

The Hybrid Aesthetics of the Malay Vernacular: Reinventing Classifications through the Classicality of South East Asia's Palatial Forms

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Abstract: The paper attempts to re-enact the framework of the 'vernacular' of Malay architecture while extending the classifications of its vernacular to include a Classical style; defined as monumental vernacular expressions representing gradual stylistic changes and 'hybrid' constructions throughout the early modernisation period of Malay history which coincides with its evolvement during the Colonial era. During this era, both structural, constructional and ornamental skills absorbed external influences without compromising its vernacular principles. Based on a group of case studies of palatial forms – i.e. palaces and aristocratic houses - from the late 19th and early 20th century, Gottfried Semper's anthropological definitions of the essence of the vernacular is used to categorise combinations of masonry and timber IN these cases, seen as a manifestation of its heightened aesthetic style. Primarily, the different extents of the 'base' or 'mound' suggest four basic classifications arising from its construction and technology i.e. (1) the half-column plinth style, (2) the full column and half-plinth stereotomic style (3) the full column-wall stereotomic style; and the (4) the 'peristyle' with central stereotomic style. It is argued that the early modern period in the region, coincides with global conditions of 'neo-classicality' and fusion and absorption of new modes and materials of construction. These evolve as new hybrid timber-masonry models that reflecting variants of a Classical-stylistic stream within the vernacular that is a natural consequence of modernity, rising prosperity and a new outlook into the world. By linking these to Semper's definition of the stereotomic and the tectonic, the meaning of the vernacular is extended beyond 'the indigenous' and its typical 'timber artisanal' language, into the 'hybrid'. In doing so, it expands what is generally known as Malay vernacular style to include hybrid variants that reflect the particular era of modernisation of the Malay world.

Keywords: Hybrid Aesthetic; Malay Architecture; the modern vernacular, the monumental vernacular.

I. INTRODUCTION

Classifications and definitions in the vernacular architecture typically focus on the aesthetics of indigenous styles, arising from the conditions of their culture and

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construction capabilities. In South East Asian architectural historiographies, stylistic evolvements dichotomise between the 'indigenous' and the 'modern'. Yet there is another face of the 'vernacular' which is less mapped but representing the degree of aesthetic tastes and predispositions of the local populations. Historians and ethnographers have also remarked a certain silence in the historiographies on the aristocrats of 1800s and early 1900s in once-colonised nations such as Malaysia. Yet during this era, it is the modernization of these leaders of the community which brought about stylistic trends within the region but expressed within the palatial-monumental typologies of their vernacular architecture. These had absorbed elements from external influences while retaining their awareness as cultural custodians towards their own populations and hence local identities and local ingenuities reach an apogee within this era. The Classical vernacular style, for example the Malay Classical style, is thus often confused with the 'Colonial style'. As Jahn Kassim et.al (2019) and Tengku Anis et.al. (2018) has defined, the Classical vernacular style refer to styles and substyles as branches to the dominant vernacular style, while a Colonial style, refer to the dominant or essential intention of Colonial aesthetic dressing and form. Yet all 'Classical' timber 'vernacular' structures of the Malay world, refer to structures of crafted timber which arise from the essentially Sultanate-dominated 'negeri' base "Classical" era, while Classical temples and monuments of South East Asia can be related to its essentially religious 'nagara-based' 'civilizational era (Reid, 2012).

The Classical vernacular structures, construction, engineering and design represent a key resource and rich knowledge-base of tropical architecture of the region. Either seen as Malay houses or Malay monumental vernacular, they recall more indigenous responses, strategies and culturally-rooted forms, rather than the tropicalized International style found in many public buildings post independence. The language of the vernacular has thus not been adequately mapped and had always oscillated between two extremes of aesthetic positions-the idyllic visions of a timber-based language seen as an intrinsic part of tropical settlements and culture; and the tropical full-masonry based International style including its variants, the Malayalised versions of Colonial architecture.



These two 'styles' are even generally argued as but two 'faces' of the same coin of "Colonialism" as capitalistic legacies of Colonialism was what brought about the International public buildings in post-colonial nations and later verified and accepted by a Colonized' mindset. In the era of post-independence of Malaysia and Indonesia, tropical architecture became seen only as these acclimatized variants of the International Style, motivated globally by iconic trend-setters such as Le Corbusier; whose Eurocentric iconographic works were the toast of academic institutions and regionalized within the discourses of the AA tropical school, writings of Koenigsberger, and public designs of Maxwell and Jane Drew.

The notion of the vernacular was seen as regressive and the works of local craftsmanship and figures were not referred to and eventually any form of 'otherness' in the form of regional style was a regionalized version of a global dominant style ; rather than a modernization of the essentially vernacular tropical style of the locality. Yet as Jahn Kassim and Nawawi (2018) suggests, even in his designs of Chandigarh, Corbusier had essentially modernized India's vernacular, but this basis is rarely popularised as part of his design processes. Vernacular architecture's 'modern' forms , are reflective of the land that had grown from the local ingenuities and polities which contain their own ingenuities, skills and ideas.This must be differentiate from a localization of an external style, which have been discussed by Chang(2016) includes the tropicalisation of Colonial buildings, styles and legacies . The Colonial-based style is a form of technoscience, referring to the 'sciences' of tropical schools in the 1970s as associated with Koenigsberger. Chang (2016) usefully differentiates and briefly identifies a 'Malay' style from the essentially tropicalized Colonial style.

