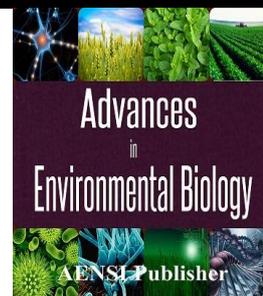




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## FengShui and Sustainable Design Applications in Interior Design – Case Study: Baba Nyonya Shophouses in Georgetown, Penang

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper investigates the applications of FengShui and Sustainable Design in Shophouses in Georgetown, Penang. The Shophouses examined are from the Baba-Nyonya period and remained as heritage buildings with Chinese cultural influence governed by FengShui. FengShui philosophy is one of the most important ancient Chinese principles for examining building sites and arranging interior spaces. The concept of FengShui has been gradually adopted and accepted in the current building construction trend. It has been found that, in many perspectives, there are similarities between the concepts of traditional Chinese FengShui where harmony among the environment, buildings and people are created; and the current issue of sustainable design that focuses on the harmonious relationship between human and nature. This investigation employed a qualitative research approach by reviewing existing literature on adopted theoretical framework in explaining the relationship between FengShui and sustainable design. This paper is conceptual and it used secondary data from published journals. It was found that the FengShui and sustainable design principles are applied and interrelated in buildings of Baba-Nyonya Shophouses. Finally, to clarify the relationships of sustainable design and FengShui environmental design concepts in interior design of Baba-Nyonya Shophouses Georgetown - Penang.

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### INTRODUCTION

Shophouses in Penang has many valued qualities are from colonial period and remained as heritage buildings with Chinese cultural influence governed by FengShui, which community concern to protect and enhance it is history, architecture, culture and strong sense of community. The applications sustainable design of Georgetown - Penang Shophouses is addressed to trace memories of the past, present and conservation of on features FengShui for the future condition in those. FengShui is a body of ancient Chinese knowledge that aims at creating a harmony between environment, buildings and people. in terms It has influenced most traditional building design in China for thousands of years. With a desire to improve the relationship between humanity and the environment, there is an increasing interest for architects and other building professionals to apply the concepts of FengShui into building design and the built environment. However, It is suggested that interpreting FengShui knowledge would embrace the western concept of sustainable design [1]. In other hand. Sustainable design is the philosophy of designing the built environment to comply with the principles of economic, social and ecological sustainability[2]. Sustainable design emphasizes on a holistic approach to eliminate negative environmental impact through skilful and sensitive design. The goal of sustainable design is to look at all the systems together and to make sure they work in harmony. This integrative design process is similar to the Chinese holistic view and the FengShui approach to the built environment[3]. This paper investigates the relationships between the concepts of FengShui and sustainable design in environmental design using secondary data of heritage sustainable buildings of Baba-Nyonya Shophouses in Georgetown-Penang . Firstly, the principles and practices of FengShui in environmental design are briefly explained. Then, a set of FengShui concepts in terms of elements design in Shophouses are identified. Finally, to clarify the relationships of sustainable design and FengShui environmental design concepts in interior design of Baba-Nyonya Shophouses Georgetown - Penang.

*Methodology:*


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This study attempts to review existing literature on FengShui and Sustainable Design , To examine the applications of FengShui and Sustainable Design in Interior Design of the Baba-NyonyaShophouses in Georgetown, Penang . This paper is conceptual and used secondary data within FengShui and Sustainable Design resource to reinterpret the existing that the Fengshui and Sustainable Design principles are applied and interrelated in Shophouses building. Secondary data were collected from published journals. However, secondary data are indispensable for most of the researches. Secondary data refer to information gathered by someone other than the researcher conducting the current study. There are several sources of secondary data , including books and periodicals, published journals and another archival records – sources of secondary data – provide a lot of information for research and problem solving [4] .

#### *Findings and Discussion:*

##### *(i) FengShui and Sustainable Design:*

The concept of Sustainable Design in the western world only dates back three decades ago in dealing with the harmonious relationship between human and nature. Furthermore, interactions between humans and environments are a part of an everyday process. In western contemporary architecture, these interactions with the natural and man-made environment is called Sustainable Design . Both FengShui and Sustainable Design principles are concerned with nature energy, and cycles. Nature, from the Sustainable Design perspective, refers to the physical environment such as water, soil, air, and so on. From the FengShui perspective, nature includes both natural elements and their cultural meanings. The ecological approach used by Sustainable Design emphasizes protecting the natural environment and people's health, the cultural approach used by FengShui emphasizes building an auspicious place for people to inhabit [5]. Hence too ,FengShui the ancient Chinese knowledge literally means "wind and water." The main goal of this ancient art is to living harmony with the land ,such that one derives the greatest benefits ,peace and prosperity from being in perfect equilibrium with Nature and aims at creating a harmony between heaven, earth and human in terms influenced most traditional built environmental design in Baba-NyonyaShophouses for many years.

