

# ความรู้สึกเป็นสถานที่และการพัฒนาอย่างยั่งยืนของ สองชุมชนละแวกบ้านในเมืองเชียงใหม่

## The Two Local Neighbourhoods of Chiang Mai: Sense of Place and Sustainable Development

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### บทคัดย่อ

ปัจจัยสำคัญประการหนึ่งสำหรับการพัฒนาชุมชนละแวกบ้านอย่างยั่งยืนได้แก่การที่ประชาชนในท้องถิ่นได้เข้ามามีส่วนร่วมในการกำหนดแนวทางการพัฒนาชุมชนนั้นๆ นักวิชาการหลายท่าน (Fisher: 1984; Mumford: 1987, ฯลฯ) ต่างเห็นพ้องต้องกันว่า “ความรู้สึกเป็นเจ้าของ” เป็นสิ่งสำคัญที่จะนำไปให้ประชาชนในท้องถิ่นเข้ามามีส่วนร่วมในการพัฒนาทบทวนวิจัยขึ้นนี้ให้ความสนใจที่ “ความรู้สึกเป็นสถานที่” ของคนท้องถิ่นในชุมชนละแวกบ้านนี้องจากเห็นว่าเป็นสำคัญที่ทำให้เกิดความรู้สึกเป็นเจ้าของและทำให้คนท้องถิ่นเข้ามามีส่วนร่วมในการพัฒนาชุมชนละแวกบ้านของตน

บทความนี้เลือกศึกษาชุมชนละแวกบ้านสองแห่งในเมืองเชียงใหม่ต่อจากการศึกษาที่ผ่านมา (Tansukanun and Daungthima, 2017) ชุมชนละแวกบ้านทั้งสองแห่งนี้มีลักษณะที่แตกต่างกันแต่ต่างได้รับความสนใจจากนักท่องเที่ยวเหมือนๆ กัน ละแวกบ้านวัดล้านซึ่งอยู่ในเขตกำแพงเมืองเก่าเชียงใหม่และละแวกบ้านนิมมานเหมินท์อยู่ทางตะวันตกออกเขตกำแพงเมืองเก่า การศึกษาใช้ปัจจัยระบุ “ความรู้สึกเป็นสถานที่” 3 ประการ (Punter, 1991) ได้แก่ กิจกรรม (Activities) องค์ประกอบทางกายภาพ (Physical attributes) และความหมาย (Meanings) นอกจากนี้ยังได้ศึกษาถึงโครงข่ายพื้นที่ทางกายภาพ-สังคม (Socio-spatial networks) ของคนในท้องถิ่นเพื่อให้เห็นมิติที่ลึกซึ้งของความหมายที่มีต่อความรู้สึกเป็นสถานที่ ขณะเดียวกันก็แสดงความสัมพันธ์ขององค์ประกอบทั้งสามที่มีต่อกันอย่างชัดเจนขึ้น บทความนี้จึงให้เห็นว่าชุมชนละแวกบ้านทางประวัติศาสตร์ที่คนท้องถิ่นมีความสัมพันธ์กันอย่างแนบเนิน รวมทั้งการมีอยู่ของพื้นที่ศักดิ์สิทธิ์ ทำให้คนในละแวกบ้านมีความรู้สึกร่วมกันสูง จึงมีศักยภาพสูงในการมีส่วนร่วมในกระบวนการพัฒนาให้เป็นการพัฒนาชุมชนอย่างยั่งยืนต่อไป

### ABSTRACT

One of the most significant factors promoting sustainable neighbourhood development is to promote partnership or public participation in the development process. Many scholars (Fisher: 1984; Mumford: 1987, etc.) suggest that people sense of belonging is vital for the engagement

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in neighbourhood development. This paper focuses on the local neighbourhood sense of place and socio-spatial networks regarding as a major factor in creating a sense of belonging.

It investigates further from the previous study (Tansukanun and Daunghthima, 2017) into the two different local neighborhoods of Chiang Mai city, Northern Thailand. They both are attractive for tourists; a traditional historic neighbourhood within the city wall and a newer hip neighbourhood outside the city wall. The paper looks into the local residents ‘sense of place’ by examining the three components: activities, physical attributes and meanings (Punter, 1991). Moreover, it enquires into the socio-spatial networks of the local residents to clarify the subtle meaning of the place to the local residents and shed light on the interconnectedness of the three components. The paper suggests that a historic neighbourhood with stronger local resident social networks and an existence of the sacred realm, has a stronger sense of belonging and more potentials to bring over a sustainable neighbourhood development.

**คำสำคัญ:** ชุมชนละแวกบ้าน เชียงใหม่ ความรู้สึกเป็นสถานที่ การพัฒนาอย่างยั่งยืน

**Keywords:** Local neighbourhood, Chiang Mai, Sense of place, Sustainable development

## Introduction

Cities have always been the physical manifestation of the most elaborated built environment people have ever made. They are the centre of commercial, institutional, social, economic and cultural functions of mankind. From 2008, for the first time in the history, there have been more urban population than rural population (United Nations, 2015). By 2050, it is forecasted that two-thirds of the world population will live in urban areas. Therefore, cities and urban development is one of the most crucial topics for sustainable development, it has been put as a stand alone topic in the 2030 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goal 11, “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.

The sustainable city index was adopted and had been actively practiced after the 1992 Earth Summit. In 1995 at least 1,200 cities all over the world tried to evaluate their city performances through the sustainable city index. However, this has been gradually decline and after 2006 the sustainability index has not been so successful. On the other hand, the livability index has become more actively applied (Marsal-Llacuna et al., 2015: 611). Evans (ed. 2002) also points out a close connection between city livability and sustainability. Cities must sustain themselves without imposing excessive ecological footprint to the surroundings. Real city livability is also equivalent to the sustainable neighbourhood security in the rural areas (Chamber, 1987 cited in Evans, 2002: 2).

One of the issues connected most to sustainable cities and human settlements development is promoting human resource development and capacity-building. This is to build partnership and participation in development (United Nations, 2015). An inclusive development, from all members of the society, is one of the goals for sustainable cities and human settlements development. Many scholars (Perry: 1929; Mumford: 1937; 1954; Fisher: 1984, etc.) strongly suggests that the neighbourhood unit is crucial to promote a sense of belonging leading to involvement among neighbours and participation in neighbourhood development. Choguill (2008) also suggests that neighbourhoods, for planners, are as important as any element in the urban system that complement to sustainability.

