

URBAN DESIGN PLAN



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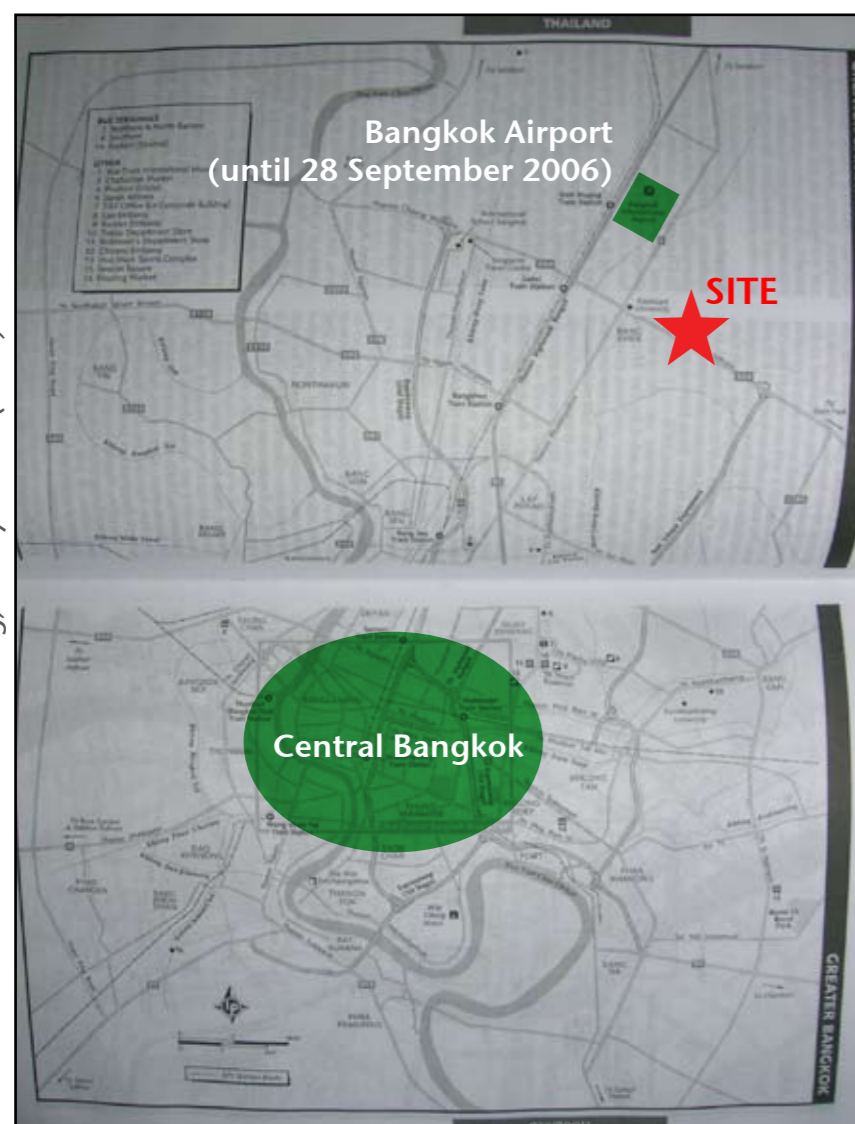
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Bangkok - a design challenge

Bangkok, Thailand is an expanding metropolis with a growing urban population. Given the extreme urbanization and population growth of Bangkok, coupled with the lack of proper planning in terms of city design, various problems arise that not only affect the quality of life in the city, but also restricts further development and functionality of this growing metropolis. Predominant among these urban issues includes an increasing car culture and traffic congestion, noise and traffic pollution, and a lack of public space and green space. This situation can easily be found in many places in Bangkok. Central Raminthra is one of these places. This urban design plan will address these issues beginning with a description of the current site location, a SWOT analysis, followed by design concepts for the site, and lastly a vision for the overall urban design plan.

Purpose

“To design an environment around Central Raminthra where students, families, shoppers, and visitors can safely escape from the hustle and bustle of shopping, noise, and pollution and relax in an outdoor environment.”



Source: South-East Asia on a Shoestring, Lonely Planet (2001)



Soei 3 and the east side of Central Raminthra

Objectives

- **To be pedestrian-friendly** so people can navigate safely through the environment;
- **To provide public green space** to bring relief from the surrounding built environment; and
- **To offer an outdoor area** where people from can maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.



Source: Google Earth, Accessed 17 August 2006

Site Background

Central Raminthra is located in the Bangkhen district of Bangkok metropolis, approximately 20 kilometres from the central business district. Unlike the central districts of Bangkok, the Bangkhen district is located in an area that contains a variety of functions. Because of its distance from the city centre, there is more space to accommodate such facilities as golf courses, big-box retailers, universities, residential blocks, and large military compounds.

The focal point of the site location is the Central Raminthra shopping mall. While not as upscale as its counterparts in the city, the mall is a major feature in the area frequented by students, residents, blue-collar and white-collar workers, and the odd foreigner/tourist. Within walking distance of the mall is a mixture of services and facilities, including car rental centres, food vendors, a golf driving range, and residential areas.

It is bordered by a major road, Raminthra Road, and contains numerous smaller streets and alleyways. The road most used within this area is the local distributor called Soi 3, which runs on the eastern side of the shopping mall and continues through the site until it reaches the entrance/gate of a residential block.

Districts & Edges

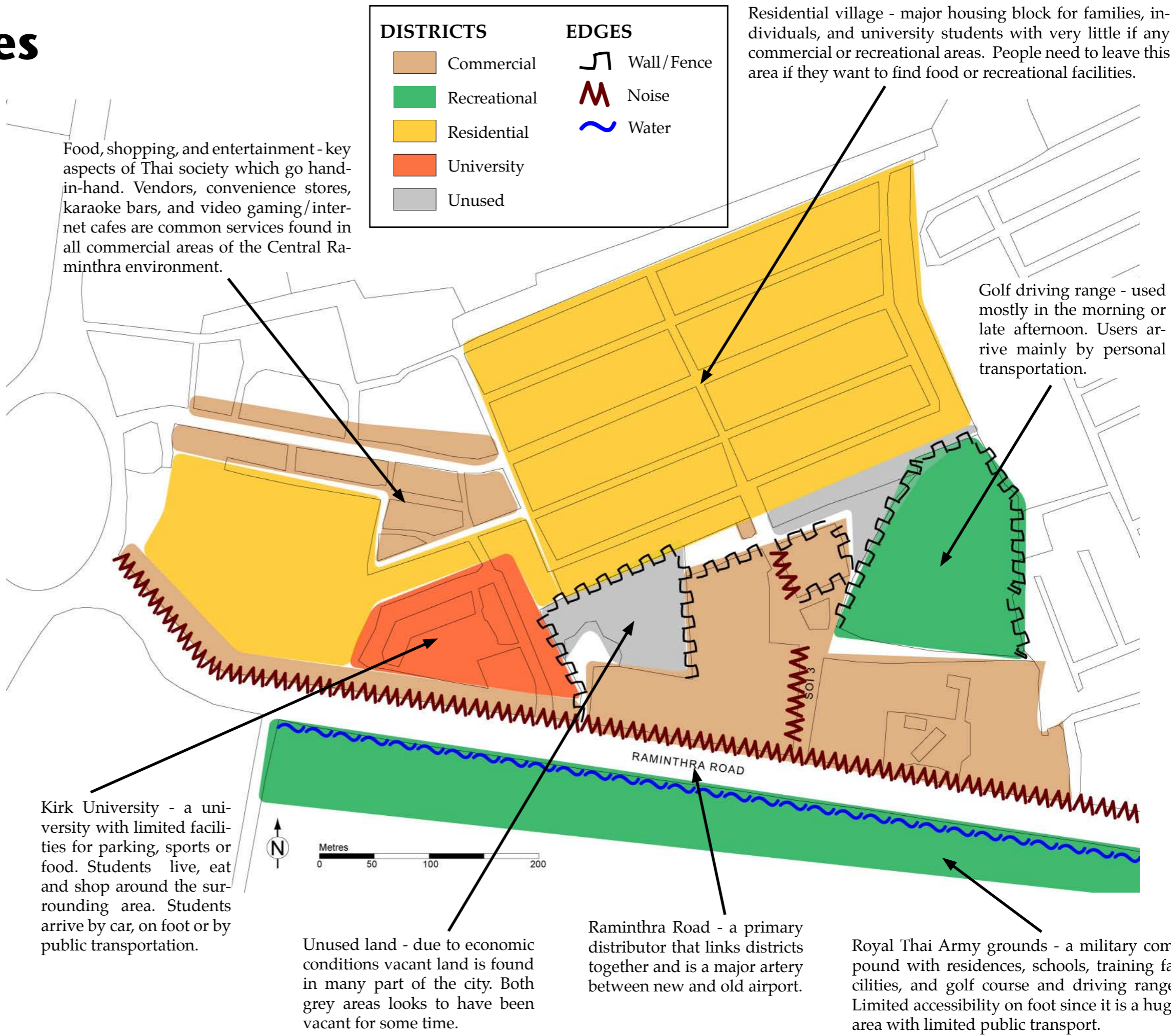
A growing metropolis and expanding urban environment brings about dynamic and rapid change especially for a developing country. On one hand, Bangkok's growth and development is facilitated by consumption and materialism at the ever-present shopping mall. On the other, it reduces access to green space for outdoor activities because more focus is placed on increasing building construction. This page shows that the development and growth of the city creates areas of mixed land uses, such as the environment around Central Raminthra.

