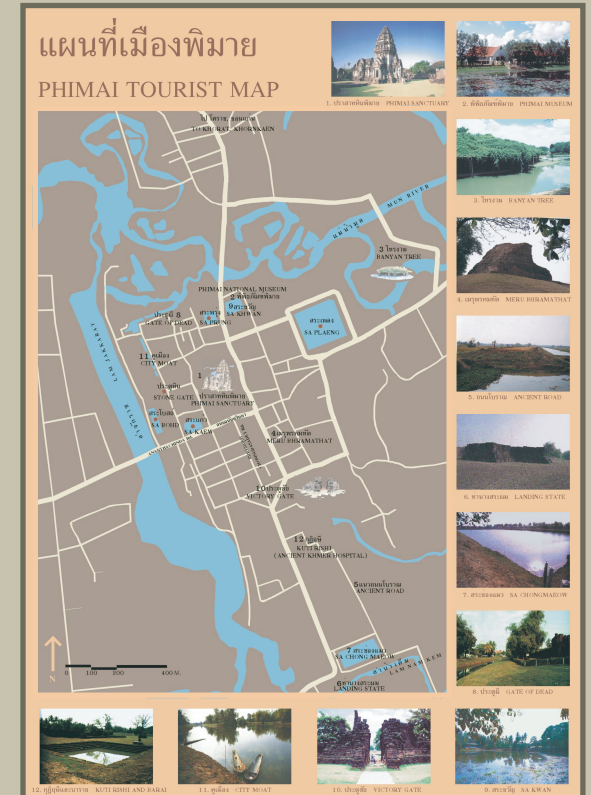
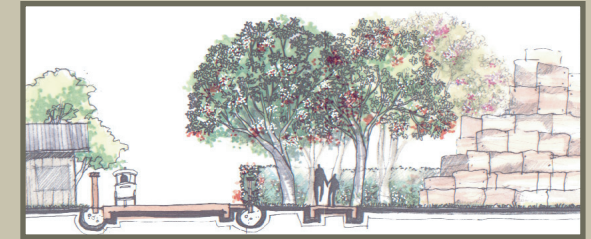


# An Urban Environmental Tourism Destination Plan for Phimai



Canadian Universities Consortium  
Urban Environmental Management Project  
Training and Technology Transfer Program  
Funded by Canadian International Development Agency

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## ABOUT THE REPORT

The CUC UEM Project became involved in Phimai at the request of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, the Department of Fine Arts and the Phimai District Office. This report was prepared by the CUC UEM Project, including project staff and a team of Thai designers and architects known as the Grit Design Group.

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## I INTRODUCTION

This report seeks to:

- ❑ Protect and enhance the historic character and sense of place of Phimai.
- ❑ Develop an interpretative strategy for the Phimai sanctuary and museum.
- ❑ Generate income for the community as well as the heritage site by improving the physical environment and interpretation thereby encouraging tourists to stay longer in the community.

The report aims to provide a sense of direction and some illustrative examples of how to begin the process of developing a comprehensive management plan. It provides demonstrations of the types of management techniques a destination such as Phimai might consider. These suggestions should not be considered ultimate solutions, as they are designed to provoke the debate and further input necessary to produce a community action plan. Involvement from stakeholders and relevant government agencies should be a major component of any such plan-

ning process. The CUC Project staff would be prepared to assist in the process of developing an action plan.

Five areas of management, all of which are in need of attention to reach Phimai's tourism goals, are discussed in this report. Responsibility of these areas of management fall under either the Fine Arts Department, the Phimai municipal government or joint responsibility.

Fine Arts:

- ❑ Interpretation of the historic sanctuary.
- ❑ Interpretation and displays in the Phimai museum.

Municipal Government:

- ❑ Parking and circulation.
- ❑ Regulation of urban development.

Joint Responsibility:

- ❑ Linkage between the museum and the sanctuary.

In this report, these five areas are dealt with in a holistic manner and the report seeks to consider the needs of Phimai as a living community as well as as a tourist destination. A piecemeal approach to tourism and urban environmental problems is not adequate for solving Phimai's dilemmas, which are common to many other tourist sites in Thailand. These urban environmental management factors need to be addressed in their broader context of tourism and the physical and social climate in which they are situated. A balance between concerns for economic development, environmental conditions and cultural heritage preservation for Phimai is essential. However, in order to put into practice an integrated plan, different actors and agencies need to co-ordinate responsibilities. This is the biggest challenge now facing Phimai.

## II GENERAL INFORMATION:

### PHIMAI AND TOURISM

Historically, Phimai was a trade centre and an important gateway from the Moon River basin to the Cambodian empire and towns in the Chao Phraya River basin. It was a part of the Khmer empire for several centuries. Phimai National Historic Park features the presentation of the archaeological remains of an Angkor Period temple complex with elaborate stone carvings and buildings constructed 1000 years ago.

Tourism is now Phimai's main industry. Entrance fees from Phimai Historic Park amount to between three and four million Baht per year which represents an increase of around 30 % from income generated five years ago. (Ninth Regional Office of Archaeology and National Museums, 2000)

Although this complex and the corresponding Khmer history museum are Phimai's main attractions, the nearby Sai Ngam banyan tree park, regional cuisine and festivals also attract visitors to Phimai (see Figure 1).

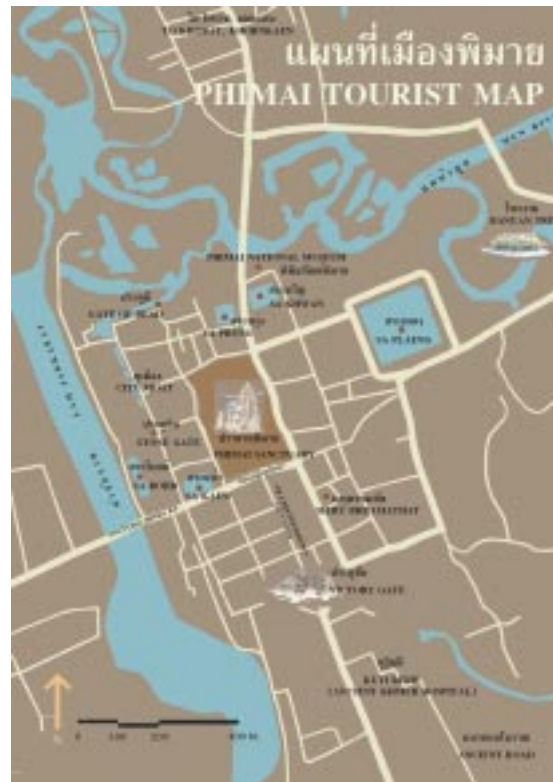


Figure 1 Tourist sites and map of Phimai

There are many Khmer ruins and other attractions in the region as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Tourist attractions in Nakhon Ratchasima Province

### III SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Many within the community and the Department of Fine Arts agree that the town and historic site could generate more income by improving the physical environment of the town and making it more attractive and interesting to tourists who thereby might extend their stay. An effective interpretation program for tourists and residents is also important in order for Phimai to increase awareness and appreciation of its heritage. Tourists do not get a feeling for Phimai and its character when they merely visit the historic site for short period of time and then leave.

The daily spending behaviour of tourists is quite modest: on average 100 Baht for Thais and 200 Baht for foreigners (Phimai municipality, 1999). Only five per cent of the 350,000 tourists stay overnight in Phimai.

The tourism destination management strategies in this report focus on one part of Phimai town as shown in Figure 3, and will look at a range of issues.

