International Business Management 8 (6): 308-311, 2014
ISSN: 1993-5250

Restudy the Needs and Functions of Shophouse's Back-Lane in Malaysia

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Abstract: Shophouse is one of the important architecture elements in Malaysia. It has been exist in the country, since the colonial era and still survive until today. Shophouse got it evolution because has been past many years and through many decades so the design, pattern and style are adapted in current situation. The facades, the ornament, the layout, the typology and material have been change from any style to others style but there still has one important element of the shophouse that is not got any attention that is the back-lane. Most of the people know the existence of the back-lane but they do not realize the needs and the functions of back-lane, especially toward shophouse. Although back-lane is the necessity in town planning, its look neglected. So, this writing is about to give the clear statement about the back-lane in shophouse so that researcher could understand the needs of the back-lane and its functions, especially at the shophouse in Malaysia.

Key words: Back-lane of shophouse, function of back-lane, needs of back-lane, ornamate, topology

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to look back on the relevance of the existing concept of shophouse's back-lane in Malaysia. Thus, the objectives of this study is to identifying, documenting, analyzing the background and the needs of back-lane in urban areas of Malaysia. Besides that it is to study, the problems of back-lane's plan and design and activities and social impact toward back-lane. This study also wants to examine the effectiveness of current acts and laws in giving the clear significant of the shophouse's back-lane concept and needs. From that too, this study will measure the relevance of the existing concept of back-lane in development's plan of shophouse now-a-days.

The justification of this study is to overcome the problems happen around the shophouse's back-lane. Observation method is used in this study because observation is one of the primary data collection methods used in obtaining the data and the evidence in this study. Qualitatively, the observations are used to understand a phenomenon that led to the problems and issues more clearly. Observation of an effective data collection method because involves a researcher in the study situation (Fox, 1998). Observations can be done close to the subject of the study, depending on the issues and problems study (Driscoll, 2010). Structural observation is a sample observation and measurement error is the type of observation method that used in this study. The advantage of this method is a researcher with a guide when making observations. In this study, the guide made based on literature review and preliminary research that has been done.

Based on observation, the shophouse is chosen as the point of this study compare others kind of development such as residential, industry and hotel because most of the classification of width's back-lane found at shophouse (Table 1). Besides that back-lane of shophouse has covered most all of the function of back-lane. So, issues and problems that are often related with the back-lane are higher rate happen at shophouse. Thus, the shophouse's back-lane is suitable scope for this study. By restudy back the relevance of the back-lane of shophouse, it is reflect others kind of back-lane too.

Based on observation toward some regions which are Kuala Lumpur, Puchong and Bandar Baru Bangi, the qualities of the back-lane are determined. Those areas are chosen because it's covered all of the types of development which are commercial, residential and industry. The parameters are determined from literature review and the qualities for each types of development could be compared. The connection between literature review and observation studies is called triangulation technique. Triangulation technique is a description of the use of multi-technique to source data, present data in quantitative and qualitative way, as well as data analysis techniques (Dola, 2002). Mark is given by the

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Table 1: Classification type of back-lane's width and type of development

Types of back-lane's width	Commercial			Residential			Industry	
	Mixed development	Shophouse	Hotel	Strata	Terrace house	Bungalow/ semi-D	Strata	Terrace/ single/semi-D
10 feet	Have	No	Have	Have	Have	No	Have	No
20 feet	Have	Have	Have	Have	Have	No	Have	Have
40 feet	Have	Have	Have	Have	No	No	Have	Have
No back-lane	No	Have	No	No	No	Have	No	No

Table 2: Likert-scale quality of back-lane

Scale	Quality
1	Very bad
2	Bad
3	Moderate
4	Well good
5	Good

Table 3: Quality of back-lane at every type of developments

Parameters	Commercial			Residential			Industry	
	Mixed development	Shophouse	Hotel	Strata	Terrace house	Bungalow/ semi-D	Strata	Terrace/ single/semi-D
Safety	Good	Very bad	Well good	Moderate	Moderate	Good	Very bad	Very bad
Vandalisme	Good	Very bad	Well good	Moderate	Very bad	Good	Very bad	Very bad
Cleanliness	Good	Very bad	Well good	Moderate	Very bad	Good	Very bad	Very bad
Urban image	Good	Very bad	Well good	Moderate	Very bad	Good	Very bad	Very bad
M&E equipment	Good	Very bad	Well good	Moderate	-	Moderate	Very bad	Very bad
Garbage disposal	Good	Very bad	Well good	Moderate	Moderate	Good	Very bad	Very bad
Traffic system	Good	Very bad	Well good	Moderate	Good	Good	Moderate	Moderate
Protistution control	Good	Moderate	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Drug dealer control	Good	Moderate	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Overall	Good	Very bad	Well good	Moderate	Moderate	Good	Bad	Bad

Likert-scale for each quality at every type of development sectors (Table 2). Then, the min and degree of preference could be determined (Rasmani *et al*., 2008). By that the qualities of back-lane can be analyzed and compared for each types of development (Table 3). From Table 3, the quality of the shophouse back-lane is very bad compared to others type of development.

