

PHT *newsletter*

PENANG HERITAGE TRUST • PERSATUAN WARISAN PULAU PINANG

c/o 19 Kelawei Road, 10250 Penang, Malaysia • Tel/Fax: 04 - 226 1358

Number 32

October 1996

The PHT is given the honour of running the AWPNUC Secretariat

We are proud to announce that the Penang Heritage Trust was chosen as the new Secretariat of the Asia & West Pacific Network for Urban Conservation (AWPNUC) by the member countries of the Network at its Sixth International Symposium and Workshop, held recently (28 September to 1 October 1996) in Yogyakarta, Java.

AWPNUC was formed at a seminar on Urban Conservation and Public Participation held in Penang in 1991 and supported by the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD). Its main purpose is exchange of information and expertise in the area of urban conservation. The member countries, which share much in common in terms of cultural heritage, building forms and technology, as well as problems brought about by rapid development, include representatives (both individuals and heritage organizations) from over 22 countries around the world.

The first AWPNUC symposium was held in 1992 in Georgetown, Penang, chosen as the only city in an era of urban evolution in the region with an ensemble of historical buildings still intact; the second in 1993 in Adelaide, sister city of Penang, planned by William Light, son of Francis Light, and which is in the forefront of the conservation movement in Australia; the third in 1994 in Hanoi, whose 1,000-year-old Ancient Quarter seems frozen in time despite the ravages of war;

the fourth in 1995 in Nara, Japan's oldest city with traditional shophouses from the Edo to the Meiji era still to be found; and the fifth, just concluded at Yogyakarta, a city founded in the mid-18th century near the great Buddhist edifice, Borobudur, and perceived by the Javanese as the centre of their traditional culture.

AWPNUC symposiums are organised by the heritage society of the country in which they are held. The 1997 symposium will be organised by the Yaoshan Cultural Foundation of Taiwan.

Change of Address of PHT Office



*Please take note
that as from 1 November
the PHT office will be at
No. 19 Kelawei Road,
10250 Penang, Malaysia*

*Tel/Fax number:
04 - 226 1358*

*Office hours:
11.00am - 4.00pm
Monday - Friday*

*PHT members are welcome
to drop in for a cup of coffee
and help with some work*

Most of these cities are presently undergoing overwhelming development and transformation, and each has provided case studies and settings for discussion and exploration to find the best means for the management of urban conservation.

AWPNUC is an incorporated non-profit organization. The Committee is made up of representatives from Network countries nominated at the annual symposium.

Affiliate groups include:

The Penang Heritage Trust
Badan Warisan Malaysia
Singapore Heritage Society
Australia ICOMOS Ins.
Australia Council of National Trust
National Trust of South Australia
Civic Trust United Kingdom
Yogyakarta Heritage Society
Yogyakarta Heritage Trust
Yaoshan Cultural Foundation of Taiwan
Nara Machizukuri Centre Inc. of Japan
Hong Kong Antiquities & Monuments Office

There are also over 200 individual members from the following countries — Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, France, Fiji, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peoples' Republic of China, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vietnam.

Membership benefits include the facility and resources to identify and contact colleagues, to plan co-operative projects, and to draw on a wide range of experience and technical expertise; a quarterly newsletter; eligibility to attend the annual symposium; and access to seminars, workshops and lectures by visiting practitioners.

The Network is the only cultural organization that links the Far East, South East Asia and Australasia, and it has played a significant role in heritage conservation in the region.

Individuals and organizations interested in urban conservation and in joining the Network should contact the **PHT/AWPNUC Secretariat** at 19 Kelawei Road, 10250 Penang, Tel/Fax: 04 - 226 1358.

Loh-Lim Lin Lee
PHT Council Member

New Members

We welcome the following as new members of the Penang Heritage Trust. They can take part in any of its activities.