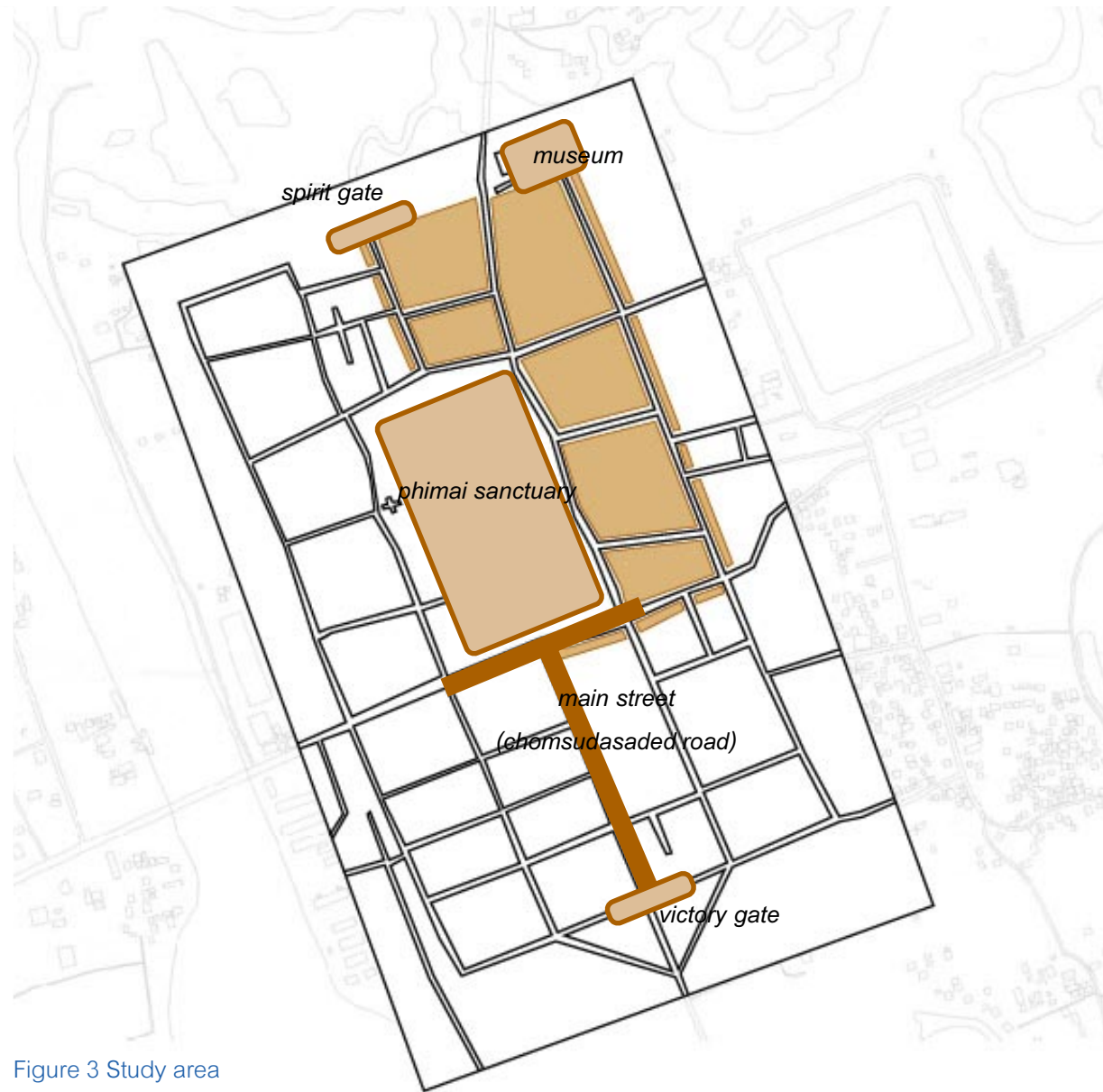


Figure 3 Study area

## Interpretation of the Historic Sanctuary

### Existing Interpretation

The story of Phimai's Khmer heritage is presented by photos, leaflets, books and a model at the Phimai sanctuary visitors centre and at the museum. There are also briefing notes for historical artifacts, gates and ponds. These are easily accessible and economic ways to tell the story but do not fully educate people on the significance of the site. Other information at the site consists of small signs identifying significant buildings. Student volunteers offer free guided tours of the sanctuary on weekends.

### Suggested Interpretation

Interpretive signage in the sanctuary should serve to bring the stories of the carvings and buildings to life. These signs should present the information in a relevant way and be physically attractive to draw attention, without interfering with the

site's visual integrity. A new design will enhance the Phimai site's heritage value.



Figure 4 Signage for Phimai sanctuary

### Video

At the encouragement of the Department of Fine Arts the CUC UEM Project has developed a video using computer virtual reality technology. This video enables a visitor to develop a better appreciation of the heritage resource by reconstructing digitally the way it looked a thousand years ago and by telling Phimai sanctuary's story from the perspective of a modern day child.

An important element of a good interpretive program is to explore the site's history in an exciting way. The drawings (see Figure 5) created for the interpretive video developed by CUC UEM could be displayed in the visitors centre. These drawings demonstrate how the sanctuary looked fifty years ago, (in an unrestored stage), as well as how the sanctuary may have looked 1000 years ago as part of a thriving temple city. Displaying these photographs could provoke the viewers imaginations and engage them in the story of the sanctuary.



Figure 5a Phimai sanctuary now





Figure 5b Phimai sanctuary 50 years ago



Figure 5c Phimai sanctuary 1000 years ago

## Interpretation and Displays in the Phimai Museum

The Phimai museum attracts around 35,000 visitors annually, which is only 10% of the total tour-

ists who visit Phimai sanctuary. This low visitation rate can be traced to the museum's location (behind and out of site of the main sanctuary), poor directional signage, uncomfortable indoor temperatures in the spring and unattractive interpretation.

### Indoor displays

The Phimai museum contains many significant and interesting pieces and the opportunity to present them effectively to visitors should not be wasted. At present the layout and the use of artifacts within the museum does not sufficiently take advantage of the historical resources which are available. There is little or no interpretation to draw the visitors into the exhibits and artifacts. In many instances the displays fail to generate adequate interest.

### Outdoor displays

At present, the long walkway from the museum parking area to the museum is uninteresting and not conducive to encouraging greater visitation to the museum. There is wasted opportunity to display and interpret artifacts along the walkway.

## Suggested Strategies for Improving Interpretation and Displays in Phimai Museum

The following recommendations aim to increase the number of visitors by improving the interpretation, accessibility and comfort of the museum.



Figure 6 Phimai museum entrance

### Interpretation Improvements

The museum display needs to be revamped to include an overall theme, the lack of which now makes the displays appear lifeless and dull. To encourage use of the museum as a source of interesting and relevant information about Phimai's history the following changes to the layout and use of artifacts in the museum are recommended:

- ❑ To improve the visual interest in the museum and to 'draw' visitors into the displays, good-quality artifacts which are strong representative samples of the museum collection should be located at the entrance room to the museum. It is important at this point to engage the visitor and set the tone for the rest of the visit.
- ❑ To assist in exploring the dual themes of the general history of Khmer architecture and civilisation in Thailand, and the specific history and artifacts of Phimai, the displays could be organised to create a journey through the museum which would take visitors from a more general history to specific aspects of Phimai. Locating the 3D video of images of the Phimai sanctuary at the end of the 'route' through the museum would work well. This type of spatial layout could be used as the first part of the journey through the Phimai National Historic Park.

Improvements to the displays inside the museum, with more interpretive information on the symbol-

ism, structure and other interesting aspects of the artifacts could also be provided. This would assist tourists in understanding the significance of many of the objects. In most cases one or two lines would be adequate.

### Phimai Museum Adaptations

During the hot spring months temperatures in the museum can become unbearable. There is a shortage of funds for installing and maintaining air conditioning in the museum and so a low technology solution, based on cooling techniques found in traditional Thai architecture should be explored.

There is a wide range of techniques for ventilation systems to deal with this issue as below:

- ❑ Several ceiling fans, set up to draw air towards the ceiling rather than push air down, could be installed.
- ❑ A number of openings around the lower part of the building, as close to ground level as is possible, could be installed to bring cool air into the building.
- ❑ To further cool the incoming air, gardens

could be planted at these points. Drawing the air through vegetation would lower the temperature by several degrees. It should be noted that utilising fans would increase the effectiveness of this cooling technique beyond that which would occur only through natural ventilation as used in a traditional house.

In addition to this technique, other steps which would assist in the cooling of the building include:

- ❑ Plant shade trees along the east, south and west walls of the museum. During the hottest time of the year this could assist in lowering the temperature of these walls and in turn the temperature in the museum.
- ❑ As the sun is quite high in the sky during the hottest months, it would be important to plant as close to the walls of the museum as possible.
- ❑ Install awnings and/or shades on all east, south and west windows that are at present unshaded.

### Access Improvements

The historical interpretive experience of the museum site could be enhanced along the sidewalk. One possibility is to place some artifacts with brief interpretive details in this area in a manner which would begin to develop the story of the Khmer architecture and artifacts of Thailand before visitors even reach the museum.