Most places in Bangkok are mixed land-use. This usually takes shape where buildings are used for residential purposes and business purposes. Despite this characteristic, districts and edges can still be seen. As Lynch defines, districts are medium-to-large sections of the city where a person mentally enters "inside of", and which are recognizable as having some common identifying character. If we consider the home-business characteristic as a natural unit, the Central Raminthra environment is still defined by various districts, each with its own identifying characteristics.

Edges can be found at the site that defines or separate parts of the Central Raminthra environment. Edges, as defined by Lynch, are the linear elements not used or considered as paths for a person. Around Central Raminthra, we can see key edges, such as noise barriers, walls, and water features.

The districts and edges both create physical or mental boundaries that restrict the movement and activities of people. This is attributed mainly to the traffic. Quality of life, as Gardner and Evans states, should be preserved, and that the car should not be allowed to dominate the city.

It is interesting to note that although the official name of the site (as shown in the cover graphic) is called "Central Plaza Raminthra", it does not evoke the sense of being in a "Plaza" or of a place for social gatherings. It is hoped that this design plan will create an environment that mirrors its name.



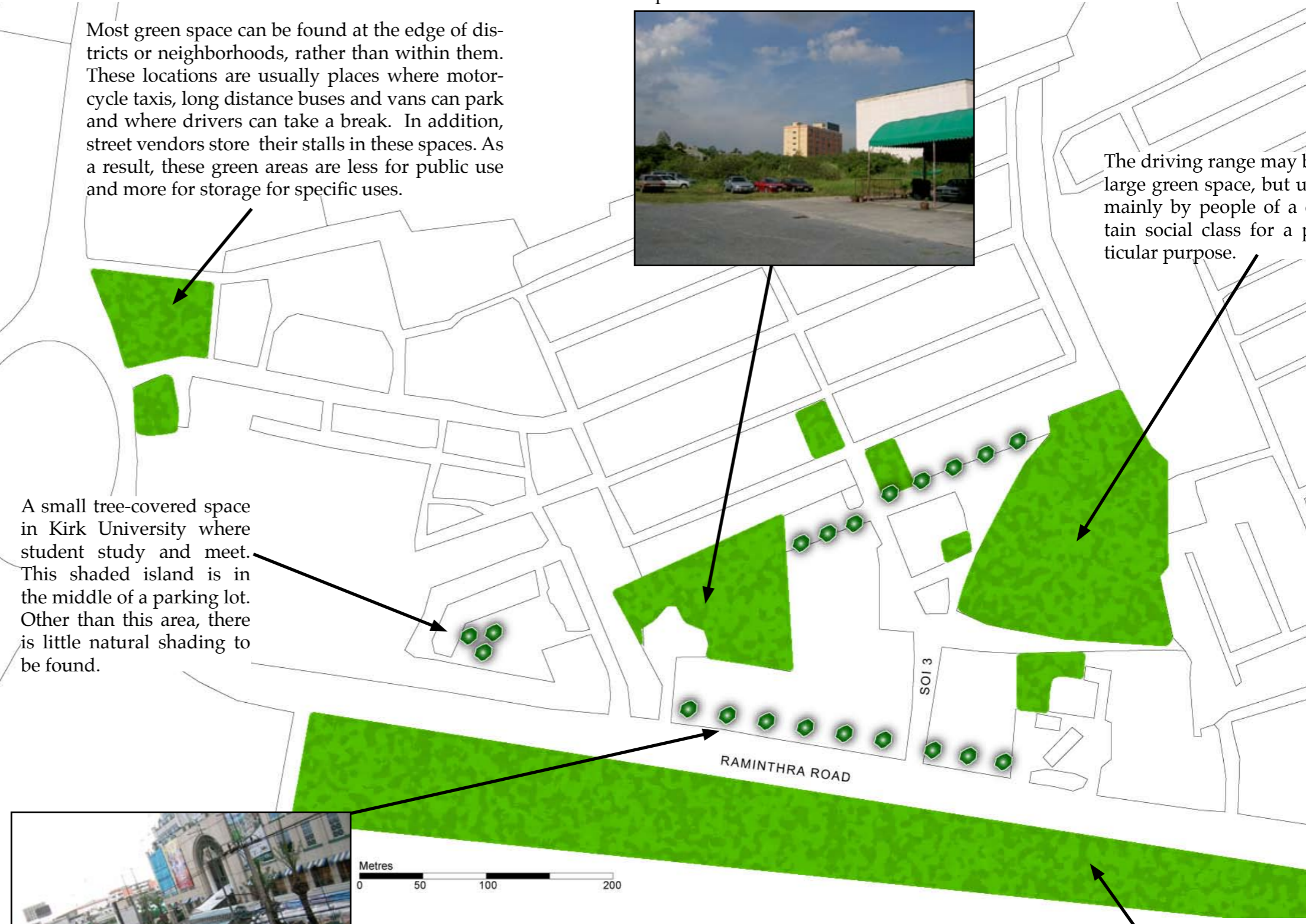
Vegetation & Green Space

There is a significant lack of vegetation and public green space to offset climatic characteristics of the country and human-induced traits of the environment. Vegetation is sporadic, if not sparse, and green space is limited to relatively large undeveloped and fallow areas.

As Jacobs states, trees can do many things for a street and city, not the least of which is the provision of oxygen, and of shade for comfort. In the Central Raminthra area, trees can be found planted in groupings that do little to separate pedestrians from machines, machines from machines and people from people. Trees are planted mainly for decoration rather than for their functionality to shade, protect or bring relief to people from the climate and human activities. The photo below shows how some pedestrians not only use trees for shade from the sun but also for a barrier between cars and their foot path. Yet, one might question the usefulness of planting the trees in their current position particularly when pedestrians are not using the portion of the street provided for them. In addition, many of the trees found are either very sparsely populated with leaves or physically stunted providing little benefit for pedestrians. Most large public green spaces are either undeveloped or used for a specific purpose.



Trees providing a barrier not against traffic but against the use of the sidewalk



Most green space can be found at the edge of districts or neighborhoods, rather than within them. These locations are usually places where motorcycle taxis, long distance buses and vans can park and where drivers can take a break. In addition, street vendors store their stalls in these spaces. As a result, these green areas are less for public use and more for storage for specific uses.

A small tree-covered space in Kirk University where student study and meet. This shaded island is in the middle of a parking lot. Other than this area, there is little natural shading to be found.



Trees are sporadically planted and do not contribute to the environment. Most are either too small to be a traffic barrier or lack the leaves to shade pedestrians.

A large undeveloped green space currently unused or an extra area for people to park their cars.



The driving range may be a large green space, but used mainly by people of a certain social class for a particular purpose.

While open to the public, the main use of this space by the public is the golf course, driving range, and fields for sports. Access is usually by car or motorcycle which limits use to specific social groups..

