ABSTRACT

The main objectives of this dissertation are firstly, to identify elements that influence the relationship between urban waterfront and its water resource; and secondly, to review the relationship between Clarke Quay Redevelopment and its water resource, in terms of the ability to maximise the potential of its water resource. There are numerous factors that affect the quality of urban waterfront redevelopment, but only the factor of the relationship between urban waterfront and its water resource is being considered.

Urban waterfront redevelopment is a worldwide phenomenon that has been induced by economic, social and technological changes, as well as environmental awareness and the historic preservation movement. With globalisation, copying of successful urban waterfront redevelopment projects becomes prevalent, leading to failures or major flaws of some redevelopment as a result of insensitivity to the unique historical, cultural and contextual settings of each individual urban waterfront. There is a need to go back to its water resource as an inspiration to the land development.

Clarke Quay redevelopment project is one of the numerous waterfront redevelopment undertaken in Singapore in recent years. As a result of the Urban Redevelopment Authority’s concentration on conservation and adaptive reuse, and together with the developer’s emphasis on commercial viability, the Clarke Quay project is redeveloped into a festival marketplace. This land-based design neglects optimising its water resource and thus the Singapore River along Clarke Quay, which was once a lifeline of the country, remains in passivity.
In order to understand the relation between urban waterfront and its water resource, the authorities' vision, the public's desire, and the cases of Venice, Suzhou and Amsterdam, are studied. The study indicates physical and visual linkages, river activities and the use of the water resource as connectors and communicators, as important elements that establish the relationship between the urban waterfront and its water resource. The three famous waterscape cities are especially appealing due to the intimate relationship between the water and the normal livelihood of its people.

In order to improve the relationship between Clarke Quay and its water resource, one needs to improve its physical and visual linkages with Singapore River and increase recreational activities on the river itself. But most importantly, the river as connector has to be re-established in order to improve the relationship between the urban waterfront and its water resource.

The final section closes with a call for the proposal for a water transportation network on a local level and the materialisation the vision of Singapore as a tropical waterscape garden city, so as to begin to re-establish the relationship between the urban waterfront and its water resource.