



PHT newsletter

ISSUE No.87 / APRIL - JUNE 2006

SUPPORT CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

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PENANG
HERITAGE
TRUST

Persatuan
Warisan
Pulau

PHT

EDITORIAL

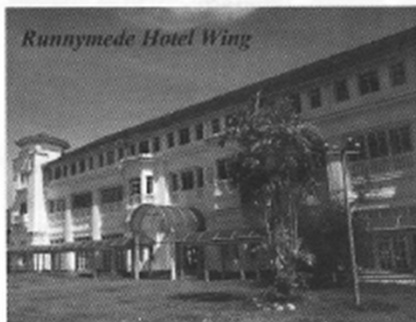
Heritage conservation in Penang remains the domain of both good news and bad news. First, the good news! As we go to print at the end of the second quarter of the year we celebrate the move of the Penang Heritage Trust to its new office premises at 26 Church Street, a mid 19th century shophouse restored as close as possible to its original design and outfitted inside to meet the requirements of our office. We also congratulate the winners of the 2006 Living Heritage Treasures of Penang Awards announced at the official opening of the new PHT office on 26th June.

Another good news story is the near completion of the restoration of Suffolk House, the most important great house of Penang's early history. We reprint reports on the launch of an innovative scheme to raise funds for the final stage to complete this project for the benefit of the people of Penang (Please see page 6 & 7 for more information).

As we welcome the opening of the new PHT office, we also bid a fond farewell to our former rented office-space at 26A Stewart Lane, PHT's home for eight years. Leading from the Goddess of Mercy Temple to Love Lane, Stewart Lane sadly typifies the decline of inner-city George Town with rows of pre-war shophouses unoccupied and allowed by their owners to fall to pieces through neglect or malevolent design.



26 Church Street



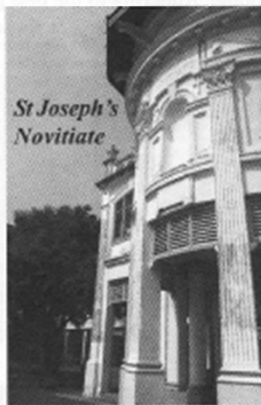
Runnymede Hotel Wing

This brings us to the not so good news! Penang's commitment to heritage conservation continues to be measured by the fate of its priceless landmarks – not only success stories such as Suffolk House but others facing an uncertain future like Runnymede, Homestead and the former Uplands School site (St. Joseph's Novitiate on Gurney Drive), conspicuous, beautiful and historic buildings important to Penang's heritage and identity. A recent visit by a group from the Kuala Lumpur based Badan Warisan Malaysia (Heritage of Malaysia Trust) drew attention to some of these buildings as the common heritage of all Malaysians not just of the people of Penang. It is hoped that the concern expressed by members of PHT & BWM over the future of Runnymede (both the

former hotel building and the house once the residence of Thomas Stamford Raffles) and St. Joseph's Novitiate (particularly the beautiful former chapel) will translate into action to prevent these sites from falling victim to heedless "development".

In the case of the former Uplands site, we feature a computer-generated projection of the proposed massive high-density development. We call for public consultation on the planned project and we ask how a property acquired by a religious body for Institutional purposes can later be sold and converted to commercial purposes.

While these major sites must engage our concern, we should not lose sight of the destruction of the many "micro" heritage sites that is continuing day by day throughout historic George Town without a murmur of disapproval from the authorities. Thus, we begin a series that documents this wanton and careless destruction through photographs by one of Penang's leading heritage architects.



St Joseph's
Novitiate

Guest Editor

Official Opening of 26 Church Street



Official Opening of 26 Church Street The permanent home of the Penang Heritage Trust 25 June 2006

After many years of struggle, together with the effort and help of many individuals and organisations, and after many months of painstaking restoration work, we are delighted to finally have a permanent home for the Penang Heritage Trust.

The official opening ceremony of 26 Church Street took place at 10a.m. on Sunday, 25 June 2006. It was officiated by the Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture & Heritage, YB Dato' Wong Kam Hoong, and witnessed by a distinguished list of invited guests.

26 Church Street is believed to have been constructed more than 140 years ago around the 1860's. It housed an early-mercantile establishment in the island port settlement, and is especially important as an example of a very early shop house prototype.

Although double storeyed, it is considerably lower than the neighbouring houses, an indication of its earlier, and more modest, origins. At that time, buildings were significantly lower in height, less flamboyant, and generally more unassuming.

These "lesser" buildings, often termed "transitional" shop-houses, are considered as under greater threat as their presence on the street is overshadowed by the more elaborate and larger buildings of the turn of the century, when wealth was more evident.

The Penang Heritage Trust is proud to have undertaken the restoration of this significant building for its permanent home. Adhering to the best practices guidelines of UNESCO and regulatory requirements of the local authorities, this restoration project showcase the economic viability of restoring such shop houses for modern adaptive reuse.