DEFINITION

A shophouse or row of shophouses have two or more floors and share a same party wall and are structures for commercial and private (Ahmad, 1997). Owner or renter usually used the first floor for the commercial purpose such as retail shop, light industry or store and as a residence on the upper floor. Besides that a typical 2 storey shophouse with the ground floor for trading and first floor for residential use is still a standard feature in the centresof Malaysian towns and cities (Yeang 1992).

Usually shophouse has a narrow frontage of between 12-24 feet and the length varies from 60-140 feet with a slope roof not exceeding 30 degrees. It was designed in symmetry form where the entrance is located in the middle of the window in both parts (Ahmad, 1997). Despite this the current state of street frontage for shophouse is 28 feet. Shophouse buildings do not stand independently but relative to each other and form a block of shophouse. Shophouse repeated to form streets and squares which are often seen in cities in Malaysia.

Back-lane can be defined, as a back route that is used as services on a building. Back-lane normally found, at the back or sides of buildings usually are ancillary or alternative routes around the building. According to Kamus Dewan 4th edition, back-lane is defined as: Lane, means a narrow road (usually has house on its left and right side). Back, the place (direction) or to the contrary from the front. Means the part or surface farthest from the front. The less used, less visible or less important.

Jabatan Kerja Raya (JKR) defined back-lane, as a lane that can be passed to all types of transport on its pavement surface in accordance with the specific standards and located, at the back or side of the building with its width is more or equal to 4.27 m (14 feet). While Section 69 (1) of street, drainage and building Act 1974 (Act 133), define back-lane is includes every back-lane whether now or hereafter existing and any part thereof and any approach thereto and all land already or hereafter acquired or set apart for or laid out, as a back-lane and all channels, drains and appurtenances of a back-lane.

LAW PROVISIONS TO THE BACK-LANE

There are several provisions of the law which states clearly needs of back-lane. The provisions are street, drainage and building Act 1974 (Act 133): Part IV and uniform building by-laws: Part VII (The Commissioner of Law Revision, Malaysia, 2006).

Street, drainage and building Act 1974 (Act 133) Part IV: The 65; local authority may require land for part of back-lane. Where upon the submission of a plan relating to a building for the approval of the local authority it appears that the site thereof or any land set apart by the principal submitting person abuts upon any land capable of forming part of a back-lane, the local authority may request the state authority to acquire, such last mentioned land in accordance with any law relating to the compulsory acquisition of land: Provided that no land shall be acquired under this subsection the acquisition of which would cause a severance of land from other land forming part of the same holding.

The 66; state authority may order back-lanes to be laid out. The state authority may at any time on the recommendation of the local authority, order that a back-lane of a width not exceeding 40 feet shall be laid out through any lands.

The lands specified in the order made under subsection, may be acquired for the purpose of providing such back-lane and the local authority may request the state authority to acquire, such lands in accordance with any law relating to the compulsory acquisition of land.

The 67; local authority may recover cost of acquisition for and laying out or construction of backlanes. When the state authority has acquired such lands, as is necessary and the local authority has laidout or constructed a back-lane, the local authority may recover the cost of acquiring such lands and of laying out or constructing the back-lane from the frontagers or developers or both. If such cost is to be paid by the frontagers it shall be paid by the persons who are frontagers when the work is completed.

The 68; declaration of back-lane as public street. Not with standing the provisions of this part, the local authority may declare any back-lane to be a public street in accordance with the procedure laid down under section 13.

The 69; general provisions as to back-lanes. In this act and in made the expression back-lane includes every back-lane whether now or hereafter existing and any part and approach and all land already or hereafter acquired or set apart for or laid out as a back-laneand all channels, drains and appurtenances of a back-lane.

The local authority may at any time at its sole discretion close up or otherwise prevent ingress, egress or regress over any back-lane controlled by it or any part thereof either totally or conditionally.

