



CATEGORISATION OF PRESERVATION FOR THE
SELECTED RUMAH BUMBUNG PERAK IN KUALA
KANGSAR, PERAK

BY

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

Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design
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AUGUST 2016

ABSTRACT

Traditional Malay houses are one example of Malaysia's cultural heritage endangered by the onslaught of modern development. The inconsistent approaches in evaluating ways for the preservation of heritage buildings, such as the traditional Malay house, also make it difficult to preserve these structures. The research aims are to determine the category of preservation of the traditional Malay houses by the residents in Kuala Kangsar, Perak and to establish their reasons that lead to each of the category. Its objectives included determining what components signified traditional Malay house, thus determining its value as an object of history and preservation; to determine the categories of preservation related to traditional Malay houses in the Kuala Kangsar district; and to examine the reasons that influenced the categories of preservation. *Rumah Bumbung Perak*, a type of traditional house found in Kuala Kangsar, Perak, were selected for detailed observation. The condition of selected 20 samples of the traditional Malay house was investigated by using building's visual investigation survey and via semi- structured interview. An observation checklist was designed to investigate the presence and conditions of 14 types of house components. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 residents of the houses to have an in-depth understanding about the preservation categories. The results revealed that the preservation of the traditional Malay houses in Kuala Kangsar could be divided into three categories with 6 houses highly preserved, 13 houses moderately preserved, and 1 house that were poorly preserved. The findings indicated that the preservation of traditional Malay houses in Kuala Kangsar was influenced by five main reasons: (1) financial problems, (2) lack of awareness among the users, (3) changes on the daily needs of the users, (4) material defects, and (5) changes in building owners. By knowing these reasons, it assisted the residents in making decisions regarding their house maintenance. It is expected that this study could contribute some benefits to the residents, various government agencies, heritage body, society and by all those who concerned with the preservation of heritage buildings in Malaysia.

خلاصة البحث

يعد تصميم البيت الملايوي التقليدي أحد أمثلة الموروث الثقافي الماليزي، هذا البيت التقليدي أصبح مهددا بالانقراض في ظل هجمة التنمية الحديثة في ماليزيا. لا توجد هناك خطط واضحة ومتناسقة للعمل من أجل تقدير قيمة الحفاظ على المباني التقليدية، وخاصة البيت الملايوي التقليدي. استهدفت هذه الدراسة تحديد أسباب المحافظة -من قبل السكان- على المكونات الموروثة لبعض البيوت التقليدية المختارة في كوالا كانجسار بولاية فيراك (Kuala Kangsar-Perak) وذلك وفقا لفئة ومستوى المحافظة. ومن أهداف الدراسة كذلك تحديد العناصر المكونة للبيت الملايوي التقليدي التي تُبرز قيمته التراثية وذلك لتحديد مستويات الحفاظ المتعلقة بالبيت الملايوي التقليدي في منطقة كوالا كانجسار (Kuala Kangsar) وكذلك لدراسة الأسباب التي تؤثر على تحديد مستويات الحفاظ المتعلقة بالبيت الملايوي التقليدي في منطقة كوالا كانجسار. أجريت هذه الدراسة في منطقة كوالا كانجسار باعتبارها مكانا لدراسة الحالة، حيث تم اختيار نوع من بيوت فيراك التقليدية، وهو البيت ذو السقف الهرمي (*rumah bumbung Perak*) وذلك لتسجيل الملاحظات التفصيلية. العينة المختارة عشرون بيتا تقليديا تمت دراستها عن طريق مسح بصري (المعاينة)، والمقابلة شبه المنظمة. تم إعداد مرجعية ملاحظات للتحقق من وجود، وحالة ثلاثة عشر عنصرا من مكونات البيت. أجريت مقابلة شبه منظمة مع عشرين من سكان البيوت المختارة (العينة) للحصول على فهم دقيق بخصوص مستويات المحافظة على البيوت المختارة. أسفرت نتائج الدراسة عن أن المحافظة على البيوت التقليدية في منطقة كوالا كانجسار. بولاية فيراك يمكن أن تندرج تحت ثلاثة مستويات، حيث كانت هناك سبعة بيوت تمت المحافظة عليها بدرجة عالية، وستة عشر بيتا تمت المحافظة عليها بدرجة متوسطة، وسبعة بيوت تمت المحافظة عليها بدرجة ضعيفة، ومناقشة نتائج الدراسة وجد أن المحافظة على البيوت الملايوية التقليدية تأثرت بخمسة أسباب رئيسية وهي: 1- مشكلة التمويل، 2- قلة وعي المنتفعين، 3- تغيير احتياجات المنتفعين اليومية، 4- تغيير الملاك، 5- رداءة المواد. وختاما فإن هذه الدراسة قد أظهرت العناصر المكونة للبيت التقليدي الملايوي، ومستويات المحافظة عليه في ولاية بيراق، والأسباب التي أثرت على اختلاف مستوى المحافظة على البيوت في منطقة كوالا كانجسار. ومعرفة تلك الأسباب يساعد قاطني تلك البيوت على اتخاذ قرارات تتعلق بصيانة منازلهم. من المتوقع أن تسهم هذه الدراسة في إضافة شيء من المعرفة عن المحافظة على البيوت التقليدية لكل من السكان، والهيئات الحكومية المختلفة، ومصصلحة الحفاظ على التراث، والمجتمع، وكل من له علاقة بالحفاظ على البيت الملايوي التقليدي .

