Resorts As Cities.
Assessing Blue Mountain Resort Using Lynch’s City Design Theory.

by
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Abstract

RESORTS AS CITIES.

ASSESSING BLUE MOUNTAIN RESORT USING LYNCH’S CITY DESIG THEORY.

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University of Guelph, 2015

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This document assesses physical aspects of themed environments, specifically pertaining to resort developments, through city design theory. The evaluation builds on the speculative study of built themed environments and their physical characteristic’s ability to alter an individual’s experience through design. The experiential elements concentrate on the influence of physical features effect on perception and memorability based on past research. This document aimed to discover if physical elements of design are present in resort development and to study how clear these elements are.

Data collection involved an analyzed photo-survey questionnaire. The findings show most design elements in the case study of Blue Mountain Village were not obvious. Results were studied and organized to create recommendations and provide knowledge on how to design themed environments in several situations.
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Section one: Overview

1.1 Problem Statement

Based on perception, a large population of individuals travel due to what a themed destination and its landscape offers. This grants those who design these destination a large influence on people’s lives. This thesis studies the physical attributes of themed environments to discover if spatial planning is evident. The research is intended to answer if themed designs that are based on principles in design theory form identifiable physical characteristics. The purpose of this is to understand how to affect design based tourism through visitor experience. Secondary questions are, do resorts require a purpose beyond supplying a visitor’s immediate needs and what are the implications of resort complexes acting as microcosms of their landscapes.

This is exploratory research that is intended to gather information on the cause and effect of linkages between certain design characteristics and tourism. In building on previous research similar methods are used to retain consistency and compare findings. To generate findings on the subject an evaluation of the physical attributes of Blue Mountains Resort will be undertaken by an expert panel. The panel will consist of those with formal education or knowledge on the subject matter in order to obtain accurate results. Formal teaching is required to assess design characteristics as it requires training to discern elements of design. The intent of the evaluation from the panel is to help understand whether design characteristics are pronounced. This leads to further questions on if design is obvious and how this effects what visitors expect from, and why they travel to resort destinations. The case study will assistance in developing
understanding on themed design based tourism and provide information useful for answering questions resulting from gaps in current research.

1.2 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this investigation is to further develop understanding of the relation between design theory and visitor experience with a focus on physical attributes of design. More specifically this research is done in the hopes of determining which physical design characteristics should be applied to resorts and how evident they are in order to determine how to maximize visitor experience. Expected and actual outcomes may vary, leading research in other directions. The practical purpose behind the immediate findings is to conclude if certain physical forms are evident in design and how they affect resorts. Aesthetic intrigue about built form is principally a result of visual and kinaesthetic features but involves all of a person’s senses (Carmona, Heath, Oc & Tiesdell, 2003). This thesis focuses on the visual or tangible elements.

1.3 Research Objectives

An investigation into theories on the topic of themed environment design was conducted to develop background knowledge on the topic. This knowledge was then used to create a framework for analyzing physical aspects of designed related to resort destination planning. The research intent was to,

Detect which features are significant in establishing a themed environment through analyzing relevant theory

Select and provide support for what is determined as the most appropriate theory for analyzing themed environments
1.4 Significance of Study

Broadly, the significance of the study is to further the field of design themed environments and the application of theory in the field. More specifically the study will compare completed research on the physical attributes of these environments in order to identify design strengths and weaknesses so that those visiting the destinations can have unique experiences. The importance of improving themed environments is increasingly significant due to the current size and expanding scope of operation the industry is involved in. Visitor experience is important as it has an effect on people’s lives whether they are searching for a relaxing escape or more active pursuits.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review will aid in identifying the current state and research that exists on themed environments. There are a variety of resort types and to simplify this they are often classified to help determine what each has to offer and predict the type of experience a person will have. Common classifications are, environmental, family, elderly, short term stays, and active or passive; however, this is not an exhaustive list. The focus will be on how these classifications are affected by themed design that relates to its natural landscape. The term design is used in a broader sense not only in reference to aesthetics but also the creation of guiding principles and greater overall planning. The topic of study is based on analyzing design elements in resort environments through urban and landscape design principles to discover which best address weaknesses. Analyzing people’s perception of a resort will help identify deficiencies in resort environments, allowing for the application of design principles to correct issues. Design principles will help,

- place the site within its greater context, providing more meaningful geographical relations,
- work on the balance between aesthetics and comfort,
- form travel friendly destination(s),
- and develop an identity.
Together these principles will create meaning for a destination that is unique to each individual.

2.2 Destination Regions

A resort is generally a destination for its visitor and may be conceived as a single compound of structures however, this is a narrow view of the topic and a much broader vision is important (Dredge, 1999). Regional development can be a significant player in the success of the immediate resort destination making site selection important (Bromberek, 2009). Destination branding needs to be entrenched in the larger planning process, affecting marketing and spatial implications (Dredge, 1999). Destination regions are formed of a variety of aspects and are larger in scale. Nodes are not a singular entity but rather contain an amalgamation of services and attractions, and are the main magnetism of an area. A service may consist of a restaurant or touring company used to explore attractions which can consist of geographic entities like a series of waterfalls or famous streetscapes. The distinction between services and attractions has become blurred through creation of entities that include both services and attractions in a single resort complex (Dredge, 1999). Surrounding these nodes are vernacular land uses that allow the mechanism that is the destination to perform and include but is not exclusive to such uses as industrial, residential, and commercial lands.
(Dredge, 1999). Active and passive travel themes alter land uses due to the relation of
resulting concentrations of activates and services in an area (Elliot & Johns, 1993). Desirable destinations are those that offer a variety of services, populations, information, and a diversity of places achieved through assortments of land uses and primary nodes (Lynch, 1980).

Destination regions are linked by circulation routes to tourist generating regions consisting of three route types; access, return and recreational that are used by travellers to enter direct, indirect, or layover areas depending on their leisure (Dredge, 1999). Direct areas are the focus of visits. Indirect are considered on the way. Layovers are used as hubs to explore the immediate or adjoining destination regions acting as peripheral support. Some travel includes all or some of these three traveled to targets made possible by the interconnectedness of spatial destination regions. It is important to note that this structure accommodates the inclusion of other theories, such as systems theory which indicates that each system is a complex system of its own that acts as part and within a larger system (Dredge, 1999). Figure 1 visually summarizes the relation of the destination region concept. This model makes the assumption that tourist producing places and destination regions are spatially separate and that there is no overlap of the two spatial entities.

2.3 City Design Theory

The destination region utilizes Lynch’s findings on a larger scale as seen in Figure 2. Although not indicated, the destination region concept uses what resembles Kevin Lynch’s findings on paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks (Lynch, 1960). The parallels between legibility of a space and paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks
are found to be identifiable elements affecting perception (Lynch, 1960). These elements are believed to be mutually inclusive, therefore making them correlated factors that cannot be created independent of each other. Lynch’s elements are presented as follows,
**Paths**
These are travel routes that people use in differing amounts based on surrounding land uses. Paths can consist of, railroads, pedestrian routes, automotive roads or other informal means used to access a destination. In the above destination region model they are used to travel from node to node.

