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**A SEARCH FOR AN INDIGENOUS  
APPROACH TO  
DESIGNING URBAN PUBLIC SPACES**



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A Dissertation presented to the

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE

UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA

SRI LANKA

for M.Sc (Architecture) Examination

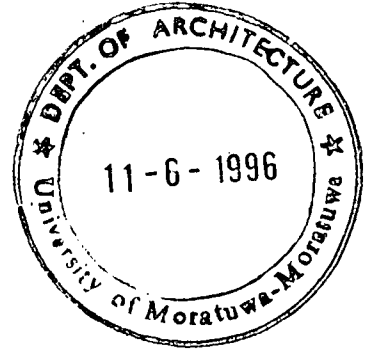
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May 1996



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## **Introduction**

## **Topic Explanation**

Space constantly encompasses our being. Through its volume we move, orientate ourselves to objects in space. We feel the air, hear sounds and see objects in space. Yet space is inherently formless. However as space begins to be captured, enclosed, molded, organized and experienced, architecture comes into being.

Architecture is the art of space making. Making of space to contain the activities of man and man experiences these spaces. Experiences and evokes emotions such as sadness, joy, pride, anger and many more within himself. Such experiences are meaningful to man, helps him to connect himself with the space. Such meaningful connections gained through experience helps man to dwell on earth.

Architecture, therefore provides meaningful experiences through which it establishes an existential foothold to man. Provides an existential foothold to man through meaningful connections which arouse a sense of belongingness in people towards such spaces.

This dissertation is founded on the basis that such spatial quality that evokes the sense of belongingness is an important criteria in producing architecture in especially urban public spaces. As man's environment around him is heading towards being entirely urban. These urban environments are to be the home for a numerous number of people, the urban dwellers. The urban dweller spends a good quantity and quality of time of his day out doors, working, travelling eating and relaxing. A good amount of time is spent in urban public spaces such as streets, parks, playgrounds and markets. Urban public spaces are dynamic spaces where the communal life unfolds. Spaces which are accessible to all. Spaces that help man to identify himself with in the urban environment. Thereby full filling a basic need for belong-



ing and this providing an existential foot hold space in the ever changing urban environment. Therefore creation of urban public spaces with the spacial quality that evokes the sense of belongingness becomes utmost important.

In this context the study, explores the concept of developing an approach to design urban public spaces, with an environmental quality of belongingness. Which eventually led to the search for an indigenous approach to designing urban public spaces.

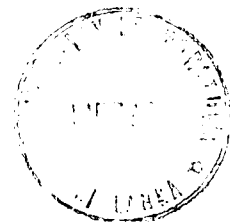
An indigenous approach is an approach that creates a sense of belongingness naturally to the users of urban public spaces. Belongingness naturally in all senses, spatially, contextually, culturally, socially and politically.

Initially the concept of developing such an approach is explored and then by analyzing contemporary urban public spaces creation of such spatial quality is examined.



### **The Need for the Study**

Across the globe, urban centers, the towns and cities of the world are growing very rapidly. In most Third World countries the annual population growth rate is somewhere between 2-3%, but the town and cities are increasing at more than double this speed. This rapid urbanization has created urban centers which stand testimony to modernization, cultural progress and industrial vitality. However urbanization has also created another facet to these centers. Facet which is opposite, densely built, over crowded polluted centers with moral decay and danger. This haphazard, unplanned development has also encroached on the public spaces of the urban dweller. Spaces occupied by the individual buildings against the public spaces are greater. Thus the public spaces are ever decreasing both in the size as well as publicness.



These changes in the public space have obvious and well articulated implications on the urban dweller. The urbanization process not only has deprived the inhabitants of urban public spaces for interaction and other socio cultural activities but also has brought about crime, psychological disorder, ill health and unhappiness.

In such growing complexities of the urban environment architecture has been misinterpreted and underestimated, It has been reduced to the mere utilitarian, economic and aesthetic value. Its capabilities have been neglected. Many illusive and inappropriate values have been added to architecture and urban design. Thus reducing its meaningful depth to mere illusion. Thereby creating spaces without meaning and connections. Such spaces alienate man. These spaces have alienated man hence the lose of the sense of belongingness. Thus making the urban dweller feel rootless, a zombie.



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In Sri Lanka too a similar situation has begun to emerge. The reasons are numerous but the most appropriate reason for this chaotic situation is that some architects have over looked the essence of architecture as a source of providing an existential foot hold to man. This may be due to the lack of understanding and knowledge about the local culture, context, society that help the architects to evolve meanings and connections that create spaces which evolve the sense of belongingness. These are evident from the urban public spaces created by professionals trained in the west and who apply western models with inappropriate values to the local situations.

Some feed back from the recently initiated Gampaha District Integrated Urban Development Programme shows that architects have evolved concepts form the west and applied them directly. This may be due to lack of knowledge and understanding from the local point of view. These are only few studies which attempt to



examine the public urban spaces from an indigenous point of view.

Therefore it is important to examine the urban public spaces and evolve an appropriate approach to designing of urban public spaces that evoke the sense of belongingness.

### **Aims of the Study**

Contemporary urban public spaces in most instances, have become disorderly, mis-managed and lack the sense of place and identity. Hence they also lack the sense of belongingness to the urban dweller.

The current approach of designing urban public spaces are as isolated sites in the larger urban fabric. Decisions about the creations of spaces are made without considering the relationships between places and the people, people and the people. Therefore what emerges in most environments today is unshaped, anti spaces as urban public spaces.



In this context, the main aim of this study is to provide a directional thought through which a more meaningful environment in terms of their concern for people and place could be achieved. The study, therefore focuses on an indigenous approach as a solution for designing urban public spaces with meaningful connections. Connections that create the sense of belongingness.

The expected out come of this study would be a set of propositions which would enable designers to design great positive urban public spaces which will evolve and endure, well loved by the people in its reach, adding joy and meaning to their lives.

Since urban cities of Sri lanka are to be larger and denser with growing population, it is these well developed, designated urban public spaces that would enhance their lives.



## **Methodology of study**

The methodology will lay the ground work for the aims the author hopes to achieve. In order to provide a directional thought to create a more meaningful environment it is important to begin with an understanding of urban public spaces.

Hence the first part of this study reviews urban public spaces. It defines, examines the manifestation, types and significance of urban public spaces in today's urban society. Then goes on to look at the contemporary urban public spaces from a critical point of view. This scrutinized look into these spaces enable designers to identify the positive and negative factors which help to create meaningful urban spaces. This part of the study is based on literature reviews, observations and informal discussions with the users of these urban public spaces.

In order to formulate the indigenous approach the research leads to the review of urban design approaches in the part two of the study. Chapter two reviews four urban design approaches. They are not in themselves precise or internally consistent theories but are inclinations or directions. By conceiving them in this way we can accommodate the ideas and hopes of a range of individuals in several countries over a number of decades - their values, visions and means of tackling urban problems. In trying to understand these approaches the following key points are pondered :

1. The visions, ideas and means of tackling the urban problems ? or what is their attitude towards urban spaces and cities ?
2. The attitude towards the people, place and the past ?
3. The typical criticism towards these approaches ?



The third part of the study is an attempt towards formulating an indigenous approach. In order to establish the approach theoretical ideologies are based on

available literature. This will be further confirmed by analysis of existing urban public spaces. Selected case studies are analysed in Chapter four.

Propositions are suggested since arrival at conclusions for design itself would be an extensive study which would not be able to incorporate in this study.

### **Scope and Limitations**

The scope of this dissertation is to study the contemporary urban public spaces and provide a thought to design meaningful spaces. Spaces with the sense of belongingness. Creating spaces with a special spatial quality. Thus a study of this nature can be extensive in its capacity being based on a qualitative aspect. Therefore the degree to which the subject matter is explored had to be limited.



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The indigenous approach is best understood by a theoretical background and description. Yet, it cannot be a fully fledged approach unless it was made understood by relevance and application in practical realistic terms. Therefore the theoretical background in which the notion was based upon had to be minimally yet sufficiently exposed in the study. Within the study especially in the case studies, the breath of the study had to be limited. As the contemporary urban context in Sri Lanka is wide, varied and the level of complexity of urbanity differs certain limitations had to be made with regard to the specific purpose of the study. Therefore the spaces discussed should not be considered as only spaces available or of relevance.

The study was based on available literature such as books, periodicals which posed a limitation and the ideas produced are also derived from lots of informal discussions with academic and architects.



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## **Chapter One**

### **REVIEW ON URBAN PUBLIC SPACES**

*"We have reached a stage in the development of our technology where we have the power to create the environment we need or to destroy it beyond repairs, according to the use we make of our power. This forces us to control this power. To do this we must first of all decide what we want to achieve. And this is far from easy ..... How do you want to live ?"*

- Sir Ove Arup.

Do you want to live in urban centers with public spaces littered, piled with rotting rubbish, walls covered in graffiti, air polluted, congested and chocked by traffic. Centers with mediocre and ugly poorly maintained buildings. Centres with dull and soulless residential suburbs. Inner areas displayed with bleak, decaying flats and buildings. With urban public spaces where even man dares to venture ? Do you want to live in environments designed for the benefit of the moving vehicle and property developers ? ( Fig. 1 ) Do you want to live in soulless spaces ?

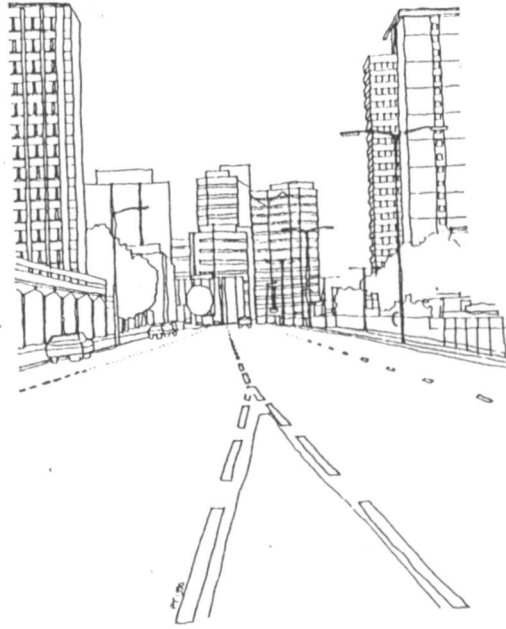
Or do you want to live in lively places? ( Fig. 2 ) Spaces which are clean, tidy, exiting friendly and attractive. spaces that make you feel that you are there. Centres with public spaces with the sense of belongingness?

You, me, everyone would opt for the latter, friendly exiting urban environments with urban public spaces with the sense of belongingness?

How do we create urban public spaces with such environments? In order to create we must understand and define these spaces.

### **1.J Definition of urban public spaces**

The space for people on earth to live is increasingly becoming urban. Until the turn



(Fig. 1 ) Do you want to live here ?  
A city designed for vechiles.  
( Source -  
Making people friendly towns )



(Fig. 2 ) Or do you want to live here ?  
A friendly lively city.  
( Source -  
Making people friendly towns )

of this century people have been largely living in rural spaces. However lately with the urbanization and migration they would be urban people living in urban cities.

Urban cities are where people live, work and enjoy themselves in a social and cultural relationships which are varying and dynamic. These dynamic and varying relationships take place in equally dynamic and varying urban spaces. Spaces which are so diverse, with people from all walks of life participating in various activities that to define it in a word or two is practically impossible.

However various urban designers throughout the history of urban design have defined urban spaces.

Krier defines urban public spaces as openly as he can as "comprising all types of space between buildings in towns and their localities." (Krier, 19; p25) And Kokuleraj (1991, p12) says urban spaces "are the spaces in the city which form activity nodes, where the city dweller can move freely and use these spaces for communication, social interaction and other urban activities." Then goes on to classify them into three types depending on the levels of interaction among people. Classifies them as urban public spaces, semi private and private spaces.

Urban public spaces are those spaces which the drama of communal life unfolds. "Spaces which permit public events and activities that keep happening in the city". (Branz, 1970; p20). Carr defined urban public spaces as "as common grounds where people carry out functional and ritual activities that binds a community whether in the normal routines of daily lives or in periodic festivities".

For the purpose of this study urban public spaces are defined as spaces as open, publicly accessible, dynamic spaces which allow free movement and interaction

among it's users. Spaces where people go for individual and group activities. Such urban public spaces range from simple spaces such as communal residential spaces to complex regional plazas and parks. They could form positive or negative spaces in the city. Positive spaces as beautiful happy, social spaces for individual and group, family activities to take place. Negative spaces as ugly, an kept, anti social spaces for anti social individual and group activities could take place.

While urban public spaces take many forms and be negative or positive spaces in urban cities how are they manifest ?

## **1.2 Manifestation of Urban Public spaces**

Throughout history urban public spaces have arisen, lived and many have died and disappeared. Some deaths were the consequence of the creeping, encroachment of people filling up spaces especially in the urban areas. Some due to new trends emerging and the old one's dying. Due to the emergence of new trends and interest saw the birth of new public spaces.

However as much as they appear and disappear urban public spaces are manifested by two different processes.

- (a) Unplanned development
- (b) Planned development

### **1.2.1 Unplanned development**

Some urban public spaces are created naturally. Naturally in an adhoc way without deliberate planning.

This natural way of development could occur.



- (a) through appropriation - Some steps in front of a private building or a shop could be used as a public space. (Fig. 3 )
- (b) by repeated use - Private Lanes and passages used through time become places for children to play over generations. (Fig. 4 )
- (c) by connecting people because of an attraction - The recent appearance of the face of Lord Jesus Christ in the ware house wall in Argentina has transformed the private space into an urban public space.

### 1.2.2 Planned Development

These developments have different origins when compared to the evolved sites. Although functionally both planned and natural may be similar these planned spaces frequently emerge from offices of architects, urban designers and city planners. They result in two ways.



- (a) through deliberate planning. These are planned urban public spaces that are designed when laying out a city or town, or for visual and image enhancement to a city or due to the need for such a space. ( Fig. 5 )
- (b) accidental - Urban public spaces are also formed by results of unplanned placement of buildings or by left over set back spaces due to planning ordinance. (Fig. 6)

Although both these types of urban public spaces manifested naturally or planned may have similar functions the naturally developed spaces are at an advantage point. They are evolved spaces through time and are user familiar spaces that harmonize with nature. Although they may look disorganized they form treasured spaces in peoples lives.

Yet planned spaces through time may become such treasured spaces. But initially these planned spaces are imposed on the environment bringing in a organized space



(Fig. 3 ) Through appropriation  
a semi private space  
could become an urban  
public space.



(Fig. 4 ) Through repeated use  
an urban public space  
could be manifested.  
A private road becomes  
a public space.  
( Source - Japanese  
style )





(Fig. 5 ) Through design.



(Fig. 6 ) Accidental manifestation.

into a natural environment. Thus creating a shock. However with careful planning, observation and user participation and with time and use such planned spaces can become meaningful public spaces with a sense of belonging.

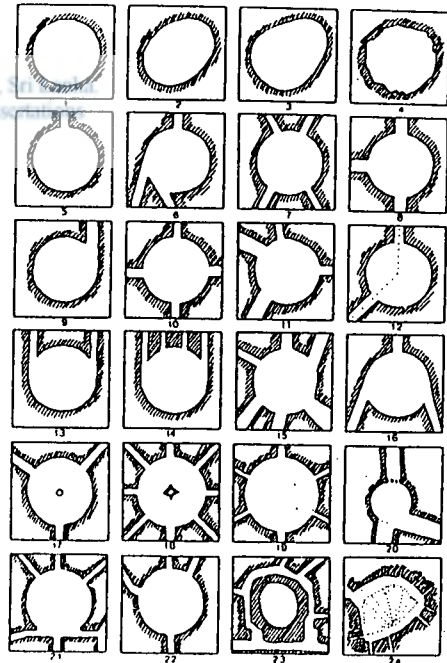
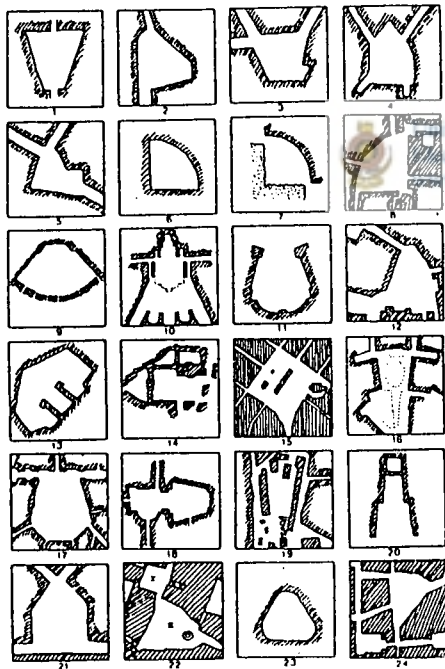
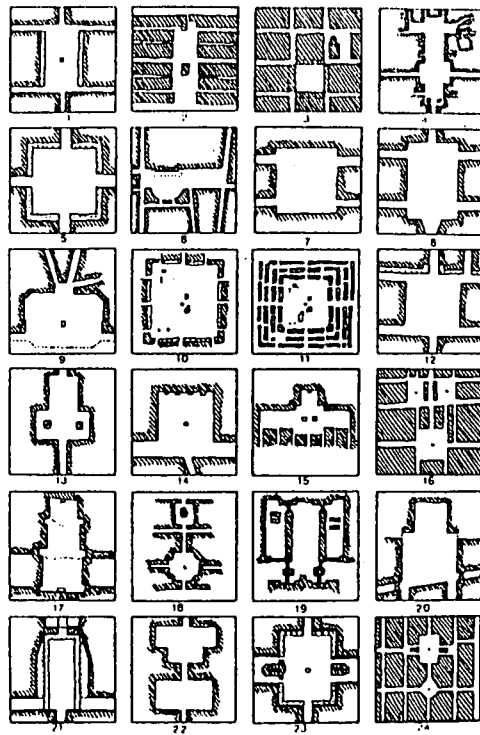
### 1.3 Typology

These planned and unplanned urban public spaces have evolved through time and have given the wide variety of overlapping types of urban public spaces that exist today. Designers throughout the world are coming up with new creative ideas, through examining the traditional urban public spaces. They have examined, clarified and classified them in numerous ways.

