

# Implications of the Demise of American Style on Architectural Decolonization of Sri Lanka

M. N. R. Wijetunge

College of Education & Human Sciences,  
Department of Design and Merchandising,  
Oklahoma State University, U.S.A.  
nishan.wijetunge@okstate.edu

Received	Reviewed	Revised	Published
16.12.2023	20.01.2024	25.02.2024	29.02.2024

<https://doi.org/10.61275/ISVSej-2024-11-02-32>

## Abstract

With independence, Ceylonese elite embarked on a nationalist course. Nationalism was celebrated in the arts spheres initially, and then extended into architecture. In a context where elitist-architects propagated ‘core’-oriented domestic architectures, Ceylon’s (Sri Lanka’s) nascent middle-class (MC) employed non-architects (NAs) who turned to post-war mass-housing in the US for inspiration (*i.e.* tract/cookie-cutter house). A hybrid in the making, the local emulation went by the name of ‘American Style’ (AS). This 1960s phenomenon disappeared altogether after neo liberal economic reforms (NLER) of 1977 that in turn introduced the International Style (IS) architecture to the nation. Although extant literature covers AS’s inception/success, the underlying reasons for its decline and what became of are yet to be tackled; constituting a knowledge gap, and need for a study.

This research employs a qualitative methodology delving on 30 random case studies from/around Colombo’s ‘satellite towns’ (STs). Through empirical work, information on case studies were gathered by a team of three (over a course of one week) via interviewing inhabitants, and carrying out a photographic survey that recorded external changes undergone by front facades. The analysis is carried out via a table illustrating photographs that cover metamorphosis of case studies that in turn, aid to place them against underlying periodic changes recorded via interviews; in a phenomenological perspective.

The research concludes that the AS has periodically been altered to suit a myriad of new uses. While approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of them perpetuated their domestic use with alternations,  $\frac{3}{4}$  shifted their use altogether with notable external changes. Only  $\frac{1}{30}$  suffered obliteration/abandonment/stylistic facelifts, among many other less-frequent fates also registered. The AS’s demise marked the end of an architectural resistance by the MC that rejected elite-associated colonial residues. The real implication of its demise was the hindering of decolonization impact. Subsequently, the IS assumed AS’s role.

**Keywords:** American Style, Nationalism, Elites, Middle-class,  
Neo-liberal economic reforms

## Introduction

The 1950s post-war America was indeed a consumers' republic' (Cohen, 2003; Conrad, 1995). The 1954-64 window – the so-called period of the 'baby boomers' – saw the American population explode, marking a great exodus into the nascent suburbs from the urban and rural Americas. Moreover, it was in fact, the period when the American masses, for the first time, acquired some degree of sophistication and elegance in terms of lifestyle – meaning encapsulated in the term 'Populuxe' – to become the envy of the rest of the world (Hine, 2007). They were by now, the world's richest economy, and the most modern society (Boucher, 2013). In this new industrial age of hitherto-unforeseen promise, the US development companies combined with post-war GI loan schemes to provide housing for the MC (Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, 2022). This provided a fleeting magic carpet for them to become new home owners. Consequently, acres of model-homes mushroomed to cover suburban land tracts all over the US. Hence, home ownership suddenly became central to American MC aspirations (Pieris, 2007), and was an essential constituent of the 'American dream' (Johnson, 1994).



**Fig.01**

**Fig.01:** General Electric Advertisement in 1944, addressing needs of returning WWII vets. This kind of advertisements soon became prolific throughout the US following the end of the war in 1945.

Source: <https://envisioningtheamericandream.com/2013/11/11/victory-homes-for-the-vet-2/>



**Fig.02**

**Fig.02:** One of the Levittown's first 20 families that arrived on June 23, 1952; just before the phenomenon of the 'tract house' took off.

Source: <http://statemuseumpa.org/levittown/two/h.html>

The so-called 'Levittowns' and 'tract-housing' sprung up usually in US vernacular fashions such as *Cape Cod* and *Ranch Style* etc., that predominantly appealed to the post-war MC taste via familiarity (Budds, 2011). Such American vernacular arguably dwelt on building materials readily available in the context of its birth, combined with colonial stylistic variations culled from early Spanish settlers to the time of Victorians etc. On the other hand, its Italian origins too could not be negated (Hine, 2007). Such vernacular had been an essential part of the American landscape since the time of its early settlers (Harwood, May and Sherman, 2015).

In 1945, John Entenza – the editor-in-chief of *Arts Architecture Magazine* that championed all things new in the arts – launched an experimental program entitled the 'case study houses', with a special emphasis on emerging modernist architecture in Southern California. The aim of it was to design a low-cost prototype for post-war California. The duration of this exercise was between 1945 to 1962. Its products have been commonly praised as being icons of mid-century modernism, where Pieris believes that it was "[...] one of the many moments when the house became a laboratory for experimentation with new technologies, materials, building processes and aesthetics associated with social change" (Pieris, 2007: 48).



Fig.03



Fig.04

**Fig.03:** Case Study House No. 22  
Source: <http://iconicphotos.wordpress.com/2011/02/27/Case-study-house-no-22/>

**Fig.04:** Sales flyer for the Levittowner  
Source: <http://statemuseumpa.org/levittowner/one/d.html>

In this light, Hine (2007) points out to the newly-available array of mass-produced cheap materials that were being used in the houses; made possible owing to the post-WWII industrial development of the time.<sup>1</sup> The vernacular-based tract houses borrowed liberally, not only from aforesaid case study houses, but from the works of great architects of the time such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Marcel Breuer and Richard Neutra etc. (Hine, 2007).<sup>2</sup> Hence, The 1950s tract house was indeed a hybrid product with a vernacular base, fed by architectural modernism, and nascent technological advancements. It was this housing model that became a great inspiration for the Ceylonese MC by the beginning of 1960s, and thus, gave birth to what is locally known as the 'American Style' (AS) housing phenomenon. This happened largely in the declared 'satellite towns' of Colombo and their close vicinities, subsequently spreading into rural areas (Wijetunge, 2022).



Fig.05



Fig.06

**Fig.05:** House in Las Angeles, California, USA, manifesting essential features of AS variants in Sri Lanka.

Source: Author (2012)

**Fig.06:** House in Oklahoma, USA, on par with architectural features of the American tract houses.

Source: Author (2023)

Wijetunge (2022) in fact, has evaluated AS's architectural attributes by placing it against its American cousin (*i.e.* the tract/cookie-cutter house). He has also explored its socio-cultural attributes; as underlying reasons for its making, and thus, success. Further, he has mapped the hybridities that emerged within the movement, while also theorizing and articulating such. Another major research finding on his part was confirmation of the style's speculated MC patronage, and also the fact that if its championing was not deliberate on the part of the MC. Wijetunge attribute's the styles propagation to the architectural technicians who designed them on behalf of MC clients. The role of vernacular too in the making of the style was assessed by Wijetunge. Ultimately, the main aim on his part was to evaluate the hand of this unique brand of domestic architecture as a tool for decolonization, in the age of nationalism. Hence, there exists a gap pertaining to the underlying reasons why the style became extinct soon after NLER of 1977, and what became of it; constituting a strong need for a new study.

This paper carries three main objectives. The first objective is to map 30 randomly-selected AS houses from/around Colombo's STs, and assess their current uses – domestic use they were originally intended for as against possible newly-converted variations. The second is to list down the external architectural changes endured by the front facades of these houses over

<sup>1</sup> This versatile pallet consisted of products such as cheap plastics, fiber-based products, factory-sawn timbers and large-sized glass to steel members such as 'H' Irons. Certain materials with their catchy trade names such as 'Contact paper' (a type of wall paper with versatile finishes) and 'Applikay' (a type of fiber-based paints that could be applied on almost any surface) etc. became instant favorites to name a few.

<sup>2</sup> The horizontality of the so-called USonian houses, open plan, walls of windows, low mantel-less asymmetrical fire places and the picture window – all suggesting a general air of informality and openness – were some noteworthy borrowings of such.

the years, to equip them for their original/new uses of single/dual purpose/s. These two objectives mark the historical evolution of the AS. The third objective is to establish the underlying reasons behind such changes in a phenomenological viewpoint; revealing the underpinning periodic changes (*i.e.* political, economic and socio-cultural). Ultimately, the aim here is to evaluate the implications of AS's demise on architectural decolonization of the nation. By addressing such, the AS can become a useful precedence to assess/theorize similar future architectural moments to come.

### Theoretical Framework

As the theoretical framework of this study, architectural styles in the age of globalization, their relevance to identity/nationalism/power, architectural decolonization, and elitism that is essentially bound with the aforesaid need to be tackled.

Although many theories exist with relation to the subject of architectural styles, what pertains to this research are the early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century 'functionalism and modernism', as well as late 20<sup>th</sup> century 'critical regionalism'. The former emphasizes on functionality, efficiency and a break from historical ornamentation. Such modernist theories are commonly associated with the Bauhaus and IS; championed by figures such as Le Corbusier and Mies Van Der Rohe (Mallgrave, 2009). The latter propagated by Frampton (1993), seeks to combine modernist elements with local/regional influences to emphasize on the importance of context, climate and culture in architectural design. The idea is to address the issue of placelessness and lack of identity associated with the IS, while rejecting whimsical individualism and retrospective ornamentation of post-modernism.

