

ENHANCING THE ENTRY EXPERIENCE AT PHAP QUANG TEMPLE,  
GRAND PRAIRIE, TX

By

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DESIGN THESIS

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## **Abstract**

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2023 Supervising Professor: David Hopman

This design thesis explores the design principles of traditional Chinese Buddhist temple gardens and their significance in creating successful entry sequences. The study focuses on Vietnamese Buddhist temples in a suburban context in North Texas and investigates the role of design elements such as architecture, water features, planting design, and rocks in creating a spiritually enriching and culturally significant environment. The research method includes a literature review, comparison analysis, site inventory, user survey, interview with a member of the board of advisors, design testing, and design proposal. The proposed design aims to enhance the accessibility, wayfinding, and sense of place of Phap Quang Temple in Grand Prairie, TX, while incorporating elements inspired by Vietnamese Buddhist culture. The study demonstrates the importance of preserving and promoting the unique cultural and spiritual significance of Buddhist temple sites in contemporary landscape architecture. Further research is needed to better understand the cultural and contextual variations of Buddhist temple and their entry sequences.

**Keywords:** Landscape architecture, Traditional Chinese Buddhist Temple Gardens, Vietnamese Buddhist Temple Landscape, Entry sequence, Suburban context, North Texas, Suburban Texas

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The design of Buddhist temples has a rich history, spanning different cultures and regions. Temples are not only spaces for religious practices but also serve as an escape from the chaos of urban life, offering a serene and spiritually enriching environment. Enhancing the individuality of regional Buddhist temple sites is beneficial for preserving and promoting cultures in contemporary landscape architecture (Hua & Nan, 2013). This design thesis explores design principles of traditional Chinese Buddhist temple garden and elements that contribute to successful entry sequences, with a particular focus on traditional Chinese and Vietnamese Buddhist temples. It examines the role of various design components, including planting design, water features, rocks, and architecture, and their cultural and spiritual significance. This study aims to highlight the importance of understanding the historical, cultural, and spiritual context of Vietnamese Buddhist temple in suburban Grand Prairie, TX, creating harmonious and meaningful environments.

### 1.2 Research Objective

To identify and analyze design principles of entrances and transitional spaces in Texas Vietnamese Buddhist Temples in a suburban context.

### 1.3 Design Questions

What are the key design principles of Buddhist Temple Gardens entry sequence and how can they be applied to the design of the transitional spaces at other Buddhist sites in suburban?

### 1.4 Definition of Terms

**Entry sequence:** The experience and journey of individuals from the point of entry

to a building or a space (Bain, 1990).

**Temple Gardens:** Gardens associated with temples and religious structures, often designed to reflect spiritual beliefs and doctrines (Zhang, 2018).

**Sense of place:** The quality that a space possesses, which makes it unique and distinct from other spaces (Relph, 1976).

**Legibility:** The term refers to how easy it is for users to navigate a space or understand its layout (Lynch, 1960).

**Sequential art:** The visual and sensory experience that users encounter as they move through space (Eisner, 2008).

**Mystery:** The quality of a space that creates a sense of wonder and curiosity, stimulating the imagination of the users (Bain, 1989a).

**Dignity:** The quality of a space that evokes respect, formality, and solemnity (Bain, 1990)

**Planting design:** The intentional arrangement and selection of plants in a garden or landscape to achieve specific aesthetic or functional goals (Oudolf & Kingsbury, 2016).

**Wayfinding:** Wayfinding is a term used to describe the process of determining the best path or route between two points. Wayfinding helps people know where they are, which way they need to go, and the direction to take to get there (Lu, 2016).

**The Three Doors of Liberation:** in Buddhism are Emptiness, Sign-lessness, and Aimlessness, which involve letting go of attachment to fixed identity, concepts, and goals, respectively (Nhật Hạnh, 1998).

## 1.5 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research is to use design as research to analyze design principles for entrances to Texas Vietnamese Buddhist Temples in a Texas suburban context.

Recommendations are provided for improving the entrance functionality and welcoming

qualities.

## **1.6 Methodology**

**Literature Review-** Studied design principles at Traditional Chinese Buddhist Temple Gardens and the elements that makes up successful entry sequence

**Comparison Analysis-** Compared the entry sequences at 12 Vietnamese Buddhist Temples in DFW and Houston, TX based on design principles from Literature Review

**User Survey-** analyzed and used to inform the proposed design of the Temple.

**Oral History Interview-** Conducted with a member of Phap Quang temple Board of Advisory gave insight of the site's history and current conditions. Board of Advisory was also be giving feedback after the design phase is completed.

**Visual elicitation-** presented participants with a set of photographs that show design suggestions for the entry at Phap Quang Temple.

## **1.7 Research Delimitations**

In this study on the Phap Quang Vietnamese Buddhist temple entry sequence in Grand Prairie, Texas, the delimitations include the lack of literature on the topic, the geographic and cultural scope, the time frame of the study, the specific design elements under investigation, and the potential biases of the study participants.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

Chapter one focuses on the research background, problem statement, research objectives, design questions, research method, definitions of terms, and research delimitations. In chapter two, the backgrounds of design principles at Traditional Chinese Buddhist Temple Gardens, how the practice of Buddhism in Vietnam got influence by Chinese Culture as well as the Buddhist temple design, and the elements that makes up successful entry sequence were discussed. Chapter three focuses on the research methods, including comparison analysis, site inventory, user survey, interview with member from

board of advisory, design testing and design proposal. In chapter four, the findings from the literature review, comparison analysis, site inventory, user survey, interview with member from board of advisory, design testing and design proposal are briefly described. Chapter five focuses on the design, and chapter six describes the conclusions reached by the researcher and makes recommendations for future studies. All these chapters have shaped this design thesis to find out the design principles and proposals within the Phap Quang temple, which represent the Vietnamese Buddhist culture, enhance the accessibility, wayfinding, and sense of place of the temple site.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This literature review explores two key topics in landscape architecture and design: traditional Chinese temple gardens and entry sequences. The first part of the review examines the design principles and characteristics of traditional Chinese temple gardens, which have been used for spiritual and religious purposes for centuries. Drawing on Buddhist principles, they are designed to reflect the natural beauty of their surroundings, with pavilions and other architectural features serving to define the edge condition. The second part of the review focuses on the importance of entry sequences in landscape architecture, drawing on the work of Brodie Bain [cite] and his research on the components of a "successful entrance." This review provides a deeper understanding of these two important areas of landscape architecture and explores how they can be applied in modern contexts of suburban in North Texas. Specifically, it analyzes the design principles of entrances and transitional spaces that can be adopted in Texas Vietnamese Buddhist Temples in this context.

#### 2.2 The Landscape of Traditional Buddhist Temple Garden

Temple gardens are a type of traditional garden that are often found in both natural and cultural settings and often include mountains and scenic vistas. They are known for their grand and majestic proportions, and there are more temple gardens in Chinese history than other types of traditional gardens, such as royal gardens and private gardens (Wong, 2000). These gardens are typically used for spiritual and religious purposes and are often designed to reflect the natural beauty of their surroundings. Some temple gardens include elements such as water features, sculptures, and pagodas, and are often places of peace and contemplation (W. Q. Zhou, 1999). As of January 20, 2013,

there were only 200 research papers on temple gardens available in Chinese academic literature and no monographs comparing specific gardens to other garden-focused research (Hua & Nan, 2013). This is a relatively small number compared to the amount of research available on other types of gardens. The majority of research articles on temple gardens focus on the architecture, surroundings, plant types, rock works and other ornamental elements of these gardens (Jia, 2009). Enhancing the individuality of regional temple gardens is beneficial for preserving and promoting traditional garden cultures in contemporary landscape architecture (Hua & Nan, 2013).

### **2.3 Traditional Chinese Temple Garden Principles**

Buddhism and Taoism are the two major religions in China (Liang, 2012). In contrast to Taoism, which emphasizes cleanliness, absence of desire and unity with nature, Buddhism seeks tranquility for all living things. Based on where they are, traditional Chinese temple gardens are divided into two categories: (a) Mountainous temple gardens: those that are integrated into landscape gardens with religious structures and the surrounding natural beauty of the mountains; (b) urban temple gardens: those that are independent gardens in urban areas or suburbs, including temple courtyard landscaping and gardens associated with temples (Hua & Nan, 2013).

Unlike typical private and royal gardens, temple gardens have been designed to stay true to Buddhist doctrines such as "the Four Noble Truths" and "the Noble Eight-fold Path," the latter of which is represented by a state of self-cultivation internally which helps believers' understanding of Buddhist principles while also bringing their landscape environment closer to nature (S. Wu, 2001).

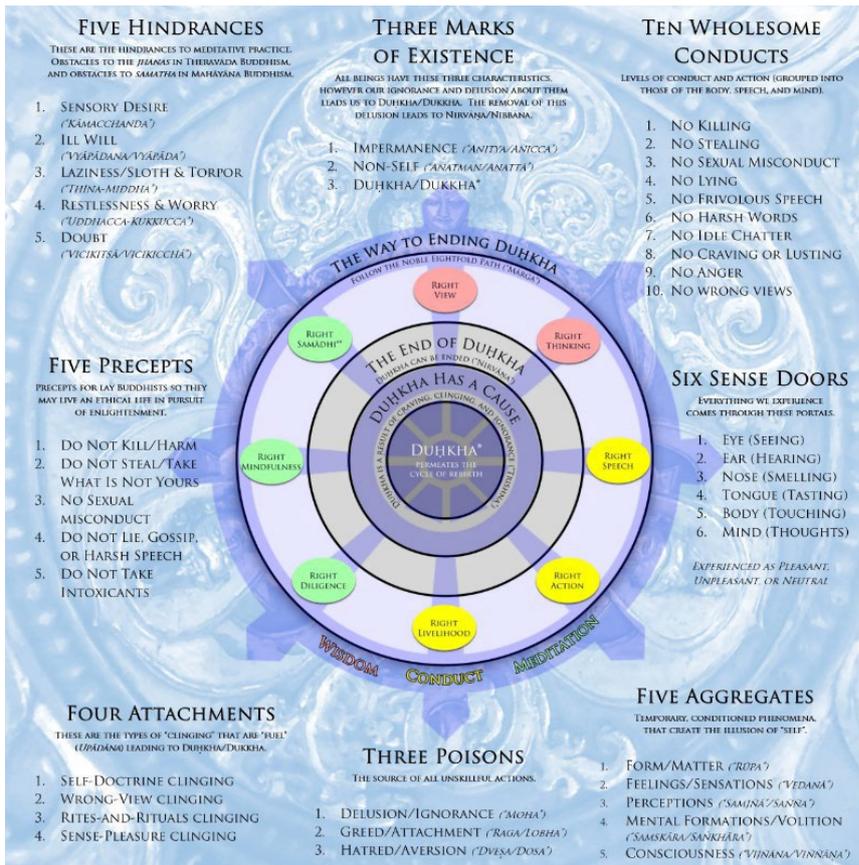


Figure 2.3

### Buddhism Cheat sheet

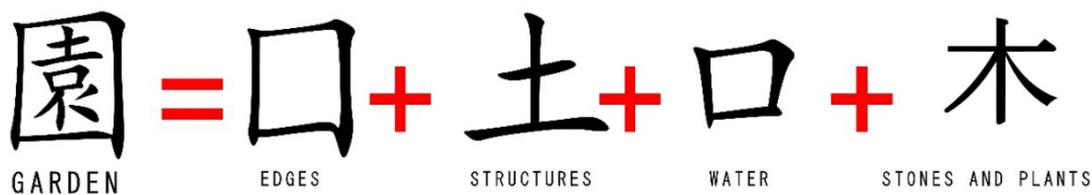
Note. Source (Peto, 2014).

The four noble truths, which are considered the most important teaching of Siddhartha Gautama, explain the concepts of pain, arising, ending, and path leading to the end of pain (Anderson, 2016). The Mahā Satipatthānasutta, The Discourse on the Establishing of Mindfulness, describes the Eightfold Noble Path which is a framework for balanced training. The eight factors of the path start with the word "right" and imply proper, whole, thorough, complete, ideal, and perfect training. These factors include right view, right aspiration, right speech, right doing, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right rapture attained through the meditation (Mahatthanadull, 2018).

### 2.3.1 Design Principles of Traditional Chinese Garden

Temple gardens have developed into more than mere locations for people to worship

Buddha figures. Landscape planning is an important component of temple gardens and a visual expression of religious beliefs. In Chinese characters, 園(Yuan, which means garden) was written using a combination of five essential garden components. The outside edge, 口, symbolizes walls, the ground, 土, symbolizes architecture and structures, the smaller, 冫, signifies water and ponds, and the 木 represents stones and plants (Yang, 2018).



**Figure 2.3.1**

Components of Garden

*Note.* Source (Y. Yang, 2018).

### 2.3.2 The Site

Traditionally, many Temples are concealed in the mountains to provide escape from the psycho-social stresses nature of city life (Y. Yang, 2018). Within the Buddhist site, architecture and natural scenes coexist. The scale of architecture corresponds to the scale of vegetation (Y. Yang, 2018). The dynamics of the spaces are enhanced by zigzag passageways (Y. Yang, 2018). Pavilions serve to define designed scenes (Y. Yang, 2018).

Bridges highlight geography and water (Y. Yang, 2018). The sites are frequently deserted and steep, and the mountain's crown is rounded rather than sharp. Buddhist landscape is created by the varied sizes of rocks, which are embellished with flowers, trees, and grasses (Liu & Liu, 2014).



**Figure 2.3.2**

*Mount Fanjing, ChinaNote. Source (Qubein, 2019).*

### **2.3.3 The Pavilions/ Architecture**

Pavilions for observing the landscape have always existed in picturesque settings and they often provide a beautiful view of the surroundings (Hunt, 1992). They were often graceful open pavilions with no external walls, located on top of a mountain or above a waterfall (Y. Yang, 2018). This type of mountain pavilion was notably popular among landscape pavilions in historical Chinese literature as the most aesthetically pleasing. Water pavilions could be built on wooden supports anchored to the pond, as if “growing” out of the water (Y. Yang, 2018). The picturesqueness of the pavilions over the springs was explained by the fact that they were illuminated by the sun’s rays from the inside, through a hole in the roof, indicating a transformation in the negative energy of underground water (yin) to positive energy (yang) (Ivashko et al., 2021). The pavilion is always secondary and subordinate to nature, as evidenced by its placement relative to the site’s trees and water features (Yang, 2018).

### 2.3.4 The Pavement and Pathway

The layout of historic Chinese gardens follows the principles of Feng Shui with curved rather than straight paths, providing the ability to look from a long distance. Feng shui is a traditional Chinese practice that seeks to harmonize individuals with their surroundings by using various design principles and elements. The goal of feng shui is to create a sense of balance and harmony in the environment, and to promote health, prosperity, and well-being. Feng shui practitioners believe that the energy, or qi, of a space can be manipulated and directed using various elements, such as the placement of objects, the use of colors and shapes, and the flow of water. By applying these principles, practitioners aim to create spaces that are conducive to positive energy and good fortune (Hong;Song; Wu, 2007).

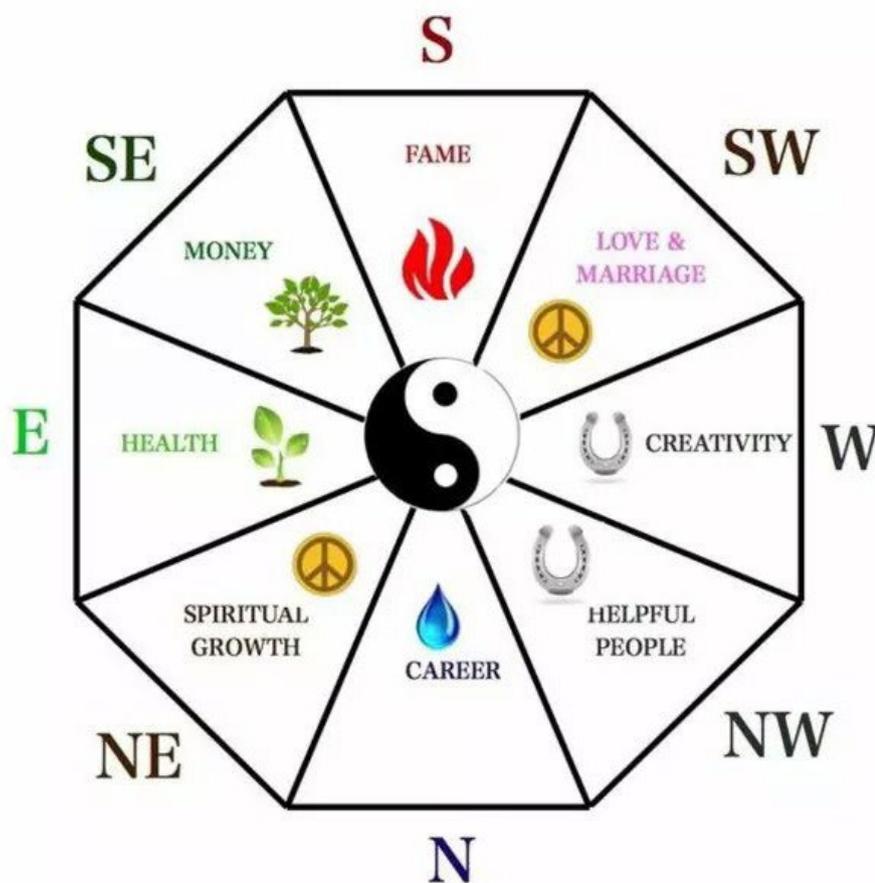


Figure 2.3-4

## Fengshui Elements Diagram

*Note.* Source (Experimenting with Feng Shui, *n.d.*)

The path, which typically leads to an escarpment at the mountain's top, is terraced from earth and stone. The passageway's rock-cut steps are small, and the ascent/descent remains steep, at times virtually vertical, and physically difficult. The passageway's design "does not allow one to see where it leads; it adds subtlety to the panorama, expands its ramification, produces a sense of seclusion and depth, and stops visitors from taking it in all at once" (H. Yang, 1982).



