

PHT *newsletter*

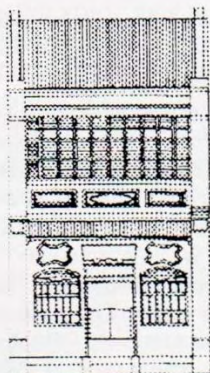
PENANG HERITAGE TRUST * PERSATUAN WARISAN PULAU PINANG

26A Stewart Lane, 10200 Penang, Malaysia * Tel/Fax: 264 2631 E-mail: phtrust@po.jaring.my

Number 59

JANUARY

1999



PHT's OFFICE

Street Signs of George Town

London's are so well designed and attractive that they are collectors' items. Singapore, in keeping with its efficient image, has them erect and clean just where you expect them to be. Our northern neighbour has them in a cast-iron frame of typical Thai design prominently mounted atop stout pillars.

We are talking about street signs, that ubiquitous and necessary fixture in all our towns and cities. While giving us guidance, attractively designed and maintained signs can add grace and charm to a city, just as well chosen accessories can enhance the appearance of a well-dressed woman.

How does George Town fare? The brief answer is: the city has too few street signs and a high percentage of these are dirty and badly maintained, according to a PHT survey of 55 major and minor roads in the city centre, Pulau Tikus and two important housing areas. Every road was visited and the number and condition of every road sign noted. The number of signs required by each street is based on these standards: every road should have two signs at the beginning and end, one at a tee-junction and four at a cross. It appears that the MPPP use these standards also, even though it is difficult

to tell. Nevertheless these are common sense standards widely used elsewhere. The finding can summarized as follows:

⇒ A total of 577 signs are required on the roads surveyed, but only 133 (18%) are provided.

⇒ Of the signs that are provided, 29 (20%) are not of the latest standard design.

⇒ 39 (30%) of the road signs are dirty, illegible, damaged or not readily visible.

⇒ Just over 10% of the roads do not have any signs at all. These include fairly important roads such as Lorong Madras and Lorong Kinta.

⇒ Even major trunk roads are inadequately endowed. Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah has only 6 signs (it needs 41), Jalan Masjid Negeri: 2 (31), Jalan Scotland: 3 (11), Jalan Utama: 4 (28).

⇒ There are at least 6, possibly more, designs of street signs in current use.

Clearly much has to be done to improve our signage system. We think that the present design is not attractive, but that is a subjective view. That aside, MPPP definitely has to work very hard to put up many more signs if it is to make the city friendly and more accessible to the visitors expected next during the Visit Penang 1999, and to make it easier for us, the residents, to find our way.

P.S.: An accidental discovery: The Southbound road starting from the Jalan Tengku Kudin roundabout is called Jalan Gelugor (according to the large illuminated maps which the MPPP has placed at several strategic points in the city), but the actual road sign says Jalan Sultan Azlan

Shah. Which is the correct name? Would this be one reason not to change road names?

- Ahmad Chik

PRESS STATEMENT

Burmah Road Gospel Hall - Heritage Building Alert!!

It has come to the attention of the Penang Heritage Trust that redevelopment plans have been submitted by the Committee of the Burmah Road Gospel Hall. These plans involve the demolition of the historic 1938 Church and the subsequent construction of a new multistorey building to accommodate church activities.

While the desire to enlarge facilities is to be commended, it should be very strongly pointed out that the present historic church is relatively small & is sited conveniently in one corner of the available site. The site itself is HUGE and unencumbered and there is no conceivable reason or rationale for not building on the available land WITHOUT demolishing the Church itself.

The building in question is an exemplary example of the architectural church style of the era with its distinctive roof pitch, rafters, terracotta and other material usage. It is in good repair and only requires minor restoration & refurbishment works.

There are currently precious few other remaining examples in the country of these smaller religious establishments as distinct from the large cathedrals and churches. And these are under constant threat of inappropriate & insensitive 'modernization' or worse, demolition & redevelopment. A recent research paper published in the Press on the

50 Humanist Space

50 Humanist Space is a new art gallery run by Tan Yeow Wooi, Eric Teoh and Choo (Sa-Chi). It is housed in a tastefully renovated 1960s Art Deco house at **50 Merican Road**, in one of Penang's cosy city suburbs (off Pahang Road, off Anson Road).

The elegant corner terrace house is located at the *cul de sac* of the gently curved Merican Road, which slows down traffic and makes for a very pleasant neighbourhood. Why don't they design new housing estates this way?

Currently, the gallery is hosting a solo exhibition of about 30 black and white drawings entitled 'Sketches of Penang', by well-known watercolour artist **Khoo Cheang Jin**. The exhibition features the streetscapes, old buildings and unique architecture of old Penang. Prices of the drawings on paper, RM120-RM200. Limited edition prints, RM 15.

26 December 1998 - 24 January 1999. Mon-Fri 7-11pm, Sat 12-7pm and Sun 10am-7pm. Tel Mr. Choo. 012-488 4351, Eric 019-470 4815.

The invitation card reproduced below shows Khoo Cheang Jin's drawing of the Khoo Kongsi.

Oil, Water & Fire

Soho, New York was revitalised when artists moved into the neighbourhood. Could the same happen to Penang's inner city? Two artists Tan Siew Khuan and Lew Heng Jit repainted and rewired the shophouse at **16 Jalan Dato' Koya**. Then they turned it into an artists studio and moved in around October last year.

It is now the headquarters for **AROS** -- short for Artists Rock Studio -- a group of artists who meet every Wednesday night at the studio. The other artists are Ong Siew Khun, Alan Tang, Lee Eng Beng, Alex Leong, Cheng Yeow Chye, Lau Seong Leng, Yew Swee Wah, Grace Choong and Nicky Sim. To quote them, "the basics are oil and water, but art wouldn't go far from here. It needs determination & burning desire to make art a part of our lives, something that everybody can feel like the fire from a stone lion."

Together with Guang Ming daily, this group organised "Oil, Water and Fire -- Penang's first ever street art exhibition" at Jalan Dato' Koya, launched on 19 December 1998.

Email artrockstudio@hotmail.com
Home Page: <http://members.tripod.com/~artrockstudio>

New Book:

The Art of Tan Choon Ghee

At last, a book on Tan Choon Ghee's works. Probably Penang's most famous veteran watercolourist of heritage streetscapes, Tan Choon Ghee has influenced a whole generation of young artists to love, draw inspiration from and depict the buildings and streets of Penang.

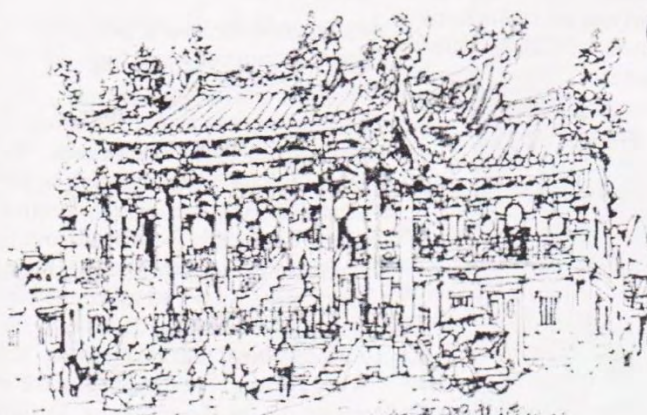
The book was designed and laid out by the artist himself, with an Introduction by Ooi Kok Chuan and some wonderful early photos of the artist. The main sections on Drawing & Wash, Watercolour, Oil contain about 120 reproductions of the artist's works. The publication approach is minimal, which makes it something between a catalogue and a coffee table book. At RM 50, this hardcover book is definitely collectable.

Size 11 X 10.5 inches, 94 pages, full colour. Published by Georgetown Printers Sdn. Bhd., 5 China Street Ghaut, 10300 Penang. Tel 2619449.

Also available at the Penang Heritage Trust Office.



邱昌仁檳城速寫展
他的紙、他的筆和他的作品
地點：伍拾號人文空間
開幕日期：26.12.1998(星期六) 7:30pm
地址：50 Merican Road 10400 Penang



26.12.1998 (Sat) Khoo Kongsi

展期：26.12.1998 - 24.1.1999

時間：07:00pm - 11:00pm (平常時間)

12:00pm - 07:00pm (星期六) · 10:00pm - 07:00pm (星期日)

公共假期休息

50 Humanist Space
伍拾號人文空間

50, Merican Road, 10400, Penang
Mr. Choo 012-4884351 / Eric 019-4704815



Churches of Malaysia, specifically mentions the Gospel Hall of Burmah Rd., Penang, as an example worthy of conservation.

