

HOW BUILDINGS BECOME LANDMARKS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO IMAGEABILITY OF URBAN STREET SCAPES

THIS DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
(ARCHITECTURE)

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA



University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka
Electronic Theses & Dissertations
www.lib.mrt

LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA, SRI LANKA
MORATUWA

Draft copy.

72 '05"
72(043)

I.K.W. NILMALGODA
MARCH 2005

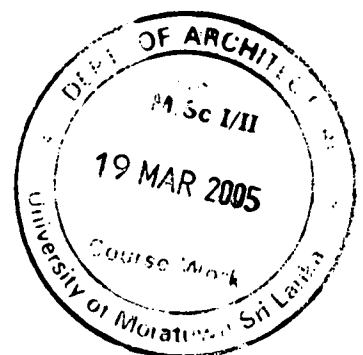
University of Moratuwa



85480

85480

85480



CONTENTS

	Page no.
Preface	v
List of illustration	vii
Acknowledgement	ix
Introduction	1
Observations/ the issues identified	1
Criticality of the above observations/issues	2
Possible causes for the above phenomenon	2
Therefore the intention of the study	2
Scope and limitations	3
Method of the study	3
 CHAPTER ONE	 4
THE URBAN STREET; STREET AND THE ENVIRONMENT WITH BUILT FORMS	
 Introduction	 5
1.1 The urban street	5
1.2 Function of the street	6
1.3 Spatial attributes of streetscapes	8
1.3.1 Dynamics of street form (the special enclosure)	8
1.3.2 Degree of enclosure	9
1.3.3 Shape of the enclosure	10
1.4 Spatial progression.	11
1.4.1 Spatial experience/ progression as opposed to a building and with time	12
1.4.2 Focal points and visual cues	12
1.4.3 Contrast of spaces	13
1.5 Different social aspects	15
1.5.1 Street as a public open space	16
1.5.2 street as a place of communication	16

	Page no.
1.5.3 street as a place of celebration	18
1.5.4 as a learning experience	18
1.5.5 streets in terms of adaptability	19
Summery	20
CHAPTER TWO	21
ENVIRONMENT AND THE IMAGEABILITY	
Introduction	22
2.1 Environmental perception and image	22
2.1.1 The image	22
2.1.2 Environmental perception and image	23
2.1.3 Imageability of a place	24
2.1.3.1 imageability	24
2.1.3.2 Imageable structure	25
2.1.4 the street environment and the imageability	26
2.2 Meaning associated with physical environment	26
2.2.1 Personal meaning	27
2.2.2 Assigned meaning	28
2.3 Legibility of an environment	28
2.3.1 Paths	30
2.3.2 Edges	30
2.3.3 Nodes	31
2.3.4 Districts	31
2.3.5 Landmarks	31
2.4 Fabrics and objects	32
2.4.1 Fabrics	32
2.4.1.1 Factors of coherence	33
2.4.2 Object	35
Summery	36

	Page no.
CHAPTER THREE	
(LANDMARKS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS, CONTRIBUTION TO A LEGIBLE ENVIRONMENT)	37
Introduction	38
3.1 Landmarks	38
3.1.1 Physical attributes of landmarks	39
3.1.1.1 Architectural attributes of landmarks	39
3.1.1.1.1 Size or mass	39
3.1.1.1.2 Shape	40
3.1.1.1.3 Proportion and style	40
3.1.1.1.4 Qualitative aspects	41
3.1.1.2 Location or positional attributes of landmarks	41
3.1.1.3 Latent Characteristics of landmarks	41
3.1.2 Associational attributes of landmarks	41
3.1.2.1 Religious cosmic association	42
3.1.2.2 Association of rituals ceremonies and festivals	42
3.1.2.3 Cultural, social and political association	43
3.1.2.4 Historical association	43
Summery	43

CHAPTER FOUR

AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CASE STUDIES BASED ON THE THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT CONSTITUTES LANDMARK BUILDINGS AND HOW THEY CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMAGEABILITY OF THE STREET.

Introduction	45
4.1. Framework of analysis	45
4.1.1 Meaning associated with physical environment	46
4.1.2 Legibility of an environment	46
4.1.3 Fabrics and objects	46

	Page no.
4.2 Background to the case studies	47
4.2.1 Character of the city of Colombo	47
4.2.2 Character of Galle road	48
4.2.2.1 Historical background of Galle road	48
4.2.2.2 The Selection of specific segments of Galle road for case studies	49
4.3 Background to the selected street segments	50
4.3.1 Segment one - Wellawatta	
From Harmers avenue to near Alexandra road	50
4.3.2 Segment two – Bambalapitiya	
From De Vos avenue to starting point of Bauddhaloka Mawatha	53
4.3.3 Segment three – Kollupitiya	
The study area covers from National savings bank head office building to British high commission building and main focus will be on Kollupitiya junction area.	55
4.4 Case studies analysis	57
4.4.1 Data summery	58
4.4.2 Data analysis	63
4.4.2.1 Analysis of the identified buildings according to the attributes of landmarks	63
4.4.2.2 Discussion on how the selected landmarks contribute to the imageability of the street	73
Summery	78
CONCLUSION	79
BIBLIOGRAPHY	82
APPENDIX	84
DECLARATION	

PREFACE

The experiencing of strong images within an urban environment help to generate clues of identification within our mind. The intensity of these clues help to recognize that location accurately. The imageability of a location is strongly influenced by various kinds of landmarks found in that particular environment. These landmarks could be doorknob or a stone mark, or a sophisticated building.

