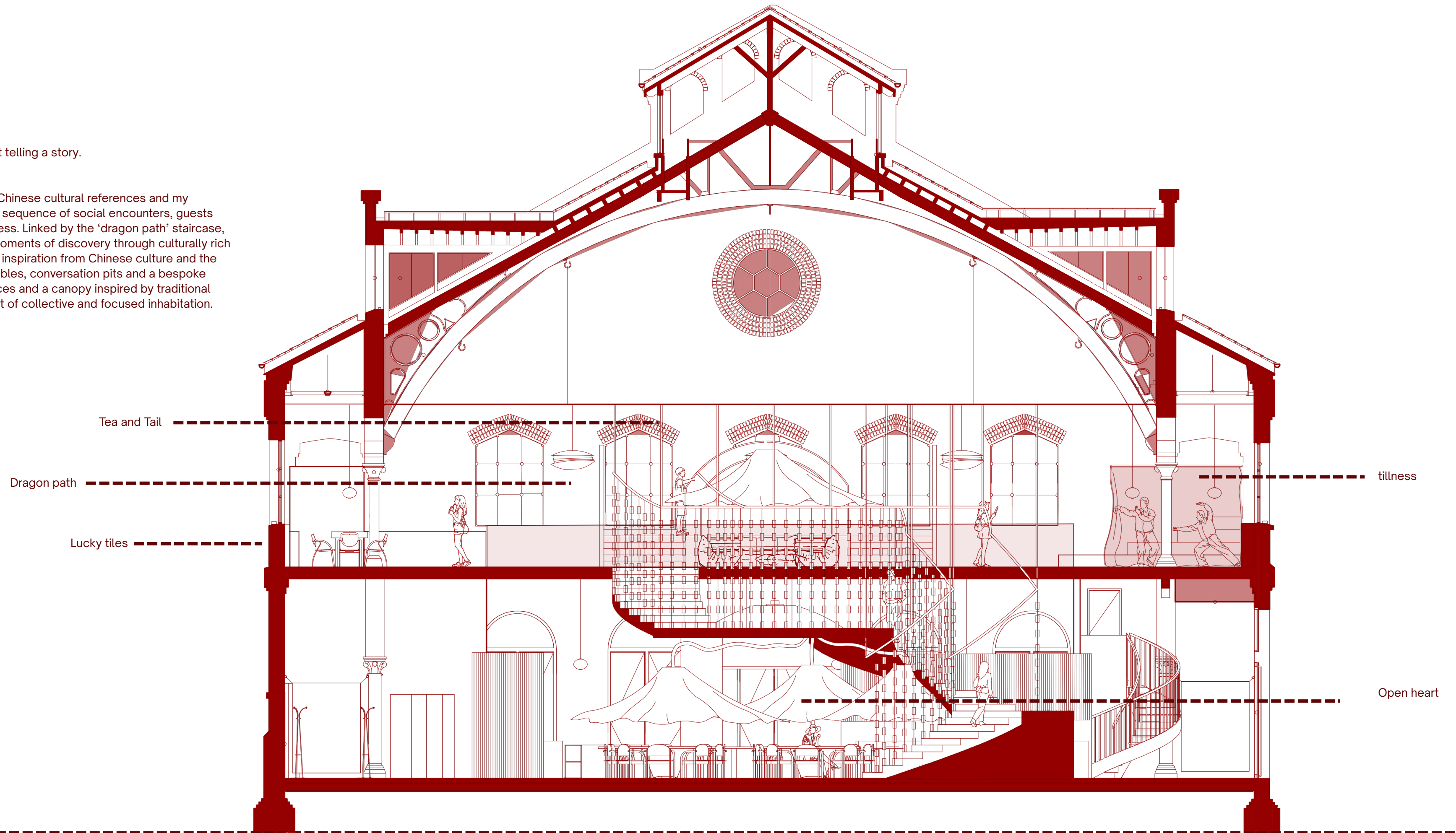




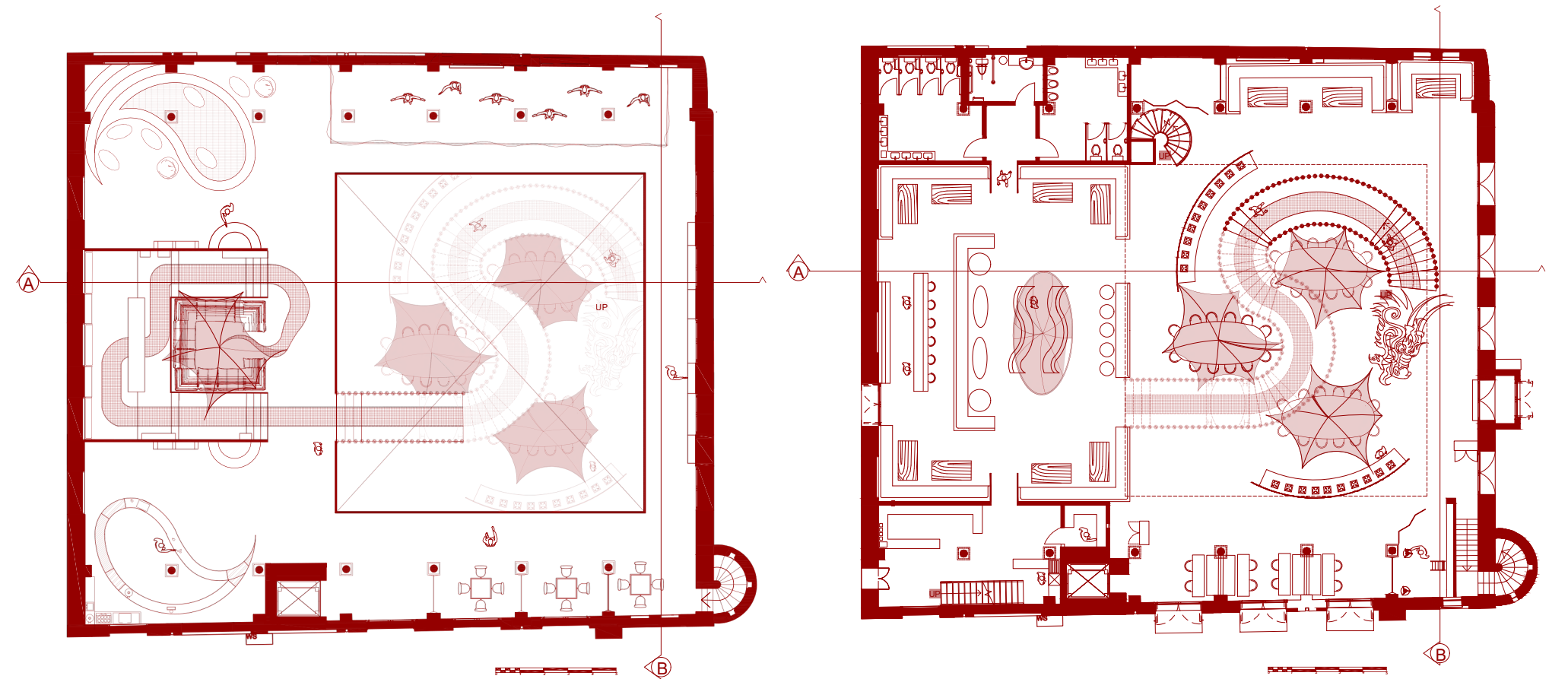
# OPEN SEAT 空位

Chinese culture shaping a spatial atmosphere whilst telling a story.

'Open Seat' unfolds as a spatial journey shaped by Chinese cultural references and my Chinese-English heritage. Choreographed through a sequence of social encounters, guests move between atmospheres of intimacy and openness. Linked by the 'dragon path' staircase, the two floors become a spatial narrative, guiding moments of discovery through culturally rich spaces. Bespoke joinery and materiality draw direct inspiration from Chinese culture and the urban character of Hong Kong. Family-style dining tables, conversation pits and a bespoke library unit defined by bamboo walls, red tiled surfaces and a canopy inspired by traditional Chinese umbrellas, construct an interior environment of collective and focused inhabitation.



The experience unfolds as a journey of discovery: folding dumplings by hand, watching the performance of noodles stretched, and ascending the Dragon Path to share tea and stories. Moments of play emerge through mahjong, while opportunities for exploration continue within the retail space. The journey concludes in guided and open mat Tai Chi, allowing guests to reconnect with both body and mind before departing.