Of even greater importance for the members of the congregation is the fact that this particular church has a very solid tradition that runs through several generations. The building itself was constructed through the efforts and contributions of the congregation. The spiritual, sentimental and emotional attachment of the congregation is being sorely tested by this threat to the church. This is the venue of weddings and baptisms, confirmations and first communions, funerals and all other focal events of their lives.

A sensitive, understanding and forward looking approach to the desire to upgrade the Church should incorporate a harmonious new structure able to accommodate large functions, classes, pastor's quarters etc, while retaining the original historic building, with its wonderful ambience, for the continuing needs of a spiritual flavour for events such as baptisms, services etc.

It should also be noted that while the building in question is out of the historic inner city, the State and Local Authorities could consider an application for awarding incentives for conservation. This would essentially mean that a sensitivity to conservation for the future of the quality of life for Penangites, should be rewarded by the State with such waivers as car-parking contributions, set back requirements and other possibilities of flexibility.

This is a prime case of unnecessary destruction of our cultural heritage. There is NO space-constraint, there is NO need-constraint, there is NO land cost-constraint to justify this demolition. At the same time there IS architectural merit, there IS historical merit and most importantly, there IS very strong emotional and spiritual merit to the retention of the historic church building.

It has again to be repeated, Growth and Development CAN take place, they SHOULD take place, but NOT at the cost of our past, our heritage, our history and the contributions and efforts of our ancestors. - Mrs. Loh-Lim Lin Lee

Letter from Seattle

Patricia Tusa Fels and her family lived in Penang in the early 1990s. She worked for a while as architectural consultant to the Penang Island Municipal Council's Inventory project. Since she returned to Seattle, she has served on the Seattle Landmarks Commissioner.

I really enjoy reading the PHT news and hope the conservation guidelines get passed by the City Council. I just went through a similar crisis with our City Council, and personally visited many of the council members to explain to them the importance of the conservation work. What amazed me was how little many of them knew about what our Landmarks Commission was doing. So education is still important, especially when you have the classic developer mentality that property is only for making money.

Recently, during some excavation work for a big water department development project, an archaeological site was discovered - a centre for tool making from about 4,000 years ago. The local Indian tribe was alerted and (because of laws on the books) an archaeological dig began. The Landmarks Commission is also responsible for archaeology in the county so I became involved. Amazing stuff was found.

At one point the chief of the tribe told me that his goal was education - he knew that his tribe had no land and he didn't want to take anybody's land. BUT he wanted the present owners to understand this land, to care for it, to connect to its history. *"They have the piece of paper, but they have no knowledge of this land."*

I am often told by developers that their economic gain is limited by conservation - even though they still gain, they feel they have the "right" to maximum gain. It seems to me that Western capitalism sees land and property as only a commodity - and somehow this has to change, so that land and property are also seen as a responsibility. Something one cares for, lives in and on, and then passes on to the next generation.

- Patricia Tusa Fels



New Book: The Good Food Guide to Penang by Fay Khoo

An energetic exponent of the "live to eat philosophy", Fay Khoo has been writing about food and wine for most of her life, first in Australia, and then in Malaysia, where she has written for numerous publications, including *Wine and Dine*, *The Edge*, *Sun*, *Men's Review* and *The Star*. She is also the author of *A Little Book of Love and Loss*, a work that has nothing to do with food.

The *Good Food Guide to Penang* is Fay's first food publication and, undeterred by the weight gain and her reputation as a gourmand with a gargantuan appetite, Fay is planning a series of food-related publications to follow this one.

The *Good Food Guide to Penang* is the definitive guide to eating out around the state of Penang. Encompassing reviews of restaurants, quick check facts for readers to refer to, the book also covers kerbside dining and comprehensively lists all such vendors in Penang and Butterworth. The book also includes maps of Penang and Butterworth; a glossary of terms; listings of best restaurants and hawker food; recommendations by local diners, and a section on wine.

Also available at the Penang Heritage Trust office.



Volunteers Needed

As usual, the Penang Heritage Trust office needs volunteers. Please give Priscilla a call at Tel : 2642631 or email phtrust@po.jaring.my and drop by whenever you're free.

Thanks to Ai Leen, who helped out to take care of the office around the Christmas break. Ai Leen is back in Penang after working for many years as a librarian for the International Labour Union (ILO) in Geneva.

Muslim Heritage Tour

Penang Heritage Trust will be organising the long-awaited Muslim Heritage tour on **Sunday 7 February 1999 at 9.30am**. Participants can meet at the front entrance of the Kapitan Kling Mosque, near Tan Teong Kooi's favourite nasi kandar stall and under the shade of the nim trees. Those interested please give your names to Priscilla at Tel : 604-264 26321.



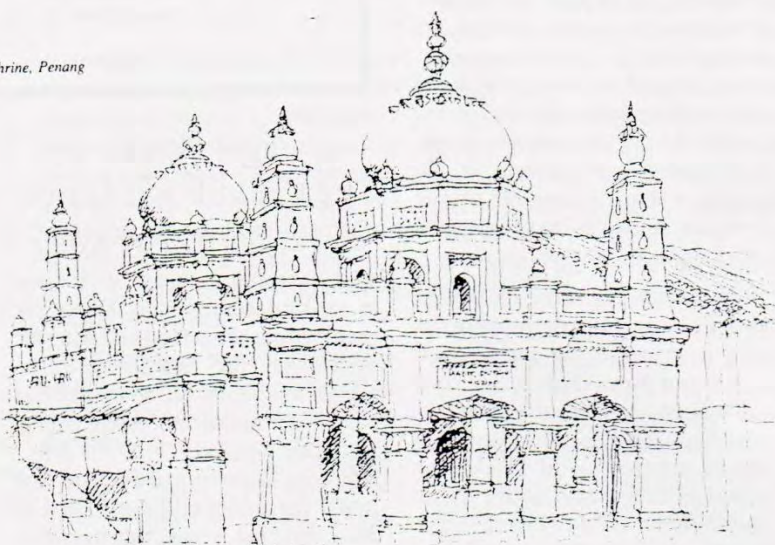
Australian Students

Rick Atkinson who gave a talk to the PHT last year entitled "Architecture for People" is sending us three heritage volunteers - architecture students from the School of Geoinformatics, Planning and Building, The University of South Australia.

Ben Mead, Kishan Sidhu and Kym Wudersitz will be arriving Penang on 14 January 99 and will stay till the end of February. They are here to help the PHT with a survey of Chulia Street, the design of an ideal bus-stop in front of the Nagore shrine and the re-design of a community park. They will be hanging out at the PHT office. Please drop by and work with them, or just say hello and show them some Penang hospitality!

Rick Atkinson is one of the key people behind the new postgraduate programme in urban design offered in Adelaide. To publicise the programme, he used a street scene in Penang (shown below) as an example of good urban design. Guess where it is?

Nagore Shrine, Penang



Bead Workshop

Michael Cheah, a specialist in nyonya & baba heritage, is organising a beaded slippers course at the PHT's office. Although we advertised the course at the end of last year, we had to postpone it till the beginning of this year.

The course will now start on Tuesday 2 February 99 and will take place at the following times:

- Tuesdays at 9.30am -12 noon

or

- Saturdays at 3.00pm -5.30 pm

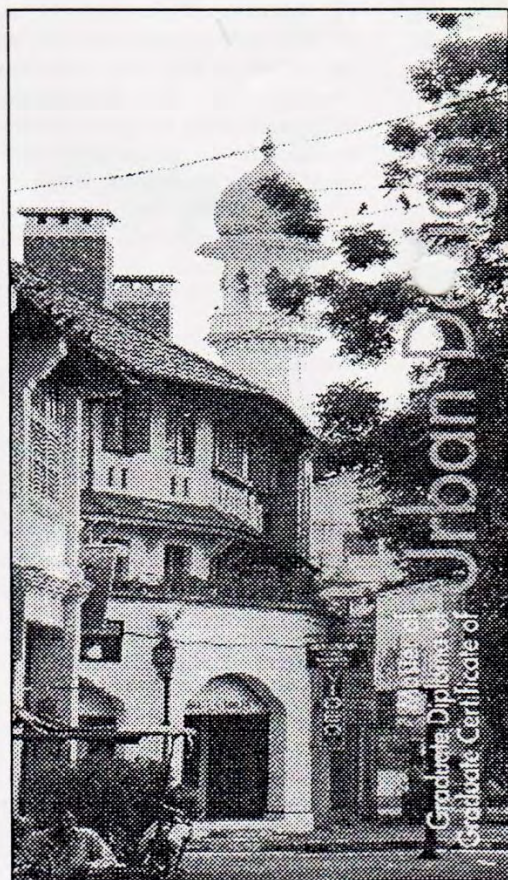
Participants can give a contribution to the Penang Heritage Trust for RM100 for 1 session a week, or 4 sessions per month. Materials are not included but Michael will be selling them at practically cost price. Nyonya kueh and Chinese tea will be provided. Those interested, please contact Priscilla at Tel : 264 2631.

