

TESIS  
(Thesis)

**STREET FRONTAGE**



**KUALA LUMPUR**

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S T R E E T   F R O N T A G E   O F  
S H O P H O U S E S  
I N  
K U A L A   L U M P U R

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Kajian akhir ini telah dihantar kepada  
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# PROLOGUE

## PREFACE

This writing is an attempt to explain the architectural values of the shophouses in K.L. It is based on the belief that every society should have its own cultural identity which left us some of the Malaysia's historical architecture that should be thoroughly studied and make know to others. Though we may not realise it, there is undue destruction where in its place should be a great regard and appreciation for things of value.

All the views and material found here are mainly from my limited experiences and appreciation as a student but nevertheless as a nature of this country.

As we know, Kuala Lumpur experienced all type of architecture, that is from the simple attap house up to the modern architecture of today. Part of the architecture can still be found in the shophouses. However the remaining shophouses are dated back from the colonial days only.

Therefore, the main aim of this research is to create a better understanding and appreciation of the architecture from the colonial days until today. Insyaallah.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Also, I'd like to thank all my beloved friends for their thin time made available to review, comment and not to mentioned, their cheerful attitude made my work much easier. I thank you.

Ezadora Fiza Zul

To my beloved mom and dad,  
and the rest of the Fiza's  
clan for their patience  
and understanding.

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# CHAPTER

1

## INTRODUCTION

Before the topic is being discussed, it is essential that there is an understanding of the definition of 'conservation' and whatever is included within its context.

Preservation is part of conservation. The meaning of it, is 'being preserved from injury or destruction'. In this case, buildings are being preserved. It can also be described as keeping safe a building, also keeping it alive and retaining its quality.

While 'preservation' explains what is done to a building, 'restoration' is the actual process of restoring to the original form or perfect condition. In other words, it is a representation of the original form of the building.

The process of 'facelift', which also comes under conservation can be compared to the operation of tightening the skin of the face and removing wrinkles in order to impart a more youthful appearance.

This has changed but with using the original structure and framework of the building. Facelifting in conservation is aimed at revitalising a structure so that it may be functioned and reused.

Within the architectural context, conservation is the maintenance of a single structure or group of structures related to each with thought given to the environment around the structure or structures. This inter-relationship between buildings and the environment is aimed at creating a continuity between elements. The general conservation also includes view points, of the building near and far, and how new structures would affect these views. Briefly, conservation may be said to consist of cherishing, existing structures so that they may not merely continue but may also received more abundant life from the changes and fresh associations which occurs.

Cultural heritage is important to people of any country. It is something with which they can identify themselves. The richness of our heritage,

especially with contributions by the different communities and races which make up our nation, is something to be proud of. Unfortunately this heritage is mostly taken for granted hence the fast disappearance of old but beautiful buildings which make part of our heritage. This either be through ignorance or, lack of imagination of the people.

It has been said that the value of the great or exceptional building as a work of art is 'one of the highest expressions of man's spirit'. 'conservation' it-self has many meanings. When applied to the context of architectural and environmental control it is not merely for preserving buildings for the sake of architectural and historical interest only but is aimed at preserving our heritage. The ultimate aim is to retain for future generations a comprehensible record of the varied influences which has brought about the Malaysia of today.

Conservation can be used to bring back buildings to economic life to renew and to redevelop. It is in all its entirety, a move to save unique districts, landmarks and urban settings. A sense of place is achieved and with this comes the development of identity, a sense of 'belonging' to something that is recognisable and established as culture. These testimonies of achievements would serve as great sources of inspiration for present and future generations, and would further give people a realization of the richness of our heritage.

There is urgency in the question of conservation. The cultural wealth that we have, if not realized and appreciated will be lost forever through the workings of some thoughtless persons, to whom we have entrusted the fates of our architectural heritage.

What must be done is to acknowledge our architectural heritage and treat it accordingly with care, as one would say, with something left to one by one's mother. This sense of caring is something that is much needed as any loss which occurs cannot be replaced. It is not merely enor-

mous losses of individual buildings, but the inconsistency of new intrusive structures built next to what is left, the common use of unsightly road signs and electrical transmission lines. In very many places, it seems as though all sense of beauty, of fitness and even of civic pride had been lost. Whatever the reasons may be, this sad decline had better be remedied before it is too late, and we regret for what we could have done.

The task of conservation cannot be made a responsibility of designers and planners alone but is also a responsibility of the public in general. After all the growth and development of a town depends upon, and affects all, who live in it. It must be understood that this civic obligation that the public has in contributing, is much appreciated and aids designers and planners in their strife to create a better environment for all. More important than this, is that, in the long run, the national objective of sustaining the natural and built environment is being satisfied. In doing so,



there may even be greater interest in what is happening and the quality of architecture and environment in this country may be raised.

