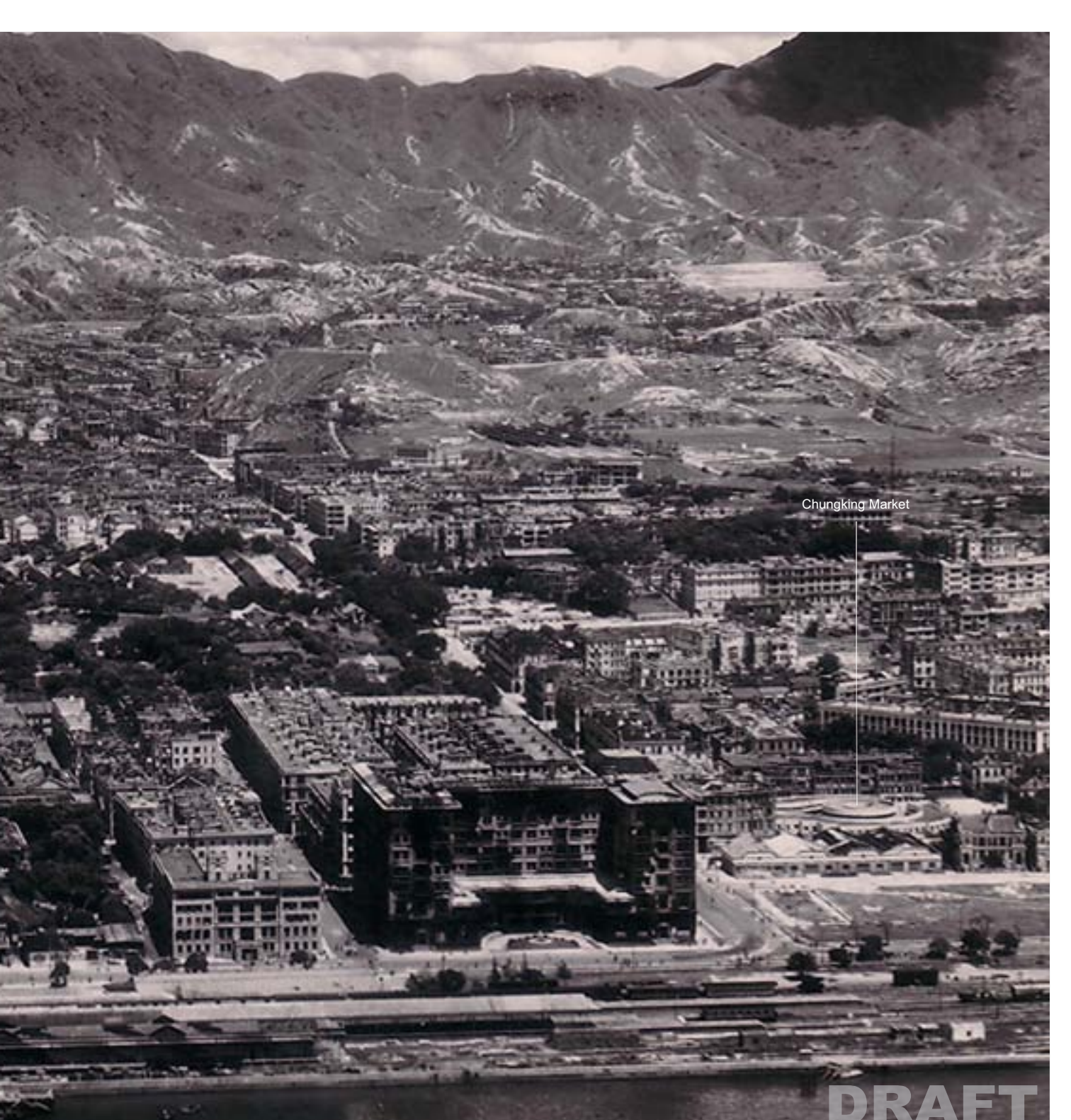






**DRAFT**

aerial photograph of Kowloon, with the borough of Tsim Sha Tsui in the foreground, 1945



Chungking Market

**DRAFT**

on the site of today's Chungking Mansions was before the Chungking Market



Whitfield Baracks

Chungking Mansions

The Peninsula Hotel

Marine Police Headquarters

part of the Harbour

**DRAFT**

aerial photograph of Tsim Sha Tsui, early 1960s



Kowloon Station

Star Ferry Pier

# NIKON

免税 TAX FREE

ACER SAMSUNG PANASONIC

JVC TOSHIBA SONY BOSE NO A

DRAFFIPS CANON NIKON IBM OLIMPU



# LOUIS VUITT

LOUIS VUITTON

LV

LOUIS

DRAFT  
© LVMH Studio Basel



**DRAFT Chungking outdoor facilities** Built in 1984 and located on



Nathan Road in a corner of Kowloon Park, the Kowloon Mosque caters to the more than 50,000 Moslems in the territory.

## HABITAT

## USE ZONES

### RESIDENTIAL

There are numbers of residential buildings in Tsim Sha Tsui, concentrated in the its older part. Most of the buildings are commercially used on the ground floor. There are doorkeepers controlling the flow of people. Tsim Sha Tsui is a very multi-cultural borough, there are a lot of people with a migration background living here. Most of them in the Chungking Mansions.

### PUBLIC

On the site of the former Kowloon Station at the very tip of Kowloon peninsula are several museums like Hong Kong Space Museum and the Hong Kong Cultural Centre located. One of the largest "free spaces" within an urbanized area in Hong Kong is the Kowloon Park, 100m away from Chungking Mansions. The Kowloon Park was created in the early 1970s and replaced the former Whitfield Barracks, a military place with lots of indian and nepalese soldiers, serving in the British Army. There are other popular landmarks such as Hong Kong Observatory or Signal Hill.



## BUSINESS AND HOTEL

The area of Tsim Sha Tsui consists of one square kilometer of shops, camera stores, restaurants, pubs and topless bars. There is a high mixture between luxury shops such as Gucci, traditional small shops runned by chinese hongkongnese or immigrants and large shopping malls like the Harbour City, Hong Kongs largest shopping mall. The large scale projects are mostly located in the extended land areas at the peninsula's eastern and western shore. It is said, that there is a lack of small shopping units to rent.

Tsim Sha Tsui also has the biggest concentration of hotels in Hong Kong. Some of these are Langham Hotel, The Peninsula, New World Renaissance, and Kowloon Shangri-La. Mid-range hotels in Kowloon include Eaton Hotel Hong Kong, the Salisbury YMCA, and Regal Kowloon Hotel. Low-end accomodation for backpackers can be found in Chungking and Mirador Mansions.

## INFORMAL STREET MARKET

The informal "street business" has a very high presence in the touristic area Tsim Sha Tsui is. During the day there are numbers of tailor hawkers, trying to persuade (western) customers to buy skirts etc. In the evening there are several spots, where street sex workers show up, for example the territory of mainland chinese sex workers is in front of Chungking Mansions, beside is the one of the indian sex workers, dressed in their traditional saris. There are also numbers of opportunities to buy drugs, mostly hash, around Chungking Mansions.



Business & Hotel

"informal street market"



**Chungking outdoor leisure** *"The people of Chungking are very*



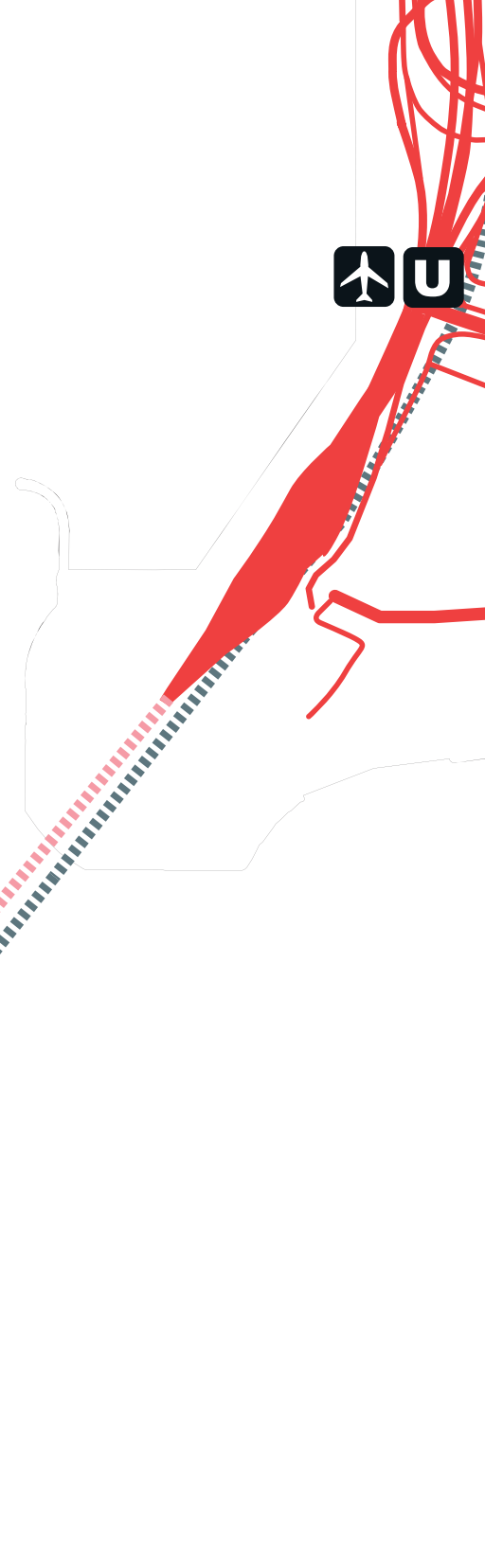
*well in using Tsim Sha Tsui. For example they hang out at 7Eleven. Or play midnight cricket at Star Ferry Pier” G. Mathews*

**DRAFT**  
© ETH Studio Basel

## 36-44 Nathan Road

The place of the Chungking Mansions is one of the best in Kowloon. In the southern tip of the peninsula, there are 4 major public transport systems reachable within a 5 minute footwalk starting from Chungking Mansions. Beside the road net is highly articulated. Chungking itself is located at 36-44 Nathan Road, probably the most lively street in Hong Kong.