The Future of Rent Controlled Properties

The seminar was postponed and is now scheduled for Monday 8 February 1999. The new venue is now Kompleks Masyarakat Penyayang, Jalan Utama, Penang. Local speakers include YB Dr. Toh Kin Woon, Mr. Ong Gim Huat from HDA, Ms. Khoo Salma Nasution from PHT, Mr. Lim Hooi Siang from PDC AR&T Consultancy and Mr. Laurence Loh from Badan Warisan Malaysia.

Those interested, please contact Henry Butcher, Lim & Long, tel 2298999.

The Penang Heritage Trust, in particular Gwyn Jenkins is also helping to put up an exhibition and/or slide show on revitalised properties.



REGISTRATION FORM

Fax to : 04-229 8666
or Mail to 142-M, Jalan Burma
10050 Penang

Name :

Title :

Name :

Title :

Name :

Title :

Name :

Title :

Name :

Title :

Company :

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Address :

.....

Email :

Tel: Fax :

Seminar notes, lunch and 2 teas are provided

HENRY BUTCHER'S

PUBLIC SEMINAR ON

"THE FUTURE OF RENT

CONTROLLED PROPERTIES

AFTER 31ST DECEMBER, 1999

- THE AFTERMATH"

Date : Monday, 8th February, 1999

Time : 9.00 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.

Venue : Kompleks Masyarakat Penyayang
Jalan Utama
10450 Penang
(next to the Penang Governor's
Residence)

* Ample parking space.

For enquiries call Mr. Ng Yuen Weng or
Mr. Low Hoo Chew
Henry Butcher, Lim & Long (N) Sdn. Bhd
International Property Consultants
142-M, Jalan Burma
10050 Penang
Tel : 04-229 8999
Fax : 04-229 8666
e-mail : hbpenang@fm.net.my
web-site : www.henrybutcher.com

PROGRAMME

9.00 am	: Registration.	
9.30 am	: Opening speech by YB Dr. Toh Kin Woon	
9.40 am	: Morning refreshments.	Early bird savings
10.00 am	: Topic No: 1 "The legal aspects of Rent Control - The Aftermath" By Mr. Steven How of Miranda & How, Advocates & Solicitors	Yes! Please register me/us for the seminar
11.00 am.	: Topic No: 2 : Rent Control - The Aftermath - The real estate developers' perspective. By Mr. Ong Gim Huat, Chairman of Housing Developers' Association Penang Branch.	RM150/- per delegate registered and fully paid by 8 th January, 1999 Block booking of 5 delegates 1 complimentary seat.
11.30 noon	: Questions and Answers session	
12.30 pm	: Lunch	Special package for undergraduates and students at RM75/- per head registered and fully paid by 15th January 1999
2.00 pm	: Topic No: 3 : Financing of Rent Controlled Properties By Mr. Khor Giap Leong	
3.00 pm	: Topic No: 4 : "The economic aspects of Rent Controlled Properties after 31 st December, 1999 - what's next? - An academic's viewpoint". By Assoc. Prof. Dr. Megat Mohd Ghazali	Cheques should be crossed and made payable to M/s. Henry Butcher Lim & Long (N) Sdn. Bhd. In the event of your cancellation, 50% refund will be made provided written notice is received two weeks before the seminar. However, a replacement may be made with no cost. We reserve the right to make any amendments deem to be in the interest of the seminar and without any notice.
3.45 pm	: Questions and Answers session	
4.00 pm	: Tea Break	
4.15 pm	: Topic No: 5 : Heritage, Conservation and The Rent Control (Repeal) Act 1997. (i) From a heritage conservationist point of view By Puan Salma Nasution (ii) From a town planner's point of view By Mr. Lim Hooi Siang (iii) From an Architect's point of view By Mr. Laurence Loh	
5.30 pm	: Panel discussion Questions and Answers Session.	
6.00 pm	: Closing remarks by YB. Dr. Toh Kin Woon	

Seminar outline

Primary purpose of this seminar : To enable rent controlled investors, owners, residents, city councilors, members of heritage trusts, developers and bankers to have a better understanding and appreciation of the problems, uncertainties and complexities of the aftermath of rent control.

Inevitably, numerous questions have been raised, doubts have been expressed and further misgivings have been added thereby creating more confusion than solutions to the problems at hand. We deem this as an opportune moment for clarifying this area of great public importance.

Authoritative thoughts and insights from real estate developers, property consultants, academics, heritage conservationists, town planner, architects, solicitors and members of the State Government would be of tremendous benefit as this would be a rare opportunity for the participants to share their invaluable and wide experience.

I WISH to refer to the articles "Assessment rates to be cut in Penang" and "Practice voluntary rent control, owners advised" (NST, Sept 22).

Tenants should be thankful to State Economic Planning Committee chairman Dr Toh Kin Woon for his advice to owners of rent controlled premises in George Town's inner city to practice voluntary rent control following the repeal of the Rent Control Act 1966 (Revised 1998) which ends on Jan 1, 2000.

And property owners on the island are thankful to Penang Island Municipal Council president Dr Teng Hock Nan for his statement that their assessment rates will be reduced next year. It appears that landlords stand to benefit in two ways:

- Their assessment will be reduced if their property falls under one of the seven categories; and,
- They are free to follow the advice of Dr Toh. I wish to state that if landlords and/or lawnmakers would have taken such advice to voluntarily reduce rent then they would have headed Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon's advice for the five-year period instead of two-and-a-half years.

If landlords and/or lawnmakers would have taken such advice then the University Report 1993 would have noted each tenant's individual view in the form.

This should include the condition that if the present tenants can afford the increased rate, they need not vacate.

Increased rates after the

date (in this case Jan 1, 2000) should be based on some reasonable formula, either provided by the Government or based on the market value of the property.

Also if the landlords do not intend to develop their property, instead of selling their property to builders and/or construction companies the first option should be given to the tenants to buy at the price offered to builders and/or construction companies.

If landlords plan to develop the property themselves, then either one-fifth of the market value should be offered to tenants (this is practised in developing countries, where there is rent control).

If the landlords want the property before Jan 1, 2000, they should offer ten-

ants space at reasonable rates in advance (as booking) when construction is proposed.

Dr Toh will be surprised to know that I have documentary evidence wherein landlords are collecting rent more than the Government-approved formula (they are using their own formula).

"They are not prepared to confirm that they will let present tenants stay till they agree to pay rent in time according to their formula."

"They are not prepared to say (when and if they want to sell their property) that they will give the first chance to buy the property to present tenants."

In this case landlords will benefit from reduced assessment, increased rent, their option to rent

their property to anyone they like, even though the present tenants are prepared to pay the same rent as others. In addition they have the option to sell their property to anyone they like, even though the present tenants are prepared to pay the same price.

If such practices are common among lawnmakers how can one expect landlords to pay attention to Koh's advice to voluntarily reduce rent.

It is said that "advice is the only thing which one can give easily, because it does not cost anything." I wish to urge Koh to hold a meeting with tenants of rent-controlled premises to get a better picture of the situation.

Kallai Penang

ADVERTISEMENT

FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 1999 THE STAR

For pre-war house tenants first

By TURKU SHAHARAH

PENANG: Tenants affected by the repeal of the Rent Control Act will be given priority in the allocation of low-medium cost (LMC) flats.

The heads of households who had applied but yet to receive the units can write to Dr Toh Kin Woon, who heads the committee on registration of tenants, for alternative housing, approach their respective assemblymen

or write directly to the state housing division.

"With the relaxation, developers will have no problem selling LMC flats except for the interval between offering these units and final acceptance by tenants," he said.

Dr Toh also urged developers to contact the housing division immediately for names of applicants after the date of acceptance of offer if their units were still unsold. He said the number of

households in George Town affected by the repeal of the Act and those who had applied for LMC units still exceeded the number of LMC units in Penang.

Of the 16,116 families in 12,577 rent control premises affected, only about 5,000 households are eligible for LMC units before the relaxation.

On Thursday, the state government relaxed its ruling on housing applications to allow unmarried

applicants to buy LMC flats with immediate effect.

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Mohd Shariff Omar said the offer was in conjunction with the Home Ownership Campaign and would be extended on a short-term basis pending a decision by the state executive committee next Wednesday.

Elaborating on his announcement, Mohd Shariff said the state housing

department had registered 9,484 LMC flats in the north-east district as of last November.

