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A Conceptual Framework for Conserving Heritage Buildings in Malaysia from the Perspective of Facilities Management

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ABSTRACT

Heritage buildings are part of human creation, which produces icons for a country, provides local identity, reflects the cultural values and background, represents a source of memory, historical events, and contributes to the tourism industry. The process of conserving a heritage begins even before a building is considered as heritage. It is derived from the individuals, institutions, or communities that decide some historic buildings are worth conserving, as they represent something worth remembering and their past that should be passed to future generations. However, abandoned and ruined heritage buildings are still evident generally, including in Malaysia. These indicate the visible symbols of failing cultural heritage management (CHM) processes of conservation in retaining the heritage of a human-made architectural legacy. Conflicts occur as value clashes and goal incompatibility among the heritage stakeholders engaging in CHM emerge. The heritage stakeholders refer to individuals or groups who have vested interests in heritage buildings. These consist of heritage building owners, local communities, historians, conservation specialists, heritage buildings surveyors, government, and non-governmental organisations. This paper aims to explore and review the current CHM process in developing a conceptual framework for conserving heritage buildings in Malaysia from the perspective of facilities management (FM). FM is chosen because of its familiarity with the building care process. The framework will integrate FM perspective with the integration of people, place process and technology in conserving a heritage building. Eight characteristics of heritage buildings, which are social, economic, political, historic, aesthetical, scientific, age, and ecological are identified. The linkages of CHM and FM will be seen as one activity, rather than process that occur at opposite ends of a spectrum. This conceptual framework may help to prevent the deterioration that leads to a magnitude of loss of heritage buildings in Malaysia.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage Management, Facilities Management, Heritage Buildings

JEL Classifications: M000

1. INTRODUCTION

Heritage buildings are part of human creation, which produces icons for a country, local identity, reflects the cultural values and background, represents a source of memory, historical events, and also contributes to the tourism business industry (Feather, 2006; UNESCO, 1972; 2003; ARCADE, 2008; Communities and Local Government, 2009; Loulanski and Loulanski, 2011; Timothy, 2007; Timothy and Boyd, 2006; Smith, 2006; Robinson, 2000; Woon and Mui, 2010). Avrami et al. (2000) note that the process of conserving a heritage building begins even before a building is considered as heritage. It is derived from individuals, institutions, or communities deciding that some historic building is worth

preserving and conserving as it represents something worth remembering about themselves and their past that should be passed to future generations.

Article 1.4 of the Burra Charter of ICOMOS (1999) stated that conservation “includes all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance (CS) which encompasses the activities that are aimed at the safeguarding of a cultural resource so as it retain its historic value and extend its physical life.” Thus, the emphasis of conservation is about the inheritance of the cultural heritage significance of the heritage buildings or, in the context of this paper, it is called the cultural values of heritage buildings (CVHB). Therefore, CS is a collective term for

cultural values. Under principle 4.2 of English Heritage (2008), conservation is defined as “the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations.” Hence, the aim of conservation is to conserve a “place” for any part of England’s historic environment that represents a sense of identity and as a resource for the benefit of present and future generations.

In Malaysia, conservation of heritage buildings is initiated by the government and the private sector (Harun, 2011). The establishment of the National Heritage Act 2005 (Act 645) and the National Heritage Department of Malaysia in 2006 has shown the government’s efforts to enhance the conservation of heritage buildings. The National Heritage Department will ensure requirements in the National Heritage Act 2005 will be complied with the respective authorities. However, abandoned and ruined of heritage buildings still occur generally including in Malaysia. These indicate the visible symbols of failing cultural heritage management (CHM) processes of conservation in retaining the heritage of a human-made architectural legacy. Without a systematic CHM process, the future generations will be unable to see and appreciate the CVHB of these buildings.

Conflicts occur as value clashes and goal incompatibility among the heritage stakeholders engaging in CHM (Finlayson, 2011). CHM conflicts such as engagements of interest among the heritage stakeholders (for instance government and non-governmental organisations [NGOs]); the domination of power (power to decide); political systems; ethnic and community disputes; and selective commodification leads to loss of cultural heritage (Perring and Linde, 2009; Rowlands and Butler, 2007; Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996; Rowlands, 1994; Meskill, 2002).

The heritage stakeholders refer to individuals or groups who have vested interests in heritage buildings. These consist of heritage buildings owners, local communities, historians, conservation specialists, heritage buildings surveyors, government, and NGOs. The purpose of this study aimed to explore and review the current CHM process and develop a conceptual framework for conserving heritage buildings in Malaysia from the perspective of facilities management (FM).

