

Designated as a heritage site, Montreal's **Chinatown** has a rich history marked by **struggles for survival**, identity, and belonging, all of which are still relevant today. Since the 1960s, the community has faced challenges such as government **expropriation**, restrictive urban development projects, and incidents displaying the **city's disregard for its Chinese population**. Despite these obstacles, Chinatown remains resilient and strong to maintain its cultural heritage, notably through efforts including the establishment of the Montreal Chinese Cultural Centre in the early 2000s, though it closed in 2012 due to mismanagement. Today, Montreal lacks a dedicated Chinese Cultural Centre, highlighting the need for revitalization and community outreach.

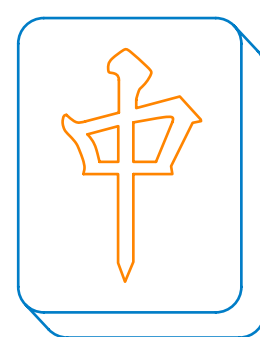
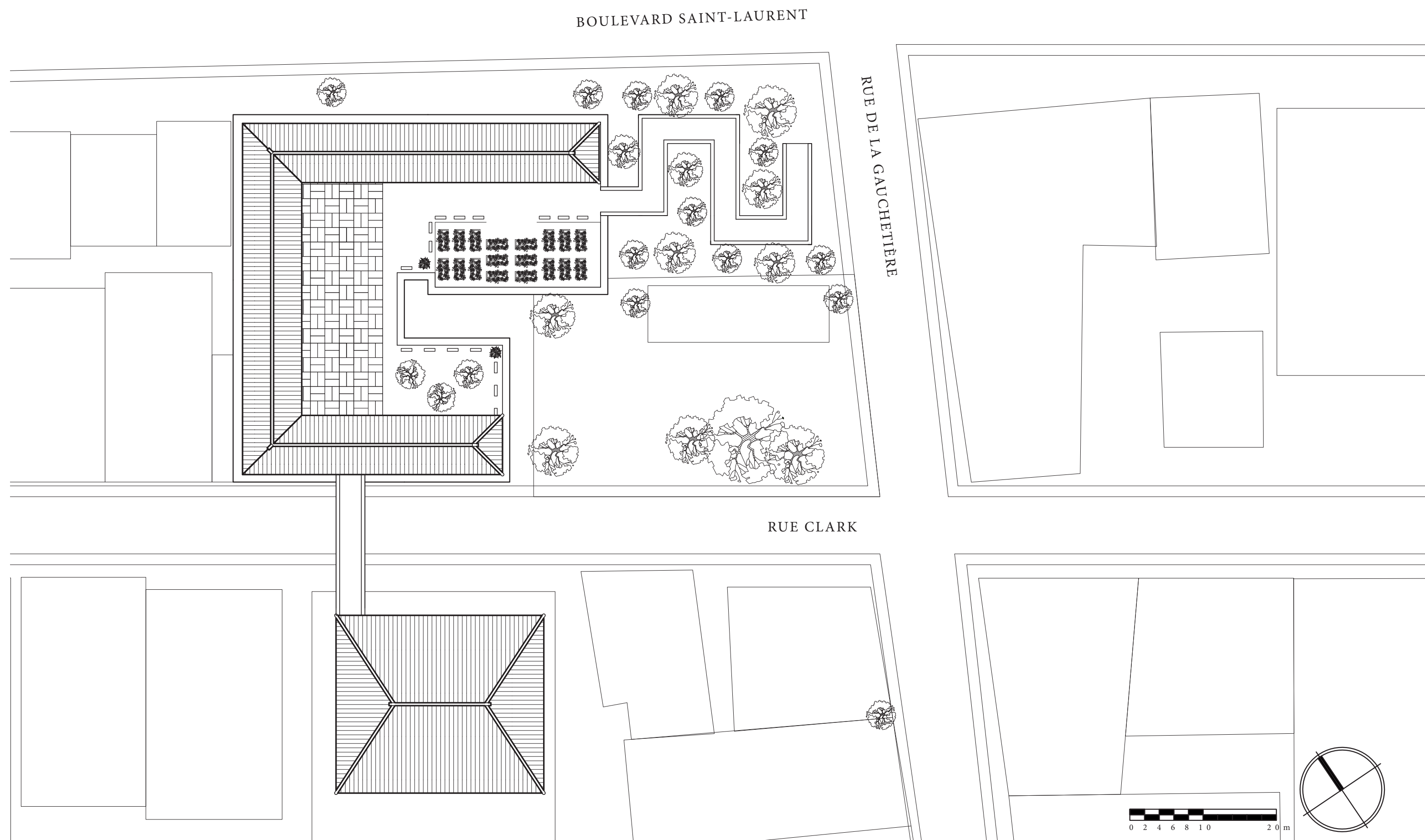
PROPOSAL:

