



PHT *newsletter*

ISSUE No.85 / MAY - OCTOBER 2005

SUPPORT CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

26A Stewart Lane, 10200 Penang, Malaysia

Tel: 604-2642631 | Fax: 604-2628421

Email: phtrust@streamyx.com | Website: www.pht.org.my

PENANG
HERITAGE
TRUST

*Persatuan
Warisan
Pulau*

PHT

DATIN SERI PADUKA ENDON BINTI DATO' MAHMOOD AMBAK

1940 - 2005

We join all Malaysians in mourning the passing of a gracious lady and in extending our deepest condolences to the Prime Minister, Y.A.B. Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, and his family on their loss. Datin Seri Paduka Endon was a tireless champion of charitable campaigns for the sick and needy. She was also an inspiring advocate for the promotion and conservation of all aspects of Malaysia's multicultural heritage. PHT members recall with pride and appreciation her distinguished Patronage of the Penang Heritage Trust 'Arts in Heritage' Charity Evening 2005 which she graced with her presence at "Homestead" on 26th March, 2005.



EDITORIAL

We begin this editorial with an apology for the prolonged gap in the appearance of the Newsletter and with an affirmation of our commitment to resume its publication on a regular basis. In explanation of the Newsletter's prolonged absence we plead the extenuating circumstances of every non-governmental organization – our reliance on the help of volunteers notwithstanding the support of our very capable and dedicated, but small, office staff. Resumption of publication begins with this issue on the basis of a guest editorship and with apologies in advance for any hiccoughs this may entail.

2005 has been an active and busy year for the PHT with efforts in the first quarter concentrated on the very successful 'Arts in Heritage' Charity Evening in March. Another successful project, launched in November 2004, has been the Living Heritage Treasures of Penang Awards sponsored by HSBC Bank Malaysia Berhad. Award winners for 2005 were presented with their awards by the late Datin Seri Paduka Endon at the Charity Evening. The closing date for nominations for the 2006 Awards was 30th November 2005. As with the 2005 nominations we look forward to another list of outstanding candidates from which the 2006 winners will be selected.

The past year has witnessed both bad news and good news on the heritage front. Among the good news stories, as we go to print it has been reported that the National Heritage Bill 2005, although less satisfactory than the version tabled before the last general election, has been tabled in Parliament for second reading with the expectation that it will be adopted in the current session. At the local level, we witnessed first the partial destruction of Penang's famous Moon Gate near the Botanic Gardens and then in response to the public outcry and intervention of the PHT and likeminded bodies the authorities' welcome reversal and decision to restore this historic landmark. Other good news includes the quiet progress on the restoration of Suffolk House. Meanwhile, as the Army vacates the Runnymede we wait with trepidation to see what is in store for this once 'grande dame' of Penang hotels (see page 10). For, the Shih Chung Branch School, saved from "development" as a columbarium, continues to disintegrate before our eyes as a visible reprimand that heritage conservation requires not only outspoken voices but eternal vigilance.

Leslie A.K. James
Guest Editor



Regrettably, the long awaited site visit to the Town Hall planned for May could not take place. Instead, 43 PHT members went to the Teochew Association. This turned out to be a good choice as the newly restored temple had just had its consecration ceremony a month before after an 18-month restoration costing about RM1.5 million.

The Penang Teochew Association, the second oldest Teochew institution in Malaysia, was founded in 1855 and moved to the current location on Chulia Street in 1870. The Teochew temple is the only example of traditional Teochew architecture in George Town.

Teochew is a district in Guangdong Province, South China. Members of the Penang Teochew Association originate from the prefectures of Chao An, Chao Yang, Cheng Hai (Kee Lai Huat's home town), Jie Yang, Pu Ning, Hui Lai (Lim Lean Thean's home town), Nan Au, Feng Shun, Rao Ping and Da Pu (Cheong Fatt Tze's home town).

The earliest record of this association dates back to 1855 when a property at 381 Beach Street was bought by Heng Booh Cheang and five others under the name of "Teoh Chew Kongsee". In

1867, Koh Boo Aun (Kapitan of Perak) and fifteen others acquired the present site at Chulia Street and started to build the ancestral temple. Three years later, the association moved to this site.

The temple building has three halls. The middle and rear halls, completed in 1870, represent typical Teochew *Shi Dian Jin* (four-point gold) architecture. The front hall was added in 1890.

The temple has distinctive Teochew features, such as a façade with a central doorway but no windows, a roof with double eaves and profusely layered gable ends. The timber beams and cantilevered brackets are fashioned in the pierced wood carving style for which Teochew is famed.