2. CHM PROCESS

CHM is “systematic of heritage conservation that coordinated and structured operation of a heritage site with the primary purpose of protecting the significance of the place as defined by designation criteria, government authorities or other owners, experts of various stripes and other citizens with legitimate interests in the place” (Mason et al., 2003).

According to Altenburg (2010), “the concept of CHM has implications for site managers and heritage professionals. Successful implementation requires management plans, which actively involve site managers, a multidisciplinary team with a range of skills, practical, and lateral thinking, flexibility, and the on-going commitment and involvement of the local community.

The management plans should be living documents which inform management.”

Figure 1 indicates the overall process of CHM based on the Burra Charter (1999). The process begins with:

1. Understanding the CS
 - a. Identify place and associations
 - Secure the place and make it safe.
 - b. Gather and record information in understanding the place
 - Documentary, oral, and physical information are used.
 - c. Assess the significance of the place
 - d. Prepare a statement of significance of the place.
2. Developing a policy
 - a. Identify obligations arising from significance of the place
 - b. Gather information about other factors affecting the future of the place
 - Owner/manager’s information and resources are needed
 - The external factors and physical condition that affecting the place.
 - c. Develop a policy
 - Identify any options in developing a policy
 - Consider options and test the impact on significance of the place.
 - d. Prepare a statement of a policy.
3. Managing the place in accordance with the policy
 - Developing strategies
 - Implementing the strategies through a management plan
 - Record the significance of the place prior to any changes
4. Monitor, review, and changing in accordance with the policy.

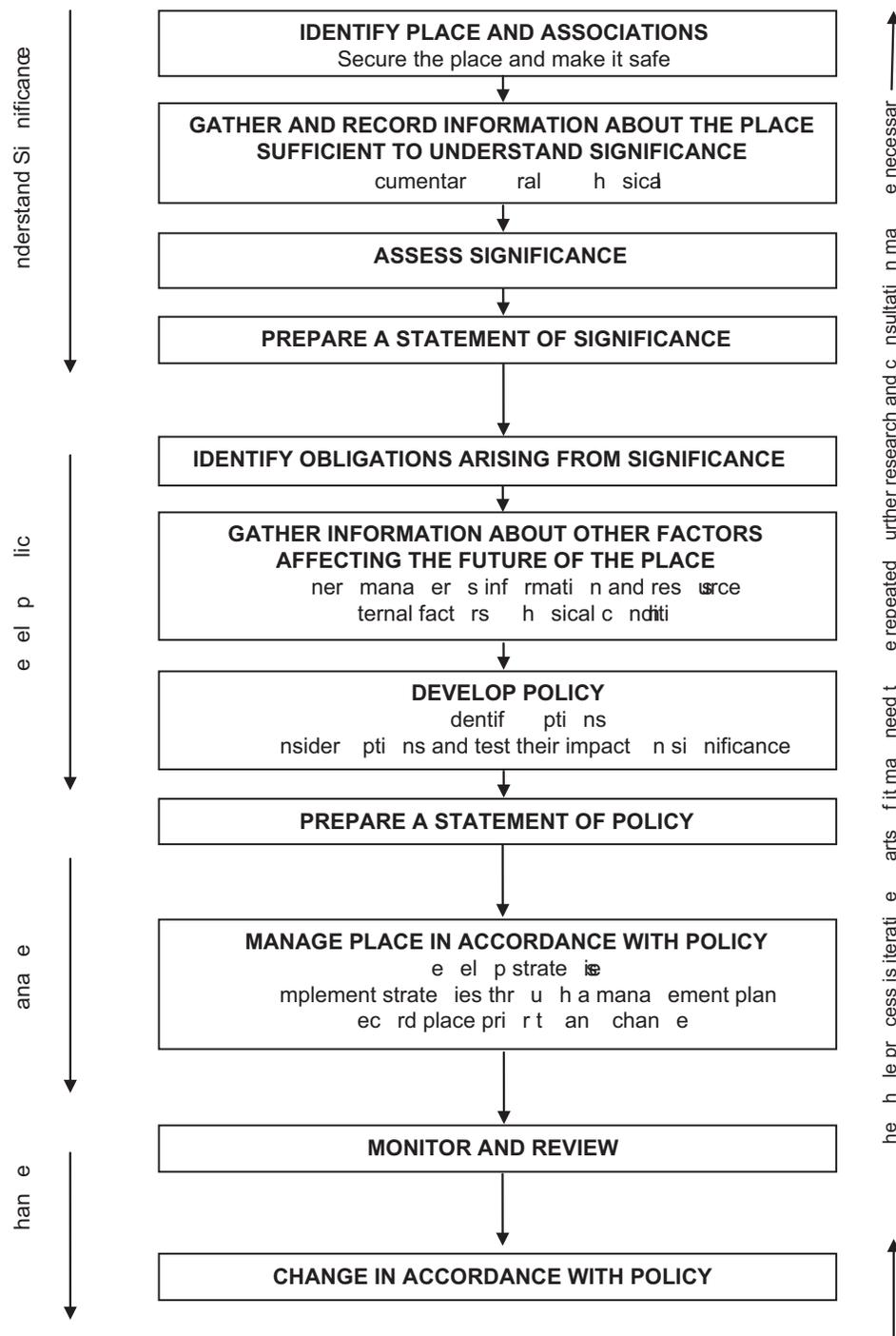
In the preliminary phase of “understanding the CS,” identifying the CS of the “place” of heritage is vital. “Place” refers to the heritage site, land, landscape, building, or other work, groups of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and views (The Burra Charter, 1999). CS according to the Burra Charter (1988) means preserving the CVHB, which are social, economic, political, historic, aesthetical, scientific, age, and ecological for past, present, or future generations. Therefore, CS is a collective terminology of CVHB.