**Edges**
Utilizing paths but not exclusive to them, edges are boundaries to identifiable spaces. A roadway may encompass a space providing a defining boundary for the observer perceiving it.

**Districts**
Areas that are entered into that are obvious to the perceiver form districts. They can be thematic or have distinguishable characteristics known to those inside and outside of them, since they have an apparent dimension.

**Nodes**
Connexions between two points that a person can interact with and enter into, define nodes. They are most commonly a creation of intersecting roads often shifting from their primary purpose to another for a short period of time. An intersection creates a destination point where activities may transpire making them a focus and provide a person with decisions or opportunities that alter their course.
Landmarks

Landmarks are often a single object such as a statue or building. They are destinations but are also used as way finding features to help navigate a space. Visual hierarchy plays an important role in qualifying and identifying landmarks.

These elements create identity for a place while also meeting basic roles in space utilization. Figure 2 shows how Lynch’s elements are used in a spatial model and how they can be tied geographically within a resort’s context to add coherence with a destination and its surroundings. Both function and form are recognised in Lynch’s elements and can be applied consistently to resort environments with the intent to enhance visitor experience. Since space and openness are more abstract entities, identifying elements or objects in the landscape is relevant to us as individuals, it provides something that is more tangible and relatable (Tuan, 2003).
2.4 Sensory Experience

Material culture is under constant change and therefore how a space is perceived fluctuates. This means associations between a person and the urban landscape is also dynamic so those travelling through the same space may have a distinctly different connection to it (Degen & Rose, 2012). Familiarity with an environment, including its history and current state, has an effect on how individuals interact and their sense of a place (Degen & Rose, 2012). Those who utilize space in a consistent manner may overlook aspects that others do not and when paired with knowledge of a space’s history people are prone to focusing on change rather than judging a space based on only its current merit. These people are found to focus more on specific visual changes and new aromas giving them an inherent bias (Degen & Rose, 2012). These judgments focus largely on the human-made functions of urban atmospheres though natural functions play a role as well.

The role of thermal performance on the sensory experience of an inhabitant affect the perception of a destination. Physical morphological placement of structures within a destination affect how an individual feels thermally and their overall experience within a space (Golany, 1996). Vernacular building styles and placement of structures plays a role in the thermal performance and aesthetic quality that help form sense of place providing a designer with methods to mitigate climatic conditions and place making at the same time (Golany, 1996; Elliot & Johns, 1993). Orientation, width, vegetation and evapotranspiration involved in the build form are significant to a person’s sensory experience of a space as diagrammed in Figure 4. Having paths that run
perpendicularly reduces hot or cold air flows and the respective turbulence that travels directly into a space. Street trees reduce dust, noise pollution, albedo and form shaded areas (Golany, 1996). Tree planting also results in evapotranspiration that increases humidity and reduces air temperature (Golany, 1996). Temperature, breeze, mugginess, and geographical uniqueness join landscape and design together allowing for a response that produces different experiences involved in place-making (Ayala, 1991b).

Themed resort design frequently produces a disconnect between architecture and natural landscape that often results in tradeoffs of comfort for aesthetics (Bromberek, 2009). Architecture is often used to mitigate climatic conditions however, plant selection and landscaping features are also useful and require greater attention as viable options (Bromberek, 2009). It is similarly important to pay attention to structure layout and how it relate a places climate (Bromberek, 2009). Methods on both structure layout and vegetation use are illustrated above in Figure 4. Methods need adaption to the specific
climate, for example plant selection changes and seasonality affects sun patterns meaning vegetation may need to provide greater shade for more of the year or provide physical wind blocks from costal winds.

2.5 Resort Landscape Theme

Layout, legibility, comfort and sensory experiences are all factors involved in altering the perception of a destination. The intent when designing any resort is to create an atmosphere that will prompt a sense of comfort and pleasure (Ayala, 1991b). This sense of comfort and pleasure is often achieved through a sense of place related to a destinations landscape involving both its natural and social attributes. Marketing heritage to current travelers has proven successful due to its connection to sense of place (Ayala, 1991b). Involving the natural landscape in resort design can encourage individuals to seek out and travel to the distant vistas causing an exploration of the local culture along the way. Additionally while immersing a resort within the vernacular landscape and utilizing those materials that are native to a destination, a space benefits from obscuring the discernible boundaries of a resort and its periphery (Ayala, 1991a). This lends itself to the concept of destination regions by way of linkages to the surroundings, while keeping the resort as the primary node of the area. Incorporating borrowed views and definable paths to these secondary destinations act as circulations routes that Lynch’s (1960) path, edge, district, node, and landmarks concept suggests are a part of place-making and function in the same manner as the destination region model (Dredge, 1999; Lynch, 1960).
Attraction is gained through using abutting atmospheres ranging from the transition of perceived indoor to outdoor space within a resort, to a mountain top destination contrasted by a neighbouring village. This exploits a destination’s sensory, climate and ecological qualities to create sense of place (Ayala, 1991a). A space takes this further through an emphasis on using the sites context in its design. Information is gathered through the exploration of resources, practices, and customs and are introduced into a space giving it a symbolic and suggestive intangible attribute that is otherwise lost (Ayala, 1991a). If local culture is not integrated in things such as resort architecture, visitors often suffer from the sensation of feeling they have not traveled due to familiar building forms and practices (Elliot & Johns, 1993). The landscape theme is paired with trends in market separation used for success, meaning resort styles are separated by both activities and social sets such as singles or the elderly (Elliot & Johns, 1993). These qualities, activities and human interactions are unlike those gained from improving a resort’s physical environment. They have no ceiling but rather support constant growth. Physical traits can be maximized. A structure can be perfectly maintained and provide the highest quality luxuries, however a natural landscape fosters endless adventure and other nonphysical elements not attainable by the built environment (Tuan, 2003). A landscape has unlimited amounts of experiences to be had that people seek when visiting destinations. The resort acts as the primary node in this case playing host to the person while they explore secondary and tertiary nodes (Dredge, 1999).
Iconic theme parks such as Disney World are examples of the conglomeration of the discussed attributes where together they form a successful themed environments. These attributes singly do not provide the same profound effect as they do as a whole. A definable gateway connects nodes, paths, edges, and landmarks on behalf of districts creating a cohesive theme. Themes are bolstered on a finer scale, where fountains, seating, paving surfaces, vegetation, and culturally relevant attributes such as food concessions will all align to secure complete continuity (Polo, 1999). Psychologically, people will adapt to their environments and act accordingly whether conscious of it or not as a function of the morphology resulting from built form (Polo, 1999). Designers being aware of the psychology of the environments they have planned, will eliminate seating, use alternative paving patterns, and provide stimulating activity away from venues for the purpose of circulating crowds, drawing people to alternative destinations or a combination of the two (Polo, 1999). This is where nodes, paths, edges, landmarks, and districts are applied on a finer scale (Lynch 1960).