Since architectural styles are impacted by global changes, theories on globalization is worth a consideration here. Its historical narration and theories are discussed by MacGillvray (2006). As for him, the term refers to the interconnectedness and interdependence on a global scale relating to economies, cultures, societies and nations. It involves the increased flow of goods, services, information, technology, capital and people across national borders. The phenomenon is driven by advances in technology, communication, transportation and trade, which have significantly reduced barriers that once hindered international interactions. In this light, the implications of stepped-up post-WWII globalization on modern regionalist architecture of the world too is established by Tzonis, Lefaivre and Stagno (2001).

In this backdrop, it is worth discussing the theoretical relationship that exists between architecture and nationalism. The potential of architecture to manifest national identity is proposed by Ruskin (1989), and the power element this nationalist fervor draws is suggested by Vale (1992). Ruskin equated the sense of national identity with memory and awareness of a nation's glorious past, and established that poetry and especially architecture provide the best mnemonic devices capable of embodying and preserving such symbolic signs. Dharmadasa (2003) adds to this idea by stating that the ancient glories revived find provenance in certain resources of value – legends, religious beliefs/rituals, classical literature, language, architectural ruins, inscriptions/texts etc. Harwood, May and Sherman (2015) offer examples from world architecture to illustrate that the notion has been utilized numerous times throughout history.

As the study hypothesizes that decolonization was attempted via the modern regionalist AS architecture in Ceylon, it is pertinent to take up theories pertaining to the discourse here. Decolonization in architecture refers to a process that contests colonial legacies in design, planning and built environments. It reexamines the impact of colonial histories on architectural practices, and questions the ways in which colonial ideologies have shaped the physical as well as cultural landscapes (Stieris, 2022).

Goodman (1988) establishes the theoretical relationship that exists between the elite of a given place and its established architecture, validating the decolonization attempt on part of the Ceylonese MC. In order conceive the earlier stated relationship, extant theories on elitism need to be tackled. Numerous theories have been formulated in relation to defining elites in a manner pertinent to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While the age-old ideas of physical and moral inequalities in men have been instrumental in the making of elitist theories, they also rely intimately on the notion of economic 'class' (Silva, 2005). Although the 'class' bias is symptomatic to elitist

theories, some are more democratically-oriented. Under circumstances where democracy has been in common practice the world over (at least from the 20<sup>th</sup> century), such theories appear to be more palatable than undemocratic others (*i.e.* Ruling Class; Power Elite; Political Elite). On the other hand, certain theories that pay homage to above ideas (*i.e.* theory on intellectuals, managers and bureaucrats) fail in their many under-assumptions and historical validity. The shortcomings of such theories have been overcome by Bottomore (1993), through the combined notions of Pareto (1963) and Mosca (1939), in the form of the theory of political-class' (PC) and 'governing-elite' (GE). These ideas are condensed into a few easily-conceivable concepts that are very much applicable to the 20<sup>th</sup> century scenario. Despite the fact that their conceptions diverge – Pareto dwelling on the psychological notion of 'residues (sentiments)' and Mosca having based his ideas on both psychology and sociologically – they are both equally concerned by the problem of political power. The conceptions of the PC, the GE and the MC that have come out of their doctrines could be noted as the most convincing theories to-date. This theoretical background steers this study on the right course.

## Review of Literature

This literature review follows the sequence of the study's narration of ideas. Many commentaries are present on the subject of post-WWII America, which forms the backdrop of this study. The fast ascend of America as a consumer's republic is convincingly narrated with examples by Cohen (2003), Conrad (1995) and Boucher (2013). Johnson (1994) on the other hand, tells us that the notion of 'American Dream' was propagated in such a context. In this light, Hine (2007) marks the newly-assumed sophistication of the American society in a hitherto-unforeseen time of prosperity he refers to as the 'Populuxe'. Under such circumstances, Budds (2011) introduces the establishment of 'Levittown' in the US in great detail. Using historical narrations by Harwood, May and Sherman (2015), the role the vernacular played in molding of the modern American house of the time can be ascertained. Hine (2007) and Pieris (2007) in this light discuss with examples the experimentation and innovation quintessential to the aforesaid exercise. This leads the way to now take up Ceylon's equivalent to the aforementioned American counterpart. In this backdrop, Wijetunge (2022) recounts the introduction of AS into the newly-independent Ceylon's satellite towns by a nascent MC; during a time of omnipresent nationalism.

The nationalist consciousness evident during the immediate post-independence is illustrated by (Dharmadasa, 2003), where Gellner and Anderson (in Eriksen, 2002) posit the 'notion of nation'. In this light, de Silva (1991) validates the legitimacy of a long-subdued ethnic majority of the island to manifest its own cultural ensemble; in the form of Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism. The endurance of this force is then narrated by Wijetunge (2012a), substantiated with examples.

The relationship between architecture and national identity – as originally propagated by Ruskin (1989) – is strengthened by Dayaratne (2016) and Smith (1991). Within this framework, Jayawardene (1984) discusses how architects of the time appropriated national identity-building, analogous to artists in other spheres of arts who strived for an oriental-occidental synthesis. Pieris (2007) tells us in detail how the MC self-fashioning took place in this light. It is Jayawardena (1983) who assesses the colonial and post-colonial social stratifications and available means of upward social mobility at that time in Ceylon to illustrate how the aforesaid new social class replaced its colonial predecessor. The universal theories of elitism elaborated by Bottomore (1993) on the other hand, help to correctly place this class poised between the elite (on top) and the working classes (at the bottom).

The phenomenon of globalization is defined and historically narrated by MacGillivray (2006), and Marr (in All Things British, 2022) discusses how Americanization subsequently became an essential part of it. Ssenyonga (2006) with a convincing degree of examples attributes the aforesaid world-wide success to post-WWII growth of media and telecommunication. In this light, DE Silva (2015) narrates the global political ambitions on the part of the US, how they were implemented, and how Ceylon was thus impacted. When Pieris (2007) attributes the global impact of Americanization for the mass MC orientation towards the

US, Alahakoon (2011), de Saram (2010) and Manawadu (2011) reminiscent the promise and optimism the new global superpower manifested at the time to inspire the same. Perera (1994) illustrates of architectural options yielded by the Western core – based on the core-periphery duality of epistemological formation and propagation that Goonatillake (1984) establishes – at the disposal of the local MC. This leads to Pieris's (2007) justification of the MC's US-oriented selection. She tells us that it promised them with a reassured sense of new modernity. While Goodman (1988) avows of the theoretical relationship between the elite of a given place and its established architecture, Wijetunge (2012a) illustrates an analogy in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), substantiating Pieris's (2007) point.

It is this theoretical framework that leads the way to discussing AS architecture in detail. It is noteworthy that AS architecture has not been covered extensively in literature, where only a handful of attempts can be found. In a backdrop where Pieris (2007, 2011) and Widyalkara (In Architectural History, 2009) leads a descriptive discourse on the area, the attempts by Wijetunge (2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2013d, 2013e, 2014, 2015, 2021, 2022, 2023, in press) remain to be the most discursive studies pertaining to the subject. Wijetunge in the aforesaid literature delves into the architectural features and especially variants of AS. It was also Wijetunge (2022) who seriously discusses in-depth, the attributes of AS success in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) – both tangible and intangible. Such studies leads way to tackling the demise of the AS – how its decline began and what became of it. Through case studies, this study maps the abovementioned, and also tackles the state of the survivors as well as its legacy.

## Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative methodology that delves on random 30 case studies. They were chosen after a reconnaissance survey in/around the STs of Colombo, and the basis of selection was diversity in terms of function/external appearance. The information on case studies were gathered by a team of three (over a course of one week)<sup>3</sup> via empirical work that involved interviewing inhabitants and carrying out a photographic survey. Semi-structured questionnaires were utilized for the interviews that established the years houses were completed in, their current uses and what prompted their new uses/alterations. The photographic survey of external appearance (front façade) recorded the architectural changes the houses have undergone to serve their new functions. The analysis is carried out by using a table (Table 03) – illustrating the exterior façade photographs denoting their shifts of use and resulting architectural changes – that also aid to place them against underlying periodic changes (*i.e.* political, economic and socio-cultural) established by interviews. Consequently, the findings are revealed in a phenomenological viewpoint.

The sequence of the paper is as follows. The study commences by introducing the American tract house phenomenon and how it appealed to the new Ceylonese MC. Having introduced nationalism, the study then addresses what nationalism meant for the aforesaid group, and how national identity could be manifested in terms of architecture. In such a backdrop, the self-fashioning of a new MC during this period is ascertained, along with how they utilized a nascent domestic architectural style with American origin. Then having established the architectural attributes of this style, the socio-cultural reasons behind the style's success are discussed. Having accomplished above, the beginning of the end of American style is narrated, focusing on two windows – the pre and post NLER period. Pertaining to the prior period, the role played by unique contributions of styles championed by architects/non-architects who practiced then respectively, is tackled. The hand that strong elite reproach played on its demise too is then taken up. With relation to the latter period, the role of global events is discussed. The analysis of the previously noted areas help derive conclusions. It is pertinent to mention here that the introduction of, and narrative to the AS relies on extant literature. Since this area has neither been featured much nor been subjected to scientific scrutiny, in order to

---

<sup>3</sup> between 1<sup>st</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.

fill-in gaps, supplementary interviews are brought in (involving senior architects/academics in the island who had firsthand experiences with the AS architecture).

