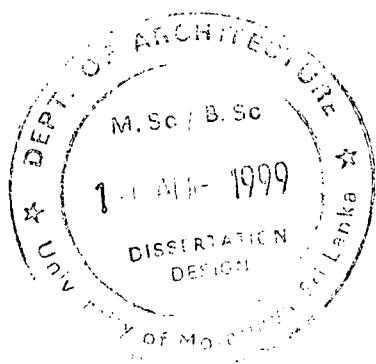


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**AN OBJECT-BIAS DESIGN PRACTICE AND
ITS IMPLICATION TO THE PLACE
A CASE STUDY OF NAWAM MAWATHA DEVELOPMENT**

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**A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Moratuwa
As a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree
of Master of Science in Architecture**

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*"A place is a piece of the whole environment
that has been claimed by feelings."
(Day)*

ABSTRACT

Architecture is believed to have such profound effect on the human being on place, on human consciousness and ultimately on the world. It is no great secret that it could make place of heaven, which is life filled and where human heart can sing resonate with them. But on contradictory architecture could also be life suppressing or even crushing not only to our finer sensitive, but to our feeling of freedom thus creating places which have lost it's sense as place.

A lot of people complain about modern architecture. They complain about performance aspects of old buildings, but about environment aspects on new ones or too much though on building consciousness. More often than not it could be observed that a greater emphasis is laid on refinement and decorations of building as dramatic architectural objects. Infact the emphasis on place does not exist. This has greatly implicated to the places in the city creating 'loss of sense of place'. Therefore it is essential to focus our attention to such profound effects, which ill fame the pleasure generated by architecture.

Recently an opportunity existed in the city of Colombo for the generation, as an urban place with all good opportunities seems to be failed in achieving a meaningful place. Here the land was available, investors were ready, finance forthcoming, architects were involving. However it's regrettable to note that what has been constructed at Nawam Mawatha has failed to generate a good "Sense of Place". In other words a fruitful chance of an opportunity of making a meaningful place in the city has been lost. This dissertation attempts to study such a place that has lost its opportunity to make a meaningful place due to object bias design practise.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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My dear friends Nimmi ,Naomi ,Yasangika, Dushanthi, Indika,Sampath, Amali and Shamane who whole heartedly became the source of help and encouragement my most needed moments.

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INTRODUCTION

TOPIC EXPLANATION

Architecture the son of mother nature is one which has summoned to recapture the loss spirit, the spirituality of built environment. It is the shrine which humanity and divinity find orients, enshrining his soul and sheltering his body.

Architecture is not just a building; through it is not mere physical object with an aesthetically gesture. Architecture maybe beautiful, but it should be more than that; it must enclose spaces in such a manner, which would create comfortable environment to live. It can be defined that then, that architecture creates spaces. The interplay of these spaces could give rise to meaningful expressions. It contains values, aspirations and attitudes of the users, comforting them physically and psychologically. In casting this mind elevating experience architecture manipulate space in which finally creating meaningful place encoded with a 'Sense of Place'



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“ A Place is a space which has distinct character. Since ancient times the genius loci or spirit of place has recognised as concrete reality man has to face and come to terms with in his daily life. Architecture means to visualise the genius loci and the task of the architect to create meaningful places where he helps man to dwell”

(Schulze cited in Tranick 1985;114)

However not all the places give rise to meaningful expressions. When a place is unable to create such meaningful expression it leads to a 'loss of sense of place'.

Today the urban places are found to be lacking in their task to arouse a 'sense of place' The lack of identity of places, the lack of visual coherence, inappropriate composition of buildings etc. have destroy the interact of the user to enjoy the urban context as meaningful place. Mass scale unplanned development, economic bias, object bias in design practice etc. can be described as some of these issue.

11

Most contemporary architectural design practices are overwhelm biased on object-design. Thus it could be observed this object-bias design practice is one of the most crucial aspect in loosing the 'sense of place' in urban areas.

Too often a greater emphasis is laid on the refinement and decoration of buildings as architectural objects. Infact the emphasis on place is almost not existent and the designers contribution becomes after the fact cosmetic treatment of surrounding environment that are ill shaped and planned, for the people's use at first place. Many designers are bent on making their own buildings most superior, dominate objects which arouse a kind of identity of themselves.

In Colombo Sri Lanka, an opportunity for enabling a significant place evolve existed in the development programme now recognised as Nawan Mawatha development executed by the U.D.A during 1980s. In this bare land area that was strategically located and available for urban place making has been transformed into new centre of the city of Colombo. It's buildings have all now being constructed and occupied, Nawan Mawatha has consumed the opportunity so existed in the city for such urban place to be enabled. Indeed it is well known that there are no such unique areas of lands in the city of Colombo, anymore available for such development. Nevertheless it is felt that the place that has now come into being at Nawan Mawatha, has failed to refine and re-generate the qualify of place that was available and indeed that what has now been constructed at Nawan Mawatha contribute to a loss of sense of place.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Architecture as an art form, at the same time expressing artistic emotions and feelings, provides a comfortable places for people to live. The responsibilities of architects therefore are not only providing shelter, but it helps people to grow in knowledge and love by caring for the mind and soul as well. The failure in enhancing the sense-of place could evoke physical and psychological discomfort, depriving user obtaining utmost satisfaction through such place. It is therefore worthwhile to study one tangible example where attempts of the designer's lead to unsatisfactory creating loss of sense of place.

“Most of the time we do not notice our surroundings and then they can work upon us without any conscious resistance on our part”

(Day,1990;38)

INTENTION OF THE STUDY

The study would be focused on recent development of Nawam Mawatha. This would provide insight why the sense of place is down played or disregarded by the development and explores its potentials to be a better place. Furthermore it will examine the history of this area and the development the individual bides manifestation and quality of place etc.

METHODOLOGY

The study would be mainly focussed on the resent development of Nawam Mawatha and would be examined whether the development has succeeded in transforming into a meaningful urban place. Newetwrlless it will be an attempt to find answers to the questions why Nawam Mawatha development has failed to generate a meaningful place.

In chapter one it would be discussed about the concept of place and the relevance of architecture in creating a meaning full place. Further it will be examined the criteria for placelessness and the effect of object-busyness create placelessness.

Chapter two it will be preserved for the discussion of place in an urban context, the features of a meaningful urban place in detail. This intends to form a basis to examine the sense of place in an urban entity.

In chapter three the examination will be done to trace back the process of development that has taken place at Nawam Mawatha. It will take an attempt to trace back relevant records of the development, from the U.D.A and municipal council. Further to trace back the history of the place, the transformation, the actors involved roles and responsibilities and control of this process.

In chapter four it will take an attempt to investigate the current built fabric and observe the sense of place in the development area. It will identify place potentials in the area, and to recognise the way in which they have been exploited and use positively or abandoned and have become negative.

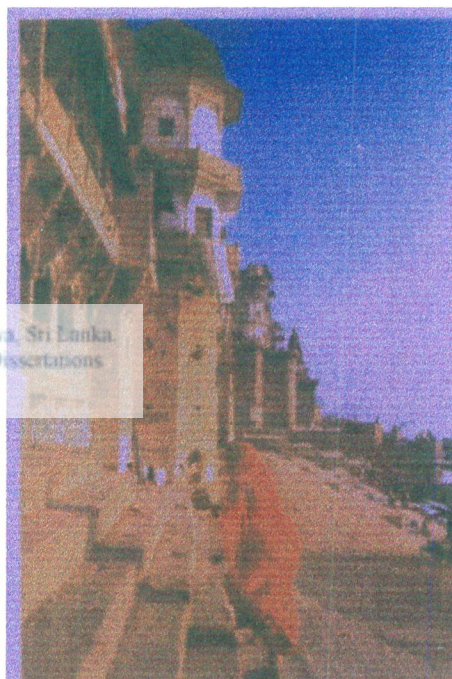


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CHAPTER ONE
PLACE, OBJECTS AND PLACELESSNESS-AN
INTRODUCTION



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"When we are in places that causes us to feel good (or bad), it is likely that our feelings are shared by other people. I do not mean buildings or people which I think something about, but those where before I start to think I feel something."

(Day)

CHAPTER ONE

PLACE, OBJECTS AND PLACELESSNESS-AN INTRODUCTION

1.1 NAWAM MAWATHA DEVELOPMENT: A PLACE OR A NON PLACE ?

Most often than not for anyone who takes the driveway through James Peries Mawatha which runs along the north boundary of south west Beira Lake will be able to notice the image of Nawam Mawatha Development. (Fig. 1.1) It emerges as a collection of high rise buildings, which stands overlooking Lake Beira.



Plate 1.1 Nawam Mawatha to the naked eye

The Land which is allocated for this development is situated along Nawam Mawatha, neighbouring the lake Beira. Nawam Mawatha and this extent of land could be described as one of the most unique urban location in the city of Colombo.

The glamorous water body- Lake Beira, the scenic beauty, cultural background and economical value had made this land a treasure to the city, hence it has intrinsic potential to become a sensitive place.

The history of Nawam Mawatha dates back to 14th century where Portuguese uses the land as a harbour front. During the British period the land has become an ornament to the lake providing a waterfront to various re-creation activities. In late 1920's the land captured it's decline remaining as a bare abundant land. However after the land was excedcuted by U.D.A. in 1981 it drew the attention of developers, Architects, investors etc. to develop as a meaningful urban space. The development begun. Finally it transformed into a new city centre. It had each and every aspect to enable a better urban space. Designers were involving, finance forthcoming, investors were ready, a unique location was consumed. Indeed it was a great opportunity to make meaningful urban space.



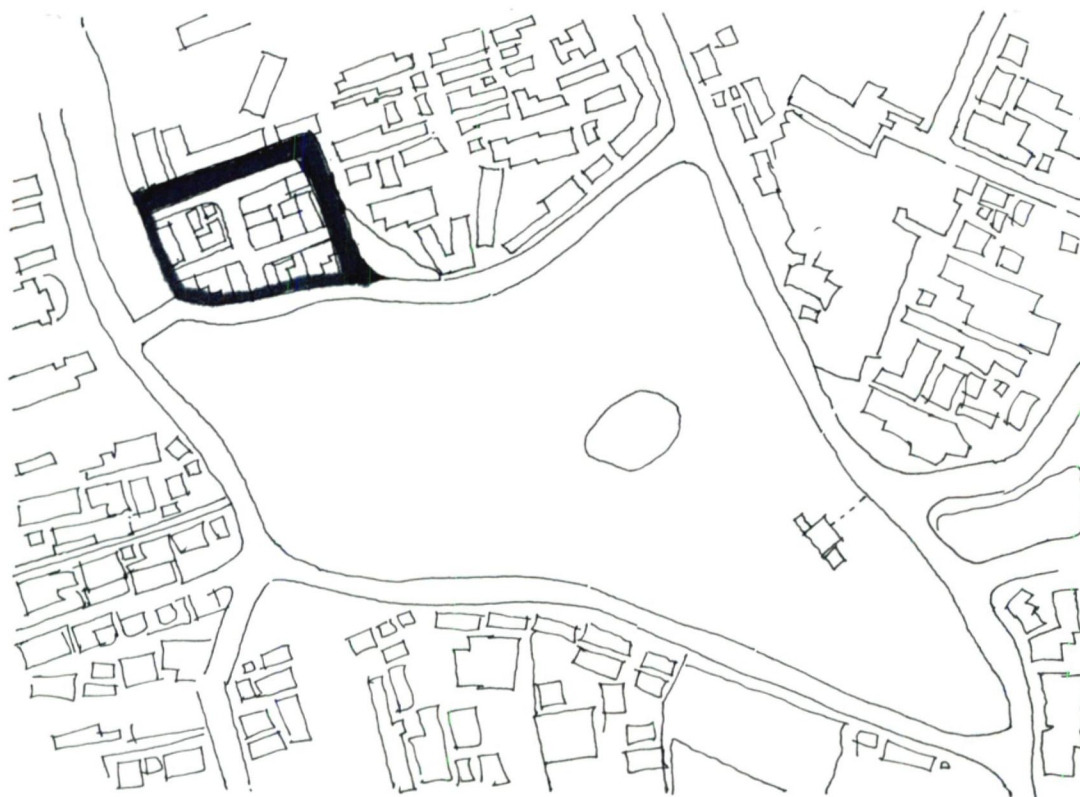


Fig. 1.1 Nawam Mawatha development-the location



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However it's buildings now being all constructed and occupied. It has consumed an opportunity so existed in the city for such urban place to enable. Have this opportunity transformed in to a meaningful urban place? Is Nawam Mawatha development: a place or a non place? Indeed it is necessary to examine the concept of place.



Plate 1.2 Nawam Mawatha development:
a place or a non place



1.2 THE CONCEPT OF PLACE

1.2.1 Place -A Definition

“ Why didn’t you leave the forest? “

“ We can’t go out of our place”

“ Why?”

“We love to stay in our forest”

“We like it here. It is a quiet place to sleep

“It is warm. Not loud.”

A saying of tribe who inhabits in a forest.

(Cited in Tuan 1977; 160)

We talk about places, describe wonderful memories of places, utilize places, watch the events that take place in places, place objects in places, live in places...

More often than not the word ‘place’ is everyday word that we use in our lives.

An everyday term which make a significant difference in the way we look at things, at life , the way we orientates ourselves, and the way we generally conceptualise the world around us. It is a word that we encounter in unaccountable numbers in our daily conversations in casual terms.



Plate 1.3 We live in places...

In architecture too we conceptualized the word 'place' but here the definition to place goes far beyond the casual meaning. To define an architectural meaning to the word 'place' the component space has been defined.

The Space

"Space constantly encompasses our being. Through the volume of space, we more, see forms and objects, hear sounds, feel breeze, smell fragrances of a flower garden in bloom."

(Ching, 1979;108)

Space is what surrounds us all the time. It is the environment around us where we constantly live, where all beings live, where everything exists. It is unlimited, profound and boundless. It contains tangible, intangible, visible and invisible things within hollowness; it is infinitely formless, and insensible and meaningless.

Space becomes sensible only by the presence of the physical elements which demarcate its boundaries and suggest point of references.

"Yet it is inherently formless, its visual form, quality of light, dimensions and scale, depends totally on its boundaries as defined by elements of form."

(Ching, 1977;108)

These give a physical dimension to space. Such as length, breadth, height which provide quantitative experience to the man. He captures the volume, the space contained within it. These elements not only form the space, but also give significance through their composition, textures, colour and scale which are referred to as qualitative dimensions.

Place

When man captures the space and experience through its quantitative and qualitative dimensions, every such space becomes sensible. And this space may become a content for people to inhabit and perform activities and also provide different types of experiences. These experiences could be derived through personal, cultural, religious content. (Tuan describes some of these experiential space types which are namely, pragmatic perceptual, existential, cognitive, architectural and abstract spaces)

These spacial experiences in it's own capacity add value to life of human being not only physically but also intellectually and emotionally.

“Pragmatic space integrates man with his natural, organic environment, perceptual space is essential to his identify as a person, existential space makes him belong to a social and cultural group, cognitive space means he is able to think about space and logical space offers him a tool to describe others”

(Schulz, 1971;11)

Space, which is earlier captured by a physical manner now, transformed to a space enriched with meaning. Man grasps this encoded meaning. He begins to interact with space and react to such meanings. These reactions are not necessarily physical, but essentially mental and emotional. The physical dimension created by space begins to be less and less significant and one begins to develop stronger emotional bonds.

Different significance in space may generate different emotions and reactions. Thus one gets mentally bonded, attached to the spaces when such emotions and reactions are positive. All the elements of a space, be it tangible or intangible are now clear and familiar within one entity. He senses that space as a part of his own existence and together he and space belong to eachother, “creating sense of place”. Created or natural spaces still exists, man continues to perceive them, arrange them in his experience and now a “place” which he belongs to is established. A place which is inhabitable and could make emotional change.

“A place is piece of the whole environment
that has been claimed by feelings”

(Gusow 1971;27)

“We do not grasp place only by our sensors, we live in it, we project our personality into it, we are tied to it by emotional bond; place is not just perceived.....it is lived”

(Matore1962 cited from Relph 1976;23)

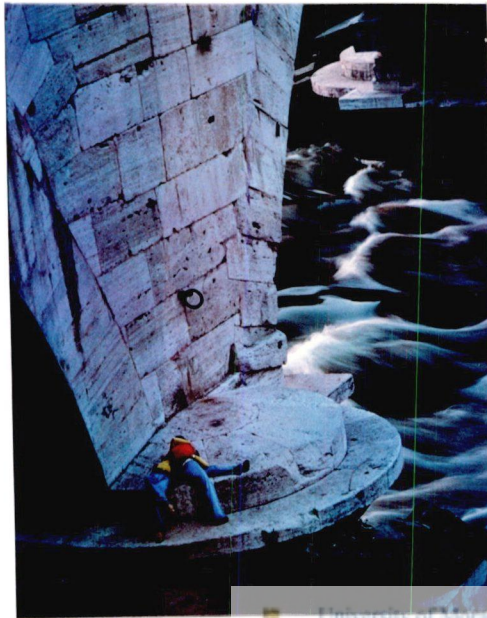


Plate 1.4 Place is not just Perceived, it is lived.....



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It is understood that one's attachment to place is something that cannot be detached. As an infant, who is bounded by affection of mother's love, human being too is bounded physically, intellectually and emotionally with place. Architecture too play responsible role in making places. Because it is the art that visualise the place.

“ Place is a space which has distinct character. Since ancient times genius loci, or sprit of place has recognised as the concrete reality man has to face and come to terms within daily life. Architecture means to visualise the genius loci and the task of architect is to create meaningful place where he helps man to dwell”

(Schulz, 1979;5)

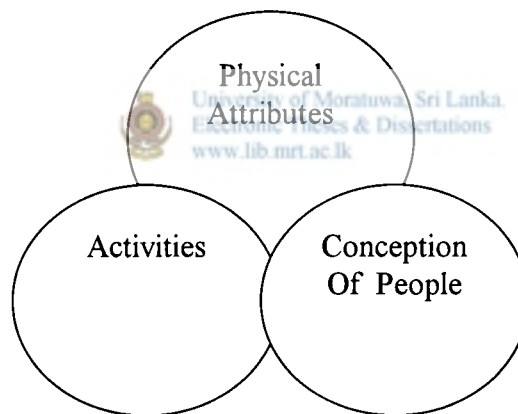
Therefore it is essential to identify the components of place to get a better understanding of what place really is.

1.2.2 Components of Place

The presence of the 'concept of place' or creating sense of place is repeatedly emphasised by many scholars. It is important to identify "of what this sense of place is derive from, or the components which will be essential to make a place. This will attempt to provide a theoretical basis to the identification of a place.