Hence, in CHM the importance of CVHB attributes and participation of heritage stakeholders in decision-making process were engaged. However, as mentioned earlier, application of CHM process in conserving heritage buildings have a shortfall. Due to this, there is a need to address this issue and a new paradigm of conservation will be proposed. Hence, a FM perspective will be proposed because of its familiarity with building care practice.

3. FM AND CHM

According to IFMA (2008) FM is “a profession that encompasses multiple disciplines to ensure functionality of the built environment by integrating people, place and process, and technology.” On the other hand, the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) EN 15221-1 (2006) has defined FM as “(the) integration

Figure 1: The Process of Cultural Heritage Management according to the Burra Charter



Source: Adopted from the Burra Charter (1999)

of process within an organisation to maintain and develop the agreed services which support and improve the effectiveness of its primary activities.” Such a definition, whilst describing the scope of FM, does not attempt to render an explanation regarding the competencies necessitated to undertake this task. Furthermore, it is unclear what the primary activities are. As noted by Barret and Baldry (2003), facilities and their supporting services may themselves be the primary activity (such as hospitals) or may secondarily become part of the primary activity (for instance hospital cleaning as part of patient care).

The CEN depicts and defines three levels of FM activity, which exist: Strategic, tactical, and operational in the built environment sector. The European standard EN 15221-1:2000 describes a systems (process) perspective of FM operating at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels. According to Svensson (1998), the scope of FM includes all three levels of the decision-making pyramid in FM organisation:

- The strategic level is concerned with the long-range aims and direction of the FM function. This includes setting objectives in response to the purpose of the FM function and carrying

out long-term planning, taking the external requirements into consideration. The strategic level has responsibility for the result whether measured in terms of profitability and performance. The work is carried out, for instance, by planning, modelling, and simulation

- The tactical (managerial) level, is concerned with establishing the totality and function within the FM organisation. This includes identifying needs and defining goals that meet these needs. The tactical work includes, for instance, controlling, analysing, programming, and budgeting, often on a yearly basis. The work includes defining routines and methods, setting standards, drawing up schedules and securing resources
- The operational level is concerned with the day-to-day decisions in operating the facilities and the implementation of process and procedures.

Finch (2012) notes that the operational level appears to underpin the FM activity, whereby evidence indicates that FM managers are not operational managers but are indeed project managers. They are involved in transformations, refurbishment projects, remodelling or relocations that have a discrete “start” and a discrete “end.” Therefore, the essence of FM primarily focuses on the organisational goals to achieve its strategic objectives.

On the other hand, although CHM is nothing new for FM managers, this field can be considered to be at earlier stage of development than other studies, such as architectural conservation. Hence, the practice of CHM has emerged during the 1990s (Roders and Oers, 2011). CHM practices have been progressing towards a more holistic approach, where the CS is taken into account, whenever changes need to be applied to these or other surrounding facilities (Roders, 2007).