The roof is decorated with porcelain shard work, using the renowned Teochew-style cut-and-paste technique. The strikingly painted "door gods" on the main doors have head-dresses of embossed gold. Gilded painting and fresco are two more types of decorative arts displayed in this temple. Motifs made from plaster moldings have auspicious meanings or represent characters from classical Chinese legends and from Teochew opera.

The temple provided temporary premises for the Han Jiang School which was started by the Association in 1919. The school moved next door when the school building was completed in 1923. The temple was still used as part of the school until the school moved to the new premises at Lim Lean Thean Road in 1960's. It now serves as a "spiritual centre" for the promotion of Chinese and Teochew culture, such as Teochew architecture, opera, music and food as well as for prayer and giving respect to the ancestors.

After a welcoming speech in Teochew by the Association president, PHT member Ms. Lim Gaik Siang who is the conservation consultant for the restoration and advisor to the Conservation Committee gave a detailed power-point presentation on the restoration project and Tan Yeow Wooi (main-contractor for the restoration) guided us on the tour. The Temple was previously visited by PHT in May 2002 before the restoration. In this site visit, we could observe the marvelously restored *chien nien* decorative art faithfully carried out by master craftsmen from China. The fresco on the truss, walls and doors was either touched up or restored with the originality in mind. Low-heat fibre-optic lights were used to illuminate the interior. Everyone was awed by the beauty of this restored temple and delighted with the delicious 'Teochew Chai Kueh' served to us by our hosts.

The site visit to the Teochew Association was most successful and many thanks are due to the Teochew Association's President and his committee for their presentation and hospitality despite the very short three days notice!

by Clement Liang & Lim Gaik Siang

Site Visit Report June 2005

Town Hall

For the long-awaited site visit to the Town Hall on Sunday, 26 June 2005 there were 45 PHT members. The Town Hall is a Grade 1 Muzium Negara gazetted building under the Antiquities Act and the oldest municipal building on Penang Island. The foundation stone was laid by Colonel Anson and the building was officially declared open by the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Frederick Weld, in 1880.



The municipal offices were in the Town Hall until 1903 when they moved to the newly built City Hall nearby. The Town Hall contained an assembly hall, ballroom and library and was the premier social venue for the town's elite in the early years. The old Hokkien name for it was "Ang Mo Kong Kuan" or European Club. The completion

of Dewan Sri Pinang in 1970, in time for the PATA conference, marked the beginning of the Town Hall's decline in the public life of Penang. This historic building was used as a set for the 1999 film *Anna and the King*.

Assistant architect Encik Ahmad Firdaus bin Haji Ahmad of HY Consultant gave the briefing on the renovation works being done in the Town Hall. HY Consultant was appointed by the Penang City Council to oversee the conservation aspect of the renovation and repairs.

This project is monitored by the National Museum Board and the renovation is required to follow very strict guidelines. Like other Class 1 conservation projects, the renovation work has to take into consideration the social and historic fabric plus the intended use of the building. On the authenticity aspect, most of the damaged objects had to be replaced as close to the original as possible. The whole project costs RM 4.5 million. Work started in 2004.

There are nine new chandeliers hanging in the ballroom which has very good acoustics. Parts of the timber flooring which were damaged by termites were replaced with hardwood such as teak, cengal, balau and merbau. The original fan can still be seen at the central portion of the ceiling in the ballroom. In 1890, the entrance hall was enlarged and four more rooms were added. The extensions and renovations done in 1890, 1903, 1938 and 1991 were also pointed out to us.

The Town Hall's previous tenant put up a lot of partitions which had to be taken down. The piping for the air conditioning which can be seen outside the building remains an eye-sore.

The rubberized tiles on the ground floor had to be scraped off. The roof which was leaking badly had to be repaired. In order to avoid such blunders in future, the intended use of the building must be spelled out clearly with strict guidelines as to repair and renovation works. To ensure adherence to these guidelines for the building's protection and management, there is a need for a body or NGO to be the "guardian" of this historic building. With proper care and maintenance the conservation of the imposing Town Hall building will be an impressive reminder to Malaysians and visitors of Penang's grand civic heritage.

by Toh Kim Hock

Background to Public Calls for Return of the Town Hall to the People of George Town

Moves to save George Town's historic Town Hall and return it to the people of Penang date from 1999. For seven years the Town Hall had been leased to a private college which carried out inappropriate modifications and work. On the departure of this tenant there were reports that renovation work was planned with a view to relocating certain Council Departments in the Town Hall. In response, 26 leading cultural, civic, educational and arts groups, including the Penang Heritage Trust (PHT), subscribed to a petition calling for the restoration of the Town Hall and its return to public use by the people of Penang.