Various approaches have been adopted by academics as components of place. It is necessary for one to probe into and understand these ideas to establish a basis. Canter (1974) speaking about places says we have not fully identified the place until we know,

- a) What is behaviour associated with, or is anticipated will be housed in a given locus
- b) What is physical pharamenters of that setting are and,
- c) The description or the conception which people hold of that behaviour in the physical environment. His model of the components of the Place,



(Canter, 1974;)

According to Relph, he expresses, what is needed to identify a place are three basic components as

- a) The static physical setting
- b) Activities of people
- c) Meanings

Steel (1981) says,

“ A place is clearly more than a geometric location in space, and more than mere physical setting. A place is the interaction between people and the physical setting together with a set of meanings that both emerge from and inform this experience and interaction”

According to the above discussion it can clearly be seen that there are certain common components of place. They are namely,

1. Physical attributes
2. An activity
3. A meaning or conceptions

1. Physical Attributes

Physical attributes of place formed mainly by location and its physical setting (built or natural). These give physical formation to the place providing space for activities to happen. In fact a place to be able to carry out these should have certain physical and physiological characters. The physical characters which are scale, proportions, textures and colours, rhythm etc. give a tangible expression to the place, making it more specific.

“Place is something more than a location. It is a totality made up of concrete things having material substances, shape, colour, texture etc.”

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(Scully, 1980:06)



Plate 1.5 A Place is more than a location.....

A man becomes comfortable in any environment, rather in a physical setting only when he is able to relate himself to that environment, recognize it and make himself a part of it and its identity. Thus it becomes clear that a physical environment to be

meaningful and also to enable a place, it has to be specified in certain psychological characters which are identified as imagability, legibility, centre, continually etc. Both these characters together helps to derive meanings. These would be further discussed in the next chapter, under and urban locality.

2. People and activities

Places happens due to subjective personal experience related to physical context and happenings in them. Man actively or passively participate in these happenings. Therefore a physical context to be fulfilled as a place, there should be an activity happening. One may participate in those activities or may observe the happening as well as the spaces in which they take place and built memories, attachment in relation to them.

Therefore activities and people become one of the primary component of place. The experience of these activities and happenings become meaningful based on the assigned socio-cultural and historical values pertaining to them and based on pleasure derived from them.



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Plate 1.6 People and activities
make places alive....

3. Meaning

Meaning the other component of place derived from the inter-relationship between other two components as a totality of experience. It is not merely the experience generated from the activity and the physical context alone, but the experience filtered through subjective variables, such as personal, cultural attitudes and values.



The component, meaning has been discussed by others as follows

“ How a person feels about the physical setting or the activity associated with it ”

(Missingham,1985;21)

“ Human intention and experiences. People’s reactions to physical setting and functional aspects.”

(Granham,1991;24)

“Conceptions which people hold of particular behaviour in particular physical environment ”

(Canter,1974;14)

Therefore based on these ideas it can be clearly stated that meaning is a derivation of personal opinion condition by cultural and social values of physical context and activities happening in it. However component meaning is highly ambiguous, as it directly related to above-mentioned subjective variables and also to space and activity.



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1.2.3 Enabling Places

Places as discussed earlier constituted by physical attributes (location and physical setting),activities and meanings, of which meanings plays a significant role in user’s point of view. Place it is observed, becomes meaningful to people through association of experience.

“ Place is a centre of meaning, an organised world of meaning constructed by experience.”

(Yi-Fu-Tuan,1977;8)

Experience is the mode through which people sense understand and get attached to real situations; and it is found that experience can range from direct sense to indirect sense.

“ The catalyst that convert any physical location in any environment if you will in to a place is the process of experiencing deeply. A place is a piece of the whole environment that has been claimed by feelings”

(Allan 1971, cited in Ralph 1976:141)

Place it can be seen, happens only when a particular actively, becomes meaningfully to its users. In that sense place can be viewed as a good fusion between human experience and particular natural order.

“Places are fusion of human and natural order, and are significant centre of our world. They are defined less by unique locations landscape and communities than by the focusing experience and intentions into a particular setting”

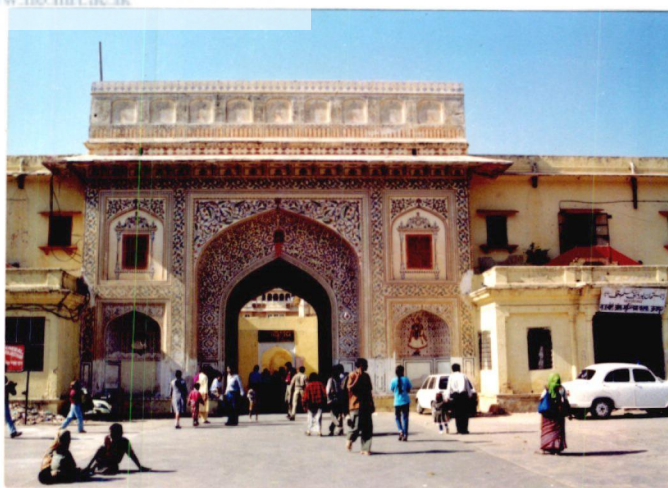
(Ralph, 1976;141)

Places thus can be viewed rather as an experiential phenomenon, which goes beyond perception of space or physical attributes. It becomes completion only in one's experienced, felt or lived in world. In fact a place is borne in the mind of the person who uses space, as result of his emotions and responses in association of it.



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Plate 1.7 Place is a subjective variable. A physical setting as a constituent of Place can be appropriated in numerous way.



In this sense, place can be viewed as situations which cannot be designed, built or constructed to completion *they can only be enabled.*

“Enabling places is what in contrast, all the best architecture should aspire to even if this is difficult to achieve without the involvement of the dweller themselves.”

(Dayaratne, 1992)

But time has come to attempt in making of places without the participation of the dwellers, at the inception of creating places. Therefore, it becomes utmost important to understand how places can be enabled or happened in our environment. There are many that have discussed and contributed towards the evaluation of this phenomenon.

“Placemaking is fundamental to human habitation and occur when ever people will inhabit a piece of ground or space”

(Dayaratne, 1992:42)

“Place making must be involved with creating something special out of or within space”

(Jonathan, 1985:2)

“Place making is the process by which a space in a location is made meaningful to an individual or a group”

(Dayaratne, 1992;)

N.J.Huraken (1980) says, architecture is the both product and process of human habitation and attempts are made to develop mechanism and methods of designing spaces which can grow with people and their attitudes and therefore becoming meaningful places.

“In some ways, it appears that places are not created or made at all. Rather it may be seen that certain parts of the urban environments Aquarius a potential for becoming special though the existence of certain behaviour patterns or through having significant attributes for them once in existence this potential can be realised or enhanced by the designer”

(Jonathan, 1985:)

Therefore it can be concluded that enabling places from the designers point of view is to create context for potential places to happen context for places to happen can be created by designing the physical context which carries physical and psychological characters of space and introducing suitable activities or on the other

hand providing such context for activities to happen. Such context should carry out the physical characters. (Rhythm, texture, colours etc.) and psychological characters (Imagiability, legibility, continuity etc.) which may further discussed in next chapter.



Plate 1.8 places can enabled.....

A village at France

1.3 SENSE OF PLACE AND PLACELESSNESS

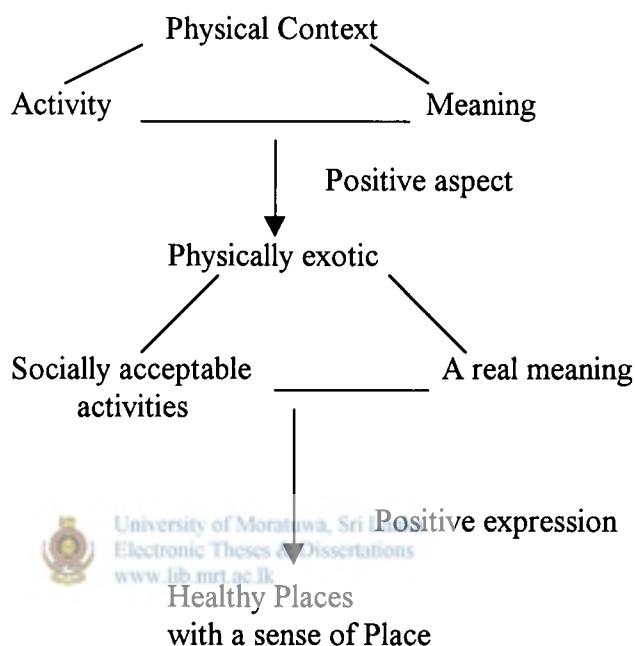
Place is the emotional attachment built with built environment through association and experiences. However not all attachments can give rise to strong emotional bonds between man and the environment.

Sense of Place

As discussed the combination of 03 components physical context - physical context, activity and meaning contribute to the happening of place. If the combination of these three components enable positive expression to people it could be believed, such environment have high potential to evolve meaningful attachments such environment give rise to healthy places. Where one could feel a sense of place. In other words if the environment is physically exotic, well defined with the presence of people and socially acceptable activities, such environment may pertain meanings that give emotional satisfaction. In fact these give rise to healthy places. Such places are highly memorable and more intensively felt. Missinghan states them as strong places, which are more memorable.

“Strong places bring about the positive aspects of place, those places are more memorable, more meaningful, more intensely felt more loved or cared and are significant to greater number of people that endure for a longer period”

(Missingham, 1985-as cited by Rajapaksha, 1995;25)



Proposed model for sense of place

In the process of enabling the sense of place, 'bringing physical exoticness to the context will be the best that designer could be done. The physical structure, which he creates, should have to be exotic either in physically by activities. This depends largely on the sensitive organisation of physical settings with a touch of social, cultural and historical rules of such place. This creates attachment to place.

“Making of places which are human in their scale and organisation, which fit both their physical and cultural context and hence are as those context and which are filled with significance's for those who will live in them.”

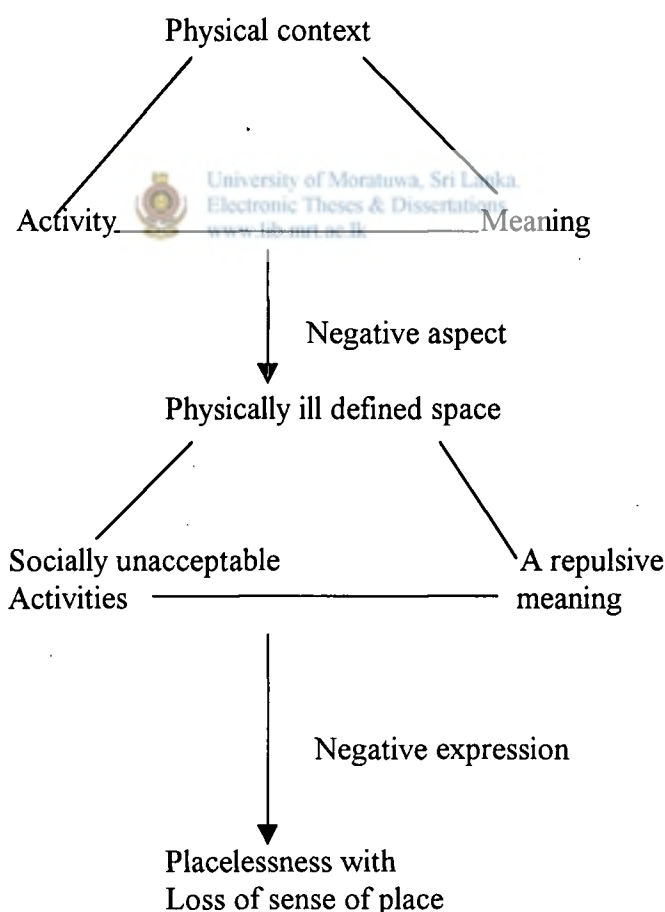
(Ralph, 1976;142)

Placelessness (Loss of Sense of Place)

In contrast if these components give negative impression such environment may evolve a repulsive experiences, memories and feeling of not so amiable place. Furthermore if the physical context is ill - mannered if it pertain socially unacceptable activities, such environment may give rise to unhealthy places, without any sense of place.

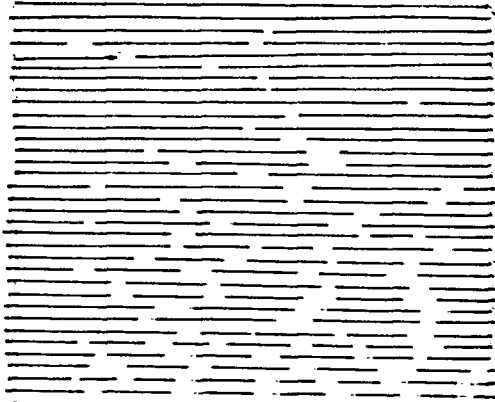
Relf 1976 suggest such environment are placeless, describes these environment are lack of significant places and does not presence any identity or variety, where such environment.

“Placelessness reaches back in to the deepest level of place, cutting roots, eroding symbols replacing diversity with uniform and experiential order with conceptual order”



Proposed model for the placelessness.

Thus it could be derived that if an environment is physically non-exotic or if an environment pertains socially unacceptable activities it give rise to the placelessness could derived by non identity of place, uncommitted insideness. He further states placeless consist of pervasive and perhaps irreversible alienation. He suggests a diagram for placelessness,



The plotting of a placeless geography: Melvin Webber's representation of the non-place urban realm of the United States.

In the above diagram it reflects the placelessness, that causes due to non variety of place.



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Nevertheless when the physical structure of a place could not be able to read as whole, when there is no relationship of buildings to each other when there is no contribution towards the space it creates from characters scale proportion etc. when the place is not giving clear identity and orientation it will not provide physically exotic structure creating placelessness.

As stated architecture as space oriented art plays a significant role in place making. It created physical context (built spaces). However the quality of meaning cannot be directly manipulated by an architect. Infact meaning could be generate through the correct decision in creating the physical setting and enabling appropriate activities and behaviour. Therefore the sensitive of the architect towards the appropriate organisation of physical setting would be great contribute to achieve a sense of place.

1.4 OBJECT MAKING IN ARCHITECTURE

In generally an object could be described as a dominant a finite, isolated element which stands in contrast with background. As Meiss discribes, 1990;75

“The object is a closed element, finite comprehensible as an entity.

Objects concentrate visual attention. They stand out against a background”

When considering an exterior space such as town such object could be a building, landmarks or monument, which stands out from the urban fabric. Similarly in an interior it could be columns, fireplace, altars etc. which appears as isolated buildings which can be identified and named, while the rest of the environment is characterised by a greater homogeneity.

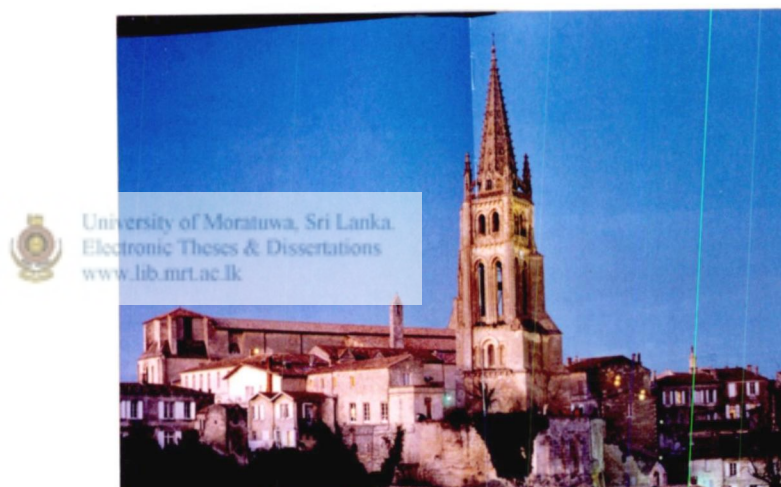


Plate 1.9 An object stands in Isolation



Plate 1.10 Spatial hierarchy given By an objects.

Objects are used in numerous ways in the context of place. In an urban entity objects are used to break down the monotony derived by homogeneity of building fabric and some times as point of references. Thus this has to be achieved by sensitive arrangement of built elements where the objects should be allowed only where they are necessary. As states by Meiss, in the historic centre of Berene objects are allowed thus retaining it's quality of place.

“In the historic centre of Berene ‘Object-reading’ is allowed only for the cathedral, town hall town gates and the fountains. The other buildings join together to form the fabric and it is only when one is closed them that recognise new units Identifiable as such. A hierarchy is thus established”

(Meiss, 1990:76)



Plate 1.11

The historical centre of Berene
A clear object fabric relationship

A similar effect was used in Rome where the objects are properly designed with the building fabric and where it used to have better spatial progression.

“The plan of Rome drawn up Gambattista Nolli in 1798 is a remarkable typological document which shows very clearly this complementarity between texture and object. It makes it possible to distinguish

relationships of scale and spatial organisation between external space, internal public space and the mass of the urban fabric of residential areas and work places”

(Meiss, 1990;76)

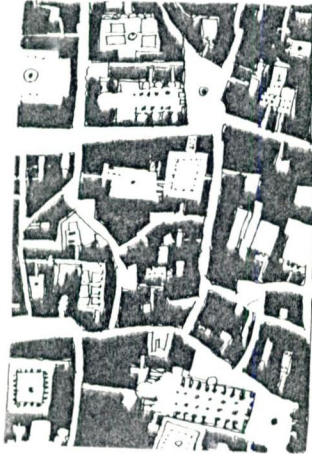


Fig.1.2 Nolli Map

In ancient cities of Sri Lanka too could be observed the use of objects where they were used to show the spatial heirachy. The temple the most important building was designed as an object to give heirachy and sacredness.



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In some instances, objects act as a gesture in enabling places, giving hints for certain activities to happen. The objects some times as buildings provide physical context for activities to happen when these are associated with meanings it give rise to enable places. E.g. objects in the middle of a public space makes it something which gives a strong and steady pulse to the square, drawing people towards the centre.

Plate 1.12 Object in a Square....allowed people to gather



In fact all the above discussed examples, the object is linked with an idea- the temple to worship, the gate to power, the fountain to the idea of place of exchange of news and gossips.

On the other hand if the objects were used in an appropriate manner, it would become a victim for misleading the sense of place. This could be well noticed in the urban spaces developed during 20th century, where the purpose of the use of objects was gradually changed. Most of the buildings were treated as objects where too much attention is paid, making them superior. This has led to the multiplication of objects ignoring the place it creates. On the other hand when the building objects are multiplied they lost their value as exceptions. At present it could be observed to many buildings which present themselves as objects indifferent to the public or hierarchical role they play in the value of the society. These buildings are designed not so much as types adopted to the site, but as models reproducing the power of the professionally or the corporate images of the clients, where this is always not the correct decisions.

