

Master SHS
Mention Sciences Sociales
Villes et Territoires



UMR 6173 CITERES
Cités, Territoires, Environnement et Sociétés
CNRS-Université de Tours
MSH de Tours

Future of public spaces

Will the era of iconic design transition to the era of creating sense of public space?

Master dissertation

Année 2010-11

Tutors: Serge Thibault & Laura Verdelli

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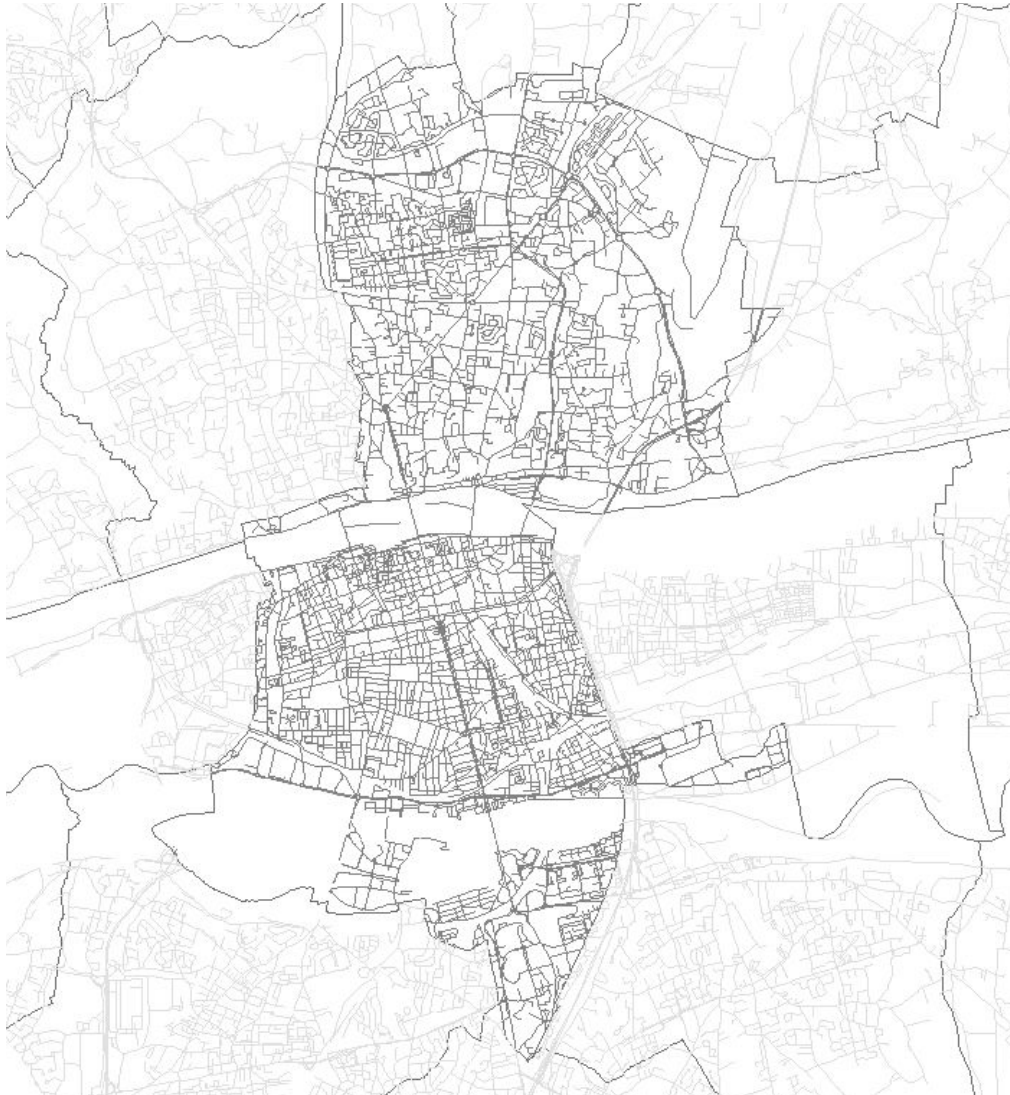
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Summary:

This research focuses on the methodology in understanding a public space and how it qualifies as great public space or as city destinations and the use of public spaces in urban context; and understanding the role of design in public spaces; does it make better or worse! Understanding how a sense of space is created in the minds of people with regards to some public places. It draws on a case study of a six month long research project in the historic city of Tours, French commune of central-western France,[with a population of around 136,000(2007)]. The study is set out to examine 'Does the design or conception of public space in itself determine the success or failure of public space?' How people use the space, what is it designed for and how is it used. The findings will help in understanding the characteristic of a great public space. The project is based on a mixed-methods approach, which involved discussion with stakeholders in the city and direct observations at eight different sites in Tours. The observations were carried out in randomly picked well known open places of the city.

Keywords: public space, sense of space, squares, design and destinations - Tours



FUTURE OF PUBLIC SPACES

Will the era of iconic design transition to the era of creating sense of public space?

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Sincerely,

chundeli faiz shahed

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1. INTRODUCTION

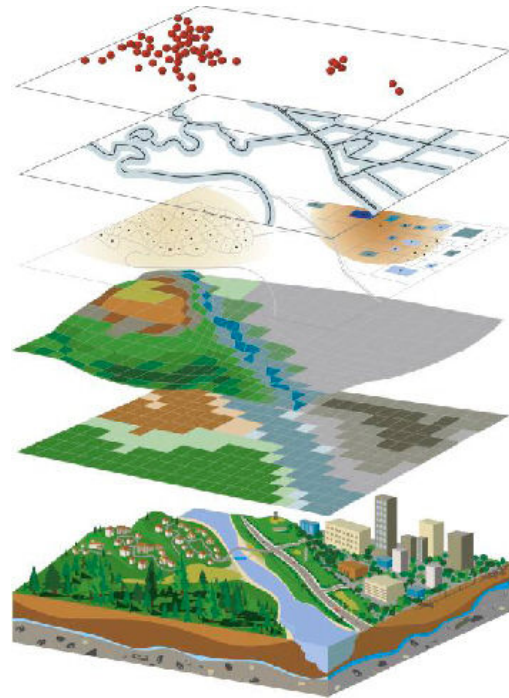
1.1 The storyline

The idea behind understanding the concepts of public space, its function and activities which take place goes back to the understanding of the term 'Urban morphology'. *Urban morphology is the study of the form of human settlements and the process of their formation and transformation* (www.wikipedia.org). The study seeks to understand the spatial structure and character of a metropolitan area, city, town or village by examining the patterns and the process of its development. It involves the analysis of physical structures, patterns of movement, land use, spatial organizations, architecture, open spaces etc. The study on urban morphology is one of the important components of urban design research, a technique used to understand the present city structure and future transformation for possible development. Cities gain their identity through a complex process in which culture always plays a dominant role. The 'sense of place' that makes each city unique is defined by the culture which attributes different textures, form and meaning to its environment.

Urban Morphology is a rare discipline focusing on the composition of Urban Fabric. The city can be seen as a superposition of six layers. Each one can be studied separately to have a

better understanding of the city as a whole (Serge SALAT).

Layer one: *Comprises human beings and activities. The interactions between people are the first factor of organization of a city.*



Layer two: The street network. **Layer three:** The study of parcels of land. **Layer four:** The topography and relief of the site.

Layer five: land use and repartition of activities.

Layer six: The three dimensions of the city i.e. Built & open space (Serge SALAT).

In order to understand the morphology of place these six components should be studied independently. The complexity of the subject can be understood by the diverse nature components which make up the city. The research presented in

this paper is one of these components listed above which is interaction of people. The first factor of city organization is the interactions between the people, where a public space plays a vital role in enhancing the interactions among the people.

1.2 Defining a space!

To understanding what a public space is, we must first understand what is space, what constitutes a space and what makes it public, semi public or private space. The typical definition given to a space is as follows, ***‘Space is the boundless, three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction*** (www.wikipedia.org). Physical space is often conceived in three linear dimensions, although modern physicists usually consider it, with time, to be part of the boundless four-dimensional continuum known as space time. An event can occurs anywhere at any time, so it does mean that everything and anything is public in nature.

A real place is a particular space which is overlaid with meaning by individuals or group. This has been expressed as “place = space + meaning” (Harrison, 1996) *and in the words of the pioneering humanistic geographer, Relph* (Relph, 1976) *“Places are sensed in a chiaroscuro of setting, landscape, ritual, routine, other people,*

personal experience, care and concern for home and the context of other places”.

1.3 Definitions of public space!

In the last 20 years, public spaces have acquired a renewed visibility in the French urban planning world (Billiard, 1988). Briefly put, the general opinion is that public spaces are an essential ingredient to the sustainability of cities for political, social, economic, public health and biodiversity reasons (Jolé, 2002). Public spaces are a fundamental feature of cities. They represent sites of sociability and face-to-face interaction, and at the same time their quality is commonly perceived to be a measure of the quality of urban life. Ideally, they are places that are accessible to everybody and where difference is encountered and negotiated (Young, 1990).

A public space can be defined under various contexts which includes general definition, sociological definition, public spaces according to environmental psychology, urban context etc., some of the definitions are as follows;

1. A public space is a social space such as a town square that is open and accessible to all, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level. (www.wikipedia.org).
2. Open space must be seen not just as space remaindered from development or green splotches for parks on land use maps, but as an essential element determining the character and quality of the urban environment. There are

basically three functions which open space serves;

- i. It can meet positive human needs-both physically and psychologically- in recreation amenities.
- ii. It can enhance and protect the resource base – the air, water, soil, plants and in turn the animals.
- iii. It can effect economic development decisions like tourism, development patterns, employment, real estate values etc. (Goodman, 1968)

3. In urban planning, public space has historically been described as "open space", meaning the streets, parks and recreation areas, plazas and other publicly owned and managed outdoor spaces, as opposed to the private domain of housing and work. However, the recent evolutions of the forms of urban settlement and the growing number and variety of semi-public spaces managed by private-public or entirely private partnerships questions this notion inherited from a legal perspective. Somehow today, public space needs to be understood as different from the public domain of the state and its subdivisions, but rather as a space accessible to the public. In terms of law, it is perhaps closer to the older concept of the "commons", although we have to recognize that today, at least in the western world; every bit of land is now regulated by the laws of property making it difficult to consider anything as common without encountering an entitled owner and manager (Blackmar 2006).

4. Public space is the accessible field of opportunity and interaction, where people can meet to share experiences and visions, where they can try out new paths to solve their own problems and improve the quality of life. (Coirier, 2010)

5. Sociology has paid more attention to the physical venues of the city and the daily interactions of the citizenry. More than the possibility for a debate or a discourse, public space is measured according to its accessibility, both physical and psychological (Joseph 1998). This notion enlarges significantly the scope of places considered public to any space accessible to individuals, provided access is not based on some membership. Thus, in addition to the classic spaces, such as streets and parks, a vast array of spaces of mobility, such as transportation facilities (train and subway stations, airports, highways, parking lots) or spaces of mass consumption (shopping malls for the most part) can be analyzed according the criterion of sociology (Tonnelat).

*The definition taken for research purpose:
'Public space is the accessible field of opportunity and interaction, where people can meet to share experiences and visions, where they can try out new paths to solve their own problems and improve the quality of life'.*

(Coirier, 2010)

How spaces are understood and used may also depend on individuals and group characteristics. For instance, the sociology of childhood (James, 1998), identifies public spaces as places where children and young people can construct a form of privacy in their own places, away from the familial control and surveillance of home (Malone, 2002). Thus, public spaces are imbued with power relations: particular social groups can be encouraged, tolerated, regulated, and sometimes excluded from public space depending on the degree to which they might be deemed 'in' or 'out of place'. For instance, acts such as loitering, drinking, skateboarding or even 'hanging out' in public may be constructed as inappropriate because of particular social representations about what sorts of groups, and activities, should be seen out in public (Wilson, 1991).

1.4 Sense of space

The term sense of place has been defined and used in many different ways by many different people. To some, it is a characteristic that some geographic places have and some do not, while to others it is a feeling or perception held by people (not by the place itself). It is often used in relation to those characteristics that make a place special or unique, as well as to those that foster a sense of authentic human attachment and belonging. (www.wikipedia.org)

The definition taken for research purpose:
Those things that add up to a feeling, that a community is a special place, distinct from anywhere else.
(Samuel N. Stokes, 1997)

1.5 Importance of public spaces

Public spaces are the backbone of the city. Streets, parks, plazas, playground, represent the quality of the built environment, as well as the vitality of civic life. Their assumed openness grants them with a central role in today's increasingly diverse cities. Public spaces bring different people together and foster informal interactions. They are not only places for recreation, entertainment, and tourism (but also of formal and informal regulation, contestation and citizen participation. Today, public spaces have become an asset upon which cities build their image and upon which developers sell real estate (Competition based on "quality of life"). But public space is more and more recognized as an essential ingredient to the sustainability of cities for social, economic, and ecological reasons. Public spaces offer many benefits: the 'feel-good' buzz from being part of a busy street scene; the therapeutic benefits of quiet time spent on a park bench; places where people can display their culture and identities and learn awareness of diversity and difference; opportunities for children and young people to meet, play or simply 'hang out'. All have important benefits and help to create local attachments, which are at the heart of a sense of

community. *Public spaces allow people to meet on ostensibly neutral ground in planned and unplanned ways, to interact with others within the context of the whole community. These include family relationships (for example, multi-generation family shopping expeditions), cultural groupings (for example, youth groups), local social connections (for example, chance or planned meetings with friends, neighbors and work colleagues) and groups meeting through common interest (for example, walking groups). By facilitating this mixing, public spaces can contribute to the cohesion of communities* (Caroline Holland, 2007).

1.6 Types of public spaces

A public space may be a gathering spot or part of a neighborhood, downtown, special district, waterfront or other area within the public realm that helps promote social interaction and a sense of community. Examples such as plazas, town squares, parks, marketplaces, public commons and malls, public greens, piers, special areas within convention centers or grounds, sites within public buildings, lobbies, concourses, or public spaces within private buildings. They are areas where you stay, where you meet others, where you observe, where you undertake something with or without others, where you relax, where you become familiar with or attached to the living environment. Public spaces also enable you to look at what people are saying about themselves in the way in which they present themselves or in the way in which they

design and accessories their own spaces, their house or their garden.

'Public space is all around us, a vital part of everyday urban life: the streets we pass through on the way to work, the places where children play, or where we encounter nature and wildlife; the local parks in which we enjoy sports, walk the dog and sit at lunchtime; or simply, somewhere quiet to get away for a moment from the bustle of a busy daily life. In other words, public space is our open-air living room, or outdoor leisure centre.'

(Rose, 2003)

Public space by definition represents vast area of study which includes; roads, streets, boulevards, parks, gardens, square etc., the research work is focused on 'public squares'.

1.7 Hierarchy of open spaces

Open spaces in a city or town can serve various functions and they are hierarchical in nature. Open spaces at the city level such as squares; plazas, central parks where people love to spend time and take friends and family with pride. So open spaces at city level serves different function than that of at neighborhood level which attracts local

populations and serves as a destination to the local communities such as neighborhood parks and play grounds.

1.8 Elements in open spaces

The elements in the open spaces are crucial for its very existence; these elements include furniture's single or in groups, lighting fixtures, sign boards, direction boards, fountains and other architectural elements. These elements make the place attractive and inviting. A lot of things can be said by just observing the kind of seating provided in an open space.

1.9 Aims and objectives

The primary aim and objectives of this research is to develop a methodology to analyze a public space; which in turn help in better understanding of a public space and understanding the importance of design in public spaces.

1.10 Scope of the study

Public spaces are vital components of a healthy city; where people like to spend time; which gives a sense of place; in order to understand what makes a place great; it is important to understand the components which go into the making of a great place. This research will help in identifying or better understanding of the following components; such as;

- i. To identify the key elements in design of public spaces;
- ii. To identify the different characteristics of design elements; which makes up a public space as a great space.
- iii. To understand the significance and value of public spaces as social arenas;
- iv. To consider the importance of public spaces for improving people's sense of well-being.
- v. To gain in-depth understanding of the meaning of public spaces in the city;
- vi. To understand the question 'what makes some places succeed while others fail'?
- vii. To identify different uses and activities; which take place in public squares.
- viii. To identify the issues related to physical and social form of public spaces. (Squares).