Figure 7 Existing access from parking lot to museum

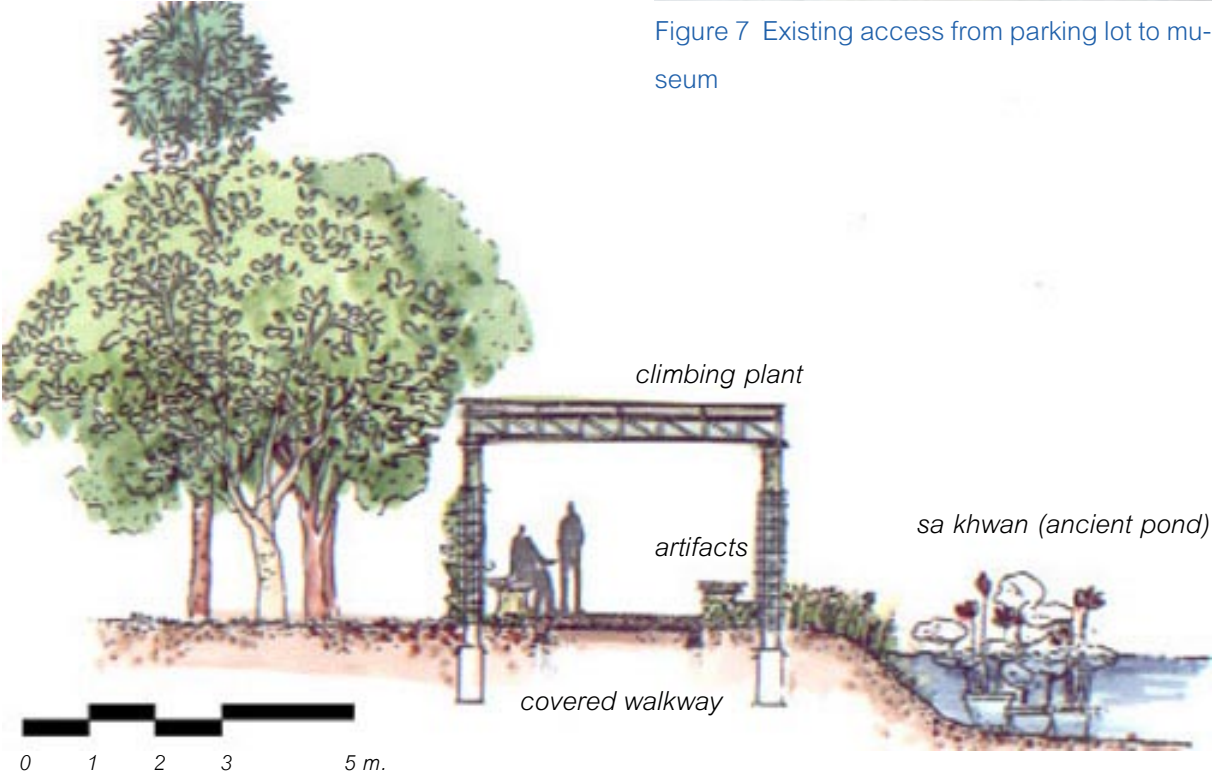


Figure 8 Suggested improvements to museum access from parking lot

### Other Issues Affecting the Sanctuary and Museum

#### Financing

Although Phimai sanctuary earns 3 to 4 million Baht each year, they do not have autonomy to utilise the revenue for restoration or maintenance of the sanctuary because it has to be sent to the central government. Therefore, a re-financing aspect should be seriously considered in order to encourage more effective management of the historical site,.

#### Tourism Impacts on Sanctuary

The approximately 400,000 visitors each year create negative impacts on the sanctuary's physical condition, (lintel carving, for example). In addition, an annual three-day light and sound performance, which accommodates 1,000 to 2,000 visitors, also affects the site. Carrying capacity is a significant issue which the responsible authorities must monitor and design mitigative measures.

## Parking and Circulation of Tourists and Traffic

### Inappropriate parking lot location

The parking lot is currently located in front of the sanctuary, which brings traffic and air pollution problems to the area.

### Ineffective heavy vehicle control

Trucks weighing more than ten tons pass along Anunthachinda Road in front of the sanctuary every day. The resulting vibrations affect the cultural arts of the sanctuary and produce noise, air and visual impacts that affect tourists and the site.



### Lack of pathway for tourists

At present the sidewalk along Chomsudasaded Road is used for spillover from commercial enterprises and residences along the street. Shop displays and motorcycle parking take over most of the sidewalks. In addition, there are bus terminals on both sides of the street. As a consequence, people are forced to walk on the street, which is both inconvenient and unsafe.



### Tourist flow

Tourists arrive in Phimai by both private and public transport. Some come with tour operators

based outside the city. Usually people park their vehicles, walk around the site, take photos, buy souvenirs and leave. They do not spend much time walking and looking around the town.

### Lack of Green Area/Shading for Tourists

The lack of trees to shade the road presents a real problem for tourists who want to walk down the street, particularly at noontime when the heat is most severe. Since the sidewalks are not accessible, pedestrians cannot walk in the shade of shop awnings.





## Urban Development

### Conflicts between the development of the surrounding area and historical site

Phimai was declared a national historic park in 1989, but the park boundaries and zoning guidelines were not clearly defined at that time. Enforcement of building restrictions was weak and many buildings were constructed by those seeking an opportunity to be close to the business opportunities of a national historic park site. Although people resided within the ancient walls before Phimai became an official park, after 1989 people increasingly settled in the area and the walls themselves were destroyed in several places to make way for new structures.



In the past few years, buildings close to the sanctuary have been constructed without proper design control. New construction and alterations to existing buildings have also changed the streetscape which was previously dominated by traditional wood houses and shops. As a result of this development, the unique historical character of the town is gradually disappearing and the large buildings overshadow the sanctuary site.



Figure 8 Examples of traditional wood houses and shops

Although there are some building restrictions, they are neither strict nor effective. These factors combine to produce a visual impact that negatively affects the skyline around the sanctu-

ary, which should be dominated by the historic architecture. In addition to the buildings, nearby advertising signage colours, sizes, types and materials used also affect the identity of the sanctuary.

### Lack of management capacity of municipality

Phimai municipality has a lack of expertise in urban environmental management and has limited technical assistance capabilities and experience. It has little freedom to implement and co-ordinate activities within its own boundaries due to the factors mentioned above.

### Unattractive Shopping Area

Most of the stores around Phimai's historic site sell everyday items and very few of them provide items that tourists might be interested in buying such as postcards or cast reproductions of Phimai's Khmer carvings. Local crafts displayed in a more attractive setting would enhance the shopping area. Everyday commerce, however, should also be considered an aspect of local culture, as should the variety of goods that

the shops carry. The area would thus not benefit from becoming strictly a tourist zone.



### Lack of Facility

Currently there is no public toilet provided for tourists which make it inconvenient and leads to the dirty of the place, Night Bazaar in particular. There is a need to provide sufficient facility. It has been proposed by municipality to build public toilet in the area where the parking lot is located at the present. However location, building design and cleanliness are seen as the important issues because it is close to the historical remain, the Meru Brahmthat. It is essential to have an agreement among related government agencies such as Fine Arts Department, Municipality and the community to cope with these issues.

## Other Environmental Issues

Tourism brings with it added pressures on the environment and infrastructure of Phimai. Increasing the visitors' length of stay could, without proper planning, also exacerbate some of Phimai's environmental problems. The high number of tourists already poses the possibility of erosion of the Phimai sanctuary as well as increasing problems with sewage and litter. These are issues that should be dealt with to improve Phimai for tourists and residents alike. Experience has shown that these urban environmental management issues could seriously affect the success of Phimai as a tourism destination.

### Water Quality

There is no public sewage treatment system in Phimai. Accordingly, the water quality of the Moon River, Phimai's major river, has deteriorated due to the large quantities of residential wastewater released directly into the river. In fact Phimai municipality has already prepared a tank to receive sewage from households. But the pipeline system is yet to be started due to budget

delay. The longer it gets delay the worse water quality of Moon River is. With the increasing number of visitors to Phimai, tourism could also become a major contributor to the serious pollution of the Moon River.

### Solid Waste

Waste generation is two times higher in Phimai than in comparable non-tourist areas. Waste-collecting capacity is sufficient but the disposal methods are inappropriate. Presently, solid waste is dumped at a landfill site, which does not meet acceptable sanitary landfill criteria. It poses the problems of odour and groundwater pollution from infiltration of leachates. In addition municipality itself also lacks of capability in terms of well-trained staff, technical and financial support to cope with this solid waste management problem.