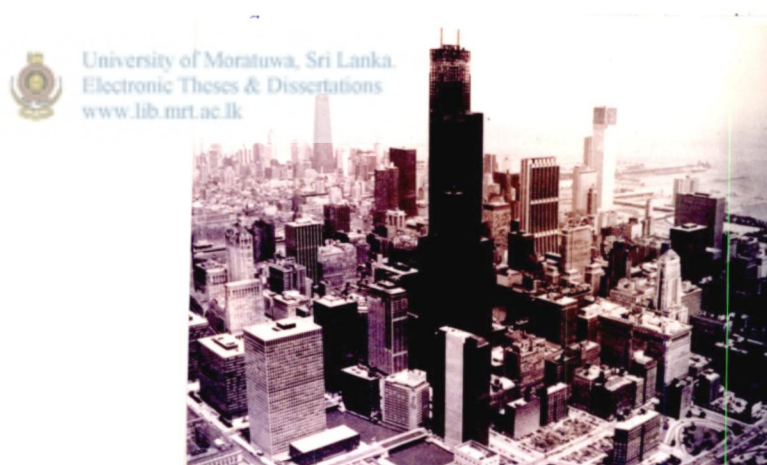


Plate 1.13 Multiplication of object.

Destroying the quality of place.

However it could be concluded, even though the making of objects is necessary, it should only be used where it is suitable and where it may not be harmful for the place. If each building becomes an object it may greatly implicate the place, killing the identity of that place and the attachments it opposes for the people. Therefore as an architect it will be grateful to tactic an ethical dimension in making objects.

“...the architect, when he eventually receives a commission and the client, who is perhaps building the only project of his life, tend to make their building stand out. However we cannot built our towns as a collection of demonstration objects. That would be rather like building a house from a sample materials accumulated in architectural offices. Let thus consider the site brief and suggest fabric or object; more often they will wish to become fabric, because the object, the potential monument can only become important by it's uniqueness and it's significant to the community.”

(Meiss,1990;78)

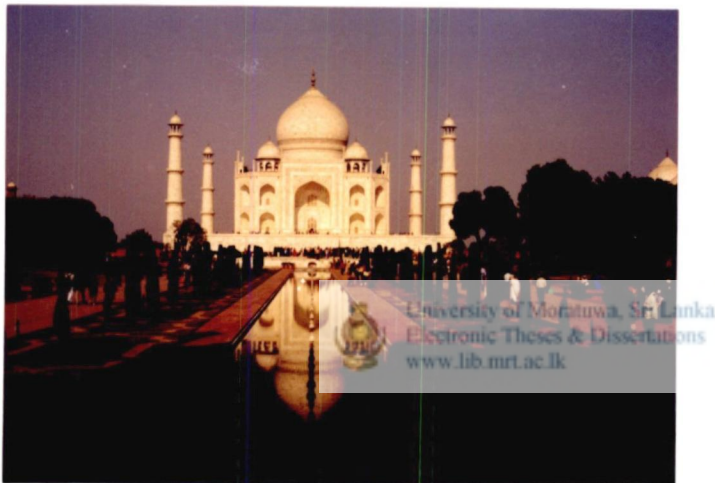


Plate 1.14 Object Making need care.

1.5 OBJECT – BIASNESS AND PLACELESSNESS

Architecture provides physical structure giving formation to the physical context for place to enable. In other words it creates spaces. The interplay of these spaces become expression in architecture and such expression give rise to meanings for buildings. When spaces are created their experience by people isn't focused only on the building mass, but also the space in and around it, to whole place where the building may only be a single particle. But if too much attention is paid on the building, ignoring the place it creates that building becomes an isolated object, resulting object biasness. Yet the purpose of architecture should not focused to only that built object-building itself, but also for place it generates. This is an important point to be understood by all

architects. Since whatever concentration and attention paid on the building when it is created, that people as a place finally experience building.

“Often our experience of building is not as a free standing objects,
but of boundaries of space. The quality of these boundaries is
a major ingredient of quality the place will have”

(Day 1990:14)

If every building treated as objects the quality of place will be destroyed without giving any identity to the physical structure and of the place. Thus the user who experience the place as whole will loose his attachments to the place resulting placelessness. This is far most critical in an urban space.

“In today’s cities, designers are faced with the Challenge of creating outdoor environment as Collective unifying framework for the new Development. True often the designers contribution Becomes an after the fact cosmetic treatment of Spaces that are ill shaped and ill planned for the public Use for the first place. The usual process of the urban Development treats buildings as isolated objects cited. In the land-scape, not as a part of the larger fabric.”

(Tranick, 1985;06)



Plate 1.13 Today the buildings
Becomes isolated objects cited
In urban space creating placelessness.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Nawam mawatha development was an opportunity so existed in City of Colombo to enabled a better urban 'place' which now being constructed and occupied. has Nawam mawatha development acquired this quality of place?. A place is rather a physical entity, which give meaningful expressions that could make an emotional attachments and feel oneness place consist physical attributes activities and meanings. Architecture plays major role in providing physical context. A meaningful physical context carries physical and psychological characters of space (to be discussed in next chapter.) which gives cues to enable places. When the combination of these components are negative where the place is ill defined, without any identity or significance or with unacceptable activities it give rise to placelessness.

An object creates spatial qualities and use to give spatial heirachy and in some instances gives cues to enable places. On the other hand objects can become victims to the placelessness, when it become biases for every such building. In fact this has become more critical in urban situations. Thus further exploration of urban spaces, the concept of place under urban space, enabling places in an urban entity need to be examined.





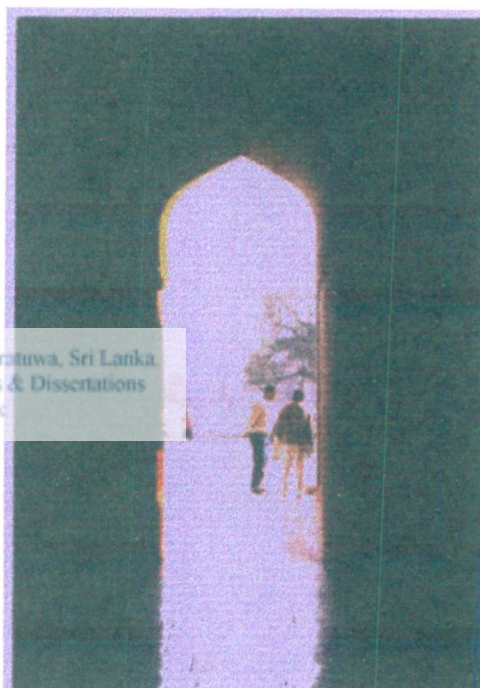
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CHAPTER TWO

SENSE OF PLACE IN AN URBAN ENTITY



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"Architecture has such profound effects on the human being, on place, on human consciousness, and ultimately on the world, that it is far too important to bother with stylistic means of appealing to fashion. It can have such powerful negative effects that we must also think, can it if consciously worked with equally strong positive effect."
(Day)

CHAPTER TWO

URBAN SPACE AND SENSE OF PLACE

2.1 URBAN SPACE - AN INTRODUCTION

Urban space has been introduced in different ways by various academics. Some of which are,

“Urban space is the result of process carried out in space and time, moulded by topography form, function, memory and history coagulated into whole which is greater than some of it's parts and which is unequivocally characterised by a collective dimension”

(Ponsi, 1985 Cited by Rajapakse 223)

“One can think of a town and it's urban spaces as a system of behaviour settings, stages as it were for various acts and behaviour, giving people the right props. The whole play is the result of all the parts and is greater than their sum”

(Rappoport 1990; 149)



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“Urban space is an object of direct experience of the people who participate in numerous activities within a physical organisation of a city”

(Coles 1970 cited by Relph; 1977:32)

Apart from the definitions urban space evoke widely varying images in one's mind, which create different experiences. Roads filled with traffic, intense experience of human activities both stimulating and stressful, jumbled building used in ways they were not designed for, poverty and tendon as well as luxury and affluence, industry, offices, shops, apartments and people.

2.2 URBAN SPACE A DEFINITION.

An urban space could be described as dense physical setting with different spaces and people who participate in numerous non agricultural activities which conjures different experiences and meanings. Compared to rural setting the relationship between people they're built elements and natural settings is very lacking in an urban space.



Plate 2.1 Urban Space

With dense physical setting
And activities



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2.3 URBAN SPACE AS A PLACE

According to the above definitions it could be stated that Urban Space consist mainly a physical setting which facilitate large segment of people and their activities, conjuring different meanings, which can result a place.

Moreover the special arrangement of persons doing things, the resulting spatial flow of persons, goods and information and physical demarcations which modifies space in some way significant to those actions become important factors in the formation of these urban space as place.

The physical setting of an urban space basically consist of man-made and natural elements. Man-made elements are buildings, streets, open spaces squares etc. and natural elements could be water-bodies, vegetation etc. These physical setting provide context for activities to happen, conjuring different meanings resulting a place.





Plate 2.2 In an urban setting
There can be intimate places.

“Place come in to being as a result of man-made elements
(buildings, streets etc.) or natural elements (water, trees, sky etc.)”

(Schulz, 1981; 201)

The buildings themselves plays a major role in physical settings where greatly
implicated to the sense of place and to the lives of people.

“Most of us do not go around deliberately touching buildings.
Yet without thinking about, we touch them at all the time.”

(Day, 1990:49)



Plate 2.3 Buildings are part of
Our lives

2.4 ENABLING PLACES IN AN URBAN ENTITY (BASIS TO EXAMINATION OF PLACE)

Urban space consists of physical context, activities and difference meanings that could results a place. Thus the resulted place may not be always carries 'sense of place' which gives emotional attachments. It can also results placelessness, eroding the human attachment to such places.

Architecture plays a major role providing physical context and spaces for activities to happen and help to enable meaningful places. What the best that architecture could aspire. The greater part of this could be achieved through the sensitive organisation of physical context and introducing suitable activities. The physical context needs certain spatial characters to enable a place. These could be described as,

1. Physical characters

These give tangible expression of the place and give physical dimension to the place.



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- Scale and proportion
- Edges and boundaries
- Colours and textures
- Light and shade
- Solid void relationship
- Harmony
- Variety
- Visual definition
- Coherent Organisation

2. Psychological characters

Space is the physical structure, which provides the context to places to happen; and a space becomes a place through the way the people act and behave within it.

“Space becomes place in the process of appropriation”

(Serfarpy, 1985 cited by Udumulla 1995; 57)

“Space change with the sun. Place changes with the movement of the people.”

(Meiss, 1986; 14)

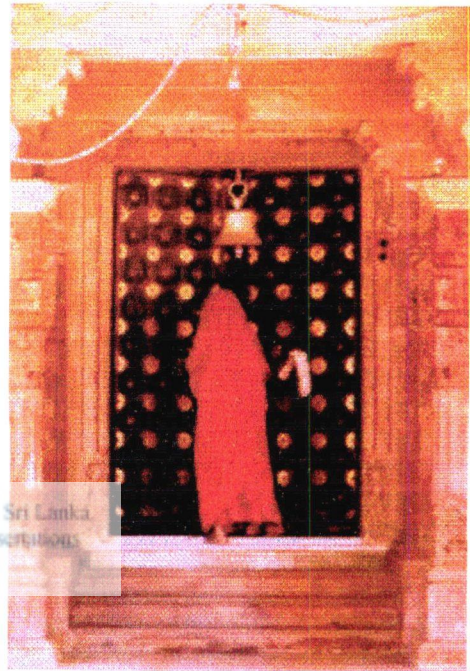


Plate 2.4 Place changes with
The movement of the people

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It is the presence of human being, his perception of space, his behaviour in space, his use and experience which primarily generate places. A space acquires potential to become a place only when it can be sensed positively by the user. Such an environment is known to be giving psychological comfort to its users and it has become clear that a space to be meaningful or sensible to people the presence of certain psychological characters are needed. They give an intangible expression of place. They are,

- Imagiability
- Legibility
- Continuity
- Centre
- Enclosure

1. Physical Characters

Scale and proportion

Each place have characteristic scale and proportion of it's own.

Scale – Scale naturally understood in comparison with human scale, blessed with inherent expressive qualities which makes one space different from another. A large scale building express dominance which over power the people associating with it and may draw their awe and respect. E.g. religious buildings, palaces

Likewise when a person enters to a huge space as explained by Canter, he may feel rather stressed, uncomfortable, unprotected and unsecured because the hugeness of space dominating and over powering him.



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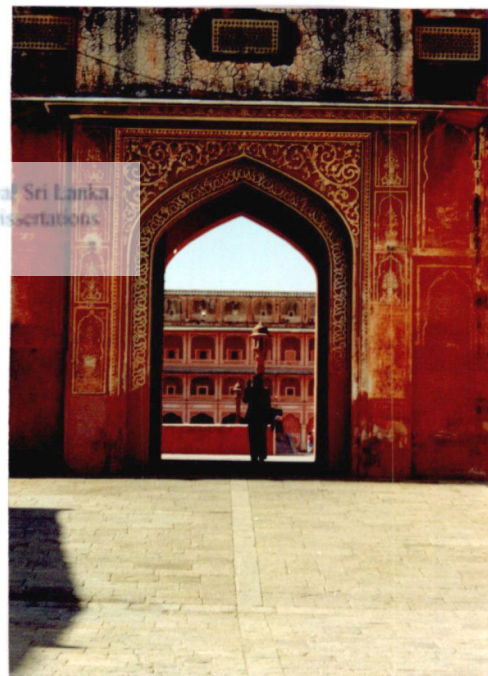


Plate 2.5 Sense of Scale

Venue India

Proportion - Refers to the volumetric relationship, which incorporate the length, breadth, and height. Proportion is helpful in achieving and expressing qualities of unity, balance contrast as well as harmony and rhythm.

Scale and proportion become important considerations in recognising places in physical terms, as each place has a characteristic scale and proportion of it's own.

Man could be considered as important measurement of all these things, especially in a feeling a sense of place. Thus place should be related to the human scale. In a urban context buildings should relate to human scale. The degree of variation or multiplication of the scale of a place interms of human scale, could generate characters and spatial qualities. In a urban space such qualities used indifferent space. Such as streets, parts, notes, squares etc by properly scaled buildings. These different qualities could used to have spatial progression in an urban space. These give intimate attachment and variety to a place. The extent to which a person is comfortable in an environment depends largely on this aspect of scale and proportion.



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Plate 2.6 Scale and
Proportion relating to human
Scale giving intimate experience
To Urban space.

Edges and boundaries.

Boundaries and edges generally the physical separation of two areas. They are the indicates of the extend of physical form of a place. As Lynch stated (1960; 47) boundaries and edges termed as “more or less penetrable, which closes one region from another or they could be seems lines along which two regions are related and joined together. These gives identification formation and powerful visual impression of a place creating sense of territory and providing relatively stable system of places for people to dwell.

“ People require relatively stable system of places in which to develop themselves, their social lives and their culture. These need to give manmade space an emotional contents, a presence that is more than physical. The bounding or define edge is important to this presence”

(Tranick 1985;15)

In an urban space edges and boundaries give definition to such urban entity or to the district giving identity to the area. Boundaries and edges should have visual prominence continently and considerable depth.



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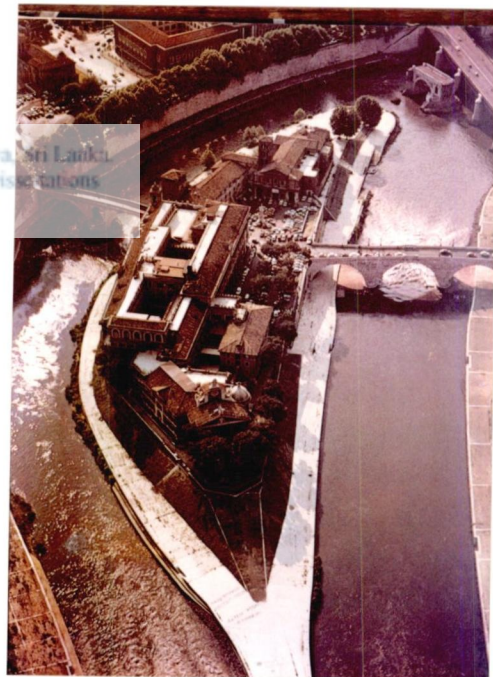


Plate 2.7 A well defined edge.

In an urban entity such boundaries could be,

- ☐ a series of building bounded together
- ☐ a continues wall
- ☐ a clear transition from water to land
- ☐ at a water-body e.g.: shores
- ☐ rail roads or elevated motor ways.



Colours and Textures



Plate 2.8 Textures gives
Spatial quality



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Texture is the property, which signifies the roughness, smoothness, coarseness and fineness of a surface. Various forms of textures give various kinds of feelings and senses. E.g. roughness or coarseness texture generally associated with comfortable feeling while the smooth or fine texture give almost sensuous pleasure.

Colour is quality, which allows the eye to see the difference between objects when both are same size and shape. These could make very subtle yet very strong gestures in creating a variety of different qualities in places.



Plate 2.9 Colours make very
Strong gestures

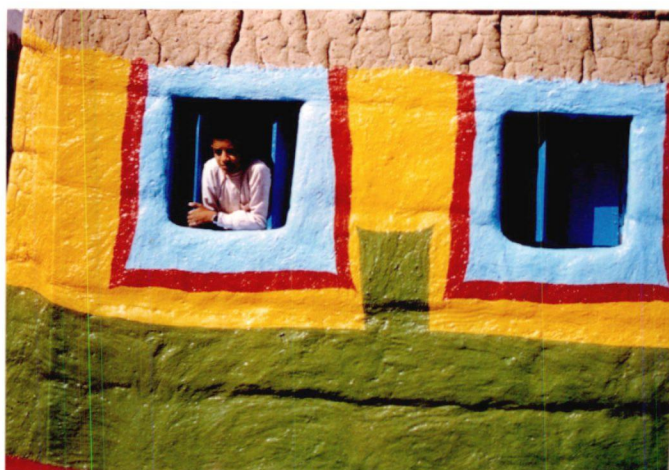


Plate 2.10 Colours.....

Breaking Monotony

In an urban space these are need to give character and variety for the people, who inhabit the space. At the same time these help to give various experiences and help to built memories, breaking monotony.

Light and Shade

The light has strong influence on qualities of spaces while providing a variety of special qualities. Light creates moods such as cheerful, gloomy, calm etc. It gives expressions of humble, friendly and give human qualities in space. In an urban space light and shade should present to give different spatial qualities and expressions. in fact in an urban space these qualities should acquire by sensitive organisation of building masses with out door spaces.

“ We try to make places that look good. Even if we don’t look at them, the background visual impression is one, which causes a good response. People see this visual mood, they can talk about it afterwards, remember it for years. Much of this visual mood is made-up of quality of life.”

(Day, 1990;49b)

Hence light can be used in creating divers environment qualities in spaces we associated with, to highlight positive environment qualities in view of making conductive environment for specific activities to happen.



Plate 2.11 Difference shades of Light create spatial quality.

Solid-void relationship

This indicates the manner in which the solid and open (void) areas are organised in a physical form, relating to other physical forms where a kind of pattern could be identified. This helps a person to relate to it in terms of the character and different special qualities.