The dissertation is a study of landmarks and their characteristics in order to understand their contribution to imageability and legibility in an urban street.

Here the main focus was to identify the object buildings in an urban streetscape through an extensive survey, and then determine to what extent they possess the attributes of successful landmarks, which were identified through a literature study. The buildings that were determined to be landmarks were then discussed in terms of their contribution to the overall imageability of the selected street segments considered in the case studies.

Imageability of streets play a major role which directly effects the day to day life of the community. Streets contribute to the social and urban life of the society which generates feelings of "safety", "sense of place", "sense of belongingness" etc in an urban context. In this context a person should be able to feel and understand his relative position in the street environment to ensure his sense of place and orientation within the street, which facilitates free movement without any confusion or fear of being lost. This results through developing an image of that particular environment, and this will vary from person to person.

A clear sense of orientation helps to perceive a good environmental image, which often influences behavior pattern and psychology. Therefore when designing a building to a street façade, it is vital to identify whether the proposed building will act as a landmark or not.

The analysis was focused to identify the basic characteristics of a landmark as physical and associational attributes. Physical attributes mainly contribute to the visibility of the object and to give a symbolical meaning attached to it. Therefore in every context these two characteristics involve to build up "mental pictures" in the minds of its inhabitants.

Through this study one can easily understand the role landmarks play within the streetscape and the factors that directly contribute to making more meaningful landmarks within a context. It would also be a valuable reference for architectural students.

Through this dissertation it was intended to introduce some basic guidelines for architectural students, town planners, architects etc to understand and stimulate further exploration on the role landmarks play within the streetscape and how these factors contribute to the an overall meaningful imageability in a particular urban context.



University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.
Electronic Theses & Dissertations
www.lib.mrt.ac.lk

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig No.		Page No.
1	Urban street – physical built form and people's activities in a busy street	06
2	Function of the street	07
3	Man's position in a place in an urban street	07
4	Good enclosed street	08
5	Loss of enclosure	08
6	Sensitive use of varying degree of enclosure in a street	09
7	Narrow streets creates fast moving, frightening experience	09
8	Wide streets creates fast moving, very less of sensitive from one side to another	09
9	The street with middle proportion	10
10	Different building sections define the shape of the enclosure	10
11	At speed	11
12	Walking	11
13	At the end of the street focal point as a terminating element	11
14	Street with significant changes in either sides	12
15	Intermediate targets become more important in curved and long streets	12
16	Visual cues which acts as a intermediate targets	13
17	When the goal appears the experience of arrival is intensified. The object disappears temporarily and then suddenly reappears in close up	14
18	when a view or a dominant building glimpsed along the street progression Is experienced and feels well oriented for the user	14
19	Elevated levels provide different persecutions	14
20	Livable and meaningful urban life and experience for the citizens	15
21	street as a public open space serve for public needs of the people	16
22	Exchange of thoughts in the streets	17
23	Territory sector flourished with the streets	17

24 Activity dominates over the functions	17
25 Sometimes streets become a cultural theater	18
26 People learn by doing and setting	19
27 Adaptability is keep the future for changes – Perahera	19
28 Lord Buddha	22
29 Relevant position to the objects to the overall fabric	23
30 elemental organization of a place	25
31 street environment and imageability	26
32 Manmade elements	27
33 Natural element	27
34 physical objects which have symbolic assigned values and culturally or symbolically important places	28
35 Legibility – the quality which makes a place graspable	29
36 Confusion is made because important buildings and publicly irrelevant private ones often look-alike	29
37 Paths	30
38 Edges	30
39 Nodes	31
40 Districts	31
41 Landmarks	31
42 Fabric and objects	32
43 Group of hatched squares; group of plain squares	33
44 Dissimilarity is counteracted by proximity	33
45 Group of figures on a 'carpet' and a group of exterior figures	34
46 Group of figures which belong to the 'street' and a group of other figures	34
47 Object	35
48 Landmark	38
49 Massive building	39
50 Town hall building	40
51 Pyramids	40
52 Ruwanwelli maha seya	40

53 Texture and style	40
54 Religious/cosmic building	42
55 Festive quality	42
56 Social and cultural association	43
57 Historical monuments	43

