

Courts in Kuching: The development of settlement patterns and institutional architecture in colonial Sarawak, 1847 - 1927

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Abstract

James Brooke's Sarawak Government originally obtained jurisdiction over the Lundu, Sarawak and Samarahan River basins that made up 'Sarawak' in 1841, when he was conferred the title of Rajah by the Brunei Sultanate. During his and his successors, Charles Brooke's and Vyner Brooke's, century-long rule of Northwest Borneo as the 'white Rajahs,' Sarawak's territory expanded several times to become what is now the Malaysian state of the same name. While he employed Europeans in his government, Brooke also relied on indigenous officers and groups (and their spatial practices) as part of his adoption of indigenous forms of rule. He also appropriated indigenous and vernacular architecture and settlement patterns for his capital, Kuching, as well as new territories, during his tenure as Rajah. The location of his original court in Kuching followed Malay tradition by being located in his Malay nobleman's house, built for him by Sarawak's Bruneian governor in 1841. He began to develop the court as an institution when he moved his court out of his residence and across the river to the commercial side of Kuching in 1847. This location has had three different courthouses constructed on it. The third courthouse was then extended four times before World War Two, during the reigns of Charles and Vyner Brooke. This paper explores how the Government adopted and began to change indigenous spatial practices as part of their diverse approaches to governing. It argues that the development of their governance can be read through the development of their institutions (particularly the Courthouse complex) and its effect on the urban morphology of Kuching.

When James Brooke first arrived in Northwest Borneo, indigenous spatial practices were not based on permanence and ownership of territory. The indigenous groups that Brooke originally encountered were mercantile Malays, and agriculturalist Ibans and Bidayuhs,

who all had distinctive but mobile spatial practices, and less than permanent settlement patterns. While strategic locations were significant to the socially stratified Malay groups who relied on trade, their followers and personal relationships with suppliers and other traders was more important. When threatened, they generally migrated (or strategically retreated) to new locations, rather than to lose their followers in battle, as they were considered as labour, wealth and prestige. In contrast, both Iban and Bidayuh groups had an egalitarian social structure, but interpersonal relationships within and between groups was still important due to the way they shared and exchanged labour. As agriculturalists, they were less mobile, but they were still prone to regular migration, due to shifting cultivation practices. Overfarming was a tendency, and access to new agricultural areas was more important than ownership of existing farmlands. For these reasons, the material culture of Malays, Ibans and Bidayuhs was not invested in permanent construction and materials. Ibans also used the mobile practice of raiding as a way of acquiring labour through slavery, and wealth and prestige, through material gain and headhunting. The Malays and Bidayuhs of Sarawak, before James Brooke, fell victim to raiding by Ibans from the Skrang and Saribas River Basins. As I have discussed elsewhere, not all indigenous groups in Northwest Borneo were as mobile - Kenyah and Kayan groups, who inhabited the headwaters of large rivers in Northwest Borneo, were more permanent, and their architecture reflected that. However, they were geographically peripheral to the original area ceded to Brooke.¹

Sarawak was a vassal of the Brunei Sultanate, and Kuching was established in the 1820's by Sarawak's Bruneian governor, Pengiran Mahkota.² According to indigenous practice, Kuching was so named as it was settled at the confluence of the Kuching and Sarawak Rivers. It was settled as a riverine Malay trading town, from which they also ruled Malay, Bidayuh, Iban and Chinese groups in the Sarawak, Lundu and Samarahan Rivers. The first rajah gained control of Sarawak by being able to read and employ indigenous power structures for his own ends.³ While he maintained his relations with individuals within the British colonial system, he was estranged from many aspects of Britain's colonialism due to its support of large commercial interests at the expense of all else. This was partly brought on by his inability to interest Britain in taking on Sarawak as a colony, and he decided to become the independent European ruler of an Eastern state.