Through the Kowloon Station, the airport of Hong Kong can be reached within 20 minutes. Generally, Hong Kong has better flight connections to the world than its Pearl River Delta competitors.





A stylized map of Kowloon, Hong Kong, with a red network of lines representing transport routes. A vertical grey dashed line runs through the center, and a red dotted line runs diagonally from the bottom right. Landmarks are marked with icons and text labels.

**Kowloon Station**

**U MTR Station**

 **China Ferry**

 **Chungking Mansions**

**U KCR Station**

 **Star Ferry**

*“The redevelopment process in Hong Kong is mostly economic/market driven. That means buildings will stay as long as there is a profit out of the building itself, e.g. rent / sales value. Chungking Mansion, in my personal opinion, will only be redeveloped if the developers can justify a use of higher commercial value, e.g. office/commercial; as there will not be too much gain in floor area after redevelopment compared to the existing building.”*

Mr. Mak Lawrence  
Senior Manager, Planning & Development, URA



i-square, shopping-mall, end 2010, 30m to Chungking



ICC Tower, commercial, end 2009, 500m to Chungking



Marine Police Headquarter, hotel, end 2009, 200m to Chungking



Hyatt Regency, hotel, end 2009, 50m to Chungking



# III. ENGINES

Asylum Seekers United Na

the Portuguese establishing schools and churches

expanding eurasian population, racially mixed community Tsim Sha Tsui

**SOUTH ASIANS**  
**BRITAINS**

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Littl

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Chungking Mansions  
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Lonelyplanet

**MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY / FINANCIAL CENTER**

the economy of Hong Kong

**HARBOUR**

**HANI**

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1888 regular transport between Central and Tsim Sha Tsui

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1890 built for the gurkhas and indian garrisons with 85 barracks and a mosque - 1970 redeveloping of the barracks into kowloon park

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1896 established

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**FIRE HAZARDS** 70's and 8



ons is running the Hong Kong Asylum Program until today / due to the long-term waiting period the asylum seekers have to take, they start doing jobs illegally

ver had the most ethnically mixed population in Hong Kong and is nowadays known as the most international borough of an Asian City

India after departure of the well-off, Chungking became a place for the indians and their restaurants etc. / now they deal on a global scale with goods from China

st whiskey in town

g Deng Xiaoping embarked China on the road to Economic Reforms and Openness

ngqing / built in 1962, the building was intended to be a luxury apartment estate for some 500 families of western and chinese origin

economy, visa policy / the Hong Kong dream as symbol for working hard over decades to create successful business

of what is now Granville Road; it's villagers were resettled further north near Yau Ma Tai after the British took possession of kowloon in 1860

lands Chungking Mansions as the cheapest place to stay

OVER 1997

developed itself from a production place for rather cheap goods to an Asian Tiger and is nowadays mainly a service center and a interface between China and the world market

lack of residential space / Public and private housing generated living space by developing typologies for the mass.

els and shopping arcades

bers of Mahjong houses

ubdividing large flat space by creating guesthouses for soldiers, backpackers, sailors and others / the amount of guesthouses raised all over the last decades / large competiiton/most of the time booked out

Rebuilt of the Kowloon mosque 1984 - the mosque remain the only and major mosque serving Kowloon and New Territories

Space Museum 1980 established on the former land of kowloon station - 1989 Cultural Center

1981 Shangri-La - InterContinental - Sheraton Hotel - 2009 Hyatt Regency

n for a modern airport was released

s a couple of small fires / 1988 Fire kills 13 People / 1988 Fire killed a danish tourist

**Time Magazin** 2007 "Best Example of Globalization in Action"

**Police Raids** 1996 "Operation Sahara" 59 people arrested - 1995 52 people arrested

**Cheap Labour Forces** some asylum seekers and visitors on a short-term visa work illegally under poor conditions

**Christian Action Service Center** Services for Asylum seekers

**Brand Africans** Chungking profits of its myth and becomes a brand for young, fashionable Hong Kong people, who visit restaurants there

appeared in the late 90s, trade goods in a small amount

**INDIVIDUAL VISIT SCHEME**

**SARS** 2002

**HANDOVER** 1997

**CHINA** AS WORLDS MANUFACTURER

**Low-End Globalization HUB**

**ASIAN FINANCIAL CRISIS** 1997

**Kowloon Station** 1998 established with the airport express

**Chungking Express** 2004 shopping mall implementation in Chungking

**ELECTRICITY** 1993 Chungking Mansions lost power for ten days

**Chungking Express** 1994 Wong Kar-Wai

**Management Change** 2000

**RENOVATION** 2002



The high complex composition and interaction of the Chungking Mansions population is one of the main engine which creates the phenomena of Chungking Mansions.

The Composition of Minoritys in Hong Kong is quite unlike to the composition of Chungking Mansions.

Basically, Hong Kong is a society of migrants. Within the population, about 7% are non-Chinese who came from various places in Asia, Europe and North America. The biggest Group of immigrants is formed by filipinos and indonesians. 93% of the population is of Chinese descent. In the past, there were large numbers of immigrants from mainland China and a small number of foreigners also moved here. More recently, considerable numbers of Hong Kong persons have emigrated overseas. The continual movement of the population is a characteristic of Hong Kong.

The continual movement of population is also a characteristic of Chungking Mansions. The difference is the intense and time sequence of movement. In Chungking Mansions the ethnic composition change from day to day. From April til November many Africans come to Chungking Mansions because of the fair trades in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. During the chines new year or today during the olympic games mostly chinese occupy the guesthouses. Chugking Mansions is exposed to a permanently fluctuations of people with different origin.

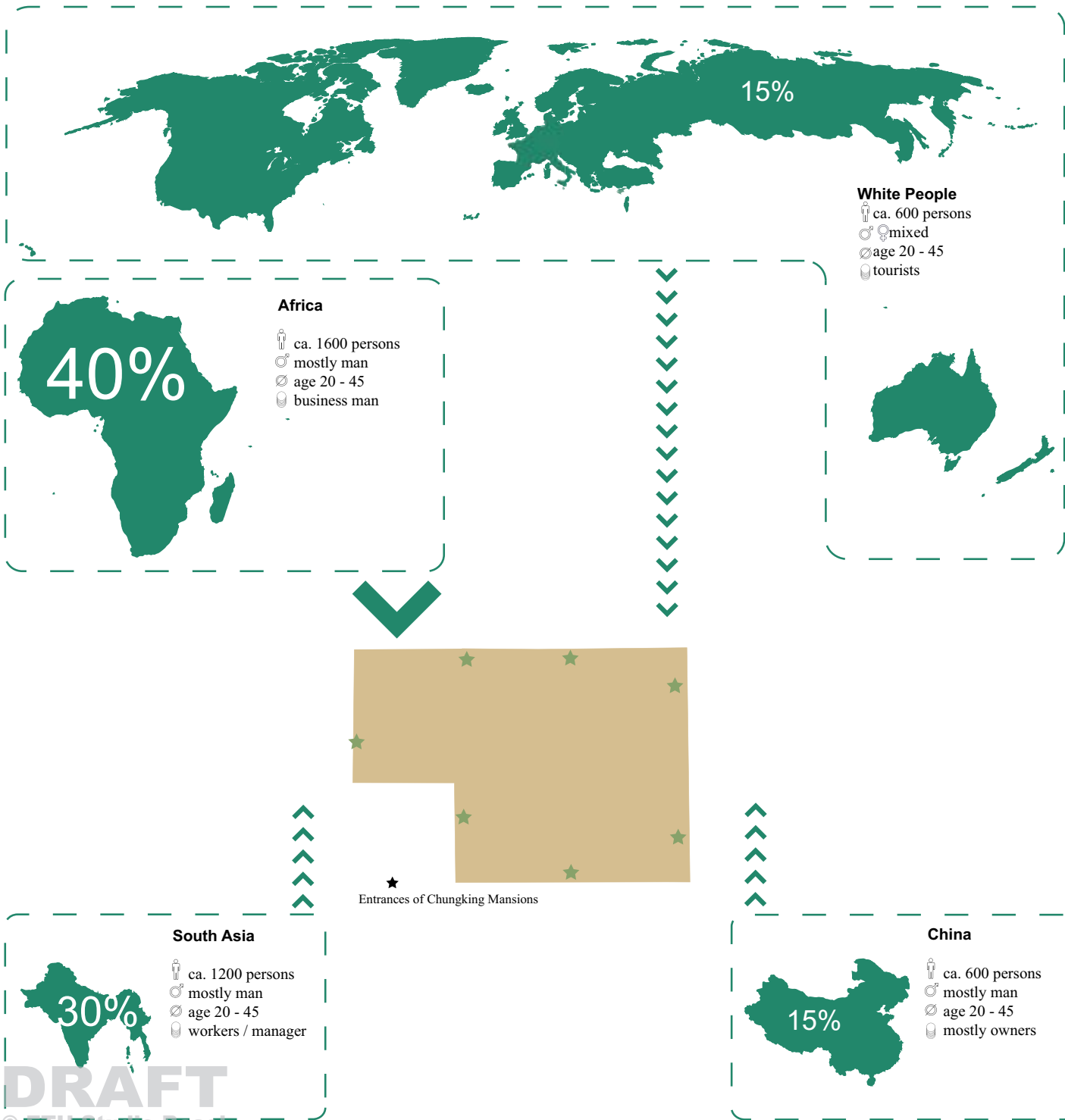
Conditions which affect this fluctuation of Population are the visa policy, minority occupation, density and security.