1.11 Methodology

The study presented here set out to examine the quality of public spaces in an urban area. The research focused on the public squares in the city of Tours; with the aim of understanding public spaces, its components, things which change an ordinary place into a destination and the design implications. The study covered a range of randomly picked open spaces (Squares) from Tours.

The findings will help better understand these public spaces and the methodology developed will help in understanding of other public spaces, especially squares. For instance, there are

two prominent narratives in current writing and thinking on public space in Europe. One refers to the apparent decline of public space, linked to processes such as privatization, regulation and surveillance. The other offers a less pessimistic view, of public spaces enabling diverse groups to come together to display their identities in the public arena. There thus appears a paradox between public spaces as sites where difference is being eliminated, and sites where difference can be celebrated (Mitchell, 1995). This research raises a number of questions that are of interest to the specific case studies presented here. What makes some places succeed while others fail? What makes a place great? What is sense of place? Why people are attached to certain places? What are the characteristics of a great public space? What are the design criteria's that's helps in building a great place? Does design play an important role in turning a place into destination? How is life defined in public spaces? What are the activities that take places in public spaces? *'Does the design or conception of public space in itself determine the success or failure of public space?'* How people use the space, what is it designed for and how is it used.

The research is based on a mixed-methods approach, which involved understanding the definitions of public spaces, its components and its characteristics from various literatures, discussion with stakeholders in the city and direct observations at eight different sites in Tours.

1.12 Hypothesis

The hypothesis is derived from the following questions *'What makes some places succeed while others fail?'*, Does the design or the conception of place determines its success rate?. How people understand and perceive public spaces; how different people use these spaces in different geographic and social contexts; to what extent these places offer opportunities for positive contact between different cultures and lifestyles, and to what extent they are dominated by different groups; how local tensions play out in public spaces; How has the meaning and uses of public space changed over time?; how stakeholders might be able to respond.

Hypothesis

The design in itself determines the success or the failure of a public space.

2. DESIGN OF SQUARES

2.1 Design challenge

Even where they are physically accessible, other aspects of public spaces can present barriers to their use. In addition to regulations, these include location, and the provision or lack of facilities. car parking etc., The sitting and location of street furniture has marked effect on the use of public spaces. Kind of furniture used; for example the furniture's with back rest or single seat or multiple seats regulates users to some extent; and this has to satisfy the growing crowds in the public spaces.

2.2 Urban design process

Urban development is the result of a process. A number of concepts have been used to analyze composition of a place in order to gain an understanding of the qualities which determine good or beautiful form. The way in which these concepts are used helps in building a quality space aesthetically. Some of the important design concepts include order, unity (example; the trees planted in place Rabelais), proportion, scale, harmony, symmetry, balance and rhythm. (Moughtin, 2003)

2.3 Focusing on squares

Public space by definition takes a range of city elements into its limits; which includes streets, roads, parks, play grounds, gardens, squares or plaza's etc., the study presented in this research is

focused on squares in the city of Tours and it holds good for the definition taken for study which is 'Public space is the accessible field of opportunity and interaction, where people can meet to share experiences and visions, where they can try out new paths to solve their own problems and improve the quality of life' (Coirier, 2010). One of the most important elements of city design is the square or plaza. It is possibly the most important way of designing a good setting for public and commercial buildings in cities (Moughtin, 2003)

A square or plaza is both an area framed by buildings and an area designed to exhibit its buildings to the greatest advantage. Great civic compositions such as St Mark's Square, Venice, St Peter's Square, Rome etc., But this definition is not the same in France where usually a garden is attached to the squares.

2.4 Activities in the squares

Activity in a square is important for its vitality and, therefore, also for its visual attraction. Vitruvius when writing about the design of the forum said it 'should be proportionate to the number of inhabitants, so that it may not be too small a space to be useful, nor look like a desert waste for lack of population' (Vitruvius., 1960). Activities in public spaces vary depending on the quality of space provided. According to Jan Gehl in his book, Public space and public life in the city of Adelaide he categorizes the activities into three kinds which are as follows;

- i. **Necessary activities,**
- ii. **Optional activities and**
- iii. **Social activities**

The optional and the social activities are the important keys to city quality. In poor quality city areas one will only find necessary activities ie. People doing things they have to do. In good quality city areas one will find not only necessary activities (carried out under decent conditions) but also a multitude of recreational and social activities people love to do while in cities. However these activities will only happen if the circumstances are right; ie. if the city offers tempting, good quality spaces. This is why a good city can be compared to a good party - people stay for much longer than really necessary, because they are enjoying themselves (Gehl, 2002).

i. Necessary activities

The things that have to be done:

Going to school, shopping, work, waiting for bus etc, in the short term these types of activities occur regardless of the quality of the physical environment because people are compelled to carry them out. *A Good City provides good conditions for the many necessary activities and will retain and strengthen these activities over time.*

ii. Optional activities

Activities people are tempted to do when climatic conditions, surroundings and the place are generally inviting and attractive. These activities are especially sensitive to quality. They only occur when quality is high. *A Good City is characterized by a multitude of optional activities.* People come to

town, find the places attractive and stay for a long time. A great, attractive city can always be recognized by the fact that many people choose to spend time in the public spaces.

iii. Social activities

These activities occur whenever people move about in the same spaces. Watching, listening, and experiencing other people, passive and active participation. *A Good City offers a wide range of attractive optional activities, and because so many people are present in the city, there are many people to experience watch and speak to. The city becomes a lively and wonderful city.* (Gehl, 2002)

The single most important function of an element in the city is the symbolic meaning attached to it. All great civic art is in tune with the profound depths of our emotions. The great plaza, like the great building, is linked with the world of fantasy, the context of feeling. There is in all-aesthetic experience, a deep core of valuation, which owes little to critical judgment (Moughtin, 2003).

The activities in the case studies chosen vary from one place to the other; general activities which are found in these places are market place, act as parking space most of the time, some gives identity to the city example Place Liberté, skating area, place to sit and watch people, walking across the square, children's play area example place de Strasburg, place to eat and drink example place Plumereau, place de grand Marche. People waiting to pick school children's etc.,

2.5 Forms of the square

There have been a number of attempts to classify the form that squares may take. Two of the most influential theories were outlined by Paul Zucker and Sitte. From his work on squares Zucker was able to distinguish five archetypal forms:

(Moughtin, 2003)

- i. The closed square where the space is self-contained; (Place Plumereau)
- ii. The dominated square where the space is directed towards the main building; (Place de Rabelais)
- iii. The nuclear square where space is formed around a centre (Place Theuriet, Place du Nord);
- iv. Grouped(Linked) squares where spatial units are combined to form larger compositions (Place Liberté); and
- v. The amorphous square where space is unlimited.

For Sitte, enclosure was taken as the prerequisite of the square and he concluded that there were only two types of square 'the deep type and the wide type'. (Moughtin, 2003)

2.6 Qualities of good squares

The enclosure of a place gives the expression of a sense of place, the centre. The square is an outdoor room and with the room it shares the quality of enclosure. Sense of enclosure is very important in design of squares.

The key to enclosure in the square is the treatment of its corners. Generally speaking, the more open the corners of the square the less the sense of enclosure, the more built up or complete they are, the greater the feeling of being enclosed. Other important qualities of squares and their surrounding buildings affect the degree of enclosure. These include the nature of the enclosing buildings' roof line, the height of the enclosing buildings in relation to the size of the space, the degree of their three-dimensional modelling, the presence or absence of a unifying architectural theme and the overall shape of the space itself. (Moughtin, 2003)

The design guide prepared by Essex County Council states: 'The relationship between the 'effective height' of the buildings and the width of the space is critical if a harmonious urban place is to be created. If too high in relation to width, a feeling of oppression may result; if too low, a feeling of exposure and vulnerability. The guide goes on to suggest the maximum harmonious proportion of height to width as being 1:4

2.7 Importance of design principles

The public square is probably still the most important element in city design; it is the chief method by which a town or city is both decorated and given distinction. It is the natural setting for the most important civic and religious buildings, a place for fine sculpture, fountains and lighting and, above all else, a place where people meet and socialize.

When such public places are designed according to some fairly basic principles and are imbued with a sense of place, they take on an added symbolic meaning. The most important physical quality of such spaces is enclosure. The methods of enclosure are many though the principles are few. In case studies chosen some are classifiable in terms of the above said definition of squares; some are not classifiable example place Velpeau, place Strasbourg are surrounded by trees which acts as enclosures to these places, place Plumereau holds good for an enclosed square.

3. A GREAT PUBLIC SPACE

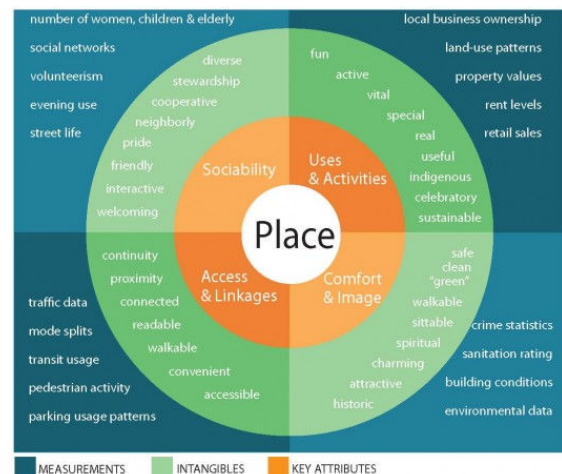
In addition to criteria's taken for consideration while designing a public spaces; as described in chapter 2, there are lots of other components which guides in turning a place into destination, into a great place. Lot of the ideas is extracted from the work of William H. "Holly" Whyte's book '*The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*'.

3.1 What makes a successful place?

Great public spaces are where celebrations are held, social and economic exchanges take place, friends run into each other, and cultures mix. They are the "front porches" of our public institutions – libraries, field houses, neighborhood schools – where we interact with each other and government. When the spaces work

well, they serve as a stage for our public lives (Whyte, 2001).

What makes some places succeed while others fail? To understand this question the 'Project for public space (PPS)' team which works on the principles developed by William H. Whyte's; has developed guidelines for understanding what makes a place really great; by evaluating thousands of public spaces around the world, PPS has found that successful ones have four key qualities: they are accessible; people are engaged in activities there; the space is comfortable and has a good image; and finally, it is a sociable place: one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit. PPS developed The Place Diagram as a tool to help people in judging any place, good or bad: (Project for public spaces (PPS)).



The center place represents the place of study which is examined on the basis of four key attributes which are;

- a. Social components,**
- b. Uses & activities,**
- c. Access & linkage,**
- d. Comfort & image.**

The first ring represents the intangible qualities of a place, which are qualitative in nature. The next outer ring shows the quantitative aspects that can be measured by statistics or field surveys. Each attributes can be understood by asking further questions which can be applied to a chosen site. Detailed descriptions of each attributes are as follows;

3.2 Social components:

This is a difficult quality for a place to achieve, but once attained it becomes an unmistakable feature. When people see friends, meet and greet their neighbors, and feel comfortable interacting with strangers, they tend to feel a stronger sense of place or attachment to their community – and to the place that fosters these types of social activities.

Questions to consider on Sociability:

- i. Is the space welcoming?
- ii. Does the space accommodate multiple activities?
- iii. Is the space friendly? Including for special need people?
- iv. Is the space interactive?

- v. Does the space serve as center of the community?
 - vi. Does it shape the identity of the city?
 - vii. What is the involvement of public in shaping the space?
 - viii. What activities make the space attractive to people and encourage social interaction?
 - ix. Is there a sense of importance about the space?
 - x. Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends?
 - xi. Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another?
 - xii. Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?
 - xiii. Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place or do they point to one of its features with pride?
 - xiv. Are people smiling? Do people make eye contact with each other?
 - xv. Do people use the place regularly and by choice?
 - xvi. Does a mix of ages and ethnic groups that generally reflect the community at large?
- These questions will shed lights on the social attributes of the space, which is very subjective and qualitative in nature. The social components can be measured and understood only by talking with the people who are extensive users of the place, understanding the importance of the place and prolonged direct observation of the site.

3.3 Uses & activities

Activities are the basic building blocks of a place. Having to do something, gives people a reason to come to a place – and return. When there is nothing to do, a space will be empty and that generally means that something is wrong or it serves some other purpose. Whyte while talking about the uses and activities he explains certain principles to be kept in mind in evaluating a place for its uses and activities which are (Whyte, 2001):

- The more activities that are going and that people have an opportunity to participate in, the better.
- There is a good balance between men and women (women are more particular about the spaces that they use).
- People of different ages are using the space (retired people and people with young children can use a space during the day when others are working).
- The space is used throughout the day.
- A space that is used by both singles and people in groups is better than one that is just used by people alone because it means that there are places for people to sit with friends, there is more socializing, and it is more fun.
- The ultimate success of a space is how well it is managed.

Questions to consider on uses & activities:

- i. What are the kinds of activities taking place?
- ii. How useful is the place?

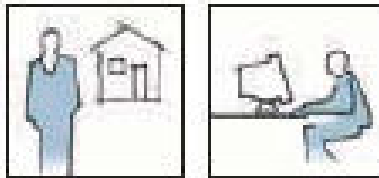
- iii. How flexible is the place?
- iv. Who are the users?
- v. Are the places adaptive to seasonal change?
- vi. How are the borders defined?
- vii. What purpose it serves for the surrounding communities?
- viii. How does this place encourage use by a diverse cross section for the public?
- ix. Are people using the space or is it empty?
- x. Is it used by people of different ages?
- xi. Are people in groups?
- xii. How many different types of activities are occurring – people walking, eating, playing, relaxing, and reading?
- xiii. Which parts of the space are used and which are not?
- xiv. Are there choices of things to do?
- xv. Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone is in charge of the space?

While talking about the activities in public spaces in 'Public spaces public life, in the city of Adelaide' (Gehl, 2002) Gehl (Detailed description is discussed in the 2nd chapter) has classified three distinct categories of public activities; which are **necessary activities, optional activities and social activities** - the optional and the social activities are the important keys to city quality. It is very important to identify and understand various possible activities and uses of a particular place over a period of time; which in turn determines the life of the public

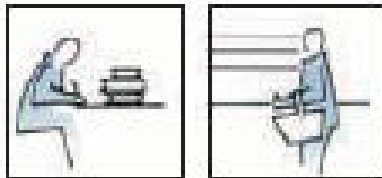
space. Gehl further talks about the daily users and activities in public spaces: (Gehl, 2002):

Which types of user groups can be expected to use the public spaces?

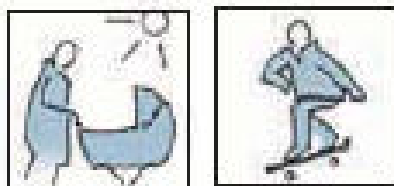
- i. **The everyday user:** People that live and work in the area or walk through.



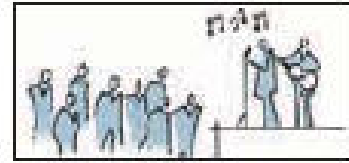
- ii. **The visitors or customers:** People that visits the functions in the area.



- iii. **The recreational visitors:** People that visit the area because the public space is delightful or use the public space in relation to recreation, pleasure, exercise, play etc.

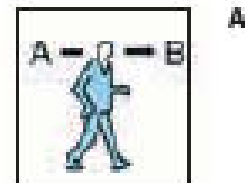


- iv. **The visitors to events:** People that visit the public space because of special events

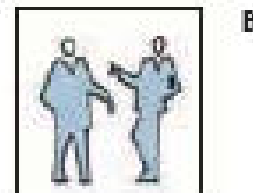


What kind of activities can be expected in the public spaces?

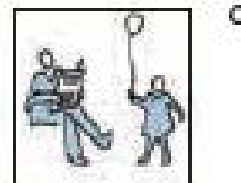
- i. **Daily necessary activity:** To walk to and from or walk through.



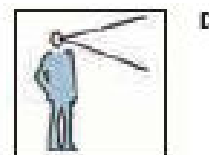
- ii. **Daily recreational activity:** Breaks and pauses.



- iii. **Recreational activity:** Recreation and play.



