



PHT newsletter

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SUPPORT CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

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**PENANG
HERITAGE
TRUST**

*Persatuan
Warisan
Pulau
Pinang*

PHT

50th Anniversary of George Town City Status

'THE PHT-HSBC LIVING HERITAGE TREASURES OF PENANG' AWARDS 2007

The Penang Heritage Trust & the HSBC Bank Malaysia pay tribute to our local people



The PHT announces the launch of the **PHT-HSBC Living Heritage Treasures of Penang Awards 2007**. PHT members are invited to nominate experts in various fields such as visual arts, traditional crafts and trades, culinary skills, martial arts, literature, performing arts in any area that personifies the cultural heritage of Penang.

The holders of the 2005 & 2006 awards are **Dato' Chuah Thean Teng** - Batik Artist, **Cikgu Bahroodin** - Cultural Expert, **Mr. Lim Bian Yam** - Chef Extraordinaire of Penang cuisine, **Mr. Yeap Seong Kee** - Penang's most renowned Nyonya Kebaya designer, **Mr. Kok Ah Wah** - Penang's last hand-carved signboard maker, **Mdm Ooi Sew Kim** - Puppeteer/ singer/ story-teller/ owner of the last remaining Hokkien Puppet Opera Troupes.

EDITORIAL

The New Year begins with the cause of heritage conservation in Malaysia confronting a challenge that is nothing short of a crisis (which we have documented in the pages of this issue of our newsletter). While heritage conservation has long been an uphill struggle in the face of a powerful, self-interested "development" lobby that has the ear of government, events during 2006 raised serious doubts whether government has any real commitment to heritage conservation, i.e., whether the political will exists at all to give concrete expression to heritage in public policy. Sadly, these doubts have deepened since the National Heritage Act 2005 was gazetted in March 2006.

Alarm bells rang on 10th October when the Culture, Arts & Heritage Minister participated in a ground-breaking ceremony for construction of a 110-metre viewing tower to be built in the heart of old Malacca. That any authority supporting Malacca's bid for UNESCO World Heritage Site listing could even contemplate approving a project so obviously likely to put the UNESCO bid at risk defies belief. That a minister responsible for heritage would then endorse the project in a public ceremony is doubly incredible and of special concern to Penang since George Town is twinned with Malacca in the application for UNESCO listing. To make matters worse the Minister reportedly said that listing for Penang and Malacca might not be so important after all. He went on to claim that conditions set by UNESCO for listing were difficult for Asian countries to meet, an assertion that betrays shockingly poor advice and a complete lack of knowledge of the true situation in the region.

The next blow to heritage conservation was delivered in mid-December when the Kuala Lumpur city authorities ordered the demolition of Bok House, a magnificent historic mansion which was the first building to be nominated for preservation under the National Heritage Act. The public outcry — from historians, architects, media, ordinary citizens and heritage advocates alike — should have given government pause. Instead, spurious arguments were

>> Continued Page 3

UNESCO Cultural Heritage Specialist Guide Programme

CULTURAL HERITAGE SPECIALIST GUIDE TRAINING & CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME 23-28 April 2007

FOR THE TENTATIVE WORLD HERITAGE SITE LISTING OF GEORGE TOWN, PENANG.

FIRST TIME IN MALAYSIA A COURSE RUN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RIGOROUS STANDARDS SET BY UNESCO, THE ASIAN ACADEMY, THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM & PENANG HERITAGE TRUST



- *Certification and Accreditation by UNESCO*
- *Kementerian Pelancungan Malaysia (Malaysian Ministry of Tourism)*
- *Macao Institute of Tourism Studies (IFT)*
- *Penang Heritage Trust (PHT)*

The PHT has been entrusted by UNESCO as well as the Ministry of Tourism with the training and certification of UNESCO Cultural Heritage Specialist Guides. Accredited trainers from within PHT as well as from UNESCO and IFT, together with local experts, will conduct the 6-day course. This advanced programme will complement existing national training programmes as well as stand alone in its ability to certify a guide to operate within George Town. It will strengthen the skills of existing guides, accredit new specialist guides as well as improve career prospects for all with internationally acclaimed certification.

INTRODUCTION WHY?

Heritage sites have become the most prominent tourism destinations in the Asia Pacific region. These represent universal values ranging from living historic towns to breathtaking cultural landscapes and stunning architectural monuments. These sites also bring enormous tourism revenue. At the same time, massive visitor pressures threaten authenticity and visitor enjoyment as well as local conditions and communities. In response to these concerns, the UNESCO-ICCROM Asian Academy for Heritage Management (AAHM), in cooperation with ADB, PATA and UNESCAP, has launched a pioneering, practical and regionally-recognized training and certification programme in partnership with national training institutions & local organizations. George Town, Penang, will be the pioneer site for Malaysia.

GOALS

To set new standards which will raise professional capacity in guiding visitors at heritage sites. The programme aims to provide the highest level of visitor experience, to raise awareness about cultural heritage and conservation issues and to foster awareness of community participation and long-term sustainability of these sites. The visitor to George Town will benefit from the best trained cultural heritage guides.

OBJECTIVES

The course aims to:

- *Enhance the visitor experience leading to longer stays and repeated visitation
- *Assist guides in interpreting sites
- *Benefit local communities by encouraging participation
- *Aid in sustaining the site by educating visitors about cultural and conservation issues and responsible conduct



UNESCO Cultural Heritage Specialist Guide Programme

COURSE CONTENT & TRAINING APPROACH

The content focuses on issues concerning Tourism at Important Heritage Sites, in this particular case, George Town, Penang, Malaysia. There are 6 Core Units which will be presented with a combination of lectures, practical exercises and field activities. Useful guidelines to a particular site will focus on explaining significance, interpretation and conservation issues and will include FAQ's about the site.

- UNIT 1 : What is the Cultural Heritage Specialist Guide – why are they needed?
- UNIT 2 : Understanding UNESCO World Heritage Sites – what is significant that merits listing?
- UNIT 3 : Understanding & Protecting Cultural Heritage – authenticity and how to sustain it
- UNIT 4 : Heritage Interpretation – whose story and how to tell it - how to enhance visitor experience
- UNIT 5 : Influencing Visitor Behaviour & Experience – appropriate behaviour, value added experience
- UNIT 6 : Sharing the Benefits – importance of community involvement & direct benefits, how does a guide help?



WHO SHOULD ATTEND?:

Certified guides as well as anyone interested in and concerned about issues of sustainable tourism in fragile heritage sites and improving visitor experience.

DURATION :

Mon 23rd April to Sat 28th April 2007 (8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.)

CHARGES : RM600/ participant (limited to 30)

INCLUDED IN PACKAGE:

Certificates, all training materials, lunches, teas, closing dinner. (Accommodation not included, may be arranged at discounted prices)

VENUE :

PHT Conference Room, 26 Church Street, George Town, Penang & various on-site locations

TRAINERS:

2 from IFT Macao, 1 from UNESCO Bangkok, 2 from PHT. Local experts will act as resource personnel.

For further enquiries & to sign up, call Penang Heritage Trust at 6-04-2642631, e-mail phtrust@streamyx.com or fax 6-04-2628421

EDITORIAL (Continued from front page)

advanced that Bok House was privately-owned and that conservation would be too costly. The Heritage Minister even challenged critics to show him why Bok House should have been saved, despite his ministry having received a massive dossier from Badan Warisan Malaysia to justify its nomination under the National Heritage Act. The Act has been shown to be toothless, with ministerial statements amounting to an open invitation to developers to demolish with impunity.

The current crisis brings into sharp focus the long-festering situation in Penang where outstanding heritage buildings are destroyed or are under threat. Examples include the pastiche replica of the illegally demolished Hotel Metropole attached to the façade of yet another high-rise on Northam Road; the derelict and collapsing Shih Chung Branch School; the proposed highrise in front of Runnymede Hotel; the planned monster tower-block project threatening the former St Joseph's Novitiate and Chapel and the Loke Mansion on Gurney Drive; and last but definitely not least, the proposed massive multiblock, multistorey development in the current open space of the Turf Club. The continued lack of planning and a transparent approval process for development projects on heritage sites (and elsewhere, including recreational spaces) strengthens apprehensions that decisions are made not in the public interest but for the financial benefit of interested parties.

Guest Editor

SUFFOLK HOUSE



A party of 93 PHT members and friends came to see what was going on at the site of Suffolk House on Sunday, 29th October 2006. For days before the visit, Penang had been subjected to heavy rain, usually starting around 4 p.m. As our visit was due to begin 3.30 p.m. umbrellas were well to the fore, but we were lucky and there was no rain. In fact, the sun broke through several times in the two hours we were there.

Arriving on foot, after passing the Malaysian German Society and Japanese Associations in their MPPP-rented buildings, outstanding colonial-style senior officers' government houses — let us hope

that they and a few other equally impressive houses also receive heritage recognition — we turned a corner and there was Suffolk House in all its glory. Admittedly much of it is still covered in scaffolding but the initial sight was memorable. At the moment this huge building is confined because of the lack of space around it. On its immediate right, and that means within 10 metres, is a school and in front within 20 metres are two old sheds used by the contractors carrying out the restoration. Behind Suffolk House the back boundary is only metres away.

We learned from Laurence Loh, the Consultant Architect, who really knows his stuff as to the 200 years history of the place, especially the recent 50 years disastrous period of inaction, that there are several hectares of land in front and to one side which are still jungly and swampy and which are to be completely landscaped anew.

This will be wonderful as included in this area is a stream, and what is more, full of unbelievably clear running water. When I went over to look at it I saw a goldfinch, a kingfisher, a heron and a biawak (iguana). Amazing! A bridge is to be built over the stream for visitors to go across and get a much better idea of the aspect that would have been seen by Captain Francis Light and his successors in the 18th and 19th centuries. All this is to be completed in 2007, before and after the official opening in March 2007.

It was a great shame, as related by Laurence, that Suffolk House, while used by the nearby school as a canteen for some years and already in a poor state of maintenance, was left to become more and more dilapidated. PHT began campaigning in the 1980s and finally plans were put into effect early this century to begin restoration. Phase I in year 2000 involved the restoration of the central core and jack roof and was financed solely by the Penang State Government at the cost of RM500,000. Further restoration was not possible as funds allocated under the 8th Malaysia Plan somehow mysteriously 'disappeared'. Work came to a standstill. Hopes fell once again. Was Suffolk House fated to remain as 'glorious ruins'? In 2004 crucial help was very generously given by HSBC Bank Bhd, RM2 million, and the State Government found another RM1.5 million to complete the restoration of the structure. The amount headed would have been considerably less if action to restore the property had begun in 1962. A public fund raising campaign is being conducted to raise the remaining money needed for the fit-out of the house involving electrical, plumbing, security and minimal furnishings.

Penangites in particular, as well as visitors, will consider that this money well spent, and carefully spent. By that I mean that as much as possible of the original building materials have been left in place or replaced with similar ones. The result is amazing and imposing. We could see the floorings upstairs and downstairs which fit in with the walls and ceilings excellently. The massive pillars outside are also a sight on their own and have been built using the original techniques employed by original builders. The flat roof too is fashioned as the original. Final furnishing will be carefully selected following what is historically known to have been there.

