

# Building framework criteria for identifying the genius loci element in urban space

Xây dựng khung tiêu chí nhận diện yếu tố nơi chốn trong không gian đô thị

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## ABSTRACT

Identifying the genius loci element is understanding and seeing the outstanding features of the space where people live, which is the first step towards identifying a specific place or location. It can be geographically, culturally, socially and environmentally symbolic of a land or locality. The identification of place factors not only helps to evaluate and analyze the special features of a certain place, it also provides more logical and transparent view of the space that we are for aiming. This helps us to better understand the nature, character and value of space, from both aesthetic, functional and social aspects. Through recognizing the element of genius loci, we can comprehensively approach the living environment around people. It provides necessary information to recommend measures to preserve and develop urban space. This may include designing appropriate and attractive urban open spaces, structures and social activities, creating a livable and enjoyable environment. By understanding and appreciating genius loci factor, we can encourage interest and investment in the conservation and development of genius loci, from protecting the natural environment to building infrastructure and facilities. culture serving the interests of the community.

Keywords: Genius loci; Identifying the genius loci; urban space; element.

## TÓM TẮT

Nhận diện yếu tố nơi chốn là việc hiểu và thấy được đặc điểm nổi trội của không gian nơi con người cư ngụ, là bước đầu tiên để định danh một địa điểm hoặc một vị trí cụ thể. Nó có thể là biểu tượng về mặt địa lý, văn hóa, xã hội và môi trường của một vùng đất hay một địa phương. Việc nhận diện các yếu tố nơi chốn không chỉ giúp đánh giá và phân tích những đặc trưng đặc biệt của một địa điểm nào đó, nó còn mang lại một cách nhìn logic và thông suốt hơn không gian mà mình đang hướng tới. Điều này giúp chúng ta hiểu rõ hơn về bản chất, đặc điểm và giá trị của không gian, từ cả mặt thẩm mỹ, chức năng và xã hội. Thông qua nhận diện yếu tố nơi chốn, chúng ta có thể tiếp cận một cách toàn diện về môi trường sống xung quanh con người. Nó cung cấp thông tin cần thiết để đề xuất các biện pháp gìn giữ và phát triển không gian đô thị. Điều này có thể bao gồm việc thiết kế các không gian mở đô thị, công trình kiến trúc và các hoạt động xã hội sao cho phù hợp và hấp dẫn, tạo ra một môi trường sống đáng sống và thú vị. Bằng cách hiểu và đánh giá yếu tố nơi chốn, chúng ta có thể khuyến khích sự quan tâm và đầu tư vào việc bảo tồn và phát triển nơi chốn, từ việc bảo vệ môi trường tự nhiên đến việc xây dựng hạ tầng và cơ sở văn hóa phục vụ lợi ích cộng đồng.

**Từ khóa:** Nơi chốn; nhận diện nơi chốn; không gian đô thị; tiêu chí.

## 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The genius loci may have appeared from ancient times through the beliefs and culture of ancient people, from the 6th century BC to the 4th century AD. Initially, it involved religion, spirituality, and philosophical thought. Accordingly, the ancient Romans believed that everything has its own spirit (animistic things) protected by supernatural forces that humans could not explain by science at that time. This spirit is considered as a source of motivation for people to overcome all obstacles in life, accompanying them from birth to death. A genius loci can be a sacred place to venerate the gods or a place of accommodation, an integral part of life that helps to maintain a balance between the physical world and the spiritual world. It creates the power of faith in people, protects and protects people. The Rome

of the Romans or the Olympia of the ancient Greeks are good examples of sacred places, the site of sacrificial spaces honoring the gods. In addition, in ancient Egyptian culture, the temple of gods and pharaohs is also considered a sacred place, a space to pray. However, as world civilization developed, the genius loci was viewed more scientifically. It is a characteristic space where people have the ability to interact with each other and with the surrounding environment. The place where tangible and intangible values exist. Physical values are physical elements such as buildings, structures, landscapes, topography and other features of the environment and are likened to the carcass of the city. The soul is intangible values including culture, society, history and life cycle taking place at each time of day, month, year, etc... The genius loci cannot separate the two parts of body and

soul from each other, because lack of one of them does not make a place.

