

LANDMARKS *of* SELANGOR



Paintings by **CHIN KON YIT** Architectural Notes by **CHEN VOON FEE** Historical Introduction by **JOHN M. GULLICK**

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This book is testimony to the rich architectural heritage of the state of Selangor. More than 40 buildings of historic or aesthetic importance have been specially painted by the distinguished artist Chin Kon Yit, with detailed commentaries by architect and conservationist Chen Voon Fee. A historical context is provided by the introduction by John M. Gullick, author of many standard works on Malaysia and its history.

The oldest structure in the book is the fort at Kuala Selangor, built in the second half of the eighteenth century. One of the most recent is the Main Terminal Building of Kuala Lumpur International Airport. The totality of the book includes mosques, state monuments, palaces, schools, churches, temples, offices, banks, even shophouses, in styles reflecting the richly complex history and culture of the state of Selangor over the past three centuries.

There is much to admire in these fine buildings, and the book will be of lasting interest to anyone connected with Selangor, and to those interested in the preservation of its historical treasures. Architects will trace with interest the responses of their colleagues over the decades to the challenges posed by the tropical climate and a multicultural environment; and visitors to Malaysia will be encouraged to seek out an array of sites well worth visiting and yet easily accessible from the nation's capital.

The book is published to mark the coronation of His Royal Highness Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, Sultan of Selangor, in 2003.



Dengan Ingatan Yang Tulus Ikhlas

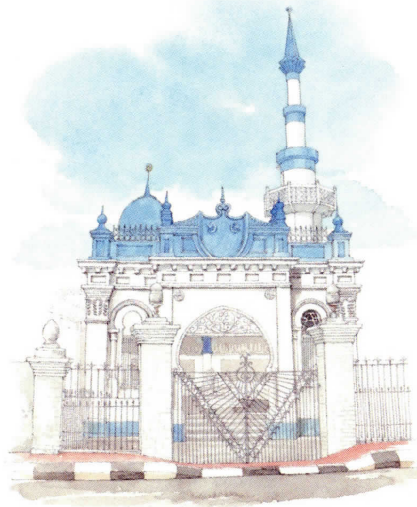
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Salam Mesra

daripada

**D.Y.M.M. SULTAN SHARAFUDDIN IDRIS SHAH
SULTAN SELANGOR**

Landmarks of Selangor



J. J. J.
25th June 2003.

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KUALA LUMPUR



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Landmarks of Selangor

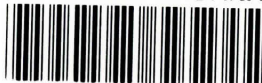


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CHIN KON YIT

Architectural Notes by
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JOHN M. GULLICK

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*Illustrated on half-title page, the gateway marking the founder's tomb at the Masjid India Muslim;
title-page, Kota Darul Ehsan; this page, Melawati Stadium*

