

Society out to raise awareness of heritage conservation through talks

KUCHING: The Sarawak Heritage Society (SHS) would carry on having a cross-spectrum of discussion over topics as a way to raise public awareness of heritage conservation.

Its executive committee member William Khoo says while SHS remains a non-profit organisation, it remains committed to conducting its talk series as means to engage the community in the conservation of heritage buildings.

"This is the sixth talk that we have carried out so far this year, and we have three amazing and talented speakers today," he said in his opening remarks for the 'Heritage Speakers Series: A New Lease on Life – Repurposing The Old' at the Borneo Cultures Museum auditorium here yesterday.

The speakers were Datin Rosemarie Wong, also owner and key designer of the Raneé Boutique Suites and SHS president; Shin Tseng, an architectural designer and creative entrepreneur as well as co-founder and managing partner of REXKL; and Shin Chang, who is co-founder and architect of Mentahmatter design and REXKL.

Adding on, Khoo said some buildings might not be categorised as having heritage status, but being 'old enough to deserve preservation'.

"Apart from raising awareness, SHS also plays an advisory role in the preservation of old and heritage buildings. We hold talks and site visits, and in terms of advocacy, the society highlights issues of heritage conservation or

matters of heritage significance.

"We also encourage community participation, which would then generate points of discussions," he said.

Talking about SHS' advisory role, Khoo said it served as a trusted advisor to owners of heritage assets.

"We selectively commission research into areas of heritage preservation and also help build a collection of heritage resources. We also engage local students from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) to carry out some forms of documentation.

"We are more than happy to collaborate with Unimas and have its students joining us to visit some heritage sites and come up with drawings," he said, adding SHS had done documentations on the long-gone Ting & Ting Supermarket, the St James Anglican Church, the Punjabi Barracks and the Marian Boutique Lodging House.

"The architecture students from Unimas visited (the sites) and photographed (them) for documentation. We would like to continue to do so."

Khoo said SHS had also carried out heritage site visits in June this year, focusing on Yu Lin Art Gallery.

He also extended appreciation to the Sarawak Museums Department for being supportive of SHS by providing the Borneo Cultures Museum auditorium as the venue for the talk.

For more information about the SHS, call or send WhatsApp texts to 018-988 2343, or drop an email to sarawakheritagesociety@gmail.com.