

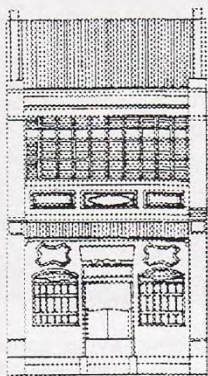
PHT *newsletter*

PENANG HERITAGE TRUST * PERSATUAN WARISAN PULAU PINANG

26A Stewart Lane, 10200 Penang, Malaysia * Tel/Fax:604-264 2631 E-mail:phtrust@po.jaring.my

Number 66 www.pht.org.my

February - March 2000



Our PHT Office urgently needs:

1. A Personal Computer with modem, preferably with printer and scanner
2. A new or used camera
3. A new or used television

APPOINTMENT OF NEW STAFF

Ms Irena binte Idris joined us at the end of February 2000, as the Senior Project Co-ordinator of Penang Heritage Trust. With many years of experience in education, marketing and sourcing of funding and an avid interest in conservation, we look forward to a new level of performance and commitment for PHT.

We are also happy to announce that the office will now be open on Saturdays mornings. We know there have been many complaints about the office being locked. We apologise. Now with two members of staff (we welcome any volunteers who can spend a few hours a week with us) we hope to be a lot more efficient.

Special thanks to PHT member Sharon Cheah for helping to edit this newsletter.



CHEONG FATT TZE
MANSION is now open for tours on
MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS,
FRIDAYS, SATURDAYS &
SUNDAYS at 11 am sharp.

EXCLUSIVE GUIDED HERITAGE SITE VISITS

The first of the site visits took place on Sunday Feb 27th at the 19th century Shaikh Omar Basheer tomb. A breezy, hazy afternoon saw more than 50 people turn up at what proved to be a thoroughly enjoyable, informative and relaxed event.

Zakiah's dining room was warmly welcoming and we ended up draped over chairs, sofas and the floor, fascinated by the spaces of the Shaikh's original timber house. Salma's and Dily's insights and stories, the sharing of glimpses of practices and times past, the articulate contributions of the participants of the visits, many new faces and familiar ones and the incredible spread of delicacies for tea.

The tomb itself brought hushed tones and visions of a relatively simple restoration and renewal. Anyone interested to help? We need about RM\$8,000 to RM\$10,000 and a month's work.

In short, the site visit was an overwhelming success, there have been e-mails and calls of congratulations and anticipation of the forthcoming months and further insights into Penang's built architectural treasures.

Once again we reiterate that ONLY members who have paid their year 2000 subs, may attend these site visits. We do not wish to have any embarrassing moments. If you wish to bring a friend or if you have not paid your subs for the year, please do the necessary.

On Sunday March 26th we are scheduled to visit Homestead on Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah/ Northam Road. Once again it will be at 3.30 p.m. on site. We request that children be left home and that you



call PHT office to register your intention to be there. The history of the Mansion will be given by a council member, and Laurence Loh will speak on the architecture of Homestead. We hope Prof. Jon Lim from National University of Singapore will also be joining us as he will be back in Penang for Cheng Beng week.

On Sunday April 30th the site will be Penang Hill. Meeting time will be earlier, at 2.00 p.m. at the bottom station, 2.15 train up, first stop Crag

Penang Heritage Trust Museum Shop

in the compound of the
State Museum, Farquhar
Street
is managed by Mr. Peter Foo

OPEN 11-5PM, 6 DAYS A
WEEK, CLOSED ON FRIDAYS.

Heritage information,
books, old photographs, T-
shirts, antiques, related to
Penang.

Postcards, journal *Past &
Present* and calendar pub-
lished by the Penang Mu-
seum.

Handphone: 012 498 9617

Workshop on Good Governance in Cultural Heritage

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its programme, The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI) is introducing Good Governance Report Cards. The Report Cards are evaluation tools to assess the level of good governance in various cities in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Asia & West Pacific Network for Urban Conservation (AWPNUC), a regional NGO, for which the Penang Heritage Trust is currently the secretariat, has been appointed as the consultant to undertake the field-testing for the Good Governance Report Card on Cultural Heritage.

AWPNUC is working together with the Penang Heritage Trust and Badan Warisan Sumatra to undertake this field-testing in Penang, Malaysia and Medan, Indonesia respectively.

The two heritage organisations will work closely with their respective city governments in Penang and Medan.

AWPNUC was chosen for the job because of its specialised expertise in the issue of cultural heritage, urban conservation and regional networking. The project will strengthen ties between the sister cities of Penang and Medan, between the two city governments, and also between the two heritage organisations, Penang Heritage Trust and Badan Warisan Sumatra.

A workshop will be held in April to bring together cultural heritage practitioners and advocates from government, private sector and civil society to evaluate and discuss how to build capacity in good governance in the area of cultural heritage.

For further information, contact: Irena Idris, Penang Heritage Trust
Tel/fax 604-2642631 or 012-4860218.

UNESCO's Asia-Pacific Heritage 2000 Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation

UNESCO's Asia-Pacific Heritage 2000 Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation has been established to recognise the efforts and contributions of individuals and/or organisations within private sector who have acted successfully to conserve and restore structures and buildings of heritage value in the region.

UNESCO now invites entries for the Best Conserved/Restored Building or Series of Buildings over 50 years old in the Asia Pacific Region. Works completed within the last 5 years prior to the official announcement of the Awards are eligible for consideration.

For further enquiries, contact :
E-mail: <culture.asia-pacific@unesco.org> Website :
www.unescobkk.org/culture/awards.htm



~~ Butterfly Lovers ~~

The Bangsawan' production of Sam Pek Eng Tai' will be held on **17 June 2000** at Dewan Sri Pinang. Keep the date free!

This event will be organised with Persatuan Artis Bangsawan Pulau Pinang (PERAWAN), the Ministry of Culture and State Chinese Penang Association.



Manik slippers

NEW Bead Workshop

Michael Cheah, a specialist in Nyonya & Baba heritage, is organising another beaded slippers course at the PHT's office, by popular demand. Fees: RM100 for 4 sessions held weekly.

The courses will now start on: Tuesday 4 April 2000
at 9.30 am - 12 noon or Saturday 1 April 2000
at 3.00pm - 5.30 pm

Part of the proceeds will go to support PHT. Materials are not included, but Michael will be selling them at RM18. Nyonya kueh and Chinese tea will be provided. Those interested, please contact Priscilla at Tel : 04-264 2631

In response to calls by parents, educationists and schoolteachers, PHT is now expanding its educational programmes to familiarize schoolchildren with the heritage city of George Town.

While we conduct educational tours at cost, we are also offering heritage tours through an established travel agency Ken-Air as an income-generating activity for the Trust. These tours, conducted by professional tourist guides and heritage specialists, can be customized for tourists, expatriates, special visitors and even locals who are rediscovering Penang.

The PHT Council member in charge of heritage walks and tours Teresa Capol, gives an account of three tours that she gave in February and March

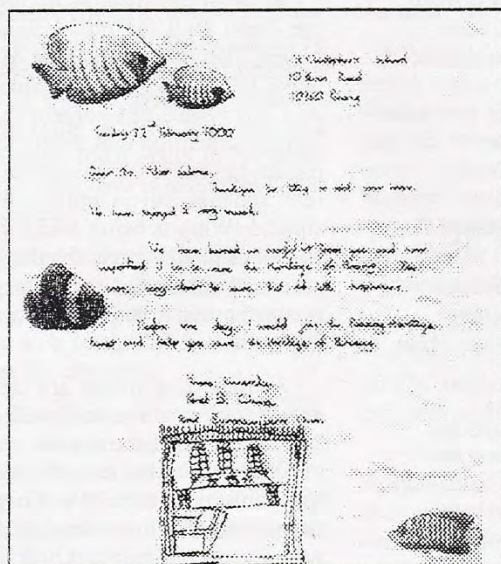
1. On Feb 29, the 9 person group led by Junko Tanaka met at Fort Cornwallis. Five trishaws were used for the expedition, which covered the Fort, Beach Street, Little India, Jalan Kapitan Keling, and Armenian Street historical enclave.

