

The Life of Place

Spaces
Places and Narratives

Edited by
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Chapter 8

Experience of Green Spaces as Nature in the Urban Environment

Mazlina Mansor

Introduction

This chapter presents the experiences of users with various types of green spaces in Taiping, a town in the northern part of Peninsular Malaysia. It explores how the town residents feel when they view and are in contact with natural features and facilities in the green spaces. It identifies the effects from the experiences and how people are affiliated with the green spaces in their town. This study is called the experiences as *experiential contact*. The experiential contact with the properties and attributes of green spaces may happen through participation in active, leisure and social activities of the users. It therefore identifies particular attributes of the green spaces that may be favourable to the users or otherwise.

Experiential Contacts and Green Spaces

Places are settings and backdrops of people's everyday actions. A place offers a variety of spaces that can have impact on people, physically, psychologically and socially. A personal bond may even develop between an individual and a place. This means that the setting becomes a meaningful place to the individual. This is why some environments are valued by people (Altman & Low, 1992). A place is given a meaning when there are physical and emotional links to the places through individuals' experiential contacts. Experiential contacts involve the uses and familiarity of a person to his or her environment. It encompasses