



TAYLOR'S UNIVERSITY

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**SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, BUILDING AND
DESIGN BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONS) IN
ARCHITECTURE**

ASIAN ARCHITECTURE
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PROJECT 1:

PREPARED BY:

AHMAD ASHRAF	0317744
JACK LEE HOR KIT	0325810
KIMBERLY ANN AUSSIE	0325881
MICHELLE SIAW WI WEE	0325883
NURUL ATIKA GAZALI	0323246
RHIANNA MAE STOREY	0325369
TAY JING HENG	0325230

TUTOR: MR KOH JING HAO

Table of contents

- 1.0 Abstract
- 2.0 Introduction
- 3.0 History
- 4.0 Social Cultures
- 5.0 Geographical zoning
- 6.0 Traditional Trades
- 7.0 Architecture Elements (Old and New)
- 8.0 Conclusion
- 9.0 References

1.0 ABSTRACT

We would be touching on how Jalan Tun H.S. Lee architecture responds contextually - how it is influenced by the surroundings and respecting what is already there unlike Constructivism or Deconstructivism that deliberately work against established geometries and fabric.

Originally named High street and then it is called Jalan Bandar and eventually named JALAN TUN H.S. LEE after the country's first finance minister (1957 - 1959) Colonel Tun Sir Henry Lee Hau Shik. Jalan Tun H.S. Lee is home to about 200 shop houses where some are sensitively reused for cafes and guesthouses while others are gutted, sealed and left to rot. Historic landmarks include the Guan Di temple (1887), Sin Sze Si Ya Temple (1864) and Sri Maha Mariamman Temple (oldest Hindu Temple - 1873) showing cultural diversity and potential of a tourist destination Its strategic location near Chinatown makes the street part of Chinatown's Walk, becoming a major tourist spot with high traffic and accessibility

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Originally known as High Street, the street we know today as Jalan Tun H.S. Lee was named after Colonel Tun Sir Henry Lee Hau Shik and is one of the most prominent streets in Kuala Lumpur. Such as can be deduced from its change in names, Jalan Tun H.S. Lee did not always look the way it did.

Rich in history, culture, and a vast variety of architectural styles, it has gone through many changes formed from historical events and influences, such as from early trade by the Chinese, reconstruction after war, and religious influence from its inhabitants. Continuing on, we shall see how Jalan Tun H.S. Lee came to be -- how it started, how it changed, and what it is now.

3.0 HISTORY

In the early 1800s, a high number of Cantonese and Hakka workers had come into the city because of the tin trade, working as coolies in the mines. This was the reason behind the strong Chinese influence in the ornate shop houses built along the street during its early stages of development. Feng Shui or Chinese geomancy was very influential back in those days.

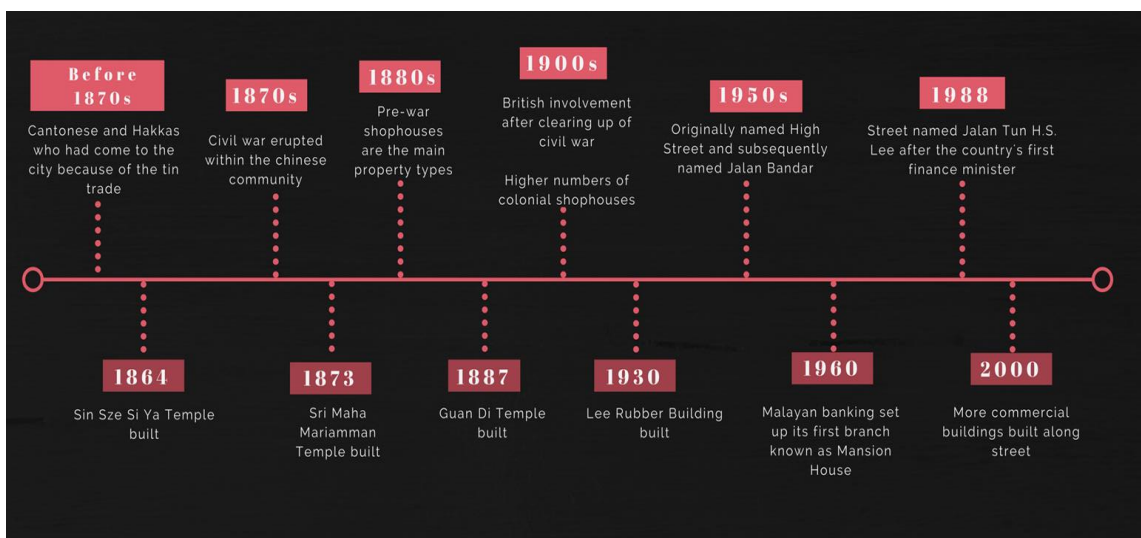
In the 1870's, a civil war erupted within the Chinese community and the British began to interfere. As a result of the war, many buildings were destroyed or severely damaged. New shop houses made of brick and tile were built in the 1880s after a fire consumed the area and occupants lived upstairs and conducted their businesses downstairs. This was the time where Buddhist and Hindu influences were prominent and temples were built along the street. The presence of the British was also seen through the architecture which shows the traditional style for the Colonial Era of Malaysia, like the Lee Rubber building which was built in the 1930s.