The Trust is confident that its experience in such adaptive reuse restoration will spring-board the main-streaming of conservation consciousness, particularly critical for the listing of Georgetown as a World Heritage Site.

The purchase and fit-out of this historic mid 19th Century vernacular shop-house, as a permanent home for the Penang Heritage Trust was achieved through the fund-raising efforts of its members and friends and generous donations from the Penang State Government, the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism, the Malaysian Ministry of Culture, Arts & Heritage and a supportive corporate sector.

The meticulous and painstaking restoration of the building was made possible, primarily through financial support by American Express®, through the World Monuments Watch®, a programme of the World Monuments Fund®.

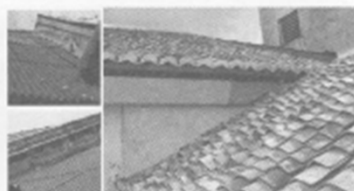
Official Opening of 26 Church Street



In October 2005



June 2006



Asbestos sheet roofing

Traditional terracotta V-shaped roof tiles gabled with lime plaster / underlying Onduline sheet



Covered & concrete-filled courtyard severe disrepair



Courtyard lined with granite slabs, re-opened, stairs restored



Concrete as 5-foot way

5-foot way, excavated and refilled with salvaged traditional geometric tiles/granite borders retained



Before Restoration

Restoration with salvaged timber lowered windows

All A/C piping hidden; condensate out of view



*October 2005
Roller shutter doors, lowered false ceilings, concrete floors*



*June 2006
Salvaged traditional doors & windows, exposed ceilings, terracotta floors, traditional furniture*



1st floor before restoration with partitioned rooms & long corridors

*After restoration :
-open meeting space
-usage of salvaged doors & timber panels*



Rear of ground floor kitchen area before restoration

After restoration - resource area, creation of French windows; retention of memory piece 1950's mosaic tiling



Living Heritage Treasures of Penang Awards 2006

Penang honours 'living treasures'

GEORGE TOWN: Age is no reason for kebaya designer Yeap Seong Kee to stop doing what he does best.

At 81, Yeap, who was born in Swatow, China, is still busy designing kebayas for the women of Penang and is happy that he is able to still do what he loves most.

"I have been designing kebayas for the last 60 years and will continue as long as my health permits," he said, after receiving the Living Heritage Treasures of Penang Award 2006 yesterday.

Yeap is one of three recipients of the award, instituted by Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) and HSEK in 2004.

The others are Kok Ah Wah, 66, a signboard engraver, and Ooi Sew Kim @ Ooi Ah Kan, also 66, a Hokkien glove puppet theatre master.

They each received a plaque



Wong congratulating (from left) Sew Kim, Yeap and Kok, recipients of the Living Heritage Treasures of Penang Awards 2006 yesterday.

and RM2,000 annually for life.

The awards were presented by Deputy Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Dato Wong Kam Hoong.

Sew Kim started to learn her skill at the age of 14 from her grandfather, a master of

Chinese traditional Hokkien theatre from Nam An in Fujian, China.

Kok is believed to be the last remaining full-time traditional signboard engraver, who produces 100 per cent hand-crafted wooden sign-

boards in Penang.

The Living Heritage Treasures of Penang Awards are given to living Penangites who carry with them to the highest degree skills that deserve to be acknowledged, documented, preserved and transmitted.

The opening of 26 Church Street also incorporated the Presentation of the Living Heritage Treasures of Penang Awards 2006.

The awards were launched in November 2004 to identify living Penangites who carry with them, to the highest degree, skills that need to be acknowledged, documented, preserved and transmitted, in order that we may not be left in bereavement for the loss of our Penang cultural heritage. The previous year's winners were announced in March last year, and they were: Dato' Chuah

Thean Teng (Master of Batik Painting), Mr Lim Bian Yam (Master Chef), and Cikgu Mohd. Bahroodin Ahmad (Cultural Expert).

For 2006, a number of individuals and groups were nominated, and they represent a wide range of skills and expertise, coming from the fields of visual arts, traditional crafts, culinary skills, martial arts, literature and performing arts.

An esteemed Panel of Judges, chaired by Dato' Shahrom Ahmad, selected three winners for 2006. The winners are:

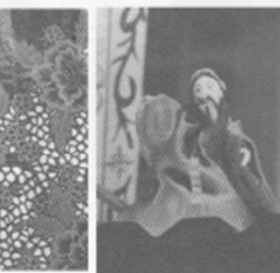
Mr Yeap Seong Kee (age 81)
Master Kebaya Designer

Mr Kok Ah Wah (age 66)
Last Remaining Handcarved Signboard Engraver.

