

# Open Spaces

IN URBAN MALAYSIA



## **Open Spaces in Urban Malaysia**

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Open  
Spaces

IN URBAN MALAYSIA



MENARA PATRIOT

# Foreword

Open spaces are part of our city's history, some stretched back to the era of Colonialism; to the beginning of our urban culture. They witnessed many events—blood, tears, and joy of our forefathers in creating the cities that we live in today. Losing them would be insanity, like erasing parts of our memory.

Just imagine a city without open spaces. Is it possible to sustain life in a concrete jungle with constant overcrowding and pollution without having spaces for recreation and human interaction? Planning for sustainable urban environment is often said to consist of 'Commodities, Firmness, and Delight'—the environmental qualities which determine the city's ability to sustain its social, economic structure, and aesthetic values. In the global environment, open spaces play a pivotal role at the time of declining natural resources, increasing pollution, destruction of ozone layers, and fear of green house effect. Without open spaces, the long term sustainability of our cities is in some serious doubt.

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL  
FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF TOWN AND  
COUNTRY PLANNING,  
PENINSULAR MALAYSIA.





# P r e f a c e

Open spaces are an important non-renewable component of town planning. In the shaping of cities, open spaces always play significant roles as they provide a convenient setting for a variety of leisure and recreational activities in addition to enhancing the civic values of a community. Some of these spaces have important historical and heritage value. Others are spaces that are inhabited by a multitude of flora and fauna that are extremely valuable natural resources to be preserved for our future generations. In cities, they appear in a variety of forms known as 'incidental spaces' that allow a variety of activities to flourish in a complex web of networks and sustain the lively and colourful city fabric.

This book is an attempt to encapsulate open spaces in Malaysia's urban environment, and the life they support. It is aimed at promoting open spaces in our cities as invaluable assets, to be preserved and gazetted as our cities' heritage. The importance of open spaces should never be underrated and the fight to retain these spaces for our future generation is our continuous social responsibility. In a multiracial society such as Malaysia, we often perceive open spaces as a common ground for people of various ethnicities to carry out community-binding functional and ritual activities either in their everyday lives or during annual festivities. Open spaces, even in their most basic form, are a manifestation of a healthy society (both mind and body). They reflect a civilised society with a deep appreciation for art and beauty.

Photographs chosen for this book represent some of the best examples (from the town planning perspective) of open spaces found in Malaysian cities, ranging from the lake gardens of the colonial era to the communal spaces in the post-independence modular housing estates. As a developing country that is still in the process of rapid urbanisation, the understanding and appreciation of open spaces are of paramount importance in maintaining the delicate balance between the built-up and natural environment, and subsequently in creating spaces that are democratic, supportive, and meaningful for a more humane culture. Open spaces are the organic component of a city in that they are continuously evolving along with the society they support.







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# I n t r o d u c t i o n



**Open spaces can be perceived as a stage upon which the drama of our communal life unfolds—a gathering place for the community, a playground for children, a protest ground for the unsatisfied, a colony for the migrating birds, a home for plants and the homeless, and a paradise for those in love.**

Throughout history, mankind has always created open spaces for different reasons. Some as demonstrations of power, some were the consequences of our desire for filling up space, and some were the product of a complex society with many different needs, interests, and aesthetics. Often, they are the product of our conscious desire for enjoyment and beauty, but some just happen naturally in an ad hoc manner without deliberate planning. While open spaces take many different forms and assume many different names such as 'park', 'plaza', 'mall', 'playground' or 'garden', they all share common ingredients and a common purpose, namely, for the betterment of the human spirit, body, and soul. By definition, an **open space** is **'an open or enclosed area allocated or reserved fully or partially, for the purpose of gardens, public parks, fields for sports, and public recreation'**.

In Malaysia, the need for open spaces in cities becomes more crucial with rapid urbanisation and constant increase in the urban population. Open spaces act as a 'green lung' for a city, a focal point that breaks up the monotony of our concrete jungle, and most importantly, they promote a healthy society by providing spaces for recreational, social, and leisure activities. A well-distributed open space can influence the quality of life in a congested urban area. A recent study on open spaces in seven major cities in Peninsular Malaysia (based on the assessment of their respective local plans) highlighted inadequate provision of open spaces. It thus concluded that it was not the shortage of land that contributed to the lack of open spaces in urban areas, but rather the ineffective use and organisation of land.

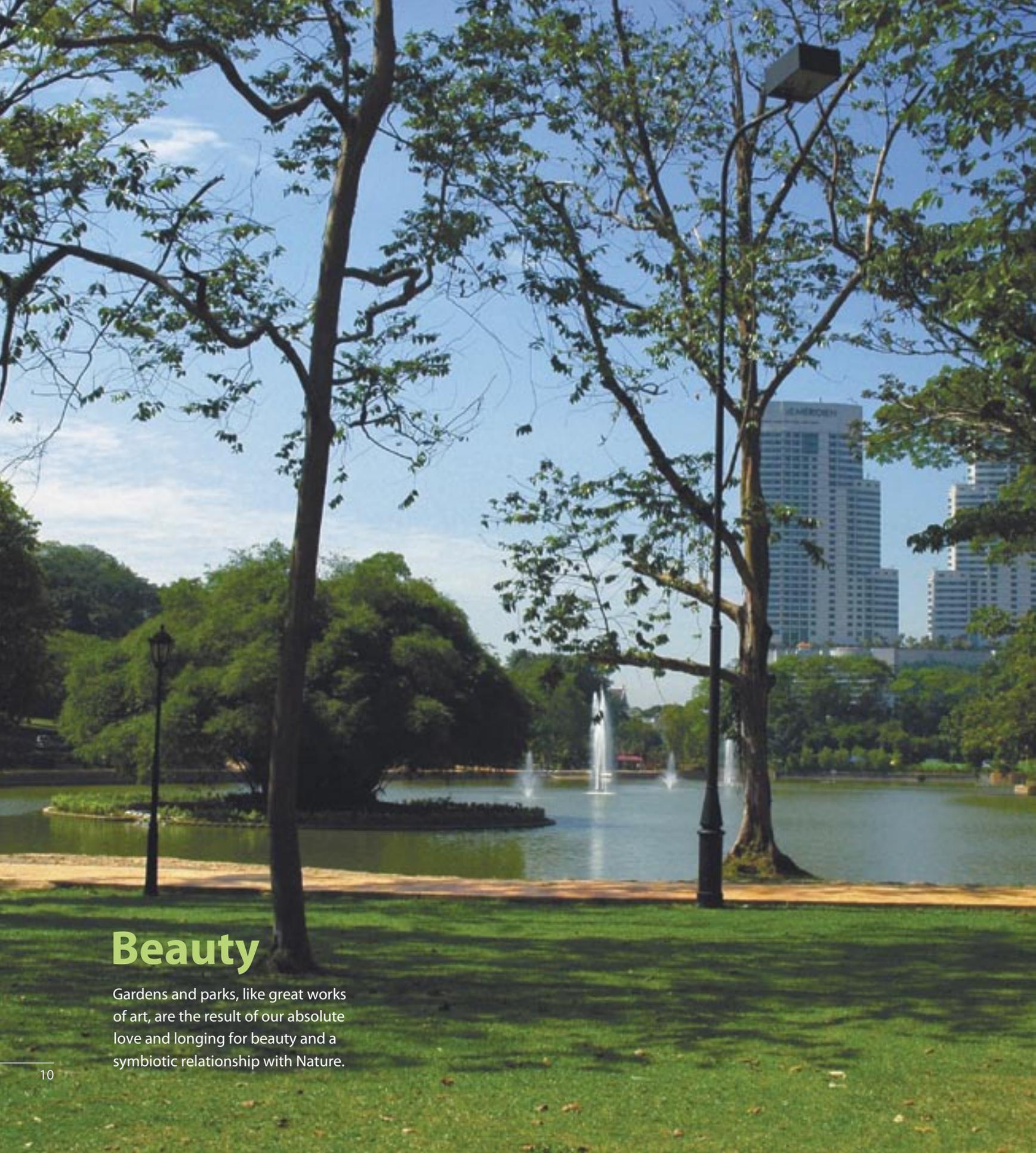
In our cities today, the rivalry between vehicles and pedestrians is growing ever more intense as new roads are constantly being built to ease traffic congestion. Unconsciously, people, whom a city must serve, are being pushed to small corners of the city with their movements limited to narrow sidewalks while traffic roars alongside, below, and above them. The history of European town planning proved that people only become important in planning process when they began to crowd the cities and when crime, social illnesses, and aggression swell in cities due to overcrowding. In accord to Chopenhauer's theory, '... people are like hedgehogs, felt uncomfortable and pricking each other when closely packed and miserable when isolated' (Whitaker & Browne 1971). We need more open spaces and the influence of Nature to counterbalance the harsh reality of a hectic urban life.

Degradation of the living environment—overcrowding, air and water pollution, and the collapse of social institutions that preoccupied the 19th century's industrial era—is beginning to haunt most modern cities today. Open spaces lost their importance to physical development and their provision are either compromised or largely ignored. Existing open spaces in our urban centres are not valued as the city's heritage, therefore, are constantly under the threat of land acquisition, changes, and modification. Roads and highways are constantly being constructed at the expense of gardens and parks. Openness and accessibility, the two hallmarks of good open spaces, are also weaknesses that make them vulnerable to property developers and the unsighted administrators.

Town and Country Planning legislation governs the requirement and provision of open spaces as an integral part of all new developments. However, there is much to be desired of the quality of these spaces as the developers' notion of open spaces often means 'leftover spaces'. In a densely populated urban centre, where high land costs make it difficult to create new open spaces, the quality of our existing open spaces and the smaller scale urban parks could play a vital role in alleviating urban stress. It is our responsibility to recover, replace, retrofit, and further enhance these spaces so that they remain relevant to our modern daily life.

**—maintaining them is a continuous challenge.**





## Beauty

Gardens and parks, like great works of art, are the result of our absolute love and longing for beauty and a symbiotic relationship with Nature.

# Retreat

Open spaces are places of retirement—a hideaway, a haven, a sanctuary, and a place where one can find refuge, privacy, seclusion, and shelter from ordered chaos.



# Oasis

Open spaces are containers of life. In a city, they have the peculiar characteristic of being a reflection of our desire for utopia, like an oasis to a desert.



# Sustainable

Open spaces are our reaction to the basic laws of Nature, in order to sustain life:

The law of gravity,

The law of least energy,

The law of attraction of opposites

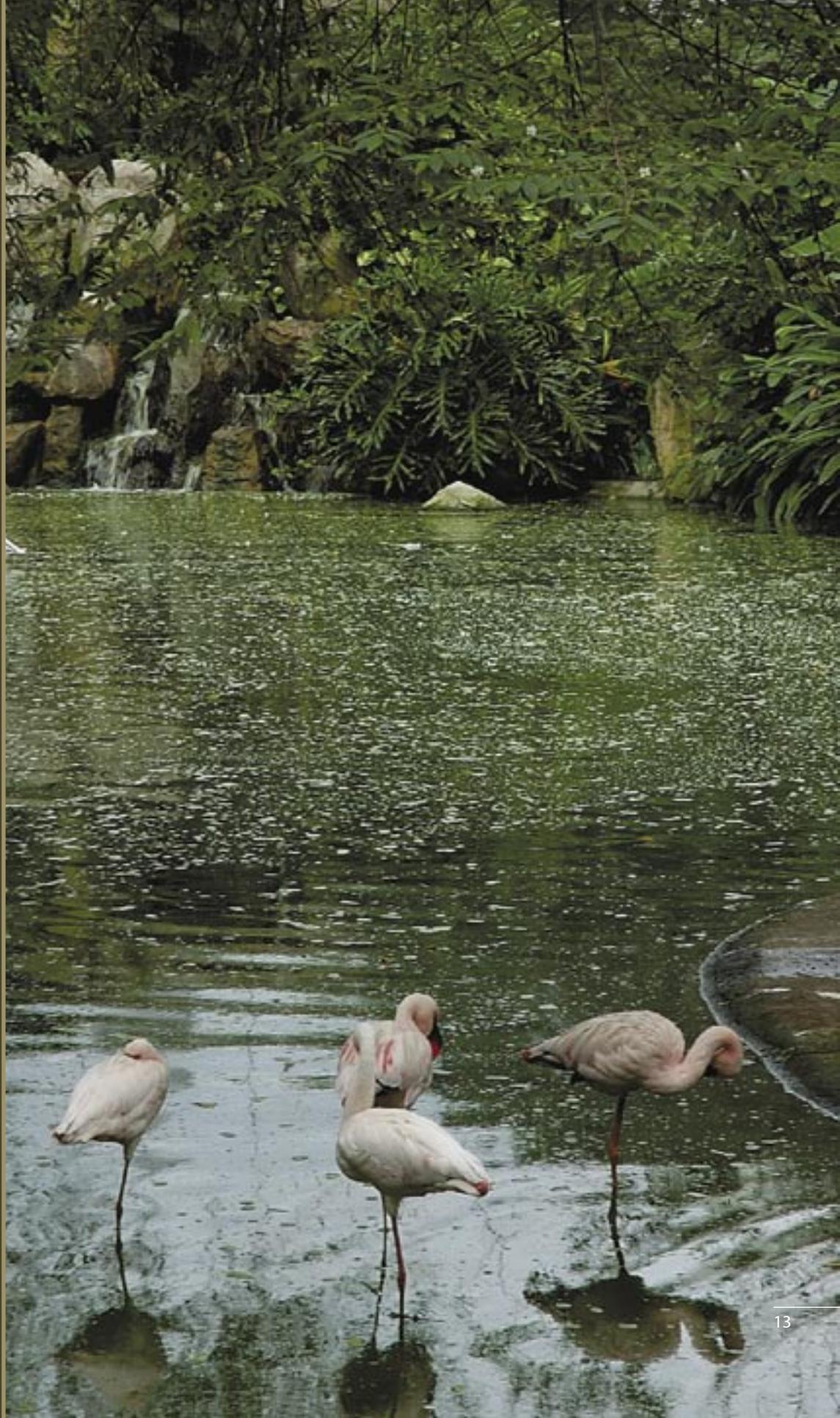
The law of habitat

(symbiosis and complementability)

The law of time of life cycle

(infancy–growth–reproduction–

maturity–decay–death)





# The Evolution of Open Spaces

## From Acropolis to Boulevard

The evolution of open spaces can be traced back to as early as 2000 B.C. to a form of marketplace in ancient Mesopotamia, the precursors to the open spaces found in ancient Greek and Roman civilisations.

In ancient Greece, the acropolis was the nucleus of towns, which had a temple precinct dedicated to the Greek gods. Later, a secular marketplace called the agora assumed a more prominent role as a meeting place. Similarly, throughout the Roman empire, cities were centred on the forum, which combined the Greek acropolis and agora, incorporating open spaces for commerce, religious congregation, political assembly, and athletics.

In the mid-15th century, the idea of civic squares and piazzas, located adjacent to cathedrals and town halls to express civic dignity (Piazza San Marco in Venice) crystallised. The idea of open spaces to express civic grandeur and as an expression of beauty also appeared throughout the Islamic cities (Spain and Central Asia) and great monuments of India, China, and Japan.

The early typologies of open spaces were created for gods and kings while the common folk were cramped into crowded and narrow streets. Communal open spaces for residential areas first appeared only in the late 17th century during the Renaissance's obsession for symmetry and formal planning, which led to the development of courtyards in wealthy housing estates. Among the earliest examples are the Place Royale de Paris (1600) and Bloomsbury in England (1630).



During the Industrial Age, the awareness for better open spaces to prevent overcrowding, and to promote better air and light quality led to the development of suburbs amplified by the Garden City Movement—the idea of houses arranged around communal open spaces, which has since been permitted throughout the world today.

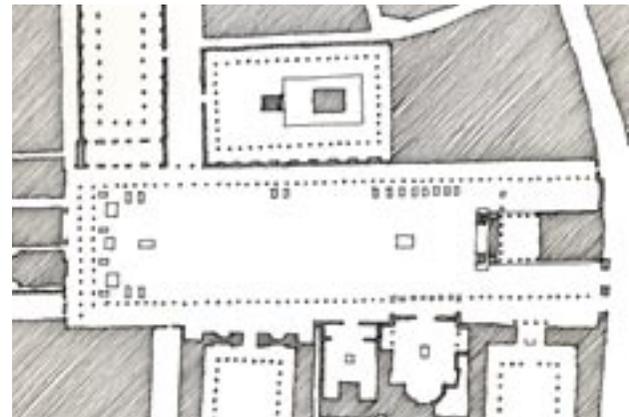
However, the evolution of the park as a typology is strongly related to leisure. The idea of the parc or park, which originally meant ‘an enclosed area containing animals for hunt’ (Whitaker & Browne, 1971), dated back to the 16th century and was popular in France and England. These were the royal parks for hunting and leisure activity.

The early parks were highly formal and geometric in design, the trademark for open spaces in Europe. They later evolved into a more informal and picturesque gardens with meandering paths and water bodies, expansive lawns, undulating topographies, and vistas drawing from the inspiration of England’s romantic countryside scenes. London’s St. James Park, Hyde Park and Green Park—all created in the 18th century—epitomised this school of thought.

The enthusiasm to create a fine urban neighbourhood during the Industrial Revolution created ‘city parks’ such as Regent Park. It was designed to serve the surrounding residence but was eventually opened to the general public. Among the first parks that was specifically designed for public use was the Friedrich-Wilhelmsgarten in Magdeburg, Germany in 1824.

Another important typology of open spaces is the notion of the street as a public space. An example of this first appeared in the form of the boulevard in Haussmann’s 19th century layout of Paris. The boulevard became the gathering point for people of all classes, strolling along the street or promenading in carriages. The idea of axes and wide avenues lined with trees replaced the narrow and crowded streets of the medieval city.

Since the introduction of the automobile in the 19th century, the conflict between vehicles and pedestrians has never been fully resolved. Pedestrian marketplaces and sidewalks are examples of some of the attempts carried out to resolve this conflict. In Malaysian cities, the evolution of open spaces bears some parallel to the ideas and implementation of open spaces in other civilisations and societies around the world, being the product of amalgamation of ideas borrowed and modified throughout our urban history.



<< **Opposite page**  
Acropolis in Athens

**Top:**  
Forum of Pompeii in Rome  
**Middle:**  
Forum of Pompeii's layout plan  
**Bottom:**  
Place Royale de Paris—circa 1600

# Open Spaces Typology

Malaysia has made tremendous strides in the development of open spaces in the last five decades since its formal introduction as part of the urban fabric. During the colonial era, open spaces were the exclusive domain of the rich and the influential. With growing affluence and improved living standards, there was a greater appreciation of 'open spaces' contribution towards a more pleasant environment, graceful living, and a balanced ecology. Open spaces in Malaysia are the product of cross-culture. Some are an introduction of western culture in the East while others are a product of more complex evolution and experimentation.

The Dutch were the first to introduce the concept of a city square in Melaka as early as 1641. However, it was the British who played a significant role in laying the foundation of open spaces in this country and for introducing the ubiquitous 'padang' and parks as an integral part of our urban environment. The simple piece of green lawn performed as a social centre for the community, for sports, as a parade ground for the police and army, and the centre of administration and politics.