As one of the earliest addresses in downtown Kuala Lumpur, Jalan Tun H.S. Lee was originally known as High Street in the 1950s. High Street became Jalan Bandar, and was subsequently renamed after the country's first finance minister (1957-1959) Colonel Tun Sir Henry Lee Hau Shik in the late 1980s. Born in Hong Kong, Lee arrived in 1924 to take over his father's tin mining business and eventually became involved in Malaysian politics. He helped form the Malayan Chinese Association in 1949, after founding the Chinese newspaper, *China Press*, in 1946. His strong influence and partaking in our country's finance was the reason the street, that had grown so well economically and culturally, was named after him.

3.0 HISTORY (Cont'd)

In the 1960s, Malayan Banking set up its first branch here (now known as Maybank Tun H S Lee), in what was then known as Mansion House. From then on, other high rise buildings such as Bangunan Hong Leong, Plaza First Nationwide and Bangkok Bank Berhad were set up along the street. Between these buildings are old kopitiam, wholesale sellers and family businesses which have been going on since the olden days. Today, Jalan Tun H.S. Lee is known for its combination of strong cultural essence and urbanisation, architecturally and community wise.

3.1 HISTORICAL TIMELINE



4.0 SOCIAL CULTURES

What used to be a commercial hub back then, Jalan Tun H.S. Lee now consists of pre-war shop houses, commercial buildings from the 1970s, modern office towers and religious temples. The street lies near several historical landmarks, including KL's oldest temples such as Hindu temple Sri Mahamariamman Temple, the Sin Sze Si Ya Temple, and Guan Di Temple — all which are more than 100 years old.

Due to the presence of temples along the street, it is evident that there is a strong Chinese influence over the social and cultural diversity of Jalan Tun H.S Lee. Most facades are adorned with small octagonal Feng Shui (geomancy) mirrors to ward off evil spirits and bad luck. Majority of businesses are family based as well to continue the tradition passed down to the next generation. Such businesses include the traditional florists, Lee Lam Thye wet market, Restoran Hong Ngek, and traditional Chinese medicine found along the street. Where most food outlets are of Chinese cuisine, they were brought over by the immigrants during the many different occupations which brought about diversity in what we call Malaysian food.

While it is not really a bustling retail area like Petaling Street, its strategic location near Chinatown makes Jalan Tun H.S Lee a major tourist spot. As a tourist attraction, this led to the conversion of shop houses into boutique hotels or backpacker guesthouses such as The Explorers Guest House and Reggae Guest House due to the high demand from foreign tourists for heritage tourism.



5.0 GEOGRAPHICAL ZONING

The Heritage Walk Tour leads you through 10 of the most historically profound buildings of KL, where the path intertwines around the muddy (berlumpur) confluence that is the Klang River, hence Kuala Lumpur. This part of the city can also be found further categorised into the 'Segitiga Bersejarah' or the Historic Triangle, namely the Colonial Walk, Chinatown Walk, and Masjid India Walk.

Now why would a country plagued by a history of racial contention present itself how a river separates uphill - against gravity, backwards and counter-intuitive - would? Maybe this suggests a strategy to streamline a tourist experience of Malaysia's cultural beginnings. With this in mind I'd like to discuss our consensus as a group of factors that prompted this separation based on our findings of the former High Street.