2. On Feb 22, a group of 17 architectural students from National University of Singapore were taken for a heritage walk through Little India.

3. On Feb 22, Pesticide Action Net-

work organised a tour for 23 international delegates which included a walk along the historical enclave of Armenian Street, a coach tour through George Town and dinner at hawker stalls at the Esplanade.

4. On 15 February, 40 children of ages 7 to 11 years, 2 teachers and 2 parents from St. Christopher's School experienced a heritage walk, conducted by Ms Joanne Khaw. The students wrote to thank PHT Hon. Secretary, Ms Khoo Salma after she gave them a talk on heritage at her home at 120 Armenian Street. Here are 2 out of the 16 lovely letters which Khoo Salma received from the children.



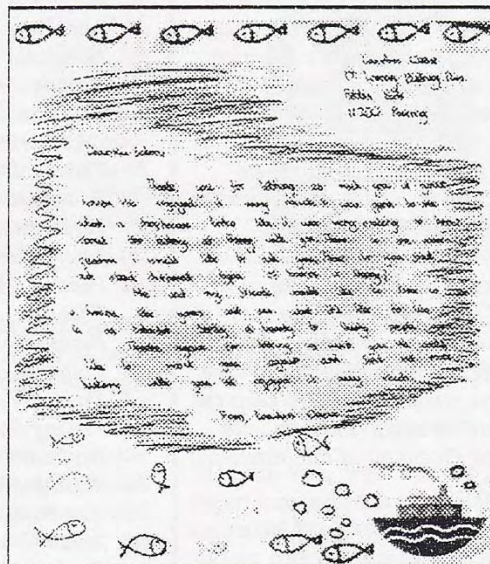
Dear Mrs Khoo Salma

Thank you for letting us visit your house. we have enjoyed it very much.

We have learned an awful lot from you and how important it is to save the heritage of Penang. You were very clever to save that old little shophouse.

Maybe one day I would join the Penang Heritage Trust and help you save the Heritage of Penang.

Yours sincerely,
Panit B. Chua



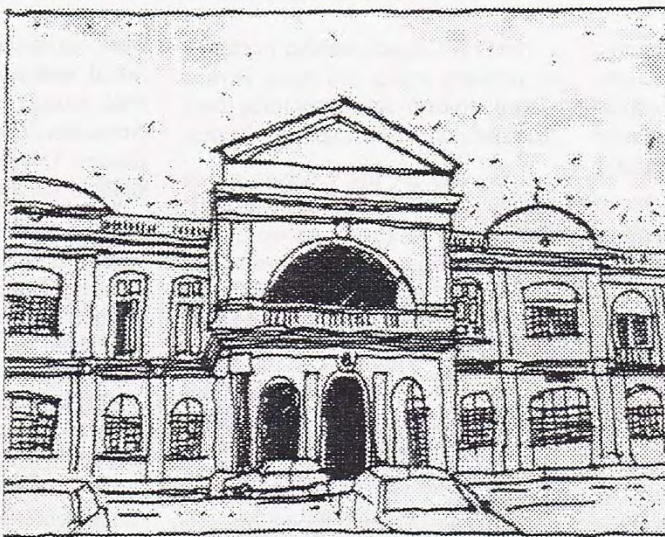
Dear Ku Salma,

Thank you for letting us visit you in your house. We enjoyed it very much. It was great to see what a shophouse looks like. It was very exciting to know about the history of Penang with you. There is one more question I would like to ask you, "How do you find out about different types of houses in Penang?"

Me and my friends would like to live in a house like yours and see what it's like to live in an extended family of twenty to thirty people.

Thanks again for letting us visit you. We would like to visit you again and find out more history with you. We enjoyed it very much.

From Lee Ann Chew



Drawing by Yeyen, Badan Warisan Sumatra

On the 20th February 2000, Dr Teng, state exco member in charge of local council made a statement to the press on why Council departments should occupy the Town Hall instead of the people of Penang, a copy of which is enclosed in this newsletter. Given the clearly blinkered view being expressed, the PHT responded in the press, the full text is reproduced here. The published statement in the Star is also enclosed. The PHT representing the 26 civic and arts groups intends to keep the pressure on and to meet up with the new President of the Municipal Council.

RETURN THE TOWN HALL TO THE PEOPLE OF PENANG

The Penang Heritage Trust would like to comment on Dr Teng's responses to the requests of the public for the Town Hall building to be returned to the citizens of Georgetown.

First: The petition of 26 civic and arts groups does NOT represent a small segment of the population. For the information of the public the groups include:

1. Jawatankuasa Kariah Masjid Kapitan Kling
2. Penang Heritage Trust
3. Society of Disabled Persons, Penang

4. Friends of Penang Library
5. Nan Yang Folk Culture
6. Consumers Association of Penang
7. Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (Northern Chapter)
8. Penang Tourist Guides Association
9. Persatuan Bekas Murid Tua Moh Chee
10. Penang Chinese School Teachers Association
11. Persatuan Bangsawan Pulau Pinang
12. Young Theatre
13. Penang State Symphony Orchestra & Chorus
14. Penang Chinese Calligraphy Association.
15. Asian Centre Penang (Indian Performing Arts)
16. North Theatre
17. Arts & Culture Information Centre
18. Penang Philharmonic Society
19. Penang Players
20. Penang State Art Gallery
21. Penang Arts Council
22. Penang Watercolour Society
23. Penang Arts Society
24. Penang Art & Culture Society
25. Friends of Artistes Liaison (FOAL)
26. Post Colonial Dance Dimension

The Indian Chambers of Commerce have also written a letter of support and a few more groups are also joining this movement.

The 26 groups are NOT asking for the Town Hall for *their* exclusive usage. They are asking that MPPP make the Town Hall available for ALL the people of Georgetown. Dr Teng's contention that public funds cannot be used for the enjoyment of a few appears purposefully short-sighted. What is being asked for is the use of public funds for the general public. It is a facility for the people as required to be provided by any State or Local Authority.

Second: The groups are merely articulating a perceived need of a Town Hall for the common people of Georgetown for a multitude of uses. It means that *YOU* will be able to use / rent/ visit the Town Hall to watch a concert, pay your bills, hold a meeting, have a party, celebrate a wedding, visit an exhibition, attend a lecture, read in the reading rooms, have a cup of coffee, meet a friend or get important information.

Third: The expenditure mentioned by Dr Teng (approximately RM\$2 million) is required for repairs (due to years of lack of maintenance by MPPP itself) REGARDLESS of whether it is to be used by MPPP or as a Town Hall. So it is most unfair to portray it as squandering of public funds for the enjoyment of a few petitioners.

Fourth: A Town Hall is conceived

as a focus of a city. This Town Hall was purpose-built in 1880 for the enjoyment and use of the common people of Georgetown. Band music was provided on weekends on the balcony for all at Esplanade to enjoy; there were concerts, dances, gatherings, exhibitions and talks, these functions continued for almost 100 years till the 1970s. *Nothing* new or unusual is being requested. Why does Dr Teng *now* consider it a waste of public funds?

Fifth: A Civic Centre/ Town Hall, promised to the people of Penang more than 25 years ago in KOMTAR Phase 4, has never materialized. Prangin Mall is its replacement.

