



Photo courtesy from Ar. Chris Yap's Facebook.

**A**r. Philip Chang received his official appointment as a Board Member of Lembaga Arkitek Malaysia (2022-2023) from the current LAM President, Datin Ar. Yong Razidah bt. Rashid on the 5<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022. Every year, one representative from Sarawak & Sabah (proposed by each chapter by rotation) will be appointed as one of the three from the nomination list submitted by the Council of PAM under Section 3(2) (d) of Architect Act 1967.

## Notice to JTCC Meeting

**P**AMSC PGL (Practice & Government Liaison) Sub-committee is compiling agendas to be tabled for the next JTCC Meeting by the Ministry of Public Health, Housing & Local Government (MPHLG). If you have any issues relating to Local Councils or the Department of Irrigation (DID), please write to us (best with a paragraph of synopsis or explanation) to [info@pamsc.org.my](mailto:info@pamsc.org.my) attention to PGL Sub-committee. Thanks.

## MUDeNR Lab on TOD & Plot Ratio



Presentation by Group 2 of the Lab by MUDeNR on the final day. PAMSC was represented by Ar. Stephen Liew and Ar. Chai Si Yong.

**I**n view of Kuching City Local Plan 2030 and upcoming ART development, MUDeNR (Ministry of Natural Resources and Urban Development) organised an intensive 3-day lab to discuss guidelines on Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Guidelines for Plot Ratio in Sibu, Miri and Bintulu.

PAMSC as one of the key members of the lab was invited and attended the lab from 13<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022 onwards at Planning War Room, Menara Pelita, Kuching. The group discussion commenced 2 days after a short briefing from MUDeNR and representatives from Sarawak Metro. The findings of the lab were presented by each group to conclude the lab on the final day. This draft will be refined by another level of the workshop before being presented to the SPA.



# A Starry Night in Sibu

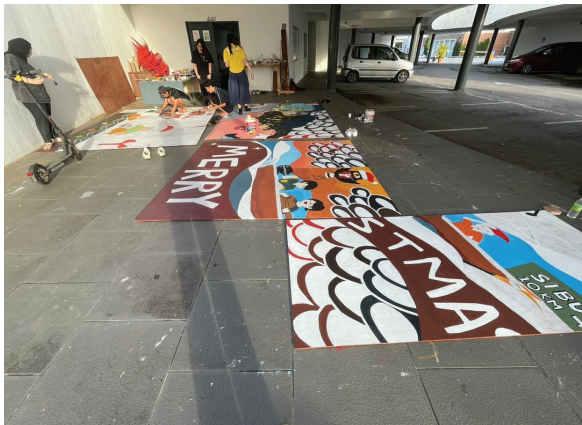
Compiled by Ar. Brendan Tong



A Christmas tree competition, with the theme "Sustainability", is now on display at Sibu Town Square from now until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.



## Christmas Mural by University Technology Sarawak



Tinsel abound, Christmas comes round,  
 Echoes of the pandemic still an audible sound,  
 People caution, don't move around,  
 But in a corner of Sibu town, a mural off solid ground.

It's red, it's yellow, it's as bright as colours loud,  
 It's jovial, it cheers, driving fear away like a hound,  
 Put together by students who worked by the clock round,  
 With a message to the people from Sibu town.

Come home, come back, come join us this round,  
 We miss fun, we miss you, like we miss our own hometown,  
 The dances, the hurrahs, we merry making like clowns,  
 And all that fun we make, only with you around!

So a mural they painted, and it made them proud,  
 That they share with you, that itch to come home now,  
 Family and friends await no longer with frown,  
 Merry Christmas, they say, to all who belongs to Sibu town!

