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THE UNIQUENESS OF OLD SHOPHOUSES

THYE ANN HOTEL AND RESTAURANT AT JALAN HILIR KOTA BHARU, KELANTAN

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Abstract: This research delves into the distinctiveness of old shop houses by focusing on an example The Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses situated on Jalan Hilir, in Kota Bharu state of Kelantan in Malaysia. Traditional shop houses, in Malaysia carry cultural importance as they embody a mix of architectural legacy influenced by colonial times and communal beliefs. The Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses serve as an illustration of these characteristics by reflecting the rooted history and identity of Kota Bharu state. This research used a method that involves conducting, on site observations and interviewing the building owner and experts to investigate the significance as well, as the cultural and historical values associated with these buildings. The research findings show that the design style of the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses blends elements, with colonial influences by incorporating features like tall ceilings and detailed cornices that were adjusted from Western styles to suit the tropical weather conditions. The frontage of the building displays characteristics such as pilasters and intricate carvings combined with design elements like timber and clay tiles. This blend of styles reflects the building's ability to adapt and its distinct identity, within Kota Bharu shophouses.

Keywords: Colonial Architecture, Heritage Shophouses, Urban Identity, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Old shophouses, in Malaysia hold value as they showcase a fusion of architectural styles influenced by colonization and local histories (Mydin et al., 2014). The Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses located at Jalan Hilir in Kota Bharu in Kelantan is a prime example of this architectural style. It combines traditional design elements, with colonial aesthetics reflecting the city rich history and identity. As Malaysia's cities continue to grow and change quickly over time historic shophouses such, as this one are at risk of being replaced by buildings often because their cultural and colonial importance is not fully recognized in city planning. This issue is especially urgent in Kota Bharu, where the push for modernization puts the preservation of shophouses – to the city history – in jeopardy.

This research seeks to explore the cultural and colonial value of Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses highlighting its importance, as a landmark. The research highlights the significance of integrating structures into present day to maintain a connection, to our past and uphold our identity. It suggests methods to safeguard these structures while accommodating today's urban requirements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Colonial Architectural Influences

The historical architecture, from times has greatly shaped the style in Malaysia by influencing the construction of traditional shophouses that combine European design elements with adaptations to suit the local environment well (Ju et al., 2015). These traditional shophouses from the period often showcase European features like ornate facades and windows with arches and pilasters. They exude an air of elegance while still retaining a welcoming feel due to their size. In adapting to Malaysia's weather conditions these structures feature adjustments, like open passageways called "five-foot ways." These covered paths offer shade for walks and protection from rain on the ground level. The tall ceilings promote air-flow, by letting hot air escape upward and cool breezes circulate. Additionally, walls and slatted windows are utilized to reduce heat inside the buildings. The fusion of design concepts and climate adaptive strategies gave rise to a style tailor made for Malaysia's surroundings (Omar & Syed-Fadzil, 2011). A harmonious mix of colonial elements, with functional adjustments that resonate with the region's essence.

2.2 Cultural Significance of Traditional Shophouses

In Malaysia landscape of traditional shophouses lies a rich cultural heritage that mirrors the tapestry of social and economic eras beyond their captivating architecture charm and beauty (Zwain & Bahauddin, 2017). These unique structures serve a function by intertwining commercial aspects under one roof—a design that nurtures a harmonious blend of work and

family life dynamics (Al-Mohannadi et al., 2020). In these homes turned businesses settings; families would run their enterprises on the ground level while embracing the comforts of home on the upper floors. This setup not only offered benefits but also fostered a unique community spirit where locals resided and worked nearby each other to form lively neighborhoods. Traditional shophouses served as gathering spots where individuals met up, exchanging items and forming connections that strengthened the community bond. (Yeap et al., 2013). Consequently, these structures stand as relics representing the routines and economic endeavors of bygone eras providing valuable glimpses into historical ways of life and family dynamics that still shape the local identity today (Schlecker, 2005).

