APPRAISING ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF URBAN HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN SOUTH ASIAN CITIES: EFFECTIVENESS OF APPLICABILITY IN SRI LANKAN CONTEXT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GALLE FORT

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Degree of Master of Science in Architectural Conservation of Monuments and Sites

Department of Architecture

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any other University or Institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

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The above candidate has carried out research for the Masters Dissertation under my supervision. I confirm that the declaration made above by the student is true and correct.

Name of the supervisor: **Architect Professor Janaka Wijesundara**

Signature of the supervisor:

Date:

DEDICATION

For everyone who nurtures and protects the heritage we all share, whose thoughtful care ensures that the legacies of our past remain a source of inspiration, wisdom and hope for generations yet to come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

In the present day, the historic cities across South Asia are trimmed and fringed by the rapid urban expansion, increasing economic pressures and changing social values. These forces are threatening the co-existence of urban heritage but in a positive note this trend can be identified as an opportunity to preserve the treasures in reaching challenging goals. Therefore, this study explores different strategies for managing and conserving historic urban environments with precise attention to how they can be applied effectively in Sri Lanka, considering Galle Fort as the main case study.

This research employs a robust qualitative methodological framework to investigate the multifaceted determinants of successful urban heritage conservation within the South Asian context by considering an international case study and a local case study as well. By analyzing data through comprehensive policy analysis, case study reviews and rigorous on-site empirical observations systematically digitized and compiled into a structured tabular matrix, the study seeks to identify the critical success factors that distinguish effective conservation paradigms from conventional regional approaches. The study critically evaluates the efficacy of diverse management modalities, including adaptive reuse strategies, integrated urban planning frameworks, public-private partnerships (PPPs) and community-led initiatives.

Further to this investigation, a comparative analysis of these conservation strategies is also conscripted as they manifest in the unique socio-political and socio-economic landscapes of South Asia. The research cross-examines the extent to which top-down institutional frameworks such as large scale integrated planning, intersect with or diverge from bottom-up community efforts. By focusing specifically on the UNESCO World Heritage site of Galle Fort and its connecting urban environments, the study examines the longitudinal impacts of conservation outcomes on local conditions.

The analysis goes beyond the physical preservation of architectural fabric to assess the broader socio-economic and cultural repercussions of heritage management. It explores how various conservation interventions influence local demographics, economic resilience and the intangible heritage of the community. Ultimately, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how conservation practices in Galle Fort and beyond can be optimized to serve as a sustainable source of inspiration, wisdom and intergenerational hope, ensuring that historical legacies are harmonized with contemporary urban development needs.

Key Words: Historic urban landscapes, Alternative conservation strategies, Cultural heritage management, Galle Fort

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
CEM	Conservation Effectiveness Metrics
CHM	Cultural Heritage Management
HIA	Heritage Impact Assessment
HUL	Historic Urban Landscape
IHA	Intangible Heritage Assessment
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PPP	Public Private Partnership
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
THA	Tangible Heritage Assessment
UHLIA	Urban Heritage Landscape Integration Assessment
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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