As per discussed in the origins of this street in the previous chapter, Jalan Tun H.S. Lee flanks the west of the spanning (number) different junctions that houses many of the district's financial buildings of modern Malaysia and preserved trading establishments (of silk, textiles) of the past. This street is a key component in what is aptly named Chinatown Walk because of the surrounding streets that happened to be in close proximity, which further encouraged Chinese businesses to flourish. In the past, most of these merchants were immigrants of China, therefore it made some sense that they would support each other with a common agenda of fostering economic growth within both, supplier and supplied countries. This would appear to be an open invitation to Chinese traders to open up shop in the vicinity.

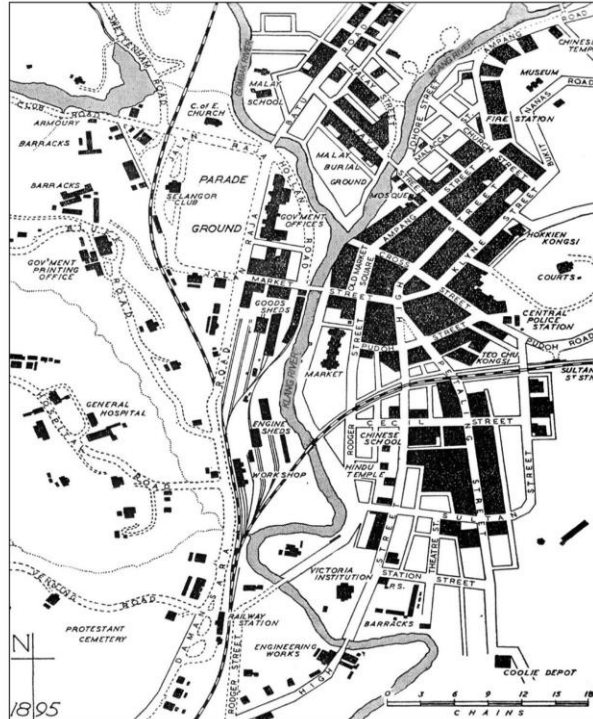
5.0 GEOGRAPHICAL ZONING (Cont'd)

Stated in the government's official website, the development throughout the streets of KL has always suffered the mutual issue of piecemeal construction, a developer's nightmare that escalates with consequent works.

Coupled with the fact that rivers were primary access routes for traders to dock, (research on Klang river purpose)

this might bring to light the clumsy clusters of erected trading posts and dwellings populated by a specific country, in this case, China, India, and Western countries. As recorded, the Chinese always had a strong hold on the Klang River Basin, from the introduction of new mining techniques and machinery imported along with Chinese laborers, and post Selangor Civil War (1867-1874) under the watchful eye of Kapitan Yap Ah Loy.

5.0 GEOGRAPHICAL ZONING (Cont'd)



In the drawn map above, under the reign of the British, it was said that city planning revolved around the “Y” of the River where both Klang and Gombak rivers met. The Chinese Hakka traders were clustered on the West of the river (Old Market Square today), the Malays at the North (Masjid Jamek today), and the British administration districts to the East, this being a geographical vantage point and barrier over their ‘subjects’. It was only much later that bridges were built to connect the communities.

Since most of the buildings of the time were relevant in preserving the cultural amalgamation, the zoning in the present time carefully reflect a piece of history.

6.0 TRADITIONAL TRADES

Jalan Tun H. S. Lee is known as a heritage gem where around 200 traditional shop houses can be found along. As the city is rapidly growing, many shop houses around Jalan Tun H. S. Lee were reused and replaced by modern trades. It is said to be pleasant as many traditional shops are still running the old trades along the street such as restaurant, textile, florist, and Chinese medicine shops by the same family for decades.

The traditional trade businesses are run by the same family for 70 years at the same location. It is a family based business passed down from generation to generation. They trade their own craft and skill with the traditional practices inherited by their ancestors.

Restaurant Hong Ngek, run by Madam Liew in its third generation, has been in Jalan Tun H. S. Lee for more than 80 years. It is one of the oldest buildings in the area as can be seen through its Grecian-Spanish architecture style facade.