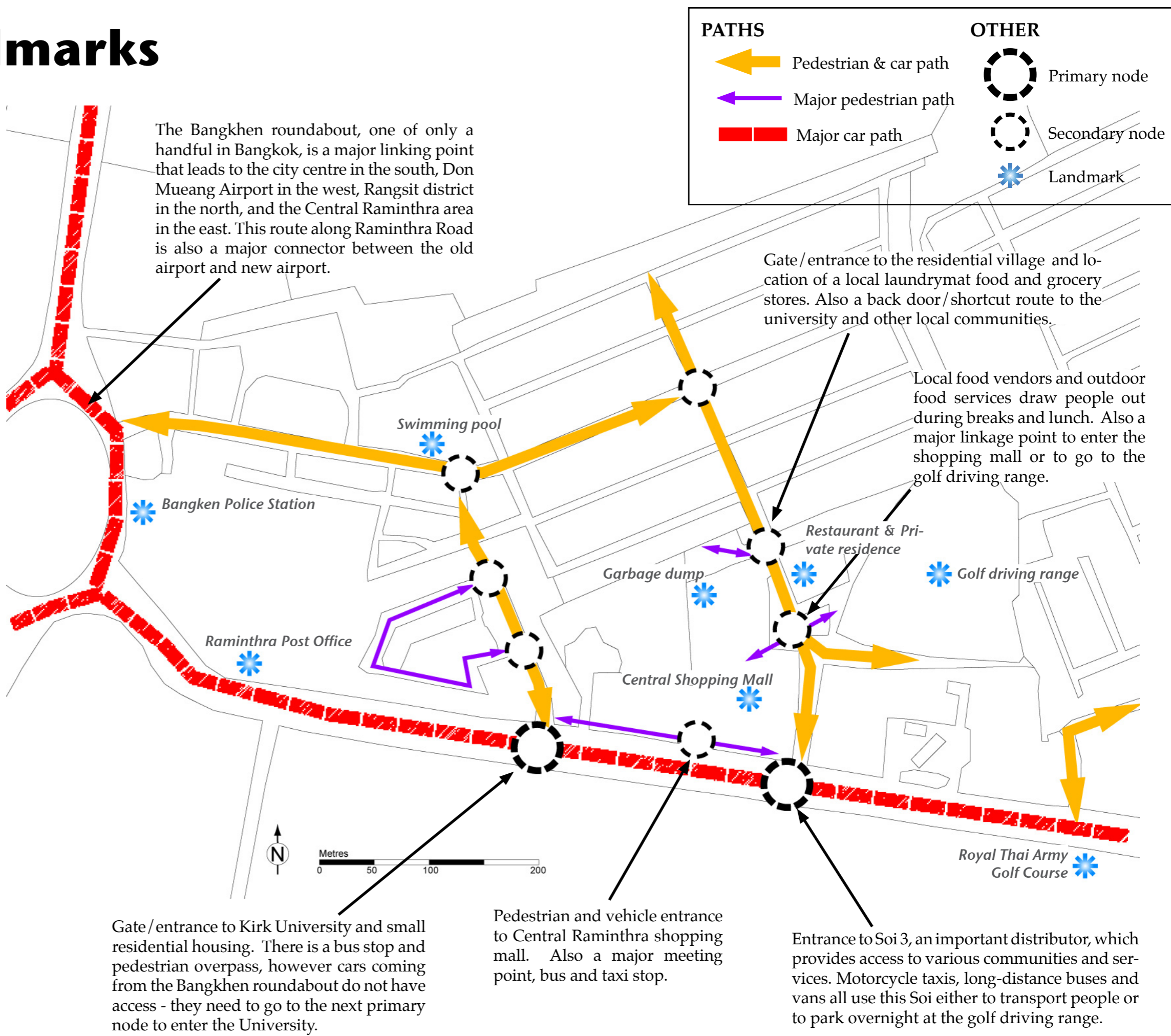
Linkages & Landmarks

Connections are important in linking people to services and facilities. Establishing efficient ways for people to connect requires understanding how people move and where they go. As Gardner and Evans writes, the lengths to which people go to minimize travel time suggests that transport itself is not what is needed, rather it is the *access* to goods and services. The Central Raminthra area contains a variety of goods and services and, like many parts of Bangkok, are connected by both pedestrian and vehicle movements. One of the key aspects of these connections is that pedestrians and vehicles usually share the paths in which they move through their environment.

Danny O'Hare's stroll through Bangkok details some common urban walkability issues that are quite relevant to this site, which includes the following points.

- Urban walkability seems not yet to be on the agenda. Bangkok has very heavy pedestrian volumes.
- Footpaths are leftover spaces between the building frontage and the traffic lanes.
- The paving is in such poor condition that the pedestrian's eye is forever downcast to avoid tripping.
- In narrower streets cars are given priority, so the pedestrian hopes that the shops are open so he/she can duck into successive doorways to avoid being run over.

Along Soi 3, pedestrians have to share footpaths with cars. Most "sidewalks" are sat on, like the one below, and are not legible in terms of connecting the environment.



S.W.O.T Analysis

There are a variety of factors that can have a positive and negative impact on an urban design. Using the analysis presented in the previous pages, this table provides a comprehensive look at the key factors that support or hinder the design of the Central Raminthra site.

In the process of collecting the data and performing an analysis of this data, there are some reoccurring themes that arise in each element of the SWOT, particularly transportation options, climate, and social-cultural attitudes. While interesting in itself, they are issues that play a significant role in the urban design plan and it's elements.

Using the information provided in this table, the following pages will detail the overall urban design plan for the site, as well a variety of elements that can add to the site's permeability, legibility and functionality.

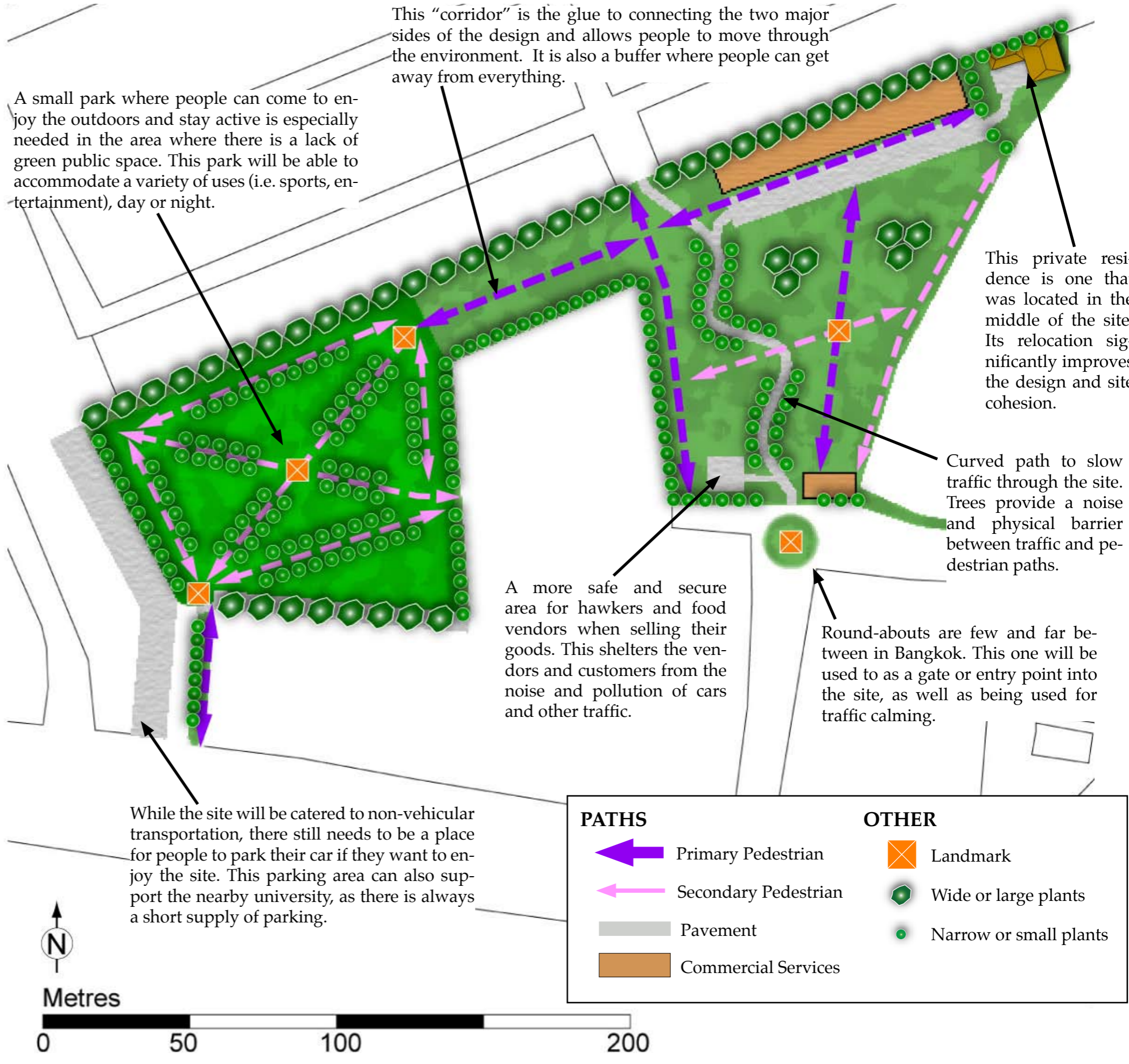
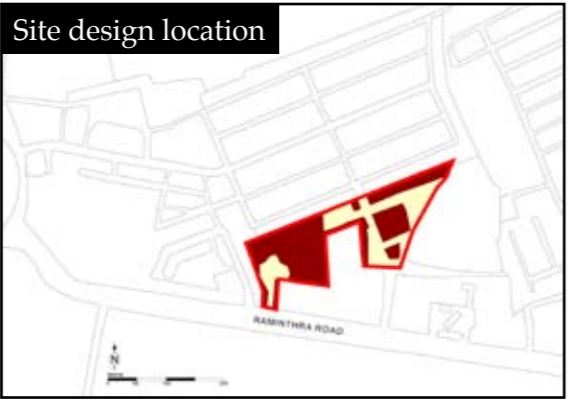
	Being pedestrian friendly	Providing public green space	Offering an outdoor activity area
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soi 3 is a path commonly used by pedestrians living in the area • The Central Raminthra shopping mall is a key landmark where people shop, eat, and meet • People can be seen walking and become pedestrians when it is not hot/humid and when there is adequate protection from traffic • Food stalls and vendors regularly draw people out of buildings during breaks and lunch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area is generally a residential suburb for families, individuals, students, and other people who want to escape from the hectic city centre • There is a constant flow of regular blue-collar and white-collar workers in and around the shopping mall • Many people already meet and eat outdoors • Most Thais spend their time outdoors after work or in evenings enjoying a beer and a conversation • Thailand has a large variety of trees, plants and flowers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There currently is an aerobics class being conducted in the shopping mall • Some residents play badminton in open spaces (i.e. parking lots) • Cycling is common (usually at night) in the area • Football (i.e. soccer) and other local sports are popular in Thailand • Kirk University has numerous clubs and student activities (i.e. cheer leading) that require an outdoor area
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cars and other vehicles are given higher priority than pedestrians since site is constantly being developed • Permeability is limited because people only have a few paths they can choose to use with limited lighting • Roads and paths are not maintained providing little incentive to walk • There is not enough shading/protection from heat/humidity so people don't walk long or far • Flooding occurs during the rainy season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site is scattered with businesses so there is a lack of cohesion • Parking is in demand during peak times for public use of site • Lack of adequate lighting • Legibility is limited due to the constant change of land-use and development • Walls and other barriers are used to define land ownership • Green or open space is usually used for storage or a garbage dump 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat and humidity hinders public use - morning, late afternoon and evenings are realistically the only times that can support outdoor activities • Limited space due to high density of buildings and businesses • Lack of facilities and services to cater to outdoor activity users • Private ownership of land dominate the landscape • Too many hanging power lines throughout the site creating an unsafe and hazardous environment
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate physical space to design for pedestrians • Areas exist on the edge of the site that can be used for parking which leaves the central areas for pedestrians • The shopping mall can support pedestrians - a place to get out of the heat and humidity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large area exists northwest of shopping mall • Unused and dilapidated buildings and grounds next to driving range • Soi 3 is wide enough to accommodate pedestrians, trees and other vegetation, in addition to access for cars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to green space opportunities • Adequate physical space to cater to various activities (i.e. outdoor movies, sports, festivals) • Climate favors outdoor activities
Threats (and constraints)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents and other users who drive • Cultural view of walking and cycling (people just don't want to do it) • Constant change of landscape due to development and construction • Resources (financial and physical) to maintain paths and walkways • People (and street dogs) are protective of their territory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses occupying a prime location in the area • Restaurant customers, local residents, motorcycle taxis, and other vehicles who need parking space • Residents adjacent to green space that do not want people in their "backyards" • Pollution and contamination of ground to grow healthy vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who would rather go to an air-conditioned shopping mall • Activities limited only during daylight hours - area being used to its fullest • Lack of motivation by people to be active and stay healthy in an outdoor environment • Having to share the space with various uses and activities