The PHT succeeded in securing the intervention of Muzium Negara which insisted that a dilapidation report be made, a procedure that the MPPP had failed to require of its consultants.

As the PHT has made clear to State and MPPP representatives on many occasions, the 26 groups spearheading public calls for the Town Hall to be made available to the people of Penang are not arguing for exclusive use of this historic building. They are calling for its return to general use by the public as a Town Hall as was intended when it was built and as was the case until the 1970s when it was diverted to private lease and its condition allowed to deteriorate. A restored and functioning traditional Town Hall available for public use and managed and maintained by the civic authorities according to appropriate guidelines will enhance Penang's case for UNESCO World Heritage listing.

Editor

Site Visit Report July 2005

Taking place on 31st July, this was the first of PHT's planned series of site visits to urban villages which have evolved around George Town over the past half century or more. These communities started their existence as resettlement housing, estate and agricultural villages, squatter settlements and very large and multi-layered villages at the lower end of suburban sprawl. Very few of the inhabitants of these communities have title deeds to their dwellings. Consequently, precariousness is a way of life.

Hong Seng Estate lies between Waterfall Road and Mount Erskine Road and is surrounded and "protected" by extensive cemeteries backed by forested hills. The community is half Chinese and half Indian.

PHT members met at the Balai Rakyat in Hong Seng Estate at 4 p.m. and were met by the village headmen, Mr. Lee and Mr. Sarabana. Other village committee members were also present. A subsequent tour of the Estate revealed that it is very much a self-contained community with many of its own facilities such as kindergarten, medical centre and activity centre. Some of these facilities are provided by the ruling political party, the Barisan Nasional, but there is also a Roman Catholic community centre. In addition to two *kopi tiam* there is also a used car dealership and a *kilang kicap* (sauce factory).



Mount Erskine & Pulo Ticoose Bay 1818' Captain Robert Smith

Project

Launch of *E-Culture X-Change* Project

On 4th August Dato' Dr. Toh Kin Woon, Penang State Executive Councillor for Economic Planning, Education, Human Resources, Science & Technology, launched the 'E-Culture X-Change' Project at the USM Museum & Art Gallery. This project was organized by Arts-Ed and supported by USM Museum & Art Gallery, Penang Heritage Trust and Penang Heritage Centre as a platform for young Malaysians to be involved in artistic exchange projects with other Malaysians or with young people from other countries. On display at the USM Museum & Art Gallery was an Exhibition on Living Heritage Treasures of Penang and Penang Heritage Idol.



Penang Heritage Idol presented young people's choices of outstanding living craftsmen/artists for the honour of Living Heritage Treasures for 2005, in effect a young person's version of the Living Treasures of Penang awards initiated by Penang Heritage Trust and sponsored by HSBC. In this creative research project young people researched and documented three living Penang craftsmen/artists using digital video and web productions. The project involved twenty students aged 16 – 22 years from several Penang schools, colleges and university for a period of six months. The outcome is a website and a VCD on each of the artists and a gallery exhibition. The website and VCD will be

promoted and made available in Penang schools.

Site Visit Report September 2005



27 of us met at **ELSIEDALE BUNGALOW** in Elsiedale Estate, Mount Erskine Road, on a breezy Sunday afternoon in September.

As mentioned in the circular, this was the estate home of Lim Leng Cheak, described in **Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya** as having "had a remarkable career, son of one of the first Chinese to come to the settlement." Messrs. Leng Cheak & Co. dealt in rice milling in Kedah (having been granted a 20-year monopoly in 1888 by the Sultan), steam ships carrying pepper between Aceh and Penang, and estates planted with coffee, tapioca and coconuts in Kulim. He was the son of Mdm. Ong Bee Nio of the estate of the same name next to Elsiedale and father to Lim Eow Hong, Lim Eow Thoon (of the road of the same name) and 13 other children. His mansion on Penang Road was sold to the State to be used as the current Police Headquarters.

When Leng Cheak died at the age of 51 in 1901, "he left an extensive and varied estate of the first importance." His widow, Tan Say Seang Neoh, then went about lavishly dispensing his wealth and became known as one of the most, if not the most, benevolent women of her day.

She was instrumental in installing water supply systems in all major temples in Penang. Her name is carved in rock in the Kek Lok Si in Ayer Itam, also at the Tanjung Tokong Temple; the public bridge

leading into Pepper Estate still carries her name. A room of statues commemorating major donors to Kek Lok Si honors Mrs Lim as the only female amongst the male donors. On the road leading into Elsiedale Bungalow, one passes an elaborate modern temple, single storey brick and mortar link houses, grocery shops and hawker stalls.

The house sits on a little rise, as was appropriate for good feng shui and appears quite "out-of-place" in the midst of all this "squatter" housing.



