

EXPLORATION OF BLIND SPACE IDENTITY THROUGH INTANGIBLE
ARCHITECTURE APPROACH

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To my dearest family and friend

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation discussed a research on intangible architecture approach that can be implement in enhancing blind architecture identity design in context of Jalan Raja Laut and Jalan Tengku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Blind architecture identity in Malaysia has not fully explored and consider in development of urban context. Most of the building for blind and visual impaired was designed just to comply with the universal design standard and just focusing on tangible aspect of the design. This dissertation having the objectives to identify blind architecture identity as well as to understand the needs of the blind and their behavior in expressing the formation of the building design. Exploration of intangible architecture can be medium that can provide easiness for the blind and visual impaired person to understand the building and architecture. Sensory is part of the intangible architecture element that can be used in creating architecture that compliment with the needs of the blind and their behavior. Hence, a methodology of identifying the intangible architecture element that related to the needs of the blind and their behavior is carried out through literature review. To strengthen the finding, the case study review and observation study are done in order to identify the specific intangible architecture element that suitable with the context of the study area. The findings suggest that although intangible architecture approach is always being neglected in the design process but it play a major role in enhancing the blind architectural identity that can provide easiness for the blind community to experiences the building and architecture.

ABSTRAK

Disertasi ini membincangkan kajian ke atas pendekatan seni bina yang tidak ketara yang boleh diterapkan dalam meningkatkan identiti senibina untuk golongan cacat penglihatan di kawasan Jalan Raja Laut dan Jalan Tengku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Identiti senibina untuk golongan cacat penglihatan di negara kita belum diteroka sepenuhnya dan masih tidak diterapkan dalam pembangunan di kontek perbandaran. Kebanyakan bangunan untuk golongan cacat penglihatan direka hanya untuk mematuhi piawaian seni reka universal dan hanya memengtingkan aspek luaran sesebuah reka bentuk. Diseratasi ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti identiti senibina untuk golongan cacat penglihatan serta mendalami keperluan dan kehendak golongan cacat penglihatan dalam sesebuah senibina bangunan. Penerokaan senibina tidak ketara boleh dijadikan media yang memudahkan golongan orang cacat penglihatan untuk memahami sesebuah ruang bangunan. Deria merupakan sebahagian daripada elemen senibina tidak ketara yang boleh diterapkan bagi mereka-bentuk sesebuah senibina yang bersesuaian dengan keperluan dan kelakuan golongan cacat penglihatan. Oleh itu, kaedah mengenal pasti elemen senibina tidak ketara yang berkaitan dengan keperluan dan perilaku golongan cacat penglihatan telah dilakukan melalau kajian literatur. Bagi menyokong hasil kajian, kajian kes ulasan dan pemerhatian telah dilakukan bagi mengenal pasti element senibina tidak ketara yang bersesuaian dengan kawasan kajian. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa, walaupun senibina tidak ketara selalu dipinggirkan tetapi ianya memainkan peranan besar dalam identiti senibina untuk golongan cacat penglihatan.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Jose R. Bernardo, in his paper *Architecture for Blind Persons*, identifies the controversy that exists between those who believe a 'mothering' environment is appropriate and those who believe a 'hostile' environment is better suited. (Bernardo, 1970) Some believe that an environment which is custom-designed is 'mothering' and hinders visually impaired peoples' development as they do not learn to cope with environments which are not specifically tailored to their needs. Others believe that a 'hostile' environment disregards the needs of the user and sends out the message that the visually impaired users' needs are not significant. This research explores both ideas and concludes with an appropriate design approach.

This dissertation investigates the relation of intangible architecture approach to produce the tangible architecture outcome in order to enable the blind person to accurately comprehend their environment and gain enjoyment from it. In order to comprehend the relationship between architecture/space and its inhabitant, this thesis firstly investigates how intangible elements such as sensory, nature, form and others can alter the perception and experience of space. Using intangible architecture approach towards the design is one of the ideal ways to incorporate architecture with the blinds. This idea of intangibility in architecture, however, is nothing new, as shown with architecture that is shaped by sensory elements such as smell, sound and texture of materials. This can lead people to experience the space and influence by

the environment and the surrounding of the space. By using sensory one of the part of intangible architectural approach it can enhance the spatial experience and also at the same time provide easiness to the blind to explore and move around the space.