**2. CRITERIA FOR CREATING THE ELEMENT OF GENIUS LOCI THROUGH THE REASONING OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCHERS**

The genius loci plays an important role in helping people locate and feel connected to their surroundings. The researchers around the world have conducted research and come up with different views about the genius loci based on their own way of seeing things and phenomena. By analyzing these perspectives, we can find commonalities and identify the core elements that make up the the genius loci. This is also how we can objectively assess the value of a genius loci . An important common ground is that scientists agree that place value is created through identifying and celebrating the unique tangible and intangible features of an area. This includes factors such as distinctive architecture, urban planning, topography, culture, and community sentiment. Scientists also emphasize the important role of the natural environment in the process of forming and developing a land. They respect the utilization and protection of terrain, water surface and other natural elements to create a harmonious and human-friendly living environment. Another common view is that genius loci value depends not only on physical features but also on the emotions and moods of the community. The active interaction and participation of the community in the construction and development of the genius loci is considered an important factor to create a livable living environment. Finally, scientists agree that the assessment of genius loci value should be done in the context of sustainable development. This requires a harmonious balance between tangible and intangible factors, respecting the natural environment and ensuring the improvement of the community's quality of life for a long time. Through analyzing the theories of creating urban characteristics as well as creating the genius loci factor of scientific researchers in the world, we have:

SUMMARY TABLE OF ELEMENTS THAT CREATE THE GENIUS LOCI OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCHERS

| AUTHOR                | OBJECT     |                       |                    | INTANGIBLE |                         |         | SPIRIT  |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|
|                       | Structures | Artificial open space | Natural open space | Activity   | Environmental landscape | History | Emotion |
| Martin Heidegger      | ●          | ●                     | △                  | ○          |                         | △       | ●       |
| Norberg Schulz        | ●          | ●                     | ●                  | △          | △                       | ○       | ●       |
| Yi-Fu Tuan            | ○          | ○                     | ●                  | ●          | △                       | ○       | ●       |
| Peter Zumtho          | △          | ○                     | ○                  | ●          |                         | ○       | ●       |
| Lawrence Durell       | ○          | ○                     | △                  | ○          | △                       | △       | ●       |
| Truong Quang Thao     | ○          | ○                     | ○                  | △          | △                       | △       | ●       |
| Kevin Lynch           | ●          | ●                     | ●                  | △          |                         |         | ○       |
| Christopher Alexandre | ●          | ●                     | ○                  | ○          | △                       | △       | ○       |
| Gordon Cullen         | ○          | ●                     | ●                  | △          |                         |         | ○       |
| Emilly Talen          | ●          | ●                     | ●                  | ○          | △                       | △       | ○       |
| Camillo Sitte         | ●          | ●                     | ○                  |            |                         | △       | △       |
| Roger Trancik         | ●          | ●                     | ○                  | ○          |                         | △       | ○       |
| Annette M.Kim         | △          | ●                     | △                  | ●          |                         |         | △       |
| Edward Relph          | ○          | ○                     | ○                  | ○          | △                       | △       | ●       |
| Jane Jacobs           | ○          | ●                     | △                  | ●          | △                       | △       | △       |
| Jan Gehl              | △          | ○                     | ○                  | ●          | △                       |         | ○       |
| William H. Whyte      | △          | ○                     | ○                  | ●          | △                       |         | △       |
| Ian Bentley           | ●          | ●                     | ●                  |            | △                       |         | ○       |
| Mark David Major      | ●          | ●                     | ○                  | ●          |                         | △       |         |
| Nguyen Van Chuong     | ○          | ○                     | ●                  | △          | ○                       | ○       | △       |

