



# Toolkit — Mapping Cultural Heritage



**HKICON**

Hong Kong Institute of Architectural Conservationists  
香港建築文物保護師學會

Funded by:

**發展局保育歷史建築基金**

Built Heritage Conservation Fund, Development Bureau

# Foreword and Acknowledgments

Built heritage/Cultural Mapping is the mapping of the cultural values of an area's physical features. It enables an area's physical features to be related to their (changing) uses over time, providing a longitudinal understanding of their importance. The practice of cultural mapping therefore involves the engagement of all stakeholders and the reference to a multiplicity of data sources. Cultural Mapping serves as a repository of information about local cultural knowledge and heritage assets. A participatory approach imparts to the local community stakeholders a sense of belonging and pride in their shared cultural roots of an area. In summary, cultural mapping documents cultural resources, empowers communities, transmits local knowledge systems, and promotes intercultural dialogues. The involvement of communities in Built Heritage/Cultural Mapping aims to raise awareness, inspire engagement, and establish stewardship as the primary goals of safeguarding cultural heritage places. Once communities have a better understanding of their cultural heritage, it is easier for them to play a more active role in the conservation of the associated places. It is hoped that Hong Kong Institute of Architectural Conservationists' "Built Heritage/Cultural Mapping Programmes" will be educational, instructive, motivating and inspirational to the citizens of Hong Kong, so that more communities will want to partake in and contribute to future programmes.

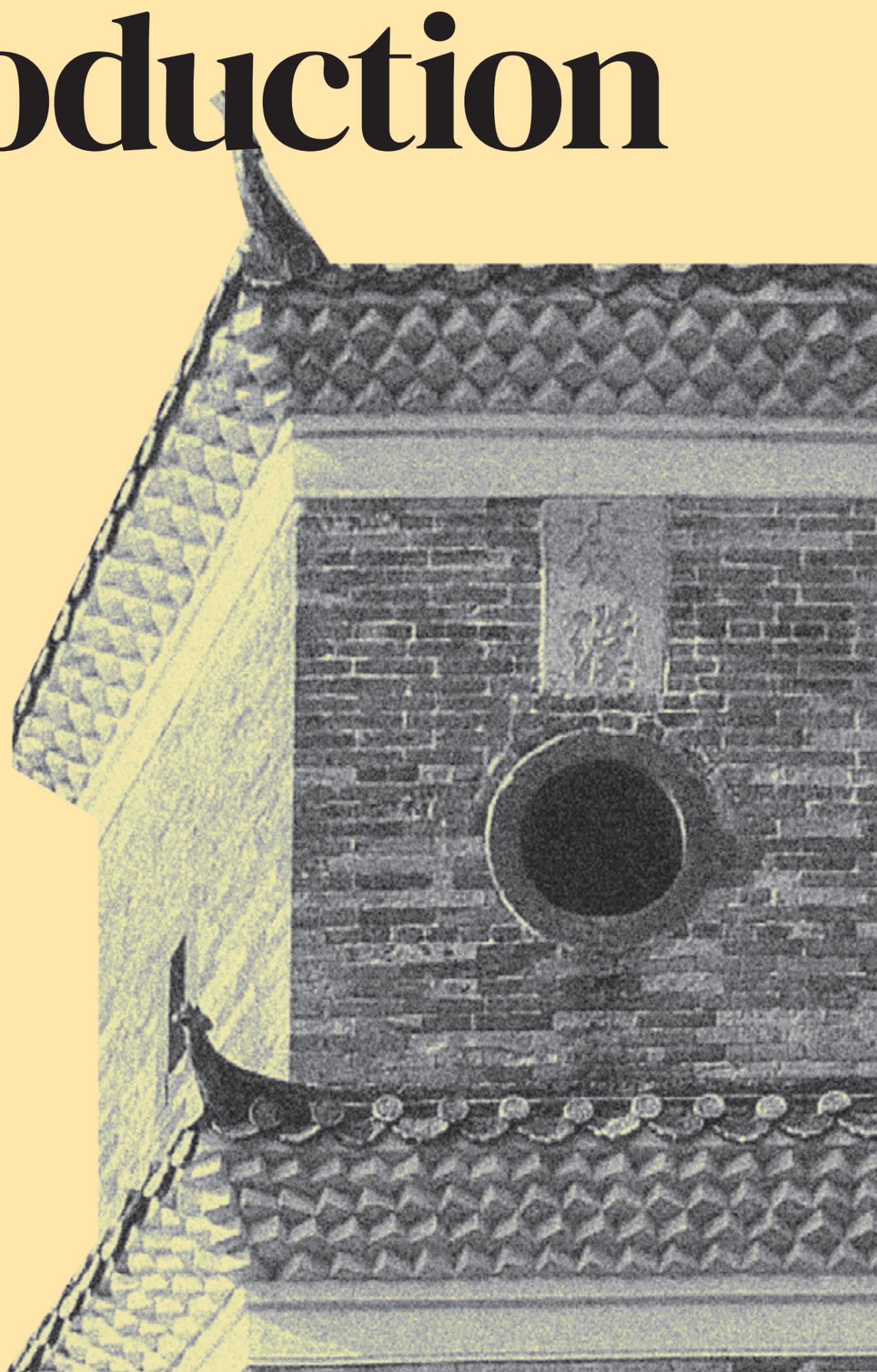
The "Built Heritage Mapping: Training and Workshops," is one of three community engagement conservation activities organized by HKICON with funding by the Built Heritage Conservation Fund (BHCF) of Development Bureau. This series of cultural mapping training workshops in the neighbourhoods around Yau Ma Tei and North Point occurred over a year-long period beginning in

