

LB/Don/06/1997

THE URBAN STREET : IT'S CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC LIFE AND THE UTILITY OF SPLENDOUR.

Dissertation prepared for the Final Examination
MSc. Architecture
1996

මහලු මහලු විද්‍යාලයේ විද්‍යාලීන උපාධි
පාලන මණ්ඩලය

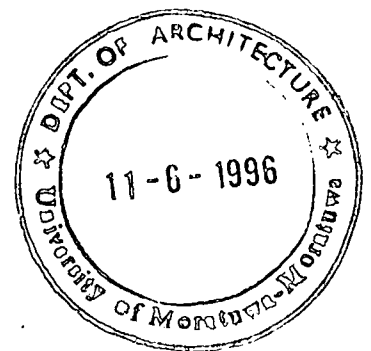


University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka
Electronic Theses & Dissertations
www.lib.mrt.ac.lk

72 "96"
71.553

66711

DAITHA WIJETUNGE
Faculty of Architecture
University of Moratuwa
Sri Lanka



May 1996

UM Thesis
coll.

66711

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In a study of this nature one builds up enormous debts, to each and everyone who contributed in various ways.

I extend my thanks to Archt. Vidura Sri Nammuni for his comments, criticism and advice.

My utmost gratitude to Archt. Madura Prematilleke, whose guidance, incisive comments directed many aspects of this study. I sincerely acknowledge all his help and the time and effort devoted on my behalf.

Further, I am very grateful to Archt. Upendra Randeniya, for his valuable comments, inputs and direction, and to Archt. D.B.Navaratne, for his discussions, comments and continuous guidance and support throughout the study.



University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.
Electronic Theses & Dissertations
www.lib.mrt.ac.lk

I also thank my dear friends, Roshan and Prasad for the inspiration and to Osadie, Nisha, Janaka, Chanura, Samanthika, Nadeesha and many others who helped me in numerous ways.

I am much obliged to my overseas correspondants, Thirani Thevar and Thusitha de Silva for their prompt response to my calls of help and to Mr. & Mrs. K.V. Rodrigo for their much valued help.

Finally, with heartfelt gratitude I thank my parents and family for all their help and support.

I am aware that a study of this nature has shortcomings, mainly because of it's nature and broad base and for the faults that still exist I remain responsible.

ABSTRACT

Urban life on an urban street is valuable for a city and important to societies. Urban life becomes memorable when people are active in public spaces. The city used to be the centre for art, thought and other enriching relationships and had a promise of something more. The urban street must be seen in terms of that splendour and contribution to public life.

However, there is an apparent crisis in public life which results in the loss of public realm. There is disorder and people have lost all public life. The word 'city' once suggested 'civility' and those characteristics of culture and politeness which attend that term. Today, however 'city' means crisis - a crisis brought about by past neglect, present indecisiveness and future explosions of undetermined effects.

The problem of the city has undoubtedly achieved a magnitude of attention in recent times. Concern with the problem of cities, is therefore more than simple idealism or passing academic fancy: it stems from fear and great apprehension. If urban problems are left to chance, or to indifference the results will necessarily be tragic. We see in cities of the world, places where man can no longer live in safety, with convenience, with a sense of security or with a feeling of human dignity.

If urban streets continue to be taken for granted, and if it is not planned according to the many forecasts that are made, our cities will continue to decline. The public life that is so vital to our well-being will gradually disappear.

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 society.

Urbanisation and increased population densities will make the open spaces more meaningful and will demand the visual pleasure of well designed streets. The trends we observe today, require that we heighten the social and aesthetic effectiveness of these spaces. Accordingly, urban streets provide the real focus for designing and enhancing urban life.

The urban street must become a 'place' in terms of social and physical criteria and, it must be seen in its splendour, as something more than merely a thoroughfare. There should be opportunity for interaction and involvement among people, along the street that would enhance public life.

It is necessary to take action to lead our cities to their survival and renaissance and this action must be guided towards one goal; to create a better city for man. Urban streets would play a vital role in this.

In the future, we will be faced with a universal city, huge in proportion in relation to the present one, with many more people, much greater number of machines, but with far greater economic forces and technological and scientific knowledge. And the need for community life will be much greater.