Overall, everyone visiting the site on 29th October came away in a thoughtful frame of mind and happy to see the progress of restoration. We all look forward to its rapid completion and opening to the wider world. One hopes that whoever is in charge when it is handed over will make sure that signs on how to reach Suffolk House are prominently displayed. It is, after all, in a very unlikely area, surrounded by three major schools with only a small unmetalled road leading in. I wish I had some historical knowledge of the whole area around Suffolk House,

Con't ~Suffolk House

which might then explain why Francis Light chose to locate his Suffolk Estate here and why it functioned as the Governor's residence.* After all, 200 or more years ago, the site was a long way from the sea and the main town, such as it was. It would have been very jungly and, looking around, not very defensible which was an important point then. Nevertheless, there it is and admirable it is, even better when the land is fully landscaped with those plants that were originally on the site. They are being propagated ready for transplant.

Text by Derek Seagrove & Loh-Lim | Photo Courtesy of LLA

**Editor's Note: It is known from historical sources that the property on which Suffolk House was built was an estate acquired by Light and named Suffolk after the English county of his birth. Several of Light's contemporaries such as Scott and Brown maintained similar estates outside George Town where they grew local fruits and spices. Historical sources indicate that as early as 1791 Light owned a Malay pavilion with a thatched roof and built six feet above the ground. It was probably on or near the site of Suffolk House. Light liked to entertain guests and visitors for picnics at this pavilion and must have been fond of the place as he left the Suffolk estate and house to his wife Martina in his will. His son-in-law General James Welsh after visiting Governor Bannerman at Suffolk in 1818 described it as "once the private property of Mr. Light and his favourite residence."*

theSun | FRIDAY, JANUARY 5, 2007

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CityPlus

March opening for Suffolk House

by Opatyn Mok
newsdesk@theunsat.com

ONE can soon take a step back to the early days of Penang by walking through Suffolk House in Air Itam when it opens its doors in March.

The grand detached double-storey building has finally been restored to its former glory after more than 40 years of restoration efforts by conservationists and various organisations.

Set in open grounds along the banks of the Air Itam river, Suffolk House is reportedly the oldest original surviving model of two forms of architecture, Anglo-Indian and Malay.

Also dubbed the first *Great House of Penang*, it was originally built by the founder of the British settlement in Penang, Francis Light, in the early 1790s and was probably named after the English county where Light was born.

The mansion was the home of the early governors and the venue for many social and official events.

It also served as a government house between 1810 and 1820 where important political discussions were held.

Over the years, the grand old building underwent many alterations and evolved from a colonnaded Anglo-Indian garden house to a tile-roofed mansion.

A campaign to restore Suffolk House began in 1961.

At that time, the Methodist Church, which owned the land and house, used the ground floor of the building as a canteen for students of the Methodist Boys' School.

However, in the early 1970s, because of severe dilapidation, the canteen was closed and the



building left vacant.

The state government later formed a Suffolk House Committee but it faced delays because of difficult land transfers while the building continued to be exposed to the elements and became even more run down.

In 1993, the Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) conducted a dilapidation survey and stabilisation works on the mansion with the help of SACON from Adelaide. Friends of Suffolk House was formed.

The turning point came in 2000 when the state government acquired the property by exchanging land with the Methodist Church.

Phase one of the restoration works started in November 2000 with an initial RM500,000 allocation from the government.

Later, HSBC Bank contributed RM2 million and the state government another RM1 million.

The total restoration cost is estimated to come up to about

RM5 million.

PHT secretary Jack Ong said the restoration works are in the final stages and "we will open the building to the public by the end of March, come rain or shine".

Suffolk House will be open for public use as a venue for events.

The original early paintings of Penang from 1802 to 1860 will be displayed in the main gallery on the first floor.

Site Visit Report January 2007~ Lunas, Kedah



A busload of 44 PHT members and friends joined the PHT January Site Visit. The visit took us out of Penang State, to visit the town of Lunas, which is just beyond the border of Penang in neighbouring Kedah. According to Laurence Loh, who played host for this visit, Lunas is located immediately east of George Town, as the crow flies. I checked and found that the latitude of Lunas indeed corresponds with Gurney Drive and Pulau Tikus on Penang Island.

The participants assembled at the Caring Society Complex at Jalan Utama, at 9:45am that lovely Sunday morning, 28 January 2007. PHT rented a coach to take us there. Our coach left Penang at 10:00am. Traffic that morning was smooth, save for a diversion where the Gelugor Underpass was closed. This trip was almost like a tour guide outing, because there were seven licensed tour guides on board. As the law requires tour coaches to include an accompanying guide, Mr Yeap Peng Hoe graciously volunteered his services for the occasion, entertaining us with light-hearted explanation on the Penang Bridge as well as the journey along the Butterworth-Kulim Expressway.

Our first stop was at the old Lunas rubber smokehouse. It is located by the main road as one enters Lunas town. There, Laurence gave us a briefing. He is the grandson of Loh Boon Ghee @ Loh Boon Ngee, one of the three men who founded Lunas. The smokehouse was built in the late 1960s by Laurence's uncle for the use of smallholders to smoke their rubber and it had been abandoned since the 1980s.

In 2006, Laurence restored the smokehouse as part of Digi's Amazing Malaysians 2006 "Rubber Story" programme, and turned it into a site museum exhibiting the history of Lunas and its position as a rubber town. The Rubber Story holds the distinction of being the only rubber exhibit in Malaysia located *in situ* of an actual rubber smokehouse. The three-storey structure is divided into two sections. On one side, we get acquainted with Lunas town, its founding, and anything interesting that we can come across in Lunas today - no stone was left unturned, no one and nothing was spared a description. On the other side, we enter an authentic smokehouse. Authentic because the smokehouse has been preserved as it was, to give visitors the feel of how and what a smokehouse is like. At the basement level, there is a exhibit of the documentation work done by the children of Lunas.

As part of the programme, Laurence Loh engaged the participation of 80 children in the Lunas community to document the sites as well as to interview the residents. The children, aged 10 to 14 of all ethnic backgrounds, were drawn from three schools in Lunas, namely SRJK (China) Hwa Min, SMK Kulim and SMK Jalan Paya Besar. Practically every shophouse in Lunas was photographed, videographed and carefully documented. The children also drew up a Lunas heritage trail. The effort is now exhibited at the Lunas smokehouse.



Mind map produced by schoolchildren



Smokehouse interpretation centre

Site Visit Report~ Lunas, Kedah



Soon Mansion

From the smokehouse, we walked through Lunas town. On the way, we passed the Sri Maha Kuttakarai Muniswarar Alayam Hindu Temple, established as an estate temple for the Indian community. The Indian community in Lunas has since dwindled with the disappearance of the rubber estates, and the town is today decidedly Chinese in character.

Continuing our walk, we passed the only single-storey detached house along the main road. This house is dubbed the "Strong Wall". It was built in 1951 and was nicknamed as such, because it was reinforced to withstand bullets!

We arrived at a junction. Turning left would take us to the Hock Teik Soo Temple, the Hokkien Tua Pek Kong Temple of Lunas and furtherdown, the Buddhist Hermitage. Turning right takes us to the mansion of Soon Ah Lee @ Baba Lee. Baba Lee was another of the three founders of Lunas, the third being Lim Lean Teng.

The Palladian type bungalow was built in 1928. The exterior has since been repainted and restored, but nothing much has been done to restore its interior. PHT members had the opportunity of browsing around at the period furnishing - I am not sure how long ago the bungalow was last used. (I did see a bottle of *Scott's Emulsion* in one of its cabinets. I wonder how long it had been there).

From the Soon Mansion, we broke for lunch. Lunch was each to his own. Chooi Yoke (my wife-to-be) and I joined a few other members to enjoy the famous Tan Kee Lunas Duck, located prominently on the main road. I did enjoy the lunch very much. For two persons, we spent a mere RM17.00, quite cheap (by Penang standards) for the amount of duck and accompanying mixed vegetable stew that we received.

After lunch, we visited a cottage industry where local cookies such as *pang siew kueh* were made. We all crowded into the backyard to watch the lady make cookies, and quite a number of us came away with massive tins.

Next we boarded our coach to visit the Buddhist Hermitage. Arriving at the bridge across Sungai Kulim, the coach driver refused to go any further, for fear that he would not be able to back out. So we all had to climb down and walk the remaining 400 meters or so to the hermitage. Approaching the hermitage on foot was also a good idea, as it allowed us to stop and take photographs.

We entered the newly built pagoda at the hermitage. It houses a statue of the Buddha in Santida Mudra gesture, represented by a standing Buddha figure with a raised right hand.



PHT members at Buddhist Hermitage

Thus ended our interesting and informative visit to Lunas.

Text by Timothy Tye

Photographs by Timothy Tye & PHT

Penang Anniversaries

1st January	150 years	Penang Municipal Commission
	50 years	City of George Town
31st March	85 years	Penang Cenotaph on Esplanade
31st August	50 years	Independence

2007

STATEMENT BY THE PENANG HERITAGE TRUST RE. UNESCO LISTING

Wednesday 11 October 2006

N22 Nation

THE STAR

Rais downplays UN heritage bids

MALACCA: Getting Penang and Malacca listed as World Heritage Sites may not be so important after all, Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said.

He said the current conditions set by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) for listing were also difficult for Asian countries.

He said he would propose to the United Nations to establish an Asia Chapter for Unesco listing comprising Asian members as judges.

"It would be fairer this way. The current conditions set by Unesco are difficult for Asian countries to be listed," he said, adding that European countries enjoyed a higher chance of being listed.

He was speaking to reporters after the groundbreaking ceremony for the 110m-high revolving tower which would be built near the Stadthuys heritage zone here yesterday.

Dr Rais said Penang and Malacca had made three joint applications and each time Unesco came back to ask for more data.

"We gave the additional data when asked to do so. Now, we do not have any more new data to give," he said.

Gunung Mulu National Park and Kinabalu National Park have been declared World Heritage Sites.

Mekong and orang asli carvings have also been proclaimed "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritages of Humanity" by Unesco.

On the construction of the revolving tower, Dr Rais said it should not be used as a reason to reject the application for listing.

It is with great distress that the Penang Heritage Trust read the statements recently made by the Minister for Arts, Culture & Heritage at the launch of the Malacca Tower. It is clear that YAB Dato Rais Yatim has been inadequately advised by the relevant parties as to the actual situations he refers to in his statements about UNESCO and World Heritage Listing. This is an international recognition that carries incomparable prestige and national

pride and is intently sought after by innumerable countries each year. In fact there are so many submissions that there is a queue for consideration and each country is only allowed 1 submission for each of the 3 categories – cultural, natural and mixed.

