

THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE IN REJUVENATING STREET LIFE: A STUDY OF SOME SELECTED STREETS IN COLOMBO

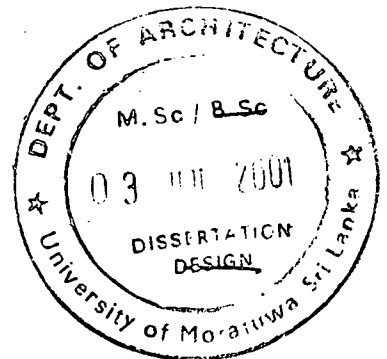
A Dissertation Presented To
Department Of Architecture
University Of Moratuwa.
Sri Lanka, for the final examination
In Master of Science in
Architecture.

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Abstract

Urban life in an urban street is valuable for a city and important to societies and becomes memorable when people are active in public spaces.

The urban street must be seen as the public realm of our city and its contribution to public life.

In urban design, the consideration relating to people, and the way in which they interact have tended to be neglected, especially in an urban street. Because of that there is an apparent crisis in public life, which results in the loss of public realm.

But if the urban street is given the attention required, there is a possibility of bringing back the public life, which is very important to the society.

Hence the essence of the argument relates to the public realm or street life in Sri Lankan context and, the study is based on the question of how to rejuvenate the street life when designing the urban space.

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Introduction.

Introduction

Topic explanation

Public spaces as inherited by cities may have different forms such as streets, boulevards, avenues gardens, squares or markets. The public realm of a city depicts the continuity of these public spaces within the city and it is the most important part of our towns and cities, where the greatest amount of human contact and interaction takes place.

"Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs. Think of a city and what comes to mind? It's streets. If a city's street look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull , the city looks dull"
(Jane Jacobs 1965 : 39)

The public realm of a country like ours is mostly associated with the street and its activity pattern. It will incorporate all the buildings, which will open out to the street and its related activities or the usage of the space as a place.

When the urban street^{is} to be considered as the principle mode of the public realm in our culture, question arises what's the public realm and how it can be used in a logical manner.

Several authors have discussed the issue of the public realm in streets. Some would refer it as elements of a place and the usage of it and appreciating space in visual manner, referring to theories which depicts the qualities of the place. Public realm of a place mainly depends on the relationship of a design and the humane being.

This relationship can be understood via the understanding of the patterns of a place. The creation of a picture of a living city in large part on its complex permeable interfaces, are refereed with twelve selected patterns as



Alexander argues. His argument is more systematic and realistic design theory than the spiritual arguments on the same issue.

Hence the essence of the argument relates to the public realm or street life in our context. Therefore the study is based on the question of how to rejuvenate the street life considering the patterns of the place, when designing the urban space.

The objective of the topic underlies to study with reference to the above basis and analyze the segments of the place referring to the "quality" behind the patterns of the place.

Need of the study

In urban design, the considerations relating to people and the way in which they interact have tended to be neglected, especially in an urban street. Street as a public space, participates in the construction of the individuals as well as the symbolic experience of society in its diversity.

This neglect of street life embodied in street spaces has convinced the private sector to invest in the production of street spaces.

However these new spaces reduce the individuals to experience and seen as a living space. That is mainly focuses on the economic aspects as well as the social practices and has completely neglected the symbolic aspects of a street form.

The character, personality of the street and the spatial quality peculiar to that street, which differ from all other streets, should be experienced in its true form. Unfortunately we have lost sight of the traditional understanding of the

urban street, due to the neglect of pattern of the place while designing those spaces. Therefore it has lost the street life and become a dull place.

It is clear that urban development process mainly considered as a by product of economic factors, while cities like Colombo is faced with severe problems of overcrowding, pollution and corruption and along the way all community life has lost.

Intention of the study:

Main objective of the study is to understand the patterns of a place and the responsiveness to the environment with reference to a basis, which leads to create a livable city. Finally the analysis will proceed into the potentials to rejuvenate life in streets.

Therefore the study aims to focus on:

- 1 To study and analyze patterns of a place .In doing so it will try to introduce a basis which includes patterns to create a livable city.
- 2 For the analysis purpose of the life behind the patterns of the place it will introduce qualities of a responsive environment to create a livable place.
- 3 Using the fundamental basis of the public realm of a place is evaluated and this proceeds into see the relationship between the analysis and rejuvenating street life, and the quality of the life in a livable city.
- 4 The conclusion will provide the analysis and enabling potentials to use the urban street as the principle mode of public realm in the context of Sri Lanka.

In order to achieve the above mentioned, the physical configuration along the urban street in terms of its setting is explored, in terms of individual experience. Man- environment interaction in an urban street, how it's really experienced and comprehended, and the effects of such values and the accessibility of the street space is also explored.

Methodology

The study is based on three selected streets of Colombo metropolitan region. The streets are selected taking into account; their particular location, existing situation and importance and the value remaining regarding the form of the street, activity pattern and the permeability of the place.

The study is based on certain arguments on the public realm done by several academics. Out of whom the study is based on to analyzes patterns of a place. Therefore the methodology adopted here is based on the patterns of a place and referring to the qualities behind that patterns and the analysis will lead to rejuvenate life in urban streets.

Physical form mapping and behavior mapping is carried out specially containing on the activity pattern, form of the place and the permeability of the place. These are carried out in the selected streets in the settings of photographic survey, graphical survey and observation by the researcher.

In order to derive the above-mentioned strategy the content of the study is arrayed into segments as below.

The first chapter deals with the public realm of city. It will give a definition to our public realm and within the survey of literature it has formulated a basis for the study. With reference to the study the urban street has identified as the

principal mode of the public realm and this leads into the second chapter of where the phenomenon of an urban street is explained.

Chapter three is where the created basis applied into practice. It will extract illustrations and explain the street form and the public realm from the history. Then explain the crisis today in hand, with the understanding of things had and the decay of the public realm in our urban context and mirrored the need of this kind of study. For the analysis purpose it will select streets on a basis and map the pattern of the place and the associated behavior pattern within the space.

The collected material will be analyzed and from that the study will conclude with rejuvenating methods and the manner our urban street can be used as the principle mode of public realm.

Scope and Limitations

Public realm of a city can be a collection of spaces as streets, squares, boulevards, gardens etc. but the study here mainly focused on to the urban streets.

The study will not deal political, social, economics etc. aspect here it would examine the human behavior and related factors in depth. Yet it explored into the physical form, and the formal design aspects of a place. Therefore the study stresses the street form, accessibility and the related activity pattern (i.e.; in terms of community life and people).

The Reference

- 1 Jacobs, Jane. (1969). The Death And Life Of Great American Cities.
New York: Random House.



Chapter one

THE PUBLIC REALM

CHAPTER ONE : THE PUBLIC REALM

1.1 Public realm of a city

1.1.1 An Introduction

Public realm in a city means the continuity of public spaces in a city. Cities need health –giving built –environment. They need it very badly, especially as unconscious and invisible process tends to foster negative unhealthy developments. Already many cities have been distorted to the point that many people experience them as alienating, life suppressing, hardening unwelcoming places to be in but that is not city life is about.

" In theory cities are the places where civilizing, cultural works are brought together to cross fertilize each other, where economic activities of service meeting need exist in great diversity with a high degree of symbiotic richness and where there are enough people to support uneconomic benefits for all. "
(Day, C. 1990: 50)



Cities are not cities if they do not condense and fertilize the spirit of a region. This does not mean that city architecture has to copy local style but the mood of a region can find expression in the built environment. Yet urban development and evolution need not be like that.

Fig.01 Public realm
in streets

Cities are made up of humane activities, the places in them are given individuality by the color mixed out of these activities and there are thousands of colors.

1.1.2 Quality of the public realm in various cultures

This is mainly depends on the culture and the place. In all communal life there is a dynamic balance between public ad private activities. Within this balance different cultures place differing emphasis on public space. Compare the Latin cultures of Southern Europe, with their display of wealth and civic and religious power in palaces , town halls ,and churches that face on main streets and squares , with the Muslim cultures of North Africa, with their limited number of public spaces apart from markets and shopping streets and yet rich design and expression in the more private domain of home, mosque , and Koranic school. Although the private –public balance is unique to each culture, it will shift under the influence of cultural exchange, technology, changing political and economic systems, and the ethos of the time.

Public realm of a city can be the streets or the plazas or the shopping malls etc. of a country. This is mainly depending on the cultural group and the region.



Streets are public places for countries like Sri Lanka, India, Middle East, Africa, China, France, Denmark, etc. , but in many other countries such as U.S., England , etc. they are rather negative spaces ; spaces for crime , urban ills and so on.

Fig.02 Street as a public realm of a city

Their public spaces are more or less inside building such as shopping malls. Also in South American countries, and in many European countries such as Italy and France, urban plazas (centrally located) are the public spaces, not streets.



Fig.03 Plazas/ Shopping malls as a public realm of a city

1.1.3 A definition to our public realm and the public place

The public realm of a country like ours is mostly associated with the street and its activity pattern. It will incorporate with all the buildings, which will open out to the street and its related activities or the usages of the space as a place.

It can be mainly identified with three categories as; the social gathering, commercial activities, and recreational activities.

Social gathering can be defined as a group of community uses the street as their social activity like meeting on the road etc.

In a market place the public realm is associated with the commercial activities.



Fig.04 Social gathering- meeting
on the road



Fig.05 Commercial activities-
market place

The public realm will create with the association of the recreational activities like Pehara or some other parades.

Therefore the public realm of our country can be defined as the life associated with the street, which can be called as the street life.



Fig.06 Clear demarcation between
Private and public space

Actually when tracing back to the history there was the Kada Maundya in our villages. That was the main public realm of that community.

In that sense it is important to understand the phenomenon of an urban street, to create a healthy city.

1.2 Basis for the study of the public realm

1.2.1 An Introduction

The public realm of a street mainly depends on the behavior pattern of the people within the physical setting. The streets should be designed by the architects /planner/ urban designers etc. Although they are the designers of the street the user tends to change their environment according to their needs.

When designing a street it is argued that there should be a provision for the user's choice. Then it will create public realm in streets. This can be argued using the following basis.

1.2.2 Literature review

Several authors have discussed the issue of the public realm in streets and some of them are as follows:

The creation of a living city mainly depends on the following patterns as Christopher Alexander argues in his **A Pattern Language** (1977), he argues on the basis of considering the patterns of a place. The public realm of an urban city can be achieved by the following patterns, which is roughly arranged in decreasing the size. That is the correct ordering when one is using them for design, since decisions on the largest scale have to be made first. Therefore it arrays as follows;

- Sub culture boundary
- Neighborhood boundary
- Industrial ribbon
- Main gateway
- Connected buildings
- Arcades
- Path shape



- Building fronts
- Activity pockets
- Building edge
- Opening to the street
- Gallery surround

As a conclusion it can be said, that any design, which ignores the patterns of a place, can never hope to connect with human beings.

On the other hand;

"Streets to be a lively, interesting and secure place for people " is the argument of Jane Jacobs in her **The Death and Life of Great American cities**, (1969)

In her critic she says that there are 3 needs to be satisfied:

Clear demarcation between the private and public space, between the territory, which belongs to a particular house, particular household, a particular shop, whatever or what belongs.



Fig.07 Buildings planed with projections to the street



Fig.08 Buildings planed with projections to the main mode of transport

Constant watch ... the buildings which line the street are oriented towards it planned with projections and recesses, bay windows, balconies, stoops ,steps and so on. There it will make easier for the proprietors to see the ups and downs of the street, which automatically give safety for the street.



Streets and sidewalks must be constantly used. The street must go from one place to another where people want to go. Therefore there must be enough attraction for the street.

Fig.09 Streets and sidewalks constantly used

Within this framework people must be given **choice** and **kind of diversity** to create urban life. In other terms the essence of urban life lies on:

- a) Exuberant diversity
- b) Making available to anyone and at any time
- c) Vast range of choices of things to do.

She has incorporated the patterns of a place in an indirect manner, which is straight away put in to a physical structure.

Also Gordon Cullen, **The concise Townscape** (1971), argues the physical aspect of patterns of a place.

Cullen's idea was to inter-link two chains as defined: **the humane activities** and the other is the **physical spaces in which they take place**

There is an art of architecture, so there is an art of relationship, in which all the elements which go to making of an environment, buildings, trees, nature, water traffic, advertisement and so on woven together as such a way the drama released.

The art of relationship is made possible by manipulate within the tolerance. This manipulation is entirely a visual matter: " for it is **almost entirely through vision that the environment is apprehended.**"

In his process this appreciation done in three ways:

- a. Serial vision
- b. Place - especially the sense of being in a particular place
- c. Content- matter of architectural style, scale, materials, & layout.

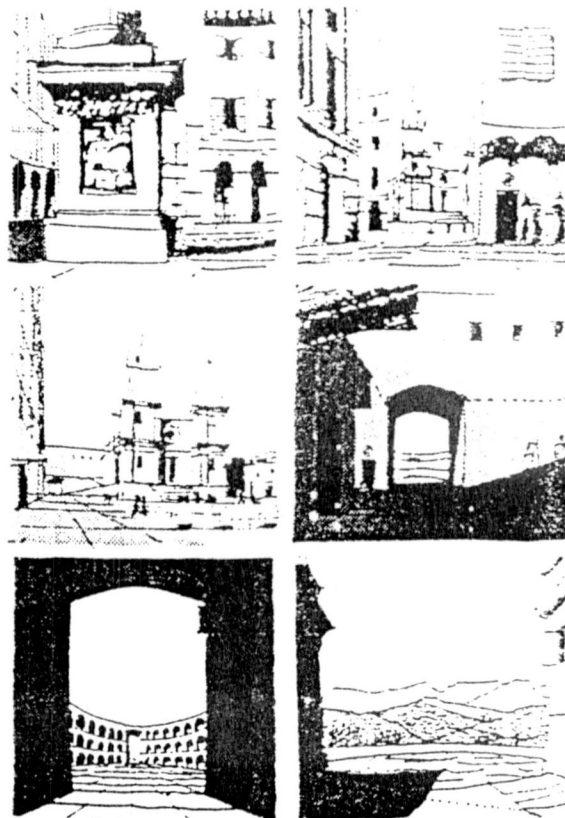


Fig.10 Serial vision

Donald Appleyard **Livable streets** (1981), argument is based on two principle aims :

- 1 To explore what it is like to live on streets with different kinds of traffic.
- 2 To search for ways in which more streets can be made safe and livable.

In his argument he tries to explore the effects of traffic on residential street life and it is a social, psychological and environmental analysis not much concentrated on the physical form of the place that much.

As Alexander argues, that in a livable place the design has to be related with the human being and this can be achieved if the designer is relating the design with the patterns of a place. But Jacobs argues the livability of an urban space on the basis of using the elements of a place and the usage, not directly revealing about the patterns of a place like Alexander's. Still she has tried to show a tangible comment on the livability of the urban space. On the other hand Cullen puts his argument using the activity pattern and the form of the space entirely appreciating through a vision. In a way he also has tried to put similar thing as Alexander's, but in a visual qualitative manner.

Apple yard also has seen the urban space in a similar manner; he argues the problem of traffic in the urban space and how to survive with that problem and putting strategies in making the streets safer and livable.

Alexander's approach is more systematic and realistic among others, and the elements he uses to describe the patterns are more observable (eg; connected buildings, arcades etc. etc.) rather than unseen notion such as "place" , the theoretical term. Each 'pattern' represents a rule governing one working piece of a complex system, and the application of pattern languages can be done systematically Jane Jacob's, Gordon Cullen's , Donald Appleyard's arguments also tally with the Alexander's vision, but it doesn't reveal in a comprehensive manner or which doesn't reveal the main

constituents of a livable place such as; **the form of the space ,accessibility and the activity pattern.**

Therefore the study basically incorporated with the Alexander's argument.

The public realm of an urban street can be mainly defined by the activity pattern, accessibility and the form of the street. The three constituents of street life in urban streets will mainly depend on the social context, physical context and its conceptions and subsequent experiences, reactions and expressions relating to the local context.

Therefore the twelve patterns will discuss according to the decreasing pattern.

1.2.3 The basis for identification

Public realm of a place is the continuity of public spaces. Therefore the public realm of a place mainly depends on the relationship of a design and the humane being. This relationship can be understood via the understanding of the "patterns of a place".

Christopher Alexander argues in his **A Pattern Language** (1977).

In order to bring the public realm in to the space, he argues the design has to be sounds friendly with the humane beings. The argument is on the basis of considering the patterns of a place. This public realm of an urban city can be achieved by the following patterns;

- Sub culture boundary
- Neighborhood boundary
- Industrial ribbon
- Main gateway
- Connected buildings
- Arcades
- Path shape

- Building fronts
- Activity pockets
- Building edge
- Opening to the street
- Gallery surround

1.2.4 Limitations

The criterion selected mainly deals with the physical characteristics of a place. But in an indirect manner it touches the social and psychological characteristics of a place. This study will mainly focused on the physical aspect of the urban space (physical form mapping) and also the social aspect of it (behavior mapping) due to the time lag.

1.2.5 Formulation

Alexander presents the Pattern Language as a practical tool, and arrays the patterns in roughly decreasing size. That is the correct ordering when one is using them for design, since decisions on the largest scale have to be true in a fundamental sense. But on this study it will basically look for the public realm of a street, which will mainly concentrate on the very sensitive and spiritual fringe movement in the street rather than concentration on the designing. To validate the above patterns, they have to be read in the opposite order: small to large. The human mind can combine the smaller patterns into groups; the larger patterns utilize these groupings and also generate new properties that are not present in the component patterns. In other terms it can be said that the mind is capable of validating the patterns subconsciously when we read the patterns in an evolving (small to large) order. That is where the mainstream architecture accepts the space as a place.

