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**URBAN CONSERVATION AS CONDUCTIVE TO
PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT**

A STUDY FOCUSED ON THE HISTORIC CITY OF KANDY

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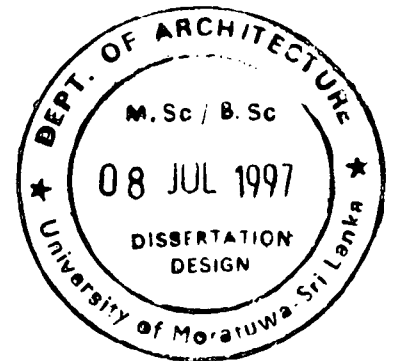
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ABSTRACT

One of man's greatest achievements is undoubtedly the City, which is not a recent phenomenon but dates back to time immemorial. As physical entity in space, each city possesses a distinct form which though ceaselessly changing and evolving, is the very proof of its existence. The Form of a city is not only an indicator to the state of civilisation but also living evidence of its construction over time. Gerald Dix (1990) appears to put this in to proper context when he says,

".... Towns are a part of our history; they reflect our likes and dislikes, our fashions and technologies, our wealth and poverty...." (Conservation and change in the city, Third world Planning Review - November 1990)


Today, especially in the third world the once humane cities are changing at an unprecedented pace on the pretext of development. If not controlled this pace may ultimately leave us junk yards and debris, and the ' beautiful' image of the city only in long lost memory.

Urban conservation sets the framework within which to manipulate and modify this image of the city. It must be understood as one means of re-civilising our cities, and not just a mechanism through which ' face lifts ' for specific historic structures can be accomplished. This understanding of the nature of urban conservation as a constructive process should play a major role in any urban development policy. This is particularly true to those areas where a considerable measure of history and tradition exists and are also susceptible for exploitation by modern development demands. Although there is ample indication that such an understanding exists in the more developed world, there remains a measure of hesitancy in giving serious thought to urban conservation in poorer countries. Lack of resources is an underlying cause for many cases, but it is also total or partial failure to appreciate the positive contribution of urban conservation in the process of development.

This study aims to analyse these issues in the context of Kandy, a world heritage city with past glory still intact, but needing immediate measures to withstand the negative implications of modern development.

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