

PRAGMATISM AND SYMBOLISM IN MALAY TRADITIONAL ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE: KAMPUNG TUAN MOSQUE

PRAGMATISME DAN SIMBOLISME SENI BINA ISLAMIK MELAYU TRADISIONAL: MASJID KAMPUNG LAUT

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Abstract

Mosque is one of the common architecture in Malaysia since the country itself is an Islamic country. The designs vary; some were made based on the onion-shaped dome which is an influence from the Mughal's empire and others were made as a landmark for a certain area. The design of enormous domes, tall minarets, and huge scale space can be considered as typical mosque layout but some traditional mosques had been altered from its original layout which messed up the philosophy behind the initial structures. Although it can be understood that renovations of adding new elements and spaces to the original layout is to accommodate the current population, it is still important to preserve as well as to conserve the traditional and heritage values of these buildings as they represent the early Islamic architecture of Malaysia. This paper will take a depth on the study of mosques architecture in Terengganu, one of the states located in the East side of Malaysia which have a number of mosques range from the 1800s to 1900s. Many were made as vernacular architecture with influences from the Middle East countries

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designs along with the injection of the Islamic principles and values. For the purpose of this paper, a traditional mosque situated in Kampung Tuan is focused as the main subject. The pragmatic concept and symbolic meaning behind the building components is elaborate in relation with Islamic values.

Keywords: pragmatism and symbolism, mosque architecture, building components and elements.

Abstrak

Masjid adalah seni bina yang banyak terdapat di Malaysia memandangkan negara ini adalah sebuah negara Islam. Terdapat pelbagai variasi pada seni bina masjid; ada yang berkubah seperti bentuk bawang, iaitu bentuk yang dipengaruhi dari empayar Mughal dan ada masjid yang dibina sebagai mercu tanda sesebuah kawasan. Seni bina masjid dengan kubah besar, menara yang tinggi dan ruang legar yang luas boleh dianggap sebagai rekaan susun atur yang biasa dibuat untuk masjid namun akibat dari kerja baik-pulih, terdapat beberapa masjid lama yang telah diubah. Sebagai akibat, falsafah di sebalik struktur awal masjid tradisional itu juga terkesan. Walaupun kerja pengubahsuaian adalah perlu bagi menampung keperluan masyarakat semasa, namun aspek pemeliharaan serta pemuliharaan nilai tradisi perlu diambil kira kerana seni bina tersebut adalah warisan seni bina Islam awal di Malaysia. Kertas kerja ini meninjau seni bina masjid di Terengganu, sebuah negeri di Pantai Timur Malaysia yang mempunyai beberapa masjid dari tahun 1880-an hingga 1900-an. Kebanyakan masjid tersebut adalah seni bina vernakular (tempatan) dengan pengaruh dari negara Timur Tengah dan mempunyai suntikan prinsip serta nilai Islam. Kertas kerja ini menumpukan Masjid Kampung Tuan yang terletak di Kemaman sebagai subjek utama dengan membincangkan konsep pragmatik dan maksud simbolik komponen binaan masjid tersebut serta kaitannya dengan nilai Islam.

Kata kunci: pragmatisme dan simbolisme, seni bina masjid, elemen dan komponen binaan.

Introduction

'ISLAM' is an Arabic word, which derived from the word '*aslama*'; meaning submitted and pronounced as '*salm*' which means peace (Khurshid Ahmad & Salem Azzam, 2002). Islam literally means commitment and obedience, stands for believe in one God and in all prophets and Muhammad (pbuh) as the last prophet, the messenger of His divine as revealed through the Qu'ran. Islam is a complete way of life. It integrates man with God (Allah SWT), awakens man through moral consciousness and difficulties in order to narrow the gaps of man and Allah. By performing prayers, the Muslims are able to converse with Allah about the misery and his sorrow in the worldly life. Thus, prayers and worship are the obligations made compulsory for Muslims as servants of Allah in this world. Islam spiritualizes the entire existence of man with the guidance of principles revealed by Allah. Muslims are guided with revelation of the Quran and also beliefs in the pillars of Islam and the pillars of faith (*Iman*). Islam is outward manifestation (*zahir*), *Iman* is in the heart (*batin*) and *Ihsan* applied to both Islam and *Iman*. There are five prominent beliefs in the pillars of Islam and six beliefs in the pillars of faith as stated below:

Pillars of Islam (*Rukun Islam*)

- Recitation of verse (*khalimah*)
- Prayer
- Fasting in the month of Ramadhan
- Charity (*zakat*)
- Pilgrimage of *Hajj*

Pillars of Faith (*Rukun Iman*)

- Belief in God (Allah)
- Belief in the Angels (*Malaikat*)
- Belief in the Book (*Qu'ran*)
- Belief in the Messengers
- Belief in the Last day (*Kiamat*)
- Belief in the certainties (*Qada'* and *Qadr*)

These concepts which represent Islam as a whole are also applied in the world of architecture. Buildings are made to portray Islam and create Islamic identity which is unique in terms of the designs, philosophies and etcetera.

Islamic Built Environment

All things have been created with purpose in proportions and measures (Al-Qamar, verse 49). The concept of environment in Islam is described in the Qur'an concerning that everything, may it be in heaven or earth; the sun, the moon, the stars, the hills, the trees, the animals and a great number among human mankind (Al-Hajj, verse 18). The Islamic methodology in dealing with the environment as God's faithful servant is where the Prophet (pbuh) presented in his numerous words and actions (Omer, 2002). One of the illustrations is the usage of date palm trunk to stand his mosque in Medina during Friday prayer to deliver his sermon (*khutbah*) before he got the pulpit (*minbar*). Man as vicegerent on earth should derived the usage of environment and God's creation within built environment. The built environment with thoughts and teachings of Islam is referred as Islamic architecture.

Islamic Architecture

There are many scholarly views regarding Islamic architecture but in general, Islamic architecture is considered as a place to worship Allah. Pure Islamic architecture is the architecture of form, design, and functions which are based on the Islamic principles and added with the spirit and values of Islam (Omer, 2002). In addition, it helps to upgrade and stimulate the level of worship of a being as a vicegerent on earth to his Lord with the facilities and activities that the architecture offers. Islamic architecture had widely spread to continents such as Mongolia to Madagascar, from Indonesia to Andalusia and even further, as a result from the Spanish colonization which transform the developed Andalusian Arab culture to America. The beauty of Islamic architecture does not really concentrate on the external outcome of the building, or the façade of the building but more likely to be penetrated into the contents and understand the imagination of the creator.

