

**KEY WORDS:**

Communities, Loci, Places, People, Spirit

## ***"Loci - the Reawakening Path": Towards Social Inclusion for Sustainable Development***

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research paper delves into the exploration of historical spaces in Indian cities, emphasizing their cultural, social, and architectural significance. Through a multidisciplinary approach, it investigates the potential of "Loci - The Reawakening Path," a concept aimed at revitalizing neglected historical spaces, to promote social inclusion and sustainable development. The study involves an efficient approach that combines historical analysis, psychological dimensions, and the nuances of perception with live instances. It recognizes the importance of inter generational and cross-cultural transmission in the long-term preservation and dissemination of the spirit of place. The paper showcases case studies on the integration of public interactive spaces, such as Chaupars and Chowks, in Jaipur. It emphasizes the engagement of local communities, particularly indigenous social communities, in understanding and preserving the spirit of place.

Ultimately, this research emphasizes that history is intrinsically tied to the future, where the former educates and the latter motivates. By recognizing and revitalizing historical spaces, the "Loci - The Reawakening Path" concept offers valuable insights for urban planners, policymakers, and community stakeholders, promoting social inclusion, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering sustainable and inclusive urban development.



**Srajati Tiwari** A young and enthusiastic learner who enjoys experimenting with the complexity of architecture in light of the evolving environment and the way society functions, while also being mindful of the sustainability aspect and the history of the specific area or build. She thinks that words and architecture assist individuals to express their deepest selves. She aims to calm curiosity with a pen and tame the endless why's and how's through a method of research followed out with meticulous attention to detail. She aspires to uncover the subtle intricacies of city life and believes in creating spaces where individuals may unwind and compose themselves.

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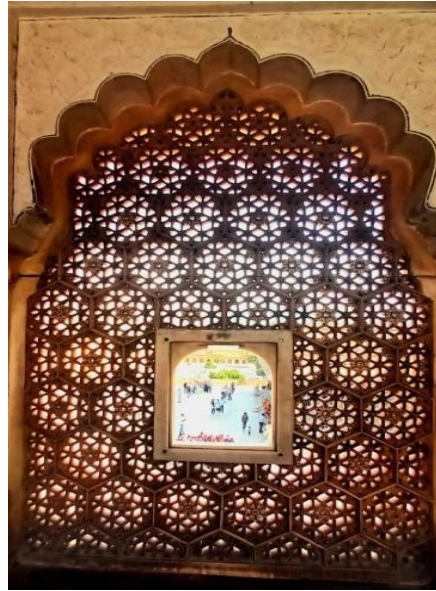
## Introduction

The loci method is a methodology for memorizing information that involves setting each thing to be recalled at a different place along an imaginary journey. By retracing the same route during the hypothetical excursion, the information can be remembered in a specific sequence. Loci are the plural of locus, which means place or location in Latin. The human brain frequently fails to discriminate between what is genuine and what isn't whenever it pertains to buildings and spaces preserved under the guise of memories. (James, 2015) There really are times when our imaginations can visualize architectural environments, and we picture ourselves in those areas despite never having visited them. We often picture architectural spaces portrayed in books and fantasize about them. The human brain generates a succession of images that do not exist in reality. Because the mind imagines objects in three dimensions, the locations, environs, and backgrounds are crucial in any daydream or vision (Bach-Glowinska, 2014).

As virtuously quoted by Peter Zumthor, "In a society that celebrates the inessential, Architecture can put up a resistance, counteract the waste of forms and meanings, and speak its own language." Architecture is a fusion of several "clear" disciplines in such a way that to become an architect, one needs to be proficient in much more than one, two, or three skills and experiences, and one's views are continually molded. It is this feature that keeps our lives fascinating, fun, and worth the effort, and no matter how much it requires of us, it just never gets boring. Likewise, diving into the perceptions of a memoirist and an architectural student will result in a glimpse of the reinvigoration road, Loci. For example, this arch and the mountain have such a serene interaction that has been preserved for millennia and serves as a memory for the users. As a result, architecture is becoming calmer when it is engaging with nature, transmitting balance



**Figure 1 :** View from Amer fort, Jaipur



**Figure 2:** Jali detail at Amer fort, Jaipur

accompanied by subtler nuances. One can observe this when admiring the views from Amer fort, Jaipur (**Figure 1**).

