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George Town (Penang) in Malaysia

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Abstract

The cultural heritage of Malaysia was, to the greatest extent, determined by its natural environment, that is, its position in the equatorial zone of the Earth with extensive rain forests. Other natural resources, first large deposits of tin, and from the middle of the 20th century oil, internationalized the area of Malaysia. Along with the local population, the Malays, the history and cultural traditions of Malaysia were created by Chinese and Indian culture, and then European (via Portugal and the Netherlands to Great Britain). The origin and development of the two most important cities in Malaysia, George Town (Penang) and Kuala Lumpur best illuminate the history of Malaysia. The opening of the sea port of Malacca (1402) also marked the arrival of Islam in the territory of Malaysia, which, until today, will be an important fact in profiling its development and cultural heritage. Even while he was under strong impressions from his travels, the Author made written works about them, titling them "My Travels in Malaysia". Just trying to write down what was seen and experienced showed the complexity of the effort to present a space, its people and architecture. The author did not want the 'review of his travels' to have a subjective note, but rather to be an objective record, with all the elements of a scientific text. This required hard 'desk work' using the appropriate scientific literature and various works that were available on the Internet.

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1. Introduction

The author's visit to Malaysia took place (03-07 November 2007) as part of the official visit of the University of Sarajevo delegation to the largest universities in Malaysia, The University of Science Malaysia (Malay: Universiti Sains Malaysia, George Town, Penang) and University Malaya, UM (Malay: Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur), (Figures 1,2,3,4). The aim of the visit was to get to know the system of higher education in Malaysia, through direct insight into several universities. Malaysia is known as a country that, after gaining independence (1957), made rapid and enormous progress in every respect, where dedication to higher education was one of the most significant driving forces of development. The road from Sarajevo to Kuala Lumpur led through Istanbul and Beirut. After the University of Sarajevo delegation arrived at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang (Malay: Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Kuala Lumpur, English: Kuala Lumpur International Airport, KLIA), they continued their journey by plane to George Town (Penang) to Penang International Airport (Malay: Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Pulau Pinang, English: Penang International Airport, PIA), from where they were transferred by car, accompanied by their host, to the hotel that is an integral part of The University of Science Malaysia (Malay: Universiti Sains Malaysia). After a short rest (until the dinner stipulated in the protocol), the members of the delegation could tour the city. The official reception of the delegation of the University of Sarajevo at the management of Universiti Sains Malaysia was particularly cordial, with a dinner that was in accordance with the culture of Southeast Asia. The working part of the visit to the university (Universiti Sains Malaysia) took place the next day (November 5, 2007), when the delegation from the University of Sarajevo met with the management of

Universiti Sains Malaysia and the deans of all its faculties. All members of both delegations presented their faculties, and below specified possible forms of cooperation. After the official meeting of the two delegations, the University of Sarajevo delegationvisited Muzium & Galeri Tuanku

Fauziah, which was a good opportunity to organize a similar institution within the

University of Sarajevo and its faculties. After the visit to Penang, the delegation from the University of Sarajevo flew to Kuala Lumpur.



Source: Faruk Mekic (November 4, 2007.)

Fig 1: Author at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang



Fig 2: Author (front row, far left) at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang (as part of a visit to Penang by a delegation from the University of Sarajevo)



Source: Samir Arnautovic (November 7, 2007.)

Fig 3: The author (far left) at the 2007 GHEF Global Forum in Kuala Lumpur





Source: Faruk Mekic (November 9, 2007.)

Fig 4: The author visiting the Ministry of Higher Education in the Government of Malaysia and the University of Malaya (UM), as part of the visit to Kuala Lumpur by the delegation from the University of Sarajevo

George Town (Penang) is the capital of the Malaysian state of Penang located in the northeastern part of Penang Island (geographic coordinates: 5°24′42.73″N, 100°19′38.81″E, altitude 2 m), about 435 km from Kuala Lumpur as the crow flies. George Town (Penang) is the second largest city (after Kuala Lumpur) in Malaysia. The city has 794,313 inhabitants [1]. The city (and Penang colony) was founded (1786) by the British captain Francis Light (1740-1794) on the initiative of the British East Indies (a huge British company). Together with Singapore and Malacca, George Town formed the Straits Settlements which (1867) became a British Crown Colony. George Town was the capital of the Straits Settlements (1826-1832) when the center was moved to Singapore. The city is based on a jungle area with swampy terrain. The newly founded settlement was named after the British King George III (1738-1820), and the name of the island (Penang) was renamed Prince of Wales Island. The port of George Town had the status of a free port (where no taxes were paid), which encouraged the development of trade, i.e. the movement of people and goods, and therefore the development of the entire city. In addition to oriental spices, the Port of Penang was the main port through which tin was traded, which was exploited in large quantities in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur. Thus, the number of ships visiting the port increased from 85 (in 1786) to 3,569 (in 1802), and the number of inhabitants in the city rose to 10,000 (1792)^[2]. By the end of the 19th century, the city had become the leading banking center in what was then Malaya. The general development of the city contributed to its becoming an attractive place for many intellectuals and artists, both domestic and foreign. Among the first intellectuals to settle here were: English poet and journalist Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), English writer William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) and Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), one of the founders of the Republic of China. At the beginning of World War I (1914), a major battle took place in Penang in which the German navy sank two Allied warships, killing a large number of French and Russian sailors. During World War II (1941), Japanese aircraft bombed George Town, which led to the withdrawal of British forces from this city (from the Batu Maung fortress). Most of the population also withdrew with the British soldiers. After they conquered the island of Penang (19 December 1941), the Japanese renamed the island Tojo-to (in honor of the then Japanese Prime Minister Hideki Tojo). The port in George Town was also used by the German