Sixth: Cities and towns throughout the world take pride in their Town Halls as symbols of the integrity, growth and civic core of their cities. It is not viewed as wasted expenditure but as a necessary amenity for the people. So as not to be accused of using European examples which abound with magnificent Town Halls in every great city and treasured Town Halls in all small towns, let's look at examples closer to home :

-Ipoh repossessed their Town Hall from the Police Department and restored it to return to the citizens of Ipoh as a Town Hall and as a focal point for city pride.

- The Medan Town Hall is currently undergoing restoration and will be handed to the Sumatra Heritage Trust to use as their offices and as a gathering point for community and civic activities

- Adelaide (our sister city) built a new Town Hall to accommodate greater growth and carefully restored their old one for smaller public use;

Seventh: The MPPP's contention that *their* own Departments need more space is not a consideration here. Vast amounts were spent in the move to KOMTAR. MPPP rented out the Town Hall to a private college for many years. It is not acceptable that the people of Georgetown sacrifice a magnificent heritage building for the exclusive use of a few Council Departments. *That* would truly constitute a waste of public funds.

Dr Teng justifies MPPPs takeover of the Town Hall in order to display

local plans and for easy payment of bills & fines. Indeed, our proposed Town Hall usage would incorporate the ball room on the upper floor as exhibition space for local plans (once every few years) & MPPP payment counters on the ample space in the ground floor.

Eighth: The Town Hall is a Gazetted and Listed Building with Muzium Negara. As such it cannot be carelessly sub-divided or changed internally or externally, without the specific approval of Muzium Negara. Certainly, the MPPP cannot be seen to be violating laws in any renovation works to be carried out for use as its Department offices.

Ninth: The MPPP have assessed that there are sufficient venues in Georgetown to cater for these perceived needs. Unfortunately this view is NOT shared by the public in the inner city.

♦ The Dewan Sri is too large for small concerts, plays and talks, while being too small and not suitable for large kenduris and weddings. The various communities in the inner city are forced to pay commercial prices for rentals of private halls like the Chinese Town Hall for weddings and parties.

♦ The current Penang Art Gallery is on the 3rd floor of Dewan Sri with no lifts and is totally disabled & elderly-unfriendly.

♦ There is no Malaysiana/Penang reading room or collection to record the pride of our city's growth and no place in the current library or museum.

♦ And yes, a ground level payment counter and information centre is seen as very desirable for the general public.

The Esplanade is now the popular venue of all our major mass public events from The New Year's Eve parties to the Chap Goh Meh celebrations to annual events like the Star Walk, imagine the greater sense of place with a community-enjoyed and people-friendly Town Hall right in the midst of all the celebrations. The restoration and refurbishment of the Town Hall to meet the needs of the Penang public in general and the downtown urban community in particular, would be one more fac-

tor in justifying the selection of Georgetown as a UNDP' LEAD City and as one of the most livable cities in Asia.

We wish to congratulate & welcome the new Mayor of Georgetown on his appointment as well as the new municipal councilors. We look forward to a dialogue with them and we would be only too pleased to take them on a tour of the Town Hall to explain the proposed usage of spaces for the full enjoyment of the people of Georgetown in the new Millenium.

Dr. Choong Sim Poey (Chairman, PHT)



FURNITURE RESTORATION WORKSHOP with DAVID YEO

David Yeo, who has 20 years experience in furniture restoration is an active member of PHT and an antique collector-dealer. He will be conducting a furniture workshop on:

Date : Saturday 15 April 2000

Time : 9.00 am - 5 pm

Venue : PHT office, 26-A Lorong Stewart, 10200 Penang

Fee : RM180 per participant

The objective of the workshop is :

~ to train participants with the basic knowledge and practical hands-on experience to identify, restore and conserve old and antique furniture.

~ to develop appreciation and awareness of the beauty, durability, craftsmanship and the sense of history of each piece of furniture.

From A Penangite abroad

As a Penangite living abroad, I have come to value the heritage that Penang has and I think it is a shame that in the effort to develop and industrialise we have lost some of the irreplaceable treasures of nature and history. One example I can cite from my personal experience is the wanton destruction of Asdang House (Hotel Metropole). Even as a small boy the character and magic of the house made a strong impression on me. The great staircase, the spacious airy halls with their high ceilings and the beautifully appointed vestibules (where my uncle and I often sat enjoying our jelly and ice-cream) gave the place a grandeur that few houses possessed. But alas it lies in ruins today and no Penangite or anyone else will ever enjoy its delights again. No doubt something else will be built in its place - some offices or maybe apartments or resort hotel. And no doubt these will be clones of the hundreds that have already sprouted up all over the island. But there was only one Asdang House and it's gone for good.

Some would argue that this what progress is all about - the new replacing the old. But as someone has said, "Change is certain, progress is not".

There has certainly been change, but it has not always improved on the old. I am not against change because I have seen that it is not always incompatible with progress. Where it has been carefully planned and executed, it can enhance and confer great benefits.

Penang is not the only place in the world to undergo transformation and thankfully it has shown that it is learning from the past and from other cities. Of course, not everything old is beautiful or worth preserving, just as not everything 'modern' is better. In fact, much of what is new that one can see in Penang is quite tacky, and much of its heritage buildings (and I include the shop-houses among these) often lie neglected and dilapidated. As many other cities have shown,

preserving the old can make sound economic sense. Inner city developments which keep communities together often help keep the place vibrant and vandalism down. Replace these with arid concrete office blocks and soon you have a dead zone that locals and tourists alike will shun.

And speaking about tourism, as a Penangite I have always been proud of our beaches. But let us face it; they are never going to be as good as those that are as easily accessible to tourists today. Without the city of Georgetown and its attractions, the resort hotels that now dominate our northern shore will be hard put to attract business.

I am aware that these comments could be construed as criticism at a distance or nostalgic sentimentality. I have no wish to offend and I hope I am hard-nose enough to want to see Penang develop into one of Malaysia's most modern cities. But if it does, I hope it will do so in the best possible taste and with a strong sense of its heritage.

Dr. C.H. Ong, is a resident in the UK. Dr Ong is an ex-Penangite whose family was one of the erstwhile owners of the Metropole Hotel. He has degrees in engineering, theology, management and has also researched and taught in the areas of R&D management, innovation strategy and technological forecasting. He is presently working in IT management and is a member of the British Computer Society. A keen hill-walker, he takes an interest in conservation matters and is a member

of the National Trust which helps to preserve and maintain much of England's natural beauty spots.



PHT Chapter in Rome

I am grateful to receive the PHT news, so I know a little bit about what is going on. I am here in Rome with FAO holding the position of a director. Please know that I am hosting an overseas chapter of the PHT, and this chapter has moved from Tegucigalpa, Honduras to Rome, the eternal city.

My address:

*Dr Wulf Killmann,
Food Administration Organisation
(FAO)*

*Director Forest Products Division
Via delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Roma, Italy*

Tel: 0039 - 06 - 5705 - 3221

Fax: 0039 - 06 - 5705 - 5137

Email: Wulf.Killmann@fao.org

Wulf Killman, a German wood technologist, was formerly Project Manager of the Malaysian German Forestry Research Project (GTZ) at FRIM and council member of Badan Warisan Malaysia. He is the author of "Restoring & Reconstructing the Malay Timber House" published by FRIM in 1994 and was instrumental in moving and restoring the Malay houses in FRIM.

He is heading this way in August. According to Khoo Salma, he is keen to buy a derelict prewar shophouse in Penang for a cheap price and restore it with his own hands. Any suggestions?



