

Bringing Arts into the Neighbourhoods

Choosing the Right Space and Strategy

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by
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for the
National Arts Council

Bringing Arts into the Neighbourhoods: Choosing the Right Space and Strategy

Published by the National Arts Council
90 Goodman Road, Goodman Arts Centre,
Singapore 439053.

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of authors unless stated otherwise.
All quotes presented are taken from the
focus group discussions or interviews with
local artists and art event organisers and
paraphrased for the purpose of this guide,
with the written consent obtained from
each participant.

ISBN: 978-981-14-1356-8



Centre for Sustainable Asian Cities
School of Design & Environment

This guide is an outcome of a research collaboration between the National Arts Council (NAC) and the Centre for Sustainable Asian Cities (CSAC) at the School of Design and Environment (SDE), National University of Singapore (NUS).

Contents

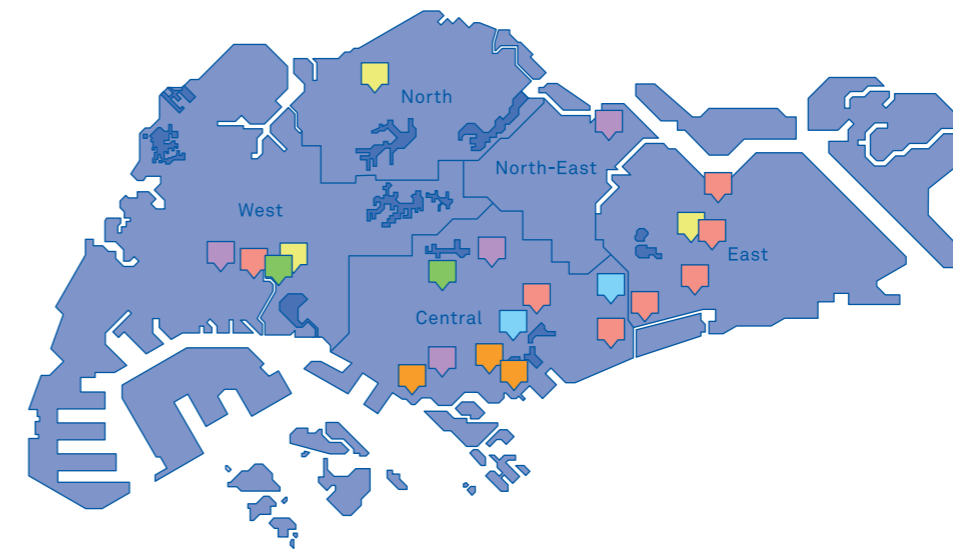
About this Guide	3
Key Concepts: Creating the Place, Fostering an Arts Ecology	4
Steps, Tools and Strategies	5
Three Key Questions	6
Choose the Right Space	
Step 1: Articulate Your Vision	8
Step 2: Consult Secondary Sources to Understand the Neighbourhood	10
Step 3: Visit the Neighbourhood and Evaluate Shortlisted Spaces	12
Filter 1: General Spatial Conditions	13
Filter 2: Pedestrian Activity.....	21
Filter 3: Suitability Criteria	30
Checklists for Neighbourhood Space Evaluation	40
Choose the Right Strategy	
What can Space do for the Arts?	44
What can the Arts do for a Space?	46
What can Arts and Space do for the Community, and <i>vice versa</i> ?	47
Footnotes	50
References	51

About this Guide

This guide is designed to support the growth and establishment of arts where people live, work, and play. It aims to help sustain the efforts to increase diverse touch-points for communities to encounter the arts, strengthen capability among stakeholders to develop a sense of community in neighbourhoods through the arts, and enhance a sense of place between residents and shared spaces through a diversity of arts and cultural experiences.

The content presented in this guide represents the synthesis of a study conducted at selected Arts and Culture Nodes. The Arts and Culture Nodes initiative, launched by the National Arts Council in 2012, establishes an island-wide network of arts touch-points within neighbourhoods to provide all Singaporeans with greater access to quality arts, bring vibrancy and stronger identity to public spaces, and increase opportunities for community participation and bonding through the arts.

Such touch-points go beyond formal arts venues (typically found in the city centre) and involve partnerships with various institutions such as libraries, government agencies, civic centres, community and recreational clubs and corporate organisations that play a key role in their respective neighbourhood.



Arts and Culture Nodes As of May 2019

The island-wide network of arts touch-points within neighbourhoods will continue to evolve.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Libraries | Recreational Clubs |
| Gardens and Parks | Corporate Organisations |
| Community Clubs and Civic Centres | Others |

For a current listing, [click here](#).¹

Companion Guide:

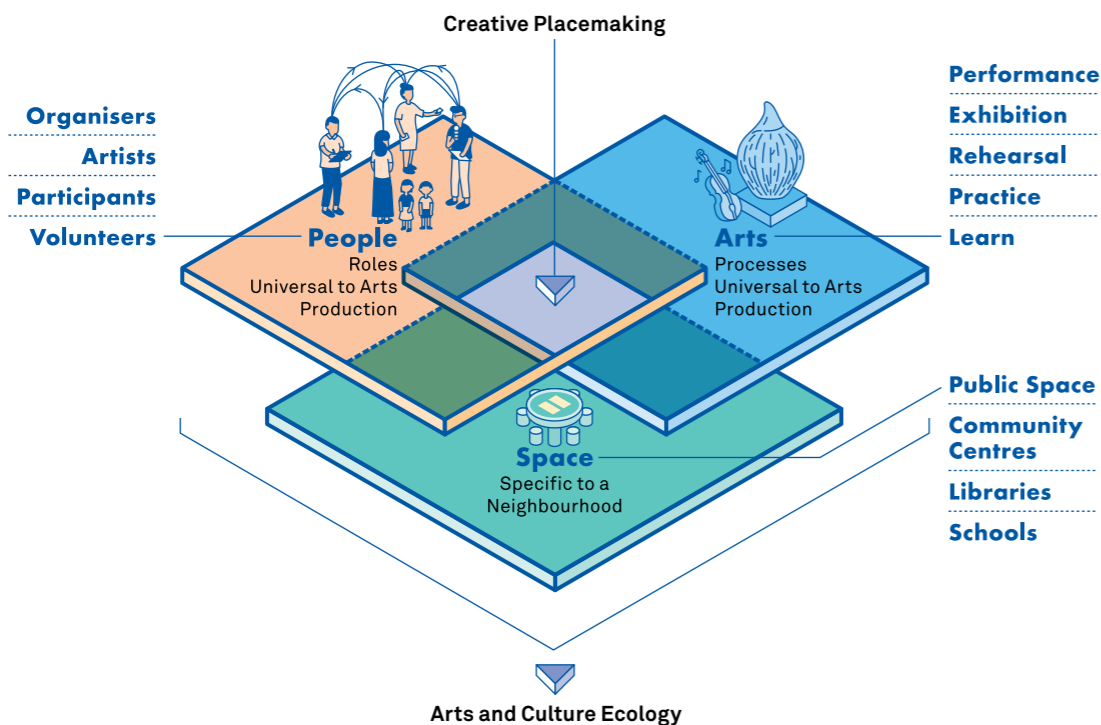


To be used collectively or independently, [click to download](#).²

Key Concepts: Creating the Place, Fostering an Arts Ecology

Neighbourhoods provide valuable spatial and human resources for arts and culture. These opportunities are however, often untapped. Good overall quality of space is essential for social activities such as arts and cultural activities.³ Therefore, careful selection of spaces in the neighbourhood and understanding the ways communities use them are critical.

The diagram below summarises the key elements of a neighbourhood arts and culture ecology. There are numerous possibilities for intersections between stakeholders, arts processes and spaces.



Creative Placemaking

Creative placemaking is the process of bringing positive impacts to the community through a symbiotic relationship between arts, space, and people.⁴ Creative placemaking may or may not involve permanent physical changes to neighbourhood spaces, but it always involves enhancing the sense of belonging and attachment to the neighbourhood and community.⁵

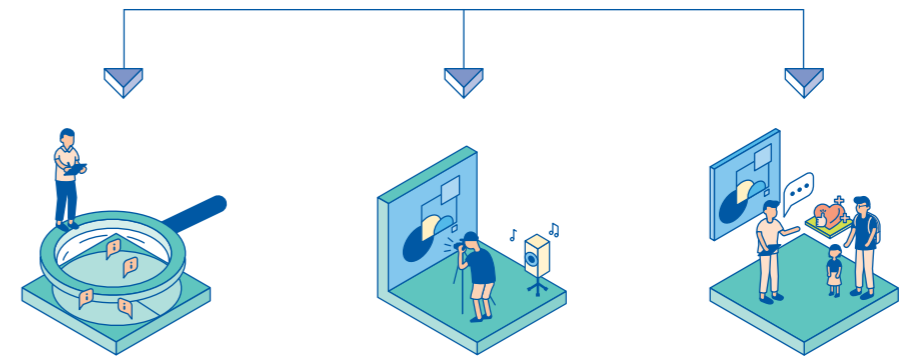
Arts and Culture Ecology

Neighbourhood arts and culture ecology refers to a comprehensive network of physical infrastructure (space), people, and organisations established to support the regular creation, practice, performance and exhibition of the arts. It offers a useful means to leverage the symbiotic clustering of creative resources and activities within the neighbourhood.⁶

Steps, Tools and Strategies

This guide offers a systematic approach to evaluate key spatial conditions and user activities in the neighbourhood and eases the process of choosing conducive settings for community arts and cultural activities. Accordingly, it proposes steps, tools and strategies for anyone keen to build a strong ecology of arts and culture spaces, programmes and communities to boost vibrant public life and creative activities in the neighbourhood. The overarching aim of this guide is to:

Support Growth of Arts and Culture Ecology in the Neighbourhood



Choose Suitable Arts Venues

Present a step-by-step framework to identify and evaluate spatial opportunities in the neighbourhood and choose the most suitable formal and informal venues for community arts and cultural activities

Activate Public Space

Articulate strategies to activate public space through arts

Engage and Benefit the Community

Suggest ways in which arts and space can actively engage the community and trigger positive social impact

Whom this guide is for

- **Organisers of community arts** who want to understand the spatial capacities of their neighbourhoods (within and beyond their own premises), and choose the most appropriate spaces (and collaborators) for their arts and cultural activities.
- **Agencies and policy makers** who want to consider informal venues for the arts or identify potential partners in neighbourhoods.
- **Artists** who want to understand how their arts practices might best synergise with the spaces, people and activities in a neighbourhood.

Three Key Questions

With space, people, and the arts as the main components, this guide develops strategies for establishing successful community arts and culture initiatives and networks in the neighbourhood, framed by the following key questions:



What can Space do for the Arts?



What can the Arts do for a Space?



What can Arts and Space do for the Community, and vice versa?

Choose the Right Space



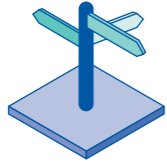
STEP
1 Articulate
Your Vision



STEP
2 Consult Secondary Sources
to Understand the Neighbourhood



STEP
3 Visit the Neighbourhood and
Evaluate Shortlisted Spaces



STEP

1 Articulate Your Vision

Reflect on key intentions and requirements of your planned arts and cultural activity in reference to your spatial capacity. Any of the three aspects of placemaking – People, Space, and Arts – can serve as a starting point for developing community arts initiatives or strategies.