##### *(ii) An Influence of Chinese Cultural Architecture in Georgetown – Penang:*

The Chinese of South China came to Malaysia in the great numbers. Today and they quickly established their Shophouses and dwelled in them, in Georgetown. However, the role of the Chinese traditional changes very rapid in Malaysia since the late 1900s, and hence their impact on the Chinese community was very significance. China town is located in Penang within the grid of early George Town, Each of these groups had their regional tradition in terms of dialect, customs, cuisine as well as arts and architecture. Secondly, for major buildings to be built, the basic FengShui followed would be “turn away from Yin and embrace Yang”. That means the building is backed by all or high land and faces the sea. Baba-Nyonya Shophouses were built in rows along streets and had a uniform and continuous facade.

##### *(iii) The Shophouses in Georgetown Penang:*

A Shophouses contains specific architectural features representative of the traditional FengShui in the southern part of China and Southeast Asia during the colonial era in the 19th the early 20th centuries [6]. They were built to cater to the business needs of the community in a compact urban setting. Shophouses have narrow frontage with a covered pedestrian walkway at the front, contributing to walk ability and efficiency in all weathers. The balcony and veranda provide a responsive Sustainable Design to the hot and humid tropical climate of south-east Asia .The Penang Baba-NyonyaShophouses is a perfect example of a Sustainable building, using materials that are locally available (lime, clay stone and timber) and suited to local geology and weather conditions. A Shophouses also possessing architectural features of FengShui such as air vents and air - well that help with natural ventilation and cooling [7].

The Baba Nyonya families, made up of a Chinese trader with a local wife, preferred to reside right in the heart of the business district, as traders often considered the location where they first got their “big break” to be lucky. The Baba Nyonya residential Shophouses and dwelling houses are a form all their own, celebrated throughout Penang and the region. Whether business or residential, each Shophouse shares a few common characteristics Each includes an intricately decorated air vent, commonly featuring the image of a peony (symbolizing wealth) and the bat (symbolizing good fortune). Their façades reflect the time in which they were made, with simple single-shuttered second-storey windows representing the early South Chinese style, while the more intricately designed triple-arched and shuttered second storey windows represent the later Straits Eclectic phase. The buildings themselves originally took to the Malay timber and atap materials, but after a series of fires, they were soon replaced with brick. The Chinese residential Shophouses provides a perfect balance between function and symbolism. Designed to utilize every bit of space, each dwelling house has the same basic features a Chinese screen a few feet back from the doorway to hold back bad energy, a courtyard providing ventilation and natural sunlight, a Chinese altar, and intricately designed doors, often featuring images of vases (tranquillity and peace) and peaches (longevity). By the early 20th century, the Straits Chinese house became

popularised. As wealth began to rise, it was not uncommon to see an ornately furnished dwelling house. Perhaps the most materially ornate houses in Penang, as well as the most culturally diverse, are the mansions of Southeast Asia's richest man. Penang's famous green Peranakan Mansion, a townhouse once owned by Chung KengKooi, the Kapitan China of Perak, features Cantonese glassworks, Scottish iron gates, European floors, and a vaguely Venetian exterior. The Blue Mansion, the foremost capitalist Cheong FattTze's most grand abode, features art nouveau stained glass windows, Victorian floor tiles, and timber wall decorations. The five elements of FengShui symbolically sculpted on the ends of gable ends. Largely built according to the principles of FengShui, the Straits Chinese houses promote a sense of calm and wellbeing, or good chi [8].

Finally, the beliefs among the Chinese in supernatural spirits have been a primary concern in erecting any building. The concept of FengShui, which is a geomantic system by which orientation of sites are determined in pursuance of harmonic relationships with the cosmic forces. Ornamental symbolism plays an important part in the conveyance of meaning in placement. The use of bright colours such as red, orange and yellow has become a characteristic of the Chinese buildings in which these colours represent an ethnic rite. The emphasis of ornamentation on the temple and association buildings is considered important among Chinese believers[9].

#### *Conclusion:*

Throughout this paper it has been explained the relationship between FengShui and Sustainable Design according to some source of secondary data To give a simple overview about the FengShui and Sustainable Design applications in interior design the Shophouses of Georgetown, Penang Baba-NyonyaShophouses are historic heritage which have unique characteristic in Penang . The fast economic growth challenges for the changes of physical environment and human behaviour which are usually based on an economic orientation. In addition, there are new developments inPenang . These affect the old Shophouses and their history and principles of FengShui may be lost. The old Baba-NyonyaShophouses are being changed; people modified them, ignored the architecture characteristics and abandoned them. Conservation is needed. This problem identified could be overcome by giving enough to understand the concept of FengShui and Sustainable Design principles in maintaining the identity of the place and also to maintain the specificities and aesthetics elements carried by the Shophouses for future generations. For the future research, one should find more application of FengShui to improve modern design understanding of environment and Sustainable Design in interior design of Shophouses .

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