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MOHAMAD SANUSI MUSTAFA

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ABSTRACT

For hundreds of years, lighthouse has been built as an aid of navigation. It has a unique strong physical character, built at specific and pre-determined locations, especially along coastal area. Its individual design marks a sense of place at where it stands. Yet it has some common character, shared among others all over the world. As these structures are situated at torturing coastal environment, through time it is exposed to decaying effect if preservation measures are not to be taken when needed to. This research tries to explore major restoration work done on lighthouses in Peninsular Malaysia as an attempt to preserve one of our national heritage. This involved major factors to considered and method of conservation being applied. At least one deactivated lighthouse in Malaysia has pun under major conservation which is the Old One Fathom Bank which is situated on the Selat Malaka waterway near Kelang, Selangor.

Due to its special design and characteristic, lighthouses have received tremendous interest among the public to visit. Examples on foreign countries have shown how these structures are made open for public visit with visitor friendly approaches. Some extend the spaces within it facilities with gallery or museum and souvenir shops, staircase climbing up to the lantern room or viewing platform and so on. Some of deactivated lighthouse has been put under adaptive reuse such as restaurant, resort and even a lab! Nevertheless, in Peninsular Malaysia, restricted admission status has been put on these structures. To date, there is only one lighthouse that is open to public visit without prior arrangement, which is the Fort Cornwallis Lighthouse in Penang. This research also tries to find out interest level of public visit on available lighthouses in Peninsular Malaysia. An extension of study would be how these lighthouses could adapt visitor friendly approach once it is open for public visit and what factors to be given consideration. Research methodology would be mix mode, combination of qualitative and quantitative where data is analyzed and findings are derived before summed up to conclusion and recommendation. The result will be of reference to future maritime conservation work and other related project and field.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the research

Lighthouse has been identified to have a unique strong physical character, built at specific and pre-determined locations. It had been started to be built long ago as sailors began to notice hazardous parts in waterways and coastlines. It has been defines as a structure or tower built in strategic locations to elevate lights that serve as a guide for mariners or ships at sea (A. Ghaffar, 2007). Merriam-Webster online dictionary gives a definition of a lighthouse as a structure (as a tower) with a powerful light that gives a continuous or intermittent signal to navigators. It also functions as a guide for the vessel in entering ports and harbors. All in all globally, about 9000 lighthouses are recorded to be existed (The Lighthouse Directory, 2011) with United States being the most numbers and type diversity.

Lighthouse of Alexandria, on the island of Pharos is said to be the oldest lighthouse in the world, based on recorded documents still available. Built in 280 BC as a landmark, it was a human man-made structure built from bricks with a height of about 135 meter (Wikipedia, Sept. 2011)

Once widely used, the number of operational lighthouses has declined worldwide due to the expense of maintenance and replacement by modern electronic navigation with the aid from space satellite system. The ones which are still operating continue to offer service of navigational guidance, perhaps with the automated lighting (without being manned) or though the additional use of more advanced telecommunication system such as radar etc. There are many examples, although most of them are outside Malaysia, where by lighthouses been conserved and adaptive reused. Many applies to the

compound of the tower only and quite a number extend it to the tower itself (by appointment most of the cases), regardless weather it is still activating or not. These peculiar structures have attracted the growing attention of public to visit them. Once an entry restricted area, the lighthouses visit programs have been developed to be of more visitor friendly for a more conducive tour and safe.

Besides providing distinct character and landmark to a place, its historical value could be of better appreciation to the public at large when accessibility is extended. This will promote a hands-on understanding of its significant existence as a lighthouse to the specific location or place. The added element such as gallery will further enhance the effort of education. Accommodation unit would offer personal rare experience of residing around a lighthouse compound for the visitors. The usage of the lighthouse compound and facilities can be broaden up of holding festive functions, in example wedding ceremony, reunion, gathering and so on.

Looking on adaptive reuse of lighthouse in other countries, it offers quite a number of alternatives on how these structures can be given reasons to still be maintained, and in many cases can commercially generates income. The Morgan Point Lighthouse (1868) Connecticut, USA has been turned into residential house while Wilsons Promontory Light Station (1857) in Victoria, Australia has been refurbished as a heritage hotel. There are many maritime or lighthouse museum operate out of existing lighthouse, such as Lighthouse of Cape Byron (1901) in the USA.

Peninsular Malaysia, with its vast stretch of sea-bound boundaries relative to its area of land, in fact has quite a number of this peculiar shape structures. All lighthouses in Peninsular of Malaysia (except Pulau Pisang Light, Johor) is under the administration of Department of Maritime Malaysia, DMM (a department under the Ministry Of Transport). These lighthouses are situated at strategic places along the coastal area of Straits of Malacca, Straits of Tebrau and South China Sea.

There are nevertheless a few lighthouses in Malaysia such as the Old One Fathom Bank Lighthouse in Selangor and Pulau Sialu (Sungai Batu Pahat) Lighthouse that have been