

IDENTITY OF PLACE

A Case Study Of Kuantan town centre, Malaysia.

By

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family :

My husband Bashri and my children,  
Fikri, Zulaikha, Syukri and Zahra.

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## LIST OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	v
List of diagrams .....	vii
List of tables.....	viii
Glossary.....	x

### CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Research problem	1
1.2	Research agenda	4
1.21	Research aim	5
1.22	Research questions	5
1.23	Research objectives	5
1.24	Research methodology	6
1.25	The case study	10
1.26	Limitations of the research	12
1.27	Structure of the thesis	13

### CHAPTER TWO: THEORIES ON PERCEPTION OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT AND THE IDENTITY OF PLACE

2.0	Introduction	16
2.1	Definition of concepts	16
2.11	Perception	16
2.12	Cognition	18
2.13	Image	24
2.2	Related concepts to identity of place	28
2.21	The concept of identity	28
2.22	The concept of place, sense of place and genius loci.	31
2.23	The concept of place in relation to the town centre.	36
2.3	Conclusion	39

### CHAPTER THREE: QUALITIES ASSOCIATED WITH IDENTITY OF PLACE

3.0	Introduction	41
3.1	Components of identity	41
3.2	Features by which identity can be identified	42
3.21	Influence of the physical environment	42
3.22	Influence of human activities	59
3.23	Meanings and cultural aspects of identity	62
3.24	The influence of social and cultural background on perception of identity.	66
3.3	How identity of place is measured	71
3.4	Conclusion	75

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.0	Introduction	77
4.1	Scope of research	77
4.2	Choice of methodology	80
4.21	Review of previous methodology	80
4.22	Nature of research and problem	82
4.3	Methodology adopted in the research	83
4.4	Research technique	89
4.41	Technique for quantitative analysis	90
4.42	Technique for qualitative analysis	91
4.5	Data collection procedure	95
4.51	Phase 1: Sample survey	95
4.52	Phase 2: In depth interview	102
4.53	Phase 3: Field observations	108
4.6	Conclusions	108

## CHAPTER FIVE: INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE STUDY - KUANTAN TOWN CENTRE

5.0	Introduction	110
5.1	Kuantan in relation to Malaysia	110
5.2	Historical development of Kuantan	114
5.3	Kuantan town centre	115
5.31	The old centre	121
5.32	The newer parts of the town centre	121
5.4	Local Authority policies relating to urban design in the town centre.	123
5.41	Structure Plan policies on the town centre	125
5.42	Local plan policies on urban design	126
5.43	Action plans for Kuantan town centre	127
5.44	Urban Design Technical Report	130
5.5	Conclusions	133

## CHAPTER SIX: ELEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH IDENTITY

6.0	Introduction	134
6.1	Elements that are distinctive and noticed and noticed by the residents	134
6.11	Physical structures	135
6.12	Urban spaces	140
6.13	Landscape features	142
6.2	The influence of residents' perceptual structure on identity of the town centre	146
6.21	The influence of edges on the perception of identity of the town centre	147
6.22	The influence of paths on the perception of identity of the town centre	149
6.23	The influence of landmarks on the perception of identity of the town centre	157
6.24	The perception of nodes on the perception of identity of the town centre	161

6.25	Distinctive elements used to perceptually structure the town centre	168
6.3	Distribution of distinctive elements within the town centre	167
6.4	Variation between different socio-cultural groups in perceiving the distinctive elements	180
6.41	Variation according to ethnic background	181
6.42	Variation according to gender	187
6.43	Variation according to age group	190
6.44	Significance of variation in perception of distinctive elements according to the socio-cultural group	196
6.5	Conclusions	198

## CHAPTER SEVEN: QUALITIES ASSOCIATED WITH IDENTITY OF THE TOWN CENTRE

7.0	Introduction	201
7.1	Physical characteristics associated with identity	201
7.11	Appearance	203
7.12	Location in context	218
7.13	Types and amount of vegetation	222
7.14	Design of landscape elements	225
7.15	Traffic system and street design	228
7.16	Quality of views	232
7.17	Lighting	234
7.2	Activities associated with identity of the town centre	234
7.21	Activities within a building (building use)	235
7.22	Outdoor and on-street activities	240
7.3	Meanings and association associated with identity of the town centre	242
7.4	Qualities associated with identity between different parts of the town centre	261
7.5	Physical characteristics of elements that are distinctive as perceived by different groups of residents	264
7.51	Variation according to ethnicity	264
7.52	Variation according to gender	272
7.53	Variation according to age group	277
7.6	Significance of variation in perception of qualities associated with identity between different socio-cultural groups	283
7.7	Conclusions	285

## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

8.0	Introduction	289
8.1	Research agenda	289
8.2	Main research findings	290

8.21	Elements that are associated with identity of the town centre as perceived by the residents	291
8.22	Qualities associated with identity of the town centre	294
8.23	Variation in perception of distinctive element and their characteristics between different socio-cultural group	297
8.24	Variation in perception of elements and qualities associated with identity between different parts of the town centre by residents	299
8.3	Planning and urban design implications	301
8.4	Contributions of the research	309
8.5	Suggestions for further research	310
8.6	Conclusions	311

<b>BIBLIOGRAPY</b>	<b>312</b>
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#### **APPENDICES:**

APPENDIX 1:	Historical development of Kuantan
APPENDIX 2:	Street plans of Kuantan town centre
APPENDIX 3:	The character areas of Kuantan town centre
APPENDIX 4:	Findings of the visual survey
APPENDIX 5:	Questionnaire, interview and photo recognition task schedules.

## ABSTRACT

This research examines the concept of identity of place using the town centre of Kuantan, Malaysia as a case study. Identity in this research is defined as the qualities of a place that are recognised or recalled as being distinct from other places by the people. The aim is to investigate the elements and qualities associated with identity of the town centre as perceived by its residents. The objectives of the research is to identify the elements associated with identity of the town centre as perceived by the residents. Secondly is to establish the qualities that are associated with identity of the town centre. The third objective is to examine the variation in residents' perception of elements and the qualities associated with identity according to their socio-cultural background. Finally, is to examine the variation in residents' perception of elements and qualities associated with identity between different parts of the town centre.

The research adopted a mixed methodology using both the quantitative and qualitative method in data collection and analysis. The quantitative approach adopted a survey using a questionnaire on a sample of the town centre's residents. A total of 330 residents from the residential areas located within the town centre boundaries were involved in the sample survey. The data collected by the survey are the resident's perception of the town centre's environment and the profile of its residents. The survey data was processed using the SPSS Pc+ and analysed using descriptive statistics, namely frequencies and percentages. A cross-tabulation table was also used to identify the elements perceived by the different ethnic groups, gender and age groups that make up the composition of the respondents. The qualitative approach adopted four techniques that is focused interview, sketch map task, photo recognition interview and visual survey (field observations and recording). A total of thirty residents were involved in the interview. The data collected from this second phase was analysed qualitatively. The focused interview and photo recognition interview were taped recorded and transcribed. Analysis of the interview were based on the recurrent themes and categories that appeared in the transcripts. The findings of the research is a culmination of the cross analysis between the two different approaches.

There are four main findings of the research. Firstly, there are three types of physical elements that are distinctive to the residents, that is physical structures (namely buildings), urban spaces (such as streets) and landscape features. Secondly, the characteristics of distinctive physical elements are influenced by the

physical appearance, activities and the meanings and associations attached to the elements. The third finding is that there is no significant variation between the socio cultural groups in terms of elements' perceived to be distinctive and that the slight variation is on the level of details observed. Of the three socio cultural factors observed, it is found that age group have more variation in perception of distinctive elements than the other two factors, especially between the youngest and the oldest group of residents. Finally, there is some variation in residents' perception of identity between different parts of the town centre. The variation observed is that residents perceived the older town centre as having a stronger identity than the newer town centre. From the research findings, several urban design and planning implications were suggested that influenced the distinctiveness of the town centre. The implications are with regards to decisions on the enhancement of path networks, development of landmarks, enhancement of nodes and entrances and conservation of the old town centre. Suggestions for further research and the implications for existing theories were also discussed. It is implied from this research that such guidelines would increased the distinctiveness of elements and places in the town centre. This consequently enhances the identity of the town centre to its residents.