- What outcomes do you want to achieve?
E.g. activate the space through the arts;
promote quality arts in the neighbourhoods;
deepen or diversify arts engagement;
bring the community together?
- What are (or might be) the challenges in achieving such outcomes?
- What resources do you have – space, human resources, skills, time, etc.?

👁️ Examples of potential visions

- Activating under-utilised indoor and outdoor neighbourhood spaces through the arts
- Boosting social bonding and inter-generational interaction
- Building a stronger sense of neighbourhood identity, pride and attachment through the arts
- Improving the well-being of elderly residents
- Empowering the residents by encouraging active community participation
- Supporting grassroots initiatives and boosting creativity through the arts
- Branding spaces and activities, etc.

What is Your Starting Point?

People



- Who is the target audience?
- How to engage them?
- Where do they gather?

Space



- What are the general spatial conditions?
- Is the space close to pedestrian activity?
- Does the space fulfil suitability criteria?

Arts



- What type of arts and cultural activity?
- What is the scale of the activity?
- What is the level of engagement?
- Who is the target audience?



STEP 2 Consult Secondary Sources to Understand the Neighbourhood

Consult online and offline resources to be informed about key landmarks, amenities and institutions in the selected neighbourhood (example on the right shows the key land use and amenities in Woodlands neighbourhood).

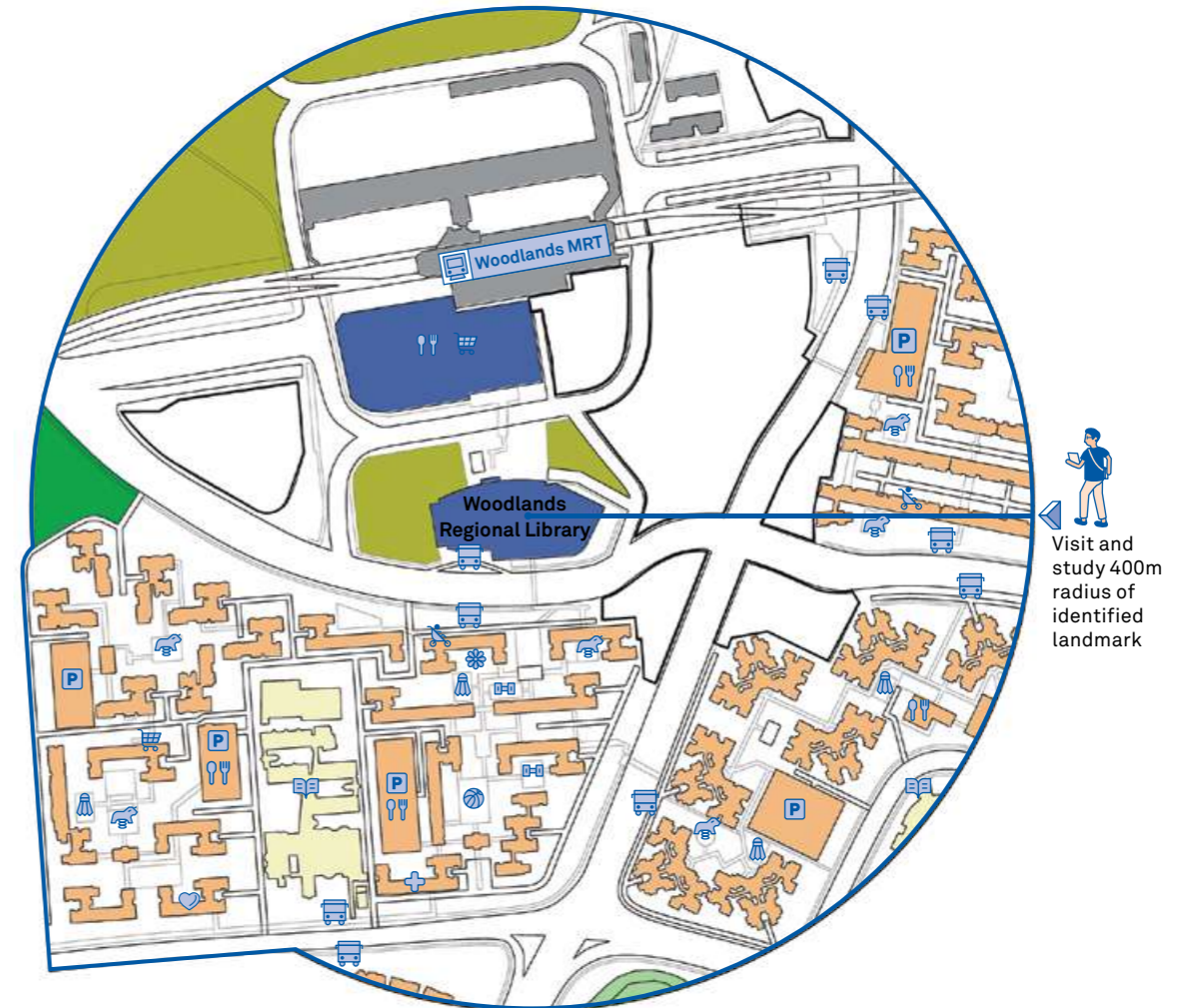
Identify a potential partnering institution, public space or landmark and consider an area of about 400m radius (equivalent to a 5-minute walk) to visit and study in greater detail.

Identify and shortlist all potential spots for arts in the neighbourhood. Conduct a site visit to verify these initial choices.

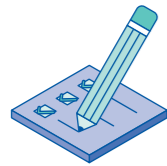
Notes

- Heaviest pedestrian flow typically occurs next to public transport stations and commercial areas (shopping centres, food courts, etc.).
- Spaces where people normally gather include commercial areas and public amenities (parks, playgrounds, sports courts, community clubs, etc.).
- Amenities such as amphitheatres, pavilions and void decks, contain activity only at certain times of the day or week.

Land Use and Amenities
Map of Woodlands Neighbourhood



Residential	Badminton	Food Court or Hawker Centre
Educational Institution	Basketball	Fitness Corner
Commercial	Bus Stop	Parking
Open Space	Community Centre	Playground
Park	Community Garden	School
Transport Facilities	Daycare or Kindergarten	Supermarket



STEP 3 Visit the Neighbourhood and Evaluate Shortlisted Spaces

Narrow the search for suitable spaces in the neighbourhood using the following three filters and Checklists for Neighbourhood Space Evaluation on pg. 40.



Filter 1: General Spatial Conditions

Inspect and validate basic spatial conditions of areas pre-selected in Step 2.



Filter 2: Pedestrian Activity

Observe movement patterns and stationary activities in and around the pre-selected areas and shortlist spaces for detailed evaluation.

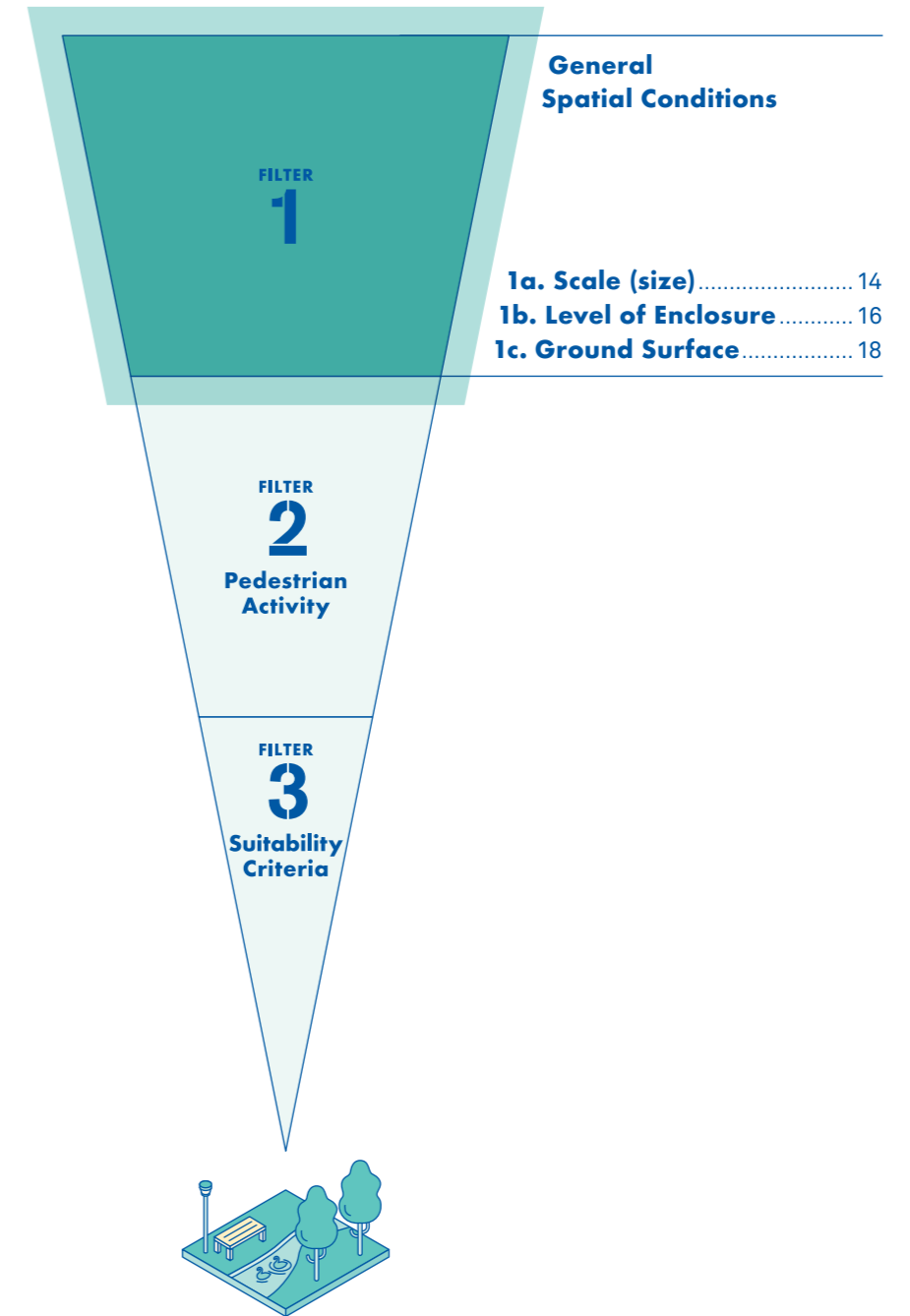


Filter 3: Suitability Criteria

Evaluate shortlisted spaces according to criteria for good public space and suitability for arts and cultural activities.

Filter 1: General Spatial Conditions

This filter describes basic pre-conditions of neighbourhood spaces to become arts and cultural activity venues.



1a. Scale (size)

The size of the venue is primarily defined by its floor area and participants capacity. While suitability depends on the type of arts and cultural activity, in general the larger the space, the more favourable it is considered, primarily due to its flexibility.

