

Malay Vernacular Architecture

Traditional and Contemporary Expressions

Norwina Mohd Nawawi

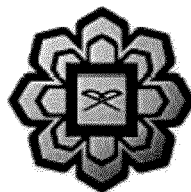


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CHAPTER 6

CLIMATE RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES VERSUS THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF MALAY TRADITIONAL HOUSES

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ABSTRACT

It is common knowledge that the vernacular architecture of a place is a result of considerations on climatic, cultural and religious factors of the people; however, thorough analyses on the mentioned considerations have rarely been discussed. This article states in detail the multi-dimensional considerations in the architecture of the Malay traditional houses (MTH) that response to the climatic design strategies and the cultural and religious dimension in form of architectural elements. The discussions also focus on generic elements of MTH in Peninsular Malaysia (irrelevant to their regions) with analysis on their response to the environment and vice-versa. The analyses indicate that the architectural elements incorporated in the design of the MTH are related to at least one of the mentioned considerations, i.e. culture, religion, climate. The findings are vital in sustaining the socio-cultural dimension in the provisions of conducive public housing in Malaysia.

Keywords: climate, socio-culture and traditional houses

INTRODUCTION

Malay traditional houses (MTH) have been accepted as the reference for suitable design solutions to the hot humid climate. Nevertheless the houses also have been accepted as a structure that reflects the culture of the Malays. Which of these factors were given the utmost considerations in the architecture of the MTH? There are claims that MTH are the best solution to the climatic, cultural and religious factors of this region. Rapoport (1969) and Zulkifli & Ahmad Zakiulfuad (2005) asserted that socio-culture is the determinants or main factors in shaping the houseform of MTH. On the other hand, climatic factors are deemed to be the modifying factors in accordance to the given environment. The claims need to be verified through detailed studies on the MTH and its environment. The rationales in the