




SEEN | UNSEEN



		User Appropriation	Veiled Typologies	Informal Economies	Transgression	Transitional	Hybrid Functions	Smallness
 <p><b>1 ARCHITECTURAL</b></p>	/1.1 Shophouse Vice (Back Entrance Brothel)							
	/1.2 Shophouse Vice (Front Entrance Brothel)							
	/1.3 Shophouse Vice (KTV Pub)							
	/2.1 Partitioned Shophouse (Beauty Parlour)							
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/3.2 Informal Economy (Transient Services)								
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/3.5 Informal Economy (Bicycle Trades)								
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/5.1 Shelter (Temporary Shelter)								
/5.2 Shelter (Homeless Corner)								
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/6.3 Socializing (Lunch Corner)								
/6.4 Socializing (HDB Void Deck)								
/6.5 Socializing (Outdoor TV Room)								

Our sites of Rochor and Geylang lie on the fringes of the city, and could thus be considered as overlooked places by the state, and much of what characterises the two areas at the present is marked by how they have grown rather organically. The purpose of our research therefore adopts the theme of the unseen - what has been glossed over in terms of state planning, yet manifests itself in unique ways that gives the two places its locality. Exploring the nooks and crannies of the area, we were drawn to various micro public activities which normally go unnoticed, yet best make up the character of the site.

Our documentation covers three scales of the site - architectural, urban, and behavioural, and identifies categories which give each activity the quality of the 'unseen'.

**User Appropriation** describes spaces that have grown past their intended usage over time, unintentionally adapted to the needs of the occupants.

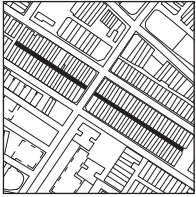
**Veiled Typologies** represents buildings that are hidden or concealed, either deliberately or due to constraints such as lack of space, or illegal functionality. Informal Economies mainly consist of temporal or mobile functions that are prevalent in both sites.

**Transgression** looks at acts that go beyond stipulated boundaries, often suggesting some sort of spill-over, or an infringement of certain thresholds.

**Transitional spaces** constitute an element of time, either over a period of a day, or in longer time frames such as developmental phases or cultural events.

**Hybrid Functions** put together paired usage of spatial elements, and show how occupants can colonise spaces for other purposes other than their intended programme.

**Smallness** is a collection of minute architectural objects that significantly change the way space is perceived, even though they lack a sizeable scale.



## Shophouse Vice

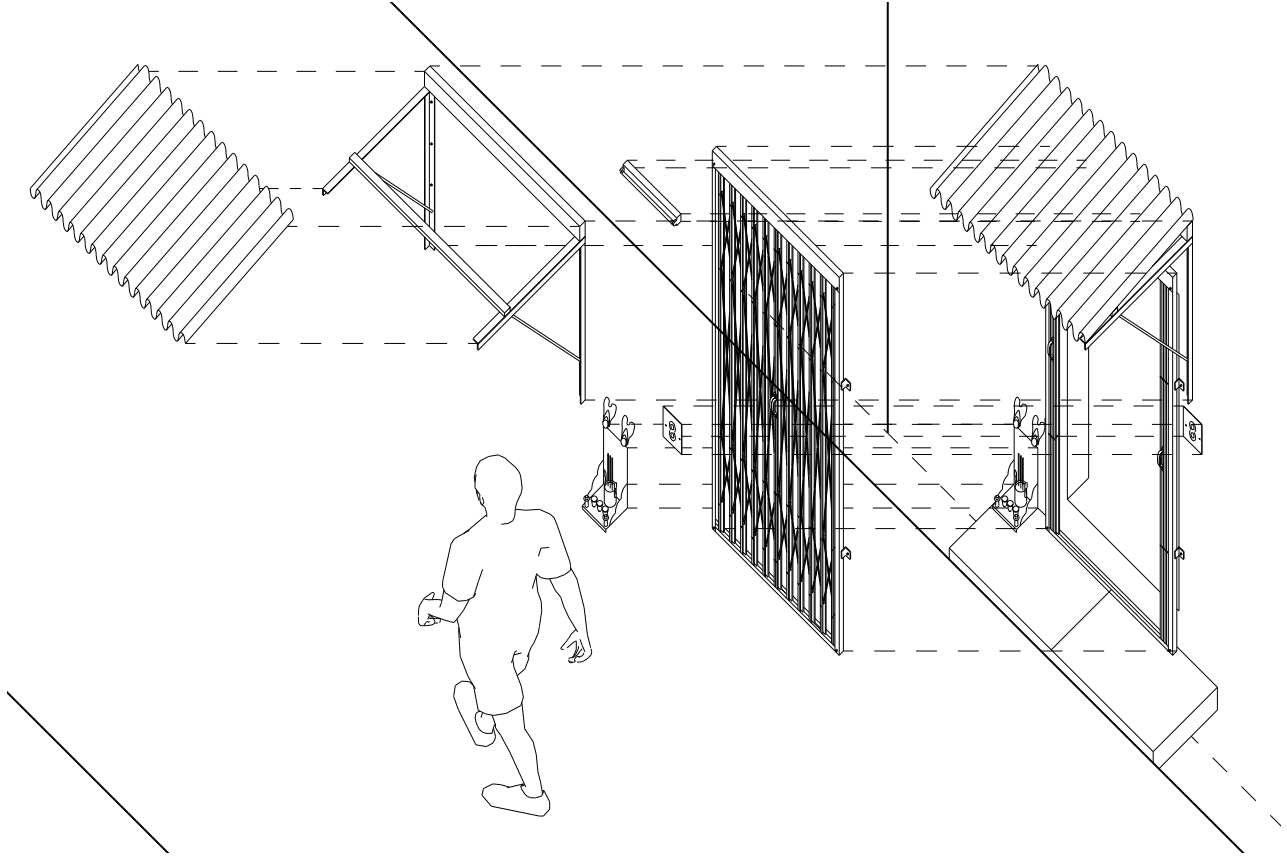
### 1.1.1 | Back Entrance Brothel

function: red light district

site: backlane between Desker Rd and Rowell Rd

- the shophouse unit is divided in its length, so that the shop fronting the street disguises its other half facing the backlane
- brothels operate along the backlane, only for those in the know
- to identify a brother, spot the mini-shrine by the entrance, and a number in red
- there is always an overhang sheltering the doorway







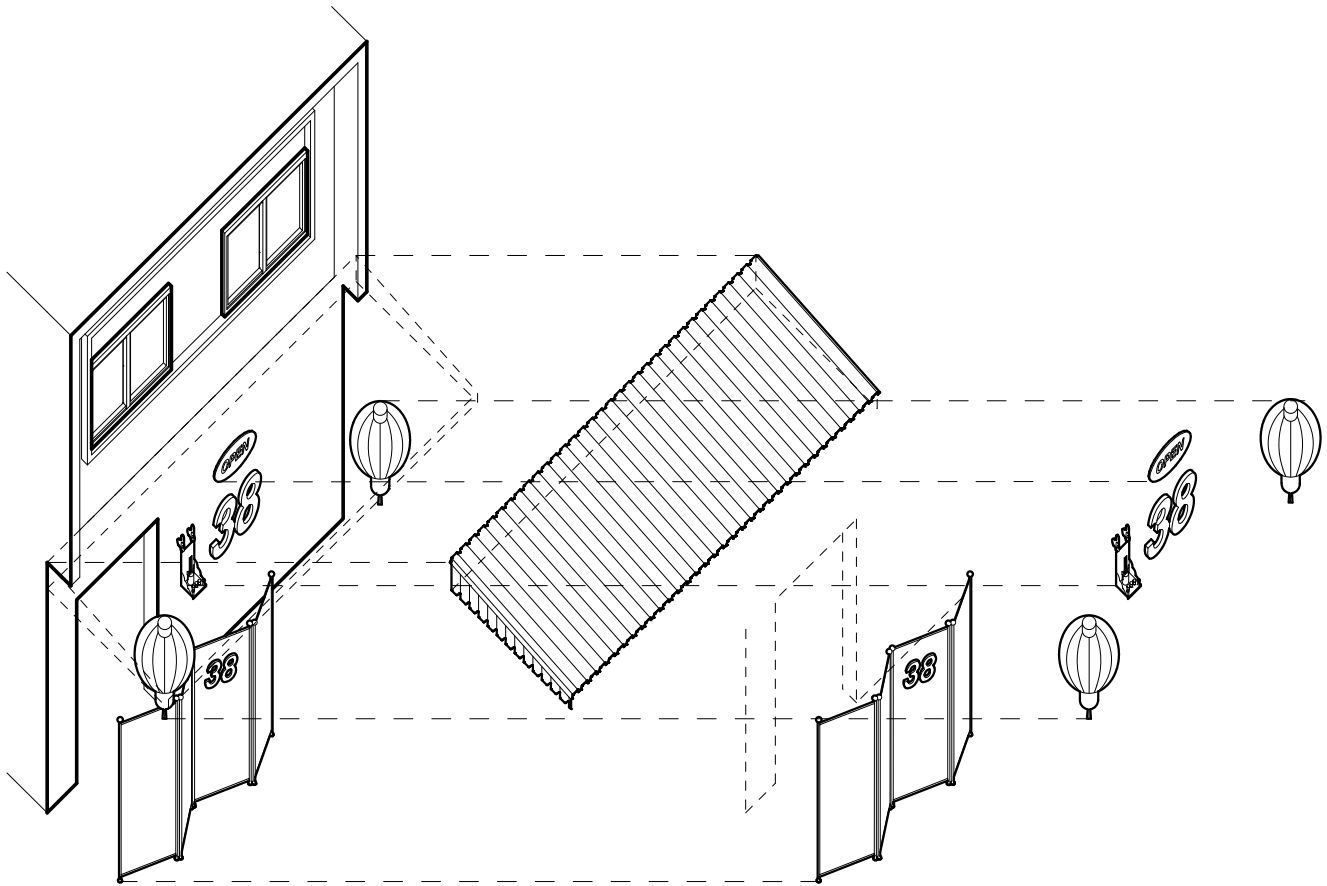
### Shophouse Vice

## 1.1.2 | Front Entrance Brothel

function: brothel

site: Geylang, Singapore

- prominent house number, signages and red lanterns to identify brothel
- heavily tinted windows and front door entrance screen for privacy
- presence of chinese altars and offerings
- lack of gates and other partitions to allow customers ease of access







Shophouse Vice

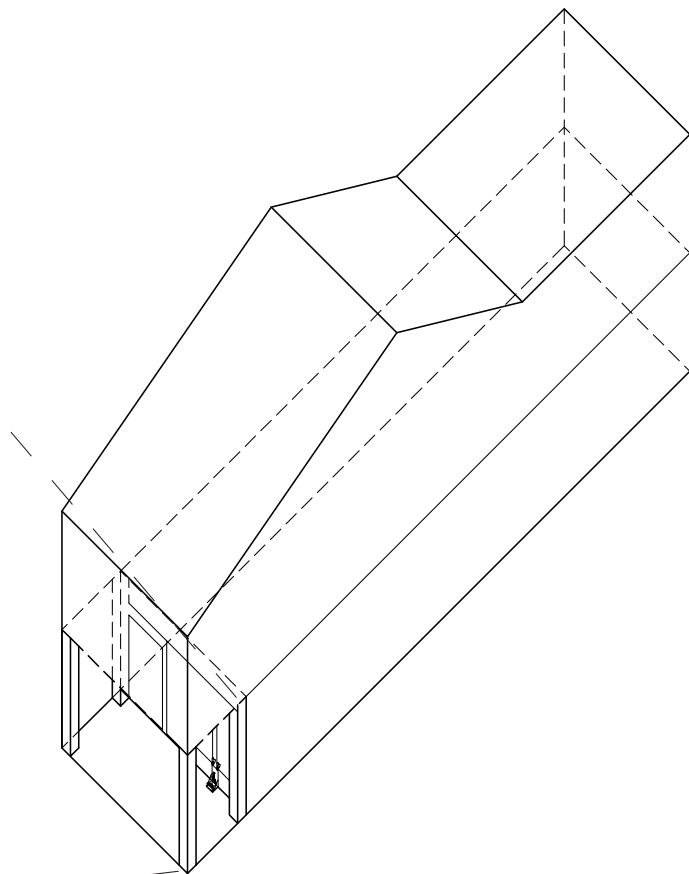
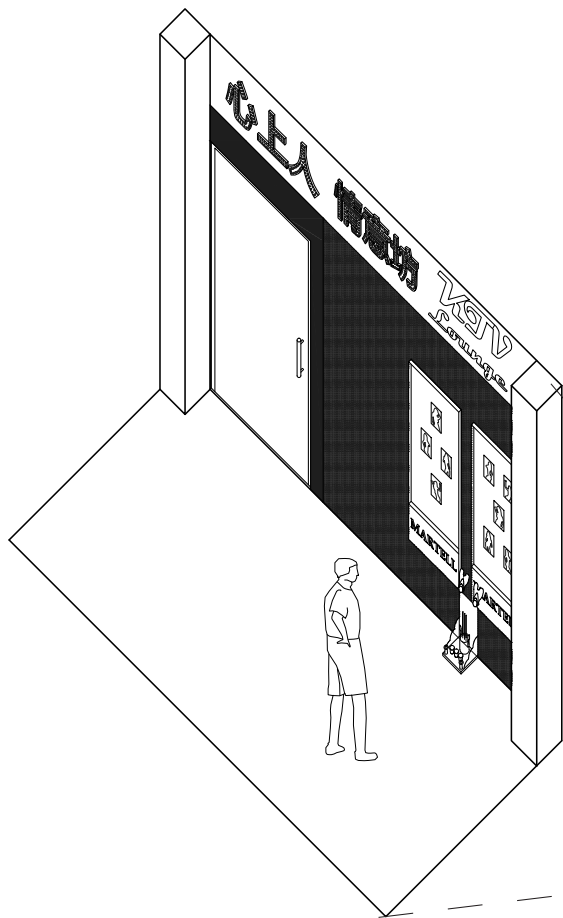
## 1.1.3 | KTV Pubs

function: ktv pubs

site: Serangoon Road

- the front facades are usually blacked out
- only operational at night, therefore signboards are usually colourfully lit to attract customers
- customers usually base their choice of ktv lounge on the pictures of girls displayed on a board
- like the brothels, an altar is usually placed in front of the shop







### Partitioned Shophouse

## 1.2.1 | Beauty Parlour

function: beauty parlours in shophouse storeys

site: Serangoon Road, Rochor

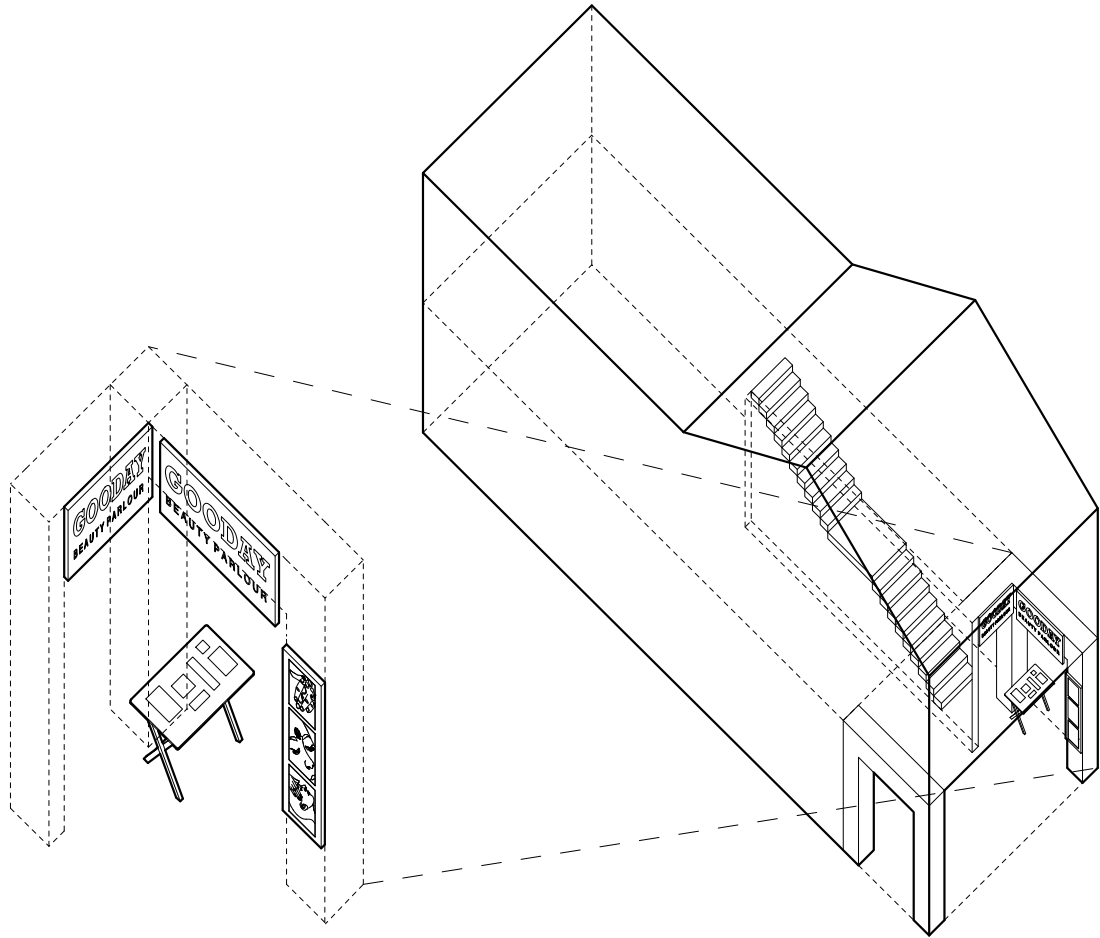
- concentration of beauty parlours, flanked by Kerbau Road and Belilios Road