## Findings and the Discussion

### Ceylonese & their Nationalism

Nationalism is often explained in terms of nationalist thought, or an impulse of nationalist consciousness (Dharmadasa, 2003). On the other hand, Gellner and Anderson (in Eriksen, 2002) illustrate the ‘notion of nation’; an ideological construction seeking to forge a link between (self-defined) culture group and state, and that they create ‘abstract communities’ of a different order from those dynastic states or kingship-based communities, which pre-dated them. Thus, as for the duo, although many nations tend to imagine themselves as old, they are in fact, modern (Eriksen, 2002).<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, in Dharmadasa’s (2003) terms, the ancient glories revived find provenance in certain resources of value – legends, religious beliefs/rituals, classical literature, language, architectural ruins, inscriptions/texts etc. In this light, it could be argued that the Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism pre-dates its modern western counterpart, and it is the latter that recognized Sri Lanka as a modern ‘nation state’. Various phases of nationalism are evident from pre-modern to modern periods of the island’s history, and arguably, the minority nationalisms induced by the manipulative British colonial policies in particular, reinvigorated its Sinhalese Buddhist counterpart over time. Within this timeframe, Sinhalese Buddhist and Tamil nationalisms (latter as the former’s main contender) fed on each other, as they had done for centuries. Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism saw a culmination in 1956 following the island’s political independence, and the phenomenon is commonly posited as a restoration of legitimate dominance of the Sinhalese Buddhist majority (de Silva, 1991). This nationalist fervor lasted for a few more decades to come – through the 1960s, into the 1970s – through a veneer of modernist masquerade (Wijetunge, 2012a).

### Architecture & National Identity

John Ruskin (1989) equated the sense of national identity with memory and awareness of a nation’s glorious past, and established that poetry and especially architecture provide the best mnemonic devices capable of embodying and preserving such symbolic signs.<sup>5</sup> As for Dayaratne (2016), architecture contributes to identity construction in two ways. First it inculcates an attachment to the past, glorifies it, and continues to make it present itself at any given time. Secondly, it endows legitimacy of its authors to be a part of the nation. Smith (1991) on the other hand, writes that symbols have always possessed the emotive collective qualities that can bring a nation together. For him, architecture is indeed such a symbol. In this light, after all, the immediate Ceylonese post-independence period architects’ search for a national architectural identity in terms of style was fed by the aforesaid notions. The initial growth of architectural historiography was accompanied by the subsequent development of art historiography and parallel movements in visual arts, performing arts, literature and cinema – all striving to find a synthesis of traditional with the modern (Jayewardene, 1984). It is in such a backdrop that the self-fashioning of a new social groups took place in Ceylon.

### A Middle-class Self-fashioning

According to present theories on elitism, in the modern world, in any given situation, the people who have access to political power<sup>6</sup> make up its so-called PC. Within this small PC

<sup>4</sup> “Nationalism, which is frequently a traditionalistic ideology, may glorify and recodify an ostensibly ancient tradition shared by the ancestors of the members of the nation, but it does not thereby re-create that tradition. Instead, [...] it reifies it [...]” (Gellner and Anderson in Eriksen, 2002: 100).

<sup>5</sup> As Ruskin (1989: 202) elaborated, the national style is well established when

“ [...] no individual caprice dispense[s] with, or materiality vary[s], accepted types and customary decorations” and “ every member and feature [is] as commonly current, as frankly accepted, as language or its coin”.

<sup>6</sup> at least to some extent

lies an even smaller minority who could be perceived as its GE – the faction who yield the real political power. Then comes a much numerous peripheries of the MC, and lies outside the aforesaid the wider majority – the ‘working class’ (WC) (Bottomore, 1993). The education franchise of the 1940s-50s had yielded a new MC in Ceylon, and its members were commonly referred to as the ‘Swabasha-trained’ youth.<sup>7</sup> The term itself was a manifestation of this newly-created duality with the only other educated faction – the elite class. This new MC had replaced its colonial equivalent that was the ‘Petty-bourgeoisie’ class as established by Jayawardena (1983), and unlike its predecessor, was armed with an education.

In this period, Peiris (2007) believes that the proliferation of American MC suburban home paralleled with American lifestyle appropriation in parts of Asia and Europe, where the Ceylonese MC too saw no exception. An infiltration of American culture, namely ‘Americanization’, had already perpetuated in Europe during WWII, owing to the indispensable part played in it by the US, according to Marr (All Things British, 2022) and MacGillivray (2006). Moreover, the growth in media and telecommunication had consolidated its global reach by the immediate postwar period (Ssenyonga, 2006). Hence, by now, its onslaught was unavoidable for the newly-liberated world.

In such a backdrop, to the newly-liberated Asian colonies that had been subjugated under centuries of European cultures, “*more liberal-looking, non-feudal and non-colonial American culture [was] a breath of fresh air*” (Alahakoon, 2011). Manawadu (2011) and de Saram (2010) also confirm this sentiment. “*The dream that was borrowed or appropriated from America was one of modernity and democracy [...]*” (Pieris, 2007); the very aspects that the US appeared to uphold. The fresh modernity the US was offering had no colonial strings attached.

The attempts such as ‘The American Small Industries Exhibition’ in 1960 further helped the American cause (DE Silva, 2015).<sup>8</sup> Subsequently, by the 1960s, the Ceylonese MC that was in the process of appropriating a new American-based lifestyle began to call its architectural extension the ‘American-style’ (AS). This happened in the presence of its variants such as ‘California-house’ and ‘Ranch-style’. In the absence of the Television,<sup>9</sup> they grasped it largely through magazines such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Ideal Homes* etc., not to mention the alluring Hollywood cinema. The hype the tract house received from media (especially via Television) in America as Hine (2007) tells us did not happen in Ceylon. Pieris (2007) states that the American-style was adopted for its “*sense of modernity*”, rather than the “*modernist aesthetic*”, in the presence of far-modern *Avant-garde* (AG) /Tropical Modern (TM) variants from Europe as Perera (1994) tells us. Such variants of course were exclusively the domain of the elite class (Wijetunge, 2012a). After all, Goodman (1988) tells us that the state and its aristocrats have historically derived power through their execution of architecture. Owing to the lack of access to AG and TM styles, this particular style overlooked by the elite became a stepping stone for Ceylon’s peripheral social classes to at least orient towards the direction of elitism in terms of domestic taste. In this light, it is worth considering the underlying physical architectural attributes and also the periodic changes (*i.e.* political, economic and socio-cultural factors) that propelled the style.

### Attributes of Success

Wijetunge (2022) remains to be the only study to-date that has tackles the AS domestic phenomenon in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) with a serious research view point, while the handful of other available efforts directed at it has been largely literature or observation-based. He marks tangible – architectural (A) as well as other physical aspects seen as non- architectural (NA) – and intangible – viewed as periodic changes – attributes that underpinned AS’s success.

<sup>7</sup> Youth trained in their indigenous languages.

<sup>8</sup> Since Ceylon’s pro-socialist political climate of the time was suffused with mounting anti-West sentiment, such exhibitions constituted the rare moments of sustained interaction between the two nations.

<sup>9</sup> TV was introduced only in 1979 (sri-lanka.mom-gmr.org, 2022).



## Tangible Attributes

Each of the established points below were taken up by Wijetunge (2022) separately. Having explored the political, economic and socio-cultural backdrops (periodic changes) of the American situation and the resultant shifts in architectural features, how AS was molded by periodic changes locally – affected by periodic changes in the international arena of which, USA was an essential part of – along with the architectural adaptations was mapped by him. It is noteworthy how certain attributes had both architectural and non-architectural provenance.

**Table 01:** Tangible Attributes (Architectural and Non-Architectural) Instrumental for AS Success  
Source: Wijetunge, 2022.