In the past, the family would retreat to Elsiedale for "fruit season" and during "Cheng Beng" (Chinese All-Souls Day). The house is surrounded

by graveyards, in the neighbouring Ong Bee Nio estate and in Pepper Estate where Leng Cheak and family are all buried on slightly higher ground. The house looks maintained on the outside but quite clearly only minimal works re roofing and painting have been carried out.

Traditional signboards with couplets still hang on the main door. They speak of a peaceful scenery and serene surroundings. In the main hall an altar is still adorned with family portraits. Pictures of sons turned out in the best of European styled morning suits, hang next to portraits of their mother in sombre traditional prayer robes. Sons such as Lim Eow Hong and Lim Eow Thoon became well-known in Penang and we saw evidence in several plaques and certificates honouring them.

The front of the ground floor is divided by a simple lattice screen behind which a large double-leaf timber door opens out to a central family courtyard with covered sides and a traditional kitchen and servants' rooms in the rear. The original timber staircase to the first floor has been altered both in position as well as materials, the original which was much more grand and central was severely dilapidated and the current replacement has a simple light steel balustrade and takes a secondary and purely functional position.

The timber floorboards of the first floor have been replaced or repaired, all timber partitions creating corridors and bedrooms have been removed, the ceiling has been lowered and the entire floor is an open studio. However, there is still a wonderful sense of proportion and of space and light. The rear has a covered but open-sided terrace looking up to the first rise of Penang Hill.

Visiting PHT members included two direct descendants of Lim Leng Cheak, yours truly, Loh-Lim and Gladys Lee, both of whom were quite happy to share fascinating (and not always flattering) family stories of great wealth and squandering descendants. Lovely tale of how the women would take out the masses of family jewelry to wash and then place them on huge flat drying trays to sun.

Tea was served downstairs, appropriate offerings were made at the altar and we all left with a feeling of great privilege for being among the few people in Penang to have actually gained access to one of the island's most mysterious houses.

Many thanks to PHT member Rebecca Wilkinson for arranging the visit.

by Loh-Lim

Top: Elsiedale, country home for Lim Leng Cheak. Middle: His widow, Tan Say Seang Neoh

PHT MEMBERS GO TO JAIL



At 9.30 Wednesday morning 12th October sixteen PHT members and two PHT staff gathered outside the main gate of Penang Prison. On passing through a small door in the heavy wooden gate we exchanged our identity cards or driving licences for security passes and were escorted to a conference room. There Tuan Idris bin Haji Ismail, Pengarah (or Director) of Penang Prison, briefed us on the prison, its inmates and the duties and responsibilities of him and his staff. The briefing was followed by a discussion period during which our questions (by no means restricted to the heritage aspects of the old prison) were answered frankly and without hesitation. Tuan Idris then accompanied us on a guided tour of the prison and its facilities. Our visit lasted a full two hours including a break for tea and cake (especially appreciated bearing in mind that our visit was taking place during Puasa) and ended with a stop at the prison shop where handicrafts made by the prisoners are sold.

Penang Prison is the oldest prison in Malaysia. It was built in 1849 and opened by Colonel William T. Butterworth, Governor of the Straits Settlements (1843-1855). In 1879 the prison was extended to 500 cells by the addition of 102 cells.

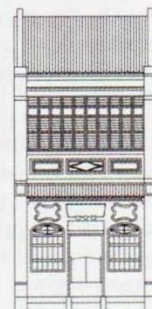
Overcrowding is a continuing problem and Tuan Idris said that on the day of our visit the number of inmates was 2,064 of whom 1,044 were remand prisoners, i.e., prisoners awaiting trial. Women prisoners are segregated in a separate section of the prison and number 147 in accommodation with capacity for 60. The prison has a hospital with 30 beds and is visited by a doctor once a week or as required. The main ailment of the prison's hospital patients is HIV and on the day of our visit they numbered 47. The number of prison staff totals 600.

Our tour included the oldest part of the prison which houses the former death row and the gallows. The scaffold is a grim place indeed, occupying a tower-like building with an upper and a lower chamber. The gallows is in the upper chamber with provision for three persons to be hanged side-by-side above a steel trapdoor to the chamber below. Although there has not been a hanging in Penang Prison for about twenty years, there are ten prisoners on Penang's current death row in a nearby cell-block; Tuan Idris said that in due course they would be transferred to Kajang or Taiping,

the only prisons in Malaysia where executions are carried out. Another part of the prison we were shown was the area where canings are administered. This is an open yard in the middle of which is a wooden A-frame to which the offender is strapped. Under Malaysian law an offender may be sentenced to a maximum of 24 strokes of the cane depending on the offence. Penang Prison has six warders who are trained to administer caning which we were assured is carried out under very strict conditions and under medical supervision. Photographs on display in the prison museum confirmed that caning is a most severe punishment that leaves permanent scars.