Key: ● : Strong ○ : Medium △ : Weak

**3. CRITERIA FOR EXPLOITING THE ELEMENT OF GENIUS LOCI THROUGH INTERNATIONAL AND VIETNAMESE LEGAL AND DOCUMENTS**

In recent years, the focus on space with international documents has received more attention, more specificity and authenticity. International legal bases such as Athens Charter 1931, Venice Charter 1964, Bura Charter 1979, Washington Charter 1987, Nara Document 1994, Indigenous Building Charter 1999, Xian Declaration 2005, Principles Valletta 2011 and the 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage both provide principles for harnessing the element of genius loci to protect and manage cultural

and natural heritage globally. This principle of exploiting the element of place in legal institutions focuses on recognizing, preserving, and respecting the local, historical, architectural and natural values of a particular place. This requires an understanding and appreciation of place factors, including the physical and social environment, as well as the role people play in creating and interacting with this genius loci. The genius loci mining principles also emphasize local community participation and dialogue among stakeholders, such as local governments, international organizations and interest groups, to ensure Decisions and actions are made based on unity and respect for local values and international law. The principles of place exploitation emphasize the protection and restoration of structures of special historical and architectural value. This includes maintaining integrity, consistency and compatibility with the surrounding environment; respect and preserve natural open space, such as natural landscape, topography, ecological environment and other natural elements. This involves the protection and development of special areas, such as national parks, marine areas, forests and grasslands. The principles of exploiting the element of genius loci also focus on artificial open spaces, such as squares, stadiums, urban areas and other public areas. The management and development of these spaces must respect cultural, historical and aesthetic values, and at the same time ensure the utility and utility for the community.

SUMMARY TABLE PRINCIPLES OF EXPLOIT ELEMENTS THE GENIUS LOCI OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND LEGAL OF VIETNAM

| DOCUMENT   | OBJECT     |                       |                    | INTANGIBLE |                         |         | SPIRIT  |
|--|------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|
|  | Structures | Artificial open space | Natural open space | Activity   | Environmental landscape | History | Emotion |
| Athens charter 1931  | ●          | ○                     | ○                  |            |                         | ●       |         |
| Venice charter 1964  | ○          | ○                     | ●                  |            | △                       | ●       |         |
| Bura charter 1979  | ○          | ●                     | ●                  | ○          | ○                       | ●       | △       |
| Washington charter 1987  | ○          | ●                     | ●                  | ○          | △                       | ●       | ○       |
| Nara Document 1994   | △          | △                     | △                  | ○          | ○                       | ○       | ○       |
| Charter for Indigenous Building, 1999  | ●          | ○                     | ○                  |            | △                       | ○       | ○       |
| Xian declaration, 2005   | ●          | ○                     | △                  |            | △                       | ●       | ○       |
| Valletta principles, 2011  | ●          | ●                     | ○                  | ○          | ○                       | ●       | △       |
| Convention for the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage, 1972 | ●          | ●                     | ●                  | ○          | △                       | ○       | △       |
| Law on Urban planning (2009)   | ●          | ●                     | ○                  |            |                         |         | △       |
| Law on Planning (2017)   | ●          | ●                     | ○                  |            |                         |         | △       |
| Law on Architecture (2019)   | ●          | ●                     | ○                  |            | △                       | ○       | ○       |
| Construction Law (2014, 2020)  | ●          | ○                     | ●                  |            | △                       |         |         |
| QCVN 01:2021/BXD   | ○          | ○                     | ○                  |            |                         |         | △       |
| Planning 930ha (2012)  | ●          | ●                     | ○                  |            | △                       | ○       | ●       |
| Ho Chi Minh City's Planning Tasks (2022)                                       | ●          | ○                     | ○                  |            | △                       | △       | △       |