The awareness in our society is still rather small. This evolution of concern may be due to the emergence of pride in a common heritage or a reaction to the blandness and monotony of contemporary life. It is hoped that this awareness and the possibility of a widespread appreciation for the natural environment and subtle but visible aspects of environmental design, will grow effectively for the betterment of our society, as a whole.

## DEFINATION

### Preservation

Preservation means essentially the retention of buildings or groups of buildings in their original form.

Preservation is broadly speaking negative or protectionist. Its attitudes are defensive and rarely contain any elements of attack. It has been traditionally concerned with the preventive measures to safeguard and valued old buildings from destruction which include maintaining the fabric of individual old buildings structurally and visually since decay and tempering with detail appearance area as serious treats in the long as demolition.

Thus preservation emphasis is largely in individual buildings.

### Conservation

Conservation concerned with the safeguard of an existing fine urban environment and does not exclude physical changes, modernisation and re-building providing the character and scale are maintained.

Conservation has become a vague word in its application to the urban scene just as to the countryside and it has the danger of being misunderstood and often it is used more less as a synonym for preservation.

### Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is a comprehensive activity which may include selective preservation, conservation and redevelopment with a view environmental management, tree planting, inserting of such facilities as playgrounds and car parks, as well as the modernisation of individual buildings.

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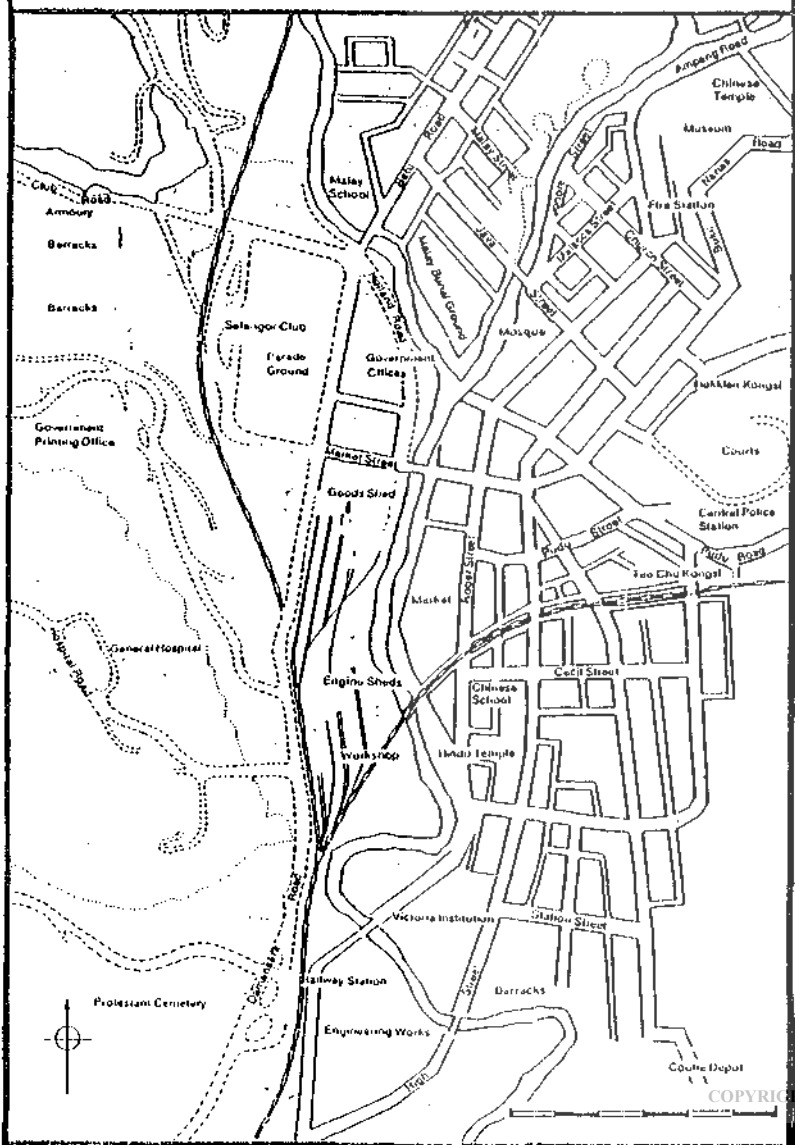
From the above defination for preservation, conservation, and rehabilitation, it would

not then be an exaggerated fact to conclude that their importance are gaining momentum in todays modern living.