Classifications and categorisations are crucial due to the needs in heritage management,preservation and conservations. It should be based on the needs of conservators which need immediate access to best practice, precedents, techniques and methods. This paper suggest that in the need of a universal classification, palaces and the public realm of the vernacular world can be the basis of such classifications. Additionally, many of these palaces are presently left dilapidated. Hence the urgency in identifying the relevance and characterize these style is related to a threefold aim 1) as part of heritage management and conservation 2) as a creation of awareness of public interest into these generally private buildings ; 3) as a resource of place-making and regional identity such as urbanscape design and urban design policies that is rising in important to the rise of tourism as an economic generator and importance of authenticity in tourism-led cities and settlements. These palaces define what is the heightened vernacular of place and what is the narrative that continues the histories of past , present and future. Their vocabulary definitions must become a part of the semantic grouping of styles and their elements and identifications features and these crucial in highlight the importance of managing and preserving heritage and historical structures of the region. The characteristics of the tropical climatic context have left many, either been left unattended, or have now been destroyed – either by external

forces or by merely neglect. Yet their preservation are crucial towards enhancing the branding, resource and place identity of towns and urban cores, and constitute a critical resource of heritage . It is argued that as regions of the Malay world, including Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, fell into direct control of the Colonialist, direct influence through the local public works and British architects, began to alter the essential Vernacular rooted forms of these palaces. While Hans Deiters (2000) recall that the history of Malay civilisation lacks an 'Urban' definition and that emerging cities like Jakarta is actually 'urbanisation without urbanism', the preservation of palaces can stem the rapid disappearance of identity in cities and the neglect of structures must be arrested.

II. METHODOLOGY

By using a database of 50 case studies , and linking different cases in the region which appear as discontinuous and sporadic works , palaces and mansions by different agents such as aristocratic figures, Sultans, regent-in-waiting, trading families, ruling families, elite figures - are investigated , Measured and drawn into a matrix and database of frontages and elements. Common aesthetic forms and features and variations of such archetypes are identified and categorised based on certain parameters related as common identifications of styles. The parameters,include origin, form,materials and ornamentation which is related to one another. The following sumamrises part of this research in order to report on an ongoing process to categorise not only the archetypes or generic forms of facades and frontages (Tengku Anis et.al. 2018) but to further create a matrix-based classifications of variations based on the constructional and engineering basis of these hybrid timber-masonry structures , which had developed in the late 1800s and early 1900s in specific regions of the Malay sites of settlements in South East Asia.

A. Historical Background

The cases are derived essentially from the mid 1700 onwards till the 1920s. Due to the rupture and experience of Colonisation, what is Classical is what is rooted in the pre-Colonial socio-political system. The ' Classical vernacular', a term used by Scruton (1987) refers to a public language of architecture which refer to the original source of civilization yet vernacular at the same time. Thus cases which come after this era is either termed, eclectic, syncretic or classical vernacular revival. The hybrid language of the Malay architecture is argued as having its roots theoretically in its Classical civilizational roots, i.e. of 16th century Melaka (Jahn Kassim, et.al. 2019). After the downfall of Melaka, a series of 'negeri' was established and up to late 1800s, there was a time of co-existence between two powers – the global Colonial imperial power and the local Sultanate institutions, which Andaya (2008) for example terms, the 'pre-colonial' era. In fact, the Colonial was already present, yet their influences was not invasive and the locals had bred hybrid vernacular styles, symbolizing how the locas had 'modernise' and had maintained their spheres of

influence while ensuring independence from the Colonial administration and machinery.

The “Classical vernacular” are essentially buildings which stems from this era and system and thus require a totally different classification to the ‘Colonial vernacular’ which refers to the definitions by Chang (2016) who draws to attention the gradual evolution of the Colonial vernacular by referring to ‘archetypes’ of the new world, beginning with the architecture of the bungalow, reflecting the tropicality hybrid forms of this Fast East region. Hence any building which re-use the vernacular Classical style after 1930s must be defined as a vernacular or Classical revival or even the ‘modern’ vernacular. Colonial-based styles are generally on larger structures which can be traced through its genealogical seed or source - the tropical Colonial bungalow from which grew variants of the archetype, i.e. the tropical Military Barracks, pavilion-type hospitals, and later large public buildings. In Malaysia, the Palladian style-bungalow is perhaps one part of a whole spectrum of the Colonial tropicalized language in urban buildings. This style included the extension of verandahs and porticos not only as evening spaces, are symbolic forms of Colonial lifestyle and East Indies.