S	Small	Up to 200m ²
M	Medium	200-500m ²
L	Large	500-1,000m ²
XL	Extra Large	1,000-5,000m ²
XXL	Double Extra Large	Over 5,000m ²

Large Scale Spaces*	
<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Greater participants capacity + Greater flexibility for the arrangement of stage, seating area, etc. 	<p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced visibility of stage and performers - Reduced audibility - Lack of intimacy, which is important for social interaction - Weaker connection between the performers and participants

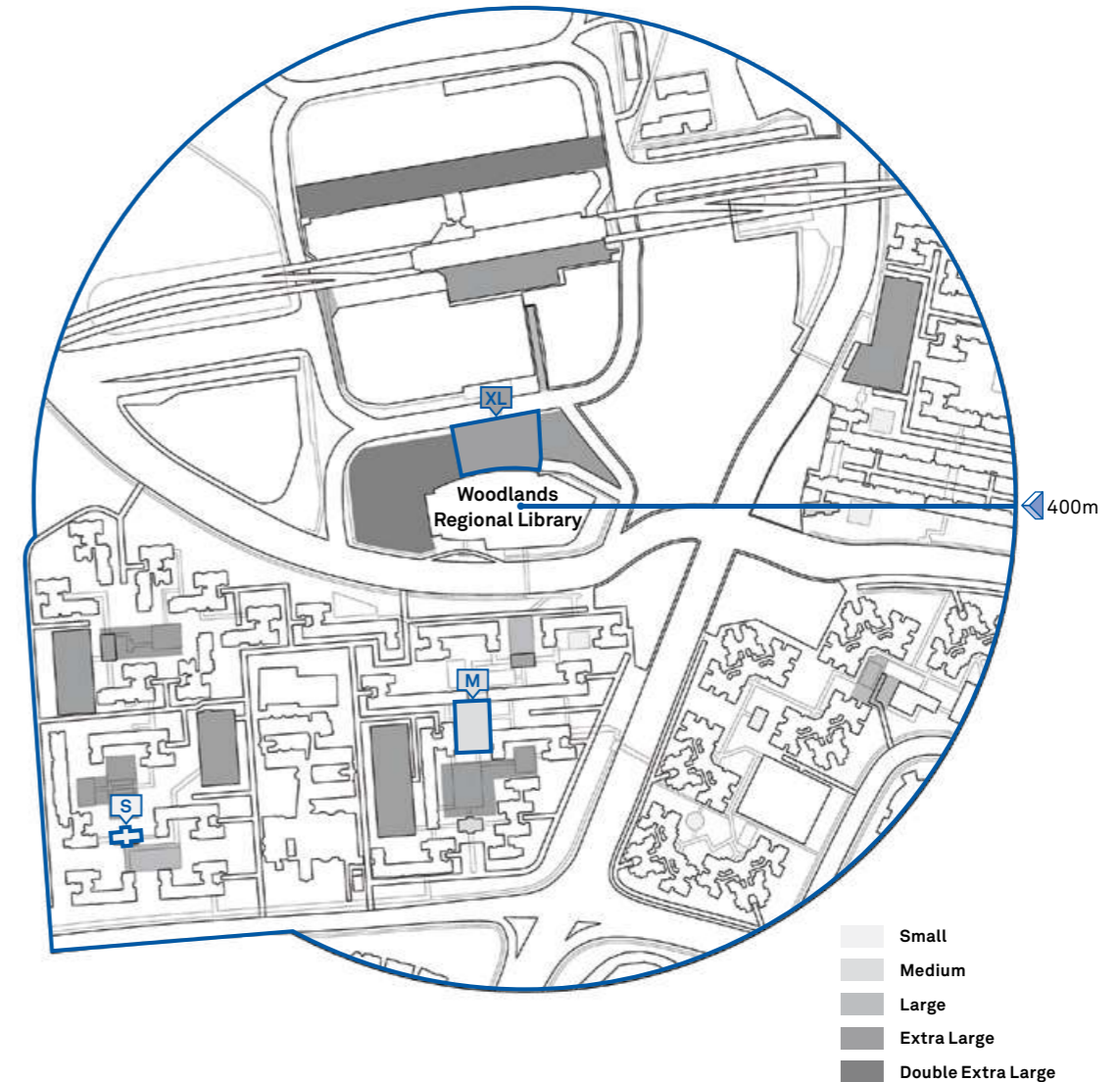
Notes

- In general, a seating place requires about 0.5m² of floor area. For more accurate estimation, areas dedicated for stage and main circulation should be deducted.
- Seated participants would normally require larger area per person than standing ones.
- Workshops often require more furniture (e.g. tables, writing boards) and specific seating arrangements different from typical spectator activities.
- Workshops may require a larger area per person than performances, but not necessarily a larger space.

* Most of the advantages and disadvantages of large scale spaces are opposite to those listed in regards to small scale spaces.

Available Spaces Categorised by Scale

Map of Woodlands Neighbourhood



S **Small**
Pavilion





M **Medium**
Basketball Court



XL **Extra Large**
Woodlands Civic Centre Plaza


1b. Level of Enclosure

The level of enclosure of a space is primarily defined by the presence of a roof and walls.

-  **Open** Spaces with no roof or walls
-  **Sheltered** Spaces with a roof but no walls
-  **Indoor** Fully enclosed spaces

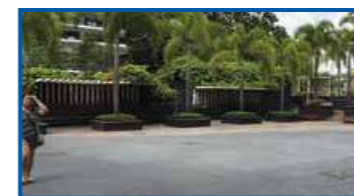
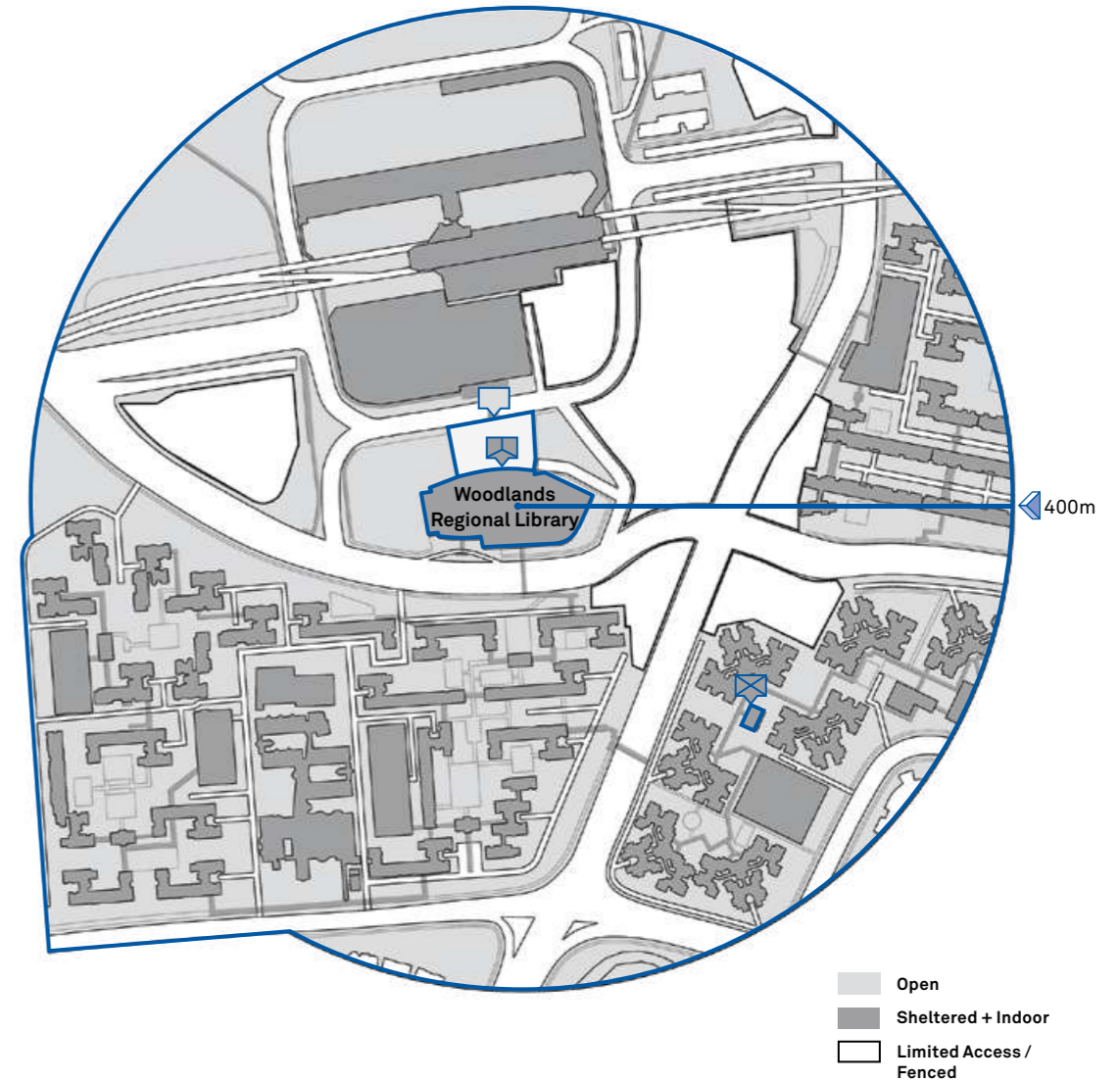
Indoor Spaces*	
<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Usually better equipped + Greater control (of space) and easier logistics management + Fewer distractions and greater comfort (e.g. better temperature, light, sound and seating conditions) + Favourable for events that require focused attention 	<p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced visual and physical accessibility for incidental participants - Need for enhanced publicity - Tendency to be associated with closed-door or paid activities - Implicit obligation to stay for the entire duration of the activity

* Most of the advantages and disadvantages of open and sheltered spaces are opposite to those listed in regards to indoor spaces.

 The biggest difference is the level of control in the environment. In a concert hall, you can work with lighting and control the settings around you, but in a public space you do not have that much control.
 – Artist


Available Spaces Categorised by Level of Enclosure

Map of Woodlands Neighbourhood



 **Open**
Woodlands Civic Centre Plaza





 **Sheltered**
Multi-purpose Hall



 **Indoor**
Woodlands Regional Library Auditorium

1c. Ground Surface

This criterion describes whether the ground surface of a space has been laid with rigid flooring materials or is in its natural state.

-  **Paved** Hardscape, e.g. rigid surface (tiles, concrete, etc.)
-  **Unpaved** Softscape, e.g. soft surface (grass, soil, sand, pebbles, etc.)

