JAVANESE TRADITIONAL HOUSES IN MUAR

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ABSTRACT

The richness of Johor as an economy center that developed in the late of 19th century influenced the migration of various ethnics. The arrival of these ethnic groups is not only due to the prosperity of the economy in Johor but due to various internal factors that occur in their homeland. Javanese is one of the ethnic groups that migrated to the state. According to a study conducted by researchers before, there are several areas in Johor which attract Javanese people namely Muar, Batu Pahat and Pontian. Other areas also inhabited by the ethnic group, but their numbers are few. This study is to identify the architecture of traditional Javanese house in Muar. Three houses was selected as case studies based on an inventory. The research are also using measured drawings, documentation, photography and interviews as methodology. Based on the information obtained, comparison between traditional houses will be carried out. From this study, the architectural features of the Java community in Muar will be identified.

Keyword: Javanese, traditional, houses, Muar

1. Introduction

The glory of Johor began during the reign of Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah III when the threat of Portuguese and Aceh end in 1641 (Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali and Zainal Abidin Borhan, 1994). Due to that, Johor became a famous trade center and influence entry from various ethnics whether to trade or to emigrate. According to Barbara W. Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya (1983), the fall of Johor trade center began after Britain opened a new trade center in Singapore in 1819.

The openness of Johor was influenced by the location of Singapore Port which becomes entrance of migrants to Johor. Johor not only situated in a strategic location which in South Peninsula and close to Singapore's entrepot but also rich with natural resources and fertile for commercial agriculture.
purposes. Singapore's success as an entrepot center has spill over to Johor. Most investors will expand their economic activities to Johor especially in agriculture and mining. However, it does not last long when the falling of gambir price in 1839 followed by shortage of forests as firewood for cooking gambir. This causes traders and investors from various countries coming to Johor because of fertile and undiscovered jungle (Kassim Thukiman, 2011).

Johor economic activities rapidly begin in 18th century. Agriculture activity which formerly traditionally carried out has been cultivated commercially. Thus, the number of labor required is increasing. According to Kassim Thukiman (2011), Javanese is most interested in coming to Malaya. Their most significant migration is in 1880’s. According to Awang Sariyan (2009), the continuity of their arrival in early 19th and 20th century is due to the similarity of living in terms of political, social, economic, race, religion, beliefs and way of life. Migration factor is due to poverty from political and economic issue in Java (Mohd Akbal bin Abdullah., & Rafiuddin Afkari Abdul Fatah, 2013). In addition to encouragement from Sultan Abu Bakar cause them more eager to migrate to Johor.

In 1910, the Indian contract labor has been eliminated. In early 20th century, farmers' associations have encouraged the presence of Javanese labour to replace labour from India. They involved in commercial agricultural activities such as coffee and rubber plantations. They come to Johor via Singapore either at their own expense or through the sheikh system (Kassim Thukiman, 2011).

In early development of Johor, Javanese ethnic is said to be most involved in exploring west region of Johor. Area that have been explore will be marked with plants and trench. There more they explore, the more ownership of land acquired (Gurupiah binti Mursib et al, 2013). Their exploration is focus at Muar, Batu Pahat and Pontian because this area is near to their homeland. The area was name as ‘parit’ to describe the construction of trenches that are made as irrigation to agriculture area and also formed a settlement (Awang Sariyan, 2009).

2. Javanese Settlement

According to Cahaya Jauhar Sdn Bhd (2014), Muar is part of the Majapahit Empire that existed in the early 13th century. It is said that Parameswara fled from Temasek and resident in Pagoh, Ulu Muar before Melaka. Two forts were built in the 15th century to prevent attacks from Portuguese, Dutch and Acheh. The agreement between British and Johor cause isolation of the reign in Muar. The isolation was until Jementah War in 1879. Starting from 1884, Sultan Abu Bakar appoints Datuk Bentara Luar, Muhammad Salieh Perang to develop Muar. In 1890, Bandar Maharani becomes administrative and largest business center in West Coast of Johor. The main economic trades are gambir, black pepper, dried nuts, coffee, and fruit.

Before middle of 19th century, a group of Malays were found along Sungai Muar, Kesang and nearby village. The area was led by seven Penghulu, three of them were Penghulu Besar. Each area were built with a mosque to enable them perform Friday prayer (Malik Munip, 1972). According Noriah and Kamdi Mohamed Kamil (2011), a total of 14,659 Javanese people were in 1911. The number increased to 22.089 persons in 1921. In appreciation of their involvement in developing areas in Muar, a village was named as Parit Jawa. Parit Jawa was formerly known as ‘kampung baru’ which covered with thick forest. The area was develop by Haji Jabar Madjati with 40 Javanese people and began to be known around 1870-1871.
3. Research Methodology

For this study, the data obtained is based on the inventory conducted by Center For The Study Of Built Environment In The Malay World in 2012 and data from the researcher. According to the inventory, 91 traditional Malay houses in Muar were found to have high architectural value. Their settlement is located at Lenga, Jorak, Sungai Paya, Sungai Terap, Bandar, Parit Jawa, Jalan Bakri, Parit Bakar, Seri Menanti and Sungai Balang. None were found in Ayer Hitam sub district because most of the traditional houses have undergone renovation.