Mdm. Ooi Sew Kim @ Ooi Ah Kan
Hokkien Glove Puppet Theater 'Phor Tay Hee' Master

The presentations to winners were made by the Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture & Heritage, YB Dato Wong Kam Hoong.

by Jack Ong, photograph by Timothy Tye, ARTS-ED & Mdm. Ooi



Heritage Alert~ Disappearing George Town

20, 22, 23 Queen Street



George Town Shops & Houses

Researched & photos by Tan Yeow Wooi

230, Dato Keramat



76 Church Street

Before



After



Suffolk House



Robert Smith painting courtesy of Penang Museum

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Dear Penang Lover,

The efforts to restore and re-use Suffolk House, the earliest surviving 'Great House' of Penang, has been going on for more than 40 years. Many individuals and organisations have put in much time, effort and money to recover, for our general use and enjoyment, a unique part of our earliest heritage. We are almost there. We need your help for the final push. We are offering you the opportunity to both show your support as well as record your contributions to 'Saving Suffolk House' by actually donating a room or a column.

WHAT IS THE HISTORICAL & CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SUFFOLK HOUSE?

Built in the vast estate called Suffolk, owned by Captain Foster Light from Durlingham, Suffolk, England (1740), and Penang (1794), the latter of the British Settlement of Penang, Suffolk House remains the first 'Great House' of Penang. It is a detached double-storey building of grand proportions and is open grounds along the banks of the All Saints River. It stands unsurpassed in its architectural and historical significance and is the prime example of Anglo-Indian architecture outside of India.

Suffolk House was the home of the early governors and the scene of many important social and official events. It served as Government House in the 1840's. 1820's and critical political issues, such as the founding of Singapore, were first discussed by Sir Stamford Raffles in Suffolk House.

It is also the sole example of the Anglo-Indian Garden House in Penang, the earliest surviving 'great house' of the region. Much praised by early visitors, Lord Minto in 1811 proclaimed it... '...early the best and handsomest house...' the artist James Watson said that it was '...a very splendid residence, built in a mix of style of British and Indian architecture...' Over the years, it has undergone many alterations and has evolved from a detached Anglo-Indian garden house to a glorified mansion.

In this region of the world, the 'Minto' house and the related Anglo-Indian mansion stand as the two signatures of almost all the evolved forms of local architecture. The study of the cultural significance of Suffolk House also lies in its standing as one of the oldest original surviving models of one of these two forms.

DILAPIDATION THROUGH THE YEARS

The campaign to restore Suffolk House began as early as in 1961. The Methodist Church, then the owners of the land and house, were using the ground floor as a classroom for the morning Methodist Boys' School, until the early 1990s when severe dilapidation forced the school boys to find themselves. Among those who remember their 'week-end' days in Suffolk House are the current Prime Minister of Malaysia and the Chief Minister of Penang.



Interest rose and waned, the State formed a Suffolk House Committee, delays were caused by difficult land transfers. Suffolk House continued to fall into severe ruin.

For nearly 40 years, various individuals, groups and organisations made various efforts. In 1993, the Penang Heritage Trust conducted a Dilapidation Survey and restoration works with the help of SACON from Adelaide, the town founded by Foster Light's son, William. 'Friends of Suffolk House' was formed acquiring the title from Durlingham, Suffolk, through Penang to Adelaide, Australia.

Finally in 2000, the Trust acquired the property by exchanging neighbouring land with the Methodist Church. Phase 1 of restoration works to restore the roof started in November 2000 with a RM100,000 allocation from the State Government. Phase 2 began in 2004 with very generous help from HSBC bank.

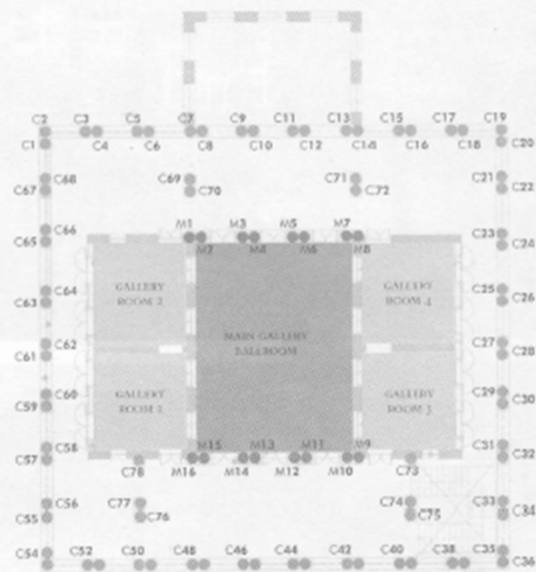
It is estimated that RM 5 million will be required for the complete restoration and out-fitting. It is envisaged that the site will be multi-functional, available to the Penang public as a themed venue and housing the most intact collection of 'Early paintings of Penang' during the 18th century. The location would be ideal for the subject matter of the collection reflected in its setting.