Islamic architecture facilitates and encourages Muslims' *ibadah* based on the guidance of the perception of God, man, nature, life, death and hereafter. Islamic architecture is a process that starts from intentions to build, planning, designing, stages of construction and the outcome is the results of how people make use and gain benefits from the building (Omer, 2010). There are various forms of Islamic architecture but mosque is a dominant icon that signifies Muslims with people of other religions.

This study is conducted to identify the adaptability and influence of Islamic architecture in the built environment. Mosque is the truly centre of a Muslim's life and one of the most significant type of building to denote the existence of the followers of Islam. Among the earliest mosques are Al-Haram Mosque, Nabawi Mosque and Quba' Mosque which were built during the Prophets' period. After the demise of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), several other mosques were built and still standing until today including Kufah Mosque in Iran (625AD), Ommayyad Mosque in Damascus, Syria (702 AD), Cordoba Mosque in Spain (768 AD) and Ibn Tulun Mosque in Cairo, Egypt (876 AD). The concept of mosque in the early period was simple and without any heavy structural demands. In the beginning of the Islamic history, the concept of mosque was very humble compared to the present concept. Nevertheless, nowadays many mosques have been elaborated with huge domes, minarets, minbars, mihrab and grand prayer halls (Muhammad Adil Khan Afridi, 2011). In Malaysia, the constructions and design of modern mosques gain negative views and perspectives from the public especially the Muslim users. People expressed that mosque nowadays does not reflect Islamic symbolism because of the architectural styles and forms which are modern and futuristic. However, since the early period, mosques architecture in Malaysia had been influenced with foreign architectural styles including the Moorish, Moghuls and Chinese according to the settlement and the year those mosques were built. For instance, the oldest mosque in Kuala Lumpur, Jamek Mosque was influenced by the Moorish style which is well accepted in the past and present. The architectural styles and forms in Malaysia are most likely referring to the vernacular architecture where the materials, constructions and forms are based on local sources. Malaysia Islamic architecture has embraced many forms and external influence throughout the centuries in response to climatic, technological and socio-political concerns (Mohamad Tajuddin Mohamad Rasdi, 2007).

Pragmatism and Symbolism in Malaysia Islamic Architecture

The pragmatism evolution in mosque architecture in Malaysia and elsewhere in the world is due to several environment factors including climate, geography, culture and traditions, economy, community and building technology. It is also meant to cater the improvement and civilization of Muslims' living standards and the growth of Muslims' population. There are many ways to build a mosque depending on the condition of the surrounding environment. Mosque architecture

demonstrates the influence and existence of local culture to its design approach. The prominent design of mosque architecture in Malaysia emphasizes on the onion-shaped domes which have been practiced and adapted for several periods of time. Although there is no *fatwa* or specific regulations in constructing a mosque, Muslims have naturally set a standard form of Islamic buildings that should portray Islamic symbolism which encompasses several basic principles; tawhid (oneness in Allah), Man as Khalifah (vicegerent), environment as Allah's faithful servant, Ihsan (comprehensive excellence) and Islam as final and universal revelation (Omer, 2008). Besides that, mosque should be based on the spirit and teachings of the Prophet's mosque, not on the form and scale of the layout (Mohamad Tajuddin Mohamad Rasdi, 2007).

The noted language of mosque architecture, such as the minarets, the courtyards, the pulpit (*minbars*), the domes, the arches and the decorative elements should not be seen as the religious symbols of Islam. The symbol as a religious building should be preached behind the building components and elements which been initiated by the creator. Symbolism describes the act or thoughts which represent something important and relevant. Islamic architecture does not accept any rigidity, formalism and symbolism in its structural form but implies on the creativity and design freedom behind the structural layout. In this respect, this study investigates the symbolism of mosques in relation to the Islamic principles. The arrival of Islam in the Malay World is believed to happen around the 7th century A.D. based on the spread of *dakwah* by merchants and missionaries from the Middle East to China. By the 13th to 16th century, Islam had spread widely throughout the Malay Archipelago and decreased the influence of Hindu-Buddhist religion which were practiced for centuries by the locals. Since then, Islam had been accepted and became the main religion of majority people in the Malay Archipelago.

Mosque Architecture

The word "mosque" originated from the Arabic word of "*masjid*" which means a place of prostration where Muslims can bow their head to the ground as an act of submission to God that is required by their faith. There are no specific designs and details required and indeed, it might properly be argued that even a single wall is unnecessary based on the saying by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh); "*Wherever you pray, that place is a mosque*". During the early period, mosque was used as a place for

gathering as Muslims met to perform congregational prayers as well as for social, communal and educational activities. When building a mosque, Muslims together with their Prophet (pbuh) demonstrated their perception of the concrete relationship of a mosque with their surrounding environment. Date palm trees were used at the site to allocate the Prophet (pbuh) mosque. The trees were cut down as an alignment heading towards the *qiblat*. The trunks were used until the mosque was then rebuilt by the caliph Uthman ibn Affan and was taken away by other companion until it was eaten naturally by wood worms. Though mosque was initially constructed using simple materials and layout, it was then expanded to cater the increasing numbers of Muslims followers. The rationality and the strength of mosque reflects the strength of Muslims' community; in terms of their thoughts, performances, strategies and aspirations. As stated in the Qur'an in Surah Ali Imran, verse 110:

*“Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind,
enjoying what is right, forbidding what is wrong and
believing in God”.*

The Arrival of Islam in Terengganu

Terengganu situated on the coordinate of the vertical line of 102.25' – 103.5' and on horizontal line of 4.5' – 5'. The north and the northwest part are near to Kelantan, while the south and the southwest part are next to Pahang. The east side is the South China Sea. The arrival of Islam in Terengganu can be explained by the discovery of the stone inscriptions or “*Batu Bersurat*”, dated 1303 A.D. where Terengganu was ruled by Raja Mandalika Seri Paduka Tuan who ruled Terengganu with Islamic teachings. The inscriptions on the *Batu Bersurat* mentioned about the arrival of Islam in Terengganu.

Architecture in Terengganu

Rapid economic development in Malaysia increases the number of modern buildings in Malaysia. Although this shows that Malaysia has advance in the building system, it however resulted in degradation of heritage and traditional buildings. Malay traditional architecture is one of the most valuable heritage that represents unique identity and symbol of cultural customs of cooperation, diligence and patience of Malay

culture and shows the close relationship to the surrounding environment. It represents the identity and life of integration between the communities with their environment. The components and elements in traditional heritage buildings usually represent symbolic meaning behind its construction including social values, elements of perceptions and world view of the local communities. The beauty and the uniqueness of traditional architecture includes the work of local craftsmen which contained aesthetic values of their soul and specialties.

