



Conservation Planning Guidelines and Design of Melaka Heritage Shophouses

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Abstract

elaka shophouses are now threatened by urban development which involves the conversion of the image and the changing of the urban fabric. The aim of this study was to clarify conservation issues in Melaka and to review building design and its influence which involves the aspect of site and facade typology. However, the focus should not only on the building facade but should also take into consideration the environmental factors that lead to building defect. This problem identified could be overcome by comprehensive conservation planning and design study guidelines in order to (come up with) detailed articulations for conservation guidelines of Melaka Shophouse.

Keywords: Historical Building; Melaka Shophouse; Building Typology; Building Documentation; Conservation Guidelines; Planning and Design

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1.0 Introduction

The city centre of Melaka, which is composed of the earliest settlements, is not exempted from the sustainable development problems. This study was divided into three main study zones which was under the observation of Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah (MBMB). The most obvious problem is the traffic system in the study zones that caused the study zones is the main route in the city centre. (I don't understand this) Besides that, the climatic factor and community activities also led to building defects. Therefore, all these conservation issues around the study zones need model proposes (proposes models) of comprehensive conservation planning and design study guidelines in Melaka sector. The problem is how to develop a comprehensive planning of Melaka shophouse in Melaka city, which conserves the traditional characteristic of the district while sustaining related areas to development of the city.

The future Melaka shophouse will become a place, which tells the area's history with its physical environment, serves the needs of resident social and culture activities. The objectives of the research are to propose conservation guidelines of Melaka shophouse, which are sustainable to social life, and visual characteristics of the district. The new comprehensive conservation planning and design study guidelines will enhance an effort to preserve the historical monument characteristic.

1.1 Research Background

Table 1: Levels of Intervention to Historic Building and Environment

No	Level of intervention	Definition
1	Preservation	Maintaining of the artefacts in its current physical condition.
2	Restoration	Returning the artefact to the physical condition it had at some previous stage of its life.
3	Refurbishment (Conservation, consolidation)	Physical intervention in the fabric of the building to ensure its continue performance.
4	Reconstitution	Piece by piece re-assembly of a building, either in situ or on new site.
5	Conversion (Adaptive reuse)	Adaptation of a buildings to accommodate a new site.
6	Reconstruction	Recreation of vanished buildings on their original site.
7	Replication	Construction of an exact copy of an existing building.
8	Exposition	Preservation of the facade of an historic building, with a new building behind it.
9	Demolition and redevelopment	Demolition and clearance with new development on the site.

Why does historic building and environment have a reason for conservation? Because of: Aesthetic value, Value for architectural diversity and contrast, Value for environment diversity and contrast, Value for functional diversity, Resource value, Value for continuity of cultural memory and heritage, Economic and commercial value (Fitch, 1990). Fitch (1990) and Carmona (2003) identify a series of levels of intervention (types of change) to historic building and environment, see Table 1.

1.2 The Study

The aim of this study was to clarify the conservation issues in Melaka and the aspects of building typologies should be considered as a whole and in detail. (Abdul Aziz Deraman, 1975). This aspect involves the study of the façade typology of the site and the environment culture to review building characteristics. In the exercise of early conservation work, the focus should not only on the facade of the building but should also take into the cultural and social environment factors that lead to building defect.

In addition, this study also demonstrates a connection between factors of history; architecture and culture are interrelated and should not be ignored in the course of conservation work. This is consistent with what was stated by David, GS (1992) that architecture is a testament to the touch, mergers and changes in culture and evidence of changes in social organization, politics and religion. Architecture is also linked to patterns of behaviour and world views that includes aspects of cosmology (Timmons, 1976).

The study zone is one of the oldest city areas in Malaysia and has a history that traces back to the Melaka Sultanate. It is located in a strategic location in the heart of the Melaka city. It can be seen from the study zone that indicates rapid development, which plays an important role in the development of the city itself.



Figure 1: Study Zone

Zone 1

Zone 1 is separated by Sungai Melaka. However, there are two bridges linking the two areas, namely the Bridge and Chan Koon Cheng Tan Kim Seng Bridge.

1) Laksamana Road. This road is between the streets of the busiest in the city of Melaka as it is a one way street and vehicles from the Road and Lorong Hang Jebat Treasurer will use this road to get to Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Jalan Hilir Kota and Jalan Bandar. Admiral Road

would go to the 'Dutch Square' which is an open field with fountains and statues at the tower at its center.

2) Gereja Road. Part of this road has been closed to vehicles and reserved for pedestrians only.