Charles Compton Reade, the first government town planner for the Federated Malay States in 1921, stated that the conditions of towns during the early 1920s were 'very favourable compared to those built after that period'. He attributed this to the 'early foresight and conscious laying out of the central areas of most places with liberal provision of 'padang' open spaces for public buildings, government office, quarters and large areas of state and park lands'. Reade also ensured that the appreciation of open spaces was made prominent in 1923 through the introduction of the Town Planning Enactment, which reflected Reade's philosophy, a combination of comprehensive planning and the garden city ideas.

IN URBAN MALAYSIA



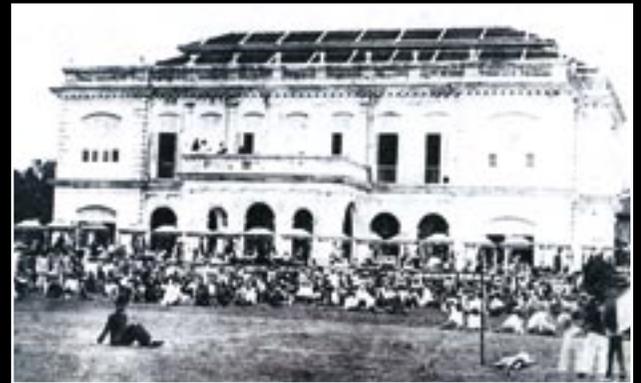
Dutch Square, Melaka in the 17th century





During the British colonial era, the civic open space was reinvented and elevated to another level. The lawn or 'padang' was originally created as parade and exercise ground for the police throughout the British colony. The 'padang' also acted as the civic square for the British administration. In Kuala Lumpur, Government offices, army barracks, church, and town hall were constructed around the 'padang' where official occasions were staged. This disposition of colonial buildings can be found in Penang, with the original cricket club, government office, and Fort Cornwallis situated around the open space facing the Esplanade.

Parade grounds such as in Taiping, Kuala Lumpur, and Ipoh eventually became the centre for sports and recreation for the British, often complemented by a clubhouse surrounding the lawn. Cricket and football were played on regular basis and the 'padang' evolved as the social and recreational centre while serving its civic duty as the administration hub. Perak Club in Taiping and Selangor Club in Kuala Lumpur—founded in 1880 and 1884 respectively—are examples of the earliest club facing the parade ground.



**Top:**  
Padang Kota Lama during British era  
**Middle:**  
The formation of Taiping around the  
Esplanade (1880)  
**Bottom:**  
Cricket match in Selangor Club 'padang'  
(Kuala Lumpur)





After the country's independence in 1957, the development of open spaces in Malaysia had never lost its momentum. A new genre of open spaces, based on the requirements of a newly independent nation with a multiracial society, was invented to reflect Malaysia's national identity.

During the economic boom of the 1970s and 1980s, the development of open spaces was geared towards providing social facilities to enhance national unity and providing a better living environment in Malaysian cities. In line with the aspiration to use the country's green heritage to provide recreation and promote tourism, many parks and new open spaces have been developed within the urban centres over the past five decades.

Vision 2020, the brainchild of former Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, served as a framework for a paradigm shift with regards to open spaces in our cities—braver, bolder, and bigger. Open spaces became the central theme in the creation of the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) in Kuala Lumpur and the new administrative capital in Putrajaya; new models for the future development of open spaces in urban Malaysia.



<< **Opposite page**  
View of the Lake Gardens with 'Carcosa' in the background (1905)

**Top:**  
KLCC Park in Kuala Lumpur  
**Above:**  
Taiping Lake Gardens in 2004



## CIVIC OPEN SPACES and the 'PADANG'

Similar to the growth of many medieval cities around the world, the early civilisation during the Malay Sultanate era revolved around a palace complex and a marketplace by the main trading port. Famed Chinese explorer Ma Huan in his 15th century account 'General Account of the Shores of the Ocean', described Melaka as 'having a civic administration of palace, mosque, warehouse and godowns surrounded by walls and a busy marketplace of around twenty pavilions'—a veritable gathering place for traders from all over the globe.

Verbal and written references by Tun Sri Lanang, the noted author of the Malay Annals, described open spaces in the form of a 'forbidden and pleasure garden' within the palace complex, accessible only to the members of the royal court. However, it was the colonial powers—the Portuguese, Dutch, and English—who brought a European sense of civic mindedness towards open spaces as an integral part of urban fabric to this country. The earliest surviving open space can be traced back to the Dutch occupation of Melaka in 1641 where the Dutch Square, surrounded by the city hall, church, and administration building, has survived until the present day.

Civic open spaces are the representation of a nation's civic pride and dignity, and in the case of Malaysia, often reflect the local community they represent. In most state capitals, civic open spaces serve as stages to cultural events, formal civic functions, and national festivities or spaces for memorial and contemplation.

**Top:**  
Bullfight on Padang Kalumpang in  
front of the Balai Besar Palace in 1908

**Opposite page >>**  
Taiping Esplanade during the British era



MELAKA





## **DUTCH SQUARE** Melaka

The need for a new administrative centre led the Dutch to construct the Stadthuys (Dutch for 'city hall') soon after the conquest of Melaka. The Dutch Square, in this context, can be viewed as Melaka's first city square surrounded by three important civic landmarks during that era—a town hall, a government office, and a church. The square was eventually completed with the construction of the Christ Church in 1753 to commemorate the centenary of the Dutch occupation of Melaka.

During the Dutch era, it was a formal square surrounded by white buildings and was used as a space for official congregations and Sunday gatherings. The square was developed in a more leisurely fashion during the British era with the addition of the Queen Victoria Fountain in 1904 in honour of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The Tan Beng Swee Clock Tower was built by his son Tan Jiak Kim in 1886. Raintrees were also introduced during the British era, which gave the square a softer look, in contrast with the imposing architecture around it.

Today, the square is probably the most accessible and utilised open space in the city, a centre where tourists gather to have their pictures taken. As part of Melaka's historical complex, souvenir shops and eateries have been built around the square, fulfilling its more modern identity as a tourist destination.

<< **Opposite page**  
Tourists gather around Queen Victoria Fountain

**Above:**  
Dutch Square on a typical Saturday afternoon

**Following pages >>**

**Left:**  
View of the Christ Church from the square

**Top right:**  
Souvenir shops around the Dutch Square

**Bottom right:**  
Tourism activities within the square



CHRIST 17

ANGELIC YOUTH





### **PADANG KOTA LAMA** Georgetown

Padang Kota Lama is the venue for most of the island's important events, such as the Chingay parade during the Chinese Lunar New Year. In the olden days, Sepoy regiments used it for target practice and the Manila Band played from a bandstand from 1890 to 1954. Portions of the 'padang' have been carved out for a children's playground, a hawker centre, and a much-needed car park. Some of the numerous trees here boast of a 'royal' heritage, having been presented as gifts by such noted dignitaries which include the Emperor of Japan, a Sumatran Governor, and a South Australian Premier.

The 'padang' is a huge square of town green flanked by important British administrative buildings, namely the City Hall—which constitutes a handsome pair of colonial architectural relics—and Fort Cornwallis which marks the spot where the founder of Penang, Captain Francis Light, first landed in 1786. Next to Fort Cornwallis is the Esplanade, a popular waterfront promenade which stretches from the hawker stalls at one end to the clock tower at the other.





<< Opposite page

Top:

View of Padang Kota Lama  
and Fort Cornwallis

Middle:

Carnival in Padang Kota Lama

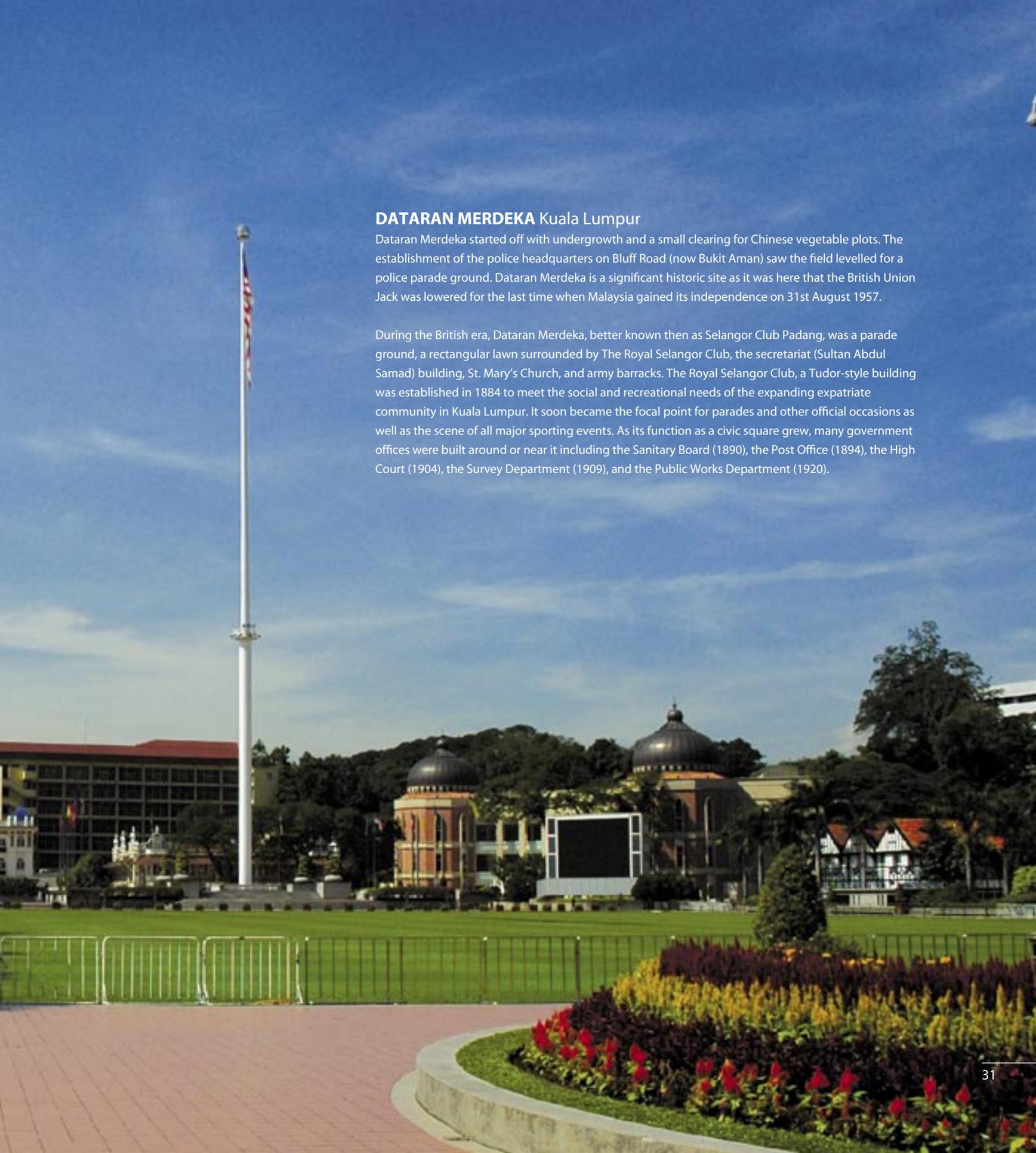
Bottom:

Padang Kota Lama in 1869

This page:

A family evening in Padang Kota Lama  
with the City Hall in the background





## **DATARAN MERDEKA** Kuala Lumpur

Dataran Merdeka started off with undergrowth and a small clearing for Chinese vegetable plots. The establishment of the police headquarters on Bluff Road (now Bukit Aman) saw the field levelled for a police parade ground. Dataran Merdeka is a significant historic site as it was here that the British Union Jack was lowered for the last time when Malaysia gained its independence on 31st August 1957.

During the British era, Dataran Merdeka, better known then as Selangor Club Padang, was a parade ground, a rectangular lawn surrounded by The Royal Selangor Club, the secretariat (Sultan Abdul Samad) building, St. Mary's Church, and army barracks. The Royal Selangor Club, a Tudor-style building was established in 1884 to meet the social and recreational needs of the expanding expatriate community in Kuala Lumpur. It soon became the focal point for parades and other official occasions as well as the scene of all major sporting events. As its function as a civic square grew, many government offices were built around or near it including the Sanitary Board (1890), the Post Office (1894), the High Court (1904), the Survey Department (1909), and the Public Works Department (1920).



## DATARAN MERDEKA Kuala Lumpur

The additions made in the 1980s elevated its status to that of a civic centre of national importance. A 100-metre high flagpole, one of the tallest in the world, towers over Merdeka Square which has become a stage to many national events. An underground complex was added beneath the square where car parks, food, leisure, and entertainment facilities were introduced to cater for the increasing tour buses and cars to this important civic and historic landmark.



**Top left:**  
Gazebos provide shade from the afternoon sun  
**Bottom left & centre:**  
Merdeka celebration at Dataran Merdeka

**Opposite page >>**  
**Top:**  
Antique fountain installed in 1980s  
**Middle:**  
Collonades marking the edge of the square  
**Bottom:**  
View of St. Mary's Church from the square





ROYAL IPOH CLUB

وہسما وان محمد

ROYAL IPOH CLUB



## IPOH PADANG Ipoh

Ipoh Padang was created in 1898, in commemoration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. In true British fashion, Ipoh Padang was the parade ground for the army. At other times, these officers can be seen enjoying a few innings of cricket or a game of football. The Perak Cricket Association was based here, with one of the best cricket pitches in the country. Cricket was so important then that the 'bulli' soil for the 'padang' was imported from Australia. It was said to be the first 'padang' constructed with specifically designed underground drainage. During the Japanese Occupation, every morning at eight o'clock, all the staff of the government offices in Ipoh gathered on the 'padang' to participate in a bowing and allegiance ceremony.

When the Indian pro-independence nationalist Subhas Chandra Bose visited Ipoh on 1st October 1943, he spoke to a large gathering here and recruited hundreds of volunteers for his Army of Free India. On 31st May 1962, the Sultan of Perak declared the formation of the Municipality of Ipoh at the 'padang'. There are a number of fine colonial-styled buildings built by the British surrounding the 'padang' including the Royal Ipoh Club, the Ipoh Municipal Council, the High Court, Masjid India, and St. Micheal School. The F.M.S. Bar & Restaurant, which is located at the edge of the 'padang', was a gathering place for famous writers of the British era.

### << Opposite page

A rugby game at Padang Ipoh with the view of Ipoh Club in the background

### Above:

Banks and office buildings facing the 'padang'

### Top right:

The famous FMS Bar & Restaurant

### Right:

Colonnades and fountain at a corner of the 'padang'



## **PADANG MERDEKA** Kota Bharu

Padang Merdeka, better known as Padang Besar among the locals, is an important historical civic open space for Kota Bharu, Kelantan. During the reign of Sultan Muhammad II in the 1840s, the site was already well known as the market square where the floating market was originally located. After the construction of the new palace by Sultan Muhammad II in 1884 which marked the birth of Kota Bharu, the square came into prominence as the market square for the new town, located exactly in front of the palace gate, and was known as Padang Kalumpang. Its transition into a civic square started after the construction of the Muhammadi Mosque (1869) and the houses of advisers and trustees to the Sultan around the 'padang'. In 1906, during the reign of Sultan Muhammad IV, it was renamed Padang Bank, seven years after the construction of the first bank (Pitis Bank) near the palace ground.

The British decisively converted this traditional marketplace into the characteristically British 'padang'. Typically, many government offices and public buildings were built around it, including the office for Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan (MUIK) and the first commercial bank in Kota Bharu, the Merchantile Bank of India. The reconstruction of the Muhammadi Mosque in 1922, using bricks and mortar, added grandeur to the civic square. In 1905, on this 'padang' the body of the legendary freedom fighter Tok Janggut was hung upside down by the British. The British also built a war memorial sculpture that still stands today to mark the end of World War I. During the Japanese Occupation in World War II, the Japanese used the 'padang' as the centre for their administration. The office of Japanese Secret Police was located here. Today, it is a place where within its gated compound, one can find peace and tranquillity

away from the hectic city. Besides its everyday function as the place for morning exercise, various formal and royal functions are staged here. The royal stand within the 'padang' is reserved for the royal family and dignitaries during the annual parade held to celebrate the birthday of the Sultan of Kelantan. Padang Merdeka is also a famous tourist destination. Surrounded by museums and historical buildings, it is the heart of Kota Bharu's cultural and historical complex.

**Below:**  
Aerial view of the 'padang' with the Muhammadi Mosque in the background

**Opposite page >>**  
**Left:**  
The flagpole marking the western end of the 'padang'  
**Right:**  
The main entrance to the 'padang'  
**Bottom:**  
Football games are occasionally played here









## MEDAN BANDAR Alor Setar

Medan Bandar, which is also known as Padang Court, is located in the heart of Alor Setar with an area of 1.8 acres. Medan Bandar is a space of civic importance, surrounded by important landmarks such as the Istana Kota Setar or Istana Pelamin (now known as Muzium DiRaja), Balai Besar, Balai Nobat, Menara Jam Besar, Masjid Negeri (Masjid Zahir), Balai Seni Negeri (originally the High Court), the Wan Muhammad Saman building, and the new High Court building.

Several important historical events have taken place in Medan Bandar since the 19th century, including the return of Setul and Perlis districts to Kedah under the rule of Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah on 17th May 1897. Another prominent event was the wedding ceremony for one of Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah's sons which was held at the Istana Kota Setar, Balai Besar, Balai Seni, and also at Padang Court in June 1904, a ceremony that lasted for three months. The territory of Kedah was handed over by the occupying Japanese army to Siam on this very field on 18th October 1943. As the country moved towards independence, Bapa Malaysia—the late Tunku Abdul Rahman, led two big public rallies on Medan Bandar in protest to the introduction of the Malayan Union, on 19th January and 30th May 1946.

As an important civic square and one of the recreational spaces for Alor Setar, it is well provided with public amenities. Comfortable seating areas, a pedestrian network, children's playground, and public toilets have been added to cater for its growing function as the recreational attraction within the city. Adequate lighting, attractive fountains, and landscape features serve to attract visitors to Medan Bandar.

<< **Opposite page**  
Aerial view of Medan Bandar

**Above:**  
Modern sculpture and fountain at Padang Court

**Top right:**  
The State Mosque (Zahir Mosque)

**Bottom right:**  
The Balai Besar



# Civic Squares and the 'Padang'

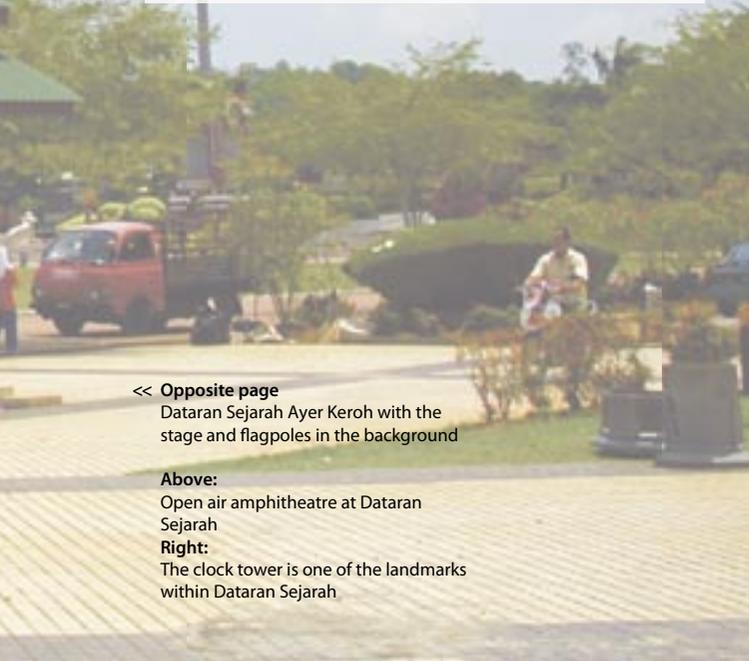
The legacy of the British 'padang' in many Malaysian cities continues. The historic 'padang' of the British era have seen them turned into civic squares, gathering places, and stages for many events and festivities. Many new civic spaces that were created recently, such as Dataran Ipoh and Dataran Sejarah in Melaka, are in many ways the modern interpretation of the British 'padang'; a flexible open space that can be used for every kind of imaginable functions. The flexible use of the historic 'padang' for important civic functions also has, in particular, led to the utilisation of adjacent roads as part of the open spaces as a parade ground. This theme first appeared along Jalan Sultan Abdul Samad near Merdeka Square. This idea is also essential in the design and formation of Dataran Shah Alam where the road is adopted as part of the open space when needed.





