

Reclaiming Callejón Otaiza: Connecting the Chinese Diaspora in Central Lima

by

Kenneth Siu

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Lima's Chinatown is a vibrant tapestry woven with the stories of multiple generations of Chinese immigrants. Over the years, it has supported the lives of many Chinese immigrants and Chinese Peruvian descendants alike. However, the Chinese population in Chinatown is stagnating due to the scarcity of residential and commercial units. The area has become so congested that it can no longer accommodate the needs of the growing community. As a result, many members of the Chinese community have migrated to other districts within Lima, where there is more space to support their businesses and residential needs. Apart from the space restraints within Lima's Chinatown, new Chinese immigrants arriving are from different regions of China, causing subtle cultural differences. This shift has created a subtle divide within the Chinese diaspora, as the community becomes increasingly dispersed across the city.

This thesis investigates the relationship between Lima's Chinese diaspora and Central Lima's Chinatown by exploring the historical injustices and marginalization faced by the Chinese community in Lima. In response to these discriminatory events, the community united and shaped the enclave using architectural and commercial ownership strategies. Building on these historical strategies that led to the community's prosperity, this study proposes a new commercial space at the historical site of Callejón Otaiza. By combining space occupation strategies from the *callejones* (a tenement with symmetrically aligned rooms on either side of an alley) of Lima with the architectural typologies of the *galerías*, the proposed design aims to foster community cohesion and economic opportunities for the Chinese community in Lima's Chinatown.

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Thank you to my family, especially my parents. Thank you for sharing your experiences with me and allowing me to travel to experience cultures and communities outside of our own.

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Preface

The topic for this thesis evolved from wanting to learn about the arrival story of the first Chinese immigrants in Lima. While researching the Chinese diaspora in Lima, I came across multiple images of my own family members in Lima and a few references to my surname. This led my interest to be directed at the time in history when my dad arrived in Lima and, consequently, my family's arrival history.

My early childhood was spent in Lima, where I experienced a mixed culture of Peruvian and Chinese holidays. It did not occur to me to question our relationship with the Peruvian community as I went to a Peruvian school. My parents had Peruvian friends, and I was surrounded by them constantly. It was not until my grandfather's funeral and my family gathered in my dad's hometown of Dachong in China that I began to understand my family's history and the reason why they had immigrated.

This sparked multiple conversations between my family and me to try and get the whole story. The story was different for both of my parents, who were from different hometowns and had met in Lima. As I began researching the topic and the past of Chinese immigrants in Peru, the main sentiment was the potential for a better life in Peru compared to China during those times. I learned through my investigations that there were many other Chinese immigrants like my parents who came before them and established themselves in similar ways.

1.0 Introduction

This thesis explores Lima's Chinatown, where the initial Chinese diaspora settled in Central Lima. It examines how architectural strategies and ownership structures can bridge cultural and generational differences within this community, focusing specifically on the demolished site of Callejón Otaiza. By proposing a new commercial typology, the thesis encourages Chinese residents and Chinese immigrants in Lima to establish themselves in Chinatown. The proposal promotes shared responsibility for the building across the generations of the Chinese diaspora. Ultimately, this thesis aims to restore the presence of Callejón Otaiza for the Chinese community while fostering relationships among the Chinese diaspora in Lima.

A large concentration of Chinese immigrants settled near Lima's Central Market. This area was filled with buildings owned by Peruvians and European settlers. This extensive fabric, now known as Chinatown, contained empty pockets in each city block. These empty spaces within the already dense fabric of buildings provided places for new immigrants to settle. "Callejón" refers to a path or stretch between walls, houses, or terrain elevations, like an alley or backstreet. However, in Lima, it also denotes a tenement with one bathroom and rooms arranged symmetrically along an open corridor. These callejones were often the first homes for many Chinese immigrants who arrived in the city. Typically nestled in pockets of the urban fabric, they could be found behind buildings, between buildings where narrow alleys were available, and even within existing structures.

Callejón Otaiza was part of multiple callejones where Chinese immigrants congregated. Unfortunately, Callejón Otaiza was destroyed in the early 20th century, erasing its presence from Lima's Chinatown. Over time, the remaining callejones were inhabited by the Chinese diaspora. However, Chinatown was not equipped to handle the increasing population density.



*Figure 1. Photograph of Lima's Chinatown paifang, 2024.
Image by Author.*

As affordable properties dwindle in Chinatown, the existing Chinese community and new Chinese immigrants have had to look elsewhere to expand and open new businesses. Many existing businesses are long-established and owned by generations of Chinese descendants, leaving little room for new enterprises. Consequently, many new Chinese immigrants and descendants of older generations

have relocated to the suburbs of central Lima, where more properties and amenities are available. This shift has created a subtle divide between the Chinese diaspora in Chinatown and those outside it.

With limited space remaining in Chinatown, car traffic and street vendors often compete for the streetscape, a situation that worsens during large festivities such as Chinese New Year. These events draw large crowds, increasing foot traffic and street activity, further exacerbating space constraints and highlighting the need for more inclusive, dense urban planning.



Figure 2. Photograph of crowded Calle Capón during the Lunar New Year celebration with a Lion dance. The streets are filled with foot traffic without any spaces to pass through, 2024. Image by Author.

By incorporating architectural strategies from the callejones, this thesis reclaims Callejón Otaiza as the site for a proposal to increase available commercial and recreational spaces while reducing pedestrian obstructions within Lima's Chinatown. To connect the Chinese diaspora through this design proposal, the thesis also considers the challenges business owners face in Lima's Chinatown when starting new ventures or establishing themselves in the dense economic market.



Figure 3. Picture inside of Callejón Capón. Narrow passageways lead into the second floor storage rooms and homes. Image by Author.

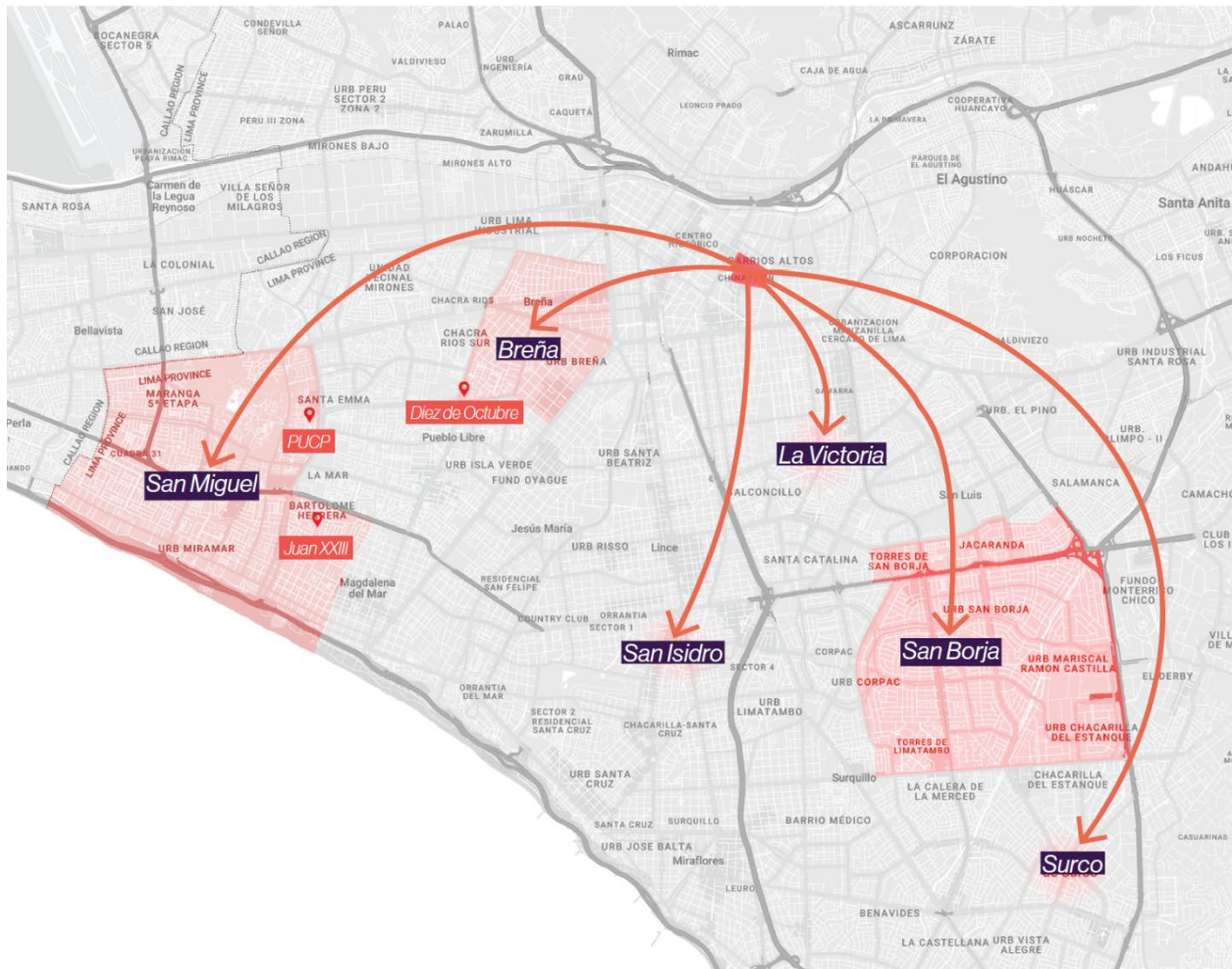


Figure 4. Internal migration diagram of the Chinese diaspora in Lima. Diagram by Author.

2.0 Methodology

Through a speculative design proposal, this thesis examines the history and present state of Lima's Chinatown. It seeks to identify the missing connections that have led newer Chinese immigrants to migrate to other districts in Lima. Although cheaper produce and more Chinese products are available in Chinatown, Chinese clusters outside Chinatown often limit their visits, aside from festive holidays, due to the distance and time required to travel into Central Lima. To understand Chinatown's strengths and weaknesses, I conducted archival research in digital repositories and in person at the National Library in San Borja. I examined Lima's historic parcel lots and urban plans before considering the site's usage and surrounding areas. Additionally, I researched newspapers, comics, and other media that may have excerpts regarding Lima's Chinatown and Callejón Otaiza. Using this archival information, I analyzed mapping to connect the site's present and past uses. A literature review reveals that there have been limited studies on Lima's Chinatown, particularly those focusing on the cultural differences between generations, prominent family names and associations, and the injustices faced by the Chinese community while integrating into Peruvian society. This thesis addresses this knowledge gap by investigating the differences between Central Lima's Chinatown and San Borja, a densely Chinese-populated suburb in Lima.

I will expand on underexplored elements, including the entrepreneurial aspects of Chinese immigrants and their use of motifs in building design. The architectural design of Chinatown is crucial to this topic, as it establishes a culturally and visually distinct central point for new immigrants who might otherwise be unaware of the resources available to the Chinese community. To illustrate these points, I will use imagery and diagrams of the buildings and streets in Chinatown, demonstrating the architecture of the spaces and the changes made by the Chinese community.



Figure 5. Photograph of a Callejón on Jirón Paruro. Taken from the rooftop of the neighbouring building away from the street front, 2024. Image by Author.

This thesis will follow a design research methodology and traditional design phases, beginning with site analysis. Initially, I will create a series of maps detailing the site's history, locations of Chinese-owned or operated businesses, and locations of Chinese-related entertainment and associations. These maps will analyze and visualize the changes and historical aspects that have occurred on-site, with some changes being more noticeable in the early years and others more subtle in later years. The maps will be created using information from archival map research at the National Library and planning details acquired from the Municipality of Lima.

Following the site analysis, I will develop the programming and design concept for the proposal. This will involve exploring how to improve Chinatown for both new and existing generations of Chinese immigrants, addressing the social and physical factors that hinder its growth. Once a concept and typology for the design proposal are established, I will follow the typical phases of an architectural project, from schematic design to design development. Ultimately, the goal is to unite the waves of generations of Chinese immigrants who have arrived in Peru through a design that proposes a commercial typology based on shared ownership responsibility.

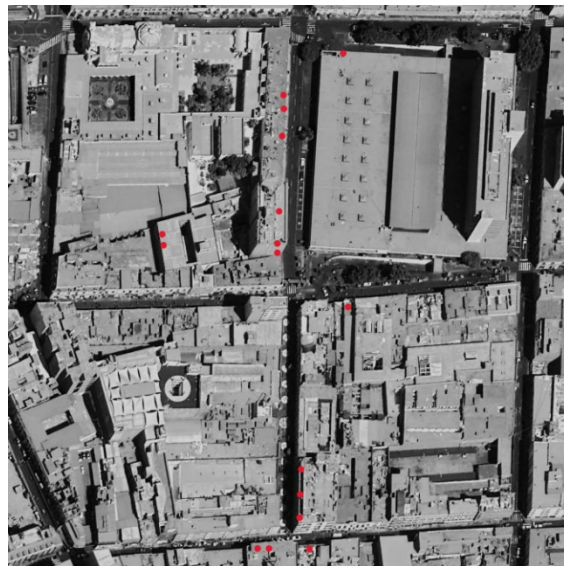


Figure 6. In red are family owned establishments in Lima's Chinatown. Diagram by Author.

Lastly, my lived experiences in both Chinatown and San Borja create a conflicting position for me as a researcher. In their paper, *Deconstructing Insider-Outsider Researcher Positionality*, Hanin Bukamal describes positionality as a biography that pays particular attention to the context that creates the researcher's identity.¹ Bukamal's concept of "insider-outsider ambivalence" aptly describes my current position. I am accepted in Lima because I was raised there and speak the language. However, since I have not lived there in the past 14 years, my knowledge of the city and current events surrounding the city are outdated. In Chinatown, my parents immigrated from China to Lima and have been a part of the community for over 40 years. This allowed me to join many meals and events with Chinese community members. Yet, because I was born in Canada and only heard stories over dinner, I could only learn about what they chose to share.



Figure 7. Photograph of a family meal in Lima.
Image by Author.

¹ Hanin Bukamal, "Deconstructing Insider–Outsider Researcher Positionality," *British Journal of Special Education* 49, no. 3 (2022): 327–49, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12426>.

This led me to make methodological decisions that Bukamal describes as “research methods that were considered culturally appropriate in both research contexts.” To begin with, I used my Peruvian citizenship to access local archives, providing easy access I might not have otherwise had during my fieldwork. Additionally, I chose not to conduct formal interviews with family members because, in my experience, they would have felt uneasy and perceived it as an interrogation. Instead, just as my parents would have done, I intentionally brought up information regarding this thesis over meals in Chinatown and at home in San Borja, where the atmosphere was more suitable. This approach allowed me to gather more profound and personal insights into my family’s past and their relations with Chinatown. In contrast, if it were to become a formal interview, I would have adopted an outsider methodology, producing more rigid, less emotional responses.

For example, the design typology was determined through conversations with my family and friends local to Chinatown. These insights also stem from my observations of having lived in Lima, specifically both Chinatown and San Borja, for ten years. From these experiences as a child to the conversations with my family after returning as an adult, I explored the concepts of the existing infrastructure that has enabled the Chinese community to support Chinatown. I will then develop upon this infrastructure with the proposed design strategy in the form of an interconnected series of spaces ranging from commercial to auxiliary, as an addition to Calle Capón. These spaces will occupy the site where the destroyed Callejón Otaiza once stood.

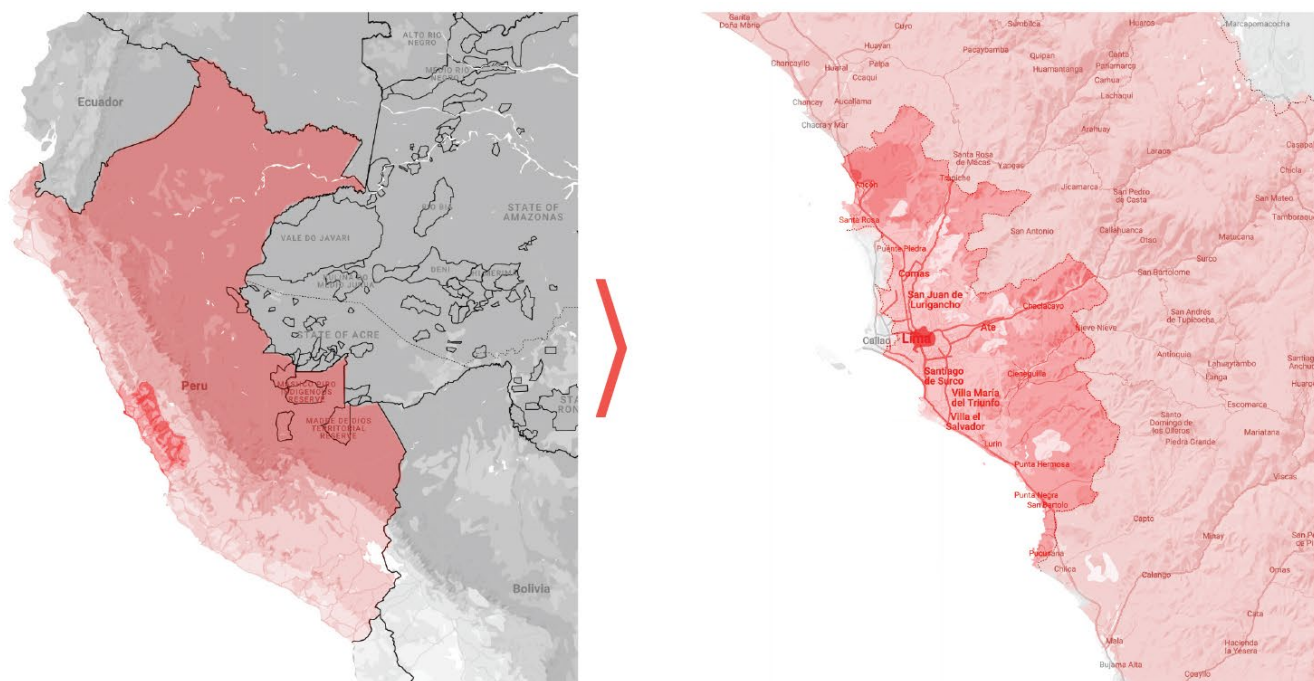
To further develop the conceptual design, I conducted deep historical research into Lima’s Chinatown. However, detailed historical information was difficult to find, as the site I chose to focus on for the thesis, Callejón Otaiza, hardly appeared in detail during my preliminary research. Therefore, I expanded my research scope to include the first Chinese immigrants, their hardships, and the broader Chinese immigration stories that have been around for a long time.

3.0 Context

3.1 Arrival into Central Lima

Peru has the largest concentration of Chinese Immigrants in South America. Many early immigrants came from the Pearl River Delta region in southern China.² Today, most are Cantonese-speaking and work in central clusters of Chinese-populated cities. The largest concentration of the Chinese diaspora is in Lima's Chinatown, "El Barrio Chino," where businesses are run. For example, "Chifa" is a term used for Chinese restaurants originating from the phrase "Chi Fan", which means "to eat rice." These businesses import and sell Chinese-origin goods or work for others in Chinese-run businesses. Most of these businesses are historic and have been in Chinatown for multiple generations; this could be in the name of the business, the type of business or the unit in which the business is run.

² Angie Chang Estrada, "Patrimonio Edificado de La Inmigración China En El Centro Histórico de Lima(*)," *Devenir* 7, no. 14 (July 2020): 155–72, <https://doi.org/10.21754/devenir.v7i14.836>.



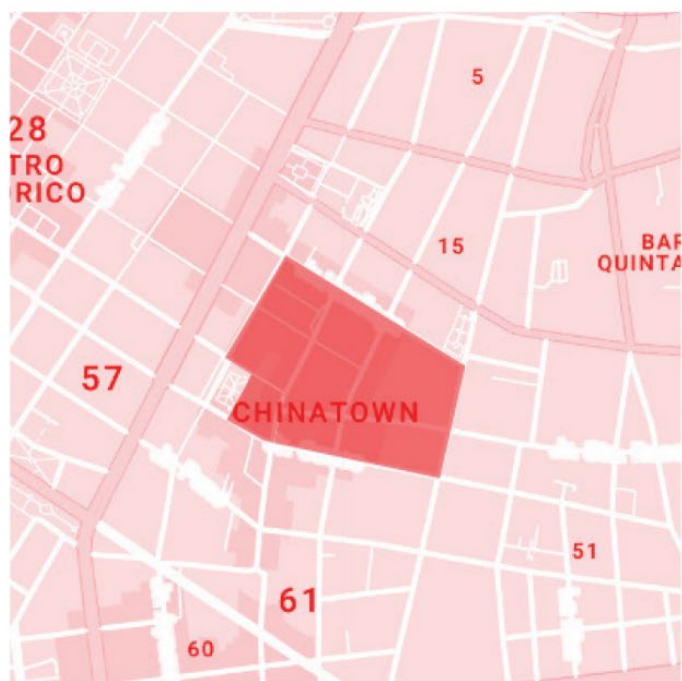
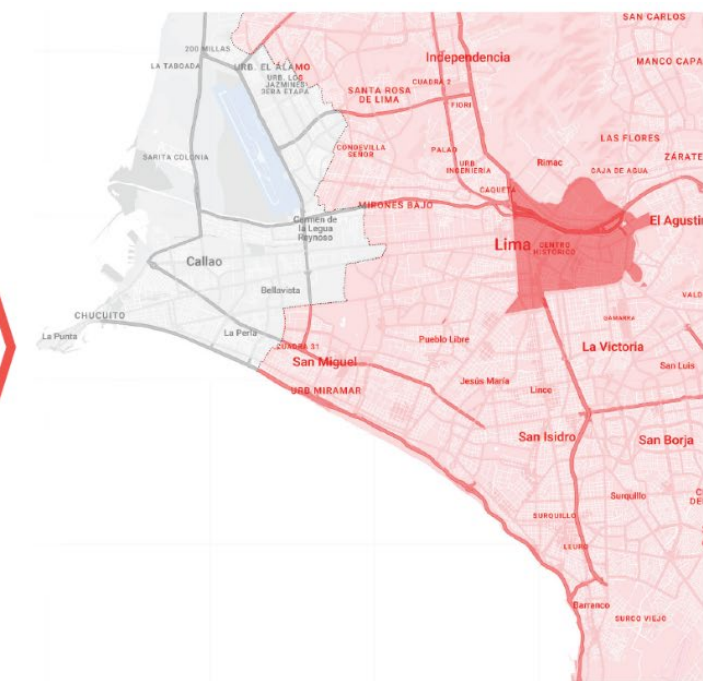




Figure 9. Ornamentation of Lima's Calle Capón. Photograph by Author.

