

Safety Level of Shophouse's Back-Lane in Malaysia

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Abstract: Back-lane is a need for the municipality, particularly in the development of shophouses. However, the safety of the back-lane is still at an alarming level. This is not consistent with the Safe City concept emphasized by the Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia. Therefore, this study has been done to measure the safety level of shophouse's back-lane by taking the views of the public, as well as owner/occupant/employee of shophouse.

Key words: Back-lane, Safe City, safety, alarming level, shophouse

INTRODUCTION

Public Works Department of Malaysia defined the back-lane as alleys can be traversed by all kinds of public transport with the surface (pavement) in accordance with the specified quality and located at the rear or side of buildings with wide surface is equal to 4:27 m (14 ft) (DoTCP, 2012). While Subsection 69 (1) of the Street, Drainage and Building (Act 133), defines a back-lane is includes every back-lane either existing or to be there later after that and any part thereof and any road in it and all the land has been or hereafter shall be taken or removed to or arranged as a back-lane and all grooves, trenches and anything related to a back-lane (The Commissioner of Law Revision, Malaysia, 2006).

Shophouse's back-lane serves as a fire prevention, utility and infraroutes, for the purpose of service and maintenance, as well as for the comfort and health (DoTCP, 2012). While the other functions that are often found in a back-lane like a store and a kitchen, as well as an alternative route and route to basement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Needs of back-lane in urbanization aspect: Back-lane has become a regular feature of the implementation of the municipality in Malaysia. Based on the functions of the back-lane has been stated, before it can be seen that the functions of the back-lane is indirectly beneficial to the urbanization areas in Malaysia. As functions of a place to unload the goods, space maintenance, alternative routes, fire exits and for lighting and ventilation, it is also give a

positive element to urban areas in the country. This is because these functions can be seen to have a strong relationship with a back-lane.

Be an identity in urbanization: Back-lane also becomes the identity of urban planning in Malaysia. The 40% of the city is the public properties which are streets, parks, schools and all other public facilities. Each of these local governments is allowed to build roads, traffic lights and open spaces according all official planning design. But, most of the buildings in the city, 60% of the total area of the city is developed, as an industrial area, business area and opportunities for housing investment (Gallion and Eisner, 1980). Back-lane can be categorized as part of the public space, as it provides various functions in the public service.

Forming pattern in the national urban: Kropf (1996) defines, the pattern as a sequence (order) or arrangement which according to Clifton Taylor states pattern is the physical arrangement of the physical part. In principle, the study of urban pattern can be applied to all size scales from small to large, such as buildings, roads and cities (Marshall and Gong, 2009). According to Kropf (1996) again, the pattern will produce a character but it will not work if the pattern seen from one thing alone, such as building materials. Instead, it must be associated with a larger entity, such as an entire building in a place.

Specifically, the street pattern of a city is the result of a combination of all of pattern plot of land, buildings and roads. This combination results distinguish one part of town to the other like street pattern is linear or grid. This

difference could also result through diverse buildings (Alfrey, 2010). Shuhana states the pattern of street layout of the building blocks that influence urban space. Combination of pattern and character and character produces characteristic patterns of the way.

Back-lane becomes the elements that make up the pattern of street in the urban planning system in Malaysia. Collinear form of back-lane with shophouse's will form perpendicular rhythm when there is repetition in planning. Back-lane can also make a difference in the space by repetition on every street and shophouses.

Provide accessibility in urbanization: Accessibility depends on the alternative route and need to be clear from the physical and visual aspects (Bentley, 1985). Connection is a factor that makes away easily to accessible. In other words, it is easy to find and easy to get too based on a good of environment's way (Jacobs, 1993). Connection will increase travel, decrease the distance and route options increase, resulting in the quality of accessibility and good transportation system (TDM Encyclopedia, 2010).

Thus, the connection should include all modes of movement (pedestrian, bicycle, public transport and private vehicles), as seen from the context of the macro (outside of the street) and micro (on the road) in providing quality accessibility, clarity, permeability and search direction (Llewelyn-Davies, 2000). Each element of this movement will affect the use and activity, density, safety and impact of development on the neighborhood (Taylor, 2006).

Back-lane shophouse is one of the elements that provide connectivity to all of the space in the townships. Then, it becomes an alternative route to provide accessibility that can affect activity and use of space in urban areas.

Form permeability in urbanization: Permeability is a quality that reflects the extent to which an environment can allow someone to enter it from one place to another (Bentley, 1985). Therefore, it is told to the public areas which may or may not be passed in a visual form.

Back-lane's design of shophouse different with main road of shophouse on the signal of permeability whether the area can be traversed on foot or riding vehicles such as bicycles, motor bikes and cars. It is accentuated by the use of the material in the back-lane by difference with the other road. This is so that the back-lane to function as usual.

