



URBAN GREEN SPACES WITH REFERENCE TO THE CITY OF COLOMBO

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A Dissertation presented to the University of Moratuwa for
the Master of Science Degree in Landscape Design 2007.

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Abstract

Historical evidences show that green spaces were a part of every city in human civilisation whether it is in Mesopotamia, Indus valley or in the later developments in Europe. Sri Lanka also had a very prominent affiliation with green spaces in its cities in the early periods. •

When Colombo became the capital of Sri Lanka under foreign rulers the city adapted many characteristics of those countries. The first prominent plan for the development of the city was brought forward by Sir Patrick Geddes. Later on there have been a series of proposals, the newest one being the Public Outdoor Recreation Spaces (PORS) Plan for Colombo, which goes into details of a nesting concept having a hierarchy of parks. The prevailing legal framework is also not effective as it does not directly address the issues in protecting the existing green spaces.

With the pressures of population increase, urbanisation and industrialization several undesirable outcomes such as fragmentation of land, environmental pollution, urban microclimatic effects etc have surfaced. There are a number of green spaces in the city of Colombo, some being maintained well and some being neglected to the point of being lost as a green space.

Urban green spaces have a number of benefits viz. ecological, environmental and social. Colombo is progressing slowly towards protecting and enhancing its green spaces. There are some examples positive and negative throughout the world that we can consider as a base in developing our own green space network.

We have to speed up our work towards achieving a desirable amount of green spaces in the cities since the forces that destruct and destroy them are more powerful and have more speed in making even the available spaces dwindle during a little time span. As Martin Luther (1483-1546) expressed,



"For in the true nature of things, if we rightly consider, every green tree is far more glorious than if it were made of gold or silver."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge with deep appreciation, the following persons whom without their help, guidance and encouragement this study may not have been a reality.

I am deeply indebted to my personal supervisor Archt. Ms. Shiranee Balasooriya senior lecturer of the Department of Architecture for her guidance, valuable comments and unreserved help given to me throughout and to Landscape Archt. Mr. Susira Udalamaththa, lecturer and year coordinator of M.Sc. 1st year, Department of Architecture for the comments, criticism and continuous monitoring, which encouraged me to do this study.

Professor Sarath Kotagama, Head, Department of Zoology University of Colombo for the intellectually vigorous discussions he had with us during the MSc first year and for providing guidance to make this dissertation a more balanced one covering all the necessary aspects.

Dr.. Byrom even though living very faraway, yet very close to us all the students, for guiding us throughout writing the dissertation, providing the necessary framework to adhere to and going through the document finding even the finest of deviations from the required quality. Archt. Mrs. Shereen Amendra, lecturer, for her valuable comments and unreserved help given during the postgraduate first year and also during writing the dissertation, for without her guidance, manoeuvring this dissertation to what it is today would not have been achieved. Mrs. Hester Basnayake, for her guidance and the untiring attempt to provide me with the necessary information to make this dissertation a complete one.

Architect Dr. Harsha Munasinghe, who voluntarily invited us to his lectures and for the rigorous task of going through the dissertation and the Head, Department of Town Planning for the valuable information given.

The librarian and the library staff of the University of Moratuwa and the staff of the Reading room of the Department of Architecture willingly helped me for finding necessary references and Malkanthi akka for being very helpful throughout our two years in the post graduate level.

I am also grateful to my friends Kumudu, Achala and Thanuja who were always by my side pressing me to continue writing and provided assistance and all my colleagues for their valuable support given.

I express my deepest love and gratitude to my dearest parents, my husband and sister for their encouragement and love and for being with me whenever I needed help.

Last but not least I express my respect and gratitude to all the people who helped me in my field of studies in various ways by sharing and articulating their experiences of the urban green spaces.



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