# ENGINES

# IMMIGRATION



### United Kingdom



- 24'990 persons
- 60% ♂ 40% ♀
- age 35-39
- first degree course
- christianism
- 39,7 % managers
- colonialism

### China



- 6'522'148 persons
- 49% ♂ 51% ♀
- age 65+
- first degree course
- all kind of jobs
- establishment PRD



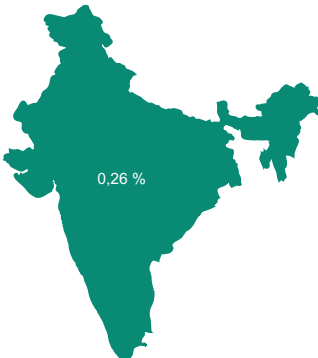
★ Immigration Control Points

### Philippines



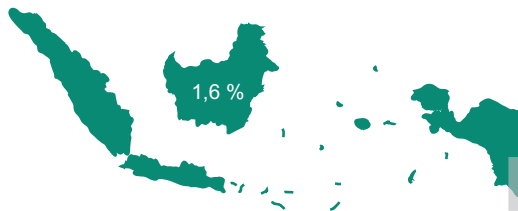
- 115'349 persons
- 6,2% ♂ 93,8% ♀
- age 35-39
- first degree course
- catholicism, islam
- 93% elementary work
- economic reasons

### India



- 17'782 persons
- 50,7% ♂ 49,3% ♀
- age 30-34
- first degree course
- hinduism, islam
- 30% managers
- economic reasons, globalization

### Indonesia



- 110'576 persons
- 8,4% ♂ 91,6% ♀
- age 25-29
- sixth form
- islam
- 92,9% elementary work
- economic reasons

## VISA POLICY

*“After reunification, the HKSAR continues to have autonomy over its immigration control. It has a very liberal visa policy for visitors. People from more than 170 countries and territories may come to Hong Kong visa-free for visits lasting for seven to 180 days.*

*Professionals and business people are welcome to work and invest in Hong Kong. Persons applying for permission to reside, work or study in the HKSAR are required to obtain visas or entry permits before arrival.”*

Immigration Department of Hong Kong

The visa policy of Hong Kong is assumed to be as liberal as it is now, due to the city's tradition as a global city and therewith the need for a fast exchange of people, informations and goods.

### CHINA PDR

#### **RESTRICTIVE**

Except Japan, Singapur and Brunei, all visitors are in need of a visa for China.

On the other hand it's a question of time, when China will loosen the visa regulations for businessmen.

The Peoples Democratic Republic knows even for inland movements special laws for their citizens.

### HONG KONG SAR

#### **VERY LIBERAL**

Hong kong visitors from developing countries do not have to obtain a visa prior to their arrival.

A range between 7-day to 90-day visas you can get on your arrival at the airport.

Due to an increase in asylum seekers, governement will probably tighten the visa restrictions.

### CHUNGKING MANSIONS S/Z

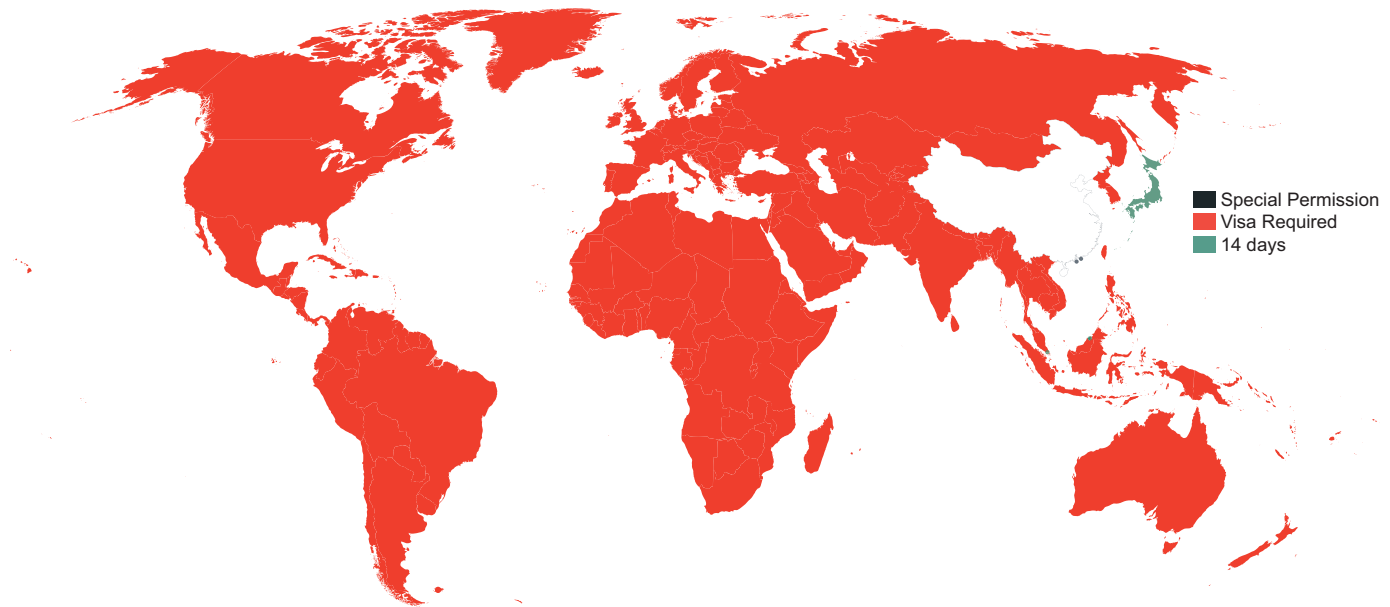
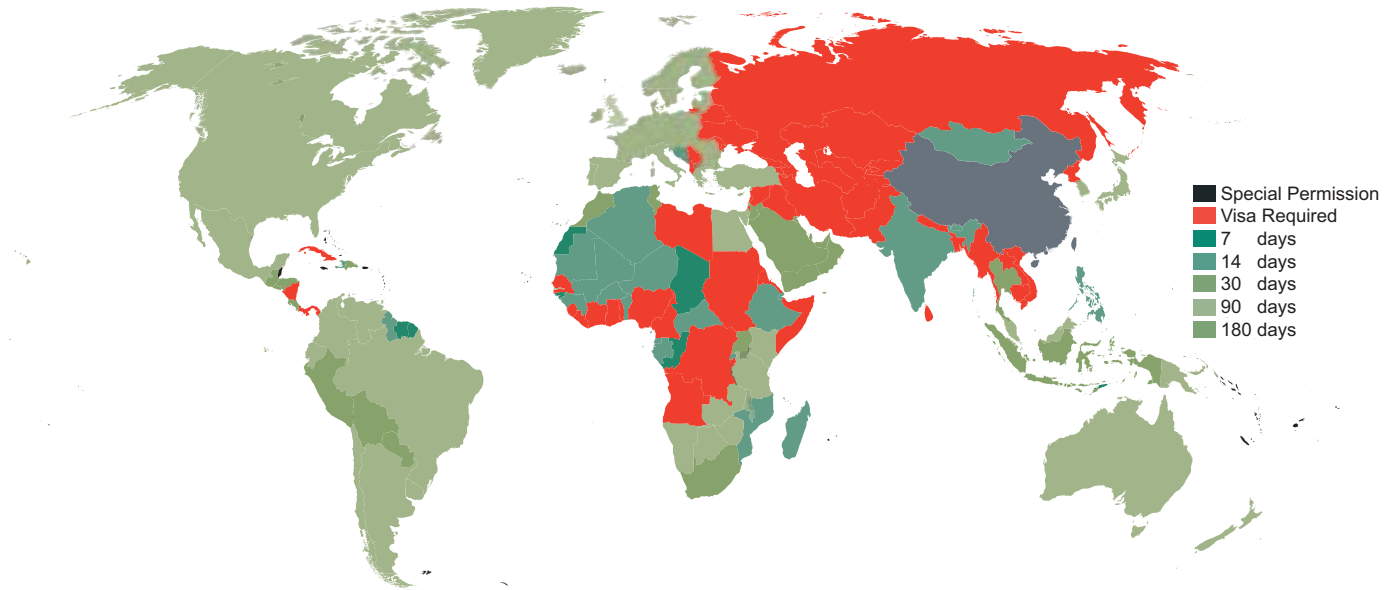
#### **EXTREMELY LIBERAL - OPEN DOOR**

For businessmen, there is less bureaucratic efforts to do. Even on a 14-day visa, they can come to Chungking Mansions, inspect goods and obtain a visa for China to visit the factory and do business.

A lot of people in Chungking Mansions illegally work under tourist visa, They don't tend to overstay and earn their money by working in Chungking Mansions, so they are not a big issue for Hong Kong Government.

A lot of asylum seekers life and work inside Chungking Mansions. If they would disappear, the system would transform or crash.

The african businessmen are the major group of customs in Chungking Mansions. Their disappearance would be a heavily problem for the system.



**MINORITY OCCUPATION**

Spatial segregation on the level of ethnic minorities and social classes is as old as the city of Hong Kong. For example, Hong Kong Island is up to now the centre of the well-off western community. On the other hand Kowloon and especially its southern tip Tsim Sha Tsui has been a place for the international soldiers, sailors and "second class" immigrants such as indians, pakistanis and nepalese. The ethnic minorities are forming their relation networks mostly within their racial belonging.

On a social level Hong Kong consist of various ethnical and social class subcultures, which have several degrees of presence in the city. They can have a highly temporary character and show up in a repetitive rhythm or they can be stable for the moment in one place.

*"Chungking Mansions is not part of Hong Kong but an island of the developing world in Hong Kong's heart."*

Gordon Mathews

**HONG KONG SAR****PERMANENT-TEMPORARY**

There is a visible distinction between permanent and temporary segregation of ethnic minorities.

The most sensational forming of a temporary segregated community on a spatial level is the filipino gathering each sunday at Central. They simply occupy the one spot in the city, where on working days deals of millions of dollars are transacted. Under the week they are working as nannies spread all over Hong Kong. So they are limited to these sundays to see each other.

There are a lot of different spatially locatable spots where segregation on different formal levels and scales takes part.

**CHUNGKING MANSIONS S/Z****PERMANENTLY EXTREME**

Chungking Mansions is the largest spot in Hong Kong where the presence of ethnic minorities is permanently visible and in that sense the extreme of Hong Kong.