The conservation approach and standards applied at all times is one of international best practice. It would stand as a testimony to the richness of our history, our growth, our heritage and our influence in the region. It would also signify our attainment of maturity in conservation and commitment to all the periods of our past.



My donation for Room or Column: _____ CODE: _____
 TITLE: _____ NAME: _____
 COMPANY: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 TEL: _____ FAX: _____ E-MAIL: _____
 I would like the name recorded in Suffolk House as: _____
 HEREBY MY CHEQUE FOR RM. _____ PAYABLE TO "PENANG HERITAGE TRUST-SUFFOLK HOUSE"
 Enquiries may be made at Penang Heritage Trust, Tel: 604-264 2631 or e-mail: phtrust@chwee.com
 Please send cheques to Penang Heritage Trust, No. 26, Chavvy Street, 10200 Penang



FIRST FLOOR	MAIN GALLERY BALLROOM	RM 400,000.00
	GALLERY ROOMS (EACH)	RM 150,000.00
	COLUMNS (M)	RM 13,150.00
	COLUMNS (C)	RM 5,000.00



More funds needed for Suffolk House project

deployed in the building.

Journal of Management Education 36(10)

part of the Salina, 1904.

Page

St Joseph's Novitiate



26th NATION *Malay Sunday Times* *Perth*
June 25

Heritage Trust wants RM700m project scrapped

By Sharanjit Singh

Penang Press

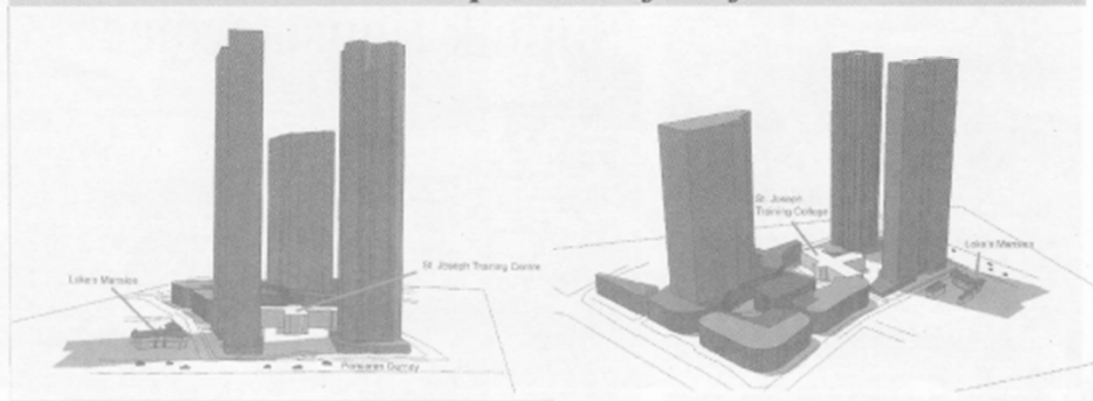
GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Heritage Trust has introduced a campaign to scrap a RM700-million upscale commercial and residential project along the former Uplands area waterfront.

The non-governmental organisation feels the project would result in the demolition of part of the historic Uplands area's architectural heritage.

We are asking for public consultation before any planning approval or land conversion is granted.

Dr Chong

Artist's Impression of Project



Heritage Alert~ Former Uplands Site

Press Release

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Website at <http://www.phtr.org.my>



Date: 12 July 2005

Proposed development of former Uplands School site on Gurney Drive

The lovely property with the fine French style building on Gurney Drive has been sold and the present tenant, the International School of Penang (Uplands), will be moving out shortly to make way for re-development.

This property was acquired in 1916 by the La Salle Brothers for a novitiate and training college for teachers who wished to devote their lives to teaching in the schools which the Brothers had established in various parts of Asia.

From the early 1960s the college also accepted lay students who, upon graduation, were accepted by the Ministry of Education for absorption into the national teaching service. By the early 1980s the college ceased to function and the property was leased to Uplands School.

The building facing the sea was officially opened on 17th April 1918. It was further extended in the years 1923 to 1927 by the addition of a third floor, a gymnasium and the much admired chapel which dates from 1925.

The Penang Heritage Trust considers this site to be historically significant and would urge the new owner and the MPPP to bear this in mind when considering the redevelopment of the property. At all costs the chapel must be preserved not only for its architectural merits but also as a reminder of the important historical role of the La Salle Brothers in education in our region.

No doubt, in due course an enormous commercial-cum-residential edifice (which we need as much as we need an acute bout of dysentery) will sprout up on the site. We would urge the state and municipal authorities to consider very carefully any application to develop this property.