The Malay ‘mature’ form of Classical vernacular generally began in the early 1800s was an era that represented a unique balance of power between the colonialists and the ruling class of the localities. The colonialists had allowed the Malay aristocrats to exert their sphere of influence and while this preserved the Malay powers, they also maintained the apotheosis of their culture – the vernacular palaces and aristocratic houses. However, by the 1920s and beyond, colonisation prevailed and speeded up the diffusion of European Modernity to the demise of the Malay vernacular. The palaces are then visual pointers of the shifts not only in the balance of power between the Malay Sultanates and the Colonialists, without referring to any architecture discourse, Gullick (1987) highlights significant differences between the more urbane and wealthier styles of the Malay aristocrats and the common utilitarian forms of the Malay world.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW – THE MALAY VERNACULAR – A DEFINITION

Before we proceed further, a definition of the Malay world is necessary as it is argued that the region exhibit shared values, including aesthetic forms and language. While the Malay world has been defined as in Norwina et.a.(2011) (Norwina Nawawi & Noor Hanita, 2011): ‘ Andaya further condenses this definition by his insight: ‘ Throughout this study, I have decided to retain the Malay word and spelling ‘Malayu’ to refer to the Malays, in preference to the current usage of ‘Melayu’ . The former was the way the name was more commonly transcribed in inscriptions and early documents, by using ‘Malayu’ i am including not only those in Malaysia but also those living in various parts of Indonesia, particularly on the east coast of Sumatra and the offshore islands to the south of the Malay Peninsular... In this paper, we also differentiate Malay, with Malay Nusantara, whose rootedness is slight with the Malay Nusantara inclusive of Balinese and early Malay style, which are of

different stylistic character and predilection. Urban architecture is inherently reflection of increasing wealth and resources including the confrontation and absorption of external technologies and styles into the local forms. Such historical works need to form a genealogy and rooted and materialised in built form in emerging cities of the region. Such roots must go back to the historical beginning, of the local societies and typologically, these include not only traditional houses, but palaces, mansions and mosques. It is within such roots that a discourse can emerge that create a locus classic – similar to what Parthenon and the Acropolis was to the Classical language of architecture – which can further the preservation of memory – amidst rapid and destructive changes in the city – in such a way that can be practiced within the rising urban conglomerations of these societies.

A. Palaces and Aristocratic Houses – Social Structure, Typology and the Vernacular

Malay palaces and aristocratic residences are part of the genealogy of Malay architecture and a branch stemming from the Malay vernacular. Palaces or palatial architecture, in traditional times, are urban centers, they are the loci of activity – similar to city centres – and are inextricably linked to the center of power , wealth, social structure, housing public events of its times. Their multilevel and layered spaces are reflective of the complexity of the society, governed by strict etiquette and hierarchical social conventions amongst the royal courts of the Malay world. The Sultanates of the Malay states during the 19th century were cultural institutions that played both a spiritual role and an economic one. However, during a specified period, these had borne the imprint of European “Industrial revolution” and its technology which became a form cultural diffusion of techniques, advancement and ideas, which appear to the Malay civilisation and nations as marks of progressiveness. Gradually these were syncretised with the local timber-based construction and had resulted in a rich hybrid which retained the cultural essences of the local population's artisanal tradition, ingenuity and cultural identity regarding built form and language. Palaces, as in the words of Andaya, are a reflection of the social structure of the Malay world., and their social system and systemic power are reflected in its layout and architecture and settlement form. They form a galactic form with miniature palaces of their extended families encircling or orbiting the central palace of the ruler or monarch. As their monarchs, palaces are institutions that are key custodians of vernacular, In many cases, there are extended and refined versions of the Malay vernacular house, and is a reflection of the highest form of technology and craftsmanship available in the locality.

Basis of Classification

Palaces and aristocratic houses are not merely housing the ruling elite but represent forms of urbanised architecture reflecting the refinement and urbanisation of the vernacular. These ‘quasi-urban architecture; are achetypes ‘which in a way,



reflects a form of urbanised architecture with a semi-permanent character. Hence these palaces are built with the latest technology of the time – as they are designed to reflect the status quo of the monarchy or leader of the settlement and thus a physical representation of power- in the words of Andaya (2010, p:80); “A simple arrangement prevailed in the Malayu areas, with a Malayu kingdom consisting of a sultan with many of his residing close to the royal residence, and other family networks headed by powerful officials or chiefs with their constituencies, ... The boundaries of these Malayu polities were never stable because they expanded and contracted by the movement of their subjects.”

To derive the essential character of Classicality, there must be a basis of selection . Theoretically,Tengku Anis et.al.(2018) has defined five aesthetic parameters or principles which serve as a set of markers or milestones. As outlined by Tengku Anis et.al. (2018), the Classical in Malay architecture is defined by the following : 1) the design must at least originate from at least a combination of a Malay Sultanate member and one craftsmen; 2) the design must reflect the stylistic character of the Malay vernacular houses: which essentially evoke the idea of the elevated, the frontage with recesses and the portico or anjung. 3) they arise from a combination of a dominant combination, of locally-based materials and skills 4) they must reflect control in ornamentation and refer essentially to only local patterns and not imported from external sources.Definitions by Semper is used to base referring to the inclination of all vernacular societies to eventually mutate their stylistic traditions from one form of available technology and materials to another , in line with their civilizational development and general changes in technologies and availability of materials.