All participants in the visit regarded this as one of the most instructive of recent PHT site visits. The attention and hospitality of the Prison Director Tuan Idris was particularly appreciated. While Tuan Idris said that there were plans eventually to build a new prison he gave no indication as to timing. If the authorities do decide to replace the old prison, it would be appropriate and desirable from the heritage perspective to retain at least the front buildings housing the main gate and the adjoining gallows block with the old death row cells. These are not only the oldest structures of the prison. They are self-contained and also the most significant parts of the prison to conserve for the education of future generations.

by Leslie A.K. James



Media Coverage of Heritage Issues

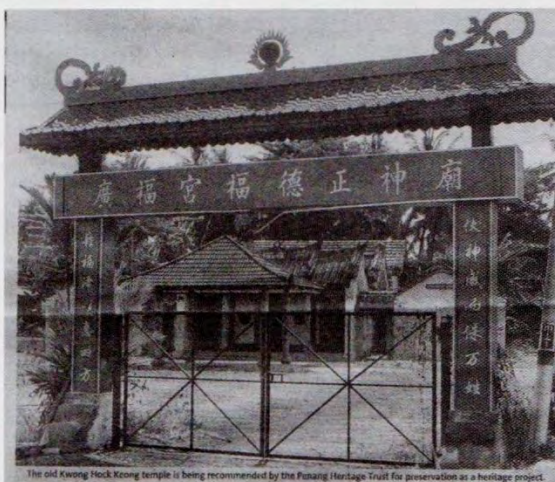
Endangered Teochew-style building: Kwong Hock Keong Temple, Nibong Tebal

While the Teochew Association in Penang Island celebrated the recent completion of its major restoration with much fanfare, one old Teochew-style temple on the mainland side is fighting for its very own survival.

Come to Nibong Tebal, a town nesting on the southern border of Province Wellesley, once a booming town thriving on the sugarcane industry pioneered by the industrious Teochews in the 19th century but nowadays it is better known for the multitudes of converted “bird-nest” old houses mushrooming in the old town.

Standing beside a river and backing a small hill, the Kwong Hock Keong temple sits in a good Fengshui position in the old quarter of Nibong Tebal but years of neglect have taken its toll on the building. It is the first Chinese temple in the town built in 1866 by the predominantly Teochew-Chinese migrants. Hence the temple reflected a typical Teochew architecture with gabled rooftops and the 4-point-gold edge structure. The temple witnessed the growth of Nibong Tebal and for many years, it was the focal point of local communal activities besides serving as a place of worship.

In the past decade or so, the “suburban” boom and out-flow of young work-force saw the population dwindling away from the old town centre, leaving rows of empty old shop-houses and the temple in desolation. A new pompous Chinese temple costing over RM2m was built some distance away in year 2000 to replace the function of the old temple as the central place of worship. All the statues of the deities were taken away to re-display in the new temple. In spite of this, the former temple trustee committee wanted the old temple to remain and properly restored for re-adaptive use, an idea that was supported by the Penang Chief Minister YAB Koh Tsu Koon during the new temple opening ceremony speech in 2000. Sadly in the end, the old temple did not get any facelift or proper maintenance.



The old Kwong Hock Keong temple is being recommended by the Penang Heritage Trust for preservation as a heritage project.

the Chinese daily newspapers. Appeal letters have been sent to the local district officer, assemblyman and YAB Teng Chang Yeow. PHT has voiced its concerns on the destruction of and removal of artifacts from the old temple and advised the temple committee that the artifacts should return to the old temple and looked for the opportunity to classify the temple as a local historical heritage.

by Clement Liang

P.S The artifacts were finally returned to the old temple in September, 2005.



The point of contention came when the front entrance supporting pillars with poem inscriptions, the commemorative stone tablets and the granite stone blocks from the inner court of the old temple were forcefully removed and damaged in May/June this year. These artifacts were found lying in the open-air compound of the new temple, a move presumably to end the “life” of the old temple by the current temple trustees.

In a rare display of public anger, a number of local residents headed by Mr. Lim Su Kuang formed an ad hoc committee lobbying for support to stop the destruction of the old temple. Big banners are hanging across the streets calling for preservation of the town’s founding temple. Within a few weeks, they have collected close to 2000 signatures and made the issue widely reported in

Media Coverage of Heritage Issues

NEW SUNDAY TIMES AUGUST 7, 2005

Rebuild wall, d

■ By Sharanjit Singh

GEORGE TOWN, Sat. — The demolition of part of a famous Penang landmark has conservationists, social activists and Chinese clans up in arms against the Penang Island Municipal Council.