Contents

Foreword by

**His Royal Highness
The Sultan of Selangor**

Map of Selangor

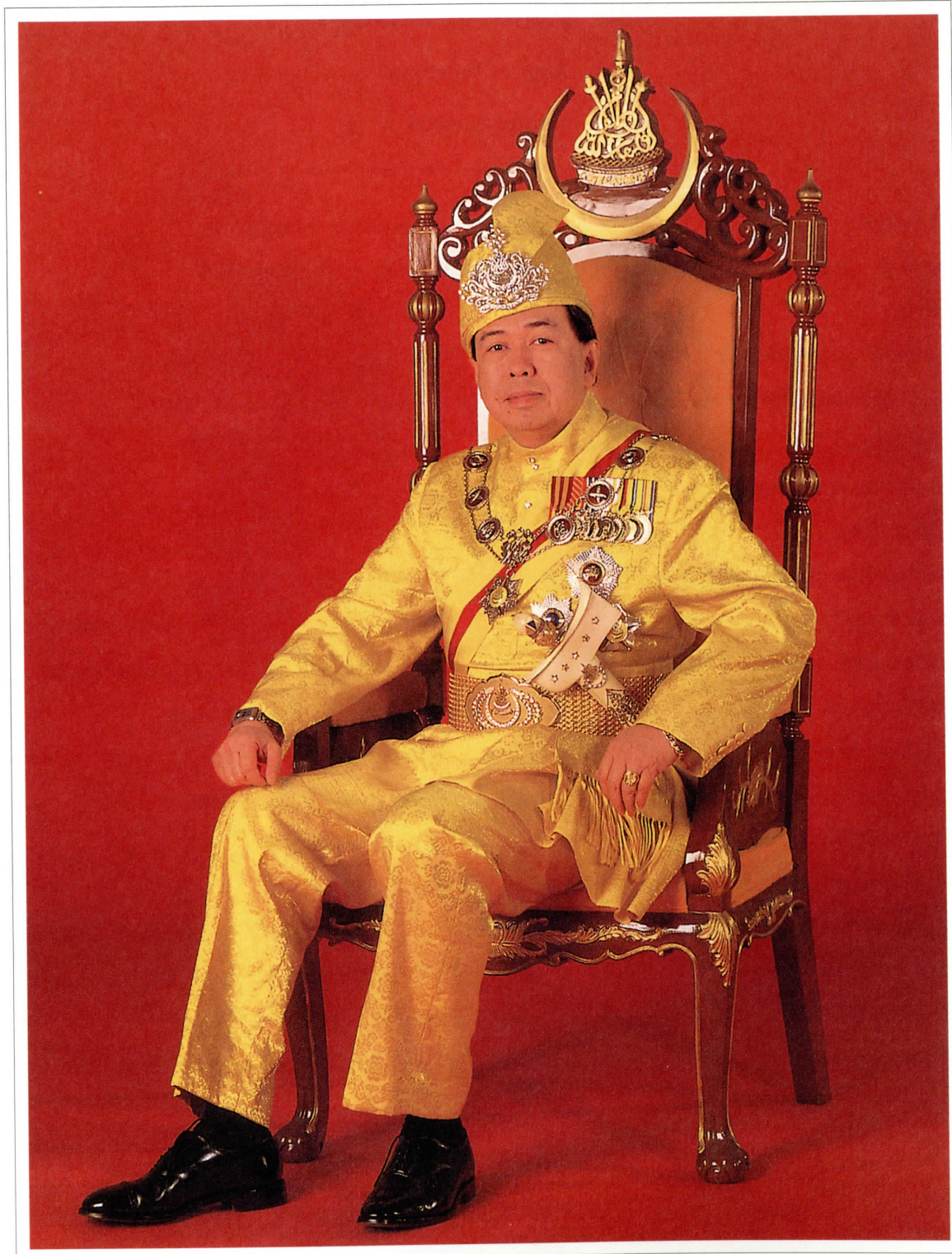
Introduction

Kota Melawati	26	Maison des Palmes	66
Gedung Raja Abdullah	28	Houses at Petaling Jaya	68
Batu Caves	30	Istana Alam Shah	70
Masjid Sultan Alaeddin Suleiman Shah	32	Wat Thai Buddhist Chetawan	72
Makam Al Marhum Sultan Abdul Samad	34	Makam Diraja Kota Melawati	74
Istana Bandar	36	Kota Darul Ehsan	76
Kuil Sri Subramania Swamy	38	Masjid India Muslim	78
Kwan Imm Ting	40	Istana Bukit Kayangan	80
Bangunan Sultan Suleiman, Klang	42	The State Memorial	82
Former Standard Chartered Bank	44	Masjid Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah	84
Bangunan Sultan Suleiman, Bukit Fraser	46	Cash Centre, Bank Negara, Shah Alam	86
Hatter's Castle	48	Muzium Sultan Alam Shah	88
The Gap Resthouse	50	Rimbun Dahan	90
Church of Our Lady of Lourdes	52	Titian Canopy Walkway	92
Sekolah Menengah Convent	54	Menara Mesiniaga	94
Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tinggi	56	Rudinara	96
Shophouses at Kuala Kubu Bharu	58	Shah Alam Stadium & Melawati Stadium	98
Universiti Putra Malaysia	60	The Royal Selangor Yacht Club	100
Masjid Sultan Suleiman	62	KLIA & Sepang F1 Circuit	102
Kolej Islam Sultan Alam Shah	64	D'hulimiti, Boh Plantation Bungalow	104
Tugu Keris	106		

