Research methodology: Cultural mapping

Bachelor Degree project report
Research method: Cultural Mapping

What is cultural mapping?
• Cultural mapping is a systematic approach to identifying, recording, classifying and analysing a community’s cultural resources or cultural assets that traced the historical, economic, social, geographical significance of a site (Pillai, 2013 and Rashid, 2015).
• It has been recognized by UNESCO as a crucial tool and technique in preserving the world's intangible and tangible cultural assets (cited from UNESCO Bangkok, n.d.).

The uses of cultural mapping?
• Historical assessment
• Exploring cultural identity
• Community resource management
• Cultural planning
• Planning for sustainable development

Select what to map?
• Mapping assets (location and distribution of Tangible & intangible cultural item).
• Mapping resources (data based of persons, organisation, businesses, institutions and etc.)
• Mapping concepts (intangible elements such as: identity, values, beliefs & philosophy)
• Mapping systems (social, economic and environmental dimension of an inhabited site / ecological system)

Themes of cultural mapping
• Anthropological, archaeological, genealogical, linguistic, sociological, topographic, musicological, botanical and etc.
Cultural mapping procedure

1. Framing of mapping exercise

2. Process of Mapping

3. Evaluation

Tangible elements
- Man-made elements
- Natural environments
- Documents and records
- Products
- Functional Item
- People

Intangible elements
- Histories/ memories
- Identities
- Knowledge
- Expressions/ practices
- Aesthetics
- Human organisation
- Processes and procedures
- Attitudes and behaviors
- Values
- Belief/ philosophies

Assessment
- To determine the significant of a site, community and cultural vitality.
- Analysis of people, places, and environments.

Figure 1.1: Cultural mapping procedures (Pillai, 2013)
Framing a cultural mapping exercise

Framing of mapping exercise

Obtain mapping brief

Inspect & profile the site

Engage with stakeholders

Establish goal & objectives

Determine scale & scope of mapping

Determine Approach, tools & techniques

Determine data management & partners

Determine scale & timeframe, cost & output

✓ Site description/ brief
✓ Rationale for mapping?
✓ Who will need to use the data?
✓ How will the data be used?
✓ When will the data be used?

✓ Checklist: site history, land use, built environment and etc.

✓ The community, manager/ planner of the site; users of the site

✓ The goal and outputs

Figure 1.2: Framing exercise (Pillai, 2013)
2.) Process of mapping

Data recording: collect and visualise data (the form of database, pictorial, graphic, audio, video, or statistic.

Layering approach
a) Integrating /layering of multi-information such as maps, images, audio recordings, 3D models, maps, GIS map etc.

System approach
a) Not visible (procedure, method and process)
b) Investigate historical/ social/ spiritual/ phenomenon.

Figure 1.3 : Steps in process of mapping (Pillai, 2013).
3.) Evaluation

Evaluation of this site

Assess cultural character & significance

- Historical value
- Scientific value
- Economic value
- Social value
- Spiritual value
- Aesthetic value

SWOT analysis & recommendation for planning strategies

SWOT Analysis
- S - Assessing internal strength
- W - Assessing internal weakness
- O - Assessing internal/external opportunities
- T - Assessing internal/external threats.

Figure 1.4 : Steps in Evaluation of the site (Pillai, 2013)
Example 1: Mapping historical significance of the site

Recording historical community

Table 1.1: Sample directory of trade documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMAGE REF No.</th>
<th>DATE YEAR OF DOCUMENT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENT</th>
<th>TO</th>
<th>FROM</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G23</td>
<td>30 Aug 1945 (2605)</td>
<td>Statutory Declaration</td>
<td>High court</td>
<td>Tan Sin Kong</td>
<td>As people were illiterate, names were pronounced and written in dialects and therefore variations exist in terms of the spelling of the name. Therefore a statutory declaration was made to declare that Tan Sin Kong and Tan Sin Kuang and Meng Kee and Sung Kee were the same person. Tan Sin Kong’s address at this time was 112 Ayer Itam Road. This required a 100 cents stamp revenue. This document was certified by a commissioner of oaths. The commissioner of oaths is assumed to be an Indian judging by his name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y14a</td>
<td>04 Aug 1945 (1945)</td>
<td>Membership card of foodstuff providers</td>
<td>Nam Khung Issued by the Japanese</td>
<td></td>
<td>Japanese seal on document. Show that one is a member of a group of foodstuffs providers. If one wants to apply for a new licence, one has to go through the association’s recommendation and join the association as a member. Membership is printed on a piece of used paper; an indication of the scarcity of paper during that time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recording history of land use

Fig 1.5: Kelly map showing the market site (source: www.visiomsopfpenang.com.my/)
Example 1: Mapping historical significance of the site

Recording historical documents

Fig 1.6: Historical timeline showing land use of market site.

Fig 1.7: Types and locations of historical buildings.

