

Project Origins

The Chinatown Gate serves as a symbol of the strong cultural and historical ties between the City and the Chinese community. The original gate was officially opened in 1987 to commemorate the sister-city relationship between Edmonton and the City of Harbin in China's Heilongjiang Province. The gate's creation was advocated for by the Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA) which coordinated community funding to support funding that was committed by the City and Province. For 30 years, it stood as a representation of the friendship and cultural exchange between the two cities.

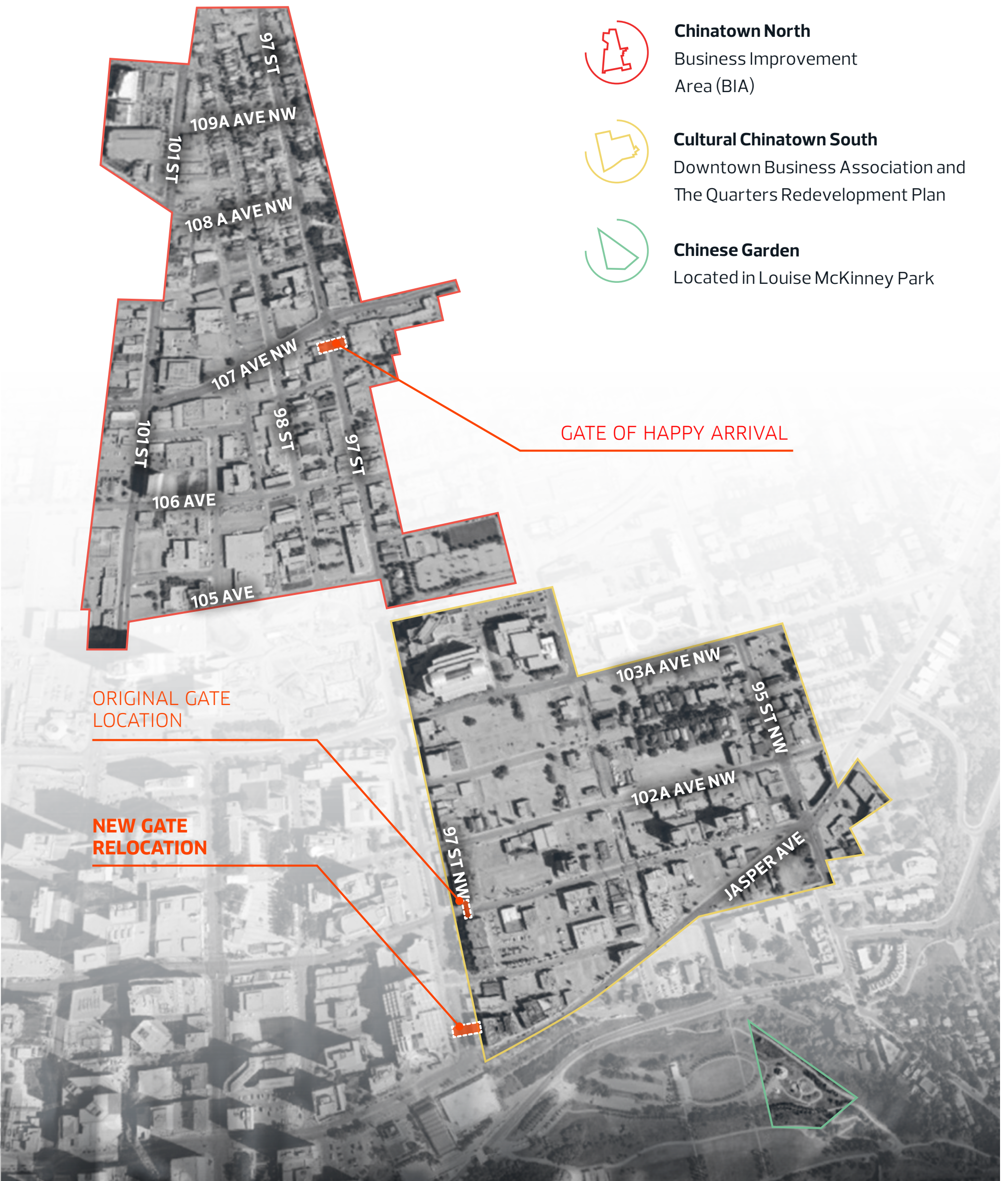
The gate was taken down to make way for the Valley Line Southeast LRT in 2017. The design of a new replacement gate began in 2019.



