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Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch

Seri Iskandar Campus, Perak, MALAYSIA



**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 16TH REGIONAL
SYMPOSIUM OF THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO
SIMPORA XVI: 2025**

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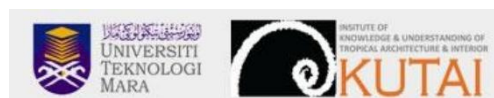
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DISCONTINUITY OF URBAN MORPHOLOGY IN BANDA HILIR MELAKA

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Abstract: The city's complexity surpasses even that of the most intricate buildings, as it encompasses substantial social, financial, and cultural aspects. Urban development results from ongoing decision-making processes, evolving through three primary periods: the Enlightenment, Modernist, and Neo-Rationalist eras. The contemporary theory of urbanism has now progressed to the Smart City Concept, which integrates digital technologies to enhance urban efficacy, inclusivity, and sustainability. This paper emphasizes the dynamic morphology of Banda Hilir, which has undergone significant evolution over nearly 600 years, influenced by various city theories from the feudal system to colonial powers and the current constitutional monarchy. Existing literature typically focuses on traditional typology, but this paper examines the continuous morphological changes that reshape urban areas. It discusses the concept of "city-time," highlighting the intensity of urban transformations and the dynamic nature of the urban fabric. Despite a perceived orthogonal grid, the evolving arrangement of roads, building entrances, commercial activities, building heights, and street sizes reflects the hierarchical processes underlying these transformations. The paper presents evidence of discontinuity in urban morphology while detailing intermediate findings from ongoing research into Banda Hilir's urban form, dating back to its establishment in the 15th century.

Keywords: urban, urban morphology, urban history, Banda Hilir

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in developing modern new towns and it heightened the need for existing city to grow the same pace in order to keep up with the current needs. However, these rapid changes are having a serious impact on the existing city, since it is usually being abandoned or changed and gradually destroying the distinctive actual value of the towns.

The city, like all urban artefacts, can only be defined by precise reference to space and time...we can see the importance of permanent phenomena linking one to the other...(Aldo Rossi, 1966). When change occurs in urban structure, it is related to a precise time-space frame. The change is caused by the action of those influences that can be observed, measured, recognised, and which then become wider influences, acting on the surrounding structures and structural systems (Stojanovic, 2015). The substantial urbanisation and rapid development happening in most of the historical cities like Banda Hilir, threaten the identity, sense of place, as well as physical attributes and appearance. Under those circumstances, the urbanisation pattern today

can affect the former identity or character of an old town, thereby endangering the nation's cultural heritage value.

The cycles of change in urban morphology have a historical dimension related to the flows of historical events that, with their power and influence, affect the change of both past and current morphological conditions and the set of thoughts about the future (Velimir Stojanovic, 2015). As mentioned above, rapid urbanisation indirectly affects historical elements, eroding the original identity of the historical city. This research aims to present the cycle of causes, reasons, influences, and consequences of change.

Urban spaces are the result of historical processes, which manifest themselves in the rise of buildings and their construction history, as well as in archaeological remains. Together, they form the most direct and generally most accessible source for the history of the city's origin and development, even before any pictorial or written record.

According to the Ninth World Urban Forum (2018), rapid population growth and economic development have impacted urban heritage in Malaysia, thereby exacerbating urban problems. This is due to the newly developed township on the edge of many historic cities, which has entailed pressure for commercialisation, poor design, and cultural uniformity, which has diminished place identity. Commonly, a town is occupied with diverse elements, in the form of urban fabrics, growing populations, commercial economic activities and various activity patterns of people. Change is, therefore, a phenomenon that eliminates this appearance and where the dynamics are necessarily confirmed as the basic nature of the structure, function and the form of urban order. Specifically, for historic old towns, these elements in urban heritage are the foundation of creating an identity and character of a town. In the study context, the historical elements within a city's circle have high potential to emphasise the place's identity as a historic city. Any attributes that possess the value of historic, unique and aesthetic can be observed from the point of visualisation, as well as the ambience can be felt through a sense of place.

