



Placemaking in Dubai

How successful are Dubai's waterfront developments in creating quality places?

A brief introduction...



Dubai in the 1940s/50s ¹.



Dubai in 2015 ².

A brief introduction...



Dubai's coastline and man-made islands ³.



Palm Jumeirah ⁴.

The water provides 'an emotional appeal which is ideal for recreation, entertainment and cultural activities.'

- Millspaugh (2001) ⁵

70 km → 1500 km

My research...

Research question:

How successful are Dubai's waterfront developments in creating quality places?

Research objectives:

1.

Define 'quality places'.

2.

Develop an analytical framework.

3.

Assess the waterfront developments.

4.

Identify viewpoints on waterfront developments and placemaking in Dubai.

Methods...

Objective	Method	Expected Outcome
1 - define 'quality places'.	Literature review.	A definition of 'quality places' will provide the basis for the criteria of the analytical framework
2 - develop an analytical framework.	Literature review.	The framework will indicate the key criteria to assess the waterfront developments..
3 - assess the waterfront developments.	Visual analysis.	The results will establish the success of the waterfront developments in creating quality places.
4 - identify viewpoints on waterfront developments and placemaking in Dubai.	Interviews.	A range of professional viewpoints will help to form the conclusion.

Defining 'quality places'...

'The physical characteristics of a community, the way it is planned, designed, developed and maintained that affect the quality of life of people living and working in it and those visiting both now and in the future'

- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2009) ⁶

Intangible qualities?

Mix of uses

Vistas

Character

Walkability

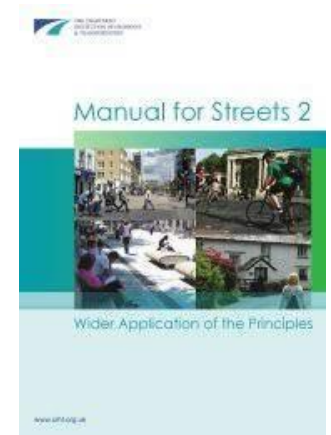
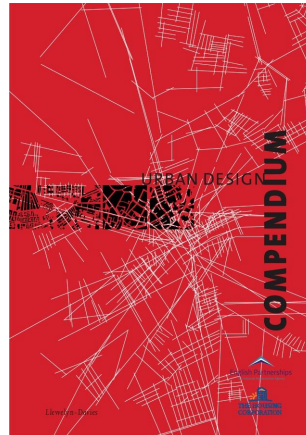
Legibility

Public realm

Street furniture

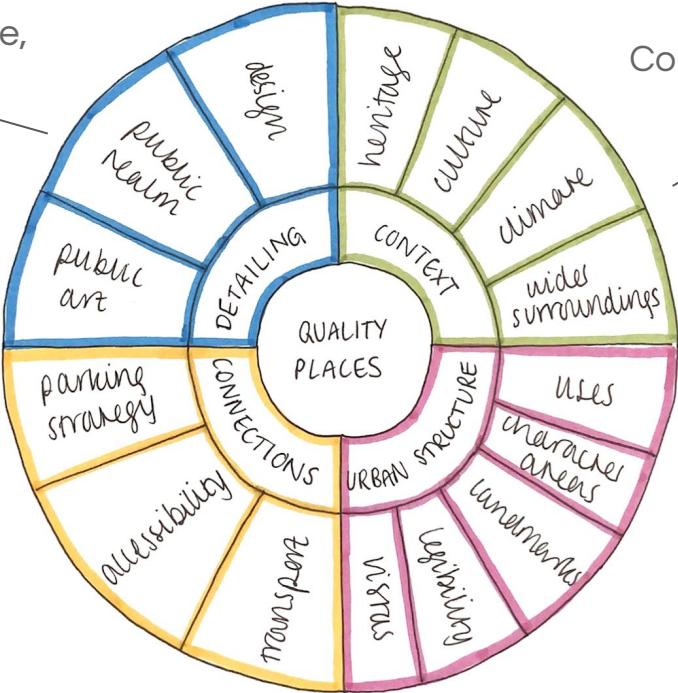
Connectivity

Planting



Establishing a framework...

E.g. public realm = street furniture, signage and lighting.



Consideration of waterfront and location of Dubai.

Visual analysis...



Al Seef

Historic- and culture-led.
Two contrasting sections.
Situated along Dubai Creek.



Bluewaters

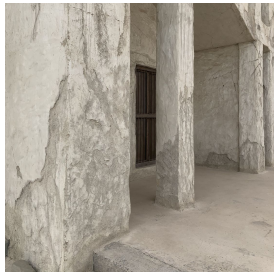
Contemporary.
Man-made island.



La Mer

Modern and semi-fantasy.
Beachfront.

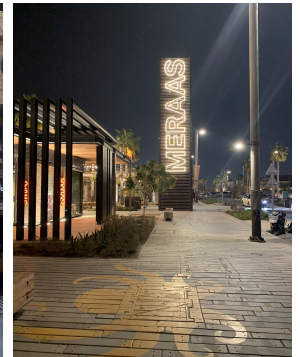
Visual analysis of Al Seef...



Visual analysis of Bluewaters...



Visual analysis of La Mer...



Interviews...

[La Mer] “was prettily done, but there was no strong connection to Dubai in any way or form”

“Very sanitised, very Disneyland[-like]”

“They haven’t done enough for culture I think”

“To be perfectly honest, our design for these spaces is catered more for people using the [place] in the afternoon or the evening”

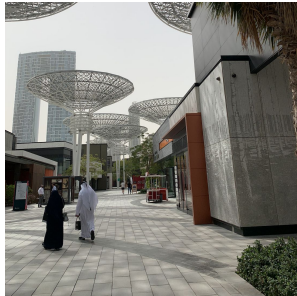
“The moment you start to add shade, is the moment you start to block the views for the restaurants”

Conclusions...

How successful are Dubai's waterfront developments in creating quality places?

Local climate and global models.

Public spaces, privately managed.





Thank you for listening!

Any questions?

References...

¹ Fernandes, L. (2019) *Dubai in the 1940s/50s*. Available at: <https://twitter.com/loouisfernandes/status/1103633708056080385/photo/1> (Accessed: 28 January 2021)

² Gulf News Archives (2015) *Dubai Creek in 2015*. Available at: <https://gulfnews.com/uae/dubai-creek-bid-for-world-heritage-site-revised-1.1449898> (Accessed: 28 January 2021)

³ Landsat and Copernicus (2021) 'Dubai', *Google Maps*.

⁴ My Bayut (no date) *Life in Palm Jumeirah*. Available at: <https://www.bayut.com/mybayut/pros-cons-living-palm-jumeirah/> (Accessed: 10 April 2021)

⁵ Millspaugh, M. L. (2001) 'Waterfronts as catalysts for city renewal' in Marshall, R. (eds) *Waterfronts in Post-Industrial Cities*. London: Taylor and Francis.

⁶ MHCLG (2009) *World Class Places: the Government's Strategy for Improving Quality of Place*. Available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919161225/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1229344.pdf> (Accessed: 27 February 2021)