Fig 1.8: Historical building types and style.
Example 1: Mapping historical significance of the site

Recording historical buildings: core market buildings & shop houses

Fig 1.9: Layout of core market building
Example 1: Mapping historical significance of the site

Synthesis data: layering of communities, land use and buildings

**BRITISH WAVE**
Late 18th century: First wave arrival of British EIC officers and merchants
Mid 19th century: Second wave arrival of British administrators, professionals, investors and merchants
Early 20th century: Return of wealthy locals from overseas

**INDIAN WAVE**
Late 18th century: First wave arrival of Indian labourers and merchants
Mid 19th century: Influx of second wave Indian labourers

**CHINESE WAVE**
Late 18th century: First wave arrival of Chinese artisans and traders
Mid 19th century: Influx of second wave Chinese labourers

Fig 1.10: Map of Early Migration to George town
Table 1.2: Layering approach to show connectivity between migration history timeline and architectural timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Styles</th>
<th>Indian Muslim Shrine</th>
<th>Southern Chinese Eclectic Shophouse Style</th>
<th>Neo-classical Victorian Style Market Building</th>
<th>Late Straits Eclectic Shophouse Style</th>
<th>Art Deco Shophouse Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>1800s</td>
<td>1840s-1900s</td>
<td>1900s</td>
<td>1910s-1930s</td>
<td>1930s-1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British influence</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Timber shutter windows</td>
<td>Wrought iron pillars and brackets</td>
<td>Full-length windows</td>
<td>Simple geometric lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Terracotta roof tiles</td>
<td>Brick arches and pediments</td>
<td>Plaster relief work on pillar heads and architraves</td>
<td>Metal-framed glass windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Lime plaster wall finish</td>
<td>Brick work columns with lime plaster finish</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian influence</td>
<td>Brick and plaster wall structure surrounding a tomb</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese influence</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Roof gable ends</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Shanghai plaster wall finish</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Internal air well</td>
<td>Roof gable ends</td>
<td>Relief signage</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 02: Mapping commercial social and religious significance of the site

Recording

use of the site for Commercial activities

Compilation of memories recollected by the community and site survey

Fig 1.11: Site plan showing commercial activities on street, in Shophouses and inside the market building.
Example 02: cultural mapping

Recording

*use of the site for Commercial activities*

Fig 1.12: Layout of the core market building and extensions

Photograph: illustrate stall market & trading activities
Example 02: cultural mapping

**Observation & hand drawing**

- Street and commercial activities

Data recorded via observation and photography
Recording

Use of the site for social activities

Fig 1.12: Social Meeting spaces
Recording

Use of Building and street for religious Activities

Fig 1.13: Hungry Ghost Festival
Synthesis data:
*Connecting commercial, social & religious space*

Fig 1.14: Layering approach to reveal connectivity of space and use at Market site
Example 03: Mapping cultural and economic significance

Recording the food and beverage business

Fig 1.15: Location of markets in relations to restaurant and coffee shops.

Fig 1.16: Location of markets in relations to street hawkers.
Example 03: Mapping cultural and economic significance

Fig 1.15: Value-added services provided by traditional markets

Fig 1.16: System approach to reveal connectivity of sample market product to culinary identity of place.
Example 03: SWOT analysis & planning recommendations

Table 1.3: SWOT analysis for the social dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Elements</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Threat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trading Community</td>
<td>Long time trading community positive about continuing to trade on site</td>
<td>Low awareness of own cultural assets and resources</td>
<td>Awareness raising on economic benefits of cultural interpretation of trades and skills</td>
<td>New players with only economic interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of intangible knowledge and skills</td>
<td>Aging population</td>
<td>Non-compliance by new traders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networks</td>
<td>Festival well-organized and supported by community</td>
<td>Absence of other cohesive networks</td>
<td>Build community by strengthening commercial opportunities and mapping shared history</td>
<td>Aging population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/Religious Activities</td>
<td>Hungry Ghost Festival activities, marketing, eating</td>
<td>Provide incentives to boost local leisure and social activities</td>
<td>New elements introduced into festival unrelated to tradition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.4: SWOT analysis for the economic dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Elements</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Threat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trades &amp; Services</td>
<td>Trades and services are closely related to local food culture</td>
<td>Decline in retail trade and increase in wholesale trade</td>
<td>Reorganization of products/services to complement Chowrasta Market</td>
<td>Competition from nearby Chowrasta Market which has a greater variety of products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to service local culinary demands</td>
<td>Lack of innovation or change</td>
<td>Introduce new market related trades, products and services, e.g., cooking school</td>
<td>Losing out to mini-markets and peripheral supermarkets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale food industry is improving</td>
<td>New population demanding ready-made goods</td>
<td>Introduce evening trades in vacant shophouses to complement morning trades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades shut by late afternoon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