Of the total, 741 units in various stages of completion are being offered to the applicants while 8,743 new units are scheduled to be ready by 2001.

He said the 8,743 new flats comprised 7,811 to be developed by Majestic Heights in Paya Terubong and 932 units in Jalan Delima by KGN RSC Development.



Dr Toh ... 'contact housing division.'

by A. K. 16 Dec 1998

PENANG Studies on the socio-economic implications of the repeal of the Rent Control Act and provisions for a handicapped-friendly environment will be incorporated in the second Penang Strategic Development Plan (2001-2010).

State Education, Economic Planning and Information Committee chairman Dr. Teh Kim Woon said it was important to study the implications of shifting the whole population out of the inner city and ways to provide some of them with the necessary support.

He said the committee would also look at the impact of the repeal of the Act on the rental market and the impact on the rental market.

concerning single people, the elderly, and women must be addressed," he told a press conference at his office after presenting a computer to the Penang and Province Welfare United Chinese School Management Association.

On the provision for a handicapped friendly environment, he said "the law is there but there is no enforcement."

The Socio-economic and Environment Research Institute, an independent think tank, has begun to draw up the plan based on five roundtable discussions with various

interests groups. "The plan will lay stress on the views of NGOs representing different interests, including the consumers, hawkers, SMEs, the poor and the marginalised," Dr. Toh said.

"To get feedback from the public, a forum will be held in March," he said adding that a roundtable discussion in Mandarin would be held on Jan 16.

To enhance the planning capacity of the think tank, two new centres would be formed by early next year — a sustainable development centre and a disability studies centre.

THE STAR HOLIDAY December 4-25, 1998

LETTERS / OPINION

19

Preserve charm of old George Town

THE heritage area of inner city George Town, and the choices which now must be made in relation to its development, have been much in the news recently. Should the heritage area be properly preserved or should overtly commercial interests be allowed to prevail?

The latter influence would no doubt soon have high rise glass towers where factory shophouses and other buildings stand at present.

The designated Inner City of George Town comprises only 137.2ha and represents only 6% of the total area of metropolitan George Town.

Letters

Letters to the Editor must carry the sender's full name, address, telephone number and signature. A pseudonym may be included. Letters should preferably be typewritten with double spacing and may be edited for clarity, objectivity, brevity and other requirements.

Letters to the Editor,
The Star, No 13, Jalan 13/6,
46200 Petaling Jaya.
e-mail: editor@thestar.com.my

structure justice) are nothing short of fabulous. The sense of history and reverence which permeates the whole atmosphere is amazing.

But even more wonderful was, as the tour was drawing to a close, I had the overwhelming feeling I had traversed across several nations, not just travelled through a few streets.

Surely there can be no better value for tourists than this?

I believe the remarkable ambience which is part and parcel of inner George Town would be totally spoiled by high-rise glass towers casting their intrusive shadows and influence over these historic and architectural treasures.

A high-rise building is a high-rise building, whether it is in Penang, Singapore, Sydney or New York. Tourists want to take holidays somewhere different from where they live, and when that destination is Penang, *what difference!*

But I am also a pragmatist. These heritage areas, no matter how charming, must also be capable of turning a profit to satisfy commercial interests.

To those who believe development should come at the cost of heritage, I say this: Please look objectively at what you have in inner city George Town very carefully.

In marketing terms, inner city George Town provides a remarkable unique selling proposition (USP) — in the form of its colourful and diverse cultures and its architectural heritage.

The cynic who looks at those heritage areas may see just old buildings, but the visionary sees them as "portals to the past."

The past always moulds the present, and what happens now with heritage

areas in Penang will dictate whether we have the richness of history to enjoy in the future.

Sure, there's room for improvement, but restoration and protection of heritage buildings would be a great start.

Also, perhaps an incentive for the trisha drivers to spruce their vehicles up a little.

I personally believe this is the best way to really get in touch with the sights, sounds and fabulous and unique atmosphere of old George Town.

So on not merely an emotional level, but also a rational one I make a plea for very thoughtful development of this special area of Penang.

Decisions made now hold the key to future generations' understanding and enjoyment of this area's rich heritage.

NEW VISION OF OLD GEORGE TOWN
Penang



Heritage Trust: Church worthy of conservation

STAR, Thursday 31 Dec. '98

PENANG: The Penang Heritage Trust is opposing the demolition of the 60-year-old Burmah Road Gospel Hall because of its historic value.

It said the church committee has submitted plans to demolish the church and for the subsequent construction of a new multistorey building.

It said while the desire to enlarge the facilities was commended, there was no conceivable reason for not building on the big available land without demolishing the church.

"The building in question is exemplary of the architectural church style of the era with its distinctive roof pitch, rafters, terracotta and other material usage," it said in a statement.

It said now there were

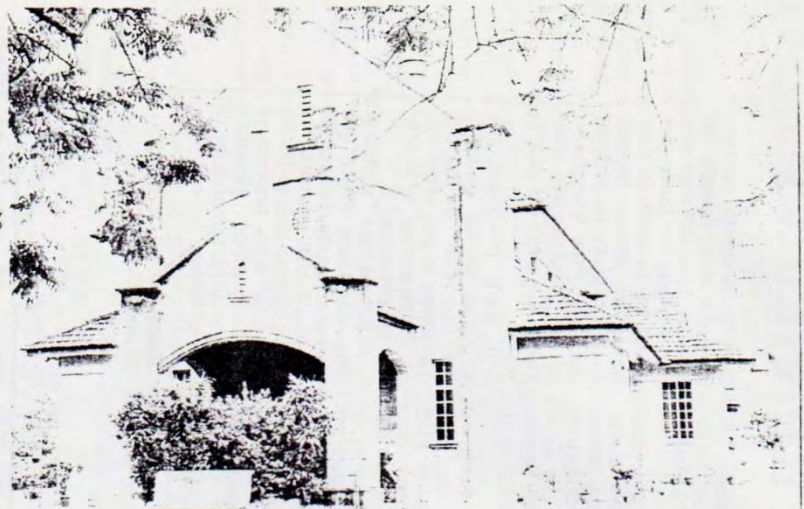
few other remaining examples in the country of these smaller religious establishments as distinct from the large cathedrals and churches.

"Such buildings are under constant threat of inappropriate and insensitive modernisation, or worse demolition and redevelopment," it added.

The Trust said a recent research paper specially mentioned that the Gospel Hall of Burmah Road was an example worthy of conservation.

"Of greater importance for the members of the congregation is the fact that the church has a very solid tradition that runs through several generations.

"The building itself was constructed through the efforts and contributions



SIXTY YEARS OLD ... the Gospel Hall located at Burmah Road.

"The spiritual, sentimental and emotional attachment of the congregation is being tested by this threat to the church.

"This is the venue of weddings and baptism, confirmations and first communions, funerals and all other focal events of their lives," said the Heritage Trust.

of the congregation.

Hope for private funds to restore Suffolk House

PENANG: The state is hoping to find a private company to fund the RM4mil needed to restore Suffolk House to its former glory.

State Tourism, Culture, Arts and Women Development Committee chairman Datuk Kee Phaik Cheen said in return, the state would lease Suffolk House to the company for a number of years.

"At this time, in view of the economic situation, all restoration work on Suffolk House has been stopped as the State has other more immediate and urgent responsibilities.

"It's not that we have forgotten Suffolk House, but if there is no funding we just can't go on," she said yesterday.

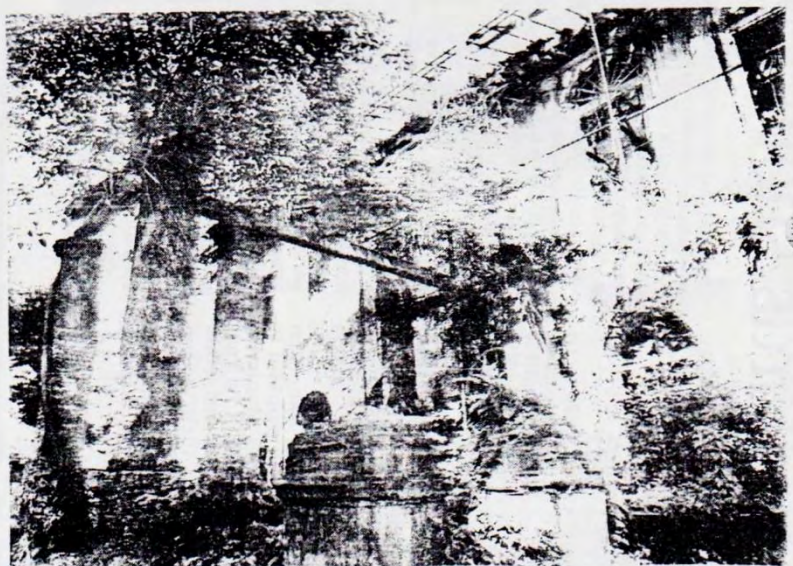
She said the state's attempt to approach differ-

ent groups to get them to foot the hefty restoration bill had met with poor response due to the economic slowdown.