Eg: a building with more open areas at eye level of a person would express an inviting quality, while more solid area would keep him away. In an urban space these give different feelings of the space.



Plate 2.12 Solid void relationship Giving a character to a place.

Harmony

A place to be significant, logical whole of the constitute parts should be maintained which is termed as Harmony. In an urban entity a building should be in tune with it's neighbourhood environment whether it's natural or built. And the new needs to be an organic development of what is already there. Harmonious environment could enable the feeling of place, making emotional attachments.

“ Harmony in our surrounding is not mere luxury. Our surroundings are the framework, which subtly, confine, organise and colour our daily life. Harmonious surrounding provide a support for outer social and inner personal harmony.”

(Day, 1990;70)

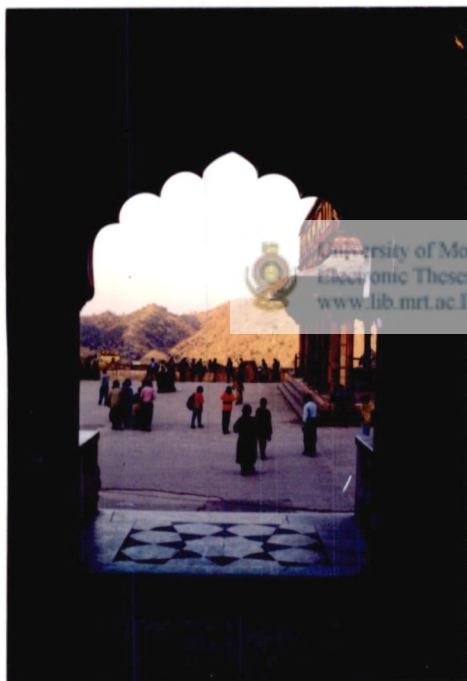


Plate 2.13 Harmony bringing Colour to Lives of people.

Variety

With in the overall clear structure of a place, perceptual variety and complexity is needed. Variety expresses the need to have relatively noticeable difference in the environment. Therefore this will be a key factor, which attract people to visit such places. If an environment or space is repeated throughout it becomes boring, dead and compelling. Thus there should be a change a variety offers change of experience and therefore range of meanings. In an urban space Variety could be achieved through different ways. Variety of spaces, rangers of textures, different views, colours, light and shades and topography and opposing different activities.

2.14 Variety within continuous
language at coloured life.



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Plate 2.15 Activities give variety
To the place.





Plate 2.16 Variety given
By topography.

Visual Definition

A place to become glorify, there should be visual impact. This is basically gain through visual connectedness. The vistas and views be it natural or created should be visually seen. This gives emotional rest and satisfaction. At the same time providing a sense of orientation. According to Lynch the range of penetration of vision can be increased by,

- *. Transparencies - (As with glasses building and building on stilts)
- * Vistas and panoramas which increases the depth of vision (as in axial streets, broad open spaces, high views)
- * Articulating of elements which visually explains a space (foci, measuring roads)
- * Concavity which exposes further objects to view (as of a background hill or a curving street)
- * Clues which speak of an element otherwise invisible (as the sight of an activity which is characterising of a region)

(Lynch 1979 ; 106)



Plate 2.17 View beyond as perceived through the
Of the building.

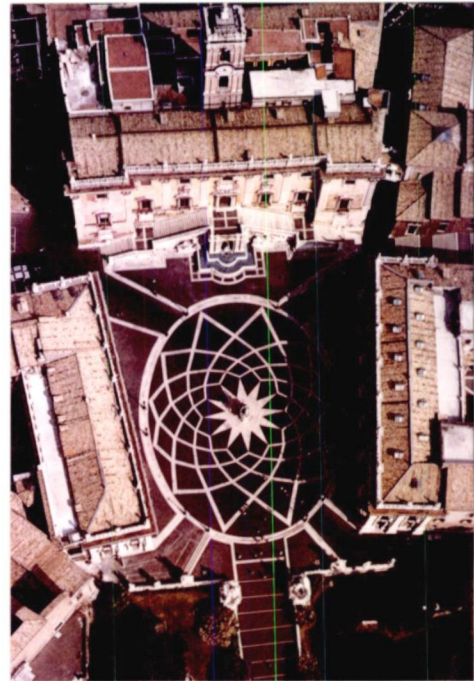
Coherent organisation

Coherent organisation of elements of the physical, content helps to provide a legible structure. Coherency among buildings between buildings and natural elements and among physical elements (paths, nodes, landmarks, districts etc.) give clear structure to the urban space, enabling the user to read the urban space as whole. The cohesiveness between old and new buildings satisfy the urban space with spirit of history. Further more there should be cohesiveness among urban spaces.

“ Part of the presence of any good place is the feeling we have of it embodying and being surrounded by a field of it's own sort of space with it's special limits and potentials. It is the field that we have previously said is only interesting today. If it implies connection roads with buildings, buildings with trees, with the seasons, with decorations, with events, with other people at other times.”

(Smithson 1981,cited in

Plate 2.14 coherency
Among building
Rome



2 Psychological characters

Imagability

Immovability of a thing is its ability to make an impression of its speciality in a persons mind or memory which interns suggests its identity. Identity is physical need of man that enables him, firstly to identify him self among other persons associated with and which makes him familiar towards and friendly with particular persons. And this is true for the environment he associated with, be it a small physical element or a considerable large physical entity.

" Where , when ever and how ever we relate to beings of
Every kind, identity makes it's claim upon us"

(Heidgger, 1969 ; 28)

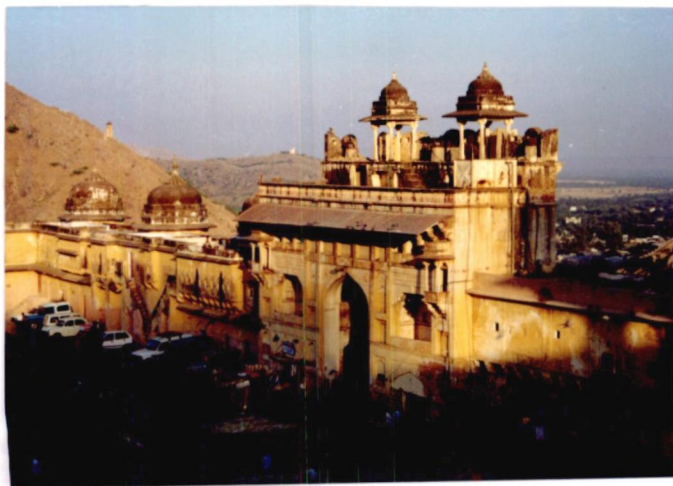


Plate 2.18 Imagability of a place

Identity and imagability are notions which go hand in hand as it is the memory of a strong image which stays with people in identifying a certain environment or identifying themselves within it

" If an environment has the ability to stamp an impression in your mind which one can carry for the rest of his life, then it is said that this environment possesses a strong degree of imagability. "

(Lynch , 1964; 18)

For an environment to be imaginable , the identity or the character of it can be influenced or conditioned by many of the particular environment, particular activity or activities associated with it and variables , such as culture personnel and group values , sentiments symbolism ; several other factors such as unique natural setting , sensitivity in the setting of important building etc.

Plate 2.19 imaginability given through activities

Legibility

Legibility of a space caters to man's psychological comfort by satisfying his orientation and territorial demarcations in spaces he associates with.

Sense of Orientation

Man has to know where he is with reference to his surroundings .It is with this knowledge of reference that he gain an existential foothold with the world.

" The very word 'lost' in your language is much more than simple geographical uncertainty, it carries overtones of utter disaster"

(Lynch 1960; 04)

“ To satisfy his inner sense of orientation man needs to situate himself in space”

(Von Miess, 1992 ;154)

Orientation could be generally termed as knowing where one is in terms of a place, which implies knowing how other places are connected to this place. This essential for man to situate himself in place.

“ To satisfy his inner sense of orientation man needs to situate himself in space”

(Von Miess, 1992 ;154)

Man's orientation has to be established intentionally for his way finding. There should be a consistent use of organisation of definite, sensory cues from the external environment. This organisation is fundamental to the efficiency and to the very survival of free moving life. Almost all-cultural groups have developed a system of orientation, which is unique to each culture and its landscape, in order to get about their day today life.

Legibility is the word used to denote the degree of orientation provided in a built environment. If the orientation is too easy and makes one comfortable such an environment is called a legible environment.

“ Hence a good legible environment it’s processor an important Sense of emotional security. He can establish a harmonious, relationship between himself and outside world. This is obvious of the fear that comes with disorientation, it means that sweet sense of home is strongest when home is not only familiar but distinct as well”

(Lynch 1960; 60)



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2.20 Legibility given by built setting

According to Lynch 1960, a legible urban structure could be achieved through establishing nodes, paths, landmarks, districts, and edges.

Paths –

Paths are amongst most significant of these elements. They are channels of movements- alleys, streets, railroads and the most important element in urban structure. A path should possess certain characters to enable a sense of place.

- It should primarily have continuity, sense of enclosure and directional quality with defined edge and beginning (a spatial progression). A path should be scaled by means of number of landmarks or nodes, which enhance the direction. A certain rhythmic pattern of buildings, facades, planting of trees, colours or textures can be contributed to the continuity of the path.

- There should be variety and visual clarity while creating interesting views at such points.
- The characters along a path such as land marks and space changes should be arranged in such away as to create a certain patter which is meaningful for the street while the form can be introduction - development - climax -conclusion .A such as land marks and space changes should be arranged in such away as to create a certain patter which is meaningful for the street while the form can be introduction - development - climax -conclusion. Arial vision of built elements help to achieve this clarity of progression.



Fig.2.1 Serial vision given in a path



2.21 Well enclosed path gives an intimate experience

Paths even though they are moving through can establish places themselves. This is more observable in pedestrian streets where whole pattern of events brought to life. These places can be seen like street shelters that in white people to wait.

Node –



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Nodes are points, the strategic stops or where the places of break in transpiration. A node should have sense of enclosure, prominence and sense of exit and entry. Being somewhat larger area nodes receive more attention as special spaces and call for more visual interest.



Plate 2.21 Land mark adding uniqueness to the place

Landmarks –

They are points of references as nodes. But in this case the observer does not enter within them. They are external and physical objects, which stands in single. These should have figure – background contrast, and uniqueness.

Districts–

Parhts , Nodes ,Landmarks and edges constitute the skeleton of the urban image, which is fleshed out with areas of less strongly differentiated urban fabric. The flesh it self organised in to districts. They are recognised as having one common character. In district

There is common character .It can be character of spaces or spatial flow pattern in an area which makes homogeneity. Common building forms, building types façade treatments, detailing use of material colours, textures and even skylines can crate an area within homoginity. There should be defined boundary and clear structure including other elements.



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Continuity

Being a communal man, man fears isolation. Hence his need to be in contact with other people, other spaces can be seen, as one of his physiology needs.

“The sense of continuity of place is necessary to people to sense reality”

(Harvey 1968, cited in Relph, 1973; 63)

Although man values privacy, territorial needs and makes his own private spaces as result, in extreme conditions, suffers claustrophobia, no matter how comfortable a space is, if not continuity is maintained with other spaces.

Hence a man to be comfortable in a space his need to be incontact with other people other spaces has to be strongly acknowledged. Establishing maintaining continuity can be twofold. That is continuity maintain physically as well as visually.

However in some spatial organisation such as in a house where the house is a collection of individual spaces such as sleeping areas, cooking spaces living spaces etc. It is the physical continuity that makes a spatial organisation meaningful, as a house is the totality of experiences of the individual spaces. Therefore it can be suggested that in some spatial organisations uninterrupted continuity of spaces or a strong continuity is necessary for psychological comfort as well as to form meaningful experience. Urban space made out of series of individual spaces thus, the continuity is needed to read them as whole.

Furthermore the continuity can be maintain physically or psychologically. Both these give ability to perceive meaningful experience of place. As Lynch (1979; 106) Describes continuity could be achieved by,

- ⇒ Continues of the edge surface (as in street channel, set back etc.)
- ⇒ Nearness of parts (as a cluster of building)
- ⇒ Repetition of rhythmic intervals (as a street corner pattern)
- ⇒ Similarity of analogy of surface, form or use (as in a common building material, similarity of market activity, repetitive pattern of bay windows, use of common signs)

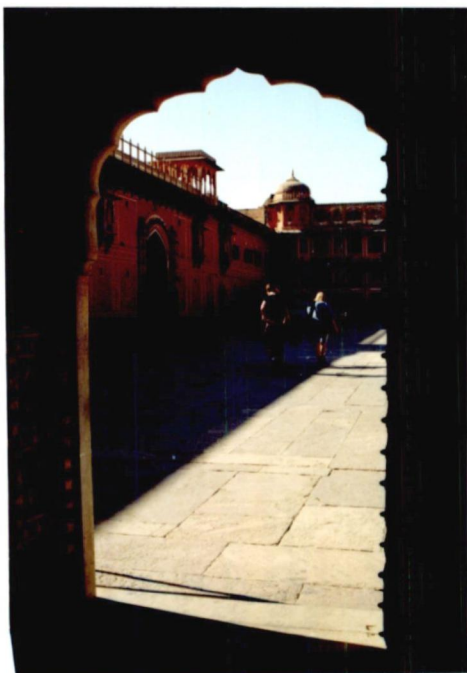


Plate 2.22 Continuity is necessary for sense
Of reality

Center

Center in relation to concept of place is the center of individual or collective experience or (memory) of people. Memories and experiences give familiarity giving psychological attachments. In terms of urban this could acquire through enclosure, a street way, a landmark, or a place of open activity. It gains character form through the particular natures of the activity that take place from own identification with such place and individual experiences. Shultz (1971:19) refers it in terms of activity as :

“All centers are places of action. Place where particular activities are carried out, or places of social interaction the place is always limited. It has been created by man and set up for his social purpose”.

(Shultz, 1971:19)

Thus the establishment of 'centers' as places in urban spaces creates a momentary place in the experience of space and makes an individual's identity richer and humane.

In order to understand space it is important to signify the concept of center, as the reference point of space. It is a point towards which a man's interest is directed.

“It is the point where he acquires position as thinking being in space the points where he lingers and lives in the space”

(Shultz, 1971:19)

Place in the context as a 'center' of individuals 'identify' and connection matters most in urban spaces. Physical characters of space that governs the quality of such places are those that relate most to the individual, those acquire the form of an intricate scale, a deep enclosure, encounters with people and mix activity will have the uniqueness of enabling place to evolve. Such place can be termed as intimate to the experience.



Plate.2.23 town center acquire the
The meaning of a place through activity
And centrality.

Enclosure



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Man's relation to the environment, his sense of position is expressed as "I am in it, or above it, or below it, I am enclosed or exposed". These sensations are interlocked with human behaviour and three morbid expressions are demonstrated in claustrophobia and agoraphobia. These give psychological comfort. Enclosure, the most powerful, the most obvious, of all devices to instill the sense of position, identifies with the surrounding.

The way in which the spaces are formed between buildings is important both as a setting for the individual buildings and as a more local detail aspect of urban character, in which each space take on its own identity. The feeling of enclosure in a room, wall, floor, and ceiling from a kind of box which has it's own identity.

In an urban space the enclosure is the same, building act as a wall, street or the paths form the ground while the skyline forms the most important part of the enclosure.

The streets are also the spaces in the sense that the buildings enclose them. The

skyline is strong to define the shape of the space changing skylines and building line creates different qualities of enclosure in the street.



Plate 2.24 A sense of enclosure

Insideness is needed to

Create attachment with places

The enclosed spaces between buildings stimulate the human senses. The quality of spaces whether large, small, high, low, wide or narrow has been observed characteristics which can be related to human reactions and feelings.



Plate 2.24 enclosure in urban

space- giving intimate feeling.....

When the height of the building is greater than the width of the street the space act as a corridor and it symbolizes and reinforced movements, not just physically, but visual as well. The static and then restful effect could be achieved by width being greater than the height of the building. That's the less enclosure, which gives facade height : Width off road equals 2:1

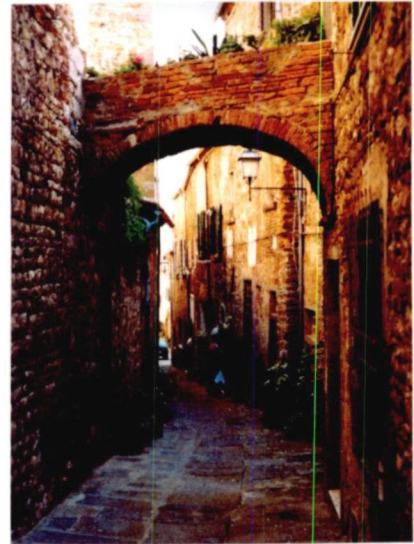


Fig 2.2 variety of enclosures

The minimum enclosure is formed to happen when the proportion equals 1:4. The enclosing elements are seen at an 18-degree angle, and objects beyond the facade are part of the scene.

The concept of looking at cities, towns and urban space that is streets, squares, meeting places, appear to be curved, from the original block of materials, where spaces are molded and shaped by degree and quality of enclosure. This is the way of looking at city space as a positive element with three-dimensional properties and enclosure act as buildings with two-dimensional facades framing space. Spaces where accordingly seen as 'volumes or corridors' of city. This emphasizes the depth and dimensional attributes of urban places.

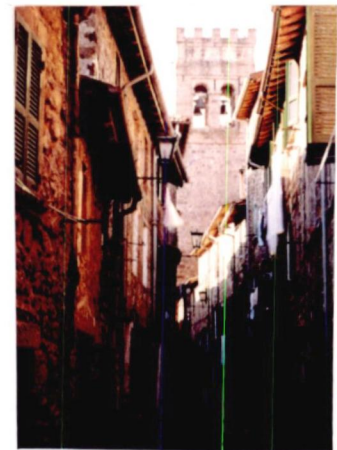


Plate 2.25 volume of corridors of a city

Elements of enclosure

Edge -is the treatment and definition of enclosure. The boundary is determined by the building edge that defines entity of outer space with the interior. Properly made edge encourages connection between inside and outside and encourage provide sense of enclosure and thus allowing different activities to happen.

Most of the present day urban spaces are not allowing human activities, because building remain out from surrounding as isolated objects, when compared with the older buildings that have continuous riches, opening created places for people to stop, while shop around or rest. These edges are much alive, they help to reconnect to the world around and respond to the outer enclosed spaces. These spaces create positive places where people can enjoy themselves, becomes a part of social fabric, part of urban space.



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Plate 2.26 open public space

Positively allowing interaction

- Threshold - limits of enclosure

Threshold can form relation between interior and exterior spaces by providing both separation as well as connection. Enclosure can be the floor, the paving that creates a unifying element of space leading from one to another. The continuous skyline or uninterrupted buildings edge can create demarcation to space. They become essential elements of spatial definitions.