Characteristics of Surfaces

Paved

- Placing chairs, temporary shelter, equipment, stage, dance mats, and other provisions is generally easier on paved surfaces, especially when ground is wet
- Paved surfaces generally offer better acoustics due to sound reflection

Unpaved

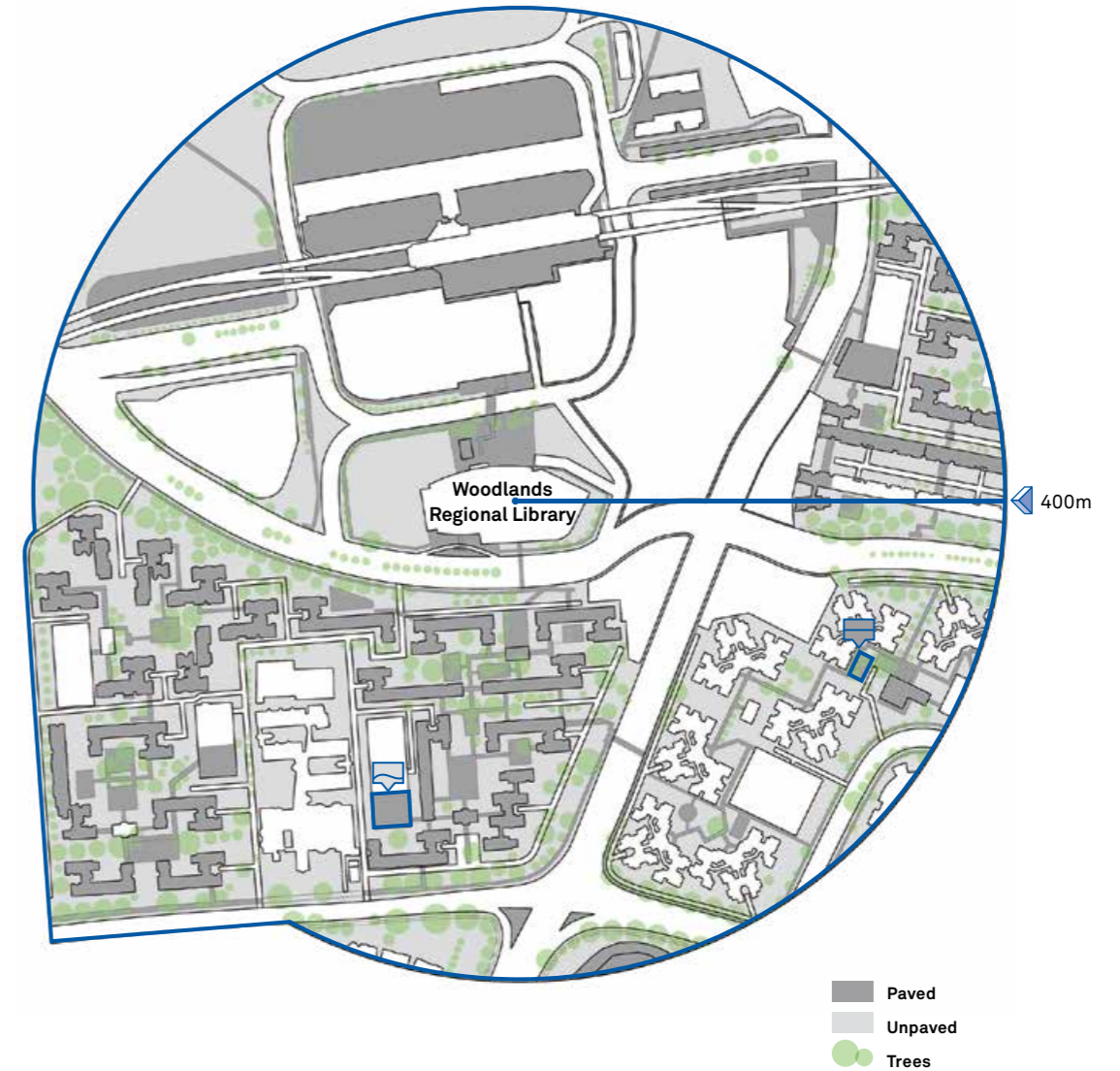
- Unpaved surfaces present lower need for providing conventional seats (e.g. potential seating on grass during dry weather)
- Unpaved surfaces can provide a more relaxed environment


Notes

- Large spaces suitable for big-scale activities are often unpaved, such as the green lawns.


Available Spaces Categorised by the Type of Ground Surface

Map of Woodlands Neighbourhood

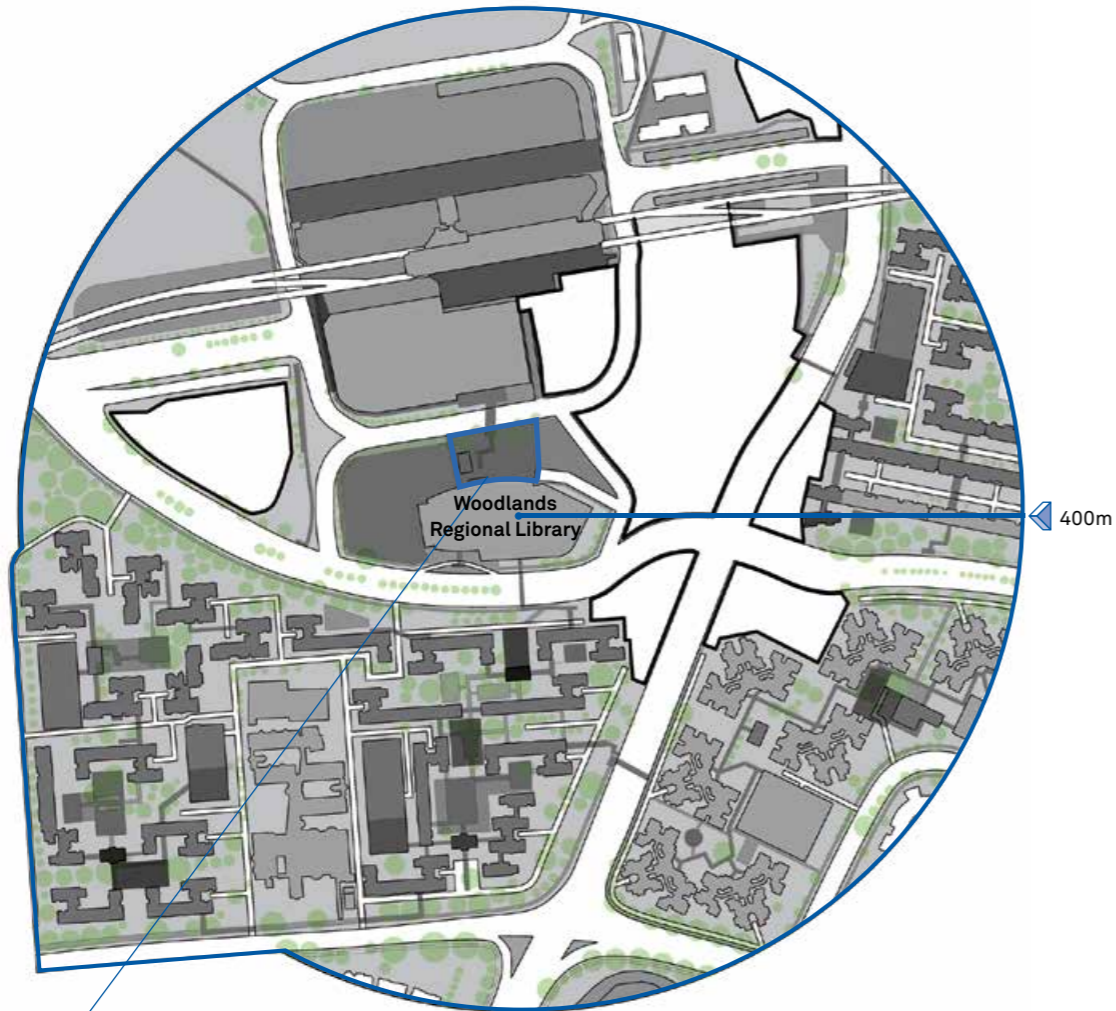


 **Paved**
Roof of Multi-Storey Car Park



 **Unpaved**
Green Space within Precinct

Available Spaces by Combining Filters
1a. Scale + 1b. Level of Enclosure + 1c. Ground Surface
 Map of Woodlands Neighbourhood



LESS MORE

Spatial Opportunity Scale

Darker shades indicate more opportunities for arts and cultural activities.

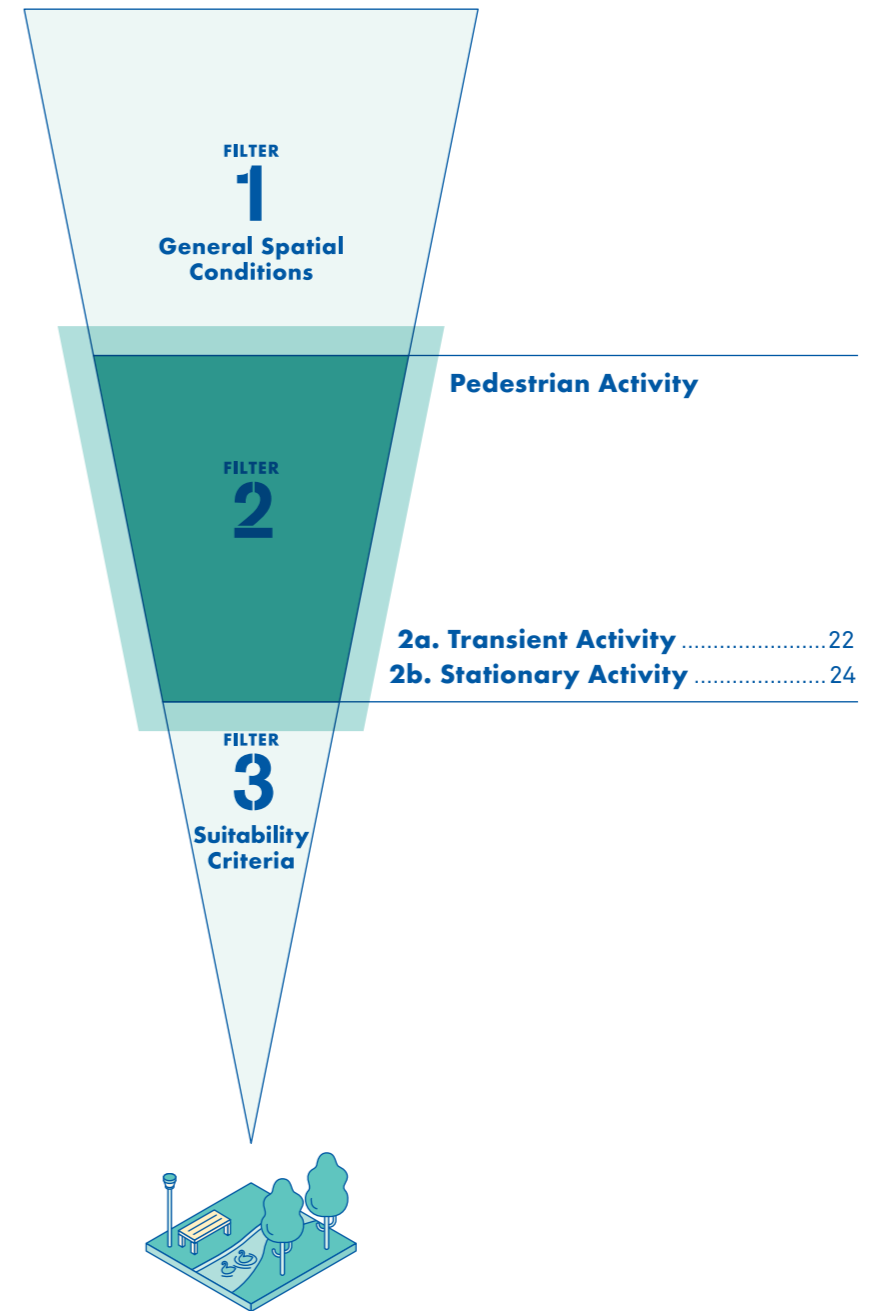


Example of a potential space for the arts, Woodlands Civic Centre Plaza

- 1a. Extra Large Scale: 1,000-5,000m²
- 1b. Level of Enclosure: Open
- 1c. Ground Surface: Paved

Filter 2: Pedestrian Activity

This filter describes the intensity of pedestrian activity in the neighbourhood – where people move and where they gather; who they are, how many of them, when and what kind of activity they are engaged with.⁷



2a. Transient Activity

Passing By: Number of People & Where?