We can foresee traffic becoming a very serious problem in future. As it is there is already congestion on Jalan Kelawei and Gurney Drive particularly on weekends and public holidays mostly caused by vehicles coming out from Gurney Plaza. Another equally large or even larger development next door can only exacerbate the situation. Anybody who believes the yet un-built PORR will alleviate this problem is mistaken. If anything the PORR exit at Jalan Pangkor will make the problem worse.

The MPPP must require the developer to commission a proper traffic study by an established expert before the any development application can be considered. Unless great care is taken with this aspect of planning there is a danger that the whole area from Tanjung Tokong to Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah will be engulfed in a permanent traffic grid-lock, to our collective woe.

In the considered wisdom of early planners, the land is zoned for 'Institutional Use'. Before any development can take place, the condition of land use will have to be changed to 'Commercial Use.' The power to do this is vested in the State Executive Council. Since this is a major development with enormous ramifications for all of us, in the interest of good governance and transparency, the PHT is asking for public consultation before any planning approval or land conversion is granted.

Penang Heritage Trust



Media Coverage of Heritage Issues



CENTRE OF ATTENTION: Bibik performing some dance steps at her Straits Chinese 'home'.

The Star
18 July 2006

A glimpse into Peranakan past

IN her baju panjang (long blouse) and the inevitable pinned hanky, Bibik Hitam was the epitome of a 19th century Nyonya matriarch.

Never mind that 'she' was really 62-year-old Mohd Bahroodin Ahmad, better known as Cikgu Bahroodin or Cikgu Baha, who won a Living Heritage Treasures of Penang Award 2005.

Bibik Hitam - An intimate tour of a Nyonya House is the latest inception in the Lebuh Aceh - Lebuh Armenian (LALA) heritage area.

It offers visitors a 'live' glimpse into the everyday life of the Peranakan people through the tales of the sprightly Bibik.

Sauntering in where visitors were sitting expectantly

around a foik panjang (banquet table) in her Straits Chinese 'home' at 120, Armenian Street, Bibik was heralded by the rhythmic beat of a kompang, transporting everyone back a hundred years.

As her husband's concubine, Bibik's secret to marital bliss was to joga badan and joga suami (take care of her body and her husband).

Speaking in English, Malay and Baba Hokkien, Bibik told tales of her childhood. She spoke of the girls in her house who sat making beaded shoes and of her maidenly blush at a Chap Goh Meh orange throwing.

Weaved into her tales were bits and pieces of factual history, such as Chinese nationalist

Dr Sun Yat-Sen (her 'son') using that very house to hold his revolution meetings.

Bibik also showed a step or two of the 'laughing conga', 'samba' and 'yonggeng', authentic dance moves as Cikgu Bahroodin has over 25 years of experience in the Malay performing arts.

After the half-hour show, limited to 20 people each time, Bibik reappeared out of character to mingle with the guests and serve them nutmeg juice, coffee and Nyonya kuih.

The show will be held every Saturday at 9.30am and 11am until October. Admission of RM20 includes refreshments and bookings can be made through Adeline (012-3175 498/04-2620123).



PHT: Resolve traffic woes

THE Chief Minister was reported as having said that the proposed high density development on the site, formerly occupied by Uplands School, in Gurney Drive is satisfactory and complies with all the rules and regulations, implying that it should be approved.

We are surprised that as a leader of vision, he should consider that as the sole criterion for approving a project with such massive impacts on a large part of the city and the whole of the north coast of Penang Island.

Has he, for instance, considered

StarMetro

Letters must carry the sender's full name, address, telephone number and signature. A postmark may be included. Letters may be edited for clarity, brevity and content. Address all letters to: The Editor, North Mail, Star Northern Hub, 212, Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, 11900 Bayan Lepas, Penang. e-mail: north@northmail.com.my

the impact on traffic? Or, what happens to Gurney Drive, an important recreational area?

Even now, during peak hours, weekends and holidays, the traffic in Jalan Kelawai and Gurney Drive is extremely heavy with frequent jams.

On some days the whole of Gurney Drive is so full of cars that drivers find it difficult to come from their homes.

For as long as we can remember Gurney Drive has been a promenade, where members of the public and their families come for recreation to enjoy the sea and to exercise.

For it to be an area of recreation must be free from traffic jams.

Media Coverage of Heritage Issues

Good to see Pulau Jerejak being protected

SAHABAT Alam Malaysia compliments State Tourism Development and Environment Committee chairman Teng Chang Yeow for his foresightedness in turning down the call to turn Pulau Jerejak into a fantasy island, "Retain its pristine state" (The Star, June 8).

We are relieved that the small islet will be maintained in its pre-

sent pristine state and news of gazetting 250ha of land as a forest reserve is most encouraging.

The future of this small islet will be jeopardised if developers who are keen to cash in on the get-rich-quick tourism culture are left unchecked.

Pulau Jerejak has a unique flora and fauna with towering tropical trees, lingering lianas, exotic

orchids and varieties of medicinal herbal plants.