Ordinary Members

Loh Lean Hye	Winfred Khoo
Roy Jenkins	Doris Lim
Alan Chew	

PHT

Antiques & Collectibles Fair 1996

*Organised by
the PHT Antique-Collectors Club
in aid of Penang Heritage Trust*

**Friday 29 and
Saturday 30 November**
(11.00 am - 8.00 pm)
Sunday 1 December
(10.00 am - 6.00 pm)

Dewan Sri Pinang (Ground Floor Hall)

*Only the members of the
Penang Heritage Trust
can take part in the
Fair as exhibitors*

*Members who wish to be
exhibitors must register with
Richard Lim, tel: 04 - 2623610
Peter Foo, tel: 04 - 2619617
or Lee Laine, tel: 04 - 8901451
by 15 November '96*

**The participation fee is
RM100 a day for one lot**

*Applications to participate in
the Fair will be accepted on a
first come, first served
basis and upon full payment
of the participation fee*

*For further details please contact
Richard Lim, Peter Foo, or Lee Laine*



HISTORICAL ... the Tunku Kudin House which is to be restored — Starpic by WAN MOHIZAN WAN HUSSEIN

123-year-old house to be site of resort

By LIM AI LEE

PENANG: The 123-year-old Tunku Kudin House here will be restored and the surrounding area developed into an RM8 million resort and mess for police personnel.

It is learnt the Penang Municipal Council's building committee has approved the plans for the project to be developed on a hillock off Glugor here.

Sources said the police had given an assurance that the house, now in a dilapidated state, would

be restored under the supervision of the Penang Museum.

A RM2 million allocation was made under the Sixth Malaysia Plan for the building's restoration.

It is learnt the police project, to be developed on 2.6ha of prime land, will be carried out in two phases.

Phase One covers construction of a double-storey bungalow, two double-storey chalets, two semi-detached houses, 20 units of double-storey mess and a banquet hall.

The land, purchased by

the police in 1973 for RM289,000, was left idle for 23 years.

Today, with a market value of RM60 per sq ft, the land is said to be worth around RM16.8 million.

Although the house has yet to be gazetted as a heritage building, it has an interesting history.

The house was built by Tunku Kudin, the younger brother of Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Mukarram Shah of Kedah, in 1873.

In February last year, the property ownership was the subject of a dis-

pute when two fourth-generation descendants of Tunku Kudin filed a suit in the High Court, claiming they were the rightful owners. The case was dismissed by the court in April.

Both the Kedah and Penang governments have expressed interest in preserving the historical building.

A proposal by the Penang government to convert Tunku Kudin House into a museum in 1993 was, however, rejected by the police.

College hopes to restore old mansion

PENANG: Distd College hopes to start refurbishment works on the colonial-styled mansion, known as Union Villa, by November for the college's expansion programme.

Its president Datuk Dr Sharom Ahmat said the college was currently waiting for the Penang Municipal Council's decision on its application for the change of use for the building.

"We hope to start restoring the mansion by November as the extra space would be needed next February," he said.

The college purchased the heri-

tage mansion, located next to its present premise, in May and has plans to retain the facade and most of the interior architectural features. The building will be re-developed along the same line as the college's present Yeap Chor Ee campus building on Macalister Road.

Dr Sharom said the expansion would be able to accommodate the college's plan to increase its student intake from the present 600 to 800 students.

"We plan to have two lecture rooms at the refurbished mansion which would accommodate 150 stu-

dents each, and two smaller rooms for 80 to 90 students each," he said.

The mansion would also house the administration offices and two of the college's subsidiary company offices.

The administrative block of the present Distd College Yeap Chor Ee campus is located in a colonial-style building designed and constructed around 1910.

It is believed that Union Villa, formerly known as Crosby Hall, was also built in the early 20th century.

The return of the non-native

BY NANCY WIGSTON

WE used to live here." On our trip to Penang Island, off the west coast of Malaysia, this will become a sort of mantra. After 20 years, I don't quite believe it myself.

Changes leap into sight like tigers in the ghostly morning light. Rice paddies and jungle have disappeared, replaced by forests of gleaming high-rise condos. "Industry is No. 1 here," explains our cab driver, indicating a clutch of computer factories. "Tourism No. 2." Real estate No. 3, I say to myself, spotting another new subdivision.