- strategically scattered amongst jewellery shops (female consumers), along the way to tourist attractions

- enclosed upper storey for privacy in rendering beauty services

- colonisation of ground floor entrance and 5 foot way with huge eye-catching advertising and table with sample products







### Partitioned Shophouse

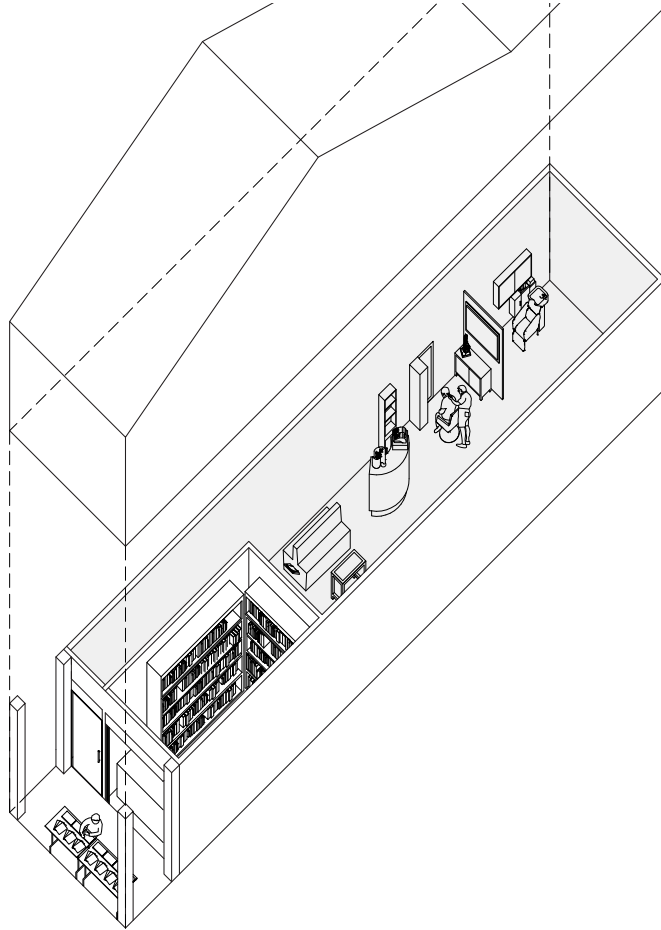
## 1.2.2 | Retail Front & Barber Back

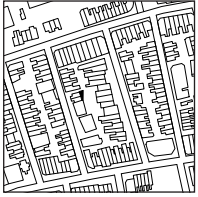
function: retail store and barber

site: Campbell Street, Rochor

- a unit shophouse is shared between two functions
- the space is divided as having a front programme and a different back programme
- the shop front therefore has a main entrance and a secondary entrance
- the entrance for the barber at the back is only as wide as the corridor space







Annex

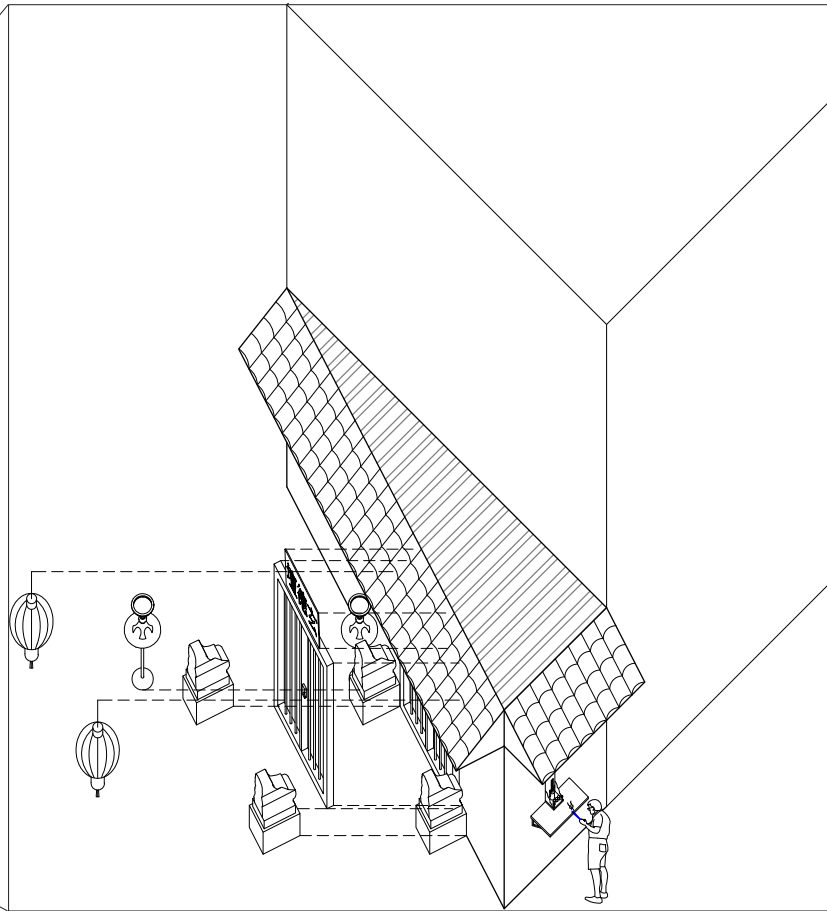
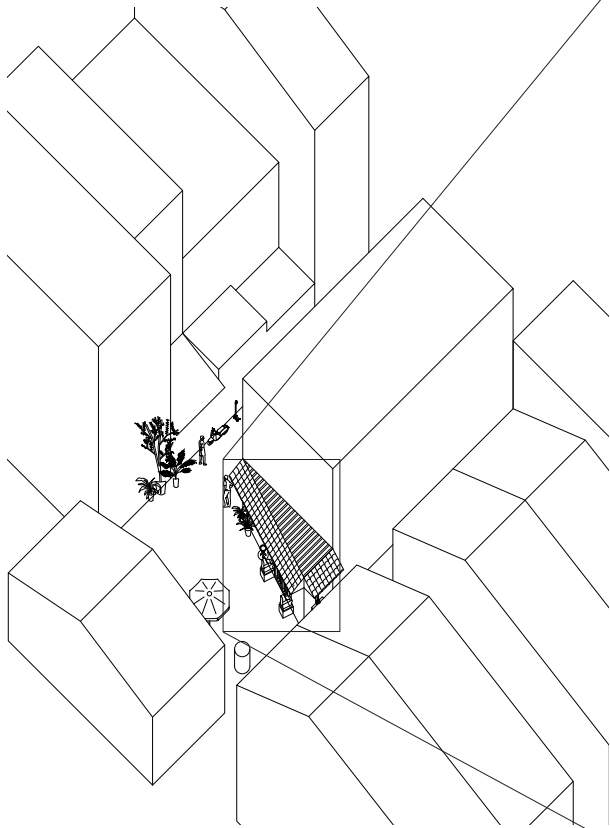
## 1.3.1 | Secret Temple

function: temple

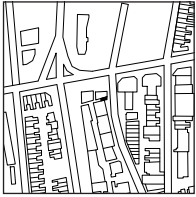
site: Lorong 13, Geylang

- the entrance to this temple is in a back alley
- the shophouses form an enclosure around this sacred space
- the temple attaches itself to the back of a shophouse and emerges as a rather small room
- sacred statues, altars, and objects spill out into the small courtyard space in the back alley as an extended praying space









### StructuralAnnex

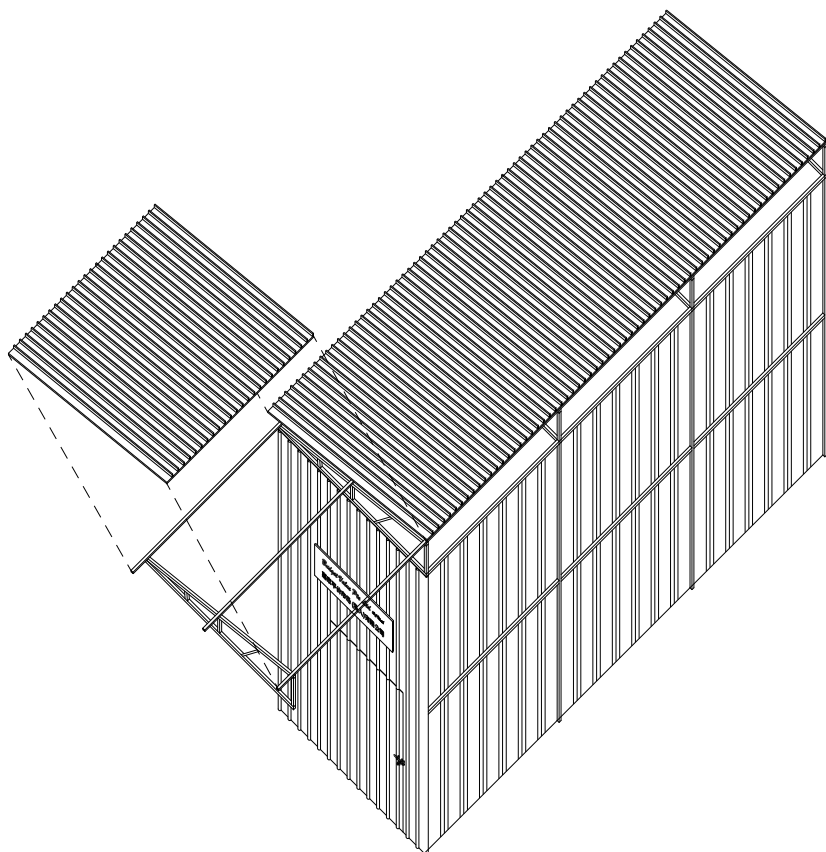
## 1.4.1 | Storage

function: storage

site: Lorong 25, Geylang

- this shed is sandwiched between two buildings, taking up the space of what would have been a backlane connecting to a parallel lorong
- such form of transgression is rare in Singapore
- it serves as a storage unit for the provision shop beside
- the back of it transforms into an outdoor dishwashing space for the coffeshop





Technical drawing showing a section of a building with a gabled roof. The drawing includes a label with text and an arrow pointing to a specific part of the structure.



### Structural Annex

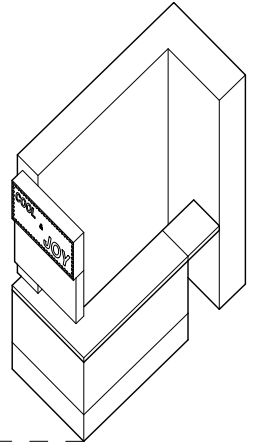
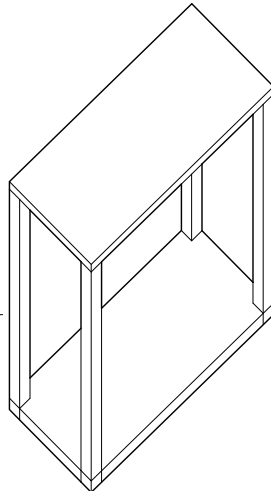
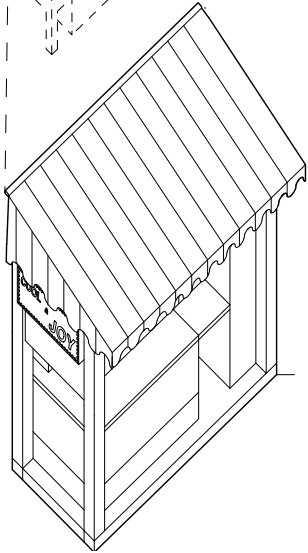
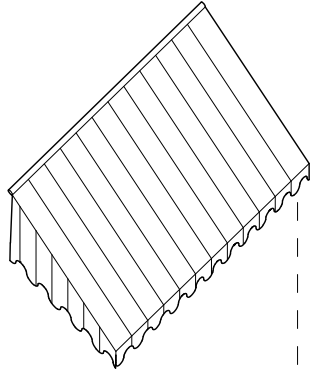
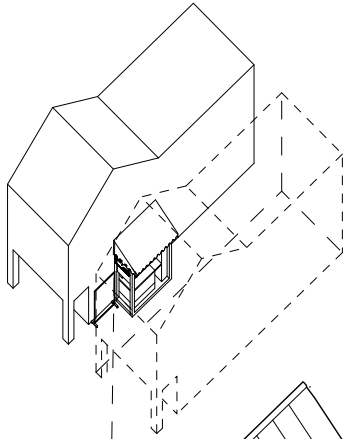
## 1.4.2 | Mini Shop

function: mini convenience store in between shophouses

site: Dunlop Street, Rochor

- a mini convenience store wedged in interim space between shophouses
- narrowness of space dictates how it is utilized
- strategic display of popular products (cigarettes, alcohol)
- use of lighted sign board, but entire shop front facing the main pedestrian street can be read as a unified display to attract customers







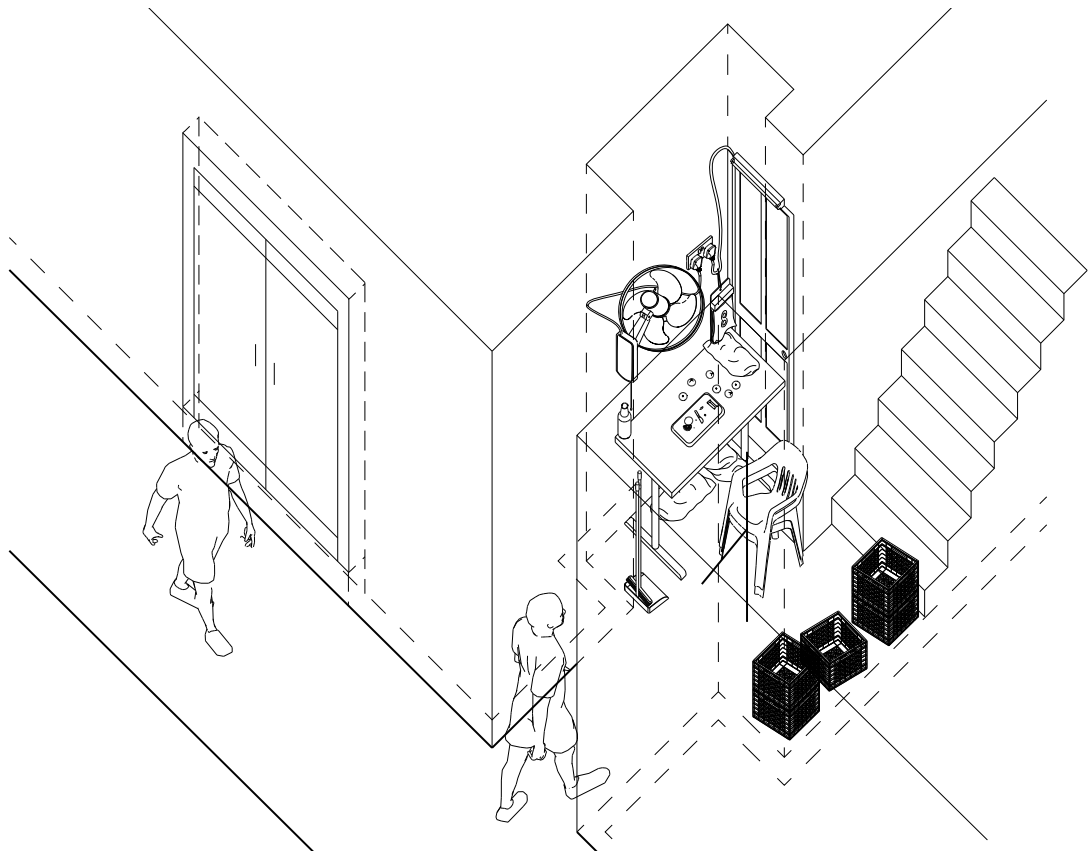
## 1.5.1 | Staircase Workspace & Storage

function: work space / storage

site: Birch Road, Rochor

- along the five-foot way, there are these narrow entrances to a staircase leading up to an independent shophouse unit on the second floor
- this space is colonised by the adjacent enterprise for its own need
- it affords some discretion and prevents detection from outside
- it has unofficially become a private space that takes offense of the occasional curious public gaze