Glossary

Further Reading

Foreword by
His Royal Highness
Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah
Sultan of Selangor





The evolution of Selangor state, from its rural and mining origins beginning with the founding of the Sultanate in 1766, through to its present position as Malaysia's most urbanized state, can be clearly traced through its buildings. My intention in publishing this book is not merely to ensure that our state's landmark buildings are identified and recorded for future generations, but most importantly to make us all aware of the role buildings play in our lives.

In preserving enough historic buildings from our past, we ensure we are aware of our history, and thus how proud we should be of Selangor's progress and development. Such buildings also offer comforting links back to our individual memories of times past, and provide a reassuring continuity to the current era of dramatic economic and cultural progress.

By incorporating examples of modern, recent buildings of different types, I am hoping that the book will inspire current architects and builders to ensure that their buildings are of real quality and integrity; so that, as time passes, their projects too can become landmarks worthy of inclusion in some future version of this book.

For their support of this project I wish to thank Southern Bank Berhad; Concorde Hotel, Kuala Lumpur; Hard Rock Cafe, Kuala Lumpur; and Planet Hollywood, Kuala Lumpur.

Lastly this book would not have happened without the input and co-operation of the many friends and professionals who have been involved since the early conceptualization of the project. They include John Gullick, Chen Voon Fee, Chin Kon Yit, Henry Barlow, Richard Curtis, Didier Millet and Timothy Auger, to all of whom I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation.

Duli Yang Maha Mulia Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah
Ibni Almarhum Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Alhaj
D.K., D.K. (Terengganu), D.K. (Kelantan), D.K. (Perak), D.K. (Perlis),
D.K. (Negeri Sembilan), D.K. (Kedah), S.P.M.S., S.S.I.S., S.P.M.J.

Map of Selangor

- 1 Bangunan Sultan Suleiman
- 2 The Gap Resthouse
- 3 Shophouses at Kuala Kubu Bharu
- 4 Maison des Palmes
- 5 Kota Melawati
- 6 Makam Diraja Kota Melawati
- 7 Rimbun Dahan
- 8 Titian Canopy Walkway
- 9 Batu Caves
- 10 Kolej Islam Sultan Alam Shah
- 11 Istana Alam Shah
- 12 Masjid India Muslim
- 13 Tugu Keris
- 14 Gedung Raja Abdullah
- 15 Kwan Imm Ting
- 16 Bangunan Sultan Suleiman
- 17 Former Standard Chartered Bank
- 18 Church of Our Lady of Lourdes
- 19 Sekolah Menengah Convent
- 20 Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tinggi
- 21 Masjid Sultan Suleiman
- 22 Muzium Sultan Alam Shah
- 23 Istana Bukit Kayangan
- 24 The State Memorial
- 25 Masjid Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah
- 26 Cash Centre, Bank Negara, Shah Alam
- 27 Shah Alam Stadium & Melawati Stadium
- 28 Petaling Jaya
- 29 Wat Thai Buddhist Chetawan
- 30 Menara Mesiniaga
- 31 Kota Darul Ehsan
- 32 Universiti Putra Malaysia
- 33 The Royal Selangor Yacht Club
- 34 Hatter's Castle
- 35 Masjid Sultan Alaeddin Suleiman Shah
- 36 Istana Bandar
- 37 Makam Al Marhum Sultan Abdul Samad
- 38 D'hulimiti, Boh Plantation Bungalow
- 39 Kuil Sri Subramania Swamy
- 40 Rudinara
- 41 KLIA & Sepang F1 Circuit