In a show of unity, these groups are demanding that the council rebuild the wall, which is part of the Penang Hill Moongate structure.

They said the council's justification in tearing down the wall bordered on the ridiculous.

The moongate was demolished by council workers earlier this week to make way for a walkway linking the Youth Park and Botanical Gardens.

Council officials also claimed that another reason the wall was demolished was because of complaints about transvestites loitering in the area, saying they were using the air lavatories. Penang Island Council vice-

Teong said the council's reasoning for tearing down the walls was totally unacceptable. "They say the walls were torn down because transvestites urinate and defecate there."

"If this is the case, the council may also resort to cutting down trees at Botanical Gardens if someone urinates behind the plants."

Cheah said the walkway project was not a good enough excuse for the council to tear down the moongate as the path could easily be altered without any need to demolish the structure.

He said the council should rebuild the wall and restore the arch to its original condition.

The moongate, so called because it is circular, is located about 300m from the Botanical Gardens and is used as the entrance to the hill on the



IN THE WAY? Part of the re mo... Heritage Trust. — Picture by M...

MOON

Old photographs showing the original design of the gate could provide help in the restoration work — Kobun Buntat assemblyman Quah Kooi Hoong

FRIDAY 12 August 2005



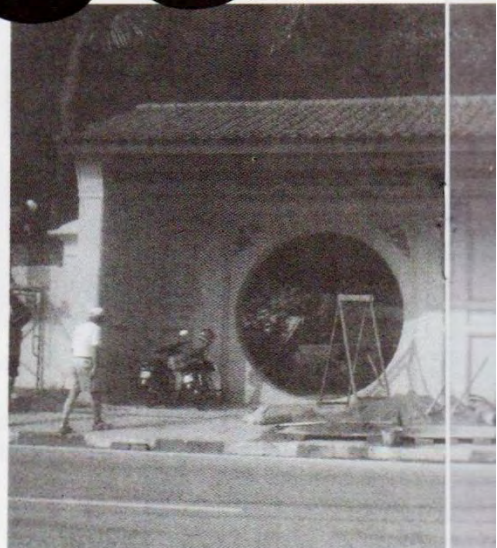
TEAMWORK: (Seated from left) Mohd Ismail, Dr Choong and Quah Kooi Hoong, a committee member of the Penang Chinese Clan Council, discussing the restoration work yesterday.

Search for photos of original Moon Gate

Menara Star, No.15 Jalan 16/11, Taling Jaya. e-mail: editor@thestar.com.my
Phone number and signature. A pseudonym may be included.

Comment 27

TheStar



Media Coverage of Heritage Issues

Demands groups



the moongate walls have been torn down, much to the ire of the community. by Mokhsin Abidin

GATE

• Nation **25**

Lawyer Cheah Kah Peng said the council had a legal obligation to ensure the moon gate was preserved and not demolished.

Build proper toilets

I LEARNED that the Penang Municipal Council is demolishing the side walls of the Moon Gate because people do that is because there are no proper toilets within the immediate vicinity of the Moon Gate.

Now, isn't this like an attempt to kill mosquitoes with machine guns?

The obvious reason people be wary of this structure. Meanwhile, a council spokesman said a stop-work order had been issued.

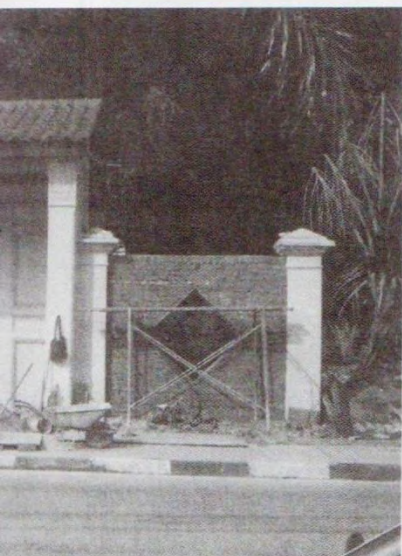
He said the order would be adhered to pending the outcome of a study being undertaken by the Penang Heritage Trust.

It was reported that the trust is trying to dig up the history of the structure and conduct a background search to show the significance of the arch.

Bearing in mind that the Moon Gate is where hikers complete their walks, local authorities should look into installing proper public toilets, complete with showers and lockers, and make the facilities available for free.

That should be the action taken, rather than demolishing a heritage structure.

CONCERNED READER



Moon Gate a landmark

WE are frequent visitors to Penang from Australia. We have been making our annual pilgrimage here since 1998.