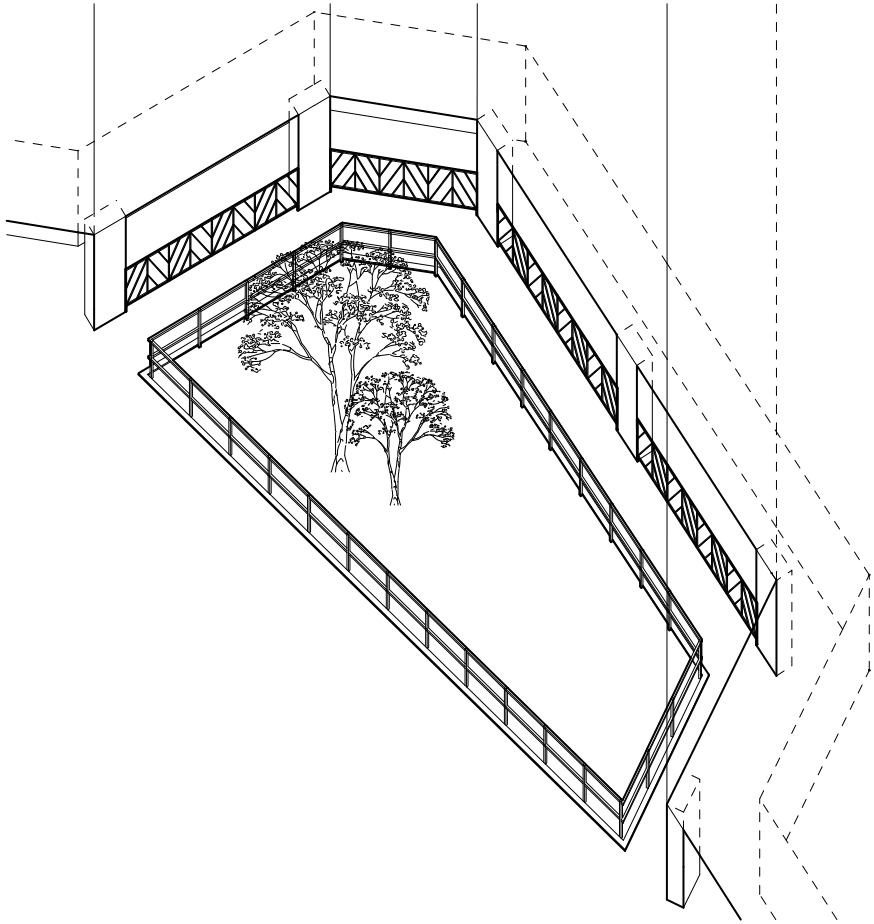
## Boundaries

### 1.6.1 | HDB Railing

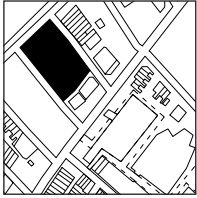
function: spatial demarcators and boundaries in HDB

site: Bellios Lane, Rochor

- the normally open green spaces and void decks are fenced up with railings
- measures implemented after complaints from residents
- this is to deter informal gatherings of foreign workers in such public spaces
- the boundary edges and surfaces themselves are thus utilized instead







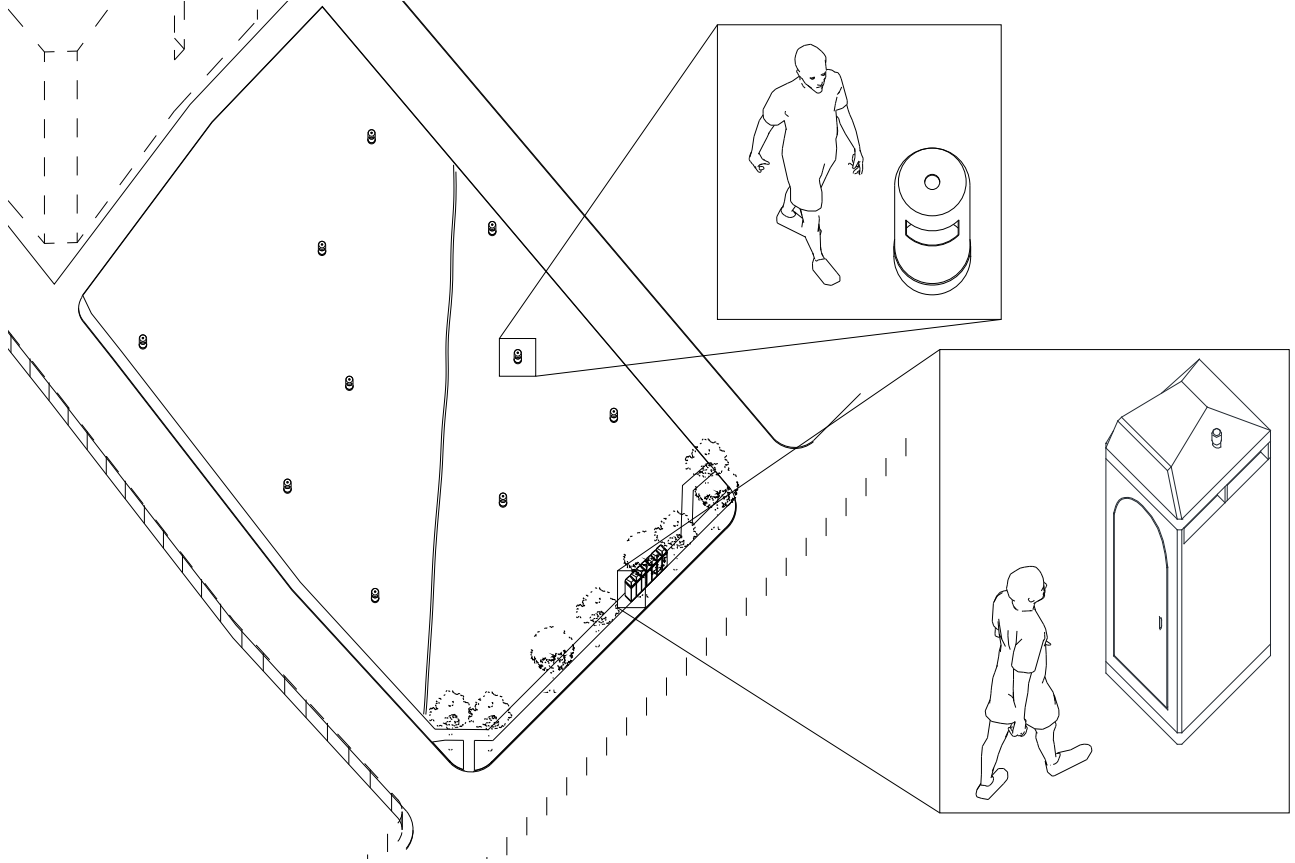
## 2.1.1 | Plaza by Night

function: public open field

site: Rochor, Singapore

- bounded by Owen Rd and Burma Rd, near Farrer Park MRT.
- the field is scattered with dustbins of different shapes and colours
- there is a row of mobile toilets positioned at its edge along the sidewalk, suggesting its function as a public gathering space at some point in time
- a dirt road cuts across the field diagonally







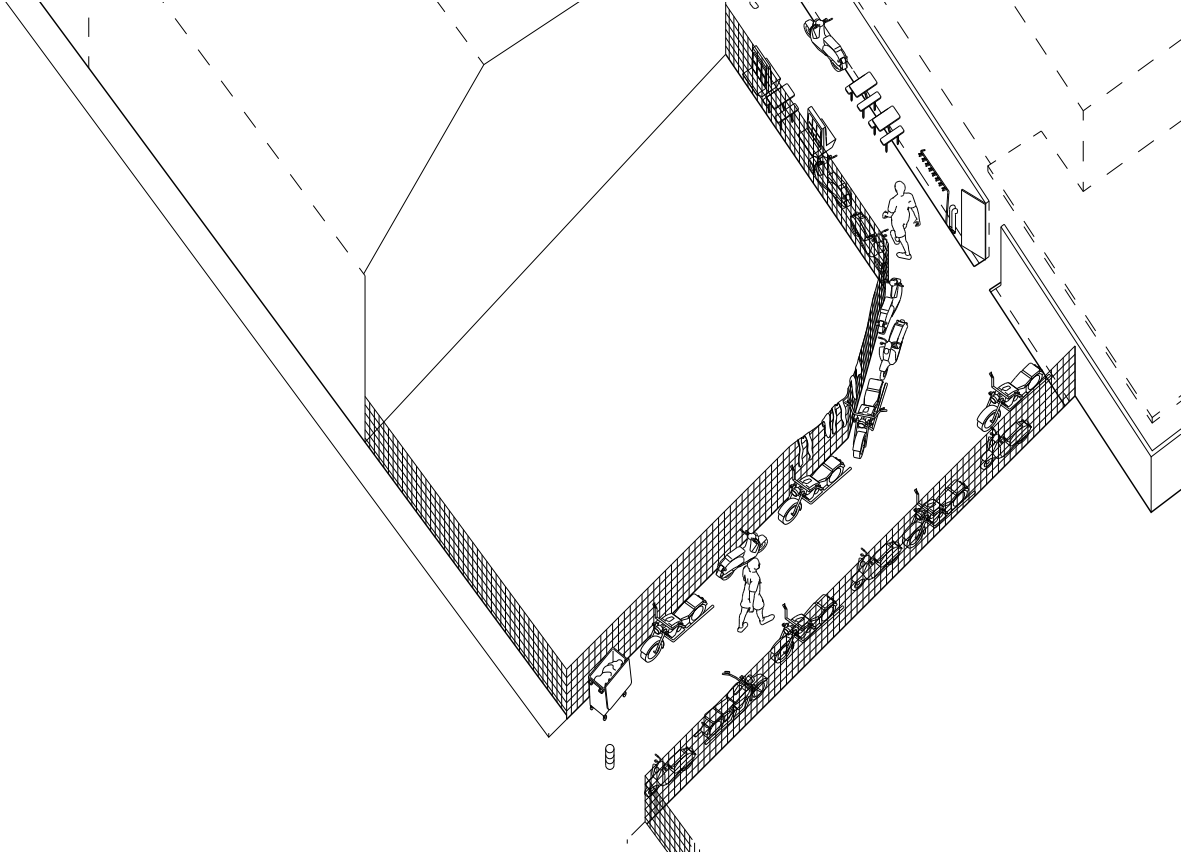
### Back Alley Appropriation

## 2.2.1 | Behind Mosque

function: extension for mosque

site: Roberts Lane, Rochor

- it is unique that the back lane connects directly to the main road
- it serves as an entry to the rear entrance of the mosque
- due to infrequent traffic, the immediate space outside the mosque becomes an unofficial ablution area, free parking space
- there are loose abandoned furniture, even clothing hanging from the fence to dry, making it a private public space





### Back Alley Appropriation

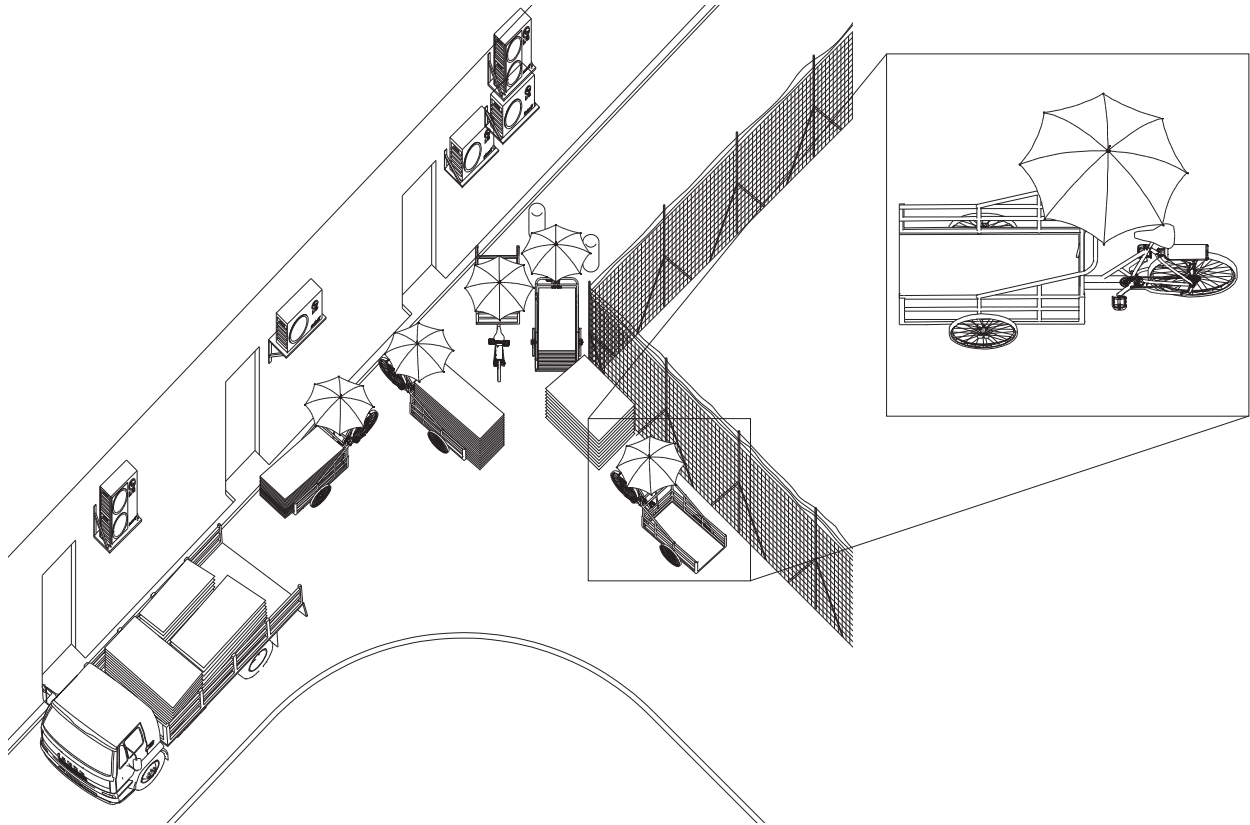
## 2.2.2 | Cardboard Collection Point

function: cardboard collection point

site: backlane between Syed Alwi Rd and Sam Leong Rd

- this is one of the few locations in Rochor for gathering used cardboards, hidden from plain sight
- the hybrid mobile push carts are used to collect them from the surroundings
- these push carts are very functional and are designed (put together) specifically for the job
- yet each push cart differs slightly in its design (wormanship) to reveal something unique about its owner







### Back Alley Appropriation

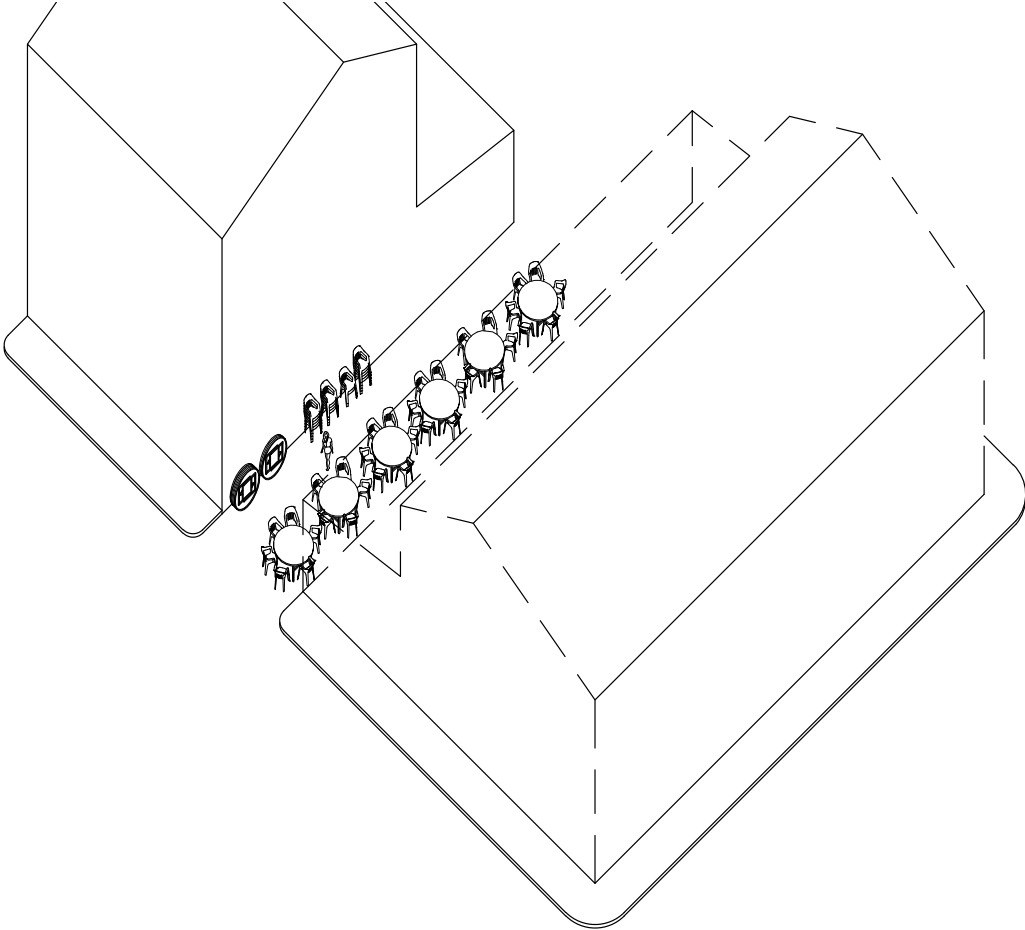
## 2.2.3 | Coffeeshop

function: eateries

site: Lorong 9, Lorong 23; Geylang

- many of the back lanes of Geylang are crowded with coffeeshop tables
- coffeeshops usually extend the boundaries of their space to areas where there is no vehicular traffic
- hidden from busy circulation paths, the alleys are ideal for men to enjoy a meal with the social escorts away from prying eyes
- it is common to see sex workers soliciting in these more concealed areas, as such actions are prohibited to be done publicly under state law









