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**DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR LIVABILITY:
A SURVEY-BASED STUDY ON RESIDENTS'
PERCEPTION OF LOW-INCOME HIGH-RISE
HOUSING IN COLOMBO, SRI LANKA**

M.R.S.M. Fernando

208026C

MSc. Research

Department of Architecture

Faculty of Architecture

University of Moratuwa

Sri Lanka

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M.R.S.M. Fernando

208026C

04/08/2025

Department of Architecture

Faculty of Architecture

University of Moratuwa-Sri Lanka

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and this thesis 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. I retain the right to use this content in whole or part in future works (such as articles or books).

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

Signature of the Supervisor:

Date:18-08-2025.....

Signature of the Supervisor:

Date:18-08-2025.....

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ABSTRACT

This study explores design considerations to enhance livability in low-income high-rise housing based on residents' perceptions in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Livability—a multidimensional concept encompassing quality of life, safety, health, and social interaction—is critical for human well-being and sustainable urban development. Despite numerous housing interventions to address urban low-income needs, many high-rise developments fall short of meeting residents' expectations, leading to housing dissatisfaction, informal unit sales, and a return to slums and informal settlements.

Key challenges in these developments include architectural, social, economic, and management deficiencies. Poor design and maintenance, insufficient unit sizes, lack of privacy, limited customization options, and absence of open spaces significantly reduce residential satisfaction. Additionally, safety concerns, social isolation, and high living costs exacerbate the issue, echoing lessons from failed international projects like the Pruitt-Igoe complex.

Unlike studies focusing only on limited physical aspects, this research takes a holistic approach to livability in the Sri Lankan context, examining diverse indicators like ventilation, cleanliness, safety, and cultural compatibility. It is predominantly quantitative, using surveys, Likert scales, and chi-square analysis, while qualitative methods interviews, observations, and photographs capture emotional, social, and cultural subtleties often missed by numerical data alone.

Findings reveal persistent issues at both unit and community scales, including inadequate maintenance systems and limited communal and recreational spaces, which undermine social cohesion. The study emphasizes the urgent need for adaptive, inclusive housing policies that integrate resident feedback and address structural and socio-economic disparities. It offers practical design and policy recommendations aimed at fostering more livable, equitable, and sustainable high-rise communities for low-income populations.

Keywords: Liveability, High-Rise, Low-Income, Housing Satisfaction

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
NHDA	The National Housing Development Authority
REEL	Real Estate Exchange (Pvt.) Limited
STP	The Sustainable Township Programme
STP	Strategic Urban Plan
UDA	Urban Development Authority
URP	The Urban Regeneration Programme

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