Restaurant Hong Ngek is known as the oldest building that located at Jalan H. S. Lee

6.0 TRADITIONAL TRADES (Cont'd)

Besides, no more than two old textile shops can be found along the street. Toong Bee textile shop is one of the remaining old traditional textile trades at Jalan Tun H. S. Lee.

All of these remaining traditional trades are precious as they have been in the same area and location for more than 80 years. They have witnessed many important events as well as continue to provide traditional trade services to the community throughout the years. Traditional trade along Jalan H. S. Lee has become one of the significant features that illustrate past events of history.



Toong Bee Textile are one of the traditional textile trades along the street

7.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHITECTURE

This century old street has stood witness to the transformation that has taken place since 19th century from the Civil War among the Chinese community, British Colonization, Japanese Occupation to now 60 years of Malaysia's independence. As a result, the architecture style along Jalan Tun H.S. Lee stretching from Jalan Sultan to Jalan Tun Tan Siew Sin is a blend of old colonial influences, Asian traditions, Malay Islamic motif, modern and postmodern.

From office towers to simple traditional shop houses, ornate old temples to Chinese traditional houses, they are all influenced by various styles including Grecian-Spanish, Art Deco, Early Modernism and Brutalism. The Traditional Chinese Shop houses are narrow yet have symmetrical frontage with preserved ornamentation to indicate the function and status of the building, where they are separated into religious, commercial or residential buildings. The original buildings are adorned with detailed engraved stone ornaments resembling nature, while newer buildings are simply decorated to embrace sleek strong lines. Refurbished shop lots are often repainted with vibrant colours to attract visitors.

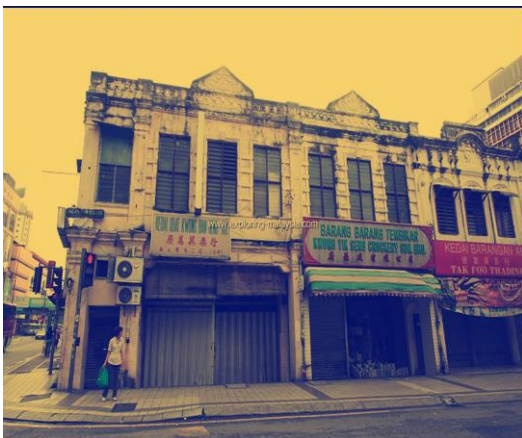
7.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHITECTURE (Cont'd)

SHOP HOUSES:



Dutch Colonial Revival Style

These pre-war shop houses are of a Dutch-influenced architectural style. Its style can be seen from its Dutch awnings and pillars along the sides of the windows.



Eclectic style

The combination of European pediments and Chinese traditional louvered window shutters give these 2 storey buildings an Eclectic architectural style.



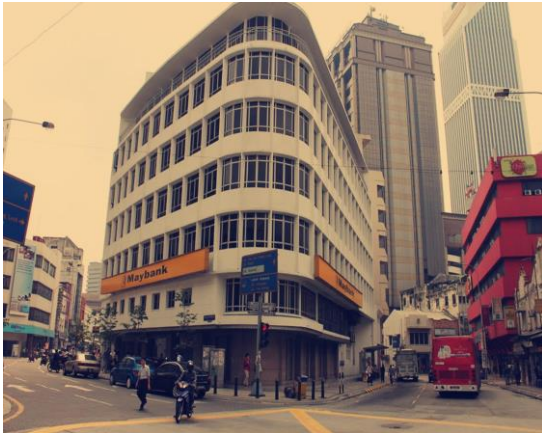
Grecian-Spanish Style

3 storey Grecian-Spanish shop lots were built during the second world war which was during the ruling of the British Colonies. Functional shops on the ground floor were separated from the residential spaces upstairs. The inspiration for these buildings were from Straits Chinese and European tradition.