Urban space is born out these relationships, of buildings with other buildings, or spaces with other spaces. Thus each durable place experience is marked by 'limits of enclosure' (Threshold). It appears to a market square or a street as enclave or sometimes to a whole town. We refer to these limits in order to know that we are inside with a place.

In urban space the quality of experience is enhanced when such limits do not explicitly exist walls or boundaries to places, but merge and form connections. When they exist as threshold they enable relationship of spaces to merge. In both creates differentiation of spaces as well as transition, interruption, continuity, boundaries and crossing of enclosures. They play an important role in the composition of space and their articulation. Through establishing limits in form of conceivable threshold, urban spaces become defined as a place themselves.

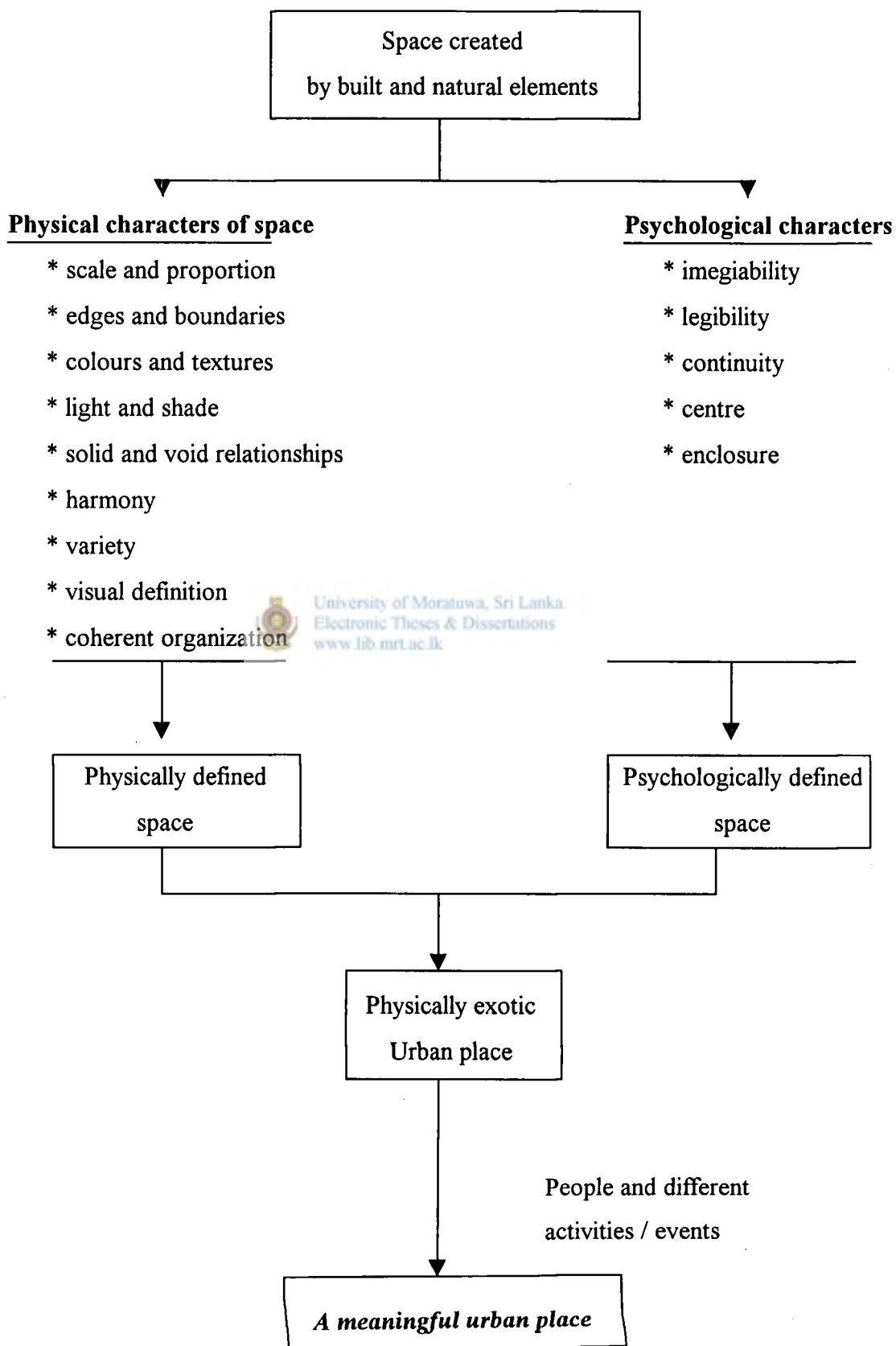


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Plate 2.27 thresholds enabled
Relationship of spaces to be merged

Enabling a Sense of Place in an Urban Entity



2.5 PLACELESSNESS IN AN URBAN ENTITY

In above it discussed the clarity where the sense of place could be enabled in an urban entity. If an urban space gives negative experience without any identity or significance it makes the urban space placelessness. There could be so many reasons for urban placelessness, such as economic bias, object bias in design practice, unplanned developments, mass scale urban development *etc.*

However built itself plays a major role in urban space giving formation to the physical context and contributing to enable sense of place.

“Most of do not go around deliberately touching building, yet without thinking about it we touch them all the time”.

(Day, 1990:49)

On the other hand if any negative reaction taken towards the designs of buildings can result placeless urban places. Object biasness in design practice is also a one such negative reaction which contribute to placelessness. In the contemporary urban spaces, this has become a critical problem for the placelessness.

“In the nineteenth century, as buildings become more utilitarian in their organization, the notion of function was gradually displaced from the external space to the organization of internal space. A building tended to become, in itself more of an object, separate from its context.”

(Tranick, 1985:5)

Because of the high dense buildings and the vast number of people who inhabit the urban space, it could be said, that any impact result by placelessness might implicate to greater number of people. But as places where thousands of civilized human being live and as places where their activities are happening, urban space may have to carry greater meaning which add colour to their lives.

Concluding Remarks

Urban space which consist of dense built up spaces with people who participate in numerous activities and conjuring different meanings could be conceived as places. The physical context, which basically formed by buildings, plays major role in enabling places in an urban entity. Thus to enable a meaningful place certain physical and psychological characters are needed in designing the urban space as well as designing the buildings, in an urban entity. When these factors are ignored in the design, it may result urban placelessness. Object - biasness is also one such negative reaction contributing to placelessness, especially in contemporary urban space.

Nawam Mawatha is a newly developed urban space existing in the hub of the city of Colombo, to enable a meaningful urban place. It had all the opportunities to become a better urban place. The unique location was consumed. Designers were involving, Investors were ready, and finances were forthcoming. However it is felt that the place has now come into being at Nawam Mawatha has failed to generate a meaningful place. What is the crisis behind the development ? Why it had failed to achieve this quality of place ? Thus it seems necessary to examine the process of development and transformation of the opportunity - Nawam Mawatha development.



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CHAPTER THREE
AN EXPLORATION OF THE OPPORTUNITY-NAWAM
MAWATHA DEVELOPMENT



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*"Success depends upon putting personal preference a side and listening with out any judgment (except as to truth) even listening unpalatable. In architecture this means listening to the needs of people- which they really can voice properly to the needs of the place, to the opportunities which are conceled and which become more apparent as design."
(Day)*

CHAPTER THREE

AN EXPLORATION OF THE OPPORTUNITY

(An examination of the development process in Nawam Mawatha)

3.1 NAWAM MAWAHA DEVELOPMENT-AN INTRODUCTION

Nawam Mawatha development area is a newly developed urban space situated bordering the lake - Beira. It is a one such unique location in the city of Colombo with all the best qualities gifted by the Nature, thus having a historical essence.

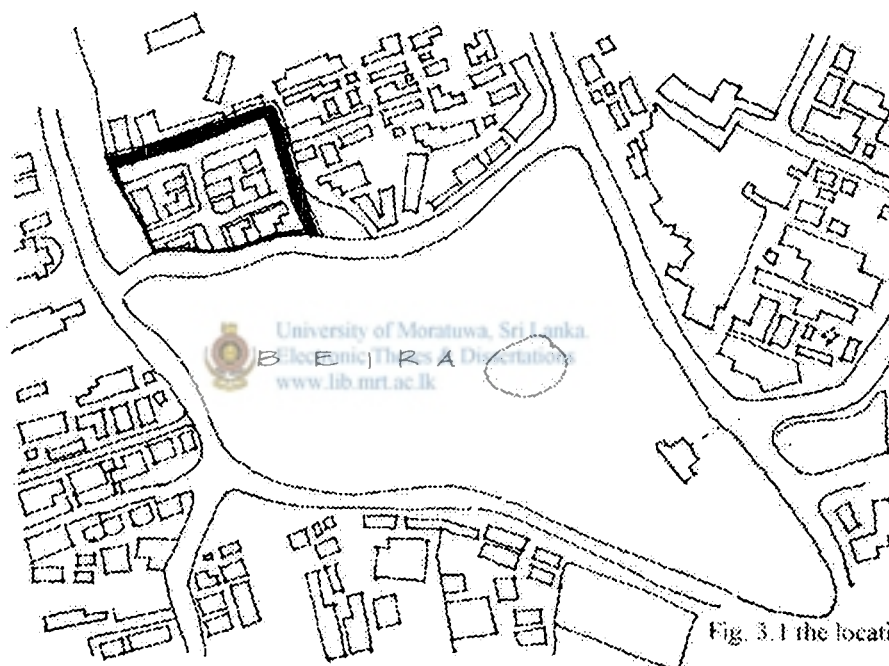


Fig. 3.1 the location

Fig. 3.1 the location

3.2 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

3.2.1 The Beginning

The history of this area goes back to 14th century, where much of what is Colombo today was consisted of low swampy marshlands and the land got prominence after the birth of Lake Beira. The origin of this lake dates back to 1521 when the Portuguese dammed a stream and built a ditch to protect their fortress. During the Dutch period this lake had being enlarged.

The lake's most glorious period arose during the British occupation when it became an ornament to the city of Colombo. They used the lake as a major point of internal transportation and for the recreation facilities. The part of the Beira Lake where today existing as Southwest Lake (which is bordering this land), had been used especially for recreation purposes, such as boating, boat races, and other water sports. The banks of the lake offered a graceful setting for the bungalows of the elite. As stated by, Dissanayaka, 1914:12,

“..... The part of the lake where today exist as South West lake provided ideal opportunities for boating, boat races, and other water sports. The affluent people and their elegant bungalows offering a graceful setting on the banks of the lake, and the evening took a festive mood with full of parties, recreation activities, social and cultural functions, festive balls, *etc.* Hence, the lake became a center for commercial activities as well as a notable enchanting leisure resort.”

(Dissanayaka, 1994:12)

However during the latter part of nineteenth century the lake and its surrounded area captured its decline, with the reclamation of certain sections for the construction of buildings and new roads, warehouses *etc.* The lake and its surrounded area were gradually neglected.

3.2.2 The Bare Land

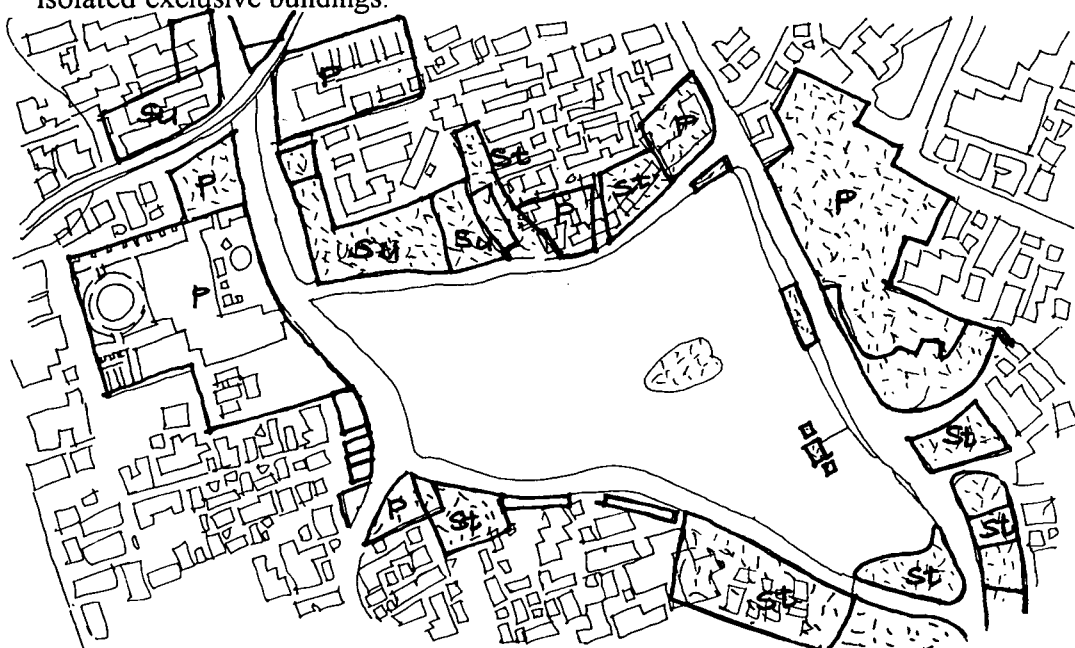
During the 20th century land became bare backyard to the George Steward's warehouses, thus serving as a knot which connected the warehouses with Lake Beira. Almost 3 sides of the land had been bounded by the lake, and a major road access was not available by then.

However during 1920s the warehouse had been shut down and the land became abandoned, unattainable bare left over space (Fig 3.4)

3.2.3 The Transformation

During 1980s Wekanda road was extended as Nawam Mawatha forming connection with this bare land. This land was executed by U.D.A. during 1981... and blocked out. These plots of land acquired by some of the leading private sector developers such as *IBM, FORBES, GREEN LANKA SHIPPING etc.* intending to put up their buildings. The designs of the buildings had been handed over to some of the leading architects and for the urban designers. The development began. Every opportunity existed. The land was available, investors ready, finance forthcoming, architects involving. The land, which was once abandoned and unattained, drew the attention as a land, which is having potential to enable a meaningful urban place.

Exclusive buildings consumed each plot of land. Billions of rupees had been spent. Each building was a masterpiece of its own. Finally the land transformed into a new city center of Colombo re-emerging a sophisticated development, that rather displays isolated exclusive buildings.



Su- U.D.A

P - Private

St- State

fig 3.2 land ownership

Chronological evaluation of the site

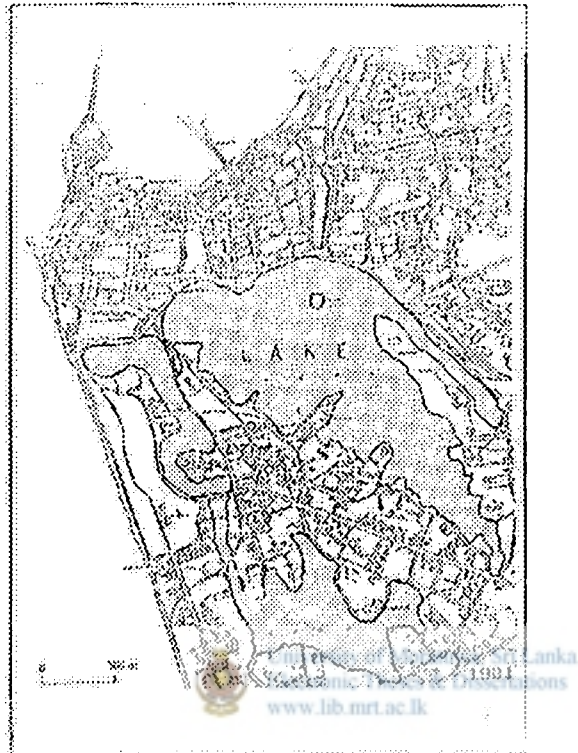


Fig 3.3 Land in year 1901

Fig 3.4 Bare land 1970

Fig 3.5 The land after sub-division
During 1980's

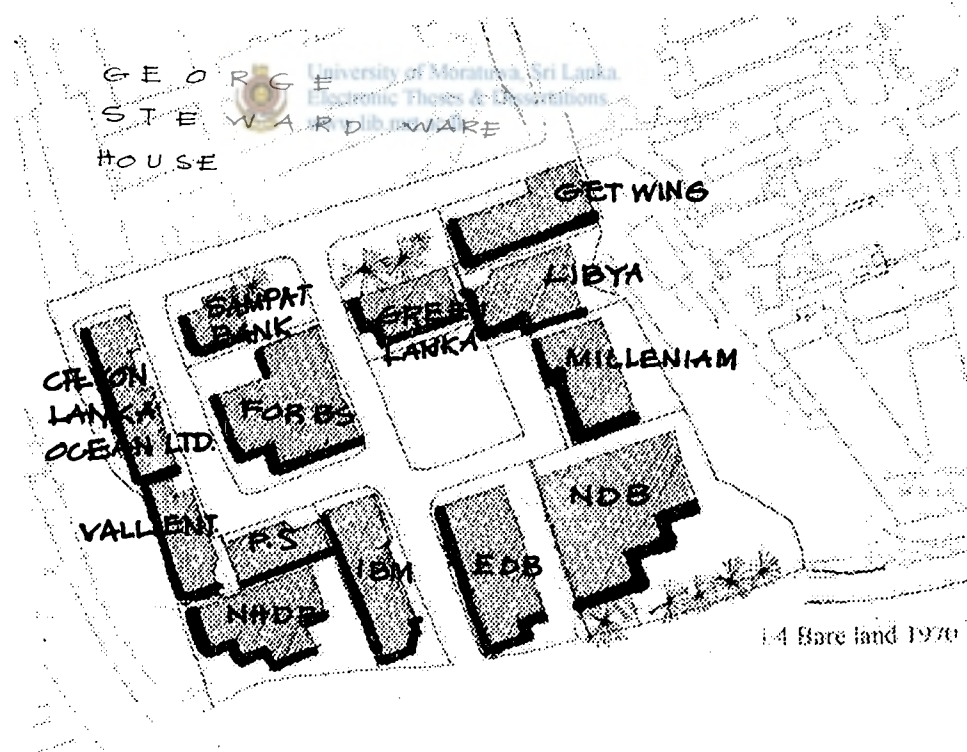
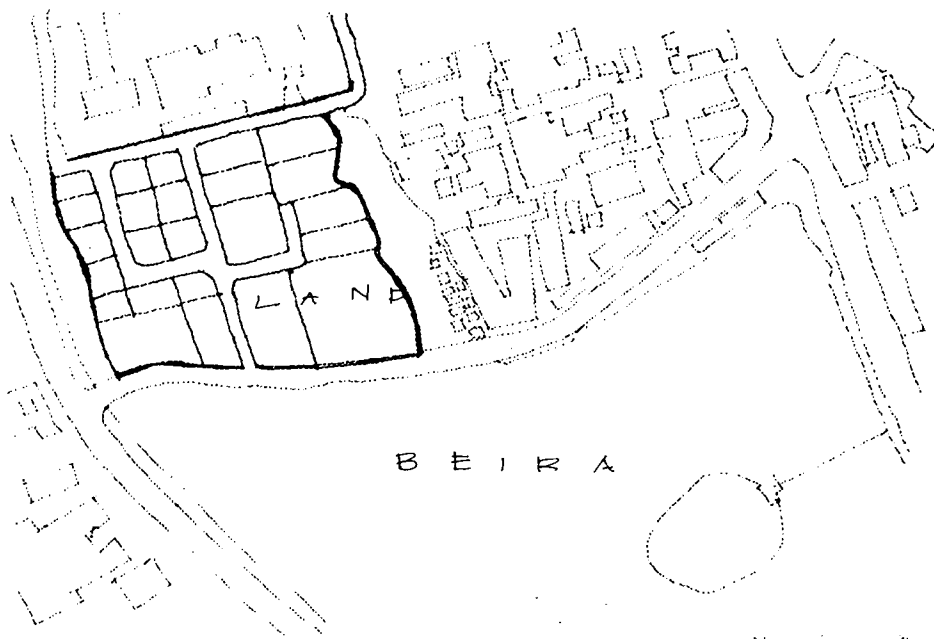


Fig 3.6 the existing condition
1999-after development

3.3.2 Sub Division of the Land

The sub division of the land had been done by a licensed surveyor and leveler appointed by the U.D.A. It is stated in U.D.A. regulations that a land under state or U.D.A. should be developed under a development plan.