**Figure 2.3-5** Stairway to Mua Cave, Vietnam.

*Note.* Source (“Northern Vietnam Travel Guide Part 3,” 2018).

### 2.3.5 The Rocks and Stone Sculptures

Rocks have significant visual and metaphorical meaning in Chinese history. In Chinese gardens, rocks are often used to symbolize the grandeur and majesty of nature. They may be arranged in various structures, such as man-made mountains or single monoliths, and are intended to evoke the dramatic character of natural landscapes. These rocks can represent the Five Sacred Mountains of China, which are the "bones of the earth" in Chinese literature. Through the use of rocks, Chinese garden designers seek to create spaces that are both beautiful and contemplative, and that remind visitors of the interconnectedness of all things (Cao, 1973).



**Figure 2.3-6**

*Rock Works at Lion Forest Garden, China*

*Note. Source (Lion Grove, n.d.).*

A rocky island may signify Potalaka, the home of Guanyin, the bodhisattva of limitless mercy and compassion, to Buddhists. In other words, the meaning of the rocks is in the imagination of the beholder. While beautiful garden rocks are typically associated with mountains, they also could also be appreciated as natural sculptures that evoke imagery such as a lion, a predatory bird, a Buddhist deity, bamboo shoots, or dragons (Murck & Fong, 1980).

### **2.3.6 The Waterscape**

The fundamental principle of the temple site is the landscape, and waterscapes are quite important in the formation of temple gardens. Academic research on temple gardens is primarily focused on plant landscapes, temple architecture, artistic conception, and the entire setting (H. Wu et al., 2020).

The waterscapes of temple gardens have received little attention (Guan, 2006; Jin & Hua, 2004; Li, 2012; Z. Wang, 2017; Yuan, 2008). Water symbolizes that there are peaceful solutions to all difficulties. Water gets to its destination regardless of the impediments.

According to the Tao Te Ching, “The highest virtue is like water which benefits the myriad creatures without contention.” (Blofeld, 1973). Water bodies occupy most of the area in a traditional Chinese Buddhist site. Water scenery, according to Wuhan’s research, has a stronger symbolic importance than visual aesthetic pleasure, the enjoyment or satisfaction that someone experiences when looking at something that is aesthetically pleasing (H. Wu et al., 2020). Most Buddhist Temple gardens use static water to create a serene ambiance, and water is scarce, giving people a unique impression. Temple waterscapes are divided into four categories based on their popularity in various temples: waterfalls, streams, artificial ponds, and historic wells. Waterfalls and streams are typically natural systems, though some water channels and streams are man-made (H.

Wu et al., 2020).



**Figure 2.3-7**

*Pond in Garden at International Buddhist Society, Canada*

*Note. Source (International Buddhist Society, n.d.).*

The ponds and historic wells, on the other hand, were man-made. These waterscapes are all typical types of water features in temple grounds. To create a distinctive landscape, a pool can be used as a Life-free Pond or a Lotus Pond. Historic wells were used for drinking, and their existence reflected the lives of ancient monks. A stream revitalizes the environment while also providing a soundscape. Waterfalls are typically seen in large natural landscape settings (H. Wu et al., 2020). Water might be natural or artificial. It is colorless, soundless, and transparent. Therefore, the sound and color of waterscape are determined by its form and scenery around it. Water scenery is made up of three basic elements: form, sound, and color (J. Wang, 2009). The temple

pools not only highlight the role of life, but also require visitors to study the purity of water and then train their body and mind to achieve the meditation realm of tranquility, like water, with emptiness and peace (H. Wu et al., 2020).

### 2.3.7 The Vegetation

The religious concept is abstract, whereas the plant is real. People idealize and conceptualize specific flowers and trees to represent “Buddhas” in order to merge religion, architecture, and flora, which could have significant cultural significance as well as an artistic effect (W. Zhou, 2007). There are always plants associated with Buddhas in Buddhist temples. Those plants are frequently viewed as Buddhist incarnations (W. Zhou, 2007). Lotus (*Nelumba lutea*), talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera* Linn), Sacred fig (*Ficus religiosa*), Champak (*Michelia Champaca*), Chinese dwarf banana (*Musella lasiocarpa*), Sal tree (*Shorea robusta*), and red frangipani (*Plumeria rubra*) are among those plants (W. Zhou, 2007).



**Figure 2.3-8**

*Lotus pond at Nan Tien Temple, Wollongong, Australia*

Most plants are evergreen, implying that the Buddhas are immortal. Trees and flowers that symbolize Buddha, such as lagerstroemia indica, guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus varcalvescens*), manchurian lime (*Tilia mandshurica*), cape jasmine (*Gardenia jasminoides ellis*), and lotus are often used as material sources for gardening to decorate (Shim et al., 2004). Plants in the temple garden could be planted in clusters, groves, or on their own. Cluster planting is commonly found in the surrounding landscape. In terms of basic temple planning, areas for plants are larger than areas for buildings (Liu & Liu, 2014). These flowers are associated with Buddha's teachings, representing purity, clarity, and spiritual enlightenment. Lotus, for example, is a symbol of purification that can clarify a world full of crime, infidelity, and injustice (Shim et al., 2004).

Inside the temple, groves are visible for regional decorating by blocking the architecture to create an intensive artistic setting. Groupings of plants of the same species will generate a calm overall atmosphere; however, groups of plants of diverse species will make the place livelier (Liu & Liu, 2014).

Jai-sung Shim, Jeong-kwan Bae, and Byung-key Seo, from Division of Horticulture and Landscape, Pai Chai University, Korea, did a case study on the planting design principles from three different temples for Journal of Natural Sciences. The three temples are: Nagsansa, Boolgoogsa, and Booseugsa. The purpose of this study is to arrange the planting of ornamental trees and shrubs in a manner that creates an appropriate type of temple scape. A newly designed model of temple scape for Buddhist temples has been presented, based on the results of this studies. The principles of the model include:

1. To consider the correlation between plants and temple buildings,
2. To plant trees or shrubs for special functions and temple location,
3. To correlate tree arrangement with Buddhism spirit,
4. And to induce environment-friendly plants suitable for regional conditions.

This model can be used as a canon for planting and arranging trees in the precincts of Buddhism temples, creating a more harmonious and spiritually enriching environment (Shim et al., 2004). Species with attractive flowers, sweet aromas, or ancient trees are frequently planted alone for ornamentation, which is what landscape architects refer to as “specimen plants” (Liu & Liu, 2014).

#### **2.4 Cultural and Religious Influences in Vietnam: The Role of Buddhism and Chinese Traditions**

Vietnam is a country in Southeast Asia that has experienced significant cultural and spiritual influences from Buddhism that have grown widely and played a tremendous role in the lives of its indigenous inhabitants (Van, 2019). As Vietnam is situated on the East side of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, located between India and China, two of the world's largest culturally significant countries, its cultural and religious practices have naturally been influenced by both nations (Van, 2019). Cultural interaction between Vietnam and China has existed since prehistoric times (Tong, 2008). The 15th-century Vietnamese historical record *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* documents that China and Vietnam have had connections dating back to the Chinese Warring States period and the Vietnamese Thục dynasty in the 3rd century BC, although this timeline is disputed (Le, 2001). Due to China's invasions and subsequent occupations of Vietnam from the North, the Vietnamese people have been forced to fight for their survival and maintain their independence while navigating the interplay of language, culture, and religion between the two countries (Van, 2019).

Buddhism is the largest religion in Vietnam with “nearly 45 million followers of the Three Jewels, there are 839 Buddhist family units and about 44,498 monks and nuns” (Van, 2019). It is the most influential religion in Vietnam (Van, 2019). The practices of Buddhism in both China and Vietnam are informed by practical reasoning and thought

processes (Van,2019). Buddhists in Vietnam have demonstrated its vitality and potential in promoting both scholarly and folk properties, thereby fostering cooperation with the nation and penetrating the consciousness of a diverse range of residents within the communal assembly (Van, 2019). It is very common behind some temples, there are pagodas that use for worshipping a god. These gods are considered real, with the possibility of transformation through learning and cultivation, and are worshiped for their ability to save and help people in a region (Van, 2019). The widespread influence of Buddhism has also served to cultivate indigenous cultural values among the Vietnamese people. Among the historical figures worshipped are mandarins, celebrities, and generals who have contributed to the country or region, such as Mac Dinh Chi of the former Tran dynasty, worshipped at Dau pagoda in Bac Ninh, and Dang Tien Dong, a general during the Tay Son dynasty, worshipped at Tram Gian pagoda in what is now Hanoi. Portraits of these figures are often displayed in these temples (Van, 2019). Vietnamese Buddhism is characterized by its flexibility and synthesis, as evidenced by the worship of both Buddhist deities and real historical figures at temples (Van, 2019).

Chinese traditional gardens have heavily influenced Vietnamese traditional gardens (Tong, 2008). Temples in China are often situated on high mountains and may even be carved from stone, showcasing exceptional craftsmanship. In contrast, Vietnamese temples tend to be smaller and simpler, often belonging to the local community. Their predominant color is a deep brown, and they are constructed using locally sourced materials such as bamboo, wood, bricks, and tiles (Van, 2019). The characteristics of these gardens evolved by blending local natural elements cultural influences (Phan, 2008). One such influence is the arrangement of Vietnamese Temples that were influenced by Chinese Confucius teachings and the philosophy of Feng Shui (Tong, 2008). The temple designs include numerous architectural aspects that highlight

Vietnam's distinct culture and local traits (Tong, 2008).

The Temple of Literature in Vinh Long, in particular, was a symbol of feudal education, representing revered traditional ideals in the sphere of education for the people of Vinh Long province (Tong, 2008). With profound devotion, stone steles were installed that documented the names of all contributors associated with the temple's construction and maintenance. Furthermore, many of the ornamental themes represent traditional Vietnamese beliefs and anthropological aspects, as well as numerous indigenous cultural and creative elements of Vietnam. (Le and Park, 2022).



**Figure 2.4-1**

*Van Thanh (The Temple of Literature), Vinh Long, Vietnam*

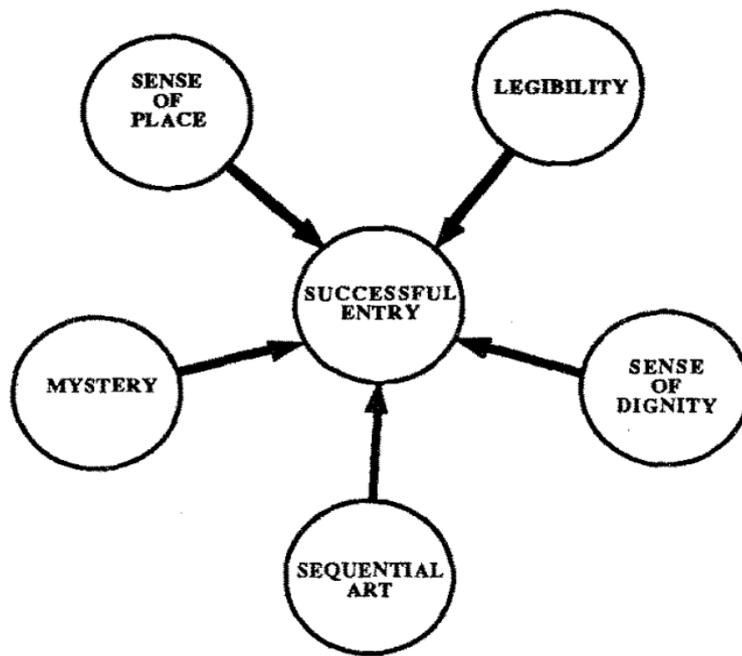
*Note. Source (KHÁM PHÁ VÙNG ĐẤT ĐỊA LINH NHÂN KIỆT, n.d.).*

## **2.5 Methods for Creating A successful Entry Sequence**

Designers of all styles and forms have considered the entry sequence to be a significant aspect of the built environment (Moore et al., 1984). In design curricula, the importance of the entry is always emphasized. This was confirmed by a content analysis

of written responses from jurors on 284 undergraduate architectural design projects at the University of Illinois School of Architecture. The results revealed that one or more comments related to entry challenges were made on 43 percent of the designs judged by jury members (Bain, 1989a).

Brodie is a national leader in planning for higher education campuses and facilities. She has comprehensive knowledge of campus planning, capital planning, programming, utilization studies, site planning, pre-designs, and design for the full range of campus building types. Brodie shares her insights through seminars, presentations, publications, and involvement in professional associations, civic organizations, and academics. Despite the importance of entry sequences in designing and experiencing spaces, there is a lack of extensive study or analysis on this topic. It is difficult to pinpoint the specific factors that contribute to a successful entry, and how these elements can vary across different cultures. In 1989, Bain began researching people's interactions with entries, and developed a conceptual model based on concerns reported in existing literature. She aimed to identify the traits that are correlated with successful entry and to apply these insights in her research. Through her work, Bain aimed to better understand the factors that influence the effectiveness of an entry and how these elements can be applied in design.



**Figure 2.5-1**

*Preliminary Model of a Successful Entry*

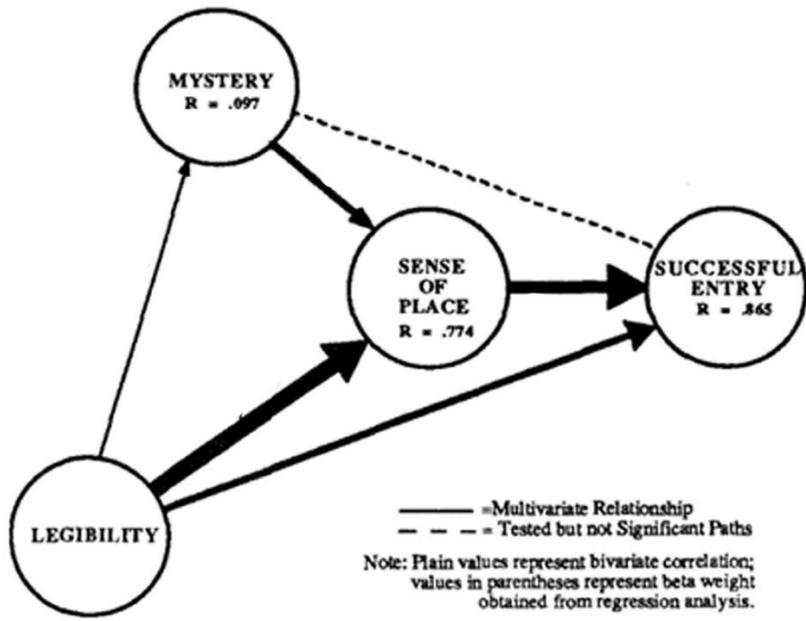
*Note.* Source (Bain, 1989b)

According to Bain's previous studies from 1989, the components of a "successful entrance" might include sense of place, legibility, sequential art, mystery, and dignity, see figure 2.4-1. On the most basic level, a sense of place needs the provision of legibility (Relph, 1976). Users' responses to the presence of a sense of place are believed to range from " simple recognition for orientation, through the capacity to respond emphatically to the identities of different places, to a profound association with places as cornerstones of human existence and individual identity" (Relph, 1976).

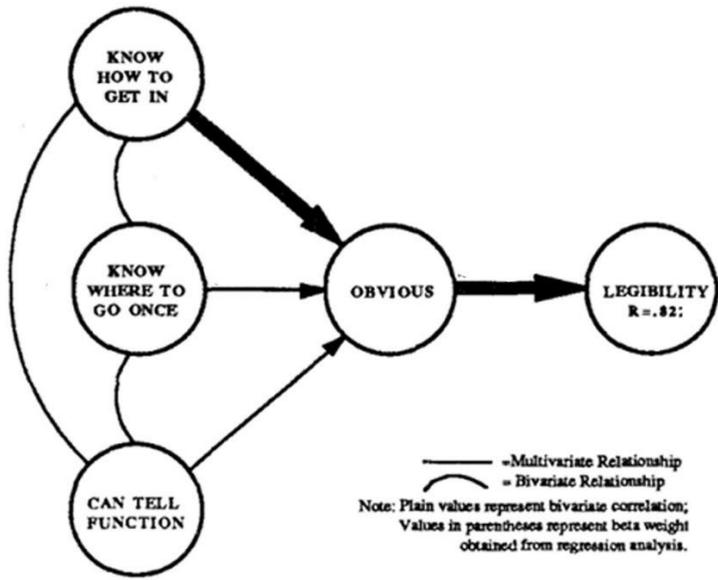
The environmental qualities of an entry can greatly influence how users experience and navigate a space (Lynch, 1960). One of the most essential aspects of an entry sequence appears to be to orient the user and define the route to take in order to get to a space and how to use it once arrived (Bain, 1990). The need for movement is being emphasized as an importance of successful spatial sequences, as well as the concept that

the composition of sequential spaces determines, in part, the aesthetic qualities of a designed space (Colbert, 1987). In design, sequences are commonly used to build up to a climax. While establishing an entry, a designer must be able to anticipate that the users will want to know where the entrance is as they approach the space (Raskin, 1954). Likewise, it appears that the entry sequence is an excellent chance to improve a space's sequential aesthetics (Bain, 1990).

Another factor that seems to be crucial in the success of an entry is mystery. As one goes through a successfully enigmatic setting, information slowly emerges (Bain, 1990). It exposes pleasant surprises to the users, eliciting feelings of anticipation and curiosity, and drawing them further along. The interpretation of mystery in this way has been demonstrated to predict environmental preferences (R. Kaplan, 1973, 1977, 1979; S. Kaplan, 1979; S. Kaplan & Wendt, 1972). Despite appearing to be the polar opposite of legibility, mystery can be used to enhance a space by asking the users to put an effort to solve a solvable puzzle (Bain, 1990). Mystery cannot exist in a constructive way without legibility (Lynch, 1960; Kaplan, 1979).