"We will keep trying," she said, adding that the state also had plans to erect another temporary shelter over the house that Francis Light built to protect it from the elements.

She said this in response to State DAP deputy chairman Chong Eng's allegations that the state was doing nothing to restore the now dilapidated building.

Earlier, Chong and party secretary Chow Kon Yeow conducted a "press tour" of the building where she reiterated the Penang Heritage Trust's warning that Suffolk House would deteriorate beyond repair within two



ABANDONED ... the once grand Suffolk House now at the mercy of the elements.

years if nothing was done quickly.

To Chong's allegations that the bureaucratic red-tape was still preventing the land transfer of Suffolk House between the Methodist Church of Malaysia (owner of the house) and the Penang Municipal Council, Kee said the transfer had al-

ready been completed.

"The state government now owns Suffolk House but unless we can get someone or the funds to restore it, nothing much can be done."

Yesterday's site visit revealed that Suffolk House was in a terrible state of disrepair and is a crumbling ruin. Even the

plastic sheets put up to shield the building from the harsh elements had been torn to shreds.

The Anglo-Indian garden house was built by the founder of Penang, Capt Francis Light in the 1790s and later became home to many of Penang's early governors.

STAR, Wed 6 January '99



CEREMONIAL GREETING ... Koh (centre) being given a grand reception by lion dance troupes.

'Conserve buildings as a living heritage'

EFFORTS should be made to conserve heritage buildings as 'living ones' rather than museum pieces.

Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Peh Oh Tsu Koon said coordinated parties should support the State Government's aim to conserve old buildings as a living heritage.

He said the State Government was formulating policies and guidelines to con-

serve and preserve heritage buildings.

Opening the Penang Heritage Trust premises at Stewart Lane recently, Koh said in 1987, the Penang Island Structure Plan had outlined heritage conservation of the inner-city and formulated guidelines to carry it out.

"In early 1990s, we looked again at the balance of conservation objectives

and development.

"Since October 1997, the Heritage Standing Committee has had a series of meetings with architects, planners and various chambers of commerce, meeting 19 times and studying 'every street and road' to consider how to apply the guidelines and feedback received.

"In this aspect, consultation and participation in

decision-making is a vision which is rooted in the past, which we had all along pursued."

He said the State had received a lot of feedback including counter proposals and would work together with the various parties to decide on how to build and conserve.

Earlier, PHT chairman Datuk Nazir Ariff expressed disappointment

over the Suffolk House project and urged the State Government to expedite the land transfer and approve funds to erect a roof to prevent further deterioration of the building.

The ceremony also saw a cheque presentation of RM50,000 to Teoh Teik Yew of the 'Loo Pun Hong' Carpenters' Guild by PHT steering committee chairman Dr Khoo Joo Ee.

Mansion with a glo

A mansion once occupied by a colourful Kedah prince and adventurer has fallen into disrepair. SHUKOR RAHMAN unearths the fascinating history behind this residence.

THE Tengku Kudin Mansion in Bukit Gelugor (also known as Udini House) used to be among the few elegant buildings in Penang during its heyday, but since the 1960s, it has been badly neglected and left to ruin.

Only the walls of this once-proud residence of a colourful Kedah prince and adventurer still stand solid today. Thick undergrowth covers the area which once accommodated a park with free-roaming deer and chirping birds.

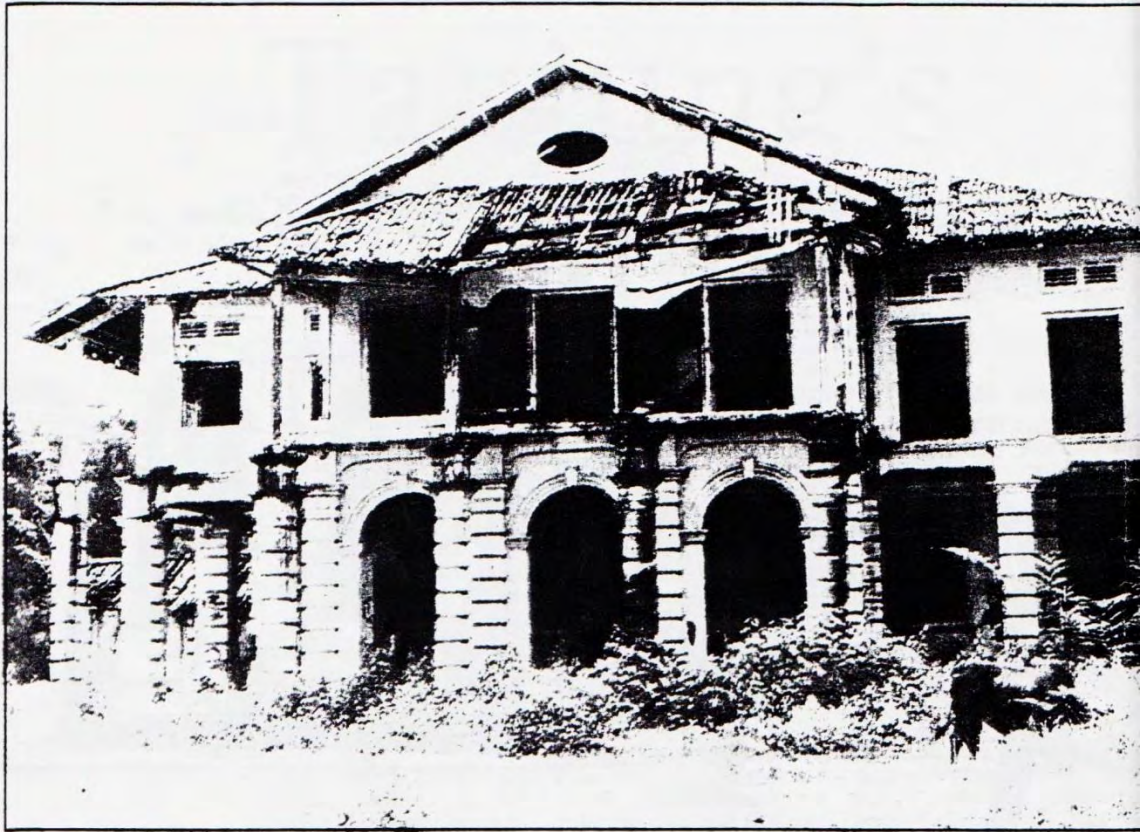
The mansion is on a breathtaking hilltop site overlooking the sea. The prince often took his evening rides around the hill in a horse-drawn carriage.

Saemah Mokhtar, director of the National Archives, Penang branch said the mansion is more than 100 years old and was built by a Malay from Kelawai.

Steps leading from the front of the mansion once linked to the sea but today, they bring one to a highway leading to the Penang Bridge.

Saemah said there is also a well called *telaga Bintang* at the mansion. It is claimed that the well leads to a tunnel under the South China Sea. At the rear of the house is a fortress in which lies an unidentified grave.

Tengku Kudin (or Tengku Dhi'uddin Sultan Zainal Rashid) stayed in



PAST ITS PRIME ... Udini House is a shadow of the elegant mansion it once was. Picture by KAMIL RAHIM

this house whenever he was in Penang. Because of its hilltop location, the locals called the area around the mansion Bukit Tengku Kudin.

After his death, the mansion was occupied by law firm Presgrave & Mathews from 1930 till the Second World War.

During the Japanese Occupation, the mansion and its grounds became the Japanese Navy headquarters. The foot of the hill facing the sea was also heavily mined.

It is believed that the Japanese beheaded many of their victims here and simply discarded the heads at the foot of the hill.

Saemah said after the war, the British Military

Administration took over the mansion and made it the operations headquarters for the Royal Australian Air Force.

The upper floor became an officers' mess and the ground floor, the naval operations headquarters. The compound in front of the mansion became a landing pad for helicopters.

Tengku Kudin was also known as Tengku Kudin Kelang. His father Sultan Zainal Rashid Al-Muadzam Shah I ruled Kedah from 1843 to 1854.

Born in Penang in 1835, Tengku Kudin was appointed the Raja Muda (Crown Prince) during the reign of his brother Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Mukarram Shah (1854-

1879). He married a daughter of the Sultan of Selangor.

Tengku Kudin received an English education and his western ways and attitude did not make him very popular in influential circles including with his brother, Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin.