The inhabitants of Chungking Mansions have a feeling for the place and the importance of it for their economical surviving, but they do not see themselves as a community, so they stay in their origin cultural networks.

*"Much ethnic interaction is purely practical"*

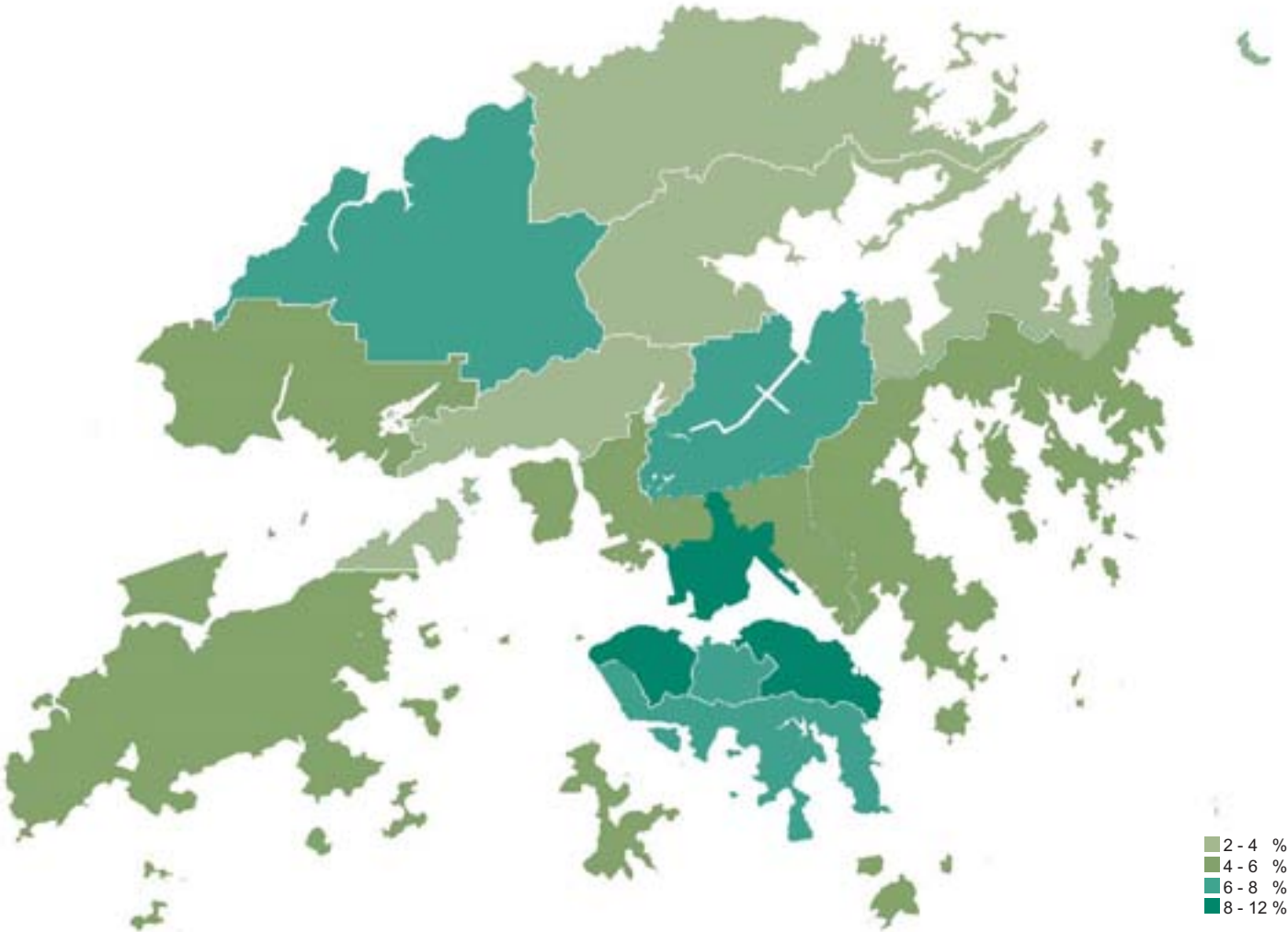
Gordon Mathews

At least it is a functional community within a high density, which forces them to interact frequently.

These functional layers are partly independent. There are even spatial segregations within the building, which are forming semi-permanent territories, occupied by different groups of interest.

There is also a huge gap between the rich and the poor in Chungking Mansions which leads to class tensions. Exploitation is present.

Proportion of minorities in Hong Kong districts



*“For decades Hong Kong has been one of the most densely populated metropolitan areas in the world. The city has demonstrated to the world that a high density does not necessarily equate to overcrowding and poor living conditions. On the contrary, it shows how a high density living environment practically works to result in a sustainable and efficient utility and infrastructure network and public transport system, economy of scale in provision of scale in provision of public facilities, enabling a highly diversified and vibrant character of the city.”*

Vincent Ng, “urban density and renewal”, WA (worldarchitecture)



DENSITY PER DISTRICT

District                      Population per km<sup>2</sup>

**Hong Kong Island**

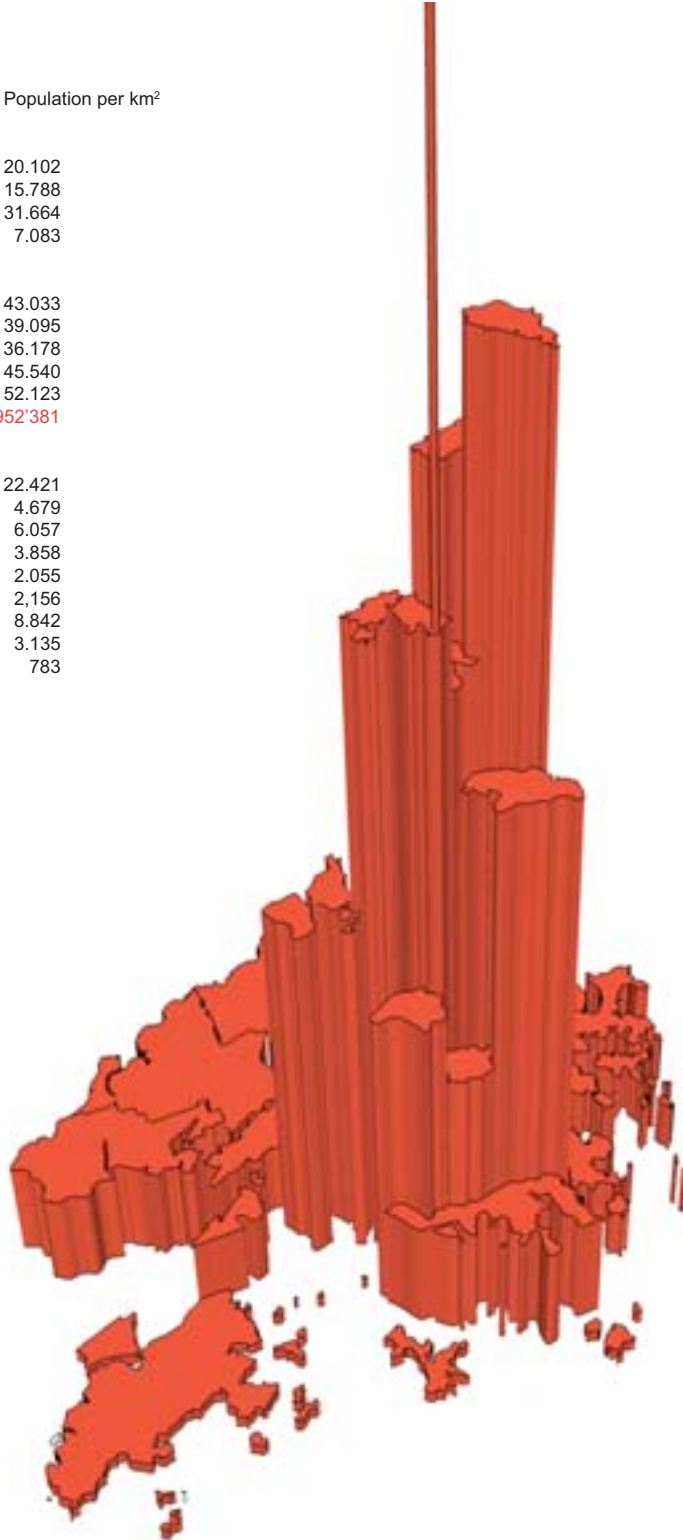
1 Central and Western	20.102
2 Wan Chai	15.788
3 Eastern	31.664
4 Southern	7.083

**Kowloon**

5 Yau Tsim Mong	43.033
6 Sham Shui Po	39.095
7 Kowloon City	36.178
8 Wong Tai Sin	45.540
9 Kwun Tong	52.123
10 Chungking Mansions	952'381

**New Territories**

11 Kwai Tsing	22.421
12 Tsuen Wan	4.679
13 Tuen Mun	6.057
14 Yuen Long	3.858
15 North	2.055
16 Tai Po	2.156
17 Sha Tin	8.842
18 Sai Kung	3.135
19 Islands	783



*“What may be the most globalized building in the world is generally non-violent due to the common pursuit of profit by all who sojourn there. Neoliberalism, in this sense, more or less works as a creator of global peace.”*

Gordon Mathews

*In a free society, it is hard for “evil” people to do “evil,” especially since one man’s good is another’s evil.*

Milton Friedman

*All Hong Kong is held victim by the thugs of organised crime and local street gangs. Many triads attempt to spread the myth of one invincible, invisible and all-powerful organisation. This dogma is meant to terrify victims into silence.*

The Hong Kong Police

*“There are no triads in Chungking Mansions, due to the fact, that these people would stand out there.”*

Gordon Mathews

### HONG KONG SAR

#### **SECURE PLACE**

Hong Kong is meant to be one of the securest places in the world.

### CHUNGKING MANSIONS SIZ

#### **SECURE PLACE**

The guards and the police are widely liked by the Chungking Mansions inhabitants, because they guarantee a certain grade of security. Due to its “status” as a “non politic place” Chungking Mansions allows different groups to life next to each other. It is said, that there are African traders which have 50'000 US\$ cash in their pockets.



