

# **SEREMBAN URBAN PARK, MALAYSIA: A PREFERENCE STUDY**

By Suhardi Maulan

Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Master of Landscape Architecture**  
In the College of Architecture and Urban Studies

Approved:

Professor Wendy Jacobson, Chair

Professor Dr. Patrick A. Miller, Member

Professor Dr. Quinsan Ciao, Member

Professor Dean R. Bork, Member

May 09, 2002  
Blacksburg, Virginia

**Keywords:**

Preferences, Urban Park, Urban Design, Landscape Architecture, Malaysia

# **SEREMBAN URBAN PARK, MALAYSIA: A PREFERENCE STUDY**

By Suhardi Maulan

(Abstract)

Unlike the West, where many studies have explored how people's needs are fulfilled by urban parks, Malaysia has received very little attention from researchers. One reason for this is the fact that Malaysia has only a short public park tradition. Although folk art and stories have chronicled a long history of gardens and other parks, these spaces were only accessible to royal family members and autocrats. In Malaysia, the concept of free public parks is relatively recent, having been introduced by the British colonial government.

This thesis aims to analyze the current demands on urban parks in Malaysia. It specifically studies an urban park in the city of Seremban in the state of Negeri Sembilan, which was built by the British in the early 1900's. This park is apparently not meeting the needs of the public at large. Even though it is near active public facilities, such as a state mosque, a downtown area, public offices, and a public library, it suffers from a declining number of visitors.

This thesis is based on data obtained from a survey questionnaire that polled public attitudes regarding Seremban Urban Park. The data was analyzed to determine the factors that influence potential park patrons, as well as the preferred activities of those who visit the park.

The research suggests that accessibility, sense of territoriality, activities in the park, the natural environment, and park maintenance influence participants' decisions to visit the park. In addition, it points out that participants' preferred park activities include family gatherings and passive socializing activities. The primary implications of this thesis are that urban parks are emerging as important public spaces in Malaysian cities, and that their continuing effectiveness is largely dependent upon a prioritizing of activities and a commitment to maintenance. This research should help landscape architects and planners expand the relationship between urban parks and public life in Malaysian cities.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all the people who provided direction, support and encouragement for me to complete this thesis and the masters program. In particular, I would like to express my special thank you to these special people

Staff at Faculty of Design and Architecture, Universiti Putra Malaysia, especially Dr. Mustafa Kamal and Mr. Osman Mohd Tahir for your support and help

My classmates for your jokes, critiques and friendship

Teresa Phipps for your patience, help and information

Dean R. Bork for taking extra time to read and critique my thesis

Dr. Quinsan Ciao for providing support and expanding my thinking in developing this thesis.

Dr. Patrick Miller for providing encouragement, excellent critiques, guidance and advice and moral support. Thank you for everything.

Wendy Jacobson for your commitment in spending valuable time to advise, guide and critiques my works for the past two years. Thank you for taking a chance on me.

My family, especially my mother, Mariati Hj. Sirat, my wife, Aniza and son, Faiz Asyraf for your patience, encouragement and love.

For my dad, I will always remember you.

Thank you all!

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**TITLE PAGE**

**ABSTRACT**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**LIST OF FIGURES**

**LIST OF TABLES**

<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>01</b>
Statement of problem	04
Need and significance of study	05
Research objectives	07
Thesis organization	07
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>08</b>
Purpose	08
The definition of urban park	08
Meeting human needs in urban public spaces	10
Factor influencing whether people use urban parks	15
Conclusion	22
<b>CHAPTER 3: CONTEXT OF THE SITE</b>	<b>24</b>
Location of Seremban	24
History of Seremban Urban Park	29
Description of the park and surrounding land uses	33
People of Malaysia and their distribution	41
Economic and social class conditions	45
Conclusion	47
<b>CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>50</b>
Study design	50
Questionnaire design	51
Organization of the questionnaire	52
Sample population	53
Pre-test	54
Data collection procedure	55
Data analysis	56

<b>CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS</b>	<b>58</b>
Approach	58
Description of Participants and their involvement with Seremban Urban Park	58
Factors influencing potential patrons of Seremban Urban Park	64
Needs and Preferred Activities	74
Conclusion	79
<b>CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>83</b>
Summary of the study	83
Discussions of Significant Findings, Implications and Avenues for future Research	85
Conclusion	94
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
Appendix A1	
Appendix A2	
Appendix B	
Appendix C	
Appendix D	
<b>VITA</b>	

## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 1: Map of Malaysia and location of Seremban</i>	24
<i>Figure 2: Map of Negeri Sembilan and Location of Seremban</i>	26
<i>Figure 3: Map of Downtown Seremban</i>	28
<i>Figure 4: Park amphitheatre, which has deteriorated</i>	30
<i>Figure 5: Park amphitheatre, which has deteriorated</i>	30
<i>Figure 6: One of the park's lakes has dried</i>	31
<i>Figure 7: Park drainage systems that has deteriorated</i>	31
<i>Figure 8: Park drainage systems that has deteriorated</i>	32
<i>Figure 9: Overgrown shrubs and trees along a walkway</i>	32
<i>Figure 10: Seremban Urban Park</i>	34
<i>Figure 11: View of Seremban downtown at the southeast of Seremban Urban Park</i>	35
<i>Figure 12: State office showing traditional Malay architecture</i>	36
<i>Figure 13: View overlooking one of the Park Lakes with State's Mosque in the distance</i>	36
<i>Figure 14: View from the east side of the park overlooking government offices</i>	37
<i>Figure 15: Lawn or picnic area in Seremban Urban Park</i>	39
<i>Figure 16: View of the mini Bird Park</i>	39
<i>Figure 17: One of the jogging tracks found in Seremban Urban Park</i>	40
<i>Figure 18: People playing soccer on the dry lake bed</i>	41

## LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 1: Participant Distribution</i>	59
<i>Table 2: Ethnic Distribution among users of Seremban Urban Park</i>	61
<i>Table 3: Gender Distribution among users of the Seremban Urban Park</i>	63
<i>Table 4: Mean for Patrons enjoyment in Seremban Urban Park</i>	67
<i>Table 5: Mean for Sense of Territoriality toward Seremban Urban Park</i>	68
<i>Table 6: Mean for Sense of Territoriality according to Ethnicity</i>	69
<i>Table 7: Content Analysis of Participants' Leisure Times</i>	71
<i>Table 8: Mean Analysis for Factors</i>	77