Removal of obstruction: No person shall erect or maintain or permit to be erected or maintained any obstruction in or overany back-lane and the local authority may where any such obstruction exists, take down and remove the same and the cost and expense of taking down or removing such obstruction may be recovered from the person responsible for or who permitted its erection or maintenance in the manner hereinafter provided.

Uniform building by-laws: The 140 all building in excess of 7000 m^3 shall abut upon a street or road or open space of not <12 m width and accessible to fire brigade appliances. The proportion of the building abutting the street, road or open space shall be in accordance with the following scale (Table 4).

The 174 where 2 or more storey exits are required they shall be spaced at not <5 m apart measured between the nearest edges of the opening. Each exit shall give direct access to:

- A final exit
- A protected staircase leading to final exit
- An external route leading to a final exit

In summary the street, drainage and building Act 1974 (Act 133): Part IV back-lane is the provision of the law on the right of back-lane, as part of the local authority owned. These acts are on the right back-lane land acquisition by the local and the state authority covering the terms, holding, ownership, cost of acquisition and payment of compensation.

Further, the act extends to the declaration of the back-lane as a public road. Therefore, the local authorities have the power to control the back-lane, such as close or detain anyone in the back-lane. In addition, no person shall erect or maintain a back-lane including build any obstacles or additional in the back-lane. In conclusion, it can be explained that back-lane is a public space that is under the control of local authorities.

If the street, drainage and building Act 1974 (Act 133): Part IV relates right of back-lane as part belongs tolocal authorities, uniform building by-laws, Part VII fire requirement is about the outside of the building space requirements for the use of against fire. It covers the

Table 4: Minimum perimeter building rate

Volume of building in m^3	Minimum proportions of perimeter of building
7000-28000	One-sixth
28001-56000	One-fourth
56001-84000	One-half
84001-112000	Three-fourth
112001 and above	Island site

boundary rate scale building roads, access routes out and the minimum perimeter of the building compared to the volume of the building.

Although, subject to the back-lane is under the local authorities control, it's still functional as required by various parties whether shophouse owners and also public. These functions sometimes a good impact on the municipality and the community but there are others were bad impact to the municipality including the social aspect.

TYPES OF BACK-LANE

Back-lane is conceptually implemented almost in all buildings: Shophouses, housing, factories and also mixed development. There are several types of roads and trails that will form the framework of determining the character of a movement in the back-lane's planning.

Generally, for back alleys shophouse and business complex is a 20-40 foot house to shop and shopping complexes. Details for minimum road width for the home shop and business complex is shown in Table 5.

FUNCTION OF BACK-LANE IN SHOPHOUSE

Function of back-lane can be divided into visible functions and invisible functions. Visible function is a function that has been subject to as the back-lane planning guidelines issued by the Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia. While invisible function is a function that has been adapted to the back-lane by the needs of the public due to the current demand.

Table 5: Minimum route requirement based on type of business

	Width of road and lane (feet)			
Types of development	Road	Slip road	Back-lane	Side-lane
Shophouse	100	50	20	20-40
Commercial complex	100; 132	50	40	40

Encyclopedia of legal procedures and town and country planning, 2005

Table 6: Classification function of shop house's back-lane

Function	Visible	Invisible
Security purposes	Fire prevention space Fire escape route	Additional parking space Alternative route
Intrastructure and utility	Air-conditioner and mechanical location TNB substation Utility route	Additonal space for storage and kitchen Passage to basement
Service and maintenance purpose	Loading and unloading area Sewerage and drainage maintenance Waste disposal chamber area	
Health and comfort purpose	Natural lighting and ventilation requirement	

The visible functions for back-lane is intended for security, for the route of infra and utilities, for the purpose of service and maintenance, as well as for comfort and health. While other functions often found in the back-lane are as storage and a kitchen, as an alternative route to the underground passage can be categorized as invisible functions. The functions of back-lane are explained in Table 6.

CONCLUSION

From this writing, back-lane can be considered as an important element in town planning based on its functions. However, the back-lane should be given more emphasis because back-lane is one of the aspect that can give advantage toward not only the owner of the shophouse but the community too. The current concept of the back-lane should be re-study and re-thinking either it is still suitable in this current situation.

Many conceptuals of urban planning can be adapted to the back-lane for replace its current concept that is a narrow lane behind a shophouse with the width is about 14 feet. Consumptions of others kind of design and concept, such as double frontage facade, courtyard, as a community space, space for street business and green element open space should considered to replace the current concept of the shophouse's back-lane, so that area is not look neglected anymore in town planning.

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