### **DATARAN SEJARAH AYER KEROH** Melaka

Dataran Sejarah is a new landmark in Melaka. Utilised for recreational and cultural activities, the square is created to serve civic purposes and reflect the new administrative centre for Melaka in Ayer Keroh. The main component in this case is the green lawn used for numerous processions, cultural performances, and gatherings. With an area of 3.5 acres, it can accommodate a seated audience of 15,000 at any one time. The focus within the lawn includes a clock tower and a stage (formally marked by flagpoles) with the view of the administrative buildings in the background. An amphitheatre has been carved out of the surrounding landscape creating a venue for outdoor performances, a place where cultural events are brought to life.



<< **Opposite page**

Dataran Sejarah Ayer Keroh with the stage and flagpoles in the background

**Above:**

Open air amphitheatre at Dataran Sejarah

**Right:**

The clock tower is one of the landmarks within Dataran Sejarah







## DATARAN IPOH Ipoh

Dataran Ipoh, the new civic square for the city, was established in 1984 by the Ipoh Municipal Council. Covering an area of 4.05 acres, this rectangular green lawn is flanked by the Ipoh Municipal Council and government buildings on one side and commercial development on the other. This 'padang' has a grand stage on one end and a clock tower on the opposite corner. Flagpoles, now a compulsory component of the modern 'padang', marks the stage. Since its completion, various formal and informal events have been held here, including the annual Merdeka Day celebration. Because of its strategic location at the heart of Ipoh's new commercial district, Dataran Ipoh is a popular recreational and meeting point among the locals.

<< **Opposite page**  
Dataran Ipoh, view towards the stage and the flagpoles

**Above:**  
Dataran Ipoh and its surroundings

**Bottom left:**  
View from the stage towards the clock tower

**Below:**  
Visitors at the Dataran





## DATARAN SHAH ALAM Shah Alam

Created by the Shah Alam City Council, Dataran Shah Alam—flexible and adaptable to various functions—demonstrates the idea of open spaces that coexist with other urban elements. There are three main elements that form this space: a square that acts as stage, a seating gallery, and the road that divides them.

In its daily function, the square, marked by its blue clock tower, acts as a passive open space with water features. One can enjoy the programmes featured on the giant electronic screen from the seating gallery across the street amidst the passing traffic. During formal functions and parades, the space can be transformed into a formal civic square where the roads are closed to vehicular traffic thereby allowing pedestrians to move on its interlocking pavers. With one stroke, a much bigger open space is created, connecting the stage with the seating gallery, allowing more than 400 people to enjoy a prime view of the activities within the square from the gallery.

**Above:**

View towards the clock tower and the seating gallery

**Below:**

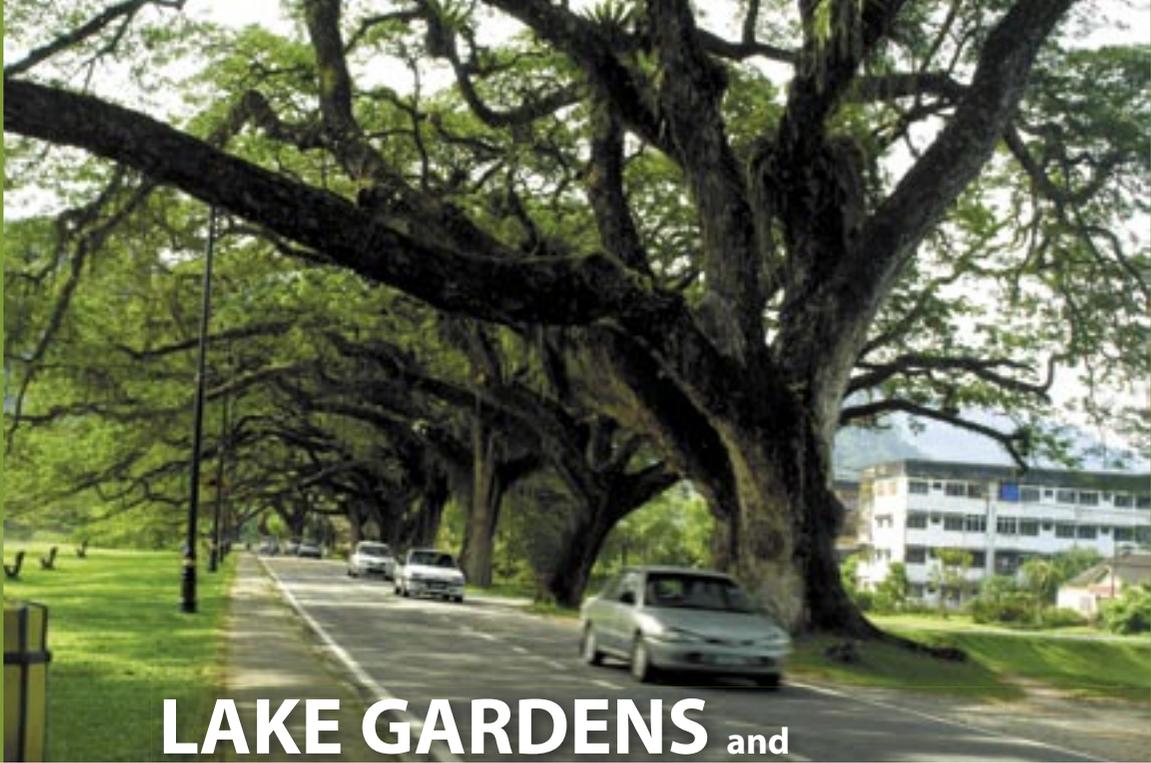
Dataran Shah Alam also functions as a public open space for shoppers visiting Plaza Alam Sentral as seen in the background

**Opposite page >>**

Shah Alam Municipal Council







## LAKE GARDENS and CITY PARKS

The lake gardens in Malaysia were introduced by the British following the formula of the royal parks of 18th-century Britain. The first garden was established in Penang in 1796, (the present garden, though, is not the site of the first garden). Surprisingly, it was created not for leisure but to serve an economic purpose. Fruits and spices were important commodities during the early Colonial era, and as a result, the plant stocks had to be controlled for commercial needs, leading to the establishment of the Botanical Gardens. Eventually, lake gardens were created as recreational parks for British officers as well as a utility nursery for plants. The Taiping Lake Gardens (1880), the Kuala Lumpur Lake Gardens (1884), and the Penang Botanical Gardens (1884) are the three surviving gardens of the British era.

The scenic beauty of these three important public parks were emulated in the planning of other city parks created after independence such as Titiwangsa Lake Gardens, Permaisuri Lake Gardens, and many other smaller city parks throughout the country. Most importantly, lake gardens amplify the idea of open spaces dedicated totally for leisure activities and pure enjoyment of scenic beauty, the two important ingredients in the development of modern city parks. In a planned city like Shah Alam, lake gardens have become a central component in city planning as a way to create a balanced ecosystem and to provide spaces for leisure activities. It also gives a natural environment setting for public buildings and institutions within the lake gardens compound.





## PERDANA LAKE GARDENS Kuala Lumpur

This is one of the oldest and largest of its kind, and perhaps the most beautiful lake garden due to its gently undulating terrain. Kuala Lumpur was only a small mining town when Alfred Venning, the colonial State Treasurer, conceived the idea of creating the lake gardens in 1888.

Built around an artificial lake, it encompasses 250 acres of undulating greenery interspersed with flowering shrubs and shady trees. Several themed gardens and parks have been developed over the years to include the outstanding Botanical gardens, the Orchid and Hibiscus Gardens, the Bird Park, the Deer Park, and the Butterfly Park. The Orchid Garden was opened in 1986, followed by the Hibiscus Garden that showcases the varieties of Malaysia's national flower. In 1989, an aviary, covering a 20-acre area and home to some 5,000 species of birds, was completed. The Deer Park is a place for rediscovering Nature and Malay folk tales while the Butterfly Park offers various butterfly species.

The Panggung Anniversary, set in a secluded valley, is a regular venue for musical and cultural performances. Taman Tasik Perdana is above all a recreational park with outstanding children's playground, jogging tracks, exercise stations, and rowing boats. Across the road, the park grounds also contain the ASEAN Sculptural Park and the world's largest free-standing bronze sculpture, Tugu Negara—the national monument which commemorates those who died in Malaysia's struggle against Communist insurgency in the 1950s.





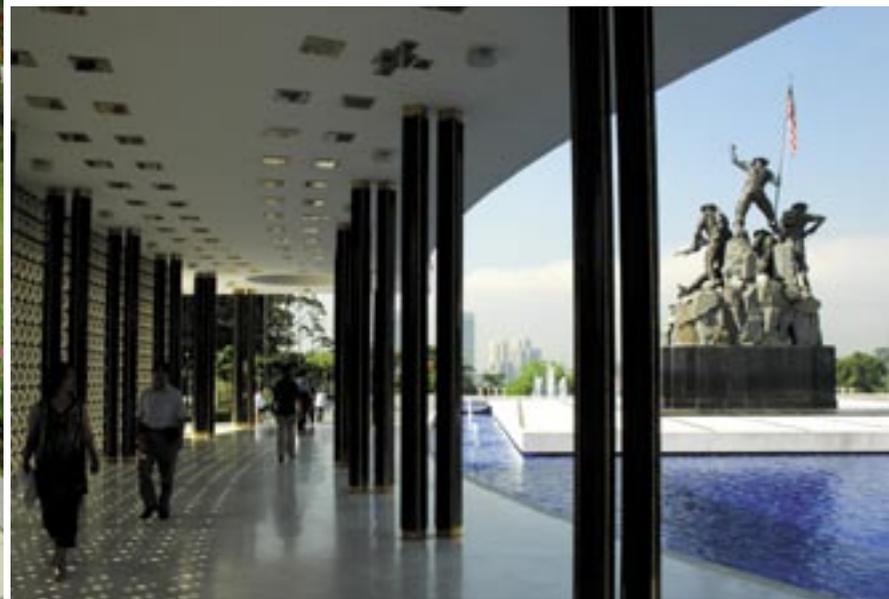
<< **Opposite page**  
View of KL Sentral development  
from the lake gardens

**Left:**  
Evening stroll in the lake gardens  
**Top right:**  
Formal English Garden  
**Right:**  
One of the children's playground  
within the lake gardens.





Admiring the Japanese Carp at the Butterfly Park



Above: ASEAN Sculpture Park and Tugu Negara—famous tourist destinations and educational venues  
Below from left to right: KL Bird Park, the Deer Park and the Orchid Park



# Botanical Gardens





## PENANG BOTANICAL GARDENS Georgetown

More popularly known as the 'Waterfall Gardens', its origins were closely linked to the economic strategy of Penang's early colonial period of providing planting stock of fruits and spices for commercial growers.

Created in 1884 by Nathaniel Cantley (who was the superintendent of the Singapore Botanic Garden), the garden is spread over 29 hectares of forested hills and lush green tropical trees and plants. It lies in a deep valley at the foot of a 366-foot high jungle-clad hills, bound by evergreen tropical rainforests, divided by a cascading stream that meanders through a sprawling of prime and undulating grounds. Originally, it functioned as part of the then Gardens and Forests Department of the Straits Settlements. The Gardens' first curator, Charles Curtis, developed the botanical and horticultural aspects. By 1910, the Botanical Gardens had an extensive collection of rare and beautiful plants. During the Japanese Occupation, the garden was turned into a naval store, an ammunition dump, and a torpedo assembly area.

Today, the garden has maintained most of its collection of both local and tropical trees, plants, and ferns although its Herbarium was transferred to Singapore in 1946. Its lush greenery and tranquil setting makes it the favourite park among Penangites as well as a popular tourist attraction. It is Penang's unique natural heritage, being the only one of its kind in Malaysia. Besides being a repository of flora unique to the country and to the region, it serves as a green lung for metropolitan Penang.



<< **Opposite page**  
One of the many rapids and waterfalls within the gardens

**Top right:**  
An evening in the park  
**Right:**  
Flowers and fountains for public enjoyment



## TITIWANGSA LAKE GARDENS Kuala Lumpur

Titiwangsa Lake Gardens was built in 1980 to ease congestion at Kuala Lumpur's Perdana Lake Gardens that has been somewhat reduced in size. It is a nucleus of an area that includes a training college, a university hospital, and housing estates at the northern fringe of Kuala Lumpur, located less than four kilometres from the city centre.

Similar to the earlier lake gardens of the British era, lakes form the major draw of this 46-hectare park, a centre for boating and water sports. In this case, there are two lakes, the bigger being an abandoned mining pond while the smaller is a man-made lake. Surprisingly, it is the brainchild of an unlikely source, Japanese landscape architect Rio Takahashi.

A popular destination amongst city dwellers, it was designed to include an array of activities—horse riding, tennis, jogging, children's playground, and model car racing. At the edge of the lake sits a floating restaurant in which one can enjoy food against the scenic view of the Titiwangsa Main Range. This park is admired not just for its scenic beauty but is held in high esteem as the recent achievement of the development of open spaces in Kuala Lumpur.

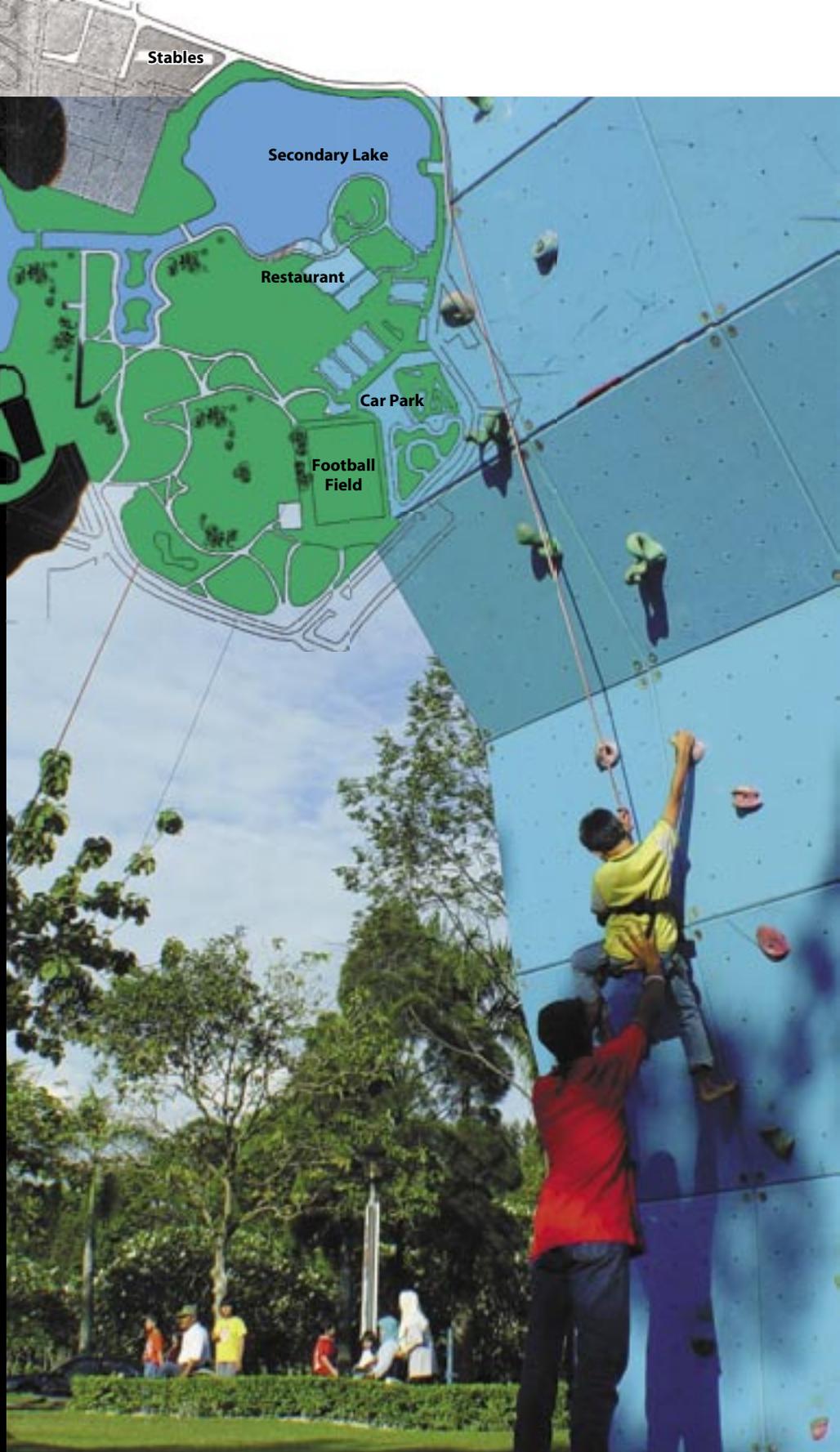
**Right:**  
Wall climbing facilities

**Opposite page >>**

**Left:**  
Kayaking activities

**Top right:**  
Picnic in the park

**Right:**  
Jogging tracks and exercise bars







**Above:**  
Jogging tracks around the main lake is popular among the visitors

**Opposite page >>**

**Top:**  
Fountains within the lake gardens create an interesting visual effect to the overall design

**Bottom:**  
The lake provides a natural habitat for fish and tortoises



## **PERMAISURI LAKE GARDENS** Kuala Lumpur

Encouraged by the success story of the Titiwangsa Lake Gardens and the growing need for more integrated recreational facilities, Kuala Lumpur City Hall designed this public park located in Cheras, this time with the help of a Canadian landscape architect.

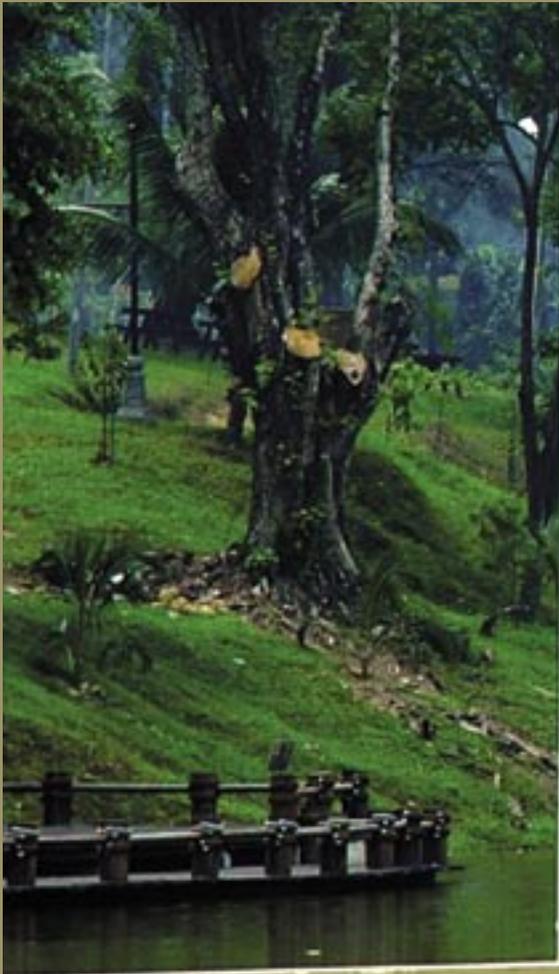
Covering an area of 122 acres, it is a local park with catchments of 100,000 to 150,000 people within a two-mile radius, and is at the heart of a rapidly growing residential area. Originally a piece of government-owned tin mining land, it was turned into lakes and undulating woodlands connected by meandering paths and tracks. The ornamental lake serves as the main anchoring element in the park and is the focus for water-based activities and various other activities arranged around it.

