

## REVITALISING HERITAGE SHOPHOUSES OF KOTA BHARU KELANTAN

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### ABSTRACT

This project highlights how the exterior facade of a heritage shophouse building, including their associated signage and advertising, as a crucial element in retaining and safeguarding the features of local and traditional cityscape. The focused concern is on maintaining the very few last remaining historical pieces of architecture in the old city of Kota Bharu by finding ways to fit them back into the changing urban environment they are located in. Armed with city heritage guidelines provided by the local authorities of MPKB, twenty new design proposals of two rows of shophouses in Jalan Temenggung were presented as an alternative to the current existing sites by the second-year architecture students. The results showed a highly viable solution that would bring gains to many different stakeholders. Undoubtedly, the process for enforcement, application and continued maintenance of these heritage buildings will constantly be competing with factors such as private ownership, finances, and relevance of placement in its surroundings. This study reveals, however, how the intrinsic value of these historical pieces is more likely to go up when investments are made to communicate their worth.

**Keywords:** Shophouse Façade, Heritage Façade, Building Conservation History (maximum 5 words, 10 font size and separated with commas)

## INTRODUCTION

The remarkable history of the past architectural style of a city is known to be shaped by the number of significant architectural heritage property which stands as a prominent artefact. These selected heritage assets owned their physical and spiritual strength, yet exists without the protection from urban growth and architecture interventions to uphold their qualities of heritage elements and property will deteriorate due to natural causes and other factors. An important part of Architectural Heritage studies is to highlight how heritage property has an intrinsic form and visual value of urban heritage pattern, which should be wisely sustained and conserved.

As appointed by Mohga (2014), to implement heritage conservation by considering cultural context and qualified planning and design, local traditional and cultural values of communities for future generations can be a great challenge for the construction and design team to take responsibility for that issues. The challenges of an abandonment of the inner city, urban growth pressure, scarce lawmaking, and poor implementation affect urban conservation nowadays (Ahmad, 2008). In addition, inappropriate design of new township, urban lifestyle changes, and poor awareness of society are also among the significant issues in sustaining the heritage value currently (Ahmad, 2008).

Recent rapid expansion and modernisation have put the heritage shophouses in isolation because of the emergence of new modern buildings in the surrounding study area. Also, the flawed characters of the shophouse façade image have not been maintained and well emphasised by the local authority and owners. The shophouse owners' deficiency of maintenance and preservation has caused an inadequate and inappropriate image of the heritage shophouses. This project seeks ways to educate the students about noticing and observing the changes of function in heritage buildings also has distracted the ambience of the heritage site. Not only have the aesthetic value of the shophouse façade also been ignored by changing the strait eclectic style façade to modern façade causing a discontinuity of heritage façade, but also that the shophouse façade has been renovated to modern architecture style irrespective of the existing strait eclectic architectural style. The outcome of this study shares beneficial information to a range of stakeholders which includes the shophouses owners, the local authority, as well as other the heritage conservation practitioners and scholars interested in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies suggest that rapid growth and urbanisation in Malaysia have put the heritage buildings in an endangered situation, which might cause further demolition of the area's historical value. Mohamed et al. (2008) pointed out that economic development and urbanisation in developing countries with heritage significance are under threat due to rapid population growth. According to The Getty Conservation Institute (2009), due to fast urbanisation and growth consequences of cities worldwide, urban heritage has been confirmed to deteriorate during the last decade. Chun et al. (2005) added that there was a conflict between urban change and heritage, and this situation is physically evident in all the towns and cities in Malaysia today.





**Figure 2.** Location plan of Jalan Temenggung's rows of selected shophouses  
 Source: Source: MPKB, Kaji Selidik Guna Tanah APUDG, 2005

This project also employed other means of qualitative methods such as interviewing the local authority and shophouses' owner/tenants as respondents to gain data and information regarding research matter and to validate data through triangulation. Each respondent selected for the interview are selected based on the scope of the study to specifically address issues of urban development control in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The interview groups are divided into levels of stakeholders – Authorities (The Majlis Perbandaran Kota Bharu, as the local authority of Kota Bharu) and Shophouse owner/ tenants' owners of the heritage buildings.

A vital part of this process in architectural design involves students understanding a client's design requirement, which, in this case, the MPKB's guidelines, and then to be able to apply them as part of their design consideration. This project also provided an important opportunity for students to advance their understanding of ongoing issues in heritage and conservation studies by employing this type of interpretive inquiry into their design work.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The combined field of research expertise of conservation, history and sustainability in the team contributed immensely for the success of this project. We would like to acknowledge of UMK Internal Short Scheme SGJP Grant 2019-2020 in funding for this study.

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