### Flooding

The town is surrounded by the Moon River. Flooding is a problem for Phimai. A plan for flooding protection has yet to be developed and floods also could deter tourists from visiting the town.

## Suggested Strategies to Improve the Urban Environment for the Phimai Municipal Government

### Parking and circulation of tourists and traffic

#### Re-Directing Tourist Traffic via Victory Gate

Restructuring the pattern of visitation so that tourists enter the town through the historic entrance of Victory Gate would encourage them to see the sanctuary in its larger context from the moment they enter Phimai, (see Figure 9).



Figure 9a Victory Gate from outside the ancient walls



Figure 9b View of the Phimai sanctuary from Victory Gate

After entering through the gates, tourists would walk along Chomsudasaded Road, which mirrors the ancient approach to the sanctuary. They would pass temples and shops on both sides of the road and develop a feeling for the community's living heritage before reaching the sanctuary. By walking to the sanctuary, visitors would better appreciate the size of the area inside the ancient walls.

Interpretive panels could feature text and drawings about the historic and contemporary significance of sites along the way, (see Figure 10).



Figure 10 Example of interpretive signage for Phimai main street.

### Improvements to Chomsudasaded and Anunthachinda Road

In order to develop Chomsudasaded Road, the following recommendations are made based on the problems of Phimai's physical environment as identified:

- ❑ Explore the possibility of relocating the parking lot in front of sanctuary and bus stops to outside Victory Gate. It is important to hold public hearing on this change to get local people opinions because relocating these bus stops would affect their comfort and convenient to travel to Phimai. It also needs to study about the impacts on tourists who come to Phimai by public transport.

Proposed parking lot could be outside victory gate at the area close to Phimai school. If this proposed parking area is feasible, it is suggested for the government to provide other services and facilities at this place such as public toilets, souvenir shops and food stores. Providing public toilet here would solve the problem of location in historical area, which

is seen as the critical issue from Fine Arts Department point of view.

- ❑ Explore the possibility of using parking lot in front of sanctuary for officials only, not tourists. To encourage tourists to enter Phimai town through victory gate, it is recommended not to allow tourists to park here but can just drop off people to the sanctuary. Tourists can park at the proposed parking lot outside victory gate. This parking area in front of Phimai can be reserved for official use only. Besides encouraging tourists to pass through Anunthachinda Road, this would also help reducing the problems of air, noise pollution and vibration to the area.
- ❑ Improve sidewalk access.
- ❑ Preserve and enhance many of the existing old buildings and historical remains within the town of Phimai.
- ❑ Encourage new construction to reflect the traditional wooden architecture.

- ❑ Control signage.

- ❑ Increase the amount of green spaces and plant trees.
- ❑ Relocate the overhead electricity and communications to underground wires. This would be good for the long term but budget will be an issue. In addition it also needs high collaboration among various government agencies to make this happen.
- ❑ Develop Anunthachinda and Chomsudasaded Roads as a shopping area.
- ❑ Develop interpretive signage for the main roads of Phimai.

It is noted that in order to make any changes to this area, opinions from local people and relevant agencies are needed to be part of decision making process.

There are a number of ways to improve Anunthachinda and Chomsudasaded Roads as mentioned above. The following figures demonstrate how these improvements could effect the physical environment of the area.



Figure 11a Possible view of Chomsudasaded Road from Victory Gate towards the sanctuary without improvements to building regulations



Figure 11b Possible view of Chomsudasaded Road from Victory Gate towards the sanctuary with improvements

Without an effective control for building in the historical area such as size and colour of signage, the images presented in the right column could happen in Phimai in the future, which will create visual impact on historical characteristics of Phimai as a whole.



The following figures shows cross sections of Chomsudasaded Road. Since the road width changes between Victory Gate and the sanctuary, the cross sections suggest different management strategies for each portion of the road. Essentially, the issues of shade, traffic, parking and footpath are consistent along the length of Chomsudasaded Road.



### Section 1 (Figure 12a)

There is not much traffic going on here because it is a portion at the end of the road (in front of the victory gate) and along both sides with the temples. It can be continue using as a public bus stop but the number and quality of the bus should be controlled.

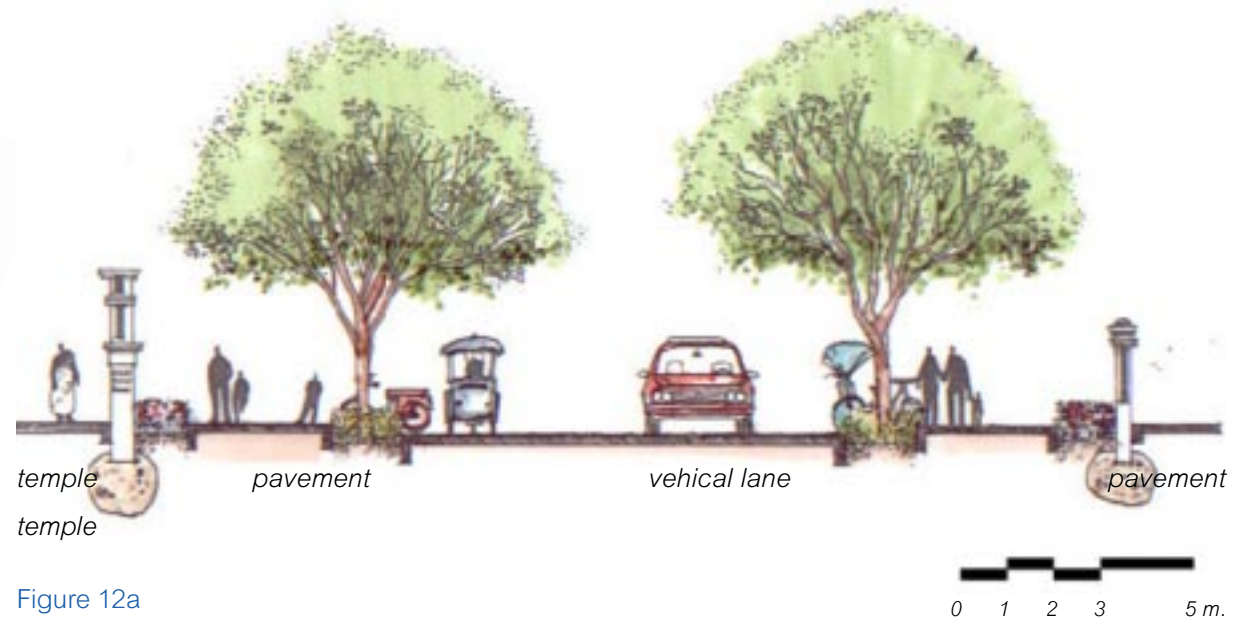


Figure 12a

Cross section of the southernmost portion of Chomsudasaded Road with improvements

### Section 2 (Figure 12b)

It is the widest part of Chomsudasaded road, approximately 24 metres. It is wide enough to locate car parking lot. Because of the commercial land use, the parking lot is quite necessary for the local people. Native trees can be planted to create shading and shrubs can be used for decoration and as a buffer screen between pavement and parking lot.

