THOUGHTS ON MALAYSIAN ARCHITECTURE IDENTITY AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF MALAYAN ARCHITECTS CO-PARTNERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The lack of discourses, research and documentations on Malaysian architectural identity are among the factors that contributed to persistent misunderstanding of architecture identity and its association with political, economic and socio-cultural context of Malaysia. Therefore, the objective of the thesis is to understand architectural identity thoughts that led to architecture design befitting with political, economic and socio-cultural context of Malaysia. This thesis looks at existing concepts, theories, types and approaches of Malaysian architecture identity, and it reviews the historical development of the search for Malaysian architecture identity from 1950s to 1960s, a dawning period in the attempts by architects in Malaya to infuse meaning and value to a new nation. A local architecture firm, Malayan Architects Co-Partnership (MAC) highlighted by scholars and historians as successful in designing suitable architecture to Malaya’s (later Malaysia) identity is engaged as the case study. The thesis employed an interpretive architectural historical methodology employing postmodern paradigm as a basis for understanding meaning and values associated with architecture design. The study relies on literature review, speeches, interviews, archive documents, direct observation and building analysis. Data obtained which was triangulated revealed that thoughts on architecture identity are products of an architect’s reflection of himself that is bounded by the external factors such as politic, economy and socio-culture. The study found that MAC’s design principles is a synthesis of modern, vernacular and past tradition ideas encompassing three themes; adaptability, reinterpretation and realization of realities. Outcomes of the study extend existing views on Malaysian architecture identity and offer an architectural design approach that draw inspiration from the past architectural work. It also extended existing knowledge as it is a pioneering effort to document architectural identity thoughts in Malaysia and design principles of a local architecture firm as a step to reshaping the Malaysian national architecture identity.
ABSTRAK

Ketandusan wancana, penyelidikan dan dokumentasi mengenai identiti senibina Malaysia merupakan antara faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada salah faham yang berterusan terhadap idea identiti senibina dan kaitannya dengan konteks politik, ekonomi dan sosio-budaya Malaysia. Oleh yang demikian, objektif tesis ini adalah untuk memahami pemikiran identiti senibina yang membawa kepada reka bentuk senibina yang sesuai dengan konteks politik, ekonomi dan sosio-budaya Malaysia. Tesis ini mendalami konsep, teori, jenis dan pendekatan identiti senibina Malaysia dan mengkaji perkembangan sejarah pencarian identiti senibina Malaysia dari tahun 1950an sehingga tahun 1960an iaitu era permulaan percubaan oleh arkitek di Malaya dalam menyemai erti dan nilai sebuah negara baru di dalam rekaan senibina. Sebuah firma senibina tempatan, Malayan Architects Co-Partnership (MAC) diketengahkan oleh para ilmuan dan ahli-ahli sejarah sebagai berjaya dalam merekabentuk senibina yang sesuai dengan identiti Malaya (kemudianannya Malaysia) telah dipilih sebagai kes kajian. Tesis ini menggunakan kaedah interpretif sejarah senibina yang mendalami paradigm pascamoden sebagai asas untuk memahami makna dan nilai-nilai yang berkaitan dengan reka bentuk senibina. Tesis ini bergantung kepada kajian literatur, ucapan-ucapan, temuramah, dokumen-dokumen arkib, pemerhatian langsung dan analisis bangunan. Data yang diperolehi telah ditiangulasi, mendedahkan bahawa pemikiran identiti senibina adalah hasil pemikiran arkitek tentang dirinya yang dipengaruhi oleh faktor-faktor luaran seperti politik, ekonomi dan sosio-budaya. Kajian mendapati bahawa prinsip-prinsip rekabentuk MAC's adalah sintesis idea-idea moden, vernakular dan tradisi lampau yang merangkumi tiga tema; kebolehsuaian, pentafsiran semula dan kesedaran tentang realiti. Hasil tesis ini telah meluaskan pemahaman sedia ada terhadap identiti senibina Malaysia dan menawarkan pendekatan rekabentuk senibina yang merujuk kepada hasil kerja senibina lampau. Tesis ini juga mengembangkan ilmu sedia ada kerana ia merupakan usaha merintis dokumentasi pemikiran identiti senibina Malaysia dan prinsip senibina sebuah firma tempatan sebagai langkah membentuk identiti nasional senibina Malaysia.