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PLACELESSNESS OF PLACE:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE LOSS OF PLACE
IN DESIGNING CONTEMPORARY URBAN SPACES

A Dissertation presented to the

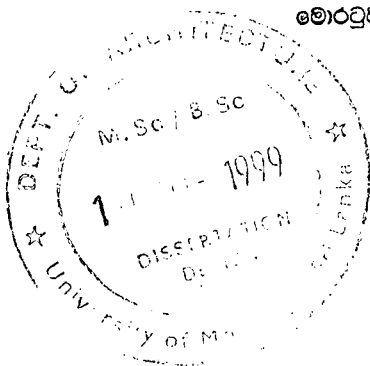
**FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA**



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for the Final Examination

M.Sc. (Architecture)



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ABSTRACT

The knowledge that people had of the places in which they lived is being lost. There is increasing ignorance of geography, whether international, national, or local, accompanied by an ephemeral commitment to their home places. Modern bonds to places are declining in the contemporary urban society. Places are becoming less meaningful, they have lost their identity, once used to establish exciting places. The interrelationship of people and place are parting; enforcing deterioration of the public realm, injecting “placelessness” in the locale. Modern cities all over the world are in a serious plight: resulting from the above. Cities were meant for the people in the past. Why shouldn’t it be so today? The street, the most important aspect of urban design, as a linkage of all scales of interaction are being invaded adversely by the automobile, thus setting the nature for going through, not for staying in. Other forces at work in modern society may do additional damage to feelings of being-in-place. Mass media, consumerism and intentional styles of architecture cause of homogenisation of culture makes many urban places similar in material form through symbolisation that is not tied to local culture. A sense of “dwelling” is often lacking in that the wholeness of place has become fractured. Modern landscape and cityscape tend to create environment without significant places. The study examines the concepts and definitions of places as against the causes for placelessness in its preliminary chapters. It will investigate into the adverse factors which results placelessness in contemporary urban places. It focuses on the social and physical contexts, which forms an urban culture and the experiences of it. It will concentrate on the morphological structures of the built fabric of the urban form and its relationship with people. The study is further focused on the relationship of man to the street, its activities and his movement patterns, and how he perceives it as a place in-order to determine “placelessness” in the city; in terms of the built fabric, the streets and the waterfronts; a wasted resource to make a place. The study will reveal the nature of successful urban places and how it could be materialised by enhanced design vocabularies, reinforced by better guides for urban design as a holistic approach.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

To Archt. Madura Prematilleke, senior lecturer, whom I'm .profoundly grateful for his inspiring comments which initiated me in doing this study.

Archt Vidura Sri Nammuni, senior lecturer, for all his guidance in analysing the relevance of the study and the encouragement offered.

Mr. K.D. Fernando, senior lecturer, Town & Country Planning Dept., for the valuable comments offered amidst his busy schedule.

I shall remember with gratitude for all the support given by the Year masters Archt. Ranjith Alahakoon and Dr. L.S.R Perera for their efforts in making this a reality.



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To Col. Vikum Siriwardena and Col. S. Perera for their help granted in making this study a success. I shall remember with great appreciation the assistance given to me by Lt. Jayaweera, Lnc.Corp. Alwis, Sgt. Indraratne and Pvt. Pushpakumara.

To Mark and MD, for their help extended to me, for the days they spent in trudging around places that I wanted to visit.

A very special thank to my colleagues Shantha and Nihantha and all my friends who supported me throughout at difficult times.

To Lalo, for all his support given to me even at the very last days of his stay.

Finally I wish to show my love and affection to my mother, and my father who stood by me all the time and who took up the tedious task checking the manuscripts even at very short notice, and all my family members who tolerated and helped me in different ways to make my project a success.

LIST OF CONTENTS	Page
ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
CONTENTS	iv

INTRODUCTION	1
Observation	
Need for the Study	
Intention of the Study	
Methodology	
Limitations of the Study	

CHAPTER ONE - PLACE Vs PLACELESSNESS

1.1 PLACE - A DEFINITION	4
1.1.1- Perceptions of Place	4
1.1.2- Attributes of a Place	6
1.1.3- Characteristics of a Place	8
1.1.4- The Identity of Places	12
1.1.5- The Urban Place	14
1.2 PLACELESSNESS : A DEFINITION	
1.2.1 -Characteristics of Placelessness	15

CHAPTER TWO - THE CAUSATIVE FACTORS OF PLACELESSNESS IN CONTEMPORARY URBAN SPACES

2.1 THE PROBLEM OF URBAN DESIGN TODAY	19
2.2 THE CAUSES	
2.2.1- DETERIORATION OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS	21
2.2.1.1- Decline of Public Realm	21
2.2.1.2- Disregard for Human Scale	
2.2.1.3- Restricting the Pedestrian Movement	



2.2.1.4- Denying the Access for All	31
2.2.1.5- Separation of Use and Activities	32
2.2.2 DISRESPECT FOR THE LOCALE	34
2.2.2.1- Ignorance of local Environment/Culture	34
2.2.2.2- Placeless Geography	35
2.2.3 INAUTHENTIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS PLACE	37
2.2.3.1- Disregard for place	38
2.2.3.2- Attitudes of Modern Movement in design	39
2.2.3.3- Mass-media / Mass-culture	40

CHAPTER THREE - EXPERIENCING PLACELESSNESS IN A LOCAL CONTEMPORARY URBAN SITUATION

PART ONE

3.1	THE NATURE OF URBAN PLACE	41
3.2	EVOLVING A BASIS FOR THE REVIEW	45
3.2.1-	The Street as a Place	46
3.2.2-	The Built Fabric as a Humanised Design	53
3.2.3--	Waterfronts as a Potential	59

PART TWO

3.3	THE REVIEW (Fort and Pettah)	62
3.3.1-	The Street	62
3.3.2-	The Built Fabric	72
3.3.3-	The Waterfronts	80

3.4	MAKING SUCCESSFUL URBAN PLACES	83
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	CONCLUSION	84
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	REFERENCES	86
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