PERAK

Sg. Bernam

Sabak Bernam

Sg. Tenggi

Kuala Selangor

Hulu Selangor

Bukit Fraser

The Gap

PAHANG

Kuala Kubu Bahru

SELANGOR

Sg. Selangor

Sg. Buloh

Straits of Malacca

Kelang

Petaling

Kuang

Batu Laves

Kepong

Federal Territory

Kuala Lumpur

Hulu Langat

Peninsular Malaysia

10 11 12 13
Klang

22 23
Shah Alam

24 25
Sungai Jaya

26 27
PJ

28 29
PJ

30 31

31 • Serdang

39 • Kajang

40 • Bangi

14 15
Pelabuhan Klang

16 17 18 19 20 21

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35 36
Bandar

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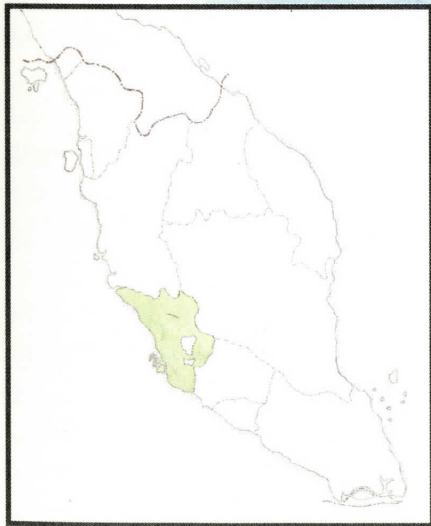
56

57

58

59

60



Carey Island

Jenjarom

Bandar

Jingra

Banring

Kuala Langat

Sg. Langat

Sepang

Sg. Sepang

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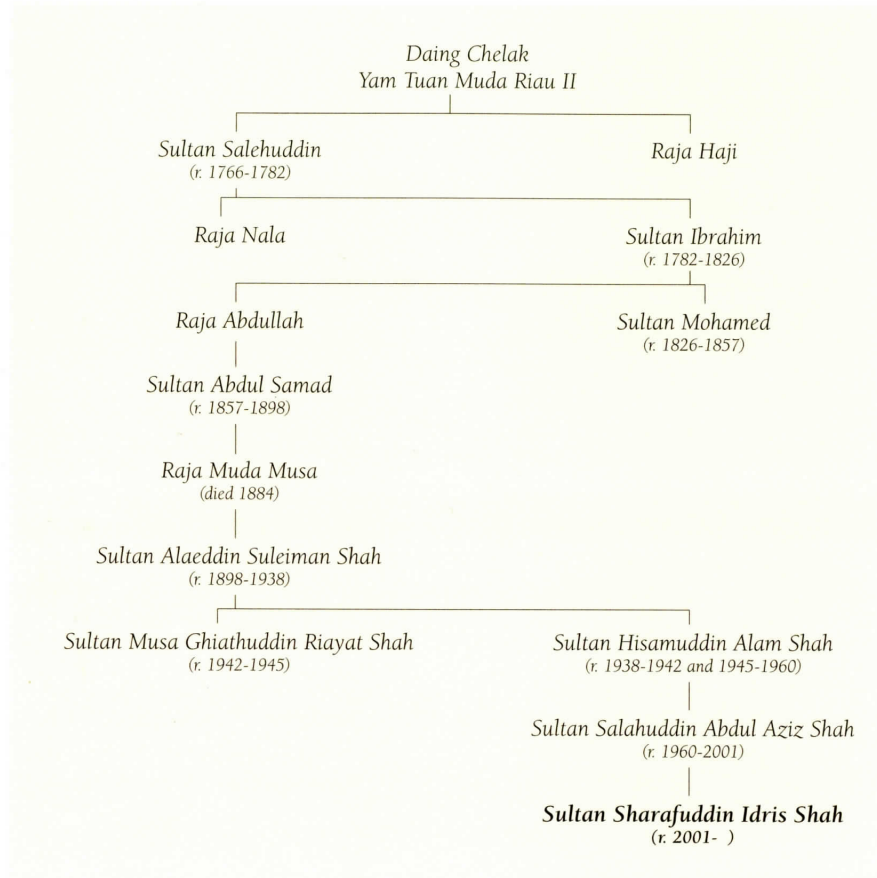
Sepang

Sepang

NEGERI SEMBILAN

Introduction

The Sultanate of Selangor



HR.H. Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, who ascended the throne of Selangor in 2001, is descended in the male line from the founder of the state, Sultan Salehuddin (r. 1766-1782), and is the ninth Sultan.