Accordingly, the urban street will contribute immensely in making this a human city, in which man can survive, and not allow it to destroy man and lead him to his end.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	I
ABSTRACT	II
LIST OF CONTENTS	III
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	V
INTRODUCTION	
The background	2
The problem	3
Intention of the study	3
Method and scope of the study	4
CHAPTER ONE - THE IDEAL	
1.1 The urban street	7
1.2 Public life and the urban street	8
1.3 Utility of splendour in the urban street	9
CHAPTER TWO - CRISIS; THE PROBLEM AND IT'S COMPLEXITY	
2.1 Anarchy in the urban context	11
2.2 Public Vs Private-uncontrolled force on people	13
2.3 Loss of public realm	14
CHAPTER THREE - BASIS FOR EXAMINATION	
3.1 Social issues	
3.1.1 The ecology of urban streets	18
3.1.2 The sense of place	19

3.2 Physical issues

3.2.1 Street form and activity	23
3.2.2 Involvement of people in the urban street	27
3.2.2.1 The street as a place of communication	28
3.2.2.2 The street as a social fact	30
3.2.2.3 The street as a place of celebration	32
3.2.2.4 The street as a learning experience	33
3.2.2.5 The street in terms of adaptability	34

CHAPTER FOUR - CASE STUDIES

4.1 Case Study 1 - Pettah	37
4.2 Case Study 2 - Galle Road, Galle Face	42
4.3 Case Study 3 - Kandy	45
4.4 Case Study 4 - D.N.Road, Bombay	49
4.5 Case Study 5 - Lamington Road, Bombay	50
4.6 Urban Streets in Singapore	
4.6.1 Case Study 6 - Chinatown	53
4.6.2 Case Study 7 - Kampong Glam	56
4.7 Case Study 8 - Stroget, Copenhagen	57
4.8 Case Study 9 - Gagate, Norway	61
4.9 Case Study 10 - Streets in Sydney	62

CONCLUSION	76
------------------	----

BIBLIOGRAPHY	81
--------------------	----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1.	Plan-Incorporation of a Fortress	12
2.	The inequitable space provided here is a barrier to the creation of public life	15
3.	The corridor through the heart of the city promotes public life	16
4.	Community or Anarchy?	17
5.	Street activity or complete chaos?	21
6.	-do-	21
7.	Non street oriented setting-Jaipur City, India	23
8.	Encouraging street activity-Jaipur City,India	24
9.	-do-	24
10.	Active street life or habit creation?	25
11.	Opportunity for communication	30
12.	The streets cape of Rajpath	31
13.	The mountain range holds the shifting scene	35
14.	Map of Pettah	38
15.	Pedestrian movement is heavy and the narrow pavements cannot cope with the density	39
16.	Activities indifferent to the street	40
17.	The end of a day	41
18.	An image of the street experience	43
19.	The extention towards the ocean	44
20.	The changing streetscape	46

21.	-do -	46
22.	The urban waterfront is a flexible ground for the creation of public life	47
23.	The street during the pageant and on a routine day	48
24.	The prominence of a facade-two dimensional architectural design	49
25.	Built form designed for mobile pedestrians?	51
26.	Does this ever promote public life?	52
27.	Activity along Trenggar street	54
28.	A strong feeling of public life	55
29.	A change of mood	56
30.	The basket shops along Arab street	57
31.	The end or beginning of the street	58
32.	University within the city	59
33.	Enhanced street life	60
34.	The walking street in Norway	62
35.	Street Map	63
36.	Street activity promotes public life	64
37.	Activity opens out to the street	66
38.	-do-	66
39.	The Central Railway Station	67
40.	Public life at several layers	68
41.	Hyde Park which opens out to the street	69
42.	The old church in the distance	69
43.	The street as asocial fact	70
44.	Approach to the Rocks area	71

45.	Promoting pedestrian involvement	72
46.	The coffee shop makes a feature along the street	73
47.	A lasting impression	73
48.	Approach to Coogee	74
49.	Promotion of active public life along the street	75
50.	-do-	75



University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.
Electronic Theses & Dissertations
www.lib.mrt.ac.lk