In all cases, many forces come into play in a city, and these forces may be economic, political, or of some other nature. An analysis of the city allows us to see how these are applied (Aldo Rossi, 1966). In spite of all the relevant elements having been determined to realise the objectives, what are the key strategies that will be used to ensure the urban strategy approach is functioning at its best, in order to successfully portray the sustainability or maybe portray the failure. The analysis of the city in this research emphasises the timeline history of Banda Hilir and direct observation to the built form and environment

The town is a "Place of transformations"- The Shape of the city is the expression of the built capability for humanising an unbuilt place, but at the same time it is also the face of the individual and collective genius loci. Spirituality's face of those who have been able to masterfully interpret and form the place, giving character and organisation to the natural place. It is the masterful outcome of the individuals and collective experiences as practices destined, over time, to become "rules", that today we can recognise in the buildings and that at one time were shared between all the cultural area people. Art that was "knowing how" and to

transform; art, whose etymological root ar- in Sanskrit, means: adapting, producing, building well, Paolo Carlotti(2021)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The preservation of Banda Hilir's built environment, shop house, and many other old historical buildings sparks ongoing debate about what must be retained and what may be transformed. The facade lining along the riverbanks was built over centuries that witnessed profound changes in domestic life, technology, available materials, and style. Restoration, like that of the Stadthuys, built over generations and subsequently modified, is similarly a frozen collage of interventions.

The transformation represents values shared with ancestors and passed down to descendants, uniting past and future. Similar continuity exists in public spaces-street, boulevards, squares and neighbourhood (Habraken, 2000). The antiquity of monuments and public spaces and the meaning with which things are spent, undercuts how much else perennially changes; reclaimed land is built, new roads, new buildings are insinuated into the existing urban fabric. Even the fundamental qualities of public spaces, seemingly so permanent, are gradually affected by the transformation of buildings and street-scapes that define them.

The very durability and transcendence of built environment is possible only because there is continuous renewal and replacement of individual cells preserve it, giving it the ability to persist (Habraken, 2000). In order to understand the transformation of the nature and structure of things, unlike other symbolic organic phenomena, the built environment escapes scrutiny because humans live as an integral part of it. In judging and projecting value into it, this research is not accustomed to simply watching it or observing it, to learning how it behaves, and to act on it (Constructive Grounded Theory Methodology).

What previous generations built for eternity, we demolish, and then, we build again, permanence is instinctively sought. Built environment like all complex phenomena, artificial and natural, endures by transforming its parts (Habraken, 2000). 'Padang Pahlawan', which was the site of the first proclamation of independence in 1957, was actively promoted and subsequently demolished for commercial development. The famous "padang" is now seen as a rooftop garden that has become a stage for singing contests and concerts; a far cry from its role in the past. The imperative historic 'padang' was then has been transform radically into another commercial centre and car parks. Another notorious development which include entertainment centres, cineplexes, exhibition spaces, the international club and area for cultural and sport events (Smith, A. (2012).

If the city morphology is an organism, it is so by virtue of human invention; people imbue it with life and spirit of space. People actively involved and find a given built environment worth renewing, altering and expanding. The intervention between people and the form likely inhabited is a fundamental and fascinating aspect of a built environment. We are all players, agents who inhabit the environment, transforming it to our liking and making sure things stay as we choose within the territory we claim. The implementation (Modernist Urban Plan) was

partial and haphazard due to the limited economic capacity and technical capability of these newly born nations, causing fragmentism and disintegration of the city. Some of the layers of urban history and heritage that kept the shared memory of the whole community for many generations were replaced by new forms alien to the existing contexts, driven by certain political agendas or economic market forces, ignoring the past and speculating about the future (Widodo, 2009). The heritage representations shown in Melaka are thus a product of cultural policies and of historical constructions of the 1970s and 1980s.

LEVEL OF DISCONTINUITY IN URBAN MORPHOLOGY

Accordingly, architects and urban designers are confronted with the right decision about discontinuity. The ethical dimensions of discontinuity in urban morphology can occur at 3 levels:

Level1, Intellectual Discontinuity- Refer to the break disruption in the flow of intellectual ideas, concepts or paradigms within a particular field of study philosophy or thought. Occurs where there is a significant departure from established intellectual norms, traditions or frameworks, leading to a shift in thinking and emergence of ideas or perspectives. This discontinuity can result from various factors, including the introduction of the revolutionary theories, technological advancements, cultural shifts or philosophical breakthrough. Intellectual discontinuity often plays a crucial role in driving intellectual progress, challenging existing beliefs and fostering innovation within academic, scientific and philosophical disciplines. Discontinuity in thought does not exist in isolation but rather within a complex ecosystem of diverse influences and historical contexts. It challenges our preconceptions, encourages us to question established norms and ideologies. The exploration of the historical development of intellectual movements reveals that the modern trend prominently embraced rationalist intellectual inclinations leading to a pronounced detachment of modern architecture from its historical roots and architectural heritage. The purity of form isolated from the local influences of diverse societies and the urban design problems.