Besides the wide range of flora, the fauna species are white-bellied sea eagles, monitor lizards, and even mangrove snakes found in brackish water environments.

Any development that is allowed on the island for tourism will lead to serious consequences. Emphasis should be placed on

maximising nature conservation and maintaining the environment in much of its natural state.

Any activity conducted should not be damaging to the environment but must move towards ecological sustainability.

S.M. MOHD IDRIS,
President,
Sahabat Alam Malaysia.

Star 19 June 2006

Inner City



Little India
Pinang Peranakan
Man

Heritage
Cheong Fatt

Street of
Historical



PRIME LAND: A view of the former Uplands School in Jalan Kelawet. The school has recently moved to its own campus in Batu Ferringhi.

The Star
18 July 2006

first

pollution and excessive noise.

Turning Gurney Drive into a one-way street (and effectively making it into a highway), as has been suggested, will negate all these.

It will become hazardous, polluted and noisy, PORR has been suggested as a solution to the potential traffic problem, in which case we suggest that the development should start only when PORR is completed.

Surely planning has to be at both the micro and macro levels with a fine balance between public interest and private profit.

It seems to us Dr Koh has forgotten about the needs of the public, in his desire to promote development.

Previously he has said that he would like to see a slowing down of development in the north coast until the traffic problem is satisfactorily resolved.

He has probably forgotten about that, judging from the number of high density projects that are sprouting along the north coast.

The PHD is not against development, but we expect our decision makers to take a more holistic approach giving due consideration to public interest.

PENANG HERITAGE TRUST

Articulating Penang's heritage

By THAMELINA TAN
Illustration by K.J. Ooi

WHILE the Saturday afternoon street performances in the George Town heritage district in Penang, especially those taking place under the LUM ANN-AMBO street canopy at Cross Street, are a familiar sight to many, not all the local residents had been exactly what they used to be.

With a little over 40 odd years of history, the street performances have been a part of the town's life since the early 19th century, when the British first set foot in the town.

The festival will not be a one-off affair, judging from the previous years.

With 15th and 16th century buildings, the street performances are a familiar sight to many, not all the local residents had been exactly what they used to be.

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The Star
13 July 2006



SINGING SONGS: A local Malay lady singing the tale of early Penang settlers.

end with a concert by Yehli, a Singaporean of Indian descent, at the Chin Koon at 10pm.

The festival is the first showcase of a project under LUM's Anniversary.



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A good part of Penang's heritage comes to life as some 60 schoolchildren play out the joys and turbulent times of the early island settlers, in a public preview of the 'Heritage Week' Street Festival, set for Saturday.



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5 June 2006

M4 News The Star

METRO

'Give councils authority'



LOCAL councils should have the authority of the Commercial Vehicles Licensing Board (CVLB) to check on public transport services if they were to manage the services in Penang.

Citizens for Public Transport (Cepat) co-ordinator Dr Choong Sim Poy (pic) said the move would allow effective planning, implementation and monitoring of the public transport services in the state.

He told a press conference that the councils should not be controlled by the CVLB.

State Local Government and Traffic Management Committee chairman Datuk Dr Teng Hock Nian had told the state assembly last week that the task of providing public bus services might be given to the local authorities.

Dr Choong said a board with experts and representatives from user groups should be set up to implement transport policies.

On the RM50m allocation from the Federal Government to improve public transport, Dr Choong said public funds



should be used "prudently and effectively."

"We hope the money will be used by the most competent operating companies, and not those with bad track records," he said.

Dr Teng had said the money would be used to purchase buses for the councils if they were tasked to provide public bus services in Penang.

Trails



experience & ranakan ion

Trail & ze Mansion

mony & Enclave

Site Visit Report April 2006 ~ Tua Pek Kong Temple



Finally the truth was revealed and it mercifully 'killed' the years of speculation. There is no evidence of any dumping of executed rival secret society members in the well of the compound of the former notorious Kien Tek Society during the civil strife known as the Penang Riots of 1867. The area around the well in the compound of Hock Teik Cheng Sin Temple was carefully excavated under the supervision of conservators to verify the persisting urban legend. The fact: the 'well' was just a cylindrical water container placed at ground level and it was placed there in 1984, 117 years after the Penang Riots.

The 40 PHT members who took part in the 30th April site visit were completely enthralled by the briefing by Restoration Committee chairman Mr Tan Lye Hock and Research Subcommittee chairman Mr Tan Lye Hoe, followed by a slideshow presentation by Principal Heritage Project Consultant Mr Tan Yeow Wooi on the conservation and restoration of the temple. Hock Teik Cheng Sin Temple was the headquarters of the Kien Tek Society, a secret society based in Armenian Street. The land was granted by the British colonial government in 1850

to Khoo Teeau Pang who then established the Hokkien-based Kien Teik Society which had the Muslim-based Red Flag Society as its ally.