The Economy of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) is known as one of the most liberal in the world. The center of its economic freedom comes from the government's hands-off policy. This model was developed in Hong Kong and Taiwan as a response to analyzing the cultural revolution effect in China

Hong Kong's model allowed for the flexibility and renovation of any given industry in a very short time. The economy of Hong Kong's has transformed and re-adapted itself to different periods of time, there were e.g. big transformation processes from a second sector based economy in the 60's and 70's to a highly service oriented one nowadays.

Hong Kong is the largest source of overseas direct investment in the Chinese mainland. Multinational companies are attracted to Hong Kong by a combination of the territory's English common law legal system, its low tax regime and its historical trading links and unique access to the People Republic of China.

Further on Hong Kong is the most important entrepot for the Chinese mainland. If re-exports to and from the Chinese mainland are included, about 21% of the mainland's foreign trade was handled via Hong Kong. The Special Administrative Region has also become a very important window to the world for the mainland based Entreprises.

Articles 106-8 of the Basic Law guarantees that Hong Kong can maintain an independent taxation system free of Chinese interference until the year 2047 while article 116 guarantees that the territory will remain a free port and a separate customs area from the mainland.



## ENGINES

### GLOBAL MARKET

*“Hong Kong follows the economic policies of free enterprise and free trade. There are no import tariffs.....Except in the very broadest sense, economic planning as such is not practised by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).”*

Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

*“Neoliberalism may be broadly defined as an ideology emphasizing the market as the ultimate arbiter of value, and advocating minimal restriction of the market by the state.”*

Gordon Mathews

*I define “low-end globalization” as the transnational flow of people and goods involving relatively small amounts of capital and informal, sometimes semi-legal or illegal transactions, commonly associated within the developing world.”*

Gordon Mathews

*“Globalization is both less rigid and territorial and more flexible and flowing; interested it seems only in networking and increased production rather than in politics.”*

Ackbar Abbas, “Theory of the fake” HK alphabet (map-office)

CHINA PDR

### WORLDS MANUFACTORER

HONG KONG SAR

### GLOBAL HUB

CHUNGKING MANSIONS SIZ

### LOW-END GLOBAL HUB

BOC	2,631 mil US \$
China Telecom	1,513 mil US \$
China Life Insurance	3,441 mil US \$
PICC Property and Casualty	801 mil US \$
Sinotrans	504 mil US \$
Ping An Insurance	1,845 mil US \$
Semiconductor Manufacturing	1,783 mil US \$
China Netcom Group	1,300 mil US \$
Air China	1,237 mil US \$
China Shipping Container	989 mil US \$
Hutchison Telecommunications	932 mil US \$
China Construction Bank	9,231 mil US \$
China Shenhua Energy	3,287 mil US \$
Bank Communications	2,171 mil US \$
China Cosco Holding	1,230 mil US \$
ICBC	22,04 mil US \$
BOC	11,15 mil US \$
China Merchants Bank	2,660 mil US \$
China Communications	2,380 mil US \$
China Coal Energy	1,944 mil US \$

**CEPA** Economic agreement between SAR Hong Kong and the PRC. Its providing enhanced access for Hong Kong products, service providers and professionals to the mainland market. all Hong Kong-produced products can be exported tariff-free to the mainland

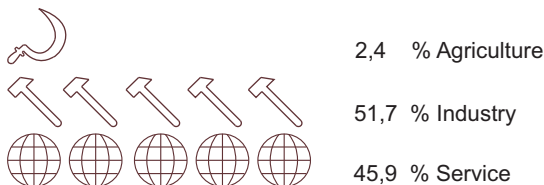
Honk Kong Stock Exchange

Major Reasons for using Hong Kong census under US - Companies

Free flow of Capital	51,2 %
Legal system	48,8 %
Banking and financial System	48,8 %
Geographical Position	43,9 %
Tax regime	39 %
Free flow of Information	39 %
Logistics and transportation	36,6 %
Availability of professional services	34,1 %

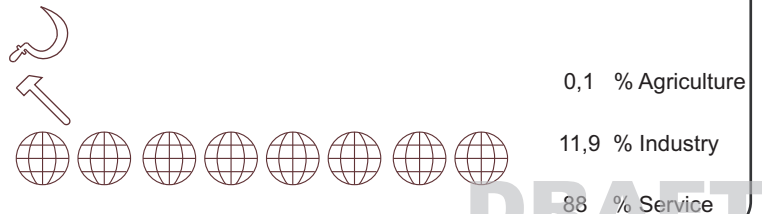
**Pearl River Delta** PRC + SEZ  
2006

GDP	302.7 bn US \$
GDP per capita	5.890 US \$
GDP growth	16,6 %
Inflation	1.7 %



**Hong Kong** SAR  
2006

GDP	189.5 bn US \$
GDP per capita	27.460 US \$
GDP growth	6,9 %
Inflation	2 %



# ENGINES

## HONG KONG IMPORTS

main items	
24,2 %	telecommunication
12,9 %	office machines
5,5 %	articles of apparel
4,2 %	textile yarn
2,4 %	photographic apparatus

principal supplier	
45,9 %	mainland China
10,3	Japan
7,5%	Taiwan
6,3%	Singapore
4,8%	USA

## HONG KONG RE-EXPORTS

main items	
15,4%	telecommunication
12,7%	office machines
7,2%	articles of apparel
4,5%	textile yarn
3,5%	photographic apparatus

main markets	
48.0%	mainland China
14,5%	USA
5,0%	Japan
3,0%	Germany
2,8%	United Kingdom

## CHUNGKING IMPORTS

main items	
*	mobiles
*	watches
*	garment
*	spices
*	tools

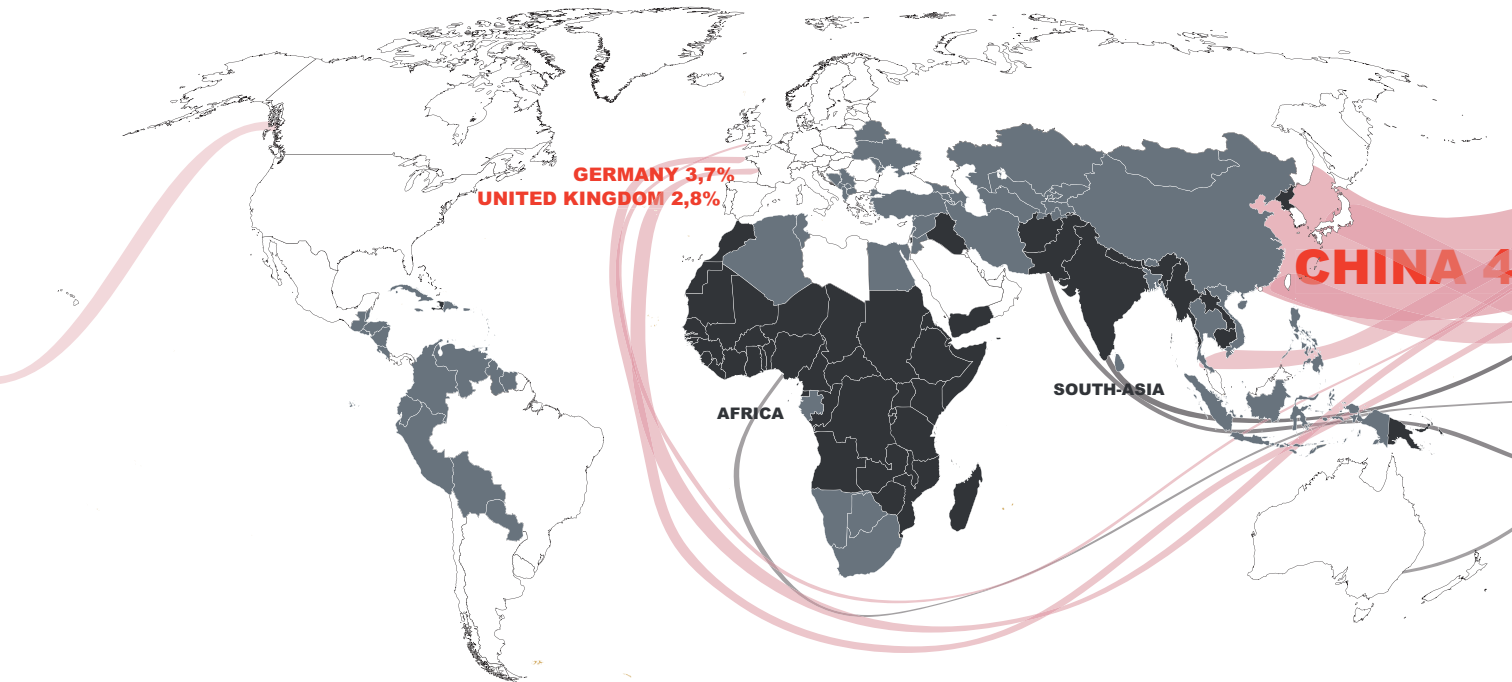
principal supplier	
*	mainland China
*	south-east Asia

