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# Reclaiming Urban's Lost Landscape Spaces

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Due to many urban problems and issues, urban designers try to look into various ways to improve our city. Urban renewal exercises have been carried out intensively around the world since the end of World War II, but earlier urban renewal processes have been criticized for making our cities as we see today. Our cities have been planned to give priorities to cars, buildings and infrastructures resulting much of our natural greeneries being destroyed.

Furthermore, modern movement in architecture has resulted in buildings designed not in relation with the surrounding landscape. They ignore the importance of streetscapes, urban squares and garden and other important outdoor spaces, leaving voids in between buildings and many of these spaces have become lost spaces (Trancik, 1986). In addition, urban infrastructures have been designed not in coherent with urban landscapes resulting in spaces within the infrastructure left unused. Urban infrastructures are better designed so that they are not static but dynamic as well as usable for the good of urban dwellers (Hauck & Kleinekort, 2011). There is also a call to turn our infrastructure from grey to greener concept (Center for Green Infrastructure, 2011). The lack of greenery in our urban environment has been linked with stress and urban dwellers' inability to cope with many demanding task of urban life (Suhardi, 2004; Ulrich, 1983).

Without landscape, parks or greeneries in the cities, the cities will be dull and chaotic. It is due to the fact that they could provide fresh air, place contemplation, socialisation and relaxation as well as aesthetic values, whereas urban spaces should be designed for these particular functions (Minguet, 2010). Landscape architects as a steward of the land are always at the forefront in championing the issues of urban greeneries in tandem with Frederick Law Olmstead's, a father of Landscape Architects, vision about urban greenery. When he designed Central Park

in New York in 1858, he argued an urban park with pastoral and country image is important to escape urban life for the psychology and physiology benefits of human beings (Spirn, 1989).

Final year BLA project's objective is to allow students to choose their own projects and they have to demonstrate their abilities to work independently to solve design problem via planning and design. Several students choose to do urban design exercise and the issues that they worked on were vary from one another ranging from urban heat island to urban parks. Nevertheless, regardless of the variety of issues, one of their project's objectives remains similar which is to add more greenery in the urban area. They feel that the current urban landscape needs to be reclaimed or enhanced to make our cities better places to live.

Two artefacts representing various urban landscapes planning and ideas are presented here. Nur Adibah in her bold design entitled "Underground Living Park" in Kuala Lumpur Golden Triangle tries to reclaim the lost landscape by proposing landscape spaces underground because she is concerned with the loss of greeneries in the cities due to development. The underground landscape spaces act as a linkage tool between two multi storey buildings. In addition, the underground landscapes also become a ground floor for the garden above it. Nur Adibah managed to show how city landscapes can be reclaimed in innovative and creative ways but the limitation is, to construct them may not be economically viable.

Nurul Atiqah Ismail aimed to reclaim unused landscapes that associates with infrastructures as a new urban landscape spaces. She looked into turning the spaces under the Sungai Besi highway bridges as vibrant community green spaces. She carefully studied these untapped urban natural resources and wanted to switch the notion of grey infrastructure to become green corridor and green infrastructure with green walls, riparian plantings,

community gardening and urban jungle. Her design titled "Mergence Blending" showed how urban greeneries areas can be multiplied in simple and innovative ways. However, for this type of landscape to be successful, careful consideration could be stressed on safety and security as many of these types of landscapes are hidden or away from main public spaces. Furthermore, a study about this new ecosystem could be explored to ensure it can fit into the overall urban ecosystem and urban open spaces network.

Nur Adibah bold design entitled "Projection of Prismaticism" in Kuala Lumpur Golden Triangle tries to reclaim the lost landscape by proposing landscape spaces underground because she is concerned with the loss of greeneries in the cities due to development. The underground landscape spaces act as a linkage tool between two multi storey buildings. In addition, the underground landscapes also become a ground floor for the garden above it. Nur Adibah managed to show how city landscapes can be reclaimed in innovative and creative ways but the limitation is, to construct them may not be economically viable.

In conclusion, landscape as a main component of urban greeneries will always be appreciated and explored to be inclusive in the urban environment. The projects mentioned are example how landscape can be used in an exciting innovative ways. Clearly, there are two dichotomies of design presented regarding the urban landscapes; one in relation to ecology and another is about fulfilling human needs, whereas, these two paradigms are very far apart in approach even though they are interdependent. Therefore, whilst we are concerned with greeneries, how these greeneries can fit into cultural and social aspects should be further explored. It will be challenging because the meaning of green to people differs due to cultural differences and to accept the assumption that green is universal in values might backfire to some.

