



# Celebrating Urban Space for People Space

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(Students: Arefah Rahim & Ronizam Ahmad)

## Introduction

Urban area is an area where people like to go for many reasons. This creates interaction between people and spaces. However, urban space use for the future is predicted to have significant challenges. Currently, issues like global climate change, urban heat island, mass migration to urban area (Brown and Coory 2011) are assumed to become similar patterns in many urban spaces. When people walk in the urban area, they will perceive, interpret and use the urban open spaces (such as pocket park) whether the spaces are attractive or not. It is important to have attractive scenes in the city because the unattractive will make people shy away from visiting again. The grand idea to celebrate urban space for public is to make the place attractive with multi-use and activities. Thus it becomes a challenge for designers to turn the dying urban open spaces to innovative uses.

Nilsson (2006) claimed that society today is having a scenario called incidences of poor health due to their modern lifestyles, which cannot be solved by medicine alone. He pointed out that the environment blending with natural spaces and elements such as trees can remedy such a trend. Meanwhile, Bryant (2006) said out that the knowledge base is a way to conserve and restore urban ecology and biodiversity. In future, natural resources such as urban forests will be significant (Dwyer, Childs et al. 2000).

The educative approach is one of the methods used to teach, inspire or facilitate of learning idea (Jason, 2013) to come up with better quality of landscape design areas.

This quality is becoming more important in the urban areas where urban space forms as an urban ecosystem functions and values that need to be protected. People use the urban open space in many ways such as recreational activities (walking and jogging in the town trail). These activities involve users such as kid, youth and adults. Thus people should be more aware of the importance of keeping and having beautiful urban open space. Dwyer et al (2003) pointed out that the experiences of people in the urban and associated environment are likely to influence their perceptions and expectations.

Part of the preliminary learning activity includes exposing students to various design philosophy such as educative landscape. The figure below, gives a typical cycle how educative landscape would be succeeded in designing urban spaces for public use (Figure 1).

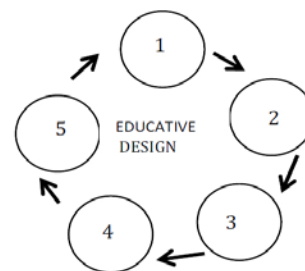


Figure1: Educative design adapted from Jason Medeiros (2013)

## Background

The challenges and seeking solution through landscape architecture design in near and long term future demands design that can

celebrate social, environment and economic co-existence. The course enables students to undertake a comprehensive study and work individually, in order to demonstrate understanding on the design process (Aziz, 2010) and the aspect of assessment, planning, design and management of the landscape area (Nazri 2011). The comprehensive project addresses broad range issues in urban setting, including culture and historical street. On one hand, they should learn and think deeply (Harun, 2000) on how to appreciate the ethical, social, environment and ecological dimensions of issues. On the other hand, they must be able to map, interpret, imagine, draw, build, conceptualize and synthesize ideas that would transform landscapes (Yazid and Mustafa, 2010).

The Final Year Project consisted of three main steps. Firstly, each student is asked to choose a site which relates to their research interest that would stimulate the thinking process during design solution. The second steps, students are divided into several groups known as workbase. In each workbase the student be guided by lecturers identify the supervisory committee and experts for the area. At the last stage, students need to compose detail drawings in board presentation and project report for final assessment and presentation in front of panel juror.

### **Design Solution**

Two artefacts from urban design workbase were chosen as case studies.

#### **i) Ethos of Klang : Forces of Time, Space and Movement (By Arefah Rahim)**

The electrifying atmosphere during the Deepavali Festival of Light has captured Arefah's creative expression of Klang town centre. Her interpretation of Indian dance and colourful spectacles of light and sound characterised the dynamic transformation of urban spaces and fusion of forms along the main street and the activity nodes in the town centre. Pedestrianised streets, street art and cafes, seatings, plantings and multi functional open spaces form new characters of the area, designed with a dynamic abstraction of forms and bright colours.

These are rooted from the Indian art and cultural images that are strongly manifested along the streets. Spaces are splendidly layered to create the sense of definition of spatial use, dominance and distinctive characteristics. The pedestrianisation of Jalan Tg Kelana mitigates the traffic issues and encourages walking to appreciate the preserved historical buildings in the area. This has strengthened the cultural aspect of the Indian community, the sense of place and the meanings attached to the people's experience of the place. The festive feeling will endure in the midst of vibrant atmosphere; distinct sights, smell and sound (Figure 2-5).