Key: ● : Strong ○ : Medium △ : Weak

In addition, the principles genius loci particular emphasis on protecting and promoting the historic value of a site. This includes the study, recording and preservation of historical and cultural heritage, as well as the creation of measures to protect and restore degraded historic elements. Exploiting the place factor should consider the impact of activities such as tourism, sports, leisure and other activities on the environment and cultural values. This requires the management and adjustment of these activities to ensure a balance between development and protection of the place element. The principle of exploiting the place factor also focuses on the social and cultural environment of a place. This includes promoting local community participation and ensuring that decisions and actions related to management and development are made based on unity and respect for values and regulations. local legislation. Overall, the principles of genius loci exploitation in international legal frameworks emphasize the protection, conservation and development of both the tangible and the intangible elements of a particular place. This requires consideration and consistency between international legal regulations and local values, while ensuring the participation and interaction of stakeholders in the management and development process. In addition, Vietnamese legislation also focuses on identifying

and exploiting the place factor. . Specifically, Vietnam's 2014 Law on Architecture deals with the protection and development of the architectural environment, ensuring its consistency and compatibility with the local cultural identity. This law requires architecture and planning works to comply with the elements of place, including color, shape, building materials and green space. In addition, the law requires the identification and preservation of important architectural and landscape heritage, in order to protect and exploit well the site elements of cultural and historical value.

**4. EXPERIENCE IN EXPLOITING ELEMENTS THE GENIUS LOCI OF URBANS IN THE WORLD**

As we explore the metropolises of Rome, Paris and Madrid, we get an overview of how to exploit the European urban place element. First, urban Europe utilizes and preserves historical and cultural heritage. The ancient architectures, historical sites and beautiful scenery are carefully preserved, creating a unique urban space and attracting tourists. Not only that, beautiful architecture and reasonable urban planning are also a common feature of European cities. Streets, squares and public buildings are built with a delicate combination of classical and modern architecture. Urban planning creates open, green spaces and ensures the protection of historical and cultural areas. Public transport systems in European cities are also invested and developed effectively. Subways, railways, buses and other public transport provide convenient transportation for residents and visitors. This helps to reduce traffic load, reduce pollution and facilitate movement in the city. European cities also take advantage of the natural environment to create better living and working spaces. Parks, lakes, rivers and green spaces are created so that people can relax, enjoy nature and engage in recreational activities. These areas are protected and maintained to ensure a healthy and sustainable living environment. Environmental protection is also a priority in European cities. The promotion of public transport, bicycles and walking helps to reduce reliance on personal cars. At the same time, the use of renewable energy, effective waste management and greening of urban space are also measures to be promoted.

The metropolises of Singapore, Bangkok and Hong Kong in Asia are all aiming to build a sustainable living environment and improve the quality of life for residents by focusing on exploiting and protecting the element of place. One of the common methods that all three cities apply is the development of green spaces and parks in the city. Singapore is famous for its extensive system of parks and flower gardens such as Gardens by the Bay and Singapore Botanic Gardens. Bangkok and Hong Kong are also focusing on protecting and restoring canals and rivers to create green spaces and better living environments. Parks such as Victoria Park in Hong Kong and riverside park in Bangkok are good examples. Asian cities also focus on using smart technology to manage the city and optimize the exploitation of the place factor. Singapore has adopted an intelligent transportation system and energy management through innovative technology solutions. Bangkok and Hong Kong also use technology to monitor and control urban activities, from traffic management to waste disposal. Protection and development of river and canal systems is also a shared priority for Bangkok and Hong Kong. Bangkok has implemented projects to restore canals and rivers to create green spaces and improve living environments. Hong Kong is also undertaking riverside park development projects to protect and utilize water resources. These cities all pay attention to improving the quality of the living environment. Singapore has succeeded in maintaining clean air and managing waste effectively. Bangkok and Hong Kong are working to reduce air pollution and strengthen waste management to

improve the living environment for people. In short, the cities of Singapore, Bangkok and Hong Kong are taking measures to exploit and protect the element of place, from building green spaces to using smart technology and protecting river systems and channel. This is to create a sustainable living environment and improve the quality of life for residents.

