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an Pembaca & Rujukan
Syed Mohd Razak
P. 101 MARA

Shah Alam
Selangor.

KAJIAN SENIBENA PERANCANGAN DAN UKUR
JABATAN PENGURUSAN HARTA TANAH

THESIS

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF HISTORICAL
LANDMARKS : THE IMPACT ON PROPERTY
DEVELOPMENT IN KUALA LUMPUR

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of the requirements for the Advanced Diploma
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Submitted By : SYED IDROS BIN SYED MOHSIN
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1.00 INTRODUCTION

Over the years, much have been written and discussed about the need for preservation of historical buildings. The controversy is raised every now and then whenever a seemingly historical building is affected one way or another. Arguments both for and against preservation have been raised, quite often, with some justification on both sides.

Nevertheless, the need for preservation of genuinely historical buildings, structures and sites are beyond dispute. For a relatively new nation like Malaysia, the need to preserve the physical signs of its history is a crucial element in the attempts of nation building. Whether these structures or sites are pre- or post-independence, modern or ancient, should not be an issue. One should not adopt a jaundiced view of things, and must be proud of one's history for what they are. Therefore, one must able to transcend petty political narrow-mindedness in his or hers selection.

It has also hitherto been argued that certain buildings should be preserved because of certain architectural merits. This is a good reason, but it should not be the only one. It does not matter whether a building, structure or site has architectural merits or not, but what matters most is its association with the

nation's history. It may even be an awful looking building but it could have been the meeting place of an epoch-making decision, home or refuge of a famous personality.

As for preservation is concerned, one must adopt a broader concept about it. Preservation, in other words, must not be justified to buildings alone but also must include structures and sites. It can be in a form of a bridge, a fort, a statue, a tombstone, a piece of ground where a great event has taken place, a famous battle ground, and even a wall if there is one which is justifiable.

The restoration and preservation of a historical site or structure is usually an expensive exercise. For example, the restoration of the Sultan Abdul Samad building recently costed a few million ringgits, a sum which according to some profit makers if used to develop the existing site with a better and modern structure will give a very large return. According to them also, it may even cost less than the total sum used for the restoration when developing, and the return will still be quite high. Besides restoration, the continual maintenance and upkeep after restoration is also costly. Due to these costs, and by virtue of these structures and sites existence being most often situated on choice real estate land in the heart of towns and city, it is therefore understood as to why there is a continuing battle between developers and preservationists with regard to this matter.