(a)

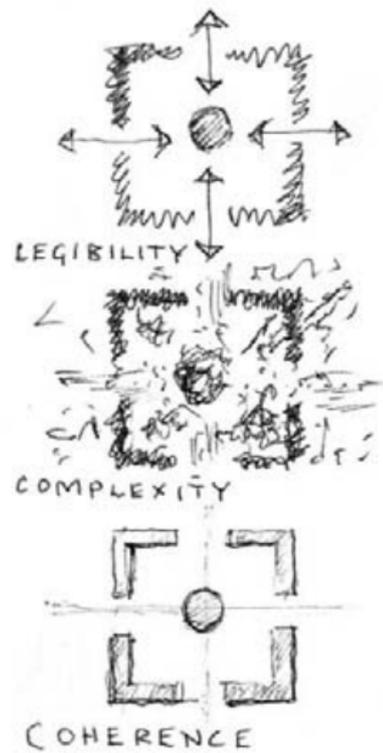


(b)

**Figure 2.5-2**

*Tested Model*

*Note.* Source (Bain, 1990).



**Figure 2.5-3**

*Models of design and qualities of place*

*Note.* Source (Stamps, 2004).

ADA, Standards for Accessible Design, has long been a concern in designed spaces (Lyndon, 1987). People with disabilities prefer to access space through main entrances, according to a study by Bain. People who are unable to utilize the main entry (which is usually a significant and evocative route to a space) are often perceived as less important than others (Bain, 1989b).

Bain undertook a study in 1989 to look at the earliest conceptual model of a "successful entry" that included all five aspects sense of place, legibility, sequential art, mystery, and dignity. These five original aspects, considered to be the key to a successful entrance experience, were explored. The models of "successful entry" were further improved by collecting data on responses to a variety of entry sequences using the

components in the test models. Continuing with this study, in 1990, she started testing these models through experiments. Since the entry sequence requires movement and it was inconvenient for the test subjects to travel to the site, video was chosen as the best alternative for presenting the entry experience to the subjects. The videotape was made in an attempt to replicate the entry sequence as closely as possible to the user's experience through the site. Further, a standard 50mm lens was utilized since it nearly approximates the human eye's natural angle of vision (Sullivan, 1988). Bain captured twelve entry sequences at 12 different sites in Columbus, Indiana. The final videotape broke the recorded materials into two segments. For the first round, the sequences were initially played immediately, one after the other. Then, the sequences, with 2-minute pauses, were shown in the second session. The sequences recorded varied from 1 1/2 to 3 minutes long. Participants were instructed to write down anything that came to mind as they envisioned themselves traveling through space. From the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 29 design students and 19 non-design students were invited to participate in the study. The general "success" of each sequence was to be judged by both designers and non-designers. A section of open-ended and a section of multiple-choice questions were utilized as study instruments. The open-ended part categorized each sequence by number in the order presented and allowed the participants to react and provide comments about them as they were watched (Bain, 1990).

This study's findings allowed researchers to look into a variety of topics regarding designer and non-designer responses to entry sequence simulations. As a result, the study contributes more in-depth evidence than the theorized relationships between components that lead to "successful entry". The most essential quality of a successful entry appears to be a strong sense of place. Sense of place refers to an individual's unique

experience and perception of a specific environment. It encompasses the emotions and thoughts that a person associates with a particular setting. Maintaining a positive sense of place is crucial for preserving the quality of the surrounding environment (Najafi, 2011). Legibility makes a substantial contribution to the establishment of a sense of place by supplying indicators that suggest where to go and informing the users about where they are. A sense of place can also be enhanced by a certain level of mystery employed to establish a positive relationship between the users and their surroundings. Knowing how to enter a space once arrived, where to go subsequently, and the ability to distinguish the function of that space are unequivocally make up a "successful entry" (Bain, 1990).

## **2.6 Literature Review Conclusion**

The entry sequence is an important aspect of the built environment, and its significance is emphasized in design. While designers have long considered the entry sequence to be significant, there is a lack of extensive study or analysis on the topic, especially as it relates to Temple Gardens in suburban areas of the United States. However, Bain's work has identified that a "successful entrance" includes five key aspects: sense of place, legibility, sequential art, mystery, and dignity. Bain's research includes experiments that utilized video recordings of entry sequences to better understand how users experience and use them. However, further research is needed to identify the specific elements that contribute to a successful entry and how these elements can vary across different cultures. However, further research is needed to identify how these elements can vary across different cultures and contexts.

Traditional Chinese temple gardens, both mountainous and urban, are designed to reflect Buddhist doctrines and provide an escape from city life. They incorporate natural

scenes and architecture to create a visual expression of religious beliefs, and planting design is a crucial element in their formation. Chinese characters use five essential garden components to represent the word "garden," including walls, architecture, water and ponds, stones, and plants. Planting design is an important component of temple gardens, and the combination of five essential garden components including walls, architecture, water and ponds, stones, and plants are used to represent the word "garden" in Chinese characters. Rocks are an important element in Chinese history and gardens, symbolizing the grandeur of nature and interconnectedness of all things. Water symbolizes peaceful solutions to difficulties and occupies most of the area in a traditional Chinese Buddhist site, with waterfalls, streams, artificial ponds, and historic wells being the four categories of water scenery in temple gardens.

Various plants such as lotus, talipot palm, and Sacred fig are associated with Buddha and are planted in temple gardens. The principles of planting design in Buddhist temples, including the correlation between plants and temple buildings, tree arrangement with the Buddhism spirit, and environmentally friendly plants suitable for regional conditions are also discussed. The cultural interaction between China and Vietnam is highlighted, with a focus on the influence of Chinese traditional gardens on Vietnamese traditional gardens.

Vietnam's cultural and religious practices have been shaped by its geographical location between China and India, with Buddhism being the most influential religion in the country. The practices of Buddhism in Vietnam are characterized by their flexibility and synthesis, as seen in the worship of both Buddhist deities and real historical figures in temples. Additionally, Chinese traditional gardens have heavily influenced Vietnamese traditional gardens, and temple designs in Vietnam highlight the country's distinct culture and

local traits. The Temple of Literature in Vinh Long serves as a symbol of feudal education and represents traditional Vietnamese beliefs and anthropological aspects. Overall, these cultural and spiritual influences have played a significant role in the lives of Vietnam's indigenous inhabitants.

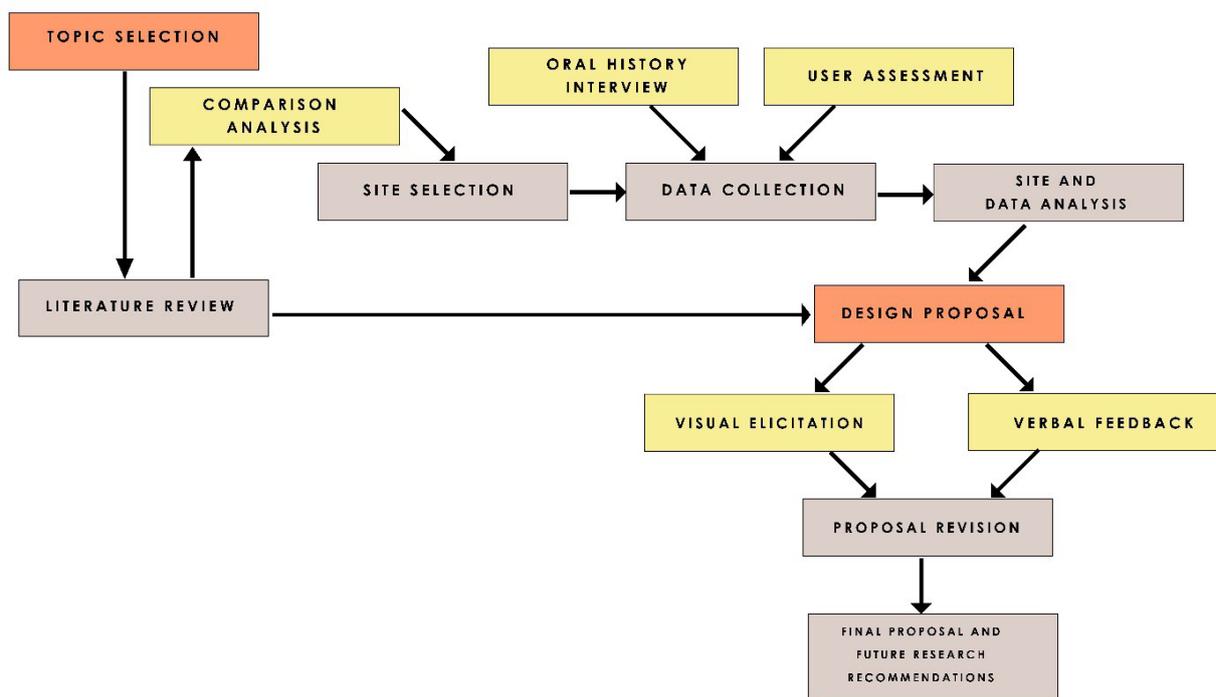
In contemporary landscape architecture, it is important to preserve and promote the unique features of regional temple gardens. By doing so, we can maintain their historical and cultural value and create harmonious and spiritually enriching environments for both believers and visitors. Further research is needed to explore the various elements and components of temple gardens in more detail, and to better understand their historical, cultural, and spiritual significance.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by using the following methods: Literature review, comparison analysis, site inventory, user survey, interview with member from board of advisory, design process, and design testing.

The researcher's overall methodology can be found in figure below:



**Figure 3-1** Flow Chart

#### 3.1 Literature Review

Literature review investigated the history and design principles of traditional Chinese Buddhist temple gardens. This included a review of relevant literature on the topic, as well as an analysis of the design elements and principles used in other Buddhist temple sites. The review aimed to provide an understanding of the cultural and spiritual significance of temple gardens in the context of Chinese Buddhist tradition. Moreover, the literature review focused

on exploring the key design elements and principles of temple gardens, such as the use of water, rocks, and plants to create a harmonious and balanced environment that supports spiritual practice and contemplation.

The literature review also discussed the elements of a "successful entry sequence" in temple gardens, which serves as a transition from the outside world to the sacred space of the temple. The review examined the design principles and elements that contribute to a successful entry sequence, such as: sense of place, legibility, sequential art, mystery, and dignity.

### **3.2 Comparison Analysis**

A comparative analysis of Vietnamese Buddhist temples in the DFW and Houston regions of Texas based on traditional Chinese temple garden design elements. The evaluation framework is based on four primary elements gathered from the literature review: architecture, water and ponds, stones, and plants. This analysis did not only provide insights into the design of Vietnamese Buddhist temples but also contribute to the wider discussion of cultural appropriation and the adaptation of cultural practices in contemporary settings. The evaluation of Vietnamese Buddhist temples based on traditional Chinese temple garden design elements provided insights into the extent to which these elements are integrated into the design of contemporary temples.

#	Name	Location	Legibility from Street	Architecture	Vegetation	Water	Monumentation	Over all Color theme	Photo
1	Hue Quan Buddhist Center	Arlington, TX							
2	Huong Dao Temple	Ft Worth, TX							
3	Ling Son Temple SW	Houston, Tx							
4	Linh Son Temple	Houston, Tx							
5	Phap Quang Temple	Grand Prairie, TX							
6	Phat An Temple, Truc Lam Buddhist Center	Arlington, TX							
7	Phat Quang Temple	Houston, Tx							
8	Quang Chieu Temple	Everman, TX							
9	Tinh Luat Temple	Houston, Tx							
10	Tu Bi Temple	Arlington, TX							
11	Tu Dam Temple	Irving, Tx							
12	Vien Thong Temple	Houston, Tx							

**Figure 3.2** Comparison Analysis Format

Based on this analysis, the Phap Quang Temple in Grand Prairie, Texas was selected as the focus of the design research. The decision was based on the temple's unique characteristics and potential for improving the visitor experience. Specifically, the temple's location, layout, and current design elements were evaluated to determine how they could be improved to create a more welcoming and harmonious environment for visitors. The focus on Phap Quang Temple provides a specific case study that allowed for a detailed exploration of the practical application of the design principles gathered from the literature review.

### **3.3 Site inventory**

Site inventory and analysis is a methodology that involves thoroughly documenting and studying the features and characteristics of a particular site. The data collected through site inventory and analysis can then be used to inform the design process and help ensure that the design is appropriate and sensitive to the unique characteristics of the site. This can include collecting information about the site's physical and environmental characteristics, such as its location, topography, climate, and vegetation, as well as its cultural and historical context.

The site inventory and analysis for this study include:

1. Topography
2. Land use
3. Demographic+ Economic
4. Circulation (vehicular and pedestrian)
5. Landscape features (vegetation, benches, gathering spaces, water, features, fences, etc.)
6. Plant Inventory
7. Views into, out of, and within the garden

Site inventory and analysis is an important step in the design process, as it helps to

ensure that the design is informed by a deep understanding of the site and its context. This can help to avoid potential design problems and ensure that the design is appropriate and responsive to the unique characteristics of the site.

### **3.4 Oral History Interview with Member from Board of Advisory**

This interview was conducted with a member from the board of advisory of Phap Quang Temple. This process involved scheduling appointments and conducting in-person interviews at Phap Quang Temple. Prior to the interviews, a list of questions was developed that aimed to gain insight into the history of the site and the board's desires for the design of the entry point.

During the interviews, the researcher began by introducing themselves and explaining the purpose of the study. The participant was then asked to share their thoughts on the history of the temple and their experiences with the site. The researcher asked follow-up questions to clarify any points or to explore topics in more detail.

After discussing the history of the site, the participant was asked to share their thoughts on the site's current condition. They were also asked about the relationship of the temple with its neighbors to address the social aspect. The participant was encouraged to provide the researcher with ideas and preferences for the design of the entry point.

All interviews were recorded with permission and later transcribed for analysis. The data collected from the interviews was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to identify recurring themes and patterns in the participant's responses. These themes and patterns were used to inform the design intervention at the Phap Quang Temple entry point.

### **3.5 User Survey**

In order to gain insight into the visitor experience at Phap Quang Temple

involved conducting a survey of frequent temple goers. The survey was designed to capture information about visitors' backgrounds, beliefs, and perceptions of the temple's entrance. The survey was distributed in both English and Vietnamese to ensure accessibility to all visitors.

The following questions address the current conditions of the Phap Quang Temple. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by checking the appropriate box.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel welcome when arrive at the entry of Phap Quang Temple.							
This entry is inviting to newcomers.							
I can locate the temple's entrance from the street.							
It takes time for me to feel comfortable after entering the temple.							
The garden entry provides a feeling of entering a special place.							
The entrance makes me feel like I am entering a safe place.							
I would recommend to other people that they visit Phap Quang Temple.							

These next questions focus on describing the characteristics of the current conditions of the Phap Quang Temple Garden. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement by placing a checkmark on your answer.

The entry to the Phap Quang Temple is.

Unkept	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Tended
Ugly	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Beautiful
Busy	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Calm
Antisocial	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Sociable
Serious	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Playful

Các câu hỏi sau đây đề cập đến tình trạng hiện tại của Chùa Pháp Quang. Vui lòng cho biết mức độ đồng ý của bạn với các nhận định sau bằng cách đánh dấu vào ô thích hợp.

	Manh mẽ Đồng ý	Đồng ý	Hơi Đồng ý	Không Đồng ý cũng không Không đồng ý	Hơi Không đồng ý	Không đồng ý	Manh mẽ Không đồng ý
Tôi cảm thấy được chào đón khi đến lối vào Chùa Pháp Quang.							
Lối vào này chào đón cho người mới.							
Tôi có thể xác định vị trí lối vào của ngôi đền từ đường phố.							
Tôi cần có thời gian để cảm thấy thoải mái sau khi vào chùa.							
Lối vào Chùa Pháp Quang mang lại cảm giác bước vào một nơi đặc biệt							
Lối vào khiến tôi có cảm giác như mình đang bước vào một nơi an toàn.							
Tôi muốn giới thiệu cho những người khác rằng họ nên đến thăm chùa Pháp Quang.							

Những câu hỏi tiếp theo này tập trung vào việc mô tả các đặc điểm của điều kiện hiện tại của Vườn Chùa Pháp Quang. Vui lòng cho biết mức độ đồng ý của bạn với nhận định sau bằng cách đánh dấu vào câu trả lời của bạn.  
Lối vào chùa Pháp Quang là.

Không giữ	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Chăm sóc
Xấu xí	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Xinh đẹp
Bận	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Điềm tĩnh
Phản xã hội	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Hòa đồng
Trang nghiêm	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Vui tươi

**Figure 3.5** User Survey English and Vietnamese Version

The survey questions focused on visitors' perceptions of the entrance, including its aesthetic appeal, functionality, and effectiveness in creating a sense of arrival and engaging them with the space. Additionally, questions were included to capture visitors' impressions

of the temple's overall design coherence and cultural significance. The survey responses were collected on site in one day and analyzed using Microsoft excel to identify patterns and trends in the data. This program also was able to produce pie charts to show the visitor data. The findings from the survey were used to inform the proposed design of the temple's entrance, including elements such as landscaping, lighting, and signage.

The survey methodology allowed for a broad and representative sample of visitors to provide feedback on the visitor experience at Phap Quang Temple. The resulting data provided valuable insights into visitors' perceptions of the entrance and how it contributes to their overall experience at the temple. This information was used to guide the proposed design intervention, ensuring that it aligns with the needs and desires of the temple's visitors.

### **3.6 Design Process**

The most important goal for this design program was to achieve the research-based criteria for successful entry sequences to a Buddhist Temple. The findings from the literature review, case study, and survey were synthesized and used to develop a set of design criteria and programmatic elements for the entrance sequence of a Buddhist temple garden. These criteria and elements were then applied to the design of a proposed entrance sequence for the Phap Quang Temple and tested by using the photo elicitation method.