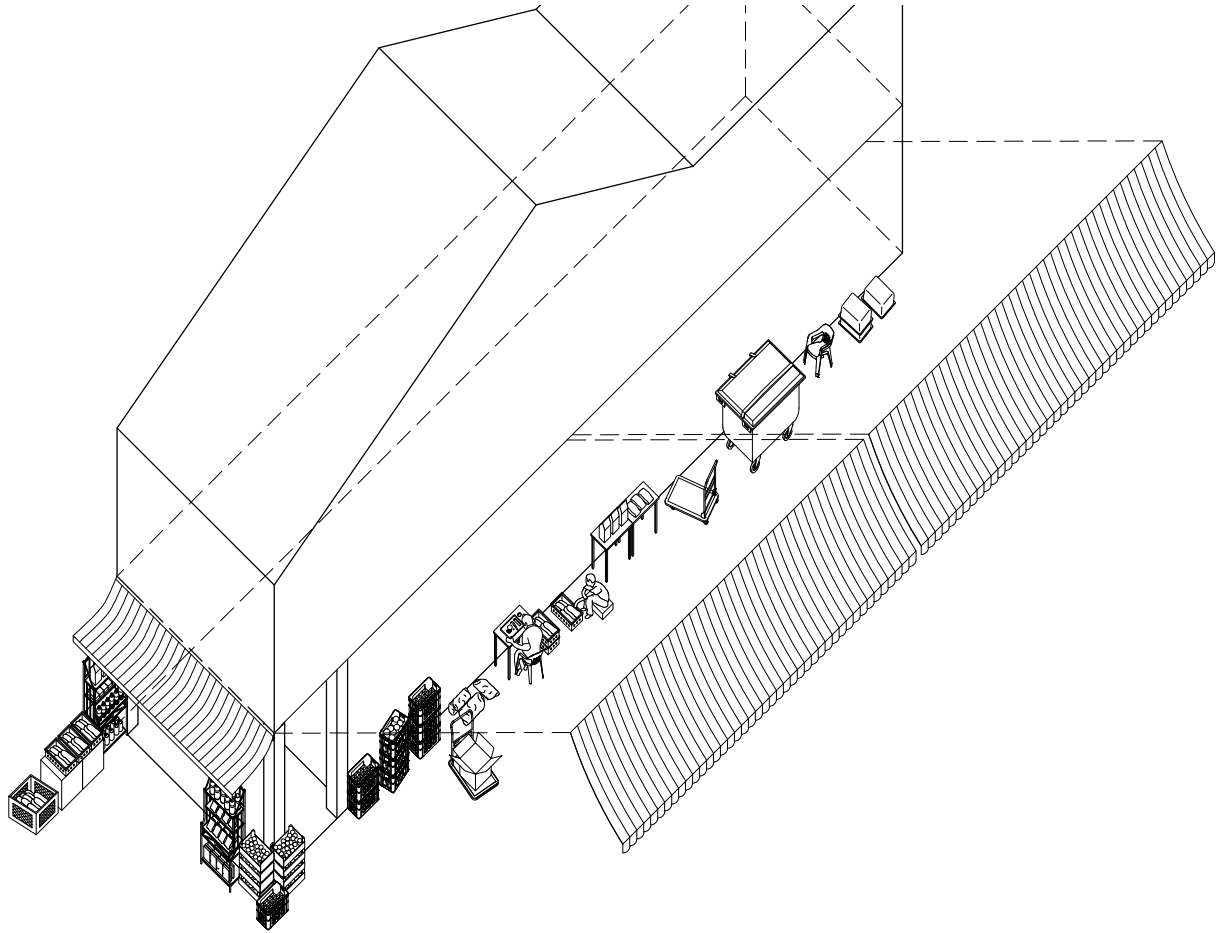
#### Side Alley Appropriation

## 2.3.1 | Grocery Goods Preparation

function: grocery store  
site: Clive Street, Rochor

- the activity of the grocery store spills over to the sides of the shophouse
- racks and cartons for the display of goods are brought out to the side walks daily
- the sidelane is also used by the shop keepers as an extended storage and work space for the preparation of the produce
- awnings were therefore installed as shading devices for these areas







#### Side Alley Appropriation

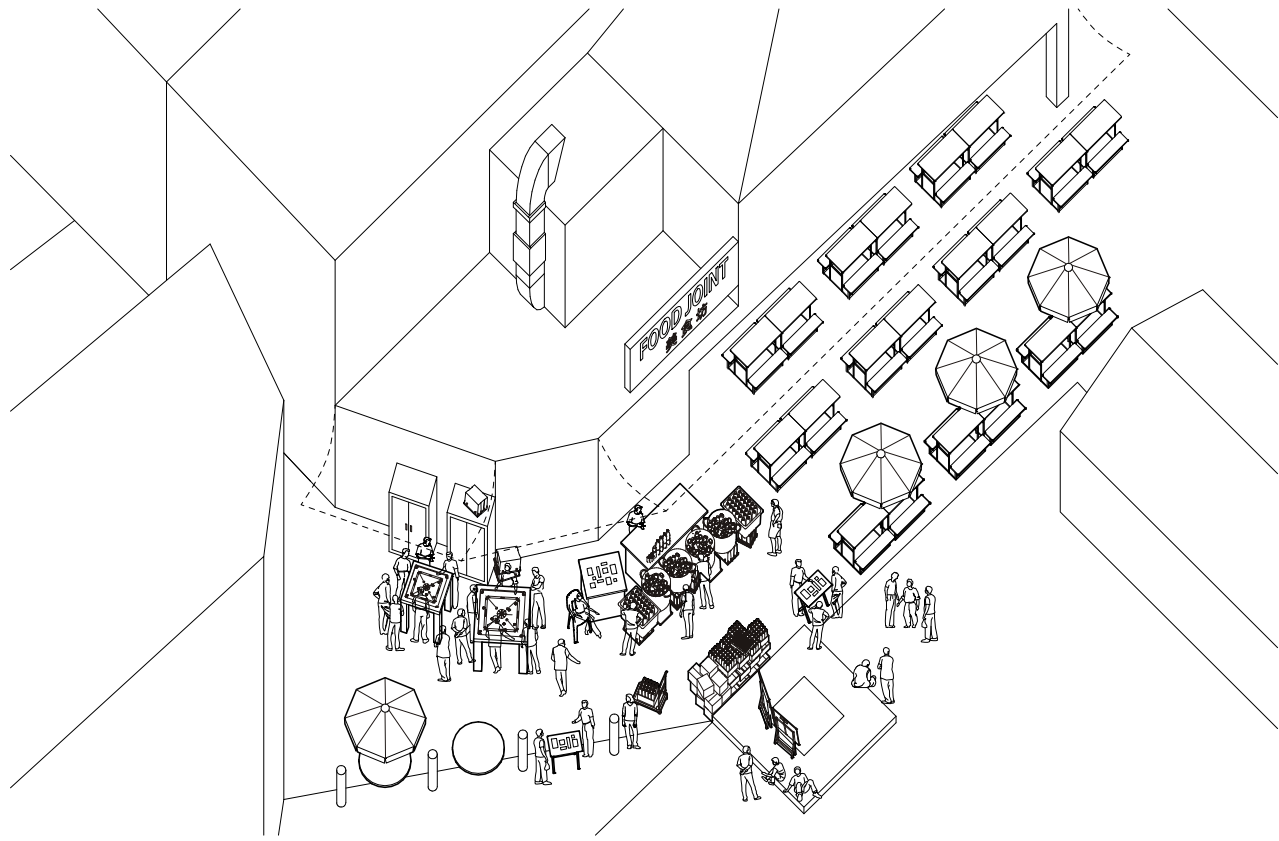
## 2.3.2 | Carrom & Snacks

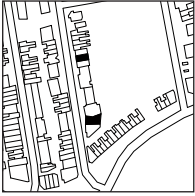
function: expansion of coffeeshop on Sunday

site: Lembu Square, Little India

- Lembu Square colonized by foreign workers on their day-off
- opportunistic expansion of coffeeshop business under shaded awnings in response to increased catchment
- workers playing and watching carrom games
- selling of cold drinks and ethnic snacks, to be hand-held and consumed while standing in the crowded square







#### Side Alley Appropriation

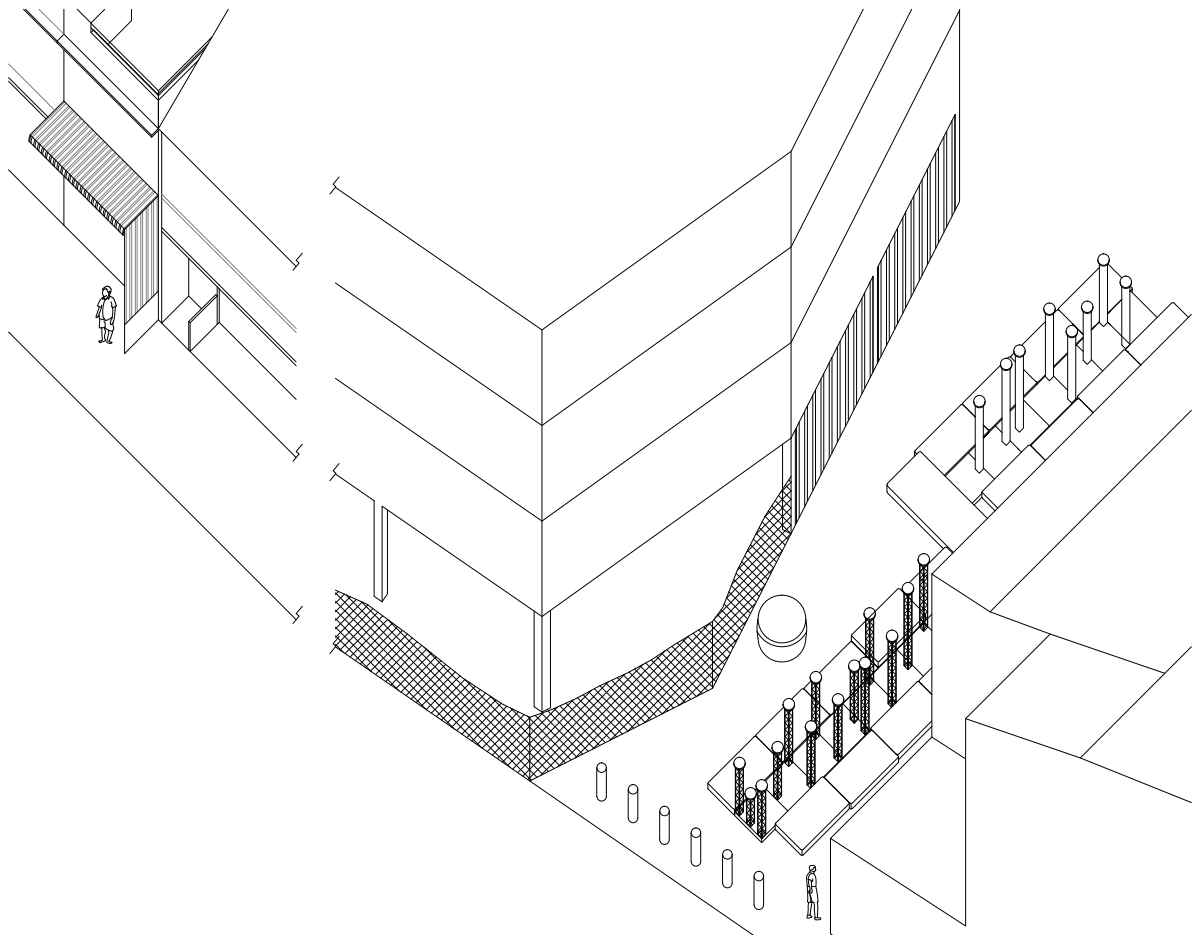
### 2.3.3 | Lion Dance Practise

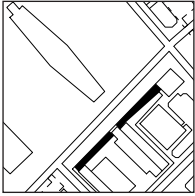
function: training space

site: Lorong 8, Geylang

- the back alley is used as an extended space for lion dance training
- it is closed off to vehicular traffic
- the practice area is separated from the shophouse where the association is located, a few buildings down the row
- the spatial constraints of the narrow shophouse forces the association to utilise the openness of the public space for its activities







### Sidewalk Appropriation

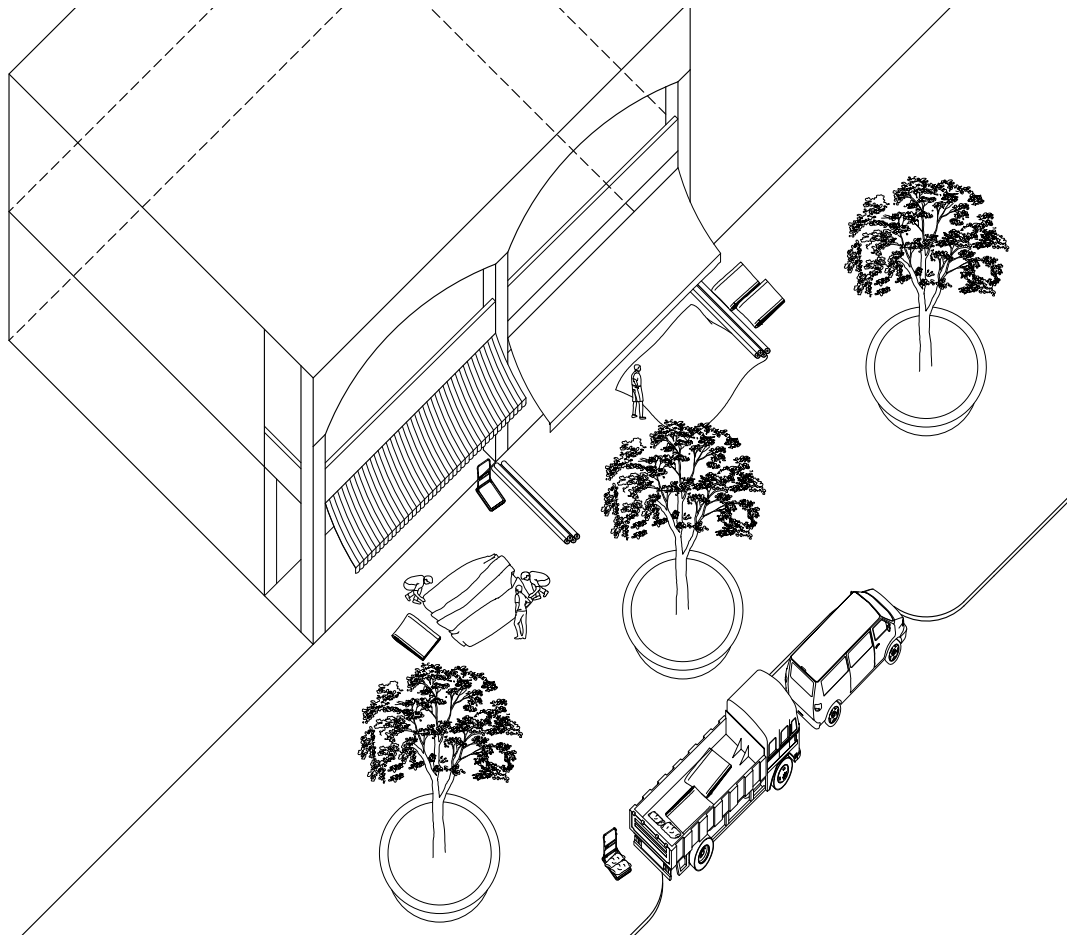
## 2.4.1 | Canvas Treatment

function: canvas shop workspace

site: King George's Avenue, Rochor

- the pavement fronting the HDB blocks are about 15 metres wide - this wide plaza-like space enables the workers to utilise it for their own working space
- since the small shop spaces are usually not wide enough to accommodate laying out the large canvas sheets, the sidewalk is useful as an extension of the working space
- the usage of the sidewalk thus doubles up in function, and activity intensity is greatest during the day when the shops are operational
- a loading / unloading bay also cuts into the sidewalk









Flea Market

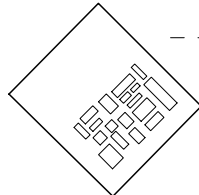
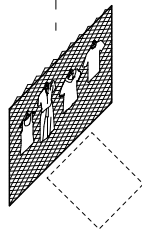
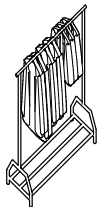
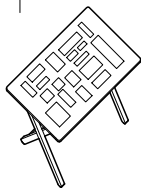
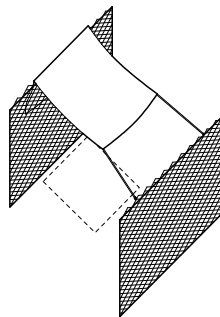
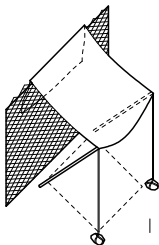
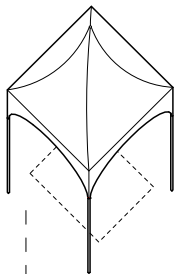
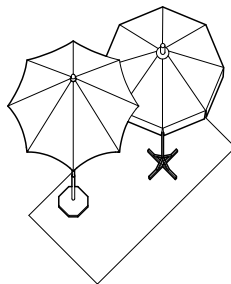
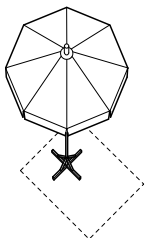
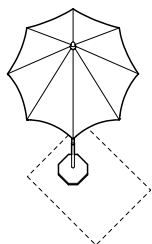
## 2.5.1 | Old Thieves'

function: flea market

site: Sungei Road, Rochor

- display of wares on a groundsheet, collapsible tables, existing fences
- groundsheet helps to demarcate boundary of stall
- sellers as a community because of the open spatial quality of flea market, shared sources of goods, time spent together in proximity
- activities besides selling: chatting, playing chess, repairing goods