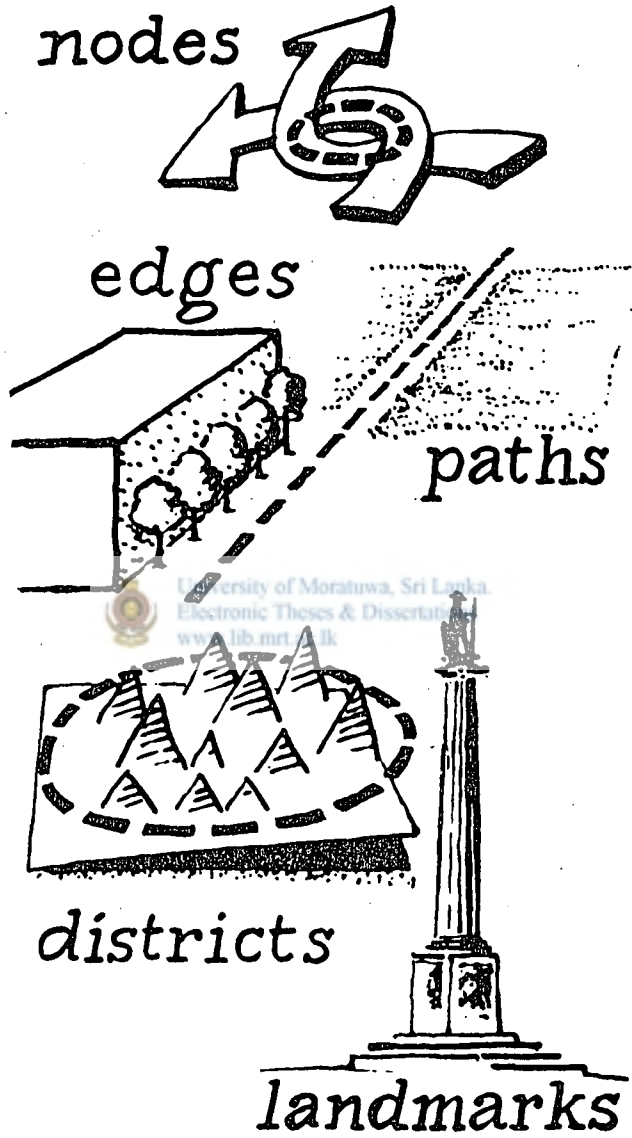
Rob Krier has formulated a typology of urban public spaces, their spatial form and formulates three main geometrical patterns they all fall into. He typifies urban public spaces as squares, triangles and circle. (Fig. 7 ) However Lynch (1960) classified urban public spaces by taking into account the images of a city. Lynch argues that images are necessary for an individual to orient himself in his environment and goes on to classify urban public spaces of the city as paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. (Fig. 8 )

Classification of urban public spaces have been also carried out in the tropical countries. Kokularaj (1991) has based his classification on use of such spaces. He classified them into arcades, side walks, passages, country yards and open spaces.

Researcher Rajapkse (1994) has based her classification on activity (function) and form. The researcher says "spaces do not have a function or a form by itself. They are inter related and link between them is man". Thus quotes "Every creation is a result of human decision included by specific needs. These needs are never constant for long. In fact, their structure is clearly dynamic. The needs are manifested



(Fig. 7 ) Urban public space as squares, triangles & circles.  
( Source - Urban spaces )



(Fig. 8 ) As paths, edges, districts, nodes & landmarks.  
( Source - Responsive environment )

through the activity. Hence certain spaces function through their forms which in turn are shaped by the forces generated by human needs". And goes on to say spaces do not have a function or a form by itself but are inter related and linked by man, man's activity. She goes on to classify urban public spaces in Sri Lanka into three major activity oriented types.

1. Recreation oriented urban public spaces
2. Commercial Oriented urban public spaces
3. Transport oriented urban public spaces

However this researcher has omitted to consider two major types of urban public spaces, that are formed through urban activities.

1. Residential oriented urban public spaces
2. Religious oriented urban public spaces



Therefore urban public spaces are classified into five major activity oriented spaces.

### **1.3.1 Recreational oriented urban public spaces**

These are spaces in which the urban dweller could engage in active or passive activities through which one can refresh or entertain one's self. This can be further sub categorised into :

1. Open public spaces along water ways

These are public spaces located along waterways such as sea fronts, canals, lake fronts, river fronts etc.

(Fig. 9a, 9b ) These increases public access to water front areas and now they are



(Fig. 9a ) Canal development.  
An Urban public space  
by the water body.



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(Fig. 9b ) Sea Front



developed to form water front parks or promenades.

## 2. Parks

Parks are planned and designed to create an environment conducive for relaxation and pleasure. They are subcategorized into.

### a) Central Park

These are publicly developed and managed open spaces which given an identity to a place. Hence plays an important part in the image of the city and often located near the central of the city.

*eg.* Viharamahadevi Park Colombo. ( Fig 10 )

### b) Neighborhood parks

Open spaces developed in residential environment include playgrounds, sports facilities etc. ( Fig. 11 ) These can be publicly developed and managed or privately developed and managed as in private residential and commercial developments.

### c) Commons

These are large green areas with traditional or historical significance. Used for festive or leisure activities. (Fig. 12 )

## 3. Memorial or Monumental spaces

Public spaces that are in memory of people or event of local and national importance. (Fig. 13 ) These spaces provide a connection for people to the history. They are symbolic spaces but people do congregate in such spaces for relaxation.



(Fig. 10 ) Central park  
Viharamahadevi park  
Colombo.



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(Fig. 11 ) Neighborhood park.  
Small & intimate



(Fig. 12 ) Commons- Galle face green, Colombo.



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(Fig. 13 ) Memorial space  
A space used  
for gathering  
during certain  
times of the  
year & by visitors.



### 1.3.2 Commercial oriented urban public spaces

These are spaces primarily for exchange of merchandises. This can be further subdivided into :

a) Market street

Commercial activities taking a linear development along the street or any other transport route. (Fig. 14 )

b) Market squares

An open space defined by man made boundaries where commercial activities take place could be categorized as Market squares. (Fig. 15)

c) Combination of market square and street

In this situation the street opens into a square where the commercial activities take place. (Fig. 16 )

These spaces could be further subdivided according to the permanency of the activity into two categories.

1. Periodic market places
2. Permanent market places

### 1.3.3 Transport oriented urban public spaces

These spaces are a result of movement of goods and people. This is sub divided into nodes and streets.

1) Nodes

Kevin Lynch defines nodes a "Nodes are strategic foci into which the observer can enter. These spaces would be typically junctions of paths or concentrations of some

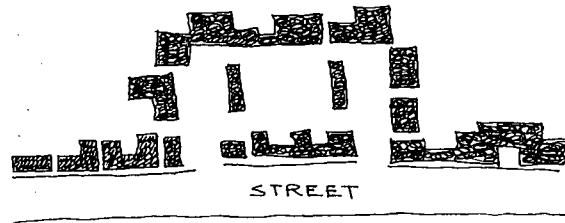
(Fig. 14 ) Market street  
Linear arrangement  
of commercial  
activities along  
a street.



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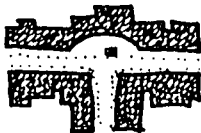
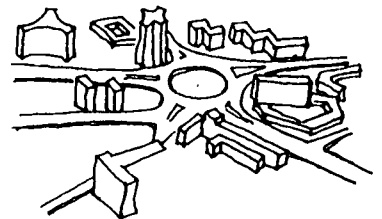
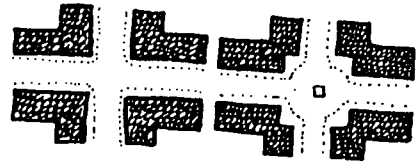
(Fig. 15 ) Market square  
A square with  
commercial  
activities as  
it's boundaries.



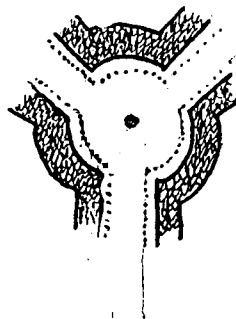


(Fig. 16 ) Combination of market street & square.

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(Fig. 17a )  
'T' Junction



(Fig. 17b )  
'Y' Junction

(Fig. 17c )  
Multiple junction

characteristic" (1985, p47).

Junctions is a point where two more roads cross each other. These can be divided into 'T', 'Y' and multiple junctions. (Fig 17a, 17b, 17c ) Depending on the location, activity taking place they gain prominence thus becoming a symbolic landmark.

Concentration nodes are nodes where action takes place. Where people congregate due to various activities. They are also called cores. One fine example is the Fort railway station. (Fig. 18 )

## 2. Street

Street is a linear element which facilitates public movement. This includes paths, passages, highways and many others.

Streets are not only functional physical spaces of a city but also form great social spaces. As a link it facilitates the movement of people as pedestrians or in vehicles the and the movement of goods.

Streets can be divided into two according to the function.

- a) Vehicular street
  - b) Pedestrian street
- 
- a) Vehicular Street

The earlier streets were for mankind and were foot paths. But with time and technological development streets developed first to accommodate horses then the carriages and later the motor vehicles. Vehicular streets are from roads to highways. (Fig. 19a )



(Fig. 18 ) Core- Spot in the community where action seems to concentrate. Fort railway station.



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(Fig. 19a ) Vehicular street  
Vehicles becomes a dominant element.  
Humans become secondary. ( Source  
Public spaces )

## b) Pedestrian street

These are the transportation routes solely for people. (Fig. 19 b ) Where people can move on foot. In Sri Lanka we find

### Paths and Passages

#### Open Walkways/side walks

#### Enclosed walk ways - Colonnades & Arcades

### Paths and Passages

They are not more than a few feet in width.( Fig 20 )

### Side walks

Side walks are situated between the road and a building, fence or wall for pedestrian movement. Paved walkways are called pavements.

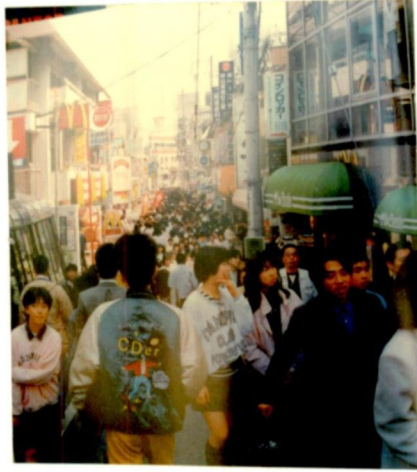


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In developed countries paved walkways are not only used for pedestrian movement but also have cafes with street furniture for people to rest and interact. (Fig. 21) However in the third world countries side walks have become a place for human habitation and commerce. These spaces are living spaces of the poor. ( Fig. 22 ) They also are extensively used by pavement hawkers and vendors and in some instances the shops at the edge of the pavements spill into it.

### Enclosed walkways

These are covered pedestrian walkways and functions as extended street. They can act as an extension of the building as spill over area for the building activities or as the extension of the street space for pedestrians or an independent domain. Eg. Arcades ( Fig. 23 )



(Fig. 19b ) Pedestrian street  
Pedestrian heaven  
(Source - Japanese  
style )



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(Fig. 20 ) Passages  
A few feet wide  
pathway.



(Fig. 21 ) Street Cafes  
A common activity  
in the west.



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(Fig. 22 ) Living space  
A common feature  
in the developing  
world.





(Fig. 23 ) Arcades  
Enclosed walkways  
Cargill's Arcade



(Fig. 24a ) The communal tap.  
A space for exchange  
of news & for daily  
functions.

### 1.3.4 Residential oriented urban public spaces

These spaces are primarily residential in nature and accommodate day to day activities of the community. These are the commercial living areas like the courtyards, communal service facilities like the tap, toilet.

These spaces not only play a functional role in the daily lives of these people but also is a great social space. Space for interaction and exchange of news among the occupants. The communal taps and toilets represent the traditional village well or the wewa bund. Thus in a way connecting the urban dweller with his/her past. (Fig. 24a, 24b )

Court yards have a distinct character in the urban space. (Fig. 24c ) They are formed through the grouping of dwellings in an organized or unorganized manner. These have multiple functions from accommodating social activities like funerals and weddings to children's play area to dry cloths and seeds and also to park vehicles.

### 1.3.4 Religious oriented urban public spaces

Religion plays a vital part in the lives of Asian people. Urban areas too have many types of religious spaces.

1. Wayside shrines
2. Large religious spaces-temples, churches etc.

#### 1. Wayside Shrines

The wayside shines come in all sizes and shapes. (Fig. 25) They form a sacred space amidst the very public space street or transport routes.





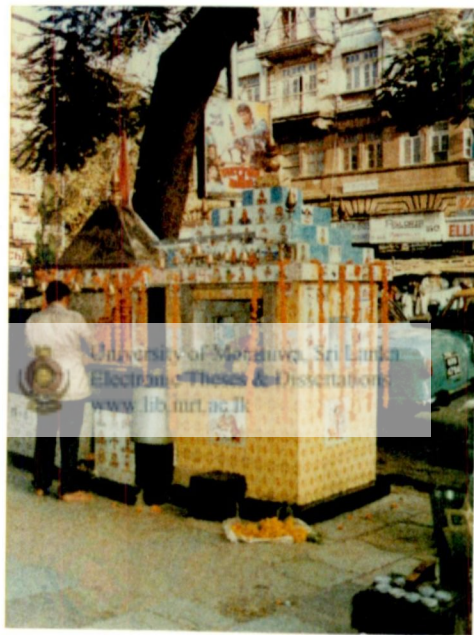
(Fig. 24b ) Wewa  
The functions are  
similar to the  
urban communal tap.



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(Fig. 24c ) The communal courtyard  
A space for play & other  
social activities.



(Fig. 25 ) A way side shrine.  
A sacred space in  
urban public walkway.

## 2. Large religious spaces

Larger temple complexes in urban areas are public gathering spaces. Especially in the countries like Sri Lanka where the religious places and the community are closely linked.

While urban public spaces take many forms and may assume various names such as plazas, malls, play grounds, they are all spaces. As spaces in an urban city they play a significant role.

### 1.4 Significance

#### 1.4.1 Significance of space

Space is a familiar word, but denotes many meanings and multiple dimensions. It is the sky, all encompassing with the stars, the moon, the galaxy, stretching unto infinite. The whole universe. It is boundless. However space constantly encompasses man. We live in space. Through the volume of space we move, see forms and objects feel breezes, smell the fragrances of flowers. Thus man is entrapped in space.

“ The space  
you occupy  
is full.  
The space  
surrounding you  
to the universe  
You are  
a definite  
form in  
limitless space. “

Correa

Thus space not only surrounds man and entraps him but also forms an integral part of him.

Man orients himself to objects, extends in movement in relation to the space surrounding him, the environment. Hence space is given by the ability to move. Spaces is experienced directly as having room in which to move. Therefore one cannot divorce man and space, it forms part of man and it is experienced.

While space becomes an important aspect of human environment, space at different times, in different context form different experiences and evolves to form different "kinds or nature" of spaces. Spaces with different kinds of spatial meanings and experience.

The nature of space has been subject of many discussions. Schulz (1971) has distinguished certain types of spaces through meanings and experiences. Through the unselfconscious and pragmatic experience the primitive or pragmatic space, through the self conscious experience the perceptual space, the built spaces of man the architectural space through the abstract geometry the abstract space and the existential space. (Schulz, 1971 ; p9-12)

Of course all spaces on earth experienced by man do not fall neatly into one of these categories. They may have all the above qualities. These qualities are what, makes spaces significant in life.

Urban public spaces are such spaces which evolve through experience, through time to signify different meanings to different people of different times.

#### **1.4.2 Significance of urban public spaces**

**- as responsive, functional space**

Urban public spaces are the stages upon which the drama of communal life unfolds. The streets, markets, squares and parks of an urban city give form to the ebb and flow of human exchange and movement. These dynamic spaces are an essen-

tial counterpart to the more settled places and routines of work and home life, providing channels for communication and movement. For example streets are components of the urban communication system, the means of moving objects, people and information from one sector to another. As arteries of the city they enable contacts, both planned and serendipitous ones, that can draw people together. (Fig. 26) Thus they form action spaces or functional spaces, spaces related to movement space (Hurst, 1971). They link different activities and spaces thus functioning as linkage spaces.

Urban public spaces perform as responsive spaces by serving the basic needs of the user in the urban environment. By responding to the basic needs like comfort, relaxation and discovery.

The urban dweller uses urban public spaces as a result of a deliberate planning or by accident. For example people stop at a park that happens to be along a route, sitting on a seat that is one the short cut to a destination. However most people in Sri Lanka and in other parts of the worlds go to urban public spaces for specific reasons. Some involve immediate needs such as to have a drink, or to rest. Others are long range purposes such as the need for change and exercise.

These needs as specific reasons draws people to urban public spaces thus making them responsive spaces. They are responsive spaces as they offer relief and relaxation from the stress of the urban life style and environment thus reflecting the negative aspect of the urban life. A stop at the public space in an urban environment may enable a person to rest and escape from the confusion, noise, crowds and over load in the surrounds, a common feature in the complex urban setting. (Fig. 27) In their study of Bryon Park, U.S.A. Nagar and Wentworth (1976) classify a series of response users gave for coming to the park under the heading of "park as a retreat". People used such words as "realizing and comfortable", "tranquil, peace-



(Fig. 26 ) Contact - A space  
for both planned &  
serendipitous contacts.  
( Source - Social life  
in small urban spaces )



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(Fig. 27 ) A space to retreat.  
( Source - Social  
life in small  
urban spaces )

ful urban oasis", "sanctuary".

These reasons may not only be true to U.S.A. but also to Sri Lanka. Urban public spaces play a significant part as spaces for relaxation in the crowded urban setting. Especially the Galle Face Green, the sea front along Bambalapitiya, Wellawatte.

Urban public spaces are responsive spaces as they help to conduct passive activities which help to maintain good health. Helps the urban dweller in partaking in active engagements such as jogging, bicycling.

They also act as "lungs of the city", especially the parks and other green areas. The greenery helps in controlling pollution and performs as a substitute to the countryside. Thus providing with the opportunity to stroll freely and relax and serves as an antidote to the oppressive physical and psychological conditions of the city life.

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These are not the only significant of urban public space. In fact in the process they also act as social spaces.

#### **- as a Social Space**

Urban public spaces enable social contact thus functioning as great social space. This is another reason for the 'need to go' rather than a space to get away from.

Urban public spaces play a crucial role in the urban environment as a setting for socializing with relatives, neighbors, acquaintances, and friends. For example parents caring for young children depend on near by parks and play grounds not only as facilities for children to play but also as places to enjoy contact with other parents. ( Fig. 28 ) Another group whose special life often centres around public spaces teenagers or young adults.

In Sri Lanka one of the most important public spaces that function as social spaces



(Fig. 28 ) A place for social contact.  
( Source - Public spaces )



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(Fig. 29 ) Content to watch.  
Ensures his existence.  
( Source - Social life  
in small urban spaces )

are the streets. Streets and side walks abound as public spaces support a range of child and adult activities particularly in many older, working class and low income neighborhoods.

These also form great social spaces as they offer visual contact, a need for the urban dweller. Living in a rat race the urban dweller needs visual comfort for assurance thus for ensuring his existence. A space where man positions himself to watch the passing scene, content to have their eyes follow. ( Fig. 29 )

Alexander has pointed out the significance of urban public spaces as social spaces where he says "people with shared way of life gather together to rub shoulders and confirm their community". (Alexander, 1977, p169) These spaces not only allow social contact between equals but also helps in the learning of a social norms, styles of other classes. Some early parks developed in the city were seen as places where the lower classes could view and imitate the activities, postures and customs of the more affluent. However in the contemporary urban communities with diverse groups these spaces have the potential to bring together the various social groups so that they can learn from each other. Social spaces also provides for casual contact of strangers, neighbors, relatives and friends in the course of daily lives that bind people together to give their lives meaning and power to life itself.

#### **- as a Symbolic Space**

Urban public spaces can be significant as symbolic spaces. In the urban environment as symbolic elements such as land marks create an identity. Thus they not only act as symbolic spaces for direction and identification but also help in shaping the city scape.

Spaces of this nature could also become symbolic to people through history. History offers us many examples of such urban public spaces. One such example are

the urban public spaces that have become symbolic to people when people exercise their rights using numbers to communicate their messages. In recent times the tragic massacre of students demonstration in the Tiananmen square in China has created a symbolic space at Tiananmen square.

These spaces also acquire symbolic significance through the sacred, mythical ritualistic events that occur or have occurred in such spaces. These spaces have been sacred places or ceremonial places that have instilled awe, reverence and powerful feelings of connections for adherents of a particular faith or beliefs. Thus making them symbolic sacred spaces. One such space is the Mahamaluva in Kandy. (Fig. 30) A symbolic urban public space through sacredness.