November 2018. These workshops targeted secondary school teachers and students, creative individuals, architects, urban planners, district council members and other members of the general public. This corresponding cultural mapping tool kit was developed in conjunction with the cultural mapping training in order to help communities better understand places of heritage value. The aim of the cultural mapping toolkit is to provide a practical guide for secondary school teachers to teach cultural mapping as part of their curriculum so that students can identify, understand, record and map the cultural significance of places of heritage value.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of many involved in the development of the contents addressed in this toolkit and the corresponding cultural mapping workshops, in particular the following: Jan-et Pillai and Laurence Loh who developed and ran the cultural mapping workshops and wrote the toolkit; Tiffany Tang and the iDiscover team, and the creatives Wai Wai, Bertha Wang, Sally Chong, Joshua Wolper and Richie Fowler who assisted in the cultural mapping workshops; the HKICON BHCF team of Angus Chan, Allison Lee, and Debra Ng who developed, organized and skillfully led the cultural mapping workshops and contributed to the development, organization and editing of the cultural mapping toolkit; and the ACP team who provided consistent support and behind the scene assistance – Joanna Chu, Hoyin Lee, Sharen Mak.

Dr. Jennifer Lang, President  
HKICON

# Introduction



Hong Kong's heritage conservation policy enables the public to appreciate and understand the historical traces of its rich and diverse culture. Hong Kong's unique cultural identity may be grounded in Chinese culture, but tides of immigration and emigration have left strong marks in the form of built and living legacies. Stories, history, antiquities, monuments, traditional practices and products are important cultural assets and resources that are part of the collective memory and multiple identities of the people of Hong Kong. An overlay of the different histories of occupation is reflected in its cosmopolitanism, the medley of emerging and old ecologies, the cacophony of building uses at street level and a skyline punctuated by skyscrapers and country parks.

In order to conserve the unique cultural heritage of Hong Kong, it is important to be able to identify what makes each place within Hong Kong distinctive and to assess if these assets are able to survive change. This teaching module will introduce the concept of cultural mapping as a tool and technique to identify and document tangible and intangible assets and resources of a place. By mapping a site, students can begin to understand how humans place-make, assimilate, create settlements and bequeath legacies to the next generation, and this is the process of place-making. As such, do not be mistaken that place-making in Hong Kong is defined by official planning; rather, it is a gradual process initiated by the communities who define their own priorities and place-make in organic corporal ways.

Key Words:

**Place-making**

**Culture**

**Cultural Heritage**

**Spirit of Place**

**Cultural Mapping**

**Heritage Conservation Revitalisation**

# Glossary of Terms

## Place-making

Human settlements develop through the process of reciprocal interaction between humans and the environment over a period of time. Fundamentally speaking, place-making is the process by which people interact with and mold the environment for various co-existing functions, to create shelter, make a livelihood and build relationships. Even as people move to new environments with intention to settle in a place that already has a history of settlement, the newcomer needs to reactivate the process of cultural adaptation and place-making.