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The Architectural students of University Technology Sarawak (UTS) have painted a 50 m x 1.8 m mural at the corner of Jalan Sanyan and Jalan Pulau, in the heart of Sibu town. The effort was a joint collaboration with Mafrica Corporation Sdn Bhd and it forms part of Masland Methodist Church's Christmas decorations. They invite to view the mural, as well as to partake in the adjoining Christmas markets and performances, from now until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

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### Credits:

Poem composed by Ar. Brendan Tong, and inspired by the works of Sze Wei, Yan Zi, Irene Tang, Rachel Foong, Pui Ying, Mixcelly Voon, Angel Liaw, Shau Maow, Anabelle Sie, Jia Xi, Connie Ling, Shi Yuan, Kevin Jong, Brighton Ting, Dennilson, Jennifer Siba, Affiqah Affendy, Shelly Liew, Bernice Sii, Rui Fang, Sing Yang, Daniel Cho, Thomas Tang, Charmaine Huang, Kah Kang, Yen Jie, Alyssa Bong, Andrew Lau, Mei Ling, Alvin Ho, Kelvin Law, Mohd Nurhilmi, Ain Dzulaizah, Siti Nurfahanah, Mohd Raphael, Esther Ling, Abra Kee, Andre Noel, Debby Lee, Gerald Anyie, Vinson Then, Edmund Toh, Kai Yi and Acinster Hii, who were supervised by Muhammad Oliver and Aaron Chew.





*Ar. Tan Bee Eu on Adaptive Reuse Case Studies - Penang and Kedah Digital Libraries.*

## On Heritage Conservation and Adaptive Reuse - Heritage Speakers Series

*Written by Alyssa Lou*

‘**H**eritage Conservation and Adaptive Reuse’ was the latest in an extensive series of talks - Heritage Speakers Series by the Sarawak Heritage Society. SHS has been actively working towards their goal of raising awareness about Sarawak’s cultural heritage and advocating for its sustainable conservation, safeguarding and management since 2006.

Though efforts have been ramping up in recent years, heritage conservation in Sarawak seems to suffer from scant heritage management and limited personal interest; a far cry from states such as Penang and Melaka, where living and built heritage are often diligently championed and protected. Invites were extended to architects from Penang that are prominent in the heritage conservation and adaptive reuse scene. Each speaker was well versed in a different facet of heritage conservation - be it heritage management, conservation policies and preservation through adaptive reuse.

The Sarawak Museum Department, a consistent patron and collaborator of Sarawak Heritage Society rallied by generously sponsoring the venue for this talk - the Arts and Crafts Gallery, Borneo Cultures Museum. The talk kicked off at 10:30AM on the 18th of December to an audience of about 70 with two opening speeches by the Sarawak Museum Department representative and James Yong, SHS President.

Our first speaker, Encik Rosli Bin Haji Nor, Penang’s Heritage Commissioner, was well received by the audience. Through light-hearted jokes and a sunny disposition, he highlighted crucial lessons learnt from his years of experience managing the heritage sites of Melaka and Penang. Though the heritage journey of Melaka has seen many triumphs and accomplishments, Encik Rosli illustrated that the hard-fought preservation of living and built heritage faces the impending threat of overtourism. Penang’s most glaring problem remains the gentrification of its heritage buildings and streets, where inauthentic measures are taken to beautify buildings without adhering to the set guidelines. In cities like Penang and Melaka, where cultural heritage runs rich, Encik Rosli called attention to the urgency to transform tourism into a tool for heritage conservation while maintaining the balance between authenticity and innovation.



*James Yong, SHS President with Ar. Au Tai Yeow, T.Y. Au Architects.*



*Ar. Au Tai Yeow on Heritage Conservation and the Challenges for Penang.*

The lunch break provided ample time for the speakers and SHS Committee members to converse and share ideas, stories and aspirations. At around 1:30PM, Ar. Tan Bee Eu of Beta Architects began a sharing session on her personal journey in adaptive reuse architecture, sharing with us a few of her standout projects. Ar. Tan exemplified that a careful touch and thoughtful problem solving allows for a new lease of life for heritage buildings whilst gaining increasing community involvement. In her projects, there was a common vein of sustained interest and continued investment - caring for the building's purpose and its patrons long after project completion. The treatment of heritage buildings requires no less than a delicate approach. Ar. Tan showed how simple themes can give rise to articulate ideas and how thoughtful, rather than flashy design may just be exactly what the community needs.