## LIST OF DIAGRAMS

Diagram 3.1: Elements of the environment	45
Diagram 3.2: Conceptual framework for the study of identity of place	74
Diagram 5.1: The east and west coast of Malaysia	112
Diagram 5.2: The district of Kuantan, Pahang	113
Diagram 5.3: Boundaries of Kuantan town centre	118
Diagram 5.4: Kuantan town centre: Land use distribution	120
Diagram 5.5: Kuantan: the old and the newer parts of the town centre	122
Diagram 5.6: Kuantan town centre: Building use	124
Diagram 5.7: Action plan zones	129
Diagram 6.1: Types of path networks drawn	151
Diagram 6.2: Location of landmarks drawn by the respondents	158
Diagram 6.3: Location of nodes drawn by the respondents	162
Diagram 6.4: Distribution of distinctive elements within the town centre	169
Diagram 6.5: Location of places included in the included in the photo interview	172
Diagram 6.6: Area perceived as the town centre by the first group of respondents	174
Diagram 6.7: Area perceived as the town centre by the second group of respondents	176

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1:	Attributes of identity as identified in the literature review.	43
Table 4.1:	Sample size required for various sampling at 95% confidence level	100
Table 4.2:	Elements included in the photo recognition task	107
Table 6.1:	Symbols of the town centre	136
Table 6.2:	Unique features of the town centre	136
Table 6.3:	Elements mentioned in the interview	137
Table 6.4:	Types of elements drawn in the mental of residents	147
Table 6.5:	Orientation abilities of respondents	150
Table 6.6:	How a place is remembered	153
Table 6.7:	Places visited for leisure purposes	163
Table 6.8:	Places for shopping	164
Table 6.9:	Why places are visited for leisure	164
Table 6.10:	Location of distinctive elements in the town centre	170
Table 6.11:	Buildings known and those considered unique according to their ethnicity	183
Table 6.12:	Streets that are known and those considered unique according to ethnicity	184
Table 6.13:	Perception of unique landscape features according to ethnicity	185
Table 6.14:	Buildings known and those considered unique according to their gender	189
Table 6.15:	Streets known and those considered unique according to gender	190
Table 6.16:	Perception of unique features according to gender	190
Table 6.17:	Buildings known and those considered unique by age group	192



Table 6.18: Streets known and those considered unique by age group	194
Table 6.19: Perception of unique features according to age group	198
Table 7.1: Factors influencing photo recognition	202
Table 7.2: Physical characteristics used to recognise elements	204
Table 7.3: Why buildings are unique	205
Table 7.4: Why streets are unique	236
Table 7.5: Activities used to recognise elements	237
Table 7.6: Why features are unique	243
Table 7.7: Places to be retained	248
Table 7.8: Why places need to be retained	249
Table 7.9: Places that are beautiful	253
Table 7.10: Places that are ugly	256
Table 7.11: What to improve in the town centre	259
Table 7.12: Why places need to be retained	265
Table 7.13: How a place is remembered	273
Table 7.14: How a place is remembered according to gender	273
Table 7.15: Places visited for leisure purposes according to age group	278
Table 7.16: How a place is remembered according to age group	282

## GLOSSARY

Majlis Perbandaran Kuantan (MPK) - Kuantan Municipal Council

Padang - Field

Taman - Park or garden

Jalan - Street

Kompleks - Complex

Sungai - River

Benteng - Wall

Medan - Square

Pasar - Market

Bandar - Town

Pokok - Trees

Kerang - Cockles

Mamak - Indian Moslem

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

This research examines the concept of 'identity of place' in the town centre of Kuantan, Malaysia. The primary concern is to examine the elements and qualities that residents associated with the town centre's identity. Identity according to Lynch (1982) is "... the extent to which a person can recognise or recall a place as being distinct from other places as having a vivid, or unique, or at least a particular character of its own " (Lynch, 1982, p.131). This research adopted Lynch's definition of identity by examining the distinctiveness of the elements and the qualities that residents associated with the town centre's identity.

This chapter presents the overall structure of the research and the framework in which the results of the inquiry are presented. The research problem will be presented in the first section. This is followed by the purpose and significance of the research in the second section. The third section outlines the research agenda followed by the fourth section which presents the research methodology and techniques. The fifth section features the case study with the sixth section establishing the limitations of this research. The final section presents the overall structure of the thesis.

#### 1.1 Research problem

Malaysia as a country is undergoing a rapid urbanisation process with towns growing at an unprecedented rate. According to Goh (1991), the urbanisation process in

Malaysia is accompanied by an increase in the urban population. This urban growth is not the same for all the towns in Malaysia but in general according to Goh (1991) the state capitals are growing faster than the smaller towns despite the government policy of 'regional development balancing' in the past decades. The United Nations Population division as reported by Goh (1991) projected that by the year 2000, the percentage of Malaysian urban dwellers would be 44%. Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, the prime minister of Malaysia, in his speech on 28 February 1991 entitled 'Malaysia : The way forward', also known as Vision 2020, envisaged the country reaching a fully industrialised nation stage by the year 2020. The Government also anticipated that 70% of the country's population would be living in urban areas by then. The rapid urbanisation process has resulted in the growth of new towns and expansion of existing cities. However, the expansion of these towns has also resulted in the towns of Malaysia lacking in terms of identity (Zainuddin 1996). Efforts by the Government to create identity were observed in 1991, in which all the capital cities of the various states were instructed by the Government to adopt certain flowers as the identity for their cities. These flowers were to be planted abundantly in the city centres to signify their identity. In 1993, an urban design competition to seek ideas to enhance the identity of one capital city was also conducted by its local authority. The National Urban Policy in 1993 also proposed the development of special feature towns and that the identity of the towns in Malaysia should reflect the town's functions. Hence, efforts to increase the identity of the towns such as conservation, in Malaysia are pursued nation wide.

In his keynote address in October 1996 in the Malaysian senior planners meeting, the Director General of the Federal Department of Town and Country Planning emphasised

that the rapid development of cities in Malaysia has failed to project a coherent image and that the design of urban spaces in Malaysian towns are lacklustre. He urged that urban design be given a priority by the planners and that every town should have its own identity which is compatible with the function and activities of the towns.

Prior to this, concerns about identity of city centres in Malaysia were also expressed in many previous studies (Abel 1985, Mijan 1984, Salim 1992). However, their interest in identity related more to the expression of Malaysian identity in the built form. Salim (1992) for example was concerned with identifying the physical and non physical components that create a Malaysian style in the built environment of Malaysian cities - using Kuala Lumpur, as his case study. His emphasis was similar to previous studies on image of cities (Lynch 1960, Appleyard 1980, Al Zaobi 1994). His focus, however was the image of the central areas of the city in terms of building styles rather than elements and qualities associated with identity as perceived by the residents.

This thesis focused on the residents' rather than the professional's perception of identity because as Gosling (1996) argued, "The ability to read his town will lead to the discovery of the town personality: what are its inherent and unique patterns making it different from other places" (Gosling 1996, p.225). This aspect differentiates this study from that of Salim (1992) who included the perception of professionals and only educated members of the public in his study.

The population of Malaysia consists of three major ethnic groups. Each of these groups, the Malays who are the indigenous population, the Chinese and the Indians have different religious and cultural backgrounds. Lynch (1960)

suggested that if cities are to be used by different major groups, studies must be done to discover the similarities and differences in terms of the perceptions between the groups of their urban environment. The extent to which perception varies between different socio-cultural groups is important to inform planners, architects and urban designers. Salim (1992) also suggested that in a pluralist country such as Malaysia, a study is needed to establish the relationships between urban images and groups of different social, demographic and cultural characteristics of the society.

The current trend in planning as stated in the 1996 Malaysian Senior Planners meeting is that urban design should give emphasis to human development and social interaction for all groups within society as well as creating identity for the towns. Ten guidelines were given to the Malaysian planners based on Francis Tibbald's urban design commandments. These guidelines were meant to help the planners to achieve a more creative and quality design of towns. Of these guidelines, three are relevant to the focus of this research - to consider places before buildings, to build legible environment and to cater for all sections of the community by consulting them. At present, guidelines and studies related to the elements and their qualities that people perceived to be distinctive in their urban environment are lacking in Malaysia. This problem was addressed in this research by contributing to the existing body of knowledge on the elements and their qualities that residents of a Malaysian town centre associate with its identity.

## **1.2 Research Agenda**

### **1.21 Research Questions**

The key research question is what are the elements and qualities that residents associate with the town centre's identity?

The subsidiary questions are as follows:

- i. Is there any variation between the different socio-cultural groups who occupy the town centre in their perception of elements and qualities associated with the town centre's identity?
- ii. Is there any variation in the residents' perception of elements and qualities associated with identity between different parts of the town centre?

### **1.22 Research Aims**

The aim of this research is to determine the elements and qualities that residents associate with the town centre's identity.

### **1.23 Research Objectives**

- i. To identify the physical elements that residents associate with the town centre's identity.
- ii. To determine the qualities of the elements that residents associate with the town centre's identity.
- iii. To examine the variation in perception of elements associated with the town centre's identity between the different socio-cultural groups of the residents.

iv. To examine the variation in the resident's perception of elements and qualities associated with identity between different parts of the town centre.

