Synopsis:

The objective of this thesis is to investigate possibilities of introducing a new live-in population in Chinatown.

It is apparent that the experience of living in Chinatown is current being forgotten, and the area, which was once regarded as a ‘living’ place is now transformed into a ‘working’ place. The importance of placing the urban software of people living in a place as an active, participating component to the ‘becoming’ of the place is focused.

This population would serve as a source of positive influence to a healthy living environment that would retain, if not propel, the social, historical, and cultural continuity of Chinatown in the contemporary urban conditions.

An appropriate residential population injected along with the new economic elements would also ensure an integral organic entity to the city, active with domestic life and commercial vibrancy around the clock and serve as a counter balance to the eventual homogenising of the commerce environment, which is catered to a transient, foreign clientele.

The design focus is to encompass a development appropriate to contemporary urban and economic context.

Therefore, the search is for a suitable ‘new citizen’ to be housed in Chinatown. These ‘new citizens’, and the lifestyles attached to them would have to be coherent with current economic and social situation of city living, and at the same time.

Within the URA Master Plan 1998, numerous sites are zoned for residential with commercial usage at the 1st storey only. The proposal is an attempt to
extend URA's brief for the selected sites of having residential with commercial usage only at the 1st storey, and propose a medium-rise high dense mixed-used development, which consist of a mixture of retail shops, offices, residential units and dual-functional 'office-home' units.

These is also this introduction of a new building type - dual functional units that supports both residential and commercial or office uses, that allow flexibility for the residents to both work and live within the city.