To understand the origin of the Chinese immigrants in Peru, we must first look at the past of the arrival of the Chinese diaspora at the mid-19th century when the first shipment of Chinese immigrants arrived in Peru. At first, they were referred to as “coolies”. “Coolies” was a global term referring to international Chinese who migrated and were put to work as indentured labourers, often replacing slave labour in these countries.³ These labourers were enticed by the ships with promises of a better future during the governing period of the Republic of China. The first recorded Chinese immigrants arrived in 1849 at the port of Callao.⁴ Employers selected Chinese immigrants from the arriving batches and transported them to different provinces to work in labour-intensive positions. Under unfavourable contracts, these Chinese indentured labourers received minimal pay, if any, and had poor housing conditions, usually living under one roof with dozens of others. These positions included cotton and sugar plantation farmers, railroad builders and guano miners. Of these positions, guano miners had the highest recorded fatality rate from lack of safety equipment while working with the highly toxic and fresh guano.⁵ From 1849-1871, there was an increased number of sailing trips, transporting thousands of Chinese immigrants.

³ Angie Chang Estrada, “Patrimonio Edificado de La Inmigración China En El Centro Histórico de Lima(*),”

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Paul Gootenberg, “More Precious Than Gold: The Story of the Peruvian Guano Trade (Review),” *The Americas* 66 (October 1, 2009): 257–257, <https://doi.org/10.1353/tam.0.0170>.

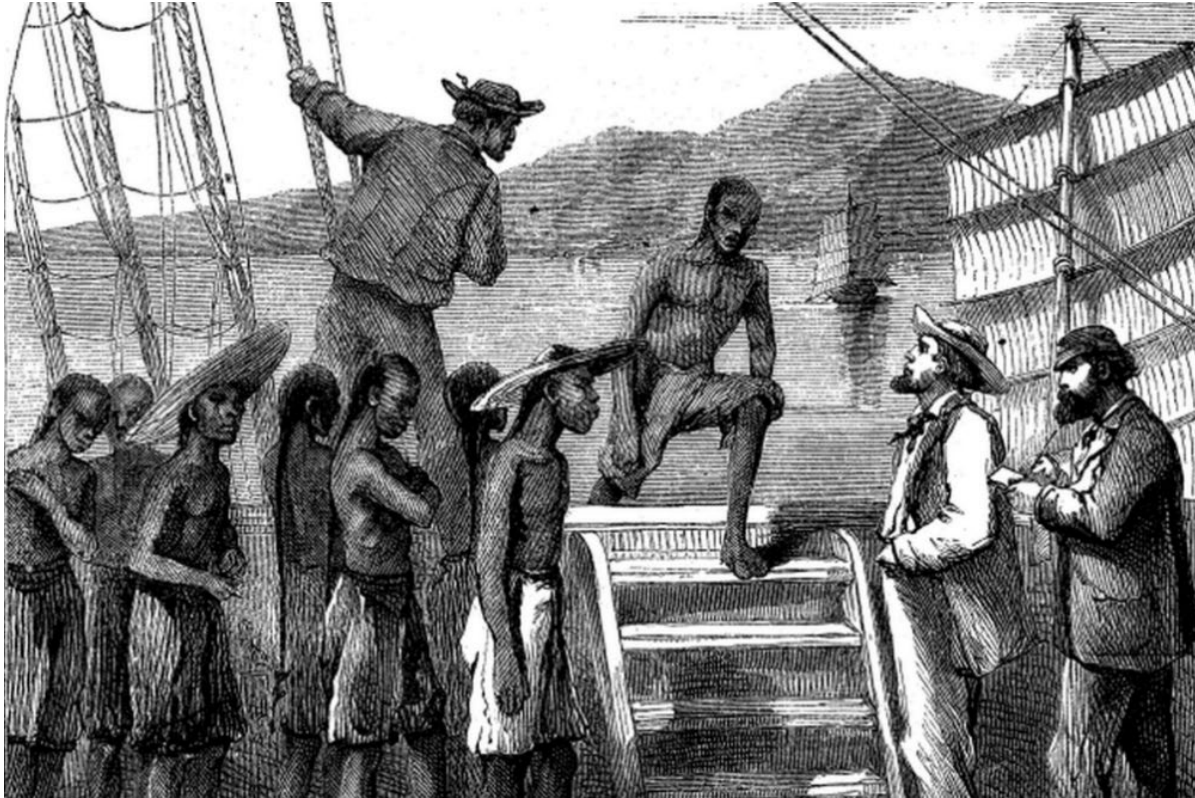


Figure 10. Drawing depicting Chinese coolies being off-loaded from their boat journey, 1846-1874. Image from "Coolie Ships of the Chinese Diaspora (1846-1874)". John Acome.

Meanwhile, the first Chinese indentured labourers had their contracts terminated after 5-8 years.⁶ After many years of working, the Chinese immigrants began to band together, demanding better conditions. Some Chinese indentured labourers renewed their positions under more favourable conditions instead of leaving for other opportunities. At the same time, others decided to search for better prospects. During this period, the President of Peru, Ramón Castilla, ordered the construction of the now well-known Central Market, which was then more commonly referred to as Mercado de la Concepción.

⁶ "La Otra Historia Del Guano PDF | PDF | Perú | Esclavitud," Scribd, <https://es.scribd.com/document/385863865/LA-OTRA-HISTORIA-DEL-GUANO-pdf>.



Figure 11. Photograph of the Central Market in Lima. Image by Author.



Figure 12. Photograph of the first Chinese association in Lima, 2024. Image by Author.

This market posed new opportunities for the Chinese immigrants. The area became known as Calle Capón and eventually was incorporated into a larger zone called El Barrio Chino due to the significant number of Chinese residents in the district. By the 1870s, the Chinese diaspora in Lima had grown exponentially. Together, they created associations and worked to build the community to achieve their goals.

This marked the beginning of the Chinese diaspora entering the economic market as their entity in Peru. Most Chinese labourers who had left their contracts began working for others in Central Lima, either as salespeople, chefs, or cargadores.⁷ Cargadores transport cargo from warehouses to stores for employers in Lima. With their savings, a group of Chinese immigrants would rent a part of the Casa Otaiza, Jardín Otaiza, also known as Callejón Otaiza and the existing Teatro Odeon from Luis Otaiza.⁸



Figure 13. Photograph of the interior of Callejón Otaiza. Unknown Photographer, prior to 1909. Lima Antigua

⁷ Angie Chang Estrada, “Patrimonio Edificado de La Inmigración China En El Centro Histórico de Lima(*),”

⁸ Percy Cayo Córdova, “Rodríguez Pastor, Humberto. Herederos Del Dragón. Historia de La Comunidad China En El Perú. Lima: Fondo Editorial Del Congreso Del Perú, 2000, 526 Pp.,” *Histórica* 25, no. 2 (March 9, 2001), <https://doi.org/10.18800/historica.200102.019>.

The spaces inside Callejón Otaiza served as communal dining, gaming, and living rooms, while the theatre offered a respite from work. Some Chinese immigrants formed their own companies and began selling Chinese goods to Peruvians as an alternative to Western goods. Over time, a newer generation of Chinese immigrants began arriving in Peru. These new immigrants did not work as indentured labourers as they had not been transported for manual labour under strict contracts. Instead, they immigrated with the assistance of existing Chinese families or friends. With the support and guidance of the previous generation, this new generation could better integrate into the economic fabric with jobs facilitated for the Chinese by the Chinese.⁹ Leading up to the twenty-first century, Chinese immigration to Peru continued largely due to ongoing government issues in China. Chinese immigration to Peru can be categorized into three primary waves.

The first wave of Chinese immigrants arrived from the southern regions of China around 1849. These were the indentured labourers and the first recorded Chinese residents in Lima. The second wave of Chinese immigration began around 1920, as Calle Capón became known as a Chinese quarter, shortly after the destruction of Callejón Otaiza in 1909¹⁰. This second wave also came from the southern regions of China and arrived in the transition from the two governing parties in China. These immigrants were literate and had more prospects upon arriving in Peru compared to the first wave. Lastly, the third wave came from the Fujian province; they were Mandarin-speaking and arrived closer to the turn of the twenty-first century. These immigrants were well-established in China and came to start businesses before applying for visas to the United States. The cycle of immigration has since repeated itself with more recent immigrants moving to middle- and upper-class suburban districts where wealthier Chinese Peruvians have now migrated.

⁹ Conversation with family member, 2024.

¹⁰ Angie Chang Estrada, “Patrimonio Edificado de La Inmigración China En El Centro Histórico de Lima(*),”

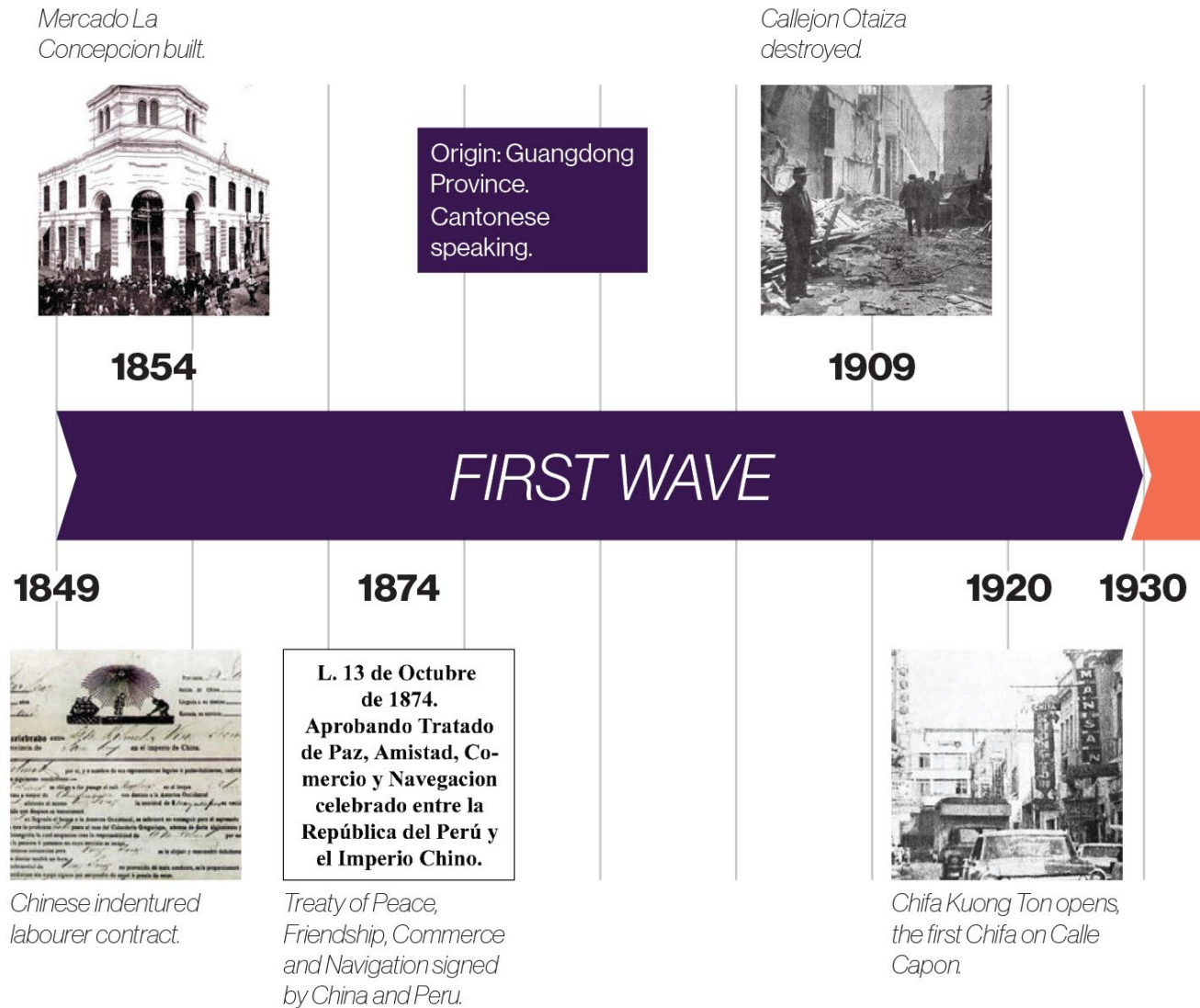


Figure 14. Timeline of major events that occurred to the Chinese diaspora in Lima. Diagram by Author.

Origin: Guangdong
Province
Cantonese
speaking.

*Chinese Arch gifted by
Taiwan.*



1971

*Calle Capon undergoes
major renovations and
becomes a pedestrian
street.*



1999

Origin: Fujian
Province.
Mandarin
Speaking.

SECOND WAVE

~1980 1990



*Chinatown stops
allowing public vehicular
traffic.*

THIRD WAVE

2023



*The city
prohibits
informal
commerce.*

2024



*Over time Calle Capon
has gone under smaller
renovations to increase
capacity.*

3.2 Lima's Chinatown

Lima's Chinatown has a long history, existing long before it was officially recognized as Chinatown. According to the 1860 census of Lima, the area was already populated by Chinese labourers who had exited their contracts as early as 1860.¹¹ Among the names listed, Ali Jerientes and José Manuel Apó were two names listed at the bottom of Figure 15. They were both classified as Chinese. The district in which this area resides is District 4 of the historic centre of Lima, which encompasses the Central Market and Calle Capón. This area developed around the Mercado Municipal Gran Mariscal Ramón Castilla, commonly referred to as the Mercado Central or Central Market in English. This area was within proximity to the central district of Lima and attracted all sorts of merchants and vendors into the city to expand their trade and create connections with each other. Shortly after, the first Chinese association, La Sociedad Beneficencia China Ton Huy Chong Koc, began construction in 1884 and was established by 1886.¹²

¹¹ "Peru, Municipal Census, 1831-1866." Database with images. FamilySearch. <https://FamilySearch.org> : 14 June 2024. Biblioteca Municipal de Lima.

¹² "SOCIEDAD CENTRAL DE BENEFICENCIA CHINA TON HUY CHONG KOC," accessed August 19, 2024, <http://www.scbcperu.com/es/quinessomos/>.

Distrito 4 ^o Calle de Camodío																		
GRADO DE INSTRUCCION	CASA	NUM.	HABITACION.	NOMBRES.	NACIONALIDAD.	EDADES.		SIGNOS DE EDAD.				RELIGIOS.	ESTADO.	RAZA.	PROFESION.	GRADO DE INSTRUCCION		
						ANOS.	MESES.	ANOS.	MESES.	DIAS.	SEÑALES.							
	Calle 39			Chilotes							13	Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Chilota			
				Manuel Rojas	Chilota						6	Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Chilota			
				Wlga Espinoza	Chilota													
			Cuarto	Indiferente en la Calle de Santa María														
	Calle 40			Indiferente al estudio de la casa que anterior														
				Opresión														
				Valentin Buitan	Chilota	20						Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Opresión			
	Calle 41			Manuel Rojas	Chilota	29						Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Opresión			
				Manuel Rojas	Chilota	29						Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Chilota			
	Calle 42	Principal		Juan Hernández	Chilota	40						Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Opresión			
				Fernando de Hernández	Chilota	30						Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Chilota			
				Chilotes														
				Manuel Rojas	Chilota						12	Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Opresión			
				Pedro Manuella	Chilota						11	Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Opresión			
			Cuarto	Juan Rojas	Chilota	60						Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Chilota			
				Chilotes														
				Chilotes Manuella	Chilota						5	Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Chilota			
			Cuarto	Manuel Rojas	Chilota	40						Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Chilota			
				Manuella de Rojas	Chilota							Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Chilota			
	Calle 43			Ali Jerientes	Chilota	20						Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Chilota			
				Chilotes														
				Jos Manuel Apó	Chilota	22						Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Chilota			
				Chilotes														
				Jos A. Jerientes	Chilota	25						Católica	Chilota	Chilota	Chilota			

Figure 15. Picture record of the 1860 census for Cuartel 2, Distrito 4 in Lima. "Peru, Municipal Census, 1831-1866." Database with images. FamilySearch. <https://FamilySearch.org> : 14 June 2024. Biblioteca Municipal de Lima.

The names highlighted are those of 2 Chinese residents in Central Lima at the time. The names of these two residents are Ali Jerientes and Jose Manuel Apó from top to bottom.

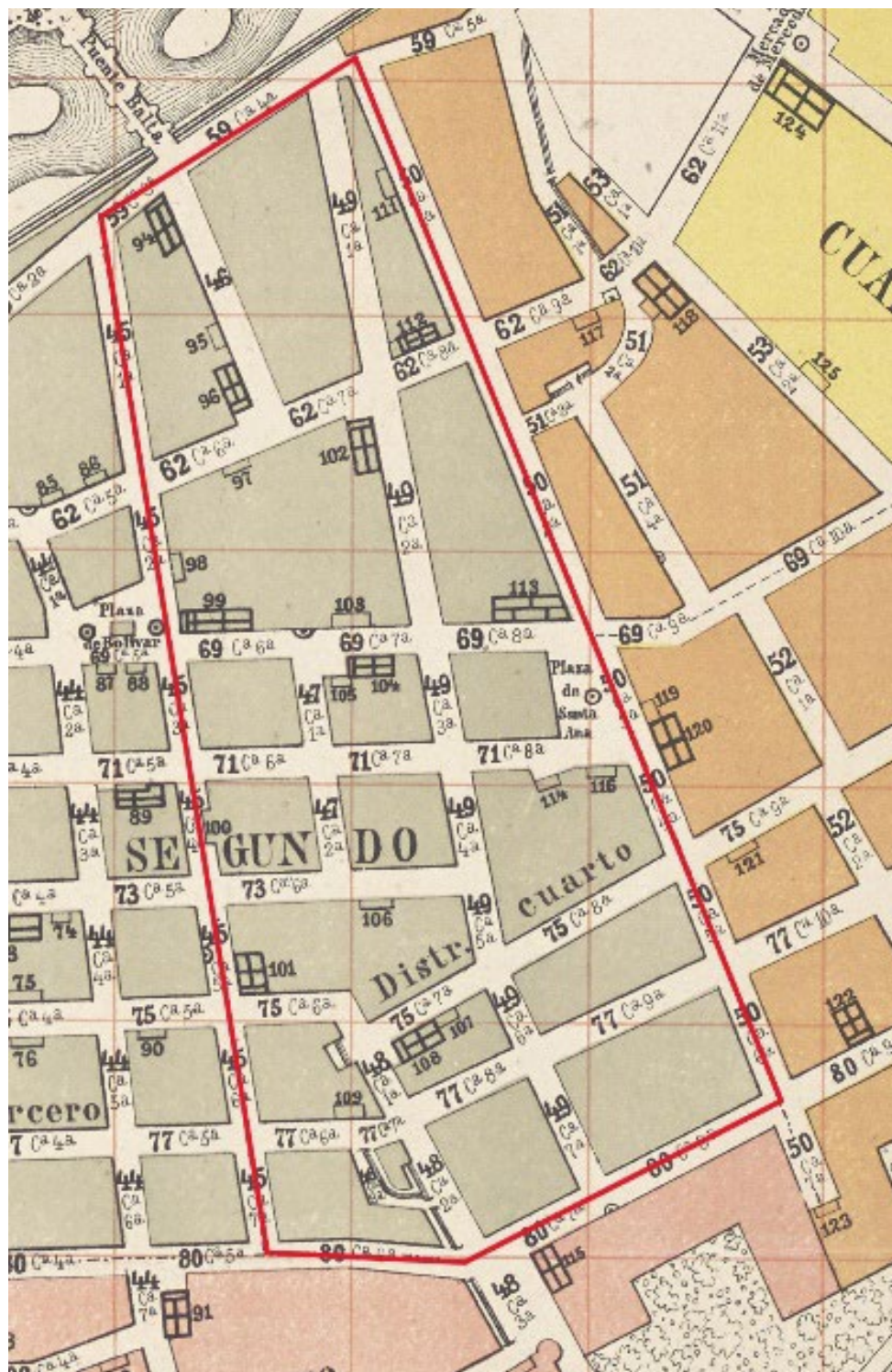


Figure 16. Boundary of District 4 in Central Lima. Zoomed in Plan of Lima, 1872. Plan drawn by P.V. Jouanny. Biblioteca Nacional de Peru.

During these years, the Chinese were still treated as lesser, and the Peruvians were unsupportive of having the Chinese live near their colonial residences.¹³ In 1908, a treaty was signed to limit and regulate Chinese immigration into Peru; as the number of new immigrants was reduced, the capacity of the Chinese quarter increased, with fewer new Chinese immigrants. Chinese immigration declined as more restrictions were placed on their immigration procedures, eventually completely denying all legal Chinese immigrants in 1930.¹⁴ As a result of this, the Chinese married Peruvian women to extend their lineage, and their mixed children of Chinese Peruvians succeeded the family businesses. Family associations quadrupled within the city, now numbering 30 of them¹⁵ When restrictions were lifted, a new wave of immigrants came to Lima. These new immigrants were adapting to the existing circumstances. They kept their heads down and assimilated to Peruvian standards, much like the previous Chinese immigrants, who had some mixed Chinese-Peruvian children from intermarriage.¹⁶

This second wave of immigrants around the transition of the Republic of China to the People's Republic of China. They had more education and resources compared to the first wave of Chinese immigrants, who had come by boat and worked as indentured labourers. This second wave had more knowledge about businesses and learned they could import Chinese goods similar to what the Chinese diaspora in the United States was procuring.¹⁷ Once this second wave of immigrants had settled, Chinatown began to prosper again after the War of the

¹³ Isabelle Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru and the Changing Peruvian Chinese Community(les)1," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 7, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 69–113, <https://doi.org/10.1163/179325411X565416>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru and the Changing Peruvian Chinese Community(les)."

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Pacific. Calle Capón had just undergone its first renovation and would not be renovated again until the perception of the street and the overall conditions of the buildings were worsened. During this time, Chinese residents of Chinatown began expanding and moving towards the suburbs. The middle- and upper-class Chinese residents saw it as an increase in social status to live in the suburbs and away from their workplaces. They created a social divide between them and less wealthy Chinatown residents, leading to a more significant separation between the Chinese clusters.