We would like to respectfully inform the Minister that far from being Euro-centric and applying European standards to Malaysia's submitted dossiers for Penang & Malacca, the **World Heritage Committee** who makes the final decisions on submissions by State Parties comprises 21 members representing State Parties on 6 year terms with the current committee having 3 Asians, 8 African/Middle Easterners and 3 South Americans and is chaired by a Lithuanian with 5 Vice-Chairmen, 1 each from India and Kuwait. Expert site assessors are from within the region and indeed, Malaysia has a UNESCO accredited expert assessor who assesses other Asian sites that have been submitted for listing.

Of the 16 cultural sites which were listed in 2006, 10 are non European being sites in Oman, Syria, Mauritius, Mexico, Iran, Malawi, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Gambia and China. Even the 2 natural sites are in China and Colombia.

We would also like to inform the Minister that of the current Asian State Parties, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam all have 3 cultural sites, Cambodia & Laos both have 2, Japan has 9, South Korea has 7, Sri Lanka has 6, Bangladesh has 2, Nepal has 2, Pakistan has 6, China has 23 and India has 21. Even North Korea has 1. Only Myanmar has no listed site and Singapore is not a signatory to the World Heritage Convention. So Malaysia is glaring in its lack of cultural site listing, particularly when we have such important sites as George Town and Malacca.

Yes, the criteria and demands are very high, or else why would such prestige be involved? These however are not European standards, they are international standards of best practice and management. The standards used follow international charters such as the Venice Charter, the China Principles, the Nara Document on Authenticity and the ICOMOS-Burra Charter. Surely we are not now saying that if we do not meet these standards, (standards met by all our neighbours who have such marvelous cultural and historical sites) they are therefore useless European standards and maybe we do not want to be listed anyway? Doesn't this reek of sour grapes?

The public should be aware that our dossiers were returned because they were technically incomplete. We did not include Management Plans and UNESCO remains very concerned that sites listed must be protected by laws

Heritage Issues

and clear management plans. We have been informed by various parties that the writing of these plans has been assigned and will be ready for re-submission by the last quarter of 2006. Are we now being informed that they are not ready?

The Penang Heritage Trust must also add its voice to those raised over the planned Malacca Tower. We are of course convinced of its unsuitability to the spirit and place of Malacca's historical district and cultural heritage. 'Tourism products' are very dangerous in a heritage site. It is the heritage itself that attracts visitors and the more authentic it is, the greater its attraction. Visitors who have taken the effort to come to Malacca to view its cultural heritage will be horrified by the Tower. We in Penang have our Komtar to contend with, but at least it was done 30 years ago, at a time when we didn't know better. How do we explain the Malacca Tower in 2007 especially when we have already submitted ourselves to vie for prestigious World Heritage Listing?

16th October 2006

Cultural Apocalypse

*Let us not mourn
the passing of Bok House
College General, tramcars
rainforests, ronggeng
wayang kulit, opera
mak yong, boria, the stage....*

The worst is yet to come.

*This is the age of MAMMON
not conservation
where profit & percentage
will ever trump
culture & heritage....*

*Cecil Rajendra
2007*

NEW STRAITS TIMES

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2006

Preserving
the past

NOW that the dust from the rubble that once was Bok House has settled, it seems clear that different people put different values on heritage. In campaigning to preserve the grand mansion, conservationists argued that its architectural, social and historical value made it a priceless treasure which had to be protected at all cost. In deciding not to step in to save it from the bulldozers, as they could have by classifying it as a heritage building under the National Heritage Act 2005, the authorities probably decided that the price tag for acquiring and restoring it to its former glory was too high. In resisting the pleas not to demolish it, the trustees of the building were banking on high-rise development rather than the commercial value of Bok House as a heritage building. What therefore seems to have spelt the demise of Bok House is its location on prime land in the city centre, which makes it financially prohibitive for the government to save it and too irresistible for real-estate developers to ignore.

In the past, when pre-war buildings and colonial bungalows were flattened to make way for shopping malls and condominiums, the finger was often pointed at the absence of legislation allowing the government to intervene. But the demolition of Bok House shows that changes to the law can only do so much. While it is true, as the case of the Coliseum in Kuala Lumpur and the observation tower in Malacca illustrate, that the authorities don't always get their priorities right when it comes to heritage preservation, the fact is that with about RM100 million set aside under the Ninth Malaysia Plan, the government can never have enough money to conserve all the buildings that can be argued to merit protection. What it means is that when endangered buildings stand on prime property, it will always be an uphill struggle to save them when their private owners are neither willing nor able to keep them in good condition.

It also means that rescuing old buildings from certain ruin is no simple matter. As the successful restoration of Suffolk House in Penang illustrates, public participation and the help of private corporations would be vital. There have been many other successes of private-led heritage conservation. If it is any consolation at all, the loss of Bok House will have generated greater awareness of the need of conservation. With the battles that lie ahead to preserve the past for posterity, private initiatives and public support would be crucial.

Just how safe is our heritage?

IT IS really disheartening to read the news about Bok House demolition (Heritage body upset by demolition of Bok House, The Star, Dec 16).

When the whole nation is busy rolling down the curtains of 2006, celebrating the arrival of year 2007 as Visit Malaysia Year, we are seeing the demolition of another national heritage structure.

Heritage buildings were built by our forefathers and they tell stories of how our nation was built.

They are the living entity that reflect how and what our nation was like.

No doubt our nation is moving towards modernisation.

More and more skyscrapers are mushrooming but at the same time, we are seeing more and more heritage buildings being torn down. Is this the price we need to pay for the sake of modernisation?

Next year is Visit Malaysia Year 2007. Tourists from all over the world are keen to know and learn more about our nation's heritage, the legacy left by our forefathers. They are not here to see skyscrapers.

If we can salvage these heritage buildings and turn them into art gallery, museum or heritage hotel, I'm sure this will be another tourist destination where we can generate revenue.

Singapore is a modern city yet when you walk around the city, you can still see many heritage buildings of the colonial days that are well protected and being transformed into galleries. Why are we sacrificing our treasured assets when our neighbour is busy salvaging them?

When Sir Stamford Raffles saw the demolition of Malacca Fort by the British, he quickly ordered the demolition to be stopped even though it was not a British legacy.

He saw the historic value and the essence of it even though what was left was only the A Famosa Gate.

Today, thanks to the intervention of Sir Stamford Raffles, we are able to see the magnificent A Famosa Gate which attracts thousands of



LOST FOREVER: Bok House was a living entity that reflected how and what our nation was like

tourist to Malacca each year.

Looking at the present situation, we cannot be sure that one-day buildings like Carcosa Sri Negara, Sri Perdana, St. John's institution, and Victoria Institution will not face the

same fate as Bok House.

After all, Victoria Institution is situated on a prime land.

WONG WENG YEW, Ipoh.

Bok House too rotten, too costly to save

by Llew-Ann Phang and Pauline Puah
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: The Culture, Arts And Heritage Ministry decided not to list Bok House as a heritage building under the National Heritage Act (NHA) because architectural and engineering reports it received concluded that the structure was severely deteriorated, rehabilitation cost was too high, and the house had no historical significance.

"It's just one house in town which is nice to see but structurally defective. Based on the reports, we utilised the provision of the new Act not to list it as a national heritage item," he said at a press conference yesterday after a National Arts Academy convocation ceremony.

"It's just a house belonging to a well-to-do man in town having some ornamental set-up in the facade as well as on the outside. The (building's) corrosion was very severe. Apart from that, there was contention within the family," he said.

He said heritage lovers should be objective about the ministry's reports, adding that City Hall had the discretion to make planning decisions based on such reports.

The 77-year-old Bok House or Le Coq d'Or on Jalan Ampang was the first building nominated under the Act as a heritage site to the ministry in April this year by Badan Warisan Malaysia. However, Rais said the ministry had already made its decision in September last year.

Last Thursday, contractors started tearing down the house and by Sunday, the house of Cycle and Carriage empire tycoon Chua Cheng Bok was just a pile of rubble.

Conservationists and architects have expressed regret, and questioned the lack of political will involved in enforcing the Act.

Asked why the ministry did not announce its decision earlier, Rais said: "Because it did not deem it fit to do so. It's just another building."

» Turn to Page 10

Historian: Bok House important part of KL's history

KUALA LUMPUR: Bok House might have been merely a rich man's house, but the mansion still warranted conservation, said the Malaysian Institute of Architects.

Its president Dr Tan Lok Mun said the building was among several houses owned by the wealthy and formed the streetscape of Jalan Ampang.

He said such buildings should be preserved if the Government was serious

about heritage tourism.

"There is nothing wrong with it being a rich man's home. It shows the lifestyle of olden days," he said yesterday in response to a statement by Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim.

Bok House built by philanthropist Chua Cheng Bok which was demolished by KL City Hall on Dec 15 was considered by many as having heritage value.

However, on Thursday Dr Rais challenged dissenters to prove that Bok House was of historical value.

"If anyone can come forward and show the historic significance of the building, I would like to see him right in the eye," said the minister.

He also described the building as "just a house belonging to a rich man."

Dr Tan said PAM was willing to meet Dr Rais to discuss the

Bok House issue and other historically significant buildings that should be preserved.

"We should do something before other buildings are destroyed," said Dr Tan who expressed disappointment that PAM was not consulted before Bok House was demolished.

Historian Prof Emeritus Datuk Dr Khoo Kay Kim said the house was more than just a rich man's house.

"The house was significant

to KL history as well as the whole development of Ampang," he said, adding that Ampang used to be home to the elite.

He said Bok House was built by someone who was synonymous with the development of Kuala Lumpur.

"Chua was the first to introduce a bus service to Kuala Lumpur before World War I. In fact, the rickshaw pullers of the city rioted because of the

threat to their livelihood," he said.

The Government, he said, should put a stop to demolition of historical buildings as they were part of history.

Heritage enthusiast Datuk Halimah Mohd Said, however, agreed with Dr Rais that the house did not have any historical significance.

"Besides its architectural splendour, what historical value is there?" she said.

20 Focus

SundayStar

24 December 2006



MIX OF OLD AND NEW: The Asian Heritage Row of trendy bars and restaurants has been adapted to cater to its new occupants at the expense of its authenticity. — STARPic by ART CHEN

Saved from demolition

Recent history suggests that Bok House could have been saved.

RASHVINJEET S. BEDI looks at a few past instances where heritage buildings that were marked for demolition escaped being torn down.

MOST tourists to Kuala Lumpur will very likely take a walk from the KL Tower to KLCC. Interspersed between these two mega-structures are old but beautiful buildings such as the Malaysian Tourist Centre and the Pakistani High Commission. And, until recently, Bok House.

According to Ahmad Najib Ariffin, a freelance heritage writer, researcher and tour guide, old buildings fascinate tourists.

"Whenever we passed by Bok House, people said it looked interesting. Although it was abandoned, I could stand there regaling them with a story about the house for 10 minutes. I used to end my story by saying that I hoped it would be restored one day. Now, I can't say there used to be a house here."

"Tourist brochures always cite our cities as having a mix of the old and new. It is true to a certain extent, but becoming less and less true. I am not against new buildings; I am against destroying the old in chasing the new," said Ahmad.

