

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**DEVELOPING A STRUCTURED
FRAMEWORK FOR HISTORICAL
RESEARCH IN HERITAGE
BUILDING CONSERVATION: A
CASE STUDY OF PERAK STATE**

NUR AINA IYLIA BINTI HUSA

Thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
**Master of Science
(Built Environment)**

Faculty of Built Environment

January 2026

ABSTRACT

The core concepts of conservation in Malaysia are rooted in the principles of conservation and documenting. By complying to these principles, it leads to the beginning of conservation efforts through the conduction of historical research in the preliminary study, which ultimately results in an initial study report. Historical research is essential to acknowledge the authenticity and significance values of a heritage building as according to Article 6 of the Burra Charter, "the cultural significance of a place and other issues affecting its future are best understood by a sequence of collecting and analysing information before making decisions". Performing a historical study of the place and its extent, as well as looking into its history, usage, associations, and materials can help to comprehend its significant values, which will eventually assist in determine what kind of conservation approach should be undertaken. It is identified that unstructured process and procedures in conducting historical research are caused by no specific guidance and precise instructions, based on this core issue, three objectives are developed, firstly is to identify determinant aspects of in historical research for heritage building conservation, to analyse the factors considered in selection of historical research evidence for conservation of heritage building and lastly is to develop historical research documentation guidance for conservation work. This study relies on data acquired through a literature review, a survey using questionnaire, and a site assessment cum with content analysis which was conducted at Perak state; Bangunan Suluh Budiman and Istana Kenangan. The questionnaire survey and content analysis are conducted to assess variables of structured framework for historical research during preliminary study. The study's findings indicated that the establishment of an inventory known as Heritage Building Historical Research Inventory or HBHRI that could enhance the procedures and process of historical research for conservation projects. This study targeted to contribute towards built heritage conservation industry, through the establishment of HBHRI as an inventory form, it has potential to contribute to build heritage conservation with the aids from Jabatan Warisan Negara to delineate the steps and methods of historical research working procedures within Garis Panduan Pemuliharaan Bangunan Warisan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Alhamdulillah, firstly I would like to thank God for giving me an opportunity in embarking my Master and completing this challenging journey. My deepest gratitude and thanks go to my supervisor Prof Madya Dr Siti Norlizaiha Harun and Sr. Mohd Nurfaizal Baharuddin for their guidance and insightful feedback. Their tips, feedback and critique help me a lot in completing this master's study.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family and friends for their unwavering support, their encouragement, love and patience made this three years journey possible. For the past three years, everyone has given their encouragement and support throughout my rough time, it really helps me a lot especially in keeping up my courage. Thankyou Umi, Ayah, Kakak, Rabiatul and Azuren for your kind words and motivation which keeps me going.

To my partner and love of my life, Awal Hasrizwan, thank you for your endless support, understanding, and love. Your belief in me kept me motivated even during the toughest times. Thank you for sparing your time, helping me out throughout these three years. Without you, I could not have done it all alone. To my beloved son Aqil Nawf, who was born along the master's journey, you are my strength and courage who makes me keep going.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my own self after years of determination, dedication throughout the challenges faced along the way. This piece of victory is for me and everyone who supported me endlessly. Alhamdulillah

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS | ii |
| AUTHOR'S DECLARATION | iii |
| ABSTRACT | iv |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | v |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | vi |
| LIST OF TABLES | x |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xii |
| | |
| CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Research Background | 1 |
| 1.2 Problem Statement | 2 |
| 1.3 Research Question | 5 |
| 1.4 Research Objective | 5 |
| 1.5 Research Scope | 6 |
| 1.6 Research Significance | 8 |
| 1.7 Research Methodology | 8 |
| 1.8 Chapters Outline | 14 |
| | |
| CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW | 16 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 16 |
| 2.2 Heritage Building | 16 |
| 2.3 Gazetted National Heritage Building | 20 |
| 2.4 Conservation | 22 |
| 2.4.1 Conservation Principles | 23 |
| 2.4.2 Conservation Concept | 26 |
| 2.4.3 Conservation Process | 28 |
| 2.4.4 Conservation Approach | 30 |
| 2.4.5 Summary of Conservation | 32 |
| 2.5 Documentation in Conservation | 32 |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Heritage buildings are one of history existence of a particular country that hold a significant amount of value for the nation (Naquiuddin et al., 2013). Every heritage building in Malaysia has its own unique history and significance, which is conveyed through building styles (Mat Hasan et al., 2019). Thus, according Zolkafli et al., (2019), heritage buildings each have its own unique value in terms of history, aesthetics, society, archaeology, culture, architecture, documentation, and symbolism, and it is imperative that these values be protected.

Conservation is a measure that was adopted in order to prevent decay and, at the same time, preserve the building's authenticity. Heritage buildings are subject to deterioration and degradation over the course of their lifetimes (Harun, 2011a). The fundamental activities of conservation can be subdivided into a few stages, which encompass the time before, during, and after the execution of conservation. Before starting any kind of conservation work, one of the most vital stages is doing research into the historical background of the building (Harun, 2011a).

In the procedure that is currently practiced in Malaysia, historical study or historical research is required. Before making any conservation proposals, it is necessary to conduct a thorough investigation to gain an understanding of the authenticity and significant values associated with a heritage building. In the field of conservation works, it is essential to do research that evaluates the history of the building as well as its current condition, as stated by (Harun, 2020).

However, pre conservation work often related with identification of defects and deterioration of a building and preparation of dilapidation report which resulting conservation approach. People have a tendency to concentrate more stress on dilapidation surveys than historical studies, despite the fact that historical research is one of the most important documentation requirements prior to conservation. A greater understanding of the building's socioeconomic history, as well as its past in terms of technologies, materials, and construction methods, can be supported by historical study (Khalil et al., 2021).