From 1841 to 1868, the first rajah leveraged both his colonial relationships and his indigenous title (and associated forms of rule and spatial practices) to establish, strengthen and protect not only his position in Kuching and Sarawak, but also his unique

approach to Eastern rule. While part of his aim was to prevent his subjects from becoming victims of colonial commerce, he also began to introduce western principles to indigenous law and its institutions. The second rajah, Charles Brooke, (1868 to 1917,) generally consolidated the state's position, and continued the adoption and appropriation of indigenous forms of rule (and spatial practices,) especially in the new river basins that the government acquired. However, a more modern and approach began to influence the government during this period. While the third rajah, Vyner Brooke, (1917 to 1946,) was sensitive to the indigenisation of his predecessors, he began to modernise the government and the state. He finally ceded Sarawak to the British after the Japanese Interregnum during World War Two, in 1946, when the state became a colony of Britain. The different approaches to governance of these three rajahs are represented in the development of the settlement patterns of Kuching, and its institutional architecture, especially the three different courthouses.

James Brooke and the Adoption and Modification of Indigenous Practices

James Brooke's first house (1841) in Kuching was a Malay nobleman's house, built for him by Sarawak's Bruneian governor. It was appropriate (in design, size and materials,) for his position as rajah of Sarawak, and Brooke's occupation of this house demonstrates his willingness to live as a Malay regent.⁴ However, as John Walker has noted, Brooke immediately began to modify the use of his residence with the use of European furniture, and used as his court for both public and private audiences.⁵ Traditionally, an open pavilion, or *balai*, adjacent to the regent's residence, was used for public audiences and dealing with public matters whereas the residence was reserved for private meetings. This personalisation of his rule was the first significant architectural modification of Malay governance. Walker goes on to discuss Brooke's decision to introduce a non-Malay veranda when he built his second house around 1843, which he continued to use as his court.⁶ This second house is also significant as it was the first building to be designed and implemented by Brooke, in contradiction to what I have suggested previously.⁷ Similarly, he introduced some general principles of European law to his governance of Sarawak, which overrode some indigenous traditional practices, such as debt bondage, head-hunting and raiding.⁸

The return of Sarawak's Bruneian overlords to their homeland, and the government's prevention of raiding by Ibans from the Skrang and Saribas River basins in the Sarawak River changed not only the security situation, but also indigenous settlement patterns. When Brooke first arrived in Kuching in 1839, it contained somewhere between 800 and 1500 inhabitants, comprised mostly of the local followers of the Brunei governor, as well

as a handful of Chinese traders.⁹ Prior to 1841, defence was the main factor that drove the location and layout of indigenous settlements in Northwest Borneo, with longhouses being protected by their height, palisades, and location on mountains, and aristocratic and noble Malay houses being fortified, and protected by high timber fortifications. The improved security conditions saw a relaxation of defensive architectural devices, including the Rajah's second house, which was not protected by a fence or palisade. Rajah James also attracted aristocratic Malays and their followers from upriver to settle around his Kuching court. Brooke understood that the permanence of the raj ensured the permanence of his Malay followers. Although Bidayuh settlements remained close to their agricultural lands in the hinterland, they began to move off the mountains and settle closer to rivers. Only the largely self governing Chinese miners did not change their settlement patterns, although more Chinese and Indian traders began to feel safe enough to settle in Kuching, across the river from Brooke's residence. By 1847, Kuching was reported to have grown to about 8,000, including several hundred Indians and 150 Chinese traders.¹⁰

Brooke also adopted indigenous defence methods, with the establishment a timber fort in Kuching, (most likely in 1844,) to control movement and communications up and down the river.¹¹ Malay forts and Iban (and Bidayuh) fortifications were traditionally located on the same side of the river as their settlements, so that they could be quickly manned by the inhabitants of the settlement, but also so to form a secure refuge if their compounds were breached. While his use of the fort followed Malay practice, its location was a modification of the Malay fort as it was separated from his residence by the river. The institution of the Malay court was further modified by Brooke in 1847, when he moved his court across to the commercial side of the river, to a recently abandoned two storey timber school building, located behind the fort.¹² This was his re-adoption of a *balai*, although it was not adjacent to his residence, and not an open-sided pavilion. Dividing the space of his court and residence indicated a desire to de-personalise the state's rule of law. While he still received guests at his residence, he was also conducting the state's affairs from a different official location. The noble Malay institution of the 'court' therefore became a 'court of law,' and his new office became Kuching's first courthouse, located between the Chinese and Indian commercial bazaars along the riverfront.