Themed environments whether a park, resort or other destination function as a small scale city. For those who have reached their destinations but are required to wait for an event need active stimulation. This is often obtained through audio or visual elements such as music or artwork which is consistent with the theme. This keeps visitors satisfied therefore increasing their length of stay and repeat visitation. The variety of activity, architecture, and open space are some among many other qualities that are prescribed to form the desired theme (Polo, 1999). What is most important to the success of a themed environment is that it is easily accessible, it provides an
experience that is not normally found in everyday life, experiences are as anticipated, travel within the environment is easy, and the environment requires constant change and updating to meet the changing demand of the visitor (Polo, 1999). Together the sum of all these features creates a whole that is greater than their individual parts. One may not be impressed by a defining vista or landmark because this is commonplace but when combining them with an environment that is a microcosm of a variety of features this can have a greater effect.

2.6 Meaning in the Landscape

Natural landscape offers a range of opportunity for its visitors to make their own interpretation of an area whereas some may not understand the implied meaning behind spaces that are planned. Natural and cultural landscapes are the only ones that may offer a practical source for landscape design, and the dominance over nature that many resorts impose is intrinsic in their very development (Treib, 1995). Imposing any development on nature especially one that facilitates large construction ensures dominance over nature nonetheless it is through the use of these natural resources that a development can pay homage to its geography (Ayala, 1991a). This means that native culture and vegetation are imperative in forming significance in resort design (Treib, 1995). Meaning in a landscape is derived from those perceiving it giving it a subjective attribute causing varying interpretations. No two people have the same life experiences and identical outlooks and as a result look upon and understand landscapes differently. Familiarity with an environment and knowledge of change in that environment affect how it is perceived (Degen & Rose, 2012). Fortunately for resort design, social utility and creating meaning in form can coexist and attract different
audiences. What is still important is that landscape design creations do not overwhelm the genius of a place. For example a river should not be created in a hot dry climate (Treib, 1995). Meaning is created in a landscape in part through the use of native materials. The challenge with this comes when reconfiguring the vernacular landscape materials in a way that does not transform them but simply moves them, otherwise meaning is lost in translation (Treib, 1995). In a landscape, meaning becomes stronger with time and is only apparent when circumstances are correct (Treib, 1995).

2.7 Leisure and Well-being

Understanding what makes an experience enjoyable sheds light on the psychology of perception and visitor experience. An individual’s optimal experience occurs when a person’s potential and the challenge they face are equal, granting the person great satisfaction (Haworth, 1997). Imbalance between ability and challenge often manifests itself in two forms. These forms are, boredom resulting from a lack of challenge, and anxiety, a consequence of overly difficult tasks. Difficulty of task is relative to the individual’s skill set and natural ability (Haworth, 1997). Satisfying experiences are most effective when integrated into a lifestyle versus piecemeal occurrences and this consistency is necessary in order to place one’s self in an ideal situation (Haworth, 1997). The characteristics of leisure and well-being are manifested in,

- *Extreme participation*
- *Precision of objectives and criticism*
- *Profound focus*
- *Wholeness of identity*
- Absence of cognizance
- Overlooked passing of time
- Inherently satisfying activities
- And an equilibrium between ability and difficulty of tasks (Haworth, Pg. 86 1997).

These characteristics are not ranked in order of importance but all play their part in leisure and well-being that resorts aim to offer.

The difficulty in providing these characteristics and optimized leisure experiences in a resort environment results from the vast numbers of individualized activates required to fulfill each person's wants and needs (Godbey, 1998). Due to the vast amount of activates and themes in recreation and leisure, facilities need to focus on a type of leisure in order maximize it and the experience (Godbey, 1998). This means it is correct to market to traveller's heritage or other themes that have proven successful in creating a connection between a destination and the respective contextual sense of place (Ayala, 1991b).

2.8 Prospect Refuge

Human preferences involves two states, prospect and refuge. Prospect speaks to the ability for a person oversee their surroundings as a functional necessity of survival. Refuge involves providing a space for a person to hide, a place where one can see others but not be seen themselves. Places that provide both prospect and refuge satisfy human needs becoming aesthetically appealing to their audience (Appleton, 1975). This
is valuable when analyzing landscapes for their desirable habitats. Furthermore Appleton discusses aesthetic desirability as being a result of landscape elements consisting of things such as, color, geophysical shape, arrangement of features and other attributes that indicate conditions advantageous for survival. He terms this Habitat Theory (Appleton, 1975). This visual understanding of what makes a desirable environment translates to themed landscape as the resort is the environment which the observer develops a prospect refuge relationship with. The idea of prospect and refuge is understood to be a subconscious discernments made by its observer therefore a themed landscape has preconceived notions made on it as a factor of biological desires that most individuals are unaware of (Appleton, 1975).

Appleton recognizes that there is no universally accepted image of the aesthetics of prospect and refuge in landscapes construction by humans. He uses the organic growth of Venice as an example of a city that has evolved with no distinctive planning but rather a method all its own that offers a variety of features which satisfy prospect and refuge. When Appleton compares this to other planned spaces he draws the conclusion that both the organic and planed manufactured landscapes have the ability to provide both prospect and refuge. It is the common elements of narrow space that open up to squares and façade treatments, including their overhanging horizontal elements which all play a role in creating a space that appears desirable to survival for the inhabitant.

In utilizing prospect refuge theory to evaluate themed environments one has to compare built structures to those of a natural landscape. A building substitutes a person natural
equivalent for refugee and open court yards provide the equivalency of prospect (Appleton, 1975). These are only two example of the equivalencies found in manufactured landscapes as there are a variety of others that individuals may encounter. Although there is not a looming threat or a strong sense that survival is a priority in modern themed landscapes, psychological contentment is a subconscious variable in design and a way a space is formed therefore it is a necessary consideration.

2.9 Conclusion

The Destination Region model covers the topic of spatial relations to destinations as well as City Design Theory providing understanding of navigational methods used in spatial planning. Together they identify the relation of spatial complexity and the exploration of these complex spaces. Additionally, the sensory experience had through the exploration of these spatially complex landscapes alters the connections to a place people gain resulting from their visits. The actual versus the expected experience received from visiting a themed environment may be disconnected as a result of misunderstood meaning in a landscape whether it is cultural or natural misinterpretation. There is a clear need for design guidelines to unite concepts of spatial complexities, navigational methods, the sensory experience and the meaning a space provides to remove gaps in themed destination design.

The selected literature was reviewed to form an assessment method for resorts and how to create a memorable place. Sensory experiences, spatial reasoning, meaning in the landscape and security were studied. What became evident through this literature
review it is Kevin lynches elements of design, path, edge, district, node, and landmark, are the best way to assess the physical elements of a themed landscape. The importance of using a physical approach is the ability for designer to alter real world tangible design choices. This allows those who do not have knowledge of design to interact with and have a hands on experience with the choices.