Historically, the first ruler of Terengganu, Tun Zainal Abidin whom was crowned in 1708 A. D. was an officials from Johor but raised in Pattani. During his reign, Tun Zainal Abidin brought along his big families from Patani to settle in Kuala Terengganu. Therefore, traditional architecture in that state has influence from Thailand. This can evidently be seen in one of the prominent mosques in Kuala Terengganu, named Hikiran Mosque (Figure 1 and Figure 2).



Figure 1: The entrance of Hikiran Mosque, **Source:** Utusan, 2009.



Figure 2: Hikiran Mosque in Kuala Terengganu with influence from Thailand in the architectural design, **Source:** flickr, 2014.

Concept of Malay Traditional Architecture

Malay traditional architecture is a treasure of knowledge, competencies and tools generated by Malay craftsmen produced in the past to facilitate building according to the usage by the owner and communities around. Traditional architectures were made using local tools and equipments made from indigenous materials available and using suitable techniques such as mortise and so forth. There is not much difference between Terengganu traditional architecture compared to traditional architecture of other states. However, when study in depth, some prominent differences are found in terms of elements, components and building forms. Based on interview with local people, traditional mosques architecture in Terengganu were influenced from other countries which were brought in by the original owner but most of the buildings still have the basic of Malay traditional houses (Figure 3).

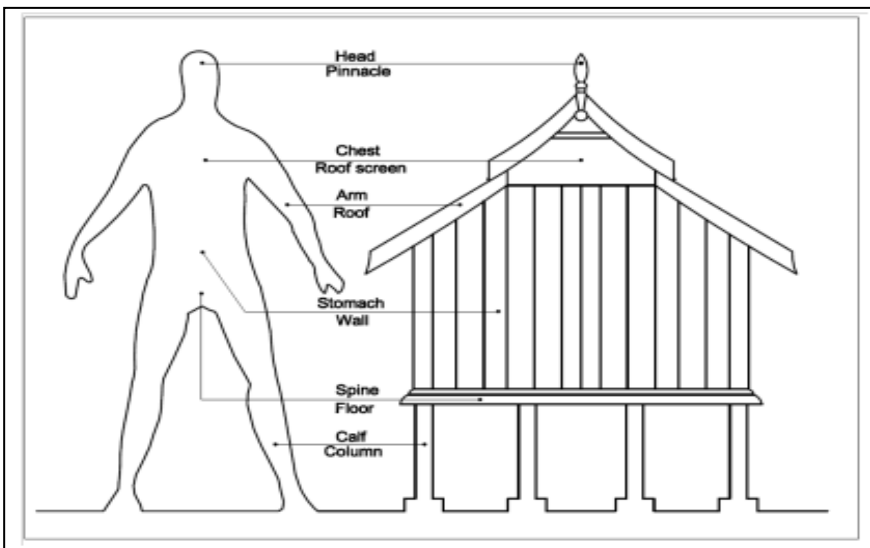


Figure 3: Malay traditional house concept compared with human's body,
Source: Abdul Halim Nazir, 1994.

Traditional people embedded symbolic meaning to their building components and elements. Symbolisms are hidden and require deep knowledge to examine and interpret the meaning. The upper part of human anatomy is the head where it contains brain, dictating the whole body part and is the most important part of human body. Similarly, traditional mosque architecture reflects the human head to the roof component. Roof symbolizes the skies which protect the whole

components of a building. Some traditional mosques such as Kampung Tuan Mosque were built with tiered roof for ventilation purposes. It indicates the head, neck and shoulder as in human. Most traditional buildings in Terengganu were installed with pinnacle (*Buah Guntung/ Buah Buton*), derived from the word *Guntung* which means high place. In addition, the pinnacle also symbolizes the substances (*Zat*) of Allah which cannot be compared and described with words.

Kampung Tuan Mosque, Chukai



Figure 4: Kampung Tuan Mosque in Chukai, Kemaman, Terengganu.

Kampung Tuan Mosque (shown in Figure 4) is also known as Tok Tuan Mosque or Sheikh Abdul Rahman Mosque. It was built in 1830 by local people. It is located in Kampung Tuan, about one kilometer from Chukai town, Kemaman near the Limbong river. The mosque was named after the founder's, Tuan Sheikh Abdul Rahman bin Sheikh Abdul Samad, a pious scholar from Pattani, Thailand. It is believed that Tuan Sheikh Abdul Rahman was the descendent of the Palembang royal family and the grandson of the Sultan of Palembang. Before arriving in Kemaman, Tuan Sheikh Abdul Rahman studied in Madinah, Makkah and Pattani. He came to Kemaman due to war in his country and lived in Kampung Tuan since 1810. Figure 5 shows the surrounding area of the mosque.

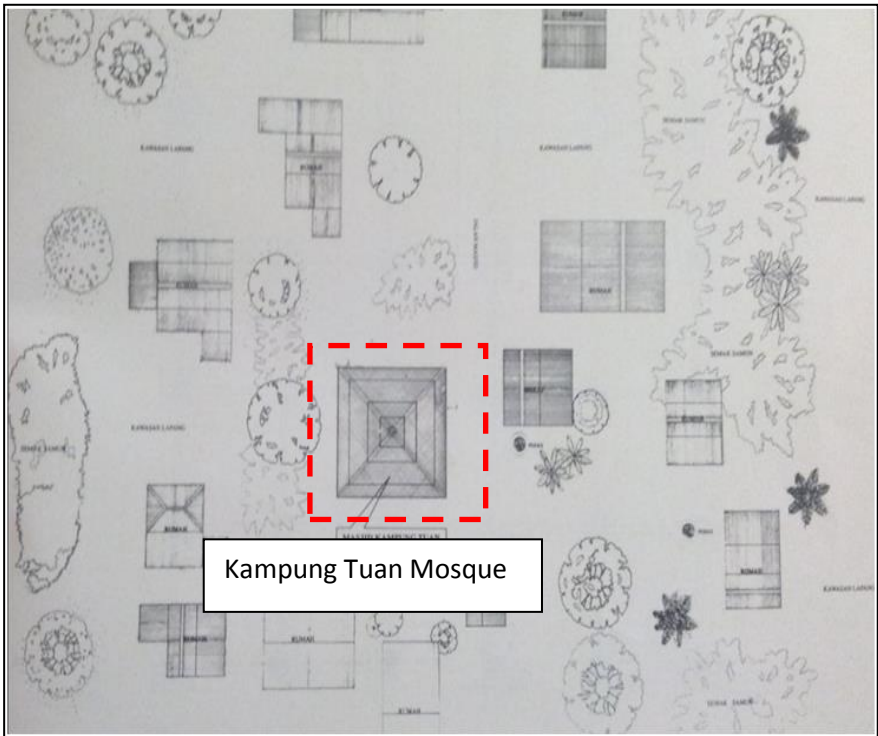


Figure 5: Site plan of Kampung Tuan Mosque as in year 1994

The mosque was the main focal at the area since it was the tallest building among others. There are no official documents about the history of the mosque. The story behind the construction of the mosque were gained through interviews with local people, building observation and other resources such as documents from museums and newspaper articles. The mosque served as a place for Islamic teachings during Sheikh Abdul Rahman's period. After he passed away, his son, Sheikh Abdul Samad took over his place and continued his late father's role in teaching. The mosque was also used as a venue for festive events and marriage ceremonies.