The main focus of this paper is on the two neighbourhoods of Chiang Mai, a living - 722 years old - historic city to the North of Thailand. As a fast-growing living historic city, the question of how Chiang Mai could balance a historic conservation and a rapid growth to maintain a sustainable development is of great importance. The paper investigates a sense of place and socio-spatial networks of the local residents of the two neighbourhoods, the Lam Chang Neighbourhood within the city wall and the Nimmanhaemin to the west of the old city wall. It suggests that the Lam Chang Neighbourhood, with its historic physical character and with both sacred and profane activities as well as a close relationship of the local residents, has more potentials to create a sense of belonging and gear to a sustainable neighbourhood development.

## Defining Neighbourhood

It is not easy to give a definition of the word 'neighbourhood' as there are too many kinds of human settlements with different kinds of social relations. The definitions of a neighbourhood concern 'a geographically localized community located within a larger city or suburb', 'an area retaining some quality or character which distinguishes it from other areas', or 'an area where the residents are drawn and held together by common and beneficial interests' (Ghoguill, 2008: 42). In summary, there are three agreeable common characteristics which are: geographical space, common ties and social interactions (Knox and Pinch, 2000).

This paper chose two different neighbourhoods, characterised by the previous study (Tansukanun and Daungthima, 2012 and 2017) as a starting point, to study the socio-spatial networks of the local residents as well as the neighbourhoods' activities and physical attributes.

As noted by the previous study, that Chiang Mai, as other living historic cities (including London - Ling & Johnson, 1943), is gradually evolved and consists of many small traditional neighbourhoods. During the past decades, developments have been filling up vacant plots of land between those old communities. The city has also grown outwards to the fringes and the near by districts. Not until fairly recently, a lot more undeveloped vacant lands within the city tissues were paid no attention.

The Lam Chang Temple is selected from the neighbourhoods and districts with **super-strong historic characters** within the square city walls. While the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood is selected from the neighbourhoods and districts with **hidden traditional and historic characters** functioning as a sacred forest in the previous time (Tansukanun and Daunghima, 2017). It lost many of their physical historic appearances through the old building replacements and the infills of vacant lands with new buildings and uses. Many of these replacements and infills are not conform with the historical characteristics, especially the fine-grain urban fabric and the low skylines. It could be claimed that for the west side of the city where Chiang Mai University, Ratchamongkol Lanna University and Maharaja Nakorn Chiang Mai Hospital are located, the city development is **heavily economic driven** (ibid).

## Defining Place

‘Place’ is a complex term that has been defined in many ways. However, almost all definitions share two significant elements which are geographic entity and meaning (Massey and Jess, eds., 2002). A mere geographic entity of ‘place’ is a space, a location of somewhere, a site, locality, locale or locus. A geographic entity does not create a ‘place’, but rather it is the meaning that differentiates a geographic location from a ‘place’ (Amdur and Pliouchtch 2009: 148). In other words, ‘place’ concerns the identity of a locale arising from the space defining elements as well as events, flows of people and goods and meaning. Place is also socially constructed and unfixed (Schulz, 1980: 5; Relph, 1976: 2-4; Massey 2005: 131; Massey and Jess, eds., 2000: 61-62 and 88; Giddens, 1995). Thus, **place** and **sense of place** are important and **contribute to sustainable urban living**.

‘Sense of place’ can be defined as the qualitative total phenomenon of ‘atmosphere’ and the material things that constitute meaningful ‘places’ in cities. Places, as cities, are interconnected, unfixed and pluralized of integrated phenomena or spatio-temporal events (Tansukanun and Daunghima, 2017). For cities, ‘place’ is a fundamental concept and construct that can be used to analyze neighbourhoods (Orum and Chen, 2003). In addition, a ‘sense of place’ contributes to the notion of urban quality (Montgomery (1998:96). ‘City Village’, developing sustainable living that is inclusive of the inhabitants traditional, cultural, learning, health and so on, is also one of the desired aspects for a sustainable city (UN, 2014). Thus, the understanding sense of place in the city can generate a strong platform for underpinning goals for **sustainable urbanism**. Further, understanding sense of place in the urban context would not be complete without a critical consideration of cities as socially constructed places both inherited and created by the residents who live there (Adams et al., 2016).

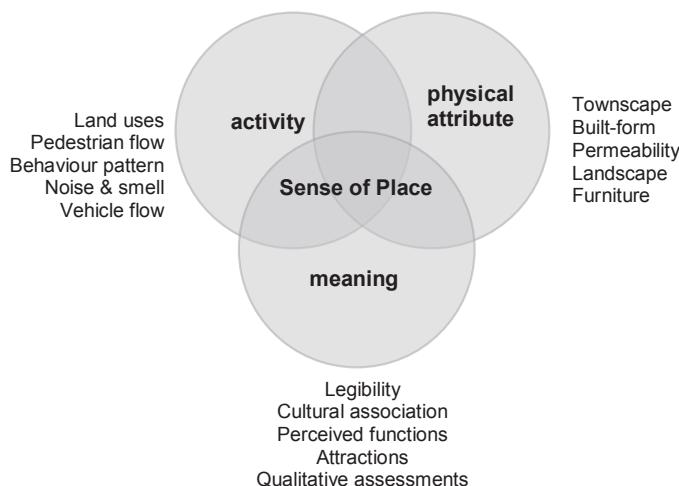
In sum, ‘a sense of place’ can be defined based on three main factors: (1) physical features and appearances; (2) observable activities and functions; and (3) user factors of memory, image,

meanings and symbols (see, for example Schulz, 1980; Garnham, 1985; Relph, 1976; Canter, 1977 and Punter, 1991 - see Figure 1).

**Physical features and appearances** include built forms, townscape, landscape as well as furniture, locations and the relations between these components (see Figure 1). Physical feature is viewed as a tool to make distinction between 'places' (i.e. Relph, 1976), as well as the expression of selves and group identity (Rapoport 1990: 15). It is of the essence for many scholars, especially urban designers (see for example; Bacon 1978; Cullen 1995; Kostof 1999; Day 1990).

**Observable activities and functions** refer to interactions between people and the place and how cultural institutions in the society react to the place as well as how people use it create a different sense of each place. These activities and functions include land uses, pedestrian flows, behaviour patterns, noises and smells, as well as vehicle flows (Punter 1991; see Figure 1). As 'place' can be seen as 'meeting place', a locus of activities and social relations of specific groups of people, thus, observable activities and functions is a part of the spatio-temporal social reproduction that creates a 'place'.

**Memory, image, meanings and symbols** are abstract conceptions or intangible attributes that contribute to creating place. These elements results from the intentions and experience of human. Place created through memory and meaning is also associated with physical characteristics as well as activities and functions of the place, but with the mental process of users in interpreting and memorization. The image of a place is created from an amalgamated cognition and perception as well as the individual, group and cultural 'personality'. It is a set of feelings and impressions about that place (Spencer and Dixon 1983 cited from Montgomery 1998: 100). Meanings also change according to people activities and physical settings of the place.



