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**SRI JAYAWARDENEPURA;
ENHANCING THE LANDSCAPE OF AN HISTORIC CAPITAL.**

A Dissertation

**Submitted to the Department of Architecture of the
University of Moratuwa in partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of**

Master of Science



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This is to declare that dissertation Presented to the
University of Moratuwa for the Master of Science degree in
Landscape Design has been written by me.

.....
H.A.P.S. Gunasekara.



To my Teacher,
Mrs. Shirani Balasuriya



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ABSTRACT

The subject of this dissertation concerns the landscape environment within the capital of Sri Jayawardenepura.

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(A verse from salalihini sandesaya)

"Remarkable friend! Know then the royal city Jyawardanepura, where reside pre-eminent men devoted and full of affection for the Triple Gem and which corners the heavenly city with boundless eternal prosperity and named Jayawardenepura, earned by manifold victories."

Sri Jayawardanapura city has a significant place among the eight capitals of Sri Lanka. It had been a capital for about 150 years and also the place where the last king who ruled the entire country had his seat. The natural geological surrounding in the vicinity of the city was utilized to the maximum capacity, to transform it into a fortress city surrounded by water. The city was originally built by prince Alakeswara during the reign of king Wickramabahu iii (1351-1374) who ruled from Gampola. But king Parakramabahu vi is the ruler who contributed greatly to the city of Kotte being capital of Sri Lanka and where he had his seat.

Unfortunately there is little visible surviving from of this period's landscape and architecture, owing to the fact that the Portuguese seiged destroyed and abandoned in. But the Kotte period is often referred to as the golden era in the Sri Lankan history because it had highly developed socio-economic and cultural standards.

When studying about the Kotte era its literary achievements must be given recognition. Literary success was attained largely due to the efforts of Rev. Totagamuwa Sri Rahula and Rev. Veedagama Maithri,. Gira, Mayura, Selalihini, Parevi, Kouvl, Hansa Sandesa are some of the books containing verses which were published. All these speak of the landscape design of the historic capital.

The importance of this study is multiplied by the fact that Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte has once again being declared as the administrative capital of Sri Lanka, since 1983. No doubt, the decision may have been influenced by the fact that it once was also an administrative capital and by being so again the government wished to trade on the idea of going back to its former glory. Therefore it will be prudent for landscape designers, architects and other controlling bodies to evolve a scheme in which it will enable them not to destroy the concept on which Kotte

was built, or important characteristics and features it has cherished. The center of administrative power, the parliament was built in the middle of the Diyawanna Oya after excavating more than 300 acres of the water body. New road net works were built to facilitate rapid commercial and industrial growth. Hence the whole area of Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte is being developed in order to meet the challenge of being the capital with the status of a newly industrial country status in the 21st century. Therefore, it has become an important task to investigate the historical city and the kingdom as a whole in order to understand the influences it had in development to meet the 21st century needs.

This dissertation is thus directed to collecting data and information about the evolution of the city landscape, and analyzing it with the aim of using it in the future.

Chapter one of the dissertation concerns the historic background of Kotte kingdom. The period covered by this study will be from 1800 to 1950 (150 years of historical development). Chapter two will be the main chapter of this study. In this chapter landscape design and architecture of the Kotte kingdom will be studied in detail. Landscape design, architecture and the existing remains will be described in detail. The third chapter concentrates on the detail of the present capital of Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte and its landscape design.

The final part introduces philosophies, proposals and guidelines to enhance the aesthetics in landscaping the capital of Sri Jayawardenepura. It considers in what way modern designs should affect the present appearance of the town; what kind of open space improvements should be included in a master plan for coping with the city's future expansion; and what control measures should be introduced in order to conserve the historic landscape character of Sri Jayawardenepura yet allowing it to grow.

"What is it about historic centers and towns that attract us? What qualities do they have that make us want to walk along their streets and linger in their spaces?"

Historic centers present past _____
Possessing buildings, moments, lanes and parks that resonate with memory and tradition.

The scale of their elements is inviting and walking through them, one can discover history in the smallest details. They give us a vision of another time. The past as embodied in the architectural heritage provides the sort of environment indispensable for a balanced and complete life. It is "a capital of irreplaceable, spiritual, cultural, social and economic value."

European character of the Architectural Heritage.