- iv. **Planned activity:** To be spectator or participant.



3.4 Access & linkage

You can judge the accessibility of a place by its connections to its surroundings, both visual and physical. A successful public space is easy to get to and get through; it is visible both from a distance and up close. The edges of a space are important as well: For instance, a row of shops along a street is more interesting and generally safer to walk by than a blank wall or empty lot. Accessible spaces have a high parking turnover and, ideally, are convenient to public transit. Gehl talks about the importance of pedestrians in public spaces says; *'The key to establishing lively and safe public spaces is pedestrian traffic and pedestrian activities. The arrival to the public space will - in different combinations - happen via six forms of traffic - people will arrive on foot, by car, by train or tram, by bus or on bicycles. Eventually everybody will be pedestrians leaving their mode of transport behind and entering the public spaces experiencing the surroundings at eye level. The traffic in good public spaces will primarily be dominated by walking, cycling and limited vehicular traffic.'*

How the traffic will be distributed depends on the quality of the public spaces. If the vehicular traffic is too dominant the public spaces will neither be exciting for people nor lively. Worldwide examples show how public spaces with unfortunate compromises for pedestrians result in unattractive and deserted public spaces. If on the other hand

good conditions are provided for pedestrians more people will walk and many re-creative and attractive activities will follow.

A public space of high quality will always be recognized by people interrupting their walk or daily business so they can rest, enjoy the city, the public spaces and be together with other people. Good conditions for walking and for life on foot, along with a possibility for staying, for pauses and experiences are the key to attractive and lively public spaces'. (Gehl, 2002)

While measuring access and linkages following questions may be considered;

Questions to consider on access & linkages:

- i. Can you see the space from a distance? Is its interior visible from the outside?
- ii. Is there a good connection between the space and the adjacent buildings, or is it surrounded by blank walls?
- iii. Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?
- iv. Can people easily walk to the place? For example, do they have to dart between moving cars to get to the place?
- v. Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?
- vi. Does the space function for people with special needs?
- vii. Do the roads and paths through the space take people where they actually want to go?

- viii. Can people use a variety of transportation options – bus train, car, bicycle, etc. – to reach the place?
- ix. Are parking spaces are provided?
- x. Which is the best mode to reach the space?
- xi. Are transit stops conveniently located next to destinations?

3.5 Comfort & Image

Whether a space is comfortable and presents itself well is a key to its success. Comfort includes perceptions about safety, cleanliness, and the availability of places to sit – the importance of giving people the choice to sit where they want is generally underestimated. *Women in particular are good judges on comfort and image; because they tend to be more discriminating about the public spaces they use* (Whyte, 2001). It is very difficult to define what is comfort of a place; as the nature of topic is subjective, varies from person to person and difficult to define.

Questions to consider on comfort:

Following questions gives some idea on measuring comfort in public space; though it is subjected to discussion.

- i. Does the place make a good first impression?
- ii. Is the place attractive?
- iii. Are there more women than men?
- iv. Are there enough places to sit?
- v. Are seats conveniently located?

- vi. What makes the place special?
- vii. Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?
- viii. Are spaces are clean and free of litter?
- ix. Is the place appealing to various kinds of people?
- x. Who is responsible for maintenance?
- xi. What do they do? When?
- xii. Does the area feel safe?
- xiii. Is there a security presence? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?
- xiv. How is the lighting in the space?
- xv. Are people taking pictures?
- xvi. Are there many photo opportunities available?
- xvii. Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?
- xviii. Does the space provide a sense of comfort and safety to people gathering and using the space?

These are the important four attributes of a great public space as defined by Whyte and Ghel in their books; which forms the first ring; ie qualitative aspects of public spaces; which took into considerations of diverse, friendly, interactive, welcoming, fun, active, vital, special, real, useful, safe, clean, walk-able, attractive, historic, proximity, convenience, readable aspects of the spaces.

Apart from qualitative attributes there are various other things which can be easily measured which

represent the quantitative aspects of public spaces which are as follows:

3.6 Visual aspects:

Visual aspects are measurable in terms of architecture, the elements of attractiveness in the space, materials used, historic value of the place, reflection of communities character etc.,

Questions to consider on Visual aspects:

- i. What is the history of the place?
- ii. What makes it extraordinary or memorable place?
- iii. How unique is the place in terms of architecture?
- iv. What are the attractive architectural elements in the place?
- v. Is the place contextual to the surroundings?
- vi. Does it provide interesting visual experience?
- vii. How are the walls surrounding the public space treated?

These questions will help in understanding the architectural treatment of the place, which are measurable in terms of architectural styles followed such as classical, modern, post-modern, contemporary or futuristic in nature.

3.7 Touristic value:

Public spaces created in the cities not only serve the communities demand of open spaces but also acts as destinations to various other walks of people; of which tourist are one of the important group who are driven to these great open spaces in the cities.

Question to consider on Touristic value:

- i. Is it one of the tourist attractive places in the city?
- ii. Is it recommended for tourist?
- iii. Is it a place enjoyed by tourist?
- iv. Is the place photogenic?
- v. What makes this space special and worthy designating as a great public space?

3.8 Soundscape:

The term 'soundscape' encompasses all aspects of an acoustical environment and often is used to characterize the natural sounds in pristine outdoor environments. Soundscape planning and design is also critical for urban public spaces if they are to serve their intended purposes. "What should a public space sound like?" is a fundamental question in urban soundscape planning and design. The answer depends upon numerous factors including the historic and intended uses of the facilities, the presence of intruding noise sources, the size of the site, the proximity of abutting land uses, the projects budget etc., (Barrett).

In his book Zardini *'Sense of the city -An alternative approach to urbanism'* explains how sense of the luminosity, sounds, smells and surfaces of the places in which we live, work and play suggest modes of experiencing the urban environment that challenge the dominance of the eye. *Designing the urban spaces with sensory aspects is a new approach centered on our perceptual capacities as human beings and the qualities of our urban habitat.* (Zardini, 2005); Some of the key elements such as soundscape, surface of the place and smellscape which aid in creating a sense of space; can be applied for the design and evaluation of a public space;

Questions to consider for soundscape:

- i. What kinds of sounds are observed?
- ii. Are there any measures taken to improve the soundscape of the place?

Questions to consider for surface treatment:

- i. Are the surface users friendly?
- ii. Is it suitable for all seasons?

Questions to consider for smellscape:

- i. Is the place clean and hygienic?
- ii. What kind of smell you can observe in public spaces?

3.9 Crime statistics

This data will give us an idea of how safe a place is and what are the regulations in force to reduce crime in these public spaces.

3.10 Traffic data

The traffic data will give us an idea on busyness of the street surrounding the public spaces; the quality of public spaces can be affected by overwhelming traffic around the space.

3.11 Local business

Public spaces are eventful place; 'People attract people'; local business like café, bars, restaurants, ice cream shops or local market, can enhance the liveliness of the public spaces; but the local businesses should not dictate the use of public space (Place publique).

3.12 Other components

The other measurable components which aid in making a place into destination or a great place; includes form of the open space, land-use pattern, property values, rent values, retail values, building condition and environmental data. These are the exhaustive list of components extracted from various sources; about making a place into destination. These attributes can be used for building or evaluating public spaces or these attributes can be used to make these public spaces into spectacular destinations of the city. The complexity of making great public spaces can be easily understood by the list of things which goes into the making of a great place. These characteristics which make up a place into destination are applied on the case studies chosen in Tours, not all the characteristics are examined here, only few attributes are tested on the ground because of the limitations in time.

4. CASE STUDIES

4.1 Introduction

This research focuses on the methodology in understanding a public space and how it qualifies as great public space or as city destinations and the use of public spaces in urban context. Understanding how a sense of space is created in the minds of people with regards to some public places. It draws on a case study of a six month long research project in the historic city of Tours, French commune of central-western France[with a population of around 136,000(2007)]. The study is set out to examine ***‘Does the design or conception of public space in itself determine the success or failure of public space?’*** How people use the space, what is it designed for and how is it used. The findings will help in understanding the characteristic of a great public space.

The project is based on a mixed-methods approach, which involved discussion with stakeholders in the city, street surveys (minimal) with members of the public and direct observations at eight different sites in Tours. The observations were carried out in randomly picked well known public spaces in the city of Tours. These case studies closely follow the definition taken for study purpose which is ‘Public space is the accessible field of opportunity and interaction, where people can meet to share experiences and visions, where they can try out new paths to solve their own

problems and improve the quality of life’. (Coirier, 2010). (See map 1 – Case study location).

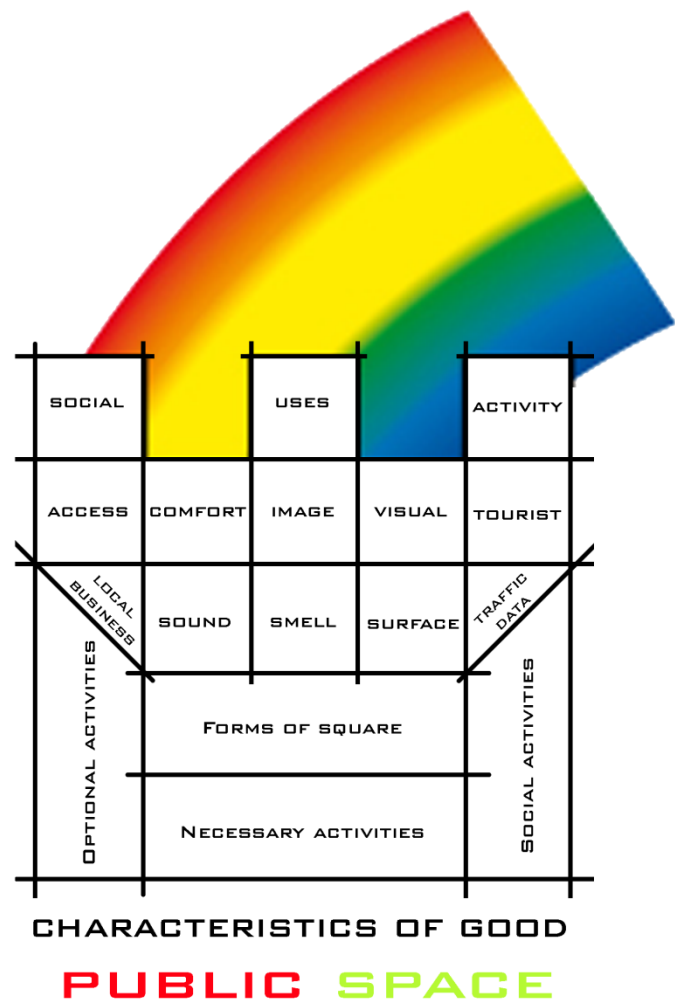
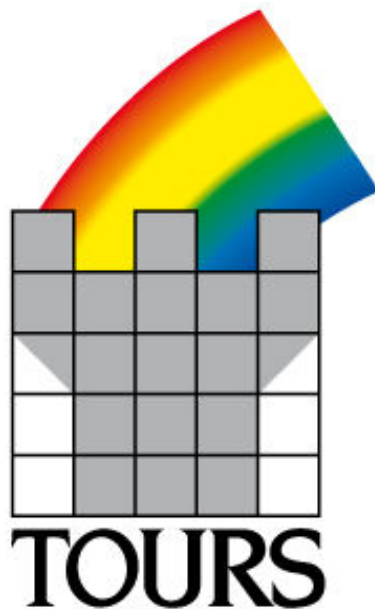
The sites identified for observations are Place du Grand Marche, Place Liberte, Place du Nord, Place Plumereau, Place de Rabelais, Place Strasbourg, Place Theuriet, and Place Velpeau. The observations were carried out at different days of week and at different times of the day. Criteria and the elements of observation are described in chapter 3; under design of squares; which took into account of the following characteristics; social component, uses & activities, access & linkage, comfort & image, visual aspects, touristic value, soundscape, crime statistics, traffic data, local business and other components which makes a successful place. These characteristic were compared with design ideas which were conceived at the time of the project and the present life.

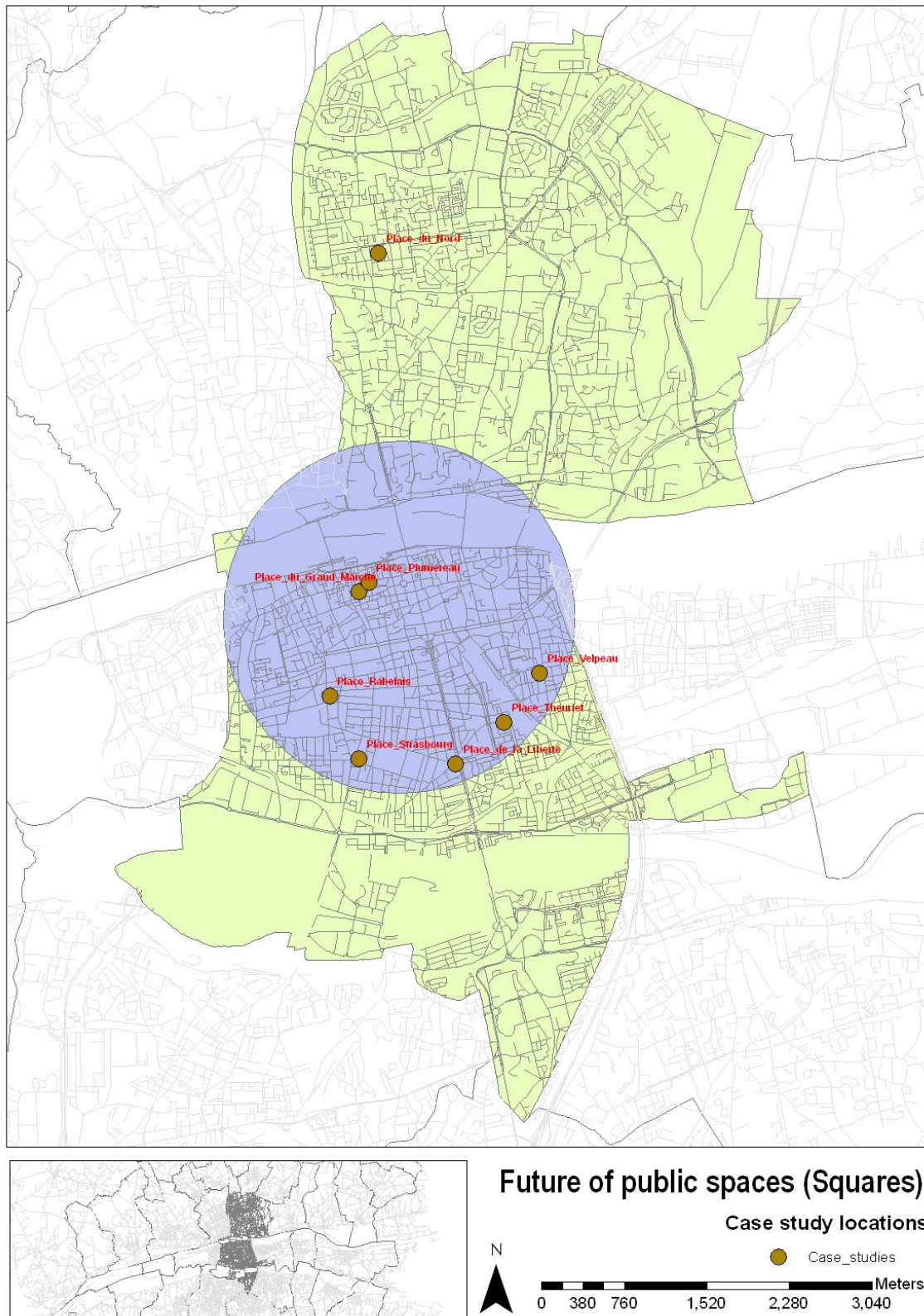
Case studies	Days						
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1. Place du Grand Marche	X			X			
2. Place <u>Liberte</u>	X			X			
3. Place du Nord	X	X					
4. Place <u>Plumereau</u>	X			X			
5. Place de Rabelais	X			X			
6. Place Strasbourg	X			X			
7. Place <u>Theuriet</u>			X		X		
8. Place <u>Velpeau</u>	X					X	

Case studies	Timings										
	10:11	11:12	12:13	13:14	14:15	15:16	16:17	17:18	18:19	19:20	20+
1. Place du Grand Marche				X	X					X	X
2. Place <u>Liberte</u>		X						X	X		
3. Place du Nord				X	X						
4. Place <u>Plumereau</u>		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
5. Place de Rabelais			X		X	X	X				
6. Place Strasbourg			X		X		X	X			
7. Place <u>Theuriet</u>		X	X		X						
8. Place <u>Velpeau</u>	X	X	X	X	X						

Features and elements of a good public space(not all may apply)				
Characteristics				
Sl.No	Characteristics	Design idea's or principles conceived	Present life	Expectations

A metaphor was made with these characteristics with that of Tours logo, which indirectly represents the importance of all these characteristic features in the formation of VIBGYOR. Therefore it is these characteristic features which help in turning a place into destination and absence of any of these features in anyplace makes it difficult to qualify it as a great place.