Named after the mildly narcotic betel nut, Penang was always a salubrious place. Tin and rubber millionaires came here to retire, building enormous colonial estates on tree-lined roads with names like McAlister and Scotland. In the 1970s a university was founded on the grounds of a British army base, where foreigners like us came to teach.

"You won't recognize it," friends have warned. So I'm relieved when we pull up at the E & O (for Eastern & Oriental) Hotel. The place has been painted, but the elevator is still hand-operated, it still feels as if Somerset Maugham might show up any second wearing a linen suit. On the stone terrace with its long sea wall, a couple of world travellers go through their tai chi moves to the newly risen sun.

In the lobby, a plump Englishman in a Panama hat checks in, followed by Australian trekkies, their hiking boots fresh with Nepalese dirt. On Farquhar Street, leather-faced trishaw (pedicab) drivers await the day's first customers.

The town, with about the population of

Winnipeg, has changed, but not much. Twenty years ago a hideous high-rise shopping centre arose on Penang Road. It's still here. But so is Chowrasta Market, a confusion of fruit and vegetable vendors, squawking chickens, fish twitching on countertops.

We breakfast regally in a coffee shop: fish curry, okra with chillies, iced coffee and fresh limes. Proust had his madeleines, fish curry for breakfast will do for me. Except for the dealmaker at the next table on his cell phone, time might not exist.

By 10:30 a.m., the sun is so hot you feel as if you've sprouted a fur coat: another visceral memory. The funicular railway takes us to relative coolness atop Penang Hill.

"What part of the States you from?" asks a friendly American woman.

"Ontario." They're living here because her engineer husband has a three-year contract. How does she find it? "Hot," she replies.

The economy is even hotter. Rich in natural resources, Malaysia is speeding toward "full development" by the year 2020. At the helm is Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, a genius of political longevity. Smiling faces on government billboards echo his exhortatory style. "Malaysia Boleh!" -- roughly, "Go for it, Malaysia!"

Families are scattered: domestic help, once taken for granted, is hard to find in this employees' market. A million-and-a-half workers have moved to Malaysia from Indonesia and Bangladesh. Wait lists for Filipina maids

LETTER FROM PENANG ISLAND / The rice paddies and jungles have been replaced by high-rise hotels and condos.

make headlines, along with lethal landslides caused by overhasty construction.

On the drive beachward, we get future-shocked. Looming along the seafloor are sky-high hotels -- and yet more condos -- financed by cash-heavy Singaporeans and Taiwanese. Decked with spilling waterfalls of lights, they resemble a mini-Las Vegas.

One morning, on a dawn "jungle walk," our well-muscled guide proudly announces that in nine years the beach will be pure resort -- all fisherfolk and villagers disposed of. A golf course is planned for this very spot. The villagers have been given condos and cash in compensation. We tourists groan.

I ask around. No one can verify this. An employee at a five-star resort tells us about the new Penang Heritage Trust. Youthful and optimistic she is, joining the fight to preserve the best of the past in this brave and sometimes abrasive new world.

Watching the sun set that night, we sit with the locals under casuarina pines at the dowager beach hotel, The Lone Pine. Cheered that reports of its demise have been greatly exaggerated, we sip cool drinks as the sun glides behind the Indian Ocean. Maybe Malaysia won't follow the eerily modern path of neighbouring Singapore. Maybe Penang has a chance. We cross our fingers for luck.

Nancy Wigston is a writer, teacher and book reviewer in Georgetown, Ont.

Freeze plan draws flak from builders

By LIM AI LEE

Penang George Town to preserve its heritage.

Dr Teng said the interim plans would be effective until the George Town Local Plan was drawn up.

Choong questioned the council's decision which he claimed was carried out without a public hearing as stipulated under the Town and Country Planning Act 1976.

He said local plans were also temporary or interim plans and had to be reviewed every few years, during which public opinion must be sought.

Choong added the council's freeze appeared to be after "pressure from certain NGOs."

"What about the opinion of property owners who will be directly affected? We feel they are not even aware of the freeze and its implications."

He urged the council to reconsider its decision by seeking public opinion and exhibiting the proposed plans (including the new land-use zones) and guidelines

before implementation.