Navy as its base. During 1944 and 1945, Allied bomber planes, with raids from India, repeatedly bombed George Town with the intention of destroying the Japanese naval forces, when many objects of its architectural cultural heritage also perished. After the capitulation of Japan (August 15, 1945), the British army reoccupied the island of Penang (September 3, 1945). After a period of military rule, the British (1946) dissolved the earlier Straits Settlements Association and included the Crown Colony of Penang in a new state creation, the Malayan Union, which the population of Penang resisted, trying to maintain its independence. Thus, George Town became the first municipality in the Federation of Malaya (Malayan Union) with an autonomous local council of administration. Immediately before the declaration of independence of modern Malaysia (1957), the city was declared (January 1, 1957) the City of Queen Elizabeth II (1926-2022). In the following years, the city of George Town retained the status of a free port. However, the federal Malaysian government (1969) repudiated the earlier agreement on free city status. This was the beginning of a period in which the development of the city stagnated until the 2000s. The Malaysian government has paid more attention to the development of Kuala Lumpur and its Port Klang port [3]. The initiation (1974) of the Komtar project, when the tallest skyscraper in George Town was built, led to the demolition of a large number of small architecturaltraditional structures in the city, which led to the emigration of a large number of the population from the old city core. This led to the formation of strategic partnerships with the aim of preserving the old city core. The results were visible, since George Town was included in UNESCO's list of world cultural heritage in 2008 [4]. The city is inhabited by many ethnic groups whose cultures form an extremely rich and unique conglomerate, which is today the greatest asset of this city. The city is home to the Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zone, an area with highly sophisticated manufacturing, which is why it has been nicknamed the "Silicon Valley of the East". The city is a well-known financial center of Malaysia and a national center for medical tourism [5]. George Town is connected to the world by the Penang International Airport, and via the Penang Bridge and Second Penang Bridge seaports, with which the city has become the busiest sea cruise center in Malaysia. The city is home to some of the oldest schools in Malaysia, making it a pioneer of the country's education system. During the British rule,

missionary schools were opened in the city of George Town. They were followed by Chinese schools, some of which are among the oldest in the country, making George Town the nucleus of Chinese education in Southeast Asia. International schools have recently been established as a response to the growing population of foreigners. Today, George Town has 117 primary schools, 49 secondary schools, four Islamic religious schools, two vocational schools and one technical school. The largest university in the city is Universiti Sains Malaysia (The University of Science Malaysia). The university was founded in 1969 as Universiti Pulau Pinang (University of Penang), the second largest Malaysian university. In 2018, this university ranked 20th in the QS World University Rankings. Several international universities also operate in George Town. There are 30 libraries in George Town, among which the largest and most important are the Penang State Library on Scotland Road and the Penang Digital Library on Green Lane. The Penang Digital Library in Green Lane opened (2016) as the first digital library in Malaysia and has a digitized collection of over 3,000 publications. The Penang General Hospital is the main public hospital in George Town, Penang. The hospital was founded (1854) as a medical center for the poor population and opium addicts. The hospital focuses on terial health care for the population of Penang and is complemented by the Balik Pulau Hospital. In George Town, there are 54 government clinics that support the work of 11 private hospitals and 352 private clinics. Gleneagles Penang Medical Center is a modern private tertiary care hospital, located in the central part of Penang. The hospital was established (as Penang Medical Center, PMC) in 1973 as the first private

hospital in Penang. Today, it has a capacity of 400 beds. Since 2010, the hospital has been owned by Khazanah National Berhad, since when it has been part of the Parkway Pantai Group. George Town became the first city in Malaysia to install public automated external defibrillators (AEDs), with the launch of the first device at KOMTAR Tower in 2015.