Loci are followed by the impression of a city itself or its surroundings, which is the result of two-way interacting methodologies between the perceiver and the surroundings. It is an absorption of something like the viewer's filtering of the connected purpose and significance of a continuous engaging approach based on choice, organization, and endorsement, as well as the distinctions and relationships provided by the environment.

### **History: Greek and Roman Discoveries In Remembrance And Spatial Connections**

The history of Greek and Roman discoveries allows us to understand spatial connections with valuable insights into the development of mnemonic techniques and their application in architectural design. The method of loci, also known as the memory palace technique, was utilized by these ancient civilizations to enhance memory retention and recall. The concept involved associating information with specific spatial locations, allowing individuals to mentally navigate through these spaces to retrieve stored knowledge.

In ancient Greece, the method of loci was attributed to the poet Simonides of Ceos, who discovered its effectiveness after a tragic event. During a banquet, the roof of the building collapsed, making it difficult to identify the deceased. Simonides, however, remembered the exact seating arrangement of the guests, utilizing his spatial memory. This event led to further exploration of the method of loci as a mnemonic device.

The Romans further refined the method of loci, using it extensively for various purposes, including education, oratory skills, and public speaking. Prominent figures such as Cicero and Quintilian advocated for the use of memory palaces to enhance the memorization of speeches and the delivery of persuasive orations.

These discoveries in remembrance and spatial connections highlight the deep connection between memory, architecture, and design. The method of loci not only served practical purposes but also influenced the layout and organization of physical spaces. Architects and designers incorporated mnemonic principles into their structures, creating spaces that facilitated memory recall and storytelling.

Today, the legacy of these Greek and Roman discoveries continues to inspire architects and designers. The principles of remembrance and spatial connections have been integrated into contemporary design practices, enabling the creation of environments that promote cognitive function, storytelling, and a meaningful interaction between individuals and their surroundings.

From an architecture student perspective, understanding the historical context and application of "Loci" can inspire innovative design solutions that integrate the principles of remembrance and spatial connections. By acknowledging the impact of the method of loci on ancient civilizations and embracing its principles, architecture students can develop a deeper understanding of the significance of storytelling, memory, and functional design in their future practice. The method of loci was utilized by the ancient Greeks and Romans to associate memories with spaces. The history of Loci is not just about remembering places, but also about weaving tales into them in order to make living easier, with such a problem-solving approach, which is what designing is about (Jhamaria,n.d.).

Not just in imaginary worlds have words like "mental worlds" and "palaces" had been deployed. Many notable Romans and Greeks, such as Cicero, used their "mental castles" to not only recall a scenario, but also to speak intelligibly narratives to others and assist others in visualizing such stories. This reflects how strongly we associate environments with our memories. Remembering theater, the science of memory, memory palaces, and other terms arose from this ability to remember ideas by associating these to settings. The loci method employs the concept of visualizing a space in which various recollections can be preserved. Space is frequently a building, a dwelling, or a road that connects many locations. The benefit of this tactic stems from the subconscious capacity to store mental images in architectural spaces. Whenever people desire to recollect previous

experiences, simply walk around the mental memory area.( RTF | Rethinking The Future (n.d.). The jalis of Amer fort can be considered as a metaphoric element allowing to connect two different worlds (**Figure 2**).

As social Inclusion involves the process of altering the terms on which individuals and organizations participate in society increasing the capability, chance, and integrity of those who are disadvantaged because of their identification. The spaces are purposely meant to link people; for example, a window/balcony/simple aperture in a well designed dwelling is an intriguing medium for the society to interact with each other and engage with the surroundings, resulting in interpersonal inclusiveness, which leads to sustainability (Day, C., n.d.). Community cohesion denotes identifying and interacting with all sections of society, all components of place, and therefore community contributes to sustainability.

### **Engagement of Perception & Live Instances in Spaces**

A lovely landscaped architectural facade fronting a busy main road is meaningless, much as Concorde might seem like a magnificent bird but does not chirp so much like one. The city is an ensemble of the most intense conversations between the built mass (form) and open areas. The spatial arrangement (layout) in a geographic region is to produce a comprehensive and integrated structure and surroundings, which are based primarily on the economic circumstances and way of life of the occupants, the nature and public persona of practices, and obtainable materials and technologies, which form the outline and therefore the picture and identification of the location (McHarg, 1969). The entrance view of Jawahar Kala Kendra is an example of this experience (**Figure 3**).

