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# OPPORTUNISTIC CRIME AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF INHERENT SECURITY IN HOUSE AND HOUSING DESIGN

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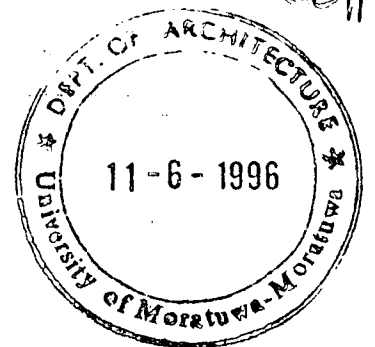
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SENAKA DHARMATILLEKE

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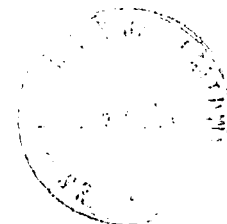
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## ABSTRACT

The problem of urban crime is being focussed upon very strongly as rapid urbanization in Sri Lanka has escalated this aspect into alarming proportions. Prodded by the almost hysteric, security consciousness of the clients the designers of house and housing seem to adopt various strategies to combat this menace, perusing solutions which more often than not worsen the existing situation.

In the light of the above the study aims at exploring the aspects which enhance the "inherent security" of the built environment which may contribute to curtail the escalating problems of urban crime which is prevalent in contemporary times.



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In order to achieve this objective the study explores through academic research the possible aspects of the built environment which facilitate or retard crime in the context of contemporary living and functional patterns.

~~In a field research based on three selected case studies which incorporate various other examples, the above theories, formulated on the design aspects are tested as to how they would apply to the local context.~~

The academic grounding is based on the research done in this field by various authors of international repute. The field research is based on data provided by the records maintained by the police department as well as field surveys, interviews, questionnaires on victims and observations made by the author.

In the course of this research it has been found how certain aspects in the contemporary built environment

encourages crime by destroying certain key elements that ensure the "natural security" of communities and house units . These observations have been backed by hard data such as annual crime records and victims accounts that proves contemporary house and housing design guilty of facilitating urban crime "beyond reasonable doubt". Symultaneously the study discovers through the examination of 'low-crime' areas and academic modals how the elements, surveillability and defensibility can be achieved in the built space at the inception of design,thus enhancing its inherent security, creating safe and secure environments for peaceful human habitation.



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