B. Theories of the Tectonics and Critical Identity of the Malay World

Jahn Kassim et.al. (2018) had highlight that the kitsch approach is merely adorning modern structures with tropical roofs in order to imbue identity. To go beyond such simplistic gestures, Frampton (2000) suggests the tectonic approach. Nesbit (2000) summarizes the details of this tectonic approach from the writings of Gregori. Vitri Gregori (1983) writes that essentially the tectonic resides in details or the practice of the detailing. This approach demonstrates the attributes, of materials of applications of the laws of construction, it renders design decisions articulate a design also raises the issue of hierarchy, suggesting a relationship between the part and the whole. In his seminal article, the ‘The Tell-the-tale detail’, Frascari echoes the same sentiments; he discusses how tectonics is linked to an approach of criticality in the use of culture to inspire new forms through its significant details – rather than overall shape- in producing regionalised forms. This is in opposition to Corbusier’s dictum of ‘Plan is the generator of the form’.. In the framework of critical regionalism, Frascari highlights why details are crucial to identity: ‘... to indicate the role of details as generators, a role traditionally ascribed to the plan, and to show that technology is the basis for the understanding of the role of details. Columns and details can

be regarded as minimal units of signification in the architectural production of meanings. A column is a detail as well as it is a larger whole.

1) The Tectonic vs Stereotomic

Semper (1820) famously distinguishes the critical elements of architecture, not regarding iconography, but regarding the combinations or contrasts between the tectonic, associated with lightweight, linear components and the stereotomic, as a form of massive earthwork constructions. He generalises the tectonic as “...the product of human artistic skill, not with its utilitarian aspect but solely with that part that reveals a conscious attempt by the artisan to express cosmic laws and cosmic order when moulding the material.” Semper goes further by implying that the tectonic defines the constructed act, that it is somehow inherently linked to artisan as an expression of their context. However, by the stereotomic, Semper means that an architectural expression is also a form of “earthwork, formed out of the repetitious stacking of heavy-weight units.” He relates the stereotomic mass as an extension of earth, to provide the tectonic a base to ascend from. The stereotomic element is more closely associated with creating volume, and the tectonic an open frame. He suggests that it is the transition between the tectonic and stereotomic that the language of architecture exists within and in that moment ‘the very essence of architecture becomes a physical manifestation.’ It is the combination of the tectonic and stereotomic, the perceived heaviness and lightness, in conjunction with the redefined notions of the temporary and permanent, that enables a poetic identity and expression in architecture and which can give an alternate reading of architecture through the application of form and formwork.

2) Critical Regionalist Intentions

Frampton, in his ‘ Studies in Tectonic Culture’ (1995) highlights the essential criticality of the tectonic ; which he refers as a key form of critical regionalism. He defines criticality as a position of resistance, and by extending this during the colonial era, the Malay Aristocrats were attempted to do in the growing trend of globalization and colonisation. The usefulness of Semperian theories in classification, is that it is able to reenact or ‘read’ the expression of architecture in its broad ranges of ‘mutated’ or ‘transmuted’ types, and suggest styles from the different forms and combination of the tectonic and stereotomic. He relates that this is another approachin producing expressiveness via the act of construction to architecture. The anthropological approach to tectonics recall how Malay architecture, in its essential ‘public’ style, which combined the lightness of timber and heaviness of masonry When Frampton discusses the stereotomic, he refers to the heaviness and weight of its presence and its connection to the earth. He describes, “*The human experience is somewhere in between the earth and sky; a tension exists between the two materials which embody opposites*”. Frampton asserts that Semper's theory separates the ‘tectonic and stereotomic’ into discussions on the building as ‘mass and skin’ or ‘mass and frame’. He illustrates that the inherent



meaning of architecture can be read, and evolves through this physical manifestation. “*Thus the presenting of work is inseparable from the manner of its foundation in the ground and the ascendancy of its structure through the interplay of support, span, seam and joint – the rhythm of its revetment and the modulation of its fenestration.*” A building’s connection to the earth is just as important as its physical presence above the earth. *Buildings acquire meaning through their act of building from the ground up, articulating a connection to both the earth and sky, heaviness and lightness.*

IV. RESULTS - IDENTIFYING ARCHETYPES AND HYBRIDITIES FROM THE MALAY ARISTOCRATIC WORKD

Malay aristocratic architecture is essentially found to be derivative of the archetype of the Malay form, i.e. the Malay house. The palace and many of the aristocratic buildings are the visually elevated and wealthier counterparts as they house wealthier families, many of aristocratic origin and Frampton’s use of the tectonic and stereotonic can also be used much in such Asian architecture. In the first phase of classifying the palaces and buildings, a series of key palaces representative of past polities – i.e. the Sultanates of the region is selected. They are selected from the dates of 1700s to 1930. The 1700s is taken as the time in which mostly timber palaces still survive. Amidst the rich variation of Malay architectural palaces observed, some appeared to be diverse, there are common characteristics that allow these to be categorised, grouped and further summarised and discussed. The analysis of these buildings must focus on frontal façades as these are designs and forms derived from conscious and intentional design, with multiple interpretations, dominant patterns and formative features of variants. By extracting the similar styles/ character of each case studies. In selecting the case studies, the observations of Gullick is crucial, which relate than 1920 is the boundary in which the old Malay system of life or traditions had survived. In these early palaces, the expressive nature of the form somehow always reflect the tension between the two opposing conditions, the earth and the sky, and which become parameters to design within. Based on Semper’s roof as sky elements and in their element reflect the earthbound nature of the building and its foundations, common aesthetic character are linked to essential principles, the palatial forms have evolved into variations due to environmental, climatic, functional and aesthetic intentions . in which their functional elements became symbolic and aesthetic.