“According to the present planning regulations, As far as state and U.D.A. lands are concerned, comprehensive developments should be undertaken preferably on the entire extent of the area category indicated in the proposed development plan or on relatively large blocks of land at least with a minimum extent of 2000 m².”

(Dissanayake, 1994:14)

Thus it is regrettable to note that there was no any prior involvement of any urban designers, architects, town planners or any master plan or development plan proposed.

1.3.2.1 Basic idea behind the sub division of land

According to the surveyor the basic idea the sub division is to divide the land basically for the use of recreation and commercial purposes. The U.D.A. regulations had been used as a guideline.

The site had been sub divided into 24 square plots of land with major road access and other by roads. The front plots of land were allocated to the development of recreation purposes.

3.3 THE DEVELOPMENT

3.3.1 Formation of the Site

As stated above the extent of this land existed as a left over unconstructed space. After the re-development of Nawam Mawatha, the land met with the potential to form a developable site. Two sides of the land were bounded by the lake while North portion

is bounded by remaining land of the ware house and the East portion by a developed residential zone.

In the U.D.A. proposals this land had been identified and proposed for the development of commercial and recreation activities.

“The catchment area of the Beira Lake especially the immediate surroundings of the Southeast lake posses an extremely high potential for commercial, recreation, cultural and tourism oriented development of high environment quality”

(..Dissanayake; 1994 , 15)

The approaches taken by the U.D.A. was to sub divide the land with a support of a land surveyor for further development. This is comparable with what is usually expected in the urban design. Such development requires the service of professional practices for the pre-designing to the sub division. However it could be observed that the basis behind the sub division of the site had been limited only to the site itself, where the contribution to the surrounded area is totally ignored.

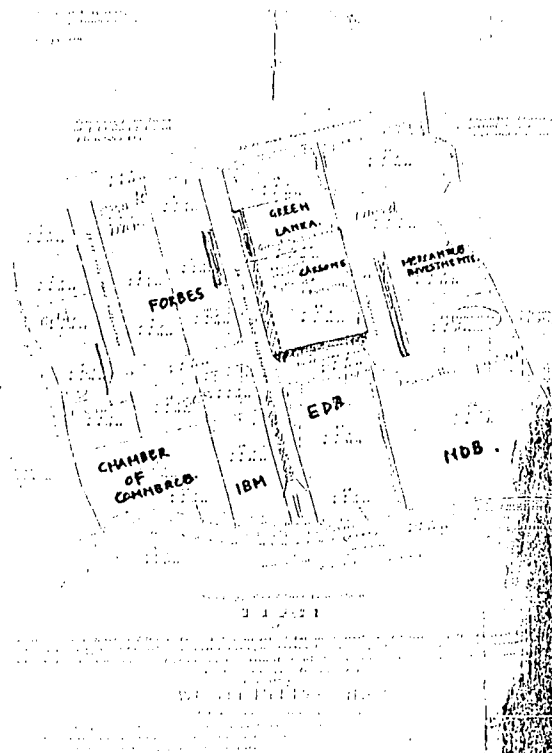


Fig 3.7 the surveyed map op the area

3.3.3 The Development of Buildings and Proposed Projects

However the proposal for the land as a commercial and recreation activities have been later modified and the whole land was sold out to the private sector for the development of commercial buildings. Finally the Nawam Mawatha development completed with a dense set of office complexes where most of the buildings were high-rises. The area is occupied about 13 building projects covering almost 85% of the land. However there were provisions for such modifications in the U.D.A. regulations.

“According to the statistics obtained from the Development Regulation Division of U.D.A. the total floor area of commercial developments approved by the C.M.C. for the years 1990 and 1991 are 825252 and 857286 ft², respectively. Further, the U.D.A. has approved a considerable number of applications for change of existing use for the commercial activities. The proposed twin tower building under construction at the Echelon square has 100,000 sqft. commercial office space. In addition, since the recent relaxation of the FAR for a temporary period, a number of high density commercial and residential development projects have been either approved or pending approval.”

(Dissanayake, 199 :138)

3.4 THE REGULATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The basic regulations that were adopted for the development were regulations, which were implicated by U.D.A. (Law No. 41 of 1978) and the requirements of the development plan of the Beira Lake catchment area. The regulations were basically,

1. Regulations for the sub division of land
2. Regulations for the development of buildings

1. Regulations for the sub division of land

According to the existed planning regulations of (U.D.A. Law No. 41 of 1978) for the purpose of sub division of land, the minimum plot size recorded was 150 m². However, this has been modified to facilitate with Beira Lake development plan.

“According to the present planning regulations the minimum plot size in land sub division is 150 m². Even though most lands abutting the lake are owned by the state, there is a tendency towards land sub divisions of remaining private lands into small blocks of land due to high land value which is not desirable. Therefore, a minimum of 500 m² is recommended for plot sizes of future land sub divisions.”

(Dissanayake, 1994:149)

Hence if the plot of the land is allocated for high-rise building, the site should exceed 1000 m² in extent and has dimension of at least 20 m along shortest side of the land and abuts a street of 12 m or more. To meet with this need most of the high-rise buildings at Nawam Mawatha had been allocated 2 or 3 plots of land. In some instances the regulation had been violated.

Further it states that,

“1. No new sub division shall have the effect of reducing the open space, light, ventilation, and other requirements of exist building on the site to less than those required under these regulations.”

“2. No lot in a sub division plan shall be utilized for any purposes other than purpose for which it was approved.”

However, in the development of Nawam Mawatha this regulation (No. 2) had been undermined, using the plots of land for a different purpose other than which it was proposed. Moreover it states a minimum area of 4% of the land to be reserved including streets for the use of community purposes. It also states that reserved space shall be vested with the authority free of charge. However, it is regrettable to note that the open reservation space at the development area has also been occupied by a building.

2. Regulations for the development of buildings

Plot coverage

According to the U.D.A. regulations (1978), the minimum plot coverage required was 66%. This has differed for the lake catchment area.

“According to the present planning regulations, the plot coverage for residential and non-residential developments are 66% and 80% respectively.

In order to ensure, more open space for landscaping and also to increase visual contact with the lake from roads and buildings in the immediate vicinity of the lake, it is recommended that plot coverage at the ground level should be limited to 66% for all types of development within the area categories abutting the lake.”

(Dissanayake, 1994:150)

Furthermore under additional requirements for high-rise buildings, it states that,

“28.1 The building will not interfere with supply of amenities to the neighborhood or mar the harmony of the area.

29.1 The maximum height of the building shall not exceed twice the horizontal distance between any storey of the building.

29.3 There shall be at least one side of the building not being front side, between the buildings and the boundary of the site minimum open space of at least one quarter of the height of building or 5.5 m.”

(U.D.A. Law 1978)

The U.D.A. regulations also states that any new development should have an architectural control. It is stated that the building should harmonize with their surroundings.

“33.1 The authority may in the interest of harmonizing the development activity with surrounding development, direct the owner to make such modification as it deems necessary in the height, architectural features or facade of any building.”

(U.D.A. Law 1978)

Further the U.D.A. had implemented the regulations for landscape which states, That the authority may direct an owner to landscape the site of development and maintain it with planting in the manner-approved by it.

(U.D.A. Law 1978)

However most of the sites in the development exist without any landscape; many without even a single tree.

Concluding Remarks

Nawam Mawatha development was a newly developed urban space situated at the hub of the city of Colombo. The land once existed as a harbour front, once as a glorious waterfront, and at the latter stages as a bare abandoned land. However the area now has been consumed by a new development called “New Nawam Mawatha Development”, which finally resulted a land with very exclusive type of buildings; mostly of high-rises. The development fulfilled with each opportunity. The developed land was uniquely located. There were regulations adopted, there were investors to build up their luxurious buildings, designers had done the designs of the buildings. However, it is regrettable to note that all the designs of the buildings were limited only to the site/the plot of land which sub divided by the land surveyor. There is no such master plan done for the development. However, the development now is being completed. It is needless to say that the Nawam Mawatha development was one of the best opportunities to make a meaningful place? Has this sense of place being achieved from the development? Or has it given rise to placelessness. In the other chapter it will examine the sense of place in the area.

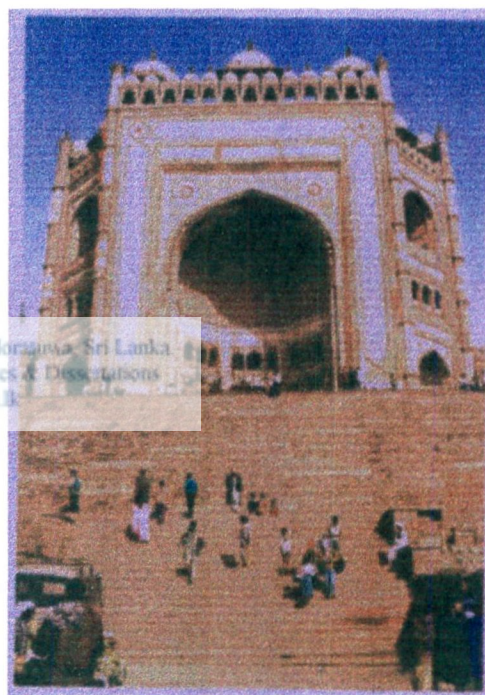


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CHAPTER FOUR
THE CASE STUDY



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"When the relationship between building and surrounding is such that the building can be seen as an object, it has the responsibility not to offend it's surrounding."

(Day)

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CASE STUDY

4.1 THE BASIS FOR THE SELECTION

It is no great secret that a meaningful place, which is glimpsed by a 'sense of place', helps the user to obtain utmost satisfaction, because it is the place where we live and dwell. Architecture as a process of place making, creates places. Thus the intention of the great architecture, and the responsibility of the designer shall be to create meaningful places for people to dwell. As stated by Day, 1990:81.

“Most of us spend most of our time in, near or influenced by built surroundings. We spent our lives in what were once the thoughts of architects’. Our thoughts, our designs, make the world of tomorrow. If we think about it, this is a terrible responsibility.”

More else in case of an urban entity this sense of place becomes much more important. Because the profound effect it results implicates to a greater number of people and to the whole city as well.

Nawam Mawatha development area is a one “tangible” example of such product of designers - Architecture, with all other opportunities to make a better urban place. Hence as a developing country, in the future the city of Colombo may have much more development such as “Nawam Mawatha Development”. Therefore such exceptional urban development as Nawam Mawatha may have to carry that intention of architecture, intention to becoming a meaningful place. this chapter attempts to examine its achievement ‘of sense of place’

“We do not look at architecture, we live in it”.

(Day, 1990:4)



4.2 EXISTING PHYSICAL SETTING OF NAWAM MAWATHA

As stated above Nawam Mawatha is one most prominent waterfront situated in the city of Colombo. The vast water body - Lake Beira which bordering the Nawam Mawatha has made this a significant location. The shoreline of Lake Beira had provided a well-defined edge making it more prominent.



Plate 4.1 with touch of traditional
Architecture; venue union
Assurance - over looking Beria



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When considering the built setting of Nawam Mawatha it could be observed densely packed buildings along one side of the road. These buildings are followed by a lower skyline and linear development and by a horizontal rhythm of the building elements. Most of the buildings in the surrounded area is carrying out a charming character which is followed by modern urbane architecture but with a touch of Sri Lankan traditional architecture with pitch roofs, with long eaves. eg. Union Assurance building. *Seema Malakaya*, *shoreline Bomaluwa* exists as distinctive buildings adding a glimpse of culture to the area, while the hotel Lanka Oberoi act as a dominant building around the area.

When considering the social activities the area is predominant for the cultural event- the *Gangarama perahera*. The perahera performs at the Sir James peris mawatha and at perahera mawatha that could be viewed from development area. This has made this area unique, hence adding cultural value

Plate 4.2 *Gangarama perahera*

Adding cultural value

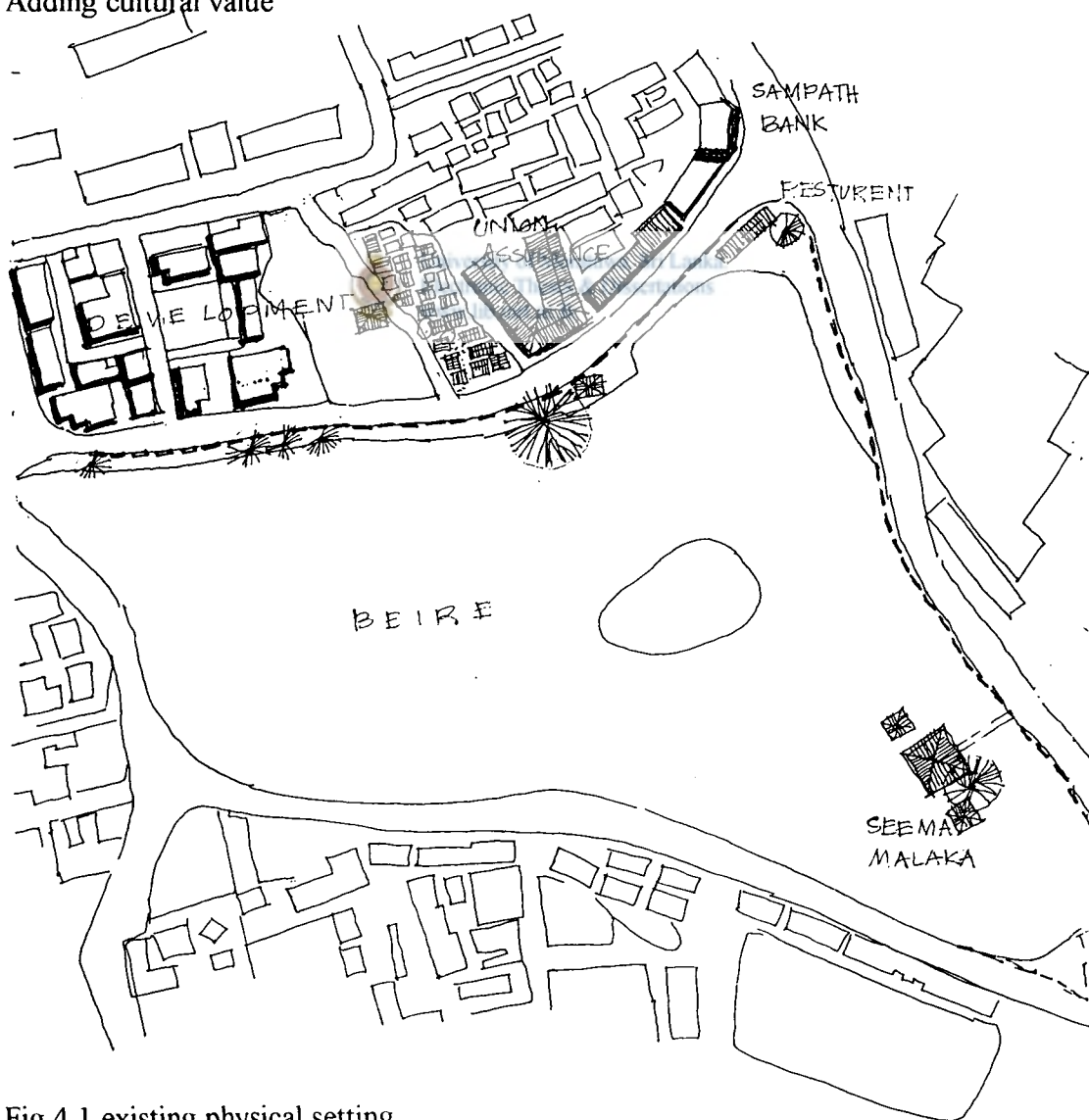


Fig 4.1 existing physical setting

4.3 THE EXISTING LAND USE

Most of the land in the Nawam Mawatha area had been used for commercial activities such as for banking, professional and services institutes and retail commercial activities. The development area too used for such activities. There are some areas used for residential purposes, but they exist as slums and shanties, one side of the lake been used for residential hotels which exist as a residential hotel.

However the main activity associated with the area is office based activities. Thus most of the streets become live during office hours (8:00 am to 5:00 pm) and mostly in lunch hours during 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm.