### **3.7 Design Testing**

Photo elicitation is a research technique that uses visual stimuli, such as photographs, to prompt discussion and reflection among participants (Harper, 2002). In this study, photo elicitation was employed to explore design suggestions for the entry of Phap Quang Temple. The photographs used were images that the researcher created through a 3D rendering program, SketchUp and photoshop, to depict possible design

options for the entryway. These design options were based on design principles from literature review, user's survey, and one-on-one interview with members of Board of Advisory.

Participants were presented with a set of photographs and asked to provide verbal feedback on their thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to the images using domain analysis. The aim was to use the photographs as a tool to evoke deeper elements of human consciousness, and to tap into the parts of the brain that process visual information, which are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information.

The photographs depicted design suggestions for the entryway of Phap Quang Temple and were meant to prompt participants to reflect on how the design options might impact their experience of the space. Using photo elicitation as a research technique evokes a different kind of information than would be obtained through traditional interviews using words alone (Harper, 2002). In addition to the photo elicitation technique, the researcher provided a range of options on each of the views at the entry to the temple. Rather than a binary choice, this way researcher was able to gain a more detailed understanding of their perceptions and preferences. By using this methodology, potential trade-offs and conflicts between different design elements could be identified. For instance, participants may express a preference for a large number of trees at the entry point, but this may also create navigational challenges. Through presenting a range of options, the researcher was able to identify these potential conflicts and explore possible solutions. This approach allowed for a more thorough and comprehensive exploration of participant preferences and aided in the development of a design thesis that balanced aesthetic and practical considerations.

## **CHAPTER 4 DESIGN RESEARCH**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section presents the analytical findings used to investigate the design suggestions for the entry of Phap Quang Temple. The study was conducted by using a range of methods, including comparison analysis, site inventory, user survey, interview with members of the Board of Advisory, and visual elicitation. All tested design elements were originally extracted from the literature review. The findings of the study provide insights into the preferences and perceptions of the participants towards these design elements and identify potential trade-offs and conflicts between them. These results are instrumental in developing a design response that balances aesthetic and practical considerations for the entryway at Phap Quang Temple in Grand Prairie, TX.

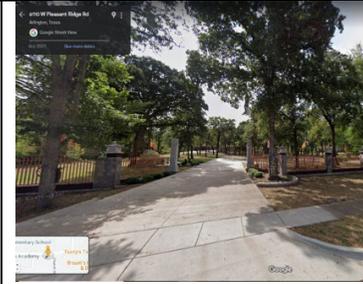
### **4.2 Comparison Analysis**

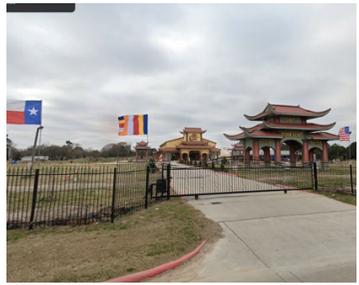
A comparative analysis of Vietnamese Buddhist temples in the DFW and Houston regions of Texas was undertaken using traditional Chinese temple garden design elements as evaluation elements for framework (table 4.2-1). By examining four primary elements – legibility from the street, architecture, vegetation, water, monumentation, and the overall color theme, this research contributes to the wider discussion of cultural appropriation and the adaptation of cultural practices in contemporary settings. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, cultural appropriation is "the unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the practices, customs, or aesthetics of one social or ethnic group by members of another (typically dominant) community or society." To correctly adopt a cultural practice without appropriate them is through critical regionalism. The tools necessary for achieving a well-designed outcome through critical regionalism, such as defamiliarization, resistance, and an understanding of regional elements, now involve a flexible and creative search for defining parameters of regions and districts. These tools are personal

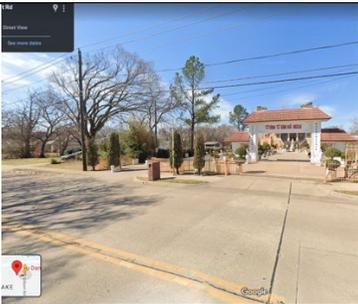
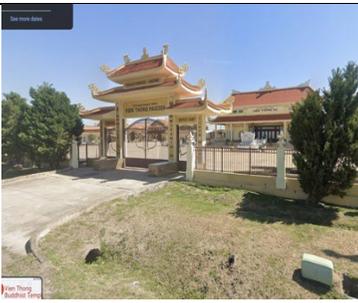
formulations that require philosophical contemplation and reflection (Hopman, 2023). The analysis of the temples based on traditional Chinese design elements offers insights into the degree to which these elements are incorporated into contemporary temple designs and which temples was was most useful as the study subject.

The literature review provides the basis for the categories used to analyze the entrance of these temples. Firstly, legibility concerns how users perceive the sense of place, ranging from basic orientation to a deep connection with the place as an integral part of human existence and personal identity. Architecture columns represent the building elements, and the Three Doors of Liberation are the most common architectural element found in the entryways of Buddhist temples. This element has significant symbolism in Buddhism. The Three Doors of Liberation are often studied and practiced by Buddhist practitioners as a means to achieve a deeper understanding of the nature of reality and attain spiritual awakening. The analysis then examines the element of vegetation, which is one of the five elements traditionally present in Buddhist temple gardens. Some species of vegetation have connections to the practice and meaning of Buddhism, such as the lotus. The analysis also considers the element of waterscape, which occupies a significant percentage of Buddhist temple sites, although many temples lack this element. Monumentation is the next element analyzed, and it includes symbolisms such as Fo dogs or Lion of Fo, which help visitors familiarize themselves with new places. Lastly, the most popular colors used in the entryways across the temples were analyzed to identify the overall theme.

#	Name	Location	Legibility from Street	Architecture	Vegetation	Water	Monumentation	Overall Color theme	Photo
1	Hue Quan Buddhist Center	Arlington, TX	Transparent, Below eye level	None	None	None	None	white	
2	Huong Dao Temple	Ft Worth, TX	Opaque, above eye level, clear separation	The three doors of liberation	Canopy and ornamental	None	Lion of Fo at the gate	red, beige, yellow	
3	Ling Son Temple SW	Houston, Tx	Opiate, above eye level, clear separation	None	Ornamental trees outside the fence	None	Lion of Fo	white	

#	Name	Location	Legibility from Street	Architecture	Vegetation	Water	Monumentation	Overall Color theme	Photo
4	Linh Son Temple	Houston, Tx	transparent with above eye level metal fence	None	Canopy trees	None	none	red	
5	Phap Quang Temple	Grand Prairie, TX	semi-opaque, below eye level, metal fence with hedges	The three doors of liberation	Full variety but mostly Ornamental planting and hedges	Water feature facing street	Founder monk's memorial, Buddha's statues	yellow	
6	Phat An Temple, Truc Lam Buddhist Center	Arlington, TX	Opaque, eye level with stone columns	Masonry columns with Buddhist symbolic Stone Cap	Dense Canopy Trees	None	None	red, grey	

#	Name	Location	Legibility from Street	Architecture	Vegetation	Water	Monumentation	Overall Color theme	Photo
7	Phat Quang Temple	Houston, Tx	transparent with eyelevel metal fence and some ornamental trees in the yard	None	Ornamental trees	None	Buddha statue	grey	
8	Quang Chieu Temple	Everman, TX	Semi-opaque, with mental fence above eye level as outer layer and canopy trees as the inner layer	Three doors of liberation	canopy trees	None	Fo dogs statues at the gate	yellow, orange	
9	Tinh Luat Temple	Houston, Tx	transparent, above eye level fence.	The three doors of liberation of to the right of the entrance	None	None	None	black, red, yellow	

#	Name	Location	Legibility from Street	Architecture	Vegetation	Water	Monumentation	Overall Color theme	Photo
10	Tu Bi Temple	Arlington, TX	Transparent, eye level see through fence	None	Some canopy and ornamental trees	None	None	red, yellow	
11	Tu Dam Temple	Irving, Tx	semi-transparent, below eye level, metal fence	Three doors of liberation	Some vertical ornamental trees	Water feature with Buddha Statues	Many Buddha Statues and rock works in water features	White	
12	Vien Thong Temple	Houston, Tx	Semi-opaque, above eye level, the ornamental tree outside of the fence	Three doors of liberation	Ornamental trees outside the fence	None	The three doors of liberation, Many Buddhist Statues and rock works in water features	dark red, yellow	

*Table 4.2-1 Vietnamese Buddhist Temples Comparison Analysis*

The study uses the Phap Quang Temple in Grand Prairie, Texas as a specific case study for the research. This selection was made based on the temple's unique characteristics and potential for improving the visitor experience. The temple plays a big part to the Vietnamese Buddhist community in North Texas area. In comparison to the other temples analyzed in the study, the Phap Quang Temple site is offering a wider range of design elements that can be examined and improved upon. With its rich Vietnamese features, the temple stands out as a unique site for investigating the integration of traditional Buddhist design concepts into modern temple construction. The temple's location in a culturally diverse area provides an opportunity to explore how cultural influences shape the design and visitor experience of Buddhist temples. Moreover, the temple's leadership and community have expressed a keen interest in improving the visitor experience, making it an ideal candidate for this study aimed at enhancing the quality of the visitor experience at Buddhist temples.

### **4.3 Site Location and Inventory**

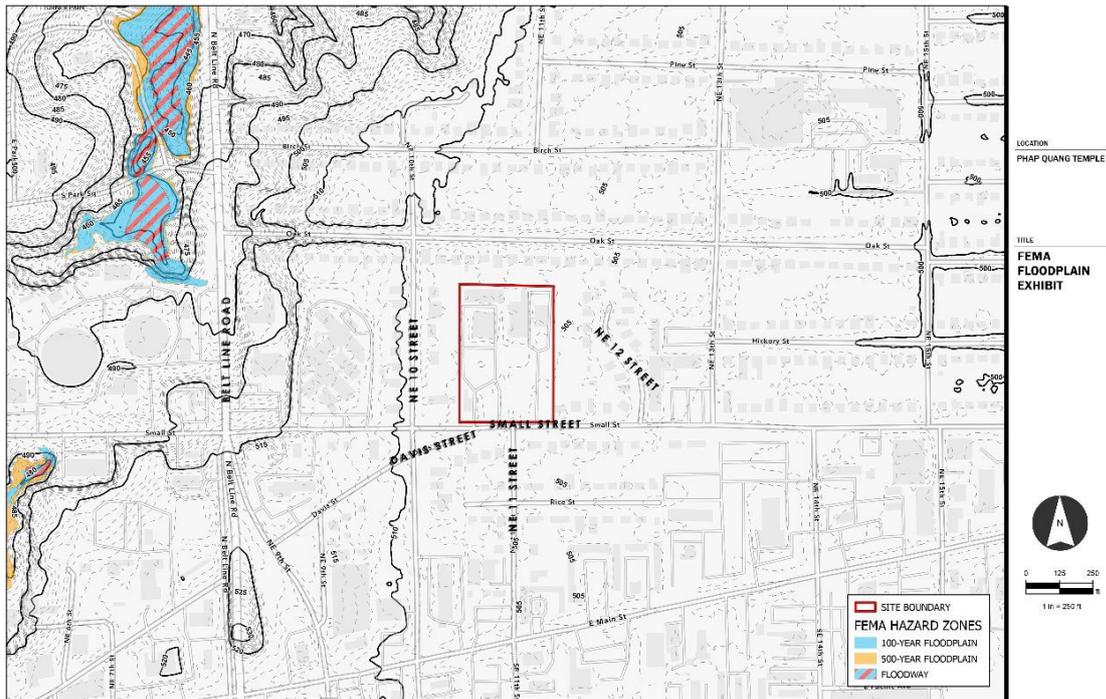
Grand Prairie is a city centrally located in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex in North Texas. It is in the northeastern part of Tarrant County, has a population of over 195,000 and is the fifteenth most populous city in Texas. The city has a rich cultural history, with a significant Vietnamese American population as well as diverse communities of African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, White Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans residing in various neighborhoods throughout the area. This cultural diversity is reflected in the city's numerous Vietnamese restaurants, grocery stores, and religious centers such as Asian Time Square, Banh Mi #1, and Phap Quang Temple. As a suburban area, Grand Prairie offers a unique context. It provides residents with access to a wide range of employment, cultural, and entertainment opportunities. At the same time, the city has a more relaxed suburban pace of life, with plenty of green space and recreational activities,

such as parks and hiking trails.

According to the City of Grand Prairie's Parks, Arts and Recreation Department website, the city boasts over 5,000 acres of parkland, which includes over 50 parks and facilities, as well as over 40 miles of hiking and biking trails. It is unclear what percentage of the city's total area is designated as green space, but Grand Prairie appears to have a significant amount of parkland and open spaces.

Phap Quang Temple is a Vietnamese Buddhist temple located in Grand Prairie, Texas, USA. Phap Quang Temple is relatively flat, as the temple is situated in the northern part of the city, which is known for its relatively flat terrain. However, there may be some gentle slopes or changes in elevation within the temple grounds or surrounding areas. Additionally, being located outside of the 100-year floodplain of Grand Prairie, Texas means that the temple is not expected to experience significant flooding from major storms that have a 1% chance of occurring in any given year. However, it's important to note that flooding can still occur in the area during heavy rainfall events or from other sources of water.

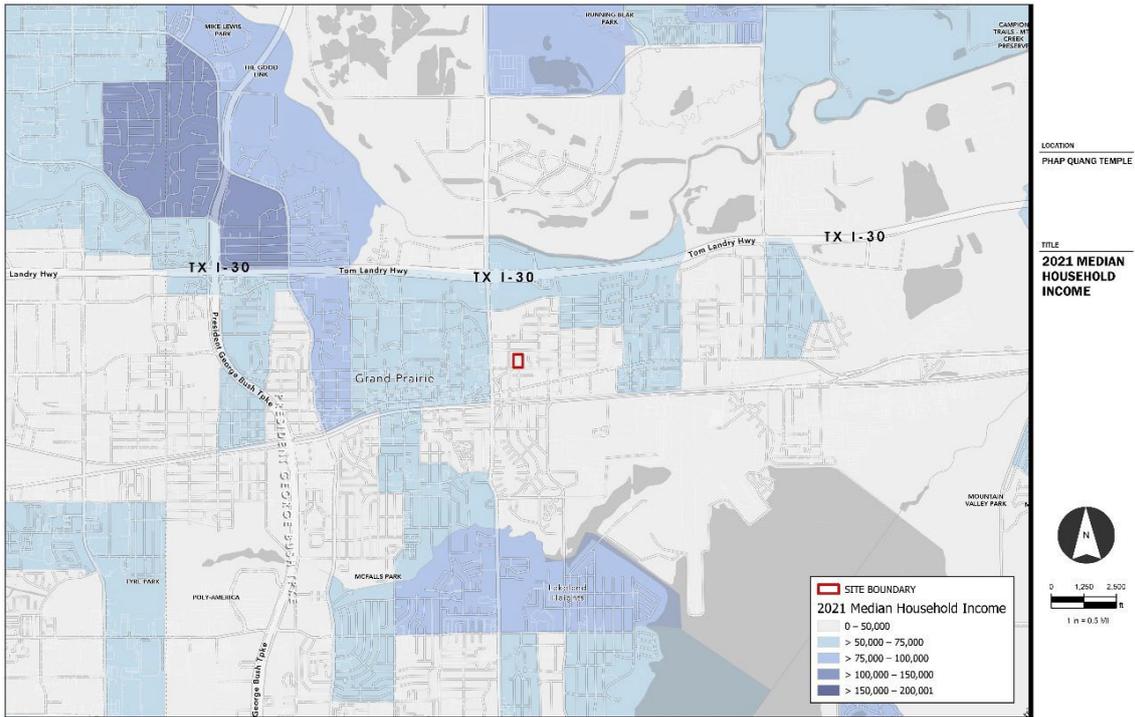
Since the Phap Quang Temple is located in a relatively flat area, there is a potential for drainage issues, particularly in the entrance and parking lot areas. With little elevation to encourage natural drainage, it is necessary to implement additional measures such as grading or the installation of drainage systems to ensure that excess water is effectively managed and does not cause damage or safety hazards.



**Figure 4.3-1**

*Topography and Floodplain on site*

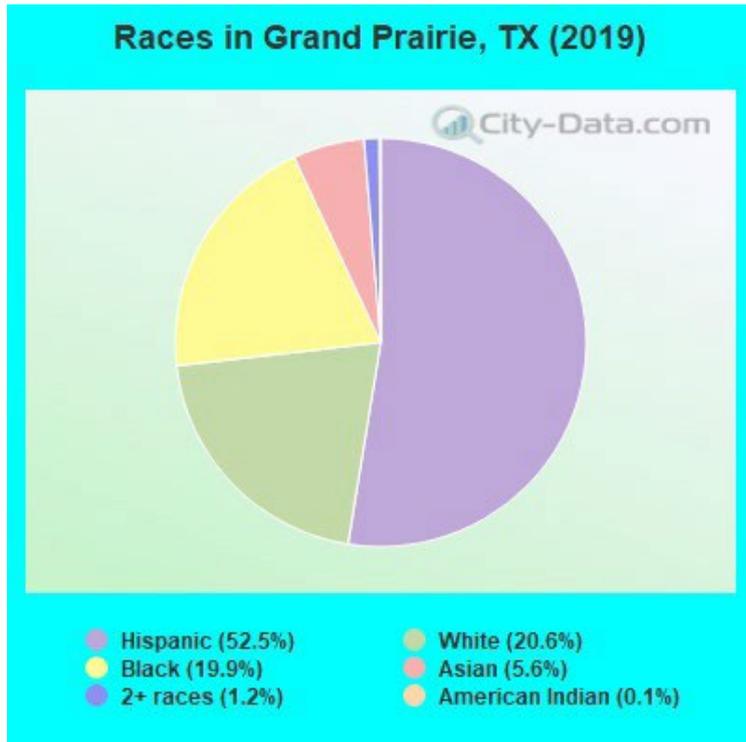
According to the United States Census Bureau, the median household income for Grand Prairie in 2021 was \$63,415. However, it showed that Phap Quang Temple is in a lower income area of Grand Prairie and has a median household income of less than \$50,000. This economic diversity is reflected in the various types of businesses and services May 2013 in different parts of the city, with some areas having access to more resources and opportunities than others.