**Figure 1** Components of a 'sense of place'

(Source: derived from Punter, 1991)

The paper derives the concept of place mentioned above to find out how local residents define their ‘locale’ forming a sense of place and a meaningful neighbourhood as well as their sense of belonging to actively involve in the development of their neighbourhoods.

### Methodology: the Local Residents’ Sense of Place and Socio-spatial Network

The historic city of Chiang Mai, as concluded by Tansukanun and Daunghima (2012) using the three sense of place components, consisted of 141 small neighborhoods constructing 14 districts shown in Figure 2. This study investigations further in the two different neighborhoods, the Lam Chang Temple locating within the city wall (9.1) and the Nimmanhaemin locating to the west of the old city wall (12.6). The two neighbourhoods are selected because they are both good representative of two different characteristics which are both significant for the making of Chiang Mai city. The two characteristics are a super-strong historic character neighbourhood inside the city wall and a new hip neighbourhood extended outside the city wall. It focuses on the **socio-spatial networks** of the local residents in their daily routine to clarify their connections with people and the **meaning of the place**. The land-use changes, opportunities and problems in neighbourhood development as well as how well each neighbourhood is coping with the problems are also investigated.

Only long term residents, residing in the area over 5 years, were interviewed. Fourteen residents from each Neighbourhood were selected randomly and by snowball technique starting from key persons. The data collection is based on semi-structured interviews to allow residents to express their feelings about their neighborhoods and sense of place without predetermined answers (Spartz and Shaw, 2011; Williams, 2008 as cited by Zakariya et al., 2015: 479). The interview questions about ‘sense of place’ were structured into four parts: (1) residents profiles (age, gender, occupation, length of stay in the neighbourhoods), (2) social networks (relatives, neighbors, acquaints, and the house locations of those people), (3) places of like, and dislike, or most and least visited (restaurants, shops, parks, temples, etc.) and (4) daily and ceremonial activities (what?, why? where?) and what do they think are the dominant characteristics of the neighborhoods, i.e. activities, places, landmarks, etc.

The interview and record techniques were different for each neighbourhood. For example, residents in the Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood are mostly unable to understand nor use a map to locate their houses and places of likes and dislikes. In these instance, field notes and tape recording were used to check the accuracy of the spatial before mapping. On the contrary, the Nimmanhaemin residents are mostly elites and able to read and draw on the maps with only small exceptions. These residents were asked to put the locations of their homes and other places directly on to the maps, with some assistance where required. The findings are examined in the next section.

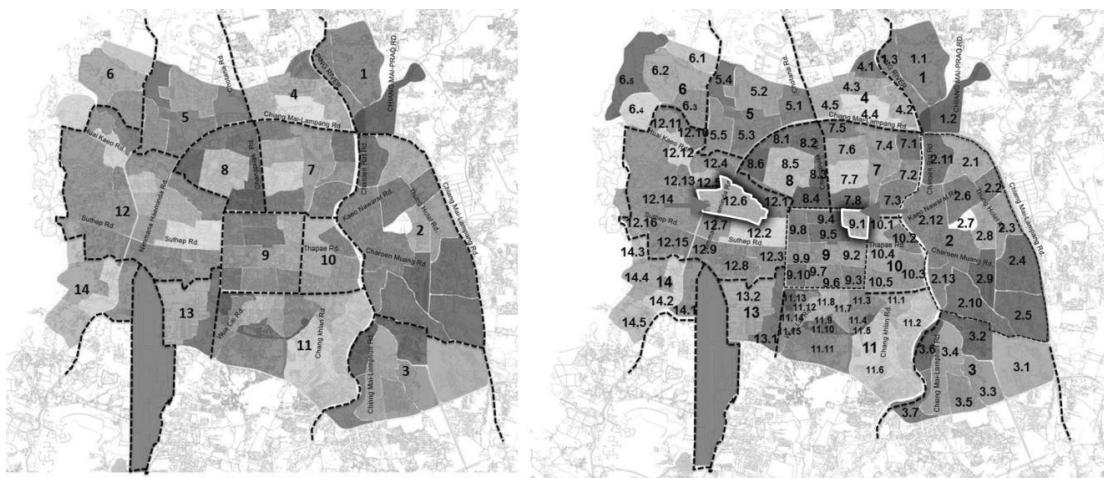


Figure 2 Chiang Mai's districts (left) and neighborhoods (right)

(source: Tansukanun and Daungthima, 2017)

## The Neighbourhood Backgrounds

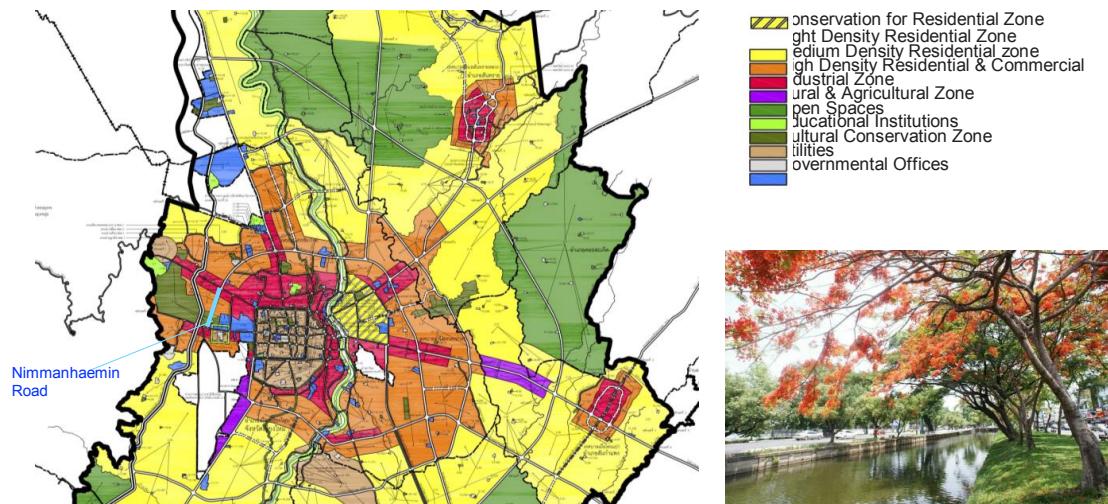
## The Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood

The old square city wall, surrounded by city moats, is where most significant historic elements; palaces, temples, the city pillar, historic craftsmanship zones, etc., as well as schools, markets, and museums are located. At present, within the area of only 2.4 square kilometres there are 38 active and 19 deserted Buddhist temples. It has been designated as a ‘cultural conservation’ zone in the latest Chiang Mai City Comprehensive Plan (2013-2018 see Figure 3). From its physical characters, activities and meaning, the old square city wall become the strongest district of Chiang Mai in terms of the perception and image of the city (Tansukanun and Daungthima, 2012: 104). Thus, the old city wall has been the centre of tourist attractions within the city.

The Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood is one of the ten neighbourhoods within the square city wall, according to Tansukanun and Daungthima (2012). It is situated at the northeastern corner, an auspicious direction and the first corner built by King Mung Rai in 1296. The other significant historic elements in the area are Chiang Mun and Lam Chang, both active Buddhist temples. The Chiang Mun Temple is said to be the first temple of Chiang Mai and the site was previously where King Mung Rai stayed while he oversaw the city construction. The Lam Chang Temple site, near by, was where his elephants were fed. The historical significance of the area make the it populated most by tourists. By contrast, the Ton Poon and Chok Kaew abandoned temples no longer function as temples, but rather have public uses as the Red Cross Office and a closed kindergarten school.

The two neighboring markets, Somphet and Ming Muang, were once popular, but after 1996 they gradually lost their levels of use and Somphet Market was closed a few years afterwards.

Nowadays only a half of the former Ming Muang Market area is used. However, the size suits the need of the neighbourhood and a new function as a raw material source for the Thai cooking classes offered to foreigners in its vicinity. The market is important, in some sense, as it is the only wooden structure market left within Chiang Mai city (Tansukanun and Duangthima, 2012: 105-110).



**Figure 3** The Chiang Mai Comprehensive Plan showing the City Wall area as  
'Cultural Conservation Zone'

(source: Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning, 2013)



**Figure 4** The Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood Characteristics  
(Source: author)

As the old city wall has been the centre of interests for tourists, the Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood has gradually changed its use to serve tourists; hotels, guest houses, restaurants, cafés, pubs and bars, etc. The major **physical appearance** of the area is dominated by two to three

story modern town houses along the main roads, with 50-60 years old wooden houses and modern brick and mortar houses in other areas (Figure 4). These architectural characters together with small alleys in the area, give a sense of '**living historic neighbourhood**' to most acquaintances and new visitors to the neighbourhood.

However, the additional and replacement process is going on and has started to create problems of uneven frontage lines. By contrast, the height and colour are not the major problems of the area since controls on those aspects are applied by the municipal law of Chiang Mai Municipality. The more detailed area investigations will be in the next section.

### **The Nimmanhaemin Neighborhood**

The Nimmanhaemin Road, bordered the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood, built to connect the first Super Highway to the west of the old city during the late 1960's. Extended from the Super Highway and connecting the two major roads to the front and the back of Chiang Mai University: Huey Kaew and Suthep Road, the Nimmanhaemin Road has become of great importance. At present, it acts as '**a new gate way**' of Chiang Mai (Chiang Mai Planner Network, 2010) greetings ones who arrive Chiang Mai city by vehicles, since the new underpasses at every junction along the Super Highway made it most convenient to arrive the area before ones could realise.

Originally, the foothill of Suthep Mountain to the west of the old city retained sacred forests, and later was converted into agriculture land and rice paddy fields. After Chiang Mai University was established in 1964, the area flourished and the land was divided to be sold. During that time, Nimmanhaemin was occupied by Chiang Mai's elites; doctors, nurses and health care personnel, university professors, entrepreneurs and so on. It was one of the most expensive residential areas of the city. With its charming characteristic of good houses and big trees as well as its good accessibility and its location with many magnets in its environs including two universities, significant temples, a hospital, governmental offices, Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood started to attract designers' shops, art galleries and restaurants in the gardens. The neighbourhood has been mixed uses, with houses, all special design shops, good restaurants, etc. It is also near workplaces including Chiang Mai University, Maharaja Nakorn Chiang Mai Hospital, Ratchamungkol University as well as the Art and Cultural Centre and Chiang Mai University Conference Hall. One of the most significant temples of Chiang Mai, Suang Dok Temple built by King Kuna - the 6th King of the Muang Rai Dynasty, and Ton Payom Market are also in its vicinity.

The settings and physical elements of the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood is comprised with **many straight small roads** connecting the two major roads, Nimmanhaemin and Siri-mung-kala-jarn, much different from small winding roads of the Lam Chang Temple area. Previously, the similarities between the two neighbourhoods are small road size and the green shady

areas. As Nimmanhaemin develops towards a more commercial aspect, much of the greenery is replaced by many high-rise buildings. Thus, in many ways, it losses its character as a ‘**good mix used**’ area.

A short time ago, the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood was rated as a very high potential neighbourhood according to the Sustainable Urbanism concept (Farr, 2008 cited in Tansukanun, 2012). However, business and commercial growth is extremely rapid as the area has been so attractive. Together with a weak building control system, the area has rapidly filled with high rises. Many special and designer shops have been replaced with world brand shops, restaurants and bars. The neighbourhood has faced a variety of problems including traffic jams, poor drainage systems, broken skylines, not sufficient facilities for pedestrians, and last but not least, noise pollution from pubs and bars during the nights. Consequently, residents started moving out of the area and the mixed use character of the area is beginning to decline. The **physical character** of the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood has altered from a **lively chic local neighbourhood** to the foot of Suthep Mountain, the major landmark of Chiang Mai, to a universal congested messy high-rises area like any other part of the world (Figure 5). Moreover, the area is perceived as a **commercial zone** rather than a **living neighbourhood**, though a number of local residents still reside in the area. Further investigation will give a more insight into the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood socio-spatial network.



**Figure 5** The Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood Characteristics  
(source: author)

### The Neighborhood Daily Life and Socio-spatial Networks

Apart from the physical setting, this study also pays attention to uses and meanings that are interconnected creating a ‘sense of place’ for individuals and a collective society. In this section, an amalgamate finding of these factors together with the resident socio-spatial networks in their everyday and sacred lives, as well as the land use changes of the neighbourhoods are elucidated. These, to clarify how well the local residents could gear to the sustainable neighbourhood development.

## The Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood

The Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood's resident interviews reveal that the **market place** is the most significant setting in the **daily routine** of the residents. It has been visited by most interviewed females and some males. Interestingly, the name Somphet is still used for Ming Muang Market as it was previously used for both markets. A near by market being visited is Chang Puak Market, to the north of the city wall, as it is bigger and offers more variety of foods.