#### **- as an Existential Space**

Urban public space play a significant role as existential space to the urban dweller. Space in the urban environment to assist man's dwelling on earth.

Most people in the bygone era were born, raised lived and died in the same community. Whatever their status, or stage in the life journey all were intrinsic components of the community. The individual could identify himself with his community and environment. He fitted himself into the environment. Man did not only fit himself into the environment but also everything he raised on land lived and perished within this land itself. The environment and the community worked as a whole.

This stultifying world has been shattered by urbanization and man's urges to escape from the entrapment of the traditional community.

In the process of urbanization and the urge to forge for un fathered furthers man has progressively eroded his sense of community, his moral and responsible atti-



(Fig. 30 ) A symbolic space.  
The Mahamaluva, Kandy.

tude towards his fellow men. Thus the modern urban man has lost faith in himself.

Housman writes,

*I a stranger and afraid*

*In a world I never made*

Thus modern man feels alone in an alien world. Losing any genuine sense of belongingness as he finds it difficult to identify himself with in the present urban environment.

Thus he has lost his essential foothold on earth. Man has become rootless, homeless as wanderer. He has lost the sense of belongingness, his sense of place.

However the contemporary urban dwellers needs, have not changed. Man has not changed. He still breaths, eats and makes love. He still wants to roam the fields and woods and swim in lakes and rivers. He still yearns to struggle into the protective warmth of a community, longs for a sense of belongingness.

Urban public spaces provides the urban dweller with the sense of belongingness thus forms an existential foothold space to assist him to dwell on earth. How ? Through spaces that symbolises man's being on earth, through conveying meanings. By being meaningful spaces. Spaces that allow man to make strong connections between the place, the personal life and the larger society. (Ralph, 1976; p12, Schutz, 1962)

These connections may be in relation to history, future, to a valued group, to one's culture or to one's psychological realities. For example spaces like Lincon Memorial, U.S.A., St. Petersburg Russia, evoke connections to past events that stimulate feeling of national pride, of a sense of belongingness. They define and connect people's membership in groups. Connecting people to nation.

Urban public spaces also help connect man to a specific group. urban public spaces with sacred or geographical connections form connections and meaning to a specific cultural or social group.

Such urban public spaces with meanings and connections helps one self to feel at home and the sense of belongingness. An urban public space that evolves into such enduring spaces and brings or evokes emotions of belongingness through memories and connections gives an existential foothold to man. Helps anchor one's sense of personal continuity in the rapidly changing urban world.

#### **- as an Architectural space**

Architectural space is created by man for the well being of mankind. It is deliberately created to provide either a fresh meaning or to emphasize an existing meaning in a lived in space. Thus it could be defined as a 'concretization' of existential spaces.

Architectural spaces are the three - dimensional physical spaces created within and among buildings. Their shapes, size, volume, form and the inter relationship are not mere physical element of spaces but indications of spatial expression. They are containers of expression and meaning.

Urban public spaces are three - dimensional physical spaces created within and among buildings. Thus they are architectural spaces created by man with encoded meanings and expressions. Created by man for the well being of the urban dweller. To give the urban dweller an existential foothold.

However in today's urban cities urban public spaces as architectural spaces are criticized. Why ?

## 1.5 Review on contemporary urban public spaces in Sri Lanka

The wind of urbanization blowing over the world is blowing over Sri Lanka too. This wind of urbanization has created a process which is forming a new landscape in Sri Lanka. The faces of Sri Lankan urban centres are rapidly changing. (Fig. 31 a, 31b )

Such urbanization process has lead to many planned and unplanned developments of a wide range of urban public spaces. Planned developments such as the shopping malls, play grounds, polla (market spaces), plazas and squares. Unplanned development such as wayside street hawkers, play areas and religious spaces.

Yet in today's Sri Lankan context these significant spaces of the urban centres, the urban public spaces are being criticized. The studies on contemporary urban public paces often highlight the human failures of public spaces adding empirical weight to anecdotal evidence and critics that appear from time to time in the press. Criticism has been focussed mainly on designed spaces. Lets focus ourselves on such designs.

Urbanization has led to designing of new shopping spaces such as super markets, pollas as the Nawala polla, Kirulapona polla, Borella and Colpetty supermarkets and the new elitist super markets.

Designed spaces like the super market and polas. Often criticized to as they are inappropriately located, designed and managed for public use. For example are the Nawala pola, Borella and Colpetty super markets. (Fig. 32a, 32b )

Careful observations of these spaces suggests that many are indeed under used or used in ways not intended. Shop owners often fear that spaces are often taken over by undesirables or deviant users. Users such as teenagers, drug addicts, beggars people who will not be sufficiently dignified enough to reinforce the desired image.



(Fig. 31a ) Colombo then.  
Chatham street.



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(Fig. 31b ) Colombo now.



( Fig. 32a ) Nawala pola.  
Used in ways  
not intended.



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(Fig. 32 b ) Borella supermarket  
Underused, a design  
failure.

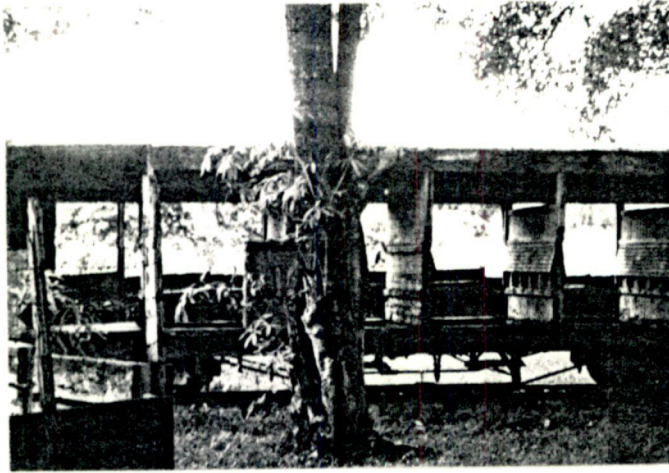


As a result of these conflicts in such spaces access is controlled by guards or by other electronic means. In larger or more elitist urban public spaces such as the modern supermarkets, the outdoor public and semi public spaces, access is limited by design or management policy. They also employ social filters in the shape of guards whose job is to keep undesirables away.

Publicly developed and managed spaces are also criticized. Parks like the Chapel road park, Vystke park have been built often with elaborate and expensive design features. (Fig. 33) But with time without adequate public or government funding to maintain and manage them these too get neglected and used by undesirables. In some instances the revitalization of such parks have neglected the users. The newly designed spaces with expensive equipments and hence management would bare the old, less fortunate to use these parks. For example is the park in front of the Mt. Lavinia cemetery. Before it was revitalized the park was neglected and the children from the slums and shanties in and around the area used to play here. Now after the new look these children are bared by a fence and a guard and children from a new class group play here. These faults should be avoided.

Some urban public spaces are under designed. Some do not even provide for the basic needs like comfort, relaxation and discovery. Most designers create urban parks and play grounds with passive engagement for adults and active engagements for children and are structured for pre determined actions, making them rigid and unchallenging. Little is left for the imagination and discovery of the user. (Fig. 34)

Urbanization has been the cause for the decline of private realm. As the urbanization process accelerated the need for land increased. Hence land values increased. Buildings and cities have become vehicles for making money. This attitude has caused the decline of the public realm and the flourishing of private realm. With the emphasis on privacy, retreat personal comfort, private consumption and security.



(Fig. 33 ) Chapel road park.  
Neglected & used  
by undesirables.



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(Fig. 34 ) Unchallenging.

The public realm has become some one else problem. (Fig. 35)

The visual identity of contemporary urban public spaces have also been criticized. It is often said that designers rely too heavily on inappropriate models from the west lacking relevance to the Sri lankan life style. Critics argue that Sri Lankan designers have directly borrowed models from the western designers where as the public life in this country is distinctly different. For example is the Negambo urban development. The architect sees many similarities between Negambo and York. "Negombo a historical city has waterways, traditional houses at main street, a fortress, cathedrals, very similar features as in York. However the architect has neglected to observe that Negombo is in Sri Lanka and the users are Sri Lankans with a different culture, traditions thus different values and needs.

Micheal Brill (1989 a) has called this "Euro urbanism". We Sri Lankans are not a cafe society and lack traditional evening fiesta or evening promenade. (Fig. 36) However the contemporary urban dwellers at present need breathing spaces and thus use spaces for weekly or occasional family outings to the many parks. (Fig. 37) Thus designs that relentlessly advance an abstract concept or a particular formal style can sometimes create a hostile environment with no social purpose.

Hence are we going to live urban public spaces as the ones above? No. Therefore as the products are at fault lets examine the approaches or the processes that created these spaces.



(Fig. 35 ) Individualistic buildings.



(Fig. 36 ) The western style.  
Street cafes.



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(Fig. 37 ) The Sri Lankan style.



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## **Chapter Two**

### **REVIEW ON APPROACHES TO URBAN DESIGN**

## 2. REVIEW (OF LITERATURE) ON APPROACHES TO URBAN DESIGN

The concept of urban design has received great attention in recent times. Individuals in several countries over a number of decades with similar values and visions have taken various means of tackling urban problems. Out of these we could distinguish four approaches in the 20th century.

Functionalist

Formalistic

Humanistic

Regionalistic

The most influential of these approaches in relation to design of urban spaces and urban public spaces in the 20th century is the functionalistic approach.

### 2.1 Functionalistic approach



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“Form ever follows function” Written in 1896 by Louis Sullivan, the Chicago high rise designer, was the founding idea of functionalism. Functionalism has its origin in the works of Bauhaus and the work of Le Corbusier.

Early functionalist envisioned the “city as a machine”. “ With great idealism the functionalist crusaders as some one called them, declared that a marriage of art and technology, performed in the spirit of social concern, would bring forth a new aesthetic a clean honest, and wholesome new shape of all man made things that would bring about a clean, honest ..... new culture of living. Everything from coffee cups from which we drink to the city in which we live was to be functional in a scientific and technological sense.” (Eakardt, 1967 p5) Hence the city was to function like a machine. In the latter years of functionalism the city was thought as a complex organism and a network or constellation of community centers linked to and directed by a central core. However the city was to function efficiently as a

machine. Hence zoning became a key element of a functionalist city for zoned environment, activities can proceed with little or no interference from other activities. Residential, commercial, individual and agricultural activities were zoned to form different areas.

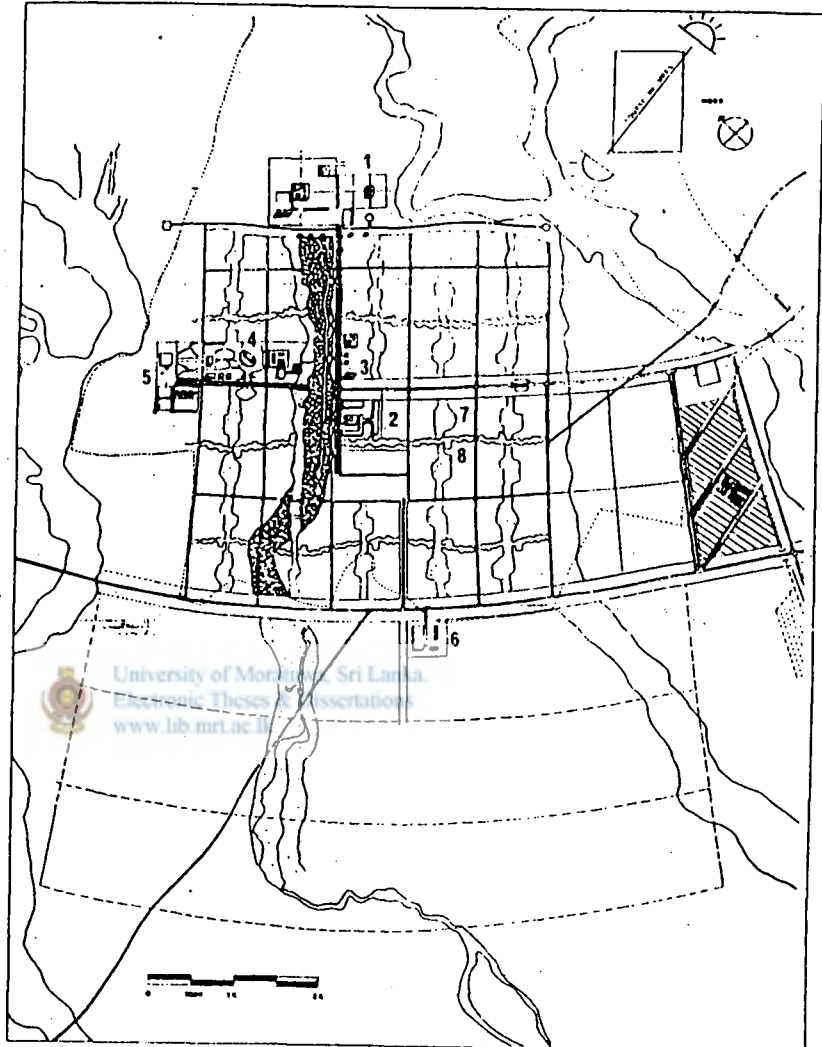
To reinforce the zoning of activities in a more efficient and orderly manner grid planning was introduced. The grid has functioned as an easily applied mechanical method for organizing separate parts.(Fig. 38)

This machine living approach with zoning and grid formation has alienated man from his environment. Though the grid has the advantage of flexibility and expendability and is not a bad ordering device it contributed to the loss of spatial flow. Especially when the grid become roads and highways.

Zoning of activities in cities has created further problems. The loss of traditional qualities of urban spaces and cities has also been the result of zoning policies. These closely allied approaches to planning were well intentioned, but misfired and ultimately is cause of urban decay. The attitude was to clear the land, sanitize and provide hygienic living conditions through segregation of land use into discrete zones and substitute ground level low density buildings for high rise towers. However the results were disastrous. A social commitment to the cleaning of city life sounded visionary and progressive but soon resulted in environment that were unlivable. The new cities rarely corresponded to the special structure of the evolved community patterns they replaced nor did they respond to the social relationship that gave meaning to the existing communities. New cities segregated the residences of offices, living spaces from work spaces. Various activities zoned were super blocked into homogenous districts separated by roads. This created lost spaces which turned to be dangerous cities with segregated areas which were dead during parts of the day thus leading towards social problems. Urban public spaces became space filled with fear.

**Le Corbusier.**  
**Plan of Chandigarh, India.**  
*The Functionalists tended to use the grid as a means of segregating activities into defined zones. In Le Corbusier's plan for Chandigarh, for example, government is physically set apart from the city. Another problem with the rigid application of the grid is that there is no logical way to establish a center. (Courtesy: Foundation Le Corbusier/SPADEM)*

- Key:**
1. The Capitol
  2. Commercial Center
  3. Hotels and Restaurants
  4. Museum, Stadium
  5. University
  6. Market
  7. Open Spaces with Schools, Clubs, Sports Facilities
  8. Shopping Street



(Fig. 38 ) The grid & zoning in Chandigarh, India. The separation of activities through roads as grids and zoning. ( Source - Finding lost spaces )

Zoning has created problem in Sri Lankans too areas like Fort and Pettah segregated for commercial activities is dead after office hours creating problems of security and social disorders. Not only does zoning create such social problems but the under utilization of land during certain hours of the day creates economic problems too. (Fig 39 )

Another factor that contributed to the failure of functionalism and the decay of urban public spaces was the attitude to traditional design. At the zenith of the history abstract forms were designed as the functionalist assumed that there was a relationship between planktonic solids and human happiness. This and the Corbusiers principles such as linear and model buildings as a large scale element, separation of movement system and the opening up of urban space to allow for free flowing landscape sun and light gave way to a anti outdoor space.



Free standing buildings on open places or green spaces came into existence Le Corbusier's buildings as isolated objects floating freely on useless places and parking lots came into existence . (Fig. 40 ) Building in straight parallel rows dominated the urban scape. These buildings instead of knitting together the city fabric become individual buildings. The buildings become more utilitarian in their organization and function was gradually displaced from the external space to the organization of internal space. The buildings tended to become more of an object separate from its context. Thus outdoor public spaces in between buildings were rarely designed.

The anderson flats is one such modern functionalist residential scheme. Free standing buildings place on a cleared site with spaces in between building cresting anti spaces. A no man's land in between buildings. (Fig. 41a )

With loss continuation between the public and private and the loss of publicness



(Fig. 39 ) Zoning creates anti social spaces. Colombo - Fort on a holiday. Looks dead.



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(Fig. 40 ) Free standing buildings on large open spaces.  
(source - Finding lost spaces )

and the increase in the feeling for individuality. Buildings became to exhibit them self. Calling for attention. Thus the modern city dweller is forced to create a social life on personal, controllable territory instead of engaging in a communal existence centered around the public spaces. As a consequence, individual attitudes towards urban public spaces have been altered.

According to functionalist, they viewed the past with historically significant buildings, as for there their educational value only and preserved them. However they also stressed that the layout of these historic districts should not be the basis for planning contemporary cities. The historic towns in their view were notorious for there unhabitable conditions. The ideal image of a functionalist city represented by Ludwig Hilberseimer's drawing ( Fig 41b ). These have become a reality in modern communities.

Theses failures of functionalism has created a renewed interest the history and traditional city. The traditional city were there was a rich and variety in public spaces and life. The reintroduction of the grammar of the vernacular style which can reunite the many aspects of buildings and as an art to create responsive environments in the contemporary society has paved way for new approaches.

## **2.2 Formalistic Approach**

One such approach which reintroduces the grammar of the traditional style is the formalistic approach. Formalistic approach focuses on the physical form and its associated meanings. Draws its models from the timeless design figures of the past. These are discovered in part through the study of typologies and precedents from the past.

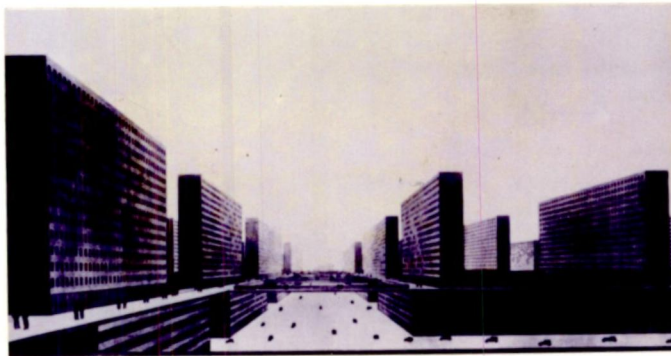
The formalist saw the large functionalist industrial city as profoundly alienating. So the formalist envisage an idealistic environment derived from our traditional patterns. This approach does not intend to replicate historical urban models but uses



(Fig. 41a ) Anderson flats, Colombo.  
Modern movement building.



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(Fig. 41b ) Ludwig Hilberseimer's  
drawing. An ideal  
image of a functionalist  
city. ( Source - Finding  
lost spaces )

the past as a filter through which the future is conceived.

As they argue that traditional solutions contain ideas that work and that these carry with them ingredient of memory that new architectural forms and new urban spaces inevitably lack. Thus the buildings from the past, forms with cultural significance lead to new designs which are good and workable.