Figure 1. View of the first courthouse, which is the small building to the left of the flagpole. The building on the right is the Kuching fort, (1844,) and the large two storey building in the background is shophouses from the Indian *pasar*. (Image from Grant, Charles Thomas. *Scenes in Borneo and the East Indian Archipelago &C.*, 1888, viewed at the National Library of Australia.)

Unlike Kuching's Malay settlements, Brooke introduced colonial land control practices with Chinese and Indian traders where he formalised their land tenure, by selling plots of land to them soon after he came to power. They were not formally surveyed and evenly laid out like future Sarawak settlements, which suggests a more informal process of apportioning land, possibly based on how much was cleared from the secondary forest along the river, and occupied by the trader and his family. As with other Malay riverine trading towns, upriver inhabitants brought agricultural and mining produce to trade with Kuching's traders. Traditionally, Sarawak's Malay aristocracy were heavily involved in trade, but Brooke coaxed them away from commercial activities by formally appointing them to salaried positions within his government, further tying them to Kuching's location. This was the beginning of colonial pluralism in Sarawak, and allowed Indian and Chinese traders to take over the settlement's commercial activities. While more substantial timber shop-houses were eventually built along the bazaars, early traders originally built vernacular timber and leaf thatch structures, and cleared space behind their land for vegetable gardens.

In 1857, the state suffered an insurrection by the upriver Chinese miners, unhappy at government taxes, and culturally unable to understand his authority in the same way as Sarawak's indigenous groups.¹³ Although the rajah managed to escape, the town fell to the insurgents, whose leader established himself in the courthouse.¹⁴ During the insurrection, the rajah's house was burnt down, although the fort and the courthouse

survived. It only lasted a few days before government troops from the new Simanggang division (made up of the Lupar, Saribas and lower Rejang Rivers, acquired from Brunei to be part of Sarawak in 1853,) arrived to violently put down the rebellion. In the aftermath of the insurrection, and in response to it, the rajah shored up Kuching's defences by leveraging Iban migratory practices. He invited a group of Ibans from Balau to settle in Kuching, at Kampung Tabuan on the Sarawak River, 4.5km downriver from the bazaar, with the promise of material reward. This group had collaborated with the government against Iban raiders from the Skrang River in the late 1840's, and was known to be strong warriors. They established their longhouse in Kuching in 1858, and added to the plural mix of Malays, Chinese, Indians and Europeans.¹⁵

The rajah's intention was for this community to operate as an on-call paramilitary to boost government forces at Kuching on short notice. The rajah also built three new buildings in response to the uprising. Firstly, in 1857, he built his third residence across the creek from the site of the second one, a fireproof rendered brick building (called Government House) in an architectural style that further contrasted from indigenous and vernacular models.¹⁶ Secondly, he constructed a fort at Belidah in 1858, (on the site of a Malay fort that he had come across in 1839), for the purposes of employing the indigenous strategy of controlling movement along the river, particularly of future Chinese miners.¹⁷ The third building he built, most likely in the same year as the fort, was Kuching's second courthouse, which replaced the one occupied by the insurgents. It is not known whether or not the insurgents played a role in his decision to replace the first courthouse, but it is known that the second courthouse, called the 'Public Offices,' constructed in timber, was a larger single storey 'shed-like structure'.¹⁸ There are no known images of this courthouse.