The question of ‘how many’ is basic for understanding how intensively neighbourhood spaces are used.

Knowing the number of passers-by (commuting or strolling) and where they go on an everyday basis can inform the decision about desirable venues and the choice of arts and cultural activities.

Snap-shot techniques⁷ to capture and map movement patterns

Counting

At selected points of observation (example on the right), count the number of people passing by for a short period of time (e.g. 5-10mins).

Repeat this exercise at different times of the day (morning, afternoon, evening) and week (weekday vs. weekend) to get comprehensive insights about the intensity of pedestrian movement at these points. If possible, note down or estimate gender, age and ethnicity of passers-by.

Tracing and ‘shadowing’

If time allows, discreetly follow groups of pedestrians to verify data gathered through counting and gain more specific insight into where people go to.

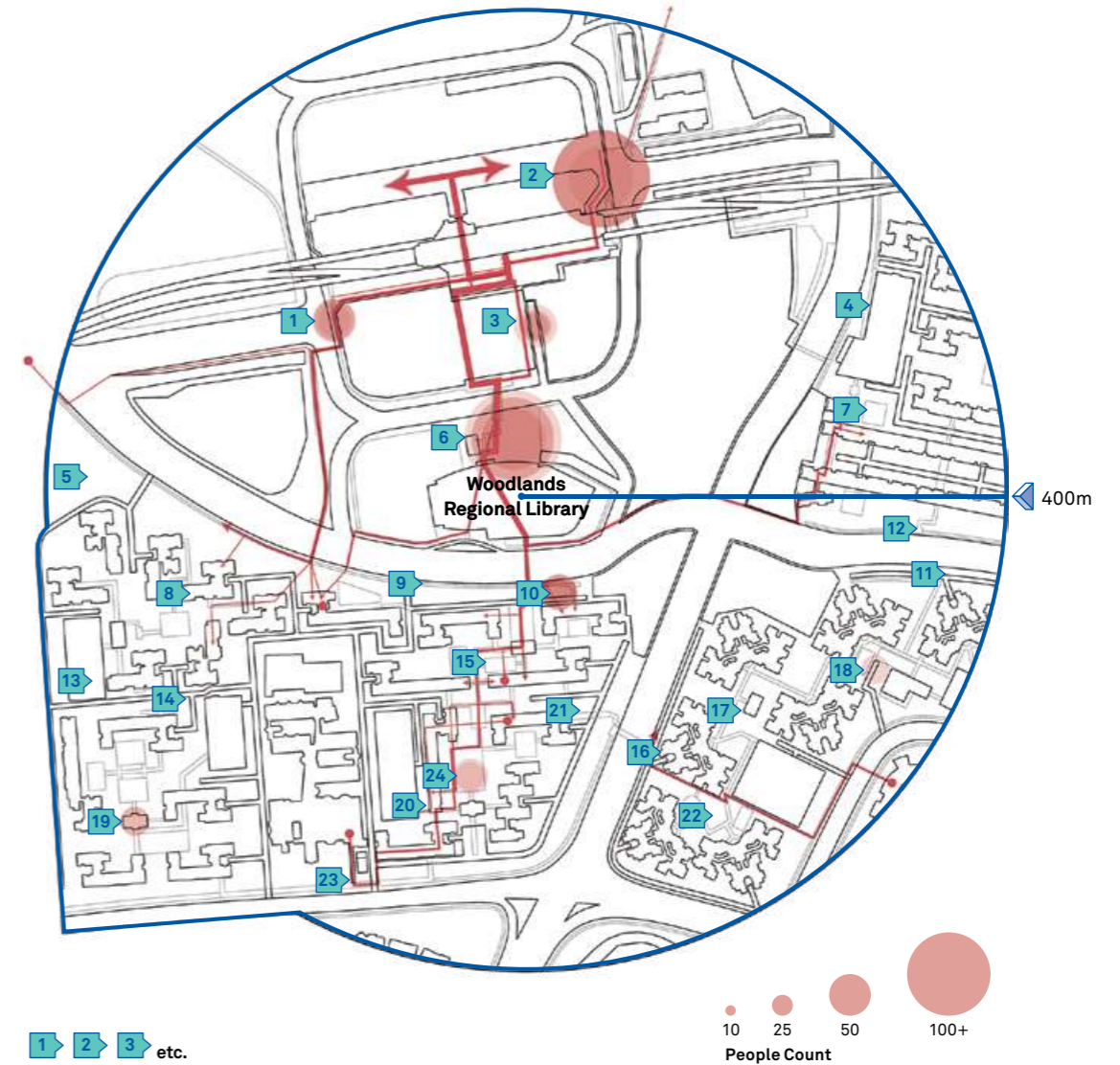
Plot the most frequented movement paths based on counting and ‘shadowing’ results (as shown in an example on the right).

Notes

- Counting is often conducted by two researchers. While one observer pays attention to people moving, the other focuses on the characteristics of the space and how people interact with and within it (See 2b: Stationary Activity on pg.24).
- ‘Shadowing’ can be a time-consuming exercise. It requires following a substantial number of people (often for an unpredictable period of time) in order to observe movement patterns and generate solid conclusions.

Selected Points of Observation and Volume of Observed Transient Activities & Dominant Pedestrian Movement Paths

Map of Woodlands Neighbourhood



Selected Points of Observation

Prior to site visit, identify the points in the neighbourhood where on-site observation of pedestrian activities will be done (as shown in example map above).

Points of observation should include spots next to key junctions, pedestrian walkways, bus stops and MRT stations, and neighbourhood amenities.

2b. Stationary Activity

Stationary: Who & What?

Mapping what specific activities happen in specific neighbourhood spaces and who performs them is useful for identifying potential synergies with specific arts and cultural activities.

Typical stationary activities include – gathering, sitting, people-watching, playing, exercising, etc. Such a record indicates if the space encourages dwelling and interaction between the users or just passing by. Stationary activities can be further categorised as necessary (e.g. waiting for the bus), optional (e.g. reading) or social (e.g. playing chess).

Gathering knowledge about the behaviour of different user groups in public space is a cornerstone of a public life study. It provides useful insights for planning arts and cultural activities that target the needs of specific population groups. Such groups are commonly (but not solely) defined by gender, age and ethnicity, which are the characteristics that are relatively easy to observe on-site.

Snap-shot techniques⁷ to capture stationary activities

• Noting down activities

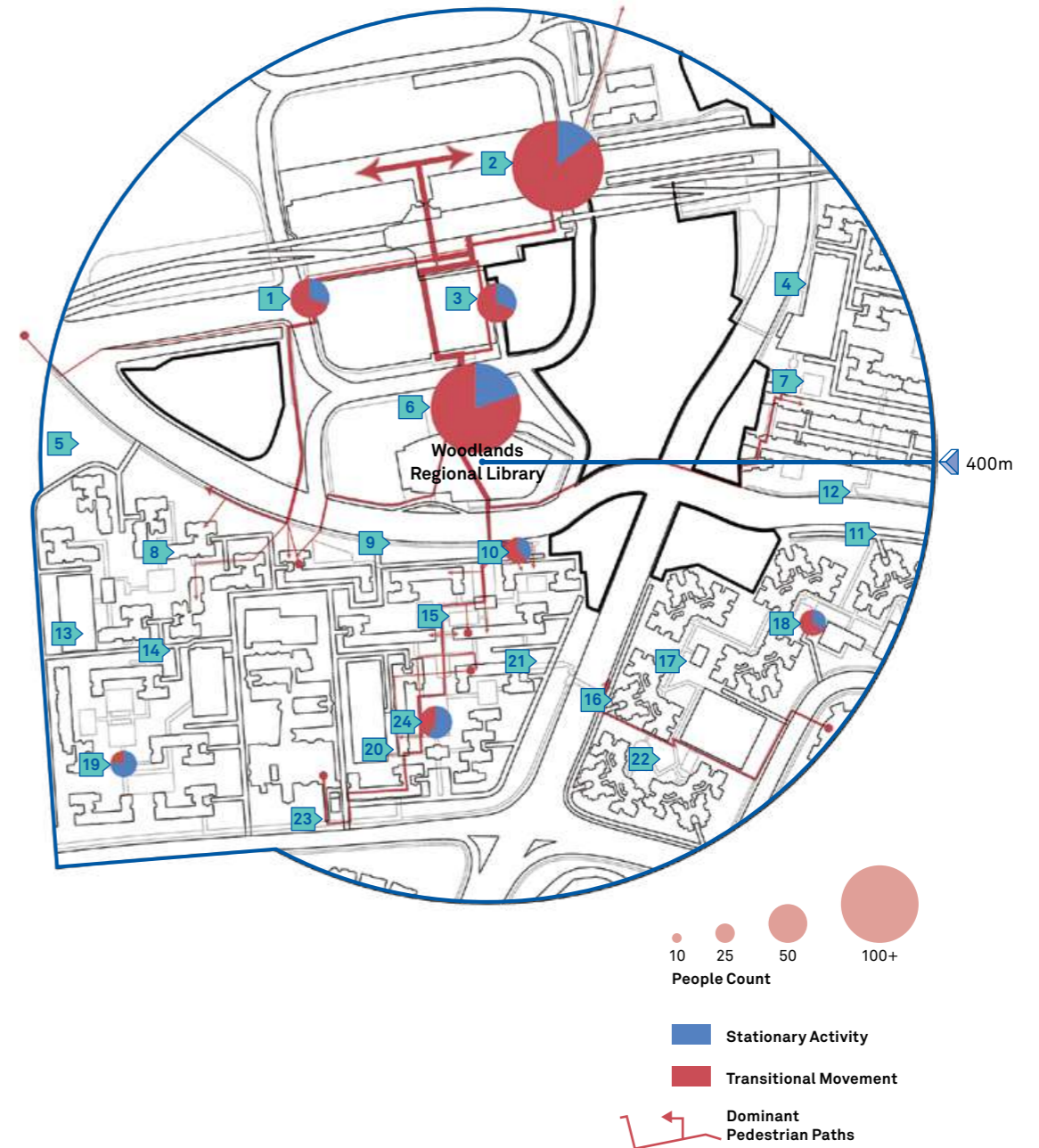
Parallel to counting passers-by (See 2a: Transient activity on pg. 22), record the number of people and the specific stationary activities they are engaged in at each observation point for a short period of time (e.g. 5-10mins).

Note gender, age and ethnicity of users engaged in observed stationary activities.

Repeat this exercise at different times of the day (morning, afternoon, evening) and week (weekday vs. weekend).