We are glad to see that many of the old Chinese shop houses have been renovated and that many historical buildings have been conserved.

These and other structures, such as the still houses at the jetty, represent for us quintessential Penang architecture.

Without them, Penang would have no soul.

Recently, with consternation, we read that the wings of the Moon Gate near the Botanical Gardens are to be demolished.

The Moon Gate is a landmark for us overseas visitors. Passing through the gateway with its own wings takes us from the modern hectic world into a place of peace and serenity.

FRANK & JACK, Australia.

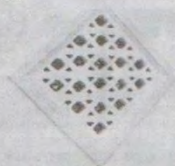
North Mail

Letters

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

Send to: North Mail, The North Mail, 11000, Jalan Sultan Abdul Halim, 11000, Penang.

e-mail: north@the-star.com.my



Hikers passing by the Moon Gate.

Media Coverage of Heritage Issues

PHT considers this site to be historically significant – Ahmad Chik

FRIDAY 15 July 2005

By SIOU YUEN CHING

THE International School of Penang (Uplands) building at Kelawei Road must be preserved for its historical significance and architectural designs.

Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) honorary secretary Ahmad Chik said the 89-year-old French-style building must be conserved in recognition of the La Salle Brothers' role in the field of education in the country.

"PHT considers this site to be historically significant and would like to urge the new owner and the Penang Municipal Council (MPPP) to bear this in mind when redeveloping the property," he said.

The La Salle Brothers acquired the building in 1916 to be used as a novitiate and a teachers' training college.

The college started accepting lay

PHT: Preserve Uplands building

students in the early 1960s but ceased operations in early 1980s. The property was then leased to the present tenant.

In December last year, Hunza Properties Berhad bought the 4.1ha site from the Visitor in the Federation of Malaya of the Christian Brothers' Schools for RM97.86mil.

The international school is expected to move to its new campus in Batu Ferringhi by July next year.

Ahmad also expressed concern that the traffic congestion along Kelawei Road and Gurney Drive would worsen if a commercial-cum-residential project was carried out on the site.

"The council must require the developer to commission a proper traffic study by an expert before any development application can be considered," he said.

When contacted, a Hunza Proper-

ties spokesperson said they would preserve one of the two main buildings on the site which was known formerly as St Joseph Training College.

She added that they planned to develop part of the land into a high-end mixed development of commercial, office and service apartments.

"But we are still at the preliminary planning stage," she said.

Media Coverage

6 Nation

TheStar

FRIDAY 17 June 2005

States' heritage listing deferred

BY ANTHONY CHEW

PENANG: Unesco has deferred consideration of Penang and Malacca's serial application for World Heritage Site listing for another year.

The Paris-based world body has asked the two state governments for clarification on some matters and to provide certain information on their listing application.

It had also asked for more details of the management plan submitted, said town planner Lim Hooi Siang, a consultant engaged by the Penang government to help prepare the state's dossier.

He said Unesco wanted to know how the states would cope with maintenance of the buildings and preservation of culture on the sites after the listing.

Unesco also wanted to have photographs and slides of the

heritage places mentioned in the dossiers as well as information on the states' preparations to sustain the status.

Lim said that unlike World Heritage Sites with outstanding monuments like Angkor Wat in Cambodia and the Taj Mahal in India, Penang's qualification for listing, hinged on the state's unique features like its ports and related activities, and the traditional human settlement.

"We also have our multi-cultural heritage and how it manifests itself in terms of economy, architecture, town planning, language, religion and food," Lim said.

The idea of serial nomination of Penang and Malacca for listing came from Unesco experts who perceived some linkages between the states' historical centres, he added.

The dossiers were submitted to Unesco in January. The bene-

fits of being listed as a World Heritage Site would be tremendous to the states' economy, especially with the higher influx of tourists and the subsequent spin-offs, Lim said.

Penang's proposed World Heritage Site and its buffer zone are bounded by the Prangin Canal and Transfer Road right up to the North Channel.

The core areas encompass the historical sites of George Town, including the Lebuh Aceh historical enclave and sites such as the Lebuh Aceh Malay Mosque, Jalan Mesjid Kapitan Kling Mosque, the Goddess of Mercy Temple, Sri Mariamman Temple, Khoo Kongsi, St George's Church, Assumption Church, St Xavier's Institution, Convent Light Street, Little India, the museum and court building, the commercial area of Beach Street, Fort Cornwallis, Esplanade, City Hall, the clan jetties and the port areas.



Will New Year's Eve be celebrated at the Runnymede in similar style in 2006?