In the 1990s, the government decided to renovate Chinatown with the support of the La Sociedad Central de la Beneficencia China Ton Huy Chong Koc and the Asociación Peruano China (APCH). During this time, the third wave of immigrants also arrived, establishing themselves in proximity to Calle Capón, although not directly on it, as there were already many pre-established businesses. In 1999, the new and updated Chinatown was inaugurated.¹⁸ Calle Capón was lavishly adorned with oriental ornaments. The floors were lined with hexagonal bricks, with the names of donors across the entirety of the street. Additionally, the 12 zodiacs were displayed on the floor as larger hexagons in line from the start to the end of the street.¹⁹ This marked the rebirth of Lima's Chinese quarter, and businesses began to thrive once again.

¹⁸ “Capón. El barrio chino de Lima,” *Municipalidad de Lima* (blog), October 2, 2018, <https://publicacioneslima.pe/munilibro-2-capon-el-barrio-chino-de-lima/>.

¹⁹ Lilia Córdova Tábori, “Calle Capón: un paseo por su historia,” *El Comercio*, October 11, 2019, <https://elcomercio.pe/archivo-elcomercio/calle-capon-en-lima-noticia/>.



Figure 17. Historic photograph of Jirón Andahuaylas filled with street vendors in front of the Central Market, 1980's prior to the second renovation of Calle Capón. Archivo de El Comercio



Figure 18. Satellite image of Calle Capón, 2024. Screenshot from Google Earth.

3.3 Chinese Businesses in Lima

There is a large population of Chinese Peruvians who own their businesses. Shortly after their indentured labourer contracts ended around 1874, as the coolie trade was abolished, the thousands of Chinese immigrants who suffered for countless years were finally free and able to pursue new job opportunities. Many moved to other cities and towns in the mountains, along the coast and even into the Amazon jungle. However, the majority moved into Central Lima. Here, they found varying job opportunities ranging from merchants to cooks.²⁰

Despite being under slave-like conditions during their contract years, the Chinese immigrants maintained their Chinese customs, clothing and entertainment. Commercial houses capitalized on the Chinese community's needs and began importing Chinese goods into Lima. Pow Lung and Wing On Chong became the first importers of Chinese goods.²¹ These commercial houses situated themselves within Central Lima in what is now Chinatown, adjacent to the Central Market. This was the beginning of importing and exporting goods from China to Lima, a global practice that continues today.

²⁰ “Capón. El barrio chino de Lima,” *Municipalidad de Lima*

²¹ Lausent-Herrera, “The Chinatown in Peru and the Changing Peruvian Chinese Community(les).”

As time went on, corner stores started popping up, run by micro-entrepreneurs selling Chinese goods. Typically, these stores would be run by one or two Chinese associates. They were called micro-entrepreneurs due to their low capital and limited resources to start these small businesses. Many of these stores converted their backrooms into storage or sleeping quarters. Combining their living and commercial rental costs.²²

The success of these stores not only came from their affordable prices but also because the entire Chinese community supported each other even if they were directly competing against one another. Their real competition was with stores owned by Peruvians or Europeans at the time. Through mutual aid, the Chinese community created a stronger sense of unity, forming Chinese associations to support each other in times of need. Their success put Lima on the map as a stepping stone to North America for the Chinese diaspora.

This continued until most of Lima's Chinatown was either Chinese-owned or operated. Today, there are many Chinese-owned and operated businesses in Chinatown.²³ There are so many that it's difficult for any Chinese immigrant, wealthy or not, to become a part of it.²⁴ Due to the difficulties of starting businesses in Chinatown, many decided to open their businesses in the other districts. At that time, there were fewer Chinese businesses outside of Chinatown, so competition was lower, and the properties were larger.

²² Conversation with family member, 2024

²³ Observation during field research, 2024

²⁴ Conversation with family member, 2024



Figure 19. Photograph of Chifa Hong San, one of the first Chifa's of the second wave of Chinese immigrants, originally known as Chifa Cao Yu Wing. Image by Author.

The general process to start a business in Lima is similar to that in other cities. Prospective business owners must go to the municipality with a letter of intent to incorporate, which has been signed and notarized by a lawyer. Afterward, they need to use their identification, whether a foreign passport or permanent resident card, to apply for loans, lease spaces, and buy merchandise for their business. Although this process is straightforward, most micro-entrepreneurs cannot afford the initial capital to either rent in Chinatown or purchase a unit within one of the existing galerías. Consequently, many opted to start their businesses in the suburbs, where the costs were lower and the competition was less intense.

To address this affordability crisis, this thesis proposes reclaiming Callejón Otaiza as a business incubator site while also re-establishing a connection with the past of the Chinese quarter to commemorate Callejón Otaiza as the community living establishment it once was. This initiative will create opportunities for Chinese immigrants from various generations and geographic origins in Lima to enter the Chinatown business market. The community will benefit from newer businesses attempting innovative ways to market their products or offering incentives for sales. With increased competition, prices in the commercial scene will also lower, making goods more affordable for the community.

Lastly, the entertainment business in Chinatown is currently limited to lion and dragon dances during festivities. In the past, several Chinese theatres showcased Chinese culture and arts.²⁵ Among these theatres, the Odeon Theatre, once located within the walls of Callejón Otaiza, was a significant aspect of nighttime entertainment for the community. It was rented by a group of Chinese immigrants, as Luis Otaiza wanted to promote more Chinese culture in Chinatown. Unfortunately, the Odeon Theatre was deconstructed around the period when Callejón Otaiza was demolished.²⁶

²⁵ Observation from field research and conversation with family member, 2024.

²⁶ Lissette Marie Campos, “Tusanaje | El teatro tradicional chino en Perú.” 2018, <https://www.tusanaje.org/2018/10/31/el-teatro-tradicional-chino-en-peru-un-crisol-de-espectadores/>



Figure 20. Chinese resident selling bubble waffles inside a callejón. Image by Author.

4.0 Typological Analysis

4.1 San Borja Suburban Typology

Although Chinatown is in Central Lima, it is noticeable while walking the streets that there are few visible Chinese residents. This is because they are usually working in the chifas, studying, or too old to be out and about in the crowds. The typical workday for most in Chinatown, whether Chinese or not, begins at 8:30 AM and ends around 8:30 PM, although some end earlier. Business owners typically stay working until 10:00 PM.²⁷ Meanwhile, the aging Chinese population generally stays inside their homes due to a lack of social spaces outside of inviting friends for yum cha or into their homes.

Another significant reason for the sparse presence of the Chinese diaspora in Chinatown is that a large population of Chinese immigrants has moved into the suburbs of Lima province. Districts such as San Borja, Surco, San Isidro, and Miraflores have seen an influx of Chinese communities. It is easy to identify these areas based on the number of Chinese chifas around. San Borja, in particular, has a significant concentration of Chinese immigrants. Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru (PUCP) has also recognized Avenida Aviación near the 27th block as a new enclave for the Chinese community, with many chifas and businesses..²⁸

²⁷ Observation during field research, 2024.

²⁸ “China En Ruta 2024: El IC PUCP Te Lleva a Conocer El Nuevo Barrio Chino de Lima,” *Instituto Confucio PUCP* (blog), accessed August 19, 2024, <https://confucio.pucp.edu.pe/actividades/china-en-ruta-2024-el-ic-pucp-te-lleva-a-conocer-el-nuevo-barrio-chino-de-lima/>.

These suburban districts are known for their spacious homes and larger spaces for stores and chifas compared to those in Chinatown. For example, comparing the average size of a chifa in Central Lima's Chinatown to one in San Borja, the San Borja chifas would have more than double the space, while the monthly rent cost remains very similar to the chifas in Lima's Chinatown.



Figure 21. Left: Photograph of Chifa Lung Wha, 2022. Google Earth.

Figure 22. Right: Photograph of Chifa Hong San, 2024. Image by Author.

In the case above, both chifas have a rental cost of about USD 3000. This is one of the reasons why the Chinese have started to move out of Central Lima, as opportunities arise outside of Chinatown. Due to the lack of space, Lima has been unable to grow. It has been stunted in height by zoning laws, and there is no more area to expand into. Yet, the costs continue to rise due to the popularity of Chinatown as a tourist destination.

Chifas in San Borja have more pedestrian space in front of them; they are not always pressed right up against the sidewalks and streets. Parking is available in the suburbs, and they have larger dining spaces with private rooms for families and events. These chifas range from one to three stories in height, and every floor can be seen filled during the lunch and dinner rush. Generally, the dining rooms are more spacious, creating a more upscale dining experience for diners.

The Asociación Peruana de Empresas de Inteligencia de Mercados (AMEIP) considers San Borja a mid- to upper-class district. The AMEIP annually studies Peru's socioeconomic levels.²⁹ This can be seen in the cityscape, with large, planted parks, bike and walking paths, and taller high-rises. Like Central Lima, San Borja has a mix of museums, theatres, and government service buildings such as the Ministerio de Cultura.

Although San Borja has many advantages, it also has drawbacks and challenges. Unlike Chinatown, San Borja can be heavily car-reliant to reach essential services. The sense of community is reduced to planned social events rather than day-to-day interactions. This is due to the lack of proximity, with all ingredients or products being ordered and arriving by car instead of being personally bought at the market or from nearby stores owned by community members. Consequently, this reduces the opportunity for social connections between residents.

²⁹ Asociación Peruana de Empresas de Inteligencia de Mercados (APEIM). “Niveles Socioeconómicos 2023-2024.” Published by APEIM. Lima, Peru. 2024.

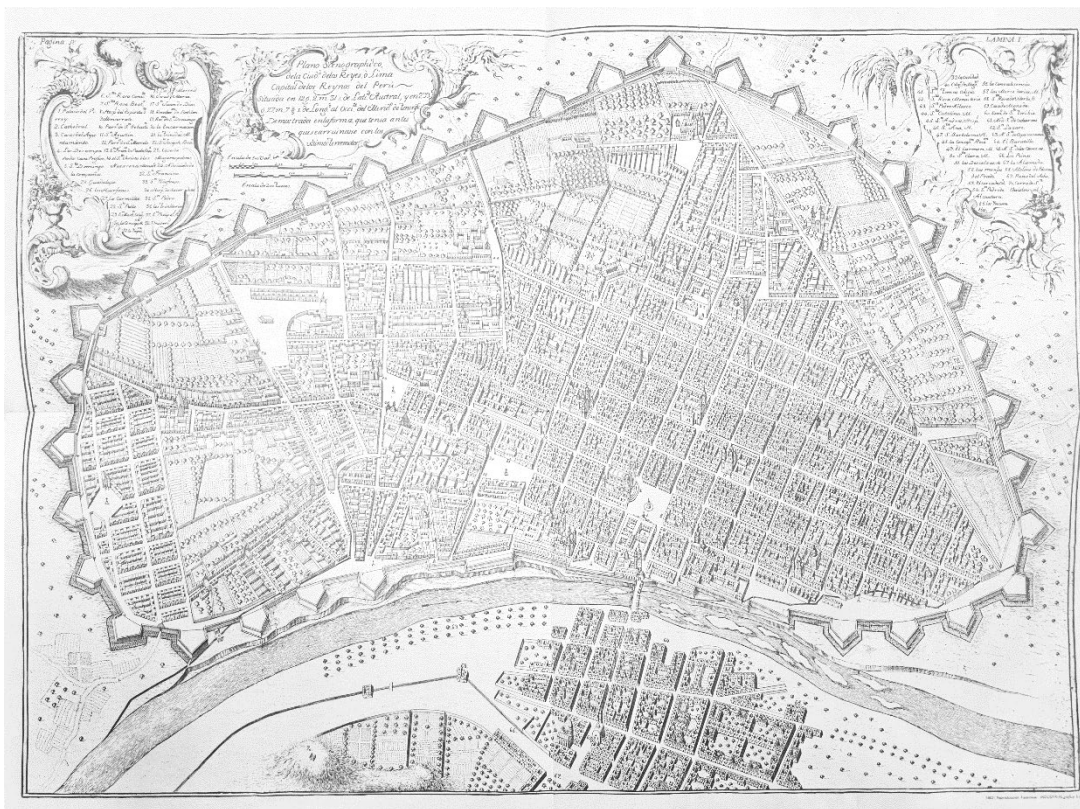


Figure 23. Photograph by Author of plan of Lima in 1685 as drawn by Pedro Nolasco Mere. Biblioteca Nacional Del Peru.

4.2 Lima Central Urban Typology

Originally, Lima was a fortress city; the city blocks and layout were predetermined within the fortified walls of the past, even before 1685. Construction limitations of the past allowed for typical one to two-storey homes and buildings. This can be observed in historical maps with sketches of the buildings. Due to the preexisting conditions of the urban landscape, all newcomers eventually attempted to build higher, creating greater density per square meter within the city. As a result, Chinese immigrants chose to settle anywhere they could find space to sleep.

There is not enough information regarding the exact locations and the number of Chinese immigrants that entered Lima, as the history of this community was largely overloaded and undocumented. Most records indicate they settled near the Central Market³⁰, suggesting there was not enough housing for all, leading to over 200 Chinese immigrants settling into Callejón Otaiza.³¹

³⁰ Lausent-Herrera, “The Chinatown in Peru and the Changing Peruvian Chinese Community(les).”

³¹ Patricia Palma and José Ragas, “Enclaves Sanitarios: Higiene, Epidemias y Salud En El Barrio Chino de Lima, 1880-1910,” *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de La Cultura* 45 (June 1, 2018): 159–90, <https://doi.org/10.15446/achsc.v45n1.67555>.

As the province of Lima started expanding, the suburban districts had fewer limitations and pre-existing conditions, allowing them to plan the cities strategically with more public spaces, more extensive facilities and overall better infrastructure. Unlike the suburban districts, Chinatown was extremely densified, with vendors, carts, businesses, and homes occupying every inch of space. This method of informal occupation is often seen in street markets across the globe, where informal markets inhabit spaces used by all foot and vehicular traffic. Due to the large number of street vendors, Chinatown was generally perceived to be unhygienic, and it led to many unjustified hateful acts towards the Chinese community in Lima. One such act was carried out by the mayor of Lima, Guillermo Billinghurst, in 1909 with the destruction of Callejón Otaiza.³²



Figure 24. Photograph of the demolition of Callejón Otaiza in 1909. Lima Antigua.

³² Palma and Ragas, “Enclaves Sanitarios: Higiene, Epidemias y Salud En El Barrio Chino de Lima, 1880-1910.

Chinatown initially featured preexisting European colonial architecture. The interiors were typically retrofitted or renovated to suit the requirements of the businesses taking over. These buildings were usually owned by one landlord who owned several connected buildings. By observing the streets of Central Lima today, you can see where one landlord's property starts and ends, as these buildings have been visually connected by having the same exterior façade repeated from one end to another.



Figure 25. Photograph of two buildings with different facades. Left owned by the Church and the right owned by a family, 2024. Image by Author.

5.0 Site



Figure 26. Entrance to Chinatown. Image by Author.

5.1 El Barrio Chino

Central Lima can be described as downtown in terms of the urban layout of the streets and the density of heritage sites in the country's first established city. Within the walls of this fortress stands Lima's Barrio Chino, historically located in the second quarter in district 4 of Lima.³³ At this time, Chinatown did not have distinctive architectural characteristics that set it apart from the rest of Central Lima. However, this neighbourhood became known as a place to purchase goods and services at an affordable price point for many district residents.

³³ Cebrián, Alfredo Moreno. "Cuarteles, Barrios y Calles de Lima a Fines Del Siglo XVIII." *Jahrbuch Für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 18, no. 1 (January 1, 1981), 111. <https://doi.org/10.7788/jbla-1981-0108>.

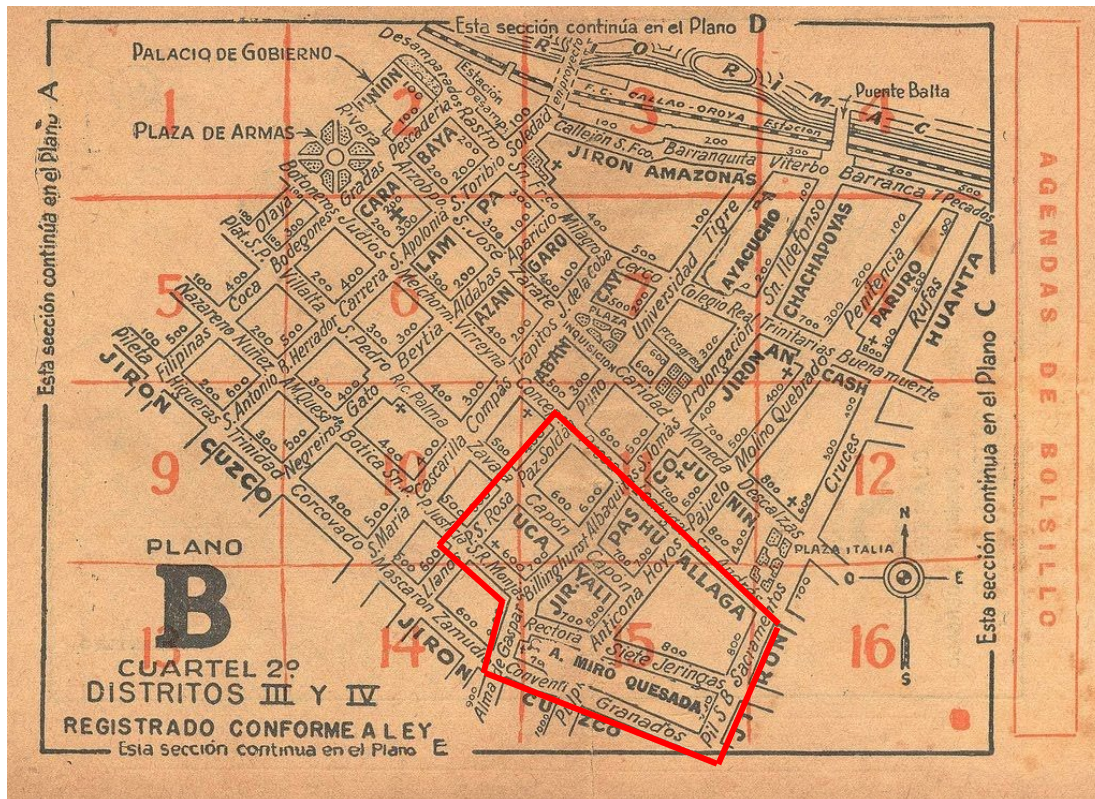


Figure 27. Unknown author's scan of Lima's Plano B Cuartel 2, Distrito III y IV. Circa 1939. Biblioteca Municipal de Lima.

Today, Lima's Chinatown boundaries lie mainly within quadrants 11 and 15 of the above figure. The existence of a paifang typically dictates Chinatown's initial boundary; a paifang is a term used to describe a memorial archway or gateway often gifted to Chinatown to define its entrances. However, there are many Chinese businesses on Jirón Ucayali across from the Central Market, and most residents would agree that it is also part of Chinatown. Lima's Chinatown would not be complete without Calle Capón, located at the intersection of sections 11 and 15 in the above figure. It is the street most associated with Chinatown in Lima.

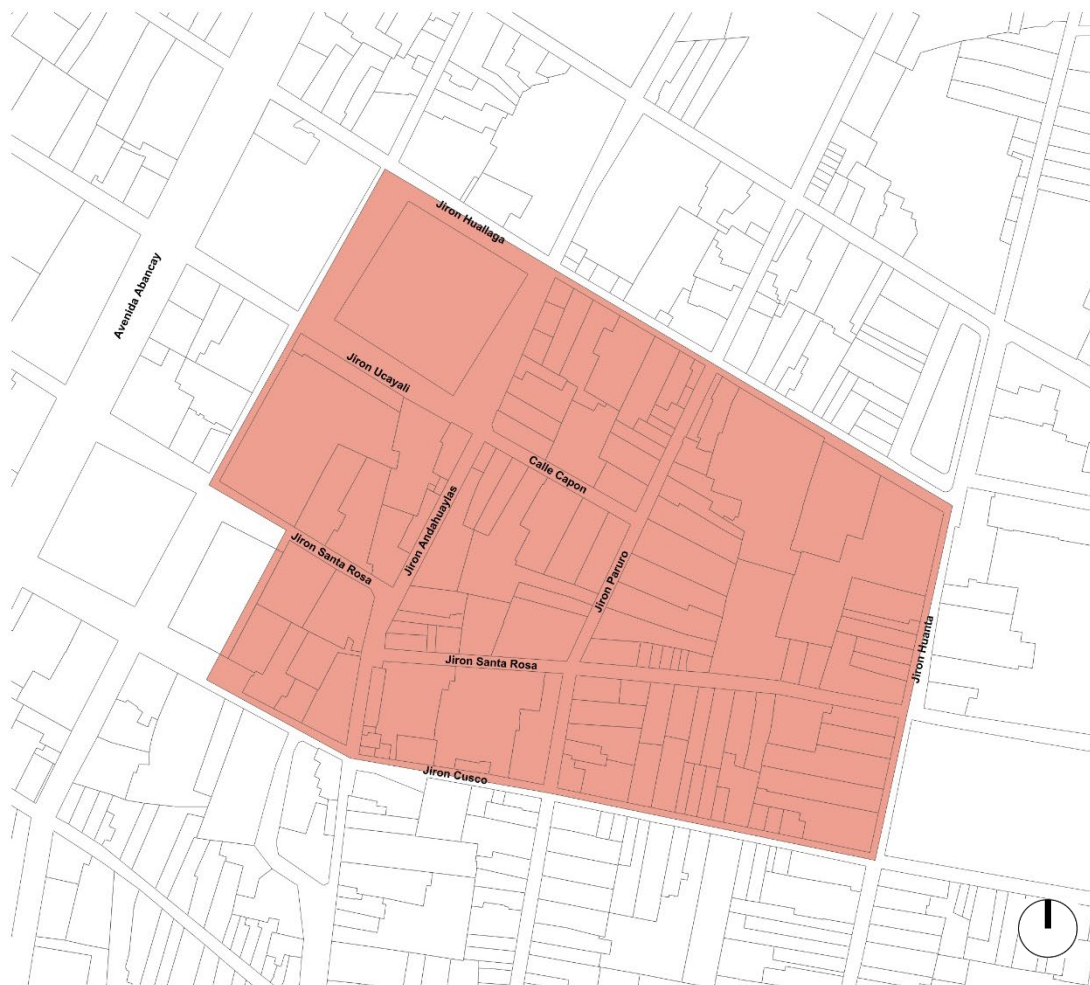


Figure 28. The boundary of Lima's Chinatown neighbourhood as defined by the Author. Plan by Author.