He was appointed Viceroy of Selangor by his father-in-law to arbitrate the disputes between Raja Abdullah and Raja Mahdi who wanted to be chief of Selangor, a position which entailed the right to collect duty on tin mined upstream at Kelang and Kuala Selangor.

As in Perak, Chinese tin-miners in Selangor were divided between the Ghee Hin and Hai San secret

societies. Tengku Kudin took the side of Raja Abdullah, and was supported by Yap Ah Lo, chief of the ^{le} San tin-miners and ^{le} Kapitan China of Kuala Lumpur.

Raja Mahdi was allied the Selangor aristocracy who resented interference by the Kedah prince; the confederates were the Ghee Hin tin-miners.

The civil war lasted seven years until 1879 when Selangor came under the protection of the British who continued to recognise Kudin Viceroy.

When matters were resolved in Selangor, Tengku Kudin was informed that his brother the Sultan of Kedah had banned him from his ow

rious past

State and appointed another as Raja Muda.

Tengku Kudin was accused of being a traitor to the Malays and interfering in the affairs of another State. His residence at Bukit Tinggi, Alor Setar, was also confiscated.

He bided his time in Penang, staying at the house on Northam Road (now Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah) next to Istana Kedah. When the Kedah Sultan died in 1878, Kudin tried to persuade the King of Siam to recognise his candidate for the succession, but failed.

After 1882, when it became increasingly clear that his political enemies led by the aristocrat Wan Mat Saman, would continue to prevail in Kedah, Tengku Kudin decided to retire permanently in Penang.

In his autumn years, Tengku Kudin alternated between his two residences in Penang, making occasional trips to Selangor.

He was also the grand-uncle of the late Tengku Abdul Rahman, the country's first Prime Minister. The Tunku related the story of a group of Penang actors and theatre promoters asking Tengku Kudin to name their new theatre form which was a Malay version of the Indian musical drama *Indera Saba*.

Kudin pondered on the matter and finally decided that since it was a make-believe drama, it should be called *Bangsawan* (literally "nobility"), as all "wans" were play actors and simulators.

The name given by Tengku Kudin, which was meant as a slight on his arch-rival Wan Mat Saman, has endured until today.

Tengku Kudin became blind in the last years of his life and passed away at his home in Kelawai in 1906. His body was brought back to Kedah and buried at the Royal Mausoleum in Langgar.

In 1910, Kudin's son, Tengku Bahadur sold the mansion to Tengku Baharuddin Tengku Meh, who was also known as Ku Din Ku Meh.

He was originally from Anak Bukit and educated at Sekolah Jalan Baru, built in 1823 and meant for children of the elite. It is believed that Ku Din was well versed in Siamese as this was the school's second language.

In 1897, Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah appointed Ku Din as Kedah Commissioner or Governor in Setul when the Raja of Setul, Tengku Abdul Rahman died without an heir.

Ku Din proved to be an able administrator and introduced many changes in the administration of Setul. He is believed to have married a woman from Penang and bought Udini House which he

occupied during his visits to Penang.

A few years back, the Penang State Government suggested that the mansion which had long fallen into disrepair be renovated and preserved for heritage purposes. However, the police, the present owner, said it had its own plans regarding the future use of the mansion.

Both Tengku Idaura Askandar of the Penang Heritage Centre and Khoo Salma Nasution of the Penang Heritage Trust have said they were prepared to offer assistance to restore the Kudin Mansion.

"It does not really matter what the present owners want to use the building for. What is more important is restoring and saving the mansion which is certainly a priceless heritage," said Khoo Salma.

Street parties to highlight Visit Penang Year '99

PENANG, Fri. — Street parties will be the main attraction of the programmes lined up in conjunction with Visit Penang Year 1999.

"The Hari Rava open house at Kampong Seronok in Bayan Lepas on Jan 23 and Chinese New Year open house at Cannon Square encompassing Lebuah Aceh and Lebuah Armenian on Feb 22 will start off the street parties," said State Culture, Arts, Tourism and Women's Development Committee chairman Datuk Kee Phaik Cheen.

The parties would be held monthly on Saturdays except when there are other major programmes such as the Pesta Pulau Pinang or other festivals like Thaipusam, explained Kee.

Speaking at a Press conference at the Bayan Lepas International Airport today before welcoming this year's first international flight carrying 260 visitors

from Medan, she said the State Government had allocated RM20,000 for the street parties. She said the allocation was from the Visit Penang Year grant of RM3.3 million.

"However, the street parties should not be misconstrued as 'Western-style' wild parties. The concept here is charity-based while exhibiting culture and arts, sale of food at stalls, handicrafts, antiques and collectable items. It will also enable Penang people to display their artistic and skills."

Kee said from coupon sales, 50 per cent would cover costs while the balance would go to charity.

She said the theme "Timeless Impressions" would be emphasised, stressing that Penang is "unforgettable" and will have tourists constantly returning.

"The State Government will emphasise the theme

"Timeless Impressions" to ensure Penang is 'unforgettable' and tourists return always," she added.

Later, accompanied by Air Itam State Assemblyman Lye Siew Weng, Malaysia Association of Travel and Tourist Agents vice-president Johnny Ooi, Penang Development Corporation tourism division manager Ong Ban Seang and bunga mangga girls, Kee welcomed the visitors at the airport. Each visitor received a T-shirt, travel brochure and VPY calendar.

Earlier at Port Swettenham Pier, Ong and Lye led a 30-member team comprising a kompang group, bunga mangga girls and lion dance troupe to give a ceremonial welcome to 749 visitors who came aboard the Super Star Gemini ship following a seven-day cruise covering Langkawi, Phuket, Malacca and Port Klang.

Preserving Tanjung's Muslim sites

THE Penang Heritage Trust fear that historical and heritage sites associated with the Muslim communities in Georgetown would come under threat from re-development or 'inappropriate' development with the repeal of the Rent Control Act.

"It is therefore important for the Muslims of Penang to identify and preserve these sites and have a say in their development," said PHT committee member Abdur-Razzaq Lubis.

The Trust is planning a one-day seminar at the Penang Heritage Centre in March to identify and promote the historical and heritage sites of Muslim communities in Tanjung.

Tanjung, he said, was the seat of Muslim traders, education, the Islamic reformist movement, the Malay printing Press, Haj travel, *bangsawan* (Malay opera) and *boria*.

It was also the arena of trade for Muslims from the Arab world, the Indian sub-continent and the archipelago.

The Malays, Jawi Peranakan, Arabs, Tamils, Malabar, Bengalis, Punjabis, Gujeratis, Achehnese, Minangs, Mandai-

The Penang Heritage Trust is organising a seminar to discuss ways to preserve the historical and heritage sites of the Penang Muslims. **SHUKOR RAHMAN reports.**

lings, Talus, Rawas and others left an amazing heritage of mosques, *madrasahs*, mausoleums, bungalows and shophouses in Tanjung. "This heritage is part of the social and cultural history of the Muslims in Penang and Malaysia," he said.

PHT secretary Khoo Salma Nasution said in spite of the strong identification of George Town with colonial and Chinese heritage, the Muslim heritage in the city is more pronounced at certain localities and neighbourhoods.

"The preservation of Muslim places is therefore of great importance to enhance the multicultural identity and character of Georgetown," she said.

These places and sites were particularly vulnerable to development pressure, especially as some of them were no longer populated or inhabited by Muslims.

