

A TRIP DOWN THE HISTORIC LANE

The History Behind Malaysia's Pre-Independence Buildings

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN



Sultan Abdul Samad Building

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Built in 1897, the Sultan Abdul Samad Building is an iconic structure and its moniker took after the state ruler at that time. During the height of British colonial rule, the building was used to house the government administration. Today, it is one of Kuala Lumpur's prominent landmarks and part of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture. Regal in aesthetic, the Sultan Abdul Samad building sports distinct Moorish and Moghul architecture. It makes for a beautiful backdrop for picture taking, be it during the day or night. The atmosphere of the place shifts in the night, as it lights up.

Carcosa Sri Negara

Perched majestically atop a hill close to the Perdana Botanical Gardens, Carcosa Sri Negara comprises two colonial mansions – Carcosa and Governor's Residence. If you feel that this heritage building looks a tad familiar, that's because it was rented out for the Hollywood blockbuster, 'Crazy Rich Asians'. The Carcosa was established circa 1897 as the official residence of Frank Swettenham, the first British High Commissioner in Malaya. Built in Neo-gothic and Tudor architectural style, the building was opened in 1913 and its name changed to King's House. Post-independence, it was known as Istana Tetamu. This colonial building was repurposed as a hotel in the 1980's and has hosted Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip.



Carcosa Sri Negara



The Hotel Majestic

The Majestic Hotel

The Hotel Majestic has stood the test of time. It was built in 1932 by Dutch architectural firm Keyes and Dowdeswell for the Trustees of the Estate of Loke Wan Tho, the youngest son of the businessman and philanthropist Loke Yew. It was an icon during the country's pre-World War II boom. Gazetted as a heritage building under the Antiquities Act, it was constructed in a hybrid of neo-classical and art deco styles, boasting a commanding hilltop site facing another of Kuala Lumpur's famous landmarks, the Moorish style railway station. In its heyday, The Hotel Majestic was the largest and grandest hotel in Kuala Lumpur, unrivalled for its prestige and luxury. It was a favoured spot for the colonial elite and prominent visitors, venue for extravagant parties, Sunday curry tiffin lunches and the European tradition of tea dance.



Ipoh Railway Station

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The Ipoh Railway station serves as the main railway terminal for Ipoh. It was erected in 1894, when tracks were first laid through the town for the Perak Railway. Designed by Arthur Benison Hubback, the railway station served for 20 years until its consolidation into the Federated Malay States Railways and was affectionally regarded as the 'Taj Mahal of Ipoh' by the locals. The Ipoh Railway station embodies a late-Edwardian Baroque and some Indo-Saracenic architectural style. The building is also located within the Ipoh Station Square, where a cenotaph had been erected to honour those who lost their lives in World War I and II.



Suffolk House, Penang

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The original Suffolk House served as Francis Light's (the founder of Penang) residence and has been described as a simple Anglo-Indian Garden House style of timber and attap construction, built within his pepper estate called Suffolk. Light lived on the estate until his death in 1794. Located along the banks of Air Itam River in George Town, a second residence was subsequently built in 1809 by William Edward Phillips. The mansion was named Suffolk Park and sported an Euro-Indian and Georgian-style. The mansion served as the residence of several governors, as well as the venue for social and official functions. Later, it was once used as the Anglo-Chinese High School, which later became the Methodist Boys' School. It was restored and opened to the public in 2009, and is a restaurant today.



Christ Church, Melaka

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Christ Church, one of Melaka's iconic structures is evidence of Dutch colonial architecture. It's the oldest operating Protestant church built in 1753 by the Melaka Dutch community to commemorate the centenary of Dutch occupation in the state. During that period, the building went by the name of Benedenkerk, which translated to "church down the hill" and functioned as the primary Dutch Reformed Church during the Dutch occupation. It was renamed as Christ Church in 1838, when the Anglo-Dutch Treaty was signed and Melaka was handed over to the British-East India Company. Christ Church bears all the hallmarks of 18th-century Dutch architecture: a rectangular plan, massive walls, red granite plinths and Dutch roof tiles.