Figure 29. Elevation of Jirón Ucayali with Chinese-owned restaurants open during a statutory holiday. Elevation by Author.





Figure 30. Calle Capón at night, 2024. Image by Author

5.2 Calle Capón

Calle Capón holds significant cultural value for the community in Chinatown; therefore, any proposal must align with the values attached to this street. In the mid-1920s, Calle Capón became a popular spot to indulge in Chinese culture and cuisine.³⁴ Like many other Chinatowns worldwide, the main street is decorated with symbols depicting traditional Chinese motifs. The buildings have been remodelled with Chinese characteristics in mind to emulate the streetscape of older Chinese streets, featuring pergolas, repetitive fortune geometries, and red and wood accents.

Calle Capón has undergone two major renovations that have helped it achieve its status as the symbol for the Chinese diaspora in Lima.³⁵ The first renovation occurred after the War of the Pacific, where during the Chilean occupation, most buildings had become ransacked and were left in hazardous conditions.

³⁴ Córdova Tábori, “Calle Capón Un paseo por su historia.”

³⁵ Nora Sugobono, “Mercado Central cumple 50 años: imágenes inéditas de su inauguración [FOTOS],” *El Comercio*, July 12, 2017, <https://elcomercio.pe/somos/mercado-central-cumple-50-anos-imagenes-ineditas-inauguracion-fotos-441511-noticia/?foto=2>.

During this time, the Chinese community came together to rebuild Calle Capón, and more Chinese businesses began establishing themselves on the street. The second and more extensive remodelling was completed in 1999.³⁶ Calle Capón took a similar approach to San Francisco's Chinatown. Although it did not align with the city's existing architecture, it became a symbol for Lima's Chinese community and demonstrated the impact of their combined efforts. This project was funded by several members of the Chinese community and associations who had been in Lima for a few generations.³⁷

This second renovation introduced the iconic hexagonal paving stones and the 12 zodiacs on the street. It also brought the pagoda-roof-style pergolas, seating, and merchant stands. The facades of the existing buildings lining Calle Capón received a cultural makeover to become synonymous with the rest of the Chinese ornamentation on the street.³⁸ Calle Capón is home to many Chinese business establishments; however, during the day, you will often see Peruvian citizens looking for a bite to eat during their lunch hours or on weekends and holidays to indulge in Chinese cooking.

³⁶ “Diseño Arquitectónico Barrio Chino En Lima | PDF | Lima | Comercio,” Scribd, accessed May 27, 2024, <https://es.scribd.com/presentation/413052103/DISENO-ARQUITECTONICO-BARRIO-CHINO-EN-LIMA>.

³⁷ “Capón. El barrio chino de Lima,” *Municipalidad de Lima* (blog), October 2, 2018, <https://publicacioneslima.pe/munilibro-2-capon-el-barrio-chino-de-lima/>.

³⁸ Ibid.



Figure 31. Photograph of Calle Capón, 1961. Archives of El Comercio.



Figure 32. Photograph of Calle Capón, 2024. Image by Author

5.3 Callejón Otaiza

The thesis is located along the same block that Callejón Otaiza used to occupy—on Jirón Andahuaylas at the intersection of Jirón Ucayali. Callejón Otaiza once stood sharing a corner with the current Calle Capón. Callejón Otaiza was a vital quarter and bore the history of the first wave of immigrants from China. It predates Calle Capón as one of the historically significant sites of Chinese inhabitation in Central Lima. Through their struggles of assimilating to a culture outside their homes, this was the place where they could speak Chinese to each other, eat the food they ate back home, and live within the city walls.

Unfortunately, this was all torn down by the mayor at the time, Billinghurst³⁹ and was essentially erased from the public's memory. The new generation is unaware, and the students are not taught this history either. Archival documents and historical information regarding Callejón Otaiza require lengthy research to find. Against this backdrop, I have chosen this site to reclaim as part of Chinatown.

³⁹ Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru and the Changing Peruvian Chinese Community(les)1."

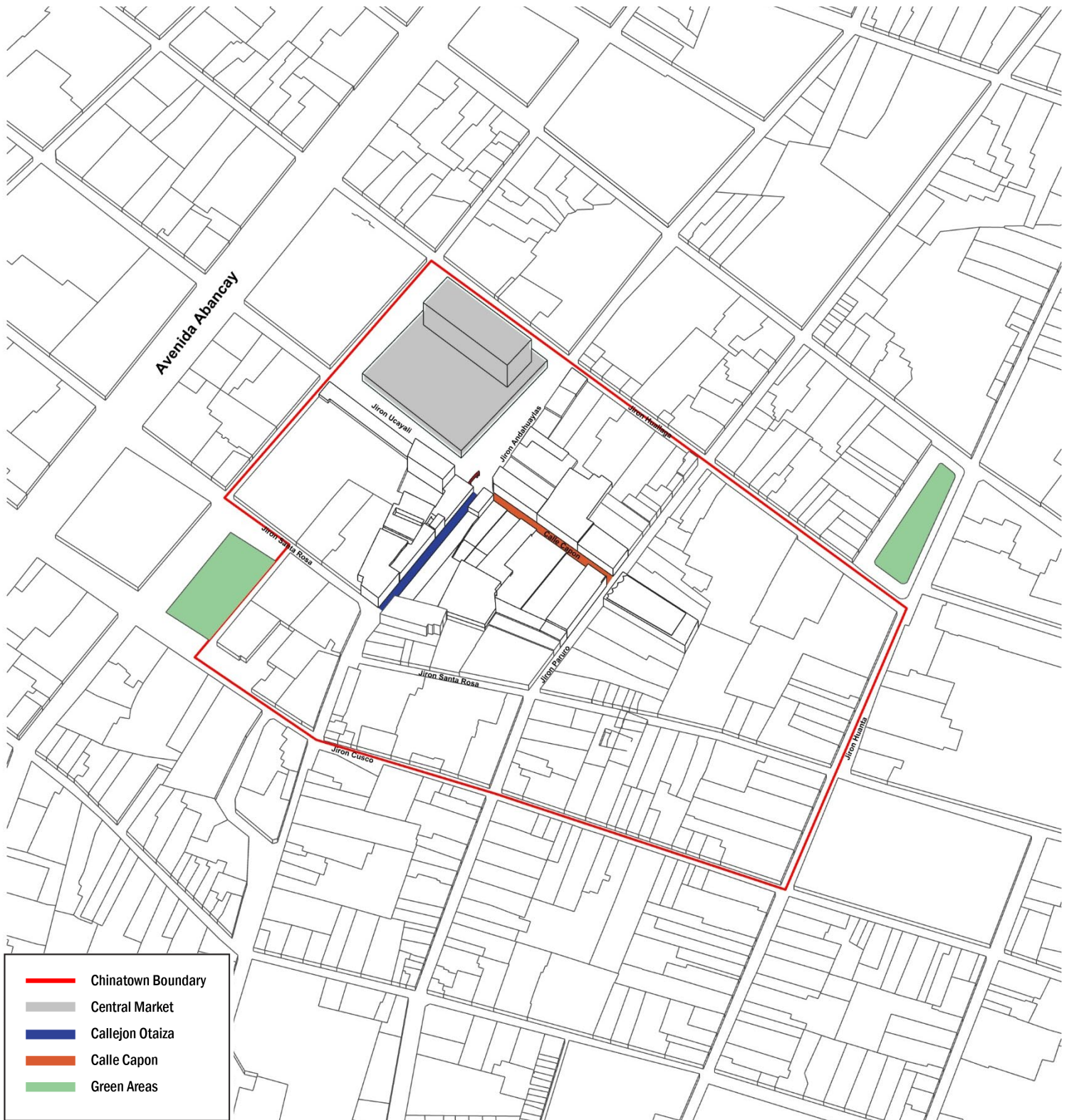


Figure 33. Axonometric of Central Chinatown with Calle Capón in orange and the Central Market in gray.
Diagram by Author.

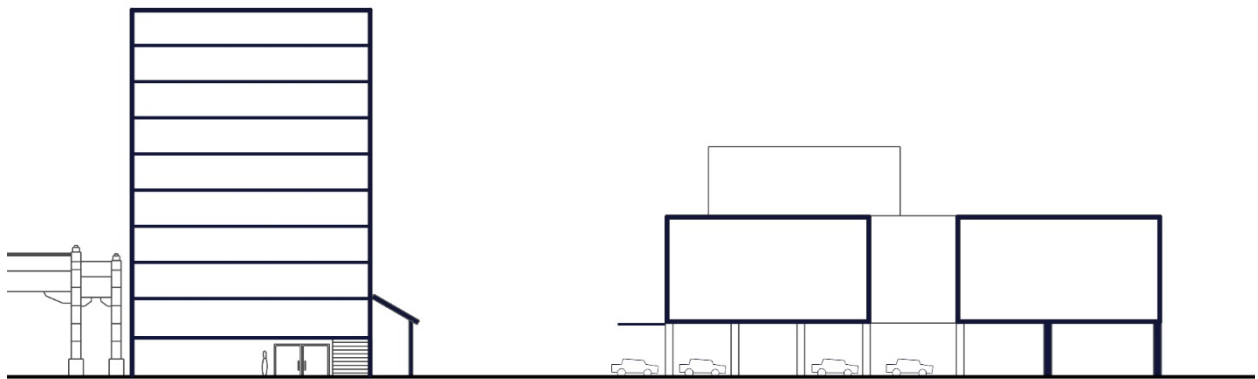


Figure 34. Existing parking garage section cut. Section by Author.

Mid rise storage facility on the left with a few retail units aboveground. Restaurants on the ground floor of the building. External parking garage with residential units aboveground on the right.

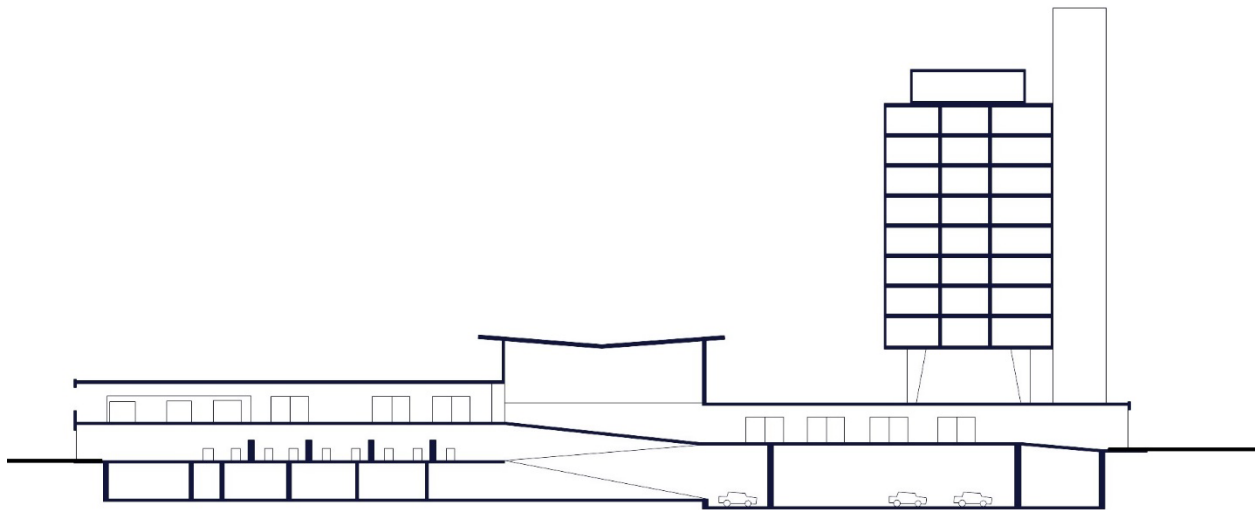


Figure 35. Central Market section. Section by Author.

3 storey market with meat and seafood stalls on the first floor. Produce and dry goods on the second floor and miscellaneous goods on the third floor.

Today, the site is owned by three parties: the monastery of Santa Rosa, a family with generational private ownership, and the municipal government. The monastery owns much of the block along Jirón Santa Rosa and Jirón Andahuaylas. The family privately owns most of the block where the project takes place, including the apartments and parking garage that lead from Jirón Andahuaylas to Jirón Ucayali. Lastly, the municipality owns the south side of Jirón Andahuaylas, which connects to the Galería Barrio Chino. Despite these properties being separate two- to three-story buildings used as commercial spaces, the thesis aims to reconnect these two city blocks and the properties within them through an architectural design featuring an entrepreneurial-oriented program.



Figure 36. Photograph of historic plan of the city block, arrow depicts entrance to Callejón Otaiza. Drawn by Pedro Nolasco Mere. 1685. Biblioteca Nacional del Peru. Image by Author.

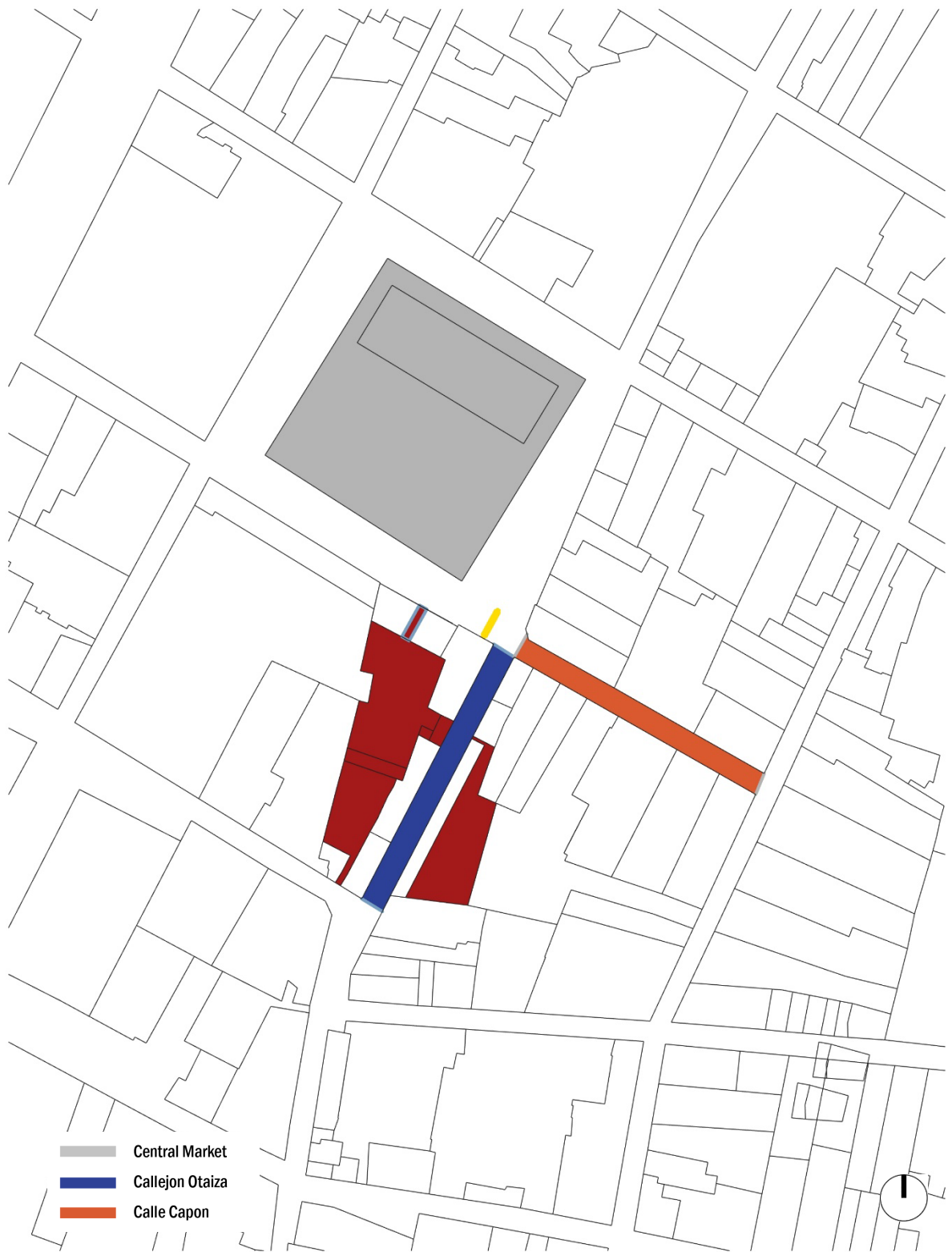


Figure 37. 1:200 Plan of proposed site highlighted in red. Plan by Author.

6.0 Proposal

6.1 Galería Typology

After researching the site, observing Chinatown during my fieldwork, and through archival research into the Central Market's functionality, I discovered that the galería programming originated from the Municipality of Lima's desire to organize and clean up the streets of Lima. The market's location and size, along with the streetscape, allowed for a large number of stalls both inside and outside. This appealed to the first wave of Chinese immigrants who arrived in Lima as labourers or street vendors as it opened up many more opportunities with smaller shops. While many eventually moved into different jobs or higher positions, a significant percentage remained in the retail of goods or foods. This typology evolved from the informal occupation of space into the galería typology we see today.

The galería typology was created to formalize the informal nature of street vendors. Galerías serve as open entry spaces to the public with no barriers, designed to house various types of businesses, from small shops to restaurants, while retaining the benefits of the original market stalls. These galerías provide an interior passage for pedestrians, purposefully drawing them in and near all the shops. Lima's arid and mild climate allows these galerías to thrive without the need for central ventilation systems, as they self-regulate with natural airflow due to the minimal threshold between interior and exterior spaces. This design allows for natural airflow to enter and exhaust through the tops.

The galerías on Calle Capón feature similar natural ventilation strategies while being adorned with Chinese colours and ornaments. They serve as passageways between streets and are primarily occupied by leased tenants from owners who possess multiple properties. Galería Barrio Chino, centrally located on Calle Capón and connecting to Jirón Paruro, is programmatically lined with store cubicles on both sides of a central hallway. The size of these stores varies as you move deeper into the galería; the deeper you go, the smaller they become, while the larger stores are situated near both entrances. The commercial activities within these stores include clothing, Chinese and other east Asian goods, restaurants, and electronics. The galería in Figure 39 also features a roof opening at the corner bend of the plan, which acts as a chimney, ventilating all the air entering from both entrances and exhausting it at the top. The space is defined very linearly, creating a sense of organization.



Figure 38. Photograph of Jirón Ucayali depicting a large number of street vendors cleaning the street prior to opening their stalls, 1967. Archivo Historico de El Comercio.

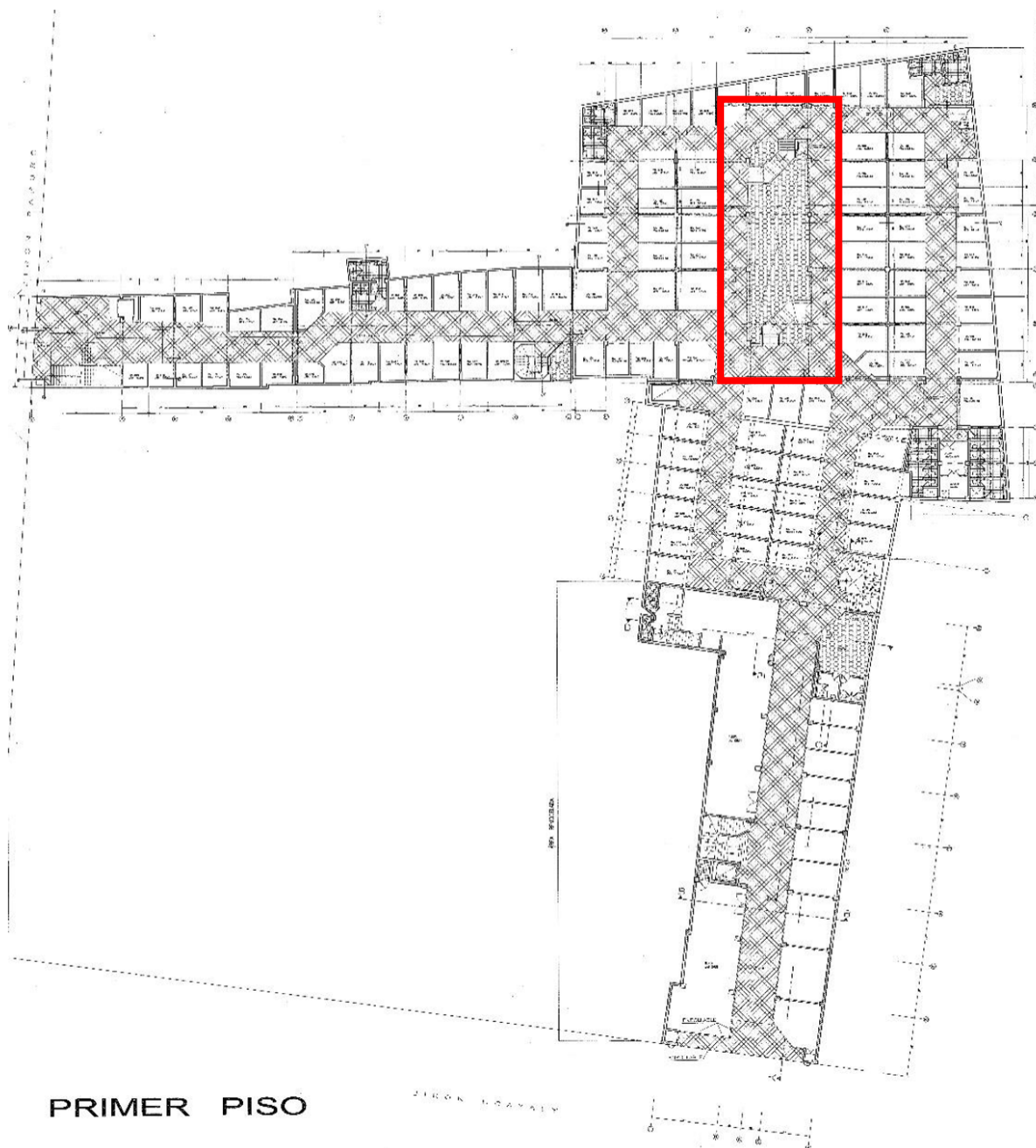


Figure 39. Plan of Galería Barrio Chino on Calle Capón. Munilima.



