

## ROADMAP FOR KUCHING TO BECOME A HERITAGE CITY

An encouraging shift in public policy appears to be underway, placing heritage concerns more firmly at the forefront.

Date	Timeline of Events
Apr 2010	SHS presented "Roadmap for Kuching to become a Heritage City" during PATA conference
Aug 2010	Courtesy Visit to Ministry of Tourism and Heritage
Oct 2010	Ministry of Tourism and Heritage Visit to Penang and Melaka
Nov 2010	Badan Warisan briefing to Ministry of Tourism and Heritage
Dec 2010	Ministry of Tourism and Heritage meeting to determine terms of reference of State Heritage Committee

### PATA Conference

On 23rd April 2010, Philip Chang, gave a presentation by invitation to the PATA (Asia Pacific) Seminar held at the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching entitled *Roadmap for Kuching to become a Heritage City*. The paper was prepared by Mike Boon who was away on travelling at that time.

In that presentation he mapped a way forward for pursuing Heritage city status for Kuching, building on the Heritage Trail project already in place. He detailed the existing various agencies and ordinances for dealing with heritage concerns and called for a master chart to map out these agencies with a view to reclassifying and categorizing the duties and responsibilities of each.



Mapping of the heritage buildings/sites (represented by yellow dots) in Kuching radiating from the centre of Historical Precinct of Old Kuching (circled area). [compiled by SHS]

### Ministry of Tourism and Heritage Sarawak (MinTH) Courtesy Visit

Joseph Ingai arranged a courtesy visit to the Ministry of Tourism and Heritage on 25th August 2010 to meet the newly appointed Assistant Minister, YB Mong Dagang, and to explain the society's aims and future activities.

After Joseph Ingai had given a brief introduction explaining what the Sarawak Heritage Society sought to achieve, Mike Boon gave a presentation in which he had the chance to highlight a number of key heritage on-going projects and past successes.

The Minister, YB Mong Dagang, agreed that his Ministry would assist in nudging SEDC into drawing up a conservation management plan and appoint a conservation committee for the Square Tower, which had recently being conserved. He thanked Joseph Ingai and Mike Boon for opening his eyes to the need for and intricacies of heritage and conservation.



SHS President handing over SHS Newsletter to YB Mong Dagang.

It was also mentioned by the Permanent Secretary and the Head of Heritage Unit, that the government will try to revive the State Heritage Committee, in which SHS is an elected committee member.

### Ministry of Tourism and Heritage Visit to Penang and Melaka

Following up on this new drive, SHS was invited by MinTH to send three representatives on a fact-finding visit to Melaka and Georgetown, jointly listed in July 2008 as World Heritage Sites under UNESCO.

The visit, in October 2010, included representatives from a number of agencies: SHS, MinTH, the Ministry of Town Planning and Urban Development, the Sarawak Tourism Federation and the Sarawak Museum.

The group was briefed in each city on the process of listing and the framework set up to manage heritage interests. There were also visits to each heritage core and a number of key sites of interest.

### Badan Warisan Malaysia Briefing

After an informal meeting over dinner in Georgetown during the heritage visit in October 2010, Elizabeth Cardoso, CEO of Badan Warisan Malaysia held a briefing here in Kuching for the Ministry of Tourism and Heritage Sarawak.

The briefing was well-attended by representatives from a number of interested agencies. The goal was to seek suggestions on how to strengthen the Heritage Unit under the Ministry and how to ensure effective collaboration between agencies, given the existing ordinances.

### Ministry of Tourism and Heritage Meeting

The year's forward momentum culminated in a final briefing meeting headed by MinTH in 14th December 2010. The aim of the meeting was to provide feedback on how to strengthen the Heritage Department.

The deputy Attorney General outlined the ordinances already in place to tend to Heritage concerns and all the various agencies were invited to provide feedback on how to move forward from the current position.

So, the year has seen encouraging progress in the roadmap for Kuching as a Heritage city. With the restructuring at the Ministry fore-fronting Heritage ideals, there is reason to be positive for the future.