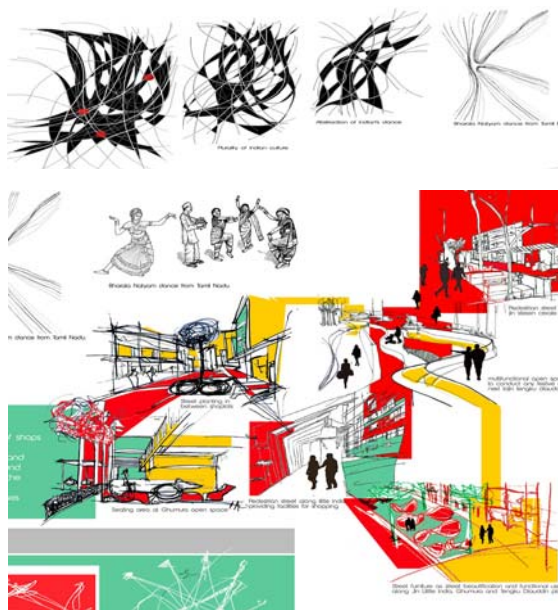


Figure 2: Conceptual Idea of Forces of Time, Space and Movement



Figure 3: Master Plan of Forces of Time, Space and Movement

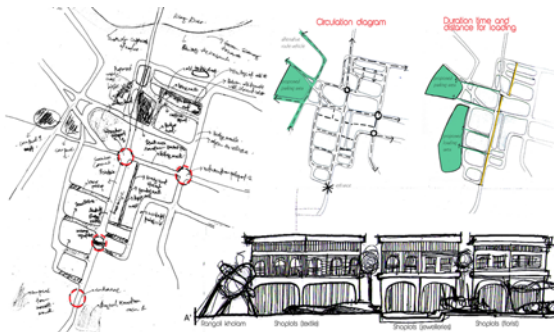


Figure 4: Detail Area Plan of Time, Space and Movement



Figure 5: Sectional Elevation of Time, Space and Movement

ii) Historical Street of Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman (By Ronizam Ahmad)

The dynamic movement redefines the immediate areas as a new and refreshing shopping environment in the city centre of Kuala Lumpur. Known as the silk shopping street, the urban design concept is inspired by the interconnectivity and overlapping attributes of lines, shapes and form of textile. The path and nodes were linked repetitively using diagonal lines as connecting elements between the public open spaces and the linear building line where the direction of human movement is almost unpredictable (Figure 7-8).



Figure 6: Master Plan of Historical Street of Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman

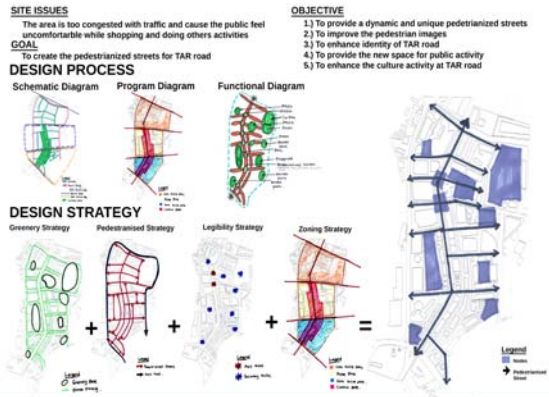


Figure 7: Idea Development of Historical Street of Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman



Figure 8: Detail Area Plan of Historical Street of Jalan Tuanku Abdul

Pedestrianised street with series of strongly distinctive urban nodes generate a new form of shopping experience to the users. The sense in comfort of walking and interacting

is successfully achieved by the integration of small parks and plazas with the aesthetics of street arts and preserved historical building facades. Friendly community spaces as focal element revitalises day and night street-life. It evokes the sense of comfort, convenience and the continuity and cultural identity.

### **Conclusion**

Urban spaces are in confrontation with many issues, especially impact from development, people and other uncertain issues. In the perspective of crafting better solution for urban space, the sustainable means which empasize the human well-being need to be higlighted. Apart from that, the urban open space is perhaps a platform on how landscape architects may play an important role to encourage the generation of new knowledge in this area. It may help the public, become more interested, informed and fascinated with new urban landscapes and making our urban areas and landscapes more sustainable.

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