

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**BRITISH ARCHITECTURE
IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA:
AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF
ARCHITECTURAL
CHARACTERISTICS FOR
COLONIAL BUILDINGS
IN HILL STATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

The roots of the colonial buildings in Peninsular Malaysia hill stations lie in the early attempts of British colonization to build a cool retreat or the 'Little England' for British military and comrade traders. There are many colonial buildings that rich in history and architectural merits but are in a state of deterioration and dilapidation in hill stations of Peninsular Malaysia. Due to that, there is a dire need to protect and to restore these buildings heritage but one needs to have accurate technical knowledge and systematic documentation. The purpose of this research is to provide an accurate roster as a valuable reference and also to determine the methods and techniques of building masonry construction and materials of colonial buildings that reflected the characteristics of British Architecture. The research has been carried out in two main methods, which are the primary and secondary data collections. The primary data is obtained from selected case studies and the fieldwork includes building inventory, photo recording, visual analysis, measured drawing and semi-structured interviews. Meanwhile, the secondary data are gathered from literature review, which include books on history, building construction, restoration and conservation, and data on British colonial architecture. Secondary data also include articles, journals, newspapers, websites, and magazines with particular reference to colonial architecture in United Kingdom, India and Malaysia. Comparative analysis of these case studies have been carried out and unveiled the real situation on building construction and materials in term of components, elements, and ornamentations as well as to create the culture of authenticity for localized architecture. Four selected major hill stations involved are Penang Hill, Penang; Maxwell Hill, Perak; Fraser's Hill, Pahang/ Selangor, and Cameron Highlands, Pahang. Through several interviews and documentation study on methods and techniques of construction, several issues and findings have been achieved, documented, analyzed and synthesized. The results show the localized architecture differs between the British original buildings and the British colonial buildings built in tropical climate of Peninsular Malaysia. In conclusion, for any tangible and intangible information or involvement of construction and conservation for colonial buildings in hill stations; the *Construction Direction Roster* (CDR) should be abide systematically at anytime by all industry players concerned for the preservation of authenticity of the British colonial buildings, historical place and cultural environment.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims of the Chapter

The chapter is presented to familiarize the reader with the subject and the purpose of the research. It portrays the overview of the research topic, background to the problem, and outlines the problem statement and issues. Research questions are explored to identify the key factors in this study. The research aims and objectives are presented in this chapter. The scope of the research is discussed and the research significance is underlined. The chapter concludes with thesis organization.

1.2 Background to the Problem

The imprint of the earliest British architecture remains apparent to the buildings of Georgetown, Penang and as a trading post of the British East India Company (British EIC) in 16 July 1786. Later the British colonialists (British architects, builders, construction trained soldiers or priests) started to develop and construct buildings for public, administrative, religious and residential purposes throughout the major towns and in the hill stations of Peninsular Malaysia.

The hill stations created are generally small, isolated and inward looking into little worlds that symbolized British power and exclusiveness. They are situated on the ridge of the Titiwangsa Range of Peninsular Malaysia and in the island of Penang. Malaysia's hill stations essentially consists of seven hill stations as outlined in Figure 1.1. Despite that, four major hill stations in Peninsular Malaysia that are popular namely: Penang Hill (Bukit Bendera, Penang) which is the oldest hill station (late 18th century); Maxwell's Hill (Bukit Larut, Perak), the earliest hill station on mainland Peninsular (1880s); Fraser's Hill (Pahang/ Selangor) that developed during 1920s, and Cameron Highlands (Pahang) at later stage in the late 1920s and rigorously early 1930s (Moore, W.K. 2008). The altitudes of all these hill stations are at the heights of 761m, 1152m, 1305m and 1640m respectively. The remainder three unpopulated hill stations are known as Gunung Kledang (Perak), Bukit Kutu (Selangor), and Gunung