No	Tangible Attributes	Architectural (A) / Non-architectural (NA)	Underlying Reasons (Periodic changes – Political, economic & socio-cultural)	
01	Suburban setting	NA	NA	Setting up of 'satellite towns' to accommodate the new locally-educated MC intelligentsia that was proliferating (Pieris, 2007). They were instrumental for the running of the administrative mechanism of the postcolonial nation (Perera, 1994).
02	Shrinking plot size	NA	NA	Sub-division of plot sizes owing to urbanization; a result of postcolonial period population growth (Robson, 2004).
03	Placement	A & NA	A	Progressive ideas borrowed from mid-century modern houses (Wijetunge, 2011).
			NA	Functional reasons of having to keep a distance from the access road and the need for a rear space for private household chores quintessential to indigenous lifestyles (of different ethnicities to which, the new MC belong) (Wijetunge, 2011).
04	Design layout	A	A	Ideas borrowed from mid-century modern houses (Wijetunge, 2011, 2013).
05	Daring roofs	A & NA	A	Progressive ideas borrowed from mid-century modern houses (especially, Marcel Breuer's House in the Museum Garden (1949 at MoMA, New York) and others to follow it (Wijetunge, 2011).
			NA	The availability of imported asbestos as a novel roof covering material which was cheap, and was a long-lasting solution to the age-old problem of leaking roofs in Sri Lanka (Ferry, 2012). The material could accommodate easily the multi-directional roofs quintessential for the AS houses. Further, the roof structure of this light weight roof cover required less timber members (Pieris, 2007).
06	Materiality and Finishes	A & NA	A	The American tract houses utilized various forms of artificial material to replicate natural effects such as stone dressings and wooden shingles that once adorned facades of their vernacular houses (Hine, 2007). It was such effects that were emulated in the local AS house facades (Wijetunge, 2011).
			NA	Apart from the fact that the architectural technicians who emulated AS houses from pattern books and Hollywood movies used them in their designs, their selections were not repudiated by their migrant MC patrons in the suburbs who had experience living in houses using such materials in their rural villages. Hence, nostalgically, such design selections appealed to them (Wijetunge, 2011).
07	Inside-outside relationship	A	A	For these smaller houses with smaller foot prints (in comparison to their predecessor the PWD Bungalow), opening of the interiors to the outside gardens was essential psychologically. To achieve this effect, ideas borrowed from the modernist avant-garde as well as mid-century modernism were instrumental (Wijetunge, 2011, 2013).
08	Symbolic References	A & NA	A	The American-inspired architecture appeared as fresh and afforded promise for a better future, as against the colonial dwelling that harked back to a past that favored the elite (Wijetunge, 2012, 2022).
			NA	Appropriating a new architectural style as a new group in the social hierarchy helped make a form of social cohesion. This cohesion was vital as they had varying ethnic and religious background (Wijetunge, 2011, 2012, 2022).
09	Innovations	NA	NA	The innovative material choices driven by great consumerism in the United States such as 'Con-tact paper' and 'Applique' as illustrated by Hine (2007) was not

				available locally. Only a handful of such choices such as Rexines and Formica were at hand (Wijetunge, 2022).
10	Modern Conventions (mod-cons)	NA	NA	The modern conveniences such as electric ceiling fans, radios and refrigerators etc. were sought by the patrons, who closely emulated the Americans. However, the range available to locals were rater limited, where TVs, Hi-Fi sets and washing machines were non-existent. Also it is noteworthy how most of the AS patrons acquired mod-cons gradually; owing to budgetary constraints (Wijetunge, 2022). The degree of consumerism already extant in the 1950s and 60s America as illustrated by Hine (2007) was not at all evident in Ceylon yet, even by the 1970s (Wijetunge, 2022).

### Intangible Attributes:

Further, Wijetunge (2022) also addressed the intangible aspects that were also instrumental for the proliferation of the AS in the island.

**Table 02:** Intangible Attributes (Periodic changes) Instrumental for AS Success  
Source: Wijetunge, 2022

No.	Attribute	Underlying Reasons (Periodic changes – Political, economic & socio-cultural)
01	Middle-class Empowerment	The political decision taken by the postcolonial state in 1948 to grant free education for all – primary, secondary and tertiary – marked this shift. Consequently, state-sponsored universities ( <i>i.e.</i> University of Colombo and Peradeniya etc. that operated under the umbrella of University of Ceylon). The result was churning out of a locally-educated (swabasha-trained) faction of intelligentsia by the mid-1950s, who took up mostly government and to a certain extent private sector jobs of the country (Pieris, 2007; Perera, 1994). This was viewed as the formation of a new MC in the country; a replacement of the 'petite bourgeoisie' that had held the intermediary position between the nation's elite and working classes (Jayewardene, 2009). Armed with their education and modern vocations, this class was empowered (Pieris, 2007).
02	Middle-class Patronage	It is commonly acknowledged that the AS was a MC phenomenon (Pieris, 2007, 2011; Wijetunge 2011, 2013, 2022). Wijetunge (2022) in fact, scrutinized the ethnic, religious, class, caste backgrounds as well as their vocations and rural origins of the group and confirms this point.
03	Cosmopolitanism	The patrons of the AS belonged to different ethno-religious as well as caste backgrounds (Pieris, 2007; 2011). Wijetunge (2022) in fact, scrutinized the ethnic, religious and caste backgrounds of the group and confirms this point. Hence, this group that valued modernity over their inherited socio-cultural attributes could be viewed as a very cosmopolitan group (Pieris, 2007).
04	Social Cohesion	Having shed their socio-cultural backgrounds in favor of modernity, the AS patrons co-existed in their communities peacefully. This point is confirmed by Wijetunge (2022) who interviewed patrons belonging to different ethnic, religious and caste backgrounds. Previously in Sri Lankan history, its populace had been divided along these lines (Silva, 2005). The British adhering to 'divide and rule' conveniently employed this policy in the island from inception of their rule (Perera, 1994).
05	Sense of Modernity	AS, as for Pieris (2007), was appropriated by the MC patrons owing to its sense of modernity in the presence of far more modern variants such as the <i>Modernist Avant-garde</i> and its offshoot <i>Tropical Modernism</i> . On the other hand, its simplicity of design that was easy to execute using abundant modern materials and especially affordability (in comparison to other modernist versions) appealed to its patrons who wished for a fleeting sense of modernity (Wijetunge, 2022). They simply sought for an alternative to the PWD bungalow the British colonial masters had left behind. Hence, this embrace of modernity that came from America for them was a gesture of repudiating colonialism; hence an open manifestation of their nationalism and need for decolonization (Wijetunge, 2011). The fact that this MC choice was mocked by the elite as pointed out by Pieris (2007), confirms its impact.

The in-depth study by Wijetunge (2022) who concentrated on AS houses in Colombo as well as its outstations further asserted some seminal points. On one hand, the fact that the

AS houses were designed by non-architects (draughtsman/technicians/builders/engineers) was confirmed. On the other, the facts that the clients neither knew of AS as a domestic style (or any other style for that matter), nor did they convey their aesthetic/stylistic preferences to their house designers to aid their respective design processes were substantiated. It appears that the designers who had a freehand took it upon themselves to churn out houses as they saw fit. Having been inspired by the American hype at a time of fleeting media and telecommunication, they appropriated American house styles out of various sources. Such sources were largely U.S magazines and Hollywood films. Their ignorant clients who were not in a social position to reach out to elitist architects (or repelled by them) were content, as long as the houses 'felt modern'. Hence, sense of modernity presided over the modernist aesthetic of architect-championed core-oriented styles.

The study by Wijetunge (2022) also confirmed that the AS clients all thought that their modern houses were cheaper to construct and maintain in their economical smaller suburban plots (as against the palatial sites of richer bungalows). Further, the fact that they all thought such houses were environmentally-comfortable was established by the study. In this backdrop of positive attributes that once made AS the style of choice of many – that in turn made it an instrument of architectural decolonization of the time – it is worth pursuing the narration of the demise of the AS from Sri Lanka.

## **Demise of the American Style**

### **Beginning of the End:**

It has been observed that the AS phenomenon that started by the early-1960s became big in the island, and also went out-of-style by the late-1970s to early-1980s altogether. This point was proven by Wijetunge (2022) by analyzing the building dates of the projects he recorded. Widyalkara (2009), Pieris (2007, 2011) and Wijetunge (2011, 2012a, 2013b, 2013c, 2013d, 2022) all attribute the style's fading to the NLERs of 1977. When more new goods/materials were being imported, when more Sri Lankans were getting international exposure in terms of travel, and vocation, when mass media and telecommunication were experiencing exponential growth, the taste of the people too was altered (Widyalkara, 2009). Consequently, other stylistic contenders to the AS emerged after 1977. When the MC had newly been dissected into 'upper' and 'lower' strata around this time as Silva (2005) tells us, it was the former faction – dubbed as the *nouveau riche* – that indulged in such nuances, while the domestic choice of the latter was still the AS (Wijetunge, 2012a). When a considerable number of the upper MC were a highly-educated faction engaged in managerial and bureaucratic vocations both locally and internationally, the others had acquired their new wealth by engaging in commercial ventures afforded by the new free market economy. This particular faction had almost reached elite fringes, yet the elite never considered them as their equals (Wijetunge, 2012a, 2023). The upper MC strove to stand out and create a distance from their underlings of the same class, and their choice of domestic architecture was one of the best means to do so.

When the more enlightened faction now chose to employ architects undeterred by the fact that the profession once served exclusively the elite class, the architects in turn, offered them options within the modern architectural mainstream. For instance, when Andrew Boyd offered an architectural solution bordering on the architectural *avant-garde*, Visva Selvarathnam and Leon Monk offered its derivation in the form of Tropical Modernism, and so did Ulrik Plesner. Pani Tennakoon and Justin Samarasekara too indulged in the same approach, yet with more of a technological emphasis. On the other hand, when Minnette de Silva and Geoffrey Bawa offered a vernacular-based 'Neo/Tropical Regionalism', Valentine Gunasekara went against the grain and propagated a California-based 'Expressionist Modernism', and subsequently 'Deconstruction'. Roland Silva's 'Retro-classical modernism' on the other hand, did not make it to domestic architecture of the MC, but that of the elite (Wijetunge, 2021).