APPROVAL PAGE

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I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents, for laying the foundation of what I turned out to be in life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“Bismillahirrahmanirrahim: In the of God, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful”

Alhamdulillah and I praised Allah the Almighty for His help that I can finish this thesis on time.

The completion of this research was utterly due to many contributions which deserved to be recognized. Without any support obtained from these individuals, this research may not be possible to be produced. Therefore, I will always treasure the knowledge, support and advices given throughout this research process.

First of all, I would particularly like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Nurul Syala Abdul Latip. She provided valuable advices, ideas, recommendations, guidance and knowledge throughout this research process. Without her guidance this research may not be completed as it is. A part from that I would like to take this opportunity to record my appreciation to my co- supervisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Zumahiran Kamarudin regarding her time, work and effort to assist this thesis.

Not to forget the support and guidance given by my family, friends (Zuraini, Azirah, Illani, Ikhwan, respondents and relatives, directly or indirectly throughout the process of this research paper. Therefore it is hoped that the finding of this study may assist other research in understanding and appreciating the Malay's cultural heritage and also traditional Malay houses. In a way, this specific research may help to provide more understanding about our Malay's treasure. In precaution taken to ensure that our future generation can also know about the Malay itself.

Wassalam.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BVIS	Building's Visual Investigation Survey
BWM	Badan Warisan Malaysia
H1	House 1
H2	House 2
H3	House 3
H4	House 4
H5	House 5
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
NPS	National Park Service of the United States
R1	Respondent 1
R2	Respondent 2
R3	Respondent 3
R4	Respondent 4
R5	Respondent 5
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

This research focuses on the preservation of heritage buildings in relation to traditional Malay house in Kuala Kangsar as a sample. Preservation can be defined as the act or process of applying measures in which it is necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property (National Park Service [NPS], 2011). The traditional Malay house is part of Malaysia's heritage requiring preservation for future reference. For example, *Rumah Kutai* and *Rumah Bumbung Perak* are two types of traditional Malay houses representing unique Malays architectural design in Perak.

The research by the NPS (2011) has documented the preservation as work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilise the property that generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. In the 2000s, a preservation movement increased rapidly in some European countries to preserve its cultural heritage (Harding, 2003). However, few preservation programs succeed in preserving cultural properties due to finance and legislation hurdles. The importance of preserving heritage buildings is to ensure that the roots of a community remain visible to the future (Hufford, 1994).