Penang Heritage Trust secretary Khoo Salma Nasution urged the council not to bow to development pressure and to implement the new ruling immediately.

Khoo said George Town was "of such cultural and historical significance" that special considerations had to be taken.

She said unsympathetic development had undermined the fabric of the traditional community in the city and called for the "conservation of a human scale of streetscape."

"We need to have a more habitable city. The existing urban form, with its narrow streets, already has limited capacity to cope with extra density."

Said Khoo: "Priority should be on enhanced quality of life and not a higher density. We should emphasise programmes like creating a pedestrian-friendly environment, improving the public transport, planting more trees, cleaning up the sewers and solving the age-old flood problems."

Hotel project plan on site of old mansion

By CHEAH UI-HOON

PENANG: Plans are afoot to revive a 23-storey hotel project at the former Donnybrook mansion in Penang's *Mil-lionaire's Row*.

It is learnt the Federal Hotels International Group has teamed up with Inter-Continental Hotels and Resorts to develop the five-star hotel, Marina Mirage Inter-Continental Penang.

The group is now actively pursuing the project although its first building plan was submitted to the local council in 1985.

"Work on the 350-room hotel is expected to take 18 months," said one source, adding the group was targeting to complete the hotel by 1998.

The hotel is to be sited on a 18,000 sq m piece of prime land between the late tycoon Tan Sri Loh Boon Siew's residence and the Leong Yin Kean Mansion in Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah.

The land had been lying idle since the former century-old colonial mansion was illegally demolished in February 1990.

February 1990.

Federal Hotel Penang Sdn Bhd, which had acquired the mansion and its land in 1976, was subsequently fined RM10,000 by the magistrate's court under Section 19 of the Local Town and Country Planning Act 1976.

The demolition of the mansion, earmarked for conservation, then caused an outcry among conservationists.

The hotel is the second planned for the side of Jalan Sultan Ahmad fronting the coast to be completed before the year 2000.

Piling works for a 39-storey hotel developed by Dolphin Square Sdn Bhd, are being carried out at the site of the former Hotel Metropole down the road.

In this case, Dolphin Square, which also illegally demolished the heritage hotel in 1993, will build a facade of the hotel based on a 1929 picture to front the high-rise hotel to be managed by Pan Pacific.

NATION

THE STAR THURSDAY October 10, 1996

17

No tall buildings in heritage area

By CHEAH UI-HOON

PENANG: Penang has frozen the construction of buildings more than five storeys high in George Town's inner zone to preserve its heritage.

The move would affect more than 2,000 pre-war and historical buildings whose owners would not be allowed to redevelop to more than five storeys.

Municipal council president Dr Teng Hock Nan said the freeze was to ensure that the architecture of pre-war buildings and their surroundings were preserved.

However, he said the council would allow "compatible" development.

Penang has one-third, or about 12,700, of the country's 38,000 pre-war and historical buildings,

directive.

The conservation area comprised five zones bounded by Leith Street, Light Street, Downing Street, part of Weld Quay, Beach Street, Bridge Street, Jalan Gurdwara (formerly Brick Kiln Road), Magazine Road, part of Prangin Road, Carnarvon Street and Chulia Street that had been earmarked for preservation since 1987.

A sixth proposed zone is bounded by Penang Road and Jalan Dr Lim Chwee Leong.

"The freeze basically nullifies a previous development guideline which allowed for buildings of over five storeys in some parts of the conservation area," Dr Teng said, adding that the ruling would be effective until the George Town Local Plan

was drawn up.

Within the six zones, historical monuments such as religious buildings and institutions are preserved as Category I heritage buildings (only restoration allowed), and buildings with architectural merits are preserved under Category II (minor changes allowed).

Also slated for preservation are historical and cultural enclaves such as Little India (off Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling) and the Acheen/Armenian Street area.

On objections from the Penang Housing Developers Association, Dr Teng said developers should follow Kuala Lumpur's example by building downwards where many buildings had basements and underground car parks.



Dr Teng... 'the freeze basically nullifies a previous development guideline'

mostly on the island.

Dr Teng said the council was enforcing stricter controlled development in the inner city conservation area following a state