## CHUNGKING RE-EXPORTS

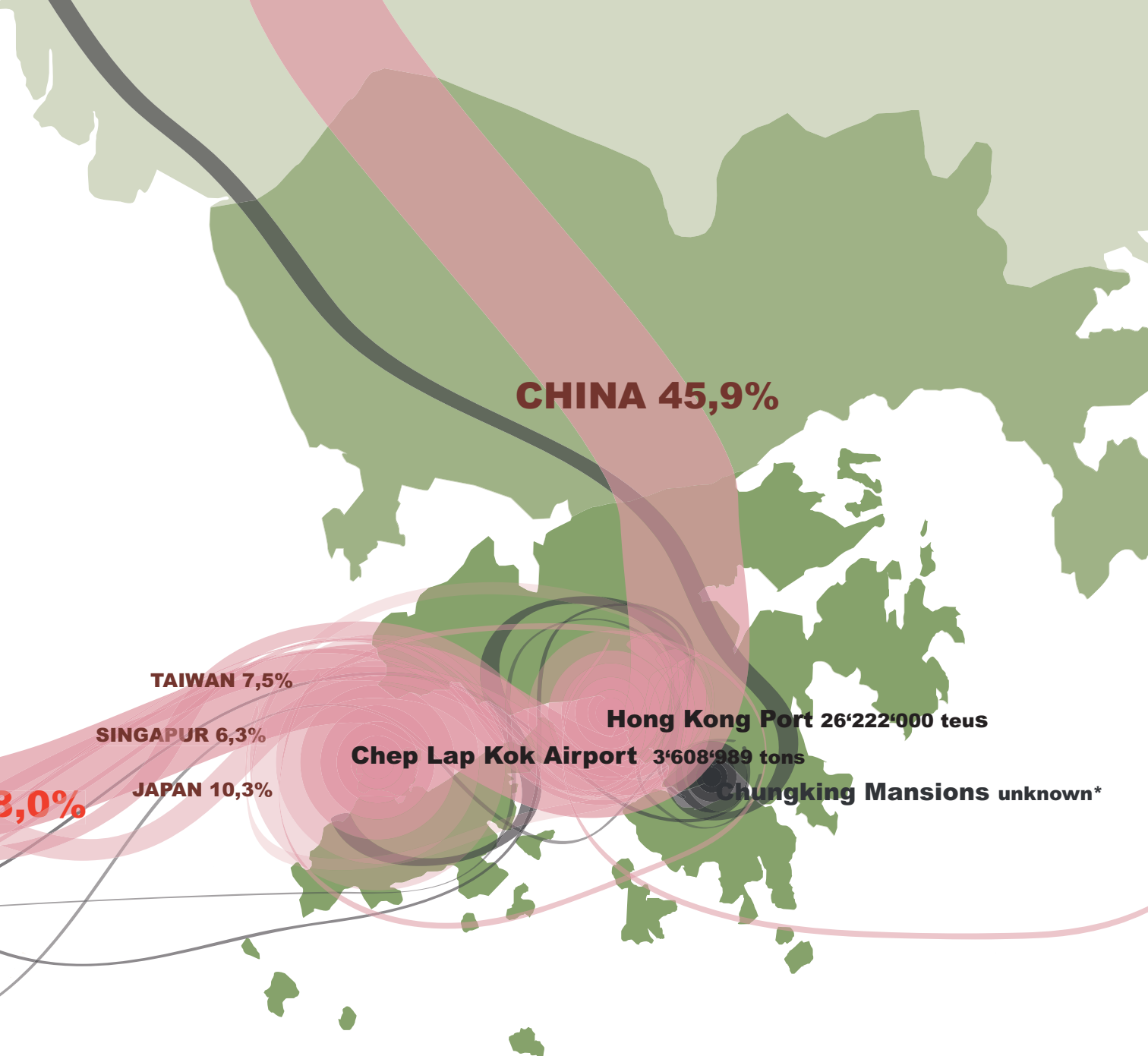
main items	
*	mobiles
*	watches
*	garment
*	tools
*	diamonds

main markets	
	Developing World

\*incountable







*“The Government’s policy is to minimise intervention in the private property market and to maintain a fair and stable environment to facilitate the healthy development of the private property market.”*

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government

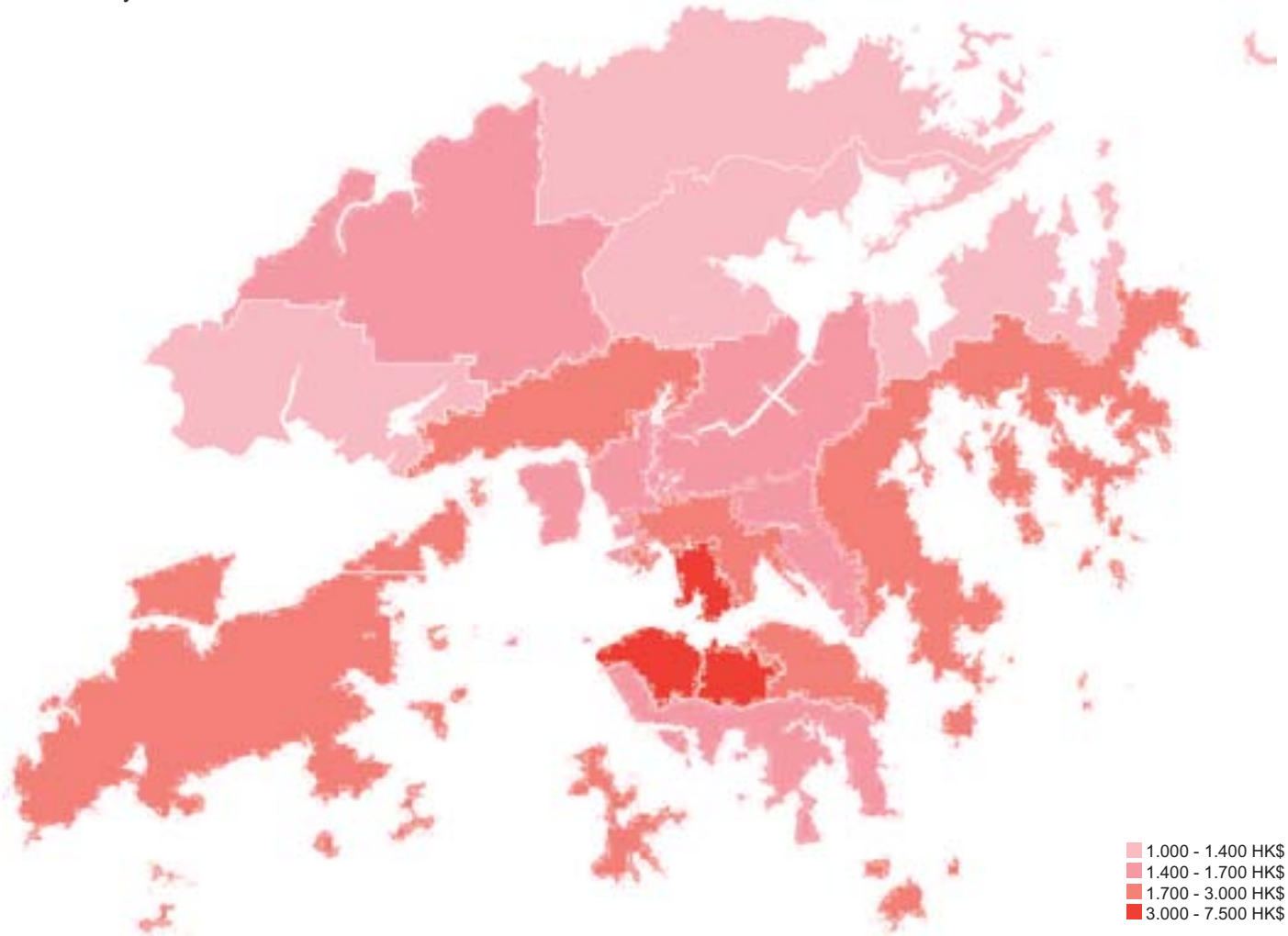
*“...a changing role for private rental housing, as it becomes a more mainstream tenure to house the insecure rich and poor alike in globalizing cities. Hong Kong is an important global city and is experiencing rising rates of social polarization associated with globalization generally, its articulation with the Chinese economy specifically and the impact of the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997. (...) It increasingly houses the highly paid, highly skilled but relatively insecure elite and the low paid, low skilled and very insecure underclass...”*

Ngai Ming Yip, Department of Public and Social Administration, City University of Hong Kong

*“the value of my guesthouse trebled within the last 6 years.”*

Mr. Li, guesthouse owner, Chungking Mansions

## Medium monthly domestic household rent 2006



Census & Statistic Department, HKSAR

## Private Flats (average monthly rent per sq.m. of saleable area in HK\$ / sq.m.)

1st Quarter	1997	2002	2007
HK Island	260	176	218
Kowloon	197	136	160
Chungking Mansions			81
New Territories	145	104	111

*“The tourism industry made another record in 2007 with over 28 million visitor arrivals, up 11,6% year-on-year. Most of the long haul and short haul markets such as the Americas, Europe, Australia, Southeast Asian markets have recovered steady growth. Mainland was still the largest source market with arrivals increasing by 13,9% to more than 15,4 million.”*

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government

## CHUNGKING MANSIONS SIZ

### **CHEAPEST PLACE TO STAY**

Within the highly touristic area of Tsim Sha Tsui, Chungking Mansions is the cheapest place to stay, with an average single room rent per night of 20 US\$. The competition between the single guesthouses is quite tough, so there is a inside market regulation regarding the price. Furthermore, the bad state of the building do not allow the guesthouses to raise the prices disproportionally.

The low exchange rate of the dollar brought a lot of people to Hong Kong for a short-term stay.

Traditionally backpackers were the main figures in tourism of Chungking Mansions. Nowadays the African Traders occupy almost every bed. There are also mainland chinese tourists.



- \*\*\*\* The Langham 342 US\$
- \*\*\*\* YMCA 126 US\$
- \*\*\*\* The Peninsula 440 US\$
- \* Mirador Mansion 20 US\$
- \*\*\*\* Holiday Inn 299 US\$
- \* Chungking Mansions 20 US\$
- \*\*\*\* Sheraton 323 US\$
- \*\*\*\* Hyatt Regency (2009)
- \*\*\*\* Kimberley Hotel 291 US\$
- \*\*\*\* Intercontinental 506 US\$
- \*\*\*\* Hotel Panorama 143 US\$
- \*\*\*\* Shangri-La Hotel 420 US\$

There are mainly two conditions which totally relate to the building itself. The first one is about the proposed space of the body, the design issues, which influence the use of space.

Second there is the special kind of organisation and building management circumstances, which led to a lack of control.



Architectural conditions have contributed to the development of chungking mansions in all decisive moments. Not only as a matrix for changing from a residential building to a total mixed up megastructure in the 60's, also today they are important conditions for the system Chungking Mansions.