PHT Visitors

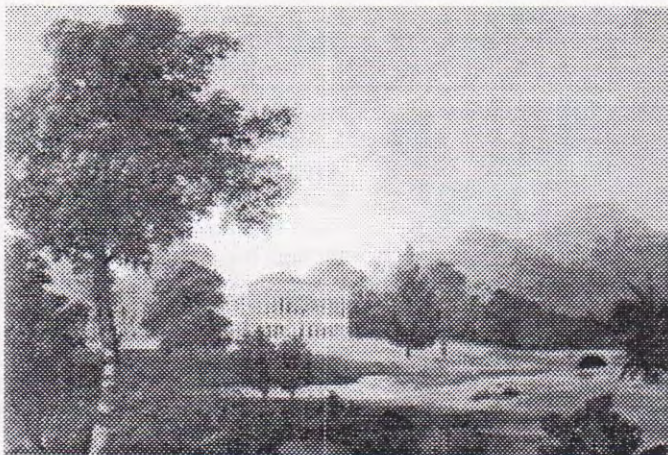
A NUMBER OF VISITORS WERE IN PENANG AND SOME ARE STILL IN PENANG.

FROM RADAN WARISAN SUMATRA BASED IN MEDAN, MS RIKA ATTENDED THE TUIGI CONFERENCE AND ALSO VOLUNTEERED HER SERVICES AT PHT. THANK YOU, RIKA. WE ALSO WELCOME INDRA WHO IS DOING HIS INTERNSHIP WITH LAURENCE LOH AKITEK FOR 6 MONTHS.

FROM JAPAN:

- WE HAVE KAZUHIRO ARAI, A SCHOLAR STUDYING THE ALATAS FAMILY AND THE HADHRAMI DIASPORA IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA.

- AND MIKO OSHIDA FROM KANAZAWA CITY WHO IS LOOKING INTO THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN THE SUSTAINABILITY OF GEORGE TOWN FOR UNESCO.



Work to start on Suffolk House

It is also with great joy that PHT reports that the restoration of Suffolk House is **FINALLY** about to begin, after a delay of more than 30 years! The Public Works Department (JKR) has found RM\$450,000 to repair the jackroof and stabilise the building. Further funds will have to be sourced for other phases of work.

The Penang Heritage Trust will be involved the entire way. The initial Scope of Works to be covered by the funds will include

- ☐ an updated dilapidation survey
- ☐ architectural and engineering restoration report and recommendations for a return to the 1818 form
- ☐ all preliminaries such as site clearance, storage, termite-proofing
- ☐ detailed recording and documentation
- ☐ tender documentation and recommendations
- ☐ all site and technical matters
- ☐ actual jackroof restoration & building stabilisation inclusive of flat roof parapet

Commencement of Work on Loo Pan Hong

After a 3 year delay and many, many frustrating meetings with the Loo Pun Hong Committee, restoration works have finally started, as of 10 a.m. February 24, 2000 (exact time as chosen by the Gods). Materials and artisans have arrived from China, we have deposited RM 83,000 of hard-earned fund-raising money in a joint account, together with RM 40,000 from Loo Pun Hong, for use **ONLY** on the restoration.

We all trust that the restoration will proceed without too many hiccups and that the end result will be something the PHT will feel proud to have initiated, organised, directed and supervised.

DINNER WITH THE CHIEFMINISTER

The PHT Council is very pleased to share with members news that a long-planned and finally-achieved meeting with the Chief Minister, was held at the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion last month.

All top planners and decision makers of the State concerned with the 'revitalization of the inner city' were requested to attend by the CM. A slide presentation on examples of revitalization efforts of other cities and visions for Georgetown was made, followed by an open discussion.

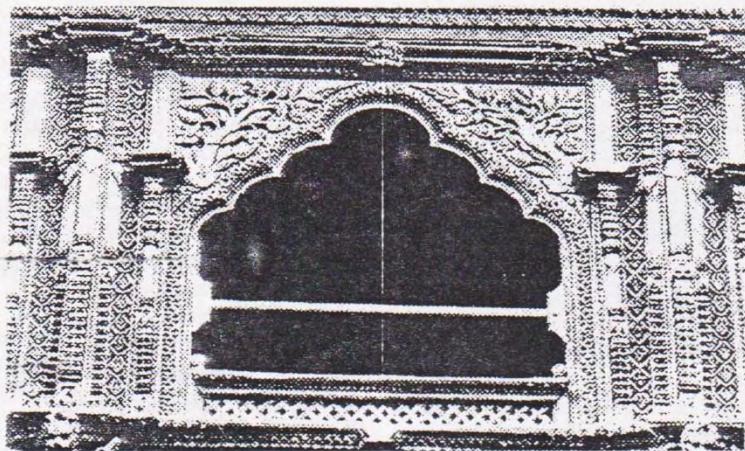
In brief, the main areas of concern and discussion focussed on:

- ☐ revitalization of the inner city/ the effects of rent control repeal
- ☐ the role of PHT in monitoring grant tied to tenants benefits
- ☐ the lack of decisive action re: the Conservation Guidelines
- ☐ the lack of any progress with World Heritage Listing
- ☐ lack of enforcement by MPPP on abuse of 5-foot ways and other public areas
- ☐ illegal use of residential downtown premises for warehousing
- ☐ poor maintenance of government owned public buildings
- ☐ Endangered World Monuments funding
- ☐ Town Hall as a civic centre
- ☐ Suffolk House- long term plans
- ☐ objections to the proposed seven-storey court house extension & carpark

A memo has been sent to the Chief Minister's office following the evening's discussions and all issues where interest was indicated and further action agreed upon, are being actively pursued.

AN INVITATION
BHAKTAPUR CONFERENCE

Culture Heritage Management and Tourism



A UNESCO conference/
workshop for the
Enhancement of
stakeholder cooperation
in tourism development
& heritage preservation
in Asia and the Pacific
Bhaktapur, Nepal
8-16 April, 2000

AS the fastest growing and one of the most profitable industries in the world, tourism offers unparalleled opportunities for economic development of local communities living in or near heritage sites in Asia and the Pacific. Throughout the region, the economic turmoil of recent years has led both to an increased reliance on international and domestic tourism as a means to generate revenue as well as to a deeper and more thoughtful introspection regarding the contribution of culture and heritage to sustainable economic development.

While employment in tourism-related activities can offer many new opportunities in communities where traditional economic activities are in decline, unplanned tourism development can also do irreversible damage. Local communities, heritage conservationists and tourism industry professionals operating in this

region are acutely aware of the problems confronting them and, in particular that the development of tourism as an economic sector is under threat because of the lack of articulation of interests and cooperation between parties involved.

In April 2000, UNESCO will facilitate a meeting of these stakeholder groups at the World Heritage Site of Bhaktapur, Nepal. Part of UNESCO's series of LEAP (Integrated Community Development and Cultural Heritage Site Preservation In Asia and the Pacific Through Local Effort) site managers' meetings, pilot sites will present results of heritage-tourism case studies and will work with international experts from the fields of heritage management, tourism and development to create individual action plans for the creation of sustainable, community managed cultural tourism industries.

Held during the spectacular Nepali New Year festival of Bisket, this conference/workshop will examine current issues in tourism development and the industry continued role in the preservation of culture and heritage in Asia and the Pacific.

Delegate numbers are strictly limited and will be filled on a first-come basis. The registration fee of US \$100 is inclusive of full conference documentation, costs of site visits,

transportation, conference snacks, lunches and most dinners. This non-refundable payment must be included with registration and can be made by cheque (in US dollars) or through bank transfer to:

UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific Account No. 163686. ABN Amro Bank, Bangkok Branch, 179/3 South Sathorn Road, Bangkok 10120, Thailand.

