

AicQoL2014Kota Kinabalu
AMER International Conference on Quality of Life
The Pacific Sutera Hotel, Sutera Harbour, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia
4-5 January 2014
“Quality of Life in the Built & Natural Environment”

Responsive Design Approach in Modern Malaysian Administrative Building

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Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to elucidate on the study of state administrative building in Malaysia by describing the design built form and its adaptation towards the surrounding. Using multiple case study approach, Perdana Putra and Parliament Malaysia were chosen as prominent case studies with emphasis on form and space studies. Since this paper formulates new ways to describe on state administrative building design, it uses interpretive paradigm and semiotics as the methodological approach to study the relationship between building design and sustainable aspects. This paper is of value for practicing architects and society as it offers new insights by formulating design approaches in designing public architecture in Malaysia.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the Association of Malaysian Environment-Behavior Researchers, AMER (ABRA malaysia).

Keywords: Administration architecture; form and space study; Parliament Complex; Perdana Putra

1. Introduction

Like any other forms of architecture, administrative building carries a wide selection of vocabulary especially from the aspect of design characteristics. This paper investigates the built form composition of the federal administrative architecture in Malaysia. Present administrative architecture often portrays eclectic style that incorporates Greek, Roman, Persian and Moorish architecture instead of referring to the

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local identity and values. This is vital because state administrative buildings are often treated as the symbol of political power and built as an icon to promote the city (Riza et al., 2012). Today's society needs to understand the role of administrative architecture and how the building should represent the identity of the country. This study is of importance for practicing architects and designers to understand that the present examples of administrative architecture may not necessarily be the best example of administrative architecture to symbolize Malaysia as a multiracial society and a democratic country. This paper focuses on documenting sustainable design characteristics on administrative architecture to produce suitable guidelines in designing better administrative building with consideration to sustainable characteristics in the future.

2. Definition of sustainable administrative architecture

When explaining on administrative architecture in this study, it is important to conceptualize it as the highest institution in the country. A government administrative architecture accommodates the work of lawmakers to perform all related administrative activities. The building is usually located at the capital of the country and regarded as the capitol building (Vale, 2008). Administrative buildings were built not only to symbolize the power and authority of the government but also to portray the identity of the society at country, states, region, district and communal level to the outside world apart from serving as a place to run the seat of the government. At country level, the most important type of administrative building is the Prime Minister's Office and the Parliament Complex (Vale, 2008). Since the focus of this paper is to highlight on the issue of sustainable design it is worthwhile to define the meaning of sustainable architectural characteristics next.

Administrative buildings are categorized under Non-Residential Existing Building (NREB) by the Green Building Index (GBI) rating system. Within this category, there are five fundamental principles to be observed. First, optimize site potential in which the location, orientation (Husin et al., 2012), and landscaping together with proper site selection, consideration of reuse or rehabilitation of existing buildings is considered. Second, optimize energy use by finding ways to reduce energy load, increase efficiency, and maximize the use of renewable energy sources within the building. Third, optimize building space and material use. In this sense, the building should use materials that can minimize life-cycle environmental impacts such as global warming, resource depletion, and human toxicity (Mahdavinnejad et al., 2012). Fourth, enhance indoor environmental quality of a building by using appropriate ventilation, suitable lighting and temperature control system. Fifth, optimize operational and maintenance practices during the preliminary design phase till building completion stage (Zainordin et al., 2012). However, for the benefit of this paper, the focus of discussion will only be involving setting, spatial organization and form design (façade and detailing, structural organization as well as usage of materials) to produce better administrative building design in the future.

3. Method of study

The administrative building acts as medium of communication and production of meaning. Semiotics, being the most suitable method for this reason will use architectural elements; form and space that acts as the basis of this study. By doing so, this research will undergo direct observation as its data collection method and research strategy.

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