The patterns will be array in this manner:

- Gallery surround
- Opening to the street
- Building edge
- Activity pockets
- Building fronts
- Path shape
- Arcades
- Connected buildings
- Main gate way
- Industrial ribbon
- Neighborhood boundary
- Sub culture boundary

Gallery surround:

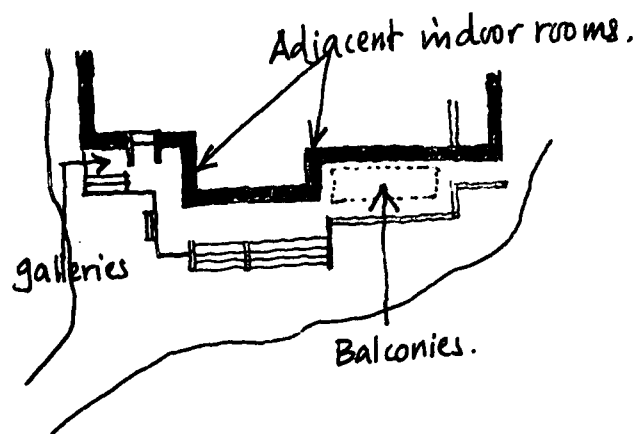


Fig.11 Gallery surround –plan form

(Source: Alexander C. 1977: 78)

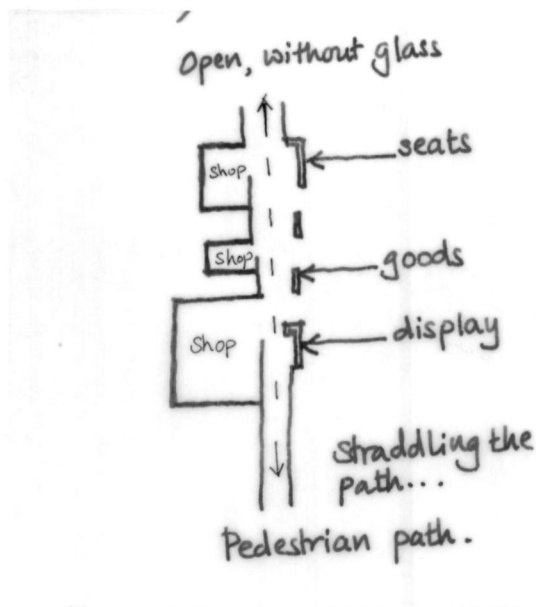
It proposes that people should be able to walk through a connecting zone such as balcony to feel connected to the outside world.





Fig.12 View of Gallery Surround

Opening to the street:



This is the corollary: people on a pavement should feel connected to functions inside a building, made possible by direct openings.

Fig.13 Opening to the street- plan form
(Source: Alexander C. 1977: 766)



Fig.14 View of opening the street

Building edge:

This should be such as to encourage life, creating pedestrian nodes and the necessarily crinkle, crenellated geometry that they require.

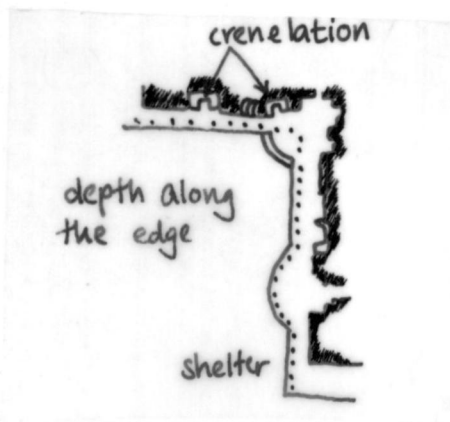


Fig.15 Building edge – plan form
(Source: Alexander C. 1977: 766)



Fig.16 View of building edge

Activity pockets:

This reveals that any public space is successful only if its edge contains and accommodates successful pedestrian nodes.

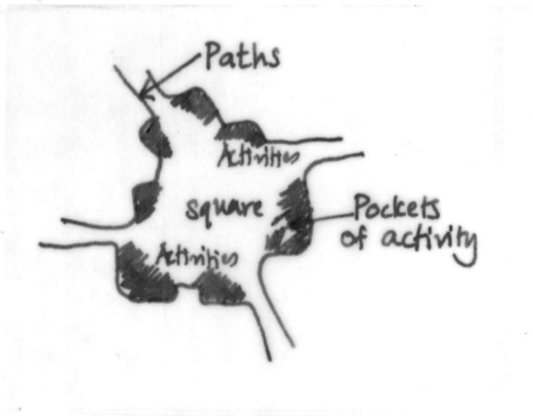


Fig.17 Activity pockets – plan form
 (Source: Alexander C. 1977: 602)



Fig.18 View of activity pockets
 (Source: Alexander C. 1977;602)

Building fronts:

This defines the life at the built edge of a street, while uniform set- backs

This defines the life at the built edge of a street, while uniform set- backs almost always destroy the value of the open areas between the buildings.

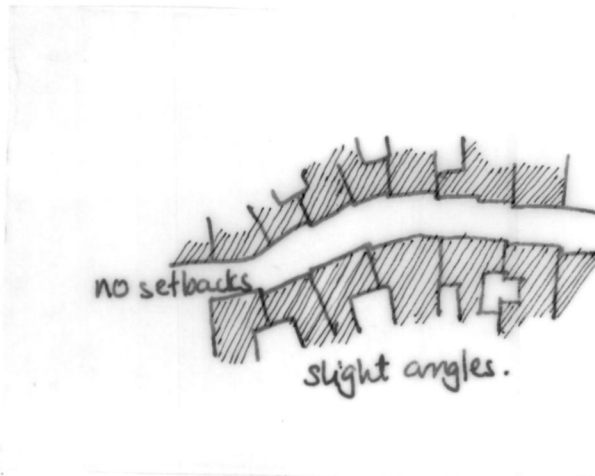


Fig. 19 Building fronts-plan form
 (Source: Alexander C. 1977: 594)

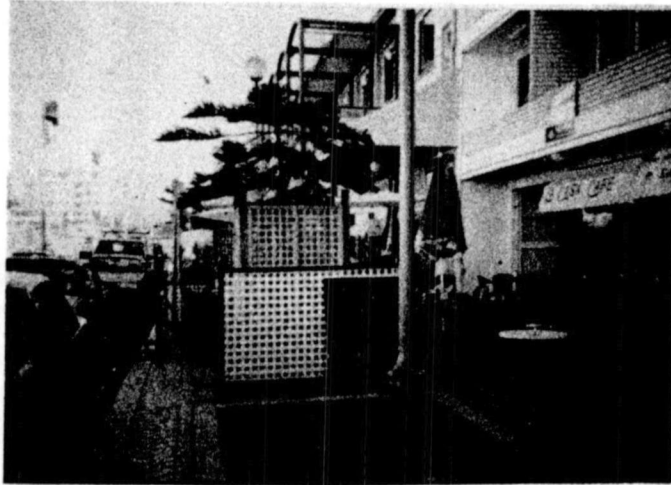


Fig.20 View of building front

Path shape

This requires pedestrian nodes along a path , and these will deform any straight edges into a more fractal form.

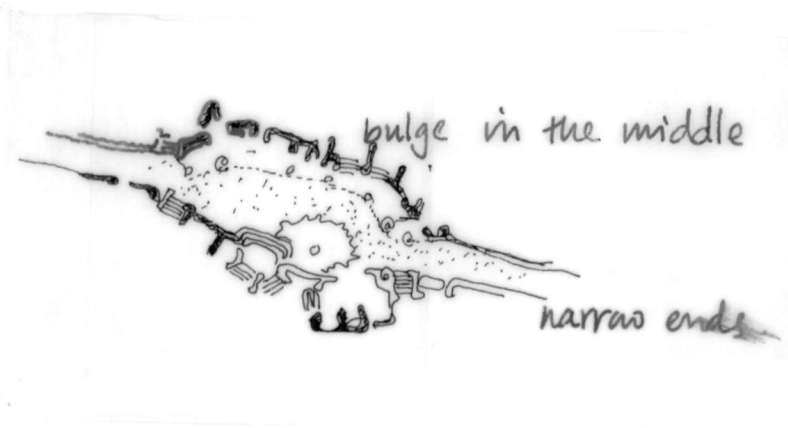


Fig.21 Path shape – plan form

(Source: Alexander C. 1977: 591)

Arcades:

These connect the inside of buildings with the world outside via an intermediate partially enclosed space; without them , the transition is to abrupt.

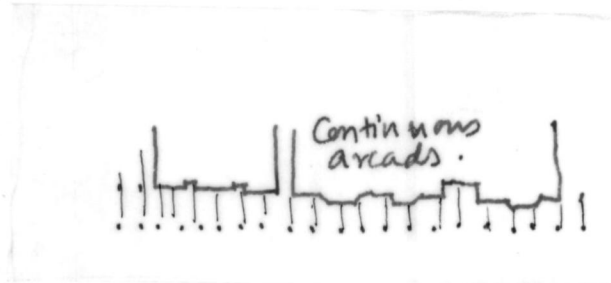


Fig.22 Arcades – plan form
 (Source: Alexander C. 1977: 583)

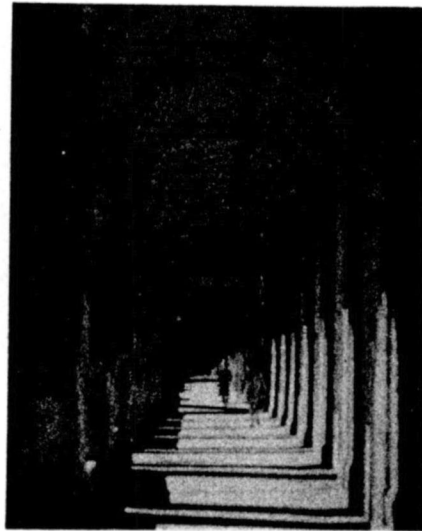


Fig.23 View of Arcades

Connected buildings:

This creates both a boundary and a path along it, which is destroyed by having intermediate space between the buildings. This creates both a boundary and a path along it, which is destroyed by having intermediate space between the buildings.

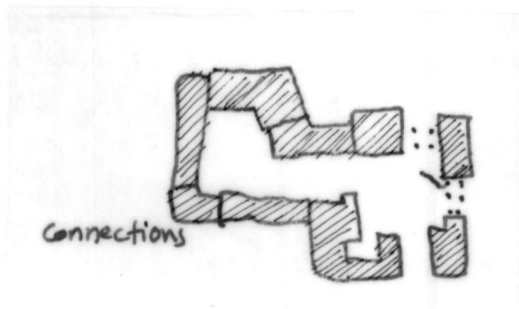


Fig.24 Connected buildings-plan form
 (Source: Alexander C. 1977: 534)



Fig.25 View of connected buildings



Main gateways:

This gives significance by defying access to what would otherwise be a useless space between buildings.



Fig.26 Main gateways-plan form
(Source: Alexander C. 1977: 278)



Fig.27 View of main gateway
(Source: Alexander C. 1977: 276)

Industrial ribbon:

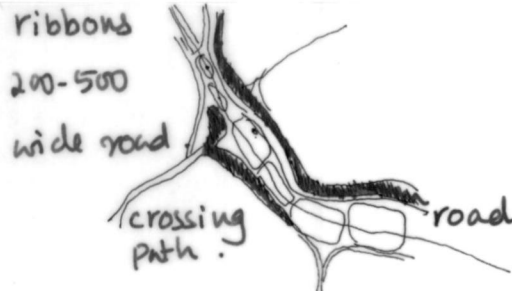


Fig.28 Industrial ribbon-plan form
(Source: Alexander C. 1977: 230)

It functions as one possible way to create a wide boundary for separating regions containing other types of buildings.

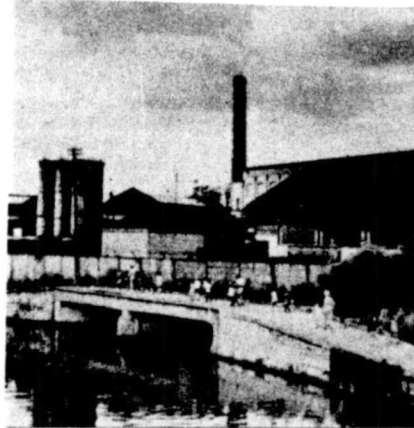


Fig.29 View of industrial ribbon
(Source: Alexander C. 1977: 227)

Finally the two patterns Neighborhood boundary and subculture boundary stress the necessity of containment in a living city, and show how one zone can destroy an adjoining zone if the appropriate boundaries are absent.

Neighborhood boundary:

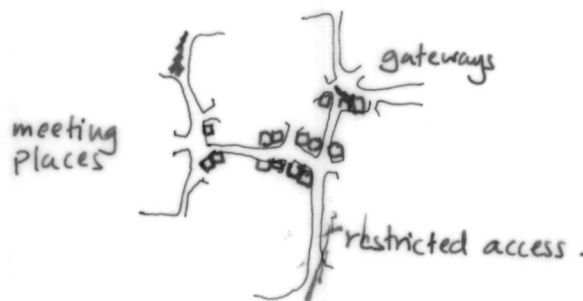


Fig.30 Neighborhood boundary-plan form

(Source: Alexander C. 1977: 90)

Encourage the formation of a boundary around each neighborhood, to separate it from the next-door neighborhoods. Form this boundary by closing own streets and limiting access to the neighborhood cut the normal number of streets at least in half.



Fig.31 View of Neighborhood boundary

Subculture boundary:

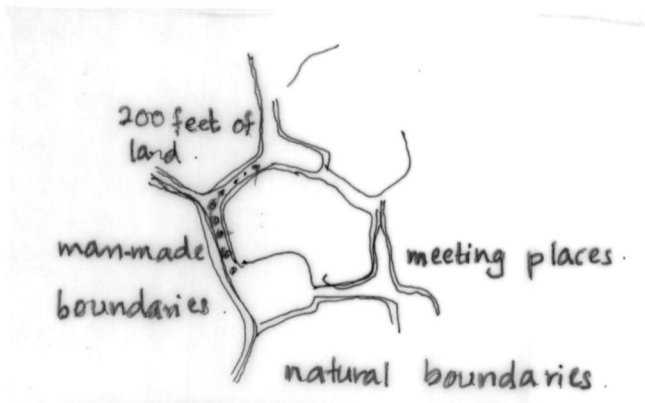


Fig.32 Subculture boundary - plan form

(Source: Alexander C. 1977: 79)

The mosaic of subculture requires that hundreds of different cultures live, in their own way, at full intensity, next door to one another. But subcultures have their own ecology. They can only live at full intensity, unhampered by their neighbors if they are physically separated by physical boundaries.

The identified above twelve patterns combine to create the picture of a living city that depends in large part on its complex, permeable interfaces. Therefore the key issue of the study is addressed by the identified above twelve patterns.

The twelve patterns depict the physical form and can be traced out the behavior pattern, in the form. But the spiritual fringe cannot be interpreted using the above-mentioned basis. The quality of the livable environment will interpret the spiritual fringe of the place.

The responsiveness of a street can be interpreted with reference to the arguments of Bently, I. , Alcock, A. , Murrain, P. in their **Responsive Environments**, (1985).

It argues that the livable built environment should provide uses with an essentially democratic setting, enriching their opportunity by maximizing the degree of choice available to them. The places are called "responsive". The responsiveness can be explained, in the quality of;

- Permeability
- Variety
- Legibility
- Robustness
- Visual appropriateness
- Richness
- Personalization

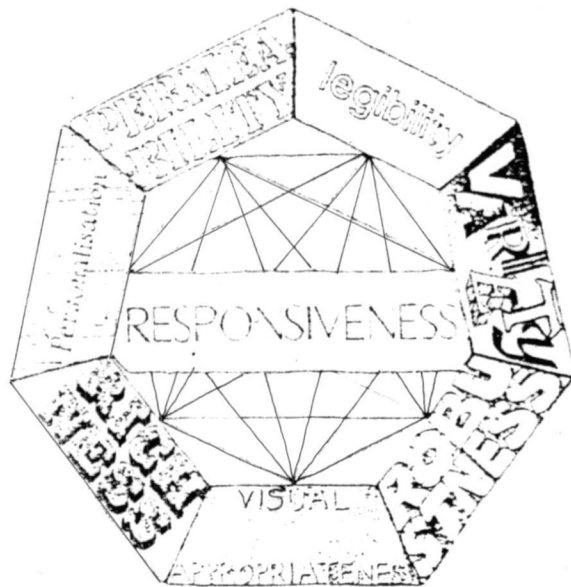


Fig.33 Key issues of responsive environments

(Source: Bently, I. 1985: 01)

Permeability

Only places which are accessible to people can offer them choice. The extent to which an environment allows people a choice of access through it, from place to place, is therefore a key measure of its responsive ness.

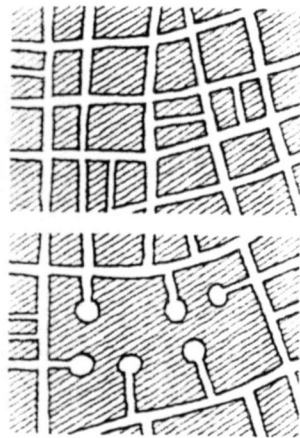


Fig.34 Layout offers greater choice of routes

(Source: Bently, I. 1985: 03)

Variety

Easily accessible places are irrelevant unless they offer a choice of experiences. Variety is particularly variety of uses.



Fig.35 Variety of uses

Legibility

Generally the degree of choice offered by a place depends on how easily people can understand its layout or makes a place graspable.

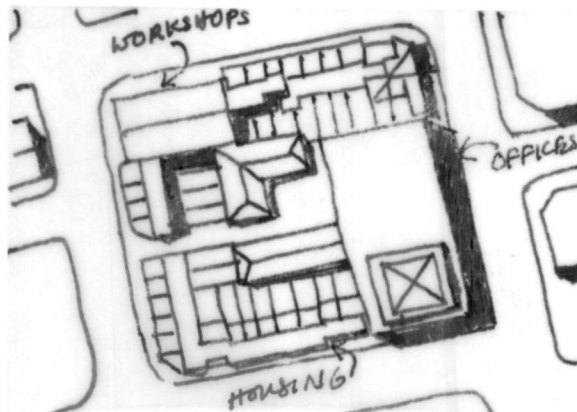


Fig.36 Variety of uses within one designed space
(Source: Bently, I. 1985: 031)

Robustness

This can be defined as multiple use places. People can use this kind of place for different purpose.