Figure 40. Interior photograph of Galeria Barrio Chino's entrance on Jirón Paruro. The entryway has no roof, allowing cool air to enter and the hot air to exhaust upwards. Image by Author.

As the existing galerías are privately owned, many of these developments align with real estate developers' mindsets. Typically, the building or land is purchased, and a building is either erected or renovated. These existing galerías are developed to be sold per unit to anyone who wishes to buy them. One person can buy multiple lots, and after purchasing them, they can do whatever they want. Most of the time, they are bought and then leased out again to smaller businesses, usually at market value, which benefits the owner rather than the tenant.⁴⁰ In contrast, the project proposes leasing, allowing for a changing clientele of Chinese immigrants and start-ups. This approach would help tenants get a better start in Chinatown and the market without spending a fortune on rent or buying property. After their lease ends, they would be replaced by other Chinese micro-entrepreneurs, continuing the cycle.

⁴⁰ Conversations with family member, 2024.



Figure 41. Galería Capón, 2024. Image by Author.

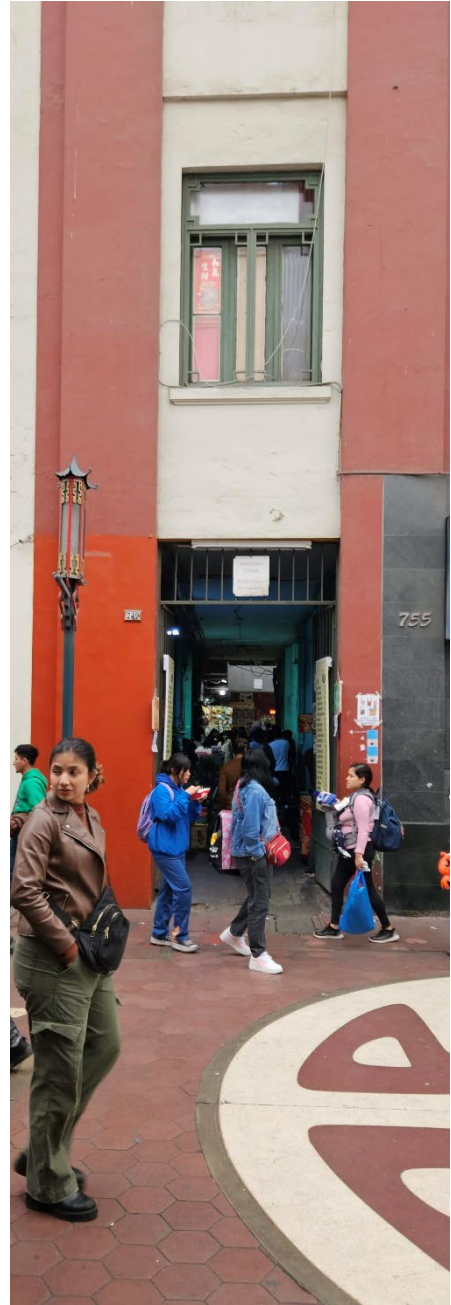


Figure 42. Narrow entrance of Callejón Capón, 2024. Image by Author

6.2 Components

The reoccupation of this thesis aims to shed light on the often-underrepresented Chinese community in Lima and the complete erasure of Callejón Otaiza from Lima's Chinatown. The thesis achieves this by respectfully occupying alleys and voids in the urban fabric, similar to the strategy used by historic callejones, and utilizing socially unproductive programs such as parking lots and the rear buildings of businesses along Jirón Andahuaylas. The design re-envisioned these spaces as mixed-use urban areas for the Chinatown neighbourhood, combining commercial opportunities and green spaces, and connecting Chinatown through a series of entry and exit points. By preserving the existing façades along Jirón Andahuaylas, Jirón Ucayali, and Jirón Santa Rosa, the design weaves an internal dialogue between the existing architecture and the new proposal to create a cohesive, unified community.

The first step in designing the new galería and addressing the issue of a unified community was to evaluate the ownership structure of the existing galerías and implement one that would allow the new galería to be owned in trust by the Sociedad Central de Beneficencia China. In this model, every tenant would have percentage ownership over the galería based on their stall size. The concept is a sandbox galería to help kickstart small businesses by subsidizing their initial rent, reducing the capital they need to spend on the physical store.

Existing Ownership Structure

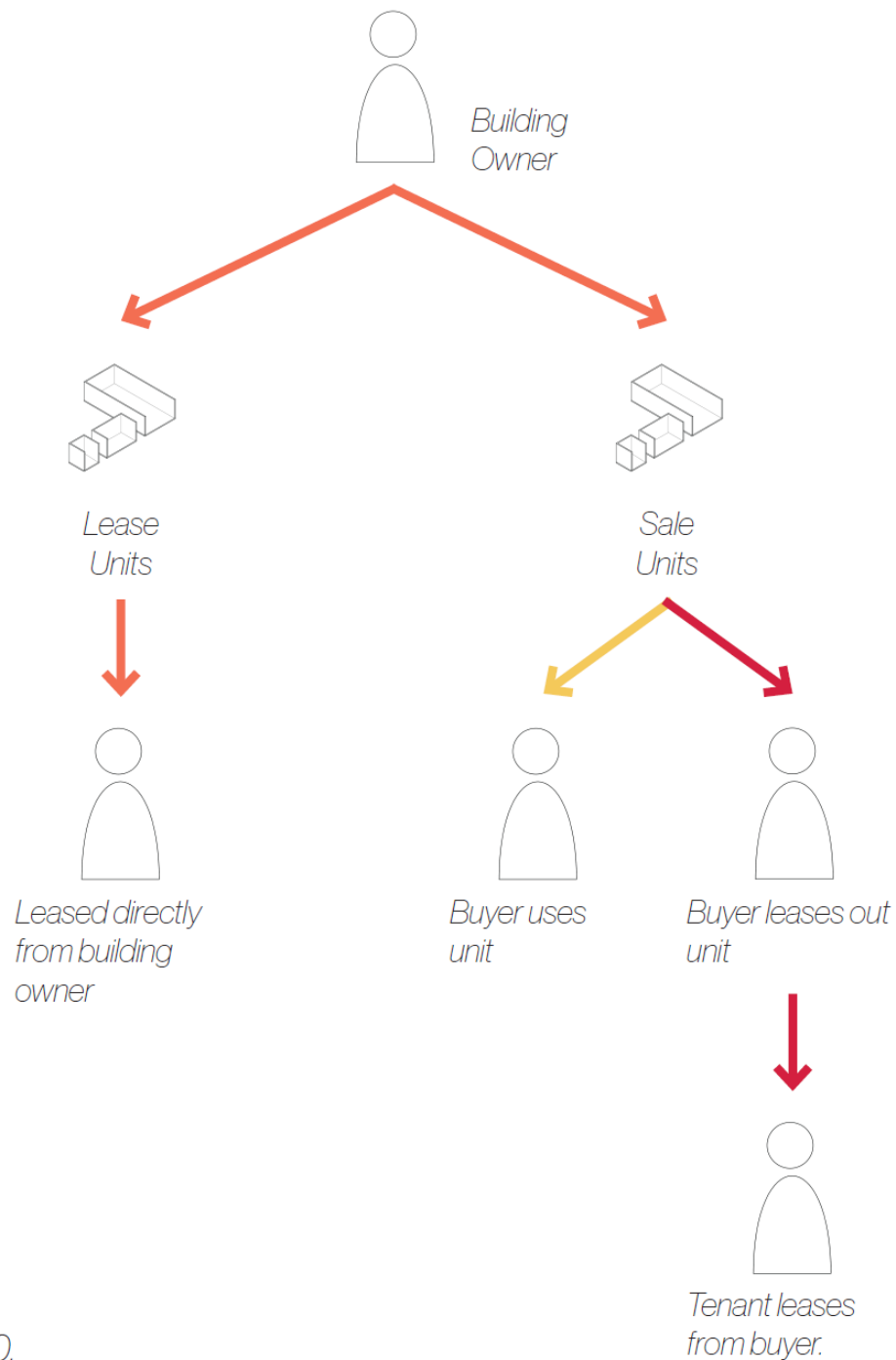


Figure 30.
Existing ownership structure of galerías in Chinatown.

Figure 43. Existing ownership structure diagram of galerías and buildings across Chinatown.
Diagram by Author.

New Ownership Structure

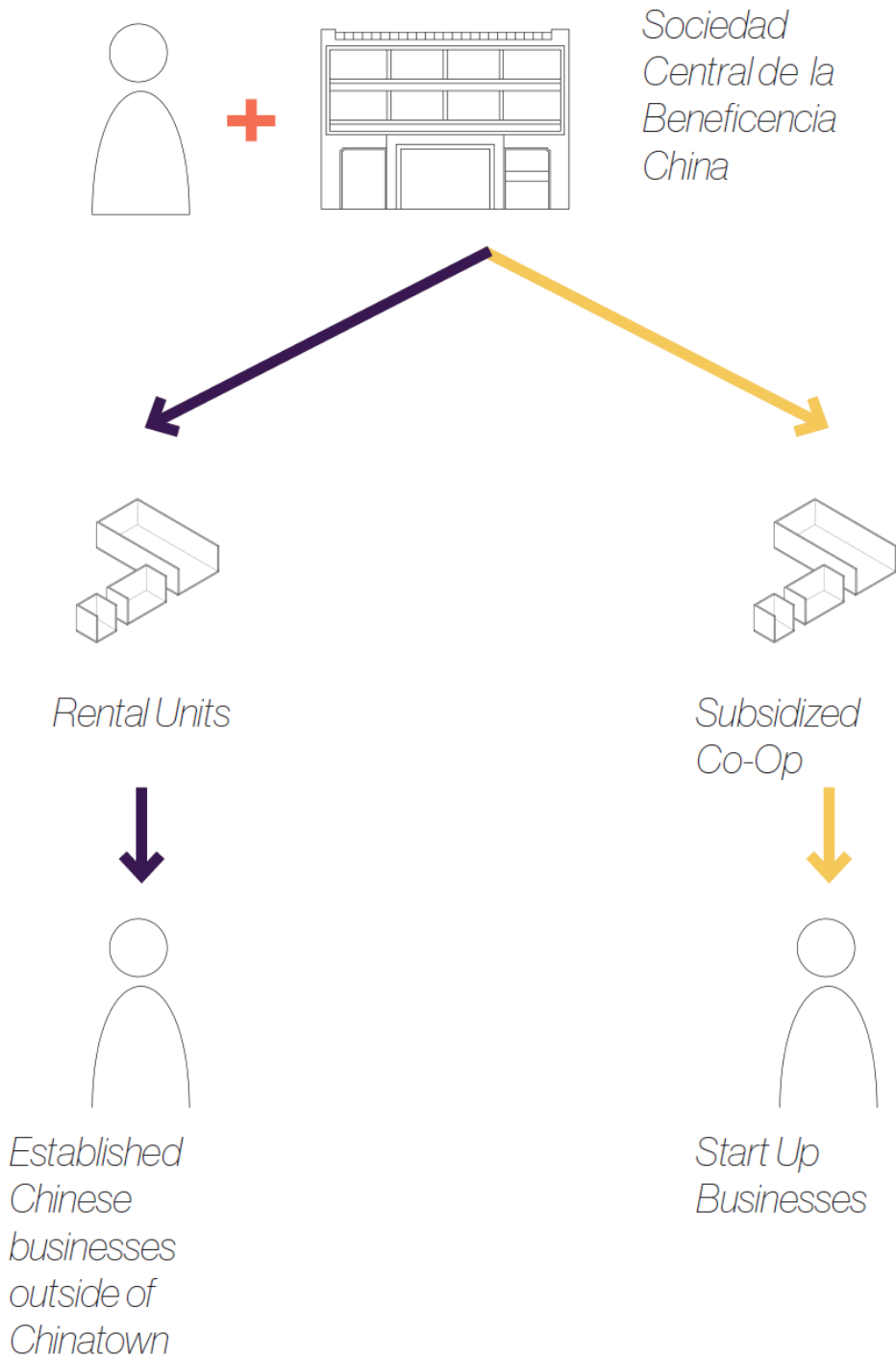


*Figure 44. The proposed ownership structure of proposed galería design.
Diagram by Author.*

The project aims to maintain the existing façades on both sides of Jirón Andahuaylas. By removing only one business from the parking garage, the design of the new galería weaves through paths of existing low-rise buildings and back alleys to create corridors that lead into larger sections for businesses. The adaptive reuse of the parking lot adjusts the current format to provide access to Jirón Ucayali and the Central Market from Jirón Santa Rosa and Jirón Andahuaylas, and vice versa. This is achieved by following the architectural strategy of creating multiple entry points and inhabiting the internal spaces of the city blocks, inspired by the existing Galería Barrio Chino floor plan.

Using the two existing entry points to the garage, the design forms a similar T-shaped floor plan with access through the interiors of the buildings rather than the exterior street. Below is a series of images of the parking garage to help you understand the spatial properties of the building. The apartments are all raised above the ground floor, which is entirely used to manage the parking garage and the utilities for the businesses along Jirón Ucayali.



Figure 45. Series of images portraying the interior spaces of the parking garage. From left to right: Residential apartment above ground floor. Commercial building leading into Jirón Ucayali. Interior of the parking garage. Staircase leading up to residential units.

In Chinatown, there are currently no large exterior open gathering spaces for the community. The Chinese diaspora in Lima makes use of their own private spaces for gatherings, such as their dining and living rooms, which tend to be more for pre-arranged meetings and events. Informal meetings and interactions typically occur in the chifas or on the streets while shopping, where one may encounter a familiar person while enjoying their morning dim sum or while grocery shopping. There are fewer opportunities for the older generation of retiring Chinese immigrants and the younger generation of children in school to meet their friends in Chinatown. By adapting and restructuring walls and entryways, the proposed design creates spaces for open-air interior courtyards to increase the limited public space available within Chinatown. Alongside the stores, it creates open and airy interiors that the community can benefit from. This design provides safe areas for older people to socialize and play spaces for the younger children who accompany their parents to work.

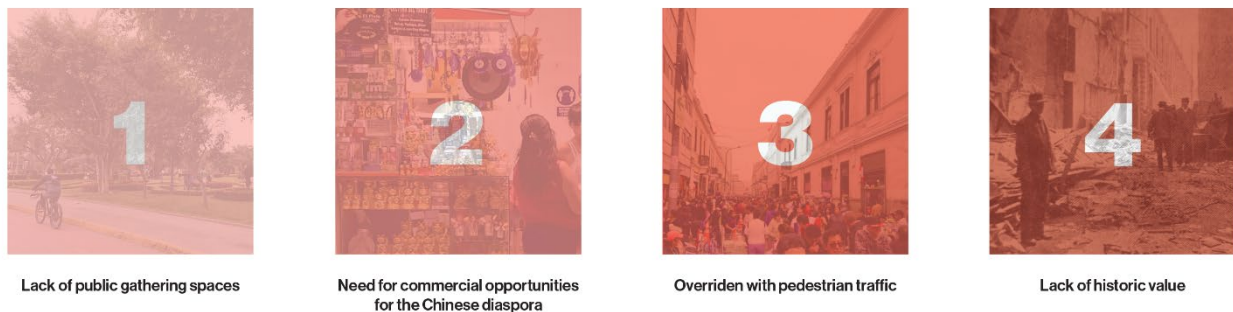


Figure 46. Key site considerations. Diagram by Author.

The façade of the design takes inspiration from Calle Capón, aiming to inform pedestrians of its presence and the galería inside. By mimicking features of the existing galerías, it creates a visual connection to Calle Capón, which then leads to a physical connection through the passageways. Overall, the programming envisions a mixed urban space for commercial beginnings, safe green spaces, and connections between city blocks adjacent to Chinatown. These programs are all situated within the neighbourhood's confines of a new galería.

Looking at the interior spaces for the galería, I have conducted a brief analysis of the stall layout and sizing based on nearby galerías and the Central Market. These stalls in the Central Market sell goods ranging from produce to clothing to miscellaneous objects such as plastic bags and baskets. The general size available for rent or sale is typically around 64 ft². Many of these units do not hold the entire inventory within the stall and usually have a separate warehouse unit in a different building or stall. Since the proposed design targets new and upcoming businesses, this should not become an issue for newer startups whose inventory may not be as large as those of the long-standing businesses in the Central Market. While this will not be the only size available, it will help estimate how many stalls can fit in the smaller and narrower interiors of the proposed galería.

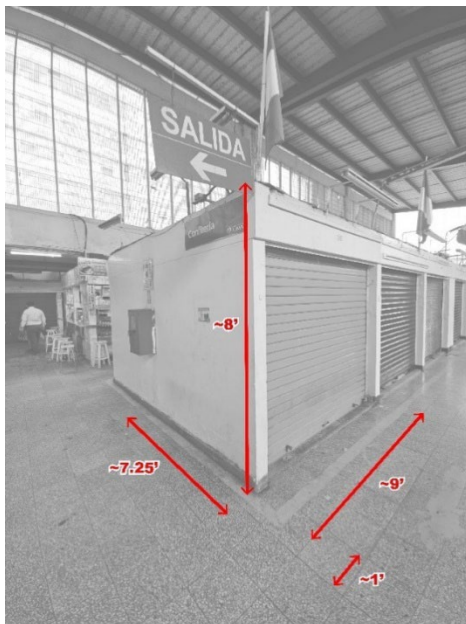


Figure 47. Left: Dimensions of a stall inside of the Central Market. Diagram by Author.

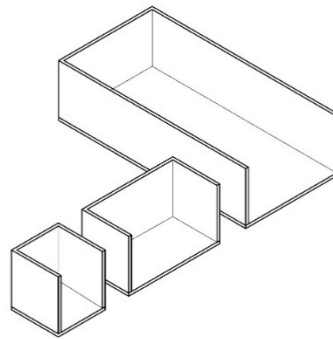


Figure 48. Right: Potential stall sizes based on an 8' grid for new galería stalls based on different programming needs. Diagram by Author.

The block of Jirón Ucayali and Jirón Andahuaylas on the west and south corners used to be one corner. By rejoining the two through street entrances that lead from one block to another, I am restoring the block's heritage without destroying the street paved atop the rubble of Callejón Otaiza. This creates an interconnected Chinatown without tearing down the current storefronts and streets. By repurposing the parking garage, there is no need for vehicular traffic on Jirón Andahuaylas; instead, it will become a pedestrian-only zone similar to Calle Capón. Without vehicular traffic, the street will thrive with street vendors from morning to evening, just like the existing ones.

To create these connections, I have chosen four entry points from the adjacent streets, which are currently not commercially in use or are pre-existing entry points to the buildings. The first entry appears on Jirón Santa Rosa; it utilizes the narrow stairway entrance as an egress for the galería program within the block. I have designed this entrance by using the narrow space beside the stairwell and opening up the rear wall into the spaces that make up the project. The second entrance reimagines the existing parking garage car entrance. This larger opening will act as one of the main entrances, leading directly into the restaurant portion of the project and branching off to two courtyards, sandwiching the restaurant quadrant. Entrance number three will lead into the portion of the project that connects to the existing Galería Barrio Chino on Calle Capón. Having the entrance across from entrance number two creates a direct relationship between the two blocks, connecting them as part of the reclaiming of Callejón Otaiza. Lastly, entrance number four is directly across from the Central Market, depicted in grey. This creates pathways for interior pedestrian traffic relief and the new programs in the proposed design.

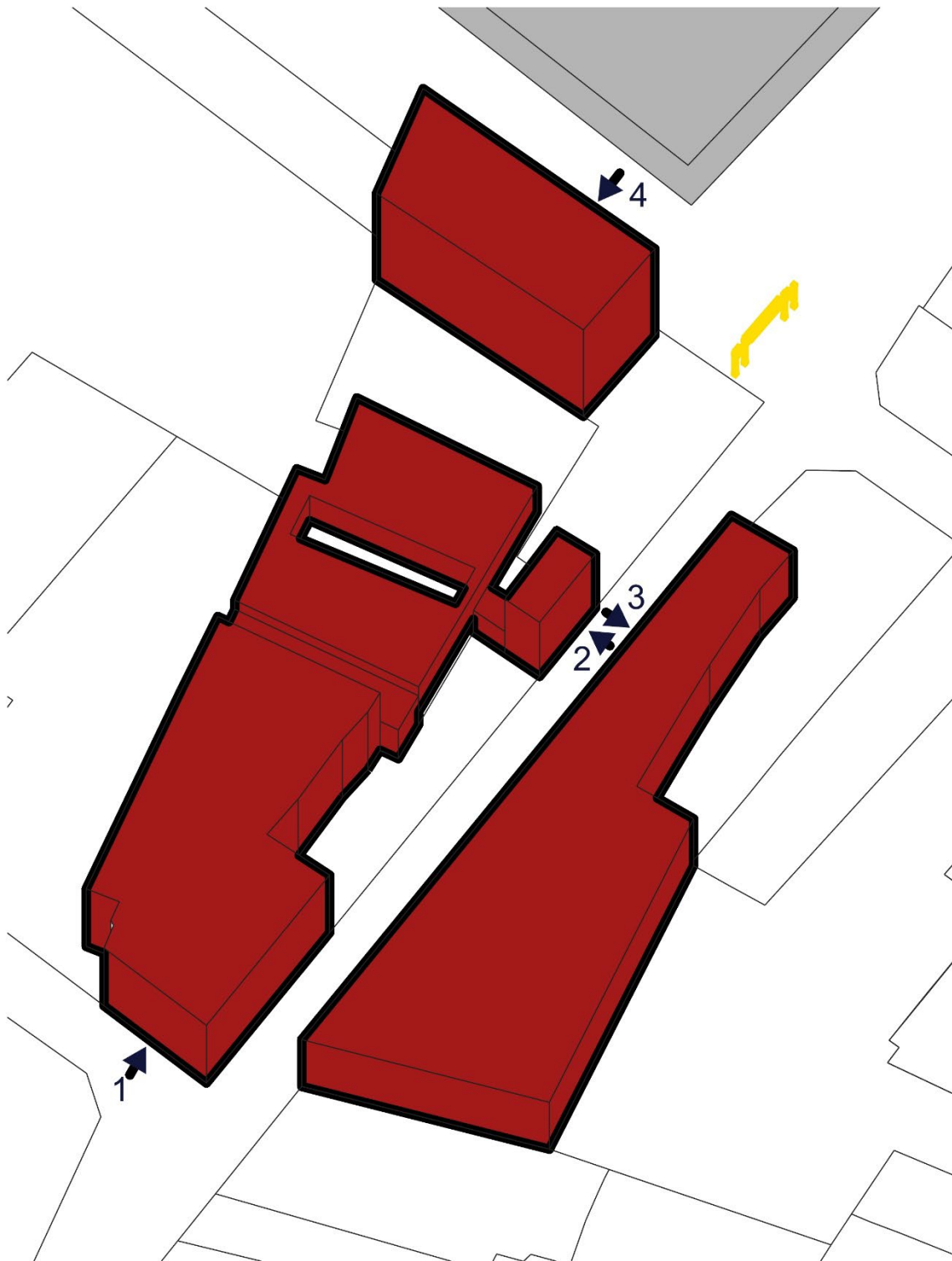


Figure 49. Diagram of entry points, numbers referenced to following images. Diagram by Author.