A Place for People

As the analysis shows there are a variety of uses and users in the Central Raminthra area. From commercial services provided by the shopping mall, recreational and educational facilities (i.e. golf driving range and university), to local food stalls and restaurants, there is something for everyone. While this satisfies certain conditions for a responsive environment set by Bentley, such as "variety of uses", "robustness in different purposes", and "personalization of the site by the users", there are other conditions that need to be addressed. By addressing important conditions such as permeability, legibility, and richness, Central Raminthra can become a place where people will enjoy the area's services in a healthy, comfortable and relaxing environment.

The following urban design concept will provide green space that is open and accessible to people from diverse backgrounds and will give them the freedom to enjoy an environment free from vehicles. It will also provide space for people to meet and the opportunity for activities of interest to people. One of the main problems with the site was the disjointed nature between the land uses - there seemed to be a lack of cooperation and partnership between the various stakeholders of the site. Although Soi 3 is a physical line that separates the two parts of the site in question, design elements that contribute will create a cohesive unit between the uses and users. To create this cohesive environment, not only will design elements be necessary to make this environment "responsive", but also the reorganization of current land uses and the support and understanding of all stakeholders.

The concept shown is an overview of the design concept. Primary pedestrian paths are the most likely paths used by pedestrians to move through the site. Secondary pedestrian paths are additional paths that can be used if pedestrians want to explore the site further. Commercial services are food stalls, grocery stores, restaurants and entertainment facilities (i.e. karaoke bar). Landmarks are physical structures such as monuments or public art pieces. Because of Thailand's diverse vegetation, there is a lot of flexibility as to what type of vegetation can be planted to support the site design - thus vegetation is classified broadly as "wide or large" and "narrow or small". The following pages will expand on the design and provide more detail on key portions of this urban design plan.



This "corridor" is the glue to connecting the two major sides of the design and allows people to move through the environment. It is also a buffer where people can get away from everything.

A small park where people can come to enjoy the outdoors and stay active is especially needed in the area where there is a lack of green public space. This park will be able to accommodate a variety of uses (i.e. sports, entertainment), day or night.

This private residence is one that was located in the middle of the site. Its relocation significantly improves the design and site cohesion.

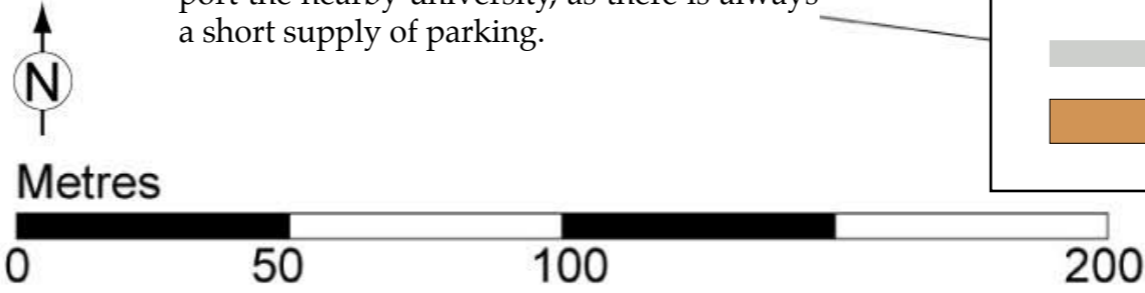
Curved path to slow traffic through the site. Trees provide a noise and physical barrier between traffic and pedestrian paths.

A more safe and secure area for hawkers and food vendors when selling their goods. This shelters the vendors and customers from the noise and pollution of cars and other traffic.

Roundabouts are few and far between in Bangkok. This one will be used to as a gate or entry point into the site, as well as being used for traffic calming.

While the site will be catered to non-vehicular transportation, there still needs to be a place for people to park their car if they want to enjoy the site. This parking area can also support the nearby university, as there is always a short supply of parking.

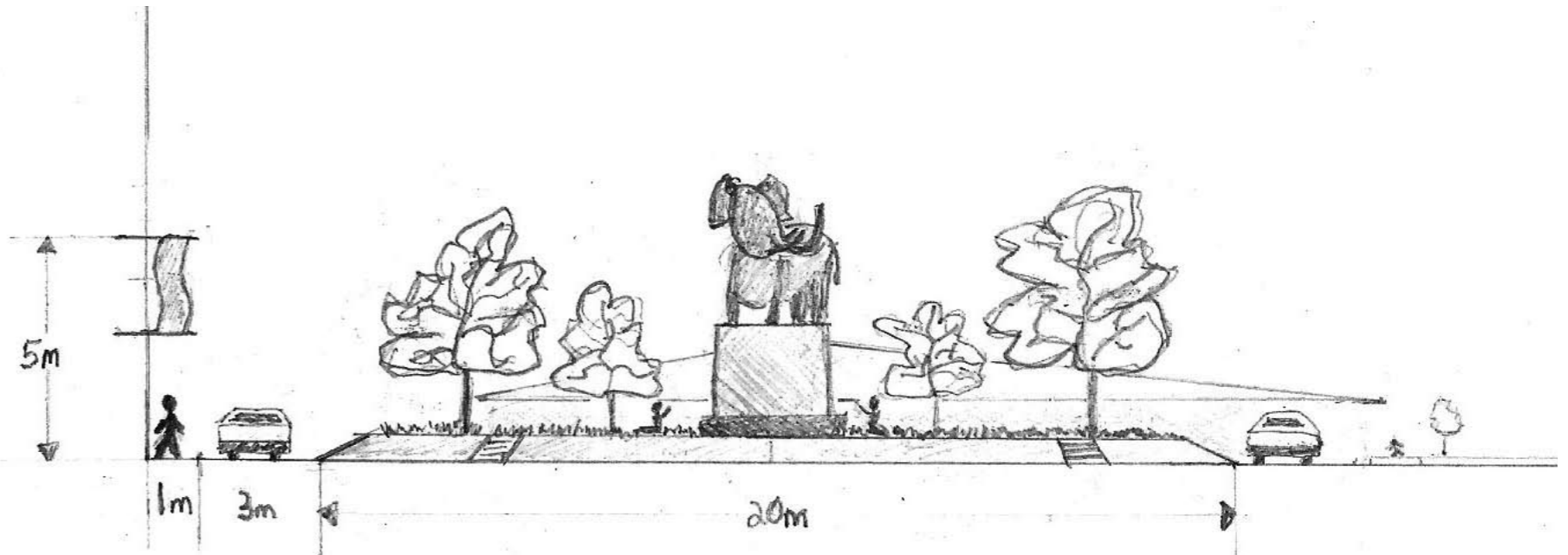
PATHS		OTHER	
	Primary Pedestrian		Landmark
	Secondary Pedestrian		Wide or large plants
	Pavement		Narrow or small plants
	Commercial Services		



Soi 3 Movement



Whether people are going to the Central Raminthra shopping mall or to the residential areas nearby, the main way to access these locations is through Soi 3. The 150m length from Raminthra Road to the residential gate at the north end of the site is a direct road with little traffic-calming elements. This plays a major role in limiting the number of pedestrians, as well as the safety and security of all stakeholders since cars speed through this length to get from one end to another. The design concepts for this portion of the site looks at two different aspects. One is the interaction between pedestrians and cars especially where they meet. The other is to provide an identifiable entrance to the site and to assist vehicles in understanding the change in environment between the main road (i.e. Raminthra) and the site they are about to enter.



Pedestrians moving in the direction of the shopping mall will be walking along the current narrow walkway. Jacobs' observation that great streets require physical characteristics that help the eyes move is applied in this situation. Placing banners (or flags) that react to wind keeps the eyes engaged and assists pedestrians to recognize a transition in their environment. Banners were placed using the figure that one can distinguish people at 12m and where a building should be 2 storeys in height for a strongly defined street (Moughtin). It is planned that the banners will be advertising current sales, movies, etc. which requires people to easily view them when they use this walkway.

As vehicles or motorcycles enter Soi 3 and make their way towards the entrance of the shopping mall, they encounter the "gate" for the design site. If they were moving at high speeds, they now have to slow down. Not only because they cannot continue in the direction in which they were heading due to the roundabout, but also because the car lanes have narrowed allowing only one car to enter the shopping mall at a time. A 3 meter lane width is used based on Lynch and Hack's definition that parking stall width are between 2.5-2.75 metres. This 3 metre berth provides room for a variety of vehicles, particularly delivery trucks and buses, to manoeuvre through the site.