In Malaysia, there is little documented material explaining the preservation works undertaken to preserve the integrity of heritage buildings (Rahman, Akash and Zuraidi, 2012). The Malaysia government encourages preservation and conservation

practices by providing consultancy services, although this initiative is still relatively new (BWM, 2010).

One type of heritage building worth preserving is the traditional Malay house (Mohd Sabrizaa and Sufian, 2005; Rahman et al., 2012). History and cultural factors influenced the design and setting of traditional Malay houses (Amir Hosein and Nur Dalilah, 2012). Nowadays, the traditional Malay house has been affected by Malaysia's rapid modern development and faces the threat of being transformed from a timber house to a brick house, among other threats (Seo, Saari & Young, 2012). Moreover, studies on preservation practice indicate that there are several issues related to preserving the traditional Malay house.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENTS

Issues for the preservation of traditional Malay houses include the following:

- i. There are unclear and inconsistent approaches in evaluating the preservation practice for heritage buildings in relation to traditional Malay houses in Malaysia. According to Rahman et al. (2012), preservation work is not well explored in Malaysia. Most of the government agencies such as the Department of National Heritage only focus on the standard and guideline for conservation of heritage buildings (Abu Talib, 2010), while the preservation of the traditional Malay house is still not widely investigated and documented. Meanwhile, Arazi et al. (2010) stated that there are still inadequate standards and methods of preservation in the context of heritage buildings.
- ii. The traditional Malay house has been endangered by the onslaught of Malaysian modern development. Mohd Sabrizaa and Mohammad Najib

(2005) mentioned that traditional Malay architecture is reflected in the traditional house and serves as a major reference for social and cultural studies related to the Malay cultural heritage. However, nowadays people tend to ignore the importance of traditional Malay house design and function and its implications for the identity of the community. Limthongsakul and Davivong (2010) and Abd. Aziz and Enoch (2013) highlighted that the aesthetic design of the traditional house plays a significant role in maintaining the identity of the local architecture. However, many traditional houses are not preserved.

- iii. Literature indicates that despite many conceptual frameworks for preservation, it is not widely implemented in Malaysia. According to Badan Warisan Malaysia (2010) and Arazi, Faris and Mahmoud (2010), various techniques to ensure the success or failure of preservation in maintaining heritage buildings are not well studied in Malaysia.

1.3 RESEARCH GAP

In Malaysia, the research on the categorisation of preservation is minimal due to lack of documentation (Abu Talib, 2010; Badan Warisan Malaysia [BWM], 2010; Rahman et al, 2012). Various researchers such as Rahman et al, (2012), Nur Hidayatuljamilah (2012), Salbiah (2010), Khursiah and Fakhrul Zaman (2011) are highlighted about the conservation of the heritage buildings in general but not the preservation of the traditional Malay house. Meanwhile, Radiah et al, (2011), Nangkula and Nurhananie (2011), Amir Hosein and Nur Dalilah (2012), Zulkifli and Abdullah Sani (n.d), and Limthongsakul and Davivong (2010) are among the researchers who explained about the design, elements, components and types of the traditional Malay houses in

Malaysia. Based on this, it shows that many researches done by the various researchers only highlighted about the heritage building and traditional Malay house without the preservation work.

Preserving cultural objects such as the traditional Malay house and its cultural value helps to share the understanding of our history and heritage. It may create a sense of shared human cultural identity and contributing to the quality of life of those who engage with it (Sease, 1998). The preservation of the traditional Malay house helps maintain one of the cultural heritage components for future reference.

1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

The preservation of the traditional Malay house is not widely investigated. Therefore, what are the categories of preservation of Malay traditional houses that have already been practiced and the reasons influencing preservation in Kuala Kangsar?

1.5 RESEARCH AIM

The research aims are to determine the category of preservation of the traditional Malay houses by the residents in Kuala Kangsar, Perak and establish their reasons that lead to each of the category.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The identification of the problems and the main research question above has left the research area with several raised questions.

- i. What are the components of traditional Malay houses that signify their heritage value?