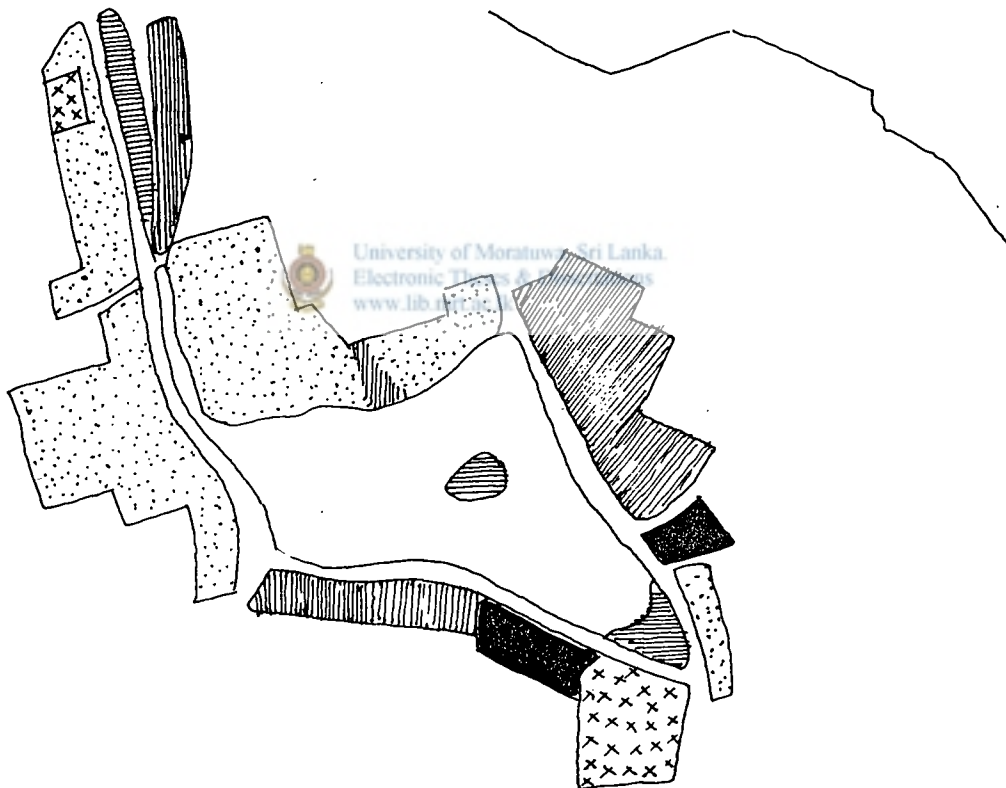


Fig 4.2 present land use

4.5 EXAMINATION OF SENSE OF PLACE

Contribution of buildings towards place

To enable a place it should be carrying out some physical and psychological characters and may facilitate with suitable activities of people. Has this been achieved in the new development area ?

Nawam Mawatha development could be conceived as an urban space. Hence it should have a clear structure and a better spacial progression gifted by that structure, to read it as an urban space (or to give imaginability) and to orientate oneself within that area.

According to the Lynch's checklist Nawam Mawatha could be identified as a district which is having a common character. As stated by Bently;:14

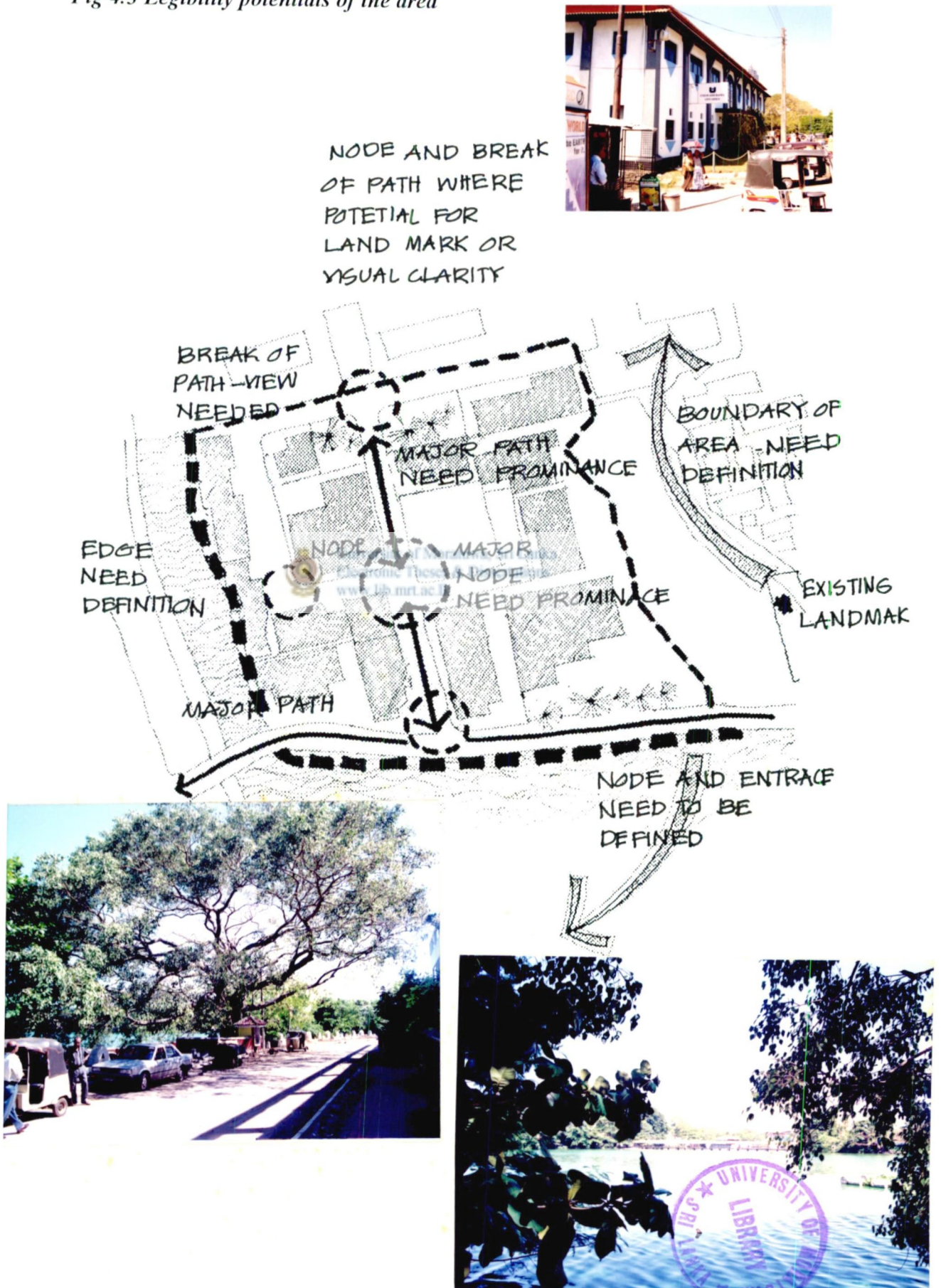
“Districts recognizable as having some particular identifiable character”

Further it states; 50

“Character often depends on consistent pattern of uses repetition, of typical building themes heights, frontages, materials, and so forth”

These aspects found to be similar in the buildings of this area. Moreover, to form a clear structure that district should properly be defined with other elements of an urban form such as paths, nodes, landmarks, and edges. In an urban space the buildings basically provide this definition of elements. The diagram below shows the legibility potentials of the developing area.

Fig 4.3 Legibility potentials of the area



Even if there is a potential in the development area it could be observed these consisted elements of paths, nodes, edges and landmarks are not integrated with the designs of buildings, where most of the buildings have totally ignored without relating to these element. Thus the area has failed to form a clear structure.

A defined edge or boundary is difficult to be identified in the area. The scaling down of NDB and EDB buildings and Chamber of Commerce building in the Southern side of the land have given some kind of gesture, contributing to the show line edge. But this has totally been ignored in other 3 sides. Even the natural edge formed by the shoreline of Lake Beira has not given any prominence, in visual continuity or in depth.



Fig 4.4 weakly defined edge

The contribution of the building to formulate spatial characters in paths, nodes are lacking. The lack of characters in paths, nodes, and the lack of prominence of land marks have failed to achieve a clear structure and one to progress through the area, diminishing sense of orientation. Below map shows the legibility failure in the area.

Fig 4.5 legibility failure

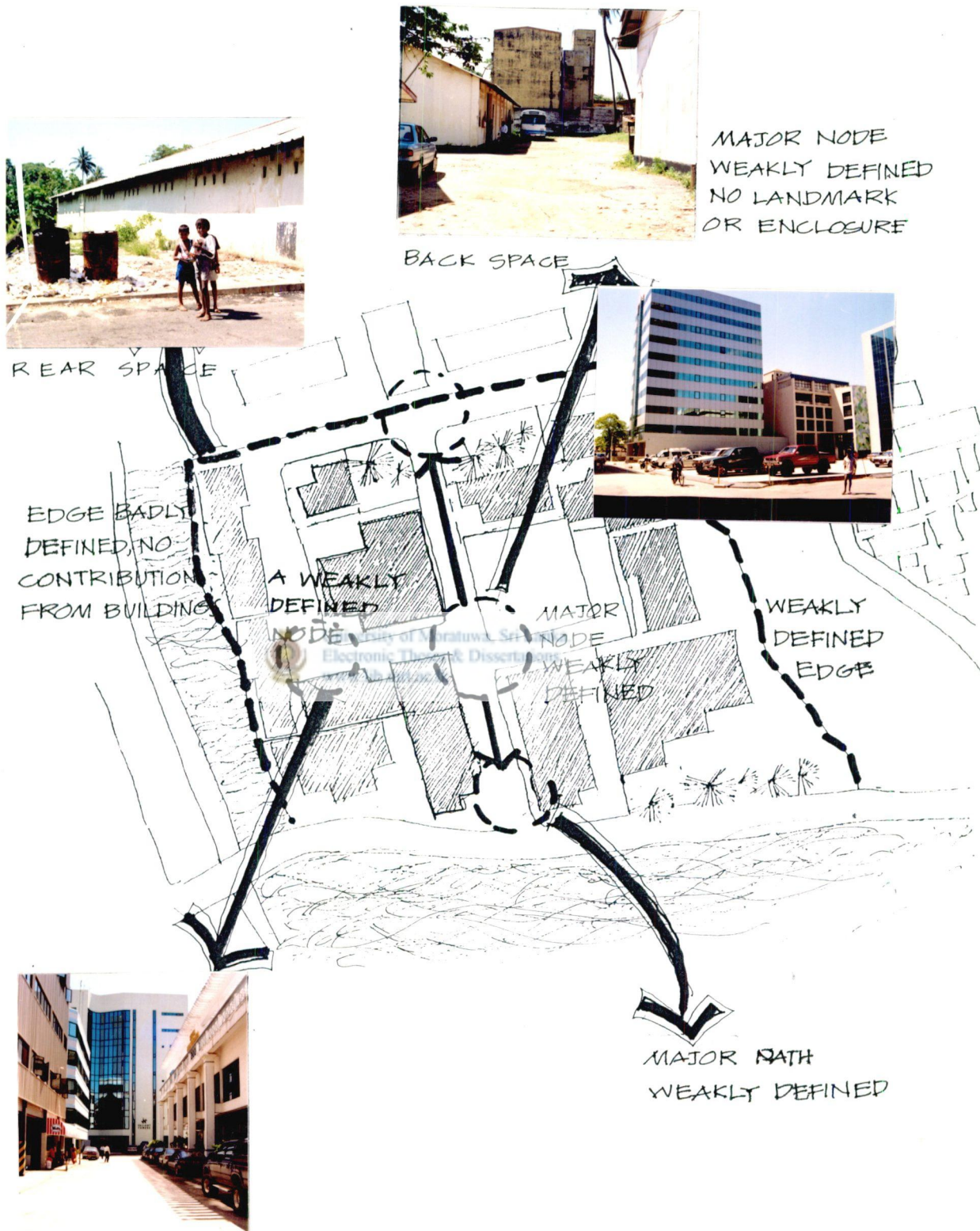


Plate 4.6 FROM 2nd CROSS LANE

When considering the spatial progression, through the paths, the spacial qualities contributed by the buildings seem to be totally ignored. At the beginning of Nawam Mawatha it had given a kind of entrance by Sampath Bank building and the linear restaurant acting as a gate providing a semi enclosed feeling. This has further continued by vertical rhythm of Sri Lankan General Trading Company and Union Assurance providing a corridor like effect. The show line Bo-maluwa acts as a focal point giving directional quality to the street. This has been further continued by the horizontal strips and linear plantation of trees at the front of the NDB building and setback created by this building.

However this sense of orientation is suddenly lost once entered to the new development area. The entrance road to the area is being totally hidden by IBM and EDB buildings which runs vertically in form of skyscrapers, where there is no sense of beginning to the area.



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Plate 4.8 entrance to the area



fig 4.6 layout of area

The high skyscrapers that are densely packed along both sides of the access road stands senselessly without giving any gestures to progress through the path. The access road directly focused on to the back yard of the warehouses, without giving any prominence to the street



Plate 4.9 a path....densely packed buildings along both sides

Each other by road had undergone the same effect where the sense of orientation is undermined. In the 4th by road the street is focused in to hotel Lanka Oberoi. But this has not empathized by buildings either creating a framed view or so on.(fig4.9). Most of the buildings are totally inward looking without any contribution to the street. The built form, scales, building line, faded treatments, materials have hardly contributed to the spatial qualities of the street. The excessive use of glass in most of the buildings has given alienation to the street by creating an uncomfortable feeling. The ground floor treatments to encourage the activities in the area are very much lesser. In most of the buildings the ground floor has designed as colonnade area. But these are used as car parks.

Building design Factors	Built form	Scale & Proportion	Bldg line	Sky line	Facade Treatment	Ground floor details	Materials & colours	Landscape
Qualities Of path								
Continuity	o	o	o	x	o	•	o	x
Sense of enclosure	x	o	x	o	x	o	o	o
Directional Quality	o	o	x	o	x	x	x	x
Defined end & beginning	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Visual clarify	x	x	x	o	o	o	o	x

Table 4.4 Contribution of building design factors to the physical characteristics of the path. The EDB Building

Building design Factors	Built form	Scale & Proportion	Bldg line	Sky line	Facade Treatment	Ground floor details	Materials & colours	Landscape
Qualities Of path								
Continuity	x	x	o	x	o	o	x	x
Sense of enclosure	x	o	x	x	o	o	x	x
Directional Quality	x	o	o	x	o	x	x	x
Defined end & beginning	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Visual clarify	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Contribution of building design factors to the physical characteristics of the path. The OCEAN LINE LTD.

- Primary Positive
- Secondary negative
- x secondary negative
- x primary negative

Building design Factors	Built form	Scale & Proportion	Bidg line	Sky line	Fazed Treatment	Ground floor details	Materials & colours	Landscape
Qualities Of path								
Constituit y	x	x	o	x	o	x	x	-
Sense of enclosure	x	o	x	x	o	x	x	o
Directional Quality	x	o	x	x	o	x	x	x
Defined end & beginning	o	x	x	x	o	x	x	x
Visual clarify	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Contribution of building design factors to the physical characteristics of the path. The

VALLIIENT TOWERS



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- Primary Positive x secondary negative
- Secondary negative x primary negative

According to the above clarification it could be observed that most of the buildings are failed in contributing to create special qualities in path. It could be observed the building factors have been limited only to the building

Fig 4.9 the views given in the path diminishing spatial progression

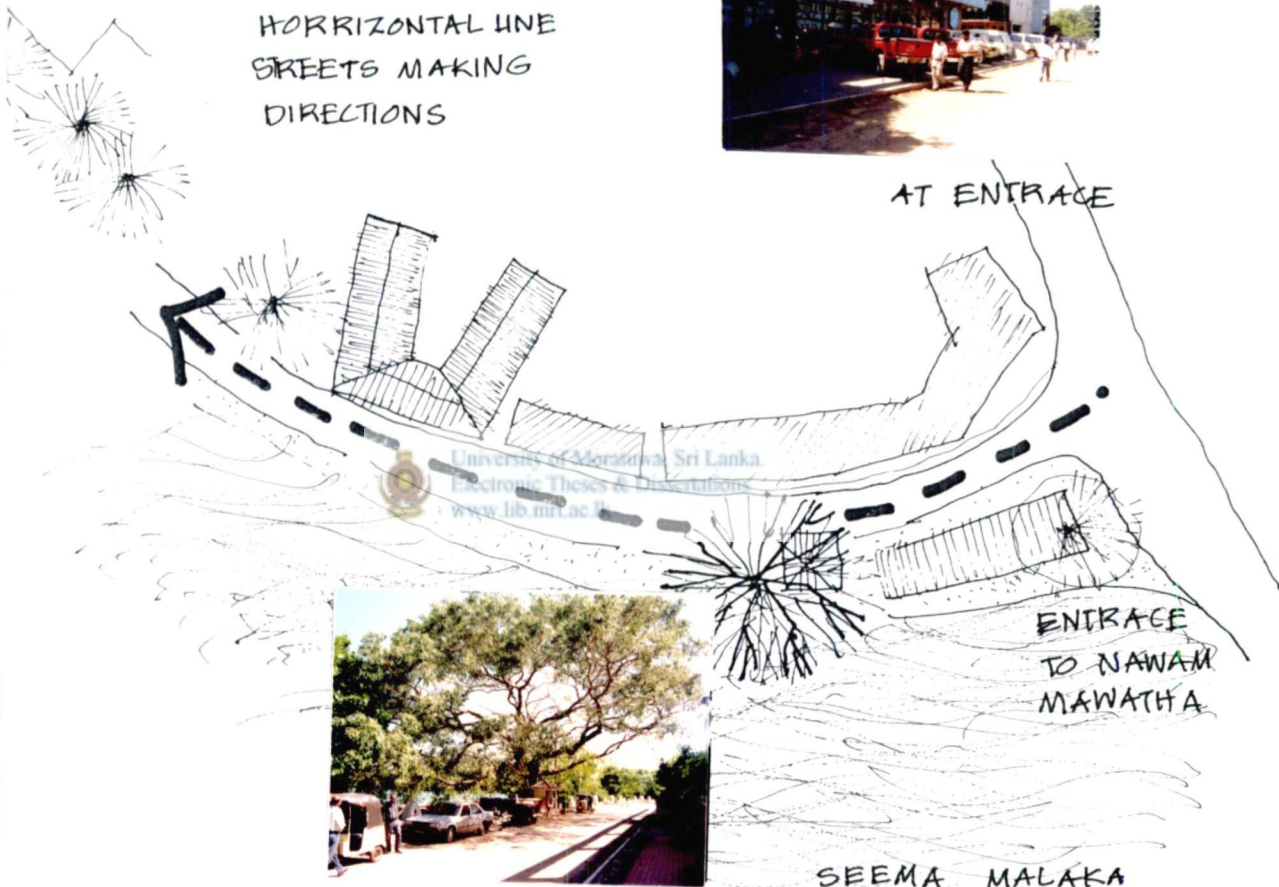




HORIZONTAL LINE
STREETS MAKING
DIRECTIONS



AT ENTRANCE



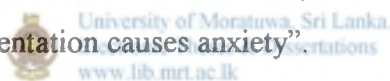
BO MALUWA.



SEEMA MALAKA

When considering the nodes there could be identified potentials of one major node and 3 other nodes. However the surrounded buildings of the node has failed to give a special identity or any visual prominence, or sense of enclosure to the node. The contribution towards the landmark is also lacking. The dominance created by each building has destroyed, giving any building a speciality to become a landmark. The existing landmarks such as *Seema Malakaya*, Union Assurance building too being ignored without giving any visual clarity. However the absence of space changers, in paths given by the buildings is lacking, which has peeled away the user having utmost interest. However it is felt that the formation of urban elements to form a legible structure and contribution of buildings towards these elements are very much lacking, where the development area has failed to create a clear structure, creating disorientation.