Volume of Observed Stationary Vs. Transient Activities at Selected Points

Map of Woodlands Neighbourhood

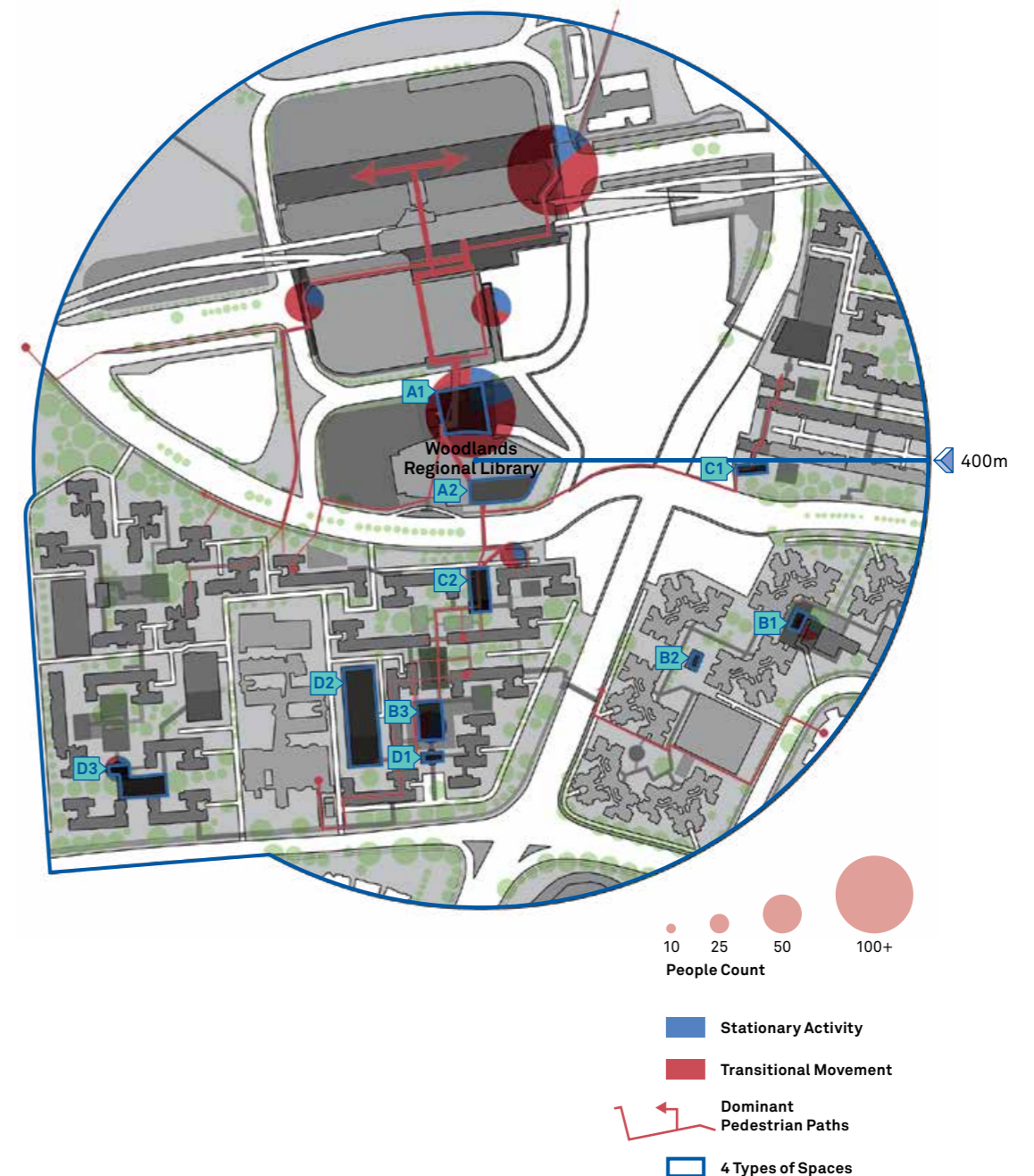


Four Types of Spaces

Types of spaces in the neighbourhood can be identified based on their proximity to the most frequent pedestrian patterns and availability of pedestrian activities (Filter 2) and general spatial conditions (Filter 1).

Type A		Type B	
Spaces close to the most frequented pedestrian movement paths and containing stationary activity		Spaces away from pedestrian movement but close to stationary activity	
Advantages + High visibility, accessibility and adjacent amenities provide reasons for people to visit and remain in a space	Disadvantages - Often crowded and noisy settings, with many distractions - Not suitable for activities that require deeper engagement and focused attention - Competitive spaces (with other event organisers)	Advantages + Often of good overall quality, close to public amenities and familiar to residents	Disadvantages - Not as accessible as Type A spaces - Challenging to draw incidental participants - Enhanced publicity required
Type C		Type D	
Spaces close to pedestrian movement but away from stationary activity		Spaces away from both pedestrian movement and stationary activity	
Advantages + Typically good visibility and accessibility	Disadvantages - Little or no incentives for people to linger in space	Advantages + Quiet spaces, with often good overall quality and without competition from other uses	Disadvantages - Strong publicity needed to attract people to attend activities

Overlay of
Filter 1: General Spatial Conditions
+
Filter 2: Pedestrian Activities
Selected Four Types of Spaces
Map of Woodlands Neighbourhood



Strategies for Types of Spaces

Based on the identified type of spaces,* the initial strategies for activating neighbourhood spaces through arts can be formulated.

Type A

Attractive spaces suitable for diversifying and increasing participants



Bedok Neighbourhood
Bedok Town Square
next to the MRT station,
Bedok Mall, supermarket
and hawker centre

Type B

Intimate settings potentially suitable for small-scale and more targeted activities to deepen engagement with the arts



Woodlands Neighbourhood
Badminton court and green
space near Blocks 514 and
515A Woodlands Drive 14

* Examples of types of spaces depicted above also include those from the neighbourhoods other than Woodlands.

Type C

Potentially suitable for small pop-up arts and cultural activities and teasers



Woodlands Neighbourhood
Rarely used open space
alongside the covered
walkway next to Block 352
Woodlands Avenue

Type D

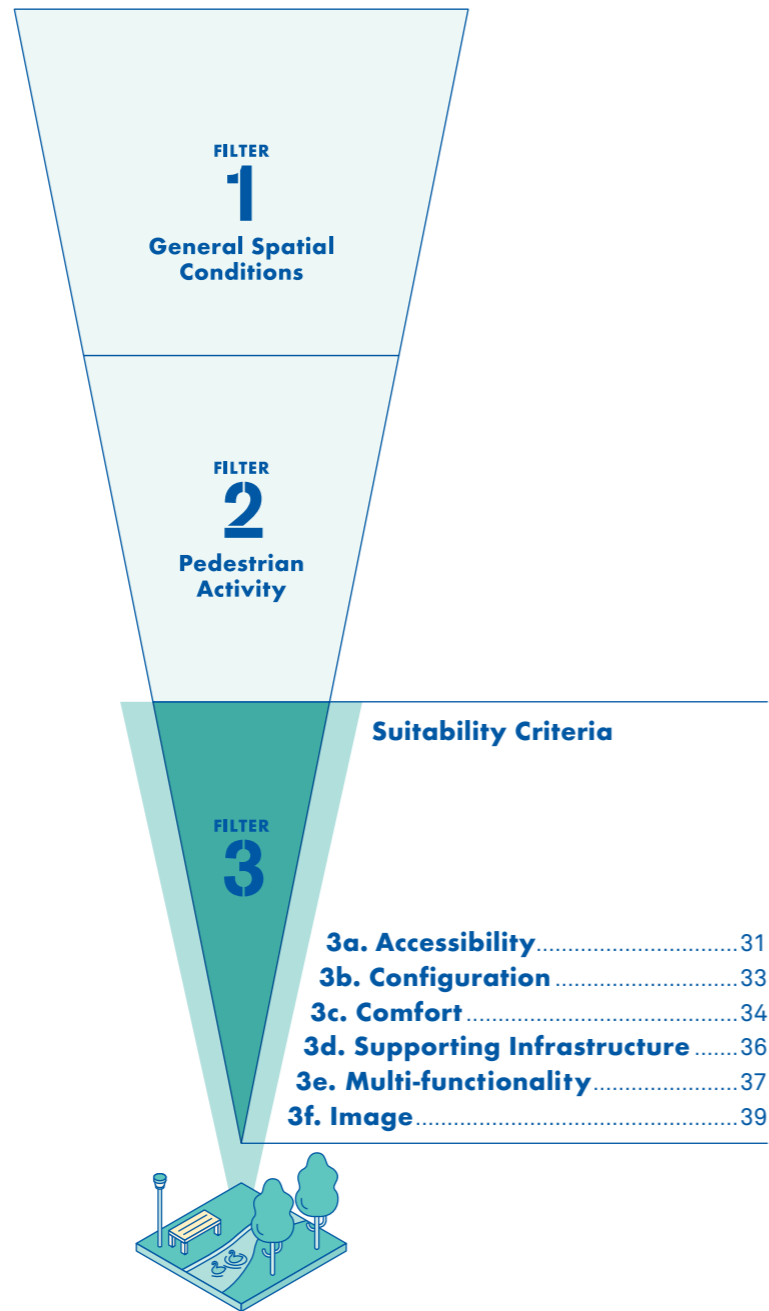
Bringing activity into under-utilised spaces



Bedok Neighbourhood
Amphitheatre behind
Block 35 Chai Chee Avenue

Filter 3: Suitability Criteria

This filter describes conditions that would make the space conducive as an arts venue. Parties involved in arts and cultural activities – such as event organisers, artists, participants, and residents living close to the venue – may have different views and priorities regarding suitability criteria. Suitability criteria also depend on type of arts and cultural activities.



3a. Accessibility

Accessibility generally refers to the ease with which people can reach the space. Good urban space pays attention to pedestrians by providing a variety of paths that are protected from non-pedestrian traffic and cater for all users, especially the disabled, children and the elderly. Physically and visually accessible space is a prerequisite for any activity, including arts and cultural activities.⁸

Can people use a variety of transportation (bus, train, car, bicycle, etc.) to reach the place?

While prioritising the pedestrians, a successful space is also accessible by various mobility means, e.g. vehicular, public transport and cycling, but should not be dominated by their presence. Mobility options increase accessibility.

Is the space visible from a distance?

Visual access and legibility are crucial for both navigating the space and understanding what happens in a space, and is particularly important for arts and cultural activities.

Can people reach the place on foot easily?

Physical access is important to enable people to reach the venue easily and safely. Some examples of barriers are high-traffic roads adjacent to outdoor venues or indoor venues that are primarily accessed via staircases.

Is the interior visible from the outside?

An event can draw a participant if passers-by are able to see what is happening within an indoor venue.

Is the space suitable for people with special needs?

Universal access to space is important, especially for the elderly, people with disabilities, children in prams, etc. It can also ease the transportation of heavy equipment.

Is the space publicly accessible 24/7?

Spaces which are always open allow for greater flexibility to schedule and facilitate arts and cultural activities, especially before and after office hours.



The space outside Boon Keng MRT station exit B is always accessible to the public.



Glass façade of Kallang CC auditorium allows pedestrians passing by to see what is happening inside.

It's because the MRT station [is] here, everything tends to be here.

– Participant

We have to consider ... the participants – you have to think of the wheelchair, the disabled, the bicycle, then the people walking up and down.