- Editor

Events

Zheng He 鄭和

600th Anniversary Lecture by Dr. Geoff Wade

Organised by **The Star** and the Asian Centre for Media Studies with the cooperation of Penang Heritage Trust, Dr. Geoff Wade, Senior Research



Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, gave a lecture in Penang in July on "The Zheng He Anniversary: Reassessing, Commemorating and Utilizing the Eunuch Voyages". Dr. Wade, who taught history at USM in Penang and whose doctoral work at the University of Hong Kong was on Ming relations with Southeast Asia, examined the 15th century Zheng He voyages, discussed their place in local Chinese cultural traditions and perceptions and discussed how the anniversary of the voyages is being used by Beijing and SE Asian countries to promote common and sometimes diverse aims.

Dr. Wade's lecture was very well received by the public and was also the subject of reflective newspaper coverage.

20 Nation
TheStar
MONDAY 25 July 2005

A militaristic view of Zheng He's voyages



PENANG ISLAND SCULPTURE PROJECT

As chairman of the Penang State Art Gallery, Laurence Loh initiated this project working with the Penang Earth Group founded by Mr. Hitori Nakayama, whose vision is to invite international sculptors from all around the world to create pieces in Penang on site. They would stay for about a month and develop the sculpture *in situ* so that there is interaction with the public. The organisers hope eventually to have fifty sculptures positioned on a sculpture trail running through George Town.

The first project was self-sponsored, in the sense that the artist, Matsusmi Mukai from Japan,



Mukai showing the two 'dancing man' sculptures he made for Parthiban and Kumar (left).

Souvenir joy for two volunteers

the sculpture being created. Moreover, children are now allowed to climb all over the sculpture, experiencing and partaking in art.

paid for his own air fare. The organisers covered the local logistics and accommodation. As the first art-piece has been successfully completed and the trail and programme launched, the organisers are confident they will be able to find sponsors. It is hoped that at least five sculptures a year will be created. In 2007, which will be "Visit Malaysia Year", the organisers hope to have a sculptors' jamboree, with ten sculptors working simultaneously in a botanical setting. On this occasion there was superb community involvement in the project with people invited to try their hand, to sit around and watch

Penang Heritage Trust

THE PHT COUNCIL 2005-2007

Elected at AGM, 28 August 2005

President : Dr Choong Sim Poey
Vice-President: Dato Dr Ismail Jawa
Secretary : Jack Ong
Treasurer : Lim Gaik Siang
Immediate Past President: Dato Nazir Ariff
Council Members:
Ahmad Chik
Khaw Yiat Lin
Clement Liang
Loh-Lim Lin Lee
Dr Tan Chong Guan
Timothy Tye

No. 26 Church Street



IT IS DEC 2005!!!

IF YOUR PHT SUBSCRIPTION HAS NOT BEEN PAID, WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO SEND YOU THE NEWSLETTER OR SITE VISIT ANNOUNCEMENTS

The PHT has one of the lowest NGO subscriptions -RM3 a month - but we DO depend on them to keep going. So, if you enjoy the site visits & the newsletter, if you appreciate the projects that have been carried out, if you share in the vision for George Town and if you believe that PHT is doing a good job, but that a lot more needs to be done... THEN DON'T FORGET to pay up your subscriptions

Admission : RM\$50

Annual subs: RM36

Overseas postal surcharge [Please NOTE]

RM14 annually for Asia, Australia, N.Z.

[RM36 + RM14]

RM 24 annually for rest of the world

[RM24 + RM36]

Enquiries : phtrust@streamyx.com

Tel: +604-2642631 (Magdeline/ Sheau Fung)

Just send your cheque to :

The Penang Heritage Trust

26A Stewart Lane

10200 Penang

New Premises for Penang Heritage Trust

An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of PHT was held on 7th May 2005 for the purpose of seeking the consent of members for the purchase of the property at No. 26, Church Street, as the headquarters of the Penang Heritage Trust. The EGM unanimously approved the purchase. The EGM also unanimously authorized PHT President Dr. Choong Sim Poey, PHT Secretary En. Ahmad Chik and PHT Hon. Treasurer Dr. Tan Chong Guan to sign the sale and purchase agreement on behalf of the PHT and unanimously approved the appointment of Dato' Anwar Fazal, Miss Khoo Su Nin and Mr. Laurence Loh Kwong Yu as the Trustees of the PHT in accordance with the PHT constitution for the purpose of executing the transfer and all relevant documents pertaining to the property on behalf of the PHT.

A picture slide show of the property was presented at the EGM and members were briefed on the condition of the property. A proposal has been submitted to World Monuments Fund (WMF) to obtain their consent to funding the restoration of the property. It is expected that the total budget for the whole project will be in the range of RM400,000.

- Editor

Unless specifically stated, the views and opinions expressed in the articles are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of PHT.