### Flea Market

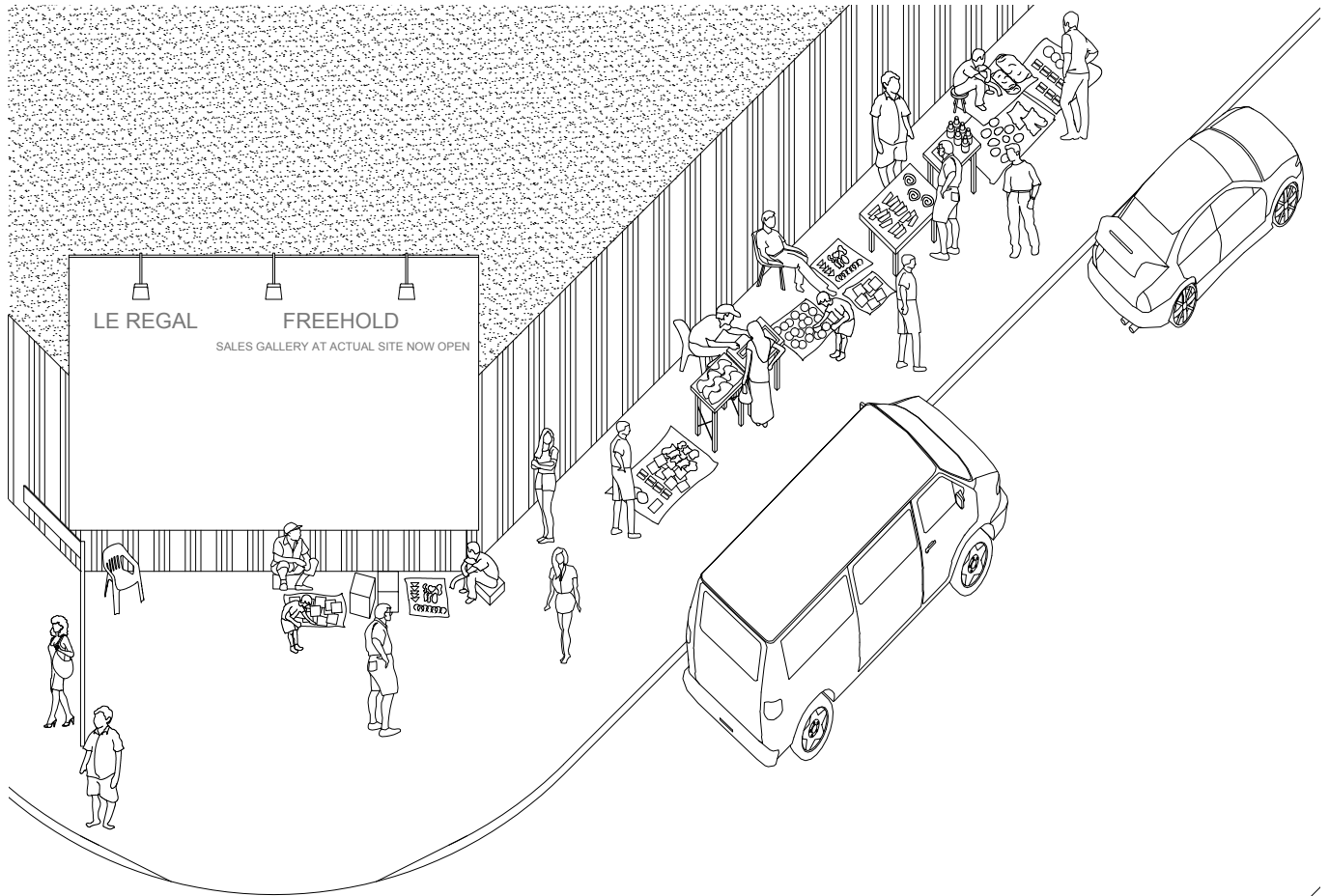
## 2.5.2 | Hoarding Frontage

function: night market, coffee shop

site: Lorong 18, Geylang

- with many new developments coming up in the area, the spaces in front of construction hoardings have no fixed functions
- the community then appropriates this leftover space during this transitory period of development
- the hoarding therefore guides the boundary of the informal night market that spontaneously pops up on the sidewalk facing the main road, where human traffic is high
- coffeeshops also utilise this space by stretching their space outwards across the road





LE REGAL

FREEHOLD

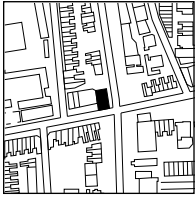
SALES GALLERY AT ACTUAL SITE NOW OPEN

LE REGAL FREEHOLD

LE REGAL FREEHOLD

LE REGAL FREEHOLD

LE REGAL FREEHOLD



Flea Market

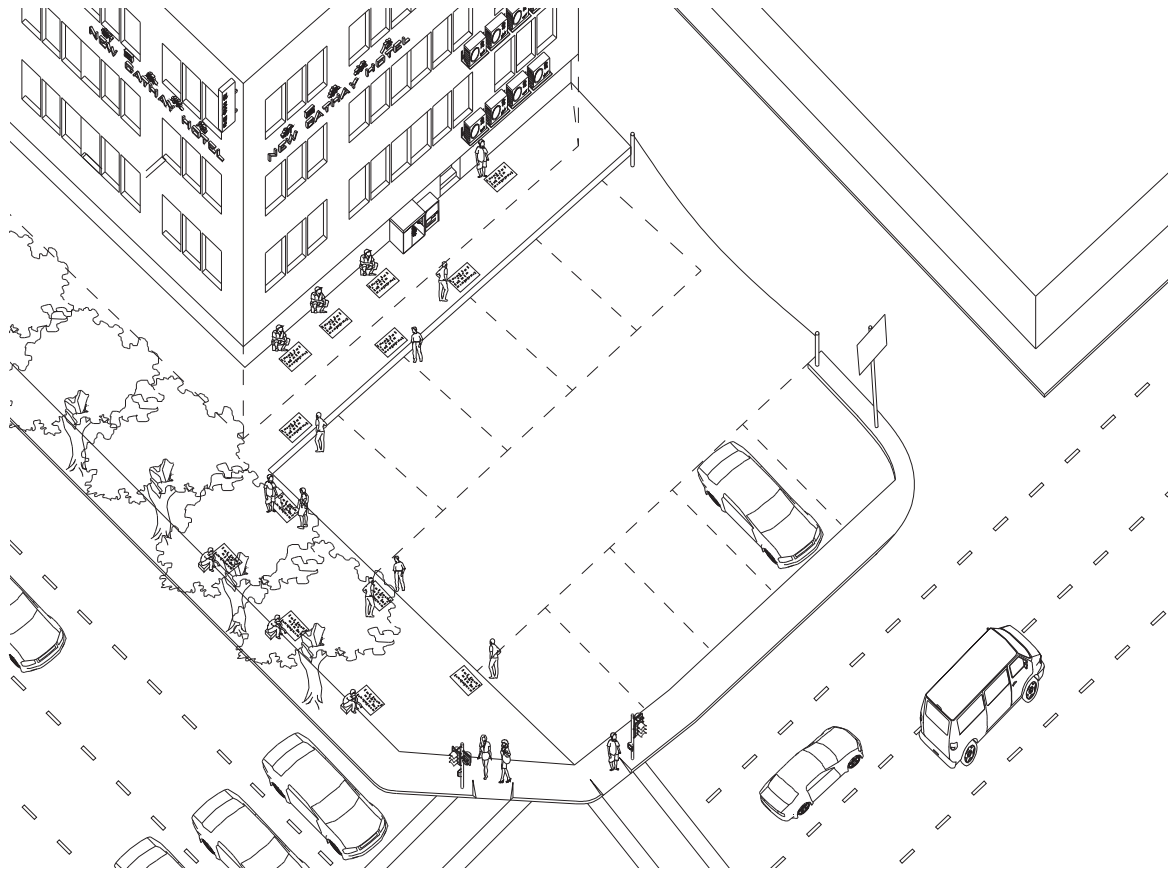
## 2.5.3 | Street Viagra

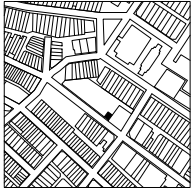
function: an informal market selling sex drugs

site: junction of Geylang Road and Aljunied Road

- just outside New Cathay Hotel is a private carpark space that is empty for most of the time
- the proximity of this open space to pedestrian traffic makes it ideal for transgressive occupation
- the peddlers all seem to ply their wares on the floor on a mat of the same size and proportion
- it is unusual for such spontaneous enterprise to operate so conspicuously when it is illegal





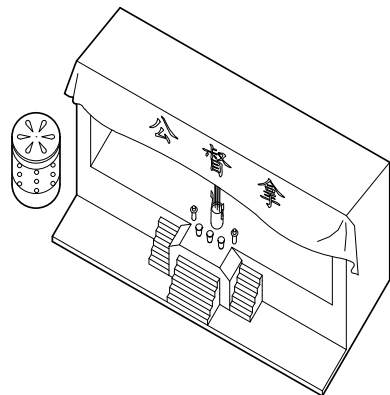
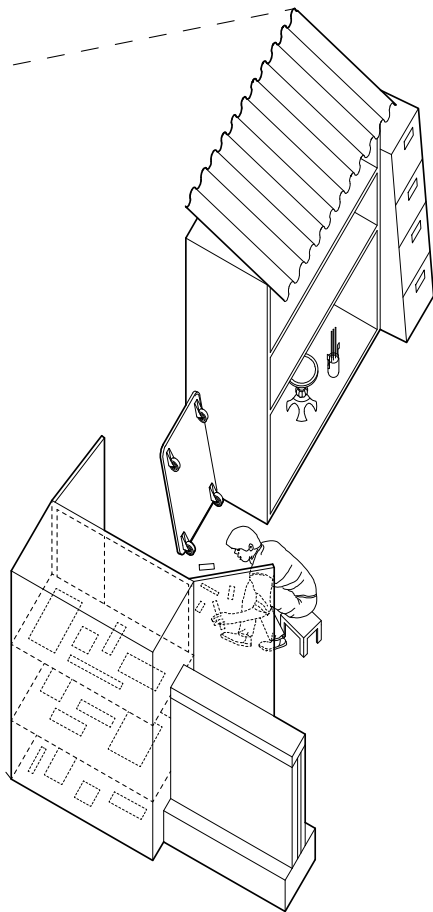
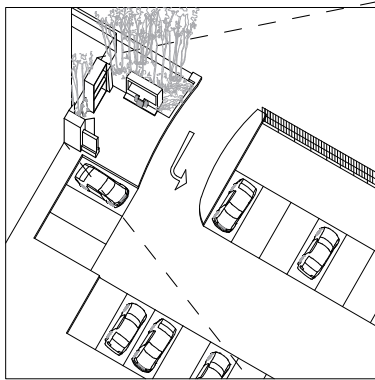


### Shophouse Vice

## 2.6.1 | Carpark Altar

- function: altar and workspace in carpark  
site: Dickson Road, Little India
- leftover, paved space in carpark shrouded by dense foliage and hidden from view from main road
  - two large altars with offerings and paraphernalia
  - cupboard, drawer and trolley serve as storage spaces
  - sorting out metals for recycling, scavenged from second hand shops









### Nature Appropriation

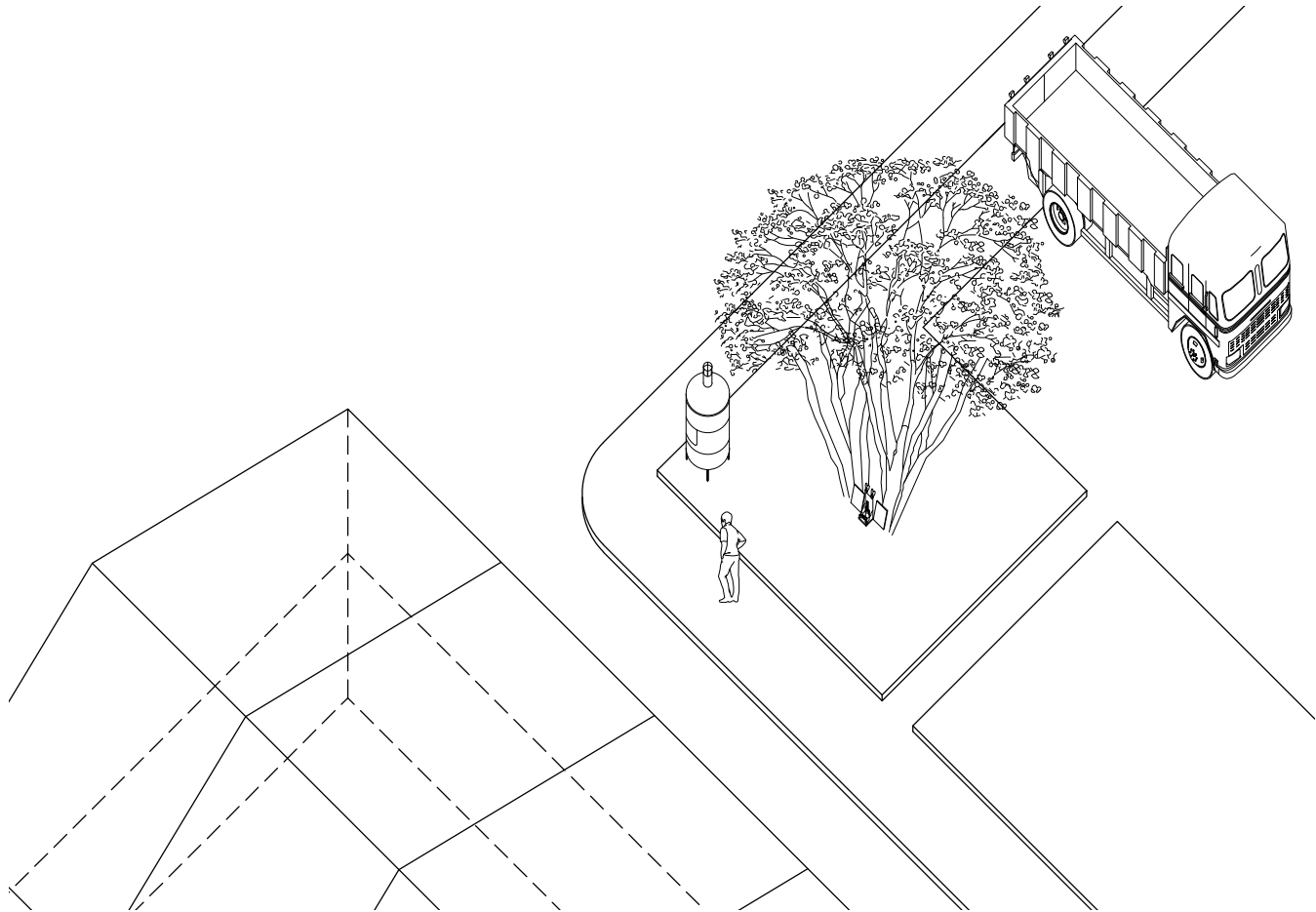
## 3.1.1 | Religion

function: religious space

site: Lorong Bachok, Geylang

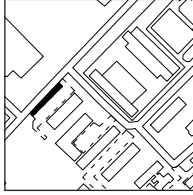
- the space surrounding the tree is appropriated with religious objects
- the site is located opposite a row of chinese clan associations
- this particular informal shrine is also situated in an intersection amongst the odd-numbered lorongs of Geylang, which are the 'cleaner' and less seedy areas
- because of the religious symbolism attached to the tree, it becomes a marker for the area







hardware shopfronts



tree-lined pavement

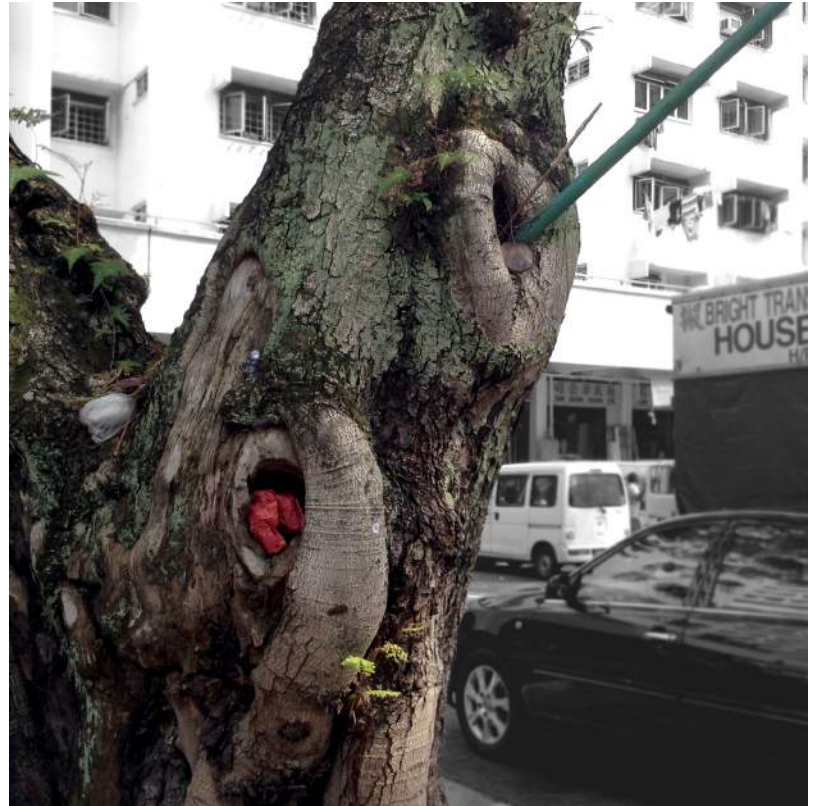
### Nature Appropriation

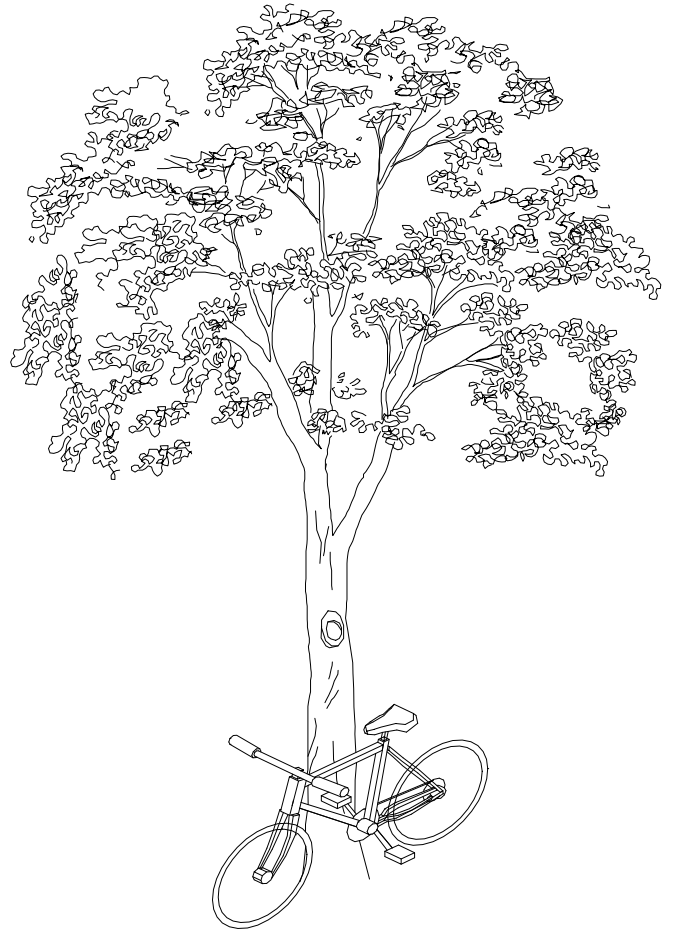
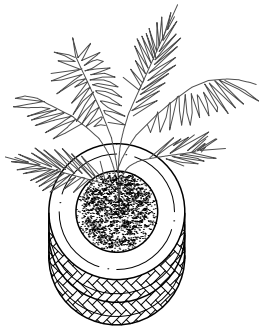
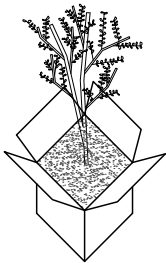
## 3.1.2 | Storage