Visual appropriateness

This is important because it strongly affects the interpretations people put on places, whether designers want them to or not, people do interpret places as having meanings. A place has visual appropriateness when these meanings help to make people aware of the choices offered by the qualities discussed above.

Richness

This is about appearance, which increase the choice of sense, experience which user can enjoy. This can be visual or non-visual experience.

Personalization

This can be identified as making the design encourage people to put their own mark on the places where they live and work.

Therefore the study criterion contains two-yard sticks revealing the 'patterns of place' and the 'qualities, which creates the responsiveness of a place' selected and the quality given by the pattern can be built up by analyzing the key issue of study into micro sectors.

1.3 The street as a public realm

Apart from its definitions, functions and fundamental characteristics in many instances, it can be considered as a place for the public realm in various situations. In the broader sense the city is the ultimate gathering place for people. It consists countless combinations and collections of streets within its parameters. Comparatively these streets are the places for celebrations of humane activities in the city.



Fig.37 The street as a public realm

" It is the ' urban street' that form the first origins of settlements has acted as ' principle place ' of public contacts and public passage, ' a place' of exchange of ideas goods, and services, ' a place' play and light, of carnival and funeral, of protest and celebration". (Czarowski, T.V. 1978: 207)

The urban street is a place for human interaction, a place for collective conception, a place for essential human relationship in the physical urban setting. Thus the organization or the combination of variety of activities and the accommodating physical setting together create different ' places' in an urban street.

It is the urban street that from the first origins of settlements has acted as principal place of public contact and public passage, a place of exchange of ideas, goods and services, a place of Play and fight, of carnival and funeral, of protest and celebration.

In a very elemental way, streets allow people to be outside. Streets are that constitute the outside for many urbanities; places to be in when they are not indoors. And streets are places of social and commercial encounter and exchange. They are the places where you meet people – which is the basic reason to have cities in any case.

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Chapter Two

STREET AS A PUBLIC REALM



CHAPTER TWO: STREET AS A PUBLIC REALM

2.1 The Street: A definition

Throughout its history there are many instances that streets have been at the center of attraction of various academics. Regardless of urban or rural 'street' has been defined in different ways by them. Probably the simplest representation of a street may be, " A line necessarily marked with points or crossings that code potential arrival, movement, event and access." (Anderson, S. 1978:1)

But, The Oxford Dictionary clarifies street in a more concrete manner,

" Street... A road in a town or village (comparatively wide, as opposed to a 'lane' or 'alley') running between two lines of houses; usually including the side walks as well as the carriage ways. Also the road together with the adjacent houses."

These give the idea of the physical characteristics on street. Giving a sense of sociability, Louis I. Khan says, " The street is a community room ". (Latour ,A 1991:263) . Similarly,

" The street is human movement institutionalized ". (Rykwert , J 1978:5)

But,

" Street is expressive " (Gutman , R , 1978:250)

To be expressive is to poses meaning. Meaning is perceived through senses; means streets posses a psychological component.

Therefore all above give us the idea of physical, social and psychological characteristics of street. Nevertheless definitions are common for all streets. But ' urban streets' are defined in this manner.

In the face of these it is clearly evident that architects, planners transport engineers , authors & scholars have different definitions and identification on streets. Apart from above city dwellers view as a place catering to the immediate circumstances of their every day life. Nevertheless the street can

trigger various images in any ones mind. To most of us it can be the linear open space with stressful movement of clogging traffic and intense human activity. To several others it is the tensed intersection of public and private, built and un built, individual and society with poverty and exploitation as well as luxury and affluence. Not just above, the word street may give us the feeling of curiosity and fear of numerous entrenched expressions.

Being on the street, streetwalker, street culture, street society and street crime give negative images of social norms. Again not necessarily for above symbolic, ceremonial, social, physical economic and political roles expressed there may be different experience streets give to the human beings.

Here it is not attempting to move into either its positive or negative connotation that streets would give. But attempt to understand what the common street is?

2.2 The street: Definition of space

The street is consumed, learned and acknowledged by its use. It can be regarded as the most important component of the urban pattern. The edges and the boundaries of the street become parts of the physical structure of the street. Hence it may probably be essential for the street user to feel the sense of the street space. Here the essential attribute in the 'urban street' is that it possesses the defined characteristics of 'definition of space' within this urban pattern. This has been conceptualized as; "The street is an 'elongated courtyard' " (Ellis , W. C. 1978: 120)

The street as a space can be conceptually defined, mainly by 'horizontal elements' and 'vertical elements'. Thus next we will forward in to the space defining elements of the street.

2.2.1 Definition by horizontal elements

According to Ching (1996) horizontal elements are formed by two basic planes. They are identified as 'Base Plane ' and ' Overhead plane '.

2.2.1.1 Base plane:

It can be considered as an integral part of the surrounding environment of the street. The base plane helps to define the field of the street and it is visually reinforced by:

- Elevated Base plane:

The vertical surfaces along the edges of the base plane reinforce the visual separation between the field and the surrounding ground. Basically it helps to provide the changes in levels of the street.

- Depressed Base Plane:

The vertical surfaces along the edges help to utilize the lowered area defining the volume of the ground of the street. It establishes boundaries of the field forming the walls of the street space.

But both these appear to be very much a part of the surrounding environment.

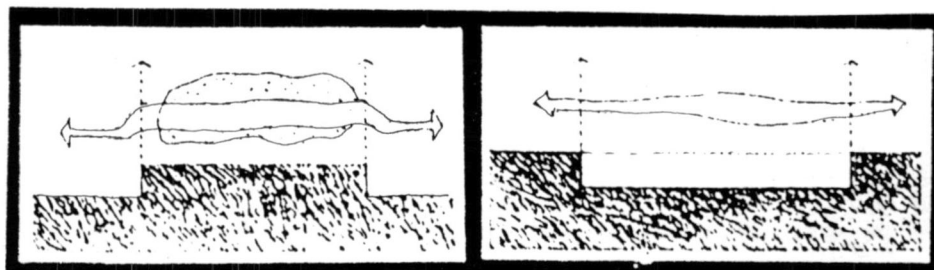


Fig.38 Elevated and Depressed Base Planes

(Source: Ching , K. 1996: 118,124)

2.2.1.2 Overhead Plane

Help to define a volume of space between itself and the base plane. The shape, size, height of the overhead plane is considered as determines the formal qualities of the street space.

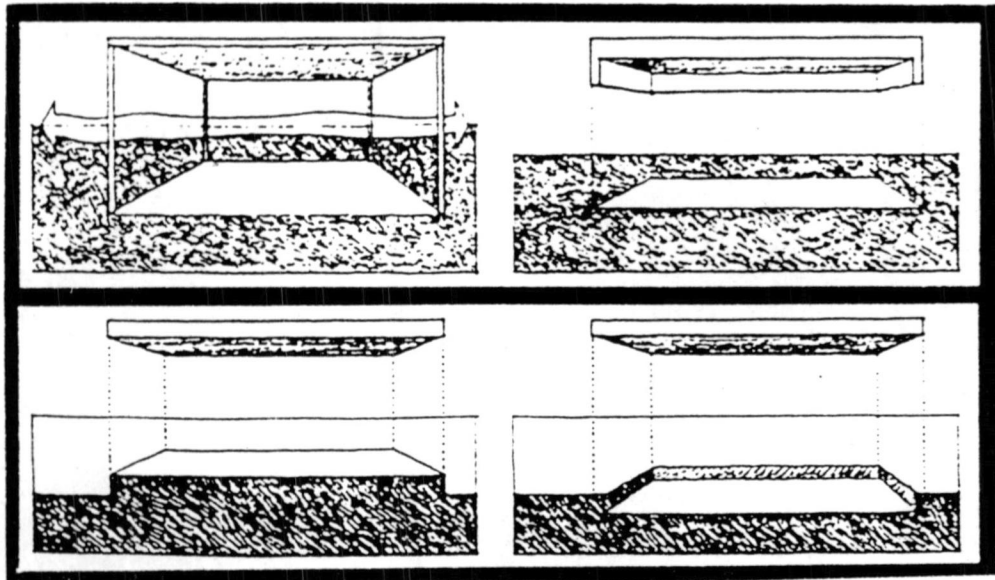


Fig.39 Overhead plane

(Source: Ching, K. 1996: 114)

Both the base plane and the Overhead plane can be figured as through perceptible changes in color tone or texture. Once its edges are stronger the definition becomes clearer. The edges can be defined by vertical element.

2.2.2 Definition by vertical elements:

Ching as expresses this:

" They serve to separate one space from another, and also establishes a common boundary between the interior and exterior environments". (Ching, F. D. k. 1996 : 120)

There can be different forms of vertical elements that define the edges of a street.

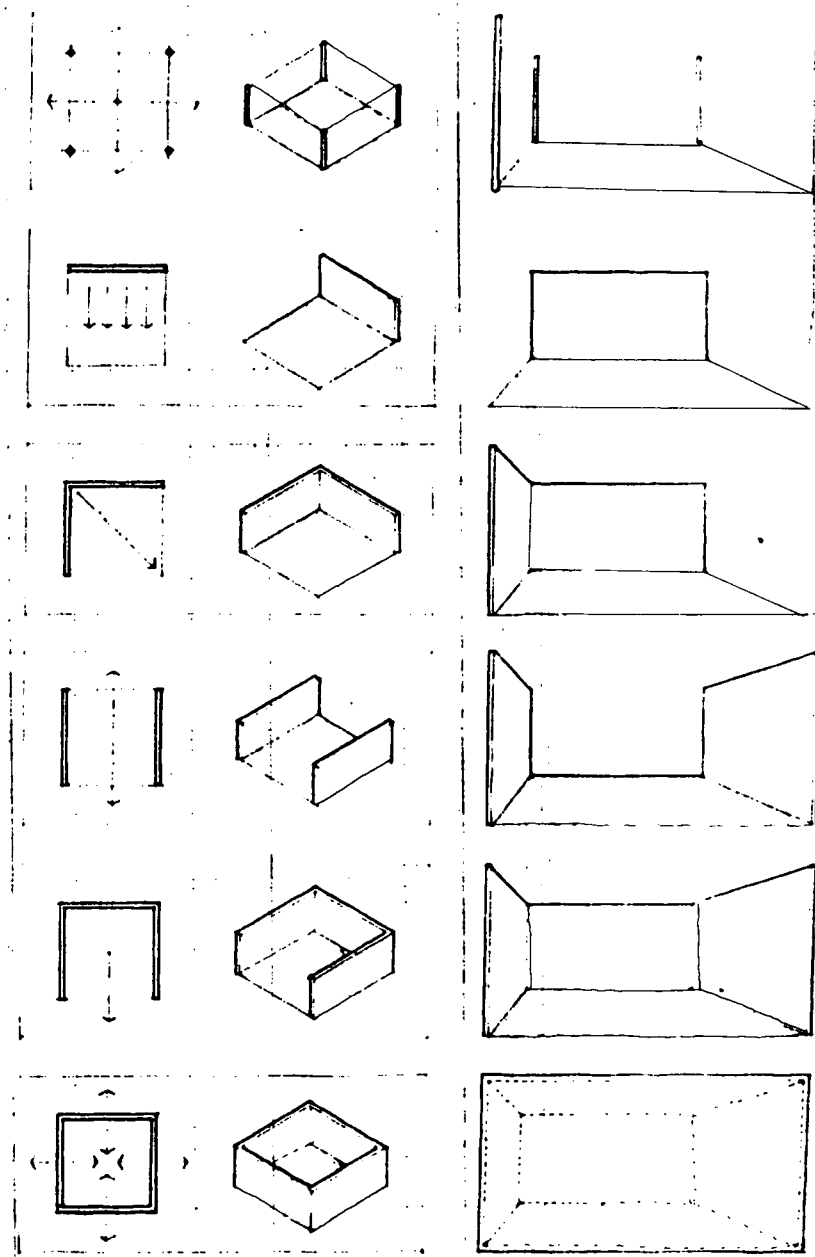


Fig.40 Defining by vertical elements
(Source: Ching, K. 1996: 121)

2.3 The street: Fundamental characteristics

Both 'horizontal elements' and 'vertical elements' visually and spatially enhance the 'directional quality' of the street. It is described by Ching (1996) as,

" The directional quality and flow of the space defined by planes are naturally manifested in spaces used for circulation and movement, such as the streets and boulevards of towns and cities " (Ching , F.D.K. 1996: 142)

Again Ellis (1978) has conceptualized this directional quality as below, " The street is a ' continuous development " (Ellis, W. C. 1978: 120)

Therefore in short the above discussion forms the basic for us to identify the fundamental characteristics of a street. They are;

- Sense of enclosure
- Sense of direction

2.3.1 Sense of enclosure

This enclosure may consist of arcades or gallery spaces connecting the surrounding buildings in to their domain. They can organize a service of buildings along its perimeter activating the space they define.



Fig. 41 Sense of enclosure

2.4.2 **Sense of direction:**

This basically means of focusing towards the street progress. The focus may be either a physical attribute or a notional attribute. They signify movement; extension and growth help us to yet from one place to another in the street.

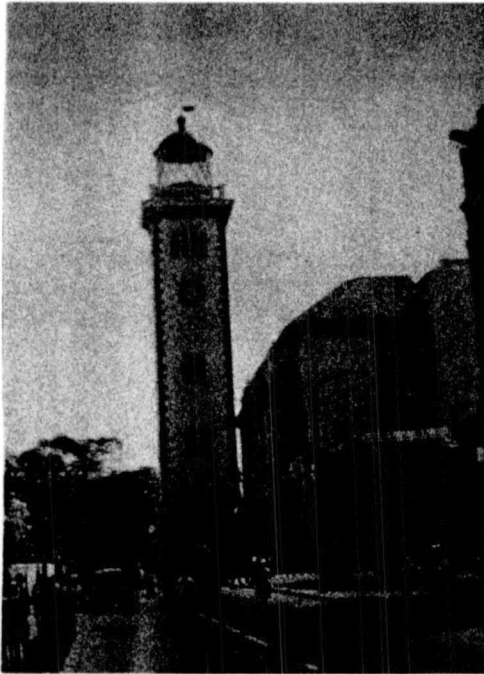


Fig.42 Sense of direction

2.4 **The street functions**

2.4.1 **Street as a dwelling place:**

It is the urban street that from the first origins of settlements has acted as principal place of public contact and public passage, a place of exchange of ideas, goods and services, a place of play and fight, of carnival and funeral, of pretest and celebration.

In a very elemental way, streets allow people to be outside. Streets are what constitute the outside for much urbanity; places to be when they are not

indoors. And streets are places of social and commercial encounter and exchange. They are where you meet people – which are the basic reason to have cities in any case. The street is movement: to watch, to pass, movement spatially.

2.4.2 Structuring functions in a city:

Street has become quite different functional purposes perceiving as a circuit of space within a city. They have formed in responding to overall geometry or topology of the organizations in terms of physical structuring functions in a city

They divide a city into large fields, either a square, a circle, a rectangle etc... possessing logical environmental ways of subdivisions . They can be regarded, an aggregates thus seem loosely related fields in to a whole . They articulate the periphery responding to string conditions of center or final edge defining fields themselves.

Link separate entities within the overall structure, becoming generators of circuits of spaces in the presence of this internal linkage. Also organize differentiated spaces in an arbitrary and imposed way giving unity and focus .These suggest no particular reference to what the overall organizations require the internal response .



Fig.43 Acting as a seam
(Source , Kostof , s, 1991 :8)



Fig.44 Acting as an edge Palmanova Italy
(source , Kostof , s, 1991: 12)

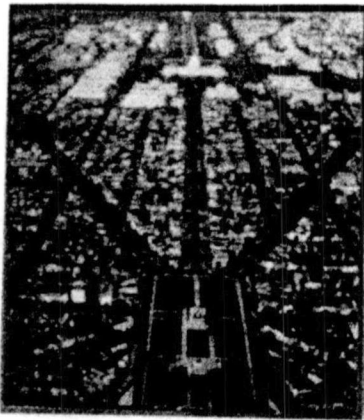


Fig.45 Acting to link two important entities Washington D.C
 (Source: Kostof , S , 1991; 209)



Fig.46 Generating circuit of spaces Manhattan Southern Tip
 (Source: Kostof , S: 1991:94)

2.4.2.1 Basic configuration of streets

In allowing these structuring functions to the city itself, streets organize themselves in different patterns. These patterns can be categorized into identifiable configurations. They are the basic configurations of streets. They are linear , radial, spiral, grid, network and composite.

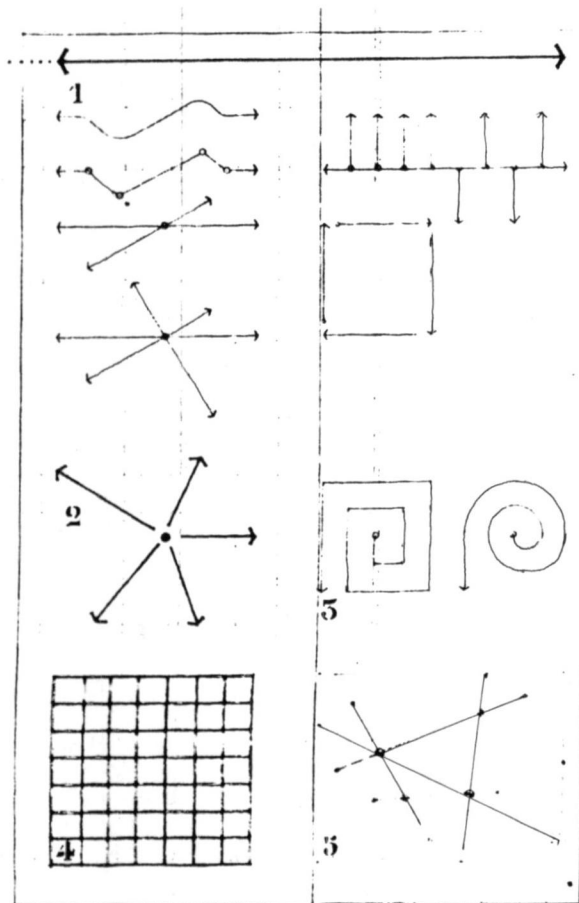


Fig. 47 Linear, Radial, Spiral, Grid, Network
 (Source: Ching, K 1992: 252)

2.4.3 Functions of a street

These configurations allow the street to be the predominant element within a city. It allows different functioning to happen within the city. These functions can be basically categorized as below with reference to **On Streets**,

(1978: 245)

- Physical function
- Social functions
- Psychological functions

2.4.3.1 Physical functions

Physical functions of the street primarily places upon its physical design. Probably you may argue that the physical setting, or of almost in the urban form have very little to do with our lives , and that social and economic are crucial variables.