This park is the best example of a modern city park that incorporates local elements such as the Laman Puteri, a huge terrace garden of colourful shrubs on an artificial hill used to emphasize the land axis when viewed from Jalan Tenteram. Gazebos and seating facilities are placed on certain strategic points, while the children's playground is surrounded by woodlands. Besides the football stadium, swimming complex, restaurants, and tennis courts, this park is also designed to provide facilities for cultural and outdoor creative activities.



## **SEREMBAN LAKE GARDENS** Seremban

Seremban Lake Gardens is located within a one-mile radius from Seremban town centre and is renowned as one of the most picturesque gardens in the country. A welcoming sight in the heart of busy Seremban, the park's landscaping is beautifully finished and is wholly suitable for families. There are jogging tracks in gardens for the more energetic visitors while children can frolic in the playground. For those who are content to watch the world go by, this is just the place where benches are erected in various spots overlooking the lake and greenery.







## **DR. SEENIVASAGAM PARK Ipoh**

This park was originally known as the Coronation Park honouring the installation of Queen Elizabeth II. Later, this park was renamed in honour of the president of the Municipal Council of Ipoh city, who was also the founder of the People's Progressive Party in Ipoh, Dr. Seenivasagam.

Located in the heart of Ipoh, the park is a recreational centre for the city. The main features of the park include several recreational fields, an artificial lake filled with various types of fish, a nursery for plants, and a children's traffic playground. There are also beautiful arches, shelters, pedestrian paths, and the Ipoh tree which gave the city its name. The latest addition is the newly landscaped Japanese Garden featuring a typical Japanese Carp pond. The fresh atmosphere and variety of flora are also part of the main attractions of this park.

The DR Park, as it is known to the locals, has entertained many families for more than 25 years, starting as a mini-theme park during its formative years, much to the delight of many children. To date, the park has remained a popular spot with abundant greenery and attractions, an oasis within Ipoh's city life.

**Above:**  
View of the Japanese Garden

**Opposite page >>**

**Top:**  
The Bamboo Garden creates a secret hideaway within the park

**Bottom left:**  
The lake with viewing towers and boating facilities

**Bottom right:**  
Children enjoying the slides at one of the playgrounds







## SHAH ALAM LAKE GARDENS Shah Alam

The Shah Alam Lake Gardens is the green lung of Selangor's state capital. The man-made lakes are divided into three sections known as the West, East, and Central Lakes which cover an area of 43 hectares. This lake garden is the location for the annual International Boat Show and the Selangor Orchid Exhibition.

The Central Lake zone, adjacent to the town centre, is strongly urban in character. The northern lakeshore comprises gently rolling hills to become the Lakeside Promenade. The major facilities in this zone, such as the plaza, restaurants, floating stage, hotel, and boat station, are located on the south side of the lake.

The Eastern Lake zone, dedicated to the mosque and 'padang', has a strong religious atmosphere, tranquil, and mystic. This zone surrounds the Ornamental Garden, featuring a clear, serene stream lined by flowering trees and shrubs.

The Western Lake zone is located close to the residential area and schools. Having the largest area of the three zones, this zone accommodates the widest range of activities.

<< **Opposite page**  
View of the Central Lake

**Above:**  
Playground in the Western Lake

**Top right:**  
The Eastern Lake and the Shah Alam Mosque

**Bottom right:**  
The Central Lake with the city centre in the background







## **BATU BURUK PARK** Kuala Terengganu

Also known as Polo Field and facing the open South China Sea, it is located across the Primula Hotel, within the vicinity of Kuala Terengganu landmarks—the hospital, the swimming pool, the hockey stadium, and the Muktafibilah palace.

Purpose-built for recreational activities in Kuala Terengganu, the park covers an area of 58.095 acres. Its design concept is based on 'Alunan Warisan Terengganu' which emphasises the heritage elements of Terengganu. Besides leisure and active recreations, educational elements have been designed as part of the park. A cultural centre has been incorporated as a venue for cultural demonstrations for the visiting tourists.

Arranged around an axis, facilities such as a children's playground, a pavilion, a food bazaar, a surau, and a green area provide supporting activities to the park. Unlike other beaches in the country, developing this park adjacent to the famous Batu Buruk beach is aimed at preserving the beach from being turned into another commercial beach resort.

<< **Spread**  
Activities on Pantai Batu Buruk

**Top:**  
A football match with the Cultural Centre in the background  
**Above left:**  
Surau is among the public facilities provided within the park  
**Above right:**  
Entrance to the southern part of the park



**KUALA LUMPUR CITY CENTRE (KLCC) PARK** Kuala Lumpur



This 50-acre urban sanctuary is the centre of the 100-acre Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC). A breathing space for one of the tallest buildings in the world, it is also the most prominent city park in Kuala Lumpur.

Being directly connected to a world-class shopping mall, people from all over the globe visit the park while shopping or just to get a close view of one of the world's tallest structures. The park provides a mosque and extensive facilities for children to complement the landscaped gardens and water features within the park. Accessibility and state-of-the-art facilities attract thousands of visitors, especially during night concerts that are sometimes performed at the park's complex.

<< **Opposite page**  
View of the park taken from the Suria KLCC

**Above:**  
Public swimming pool is popular among the children during weekends

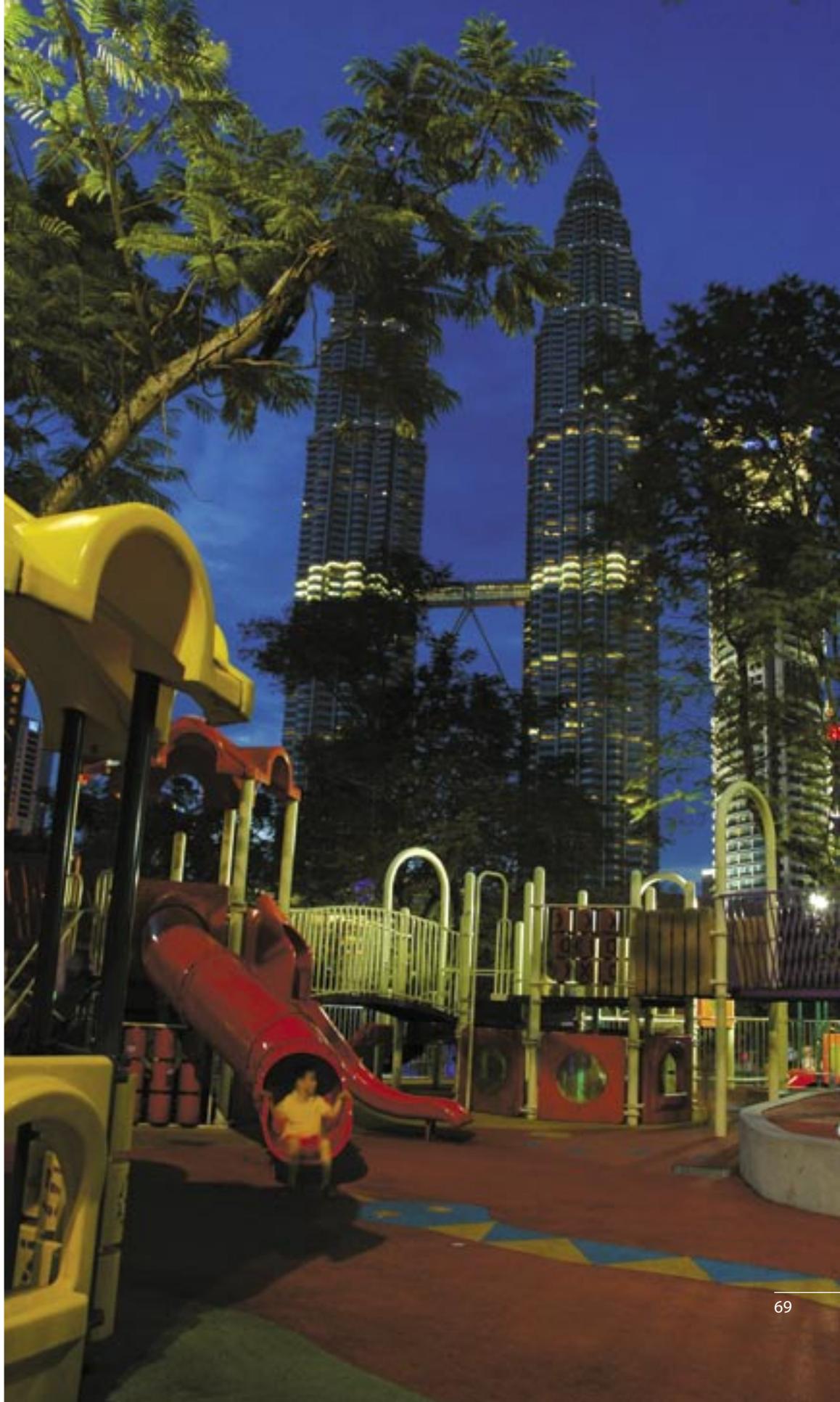
**Following pages >>**

**Left:**  
Light and water display in front of Suria KLCC Shopping Mall

**Middle:**  
View of the park at dusk

**Right:**  
Children's playground is open to the public until late evening







## NEIGHBOURHOOD OPEN SPACES

The 'Neighbourhood Open Spaces' demonstrate the very basic need of a community, namely, a sense of belonging. Besides providing space for recreation, a neighbourhood space gives a community an identity unique to the residents within the neighbourhood. These spaces become more crucial in a high-rise living environment where private open spaces are reduced to mere balconies. Realising these needs, The Town and Country Planning Department in their ***Guidelines For Recreational Open Space Provision*** required every housing scheme or residential estate to '...reserve open space for recreational, sports and environmental beautification based on a standard of 10% of the gross development area of the said housing scheme'. The calculation of 10% of the gross development area would also include 30% of the reserve for infrastructures and utilities. This 10% of open space requirement forms the basis of most of Malaysia's modern townships today.

IN URBAN MALAYSIA



Children playing football at a neighbourhood park in Bandar Seri Damansara





Neighbourhood open spaces in residential areas such as Kota Kemuning and Bukit Jelutong in Shah Alam provide a country-like setting to the otherwise repetitive and monotonous link houses. As in other residential townships in Malaysia, playgrounds are the compulsory element in the design of neighbourhood open spaces, providing the basic facilities for children's recreational activities. Neighbourhood spaces promote healthy activities namely jogging, relaxation, meeting among neighbours, and most importantly, it provides a sense of place.

**Above:**  
Neighbourhood park in Kota Kemuning, Shah Alam

<< **Opposite page**

**Bottom left:**

Children's playground in Bandar Seri Damansara

**Bottom right:**

Neighbourhood park in Bukit Jelutong, Shah Alam

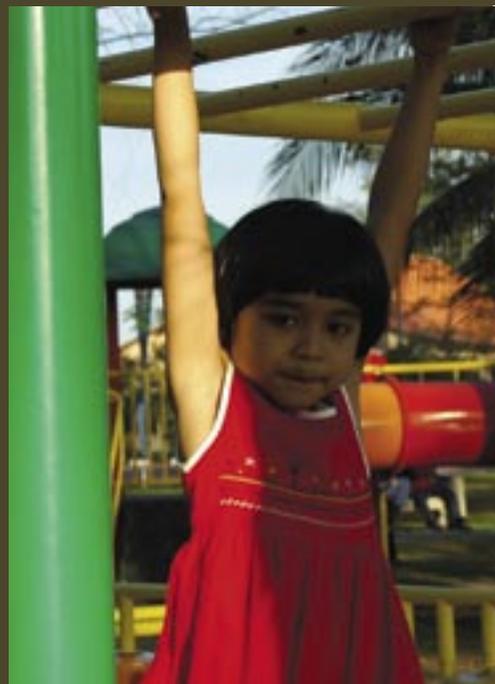




High-rise developments are often communities by themselves, and are therefore not excluded from the planning requirement of open spaces in residential areas. The provision for neighbourhood open spaces is based on 10% of the development area and the density of units. In condominiums such as Riana Green Condominium, open spaces create a communal space for entertaining guests besides being the centre for recreational facilities that gives added value to the property. In housing for the low income group, open spaces become more of a necessity, providing extra room for dwellers to move around and away from confined living quarters. They truly become the communal area, a place where weddings, funerals, and other events that bind a community take place.

<< Opposite page  
Riana Green Condominium, Selangor

Above:  
Low-cost housing in Bandar Seri Damansara  
Right:  
Low-cost housing in Subang





## OPEN SPACES in PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

The British were instrumental in introducing the 'padang' as part of the English schools during the colonial era. The Penang Free School, the King Edward VII school in Taiping, Victoria Institution in Kuala Lumpur, and the Malay College in Kuala Kangsar are some of the oldest examples of open spaces in public institutions that have been adopted as the models in this country.

Besides educational facilities, places of worship—mosques, temples, and churches—are the gathering places for the community at large who share a common belief in the Creator. The Total Planning Doctrine adopted in Malaysia encompasses not only the relationship of man with the environment, but involves a complex triangular relationship between mankind, environment, and the Creator. Naturally, open spaces appear in places of congregation for the various religious and community groups. These spaces often form part of a religious complex or temple precinct, appear as forecourts, lawns or gardens. The oldest of such spaces was probably the compound of Melaka's Great Mosque that was burned down during the Portuguese invasion in 1511. The Portuguese later built the Saint Paul's Church which functioned as the place for religious, administrative, educational, and communal gatherings. Other public buildings such as hospitals and museums are the modern public institutions that incorporate open spaces as the essential component in their design. These are the places for recovery, contemplation, and appreciation for art and beauty.



### **ST. PAUL'S CHURCH** Melaka

The ruins of Saint Paul's Church stand at the summit of Saint Paul's Hill. It was originally known as the Annunciation Church when it was constructed by the Portuguese in 1521, and then later renamed as Saint Paul's Church by the Dutch in 1556. Throughout the ages, the space around the church was used as the gathering place for the Christian community in Melaka. Since then, it has evolved into a gathering space for tourists visiting Saint Paul's Hill.

### **ST. PETER'S CHURCH** Melaka

Saint Peter's Church is the oldest operational Catholic church in Malaysia. It was built in 1710 on land donated by the Dutchman Maryber Franz Amboer. The open space in front of the church was used as a gathering place where people came to meet each other. Now the space acts as a landmark for the church with a big cross marking the foreground.



**Left:**  
St. Paul's Church  
**Above:**  
St. Peter's Church





### **MASJID NEGARA** Kuala Lumpur

This is one of the largest mosques in South East Asia, with a vast prayer hall that caters up to 15,000 people. The external open space sometimes acts as the extension of the prayer hall when a large gathering of Muslims takes place during Friday prayer. The National Mosque that was completed in 1965 is also a popular tourist attraction, visited on daily basis. The open space outside the mosque functions as the forecourt, an orientation centre before entering the mosque proper. Islamic design motives and landscape features fill the court, adding colours to this intricately designed white mosque with unique angular dome.

<< **Opposite page & above:**  
Main entrance of Masjid Negara  
**Right:**  
View of Masjid Negara's forecourt





### **SAM POH TONG TEMPLE Ipoh**

Built by a Buddhist priest from China in 1962, the temple is located at Gunung Rapat, some 5 km from Ipoh. This cavernous Buddhist temple, which is located within Ipoh's famed limestone outcrop houses over 40 Buddha statues.

A charming Oriental rock garden greets visitors at the half-century-old temple. Features of this rock garden include 11 artificial hills and waterfalls. Many of the bonsai plants and other Oriental shrubs are imported from Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand, making it an exotic and sacred place within the temple precinct.

### **SULTANAH AMINAH HOSPITAL Johor Bahru**

A hospital for most people is a place of sadness. Open spaces and greeneries play an important role in rehabilitating and recuperating the ailing body and soul. Sultanah Aminah Hospital in Johor Bahru is one of the oldest example of a hospital that integrates well with its surrounding environment. Unlike other hospitals, visitors to this complex are greeted with a vast green lawn with majestic view towards the Straits of Teberau. Within the complex, charming small gardens provide spaces for relaxation and contemplation.





## **VICTORIA INSTITUTION** Kuala Lumpur

Victoria Institution (V.I.) is one of the first schools in Klang Valley and one of the first secondary schools in Malaysia. The present school complex was officiated by Bennet Eyre Shaw on 26th March 1929. Prior to that the school was located in High Street (now Jalan Tun H.S. Lee) in the heart of old Kuala Lumpur town where the school was first established in 1893. The relocation to the present site was due to the increasing noise and the continuous threat of flood from the nearby Klang River.

The vast lawn and playing field is one of the features of this institution, which over the years has produced so many sportsmen, Olympians, and leaders of our society. Five out of seven badminton players that won the Thomas Cup for Malaysia in 1992 were groomed in this school together with the like of legendary football player, the late Mokhtar Dahari. The field plays an important role to the school's education system, a centre for social and co-curricular activities.

The Japanese formally signed their surrender on 13th September 1945 in the school hall and later surrendered their Samurai swords to the Allied Forces in front of the porch of this school on 22nd February 1946.

## **JALAN BATU PRIMARY SCHOOL** Kuala Lumpur

Also known as the Batu Road Boys' School, this school started out as part of the Victoria Institution secondary school on Jalan Bandar. When the new building was completed in 1930, all the primary school students were transferred to the new building, away from the secondary students.

The school was built complete with a field for the students. During the Japanese Occupation, the school building was used as an army camp. The field was cleared for vegetable plots and Japanese army quarters. After the Japanese surrendered in 1945, the school was reopened by T. R. Abraham (the school's headmaster) and the field was cleared for use by the students again. A large proportion of the field has since been dedicated to the Light Rail Transport development which is located next to the field.



## **PADANG GARONG PRIMARY SCHOOL** Kota Bharu

Originally known as the Padang Garong Malay School, it was built by the Kelantan State Government. The school was originally located at Padang Merdeka, facing the Muhammadi Mosque and the Istana Balai Besar palace. Established in 1904, it was the first Malay school in Kelantan. In 1936, the school was moved to the new building at Padang Garong Street with a 'padang' as part of the school complex before being moved to the current location in 1968.







# Public Institutions

## INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA (UIA)

The physical development of the university was planned as a 'Garden of Knowledge and Virtue' and this concept is reflected in the design of open spaces for the campus.

Water features, a river, and courtyards are the main components for the open spaces, creating a conducive environment for learning, a place where the exchange of ideas occurs within the limits of Islamic virtues. Islamic patterns and features are carried throughout the design of the open spaces which at the same time give an identity to the Islamic institution.