### 1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research investigates the physical aspects of the town centre environment that are recognised and recalled by the people as contributing towards its identity. An evaluation of the distinctive elements in the town centre and their qualities are investigated by examining the reasons for them being recalled by the residents. Pipkins (1983) argued that an alternative to describing and analysing the properties of elements involves an examination of the connections among the elements. When elements are interconnected new properties often emerged in the interaction that could not have been inferred from the properties of the elements themselves. Perception of buildings and urban spaces according to Pipkins (1983) depended on properties and how objects relate to one another. However, analysis of form cannot be wholly independent of mind. Thus, some types of meaning must enter empirical studies. Lynch (1982) argued that the identity of a place or event can be analysed and crudely measured by simple tests of recognition, recall and description. Lynch, (from Banerjee, 1990) also contemplated that the test for site identity is not the novelty of its graphic presentation but the degree to which it is vividly remembered and identified by its people. Hence, the understanding of how a user looks at the world is critical to achieving identity. The urban quality has much to do with perception and evaluation. This evaluation is central to our perception and reaction to the environment (Smith 1974, Nasar 1990). Imageability and evaluation interact because people tend to recall places which they have feelings about. "In other words, evaluative reaction



heightens imageability, and imageability intensifies evaluation" (Nasar, 1990, p.42).

In this research, there are four important aspects to be considered: the physical characteristics of the town centre, the characteristics of the people experiencing the town centre, the people's perception of the physical form of the town centre and the characteristics of the physical elements that influence this perception. The characteristics of these elements will be invaluable as they have implications for urban design strategies and planning policies with regards to the town centre.

There were six techniques used in the collection of data for this research. The techniques are as follows :

i. A literature review of the works by various scholars on the perception of the environment by the people provided the theoretical framework for this research. Two aspects of the theory were reviewed - the concepts of perception, cognition, image and identity of place and theories regarding the attributes of identity of a place. These theories were developed by western scholars based on the western societies' perception of their environment and the physical characteristics of cities in the western world. This review formed an important part of the research as it provides an avenue and a platform by which an investigation into the same field can be conducted in a Malaysian context.

ii. A systematic field reconnaissance of the town centre in the case study was also conducted. The aim is to record the presence and characteristics of elements and human activities in the townscape that contribute to its character. This takes the form of a Visual Survey. These analyses were used to compare and complement the other

findings.

iii. A survey of three hundred and thirty residents of the town centre was conducted; taking into account their age, sex, length of residence, educational background, ethnicity and religion. A questionnaire schedule was used to record the answers given from the respondents. This survey allowed a large sample of the residents to participate, thus giving an opportunity to analyse the variations between the elements noticed and their socio-economic and cultural background. The findings from the survey were analysed using descriptive statistics, namely frequencies, percentages and cross-tabulation tables. It provides the quantitative aspect of the research as well as giving a profile of the town centre's residents.

iv. A focused interview with a group of thirty residents of the town centre using an unstructured interview schedule was conducted following this survey. Its aim is to extract the qualitative data that is not possible to be covered in the survey. This interview was transcribed and analysed qualitatively.

v. A paper and pencil test was carried out on this group of thirty respondents to obtain a mental map of the town centre. The sketches indicated the distinctive elements that were important to the residents' perceptual structure of the town centre, thus associated with its identity. They were analysed qualitatively and cross analysed with the visual survey.

vi. The final technique was a photo recognition task accompanied by an interview, which was carried out with the same group of thirty respondents. The objective is to get the respondents to identify a set of photographs and to describe why they were able to do so. The response of this interview was also transcribed in order for it to be

analysed qualitatively. The photographs used were the places within the town centre most frequently mentioned in the survey. This recognition task enables a more detailed explanation as to how the distinctive elements are identified and recognised by the residents.

In order to answer the research questions and objectives, the methodology adopted for this research was as follows:

i. The first stage identified the physical elements that were distinctive in the residents' description of the town centre. The characteristics of the distinctive elements were then examined according to the reasons given by the respondents in recalling certain elements. These elements were then compared with those found in the mental maps of the town centre in order to highlight the qualities that were most distinctive to the residents. The cultural influence of distinctive elements in terms of meanings and associations were also investigated by examining the reasons given in recalling the elements concerned that was not related to physical factors.

ii. The second stage analysed the variations in perception of distinctive elements and their qualities between the different socio-cultural groups of the residents. Three factors were taken into consideration - ethnicity, gender and age. This research attempted not only to establish a group image of the residents as done by Lynch et al but also to identify the variations and their significance in the perception of identity by the residents according to their socio-cultural background.

iii. The third stage examined the variation in the residents' perception of elements and qualities associated with identity between different parts of the town centre in terms of the presence of distinctive elements and their characteristics. This was done by identifying the location

of the distinctive elements perceived by the residents within the town centre. The more distinctive elements found in an area suggest that the area possessed a stronger identity as perceived by the residents.

This research adopted a mixed methodology approach due to the nature of the subject matter and the research questions. This means that the research will have a quantitative and qualitative methodology in data collection and analysis. However, the nature of this research which tries to identify elements and qualities associated with the town centre's identity as perceived by the residents means that it is primarily qualitative in nature. Thus, the quantitative method played a subsidiary role. A more detailed explanation of the research methodology and procedure is provided in Chapter Four.

#### 1.4 The Case Study

A case study was considered to be the best method for this type of research. It is able to illustrate in detail how a town centre acquired its identity, as perceived by the people. It is very difficult to generalise studies on identity by using a survey method as the identity of an urban area depended on the physical characteristics of the city as well as the knowledge of the people residing in it. Since there is a complex relationship between the two, only an in-depth study can uncover how they influenced each other and what actually makes the identity of a place.

This research was conducted in the context of a Malaysian town. The town chosen was Kuantan, the capital state of Pahang which is aspiring to acquire a city status in the near future. The choice of Kuantan as a case study was made for two reasons :

- i. The first step in selecting the case study was to look

for towns which had a clear visually identifiable town centre. Since most towns in Malaysia, according to Shamsuddin and Sulaiman (1992), consisted of old town centres and newer commercial centres, the distinction between the two must be clear to the observers. From their study, Shamsuddin and Sulaiman (1992) discovered that Kuantan had the two identifiable town centres mentioned earlier. Its physical characteristics possessed many of the elements typical of a Malaysian town, as illustrated in Shamsuddin and Sulaiman's (1992) study, making it the ideal choice for this research.

ii. Secondly, since this research focused on the identity of places of major town centres in Malaysia, the town chosen must be categorised as a major town. For the purpose of this study, the major towns in Malaysia were taken as towns which served as the capitals for the eleven states in West Malaysia. As state capitals, these towns had a considerable amount of urbanisation and played an important role as an administrative and service centre for the rest of the towns in the state. They also displayed the character of a truly urban area compared to other remote towns. In order to select a town that could be considered typical of a major town, several state capitals, which were thought to be unique to themselves, had to be omitted from the selection. The characteristic might be in terms of their function, history, geographical location or composition of the population. Based on this criterion, it was decided that the historic city of Malacca, the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Georgetown, the capital for the State of Penang Island, were not included in the choice for a case study.

Being an historical city, Malacca did not share the same history as the other towns in Malaysia. It also had a racial composition that was not typical of Malaysian towns, due to the presence of the Portugese and the Baba (Straits

Chinese). Kuala Lumpur, on the other hand was the capital city of Malaysia and metropolitan in nature. Thus, it no longer had a characteristic of a major town. Georgetown, located on an island and subjected to British rule longer than the rest of the towns in Malaysia, had its own unique characteristic not shared by the other towns. Thus, the case study was selected from the remainder of the state capitals.

By excluding the state capitals that had acquired city status such as Ipoh and Johor Bahru, there were five state capitals left in Peninsular Malaysia that were short listed for the case study. Of the five towns, Kuantan was selected because it was a town that had been the object of many studies in the past which ensured the availability of data and background information necessary for this research and one that the researcher was already familiar with it. In addition, previous contacts with the residents and the town's officials facilitated the conduct of the survey and field work. This factor is very important in ensuring the success of an in-depth interview because it requires full co-operation from the respondents. In addition to this, Kuantan had a town centre that was manageable in terms of size and therefore did not imposed undue time and financial constraints for the fieldwork.

### 1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This research was limited to the study of the elements in the physical environment and the qualities that residents associated with the town centre's identity. Although activity and meanings were important components of identity, their influence were only analysed in the reason why the physical environment were noticed and considered distinctive. This was due to the immense scope of work involved if the social and cultural components of identity

were explored in greater depth. Thus, the social and cultural components of identity were not fully explored on its own in this research. This was seen as a limitation to the research findings.

(This study was limited to the residents' perception of identity rather than the users' perception of the town centre. Thus, only the perception of people who lived and worked in the town centre area was taken into consideration. Hence, users of the town centre which may include local and foreign visitors as well as people living in the suburbs were not considered in this research. The decision not to include the users in the survey was partly due to the availability of resources for this research. This was seen as a limitation of this research.)

(The scope was also limited to the town centre area because the town centre is considered to be the essence of the character of most town and is the focus of civic identity, expressing the essence of what each town is and how it is different from another (Worskett, 1969). Hence, the focus of inquiry was in the area defined as the town centre by the local planning authority rather than the town itself or the central areas of the town, as done by previous research in this topic.)

## 1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESES

This chapter presents the overall structure of the research in order to provide a review of the scope, purpose and objectives as well as the methodology adopted. It also provides a brief introduction to the subject matter as well as highlighting the significance of the research.