1.2 Problem Statement

Due to the rapid development and fast pace of Jalan Raja Laut and Jalan Tengku Abdul Rahman, the social chasm among the communities was initiated and minorities tend to be left out. One of the minorities that are affected in this issue is blind people. There are many blind entertainers at the streets that create a unique character along the street. However, the blinds facilities have not been fully discovered and explored. The blind identity is not formulated towards the easiness for the blind to move about. Thus, this research is on:

- a) The appropriate architecture which reflects the needs of the blind, behaviours and identity of blind architecture.
- b) The intangible architecture element that forms a blind entertainment academy that provides easiness towards the blinds.

1.3 Thesis Statement

Blind design element in architecture has not fully formulated in our country Malaysia. Even though we facing great transformation since independence. The rise of blinds talent in our country has made a significant change in our entertainment industry but blind entertainment facilities have not been fully explored for example the music studio and space. Therefore, the Blind Entertainment Academy that

corporate with blind identity design and universal design, could enhance, empower and showcase the blinds talent.

1.4 Research Aim

The research is to enhance the architecture scheme for the blinds at Jalan Raja Laut and Jalan Tengku Abdul Rahman through intangible architecture approach to produce tangible architecture outcome.

1.5 Research Objectives

Looking at the needs of searching for blind architecture identity. Research objective for this study are state as below :

1. To identify the blind architecture identity so as to provide easiness for the blinds to move about in the building.
2. To understand how the needs of the blind and their behaviour express the formation building design.
3. To identify the relationship of the intangible architecture approach in order to create the formation of building design for the blinds.

1.6 Research Questions

In order of searching the blind architecture identity in this research, the research question for this study are state below:

1. What is the blind identity that can provide easiness for the blinds to move about in the building design?
2. How the blind needs and behaviour express the formation of the buildings?
3. How to express the relation of the intangible architecture that creates a suitable architecture for the blinds?

1.7 Scope of Research

Intangible approach is widely used in architecture world. In this dissertation, the intangible approach focuses on the use of human sense in order to create sensorial architecture experience for low storey public building and public space. Besides, the intangible architecture element involved will be narrowed down into several human sense that related toward the needs of the blinds and their behaviour.

1.8 Significance of Study

The significance of study is to explore and identify the ways to shape the architectural identity for the blinds. A methodology of translating the intangible approach is created from this studies. This is part of the collaboration between Design Thesis and Design Thesis Dissertation, the result of it can be seen in the appendices A. This study aims to develop a scheme to regenerate the potential blind

entertainment academy. This can accommodate the blind community at Jalan Raja Laut and Jalan Tengku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur with the entertainment facilities and at the same time the building itself react as the empowerment tools for the blinds.

1.9 Research Methodology

The aim of this studies are to find relation of architecture and blind identity design through the intangible architecture approach to create the Blind Entertainment Academy. The methodology uses a qualitative theoretical framework and methods based in the field of grounded theory research. This qualitative study involved the spatial movement through space syntax of the urban user around the study context. Apart from that, the quantitative method being used is by interview and static around the study context.

1.10 Structure of Thesis

The thesis dissertation contains six main chapters. The overview of this research has been discusses in chapter 1 which are contains background study, problem and thesis statements. Furthermore, aim, objectives, research questions, scope of research and method of the study also has been discusses in chapter 1.

Chapter 2 discuss overall review and information about sensorial as intangible approach. Firstly, the discussion generally focuses on application of human sensory in order to create space experience that compliment with needs of the blind and also their behaviour.

Method that been used in the research has been discusses in chapter 3. Procedures in data collecting, research instrument, setting of the study and analysis procedure will be discuss further in this chapter.

The finding of the research from the method used in chapter 3 will gather and analysis in chapter 4. Case studies are used to identifying and justify the sensory as intangible approach that produces tangible outcome. The analyzed data is used to determine the suitable design principle and approach to achieve the research objectives.

Chapter 5 explains the finding and observation data that are collected around the study area of Jalan Raja Laut and Jalan Tengku Abdul Rahman.

Lastly, the summary and significant of the research were explained and discussed in chapter 6. In fact the limitation and potential of the studies also recorded in this chapter.

1.11 Summary and Conclusion

This study is part of exploring the relevant of intangible architecture elements and principles to produce tangible building design that compliment and suitable for the blind users. Furthermore, research of the blind behaviour as the element in supporting the building formation is further discussed in the next chapter. At the end, the solutions would contribute to development of blind identity design along the study area of Jalan Raja Laut and Jalan Tengku Abdul Rahman.

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