In fact, the dynasty had come to prominence half a century before the time of Salehuddin. Early in the 18th century, the Sultan of Johor, hard-pressed by foreign enemies, rewarded a group of Bugis nobles from the Celebes, who had given him

valiant help, by creating a title of Yam Tuan Muda ('under-king') of the Riau-Johor empire to be held by their leader. Although the Yam Tuan Muda of Johor-Riau-Lingga generally resided at the Johor capital, his kinsmen and their followers settled along the coastline between the mouths of the Bernam and Linggi rivers. Today this coastline is divided (at Sepang) between Selangor and Negeri Sembilan. In the mid-18th century, Raja Lumu, a son of the second Yam Tuan Muda of Riau, Daing Chelak



*Left to right: Sultan Abdul Samad,
Sultan Alaeddin Suleiman Shah, and
Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah.*

(r. 1728–1745), and brother of the warlord Raja Haji, ruled this coastal fringe in nominal fealty to his cousin, Yam Tuan Muda Daeng Kemboja (r. 1745–1777). Then in 1766 Raja Lumu broke the link with Johor by assuming the title of Sultan Salehuddin of Selangor, with the support and recognition of the Sultan of Perak. Thus the ruler of Selangor became a monarch in his own right.

Sultan Salehuddin's son and successor, Sultan Ibrahim (r. 1782–1826), was another doughty warrior. He survived a period of turbulence in the Straits of Malacca which ended in the mid-1820s with a settlement of the rival claims of Britain, the Netherlands and Siam to dominance of the area. As an incidental consequence, in 1825 Britain and Selangor made a treaty for the promotion of trade and the suppression of piracy. However the ensuing half-century (to 1874) saw an intermittent internal power struggle in Selangor, during which Sultan Mohamed (r. 1826–1857) and Sultan Abdul Samad (r. 1857–1898) lacked the authority and power to keep their ambitious subjects in order. It ended with an outright civil war (1867–1873), and British intervention in 1874, ostensibly to suppress piracy but mainly to protect and further British commercial interests in Selangor.

On his accession in 1857 Sultan Abdul Samad moved the royal capital from Kuala Selangor to Kuala Langat, in the south-west of the state, which was his ancestral fief. Until the mid-1870s his capital was at Bandar Langat, on the Langat river, but he then moved a few miles nearer the coast to

build an istana (palace) on Jugra Hill, which became the headquarters of the Kuala Langat district (until the headquarters was moved to Telok Datoh in 1917). In 1875 a British Resident, with a handful of European staff, established himself at Klang, with the remit of advising the Sultan on the government of his state, though from the outset the Resident in effect governed the state in the Sultan's name. In 1880 the increasing commercial importance of Kuala Lumpur led the Resident to move his headquarters there, and it officially became the capital of the state. The elderly, but long-lived, Sultan Abdul Samad preferred to remain at Jugra until his death in 1898. Meanwhile, in 1896, Selangor had joined Perak, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang in forming the Federated Malay States, with its administrative centre in Kuala Lumpur. To accommodate a rapidly expanding bureaucracy, a number of major buildings were erected in Kuala Lumpur in the distinctive 'Mogul' style (see p. 13).

Kuala Lumpur became in due course the centre of government of Malaya in 1946 and of Malaysia on its formation in 1963; but the Sultans of Selangor have always preferred to maintain their seat elsewhere, first at Klang and later at Shah Alam. The size and special position of Kuala Lumpur led to a decision in 1974 that, with its environs, this large city should become a Federal Territory (comparable with Washington D.C. in the USA and Canberra in Australia).

The paintings shown in the main part of this book depict buildings in present-day Selangor.