The following chapters present the review of the literature relating to the subject matter under

investigation. There are two important theories that must be covered which are considered vital to this research. The first, which is covered in Chapter Two, relates to the existing theories on the perception of the urban environment by people, specifically addressing the concepts of image, identity and place. This provides the background on the existing body of knowledge relating to these concepts and the factors influencing perception of the urban environment. It then discusses the concept of identity of place and other related concepts in order to focus and clarify the scope of the research.

Chapter Three highlights the qualities that are associated with the identity of place as argued by various western scholars. The review of the current theories on the qualities of identity of place will provide a useful cross reference for the findings in the case study. This chapter also discusses how identity of place can be studied and the criteria that should be taken into account in such study.

The research methodology and procedure are explained in Chapter Four. It establishes the choice and rationale of the methodology adopted in the research. A detailed account of the data collection procedures is presented. This is to substantiate the validity and reliability of the research findings.

Chapter Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven present the analyses of the case study. Chapter Five provides the background information to the case study. It then highlights the policies regarding urban design and the planning authority view on identity of place.

Chapter Six examines the elements that are distinctive to the residents. The difference between the different parts of the town centre in terms of the presence of distinctive



elements is discussed by identifying the location of the distinctive elements. It then discusses the variation that exists between the different socio-cultural groups in perceiving these elements and the difference in their perception between different parts of the town centre.

Chapter Seven identifies the qualities that are associated with identity as perceived by the residents. It also discusses the variation between different socio-cultural groups in perceiving the qualities associated with identity. The difference in the residents' perception of these qualities between the different parts of the town centre are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Eight, the final chapter, summarises the main findings of the research as well as highlighting the contributions of this research. The planning and urban design implications of the findings are also discussed in this chapter. Finally, this chapter also makes suggestions for further research into this area and a general conclusion to the research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORIES ON PERCEPTION OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT AND THE IDENTITY OF PLACE.

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the theories of how cities in western countries are perceived and imaged by their inhabitants. It provides the theoretical background for the conduct of this research in Malaysia. It seeks to explain the factors that influence the images formed. The literature review also assists in the selection of respondents and the choice of methodology for this research. The chapter also discusses the concept of identity to define the focus of this research.

This chapter is divided into three sections. It begins with the definitions of perception, cognition and image to build up the theoretical framework of the concept. The second section explains the concept of identity, place, how identity of place is perceived and a discussion of the idea of the town centre as a place. The final section presents the conclusion to this chapter.

#### 2.1 Definition of related concepts

There are three related concepts that need to be clarified. These concepts are perception, cognition and image.

##### 2.11 Perception

The term perception has often been used interchangeably with cognition by urban researchers (Moore and Golledge

1976, Altman 1980). Krupat (1985) asserted that there are some subtle and not so subtle distinctions which it is important to establish. Perception, he argued, denotes the direct sensory experience of a stimulus or an environment. It is flexible and transitory, unlike attitudes which are relatively permanent and hold in the absence of a stimulus. This was reflected by Bruner's suggestion, (from Appleyard, 1970) that perception depended "... upon the construction of a set of organised categories in terms of which stimulus inputs may be sorted, given identity and given more elaborated, connotative meaning" (Appleyard, 1970, p.111).

Perception is also regarded as the central node in a network that consists of cognitive processes and environmental stimuli. This eventually affects the act of decision making. However, immediacy and stimulus dependency are standard criteria for perception as argued by Moore (1976). Immediacy implies that response immediately follows the impingement on the sense organs, whereas stimulus dependency implies that response is accounted for by the physical properties of the stimulus (Moore, 1976). Nevertheless, perceptual tasks require an interval between the presentation of stimulus and response. Moore (1976) himself doubted if pure perception ever occurred without cognition. This is because this interval might result in a situation whereby the perceptual response is affected by memory and assumptions made of the stimulus situation confronted, instead of purely by its properties.

Perception is a subsystem and function of cognition which means knowledge about the world may be constructed by various means, of which perceptual judgement is one (Wapner and Werner from Moore, 1976). Thus, objects are perceived according to previous ideas, impressions and beliefs. According to Smith (1977) "perception is based on memory, since recognition involved equating stimuli with information schema to test for conformity" (Smith 1977

It was also suggested that there is an interaction between language and perception because the former determined the categories into which stimuli may be put. Hence, the semantic structure of a language has important implications for the analysis of cross cultural differences in perception. The other factor is the appraisive aspect of signification which is also related to the affective component of perception. Thus, when a sign provokes a feeling of attraction or repulsion then it is expected that behaviour is affected. This is also an important aspect of perception.

The definition of perception suggested that it is a form of environmental knowing in which the information presented by the environment is then sorted and categorised. However, perception is also affected by a person's appraisal or their feelings towards the environment as suggested by Nasar (1992). It differs from cognition in that perception is dependent on the attributes of the stimuli presented rather than the previous knowledge or beliefs. It is also an active and purposeful process and is also where cognition and reality met.

## 2.12 Cognition

As discussed earlier, the terms perception and cognition have been used interchangeably by many people. In this section, the concept of cognition will be defined in order to find the division between the two terms. According to Rapoport (1977), cognition is derived from a Latin word which means 'getting to know'. It thus refers to the process of knowing and understanding and the product of this process was the things known. Cognition also refers to the process by which gathered information is organised and structured (Krupat 1985). Through cognition,

information collected is categorised, sorted and placed in meaningful groupings. All future information will be organised according to these categories, where it is either modified or modifies the very system in which it is placed. "Environmental cognition is the study of the subjective information, images, impressions, and beliefs that people have of the environment, the ways in which these conceptions arise from experience, and the ways in which they affect subsequent behaviour with respect to environment" (Moore, 1976, p.3).

Altman (1980) referred to environmental cognition as perception, cognition and beliefs about the environment. Information about various properties of the environment are received through our senses and organised as well as compared with experiences of similar and different environments. The function of this process is to inform the location of places and objects in terms of distance and direction. Secondly, it is to inform the environmental attributes or properties, which can be either descriptive or evaluative. These environmental cognition are selective, incomplete and inaccurate. Thus, cognition includes the various processes by which visual, linguistic, semantic and behavioural information is selected, coded, reduced and elaborated, stored, retrieved, decoded and used (Altman 1980). However, the properties of the environment that are most important in order for them to be perceived need to be clarified. This is because there are two properties of the environment perceived - the descriptive and the evaluative.

Moore (1976) highlighted that there were three fundamental principles of environmental knowing or cognition, which were:

- i. The dynamic process whereby information from an external environment is constantly received, selected,

organised and used to help individuals operate on a day to day basis.

ii. The subjective conception of the environment, which is used differently by different individuals and groups. These needs and value system are important in determining the extent of awareness or knowledge about the environment.

iii. Information extracted from the larger scaled external environment existed in some type of psychological space. This psychological space need not have the same dimensions as the physical space.

Of the three, the second principle is more related to this study because it deals with the perception of people from different backgrounds. The questions are; how do different groups differ in their conception of the environment and does the social and cultural background influence their perception of the identity of a place?

Rapoport (from Moore, 1976) argued that there are two approaches to environmental cognition, the psychological and the anthropological. The former relates to the notions of schemata, life space and cognitive maps. The latter emphasises the cognitive processes which are concerned with making the world meaningful. Hence, the difference between the two is that the psychological view stresses knowledge of the environment whilst the other is about giving meaning to the environment. Unlike perception, cognition involves indirect materials; information derived from other people, their values, views and interpretations, making it culturally affected. Tyler (from Rapoport, 1972) posed two questions which are considered as extremely relevant to environmental cognition:

i. What material phenomena are significant to people in a culture and are thus stressed, selected and used?

ii. How are the selected phenomena organised by the people in question?

He argued that these questions have important implications for both design and research. In fact, those features of the environment which are selected subjectively by people for organisation, reveal noticeable differences that are important to identify (Rapoport 1976). Although it is possible to list the potential noticeable differences in the environment (physical, social, symbolic and others), the type of elements noticed and understood, which eventually elicit appropriate behaviour, are actually a cultural variable. Thus, different cultural and sub-cultural groups tend to rely on different criteria to decide the likeness and grouping of different features of the environment. These criteria are not listed by Rapoport and, therefore it is not known the extent of the difference or similarity among cultural groups or within cultural groups. In Malaysia, this question becomes very important because its multi-racial situation implies that different ethnic groups would have different perception of the environment. Hence, it is crucial that this issue is addressed in order to design an environment for people from different cultural groups.

The process of knowing the environment is complex. At the most basic, it is the stimulation of the senses by the surrounding things and people. Thus, past experiences sometimes influence the things recalled or at other times, people tend to be creative and anticipate things that might happen in the future. In both cases, sensory experiences are assimilated into stable structures of knowing and understanding. This is because information derived from the environment is stored in the minds and can be recalled and decoded when needed (Altman, 1980).