#### GENEROUS UNIT SIZE AND BEARING STRUCTURE

The combination of the generous flat size and the flexible column slab construction enables a various conversion to different using condition. Units can be easily added and subtracted . Open space like the balconys are accessed to permanent space. Corridors are also temporary occupied for uses. All over Chungking you can find the method of maximization of the space

#### CONFUSING CIRCULATION AND FLOOR PLAN

The corridors in the towers with their unclear defined layout beacon to a lack of control and security. Due to the use of the units for guesthouses and restaurants the corridors are extensions of these. The boarder of the open space blurs in the labyrinth of rooms.

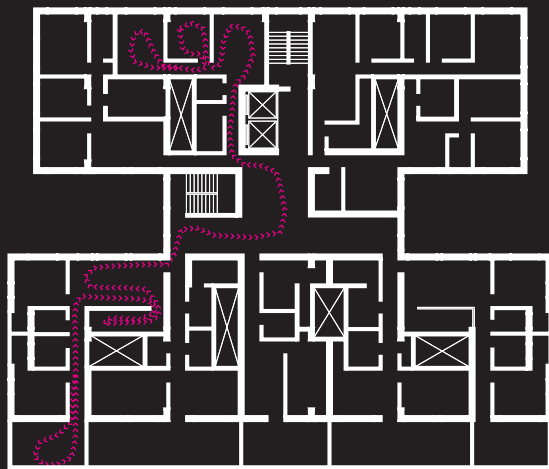
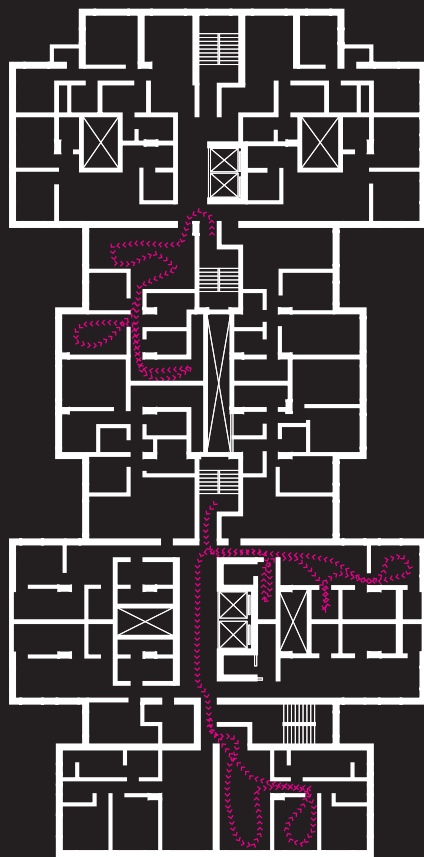
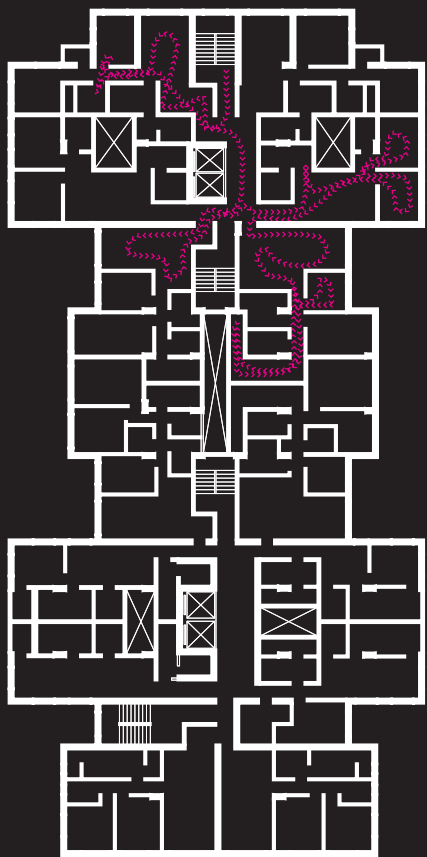
#### INSUFFICIENT VERTICAL STREET

The antiquated lift system is not able to serve the needs of Chungking Mansions. Due to its Slowness combined with a early warning system neither the police nor the building management is able to control the hole building.

#### OPEN DOOR ENTRANCE

The entrances to the residential towers are situated on the major axis of the shopping arcade. There is no controlpoint like in other buildings where it is checked who enters the building. The privacy of the residential area is abolished through this lack of control.





Owners Corporation

*“It is the responsibility of property owners to jointly manage and maintain their buildings or estates. They may also be held jointly and severally liable for the liabilities arising from any accidents caused by the improper management or lack of maintenance of the common parts of their buildings or estates.”*

*“2.1.1 The owners of a building may appoint a Owners Comitee and establish an Owners Corporation to manage, control and administer the common parts of the building.”*

*“2.1.2 The Owners Corporation may employ a manager, building management agent or property manager company to carry out the day-to-day management, control and administration of the common parts on behalf of the owners.”*

Code of Practice on Building Management & Maintenance

**FORMAL**

**920 Owners of Chungking Mansions**



- 70% chinese descent
- withdrawn daily management
- majority lives not in CKM
- symbol for Hong Kong Dream

**Society of Hong Kong**

- shared values
- basic law

form:

**Incorporated Owners Chungking Mansions**



- concerned about bad publicity
- want increase property values
- periodical meetings

**Hong Kong authorities**

- assistance for the formation of owners corporation

appoint:

**Owners Comitee**



- one chairperson & 14 members
  - high exponents want to dry out the informal sector of Chungking
- TASK:**
- develop strategic concepts
  - public relations
  - interface to the City on the strategic hierarchy level

- code of practice on building

meetings outside Chungking Mansions

assign:

**Management Office Chungking Mansions**

- all of them Hong Kong Chinese
- difficulties to find new employees --- vacancies
- responsibilities for building maintenance in public space

**Hong Kong executives**

- external engineer
- police and fire department
- code of practice on building

maintain

- CLEANING:** 16 cleaners, 4-times a day rubbish tour
- FIRE SECURITY:** amelioration of tools and observation
- IMPROVEMENTS:** public space surfaces and infrastructures
- COMPLAINTS:** customer complaints about fake products etc.
- RESTRICTIONS:** construction works, use of materials and people
- SECURITY:** maintain crowd control and prevent fights

**LACK OF CONTROL**

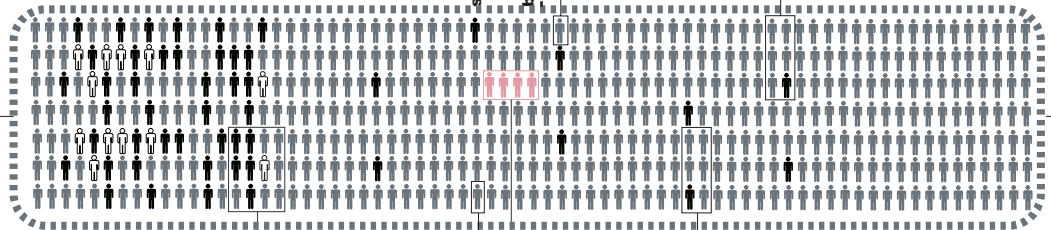
rent space for shops and guesthouses  
say club not restaurant  
say guesthouse not hotel

shut-off CCTV in order not to be controlled

build without control, hire illegal workers

no knowledge of the building to control  
drop into the crowd and hide  
use the labyrinthine to hide

early warning system:  
sentinel denounce police  
presence



informal shop civil defence:  
keep drug addicts out

self-regulations

underload  
protection service:  
trick the elevator

**INHABITANTS**

no community as a whole. Social class and ethnic origin distinction.  
Spontaneous forming of groups of interest. Common sense. Challenging the formal.

**INFORMAL**



**DRAFT**  
**CHUNGKING LIGHTHOUSE**

© ETH Studio Basel



# CONCLUSION

The Chungking Mansions are neither an isolated island nor an assessable whole in the city fabric of Hong Kong. Nevertheless, their intrinsic character makes it into an outstanding phenomenon.

## **how it feels like**

Going there is like dropping into a movie. The bazaar-like scenery in the shopping arcade with all the smells, pictures, language flakes, sounds, signs, surfaces and behaviours lets you feel as being in another world. Just as if you would have run through a body transmitter, which ejected you in another world, you shift almost everything you know from Hong Kong and build up your knowledge from the very start with endless new stories you might discover.

The physical and mental spaces you fall into are completely beyond expectations. On the other hand, the feeling of being in another world or even being swallowed by this object is overwhelming. Weird enough, the incredible density, the fully artificial lighting in the shopping arcade, the feeling of being lost in the labyrinth and the overall strangeness of the place forces you to escape to the assessable City of Hong Kong (outside). Nevertheless the uncertainty of the Chungking Mansions creates a prickling, indescribable atmosphere. In the end, you got your ideas how this “thing” could probably work, but yesterday’s truth might need a revision towards your present impression.

The Chungking Mansions appeared as a downscaled example for a future global city.

## **why it exists**

What are the main forces of mutation that turned the Chungking Mansions from an apartment building for the upper class to a deteriorated with the characteristic of a “Low-End-Globalization hub”, “the largest small-unit backpacker infrastructure” and hosting place for people from all over the world, being the “most globalized” spot in the world?

The history of the Chungking Mansions is a history of chain reactions; in a certain moment of time, it turned away from “normal evolution” and took its own steps. It’s body, the architectural structure pushed off the injected inappropriate elements like the “luxury conditions” and showed a positive chemical reaction with many other occupiers. The backpackers, who dropped in because the place was mentioned in the “lonely planet” a hot spot as well as the soldiers and sailors around Tsim Sha Tsui, looking for adventure in the Mansions or the ethnic minorities mostly from south-asia to serve the “guests” and make their money out of it, created eventually the “myth” on this unique

building, about which most hongkongnese are terrified. This could have happened because the ownership was weak and not unified, meaning that there was a lack of control to be aware of the downward spiral. Hence in the eighties, the danger of life was present in the numerous fires. Now it seems as if it had turned its course once again and is getting stable.