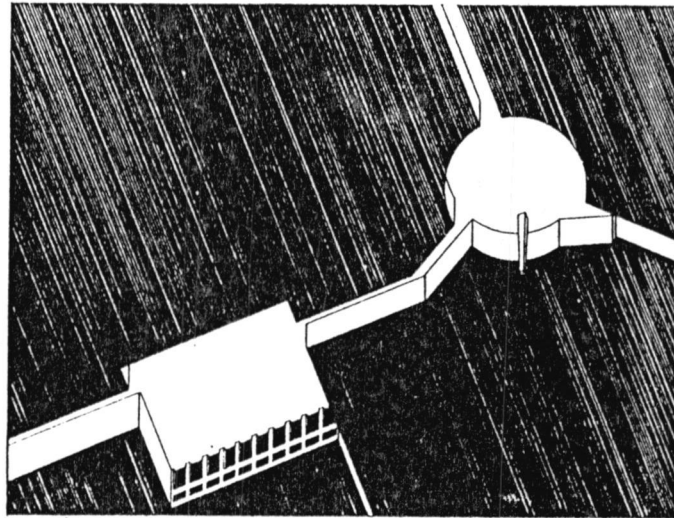
Architects Robert and Leon Krier are some formalist designers. They have typified traditional urban spaces according to their geometric forms and thus helping to create new urban spaces. ( Ref Fig. 7 )

This approach also favors axial ordering hierarchy originated in formal ordering system. They envision the city as a collage of patterned solids and voids in poetic tension with the grand figure and ground relationship of the bygone area. (Fig. 42 )

These are evident in the works of Krier brothers. the brothers, in a series of drawings and paintings created images of the lost public realm. (Fig. 43 ) Focusing most often in traditional spaces like arcaded piazzas and the rule of the classical urban design.

Formalist found an ally in Christopher Alexander and his many theoretical statements, most notably contained in the books " A Pattern Language" and the " Timeless way of building". In the Timeless way of building he says architecture is a piecemeal process, created by patterns. Creating an 'organic', 'living' or 'nature' order based on patterns which are timeless. Patterns found in the present that have transcended time.

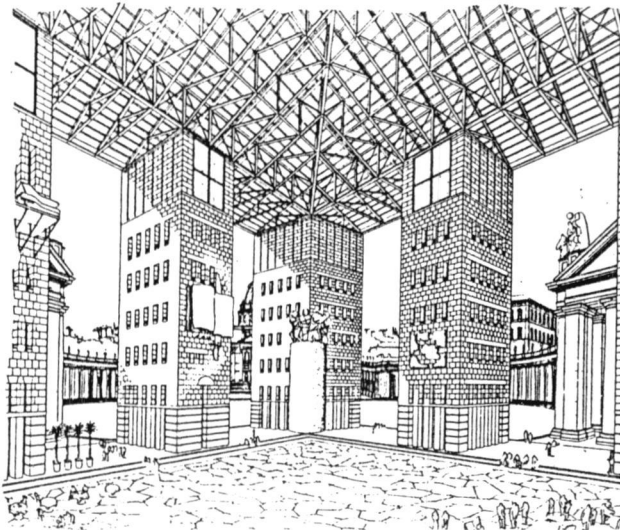
Critics argue the formalist lack the forward looking idealism of the functionalist and of being concerned largely with aesthetic matters and only incidentally with real needs.



(Fig. 42 ) Ground figure & Ground relationship. Solids & voids in poetic tension. A formalistic feature .



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(Fig. 43 ) The introduction of tradition into new urban public spaces. Krier's covered square. Luxembourg. ( Source - Emerging concepts in urban space design )

Another view point is although a much is constant in human life and culture, changes do happen and new urban spaces are created. How can this approach cater to the new needs? These are evident in Hussan Fathy's Courna New Town, Egypt. Fathy recreates - mud brick villages with tight streets, flat domes and walls with white wash finish. He reviews the craft tradition. (Fig. 44a ) Yet with such traditionalesque buildings the villages were abandoned by the users.

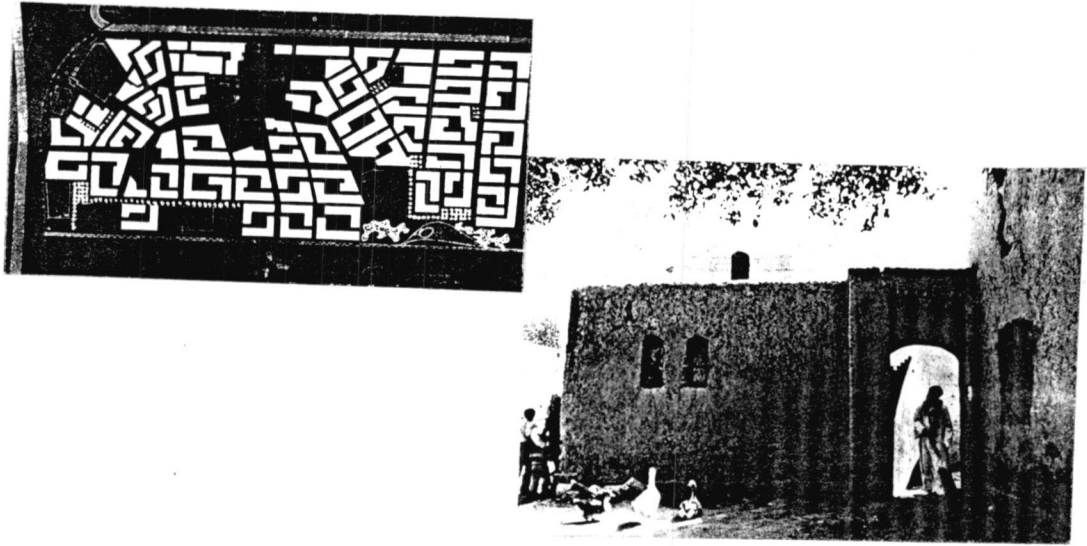
How can formalistic principles derived from the past and modified for the future exist if there were no such historical elements to constitute a tradition, or what if historical patterns are inadequate to serve contemporary needs?

And the critics go on to argue that neither nostalgia for a timeless past or utopian vision of the future grantee good architecture. Thus new architectural approaches have come into existence.

### 2.3 Humanistic Approach

Humanistic approach is a reaction to functionalist and other approaches. Humanist planning seeks to realize and enhance pre existing and underlying social structures. It concerns the human need, behavior and experience of the city and its social life. It emerged in later 50's and among those representing humanistic attitudes are Gorden Cullen, Aldo Van Eyck and Herman Hertzberger.

The humanistic designers expect the individuals and groups who inhabit a place to appropriate the environment and make their own. They believe the more somebody is personally able to influence his surroundings, the more involved and attentive he becomes. They go onto say "what we offer cannot be neutral it must the raw material, as it were, containing the 'intentions' out of which everyone can make his own choice in a particular situation, extracting from it precisely the intention which resonates with his 'intentions'". (Hertzberger, 1976 p23) Thus user participation



(Fig. 44a ) Fathy's Gournu new town.  
In the traditional manner  
but abandoned.



(Fig. 44b ) User participation in design.  
( Source - Public spaces )

in design was advocated. And when the architect has to design on behalf of the user the decisions are based upon the users need and circumstances. And Jane Jacobs says "The best ways to plan for down town is to see how people use it today; to look for its strengths, and to exploit and reinforce them. There is no logic that can be superimpose on city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans". Such designing for humans and in human scale achieves familiarity and the sense that things have been made by people for people. This creates a sense of belongingness.

They also advocate a mixed use of activities in the urban environment to the functionalist segregated city. Functional zoning and functional distinctions are not the normal instead activities and elements are to overlap and interwoven to form a cohesive city. For example the functional city streets were for automobiles whereas the humanist streets are domesticated and livable. Livable places for people. Such cities with mixed livable environments is what Jane Jacob calls as "organized complexity".

Traditions are not forgotten in the humanistic approach. Humanist believe that the future city need not differ from the present if the present was satisfactory. Any changes that are needed will be created from the existing. In effect, tradition would be the resource bank to draw upon these changes. Humanist urban designers would draw lessons from the past, translate the borrowed ideas into modern.

However critics argue that humanist do not consider the overall needs of the city. They are accused of having only concerned of the design at grass root levels of the city. And the design committee approach with user participation in this approach slows down work and makes conflicts. (Fig. 44 b)

The user participation is also criticized as the future of cities are too complex a task for the untrained laymen.

## 2.4 Regionalistic Approach

One of the recently talked about approaches to designing of urban spaces is regionalism.

The rapid multiplication of people and the spread of information, and images have caused a world architecture culture. An architectural culture that visible in all parts of the work. It may be called Post modern in some countries and Punk in others. However this has also caused some to indulge in soul searching for an identity. Those especially with rich traditional cultures and fear the loss of identity.

A number of architects in the Asia Pacific region and the Latin American region have been concerned with the problem of loss of identity. The Asian in the loss of Asian identity in the urban and rural spaces, a concern brought by successive waves of cultural invasions from the west. Invasions from the colonial period to the International style.



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Regionalism “involves, basically resolving the debate between impersonal, international standardised architecture and localised vernacular architecture”. (Piacentini 1922) And regionalism is committed to findings unique responses to particular place, culture and climate.

Regionalism looks for sustenance in spiritual forces and thus hopes to produce buildings of a certain timeless character which fuse old and new, regional and universal.

Such regionalistic urban spaces have been created by many architects. Islamic cultural arabic regionalism has been worked out at the Mecca Airport.(Fig. 45 ) An architecture derived from the nomadic regions but incorporates the modern materials to achieve a monumental building. A building of some symbolic importance as



(Fig. 45 ) Mecca airport terminal.  
Regionalistic architecture.  
(Source - Architecture  
today )



the modern arrival point for Muslims from all over the world for the pilgrimage.

However regionalism is criticized "as it does is" not to appeal to the blatant technocrat or the parvenu who recalls that working in the fields for 12 hours a day in exchange for virtually nothing may not be ideal life. Regionalist yearnings are especially appealing to sensitive intellectuals who are troubled by the fragmentation that seem to come with industrialization. It is for this reason that some of the most beautiful regionalist experiments are under taken for the rich cultivated collector of handicrafts.

\* \* \*

The world has seen many "ism" in architecture and urban design. Yet there is a crisis in architecture in the world. Man, especially the urban man is in eternal turmoil. He has lost his roots. The urban man is like a drawing man searching for a piece of wood. He is in search for a life saving substance. What is this great life saving substance that these approaches have missed? As chamoust says in order to find the life saving sub substances we must return to the source, to the principle. Therefore lets, examine these approaches in detail.

Functionalism was concurred about the functional efficiency, good hygiene habitable environment and thus the logo machine living. However in this sincere endeavors regionalism and environmental identity were ignored. As the term international style suggest a style for the whole world was created. Buildings in the Nubian desert in Sudan and Nothern Canada had much in common. Add to this the components of the buildings with exposed concrete, glass cladding and flat roofs became style. They did not fake into account the indigenous building materials, the climate or the natural setting. The term context or place was missing from the functionalist vocabulary. Not only was the context ignored from the vocabulary but also the people living and using these spaces were ignored. People around the

world were assumed to have similar needs and wants. And architecture was created for a universal man. Functionalism forgot that man, his needs and wants, his outlook changed from culture to culture.

Formalistic approach too neglected the man even though formalist took into there design the regional, identify and the context they neglected the people they designed for. As man's needs change from era to era formalistic approach lacked the sensitiveness to these changes.

However the humanistic approach was totally concerned about the man's needs and wants. Humanists were concerned about his culture, tradition, behavior, but neglected the context. The spirit of the people were the primary concern of the humanist and not the spirit of the place.

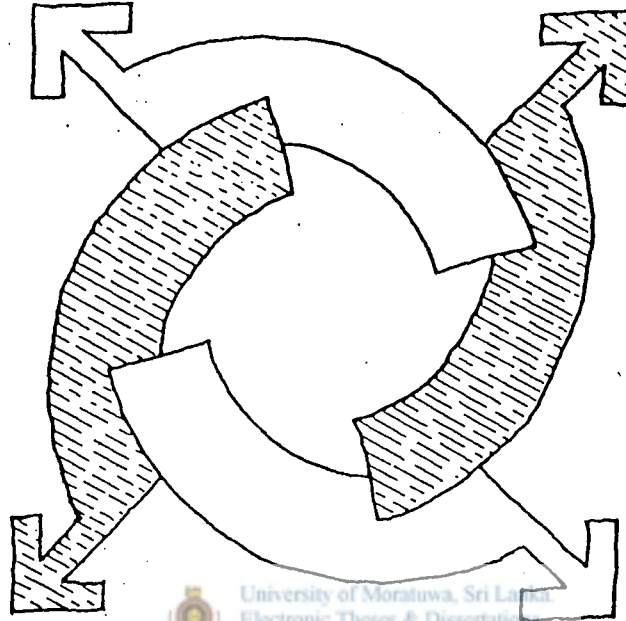
Regionalism is an approach which intends to capture the spirit of the place and the people. However it is at a regional scale. For example Sumet Jumsai (paper presented at the UN-APAC meeting, Tokyo 1985) says pacific region three main regional cultures. They are the Chinese, Indian and Australians. In this Sri Lanka would belong to the Indian region. The Sri Lankan architectural identity is lost. Architecture and urban design would be created to the spirit of regional people and the climate and place. This approach neglects the local people and place. Local people and places have their own uniqueness. These are over powered by the regionalistic approach.

These approaches seems to have developed to oppose and replace others, but all the approaches shift laterally, no single one can encompass the other. In the accompanying figure (Fig. 46) the approaches are shown as having some concern and values, but more significant as moving in different directions .

Thus non of these approaches help the local urban dweller to connect himself with

Regionalistic -  
Regional identity the  
main concern. Local  
place & people  
are forgotten.

Formalistic -  
Focuses on the physical  
form & it's associated  
meanings. Not on the  
people.



Functionalistic -  
City designed to function  
as a machine. Grid, zoning  
& individualism came into  
existence. Functionalist  
neglected the local people  
and place.



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Humanistic -  
The approach concerns the  
human need, behaviour &  
experience. A person is  
also personally involved  
in making his surrounding.  
However the spirit of the  
place is neglected.

(Fig. 46 ) The approaches progressing  
in different directions.

his community and the environment. No meaningful connections are formed with the people and place. Therefore the urban man feels alienated. Feels rootless.

In order to satisfy the urban dweller in order to provide the life saving substance to the rootless man, through architecture a new approach should be formulated. Hence as Ribard de Charmoust says "we must return to the source, to the principle and to the type". Though this alone can one find the life saving substance. An urban public space with an environmental quality that sustains life. And the process of this creation would become an approach.

**An approach that takes into account spirit of the local people and the place. An approach through being people and place specific created meanings and connections. Creates urban public spaces with an environmental quality that evokes the sense of belongingness through meanings and connections.**



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An approach that would provide the urban dweller an existential foothold in this ever changing world.



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## **Chapter Three**

### **THE INDIGENOUS APPROACH**

### 3.1 THE NEED FOR AN INDIGENOUS APPROACH

“What may seem less obvious is that our urban and suburban neighborhoods, too need sense of place to be meaningful to us to give us a sense of belonging, to give each individual a sense of his place in a bewildering cosmos”. (Eckart, 1967 p xvi) Thus it could be said that the urban dweller is now faced with a problem of a change environment in which he has to achieve a goal of satisfying a more or less persistent psychological need. This is the deep rooted need for belonging. A want of a place to call mine. Robert Coles suggest (1970, p120-121) “It is utterly part of our nature to want roots, to need roots, to struggle for roots, for a sense of belonging for some place that is recognised as mine, as yours, as ours”.

However some may feel it is a personal need that concern only a few. Yet it is a universal need.”To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognised need of the human soul. It is one of the hardest to define”. (Simone weil, 1955; p 53) And according to the conceptual model of a need for hierarchy system by psychologist Maslow, the hierarchy starts with the basic physiological requirements to sustain life and health.(Fig. 47 ) Without being able to satisfy these needs, the individual cannot survive for any length of time. When these basic requirements are met, usually associated with food, clothing and shelter, safety need emerge. The individual becomes concerned about security, the avoidance of harm, and the need for protection. After some measure of safety has been assured, a need to belong becomes apparent. The individual strives to be a member of a group. Therefore it can be assumed the need for belongingness exist in all levels of people. At the first level is the need for belongingness, at the family level. The second is at the village or urban level and the third is at the national on country level.Thus “to belong, to have roots is perhaps a necessary precondition for other needs of the soul”. (Relph, 1975 p38) Therefore man needs roots. To be rootless is like a tree without roots.

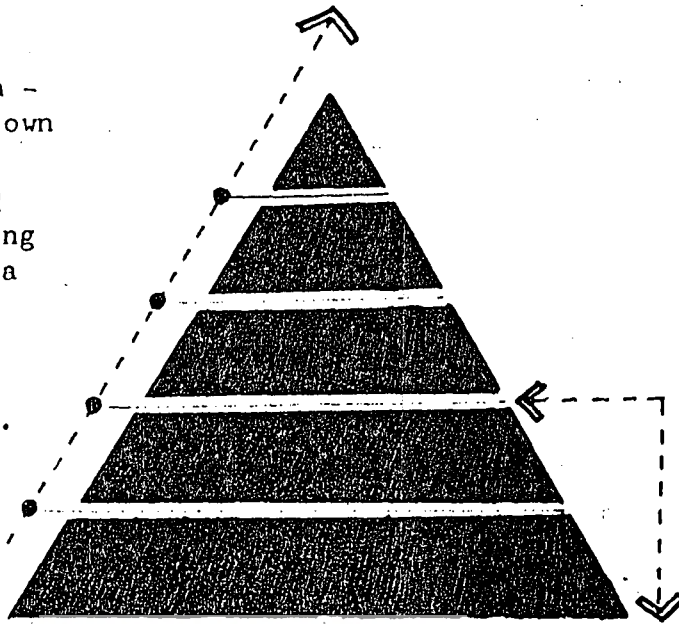
Self Actualization -  
Full filling ones own  
highest need.

Self Esteem - Need  
to belong - Striving  
for membership in a  
group.

Belonging - Need  
to belong -for  
a group membership.

Safety - Security  
avoidance of  
harm, need for  
protection.

Physiological need  
needs -  
Sustain life &  
health - food,  
clothing, shelter



Survival in a  
hostile environment



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(Fig. 47 ) Maslows hierarchy of needs.  
( Source - A graphic survey of  
perception & behaviour for  
the desugned professions. )

Yet, the present urban environment with its high standards of living makes us desire for a better environment. Environment that creates a sense of belonging. And according to Kokuleraj (1990, p 81) "If cities are to survive in the future, the city and city spaces have to create a sense of belonging to its inhabitants." Therefore as architects and urban designers we have to create environments with sense of place, sense of belongingness. As Architecture today is in a state of crisis, and that crisis has contributed, to a larger extent than is generally realized, to the urban mess. Architecture has failed to respond to the needs of our time and the varied requirements of its surroundings. It is shouting in isolation. Lacking a sense of place in time and space, and fails to give our environment a sense of place. Thus also a sense of belongingness. Therefore the indigenous approach to designing of urban public spaces help to fulfill the deep rooted need for belongingness at the urban level.

### 3.2 The Indigenous Approach

The word indigenous is widely used in the field of art and science. People talk about indigenous plants and animals. Here the word indigenous implies born or produced in the land or region. The indigenous man is a person who is a native belonging naturally to the place. Thus indigenous is something or someone inherent to a place, creating or feeling a sense of belongingness naturally to a place.