As Downs and Stea (1973) had observed, environmental cognition is often inaccurate and incomplete. It also differs from person to person and group to group. It is selective and includes elements that are important to people. This means that people are able to discriminate between things by identifying the unique properties of certain things and disregarding the uniqueness of individual things by identifying equivalence in similar things. Thus, objects, places, events and so on can be classified in a variety of different ways depending on the criteria chosen. It is important to establish the criteria chosen by different groups of people in environmental cognition and the extent to which the criteria are based on physical properties of the environment or socio-cultural factors.

Finally, another characteristic of environmental cognition, according to Altman (1980) is that it often contains surplus information. He argued that people sometimes infer the existence of things to rationalise their beliefs and perception as well as making them consistent. Cognitive representation also tends to be distorted and schematised. Thus, certain features of places are overemphasised or under-emphasised depending on the person. Added to this, simplification and labelling are typical features of environmental cognition. Altman (1980) also contended that cultural influence affects information that is meaningful, consistent and appropriate. Hence, the information that is meaningful and consistent within each cultural group must be established.

From the above, it is apparent that the difference between cognition and perception is difficult to distinguish, and that they share more common properties than differences. Krupat (1985) however, forwarded a difference between the two that highlights their distinction. He suggested that perception denotes the direct sensory experience of an



environment whereas cognition implies more than just a process of gathering information. Cognition involved the process of categorisation, the sorting of information and placing it in meaningful groups (Krupat, 1985). Given the difficulty of establishing a clear distinction between perception and cognition, Down and Stea (1973) argued that the difference between the two is one of degree and focus. This means that although both are concerned with the organisation and interpretation of information, perception is a direct sensory reference compared to cognition. The latter was more general in the sense that it includes perception and occurs in a spatial context so extensive that it cannot be perceived in a series of brief glances. The large scale space also contains objects and events that are outside the immediate sensory field of the individual. These can only be cognitively organised and committed to memory.

The literature review suggested that the study of perception cannot be conducted without involving cognition because of their very subtle differences. Thus, this research relates to both the perception and cognition of the environment. This is due to the concern of this research with the elements of the environment and their qualities that are recalled and recognised by the people. This involves both the presence of stimulants and memories that influenced their ability to recall and recognise the physical elements in their environment.

The other important thing to highlight is that both perception and cognition are culturally affected. Thus, cultural differences have an influence on perception and environmental cognition. This emphasises the need for new research on perception within different cultural settings, such as attempted in this research, even though theories on perception and cognition are already abundant in the western society.

### 2.13 Image

The concept of image is discussed here because of its close relationship with perception and cognition. Kenneth Boulding (from Moore, 1976) had this to say about image in his book "The Image" : "For any given organism or organisation, there are no such things as 'facts'. There are only messages filtered through a changeable value system. Image is a mental representation of those parts of reality which is known through direct or indirect experience, thus grouping the various environmental attributes which is then combined according to certain rules" (Moore, 1976 p.4). Hence, image may be of a specific element or events, or symbolic, or of a semiotic character which were derived from real life experiences or from the media. Image is important because the environment is what the people think it is. However, of the three systems - the system of action, imagery and language, in which people employ to process information in understanding the world, imagery is the least known. This is because actions are observable, and language is the principal means of communication. However, it is difficult to communicate images accurately. This is because images are internalised reconstruction of sensory experience and expectations. However, the importance of image is that it actually determines and governs behaviour.

The urban image is a type of image used in the sense of schemata. It is not only visual but all senses entered into its formation. It increased its importance with an increase in scale, age, education, skills, socio-cultural variables, the symbolic and association values of individuals and groups, the variations in their activity patterns and the extent of behavioural space (Rapoport, 1977). According to Krupat (1985), there was a dynamic and reciprocal relationship between image and activity. The environment provides the basic material in the form of

distinctions and relations. The individual then selects, organises and gives meanings to these elements in order to create an image. The ability and mobility to do this are based upon each person's own cognitive representation of the environment. Finally, each of the activities and experiences of the individual is capable of providing modification of the image itself. This affects future behaviour (Krupat, 1985).

There are four important functions served by a clear image of a city, according to Lynch (from Krupat, 1985). There is, firstly, the mobility function, which allows people to move around easily. Secondly, image serves as a broad frame of reference to the structural knowledge of the city and the activities in it. Thirdly, there is the emotional function in which a clear image allows one to move about in the city with a sense of comfort, ease and emotional security. Finally, the urban image serves a symbolic function by providing symbols and strong associations with a place. This facilitates communication between people within a common environment. Hence, to maximise man's relationship with his environment, cities should be planned to maximise their imageability. Lynch's idea of a clear image also suggested that it relates to a sense of orientation and feelings of security but does not imply that a clear image necessarily suggests a clear identity. Thus, what makes the identity of place clear to the residents remains an interesting question to be answered.

There are three characteristic types of urban images; operational, responsive and inferential (Appleyard 1970). Appleyard (1970) suggested that many elements in the city are perceived because of their operational roles. This means that certain aspects of the environment are selected as an individual carries out his or her tasks, hence details of traffic circles, islands and intersections are often exaggerated in subjective maps. This results in

salient elements, no matter how small or non distinctive, being remembered because of their location at primary decision points, thus aiding orientation. This kind of operational perception, which is guided by activities in the environment according to Appleyard (1970), was often neglected in environmental planning and design. Thus, the extent in which operational perception employed by the town centre's residents in a Malaysian town can be a useful finding. Also important is what type of elements in a Malaysian town are distinctive because they aid the residents in their daily activities and how does the design and location of these elements enable the residents to notice them?

Urban perception was also said to be responsive to the configuration of the environment. Whilst engaging in operational search, the traveller is often drawn to bright, isolated, singular and distinctive elements such as signs, billboards, water or people. These are not necessarily visual yet they are the imageable elements that Lynch (1960) described in his work 'Image of a City'. In addition, perception is inferential and probabilistic in nature. As a person grows, a generalised system of environmental categories and relationships are developed to form a personal coding system for the city. Hence, when new cities are encountered, each new experience is matched against a general expectation. The placing of new buildings into a particular class of building can be seen as a cognitive decision process. The wider the urban experience and the more conventional the structure of the city, the quicker and more accurate is the acquisition of knowledge (Appleyard, 1970). Each kind of perception relies on certain attributes in the environment. Attributes of operational perception are personal movement and visibility, imageability of responsive perception and the socio-functional significance of inferential perception. Urban perception and knowledge are schematic in character.

To organise them, we resort to methods that simplify, structure and stabilise them.

In this research, all three aspects of perception were observed. This is because the research was concerned with the elements and the qualities associated with the identity of the town centre as perceived by the residents. The qualities could be determined by the reasons given as to why the elements were considered distinctive. These reasons could be due to the elements helping a person in his or her operational task in the city or because he or she is responsive to certain features of the environment. The other factor is the inference made of previous encounters with similar objects. Thus, the longer time a person spent in a city, the more he relies on this inferential perception. This also highlights why this research focused on the perception of the residents of a place because as inhabitants of a place, they have a longer experience with a place and should rely on other means of perception apart from operational perception.

Discussions about urban image were often accompanied by cognitive mapping. Lynch (1960) used the mental maps drawn by people to derive the areas of consensus which he calls the public image of the city. These mental maps are usually selective, incomplete, sketchy and contain many inaccuracies (Krupat, 1985, Lang, 1987). However, they represent how the city is organised in a person's mind.

Downs and Stea (1977) defined cognitive mapping as the mental process through which people came to understand the world around them. A cognitive map is therefore a person's internal organised representation of part of the spatial environment. It is a model of reality according to Lang (1987). One of the roles of cognitive mapping is to provide a frame of reference where information regarding the environment could be placed (Downs and Stea, 1977). This

explains why research on urban image and perception require the subjects to produce a mental map of the environment studied. In this research, a sketch map of the town centre was requested from the residents. This sketch map enabled information regarding the residents' perceptual structuring of the town centre be obtained. It also enabled certain elements that were important to their mental representation of the town centre to be identified.

## **2.2 Related concepts to identity of place**

Although the definition of identity for this research had been stated earlier, it is important to establish the concept of identity of place. This assists in the development of the research methodology and defines the limitations of this research. There are two important concepts relating to this research that must be clarified. First, is the concept of identity and second the concept of place, in which case the town centre is considered as a place. These concepts are also discussed in the light of other similar concepts such as *genius loci* and sense of place. This is done in order to clarify the concept of identity of place adopted in this research.

### **2.21 The concept of identity**

According to Zeisel (1981), identity is one of the most difficult concept to define because it refers to the relationship of self to the environment. A part of a person's total identity involves identification of places. People will fight when a part of their locality is physically or symbolically removed. Nevertheless, identity was defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (1989) as "the quality or condition of being the same in substance, composition, nature, properties, or in a particular quality under consideration; absolute or essential sameness; oneness" (p.620). The Dictionary of Behavioural Science

(1973) also stated that identity is the condition of sameness in essential character. Here, identity was defined as the quality of sameness in characteristics.