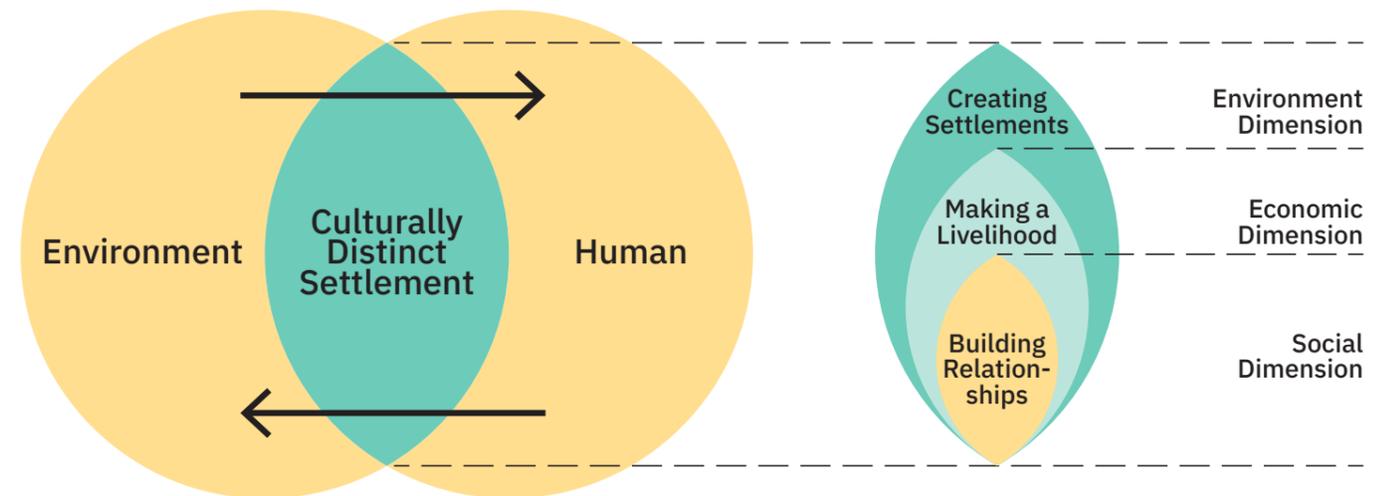


Diagram illustrating place-making. (Source: Janet Pillai)

## Culture

Culture can be viewed as both a process and a product of place-making. On the one hand, culture is a dynamic force that facilitates human adaption to new places through the use of available resources, and creative ways of thinking and doing. On the other hand, culture can also be viewed as the range of human experiences and products resulting from the place-making process. Over time, experiences and products that are considered useful are encoded and transmitted through social learning, customary practices and values among a particular society or group. Such cultural legacies are often unique to the place and are of significance to the particular community as the cultural legacies represent the construction of their identity.

Cultures are affected by forces that encourage or force change (technology, transcultural influences and disasters) and by forces that discourage or resist change (sentiment, protectionism and conservation). Cultures also undergo change or are transformed through diffusion and acculturation through the migration of people and ideas.

## Images Illustrating Cultural Adaptation



Floating market, Banjarmasin, Indonesia.  
(Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons>)



Street market, Hoi An, Vietnam.  
(Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org>)



Adobe brick beehive homes in Syria.  
(Source: <http://trendupdates.com/syrian-beehive-homes-the-cool-faultless-and-functional-desert-homes/>)