Natural resources and attractions of George Town (Penang)

The largest and most important natural resource of the city of George Town is its geographical location, which generated the emergence and development of the city as a seaport for the transport of goods from this part of Southeast Asia to Europe and other parts of the world. In the central part of Penang Island is a higher area (the highest point is at 833 meters above sea level), Penang Hill, which has an invaluable importance for the city's climate, where the forests of this elevation function as the 'lungs of the city'. The top of Penang Hill can be accessed by railway, from the Hill Railway Road station. On the northwestern coastal edges of the city are spacious beaches (Batu Ferringhi, Tanjung Bungah and Tanjung Tokong) which are a huge asset to the city due to the large number of domestic and foreign tourists who visit them. The City Park (also known as Youth Park) was established (1884) as a branch of the Singapore Botanical Gardens (Penang Botanic Gardens) and is the oldest botanical garden in Malaysia. Today it is the main recreational area, hosting about 5,000 visitors every weekend. This botanical garden is home to the Penang Waterfall, which is part of the city's water supply. Next to the Penang Botanic Gardens, the 172-hectare City Park was opened (1972) (Figure 5).

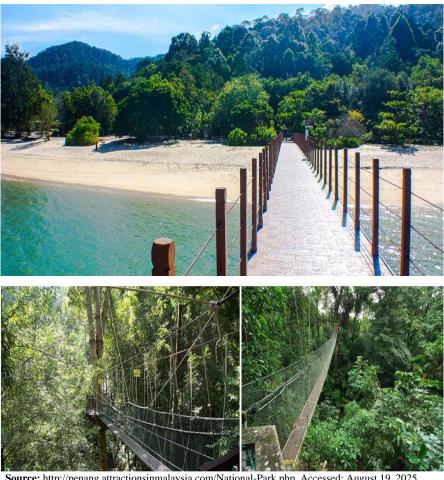


Source: http://www.penang.ws/penanginfo/overview.htm, Accessed: August 19, 2025
Source: http://www.traveller.com.au/penangsrainforest-nature-trail-a-walk-on-the-wildside-gyfkra, Accessed: August 19, 2025

Fig 5: City Park (Youth Park)

The city is home to the smallest national park in the world, the Penang National Park, which covers an area of 25.62 km².

In the park there are swamps with mangroves, forests through which hiking trails and beaches are arranged (Figure 6).



Source: http://penang.attractionsinmalaysia.com/National-Park.php, Accessed: August 19, 2025 Source: http://flickriver.com/photos/alan_cressler/4196109789/, Accessed: August 19, 2025

Fig 6: Penang National Park

Other natural attractions in the city include the Tropical Spice Garden and the Entopia Butterfly Farm, as well as Malaysia's first butterfly sanctuary (Image 7).



Source: https://www.expedia.com.hk/Tropical-Spice-Garden-George-Town.d6169151.Place-To-Visit, Accessed: June 13, 2025. Source: https://www.redbubble.com/people/dan62442/works/6492349-tropical-spice-gardenpenang-malaysia, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 7: Tropical Spice Garden

George Town has many promenades: Gurney Drive, Esplanade and Karpal Singh Drive. The city has a tropical rainforest climate (type Af climate, according to the Köppen climate classification) with uniform temperatures throughout the year. Average annual temperatures range from 21 °C to

32 °C. The average annual precipitation density in the city is 2477 mm/m². Due to its proximity to the island of Sumatra, which is prone to forest fires, smoke is common in the atmosphere above George Town (Figure 8).



Source: Author (November 5, 2007.)

Fig 8: The city of George Town has a tropical rainforest climate

Architectural cultural and historical heritage of George Town (Penang)

The inclusion of George Town on the UNESCO World Heritage List recognizes the immense wealth of its architectural tradition, the largest and most diverse in Southeast Asia [4]. The area covers an area of approximately 2.6 km2. It contains the city's administrative buildings, the most important of which are Fort Cornwallis, City Hall, Penang State Museum and the main business district along Beach Street. The zone includes various places of worship, such as St. George's Church, Kapitan Keling Mosque, Goddess of Mercy Temple, Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion and Eastern & Oriental Hotel. Buildings higher than 18 m are prohibited in this zone, and new buildings must not exceed the height of buildings in their immediate vicinity. Unlike

other cities in Malaysia, George Town retains bilingual street names (in Malay and English). Road signs are written in English, Chinese, Tamil and Arabic. The city is constantly expanding, in all directions. The northwestern suburbs are more affluent, since the beautiful beaches attract a large number of tourists. The southern suburbs (such as Jelutong) are developed as industrial zones, while the western suburbs (such as Air Itam and Paya Terubong) are developed as centers of advanced agriculture or plantations.