These two secret societies were drawn into a feud with the Cantonese-based Ghee Hin Society which had the Muslim-based White Flag Society on its side. The conflict developed into ten days of intense unrest, catching the colonial government unprepared. The riots were suppressed and eventually resulted in the 1890 Society Ordinance banning secret societies. After the dissolution of the Kien Tek Society, its headquarters site was acquired by Mr Khoo Thean Poh and two other persons. On 4th December 1890, the trustees of the Chinese Traders Society (Hock Teik Cheng Sin) bought the site and it became a temple dedicated to Tua Pek Kong and named "Hock Teik Cheng Sin Temple".

The present temple building appears in a George Town survey building plan dated 1881-1893, showing it as a double-storey bungalow-type structure with a protruding *porte-cochère*. The building, together with nine

adjacent shophouses, dates from the mid-19th century and not later than 1867. Between 1908 and 1949, four organizations – Tong Kheng Seah, Poh Hock Seah, Cheng Hoe Seah and Hokkien Kongsi – moved to and settled in Hock Teik Cheng Sin Temple. Three of these organizations worship different deities, namely Sin Long Siang Tay, Tua Pek Kong and Cheng Chooi Chor Soo. Hence, Hock Teik Cheng Sin Temple was transformed into a multi-Seah, multi-deity temple.

Hock Teik Cheng Sin Temple is inevitably a spiritual focal point of the Hokkien community in Penang, particularly the Goh Tai Sneh (Five Big Clans), the clans of the five major surnames in Penang: Khoo, Cheah, Tan, Lim and Yeoh. Incidentally, clanhouses of each of the Goh Tai Sneh are located within close proximity to each other in the Armenian Street enclave.

The idea of restoring the dilapidated Hock Teik Cheng Sin to its former glory was first mooted in 2002 despite a lack of funds. Tan Lye Hock was appointed project chairman and the temple, its trustees and their affiliated Seahs pledged about RM104,000.



Site Visit Report April 2006 (cont'd)

The first phase entailed comprehensive research, documentation and planning and Phase Two the actual restoration and conservation work. Phases One and Two are expected to cost about RM1.3 million and are about 80 percent complete. Phase Three will start after the completion of Phase Two and will involve the restoration of the temple's gate-way and gate-house. The project will conclude with landscaping of the temple's compound in its final phase, Phase Four.

PHT members were given a tour of the temple after the briefing and slideshow presentation. They were shown the ancestral tablet of Khoo Teeu Pang and relics of the Kien Tek Society. Yeow Wooi took the PHT group to view the "secret" doorways that had been bricked up until their discovery during restoration work.

The visit ended with PHT members adjourning to "Edelweiss Cafe" across the street for scrumptious cakes served with hot cinnamon tea. "Edelweiss" is an example of a successful adaptive re-use of a pre-war shophouse.

Report jointly by Yong Cheek Yoon and Tan Yeow Wooi

Letters

Craig houses in Penang

7 May 2006

I have just read an article on No 15 Brown Road in your recent newsletter (Issue No. 86).

Following preliminary research, it was thought that Brewer had designed 15 Brown Road. Unfortunately, the article quoted from superseded correspondence which noted this belief. However, this was publicly updated by Dr. Jon Lim, during his visit to Loke Mansion in November 2004.

As PHT members were present at the Loke Mansion and no doubt heard Dr. Lim's fascinating talk, they may now be extremely puzzled by this conflict of information.

Below you will find the e-mail sent to PHT and others, following the site visit, which corrected the earlier research, but seems to have been overlooked in the writing of this article.

I hope that PHT will set the record straight, and perhaps consider passing any article to those quoted so that we can assist in checking the relevance of the quotation.

Regards,

Gwynn Jenkins

From: Gwynn

Date: November 28, 2004 9:55:39 PM GMT+08:00

To: Laurence Loh

Subject: Craig houses in Penang

Stark and Maclaren -
Chief architect David Macleod Craig
15 Brown Road 1917 - Srilankan buildings style - Arts and Crafts
Loke Mansion 1924 - Edwardian Arts and Crafts

Comparison for identity of the Loke Mansion and 15 Brown Road
Corner buttress and column detail - identical
Three dimensional decorative curl to bracket identical
Round window - similar



Site Visit Report May 2006~ Runnymede



of Runnymede, but rather on its recent use as a military base.

Loh-Lim Lim Lee provided an explanation as to the background of Runnymede as one of Penang's premier hotels and its earlier association with Stamford Raffles. A few senior participants of the tour related their experience, some having stayed there when Runnymede was a British army officers' leave centre, while others knew of relatives who had. After this informative detour down memory lane, we proceeded to explore the complex on our own. We began our tour at the grand ballroom which was once the watering hole of Penang's elite during the 1930s. (See copy of Runnymede Hotel 1936 New Year's Eve dinner menu reproduced in PHT Newsletter Issue No. 85.) Later on, the same ballroom was used as a wedding venue for the military officers of the Royal Malay Regiment.