Having Chinese-English heritage I was fortunate enough to grow up with a culturally diverse childhood and as I grew older I learnt to embrace it and resonated with it. For me, Chinese culture is the warmth and authenticity it brings to my life, I want to be able to share my comfort with everyone and allow others who haven't got the chance, or like me want to reconnect with their roots, a place to do so. Chinese culture has always heavily emphasized family importance, with a typical expectation that when the children are old enough, they switch roles and take care of their parents. As well as an encouraged deep respect for their elders. (Filial Piety)  
My spatial experience should embody this, providing moments for guests to feel, not just be a part of.

Alongside research into the conceptual depth and meaning of the project, I also investigated the existing building to ensure the brief responded appropriately to the site. The building, formerly a German Gymnasium, possesses a strong architectural character and sense of grandeur. To respect and enhance these qualities, I developed a spatial layout and material strategy that draws out the building's inherent features while allowing them to coexist with the new programme I proposed. A building like this deserved a rich and intentional atmosphere to pair.

**Materiality**



Bamboo



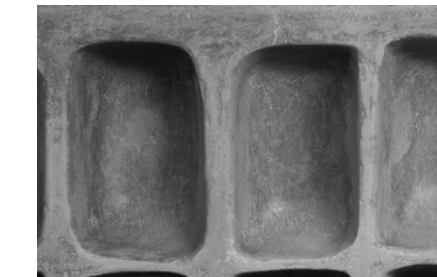
Clayworks



Mycellium



Chinese paper making



Datecrete

Sustainability played a key role in my materiality, with investigations into new materials such as Datecrete, a concrete alternative made from crushed date pits, I found numerous options to embed into the space.

**What does Chinese culture mean to you?**

**ME** - To me it means authentic community and family orientated connections.

**MUM** - Family is the heart of society, and respecting elders, especially your parents.

**POR POR** - I believe that Chinese culture has a long history and rich historical memories

**What'd your fondest memory of Hong Kong / China?**

**ME** - My fondest memory in HK will probably be when we are all together round the table for dinner, all my aunts and uncles, cousins and Paw Paw. Similarly any family and friend bbq's on the beach we have.