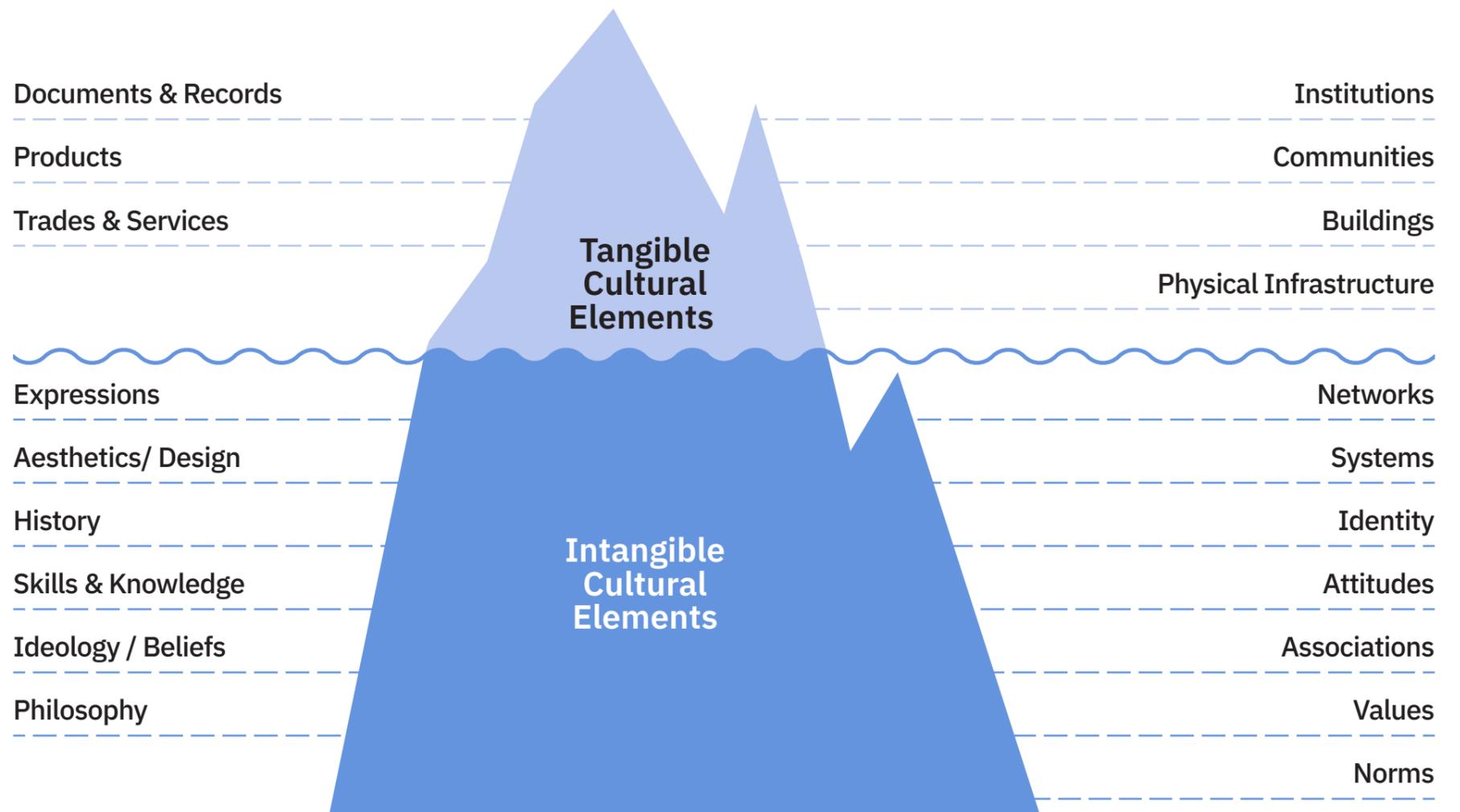
A tree house in the Papau province of Indonesia, where Korowai tribe members live. (Source: <http://adventurecarstensenz.com/2018/07/19/korowai-tribe-lived-in-the-tree-house/>)

## Cultural Heritage

Cultural Heritage is the legacy of tangible and intangible attributes or products of a society or group that is inherited from past generations. It includes tangible artifacts (such as, buildings, foods, tools, clothing and documents), intangible legacies, social and political organizations, cultural practices and expressions, folklore, knowledge, skills and larger cultural landscapes. As culture is dynamic and evolving, some cultural heritage may end up being abandoned, discarded or destroyed as new cultural innovations emerge. As it has been recognized that cultural heritage encodes the local knowledge and identity of a society or group, there have been deliberate attempts to conserve or safeguard cultural heritage from deterioration or destruction through conservation policies and laws. While tangible heritage such as a building or artifact is more easily salvaged, it is rather challenging to conserve intangible heritage. Recent initiatives look to conserving and revitalising both tangible and intangible heritage together, as spaces and human expressions are regarded as interconnected and interdependent.

## Spirit of Place

The cultural interactions between humans and their environment results in the development of distinct cultural places or settlements. ‘Spirit of place’ refers to distinctive physical, environmental, atmospheric characteristics or unique qualities that are associated with a locality. It can be a unique natural geographical phenomenon that characterises a place, or a complex phenomenon resulting from the historical interaction of a community or with a locality and from the interweaving of tangible and intangible elements. Incompatible alterations or interventions to the physical, social or use dimensions of a place or even its surrounding landscape can threaten the spirit of place.



