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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A STUDY OF PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN THE
CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC SETTLEMENTS IN
MALAYSIA
CASE STUDY: KUALA SELANGOR, SELANGOR

BY

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for
the Master of Science in Built Environment

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ABSTRACT

In recent years certain circumstances occurring in the historic settlements of Malaysia have been having an adverse influence on some of their particular attributes. Such attributes give the historic settlements their special character and are of significant cultural and historic importance, perhaps even irreplaceable. Their loss is a matter of serious consequence. The major objective of the study is to develop a better understanding of the processes and repercussions of change in the historic settlements by studying them in some detail and to put forward suggestions for the improvement of the present planning process. To achieve the aim the special attributes of the historic settlements were identified. They were examined in a numbers of historic settlements of Kuala Selangor, Selangor in order to determine their past and present characteristics and the nature of the effects to which they have been subject. The role of the planning process in anticipating and reacting to such changes was examined. A broad range of information was collected from various sources and through a field survey carried out in the selected settlement. The collected information was analysed with particular regard to the special attributes. It became apparent that the special attributes of the historic settlement are being adversely affected to varying extents because of the changes occurring. The legislation procedures though found to be fragmented, however, appear to be appropriate protection of the identified special attributes. It is also evident that the planning policies as contained in the Structure Plans/Local Plans have generally proved unsuccessful in arresting the present trends. In the long term it may be possible to reduce the scale of the adverse effects, though this is likely to take a fairly considerable period of time, significant resources and a substantial commitment to certain managerial measures and other planning requirements. Detailed conclusions have been arrived at and specific suggestions are made for the formulation of guidelines to improve the planning process in Malaysia with regard to its operation in the historic settlements.

خلاصة البحث

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APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

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**A STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC
SETTLEMENT IN MALAYSIA. CASE STUDY: KUALA SELANGOR, SELANGOR.**

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Conservation is known as a process of looking after or managing changes. It also includes maintenance and may according to circumstances include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation and often a combination of more than one of these philosophies (Ahmad 1994). According to International Council on Monuments and Site or ICOMOS (1987) conservation is a process which leads to the prolongation of life of cultural property and for its utilization now and in the future. It is also to recapture a sense of the past and to conserve, as much as possible the existing fabric in its original condition or situation. It is also a process that seeks to promote the harmony of both private and community lives in affected areas. In addition it is also referring to the encouragement of the preservation of those cultural properties that constitutes the memory of mankind. In addition, according to Ahmad (1994), conservation is a guardianship providing for protection of what presently exists from being destroyed or change in an appropriate manner. This can be applied to all types of cultural, built and natural environment which are of various significance.

The global society has started to recognise the importance of conservation in the early 20th century. Simultaneously, conservation works began to receive positive reaction by all quarters of expert especially in the field of historic buildings. In Malaysia, conservation initiatives only began to receive government attention during the 1970's. This was culminated by a drafted Bill of Antiquity which was later passed in the

Parliament as Antiquity Act (Act 168) in 1976 and several related Acts and guidelines that followed. However, these provisions of Acts and guidelines only cover or are being enforced within certain areas of archaeological importance and distinguished buildings of historical settlements in Malaysia. Some minutes effort of conservation have been witnessed in many cases which include preserving these special attributes which give historic settlements their special character. Despite this, there are still uphill struggles and challenges faced by many agencies involved in conservation works to ensure their success.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Malaysia has many settlements of historic and cultural significance that are worthy of preservation for sustainable development. However, such settlements are undergoing rapid changes due to rapid industrialisation, economic growth and urbanization. Such changes have also adversely been affecting the special character of the historic settlements.

In recent years, as a step to prevent from these changes, conservation has been regarded as a tool in safeguarding the historic settlements. Efforts have been made by the public and private agencies for the conservation of these settlements. However, some efforts appear to be unsuccessful. There is a danger if present trends continue, such historic settlements would lose their special character permanently and it is going to be an irreplaceable loss. For a conservation policy to be effective, it is essential to identify what is to be conserved. However, in Malaysia it appears that very little

attention has been paid to identifying those long-established qualities that give a historic settlement its special character.

Moreover, at the moment only one long-established quality or special attribute of the historic settlements, the significant (historic/architectural) buildings and more than one hundred (100) years old, are being considered worthy of preservation. Therefore it appears that little attention has been paid to the preservation of the other special attributes which a historic settlement may possess.

1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the present study is to investigate some of the problems involved in the conservation of the historic settlements in Malaysia with special reference to the historic settlement of Kuala Selangor, Selangor.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To achieve the above aim, the following broad objectives were identified:

- a) To identify the special attributes of the historic settlements in Kuala Selangor.
- b) To identify the nature and the scale of changes occurring in historic settlement of Kuala Selangor.
- c) To identify what role planning policies as contained in planning reports have played in the conservation of the special attributes.
- d) To recommend improvements in the existing planning process.

1.5 IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

The research is by no means looking for a static solution to address modern day's conservation policies, practices and development. Rather it is an initiation to change our track from previously focussing on rapid development and growth to a more radical but moderate remedial of preservation and conservation of historical area in order to achieve quality decision making process and sustainable development.

The study will prove to be important to policy and decision makers at all administrative and management levels based on the followings:

1. An explanation on the establishment and importance of conservation and preservation policies in achieving sustainable development.
2. A critical analysis will be made regarding prominent issues and problems encountered in the development of conservation theories and policies in Malaysia.
3. A greater appreciation and awareness of the existence and practicality of conservation of historic settlement

4. Having analysed the problems and issues, the section on conclusions and recommendations is hoped to increase the current awareness and appreciation of the practicality of conservation activities in historic settlements in Malaysia.
5. The significant result of this research is the increased awareness among the discerning scholars of the potential and invaluable contributions of Kuala Selangor to the history of Malaysia and directly to the need of preservation of these old towns for the future generation (public rights and sustainable development)
6. Students of the built environment field will directly benefit from the study especially studies or research related to conservation area, preservation activities, policies and its programmes.

As Malaysian conservation activities and policies is still evolving, the success or other wise of this practice is yet to be evaluated. Thus, it provides a new area of contemporary research topic for those involved in urban design, historic built environment, sustainable development and conservation planning and development. Moreover, limited research has been undertaken on conservation and policies to safeguard the cultural and natural heritage in Malaysia, its stakeholder participation and its implication to the whole decision making process. The