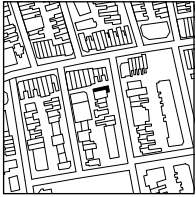
function: planting/storage

site: Lavender Street / King George's Avenue, Rochor

- hardware objects and nature form a symbiotic spatial relationship
- cardboard boxes and rubber tyres are commonly found in industrial shops; which are then converted to housing plants.
- bicycles are secured at trees along the pavement
- tree niches also serve as storage for ordinary objects, usually belonging to mobile rag-and-bone sellers







#### Microstructure Appropriation

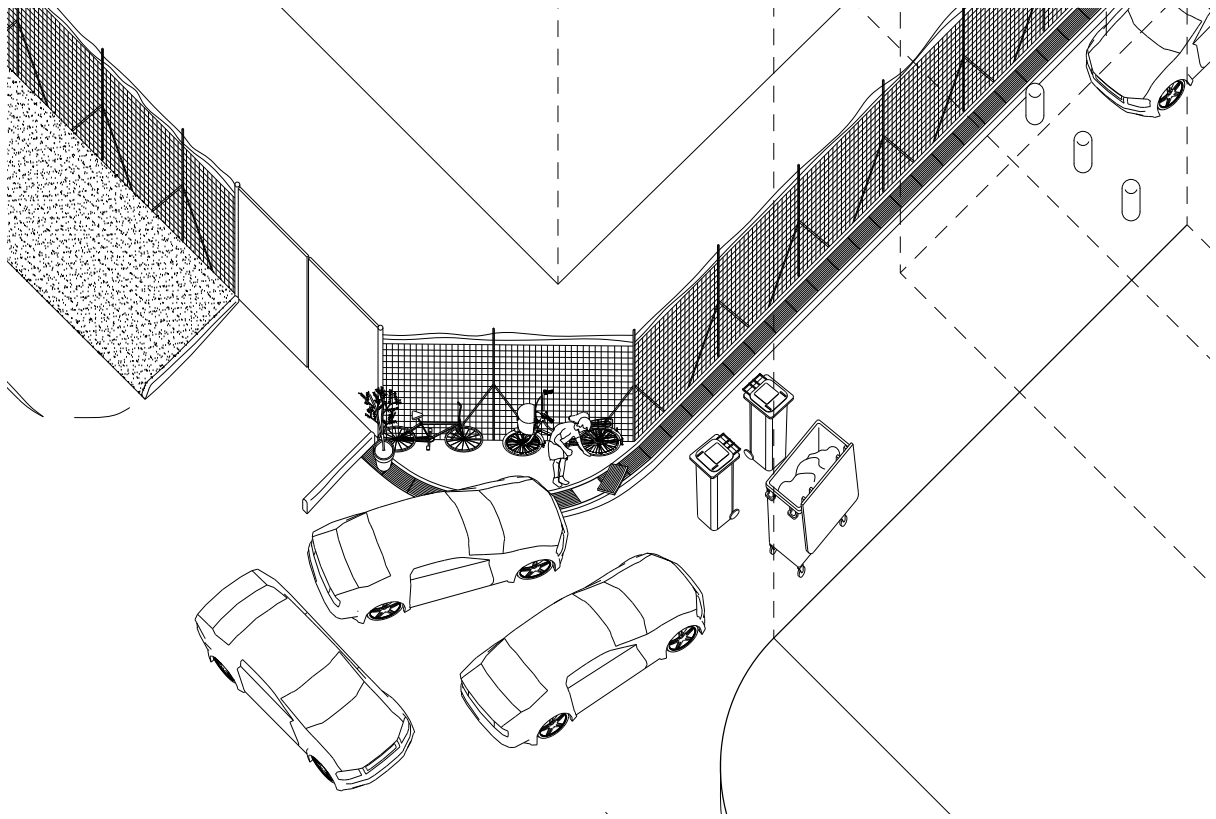
### 3.2.1 | Drug Storing Drain

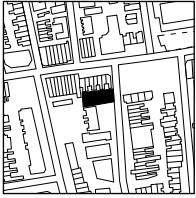
function: hiding place for illegal drugs

site: Lorong 12, Geylang

- a nondescript strip of drain serves as the perfect hideout
- the drain is always enclosed by objects and vehicles, making it very obscure
- any suspicious human action is hardly detectable
- illegal cigarette vendors ply their ware close by, constantly keeping watch of this harmless looking property







Informal Economy

### 3.3.1 | Illegal Gambling Dens

function: illegal gambling dens and porn discs

site: Lorong 16, Geylang

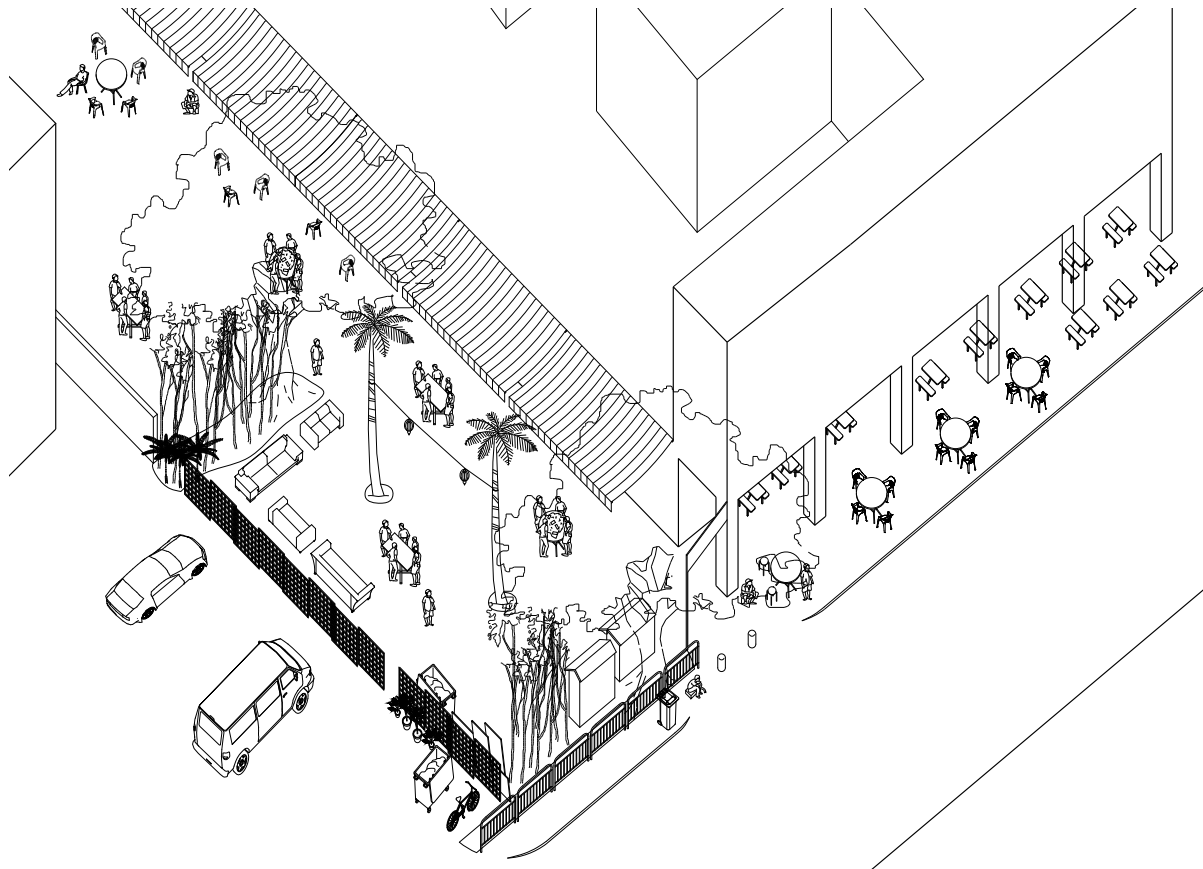
- at times when the police is not there, it transforms into a 'casino', disguised as a public shrine

- loose objects border the space to form an enclosure

- this space is guarded by many cautious 'outlookers' who are always on the alert

- the coffeshop adjacent to it serves as their guard post and as a place for exchanging secret information

<p>Big</p> <p>大</p> <p>11 - 17</p>	<p>1 ↔ 4</p>	<p>1 ↔ 3</p>	<p>3 ↔ 6</p>	<p>Big</p> <p>大</p> <p>11 - 17</p>
<p>TRIPLE BANKER WIN</p> <p>豹子通吃</p>				<p>TRIPLE BANKER WIN</p> <p>豹子通吃</p>
<p>Small</p> <p>小</p> <p>1 - 10</p>				<p>Small</p> <p>小</p> <p>1 - 10</p>
<p>CASH TERM</p> <p>现金交易</p>	<p>3 ↔ 6</p>	<p>6 ↔ 4</p>	<p>1 ↔ 4</p>	<p>CASH TERM</p> <p>现金交易</p>





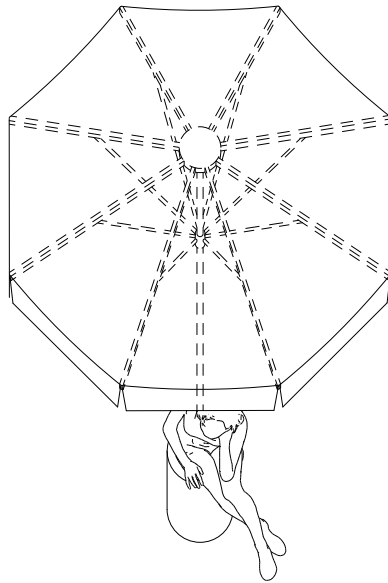
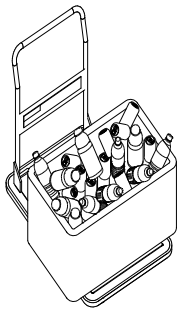


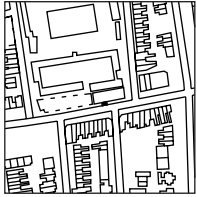
#### Informal Economy

### 3.3.2 | Transient Services

function: (from left) mobile drinks stall, umbrella shelter, mobile barber  
site: Jalan Suka, Jalan Molek

- these streets are cul-de-sac, perfect for discreet economies such as prostitution
- huge 'Tiger Beer' umbrella shelters stand along the pedestrian sidewalk to shade the girls while they wait for the boys
- because of the thriving prostitution scene there, various other enterprises seek to capitalise on the sustained human traffic
- drinks vendors operate simply from a trolley and styrofoam box, while the barber has his stool, scissors and comb, plus a headlight (essential for cutting hair under the stars)





### Informal Economy

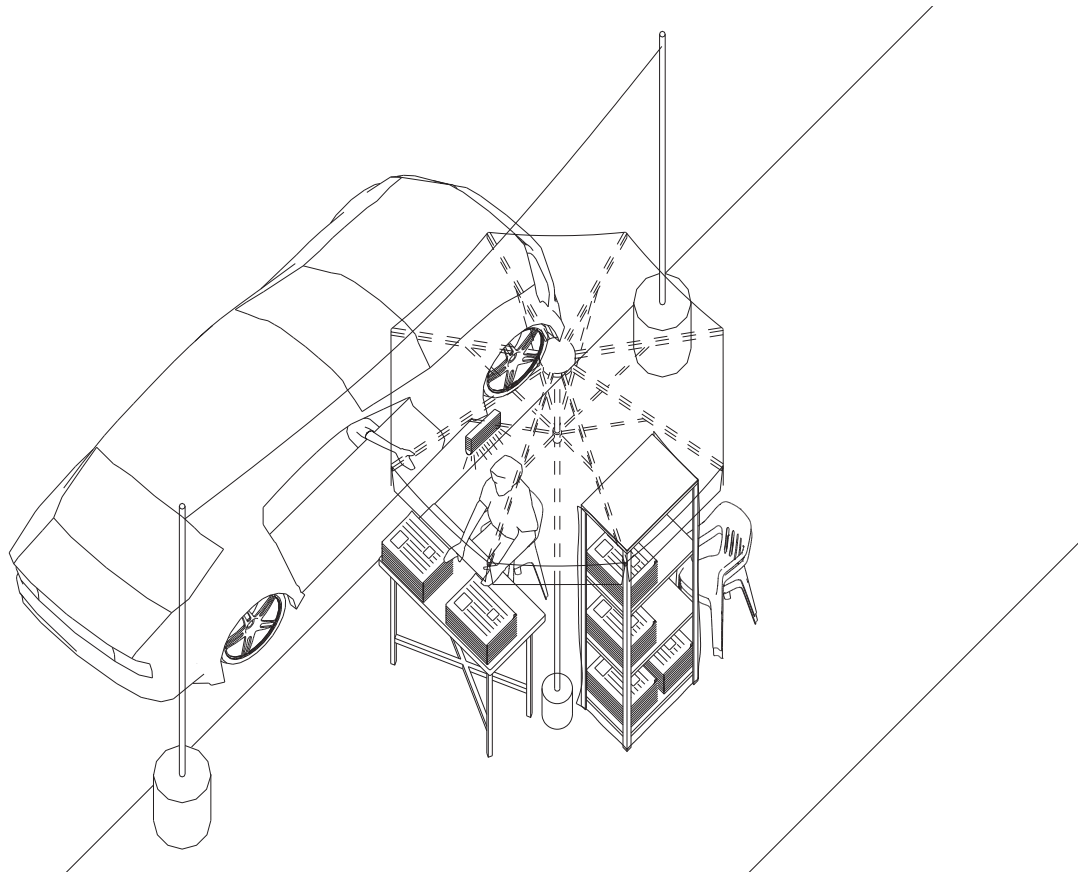
## 3.3.3 | Drive-Thru Newsstand

function: newspaper booth

site: Geylang Rd

- Geylang Rd is a four-lane wide one-way road
- perhaps because of this, it is very common for vehicles to park (temporarily) along the lanes at the side
- this is an ideal opportunity for selling news to people on-the-go
- the two poles seem to serve as a marker so that customers know where to stop their vehicles







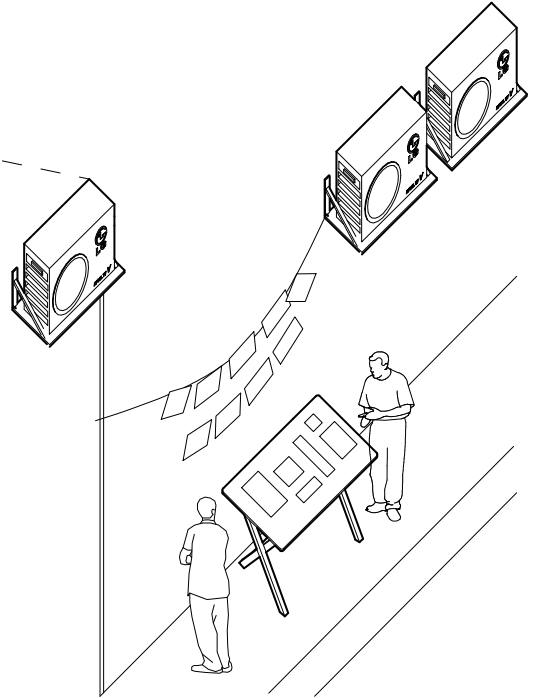
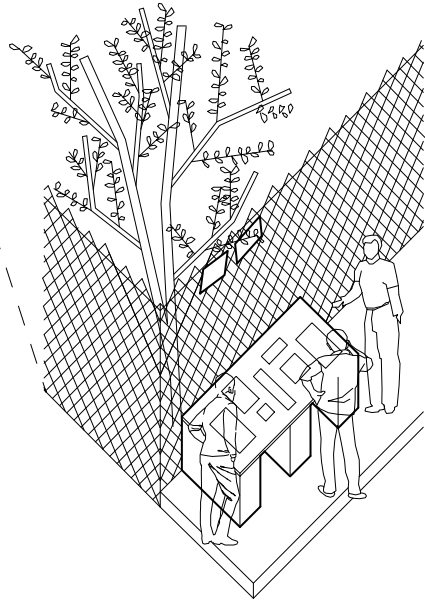
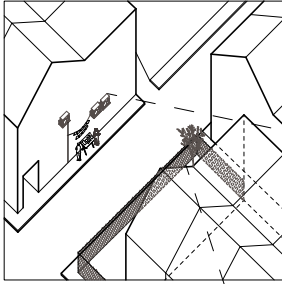
### Informal Economy