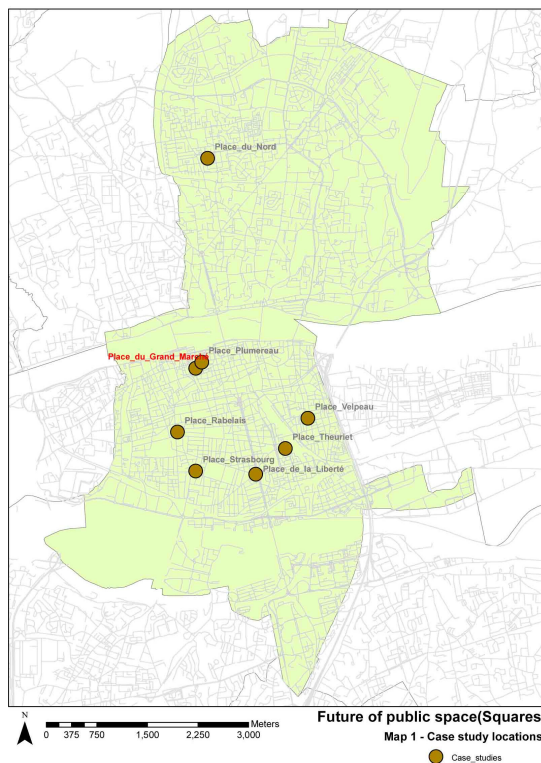




4.2 Case study I

Place du Grand Marche

Place du Grand Marche is located in old neighborhood of Tours, a street connect it to Place Plumereau. The place is famous for the artwork 'Giant monster' which is also called 'Tours monster'. The place is surrounded by commercial shops, restaurants.



The initial idea when the project was conceived was to create a promenade at different scale, retaining the old buildings and tree along the stretch with a demand of cultural activities from the community.



But the project was not completed due various reasons including the decision to retain the tree along the promenard which today is seen as problem as the surface of the promenard giving its way due to thick roots of tree expanding in all direction. The promenard was desinged in consences with local community; the place was concieved as cultural point for the local community.

***Design idea was to create urban pocket
promenade at different scale.***

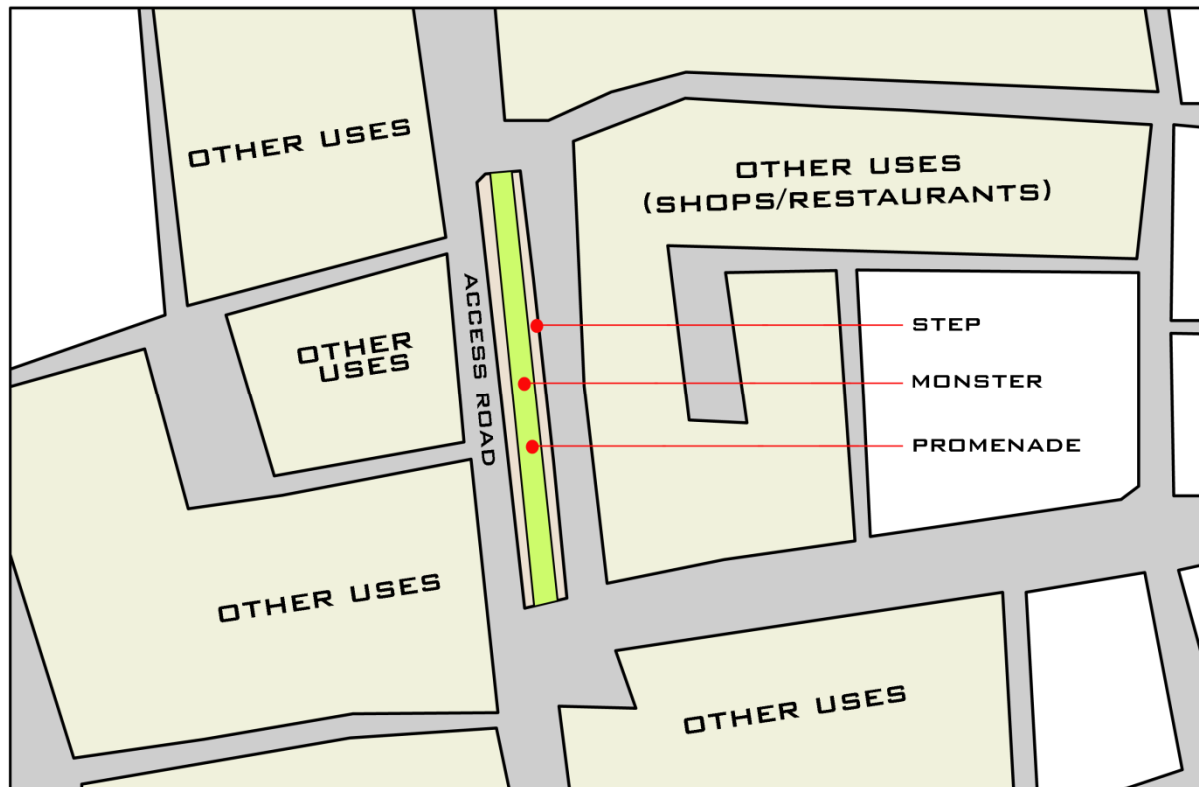
Place du Grand Marche**13:00 – 15:00, Sunday 8th May 2011;**

It is lunch time, sunshine; I can hardly see people using the space... I can see a family open dining at a restaurant... a teenager sitting with his skate board under monster... a couple walking through the promenade... All the shops are shut with exception to the restaurants... Four or five cars are parked.... and lot of cycles too... The flow of traffic is less... May be because it's Sunday?? Almost an hour passed couple girls taking pictures one after the other in front of monster laughing and enjoying ... Hardly some 20 cars passed... It's dry nothing much seems to be happening....

**19:00 – 21:00, Wednesday 20th April 2011;**

Sun is about to set... I see lot of college students gathering In front of restaurants taking food, drinks, smoking... all the outdoor seats are occupied on one side and on the other side a group of teenagers are preparing temporary stage for a musical show... lot of people in groups are moving towards the musical band... the traffic is slow people are crossing at various point... I hear music; it's from the show; people are moving towards the temporary stage... Its loud and clear a speaker is place right in front of stage its making lot of noise... people from restaurants and people from upper floors are peeping out to see what is going on... I see some 50-60 people gathered front of stage... a band is playing music live... youngsters are dancing... I hear siren its police patrol... its almost 2 hours now the crowd is increasing by time... its dark... the music band is moving and the crowd along with it..





Characteristic feature of the place

The place is inviting; monster acts as element of attraction, and the place is meant for organizing small cultural events and it accommodates multiple activities such as walking, taking café or drink, eating in restaurant, the place is designed in such a way that it does not facilitate people to sit and spend time without getting into restaurants; as no seating is facilitated. It acts as a local identity not the place as such but the monster; it's called 'Tours monster'. The place was a result of communities' demand. It acts as a spillover space of 'Place Plumereau'.

The borders of the place are defined by roads around the promenade and the car parking. The space is occupied only on certain days of the week and

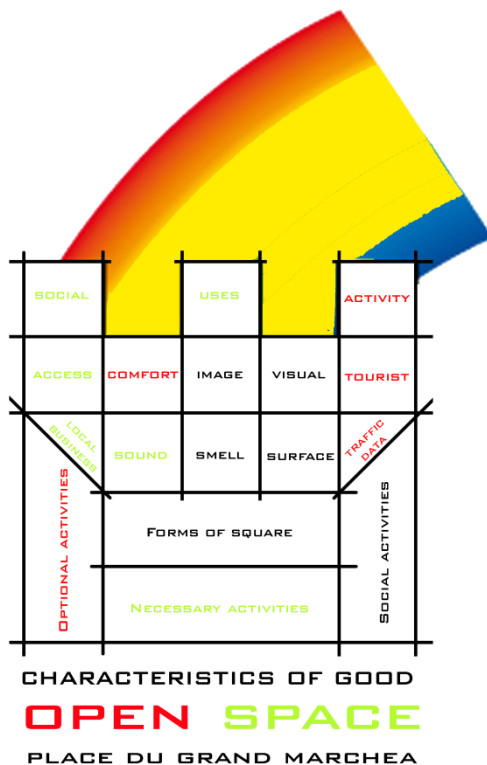
certain part of the day mostly by college students.

The concept behind promenade doesn't seem to be practiced in daily life as we can see the use of space is not very intense. The place encourages only daily necessary activities such as walking, passing through and planned activities such as outdoor seating for restaurants, monster etc; sometimes encourages recreational and unplanned activities.

The place is well connected; can be accessed by public transport which is a five-minute walk from the place. The place is attracted only by the monster which drives people to the place and the chain of restaurants; it's photogenic. The place is historic with old buildings and monster which symbolizes the modern era; and in terms of surface a clear distinction is made by using bright color tile and

the place is less noisy; these are the distinctive features one could observe in this place.

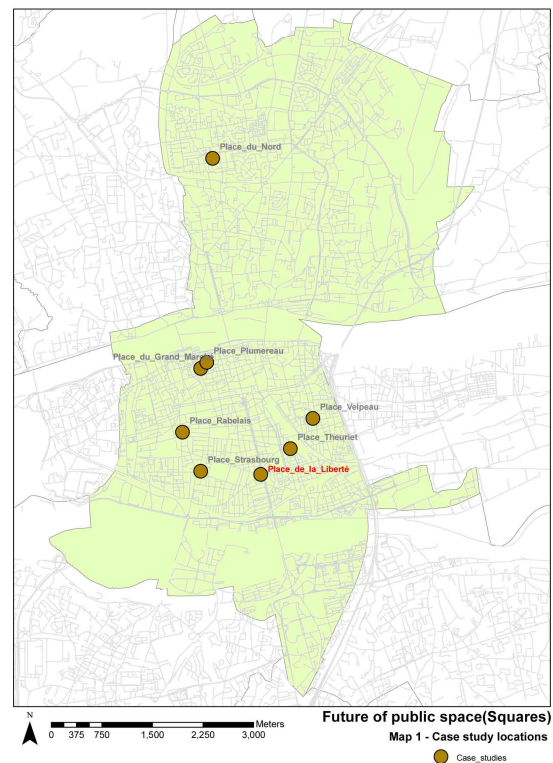
These characteristic features when compared with the list discussed in chapter three with respect to social component, uses & activities and other necessary & optional activities and translated in the form of metaphor one can easily identify the missing elements which caters to the overall picture of a great public space. Though some of the features identified as key elements in turning a place into destination are missing; still it serves much other purpose which acts an identity to the city.



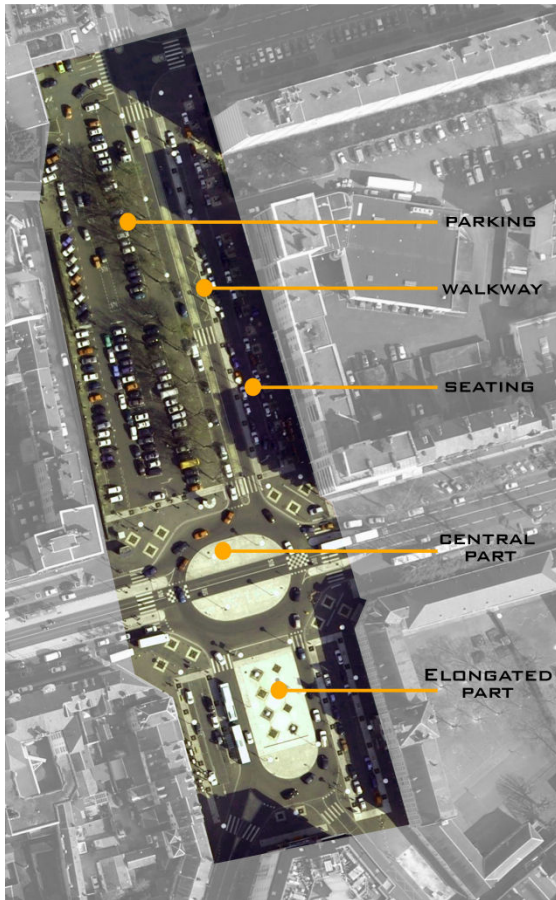
4.3. Case study II

Place Liberte (Thiers)

Place Liberte is a junction where avenue de Grandmont and avenue de General de Gaulle intersects. It has three parts basically one dedicated for parking, the central part and the elongated part on the left. The place is surrounded by restaurants, shops, hotel and a school building.



The central part and the elongated square are the resultant space; which are designated for public use with an idea of making the people move through the space without much level difference and the other part of place is used for parking; where a proposed tramway station is expected.



For many it is 'rotten freedom square' as it fails to facilitate and encourage diverse activities their by failing to attract people. On the other hand Place Liberté is one of the important landmarks in the city of Tours.

Design idea was to meet the growing demand of parking and make use of the rest of resultant space for people's movement.

Place Liberté (Place Thiers)

11:00-12:00, Wednesday 20th April 2011

Sunny day, vehicles moving slowly heavy traffic... a group of people waiting for bus... I see a old aged couple seated on the way from shopping (I see shopping bags with them); a couple of people crossing the square with their bikes...



I hardly see people walking across the square to the other end as this was its prime intension when the project was conceived... It's sunny and the place is very bright it's due to reflection from surface... White stones are used which enhances the reflection making the place much brighter... The other side of square is under tramway construction...



I see a mother with couple of kids being seated... empty chair outside the restaurants...An old lady crossing the square...



Lot of noise due to traffic and construction work... I see a group of protestors in car moving towards the city center one after other...

10:00-11:00, Sunday May 1st 2011

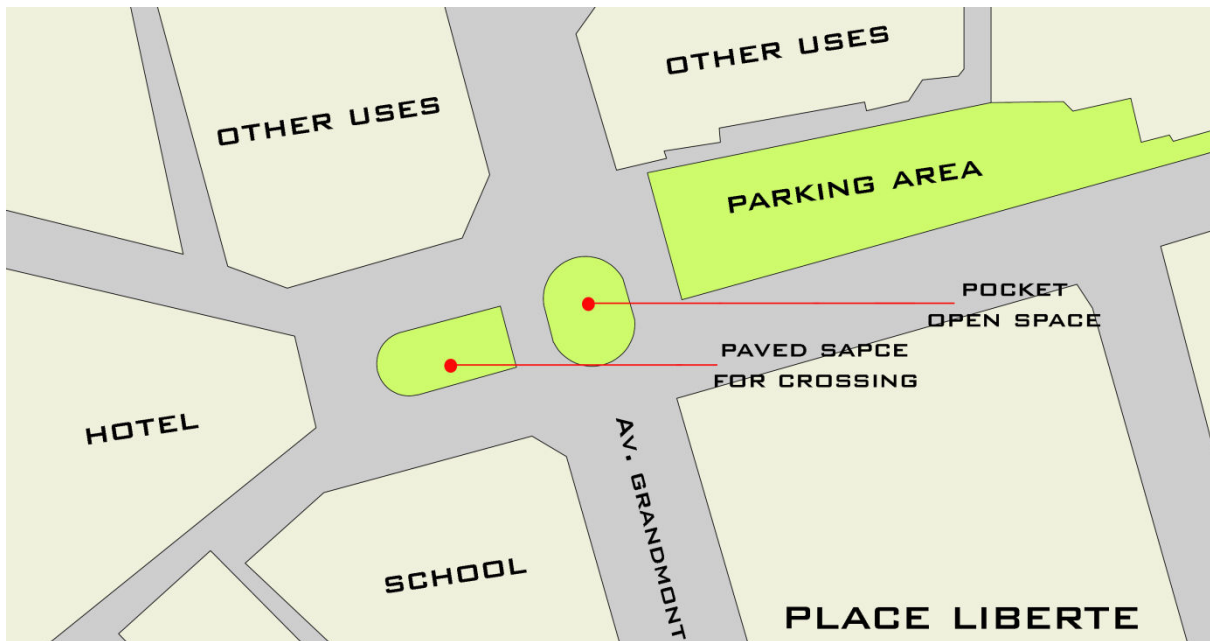
Ma day... I see lot people selling flowers in an organized manner its common seen in the city and it's the only extra activity I could find during the course of my observation period...



