

PHYSICAL CONTEXT AS A GENERATOR OF ARCHITECTURE

Manipulation of built environment in harmony with nature

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A Dissertation Submitted for the Department of Architecture of the
University of Moratuwa in partial fulfillment of the
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In Architecture



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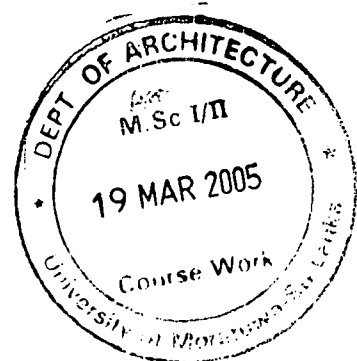
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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

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ABSTRACT

Nature is a very complex entity regarding with its creation. It exists through its harmonious integrations of cosmic and physical rhythms, from the beginning of time. Man was has embodied in nature and dependent on natural forces. It gives the birth to all creations of man. He built his shelter obeying to these inherent characteristics of the nature.

Man interpreted his inspirations as an intelligent understanding of nature rather than a perceptible understanding. These experiences, studies the surrounding environment which gives the way to create harmonies built environments with nature, without simply having superficial imitations.

Any building to maintain a good conversation with the context, should respond to the essential character of the place. The essential character or the inherent quality of a place is generated out of a number of features such as physical and non physical components.

The harmonious integration of the built environment with nature always gives rise to a good piece of architecture. Such a harmonious product undoubtedly become meaningful and express its inherent meaning through its built form. Hence the built form becomes the resultant output of the certain generative forces thus it becomes a harmonious product with the context.





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INTRODUCTION

0.1 Topic explanation

Architecture is an important achievement of man. It should not only an eye catching object in a plot of land, but should exists as a dependent of that environment while also adding power to that environment. This co-existence can facilitate through the integration of built environment in harmony with its physical context: either man-made or natural. Hence the architectural creation should be a reflector of itself as well as its context or the specific setting where the architecture generates.

"....The context or the ambient conditions or the surrounding is a factor that we should be aware of constantly, when thinking of a building." (Tugnutt, 1978:70)

Man has derived ideas from working with nature. Nature is the main force to direct art and architecture. It can be understood in two ways, one way is the perceptible manner and the other way is the intelligible to fit in to an architectural work.

There are various points of views are available that can be looked at nature relate with architectural creations. This dissertation will examine the harmonious interaction of the nature with built environment. This consideration is discussed in detail under the title of "Physical context as a generator of architecture".



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0.2 Observation

It is appropriate to start this by saying that "today's" architecture has less sensitivity towards its environment. Often they are unsympathetic to its surrounding or at its worst 'alien". They do not enhance nor heighten the existing positive characteristics of the environment in which they are placed. If this situation continues, not only we will have to experience horrible set of buildings but we will not have enough natural environments to be seen. But theoretically the existing environment where any new building is to be placed is one of the major factors to be considered. The others are the activity pattern and the user category of the building which also have similar importance.

The reason for the above unsatisfactory or alien building types may be the less sensitivity or rather superficial understanding of the environment by the designer or sometimes due to less experience of handling the new materials which are pouring to the market today. The major issue could be lack of understanding to see what aspects and components of the environment or context should be taken in to consideration.

0.3 Scope and limitations

Architecture is not merely copying what is there in the surroundings on visual level but to take the essence or principles and use those in a meaningful way. So it is essential to understand, what harmonizing is? As an example "IMER MAKOVELZ" one of the Russian architects said "organic architecture is not merely copying the forms of nature but take its essence or merits or rather principles of the natural phenomena and include those in a design.

So to understand what harmonizing is, first one must know the components of harmony and, one has to understand or rather should have sensitivity to what the components of the physical context are? Identify them correctly and what aspects of the physical context are most critical for the building in hand. The understanding of the physical context and its various aspects is therefore essential. And this study will try to point out what harmonizing is in the physical environment and to achieve that what are the aspects and components one should really respond to, in design. In this study, only the physical context is taken in to detail consideration.

Though the study will talk about the physical context, its man made part will not be discussed in this study as it will give resources for a separate study. But the features one should look at when designing in man made environment are briefly discussed. And even the natural context has studied in micro level which one can perceive at a stretch not in macro level where it lead to master planning level.



Considering the examples, this study will not identify how each an every individual has responded to the physical context. It may differ from person to person. But the identification of the principles or spirit is the most important factor that a designer should be thorough with. The examples will be used only for that purpose.

0.4 Methodology

The study includes three chapters. The chapter one will try to understand what architecture is all about and the principle elements or generators which are affect to designer. From that the context has taken in to much consideration and contemplates on the physical context and end of that chapter the study will be narrowed down to the natural environment.

The second chapter is based on a detail study of the natural context related to generators of architecture. This chapter discusses about the harmonizing characters of nature which leads to generate architecture. This will be an approach to a theoretical frame work for the case studies discussed in the third chapter.

The third chapter is based on the case studies and an analysis to reveal the theoretical frame of the previous chapter. At the initial stage of this chapter will discuss the factors considered when doing the case studies. And then there are followed in the case studies to point out what all the components and aspects of the physical context that should be taken into consideration by the designer, by citing examples how the successful designers have picked them correctly and created architecture.