The 1972 the World Heritage Convention has adopted the CHM in conservation (UNESCO, 1972). However, controversial debates emerged in the CHM of the World Heritage City in Vienna, Austria, St. Petersburg in Russia, Liverpool and London, UK, Macao in China as well as the Historic city of Penang in Malaysia (Roders and Oers, 2011; Rasli et al., 2014). FM’s scholars such Roders and Hudson (2011); Oers (2006) have discussed the CHM practice, which is related to the FM. However, as discussed earlier, CHM has a deficit. The conflict issue exists among the heritage stakeholders in engaging CHM in conserving a heritage building at the preliminary process of conservation. Due to this, a FM perspective is undertaken to address the issue of contradicting conflict.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONSERVING HERITAGE BUILDINGS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FM

The framework will integrate FM perspective with the integration of people, place, process and technology in conserving a heritage building. Eight characteristics of CVHB, which are social, economic, political, historic, aesthetical, scientific, age, and ecological are identified. The linkages of CHM and FM will be

seen as one activity, rather than process that occur at opposite ends of a spectrum (Arshad et al., 2013).

This conceptual framework may help to prevent the deterioration that leads to a magnitude of loss of heritage buildings in Malaysia. Two main variables, which will occur in this study, first will be the CVHB, and second will be the FM perspectives. Figure 2 shows the conceptual framework for conserving heritage buildings in Malaysia from the perspective of FM.

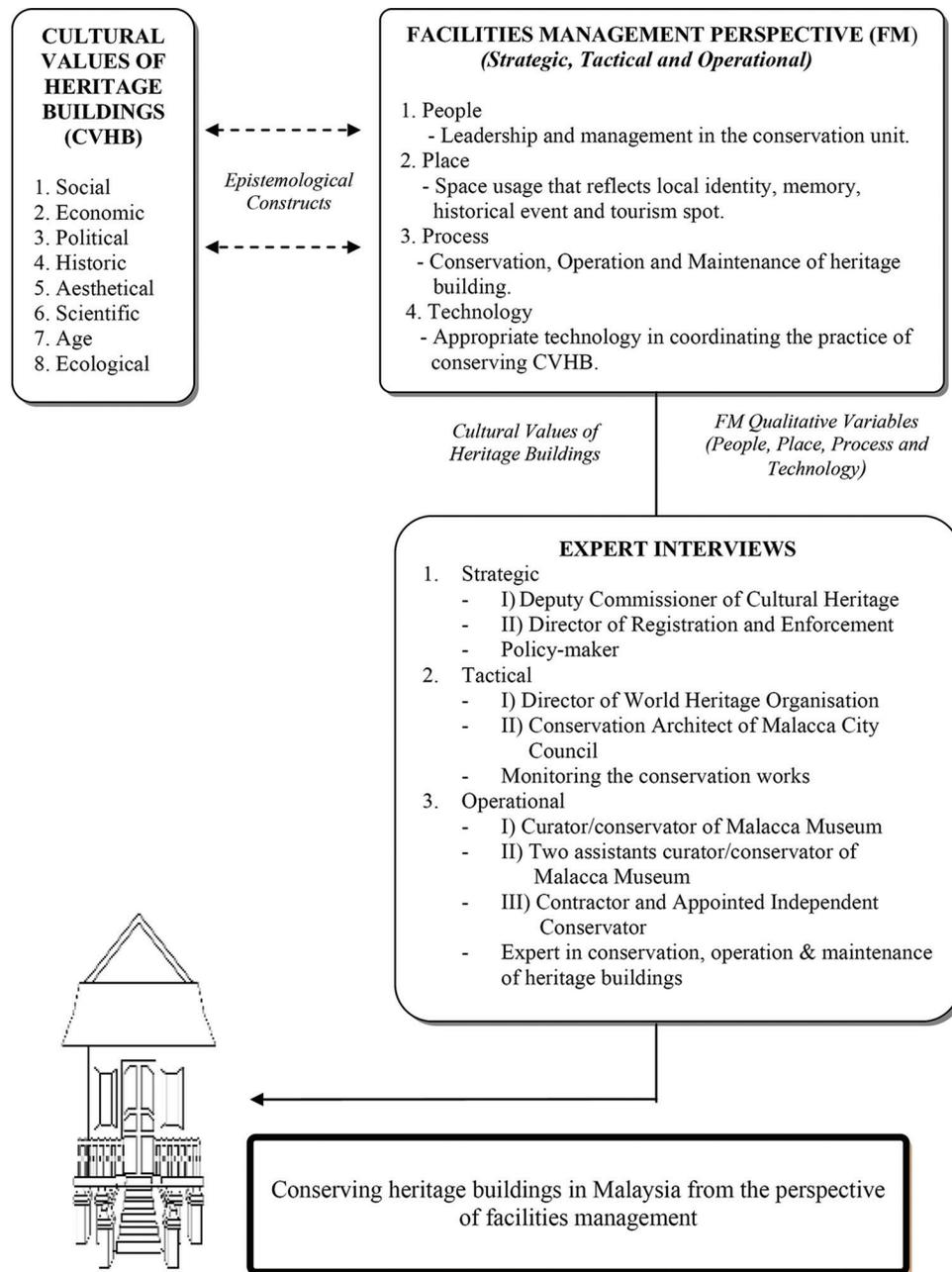
Heritage buildings are evaluated and conserved according to the CVHB principles provided by ICOMOS (1999); English Heritage (2008); UNESCO (2008). Initially, four CVHB; social, historic, aesthetical, and scientific were established by UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee (2008) and classified as primary values. These were followed by economic, political, ecological (Riganti and Nijkamp, 2005) and age (Piper, 1948; Lowenthal, 1985; Reigl, 1982) which were introduced to complement the pillars of conservation development that were adopted by UNESCO. The IFMA’s terminology of FM will be the fundamental principle will be used in the integration of CVHB and FM perspectives (people, place, process, and technology). In this study, the FM perspective of “people” is focusing on the leadership and management of the conservation unit. It is based on seven guiding principles of FM provided by IFMA (2006). These include complementary elements (skills, knowledge, attitude); shared vision; integration of management activity (human leadership, technical, and financial resources); team building; trust and respect, accountability; and ethical philosophy.