Ar. Au Tai Yeow of T.Y Au Architects has been a staunch advocate of heritage conservation in his hometown of Penang. His talk was an honest depiction on the challenges of heritage management in Penang - showcasing the good, the bad and ugly of its extensive journey. Amongst the many exemplary and successful endeavours, there remain many examples of built heritage that have failed to be protected and preserved. Ar. Au attributes these to the mismanagement of resources by the responsible parties. Selective enforcement and lack of monitoring have contributed to the mishandling and mistreatment of heritage buildings, some to the point of no return. Ar. Au also spoke briefly about how economic and demographic changes are intertwined with the preservation of living cultural heritage in Penang. It may be challenging to manage conservation in a heritage area as big as Georgetown, but many, like Ar. Au, remain passionate about the cause and carry out major outreach and advocacy to preserve their cultural inheritance.

It was heartening to see the turnout, especially on a Sunday, that ranged from architecture students to heritage advocates and to members of the public that chanced upon our talk and decided to participate. It was an enlightening experience for all involved as we had the opportunity to examine the considerable revitalisation effort that has swept the shores of Penang and Melaka over the years.

In the near future, Sarawak Heritage Society will undoubtedly continue on with their successful Heritage Speakers Series, with these programmes anchoring on the themes of awareness, advocacy and advisory. I heartily believe that learning from these ventures will form valuable lessons for Sarawak's own conservation journey and bring forth our shared passion for our living and built heritage.

END



*Question & Answer Session.*



*Rosli Bin Haji Nor on Heritage Management - Penang and Melaka Experience.*



*Group Picture featuring Speakers, SHS Committee members and participants.*

# WHAT DO ARCHITECTS DO ALL DAY? 9/12

*This section attempts to sum up the architects' busy day in a series of snapshots - this is Ar. Tay Buang Chuan's contribution this issue. For the next issue, we nominate Ar. Noraini Narodden.*

*Our readers are invited to submit their 'day's experiences' as well - email to [intersection.editorial@gmail.com](mailto:intersection.editorial@gmail.com)*



*5:45a.m. Day Starts with a few pages of soft 'bread'.*



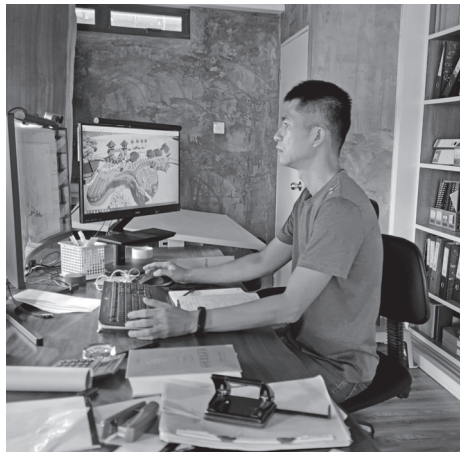
*6:30a.m. Sending kids to school.*



*8:30a.m. Site visit with Kampung Adidas.*



*11:30a.m. Treat myself with local delicacies.*



*12:00noon Back to office or home?*



*2:00p.m. Tutorial hours!*



*4:00p.m. Interns 'stealing' my workstation!*



*8:00p.m. Sports time....*



*11:00p.m. Day ends with another few pages of soft 'bread'.*

# The (incomplete) Tenets of Architecture in the Tropics: Thresholds

Written by Min

Ever since visiting India with PAMSC, I have wanted to put this on paper - as a reminder to myself which I can share and build from. In India, I was reminded of the work of people such as Laurie Baker, Jane Drew (who worked with Le Corbusier in Chandigarh) and Maxwell Fry. These architects drew from their experience of building in India and published many books which have become prescribed reading for architecture in the tropics. Many of us were familiar with their books and lessons during our university education, but seem to have forgotten them in our actual built work.