Hawkers selling food directly on Soi 3

A straight-line road to the end of the site with no traffic-calming devices



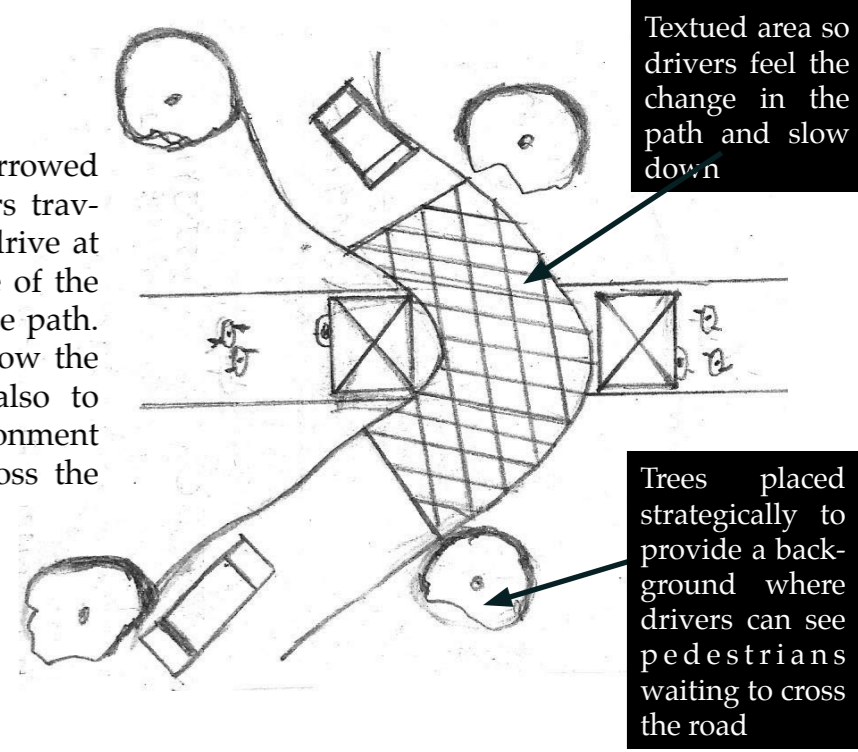
No place for pedestrians to cross safely - most pedestrians keep looking over their backs for speeding cars

Lack of traffic control which creates a disorganized and inefficient situation. Cars usually have to fight their way to enter/exit the mall



Example of architecture for waiting areas at crossing

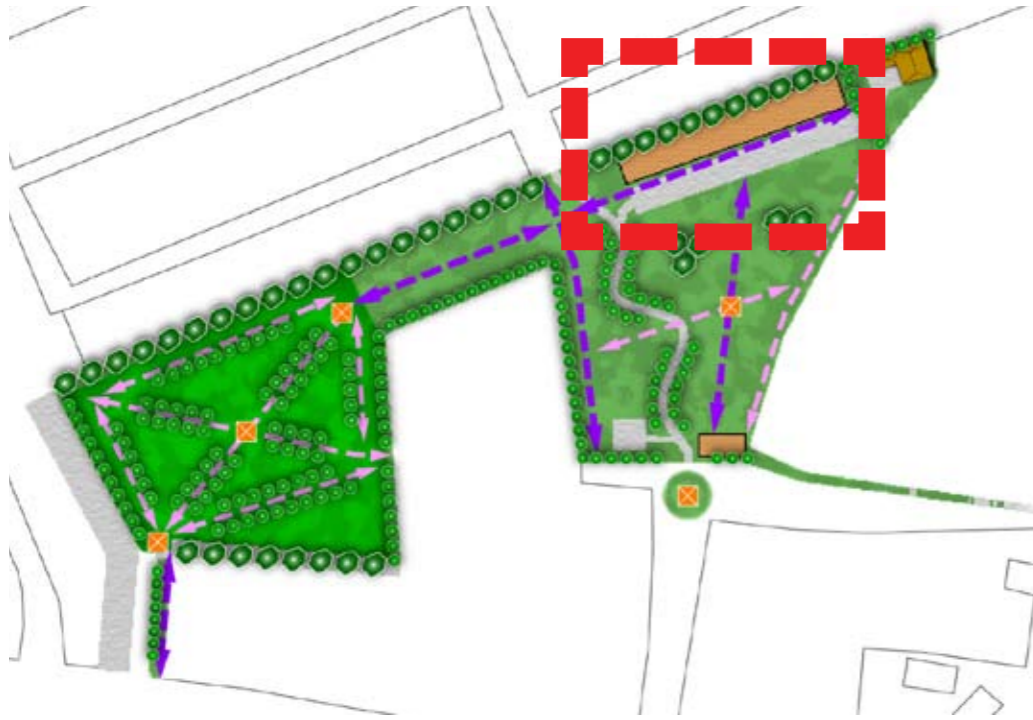
In addition to a narrowed two-lane path for cars travelling on Soi 3, cars drive at a slow speed because of the slight curves along the path. This is not only to slow the speed of cars, but also to provide a safe environment for pedestrians to cross the street.



Textured area so drivers feel the change in the path and slow down

Trees placed strategically to provide a background where drivers can see pedestrians waiting to cross the road

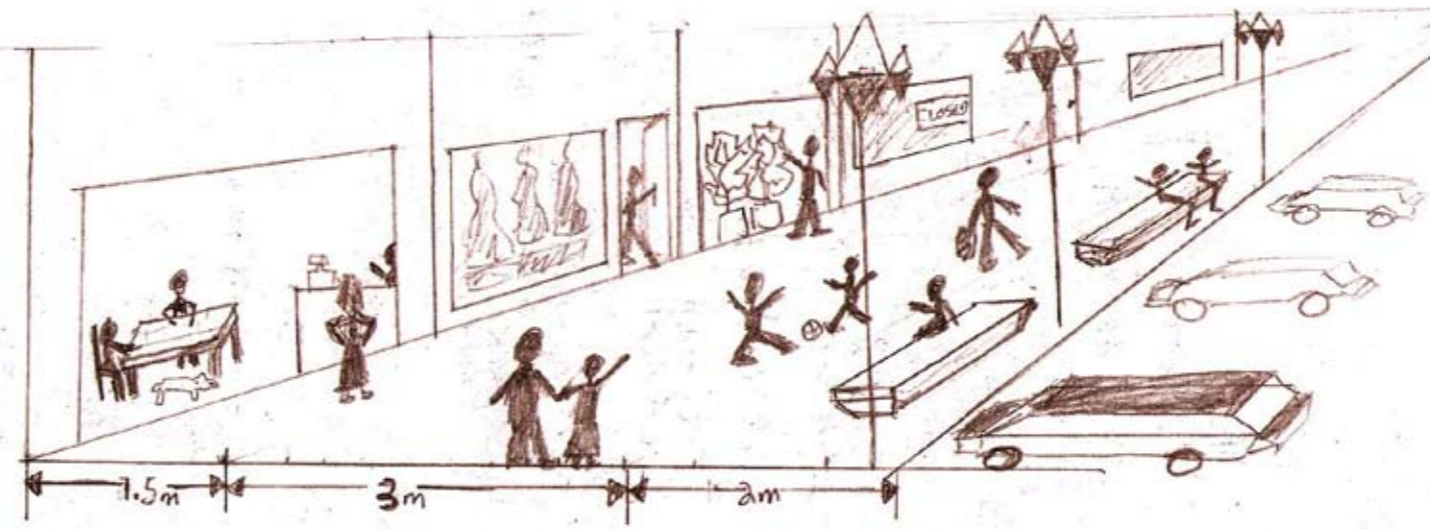
Landuse & Comfort



Food should never be too far away in Thai culture and society. Access to a variety of things to eat as well as food stalls are characteristics of Bangkok, if not all of Thailand. Food is available almost 24 hours a day and it is customary to snack throughout the day or visit food courts, vendors or stalls for a quick meal. It is something that must be considered in designing the Central Raminthra site. However, many of the food shops and other services in the area are spread-out causing the site to be disjointed. Although it is expected that current commercial services will remain, their location has to be rearranged to facilitate a more cohesive and responsive environment.

As Moughtin describes, the role of design is to bring some sort of order out of chaos. In the Week 5 Urban Design and City Building material, Moughtin's Unity and Balance concepts are presented. Unity is where designs must be brought together in some central idea or focus. By having the services at the site spread around, it hinders the design's purpose. By grouping and moving these services to the northeast, it supports the unity of the site's design of providing pedestrian-friendly green public space. Balance relates to the physical balance of the design. With the reorganization of the services, it provides a more balanced environment since all commercial and food services are located at the edge of the site.