Identity was more specifically defined to relate to urban design by other authors. Green (1992) for example stated that identity denotes a visual image of the environment that reflected special or unique qualities. This definition was also supported by Scoffham (1987) when he suggested that urban identity is a characteristic that make it distinct from others. Thus, he argued that a lengthy study of a location will reveal the vocabulary of visual characteristics that make it distinct from others.

However, Lynch's (1981) definition of identity is more akin to this study. He defined identity as the simplest form of sense, of which the narrow meaning of the term is sense of place. Sense, on the other hand, was defined by Lynch (1981) as the clarity by which a city can be perceived and linked with other places in a coherent mental representation. Hence, identity according to Lynch (1981) is "...the extent to which a person can recognise or recall a place as being distinct from other places as having a vivid, or unique, or at least a particular character of its own " (Lynch, 1981, p.131). Lang's (1987) interpretation of identity relates more to the Gestalt laws of visual organisation by stating that identity refers to objects in the environment having the quality of figure ground relationship. The similarities between these authors in defining identity suggest that distinctiveness is a quality that is associated with identity. This implies that in describing the identity of a place, one should be looking for the presence of distinct elements and that this characteristic is recognised and remembered by people.

There is also a slightly different version of this definition of identity which emphasises its experiential

rather than its visual characteristics. This was reflected by Relph's (1976) notion of identity as being an expression of adaptation, assimilation, accommodation and socialisation of knowledge of each other. It is neither constant and absolute nor it is constantly changing and variable. The identity of place, according to him took many form and is always the very basis of our experience of this place as opposed to any other. Image of place is its identity and to understand something of the social structure of image is an essential prerequisite in understanding identity (Relph, 1976). "The image of place consists of all elements associated with the experience of individuals or groups and their intentions towards that place" (Relph, 1976, p.57).

Relph's suggestion that identity is related to the image of a place also implies that studies on image are actually to determine the identity of place. If Relph (1976) suggested that identity is related to the image of a place, then can it be presumed that identity of place is related to how it is perceived by the people rather than the appearance of a place? If this is the case, then this research has significance because it is concerned with the identity of place as perceived by the people rather than identity being described from a theoretical point of view.

Identity was considered a complex phenomenon by Crosby (1965) and is acquired by virtue of action, appearance and involvement. Giovanni De Franciscis (1987) stated that the physical form of cities expresses the myths, values and cultures of people. Hence, for this reason, he argued that an urban environment acquired its own specific identity and becomes a place of identification for its inhabitants.

Giovanni's idea suggested that there is a strong association between the values and culture of the inhabitants of a place with the physical appearance of it.



This implies that the physical characteristics is a manifestation of this culture and that the inhabitants identify a place through meanings. This suggests that the concept of identity of place must also cover the aspect of meanings and associations in addition to the physical characteristics. Of importance are the meanings acquired from the physical environment associated with identity. This also implies that the theory on identity of place cannot be applied on a blanket approach because of the cultural influence on perception. This supports the intention of this research which is to explain the elements and qualities associated with the identity of a town centre in Malaysia, a country that has a different social and cultural background from the countries in the developed world.

It can be seen from the works of various Western scholars that the concept of identity cover two aspects; the physical qualities and the experiential qualities derived from the environment. However, the most important part of identity relates to the distinctiveness of the physical environment and the ability for it to be recognised or recalled vividly by the observer. This is shown by the greater emphasis made by the scholars on the physical quality aspects of identity. This definition of identity is used in this research as it is more tangible and researchable. Furthermore, the deterioration of the physical qualities of the urban environment is a major concern in Malaysia.

## **2.22 The concept of place, sense of place and genius loci.**

It has been discussed earlier that there is a link between the distinctiveness of the environment's physical qualities and its identity. The term 'place' is very rich and according to Canter (1977) has geographical, architectural and social connotations. He suggested that a place is a

result of the relationship between actions, conceptions and physical attributes. The geographical concept of place, refers to the aerial context of events, objects and actions. This includes both natural elements and human construction in terms of materials and ideals. It is also a centre of meaning and the external context of our actions and these have cultural significance. Their descriptions are often fused with human goals, values and intentions and that as centres of felt value, their existence satisfy people's biological needs (Tuan 1977).

However, it only achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, using all our senses together with an active and reflective mind. Places, according to Tibbalds (1992), matter more than individual buildings or vehicular traffic. Urban designers and planners must concentrate on creating attractive places related to the scale of people, and exploit the uniqueness and differences between places. This suggests that the creation of places is an important aspect of urban design.

One of the authors who has a major contribution to the theory of identity and place is Norberg Schulz. Place, according to Norberg Schulz (1980), means more than abstract location; it is a totality made of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture and colour. All these things determine the character and the essence of place. A place is also a qualitative total phenomenon which cannot be reduced to any of its properties without losing its overall nature (Norberg Schulz 1980). In discussing the theory of place, Norberg Schulz (1980), highlighted three important and interrelated concepts; the concept of character, identity and Genius Loci. His idea of character is that it denotes the general atmosphere of a place, which is its most comprehensible property. Character, he argued, is determined by the material and formal constitution of the place that is how things are.

The structure of place is manifested as a totality comprising of character and space. The genius loci, on the other hand, according to Norberg Schulz is the spirit of place. This spirit gives life to places and determines their character. The genius loci can only be fully grasped by identifying the character of place.

If places are not designed to respect the genius loci, then they would lose their identity. To respect the genius loci, according to Norberg Schulz (1980) is to determine the identity of place. This implies that the identity of place must be interpreted in new ways instead of copying the old models. It appeared from Norberg Schulz's (1980) discussion on the concept of genius loci and identity that the former was a more global concept encompassing the other related concepts such as character and identity. Genius loci is a concept that is beyond the physical and social constructs and only is understood through very deep understanding of the factors that shaped the built form. It can be implied that a place has identity if its genius loci is respected and observed. Thus, identity is a manifestation of the genius loci of place. Garnham (1985) also agreed that the widespread acceptance of genius loci is that it denotes the distinctive characteristics of a region or city. However, Norberg Schulz's (1980) discussion of identity relates to how a professional perceives the identity of place and it cannot be assumed that professionals and non professionals share the same perception. Thus, a research that looks into the concept of identity as perceived by the lay men will inform the professionals as to the effectiveness of their design to people.

The concept of place has six major components, according to Lukerman, (from Relph, 1976). One of these components is that they involve the integration of the elements of nature and culture. Places are also interconnected with each other by a system of spatial interactions and transfers. Since

places have meaning, they are characterised by the beliefs of man and have historical components. Jacobs (from Teo and Huang, 1996) also emphasised the importance of meanings that people associate with a locality in discussing the concept of place.

Downs and Stea (1973) argued that place is initially distinguished from space by an external boundary and internal structuring. Hence, there is a recognisable "insideness" and "outsideness". A sense of place, therefore, comes from the attribution of meanings to physical forms. Place is affected by people and in return people are affected by place. As a result, there is an interaction with a place rather than a response to it. Time becomes an important component of a sense of place because it deepens the relatedness of person to place and endows the place with meaning. Places that did not relate to any particular period and lacking a sense of continuity are uncomfortable environments according to Downs and Stea (1973). Thus, the stability and continuity of an environment act as therapy to the rapidity and scale of modern social and environmental changes.

According to Banz (1970), people who are satisfied with their environment will develop a collective motivation to retain its qualities, whereas those who are dissatisfied with their habitat may relocate or opt for improvements. Is satisfaction then related to identity of place? If this is so, then a way to create identity for a place is to satisfy the people living in it. Downs and Stea (1973) also argued that an excess of visitors is detrimental to the sense of place, that very uniqueness which attracts the tourist in the first place. Thus, over-patronage of tourist centres must be avoided.

According to Relph (1976), sense of place is the ability to recognise different places and different identities of a

place. This statement is also agreed by Lang (1994) who argued that in general, sense of place is understood by professionals as a place being different from another place and having unique qualities. This concept, according to Relph (1976) is a broad one and incorporates imageability, topophilia, attachment and symbolic meaning of places. Banz (1970) argued that the search for a sense of place permits individuals to relate spatially to the aspects of the urban life they specifically choose to identify with. In a pluralistic society, a sense of place must be based on multiple spatial relationships unlike traditional cities where a simple orientation towards the cathedral is sufficient. In theory, Banz (1970) argued that gaining a sense of place means that a person can orient himself in his environment by using all his senses. Hence, the sequence in which he perceives the elements surrounding him extends his sense of place within a sense of time. The concept of sense of place according to Garnham (1985) depends on the level of understanding a person has on the components that create identity. Hence, sense of place depends on the degree of familiarity a person has with the place.

From the literature reviewed, it was evident that the most important aspect of a place is that it is an area or context whereby various meanings, values and cultural significance are attached. It is also an area where perception is enriched and a person is made aware of the distinctive character of specific localities. It is evident from the above, that the concept of place and sense of place relate to more than just a physical location and its physical qualities. The ability of the physical space to stimulate all the senses and to evoke a sense of attachment and meaning is important for gaining a sense of place. This, in return, helps imageability and orientation within the urban environment. Hence, sense of place is seen as the qualities of the environment that are able to stimulate the

senses as compared to identity, which is the qualities that are distinct and able to be remembered vividly by the observer. Thus, the concept of identity emphasises on the ability of the physical qualities to be seen as distinct and that these qualities can be influenced by non physical factors such as meanings and association. This slight difference in emphasis between sense of place and identity will be used in this research to clarify the concept used.