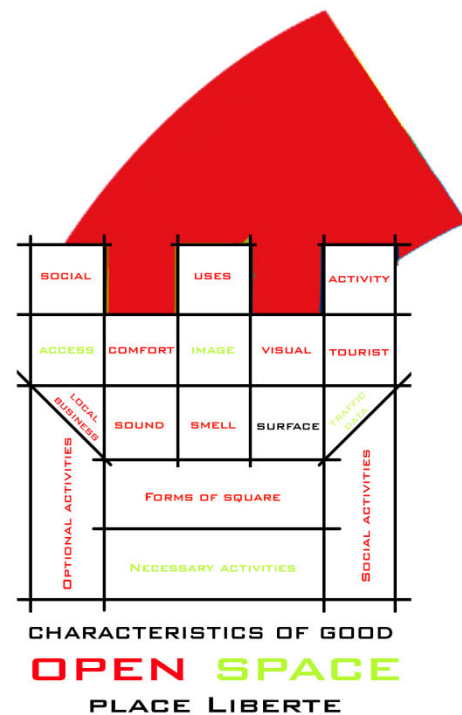
Characteristic feature of the place

Place Liberte is one place which all the commuters from south to center of the city pass by. It's a resultant space. Not inviting as the place is surrounded and marked by roads as its boundaries; where the traffic is quite heavy. There is hardly any place to sit (three groups seating's are provided) for large group. The place is not vibrant; hardly any activities occurs other than vehicular movements. Usually the place is dead without people in the center. The activities one could find at this place is people crossing the square (which was one of the main intentions of design); parents waiting for their children's and passer by stops for a couple of minute as few seats are provided and people waiting for the bus.

Place Liberte is well connected by public transport, parking space is provided around the square. Though the place is historic as the name suggest; but nothing concrete one could find and the place is surrounded by buildings of different architectural styles. It's not photogenic in nature; one can observe vehicles moving all the daylong and the noise along with it. The surface of square makes it distinct from the other place by the use of white stone. It is clear from the observation that the square is a resultant space and designed to cater growing demand of parking and the rest of space for circulation.



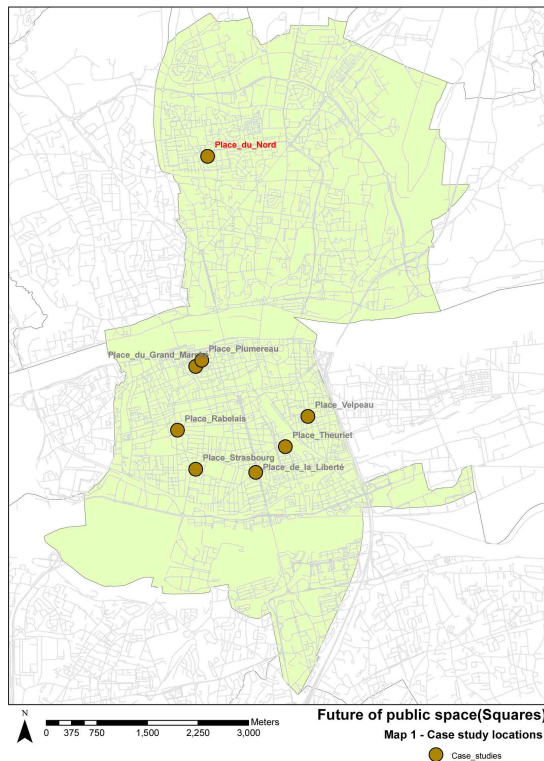
When we compare the list of features and elements which makes a place worthy of destination; one could find a large list of characteristic features missing in this space. But these ideas were not taken for design considerations as the main focus of design was functional; to solve the vehicular movement which resulted in pockets of space which was treated for public usage and providing parking facilities on the other end of the square. For many place Liberte is rotten freedom square as it fails to attract people. In spite of these missing characteristic features the square acts as identity to the city.



4.4 Case study III

Place du Nord

Place du Nord as the name suggests, it is in the northern part of Tours city. An open space used for parking, market and the old garden for general public. Ironically the space can be read in three distinct parcels amalgamating into one. The space in the foreground opens with literally no boundary (where a tramway shelter is proposed); followed by parking space which on Sundays used for market and the garden at the rear side.



The design ideas were very clear keeping the front portion option for tramway to stop; parking space which is in full capacity all day long and throughout

the week, people gathering for Sunday market and enclosed garden attached at the rear side.



Design idea was to facilitate enough open space in front for tramway; meeting the demand of parking (square); and connecting into the old garden at the back.

Place du Nord**13:00-15:00; Monday, May 2nd 2011**

Sunny day, I can hardly see people may be its too hot and more over it lunch time... I see steel benches right under sun pretty hot to sit... The rest of spaces are filled with car parking... I see two people sitting outside facing square chatting... Hardly general public crosses the square... one hour has passed I don't find any people



using the space or crossing... An old couple using the bench before crossing across the road... Car parking is full during and after the observation period.

Characteristic features of the place:

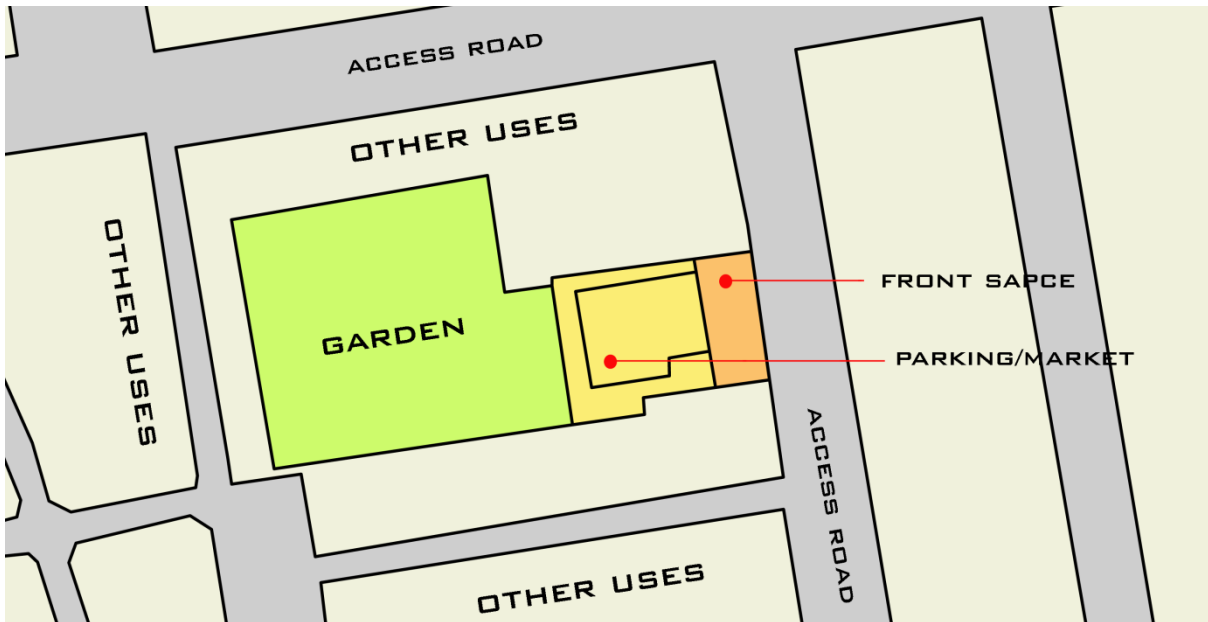
Place du Nord on the first place looks private as the square resides in the middle. The place is not very active and vibrant; and the park is used by local residents occasionally; the place is not friendly; hardly place to sit with exception of four to five group seating's. The activities are not exemplary; just serves the necessary activities;



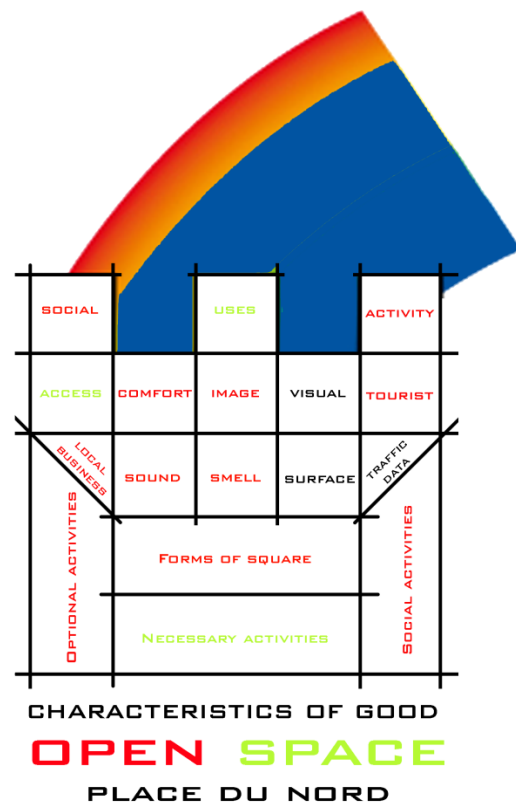
provides parking facilities for cars and bike; few benches to people walking across and garden which hardly look public. It's well connected by public mode of transport and a tramway is expected by the turn of couple of years. Surrounded by public and



private buildings which are modern and classic; facing road on one side and the other side ends with a garden. Not photogenic in nature.



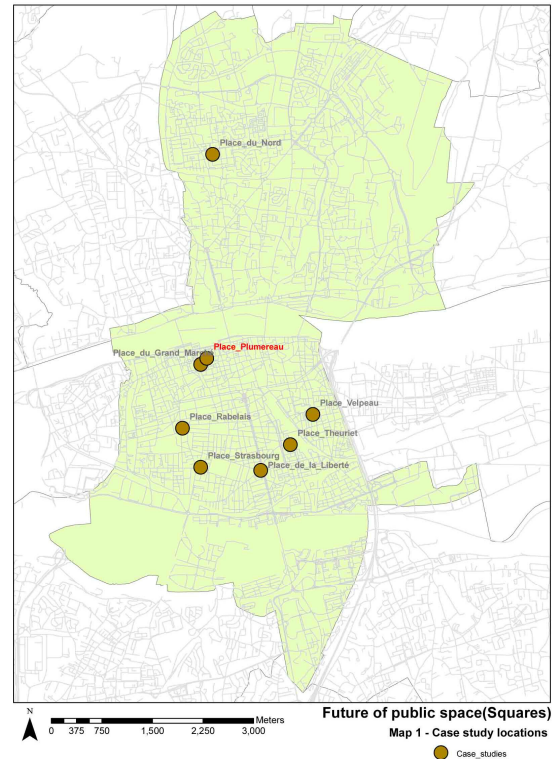
With the measuring characteristic features described in chapter three; we can hardly see few features being taken in for consideration. The place does not encourage interactions or other activities which makes place great. It simple serves the function of parking and on Sundays for market. Categorically the place is divided into three, evidence of which can be seen at the site; making it more complicated for the users. The garden is used for socializing by the local community; with scattered visual continuity.



4.5 Case study IV

Place Plumereau

The place Plumereau is called the living center of the city; it is very crowded especially with students and tourists. The houses around Plumereau dates back to fifteenth century; many houses are still in the same old style. It's filled with people most of the time; and it intensifies as the day progresses.



The square was remains of old settlement; surrounded by half-timbered houses, restaurants and bars;

Falls under perfect definition of squares in general; surrounded by building which controls the wind flow; building shadow; no vehicular movement around the square; all pedestrian walkways; add to that shops, bars & restaurants making it most happening place in the city for students and tourists.



Place Plumereau

11:00-13:00, Wednesday 4th May 2011

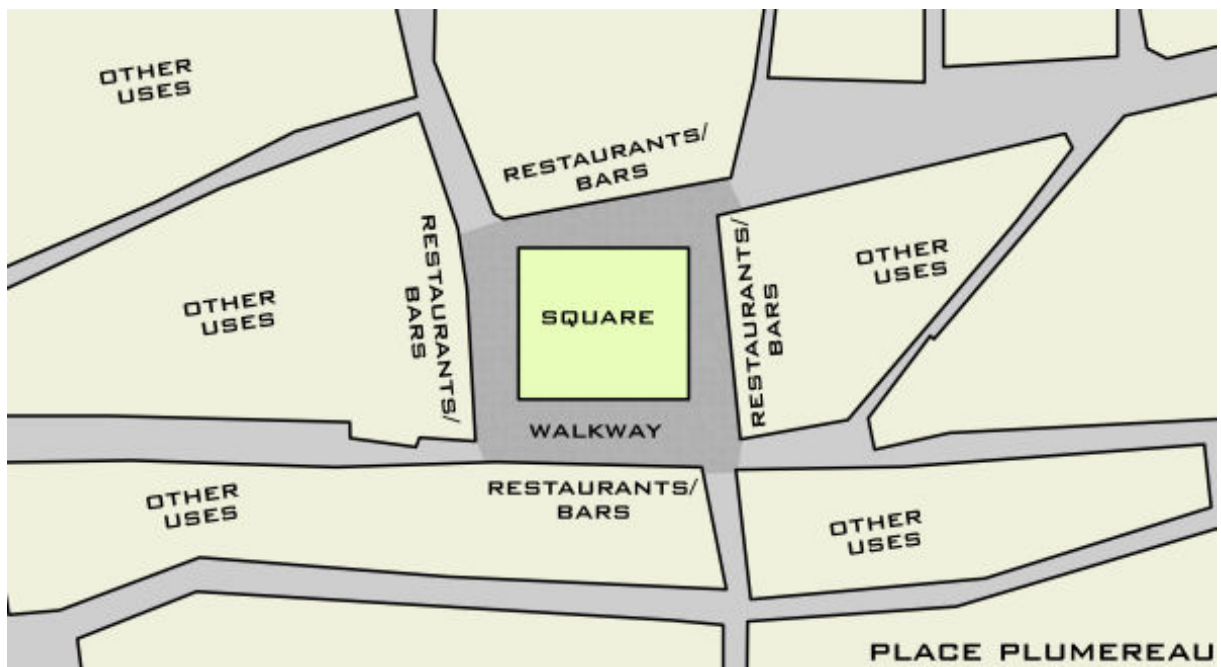
Sunny day, away from traffic I hear people talking like being in market place I could hear only talking sound... Almost all the restaurant chairs are occupied... I see people sitting in the steps in some part of the square... lot of children's playing in center... It's getting time for lunch people keep coming... I see a long queue forming to get ice cream in a shop... A teenager is playing music with his guitar... Students have occupied most of the restaurant chairs and families too are here (with pets)... A group of students standing right at the entry (northeast) talking and screaming blocking ways... Even ATM's are busy with people making queue... Most of the seats are organized as if for groups; some are facing the square... A group of tourist (guided tourist) are looking at the buildings and taking photographs...