*Iceberg diagram showing interconnectivity and interdependency of tangible and intangible cultural assets. (Source: Janet Pillai)*



*Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda in Ping Shan, Hong Kong in 1986. (Source: Hoyin Lee)*



*Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda in Ping Shan, Hong Kong in 1990 depicting the lost spirit of place. (Source: Hoyin Lee)*



*Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda in Ping Shan, Hong Kong in 2003 depicting the lost spirit of place. (Source: Ken Nicolson)*

### Sense of Place

People who inhabit a space and contribute to place-making over a period of time talk about ‘a sense of place’. The term refers to place-bonding or place-attachment felt by inhabitants which are associated with physical attributes, experiential practices or mental perceptions of the space. This meaning or value ascribed to a place contributes to an individual or community identity and well-being.



*Dreamlike Horses performance held at revitalized Tai Kwun in Central, Hong Kong in June 2018. (Source: Hoyin Lee)*

### Place Revitalisation

Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a non-profit organisation in the United States, refers to placemaking as a collaborative process by which professionals together with community stakeholders can reimagine, reinvent or revitalise public spaces such as parks, streets, waterfronts, public buildings or markets by capitalizing on the assets of the place. Placemaking can support the ongoing evolution of a place through a collective community vision, adaptive reuse or creative programming. However, the social, cultural and physical qualities of the place and the community needs to be identified and mapped before any planning can take place.

### Cultural Mapping

UNESCO defines cultural mapping is a tool and technique used to identify and document the local cultural assets and resources of an area. Collected data can be represented through a variety of formats such as geographic maps, graphs, diagrams, photo essays, images and reports. Data collected is analysed and interpreted for the purpose of understanding, building awareness, promoting, conserving or improvement of the place.

Cultural mapping is best carried out with the participation of the community who are able to identify and provide information on the tangible and intangible cultural elements of the place. Cultural mapping involves a range of subjects or disciplines such as history, geography, environment, anthropology, heritage and culture. Mapping tools can be very varied too, and can include; observation, interviews, photography, video, cartography and sketching.

# Teaching and Learning Module

## Suggested Subjects:

Liberal Studies, Geography, Modern Chinese History

## Theme:

Exploring and Mapping the Historical and Cultural Layers of Hong Kong

## Objectives:

- i) Understand the multiple layers of history, heritage and identities in a site in Hong Kong;
- ii) Document significant cultural assets and resources in the site; and
- iii) Discuss how built and living spaces in the site reflect history, diversity, inclusion and continuity.