This project proposes a **cultural center** extending on the roofs of 1080 and 1089 Rue Clark, with public spaces aiming to reclaim and celebrate Chinatown's heritage while addressing current issues such as **gentrification** and economic displacement. Through the addition of interior and exterior public spaces, the project focuses on increasing the **quality of life for residents**. Opportunities for community gardening workshops, mahjong tournaments, tai chi classes, and exterior markets will empower residents and businesses, as well as challenge dominant narratives of displacement and erasure.

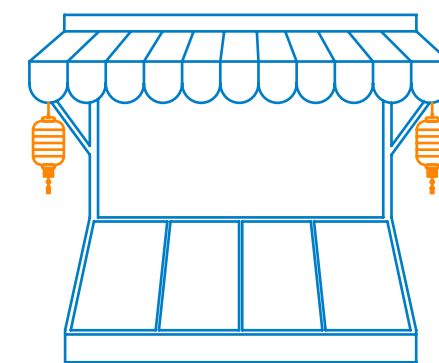
This design spans the rooftop of buildings neighbouring the Sun Yat-sen Park as well as inhabiting the out-of-use community center across the street. By linking the two spaces with a bridge, the rooftop addition challenges the constricting of space imposed by the city by building and expanding vertically towards the sky. This not only responds to communal needs and desires, but it also further serves as a mark of strength and cultural pride. Meant to be used and personalized by its citizens, this space is inspired by traditional Chinese courtyards and references a pagoda erected by Chinatown businesses and family associates in 1967 that got dismantled for city projects. This installation stands as a statement for all immigrants and answers a **need to feel seen and accepted** by the rest of Montreal. By reviving the community center and engaging with local Canadians and new immigrants, this project seeks to become an educative space to celebrate Montreal's diversity and encourage the intermingling of cultures through discussion and immersion. It is programmed to be **flexible** and adaptable for the community, as a place to be used and not just viewed. To access the platform, a ramp is to be installed next to the Sun Yat-sen park, and elevators in the community center would reach the roof, allowing access to Chinatown's prominent elderly population from a convenient main street entrance. The move to vertical expansion prevents the hindering of current businesses and retains the pedestrian circulation below. Additional benches, gathering spaces and green areas will benefit restaurants by creating inviting areas to dine outside, embodying Montreal's terrace culture. During the winter, the interior room may be used for activities, whereas during the warmer months, the outdoor atrium may be used to take advantage of the favorable weather.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

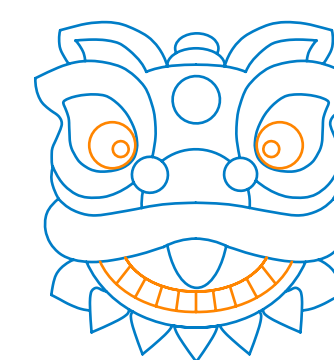
Historically, the Chinese community in Montreal has faced government expropriations, urban development projects, and incidents of cultural erasure. These experiences have led to a lack of trust and frustration towards governmental authorities. By **involving the community in the decision-making process**, their voices are heard, their concerns are addressed, and their agency is recognized. The proposal aims to ensure that initiatives are responsive and reflective of the community's needs and aspirations, allowing them to actively participate in shaping their future. To this end, groups with which this project would work in close collaboration with include the Chinatown Working Group (CWG), the JIA foundation, and the Hum Family Association.



The interior space can function as an event space for the community center. This room can hold weekly schedules of traditional activities, namely tai chi classes and mahjong tournaments, granting the elderly population or any curious passerby the opportunity to learn and connect with the culture and its people.



Local markets can be set up in the exterior atrium to allow for small businesses to engage with the community and expand their reach. This space can also house workshops on various cultural activities such as traditional arts and crafts, cooking classes, and ancestral games, as a means to engage the community and educate on Asian heritage.



The rooftop addition can serve as an extension of the Sun Yat-sen Park below, where festivals and celebrations can take place. During Lunar New Year, the spaces can fill with performances like dragon dances, displays of martial arts, or musical productions. Special events like outdoor museums and art galleries would be highly enhanced with informational booths, interactive attractions, and the sale of memorable keepsake items.



The space will feature a community garden, responding to the desires for increased green spaces and a move towards sustainable living. This garden would primarily grow Asian vegetables fueling a possible local market while exposing oriental ingredients to local palettes.