OLD CHINATOWN GATE AT 102 AVE NW

Location

The City made a commitment to the public to construct a new gate in the downtown core on 97 Street and Okisikow Way (101A Avenue), where the original Edmonton Chinatown began. The gate will be a memorable addition to the city's identity, bookending the city's old and new Chinatowns with the Gate of Happy Arrival at 107A Ave.



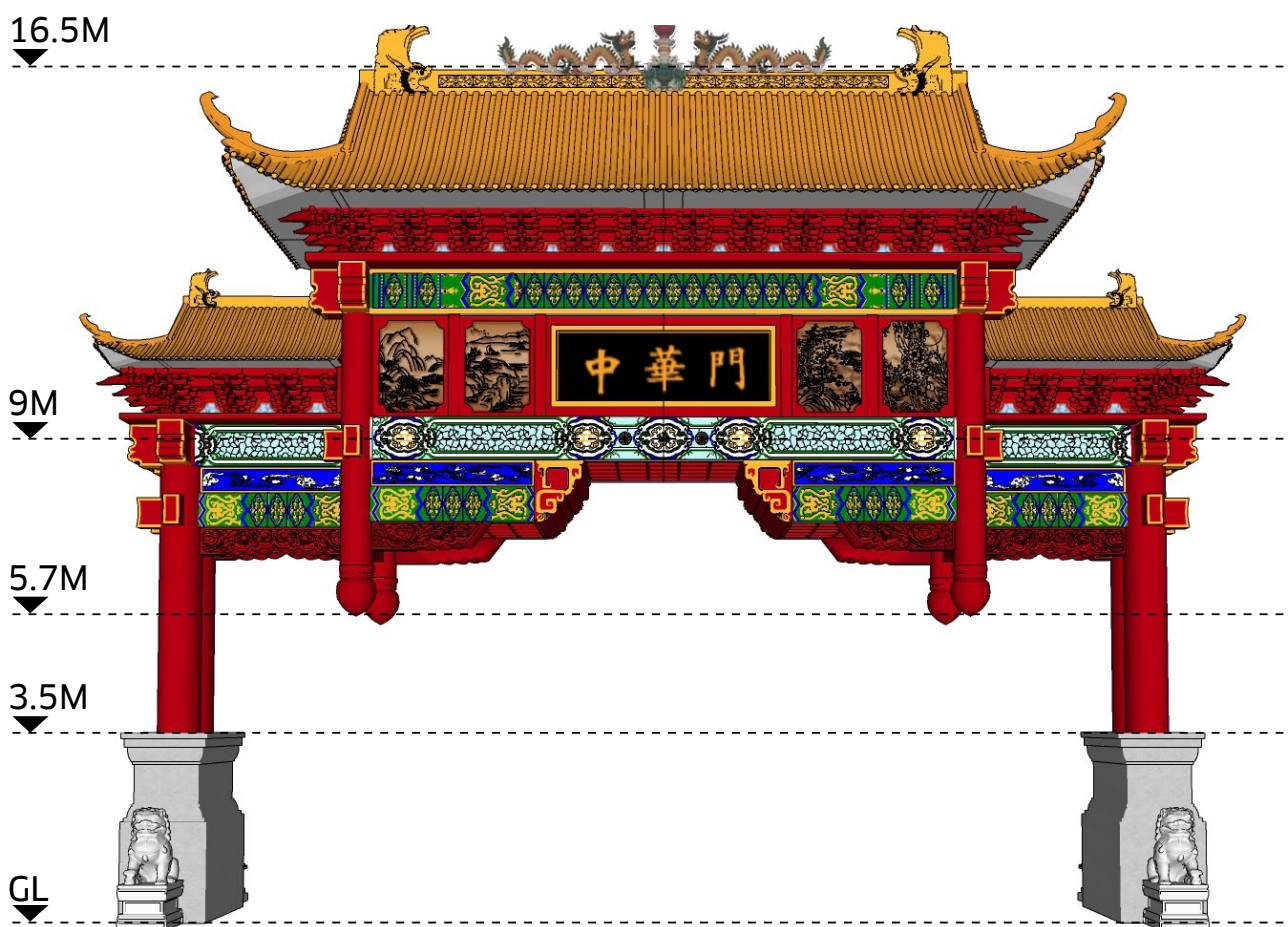




VIEW FROM JASPER AVE LOOKING NORTH ON 97 ST

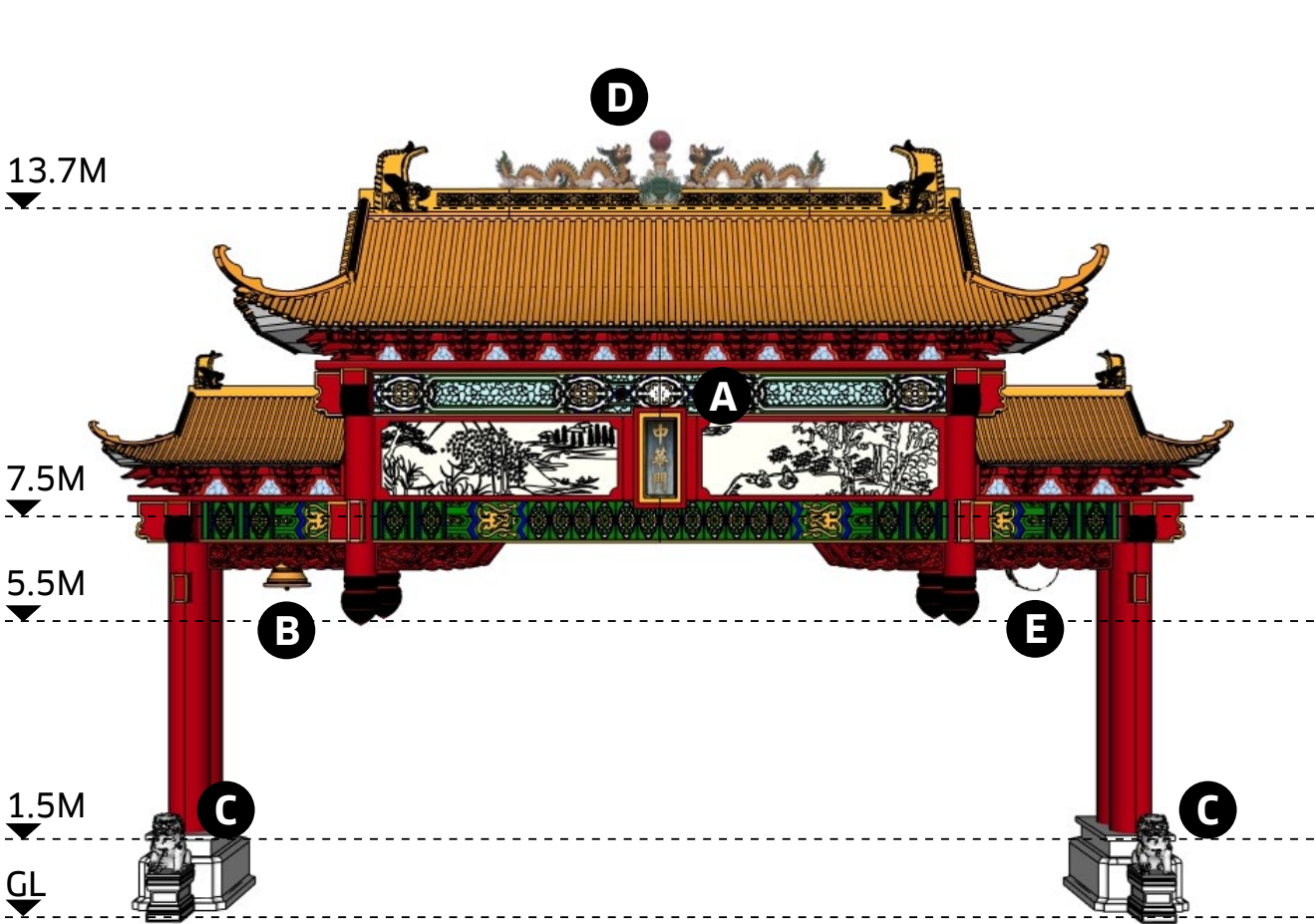
Design Progression