These five elements are accountable for what Lynch described as the image of a city since they are responsible for how a built environment is perceived by its inhabitants. His model allows for an evaluation of a built environment by breaking it down into physical characteristics identifiable across many types of built form. It is because of this replication of features that it is useful for a case study on a themed environment. Additionally this will draw parallels between completed research and the findings that are to come through a case study application that can be compared to other case studies. The intent is to test the continuity of findings on themed environments. This thesis is meant to be part of an incremental process in analyzing themed environments. Furthermore the significance of using Lynch’s theory is that it is widely accepted and is considered an authority in the applicable field therefore providing direct relevance and application to the audience. Lynch’s elements adequately capture the scale of a resort. Resorts contain all the elements of his theory whereas others address feature that are too fine and do not capture the resort as a whole or are too course not addressing the specific feature of a resort.
The advantage of Lynch’s approach lies in the ability to select physical characteristics that are tangible to the perceiver. A landmark can be touched, a node is marked by intersecting roads or buildings, an edge is created with fencing, paths are walked upon and a district encompasses all these physical traits. It is the discernment of these traits that allow for the individual evaluation of parts. The examination of other theories such as destination regions, meaning in the landscape among the others discussed do not have discernable parts that when evaluated individually provide a comprehensive assessment. Lynch’s theory has been used in other research to evaluate the success of a park providing a basis for its selection as evaluation criteria (Polo, 1999). It has a proven method of assessment that strengthens the choice of it for application in this research.

Kevin Lynch’s theory on design was selected among other theories due to its ability to assess elements of a place in order to determine deficiencies in physical design and therefore identify areas where memorability and sense of place can be improved. In addition, Lynch’s theory was most applicable due to scale and the function of a resort. A resort in many ways functions as a small city possessing the qualities a city requires to be memorable and create a positive experiences for its inhabitants. Blue Mountain Resort is an adequate scale to be assed using Lynch’s theory whereas Appleton’s theory on prospect refugee analyzes a much finer scale of development. Lynch’s theory also focuses on spatial planning and not specifically analyzing one feature or element of a single space. The resort needed to be studied on a larger scale.
Additionally a resort must provide for the needs of those inhabiting it much like a city. A resort must provide food, shelter, entertainment and all the other needs and desires a city must during the stay of its visitors therefore it functions much like a city. There are cases where resort define a city or encapsulate what a city is. Such is the circumstance with Las Vegas where it has been termed a “resort city” built on tourism (Moehring, Pg. 13, 2000). What makes this a significant case is Las Vegas has a historical progression characteristic of all cities yet acts as a resort destination with a theme all its own (Moehring, 2000). Another case is the Kuantan Waterfront Resort City located in Pahang, Malaysia. This is a development currently be constructed using city design principles common to resort destinations as it consists of commercial districts, business parks and an assortment of other types of spaces (http://www.kwrc.com.my/concept.html, 2013). It is because of the relation between cities and resorts that Lynch’s assessment is most appropriate choice for the evaluation method of resorts. Furthermore, it is argued Lynch’s method integrates Appleton’s Prospect Refuge features of environmental image and perception (Polo, 1999). To add to this as reviewed in the former portion of the literature review, Lynch’s method captures Dredge’s ideas on Destination Region’s as well further promoting the reasoning for Lynch’s elements as the most appropriate method of evaluation. It appears to capture the essence of other theories and applies directly to city design, therefore to resort design as well. The intent is to evaluate a case study to determine the success of its memorability achieved through the presences of Lynch’s elements.
Section Three: Methods

3.1 Overview of Method strategies

Methods for analyzing a case studied are put forth in this chapter. They provide a means to qualitatively measure the presence of Lynch elements found within the site. The significance for identifying features within the site are used in the procedure section of the section three and then studied during the data analysis in order to draw conclusion.

Research was broken down into two groupings, analysis and synthesis of relevant city design theory and the application of relevant theory in a case study. Analysis and synthesis of city design theory was used to determine, what constitutes a well-designed urban village themed resort from the physical perspective? Conclusions on this were drawn based on the previously performed literature review. The second part of the research performed is on a case study of Blue Mountain Village. The material gathered for the case study is as follows,

1. The design intent of Blue Mountain Village containing an assemblage of material such as maps, reports, and interviews with designers
2. Modifications to the village including maps, reports, and interviews with site operators
3. A site analysis conducted by the author
4. Procurement of graphics on the village
5. Attaining assessments of the site through knowledgeable specialists on the subject matter

6. Assessing the findings of the specialists

This form of assessment has been used to analyze other parks and destinations including Ontario Place located in the Toronto area. Both destinations are located within the same province meaning there are geographic and cultural similarities strengthen the choice for selecting the above methods.

### Methodology Summary

| Theory examination by way of literature review | Adapt and utilize appropriate theories for case study | Complete a site inventory and analysis of the physical form on the study site | Provide findings to skilled professional panel | Apply conclusions to the case study while developing recommendation for changes to the site |

3.2 Assessment Measures

The assessment process used matches prior research on assessing themed environments in order to maintain continuity in methods creating comparable findings. Lynch’s theory of five elements, as discussed in the literature review, are the principles used to measure memorability of Blue Mountain Resort based on structurally distinguishable traits. The reason for collecting this material is based on the assumption that gathering this data will shed light on the research problem (Creswell, 2013). The researcher applied these five elements to assess strengths and shortcomings. To strengthen the legitimacy of results qualified key informants were used to evaluate the site by way of the same five criteria.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kevin Lynch’s Five Elements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paths:</strong> These are travel routes that people use in differing amounts based on surrounding land uses. Paths can consist of, railroads, pedestrian routes, automotive roads or other informal means used to access a destination. In the above destination region model they are used to travel from node to node.</td>
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<td><strong>Landmarks:</strong> Landmarks are often a single object such as a statue or building. They are destinations but also used as way finding features to help navigate a space. Visual hierarchy plays an important role in qualifying and identifying landmarks.</td>
</tr>
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3.3 Case Study Context

Blue Mountain Resort began as an ambitious small scale ski resort in 1941. It is now the third largest ski resort in Canada behind, Whistler, British Columbia and Mont-Tremblant, Montreal (thestar.com, 2007). Built on former agricultural lands the resort used its agricultural profits during inception to fund itself effecting its identity which is still apparent in its creation of the apple bowl course, an area where Gregorian Bay apples were grown for sale to skiers. It is also apparent in a variety of other elements in the resort. Although it is known for its ski hills Blue Mountain Resort has evolved into a dynamic year-round destination boasting an array of restaurants, a conference centre, lodging, a golf course, and a number of other services and amenities for its visitors (thestar.com, 2007). It has branded itself as, “Ontario’s Only 4 Season Mountain and Village Resort” (www.bluemountain.ca, 2015).

Blue Mountain Resort is located in The Town of The Blue Mountains, Ontario, geographically found at 44.507581 Long: -80.316120 and borders southern Nottawasaga Bay. The Town of The Blue Mountains is
the result of an amalgamation of the Township of Collingwood and the Town of Thornbury taking place on January 1, 1998 (Blue Mountains Official Plan, 2005). The following map places Blue Mountain Resort within the context of Southern Ontario.