**Figure 4.3-2**

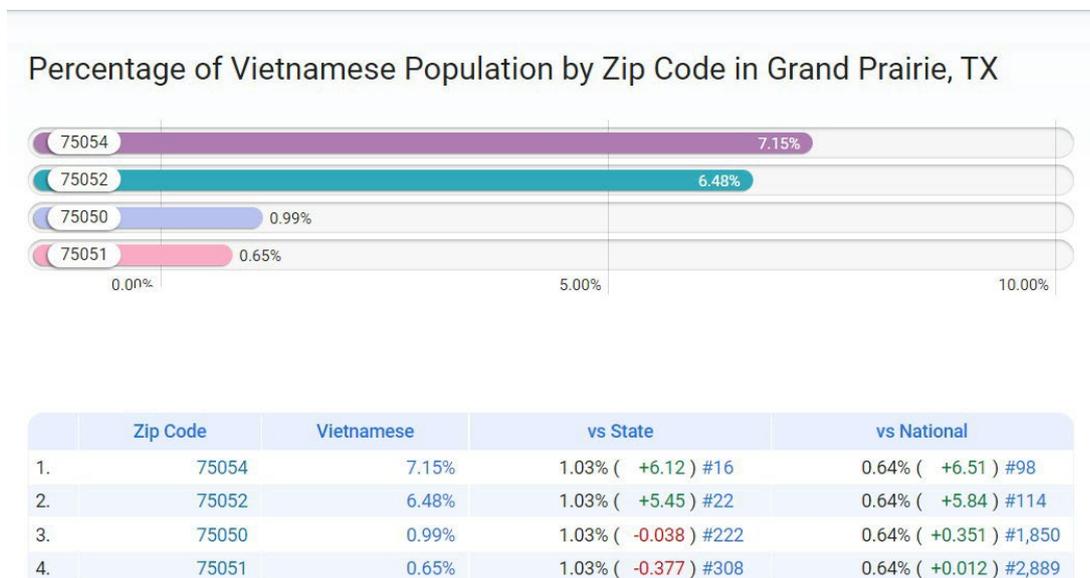
*2021 Median Household Income in Grand Prairie, TX*

The demographics of the area surrounding Phap Quang Temple in Grand Prairie are diverse. According to the United States Census Bureau, as of 2019, the racial and ethnic makeup of Grand Prairie was 52.5% Hispanic, 20.6% White, 19.9% Black or African American, 5.6% Asian, 0.1% American Indian and 1.2% of other races. According to the May 2023 American Community Survey, about 3.8% of the population in Grand Prairie identified as Vietnamese in 2019. It is more than 6% populated comparing to the rest of the state and nation.



**Figure 4.3-3**

*Race Demography Pie Chart in Grand Prairie, TX*

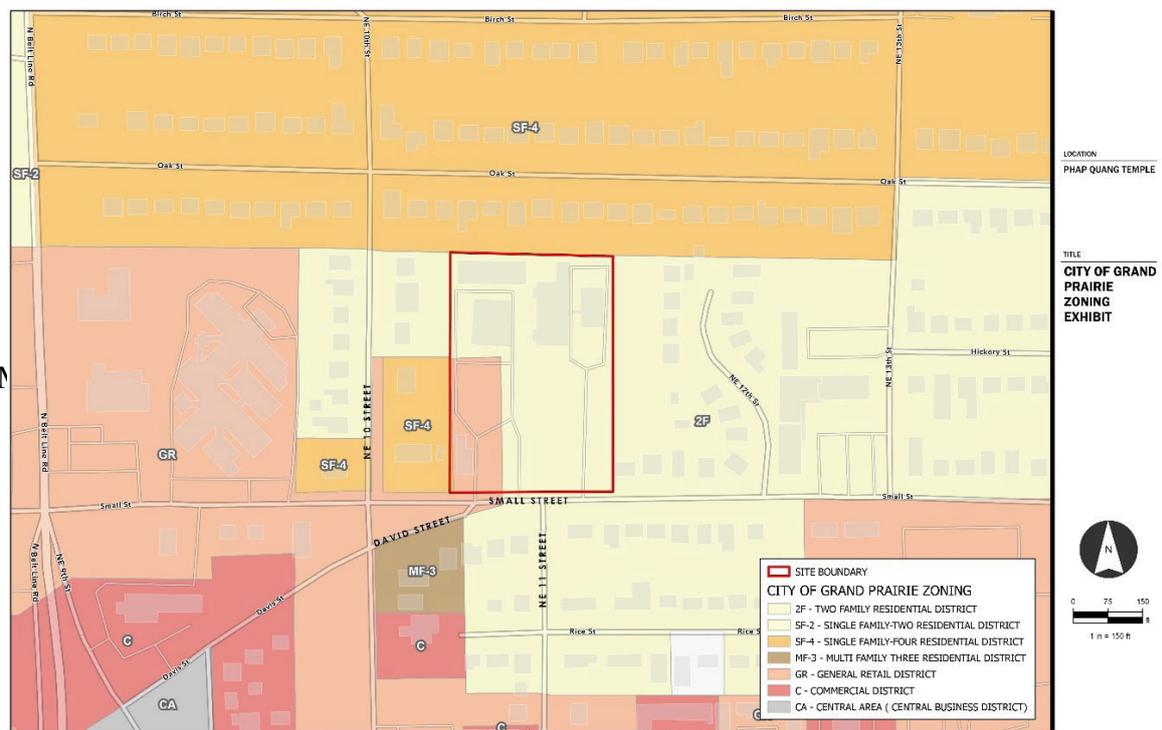


**Figure 4.3-4**

*Percentage of Vietnamese Population in Grand Prairie, TX*

The median age in Grand Prairie is 33.9 years old. The population is fairly evenly

distributed across different age groups, with 25.7% of the population under 18 years old, 63.2% between the ages of 18 and 64, and 11.1% aged 65 years or older. Understanding the age demographics of Grand Prairie is important for designing a Temple and its surrounding neighborhood that caters to the needs of the diverse local population, it is important to consider accessibility and mobility issues related to aging populations in the design of the Temple and its surroundings. Additionally, the age demographics can inform outreach and engagement strategies, such as interpretive elements in the landscape as well as programming or events that cater to different age groups, thereby creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of the community who use or visit the Temple.



**Figure 4.3-5**

*City of Grand Prairie Zoning Map*

The area surrounding Phap Quang Temple in Grand Prairie, Texas is predominantly

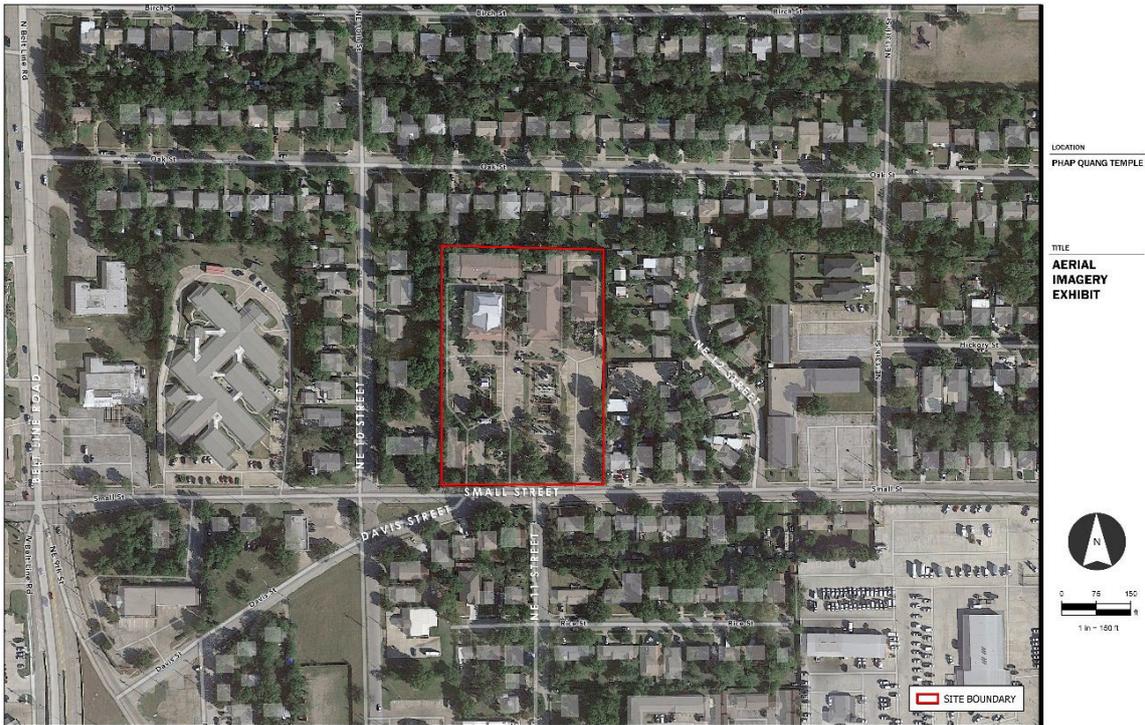
residential, with a mix of single-family homes and multi-family buildings. There are also some commercial and retail areas nearby, as well as a few industrial sites. The temple itself is located in a residential neighborhood, with single-family homes. It is on the intersection of 11th and Small street, which is less than 1 mile from downtown Grand Prairie.



**Figure 4.3-6**

*Streetscape and neighborhood adjacent to the temple*

The temple was established in 1980 by the monk Tri Ha Hien and has since become a popular destination for visitors and devotees seeking spiritual guidance and peace (Phap Quang Temple, 2012). The temple offers various programs and services such as meditation sessions, Dharma teachings, different Buddhist ceremonies, and community events.



**Figure 4.3-7**

*Site Aerial*

One of the unique features of Phap Quang Temple is its expansive outdoor areas, which include several serene gardens with ponds and water features, many statues of the Buddha, and flowers and trees. The gardens are designed to provide a peaceful and tranquil environment for meditation and contemplation.

May 2023



**Figure 4.3-8**

*“Ho Tinh Tam”*

The comparison analysis revealed that the Phap Quang Temple is the only one with the "Ho Tinh Tam" meditation pond, located on the east side of the entrance, as shown in Figure 4.2-2. Although it is a unique feature, it was poorly executed due to a lack of intention when arranging the rock works, and the vegetation choices could be improved. As it is situated right next to the street, this area has the potential to be transformed into a more intimate space and enhance the overall visitor experience with evidence-based design. With some beautification efforts, this area could become a more inviting and peaceful location for visitors to reflect.

The temple also hosts various cultural events throughout the year, such as the Lunar New Year celebration, which features traditional Vietnamese music, dance, and food. Phap Quang

Temple is a place that offers visitors a unique opportunity to learn about and experience Vietnamese Buddhist culture and traditions.



**Figure 4.3-9**

*Visitors during First Flowers Offering to Buddha Ceremony for Lunar Year, 2023*

#### **4.4 Plant Inventory**

At the entrance of the site, a variety of plant species have been selected to enhance the site's aesthetic appeal and create a welcoming atmosphere for visitors. However, it is important to note that some of these species may be susceptible to diseases or environmental conditions that can impact their growth and longevity in the D/FW area. For example, as mentioned earlier, rose rosette disease (RRD) is a significant concern for rose species in this region. It is important to carefully evaluate the selection of rose cultivars and choose varieties that are more resistant to RRD or other diseases prevalent in the area. By taking this proactive approach, it is possible to ensure that the plantings at the entrance of the site remain healthy and vibrant, contributing to the overall success of the design. The specific species present at the entrance of Phap Quang temple is listed in the **Table 4.4-1** below.

Botanical name	Common name	Type	Leaf	Interest	Native	Sun	Water	Zone	Maintenance
<i>Buxus microphylla</i>	WINTER BOXWOOD	SH	Evergreen	Winter	NO	F/PS	MEDIUM	6 TO 9	MEDIUM
<i>Chaenomeles japonica</i>	FLOWERING QUINCE	SH	DECIDUOUS	April	NO	F/PS	MEDIUM	5 TO 9	LOW
<i>Cupressus macrocarpa</i>	MONTEREY CYPRESS	OT	EVERGREEN	Winter	NO	F	MEDIUM	6 TO 10	MEDIUM
<i>Cyperus alternifolius</i>	UMBRELLA PALM	OT	EVERGREEN	Jul-Aug	NO	PS/S	WET	9 TO 10	MEDIUM
<i>Ilex vomitoria "Nana"</i>	DWARF YAUPON HOLLY	SH	EVERGREEN	April	NO	F/PS	MED-WET	7 TO 9	MEDIUM
<i>Iris germanica</i>	BEARDED IRIS	PE	DECIDUOUS	MAY	NO	F	MEDIUM	3 TO 10	MEDIUM
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	EASTERN RED CEDAR	OT	EVERGREEN	Winter	NO	F	DRY	2 TO 9	LOW
<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>	CREPE MYRTLE	SH	DECIDUOUS	JUL-SEP	NO	F	MEDIUM	6 TO 9	MEDIUM
<i>Magnolia grandiflora "Little gem"</i>	SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA	TR	EVERGREEN	MAY-JUL	NO	F/PS	MEDIUM	7 TO 9	MEDIUM
<i>Photinia fraseri</i>	PHOTINIA	TR	EVERGREEN	APR-MAY	NO	F/PS	MEDIUM	7 TO 9	MEDIUM
<i>Phyllostachys aureosulcata</i>	GOLDEN BAMBOO	OT	EVERGREEN	Winter	NO	F	MEDIUM	4 TO 9	MEDIUM
<i>Prunus persica 'Golden Jubilee'</i>	PEACH TREE	FR	DECIDUOUS	MAR-APR	NO	F	MEDIUM	5 TO 8	HIGH
<i>Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford'</i>	BRADFORD PEAR	TR	DECIDUOUS	APR	NO	F	DRY-MED	5 TO 9	MEDIUM
<i>Quercus Virginiana</i>	SOUTHERN LIVE OAK	TR	DECIDUOUS	MAR-MAY	YES	F/PS	MEDIUM	8 TO 10	LOW
<i>Rosa 'The Fairy'</i>	THE FAIRY	SH	DECIDUOUS	MAY-FROST	NO	F	MEDIUM	5 TO 9	MEDIUM
<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	BALD CYPRESS	TR	DECIDUOUS	FALL	YES	F	MED-WET	4 TO 9	LOW
<i>Tradescantia gigantea</i>	SPIDERWORT	PE	DECIDUOUS	MAR-JUN	YES	F/PS	DRY	4 TO 9	LOW
<i>Typha angustifolia</i>	NARROWLEAF CATTAIL	PE	DECIDUOUS	MAY-JUL	YES	F/PS	WET	2 TO 11	LOW

**Table 4.4-1**

*Phap Quang Temple's Plant Inventory*

#### **4.5 Oral History Interview with Member from Board of Advisory**

An interview was conducted with a member from the board of advisory of Phap Quang Temple. The board member volunteered due to their familiarity with the history and current condition of the site, as well as their involvement in decision-making processes related to design changes at the temple.

The following questions, approved by the UTA Institutional Review board (IRB), were used in the interview with the member from the board of advisory of Phap Quang Temple:

1. Tell me about the history of Phap Quang Temple (timeline).
2. Who designed the original layout of the temple?
3. Who does the construction and maintenance?
4. Can you describe any plans or ideas for improving the functionality and welcoming qualities of temple entrances?
5. Is the number of parking spaces enough? Are you willing to remove some parking spaces to improve the entry experience for visitors? Is there overflow parking?
6. What kind of drive-up appeal, temple's identity would you like to have?
7. What kind of relationship does the temple have with the rest of the neighborhood?

Here are the findings gathered from the interview:

##### *History of Phap Quang Temple*

According to the interviewee, Phap Quang Temple was established in 1980 by a Vietnamese Buddhist monk named Tri Hien who was looking for a place to practice his faith after escaping the communist government in Vietnam in 1975 (Phap Quang Temple, 2012).

“The Phap Quang Temple was established by the founder monk, with the assistance of the

Vietnamese Buddhist community in the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area. The community members, particularly those on the Board of Advisory, have been actively involved, generation after generation, in the temple's history since its inception.” The original temple was a small building located on a residential lot in Grand Prairie, Texas. Over time, the temple grew in popularity and size, and additional buildings and features were added to the site.

#### Layout and Landscape Design

The founder monk of the Phap Quang Temple designed the original layout of the temple, drawing inspiration from traditional Vietnamese temple designs, including the Three Door of Liberty, "Ho Tinh Tam," and Buddha statues donated by stakeholders. The temple was constructed in sections, with the purchase of additional land from neighboring properties allowing for its expansion over time. The interviewee did not provide information about who designed the various areas of the landscape at the temple. However, they did mention that “the temple relies on a team of volunteers to construct and maintain the site.”

#### *Improving the Functionality and Welcoming Qualities of Temple Entrances*

During an interview, the interviewee was asked about potential plans or ideas for improving the functionality and welcoming qualities of temple entrances. In response, they agreed that the Phap Quang Temple could benefit from improved signage, heightened levels of legibility and mystery to define the entrance, and enhancements that create a stronger "sense of place" to make visitors feel like they are arriving at a special destination. They also expressed interest in incorporating traditional Vietnamese design elements, such as statues and paving, into the entry point. Additionally, the interviewee suggested that the site could be made greener by planting more trees, especially considering that the majority of the site is currently occupied by parking lots. This idea aligns with the literature review, which

emphasizes the importance of planting design in Buddhist site.