– Node partner

3b. Configuration

The configuration of a venue refers to a combination of its physical characteristics, such as size, shape (compact or linear), layout and level of flexibility (arrangement of stage, equipment and participant areas for a variety of activities, presence of any visual barriers, etc.), among other design attributes, which can considerably determine the type and nature of arts and cultural activities to be held there.⁹

Is the space free from columns and other obstructions?

Trees, street furniture and columns can block the views of the performers as well as hinder the provision of a stage or a shelter.

Is the space flexible?

Flexibility is the ability of the space to accommodate a variety of changes to its physical form and layout. This could involve a change in area through movable partitions, or the ability to put up a shelter, etc.



Bedok Town Square is a large sheltered space with columns located at the periphery that do not obstruct the view of the performance. Amphitheatre-like seating along the edges leaves room for additional flexible seating.



The open courtyard space of Kallang CC can accommodate a temporary shelter when needed as well as flexible stage and seating arrangements.

Some of the palm trees [in this space] pose various challenges. It's a nice place, but the stage size is limited and we can't organise bigger events here. If we make the stage and participant area bigger, trees will obstruct the view. Also, the trees restrict the position and mounting of the tentage.

– Node partner

3c. Comfort

The comfort of a venue refers to how people feel in that space and their experience through senses, which may also affect how they appreciate the arts and cultural activities. This includes the presence (or absence) of ambient sounds, smells, lighting and sights that might be unpleasant, non-conducive or distracting as well as the temperature of the venue, which is affected by its levels of enclosure and ventilation. Protection from extreme weather conditions (sun and rain) is an important factor in our tropical climate.

Finally, being able to minimise sound and other atmospheric disturbances that an activity may produce to the immediate surrounding is an important consideration when choosing a space for an arts and cultural activity.¹⁰

Does the space provide good auditory experiences?

The presence of reflective surfaces for sound is important for the acoustics of a space, especially for theatre plays and music events. The absence of reflective surfaces increases the need for additional amplification or balancing of sound to improve audibility.

Are the immediate surroundings free from spaces sensitive to noise?

Venues should preferably be away from the spaces that are sensitive to noise, such as hospitals and homes. However, with high-density conditions in HDB neighbourhoods, this may be challenging, especially when the intention is to bring the arts closer to where people live and play. When deciding on venues close to HDB blocks, the time and duration of the activity should be considered carefully.

Is the space adequately ventilated and cooled? Is it sheltered?

In the tropical climate, heat and rain are ever-present challenges for all (performers, participants and organisers) at open-air activities, even if held at night or in covered spaces during the day.

Is the space free from surrounding visual, noise or other distractions?


Spaces with high traffic movement are favourable for attracting more participants. However, these venues are also inevitably crowded and noisy. Background noise and visual distractions reduce the level of control artists have over the participant's experience of the activity.



The space at Block 88 Tanglin Halt has reasonable acoustics because of the reflective ceiling. The adjacent supermarket and hawker centre, however, create background noise.



The Woodlands Regional Library auditorium has a sound proof air-conditioned space that offers a comfortable environment to focus on the performance.

 We put in a lot of fans and coolers just to make the place conducive for the performers and definitely for the residents, so that they would actually stay on to be engaged by the performance and not be challenged by the weather.

– Node partner

As musicians, we look for high ceiling or roof, because we need some reflections, if not, the sound will go everywhere and we have to use a better sound system to compensate for the public spaces.

– Artist

3d. Supporting Infrastructure

The absence of supporting infrastructure usually requires additional logistic arrangements to compensate for them. While this may not pose a major challenge in organising events, the presence of supporting infrastructure may reduce the costs and efforts of organising and hosting arts and cultural activities in the long run, while supporting greater frequency and regularity of activities.¹¹

Does the space have adequate lighting?

While most public spaces will have sufficient lighting for basic visibility to navigate through the space, arts and cultural activities might require additional lights to increase visibility for performances or workshops held at night.

Does the space have public toilets?

Public toilets also serve as a space for artists to change into their costumes and therefore add to the convenience of the venue.

Are there places to sit and stay?

The presence of existing seating in a space reduces or eliminates the need to rent chairs for the activity. It also allows participants to linger in the space after, contributing to a more sociable atmosphere.



Basketball courts are spaces that are usually well-lit in the evening to allow for greater visibility.

When the performers feel comfortable with the entire environment, they tend to perform better and they smile a lot.

– Node partner

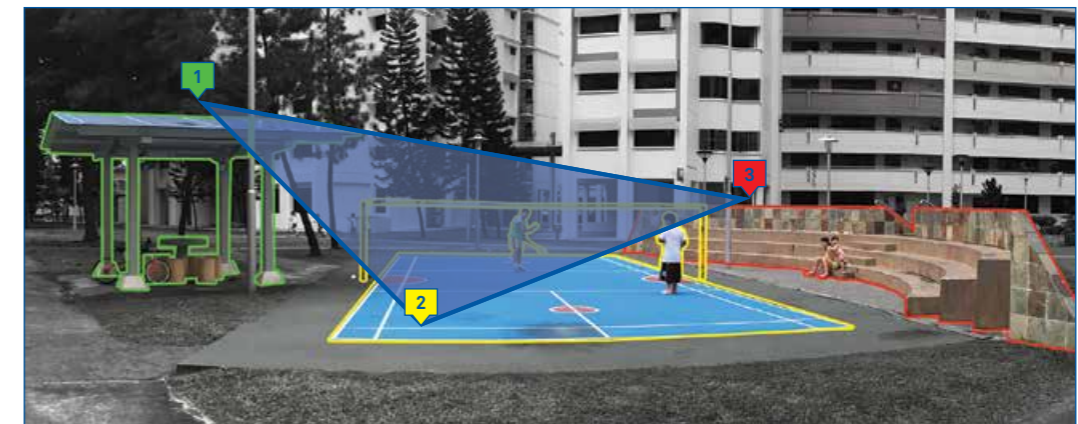
3e. Multi-functionality

Diversity of arts and cultural activities is crucial for the success of public spaces. Such diversity can be created by layering multiple uses within the space, permeable edges, adjacent activities, a variety of forms, spatial conditions and ambiances, and a sufficient concentration of people.¹² Good programming invites people, which in turn attract more people.

William H. Whyte's rule of 'triangulation' suggests that the arrangement of activities and amenities in space can substantially contribute to the intensity of its use and of social interaction.¹³ For example, an advertisement board, a bench and a rubbish bin placed adjacent to each other at a lift lobby provide more opportunities for incidental interactions among the void-deck users than when these elements stand alone. The symbiosis between available space and programmes and art interventions may be crucial for their success.

An Example of the Rule of 'Triangulation':

1. Shelter (Pavilion) + 2. Badminton Court + 3. Amphitheatre Seats



Precinct amenities at Block 661C Jurong West Street 64 near SAFRA Jurong.

Is the space multi-functional?

Spaces that can host different activities are more likely to be adaptable for different requirements of an arts and cultural activity.

Are there adjacent spaces that are for: eating, recreation, waiting, grocery shopping?

The presence of adjacent spaces and amenities allow participants to combine their attendance with other activities. Adjacent amenities can also attract incidental audience and provide possible extension to the space.

Are there choices of different things to do?

Activities bring people into space and encourage its use. A greater variety of things to do supports the use of neighbourhood spaces by diverse user groups and at different times of the day and week.

Is the space used by people of different ages?

The presence of different age groups indicates that the space is accessible and well-used, as well as supporting inter-generational bonding, which may influence the type of arts and cultural activity.

Is the space used as a gathering point?

Spaces in which people come in groups can be seen as natural or established meeting points.



Amenities around Tanglin Halt, including the MRT station, supermarket, ATM and other commercial activities attract incidental audience. The adjacent food court also serves as an informal extension of the audience seating area.



Neighbourhood around Woodlands Regional Library – HDB precinct amenities such as playgrounds are inter-generational gathering spaces as the children who play there are accompanied by parents or grandparents.

You can watch a performance and buy groceries here. You can just put the things down and watch the performance, it's convenient.

– Participant

I think a playground is a good venue [where] parents and kids interact.

– Participant

3f. Image

The first impression of a space can considerably shape users' behaviour and interaction with and within space.¹⁴ Apart from aesthetic qualities, attachment, sense of belonging, personalisation and temporary appropriation are some of the key ingredients of space character.¹⁵

Arts and cultural activities can bring vibrancy and a festive mood to everyday spaces and contribute to building stronger identities of neighbourhood spaces and creating important collective anchor-points for the communities.¹⁶

Image of space also refers to its hygiene and maintenance. Clean and well-maintained spaces, with mown lawns, emptied rubbish bins and no signs of decay or vandalism, are generally more attractive and contribute to users' perception of safety, while encouraging positive social behaviour.¹⁷

Is the space clean? Does it feel safe?

A perception of hygiene and safety can considerably affect how and whether a neighbourhood space is used. A dirty or messy space with broken lights or other signs of vandalism, may be seen as unsafe and therefore avoided by residents, especially those with young children.



Kallang neighbourhood – Arts can improve the image of spaces.

In an open ground or in a park, the children can roam about without being scared that they will fall.

– Participant

Checklists for Neighbourhood Space Evaluation

Use the following checklists to describe and evaluate shortlisted spaces on-site, in order to select the most suitable spaces for arts and cultural activities.

Filter 1: General Spatial Conditions

Criteria			Comments
1a. Scale (Size)	<input type="checkbox"/> S Small	Up To 200m ²	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> M Medium	200-500m ²	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> L Large	500-1,000m ²	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> XL Extra Large	1,000-5,000m ²	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> XXL Double Extra Large	Over 5,000m ²	<input type="checkbox"/>
1b. Level of Enclosure	<input type="checkbox"/> Open		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sheltered		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Indoor		<input type="checkbox"/>
1c. Ground Surface	<input type="checkbox"/> Paved		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unpaved		<input type="checkbox"/>

Filter 2: Pedestrian Activity

Criteria		Comments
2a. Transient Activity	Is the space close to pedestrian paths?	<input type="checkbox"/>
2b. Stationary Activity	Are there people performing stationary activities within the space?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Filter 3: Suitability Criteria

Criteria		Comments
3a. Accessibility	Can people use a variety of transportation options to reach the place?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the space visible from a distance?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can people reach the place on foot easily?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the interior visible from the outside?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the space suitable for people with special needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the space publicly accessible 24/7?	<input type="checkbox"/>
3b. Configuration	Is the space free from columns and other obstructions?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the space flexible?	<input type="checkbox"/>
3c. Comfort	Does the space provide good auditory experiences?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are the immediate surroundings free from spaces sensitive to noise?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the space adequately ventilated and/or cooled? Is it sheltered?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the space free from surrounding visual, noise or other distractions?	<input type="checkbox"/>
3d. Supporting Infrastructure	Does the space have adequate lighting?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does the space have public toilets?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are there places to sit and linger?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Filter 3: Suitability Criteria

Criteria		Comments
3e. Multi-functionality	Is the space multi-functional, e.g. are there multiple uses and activities happening in the space?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are there adjacent spaces that are used for: eating, recreation, waiting, grocery shopping?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are there choices of different things to do?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the space used by people of different ages?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the space used as a gathering point?	<input type="checkbox"/>
3f. Image	Is the space clean? Does it feel safe?	<input type="checkbox"/>



Choose the Right Strategy



What can Space do for the Arts?



What can the Arts do for a Space?



What can Arts and Space do for the Community, and vice versa?

