

The Historic Canal System in Bangkok, Thailand: Guidelines for Reestablishing Public Space Functions

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Abstract

This thesis proposes guidelines for reestablishing the historic canal system on Rattanakosin Island, Bangkok as a public space system and a connector of key public spaces. The study examines the historic value and cultural symbolism of the canals through evolutionary morphological analysis, establishing that the canals are primary structural elements in the city, since they have retained the integrity of their physical form over time, and have come to hold cultural meaning for the Thai people. The canals have also accommodated different functions over time, in response to a changing urban context. There is potential for them to accept new functions as recreational spaces, connectors of key public spaces, and as tourist destinations.

Typological analysis of structural characteristics of the canals yields seven canal types that have potential to accommodate public space functions. The study proposes guidelines for the seven canal types that will enhance these potentials and ensure the preservation of the canals' physical form.