<< Opposite page  
Open spaces at the main building

**Above:**  
The courtyard that reflects the Islamic concept of open spaces  
**Right:**  
UIA's main college park, a combination of Islamic courtyard spaces with tropical landscaping





### ABU BAKAR ROYAL MUSEUM Johor Bahru

Said to be one of the finest museums in the world in terms of its ambience and its dazzling display of cultural treasures, the Royal Abu Bakar Museum occupies the Istana Besar, or Grand Palace, which was built by Sultan Abu Bakar in 1866. The museum was founded in 1990 by the state's present ruler, Sultan Iskandar and its collection consists of the treasures of the Johor royal family. The sprawling garden within the compound of the palace is often ignored or hastily covered on most tour itineraries. Extending over an area the size of five football fields, the grounds are carefully landscaped and regularly maintained. Besides second-to-none panoramic views of the Johor Straits, palm-lined driveways and manicured lawns make for a refreshing afternoon stroll or some casual cycling. Further inside, away from the seafront, a worn and disused bungalow nestles amidst dense vegetation providing an interesting architectural sight reminiscent of the 'White Rajah' era.

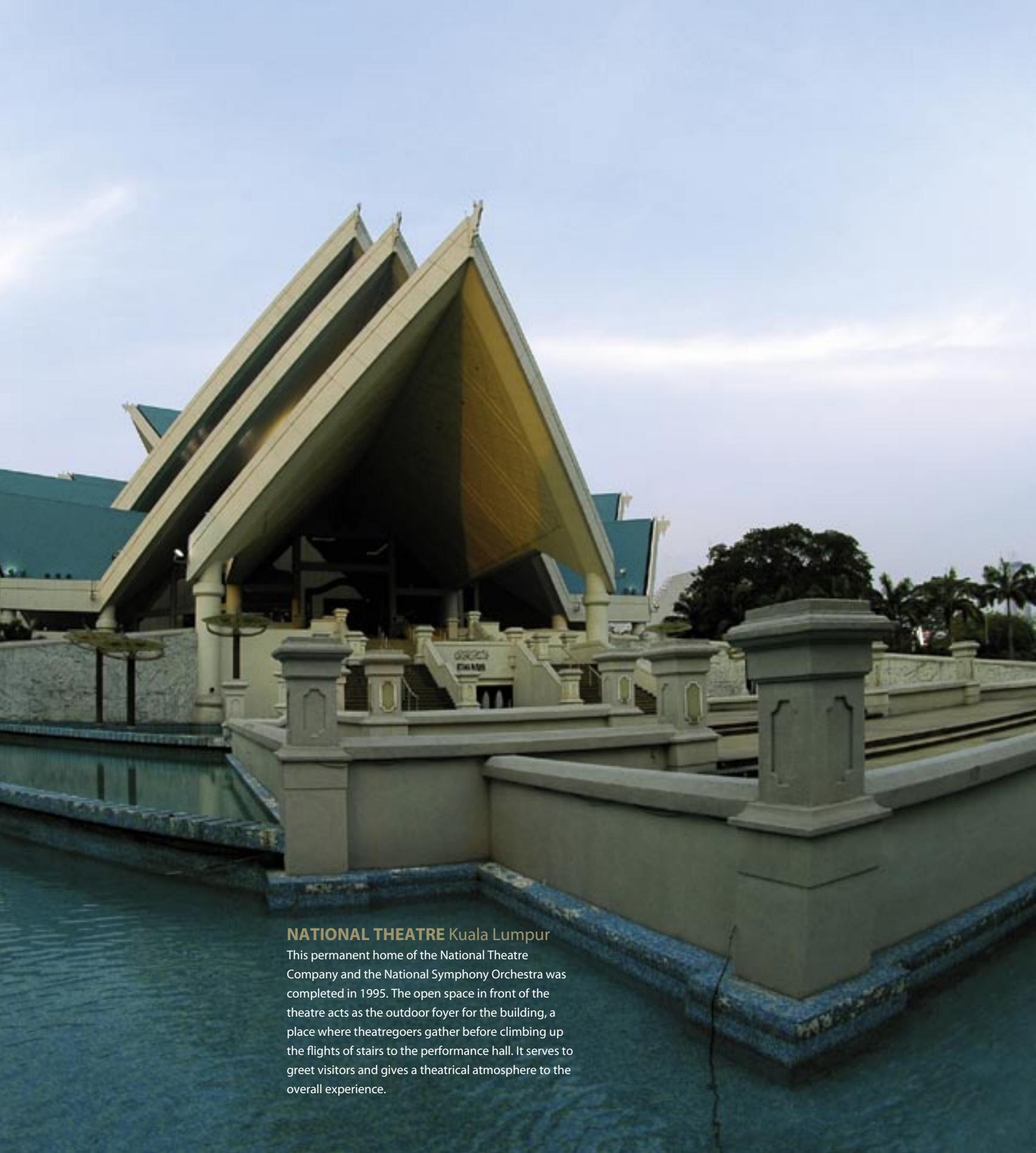
**Above:**

The formal entrance to the museum styled in the traditional English lawn

**Below:**

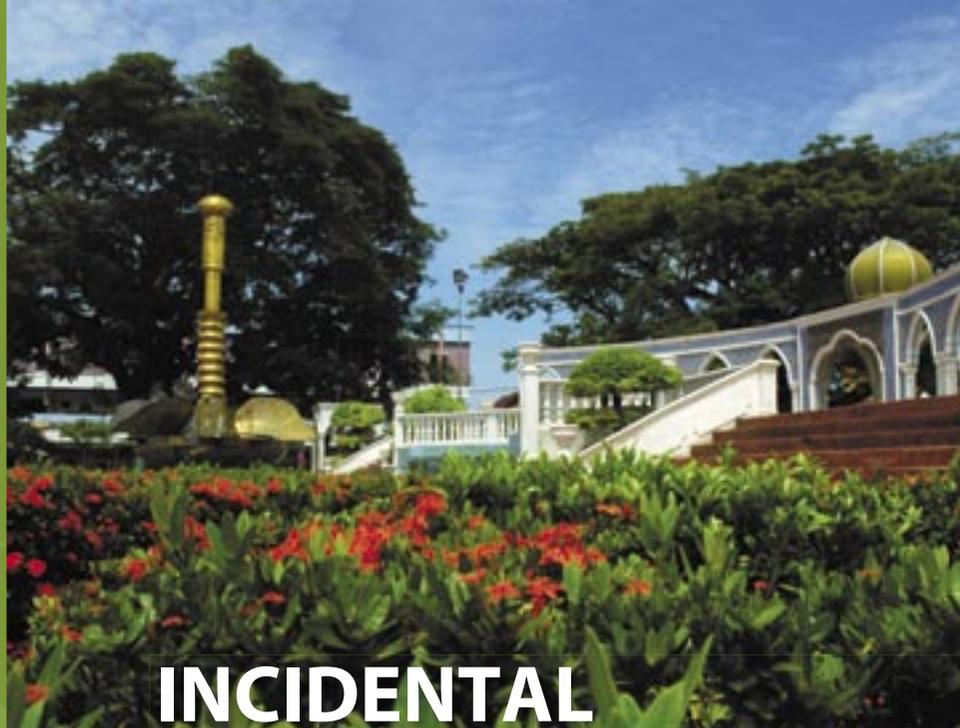
The traditional Japanese Garden and teahouse





### **NATIONAL THEATRE** Kuala Lumpur

This permanent home of the National Theatre Company and the National Symphony Orchestra was completed in 1995. The open space in front of the theatre acts as the outdoor foyer for the building, a place where theatregoers gather before climbing up the flights of stairs to the performance hall. It serves to greet visitors and gives a theatrical atmosphere to the overall experience.



## INCIDENTAL OPEN SPACES

As cities develop into concrete jungles, open spaces with trees and gardens are needed to soften the city's harsh reality and to enlighten our spirit. They are important elements that knit a city's fabric into a network of open spaces that coexist with everyday city functions and integrate the public and private development.

Incidental open spaces are defined as supplementary urban spaces created through the use of non-planned open spaces such as road reserves, plinth areas of a built-up area, river corridors, setbacks between buildings, and many more as ways to alleviate urban congestion and fatigue. The purpose of these incidental open spaces is to establish character for a place or street—as memorable landmarks. Busy marketplaces are often turned into pedestrian malls, creating urban linkages crucial in the process of 'place making' in the urban centres.

Smaller urban parks serve as identity elements for urban areas, creating a positive visual structure for urban areas as a whole. Sometimes, a small and secluded flower garden can serve as the place for contemplation, a retreat from the hustle and bustle of urban life. Whatever their names, they are essential components for urban areas where the competition for space is high.

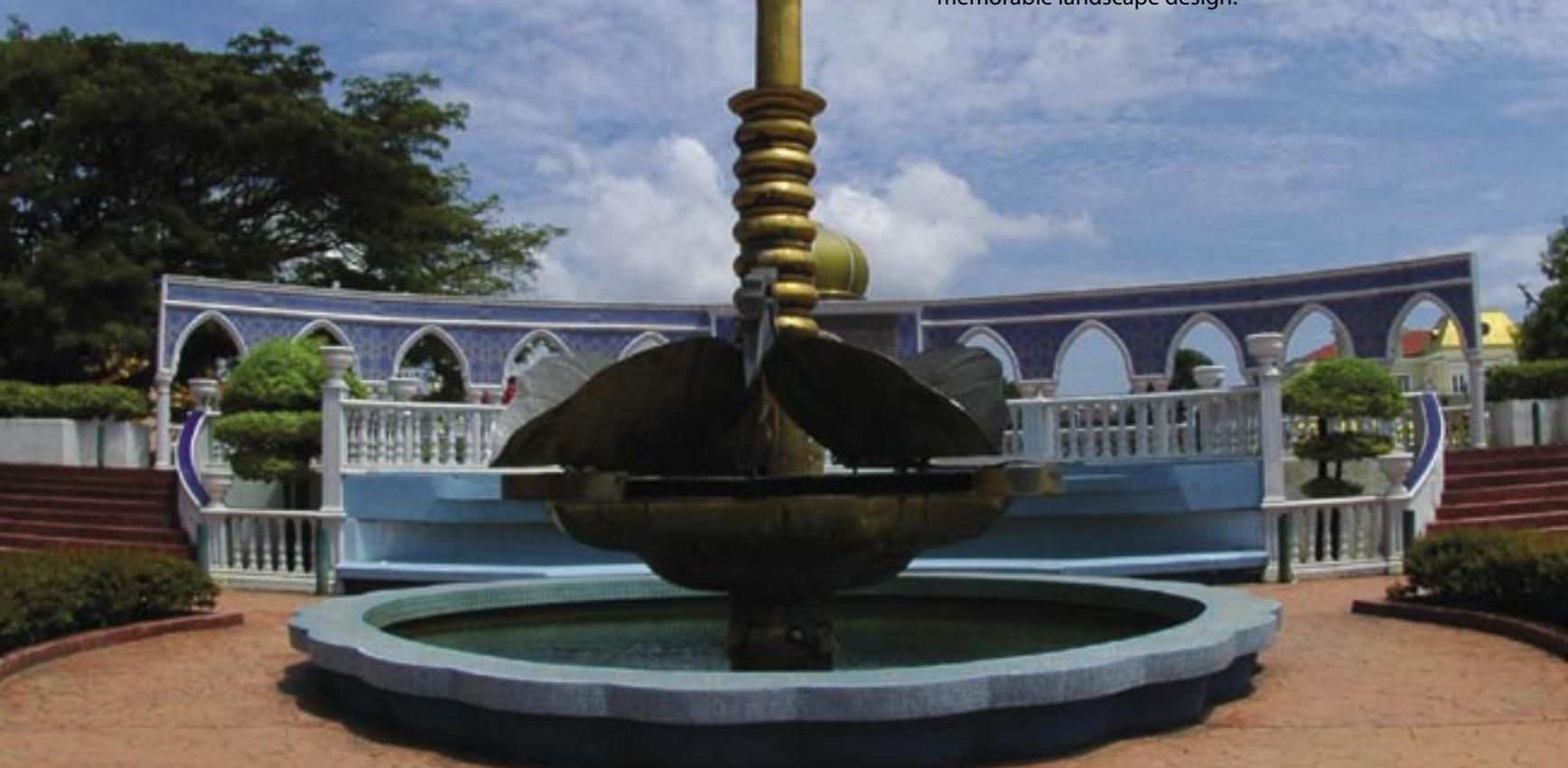


Waterfall garden along Jalan Tun Perak, Kuala Lumpur

# Pocket Parks & Flower Gardens

The term 'pocket parks' is often used to describe the size of an open space, small and compact enough to be ignored by most property developers. Regardless of their small area, they play important roles as part of city spaces that alleviate urban fatigue. When designed as small flower gardens, they contribute to the beautification of a city and the creation of a city's unique identity.

Pocket parks are often created by *space leftover after planning* (SLOAP). This open space creates the relation between streets and development blocks. If evenly distributed within a city, they could enhance the city centre by providing landmarks and memorable landscape design.





## **MEDAN MAZIAH** Kuala Terengganu

Medan Maziah is an example of a beautiful pocket park and is located at the junction between the main roads. Covering approximately 0.89 acres, the park is part of the palace ground where the princes and princesses would play and rest under the watchful eyes of the guards on Bukit Puteri. Medan Maziah, a gift from the present Sultan to his loyal subjects, was opened in March 1999 in honour of the Sultan's installation ceremony and has since become one of the landmarks of Kuala Terengganu.

### << Opposite page

The main sculpture reflecting the traditional Malay culture and artistic tradition

### Above:

The pedestrian sidewalk marks the boundary between the park and the main road

### Top right:

View of the park in relation to the palace and Bukit Puteri as seen in the background

### Right:

The Maziah Palace as backdrop to the park





### **LAMAN TUANKU ABDUL RAHMAN** Kuala Lumpur

Laman Tuanku Abdul Rahman is located along Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, a forecourt to the famous Coliseum cinema. It was used as a car park until 15th November 2001 when it was reopened as a public space incorporating a tourist information centre and public lavatories. The space is also used for mini exhibitions related to the tourism industry.



### **'PERIUK KERA' GARDENS** Kuala Lumpur

This small public park is located adjacent to the Merdeka Square and the Kuala Lumpur Municipal building, a site for the once famous seafood restaurant. It functions as a mini oasis to the busy transport junctions and is home to many beautiful flowers and plants. Its main feature is the sculptured fountain shaped in the form of old tree trunks with water spouting from the exotic carnivorous plant known as 'Periuk Kera'.

## **LINEAR PARK** Kota Bharu

This narrow strip of land along the busy street of Jalan Sultanah Zainab creates a welcome break from the repetitive rows of shophouses that make up the main fabric of Kota Bharu. As part of the road reserve, it provides pedestrian linkages and a transition zone from Kota Bharu Historical Complex to the busy marketplace. Surrounded by trees that further emphasize its linear character, tourist information booth, 'wakaf', and cafe create visual interest to this otherwise quiet corner for retreat and contemplation.



# Building Setbacks

Setting buildings aback from the street to create incidental open spaces through the passage of time, has been associated with town planning action from which gave rise to public health ventilation and better light quality. Open spaces created by setting buildings aback from the street gives additional benefits to the city's dwellers. Besides being more pleasant visually, these spaces can be used as landscape gardens, entrance forecourt, outside cafes, or simply as pedestrian malls.



## IPOH RAILWAY STATION Ipoh

The development of the open space in front of the station started off as green lawn, a forecourt to this public building. Besides providing space for friends and relatives to gather before a train journey, it creates a positive visual structure for the town and a sense of grandeur to the historic building. This space is a green landmark for Ipoh, filled with a variety of plants especially bougainvillea—the flower of Ipoh.

### << Opposite page

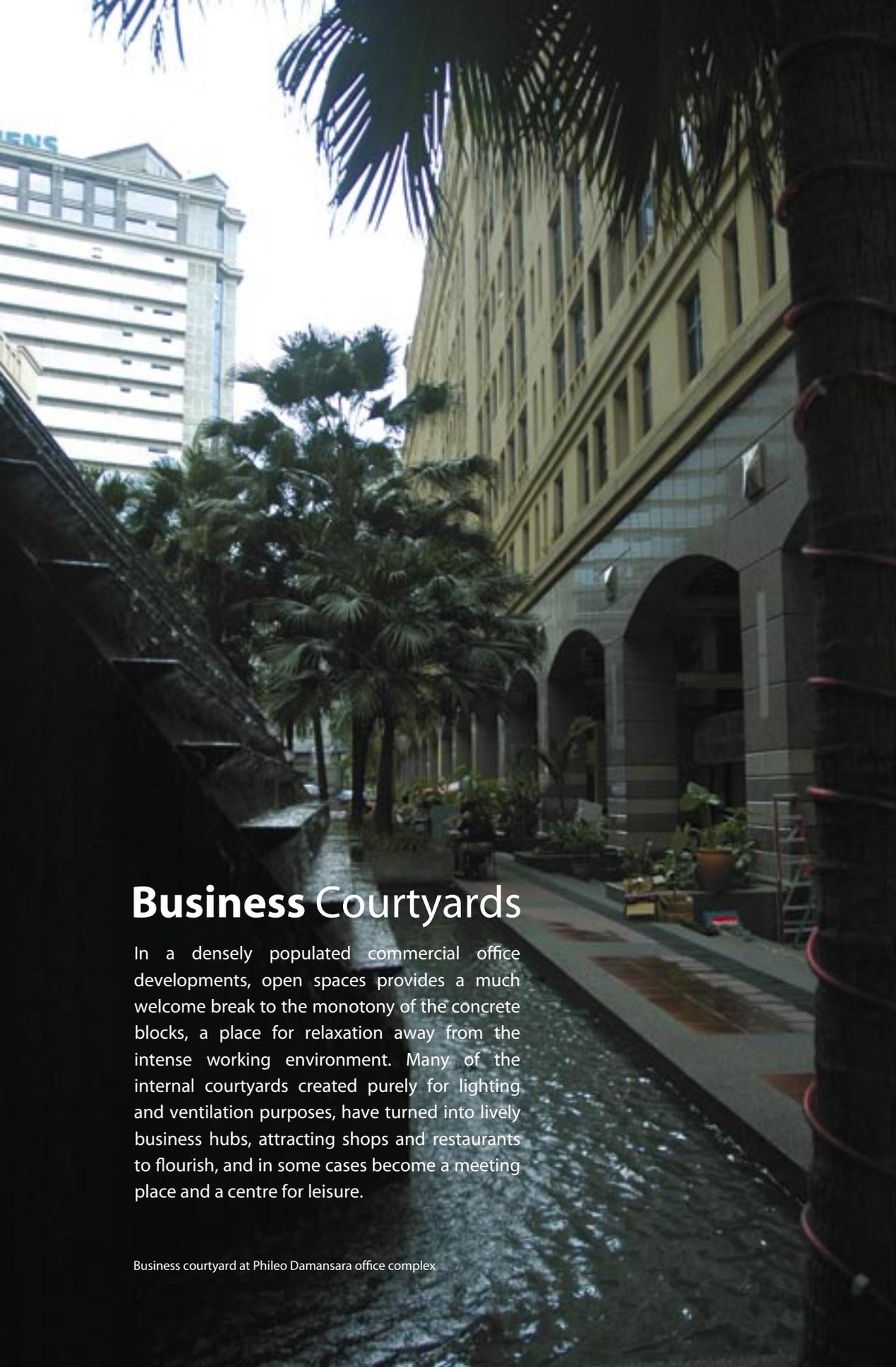
A linear park along Jalan Sultanah Zainab in Kota Bharu