Fig.07



Fig. 08



Fig. 09



Fig. 10



Fig.11



Fig. 12



Fig.13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15

**Fig.07:** House in Kandy by Andrew Boyd in the modernist *avantgarde* idiom

**Fig.08:** House in Colombo by Visva Selvarathnam in Tropical Modern style

**Fig.09:** Pieris house by Ulrik Plesner in Tropical Modern style

**Fig.10:** Tennakoon Family House by Pani Tennakoon in Neo/Tropical Regionalist style  
(Recently altered)

**Fig.11:** Pieris House 1 by Minnette de Silva in Neo/Tropical Regionalist style

**Fig.12:** Osmund and Ena de Silva House by Geoffrey Bawa in Neo/Tropical Regionalist style

**Fig.13:** Weeramuni House by Valentine Gunasekara in Expressionist Modern style

**Fig.14:** Upali and Manel de Silva House by Valentine Gunasekara in Expressionist Modern-  
Deconstructive style

**Fig.15:** Silva Family House by Roland Silva in Retro-classical modernist style

**Source:** Fig.07-09: Author (2010); Fig.11: Author (2010); Fig.12-13: Author (2017); Fig.14: Author  
(2010); Fig.15: Author (2021); Fig.10: Johann Peiris (2023).

**Source:** Author (2012, 2021)

domestic architecture; offered by non-architects of the time in practice. This shifting of allegiances by the upper MC subsequently rubbed off on the lower MC contingent, and they too started to emulate IS models doctored by non-architects. They too were too self-conscious to approach architects. In this backdrop, a handful of non-architects such as Arambawela and Kalubowila became popular choices, to name a few (Pieris, 2007).



Fig.16

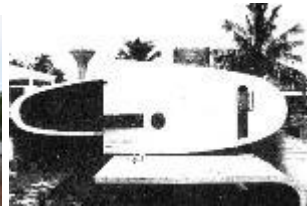


Fig. 17

**Fig.16:** House in Colombo by an Unknown designer in the IS

**Fig.17:** House in a Colombo outstation by Alfred Kalubowila in the IS

Sources:

**Fig.16** (Author, 2012);

**Fig.17** (Jayewardene, 1984).

On the other hand, there was also a strong sense of elite reproach towards the AS that they did not neglect to hide. The elite opinion looking down on the style had in fact made it into mainstream media of the day such as magazines (Pieris, 2007). The criticism directed at the choice of the new MC by the elite had a humanist undertone to it; where they compared the first-hand epistemology accessible to them from the Western ‘core’, as against the second-hand counterpart received by the MC beneath them (Wijetunge, 2012).<sup>10</sup> When the beginning of the end of AS was marked as aforementioned, it is worth narrating what became of the examples that once was the MC domestic architectural style of choice.



**Fig.18:** Cartoon by Bewis Bawa

(“*The Colombo of those days & these*”,

Briefly by Bewis, Sri Lanka: The Sapumal Foundation, 1985).

Source: Bewis Bawa (1985) in Pieris (2007).

### What Became of the American Style







This section intends to covers three aspects pertaining to the demise of the AS in Sri Lanka. First, through case studies, the new uses assumed by the AS houses and their consequent external architectural alterations are covered. Second, the survivors in their original state – in terms of use and architecture – are mapped. Finally, how the legacy of the style still resonates in Sri Lankan architecture is also covered.


### Case Studies

This study narrates 30 AS case studies from within and around Colombo, to assess on one hand, their newly-assumed functions, and on the other, the exterior architectural changes they have undergone in order to accommodate their new roles. Table 03 maps the aforesaid with images and descriptions on their functional and physical metamorphosis.

**Table 03:** Functional and architectural changes of the AS houses in and around Colombo.

<sup>10</sup> In a ‘core-periphery’ perspective, when knowledge is produced in the Western ‘core’, it is then distributed to the ‘peripheries’, where the rest of the world lies (Goonatillake, 1984).






No	Image	Original Use (Domestic)	Current Use (Non- domestic)
01		Domestic	Sumba Exercise Studio/Domestic
		Still occupied by original family	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio- Cultural:</b> Growing demand for physical well-being in the suburbs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity for new side-income by lifestyle needs
		<b>Location:</b> Ratmalana <b>Construction Date:</b> 1970	<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b> -House physically divided in two using internal walls for two families (sister and brother) - Additional makeshift veranda added to the side of house by one of the units, using contemporary material and style - Large FLEX advertising boards displayed covering façade.
02		Domestic	Architecture Studio/ Domestic
		Still occupied by original family	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for Architectural Services in the suburbs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/ Opportunity for self-Employment by Construction boom
		<b>Location:</b> Ratmalana <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1970s Approx.)	<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b> -Apart from the side entrance that has been covered with a concrete canopy, The house remains in original condition.
03		Domestic	Garment factory
		Original Family abroad	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio- Cultural:</b> Growing demand for Employment in the suburbs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity by high demand for export ready-made cloths
		<b>Location:</b> Ratmalana <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)	<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b> - Apart from the lean-to roof garage that has been added in front covering the Main entrance, the original house remains intact. Material for the addition are exposed brick for columns and half-walls, timber frame and asbestos cover for Roof.
04		Domestic	Fast-food restaurant
		Original Family has moved	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio- Cultural:</b> Growing demand for Leisure in the suburbs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity for businesses by growing lifestyle needs
		<b>Location:</b> Wellawatta <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)	<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b> The entire façade has been altered by removing the fenestration and replacing them with larger floor-to-ceiling glass panels to make the interior more visible to the outside. - The opened-up section is covered by a heavy-duty fabric canopy to shelter the glass facades from Western sun; as the house sits by the side of a main road, overlooking the ocean. - A part of the façade has been covered with a large flex advertising board.
05		Domestic	Hardware store
		Original Family has moved	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for Building in the Suburbs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/ opportunity for business by construction boom
		<b>Location:</b> Nugegoda <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1970s Approx.)	<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b> - The entire façade has been altered by removing the fenestration and replacing Them with timber slat doors; suitable for an open-façade hardware store. Apart from This modification, the original house remains intact.
No	Image	Original Use (Domestic)	Current Use (Non- domestic)
06		Domestic	Photo studio

		Original Family has moved	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio - Cultural:</b> Growing demand for family and Employment centered activities in the suburbs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity for business by people's family or employment needs
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
		- The original short boundary front-facing wall has been replaced with a taller one made of baric bricks, with a prominent pedestrian entrance. This imposing structure covers the house behind it. - Between the aforesaid and the house, another gable roof has been added for Extra protection from the elements. Apart from this modification, the original House remains intact.	
07		Domestic	Lawyer's office/Domestic
		Still occupied by original family	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for legal activities in the suburbs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/ Opportunity for self-Employment by people's legal needs
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
		- The original short boundary front-facing wall has been Replaced with a taller one. -An external staircase leading to an upper floor has been placed on the Right-hand-side for accessing the upper floor used as the office. -Front-facing windows on the upper floor façade has been replaced with Aluminum sliding panels	
	<b>Location:</b> Mt. Lavinia <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1970s Approx.)		
08		Domestic	Civil contractor's office
		Original Family has moved	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for construction	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/ prompted By people's construction needs
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
		- The entire roof has been covered with advertising boards -A makeshift garage has been constructed between the front façade and the Raised boundary wall, using Zn-Al roofing sheets.	
	<b>Location:</b> Boralessgamuwa <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)		
09		Domestic	Annex/ Domestic
		Still occupied by original family (now an extended family)	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for housing	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/promoted by housing needs
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
		-A brand new two-storied section has been added to the side of the original house. The new unit illustrates a r.c.c. structure, masonry walls with external exposed brick envelope and timber fenestration. Its concealed roof behind its raised walls gives it a modernist outlook. The original house remains largely in-tact.	
	<b>Location:</b> Ratmalana <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)		
10		Domestic	Water-proofing company office
		Original Family has moved	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio- Cultural:</b> Growing demand for construction Needs	<b>Economic:</b> Highland cost/promoted by people's Building needs
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
		-The original house remains in-tact, where the advertising has been placed on top of the original front-facing boundary wall, which largely covers the house.	
	<b>Location:</b> Ratmalana <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)		






No.	Image	Original Use (Domestic)	Current Use (Non- domestic)
-----	-------	-------------------------	-----------------------------






11		Domestic	Domestic
		Still occupied by original family (now extended)	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for housing	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/prompted by housing needs
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Ratmalana <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)	-A formerly single-family use house has been split in the middle to form two Separate Houses; demarcated in two different colors. -The original boundary wall has been slightly raised and two gates show entrances to the two units.		
12		Domestic	Makeshift boutique shop/ Domestic
		Still occupied by original family	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for convenient goods	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/ opportunity for self-Employment by people's consumer needs
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Nawala <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)	-The original house largely unaltered has been entirely covered by a makeshift shack constructed out of cement blocks and asbestos. -A front-facing boundary wall has been created using asbestos.		
13		Domestic	Hair salon
		Original Family has moved	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for lifestyle needs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/ opportunity for self-Employment by people's lifestyle Needs
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Nawala <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)	-An advertising board has been laced under the roof eave of the front façade Above Fenestration line. Apart from this, the house largely remains intact.		
14		Domestic	Domestic
		Still occupied by original family (now extended)	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for modernization and lifestyle needs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity by face-lifting Existing building than building anew
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Weyangoda <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1970s Approx.)	-Many alterations and additions have rendered the house unrecognizable. A verandah has been added in front using concrete ready-made columns with A timber structure and Asbestos roof. -A whole new two-storied section has been added at the back of the house Using Conventional building materials. The structure is of r.c.c., with a masonry Brick envelope and an asbestos roof with a timber structure.		
15		Domestic	Domestic
		Still occupied by original family	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for new housing	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/prompted by land sub-division
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Ratmalana <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)	-Portion of the house on the side has been sliced to make way for an access Road. The original site would have been sub-divided and in order to provide Access to the sites at the back, this would have been done.		