- ii. What are the categories of preservation related to traditional Malay houses in Kuala Kangsar?
- iii. What are the reasons that influence the categories of preservation related to traditional Malay houses in Kuala Kangsar?

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The above questions have led to the following objectives of the study.

- i. To determine the components of traditional Malay house that signify their heritage value
- ii. To determine the categories of preservation related to traditional Malay houses in Kuala Kangsar.
- iii. To examine the reasons that influence the categories of preservation related to Malay traditional house in Kuala Kangsar.

1.8 OPERATIONAL TERM

Various researches (Benson and Klein, 2008; History Trust of South Australia, 2009; NPS, 2011; Arazi et al., 2011; National Heritage Act 2005 (Act 645); the ICOMOS Burra Charter, 2013) have discussed the meaning of preservation in relation to heritage buildings. The preservation of the traditional Malay house can be identified as;

“The retention of the building existing form, features and detailing of the Malay traditional house by the house users”

The operational term of this research are discussed further in chapter two.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

There are limited studies on the preservation of the traditional Malay house. This house has its own uniqueness in terms of Malay cultural values. It represents local culture and has been built to fulfil the needs of society. However, the traditional Malay house is under threat due to many factors include the age, financial and awareness. This study explores the categories of preservation of traditional houses. The findings from the research will enhance understanding among residents, local communities, and the relevant authorities for the preservation of the traditional Malay house. It will also contribute to the field of preservation for heritage buildings in Malaysia.

1.10 SCOPE OF RESEARCH

This research focuses on the category of preservation for selected traditional Malay house in Kuala Kangsar, Perak. Current approaches for preservation published by various agencies such as the ICOMOS Burra Charter (2013), the ICOMOS Principles for the Preservation of Historic Timber Structures (1999) and National Heritage Act 2005 (Act 645) are forms the main reference before evaluating the categories of preservation used by the sampled residents. Most of the agencies such as the Office of Historic Preservation, California (2011) and Oklahoma City Historic District (2011) refer to the ICOMOS as guidelines for the preservation of heritage buildings. Due to its reputation as a heritage site, Kuala Kangsar has been chosen as a case study. According to *Draf Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Kuala Kangsar* (2011), Kuala Kangsar is an attractive site rich with architectural heritage worth preserving for the next generation. This research focusses solely on the traditional Malay house in Kuala Kangsar as a centre for Malay cultural heritage in Perak. The type of the traditional

Malay house that was chosen is *Rumah Bumbung Perak* which represents the identity of the Perak's architectural heritage because it has left behind a historical legacy of old buildings of the Malays (Salbiah, 2010)

1.11 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

This thesis comprises six chapters beginning with the introduction, literature review and theoretical framework, methodology, analysis, results and finding, and ending with a conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter 1 introduces the research, including the research background, problems, gap, aim, objectives and questions, operational term, significance, and scope of the research.

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework of the research to elicit the research statement. It provides the basis of the research based on related theories and knowledge on the preservation of heritage buildings and the traditional Malay house. Apart from that, the second chapter also presents the review of literature on preservation of heritage buildings in general. Hence, it covers the standard of preservation practice at the national and local level. It also covers the relationship between the preservation of heritage buildings and its importance for the traditional Malay house. It discusses the types of traditional Malay houses in Malaysia and focuses on traditional Malay houses in Perak found in Kuala Kangsar.

Chapter three focuses on the methodology of the research. It provides a review of previous studies that employ methodologies related to the study of buildings and heritage preservation, traditional Malay houses, and offers a detail explanation of the methodologies selected for the research.

Chapter four explained the selection of the area of study which includes the case study area and selection of traditional Malay houses that are located in the Kuala Kangsar, Perak.

Chapter five analyses the data and presents the results and findings of the research consistent with the objectives and the theoretical framework of the research.

Chapter five presents the conclusion of the research and offers recommendations for future research.

Figure 1.1 shows the outline of chapters of the thesis.