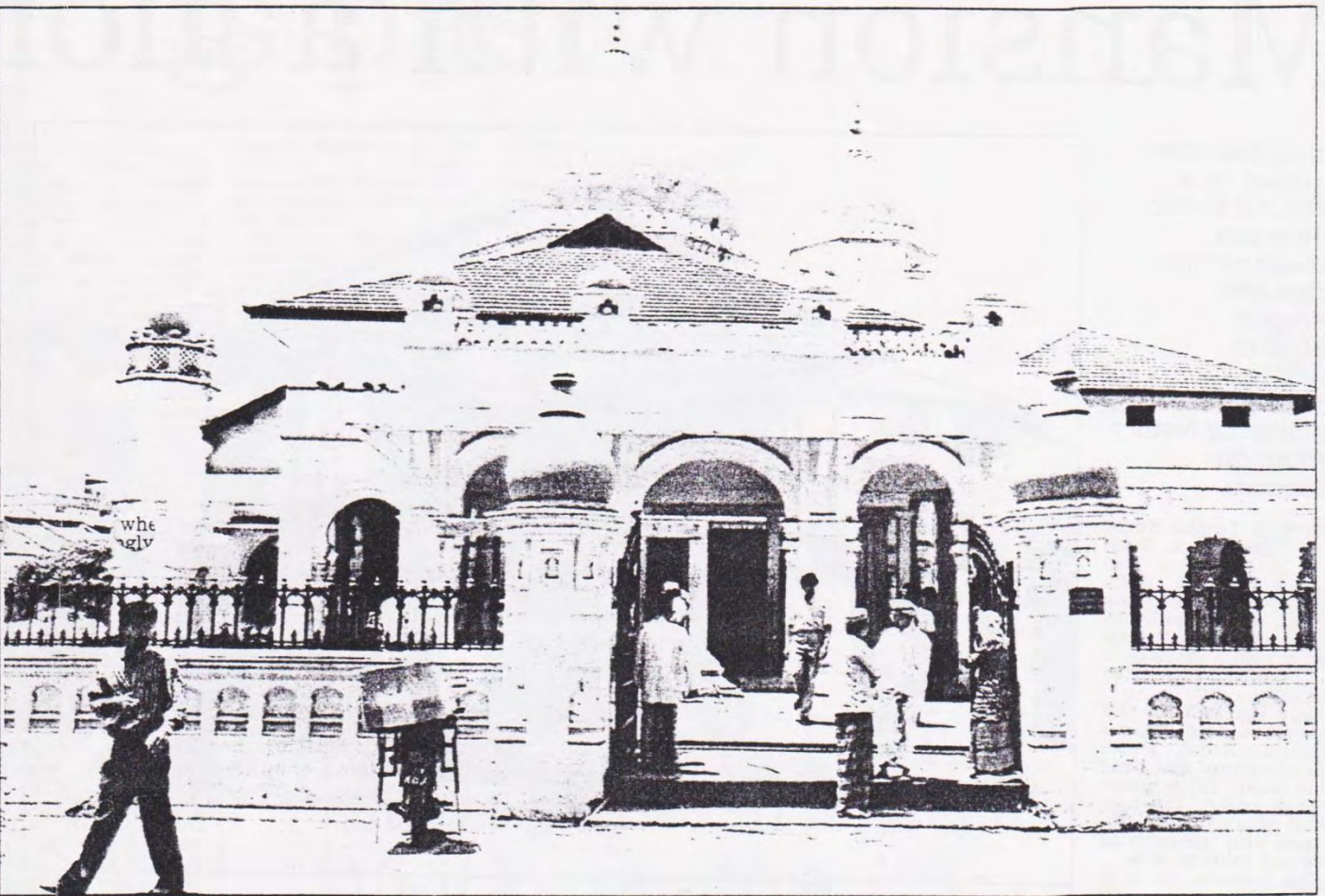
"If they were lost, Georgetown could no longer claim to represent

the full diversity of its historical cultures and traditions," she said.

Abdur-Razzaq said various aspects of Muslim history in Penang will be presented at the seminar but particular emphasis would be given to places where historical personalities lived and worked where historical events took place as well as the built heritage of the respective communities.

The proposed guest speaker is Datuk Abdullah Hussain, a national literary figure who was awarded the title *Sastrawan Negara*. Abdullah, of Achehnee descent and who was involved in the Malay Press in Penang from the 1920s to 1940s.

Other speakers include Prof Wazir Jahan Karim, Associate Prof Idris Fadlullah Jamil and Idris Darwis Harahap, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Associate Prof Syed Zainal Abidin Aidid, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.



IMPRESSIVE ... The Kapitan Keling Mosque was built around 1800. Picture by KAMIL RAHIM

The topics include The Role & History of the Malay Press in Tanjung Boria of the Old Days, The Rawa of Acheh in Street, Hafiz Ghulam Jarwar, the Sheriff of Penang, Ahmad Rashid Talu, the Haj Business of Acheen Street, Arab and Achehnese Legacy in Acheen Street and The Wakaf of Kapitan Keling Mosque and Chulia Street.

The Masjid Melayu or Acheen Street Mosque was

founded in 1808 by Tengku Syed Hussain, an Arab merchant-prince from Acheh who came with his clan and settled in the state in 1792. He was regarded as perhaps the wealthiest man on the island.

He was also the patron of the Malay and Sumatran community along Acheen Street. In the mid-19th century, there were about 300 Achehnese traders in this community.

Syed Hussain endowed large pieces of land as *wakaf* and these properties gave the early Muslim traders and settlers a secure base.

His *wakaf* also supported an orphanage and a home for boys and provided the cradle for a Muslim school and printing presses.

In the 1870s, the Gedung Aceh was the meeting place of the Council of Eight, the Achehnese resistance against the Dutch.

Pepper trader Syed Mohamad Alatas, who had his home on Armenian

Street, was a member of the Achehnese resistance. He was allied by marriage to the foremost Straits Chinese pepper merchant Khoo Tiang Poh, who supposedly gave his son-in-law Syed Alatas a bungalow on Carnarvon Street.

The leader of the South Indian community was a Tamil Muslim, Cauder Mohudeen Merican, who was appointed Kapitan Keling, or head of his community, by the East India Company government in 1801. He spearheaded efforts to build the Kapitan Keling Mosque, which originally held about 7.2 hectares of *wakaf* land in George Town.

Through the years, some of this land was acquired by the government for roads, schools and police station, leaving about 3.2 hectares.

The Kapitan Keling Mosque *wakaf* (endowment) has enabled generations of Tamil Muslims to live and trade around this area.

Muslim shippers, jewellers, moneychangers, *nasi kandar* sellers, *pelikat* cloth traders and second-hand furniture dealers are some of the traditional trades.

Ibrahim Munshi, the State Secretary of Johore and the son of Abdullah Munshi, who visited Penang in 1872 and "went exploring all the lanes of Penang town" gave a vivid description of the ethnically-mixed Muslim society.

He stayed with a friend in Kampung Masjid Melayu, where he was entertained by Penang-born Indians performing refined Hindustani songs and *ghazal*.

He feasted at the house of wealthy Indian Muslim *kain pelikat* traders, Dalbidal and Yahya Marican, probably at their home in Market Lane, a large early 19th century brick bungalow. Ibrahim remarked that some of the Malays were shoe-makers.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many lodges sprung up around Acheen Street to accommodate pilgrims from northern Malaya, southern Thailand and northern Sumatra who came to Penang to board the ship to Mecca.

Acheen Street also became known as the "Second Jeddah". Pilgrim-brokers or 'Sheikh Hajis' who took care of all the travel arrangements, Arab traders, Minang *nasi* Padang vendors, Rawa textile and book traders were part of the Muslim bazaar.

The area flourished with the activities of these and ticketing agencies, hotels, shops and printing presses which published most of the northern region's Islamic literature.

"This bazaar died out with the advent of the aeroplane — when the *kapal haji* was replaced by the *kapalterbang*, and the Sheikh Haji by the Tabung Haji," said Salma

The sights of old Geor

MARINA EMMANUEL maps out six of the best ways to discover quaint, historical Georgetown.

HERITAGE-rich Georgetown is best discovered on foot, although a pair of sturdy walking shoes, sunglasses or hat, and supply of mineral water are advised.

The not so athletic may opt for the comfort of a trishaw — which provides an interesting tour through Penang traffic — and photograph temples and mosques as well as Georgetown's shophouse-lined streets.

The recommended routes below are yours for the choosing. Depending on the amount of time one has, one can pick routes with themes revolving around culture, religion, architecture or shopping.

Those with more time can walk the streets of Georgetown over several days and allow themselves the luxury of stopping to stare, eating a bowl of noodles, shopping for Straits Chinese antiques, or watching the sunset glow from one of the jetties near the harbour.

Below are six recommended routes and the distance and time needed to cover them.

Penang's gastronomic delights, which are often a mix of influences from many lands, can also be sampled at restaurants, stalls or alleyways along these routes.

□ **CIVIC ROUTE** (a 2.4km route, which takes between one and one-and-a-half hours with stops at Fort Cornwallis and the Penang Museum)

Georgetown's early history is encapsulated in the sites and structures along this route. Among them is Fort Cornwallis which serves as the historic cornerstone for the State, as this was where Captain Francis Light landed in 1786.

The Municipal Town Hall and City Hall, along with the State Legislative Assembly buildings, are testimony to Penang's colonial past, while Convent Light Street, which is the oldest girls' school in the country, holds tales of tears, hope, joy and horror.

The newly refurbished Penang State Museum located along this route is a good starting point for visitors.

□ **THE HARBOUR DISTRICT** (1.5km route, 45 minutes)

Georgetown's commercial district is housed in this area, where original Government buildings which survived World War Two bombs still stand tall and majestic.

These buildings with high ceilings and cool interiors are mostly business premises. Many have been restored to their original splendour. The Weld Quay area, which is home to godowns, the ferry terminal and quay, is also home to Chinese clan communities whose homes form a village built on stilts.

