## URBAN VOID AS A PUBLIC SPACE

A STUDY ON UNDER-UTILIZED URBAN VOIDS AND THEIR POTENTIAL AS URBAN PUBLIC SPACES

A dissertation presented to the FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA SRI LANKA for M. Sc. (Architecture) Examination

Lipsis Thesis

Call.

පුණ්පකකලය මෙරෙනුව විශ්ව විදහාලය. ළි ලංකවෙ පමාරමුව.

72<sup>"</sup>98" 711.4

Renuka de Silva Faculty of Architecture University of Moratuwa Sri Lanka July, 1998

## **CONTENTS**

	rag		
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT			
ILLUSTRATIONS	iv		
ABSTRACT	vii		
INTRODUCTION	01		
CHAPTER ONE : UNDER UTILISATION OF URBAN SPACES	06		
1.1 Urban space	06		
1.2 Urban space in third world cities University of Moraluwa, Sri Lanka.	07		
1.3 Urbanisation and under utilisation of urban spaces 1.3.1 The under utilisation of urban space 1.3.2 Evolvement of under utilized spaces in the city. 1.3.3 Use and misuse of urban space 1.3.4 Usage of land	09 09 12 16 18		
1.4 Impact on policies for underutilization	18		
1.5 Under-utilized space which creates negative effects in urban space	19		
1.6 Identifying the potential in under utilized urban spaces.	20		
CHAPTER TWO : PHILOSOPHIES AND THEORIES ON URBAN PUBLIC SPACE	23		
2.1 Philosophies and theories on urban space	23		
2.2 Urban public space 2.2.1 The values of urban public life 2.2.2 Human dimensions of public life	37 39 41		
2.3 'Urban Void' as urban public space 2.3.1 'Urban Void' as positive urban space 2.3.2 'Urban Void' as vest pocket park	42 42 43		

CHAPTER THREE: SPATIAL ATTRIBUTES AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF URBAN SPACE			
Part One - Spatial Attributes of Human Space	49		
3.1 Proximity as centre 3.1.1 Sense of place in urban context 3.1.2 Composition of space as centre	50 51 52		
<ul> <li>3.2 The enclosure</li> <li>3.2.1 Elements of enclosure</li> <li>3.2.2 Sense of scale in urban context</li> </ul> 3.3 Principle of continuity in form of rhythmic movement	52 56 60 61		
Part Two - Social characteristics of urban space	64		
CHAPTER FOUR POTENTIAL OF URBAN VOIDS IN COLOMBO - SELECTED EXAMPLES	71		
4.1 Introduction	71		
<ul> <li>4.2 Basis for review <ul> <li>4.2.1 Historical evaluation of the city centre</li> <li>4.2.2 Land use</li> </ul> </li> <li>4.3 Basis of selection of reviews <ul> <li>4.3.1 Review one</li> <li>Lost space due to increased dependence on the automobile and change of mode of transportation</li> <li>4.3.2 Review two <ul> <li>Lost space due to change in land use</li> </ul> </li> <li>4.3.3 Review three <ul> <li>Attributes of the society and the professional bodies</li> </ul> </li> </ul></li></ul>	71 75 75 77 78 89		
CONCLUSION	114		
BIBLIOGRAPHY	117		

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

To those people who have helped me in the dissertation to whom I owe a special debt of gratitude.

Dr. L. S. R. Perera, my tutor for his guidance, incisive comments and valuable criticism, who helped me much by giving pace to develop my thoughts and an approach to this study. I am extremely grateful for his help and appreciate the time and efforts extended to me in carrying out the study.

Archt. Vidura Sri Nammuni, senior lecturer to whom I am grateful for his encouragement offered at the onset of the study.

Special thanks to Archt. Piyal Silva for providing me with numerous information.

My sincere thanks to Archt. Zanhar for his tremendous dedication and guidance.

Special thanks to IP and the staff of the Pettah police station for the permission given me for taking photographs around Pettah, Fort and Maradana area.

I am grateful to my friends Muthu and Chitrani for valuable comments and encouragement and Kashi and Yasangi for their tremendous help.

I am also grateful to Hemantha Akka and Dilani Akka for their valuable comments.

To Indika, for spending his precious time for taking photographs.

My heartfelt gratitude to Pradcepa Akke, Prasanna Aiya, Loku Amma and their family for helping me when I badly needed them.

To my parents, Loku Aiya and Punchi Aiya for their whole hearted support.

Finally, to Keerthi for giving me encouragement and spending his precious time throughout the study.

## **ILLUSTRATIONS**

Figure	<u>Description</u>		
01	Squatters struggle to shelter	08	
02	Lost spaces	10	
03	More space for parking	13	
04	Reservation in water bodies encroached		
	by the squatters		
05	Isolated buildings in the city	14	
06	Colombo Fort, during holidays	15	
07	Sub-marginal lands are encroached		
	by the squatters		
08	The urban streetscape bluntly ignored	19	
09	Nolli map of Rome	24	
10	Nolli map of modern city	25	
11	Composition, mega and group form	26	
12	Three major approaches to urban design	26	
13	Nolli plan of Rome	28	
14	Modern city - nolli plan	28	
15	Piazza San Marco of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.	30	
16	Sketch Electronic Theses & Dissertations	31	
17	Sketch	31	
18	Nolli plans	32	
19	Sketch	32	
20	Sketch	33	
21	Sketch - transformation	34	
22	Sketch - transformation	34	
22 23	Sketch - off centre	35	
24	European public space - dynamic square	38	
25	Street as a public space	38	
26	City park as a retreat	39	
27	Public space	40	
28	A market place	41	
29	Paley park - New York	44	
30	Entrance to the park	44	
31	Paley park	45	
32	Paley park	45	
33	Inner harbour, Baltimore	46	
34	Prevent acting as barriers to water front	46	
35	George E. De Silva park - Kandy	47	
36	Town centre	50	
37	An intimate place of interest	52	
38	Enclosure of a room	53	
39	Enclosure of urban space	53	
40	Enclosure in urban space	54	
41	Sketch	54	

·	<u>Figure</u>	Description	Page
	87	Sketch - width of street	94
	88	Sketch - section through existing elevation	95
	89	Pedestrian flow	95
	90	Urban edge	96
	91	Exhibition and convention centre	96
	92	Manning market	98
	93	Gunasinghepura	98
	94	Entrance to Bodhiraja mawatha	99
	95	Informal sector activities	100
	96	Sketch- existing situation - Bodhiraja Mw.	100
	97	Sketch - section through Bodhiraja Mw.	101
	98	Unauthorized temporary structures	101
	99	Central bus terminal	101
	100	Gasworks junction	102
	101	Gasworks junction	102
	102	Pedestrian flow	103
	103	Pedestrian flow	103
	104	Temporary built structure	104
	105	Bristol street from Chatham street	104
	106	Sketch University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.	105
	107	Sketch - section	105
	108	Connecting point to Chatham street	105
•	109	Sketch	106
	110	Pedestrian flow	107
	111	Path along the stalls	107
	112	Sketch - existing built form	108
	113	Sketch - changing width of street	108
	114	Sketch - elevated arcade	109
	115	Green patch	110
•	116	Sketch - section	110
	117	Sketch	110
	118	Built and unbuilt ratio	111
<u>.</u>	119	Pedestrian flow	111
	120	Permanent land mark	112
	121	Informal sector commercial activities	112