From 91 traditional houses, 7 traditional houses belong to Javanese, 11 traditional houses are Malay, 8 traditional houses are combination of Javanese and Malay ethnic, 2 traditional houses are combination of Bugis and Malays, 2 traditional houses are combination of Riau and Malay, 4 of them are Bugis traditional house and combination of Bugis and Riau, Javanese and Bugis and combination of Malay and Javanese 1 traditional house for each.

From the inventory, they also found 50 unidentified ethnic. Some of the houses are abandon but most of the houses are occupied by younger generation. They do not aware about the history and background of their ancestry. From 91 houses, only 3 houses were selected as case study because of the uniqueness.
4. Case Studies

The case studies involve 3 Javanese traditional houses in Muar. They are:

a. Rumah Selami binti Haji Ahmad

![Figure 4.1: Floor plan and front elevation](source: Researcher)

The house is located at Kampung Selancar, Pagoh. The house is about 80 years old and was built in 1930’s. Nowadays, the house is inhabited by Cik Selami binti Haji Ahmad after the death of her parents. The house consists of serambi terbuka (refer figure 4.1 (i)) with double staircase to serambi dalam (refer figure 4.1 (ii)) and anjung (refer figure 4.1 (iii)). From anjung to rumah ibu, they still maintain their original architecture while rumah dapur has been renovated.

b. Rumah Sawiran bin Satam

![Figure 4.2: Floor plan and front elevation](source: Center For the Study of Built Environment in the Malay World, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor Bahru)

The house is about 75 years old and it was built in 1940’s. It is located at Kampung Semerah Tengah, Air Hitam. The house is still occupied by house owner but in a bad condition. It is consist of serambi terbuka (refer figure 4.2 (i)), serambi dalam (refer figure 4.2 (ii)), anjung (refer figure 4.2 (iii)), rumah ibu (refer figure 4.2 (iv)), selang (refer figure 4.2 (v)) and rumah dapur (refer figure 4.2 (vi)). The house was design with two staircases to connect serambi terbuka and serambi dalam. The second entrance of the house is from selang which were used by woman. The house did not equipped with bedroom but only using curtains as room dividers. At rumah dapur, they design a drying rack to dry the clean dishes. The specialty of this house is they cook on the ground and application of jack roof to let the smoke out from the room.
c. Rumah Anuar bin Haji Shukor

![Floor plan and front elevation](image)

Figure 4.3: Floor plan and front elevation  
Source: Researcher

The house is located at Kampung Bukit Rahmat. According to the owner, it is more than 100 years and still occupied by his family. The house was design with no *anjung* but has transformed *serambi dalam* (refer figure 4.3 (i)) as welcome area. It consists of 2 staircases which connect *serambi dalam*. The architecture of this house is categories as *rumah bumbung perabung lima*. At the beginning of house construction, *rumah dapur* is built higher than the ground level but due to the damage of building materials, it was moved to the ground floor. The house is decorated with carvings at wall of *rumah ibu* (refer figure 4.2 (i)), *papan jerejak* and on top of the window to describe the status of house owner.
5. Analysis

The analysis will include information from inventory conducted and measured drawings by the Center for the Study of the Built Environment Malay World (KALAM). The process involves an analysis of the site plan, floor plan, front elevation, right and left elevation. From the analysis, the comparison between Javanese traditional houses in Muar will obtained.

a. Site plan

The site plans for each house were analyzed to get the land division and land lot size, house placement and relationship between life and plant. The site plan orientation will use road as basis for analyze. The site will divided into 3 sections to easy identify the plantation in the house area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rumah Selami binti Haji Ahmad</th>
<th>Rumah Rumah Anuar bin Haji Shukor</th>
<th>Rumah Sawiran bin Satam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Site Plan" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Site Plan" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Site Plan" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.1: (i) land lot size (ii)(iii) land division (iv) house placement (a) rectangular land lot size (b) elongated rectangle

b. Floor plan

The floor plan is analyzed to get the division spaces for Javanese traditional houses in Muar. The analyzed involve front area, middle area and intermediate area until *rumah ibu*. The location of spaces either on the left or right of the house and number of bedrooms and stairs that are include for this study.
Rumah Selami binti Haji Ahmad
Rumah Sawiran bin Satam
Rumah Anuar bin Haji Shukor