The brutal response to the equally brutal Chinese uprising scared away Kuching Chinese groups who were not involved in the insurgency, fearing government reprisals due to their ethnicity. These Chinese groups had been established at Kuching's bazaar, and their absence effectively shrunk the commercial activities of the state. Over the next few years, confidence grew and the Chinese slowly returned to Kuching. During this time, the government continued to expand its sphere of influence, bringing the Bintulu and Mukah Rivers under their jurisdiction. Government forts were built at each of these rivers, as well as within the government controlled rivers of the Saribas, (Fort Lily at Betong, 1858,) Rejang, (Fort Brooke, at Sibu,) Upper Lupar, (1865, later called Fort Arundel,) and Kalaka Rivers (1865, later called Fort Charles.) Key to much of this expansion was the rajah's

nephew (and successor,) Charles Brooke, who managed the Simanggang and adjacent outstations, as well as leading military forces against local groups, and established stations at acquired rivers. These new acquisitions, previously affected by local and regional raiding groups and groups politically opposed to the rajah, allowed commercial activities to be reestablished there. The relative political and military stability allowed the government to begin planning improvements to the state, including Kuching.

By 1865, the rajah was in the process of finalising plans for the third, larger courthouse in Kuching, in order to accommodate the growing administration due to the state's expanding area and commerce.¹⁹ While the second courthouse had one large room which contained different administrative and court functions, each function was to have its own office in the third one, including offices for the resident of Kuching, printing, post, treasury and audit, and shipping. The first rajah did not implement this project however, as he died in 1868. Charles Brooke became the second rajah of Sarawak, and was responsible for the completion of the project, and the construction of the building.

Establishment and Change during the reign of Charles Brooke

While the second rajah continued the first rajah's trajectory of the survival and security (through expansion) of the fledgling state, he also began to refine Sarawak's institutional architecture as a representative tool. While he was often involved first hand in the functions of state, James Brooke delegated much, and was often not too concerned with detail. This contrasted with Charles' micro-management style. Charles also governed as an indigenous regent but began to introduce modern ideas, such as confirming the international border with Dutch Borneo.²⁰ The second rajah used architecture in a much more representative way. The existence of an institutional building to claim a river was not enough, its construction and appearance was also important. This was apparent in the outstations, where his communications from his officers showed that he wanted to know that the forts, (by then used mostly for civil rather than defensive purposes,) were kept in a good state of repair, including being white-washed.²¹

He took this a step further in the capital Kuching, where he heavily renovated Government House in 1870 and renamed it the *Astana* (palace), rebuilt the timber Kuching fort in whitewashed rendered brick (1879, called the Square Tower,) and built a new, larger whitewashed rendered brick fort on the north side of the river (Fort Margherita, also 1879.) These three structures were located on the river, architecturally representing the state along the primary access to the capital. In addition to the many

other public buildings and infrastructure that were established during the second rajah's reign, Kuching was beginning to display architecturally more and more colonial order. Private structures did not escape his attention either. In 1870, Charles ordered that all thatched roofed timber shop-houses facing the river be rebuilt in rendered brick with *belian* shingle roofs.²² *Belian* is a very dense, hard and durable wood species found only in Borneo, which is resistant to rot, even when immersed in water. He also ordered that the shop-houses be rebuilt with a 'five-foot way,' a covered walkway at the front of the shops, a colonial invention employed in the British colonies of Singapore and Penang.²³ More ordered public facilities began to be built with the construction of a building to house the *pasar* (market) in 1870.²⁴ Prior to this time, as per indigenous practice, the *pasar* was disordered and informal, made up of local and upriver vendors who occupied the space between the bazaar shop-houses and the river to sell their agricultural and forest produce. However, the key building which represented his ambition for the capital's representative architecture was the courthouse.