**Figure 4.5-1** *Current condition of Parking lot with Drainage issue*

#### *Parking and Traffic*

The interviewee indicated that parking can be an issue at the temple, especially during special events. They mentioned that “there is overflow parking available at the Chase bank located a block away.” This highlighted the need for a pedestrian entrance for visitors to the temple. When asked about the possibility of removing parking spaces to improve the entry experience for visitors, the interviewee expressed some reservations but was open to the idea if it would improve the overall experience for visitors.

#### *Use of Outdoor Spaces*

During the interview, the interviewee provided valuable insights into the use of outdoor spaces at Phap Quang Temple. The interviewee mentioned that “visitors mainly use the outdoor spaces at the temple for socializing, including the water features, the main courtyard, and various garden spaces throughout the

campus.” The interviewee also noted that “these outdoor spaces offer visitors many photo opportunities.”



**Figure 4.5-2** *One of The Site Features That provide photo opportunities.*

The interviewee mentioned that “the temple has a youth group that meets for Sunday school and often has activities in the front yard of the temple. However, during events, they are not permitted to have outdoor activities due to safety concerns regarding traffic passing through that area.” This highlighted a lack of designated spaces for the youth group at the temple. The youth group participates in various activities, such as playing various sports, Lion dance practices, and community service. They currently do not have a specific area where they can gather and participate in these activities. This finding underscores the need to consider the needs and preferences of user groups in the design of the Temple entrance.

Providing dedicated spaces for different user groups, such as the youth group, could enhance the overall user experience at the temple and create a more inclusive and

welcoming environment.

By understanding how visitors use the outdoor spaces, opportunities to enhance the functionality, create spaces that encourage socialization and photo opportunities, and the comfort of these areas was identified thereby enhancing the overall user experience at the temple.

#### *Temple Identity in the Neighborhood*

When asked about the temple's drive-up appeal and its identity in the neighborhood, the interviewee expressed a desire for the temple to be “more visible and welcoming to the community”. They suggested that adding more traditional Vietnamese design elements to the exterior of the temple, such as colorful tiles and paving, could help to make the temple more visually appealing and increase its visibility.

#### *Relationship with the Neighborhood*

The interviewee indicated that the temple has a positive relationship with its neighbors and that the temple is seen as a valuable community resource. “The neighbors are very supportive towards the temple.” They mentioned that the temple hosts a number of Vietnamese events throughout the year, such as Lunar New Year, food festival, and that many local residents attend these events. According to the interviewee, residents who are moving out of the neighborhood “often offer their land to the temple for use as future campus expansion.”

This finding suggests that the temple plays an important role in the community and is viewed positively by its neighbors. This positive relationship can be leveraged in the design of the entry point by creating a design that is functional, welcoming and respects the surrounding neighborhood and its residents. The design takes into account the existing landscape and architecture of the neighborhood, as well as incorporate elements that reflect the cultural and spiritual significance of the temple.

### *Traditional Vietnamese Plants*

When asked about the use of traditional Vietnamese plants on site, the interviewee suggested that the temple could benefit from the incorporation of more plants and greenery but did not specifically mention any traditional Vietnamese plants that could be used.

The information gathered from the interview with the board of advisory of Phap Quang Temple provided valuable insights into the history of the site and the board's desires for the design of the entry point. These insights were then used in this research to inform the design intervention at the Phap Quang Temple entry point.

History of Phap Quang Temple	Layout and Landscape Design	Improving the Functionality and Welcoming Qualities of Temple Entrances	Parking and Traffic	Use of Outdoor Spaces	Temple Identity in the Neighborhood	Relationship with the Neighborhood	Traditional Vietnamese Plants
Established in 1980 by a Vietnamese Buddhist monk named Tri Hien	Original temple layout inspired by traditional Vietnamese temple designs	Improving signage, legibility, and a sense of place to create a stronger welcoming quality at the entrance	Parking is a challenge during special events.	Visitors use outdoor spaces mainly for socializing and photo opportunities.	Should be “more visible and welcoming to the community.”	Positive relationship with its neighbors.	Site can benefit from the incorporation of more plants and greenery
“The community members, particularly those on the Board of Advisory, have been actively involved, generation after generation, in the temple's history since its inception.”	“The temple relies on a team of volunteers to construct and maintain the site.”	Incorporating traditional Vietnamese design elements and planting more trees to make the site greener and reduce the dominance of parking lots.	Pedestrian entrance is needed for visitors.	There is a lack of designated spaces for the youth group due to safety concerns with increased traffic.	Adding traditional Vietnamese design elements to the exterior of the temple could make it more visually appealing and	“The neighbors are very supportive towards the temple.”	Not specifically mention any traditional Vietnamese plants that could be used.
		Planting more trees, especially considering that the majority of the site is currently occupied by parking lots.	Removing some parking spaces to enhance the entry experience for visitors may be considered.			A valuable community resource.	

**Figure 4.5-3**

*Summary from oral history interview*

## 4.6 User Surveys

To understand the visitor experience at Phap Quang Temple, a survey was conducted among frequent visitors, capturing information on their backgrounds, beliefs, and perceptions of the entrance's aesthetic appeal, functionality, and cultural significance. The survey responses were collected in both English and Vietnamese, and the data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

Based on the survey conducted at Phap Quang Temple, the findings indicated that these surveys were sampled from frequent temple goers. Visitors' perceptions of the entrance were collected, including its aesthetic appeal, functionality, and effectiveness in creating a sense of arrival and engagement with the space. The survey also captured visitors' impressions of the temple's overall design coherence and cultural significance. The survey responses were collected on-site over the course of one day and analyzed using Microsoft Excel to identify patterns and trends in the data. These data came from 15 participants that are frequent temple goers. They used to guide the proposed design interventions, ensuring that they align with the needs and desires of the temple's visitors. The resulting data from the surveys is represented in the tables and charts below.

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel welcome when arrive at the entry of Phap Quang Temple.	13	1					
This entry is inviting to newcomers.	8	6					
I can locate the temple's entrance from the street.	10	1	3				
It takes time for me to feel comfortable after entering the temple.	5	3	1			1	4
The garden entry provides a feeling of entering a special place.	11	3					
The entrance makes me feel like I am entering a safe place.	9	4	1				
I would recommend to other people that they visit Phap Quang Temple.	12	2					

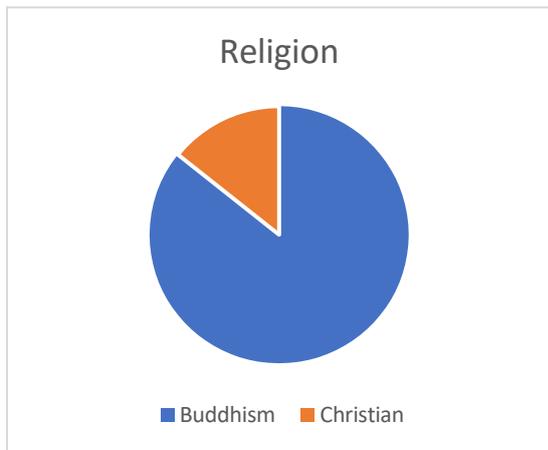
**Table 4.6-1**

*Visitors' perception on the functionality of the temple entrance*

Unkept	0	1	0	3	5	5	Tended
Ugly	0	0	0	3	3	8	Beautiful
Busy	0	1	1	1	5	5	Calm
Antisocial	1	0	1	1	2	9	Sociable
Serious	3	2	3	1	3	2	Playful

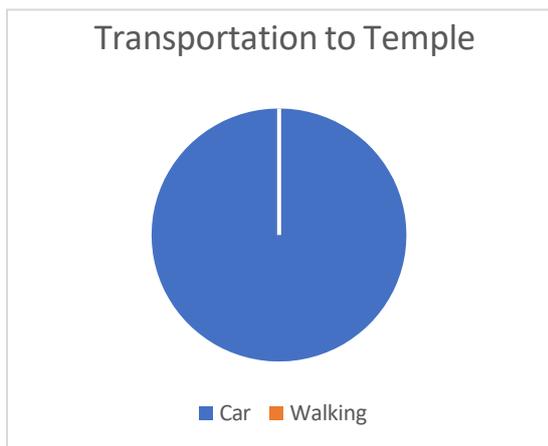
**Table 4.6-2**

*Visitors' perception on the aesthetic quality of the temple entrance*



**Figure 4.6-1**

*Visitors' religious background*



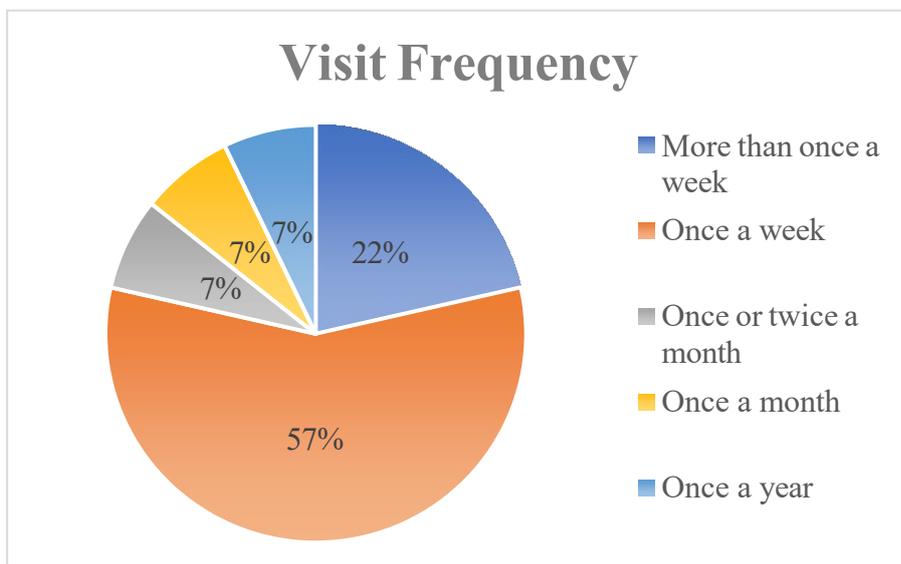
**Figure 4.6-2**

*Transportation to temple*



**Figure 4.6-3**

*Prior Temple visit*



**Figure 4.6-4**

*Visit Frequency*

Based on the survey results, it is clear that the majority of the frequent visitors to Phap Quang Temple are already familiar with the site. This familiarity with the space indicates that any proposed design intervention should consider maintaining the existing elements that are already familiar to the visitors. The fact that 80% of the survey participants identified as Buddhist suggests that the design should be sensitive to the cultural and religious significance of the temple. This implies that the design should

consider incorporating elements that reflect Buddhist beliefs and practices, such as Buddha statues, or incense burners. Furthermore, the fact that 100% of the visitors arrived at the temple by car highlights the importance of parking and traffic management in the design of the entrance. This suggests that the design should take into consideration the safety and convenience of vehicular traffic, as well as pedestrian traffic at the entrance.

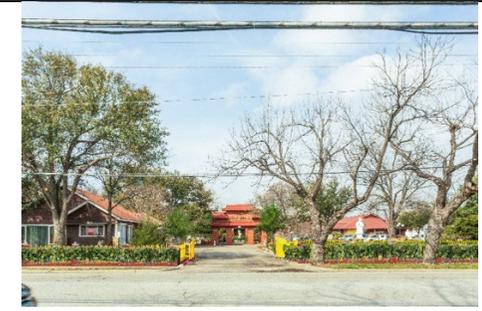
Regarding visitors' perceptions of the entrance, the responses to the statements provided showed that most participants felt welcome and comfortable upon arrival and found the entrance inviting to newcomers. This suggests that the temple's current design is effective in creating a sense of arrival and engaging visitors with the space. Additionally, the majority of participants would recommend Phap Quang Temple to others, indicating a positive overall impression of the temple.

However, the survey also identified two statements that stood out with less consistent responses. The statement "It takes time for me to feel comfortable after entering the temple" received mixed responses, with 5 people agreeing and 4 people disagreeing. This suggests that there may be room for improvement in creating a more comfortable and welcoming environment beyond the entrance. Another statement that received somewhat mixed responses was "I can locate the temple's entrance from the street," with 3 participants responding, "somewhat agree." This may indicate a need for improved signage or visibility of the entrance from the street.

#### **4.7 Visual Elicitation**

Visual elicitation was used as a research methodology to explore design suggestions for the entry of Phap Quang Temple. Participants were presented with a set of photographs depicting design suggestions for the entryway of Phap Quang Temple and were asked to provide verbal feedback on their thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to the images. The table below provides a comprehensive breakdown of the findings,

detailing the specific comments made by participants in response to each photograph

View	Principles	Comments from Board Members
	<p>Clear Legibility, No Mystery, Low hedge Vegetation, Architecture: below eye-level fence</p>	<p>Hedges cannot be higher than 4', Maintenance cost, good choice of plant species, nice row of trees indicate direction for visitors</p>
	<p>Clear Legibility, Low Mystery, Vegetation: Medium height hedges, Architecture: below eye-level fence with columns same material as the Three Door of Liberty</p>	<p>Hedges cannot be higher than 4', good choice of plant species, nice row of trees indicate direction for visitors, good idea to bring the material of the monument towards the street, appreciate the cultural element on each column but cannot see from the street.</p>
	<p>High Legibility, High Mystery, Vegetation: Row of tree, Above eye-level hedges, perennial flowers, Architecture: Higher fence, gate</p>	<p>Hedges cannot be higher than 4', good choice of plant species, nice row of trees indicate direction for visitors, good idea to bring the material of the monument towards the street, appreciate the cultural element on each column but cannot see from the street.</p>

View	Principles	Comments from Board Members
	<p>Clear Legibility, High Mystery, Vegetation: tall wall of bamboo, eye-level hedges, perennial flowers, Architecture: Higher fence, gate</p>	<p>Board members does not like this option</p>
	<p>Low Legibility, High Mystery, Vegetation: High hedges on the edges, eye-level ornamental, perennial flowers, incense burner</p>	<p>Like the use of incense burner as visual barrier with the street, the plants on both sides are too big, the two gate on the side need to have visibility, the hedges are too high, need to be able to see into the garden.</p>
	<p>Clear Legibility, Low Mystery, Vegetation: High hedges on the edges, below eye-level edges, perennial flowers</p>	<p>Prefer the previous version, but the planting of lower hedge in the garden give better visibility to the street.</p>

View	Principles	Comments from Board Members
	<p>High Legibility, Low Mystery, Vegetation: low hedges on the edges, above eye-level ornamental, below eye-level hedges with perennial flowers, incense burner</p>	<p>Like this version the most, however the concern lay on maintenance of the palm trees</p>
	<p>Clear Legibility, Medium Mystery, Vegetation: Rhythm of High and low hedges on the edges, Small Canopy trees</p>	<p>Like the rhythm of high and low hedges mix with tree, able to see into the garden but still have a level of mystery</p>
	<p>Clear Legibility, Medium Mystery, Vegetation: Rhythm of High and low hedges on the edges, Tropical trees</p>	<p>the choice of palm trees bring a more familiar feeling as it remind them of the ones that grows in Vietnam</p>

View	Principles	Comments from Board Members
	<p>Clear Legibility, Medium Mystery, Vegetation: Rhythm of High and low hedges on the edges, Small Canopy trees, perennial flowers, Paving: Impervious but cultural significant</p>	
	<p>Clear Legibility, Medium Mystery, Vegetation: Rhythm of High and low hedges on the edges, Small Canopy trees, perennial flowers, Paving: pervious but not cultural significant</p>	<p>Like the pervious paving a lot it helps with the drainage issue the site currently having. Also want to see the space looks more naturalistic</p>
	<p>Clear Legibility, Low Mystery, Vegetation: Cultural significant plants, Rock: imitating nature form, Water: natural pond with water feature that give ambient sound blocking out traffic</p>	<p>like the water feature a lot especially with the use of falling water sound to block out traffic noise, appreciate the planting of Vietnamese plant species</p>

View	Principles	Comments from Board Members
	<p>Clear Legibility, High Mystery, Vegetation:  Cultural significant plants, Rock: imitating nature form, Water: natural pond with water feature that give ambient sound blocking out traffic,  Architecture: Fence wall</p>	<p>Cannot have the wall, need to be able to see into the temple from the street.</p>

**Table 4.7-1**

*Visual Elicitation's Feedback*

## 4.8 Conclusion

The researcher developed design principles for the entry sequence of Phap Quang Temple, in Grand Prairie, TX, based on design principles from the literature review, user surveys, and the oral history interview with a member of the Board of Advisory. Based on the finding and analysis, the key design principles of Buddhist temple gardens' entry sequence are legibility, mystery, architecture elements, vegetation, water, and monumentation. These elements play a crucial role in creating a sense of place and providing visitors with a welcoming experience. Using architectural elements such as the Three Doors of Liberation, which has significant symbolism in Buddhism, to help visitors orient themselves and deepen their connection with the place. The designer also incorporates vegetation that has connections to the Vietnamese community, and the practice and meaning of Buddhism. The waterscape on site is enhanced with more intricate rock work, that mimic nature. Symbolisms such as Fo dogs or Lion of Fo can be used to invite and familiarize visitors with new places.

These principles were adopted into a conceptual design, presented by a concept diagram, master plans, planting plan that focus on the entrance, and perspective views that show the experience of going through the enhanced entry. The design also incorporated feedback from the participants obtained through visual elicitation, site inventory, and analysis. The resulting enhancement balances aesthetic and practical considerations for the entry sequence of Phap Quang Temple.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DESIGN**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides information about the design proposal, programs, and design patterns intended to improve the current entry sequence to the Vietnamese Buddhist Phap Quang temple in Grand Prairie, TX.