However the word indigenous in the field of medicine implies to an approach where indigenous plants, herbs and animals are used in harmony with the socio cultural beliefs, norms and myths of the indigenous man to cure illnesses. The indigenous medical approach varies from culture to culture, country to country. In Sri Lanka there is the Ayurvedic medicine, which is indigenous to the south and the Sinhalese culture. In the northern part of Sri Lanka the practice of Sida medicine prevails. This approach is in harmony with the place and the culture. Thus indigenous medical approach becomes unique from culture to culture and place to place. It is a

people and place specific approach. This people and place specific approach is not only in harmony with the nature and culture of the place and the people but also evoke a sense of belongingness. The sense of belongingness an evoked emotion, is experienced through connections. Connections from man to his environment, connecting man to man, patient to the medical man, man to his cultural group and man to earth from which he derives the life sustaining medicine.

However when one spells out or reads out the word indigenous in architecture ones mind wanders back to the traditional, rural romantic setting of our vernacular architecture. Hence one intends to visualize an indigenous approach as an approach that takes into account the traditional urban design principles. However in this study the indigenous approach to designing of urban public spaces is not derived from the traditional principles but formulates a contemporary humanistic, functional, lively approach.



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**Indigenous approach in architecture is the process by which urban public spaces are created to evoke a sense of belongingness to the urban dweller. Creating the sense of belongingness naturally in all senses; spatially, contextually, socially, culturally and politically.**

Like in medicine the indigenous approach to designing of urban public spaces is a people, place specific approach. This people and place specific approach takes into account the basic needs of the people, the spirit of the people and the place. Thus creating urban public spaces where the environment provides opportunities and possibilities for making meaningful spaces. Spaces that connect or link man to his environments, the earth or place, group connections, connections to the larger society. People find environment with connections and meanings intimate, thus evoking the sense of belongingness, feeling of being "at home".

### 3.3 Creating a sense of belongingness through

#### 3.3.1 A people specific approach

*"Man can dream, create design and build most wonderful places in the world but it requires people to make the dream a reality."*

- Walt Disney

Thus man can build wonderful places but all these places need people to liven it. Without the human touch, laughter and their spirit these spaces become haunted. People liven these spaces. Make them come to life.

However for spaces to come to life it is not people just living in them but they should feel "at home". A place on space comes to life when a person feels that he belongs there. The need to belong is a primary need of the urban man. The sense of belongingness is created through spaces with meanings and connections. But how do we create such environments?

The most fundamental example of a space that creates the sense of belongingness is "our home". We experience "our home" through the links it created within ourself and with others. It creates connections with our personal reflections, attitudes, values and aspirations. The home also links oneself with his sphere group that is to "us" and help to separate others "them" from "us". Thus the home helps to identify oneself with the society, connecting one with a larger group. Not only does the home connect people but also in the process of making the home connects the person with the earth. Thus all these connections with meaning enhances the sense of belongingness.

However our experience of sense of belongingness in our daily lives is not limited to the home but extends beyond. In some urban public spaces one feels "at home". Feels the sense of belongingness. Such experiences of belongingness outside once

home leads to many meanings. These spaces have some quality. An unnamed quality that evokes the feeling. These qualities are encoded languages with meanings which when decoded connect and evoke emotions to the reader connect and evoke the sense of belongingness not only to the individuals but also to a specific sub cultural group and to a larger cultural group. How do these connections happen ?

From earliest times man has used language as his basic form of communication, a system where by words have meanings and is understood by all, within a ordered grammatical frame work. The inadequacy of words to express certain meanings have led to a non verbal communication system. A non verbal communication system using signs and symbols with encoded meanings to communicate and connect people to people, people to earth. (Fig. 48 ) A communication system within a frame work whose purpose is to assist humans to communicate.



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Man in order to communicate makes signs and symbols. Every experiences recreated or relieved by man is represented by signs and symbols. The associated images, concepts, ideas all experienced finds expressions in signs and symbols. Not only does man has a great "propensity to symbolise everything that happens to him but also reacts to them as if they were actual environmental stimuli". (Lang, p40) People react to environments or spaces in terms of the meanings the environments have for them. Meanings of the environments are encoded in environmental cues. "People act in accordance with their readings of environmental cues. This follows from the observation that the same people act quite differently in different settings. Settings somehow communicate expected behavior if the cues can be understood. It follows that the languages used in these environmental cues must be understood. The codes need to be read. If the design of the environment is seen partly as a process of encoding information, then the user can be seen as decoding it." (Rapport, 1982 p85) Therefore if the user does not understand codes the environment



(Fig. 48 ) Signs and symbols as encoded with meanings communicate to people. Communicate & connect people. ( Source - Making people friendly towns )

does not communicate. This leads to a cultural shock.

However if the cues are understood, the environment communicates. The potential cues in an urban environment are listed out by Rapport (1982, p106)

### **Physical elements**

- Vision :**
- Shape, size, scale, height, color, materials, texture, details decoration, graffiti, urniture, furnishing etc.
  - Space, quality, size, shape, paving barriers, enclosing elements, links etc.
  - light and shade, light levels, light quality.
  - greenery, presence of planting, controlled versus natural, type of planting, arrangement.
  - age : new versus old
  - type of order, order versus disorder
  - perceived density
  - level of maintenance
  - topography - natural or man made
  - location - prominence, centrality versus periphery, hills or valleys, exposed or hidden etc.
- Sound :**
- Sound quality - dead versus reverberant, noisy versus quiet, human made sounds (industry, traffic, music, talk laughter etc.) versus natural sounds.
  - (winds, trees, birds, water etc) temporal changes in sound.

Smells : - human made versus natural, such as industry, traffic etc. versus plants, flowers, the sea etc. "pleasant" versus "unpleasant" foods and the type of food etc.

**Social elements :**

People - language spoken, behavior, their dress, physical type occupation, age & sex etc.

Activities & Users - Intensity, types such as industry, clubs, restaurants, residential, religious, fairs, markets, shops, recreation; separated and uniform versus mixed; cars, pedestrians or other travel modes, cooking, eating, sleeping, playing etc.

Objects - Signs, advertisements, foods, decor, fences, lawns, plants and gardens, possessions etc.



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These cues communicate to people. "These cues found in the physical environment as signs and symbols - "audio visual, literal or abstract, mental or physical act as a penitent stimulus that elicits an inmate response from a specific group." (Rapport, 1992 p50) A specific cultural group can respond with the correct behavior. Members of a culture know how to act appropriately in various settings. "People need to be seen as behaving in places that have meaning for them, that define occasions or situations. In terms of behavior in environments situations include social occasions and their settings - who does what, where, when, how and including whom. Once the code is learned, the environment and its meaning play a significant role in helping as judge, people and situations by means of cues provided and interpreted in terms of one's culture and particular subculture." (Rapport 1982 p59) Even though members of a culture know the settings and the situations with which they are associated, different cultures have different settings, and the behavior appropri-

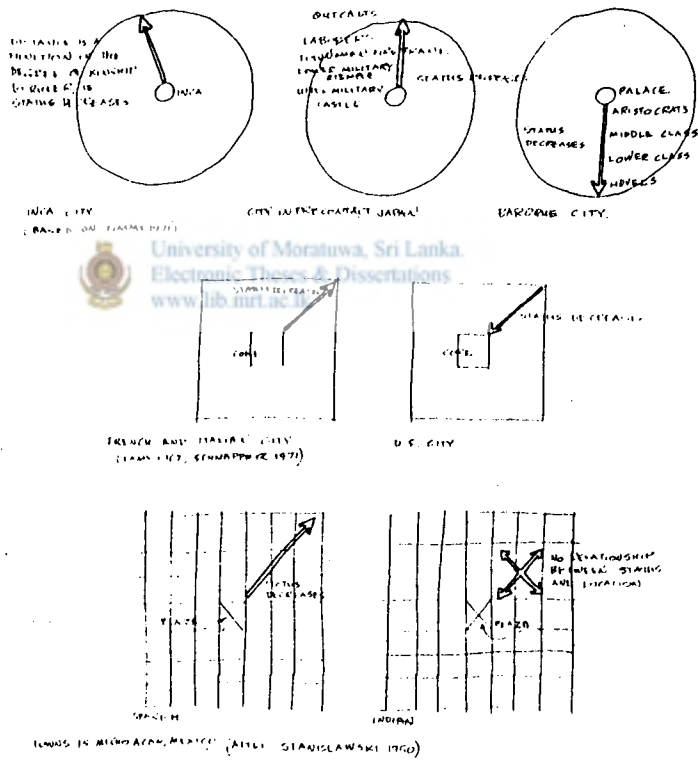
ate to apparently similar settings may vary in different cultures.

Colour is one such cue which users of various cultures can decode to form different meanings. Colour in mourning can be white or black to different cultural groups. Some cultures even use the colour purple to denote mourning. Another such colour cue is yellow colour. Yellow was used as a stigma colour by the Nazis whereas it has the opposite meaning in Buddhist culture. Another environmental cue that varied from culture to culture was the relationship between the city center and status. In pre-industrial cities high status individuals live near the center, which is highly valued as in Inca city. Baroque town, and many others. (eg. Timms, 1971 p 220-221) This many still persist in some cities (eg. Cuplow 1961 (a), (b)) to the extent in Paris lower status groups ignore the center. (Lamy, 1967) In the US city today the center is seen as a dense. Lower class, dark area of low environmental quality and high crime rate, (Cox, cited in Seaman 1972, p 7-13), ie. the relationship of center and desirability is reversed. (Fig. 49a, 49b, 49c ) Thus the city center as cues denote status and people act accordingly. These examples show how different cultures have different cues which give different meanings and connections. Thus not only regulating human behavior but also evoking a sense of belongingness.

Hence peoples behavior in environments are related to the cues and its decoding. Which is intimately related to culture. **Therefore for environments in urban public spaces to work to connect, to be meaningful to evoke a sense of belongingness they must be "culture specific."**

A culture specific design creates a sense of belongingness by providing meaningful environments, thus connecting man, the urban dweller to a larger cultural group.


Within each culture there are sub cultures. People with the same culture but share "values, ideas and norms, understand and respond to the same symbols agree about



(Fig. 49a, 49b, 49c ) Cue - The relationship between the city center and status. ( Source - Human aspects of urban form )



child rearing, interaction, density and life style - and hence leisure, food clothing style, manners and rules". (Rapport 1977, p256) City has many sub cultural groups within a culture. The business communities, intellectual communities, teenage groups are such sub cultural group. Each sub cultural group has its own set of behavior. Thus they have their own set of environmental cues. Not only do sub cultural groups have their own set of behavior and environmental cues they have their own setting including their own urban public spaces. A space that they can gather and connect them self with others. Alexander (1977, p300) expresses such gathering spaces express as thus "Each subculture needs a center for its public life, a place where you can go to see people, and to be seen. Throughout history there have been places in the city where people who share a set of values could go to get in touch with each other."

Therefore it is considered that these spaces play a major role in satisfying the need for belonging by  connecting the urban dweller with his own sphere group. **Urban public spaces to work should also cater to sub cultural groups. To work they should be sub culture specific.**

### 3.3.2 A Place specific approach

The sense of belongingness is created through meanings and connections. Connections not only between people but also with the place. These meaningful connections with the place create the sense of belongingness. Connection through the Genius the guardian spirit of a place. What is the spirit of a place ?

When one refer to a place it generally gives the idea of either a location or area seen in its physical form. Thus the spirit of a place as the character of the physical form is usually considered. However it is not so. As D.H. Lawrance (1964, p20) wrote "Different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibrations, different chemical exhalation, different polarities and different stars; call

it what ever you like, but the spirit of place is a great reality". As Lawrence says spirit is a reality but identification and understanding of the spirit of the place looks complex thus pertaining a major stumbling block. There is however one possible way of clarifying the spirit of place by examining it's various components of its character. Thus like in chemistry by examining its components we could extract the essence or the spirit of a place.

However towards understanding the spirit of places one comes across several authors writings on components that make a place. The following indicate some ideas. In Camusis writings (1955, p 130-131) he says "components are the static physical settings, the activities and the meanings."

However there is another writer points out the components are "Each of these places will contain local, special attributes. The ingredients which product, these attributes are based upon :

1. Aspects of the existing natural environment such as land forms and topography, vegetation climate and the presence of water.
2. Cultural expressions such as bridges, forts or hilltop churches which are a reaction to landscape social, history, physical location, human activities and place as a cultural artifact.
3. The sensory experience, primary visual which results from the interaction of culture with the existing landscape.

Thus these components individually or as compounds, react, fuse together to bring out the spirit of the place. Thereby creating different places on locations with different characters. This uniqueness or the spirit of a place is what helps man to connect himself with a place and thereby giving him a sense of belongingness.

As Graham (1985, p 7) says "since remote time man has recognised the different

places have different characteristics. This characteristic is often so strong that it is in fact, determines the basic properties of the environmental image most people present, making them feel that they experience and belong to the same place”.

**Therefore any design of urban public spaces created to prove the sense of belongingness should be place specific.**

**Therefore the indigenous approach in an approach that is inherent to the place and the people. Through this people and place specificness creates connections and meanings which evoke the sense of belongingness.**

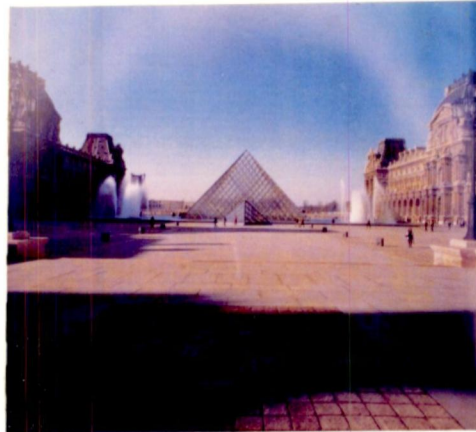
For example in the glass La Pyramids at Louvre (Fig 50a, 50b ) and the George Pompidou center are to recent urban public spaces which through its place and people specificness has created a sense of belongingness. Although the process of designing or the approach is not named, such approaches are begin carried out and spaces with the sense of belongingness are created. As these spaces create a sense of belongingness naturally in all senses the approach to design is named as The indigenous approach. The indigenous approach is unearthed.

### **3.4 Constituents of these spaces**

For an urban public space to evoke a sense of belongingness, to become meaningful and to develop connections a number of fundamental requirements must be met. These fundamental requirements could be :

1. Identity
2. Orientation
3. Legibility

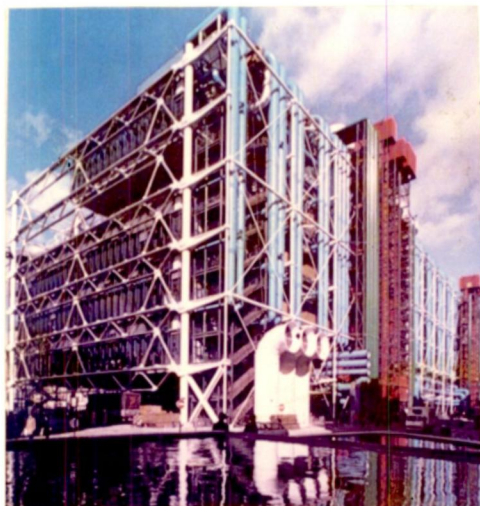
As schultz writes (1971, p35) “To gain essential foot hold man has to be able to orientate himself. He has to know where he is. At the same time he has to identify



(Fig. 50a ) La Pyramids at louvre  
A place & people ( for  
the french as a statement  
- commisioned by Francois  
Mitterrand) (Source - A  
New spirit in architecture. )



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(Fig. 50b ) George pompidou  
Center. France.  
(Source- Architecture  
today )

himself with the environment.” Therefore to evoke a sense of belongingness in a space, identity and orientation becomes fundamental requirements. Yet in order to identify and orient himself man has to be able to read the nonverbal language. Thus these communication systems should be legible.

### **3.4.1 Identity**

Identity is the “ extent to which a person can organize or recall a place as being distinct from other places as having a vivid, or unique or at least a particular, character of its own”. (Lynch, 1984; p131) This intense familiarity can help create a sense of belongingness.

Such place identity is also closely related to personal identity. This personal identification is a psychological function which enables man to identify himself with the environment. “To be inside a place, is to belong to and to identify with it and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with the place.” (Relph, 1975; p44)

This insideness creates an identity that evoke a sense of belongingness. Relph (1975, p51) as classified insideness as following :

#### **Vicarious insideness**

Evoking a sense of identity and thus belongingness by second hand or vicarious way of experience. This is by not actually visiting these places but through travel accounts, pictures, painting and poetry. The observer transports himself into the world of dreams and identifies himself in such environments. This experience depends on the artist’s skills, our own imagination and empathetic inclinations. It also corresponds with our experience of such familiar place. “We know what it is like to be there because we know what it is like to be here” (Relph, 1975; p53)

### **Behavioral insideness**

“Behavioral insideness consist of being in a place and seeing it as a set of objects, views and activities arranged in certain ways and having certain observable qualities.” (Relph, 1975; p53) This is profoundly and clearly felt in enclosed places with public activities.

### **Empathetic insideness**

To be inside a place empathetically is to understand that place, its meaning and hence to identify with it, for these meanings are not only linked to the experience and symbols of the place, but also stems from one's own experience. Thus the identity of place experienced through empathetic insideness is much deeper and richer than that is known through behavioral insideness. Thus identity is not just an address or set of appearances, but a complete personality with which the insideness is intimately associated with.



### **Existential insideness**

However to be inside a space and experience it does not imply that existentially we are insiders. Most people experience insideness when at home, in their birth place, where they are know to everyone and every place is known to them. Thus “Existential insideness is part of knowing implicitly that this place is where you belong - in all other places were are existential out siders no matter how open we are to their symbols and significances”. (Relph, 1975; p55)

These insideness create the feeling of here and thus an identity which evokes a sense of belongingness.

### 3.4.2 Orientation

In order to belong, to gain existential foot hold man has to identify and orient himself. He has to know where he is with in reference to an unknown surrounding. So sense of orientation is needed.

Orientation is "knowing where (or when) one is, which implies knowing how the other places (or time) are connected to this place." (Lynch, 1984; p270) This poor orientation means homeless lost in time and effect.

Usually orientation is established with a structure or location. People may use many different clues to establish location. This may be by recognition of a characteristic form, or activity in spaces or by sequential linkages, land marks, paths or edge continuation nodes, gradients, panoramas and by other means.



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There is also an orientation to time. And Lynch (1984, p268) says "the deep sense of orientation in time is very likely more important to most people than the corresponding sense of orientation in space. More over, since our internal representation of time is poorer than our internal representation on external, clues help to keep us temporarily well oriented". Thus clues, forms and sequences are very useful for anchoring and extending our temporal orientation.

However to identify and orient oneself the spatial patterns, forms, signs, symbols & clues of the non verbal communication system must be legible.

### 3.4.3 Legibility

In order to identify and orient himself man decodes the non verbal clues. The urban environment is a medium of non verbal communication, displaying signs and symbols. Signs and symbols such as flags, lawns, fences, sign boards, letters, pictures.

These signs and symbols communicate to us of status ownership group affiliation, hidden functions, behavior and many more. But in order to decode they should be legible.

Legibility is "the degree to which the inhabitants of a settlement are able to communicate to each other via its symbolic physical features".(Lynch, 1984; p260) (Fig. 51)

The more legible these signs and symbols are it would be easier to decode and attach meanings and connections and thus to identify and orient one self. This connections would help one to root himself to the space. Thus creating a sense of belongingness.

