IDENTITY OF PLACE:
AN EXAMINATION ON CAPTURING THE IDENTITY OF
PLACE AND RESPONDING TO IT THROUGH ARCHITECTURE

A Dissertation

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by

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university or to any other institution fro a degree, diploma or other qualification.

UOM Verified Signature

Signed:.

(H.G.B. Senanka)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PREFACE

What is expected from the M.Sc. dissertation is for students to present an argument and then rationalise it by analytical thinking that is also backed by adequate research. The area of study is selected as one of importance to both the student and to the profession or the university for academic purposes.

Within this study the term place is used for the phenomena of place that is defined by many architects and academics as the basis for meaningful human habitation. Even within the place it can be identified from the personal room to house, to neighbourhoods, and cities or even one country as a distinct place. but this dissertation is considering the place in term of a place where a distinct character, and a unique that can be found. The case studies were selected to emphasise this boundaries of the place define by this dissertation. A city can hold several these kind of places.

But to study a response to a natural place a case study was selected that has responded to the natural setting of the place.
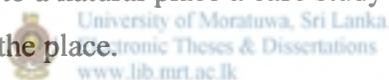
The response to the identity of place must address issue of capturing the identity of e place and for this an existing mechanism was selected as to capture the image this was illustrated in the part I of the chapter three together with the architectural response thus resulting in the framework for case studies.

The case studies were done based on this structure in two ways; from one point of view the place was analysed according to the analysis and capturing of the image of the place giving the place its identity. at this point all the identities are that are important are considered.. But the individualisation by verbalising and abstracting was not done in extent, from other point of view building was analysed as to how well the captured identity was reflected by the built-form. And the fusion of the two point of views will determine the success of the building.

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CHAPTER THREE- CAPTURING THE IDENTITY OF PLACE AND RESPOND TO IT THROUGH ARCHITECTURE

Abstract

The place is what makes the human habitation meaningful. One's attachment to a place will provide the basis for identification to an existential foot hold in the community.

The space is a prime considerater of architecture that gives the existential roots for people. There are different aspects and functions of spaces that can be categorised as unselfconscious and pragmatic space of the primitives, the self consciously experienced perceptual space of individual, the built space of architecture, and the abstract space of geometry.

The concept of "existential" or "lived space" is particularly important in this sense, for it seems specially relevant to phenomenological understanding of place. The place is created in concretising the existential space. This holds a strong relationship between the place and the space.

"in general it seems that space provides the context for places but derives its meaning from particular places" (Relph,e, E. 1976, p.2)
"A place is a space which has distinct character" (Norberg-Schulz, C, 1980, p.5)

The place is understood based on many concepts that involves place; sense of place, spirit of place, character of place and identity of place where each of these concept is different yet are interrelated to each other. The identity of place pour out the essence of understanding the place in order to respond to place through architecture.

It is the identity of place that helps to distinguish a place as a unique entity with it own inherent attributes. Identity of place constitute of the static physical setting, observable activities and the meaning depicting the interrelation of the above two. It is the meaning that holds in minds of the people within the field of their position of inside or outside that help in understanding the identity of place. the image of the place, whether consensus, mass, individual or community will cast different identities that exists within a place. any architectural intervention in a place can be executed to reduce, change or to respond to the existing identity of place.

If one were to respond to the identity of place first the identity of place must be captured. Capturing the identity of place can be done in an analytical way concluded in several steps starting from recording and analysing the existing situation, verbalising the identity and then abstracting it. The recording and analysing the existing place can be set down as a series of steps with an intellectual backing whereas the verbalising and the abstracting is determined by the ability and biases of the designer.

The captured identity is reflected through the built form in means of its expressions using appropriate scales, proportions, colours, textures, lighting conditions and maintaining the correct inside outside relationship. Architecture that respond to the identity of place is perceived as part of the place that does not destruct its inherent uniqueness but rather enhancing and giving sense of continuation.