In reality, people directly communicate with and perceive their immediate surroundings and they have largely ignored the place layer or neighborhood scale. Designers may be best placed to engage people in what appears to be a larger sustainability mission by encouraging individuals to take responsibility for and change these communal domains that extend beyond their home. The sense of place method encourages and empowers people to assume responsibility. A sense of place is indeed the simplistic act of creating and sustaining the sentient environments people cherish the most. (Day, C., n.d.) A view from Galta Ji allows one to immerse in the surrounding and enriches the peace one feels while visiting the temple (**Figure 4**).

The environment is having an interesting conversation with both "shikharas" of the temple complex, resulting in areas intended to refocus sentient time and energy by integrating with people, as the scene depicts the symbolic importance of the bench on the steep slope just on direction to Galta Ji Temple, Jaipur. The significance of that kind of location is perceived as an individual who is there for spirituality, exploration, or wandering who will continue to incorporate and imbibe the amazing wizardry of



**Figure 3:** Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur



**Figure 4:** The magnificent view from Galtaji's temple, Jaipur

architecture. Nevertheless, individuals will relax and take off their footwear before entering, and the area, individuals, and spirit will engage with them in some way.

### **Inter generational & Cross Cultural Transmission: Preserving the Spirit of Place**

Design plays an influential role on urban fabric. Inside a building, the elements combine to form the entire infrastructure; externally, it is merely a component of our surroundings. Larger buildings are rarely experienced as design information, but whenever they are, it is usually because they are powerful and domineering. Such structures impose their existence on us and, more significantly, on their surroundings. They are immobile dialogues about satisfying the requirements of individuals or places. They lend themselves well to photography and are popular subjects for design studies. One can see this clearly in the Motisons Jewelers building in Jaipur (**Figure 5**).

Buildings can be influential. They inspire basic compassion just by their massive enormity. The more imposing, old, skillfully crafted, and decorative the edifice is, the more influence it wields over us. The buildings and superstructure represents an investment of time, whether it is difficult to locate, build, equip, or even sustain them. As such, they provide a suitable environment for symbolic significance. One of the most influential functions of architectural symbolism is conveying the intention of the design.

These buildings contribute to the surroundings and always serve as cognitive locations for relocating routes and destinations that is what Loci symbolizes. This interconnectedness of the physical setting with notable landmarks constantly contribute to the recognition and engagement of the metropolis. The quality of these boundaries is an important component of the overall excellence of the location.



*Figure 5: Motisons Jeweler's building, Jaipur*

The first indications that a place exists, rather than just putting effort into achieving, are vocational interactions among structures. Several of a place's subtler qualities, such as the intricacy of intersecting shapes and dimensions, the transformation of one geometry, shape, or place into something else, as well as the influences of both natural and artificial light, can only be approximated but badly predicted. They must always be created (Galindo, 2000).

### **Case studies: integration of the public interactive places at Jaipur**

Jaipur is an ancient city created in 1727 to support the burgeoning population of Amber, the former capital of the Dhoondhar Empire. Pink City is thus named because of its largely pink and complementary color palette. And over centuries, the city has undergone significant shifts in its culture, lifestyle, social status, and innovation, but it remains one of India's most recognizable and functional native cities. This study seeks to analyze several features of the urban organization of Jaipur's walled city, which culminate in the construction of the city's identity and perception. Jaipur city plan is thought to be based on the Prastara principles outlined in the Shilpa-shastra or Vastushastra (the ancient Indian art of creating dwellings based on astrophysics), in which the emphasis is placed on the cardinal points with an adapted grid arrangement of 3x3, with major roads or walking routes acting as pixels. The design is divided into eight Chowkri segments rather than four, as initially planned. The plan of Jaipur is illustrious of these elements (**Figure 6**).