Place Plumereau is the most happening place for students and youngsters. One could see people gathering at place Plumereau at any part of day throughout the week. People are very attached with place. This scenario is not only at day time even at nights people hang out here; often it's hard to find a place; making it into destination for students, youngsters, families and tourist etc.,

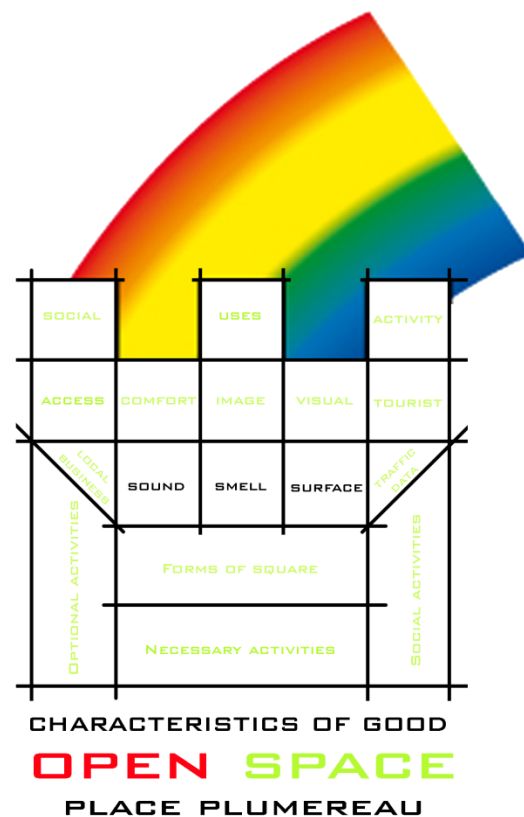


Characteristic features of the place

Place Plumereau is certainly welcoming; for simple reason people attract people; Even though the place is flooded with people the activities are mostly dining place; chatting with friends and families; and odd fellows in their own world singing and dancing. The place seems to be interactive and it serves as identity of city. It's often difficult to differentiate the regular users to that of tourists and others; and it is a meeting point for friends and families in the city. Students are proud to bring their friends here; which shows the attachment to this place. The borders of the square are defined by half-timbered houses; making it a perfect square which gives protection against wind, noise due to traffic and sunlight. You can find people eating, drinking, walking, reading, talking & chatting in their own way. The place is frequented by regular users, visitors, recreational visitors and event visitors. The place is connected by public transport and car parking's are provided adjacent roads leading to the square. The place is inviting and highly photogenic in nature.



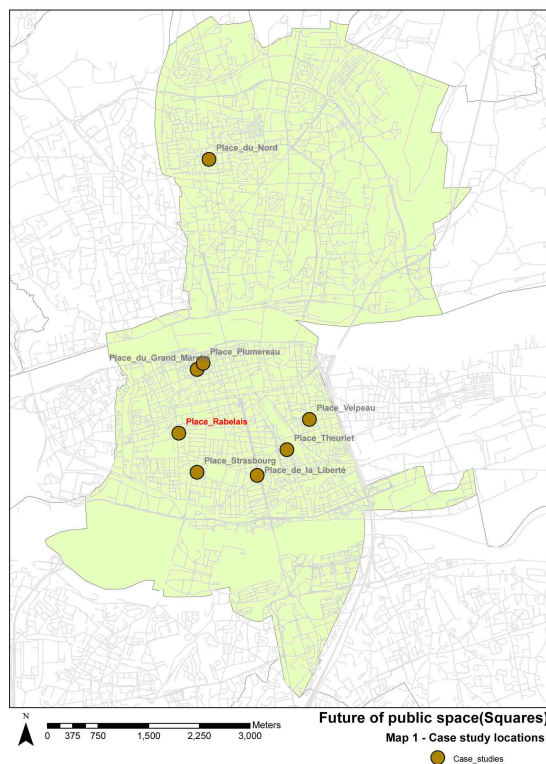
Vehicles are put off from the square making it more comfortable for pedestrians. Seating's are restaurant owned; but the level difference created within the square gives opportunity for people to sit without getting into restaurants. The place is of historical importance; the houses around dates back to fifteenth century. This is one of the places in city visited by tourist and recommended too. In respect to sound one could hear peoples talking all day long; sound created by walking pedestrians and occasional birds sound. The surface is treated with stone which gives warm feel and the local business (restaurants/bars) dominating the place.



4.6 Case study V

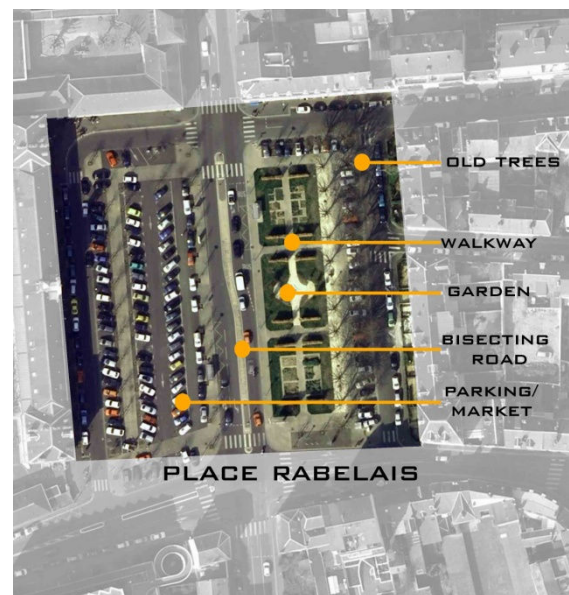
Place de Rabelais

Place de Rabelais an opens space designed on demand of the local community with intension to solve the problem of parking; creating a small garden by preserving a row of trees which were significant in brining unity in the overall



designed open space. The open space is bisected into two by road network which cut across the space; dividing the one space into two different spaces with different functions; one serves the function of parking and markets on Sundays and the other small garden to for local community with age old row of trees for walking across the place.

Clearly there are two distinct spaces created by road which cut across the place; the problem of unifying the space into one was biggest challenge. Unity was brought by using similar vegetations and trees which were found on the gardens on eastern side. Still we could find two distinct spaces with distinct functions.



Design idea was to create avenue with age old trees which were existing; creation of garden and parking for the local community.

Place de Rabelais**15:00 – 17:00; Wednesday 27th April 2011**

Late afternoon one could feel the intensity of sun... pretty hot, the place is deserted with hardly people



using the garden or the parking space both are deserted... few cars are parked on either side of the space... the dense old trees shades some parts of walkway...

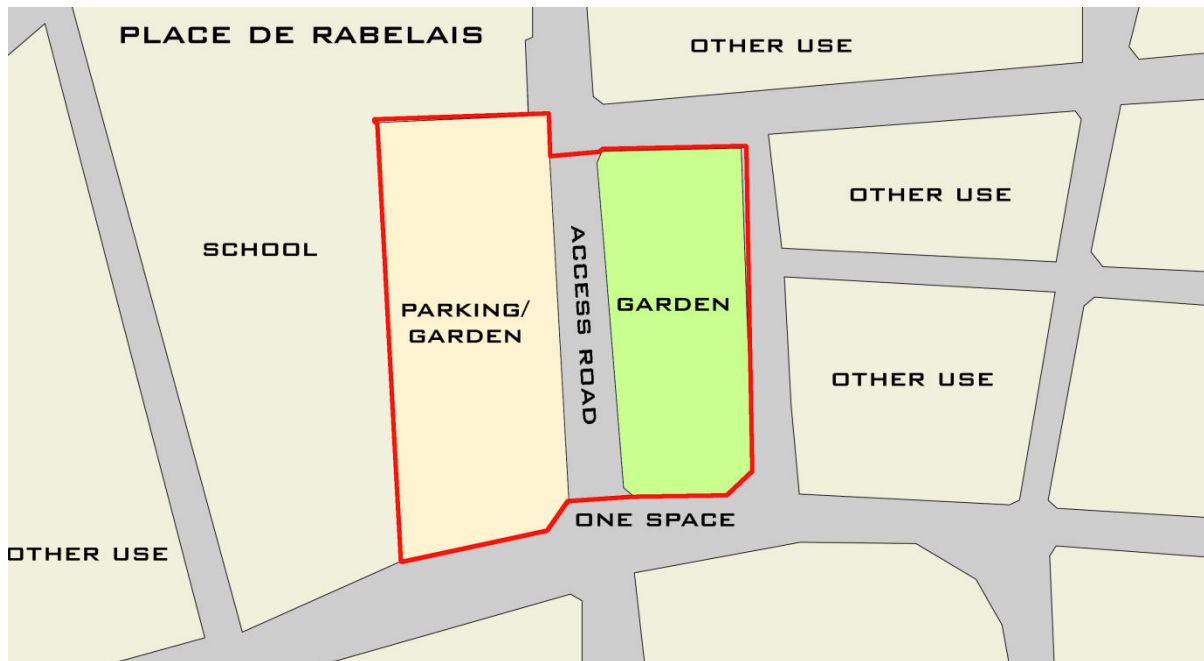


I see a couple walking across the stretch to the other side of the street... An old person retiring from walk being seated... couple of people waiting for bus under bus shelter... I see couple of school kids with cycle and skateboard playing on parking area on the side of school...

A couple resting in the garden... There seems to be nothing much happening at this part of the day.

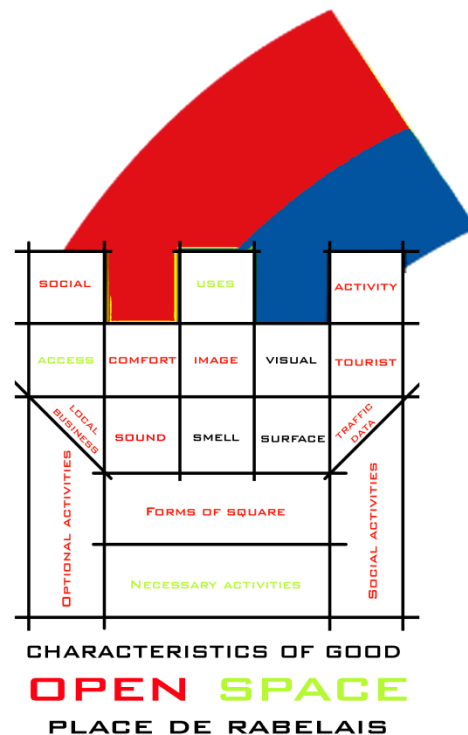
**12:00 – 13:00; Sunday 22nd May 2011**

Market occupying the parking area is filled with shops and people; lot of noise I could hear... I see people with bags walking across the garden... two people is seating with their shopping bags facing the market... lot of cars and vans are parked around the main road they belonged to the market people... place seems to be somewhat happening due to market with people occupying the place... a perfect market place from the outset....



Characteristic features of the place:

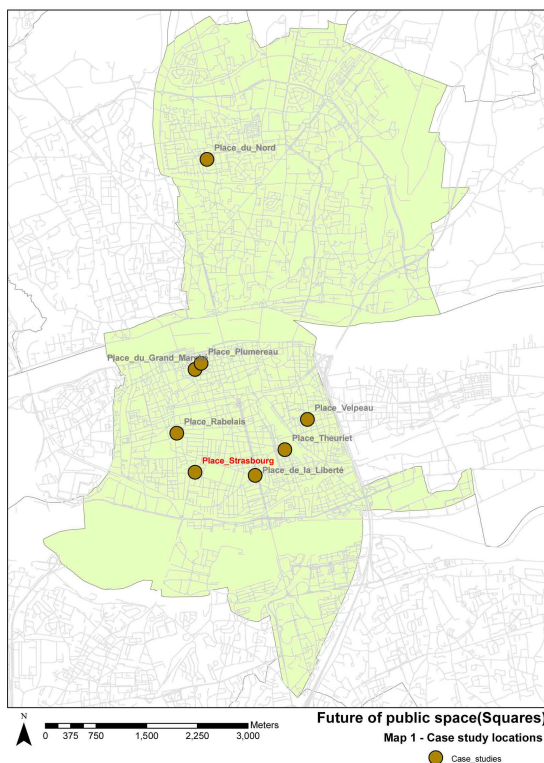
Place de Rabelais by design its two different spaces and it's very difficult to conceive as one. It's not welcoming place for a large groups of people it serves as small garden for the local community and serving the purpose of car parking. Except on Sundays one could find people using the space. Half of the space is filled with car parks and in the rest of the space which is garden people walk across the street and few people take a breath in the benches provided in the garden. The borders are defined by roads; one of which runs across the place; avenue on one side and school building on the other. There is not much scope created for socializing. Public mode of transport at a minutes reach. Garden is photogenic in nature and a list of characteristics features one could easily find missing in this place.



4.7 Case study VI

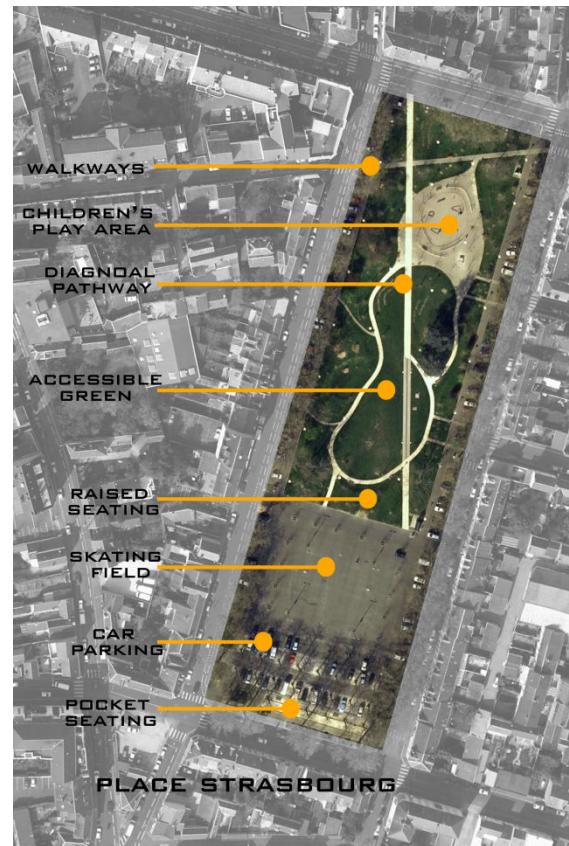
Place Strasbourg

Place Strasbourg an open space for all age groups with garden in the front, children's play area, lush accessible lawn, skating area, market place, parking and a pocket of seating space in the rear side of the open space. One of the distinct public spaces; which is open for all age group.



The open space is surrounded by walkways all around; it creates two level of walking possibilities one that of at ground level and at the garden level. The uniqueness of this garden is the possibility of using the lawn space for playing which are restricted in most of the parks in the city. The diagonal lines are emphasized as walkways one of which is the

continuation of road. One end of park is provided with seating looking at the green play field. There was no intension for hosting of Sunday market; but it serves the purpose.



Design idea was to create an open space which is accessible for all age group; with green play field.

Place Strasbourg**12:00 -13:00 Wednesday 13th April 2011**

Sky is clear with lot of sunshine... Though it's lunch time I see lots of children's playing and their parents monitoring being seated... a couple of youngsters biking... I see some eight to ten kids playing in kid's zone.



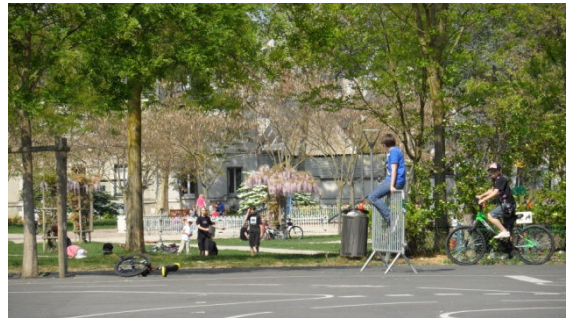
Five children are playing soccer in the green field... I see a parent playing along with kids... all the benches are occupied with people probably parents waiting for kids (am guessing)... I see a old couple being seated facing the green play field.



Kids are biking around the curvilinear path with great effort... this is in the garden... behind I see lot more kids with bikes and skating boards enjoying themselves...