Level 2 ,Discontinuity in meaning (symbolic disruption)- In the intricate tapestry of human culture, symbolism holds a profound significance. It is the language of metaphor and meaning, transcending the superficial to convey deeper truths. Within this realm, "symbolic disconnection" emerges as a potent and enigmatic concept, weaving itself into the fabric of various aspects of human existence. This notion ventures beyond the physical and empirical, delving into the profound intricacies of human thought and expression. Symbolic disconnection is the unraveling of meanings, the rupture in the seamless flow of symbols and their interpretations. It is a profound exploration of the spaces between symbols, where ambiguity and paradox often reside. In this exploration, we peel back the layers of human communication, delving into the enigmatic chasms that exist between signifiers and their signified. Through this journey, we begin to grasp the significance of these symbolic disconnections and their implications for our understanding of culture, language, and the very essence of meaning itself. This inquiry into symbolic disconnection ventures into the uncharted territories of semiotics, linguistics, and philosophy. It challenges conventional notions of clarity and coherence in communication, and prompts us to confront the profound complexities that underlie the symbols we use to express our thoughts and emotions. Symbolic disconnection is a portal into

the world of interpretation, where meaning is not a fixed point but a dynamic, ever-shifting landscape.

As we embark on this exploration, we navigate the nuances of symbolic disconnection, understanding how it shapes our perceptions, influences our discourse, and ultimately illuminates the intricate dance of human expression. Join us in this journey through the corridors of symbolic disconnection, where meaning reveals its multifaceted nature, and where the spaces between symbols beckon us to discover the hidden depths of human understanding.

Level 3, Morphological or Physical Discontinuity- the visual and spatial characteristics of the built environment, addressing questions about form, layout and the relationship between different elements within urban landscape. The dimensions of discontinuity delve into the in which various architectural styles, materials, and urban planning approaches interactor clash to create a distinctive urban fabric, and crucial for urban designer, as it influences the overall aesthetics, functionality and user experiences of cities. A key consideration in urban design is the continuity or discontinuity of the built environment. Morphological dimension refers to the physical characteristics and spatial arrangement of urban *elements, including buildings, streets, public spaces, and infrastructure*. It encompasses the size, shape, scale, proportion, and spatial relationships of these elements.

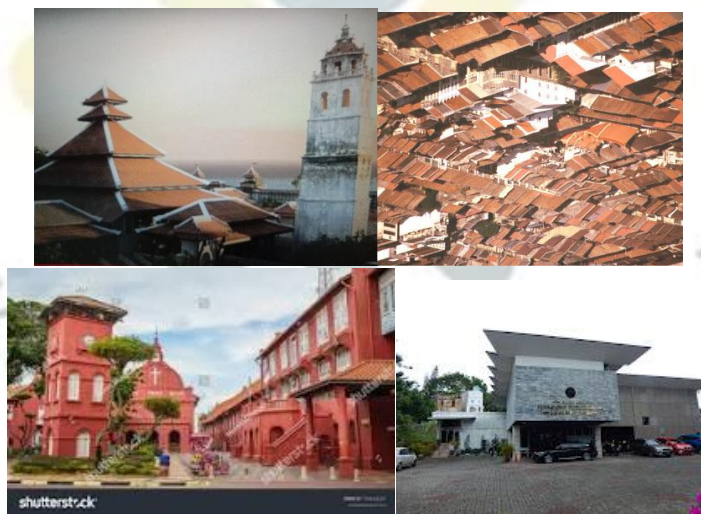


Figure 1: Significant cultural heritage in Melaka that are the results from discontinuity of urban

It influences how people perceive and navigate through urban spaces, ultimately shaping their experiences and interactions within the city. The morphological dimension of discontinuity focuses on the physical characteristics and spatial relationships that contribute to a sense of fragmentation or cohesion within urban areas. Different factors influence *morphological discontinuity*: a) Historical Context: Historical events, such as wars, natural disasters, or urban transformations, can lead to morphological disruptions in urban design (Cullen, 1961). Post-war reconstruction often introduces new architectural styles and spatial arrangements, creating a visual break with the pre-existing fabric. b) Socio-economic Factors: Socio-economic disparities and land-use patterns can contribute to morphological discontinuities. Variations in income levels, land values, and property ownership can result in contrasting building scales,

architectural quality, and neighbourhood amenities (Gehl, 2010). c) Planning Policies and Regulations: Planning policies and regulations play a vital role in shaping urban form. Zoning regulations, development guidelines, and building codes can influence the continuity or fragmentation of the built environment (Carmona et al., 2010). Inconsistent planning policies may result in disjointed developments and visual dissonance.