### Above left:

Garden in front of Ipoh Railway Station taken from the old City Hall building

### Above right:

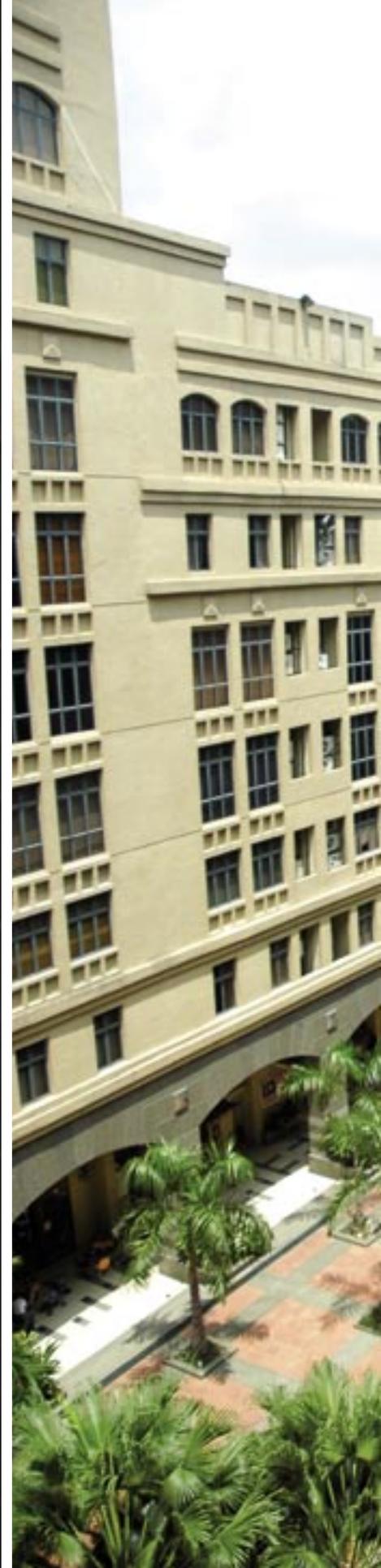
The Garden also acts as a noise buffer between the station and the busy main road

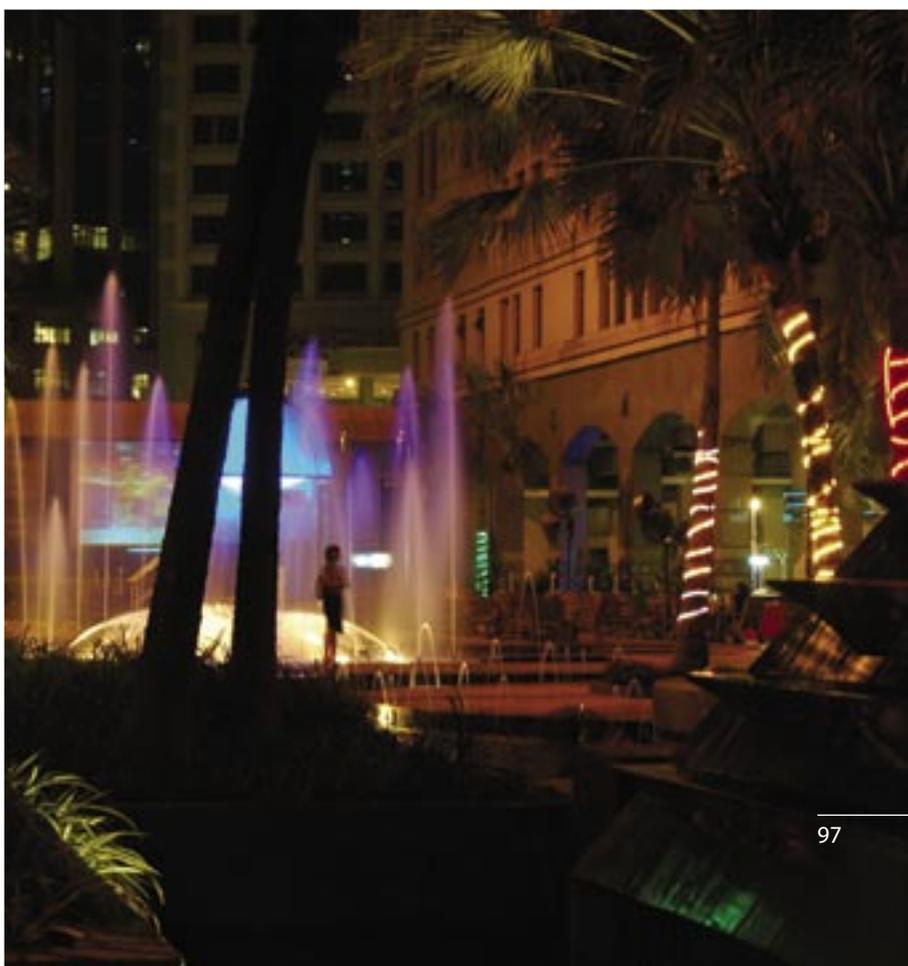


## Business Courtyards

In a densely populated commercial office developments, open spaces provides a much welcome break to the monotony of the concrete blocks, a place for relaxation away from the intense working environment. Many of the internal courtyards created purely for lighting and ventilation purposes, have turned into lively business hubs, attracting shops and restaurants to flourish, and in some cases become a meeting place and a centre for leisure.

Business courtyard at Phileo Damansara office complex







## Pedestrian Networks

Pedestrian networks provide passage for movement within an urban centre. They connect a town's activities and amenities, and through their streetscape treatment, create a clear visual structure for the town area. A good pedestrian system should be safe and convenient, provide shelter from the sun and rain, and should come with added landscaping or interesting activities at the street level.

Clockwise from above:  
Waterfall garden at Jalan Raja Laut, riverside walk along Klang River, and walkway at Jalan Bonus

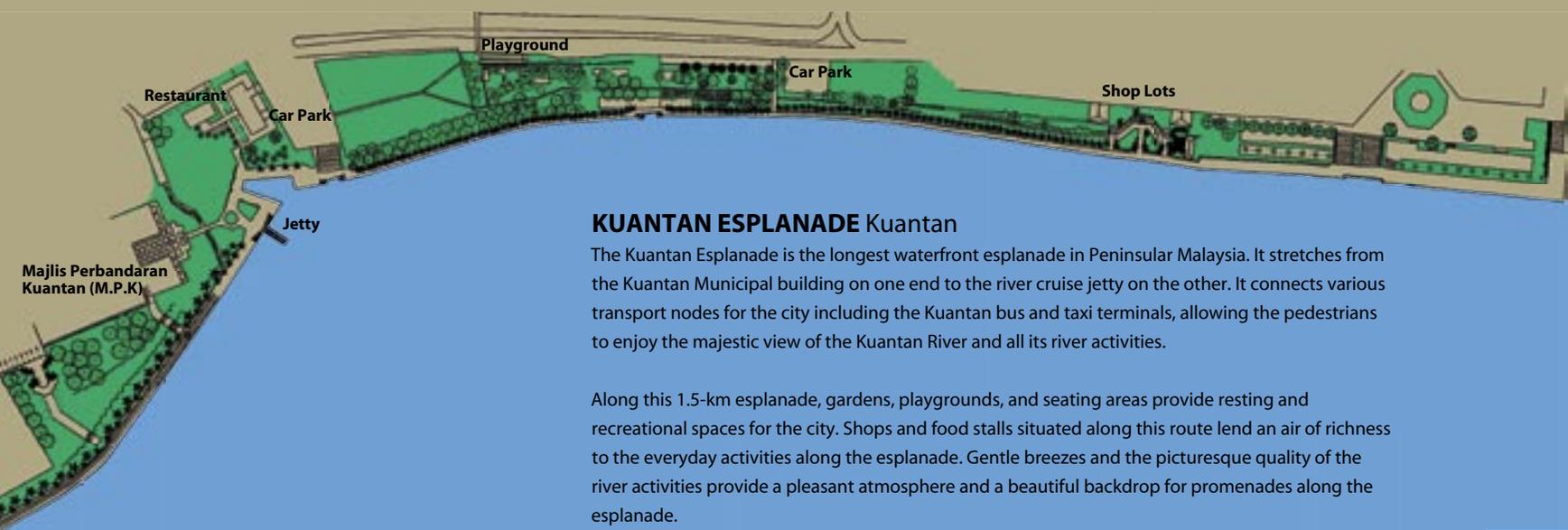
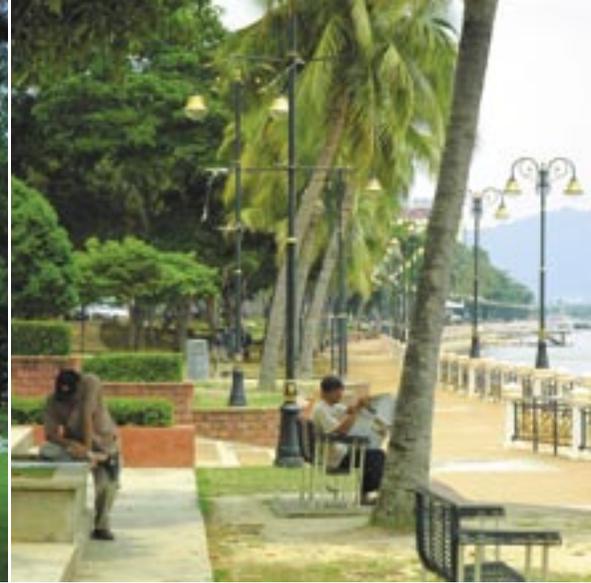


A photograph of a waterfront park. In the foreground, a man and a woman wearing a hijab are sitting on a black metal bench, looking out over a body of water. The water is a light, murky greenish-brown. In the middle ground, a large, multi-decked boat with a blue and white cabin is moving across the water, leaving a white wake. The background is a dense, green forest of trees. A black lamppost stands in the foreground, partially obscuring the view. The sky is overcast and grey.

## Waterfront Parks

Cities with urban waterfronts have a special open space opportunity. The water's edge serves as a natural magnet for people and a valuable recreational and visual resource. This will enhance the town and the retail economic value along the waterfront. The potential of river reserves as incidental open spaces and for promenading has not been explored fully in most of our cities, with the exception of some notable efforts in Kuantan, Alor Setar, Johor Bahru, and Putrajaya.







### **TERENGGANU WATERFRONT PARK** Kuala Terengganu

This riverfront open space is located in-line with the Terengganu River and was purpose-built as an alternative open space to cater to the needs of recreational and social activities in the city. Besides the usual facilities of playgrounds, sheds, and recreational areas, it offers a majestic view of the Sultan Mahmud Bridge, the hilly Bukit Besar, and the picturesque Duyong Island. This is a perfect location for sports fishing, promenading, or simply watching fishermen's boats moving up and down the river.



### **PERSISIRAN AMPANG JAJAR** Alor Setar

This 1-km long linear park is located at Jalan Lencong Barat. It is built along the Kedah River and provides ample seats, sheds, paved pedestrian ways, and beautiful lighting. This park is also a venue to many annual events including the boat race that attracted local and international tourists alike. It provides facilities for such river recreational activities such as kayaking, jet-skiing, and water sliding, in addition to playgrounds for children's recreational activities.

**Above:**  
View of the Persisiran Ampang Jajar  
**Right:**  
The bridge across the Kedah River connecting  
the Persisiran Ampang Jajar to other developments





## MARKETPLACES and PEDESTRIAN MALLS

In the early medieval period, the town centre was the dominant focal point of a community's economic and social life. The marketplace was the public space where people came together to exchange goods and services. Besides economic activities, the marketplace was also a social centre where people met and exchanged information and ideas. Traditionally, open spaces always relate to the marketplace where the concentration of businesses and social activities encourage interaction and generate new supporting businesses and economic expansion. The first specifically designed open space for marketplace was built in Taiping by the British in 1875. It was so important as a public gathering space that the Japanese, during their occupation of Malaya, displayed the heads of beheaded victims in this marketplace.

At the same time, another form of marketplace evolved to resolve the conflict between vehicles and pedestrian traffic and to provide additional facilities often lacking in the traditional shopping streets and the traditional markets. The Dataran MPKB and Laman Siti Khadijah, both in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, and also the Central Market in Kuala Lumpur have been created to serve this purpose. The complete separation of pedestrian and vehicular movement created the most attractive environment for people and best served the urban retail component.

WHOLESALE & RETAILER

Restoran  
Selera  
Kampung  
24 JAM  
HOTEL  
KOWLOON

R

KERANAMU  
MALAYSIA

KERANAMU  
MALAYSIA

Hotels  
MIGA



## Traditional Marketplaces



### **DATARAN MPKB** Kota Bharu

Dataran MPKB is located at the heart of Kota Bharu's commercial district where all the marketplaces are located, including the famous Siti Khadijah Market, MPKB Market, Buluh Kubu Bazaar, and Buluh Kubu Night Market. Its proximity with Kota Bharu's historical complex and bus terminal generates high volumes of pedestrian traffic, thus making Dataran MPKB one of the city's busiest pedestrian streets. Together with the newly completed Laman Siti Khadijah, they form a pedestrian linkage between the busy marketplace to Kota Bharu's historical complex. Gazebos, resting areas, landscaping, and commercial stalls selling souvenirs have been planned along the street as part of the rich experience. The dataran is sometimes used for Muslim prayers during the month of Ramadhan. Dataran MPKB was constructed in 1996, however the construction works only started after three months of trial run, after receiving objections from business owners and the neighbourhood. Today, Dataran MPKB is a well known landmark of the city and stands as an example of a successful urban regeneration carried out by the Kota Bharu Municipal Council.

### Laman Siti Khadijah Kota Bharu

Laman Siti Khadijah was purpose-built as a forecourt serving the Siti Khadijah market and the Buluh Kubu market. It is also part of Kota Bharu's pedestrian linkage that joins the commercial area to the historical complex nearby. The development concept is geared towards providing resting areas as well as an outdoor shopping area, an extension to the two famous markets.

<< Opposite page  
Pedestrian network at Dataran MPKB

Right & bottom right:  
The newly completed Laman Siti Khadijah  
Below:  
Outdoor marketplace at Siti Khadijah Market  
adjacent to Laman Siti Khadijah





### **CENTRAL MARKET** Kuala Lumpur

This pre-war building was the principal wet market for Kuala Lumpur in the early years. It was extensively renovated in the 1980s and was then turned into an arts and cultural centre.

Saved from demolition, the original 1936 Central Market was converted into a 'festive hall' and in 1986 it was reopened as the country's foremost Cultural Shopping Centre showcasing the finest local crafts in the country. Pedestrian streets have been created around this traditional marketplace providing linkages connecting the Klang Bus Station, the Dayabumi building, and shops in this older part of Kuala Lumpur. In addition to this, it also serves as a stage for dance and musical concerts.

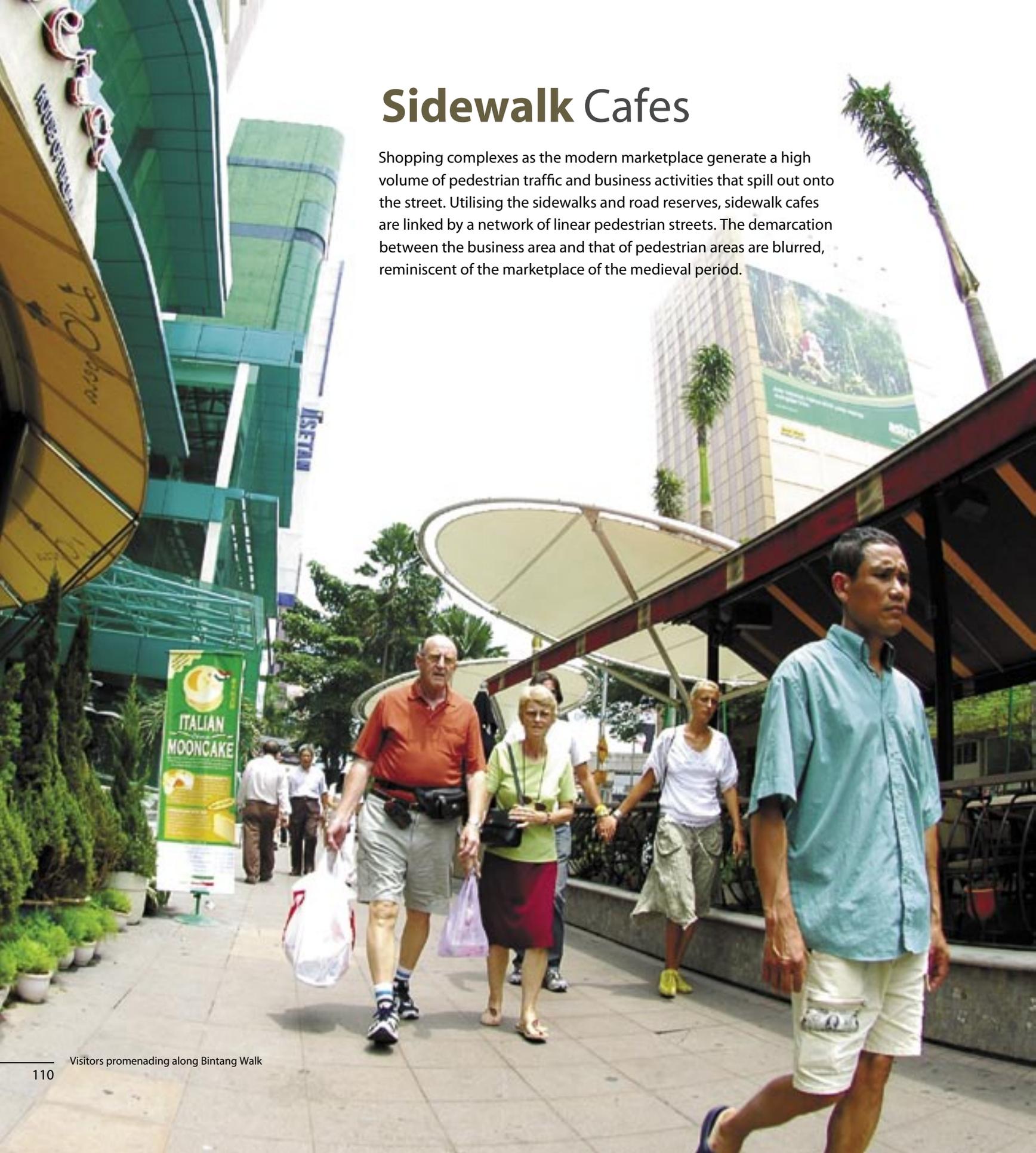


### **MASJID INDIA** Kuala Lumpur

The soul for more traditional shopping in Kuala Lumpur, this is one of the examples of open spaces created to give additional seating and resting areas to a busy shopping district. Further development of this area as the destination for festive shopping has seen many of its back and side lanes turned into pedestrian streets, creating linkages to various arcades and hidden passages unique to the place. Contrary to popular belief, limiting cars only to the main street did not dampen the growth of Masjid India as a key shopping precinct.

# Sidewalk Cafes

Shopping complexes as the modern marketplace generate a high volume of pedestrian traffic and business activities that spill out onto the street. Utilising the sidewalks and road reserves, sidewalk cafes are linked by a network of linear pedestrian streets. The demarcation between the business area and that of pedestrian areas are blurred, reminiscent of the marketplace of the medieval period.