Another significant food-function for quick meals mentioning by all interviewees, is a **restaurant**. Noticeable, restaurants for residents are not normally the same as those for tourists, because of prices and types of food, except for the old restaurant – on the main road to the northern part of the neighbourhood – that is also for visitors (Figure 6). This can be termed as *co-existence*, not overlap, when residents and visitors appear in approximately the same area but are different in the sub-areas. It should also be noted that many activities today, for example; work, goods shoppings, hang out with friends for the young, etc., occurred outside the neighbourhood boundaries.

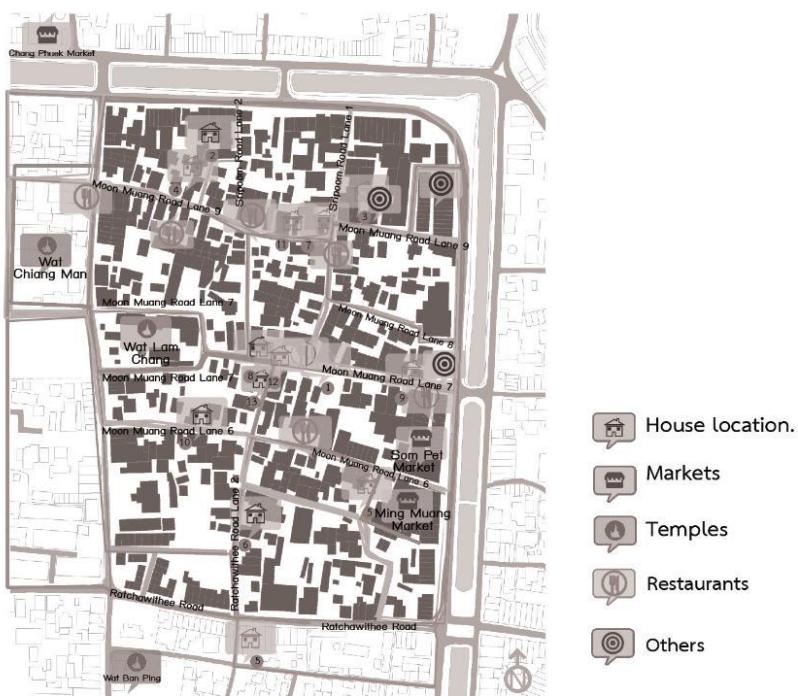


Figure 6 The Lam Chang Temple daily place of visit and neighbourhood boundaries

For the **ceremonial lives** of the local residents in the neighbourhood, the study found out that the **temple still plays an important role** in the lives of its people. The temple precinct today is the only public space for residents, apart from other functional public spaces such as markets.

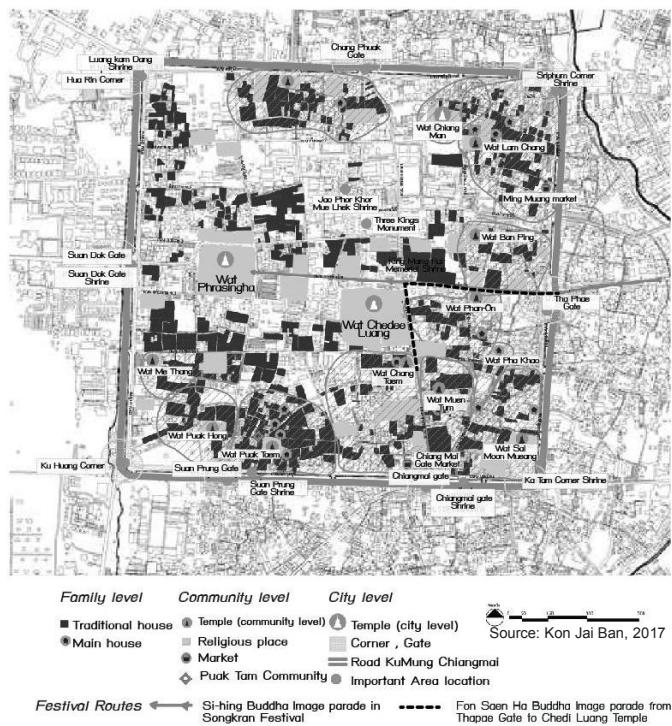
For most residents, the small community temple, Lam Chang Temple, is visited most as a place of daily worship, while the larger tourist attraction, Chiang Mun Temple, is a place for tri-annual or annual events and ceremonies. This is again canbe called the co-existence of both groups, where the local residents and visitors have their **basic form of interactions**, sharing public spaces, such as streets and markets, but have different choices for food functions in their daily routines. Figure 6 shows the places that the residents visited in their daily routines.

The locations of the interviewed resident houses and their named relatives, neighbours and acquaints are shown in Figure 7. It is seen that the social relation in the neighbourhood is still very strong as residents mention at least 8-10 names and the maximum numbers go up to 25-30 names during the interviews. The social network map shows that the accustomed lines spread all over the area. However, the detailed patterns reveal that some residents confine their relations within the vicinities of the Northern or Southern parts, divided by the Moon Muang Soi 7 - the east-west road from the city moat to Lam Chang Temple. The social network map is synchronized with the local traditional lives of its people shown in Figure 8. The map shows the social sub-group system called ‘*Ban Kao*’ or the main house where performances of an ancestral respect ritual once a year among relatives that is still in practiced. This pattern is also conformed with the land-use and land ownership maps (Figure 10 and 11) discussed below.



**Figure 7** The Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood social networks

(Source: from the interviews)



**Figure 8** KuMung Chiangmai local life map

(Source: Kon Jai Ban, 2017)

### The Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood

The Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood residents were asked to put the locations of their houses, their neighbours, favourite places, favourite restaurants and other places, for examples; favourite shops, a park, banks, hair dressers, kindergarten school, etc. on the maps. Figure 8 and 9 show the relevant maps.

There is a **great variety** of the Nimmanhaemin residents' **places of daily routine** (Figure 8). They are various kinds of restaurants, specialty shops, the Somdej-Ya mini park, Chiang Mai University Art Museum and Conference Hall, coffee shops, healthy food shops, banks and stationeries, and so on. From the previous study (Tansukanun, 2012) on the **neighbourhood completeness** indicating the degree of potential pedestrian destinations as one of the factors promoting mixed use and sustainable neighbourhood, shows that Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood has as high as 15 out of 23 amenities within in its only 5 minutes walk or 400 metres radius. While the other fives; hardware stores, places of worship and a community civic centre as well as a library and a post office are within its only 1-1.5 kilometres radius. Moreover, the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood is adjacent to at least three shopping malls and is 800 metres away from another shopping mall where it is most convenient for residents to reach those amenities and facilities inside. Thus, it could be stated that the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood is a real **paradise for many residents**, in terms of its location and facilities within.