A. Selected Case Studies Descriptions

These different versions of the Malay palace or mansion – exhibiting the combined use of masonry and its fusion with timber forms and elements can be symbolised by their facades. These vernacular archetypes – seen in selected states – are part of the local language and have become a form of hybrid timber-masonry language , which combine the stereotomic base with recognisable elements of the Malay vernacular such as the pitched roof, decorative finials and fascia boards, tall -body height windows, extended eaves, wide porticos and elevated structures These have

embellishments such as roof filigrees and ornamented fascia boards. Several of the case studies are:

1) The Baitul Rahmah

The Baitul Rahmah (Fig. 1) mansion is a Malay royal mansion located around near the compound of the main palace in Kuala Kangsar, Perak, built by monarch-in-waiting Raja Kechil Sulong Harun Al-Rashid ibni Almarhum Sultan Idris; it was built in 1911. It has a symmetrical ‘double’ extended portico or verandah which is a variant of the ‘anjung’ or verandah of the local Malay style. The portico unites elements of roof finials and decorative panels with the columnar nature of the form, and these are embellished by woodcarving inspired by the character of honey bees while the head of the columns is decorated by ‘kerawang’ woodcarving. Baitul Rahmah, Kuala Kangsar - The hybrid masonry plinth and column base fused with timber columns, portico, side balconies and decorative eaves.



Fig. 1. Baitul Rahmah, Kuala Kangsar - The hybrid masonry

2) Istana Langkat

Istana Langkat (Fig. 2 and 4) located in Tanjung Pura, in the district of Langkat, Sumatera, is the Langkat palace in its original form exhibits a modernised version of its vernacular, combining masonry and timber elements, depicting the key elements of tropical architecture i.e., the conventional large shuttered windows, an open-air colonnaded ground floor and the typical ‘bumbung panjang’ roof. The roof is further surmounted by a multi-tiered form characteristic of Javanese architecture. A series of white masonry stairs on the frontage adds to the overall dynamism of the symmetrical portico centre form by injecting a monumentality dynamism into the facade. Istana Darul Aman (Fig. 3) on the other hand, is infused with various elements of Arab Islamic origins. This particular palatial form reflects the unique fusion of traditional vernacular, Islamic and Indian influences.

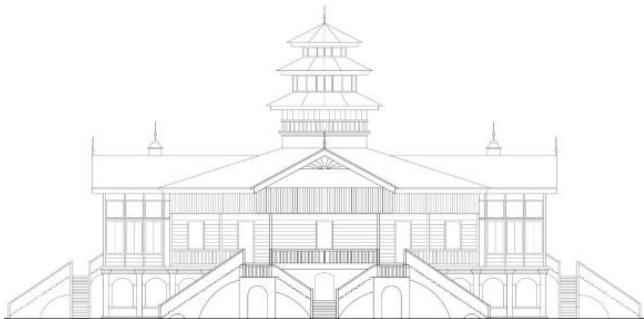


Fig. 2. The Palace of Langkat, Elevation showing Hybrid Architectural language reflecting the hybrid or Classical palace



Fig. 3. The Darul Aman palace at Tanjung Pura (1920)
(Source: Digital Archives, University of Leiden)



Fig. 4. The Langkat Palace at Tanjung Pura built by Sultan Abdul Aziz (1900).
(Source: Digital Archives, University of Leiden)

3) Istana Lima Laras

The Palace of Lima Laras (Fig. 5) is located in the village of Lima Laras, District of Tanjung Tiram and the four-storey palace was built in 1912 by a merchant, known as 'Datuk Matyoeda'. Originally called 'Palace of Intention', it consists of a hybrid masonry and timber structure enhanced with multicolour timber panels and with colourful elements that recall the influences of China, India and Europe. The palace is a symmetrical structure in which wide open-air porticos extend from left and right and while continuing to the back for more private zones. The Palace structural form itself is a fragmented form with four platforms, each facing the four cardinal directions.



Fig. 5. Palace of Lima Laras, Batu Bara, Sumatera

4) The Istana Hulu, Perak

Completed in 1903, the Istana Hulu (Fig. 6) was built for the reigning Sultan Idris Mursyidul Azam Syah and was sited atop the Bukit Chandan hill. It is the example of the highest influences of Neo-Classical architectural elements including pilasters and cornices into Malay form, yet still retaining the Malay vernacular in its roof, fascia board and finial elements. The form itself has a projecting portico, an open-air symmetrically organised structure enhancing airflow and surrounded by large trees.



