

FIRE SAFETY AND PROTECTION MEASURES IN HERITAGE BUILDINGS WITH SPECIAL CONSIDERATION ON MUSEUM BUILDINGS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, a number of priceless heritage buildings were badly damaged or burnt down by fire including the People Museum, Melaka (2001), Pak Ali's House, Gombak (2003) and the Sarawak Club, Kuching (2006). Indeed, fire is one of the greatest threats to heritage buildings not only to the buildings' occupants but also to the buildings' fabrics and contents. Heritage buildings are irreplaceable, in addition to being vulnerable to fire due to several factors: large scale buildings, flammable priceless contents, and weak existing structures to fire resistance. Unfortunately, until today, there are no sufficient legislations or guidelines on fire safety for heritage buildings in Malaysia. This study audits the current fire safety measures and examines the management of fire safety in Malaysian heritage buildings that focuses on museum buildings. A combination of observations, interviews, questionnaires and case studies was employed to provide primary data in this study. Thirty seven heritage buildings from nine different states in Malaysia were successfully surveyed as building samples. Later, three of them were selected as case studies; each of them represented different criteria in order to gather various information and comparison as much as possible. Findings from the study revealed that there are several fire safety weaknesses in the heritage buildings that could put people and heritage properties on fire risks. Four fire safety guidelines for heritage buildings are recommended at the end of the study.

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