The Department of National Heritage had carried out conservation works on the mosque in 2006. The original structure was entirely built with *Chengal* and *Singgora* for the roof. It is said that the whole structure of the mosque were taken from a single *Chengal* tree and the *mihrab* was perforated from the same tree. Most traditional Malay houses in Terengganu used *Chengal* as the main building

material. There are four factors in selecting the right timber which are ease of obtaining, types of usage, physical strength and the wood spirit which is more of a belief (Ismail Said, 2006).

Kampung Tuan Mosque did not use any nails to connect components of the building but instead it used the traditional dowel constructions which prevent rusting to the building. Traditional construction joints such as peg (*Pasak*) and mortise were used to connect components which was a normal practice in traditional Terengganu architecture (Figure 6-8). The tools used to build the mosque however was unable to be identified due to the limited information on the construction of the mosque. However, information from locals; some were told and believed that the mosque was built with assistance from Muslims Jinns.



Figure 6: Floor joint of Kampung Tuan Mosque.



Figure 7: Column joint of Kampung Tuan Mosque.



Figure 8: Wall joint of Kampung Tuan Mosque.

Kampung Tuan Mosque Building Style and Influence

The building style of Kampung Tuan Mosque is similar to the typical Malay traditional house which used local materials, local design and local labour. Apart from that, the style was believed to have been influenced by the Nusantara architecture from Demak, Jawa and Patani. The original concept is similar to the early mosque in Patani in the aspect of simple plan layout which covers a wide single area. There is no internal wall compartment and the praying area for men and women is divided by removable partition. According to the local, initially the mosque was meant only for men since there was only one entrance and no space for women. However, women can now enter the mosque through the removable timber floor panel (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Removable timber floor panel of Kampung Tuan Mosque.

The design layout is similar in comparison to another old mosque located at Nilam Puri, Kelantan, called the Kampung Laut Mosque (Figure 10). Kampung Laut mosque was originally built without any nail and was constructed using traditional construction method as in the construction of Kampung Tuan Mosque. However, after relocation from its original site to Nilam Puri, some structures of Kampung Laut Mosque needed modification using modern methods to ensure the building stability. In terms of the design, both consist of numerous arts and symbolism which relates to the Islamic religion.



Figure 10: Kampung Laut Mosque at Nilam Puri, Kelantan as a comparison with Kampung Tuan Mosque.

Pragmatism and Symbolism in Kampung Tuan Mosque Architecture

Kampung Tuan Mosque is raised on stilts like most traditional buildings in the East Coast state due to flood problems and to avoid wild animals. From interviews with the local people, the layout of the mosque relates to the Islamic teachings and beliefs (Figure 11):

- The base symbolises “Islamic law” (*Syariat*).
- The first level symbolises “Path to God” (*Tariqat*).
- The second level symbolises “Righteousness” (*Hakikat*).
- The third level symbolises “Acknowledge Allah” (*Makrifat*).

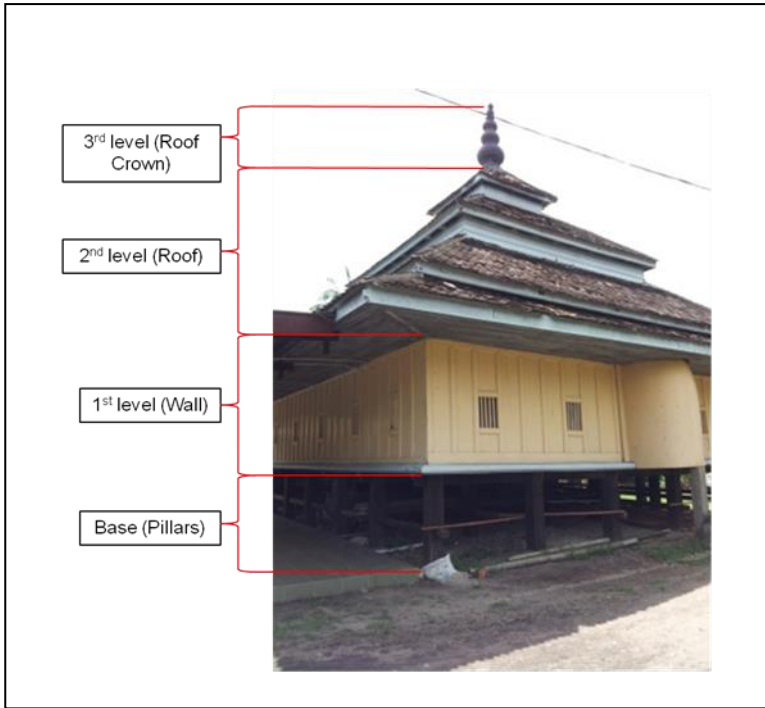


Figure 11: Building level of Kampung Tuan Mosque.

Roof Component and Elements

One of the prominent components is the four-tiered *Meru* roof (*Bumbung Meru*). Based on Islamic philosophy, the form resembles a pinnacle pointing towards the sky which symbolize greatness of the creator. The degree slope of the roof is suitable with the local climate with heavy rainfall. The purpose of the tiered roof is to create comfort and to differentiate the function of the building as a mosque with other buildings around. In addition, such form enables smooth air flow (*Stack Effect*) and allows maximum lighting (*Ventuary Effect*) to enter the entire space of the mosque through spaces between the layers of the roof. The *Singgora* roof tiles of size 240 mm x 140 mm are used as the roof finishes which was believed to be brought from Patani, Thailand. Other opinions said that the *Singgora* tiles resemble fish scales when arranged together (Figure 12) which relates to the fishing activities, the main occupation and source of income for the local people.