Fort Cornwallis is the largest fortress in Malaysia, built in 1786. The fort was named after the then governor of Bengal, Charles Cornwallis, Marquess Cornwallis (1738-1805). It is interesting that this fortress was never used in military operations. In the fortress there is a 21 m high lighthouse built in 1882 (Figure 9).





Source: https://www.medisata.com/wisata/fort-cornwallis-penang, Accessed: August 19, 2025

Fig 9: Fort Cornwallis

The Church of the Assumption is the third oldest Catholic church in Malaysia. The church was built (1786-1787) in the Neo-Renaissance style, when Captain Francis Light first

came to Penang. The building is located on Farquhar Street in George Town (Figure 10).



Source: https://travel2penang.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/church3.jpg, Accessed: August 19, 2025

Fig 10: Church of the Assumption

Suffolk House is a complex of houses built in the earliest stages of the development of George Town, located about four kilometres from the city centre, along the Air Itam River.

The oldest of these buildings was the residence of Francis Light (1740-1794), the founder of the settlement. The settlement was named after the English county of Suffolk (Figure 11).





Source: https://velvetescape.com/ten-things-to-do-inpenang/, Accessed: June 13, 2025. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suffolk_House,_Penang#/media/File:Suffolk_House.JPG, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 11: Suffolk House

The Kapitan Keling Mosque (Malay: Masjid Kapitan Keling) is located at the intersection of Buckingham (Lebuh Buckingham) and Pitt (Jalan Masjid Kapitan) streets. The

mosque was built (1801) by Cauder Mohuddeen Merican (1786-1834), a Muslim of Indian origin (Figure 12).



Source: https://www.beautifulmosque.com/Kapitan-Keling-Mosque-in-Peneng-Malaysia, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 12: The Kapitan Keling Mosque

The Penang Jewish Cemetery (Malay: Perkuburan Yahudi Pulau Pinang) was established in 1805, and is believed to be the oldest Jewish cemetery in Southeast Asia. The 3,538 m² cemetery is located along Jalan Zainal Abidin (also known as

Jahudi (Jewish) Road), in the heart of George Town (Figure 13)



Source: http://ttnotes.com/penang-jewishcemetery.html, Accessed: June 13, 2025. **Source:** http://ttnotes.com/penang-jewishcemeteryhtml#gal_post_13701_penangjewish-cemetery-george-town-1.jpg Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 13: Jewish cemetery in Penang

St. George's Church is an Anglican church built (1816-1818) in George Town according to the project of architects William Petrie (1784-1816) and Robert Norman Smith. The church was built in a combination of neoclassical and

English-Palladian style. The pavilion next to the church was built (1886) in memory of Captain Francis Light, in celebration of the centenary of the founding of modern Penang (Figure 14).





Source: http://omgzi.blogspot.com/2017/04/stgeorges-church-georgetown-1818.html, Accessed: June 13, 2025. Source: https://travelextravaganza.wordpress.com/2013/04/30/4-religions-on-1-street/, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 14: St. George Church

The Sri Maha Mariamman Temple is located on Queen Street, George Town. The temple was built in 1833 and is the oldest Hindu temple in Penang. Its entrance facade features

sculptures of Hindu deities. The temple is also known as Mariamman Temple and Queen Street Indian Temple (Figure 15).



Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c7/Mahamariamman_Temple_Penang_Dec_2006_001.jpg Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 15: Sri Maha Mariamman Temple

Wat Chaiyamangkalaram is a Thai Buddhist temple built (1845) near the Dhammikarama Burmese Temple, in the suburb of Pulau Tikus, George Town. The temple houses a

statue of Buddha, one of the tallest in the world, and several colorful statues of Devas and other mythical creatures (Figure 16).





Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wat_Chaiyamangkalaram#/media/File:Penang_Malaysia_Wat-Chaiya-Mangkalaram-Temple-01.jpg Accessed: June 13, 2025

Source: http://www.promotemalaysia.com.tw/spot_detail.aspx?class_id=3&data_id=326, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 16: Wat Chaiyamangkalaram

The Penang Islamic Museum (Malay: Muzium Islam Pulau Pinang) is housed in a villa built (1860) by a famous local pepper merchant. The villa was converted into a museum in

1999. The architecture of the villa is a mixture of European neoclassical architecture and elements of traditional Islamic architecture (Figure 17).





Source: http://www.holidaygogogo.com/rediscovering-culture-in-the-penang-islamic-museum/, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Source:http://www.ancasahotels.com/wbe/page/detail.action?selectedPropCode=ANXP&menuCode=HOME&cid=ANCASA&selectedPageID=28&menuCode=ANNUR_EXPRESS_@PENANG, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 17: The Penang Islamic Museum

The Sun Yat-sen Museum was opened (2001) and is dedicated to Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), the Chinese national leader who founded (1912) the Republic of China after the

Xinhai Revolution. Sun Yat-sen lived in this house, which was built in 1880, and created a plan to overthrow the Qing dynasty (Figure 18).