Blue Mountain Resort has been increasing in size over the years however the mountain itself stays the focus of the resort. Regardless of form urbanization as seen in through the development of Blue Mountain resort introduces change that is dynamic, constant and consistent (Bunting & Filion, 2006). Although the mountain remains a discernable landmark other open spaces define the development. The Mill Pond seen in Figure 6 and the Events Plaza seen in Figure 7 are locations which take on the role of landmarks and form identity for the space. These two spaces are connected by a variety of paths and form their own distinct area within the resort playing host to a variety of events.
3.4 Procedure

Two planners, two landscape architects and one architect all with formal education in their respective fields participated in a voluntary photo-survey evaluating Blue Mountain Resort. These individuals were selected as they are trained to have a greater understanding of the principles of city design theory beyond that of the general public. It is implicit that those trained in any of the three professions as listed above have greater comprehension of common design principles applied to any constructed space. Significance is found in the abilities attained through formal training of those involved to understand design theory principles so that they may connect imagery to theory. This allows for evaluations to be made based on professional judgement and not uninformed preferences. These 5 individuals were given a set of images and asked to judge them based on the presence of Kevin Lynch’s elements. The panel ranked the images based on the apparent presence of Lynch’s elements.

Blue Mountain Resort was selected based on its location, size, variety of spaces and it being a resort. The location offers a variety of landscape features beyond the initial mountain, including such things as immediately adjacent and nearby waterbodies as well as significant forests. The size of the site is ideal as it is adequate for the assessment of Lynch’s elements and not so overwhelmingly large that it is difficult to be assessed in its entirety. Additionally the size of the resort lends itself to the creation of a variety of spaces which is important to the study. Lastly Blue Mountain is a resort, the mainstay of why it is being studied.
In order to ensure the suitability of key informants, criteria has been created to qualify them. The criteria distinguishes the participants and is as follows,

**Education**

Key informants are selected based on formal education requiring professional training on spatial planning and reasoning. Three appropriate fields of study are planning, landscape architecture and architecture as they require understanding of spatial arrangements. Formal education on the subject requires a sufficient amount of scholarship generally defined by a minimum of a bachelor degree in their respective fields. Any additional training further qualifies the key informant on the subject. Education ensures a degree of understanding the governing institution guarantees upon graduation. This creates a minimum standard that all key informants must be qualified on.

**Work Experience**

Work experience involving spatial planning and design relevant to the subject must be considered when qualifying key informants. Experience can come from, but is not exclusive to, development consulting firms, government agencies involved in spatial planning such as local municipalities, or management companies. The more years of relevant industry experience denotes a higher level of understanding of spatial planning and design therefore the more years of experience the greater
competence on the subject matter the key informant has. All key informants require work experience to be considered for selection.

**Understanding of Kevin Lynch’s Five Elements**

Key informants must have a working understanding of Kevin Lynch’s study pertaining to the five elements (Lynch, 1960). Understanding of the ideas put forth in his publication, “Image of the City” (Lynch, 1960) are essential for assessing the provided material and its relations to Blue Mountain Resort. This understanding is largely attained by way of the education criterion as noted above however, verification by the key informant is still required.

**Awareness on Blue Mountain Resort through Visitation or Study**

All Key informants will be qualified based on their understanding of the resort. Awareness is defined by individuals familiarity achieved through, visitation or examination. Qualification by way of visitation requires multiple visits in excess of three distinct occasions. Examination entails academic study, involvement in operation of the resort and participation in creation of the resort. Singly or collectively any of these three types of examination are valid.

This criteria distinguishes individual’s level of competence by determining their level of knowledge on the topic. The questions conclude respondents have familiarity with the applicable theory, site specific conditions and relevant work experience as well as a
sound formal education on the subject matter. This recognizes the individual's knowledge and/or understanding of the necessary subject areas. The above criteria is significant as key informants are to reflect a community's knowledge on the subject and are to be prepared to offer this information (Tongco, 2007).

In order to have this research contribute to the respective field it needs to be reproducible and that is why this informant criteria method is significant. The criteria allows for reproduction of key informant evaluation and therefore the ability to reproduce a process ensure consistency (Tongco, 2007).

To generate a list of key informant snowball sampling was used. This is a method where one begins with an informant that refers the researcher to other individuals in the community who have expert knowledge on the topic (Robson, 2011). The method generates further informants to a point where relevant experts begin to refer the same individuals therefore developing an exhaustive list of informants. Additionally, experts are qualifying peers through recommendations. The number of individuals selected as participants is determined by the number required to obtain necessary information, nevertheless a minimum of five informants is seen as essential to reduce possible bias (Tongco, 2007). For the purpose of this study five informants provide sufficient perspective due to their qualifications as discussed above. Having greater than five informants contribute will not produce more credible results therefore it is no necessary. Credibility is gained through qualification process of the key informants (Tongco, 2007).
3.4.1 Photo Survey

Colour images were taken of Lynch’s elements found in Blue Mountain Resort. The selected images were picked as they best depict Lynch’s elements. Pictures were chosen as the medium for display since they remain consistent among all respondents and streamline the process. The pictures were taken between 11:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. during March. A digital camera was used to capture the pictures. All pictures were intended to capture the natural state of the resort so no information was consciously excluded from the pictures.

15 pictures were chosen to be used for the photo survey. These 15 pictures were chosen because they best represent the element being portrayed and the significance of the place within the park. The chosen 15 pictures were divided into five even categories of four images per each of Lynch’s elements, path, edge, district, node and landmark. The survey collected ratings on each of the independent five elements. The purpose was to discern how obvious the element was in the picture according to the participants rating. In order to prevent participants from influencing the survey they were required to rank all images on the degree of clarity for each element. This ensure assumptions were no made for a certain element as the participant could not know what element was being displayed in the image. Each picture was also judged based on its perceived significance in the photo-survey. The pictures were shown in a random sequence.
The photo survey method was selected based on the high consistency between landscape observations centered on photography and those of direct site experiences by the observer (Jacobson, 2007). For landscapes associated with tourism, specifically those with a connection to the visual experience a photo based method is a valid assessment technique however, it does require a precise set of photos capturing the valued aspects (Jacobson, 2007). These valued aspects includes such landscape features as mountains, water, and shorelines (Jacobson, 2007). The valued aspects of Blue Mountain’s landscape became the selection criteria for the photos. Furthermore the strength in using photos as a means of evaluation is the ability to immediately view multiple landscapes simultaneously unlike those who are experiencing a landscape while on site (Jacobson, 2007). A limit to this type of photo survey method is the requirement to obtain quality images of the exact targets. In this study this issues was overcome with proper planning and an adequate timeline that allowed for the quality imagery to be obtained when it was available.