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# Jury Review

Khalilah Zakariya

This project is an interesting contemporary design approach to solve the issues of unappealing infrastructures. The idea of merging the green corridor and grey infrastructure can create connection between human use, environment and left-over spaces. The flow is well presented and the design process is clearly articulated. The master plan images offer a creative alternatives to activate the infrastructure. The development area of the open plaza however needs to respond to urban heat and microclimatic needs of users.

Devendiran S.T. Mani

Overall content of background information and site analysis are well defined and represented with good layout and charts. The design process and concept are also acceptable. The use of 'Permaculture' is a positive idea for sustainable development. The student however did not elaborate enough information in detail. The Master plan is informative and shows the designer's intent. It would be better if the designer shows the overall picture of ethno-Botanic Theme. The planting palette would need to provide a very comprehensive list of species and are very ornamental, which is very vital for this theme.







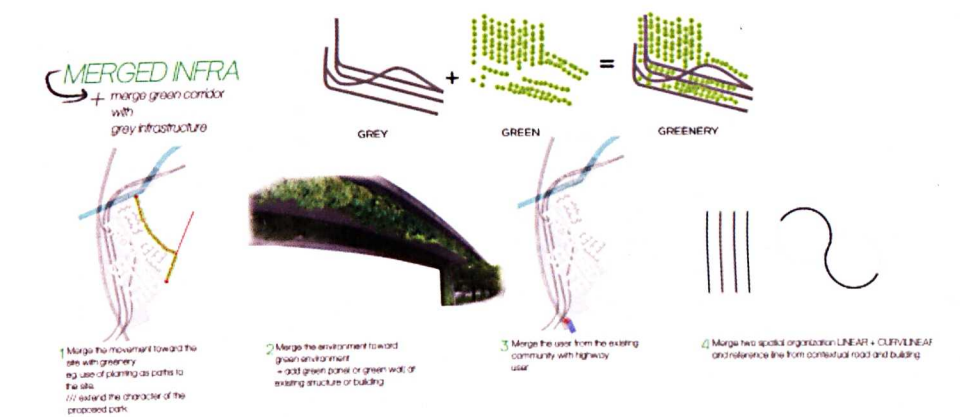
# Merging Blending

Mohd Fairuz Shahidan, Mohd Fabian Hasna & Norsidah Ujang

The design focuses on the development greenery environment of Community Park that integrates with the existing community and unusable space under large infrastructure such as flyovers and overpasses. 'Merged' as a main concept is defined as a combination or blend two or more things gradually to become single entity. In the design concept, the merging of green environment and grey infrastructure will overcome the site issues of lack of community's green spaces and impact of air pollution on site. Thus, the proposed landscape design could give opportunity of transformation from no man's land into a thriving recreational park for the community. The strength of the project is based on the original concept that merged two landscape entities into a new landscape paradigm of public spaces. In contrast, the merging of water bodies into design is still lacking from application point of view. The project would benefit from further study on the prospects of plants selection to reduce the impact of air pollution.