**MUM** - Spending time with family and friends because we live so close that it makes meeting up easy.

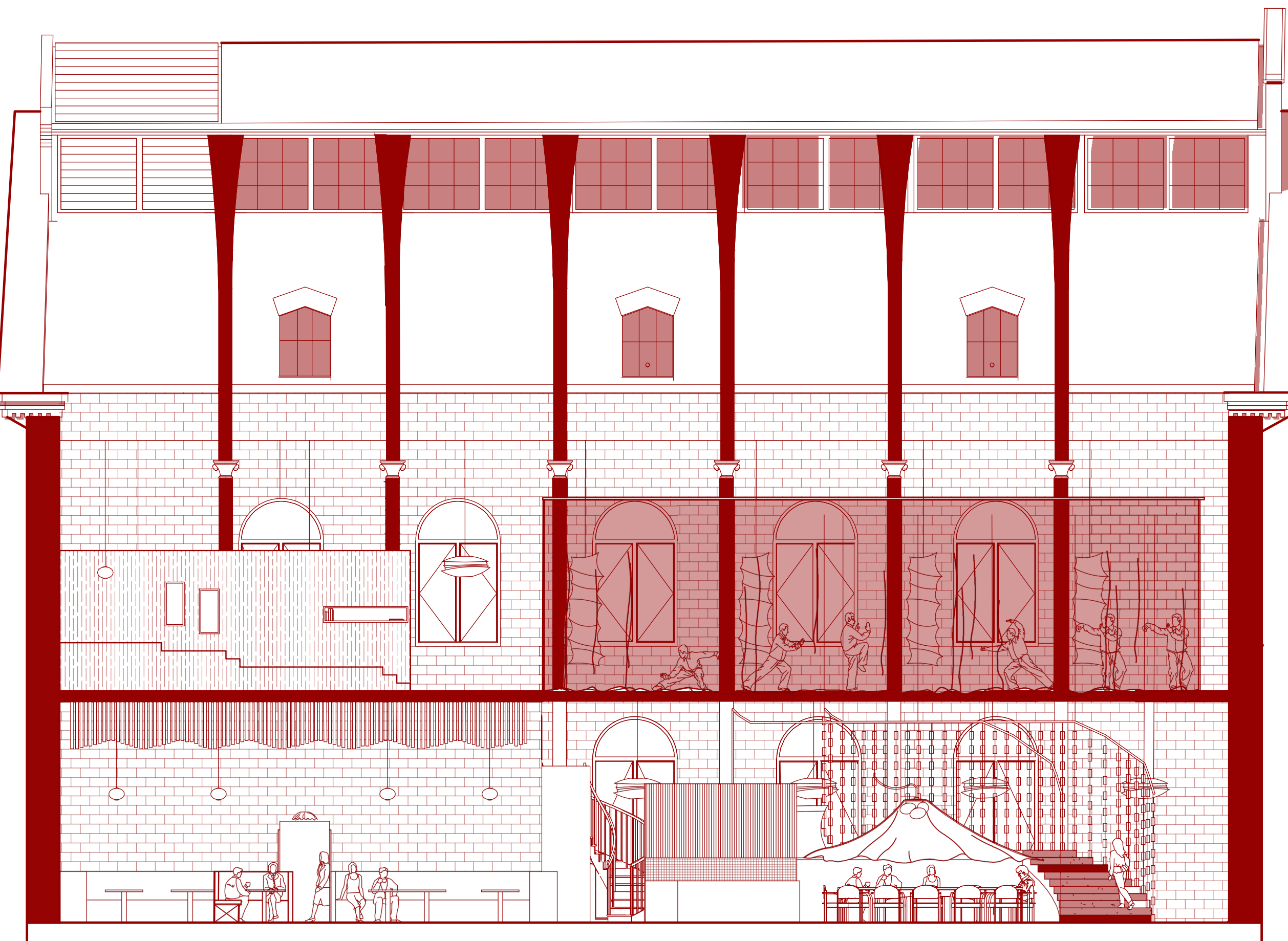
**POR POR** - Beautiful mountains and rivers, a beautiful hometown sentiment, a feeling of peace and tranquility in people's hearts

**If you could pick one thing from your culture what would you share?**

**ME** - I would share the love of food, but how its very much a social thing and a loving act.

**MUM** - Having weekend dinners with my family at my parents' house, especially since we all have our own families. It creates for a nice atmosphere.

**POR POR** - Chinese martial arts, Tai Chi and Chinese Dance



**OPEN SEAT 空位**  
**Context and Research**

Research for this project was crucial for my project, the context in which it sits in resonates with me personally. My own experience has become the backbone of this project, the beauty of Chinese culture I know to be true forming each design decision that curates it's spatial character and experience.



## One heart

As you enter the building you are immediately introduced to the beautiful rich atmosphere that surrounds 'One heart'. A symbol for connection and time for friends and family, you are immersed into the art of chinese dumpling folding. Here you sit amongst soon-to-be-friends and get hands on with the meal prep!



1

## Flow

Venturing deeper into the building, you notice a theatrical demonstration of noodle stretching, with drop lighting casting beautiful shadows of the noodles dancing in the air, you sit down in 'Flow', on one of the booth tables. A powerful performance of culture and excitement. You wait in awe for a taste.



2

## Tea and Tail

As you reach the top, the red path leads you straight through a beautiful bespoke book unit, with different layers and shaped bookshelves, to an intimate conversation pit, enclosed with a shade inspired by chinese umbrellas. You reached the end of the dragons tail. The name 'Tea and tail' represents the 'tales' you read at the 'tail' of the dragon, with a cafe on the left serving traditional chinese teas and a fun layered seating area on the right side. A wonderful way to immerse yourself in chinese literature and the beauty of chinese tea.