The term apparent was used to assess the quality of the scenes provided on the questionnaire and refers to the level of obviousness of Kevin Lynch’s elements that exist in the given image. Degrees of obviousness are used to assess the quality of the scene shown in the images. They are as follows, strongly apparent, apparent, somewhat apparent, and unapparent. The distinction between the degrees of apparent are defined by the certainty of the viewer’s ability to identify element(s). For example strongly apparent defines a scene where a viewer immediately identifies an element(s)
with high confidence whereas somewhat apparent portrays a low degree of confidence. Unapparent, describes a situation where no element(s) can be identified by the viewer.

Consistency in the questionnaire results from clear instruction on its completion. Clear instruction is provided in the preamble of the questionnaire document. Since the questionnaire is gathering data specific to a respondent’s subject knowledge, each will have different results and this is why it is important to have qualified key informants as previously determined. It ensures their understanding of the subject is equal. Qualified key informants provide thoughtful reliable results as they are experts on the subject. Reliability of results is associated with an informant’s place and tenure in their respective organization, therefore key informants selected based on their industry knowledge and position in their organizations increases accuracy of their given responses (Homburg, 2012). A key informant method gains strength in the scenario of a photo-survey as they are significantly more consistent when assessing current and apparent events (Homburg, 2012). This strongly relates to the nature of the questionnaire as it assesses the obviousness of elements in the present condition of Blue Mountain Resort.

3.5 Data Analysis
A quantitative approach places an emphasis on behavior and attitudes. The intent is to analyze how people act or react in this case to better know just how they think (Bryman, Bell & Teevan, 2012). Gathering data from key informants was the basis for exploring the relation.
From the data gathered from the key informant respondents it is clear the path element is distinguishable where ninety-three percent of responses identified it as strongly apparent in the corresponding path photographs. The remaining seven percent saw it as apparent. Due to the high percentage of identical responses one can conclude there is a high degree of clarity in the path element and that design intent can be claimed.

Edge shares some of this claim as forty of responses recognized the element as strongly apparent in the corresponding edge photographs. More significantly eighty-seven percent of responses identified the element as apparent or higher. The remainder saw edge as somewhat apparent. No respondents claimed edge was unapparent.

District was not as noticeable where forty percent of responses recognized only a loose tie to the element in the specific images however, fifty-three percent identified the element as apparent or greater. There lies a degree of ambiguity among the visibility of the element reducing its significance in comparison to the path or edge element. What this does indicate is that the element can be seen in the design meaning it is not entirely absent.

Node was the least apparent element where forty percent of responses acknowledged it as unapparent in the corresponding images. The remainder is skewed towards apparent with strongly apparent and somewhat apparent being the outliers. It is obvious the Node element is not clear in the physical design of Blue Mountain Resort.
Lastly, landmark received mixed interpretations showing a range of responses in all categories however, the majority of respondents did not mark it as unapparent. There appears to be some vagueness around the presence on Landmark in the resort but it is existent.

**RESPONDENT DATA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Edge</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Node</th>
<th>Landmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Apparent</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apparent</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Apparent</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unapparent</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 8: The data collected from key informant assessments of Blue Mountain Resort (Author, 2015).*

The data indicates there is a presence of some components of Lynch’s elements found in the resort. Paths are a core components in forming the image of a place therefore creating a strong identity according to Lynch’s findings (Lynch, 1960). Given the strength of the path element Blue Mountain Resort shows promise of strength in developing a sense of place that is to be identifiable to its visitors however, improvement among the other elements are required. Edge and district elements are to be responsible for forming a strong connection to thematic harmony inferring Blue Mountain Resort has some degree of unity as no respondents saw no indication of edge and only seven percent identified district as unapparent (Lynch, 1960). Nevertheless the degree of unity is uncertain. It is obvious Node lacks clarity and consequently fails to be significant in appearance. Landmark purports ambiguity but there appears to be a
degree of agreement among respondents that they exists. The clarity of landmark is lacking creating unsureness among the respondents.

3.6 Visual Study

To fully experience the site it was visited during the summer and autumn season in order to take into considerations seasonality. The visits covered the entire resort so that all of its part were considered in the study. The purpose of examining the site was to visually discover if Lynch’s elements were inherent in Blue Mountain Resort and in order to do so four visits were conducted between March 4, 2015 and August 4, 2015. To remain authentic to the experience of the resort the researcher allowed themselves to organically explore the resort during the visits.

Upon arrival of the resort the landmark was the first of Lynch’s elements to become apparent. A large mountain is the backdrop of the resort engulfing the built structures. This landmark was very obvious and a clear focal point of the resort during all seasons. The natural feature of the mountain acted as an identifiable landmark. The mountain functions as a destination that’s visual hierarchy made it the most notable among the rest of the spaces. The mountain could be seen from every space within the resort, never lacking presence.

Other secondary landmarks were found throughout the site. The events plaza was marked by a grouping of seating and a stage where the stage was supplemented with a large fire during the cooler months also boasting a variety of seating. The Mill Pond space was marked by its body of water playing host to water activates during times of
warm weather and skating once conditions became appropriate. A passive gathering area with a gazebo and another fire was found.

The edge element was apparent when walking the paths on the outer limits of the resort. These edges were defined by the open fields on one side that lead to no specific place and are abutted by the structures of the resort. The resort did not slowly dissipate into the landscape, it was harshly terminated by the visual void beyond the resort. This remained true for its outer limits in their entirety with the exception of the mountains to the southwest which became a natural edge and some sparse low-rise residential to the north. The residential structures to the north had differing façade treatments from that of the resort creating an obvious visual end to the resort. It is clear to the observer that there are edges to the resort providing a strong presence of this element.

The paths in Blue Mountain Resort noticeably define importance using size. The wider pedestrian paths take travelers to major spaces. Paths that vary in width create an obvious hierarchy of importance. The paths can be classified into primary, secondary, and tertiary by their purposes. The bounding path does not follow the same use as the rest of the paths, it is mainly a service road and an indication of edge. The circulation that the paths provide as a whole visually appeared to continuous and flowing taking travelers to their destinations.

Districts in the resort are defined by their characteristics and apparent dimension. One can immediately distinguish the use of a space by its frequency of buildings and
activates (Hodge & Gordon, 2007). The event plaza space if framed by the buildings and uses of the area where it acts as a passive space during downtimes when events are no occurring. Additionally, it is supplemented by active commercial uses, such as shops and restaurants to create variety in activity. The mill pond area functions as a district apparent through its activities and is easily distinguished by the body of water. It is also framed by buildings but they are of residential use. The entrance to the park from the north is defined by its village like feel. It is used primarily for shopping and dining at grade and provides housing on the upper floors. The architecture and streetscape of the district remains consistent throughout granting the perceiver a clear visual clue as to where they are. The base of the mountain is unmistakably defined by the skiing activity and the services offered in the space. It becomes immediately obvious that the space makes up the skiing district due to the mountain landscape and the edge it creates.