Zone 2

Tun Tan Cheng Lock Road (Heeren Street). At the time, the road is known as the 'Heeren Street' or the Dutch-English translation means "First Class Gentlemen Street". Roads are still maintaining the character of existing residential areas and buildings in the area inherited architecture of high value. This road is the most popular way of travel for the unique architecture coupled with the variety of activities along with the availability of Baba Nyonya Museum, eateries and shops selling handcraft.

Zone 3

1) Hang Jebat Road (Jonker Street, Young Noblemens Street). This area is occupied by the superiors of the Dutch people and the Baba Nyonya and is the focus of traders at the time. This road is also the main route to the chariot of the Dutch, and British.

2) Hang Kasturi Road. Known as the 'Second Cross Street, there are premises that still maintain handcraft activities like making cane. Tourists are seldom the way tap in the street activity is more focused on business and residential.

3) Hang Lekir Road. Known as the 'Fourth Cross Street, has a short way and mostly residential premises.

4) Hang Lekiu Road. Known as the 'Third Cross Street, Kampung Kling Mosque's wall located next to the road provides an interesting effect on this route

2.0 Methodology

Information gathering stage of the study area was divided into two parts; the first one is a study of the historical background, and the second is the establishment of the city centre. It includes an introduction and understanding of Melaka town itself. It is more about the history of the early commencement of the Melaka city and its development as one of the key areas that contribute to the formation of the historic city of Melaka. The facts that influence the development of the study zones and patterns of change will also be distributed as the basis for the study zones. (A Ghafar Ahmad, 1997).

In conducting this review, the review will only cover an area, which has been gazetted by the Melaka City Council as the history of the area of the old city of Melaka. The buildings of the selected studies will be the Melaka shophouses, which are in variation of style:

- 1) Dutch style 1600-1700
- 2) Southern China style 1700-1800
- 3) Early Shop house style 1800-1900
- 4) Early Transitional Style 1840-1900
- 5) Early Strait Eclectic Style 1890-1920

- 6) Late Straits Eclectic Style 1920-1940
- 7) Art Deco style 1930-1950
- 8) Early Modern style 1950-1990



Figure 2: Typology of Melaka Shophouse

3.0 Findings

Conservation Issues in the Study Zones

The city centre of Melaka, which is composed of the earliest settlements is not exempted from the sustainable of development problems. The areas around the building are actively leading the study zones under pressure. In addition, earliest shophouses left dilapidated and threatened. Most of the dilapidated building is made up of houses owned by individuals who rent stores. Tenants are not interested in maintaining a rented building as any interest on such buildings (Touru, 1989).

The example in Figure 3 indicates that the owner did not want to rent out their buildings, but let old age consumption. Once the building is no longer safe for occupancy, they would demolish the building for replacement of new buildings.



Figure 3: This is an Example of Dilapidated Shop House Façade at Laksamana Street

Transfer of ownership since the Dutch era so far has caused lots of broken shops split into lots of smaller ones. By the year 1900, the shop houses have been given new numbers as a result of the division of land into smaller lots. Changing the function of residential buildings to store also has caused many changes were made not only to the interior layout but also to the facade of the shop houses. Front facade demolished and replaced with a larger opening to allow the building functions as a store run. Figure 4 shows that renovation or new construction is not directly related to the scale, context, and the characters surrounding buildings. Design continuity between the old and new units is ignored. This makes the new building seems to stand by itself and appear awkward in their own environment.



Figure 4: The Renovations without Regarded on the Building Characteristic make the Façade seem Lost their History

The absence of integration of design particularly between the development of modern and old buildings are crippling the identity of this historic area. As a result, the uniqueness of the shop houses in the old city of Melaka began missing and the town of Melaka had been forced to accept the new design elements that are less suitable and not harmonious.

Placing the air conditioner unit on the front facade without thinking too much about facade style can be seen at a shop house in Melaka as illustrated in Figure 5. The effect of the placement of air conditioning unit is crippled without control of the building facade.



Figure 5: Placing Uncontrolled Air Conditioner also can Lead to Building Defect

Sometimes, the building façade adds to the height of three storey and this causes the original scale to change and the height of the building is no longer uniform. The front façade is retained and not changed, but additions are made on the back of the building. Height of the rear of the building had been added up to three levels.

This change is not significant if we look at the front of the building, but the reality is that the interior has been thoroughly renovated and has changed the architectural character of the building indirectly by introducing the addition and renovation of this building material, see Figure 6.

This addition also, if not addressed by experienced professionals, will lead to a dangerous structure. The matter is due to the additional burden imposed on the original structure. Increase in height will also prevent the flow of air into the interior of the building. Quality ventilation of old shop houses that rely heavily on air wells are affected (Bill, 1997).