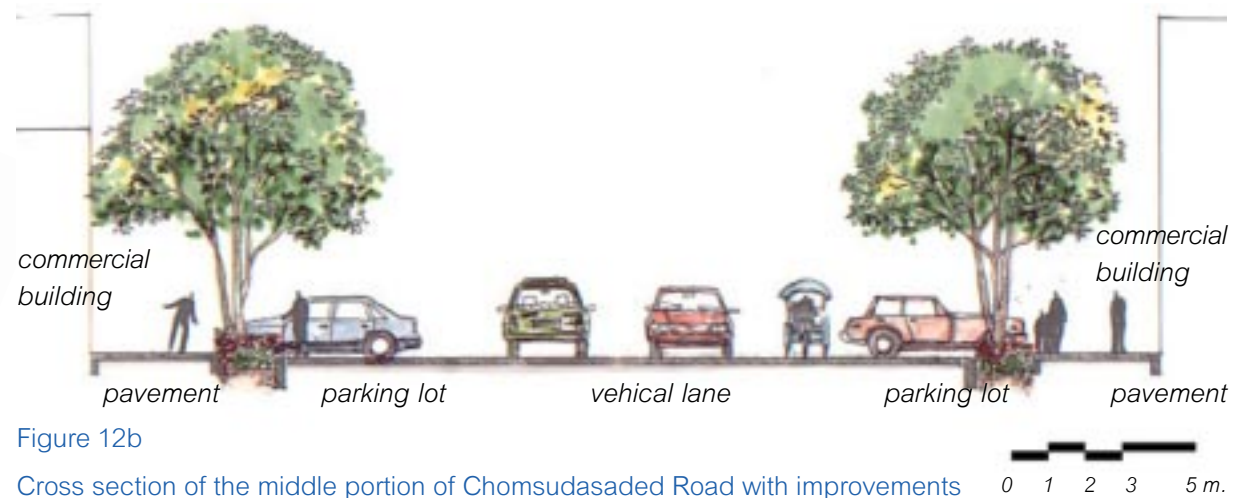


Figure 12b

Cross section of the middle portion of Chomsudasaded Road with improvements

### Section 3 (Figure 12c)

This part, approximately 12 metres, is the narrowest and nearest to the sanctuary. It should be clear to create the perception of the sanctuary approach (channelling of vista). There could be some parking lots along the road but only for small vehicle such as bicycle or motorcycle.

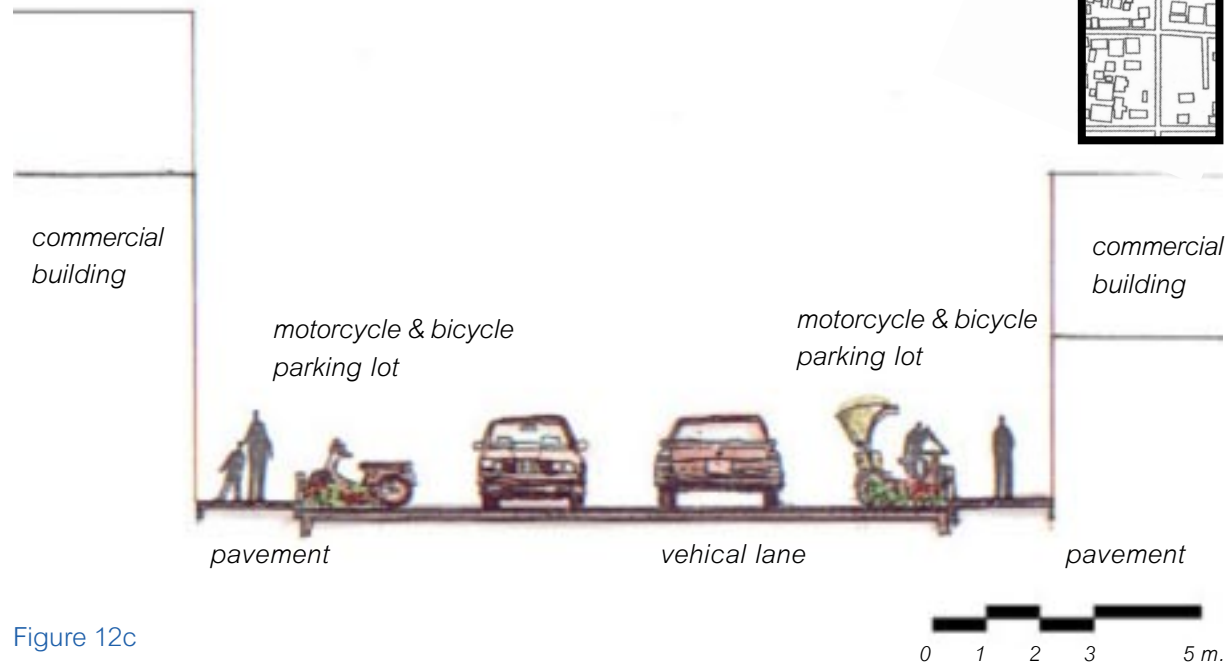


Figure 12c

Cross section of the northernmost portion of Chomsudasaded Road with improvements

Figures 13 and 14 demonstrate current and potential views along Anunthachinda Road from the junction with Chomsudasaded Road.



Figure 13a Possible view of the junction of Anunthachinda and Chomsudasaded Roads in front of Phimai sanctuary without improvements and rehabilitation of the building



Figure 13b Possible view of the junction of Anunthachinda and Chomsudasaded Roads in front of Phimai sanctuary with improvements and rehabilitation of the building



Figure 14a

Current view of Anunthachinda Road from junction with Chomsudasaded Road



Figure 14c

Possible view of Anunthachinda Road with improvements



Figure 14b

Possible view of Anunthachinda Road without improvements to building regulations

The improvements suggested above would make the area around the sanctuary into pleasant tourist shopping streets which could support additional economic activity. Although local shopkeepers and residents may be hesitant at first to enact changes to the streets, the long-term affects will provide economic benefits, town pride and identity. Useable sidewalks and reduced traffic would also directly benefit residents.

## Issues for both Fine Arts Department and Municipal Government

### Linkage between the museum and the sanctuary

Currently the location of the museum vis a vis the sanctuary, combined with lack of signage and publicity for the museum at the sanctuary make the Phimai museum an undervalued resource. The sanctuary and museum are often seen separate and distant attractions. Most visitors drive between the two, increasing traffic congestion along the roads. This driving distance is much longer than a potential walking path from the sanctuary's outer northern gopura.

Linkages would not only connect the site and the museum physically, but also in the minds of visitors who would hopefully then see the two sites as one attraction with complimentary dimensions. Improved physical linkages and signage would utilise the potential of the museum and give visitors a more complete picture of Phimai's history, while also encouraging tourists to stay longer in Phimai.



If the two are linked, one ticket fee structure for both sanctuary and museum could be introduced. This would help to bring more tourists and revenue to the museum. The ticket could be sold at both sanctuary and museum. The proposed walkway options linking the museum and the sanctuary are presented below.

### Alternative Walking Circuits

There are five possible routes between the museum and sanctuary based on two movement patterns for improved linkage. In the routes of Option 1, tourists start walking from Victory Gate, proceed through the sanctuary and outer northern sanctuary gopura, and end at the museum. The second option would see tourists starting with a visit to the museum and then walking to the sanctuary.

The Phimai municipality has budgeted to build a walkway around the perimeter of the sanctuary. However, the Phimai sanctuary office thought that it would be more effective to utilise this budget to improve some linkage alternatives as proposed by the CUC UEM Project rather than to build a new path that simply circumscribes the sanctu-

ary. Therefore the sanctuary office plans to propose these alternative routes to the municipality in order to link and encourage movement between the sanctuary and museum.

Figure 15 shows the different routes being proposed. Proper maps and signage to direct tourists along those routes would have to be provided at both southern and northern outer gopura.