#### **5.2 Current Site Condition Analysis**

To better understand the site's characteristics and inform design decisions, a comprehensive site analysis has been conducted. This analysis considers elements such as site circulation, topography, existing programs, monuments, and landmarks. By examining these various factors, a more complete picture of the site's potential opportunities and challenges can be identified, helping to guide the development of a successful and culturally significant design strategy. The following figures show elements on the site such as circulation, site features, programs.



**Figure 5.2-1**

*General Site Analysis*

### 5.3 Design Concept

In the initial phase of concept generation, a concept diagram (Figure 5.2) was created to illustrate the conceptual relationships among various programs, enhanced elements, and circulations. In the subsequent phase, the researcher proposes a master plan concept tailored to the site. The proposed elements for the Phap Quang temple include:

1. landmarks
2. parking lot/ flex-space
3. paving with different textures
4. paving enhancement
5. greenspace
6. street edge condition
7. water feature

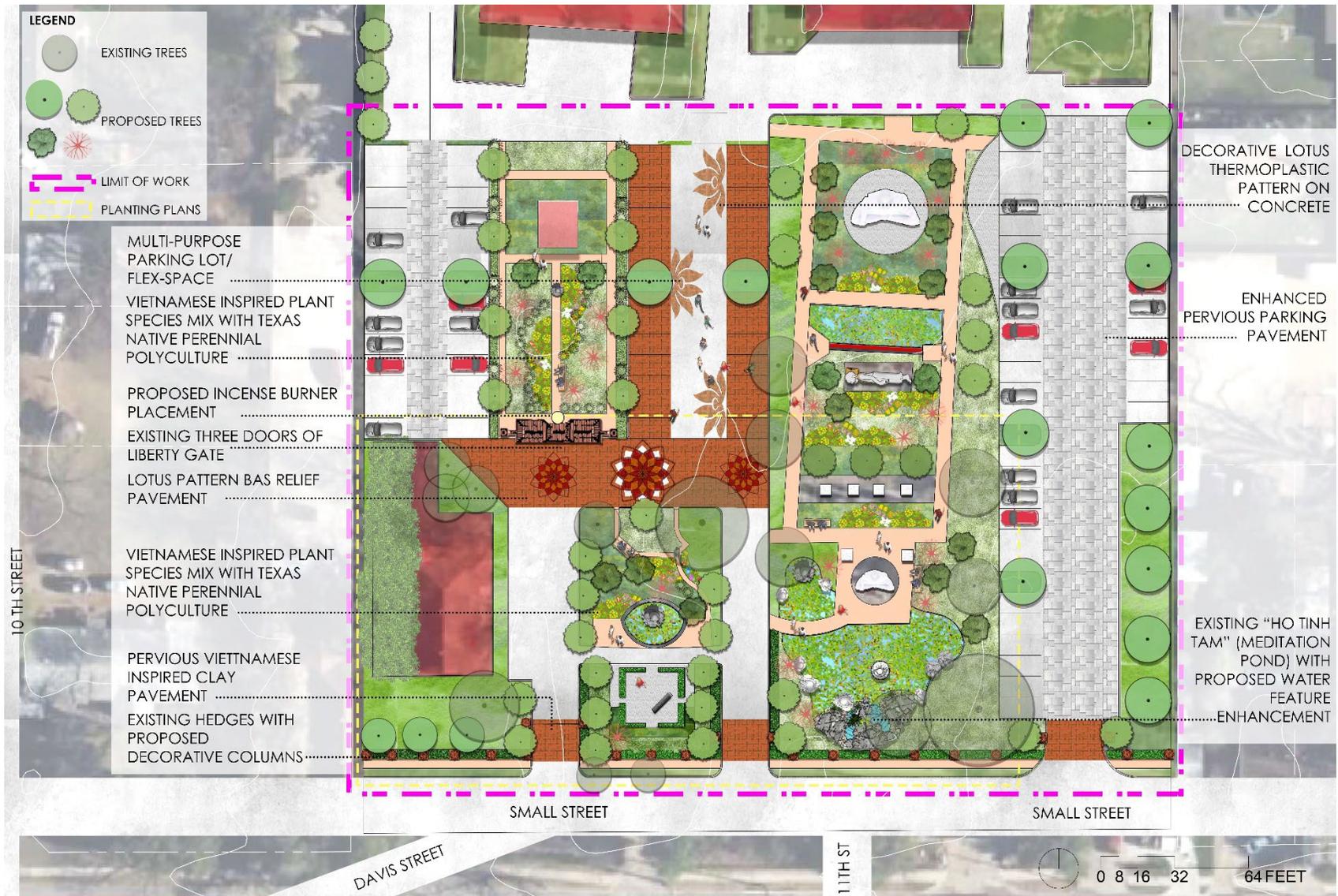


**Figure 5.3-1**

*Concept Diagram at Phap Quang Temple*

#### **5.4 Design Proposal for Phap Quang Temple, Grand Prairie, TX**

The proposed design for the entry of Phap Quang Temple aims to improve the wayfinding, hierarchy of spaces, legibility, and permeability of the temple site, creating a more inviting and accessible space for visitors. The design incorporated elements and activities inspired by Vietnamese Buddhist culture, creating a unique and authentic experience for visitors. Landmarks, enhanced paving, and wayfinding elements strategically placed throughout the site to guide visitors through the entry sequence. Colorful features, such as decorative columns and paving, created visual interest and add a sense of identity to the entry. The design also included a flexible space that can be used for social gatherings, events, and other activities that encourage social interaction and community building. These design elements and activities align with the principles of successful sense of place, creating a space that is not only functional but also culturally meaningful and socially engaging.



**Figure 5.4-1**

*Schematic Site Plan of Phap Quang Temple in Grand Prairie, TX*

The **table 5.4-1** provided below showcases a collection of plant species that are ideally suited to thrive in the climatic conditions of the Dallas-Fort Worth region. These plants have been selected based on their low maintenance requirements and their ability to tolerate stress. This means that they are well-suited for Phap Quang temple as they are looking to create enhance the site without having to devote significant amounts of time and effort towards upkeep. This region is characterized by hot summers, mild winters, and low precipitation levels, which can make it difficult for certain plant species to flourish. However, the species listed in this pallet have been carefully selected based on their ability to tolerate these challenging conditions, ensuring that they provided long-lasting beauty and resilience in your landscape.

It is worth noting that several species included in this plant pallet have cultural significance for the Vietnamese community as well. These plants are commonly found in Vietnamese planting design or are native to Vietnam. For instance, elephant ears (*Colocasia esculenta*), fishmint (*Houttuynia cordata*), and lotus (*Nelumbo luiea*) are plants that are commonly used in Vietnamese planting design and hold cultural importance in Vietnamese cuisine and medicine. By incorporating these plants into the entry at Phap Quang temple, it is not only beneficial from their low maintenance and stress tolerance but also connect with the Vietnamese culture and heritage.

#	LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	BLOOM	ZONE	COLOR	Water	SUN	SYMBOLISM AND CESIGNIFICANC E
CE CE	<i>Ageratina havanensis</i>	WHITE MISTFLWOER	APR-DEC	3 to 8	WHITE	LOW	F/PS	
2	<i>Aquilegia chrysantha</i>	YELLOW COLUMBINE	APR-SEP	3 to 9	YELLOW	LOW	F/PS	
3	<i>Aster oblongifolius</i>	AROMATIC ASTER	SEP-NOV	3 to 8	BLUE	MEDIUM	Ps/S	
4	<i>Canna spp.</i>	CANNA SPP.	MAR-OCT	7 to 10	RED	MEDIUM	F/PS	
5	<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	ELEPHANT EARS	N/A	8 to 10	GREEN	MEDIUM	F/PS	Key Ingredient for a popular Traditional soup in Vietnam, "Canh Chua" (My Lien, 2005)
6	<i>Conoclinium coelestinum</i>	BLUE MISTFLOWER	JUL-NOV	5 to 10	BLUE	LOW	F/PS	
7	<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>	PURPLE CONE FLOWER	MAY-JUL	3 to 8	BLUE	MEDIUM	F	
8	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	GINKGO	APR	3 to 8		MEDIUM	F/PS	
9	<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	HIBICUS	JUL-SEP	5 to 9	RED	MEDIUM	F/PS	symbolic connection with Buddhism: something about the transience of life represented by the brief blooming of the flower, which closes and withers at dusk.
10	<i>Houttuynia cordata</i>	FISH MINT	MAR-SEP	4 to 10	WHITE	LOW	F	used most commonly as a herb garnish in Vietnamese cooking. The leaf of this herb has a taste slightly reminiscent of fish hence the name.

#	LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	BLOOM	ZONE	COLOR	Water	SUN	SYMBOLISM AND SIGNIFICANCE
11	<i>Hypericum patulum</i>	GOLDENCUP	MAY-NOV	5 to 8	YELLOW			They express happiness, joy, and excitement, making them one of the best gifts for loved ones.
12	<i>Ilex vomitoria 'nana'</i>	DWARF YAUPON HOLLY	N/A	7 to 9	GREEN	LOW	F	
13	<i>Lantana urticoides</i>	TEXAS LANTANA	APR-OCT	8 to 11	RED	MEDIUM	F	essential oil compositions, molluscicide, and mosquito larvicidal activities of four collections of <i>L. camarin</i> north-central Vietnam have been investigated
14	<i>Nelumbo thutea</i>	LOTUS	JUN-SEP	4 to 10	YELLOW	WET	SHADE	the national flower of Vietnam,
15	<i>Nepeta racemosa 'walker's low'</i>	CAT MINT	MAY-NOV	4 to 8	PINK	LOW	F/PS	
16	<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	WATER LILY	MAY-JUNE	4 to 11	PINK	WET	F/PS	especially known as Hoa Súng in Vietnam. They are among the itmajorityof lily flowers harvested by farmers as a way of occupation during the season. Use in many Vietnamese dishes
17	<i>Packera obovata</i>	ROUND-LEAVED RAGWORT	FEB-JUN	3 to 8	YELLOW	MEDIUM	F/PS	
18	<i>Pavonia lasiopetala</i>	ROCK ROSE	APR-NOV	6 to 8	PINK	LOW	F	

#	LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	BLOOM	ZONE	COLOR	Water	SUN	SYMBOLISM AND SIGNIFICANCE
19	<i>Phyllostachys aurea</i>	GOLDEN BAMBOO	N/A	4 to 9	YELLOW	LOW	F	In Vietnam, the bamboo tree is a significant symbol of our culture and daily life. The solid, straight and high bamboo trees represent resilience, indomitability and bravery for the Vietnamese people. Bamboo trees often grow in clusters with strong vitality. They symbolize the solidarity, diligence and loyalty of our people, and our homeland.
20	<i>Prunus persica</i>	PEACH 'SAM HOUSTON'	FEB-APR	5 to 8	PINK	LOW	F	
21	<i>Rudbeckia fulgida 'goldsturm'</i>	BLACK-EYED SUSAN	JUL-NOV	3 to 9	BLUE	MEDIUM	F	
22	<i>Sabal mexicana</i>	TEXAS SABAL PALM	MAR-MAY	4 to 11	YELLOW	LOW	F/PS	
23	<i>Salvia farinacea</i>	MEALY BLUE SAGE	APR-OCT	8 to 10	BLUE	LOW	F/PS	
24	<i>Salvia greggii</i>	AUTUMN SAGE	MAR-NOV	6 to 9	RED	LOW	F/PS	
25	<i>Tagetes lucida</i>	MEXICAN MINT MARIGOLD	JUL-OCT	9 to 11	YELLOW	MEDIUM	F	
26	<i>Tulbaghia violacea</i>	SOCIETY GARLIC	APR-NOV	7 to 10	BLUE	MEDIUM	F	
27	<i>Wedelia hispida</i>	ZEXMENIA	MAY-NOV	7 to 9	YELLOW	MEDIUM	F/PS	

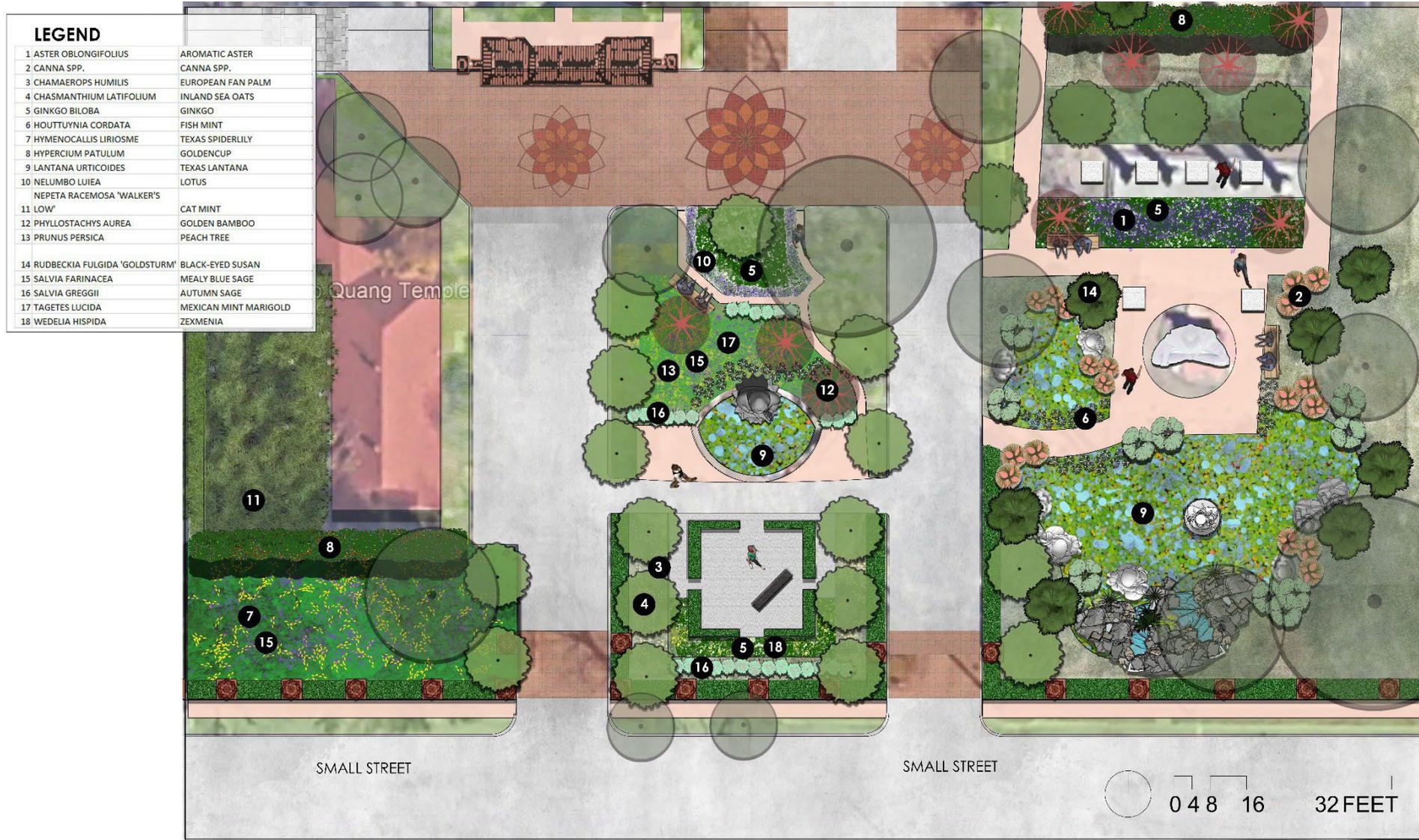


Figure 5.4-2: Planting Plan at the Entry of Phap Quang Temple

The proposed planting design at Phap Quang Temple incorporates a variety of plants that serve both aesthetic and symbolic purposes. The design features two distinct themes that complement each other while highlighting the cultural significance of the temple. The first theme is a North Texas Native polyculture planting around the main entrance that includes plants such as Aromatic Aster, Inland Sea Oats, Black-eyed Susan, and Mealy Blue Sage. These plants are selected for their ability to thrive in the North Texas climate and to attract pollinators that will help maintain a healthy ecosystem. The second theme is a Vietnamese tropical planting around the meditation pond that includes plants such as Fish Mint, Golden Bamboo, Lotus, and Peach Tree. These plants are selected for their cultural significance and their ability to create a serene and contemplative environment. The European Fan Palm is used as a transition plant between the two themes. The design aims to create a harmonious balance between the two themes and to provide visitors with a unique and meaningful experience.