For more information and registration please contact:

The Office of the UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture UNESCO
Principal Regional Office
for Asia and the Pacific
P.O. Box 967 Prakanong, 920
Sukhumvit Road, Bangkok 10110,
Thailand

Tel: (662) 391-0577 ext. 501.

Fax: (662) 391-0866.

e-mail: culture@unesco-proap.org

For up-to-date information, visit our website: www.UNESCOBKK.org/culture/bhaktapur.htm

Seminar
*Planning &
Management in
Heritage Precincts:
Signage, Streetscape &
Public Realm
Enhancement*

conducted by Australian architectural consultant Elizabeth Vines

Venue: Hotel 1926, Burma Road
Date 4-5 April 2000

Write to: The Organiser
Planning & Management in Heritage
Precincts Seminar
Signage, Streetscape & Public Realm
Enhancement
PDC AR&T Total Project Management
Sdn Bhd, "Burma Square"
58 Jalan Chow Thye
10050 Penang

Keep complaining until you're heard, tenants urged

By SIRA HABIBU

PENANG: Tenants affected by the repeal of the Rent Control Act were urged to keep reminding Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon of their plight until their problems are heard.

SOS (Save Ourselves) protest committee secretary Ong Boon Keong said only then would Dr Koh realise the magnitude of the problem faced by the tenants, especially those from the lower income group.

A group of tenants had staged a protest at Komtar last Friday following the disclosure in Parliament that the Penang Government had not reported to the Federal Government the problems faced by tenants affected by the repeal of the Act on Jan 1.

"If the state government refuses to listen to our problems, who else can the tenants turn to," Ong said at a briefing which was organised by SOS

on summonses issued to tenants, in Pulau Tikus on Tuesday night.

Over 300 tenants went home disappointed when a lawyer from former Jelutong MP Karpal Singh's office, who was invited to give a talk at the function, failed to turn up.

"We are disappointed. We were hoping to get legal advice for tenants who were summoned to court before their eviction notices expire at the end of March," said Ong.

A 77-year-old tenant who wanted to be known only as Koay, said the rental for his Bangkok Lane home had been increased from RM126 to RM800.

"I am only earning RM500 as a pump attendant at a petrol station. How can I afford the rent?," he asked.

Koay said the state government should rent low-cost units rather than let the poor and elderly worry over their fate.



UNHAPPY LOT ... disgruntled tenants giving the thumbs down as a sign of displeasure over the state government's alleged failure to take into account their plight.

Elderly tenants urged to stay with children

PENANG: Elderly tenants of ex-rent controlled premises whose eviction notices are expiring at end of March are advised to stay with their children who own houses, a state assemblyman said.

Kampung Kolam assemblyman Lim Gim Soon said yesterday it was better for the elderly to stay with their children instead of looking for alternative places to rent.

"Out of about 30 cases in my constituency, many are elderly tenants whose married children own houses elsewhere.

"If they stay with their children, it can foster family ties and they

need not worry about looking for alternative places to rent," he said.

Lim said he had helped affected tenants to apply to the State Housing Department to rent units in River Road and Rifle Range flats.

"But some were rejected as they already own houses. There are elderly folk who gave their own properties to their children while they themselves prefer to continue renting pre-war houses due to familiarity and sentimental reasons," Lim said.

He said affected tenants who were bachelors and genuinely had no alternative houses would be as-

sisted in searching for places to rent.

Lim was replying to *The Star's* report yesterday quoting SOS (Save Ourselves) secretary Ong Boon Keong as saying that a first batch of 200 to 300 households would be in limbo when their eviction notices expire after end of March.

Pengkalan Kota assemblyman Lee Hack Teik said the figure provided by SOS was an exaggeration as the actual number of eviction cases in George Town so far was only about 100.

There were less than 30 cases in

his constituency, he said.

"For those affected, I am helping them apply to rent units at River Road and Rifle Range flats," he said.

He also urged landlords to consider offering social arrangement assistance to tenants like giving some compensation to help them move out.

Tanjung, which includes Kampung Kolam, Pengkalan Kota and Padang Kota, has the most of the state's 2,577 ex-rent control premises.

200 households to face eviction soon

PENANG: The first batch of 200 to 300 households renting ex-rent controlled premises will be in a limbo when their eviction notices expire by the end of March, SOS (Save Ourselves) secretary Ong Boon Keong said.

He said most of them either had no alternative housing or their houses were not ready.

"Those who have been al-

located two-room low-cost units will not be able to take in all the members of their large families who were used to living together in pre-war houses," said Ong.

He said many of those affected were poor and uneducated while cases of tenants enriching themselves by exploiting the previous rent-control situation were few.

"After the end of March, more eviction notices will expire progressively and soon there will be very few people left in the inner city," Ong said.

He said SOS was circulating letters urging all state assemblymen to support a resolution calling for an emergency state assembly session to initiate amendments to the Rent Control (Repeal) Act 1997.

The resolution seeks two amendments to provide for gradual rental hikes and appropriate compensation for those evicted.

Another petition signed by 2,000 tenants was faxed yesterday to the Housing and Local Government Ministry, Ong said.

"The state government has all the powers within the Town and Country Planning Act and Local

Government Act to solve the problem. However, it is giving us no choice but to resort to this," Ong said.

He said the RM100mil soft loan to landlords was a mere "smoke-screen" to indicate that something was done when in actual fact, the proposal was full of holes and not feasible.

He said a campaign *I Love Old Penang* would be launched next month fea-

turing story-telling by old folk and exhibitions.

They will be held either at the Esplanade, Town Hall or association halls.

"It is a campaign for non-tenants who support efforts to retain old George Town and is aimed at highlighting the charms of old Penang, the perpetuation of the old trades and lifestyles here," he said.

Info centre soon for tenants

STAR, Friday 11 Feb. 2000
By NG SU-ANN

PENANG: The State Government plans to set up an information centre by end of this month for tenants affected by the repeal of Rent Control Act which came into effect this year.

State Economic Planning, Education and Human Development Committee chairman Datuk Dr Toh Kin Woon said the centre, to be sited in the Penang Municipal Council Town Hall in Esplanade, was for tenants to refer their problems to the government.

"The centre will also act as a referral centre which provides a database to help find

cheaper housing alternatives for tenants," he said.

Dr Toh, who heads a sub-committee on the repeal of the Act, added that the council's valuation department would run the centre.

He was speaking to reporters after a dialogue session organised by the SOS (Save Our Selves) group with some 300 tenants last night.

He also said Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon would meet with about 10 major landlords, who owned between 30% and 40% of the state's pre-war houses, today and at least 50 minor landlords on Feb 15.

The meeting was to urge landlords to take up the

RM100mil soft loan to renovate and refurbish their premises on condition that they charge tenants reasonable rental rates for minimum three years, he said.

Dr Toh also said the Cheah Leong Keah Estate trustees, responsible for a few hundred pre-war houses in Pulau Tikus, would meet tenants on March 3 at 11.30am in Level 53, Komtar.

During the dialogue session, a coffee shop owner said her rental had been increased from RM503 to RM4,000.

Also present were Pengkalan Kota assemblyman Lee Hack Teik and SOS secretary Ong Boon Keong.

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LOCAL

THURSDAY February 24 2000 THE STAR

'One-stop' centre for tenants

By HWA MEI SHEN

PENANG tenants affected by the repeal of the Rent Control Act can take their woes to an easily accessible "one-stop" information centre come March 1.

State Executive Councillor Datuk Dr Toh Kin Woon said the centre, located at the Penang Municipal Council Town Hall at the Esplanade, would serve to co-ordinate and centralise the various services rendered so far to tenants.