Form structures in urbanization: Structure refers to the relationship of the parts to the other part in shaping the

overall relationship. Lynch (1960), also proposes the structure is connected by the 5 elements which are nodes, landmarks, edges, paths and districts. These elements are the main contributors to the quality of legibility a city or street (Lynch, 1960) which the quality is influenced by aspects of visual quality (Gupte, 2009).

Therefore, the back-lane also be the main structure in the urban area with necessary in urban planning. The relationship between the back-lane and shophouse evident in its reliance on a back-lane to carry out the functions stated.

The concept of Safe City: Safe City design or Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Implementation guide is one of the guidelines issued by DoTCP (2010) based on the idea that the detailed design of the physical environment can effectively influence human behavior from committing the offense and reduce the fear of crimes and incidents of crime and improve the quality of environment and life.

CPTED concepts have been applied in the planning of cities in other countries, such as New York, Glasgow, Adelaide, Melbourne, Seoul, Singapore and others. CPTED study proves effective in reducing the crime rate as:

- Impairment losses on retail dealers of 50% of the crime of theft and 65% of the criminal gang
- The dramatic reduction of the sale of drugs, crime burglary and other crimes between 15-100% in some communities in the United States and Canada
- Reduce criminal violations among students
- Increase benefits, productivity and quality of life of the community and saving costs and resources through efficient design to perform natural strategies compared with management strategies and mechanical

There are 4 principles that are emphasized by the Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia (DTCP) in a Safe City guideline that specializes in natural surveillance, natural access control, clarity of boundaries and the maintenance and management.

The main purpose of the principle of natural surveillance is to increase the level of supervision of the public through the eyes on the street against criminals and thus, can cause insecurities intruder commit the crime. Natural surveillance means monitoring capacity of the environment to create a clear and extensive opportunities from various angles either from outside or inside the building by residents or security guards through the design and location of windows, doors and building

lobby. Natural access control is intended to prevent a person from entering the area or premises should not it be. Access control can be implemented through the use of the door with security card, fences, landscaping and other physical elements.

Clarity of boundary is intended to indicate ownership of an area. Marking the boundaries of public and private that are clearly doable using physical elements, such as fences, gates, landscaping and others. Maintenance and management principles emphasize the need to maintain and manage the grounds and buildings regularly and continuously from management, residents, owners and the community. The existence of abandoned and dilapidated buildings and may encourage criminal activity, such as drug addiction and criminal activity and negative social.

Based on the description of the principles of natural surveillance, natural access control, clarity of boundaries and the maintenance and management, Safe City in fact also requires public involvement and community especially, so it implementation will achieve the objectives required.

Therefore, these guidelines also identified 7 components that need to be taken into account in implementing the Safe City concept (DoTCP, 2010). It involves the design layout, access and footpaths, soft landscaping and urban design elements, parking, lighting, safety equipment and management and maintenance.

Safety level of shophouse's back-lane: Increased criminal cases in this country is like a phenomenon. Statistical figures recorded increasing from time to time and difficult to contain. According to the 2006-2008 year index crime statistics from the Department of the Royal Malaysian Police, the rate of violent crimes and property crimes, respectively showed statistics to support the statement in the daily news.

According to the theory of urbanization, the larger a city, the more easier crime to happen. Crimes often occur in the desolate alley, such as back-lane of building. There are many social problems that often hear to happen in the back-lane, such as the case of theft, robbery, vandalism, drug addiction, prostitution, gambling and criminal cases involving serious crimes such as murder and rape.

News report on November 8 report a chicken truck driver charged in the Section Court for being an intermediary to 2 foreign women aged 25 and 28 years for the purpose of prostitution at about 11.30 p.m., October 25 in a back-lane of Sungei Wang Hotel, Jalan Bukit Bintang. Whereas on November 29, a mechanic charged in the Magistrates Court here today on charges of snatching a mobile phone belonging to a college student in a back-lane Hospital Sentosa, Jalan Datuk Haji Eusoff here.

Table 1: Safety level of shophouse back-lane

Indicators	Min score
Old design and no change	3.90
Dark and least light, especially at night	4.05
Dirty back-lane dirty and unkempt	4.15
Worry threat to personal safety	4.09

This study, 2014

On May 14, a news reported that a rice trader was found dead after being shot 6 times in an back-lane of a bank near Rozan Road, Town of Alma, Bukit Mertajam. The special report on March 21, bringing the issue of prostitution and drug abuse are rampant in the back-lane of Haji Taib.

Based on surveys conducted on 335 respondents from the general public and also from the owner/occupant/employee of shophouse, the majority agreed that the back-lane has the low-security features, based on the factors of design, lighting and cleanliness (Table 1).