Fig. 6. The Palace of Hulu Perak, Kuala Kangsar

5) Istana Balai Besar

The Balai Besar (Fig. 7 and 8) or Royal Audience hall of Alor Setar Kedah is in its present form, one of the more 'modernised' version of the Classical vernacular. Located in the centre of town, it reflects expressions of Malay-Siamese elements, absorption of Colonial influences, yet still retains the essence of Malay form, fusing timber, masonry and the technology of cast iron. It was built by Sultan Muhammad Jiwa Zainal Adilin Shah (1710-1760), the first Sultan of Kedah, and is sometimes known as "Balai Penghadapan" (Grand Audience Hall), located in front of the "Istana Pelamin". The Balai Besar, Alor Setar is characterised by columnar elements with pitched – extended eaves roofs with layered levels and louvres reflect the radically tiered pointed vernacular structures of the region surrounding a masonry core. The Balai Besar of Alor Setar has been renovated with Georgian elements yet its form and deep verandahs reflect the local Malay vernacular form and both form and elevations respond to climate, whether through its extended overhanging eaves, colonnaded porticos, larger windows and ventilation in the walls.

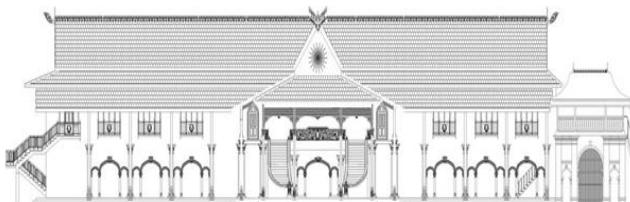


Fig. 7. Malay Classical proportions and form are preserved while combining with climatic elements included open ground floor, Colonial-style colonnaded porticos and ventilated openings. (Source: Fadzidah and Hamuriddin et.al. and IIUM Heritage Lab, 2005)

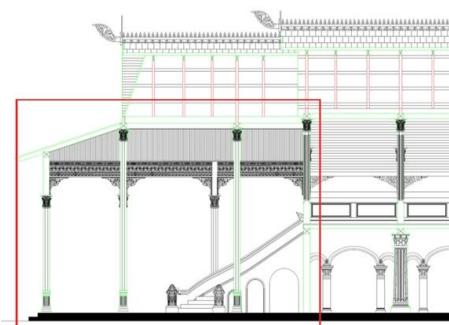


Fig. 8. Elevation showing the projecting portico and Malay Riau roof finials and double pitch forms

V. DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS - CLASSIFICATIONS

From the case studies above, a Categorization of types in terms of hybrid forms - can lead to further discussions on the different styles -based on similar forms can be identified in the following. The types and stylization is derived from a reading of the similarities in tectonics and base masonry language between the cases and which can be linked to further archetypes found in the same eras and across South East Asian region.

A. The Half Column Plinth Type

These case studies include the Baitul Rahmah, Baitul Anwar and Istana Damnah Sumatera. Basically they represent an aesthetic approach of how a timber aesthetic form rest on a half column high base which is basically a stylized masonry base. At times, the base is moulded, merged with columns and include staircases. While this can be related with smaller communities and sultanates in the region, it has its own aesthetic rules and quality, the base is moulded, the façade symmetrical, the ornamentation is stylized and staircase decorative forms represent from central to double staircases. They refer to a highly stylized version of a timber -based vernacular language in which the timber stone bases have now evolved and partially mutated into **continuous** masonry elements, **recalling Semper's mound** while obeying Malay character of the vernacular archetype of roof, body and elevated columns. However, in Baitul Anwar (Fig.10) and Baitul Rahmah (Fig. 9), the masonry elements are 'half-column' height and are at either columns or a continuous masonry base. The expression itself is essentially derived from the masonry pedestal base in about half the height of the ground floor, combined with timber architecture. The base is stylised with moulding and seems to

constitute a base from which the more columnar form of the house rises.



Fig. 9. Baitul Rahmah, Kuala Kangsar, Perak



Fig. 10. Baitul Anwar, Kuala Kangsar, Perak

B. The Combined Stereotomic Base and Half-Column Type

These refer to Istana Lima Laras in Batu Bara (Fig.11), and Rumah Panglima Ghani which both demonstrate how striated columns rise as pillars and pedestals to the full height of the ground floor level. These case studies refer to how masonry elements have not reach full height of columns and are sometimes combined with the moulded masonry base. The timber -based vernacular language had further but still partially mutated into masonry elements, while still retaining key elements and proportions of the archetype. In the Palace of Lima Laras, both Malay timber elements and masonry elements are present in both columns and arches. At times these columns are fused with the masonry base. On this, the timber-based structure rests, the aesthetics are derived from the contrast between the two. In the case of both Istana Batu Bara and Rumah Panglima Ghani, both demonstrate the influence of Chinese and oriental elements in its colour.