"We appreciate that many tenants are having problems. This is

an additional measure to try and mitigate the difficulties they are undergoing," he told a press conference yesterday.

Dr Toh, who heads the state Repeal of Rent Control Committee, said the centre would collect information on premises available in the inner city and pass this to tenants facing displacement.

"We hope to relocate people this way, especially those who need commercial premises," he said, adding that the centre would have a hotline to the state Housing Department.

Tenants who had registered for low-cost or low-medium-cost housing could approach the centre to verify the status of their applications with the depart-

ment.

Dr Toh said the centre would also receive complaints from tenants on problems faced and would also put them in touch with non-governmental organisations offering legal aid.

"We hope to provide information on housing schemes and commercial premises for sale," he added.

He said guidelines on the RM100mil loan-cum-subsidy scheme to assist homeowners in refurbishment of their buildings, which should be ready "within a month at the latest", would also be available at the centre.

"And homeowners who wish to apply can submit their applications to the centre," he said.

He added that those who had

vacant premises to rent out could also pass on the information.

Dr Toh anticipated that some 2,000 to 3,000 people would use the services offered by the centre.

He said a survey conducted in 1997 indicated that 3,889 tenants still needed housing and another 1,700, low-cost commercial premises while many of those offered low-cost housing could not move into their units as these were not ready.

The centre will be set up by the council's Valuation Department with involvement from the State Secretariat.

It will be run by three permanent staff and opened from Mondays to Fridays (8am — 4.30pm) and Saturdays (8am — 12.45pm).



Dr Toh ... the centre will collect information on premises available in the inner city

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NATION

FRIDAY March 3 2000 THE STAR

Penang plan 'to be released soon'

By LIM AI LEE

PENANG: The long-awaited review of the Penang Island Structure Plan has been completed and will be released soon.

State Town and Country Planning director Mohamed Jamil Ahmad said yesterday the draft plan, which charts the new direction for the is-

land until 2010, had been approved by the Penang Municipal Council (MPPC).

"A one-month exhibition will be held in May to get public feedback. Following the exhibition, there will be a public hearing for suggestions to give their comments," he said.

The public can, among others, check out the alignment

for the proposed second link between Penang island and the mainland, which is included in the plan.

The plan also provides heritage guidelines for the city in line with the repeal of the Rent Control Act on Jan 1, 2000.

Mohamed Jamil said the date for the exhibition would be announced soon, adding

that the exhibition period could be extended upon public request.

The draft plan outlines development proposals and policies on land use on the island and addresses various issues such as traffic congestion, environmental pollution, housing and industrial development.

It covers an area of

29,965ha of gazetted land on the island and also takes into consideration another 913.2ha of reclaimed land, which has yet to be gazetted.

The review of the structure plan has been a long-drawn process and was first proposed in 1995.

The original plan was drawn up in 1983 but only implemented after it was ap-

proved by the state authorities in Dec 1989.

In 1995, the state government commissioned the RM1.4mil review as the plan had become outdated in view of the rapid changes and pace of development on the island.

A survey report was carried out and put up for public exhibition in June 1998.

Let town hall be 'available to all'

PENANG: The 26 organisations calling for the return of the Penang Town Hall as a civic and cultural centre are asking that it be made available to all Penangites.

Penang Heritage Trust chairman Dr Choong Sim Poey refuted state executive councillor Dr Teng Hock Nan's statement that the Town Hall's conversion would only "benefit a small section of society."

In a strongly worded press statement, Dr Choong said

Dr Teng's statement was "purposefully short-sighted."

"The hall was purpose-built in 1880 for the enjoyment and use of the common people of George Town until the 1970s, so our request is nothing new or unusual," he said.

Dr Choong also pointed out that about RM2mil would have to be spent for repairs regardless of whether it was used by the council or as a town hall.

On the move to relocate several council departments to the Town Hall, he said it was "not acceptable that (Penangites) sacrifice a magnificent heritage building for the exclusive use of a few council departments."

However, Dr Choong welcomed the council's plans to have a ground level payment counter for bills and an information centre.

Noting that the Town Hall was a gazetted and listed building with Muzium Negara, Dr Choong said it could

not changed internally or externally without its approval.

He said that the council's assessment that there were sufficient venues in George Town to cater for needs was not shared by the public.

Dr Choong congratulated and welcomed newly-appointed council president Hamidi Abdul Hamid, offering to take him and the councillors on a tour of the Town Hall to explain the proposed usage of the space.



Dr Choong ... 'our request is nothing new or unusual'

NATION

MONDAY March 13 2000 THE STAR

Poverty in the city



BARE FACTS ... a father gives his son a bath in a crumbling pre-war house shared by 24 families.

By CHOONG KWEE KIM

PENANG: Behind this picture of father-and-son devotion is a sad story of poverty and growing uncertainty for the community of 24 families renting a pre-war house at Noordin Street.

The large community lives huddled in small cubicles, where rental has increased from about RM30 to about RM60 after the repeal of the Rent Control Act.

It appears reasonable but to the hardcore poor or elderly like Cheah Chee @ Cheah Siew Chee, 79, and Tang Choot Neoh, 77, it was drastic.

Like a refugee camp smack in the centre of affluent George Town, the overly congested house with gaping roof and rotting beams is a fire hazard and lacking in basic facilities like cooking area, washing and toilet.

Malaysia Hindu Sangam social and welfare committee chairman P. Murugiah said some of these premises, housing over 20 to 30 tenants could be found along Jalan Datuk Keramat, Little India, Jalan Jelutong, Perak Road and in Bayan Lepas.

"Some tenants pay between RM50 to RM100 each and they don't even have rooms but sleep on

mats spread on the floor," he said.

Penang Heritage Trust secretary Khoo Salma Natuson said the state government must acknowledge the plight of the poor, elderly and disabled and admit there is a social crisis following the Act's repeal.

"The state should immediately mobilise more resources, social workers, and even philanthropists and work out a social housing programme for this group," she said.

Unofficial data reportedly recorded over 200 eviction cases in George Town, 500 cases of exorbitant rent hikes and the quiet exodus of about 200 tenants following the Act's repeal.

A tenants' protest committee SOS (Save Ourselves) has launched a series of aggressive campaigns, protesting the silence of the state government which has offered the unpopular RM100mil soft loan for landlords. Tenants who bought houses in stalled projects like the Majestic Heights or Fettes Villa are also pressuring Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon to act.

When approached during press functions, Dr Koh had repeatedly declined to comment.

Protesters peacefully disperse

By CHOONG KWEE KIM

PENANG: A gathering of disgruntled tenants protesting their tenancy woes outside Komtar, where the Chief Minister's office is located, was peacefully dispersed by police yesterday.

Their leaders were also hauled up for questioning by the police.

Some 50 tenants were present at the gathering organised by the SOS (Save Ourselves) pro-tem committee, outside Maybank when police arrived and started taking down their particulars.

SOS secretary Ong Boon Keong and treasurer Leong Nyit Kiew who had stacks of leaflets with them, were then escorted to the police booth at Komtar for questioning.

When he emerged, Ong told pressmen that they just had a "chat" with the police and were advised against distributing the leaflets without proper clearance.

Ong said the protest was organised to show their un-

happiness over the recent disclosure at Parliament that the Penang State Government had not reported to the federal government on problems faced by tenants following the repeal of the Rent Control Act after Jan 1.

He said information from the Consumers Association of Penang, Penang Heritage Trust and Padang Kota assemblyman Teng Chang Yeow's service team showed there were at least 135 eviction cases while 119 eviction cases had been referred to SOS.

Ong said SOS's compilation also showed 515 cases of exorbitant rental hikes while another 252 tenants had quit their premises.