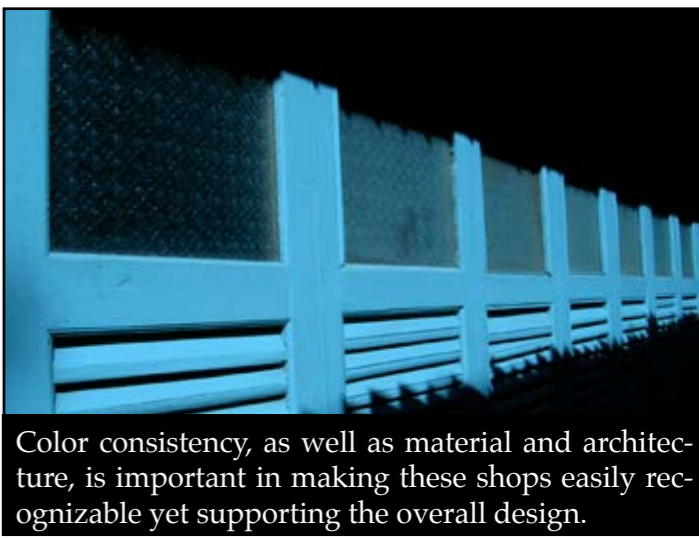
Main source of dis-unity and unbalancing of the site is the central location of this private residence/restaurant/karaoke bar.



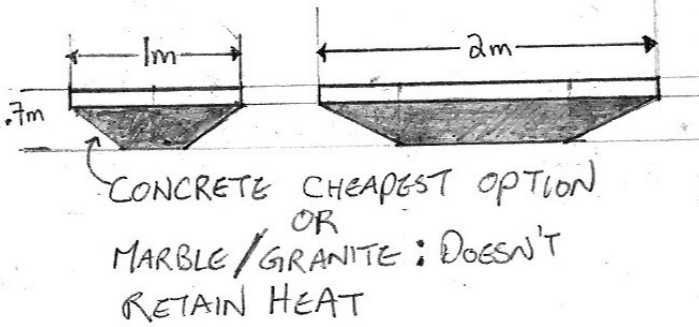
Moving current services (i.e. restaurants, laundrymat, grocery store, and karaoke bar) to the northeast part of the site has many benefits. First, it is specifically located to be a continuation of the connection corridor. The path from the connection corridor leads to this part of the site and vice versa, making it easily seen and accessible by pedestrians moving through the site. Second, with businesses grouped, this will reduce the amount of driving and movement as this area becomes a one stop shop, especially when the shopping mall closes for the night. Third, a parking lot will support not only the customers, but it will also provide parking space for local residents and remove cars from the central parts of the site. Fourth, since these services are generally more active at night, having them grouped will encourage nightly strolls by local residents and visitors. Fifth, by orientating the services in a southward facing direction, the nightly noise from customers and the karaoke bar is directed to an open area lessening the disturbance on local residents. Also, by facing a large open area, this area will receive more wind cooling users while they move through and use this area. In creating a legible and aesthetically commercial service area, material used in the construction of the shops and buildings should be ones that add to or mimic the surrounding environment. While natural materials, such as wood, would be the most appropriate for the climate and design, other materials can be substituted - the key idea is to distinguish this area so it is easily found, but not too drastic that it deters people from coming.



Option to use traditional Thai architecture for shops and restaurants since they were designed with climate and culture in mind

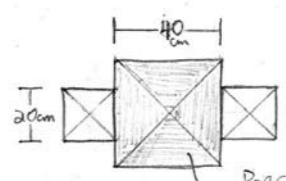
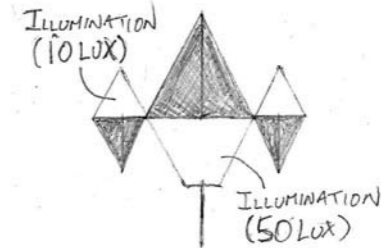


Color consistency, as well as material and architecture, is important in making these shops easily recognizable yet supporting the overall design.



Seating throughout the site should be consistent in design. The straight-slab seating allows people to observe the events around them, eat lunch, relax with a book, or even sleep. It is important that seats do not absorb or retain heat and are easy to clean.

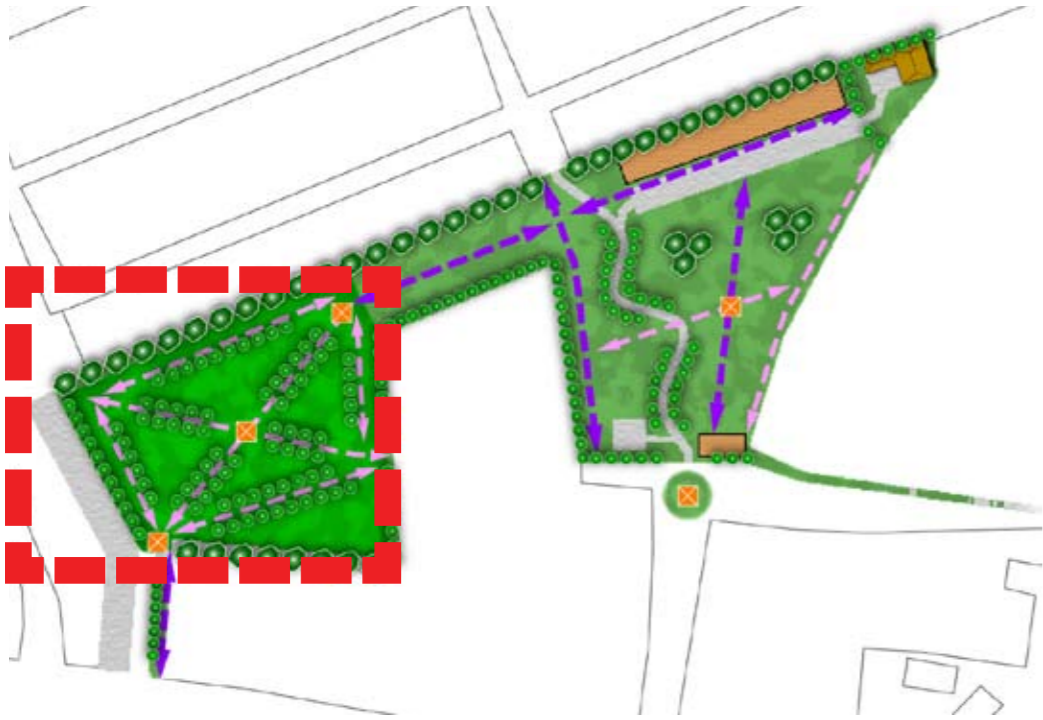
People use outdoor seats when they are available



PORCELAIN OR CLAY-BASED MATERIAL: WITHSTAND HEAT & HUMIDITY, AND NO RUSTING

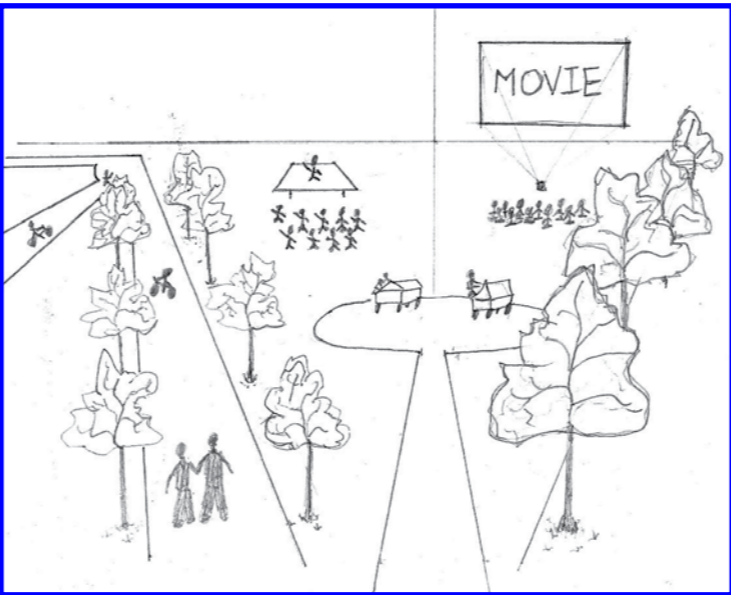
Improved lighting encourages people to use public places at night and may increase informal, natural surveillance. It also decreases fear of crime (Wekerle and Whitzman). Lighting designs need to be easily maintained and energy efficient.