There are other conditions, which keep the Mansions alive: For example Hong Kong's proximity to the China's powerhouse. The Chungking Mansions were able to absorb trade hub functions on a global scale; it serves as an intersection between China and the (third) world.

### **how it works**

The Chungking Mansions are a place to 'make money' for the most people and therefore a symbol for Hong Kong. The Mansions are a perpetuation of a Hong Kong dream of self-made wealth, even if the circumstances for some of the inhabitants are anything but promising, due of their unsettled legal status. This situation creates a surprisingly peaceful place, despite the fact that groups of Indians and Pakistanis, Christians and Muslims living and working side by side. However, their interactions have most of the time a more practical aspect rather than a social one. As Gordon Mathews, anthropologist at the CUHK said "the pursuit of profit makes ethnic and religious discord no more than an unwelcome distraction". Nevertheless, exploitation and class tensions are present between owners and illegal workers.

The flexible possibilities of all thinkable structures and the informal power transform space in a very pragmatic way, in order to fulfil the needs of its users. The one above the other and next to each other - layering of spaces and programs constructs amazing relations. The informality gets stable in the system Chungking Mansions; perhaps a Rubrik cube, as a metaphor, can best illustrate this condition.

### **its status in the city**

The Chungking Mansions are not autonomous. Its highly dependent to the city and the Hong Kong specific conditions like the visa policy, the high density or the hands-off policy. Hong Kong has in general a quite laissez-faire policy regarding flows of people and goods, so the intervention of the state is on a very low level. This offers a lot of space, which is exploited in several scales and in different manners all over Hong Kong. The Chungking Mansions go as far as possible in exploiting most of these conditions and that sense form the Hong Kong extreme. In some points Chungking practices cross the boundary and go further than officially permitted, acting in an informal and illegal field. In that sense Chungking is again an extreme symbol for another specific phenomena, synonymous to HK in the past,

such as the presence of informality (at almost every corner). The web of functional lines and existential dependences is widely articulated. Chungking Mansions economy is dependent to the infrastructures of the city and is in that sense parasitical. Furthermore the phenomena is also captured in a fragile network of conditions like global economic developments and its impacts on the local, Hong Kong scale and nothing more than a puppet in a puppet show determined by the bigger scale relations between Hong Kong and China.

On the other side, the Chungking Mansions have a self-maintained character. Looking at its organization at various levels, and the different domains which are organized or self-regulated such as accessibility, security, waste disposal, etc, one gets an impression of a place that is independent, self-sufficient.

Still the Chungking Mansions have a bad reputation in the city. Most Hong Kong people –especially elderly- avoid going there. To the contrary, the place has got a fashionable touch due to its myths and urban legends. This attracts a lot of young trendy Hong Kong people, who go for example in one of the Indian restaurants.

For most of the immigrants from the developing world, the Chungking Mansions play an important role as a harbour and an orientation point. Finally, as we have been told, for the most of them, this is the one place in Hong Kong where they have a feeling of home.

### **what it will be**

The Chungking Mansions are a chameleon. For sure it will be able to take steps forward, also under other conditions.

The dependence to Hong Kong and China is obvious in many ways. If China for example would liberalise its visa regulations, the Africans would most probably go directly to the factories in China. There are also intents of some of the major owners to sweep out the informal businesses. Without that Chungking would of course lose its most vibrant living source and would maybe become a retirement home or something else. Fact is that the ownership structure with more than 900 different owners not allows to turn the building down or to do large-scale changes, because nobody would be able to persuade all of them.

Meanwhile the Mansions are a brand for themselves. A dislocation of this brand is not anymore possible. Somehow it is paradox: the more Chungking dissociated itself from the city of Hong Kong (population etc.) the more vernacular it became in the system of the city.

Maybe Chungking Mansions will become a physical island of an old, run-down 17-storey building within newly built, down-tempered corporate buildings in future Tsim Sha Tsui. Maybe Chungking Mansions will go back into nature. Most hopefully it stays what it is. Chungking Mansions.



## 結論

在香港的城市結構中，重慶大廈既非一個孤立的個體，也非一個整體。然而，牠本身的特徵決定了出眾的現象。

### 對於牠的感覺

去重慶大廈如同進入了一場電影。在商場裏雜貨市集的場景，伴隨著所有的氣味、圖像、語言、聲音、標記、外表和行爲，都讓你感覺身處另一個世界。正如你穿越時空機，你所知道的香港轉眼消失，一切都讓你有重新的認識。

你所進入的物質空間和精神空間遠遠超過了你的想象。進入另一個世界的感覺，或者說被牠吞噬的感覺是如此的強烈。奇怪的感受，不可思議的密度，沒有自然光的商場，身處迷宮的感覺以及完全陌生的場所，都使你想逃離香港這座城市。然而重慶大廈的不確定性創造了一種強烈的、不可言喻的氛圍。最後，你會發現牠是如何在這個城市中生存的，但是你需要以現在的感受去修正一些過去的事實。

重慶大廈，從某種程度上來說，是未來全球城市的一個縮影。

### 牠爲什麼存在

象重慶大廈這麼一個單體，如何從一座富人的公寓樓變成一個墮落的巨型結構體，甚至被描述爲“低端全球化的樞紐”，最大的爲來自世界各地的人們提供背包客設施的場所，以及世界上“最全球化”的地點

重慶大廈的歷史是一個連鎖反應的歷史。在特定的時間裏，牠偏離了“正常的”演化過程，以牠自有的方式發展起來。建築的結構體驅趕了不合適的注入元素，比如富人居民，同時又與其他的元素產生著積極的化學反應。由於在《寂寞星球》(LONELY PLANET)一書中有所提及，背包客們與尖沙咀附近的士兵水手在此落腳，他們在大廈裏尋找奇遇，而那些來自主要來自南亞的少數族裔人士在此服務謀生。種種這些令大多數香港人都感到恐懼。由於產權的薄弱和不一致，這幢大樓無法控制的墮落下去。之後，在八十年代，無數次的大火帶來了生命威脅。現在，牠似乎又一次改變牠的進程且變得越來越穩固了。

當然，還有其他的條件使得這座大廈得以生存，例如香港緊靠中國大陸這座發電廠。重慶大廈能夠在全球範圍內起到交易樞紐的功能；牠是中國與（第三）世界的交點。

### 牠是如何運作的

重慶大廈對大多數人來說是一個“賺錢”的場所，也因此成爲香港的象徵。牠是永恆不變的，一個白手起家致富的香港夢。即便是對於有些居民，由於他們的不穩定的合法狀態，這裏的環境沒有什麼希望得到改善。這個情況卻創造了一個令人唾舌的和平場所，印度人和巴基斯坦人，基督徒和穆斯林人，他們在一起工作和生活。當然，大部分時候，他們的交流是在更實際的方面，而不是社會方面。正如香港中文大學的人類學者喬丹·馬瑟(Gordon Mathews)所說，“對於利益的追求，使得種族與宗教的衝突變成了一種不友好的幹擾”。然而，剝削和階級緊張局勢在僱主和非法勞工之間存在著。

爲了滿足使用者的需求，結構的靈活性和非正式的力量以一種十分實際的方式實現了空間的轉型。空間與規劃的層次，層層相疊和相靠，形成了驚人的關係。在重慶大廈這個係統裏，非正式性變得穩固；也許把牠比作魔方（扭計骰）最能表達這個狀態。

### 牠在城市中的狀態

重慶大廈不是自治的。牠高度依賴城市和香港的特殊法規，如簽證政策、高密度或袖手旁觀的政策。總的來說，香港對於人員與貨物的流動採取放任自由的政策，因此政府幹預處於非常低的水平。這一點爲整個香港在不同尺度和方法上的開發提供了廣闊的空間。重慶大廈充分的利用了這些條件，在程度上到達了香港的極端。在某些方面，重慶大廈甚至超越了官方的許可，涉足了非正式和非法的領域。因此，重慶大廈又一次成爲另一個特殊現象的極端象徵，也是過去香港的代名詞，如非正式行爲的所在地（幾乎在每個角落）。

功能上和實際使用上的互相依存組成的網絡是廣泛而清晰的。重慶大廈的經濟依賴城市的基礎設施，可以說是寄生於城市。此外，這個現象或多或少受到全球經濟發展及其對地方經濟的影響，但是對於香港這個範圍來講，與中國大陸之間的關係起到了決定性的因素。

另一方面，重慶大廈有著一個自我維護的特徵。從不同的層面以及諸如可達性、安全性、廢物處理等功能領域上觀察，人們能感受到這是一個獨立的，自給自足的場所。

然而，重慶大廈在城市裏仍然有一個壞名聲。大多數香港人，特別是老年人，都避免來這裏。相反，由於牠的神秘感和都市的傳說，這個地方成爲了時尚的場所，吸引了許多追求時髦的年輕人，例如他們樂於去其中的印度餐館。

對於大多數來自發展中國家的移民來說，重慶大廈扮演了一個如同港灣和燈塔的重要角色。最後，我們了解到，對他們中的大多數人來講，在香港，只有這個地方才能讓他們有家的感覺。

### **牠的未來**

重慶大廈是在不斷變化的，可以肯定的是這種變化還將持續下去。

重慶大廈對香港與中國大陸的依賴是多方面的。比如說，如果中國大陸放開簽證管制，則非洲人可能會直接去中國大陸的工廠工作。同時許多業主也希望結束其中的非正式生意。如果沒有這些，重慶大廈將失去最有活力的生存來源，從而變爲退休人士的居所或其他的東西。事實上，這種有超過900個業主的所有權結構，一方面讓這座大廈不至於關閉，同時又使大規模的改造活動難以進行，因爲沒有人能說服其他所有人。

同時，這座大廈本身也成爲了一個品牌。而對這個品牌的重新定位幾乎是不可能的。從某種程度上來講，這是一個悖論，重慶大廈與香港的關係越不緊密，牠反而越是香港本土化的一部分。

也許將來在尖沙咀，重慶大廈將是一個孤島，在衆多新建房屋中一幢破敗而陳舊的17層大樓。也許重慶大廈會回歸自然。但最有希望的還是牠保持牠現在的樣子——重慶大廈。







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