Design Gifted by City of Harbin



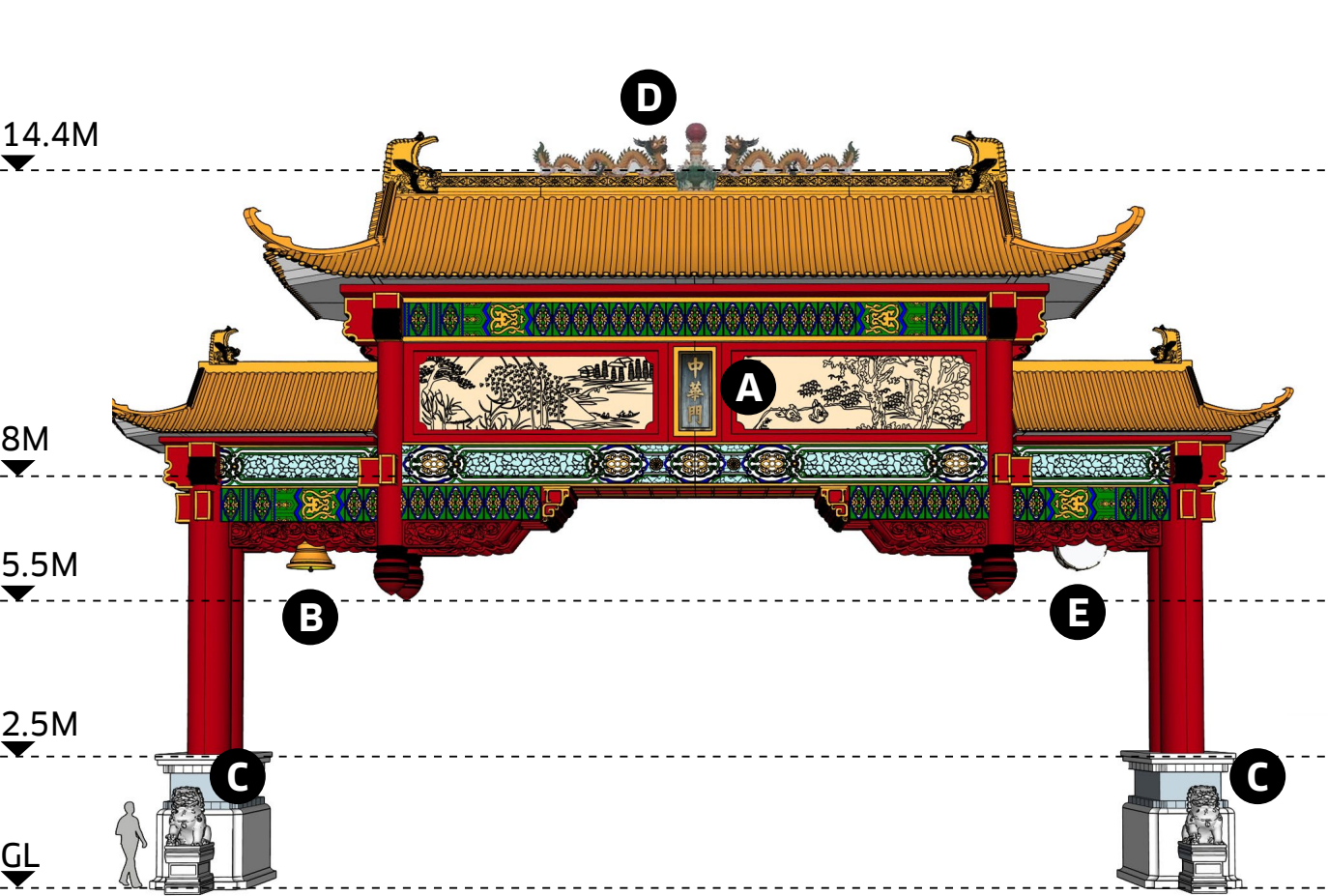
Following the deconstruction of the original Chinatown Gate in 2017, a new design was provided by the City of Harbin in collaboration with a Beijing based architecture firm as a gift to the City of Edmonton.