The Buildings of Selangor

When Sultan Salehuddin established the state of Selangor in 1766, his stronghold in those turbulent times was the Fort at Kuala Selangor, on the high ground commanding the estuary. In 1784 the Dutch, who had just taken the fort, improved its fortifications by filling the gaps in its surrounding rocks with bricks and masonry to make a continuous defensive perimeter. But soon afterwards, by a celebrated stratagem, Sultan Ibrahim expelled the invaders. Under cover of darkness the Malay attackers waved poles to which white handkerchiefs had been tied to suggest that the assault was coming from that side, and then came in from the other side against an almost undefended length of the perimeter. Thereafter the Sultan and his successors and supporters held the fort for almost a century until, in 1871, it fell to a British naval bombardment. The restored ruins stand, as the oldest surviving structure in Selangor, to remind us of the history of an ancient trade port and of a fighting dynasty.

The use of brick or stone was the exception in the Malay states of the 19th century. The Sultans of Selangor were then content to build their istanas (palaces) of timber, which was abundant and easier to transport and fashion into shape. When damp, or white ants, ended the useful life of a building, it was replaced by another timber structure. But the need for security against attack occasionally led to the use of brick or stone. When Raja Abdullah became the ruling chief of the Klang district in the 1850s he built himself a

dual-purpose customs house and residence, in which to store the proportion of the cargoes of tin passing along the river which he exacted as his due. The carpenters and masons whom he imported did their work well, and the building survives to this day as the Muzium Timah Klang.

Buildings cost money. As one considers the architecture of Selangor over a century-and-a-half, one has always to remember that the men who commissioned fine buildings to make an impression of power and wealth also had to foot the bill. The first British Resident 'made do' with Raja Abdullah's house. His successor built a Residency of timber at Klang in 1877, and when it was decided to move the government headquarters to Kuala Lumpur in 1880, the house was dismantled so that its component timbers might be shipped upriver by boat to be reassembled in Kuala Lumpur. However the men from the Public Works Department pointed out that the use of timber was sometimes a false economy. The saving in initial cost was offset by the short life of the building and the cost of maintaining it. If the money could be found for a greater initial outlay, it was cheaper in the long term to build in more durable materials. This trend was more apparent in towns and villages, centres of permanent settlement, than on the mines and plantations of the late 19th century.

For half a century to the end of the First World War in 1918, the state government built most of the new buildings; but, except in Kuala



Prewar shophouses remain some of the most characteristic features of many towns in Selangor.

Lumpur, these were strictly 'functional' after the fashion of the time and not designed to please or impress. The first qualified architect to work in Selangor was A.C.A. Norman, ARIBA, who became deputy head of the Public Works Department in 1883. He was a man of moderate talent, but he was succeeded in due course by Arthur Hubback, who designed most of the buildings of the 'British Raj' or 'Mogul' style (developed by British architects in India). The Istana Mahkota Puri built at Klang for Sultan Suleiman in time for his installation ceremony in 1903 was in this style (it was replaced by the present Istana Alam Shah in 1960).

A government architect or engineer did not have to secure official approval for his designs as such. A private citizen, however, typically a businessman who wished to build a godown, shophouse or villa, and who had obtained a suitable site, had then to submit plans in outline to the town council for consideration under building regulations intended to avoid risk of fire or structural collapse, or to protect the health

of the occupants. The preparation of such plans was the work of draftsmen, some of them former government employees who knew the rules but had little idea of design – or of estimating costs, in which connection the client sometimes had nasty surprises. The real architect was often the working builder, usually a Chinese from the Straits Settlements, whose experience enabled him to solve his problems as the building rose from the ground.

The most important product of this system was the shophouse. From the late 19th century onwards, shophouses were built in rows to form the new streets of Selangor's towns and villages. As the name suggests, the shophouse performed the dual functions of shop and dwelling. The building regulations required that along each side of a street there should be a pavement, the *jalan kaki lima*, or 'five-foot way', for the use of pedestrians – though it was often obstructed by shopkeepers' goods, hawkers' stalls or petition-writers' desks; at night it might accommodate the resident's bicycles, handcarts, or – in rural areas –



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