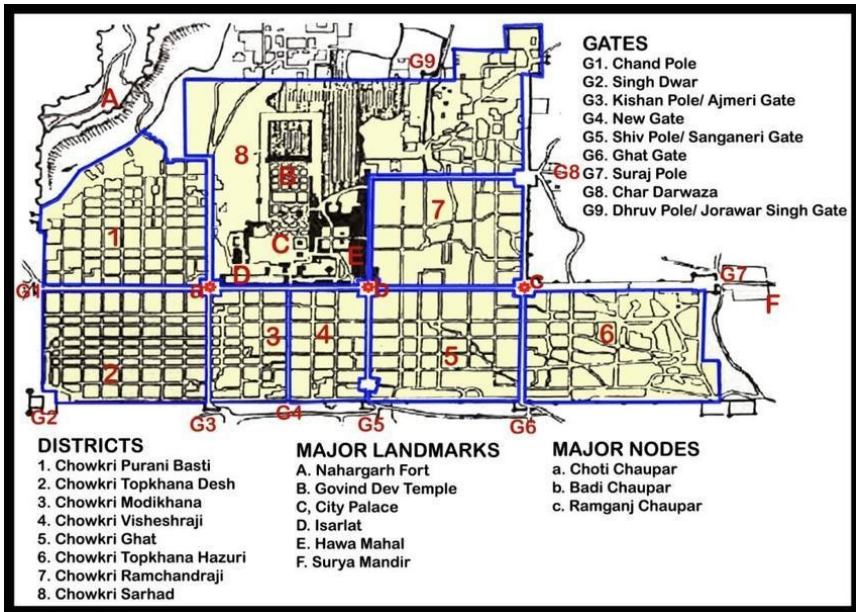


Figure 6: Key plan of walled city of Jaipur (Jawaid n.d.)

Jaipur's planning and spatial components are inextricably linked to the community's view and use of the city. The grid based city layout, with large roadways and ordered sectors, improves mobility and allows for more efficient transit. Well designed public spaces, such as gardens, parks, and promenades, serve the community by providing chances for recreation, sociability, and cultural activities. Landmarks such as the Hawa Mahal and Jal Mahal are not only architectural marvels, but they also contribute to tourism and economic activity. Furthermore, the preservation of historical landmarks and architectural heritage fosters pride and identity among citizens. The community's active participation in these planned spatial features indicates their respect for the design of the city and its impact on their daily lives (Figure 7).

From an architecture student perspective, the planning of Jaipur showcases the significance of nodes, Chaupars, and Chowks in shaping the city's spatial elements. These well planned nodes, Chaupars, and Chowks contribute to the overall functionality and aesthetic appeal of Jaipur's urban design, creating a dynamic and interconnected urban experience (Figure 8).



## Nodes

Nodes refer to important junctions or focal points within the city, where multiple streets converge. These nodes often feature prominent architectural landmarks or public spaces, attracting social activities and cultural events. They are the spots of intense concentration all along paths inside the city that the viewer is navigating across. They are crucial points in the city into which he can enter, and are essentially connectors, intersections or confluences of routes, points of interruption in mobility, points of transition from one construction to the other, and so forth. Aside from Chaupar, the gates marking the entrance towards the walled city serve as connectors for the inhabitants as well as a place of reference and signpost (**Figure 9**).

## Towns square or Chaupars

Chaupars, also known as intersections, are designed to facilitate pedestrian and vehicular movement while maintaining connectivity between different parts of the city. They are prominent crossroads on the main axial roads that were historically the location of town squares and stepped wells as well as water infrastructure for freshwater resources at sidewalk elevations all throughout the city via underwater water mains extending down the roads. Three key junctions are made at the crossing of the main axial road from Chandpole to Surajpole by three perpendicular roads named Chhoti Chaupar, Badi Chaupar, and Ramjang Chaupar. The observation highlights the importance of community engagement through these Chaupars; people from all over the city use these spaces for recollection and encounters as they travel to multiple destinations. The role of Chaupars seems to begin the process of inclusion that further makes the town comprehensible and leads to viability (**Figure 10**).



**Figure 7:** Spatial arrangement of elements, Jaipur (*The Wire* 2020)



**Figure 8:** Spatial arrangement of elements, Jaipur



*Figure 9: View of Badi Chaupar, Jaipur*



*Figure 10: View of Badi Chaupar Jaipur*

## Chowks

Chowks and crossroads are examples of secondary nodes. Chowks are major crossroads that are frequently formed by the confluence of lateral roadways and section streets or segment roads within chowkries, etc. Subhash Chowk, Jaleb Chowk, Chandini Chowk, and other notable Chowks are located throughout the city. Chowks, or squares, serve as gathering spaces and play vital roles in the community's social fabric (**Figure 11**).

The inner Chowkries' streets and Chowks, which contain diverse groupings or Mohallas, also weren't predefined and hence present a combination of matrix iron and organic form, with a basic unit of architectural environment. It's remarkable to observe the dimensions and proportions so expertly designed that they not only boost utility but also give the space identity. Integrating public interaction places with roadways gives the impression that it is more than simply a route. As a result, it is not a one way process of creating something and then abandoning it, but a two way task that demands participation and engagement, not only with the layers of perspective sketches, but also in the diverse viewpoints of society and traditions that different cities possess (Jawaid,n.d).