It is also expressed by the words of Allen B. Jacobs.

" Immediately, when searching for the best or most important physical street arrangements in an urban settings, one must contend with the frequent assumption that what is being asserted is that physical design, either alone or primarily, makes the street the great or fine place that it is , and with the reality that such an assertion can hardly be proved ".

(Jacobs , Allen B . 1996 :6)

Most ordinary to the most secular humane activities are unfolded within a street and it is on the actual physical setting of the street.

Its length, its width , sizes of the walks , the street furniture , the features , how all the buildings , the remarkable ones , nature of the buildings, density of

them , where the most intense development , whether there are trees , the focal points , the perspectives and etc. give description of the street itself.

It is difficult or impossible to separate the interplay of humane activities and the physical nature of the street. This interplay of humane activity with above important physical details gives us the notion on different settings, different places and countries where these streets stand. Through our relationships our collective subconscious interprets them as ' the specific street and this is what the physical function of a street.

2.4.3.2 Social functions



The street encourages human participation. Therefore unanimously it has become a ' shared public world'. People engage in their day-to-day activities on streets. It provides us a space to meet, to sleep, to read, to stay, to relax, to eat, to sell, to play, to sit walk, to born and die and basically to live. It is a space for wedding , for funerals , for political celebrations , for entertainment , for transportation , for races and simply for celebrations.

Fig.48 social functions of streets

At the same time it may be a place to be alone, to be private, to wonder what it was once like and what it could be like. It can be a place for the mind to wonder until whatever is inside the street unfolds. In a very elemental manner, street allows the animals and also us and birds to be outside.

Basically no matter from where we are, our race, religion. Culture, the color, the country, the street simply provides us a place to be free, to be personal, to be on our own.

2.4.3.3 Psychological functions

Best streets are those that can be remembered and they are always better than the others. One might go back to them more often than to others. It may not just become the things to do or have to do are more centered on one than another, may be it is because it focuses a part of the life more on one street for reasons not necessarily economic or functional. Probably that street may unlock memories or offers expectations of sometimes pleasant to be seen or probably on possibility of an encounter.

Therefore as a remarks for the understanding of the urban street phenomenon it can be said that physical functions makes social functions possible and it creates a psychological comfort for the user and this kind of environment is responsive for user.

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Chapter Three

THE DECAY OF PUBLIC REALM IN SRI LANKAN
STREETS WITH SELECTED EXAMPLES



CHAPTER THREE: THE DECAY OF PUBLIC REALM IN SRI LANKAN STREETS WITH SELECTED EXAMPLES

3.1 An Introduction

In the first chapter it is discussed the public realm of a city, and it has come to a conclusion that the street is the principle mode of public realm in our context, and in the second chapter it has given the phenomenon of an urban street.

Then the question arises why we need to understand the urban street and the existing situation? First of all it will understand that we had a street life with the historical setting and it has lost that. Therefore the study leads to analyze patterns of a place in order to rejuvenate the public realm.

3.1.1 Streets in Sri Lankan context:

The streets in urban context has become much more than a two dimensional path that links two entities. It has become a place that reflects and emphasizes the urban character of the township. The pedestrians, hawkers, the vehicular traffic the built form all contribute to give life to the urban street. In fact one can argue that the street is what makes the city.

The history and evolution of streets and routes of Sri Lanka are no doubt related to the two kinds of settlements that existed; one along the coastal areas and the other within dry zone of the country.

Most contemporary Sri Lankan urban streets we live around are becoming dividing entities rather than social spaces that they used to be.



Fig.49 Street as a dividing entity rather than a social entity.

Hence the live humane movement and the elongated courtyard in the medieval cities are now seen as things of the past. This means at present our streets primarily act as the channel for transportation and are transformed in to beings so.

3.2 The history of streets in Sri Lanka

Throughout the history streets might have been ' places' for the people of ancestors who occupied them. Therefore the present situation solely, would not give an exact image Therefore it may be better to understand the history, acquiring knowledge on the evolution, up to present state of the street within the context of Sri Lanka.

3.2.1 The street form

The urban street originated as the villages gathered in to form townships. Once built forms are created at all available spaces, the space left out for access became the street. The earliest of such were not in planned layouts, they were of just natural origin, grown out of the existing conditions. This organic growth is followed in other countries as well as Sri Lanka except very few planned once.

As the Sri Lankan cities also followed parallel lines of other planned city developments, Anuradhapura in particular, became the first city to gather all the glamour and character of a large city in far with the cities in Greece and Mohen Jo Dara etc. It has followed a gridiron layout and houses had their entrances facing the minor lanes at right angles to the main routes.

The Portuguese, the Dutch and the British all three alike, adopted the architectural styles of their own motherland and most of the streets in which they exercised their powers and specially streets where they housed their own functions soon became streets of their own landmarks though much tropicalised and scaled down.

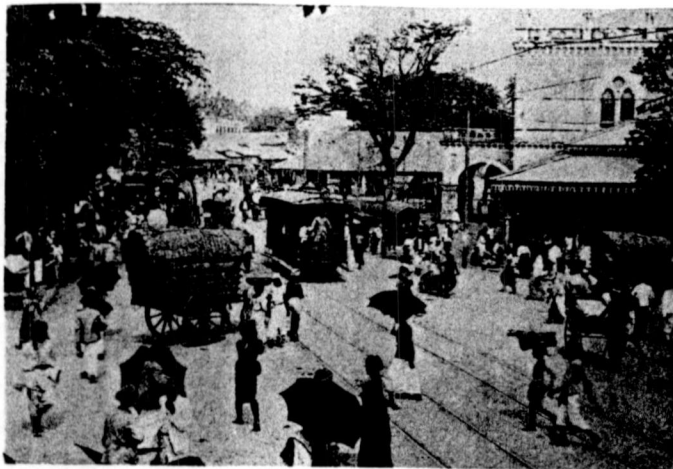


Fig.50 Street form and the associated public realm during the colonial period
(Source:Raheem,I.1991:113)



Fig.51 Chatham street during colonial period
(Source:Raheem,I.1991:115)

3.2.2 The public realm

Ancient city planning of Sri Lanka shows parallel development, with other ancient cities, like Greece and Mehenjardaro and Aryan towns in India in the East. COSMOS Indicopleustes, a Greek writer in the 5th century describes and records the cities of Anuradapura is one of his description as, " temples and places, whose golden pinnacles glitter in the sky, the street spanned by arches bearing flags, the sideways strewn with black sand and the middle sprinkled with white and on either side, vessels containing flowers, and bows and arrows. Elephants, horses, carts, and myriad of people pass and repose" Dr Roland Silwa quotes Tenner J.E. Ceylon volume 01 London 1960 pp494-495 to explain the principle streets existed in the city of Anuradapura named as Moor street, Great King street, Hinguruwak and Mahaweli street , containing thousands of houses , many of them two stories in height. The Sri Lankan Medieval village or town was itself designed and laid out with the highest objectives of social and economic organization and keeping with the ideals of aesthetic balance.

the approach from the Jetty, Colombo



The religious remains of the villages of the 19th century reflect a society of parallel practice. Ambake has a devale facing East and at the Eastern end of the street is the depository for the professional weapons.

Fig.52The public realm in the colonial era-York street

(Source:Raheem,I,1991:114

)

The main street is lined with dwellings owned by the ancestral office bears of the devale.

3.3 The crisis

Urban streets must recognize the nature and limits of the interaction of people with their environment. The physical environment is influenced upon people – a satisfyer of needs, means of communication and a source of hurt and joy. Therefore, strictly speaking, the formal agents here are people. The man in the street makes the city.

Contemporary urban centers are historical enclaves that have evolved, not out of attitudes of the modern movement, but as an investment in the notion of public realm. Throughout history, communities have developed public spaces that support their needs and they often come to symbolize the community and the larger society and culture in which it exists. However, there is no community spirit anymore and the public realm is completely lost. This can be seen in semi public, semi private places and especially in streets. People are isolated in a world of their own and have no concern whatsoever about what happens around them.

The urban street must be seen in terms of how people understand the system once it is in place and how they orient themselves in it and hence, how they should get involved in it. Therefore, involvement is the keyword here.

Andres Duane stresses that the making of a street becomes an asset in itself and it liberates people from smaller private quarters.

It is clear that people chooses settings with characteristics, which they value highly and avoid environments which they regard negatively.

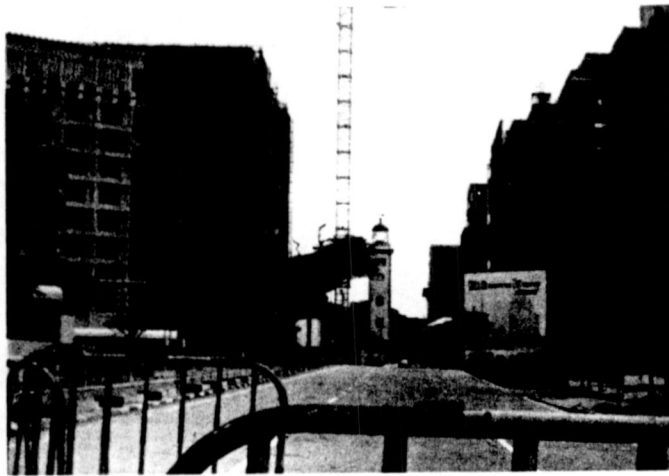


Fig.53 Loss of the public realm due to the privatization of roads by security sector



When preferred environments cannot be selected, people's lives are affected by having to adopt, having to reduce incongruent and having to give up certain activities.

In the present day, it is unfortunately to note that all this is disregarded on the face of it or that there is absolutely no time to experience it. There is complete breakdown of community spirit. A basic human need is for people to get together for business or pleasure and an age old function of the city has been to create such places that offer an opportunity for chance meeting in addition to those required for formalized civic or religious functions. In the present context there is also the ultimate danger of communities becoming walled cities, enclosed communities that never expand, that never open out to the street and other public spaces. It is therefore clear that there is chaos in the urban life and complete loss of public realm. Public life is too precious to lose in this manner. People will try hide in their ' electronic cottages', but all of us do need human contact and choices.

Is it possible for the urban street to bring back this public life?

3.4 The basis into practice

3.4.1 Methodology of the study:

3.4.1.1 Physical form mapping:

The basis formulated in the first chapter and understanding the phenomenon of the urban street in the second chapter will be applied to the selected streets. The existing patterns presented graphically and it will note down the variations to the original pattern. Many human functions and interactions are facilitated by the proposed urban geometry, which will derive through the proposed twelve patterns, explained in the first chapter. Through the analysis it will try to understand whether the behavioral patterns could link to these architectural patterns directly. In other terms it will try to implement the relationship between the analysis and the rejuvenating street life, and it will evaluate the "quality of the life" behind the patterns.

3.4.1.2 Behavior mapping:

This research method, also intended to identify ' patterns of places ' through ' patterns of events ' within the selected streets. These ' patterns of events ' have been identified by the researcher, through carrying out mapping of public behavior in events, participating in those streets.

Behavior mapping has been carried out in different levels in predominantly identifying the ' patterns of events '.

They are;

- Making annotated diagrams, sketching and illustrations.
- Observing people from a stationary point
- Using still photographic data

The behavior mapping is primarily used in understanding the ' patterns of events ' in the selected streets. Therefore the study concerns on the identified

physical characteristics, which are associated with social background, in formulation of the basis as briefly;

- Where the ' patterns of events ' happen?
- What physical elements are involved in the patterns of events'?

3.5 The basis for the selection of the streets

The created basis in the first chapter is used to examine the preceding case studies, may not be the ideal representative sample, and vice versa. But they are among the most interesting and thoughtful of those available.

Further, the selection is based primarily on personal experience and first-hand interviews which is considered important for this study.

The areas that are dealt with here in after have been selected taking into account their particular location, existing situations and importance or value. Some streets possess great cultural heritage strengthened by the societies living within. The others are found less functioning as public spaces, which are essential elements of a city in terms of the public realm.

Some street networks of mixture of functions and public transport mode. Among many other urban streets of Colombo, can be identified Fort, Slave Island and Punchikawatta triangle as distinct of playing the above roles respectively.

The selection of the foregoing locations, as a case study can thus work as an effective tool to illustrate the potentials of each.

Understanding the manner in which the changes should occur to strengthen the functions and associated life that those spaces are inclined to perform, may be advantageous in the event of rejuvenating street life.

Planing Units & Ward Boundaries
City of Colombo



Fig.54 City of Colombo and the three selected areas of the study

3.6 Case study

3.6.1 Introduction

Very briefly it will be described the selected street, and reasons for the selection. It will be applied the basis which is elaborated in the first chapter, to the selected streets. Do the physical form and activity pattern mapping on the selected street with reference to the basis created in the chapter one.

The smaller the scale on which a pattern acts, the more immediately it connects to humane beings. So here it will basically applied in that sequence where people who have not experienced them in person can imagine their emotional impact.

For the purpose of presentation the existing patterns will form into a graphical form and the photographic survey will express the quality of the place or the "responsiveness" to the environment.



KEY

- Gallery surround —
- Opening to the street —
- Building Edge —
- Activity pockets —
- Building fronts —
- Path Shape —
- Arcades —
- Connected Buildings —
- Main gateway —
- Industrial ribbon —
- Neighbourhood boundary —
- Sub culture boundary —

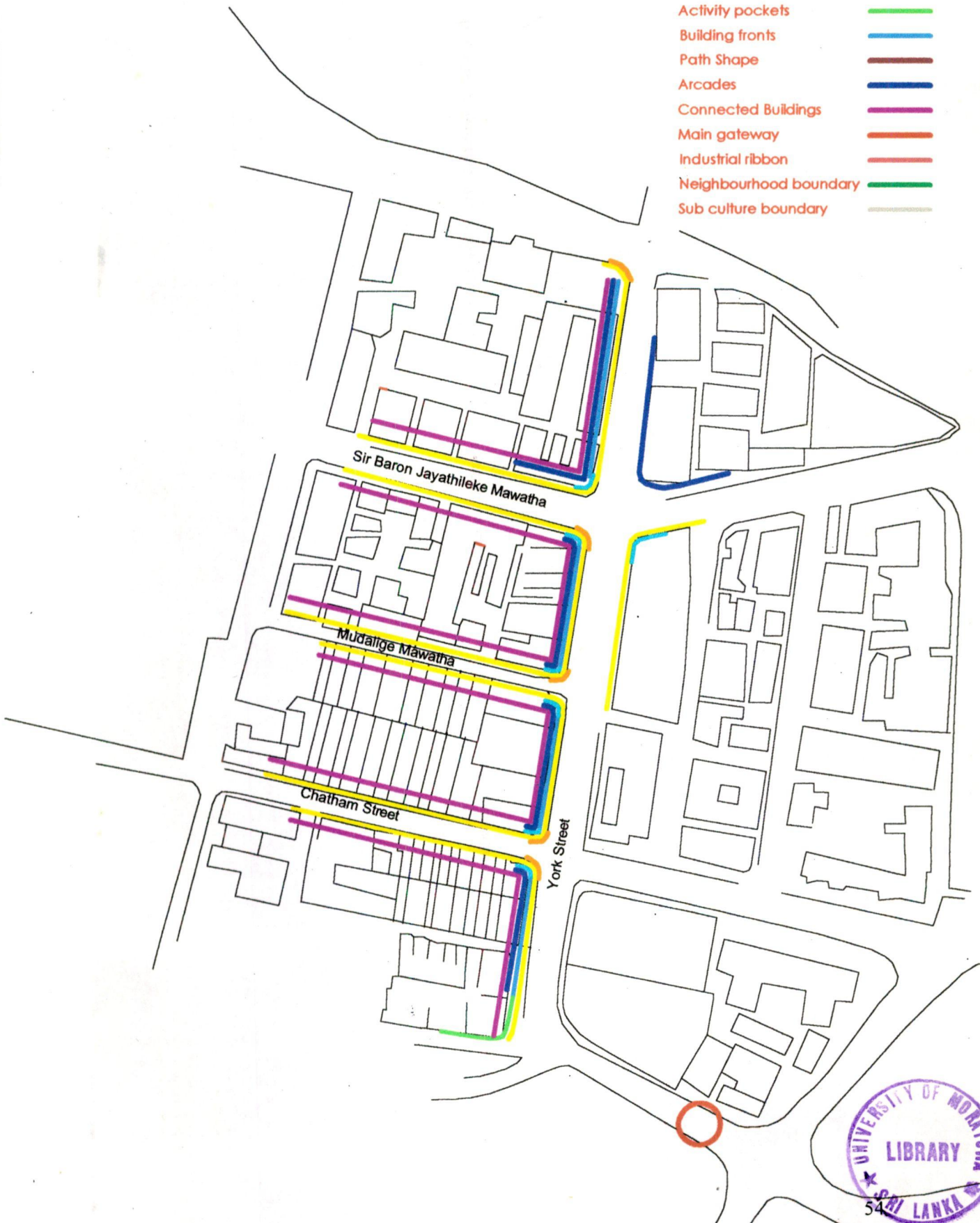
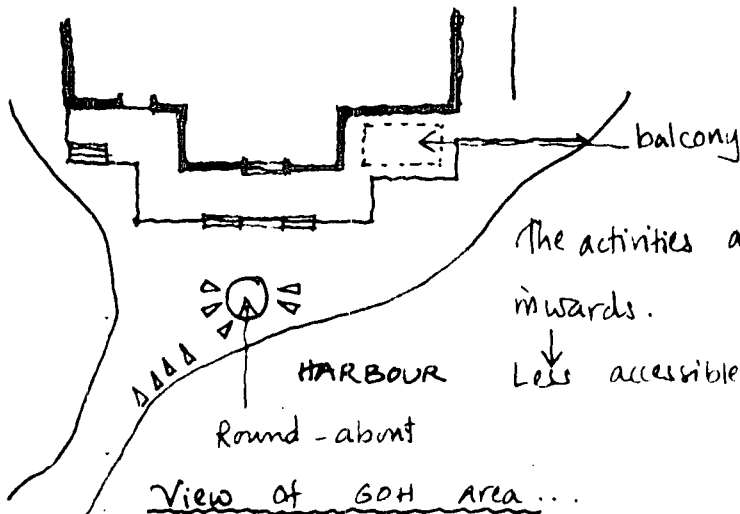