### **2.23 The concept of place in relation to the town centre.**

The process of establishing identity involves at least two steps (Rapoport 1981). First is the definition of the contents and identifying the distinctiveness of the place. Secondly, it is the setting up of a boundary that separates one place from the other. It is this second step that will be discussed in greater length. When discussing how the identity of place is perceived by people, it is important that the nature of the boundary of the place is known to the people. This involves questions as to how this boundary is known or made known, how it is indicated and reinforced and how people are reminded of it. The nature of boundary according to Rapoport (1981) can be territorial, spatial, religious, ethnic or even life style. However, the most important aspect is the system of messages that communicate the essentials (or the core) of the identity, or the particular distinctiveness of the place. Basically, the communication of identity involves the location of people in social space so that they become distinctive and not strangers. In communicating identity there must, first, be ways of establishing noticeable differences in the system used so that people are aware of their presence. Secondly, these differences and cues must be understood, that is the core elements used by the group to identify itself and those used by others to identify them are congruent. The definition of areas, according to Rapoport, can be done by using subjective or objective criteria. The

subjective definition is a function of meaning and symbolic value reflecting preferences and hierarchies. Hence, elements important for particular groups tend to be included by them.

It can be deduced that in communicating the identity of place, the most important aspect is that the boundary of the place is understood by the observer. Following that, the characteristics of the places that are noticed to be distinctive must also be easily perceived so that its identity can be communicated. It is also noted that the stronger the identity of place, the more salient the cues that are noticed by the people.

From a review of literature, it can be found that the town centre has some special characteristics that make it the most important place and the essence of the character of most towns (Worskett 1969, Worpole 1992). To begin with, the town centre has a location and a boundary which, according to Rapoport (1977), can be defined both objectively and subjectively. The objective definition is in terms of its size, land use and population density. These criteria are familiar to planners and town officials, whereas to the population the town centre's boundary is very subjective and is accompanied by meanings and symbolism. However, both definitions are important to make the town centre a better place for its residents.

Place definition is important to identity and is a crucial part of the people's mental maps (Rapoport, 1977). How people cognitively define areas and places, and the criteria used in doing so, are important in urban design. According to Rapoport (1977), subjective definition differs from the objective definition of a place. This is important for planning and design generally, as well as in the construction of new towns involving other cultures. In Goodey et al's (1971) study in Birmingham, it was

discovered that the basis for including areas in the central city is historical, aesthetic and economic. The area in which all three coincide is of great importance to people. However, in generating theories relating to the design of town centres, it is important to establish the criteria used by people to define the centre of the town. It is also interesting to establish the most important clue used to decide on the boundaries or edges of the town centre. How much of this decision depends on the physical characteristics and how much on the socio-cultural factors can be a useful finding. In this research, the subjective definition of the town centre and its boundaries will be derived by asking residents to draw a map of the town centre and to recall the elements used as boundaries and the reasons used in their decision making.

In addition, as the core of the town, the centre is usually associated with its evolution and thus has a special attachment for the people, especially older generations. According to Gibberd (1959), since most important public buildings and major commercial buildings are located in the town centre, it usually becomes a place for entertainment and public assembly. It is also the place where most care is given to civic spaces, buildings and urban embellishments. Considering the character of a town centre, Gibberd contended that it should be the place that gives the greatest feeling of urbanity and the impression of the town's environment.

The city is also a centre of meaning and a visible expression of man's value systems, beliefs, ideas, hopes and fears (Tuan 1977, Downs and Stea 1973). According to Smith (1977), historically the city represents a cultural continuum which fixes its people in time and place, and binds them with the past and the future. Familiar town centre buildings, he added, are essential contributors to the ultimate sense of place, which the town projected. He



further emphasised that "towns and cities should confer identity on their inhabitants. They do this by their uniqueness, and the stronger that individuality, the more it attests to a powerful community character" (Smith, 1977, p.50). This also implies that it is important for identity of place to be perceived by its inhabitants as this will develop into a strong sense of community.

It is apparent that the study of identity is best done in the town centre because of its importance and location in the town. In Malaysia, the town centre can be physically divided into two - the old centre and the new centre. The old centre is associated with the beginnings of the town and accommodates many of the old and historical buildings in the town centre. The architecture of the buildings is also different from buildings in the newer centre. This research aims to establish if there is a variation in the residents' perceptions of elements and qualities associated with identity between the old and the new parts of the town centre.

### 2.3 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theories concerning perception, cognition and image of the urban environment and how man makes sense of the stimuli projected by his environment. The concept of identity was also discussed in the light of this and other related concepts. It had been illustrated that the concept of identity of place is very similar to sense of place and that of image. This implies that the concept of identity of place does not just concerns the physical characteristics of a place but also the social meanings acquired from the physical constructs.

It was observed that the image of the urban environment is evoked through involvement and not just by looking at the city. It is a mental construct made up of sets of visual

association which are then supplemented by known facts about the environment. The individual selects the data available to him, and in the process he defines his own environment.

It was apparent from the literature review that identity of place is concerned with the distinctiveness of a place as perceived by the people. This means that identity is a quality that make a place recognised as being distinct from other places. Thus, this suggests that identity is a quality that enables the physical environment to be noticed and remembered by the people. The reason why the environment is noticed could be due to the physical qualities or the social meanings evoked by the physical structures. It was apparent from the literature review that identity of place does not imply affinity to a place and that a place with identity is not necessary a place liked or disliked by the people. Its quality only relates to its ability to be noticed and recognised as distinct from others.

The next chapter will discuss how identity of place is perceived and the attributes of the urban environment that influence the identity of place. It will also discuss the indicators for identity of place.

## CHAPTER THREE

### QUALITIES ASSOCIATED WITH IDENTITY OF PLACE

#### 3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed theories of perception and cognition and the concept of identity of place. This chapter will review theories relating to elements that influence the development of image of place and the attributes that contribute towards identity of place. It will also discuss how identity of place has been measured in previous research. This will assist the formulation of a conceptual framework for the study of perception of identity of town centres in Malaysia.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section will discuss the components of identity and the characteristics of each component that is associated with strong identity. The second section will cover theories on how these elements influence the image construction of a place. The third section discusses other factors influencing perception of identity. The fourth section examines the approach adopted in measuring identity of place. This is to enable the theoretical framework for the study of perception of identity to be formulated. The final section presents the conclusion to this chapter.

#### 3.1 Components of identity ✓

A review of related literature suggests that there are three major components of identity. They are the physical environment, activities and meanings (Garnham 1985, Schulz 1980, Rapoport 1990, Banz 1970, Teo and Huang 1996, Teo 1996). These components combine to influence the identity of place and each must be considered in relation to the others. Relph (1976) argued that identity can neither be understood simply in terms of patterns of physical and

observable features nor as a product of attitude. It is a complex combination of these components that constitutes the identity of place. Garnham (1985) identified the major components of identity as being:

**i. Physical features and appearance.**

This is the actual physical structure of a place which included buildings, landscape, climate and aesthetic quality.

**ii. Observable activities and functions. ✓**

This relates to how people interacted with a place and how the buildings and landscape were used.

**iii. Meanings or symbols.**

This is the most complex aspect of identity because it is the result of human intentions and experience. Thus, the character of the place is derived from people's reaction to its physical and functional aspects.

**3.2 Features by which identity could be identified.**

In this section, the features by which identity can be identified are reviewed to ascertain the characteristics of each component that is associated with identity. The features are divided into the physical characteristics, activities and the social meanings attached to the physical characteristics. Table 3.1 summarises the attributes of identity as identified by various scholars.

**3.21 Influence of the physical environment**

According to Zeisel (1981) physical environment includes "objects in a setting; places, such as street corners, tot lots, rooms, and stairwells; relation between

**TABLE 3.1: ATTRIBUTES OF IDENTITY AS IDENTIFIED IN THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

[illegible]

**Hierarchy of attributes most frequently quoted:**

1. Street
2. Size, skyline, view, type of activities & historical meanings & colour
3. Greeneries, shapes, square, enclosure, organisation of building and intensity of activities.
4. Height, materials, street layout
5. Landform, geographical location levels, smell, sound, tactile, function, people and familiarity.
6. Building, object, open space, location visibility economic meaning and non functional meanings.
7. Water, air movement, light quality, sign, aerial location, design and quality, age, significance of activities, political, social, religious, functional, general significance, convenience, affinity, atmosphere and preference.

places created by such things as walls, distance, windows, barriers, adjacencies; and qualities of the setting; such as light and sound" (Zeisel 1981, p. 181). Rapoport (1977) suggested that physical environment includes "all natural features of geography, climate, and man-made features which limit and facilitate behaviour, and the "resources" of the environment." (Rapoport 1977, p.8)

The environment, according to Greene (1992), is the actual geography that a user experienced. It comprises elements that constitute the physical substance of community design. These elements, according to him, include masses (land forms, buildings and structures), spaces (parks and other types of open areas) and paths (linear travel ways). The essential physical constructs for each of these elements which occur in natural and built states are their general form (concept) and detail (specific delineation and particular parts). Examples of these three components are illustrated in Diagram 3.1.

