EXPLORATION OF BLIND SPACE IDENTITY THROUGH INTANGIBLE ARCHITECTURE APPROACH

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To my dearest family and friend
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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

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td></td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td></td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRAK</td>
<td></td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td></td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td></td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF APPENDICES</td>
<td></td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Study  |  | 1 |
1.2 Problem Statement  |  | 2 |
1.3 Thesis Statement  |  | 2 |
1.4 Research Aim  |  | 3 |
1.5 Research Objectives  |  | 3 |
1.6 Research Questions  |  | 4 |
1.7 Scope of Research  |  | 4 |
1.8 Significance of Study  |  | 4 |
1.9 Research Methodology  |  | 5 |
1.10 Structure of Thesis  |  | 5 |
1.11 Summary and Conclusion  |  | 6 |
2 LITERATURE REVIEW
  2.1 Introduction 7
  2.2 The Environment and the Blinds 7-8
  2.3 The Human Senses for the Blinds 8-11
    2.3.1 Sound 12-15
    2.3.2 Touch 16-20
    2.3.3 Smell 21-22
  2.4 Sensory garden 22-23
  2.5 Phenomenology 25-26
  2.6 Emphasis on the Non-Visual 25-26
  2.7 Accessible and Universal Design 28-29
  2.8 Acoustics Architecture 30-31
  2.9 Way finding 32-33
  2.10 Precedent Studies 34-35
  2.11 Summary and Conclusion 36

3 METHODOLOGY
  3.1 Introduction 37
  3.2 Research Paradigm 38
  3.3 Research Design 38-39
  3.4 Research Strategy 40
  3.5 Research Procedure 40
    3.5.1 Data Collection Procedure 40
    3.5.2 Data Recording Procedure 41
    3.5.3 Data Analysis Procedure 41
  3.6 Summary and Conclusion 42

4 CASE STUDY
  4.1 Introduction 43
  4.2 Case Studies 43
    4.2.1 Centre for The Blind and Visually Impaired Mexico 44-49
4.2.2 Hazelwood School, Glasgow. 50-55
4.3 Summary and Conclusion 55

5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
5.1 Introduction 56
5.2 Findings of Mapping Observation Around The Site 56-58
5.3 Findings of Static Analysis 59-64
5.4 Summary and Conclusion 65

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION
6.1 Introduction 66
6.2 Research Synthesis 66
  6.2.1 Objectives 1: To identify the blind identity to provide easiness for the blinds to move about in the building. 67
  6.2.2 Objectives 2: To understand how the needs of the blind and their behavior express the formation building design. 68
  6.2.3 Objectives 3: To identify the relationship of intangible architecture approach to create the formation of building design for the blinds. 68
6.3 Limitations 69
6.4 Recommendations 69
6.5 Conclusion 71

REFERENCES 72-77

APPENDIX 78-95
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE NO</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Centre for The Blind and Visually Impaired, Mexico.</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Hazelwood School, Glasgow.</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>The total number of people occurrence during day at zone 6 of study area.</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>The total number of people occurrence during evening at zone 1 of study area.</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>The total number of people occurrence during day at zone 6 of study area.</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>The total number of people occurrence during evening at zone 2 of study area.</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Criteria of Case Studies</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURES NO</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Blind and Visually Impaired senses mind map study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Blind and Visually Impaired senses mind map study</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Multi-sensory architecture mind map study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Visual impaired architecture mind map study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Concept of human echolocation related to the blinds</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Human echolocation method for the blinds</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Example of textured signage for blind</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Position of Braille signage for the visual impaired person</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>The South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation of tactile design in building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>The application of cane to differentiate tactile surface on ground level</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>Texture can only offer information at arm's length</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>Detectable warning surfaces texture</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>Element of sensory garden design</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>Integrated sense study of sensory garden design</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>Sensory park of Oizumi Ryokuchi- Garden of the Blind</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>Toa Payoh Sensory Park, Singapore</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>The relationship between phenomenology and architecture design</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>Mapping study of universal design</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>Braille tactile system reflex on the universal design standard</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>Braille and handrail design reflex on the universal design standard</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>Acoustic study diagram</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>Type of way finding study diagram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>Centre for The Blind and Visually Impaired, Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>Hazelwood School, Glasgow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Research Design Framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Initial idea of different material and texture at Centre for The Blind and Visually Impaired, Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Used of different material and texture at Centre for The Blind and Visually Impaired, Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Used of natural fragrance to indicate place also been implemented at Centre for The Blind and Visually Impaired, Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Used of natural fragrance to indicate place also been implemented at Centre for The Blind and Visually Impaired, Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Used of water features as the guides at Centre for The Blind and Visually Impaired, Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Clear and straight direction along the building at Centre for The Blind and Visually Impaired, Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Clear and organise block arrangement at Centre for The Blind and Visually Impaired, Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Distribution of softscape and hardscape Centre for The Blind and Visually Impaired, Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Entrance area was designed as a loop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Entrance of the school. Different material used for drop off area as indication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Space distribution for the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Implementation of tactile element along the wall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Classroom view of the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>View of playroom area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>Garden and landscape of the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>External environment view of the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Mapping analysis based for blind facilities along the study area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Mapping analysis based for blind facilities along the study area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Shows the static analysis around the proposed site of Jalan Raja Laut and Jalan Tengku Abdul Rahman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Shows the static analysis around the proposed site of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jalan Raja Laut and Jalan Tengku Abdul Rahman

5.5 Activity distribution of people occurrence during day at zone of study area

5.6 Activity distribution of people occurrence during evening at zone 1 of study area

5.7 Activity distribution of people occurrence during day at zone 2 of study area

5.8 Activity distribution of people occurrence during evening at zone 2 of study area
# LIST OF APPENDICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPENDICES</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>List of Compilation of Final Design Thesis Presentation Boards and Drawings</td>
<td>78-95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 corporate 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 stated 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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