Design Development (Fall 2024)



The City of Harbin design was modified to incorporate elements from the original gate (see below), while factoring in budget, constructibility, Edmonton’s climate and providing a more human-scaled experience in response to the surrounding context.

Final Design (Summer 2025)



Further refinements included adding two more lions (four in total) and a row of tiles, increasing the height of the column plinths, and removing the duogong. Material modifications also occurred to ensure long-term durability in Edmonton’s climate.  
**March 2026 Update:** Following design reviews, the height of the column plinths will remain the same.

The final design incorporates guidance and feedback gathered from the local community and Harbin representatives throughout the design process.

Reused + Replicated Elements

Elements from the original gate such as the plaque and bell will be refurbished and incorporated into the new design to reflect the history of the Chinese community and to recognize the original gate’s importance to the residents of Edmonton in this neighbourhood and beyond. The plaque identifies the gateway as a place of confluence for Chinese culture in the city, while the lions mark the entrance to the neighbourhood.

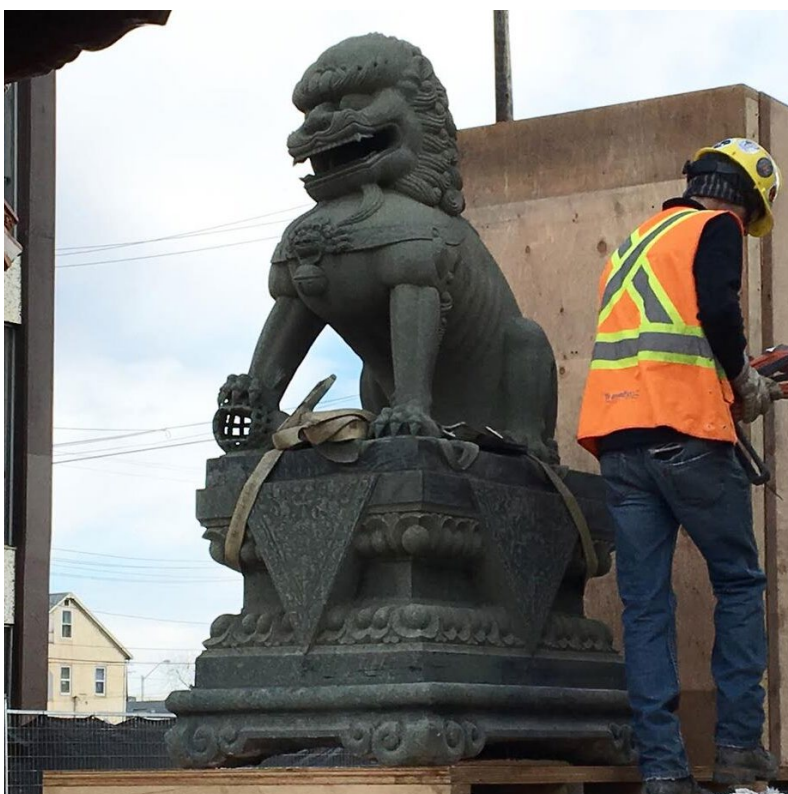
Elements from the original gate that are not available for reuse, including the dragon finial and drum, will be replicated and incorporated into the new design to pay homage to the old gate. Two new lions will be incorporated at the base of the gate facing south, one on each side.