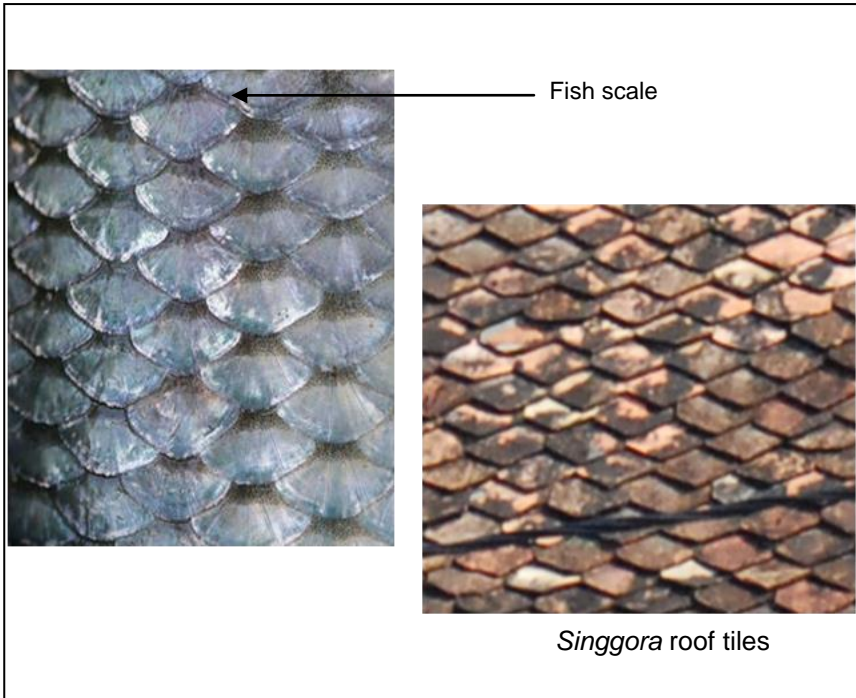


Figure 12: *Singgora* roof tiles resemble fish scale.

The roof overhangs up to 1500mm to protect the internal spaces from direct sunlight and rain since the window panels are not covered. The roof is divided into several components and elements as below (Figure 13):

- i. First-tiered roof
- ii. Second-tiered roof
- iii. Third-tiered roof
- iv. Fourth-tiered roof
- v. Finial (*Buah Buton*)

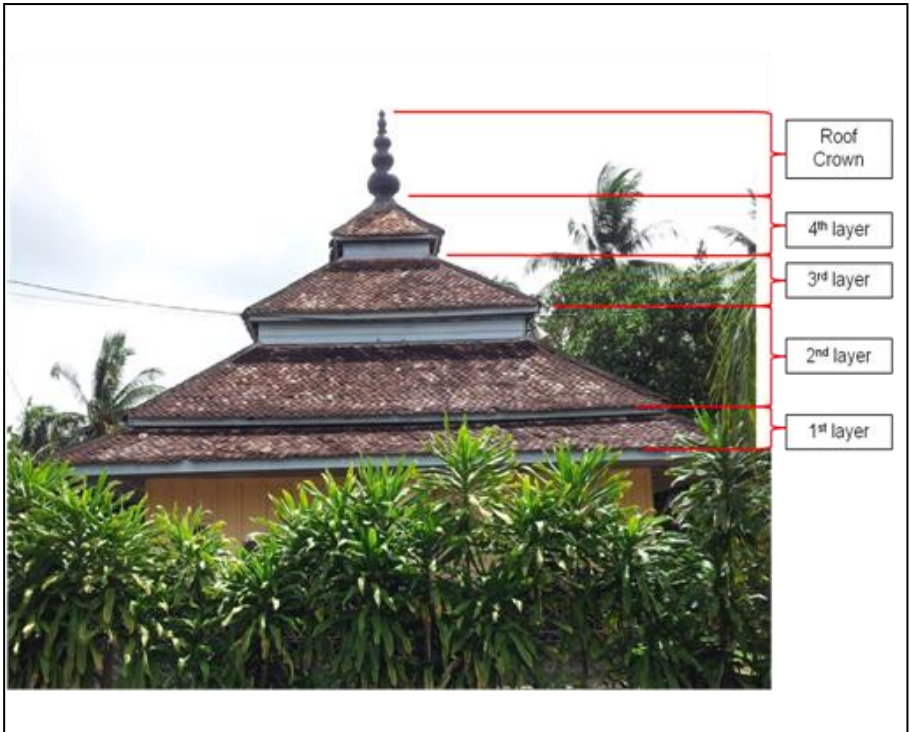


Figure 13: Four-tiered *Meru* roof.

i. First-tiered Roof

The roof slope is 27° (27 degree), elongated from the building that is supported with 160 mm x 70 mm timber batten and mortised to the main column. The principal rafters (*Kasau Jantan*) sized 150 mm x 150 mm and the common rafters (*Kasau Betina*) sized 120 mm x 50 mm.

ii. Second-tiered Roof

It is supported by 12 pillars with height of 2570 mm each with 200 mm x 100 mm beams. The roof slope is 39.5° on the front elevation and 38.5° on the side elevation.

iii. Third-tiered Roof

The construction to the third roof is similar to the second layer roof but it is supported with four hanging columns with height of 2100 mm each.

iv. Fourth-tiered Roof

The roof slope is 45° on the front elevation and 43° on the side elevation. A hanging column known as “*Tiang Gantung*” acts as supporting element to the roof. The column sized 160 mm x 160 mm is shaped in octagonal to place the rafters and ridge. The edge of each roof is installed with mortar to avoid water leakage into the mosque.

v. Roof Crown (*Buah Buton*)

The roof is embellished with a roof crown (Figure 14) on top to symbolize the substances (*Zat*) of Allah.

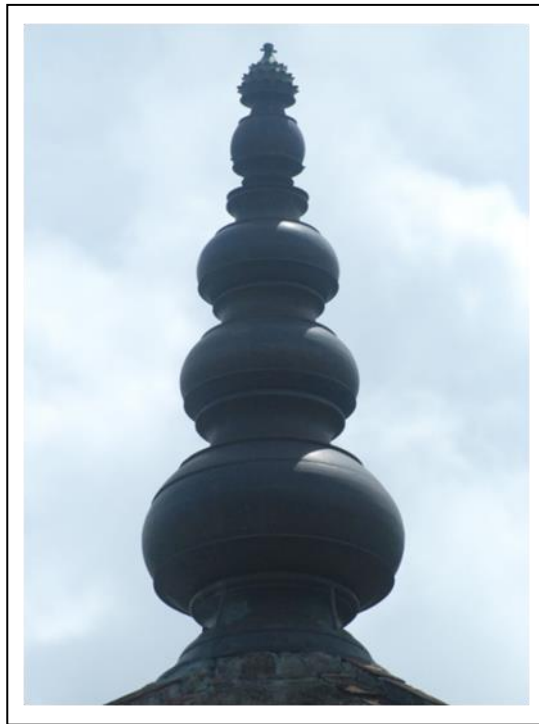


Figure 14: The roof crown of Kampung Tuan Mosque,
Source: Centre for Study in Built Environment in the Malay world
(KALAM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

The roof crown (*Buah Buton*) is made of copper clay (*Tembaga Tembikar*) and is standing at 1.942 m height. The design is similar to Thai Wat (Temple) which is associated with “*Jada*”, traditional Thai women headgear (Figure 15). Based on interviews, the finial has seven

levels which represent the seven levels of the sky (*7 Petala Langit*) as in Figure 16.