Nurul Atiqah Ismail





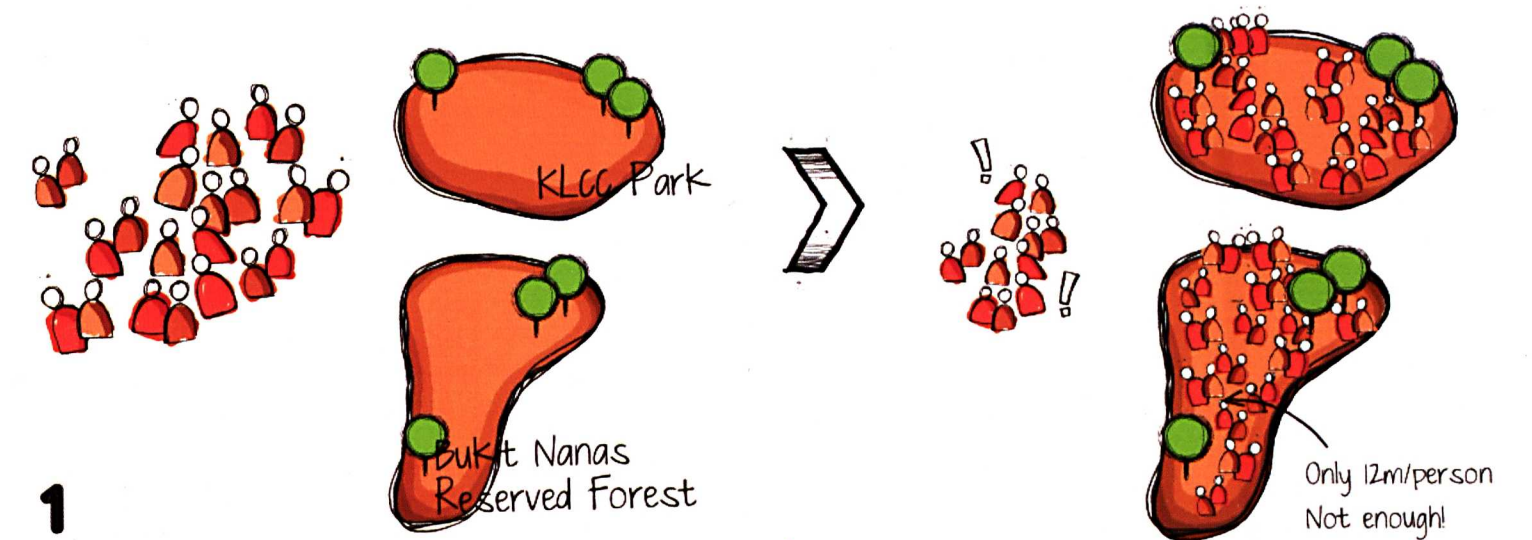
# Projection of Prismaticism

Shureen Faris Abdul Shukor, Asraf Abdul Rahman & Mohd Yazid Mohd Yunos

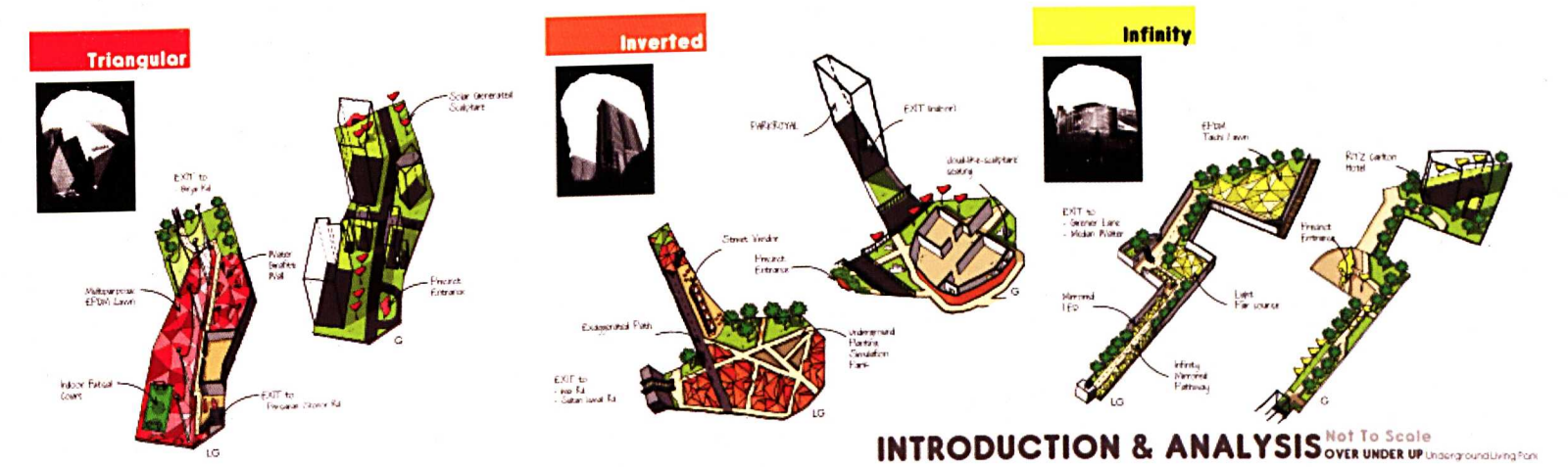
This project explores the ability and probability of using the spaces underneath Kuala Lumpur as a park and urban connector due to the lack of green spaces in the city centre. The concept 'Projection of Prismaticism' combines three elements: reflection, refraction and triangular shape which resulted in the use of lines and colours. The strength of the project lies in the bold and radical ideas projected during the design process. The proposal indicates in-depth exploration of ideas and thoughts during the process, especially in the area of ecology sustainable strategy in using swale and rain garden. Aspects concerning safety and security were also given considerations. It would be interesting for future study if more exploration could be carried out on the type of plants species suitable for the underground spaces.



## SITE READING\_



## Local Analysis\_urban greeneries



Nur Adibah Abdul Karim