Da Lat, Da Nang and Hoi An are three notable cities in Vietnam. Each city has its own unique place elements and is creatively exploited to attract visitors. Diversity and natural beauty are an important feature of all three cities. Da Lat is known as the "city of love" with its cool climate and beautiful landscape of mountains, lakes and flower gardens. This is the ideal destination for those who want to immerse themselves in the fresh air and enjoy the fresh air of the high mountains. Da Nang, with its long beach and majestic mountains, makes for a wonderful landscape. You can swim in the sea, participate in water sports activities, or explore the beautiful surrounding mountains. At the same time, Da Nang also has many notable historical and cultural sites, such as the Dragon Bridge and the Cham Pa ruins, providing visitors with rich cultural experiences and a harmonious combination of nature and nature. history. Hoi An is a historic old city with traditional architecture and famous Japanese bridge. Hoi An ancient town bears the imprint of foreign traders from the 16th century, creating a unique and charming space. Visitors can explore ancient houses, visit the bustling Hoi An market and enjoy unique local cuisine. All three cities also utilize and preserve their cultural and architectural heritage. Unique cultural activities and festivals have created a joyful atmosphere and attracted visitors to participate in the experience. In addition, a variety of tourism and leisure activities are also offered, from visiting famous destinations, shopping for specialties, enjoying spa services to participating in outdoor activities or enjoying delicious food. local real. In short, Da Lat, Da Nang and Hoi An have different place elements but are creatively exploited to create an attractive tourist environment. All three cities take advantage of beautiful nature, preserve cultural heritage and unique architecture, organize unique cultural activities and festivals, and provide diverse tourism and leisure activities. These factors play an important role in creating their own identity and attracting tourists to these three cities.

SUMMARY TABLE OF EXPERIENCE EXPLOIT ELEMENTS THE GENIUS LOCI OF URBANS IN THE WORLD AND VIETNAM

| ELEMENT               | OBJECT     |                       |                    | INTANGIBLE |                         | SPIRIT  |         |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|
|                       | Structures | Artificial open space | Natural open space | Activity   | Environmental landscape | History | Emotion |
| <b>THE WEST</b>       |            |                       |                    |            |                         |         |         |
| Rome (Italy)          | ●          | ●                     | ⊙                  | ●          | ⊙                       | ⊙       | △       |
| Paris (France)        | ●          | ●                     | ⊙                  | ⊙          | △                       | ●       | ⊙       |
| Madrid (Spain)        | ●          | ●                     | ⊙                  | ●          |                         | △       | △       |
| <b>THE EASTERN</b>    |            |                       |                    |            |                         |         |         |
| Hong kong (China)     | ●          | ●                     | ⊙                  | ⊙          |                         | △       | ●       |
| Singapore (Singapore) | ●          | ●                     | ⊙                  | ●          | △                       | ⊙       | ⊙       |
| Bangkok (Thailand)    | ⊙          | ⊙                     | ●                  | ●          |                         | ⊙       | △       |
| <b>VIETNAM</b>        |            |                       |                    |            |                         |         |         |
| Da Nang               | ⊙          | ⊙                     | ●                  | △          |                         | △       | △       |
| Da Lat                | △          | △                     | ●                  | ⊙          | ⊙                       |         | △       |
| Hoi An                | ●          | ●                     | △                  | ⊙          | △                       | ●       | ⊙       |
| TPHCM                 | ●          | ●                     | ⊙                  | ⊙          | △                       | ⊙       | △       |

