HERITAGE & CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS IN CITY DESIGN

By: Khairul Kamarudin

© razuryza 2011
HERITAGE & CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS IN CITY DESIGN

“setting the context”

1) Brief overview of:
   - Heritage
   - Culture
   - Conservation

2) The importance of heritage & cultural considerations in city design

3) Factors which determined the level of heritage & cultural significance

4) Conclusion
“Heritage is the full range of our inherited traditions, monuments, objects, and culture. Most important, it is the range of contemporary activities, meanings, and behaviors that we draw from them.”

(UMass Amherst Center for Heritage & Society)
Heritage includes, but is much more than preserving, excavating, displaying, or restoring a collection of old things. It is both tangible and intangible, in the sense that ideas and memories--of songs, recipes, language, dances, and many other elements of who we are and how we identify ourselves--are as important as historical buildings and archaeological sites.
Heritage is, or should be, the subject of active public reflection, debate, and discussion:

- What is worth saving?
- What can we, or should we, forget?
- What memories can we enjoy, regret, or learn from?
- Who owns "The Past" and who is entitled to speak for past generations?
Heritage is a contemporary activity with far-reaching effects:

- It can be an element of far-sighted urban and regional planning.
- It can be the platform for political recognition, a medium for intercultural dialogue, a means of ethical reflection, and the potential basis for local economic development.
- It is simultaneously local and particular, global and shared.

Further reading:
1. What is heritage? – http://www.umass.edu/chs/about/whatisheritage.html
“culture is defined as the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group.”

(CARLA – Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition)
Heritage is a contemporary activity with far-reaching effects:

- It can be an element of far-sighted urban and regional planning.
- It can be the platform for political recognition, a medium for intercultural dialogue, a means of ethical reflection, and the potential basis for local economic development.
- It is simultaneously local and particular, global and shared.

Further reading:
1. What is heritage? – [http://www.umass.edu/chs/about/whatisheritage.html](http://www.umass.edu/chs/about/whatisheritage.html)
“conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may, according to circumstances, include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation and will commonly be a combination of more than one of these.”
(extract from Article 1 Burra Charter)
Therefore conservation doesn’t necessarily mean keeping a place as it is without allowing change.

Over time, buildings and places need to adapt and change to different circumstances and the needs of the user or occupier.

Heritage conservation is an informed process that manages and allows for this change, but at the same time perpetuating the cultural significance of the place.

Further reading:
Further reading:
1. Maintenance Management Framework for Conservation of Heritage:
IMPORTANCE OF HERITAGE & CULTURE
**Importance of Heritage**

- Heritage is important in **understanding the story of place** – its history, identity and its people.

- Heritage can incorporate both the tangible and the intangible. It is present in many forms such as landmarks, places, buildings and contents, spaces, views and the stories associated with them.

**Q:** How many (in %) Malaysian value heritage as a core part of our national identity, hence incorporate it into city design?

- As a community, we share the responsibility to identify and respect what is important, and pass on these places to future generations so they will understand what came before them.
The retention and management of heritage places has an important role to play in protecting the environment, creating vibrant communities and sustaining local economies.

Retaining heritage places amounts to a substantial environmental and financial saving in embodied energy. It avoids the creation of waste and the need for replacement building materials.

Heritage places also contribute to the quality of life and cultural identity of our communities. Many heritage places, such as halls, churches, gardens, schools, and hotels, are the focal point for community gatherings. Privately-owned heritage places and heritage precincts contribute to streetscapes and our sense of belonging.
Importance of Heritage (cont.)

- Utilising and revitalising our heritage places can also assist local economies through employment opportunities and by generating additional revenue, particularly through tourism.

- State Government, local governments, property owners and members of the community all have a role to play in ensuring that the valuable asset of our heritage is recognised, respected and promoted.

Further reading:
What Determines Whether a Place Has Heritage Significance?
What determines whether a place has heritage significance?

- The cultural heritage significance of the places should be clearly defined. Example of definition:

  "in relation to a place, the relative value which that place has in terms of its aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance, for the present community and future generations“ (adopted by the City of Fremantle, Australia).

- The criteria for the assessment of heritage places include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Significance</th>
<th>Degree of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Aesthetic value</td>
<td>1) Rarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Historic value</td>
<td>2) Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Scientific value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Social value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions:

1. Is it necessary for every city to consider elements of heritage and cultural into its design? OR only valid for cities with significant and valuable heritage and culture?

2. If you were asked to propose a design (as to improve) of your hometown, what could be the cultural and heritage significance that need to be considered? and why?