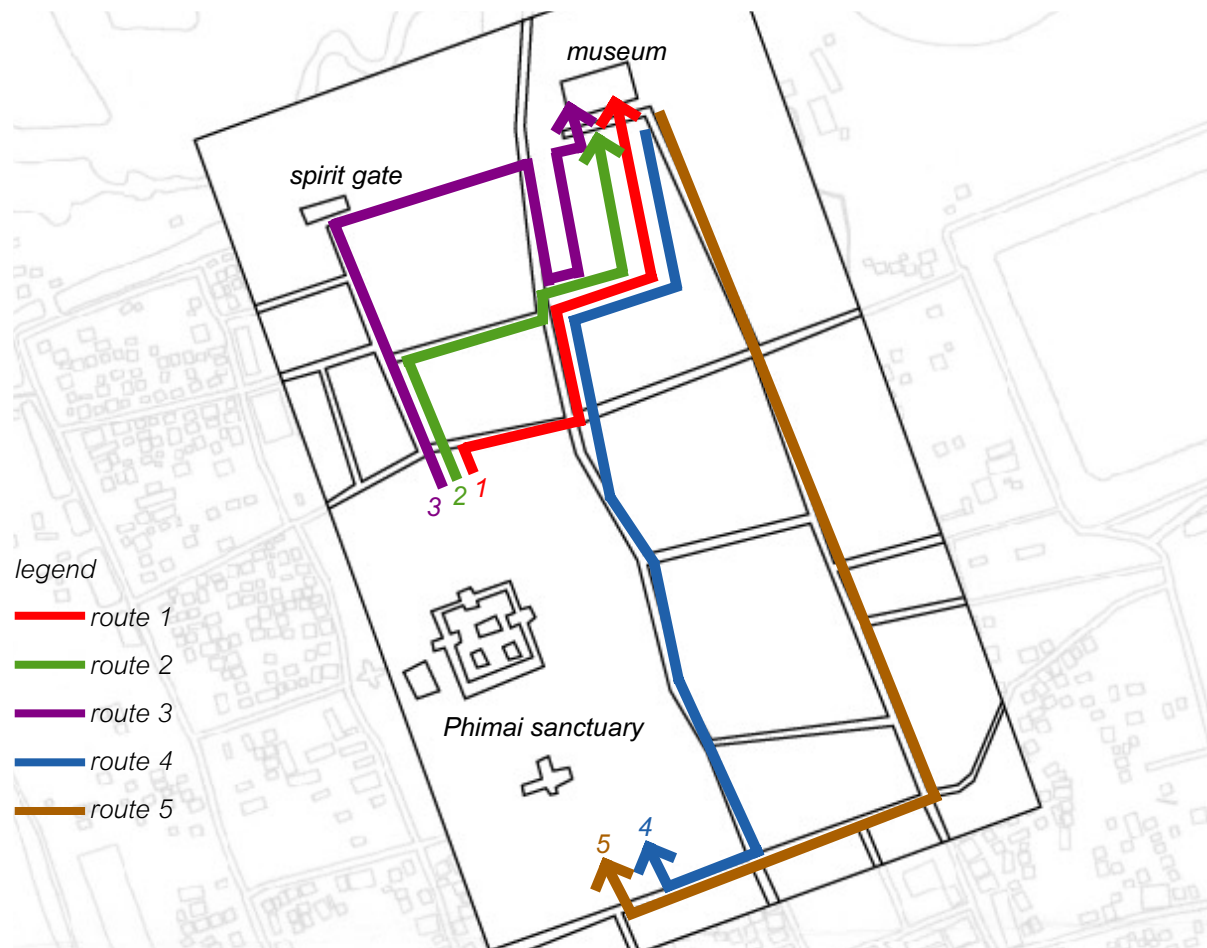


Figure 15 Suggested routes to link the museum and sanctuary

## Option 1

### Route #1

It is a short distance (30 meters) from the sanctuary's outer northern gopura to the museum. The walkway is narrow but it is pleasant to walk along because there are trees on both sides of this road. However the walkway needs to be improved and widened to be more convenient for tourists.

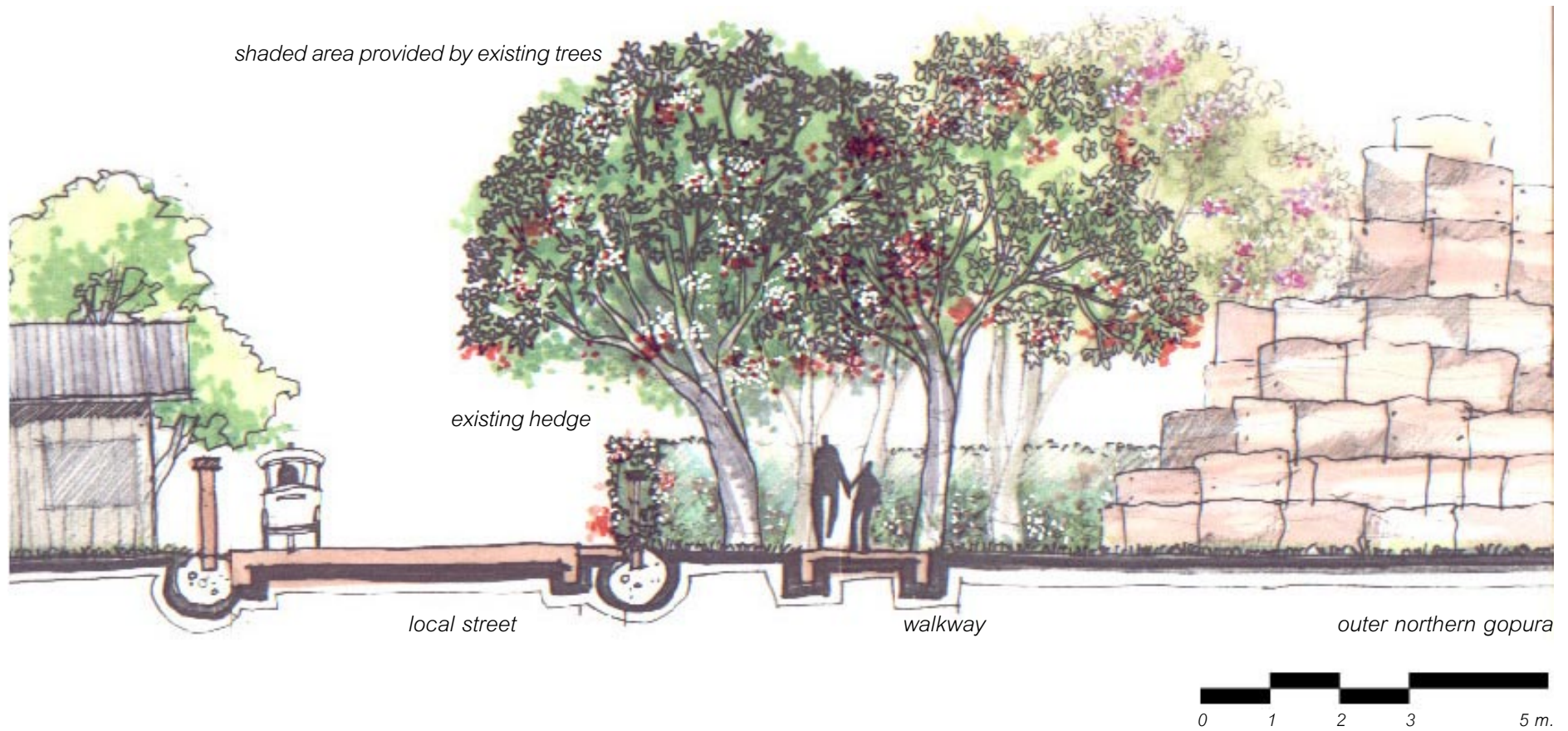


Figure 15a Cross Section of Route 1

## Route #2

This route is around the same distance as route #1 (30 m). However, the advantage of route #2 is that the road is in good condition and there would not be much need for repairs. In addition, tourists would have a chance to pass by an historic pond (Sa Prung). The museum entrance is at the end of the road, so tourists would be able to see their destination. It is recommended that Sa Prung be developed as an attractive fish-feeding site for visitors, with vendors selling fish food and an interpretive sign to provide relevant information on Sa Prung for tourists.