Figure 50. Photograph of entrance along Jirón Santa Rosa,2024. Image by Author.



Figure 51. Photograph of parking garage entrance on Jirón Andahuaylas, 2024. Image by Author.



Figure 52. Photograph of the narrow entrance to second-floor storage on Jirón Andahuaylas, 2024.
Image by Author.

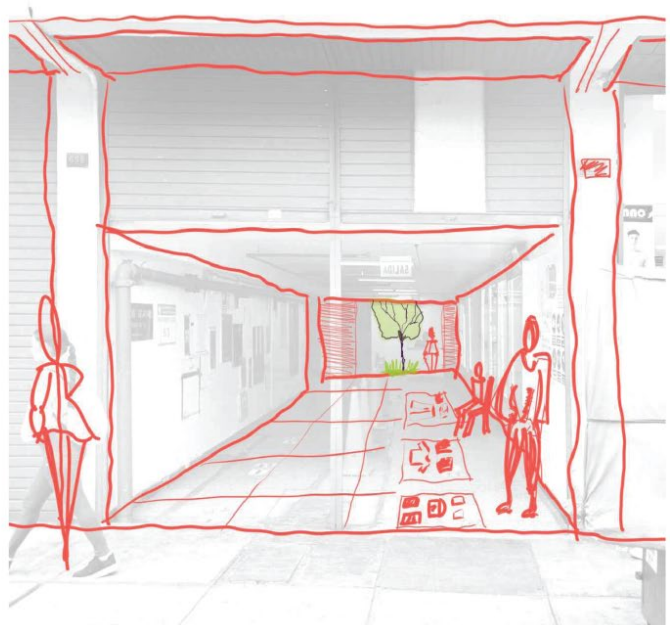


Figure 53. Photography of entrance to a storage building on Jirón Ucayali, 2024. Image by Author.

Activating the evenings for this thesis will involve replacing the historic Odeon Theatre. What was once a theatre leased to Chinese immigrants for traditional Chinese operas and shows, was taken around the same time as the destruction of Callejón Otaiza. The evenings can once again be filled with the community by bringing back the theatre and showcasing Chinese theatre acts, a concept popular in Macau.⁴¹ Adapting it to the growing community in Lima, with its large elderly population, will produce comparable results.

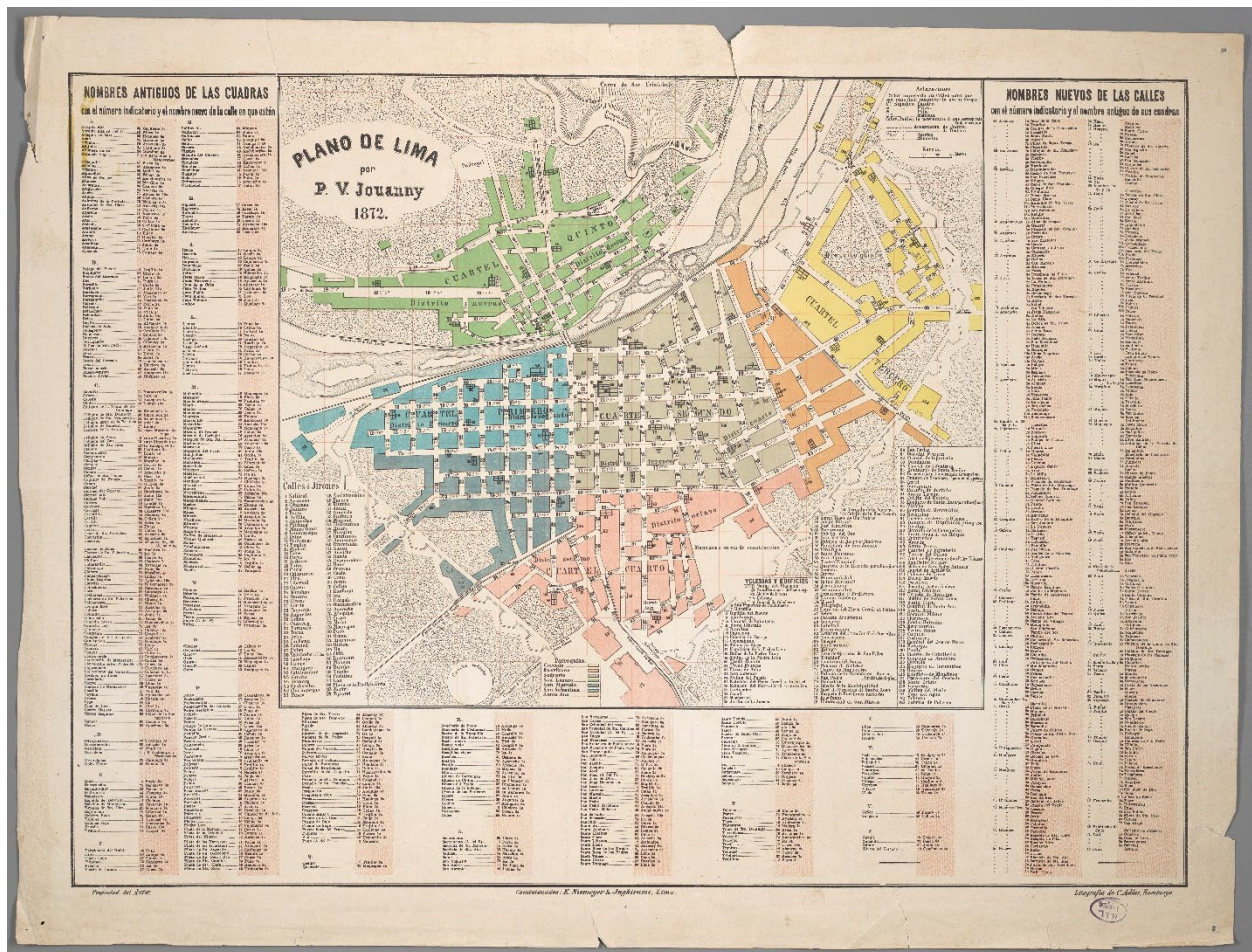


Figure 54. Historic plan of Lima, 1872. P.V. Jouanny. Municipalidad de Lima.

⁴¹ Conversation with family member, 2024.

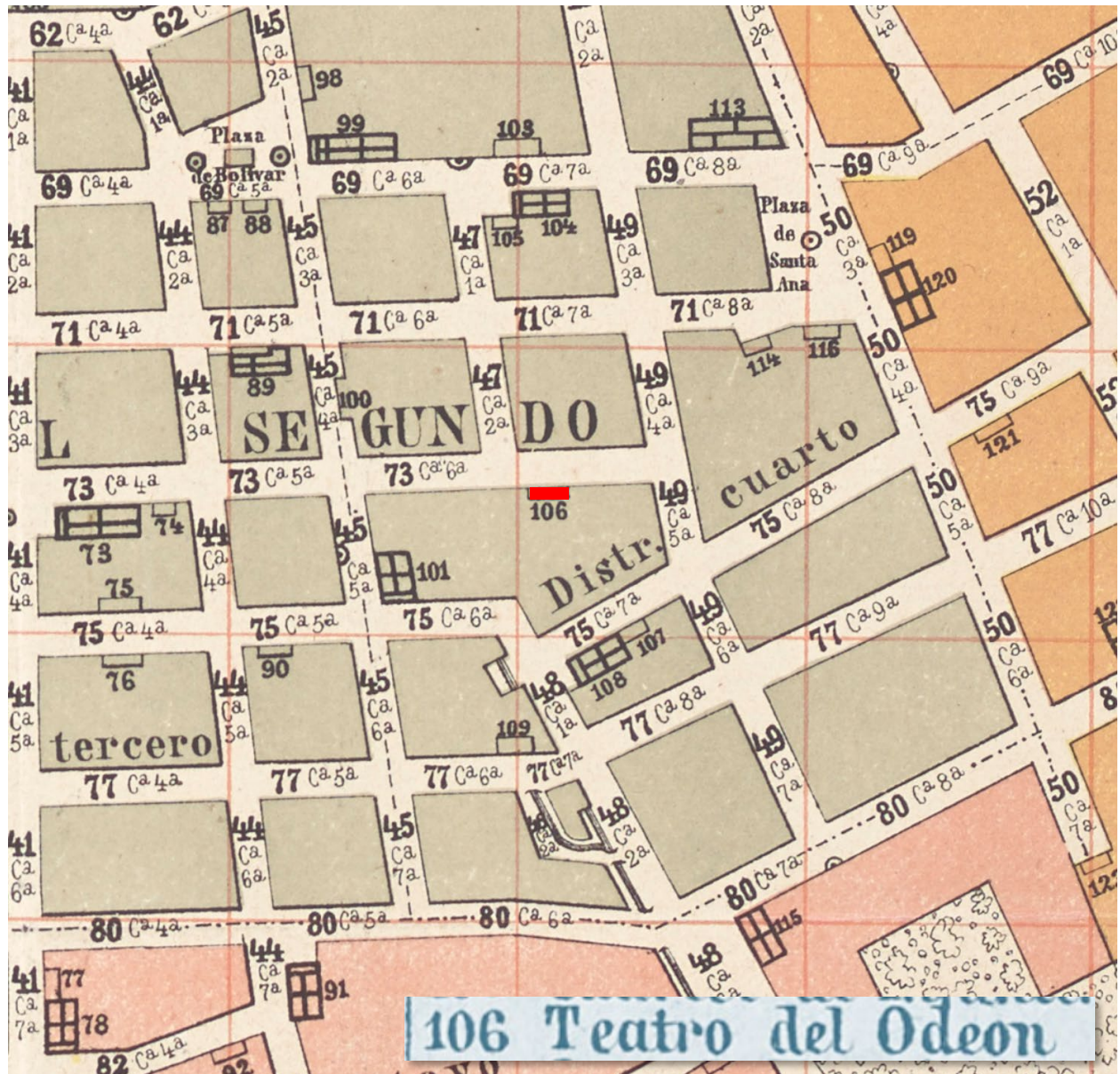


Figure 55. Zoomed in historic plan of Lima, 1872. P.V. Jouanny. Municipalidad de Lima.

Galerías are synonymous with Central Lima and Chinatown. From their affordable prices to the natural community of competing businesses they create, galerías concentrate businesses with similar products within them. Whether they are comprised of party supply stores or candy stores, these galerías exist throughout Lima. While they are organized on the interior, they are also organized on the exterior, where large city blocks are tailored explicitly to automotive products, electronics, hardware, etc.

While galerías have many positives, the most significant negative is the cost to rent and own, especially in Chinatown, where property values have increased over the years. This ownership structure is not economical for incoming Chinese immigrants or those working under others. The new proposed ownership structure works alongside Chinese associations to create and subsidize a sense of ownership for Chinese residents of Lima.

The hope is to incentivize the Chinese community in the suburbs to participate in Chinatown and its cultural activities, serving as a bridge to connect multiple generations of Chinese immigrants in Lima. This is achieved not only through the ownership structure but also through the community spaces included in the proposal. These spaces allow informal meetings to happen near Chinatown, with a significant focus on attracting both the suburban Chinese community and newcomers.

Rather than creating a rift between waves of immigrants from different regions, the collaborative ownership structure for the new galería design aims to engage these waves together, fostering a sense of responsibility for the site of the demolished Callejón Otaiza.

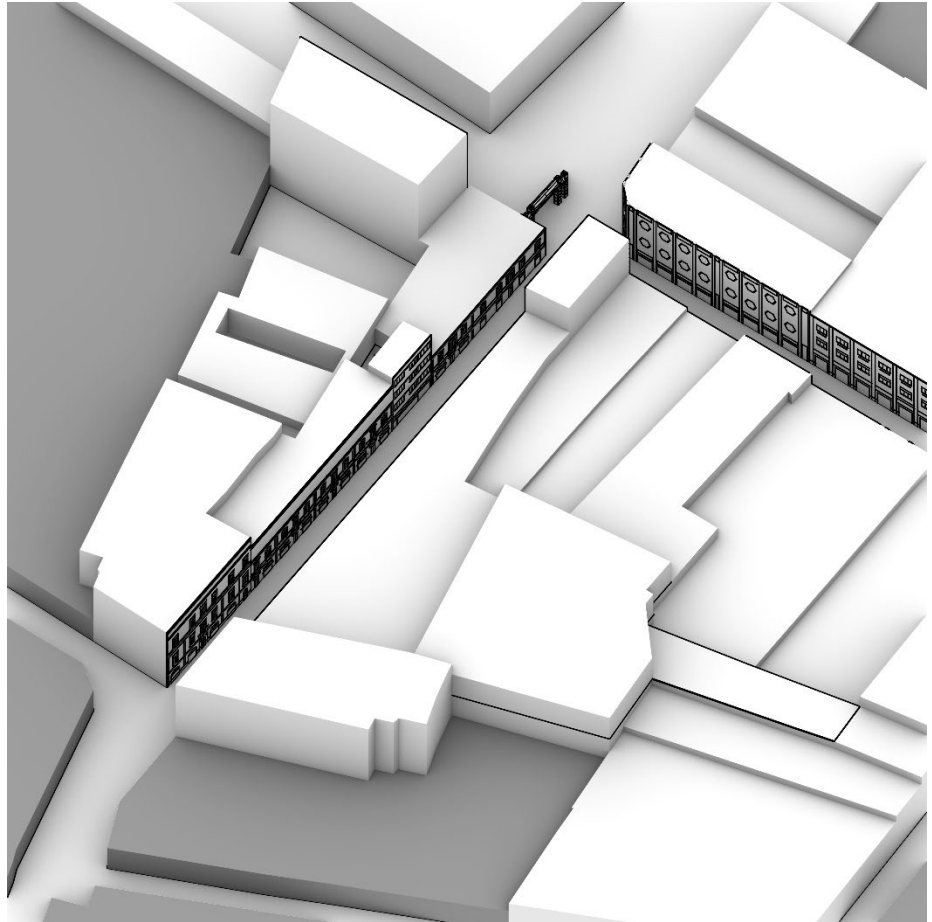


Figure 56. Axonometric of proposed design in the site, since the design is hidden away in the rear of the businesses, from this point of view it looks almost identical to the existing conditions. Diagram by Author.

6.3 Design

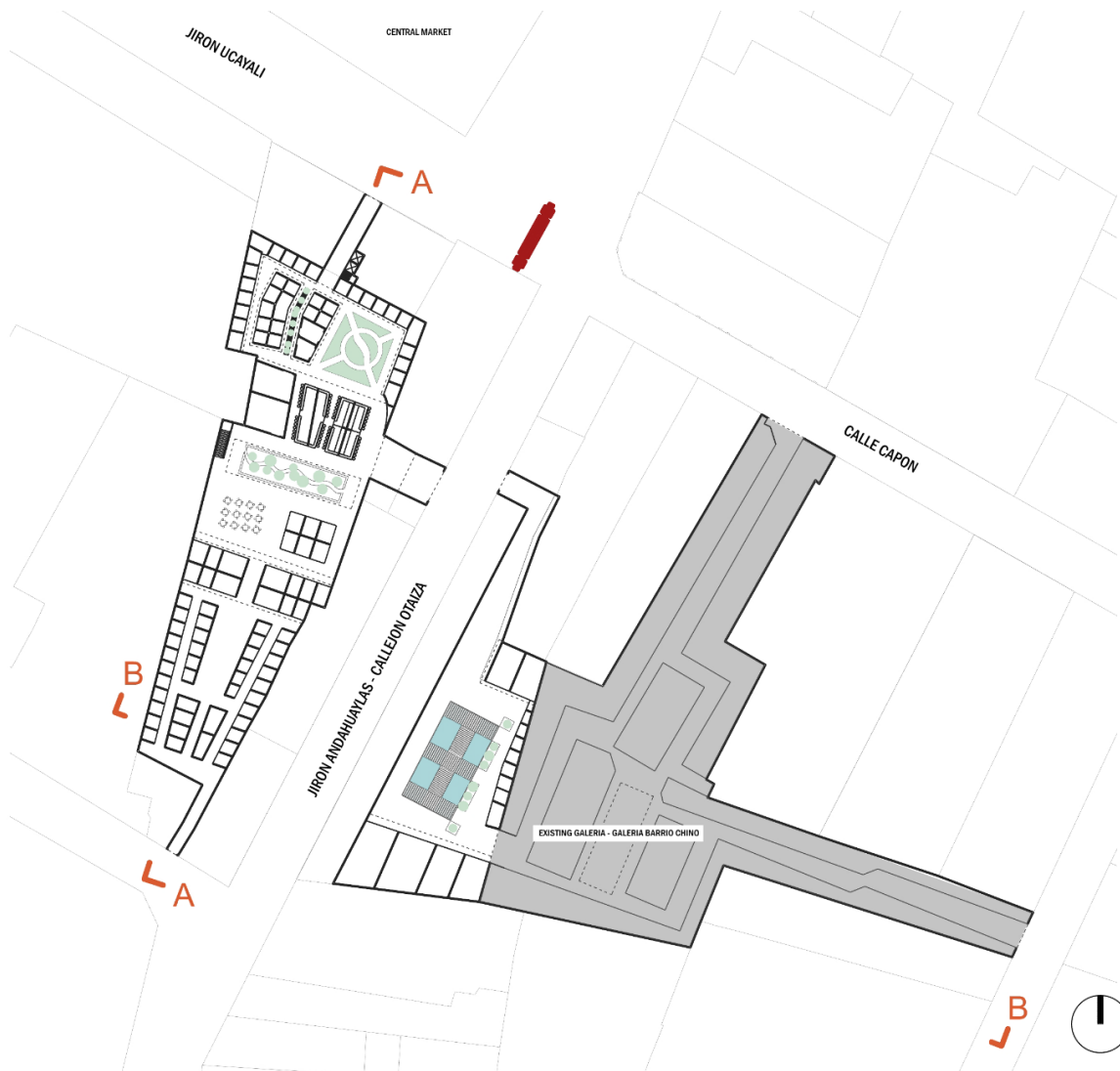


Figure 57. 1:1000 Ground Floor Plan. Plan by Author.



Figure 58. 1:500 Plan of programming inside the new design. Plan by Author

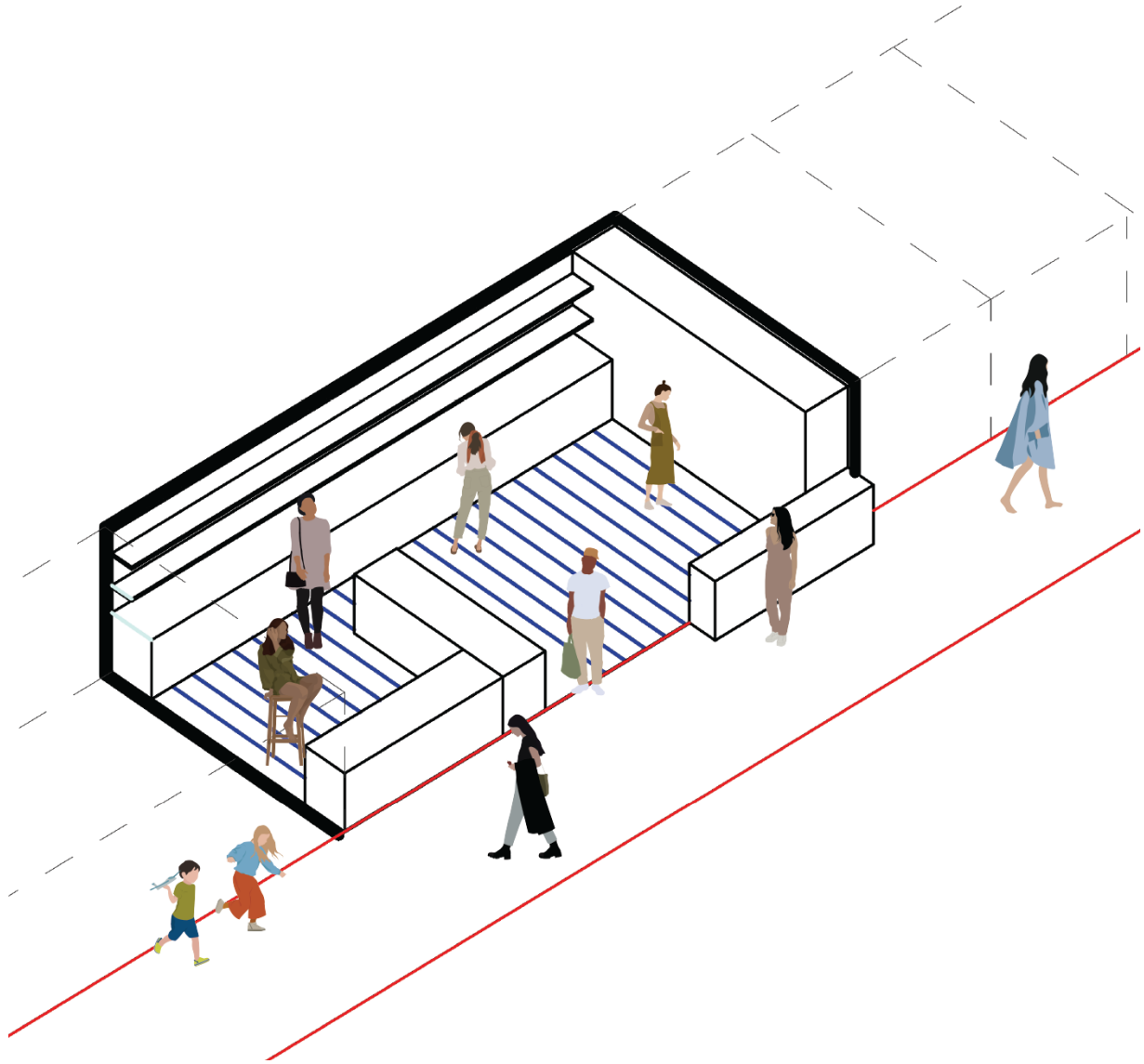


Figure 59. Detail Axonometric of stall. Axonometric by Author.