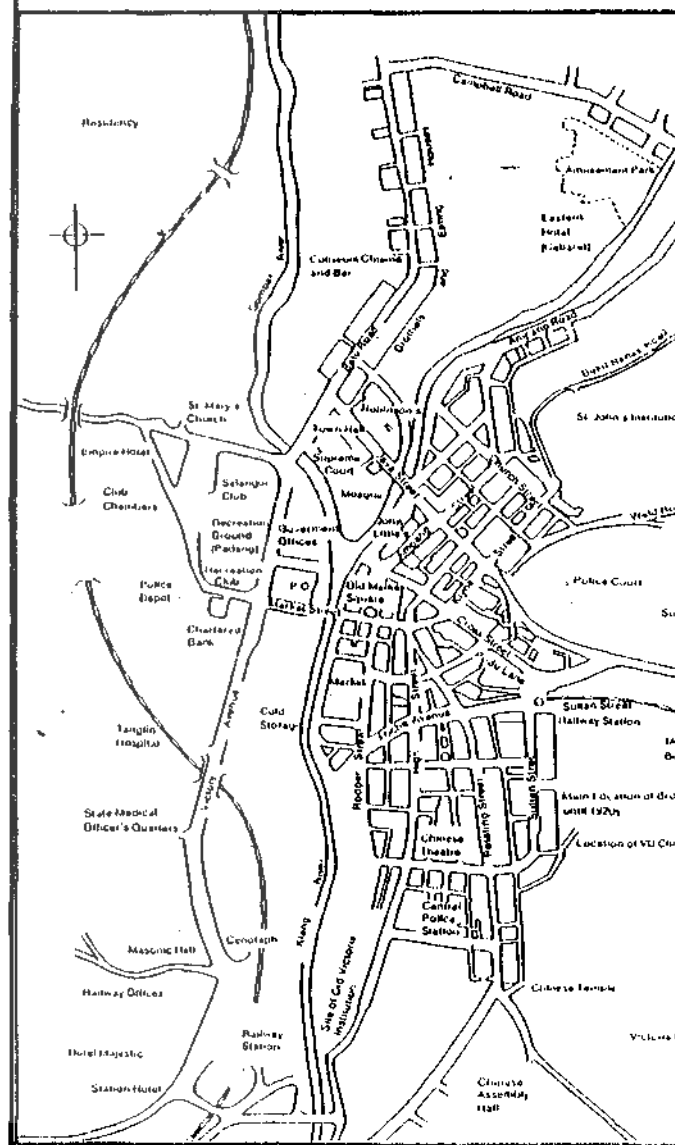
ONES UPON A TIME

- + EARLY KUALA LUMPUR WAS ESSENTIALLY A CHINESE ENCAMPMENT WHOSE INHABITANTS WERE PREDOMINANTLY MALES
  
- + ONLY A FEW OF THOSE TRULY REGARDED KUALA LUMPUR AS THEIR ' HOMES ' WHILE THE REST MERELY TREATED IT AS A PLACE OF TEMPORARY RESIDENCE, AND REMITTED THEIR ENTIRE SAVINGS TO THEIR NATIVE LAND.
  
- + BESIDES, THERE WAS LITTLE INTERACTION BETWEEN ONE ETHNIC GROUP AND ANOTHER ; EACH GROUP KEPT ALOOF BOTH CULTURALLY AND RESIDENTIALLY ; THUS LEADING TO THE FORMATION OF A ' PLURAL SOCIETY'
  
- + IT NEED OCCASION NO SURPRISE THAT KUALA LUMPUR THAT RESEMBLED A PARASITIC CITY

Kuala Lumpur, 1880-95



Kuala Lumpur in the 1930s



## THE EARLY KUALA LUMPUR SETTLERS

- a) 1850's : Towards the middle of 19th century, open cast tin mines came into existence and multiplied in the plains and along the western foothills of the main range, mining villages sprang up where these mines were thickest and at focal points in the growing system of communications. Then the villages developed into considerable town. Kuala Lumpur was one of the many urban settlements to have originated in this manner. Its creation was almost entirely the work of Chinese immigrants who were largely involved in the tin mining industry. Since then the Chinese have always formed a major proportion of the town population.
- b) 1879 : It was only then that the first European administration was permanently stationed in Kuala Lumpur from Klang. This event was of major importance in stabilising this mining settlement which may have otherwise turned into a ghost town with the eventual exhaustion of tin.

c) 1884 : A rough census held within this year estimated the population of Kuala Lumpur to be 4050, much of the early development of the occurred along the East Bank of the Klang / Gombak rivers <sup>(1)</sup>. Many early town buildings were constructed of wooden wall and attap (nipah palm leaves). Building rules were however introduced only gradually as building materials including bricks and tiles were in short supply. Soon a number of brick kilns were established and by 1886 there were reportedly 15 brick kilns and 6 lime kilns around Kuala Lumpur. Most were located to the west of Klang river that later came to be known as Bricks-fields. Many of the early city roads ie : Jalan Damansara, Jalan Ipoh, Jalan Ampang, Jalan Batu, Jalan Pudu .....tend to follow the contour lines and an examination of these routes revealed that they were initially bullock

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(1) Lim Seng Hin & Edwin Lim, K.L - A case study unpublished work, Subang Jaya .