Design
Architecture
Pavement and Pathway
Rocks and Stone Sculptures
The Waterscape
The Vegetation
Legibility
Mystery
Sense of dignity
Sense of place
Sequential art

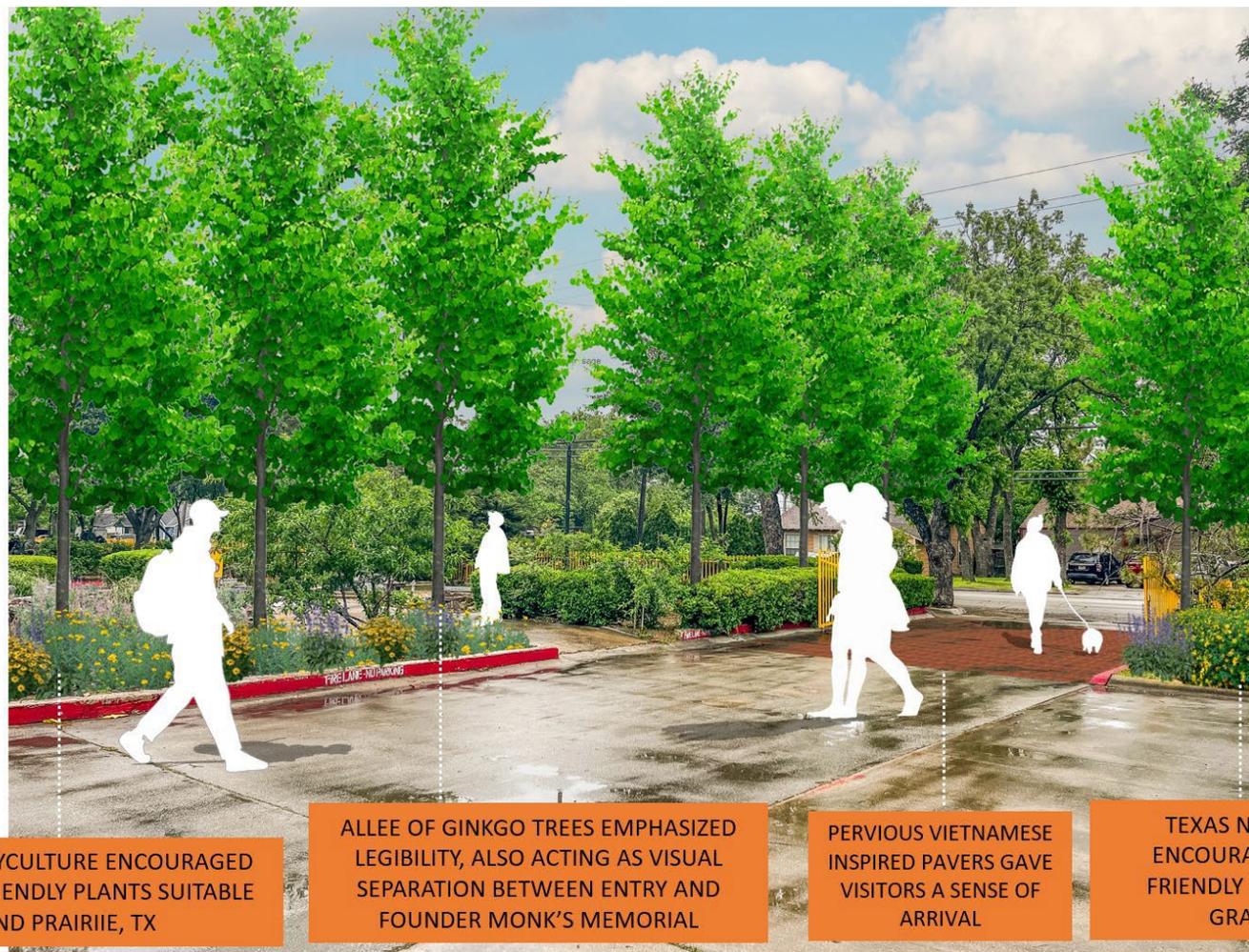


**Figure 5.4-3:** *Pedestrians and vehicles shared entry looking from Small St.*

The proposed design for the entry sequence of Phap Quang Temple incorporates various features to enhance the pedestrian and vehicle entry experience from Small St, **in Figure 5.4-3**. The design utilizes architecture, pavement and pathway, and vegetation to improve legibility, create a sense of place, and add a touch of mystery to the visitor's experience. An existing hedge with a decorative column enhances the legibility of the entry sequence, clearly marking the temple's entrance and providing a welcoming atmosphere. Pervious Vietnamese-inspired pavers are used to give visitors a sense of arrival, creating a designated pathway for pedestrians and vehicles. The lotus pattern bas relief paver strengthens the sense of place, emphasizing the connection between the temple and the Buddhist faith. Additionally, an allee of Ginkgo trees is incorporated to emphasize the entry's legibility, adding a layer of depth and height to the pathway while creating a natural canopy.

This next view is proposed design for the view of pedestrians and vehicles shared entry looking out to Small St, **in Figure 5.4-4**, focuses on incorporating Texas native polyculture plants that are suitable for the Grand Prairie, TX environment. The use of these environment-friendly plants not only enhances the aesthetics of the entry but also promotes sustainable landscaping practices. Additionally, an allee of Ginkgo trees is used to emphasize legibility and acts as a visual separation between the entry and the Founder Monk's Memorial. The use of pervious Vietnamese-inspired pavers provides visitors with a sense of arrival while also promoting sustainable practices.

Design
Architecture
Pavement and Pathway
Rocks and Stone Sculptures
The Waterscape
The Vegetation
Legibility
Mystery
Sense of dignity
Sense of place
Sequential art



TEXAS NATIVE POLYCULTURE ENCOURAGED ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY PLANTS SUITABLE FOR GRAND PRAIRIE, TX

ALLEE OF GINKGO TREES EMPHASIZED LEGIBILITY, ALSO ACTING AS VISUAL SEPARATION BETWEEN ENTRY AND FOUNDER MONK'S MEMORIAL

PERVIOUS VIETNAMESE INSPIRED PAVERS GAVE VISITORS A SENSE OF ARRIVAL

TEXAS NATIVE POLYCULTURE ENCOURAGED ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY PLANTS SUITABLE FOR GRAND PRAIRIE, TX

**Figure 5.4-4:** *Pedestrians and vehicles shared entry looking out to Small St.*

Design
Architecture
Pavement and Pathway
Rocks and Stone Sculptures
The Waterscape
The Vegetation
Legibility
Mystery
Sense of dignity
Sense of place
Sequential art



PROPOSED HEDGE AROUND FOUNDER MONK'S MEMORIAL AS A PHYSICAL SEPARATION IMPLYING THE SENSE OF PLACE

TEXAS NATIVE POLY-CULTURE ENCOURAGED ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY PLANTS SUITABLE FOR GRAND PRAIRIE, TX

ALLEE OF GINKGO TREES CREATED A LEVEL OF MYSTERY BY ACTING AS VISUAL SEPARATION BETWEEN ENTRY AND FOUNDER MONK'S MEMORIAL

**Figure 5.4-5:** *Founder Monk Memorial.*

The proposed design for the Founder Monk Memorial, presents in **Figure 5.4-5** focuses on enhancing the vegetation, legibility, mystery, and sense of place. The addition of a hedge around the memorial creates a physical separation that simplifies the sense of place. Texas native polyculture plants were selected to encourage environmentally friendly flora that is suitable for the Grand Prairie, TX climate. An allee of Ginkgo trees was also added to create a level of mystery, acting as visual separation between the entry and the Founder Monk's Memorial. Together, these elements will create a cohesive and meaningful memorial space that pays tribute to the founder of the Phap Quang Temple.

In the proposed design for looking out to Small St from the courtyard, in **Figure 5.4-6** the use of alternating low and high hedges helps to create a sense of mystery and separation between the parking lot and the courtyard. Additionally, the incense burner provides a visual separation between these spaces. The vegetation includes a mix of Vietnamese-inspired plant species and Texas native polyculture, which encourages the use of environment-friendly plants that are suitable for the Grand Prairie, TX climate. This combination of plant species creates a unique sense of place within the courtyard. Finally, the use of sequential art elements, such as signage and artwork, can enhance the legibility of the space and further contribute to the sense of place.

Design
Architecture
Pavement and Pathway
Rocks and Stone Sculptures
The Waterscape
The Vegetation
Legibility
Mystery
Sense of dignity
Sense of place
Sequential art



ALTERNATING LOW AND HIGH HEDGES  
 CREATES A SENSE OF MYSTERY AND  
 SEPARATION BETWEEN PARKING LOT AND  
 COURTYARD

INCENSE BURNER  
 PROVIDES VISUAL  
 SEPARATION

VIETNAMESE INSPIRED PLANT SPECIES MIXED WITH  
 TEXAS NATIVE POLYCULTURE ENCOURAGED  
 ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY PLANTS SUITABLE FOR  
 GRAND PRAIRIE, TX

**Figure 5.4-6:** *Looking out to Small St from the courtyard.*

Design
Architecture
Pavement and Pathway
Rocks and Stone Sculptures
The Waterscape
The Vegetation
Legibility
Mystery
Sense of dignity
Sense of place
Sequential art



PLANTING ISLAND WITH TREE AND NATIVE PLANT PROVIDING SHADES FOR ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE IN THE FLEX-SPACE, CREATING STRONG SENSE OF PLACE

PERVIOUS VIET INSPIRED CLAY PAVEMENT FOR PARKING LOT

VISUAL SEPERATION BETWEEN PARKING LOT AND COURTYARD

**Figure 5.4-7:** *Flex-space/ Parking lot with pervious paving.*

The proposed design for the flex-space/parking lot area, **in Figure 5.4-7**, includes several elements that aim to enhance the user experience and create a stronger sense of place. One of these elements is a planting island with a tree and native plants, which will provide shade for activities that take place in the flex-space. This will not only improve the comfort of the users, but also create a more inviting and attractive atmosphere.

In addition, the parking lot will feature pervious Vietnamese inspired clay pavement, which will allow rainwater to seep into the ground instead of running off into the stormwater system. This will help to reduce the impact of stormwater runoff on the site, since there is drainage issue currently at the site, due to its flat topography.

Furthermore, the high and low rhythm hedge planting will provide a visual separation between the parking lot and the courtyard, creating a clear boundary between the two areas. This will not only enhance the legibility of the site, but also create a more cohesive and organized appearance.

These design elements will not only improve the functionality and sustainability of the site, but also enhance the sense of place and create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for all user groups, including the youth group. By considering the needs and preferences of different user groups, the design can be tailored to better meet the diverse needs of the community.

The proposed water feature and stone sculpture at the Meditation Pond, presented **in Figure 5.4-8**, are designed to mimic natural forms and create ambient sound that blocks out traffic noise from the street behind it. This creates a tranquil and calming environment for meditation and relaxation. The tropical theme planting around the pond further enhances the sense of place, particularly for the Vietnamese community. The lush greenery and vibrant flowers create a visual connection to nature and evoke a sense of tropical ecosystem in Vietnam. The design also adds an element of mystery, as the water feature and planting

provide glimpses of what lies beyond, encouraging visitors to explore and discover the beauty of the surroundings. This proposed design is intended to create a welcoming and peaceful atmosphere for all visitors to the temple.

Design
Architecture
Pavement and Pathway
Rocks and Stone Sculptures
The Waterscape
The Vegetation
Legibility
Mystery
Sense of dignity
Sense of place
Sequential art



PROPOSED WATER FEATURE AND STONE SCULPTURE MINMIC NATURE FORM, CREATE AMBIENT SOUND THAT BLOCKS THE TRAFFICE NOISE ON THE STREET RIGHT BEHIND IT

TROPICAL THEME PLANTING IMPLIED THE SENSE OF PLACE TOWARD VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY.

**Figure 5.4-8:** *Water feature at Meditation Pond.*

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter presents the design proposal for the entry sequence of Phap Quang Temple based on the findings obtained from the literature review, comparison analysis, site inventory, one-on-one interview, user survey, and visual elicitation. The proposed design aims to enhance the temple's aesthetic appeal, increase its visibility, and provide a more welcoming experience for visitors. The design process involved creating a concept diagram to identify key functional areas and connections, followed by a final schematic plan to illustrate the proposed design solution. These design phases were essential in developing a cohesive and practical design solution for the entryway of Phap Quang Temple.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Introduction

Based on the findings derived from the literature review, comparison analysis, site inventory, one-on-one interview, user survey, and visual elicitation to explore design suggestions for the entry of Phap Quang Temple, the proposed landscape architecture design aims to create an inviting and memorable entryway to the temple by:

1. Adopting design principles from Traditional Buddhist temple garden and the elements that made up successful entry sequences,
2. Incorporating cultural design elements that reflect the Vietnamese Buddhist tradition,
3. Enhancing the functionality and accessibility of the entry sequence,
4. Improving the overall aesthetic quality of the space.

The proposed design solutions reflect the preferences and perceptions of the participants from the surveys regarding various design elements and offer a balance between practical and aesthetic considerations. The use of landscape design elements such as water features, planting design, and pavement, are designed to create a tranquil and peaceful environment that reflects the spiritual nature of the temple.

The end proposal for the entry sequence of Phap Quang Temple, in Grand Prairie, TX, seeks to create an inviting, functional, and aesthetically pleasing space that reflects the Vietnamese Buddhist tradition and provides a memorable experience for visitors.

#### 6.2 Significance for Landscape Architecture

The research on the Vietnamese Buddhist temple entry sequence in suburban Texas is significant to landscape architecture for several reasons.

Firstly, it highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity and contextual awareness in

landscape architecture. By incorporating design elements that reflect the Vietnamese Buddhist tradition, the proposed landscape architecture design for the entry sequence of Phap Quang Temple creates a space that is functional, aesthetically pleasing and culturally appropriate. This reflects the significance of understanding and respecting the cultural and social context of a site in the design process.

Secondly, the research emphasizes the role of landscape architecture in creating meaningful and memorable experiences for visitors by improving the functionality and accessibility of the entryway, enhancing the overall aesthetic quality of the space, and incorporating elements that create a peaceful and tranquil environment. This highlights the importance of landscape architecture in creating spaces that not only serve practical purposes but also contribute to the emotional and psychological well-being of people.

Finally, the research sheds light on the potential for landscape architecture to contribute to the social and cultural fabric of a community. By creating areas for social gatherings and incorporating cultural design elements, the proposed design for the entryway of Phap Quang Temple fosters social interaction and promotes a sense of community among visitors. This highlights the role of landscape architecture in creating spaces that are functional and aesthetically pleasing and contribute to the social and cultural vitality of a community.

This research showcases how design solutions can be developed to address the needs and preferences of users, while also taking into consideration the cultural and historical context of the site. By using a variety of research methods such as literature review, comparison analysis, site inventory, one-on-one interviews, and user surveys, the proposed landscape architecture design for the entryway of Phap Quang Temple considers the opinions of stakeholders and visitors to create an inviting and memorable space that reflects the spiritual and cultural significance of the temple. The proposed design solutions

demonstrate how landscape architecture can play a vital role in creating functional and aesthetically pleasing spaces that encourage social interaction and improve the overall user experience.

### **6.3 Delimitations**

For this study on the Phap Quang Vietnamese Buddhist temple entry sequence in Grand Prairie, Texas, delimitations include:

5. Geographic scope of the study is limited to Grand Prairie, Texas, which may not be representative of other areas in North Texas or beyond.
6. The cultural scope of the research is focused solely on the Vietnamese Buddhist community, which may not fully capture the diversity of Buddhist practices and beliefs in the region.
7. The study is specifically focused on the entry sequence of the temple site and may not address other aspects of temple design or the broader cultural and spiritual significance of temple gardens.
8. The surveys conducted were focused on frequent temple goers, which may not fully capture the experiences and perspectives of occasional or first-time visitors.

These delimitations help to narrow down the scope of the research and ensure that the study is manageable and focused.

### **6.4 Limitation**

For this study on the Phap Quang Vietnamese Buddhist temple entry sequence in Grand Prairie, Texas, some possible delimitations could include:

1. Lack of literature on Buddhist temple landscapes in North Texas, particularly entry sequence: There is limited existing research on the design of Buddhist temple landscapes in the North Texas region, specifically related to the entry sequence of these temples. This lack of literature may limit the depth and

scope of the research findings.

2. The delay in starting the research was caused by the IRB process taking longer than expected: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) process is necessary to ensure that the research study is conducted ethically and that the rights and welfare of the study participants are protected. However, the process can be time-consuming, and unexpected delays can affect the research timeline.
3. Time frame limited to January-April 2023: The research project has a fixed timeline, which may limit the amount of data that can be collected and analyzed. This may affect the depth and scope of the research findings.
4. Not able to conduct an interview with the head monk: Interviews with key stakeholders, such as the head monk, can provide valuable insights into the design and significance of the temple landscape. However, if such interviews cannot be conducted, the research findings may be limited in their scope and depth.
5. Temple was not able to provide any site plan or information on the design of the temple site: Access to site plans and design information is crucial for conducting a thorough analysis of the temple landscape. Without this information, the research findings may be limited in their depth and scope.

## **6.5 Future Research**

There are many areas for future research related to Potential research questions to explore include:

1. How do cultural differences of users and surrounding environment influence the design of entry sequences for Buddhist temples in different regions?
2. How can the principles of sustainable design or green infrastructure be

- incorporated into the design of entry sequences for Buddhist temples?
3. How can technology, such as using virtual reality in the design process, be used to enhance the visitor experience of entry sequences for Buddhist temples?
  4. How does the topography of the surrounding area affect the design and function of Buddhist temple sites in suburban Texas?
  5. What are the strategies to strike a balance between site-specific design considerations and district-level influences on the design and function of Buddhist temple sites in suburban Texas?
  6. How do non-Vietnamese community members and those who do not frequently visit the temple perceive the temple?
  7. In what ways does Buddhist philosophy impact the design of the landscape in suburban North Texas Buddhist temples?

Each of these questions can lead to new insights and knowledge in the landscape architecture profession. Further research can help to create more informed and effective design solutions for entry sequences of Buddhist temples and contribute to the development of sustainable and culturally sensitive designs.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

In this study, the significance of the entry sequence in temple gardens has been explored, with a focus on a Vietnamese Buddhist temple in a Texas suburban context. Through a literature review, comparison analysis, site inventory, user survey, interviews, and design testing, the researcher has identified key design principles from Traditional Chinese Buddhist Temple Gardens and elements that contribute to a successful entry sequence. These principles were then applied in the development of a conceptual and detailed design for the entry sequence of Phap Quang Temple in Grand Prairie, TX.

The proposed design aims to improve the accessibility, wayfinding, and sense of place of the temple site, while incorporating elements and activities inspired by Vietnamese Buddhist culture. By strategically placing landmarks, wayfinding elements, and flexible spaces for community events, the design creates a visually interesting and socially engaging environment for visitors. Through this design process, the researcher has demonstrated the importance of preserving and promoting the unique cultural significance of Buddhist temple sites in contemporary landscape architecture. By continuing to explore these elements and their relationships, landscape architects can continue to improve the creation of meaningful and authentic spaces that reflect user group's traditions and values.

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