Source: Researcher
Source: Center For the Study of Built Environment in the Malay World, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor Bahru
Source: Researcher

Figure 5.2: Floor plan of traditional houses

c. Front, Right and Left Elevation

The analysis involves space division hierarchy based on façade division to get the proportion of houses. The façade division is divided into horizontal and vertical. Horizontal division is divided into 3 sections which from ground level until floor joist, from floor joist until ceiling and from ceiling until roof. Vertical division is based on column placement to get the placement of door, window, staircase and carving.

i. Front elevation

Source: Researcher
Source: Center For the Study of Built Environment in the Malay World, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor Bahru
Source: Researcher

Figure 5.3: Front elevation with vertical, horizontal division and proportion for each house
6.0 Findings

From the analysis, there are a few findings that have been identified, namely:

a. Site plan:

There are two types of land division which are rectangular (refer Figure 5.1 (a)) and elongated rectangle (refer Figure 5.1 (b)). For Javanese people, their plantation is close to their house. The plantation is located either at front area or at the backyard. The house orientation is not facing qiblat but using road as main orientation. Placement of the houses are built further away from roads to enable various activities carried out in this area such as gamelan, wayang kulit, kompang, kuda kepang and barongan (Noriah Mohamed dan Kamdi Kamil, 2011). Placement of plants for rumah Anuar and Sawiran are more structured compared to rumah Selami. Even so, they use trees and trench as lot divider. Trenches is an important component in designing Javanese traditional house either small trench or border tranch. It is used as drainage to allow irrigation to plantation area which location near to the house (Awang Sariyan, 2009). From 3 houses, only rumah Sawiran plant...
their front area with subsistence plantation such as coconut, rubber, pineapple and fruits while rumah Selami and Anuar, they only plant decorative plants in front of their house. On the right side, most of the houses plant a decorative plants, food crops and herbs. According to Fawazul Khair bin Ibrahim et al. (2012), for Javanese people, they consume many herbs as medicines. Therefore, herbs is plant near to the house specially kitchen area because easy to reach. On the left side, most of the house is planted with decorative plants and fruit trees while at the backyard most of the houses were planted with subsistence plants such as coconut, palm oil, fruit trees and food crops.

b. Floor plan:

The division of these three houses are the same, starting with intermediate area, front area and middle area. Mostly intermediate space is on the left and is equipped with two stairs before entering front area. It is use as welcoming space for guest. For front area, the two houses which are rumah Selami and Sawiran have anjung while rumah Anuar do not have anjung. The area is provided with a lot of windows to allow ventilation and lighting because it is use as gathering spaces. For middle area, two houses which is rumah Anuar and Selami is design at least with 1 bedroom while no bedroom for rumah Sawiran. Even so, for rumah Sawiran, they use curtains or partition to form a bedroom. The room is still used as a sleeping room for family members even with curtains to form the division of the bedrooms.

c. Front elevation:

Proportions of these three houses are different. Rumah Selami is more balanced compared to other two houses. The three houses are using tingkap labuh with carvings at papan jerejak and on top of the window. From one column to another column, at least have one window. Only one house have door at front elevation which is rumah Anuar. The construction for all houses are using vertical wall.

d. Right elevation:

Figure 6.1: (a) tingkap labuh (b) normal window (c) small window (d) papan jerejak
Analysis showed the opening for this façade is only window opening. They use tingkap labuh (refer figure 6.1 (a)), normal window (refer figure 6.1 (b)) and small window (refer figure 6.1 (c)). Carvings still found at papan jerejak (refer figure 6.1 (d)) and on top of window for tingkap labuh while for normal window, the carving only found on top of window for rumah Anuar. They remain vertical wall construction for this façade.

e. Left elevation:

On the left side, they still remain the use of tingkap labuh with carving on top of the window and papan jerejak. Tingkap labuh was located at front area until middle area which is rumah ibu. Nevertheless, only rumah Sawiran use normal window at rumah ibu. The door opening can be found at this façade due to location of serambi luar which at the left side. Serambi luar is built without wall. Wall still remain vertical construction as front and right elevation.

7.0 Conclusion

From the findings, it shows that the ownership of land is based on the exploration area. The more you explore, the broader your land ownership be. Surrounding crops are based on the space function. For example, kitchen is use as cooking area. Therefore, crops located near to the kitchen are for cooking or use as medical purposes. So they will plant herbs and food crops. Implementation of element for each façade is depending on view of public toward that façade. For example, front elevation is the main view for most of the house. The façade must show the beauty of that house. Usually, this façade will be decorated with carvings and ornamentation. For façade with less view to the public, they will minimize the beauty for that façade.

Acknowledgement

Appreciation to Ministry of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, researchers and whom involved in preparing this paper under vot no 4F433.
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