2.3 Urban Heritage and Identity

Preserving heritage buildings is crucial, for maintaining a city's charm and old shophouses contribute significantly to the character of areas in Malaysia (Rani et al., 2018). As urban areas undergo modernization and growth these historic structures like traditional shophouse play a role in linking the past with the present anchoring identities in a sense of historical flow (Azmi et al., 2017). These constructions promote a feeling of attachment and connection to the locality not for established residents but, for future generations and tourists alike. Urban planning that incorporates buildings helps cities maintain their heritage and adds a touch of history and culture to modern urban growth settings. By preserving these structures and blending them with developments, in cities honor the past while embracing progress to create spaces where tradition and innovation blend seamlessly (Boussaa, 2017). Keeping buildings like shophouses contributes to a sustainable urban identity balancing the old ways, with new advancements and enriching the cultural tapestry of city landscapes (Faudzi, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research used a method that combines observing and conducting interviews to delve into the architectural and cultural elements of the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses, in Kota Bharu. Observations on site center on details that showcase a blend of local styles such as high ceilings, arched windows, and intricate cornices. Interviews with the building owner and experts from the area shed light on the importance and cultural significance of the building while providing insights into its contribution, to Kota Bharu identity. The information collected from observing and interviewing individuals is subsequently examined to emphasize themes that shed light upon the role of heritage values, in maintaining heritage and urban identity.

RESULTS

4.1 Building History

The Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses can be found on Jalan Hilir, in Kota Bharu Kelantan. Serves as a representation of the traditional shophouse style in the areas historical and cultural context. Figure 1 shows the overall view of the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouse. Built in either the late 1800s or early 1900s this structure embodies the rich heritage of Kota Bharu. The front display showcases features, like windows, decorative plaster details, and lively hues that mirror the communities' customs. Thye Ann's architectural layout blends style, with craftsmanship by incorporating lofty ceilings for better airflow in the warm weather and extended eaves for shading purposes. The indoor areas are carefully crafted to serve both as a restaurant for guests and as living spaces of shophouses. This versatile use does not emphasize the building's significance, in the area but also demonstrates the flexibility of shophouse architecture. Figure 2 shows the detailed architectural study of the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouse.



Figure 1: Displays a complete view of the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouse.

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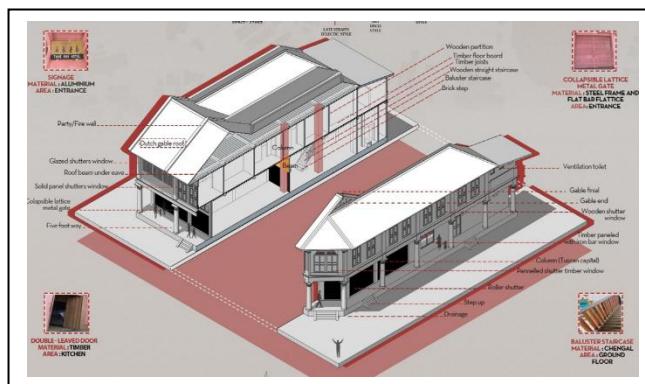


Figure 2: The comprehensive building study of the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouse.

Image Copyright, Author (2024).

4.2 Architecture Analysis

An, in depth exploration of the importance of the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses is offered to give a view of its significance. The research delves into elements such as the design and layout as well as the choice of materials and decorative elements that collectively highlight the distinctiveness of the structure, within its historical backdrop. Table 1 showcases the outlines characteristics of the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses and its importance, as a heritage site clearly.

4.3 Facade Design

The exterior of the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses showcases a mix of colonial design elements that give it a unique charm and historical relevance, with detailed cornices and decorative details like balustrades and elongated windows adding to its character. The architecture tells a tale of fusion, by blending European aesthetics with local craftsmanship in a way that not only makes the building visually appealing but also highlights the varied influences that have contributed to Kota Bharu architectural heritage.

4.4 Layout

The Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses has been planned with two stories, in mind to blend residential areas together. This unique layout pays homage to the shophouses in the region where families resided above their shops. The open design promotes airflow and sunlight penetration to combat Malaysia's weather. This holistic approach sets the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses apart, from neighboring shophouses that typically have a layout.