Source: http://atap.org.my/members/sun-yat-senmuseum/, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 18: The Sun Yat-sen Museum

The Eastern & Oriental Hotel (also known as E&O Hotel) is a complex of two hotels, Eastern (built in 1884) and Oriental (built in 1885) in George Town, commissioned by the Sarkies Brothers company, known for its chain of hotels in Southeast Asia. (Sarkies Brothers is a company founded by Armenians from Isfahan, Iran: Martin (1852-1912), Tigran (1861-1912), Aviet (1862-1923) and Arshak, 1868-1931). The hotel is one of the symbols of George Town. After a series of reconstructions and redesigns, this hotel (in 2001) became the property of The E & O Group (Figure 19).





Source: http://penang.wikia.com/wiki/File:Eastern_%26_Oriental_Hotel,_George_Town,_Penang.jpg, Accessed: June 13, 2025. Source: https://www.agoda.com/eastern-and-orientalhotel/hotel/penang-my.html?cid=-106#nohash, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 19: The Eastern & Oriental Hotel

The Pinang Peranakan Mansion (Malay: Rumah Agam Peranakan Pulau Pinang) is a museum dedicated to the Peranakan heritage of Penang. The museum is housed in a palace located in Church Street, which was originally built (1893) as the residence of the Chinese businessman Chung Keng Que (1827-1916). The museum houses thousands of Peranakan (Chinese immigrants to Penang) artifacts that testify to their culture (Figure 20).









Source: https://jasssharing.wordpress.com/tag/pinangperanakan-mansion/, Accessed: June 13, 2025. Source: http://www.gopenang.my/pinang-peranakanmansion/, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 20: The Pinang Peranakan Mansion

Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zone, also known as the Silicon Valley of the East, is located in the Southwest Penang district. The district was established in the 19th century. Many local

and international companies (Bosch, Motorola, Dell, Intel and Hewlett-Packard) are located in this part of George Town. In addition to the industrial zone, this city district is also home to the Penang International Airport (opened in 1935), (Figure 21).



Source: http://penang.attractionsinmalaysia.com/Bayan-Lepas.php, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 21: Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zone

The HSBC Building is located on Beach Street. The building houses the management of the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) in Penang. The bank was founded in 1865 in Hong Kong, and is the sixth largest bank in the world by assets (data for 2014). The current building of this bank was built (1906) in the neoclassical style, according to the project of the architectural firm Wilson & Neubronner. At the time it was built, it was the tallest building in George Town and the first building on Penag Island to have an elevator installed (Figure 22).



Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/thebowies/9191436733, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 22: The HSBC Building

The branch of Standard Chartered Bank in Penang (Standard Chartered Bank Penang Branch) is located on Beach Street, in George Town. The bank building was built (1926-1930) according to the project of architects John McNeill and Charles Geoffrey Boutcher, as part of the chain of the British Standard Chartered Bank (formerly Chartered Bank of India), one of the largest banks in the world that operates in 71 countries. This is the second oldest branch of Standard Chartered Bank that was opened in Southeast Asia (it was preceded by a branch in Singapore that was opened in 1859). The bank building was built in a mixture of several architectural styles (Palladian and Art Deco, mainly). This building is included in the list of cultural assets of the old core of George Town when it was placed (in 2008) on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List (Figure 23).



Source: http://tripodshutter.blogspot.com/2012/07/, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 23: Standard Chartered Bank branch in Penang

The Penang State Museum and Art Gallery (Malay: Muzium dan Galeri Seni Negeri Pulau Pinang, English: The Penang State Museum and Art Gallery) was built (1821-1927) as the Penang Free School. In this building (which was declared a historical heritage of Penang) a museum was arranged in 1965 (Figure 24).







Source: https://www.lexissuitespenang.com/zhhant/place-of-interest/penang-museum-andart-gallery, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Source: https://www.tripadvisor.com.sg/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g660694-d455034-i90841033-Penang_State_Museum_and_Art_Gallery-Penang_Island_Penang.html, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 24: The Penang State Museum and Art Gallery

The Kek Lok Si Temple is a Buddhist temple located in Air Itam, George Town. It is an important pilgrimage center for Buddhists from Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore and other Southeast Asian countries. The temple was built (1890–1930) at the initiative of the Buddhist priest Beow Lean

(1844–1890). The main features of the temple are the seven-story Pagoda of Rama VI (Pagoda of Ten Thousand Buddhas) with 10,000 Buddha statues made of alabaster and bronze, and the 36.57 m tall bronze statue of Kuan Yin (Goddess of Mercy) (Figure 25).