Visitors promenading along Bintang Walk



### **BINTANG WALK** Kuala Lumpur

Bintang Walk is a row of street-side cafes, restaurants, and pubs stretching from the Lot 10 Shopping Centre to the JW Marriott Hotel. Utilising the existing sidewalk and road reserves, it creates a rich experience for pedestrians walking within its precinct.

Jazz musicians sometimes create a soft background noise to the often busy and crowded pedestrian streets. At night, when most of the shopping complexes are closed, Bintang Walk is the heart of Bukit Bintang, attracting younger crowds to its trendy cafes and bars.



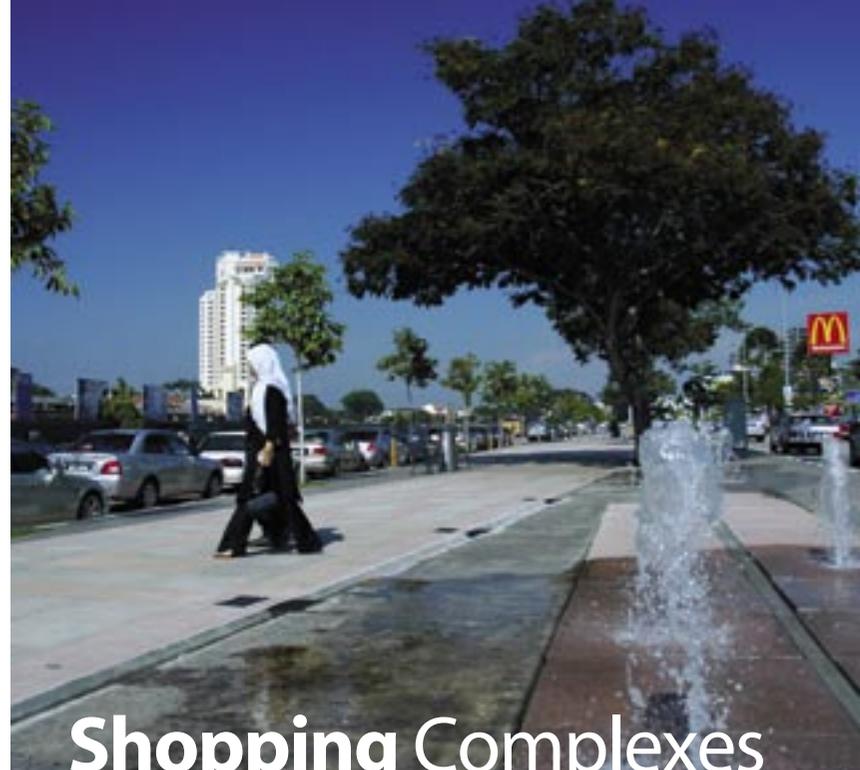
## Sidewalk Cafes

### Hang Tuah Mall Melaka

Named after the legendary Malay warrior, Hang Tuah Mall is an example of the effort to create a pedestrian city in Malacca. Former Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad officiated the opening of the mall in October 2002.

Its design is based on Bintang Walk in Kuala Lumpur, where the existing sidewalks and road reserves of a busy shopping district are converted to create a mall with various stalls selling food and beverages, as well as venues for performances. Hang Tuah Mall is demarcated by Dewan Hang Tuah and stretches the whole length of Jalan Hang Tuah with a distance of 1.5 km.





## Shopping Complexes

Shopping complexes are increasingly being related to leisure, a place for family outings for most modern societies. A new genre of shopping complexes provides outdoor and indoor gardens for the enjoyment of shoppers and contributes towards the provision of open spaces related to market and business activities.

The Mahkota Parade in Melaka is a good example of this new hybrid of shopping malls that provide open spaces and outdoor kiosks as part of the overall shopping experience, as well as creating an interesting mixture of indoor and outdoor shopping between, inside, and outside spaces.

**Above:**  
Pedestrian street in front of Mahkota Parade

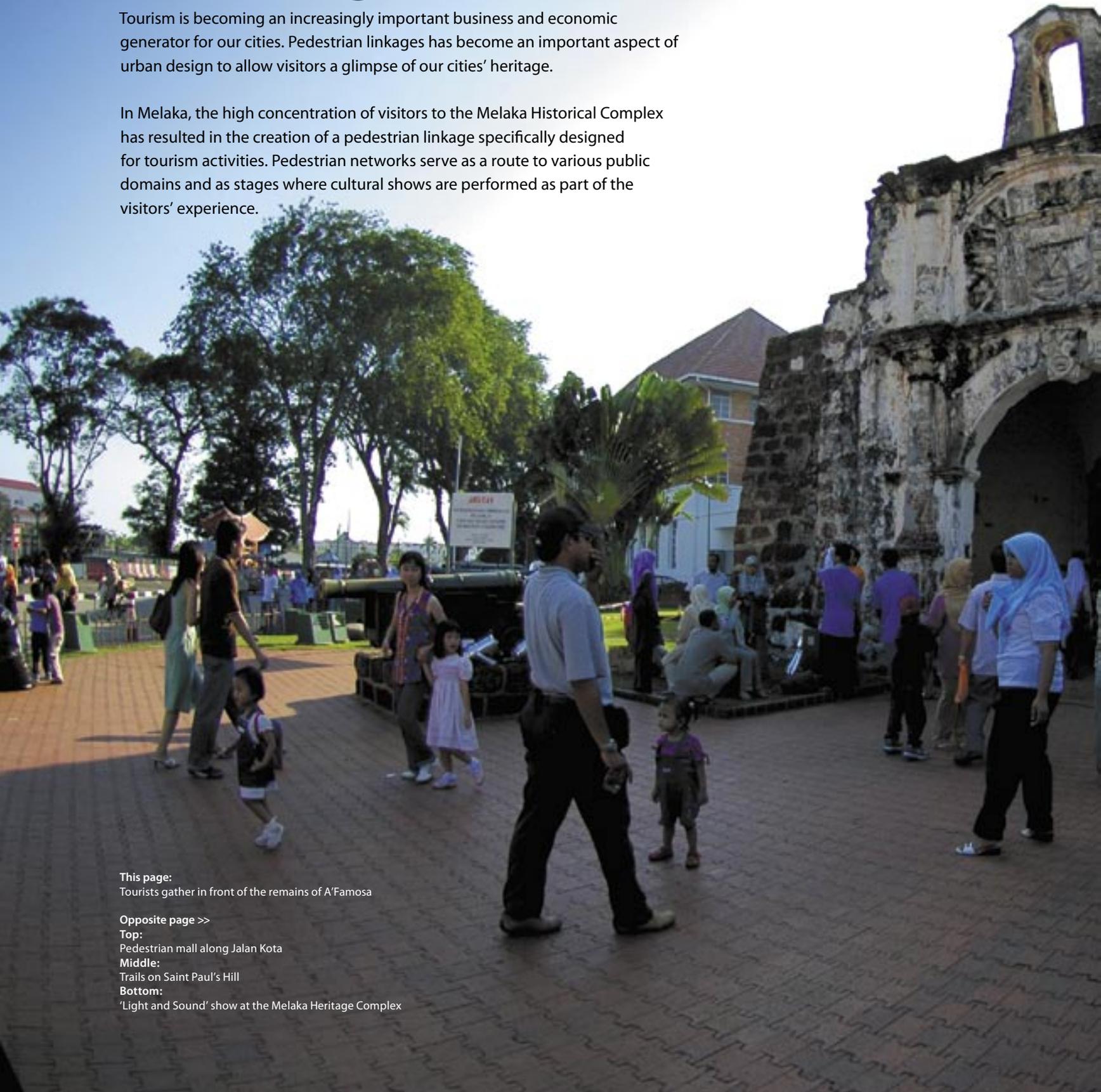
**Left & below:**  
Open spaces as part of shopping complex at Mahkota Parade



# The Heritage Trails

Tourism is becoming an increasingly important business and economic generator for our cities. Pedestrian linkages has become an important aspect of urban design to allow visitors a glimpse of our cities' heritage.

In Melaka, the high concentration of visitors to the Melaka Historical Complex has resulted in the creation of a pedestrian linkage specifically designed for tourism activities. Pedestrian networks serve as a route to various public domains and as stages where cultural shows are performed as part of the visitors' experience.



**This page:**  
Tourists gather in front of the remains of A'Famosa

**Opposite page >>**

**Top:**  
Pedestrian mall along Jalan Kota

**Middle:**  
Trails on Saint Paul's Hill

**Bottom:**  
'Light and Sound' show at the Melaka Heritage Complex





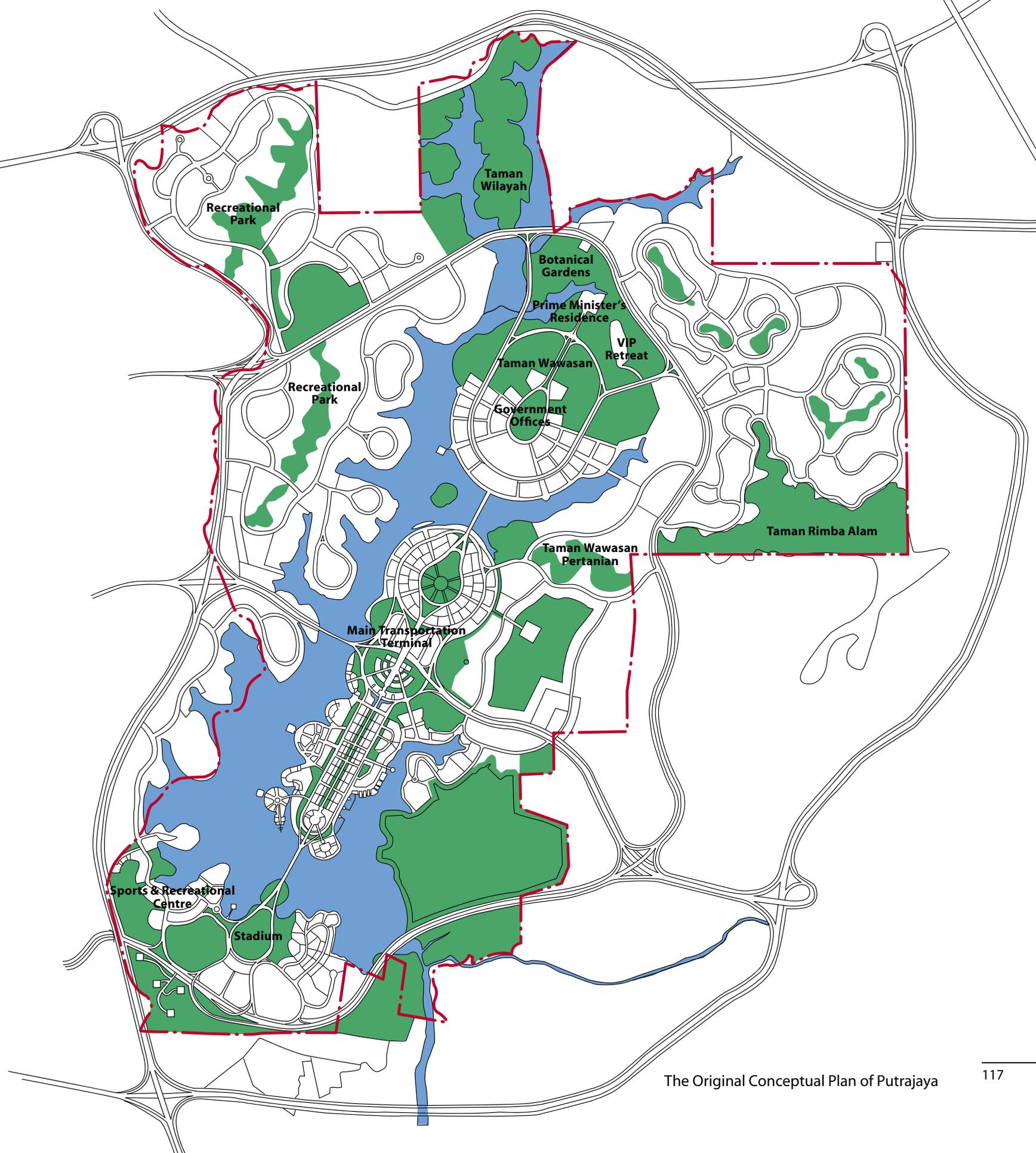
## PLANNED OPEN SPACES – PUTRAJAYA

Putrajaya marked a new beginning in the development of open spaces in Malaysian cities. As the new administrative centre for the country, open spaces form the backbone to the concept of 'garden city' implemented in Putrajaya. It reflects the 'Total Planning Doctrine' that embodies the harmonious relationship between Man, the Creator, and the Environment. Many axes linking the major nodes serve as the spine for the city along which governmental precincts and major public buildings are aligned to create a network of public spaces, squares, and boulevards.

Sensitive to the existing topography, plants, water bodies, existing hills, jungles, and rivers have been turned into gardens and wetlands that maintain the existing features and ecosystem. Faithful to the original concept of a garden city, over 30% of the development area has been dedicated to open spaces, excluding the expansive allocation of water bodies that cover an area of 650 hectares. Designed as an integral part of the open spaces network, these water bodies are mainly for recreational purposes.

Gardens and public parks are the essential components of the garden city concept, which sees the preservation of the existing topography of hills, forests, and swamps to sustain the existing ecosystem. Over 16% of the city is dedicated not only for leisure activities but to function as an educational space as part of a balanced ecosystem.

Office buildings, shopping complexes, and housing areas retain 15% of the development area for open spaces and the boundary between the public and private realms are made less obvious with the omission of gates and fencing wherever possible. Integrated with a large amount of water bodies, the new open spaces in Putrajaya evoke the memory of the lake garden concept by creating peace and tranquillity possessed by its predecessors from the colonial era.



Recreational Park

Taman Wilayah

Botanical Gardens

Prime Minister's Residence

VIP Retreat

Taman Wawasan

Government Offices

Recreational Park

Taman Rimba Alam

Taman Wawasan Pertanian

Main Transportation Terminal

Sports & Recreational Centre

Stadium



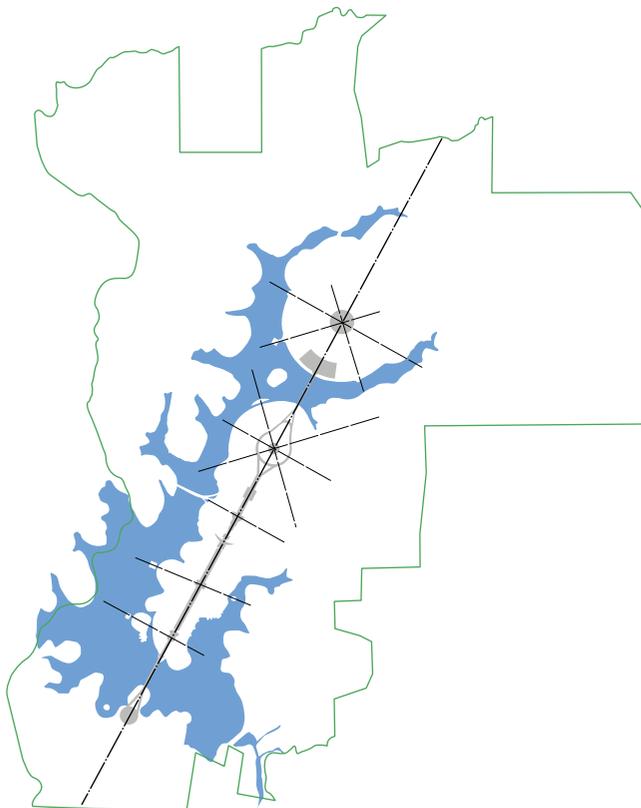


## The Civic Squares

### Dataran Putra

Dataran Putra is one of the major civic nodes that forms the main planning axis in Putrajaya, with the Convention Centre on the other end. Important civic buildings and government offices have been planned around this node. The Prime Minister's Office is the main focus of Dataran Putra, a place frequented by visiting tourists to Putrajaya.

**Above:**  
The Prime Minister's office  
**Bottom right:**  
Putrajaya Convention Centre  
**Bottom left:**  
Putrajaya Mosque



# The Religious Courtyard



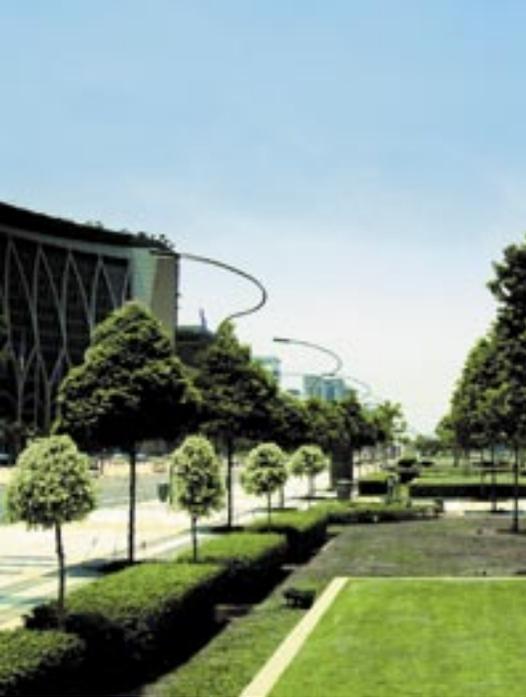
## Putrajaya Mosque

The Putrajaya mosque is one of the major landmarks around Dataran Putra. This mosque is housed in an enclosed courtyard (sahn) of Middle Eastern typology, and these open areas allow through air movement between blocks as well as functioning transition spaces between the public and private domains. Its boundary is clearly demarcated as one passes the main entrance gate. Some areas are covered, intended to accommodate large Friday prayer gatherings that sometimes overflow from the main hall.

# The Boulevard

In a planned city, open spaces appear as nodes or collecting points, emphasised by buildings around them and linked by various forms of routes and linkages that make up a rich network. Accessibility is one of the key factors that will determine the success or failure of an open space.





The boulevard connects the Dataran Putra to the other nodes, namely the Putrajaya Convention Centre along which government offices are arranged, defining the linear nature of this space. Movement of vehicles and pedestrians have been given equal importance.

One could wander along the avenue of trees to discover small gardens with benches and water features with view of the lakes beyond. The open space along this boulevard functions as a huge outside lobby for the government offices and its unique design allows events such as the Merdeka Day Parade to take place along this boulevard.

## The Boulevard







**Above:**  
Waterfront open space near Putrajaya Mosque  
**Bottom left & right:**  
Pedestrian walkway and landscape along the waterfront

## Waterfronts

Putrajaya is a city by the lakes. Consequently, waterfronts form part of the linkages to various parts of the city. Pedestrian networks have been built along the lake edges where small gardens sometimes appear, adding colour and a rich promenading experience. In this idyllic setting, open spaces carry new meanings and offer new experiences.





## Marketplaces



In a garden city, gardens and open spaces merge with the shopping experience. At Alamanda shopping complex, the building was set back to allow gardens, playgrounds, and fountains to become part of the forecourt as one arrives for the daily shopping experience. As in the Souk, the space between buildings are used as outdoor shopping areas, integrating playgrounds and spaces for cultural performances as part of the marketplace.