Chua Cheng Bok, who co-founded a business in 1899 and built it up into a successful enterprise that came to be known as Cycle & Carriage, commenced construction of Bok House in Ampang Road in 1906 and the building was completed in three years.

Seventy-seven years later, Bok House was soon bought by KL City Hall on Dec 15, following a study by the Culture, Arts and Heritage Ministry on the safety of the building which found severe deterioration of its structure.

Precedents have shown that Bok House could still be standing. For instance, the neo-classical Lokai Hall, which houses the Architects Association of Malaysia (PAM), was saved from near demolition.

Built by Lokai Chow Kit in 1907, Lokai Hall was converted to the Peninsular Hotel before it was taken over by PAM in 1973.

In February 1981, the estate of Alan Lokai gave notice to PAM to vacate the premises as it was sold to Inland Development Sdn Bhd for new development.

According to former PAM president Hajeedur Abdol Rahman, public outcry caught the Government's attention on the importance of preserving heritage buildings.

KL City Hall, then led by Mayor Tan Sri Elyas Omar, acquired the building from the develop-



PUT TO GOOD USE: The Central Market, once used as a wet market, is now a charming cultural market through the concept of adaptive reuse. — STARPic by KAMARUL ANVIZ

ers and transferred their development rights to another site. This transfer of rights was based on the 1984 KL Structure Plan, which gave importance to the preservation of places and structures that have historical and architectural significance.

The KL Structure plan also recommended incentives such as a payback scheme and tax reductions for owners of these buildings.

"We (PAM) were handed responsibility as custodians of the building," said Hajeedur. Instead of paying rent, PAM was responsible for restoration and upkeep of the building. And it has not come cheap for PAM whose members had to raise the funds.

In 1983, almost RM285,000 was spent to repair the roof that was in danger of collapsing. In the mid-1990s, the bill to repair a termite-infested timber floor came up to RM900,000.

There was also the proposed demolition of the Central Market. Once used as a wet market, it was deemed to no longer serve any purpose because three new markets were built in the



ARCHITECTURAL SHOWPIECE: Dr Tan stands in front of Lokai Hall which now houses PAM's headquarters. The association took over the building in 1973 but almost lost it when developers wanted to demolish the building in 1981. — STARPic by ONG SOON ANN

into restaurants and bars. Although purists question the intrinsic value, William Ng who was behind the Row says that something is better than nothing.

"Internally it may have lost its intrinsic value but has anyone done better? At least we preserved something. Others have knocked everything down or left things in derelict condition. We tried to at least keep the facade and the consistency of its look."

"It is difficult, if not impossible, to find replacements for the original materials. Also, the buildings did not have the modern amenities and layout necessary for a different type of business or usage," he said.

Therefore, Ng said there was no choice but to knock down walls and remove floors. Steel reinforced beams and structure had to be installed to strengthen the building to accommodate hundreds of customers at one time.

So what was different about Bok House?

While the owners had the final say, the Ministry study suggested that Bok House was structurally unsound. Renowned architect Laurence Loh believes it could have been saved.

"There are no difficulties in preservation or conservation work. You have to be trained, knowledgeable and well-versed with the work methodology," said Loh who was in charge of restoring the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion in Penang, winner of Unesco's Asia-Pacific Heritage 2000 Award for Conservation.

"I have worked on the most dilapidated of buildings. I have resurrected Suffolk House in Penang, which was a ruin. I restored the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion which had hundreds of structural cracks caused by hammer-driven piling next door. Bok House is a relatively younger building erected out of harder material," he said.

"The question is, who did the assessment? The situation is like a person who changes his car because the astiray is full," he said.

PAM president Dr Tan Loke Mun says the Government could give incentives to corporations to buy these heritage buildings as is done in Australia.

"The corporations would get their name on it and can build up a nice piece of art. They could use it for advertising and corporate imaging," he said.

'Balloon better option than watch tower for Malacca'

By Regina William
newadvice@sundaily.com

INSTEAD of building a viewing tower near the old Dutch fort, the Malacca state government has been urged to consider providing helium balloon rides to visitors who want to view the scenery.

The suggestion by the Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) is based on the popularity of the helium balloon rides at Angkor Wat in Cambodia.

In making the suggestion, PHT council

member Ahmad Chik said helium balloons would be a cheaper but more attractive option.

Following the decision to preserve the recently uncovered wall of the ancient Dutch Fort, Ahmad Chik said the balloons would likely be more acceptable to Unesco, since Malacca's application for listing as a world heritage site is pending.

"The PHT congratulates the culture, arts and heritage minister and the Malacca state government for the wise decision to scrap the viewing tower to preserve the ancient wall.

"This is in accordance with the well established conservation principle that the new must give precedence to the old.

But instead of looking for another site for the aborted tower, he said PHT would suggest the authorities consider the use of helium balloons which will be as, if not more, attractive, cheaper and, less offensive visually.

"Angkor Wat and its surrounding temples, one of the best known and most prestigious heritage sites in our region, has a tethered helium balloon which can take about 20 passengers on each 10-minute trip in complete safety to a height of 180m, giving a spectacular view of the ruins and the entire countryside to a distance of about 20km.

"It is very safe, costs very little to maintain, is extremely popular with tourists and those who have been on it are impressed by the sense of serenity and comfort," Ahmad Chik said.

He said all that is required is an area about the size of two tennis courts and very little building and engineering works.

The cost would most definitely be less than the RM20 million proposed for the tower, said Ahmad Chik.

He suggested that the Malacca state government send a small team to Angkor Wat to study and evaluate the proposal.

Scrap the tower, use air balloon to view Malacca

THE Penang Heritage Trust congratulates the Minister for Culture and Heritage and the Malacca Government for the wise decision to scrap the viewing tower and instead to preserve the recently discovered wall of the ancient Dutch fort.

This is in accordance with the well-established conservation principle: the new must give precedence to the old.

While they are looking for another site for the tower project, may we suggest an entirely different approach which will be as, if not more, attractive, cheaper and, being less offensive visually (unlike the tower), is likely to be more acceptable to Unesco for listing purposes.

Angkor Wat and surrounding temples, one of the best known and most prestigious heritage sites in our region, has a tethered helium balloon which

can take about 20 passengers on each 10 minute trip in complete safety to a height of 180m, giving a spectacular view of the ruins and the entire countryside to a distance of about 20km.

It is very safe, costs very little to maintain, is extremely popular with tourists, and those who have been on it were impressed by the sense of serenity and comfort.

It is also acceptable to all international conservation bodies because it is not an irreversible intrusion into a site.

We do not know the cost but it is very likely to be less than the RM20mil proposed for the tower.

In addition, it will have another advantage of being unique in Malaysia and therefore more of a crowd puller than a mere steel tower.

AHMAD CHIK,
Penang Heritage Trust.



Photo courtesy
of Loh-Lim

Please retain Malacca's charm

Star 28.10.06

I OFTEN wonder how the Malaysian powers that be define growth and progress.

As we race towards becoming a fully developed country by the year 2020, do we even know what being "developed" means?

Is it all about shiny skyscrapers, criss-crossing highways and air-ports in space? All these things merely go to show that we have some spare cash to spend and nothing else.

It was recently reported that the Malacca government is proposing to build a mini-monorail from Melaka Sentral to Semabek, Melaka Raya, Kota Laksamana and back to Melaka Sentral. "CM: Malacca to build mini-

monorail" (The Star, Oct 17).

Now, if you were a local, you would know these "stops" are only 10 minutes apart by car and most families in Malacca own at least one car.

In fact, the public buses are seldom full. Why do we need a monorail then?

According to the Chief Minister, the presence of the monorail will add value to the Malacca River.

How will having a train line cross over the river add value to it?

In 1956, Tunku Abdul Rahman led a delegation to London to negotiate Malaya's independence.

The British government agreed and when Tunku returned home, he ap-
plied to announce the news in Malacca - the place where it all began.

Consequently, the location of this announcement was named "Padang Merdeka". One would think that such a historical site would be cherished and preserved by the state government. But, no, it decided to build, of all things, a shopping mall on the padang.

Years ago, Padang Merdeka was the place youth would gather in the evenings for friendly football matches, cheered on by family and friends.

Was this too un-glamorous and un-posh for the government?

The state government has also decided to build an observation tower costing RM15mil just outside the state's heritage zone.

It expects 500,000 tourists a year to visit Malacca Tower. Malacca is an architectural paradise and is best appreciated from the ground.

And just when you thought things couldn't get any worse, they are trying with the notion of a cable car linking St John's Hill to Pulau Melaka.

I grew up in my grandparents' home at the foot of the hill. So, I can say that there is no way one would be able to build a cable car station on that hill without damaging St John's Fort, which is more than 200 years old.

During the mornings and evenings, you can see many locals jogging up and down the hill, chatting with friends, enjoying the greenery and fresh air.

It is a green lung and the people's sanctuary. How could a cable car station be more important than that?

The government aspires to make Malacca a developed state by 2010. But if "developed" means turning a once-charming town into something tacky, sacrificing taste and heritage at the altar of the dollar sign, I would rather remain "undeveloped".

MELISSA YONG,
Kuala Lumpur.

Heritage Issues~ Statement by Badan Warisan Malaysia

I. HERITAGE MATTERS: PROMOTING AND PROTECTING PLACE

Badan Warisan Malaysia is deeply concerned over the definition of what is a heritage building. The demolitions of Bok House, and those of the Metropole Hotel in Penang (1993) and the Eastern Hotel in Kuala Lumpur (1990) were sad stories for the public.

2. Heritage has to do with our legacies. The objective of conservation is the retention of authenticity in buildings which are repositories of knowledge, history and memories. Heritage conservation is about cultural sustainability and the promotion of cultural rights and cultural diversity. It is about our collective memory and celebrating our past in the present. It is about leaving a legacy for our children and our children's children.

3. Badan Warisan Malaysia is conscious of the urgent need to seek clarity on the issues which were raised by members of the public when these demolitions took place. The moment is now ripe to discuss the definition of cultural significance and whose version should get the vote.

4. What is required is dialogue and discourse to engage with the issues expressed in the public arena, to propel the understanding of cultural heritage conservation forward. The present condition is testimony to the fact that our physical legacies remain fragile and highly vulnerable, especially within the context of economic marketforces and real estate development. It is not an exaggeration to state that we are fighting against time.

to read more, please visit our web site:

<http://www.badanwarisan.org.my/content/?cid=163>

Ahmad Sarji bin Abdul Hamid
President
Badan Warisan Malaysia



Photo Courtesy of Badan Warisan Malaysia



Hotel Metropole

Photo Courtesy P. Pinang Magazine



Hotel Metropole facade-
adding insult to injury!



19th December 2006

WHITHER HERITAGE?