4.5 Materials

The Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses design incorporates a mix of traditional brickwork, plaster and timber sourced locally and representative of construction methods, from the region's history. A choice that does not add to its visual appeal but also ensures its strength and longevity by following historical building practices prevalent during its inception period.

4.6 Ornamental Details

The intricate and skillfully crafted ornamental elements, at Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses stand out for their design and historical significance with the era in mind. The exquisite cornices and balustrades that adorn the building does not add to its charm but also showcase the craftsmanship of the skilled artisans involved in its construction. In a departure, from the styles seen in shophouses the ornate beauty of Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant

shophouses provides a window into history paying homage to the creativity and cultural richness of its time.

Table 1: Architectural Features of Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses

No.	Material	Description
1.	<i>Facade design.</i>	A harmonious blend of colonial and Chinese influences with ornate elements including intricate cornices, decorative balustrades, and elongated windows.
2.	<i>Layout.</i>	Three-story structure allowing for integrated commercial and residential spaces, facilitating natural ventilation and light, reflective of traditional shophouse design.
3.	<i>Materials.</i>	Constructed using locally sourced brick, timber, and plaster, enhancing aesthetic qualities and structural integrity while showcasing traditional building practices.
4.	<i>Ornamental details.</i>	Notable for intricacy, featuring elaborate cornices and balustrades that highlight colonial heritage, celebrating craftsmanship and artistry from the period.

4.7 Breakdown of Materials and Design Methods

The choice of traditional brick, for the walls paired with a lime plaster finish enhances the buildings charm and longevity. The sloping roof topped with tiles showcases an architectural characteristic of that era and helps efficiently drain rainwater in the tropical weather. The curved wooden windows do not add to the facade's beauty. Also aid, in ventilation to keep indoor temperatures cozy and pleasant. The craftsmanship shown using floorboards is evident, in the strength and visual appeal created by the tongue and groove joinery method. Table 2 showcases the summarizes characteristics of the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses and gives a comprehensive look at its historical value as a heritage structure.

Table 2: Materials and Design Methods Used in Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses

No.	Material	Description	Design Method
1.	<i>Wall structure.</i>	Red brick with plaster finish.	Load-bearing masonry.
2.	<i>Roof.</i>	Gabled roof with tiles.	Traditional pitched roofing.
3.	<i>Windows.</i>	Arched timber frames with louvres.	Custom carpentry.
4.	<i>Flooring.</i>	Wooden floorboards.	Tongue and groove joinery.

4.8 Cultural Insights

Through interviews, with the building owner and experts it was discovered that the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses played a role in serving as a hub for gatherings over time. People emphasized its importance as a spot for connections and cultural events that were essential in shaping the community's identity. Moreover, the hotel's longstanding history as a family-operated business highlights its contribution, to upholding customs and ensuring coherence within the cityscape. The significance of the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses goes beyond its prominence serving as a representation of the communities' shared history and sense of identity.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Significance of Heritage Buildings

The Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses showcase the importance of heritage buildings, in environments in Kota Bharu. The old shophouses do not just stand as structures, they hold within them the rich history and cultural essence of the city. These buildings act as symbols of the past that tell a tale, about the community and how architectural designs have changed over the years to mirror changes. Blending colonial styles, with design elements creates a tapestry that enriches the cityscape and underscores the significance of historic structures such, as Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses in capturing Kota Bharu unique identity.

5.2 Architectural and Cultural Identity

The Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses architecture incorporates ceilings and intricate facades not for looks but also for adapting to the local climate and way of life effectively. It seamlessly combines colonial style design, with sourced materials to showcase both elegance and functionality, in form. This fusion creates an ambiance that celebrates the city heritage and resonates with both locals and tourists alike. These structures enrich the story by holding tales of yesteryears and meeting the requirements of the community.

SUMMARY

In summary the Thye Ann Hotel and Restaurant shophouses emphasizes the importance of heritage shophouses, in maintaining the city characteristic. Their unique architectural style that blends local elements stands as a tribute to the area's historical past. As Kota Bharu and other cities in Malaysia progress, towards modernization it becomes crucial to promote regulations that safeguard the preservation of structures. These measures will help guarantee that upcoming generations are able to stay linked to the past and develop an understanding of the historical stories that define their societies.