No.	Image	Original Use (Domestic)	Current Use (Non- domestic)
16		Domestic	Domestic
		Still occupied by original family	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for new housing	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/ opportunity for extended Housing by vacant buildable land
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Mt. Lavinia <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)	-New electric roller door has been added at the road edge along with a supporting r.c.c. structure at front, by replacing original gate. -Further, between a roller door and house façade, a new r.c.c. structure is coming up; To accommodate a garage on the ground floor and habitable area on the upper.		
17		Domestic	Hospital Laboratory Sample Collection facility
		Original Family has moved	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio - Cultural:</b> Growing demand for medical needs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity for business by people's medical needs
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Borella <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)	-The original façade has been compromised by covering off fenestration apart from the main front door for privacy. -Prominent printed flex advertising board covers the lower roof portion Boundary wall and entrance gate have been removed to make way for parking		
18		Domestic	Domestic/Boutique Shop
		Still occupied by original family	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for convenient goods	<b>Economic:</b> High and cost/ opportunity for self-Employment by people's consumer needs
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Mt. Lavinia <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)	-Entire front façade has been altered to suit the function of a boutique shop; by removal of fenestration and replacing them with a single wide Zn/Al sheet door with a steel frame, which is collapsible. It appears that the house built against road edge never had a boundary wall and an entrance gate but a short iron fence, which is still intact.		
19		Domestic	Grocery/ Convenient store
		Still occupied by original family	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio- Cultural:</b> Growing demand for convenient goods	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/ opportunity for self-Employment by people's consumer Needs
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Kelaniya <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)	-Entire front façade has been altered to suit the function of a boutique shop; by removal of fenestration and replacing them with a single wide Zn/Al sheet door with a steel frame, which is collapsible. The house built almost against road edge would have had a boundary wall and Entrance Gate, which would have been taken out to facilitate the new function.		
20		Domestic	Print shop
		Still occupied by original family	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio- Cultural:</b> Growing demand for stationery and printing needs owing to education and employment needs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity for self-Employment by people's printing Needs
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Mt. Lavinia <b>Construction Date:</b> 1974	- Simple shed-like print shop facility has been placed in front of the house on its front garden. This structure with cement block work walls, asbestos roof and Aluminium glass façade covers half of the house; on its road-facing side. -The rest of the house remains in its original state		

No.	Image	Original Use (Domestic)	Current Use (Non- domestic)
-----	-------	-------------------------	-----------------------------

21		Domestic	IT Office facility
		Original Family has moved	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for foreign-Oriented IT service needs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity for business owing to lucrative foreign IT services/ added income by renting out
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
Location: Bambalapitiya Construction Date: Unknown (1960s Approx.)		-The original timber frames glazed windows on its façade has been replaced with Aluminum glazed counterparts. The original timber door has been covered with an aluminum glazed awning. -Although the original boundary wall remains, the entrance gate has been Removed for the ease of car parking. The parking bays now occupy the space that had originally been the front garden	
22		Domestic	Pre-school
		Original Family has moved	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio- Cultural:</b> Growing demand for child Education Needs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity for business by providing education
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
Location: Katubedda Construction Date: Unknown (1960s Approx.)		-Remains in its original state apart from the raised front boundary wall	
23		Domestic	Domestic
		Still occupied by original family	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio- Cultural:</b> Growing demand for housing	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/ opportunity for building vertical for extended housing
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
Location: Nawala Construction Date: Unknown (1960s Approx.)		-Bisected house has given way to the new 3 story modern house constructed On the demolished part. The remaining half of the house still carries all its Original traits.	
24		Domestic	Abandoned
		Still occupied by original family	
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for foreign Employment and migration	<b>Economic:</b> Missed opportunity
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
Location: Ratmalana Construction Date: Unknown (1960s Approx.)		<b>Visible Architectural Changes</b> -The entire house still in its original state has been abandoned, the house Has fallen into disrepair and the front garden overgrown.	
25		Domestic	Demolished in June 2023
		Original Family has moved	Sold
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand form modernization And lifestyle change	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/ opportunity for building vertical for extended housing
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
Location: Wattala Construction Date: Unknown (1960s Approx.)		-The entire house which was in its original state at the time of recording in May 2023, Was demolished the next month to make way for a two-story modern Contemporary house.	

No.	Image	Original Use (Domestic)	Current Use (Non- domestic)
26		Domestic	NGO office
		Original Family has moved	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing Presence of NGOs with Own agendas – both positive and negative	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity for added income by renting out
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Wellawatta <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1970s Approx.)	-The house remains intact, apart from the intervention of a front-facing wider r.c.c balcony that juts out facing the access road. The design (i.e. grill work and masonry work) is suggestive of a 1990s intervention. -The original boundary wall has given way to a live fence and the original gate Replaced With a newer 1990s counterpart.		
27		Domestic	Private Tuition class
		Original Family has moved	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for adolescent Education needs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/ Opportunity for business by providing education
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Verahera <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)	-The original house remains largely intact apart from the raised front boundary wall for more contemporary Zn/Al sheet covered steel framed pedestrian gate is visible on the side. -A prominent flex display board mounted below ceiling line covers Approximately 1/3 of the façade.		
28		Domestic	Domestic
		Original Family still lives in the old house	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio- Cultural:</b> Growing demand for housing	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity to make extra income by renting
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Ratmalana <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1960s Approx.)	-While the original house remains intact, an entire new section has been added as an annex to the side of the house. Although it touches the original structure, owing to the fact that is it sufficiently set back, does not disturb the original house. The construction is an r.c.c. structure with masonry walls. The windows, air vents over windows and the color scheme has been imitated from the original house. However, the roof is a flat one covered with a Parapet protective wall. The roof and front-facing balcony that juts out, does not match appear to be very 1990s kind of intervention.		
29		Domestic	Domestic
		Original Family still lives in the old house	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio- Cultural:</b> Growing demand for housing	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity to make extra income by renting
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Mt. Lavinia <b>Construction Date:</b> Unknown (1970s Approx.)	-While the original house remains intact, anew section has seamlessly been added towards having responded to the existing drop of the terrain. The new section that faces side access road too displays same materiality as the original house. The main house and extension together, presents an additional side façade to the aforesaid side road that given rear section.		
30		Domestic	Auto repair Center (Garage)
		Original Family has moved	Rented
		<b>Underlying Reason for Change</b>	
		<b>Socio-Cultural:</b> Growing demand for automobile repairs	<b>Economic:</b> High land cost/opportunity to make extra income by renting
		<b>Exterior Architectural Changes</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Ratmalana <b>Construction Date:</b> 1960	-While the original house remains largely intact, front garden has been converted into an auto repair center by covering it entirely with a Zn/Al roof supported by a steel structure. -The original boundary wall and gate has been taken out to facilitate free Movement of vehicles in and out of the lot.		

### *Survivors and Legacy*

Despite the fact that a majority of AS houses have undergone changes and alterations in the recent times, even after five-six decades, some have managed to survive more or less in their original state, with little or no interventions; still serving their domestic function. In terms of minimum changes, replacement of fenestrations (with timber again, or aluminum), introduction of simple covering devices (both vertical and horizontal) for weather protection (*i.e.* from sun and rain) and adding added protection over their road-facing boundary walls (mostly in the form of iron grills) seem to be common.



AS houses around Sri Lanka still serving their domestic functions; with no architectural interventions.

**Fig. 19:** AS house in Nawala

**Fig. 20:** AS house in Ratmalana

**Fig. 21:** AS house in Ratmalana

**Fig. 22:** AS house in Colombo

**Fig. 23:** AS house in Ambilipitiya

Source: Author (2023).

AS houses around Sri Lanka still serving their domestic functions; with minor interventions.