Source: http://peekingduck.co/kek-lok-si-temple/, Accessed: June 13, 2025. Source: http://www.escapetraveler.com/penang-kekloksi-and-penang-hill/, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 25: The Kek Lok Si Temple

The Residency (Malay: Seri Mutiara) is the official residence of the President of the State of Penang. The residence is located along Western Road and was built (1888) as the residence of the British Governor of Penang.

Several rare plants were planted next to the residence, including a baobab tree, Brazil nut, Indian ebony and a cannonball tree (Figure 26).



http://penang.wikia.com/wiki/File:Judge%27s_Residence,_Sepoy_Lines_R oad,_George_Town,_Penang.jpg Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 26: The Residency

The City Hall is located on Esplanade Road in George Town. It was built (1903) as the seat of the George Town City Council, during the British administration. Today, this building houses the headquarters of the Penang Island City Council. The building was made in a mixture of architectural styles, 'Edwardian Baroque' and 'Palladian', characteristic of the British Empire, that is, the Edwardian era (it is the time of the reign (1901-1910) of the English king Edward VII (1841-1910), (Figure 27).



Source: http://penangport.com.my/Services/Swettenham-Pier-Cruise-Terminal, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 28: The Swettenham Pier

The Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion is located on Leith Street, George Town. Due to its distinctive (blue) white, the mansion is nicknamed the Blue Palace. Built (1897-1904) by merchant Cheong Fatt Tze, the mansion has 38 rooms, five granite courtyard terraces and seven staircases, and its architecture could be described as 'Chinese eclecticism' (Figure 29).



http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-31/george-town-worldheritage-status-underthreat-from-development/7980270

Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 29: The Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion

The Khoo Kongsi is a large Chinese clan in George Town, known for its distinctive buildings, such as the Khoo Kongsi Temple. The temple was built in 1906 in Cannon Square, in the historic core of the city (Figure 30).

https://www.videoblocks.com/video/historiccity-hall-building-Source: george-town-penangmalaysia-t4pybeg, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 27: The Penang City Hall

The Swettenham Pier is a pier located on Weld Quay in George Town. The wharf was built in 1904, and was the busiest port for cruise ships, and along with Penang International Airport, the most important point of access for visitors to Penang Island. In addition to cruise ships, this port was a dock for domestic warships (Figure 28).



Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/kryptos5/6266497454, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 30: The Khoo Kongsi

Penang International Airport (Malay: Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Pulau Pinang, English: Penag International Airport) is one of the busiest airports in Malaysia. The airport is located near Bayan Lepas, on the southeastern tip of Penang Island, south of the city of George Town. The airport opened (1935) as Bayan Lepas International Airport, making it the oldest airport in Malaysia. The airport has two runways (each 3.35 km long), 11 gates, 12 air bridges, three baggage carousels, several restaurants, shops and a luxury passenger lounge. The airport had an annual traffic of 7,232,097 passengers and 134,187 tonnes of cargo (Figure 31).



Source: http://www.klia2.info/penang-internationalairport, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 31: Penang International Airport

Tower BHL is a commercial skyscraper located (headquarters of CIMB Bank branch) on Northam Road in George Town. The 30-storey building (108 m high) was built in 1995 (Figure 32).



Source:

 $https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BHL_Tower\#/media/File:BHL_Tower,_George_Town,_Penang.jpg, Accessed: June 13, 2025.$

Fig 32: Tower BHL

The Batu Ferringhi business district is located on Beach Road, about 11 km northwest of the city centre. The complex includes several high-end hotels along a 4 km long beach, including the Hard Rock Hotel (opened in 2009). The complex offers various water sports, such as parasailing. This exclusive district is known for its special night-time street food service. The history of this luxury district begins in 1592 with the arrival of the English merchant and entrepreneur, Sir James Lancaster (1554-1618). More serious development began in the 1970s, and has intensified in recent times (Figure 33).



Source: http://www.malaysianrealestates.com/agentpage/41468/batu-ferringhi, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 33: The Batu Ferringhi business district

Penang Street Art is one of the specifics of George Town, whose tradition dates back to 2012, when the Penang Municipal Council hired the Lithuanian artist Ernest Zacharević to revive the facades of the old part of the city with his artistic creations. The artistic creations of this artist are placed along several streets in the city: Muntri Street, Weld Quay, Lebuh Leith, Armenian Street, Ah Quee Street. Today these artistic creations are one of the symbols of George Town (Figure 34).

Gurney Paragon is a residential complex located on Gurney Drive, consisting of a nine-storey shopping center (more than 200 outlets), two condominiums and an office block. The two condominium (apartment) blocks are each 155 m high, and are the third tallest skyscrapers in Penang. The complex was completed in 2013.