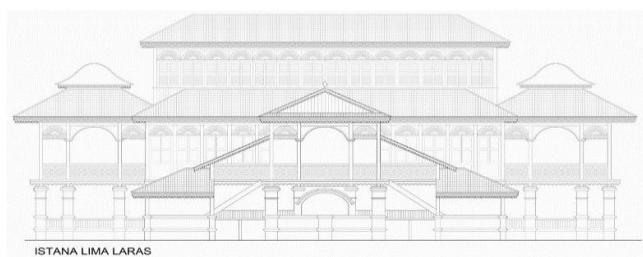


Fig. 11. Istana Lima Laras

C. The Full Base and Column Stereotomics

- (Istana Jahar, Kota Bahru, Istana Leban Tunggal, Pahang, Istana Yaring, Patani)

Istana Jahar and Istana Leban Tunggal have essentially the same generic form, i.e. both include octagonal or curved protrusions expressed in Colonial language of columns. The octagonal portico has been linked to the royal style. These are palaces in which octagonal form was used in the frontage portico style. Timber structure on 1st floor with the ground floor of full masonry stereotomic -Istana Langkat (Fig. 13) and Rumah Dato Biji Sura (Fig. 12). This represents how a full masonry style in which openings seem to be carved out of an essentially thick mass or masonry is then combined with timber floor above.



Fig. 12. Rumah Dato Bija Sura

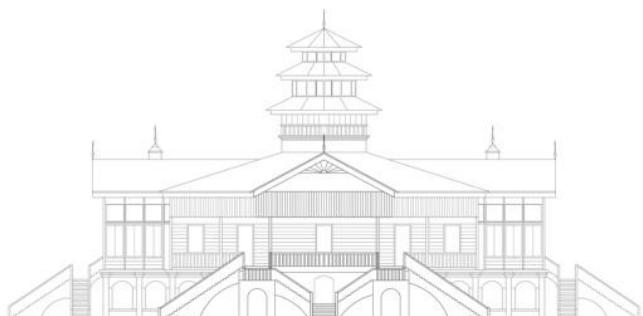


Fig. 13. Istana Langkat

D. Stereotomic Core Space, with Tectonic Perimeter

This refers to the combination of a masonry core and linear or columnar elements surrounding the core. In the Langkat Palace, the whole of the ground floor is a variant of Malay -Colonial tropical form, and it is the rich contrasts between the timber and masonry elements that sets off a distinctive and iconographic form. The form itself reflects a hierarchy of local culture regarding spatial forms, yet its longitudinal organisation of spaces and covered linkages between one block. Climatically, its narrow floor plates and covered walkways and connections – reflective of the notion of the verandah was crucial to the facilitation of walkability and increased shaded walkways with colonnade structures. Example of the case studies is Balai Besar, Alor Setar (Fig. 14) and Istana Indra giri (Fig. 15).



Fig. 14. Istana Balai Besar, Kedah



Fig. 15. Istana Indragiri, Rengat, Sumatera

E. Total Fusion of Tectonic and Stereotomic Forms

Istana Hulu represents a most external influenced or ‘colonised’ local style, in which the columns with pedestals appear to be totally fused with the masonry mass of the palace. The columns are now pilasters, and the entire mass no longer projects a tectonic character, its tectonic elements are almost fused into the mass, in this case, the windows become a form of Colonial Regency style. Example of the case study is Istana Hulu, Perak (Fig. 16)



Fig. 16. Istana Hulu, Perak

VI. THE MALAY CLASSICAL VERNACULAR – STYLISTIC EVOLUTION OF FACADES AND ITS INTEGRAL TROPICALITY

A. Evolving Hyphen-

The generally ‘Classical’ all timber forms of the Malay world are classified as ‘early’ Classical style, which is essentially the outcome of the height of timber artisanal and constructional building skills of the Malays. Surviving examples are the Istana

Pagaruyong, Sumatera and Istana Rokan, Sumatera , which contain legacies of civilisations from the 16th centuries onwards. Hence the Istana Seri Menanti built in the early 1900s is a ‘revival’ of the Early Classical vernacular style. The evolution of these facades can be represented and summated as in the following Fig. 17.

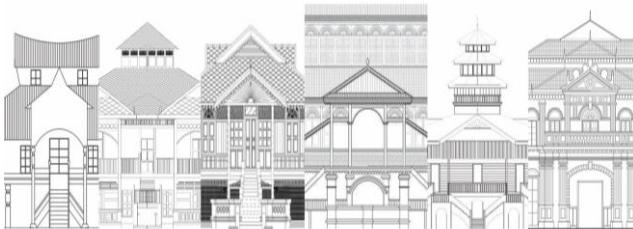


Fig. 17. Malay urbanscapes of identity -The stylistic evolution of the Classical vernacular through Classifications of hybridity

B. Recessed and Layered Character

As opposed to Colonial style and its variants , the Malay Classical vernacular has a key characteristic – its sudden shaded recesses . As in palaces, such a zone become part of the ceremonial of the royal courts, taking part in the rituals of court customs. For example, the extension of the Balai Penghadapan recall the deep recesses of traditional forms All project out from the elevational plane and all rest on columns, but in all cases, the form itself is beyond the principal elevation, in all cases, they combine functionality with a reinforcement of monumentality, frontality and symmetry. The Malay Classical style is drawn from an Archetype of porticos , referring to the characteristic layering of the Malay frontage which can either extend, recess or add the portico. Table I defines a parameter that allows the distinctiveness of the Malay Classical facade, and reflects the nature of its cultural roots, and any revival must be designed to include layerings including how the 1) portico is merely attached to the main structure or 2) the portico is embedded in the body of the palace itself 3) porticos that are pushed into the form and constitute part of the palatial form.