The Penang Heritage Trust is greatly saddened by recent events, the demolition of Bok House, the destruction of the last remaining Hui Muslim community the Koay Jetty, the approval of the Hunza/Uplands development threatening the historic St Joseph's Novitiate and Loke Mansion, and the continued insistence of the Malacca Government, with the public endorsement of the Ministry of Culture, Arts & Heritage, to erect a concrete viewing tower in the historic core of Malacca. All these decisions have been made in the name of the almighty ringgit, in blatant favour of a small but obviously powerful sector of the society and in the face of public disapproval and against public well being. The statements / excuses given by the powers-that-be as to why these heartbreaking tragedies have been allowed to happen, range from indefensible to just plain foolish:

- "as long as its within the plot ratio, we can't say no" (a clerk can calculate plot ratio, we expect our city leaders to demonstrate a critical ability to judge what is for the greater good and the betterment of the general public, not of a single developer. Plot ratio is a privilege not a right)

- "The Government has no money to buy all private heritage sites" (And yet the Ministry insisted on purchasing Coliseum? Protection of our heritage does not necessarily involve purchase. Can the Authorities not look to other countries to see what they do? Why do we always act like our problems are so unique to us? All the European nations and Asian ones like Vietnam, have heritage sites, the site is not bought, it is allowed to engage in its traditional usage, instead Governments offer real incentives, such as partial restoration costs, assisting with maintenance etc)

- "we can't gazette it because its private property and because of the high cost of restoration", (Does the National Heritage Act not allow gazetting of private property and since when has the cost of restoration determined the importance of a building? PHT trembles with concern for our dilapidated heritage buildings in Penang)

- "It was unstable, there were cracks from neighbouring piling works" (We have many cases of restored buildings that were a great deal more damaged than Bok House to start off with)

- Do we need a RM21 million viewing tower for tourists to see historic Malacca? A clearly determined move to eliminate any possibility of UNESCO World Heritage Listing, to leave Penang now in limbo and ironically of course removing any desire of tourists to visit a once-historic town.

The National Heritage Act was hurriedly approved, it had no input from important historic centers like Penang and it is considered by international legal minds as very poorly written and vastly lacking in any real 'bite and substance'. The Penang State Exco had opposed the Bill, we urge them not to adopt the concurrent Act and to seek amendments to give it greater strength.

13 years ago at this same time around Christmas, the Metropole was illegally demolished. Today a multistory development stands in its place, at the bottom of its façade a pastiche paste-on pretend-Metropole, making a total

Penang Heritage Trust not buying ministry's excuses

GEORGE TOWN: The Culture, Arts and Heritage Ministry and other authorities have been lambasted for offering excuses every time a historical site or building is destroyed.

Penang Heritage Trust vice-president Tunku Ismail Mohammad Jewa said the statements given by the authorities ranged from the indefensible to just plain foolish.

He said the trust was saddened by recent events, such as the demolition of Bok House in Kuala Lumpur, the approval of a development project at the former Uplands School site here and the continued insistence of the Malacca government to build a viewing tower in the historic centre of the city.

"All these decisions have been made in the name of the almighty ringgit, in blatant favour of a small but obviously powerful sector of society. It is being done despite public disapproval and protests."

Tunku Ismail said the excuse that the government had no money to buy all the heritage sites was a lame one.

He said if this had been the case, the ministry should ex-

plain why it had insisted on buying the Coliseum building in Kuala Lumpur recently.

"Protection of our heritage does not necessarily involve the government buying up all the buildings. It only needs to learn from what is happening in our neighbouring countries

PHT vice-president
Tunku Ismail Mohammad Jewa

to see how heritage buildings are being conserved. The governments of other countries offer incentives such as subsidising part of the restoration costs to ensure that the buildings are maintained," he said.

On the project at the former Uplands School here, Tunku Ismail questioned how and when the Penang government had changed the site from educational to development land.

Another historical building management here has also voiced its apprehension over the ministry's role in helping heritage building owners.

The Cheong Fatt Tze mansion management said it had been facing an uphill battle since buying over the building.

"The mansion is now one of the most unique and important heritage sites in the country. However, the story has not been pretty for us. We've endured numerous challenges and bureaucratic red-tape since we bought over the building," it said.

It suggested that the government stringently enforce conservation regulations to ensure that heritage buildings were protected.

Heritage Issues ~ continued

lampoon and mockery of restoration. And this too will of course, be considered to fulfill MPPP's requirements for 'putting back the original building'.

The public has many unanswered questions, "How and when did the zoning of the Uplands site change from educational/institutional to development land?", "How and when did the zoning for the Turf Club change from recreational open space to development land?" *Are the public to be consulted on a submission that proposes 32 blocks of more than 40 stories each on what was previously a green lung?* Is the National Land Commission on Planning going to approve this without a public forum? The Penang Heritage Trust is very troubled about our deteriorating quality of life, the future of our city and our legacy. We look to our leaders to be accountable and transparent and to truly care about the people who elected them to look after that future.

19th December 2006

OPEN LETTER

HELP FOR HERITAGE BUILDING OWNERS?

The Deputy Minister of Arts Culture & Heritage Dato Wong Kam Hoong is reported to have suggested, on 18th December 2006 that incentives be put in place to assist heritage building owners so that another 'Bok House' demolition will not occur. We thank him for his kind suggestions. May we offer our suggestions since he has chosen to mention the 'Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion'? We have been the pioneers of 'best practice' conservation, acknowledged with almost all conservation and tourism awards both nationally and internationally. To-day the Mansion stands as one of the most unique and important heritage sites in the country, attracting visitors from near & far, but ...the story has not been pretty...

- When the building was first purchased, the State Valuation Department would not accept the purchase price for taxation purposes despite the sale being declared in open court. They insisted on valuation at development value per sq ft even though the house had a Section 4 under the Land Acquisition Act on it and it was sold with a household of 34 illegal tenant families.
- Plans were submitted to re-build a garden wall demolished when Farquhar Street was extended in the 1970's. After more than 2 years and no approval, we proceeded to construct due to security reasons, we were of course heavily fined.
- All imported restoration materials were taxed despite our declarations of restoration needs.
- As soon as restoration of the fabric was completed and the Mansion won the Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia's top award for Conservation, the neighbouring hotel proceeded in 1996, to construct a multi-storey car park using hammer piling. The Mansion cracked extensively and structurally. Despite winning the case at the highest courts of the land, 10 years later we have yet to receive a cent in compensation.

Dato Wong from Penang, has suggested a reduction of assessment, we are of course grateful for any handout but we must point out to him that the Majlis Perbandaran Pulau Pinang as well as the Taiping Council already has this in place. Any building owner who submits for building plan approval or building permit, gets approval and conducts an authentic restoration retaining original spaces and fabrics can apply for the assessment rebate. But this is very minimal and will in no way attract any owner to conserve. The issue of the Government buying over the property does not in anyway arise. Heritage building owners would instead like to see the following:

- assistance with restoration costs (e.g. in France - Federal Government 50%, State or Provincial Government 25%, owner's costs, a mere 25%)
- assistance with maintenance costs (e.g. London gives maintenance grants)
- a reduced electricity rate
- reduced property gains tax
- waiver of stamp duty
- a tax exemption for restoration materials & levies for foreign artisans
- pioneer status & double tax reductions (as in tourism & industrial projects)

As in all heritage cities with the scarcity factor, market forces have led to very substantial increases in the value of heritage buildings in George Town. This is a much better incentive but the value will only continue to grow if conservation regulations are stringently and impartially enforced. The value of the heritage building will escalate as long as neighbouring properties are similarly controlled. No one would want to invest money in restoring a site if they could not be sure that their neighbour would not be allowed to have a towering high rise block next to them.

The Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion
14 Leith Street George Town Penang

International Symposium



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON STUDIES ON HISTORICAL HERITAGE

17 – 21 September 2007 Antalya, Turkey



Research Center for Preservation of Historical Heritage, established in 2005 in Yıldız Technical University, organizes an International Symposium on "Studies on Historical Heritage" in Antalya. The symposium will be as a continuation of the previous international symposia entitled "Studies in Ancient Structures" held in Istanbul in 1997 and 2001.

Antalya, known as Pamphilia in history, was inhabited 50 thousand years ago and housed Hittites, Phrygians, Lydians, Greeks, Romans, Seljukians and Ottomans. From 2nd century B.C. on the name of the place has been known successively as Attaleis, Adalia, Adalya and finally Antalya. Housing many historical remains from these periods, Antalya is one of the most suitable places to communicate the rapid advances made in theoretical and applied aspects of studies in preservation of historical heritage.

This symposium is aimed to provide an international and multi-disciplinary meeting for researchers and practitioners to present and discuss past, present and future of historical art and architectural heritage and their environments. It will bring together historians, art historians, archaeologists, architects, engineers, scientists, building surveyors, urban planners, and other specialists to exchange their analytical, experimental, historical and constructional experiences and studies in preservation of historical heritage.

For more details, visit <http://www.shh07.yildiz.edu.tr/>



Venue: Dedeman Resort, Antalya

International Conference

The 2nd International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality (ICTH): Planning and Managing Heritage for the Future

Universiti Utara Malaysia and the National Heritage Department, Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage Malaysia are pleased to announce the 2nd International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality (ICTH): Planning and Managing Heritage for the Future to be held on 30th July at 1st August, 2007 at Marriott Putrajaya. The theme is chosen because heritage forms non-renewable resources that become a subject of conservation and tourism. In the tourism and hospitality industry of Malaysia for example, heritage becomes an invaluable asset for enriching tourist experience. Recognizing this, and in conjunction with Visit Malaysia 2007, we cordially invite all academics, researchers and practitioners involved in heritage to participate in this conference and share their experiences. Please visit our website at <http://fpha.uum.edu.my/ict07/> for more details.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Azilah Kasim
Chairperson
ICTH2007
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Universiti Utara Malaysia
MALAYSIA



Images downloaded from
fpha.uum.edu.my/ict07/

International Conference**12th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL TRUSTS****December 3rd -5th, 2007 New Delhi, India**

International National Trust Organization (INTO) is a forum that enables conservation specialists from around the world to share experiences and best practices, to develop collective strategies, to promote international cooperation, and to build the capacity of new and emerging Trusts. INTO meets every two years to exchange ideas of heritage management, conservation and latest technologies applied in this field and other related issues. The last two international conferences were held in Washington, D.C. in 2005 (hosted by the U.S. National Trust for Historic Preservation, with 175 international participants), and in Edinburgh in 2003 (hosted by the National Trust for Scotland, with representation from over 40 countries).