Fig. 55 Existing Patterns in to the Context - Fort

UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA
LIBRARY
SRI LANKA

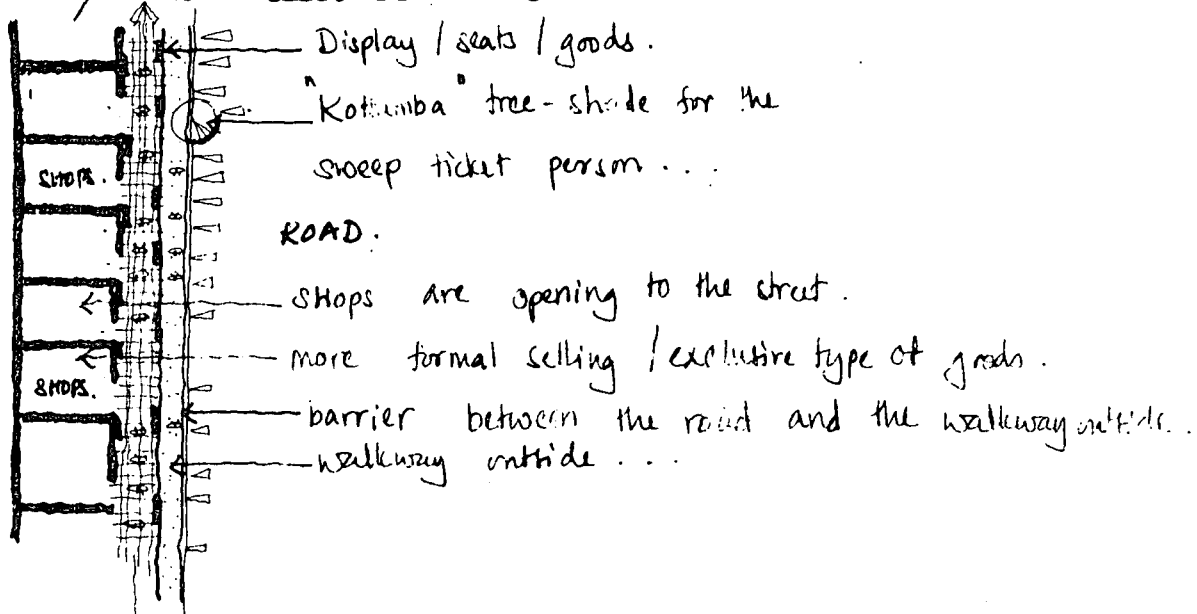
①.



KEY
 • PEOPLE - 5 no.
 • VEHICLES

The activities are more concentrated inwards.
 Less accessible for the place...

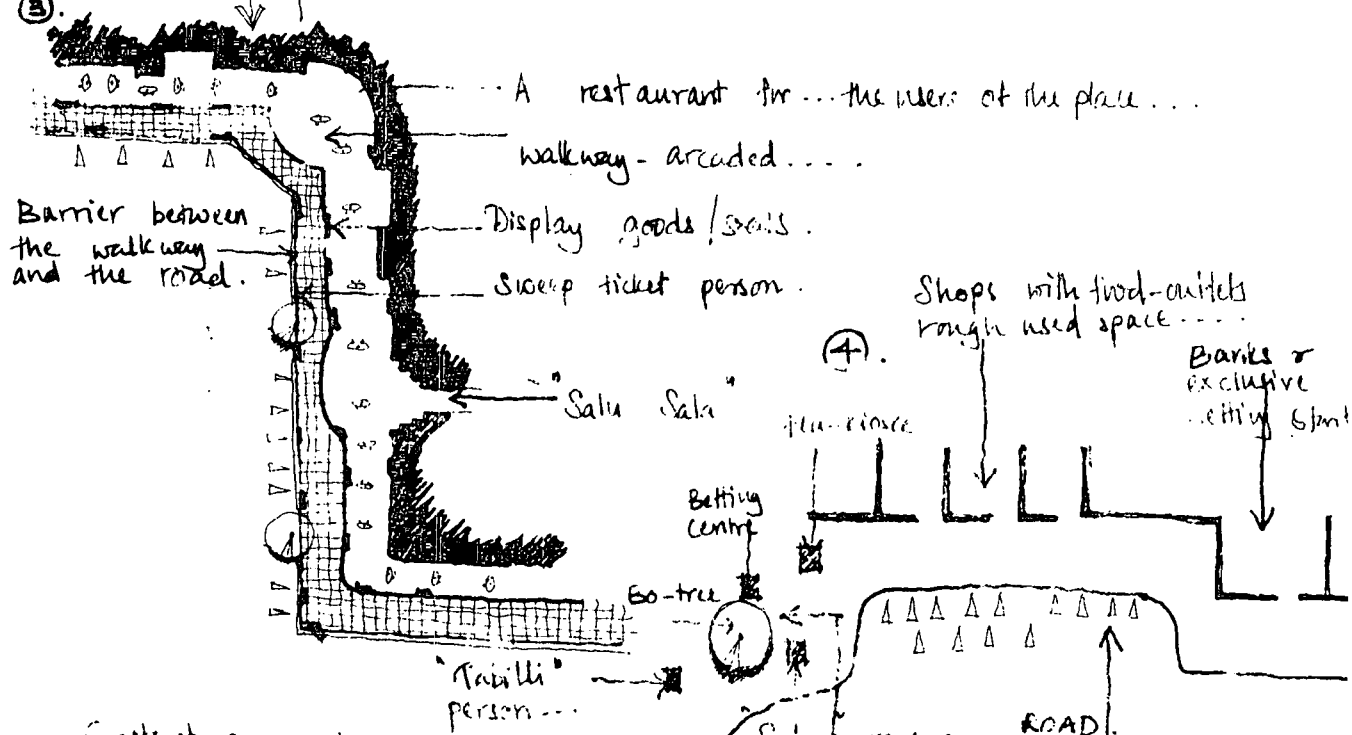
②.



ROAD.

Shops are opening to the street.
 more formal selling / exclusive type of goods.
 barrier between the road and the walkway outside.
 walkway outside...

③.



Barrier between the walkway and the road.

A restaurant for... the users of the place...
 walkway - arcaded...

Display goods / seats.
 Sweep ticket person.

"Salu Salu"

Betting Centre

Eco-tree

"Tabilli" person...

Shops with food-outlets rough used space...

Banks or exclusive setting 6m

④.

plu-rinse

ROAD.

Sweep-person

555

Gray area allocated for parking.

Constant eye-sight

They are worried about the new comers for the 'Square' - activity place informal gathering parking.

collection with 3-wheeler

Fig. 56 Existing patterns of the place.

"Richness" in
Detailing.....



"Permeability"

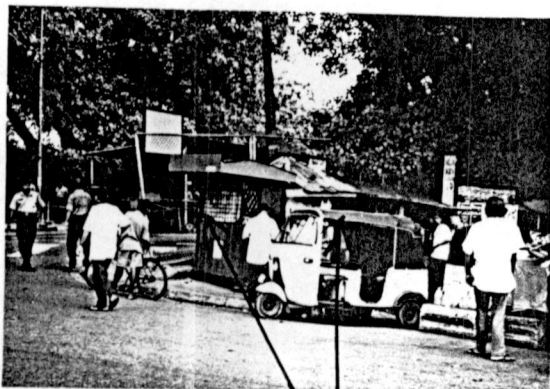
Space is "permeable"
for anybody

"Personalised" the
space.....



"Permeable" space.

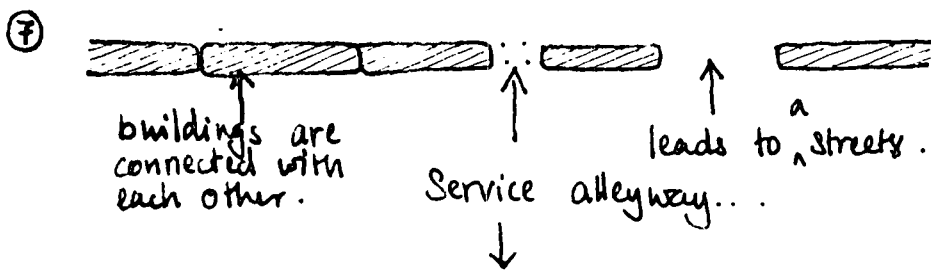
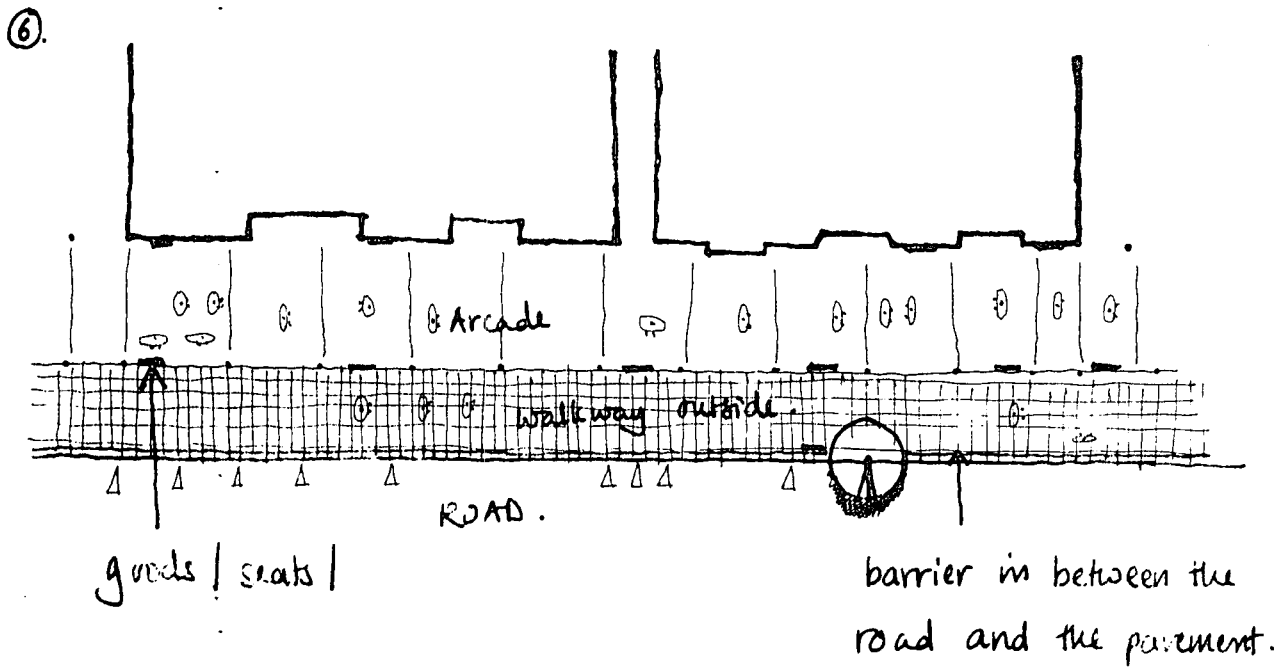
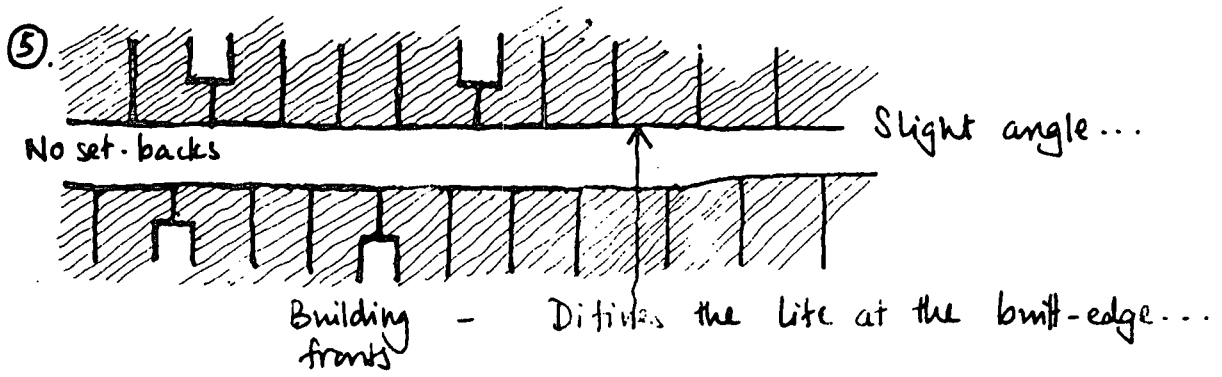
"Variety"
of uses.....



Combination of the colors..... makes 56
the place vibrant..... 56

Space is used for
different activities... - "Robustness"
"Variety" of uses.....

The space is
"personalised"...
giving "richness" to the
Place.



These are for the street hawkers, strollers etc.
Unknown activities are taking place.

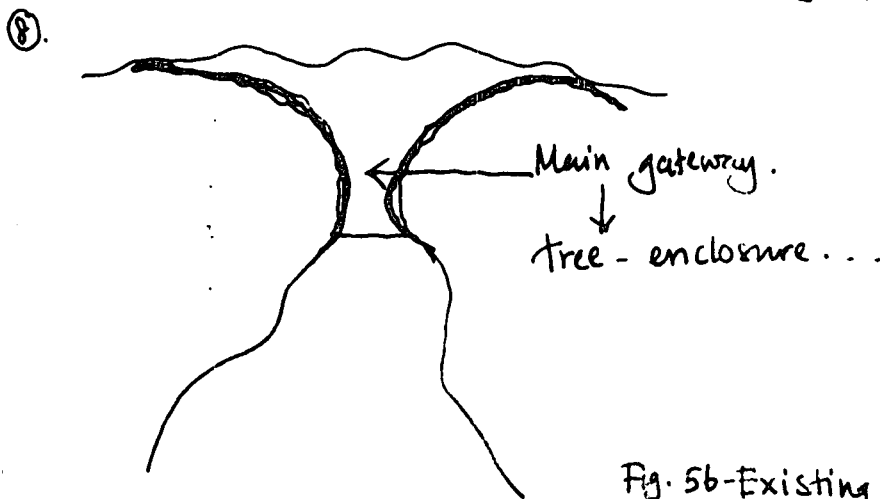
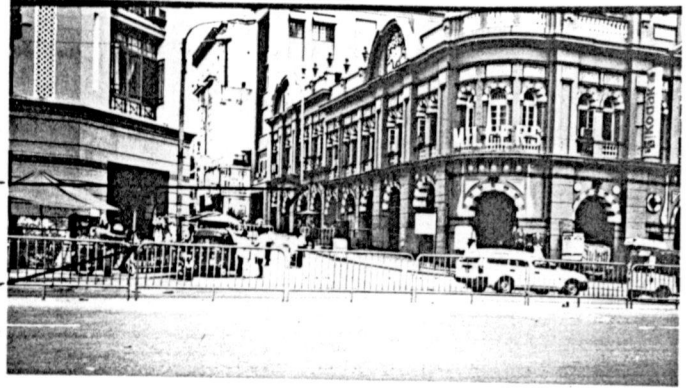


Fig. 5b-Existing patterns of the place.

Facade - "visual appropriateness"

Defines the life at the built-edge.



Space is "permeable" for anybody.



"Variety" of uses

"visual appropriateness"



Main gateway - "permeable" - entrance to the context.

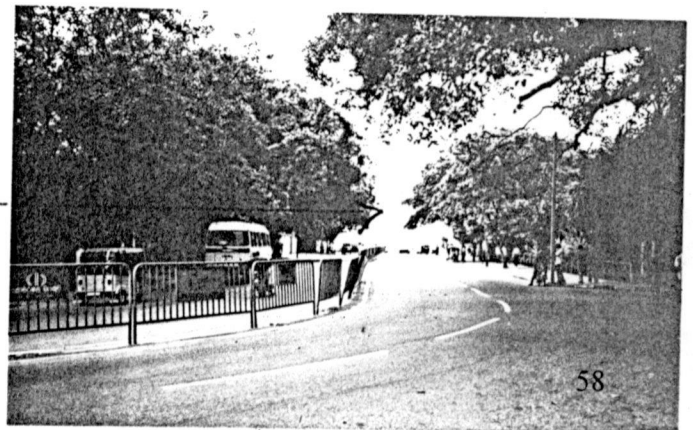


Fig. 57- The quality behind the patterns.

3.6.2 Case study 01 – Fort.

1 Historical perspective and the social structure

Portuguese occupied the first Fortress of Colombo in 16th century. Dutch took over power from the Portuguese and they rebuild it, including only the present Fort within the walls.. A grid network of streets was laid out and the Beira Lake was created, linked to the outer skirt by a system of canals The residences were moved out, the Fort remained the functioning as a shopping district, characterized by tree-lined streets and arcade buildings.

The Fort area has a very significant character with its colonial influence for the place and it had a very rich urban life surround the place and now it has lost even with the same physical fabric Therefore it is important to study the area and find out the strengths and potentials to rejuvenate the life for the place.

