

NGO: Save Tunku's home

Gazette it as a heritage building, urges Pemenang

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GEORGE TOWN: The mansion of the first prime minister of Malaysia, the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, should be gazetted as a heritage building, says the Penang Malay Association (Pemenang).

"There is so much history and invaluable treasure in that house that the Tunku named 'Rumah Takdir', where he lived his private life for about 40 years," said its president Tan Sri Mohd Yusof Latiff.

The Umno veteran said the house witnessed many meetings and assemblies, and paid host to many world leaders who visited the Tunku.

He said Tunku Abdul Rahman gave the house to one of his daughters as a gift.

"At the time, the house had termite problems and there was a discussion about turning the house into a gallery, but the suggestion did not materialise," he said.

More than a decade ago, the historical mansion was bought by a private company after the family of Tunku Abdul Rahman decided to sell it.

The current owner was said to have been looking to sell the property over the past three years. At present, the market value is reported to be RM62mil.

Nestled in a tranquil corner of Pulau Tikus at the corner of Jalan Park and Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman, the mansion with a built-up area of 9,867sq ft and a land size of 64,472sq ft, has six bedrooms and an annexed servants' quarters.

Mohd Yusof called on Federal Government to give attention to the mansion where the Tunku lived until he passed away in 1990.

"I have forwarded the message to Dewan



So much history: The current owner of Rumah Takdir has put it up for sale for RM62mil.

Negara president Tan Sri Dr Rais Yatim and Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri, and I hope they can bring it forward," he said.

The mansion, he said, should be converted into a gallery dedicated to Tunku Abdul Rahman as it holds a significant part and history of his life.

He said the Father of Malaysia's great contributions should be remembered.

Heritage activist Khoo Salma Nasution said Penang Island City Council (MBPP) had the power to protect the mansion should the current owner decide to develop the house.

She said under Penang Heritage Enactment 2011, the local council had the right to gazette

the house as a heritage building.

Khoo Salma, who is also Penang Heritage Trust vice-president, said even though the mansion was not within the Unesco World Heritage Site, MBPP had the authority to use the Enactment.

However, a spokesman from the MBPP Heritage Conservation Department said the current owner had the responsibility of conserving the historic mansion.

"MBPP can assist and help the owner on how to conserve the mansion," he said.

"If the owner wants to change the status of the land and the mansion, then the owner must submit planning permission to MBPP and it will be subject to approval."