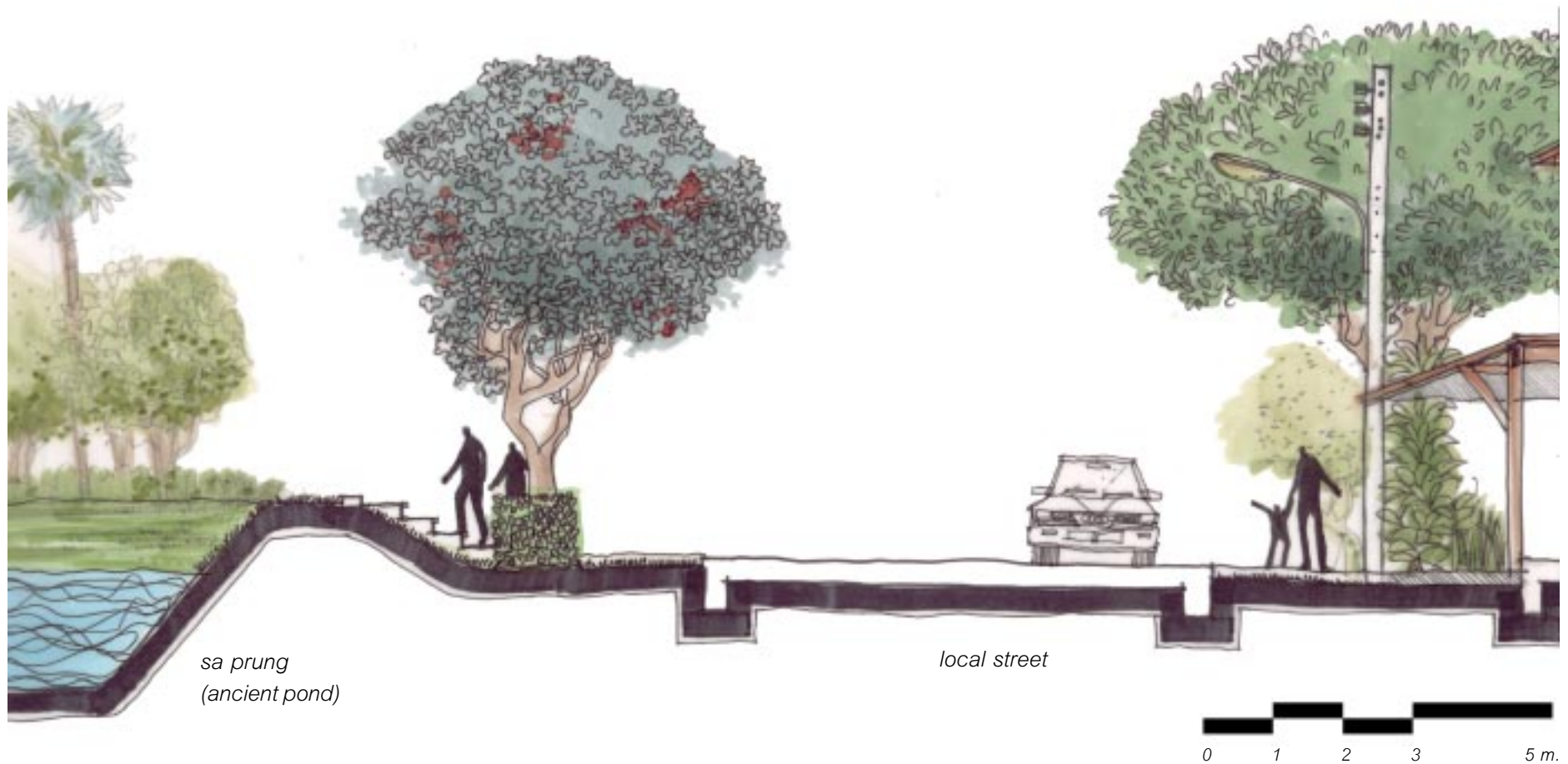


Figure 15b Cross Section of Route 2



### Route #3

It is around 50 meters from the outer northern gopura to the museum with this route. From the outer northern gopura, tourists would go straight through the Spirit Gate close to the north moat and walk along next to the water. Although the existing walkway is not adequate, the scenery along the river is quite nice. Improvements to this route would require the construction of a pedestrian walkway to the museum. Gathering perspectives from people living in the area would be essential because development of this route might affect the lives of people living there.

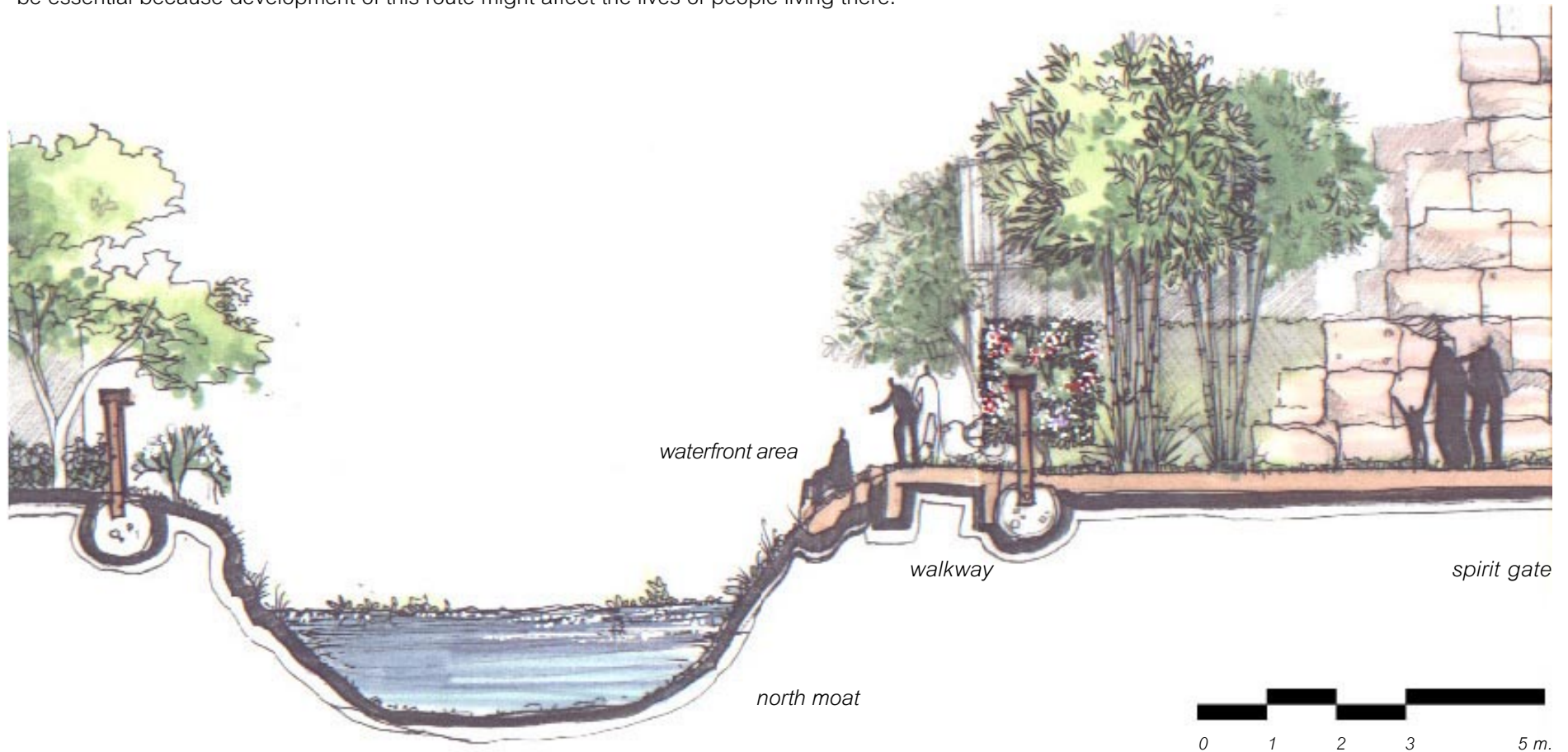


Figure 15c Cross Section of Route 3

## Option 2

Option 2 provides alternative routes for the tourists who visit the museum first and then proceed to the sanctuary. There are two alternative routes as below.

### Route #4

It is about 500 meters from the museum to the outer southern gopura with this route. Presently, there is nothing much to see along the road and the walkway is used for several commercial activities. There is currently no space for pedestrians. To be used as a linkage route, the walkway would need to be cleared. There is potential to develop the commercial area so that tourists could shop or eat and drink.