2 Identification of the existing patterns and the responsiveness to the environment:

The streets chosen for the study are York street, Chatham street and Sir Baron Jayathilaka Mw.. The street layout pattern and the buildings have the great influence of colonial history and York Street depicts the historical influence clearly. It played a role of major path in the colonial Colombo, secondary to the Queens Street and given a high common usage. The form of the street, reveals less informal quality to gather people in their day today activities with the traffic congestion. Departmental stores like Cargills and Millers, banks like Green lays and Bank of Ceylon and hotels like Grand oriental , Thaprobane ect. confirm to the primacy given to the high commercial usage in the street.

The street has two main characteristics directly related to form; it is path and place. Here the street is more or less for motor vehicles that its function as a place has been quite overlooked. As Alexander says , " Streets should be for staying in , and not just for moving through , the way they are today". (1977: 590).

The responsive quality of the built edge is given by the patterns of Gallery surrounds, opening to the street and the building edge. The space defined by the building edge creates a responsive environment for the user. The patterns, which formed at the edge involved in knitting the inside of the building with outside world.



Fig.58 Opening to the streets

The environment of various details and the materials used in the built fabric makes the place vibrant, colorful where the environment gives the quality of richness to the user.

Arcades of Car gills and Millers define the life between the building and the street and the stretch along that and the space is permeable for the user.

At the edge of the built fabric with drizzles of light given by the Bo tree, give life to the place. The users have personalized the space where it can be used for many different purposes giving more choice for the user within one place.

The buildings are connected each other revealed in a unique language and creating the outdoor space positive and almost instinctively. A town of connected buildings, would be a picture of society, made up connected.

The minds of people addressed with a visually appropriate a picture of a place. The avenue of tree enclosure at the very start of the York Street, creates a boundary between the Lotus junction and the York street. They mark the Lotus junction less activity space only with the rushing traffic and the pedestrian movement, to a kind of calm down place and the beginning of the activities of commerce and trade at the edge of the built fabric in the York street.

The activities themselves are made more sharp, more vivid, more alive, where the boundary exists in the minds of people, physically appears on this context. This form crests more permeable quality where people are allowing to respond to the environment.

The neighborhood boundary formed by closing down streets, of Chatham Street, Mudaliga mw. , Sir Baron Jayathilaka mw. and limiting access to the neighborhood, cut the normal number of street activities happening in those and the York street.

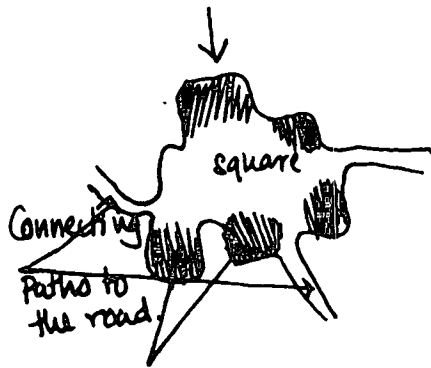
Varying cultural groups can be identified here. The western side of the Fort is occupied with more exclusive, formal majestic marching of people and with a very aggressive building fabric but the more in formal spirit exists on the eastern side with commercial activities.

The hustle and bustle of the place gives rushing movements for the place and due to automobile and the wide road and there's no constant watch or familiarity for the place and it has converted into an automobile transition tube. Therefore the character of the Fort lies hidden due to the traffic congestion unsuitable land use and inactivity after office hours.



Fig.59 Inactivity after office hours

The built environments provides its uses with an essentially democratic setting giving the quality of permeability, richness in the built fabric, robustness in the use of space, provision to personalize the space, visual appropriateness in the built fabric but the function taking place does not make any variety for the user in the place to make a 24 hours livable place.



Activities like - restaurant +
children's corner etc .

↓
Reduce the institutional or
enclosed activities within the buildings & introduce
more exhorvard activities

Take-off the parapet-wall
& create more "permeable"
space & "variety" of uses
within the space



Need to be permeate
at the pedestrian level.



Need to be more
responsive for
the environment.



3 Potentials to rejuvenate street life:

The pattern Gallery surround at the edge of the building and the outside is stuck artificially on to the building. These places should be an integral part of the building territory, and contains seats, places to stand and talk, places to work outside – all in the public view, make the space deep enough to be really useful.

One side of the York Street is not used for any purpose and hence no significant built mass is present. It will be shaped the path, accommodating details of "bulge" with opening arcades, activity pockets of restaurants with stair –seats of supporting activities, giving choice of variety, which will rejuvenate the life in the street. When the segments of the street are pedestrianised the street will be more relaxed and lively.

The urban blocks laid out in gridiron pattern consist of highly geometrically placed building units, of which the physical characteristics mirror a more livable space for humane behavior.

This forms accessible for the buildings or community gatherings. But the issue, which demands grave concern, is the activity pattern of the place, which lacks adequate activities in the night, except as a realm for the beggars of the city. In this regard it can propose civic buildings in the nodes where major activities occurs in the high points of urban structure.

The grey areas identified in the analysis have capacity to ended up in humane life. In between space of the building can be converted into more useable areas, for commercial activities like small book shops, tea kiosks at domestic scale rather than places for loafers, drug addicts, strollers etc.

At this Fort area locates in the central point, adjacent to the port , the bazaar of Pettar , the Beira water front and the Gall face enplaned . This demands the place into major celebrative and national events to occupy also.

The area acutely expression of the public realm. Public space is merger and does not fulfill its function as a connector between civic, commercial, residential and other uses or as link between where immense potentials of creation of public realm. Therefore the area can be expanded among the activities like commerce, civic, leisure and cultural.

3.6.3 Case study 02 – Slave Island

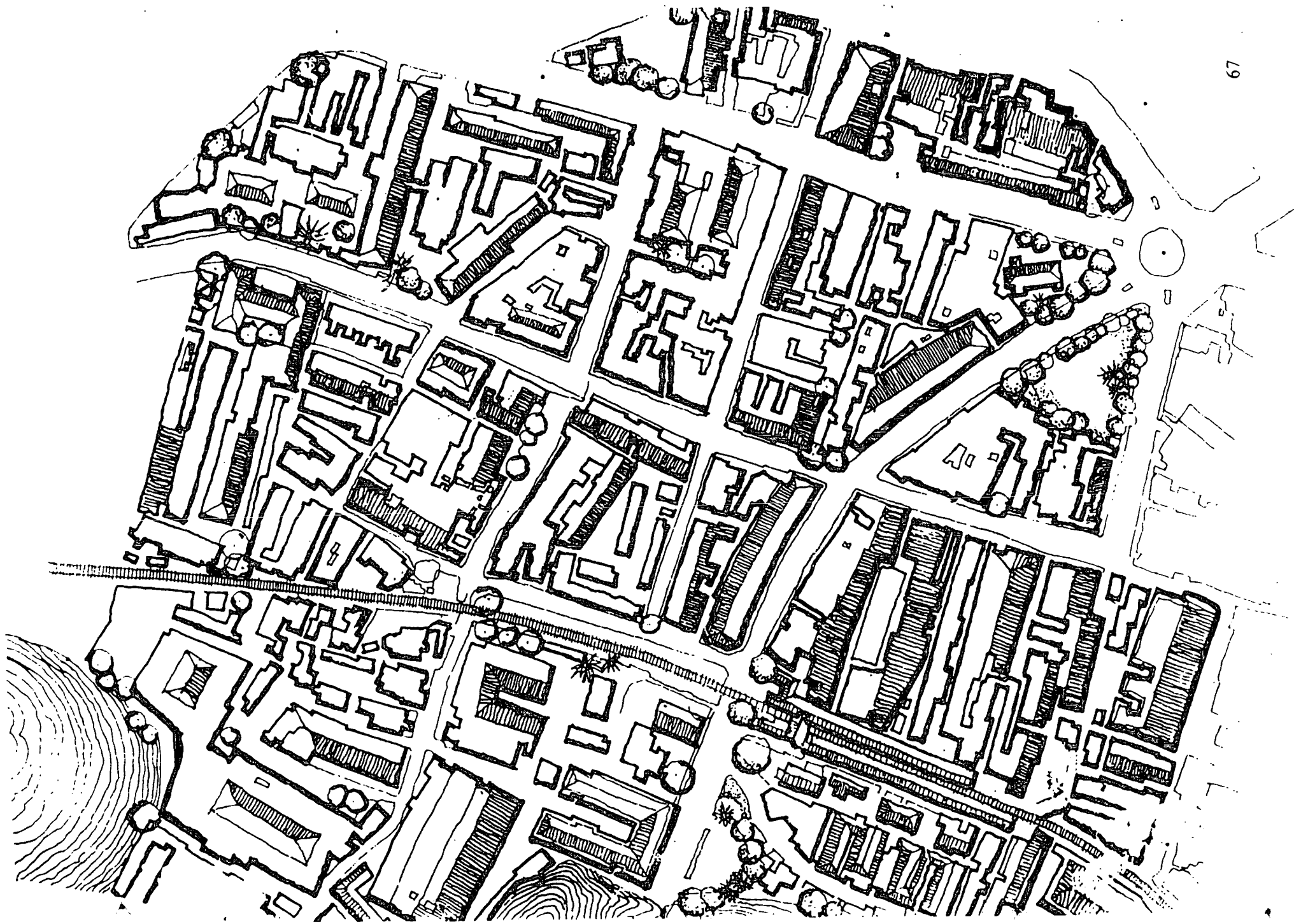
1 Historic perspective and the social structure:

Social groups having links to a variety of geographic origins seems to be flocking in the area of Slave Island. Among them, in contrast is one community having a historical background, as descendents of a Malay, Jah workforce attached to a military regiment which is said to have been situated in the region during the colonial period.

Its grid layout pattern of roads organizes the built forms as well as the urban spaces. Streets are well defined in most cases. Large plot divisions, which are a result of once being the commercial wholesale area and highly dense residential clusters, made most of the buildings of low-rise nature.

The skyline is not uniform as the height of the buildings varies from single story to three story structures.

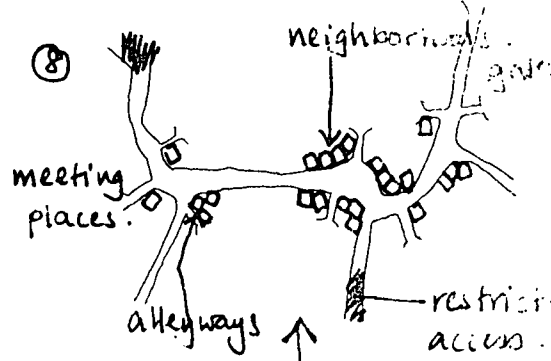
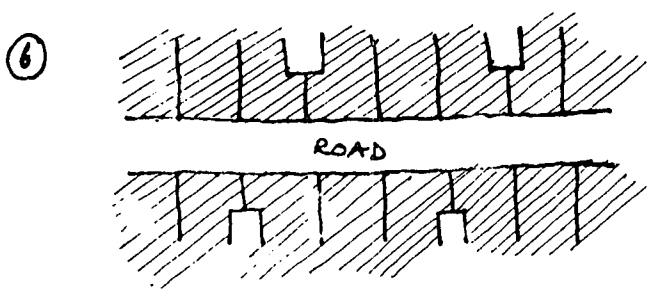
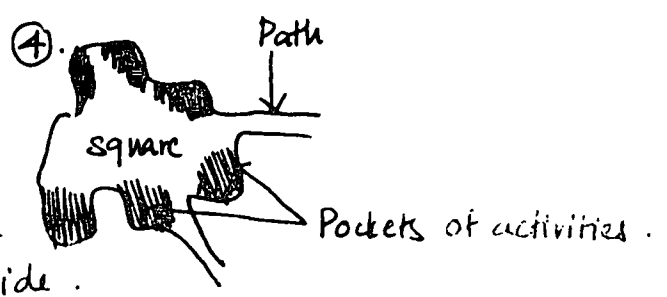
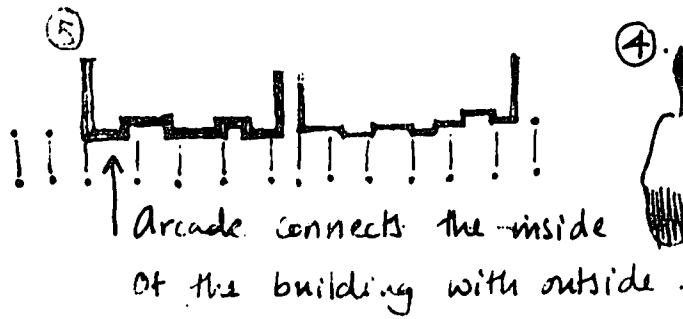
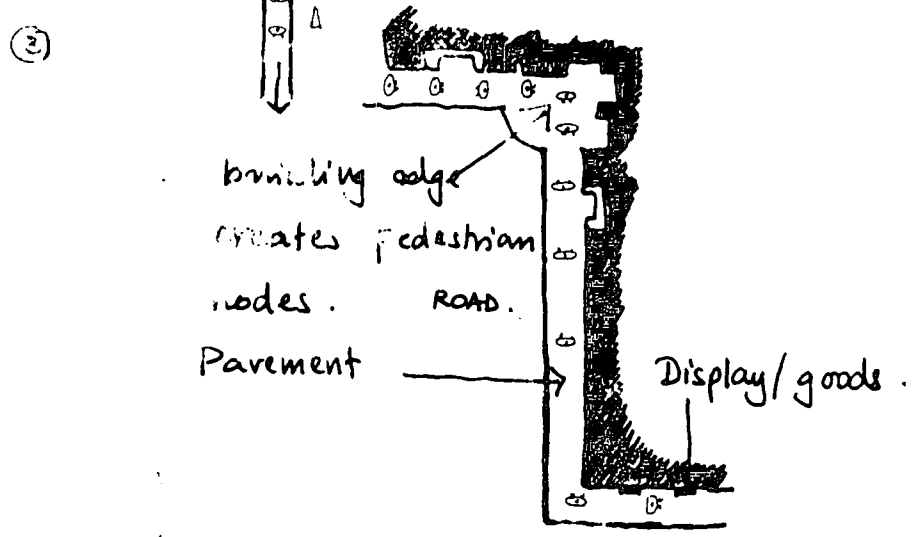
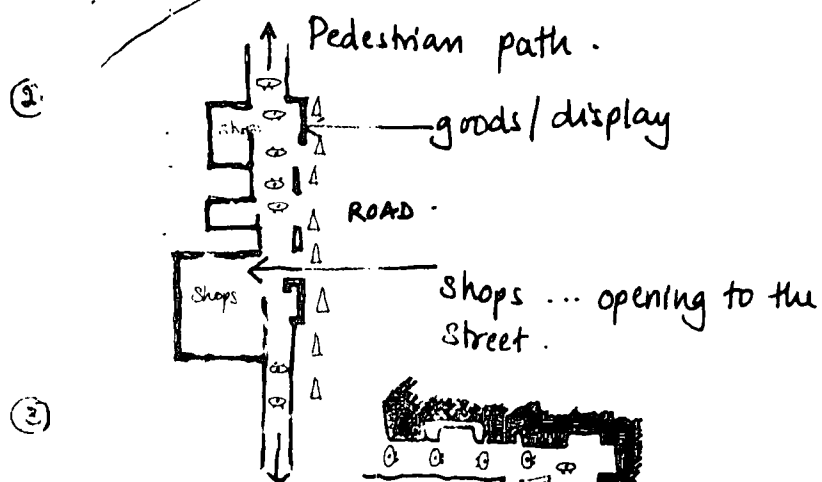
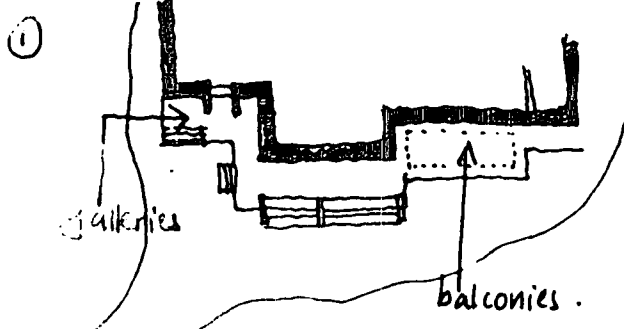
The façade treatment in some buildings binds the buildings as one group presenting solid and void patterns with rich detailing and grand continuous arcades. Hyped or gable roofs are hidden by the detailed cornices. All these physical characteristics of buildings create an architectural homogeneity, which results in a common character differentiating the Slave Island as a separate district.



Existing patterns in to the Context - Slave Island



- KEY**
- Gallery surround
 - Opening to the street
 - Building Edge
 - Activity pockets
 - Building fronts
 - Path Shape
 - Arcades
 - Connected Buildings
 - Main gateway
 - Industrial ribbon
 - Neighbourhood boundary
 - Sub culture boundary



⑦

leads to an alleyway - defines the neighborhood boundary.

Fig. 61 - Existing patterns of the Place.

Fig. 62 - The quality behind the patterns.

"Permeable" and "richness" of the space:



"Permeability" of the space.

"Personalisation" of the space.



"Permeability" and "Variety" of uses.



Qualities of; Variety of uses, robust richness, & personalisation within the activity pocket.



"Permeability" of the space.

Building fronts define the life at the built edge... , quality of "visual appropriateness"...



2 Identification of the existing patterns and the responsiveness to the environment :

The node radially fragments the land by six major trunk roads and the study focused on the K marrathnana mw. , Malay st. and Riffle st.

The fragmented urban blocks are enveloped by middle rise commercial establishments, some of which are even architecturally significant buildings dating back to the colonial period.



Fig.65 Building edge made people to hang around

The balconies and the galleries of the existing shop houses and the Nippon City hotel gives the whole street the pattern of Gallery surround and the arcades, which link the pedestrians and the road. Combination of these patterns provides an opportunity for the people to move through the place and this the patterns creates a permeable environment for the user. But the boundaries of those don't make any continuation for the place.

The shops are opening to the street connecting the inside of the shop with the street. The building edges made people to hang around the shady spaces of " Kottamba trees ". The buildings are connected with each other defining each other's boundaries. But on the breaking points are the accesses for the alleyways, which gives a vibrant social fabric for the place.

Shops are opening to the street, creating a pedestrian path and in between allowing people to sit on, sell goods, stroll on ...etc. This made the place more familiar having a constant watch on to the street.