Source: http://allyouseeiscrimeinthecity.com/penangfebruary-2014/, Accessed: June 13, 2025. Source: http://thenextsomewhere.com/2017/07/11/walking-tour-street-art-in-penang/, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 34: Penang Street Art

The Batik Painting Museum Penang (Malay: Muzium Lukisan Batik Pulau Pinang) is housed (2013) in a 19th-century house in an eclectic style. The museum displays paintings from the 1950s by the founder of batik painting, Chuah Thean Teng (1914-2008), and later works by Malaysian artists. (Batik is a type of decorative painting that

uses a wax technique. Paper (batik) is used to decorate textiles. Here, a drawing made with wax chalk is coated with watercolor, where the hydrophilic paint is only accepted in places where there are no traces of wax. A parallel name for this type of painting is reserve technique). The museum currently has 80 batik paintings by 25 artists, including

several foreign artists (Figure 35).



Source: http://ttnotes.com/batik-painting-museumpenang.html, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 35: The Batik Painting Museum Penang

Setia V Residences is a residential complex located on Gurney Drive, consisting of a pair of buildings (known as Tower A with 48 floors and Tower B with 43 floors). Tower

A is 189 m tall, making it the second tallest building in Penang. The complex was completed in 2017 (Figure 36).



Source: https://en.sekaiproperty.com/projects/4662/setia-v-residences-george-town-george-townpenang, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 36: Setia V Residences

KOMTAR Tower is the tallest skyscraper (250 m) in Penang built (1974-1986) and renovated (2013-2017) for Kompleks Tunk Abdul Raza (KOMTAR), according to the project of the architectural design team Architects Team 3 and Jurubena Bertiga International Sdn Bh (basic project and Only World

Group, renovation). The skyscraper has 65 floors, 26 elevators with a total usable area of 71,080 m². At the top of the skyscraper is the famous viewpoint with a promenade and cafés, the Rainbow Skywalk (Figure 37).



Source: http://www.penang.ws/penangattractions/komtar.htm, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 37: KOMTAR Tower

The Rainbow Skywalk is located at the top of Komtar Tower (the tallest skyscraper in George Town) and is the largest open-air greenhouse in Malaysia. The greenhouse (built in 2016) is basically a horseshoe shape. It is a viewing platform

with a walking path and cafés, offering a wide view of George Town and the surrounding settlements (Tanjung Tokong, Pulau Tikus and Air Itam) and Penang Hill (Figure 38).



Source: http://sumabeachlifestyle.com/new-rainbowskywalk-opens-penang/, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 38: The Rainbow Skywalk

The Museum and Gallery of the University of Science Malaysia was opened in 1982. The museum displays artifacts

that testify to the richness of Malay culture, from the earliest days to the present day (Figure 39).









Source: Faruk Mekic (November 6, 2007.) **Source:** Author (November 6, 2007.)

Fig 39: Author at the Museum and Gallery Universiti Sains Malaysia

The Camera Museum (Malay: Muzium Kamera) was opened in 2013. The museum is arranged in a two-story building that has three basic exhibition rooms: Dark Room, Obscura Room and Pinhole Room. the museum exhibits about 1,000 old

cameras and various photo accessories. There is a café and a souvenir shop in the museum building. Exhibitions are organized in the museum every month (Figure 40).





Source: https://www.timeout.com/penang/museums/the-camera-museum, Accessed: June 13, 2025. **Source:** https://appreciategoods.com/things-to-do-ingeorge-town-penang, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 40: The Camera Museum

The Penang Toy Museum is located at Teluk Bahang in George Town. The museum, founded by engineer Loh Lean

Cheng, opened in 2005. Over 110,000 toys are displayed in an exhibition area of about 1,000 m² (Figure 41).





Source: https://www.malaysia.sea7htravel.com/2013/08/toy.museum.html, Accessed: June 13, 2025. Source: https://journalstar.com/ap/state/toy-museuman-integral-part-of-pawneecity/article_fc5c1687-00ef-5f72-8aa6-aa1c754c3a8f.html Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 41: The Penang Toy Museum

The Made in Penang Interactive Museum is a 3D gallery museum located near George Town. This museum (which

opened in 2014) features 3D images of old George Town (Figure 42).









Source: https://www.tripadvisor.in/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g298303-d5772856-i86204475-Made_In_Penang_Interactive_Museum-George_Town_Penang_Island_Penang.html, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 42: The Made in Penang Interactive Museum

The Penang Digital Library is located in Green Lane, George Town ^[6]. The library was opened by the initiative of the State of Penang, in collaboration with Eastern & Oriental Berhad (E&O) and Keysight Technologies and supported by TIME.

The aim of the library is to educate interested persons how information is recorded and consumed in today's (digitally managed) world and restore the 'human' aspect of social cooperation. The library was opened in 2016 (Figure 43).





