Identification and Preservation of Classical Roman Architecture in the Kandyan Landscape

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This study focuses on preserving the classical Roman architecture within the historically rich Kandyan Landscape, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1988. The landscape has been influenced by various historical rulers, including local Buddhist leaders as well as the Portuguese, Dutch, and British. Among the architectural styles, Kandyan architecture has notably blended with classical architectural characteristics, adding significant value to the region. However, the study highlights a key research gap concerning the lack of site-specific Roman architectural information within the Kandyan landscape and the need for effective preservation mechanisms. The objective of this research is to identify features and sites and propose viable mechanisms to preserve the classical Roman architecture found in the area. Data collected from field surveys, stakeholder interviews, and observation was conducted and analysed using descriptive and Microsoft Excel methods. The study identified 11 sites within a 10-kilometre radius from the centre of Kandy city for in-depth analysis, revealing considerable Roman architectural features such as thick walls, arches, round arched windows, and Roman Tuscan columns. The preservation of these architectural sites faces several challenges, including a lack of financial resources, limited public understanding of their cultural and historical significance, insufficient rules and implementation, a shortage of skilled experts, and the impact of urbanisation and development. To address these challenges, the study proposes implementing the Kandy Heritage Foundation proposed by UNESCO. These include launching public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of preserving heritage monuments, introducing new rules and regulations, fostering academic and international partnerships, and establishing community-based organisations to actively involve local communities in preservation efforts. Through the implementation of these recommendations and the proposed preservation mechanisms, the study aims to safeguard the ancient architecture within the Kandyan Landscape, preserving its historical and cultural significance for future generations.

Keywords: Classical Architecture, Heritage, Kandyan landscape, Preservation