7.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHITECTURE (Cont'd)

COMMERCIAL MID-RISE BUILDING:

Modernism & Postmodernism



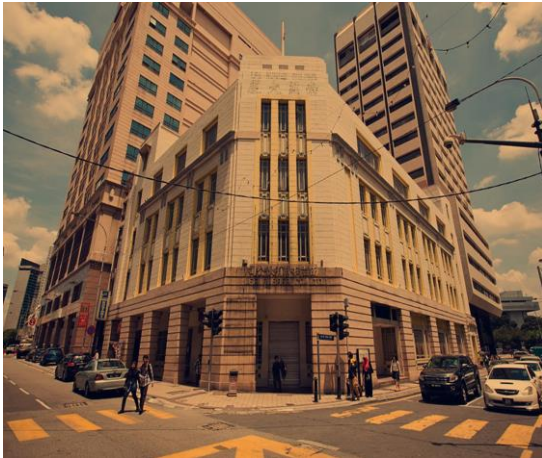
The Maybank Tun HS Lee Branch is the oldest Maybank branch in Malaysia since the founding of the bank in 1960. This 7-storey office building follows the curve of the road which applies 'Form follows Function' pluralism as well as contextualise.

Unlike Art Deco facades, the corner of the building is not accentuated due to the recessed entrance and the regularly spaced windows that flow across the facade.

7.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHITECTURE (Cont'd)

COMMERCIAL MID-RISE BUILDING:

ART DECO



At the corner of Jalan Tun H.S. Lee is the Lee Rubber Building, designed by Arthur Oakley Coltman of British architecture firm Booty Edwards & Partners. It has a strong geometric shape with a corner set at a 45° angle which adopts a classic Art Deco architectural style that was employed throughout Malaya during the 1930s. It has a flat roof with no cornice or overhang. Modernist Art Deco rules this building with its striated lines and mouldings complete with differentiated corner treatment topped with a requisite flagpole. The narrow window spandrels highlight the space between the top of the window in one storey and the sill of the window in the other storey above.

7.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHITECTURE (Cont'd)

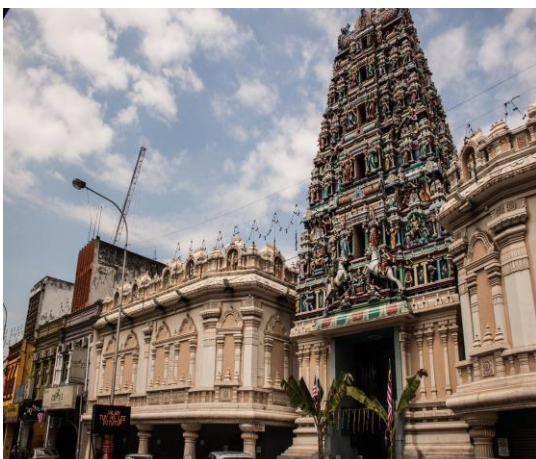
RELIGIOUS BUILDING:

CHINESE TAOISM



Guan Di Temple, also known as Kwong Siew Free School, is a Taoist architecture temple. Exaggerated decorative elements such as dragon and god sculptures are engraved to create a stronger relationship between devotees and the divine. A red-in-colour exterior plays a vital role in adding prosperity and well being to the prayers. The 'Dou Gong' construction method learnt from China is also applied to support the roof of Guan Di Temple

HINDU DRAVIDIAN



Sri Mahamariamman Temple is the oldest Hindu temple in Kuala Lumpur built in 1873. In 1968, the most significant structure was built, featuring the ornate 5-tiered 'Raja Gopuram' tower in the style of South Indian temples. The 22.9m height gopuram with a pyramid shaped gate tower is sculpted with depictions of Hindu gods.

7.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHITECTURE (Cont'd)

OLD AND NEW TRANSITION



Test of time: There are 200 old shop houses along Jalan Tun H.S. Lee, some of them are well preserved or re-adapted into boutique hotel and cafes, while others have been cast into abandonment.



8.0 CONCLUSION

Jalan Tun H.S. Lee is a street visited by countless people on a daily basis, but unbeknownst to most of its visitors is the rich history the street has to offer. Jalan Tun H.S. Lee is a street full of culture all the way from its trade as well as family tradition reflected now in its businesses kept since decades ago to its religious beliefs as seen from the abundance of temples along the street. Jalan Tun H.S. Lee did not form overnight and took centuries to become the renown street it is today all from the influence of its visitors.

Having conducted an in-depth analysis of how Jalan Tun H.S. Lee came to be is an eye-opening experience. As stated, many of us walk through the street without regard of its origins. Walking through the street now, it cannot be seen the same way, and neither will walking through other streets be the same experience as before, as now we know that just like a person, every street has its story and has had its fair share of struggles which may or may not even continue up to present day that make up what it is today.

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