Source: https://www.onlypenang.com/penangattractions/penang-digital-library/, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 43: The Penang Digital Library

Every year, a large number of festivals related to various peoples and their cultures are held in George Town:

Deepavali festival (Figure 44), Thaipusam, Vaisakhi, Christmas, Vesak Day, Songkran.





Source: http://malaysianmeanders.blogspot.com/2013/11/little-india-preps-for-deepavali.html, Accessed: June 13, 2025. Source: https://www.pinterest.com/pin/386957792973584694/, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 44: Deepavali festival

George Town is the birthplace of the unique form of the Chingay Parade. The first parade was held in 1919. The parade is held every December of the year, and one of the

traditional points is the balancing of the flag in the hands and on the forehead (Figure 45).

Source: https://www.themalaysianinsight.com/g/27188, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 45: The Chingay Parad

Bangsawan is a form of Malay theatre that developed in Penang with Indian, Western, Islamic, Chinese and Indonesian influences. In the last decades of the 20th century, it experienced a decline in audience interest in this type of theatrical expression (Figure 46).



Source: https://arecabooks.com/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/bangsawan.jpg, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Source: http://smp2252justersan.blogspot.com/2010/08/jurnal-refleksi-minggu-ke-6.html, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 46: Bangsawan

Boria is a type of Malay theatre with Indian influences. It is a traditional dance drama that deals with Penang, and the singing is accompanied by various musical instruments. The tradition of this dance in Penang dates back to 1897 (Figure 47).



Source: http://penangmonthly.com/article.aspx?pageid=9476&name=from_persia_to_penangboria_bops_on, Accessed: June 13, 2025. Source:https://www.thestar.com.my/metro/community/2015/08/24/bowled-over-by-boriapenangites-and-tourists-enjoy-colourfulperformances/, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 47: Boria theater

The Penang Philharmonic Orchestra (PPO/Penang State Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, PESSOC) is an amateur orchestra and choir that promotes classical music. In addition to local musicians, this orchestra and choir also includes foreign musicians (and conductors). The orchestra and choir perform over 140 times a year, and have been active since 1917 (Figure 48).



http://penangmonthly.com/article.aspx?pageid=2592&name=musica_sinfonietta_born_of_penangs_cultural_bosom

Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 48: The Penang Philharmonic Orchestra

The George Town Municipal Stadium is the oldest stadium built (1932) in Malaysia (Figure 49). This stadium is home to the local club Penang FA and the Malaysian state of Penang football team. The stadium has a capacity of 25,000 seats. One of the interesting things about this stadium is the fact that Penang FA footballer Mohd Faiz Subri scored a goal (2016) there for which he received the FIFA Puskás Award, which is awarded by this world organization for the most beautiful goal scored in the world in a given year.



Source:

http://www.goal.com/enmy/news/3896/malaysia/2016/12/12/30404912/pul au-pinang-to-play-at-batu-kawan-in-2017 Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 49: The George Town Municipal Stadium

The SPICE Arena in Bayan Baru (originally: Penang International Sports Arena, PISA) is a complex facility that houses an (indoor) stadium, a water sports center, and a convention center. The arena was opened in 2000 and renovated in 2017. It has hosted many regional and international competitions. The arena has a capacity of 10,000 seats for spectators (Figure 50).



Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8qWz1N5kOs, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

Fig 50: The SPICE Arena in Bayan Baru

The Penang International Marathon is an annual event. The marathon route starts near Queensbay Mall, then runs 13.5 km to the Penang Bridge, from where it returns to the starting point and finishes (Figure 51).





Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdouopOuj2s, Accessed: June 13, 2025.

 $\textbf{Fig 51:} \ \textbf{The Penang International Marathon}$

Conclusion

The author has always viewed architecture as a system consisting of Environment, Man, Boundaries and Perspectives [7]. At the same time, it was extremely important for the author to experience architecture 'on the spot', in its authentic natural and social environment and with the people who created it. Many trips around the world (mainly participation in international scientific conferences and study trips) have enriched the author's 'architecturaldossier'^[7-57]. One such trip was the author's visit to Malaysia (3-7 November 2007) as part of an official visit of a delegation from the University of Sarajevo to the largest universities in Malaysia, the University of Science Malaysia and the University of Malaya (UM). The aim of the visit was to get to know the higher education system in Malaysia, through direct insight into several universities. Malaysia is known as a country that has achieved rapid and enormous progress in every respect since gaining independence (1957), where the commitment to higher education has been one of the most significant driving forces of development. The visit to George Town (Penang) and Kuala Lumpur [48] was extremely inspiring for the author, not only because he got to know a natural and social environment that is very different from the one in which he was born and raised, but also because there he realized that the world is a single whole in which information and knowledge are spreading at a rapid pace. Simultaneous authenticity and universality are the most important characteristics of architecture.

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