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has been an active member of INTO since 2000, we have contributed major presentations to the Edinburgh and Washington meetings, organized a regional chapter for the Asia-Pacific region, and become an active member of the INTO steering and planning committees. INTACH was founded in 1984 in New Delhi with the vision to stimulate and spearhead heritage awareness and conservation in India. INTACH is today the largest membership organization in the country dedicated to conservation. A core professional staff at the headquarters, look after the Divisions, namely, Architectural Heritage, Indian Council for Conservation Institutes (ICCI), Chapters Division, Heritage Education and Communication Services (HECS) Division, Natural Heritage, Cultural Affairs and Heritage Tourism Division. INTACH is a member of many important national and international organizations and has participated in major conferences on conservation, also garnering support through its overseas Chapters in United Kingdom, New York and Belgium. Chapters in Canada and Japan are also in the offing. INTACH's programmes and projects aim at community development and poverty alleviation with employment generation. (For details see www.intach.org)

The main theme of the 12th International Conference of National Trusts will be **Heritage and Development** with focus on:

- Heritage and Globalization
- Conservation of Heritage in Regions of Conflict and Natural Disasters
- Heritage Tourism and Conservation
- Funding for Conservation Projects
- Regional Cooperation
- Heritage Education
- Heritage and Conservation Management
- Intangible Heritage
- Legislation for Heritage Conservation
- Role of National Trusts

VENUE

Ashok Hotel,
New Delhi

Registration fee

\$ 500 only

TIME SCHEDULE

Submission of paper:

April 30, 2007

Last Date for Registration: July 30, 2007

Registration

The registration charges for the conference are as follows:

Foreigners \$500 per pax

Indians Rs 5000/- per pax

Booking for hotel and transport can be made for which payment has to be made separately by the participants who wish to register.

10

news without borders



Sun setting on The Sunhouse?

Penang council's move not prudent nor responsible

WE would like to draw the public's attention to the Penang Municipal Council's blatant display of arrogance and utter contempt for the public interest (and public opinion), by approving the controversial development project on the Gurney Drive site of St. Joseph's Novitiate, formerly occupied by Uplands School, less than 12 months after the application was submitted.

Everything that we have heard in this case has convinced us that the people are unanimously not in favour of the development as proposed, a position further reinforced by those neighbours who gave their views at the inquiry the council held.

Traffic was a main concern, with good justification.

An important point to be noted is that even the developer's own traffic consultant conceded that this development would cause serious traffic congestion unless:

- 1- KILAWAI Road and Gurney Drive are made into one-way streets and
- 2- THE proposed Penang Outer Ring Road is fully operational.

There is yet no indication that PORR will be built any time soon, and even if work starts tomorrow, there is no guarantee that it will be ready in time to prevent serious traffic problems from developing.

Clearly in these circumstances, a more

prudent and responsible council will defer the decision until after PORR is ready and the two roads made into one-way streets.

During the public debate over this project there was never any evidence given to show that this project will generate benefits to Penang that will offset the horrendous problems that it will create.

The Penang Heritage Trust has three key issues it feels the council and the state government are morally obliged to explain:

- 1- THE council should give a comprehensive account of the reasoning behind the decision to favour a developer over the wishes of the majority of the public.

- 2- The Urban municipal councilors, who claim to be the guardians of Malay community in George Town, should explain how this decision will benefit their community.

- 3- The State Planning Committee should inform us what percentage of the apartments being built will be low-cost units for the lower-income groups.

If the government wants to promote transparency and good governance, this will be an excellent opportunity to show its commitment and sincerity.

DR CHOONG SIM POEY,
President,
The Penang Heritage Trust.

By Opalyn Mok

mmok@theherald.com

PENANG: Standing organically amidst high-rise and modern buildings on the seaboard in Gurney Drive, the surreal coloured Loke Mansion is now at risk of being overshadowed by the proposed construction of three high-rise buildings next to it.

This heritage villa was built during the English "arts and crafts" period in 1924 by Lyeoon Loke's son, the late Ahn Loke Wan Koo.

Originally named Chatsworth, the mansion is reportedly one of its kind in Malaysia because of its unique architecture.

It is a work of art, paying homage to the sun by capturing the rays of sunlight no matter what time of day, thus earning it the nickname The Sunhouse.

The courtyard windows, adorning its walls are of various shapes and positioned in such a way that sunlight filters in at all times, regardless of whether it is morning, noon or afternoon.

The mansion was originally

occupied by Ahn's brother, Loke Wan Yip, who raised his family there before they moved.

After the family left Penang, the mansion was left vacant, except for a caretaker to continue maintaining the building.

Over the years, because of natural wear and tear, the building became dilapidated with leaky roofs and broken gutters.

Restoration work to bring back its former splendour was done in 2003 and now it is rented out to an expatriate family who still lives there.

It is learnt that the mansion's owners, the Loke family, had applied for it to be gazetted as a national heritage treasure.

The owners have also raised objections, through their lawyer Kacy Tang, against the development project next door at the Penang Island Municipal Council building in July and September.

According to Tang, the owners are worried that the development would adversely affect the basic structure of the mansion.

Also, the proposed site of the

three blocks of high-rise buildings is very near to the mansion," he said.

The proposed high-rise buildings will be on the west side of the mansion and it would completely block out the sunlight in the afternoon, thereby placing the mansion in its shadow, he said.

"This means the mansion would no longer be the Sunhouse and its unique feature of capturing sunlight within its walls and rooms will be lost," he said.

In their objections, Tang submitted that the developer should consider altering their development plans to complement the mansion, instead of overshadowing and diminishing its unique feature.

He also submitted that the developer should use methods, during construction, to minimise risks of de-watering and cracks in the mansion's walls.

"The owners are not against the project, they only want to ensure that the development does not affect the mansion's structure," he said.

MPP had recently approved planning permission and building plans submitted by the developer of the RMV2000 project.

The mansion's owners are in the process of appealing against the MPP's decision to approve the planning permission and building plans.

St. Joseph's Novitiate

22

property

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Hunza Properties' projects attract foreigners

by Jonathan Chen
property@theherald.com

PENANG: Hunza Properties Ltd is exporting about 50% of its residential properties in its RM200 million development in Gurney Drive to be snapped up by foreigners, its executive chairman Iqbal Khur Tong Tong said.

Khur said many foreigners, especially the Japanese, had expressed interest in the residential properties to be developed in the mixed development project, which also comprises a shopping mall, retail lot, and high-end high-rise residential developments.

The residential development, to be built on the former site of the International School of Penang (Ipsland), will comprise 250 residential units in a 45-storey building, which will also have a 10-storey podium for commercial purposes. The gross development value of the high-rise residential units stands at RM500 million.

The 4.5ha site, on which stands the 1918 French-style building with a chapel built by the La Salle Brothers in a two-storey and teacher's training college, was purchased by

Hunza for RM97.86 million from the Christian Brothers in 2004.

"We are confident that foreigners will be attracted to our project, based on the response we received with our previous and

ongoing residential development projects," he said at a press conference yesterday.

He said foreigners, especially from Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and the UK were especially drawn towards the developer's



Khur posing with an artist's impression of the development.

high-end developments such as the Alila, Muzium Sepuluh and the Infinity Condominiums. "To date about 20% of sales from our Alila in Tanjung Pagar are from foreigners, mainly those from Hong Kong, while 25% of our Muzium Sepuluh in Kuala Lumpur has also been taken up by foreigners," he said.

The plans for the controversial properties within the Gurney Drive development, Khur said he is going to engage several retail consultants soon. He added that a walking bridge would be constructed to join the existing Gurney Plaza next door to their shopping mall when it is completed.

The 5-storey mall, which can accommodate around 2,000 car park spaces, would be targeting higher-end international brands.

In addressing the traffic concerns in the area, Khur said the authorities have approved a one-way system implemented on several parts of Jalan Keluar.

Khur added that the company is eyeing lots of land in more advanced countries such as Singapore and Japan. "We are also thinking about making trends into Vietnam, particularly in Ho Chi Minh City where the demand for housing is quite strong," he said.

news without borders

Quaint old chapel to be relocated

by Regina William and
Jonathan Chen
newsdesk@sunanddaily.com

PENANG: Hunza Properties Bhd yesterday announced that it is "relocating" the 82-year-old chapel on the former Uplands to make way for a RM700 million mixed development project.

Its executive chairman Datuk Khoo Teng Tong told a media briefing: "The building can be relocated."

He, however, did not say how that would be carried out and remained mum when asked whether he could give his assurance that the former International School of Penang building would not be damaged.

The chapel 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 Asia.

From the early 1960s, the college also accepted lay students who, upon graduation, were accepted by the Education Ministry for absorption into the national teaching service.

By the early 1980s, the college ceased to function and the property was leased to Uplands School which in 1977 had already occupied the former St Xavier's Branch School facing Kelawei Road in front of St Joseph's Novitiate.

The building, which is facing the sea, was officially opened on April 17, 1918, and a chapel was added to it in 1925.

Khoo said the Penang Island Municipal Council (MPPC) has approved the "relocation" of the chapel.

In spite of reassurances in the



This majestic white chapel will make way for a RM700m project.



past by Hunza that the chapel would not be touched in the development, the council has given its approval for the chapel to be relocated.

The Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) has for the past year repeatedly voiced its concern over the fate of the chapel, which is a historical symbol of the pioneering role of the La Salle Brothers in education in the region.

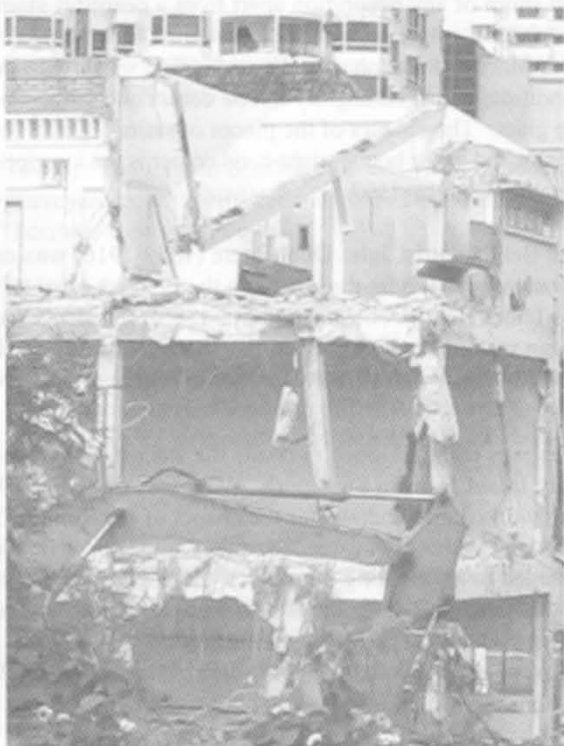
As recent as last month, Khoo had in a media briefing given his undertaking that the novitiate and chapel facing Gurney Drive would remain untouched.

Khoo said: "According to MPPC's ruling on heritage buildings, the building has to be preserved but not necessarily on the same site."

"The MPPC said if possible, not to move the building but we have decided to relocate the building to the other end of the property."

He also said three experts will study the building's structure.

Which Chapel?



14th January 2007 Demolition of NE wing



Murder and Art Treasure on Penang Hill

A hike along the Moniot Road, the earliest surveyed trail on Penang Hill, eventually leads to the "Christian Brothers' Bungalow", the hilltop retreat of the La Salle Brothers, pioneers of education in Malaysia. Situated high on a spur above Ayer Itam, this is no ordinary hill-station bungalow. Indeed, it has more in common with a monastery, comprising as it does some thirty or forty rooms. The structure appears to have been built in three stages, with two later wings extending in line behind the original building. The two-storey buildings are of timber construction on stone foundations. The walls of the ground floor are also built of stone.



