

**AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF URBAN SPACE BETWEEN  
FABRIC AND STREET  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MAIN STREET OF  
COLOMBO**

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University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka  
A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE OF THE  
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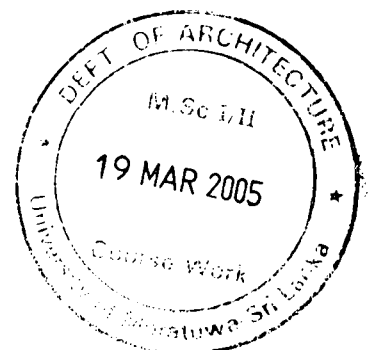
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BY  
**P.D.W. LIYANARACHCHI**  
19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2005



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## DECLARATION

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I hereby declare that this dissertation represent 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 for a degree, diploma or other qualification



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daru' with a flourish underneath.

P.D.W. Liyanarachchi

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## ABSTRACT

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Creating a style is a complex work of art. It requires the merging of many criteria both functional and symbolic. Requirements in modern days make the city even more complex.

City is an expression of essence of the people who built it and who live in it. Therefore, every city has unique characteristics of its own.

In the urban city, street is the most prominent feature. Identity of the street is given by its built fabric and the social activities. The role of the built fabric varies from city to city depending on its' arrangement, detail and design.


City is not only an arrangement of buildings to form one entity. It also encapsulate activity pattern of its uses. Therefore, city should express and reflect the socio-cultural background of its' society.

Whilst designing urban streetscape, a proper design concept in the street architecture is essential since, the quality and the architectural language of the design depend on these concepts.

Architectural language should fit into to its physical context. An architectural product which blends in with its context will achieve a rhythm. This rhythm will be a three dimensional experience to the viewer, who walk through it. Rhythm of a street can be defined as its function, composition of its built fabric and form of its space. Unless the designer clearly understands and identified this rhythm, he or she cannot add any built element to the context which blends with it.

This study will endeavour to provide guidelines for the designers to identify the rhythm of the street, characteristics of urban fabric and there co relationship with the social activities. The author sincerely hope that this study will be useful in its' own modest way, to find architectural solutions for the present and future needs.

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# INTRODUCTION

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## 01. Topic Explanation

In most of open spaces there is no relationship between the design and the social activities. In general practice designers fail to design an architecture responding to physical, Social and economical needs of human being.

In a city the most dominant and well identified spaces should be the public space. The characteristic elements of the city space shape the physical environment of the city. Similarly it also shapes the social life of the individuals of the city and less has an impact on people's attitudes, values and cohesiveness.

The combination of deferent elements such as buildings, town squares, path ways, open spaces, and series of these elements which are connected by the street make the physical environment of the city. These elements and spaces are to be organized in a certain manner and order for it to become a good city.



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Streets also have there own architectural characters, even within the same region or town. This character is change from place to place with the architectural context, historical background and also the behavior patterns of the user.

The street can be taken as the key elements of the city composition. The organizing the context it is compulsory to have street entrance, exit points, junctions also the built fabric either side and solids sidewalks, passages, arcades and open spaces between them are needed. The manner of composition and combination of solids and voids and all these elements make the specific character of the street and control the behavior pattern of the user.

“A good building is one which client can't destroy by wrong use of space”

*Ref.*

The quotation says that to design for the people one must understand people's needs and how design can touch their lives. Therefore the physical environment plays a big role in the society. It is essential the designer to understands how the physical environment act and react to the people.

When the combination of different elements such as buildings town squares, pathways, open spaces are not in a proper manner or order the physical environment of the city becomes obstructive this is so called architectural pollution.

Architectural pollution may cause bad impact on uses of the streets as well as the city character. This may be either physical or psychological pollution.

## **0.2 Intention of the study**

“Today’s city is the most vulnerable social structure ever conceived by man (Oppenheimer M, urban Guerilla). Men’s decision to changing his environment, considerably affect the urban space. As a result urban space may become a complex arrangement of spaces. The essence of the urban space is its user, their expressions, activities and related development. Both social activities and spaces are the process and product of human habitation.

Shopping, waiting, walking etc... are more or less compulsory activities in an urban area. In other words all activities in which those involved are to a greater or lesser degree required participation. These activities are necessary; they are influenced only by the physical framework.

Physically a city consists of buildings but decisive to its character is the relationship of these buildings to each other and most important the space; between them.

Street acts as the key element of visual manifestation of man him self as an individual an as well as a communal being. Maintaining harmony of a street is therefore important to overcome it being ugly and misfit for the user, and also study the architectural pollution in urban context affected to the character of the streetscape.

### **3.0 Important of the study**

The street in today's context plays an important role in every human being. Each and everyone fall in to the various categories of street user. So every human being experiences the street in their daily life. People move from one place to another or from one activity to another through a series of spaces along the street. The street is the built fabric, an architecture that is directly involved with the activities of the user. Therefore the development and design of the street become an important part that has to be considered for the betterment of the inhabitance.

### **4.0 Scope and limitation**

The street is considered the main element of the city or town. A city or town is basically experienced through the street. The city form is manifested on the composition of various elements form the streetscape.

A streetscape is a composition of the urban solids and voids. The correct composition of solid and voids make a rhythm to the street, thus giving uniqueness to the particular street. So characters of the each street vary from one another. So the scope of the study limited to the study of the use of urban spaces between street and fabric at micro level concentrate to the main street Colombo. Comparison of few streets in similar context will be used to identify the factors that course architectural pollution.

### **5.0 Method of study**

The study is based on the observation of the study area comparing with other cities and application of urban design concepts developed in the west to east.

Historical background of the urban cities of the world will be studied in order to understand the concepts and formation pattern

An urban streetscape formed with combination of elements and activities an as a social phenomenon and the three dimensional space. The physical component which is deal by the designers the built fabric that includes the built element, form and space etc... are to be examined in the comprehensively.

The manifestation of social and physical background related to the human activities and responsiveness of man – environment relationship in the particular area will be examined as a high dense commercial street.

The architectural pollution effected to the character of the streetscape will be examined with the ground situation of the study area through the photographic survey, observations, and sketches and with the literature review.



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