Park for Pedestrians



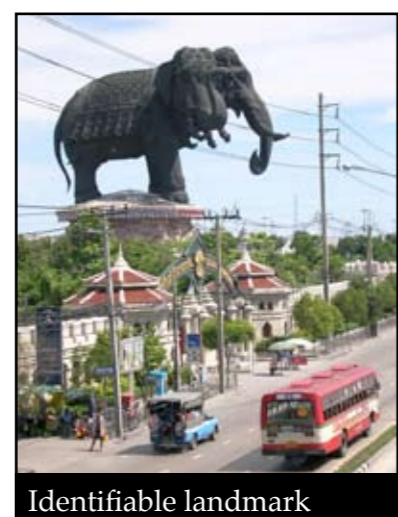
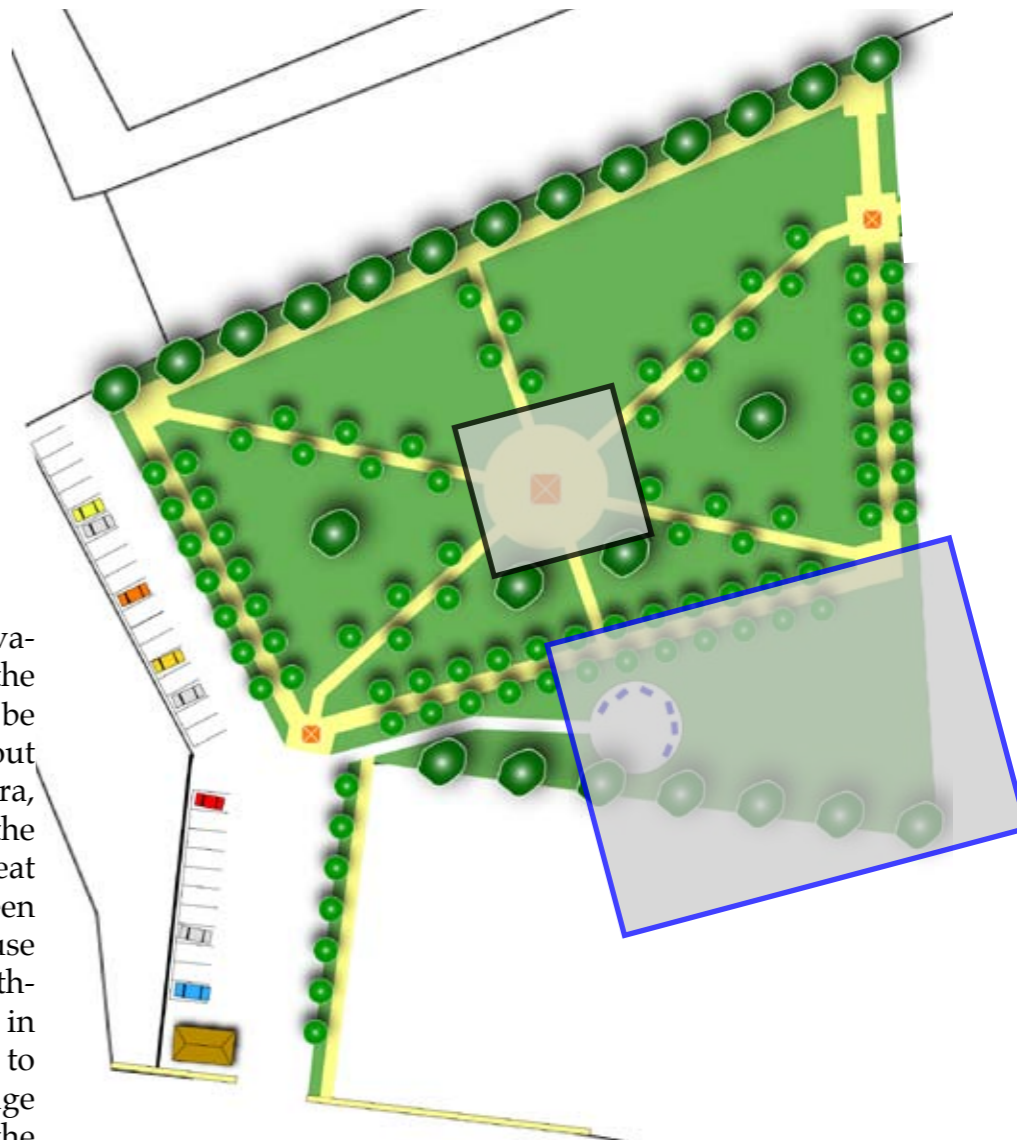
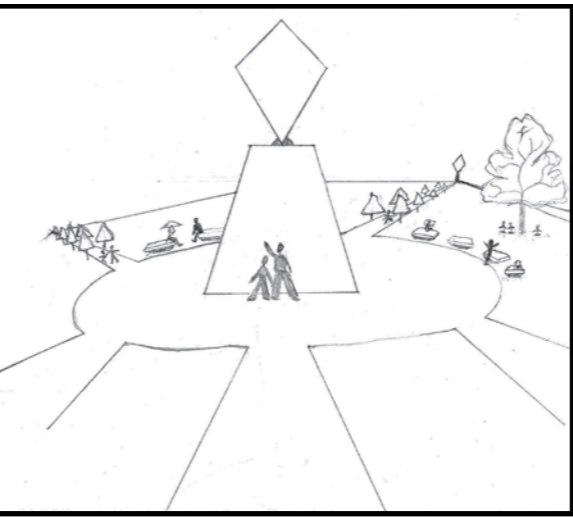
Urban green public space is a place where people go to read a book, have a picnic, meet with friends, participate in sports, or just go to get away from the hustle and bustle of city living. In Bangkok urban green public space is available under strict circumstances and usually not accessible to the general public. They usually come in different shapes and sizes, however most green space in Bangkok is limited to temple grounds. Even if green public space is available, they are either dilapidated and waiting for development or become storage areas for vendors. In addition, if urban parks and other green space are available, they are usually found in places frequented by particular social groups (i.e. the wealthy, tourists, and expatriates). Once outside these places in Bangkok, it is often difficult to find a public green space. One key aspects of this urban plan is to incorporate a park or urban public space in the site that will be beneficial for all social groups in the area, such as the university students local residents and people seeking an outdoor space for relaxation or activities.

The undeveloped area used for a park or public green space is a large piece of land that can be designed in a variety of ways based on local participation and input. The following design concept on this page looks not at specifically designing a park, but rather in providing the necessary ideas and information on how this area can be best designed to support the overall plan.



The purpose of the public green space is to be able to support a variety of activities from diverse groups and individuals. One of the main ideas when conceptualizing this space was that it would be an ideal location for the 6pm aerobics classes that occur throughout the city. While most classes are held outdoors, at Central Raminthra, classes are held in the mall's parking lot. This space would offer the aerobics class a pleasant environment for exercise, but it will be great for other evening or night activities. People who use public green space during the day are not very active compared to those who use it in the evening or night, due to heat and humidity. As a result, other activities that would be ideal for this space would be concerts in the day and nightly outdoor movies. While there can be an access to Central shopping mall services (i.e. food court) on the eastern edge of the park, it is planned that hawkers will also sell their food at the park. Thus a space should be allocated for them at the southern end of the park so they are safe from traffic, they do not obstruct traffic, and in a central location where people can find them.

The landmark at the centre of the park should be a significant symbol for Thai people. The landmark should also be large enough so users can see and appreciate the scale and feel that they are in a special place. Visual permeability, or the ability to see what is ahead and around is also important - thus the park centre is easily viewed from all paths. This concept of "all roads lead to Rome" supports a safe and secure environment by providing good sightlines, encouraging people to use the public green space.

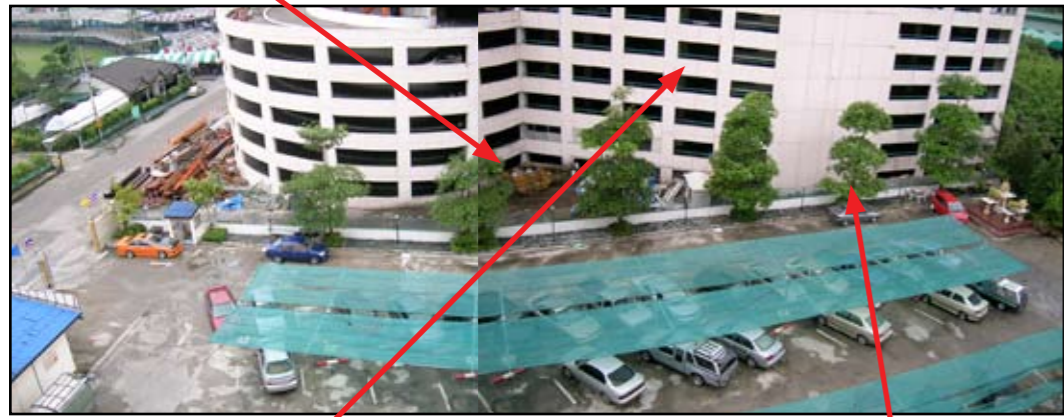


Connection Corridor



Pedestrian friendly streets are required at the site. One of the issues is how to provide a paths that will be easily accessible and where people will be comfortable using them. The corridor that joins the two sides of the site design is one example of where a space can be designed to support movement of pedestrians. As the below picture shows, the current conditions of this space being a parking lot for residents of an adjacent apartment building does little to encourage pedestrian use. In addition, the garbage dump for the shopping mall is located beside this space creating an unpleasant environment to walk through.