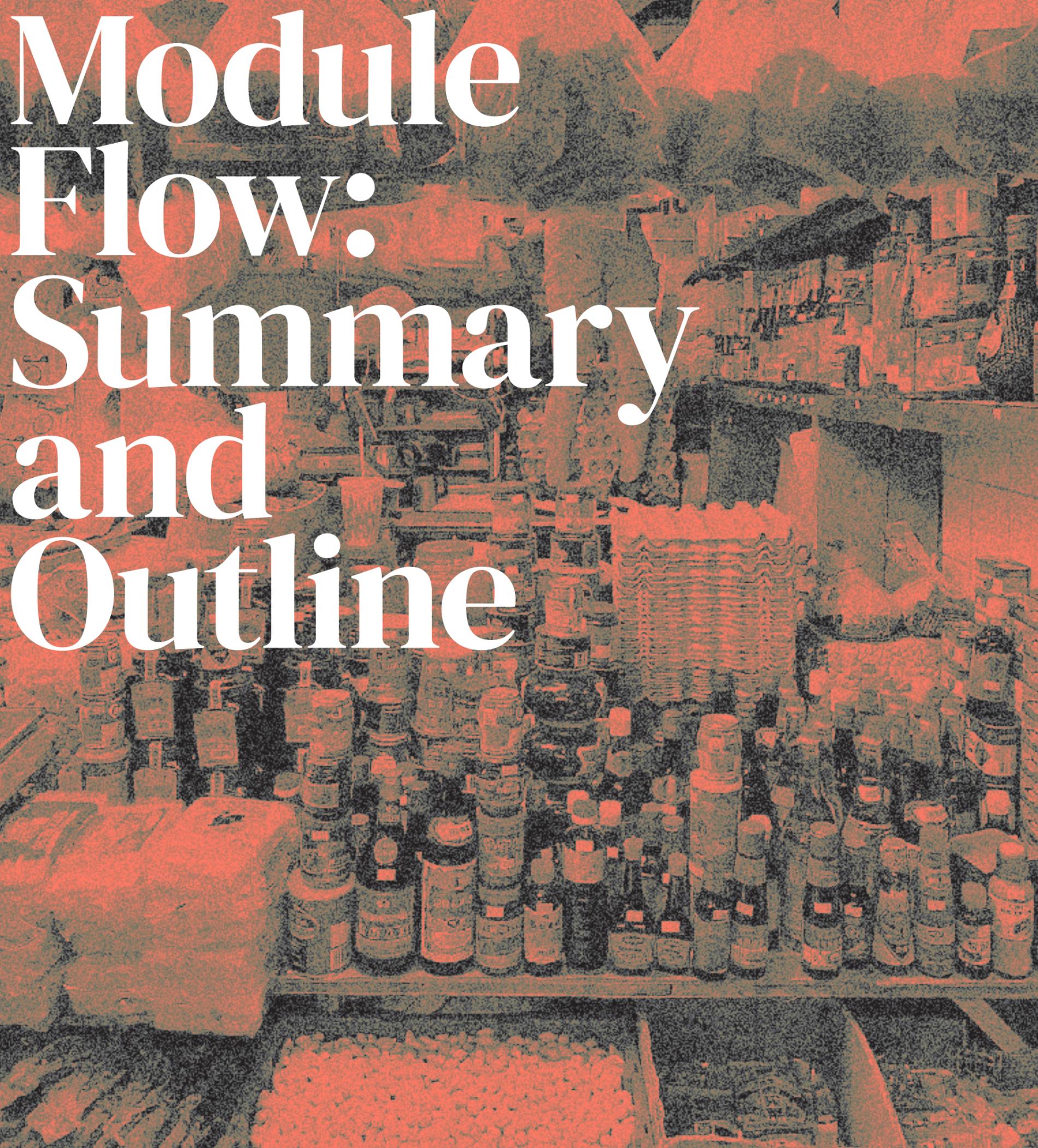
This module can be used to guide students to explore the changing environment in Hong Kong and the significance of its multiple layers of history, heritage and identities. Students have an opportunity to examine cultural history (e.g. patterns of migration and settlement), investigate the diversity of cultural heritage (e.g. trades, food, norms, buildings, languages etc.), and reflect on cultural continuity and inclusion (through adaptation, revitalisation, assimilation of multiple identities) that makes Hong Kong what it is today.

## Learning Outcomes:

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Skills</i>	<i>Values</i>
How do we identify cultural assets and resources that are distinctive to a place?	Observation and communication skills.	Cultural Rights and Inclusion.
How can we ensure continued meaning and use for these cultural assets and resources in the future?	Investigative and analytical skills.	Intercultural understanding.
		Safeguarding culture.

## Teaching Tip

As this teaching module involves elements of field exploration and investigation, teachers are advised to select an inhabited site (near to the school), preferably one with a community. The site selected may be a small human settlement or a part of a settlement such as a market or a temple site. It can also be a street or part of a street. Suggestions for investigation sites: North Point, Yau Ma Tei, Lei Yue Mun, Sai Ying Pun, Wan Chai, Aberdeen and Kowloon City.



# Module Flow: Summary and Outline

## **Knowledge Framework:**

The teacher introduces videos on Hong Kong's diverse cultural heritage to give students a contextual background and explains the related concepts as defined in the glossary above.

## **Teaching Activity:**

The teaching activity comes in three parts and uses a 'site-specific' approach to learning about culture and cultural assets. This will include on-line historical research about the place, site visits and on-site exercises (such as mapping and documentation).