Morphological discontinuity has many impacts: a) Perception and Identity: morphological discontinuities can affect the perception of place and identity. Fragmented urban design may create a sense of disjointedness and detachment, affecting residents' attachment to their neighbourhoods (Gehl, 2010). b) Connectivity and Accessibility: discontinuities in urban design can impede pedestrian and vehicular connectivity. Lack of well-connected streets and public spaces may limit accessibility and hinder social interactions (Hillier, 1996).

Typologies of morphological discontinuity are numerous: a) Scale discontinuity: variation in building heights and sizes within a neighbourhood or district can create a sense of visual disjunction. Contrasting scales can disrupt the overall urban fabric and affect the human experience of the environment (Madanipour, 1996). b) Architectural discontinuity: differences in architectural styles, materials, and detailing can contribute to morphological discontinuity. A mix of architectural styles without a cohesive design approach can lead to visual fragmentation (Kelbaugh, 2013). c) Plot and Street Discontinuity: Inconsistent plot sizes, setbacks, and street patterns can result in irregular and disconnected urban forms. Discontinuities in plot sizes may disrupt the rhythm of the street frontage and pedestrian experience. d) Open Space Discontinuity: Disjointed or poorly connected public spaces, parks, and plazas can hinder the continuity of urban design. Lack of connectivity between open spaces may limit pedestrian movement and reduce social cohesion (Lynch, 1960).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology in this research will be using Constructivist Grounded Theory. The first aspect is based on the reference to the suitable previous research. The second aspect is based on the research's main purpose or aim and its suitability for the research. However, the suitability of the methodology and approach to the research is the primary basis for determining the most suitable methodology to apply. Referring to my research based on timeline morphology, Karl Marx viewed human history: 'man makes their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances already given and transmitted from the past'. The Constructivist approach treats research as a construction but acknowledges that it occurs under specific conditions of which we may not be aware and which may be of our choosing. The Constructivist Grounded Theory has generated innovative ideas since its earliest beginnings. Glasier's (1964) early concept of 'comparatively failure' depicted how seemingly successful scientists adopt famous scientists as their models and subsequently judge their own contributions against these more recognised scientists (Charmaz, 2014). Guidelines describe the steps of the research process, providing a path through it. Adopt and adapt them to solve problems and to conduct diverse studies, whether or not aiming for theory development.

PRELIM-FINDINGS

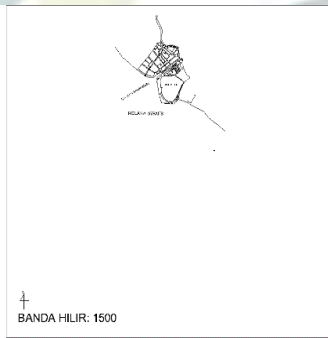
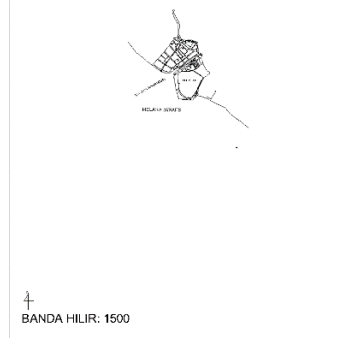
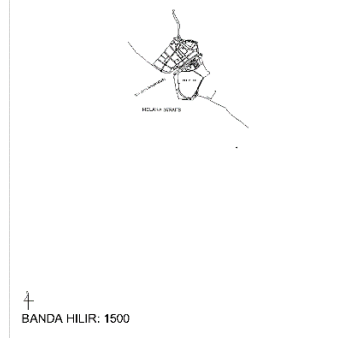
Cultural Layers

The spatial dimensions within each cultural layers is represented by a complex structural fabric. Its complexity stems from the large number of factors, ranging from the client's demands and resources to the planners' and builders' skills and the users' behaviour. These factors have concrete effects that can be seen in the building or its remains.