Tanjung MP Chow Kon Yeow who was also present, said the state had no feedback and official statistics on the impact of the repeal and urged the government to address the issue immediately.

The protest was also held to coincide with a negotia-

tion meeting at Komtar Level 53 between tenants of premises belonging to Cheah Leong Keah Estate and the estate's trustees.

The estate covers many premises at Bangkok Lane, Phuah Hin Leong Road and other parts of George Town.

The closed-door negotiation was chaired by state executive councillor Datuk Dr Toh Kin Woon and attended by exco member Dr Teng Hock Nan and Chang Yeow.

After the meeting, Dr Toh said negotiations were still on-going and they would continue to meet to resolve the matter.

Daisy Chuah who represented residents at Bangkok Lane said residents were asked to pay a 500% hike in rental and were appealing for a 50% to 75% rental increase instead.

Clifford Toh who was representing residents at Phuah Hin Leong Road said the present rental hike was more than 200%, citing an example of an increase from about RM200 to RM600.



ROUTINE MOVE ... a police officer taking down the particulars of some of the tenants at the gathering.



Teng: Unfair to turn Town Hall into civic centre

STAR
Monday
21 Feb
2000

PENANG: It is not practical to convert the 125-year-old Penang Town Hall into a civic and cultural centre, State Local Government, Environment and Traffic Management committee chairman Dr Teng Hock Nan (pic) said yesterday.

He said it would only benefit a small section of the society if the building was used for art exhibitions, performing arts and talks, adding that the maintenance cost would increase if it was used for social functions including *kenduri*.

"Between RM1.5mil and RM2mil is needed for renovation works, and five or six workers have to be stationed there to maintain the building.

"It will not be justified if ratepayers' money is spent to benefit a small section of the society," he said, adding that the Dewan Sri Pinang nearby could be utilised for the proposed usage.

The Penang Heritage Trust had in August sent an appeal letter on behalf of 26 organisations to Dr Teng who was then Penang Municipal Council president to refurbish and maintain the Town Hall as a civic

and cultural centre.

Dr Teng had in January instructed heads of the relevant departments to study the possibility of converting the premises and to study how the civic centre would differ from the existing *balai rakyat* and Dewan Sri Pinang in terms of usage.

"I will call for a dialogue session. I will make an arrangement soon to have council president Datuk Jamaluddin Ahmad Damanhuri and the councillors meet the representatives from the 26 organisations," he said.

Dr Teng said it would be more practical if the premises is used by the council's Planning Department to exhibit local and structure plans.

"We also want to open a counter there for motorists to pay parking tickets.

"Many people have been complaining that it is a hassle to go to Komtar to pay parking tickets.

"If the counter is relocated to the Town Hall at the Esplanade, it will be easily accessible to the people," he said, adding that the place also had ample parking space.

● FROM PAGE 8

Adopting local influences

were also incorporated into the Peranakan dessert menu. Food and the preparation of it now act as markers of a disappearing race.

Today it is considered chic to wear the kebaya or collect Peranakan antiques. The recent successful staging of Stella Kon's *Emily of Emerald Hill*, a play about a Straits Chinese matriarch, testifies to the "commercial" appeal of all things Peranakan.

Although the play informs us of how the Nyonya was circumscribed to her home, Peranakan men were active participants in their adopted country. The Straits Chinese, unlike their more recently settled brethren, always considered Malaysia their permanent home.

Peranakan businessmen made their mark in the 19th century as investors in the booming tin industry and as merchants in the Straits Settlements. The rich Baba families, like the Tans of Singapore and the Khaws of Penang, invested in tin-mining, merchant shipping, revenue farming and rubber-planting.

One of the more famous names of Peranakan economic dominance is Tun Sir Tan Cheng Lock, founder member of the Ho Hong Bank (later United Malayan Banking Corporation) in Malacca. He was the father of former Finance Minister Tun Tan Siew Sin. Another is Dr Lim Boon Keng, famous for his anti-opium campaigns. Yeap Chor Ee, the Penang multi-millionaire and founder of Ban Hin Lee Bank, is also an oft-quoted per-

sonality with regards to Peranakan entrepreneurial skills.

Ironically, their business acumen in the migrant trade eventually opened the floodgates of Chinese immigration to Malaya thus ending their "cultural" hegemony.

The new immigrants found the Straits Chinese — whether in Penang, Malacca or Singapore — alien.

The Peranakans were among the earliest to publish English dailies in this country. The *Straits Chinese Magazine*, which was edited by Dr Lim Boon Keng and noted Singaporean figure Song Ong Siang, ran from 1897 to 1907. The Babas in Malacca published the *Malacca Guardian* in 1928 and continued publishing it till 1940. This made them decidedly different from the more recent Chinese immigrants who were closer to China linguistically.

Thus, in 1900, the Straits Chinese British Association (SCBA) was formed to safeguard the elite position of the Straits Chinese in the face of the growing number of immigrants from China. However, it was a futile attempt as immigration from China increased dramatically due to immigration laws being relaxed to supply labour demanded by the tin, and later rubber, boom.

The rise of the new rich displaced the Baba in the sphere of economic importance. The new arrivals outnumbered the older settlers and eventually displaced the Peranakan politically as well. Due to the reduced role of its members in business, the Straits Chinese turned to education, particularly English education, as a means of survival and later they formed what Lynn Pan terms the "comprador class, working for European firms as brokers, clerks and cashiers."

Shortly before Independence, the Penang branch of the SCBA called for the secession of Penang from the Federation of Malaya. This apparent lack of confidence in Malaya was due to the Straits Chinese's traditional links with the British. It is perhaps impossible to deny that these businessmen were products of colonialism who found themselves left behind by the rising tide of history.

Attempts to rejuvenate the SCBA as a Peranakan association was further complicated by the separation of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965.

Many Peranakan leaders also saw the need for integration with other Chinese people in Malaysia and Tan Cheng Lock,

for example, although a Baba, did not campaign as one. Instead, he saw himself as Chinese Malaysian first and eventually led the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA).

Today, the Peranakans are indistinguishable from their Chinese counterparts. This once apparent diversity among the Chinese is quickly disappearing with many today identifying the Chinese merely as either English or Chinese educated.

However, with the rise of a national policy and as Malaysia and her citizens become more mature, the Chinese now see themselves more as Malaysians rather than Chinese or Peranakan.

While the Straits Chinese have lost their *raison d'être* for existing as a separate race, the new generation of Malaysian Chinese are perhaps beginning to realise that they are in the midst of integrating with this land.

■ *Millennium Markers* is a weekly series that looks at events and happenings that shaped Malaysia and the surrounding region over the last 1,000 years.

Next week: The Malaccan element in China's Taiping rebellion



Compromise likely on use of Town Hall

STAR, Tuesday 14 March 2000

By HWA MEI SHEN

PENANG: The hopes of Penangites wishing to see the Town Hall returned to the "citizens of George Town" have been kept alive.

The Penang Municipal Council has agreed to look into the possibility of using part of the building for arts and cultural activities.

While stressing that he was "not in a position to decide," council president Hamidi Abdul Hamid said the council had not totally closed the door on the issue.

"I'm open to discussion. I think a town hall should be a town hall," he said yesterday during a dialogue session with representatives from various organisations urging the council to refurbish and maintain the building as a

civic and cultural centre.

A group of 26 organisations and cultural bodies had written to the council on this matter in August. They include the Penang Players, Penang Heritage Trust (PHT), Penang Society of Disabled Persons, Kapitan Kelang Mosque Qariah Committee and Malaysian Institute of Architects (PAM), Northern Chapter.