In front of the original building is a life-size statue of Christ with arms outstretched looking out across George Town and Ayer Itam in apparent benediction of the statue of Kuan Yin at Kek Lok Si below. The statue of Christ is dated A.D. 1893. At the beginning of the wooded path behind the buildings is another statue, this one of Mary bearing the inscription, "A token of gratitude 21st June 1888". What act was commemorated by this statue? What other stories does this fascinating building tell?

The caretakers will show visitors bullet holes in the wall near the spot where one of the Brothers was murdered by communist terrorists during the 1948-60 Emergency. The incident was reported in *The Times* of London on 20th and 21st April, 1954. Ten terrorists attacked the Brothers' Bungalow on the night of 19th April. Two terrorists entered the reading room and ordered two brothers to put up their hands and look at the floor. At that moment Brother Symphorien Augustus, aged 63, supervisor of secondary classes at St Xavier's Institution, entered the room and started to run back but his way was barred by a terrorist who shot him. He was wounded in the stomach and taken to hospital via the Penang Hill Railway but died from his wounds the next day. He is buried in Western Road Cemetery alongside his many fellow teacher Brothers buried nearby, his grave marked by a simple stone cross without mention of the violent act that caused his death.

The Brothers' Bungalow contains more than forgotten stories and statues. Off to one side of the original building is a small chapel, simple in design and shorn of any decoration apart from a beautiful stained-glass window in the chancel where once the altar stood. The window depicts the boy Jesus with Mary and Joseph on either side. The window is in near perfect condition, damaged slightly in one corner and with two hairline cracks in the glass. The colours of the pieces of stained glass, however, are rich and vibrant and in the bottom right-hand corner is the inscription **J. Dobbelaere Brugs Belgium 1907**.



The Belgian artist Jules Dobbelaere (1859-1916) was one of a family of famous stained-glass makers from the Flemish town of Bruges (Brugis). His father Henri Dobbelaere (1822-1885) was also a painter renowned for his historical and religious scenes. He began making stained-glass in the 1860s and Jules carried on the work after his father's death, creating gothic-style stained-glass windows for churches in France and the Netherlands as well as Belgium, including the Cathedral of Bruges.

Jules was commissioned to create the stained-glass windows for the new chapel to be built for the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus in Singapore. Work was started in 1901 and the Chapel was consecrated in 1904. Dobbelaere also worked on windows for the chapel of the Roman Catholic boys' school in Singapore, St Joseph's Institution, when the school was extended at the same time. His work on the windows of these chapels in Singapore must have led to his creating the stained-glass window of the La Salle chapel on Penang Hill. Perhaps further examples of this famous Belgian artist's stained-glass masterpieces are to be found in other Roman Catholic institutions in Malaysia, such as St Michael's Institution in Ipoh or St John's Institution in Kuala Lumpur as well as Light Street Convent and the endangered St Joseph's Institute in Pulau Tikus. More research is needed to identify, document and conserve such treasures.

Text by Leslie A.K. James | Photographs by Harry Sutton

*Heritage Tourism In India- Historic Cemeteries***India pushes 'graveyard tourism'**

"The cemeteries were deliberately created to be like a little part of England" Rosie

Llewellyn-Jones, Bacsá

To take advantage of this growing interest, this tourist-friendly state - last year Himachal Pradesh attracted 7.3 million tourists, including 300,000 foreigners, and tourism contributed 8% to its gross domestic product - is now embarking on documenting and restoring these graveyards.

Tourist guides prefer to call it cemetery tourism. Others say it is essentially meant for 'tomb travellers'.

But tourism authorities at the idyllic Himalayan Indian state of Himachal Pradesh are loathe to woo British tourists with such macabre sounding pitches.

So they are telling them a visit to the state's many European graveyards is an added 'bonus' on their itinerary.

According to official estimates, there are some 10 main 'European' graveyards in the state, which mainly house the remains of British people who died in India.

The London-based British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia (Bacsá), however, estimates the state has a total of 42 such cemeteries. Many of them are open to the public, although new burials no longer take place there.

Rosie Llewellyn-Jones of Bacsá says the rising interest among British tourists in travelling to graveyards of ancestors is due to "often an inbuilt love of cemeteries among the British people" and a "huge boom" in genealogy and research into one's ancestors.

"A large number of British people had relatives who served in India, not just as officials, but as soldiers, shopkeepers, traders, tea planters, forest officials, teachers, missionaries, photographers," she says.

"Tourists and researchers are going to India to find and photograph the graves of their ancestors, and also to see the places where their ancestors lived and worked, so there is a spin-off effect."

Vandalised Local tourism officials say many British tourists ask tourist guides to take them to the graveyards of their ancestors.

Authorities and experts alike agree that many of the cemeteries are in a derelict state and urgently need restoration and maintenance - one official says stones have been stolen and the graveyards have been vandalised.

Local historian Raja Bhasin has been commissioned to document the European graveyards, to make the information easily accessible to foreign tourists and to begin proper restoration work.

The cemeteries he is working on include four in the state capital, Shimla. The oldest one in Shimla dates back to the 1820s with a dozen graves and monuments.

"The dead have a mixed profile. We have an entire British family that died of cholera, for example. At a cemetery in Kangra fort, the dead are all British soldiers," he says.

Tourism chief Tarun Sridhar says that visits to ancestors graveyard could easily become part of the state's 'heritage tourism circuit'.

"We are not going to be hard selling it with such names as cemetery tourism," he says.

For many British tourists, this will come as good news - there is an expected upswing of British tourists to India in 2007, which will mark the 150th anniversary of what the British call the Indian Mutiny, and Indians call the first war of independence.

"In hill stations in northern India the cemeteries are very similar to our British cemeteries. They were deliberately created to be like a little part of England, a 'foreign field that is for ever England' as the poet said, and so we feel at home there," says Bacsá's Rosie Llewellyn-Jones.

By Soutik Biswas BBC News, Delhi

Most of the graveyards need restoration and upkeep Pics: Rajeev Sood

Chinese hero's memory burns bright in Penang house

By Niluksi Koswanage

Reuters

Wednesday, January 3, 2007; 3:23 AM



PENANG, Malaysia (Reuters) - The fate of China's last imperial dynasty was sealed in an unlikely place — an indigo-blue shophouse jammed into a bustling commercial street on the Malaysian island of Penang.

Here, early in the last century, Chinese revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen, shattered by the strain of leading nine failed rebellions against the country's crumbling Qing dynasty, broke down and begged discouraged supporters to aid him one last time.

"I will not trouble you again," historian Khoo Salma Nasution quoted the distraught 44-year-old as telling the Chinese migrant merchants who had funded his efforts.

"The rest was history," she added. "The money raised from his supporters funded two rebellions in 1911, which overthrew the Manchu dynasty and made him China's first provisional president."

Sun, the father of the revolution that toppled China's last emperor in 1911, died in 1925, and is a hero in China despite being the former leader of the Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party, defeated by the Communists in 1949.

The 1910 meeting with his backers in Malaysia, known to history as the "Penang Conference," was held in utter secrecy in Sun's headquarters on Armenian Street, crowded round with secret society dens and temples built by migrant Chinese traders.

Sun, a Western-educated physician exiled by the Qing

government, plotted the Canton uprising from his base in the bustling then-British-controlled port of Penang on the west coast of colonial Malaya.

Few traces of the dynamic leader remain, apart from an exhibition of photographs that commemorates his brief stay on the island, where Sun had sought refuge from the Manchu-dominated Chinese government.

Yet the house, with its narrow passages, small courtyards, winding staircases and hidden rooms, bears powerful testimony to the secrecy that surrounded

Sun's revolutionary activities.

"This was his life. It was always in the shadows," said Khoo, whose family has owned the house since it was bought in the 1930s by her grandfather, an arms dealer who wanted a place to store his stock. Now, almost a century later, Khoo's shophouse serves a different purpose as the home of the Lestari Heritage Network, which runs a program of heritage conservation projects around Asia, as well as a publishing firm, to document its activities.

The network, run by Khoo, has helped fund efforts to restore heritage buildings in former mercantile and colonial centers in India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand.



Agencies such as the Japan Foundation and the New York-based Institute for Cultural Enterprise have helped provide the funds.

"Sun Yat-sen used the shophouse as a base for his revolutionary activities," said Khoo. "We are coming full circle with the shophouse as a center for heritage conservation."

She added, "My family thought I was crazy to spend so much money and effort to restore the shophouse. But they now realize this shophouse could have been lost forever if nothing was done."



Small Chinese kitchen: The kitchen at 103 Armenian Street is worth visiting, especially for those who are interested in learning more about the Chinese.

She declined to say how much she had invested in the project. Her efforts have paid off.

China officially recognized the site when President Hu Jintao visited the shophouse in 2002 and presented a commemorative plaque to Khoo. At the time, Hu was China's vice-president.

But other sites in Penang associated with Sun have slowly begun to disappear. Sun's house, located in a different part of Georgetown, has long since been demolished.

Sun held secret gatherings in Penang to spread his ideas about overthrowing the Qing dynasty and canvassing for funds.

He was able to tap into the sentiments of the vibrant Chinese migrant community, which was bitterly upset over news that their home country had been ravaged by famine and torn apart by civil war and clashing warlords.

"These buildings can piece together Sun's Malaysia story but they face an uncertain future," said Khoo, lamenting that agencies of the state and federal government had shown little interest in conservation efforts in Georgetown.

"People here are slow to realize that Penang has such links to international history. It is a shame."

But one proof of Sun's presence in Penang still lives on, in the form of a Chinese newspaper launched in the shophouse for distribution among his supporters.

Today, the paper, which features Sun's calligraphy in its masthead, is Malaysia's longest-running Chinese daily with a circulation of up to 72,000 in 2005.

"Sun Yat-sen knew how to move the hearts and pockets of the overseas Chinese with his speeches," Khoo said. "The newspaper brought it to another level. Now, that's all we in Malaysia have of him."