A - “GATEWAY TO CHINATOWN” PLAQUE (REQUIRES REFINISHING)



B - CEREMONIAL BELL (REQUIRES REFINISHING)



C - STONE GUARDIAN LIONS (TWO NEW LIONS)



D - ROOF FINIAL (REPLICA)



E - DRUM (REPLICA)

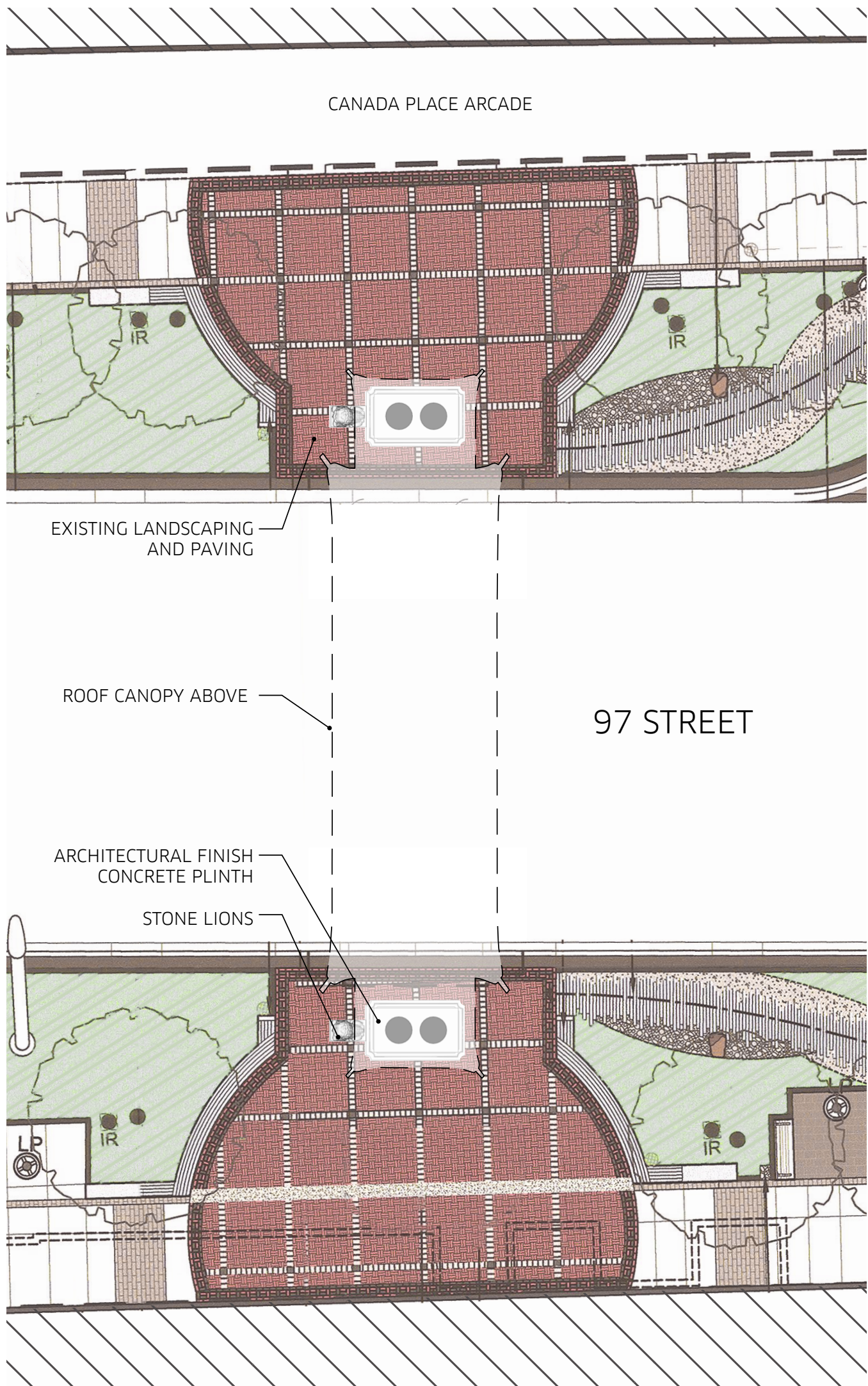




VIEW FROM OKISIKOW WAY LOOKING SOUTH ON 97 ST

The two-sided nature of the gate presents an opportunity for interpretations of Chinatown and Edmonton’s evolving history to be showcased on the north face. The south-facing facade and ornamentation will reference Edmonton’s sister city, Harbin. Other locations on the gate, including the columns and plinths, and surrounding urban realm can also allow for additional information, art, and interactions to be presented. A Call for Art is currently underway to procure art for the north-facing panels on the gate.