Figure 6: The Height Changes of the Shop House Façade Make the View is No Longer Uniform

5.0 Implications

Due to the continuous threats of the old shophouses and without intervention, the researcher felt that it is her responsibility to conduct more in-depth study on this subject. It is feared that without documentation, and specific studies, the old shophouses will disappear and will be history. Efforts to prevent the disposal should be intensified for the values of history and architectural heritage can be preserved. Documentation is one way to ensure that the architecture of the shophouses was preserved.

The findings indicate that the practice of conserving the old shophouses by Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah (MBMB) is still not effective. A more effective measure in preserving the old shophouses needs to be undertaken. The findings of the exploratory survey prompt the author to discover the unseen causes in the erosion of the old shophouses. The main focus of this on-going research is concerned with the perception of the users towards the heritage value of the old shophouses. Hopefully, the outcome would shed some light to MBMB party on the ineffectiveness of the conservation of the Melaka shophouses.

6.0 Recommendation

Conservation planning and design study guidelines of study zones are very important to commemorate the building and environment histories in the past. The development of the guidelines has to be maintained for a long time, where it is good planning and sustainable. Not only the factor of potentials but also need to plan several actions. There are many aspects to determine the planning and design guidelines of heritage building especially for building conservation when it involves the authority guidelines and approval as their scope to control the development around their zone. Conserving a historic building is not only preserving the material but also the identity, historical and aesthetic value of the building itself.

Table 2: The Propose New Conservation Planning and Design Guidelines in Melaka

No	Potentials	Value	Action	Focus Action
1	Visual / Physical factor / conservation planning and design study guideline	Aesthetic value	Heritage Building Preservation	<u>Building height</u> <u>Building material</u> <u>Building characteristic</u> Front facade <u>and back lanes</u> Deterioration factor (Physical, chemical <u>eggs</u> , biological factor)
		Value for architectural diversity and contrast	Public Realm Improvement Convenient	Intensity and <u>Development</u> Structural stability of adjacent conserved buildings
		Value for environment diversity and contrast	Linkage to the nearby <u>zoning</u> <u>neighbourhood</u>	<u>Circle zoning</u> <u>Boundary wall</u> Land use - owner
		Resource value	Transportation <u>and</u> pedestrian comfort (avoid traffic congestion) A sense of security (focus on safety pedestrian access at back lanes)	<u>Payment</u> Car parking <u>Mechanical / Electrical</u> Local people and tourist safety
2	Socio-cultural factor	Value for continuity of cultural memory and heritage	Commemoration of Melaka shop houses and formation history of Melaka	
3	Economic factor	Economic and <u>commercial</u> value and community <u>security</u>	Attraction for tourists A community with a residential and <u>commercial</u> mixture	Direct grand to building <u>usage</u> Tax relief and <u>taxing</u> <u>base</u> Direct action by local authority
		Value for function diversity	Diversified retail for goods and services	
4	Training building conservator / expert	Value of Building Characteristic	Public Connection and community Development	Transference of development right



Figure 6: (a) Example of Conservation Planning Design to Avoid Traffic Congestion and Encourage Pedestrian. (b) Example Proposal for Pedestrian Travel at the Back Lanes of the Shophouses to Create Calm and Safety Environment to the Local People and Tourist

The character of the Melaka town is more frequently described by the architectural style and urban form. Roy (1970) stated that the planning design is only a part of element but it stimulates the eye and human spirits through the perceptual pattern by taking an example from other places such as Italian cities. Their urban area was designed with a sense of the significance of order and sensitive to the perceptual patterning using a colour role like Venice, Rome, Firenze and Bologna; where they are uniquely formed and distinctively calm, while vividly expressing the character and culture of its people.

Conclusion

Sustainable development of conservation of the study zones needs comprehensive planning and design. Act and regulation are important to be developed for the conservation planning and design study in order to pressure for conservation. It includes:

- 1) Conservation Act of motivated potential development to the study zone.
- 2) Act of zoning activity and culture that is related to bind to historical building characteristic.
- 3) Role of contributor from all of sector; planners and designers, private society to determine the conservation policy, local people and tourist.
- 4) Contribution Act to professional conservator and contractor.

Melaka shophouses are historical heritage which have unique characteristic in Melaka. The fast economic growth challenges for the changes of physical environment and human behaviour which are usually based on economic orientation. In addition, there are new developments in Melaka. These affect the old shophouse and their history may be lost. The old shophouses are being changed: people modify them, breed bird nests, ignore architecture characteristic and abandon them. Conservation is needed. This problem identified could be overcome and contribute to MBMB party by comprehensive conservation planning and design study guidelines of the study zones.

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