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SPACE – IN – BETWEEN
HOUSE AS A METAPHOR FOR THE CITY



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A Dissertation presented to the Faculty of Architecture,
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DEEPANI JAYASOORIYA

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INTRODUCTION

Architecture in its mere perception is 'something' to do with mass and space, beyond and above that it is initially responsible for the genius of locus with the gentle discipline of the mass- space paradox.

Yet present urban settings experience a destruction of spirit of place (namely antiseptics and lost spaces within the city) for we could hardly find this discipline within our cities. An analysis of this implication shows that the spaces between buildings (i.e. voids among solids) make a virtual impact on this regard.

Observation

Spaces between buildings may either well thought, designed or vice versa. Historical and contemporary example trace evidences of both situations in terms of success and failure. Also in domestic context the design of cities/towns indicate these extremes and varying stages where the later ended up with paralyzed urban settings.

Background

Overcoming of this problem - one of the trickiest issues in contemporary urban design discourse foresees its direction towards the integration of spaces between buildings with the city as a whole. For this to be visualized within the cities we live in, urban design efforts demand for the potential of spatial integrity in its fetus form - which forms the constituent spaces, a single entity - for the extraction of virgin concepts.

Need of the study

Throughout the process of human evolution man's physical and psychic changes stained successive

imprints on DNA. Similarly the resultant behavior of man has made tangible traces on the physical environment with the help of architectural tools.

Significance of 'built' sense found its origin from the very basic dwelling unit - the house. House has been identified as the fundamental built environmental unit, which made the subtle reflection of 'self'. Hence within the house man finds his true nature as the self is manifested with the articulation of spaces. Within the homestead his psychic and physical being is nourished by dividing it in to relevant spatial components, yet maintaining an undisturbed spatial flow / progression in chorus.

In between spaces being the 'connective tissue' for putting up the main spaces in to sequential flow make the house a unique place of dwelling. So the house hardly seeks its existence / personality with these spaces (main spaces/ in between spaces) in isolation.

As man creates his behavioral sphere physically a large entity (i.e. to live in a city) he finds himself within a greater context compared to that of the house. For the mere perception of self he again appeals for a 'homey' environment for he cannot be some are else in the city. This reveals that the functional and symbolic spaces of a city should make the same sense of the house in collective terms.

Thus study seeks its significance with the city planning concepts and guidelines within the framework of the house. In other words, house as a

Intention of the study

Significance

metaphor for the city, emphasizing the importance of spaces in between.

Cities, which have lost their spatial continuity (as what we can find within a house) destroy the collective sense of dwelling within them. Space in between being the mediator for straightening this continuity becomes one of the key constituents of most urban design approaches.

Making use of selected theories and concepts of different view points it is intended to extract some of the guidelines for development strategies of domestic urban settings, to make the city a responsive environment where you find the rich sense of continuity that can be found even within the house.

Method of study

From the broader perspective of city designing and planning, the study gives emphasis to the theoretical aspects of maintaining oneness, continuity of a city using strategies based on space in between. Here the mass space relationships of a city fabric is stressed to study in detail with their underlying principles.

Analyzing of concepts of selected theorists, Architects and planners is done for and purpose of making out the similarities / contradictions if any, this same work is then interpreted to match with the physical study area.

Scope and limitations

RESEARCH STUDY

Starting from the first principles of city planning concepts up to contemporary designers within the above framework.

01/ Gimabatista Nolli, Andrea Palladio, Leon Battista Alberti and Sitte – briefly pointing out their contribution to

urban designs in aesthetic, geometrical and poetic sense.

02/ Paul Zucker – as to acquire broader perspective in theories of city squares.

03/ Kevin Lynch – the way that a city is perceived, the theory of imageability and cognitive mapping.

04/ Gordon Cullen – Serial Vision
(Perception with the movement)

05/ Christopher Alexander – Patterns created by mass and space. (His book on The city is not a tree)

06/ Christian Norberg-Schulz – unique sense of place and importance of symbolism in all that man creates.

Physical boundaries of the study stretches over,

- Fort
- Pettah
- Beira lake and surrounding water front
- Marine drive

Selection of these areas bears following significance.

01/ Natural setting – Colombo as a Fort City plus tendency to water related activities.

02/ Historical significance

- Colonial influences
- Layered city format

- Introduction of artificial water body

03/ Impacts of the city planning exercises done by - Federic Gedde.

04/ Currently being the business hub of the country (CDB)

05/ Diversity of Function and land use

06/ Potential to grow as a live city in day and night



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