The favourite places and other places are mostly along the two major roads, the Nimmanhaemin and Siri-mungkala-jarn, while favourite restaurants are common in the small roads between those two roads. Noticeable, many of the favourite places and restaurants for the **Nimmanhaemin residents** are also frequented by **visitors and tourists**, as they **share styles and economic status**. However, a source of conflict between the residents and visitors has come from the ‘pubs and bars’ in the area, since they normally produce loud noises during the nights. This has been, one the one hand, a real burden and a push factor for the local residents to move away from the neighbourhood but on the other hand, a reason to unite their campaign against some pubs and bars. Despite the fact that their campaign succeeded in many cases, some local residents moved out. After more and more local residents moved out, coffee shops, restaurants, shops, hotels and condominiums are moving in for a replacement. The rapid change will be investigate in the next section.

Different from the Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood, Nimmanhaemin residents do not associate their daily routines with the Buddhist temple, one of the reasons is there is no Buddhist temple within its 400 metres boundaries. Their **ceremonial lives** tend to be **not as strong** as the Lam Chang Temple residents. Nevertheless, one of the tourist attractions, the Suan Dok Temple, is only a short distance from the southwest of the neighbourhood and the Pra Than Porn Temple to the north of the Irrigation Road, is also near-by. Living in a comparatively new settlement, the Nimmanhaemin residents come from a diversity of beliefs and practices and go to different temples to worship. Durkheim (1984) would term this structure an **organic solidarity**, the solidarity of differences, unlike the Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood, a **mechanical solidarity**, the solidarity of similarity.

From the houses and neighbours map (Figure 10), it seems, Nimmanhaemin residents also typically know each other a lot and have strong social networks. Nonetheless, the in-depth interviews reveal that the residents are normally **individuals** and get together only on important occasions, such as at community meetings. The local residents used to have a regular meeting on every month during 2010-2013, after several meetings with the Chiang Mai Planner Network through the ‘Chiang Mai Iam’ Project. They did many proactive activities and had a voice in many policies affecting the lives of the local residents. However, during the past years, as some residents were moving out, there has been less active local residents. The regular meetings has been stopped, a face-to-face meeting was set up only when an important issue was raised. The social web and communication technologies have been used to communicate among themselves. This has advantages and disadvantages at the same time. Changes in the neighbourhood and their consequences will be addressed in the next section.



Figure 9 The Nimmanhaemin daily place of visit and neighbourhood boundaries



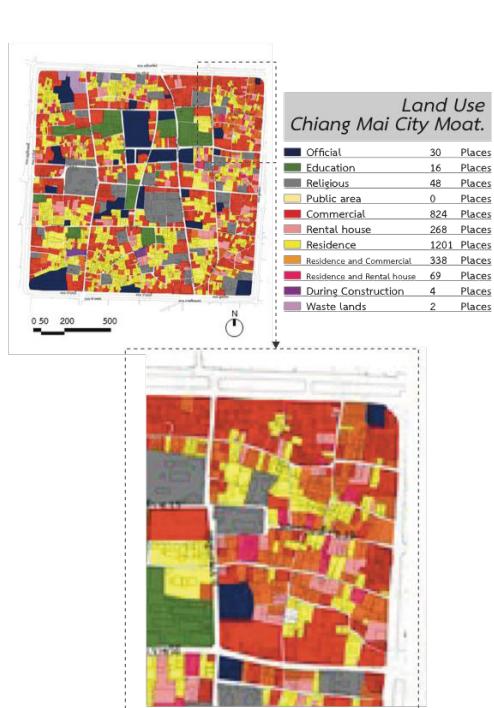
Figure 10 The Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood social networks (source: from the interviews)

## The Neighborhood Changes

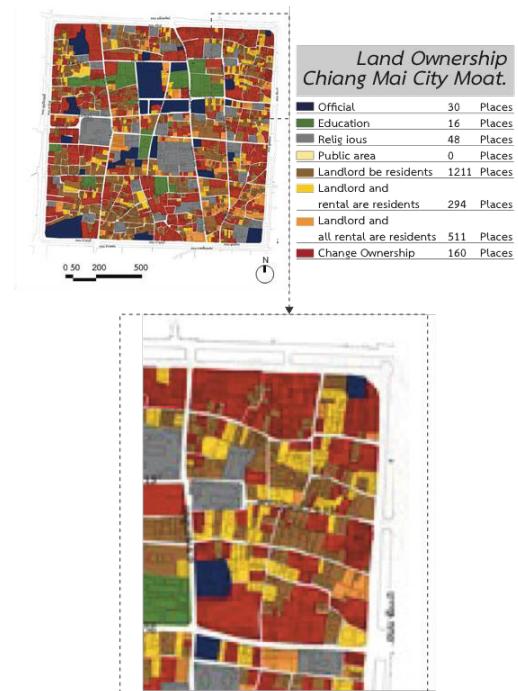
The central idea of heritage planning is that of managing change rather than denying it. The conservation of historic cities need to focus on how to manage change to reach a balance between urban forms, urban functions and area strategies in urban planning (Ashworth, 1991: 1-3). Changes in both neighbourhoods are investigated in order to see what are the roles of the local residents and how well they could gear to the sustainable neighbourhood developments.

### The Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood

The old square city wall still resides the original local residents about 42% (33%+9%) by area (Kon Jai Ban, 2017 - see Figure 11). The ratio in the Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood is slightly lower than the city wall as a whole as the eastern part has changed more rapidly than the western part of the old city. This should be kept in mind, as the lower number of the local resident affects the change of settings, and consequently has a strong influence on the types of activities that people can undertake, which eventually lead to the different place meanings (Zakariya et al., 2015: 485), by both the residents and tourists.



**Figure 11** The Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood Land Use Map (Left)  
(source: Kon Jai Ban, 2017)



**Figure 12** The Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood Land Ownership Map (Right)  
(source: Kon Jai Ban, 2017)

Astonishingly, the percentage of the land ownership change from locals to new comers within these last five years is as high as 41% of the total area. Furthermore, the percentages of land that has been rented and used by new comers goes up to 54% (41%+13%) by area, as shown in Figure 12. In other words, the old square city wall is used by the new comers own/use more than half of the area within the city wall. Though the percentage of land belonging to the local residents (38%) and the land that the local residents stay with the new comers (8%) is not too low (46% of the total area), the threat of reducing the local resident number is still very high as the high land price can be a very strong push factor for local residents to move out of the old city.