3

## Lucky tiles

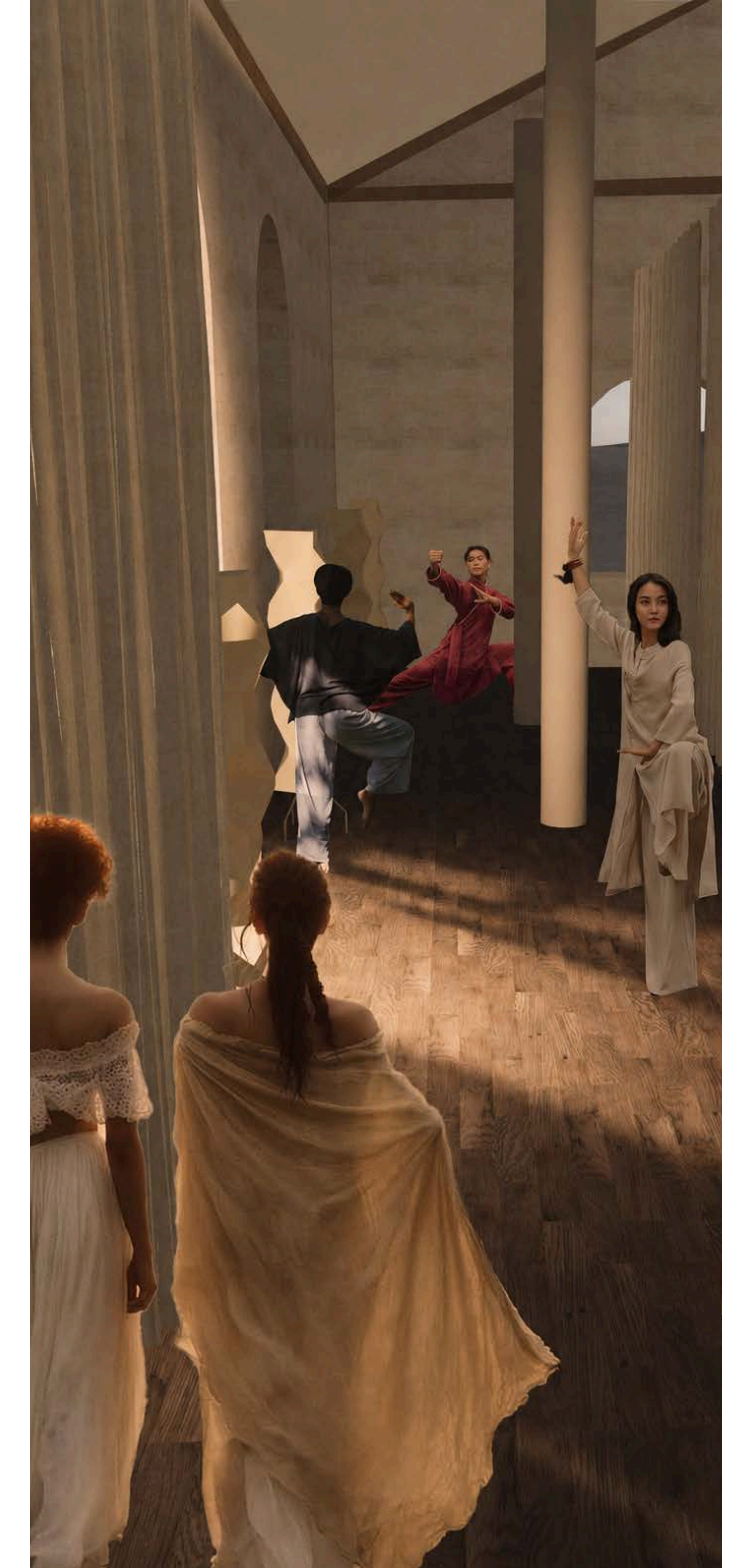
'Lucky Tiles' is situated on the side of the building there are also numerous mahjong tables. You are welcomed onto a table to play and a fun exciting game is afoot. Test out your skill... or luck in a game that was developed by the Chinese in the Qing Dynasty.



4

## Stillness

On the opposite side, after passing the small shop shelves of teas and books, you are met with an elegant linen curtain. The windows open, a gentle breeze moving the fabric in a slow dance. Your drawn in and you see people in harmony, breaths still and movement controlled and intentional. A space to experience the beauty of Tai Chi. A moment of 'Stillness' in your day.



5



### OPEN SEAT 空位

Key spaces

The spatial planning of the project's key spaces was instrumental in shaping the intended atmosphere. With the dragon path acts as a unifying circulation element, enhancing the overall experience travelling through the space. While the ground floor is characterised by vibrant food-centred interactions, the mezzanine level provides a deliberate contrast that encourages visitors to form connections and engage with one another at a slower, more intentional pace.

