
PHT *newsletter*

PENANG HERITAGE TRUST • PERSATUAN WARISAN PULAU PINANG

c/o 11 Free School Road, 11600 Penang, Malaysia • Tel/Fax: 04 - 281 3187

Number 29

July 1996

AGM 1996

PENANG HERITAGE TRUST
(PERSATUAN WARISAN PULAU PINANG)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 3 August '96

2.30 pm

INTEC College

(Leith Street, opposite Cheong Fatt Tze)

Agenda

1 To consider and approve

a) The Minutes of the PHT Annual General Meeting 1995

b) The PHT Council Report July 1995 – July 1996

c) The Hon. Treasurer's Report ended 31 December 1995

2 Other Matters

Light refreshments will be served

Kapitan Chung's villa should be restored

I REFER to Shukor Rahman's article entitled "Kapitan Chung's villa worth restoring" (NST, July 1). The story brings back pleasant memories of my school days at the Anglo-Chinese School in Suffolk House in Penang in 1935. I was then in the Senior Cambridge School Certificate class.

Kapitan Chung Thye Pin's son, Chung Kok Soon, a schoolmate, took me and a classmate of his, for a visit to the villa during a weekend. We travelled in an Austin car. Seated in front was Kok Soon's attendant (or was he his bodyguard?). The three of us sat in the back. Traffic in those days was light. Ours was the only car going from Georgetown to Relau. To give us a thrill, Kok Soon would ask the driver to go at 60mph on straight stretches of the road.

When we arrived at the villa I saw a sign "Nirwana". Opposite the entrance was the door to the kitchen. The attendant followed us around during the tour of the villa, with its stream and a beautiful pavilion outside the grounds. The place was beautiful and well-kept.

Some time later, Kok Soon invited me to stay a night in the villa. We first had lunch in his house in Northern Road where I met his mother.

We arrived at Nirwana about 4pm. We went for a swim and wandered round the garden. Dinner was served at 6pm and consisted of bread and a roast duck.

I think it was in 1937 that the Chinese Swimming Club organised a picnic for some members at the villa.

After the Japanese Occupation, I visited the villa in the early 1950s. I found the place dilapidated. It was a sorry sight.

I support the proposal that the once beautiful villa be restored to its former splendour.

B.K. Ng
Petaling Jaya

(See article about the villa in June '96 issue of PHT newsletter)

Hotel's 'character' being sold off

Trust: Such action makes restoration meaningless

PENANG: The antique interior fixtures of the 111-year-old E & O Hotel, including doors, windows and even one of its staircases, were stripped off and sold recently, sparking off a protest from the Penang Heritage Trust.

Trust vice-president Dr Choong Sim Poey criticised the removal of the fixtures which were an intrinsic feature of the hotel's character, saying the action had rendered the hotel's restoration exercise "totally meaningless."

"We have requested a meeting with the owner, E & O Bhd, and the Penang Municipal Council to discuss the matter," he told *The Star*.

The hotel, which closed in April this year for a RM60 million face-lift to turn it into a five-star boutique hotel, is scheduled to reopen by the end of next year.

The E & O is one of only three survivors of the pre-war Sarkies Brothers hotel empire. The other two are the Strand in Yangon, Myanmar, and the Raffles in Singapore.

Dr Choong said the incident high-

lighted the need for the council to have detailed guidelines on the restoration or renovation of historical buildings.

"The council could appoint a conservation officer to sit in the planning stage with the developers or architects to ensure the preservation of heritage or historical features," he said.

One of the Trust members, who asked not to be named, said she was told of the sale last month by friends who saw people "carting away the hotel's antique furniture and other items."

"When I went there, I saw items like cupboards, doors, windows, bathroom sinks, urinals, and even floor tiles for sale," she said, adding that she was offered the staircase up to the hotel's *Straits Room*.

The man handling the sale told her "everything has to go as soon as possible."

Officials from E & O Berhad declined to comment when contacted.



STRIPPED... the interior of the E & O Hotel reduced to a mere shadow, literally, of its former grandeur, with only dark stripes left to show where the staircase used to be.



PERSATUAN WARISAN PULAU PINANG • PENANG HERITAGE TRUST

Registered Address: Penang State Museum, Lebuh Farquhar, 11200 Penang, Malaysia

Tel/Fax: 04 - 261 3144

Temporary Address: c/o 19 Kelawei Road, 10250 Penang, Malaysia

Tel/Fax: 04 - 226 1358

Minutes of the PHT Annual General Meeting 1996

Date: Saturday 3 August 1996

Time: 2.30 - 4.30 pm

Venue: INTEC College, Leith Street

Present:

Members

1	Dr Choong Sim Poey (Vice-chairman)	17	Dato' Eddy Choong
2	Elise Cumo Ikeda	18	Gan Teik Chee (Legal Advisor)
3	Gwyn Jenkins	19	Ng Bok Tye
4	Peter Foo	20	Loh Leong Hai
5	Marie-Louise Oh	21	Tengku Dato' Idaura (Committee Member)
6	Khoo Boo Chia	22	Michael Cheah
7	Ch'ng Cheng Ee	23	Pierre Laine
8	Oh Eng Sim	24	Ren Fennamore
9	Loh-Lim Lin Lee (Committee Member)	25	Anna Saunbury
10	Chong Lee Lin	26	David Khor (Committee Member)
11	David Yeo Khee Chin	27	Khoo Salma Nasution (Hon Secretary)
12	Clara Chan	28	Alexandra Ong
13	Ahmad Chik (Committee Member)	29	Annelies Allain
14	Alan Flux	30	James Lee (Committee Member)
15	Lee Laine (Hon Treasurer)	31	Ong Teng Lam (Committee Member)
16	Laurence Loh		

Guests and Friends of the PHT

- 1 Joseph Renang
- 2 Lee Liang Hye

Absent with Apology

- 1 Dato' Nazir Ariff (Chairman)

Minutes

1 Chairman's Welcoming Address

Dr Choong Sim Poey chaired the meeting in the absence of Dato' Nazir Ariff. He welcomed the members and friends of the PHT present.