□ **THE MELTING POT** (about 0.8km,

allow two hours including stops)

The harmonious relationship among the Malays, Chinese, Indians and Eurasians is evident along this route. These communities make up Georgetown's melting pot and serve as the city's living heritage.

Lovers of great civilisations should not give this area a miss as it comprises houses of worship such as the Acheen Street Malay Mosque, Mahamariamman Temple and Temple of Goddess of Mercy.

The Syed Alatas Mansion is a must-see — it is Penang's pilot restoration project and is today a centre which promotes heritage conservation and building restoration skills.

□ **MARKETS AND CHINATOWN** (about 0.8km, allow an hour and extra time for shopping)

Wet markets and traditional retail shops abound in this area. Pick up fresh produce or take time to check out the textile shops along Lebuah Campbell which sell Chinese brocades and silks, gold jewellery, vintage designer shoes (some still in mint condition and sold at bargain prices).

Georgetown's Indian-Muslim treats like nasi kandar, nasi briyani and pasembur are found in this area, along with Cantonese noodles, dim sum and hawker food.

□ **LITTLE INDIA** (about 0.5km; allow 45 minutes and more for shopping)

Little India's sights and smells give it plenty of colour. It is a concentration of South Indian shops and eateries. Pick up a saree or learn to tie one.

A banana leaf lunch or dinner (comprising steamed rice drenched with curries and vegetables served on a banana leaf) here is not to be missed. Vegetarians will have a field day with a wide spread to choose from.

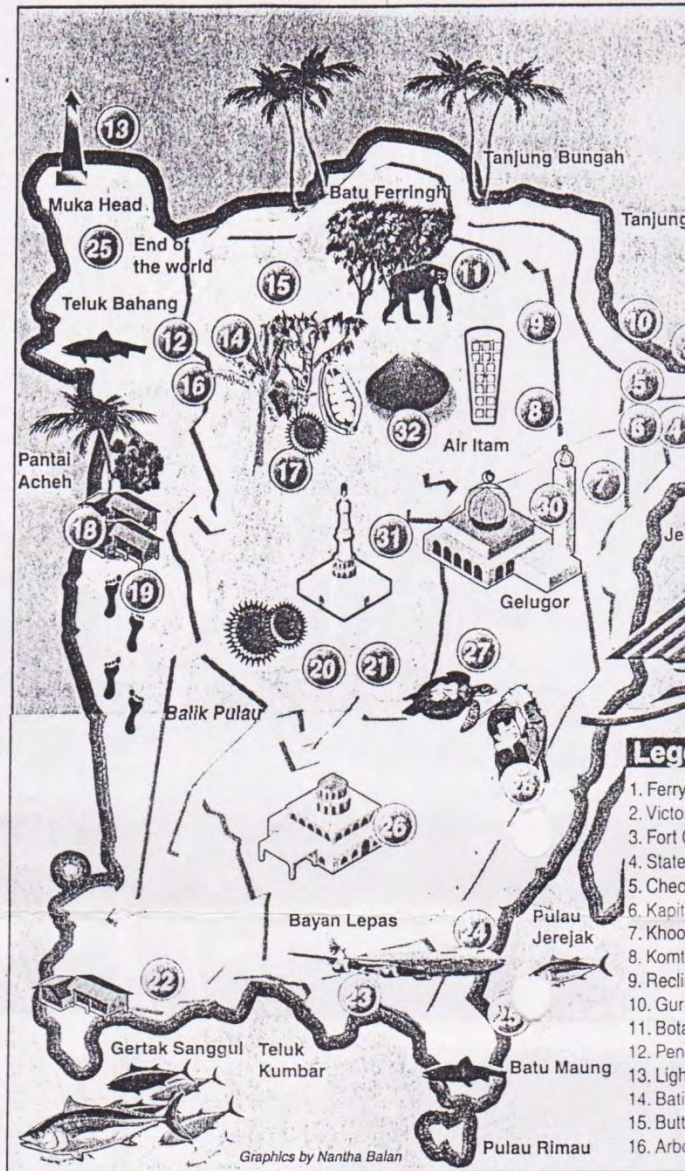
Incense, garlands, steelware and spices can be picked up from any of the shops here.

□ **THE CULTURAL ENCLAVE** (about 0.8km, allow two hours including an hour for a tour of the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion)

Amidst old bungalows converted into accommodation for budget tourists stands the blue mansion of Hakka millionaire Cheong Fatt Tze in its restored splendour.

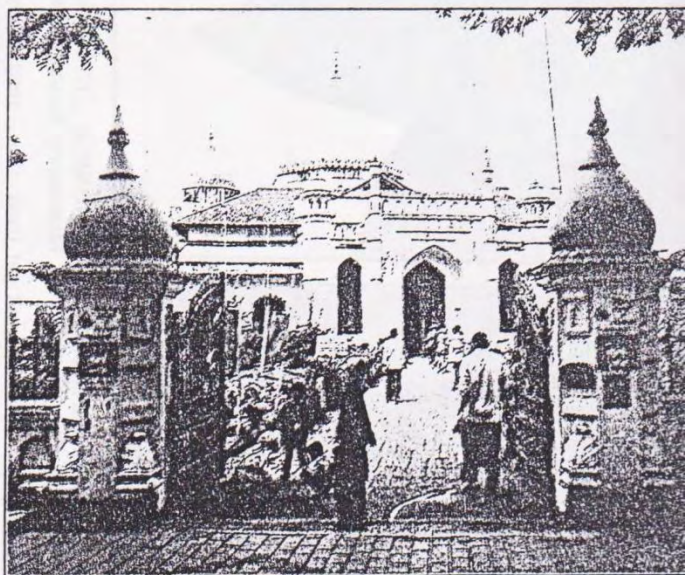
A guided tour of this stately mansion, which includes a retelling of the life story of the Chinese industrialist and how Chinese craftsmen built his home, is a must.

The streets of this enclave also house some of Georgetown's vanishing trades such as noodle-making, rattan weaving and metalworks.



Leg

1. Ferry
2. Victo
3. Fort I
4. State
5. Chec
6. Kap
7. Khoo
8. Kom
9. Recl
10. Gur
11. Bot
12. Pen
13. Ligh
14. Bati
15. Butt
16. Arb



SIGHTS TO SAVOUR ... Above is the Kapitan Keling Mosque. On left and right are the Temple of Goddess of Mercy and Mahamariamman Temple, respectively. The latter two can be seen along the 'Melting Pot Route'.

Heritage

PENANG

Many reasons to love



ASOK KUMAR ... Many tourists are curious about Little India

FROM PAGE TWO

of information and I feel this house is a tourism information centre."

Asok Kumar G.P., textile and saree shop owner, Lebuh Penang

"My parents came from India and set up this business in 1967. Little India has become a second home to me.

"There is really no need for a person to go to India to buy anything, since the area is stocked with all items imaginable such as food, spices, pots and pans, textiles and prayer items.

"Until a few years ago, before Little India was packaged overseas as a tourist attraction, it was only frequented by locals, who were mainly Indians from Penang and the northern region.

"These days, it's no longer the Indian crowd; foreigners come to see what Little India is about. Some take photos, others come to my shop, try on



VERONICA ... Grown to love Penang immensely through the years

sarees and get their photos taken.

"Most traders here now are either second- or third-generation Indians. I go to India three to four times a year to purchase goods.

"There are some traders whose families are in India. They go back once every two years.

"Sometimes they work for one year, then they get someone else, maybe a relative, to run the business for another year while they are in India, after which they will return to continue the business.

Veronica K. Rajakanu, lawyer, Lebuh Bishop

"When I was offered a job in Penang six years ago to run a branch office of a legal firm in Georgetown, I accepted the offer quite reluctantly. Today, I have grown to love the island

immensely. The building I work in is located along Bishop Street and used to be called Whiteaways, a favourite shopping centre for Georgetown's elite in a bygone era.

"The splendour of this colonial structure is still retained today in its airy bay windows and little iron-grilled balconies trimmed in black.

"This financial district has many legal firms which are a stone's throw away from the Penang High Court.

"Other interesting landmarks include a famous jewellery shop whose spectacular displays allow me to window-shop during my lunch-hour.

"Modern banks and other financial institutions are also found in this area and are housed in buildings whose architecture has been thoughtfully maintained.

"My favourite haunt is a quaint little antique



shop down the street from my office which my family members never fail to visit when they are in Georgetown. We always manage to pick little treasures here and its owner brags that Jane Seymour was his most famous patron.

"I enjoy sitting under the huge tree next to my office reading my newspapers while the stall owner prepares my morning coffee/iced Milo and toast. I hope the charming essence of Georgetown never disappears."