Even the Nippon building conveys relationship with the street, and the people who use the road; the edge of the building ends bluntly creating a dead place, of a Bo- tree which is surrounded by a parapet wall.

The building edges were well defined to take place activities in some places.. The café at the edge has the physical form of responding to the activity-taking place. Also the open space is successful with the 'Pola' like activities taking place at the node of the street.

The squares made with the building recessions, and the edges contain and accommodate successful pedestrian nodes and lead to create activity pockets and the building fronts define the life at the built edge of a street, giving a visually appropriate vision for the user.

The buildings are connected with each other, which creates both a boundary and a path along it, which is destroyed by having intermediate space between buildings, which are the strong social fabric of the alleyways.

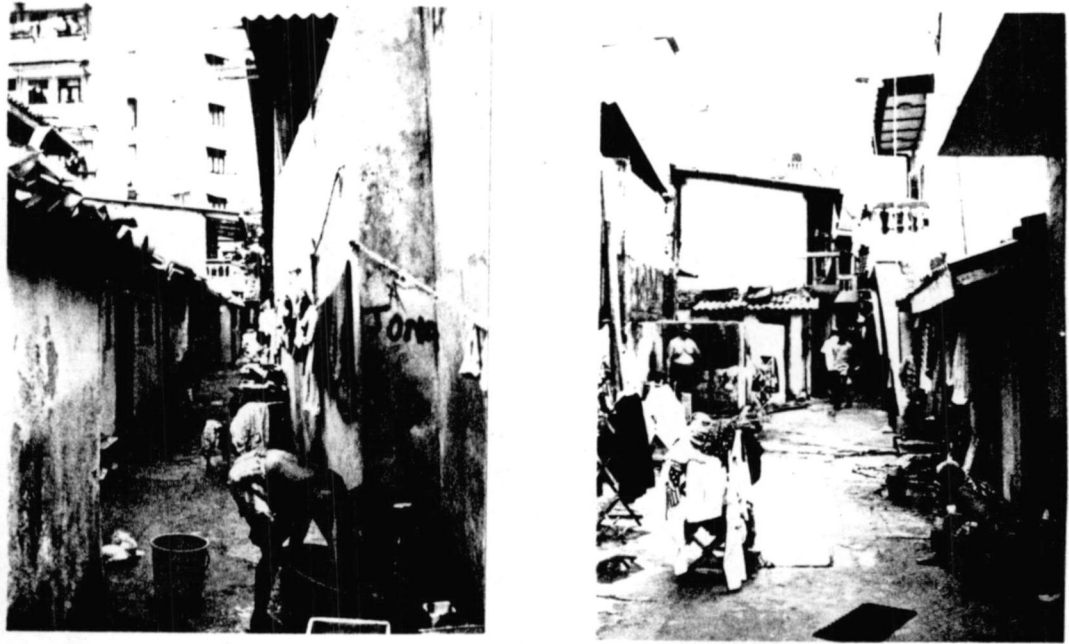


Fig.66 Alleyways, which give vibrant social fabric to the place

On the other hand stresses the necessity of containment in a living city, and show how one zone can destroy an adjoining zone, if the appropriate boundaries are not defined.

The alleyway shows the meeting places, gateways and also some kind of security boundaries making legible environment for its users.

This area is one of the traditional living areas of Malay population, and their individual residential quarters may not be of landmark quality , but the overall character they created is significant with the mix of other sub cultures exist. The city to be live needing the mosaic of **subcultures**. Here different cultures like Moors, Malays, Singhalese and Hindus live in their own way, at full intensity, next door to one another creating their own cultural boundaries.

3 Potentials to rejuvenate street life:

The residents in Slave Island as well as the commuters have problems with the dilapidated buildings, high traffic congestion, non-availability of parking places and parking along streets.

↓
Redevelopment of existing place.

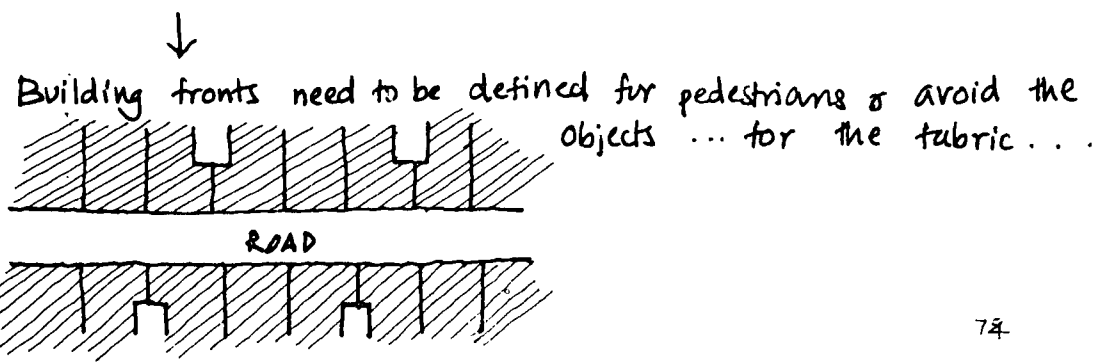
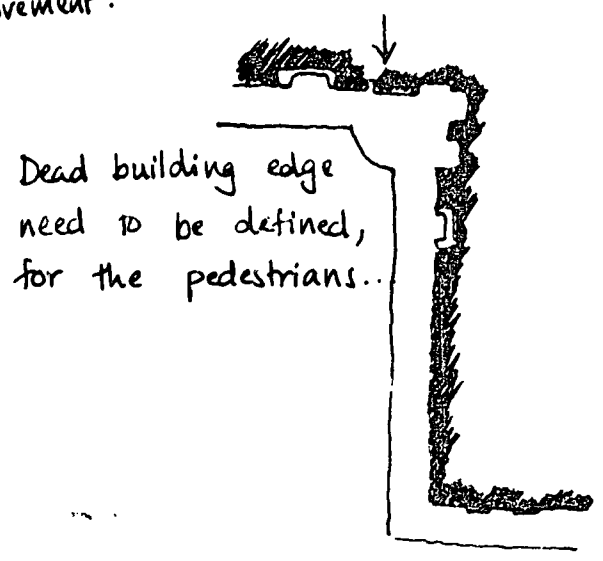
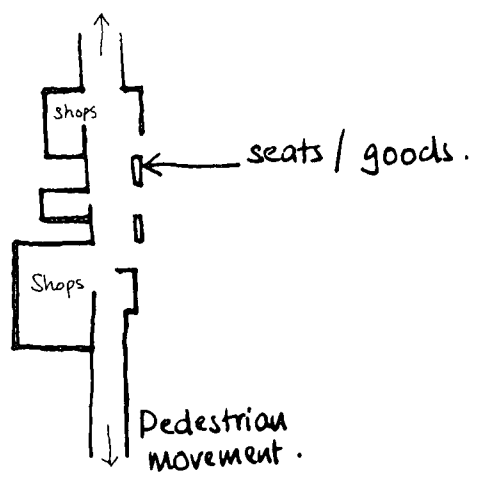


Fig. 63 - Potentials to rejuvenate street life.

Dilapidated level of buildings.

Less permeable or variety

Haphazard development.



Dead building edge.
less permeable - no life defined.



Objects to the fabric.
less permeable,
variety or richness
giving to the fabric.

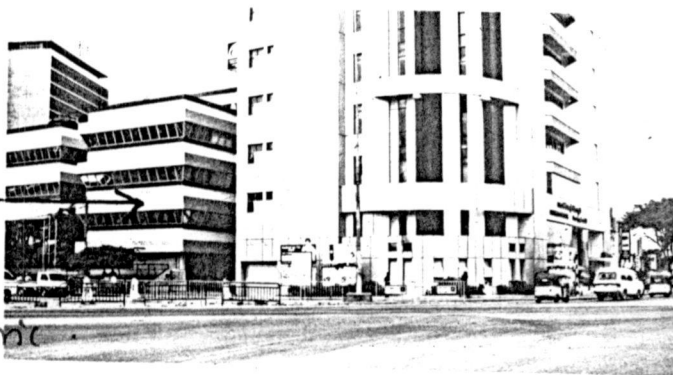


Fig. 64 - The quality given by the patterns.

Therefore the dilapidated level of building can be used to regenerate activities, which will rejuvenate the street life of this area. This can be introduced cafes, public-gathering places like community centers etc.

The privatization of the pavements by the hawkers make disturbance for the pedestrian movement on the pavements. Valuable land parcels being underutilized, haphazard skylines and the new buildings coming up as objects to the fabric reduce the life on street.

From the analysis it is understood the existing weaknesses and threats that can be converted into strengths and potentials to develop into a very livable place which people can enjoy their living in urban which can retain the memory of the early immigrants who transformed Slave Island from a company street to a bustling city.

3.6.4 Case study 03 – Pōnchikawatta -Maradana

1 Historical perspective and the social structure:

It is being one of the busiest towns in Colombo, is a well-known commercial stronghold from time immemorial. Its close proximity to the city center with wide roads, rail service and even inland water transportation through the Beira lake, has brought in a lot of factories, stores and warehouses , supportive of the commercial capital since the colonial ruling. Today, it having been further established in the field of commerce, is popular in certain specialized trades such as stationary and motor spare part, that almost the entire citizenry is found making use of.

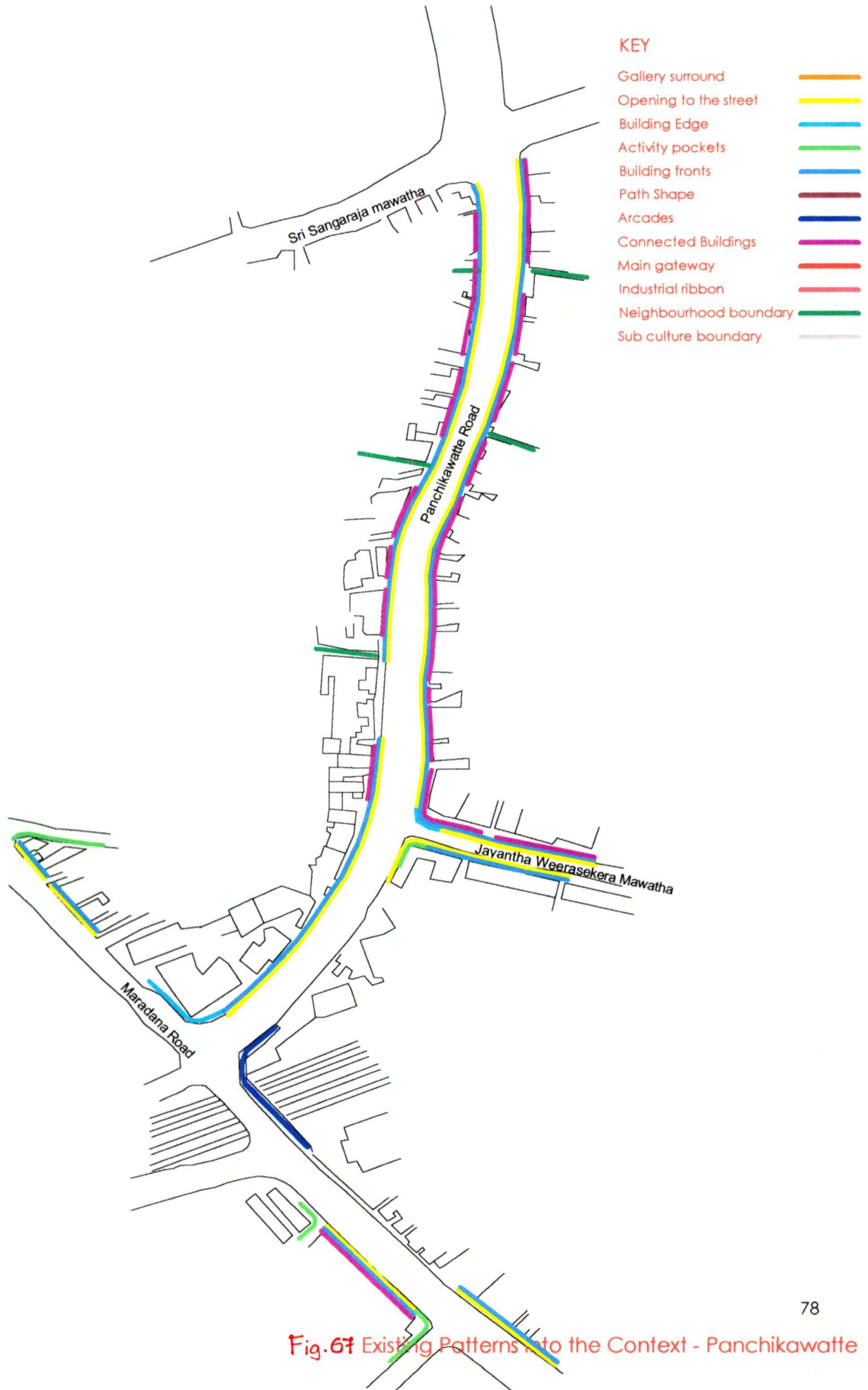


Fig.67 Existing Patterns into the Context - Panchikawatte

The social structure constitutes a reasonable representation of the entire racial spectrum. Concentration of Muslims in the North of Maradana, is an identifiable disparity when compared with the rest of the population distribution. However, they all could collectively be categorized under the lower middle income or low income groups, as far as their income levels are concerned.

2 Identification of existing patterns and the responsiveness to the environment:

The area chosen for the study is surrounded by major roads such as Maradana rd. ,Punchikawatta rd and Jayanthaweerasekara mw.

Maradana road is specialized for stationary and shoe repair shops. Besides, making advantage of the locational popularity for films and dramas, in the presence of large number of cinemas and theaters such as Elphinston and Tower hall in close proximity.

Basic humane situations can be enriched by the qualities as the walls are opening to the street it is possible to hear the sounds of Kottu making and the smell of it and with the backdrop of Saywar- music and the stationary spots and the workshops makes the place more live.

The building edges are permeable such as to encourage life, creating pedestrian nodes and the necessarily crinkly crenulated geometry that it is required.

Some edges are contained with of domestic scale activities like a place of the cobbler and the Kaddala -person with his cart etc.

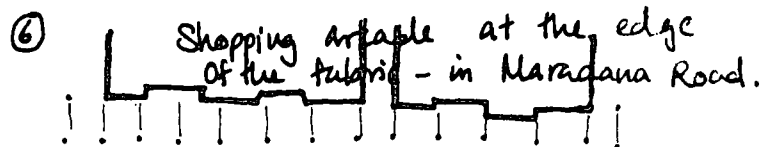
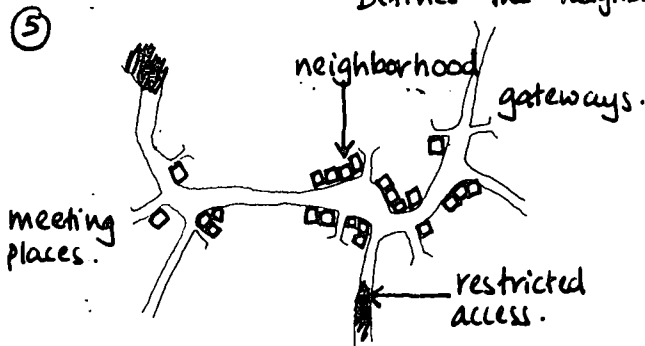
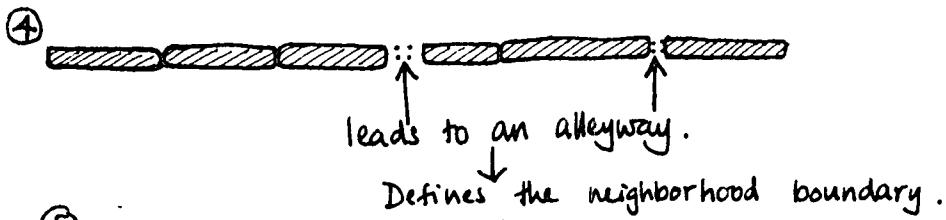
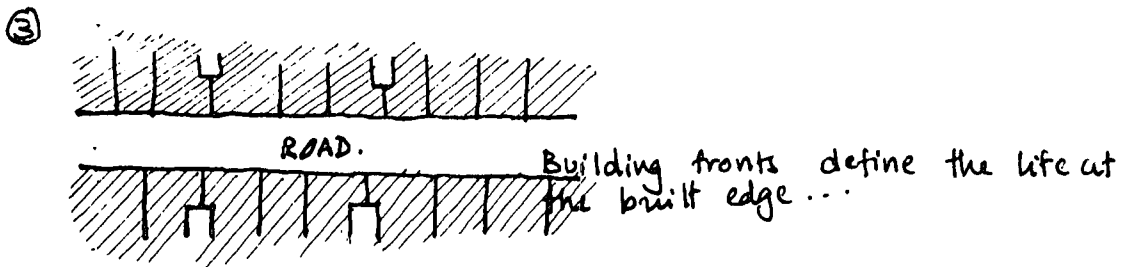
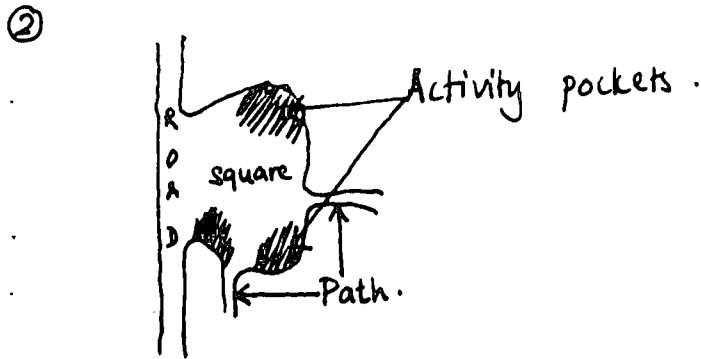
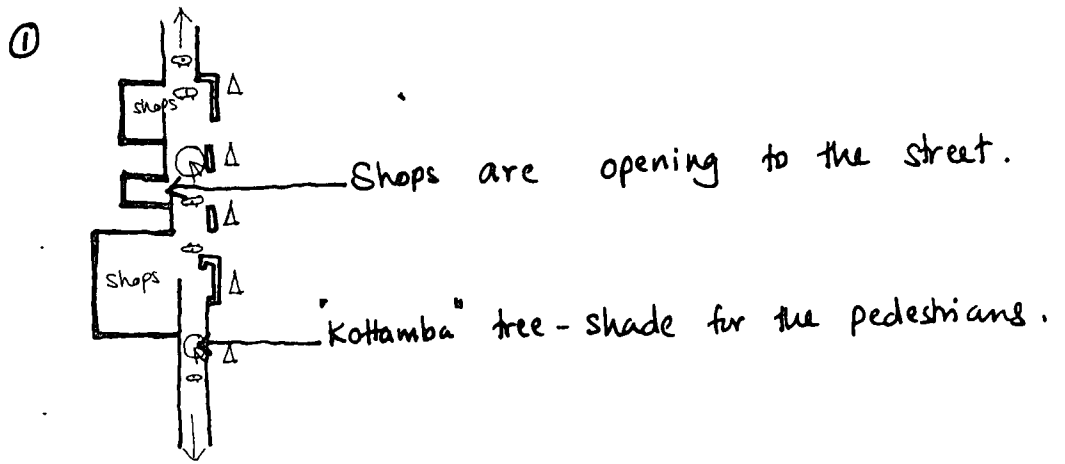


Fig. 68 - Existing patterns of the place.