Gateway Plazas

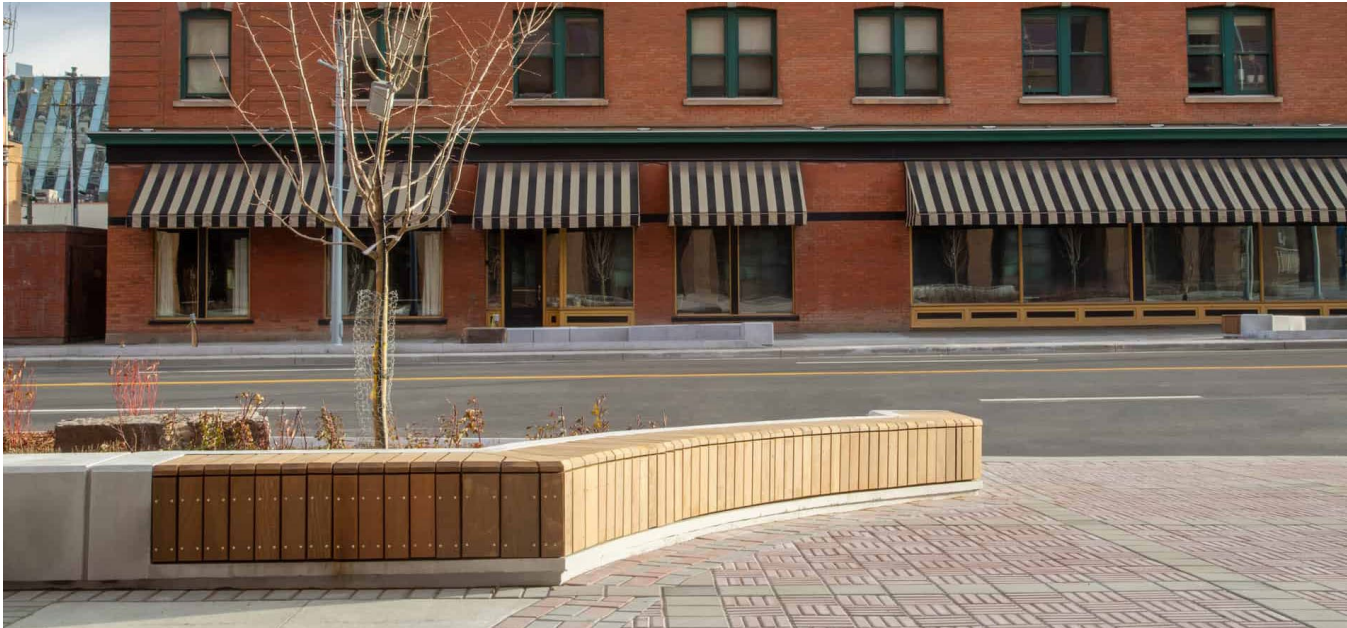


Paved plazas on either side of the gate welcomes pedestrians and ties the gate into the surrounding streetscape