Photo courtesy of The Star

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26 Church Street

10200 Penang

Future Site Visits:

1. St Anne Church Bukit Mertajam
2. Heritage Trail of Balik Pulau
3. God of Heaven Temple 'Tee Kong Tua' at Ayer Itam
4. Sungai Bakap Kee Estate (re-visit)
5. Taiping Heritage Trail
6. Telok Bahang and the Nature Reserve Park
7. Lighthouse and Fort Cornwallis

Birch House & demolition of adjacent shophouses *Jalan Dato Keramat***Katz Street****Hutton Lane***(next to no. 203)***Statistics for Penang Shophouses demolished in 2006 (more than 80% demolished or rebuilt)**

218 Jln Dato Keramat	Shophouse (5 units)	90% demolished/ rebuilt
Lot 496, 513 Jln Dato Keramat	Shophouse (2 units)	100% demolished/ rebuilt
No. 304 Jln Dato Keramat	Malay Bungalow (1 unit)	100% demolished
Birch House, Jln Dato Keramat	Row of shophouses (14 units)	100% demolished
Next to Birch House	Row of shophouses (13 units)	100% demolished/ replace
Next to 203 Hutton Lane	shophouse (2 units)	90% demolished/ rebuilt
No. 112 Hutton Lane	shophouse (2 units)	90% demolished/ rebuilt
Sek Kebangsaan Sri Tanjung	Bungalow (1 unit)	100% demolished
Katz Street	Row of shophouses (10 units)	80% demolished/ rebuilt
155, 157 & 159 Carnarvon St	row of shophouses (10 units)	90% demolished/ rebuilt
& 34, 36 Magazine Road		
20 & 22 Queen Street	Shophouses (12 units)	100% demolished
27 King Street	Shophouses (2 units)	90% demolished/ rebuilt
Carnarvon Street	shophouse (1 unit)	90% demolished/ rebuilt
Buckingham Street	shophouse (9 units)	80% demolished
Carnarvon Lane	shophouse (16 units)	80% demolished
1A, 1B Kek Chuan Lane	shophouse (1 unit)	90% demolished/ rebuilt
	shophouse (2 units)	90% demolished/ rebuilt

TOTAL 96 UNITS

Book Review



Julia de Bierre with photography by James Bain Smith, *Penang Through Gilded Doors*, Areca Books, George Town, Penang, 2006.

Not another Penang picture book! No, indeed. This is not just another glossy souvenir book of the usual photographs for the tourist market. Julia de Bierre's book is a labour of love created by an Englishwoman born in Penang who remains a Penangite at heart. Julia de Bierre and James Bain Smith have succeeded in capturing the spirit of this Island, its places and its people through a unique blend of narrative and photographic record. Julia's narrative reflects a love of Penang begun through childhood attachments and

impressions and matured through time and absences to a warm fondness and respect for those things in Penang that have an abiding familiarity despite the changes wrought by modern development. In the thematic approach adopted by Julia and James the book presents a series of chapters that unite the historical, cultural, architectural, religious and ethnographic in a coherent and very pleasing blend. *Penang Through Gilded Doors* is a book to savour and treasure.

The book is a first for a Malaysian publisher, printed and published in both an English edition and a French edition (*Penang - La porte des secrets*) by Penang's own Areca Books for release in Malaysia and France. The book was officially launched in Penang at the Town Hall on 7th December 2006 by H.E. the Governor of Penang. The official launch of the French edition took place in Paris on 18th October in an arrangement with Tourism Malaysia following a soft launch at the Alliance Française in Penang on 13th October.

Text by Leslie A.K. James | Photo Courtesy The Star

Penang Global Ethic Project

Living harmony at our doorsteps

THE Penang Heritage Trust (PHT), as an NGO committed to Penang's cultural heritage, would like to record our support for the Global Ethics Project (GEP) sponsored by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF) which was so unfairly criticised by a Penang Umno delegate at the party's general assembly recently. The background preparation and objectives of the project have been clearly explained by the KAF Malaysian representative Peter Schlier.

The PHT supported the project in Penang by including a "World Religious Walk" for schools by taking advantage of the existing religious institutions along Jalan Masjid Kapitan Kling, a street that our tourism department has proudly called Penang's "Street of Harmony".

As all Penangites know, religious institutions along that unique street include the Kapitan Kling Mosque, the Anglican Church, the Kwan Yin Temple and the Sri Maha Mariaman Temple, all historical institutions established in the 19th century. As the Trust has a working relationship with most of these institutions, we made arrangements for their guardians to brief the students during the tour.

During the six-week duration of the GEP exhibition last year, more than 400 students were shown the exhibition followed by a tour of these institutions. The response was most gratifying in terms of the students' feedback and the resulting demand for these tours.

However, when the idea was mooted that these activities could be made a regular feature of the school's extracurricular activities, we

letter

letters@thesundaily.com

were suddenly informed that certain officials in charge of Islamic affairs had raised strong objections and we had to stop.

This directive clearly runs counter to our declared national policy to cultivate a sense of unity amidst diversity that is being promoted by the Ministry of National Unity. Penang can lay claim to be a model society where for generations different communities have lived cheek by jowl in perfect harmony. Even in our tourism brochures, we declare Malaysia to be Truly Asia.

Knowing the mindset of Penangites, I can confidently say that this kind of sentiment does not represent the mainstream Malays in Penang. Sadly, it seems that these minority voices have organised themselves so well as to give that totally false impression to the government. This trend to treat any activity where people of different religious affiliations can interact with each other as equals as a threat to national security, must be resisted.

We must see such actions in their true light. That is, an effort to divide and isolate individual communities for the selfish interests of certain groups who seek to divide and rule, an age-old strategy used by the colonial powers.

Tunku Datuk Dr Ismail Tunku
Mohammad Jawa



Photo Courtesy of
Lestari Heritage Network

Media Coverage ~ Trams

BBC
NEWS

Paris welcomes trams back to town

Saturday, 16 December 2006

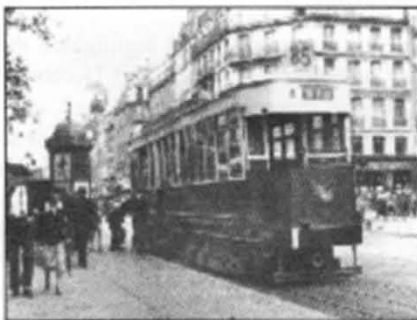
Paris has inaugurated a modern electric tram line along a section of the city's inner ring road, the first time trams have run in the city since 1937.

Mayor Bertrand Delanoe rode the first tram on the new T3 line, built to offer Parisians environmentally-friendly public transport. The line is set to carry 100,000 people a day along a crowded section on the Left Bank of the Seine.

The opening was boycotted by right-wing opposition parties. They have opposed the 300m euro (\$400m; £200m) development, calling it a waste of money.

But Mr Delanoe defended the tram project, the largest public transport project for Paris since the city's ring road was built in the 1970s. "We need to respond to pollution with action, it's a necessity of public health and civilisation," he said. "Half of the planet's population lives in towns today, so we need to make behaviour evolve."

World approval



Tram lines already run in some suburban areas outside Paris' city limits.

But the new tram is the first within

the metropolitan area since Paris's extensive tram network was finally closed just before World War II. Those trams, which began as horse-drawn carriages, ran from the mid-19th Century and predated the city's underground Metro system.

The new line runs through 17 stops in the city's 13th, 14th and 15th arrondissements, to link the Garigliano bridge on the city's western edge with the Porte d'Ivry to the south-east. There are plans to expand the network to other areas of the city. Journeys on the new line will be free during the tram's inaugural weekend, with fares after that costing the same as the bus line the tram has replaced.

The mayors of Beirut, London, Montreal, Barcelona, Bamako, Stockholm and Antananarivo were in Paris for the opening ceremony.



Thursday 9 November 2006

M6 Events

METRO



COLONIAL TRANSPORT SYSTEM: Francis showing his book on Penang trams.

Bring back trams

by EMMELINE TAN

emmeline@the-star.com.my

KEEP the monorail out of George Town and bring back the trams for the sake of the environment and heritage.

Engineer Ric Francis, who has been in the tram industry for 38 years, said there were many pitfalls to the proposed RMT201 monorail system that would connect the entire Penang Island.

"Once the huge monorail structures are built in George Town, the heritage buildings will be totally eclipsed."

"Trams on the other hand, provide a nice, quiet, scenic journey," said Francis, co-

author of *Penang Trams, Trolleybuses and Railways - Municipal Transport History 1890s-1960s*.

Giving a lecture at the Penang Heritage Trust at Church Street recently, Francis said George Town Municipal electrical trams used from 1905 to 1936 reaped high profits until World War I when the supply of replacement parts was hampered.

He estimated that less than RM1.8m (US\$1m) was needed to get an electrical tram system up and running in George Town.

"Old tramlines such as from Prangin Mall to World Quay still exists underneath the between road and can be restored for

use," he said.

A 500s transline was unearthed at the Chulia Street-Penang Road junction in 2004 during road works and was preserved by the Penang Municipal Council.

"There are many second-hand trams in other countries that are for purchase."

Existing street poles could be used to support the one-cable electrical wiring for trams, he added.

"Trams are pollution-free and are being used in cities with narrow roads such as Amsterdam and Lisbon."

"There would not be the high cost of diesel to pay, and very little maintenance of parts compared to buses."

Events & Talks at PHT**Diplomats by Default**

14th October, 2006

Diplomats by Default, a public talk by Dr. Anita Hibler, member of the Indonesian Historical Society and co-author of *Elephants for Mr. Lincoln: American Civil War-Era Diplomacy in Southeast Asia*. Dr. Hibler gave an interesting and colourful account of the activities of American missionaries and merchants in SE Asia, with particular reference to Penang and the Straits Settlements, in the 19th century.

**Trams in George Town**

7th November, 2006

In his public talk on *Trams in George Town*, Ric Francis, co-author of *Penang Trams, Trolleybuses & Railways: Municipal Transport History 1880s – 1963*, elicited media interest in the idea of reintroducing trams to Penang. He suggested the use of the original tramway from Weld Quay, part of which was uncovered during recent road works at Chulia Street and Penang Road. (See page 27)

**Phuket's Baba Heritage**

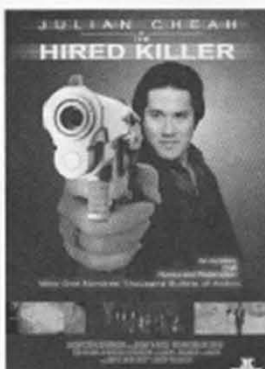
13th December, 2006



Public presentation on *Heritage of Phuket Baba*. Despite a heavy downpour, an audience of more than 50 people, mainly from the Straits Chinese

Association but also including PHT members and media reporters, reflected a strong community interest in Baba-Nyonya heritage. The programme began with a demonstration by Michael Cheah on how to wear traditional nyonya kebaya attire, using two "models", Sheau Fung and Mag. Khoo Salma Nasution, herself a nyonya, gave a talk on Penang-Phuket historical connections and the heritage of the 'Phuket Baba', a project she researched in 2005 as an Asian Public Intellectual (API) Fellow.

Dr Praneek Sakulpipatana from Phuket highlighted the Baba Peranakan Convention to be held 1-3 December 2006 in Phuket. She was accompanied by Dr Kosol, vice-president and chairman of Phuket Baba Peranakan Convention Committee, Mrs Suwalai, Director Tourism Authority of Thailand, and three other representatives from Tourism Thailand. In a lively presentation, they outlined the interesting seminar programme and visit package planned for the convention. Their enthusiasm aroused strong interest in the audience and further strengthened the historic ties between Penang and Phuket.

**The Hired Killer**

3rd December, 2006

Public screening of *The Hired Killer* by local film maker Julian Cheah, a film shot entirely in George Town, featuring heritage areas and landmarks.

Newsletter Guest Editor—Leslie A.K. James

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