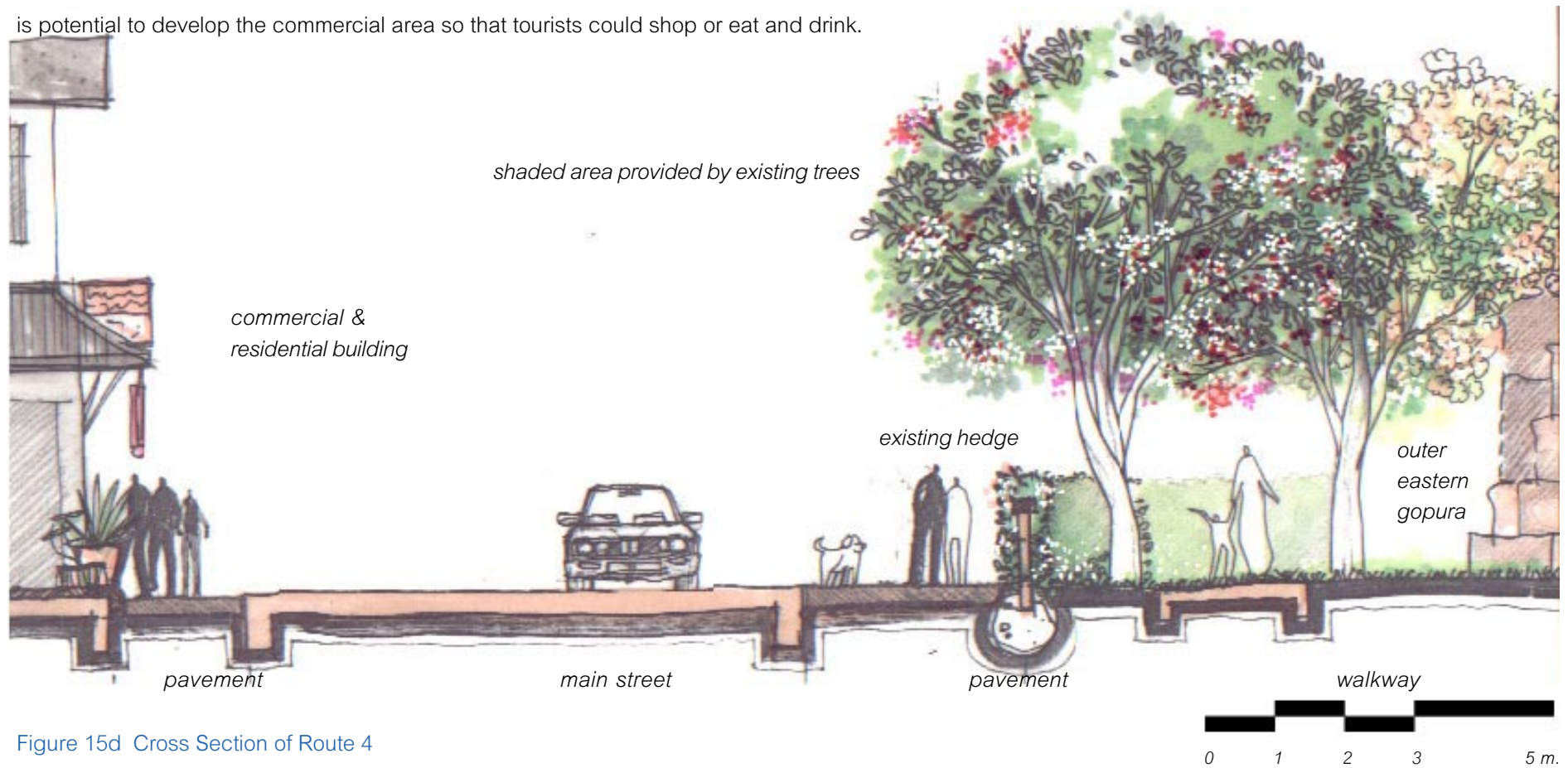


Figure 15d Cross Section of Route 4

### Route #5

This longer route allows for added exploration of Phimai town and could be used by tourists with more time to spare. Tourists could also rent bicycles or 3-wheel vehicles and ride along this route next to the city moat. At present, the route is not particularly interesting, but if the city moat is developed into a park area it could become quite pleasant. There is currently no footpath but the road is quiet. This route also passes by the active night bazaar and food market.

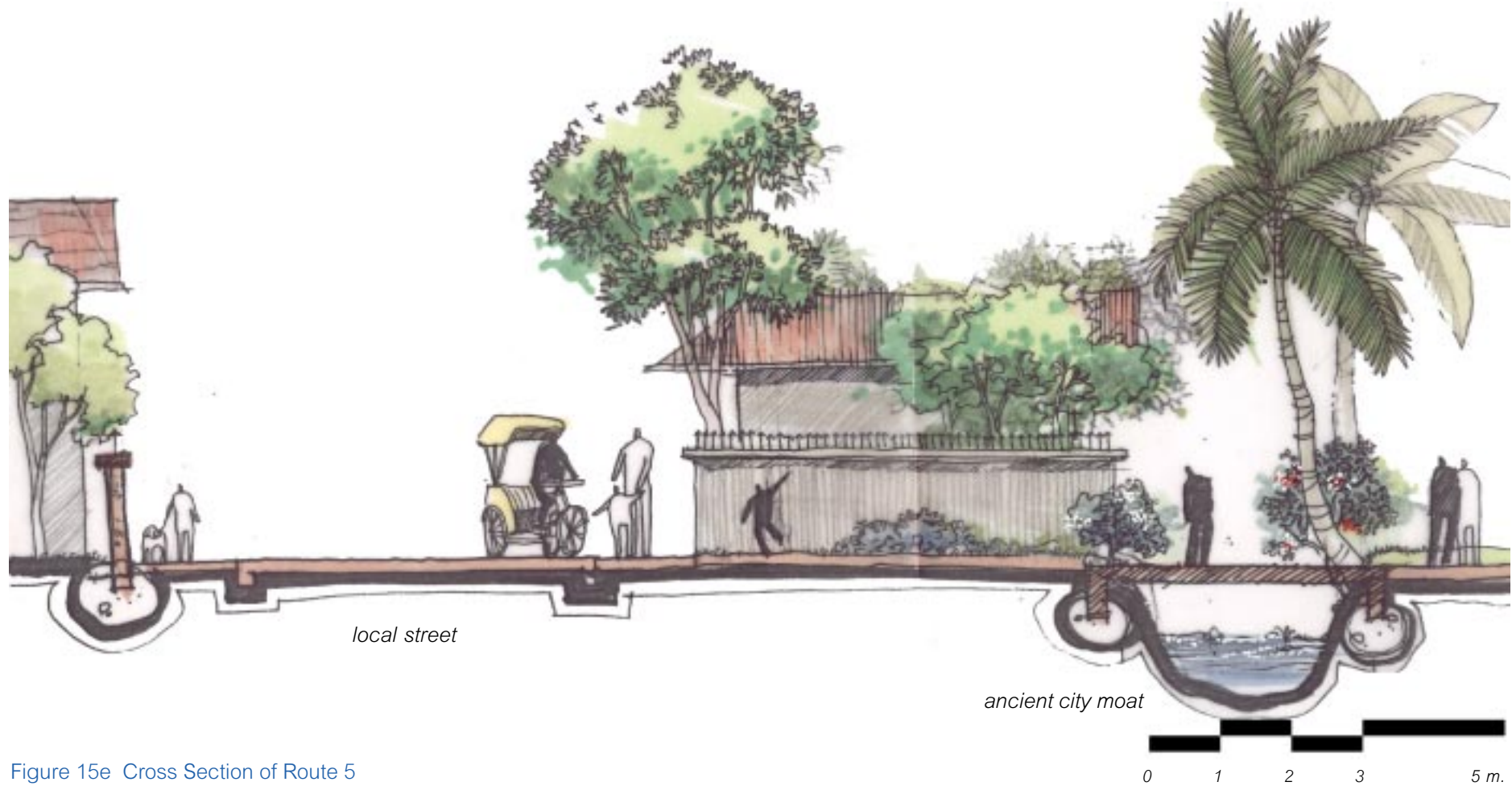


Figure 15e Cross Section of Route 5



## IV OBSTACLES TO SUGGESTIONS

The above suggestions will not be easily implemented. Constraints and barriers relevant to both the Fine Arts Department and the municipal government are blocking the implementation of these strategies are discussed below.

### **Lack of co-ordination among government authorities**

To follow up the plan to improve the physical environment of Phimai, specifically on Anunthachinda and Chomsudasaded Roads, improved co-ordination between government agencies is required since there are several agencies involving in the historical area. Since the Fine Arts Department takes care of only the sanctuary and Phimai municipality and district governments take care of the surrounding areas and the Tourism Authority of Thailand is responsible for tourism development, there needs to be extensive co-ordination to effectively plan for Phimai. Presently these three agencies are not co-ordinating among themselves, which negatively affects the development of the town as a whole.

### **Lack of public involvement in planning for Phimai**

To carry out any tourism destination management plan, public involvement is essential. Currently there is little public involvement in the projects for Phimai. There is a need to inform people of the proposed plan to improve the town and to encourage their co-operation and interest in clearing walkways or maintaining the historical characteristics of the town, for example.

### **Lack of public awareness about and cultural heritage conservation**

Environmental and cultural awareness programs are inadequate and people do not see what advantage they would get from co-operating on walkway improvement or relocation of the parking lot. To get more co-operation from people, awareness programs need to be put in place.

## V CONCLUSION

There are a number of opportunities for Phimai to maximise its tourism potential as described in this report. The advantages of developing a more sustainable tourism industry could benefit not only individual businesses and the historic sites but also could contribute to improving Phimai for all its residents. More effective co-ordination between government agencies and public consultation is necessary to enact many of the recommendations. Several however, especially as regards the museum, may be implemented more easily.