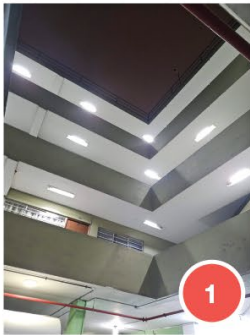


Figure 42.
Open air atrium of
existing residential
apartment.



Figure 43.
Entrance into the
existing parking
garage

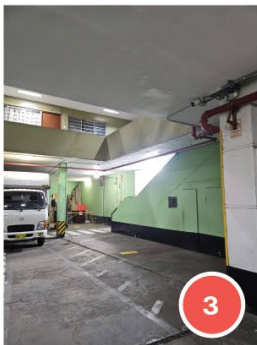


Figure 44.
Existing stairwell to
the apartment units.

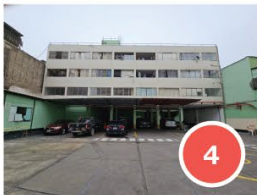


Figure 45.
Open air parking
spaces beside
the residential
apartment.

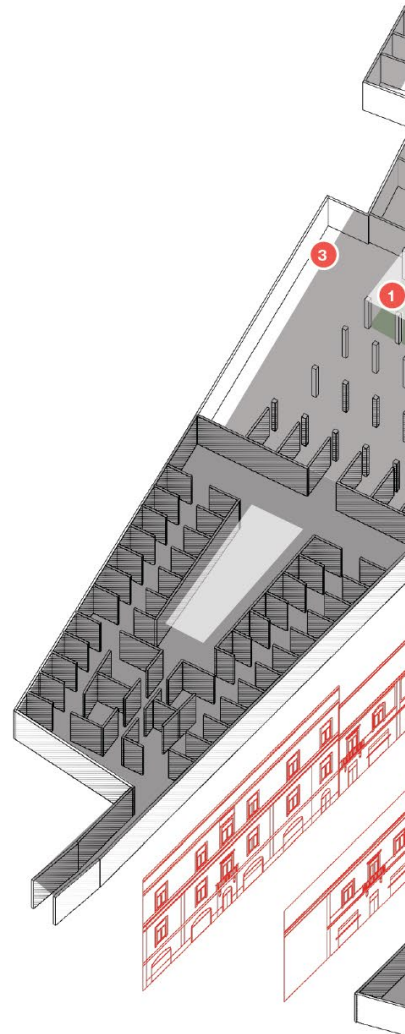
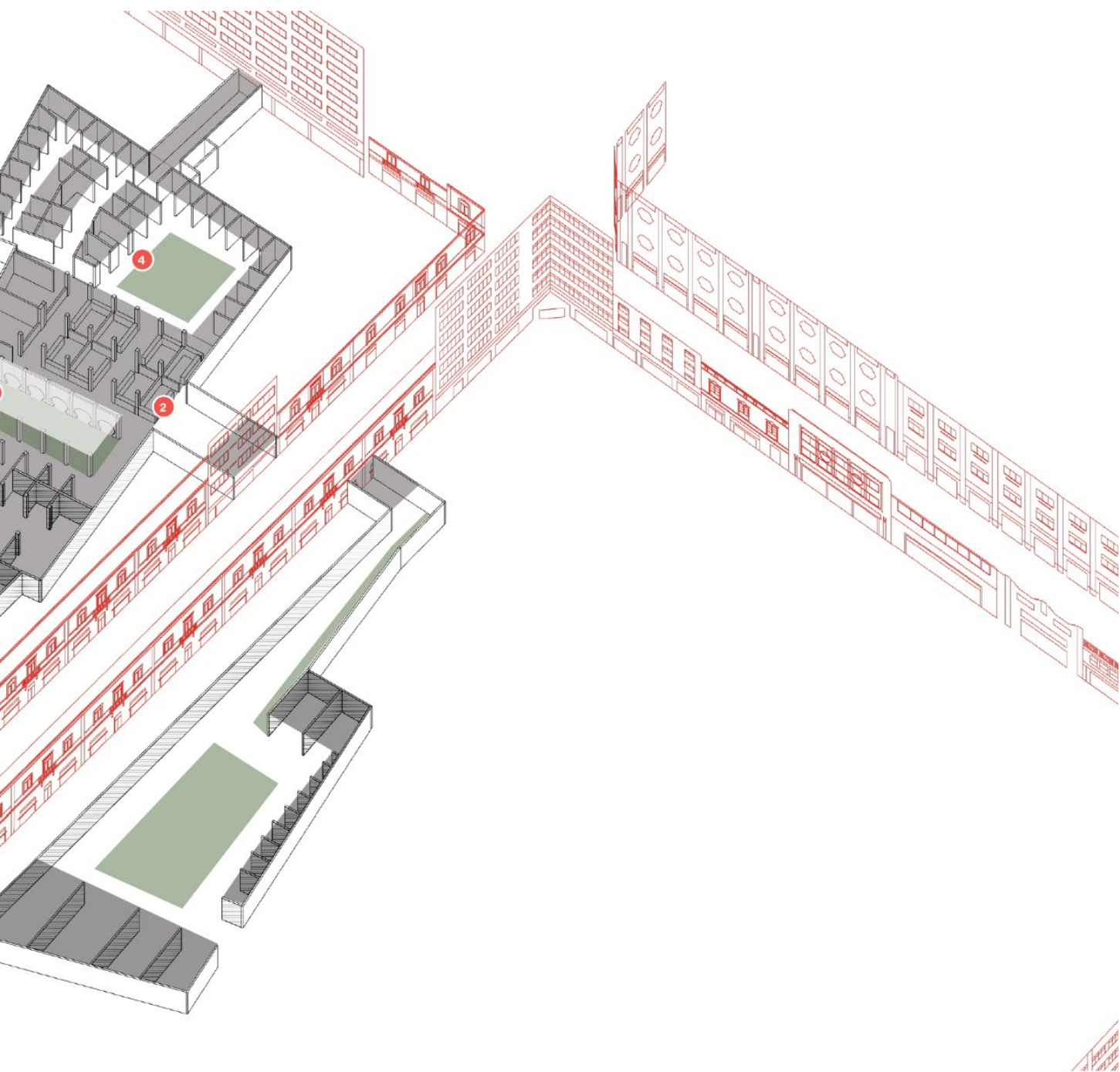


Figure 60. Axonometric of design. Shaded areas depict ceilings and roofs. Diagram by Author.



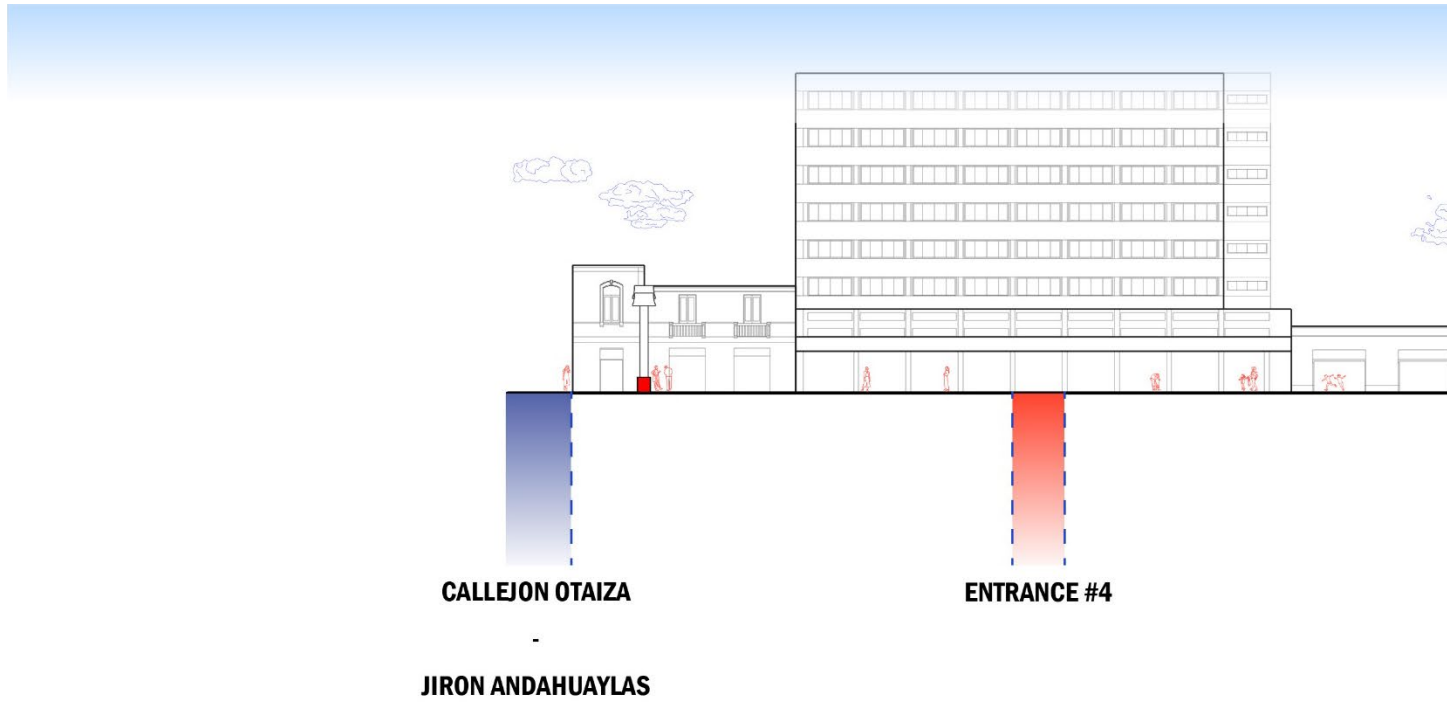
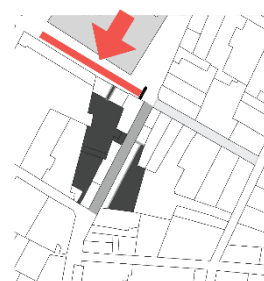
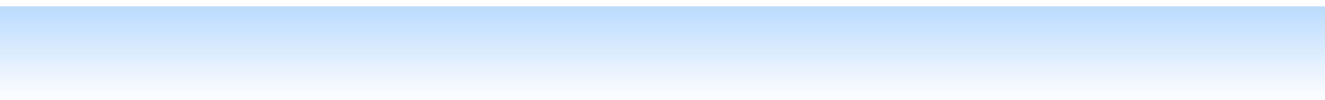


Figure 61. Street elevation AA. Entrance along Jirón Ucayali. Elevation by Author.



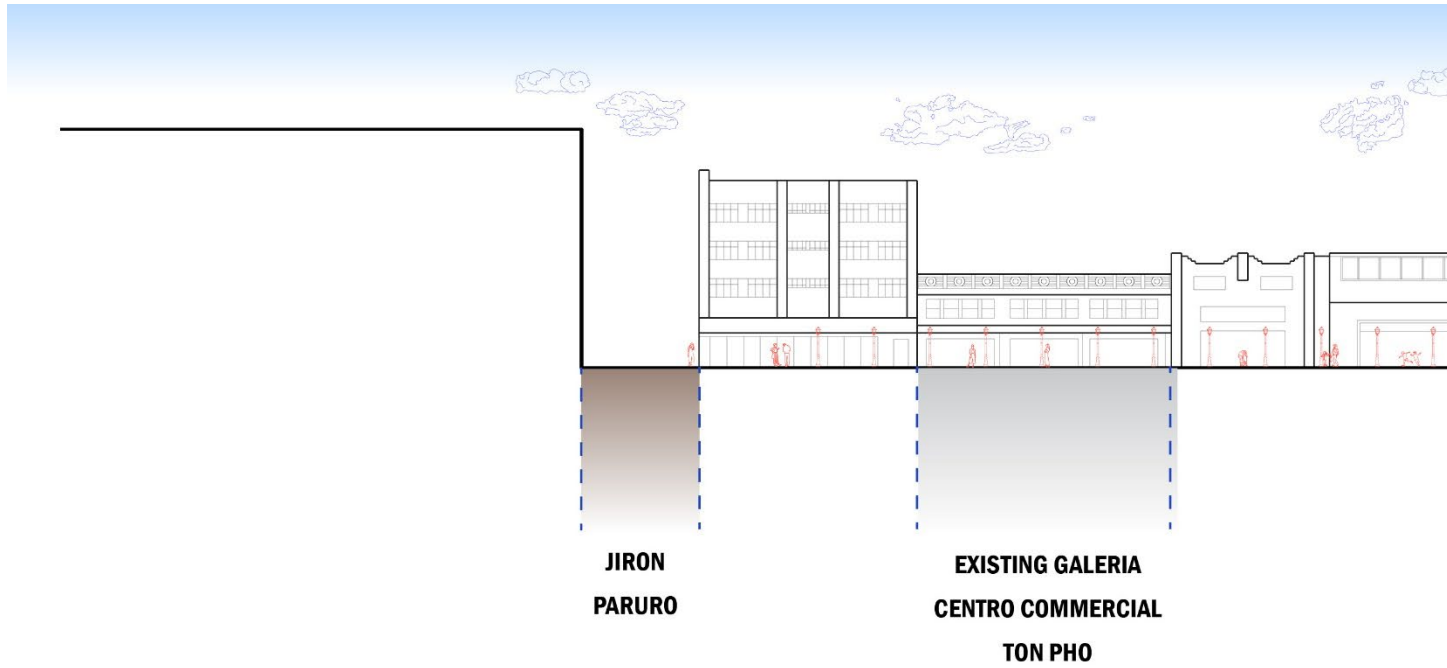
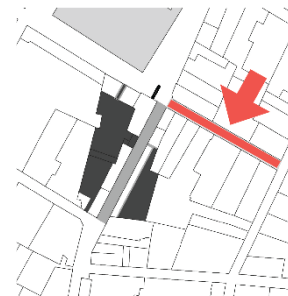


Figure 62. Street elevation BB. Calle Capón west elevation. Elevation by Author.



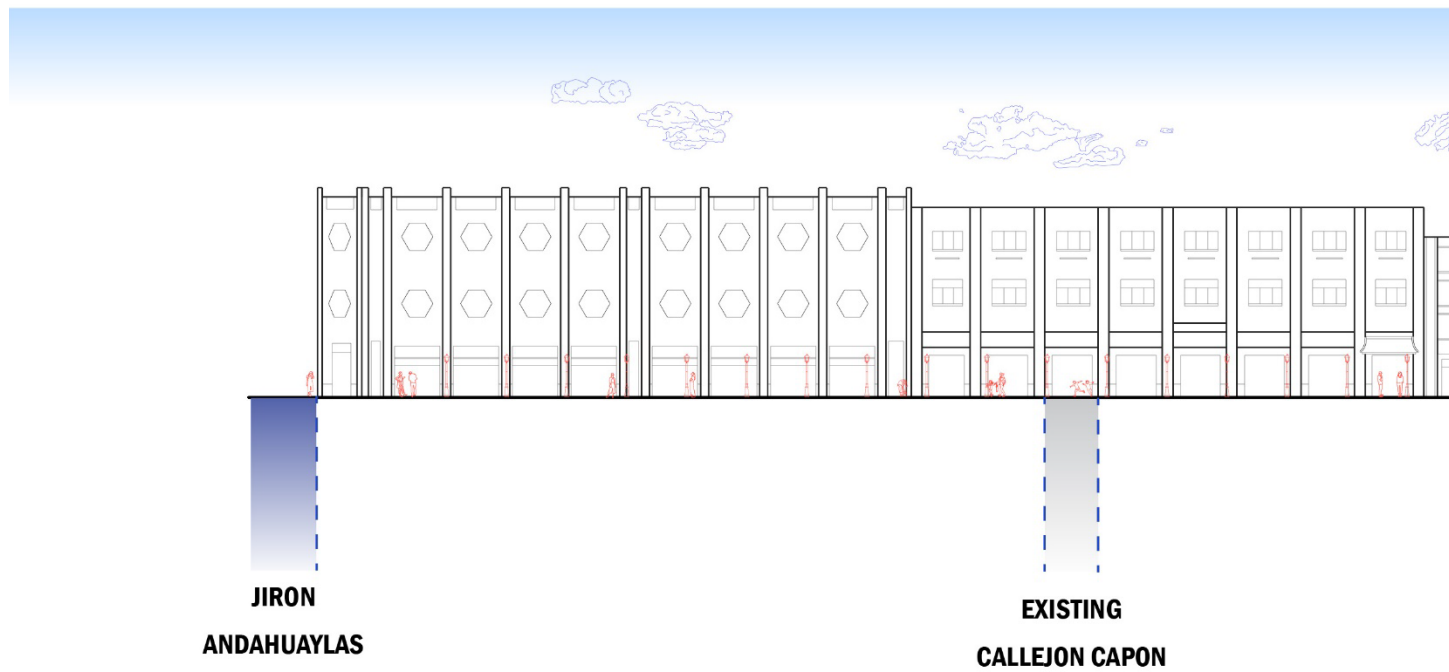


Figure 63. Street Elevation CC. Calle Capón east elevation. Elevation by Author.

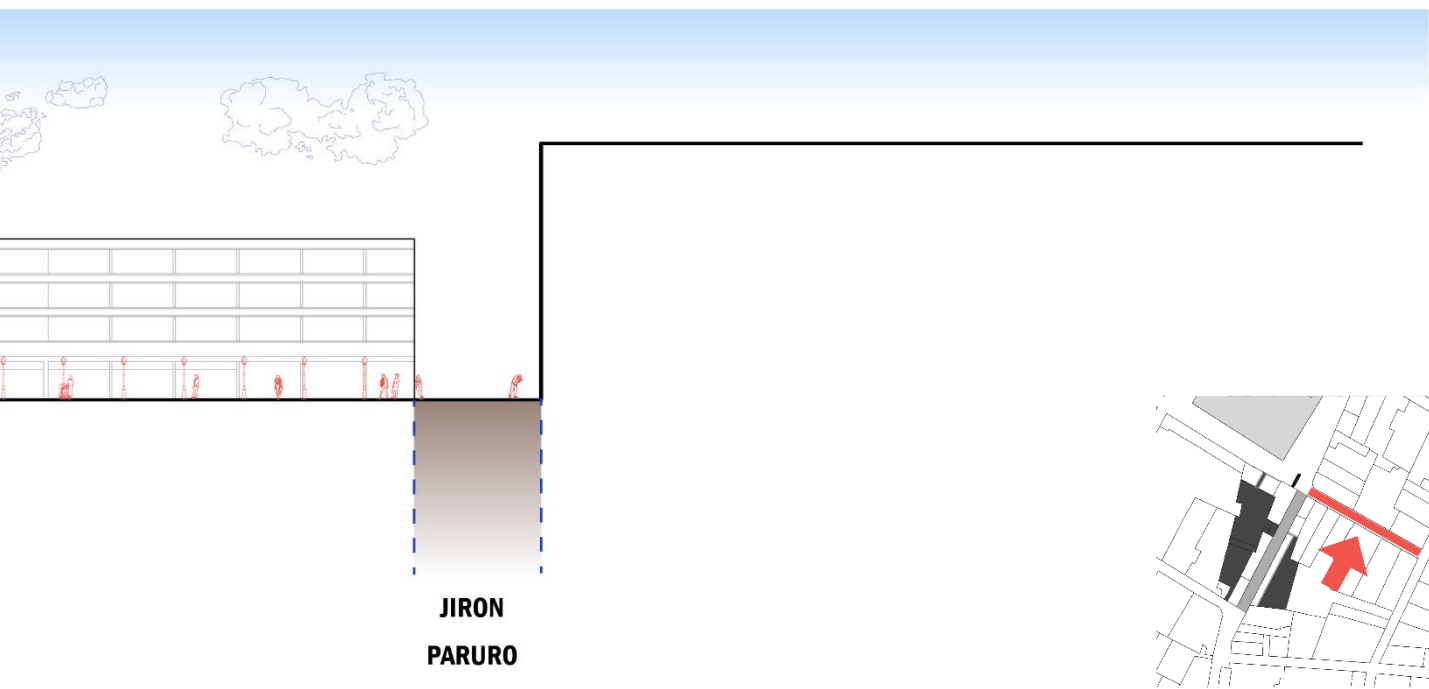
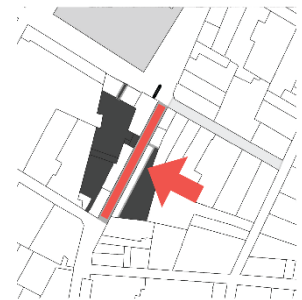
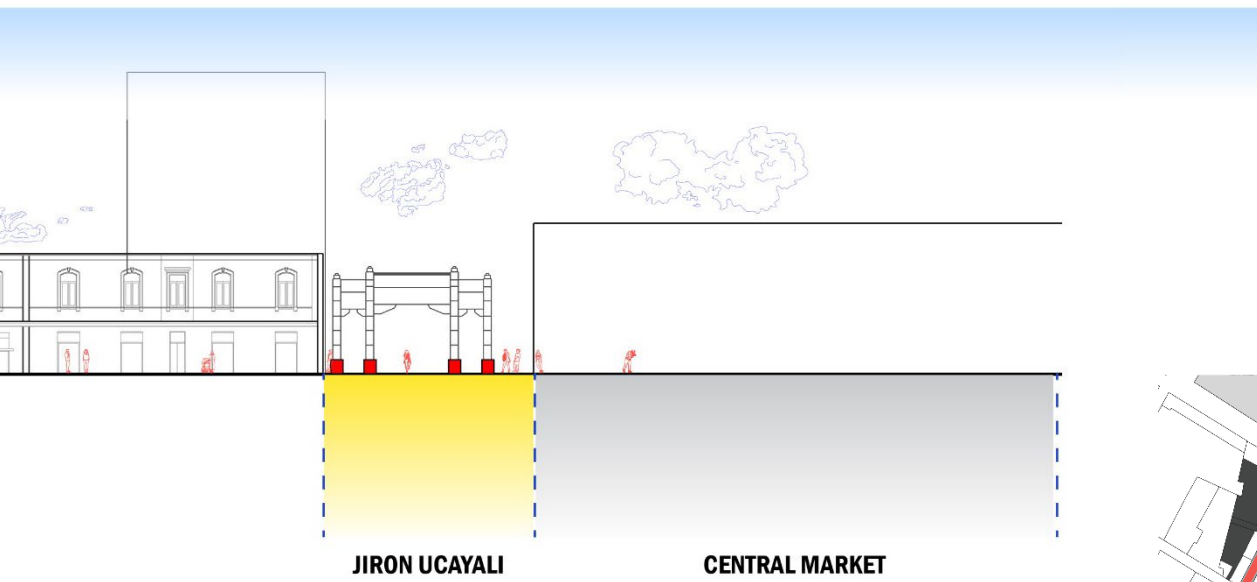




Figure 64. Street Elevation DD. North elevation of Jirón Andahuaylas. Elevation by Author.