Nonetheless, it is observed that, apart from the neighbourhood leader, the abbot of Lam Chang Temple plays a key role to unite members and promote cultural activities in the neighbourhood. Besides religious activities, other kinds of cultural activities have always been taken place within the temple precincts, for example; history photo exhibitions, occasionally traditional markets, traditional music group rehearsals, etc. These activities give emphasis to the local residents' social ties. Other activities are also taken place in the neighbourhood, for example group exercise, group sharing knowledge, etc.

New types of activities, arranged by governmental and non-governmental organizations aiming for visitors and promote sustainable tourism, also occurred both inside and outside the temple precinct as the neighbourhood is one of the centres of interest for tourists. These activities, in a sense, give a new meaning to the neighbourhood for the local residents as well as visitors. At this moment we might be able to sum that the forces between the local residents and the visitors are still in 'balance' (Figure 12). This situation of '**share spaces - share meanings**' is still going on, and perhaps we need to 'wait and see' that whether the neighbourhood development moves to the sustainable direction.

### **The Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood**

The investigation in the past five years land use change (2012-2017) of the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood reveals that the neighbourhood has reduced the low rise residential area (in yellow), while increasing in the numbers of apartments, condominiums (in orange) and other commercial (in red) uses (see Figure 14). At present, the low rise residential area is about 30% by area. But, in combining the low-rise residences with the apartments and condominiums as well as the mix used area, the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood has about **41 % by area of the residential use**. This picture is different from the '**totallycommercial zone**' image of the neighbourhood by most people.



**Figure 13** The Neighbourhood balanced-mix of historic, traditional and global characteristics during the Chiang Mai Design Week organized by TCDC<sup>1</sup> with a traditional market in Lam Chang Temple and graffiti on leftover walls by Thai and foreign artists.

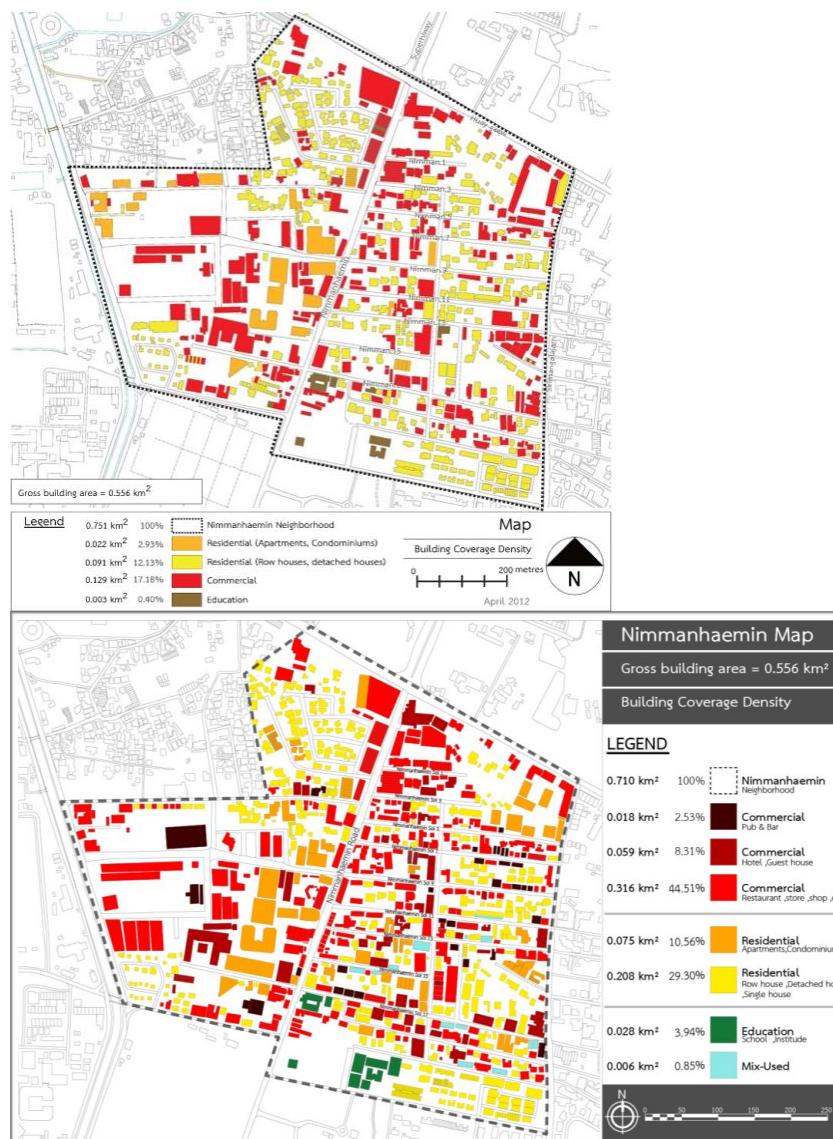
Though, the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood still has plenty of rooms for development from the **sustainable urbanism** perspective, saying that the good percentages between the loft and apartments and single houses are 52% and 48% (Farr, 2008 and Wheeler, and Beatley. eds., 2009), the high rise development is regrettably blocking the view to Suthep Mountain, one of the most important image elements of the city (Figure 15), reducing the connection between the neighbourhood and the mountain, thus, **diminishing the meaning** of the place.

Fairly recently, in conjunction with the rapidly increased Chinese tourists, the shops in Nimmanhaemin have altered their types of good and shopfront design to suit the tastes of the mass Chinese tourism. In addition, a new shopping mall and a hotel at the Nimmanhaemin-Huey Kaew junction have replaced the oldest and most hip hotel in town during 1960s to 1980s. These affected much of the atmosphere of the neighbourhood. Nimmanhaemin became a more **commercial zone** than ever before.

As mentioned earlier, more and more numbers of local residents are moving out from the neighbourhood because of the neighbourhood problems and the high land prize. The high land prize situation is similar to what has happened in the neighbourhoods within the city wall, only

<sup>1</sup> TCDC = Thailand Creative & Design Centre

with a higher degree, as the building codes in the Nimmanhaemin area are not as strong as in the city wall. The **place meaning**, in terms of the appearance of the **local residents in the daily rhythm** (Massey, 2005 and Massy and Jess, 2000) is diminished. Many local residents outside the neighbourhood also avoid to pass the area because of the traffic jam. It could then be called '**share space - contested meaning**' between the local residents and visitors (Figure 16).