Lastly is node which can be seen in the events plaza. The events plaza functions as a town square meaning its purpose is to display grandeur often attained by the buildings which frame the space (Carmona, Heath, Oc & Tiesdell, 2003). A large number of paths lead to the plaza transforming their purpose while intersecting the space. The events plaza is the major node accompanied by secondary nodes located throughout the village however, the realization from the perceiver of entering into these secondary nodes is underwhelming and perhaps lost. These secondary nodes are not marked differently in some way, shape or form. They are often framed by buildings but are not necessarily a definable moment in ones journey. Nevertheless the events plaza grants a strong presences to the resort and is perceptibly a node.
3.6.1 Summary of Results

Through visitation of the site it was found that the key informant photo-survey findings are well connected to Blue Mountain Resort. All of Lynch’s elements are present in the resort however, the degree of their clarity is not consistently high. The visual study marked the occurrence of the elements but did not judge their clarity beyond the extent of discerning their presences. A limitation of the study derives from the familiarity with the resort that is why key informants were qualified based on their awareness of the place. The visual study made it apparent that familiarity with the space was a necessity to judge the resort. Moreover there are personal connections that account for clarity of a space that cannot be detached from respondents. The photo-survey and visual study aid in establishing broad recommendations for Blue Mountain and resorts as a whole.

With these findings it is important to draw conclusions and provide an application for them. The findings will be discussed and improvement to the resort will be made in the form of recommendations to provide a meaningful conclusion to this thesis.

Section Four: Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

4.1 Findings Reexamined

This chapter discusses the findings and what they mean. It outlines how the conclusions that were drawn can be used to makes changes to Blue Mountain Resort. Path, edge,
district, node and landmark are each discussed providing ways to strengthen their presence in the resort in the hopes of forming a stronger experience for the visitor.

The assessment of Blue Mountain Resort through Lynch’s elements, path, edge, district, node and landmark, and the visual study exposed that the elements are present in the resort however, the degree of their clarity ranges between obvious and vague depending on the selected element. Regardless of success of a space there are opportunities for advancement or change to encourage a higher level of visitation. This is important to the economic sustainability of a resort as it requires funding and a return on investment to endure. What was found was that clarity of design characteristics vary. To better understand the implications of the ties to memorability of a space and design elements further assessment is required. There is a financial benefit to be gained by a destination through strengthening its memorability by way of physical design (Polo, 1999).

If individuals are able to place themselves in an environment they find physically recognizable and perceptually clear they are able to form a feeling of belonging (Polo, 1999). This means physical aesthetics plays a role in conveying a place’s degree of gratification to its user. What is difficult to account for is the experience a person will have at any given event while at the resort and recognition of physical design being the deciding factor of this (Polo, 1999). Lynch’s elements provided a method for assessing the occurrence and clarity of physical design which allows for identifiable areas of improvement.
Findings by other researcher using photos as a means of examination of Lynch’s methods support the connection between built environment and clarity of elements suggesting there is, “a definite causal connection between the built environment and the perceived image” (Thitumaran and Babu, Pg. 198, 2014). Others found a strong connection involving the observers and the elements of landmark where bridges or trees where identified and edges where mountains became a defining feature (Strohecker, 1999). Districts appeared vaguer to perceivers likewise with nodes however it is of note that there was a correlation between activity of a space and node (Strohecker, 1999). What is significant among the findings is there is a consistent connection between the perceiver and the elements whether they differ in strength depending on the imagery. This indicates Lynch’s methods provide an assessment method that remains constant and can identify the strength and weaknesses of the dependent variable of geographical space. For Blue Mountain Resort this means those elements that appear weaker are areas which require improvement to create a stronger identify. Some recommendations are made to help improve situations.

4.2 Site Recommendations

As a result of the data collected from the literature review, photo-survey and visual study recommendations can be made for Blue Mountain Resort. To address shortcomings of each element the following will provide suggestions on enhancements to inadequacies.
Paths appear to have a clear presence on site suggesting improvements are minor if necessary. Some methods for improving the apparentness of wayfinding features can be achieved through pavement patterns and texture. A strengthening of the connection to landmarks and the quality of landmarks themselves will establish a sense of direction and develop a stronger sense of primary and secondary pathways.

The Mountain serves as an obvious visual edge as well as physical one nonetheless, some of the surrounding residential structure appear to sparsely dissipate lacking a clear termination of the resort grounds. Strengthening the edge could provide a stronger unity throughout and therefore defining the resort. Through developing a discernible gateway features along the edges of the resort grounds you will help visitors understand where the edges end and begin. Additionally paving textures and colouring are a means of providing obvious cues to a visitor that they are at the edge of the resort by appealing to their sense of sight and touch. This method can be easily applied to Blue Mountain Resort. The existing asphalt pathway that encompasses the resort provides an initial sense of edge however, it breaks off into a variety of other subdivisions that convoluted the understanding of what belongs to the resort and what is independently owned and separate of the resort grounds. Transitional architectural difference in materials could play a role in defining the boundaries. Such things can include changes in light standards, paving material, wall treatments, plant material, and elevation grades.

The existence of district is definite but the clarity of where they begin and end is undiscernible as the data suggests. Forty percent of key informant respondents rated
the districts as somewhat apparent making it the most selected of the four options. Although a harmonious associations exists between the districts the lack of definition in boundary is present. Visible access areas need to be emphasised to increase clarity (Polo, 1999). Signage will aid in identifying differences between retail, recreation, residential and passive districts and areas. Combining this with installations of thematic elements including such this as canopy covers for an area, specific site furnishings and art installations help define an area. Lastly programming a space to have more active functions will create associations of a commercial active district opposed to a passive residential space.

With nodes unapparent to forty percent for respondents there is an obvious need for improvements. A node can form a feeling of arrival at the resort that can be further enhanced by landmark features. This occurs on site in the events plaza where a bonfire with seating is placed in the centre of the square. Maximizing this effect by implementing the same method elsewhere within the resort and creating hierarchy among the nodes accentuating their presence. Improvements are attainable through differentiating the paths leading to the nodes as this will cause an interesting effect when converging therefore clarifying the presence of the node. To further this effect colour scheming the spaces provides a direct visual signal that the node is different from other spaces and can cause visitors to spend time studying the area. Thirdly, introducing seating and passive spaces can signify a node implying the space is meant to be a place of idling.
Blue Mountain Resort is emphasized by its natural mountainous landscape that helps visitors identify it but on a finer scale it requires greater attention to landmarks on the inside of the resort. To increase the benefits of landmarks there is a need to have more unique features scattered throughout the resort. When developing landmark features a higher level of attention should be paid to hierarchy and view sheds. Being able to see a landmark from a greater number of paths leading into a space encourages exploration and acts as wayfinding feature. A prominent landmark feature at the entrance of the resort will strengthen the resorts attraction and presence.

4.3 Research Limitations and Recommendations

Due to the breadth of the undertaking this thesis studies the tangible aspects of Blue Mountain Resort leaving a need for further investigation into the psychological aspects of design in order to greater comprehend the relation a resort has with its visitor. To fill gaps on the effects of physical design and the success of a resort some beneficial areas of study include visitor interaction with built environments, natural versus manufactured landscapes and expected versus actual experiences of a destination. These are some areas of study that will help bolster the research on resort design although it is not an exhaustive list.