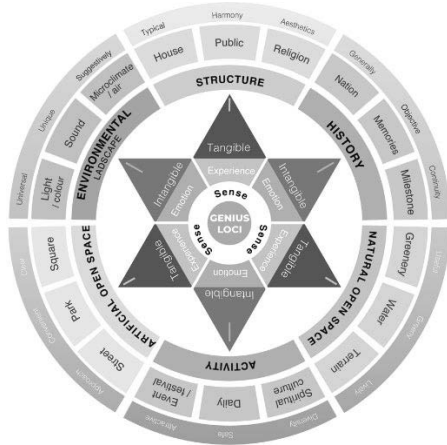
Key: ● : Strong ⊙ : Medium △ : Weak

**5. THE CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING THE GENIUS LOCI ELEMENTS**

Building a criteria framework to identify the genius loci element can be classified into two main features: tangible and intangible. Objects are concrete, visible, touchable and existing objects in physical space. They have a specific shape, size, and mass. Examples of objects include objects such as buildings, squares, streets, green parks, water surfaces, etc., or any object that we can observe and come into direct contact with. Intangibles are features that exist that are not physical

objects. They have no specific shape, size or mass and cannot be seen or touched directly. Instead, intangibles are often associated with abstract concepts, ideas, feelings, or attributes. Examples of intangibles include daily activities or festive events, spiritual culture, history of a country or people, or attributes such as color, taste, sound, and light. .... Objects and intangibles are two complementary and symbiotic factors that make places appear. The existence of the object is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the appearance of the genius loci element. The object itself has its own characteristics, but besides that, it must be a space that brings values and meaning to people through the interaction of the community.

#### CHART FRAMEWORK CRITERIA TO IDENTIFY THE GENIUS LOCI



#### 6. DISCUSS THE CRITERIA FRAMEWORK FOR IDENTIFYING THE GENIUS LOCI ELEMENTS

To identify the genius loci factor, it is first necessary to conduct research and collect information about the genius loci to be assessed. This may include learning about the history, culture, architecture, environment, and social activities in that area. Information can be gathered from documents, conversations with locals, face-to-face surveys and online sources. Next, it is necessary to identify the physical elements in the place. These can be outstanding architectural works, natural open spaces such as parks, ponds, forests, or artificial open spaces such as squares, parks, etc. These physical elements can be evaluated on the basis of beauty, functionality, suitability with the surrounding environment and influence on the human experience. Then, it is necessary to analyze the intangible factors in the place. This includes looking at the area's activities, events, history, and urban environment. These factors can influence social interactions, cultural values, and specificity of the genius loci. Based on the information gathered about tangible and intangible elements, an assessment and classification of the value of a genius loci can be made. This can be done through the application of evaluation criteria such as originality, creativity, social relevance, and cultural importance. The process of place element recognition is a complex and multidimensional process, requiring the interaction and proper evaluation of the levels of tangible and intangible elements. The combination of in-depth analysis and creative assessment will give you a holistic view of the value of a genius loci. Creating a place element identification framework based on tangible and intangible features is a useful method for assessing the value of a genius loci. Physical elements include architectural works, natural open spaces and artificial open spaces. These elements make up the physical structure of an area and can have a significant effect on people's experience and perception of the genius loci. In addition to the physical features, the intangible also plays an important role in determining the genius loci factor. The

activities and events taking place in the area, its history and cultural heritage, as well as the surrounding urban and social environment, can all create a unique setting and habitat. Understanding and appreciating these intangible elements helps us to have a holistic view of places and human interactions with the surrounding environment. Since then, the building of a genius loci value identification framework is more comprehensive and authentic.

#### 7. CONCLUDE

The criteria framework for identifying the genius loci factor in the city plays an important role in urban planning and urban management. It provides guidance for the conservation and development of important areas, including public areas, green spaces and cultural heritage. By leveraging and protecting these elements, we can build a sustainable and attractive city. At the same time, the identification and development of the genius loci factor in the urban area also creates business opportunities and economic development. Unique and attractive areas can attract visitors and encourage related business. This not only generates income and jobs for the community, but also enhances the reputation and awareness of the city. The identification and evaluation of criteria for identifying urban genius loci factors requires interaction and cooperation among stakeholders, including local governments, local residents, urban managers and experts in the fields of architecture, urban planning and cultural preservation. By building a framework of criteria to identify the genius loci element in the organization of urban space, we step by step create a livable, sustainable and unique city.

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