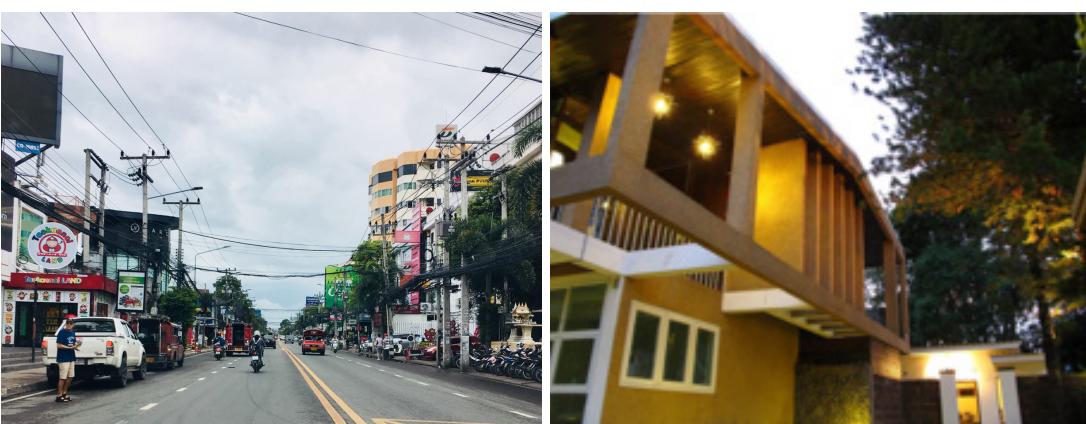


**Figure 14** The Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood Land Use Maps 2012 (upper) and 2017 (lower)  
 (source: from the surveys, drawn by Nuttasit Srinurak and Laksanaree Wanapantaporn)

ความรู้สึกเป็นลักษณะที่แสดงการพึงพอใจอย่างชัดเจนของส่วนชุมชนจะหากเป็นไปได้มั่งเชิงที่นำไปสู่ความสุขในส่วนตัว



**Figure 15** Connection to the sacred mountain, Doi Suthep, from Suthep Road (left) And condominiums and hotels block a view to Doi Suthep from Huey Kaew Road (right)



**Figure 16** The ‘share space-contested meaning’ characteristic of the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood

## Conclusions

### Place of Sameness vs. Place of Differences

It should be noted at first point that in general the two neighbourhoods have different characteristics, especially the social practices and social relations among the local residents. The residents of Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood are similar and associate their daily routines with basic facilities in the traditional neighbourhood, i.e. markets and Buddhist temples. By contrast, the Nimmanhaemin residents are different and do not associate their daily routines with the Buddhist temple, and they have a great variety of choices for their favorite places in their daily routine. Durkheim (1984) would term these social structures as the *mechanical solidarity* - the solidarity of similarity and the *organic solidarity* - the solidarity of differences for the Lam Chang Temple and the Nimmanhaemin neighbourhoods respectively.

### ‘Sense of Place’ & Locations of Activities

The neighbourhood boundary, as ‘*my place*’, has a close relation to the daily routines of the residents, as found in the Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood. However, in the southwestern corner many residents’ sense of place is reduced because the area is used for pubs, bars and restaurants by tourists and most local residents do not visit the area except walking past. This is also true for the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood where the neighbourhood boundaries and positive sense of place are confined within the east side of the Nimmanhaemin Road where almost all shops and other facilities are on the side. Moreover, there seems not to have a ‘*blind spot*’ within this side of the road as appears in the Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood because of its mixed use and the place is in the daily routine of the residents. Thus, the locations of activities and amenities are important to create a sense of familiarity and a sense of place for the local residents.

From this point we can suggest that the location of activities and amenities is one of the key factors for a strong ‘sense of place’ for people. Consequently, separated zoning for locals or tourists is not an ideal strategy for the neighbourhood development. Mixed uses between the locals and tourists could open opportunities for social interaction, leading to a ‘place of integration’ or social inclusion that is one of the key factors for a sustainable developments. For this reason, codes of practice, in many aspects, to prevent conflicts between the two groups are needed.

### Form and Function Dilemma and Senses of Places

The only shared physical attribute of the two neighbourhoods at present is the road size. Previously, the two neighbourhoods shared the characteristic of a place with small road size and the green shady areas. As Nimmanhaemin develops towards a more commercial aspect, much of the greenery is replaced by many high-rise buildings. Thus, in many ways, it losses its character as a ‘good mix used’ area. Physical appearance is also an outcome of the activity allocation that is

much depends on building codes of the area. Chiang Mai is a rapid changing historic city and has faced the problem of how to make a balance between conserving urban form while allow suitable functional change through times, as other historic cities (Ashworth, 1991). The Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood is within an old city wall where a stronger zoning system and building codes are applied. Accordingly, the functions of the neighbourhood are limited and the form or an appearance of a historic neighbourhood is better kept than the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood. Physical attribute is one of the strongest factors affecting a sense of place. However, it has more impact on the outsiders than the local residents. The character of the place through its physical attributes seem to be less significant for the local residents, as they are associated more with uses.

### Places for Social Interaction

Places for social interaction can be one of the sustainable neighbourhood development, as suggested previously. Public space around the Lam Chang Temple area is quite limited to the streets and the temple grounds. In the Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood small closures and alleys are used for day-to-day interactions, as in other Thai urban communities as suggests by Khaisri Paksukcharern (2008). Luckily, alleys within the Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood are still walkable, shady and safe. Along these alleys, especially where restaurants for the locals are located, people stop and talk. By contrast, roads in the Nimmanhaemin Neighbourhood are straight, not so shady and fill up with traffic. They have different role from alleys within the Lam Chang Temple Neighbourhood. The interaction among residents are limited within private spaces or other third places such as coffee shops, an art museum, or the Somdej-Ya mini park to the west of the neighbourhood. Luckily, the one-way road system, as once proposed by the police, is not applied. It is not ideal for socialising since it brings fast traffic to the small roads, create more pollutions and is not safe for pedestrians. Further, the Somdej-Ya mini park can partly fulfill the needs to of the local residents in terms of an ‘everyday nature’ that people need for a psychological reason, as suggests by Kaplan et al. (1998). Other kinds of ‘third place’ could also promote social interaction among people. These should be kept in mind in the design and planning of a sustainable neighbourhood.

### Share Space - Share Meaning

As suggest by Zakariya et al. (2015: 484), the backgrounds, experiences and intensity of engagement of uses influence place meaning. The local residents, who have longer and deeper engagement in places within the neighbourhood, will attach to the neighbourhood more than visitors or tourists. In addition, the identity of a place is connected to both built forms and the lives of people. Heritage cities that have no local resident, but are filled only with tourists, may not be able to represent the very distinctive character of the place since the vitality of an historic city

mostly comes from the daily and ceremonial activities of the local resident, and not from tourists. The mutual understanding between the two groups could create a place where both groups ‘share space and share meaning’ and that is one of the important factors for a sustainable neighbourhood development.

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