Granting the key informants were qualified they do not represent the average user of the resort and because of this they could not be used to assess visitor experience. For future research data collection on the average visitor’s experience of the place is valuable in assessing design intent versus how it is actually experienced. Although
Lynch’s elements were identified the question of how this affects an experience remains unanswered.

Images of the resort were provided and key informants were required to have visited the resort however, this lacks in addressing physical changes over time. A destination changes over time and key informants were not required to have recently visited the resort. The photo-survey method provided an adequate way of supplying respondents with identical unbiased information within a reasonable time frame but does not necessarily provide the same experience as a site visit.

Further research may prove worthwhile to assess the greater context of Blue Mountain Resort and whether or not the surroundings define the architectural style and spatial planning of the destination. This raises the question pertaining to the vernacular landscape. Although the landscape may suggest a type of experience what is actually felt by those familiar with the destination needs to be looked into.

4.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to further understand the relationship between design theory and its real world application. It is the theory that provides rational for undertakings such as this one and is necessary for ongoing development in the field (Brooks, 2002). It is done to aid in determining which characteristics should be applied in resort design by first defining if practices are visible in resort developments.
This investigation identified the issues that are found in clarity of design intent. This is significant because there is a connection between physical form and establishing a sense of place (Polo, 1999). Physical form is also linked to memorability which is crucial to resort developments and is not an unintentional occurrence. It is created through physical design practices that Lynch’s elements were used to test their presence (Polo, 1999).

Many issues became apparent through this investigation and each phase of the research process help play an important role in disguising and identifying these issues. Each stage of the research provided groundwork for the next. Initial stages on the speculation and purpose of study formed a cause for the literature review due to the need for study of design theory to fully comprehend the current landscape on resort design.

The initial information gathering achieved through the literature review provided knowledge on physical aspects of themed resort environments. It also took into consideration psychological aspects of design and their role in resort development. What was found is, experiences can be controlled through physical design (Polo, 1999). For the case study this meant there was a need to establish the existence of physical design characteristics by studying their clarity. This is important to the field of landscape architecture because it has a direct influence on how resort environments are viewed and designed.
Data created a way of measuring the apparentness of Lynch’s elements in a resort. The data was gathered using qualified key informants requiring that they were trained and had knowledge on the subject matter. This ensured a level of competence and adequate knowledge ensuring the study received accurate data. This made it possible to judge the presence of Lynch’s elements in the resort making it possible to identify the deficiencies and effectiveness of such finding on memorability and sense of place. Recommendations on the physical form of the resort were made based on the findings of the key informants. This provided a tangible product as a result of the research that is useful to academics and in-field practitioners.

Lynch’s elements created a means for measuring identity through physical design. People develop their own connection and find their own meaning in a place but Lynch found that although this connection cannot be prescribed it can be encouraged by the way we design (Banerjee and Southwood, 1990).

The study of Blue Mountain Resort using Lynch’s elements made it obvious that design elements can by implemented but not executed in a way that is clear or descriptive to a place. With these elements visitors are encouraged to relax and enjoy a place. They form a connection to the nodes they enter into, the landmarks they find, the districts that describe experiences, the paths that create access and the edges that define boundaries. This thesis provided a method for analyzing the physical form of a resort and provided meaningful facts about the way a resort is spatially designed.
Through shedding light on the clarity of design elements found in resorts practitioners are able to improve how resorts are constructed in order to increase visitor experience. It is the job of landscape architects to create desirable and functional spaces that improve an individual's quality of life and these findings provide a means of targeting weaknesses so they may be improved. With landscape architects as key players in decision making roles in the development of resorts. This documents provides the potential to advance the resort industry and therefore have a positive effect on people’s lives. Additionally, through this study a theoretical framework has been further developed to study the significance of the way spaces are designed and how clearly the design features appear. Lastly, through meshing planning and landscape architecture teachings in this study a step in an incremental process of bridging the gap between the professions begins for those who are unaware.
References

Literature


Figures


Appendix
Appendix I: Photo-survey Questionnaire provided to Key Informants

INSTRUCTION

This questionnaire is intended to gather information on the appearance of Kevin Lynch’s five elements found in the design of Blue Mountain Resort. Below are descriptions of the five elements.

PATHS
These are travel routes that people use in differing amounts based on surrounding land uses. Paths can consist of, railroads, pedestrian routes, automotive roads or other informal means used to access a destination. In the above destination region model they are used to travel from node to node.

EDGE
Utilizing paths but not exclusive to them, edges are boundaries to identifiable spaces. A roadway may encompass a space providing a defining boundary for the observer perceiving it.

DISTRICT
Areas that are entered into that are obvious to the perceiver form districts. They can be thematic or have distinguishable characteristics known to those inside and outside of them, since they have an apparent dimension.

NODE
Connections between two points that a person can interact with and enter into, define nodes. They are most commonly a creation of intersecting roads often shifting from their primary purpose to another for a short period of time. An intersection creates a destination point where activities may transpire making them a focus and provide a person with decisions or opportunities to alter their course.

LANDMARK
Landmarks are often a single object such as a statue or building. They are destinations but are also used as way finding features to help navigate a space. Visual hierarchy plays an important role in qualifying and identifying landmarks.


DEFINING THE SCALE
The term used to describe the images in the scene is apparent. Apparent refers to the level of obviousness of Kevin Lynch’s elements that exist in the given image. Degrees of obviousness are used to assess the quality of the scene shown in the images. They are as follows, strongly apparent, apparent, somewhat apparent, and unapparent. The distinction between the degrees of apparent are defined by the certainty of the viewer ability to identify element(s). For example strongly apparent defines a scene where a viewer immediately identifies an element(s) with high confidence whereas somewhat apparent portrays a low degree of confidence. Unapparent, describes a situation where no element(s) can be identified by the viewer.

An example of how to complete the photo survey follows.
Please answer the following questions before proceeding.

1. Are you a Landscape Architect, Planner, Architect or do you work in the recreation and leisure industry? (Select all that apply)
   - Landscape Architect
   - Planner
   - Architect
   - Recreation & Leisure
   - None of the above

2. Are you familiar with Kevin Lynch and his theories involving the five elements, path, edge, district, node and landmark as put forth in his publication, “Image of the City” (Lynch, 1960)? (Select one)
   - Yes
   - No

3. Have you visited Blue Mountain Resort and/or are you familiar with it? All key informants will be qualified based on their understanding of the resort. (Select all that apply)
   - Familiar with the resort through scholarly study or involvement in its construction
   - Visited the Resort on 3 or more occasions
   - Unaware of the resort

4. How many years of design/spatial planning work experience do you have?
   - [ ] Years
Select only ONE and the MOST APPROPRIATE response for each of the elements.

How apparent is the element shown in the corresponding image?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PATH</th>
<th>EDGE</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>NODE</th>
<th>LANDMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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