## **Teaching Activity 1:**

### Exploring Cultural Heritage

- Site history
- Site visit
- Locating cultural assets
- Summary discussion

## **Teaching Activity 2:**

### Mapping Cultural Heritage

- Introduction to mapping tools
- On-site documentation of cultural assets
- Summary

## **Teaching Activity 3:**

### Mapping Synthesis

- Consolidating the mapped data
- Summary discussion

# Knowledge Framework

## Topic: Culturally Distinct Places

The teacher asks students to prepare for the class by watching online videos & articles selected by the teacher that illustrate Hong Kong's history, the different ethnic groups that have made Hong Kong their home over the years and places in Hong Kong that reflect its cultural diversity. Examples may include:

### “18-year-old Visits 18 Districts in 18 Days”

Video link: <http://hongwrong.com/hong-kong-districts/>

### “Wan Chai’s Blue House with Architectural, Community and Socio-cultural Values in Hong Kong”

Article link:

<https://www.jenniferteophotography.com/thats-life-blog/wan-chais-blue-house-with-architectural-community-and-socio-historical-value-in-hong-kong>

### “Get Real! Cubical Dreams Hong Kong”

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQFO-3-RupM>

### “Top 10 Hong Kong Outdoor Wet Markets”

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWFmAQX8SN0>

## Terminology Discussion

In class, the teacher makes reference to the introduction above and explains the Glossary terms. The teacher leads a discussion on each of the videos and articles in relation to the concepts of place-making, cultural heritage and spirit of place.

## Exercise on ‘Mapping Hong Kong’

The teacher facilitates an exercise with the students entitled ‘Mapping Hong Kong’ where the students identify unique cultural places that they have personally experienced (see Appendix 1 below). The teacher then encourages students to discuss some of these culturally distinct places in Hong Kong and the elements that contribute to their uniqueness.

### Materials:

- An indoor or outdoor open space
- Coloured pens
- Coloured Post-it note
- Two pieces of rope/string (about 10 meters long)
- Randomly found objects (empty drink cans, bottles, milk cartons etc.)

In an open space, students use a few meters of string to create the outline of Hong Kong Island. They then place ‘found objects’ within the floor map to indicate places which they consider culturally unique. In addition, they may write the place names on post-it papers and stick them on the found objects.

Students then explain what are some of the tangible and intangible cultural elements they have observed that are unique to the site.

The teacher may use the *Iceberg Diagram* to facilitate the discussion.

# Teaching Activities 1

## Brief:

While the overwhelming majority of Hong Kong's population is Chinese, Hong Kong has a vibrant and unique history of social, political and economic immigrants. With reference to the multi-cultural site selected for the field study, students will examine the site's history, built and living legacies from the past and in the present time.

## Materials Required:

- Students to bring their own camera-phones or digital cameras for field study
- Each student to bring an A3-size baseline map of the site (preferably showing property boundaries and roads)
- A computer and projector for students' presentations
- Students may use PowerPoint or printed material (maps/documents/photos/articles) for their presentations

## Presentation of Site History

The teacher puts together a folio of secondary source materials (photos, videos, articles) about the study site. This should include historical information, maps, photos, important dates/events, articles on the various communities and online references. The teacher presents a PowerPoint summary on the history and profile of the site to students.

## Site Visit

Students are taken on a guided tour of the study site led by the teacher, a tour guide or a local historian. The tour should highlight the cultural assets of the diverse cultural communities and special character of the place. The tour should also highlight any challenges or threats to the sustainability of cultural legacies in the site.

- i) Tangible heritage (landscape, buildings, artifacts, people etc.);  
and
- ii) Intangible heritage (trades, services, languages, organisations, skills, knowledge, customs, foods and festival routes).

## Locating Cultural Assets

- During the tour, students are encouraged to locate and label as many cultural assets as possible on their individual A3 maps. They also are encouraged to take photos of these cultural assets. After the tour, students may remain on site to improve on their asset mapping or try to locate additional cultural assets by speaking to members of the community.
- In class, students work in two separate groups to transfer the assets identified collectively on to an enlarged printed map or floor map (as in Appendix 1). They label each asset using different color Post-it notes to distinguish between tangible and intangible cultural assets.

## Summary Discussion

- Discuss how the cultural assets identified are connected to the various communities in the site and to the site's history.
- Describe distinctive or special characteristics of the site that makes it unique and discuss if there is an identifiable 'spirit of place' that can be associated with the site.

## Teaching Tip for Activity 1

For a more student-centered approach to learning, the teacher may attempt any of the following exercises:

1. **Discovering Site History:** The teacher can assign small groups of students to conduct their own online research on the history of the site based on specific topics or periods. Students present their power points in class. Alternatively, the teacher can ask students to collectively make a timeline on the floor or wall using paper, chalk and print images from the internet
2. **Locating Cultural Assets:** Instead of a guided tour, the teacher can encourage the students to explore the site on their own in pairs. Students can investigate the site, talk to community members and take photographs of both tangible and intangible cultural assets. They can then label the images accurately and upload them on an Instagram account. Images should be tagged according to the cultural assets identified.