Building Form

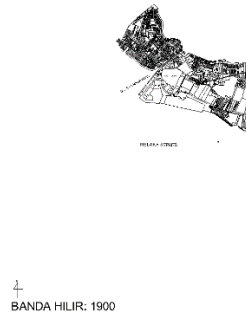
However, conversions, extensions and new buildings not only shape the building itself but also its surroundings and thus relationship to the neighbouring buildings. Historical building research identifies these processes as the basis for the structure's rise and thus determines its building history.

Table 1: Level 1, 2,3 / Discontinuity Of Urban Morphology

RULER	LEVEL 3. MORPHOLOGICAL DISCONTINUITY OF LAND FORM
1396 – 1511AD Feudal System 1. Parameswara (Ulu Bertam) 1396-1414 2. Megat Iskandar Shah (Bt Melaka) 1414-1424 3. Sultan Muhammad Shah Shah 1424-1444 5. Raja Ibrahim 1445 6. Sultan Abu Sayed 1445 7. Raja Kassim (Sultan Muzafar Shah) 1446-1458 8. Sultan Mansur Shah 1446-1458 9. Sultan Alaudin Riayat Shah Shah 1477-1488 10. Sultan Mahmud Shah Shah 1488- 1510 11. Sultan Ahmad Shah 1510 (temporary) 10/11. Sultan Mahmud Shah 1511	
1511 – 1641 Feudal System (King of Portugal) *commander / governor	
1641 – 1824 Feudal System (King of Holland) *commander / governor * Dutch East India Company	

1824 – 1957AD

constitutional Monarchy of
England
* East India Company

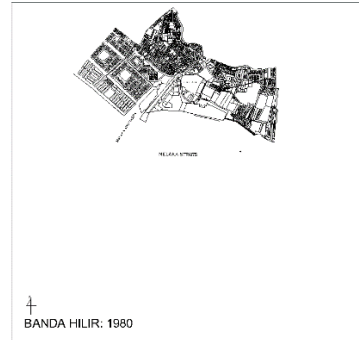


1957 – NOW

Constitutional Monarchy

*DYMMM

1. Tuanku Abdul Rahman ibni Tuanku Muhamma / Negeri Sembilan
2. Sultan Hisamuddin Alam Shah ibni Sultan Alauddin Sulaiman Shah / Selangor
3. Tuanku Syed Putra ibni Tuanku Syed Hassan Jamalullail / Perlis
4. Sultan Haji Sir Ismail Nasiruddin Shah ibni Almarhum Sultan Haji Sir Zainal Abidin Shah III / Terengganu
5. Tuanku Haji Sir Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah ibni Almarhum Sultan Haji Sir Badlishah / Kedah
6. ultan Yahya Petra ibni Sultan Ibrahim Kelantan
7. Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Al-Musta'in Billah ibni Sultan Abu Bakar Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mu'azzam Shah / Pahang

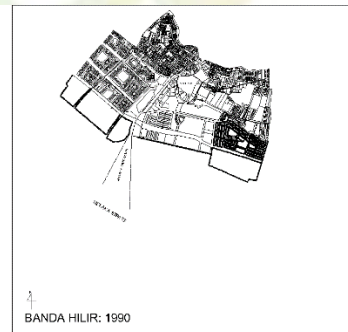


1990 AD

Constitutional Monarchy

*DYMMM

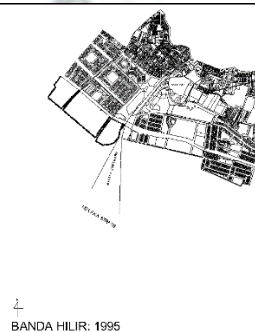
8. Sultan Iskandar ibni Sultan Ismail / Johor
9. Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah ibni Almarhum Sultan Haji Sir Yussuff Izzuddin Shah Ghafarullahu-lah / Perak
10. Tuanku Ja'afar ibni Tuanku Abdul Rahman / Negeri Sembilan
11. Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah ibni Sultan Hisamuddin Alam Shah Al-Haj / Selangor