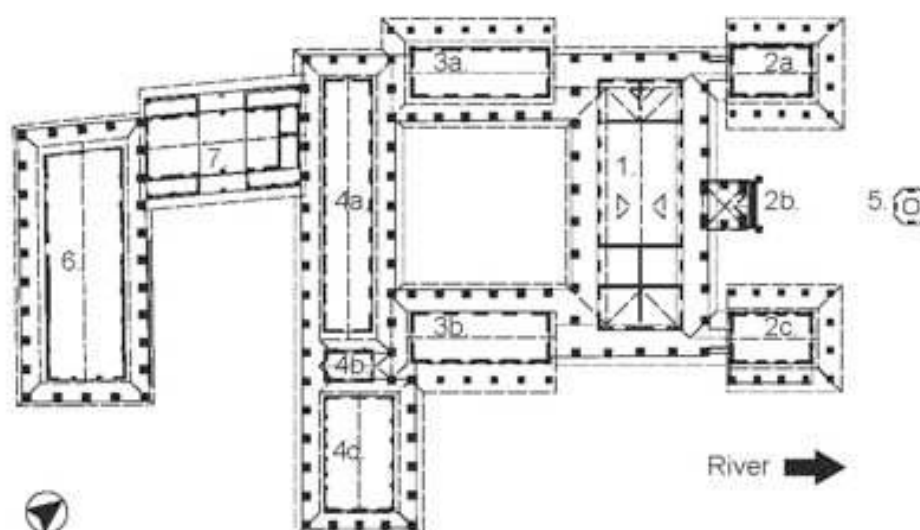


Figure 2. Plan of the third courthouse about 1942. 1. The original wing, 1874. 2a, 2b & 2c. The first extension, 1883. 3a & 3b. The second extension, 1900. 4a, 4b & 4c. The third extension, 1907. 5. The Rajah's Memorial, 1924. 6. The fourth extension, 1927. 7. The wing built during the Japanese Interregnum, about 1942.
(Drawing by John Ting Architect)

The completion of the third courthouse in 1874, contrasted with the timber one it replaced, as it was constructed in more permanent brick. Officially called the 'Public Offices,' the whitewashed courthouse had a deep veranda that ran around the building, supported by brick columns in the Tuscan style (see Figure 3).²⁵ The architecture was a deliberate combination of colonial and indigenous architecture – while classical columns were employed, so were deep eaves, used in indigenous and vernacular architecture as

sun shading and protection from the heavy rain. The floors and roof were constructed of *belian* timber, with *belain* shingles used as the roofing. The government newspaper, The Sarawak Gazette, (undoubtedly supervised by the rajah,) recognised that ‘it has been pronounced by all to be a very handsome plain building suitable for the purpose; if boasting no [colonial or western] architectural beauties, it is free from blemishes and is not an eyesore’, and went on to rationalise the unsuitability of buildings without eaves in Sarawak’s climate.²⁶ While ‘plain,’ the architecture of this first wing was to be employed in the four extensions of the courthouse complex over the next 53 years. The fifth extension was built by the Japanese during World War Two, likely in 1942. The seemingly seamless architectural transition from extension to extension (except for the Japanese building,) has caused many to hold the mistaken belief that the entire complex was constructed at the same time.²⁷



Figure 3. Figure 3. View of the rear of courthouse after the first renovation – one of the new wings and the top of the clocktower can be seen behind it. The photograph was taken sometime between 1883 and 1905. (Photograph courtesy of John Falconer)

In 1883, the third courthouse received its first extensions, with the addition of two office wings, as well as a clock tower, to the north of the original block, facing the river.²⁸ As a piece of public infrastructure, the clock tower brought a visible colonial sense of permanence and order to Kuching’s timekeeping. It put everyone on Kuching’s riverfront on the same time. It was visible not only to the adjacent inhabitants of the bazaar, but also river and wharf users, across the road. It was even visible from the rajah’s residence across the river. The other works were more prosaic. One of the wings was for the Resident of Kuching’s office, whose original office in the first wing was less than half the floor area. The design of these two new wings was visibly similar in design and

construction to the first wing, although they were narrower. This narrow format was the basis for the design of the next two wings, as were the attached roofs (but unattached rooms.)²⁹ The spaces vacated in the first wing were modified to provide spaces for the remaining functions there to expand into. These works represent a willingness to invest in public works that was not always seen during the reign of the first rajah. This growing confidence in Sarawak's permanent survival and success accompanied a time when Sarawak's accounts were beginning to return a profit.