## Sustainable Development & the Human Spirit of A Place

The paradigm of sustainable development is associated with spatial policy, which prioritizes effectiveness, efficiency, and equity. As a result, it affects all ecological, economic, geographical, and social elements. And it is in those dimensions that the city takes shape its structure, functionality, and activities.

The significant and far reaching changes required to realign the universe toward a sustainable society are only conceivable by connecting the spirit and by enticing all universalists who can motivate the communities to function in the long term goals of the

universe and promote compassion in its entirety. In the context of towns, one could claim that "all means need to be utilized effectively for integrative growth, in which societal, environmental, and economic aspects are fostered in the urban spaces." (Uplifting Words, n.d.).

As history has shown, new notions for creating the physical configuration of towns typically emerge through criticisms of existing theories and the quest for the ideal city, but this objective is regarded differently every time, as is sustainable development. (World Heritage Center UNESCO, n.d.) Even though the concept of sustainable development has existed for a while, it needs precision and consistency. Because the spirit of place is constantly in a recreation process that interacts with sections of the community's necessities for transformation and continuity. People believe that it can shift over time as well as from cultural backgrounds based on their memory practices, and that a place can have multiple spirits and be decided to share by disparate factions (Figure 11).

As a result, geometrical or sociological notions could indeed adequately represent architecture. Expressive elements should be used to understand design. Simply put, it belongs to the canon of existentialist interpretations. It should be underlined that fundamental significance is not something that is imposed on a person's everyday life. Complementary interpretations, comprised of the interactions among human and natural attributes, are embedded in our current lives (Lehman, 2010). Whenever it comes down to it, there will be no sustainability unless there are sustainable places that help reduce environmental consequences while simultaneously nurturing the human spirit. Ultimately harnessed, the potent and vibrant source of individual and communal drive will unleash such a fundamental and beneficial spirit from among the forces of globalization that no strength will indeed be able to oppose the unifier.

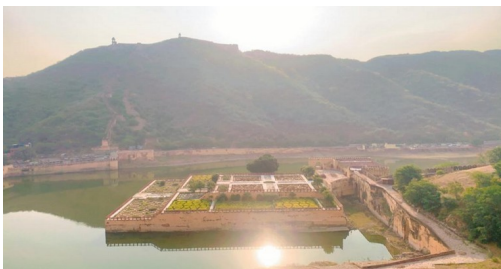


Figure 11: Amer fort – view imparting serenity, Jaipur

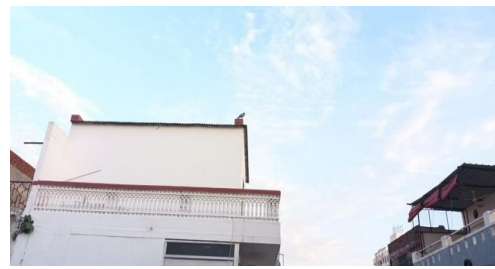


Figure 12: Terrace view, Jaipur

## Conclusion

Remembering serves as the basis for making meaning whether anecdotal or communal. The process of remembrance encompasses every aspect of existence. It shapes our identities as individuals as well as the identities of communities. The linkage between architecture and remembrance is established in each person's personal absorption of the others in order to create connections in space and time; the fracture between current and past dissolves and a solitary location connects with another through images (Figure 12).

Loci could be a method of remembrance leading to sustainable understanding as a strategy for transforming cities and public spaces to enhance health and profitability in a specific city, urban region, or community, as influenced by studies. As we conduct more research on community, inclusiveness, the spirit of place and sustainable development, the theory and practice of sustainable urban growth in relation to location will change and ultimately yield well grounded interpretations and perceptions. Memories and design work in tandem. Each location has something unique, something alive and developing, but something that endures beyond minor changes. The spirit of the land is a living being. All places have a character, which is not necessarily benign.

The pleasure of looking at similar places and finding them distinct by combining simple features inspired us all to consider architecture not only from a utilitarian standpoint, but also to design places that can withstand the ravages of time. As a result, as young architects, we should take an inquisitive response to this spiritual awakening path, Loci, which will improve the sustainability voyage of cities pursuing their spirit of place.

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