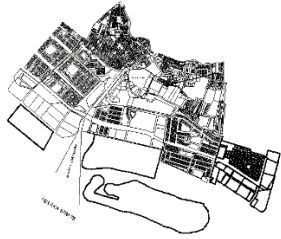
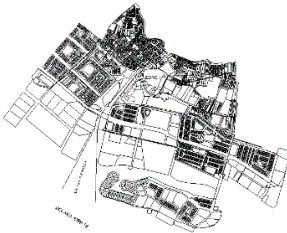
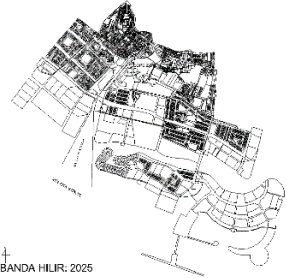
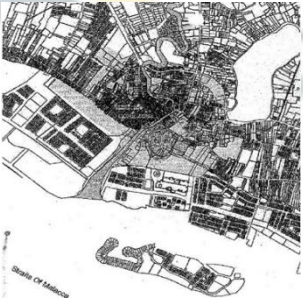


1995 AD

Constitutional Monarchy

13. Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin ibni Almarhum Sultan Haji Mahmud Al-Muktafi Billah Shah / Terengganu



2000 AD Constitutional Monarchy *DYMMM 14. <u>Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah ibni Sultan Hisamuddin Alam Shah Al-Haj / Selangor</u>	 ↑ BANDA HILIR: 2000	
2010 AD Constitutional Monarchy *DYMMM 15. <u>Sultan Muhammad V / Kelantan</u>	 ↑ BANDA HILIR: 2010	
2020 AD Constitutional Monarchy *DYMMM 16. <u>Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah ibni Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Al-Musta'in Billah / Pahang</u>	 ↑ BANDA HILIR: 2020	
2025 AD Constitutional Monarchy *DYMMM 17. <u>Sultan Ibrahim / Johor</u>	 ↑ BANDA HILIR: 2025	

Source: The Author

Locus And Topology

The starting point for an investigation into the history of urban morphology is always real space or locus (the core of the UNESCO Historical Site), where the historical stratification and structural fabric can be experienced in their physical majority. The structural fabric of the place establishes the phenomenal autonomy and the uniqueness of the perspective's urban morphology.

The Development

Starting from the 'core', Banda Hilir City was extended with the development of Kota Laksamana, followed by Mahkota Melaka, Pulau Melaka (connected by a bridge), and the latest, Melaka Gateway (which looks like an extension of Pulau Melaka).

BUILT FORM ARCHITECTURE

Rationalism Movement

The process is closely linked to the Enlightenment and modern capitalism; the growth of literary and scientific humanism was a reaction aimed at establishing a suitable framework for the success of the evolution out of the Middle Ages (Morris, 1979). Influenced the development of the modernist movement, which emphasises clean lines and functional design, while Realism is embodied in history and culture (Nesbitt,1995).

Empiricism Movement

Emphasises the importance of observation, experience, and experimentation in acquiring knowledge. It argues that sensory experience is the only source of knowledge, "all depends on the senses ... with the ways in which his designs might affect the senses of the users"(Broadbent,1990).

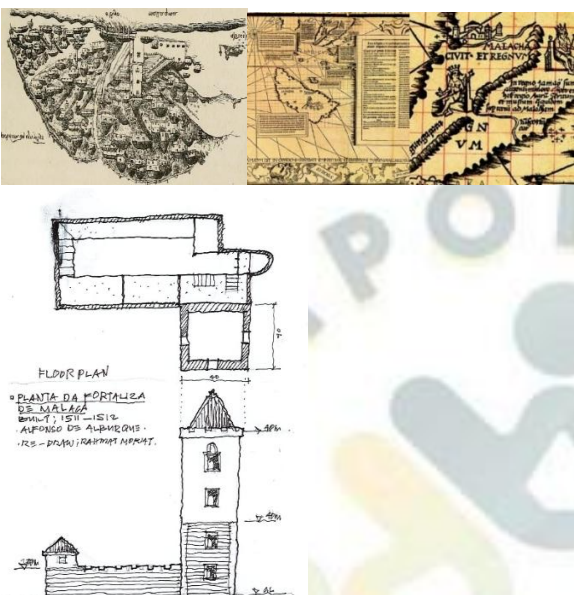
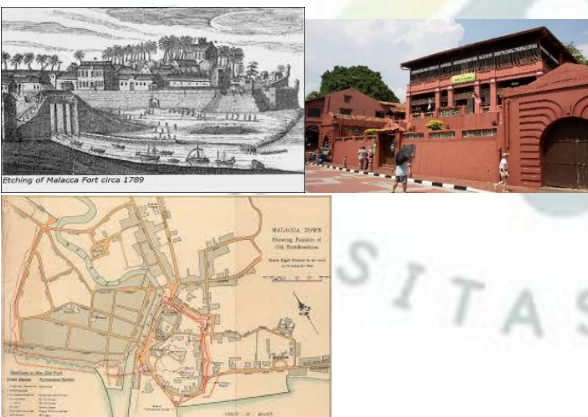
Pragmatism Movement