Figure 4. View of the front of the third courthouse in the 1970's. The first wing (1874) can be seen behind the clock-tower and the side wings, which were built in 1883. The Rajah's Memorial in the foreground was built in 1924. (Photograph by Ho Ah Chon, reproduced with permission from Pustaka Negeri Sarawak)

Around that time, Kuching had grown to about 12,000 inhabitants.³⁰ Council rates for private buildings owned by non-Malays in Kuching had been updated the year before, as had the boundaries of the expanding township.³¹ While he did not seek to re-order the indigenous and vernacular morphology of Kuching, Charles Brooke continued to modernise many aspects of the settlement, implementing major infrastructural works and other new institutional buildings. The Gartak River, on the western edge of the Indian bazaar, was filled in and reclaimed, and a covered drainage system put in to deal with the stormwater (completed 1899.)³² This additional land allowed for a new road and new shophouses to be built on the site where Kampung Jawa was located, as well as a second row on Khoo Hun Yeang Street. A new public park, the Esplanade, (now cleared and called Padang Merdeka,) was also built on swampy land associated with the Gartak River, behind the courthouse in 1889.³³ Also built during this time were the Kuching Town Reservoir (1895,) and the Malay Courthouse (1886.) Perhaps the one project of this time that best displays the second rajah's growing sense of permanence was the Sarawak

Museum (1891), which demonstrated the government's commitment by aiming to be 'the most expensive permanent edifice in Borneo...'.³⁴



Figure 5. View of the rear of courthouse after the second renovation. The photograph was taken between 1900 and 1905, when the photographer left Sarawak.³⁵ (Photograph from Robert Shelford, *A Naturalist in Borneo*. (London: T. F. Unwin, 1916))

The courthouse was extended a second time in 1900, with two large wings being built to accommodate the expanded requirements of the Public Works Department, the Shipping Office and Post Office.³⁶ The Shipping and Post Offices moved from their smaller offices in the first wing into one of the new wings, whereas the Public Works occupied the other. The new wings were located off the south side of the original wing, at its east and west corners, forming three sides of the eventual courtyard. The design and construction remained essentially the same as earlier wings, although the use of a steam-powered pile driver was new to Sarawak.³⁷ Using powered pile drivers soon became standard, and is still the case in the state. Similarly, the third extension of the courthouse (1907) employed new construction technologies. During the conservation process in 2009, the conservation architects, Arkitek JFN, discovered that these three blocks, although they appeared externally similar to the earlier blocks, were constructed with a reinforced concrete frame and brick infill, before being rendered and whitewashed. This construction method also became standard in Sarawak, and is still in use today. The third extension included a new courtroom and offices.³⁸ It was made up of three blocks, running east to west, and a closed courtyard. While the roofs of the four sides of the courtyard were attached, walkways were maintained between the wings, making the courtyard accessible to the public at all times.

It is during this period, in the early twentieth century, the number of Kuching's inhabitants rose significantly – by 1920, it had reached about 20,000.³⁹ Infrastructural improvements in Kuching continued to improve, with the Kuching Municipal Board being established in 1906, likely housed in the courthouse complex. A new Dry Dock was also constructed in 1911. New institutional buildings continued to be built – the Islamic School in 1902, the Chinese Court in 1912, and a new building for the Government Printing Office (1914, see Figure 6 below.) The interesting thing architecturally about these (and future) buildings is that they demonstrate the government's search for a style. While the courthouse continued to follow the same design as had been established in 1874, other institutional buildings were designed in a different architectural styles – while buildings without eaves were considered unsuitable when the first wing of the courthouse was built, newer buildings were constructed with some parapets, and some buildings, like the Chinese Court and the Government Printing Office, had no eaves whatsoever. By this time, the cost and effort to maintain parapet walls in the tropics was considered to be a bearable trade-off for newer architecture. The reign of Charles Brooke came to a close when he died in 1917. He was succeeded by his son Vyner, who became the third rajah. Similarly to his father Vyner had been an officer in the Sarawak government, and had been stationed in many outstations across the state. Where he differed from his father was his management style – he had a much more modern approach, choosing to delegate tasks rather than to micro-manage them as the second rajah was notorious for.