“To satisfy his inner sense of orientation, man needs to situate himself in space. Disorientation causes anxiety”.



(Meiss, 1990:154)

- Contribution of the buildings towards scale and proportion.

Since most of the buildings out of thirteen building projects are reaching to it's verticality, the contribution towards the humane scale has been disregarded. This inhuman scale has destroyed the psychological comfort of the user, compelling him and imposing alienation.

“Proportions that are too high, too wide, too long like lines that are too dynamic or spaces that are too strongly focal - risk being too compelling”

(Day, 1990:74)



Plate 4.8 a path ... Proportions that are too High risk being compelling

- Sense of enclosure

The high rise buildings, in most of the areas had undermined the sense of enclosure. These high rise buildings have diminished the required enclosure. In the central area, where the car park is located, the sense of enclosure is not given any prominence. In this area the width : building height ratio is more than 4:1 creating a minimum enclosure.

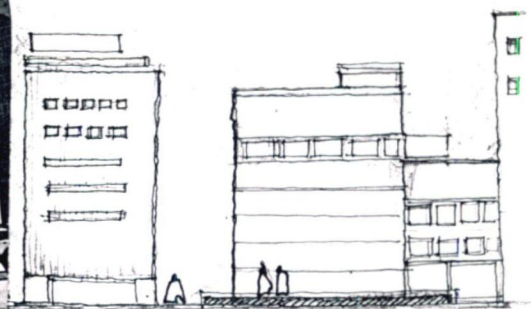


Plate 4.16 at the center of areathe loss sense of enclosure

- Use of solid - void relationship, colours, textures and light and shade

These properties give spatial characters to the place at the same time adding variety to the place. Since most of the buildings are cubical glass boxes, which are inward looking, the solid void relationships are not properly considered. The ground floor of some building are designed as closely tighten glass cubical while some are used as car parking, where a kind of voidness have been established. But these are not effectively designed to carry out the character or to give any visual clarity such as views *etc.* The colonnade path at the ground floor of EDB building has given a better relationship of solid-void. But it is not well emphasized.

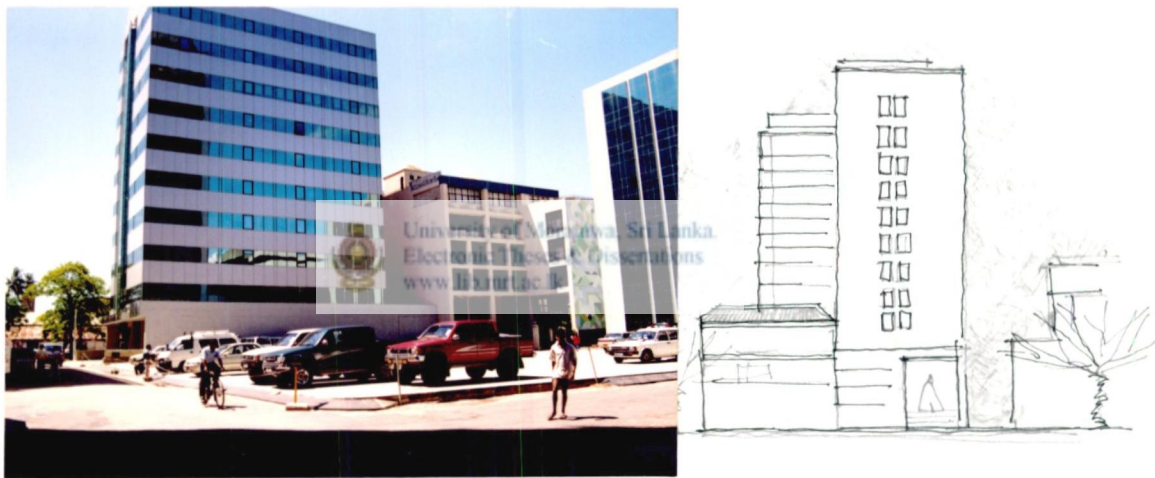


Plate 4.17 less contribution of buildings towards each other.....

The excessive use of glass and curtain walls has undermined the use of colours and different textures. Different qualities of lights and shades are not effectively used. This has resulted a kind of same mood every where in the area, which has down played the interest of user depriving him giving a sense of place and any variety.

“Much more than the architecture it is the materials and play of light upon them that makes the atmosphere of a place.”

(Day, 1990:114)



Plate 4.18 excessive use of glass....giving monotonous expression

- Harmony and coherency

When considering the whole image of the Nawam Mawatha with the surrounding it could be observed that the image of the development is merged with the context, to a certain extent. The height of EDB building has given a kind of monumentality to the area. However excessive height and dominance of the other buildings has not given any contribution towards this spatial hierarchy.

The continuity of the development area with its immediate surrounding, in terms of activities physically, or psychologically is found to be lacking. The charming character of Nawam Mawatha has been peeled away with vertical glass boxes. The sudden rising of the skyline of the buildings has ignored the transition layer of the street and surrounding. Even the relationship of one building to another being downplayed where most of the buildings are separated from a tall blind wall, without contribution towards each other. The sense of cultural background seems not to have been integrated in the designs, and the residential area around, is being totally ignored, by creating a dead wall.

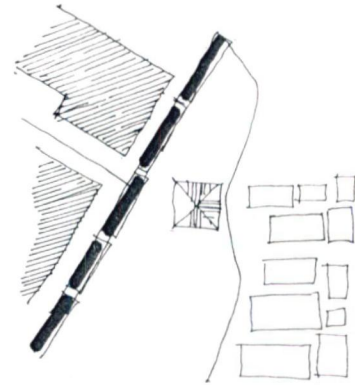


Plate 4.19 the development ignoring the surrounding

However it could be observed that the contribution of building towards the physical context to enable a place is very much lacking. The physical context has been so far failed to give a image to perceive it as a place, or to create an intimate experience to build emotional attachments. The buildings are not encouraging activities with in exterior space, where the activities are shut away inside. Most of the buildings reflect alienation, compelling the user and giving a repulsive experience. These have resulted out door dead spaces without activities and people. Most of the streets are dead without people, diminishing the sense of place. As Day states, 1990:152.

“With our streets taken over by motor vehicles and our climate and culture conducive to closed wall tend to forget that it is human activity that makes a city alive”



Plate 4.20 not an intimate feeling....

So far a dead street

The spaces, which created for people to hang around and to stay a while is felt much more, needed in the area. Most of the buildings have failed to contribute towards this effect even from the landscape. In most of the spaces there is no single tree to give shading to people to stay. Little activities and human component has peeled away the sense of place.

Potential places in the area.

In the area there could be identified certain spaces which is having potential to become a place.

They are:

1. The major space which has been created in the center of the area
2. Food outlets/snacks at the ground level of some buildings
3. Left over sites, which are using as car parks
4. Colonnade ground floors
5. Road at the edge of the lake

Observation of the potential places

1. The major space which has been created in the center of the area

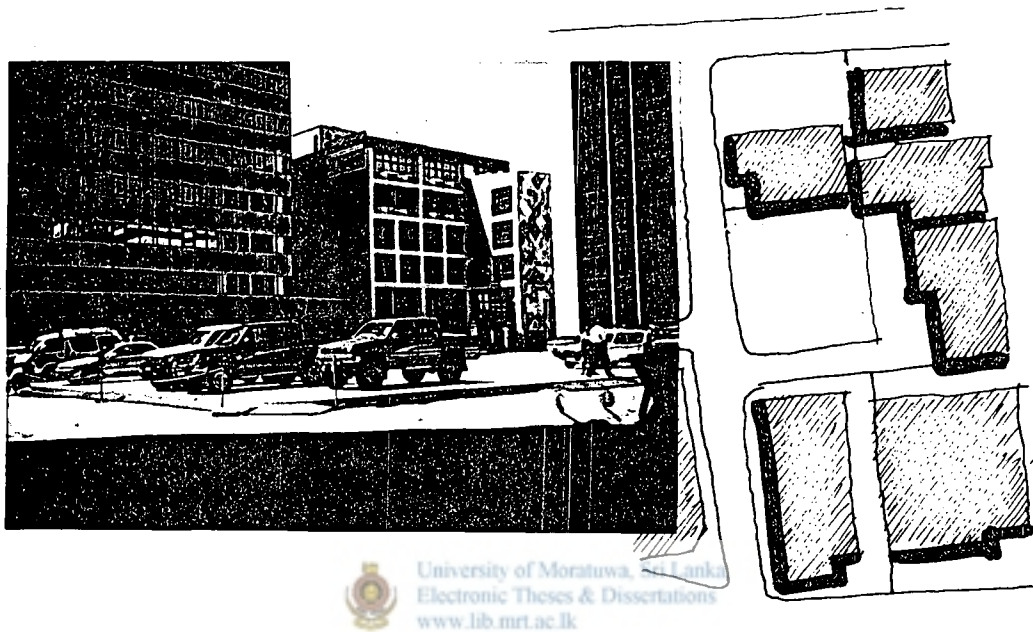


Plate 4.6 open space at the center

The major space, which has been created in the center of the area, could be considered as one of the most important spaces in the area that has potential to become a place. This area was earlier proposed for a high rise. But now it is being used as a car park. High rise buildings have demarcated this considerable large area. So far this has been located as the center of the area which needs a kind of prominence. However if this has been treated with more defined way with a sense of insideness, and with more direct linkages with ground floors of the buildings making connections and with different activities this would have become more exotic. However it is regrettable to note that the whole area is being used for the parking of cars. There is not even a single tree to provide shade or a landmark to give any prominence. However the Valiant tower has responded to the area acting as a back stage to the open area. The colonnade path that is created at the E.D.B building which is connected to this square has been blocked. In fact this path has potential to become an attractive and livable path physically and visually.



A center space....well contribution from buildings

Hence it can be said that although a space has been created it has no meaning interns of proper activities or physical structure.

Left over sites, which are using as car parks

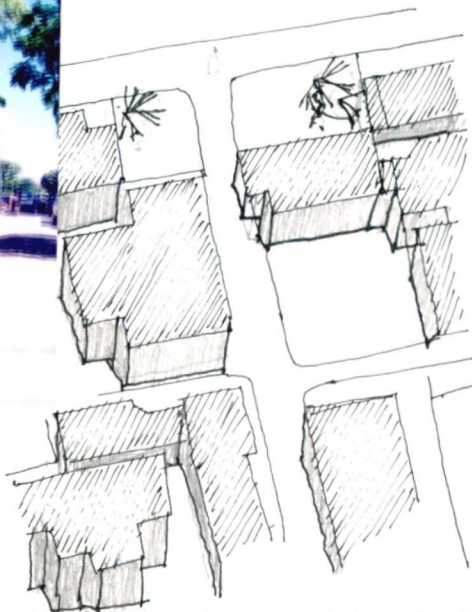


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There could be identified several left over spaces/sites in between these high risers which is presently using as car parks. However these spaces are not well physically defined to create exotic structure. Further these are not introduced with proper activities other than the parking. These left over spaces has to be well defined and should pertain connection with buildings. These spaces could be activating with small scale commercial and recreation activities such ass out door food courts, resting-places etc. These are necessary because most of the buildings are officers. These left over spaces could make much more attractive by making level changers, using steps where one could hang on and rest.

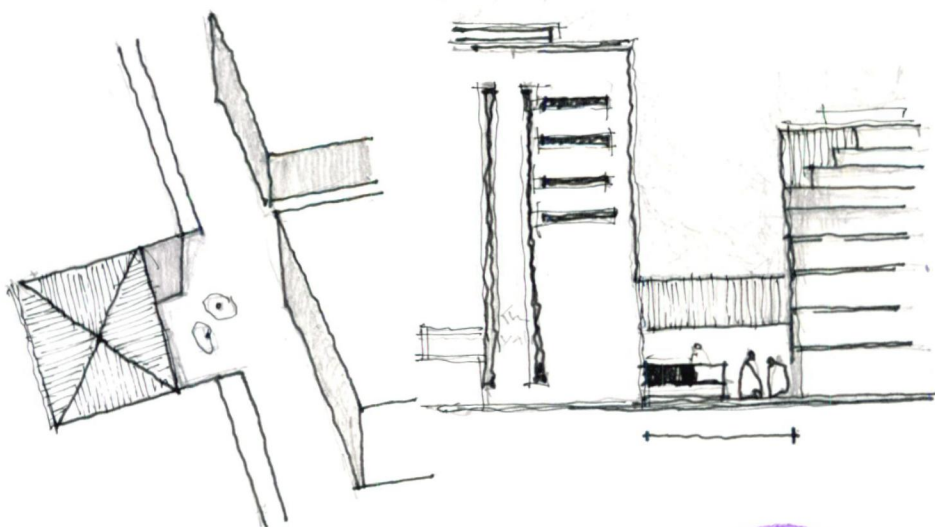


Plate 4.21 left over car parks



Food Outlets

There could be identified, small-scale outdoor food outlets, snack bars in the bottom of valiant towers and IBM, which has potentials to become places. They seem to be functioning well, when compared to other spaces in the area. However these spaces need kind of enclosures, variety, views and continently with other spaces to become much more successful. It's regrettable to note the views, which could be created in linkage with Biera Lake, is totally ignored.



Food outlets at the ground floors



Colonnade ground floor

It could be observed that most of the buildings are consisted with colonnade ground floors. But these are using as car parks without using for variety of activities that add color to the place. Most of them are not creating a meaningful connection with streets to give livability to the space. If these spaces are used as connective series of spaces, contributing to the street and for the open spaces it could have been a better place.

Road at the edge of the lake

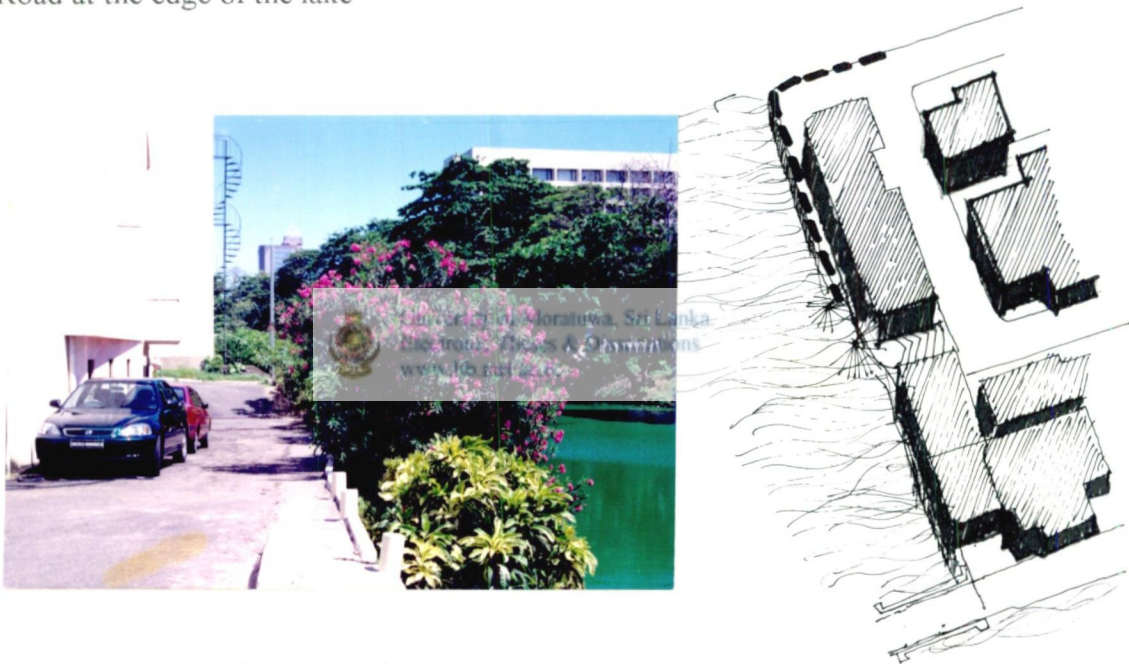


Plate 4.22 road at the water edge

This street which is at the edge of the lake are now being using as an access road to the car park of Valiant towers. Thus this has the potential to become a place. If this road is used as a lakefront introducing different activities such as resting-places and different water base activities it should have more interesting. This space need more definition, landscape street furnitures

4.5 NAWAM MAWATHA DEVELOPMENT PLACE OR A NON PLACE?

Nawam Mawatha development has consumed an opportunity to make an urban place. It's buildings now all being constructed and occupied. However, it could be observed that the place created at Nawam Mawatha is far from the true sense of place. Each building of Nawam Mawatha reflects masterly in architecture. Each building is a master - piece. But this masterly has limited only to the building itself, making it an object. It's immediate surroundings, the place it is creating, seems to be ignored. Thus the imeagiability of the area as a place is lacking.

“It is observed that haphazard development and individualistic approach to building design around the South West lake, with no regard for existing environment have not only created unpleasant urban development but have also destroyed the unique character and identity of some areas of the city”.



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(Dissanayaka, 1994:150)



Plate 4.23 Buildings reflects masterly....but no contribution to place

CONCLUSION

Place can be viewed as the most affectionate emotional attachment to the human being which could be 'enabled'. We live in spaces, we talk about places, built memories of places and it is where we dwell. 'Place' is an important part of the lives of the people. However, places are not affectionate always, when it creates placelessness, eroding human attachment with such places. Architecture is the process which visualize this place. It enables places. Indeed this is very important and a terrible responsibility, because it is the architecture which provides those 'places' where people spend most of their lives. Thus the intention of architecture should be to create meaningful places encoded with a 'sense of place'. Therefore, in anywhere in the world, when a piece of environment is consumed to enable a place by a work of architecture it should be able to enable 'meaningful place'.



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Nawam Mawatha development is also such piece of environment - an urban entity that consumed to enable a place. Nevertheless it was an opportunity to make a meaningful place. It is uniquely located. Buildings were designed by designers. Investors were already there to invest. Billions of rupees were spent. However, it is regrettable to note that what has been constructed in Nawam Mawatha has failed to generate a good 'sense of place'.

When considering each building itself, they could be observed as master - pieces. But this masterly has limited only to the building to the site itself. The place it creates, to its immediate surroundings has been totally ignored. In other words all the buildings are treated as isolated objects where finally it had become a victim of placelessness.

The sin behind this tragedy could be many. It may not be only the architects who made the wrong attempt. The sub division of land, inadequate regulations, lack of planning decisions, lack of professional coordination *etc.* too is responsible for this

placelessness. Thus the architects should take the responsibility to make 'meaningful places'. Because what they built will last for a longer time, may be for the whole life of the inhabitants. Though as architects we should not concentrate only to the building itself.

We must watch the place it creates, and listen to what the place is asked for. During the academic carrier we were taught to design buildings that are responsive to the environment, taught C.G.A. - Context Generated Architecture to enable better places.

This may not only be limited to the academic carrier. These should be visualized when it comes to the real situation. And it is where the work of great architecture may sustain, sustain in the mind of people forever.





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