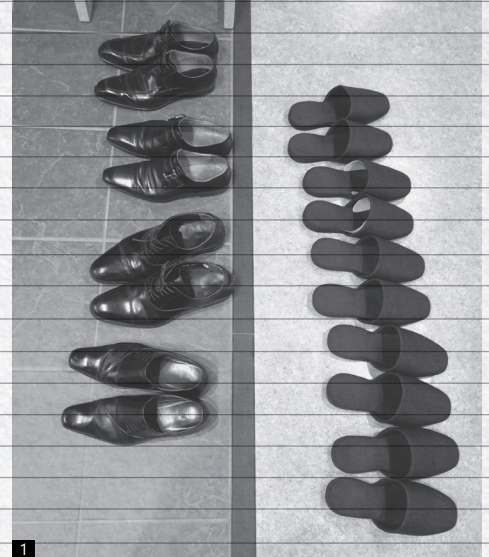
In four consecutive articles under the broad headings of **Shade**, **Permeability**, **Thresholds** and **Materiality** - this is an attempt to refresh our collective memories. Hopefully, as we progress we will come up with more headings and examples. Many of the tenets deal with the climate, but they are the most effective when melded with aspects of local culture and lifestyle. In this article, we see the significance of the 'threshold' in tropical buildings.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines the 'threshold' as "the floor of an entrance to a building or room" while the Longman Dictionary has this definition - "the level at which something starts to happen or have an effect" and "at the beginning of a new and important event or development." These common definitions regard the threshold as a separation or connection element located between different spaces. In architecture however, it takes on physical, psychological, emotional, social and cultural meanings.

*In its first and simplest form, it represents the physical boundary between the inside and outside - as part of the door construction; with a hole in the centre for a shot bolt, with a physical divider to change from one floor material to another, or a step to emphasise the act of crossing over.*

#### CAPTIONS:

1. Part of a ritual to remind us to adjust our tone and temper our behaviour.
2. The door left ajar extends the function and meaning of the threshold.
3. High Court Building, Chandigarh. Photo courtesy of Ar. Chai Si Yong.



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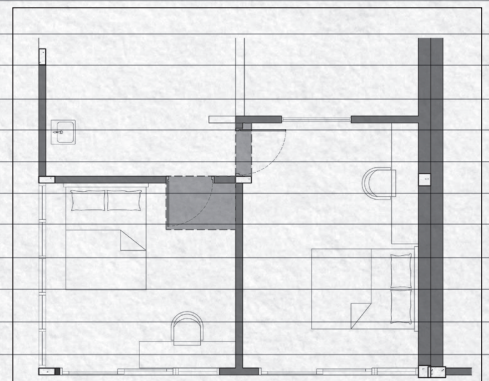


Diagram showing how the threshold to a room changes with the doorswing

2



3



In local cultures, this is often where we take off our shoes to enter the house, crossing the public realm into the private. In the traditional Malay house, there is sometimes an earthen pot of water with a scoop for washing our feet before climbing the steps to the 'anjung' or entry verandah. It can be seen as part of a ritual to remind us that we are entering into another sanctum - that we should adjust our tone and temper our behaviour. More poetic than a door mat. Some believe that thresholds have protective powers against unwanted visitors.

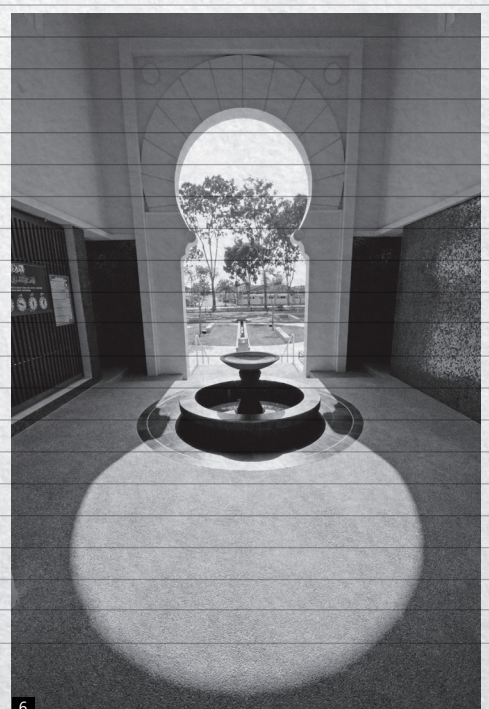
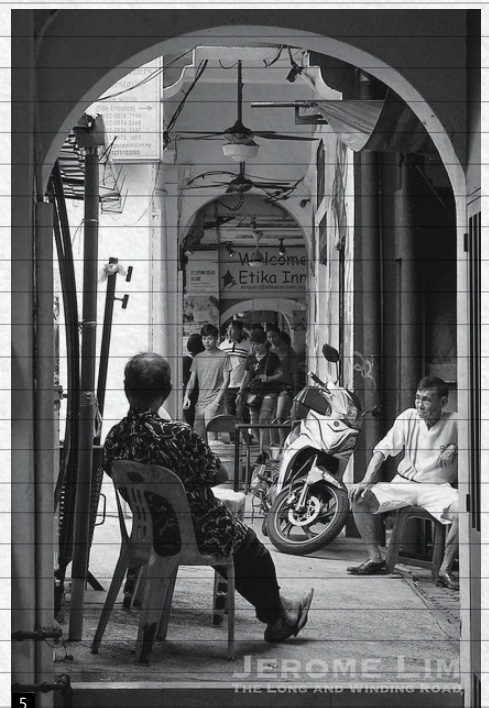
And there is more to it - consider the door swinging into a room; whether the door opens into the room or facing the adjacent wall determines the level of privacy for the person inside the room. The door left ajar extends the function and meaning of the threshold. It maintains connectivity with the space and people outside the room while retaining a level of privacy - for naps on warm tropical afternoons when the door is left ajar for breezes to enter.

