

Penyampai : TAN SRI DATO SERI AHMAD SARJI BIN ABDUL HAMID  
Tajuk : BADAN WARISAN MALAYSIA  
Lokasi : KUALA LUMPUR  
Tarikh : 01-08-1996

1. Badan Warisan Malaysia - Heritage of Malaysia Trust - is a non-profit, non-government organization. It was established in 1983 to promote the conservation and preservation of our built heritage. In December 1995, I was very pleased to be elected the President of this body because I believe that we need to save some of the jewels of our history for the benefit of future generations.

2. You have before you this evening, a photo exhibit of selected structures which either have been restored or need restoration, etchings by Ilse Noor which were part of the Warisan Nusa Shell Book of Malaysian Heritage and a video titled Preserving Malaysia's Architectural Heritage which was donated by Novista Sdn. Bhd. These are visual reminders of the work ahead of us.

3. In order to understand our future direction, I would like to briefly review the organization's early history and achievements. Badan Warisan Malaysia played a major role in saving the Central Market in Kuala Lumpur, the Gedung Raja Abdullah in Klang, the Istana Tengku Long in Terengganu, Loke Hall now known as the PAM Building in KL, Masjid Merbuk Pengkalan Kakap in Kedah and the Rumah Kutai in Kuala Kangsar, Perak. You may recognize some of these buildings in the photo exhibit on display tonight. Our involvement varied in each instance from stimulating interest in the restoration, establishing financing, consultation, putting together the project team and actual management of the restoration process.

4. We have sponsored numerous seminars and talks. In 1986, the Strategy for Conservation established the need for conservation. The lack of technical expertise was addressed in the seminar on the Principles and Techniques of Architectural Conservation. And in Develop and Conserve, two concurrent seminars were held for the government and developers. There has also been a HABS seminar, which is a Historical Architectural Building Survey methods seminar.

5. The Badan and BSB Malaysia jointly produced a 15-minute video on architectural heritage called 'Give our Past a Future'. 1600 copies of this video were donated to the Ministry of Education to be distributed to schools.

6. There have been heritage walks and trips.

There has been a heritage hunt in Kuala Lumpur the results of which were donated to the Dewan Bandaraya KL.

7. The organization has contributed its ideas in conservation planning in the Kampung Cina report which was sponsored by the British Council and the action plan prepared for Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock and Jalan Hang Jebat which was funded by the Majlis Perbandaran Melaka.

8. Members of this company have incorporated aspects of heritage conservation in fundraising events. Previous fundraising events include the Warisan Riverside Carnival, Malam Semangat Warisan, the film premiere of 'Matinya Seorang Patriot' and the 'Cosi Fan Tutte' opera. Proceeds from the sale of cards, prints and books, such as the Warisan Nusa are used to cover the cost of activities aimed at achieving our objectives.

9. This year, we continue this tradition of publicising the need for preserving our built heritage through a variety of projects.

10. In February I launched the Mubin Sheppard Memorial Prize. This is a scholarship award for students work in heritage conservation. We invited the participation of 11 academic institutions and are happy with the response. Our Panel of Judges have reviewed the 14 reports submitted and we await their findings. Later this year, we will hold a ceremony to award the prizes.

11. We completed the restoration of the Rumah Bomoh in Cangkat Jering, Perak. This was a restoration of a 100 year old house and construction of an adjacent building to provide current day facilities to the family living there. Funding for the work came from the sale of the Warisan Nusa which was sponsored by Shell Malaysia. I was proud to be able to officiate at the completion ceremony in March.

12. Subsequently, on May 7th, and again in mid- May and early July, I launched the 'Pemeliharaan Warisan Rupa Bandar', copies of which were presented to senior government officials. This publication was written by Tuan Syed Zainol Abidin Iddid, a lecturer at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and highlights the need for conservation. It describes the significant heritage buildings and areas in 49 towns in Malaysia. It is the outcome of the Badan Warisan Malaysia's pilot study which was the forerunner of the more comprehensive National Urban Inventory of Historic Buildings sponsored by the National Museum and Antiquity.

13. This year, we bought the Rumah Penghulu.

This house and attached Balai were once the residence of Penghulus in Bandar Baru, Kedah.

However, in the past 10 years, the descendents had chosen not to occupy the buildings. It has beautiful carvings and some unique design features.

Measured drawings were completed by students from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. The dilapidation study was completed by personnel from the Forest Research Institute Malaysia. I attended the Dismantling Ceremony on May 13th and on August 8th we will be holding the ceremony to raise the first tiang here in the grounds of No. 2 Jalan Stonor.

The presence of this project in the heart of Kuala Lumpur will be a strong statement about the Badan Warisan Malaysia's commitment to the preservation of our vernacular architecture.

14. I see the Badan Warisan Malaysia as an organization which plays a critical role in coordinating the efforts of the government, the private sector and the universities. Accordingly, our work will involve participation in all these sectors.

15. We are starting the groundwork for a pilot study on the rural inventory of heritage buildings.

At the July meeting of the Local Authorities in Kuching, I distributed a form which was designed for initial data input from these government officers.

It is my hope that the officials at that meeting will take the time to fill these forms and send them to the Badan's office and we can then begin to establish the framework for the rural inventory.

16. We will begin to work on ideas to incorporate architectural heritage and the need for conservation into our educational system and also in information to be provided to the visitor industry.

We are expanding our library and other resources such as video tapes. By the end of the year, we should have a tape of the restoration of Stonor, which has been generously sponsored by Y. Bhg. Tan Sri Dato' Lim Kok Wing and a video of the restoration of the Penghulu House which will cover more than a year's work.

17. We would like to promote increased corporate sponsorship of projects. There are many worthy buildings that need attention and our members and staff would be more than willing to be of assistance in any way.

18. The Badan Warisan Malaysia and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia will be entering into a Memorandum of Understanding to promote the exchange of ideas and resources. I hope we can be of assistance to them and in particular to the Faculty of Built Environment.

I have invited the Dean, Prof. Parid Wardi, to join us this evening and to share with us some of his ideas and proposals.

19. The purpose for our gathering this evening is to formally launch the Badan Warisan Malaysia at No. 2 Jalan Stonor. We have renovated these buildings in the spirit of (adaptive re-use) - as an example of restoration which accomodates current day requirements.

20. It is our goal to create at No. 2 Jalan Stonor a fully functioning Architectural Heritage Centre with an expanded library, gift shop and exhibition space - which will be inviting to students and visitors alike. The siting of the Penghulu House in the gardens allows us to present a mixture of architectural traditions, examples of different aspects of our history and traditions. When this restoration is completed we can then plan further activities on the premises.

21. As you can see, there are many challenges ahead. However we are inspired by the need to preserve our built heritage for ourselves and our children and I am heartened by your presence here, by your support for this very real need. Thank you for taking the time to join us tonight at this official launch of the Badan Warisan Malaysia at No.2 Jalan Stonor, Kuala Lumpur.