## 3.3.4 | Sunday Newsstand

function: makeshift newsstand on Sunday

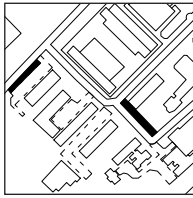
site: Lembu Road, Little India

- Lembu Square colonized by Bangladeshi workers on their day-off
- site for gathering and exchange of info through verbal and written word
- opportunistic news vendors tailor products to suit target audience
- makeshift simple stalls with minimal setup, using existing structures for display of newspapers





backpacker's hostel and five-foot way spaces



bicycle cart parking



### Informal Economy

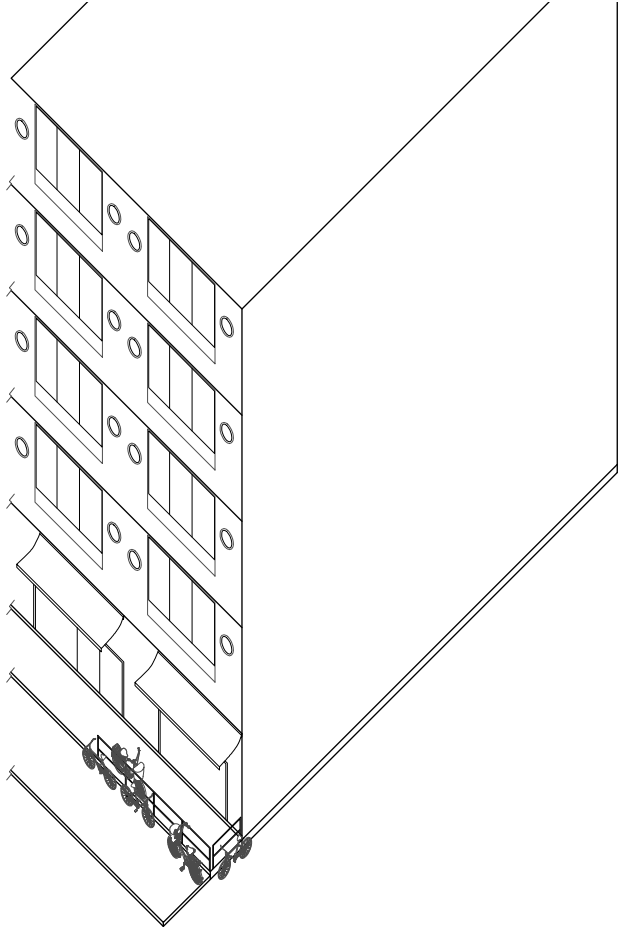
## 3.3.5 | Bicycle Trades

function: bicycle parking and circulation

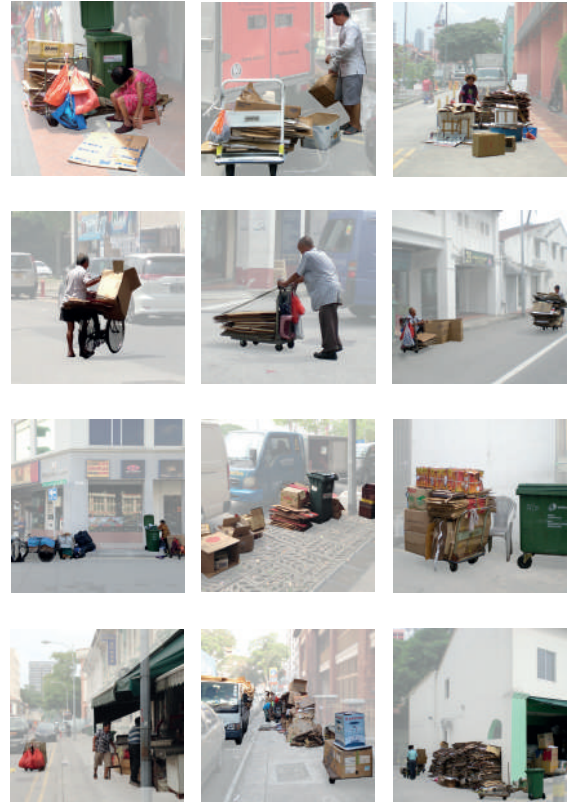
site: King George's Avenue, Jalan Besar; Rochor

- bicycles still remain one of the common transportation modes in the Rochor area
- they form an integral part of the trades of the area, e.g. backpacker hostel rentals, rag-and-bone sellers
- pedestrian spaces such as five-foot ways are colonised by bicycle circulation too
- railings and signposts are also often used to chain the bicycles when not in use









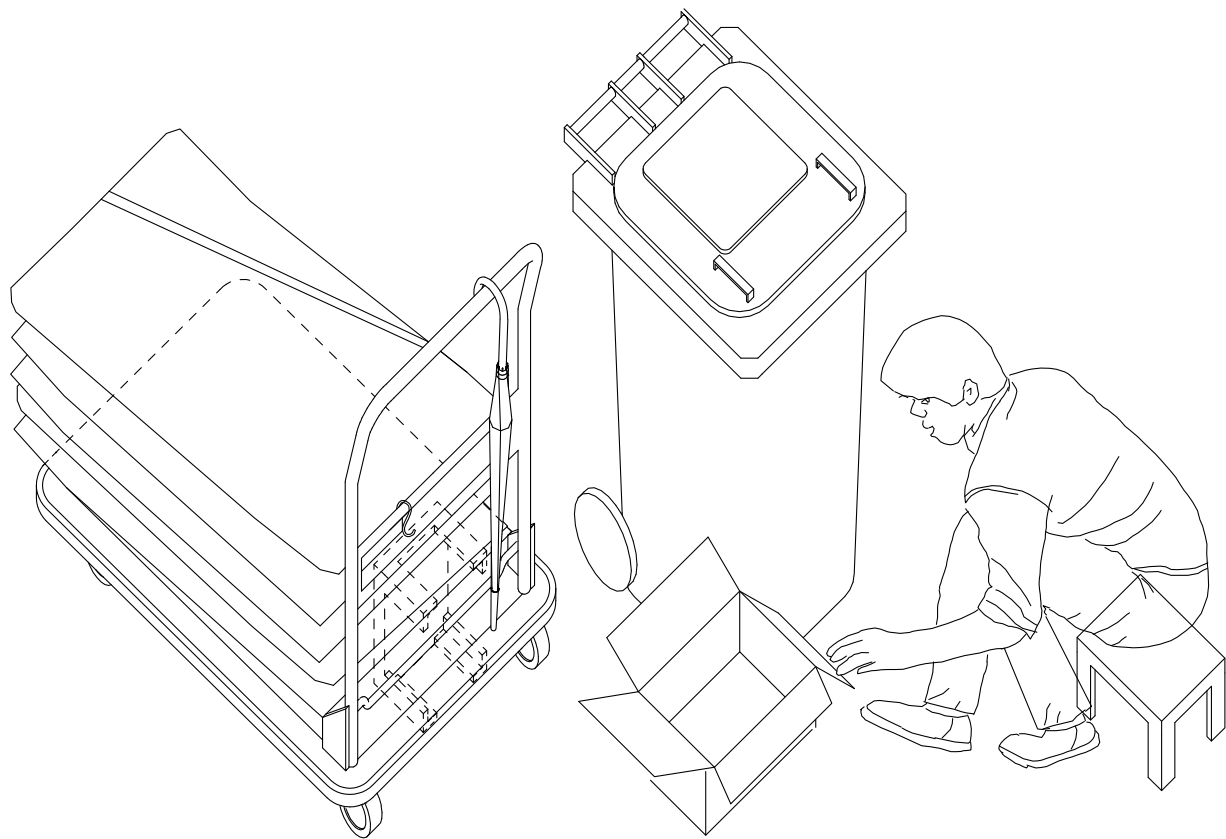
### Informal Economy

## 3.3.6 | Rag & Bone Collector

function: cardboard collection and recycling

site: Rochor, Singapore

- shops (selling groceries and other packed products) generate cardboard boxes as waste,
- rag & bone man (karang guni, usually the elderly or lower income persons living in the area) ply the roads with their trolleys to collect them
- trolley contains plastic stool (to sit along the pavement and flatten the cardboard), umbrella (in case of rain) and other personal objects
- collection pick up points along Upper Weld Road and at its dead end





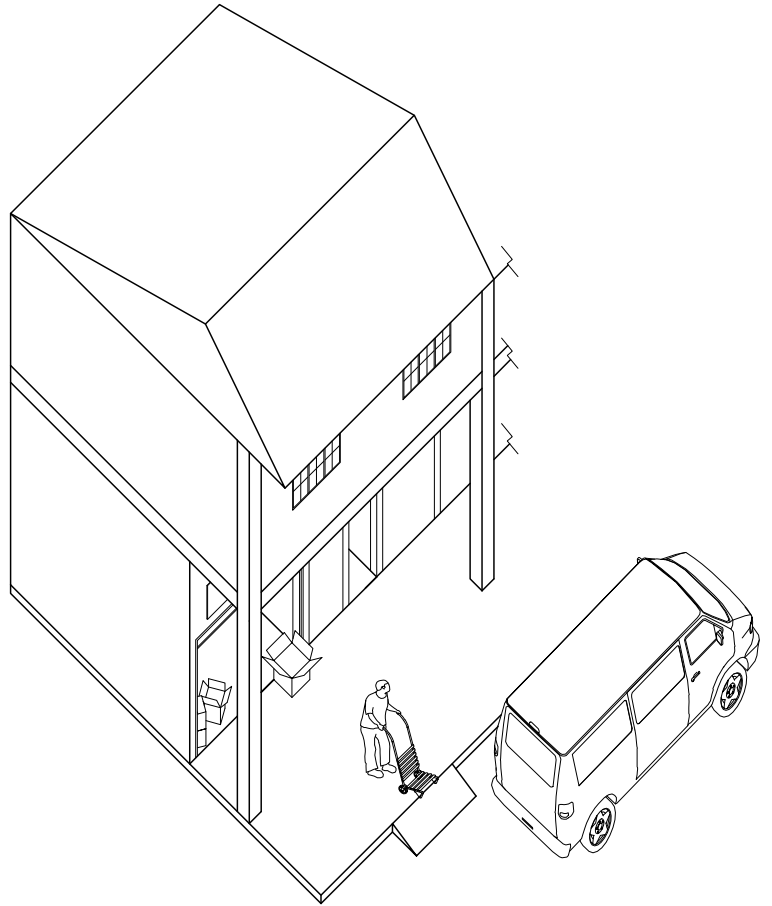
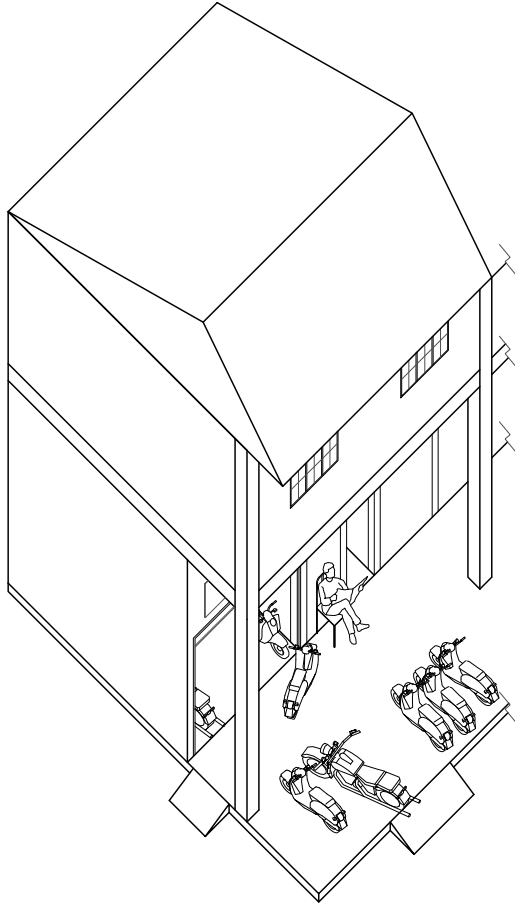
### 3.4.1 | Loading / Unloading

function: loading and unloading elements

site: Jalan Besar, Rochor

- as an industrial district, a lot of loading and unloading occurs along the shophouses facing the main road
- ramps are added by the shop owners to line the edges of the pavements in order to ease this routine
- pavements are wide enough for motorbike repair shops to use as an additional parking space for customers
- trucks and lorries sometimes mount the kerb when they need to stop for prolonged periods along the roadside to unload or load goods







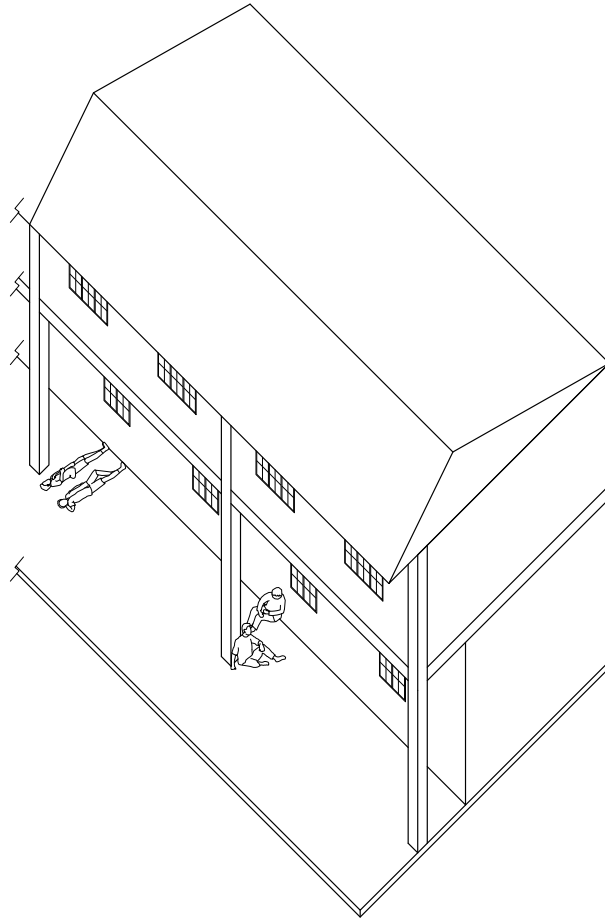
### Shelter

## 3.5.1 | Temporary Shelter

function: rest spaces

site: City Square Mall, Petain Road; Rochor

- behavioural patterns show that occupants tend to take their breaks where there is shade
- students gather in the space underneath playground equipment
- office workers take a smoke break under the shade of a tree
- industrial and construction workers take a midday rest within the comforts of their shopfronts or along five-foot ways.





Shelter

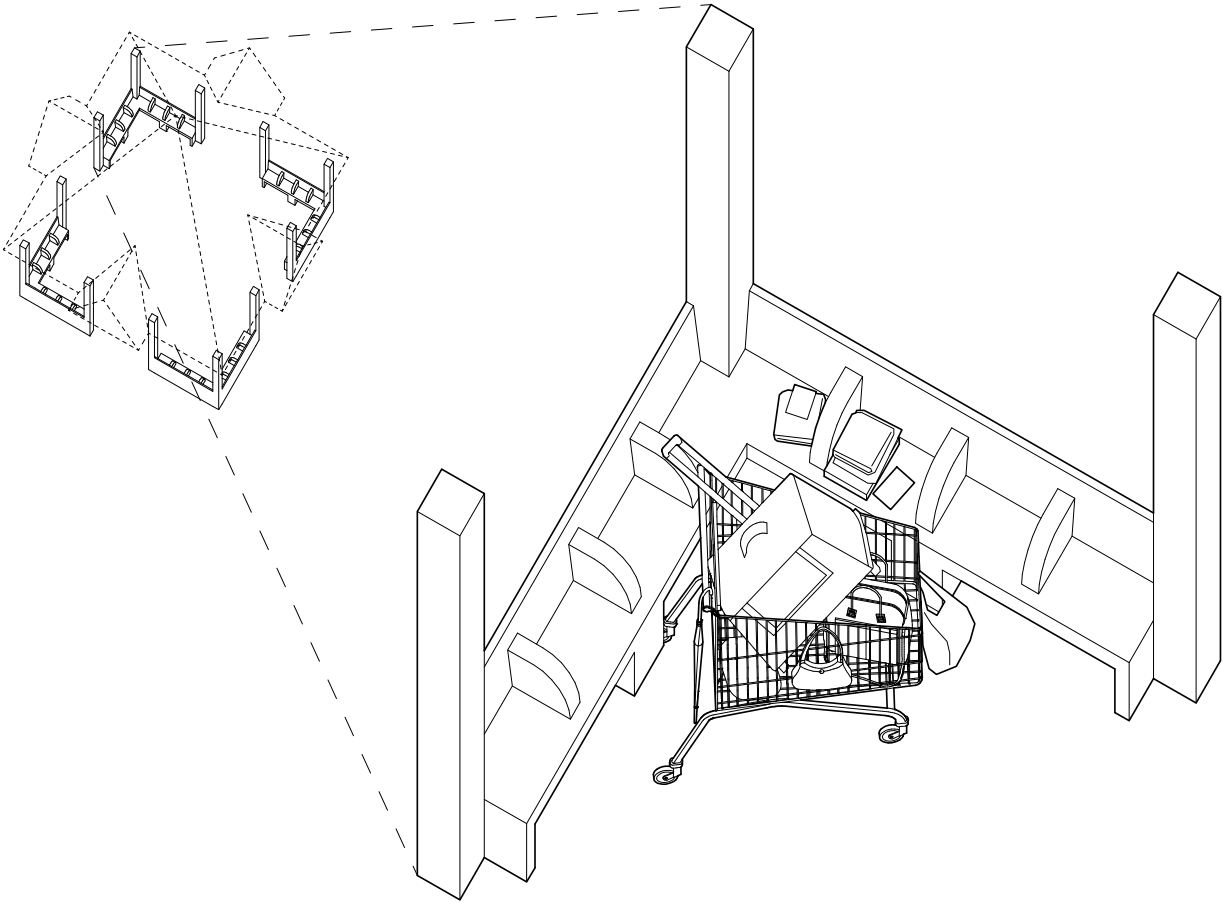
## 3.5.2 | Homeless Corner

function: homeless man's personal corner in a pavilion

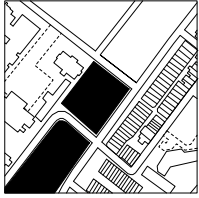
site: Veerasamy Road, Jalan Besar

- spacious, sheltered public pavilion for HDB residents
- pavilion buffered from main road by extensive railings, green space and currently, construction hoarding for the MRT downtown line
- corner chosen for privacy and partial enclosure on two sides
- shopping trolley of belongings for mobility and to demarcate boundaries