"Permeability" for the user.



"Variety, robustness, richness & personalisation"

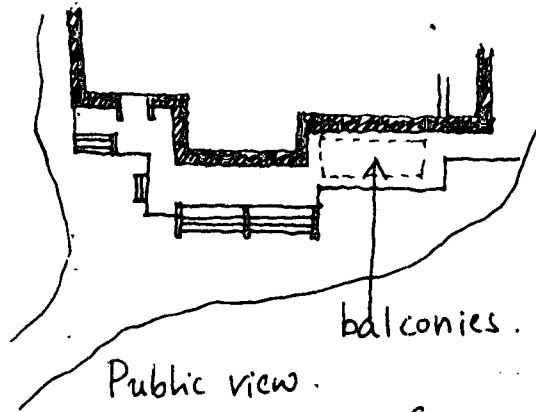


The space is "legible" for the user.

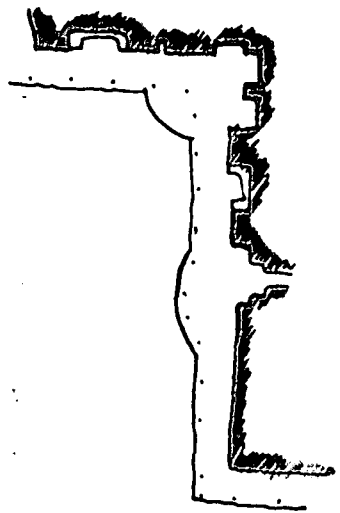
"Personalisation" the space & the space is visually appropriate



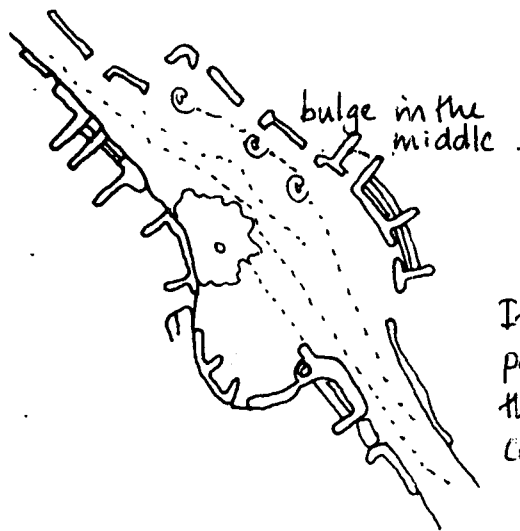
Fig. 69- The quality behind the patterns.



Can create this pattern into this place & try to knit the inside of the building with outside.



The building edge can be defined into more activities where more people can enjoy the place.

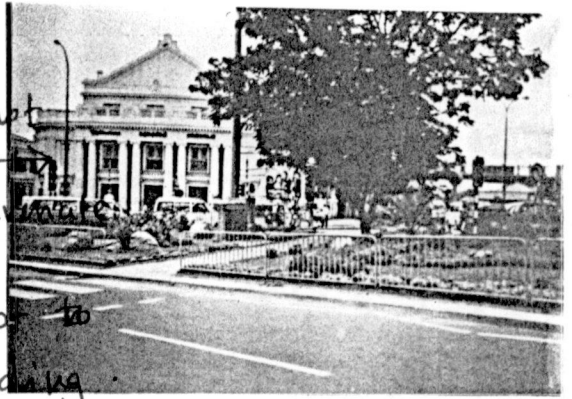


It can be introduced more people generated activities than leaving only for car parking.

The building edge is not defined....

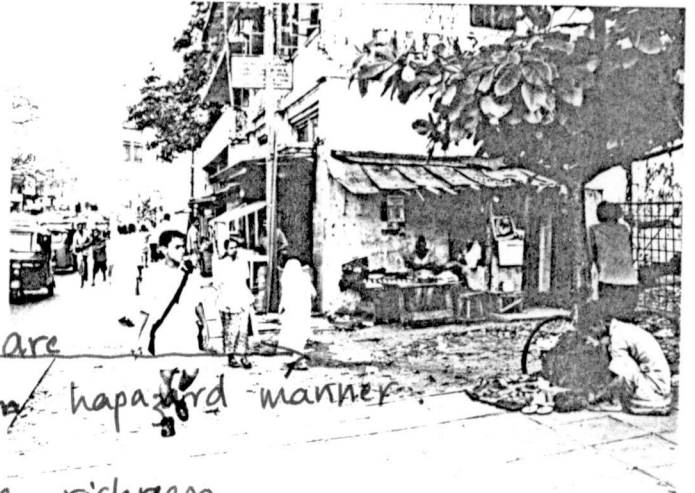
There's potential to rejuvenate life at this edge.... with the street, but not to the inside of the building.

↓
"Less permeable"



The activities are happening in an ~~un~~ haphazard manner.

↓
less permeable, richness ...



The street is more or less for vehicles....

↓
less permeable.



Fig. 71- The quality given by the patterns.

Punchikawatta road is famous for the trade of motor vehicle spare part. The edge of the building and the built fabric along the Punchikawatta road creates some spots for benches, places for posters and banners extending the eaves of the roofs.

The creation of such an edge is a realm between realms and the user has variety of choices within the context, either to sit and enjoy selling their things or to stroll from one place to another. The permanent users of the place enjoy the responsiveness given by the built fabric.

Neighborhood boundaries show how one zone can be destroyed an adjoining zone if the appropriate boundaries are absent.

The buildings are connected with each other, which creates both a boundary and a path along it , which is destroyed by having intermediate space between buildings , which are the strong social fabric of the alleyways.

3 Potentials to rejuvenate street life:

Include studios, saloons, tailor shops , retail boutiques , tea kiosks as well as betting centers at domestic scale catering to or the demand of local population along the street rather than specifying into the alleyways..

With the uniqueness of different lines of trade having confined to specific areas within the larger context, it can also be identified such specialized trade being penetrated into the depths of inner most areas forming alleyways, in the space between buildings. Therefore during the night the streets are more dead when the shops are closed. There should be a constant uses along the road like more entertaining places in the street. extension or conversion of existing buildings owned by the inhabitants of the

area or extensions with the public gathering places like Elphinston and Tower Hall.

Also the residential areas are defined within the other activities to create proper environment for that.

It should make provision to make series of patterns rather than specifying for one or few patterns like here.

3.7. Analysis of Case Studies

Fort

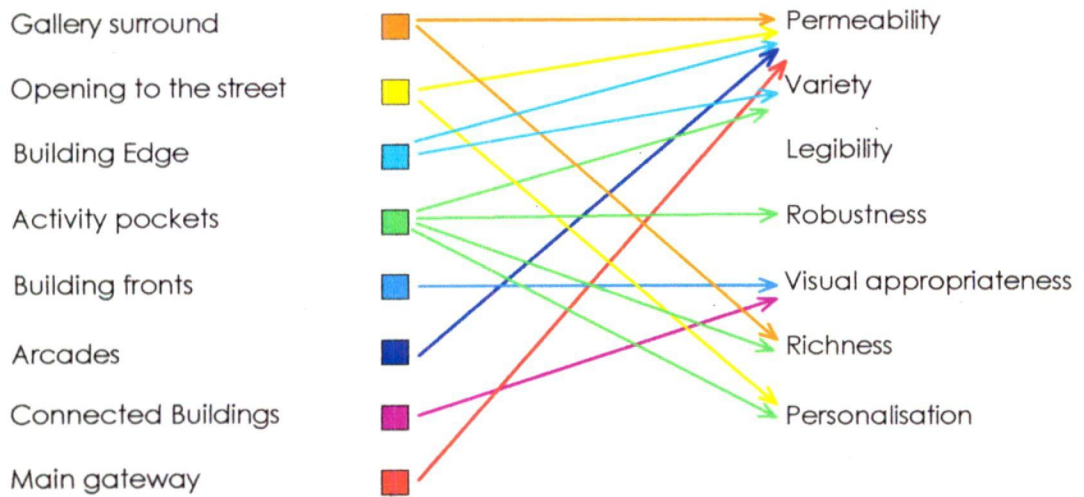


Fig.72- Analysis of the case-study - Fort .

Slave Island

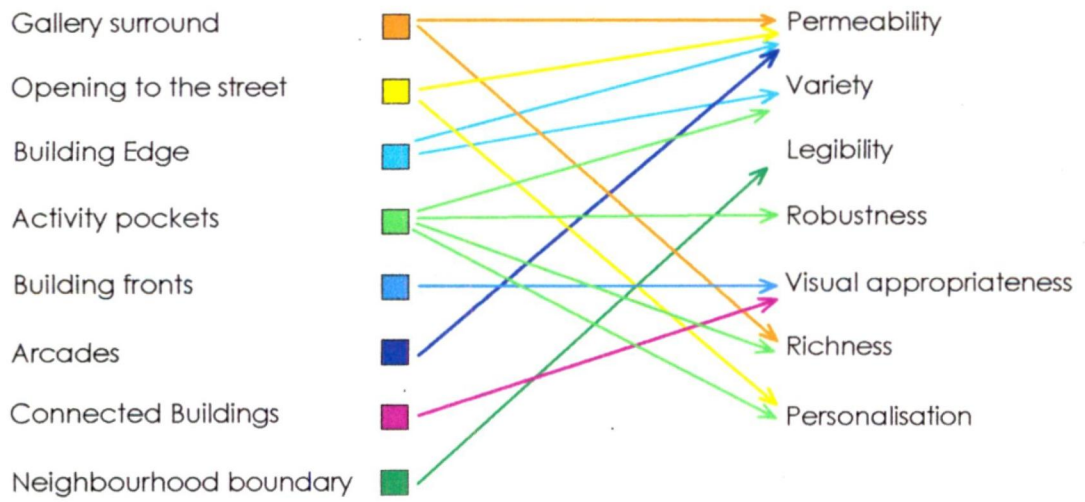


Fig.73- Analysis of the case study- Slave Island.

P0nchikawatta

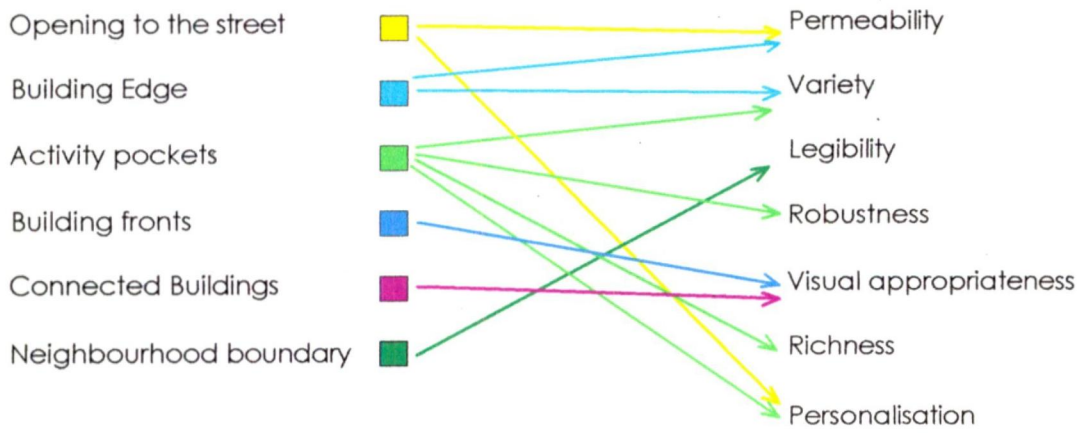


Fig. 74- Analysis of the case study
Panchikawatta .

The above analyses of the selected streetscape instances reveal the manner that the identified set of patterns generate the life of the place. Therefore the due attention must be paid to the existing pattern of a place and the way those patterns can be appeared when developing and designing the urban context.

As a conclusion remark to the case study:

- A repetition of one component along creates a mono culture efficient for one task as shown in the example of Fort..
- Even with the appearance of almost all the built components, it doesn't make a real responsiveness for the user, having some dead points even within the fascinated points of the context as illustrated in the Slave Island example.
- Lesser the appearance of built components within the context creates a illiterate language which is identifiable only a very few set of users. The created environment is more deceivable for the user creating dead points within the context as shown in the example of Punchikawatta.
- Therefore a balance of patterns will create a better environment for all aspects of lives in the context.

As a summery of analysis of the case study, certain guidelines can be established which should followed in creating a livable environment.

- a) Mixing users and activities within the context and it should be clearly defined in the central areas and nodes of activities.
- b) Buildings on important pedestrian routes and in public places, should seek to create an active and attractive pedestrian street frontage or as a minimum, make provision for its future ease conversion.

- c) Provision for the pedestrian freedom. Reduce vehicular traffic to that which is appropriate to the use and the environmental qualities of each street. This may some times lead to complete pedestrianisation.
- d) Most towns are made to work primarily for the motorists. That should not be the priority. Instead they must be made to work for the pedestrian, the cyclist, the old or disabled persons and the school child.
- e) To encourage more sensitive, friendly developments in which color, pattern, texture and, materials as well as technical excellence and innovation combine to create enjoyable places and attractive buildings.

Finally the researcher was trying in this study to introduce a good yard -stick while referring both Alexander's concept of **patterns of place** and the **qualities** which will make a responsive environment (Bently, I., 1985) of a context where the patterns appear.

This will be a very good yardstick to analyze, an urban context. Here it has specified in the urban streets of Colombo. But this yardstick can be used for any other context in the process of urban planning and urban designing.

Its strongly felt by the author that if architects are to create better urban places, the qualities of the spaces should be enhanced in their creative patterns of the place.

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Conclusion

Conclusion

The purpose of the study has been to review some of the evidences and findings of a pattern of a place and the related man-environmental interaction within the urban context.

Therefore the study focused on to identify our public realm and it has defined the urban street as the principle mode of the public realm in our culture.

The physical functions of an urban street makes social functions possible and it creates the psychological comfort and it makes a responsive environment which is created by the 12 pattern and this environment makes the city livable.

The analysis of the case study reveals that the repetition of patterns creates a monoculture, which is specific for one task. Although almost all the patterns exists, it can't be linked psychologically due to the lack of coherence within the patterns . In another terms it reveals that there should be a co-relation between the physical ,social and psychological functions of a street and then the street is read as a livable space.

Some streets are fully dead, some are more congested. For an example D.R. Wejewardena Mw. and the Pettah 1st Cross street Therefore all the streets need a balance within the context. Therefore a balance of patterns creates an environment of all aspects of a life where people can meet in an anonymous setting and learn about their differences and similarities while sharing or sense of common identity and common vision of their future.

Also it reveals, that wide boulevards and open spaces reflect and encourage quite different patterns of social behavior than do cities with small, tight street plans. They feel different and they are different.

On the other hand the analysis reflects the social, political and physical influences in rejuvenating street life in the urban context. Responsiveness of the environment creates a democratic setting to the users enriching their opportunities by maximizing the degree of choice available. But with the privatization of the streets by the security, industrial, institutional sectors etc. the life has decayed even the physical form exists to make the place livable. As a result crime will occur within those places and people are afraid to come out from their private enclaves. Therefore in the process of urban designing the activity zoning is an essential part of where mixing users and activities within the context and it should be clearly defined in the central areas and nodes of activities. The streets be enhanced for walking from activity node to activity node. The destinations can include shops, gardens, churches or parks. The physical character of the walk way must provide comfort , safety and convenience.

On the other hand when the city's activities close down for the night , those that stay open often feel isolated and separate. Therefore the concentration of shops, services and restaurants in the streets to form a center of night life that is well lit, safe and lively. This will encourage evening pedestrian activity

Also the buildings on important pedestrian routes and in public, should seek to create an active and attractive pedestrian street frontage or as a minimum, make provision for its future ease conversion.

Most of towns in Sri Lanka are made to work primarily for the motorists. That should not be the priority. Instead they must be made to work for the pedestrian, the cyclist, old or disabled persons and the school child. Reduce



vehicular traffic to that which is appropriate to the use and the environmental qualities of each street.

Also it is need to be concerned on the provision for the pedestrian freedom on the urban context is an essential. This may sometimes lead to complete pedestrianization.

The effectiveness of the above issue reflects in the following example:

When "Stroget " was pedestrianised; the urban culture has changed dramatically confirming that more good public space can mean a better quality of public life within the inner city of Copenhagen.

Finally it must be understood that no solution would be universally successful. Design and management can make an urban place more accessible and welcoming to people, with great effect on whether or not a place is taken to heart and becomes a meaningful part of an individual's life.

The behavioral component with the influence of the culture is not clarified in depth in this study and this can be focused into that aspect further.

The yard stick formulated will be useful in the analysis of other cities like Galle Matara, Kandy or any other place in order to build up a capacity of a place.

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