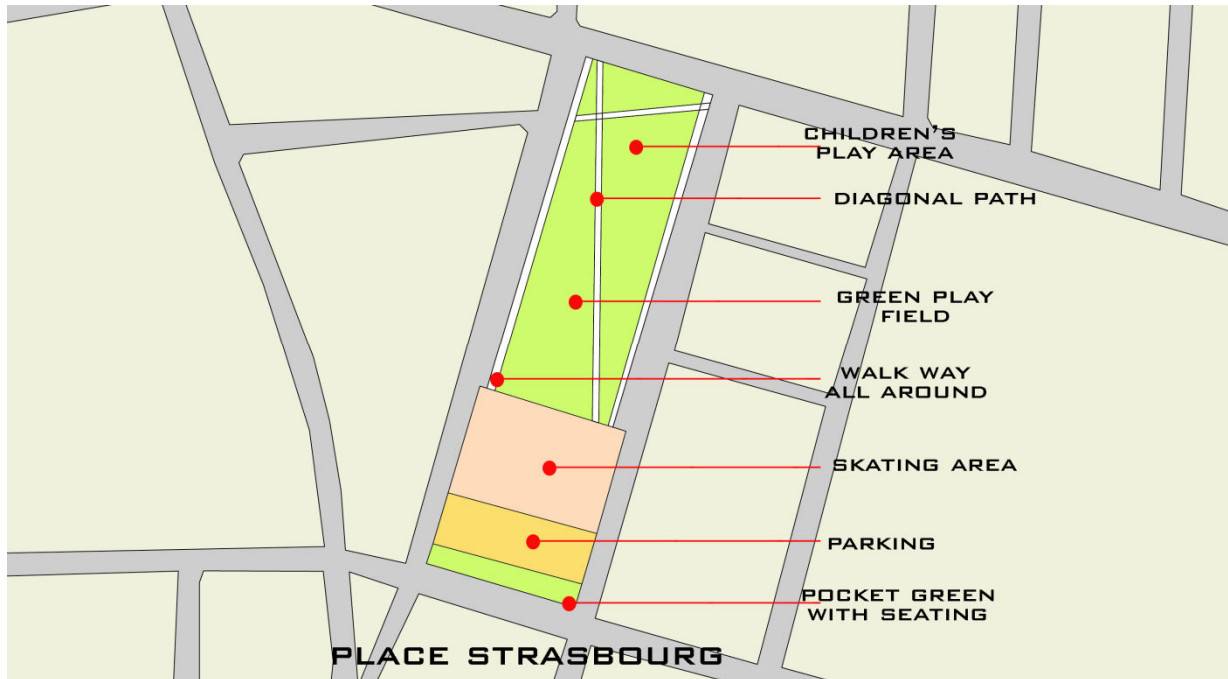


A small group of school children's are gathered at one point their bikes are lying around them; some of them are sleeping...



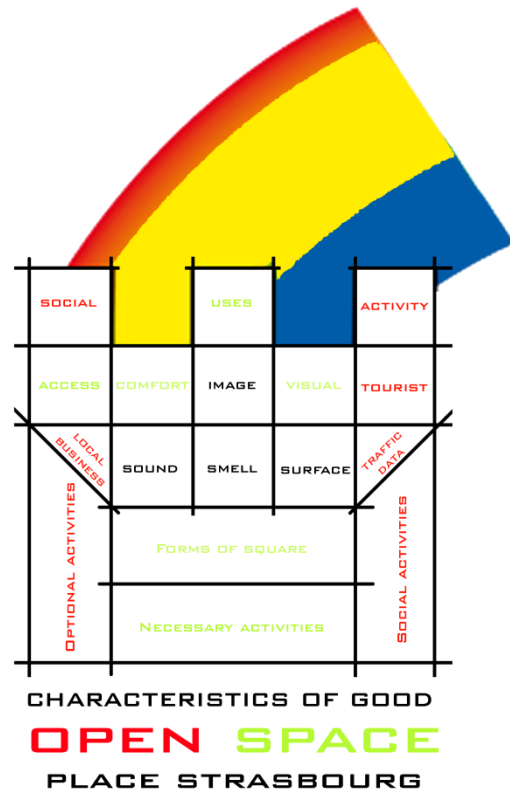
It's almost an hour I was watching an old man from the beginning of the observation he walked around the garden with great effort with the help of kid he carries with... I see a mixed use of place by all age groups...





Characteristics features of the place:

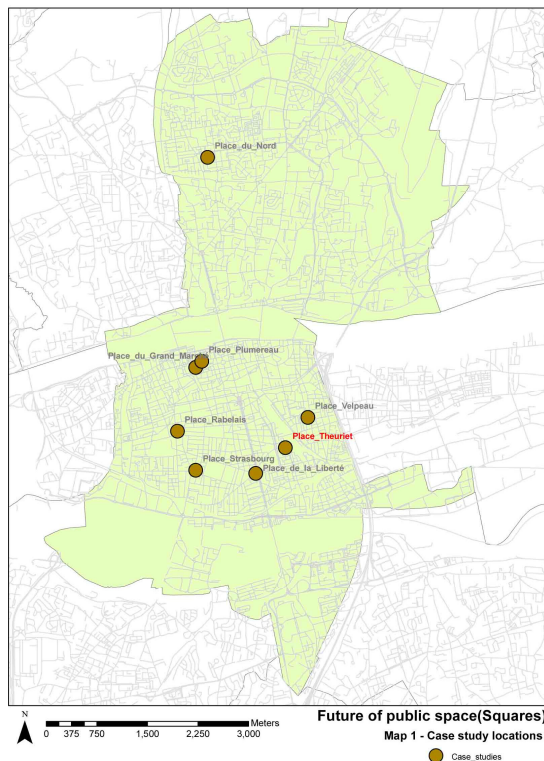
Place Strasbourg though the place is not socially sound but it's still welcoming place for kids along with their parents to spend some time together. The gardens in front on either side of the place invites people to the place; which is accessible for all age group. One could find kids playing, green field occupied with soccer, parents relaxing, reading, biking, skating etc.; these are the common activities one could observe in this place. The borders are defined by road ways externally and internally a pedestrian pathway. Well connected with public transport and provisions are given for car park. Attractive for kids as the place gives opportunity for doing a range of activities. The place as observed is used by all age groups fulfilling the objectives of design.



4.8 Case study VII

Place Theuriet

Place Theuriet is a small garden designed in eastern part of neighborhood in Tours; which predominates social housing. It's a newly designed garden in the neighborhood with the intension of making the place's pleasurable for walking. The residential units face the garden; making it desirable to use for people living in the neighborhood.



The intension of design was quiet clear turning the open piece of land given into a garden; with different vegetations, elements of interest and material usage etc.,



The primary users of the garden are the people living in the social housing surrounding the garden; reachable in couple of minutes walk.



Design idea was to create a garden with intension of making people walk across.

Place Thieurt**11:00-12:00, Tuesday 24th May 2011**

I find it difficult to locate the garden on the first place... A green patch in the middle of the neighborhood... I see lot of people walk towards and opposite to the direction of residential units... A group of men has occupied the garden drinking, singing and making their presence known to others... I see a couple with a small kid walking in the garden... Place doesn't seem to offer much for the people other than walking across...

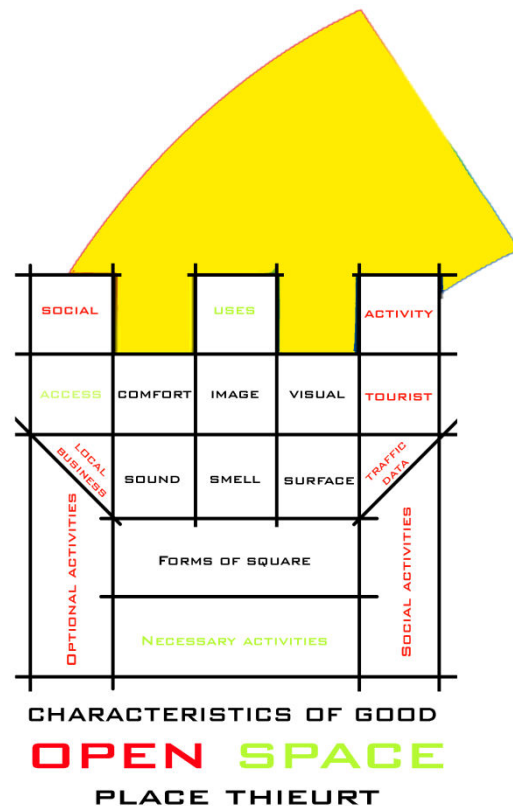
**Characteristics features of the place:**

Clearly the space does not encourage any kind of social interaction; it just serves the purpose of green walk ways. Its inviting on the other hand with its lush green, but there is not much of activities one could find in this place. The borders of the spaces are defined by one more pedestrian walkway. An open space of neighborhood; contextual to surrounding concrete jungle as it is the only green patch for the surroundings. Seating are provided which are very less when compared with the number of housing units clearly intentional; and

the seating out there are oriented aimlessly. Gardens are made interesting with the different elements and material usage and it's photogenic.



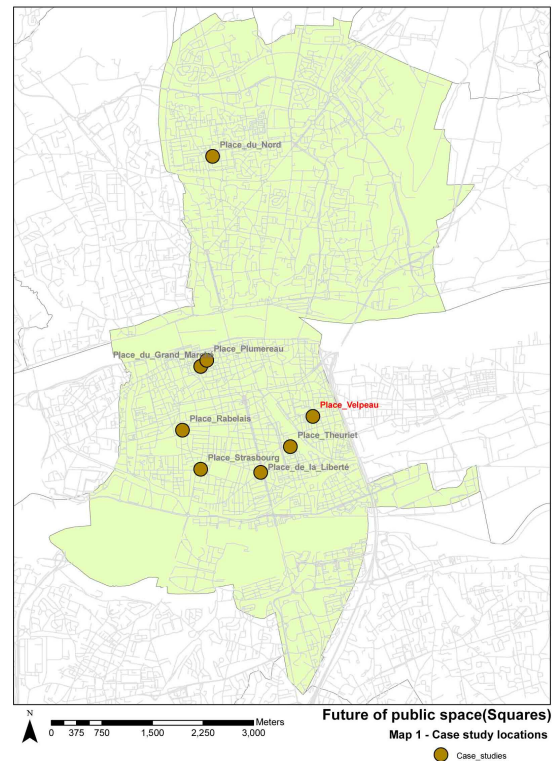
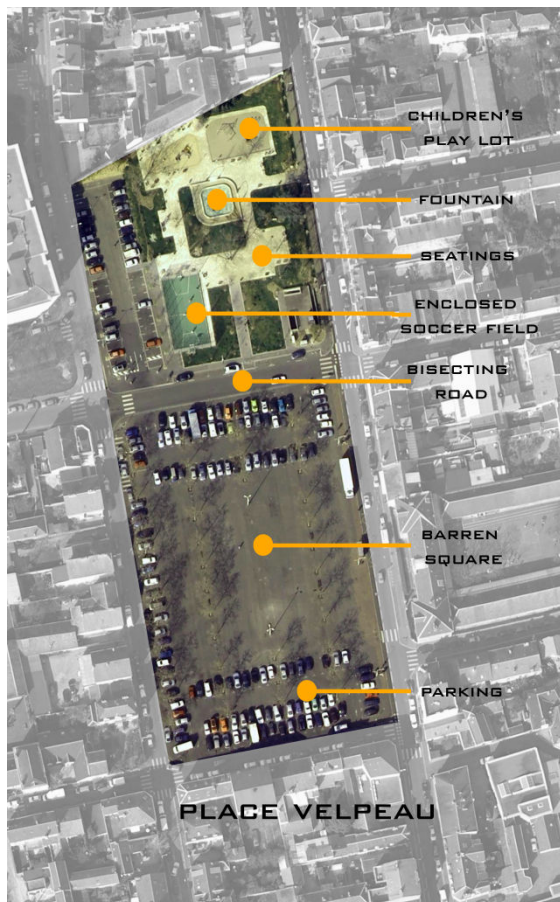
On the measuring scale the characteristics features identified are missing by a large margin; as the design idea was not highly profound in making the place socially sound.



4.9 Case study VIII

Place Velpeau

Place Velpeau is located close to railway station; falls in a neighborhood which has the reputation of calm and quietness. Place Velpeau serves many functions to the local people; it serves as parking lots, market on Sundays, an enclosed soccer field which is occupied at any part of the day; the children's play-lot and the garden making it interesting to the local community.



The borders are defined by roads on three sides and garden on the other; a roads bisects the overall space into two different zones one which is greenish and the other barely with any greeneries. The place attracts school children's and on Thursdays & Sundays filled with peoples from different part of the city for the market it hosts.

Design idea was to create an open space for the local community; a market place; play fields for kids.

Place Velpeau**14:00-15:00 Friday April 29th 2011**

Sunny day with intensity of sun beating is on higher scale... I can see two different spaces clearly from the out front... One the barren open space and the garden on the other... The barren square is occupied minimally... I see a group of school children's occupying a bench spending time... Two girls eating ice cream sitting right under sun as there is no shade naturally or artificially... A young girl taking a nap under sun seems to be enjoying heat out there...



Couple of kids with their bikes on... An old lady waiting for bus... on the other side I see few kids at the play-lot... one could hear the sound of



bagging the soccer against steel fence throughout the day; a lady sleeping in garden... A typical seen I could observe during one hour time.

12:00-14:00 Sunday April 17th 2011

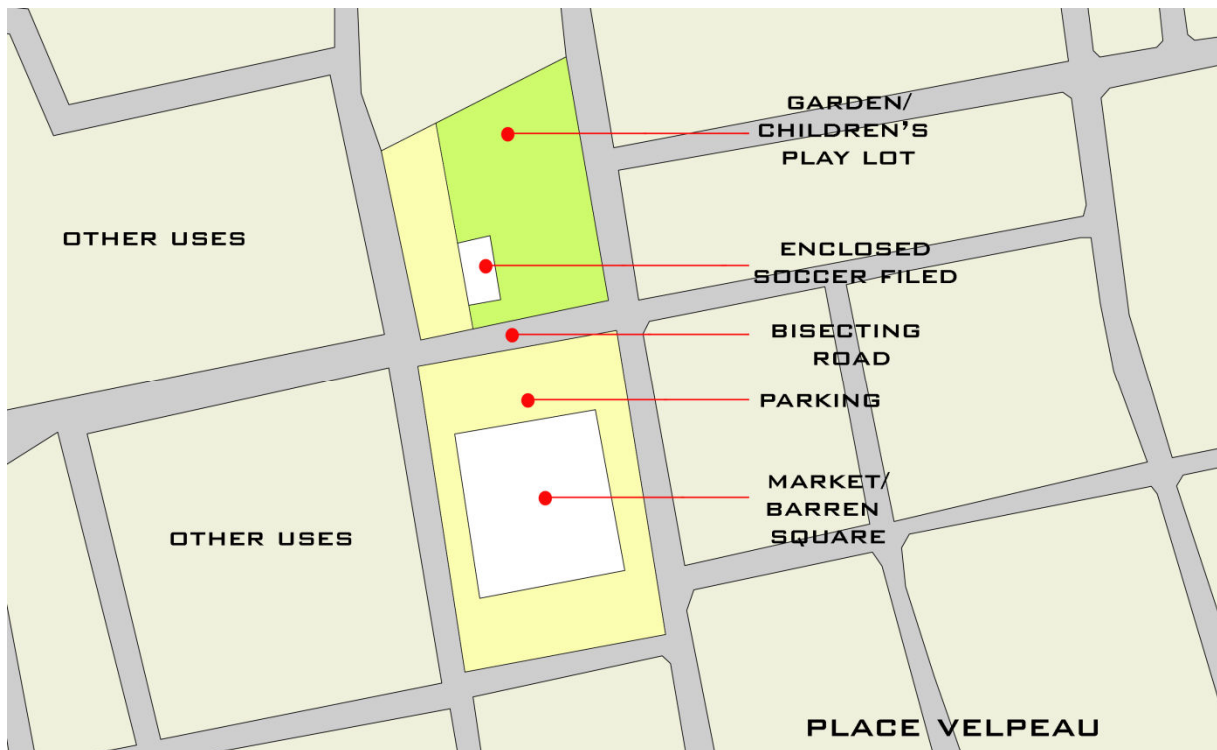
Sunday market... packed with people... I see people all around; even the shops around are on song with people making their way to pick café or drink... I see a group amidst market attracted to the music played by few youngsters....



This is the scene in the barren land... on the other hand the soccer field is occupied (quiet expected)... I see a group cooking food in the garden and few of them playing musical instruments and having fun...