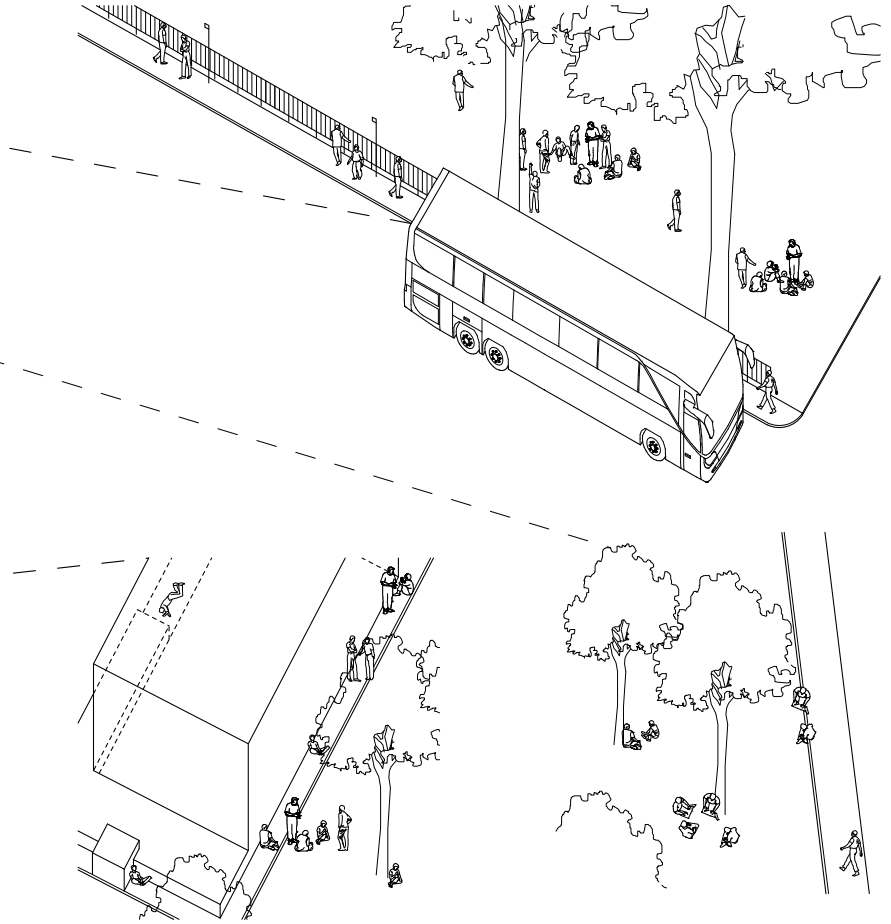
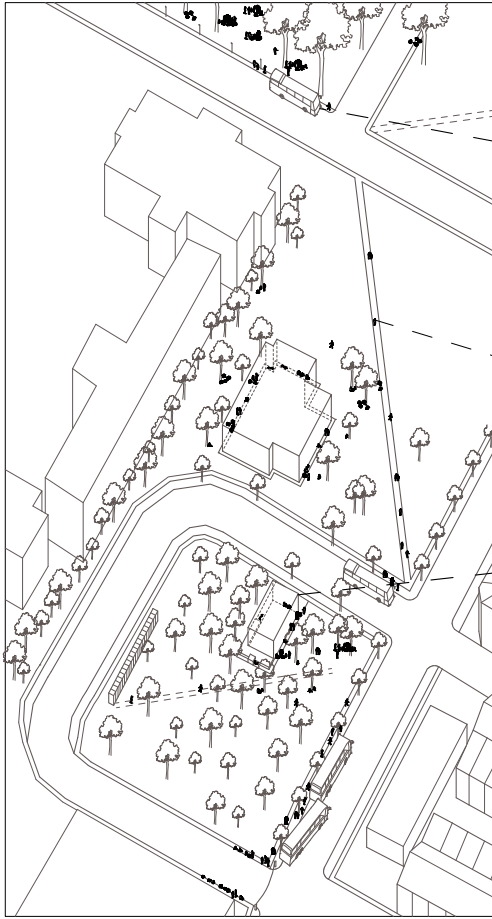


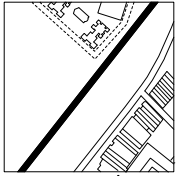


### Socializing

## 3.6.1 | Drop-off & Meet

- function: foreign workers' transport drop off and meeting point
- site: Race Course Road, Tekka Lane, Hampshire Road
- foreign workers arrive via chartered buses along Race Course Road
  - Hampshire Road (less busy secondary road) serves as pickup points where workers wait to get ferried back to their respective dormitories
  - open, green spaces serve as areas for gathering and socializing
  - leftover spaces such as building ledges, pavements, grass are utilized





### Socialization

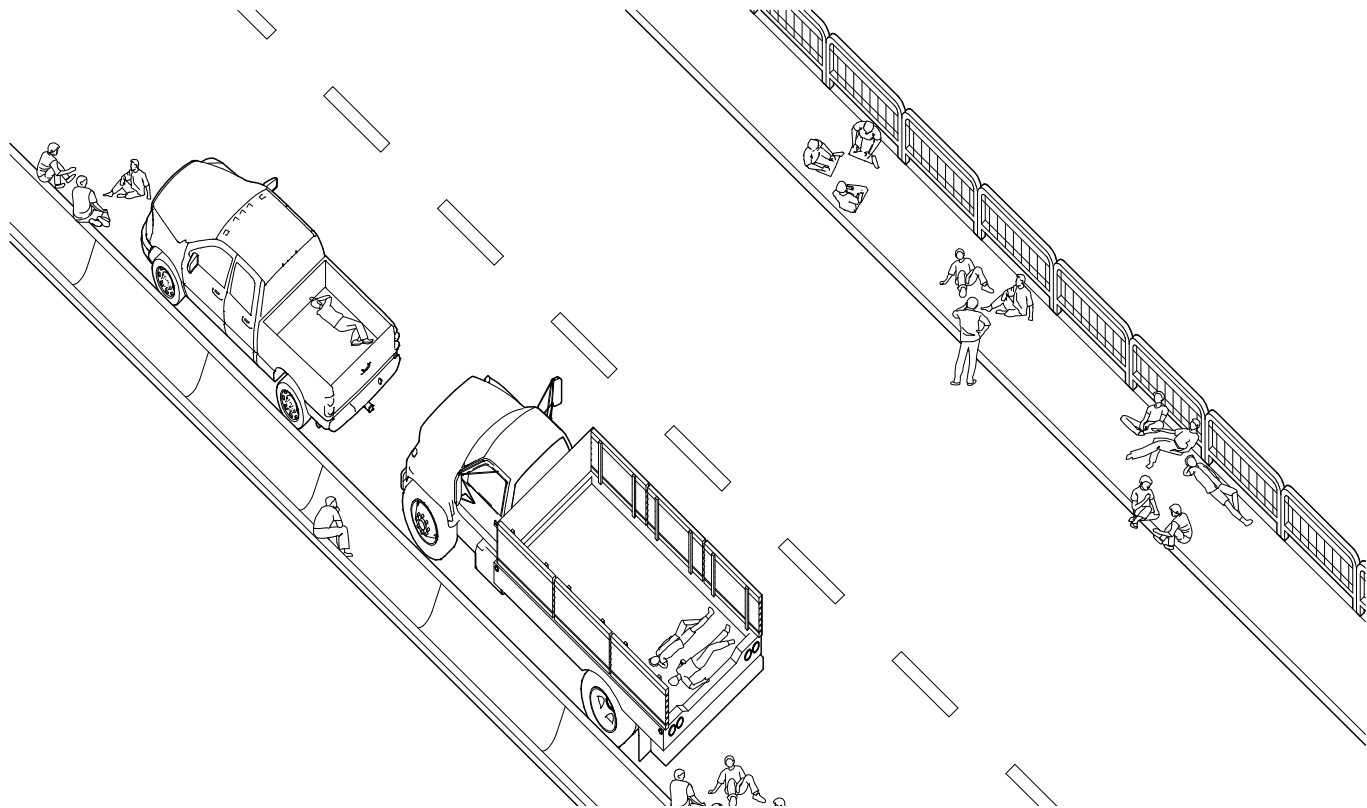
## 3.6.2 | Roadside Picnic

function: roadside picnic

site: Northumberland Road, Little India

- long road is relatively quiet, flanked by open green space on both sides
- small company trucks ferrying foreign workers to Little India are parked along the road
- workers sit along the pavement, on the canal ledge, on the road itself (next to or in-between trucks for privacy) to eat, drink and socialize
- urban edges are effectively utilized







### Socializing

## 3.6.3 | Lunch Corner

function: private public space

site: Hindoo Rd

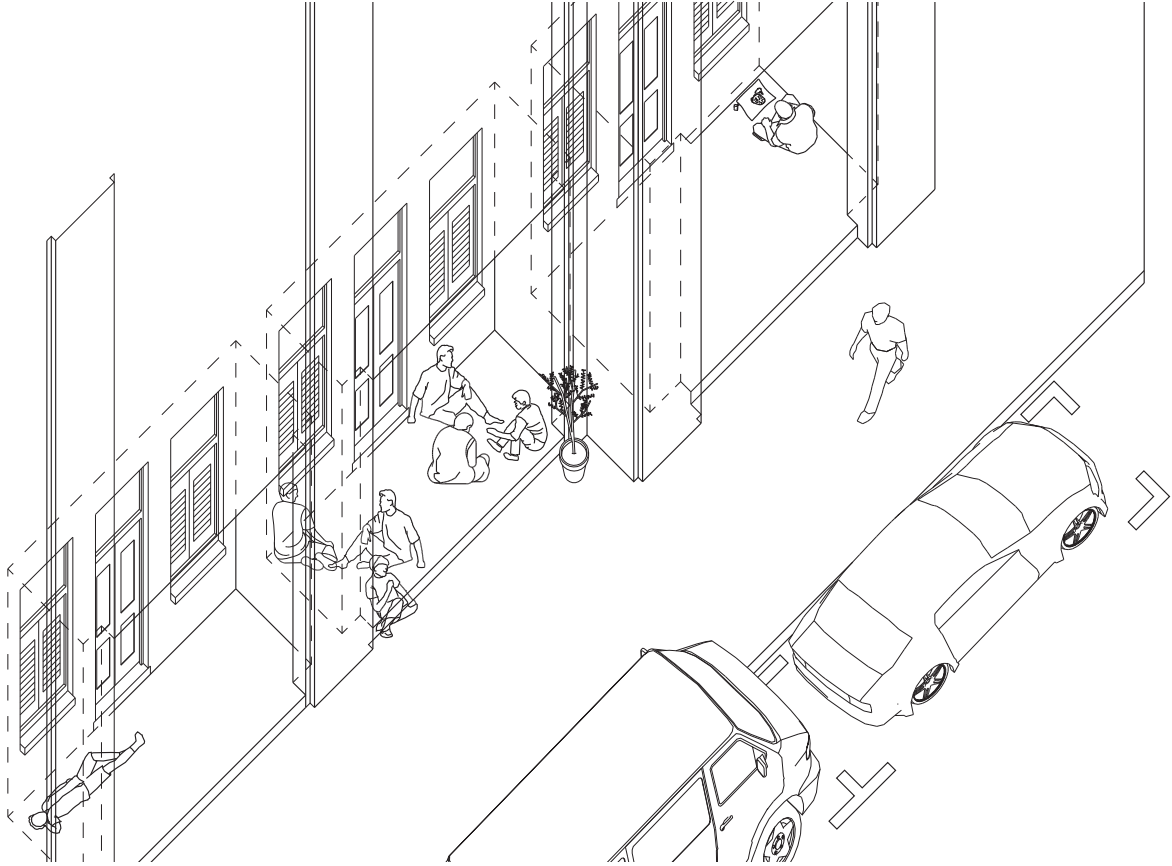
- this is a row of residential units converted for commercial use

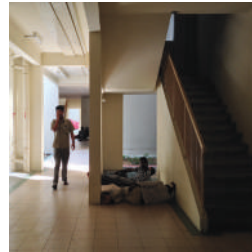
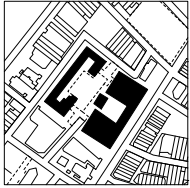
- in the day, the unit seems unoccupied, so that the enclosed porch becomes a public private space for a quiet lunch

- the stationary vehicles parked along the road provided added privacy and exclusivity

- on weekends, it transforms into a full-fledged private public space for rest and recreation







### Socializing

## 3.6.4 | HDB Void Deck

function: HDB void deck picnic

site: Chander Road, Little India

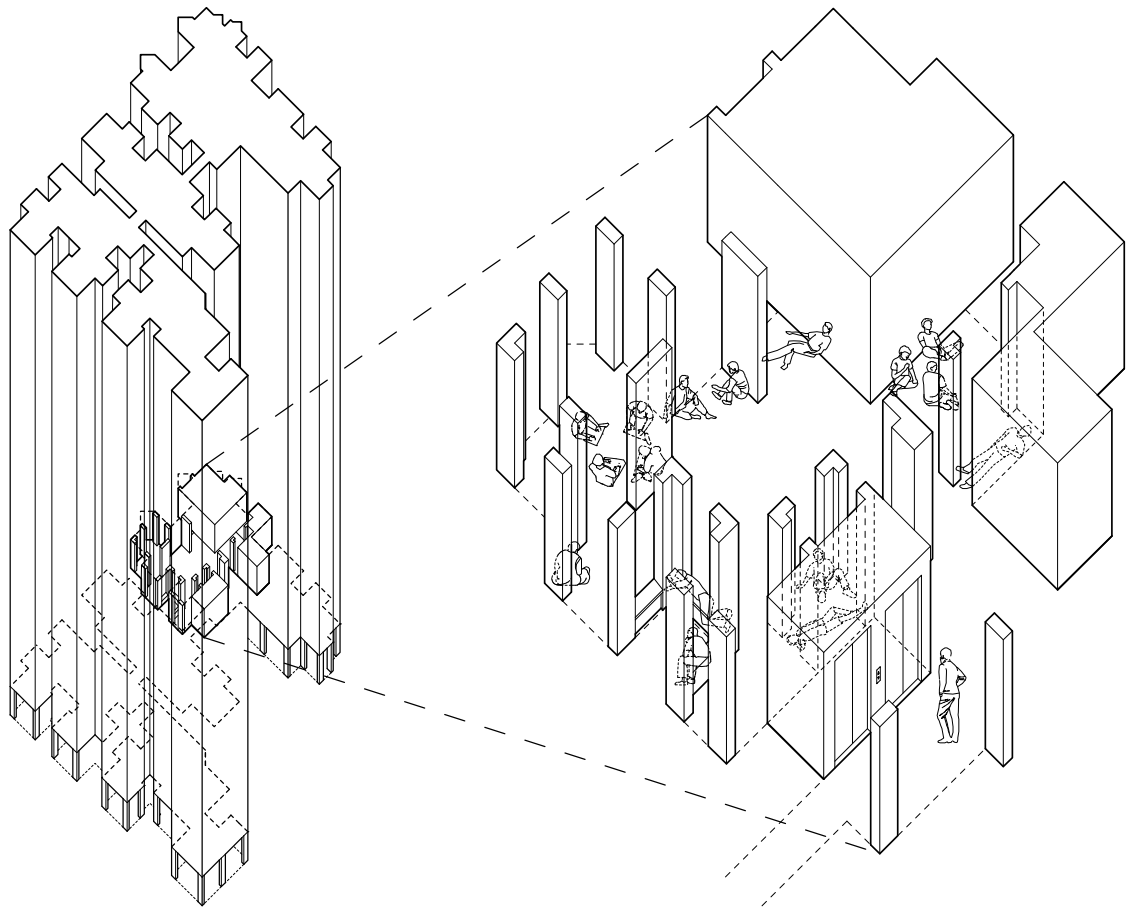
- HDB is sandwiched by race course and serangoon road, located between where foreign workers frequent on Sundays

- void decks are shaded, open, public (albeit contested) spaces which the workers appropriate for their use

- multiple columns create semi-enclosed pockets of space for privacy and surfaces for leaning against

- activities determined by brightness and degree of enclosure (darker areas for napping, brighter areas for socializing)









### Socialization

## 3.6.5 | Outdoor TV Room

function: movie screening by DVD shop on Sunday

site: Lembu Road, Little India

- Lembu Square frequented and colonized by foreign workers on their day

- off - DVD shop shows movies on big screen TV for public entertainment and advertising

- viewers crowd around the adjacent parking lot and pavement along Lembu Square

- street becomes an outdoor urban TV common room