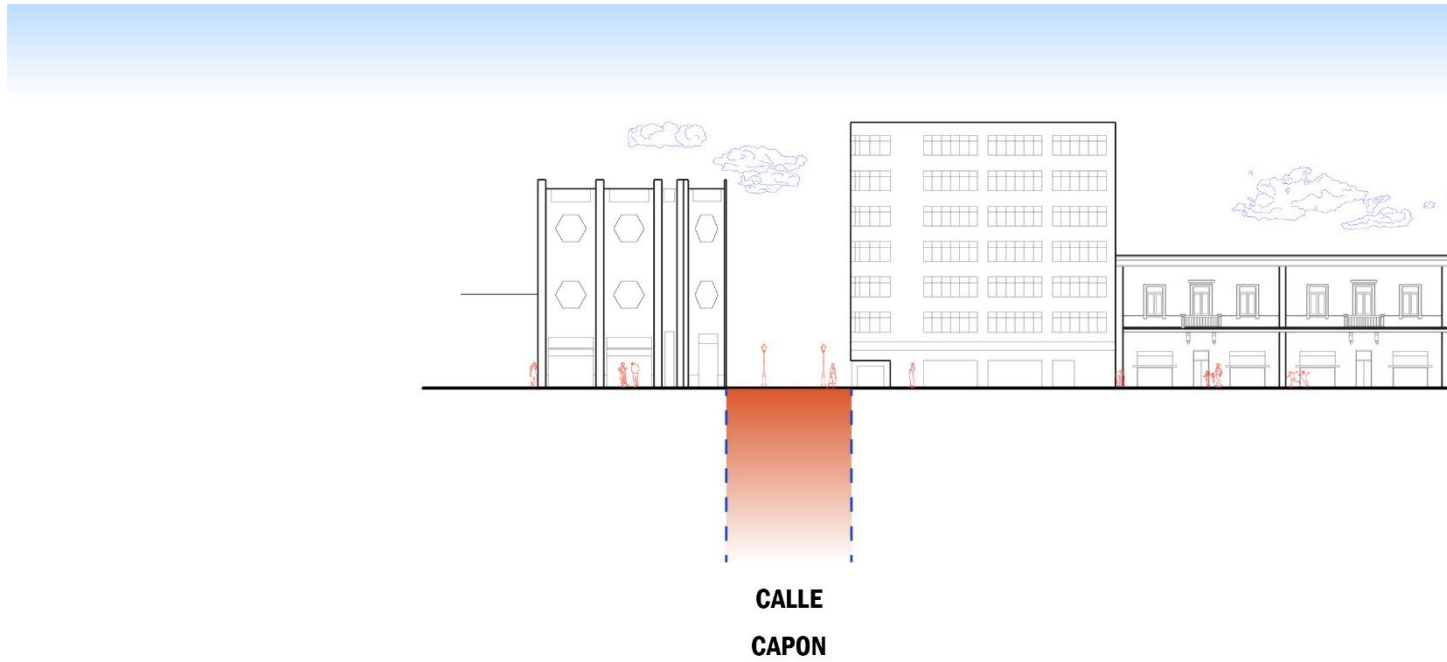
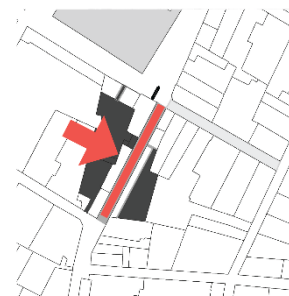


Figure 65. Street Elevation EE. South elevation of Jirón Andahuaylas. Elevation by Author.



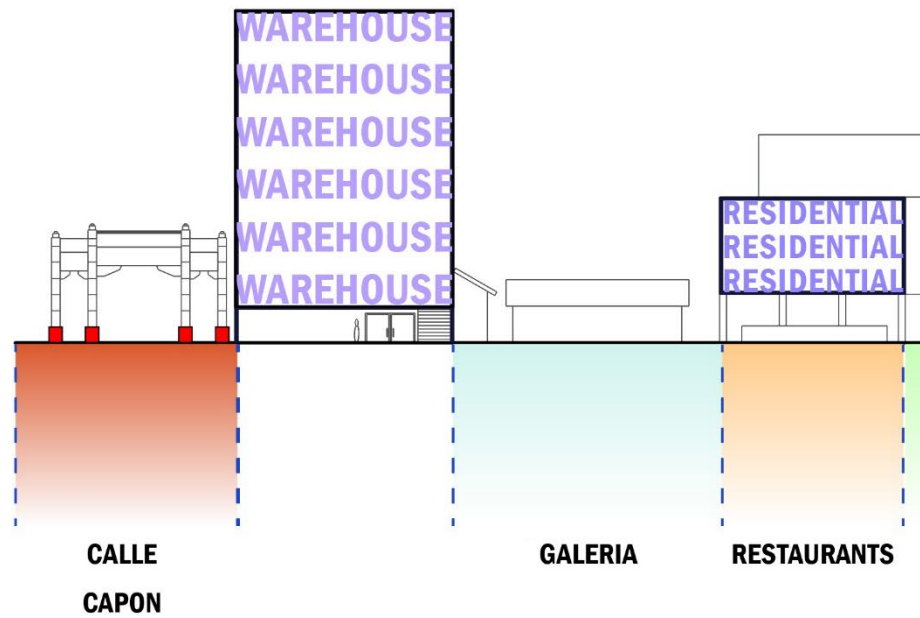


Figure 66. Section AA. Cut along the interior programming of the north block of the site. Section by Author.

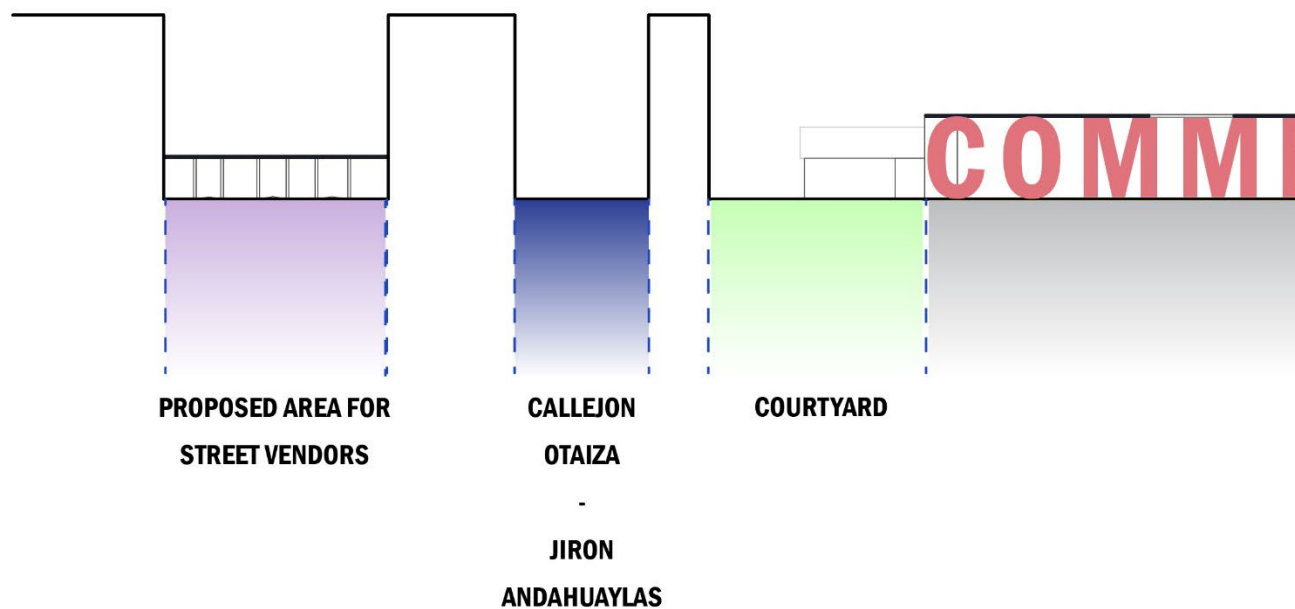
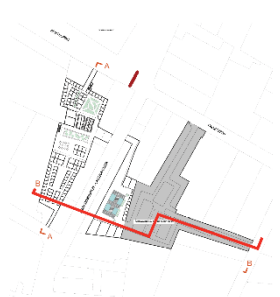
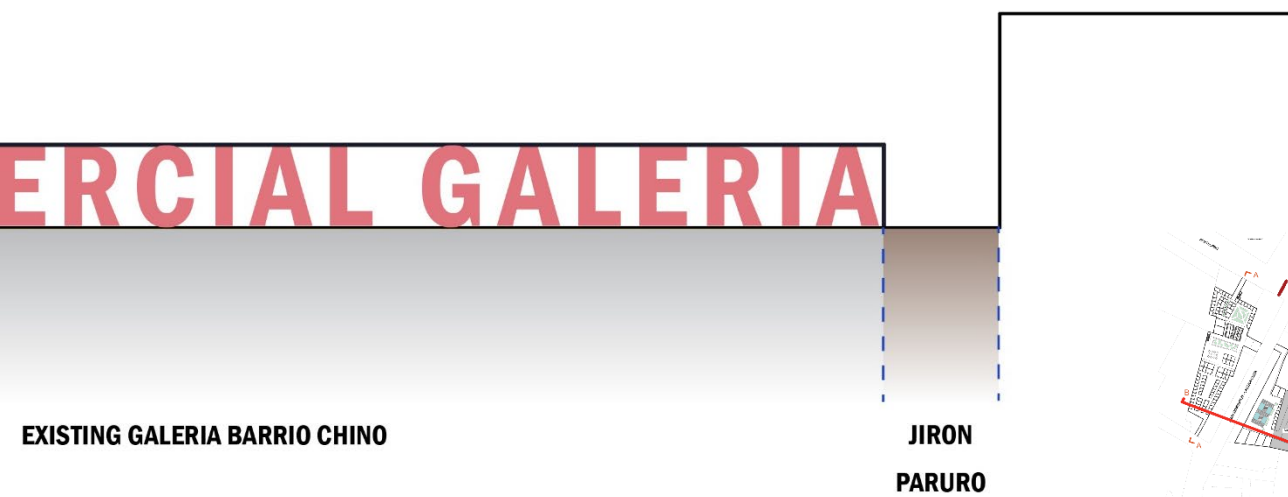
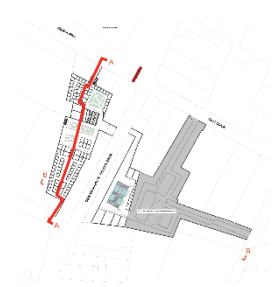
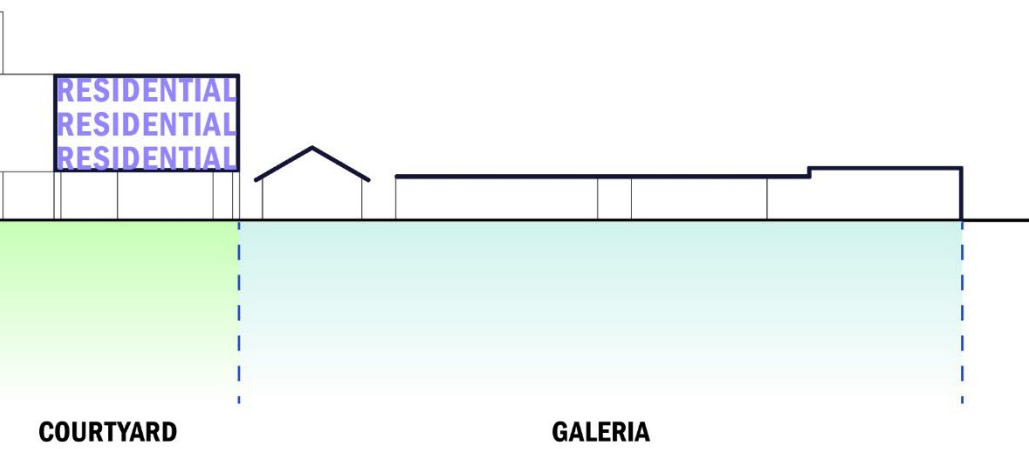


Figure 67. Section BB. Cut along the interior programming of the north and south block of the site. Section by Author.



7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Design Reflection

Callejón Otaiza existed when a large percentage of the Chinese population in Lima had settled near the Central Market. The site's history was significant, as the Chinese community lost a home and a community hub. With the displacement of this large community building, they were forced away from the city or to settle in with friends or family in other nearby callejones.



Figure 68. Street sign for Calle Billinghamurst. Image by Author.

Although the community has since moved on, Callejón Otaiza was also forgotten. Today, the street it stands on has a plaque to commemorate Billinghamurst, the mayor of Lima, who ordered the destruction of Callejón Otaiza, leaving no remnants behind. The design for the site took this forgotten part of history and combined it with a commercial typology to bring awareness to the past and reconnect new waves of Chinese immigrants with past ones. The design is both a commemoration in honour of the lost memory of Callejón Otaiza and simultaneously an act of resistance against its erasure by reclaiming the site for the community once again.

In response to the missing amenities and quality-of-life improvements that the suburban communities could offer, the design intends to merge and provide some of these spaces for the community. Courtyards are designed to be hidden away from the primary streets of Central Lima while creating spaces for the older generations to visit, reflect, and socialize with each other. A series of pathways connecting Chinatown creates refuge and exposure for the vendors.

The design of this thesis has not been without its challenges. As a resident of Lima and a part of this neighbourhood, many of the proposed design changes may not sit well with my family as they use some of the existing establishments on a day-to-day basis. One of these challenges comes from readapting the parking garage on Jirón Andahuaylas and changing the programming beneath the residential tower, which would affect my family. The parking garage that will be readapted is where most of my family parks their vehicles when entering Chinatown. I have other family members who reside in the apartment above who may be affected by the proposed programming for the space beneath. I debated how to tackle this challenge, which affected my decision-making regarding the programs. I also think that because this thesis is aimed at the Chinese community in Lima, it fails to deliver the same benefits to the Peruvian citizens in Chinatown. Ultimately, I could address my personal bias by not directly placing the galería program beneath the apartment, instead opting for one of the interior green spaces as an anchoring point denoting the residential use of the space.

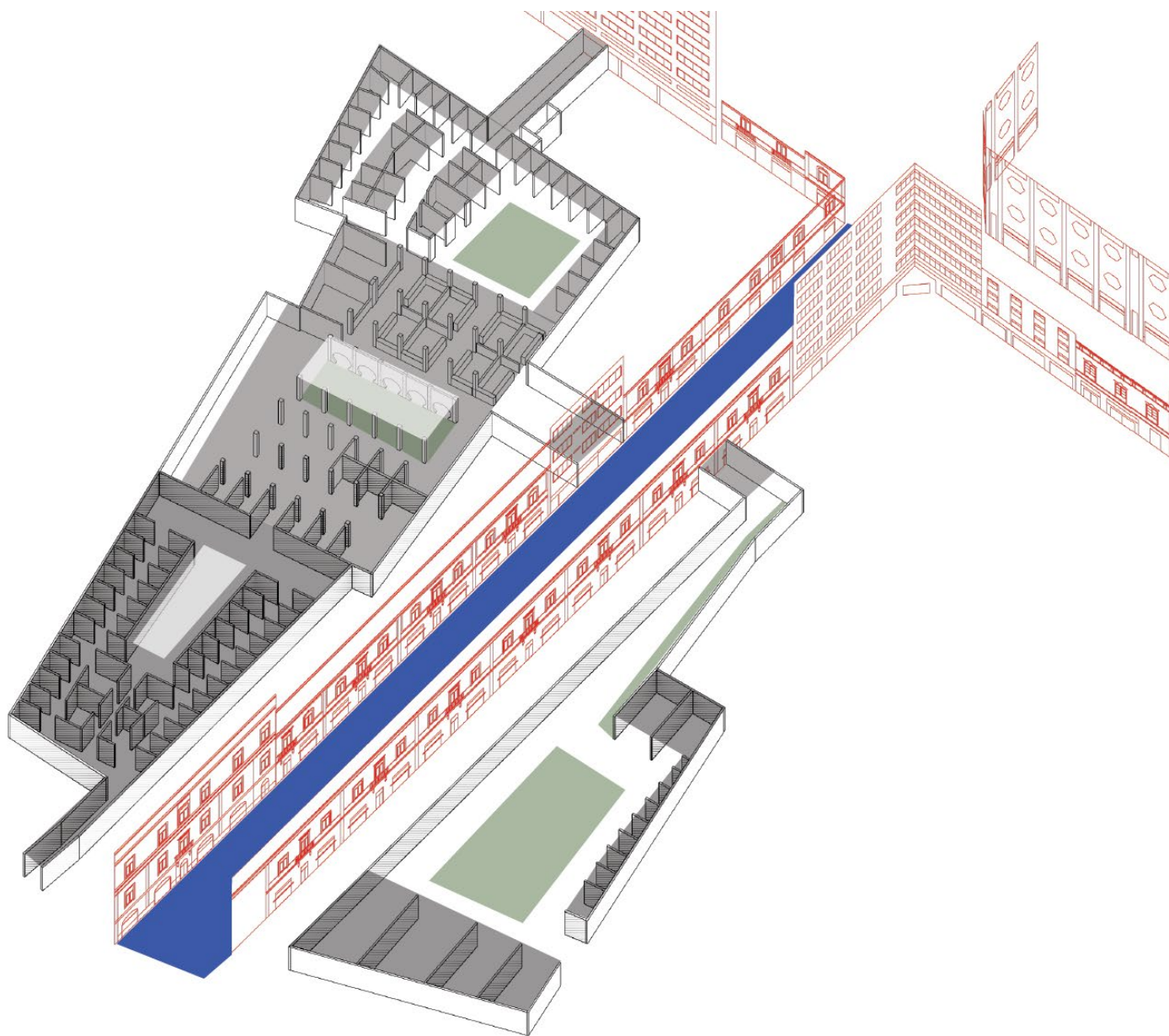


Figure 69. Axonometric diagram with Callejón Otaiza in blue.

7.2 Thesis Conclusion

The nature of Chinatown depicts multiple and diverse businesses and residents creating a community that relies on each other. Personal connections are formed over long-standing customer relations, purchasing goods at discounted rates, and support when trouble arises. The community has supported each other since the late 1870s. For almost two centuries now, the Chinese diaspora in Peru has practically become one with the Peruvian community in Central Lima.

This thesis explores Chinatown's existing identity and its relationship to the Chinese Peruvian community in Central Lima. Understanding the urban typologies and commercial architectural programming of where the Chinese residents have established themselves across Lima lends a site with a history of displacement to the Chinese community. It readapts it as an important historic site, increasing awareness of its history and reimagining displacement by creating a communal sense of pride in the past through the proposed design of the galería and its connected passages.

Much like the second renovation of Calle Capón, by having one lead architect for the project, aspects of the street correlate. From some of the repeating façades with hexagonal apertures to the street paving once again with hexagonal stone pavers, they form a relationship that gives Calle Capón its identity. In the case of the potential for Chinatown and its identity, they do not need to become similar, as the varying aspects and forms of buildings give it the character and charm it has today.

Instead, Chinatown's programming and connectivity give it its current identity. The community of Lima's Chinatown is what makes Chinatown what it is: the small but daily transactions between clients and business owners, greeting each other in the small streets of Chinatown and the larger social gatherings. All of these nuances make up Chinatown. Considering that, this thesis attempts to find a solution using architectural thinking to design and solve an issue. Still, maybe the problem is not something architectural skills alone can solve, as the identity of Chinatown does not reside in its buildings but rather in its people.

As the population in Lima is expected to continuously increase by 1.5% annually, it begs the question: does the city plan to grow and reinforce the infrastructure to support such a large influx? Would there be any strategies in Central Lima or Chinatown to solve the housing crisis in the area? A future architectural project could envision restructuring the urban fabric of Chinatown to support a larger population. There is potential to create new homes, add new internal passages between commercial buildings, and generally reorganize the flow of pedestrian traffic with commercial strategies.



Figure 70. Photograph of crowds on Jirón Andahuaylas shopping and passing through to the rest of Chinatown, 2024. Photograph by Author.

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Glossary

Chifa: Chinese-Peruvian restaurants. The word originates from the Chinese saying chifan.

Callejón: a path or stretch between walls, houses, or terrain elevations, like an alley or backstreet. It also denotes a tenement with a bathroom and rooms arranged symmetrically along an open corridor.

Callejones: Plural of Callejón.

Galería: Commercial centre building with densely placed stalls ranging from retail to restaurants.

Calle Capón: Pedestrian street in Lima's Chinatown decorated with Chinese symbols and the twelve Chinese zodiacs.

Mercado Central is Lima's historic district's central market. On three levels, Peruvian vendors sell everything from raw meat to miscellaneous goods.

Estibador/Cargador: A worker who moves and delivers products, typically from vendors selling by the bulk.

Paifang: Chinese gate or archway. It often denotes the entrance or boundary of Chinatown in diasporic cities.