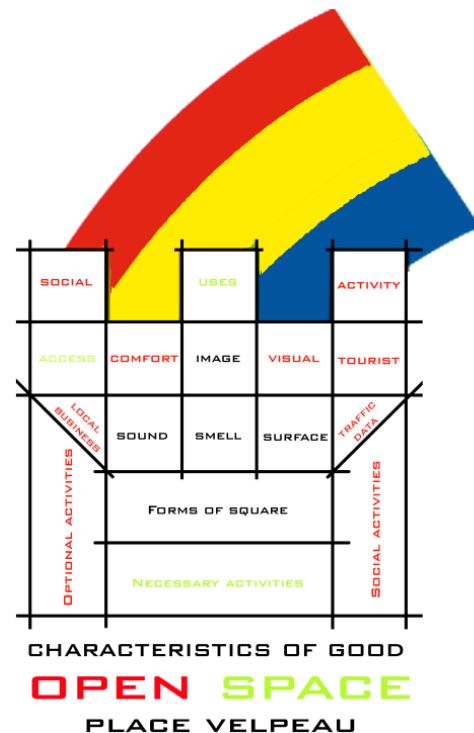
These scenes are very different from the deserted days of week... on Sundays the places is flooded by people...



Characteristic features of the place:

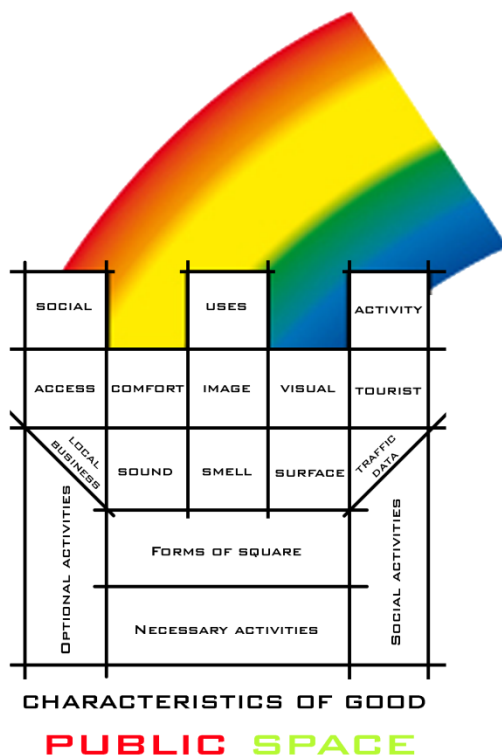
The characteristic features of the place Velpeau can be seen in two ways one on any week days which fails to attract much people and the place is left barren and with literally no activities and on Sundays flooded with people often spilling over roads blocking the vehicular movements. The barren lands are not inviting. At the same time kids have the pleasure of occupying the square with their bikes on. The kind of activities one could find are parking of cars, kids with bikes, sound of soccer banging. Children are in play lots with their parents. The boundaries are marked by roads all around. Seating's are provided at intervals. Not photogenic in nature. Well connected by public transport. One could hear the banging soccer and the bell sound;

as the place is quiet most of the time except on market days.



5 Discussions and Conclusion

The study has considered some of the ways in which the public spaces are understood, used and experienced by general public of various age groups. The observations were carried out with the literature understanding of a public space in general; and the characteristic features of a good public space; which are discussed more explicitly in chapter three.



The findings and observations from the sites were reflected in the case study itself in chapter four. Before drawing general conclusions from the observation from site and literature review; I must

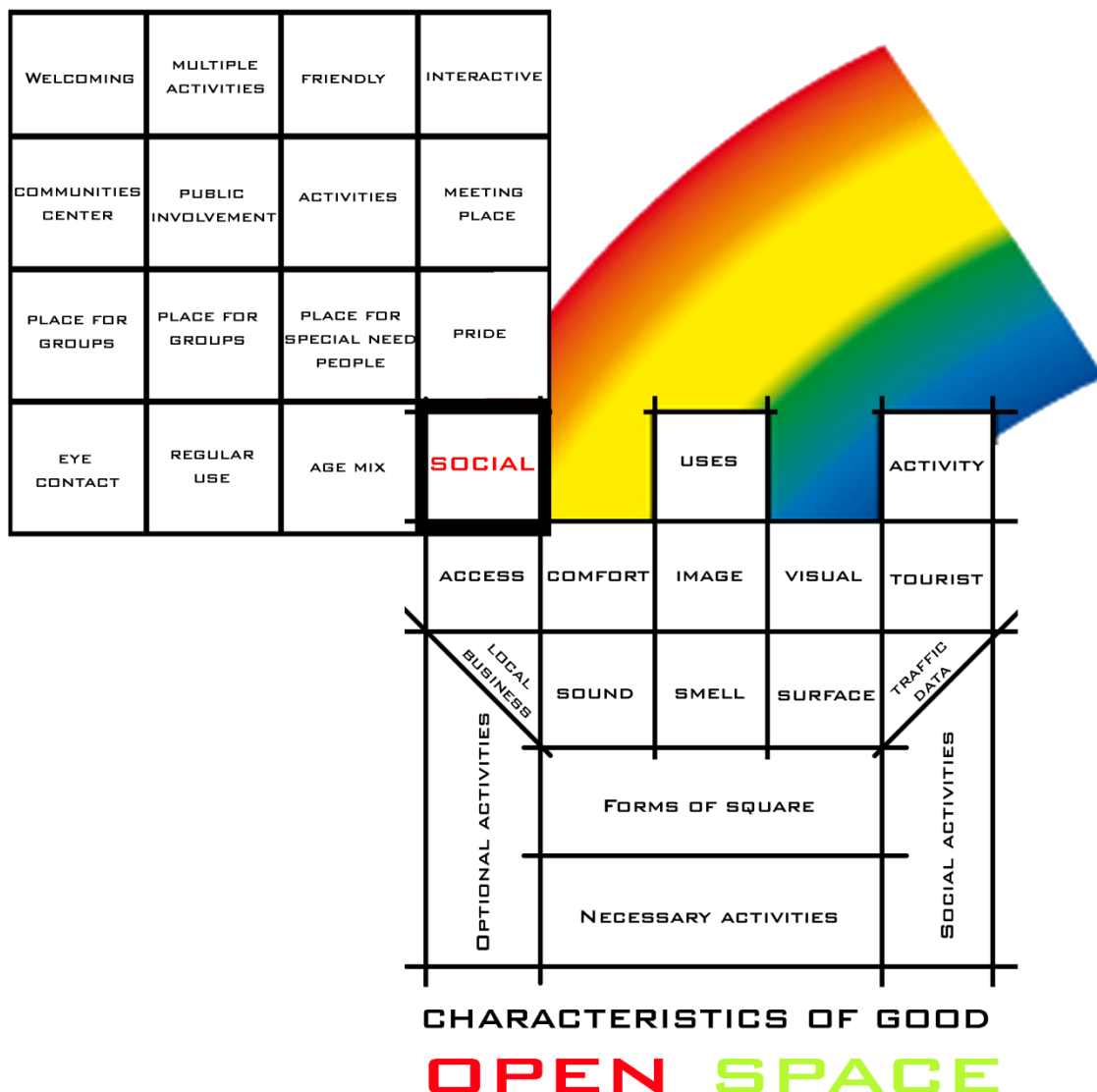
confess some of the limitations of my research work carried out.

Firstly the observations and comments made are purely from my understanding of the case studies individually; without any inputs from general public (without surveys; keeping the difficulty of language in mind) and with the first hand inputs from stakeholders about these study area. Secondly the complexity of the subject itself; where observations on most of the characteristic features identified is subjective and calls for discussion. For instance I have identified a list of possible characteristic features which goes into making of a great public space or destinations in chapter three; and the metaphor developed based on it. There is a list of features which makes up this metaphor as shown in the picture on the following page; which includes social component, uses, activities, access and so on. In order to understand one of these features a lot of sub features have to be identified. For instance the social component; for understanding how a space offer social activities the following sub features have to be identified and understood; which are intangible qualities of space. Though all the features may not be applicable to all the case studies but most of these features are vital as far as social components are concern and the observations of which makes it further complicated; taking these questions to public response which is the next step. But in the case studies presented in the earlier chapter these questions are answered from my personal understanding of the place and the third

limitation was the duration of observation; a conclusion has to be drawn from the limited observations made; as the duration of research is just six months.

In order to understand the social components of a public space; the characteristic features as shown in the picture below should be studied, understood and analyzed; which demands ample lot of time to be spent on the site observing all

the possible events which could possibly take place over a period of time; before commenting on the sites strength on the social components of the site. As we know that these social components are important in defining the quality of the spaces. This will in turn help build socially sound community; or the socially sound gathering space; where community's interests are reflected.



Even with limited observation on how public spaces are put to use and kind of activities that takes place; we can understand what makes it a perfect place for social interactions and how sense of space is created in the minds of people. Public spaces serve much purpose in a city; landmarks or identity to the city (Place Liberte, Place du Grand Marche), tourist place (Place Plumereau), leisure (Place strasbourg), lung space (Place Theuriet) and many other functions serving people's need and sometimes demand.

Therefore it is irrational to paint all the public spaces with the same color; and on the same time it doesn't mean all public spaces successful either. This answers partly the hypothetical question 'Does the design in itself determines the success or failure of a public space'; Much of the design principles that were identified (Chapter in three & four) as crucial for the design of a public space especially design of squares are often been neglected in these case studies. For instance the sense of enclosure in the design of squares i.e. 1:4 the height to width ratio is established as one of the guiding principles which ensures the security and increases the comfort level in the minds of people are missing in almost all the case studies chosen except in place Plumereau and place du Grand Marche; while on the other case studies are left vulnerable.

There are instances where design alone determines its success, in case of place Liberte, where design intentions were to solve the problem of intersectional flow of traffics and car parking, which the place serves its purpose but it fails to bring life into place; and the answer, is simple what brings life into place? It's the people. For any place to be successful it has to attract people. What attracts people? A million dollar question which this research paper has tried to explore;

From the observations we can draw two clear conclusions; one based on the design conception of the site (case studies) to its performance and the other which helps build better place. If we just take the performance of the site (case studies) to its design ideas; almost all the case studies chosen will be on higher scale in terms of performance based on design ideas conceived at the time of the project. These ideas were functional in nature; these places were designed to meet the demand of parking in most of the places (place du Nord) some are resultant space (place Liberte) etc. Many of the open spaces facilitate the necessary activities which are designed to carry out. What is more importance is the optional activity which gives people an opportunity to get engaged in various activities and interact with other people. Public spaces must serve much more than just serving the necessary activities. Any given open space has its specific function attached to it; but the most interesting aspects the open spaces are its optional activities which it offers.

When it comes to optional activities open spaces has to offer lot more than what is it designed for. When an open space offers people ten different things to do; we can see people engaging in ten different activities and the places gives an opportunity to visit it again and again; attachment to the place increases and people feel proud in bringing friends and families here; which isn't the case here in many case studies chosen. If we design our communities around cars we get cars; and when we design our communities around people we get people. We should understand the very concept of people attracts people, people attract people; and the design in itself cannot determine its success or failure of space it is the adoption by people to the design determines its validity; the designer has much more responsibility than just brining physical design into picture. Urban planners can bring lot of more changes in the way these opens spaces are designed; his/her role does not stop at preparing a physical plan with an idea to solve the problem of parking. Future of public spaces depends on how these places are treated; whether they are treated to serve the necessary activities and meet the ever growing demand of parking or create quality public spaces in the city a living room away from home. There is a transition from an era of iconic design to an era of creating sense of public spaces and the role of urban planners are very crucial in this transition together with other professionals and specially with the zealous nuts of the community .

Thus the importance of understanding how a public space works; becomes very crucial in turning them into better place or destination. There isn't a set of checklist for design of good public space which assures us with success; but rather we have some characteristic features of great public spaces from all over the world; which leads us towards understanding of open spaces and the lacking features of the place. It is a process nobody knows what it is going to end up with. The success of a public space depends on the quality of design and the adaptation of it by people. It's hard for people to realize that place is more importance than deign; we shape our public spaces and later public spaces shapes us. It's important as having a good home as having a good community space or gathering space and when it comes to public spaces or community space we can't accept anything less than excellence.

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Features and elements of a good public space(not all may apply)			
I-Social component			
Characteristics	Design idea's or principles conceived	Present life	Expectations
i. Is the space welcoming?			
ii. Does the space accommodate multiple activities?			
iii. Is the space friendly? Including for special need people?			
iv. Is the space interactive?			
v. Does the space serve as center of the community?			
vi. Does it shape the identity of the city?			
vii. What is the involvement of public in shaping the space?			
viii. What activities make the space attractive to people and encourage social interaction?			
ix. Is there a sense of importance about the space?			
x. Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends?			
xi. Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another?			
xii. Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?			
xiii. Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place or do they point to one of its features with pride?			
xiv. Are people smiling? Do people make eye contact with each other?			
xv. Do people use the place regularly and by choice?			
xvi. Does a mix of ages and ethnic groups that generally reflect the community at large?			
II-Uses and activities			
Characteristics	Design idea's or principles conceived	Present life	Expectations
i. What are the kinds of activities taking place?			
ii. How useful is the place?			
iii. How flexible is the place?			
iv. Who are the users?			
v. Are the places adaptive to seasonal change?			
vi. How are the borders defined?			
vii. What purpose it serves for the surrounding communities?			
viii. How does this place encourage use by a diverse cross section for the public?			
ix. Are people using the space or is it empty?			
x. Is it used by people of different ages?			
xi. Are people in groups?			
xii. How many different types of activities are occurring – people walking, eating, playing, relaxing, and reading?			
xiii. Which parts of the space are used and which are not?			
xiv. Are there choices of things to do?			
xv. Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone is in charge of the space?			

III-Access and linkage			
Characteristics	Design idea's or principles conceived	Present life	Expectations
i. Can you see the space from a distance? Is its interior visible from the outside?			
ii. Is there a good connection between the space and the adjacent buildings, or is it surrounded by blank walls?			
iii. Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?			
iv. Can people easily walk to the place? For example, do they have to dart between moving cars to get to the place?			
v. Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?			
vi. Does the space function for people with special needs?			
vii. Do the roads and paths through the space take people where they actually want to go?			
viii. Can people use a variety of transportation options – bus train, car, bicycle, etc. – to reach the place?			
ix. Are parking spaces are provided?			
x. Which is the best mode to reach the space?			
xi. Are transit stops conveniently located next to destinations?			
IV- Comfort & Image			
Characteristics	Design idea's or principles conceived	Present life	Expectations
i. Does the place make a good first impression?			
ii. Is the place attractive?			
iii. Are there more women than men?			
iv. Are there enough places to sit?			
v. Are seats conveniently located?			
vi. What makes the place special?			
vii. Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?			
viii. Are spaces are clean and free of litter?			
ix. Is the place appealing to various kinds of people?			
x. Who is responsible for maintenance?			
xi. What do they do? When?			
xii. Does the area feel safe?			
xiii. Is there a security presence? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?			
xiv. How is the lighting in the space?			
xv. Are people taking pictures?			
xvi. Are there many photo opportunities available?			
xvii. Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?			
xviii. Does the space provide a sense of comfort and safety to people gathering and using the space?			

V- Visual aspects			
Characteristics	Design idea's or principles conceived	Present life	Expectations
i. What is the history of the place?			
ii. What makes it extraordinary or memorable place?			
iii. How unique is the place in terms of architecture?			
iv. What are the attractive architectural elements in the place?			
v. Is the place contextual to the surroundings?			
vi. Does it provide interesting visual experience?			
vii. How are the walls surrounding the public space is treated?			
VI- Tourist Value			
Characteristics	Design idea's or principles conceived	Present life	Expectations
i. Is it one of the tourist attractive places in the city?			
ii. Is it recommended for tourist?			
iii. Is it a place enjoyed by tourist?			
iv. Is the place photogenic?			
v. What makes this space special and worthy designating as a great public space?			
VII- Soundscape			
Characteristics	Design idea's or principles conceived	Present life	Expectations
i. What kind of sounds is observed?			
ii. Are there any measures taken to improve the soundscape of the place?			
VIII- Surface of the place			
Characteristics	Design idea's or principles conceived	Present life	Expectations
i. Are the surface user friendly?			
ii. Is it suitable for all seasons?			
IX- Smellscape			
Characteristics	Design idea's or principles conceived	Present life	Expectations
i. Is the place clean and hygienic?			
ii. What kind of smell you can observe in public spaces?			