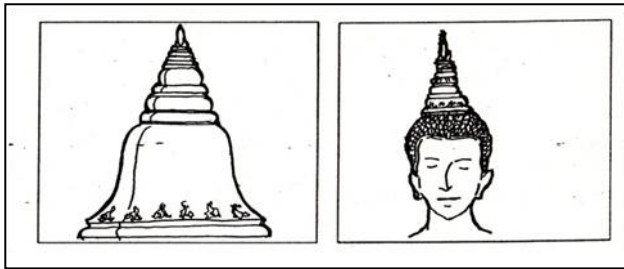


Figure 15: Thai Wat in comparison with *Jada*.

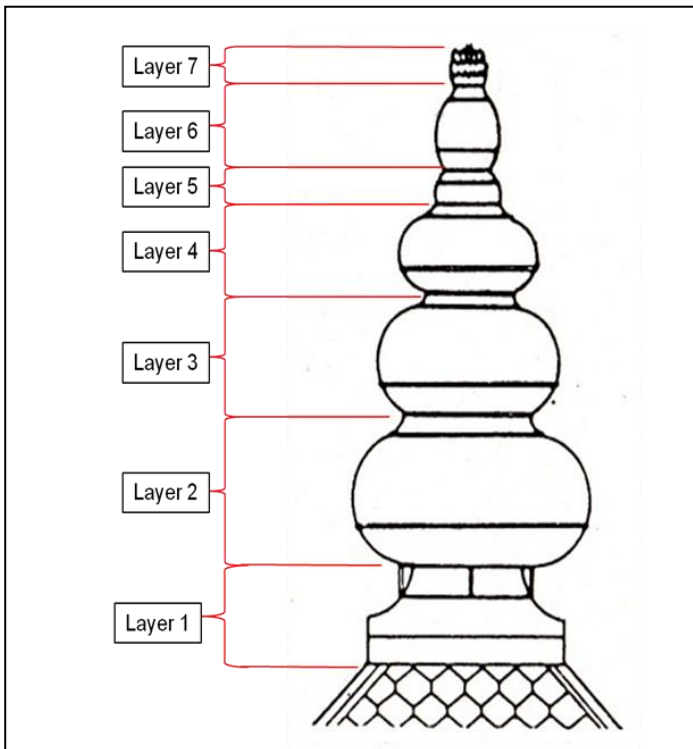


Figure 16: Level of the roof crown represents seven levels of the sky,

Source: Centre for Study in Built Environment in the Malay world (KALAM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

The highest layer is a three petals “Lotus” (*Teratai*) flower shape, the sacred flower of Thailand. Each layer can be separated and are tied with an iron in the middle to tighten every layer. Many traditional

buildings in East Coast especially in Terengganu and Kelantan used stupa and lotus as the basic shape for the finial since most craftsmen were skilled in these floral motifs before the 14th century.

Wall Components and Elements

The wall of Kampung Tuan Mosque is made of timber strips which were arranged vertically. Originally, the whole building including the wall component was in natural wood colour. However the wall had been painted in yellow. There are five wall panels at every elevation to represent the *Rukun Islam* (Figure 17). Building is supported with 30 timber pillars and from each elevation, six pillars can be seen which symbolise *Rukun Iman* (Figure 18).

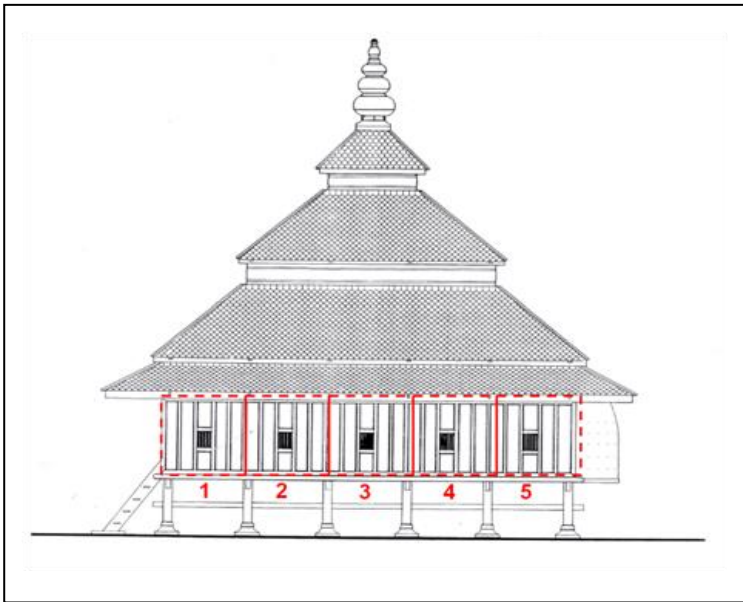


Figure 17: Five wall panels represent Pillars of Islam,
Source: Centre for Study in Built Environment in the Malay world
(KALAM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

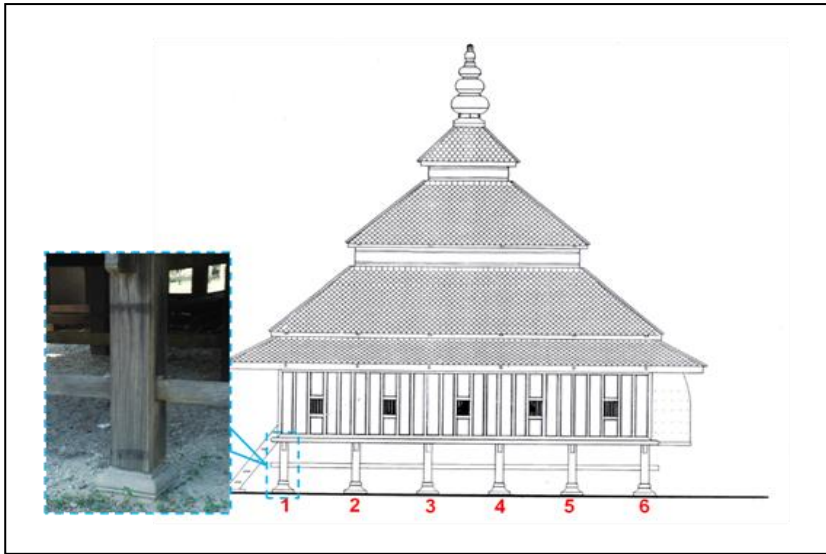


Figure 18: Six numbers of columns on each elevation represent Pillars of Iman,
Source: Centre for Study in Built Environment in the Malay world
(KALAM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