Figure 6. The Government Printing Office (1914) in the 1950's.
(Photograph by Ho Ah Chon, reproduced with permission from
Pustaka Negeri Sarawak)

Permanence, Modernisation, Tradition and the Governance of Vyner Brooke

In 1924, the government of the third rajah constructed the 'Rajah's Memorial,' (see Figure 4), commemorating the rule of Charles Brooke, located in front of the courthouse. Although the monument's construction was implemented by the Public Works Department, this was the first publicly recorded time where an overseas architect (Swan and McLaren, Singapore,) was used to design a structure Sarawak.⁴⁰ The fashionably current art deco architecture of the monument contrasted with the tropical colonial architecture of the courthouse, perhaps indicating the differences in the approaches of the second and third rajahs. Unlike his father, he third rajah also encouraged high-tech solutions, such as the suspension bridge at Satok, opened in 1926 (Figure 7).⁴¹ While his father had been suspicious of this approach, preferring a more conservative solution with large masonry pylons set in the river carrying the bridge, Vyner embraced it to spectacular modern effect.



Figure 7. The Satok Suspension Bridge (1926) in the 1970's.
(Photograph by Ho Ah Chon, reproduced with permission from
Pustaka Negeri Sarawak)

The third rajah was also modern in terms of management. Previously, all structures and buildings were both designed and implemented by Sarawak's Public Works Department, but the use of overseas architects signaled the beginning of a new level of delegation by the third rajah and engagement with the British colonial world, and the transition away from the Public Works Department being solely responsible for the design of government buildings. While Swan and McLaren were to go on and design many more government buildings in Sarawak, the fourth extension of the courthouse, built to house the Treasury Department, was designed and implemented under the auspices of the Public Works Department. While the third rajah was interested in modernity, he also maintained the

unique character of Sarawak's government set up by the first rajah. The courthouse's fourth extension (in 1927, for Sarawak's treasury) demonstrates this approach in built form. It was located across a side street and not attached to the main courthouse complex, but it followed the tradition of courthouse extensions being built to the same design as the original 1874 wing. While its design and proportions were essentially 50 years old, its construction was thoroughly modern, with reinforced concrete piles and structural frame being used. The construction technology of the floor was the most modern, as it was a prefabricated system of T-section reinforced concrete planks, which allowed for faster construction and less construction elements.



Figure 8. View of the new Government Offices, across the road from the courthouse complex. (Image from National Library of Australia)⁴²

When additional space was later needed for the state's public offices in Kuching, it was not built on the land available behind the treasury wing, but further down the street, and across the main road from the courthouse complex. The reasons for this are not clear, but the architecture of the new Government Offices, completed in 1931 to a design prepared by Swan and McLaren, was conventionally modern in a colonial sense, and contrasted with the courthouse complex. Its neoclassical design was achieved with modern construction and materials, including steel-framed glass windows (Figure 8). By this stage, Kuching's urban morphology had also become much more conventionally ordered, with new subdivisions needed to be laid out by a surveyor, and required the approval of the Department of Lands and Surveys. While the older parts of the settlement, including the shop-houses and Malay *kampungs* along the river, displayed vernacular and indigenous settlement patterns respectively, and came about due to the personal presence of the rajah, Kuching's new suburbs (both Chinese and Malay) were

laid out according to western surveying practices, and ordered by gridded road patterns. Towards the end of Brooke rule in Sarawak, many of its urban spatial practices were approaching that of more conventional British colonies in Southeast Asia. However, by then, the principles that contrasted with conventional colonialism, (established by the first rajah, James Brooke, had been well established), and were to go on to affect the development of settlement patterns and urban morphology in Sarawak to the current day.