Above:  
Entrance of the new Alamanda Shopping Mall  
Left:  
Live traditional performances at the Souk

# Public Gardens and Parks

The concept of public parks and open spaces is to sustain the natural environment of Putrajaya. Originally, 10 public parks and gardens have been planned for the city—the Regional Park, the Urban Park, the Riverside Park, the Buffer Zone, Taman Warisan Pertanian, the Recreational Forest, the Botanical Park, the Public Recreation Park, the Golf Course Country Home, and the Memorial Park. Some of these parks are in their infancy while some others are still in the making. Although a few might remain in the planning stage, many have been materialised to be the trademark of Putrajaya as a garden city.





## Putrajaya Wetland

The wetland in Putrajaya is the largest constructed freshwater wetland in the tropics. Covering a total area of 335 hectares, the wetland environment comprises of the wetland park (138 hectares) and the wetland areas (197 hectares). Physically, it is an essential part of the city's ecosystem, functioning as a flood mitigation and control system as well as a natural filtering system to the vast Putrajaya lakes.

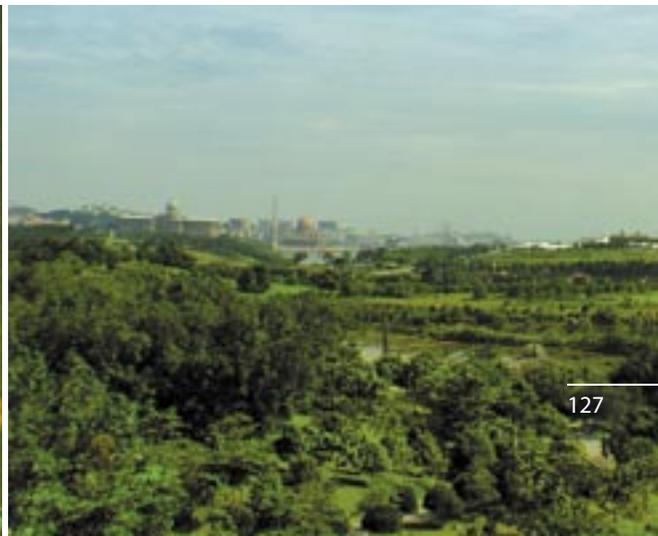
Socially, the wetland is an expansion area for recreation and education based on the concept of sustainable development. The natural ecology park that we know today is, in actual fact, a product of human planning ingenuity and technology, having been carved out of rubber and oil palm plantations. A total of 58,685 trees from more than 70 species have been planted and 24 species of indigenous fish have been introduced into their 24 wetland cells, home to rare migrating birds such as swans and flamingos.

The facilities within the park are geared towards educating the public about the importance of sustaining a balanced ecosystem. The Nature Interpretation Centre, an 18-metre high lookout tower and shelter are all designed as orientation and rest areas among its jungle tracks that allow the public to have greater understanding of the flora and fauna that make up their natural environment.

**Above:**  
Putrajaya Wetland—an educational venue

**Top right:**  
Nature Interpretation Centre

**Right:**  
The wetland provides a natural habitat for wild life





## Taman Putra Perdana

Taman Putra Perdana is located at the highest point of Precinct 1. It spreads over 70 hectares and is surrounded by Persiaran Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah and acts as an intermediate space between the natural domain to the north, and the government and commercial domain in the south and east. There are many attractions and facilities in the park. The Perdana Mall provides the pedestrian linkage to the various landmarks at the entrance level of the plaza and to the Fragrant Garden, gazebos, and pergolas within the park.

**Above:**  
The main axis of Taman Putra Perdana

**Opposite page >>**

**Top:**  
View of Prime Minister's office from the park

**Bottom left:**  
Fountain and sculpture marking the node of the park

**Bottom right:**  
Wide pedestrian mall and seating areas to capture the panoramic view of Putrajaya







<< **Opposite page**  
Pedestrian track within the rubber plantation

**Above:**  
A demonstration centre for rubber production

**Top right:**  
Food court and marketplace at Taman Warisan

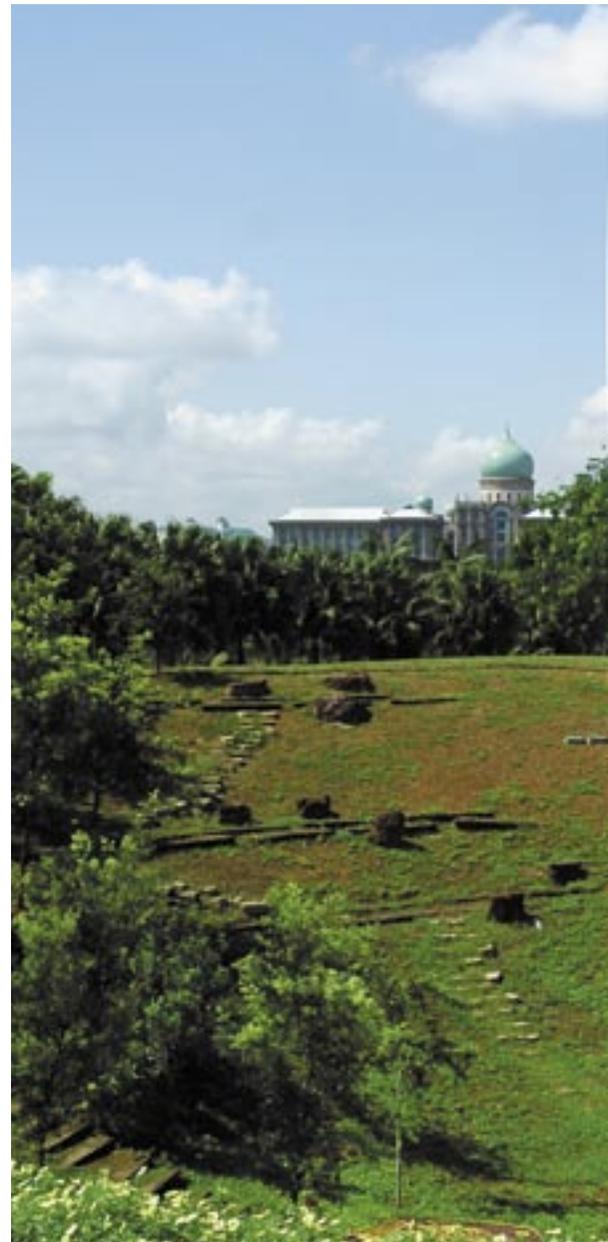
**Below:**  
Panoramic view of Putrajaya Administrative  
Centre from Taman Warisan

## **Taman Warisan**

This park is located within the southern section of Precinct 16. It is designed to showcase Malaysia's agricultural heritage. Large areas have been reserved for the preservation of rubber trees that were once the main economic source for the country. Paths and seating areas are provided within the existing rubber plantation where visitors obtain first-hand experience of rubber production demonstrated within the compound. Various local fruit trees have been planted as landscape elements within the park. Restaurants, fruit stalls, and demonstration areas offer places for relaxation and education for visitors after a quiet jog within the compound.



# Gardens and Public Parks



## Taman Botani

Formerly agricultural land, the botanic gardens retain the oil palm trees and the various forest species on the site. Covering an area of 230 acres, it is a national sanctuary and a centre for education and research, besides being a popular recreational park for Putrajaya residents. Rare species and elaborate plant collections such as The Heliconia Trail, The African Collection, The American Collection, and The Sun Garden lead visitors further up the path designed for walking and mountain biking. Located within the lakeside area, this garden offers a panoramic view of Putrajaya in addition to restaurants and water sports.

<< **Opposite page**

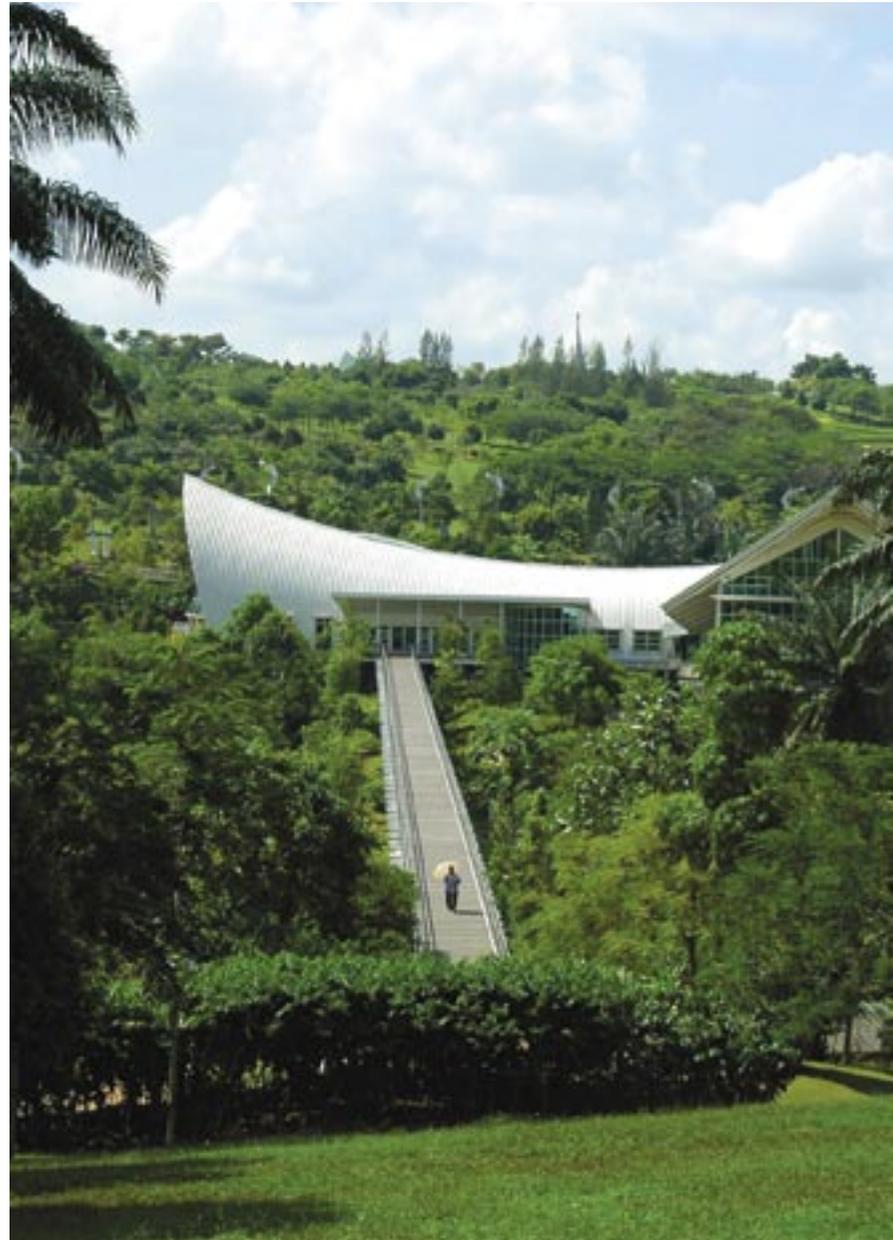
Taman Botani Visitor's Centre

**Spread:**

An obelisk marking one of the nodes

**Below:**

The visitor's centre and the bridge linking to the park





## Neighbourhood Parks



Putrajaya is divided into 10 residential neighbourhoods with an average of 3,100 people per neighbourhood. Houses are designed without fences; with the backs of the houses facing green neighbourhood open spaces. This allows for the separation between vehicles and pedestrians, thus allowing children direct access to playgrounds.

The omission of fences also allows high-rise apartments to integrate with other types of dwellings, giving children a less congested and less isolated compound. As a result, integrated open spaces create a friendlier living environment and better interaction between neighbours and community members.

**Above and left:**  
The back of the houses  
open to the neighbourhood  
park at Precinct 11

**Opposite page >>**  
High-rise apartments are  
designed with common  
recreational area



# THE FUTURE of OPEN SPACES

Open spaces are not as valued as any other land marked out for commercial, residential, or industrial development, therefore are given less attention. On the other hand, cities need green lungs in order to breathe and sustain the urban ecology. Are there ways to resolve this conflicting interest? Should developers be held responsible for the lack of open spaces? Or is it our own lack of vision?

At the moment, the requirement for the provision of open spaces leaves much to interpretation. As a result, many of the open spaces provided lack functional design and proper landscaping, and are left neglected due to the lack of maintenance. The problem of maintenance, or the lack of it, needs to be addressed. Although the Federal Territory (Planning) Act allows the local authority to retain a portion of the deposit for maintenance, this is only for a period of one year. There should be some form of legislation that deals with the maintenance of these spaces.

**For the sake of our children, let us gazette our open spaces.**

Taiping Lake Gardens, Perdana Lake Gardens, Penang Botanical Gardens, and other historical gardens are our cities' heritage. Gazetting these gardens will ensure their survival for future generations. Leaving them in their current state means putting them in a continued state of uncertainty.

**For the memory of our forefathers, let us not convert our open spaces for other uses.**

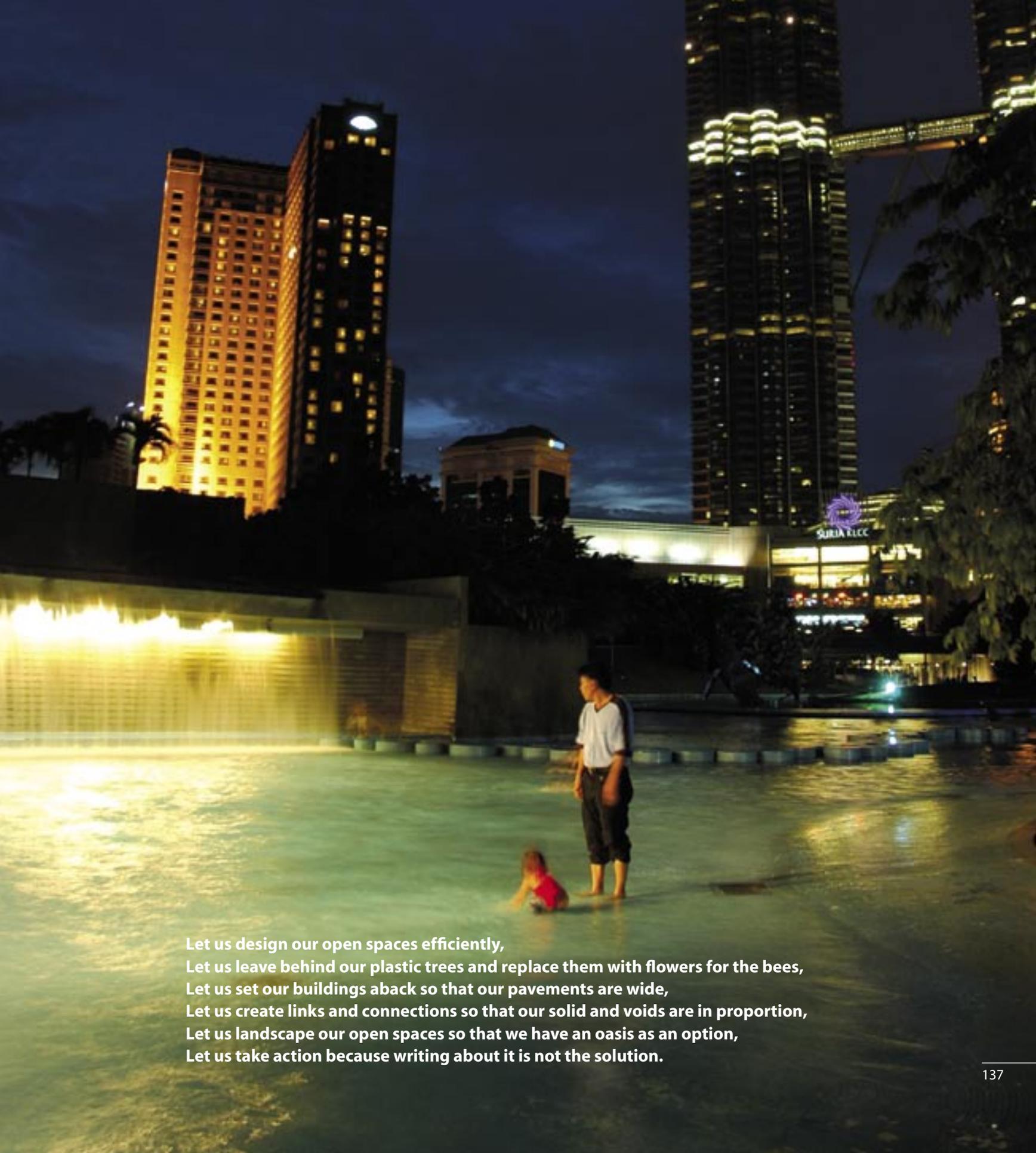
There are instances where part of the open spaces has been converted to other community uses. Whilst important these other uses might be, it would have been better if a separate provision for such facilities had been made earlier rather than place them on open spaces.

**For our own sake, let us draw up open spaces legislation.**

Only through the enactment of specific legislation can the provision of open spaces according to certain design specifications, landscaping, and facilities be provided.

**For our community, let us make the conservation of open spaces our responsibility.**

A successful open space provides settings that become an important part of people's lives, allowing them to form roots in an area. This occurs when spaces are well suited to their surroundings both physically and socially, when they support the kinds of activities users desire, and when they engender feelings of comfort, safety, and connection to other people. However, unless a maintenance system is in place, none of our open spaces can be permanently successful.



**Let us design our open spaces efficiently,  
Let us leave behind our plastic trees and replace them with flowers for the bees,  
Let us set our buildings aback so that our pavements are wide,  
Let us create links and connections so that our solid and voids are in proportion,  
Let us landscape our open spaces so that we have an oasis as an option,  
Let us take action because writing about it is not the solution.**

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## Advisers

### Federal Department of Town and Country Planning, Peninsular Malaysia

Dato' Haji Abd. Mutallib b. Jelani  
En. Mohd. Fadzil b. Hj. Mohd Khir  
Dato' Haji Zainul b. Ayob  
En. Kamalruddin b. Shamsudin

## Chief Editor

### Federal Department of Town and Country Planning, Peninsular Malaysia

En. Mohamed Jamil b. Ahmad

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En. Ismet b. Md. Ali

## Writers

### SAW Geo Data Services Sdn. Bhd. + A&I Network

Pn. Hajjah Norasiah bt. Haji Yahya  
En. Hussain b. Ishak  
Cik Hasfalinda bt. Abu Hassan

## Graphic Design

### A&I Network

En. Azwar Anas Alymann b. Zarazilah  
En. Azad b. Abdul Hamid

## Photography

### A&I Network

En. Hussain b. Ishak  
En. Azad b. Abdul Hamid  
En. Adam Ariel Tunguia  
En. Sanjitpaal Singh

## Cybernote Sdn. Bhd.

## Picture Credits

### A&I Network

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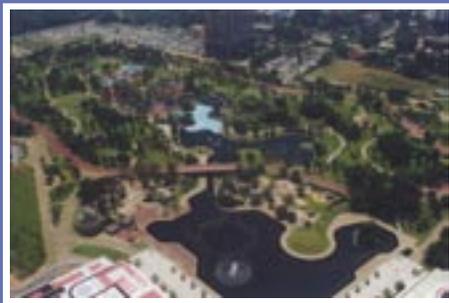
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## Further information

Research and Development Division,  
Federal Department of Town and Country Planning,  
Peninsular Malaysia,  
Ministry of Housing and Local Government,  
Jalan Cenderasari, 50646 Kuala Lumpur.

Tel: 03 - 2968 9211  
Fax: 03 - 2968 9994  
Email: [bpp@townplan.gov.my](mailto:bpp@townplan.gov.my)  
URL: [www.townplan.gov.my](http://www.townplan.gov.my)





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