# Teaching Activities 2

## Brief:

Students are expected to collect and record detailed information on selected cultural assets. For example, students may:

- a) interview elderly members of the community and record their personal memories of the place;
- b) map the process of making a local food;
- c) record the soundscape and languages spoken by the communities; or d) document heritage buildings and their historical past and evolution.

## Materials Required:

- Clipboards with blank A4 paper
- Coloured pens and pencils
- A3 map of the site showing the roads and buildings
- Students to bring hand phones/cameras

## Introduction to Mapping Tools

Using the map from the previous exercise, the teacher may select a range of tangible and intangible cultural assets on site or a specific type of asset (e.g. cultural foods or trades) to be investigated and documented by the students.

Students are broken up into groups and each group is assigned to ONE community or ONE section of the site. Each group should document three or more assets that are related to the site and its community.

There are many creative tools that students can use to investigate and document cultural heritage sites such as observation, interviews, photography, videos and sketches. The teacher should introduce students to ethics, procedure and competencies required for field work:

- i) Ethics when engaging with community;
- ii) Interview techniques;
- iii) Cross-checking accuracy of information; and
- iv) Documentation techniques.

## On-site Documentation

Students may be provided with a guideline when collecting and recording information. Examples of tasks given could include:

1. Collect and record stories and memories associated with the assets;
2. Gather community opinion on which assets are considered significant and why;
3. Document the assets using visual, written or oral tools (as appropriate); and
4. Observe and document activities/practices, processes, knowledge and skills associated with the assets.

## Summary Discussion

- Each group works on improving and consolidating their documentation of assets. In doing so, students may combine written narratives with visuals or even sound.
- Each group matches up the information they have collected to a historical timeline on the development of the site.

## Teaching Tip for Activity 2

Tools and techniques of documentation are best taught through short hands-on workshops (e.g. photography, plan drawing or role play). The teacher may also invite local artists such as drama practitioners or photographers to teach students basic communication and recording skills.



*Cultural Mapping exercises in North Point, Hong Kong in November 2018.  
(Source: Allison Lee)*

# Teaching Activities 3

## Brief:

Students are expected to consolidate all the data gathered to produce a meta narrative on the study site; who are the communities that occupy the site, how did these communities and their settlements originate, how have they adjusted over time, what are the cultural legacies produced over time?

## Materials Required:

- Data collected by students
- General stationery
- Printer

## Consolidating the Mapped Data

Groups have to use their creativity to piece together all the evidence they have collected to create an interpretation of the site and communities. The joint interpretation may be in the form of an installation, multi-media exhibition or a poster and may consist of maps, timelines, photo essays, sketches, videos, quotations from interviews/stories from the community.

Here is a guideline that may be used when synthesising data:

- i) Facilitate students to create a visual timeline that maps the history of important social, political or economic and cultural events as well as physical developments and people;
- ii) Locate the cultural assets and legacies of the place and communities on a map of the site; and
- iii) Find creative ways to link the cultural assets documented to the history of the site and communities.

## Summary

- Does the site have a unique character?
- How are the cultural ways of thinking and doing of different communities reflected in the cultural legacies on site?
- Based on the students' own observation and re-search, do they see assimilation, coexistence or tension among communities using the site?

- What are the ways in which the cultural data that has been mapped can be used to safeguard or promote the cultural identity of the site?

## Teaching Tip for Activity 3

Encourage students to lay out their written and visual data on the floor or table, and try to piece together the data to create small illustrated stories about each of the cultural assets.

Overlay these stories with the timeline, maps and quotations to create a wall installation or exhibition that captures the spirit of place and community.



*Cultural Mapping exercises in North Point, Hong Kong in November 2018.  
(Source: Allison Lee)*



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Built Heritage Conservation Fund (BHCF) was established in 2016 to provide subsidies for public education, community involvement, publicity activities, and academic research. Under the BHCF Funding Scheme for Public Engagement Projects on Built Heritage Conservation, HKICON's project proposal titled "Our Neighborhoods (Heritage of Our Days)" was approved in March 2018.

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