The prominent and outstanding elements identified in Kampung Tuan Mosque include (Figure 19):

- i. Mihrab wall
- ii. Windows



Figure 19: Mihrab wall and windows of the Kampung Tuan Mosque.

i. Mihrab Wall

Mihrab or the Qiblat wall of Kampung Tuan Mosque was made of a single log believed to be obtained from a place in Bukit Kuang. The Mihrab with diameter of 1500 mm is supported with a timber support and beam (Figure 20). The internal side of the Mihrab is carved with floral ornamentations and *Khufi* calligraphy of Quranic verse (Figure 21). The calligraphy verse is meant not to be completed in order to made people who read it seek for the continuation of the verse by himself. Some people believed that if the whole verse is recited regularly, it will become a superstitious knowledge (*Ilmu ghaib*). The edge of the Mihrab is carved in the form of strings and has 99 grooves to symbolise the 99 names of Allah.

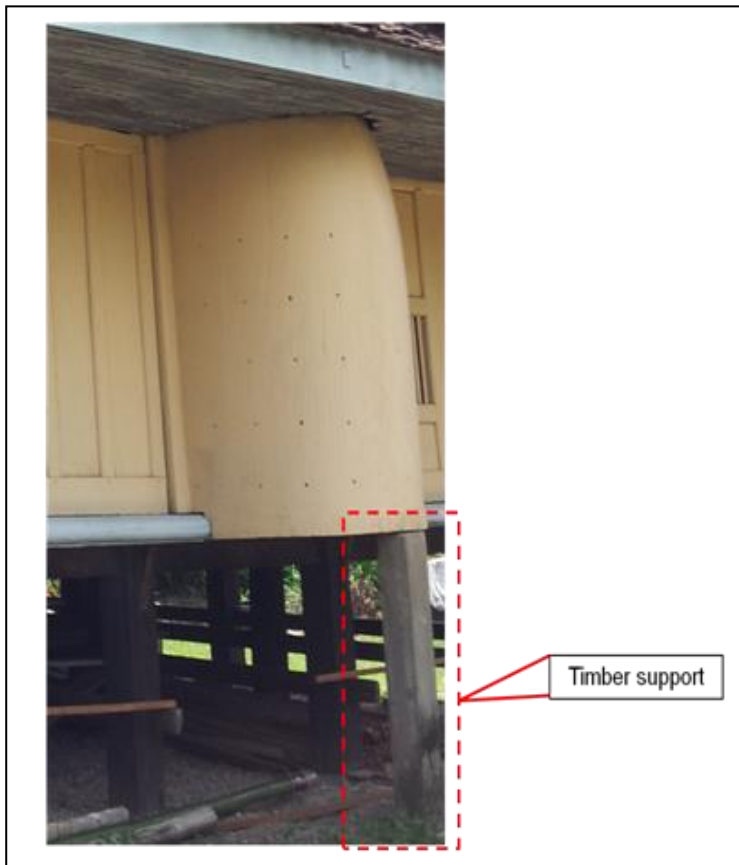


Figure 20: Timber support of the Mihrab wall.

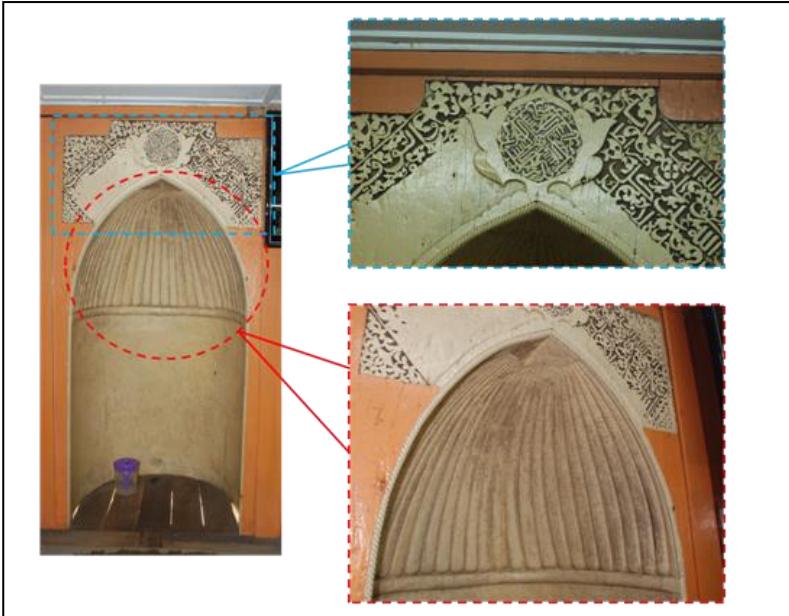


Figure 21: Ornament on the Mihrab wall of Kampung Tuan Mosque.

ii. Window

The windows of Kampung Tuan Mosque are small in size and have minimal openings. The size of the opening is 40mm x 45mm with four timber separators on each window (Figure 22). Through the view on the side elevations, there are five windows on each side with four timber separators. When multiply five (5) by four (4), the total is 20. The number 20 symbolise the 20 attributes (*Sifat*) of Allah .

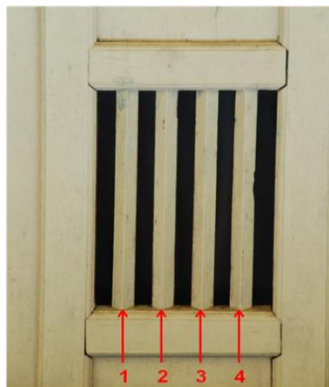


Figure 22: Timber strips on the window panel.

The Present State of Kampung Tuan Mosque

The concept of Malay traditional architecture is additional spaces to cater the needs of users. This feature is also available in Kampung Tuan Mosque where additional spaces was constructed to provide comfort for users especially during gatherings and festive seasons. Some additional spaces were made using similar material to the original materials and some were made using contemporary materials. The veranda on the front side of the mosque (Figure 23) used to accommodate travellers and people who wanted to get some rest before entering the mosque. The low wall and the floor were made using timber and the ceiling was installed with asbestos finishes. New staircase made from concrete and finished with tiles added at the front of the mosque (Figure 24).