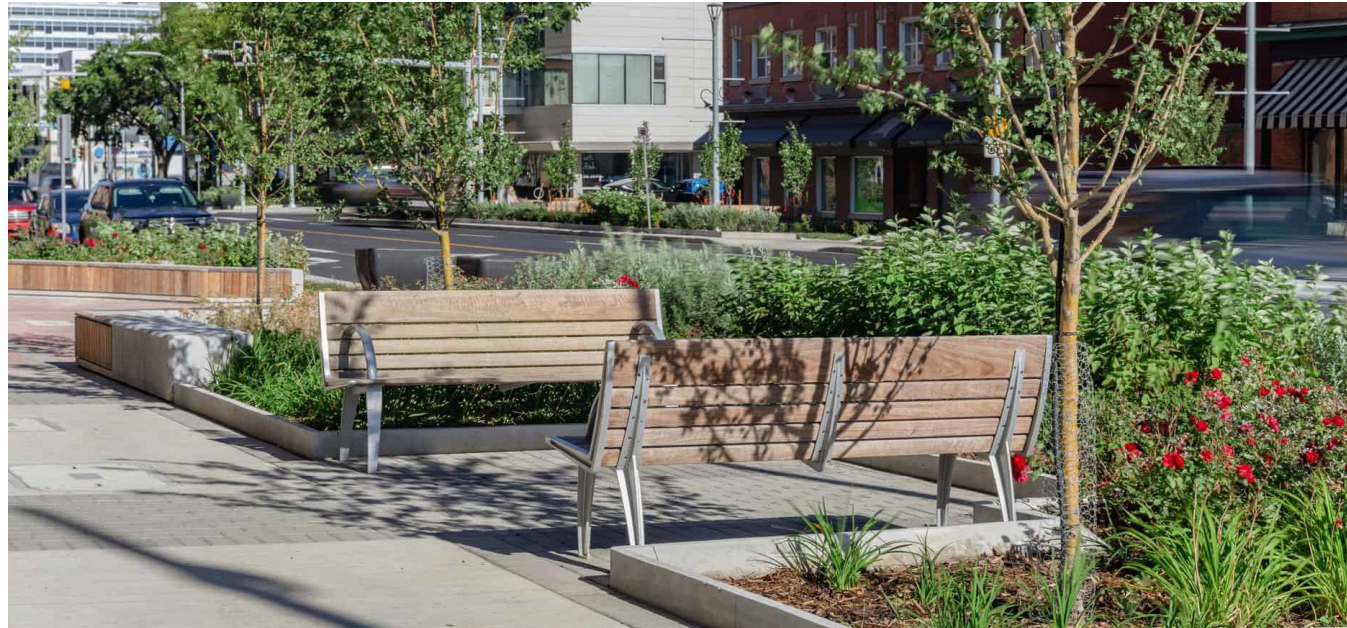
Completed Landscaping



Updated streetscape along 97 St.



Street furniture incorporated into plaza design



Rest areas incorporated into landscaping

Pedestrian Experience



The east and west plazas are part of the pedestrian gateway experience



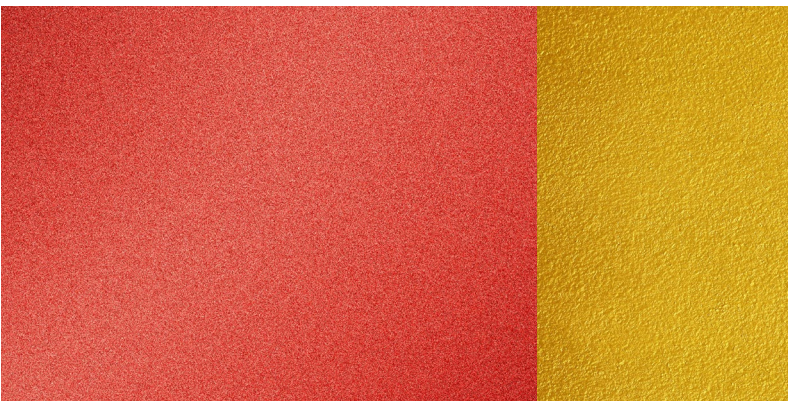
Potential public banners could be attached to the sides of the column

Materials

Materials have been selected for durability and ease of maintenance, as well as suitability for Edmonton’s climate.



1 - SAMPLE CLAY CERAMIC ROOFING TILE



2 - POLYURETHANE COATED STEEL



3 - ARCHITECTURAL FINISH CONCRETE



4 - HIGH DENSITY POLYSTYRENE DECORATIVE ELEMENTS



5 - HIGH DENSITY POLYSTYRENE DECORATIVE TILES