Therefore, in this particular study, the “place” of a heritage building is one of the aspects that never been explored from an FM perspective. The functionality of a heritage building might be different from a typical FM business context. The term “place” goes beyond physical form, it involves the characteristics that can contribute to a “sense of a place.” It embraces the distinctive local identity, memory, historical events and as tourism spots (English Heritage, 2008; 2012; Jokilehto, 2006; ICOMOS, 1998).

Generally, FM “process” is referring as an integration approach (primary and support) in the organisation business services. The FM process is developed as part of the drive to standardise the FM terminology and used to convey the sense of an integrated approach to provide all the support services of an organisation. However, in this study, the concept “process” is not referring to the traditional FM “process,” therefore is more refer to as non-core function which is focuses on the “operation and maintenance” in conserving a heritage building. Operation and maintenance are considered to be FM core competencies and vital phases in the FM life cycle (IFMA, 2006; Cotts et al., 2010). Moreover, operation and maintenance in FM will help to conserve a physical building’s condition and functionality (Lewis et al., 2010; Douglas, 1996; Amaratunga, 2001; Pitt and Tucker, 2008).

In addition, “appropriate technology” is identified as the mechanism and medium that coordinates the practice of conservation activity such as techniques, skills, and materials in conserving a heritage building. The term “appropriate technology”

Figure 2: The conceptual framework for conserving heritage buildings in Malaysia from the perspective of facilities management



was coined by Schumacher (1973) as “the simplest level of technology (efficient and effective) that has less negative impacts on the environment and society.” “Appropriate technology” has been in used in building care in general (Steele, 1997; Sassi, 2006). In addition, “appropriate technology” that was introduced by Schumacher (1973) concerned about the people, environment, and economics by using sources of energy and materials which are environmentally safe (Richardson, 1979; Ghosh, 1984; Darrow and Saxenian, 1993; Buitenhuis et al., 2010).

A series of expert interviews are conducted at the strategic, tactical, and operational level from the conservation practitioners in Malaysia. In total eight expert interviews were conducted. The eight respondents consist of two strategic level respondents which are the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Cultural

Heritage and the Director of Registration and Enforcement of the Cultural Heritage Department (policy-maker of conserving heritage building); two tactical respondents, the director of the World Heritage Organisation (WHO) and Conservation Architect of Malacca City Council (experts in monitoring the conservation of heritage building) and four operational respondents, one curator (conservator) and two assistant curators (conservators) from Malacca Museum Corporation and one Contractor and Appointed Independent Conservator who is responsible for the conservation, operation and maintenance of heritage buildings in Malaysia.

5. CONCLUSION

The responses from the interviews conducted with the experts have derived that CVHB characteristics which are social,

economic, political, historic, aesthetical, scientific, age, and ecological have the linkages and constructed with FM perspective of people, place process and technology in conserving a heritage building in Malaysia. This study provides useful insights on how FM perspectives could manifest with CVHB in developing a conceptual framework of conserving a heritage building before it is endorsed as heritage at the preliminary phase of conservation.

Three different levels of conservation practitioners at strategic, tactical, and operational levels have explained and elaborated in connection between CVHB and FM perspective in mapping the framework. Furthermore, positioning FM as one of the heritage stakeholder in CHM enable to reduce the conflicts arise in conserving a heritage building.

It is suggested that the conceptual framework for conserving heritage buildings from the perspective of FM is used as a guideline for conservation practitioners in Malaysia.

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