Figure 23: New veranda and asbestos ceiling finishes.



Figure 24: New staircase leads to the praying area.

The female ablution area as shown in Figure 24 is a new addition to the mosque. The wall and the floor of the ablution area are made of non-slip tiles. However, the colour applications of the columns were poorly done without much consideration on existing tones.

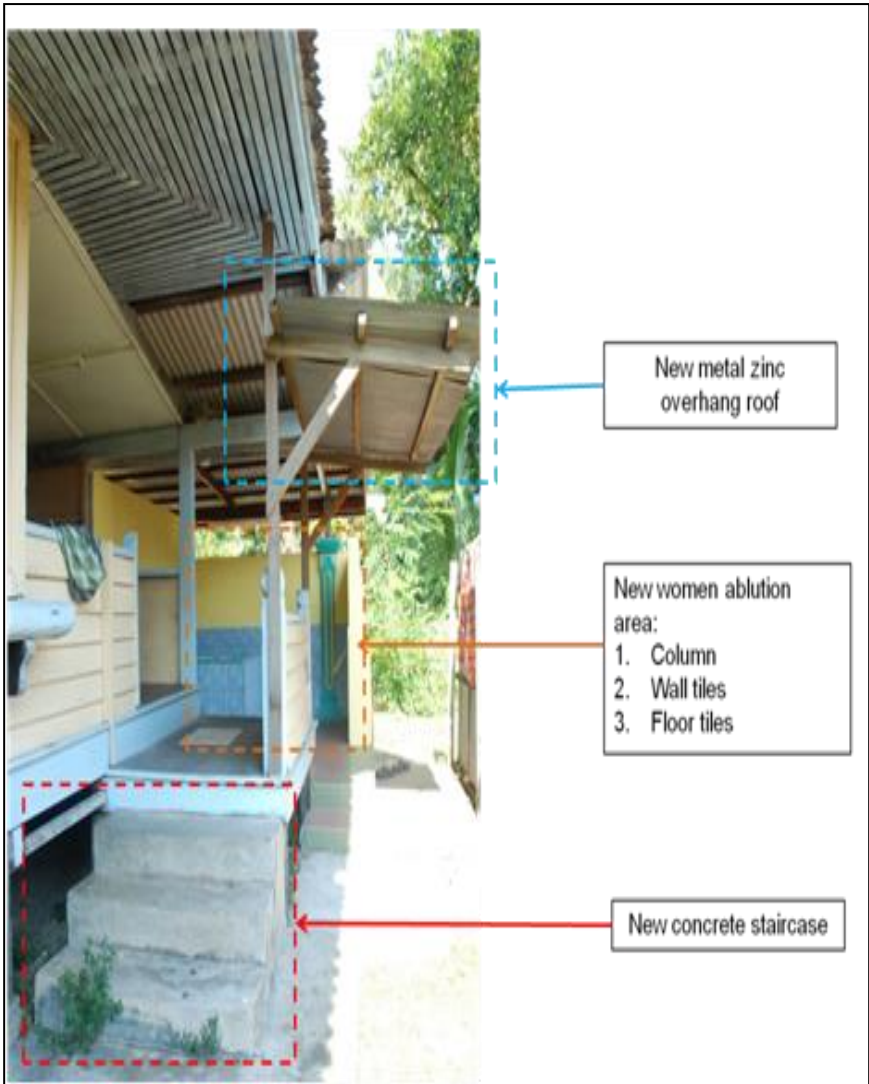


Figure 25: Female ablution area.

Minbar of Kampung Tuan Mosque is made of timber (Figure 25). The carving of the head of *Minbar* is called the “Java princess” which is based on floral with calligraphy motifs. The head is said to be influenced from the hair accessories of the Cambodian bride. Some said the head is influenced from the Aceh tombstone. The *Minbar* however is no longer in use since the mosque does not hold Friday Prayers and it is now used as a place to store praying mats (*Sajadah*).

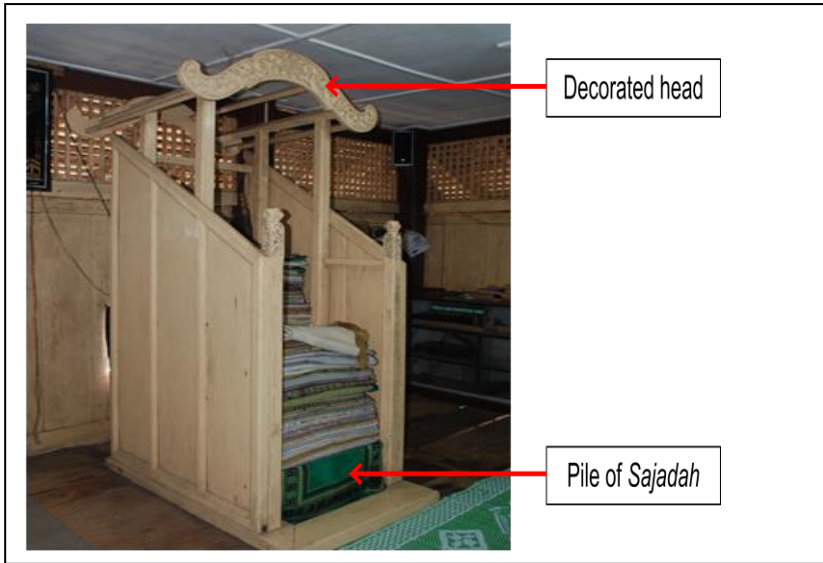


Figure 26: *Minbar* of Kampung Tuan Mosque is now used to store praying mats.

Conclusion

Architecture of old buildings are not just about their historical stories, but also important for their physical structures as every building is unique in its own way. Therefore it is essential to care and conserve them. However, this matter seems to be overlooked especially by the public. As evidently shown by the local people who were met while this research is conducted; many are not aware of the guidelines in doing enhancement of old and historic buildings (this includes works involving the colour, materials and form of the building). Retaining the original building layout should be part of consideration while working on historic buildings to avoid historical value degradation. As in Kampung Tuan Mosque case, it should be upgraded based on proper guidelines referring to the local authority to preserve the heritage values. Minor defects occurred such as wall and floor cracking could lead to major problems if no early precautions and actions were taken prior renovation. Local authority should play its role to promote and educate the public of the importance of conservation of old, historic buildings in ensuring the longevity of such buildings for future generation.

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