The threshold as a planning element is more common than we think - the five-foot way is designed as a thoroughfare if one were to regard the entire street. But from the point of view of the individual shop, it is can be seen as a soft (and permeable) border between two realms - the street (public) and the shop (private). It can take on different functions depending on the time of the day and/or business. Often these devices are enlarged to suit the scale and type of the building it serves; becoming a forecourt which functions also as preparatory space for the task to come - allowing time for the visitor to prepare.

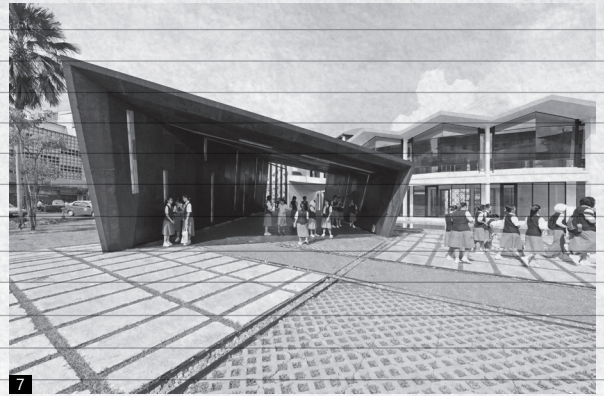
Successful thresholds for buildings in the tropics are the interstitial space between the outside and the inside, designed specifically for our climate - for the eyes to adjust to the light, for perspiration to evaporate slightly or to put away our umbrellas before entering the building. This can be in the form of a naturally ventilated lobby or a shaded verandah such as the 'serambi' of a Malay House.

**CAPTIONS:**

4. It is also written in ancient Chinese folklore that a high threshold (門檻) can prevent a zombie (僵尸) from entering the house. (Chinese Doorway) Photo courtesy of Mary Leonard.
5. The 5-foot way can be seen as a soft and permeable border between two realms; the street and the shop. Photo courtesy of Jerome Lim.
6. The tree court in the front of the Masjid is one of the thresholds between the street and the prayer hall - a quiet space and shade from the trees in preparation for prayer. (Masjid Wan Alwi)



Often these thresholds serve as spaces for social and communal activities - successful for this purpose because of their organic nature, they are less formal thus encouraging interaction. They give the notion of 'colonising' an auxiliary space to extend the meaning and function of the original space. This blurring of boundaries is an important aspect of tropical design as it allows a flexible interpretation of space depending on the time of day, the weather and the activity itself. It invites nature into the built environment.



7

Perhaps the designers of our public buildings need to adopt this manner of thinking more stringently, and to remember that the threshold between the inside and outside, between work and community, between heat and comfort, between public and private is NOT defined by 12mm of tempered glass. They must remember that its relationship with the street and the public will be enhanced by the quality of its threshold - it must be accessible to the public, it must say something about the space they are about to enter, and because we are in the tropics, it must have **SHADE**.



8

And this is the topic of our next conversation.

CAPTIONS:

7. Thresholds into public buildings can be used for social and community facilities. (Sibu Heritage Centre)
8. The street is invited into the building; making it a lobby, a forecourt, a thoroughfare and public space. (Hong Kong Shanghai Bank - photo courtesy of Fosters and Partners)

END

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