Figure 9. Part of a map of pre-WW2 Kuching from 1945. The courthouse is in the centre of the map, with the Astana directly to its north. While it has named the *kampungs* north of the river, it has left out the actual *kampung* houses. (Image from National Library of Australia)⁴³

Endnotes

¹ John Ting, 'The Egalitarian Architecture of the Iban Longhouse' in Andrew Leach and Gil Matthewson (eds.), *Celebration: Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Conference of Sahanz*, (Napier, New Zealand: SAHANZ, 2005), 359-366.

² S. Baring-Gould and C. A. Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak under Its Two White Rajahs, 1839-1908* (London: H. Sotheran, 1909), 64.

³ J. H. Walker, *Power and Prowess: The Origins of Brooke Kingship in Sarawak* (Sydney and Honolulu: Allen and Unwin and University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 40-43.

⁴ John Ting, 'Kuching 1841 - 1941: A Local Response to a Global Project' in David Beynon and Ursula De Jong (eds.), *History in Practice: Proceedings of the 25th International Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand*, (Geelong: SAHANZ, 2008), 10.

⁵ John Walker, 'Culture, Power and the Meaning of Built Forms in Sarawak, 1841-1868' *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 44, 2 (2010) 94-5.

- ⁶ Walker, 'Culture, Power and the Meaning of Built Forms', 93.
- ⁷ For example, in John Ting, 'Kuching 1841 – 1941', 12, where I incorrectly state that the first building built by Brooke was the fort at Skrang in 1849.
- ⁸ Baring-Gould and Bamfylde, *A History of Sarawak*, 88-89.
- ⁹ Craig A Lockard, *The Southeast Asian Town in Historical Perspective: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970* (Madison, Wisconsin: unpublished PhD thesis, 1973), 41. Henry Keppel, *The Expedition to Borneo of H.M.S. Dido for the Suppression of Piracy: With Extracts from the Journal of James Brooke, Esq., of Sarawak, (Now Agent for the British Government in Borneo)* two vols, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1846), I, 30. Rodney Mundy, *Narrative of Events in Borneo and Celebes, Down to the Occupation of Labuan: From the Journals of James Brooke, Esq. Rajah of Sarawak, and Governor of Labuan. Together with a Narrative of the Operations of H.M.S. Iris.* two vols. (London: John Murray, 1848), II, 109
- ¹⁰ Mundy, *Narrative of Events in Borneo and Celebes*, 109, and Lockard, *Southeast Asian Town*, 42 (Table 1) and 47. Lockard is suspicious of the reported numbers, and estimates that in the 1850's, Kuching probably had a bit over 6,000 inhabitants.
- ¹¹ John Ting, 'Fort Alice - Syncretic Architecture in Sarawak under the Brooke Regime' in T. McMinn, J. Stephens and S. Basson, (eds), *Contested Terrains: Proceedings of the 23rd Annual Conference of Sahanz*, (Perth: SAHANZ, 2006), 545.
- ¹² W. J. Chater, *Sarawak Long Ago* (Kuching: Borneo Literature Board, 1969), 69.
- ¹³ J. H. Walker, *Power and Prowess*, 123.
- ¹⁴ Baring-Gould and Bamfylde, *A History of Sarawak*, 196
- ¹⁵ Lockard, *Southeast Asian Town*, 114-5.
- ¹⁶ Walker, 'Culture, Power and the Meaning of Built Forms', 101, and John Ting, 'Colonialism and the Brooke Administration: Institutional Buildings and Infrastructure in 19th Century Sarawak' in *Proceedings of the 17th Biennial Conference of the ASAA: 'Is This the Asian Century?'*, A.M. Vicziany and Robert Cribb (eds.), (Melbourne: Asian studies Association of Australia, 2008), 10.
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