To get the photographs I needed for the Penang Heritage Trust and **AsiaExplorers** websites, I detached myself from the group and did my own little exploring. In this way, I came away with photographs of the Runnymede complex without showing too many people in the shots. Before the site visit, I did my own research on Runnymede and have written about it on the AsiaExplorers website, an excerpt of which is reproduced below.

The Runnymede is the name of a collection of properties which once served as the residence of Stamford Raffles, who later founded Singapore. Raffles arrived in Penang in March 1805, to serve as the assistant secretary to the new Governor of Penang. In 1807, he commissioned a new house to be built along the North Beach. This house was named Runnymede, after the field on which King John of England signed the Magna Carta. It was a single storey building with louvred wooden window shutters, carved balconies, deep cool eaves and large, open living spaces within. During his stay at Runnymede, Raffles' two sisters came to live with him and his wife.



A group of eighty PHT members attended the May Site Visit at Runnymede on Sunday, 28 May, 2006 from 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. PHT president Dr Choong began by apologising that due to a mix-up with another heritage tour conducted in the morning of the same day, there was nobody to give us a proper briefing. Nevertheless, we were told that the briefing given was not so much about the history

Site Visit Report May 2006~ Runnymede

In 1811, Raffles was transferred to Malacca, and Runnymede was put up for sale. From then on, it transferred ownership through many hands until 1921, when the roof of Runnymede caught fire and the whole house was destroyed. After the fire, the surrounding buildings were bought over and turned into a hotel, run by two Scotsmen, W. Foster and H. Parker.

The main three-storey seafront building of the Runnymede Hotel was only built in the 1930s - so it was never there during Raffles's time. It houses a huge ballroom on the ground floor, with guestrooms on the first and second floors above. The British Navy took over the hotel in 1940, while the Japanese used it as a military base during the Occupation. It reverted to the British Government for military occupation in 1951 until 1957, when the British sold it to the Malayan government for M\$1.00.

Since then, Runnymede was known as Wisma Persekutuan, and was used as a government resthouse. The military has recently moved out, having secured a new base at Bukit Gedung and is temporarily between occupants.



Runnymede grand ballroom

by Timothy Tye

Photos by Timothy Tye, Leslie A.K. James

Editor's Note:

At a briefing for members of a group from Badan Warisan Malaysia that visited Runnymede on Sunday morning 28th May, Malaysian Army 2 Division chief-of-staff Colonel Ramli provided some information on the transfer of ownership of the Runnymede site under the Ministry of Defence "privatization policy". According to this information, the Runnymede property has been transferred to a company called Warisan Pinang Sdn Bhd in exchange for property at Bukit Gedung which has been developed as Camp Tun Razak, the new HQ of 2 Division. Warisan Pinang Sdn Bhd (managing director Datuk Mohd Ramzan Ibrahim) is responsible inter alia for "The Sanctuary", an exclusive RM425 million housing and condominium project being developed at Batu Uban which is expected to be completed in 2010.

Runnymede was vacated by 2 Division in April 2005 but remains under MOD control pending resolution of outstanding difficulties regarding the "privatization" arrangement with Warisan Pinang Sdn Bhd. Meanwhile, a Territorial Army battalion is expected to occupy the Runnymede premises for the next two or three years. This will assure the continued preservation and maintenance of this important heritage site at least in the short term.

Colonel Ramli also provided interesting anecdotal information about the double-storey house to the east of the main hotel wing and linked to it through the lobby. This building is believed to be the original "Runnymede", the house occupied by Thomas Stamford Raffles and his first wife Olivia, accompanied by Raffles's sister Mary Anne, during their stay in Penang (1805-1810). Destroyed by fire in 1921, the house was the residence of the 2 Division commanding general during 2 Division's occupancy and, according to Colonel Ramli, was a favourite retreat of the late Tun Razak, Malaysia's second Prime Minister and former Minister of Defence.



Raffles House showing five 19th century columns

Street Mementoes of Penang History

The careful observer wandering the streets of George Town will encounter many signs of days gone by – from colonial post office pillar boxes to manhole covers with proof of George Town's status as Malaysia's first city. Perhaps Pos Malaysia can explain what has happened to the King George VI post box that formerly stood outside the old Pulau Tikus post office under renovation on Cantonment Road.



City Council of George Town (CCGT) sewer cover on Esplanade near Fort



Queen Victoria post box with modern Pos Malaysia counterpart on Beach Street



King Edward VII post box, China Street Ghaut

Text & photos by Leslie A.K. James

Merchandise Sale



Newsletter Guest Editor-Leslie A.K. James

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