**Fig. 24:** House in Mt. Lavinia - Bamboo tats covering the West-facing façade from elements

**Fig. 25:** House in Nugegoda - Horizontal shading devices (Polycarbonate on Al frame) has been

**Fig. 26:** House in Colombo - Mounted over windows for protection  
- Breathing wall of the façade has been covered with glass blocks to keep away dust and noise

**Fig. 27:** House in Ratmalana - The house has been sealed and airconditioned for comfort

**Fig. 28:** House in Moratuwa - Boundary walls and entrance gate has been raised for extra Protection

Source: Author (2023).

### **Contemporary Variants**

The architectural influence of the American Style has infiltrated Sri Lankan architecture over the years, and the manifestations could be seen from the most basic forms of non-domestic use to fully-fledged houses. The examples that could be adduced from around the nation justifies the lament by Bewis Bawa (1985); claiming of the magnitude of the style's infiltration in local architecture.

For instance, the butterfly roofs were never a part of vernacular architecture in Sri Lanka, where the simple gable would have been the norm for such a simple structure (de Silva, 1990). However, even rural people having been familiarized with the butterfly roof, the feature appears in certain rural structures. It could be deduced that the rural people's idealization of the style over the years would have caused this. Further, its appearance for non-domestic functions such as road-side boutique shops in more permanent materials such as ready-made concrete columns and Asbestos underpin the same reasons these material were used for AS houses to achieve such daring – steep and multi-directional – roofs. Even some houses

designed by both architects as well as non-architects in the recent years have opted for the aforesaid roof.



**Fig.29**



**Fig. 30**



**Fig. 31**



**Fig. 32**



**Fig.33**



**Fig. 34**

**Fig.29:** Sunday market vernacular shack for selling vegetables in Suriyawea, Ambilipitiya in the Southern Province. This sort of structure would usually be capped with a gable. In this case, a butterfly roof has been utilized.

**Fig.30:** A road-side boutique shop in rural Hambanthota, in the Southern Province. Butterfly roof is a common occurrence in the area pertaining to shops of this nature.

Source: Author (2023)

**Fig.31-34:** Modern house variants showing AS influence from Ratmalana, Mt. Lavinia, Pannipitiya and Piliyandala respectively.

While 31 is non-architect designed, 32, 33 and 34 were designed by professional architects.

Source: Author (2023)

## Conclusion

Ceylon gained its independence in 1948, and by 1956, embarked on a rigorous search for a new national identity to shake off its former colonial shackles. The fervor that infiltrated the Ceylon's visual/performing arts circles did not spare the architectural sphere too. In a backdrop where the elite were still harking back to their colonial heydays by perpetuating the residual British colonial bungalow, the elite-serving architects of the time further afforded them with an array of modern architectural options also emanating from the European 'core' – where knowledge has been produced and propagated, largely since modernity.

The immediate postcolonial period had yielded a newly-educated nascent MC with largely rural origins that had replaced its colonial *petite-bourgeoisie* counterpart. They had acquired employment in mostly the government-sector and was undergoing fleeting upward social mobility that in turn, soon inflated their numbers. This less-affluent faction was self-conscious to approach or repelled by architects – still largely conceived as professionals serving the elite. On one hand, they could not afford the palatial/spacious/luxurious colonial bungalow, and on the other, out of ignorance (caused by the lack of global exposure), missed out on the modernist architectural variants architects of the time were offering. More importantly, both the earlier stated expensive options were out of their budget range. Instead, they chose to emulate a domestic architectural style fresh from the US – the nascent global power that stood as a beacon of new promise, progression and especially, anti-colonialism. The American tract house that was born and soon proliferated in the post-WWII US with its vernacular base and technological advancements was propagated around the world by their rigorous media campaigns (*i.e.* films, home magazines etc.) as well as isolated trade exhibitions with their political undertone.

The championing of the American Style in Ceylon could be attributed to non-architects who superficially cashed-in on the opportunity of offering a new housing model for an aspiring MC that was striving for empowerment, cosmopolitanism, social cohesion and especially, modernity. The unconditional acceptance by the MC was pivotal for the proliferation of AS in Ceylon. They were undeterred even after Ceylon became 'Sri Lanka' in 1972 – yet another point of manifestation of many attempted ethno-religious actions of nationalism that in fact was oriented towards the majority population.

An ensemble of tangible and intangible attributes indeed contributed to the success of the American Style in the island. When periodic changes in the global arena that affected its local counterpart helped mold the style, similarly, a set of physical attributes of architectural as well as non-architectural provenance marked its rise. While the former attributes could be marked as suburban setting, plot size and placement, design layout, daring roofs, materiality/finishes, inside-outside relationship, symbolic references, innovations and modern conveniences; the latter were MC empowerment, MC patronage, cosmopolitanism, social cohesion and sense of modernity.

The American Style saw its decline following the island's NLERs of 1977. When the construction material palette tremendously improved owing to the island's hitherto-unforeseen engagement in international trade, when more Sri Lankans were getting international exposure in terms of travel and vocation abroad, and especially when mass-media and telecommunication were experiencing expedient growth, the taste of the people too changed drastically; and quickly.

The strong elite reproach and disgust directed at the American Style—although largely ignored by its designers and patrons—also played a hidden role behind its decline, along with the MC's burgeoning loss of disenchantment toward the USA soon after (prompted by the nation's unreasonable meddling in world affairs). Consequently, by this point, the MC that had bisected into 'upper' and 'lower' factions had a number of choices. While the more enlightened and globally-exposed professional contingent of the former were now bravely approaching architects to seek what they could offer in terms of architectural modernism, the latter more business-oriented faction lacking in both factors that characterized its counterparts now indulged in the IS (*a.k.a.* pluralism of design) variants the non-architects were offering them. It would not take long before the choice of the latter infiltrated the lower MC too, sealing the fate of the AS in Sri Lanka.

Over the years, it appears that the AS domestic building in Sri Lanka has been altered to suit a new myriad of uses as was established by Table 03. Out of the 30 case studies taken up, 23 nos. (76.66%) of them had shifted their uses from domestic to non-domestic. Consequently, their original external appearance had been largely altered to varying degrees; sometimes even beyond recognition. On the other hand, 7 nos. (23.33%) of them remained their domestic use. Out of this segment, while 4 nos. (13.33%) accounted for being used with either of the omission and additions of various forms to the original house, 1 no. (3.33%) suffered complete obliteration, and another one (3.33%) abandonment. On the other hand, only 1 house (3.33%) showed attempted external alterations to orient it towards the IS. Moreover, from the same lot, while 1 no. (3.33%) was bisected in half for the use of two families, another 1 no. (3.33%) lost half of it to a new construction next door. Just one example (3.33%) lost an entire strip to make way for an access road to another site.

In terms of assessing the underlying reasons for above shifts in a phenomenological viewpoint, in all the cases, the reasons were largely economic. In times when constructing buildings anew is an expensive affair out of reach of the present-day MC, their prolonged use has become only logical. Their new uses on the other hand suggests of new societal and cultural changes of their locations. Although no direct political reasons could be attributed, the aforesaid economic and socio-cultural changes would have been prompted by such. In this light, it is noteworthy that only one of the case studies suffered a facelift owing to direct socio-cultural aspirations of its owners.

In terms of architectural mapping of alterations, the study has been limited to the exterior (front façade) counterpart, which is a limitation. Some of the exterior changes in fact

have rendered such houses unrecognizable beyond comprehension. In this context, with relation to their interiors, it could be deduced that the open plan concept of the living-dining spaces of these houses has rendered them usable for most of their new functions well. The fact that their low ceilings require low cooling loads and thus, less electricity bills would have made them attractive when it comes to air conditioning, especially in their office uses. Even without such, their natural thermal comfort ability too would have rendered them usable in contemporary times of global warming; marked by urban temperature rises in Sri Lankan cities. Substantiation of such points require further research.

In this context, it is imperative to establish the fact that the AS was not that much affected by alterations attempting to orient it towards stylistic pluralism offered by the IS. Moreover, some AS houses have survived more or less in their original state having undergone minimal external changes; needed to make them work in their current climatic and socio-economic situations; unlike the ones they faced at the time of their inception. The AS legacy is still intact all over the island; on one hand, though such survivors, and on the other, manifested in its myriad of new non-domestic and domestic uses – both temporary and permanent.

Finally, it could be concluded that the real implication of the premature demise of AS from Sri Lanka after NLERs was marking the end of an architectural resistance by its MC that rejected the colonial architectural residues with elite associations. Consequently, this demise hindered AS's direct architectural decolonization impact. It appears that the new IS soon assumed the role of the AS. Substantiation of the latter point needs more in-depth research. However, the legacy of the AS that is still intact (even decade after it went extinct) is suggestive of a subtle architectural decolonization the present-day Sri Lankan MC and even the working class are still championing without even realizing it. This point too needs further affirmation through research.