Proposals made include facilities for the performing arts, a venue for receptions and *kenduri*, a specialist 'Malaysiana/Penang' reading room and the Penang Art Gallery.

The council has since started renovating the 120-year-old building for its own use. Its plans include office space for some departments, the Repeal Rent Control

Information Centre, a bill payment counter, archival space and use of the auditorium for exhibitions and the like.

At the session, senior officers noted that the council had a definite need for the building.

Planning department director Tan Thean Siew said the space in Komtar was very inadequate and the logical step was to move part of the council's offices and services back to the Town Hall.

He added that maintenance of the building, listed as a national monument under the Antiquities Act, was expensive and beyond the resources of a non-governmental body.

Principal assistant secretary Ong Chin Seng also explained that the council's

plans to reoccupy the building were not new.

"Kolej Damansara Utama (which leased the building from 1991 to 1998) had wanted to continue (using it) but we told them we needed it for the space and for public use," he said.

Representatives from the groups, however, argued passionately for consideration of other factors.

"The question is whether a building of this calibre should be used just for council office space," said PHT council member Loh-Lim Lin Lee.

Universiti Sains Malaysia lecturer Janet Pillai also noted that there was a desperate need for a small auditorium, adding that the one in the Town Hall was custom-made for performing arts

and "acoustically perfect."

PAM's northern chapter council member Boey Mew Heng pointed out that "we do not have a community hall that reflects both the state's aspiration of a heritage town and the people's culture."

State Local Government, Environment and Traffic Management Committee chairman Dr Teng Hock Nan, who chaired the session, suggested that the council officers take a look at what the groups had proposed to see if some compromise was viable.

"If you get part of the building, maybe you can restore the building and maintain it for your own use and, at the same time, use part of it for the performing arts, exhibitions and cultural activities," he said.

Demolitions 'need approval'

Star. Wed. 16 Feb 2000

THE Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) is concerned with the increasing number of old buildings within the conservation zones that have been demolished or threatened with demolition.

Its vice-president Ahmad Chik said half a dozen of old buildings had been demolished within the zones in the last few months with two along Beach Street.

"It is not a question of whether the buildings are in bad or good condition.

"The issue is that old buildings within the conservation zones cannot be demolished unless approvals have been obtained from the local authority," Ahmad said.

He said owners, who demolished their buildings illegally,

should be fined by the Penang Municipal Council and be made to rebuild them back to their original designs.

Noting that the state government had applied to be listed by Unesco as a World Heritage Site, he said destruction of old buildings undermined that attempt and reduced its credibility.

In a letter sent yesterday to the president of the Penang Municipal Council, PHT requested for a list of buildings, previously under rent control, whose building plans had been submitted or had been approved.

"With the list, we can verify whether the demolitions have been approved or are illegal," Ahmad said.

Xiamen craftsmen start restoration work

STAR. Friday February 25 2000

PENANG: A team of some 10 craftsmen from Xiamen, China, has begun work on the restoration project of the Loo Pan Hong carpenters guild's building in Love Lane here.

The RM113,000 restoration of this 144-year-old Cantonese architecture is jointly organised by the guild and Penang Heritage Trust.

Guild president Teoh Teik Yew said the project's first phase was to replace the old roof tiles with those of similar design, which were imported from Xiamen.

"The project is aimed at conserving the building's original architecture which has become one of Penang's heritage treasures," he told reporters yesterday.

He said the Chinese craftsmen, skilled in such restoration, would use lime instead of cement to fix the tiles, adding that the work was expected to complete in four months.

Teoh also said the restoration work had been planned to start yesterday to coincide with the 20th day of the first moon in the Chinese calendar.

The second phase of the project would feature a mini exhibition hall to house the guild's antiques such as finely carved sedan chairs as old as 149 years and Ch'ng Dynasty costumes.

Trust chairman Dr Choong Sim Poey said the building was ideal in promoting the Chinese culture and heritage.

"Even now, many locals and tourists will sometimes drop by to admire the intricate architecture and antiques of the building," he added.

The project's fund was raised via fundraising efforts totalling RM83,000 by the trust and RM30,000 by the guild.

Also present were project vice-chairman and trust council member Loh-Lim Lin Lee the contractor, Padang Kota assemblyman Teng Chang Yeow and the contractor, Syarikat Success Construction project manager Loh Beng Ping.

The guild has currently about 200 members including its 21 committee members.



HERITAGE TREASURE... Teoh (left) discussing the restoration project with Dr Choong while two craftsmen from Xiamen inspect the roof.

"Heritage and the Quest for Identity in a Globalising Society"

Talk by
Professor Judith Nagata

Date : Friday, April 7, 2000
Time : 5.00 pm
Venue : PHT office,
26-A Lorong Stewart
10200 Penang

From York University, Toronto, Canada, Ms Nagata is an anthropologist, well-known for her prolific works on Muslim society in Malaysia and ethnic revivals.

Who defines "heritage", who promotes it and why? Why is "heritage" currently such an important issue across the world? The speaker addresses the idea that "heritage" and "tradition" are local responses by rapidly modernising and globalising societies everywhere, and that people tend to legitimate the needs of the present through appeals to the past. It will be argued that heritage is partly about identity and community, and that many of today's claims over ethnic, cultural and religious rights, use it as a symbol and resource. Further, other interest groups, such as tenants, local residents, developers and tourists, all perceive and consume heritage culture in different ways, as we see in the context of Penang.

The focus will be on the rapidly disappearing heritage communities of urban Penang (eg waqf, serani, Buddhist lands, Malay, with their associated Indian, Arab Muslim and Chinese identities), and on how all these interest groups play out their identities and other needs around the notion of tradition, which is continuously adjusted to suit each group's agenda.

How do we participate in planning to ensure:

- ☐ *that tenants will not be forced out by commercial development and speculative land prices?*
- ☐ *that new developments will not be in direct conflict with heritage?*
- ☐ *that we retain our greenery and open spaces?*
- ☐ *that a petrol station is not located next to a school?*
- ☐ *that populations do not travel unnecessarily and contribute to traffic jams?*

The new Structure Plan of Penang Island and the George Town Local Plan are now being drawn up and will be exhibited in a few months time. How can ordinary citizens like us have a say in the future development of George Town? It's time we educate ourselves on this issue.

ALL WHO LOVE PENANG are welcome to the talk on:

Community Participation in George Town Local Plan

by Associate Professor Dr. Lee Lik Meng

- ☐ *lecturer in town planning at the School of Housing, Building and Planning (HBP), University Science Malaysia, Penang.*
- ☐ *educated at USM (B.A., M.Sc) and University of Washington, Seattle (Ph.D)*
- ☐ *special interests are in IT and planning law*
- ☐ *has written extensively on town planing and low-cost housing in Malaysia*
- ☐ *was principal GIS consultant to MPPP for the Preparation of Local Plans*
- ☐ *produced GIS-based digital zoning maps and cadastral maps of Penang Island*
- ☐ *was joint creator and web master of the HBP HomePage <http://www.hbp.usm.my/>*
- ☐ *the Malaysian Town Planning HomePage (MTP) <http://www.hbp.usm.my/townplg/townplg.htm>*
- ☐ *for more biodata, check out IT Support Website at <http://www.hbp.usm.my/itsupport/> OR email <vivi@tm.net.my>*

Time & Date: Wednesday, 19 April 2000, 8pm

Venue: Penang Heritage Trust Office, 26-A Stewart Lane

If you don't think you can find our office, please call in advance!

Organised by the Penang Heritage Trust

26-A Stewart Lane, 10200 Penang (behind the Pitt Street Kuan Yin Temple)

Tel/fax 604-2642631 Email phtrust@po.jaring.my

Website www.pht.org.my