### **3.5 Attributes of space**

There exist a natural diversity and complexity in any urban public space. Their spaces and forms, must acknowledge the functions they accommodate, the user they serve, the purpose and meaning they convey the scope and context they address. It is in recognition of this natural diversity, complexity and hierarchy in these spaces that attributes of the space is discussed.

In any space there are some fundamental attributes associated with it. These attributes are the devices that allow the diverse forms and spaces of an urban public space to co-exist within an ordered and unified city as a whole. They are the centers, the enclosure and the continuity.

#### **3.5.1 Center**

Man in order to orientate and identify himself needs centers. Even the child's world is subjectively centered. Child has the ability to reach out into the surrounding, into his environment which consist of few stable elements as his centers.



(Fig. 51 ) Legibility.  
( Source - Responsive  
environment )

As the child's perception, perception of man's space is subjectively centered. So much so that the need for centers has been so strong that since remote times man thought that the whole world is centralized. In many legends the center of the world as thought to be a tree or the axis mundi. The "Romans considered their capital as caput mundi, for Islam "Ka, aba is still the center of the world". (Schultz 1971, 18-19p). Therefore man in other words has developed an emotional attachment to centers especially central places.

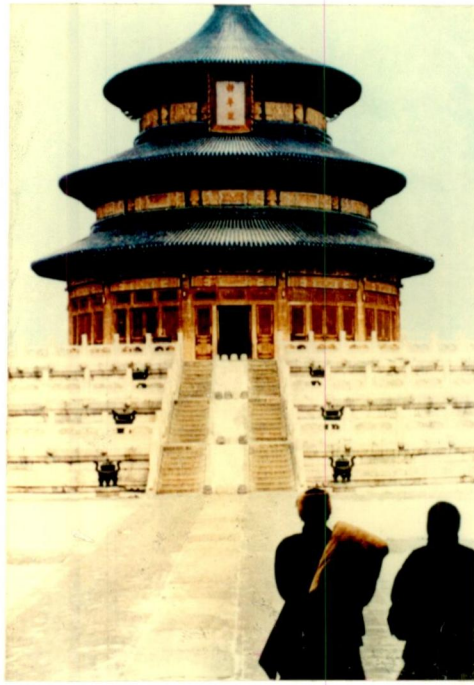
Central places could be considered as a space where action takes place, or place where particular activity is carried out, or a place of social interaction. Therefore a center can be considered as a goal or foci in our experience.

They are points of departure from which we orient ourselves and take possession of the environment. (Fig. 52a )

The prestige of the center is well established when all human groups tend to regard their homes, homeland, region as the center of the world. They develop emotional attachment to the place, They identify it as a place which represents their social values. In this sense a center may be a landmark, a place, a city or an enclosure. It gains character through its meaning. This in turn helps to identify and orientate himself with his surroundings. It is the point where man acquires his position in contrast to the unknown outside world, The point where he lingers and live in the space.

In the city layout of many European cities, especially in urban public spaces the application of centers could be identified. Michelangelo clearly demonstrates the fundamental and timeless character of man's need for a center in his Capitoline Square Rome. (Fig. 52b) One of the contemporary centers created in urban public space is L' Archi de La De' fence, Paris. ( Fig. 53 )

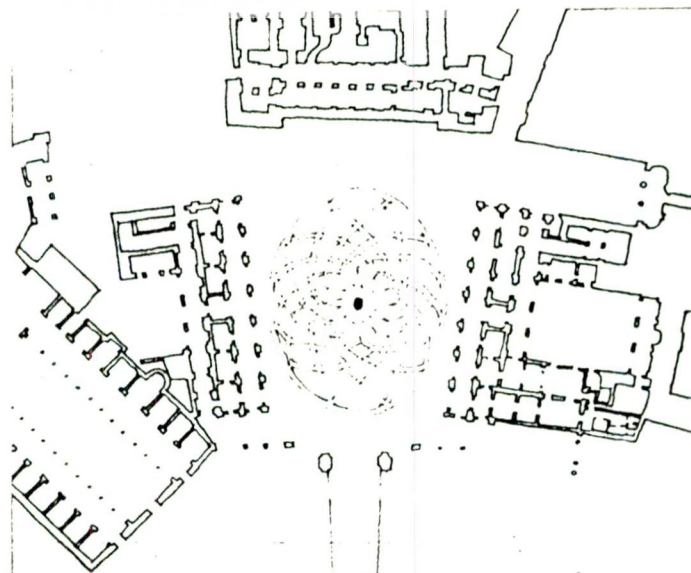
These centers could also be objects in space. Elements such as sculpture, water



(Fig. 52 a ) Center - Point of departure or point of orientation.



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PIAZZA del CAMPIDOGGIO: ROME (Michelangelo C.1544)  
The equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius marks the center of this urban square.

(Fig. 52b ) Michelangelo's Capitoline Square, Rome. Center & enclosure well defined.



features that provide accents or focal points and make space memorable. Objects are also used to anchor the center and to give vitality to space. (Fig. 54 )

### 3.5.2 Enclosure

Enclosure may be considered as man's first real attempt to take possession of the environment.

Man's activities on earth take place in the earth, an indefinite space. An indefinite horizontal space which makes him feel restless and lost. He seeks reassurance. He seeks anchorage. He seeks the distinction between the protected insiderness to the unprotected outsiderness. The need to be inside is a fundamental need in order to dwell. Thus in order to create a protective insiderness, in order to dwell, man encloses himself. Thus enclosure becomes a basic property in man made spaces. Tuan (1977, p166) explains "At first there is wilderness, undifferentiated space. A clearing is made in the forest to build houses. Immediately differentiation occurs the demarkation, edge of land created an enclosure from the wilderness outside". (Fig. 55 ) And man has recognized the need for enclosure from time in memorial.

Enclosure "primarily means a distinct area which is separated from the surroundings by means of a boundary." (Schultz 1971, p30) Bernini's piazza, Piazza San Pietro Rome ( Fig. 56 ) has a well defined enclosure, which separates the piazza from the surroundings.

Urban public spaces as open spaces in contemporary cities are admired when they are really closed. When there is no sense of enclosure the space is too open to be perceived as space. Thus these ill defined spaces without measurable enclosures not only fail to connect the city in a coherent way and form anti spaces but also exposes man to a sense of outsiderness. Therefore enclosure plays a vital role in urban public spaces.



(Fig. 53 ) Contemporary center-  
L' Archi de La De'fence,  
Paris ( Source Architecture  
& designn)



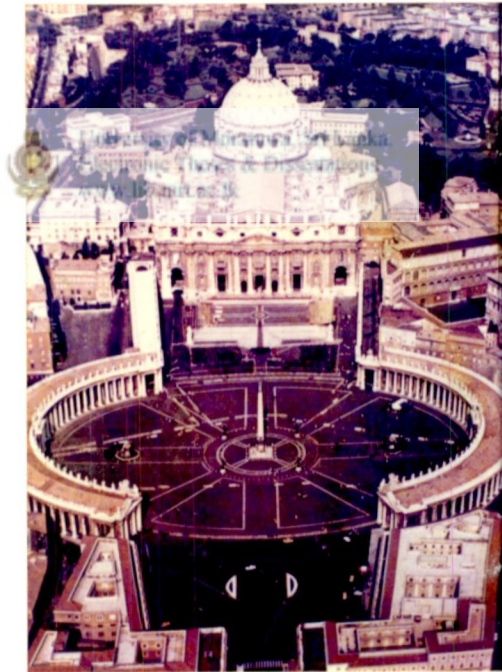
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(Fig. 54 ) Objects used to anchor  
the center. ( Source -  
Responsive Environment )



(Fig. 55 ) Clearings in wilderness.  
Creates an enclosure.



(Fig. 56 ) Bernini's Piazza San Pietro  
Rome. Enclosure well defined.  
( Source - Vatican )

Any man made space, its character and spatial properties are determined by how it is enclosed. The following properties determine the sense of enclosure. Dimension such as proportions, scale, surface and edges of enclosing elements, the shape and configuration of enclosure and the openings in the enclosing elements. ( Fig. 57 )

Enclosure could not only be manifested through dense cluster of buildings and built elements but also by a mere change of texture of the ground. (Fig. 58 )

With enclosure comes boundaries. Heidegger (1971, p 154) says “ boundaries is not that which something stops but as the Greek recognized the boundary is at which something begins its presencing.” Therefore boundaries could create enclosures which may not be visible.

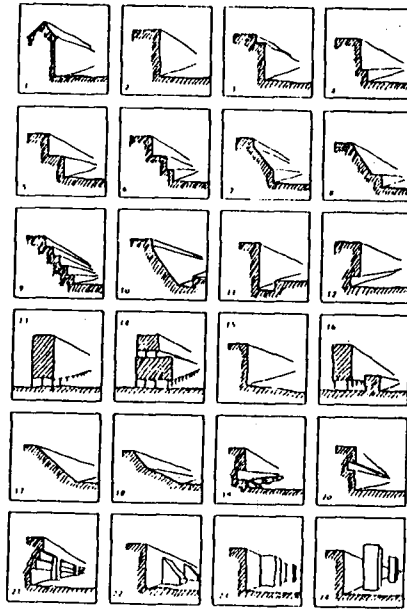
Street artist take the advantage of enclosures create an instant visual boundary a state, around which a crowd forms. ( Fig. 59 ) This is a mobile visual boundary. Yet invisible social boundaries could also be formed among groups of people in cities. These boundaries are invisible but create enclosures.

### 3.5.3 Continuity

“Any closed form, has to be entered, and direction is there by introduced. For a house not to become a prison it must have opening into the world beyond, that connects this inner world with the outer.” (Schultz, 1971, p25)

This connection of the inner and outer world, the connection between the enclosed and the open is continuity. (Fig. 60 ) Continuity bridges the gap and thus creates the connection shattered by the enclosure.

Continuity is created through paths. Visual or physical paths. Hence when there is



(Fig. 57 ) Enclosing elements define the sense of enclosure.  
( Source - Emerging concepts in urban space design )

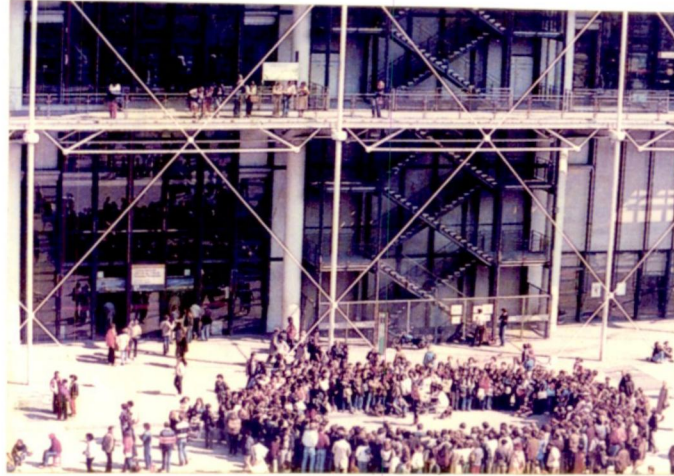


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Rome, Italy 1

(Fig. 58 ) Change in texture creates enclosure. ( Source - Responsive Environment )



(Fig. 59 ) Human Enclosure.  
Street artist  
create an enclosure  
at George pomido  
center, France.



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(Fig. 60 ) Continuity.  
Through openings  
and paths.

a path, there is the beginning of the path, a direction, a movement or orientation, and the final destination, the end.

To exist space has to continue. It has to continue and weave a relationship between the environment and the people. Thus creating upheavals and experience. The experience of this spatial continuity colours up man's journey of life, creating a sense of belongingness. Bring in a personal attachment.





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## **Chapter Four**

### **CASE STUDIES**

#### **4.1 BASIS OF SELECTION**

In the previous chapter the need for the indigenous approach and the creation of spaces with the sense of belongingness was discussed. This chapter test the validity of the basis.

The case studies were selected from the two major urban center of Sri Lanka. The capital Colombo and the center of the hill country Kandy. Both of these urban centers have a population of over a million people and also has a cross section of all religions, races and classes in the country.

These urban centers provide the urban environments with diverse spatial experience. Some creating the sense of belongingness to various people. The case studies selected for this study are through the day to day experience of the urban community where the strong sense of belongingness exist through connecting people to specific group, people to specific cultural group, people to place. The high degree of involvement of the people in these spaces is another factor in selecting these spaces.

The sense of belongingness would be created at various levels in the urban environment. The highest level would be at the national level where the urban public space creates a sense of belongingness to every native person of the nation. Next to the national level would be creation of a sense of belongingness in urban public spaces to a specific cultural group. At the third level would be the creation of belongingness at a sub cultural group level.

Therefore the case studies selected also represent this hierarchy of urban public spaces.

1. National level - The Independence Square, Colombo
2. Cultural level - Mahamaluwa Kandy
3. Sub culture level - Summit Flat

## 4.2 Independence Square

### Description

Located away from the hub of activity of the city center is the Independence Square. (Fig. 61 ) The urban public space, the square is an open area of greenery surrounding an architectural element the Independence hall. (Fig 62 )

The space surrounding the Independence square is defined on the southern periphery by buildings of the department of Textile and Rural Development and a few colonial buildings. In the north the space is bordered by trees and greenery, the main avenue that leads to the square and the garden of the Iraqi Embassy. The eastern periphery is defined by the Sports Ministry grounds which is an open area with a clearly defined boundary. The ground is bordered by a row of trees and a steel fence. The western periphery too is bordered by a green belt. (Fig. 63 ). Therefore the trees, shrubs and other greenery play a major role in defining the space.

The Independence square is approached through a tree lined avenue, an axial path that terminates at the Independence hall ( Fig 64 ). The Independence hall becomes a central nucleus by which the surroundings are held in tension.

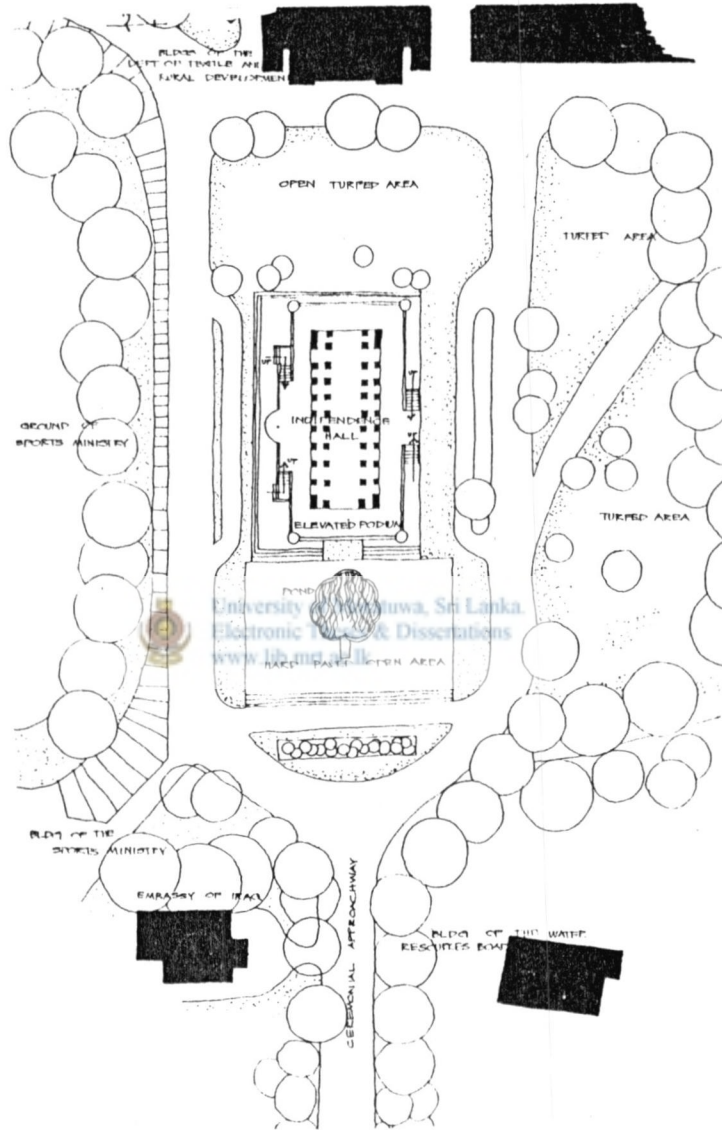
The Independence hall the central architectural elements is an open colonnaded structure resting on an elevated podium (Fig. 65a, 65b ).

### Observations

The independence square was designed by Wynn Jones in 1953 to commemorate the Independence of the nation. Since recently it has become the venue for Independence day celebrations and state funeral. However the space designed to be national monument and hence designed to create a sense of belongingness to all Sri Lankans at the national level has failed to do so. Why has it failed ?



(Fig. 61 ) Location map - Independence square  
Colombo.

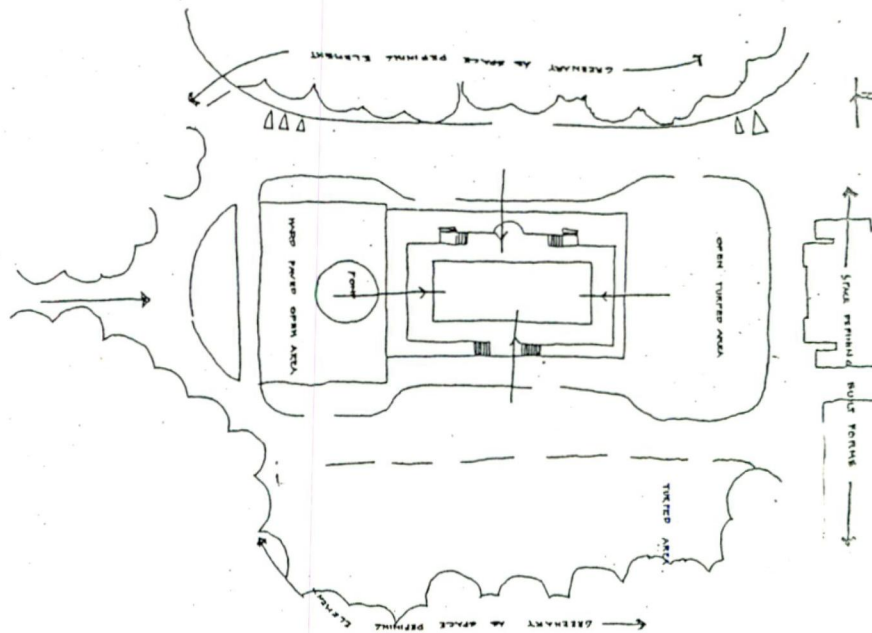


(Fig. 62 ) The urban public space, the square.

Spaces like the Mall in Washington DC ( Fig. 66, 67 ), The Statue of Liberty have created the national pride and the sense of belongingness to the people of that nation. Examining such spaces one can list out the reasons for their success. These spaces create the sense of belongingness primarily through their locations. Located in historic or prominent urban settings and they form an everyday experience of the city life. One passes these spaces in the course of their daily lives. They are not only located at strategic points in the city but also are led to these spaces through varying spaces with a spatial progression that terminates at this space. Another factor that contributes to the belongingness and national pride is the scale of these monuments. The Liberty statue, (Fig. 68 ) its scale and the location is the first sight that meets everyone's eyes as they sailed or travelled by air into New York. Thus the scale gives the prominence to these spaces.

