

Set up Dept of Architecture in UMS

THE 2004 election hopes to bring changes to Sabah yet again. One area which I believe is grossly overlooked is architectural heritage conservation in the State, in particular the traditional houses in Sabah.

It is one of the unique aspects of our local heritage which has a huge tourism potential, if properly managed and maintained. However, the traditional houses in Sabah seem doomed to extinction due to lack of awareness and understanding of their importance to our society.

One sad example is the Penampang traditional house, which can no longer be found in Penampang.

Another area which needs special attention is the development of the building and construction industry in Sabah. Much of our infrastructural development in the State seems to have been done at the expense of our natural environment, which in turn has hurt the local tourism industry.

We have seen too many housing projects undertaken that cater exclusively to the well-to-do but less for those in the low-income and rural communities.

Even though there is an allocation of funds for low cost housing and infrastructure, it is based on a general guideline and do not always address the needs of those targeted communities effectively.

In an architectural context, not many, if any

Of our YBs and issues



RECENTLY we asked for your views on the performance of our elected representatives, what they have achieved and where you feel they have not. We also asked what you think are the issues that matter. Here are some of your responses. More will be published when space permits.

of these projects, low-cost or otherwise, inspire much confidence as it lacks the sensitivity to the needs of the locals, their identity and way of life.

One need not be an architect to see that many of these development schemes are poor imitations of other developed countries, hence our willingness to imitate them blindly without any consideration of our own cultures and environment reflect poorly on the mentality of

our people and the state government.

Hence, I hope the next Sabah Government will consider setting up a Faculty of Built Environment in our local university, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and, in particular, a Department of Architecture to study the issues highlighted here.

Setting up a Research Centre for Borneo Vernacular Architecture within this proposed department would make UMS the focus of architectural researchers from around the world, and at the same time helping to locate, document and preserve the remaining traditional houses of our local communities to boost the state's tourism industry.

Also, the students of this proposed Department of Architecture would be able conduct studies on our local housing needs. It will enable us to produce local architects, developers and future state leaders with an accurate idea, expertise and awareness to develop and implement sustainable housing development policies that will benefit the state and its people.

Sincerely consider this suggestions. The integrity of our built environment is a testimony of our identity, history and aspirations for the people of Sabah.

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