Focuses on practicality and usefulness in the pursuit of knowledge, suggesting that the truth of an idea can only be determined by its practical consequences and its ability and flexibility to respond to changing needs.

Catastrophe Theory

Rene Thom (1972), Catastrophe Theory and its application to the urban planning experience the sudden discontinuity after continuous operation. The theory can be applied to any sudden change in any process, and it remains a subject of research until today. It plays a fundamental role in analysis and is characterised by its importance in the concept of communication, continuous and discontinuous functions, and the properties preserved after the formation of spaces and sizes. Catastrophe Theory forces in the local behaviour of systems near critical points. Introduced the concept of critical points and described how small changes in parameters can lead to abrupt and dramatic changes in the behaviour of systems of equilibrium and disequilibrium.

Table 2: Level 3: Historical Timeline and Morphology

LEVEL 3, HISTORICAL TIMELINE	LEVEL 1 AND 2-CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY OF ARCHITECTURAL STYLE
1511-1641 AD- UNDER PORTUGUESE OCCUPATION  The image contains two main parts. At the top, there are two historical maps: on the left, a detailed map of Malacca showing its fortifications and surrounding areas; on the right, a map of the Malay Peninsula with Malacca highlighted. Below the maps is a hand-drawn architectural sketch of the A Famosa watchtower. The sketch includes a 'FLOOR PLAN' showing a rectangular structure with a central tower, and a 'LEFT ELEVATION' showing the tower's profile with multiple levels and windows. Text in the sketch includes 'PLANTA DA PORTALUA DE MALACA' and 'ALFONSO DE ALBUQUERQUE'.	Middle Ages of European architecture. Military camp development with strong city wall, churches, barracks, stores and hospitals. A Famosa – first building built by Portuguese in Banda Hilir. 25 meters high watch tower. Built on top of Masjid Besar Melaka site.
1641-1824 AD – UNDER DUTCH RULER  The image contains two main parts. At the top, there is an engraving of Malacca Fort, showing a large, multi-tiered fortification with bastions and a central tower, situated on a hill overlooking the water. Below the engraving is a modern photograph of the Malacca Museum, a large, multi-story building with a red facade and a prominent arched entrance. To the right of the photograph is a historical map of Malacca, showing the city's layout and fortifications.	RATIONALISM (Enlightment) Stadhuis (townhall)- built just after the occupation ,1641. Amsterdam style of architecture which is influenced by Feudal-Colonial era. Protect with very strong city wall construction (upgrade from existing city wall). Proper land survey, high quality construction.
1824-1957 AD – UNDER BRITISH COLONIAL  The image contains two main parts. At the top, there is a historical map of Malacca, showing the city's layout and fortifications. Below the map is a photograph of the Malacca Club, a large, multi-story building with a red facade and a prominent arched entrance. To the right of the photograph is a photograph of the Sime Darby building, a large, multi-story building with a red facade and a prominent arched entrance.	RATIONALISM (Realism-embodied in history and culture) Malacca Club, Neo-Classicism. (Functionality and technology) Sime Darby building, Umno Museum RATIONALISM (Functionality and technology) Commercial development and speculative project Discontunuity in building height, building size, island built totally disconnected with the main land, sustanaibility and environment issues,

1957 – NOW (2025)– UNDER MALAYSIA FEDERATION
Qsave



RATIONALISM (Functionality and technology)
Very high density, commercial driven of ideas, very speculative that might create more urban, culture and social problems.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT – MELAKA GATEWAY



CONCLUSIONS

The discontinuity started to appear since the emergence of various philosophical approaches in design, where design represents the arrangements made by thought to change an existing situation to preferred one. The collapse of traditional cognitive systems, causing the dogmatic views of human beings and the world in all its forms and scientific projects to be lost. The phenomena of exploitation dominated and caused discontinuity or fracture and opposition in the system of mutual relations.

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