VII. DISCUSSION

The hybrid language of the Malay Classical vernacular, must be viewed as a natural evolution of Malay aesthetics and architectural language within the evolution of the Malay society and not as a colonial import. Tengku Anis et.al. (2018) had highlighted the five archetypes and classifications of type of the form which implies that across the Nusantara, the variations can be categorised into main types. Yet their distinctiveness and aesthetic form of ‘Classical vernacular’ are defined theoretically and universally by the writings of Scruton (1995) and their parameters are also defined. The efforts must continue to root back these evolved stylistic forms and expressions is part and parcel of extending the tree of the vernacular into its modern manifestations . It flowered primarily in the early phase of colonisation, in which the Sultanate and aristocratic held the reigns of power and influences economically and politically, the diffusion of technology was brought by the Colonialist. These hybrid Classifications can be extended into ‘syncretic’ styles, which

occur before and after Classicality as an era.

Baitul Rahmah	Rumah Panglima Ghani	Baitul Anwar

Table I: Layers of the Malay Classical Frontage – variations of the tropical portico

This paper highlights that the Malay Classical vernacular aesthetic is not a uniform language but can be identified into several hybrid variants which reflect a more tectonic or constructivebased aesthetic to the stylistic language and its classification. The identified classifications are 1) half column height plinth or base 2) combined half and full column stereotomic base; 3). The peristyle tectonic with core stereotomic base and 4) the fused tectonic -stereotomic systems. Further research will look into the elements and character that defines the essence of Malay Classical identity in these cases, reflecting the natural evolution of the Malay world. Diffusion of cultural forms and styles were channeled through trade and commerce links and dynamics. Metal and ceramic can be included in the discourse and variations, and from the natural evolution of timber houses, which essentially has included metal as key elements, and to full masonry mutations with infusions of cast iron. For example, the gradual evolution of the Balai Besar Kedah must be seen as a natural final evolution of the mature Classical style in a modernising society (Fig. 14). Although Western presence that the stylistic trends began to show (Fig. 15) in the form of Regency arches,these are introduced as supportive design elements, the Classical style is still the dominant form as the parameters remains Malay . Is embellishments have started to absorbed a degree European stylisation but the aesthetic parameters remain, and changes are subordinate to a persistent overall Malay character and vernacular form. The Classical style remain if during each time of renovations, although key alterations were done by the ruling monarch, but were principled alterations. Changes were made, but forms persisted and proportions remain, and hence genealogically rooted and differentiated from ‘imitative’ stylistic forms, and disruptions of the Colonialist that were exerted and imported and grafted, externally.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

Definitions of the vernacular is crucial to the development of heritage management, preservation, urban policy and place-making regionalism within a region, whose heritage is increasingly disappearing at a rapid rate by virtue of its materials and its intense climate. Steps need to be undertaken to consolidate a database of resources that arise from a common root. The Malay world is united by a common ethnolinguistic heritage, yet architecturally, it is challenged

by a diversity that arose based on its geographic and archipelagic context. The significance of the vernacular must be rooted to its socio-polities and their legacies can be classified as different categories of 'hybridity' of architecture and construction. They represent a late stage but key era in its history yet linked to the roots and beginnings of the vernacular and thus evoke and contain the essentials language of place. The paper aimed at using fundamental theories of architecture to classify Malay Architecture and its offshoots and variants. Through selected palatial case studies which reflect a hybrid aesthetic, these classifications refer to the late genealogical development of the Malay vernacular and is part of the Classical style and its branches. Some of these types include also syncretic expression from neighboring regions. Classifications are crucial due to the increasingly urgent need to manage the heritage and historical resources of a place which constitute efforts towards place-branding and hence, heritage identity and identification of places and towns. Currently many hybrid structures are left neglected as they are seen as part of the 'Colonial' memory, without truly separating the vernacular based innovations and the narrow minded kitsch approach or grafting of external styles. One branch may die while the other root begins to live, yet the palaces can be read to see an evolving style which reflects the richness of Malay architectural heritage as arising from the relationship between political structures, dynamics of powers and influence and to some extent, the impact of Colonisation and the presence of the Colonial powers of a certain era had brought about the essential Classical hybridities in palatial structures. Rather than further contributing to the historiographies of architecture which often views Modernism as the peak of the Western civilisation, it is argued that how local populations face the co-existence of a global force with the local talents that should become the cultural standard –bearers of architecture.

Architectural language becomes a testament of the ability to locals to resist by way of including synthesizing, and to syncretise, modernize and innovate, and these ability of doing so Without losing one 's identity and essence is crucial to the identity of future cities and townships. Architecture is generally the perennial tension of the competing and dominating forces, e.g. and the challenge of Asian societies is how to absorb the new without compromising the old. Hence although the region was once colonized and principally seen as subjugated, the subjugator had also played their roles in the diffusion of cultural expressions of nations and races. The shifts from one trajectory of Modernity to the next, are the backdrop into which a study of the dynamics between powers are played out again and again in a range of larger architectural expressions and forms. The classifications found should be used to further highlight its final branches before the essential branches and form of the local vernacular ends to be replaced by a homogenous style of new modernity which came to replace the essences of the local host culture, and thus these will be seen and valued, as a form of rooted vernacular.

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