Based on the statistical data, the probability shows that it is more than the value of 3.5. Thus, most of the respondents agreed that the back-lane the design still has an old design and there is no change, darkness and lack of lighting especially at night, dirty and unkempt and worry about the threat to personal safety when going through a back-lane. The results from the survey are in conflict with the Safe City concept based on the idea that the detailed design of the physical environment can effectively influence human behavior from committing the offense and reduce the fear of crimes and incidents of crime and improve the quality of environment and life.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The environment of back-lane which are desolate, hidden, dark and no security from the authorities makes crime and social problems prevalent in this area. Image of back-lane has influenced the increase in social problems in this area based on negligence in the design plan, abuse space of back-lane, dark lighting and an indifferent attitude of building owners in maintaining the cleanliness in this area have much impact on the occurrence of social problems in this area.

Back-lane is often used as a storeroom, kitchen and solid waste collection area. Moreover, it is also designed to access services and facilities for loading and unloading of goods. Arguably, back-lane's function is to carry out the activities hidden from public view because if it was placed in front of the public it will damage the public character and give deadening effect for welcoming feature. Therefore, back-lane becomes the focus of criminal activity because of the design which is not secure.

Lighting in the back-lane often becomes worse nightmare to road users. Entering the lane especially at night cause fear, wary, suspicious and insecure compared by the front road with brightly lit gives safe feeling. This give difficult for consumers to identify the road and individuals on surrounding who are intent whether good or bad.

Dark conditions and the lack of human activity in a back-lane makes the area dark, desolate and suspicious. This is attract for illegal activities of the syndicate who like to conduct their business in private, regardless of whether the drug syndicate, car theft, gambling, prostitution and so on. This situation led to the risk of occurrence of crime there is also high. The area between the building blocks which is relatively secluded facilitate this illegal syndicate to do their work futhermore lack of police patrols in that area.

For those who becomes victim to this crime, it is difficult for the individual to seek help due to the problems stated earlier. No wonder why every time a criminal case, such as theft, murder, rape and so on, back-lane becomes a good place for criminal to escape from pursuing by police or the public.

The level of cleanliness in the back-lane is often negligible compared to the front road. Its hidden from public view and not facing the main road causing people with impunity discharge their responsibilities in protecting and maintaining the cleanliness of the area. The more painful view situation, we can see are litter of garbage are not collected. If always observed that garbage bins only provided at one location in a secluded corner. Back-lane itself becomes a very large trash like a landfill. There are wood, fruit basket, baskets of vegetables, fruit rot, iron and glass and the water of drain is black and smelly. This led to the presence of rats and cockroaches.

In the governments efforts to avoid the social ills in a back-lane by providing nights bazaar or market in the area will not reduce the level of cleanliness of the existing conditions but its growing worse by the attitude of the dealers own arbitrary leave rubbish on the road without it neatly collected in a specific place. Moreover, the attitude of the society that likes to throw garbage everywhere make the night market is a garbage disposal field.

CONCLUSION

The low of safety level back-lane of shophouse shop should not be overlook. This is so because of a back-lane is a key aspect in the development of shophouses and it also gives the requirements in terms of identity form patterns, permission is accessibility, the permeability and the structural aspects of urbanization. Safety problems on

shophouse's back-lane who have long plague the various parties, especially socially still not given special attention, so that it can be reduced while encouraging the concept of Safe City with 4 principles as described which specializes in natural surveillance, natural access control, clarity of the border, as well as maintenance and management.

Thus, the various parties should play their role, so that the problems that have been a cancer in the urban areas of the country can find the solution. The 3 aspects of the indicator which are the design, lighting level and cleanliness must be the key element in increasing the level of safety in the back-lane of shophouse. Aspects of design, development shophouses latest design concepts should consider alternatives, such as multiple front facade design, courtyard design, the use of green elements or widen the back-lane so that it can be used as a community space. The existing back-lane is need to increase its security by installing CCTV and add aspects of lighting, especially at night.

On the aspect of hygiene, each party whether owners, employees or members of the public must play a role in ensuring that the level of cleanliness of back-lane is at the proper level. Among the approaches that can be used to ensure the back-lane are always in the net is by make it as a community space. Through, the use of high levels of public, back-lane problems, especially in terms of lighting and hygiene aspects can be reduced.

Some examples of back-lane conservation shophouses that have been carried out in Malaysia is the concept of art, as applied to a back-lane in the city of Georgetown. Now, the concept of a back-lane's art has been and will be adopted by other cities like Kuala Lumpur, Malacca and Ipoh. It is not only become interest to the public but at the same time can be more clean and have adequate lighting aspects for receiving public attention during the day or night.

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