However the Independence square with its tree lined avenue, the axial path, with the Independence hall as a visually terminating element and the symbolic ornamentations has not created the sense of belongingness to all Sri Lankans. Nor does it create the sense of liberation from our colonial masters. Located in residential area away from the everyday experience of the city is one reason for the failure to create a sense of belongingness at a national level. The surroundings of the square and the spatial experience that leads to the square does not signify the importance of the Independence hall, may be another reason for the failure. Yet the primary reason may be the scale of the hall which is in par or smaller than the buildings around it creating a domestic look. Hence the hall has lost its prominence and the sense of belongingness.

Lately the independence square is functioning as a gathering space for a limited group of people who daily and in weekends engage in recreational activities. (Fig. 69 ) The space surrounding the pond is widely used by families and children (Fig 70a, 70b ). Whereas the turfed landscaped space in the south and the area with greenery in the west of the buildings is mostly used by couples.



(Fig.63 ) The boundaries of the space.



(Fig. 64 ) The tree lined avenue,  
the Independence avenue,  
The focus, the Independence  
hall. Colombo.



(Fig. 65a ) The Independence hall  
the central nucleus.

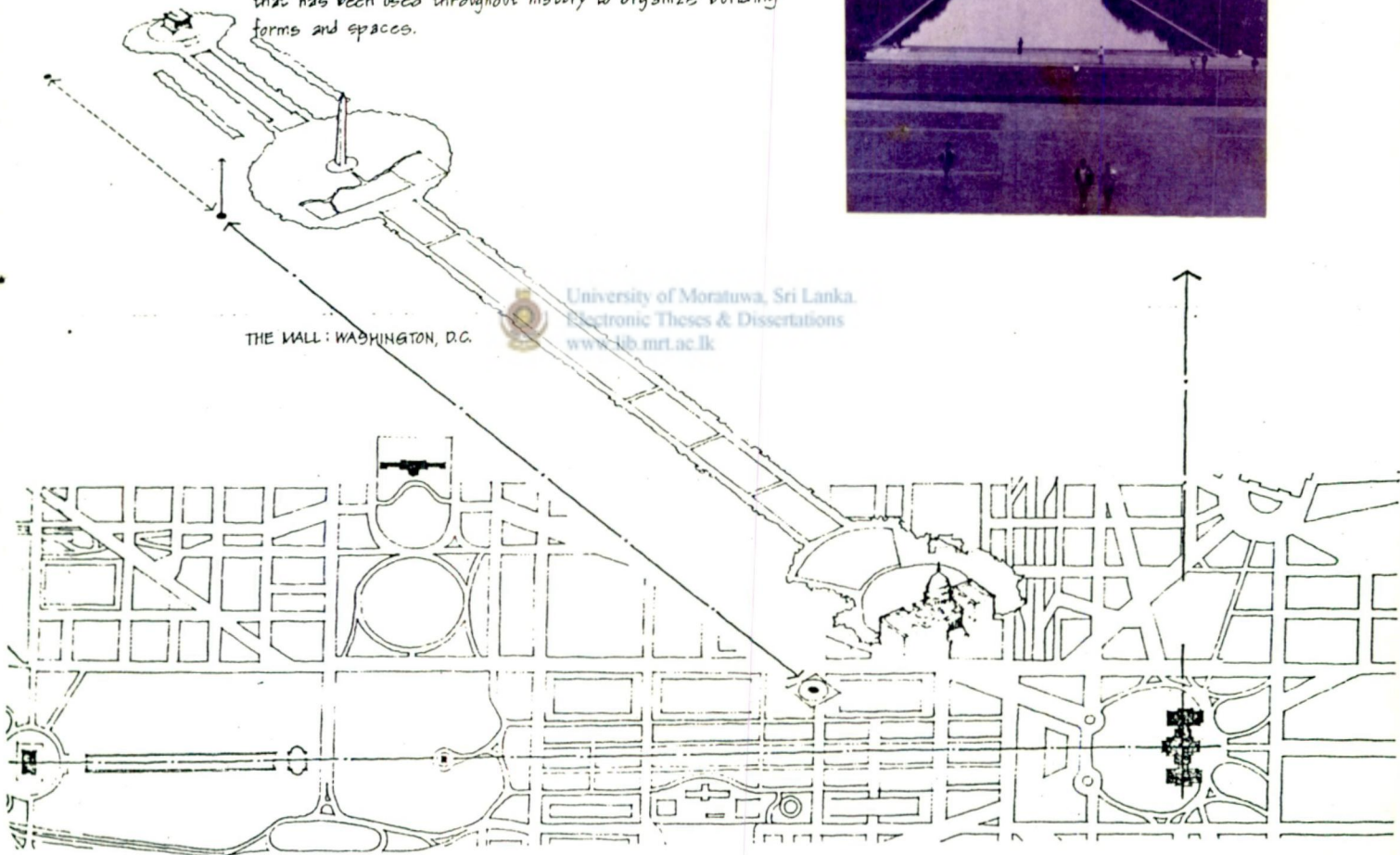
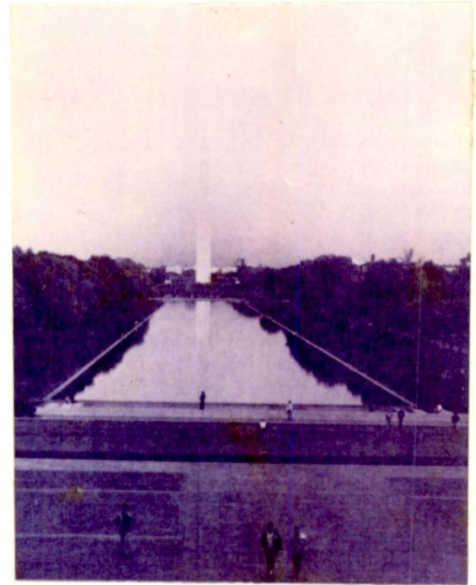


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(Fig. 65b ) The Ornate columns.

Two points, established in space by columnar elements or centralized forms, can define an axis, an ordering device that has been used throughout history to organize building forms and spaces.



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(Fig. 66 ) The Washington Mall  
( Source - Public Spaces )

(Fig. 67 ) The Location of Mall.  
Note - Location, scale, spatial  
progression. (Source - Space  
Form & Architecture )



(Fig. 68 ) Statue of Liberty. U.S.A  
Note the scale.  
( Source - Amazing  
buildings )



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(Fig. 69 ) The recreational activities.



(Fig. 70a ) Space arround the pond  
used by families.



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(Fig. 70b ) Greenery used by couples  
and teenagers.

### **People Specificness**

The urban public space has recently gained popularity as a gathering space for a specific sub cultural group, the upper and upper middle class city dwellers. Thus space as a gathering space creates a sense of belongingness by connecting people with people of the same views, culture and life styles. It connects people through the cues in the space.

One such cue is the location of the square. The square is located in a upper and upper middle class residential neighborhood. Thus enabling these dwellers to use this space.

Another cue is the well kept environment in this space induces the elite to use this space. The well kept, trimmed landscaped lawns, the fountain together with the elevated podium creating the sense of aloofness and prestige attracts the specific sub cultural group. (Fig. 71)

People, the users them self form an important cue to attract others of the same sub culture to use this space. The clothing, the vehicles, the activity they engage in act as cues. Communicating messages which attract same and repel others. (Fig 72 )

All these cues communicate and connect people of a specific sub culture group and creates the sense of belongingness to the people.

### **Place Specificness**

Although it has created a sense of belongingness to a specific sub cultural group through connecting people to people it has failed to capture the spirit of the place nor does it become a place it was intended to be. A place with a sense of belongingness at a national level. Thus is considered as a space which has a low level of success.



(Fig. 71 ) Cue - Well kept environment



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(Fig. 72 ) Another cue - The people

### 4.3 Mahamaluwa - Kandy

#### Description

Located in the hill capital Kandy is a unique space within the central religious area the Mahamaluwa. (Fig. 73 )

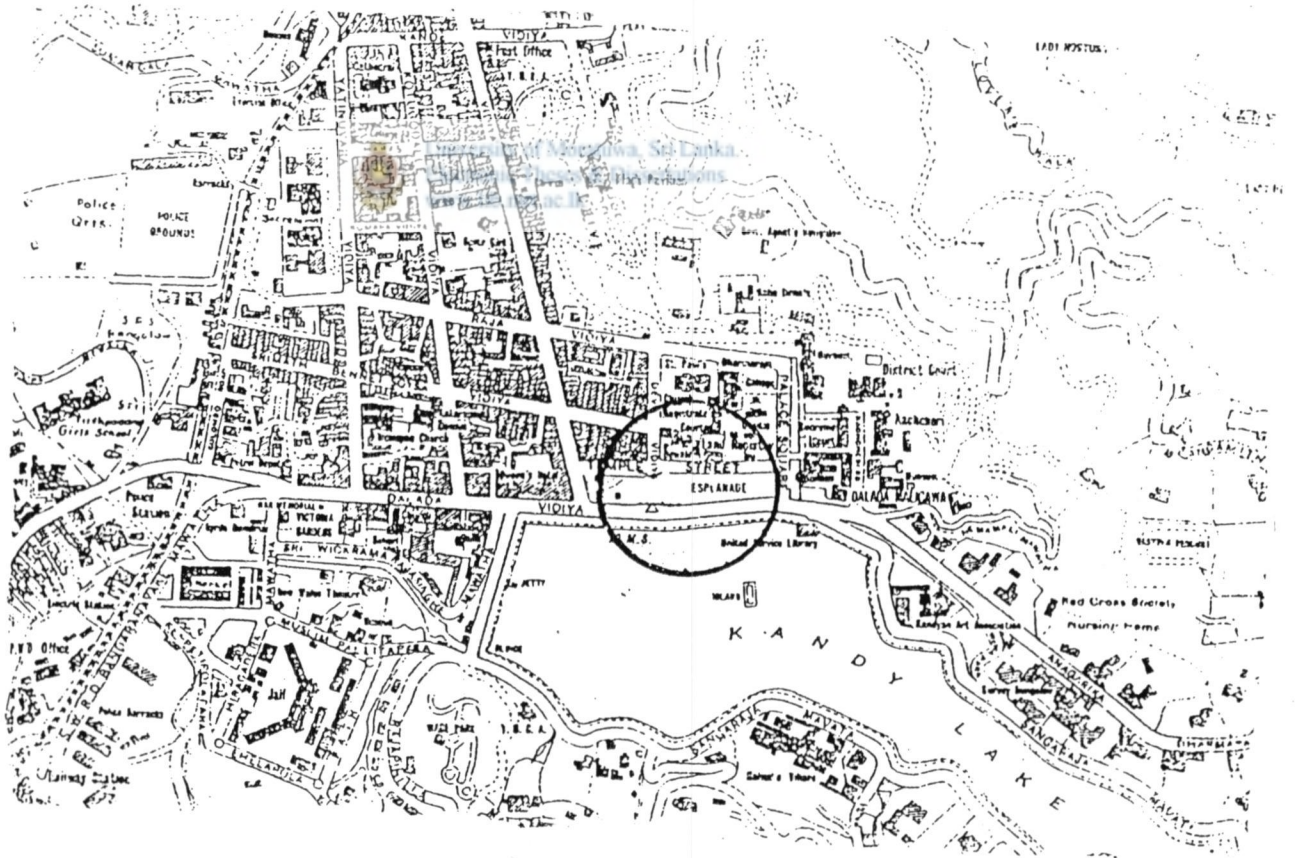
This urban public space is bounded on the east by the Maligawa the temple of the Tooth and in the North by a series of buildings, the Nartha Dewala, the Pathini Dewala, the Muladeni Mandiraya Old colonial buildings and the old Empire hotel. The southern boundary of this space is the Dalada Veediya. ( Fig. 74 ) The space is entered through the western boundary through the ceremonial entrance demarcated by the Vahalkada. ( Fig. 75 )

#### Observation

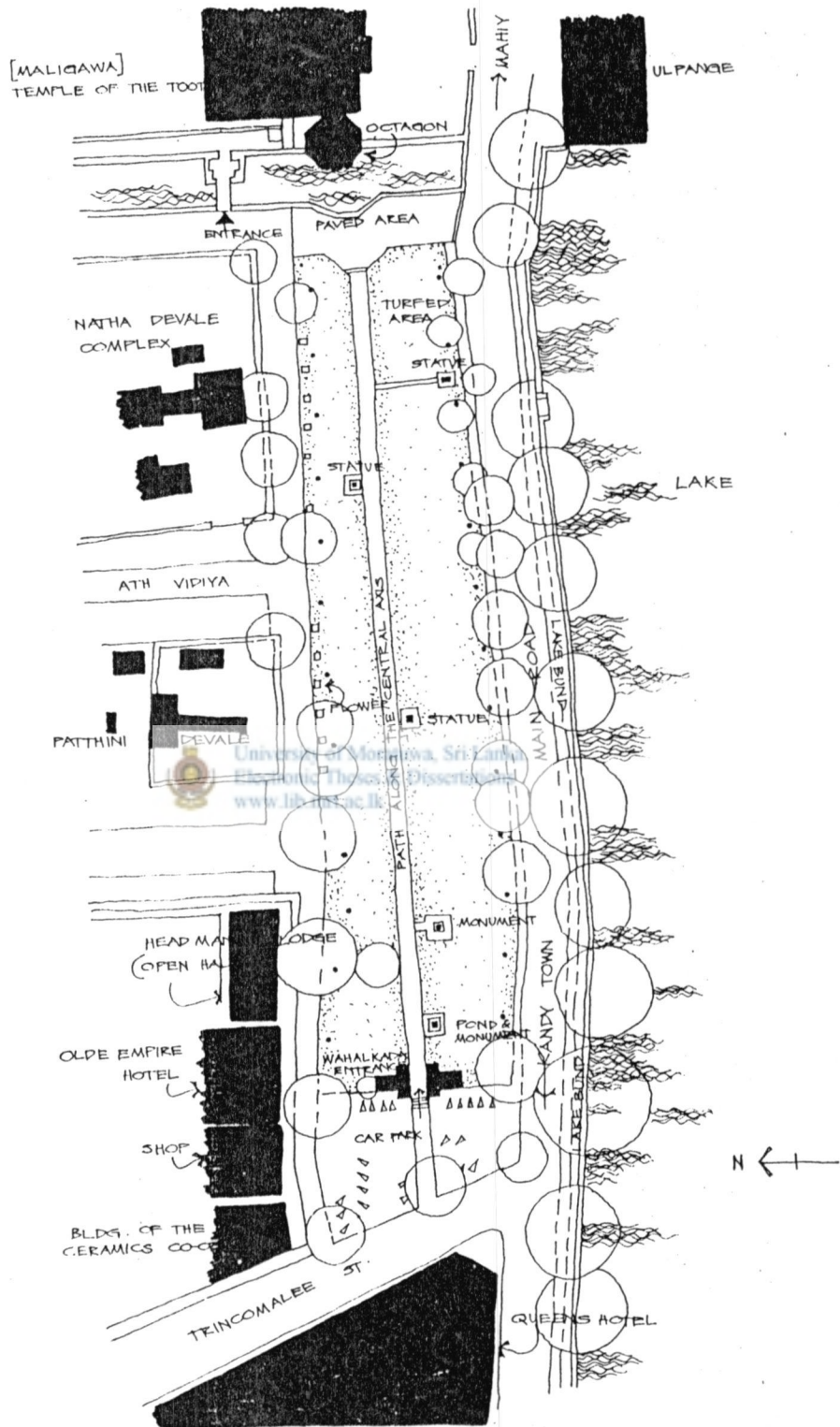
This space is unique as it possesses a dual nature in its spatial quality. On one hand the space is drawn towards the Maligawa, a dominantly directive force, and on the other hand the space is drawn along its length towards the lake and the surrounding hills. ( Fig. 76 )

The location of the space within the central religious area of the Devalas and the Temple gives it a strong religious identity. ( Fig. 77 ) This religious atmosphere is stronger than the influence of the nature, this force thus exerts a strong influence on the behavior of the users. Activities such as drinking alcohol and boisterous merry making are absent in this space. ( Fig. 78 )

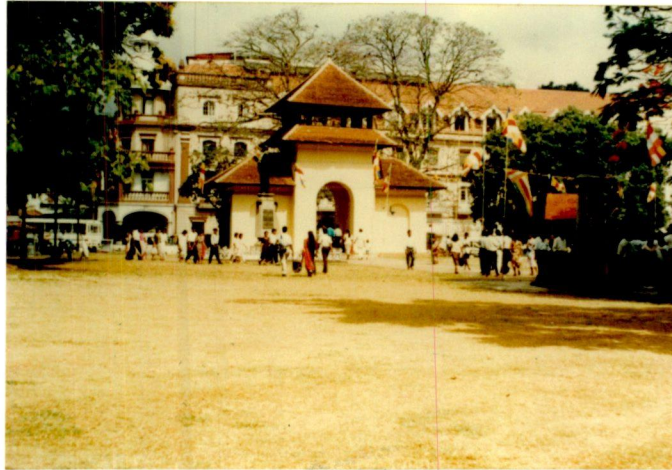
The activities within the space is mostly religious oriented. The activities such as selling and buying flowers, relaxation are carried out in this space. (Fig.79 ) The activities are directed towards the dominant architectural element the temple. Hence the open space is drawn towards the temple. This force is strengthened by the path which originates at the western end (from the Queens Hotel side) through the



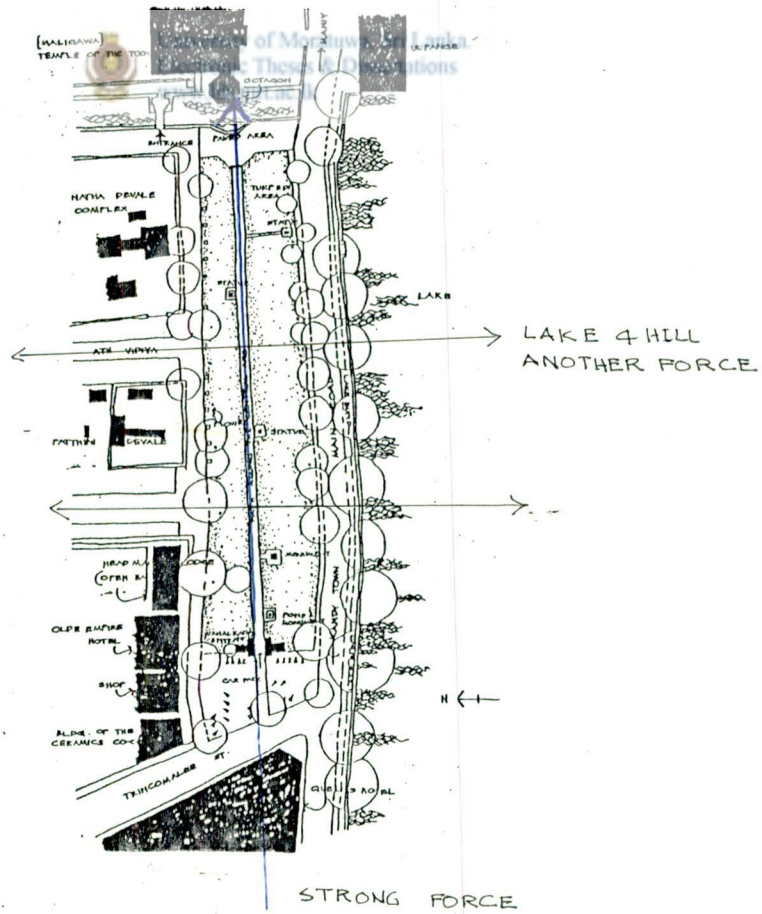
(Fig. 73) Location map Mahamaluwa Kandy.