Congratulations

Dr Choong congratulated Tengku Dato' Idaura and Dato' Eddy Choong on their being honoured with the title of Dato' by TYT Tun Dato' Seri (Dr) Haji Hamdan Bin Sheik Tahir, the Yang Di Pertua Negeri Pulau Pinang, on the occasion of his 75th birthday.

Thanks

He thanked Alexandra Ong for the wonderful apple cake and tuna pizza she specially made for the occasion, Alan Flux for donating postcards of his paintings to the PHT, and Marie-Louise Oh, Clara Chan, and Peter Foo for putting up a little exhibition at the back of the meeting room to give those present a preview of the PHT Antiques & Collectibles Show '96 to be held in December.

2 Confirmation of the Minutes of the AGM 1995

The AGM confirmed the minutes (Ms Alexandra Ong proposed and Mdm Ch'ng Cheng Ee seconded).

3 PHT Council Annual Report July 1995 - July 1996

Khoo Salma Nasution, the PHT Hon Secretary, presented the report. The AGM passed the report (Mr Pierre Laine proposed and Mr Laurence Loh seconded) after the committee answered questions about Suffolk House, Soonstead, Metropole, Hardwicke, Runnymede, Loo Pun Hong, Relau House, E&O Hotel, and PHT Museum Shop

Suffolk House

Alexandra Ong wanted to know what happened to the RM2 million the Ministry of Culture had approved for the restoration of the great house. En Ahmad Chik explained that the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), a higher authority, had not given its blessings to the Culture Ministry's approval. But the issue was not funding: there was enough third party money for the project. It was officialdom and he felt like 'camping in the corridors of power' until the bureaucrats got tired of his presence and got on with the paper work they were supposed to have done.

Metropole, Hardwicke, Soonstead

Loh-Lim Lin Lee feared that Soonstead, the listed and still intact neighbour of the illegally demolished Metropole, might go the way of Hardwicke, now damaged beyond repair. There were signs the developer of Dolphin Square, a 39-storey tower to be built on the grave of Metropole, was planning to use the same destructive hammer-driven method of piling. Dr S P Choong said he would speak to the MPPP about getting Dolphin Square to use a safer method of construction.

Runnymede

Mr Ong Teng Lam asked about Runnymede. He had heard that it was to be turned into a 5-star hotel. Dr Choong said that the PHT had not only given the MPPP a list of the city's endangered buildings but also proposed that the PHT be consulted before any of these buildings was given planning permission for redevelopment.

Relau House

Tan Teong Kooi reported that the PHTnewsletter had carried an article by Khoo Salma about the house and he had spoken to Mr Pierre Laine about the possibility of the Alliance Francaise leasing it from the MPPP. Mr Laine said that the French Ambassador seemed very interested in establishing the Alliance Francaise there. Dr S P Choong said that the PHT would support such a project provided that the house when restored was made accessible to the Penang public.

Loo Pun Hong (Penang Carpenters Guild)

Ms Lee Laine told the meeting that the Chai Gang Art Exhibiton had raised RM10,000 for the restoration project. En Ahmad Chik reported that Ms Gwyn Jenkins had completed an inventory of the guild's artefacts; the PHT had asked the architects for help and Mr Laurence Loh had volunteered his services as consultant; students from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology had done a dilapidation survey of the building and would soon present their report. In the meantime the PHT would look into the possibility of restoring the guild's screens and costumes. It had published a brochure to make the public more aware of the guild's history and present state of disrepair.

PHT Museum Shop

Mr Peter Foo wanted to know about the progress being made to establish the shop. Mr James Lee reported that the PHT and Mr Beh Thye Boo, PHT member and former employee of the Museum, had come to a verbal agreement, under which Mr Beh was to pay the PHT a monthly rental of RM800 for the right to run the shop and the carpark. The PHT would in turn pay the Museum RM400 a month.

E&O Hotel

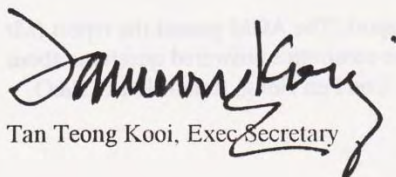
Khoo Salma told the meeting that the 111-year old hotel was being turned into "a 5-star boutique hotel", and Ms Loh-Lim added that its furniture, staircases and other fixtures had been sold to collectors, and that the PHT had written to the MPPP president requesting him to arrange an urgent meeting with the developers so that the PHT could view and comment on the project.

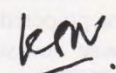
4 PHT Accounts Ended 31 December 1995

Ms Lee Laine, the PHT Hon Treasurer, presented the accounts. For auditing it, Price Waterhouse charged RM600. The Loo Pun Hong restoration fund was under fixed deposits. The marginal increase in expenditure was because of the increase, as one could see from the annual report, in the number of PHT projects and activities. The AGM passed the accounts (Ms Annelies Allain proposed and Ms Gwyn Jenkins seconded).

5 Other Matters

There were no other matters brought up for discussion and the members adjourned for some light refreshments.


Tan Teong Kooi, Exec Secretary


Khoo Salma Nasution, Hon Secretary