### Research Team

W. D. D. Bohteju  
B. L. T. Paramee

### References

- Alahakoon, R. (2011) Interviewed by M. N. R. Wijetunge. 12 January, Colombo.
- All Things British (2022) *Andrew Marr's The Making of Modern Britain*. 9 September. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJVEEuzQ-cM&t=16s> (Accessed 06 October 2022).
- Architectural History (2009). *American Style House*. 2 February. Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9blinLZgoI> (Accessed 25 November 2011).
- Bawa, B. (1985), *Briefly by Bewis*, Colombo: The Sapumal Foundation.
- Bottomore, T. (1993) *Elite and Society*, London: Rutledge.
- Boucher, D. (2013) *The 1950s American Home, USA*: Blumesbury.
- Budds, D. (2011) February 20, *Restoring Breuer's House in Garden*, dwell: At Home in the Modern world, viewed 20 March, 2011, [http://www.dwell.com/articles/Restoring Breuer's House in Garden - Ideas - Dwell.mht](http://www.dwell.com/articles/Restoring_Breuer's_House_in_Garden_-_Ideas_-_Dwell.mht)
- Cohen, L. (2003) *A Consumer's Republic; The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Conrad, P. (1995) *Our House: The Stories of Levittown*, Pennsylvania: Scholastic.
- De Saram, C. (2010) Interviewed by M. N. R. Wijetunge. 28 September, Colombo.
- Dayaratne, R. (2016) Re-dignifying Vernacular for Constructing National Identity; Elitism, Grand Traditions and Cultural Revival in Bahrain. *ITU A|Z*, 13(1), pp. 127-138.
- de Silva, N. (1990) 'The Sri Lankan Tradition for Shelter' *The Journal of Sri Lanka Institute of Architects*, Colombo, Vol 10, No 6, 1990.
- de Silva, N. (1991) [Nationality, Culture and Ideology], Chinthana Parshadaya: Maharagama. (In Sinhalese).
- De Silva, N. (2015) 'Assembling Smallness: the American small Industries Exhibition', Ceylon 1961', B.A. Dissertation, Princeton University.

- Dharmadasa, K. N. O. (2003) *Patriotism; A socio-classical Analysis*. [Deshanuragaya: Samajavidyathmaka Vighrahayak] Boralesgamuwa: VisidunuPrakashakayo.
- Eriksen, T. H. (2002) *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, London: Pluto Press.
- Frampton, K. (1993) *Toward a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance*. Book Chapter Contribution for Frampton, K. (ed.), *Postmodernism*, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, London: Routledge.
- Goodman, N. (1988) *How Buildings Mean*. In N/ Goodman & C. Elgin (Eds.), *Reconceptions in philosophy*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.
- Hine, T. (2007) *Populuxe*, Woodstock & New York: The Overlook Press.
- Harwood, B., May, B. & Sherman, C. (2015) *Architecture and Interior Design: An Integrated History to the Present*, Fashion Series, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, Vancouver: Pearson.
- Jayawardena, V. K., 1983. *Aspects of Class and Ethnic Consciousness in Sri Lanka, Development and Chane*, 14, pp.1-18.
- Jayawardene, S. (1984) 'The Work of Geoffrey Bawa: Some Observations Towards a Historical Standing, M.Sc. Dissertation, University College London.
- Johnson, R. E. (1994) *Wealth and Poverty*, Sociology Department, Brigham Young University, viewed 20 March, (2011) <<http://www.kateandneil.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Wealth-and-Poverty.pdf>>
- Macgillivray, A. (2006) *A Brief History of Globalization*, New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers.
- Mallgrave, H. F. (2009) *Modern Architectural theory: A Historical Survey 1673-1968*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Manawadu, S. (2011) Interviewed by M. N. R. Wijetunge. 13 January, Colombo.
- Mosca, G. (1939) *The Ruling Class*, New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Pareto, V. (1963) *A Treatise on General Sociology*, New York: Dover.
- Peiris, A. (2007). *Imagining Modernity: The Architecture of Valentine Gunasekara*, Sri Lanka: Stamford Lake (Pvt) Ltd.
- Peiris, A. (2011) 'Tropical' cosmopolitanism? The untoward legacy of the American Style in Post-independence Ceylon/Sri Lanka. *Singapore Journal of Tropical geography*, 32(3), pp. 332-349.
- Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (2022) Homepage - The State Museum of Pennsylvania. Available at: <https://statemuseumpa.org/> (Accessed: 18 January 2024).
- Perera, M. C. N. (1994) 'Decolonizing Ceylon: Society and Space in Sri Lanka', PhD Thesis, State University of New York at Binghamton.
- Robson, D., Gormley, A. & Sonawane, D., 1984. "Aided-Self-Help Housing in Sri Lanka 1977 to 1982", A Report Prepared for the Overseas Development Administration of the United Kingdom. Sri Lanka: HMSO.
- Ruskin, J. (1989) *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, New York: Dover Publications, (Based on the Issue Published in 1880 by George Allen, Sunnyside Oprington, Kent; First Published in 1849).
- Silva, K. T. (2005) *The Caste, Class and Social Conflicts in Sri Lanka*. [Kulaya, PanthiyasahaLankaweSamajaGatum] Boralesgamuwa, VisidunuPrakashakayo (Pvt) Ltd.
- Smith, A. D. (1991) *National Identity*, London: Penguin.
- Ssenyonga A. B. (2006), 'americanization or globalization? viewed 21 March 2011, <http://www.websites\Americanization\Americanization or Globalization Global Envision.mht>
- Stieril, M. (2022) *Project of Independence: Architectures of Decolonization In South Asia*, New York: The MOMA.
- Tzonis, A., Lefavre, L. and Stagno, B. (eds.) (2001) *Tropical Architecture: Critical Regionalism in the Age of Globalization*, Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Academy.
- Vale, L. J. (1992) *Architecture, Power and National Identity*, New Heaven and London: Yale University Press.
- Widyalankara, A. Y. 2009. *Architectural History*. [video online] Available



- at:< <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9blinLZgoI>> [Accessed 25 November 2011].
- Wijetunge, M. N. R. (in press) [From Ancient Times to Modernity: An Ensemble of Essays], Vol 2, Godage Publishers: Colombo. (in Sinhala).
- Wijetunge, M. N. R. (2023). The de Silva House at Mt. Lavinia by Valentine Gunasekara: Phenomenological Analysis of an Elite Dwelling from the Nationalist Era of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). *Built Environment-Sri Lanka*, 14(1).
- Wijetunge, M. N. R., 2022. Decolonization and Nationalism: The ‘American Style’, the Vernacular and the Domestic Architecture of Sri Lanka. *ISVS e-journal*, 9 (4), pp. 180-201.
- Wijetunge, N. R. (2021) *The Archaeologist-Architect of Sri Lanka: Roland Silva*, Colombo: Sri Lanka Institute of Architects.
- Wijetunge, M. N. R., 2015. The Notion of Nation: Protagonist Behind the Post-Colonial Elite Domestic Architecture of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). *Built Environment-Sri Lanka*, 11(2), pp.12-24.
- Wijetunge, M. N. R. (2014) [From Ancient Times to Modernity: An Ensemble of Essays], Vol 1, M2A Publishers: Colombo. (in Sinhala).
- Wijetunge, M. N. R. 2013a. Domestic Architecture of the Modern-day Elites: Manifestations Of Periodic Change in Home Environments. *ISVS e-journal*, 2(4), pp. 54-70.
- Wijetunge, M. N. R. 2013b. Unearthing What Underlies Elite Domestic Works of Geoffrey Bawa and Valentine Gunasekara. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka*, LVIII(1), pp. 67-88.
- Wijetunge, M. N. R. (2013c) ‘American Style: An Analysis on the Role of this Style in the Post-independence Period Domestic Architecture of Sri Lanka’, *Divaina, Haraskada*, March, pp. III. (in Sinhala).
- Wijetunge, M. N. R. (2013d) ‘American Visitor to the Sinhalese *Hatara-andi gedara*’, *Divaina, Haraskada*, March, pp. III. (in Sinhala).
- Wijetunge, M. N. R. (2013e) ‘Decline of the American Style’, *Divaina, Haraskada*, March, pp. III. (in Sinhala).
- Wijetunge, M. N. R. (2012a) ‘Domestic Architecture of the Sinhalese Elite in the Age of Nationalism’, PhD Thesis, Nottingham Trent University.
- Wijetunge, M. N. R. 2012b. Emulating Vernacular: Role of Tradition in the Elite Domestic Architecture of Geoffrey Bawa & Valentine Gunasekara. *ISVS e-journal*, 2(2), pp. 2-16.
- Wijetunge, M.N. R. 2011a. Elite Domestic Architecture of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) from Independence to Globalization. [Poster]. In: Nottingham Trent University, *NTU College Conference*. Nottingham. UK 7 July 2011.
- Wijetunge, M. N. R., 2011b. Role of the American Style in Post-Independence Period Domestic Architecture in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). In: Nottingham Trent University, *NTU Research Practice Course Conference*. Nottingham, UK, 24 May 2011.
- Wijetunge, M. N. R. 2010a. Roles of Tradition and Vernacular in Elite Domestic Architecture of Post-colonial Ceylon (Sri Lanka). *FARU Journal*, 1, pp. 97-109.
- Wijetunge, M. N. R., 2010b. Role of the Notion of ‘Nation’ in Post-colonial Elite Domestic Architecture of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). In: Nottingham Trent University, *NTU College Conference*. Nottingham, UK 8 July 2010.