Urban Morphology of the Modern Tropical Asian Cities

By

CHNG HSI YEE CAROL
HD982513N

Submitted to School of Architecture
On September 18 1999 in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Architecture

ABSTRACT

The challenges that come with population increase and Social Change with Specific

As the world anticipates the turn of the millenium, developed as well as developing
countries are all too eager to “modernise”, to mould their urban- scape in order to face the
challenges of the next century. Challenges to create better living, better technology,
better environment, higher skyscrapers, bigger airports, or is it just a case of “winning the
pageant”? It seems that the phenomenon of “winning the pageant”, being especially
apparent in Singapore and the neighbouring region, is suffocating the actuality of
building a modern tropical Asian city. Modernity has been translated in our region to
borrowed icons from the West, 21st century gleaming glass skyscrapers as well as pre 20th
century classical icons alias post-modernism’s neo-classical symbols. There is an
urgency to assure that success does not equal to borrowed Western icons and precedents.
The preoccupation with success in the Asian’s mentality propelled the fast route of
adopting western’s formula of success. The success of modernising the Asian city should
be derived from the Asian conditions, lifestyle and senses.

The dissertation studies the current situation of Asia and the problems that come with its
unprecedented rapid economic growth phase. Current technologies and innovations
provide the scientific solutions to some of these problems. However, there need to be an
injection of aesthetic order practiced by sensibilities in order to reduce the mechanical
nature of a city. A criteria of aesthetic order is thus used to assess two precedents closest
to the morphology of Asian Cities. Emphasis on the precedent study and assessment is
based particularly on Singapore.

Dissertation Supervisor: Mr Tay Kheng Soon
Title: Adjunct Associate Professor