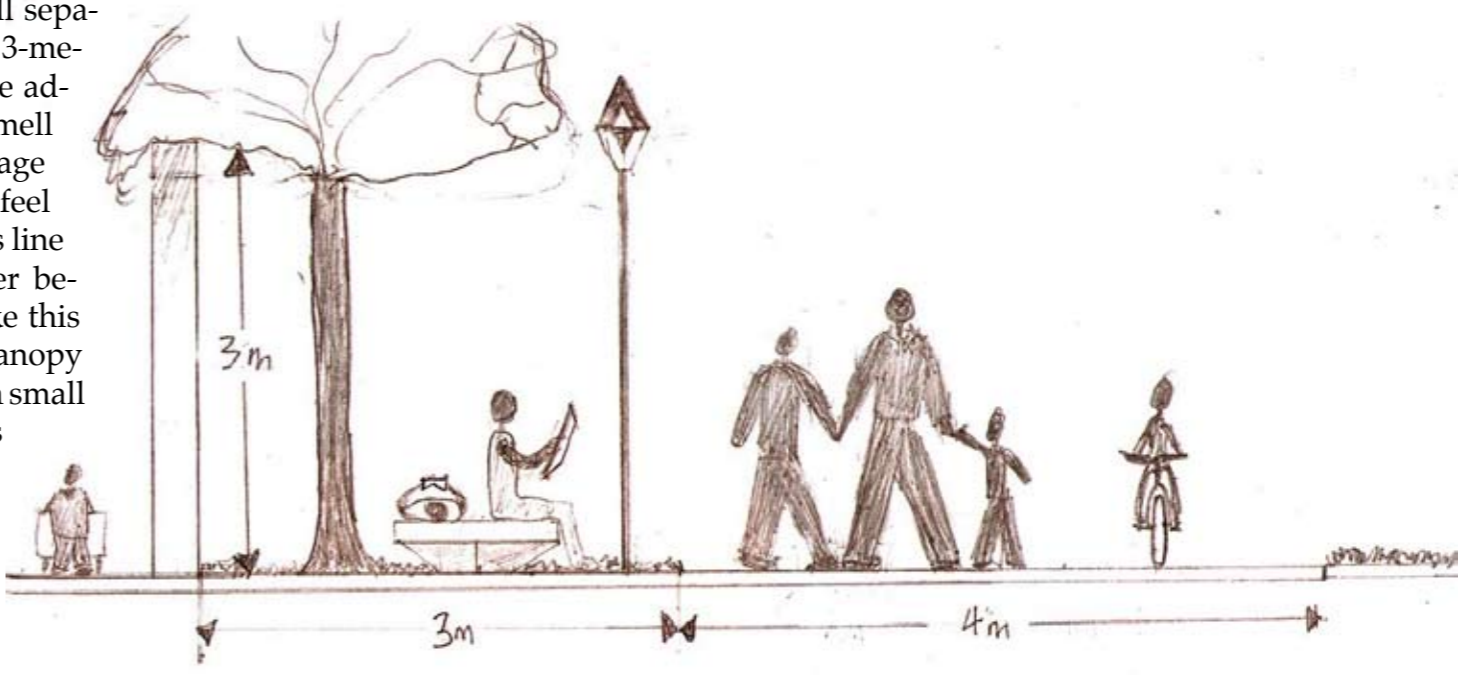
Garbage dump used day and night.



Central Raminthra shopping mall parking lot.

People do not usually sit under trees and infrequently walk through this area unless they park their cars at the far end of the lot.

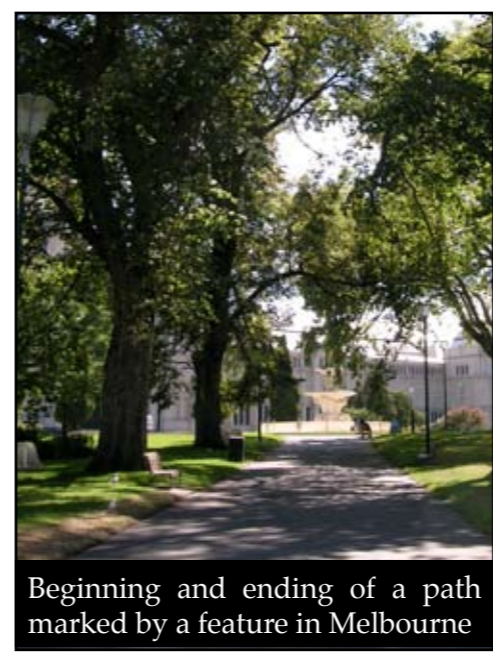
Introduce a wall or barrier that will separate garbage users from path users. 3-metre high wall is designed to provide adequate protection from noise and smell of shopping mall car park and garbage area, while not making the user feel claustrophobic of its presence. Trees line the wall to be an additional buffer between noise and smell, and to make this barrier less ominous. Trees with a canopy of at least 2.5 metres can help to form small spaces for refuge and encourages people to claim the space (Bentley). With the combination of wall (3m) and trees lining wall (at least 3m), this creates a 1:2 ratio where pathway is strongly defined. Although the path might seem too confined for some, the open space to the right of the path provides "breathing room".



Example of path from Manhattan Waterfront Greenway Map



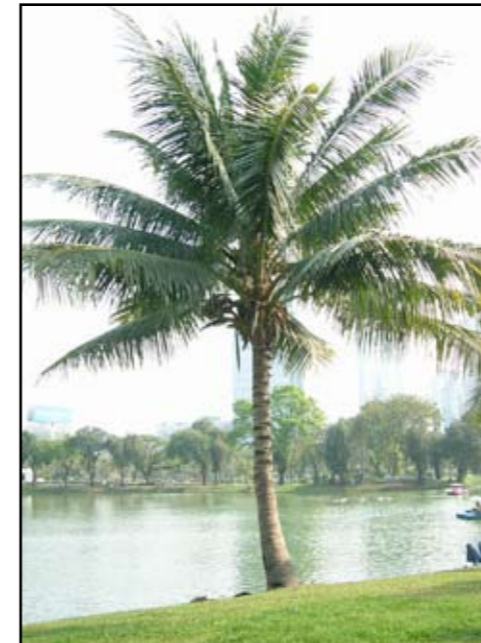
The textured brick frontage of Central shopping mall



Beginning and ending of a path marked by a feature in Melbourne

One of the key requirements for the site is the legibility of its paths - for people to know where they are and to be able to see where they are going. This can be achieved by providing symbols or signs to help people move through the site. One example is the far left photo where the front of the shopping mall uses a textured brick pattern to identify its walkway. Since most of the paths are around the mall, the consistent use of this type of textured walkway can help people identify where they are. In addition, a clear view of key landmarks and features is important in seeing where one wants to go. The above sketch and left photo shows that key objects/structures are located at the ends of a path to signify a change in environment. As Jacobs describes, "special qualities that denote ends are helpful... they say that one has arrived, or left, or they give boundaries... they are places to meet or reference points."

Site Vegetation



Vegetation is an important part of the site design. It plays a key role in creating an atmosphere of serenity by providing shading, blocking out noise, absorbing pollution, generating fresh air, and facilitating wind. Thailand is home to a plethora of plants and flowers. While the site has been designed with trees as the main vegetation element, other flowers and plants can be used to enhance the site. This page provides some examples of vegetation that can be used throughout the site. Local or domestic plants, flowers and trees should be used as they are best suited for the environment and climate. All these examples were found in Thailand.

In addition to the various striking colors available at the discretion of the design, as shown in the third column, there are various types of trees found throughout Thailand. For example the top row shows trees that can be used to define the outer edges of the site since their leaf density and relatively large size can provide protection from noise coming into and out of the site. The middle row shows plants and trees that can be used within the site to line paths or to provide shading for benches and sitting areas. The final row shows two possibilities of displaying vegetation for the site. One is the common spiritual attachment to nature by Thais. Cloth and ribbon, as well as food, are commonly offered to trees - this can provide an added value to the site, its aesthetics, and harmony with the local culture. The other shows a possible concept of a small pond. Water features was not considered when conceptualizing the urban design plan, however there is enough flexibility with the site to incorporate fountains (i.e. landmark features) or ponds into the plan.

Framework for the Future

The urban design plan has provided an in-depth analysis into the conditions of the Central Raminthra site and presentation of concepts and ideas that would create an environment where students, families, shoppers, and visitors can safely escape from the hustle and bustle of shopping, noise, and pollution and relax in an outdoor environment. While comprehensive, the urban design plan needs to take into consideration some short-term conditions that will affect its implementation.

TIMEFRAME. Since most of the changes proposed will be on vacant or relatively unused land, development can begin as soon as possible. A 5 to 10 year timeframe for completion is a generous period given stakeholder interests and the growth rate of vegetation.

LANDUSE. The majority of the location and its services are under private ownership (i.e. karaoke restaurant). As a result, it is necessary to determine the legal boundaries of land ownership as well as the zoning regulations for these areas. Negotiations will need to take place as soon as possible regarding the rearrangement of businesses to the location in the plan. Local and federal government will need to attend negotiations due to the project scale and the cost of relocating of business or reclaiming property.

OWNERSHIP. Central stores are seen as one of staple department stores in Bangkok. They have a lot of sway in the development and use of its surrounding areas. Discussions should be held to request Central's advice, to consult with and convince the owners of Central that this urban design is to their benefit, since they are promoting Central Raminthra as a town/plaza concept.

BUSINESSES. Discussions should be held with the various formal and informal businesses at an early stage of development. Since people require their services, their voice needs to be heard if the plan is to be implemented. Strict deadlines will need to be set as to when they will be able to operate after their relocation. They will need to be convinced that the plan can bring in more customers due to the healthier and more cohesive environment.



While the implementation of the design plan is important to the health, lifestyle and environment of the people, what is equally important is how the plan can affect a developing country on a greater scale. The plan is in essence an example of how rapidly developing countries need to focus not only economic development but also on the social development of its people. Developing countries are much more likely to succeed and progress economically if they have a healthy, educated and happy population. The implementation of the Central Raminthra urban design plan will be a healthy example for the rest of Bangkok in creating a functional and pedestrian-friendly community. For the plan and vision to be fully realized, there are some long-term conditions that need to be addressed.

PHYSICAL. Current conditions of hanging power lines, open sewers, and lack of drainage systems will need to be overhauled to support a more functional, less polluting, and efficient city. This will include developing the proper infrastructure. Local architectural innovations using local building material creates a sense of ownership of land and area.

SOCIAL. Restrict the bypassing of socially established laws and guidelines. Corruption is a serious problem that needs to be addressed. The "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" attitude needs to change. Implementing projects and plans should be based on their feasibility and appropriateness rather than on the social relationships between friends, colleagues and business partners.

CULTURAL. One of the main issues is that of environmental awareness and socially-responsible actions. Consumerism, the act of merit-giving to offset negative actions, and environmental ignorance needs to be addressed. Education is the key to understanding the benefits of being healthy, positive view of environment and how people can act more socially responsible. Revisiting the original teachings of Buddha would be encouraged.

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