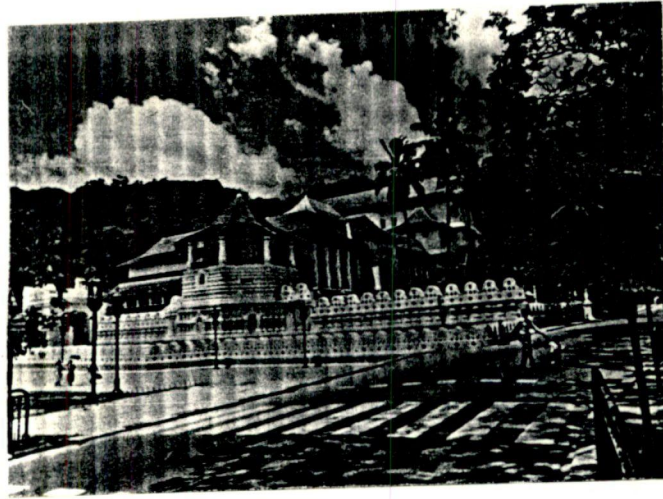
(Fig. 74 ) The space.



(Fig. 75 ) The entrance - Vahalkada.



(Fig. 76 ) The forces



(Fig. 77 ) The Temple of the Tooth Relic.  
A strong influence.



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(Fig. 78 ) Activities not boisterous.



(Fig. 79 ) But Religious oriented.



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(Fig. 80 ) The strong path draws a person towards the focus the temple.

ceremonial entrance to the temple. ( Fig. 80 )

Another area with activity is along the slightly elevated path along the lake bund with its decorative “Walakulu Bemma” (cloud parapet), is used for seating and pedestrian movement. ( Fig. 81 ) It also serves as a gathering place during ritual activities such as Perahara.

### **People Specificness**

The Maligawa enshrined with the tooth of Lord Buddha makes this space a sacred place for the Buddhists. Buddhist from all parts of Sri Lanka, from all class of the land come to worship to the temple throughout the year. Thus making the buddhist the major users of this urban public space. The historical significance and the aesthetic beauty also induces users from other races, religions to use this space. However the space creates the sense of belongingness to the people of the buddhist cultural group.



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The Maligawa, a majestic architectural building, with its symbolic importance creates the primary cue to all buddhist. ( Fig. 82 ) This sacred building binds all buddhist thus creating a sense of belongingness to the religion through this connection connects all buddhist to the place and to the larger cultural group.

Another cue is the buddhist people and the activity in this space. The people with their offering, the religious look in the faces, chanting of the religious verses the beating of drums, the white or sober colored kandyan clothing is another connection with the Sinhalese kandyan buddhist. (Fig. 83 )

### **Place specificness**

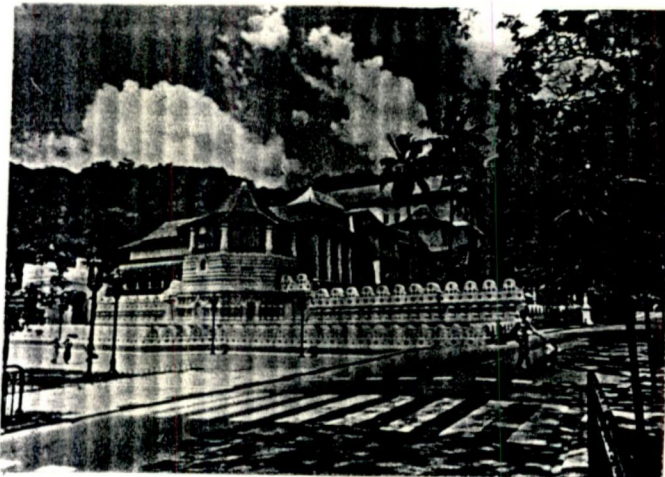
The last king of Kandy Sri Vikrama Rajasinghe (1798 -1815 A.C.) asked his royal architect to develop the city of Kandy as a city in the heaven. The architect thus



(Fig. 81 ) The elevated path along the bund is used for pedestrian movement.



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( Fig. 82 ) The Maligawa - a majestic architectural building.



(Fig. 83 ) Cue - The people



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(Fig. 84 a ) The spirit captured.

designed and explained his concept of his plan. He explained as thus "My lord, consider the 'Uda Vatha Kele' the thick dark foliage in the mountain forest behind the palace as the dark blue cloud "Neela Megha" with white buildings on terraces in the front and the linear white "cloud walls" (Valakulu bemma) along the terrace need to get reflected in the lake that is to be created in front of the palace complex by dredging the paddy fields belonging to the Malwatha Vihara. My Lord you will see the reflections of the cloud wall in the water giving a floating effect to the place building among clouds as a city visualized in heaven: Thus the Royal architect not only built his dream but also captured the spirit of the place. ( Fig. 84a ) He has cleverly integrated the environmental, topographical symbolic and aesthetics in developing the beautiful city.

Within this beautiful city, located next to the lake and the place is this urban public space. The small scale of the space, the lake, the magnificent Maligawa in the forecourt and the lush green hills as a backdrop makes a person feel their presence. The hills provide a sense of enclosure this creating an insiderness. ( Fig. 84b ) This sense of "here" enhanced by the screen of foliage along the lake and thus making the outside world remote.

The entry into the space is demarcated by the Vahalkada entrance the space. These together with the special progression towards the focus, the temple gives enclosure, focus, continuity hence identity, orientation creating a strong sense of belongingness.

Therefore the Mahamaluwa effectively captures spirit of the place, the spirit of the people, creating a strong sense of belongingness to the buddhist cultural group and to the Kandyan people. Not only creates a strong sense of belongingness for the present generation but to all future generation too.



(Fig. 84b ) The hills provides-  
a backdrop  
a sense of enclosure.

#### **4.4 Summit Flats**

##### **Description**

Situated in the Colombo city in an high class residential neighborhood is the summit flats.( Fig. 85 )

Originally the area had colonial villa type bungalows with large landscaped gardens. ( Fig. 86 ) The need for houses during the Non Aligned Summit demanded housing for upper income urban dwellers. The government acquired the lands in an around this area (Keppitipola Mawatha) in order to build these houses.

The neighborhood to this residential flats is entered through Keppitipola Mawatha. The whole scheme consist of 44 housing blocks and each block consist of 2 - 7 flats. The housing units are arranged in a dispersed pattern in order to blend with the existing surroundings. (Fig. 87)



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##### **Observation**

The most important feature which gives a special character to this neighborhood is woven pattern of the old colonial bungalows, the new units and the open spaces with the shady trees. (Fig. 88, 89 )

Another is the inter connected links at the upper level. These not only connect housing units at the upper level and provide shade for activities on the ground floor but also as the connect verandas of one house to another and as well designed public spaces for people and children to gather and to play. (Fig. 90 )

##### **People Specificness**

The summit flats designed to house the upper and upper middle class urban dweller. A large percentage of the users are the top ranking government officers, who live in

these houses during the course of their services. Therefore due to the time limitations and norms of this class their circle of friends in the neighbourhood is maintained to a limited number. To a few family units. Hence the small public spaces at each neighborhood level helps to maintain this friendship to a small group. ( Fig. 91) around the housing units. This also allows to maintain their privacy as a small group unit a basic need for this class of people.

Another cue that creates people specifness as the well kept neat public spaces. The residential environment of an urban low income neighbourhood have no trees, whether beaten houses or temporary houses, litter on the side walks, crowding, noise and buildings with no architectural style. (Fig. 92 ) This environment in the Summit Flats is entirely different. The environment has lots of shady trees well maintained permanent houses, well dressed people, medium density, quiet and residences with architectural style. (Rapport, 1982) (Fig. 93 ) These cues communicate to people creating social boundaries which attempt to exclude particular groups of people. Thus creating a sense of exclusiveness, pride, identity and hence a sense of belongingness.

### **Place specifness**

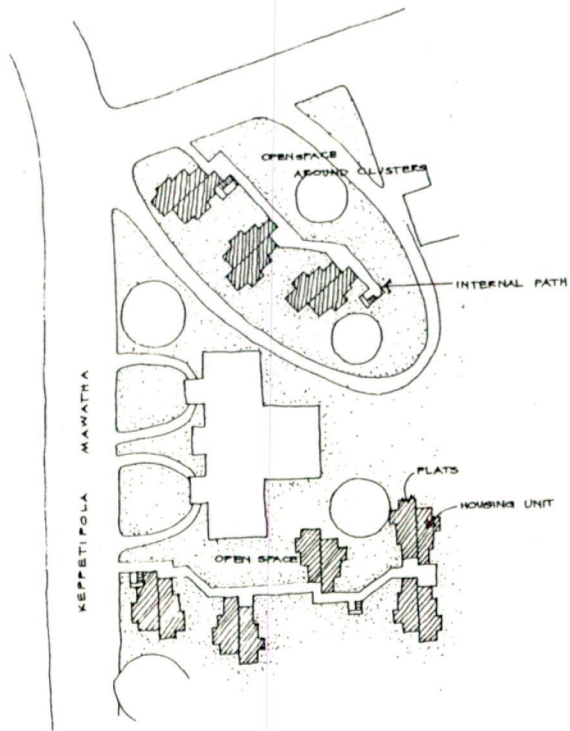
The design instead of demolishing the villas fragmenting the land the old villas were allowed to remain as they were. But the boundaries of the villas were reduced there by creating pockets of land in between villas to introduce small blocks of flats.

The old shady trees were retained and open public spaces were built and in some instances the shady trees could be touched and viewed at the eye level from the linkages at the upper floor. ( Fig. 94 )





(Fig. 86 ) The area map.  
Keppitipola mawatha.



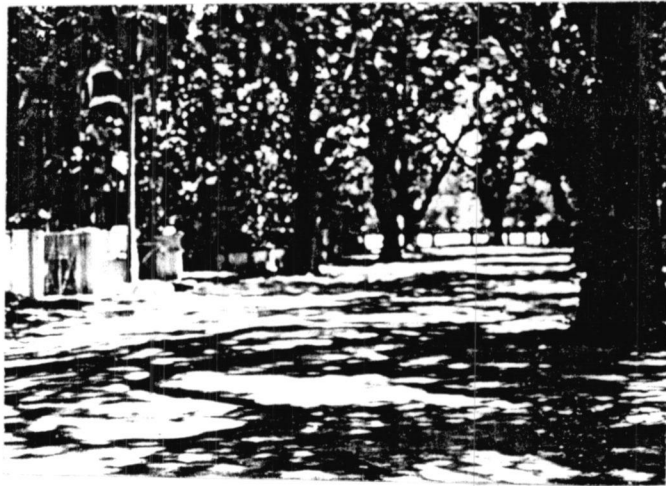
(Fig. 87 ) The public spaces-  
in and around the flats.



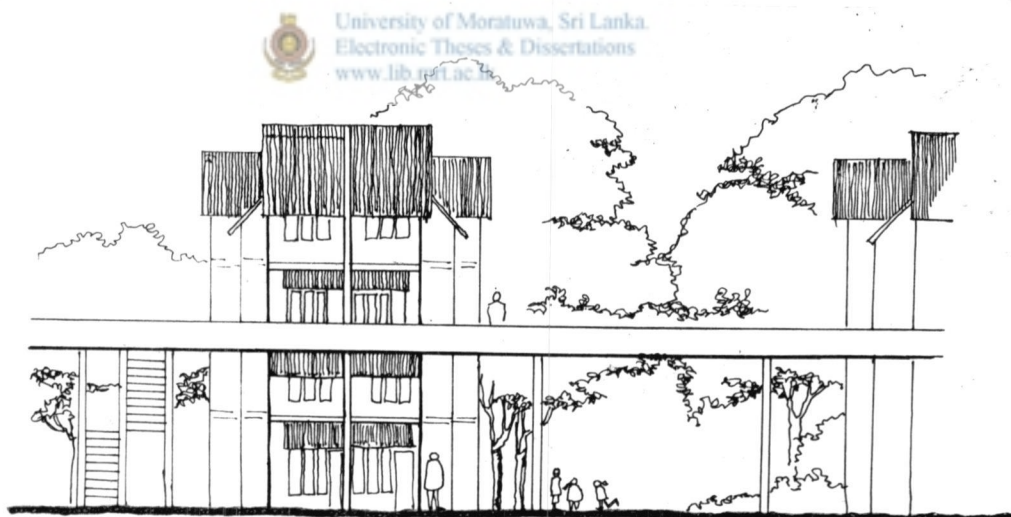
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(Fig. 88 ) The Old bungalows.



(Fig. 89) The shady trees-- retained



(Fig. 90 ) Children's play spaces.  
Under the links.



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(Fig. 91 ) Links as public spaces  
serve as small intimate  
community spaces.



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(Fig. 92 ) Cue - Low income residential  
area. Note the environment,  
the buildings & the people.



(Fig. 93 ) Cue - Here the environment is the opposite. Well kept, clean environment with well dressed people.



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(Fig. 94 ) Linkages - Upper level trees could be touched. Making the sense of earth & the environment.



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**Conclusion**

*"Today's urban scene is a jungle over grown malformed, a product of chaotic planned growth, encouraged by competition that is wasteful, unwise and immobilizing. Man struggles through a tangle of people packed buildings, choked traffic, snarled streets and multitude of signs which are an assault to the sense and the eyes. All elements seem to work at cross purposes, in comprehensible to him."*

(Jenks 1987, p53)

Thus life has become a struggle to the urban man in the urban scene, his environment. He is not only in struggle with his environment but also within himself. This life has become a struggle without his knowledge as his making desperate attempts to search for new ways and means of full filling ambitions, an desires. Science and technology have been emence help to the urban man to achieve his aspirations and ambitions. His achievements are vast and unimaginable. He has conquered the earth, the sea, the sky and now is in the process of conquering unknown. But on the second thought has man really won the struggle and conquered the world? Or as he been labeled as a conqueror. Has he been a victim of the circumstances. Man has become a product of his circumstances. Conquer who needs no attachments or anchorage but a perfect man without any emotional bondage. However man like all animals has a human quality to attach and seek a point of reference.

In such urban environment and for the urban man who has lost the sense of belongingness, the well designed urban public space as revealed in the study and detailed out in chapter one plays a significant part as an existential, anchorage space. Such well designed urban public spaces with meanings and connections that evoke a sense of belongingness are more important since they provide a worthy experience to the urban dweller.

Such significant urban public spaces with worthy experiences touches people within up, lifts them and activate emotion towards the urban spaces, cities and the nation.

It binds the people to places, makes them become an integral part of the space, place and register permanent memories of these spaces of cities. Ensures his existence in the struggle in the ever changing world.

Therefore it is obvious that architects should be more aware of creating urban public spaces with meanings and connections which evoke the sense of belongingness.

Making of these spaces, the process of making is the approach, the indigenous approach, the approach that is inherent to the place and to people. This study was conducted in this context and in this basis an approach was unearthed. An approach growing with the passage of time. However this process remained unnoticed by many due to upheavals, introduction of many trends. This study searched, unearthed and brought out its validity.



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Essential characteristic or quality inherent in this approach is the people and place specificness. Through catering to the needs, values of the people and capturing the spirit of the people and the place. Through the people and place specificness creates meanings and connections which evoke a sense of belonging naturally to the urban dweller. It is such spaces that have captured the two spirits, create the spatial quality of belongingness that humanize spaces, up lifts one through the feelings generated by mundane experience and provides him with a better bond with his environment and fellow men.

Such spaces not only can prove an humanize space that evoke a sense of belongingness but also can help overcome many urban problems. Problems such as cultural shock, lack of character, alienated spaces and most importantly absence of belongingness could be overcome with the indigenous approach in designing urban public spaces with such spatial quality.

However definite design principles to formulate spaces of this quality cannot be named. It is important to know and to understand the places and places before designing without pre assumptions.

Therefore in conclusion a directional thought is suggested through propositions in order to create urban public spaces with a spatial quality that evokes the sense of belonging.

### **Proposition 1**

**That no urban public spaces should be designed and created without reasonable investigation, in depth through first hand experience of the users, the people and the place.**

The present and widely used approach, the drawing board approach, takes into consideration aesthetics, economy, the client's brief, and expression and concentrate on them as essential factors to designing of urban public spaces. This method of designing should be dropped.

Architects should look, search deeper into the qualities of the spaces, the spirits of these spaces, the spirit of the people and there needs. These aspects should be investigated, understood and in turn be incorporated as the exercise of creating meaningful urban public spaces.


In depth investigations and dialogue can be helpful in achieving this aspect of design. Good discussions with the locale people with examples from other places and times can reveal the dimensions and meanings to which they respond to strongly. These could be incorporated into the designs to make it meaningful and enduring.

## **Proposition 2**

**That planning and creating urban public spaces be based on the unique attributes of the place and the people. Thus designing should be people and place specific.**

The first position would lead to establishing these unique attributes of the place and the people.

Sometimes these attributes are experienced in our day to day lives. It is neither a magical idea as one may imagine it. Rather it is realistic. It is the own essence of the people and the place. It is the spirit of the people of the place.

However studying one locality or place and applying its attributes to all spaces is not suitable. People and places change form region to region, culture to culture, locality to locality.  Therefore any design should cater to the user, the people. [www.lib.mrt.ac.lk](http://www.lib.mrt.ac.lk) Therefore the design, should be locality based people and place specific design.

## **Proposition 3**

**Urban public space be preempted by vision.**

Urban designers, architects should deal in dreams or visions. Visions that look into the future. Visions that would accommodate all and be meaningful overtime.

Architects need all sorts of tricks up their sleeves to implement those visions or to persuade others that they are worth implementing. However design alone would not create meaningful spaces that evolve overtime.

Design and management are the two endless process of creating meaningful spaces which could adopt to change. Therefore an urban public space need sound management policies that could help create changes in urban public spaces.

#### **Proposition 4**

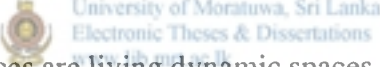
##### **The power of shared vision.**

To be successful every time, urban public spaces design and management must be motivated by a shared vision among those who initiate, create, tend and use the place. A durable, shared vision could be both unified and inclusive of all.

This shared vision may create certain hurdles through dominance of individuals or groups. There could be the dominance of the professional on one hand and the laymen or the client on the other. What is needed is a collective effort, with due acknowledgement that creates an end product with an wholesome experience.

#### **Proposition 5**

##### **Urban public spaces should be architecturally unfinished.**

 Urban public spaces are living dynamic spaces. So are people and places. And in the process of making spaces, it is the quality, activity and not the space alone that is built and destroyed and rebuilt. For this reason it is essential that people do shape their surroundings for themselves. Since these spaces will not have the quality, activity unless they are felt, created and maintained by the people whose actions goes into these spaces.

No space can be created and built by professionals for others to live in. These spaces can only be partly finished by a professional.

This is like a shoe. The cobbler could professionally design and create a shoe but cannot create the perfect comfortable fit unless the user wears it in order to personalize and shapes it and creates the sense of belongingness.

Therefore spaces can only be partially created (architecture unfinished) in a proc-


ess in which the people who are part of it shape and maintain it and personalize it. Through personalization creates meanings of connections that evoke a sense of belongingness.

Such propositions are established by the author herself and are not strict, regulated rules as such. However the author strongly feels that if architects are to create better urban public spaces with sense of belongingness the above propositions could well act as a guide as how to bring about such a quality.

The indigenous approach is however a continuous approach and is not static. An external process which is evolving to form, design create better meaningful enduring positive urban public spaces.



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