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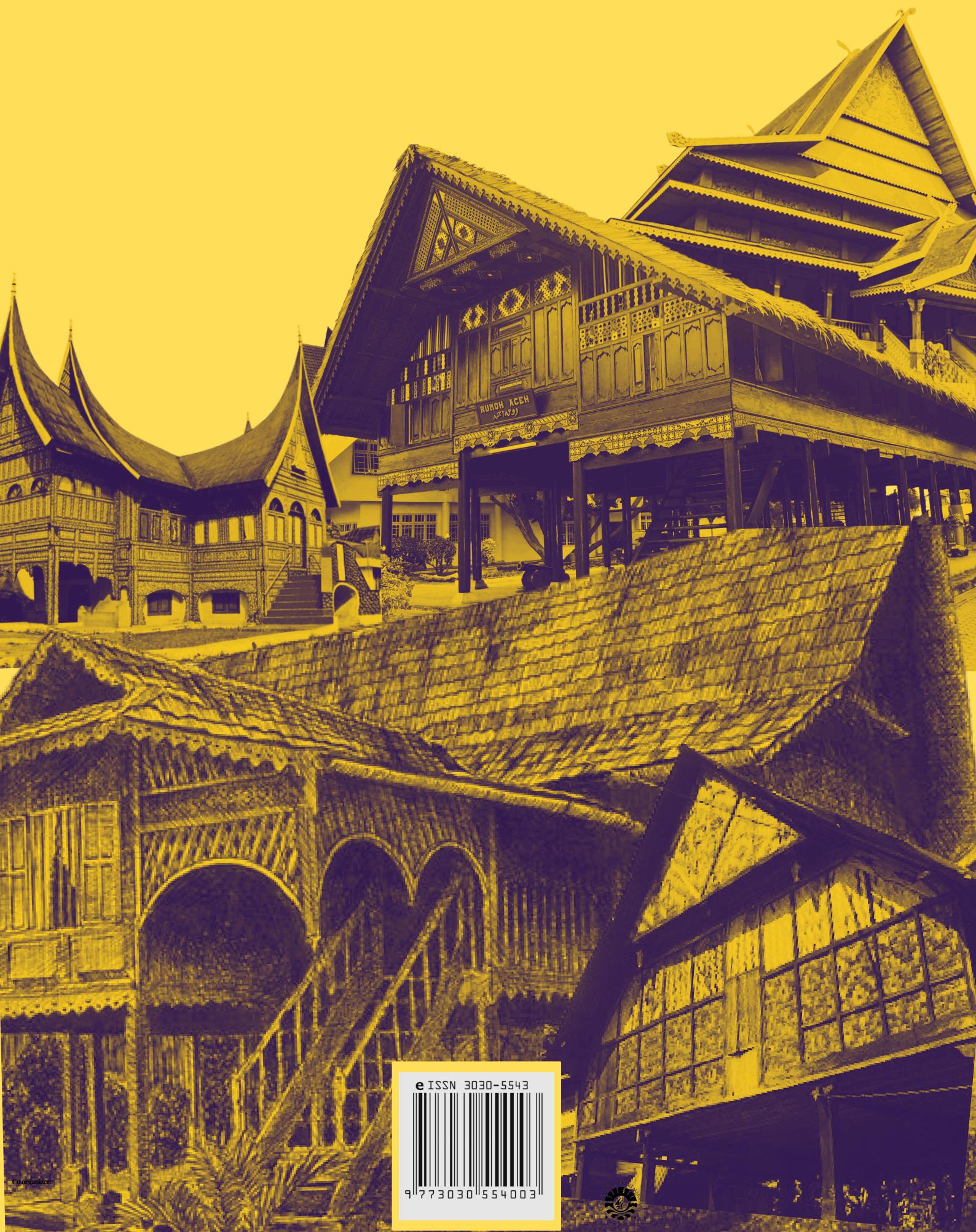
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