

Revitalising an overlooked garden at the heart of the community, transforming it into a safe, welcoming space for events, reflection and cultural celebration

Project Overview

Manchester's Chinatown – one of the most historic and culturally significant in Europe – had seen a steady decline in footfall, safety, and public perception.

During his time in a previous role, Andrew Edwards (V4 Services senior consultant since 2022) led the development of the LOVE CHINATOWN initiative: a cultural regeneration project focused on place activation, community pride, and safety.

This initiative exemplifies the impact that cultural events and place-based engagement can have on local economies, resident sentiment, town identity and cultural celebration

Place-based Cultural Project

The project revitalised an overlooked garden at the heart of the district, transforming it from a hotspot for antisocial behaviour into a safe, welcoming space for events, reflection, and cultural celebration.

It demonstrates how even the most challenged town centre spaces – affected by safety concerns or negative perception – can be transformed into vibrant, safe, and culturally resonant environments through place-based strategy, partnership working, and community reactivation.

Project Goals



To restore public confidence in Chinatown as a safe, vibrant space by addressing criminal activity, celebrating cultural identity, and building stronger connections between local businesses, residents, and visitors through:

- Enhancing community safety through environmental improvements.
- Improving perceptions of Chinatown as a clean, culturally rich area.
- Encouraging families, tourists, and residents back into public space.
- Strengthening partnerships between community leaders, the city council, and local organisations.

This project was delivered by V4 senior consultant, Andrew Edwards, while in a previous role at Your Housing Group (YHG).

It demonstrates the kind of work our team brings into current projects and forms part of the experience and capability now embedded within the V4 team.

Outline Scope

Public Realm & Safety Activation

- The central Chinatown garden had become an area of concern, with dense overgrowth being used to conceal stolen items, knives, and machetes - contributing to a climate of fear and deterring visitors.
- The project stripped back overgrown planting, redesigned the space with clear sightlines, and introduced cultural design elements such as a restored pagoda, pathways, lighting, and planting aligned with traditional aesthetics.
- Worked with Manchester City Council's community safety team and Greater Manchester Police to coordinate improvements.

Cultural Rebranding and Events

- Developed the LOVE CHINATOWN identity as a unifying brand for the area - used across banners, events, and business-facing materials.
- Reinvigorated the space as a venue for small cultural events, such as Lunar New Year activities, story trails, and market pop-ups.

Business and Stakeholder Engagement

- Re-engaged local business owners (many of whom were initially disengaged) and facilitated partnerships between traders, the council, and cultural organisations.
- Supported grant applications for long-term maintenance and event programming.

Programme Impact and Legacy



- Crime and antisocial behaviour in the garden decreased significantly, supported by police data and resident feedback.
- The garden shifted from a no-go zone to a tranquil, used space, supporting public confidence and a more family-friendly environment.
- Cultural events began returning to Chinatown, with improved footfall and visibility for local businesses.

The LOVE CHINATOWN brand was adopted more widely, including by schools and community partners.