What can Space do for the Arts?



Arts Imprints Around My Neighbourhood by Quek Ling Kiong at Toa Payoh's Dragon Playground – Arts in Your Neighbourhood March 2016.

Space can help attract, diversify and increase participants

Employ high-traffic spaces in the town centres and near MRT stations (type A and C spaces) to diversify and increase participants for the arts.

Create synergies between local amenities and the arts

Eating, shopping and even exercising can be synergetic with the arts as these are social and recreational pursuits. Having these activities happen in the same space or close-bys adds to the appeal and encourages people to visit and stay. Moreover, adjacent amenities and structures may provide alternative spaces to watch the performance beyond the allocated participant area.

Low-traffic spaces can provide a quiet atmosphere for arts and cultural activities

Choose low-traffic quiet areas (type B and D spaces) to deepen participation and make the arts experience more rewarding.

While high-traffic areas are suitable for publicising arts and cultural activities, it is the low-traffic spaces that provide the quiet atmosphere that is often more suitable for deeper engagement and greater enjoyment of an activity. Synergy can be developed between the two by advertising activities organised within enclosed high-quality venues in nearby high-traffic spaces.

Diversity of spaces creates flexibility and options for arts and cultural activities

Synergies may be created between adjacent spaces of different attributes – covered and open, tiered and flat surfaced, etc. Such synergies allow for greater flexibility in the event of unpredictable situations (such as weather change) as well as offering the capacity to expand the scale of an activity.

Existing indoor spaces at community institutions can broaden engagement

Non-dedicated indoor spaces that are regularly (if not permanently) available for activities can broaden and deepen engagement of the community in the arts. Such spaces can be identified in schools, community centres, libraries and other public institutions.

Informal, flexible spaces create a sociable atmosphere for the arts

Choose informal, flexible spaces and seating arrangements to create a sociable atmosphere for the arts. Formal venues are typically designed with rigid seating arrangements that do not allow much freedom to mingle for the participants.

Comfortable indoor settings direct attention towards the arts

'Art lovers', whose experience is focused on the performance, prefer to be in indoor environments, which have comfortable temperature, seating and are free from distractions. The accessibility of the venue is not as important to arts enthusiasts as the conduciveness of the setting. They usually plan to attend an activity in advance and will therefore make an effort to find the venue no matter where it is.

Spaces can allow for temporary or permanent props to enhance arts and cultural activities

Temporary design measures (movable stage, tents, walls, lighting, advertisement boards, community markers, etc.) can considerably improve the quality of an activity. They can also encourage the use of public space and social interaction before and after the arts and cultural activity. On the other hand, permanent design interventions can minimise the use of temporary adjustments and may add to the perception of an informal public space as an arts and cultural venue.

What can the Arts do for a Space?



Exquisitely Us, Me and You! co-created by Terence Lin and Taman Jurong's residents, located at Block 352 Kang Ching Road – Our Gallery at Taman Jurong, an NAC's Arts and Culture Node.

Enliven everyday spaces with a sense of joy and surprise

Spaces where people perform necessary activities, such as transit spaces or outside grocery stores, can be bustling and most frequented but not necessarily pleasant to spend time in. Hence, introducing the arts in such spaces can make a big impact on the daily experiences by triggering good mood and boosting overall sense of well-being. The arts can introduce a sense of joy and the unexpected, and encourage people to bond with others through a sense of shared experiences.

Activate spaces where there is movement but no stationary activity through the arts

Such spaces exist near town centres as well as within heartland precincts along major connecting paths, but have no stationary activity because of the absence of any adjacent amenities. They include public plazas, void decks and other spaces next to covered linkways (or the covered linkways themselves). These constitute good locations for arts and cultural activities as they face no competition from commercial interests, yet can easily draw participants because of their visibility and accessibility.

Activate under-utilised 'white elephant' spaces

Arts and cultural activities held in locations without high pedestrian traffic can offer a quiet and conducive atmosphere but need more publicity. Such under-utilised spaces include amphitheatres, ground parking areas, and even roofs of multi-storey car parks. The very nature of the arts is experimental and imaginative and thus has the potential to transform such spaces.

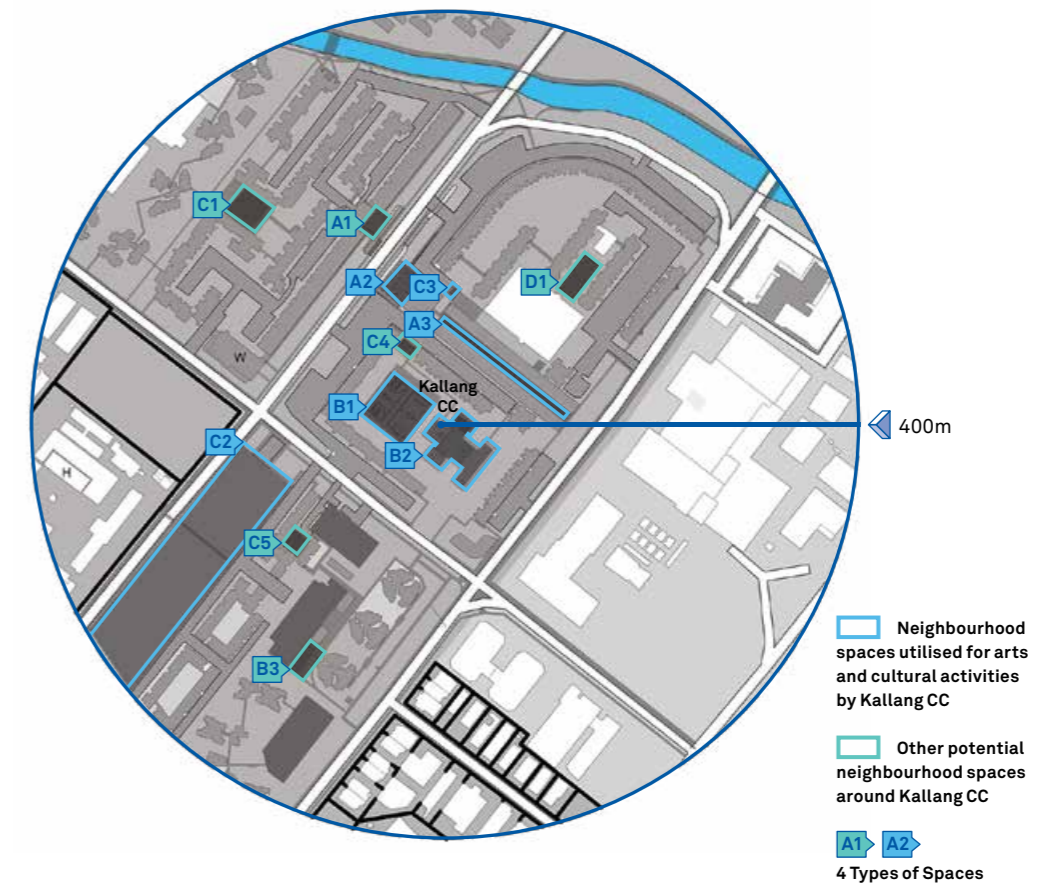
What can Arts and Space do for the Community, and vice versa?

Build a strong arts and culture ecology in the neighbourhood

There needs to be an ecology of spaces that supports different processes involved with the creation (and co-creation), practice, performance and exhibition of the arts. Arts and cultural activities should capitalise on all spatial and human resources in the neighbourhood and bring them into a comprehensive and symbiotic whole.

Good Practice: Arts and Culture Ecology Diversity of Neighbourhood Spaces Utilised by Kallang CC

Map of Kallang Neighbourhood



Performance



A2 Plaza outside Boon Keng MRT exit B A3 Bendemeer Mall C3 Green space B2 Kallang CC courtyard C2 Green space at MRT exit C

Rehearsal



B1 Amphitheatre and basketball court B2 Kallang CC auditorium

Practice



B2 Kallang CC practice room

Encourage the interdependence between volunteerism and community arts practice

The community interest groups who use the practice rooms in Kallang CC to meet, learn and practice also give back to the community by performing at their monthly activities.

Strengthen ties between professional artists and arts interest groups

Cater to the diversity of arts interests through different types of activities and performers involved. Organise activities with professional artists as well as community performers. Offer your spaces to arts interest groups and arts classes.



The Rubbish Prince by 3Pumpkins, Danny Yeo and Ong Kiang Sin at the playground of Woodlands Waterfront Park – Arts in Your Neighbourhood November 2018.

Spark interest in the arts and cultural activities through different levels of arts participation

Invest into arts and cultural activities of different natures and levels of engagement to boost stronger interest in the arts among the participants and encourage ground-up initiatives.

Active



Inventive Arts Participation

Engages the mind, body, and spirit in an act of artistic creation that is unique and idiosyncratic, regardless of skill level.



Interpretive Arts Participation

Creative act of self-expression that brings alive and adds value to pre-existing works of art, either individually or collaboratively.



Curatorial Arts Participation

Creative act of purposefully selecting, organising, and collecting art to the satisfaction of one's own artistic sensibility.



Spectating Arts Participation

Encompasses arts experiences that an individual selects or consents to, motivated by some expectation of value.



Ambient Arts Participation

Involves experiencing the arts, consciously or unconsciously, that is not purposefully selected – arts that 'happens to you'.

Passive



Footnotes

- 1 Current listing of Arts and Culture Nodes. <https://www.nac.gov.sg/whatwedo/engagement/artsforall/Arts-Culture-Nodes.html>
- 2 Download companion guide 'Assessing the Impact of Bringing Arts into Neighbourhoods'. <https://artsforall.sg/resources/toolkit/nac-nus-csac-guides.aspx>
- 3 See, Gehl (1987).
- 4 See, e.g. Jacobs (1961), Montgomery (1998), PPS (2016), Silberg et al. (2013), Whyte (1980).
- 5 See, e.g. Artscape (2016a), Markusen and Gadwa (2010), PPS (2013).
- 6 See, e.g. Artscape (2016b), Stern (2014).
- 7 See, Gehl and Svarre (2013) for further details and useful methods and tools to study public spaces.
- 8 See, e.g. Carmona et al. (2010), Carr et al. (1992), Marcus and Francis (1997), Shaftoe (2008), Urry (2007).
- 9 See, e.g. Wenger (2008).
- 10 See, e.g. Marcus and Francis (1997).
- 11 See, e.g. Cho et al. (2016), Marcus and Francis (1997), Nemeth and Schmidt (2011), Shaftoe (2008).
- 12 See, e.g. Jacobs (1961), Evans (2001).
- 13 See, White (1980).
- 14 See, e.g. PPS and Metropolitan Planning Council (2008).
- 15 See, e.g. Carmona et al. (2010).
- 16 See, e.g. Januchta-Szostak (2010), Ursic (2015).
- 17 See, Wilson and Kelling (1982).

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Acknowledgements

The authors and publisher of this guide would like to express sincere gratitude to all the Arts and Culture Node partners, event organisers, artists and residents, for their kind support and participation in this study, and for consenting to the photos and quotes used in this guide. The authors also express their thanks to Nivedhitha Ravi, Sheryl Foo Ming Yee, Zhang Qingran, Yip Renhao, and other part-time student researchers from the National University of Singapore who contributed during the course of this research project.