The inclusion of space as part of the elements of the physical environment is also suggested by Relph (1976). This is evident when he said that physical components comprise the earth, sea, sky and a built or created environment, each offering its own characteristic possibilities for experience. The physical environment also comprises non visual aspects which affect the senses. These are aspects of the environment whose characteristics are felt or detected by the senses instead of being present in the form of an object or physical elements.

Although urban design is primarily a three dimensional design it must also deal with the non visual aspects of the environment. Pocock (1978) argued that for a space to become a place, senses other than the visual have to be invoked. Examples are noise, smell or feelings of danger and safety, which contribute significantly to the character of an area (Gosling 1984, Rapoport 1977).

### DIAGRAM 3.1 : ELEMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

	NATURAL (FORM/DETAIL)	BUILT (FORM/DETAIL)
MASSES	land form topography crowds vegetation	structures contouring vehicles landscaping public art street furniture public utilities
SPACES	agricultural land plains valleys scenic and historic places water areas	recreational/park area squares/plazas/malls parking lots yards vacant land terminal areas
PATHS	rivers streams/gullies ridges canyons	expressways/parkways streets/roads/alleys railways/subways bridges/tunnels walkways/trails/ bicycle paths

(Source : Greene 1992, p. 178)

Rapoport (1977) also includes lighting quality such as shade or brightness as influencing the identity of an area. Thus, these sensory experiences especially noise and smell influence the identity of the urban environment.

Hence, it is evident that the physical environment comprised of objects or elements, spaces, the circulation networks and non visual aspects. It is apparent from a review of literature that the attributes of the physical environment associated with identity of place are those that are distinctive and easily noticed by the people. Rapoport (1977) used the term 'potential noticeable differences' instead of the term distinctive to denote elements that are easily recalled. He argued that potential noticeable differences are important for the identity of the city. This suggests that differences that are

noticeable between the physical elements are easily recalled and contribute to the identity of place.

The features of the physical environment associated with identity are:

**i. Physical form and appearance.**

Physical form and appearance are the characteristics of the physical environment, especially buildings, which are distinctive and easily recalled (Appleyard 1969, Harrison and Howard 1980; Worskett 1969, Rapoport 1977). In Appleyard's (1969) research on why buildings are known, the distinctiveness of the physical form was among the most frequently quoted reason by people. Lay and Reis's (1994) research on the impact of housing quality on urban image also suggested that user perception of visual appearance was intrinsic to the process of image making.

From a review of literature, the attributes relating to the physical form can be identified as follows: size, height, shape, contour, skyline, movement, surface, quality (texture), signs, age, design, materials, condition (upkeep and landscaping), general visual appeal, other factors related to appearance (time, smell, noise and lighting), features on facade, arrangement of building, openness, spaciousness, enclosure, level of orientation and territorial definition. These characteristics are derived from research carried out by Rapoport (1977, 1990), Worskett (1969), Harrison and Howard (1980), Appleyard (1980), Crosby (1965), Lay and Reis (1994) and Smith (1977).

It is apparent that the physical form and appearance include features that relate to spatial quality such as enclosure, spaciousness and landscaping. Many of the empirical works on perception of urban image relate physical form and appearance as a characteristic of a



building that is important for imageability. In the case of Lay and Reis's (1994) study, this feature was associated with the user's perception of the organisation of buildings which they relate to appearance. This is because their research was concerned with the influence of housing quality on urban image. Thus, the physical appearance is a feature that is associated with the overall perception of the housing environment. It is in the interest of this research to examine the influence of physical form and appearance in the residents' perceptions of Malaysian town centre's identity. Since there are many attributes relating to physical form and appearance, it is also interesting to discover which aspects of appearance are important to the identity of place and which are the least distinctive to the residents.

#### ii. Location factors.

The second feature associated with identity of place is related to location and juxtaposition of physical elements (Harrison and Howard 1980, Rapoport 1990, Worskett 1969). Harrison and Howard (1980) argued that location is an important physical component of imageability. They stated that the attributes of location are aerial location, spatial relationship, prominence, scope, activity, associated features, signs and markers. These factors which concern location, especially prominence and visibility ensure that a physical element is noticed and remembered (Appleyard 1969). When this happened, it is then easily associated with the identity of town, especially if the elements also have a unique physical form and appearance. It is implied by both Appleyard's (1969) and Harrison and Howard's (1980) studies that location played an important role because a physical element or activities could only be noticed if its location was prominent and visible from a distance. Harrison and Howard's (1980) study showed that there were eight attributes that residents used in describing the image of city that relates to location

factor. They discovered that people relate to the urban environment most significantly through location factors, especially in the case of paths. In Appleyard's (1969) study, the visibility factor that influences why a building is known actually relates to location. Of the three attributes of visibility that he identified (visibility, viewpoint significance and immediacy) the last two were used most significantly in map and trip recall. This implies that the readiness of a building to be seen by the traveller and the immediacy of its location to the viewing and circulation system are important for buildings to be known. This aspect will be observed in this research in order to ascertain the importance of location as contributing to the perception of identity of the town centres in Malaysia.

The other aspect of location relates to the geographical setting of towns and cities as this also contributes to the identity of place (Norberg Schulz 1980, Worskett 1969, Goldstein and Elliot 1994). The geographical setting relates to the location and positioning of towns and cities in relation to the land form or topography. This is highlighted by Worskett (1969) when he argued that the widest level of town's identity is its overall form and relationship to the landscape. Goldstein and Elliot (1994) supported this by arguing that cities are identifiable at the most fundamental level by its geographical setting.

Tugnutt (1987) stated that the factors influencing the character of a town are its geographical siting, subsequent fortunes and activities. He argued that British towns develop their characters from the product of these factors together with their history. Thus, he contended that "...conserving visible evidence of this relationship assists in retaining the unique qualities of a town, qualities that can easily be eroded by the insensitive siting of larger-scaled twentieth century buildings" (Tugnutt, 1987, p.22 ).

Among the geographical factors that many authors considered important to the character of a town is topography (Worskett 1969, Tugnutt 1987, Rapoport 1990, Tibbalds 1992, Moughtin et. al 1995). Topography, whether man-made or natural, as well as the prominence of location, is identified by Rapoport (1990) as one of the potential noticeable differences in the environment, which is important for identity. These two elements are strongly associated with geographical location. Hence, the identity of a town is more apparent when it is seen as a collection of buildings in relation to the surrounding countryside. This relationship, Rapoport (1990) argued is very important to its identity. In fact, he suggested that for a town to be recognisable, a distinct individual character in the change from town to countryside is necessary.

Trancik (1987) argued that in travelling towards and through a city, what is seen and experienced is determined by the underlying land form which is modified by size, scale and pattern of development. Thus, cities built on a hill are viewed differently from flatland city, hence assuming different identity. In hilly cities, such as the hill towns in Italy, the overall form of buildings is exposed and viewed against a backdrop of the larger portion of the city. In flatland cities, on the other hand, only the upper parts of tall buildings are visible against the sky. Tibbalds (1992) also agreed that the strongest image of towns is derived from the way they relate to the physical features such as hills, rivers and valleys.

Finally, apart from land form and the surrounding landscape, the other feature that is related to geographical location is the presence of water which forms a distinct impression towards a town. Norberg-Schulz (1980) argued that the presence of water gives identity to the land, hence cities whose geographical location is near to water have their own distinctive character. This is reflected in the difference of identity between towns

located by the sea or a river as compared to those which are located inland. A river or waterfront is also a crucial element in providing reference for perceptual structuring (Pocock, 1978).

The importance of the location of town in the geographical setting itself to the identity of place are mostly put forward by scholars' interpretations of the concept of identity of place. Many of these theories are not empirically tested or are not the result of studies that involve people's perception. Hence, it cannot be assumed that people also perceive the geographical setting as associated with the identity of a town, the same as professionals such as architects and urban designers. Thus, this study will observe if geographical setting is important to the residents' perception of identity of place in the Malaysian situation. This was done through analysing the description of the distinctive elements in the town centre. The sketch maps will also reveal if topography has an influence on the resident's perceptual structuring of the town centre.

### **iii. Spatial Organisation and structure**

The second aspect of the physical element is spatial organisation and structure. Spatial organisation is concerned with the organisation of buildings that create spaces within the towns and cities whereas structure relates to the streets' layout and circulation pattern in the town centre. Both spatial organisation and structure are important in creating the identity of towns (Bor 1974, Worskett 1969, Smith 1977). They are considered together here because of the strong relationship and influence of these factors on each other. The uniqueness of each towns and cities as suggested by Bor (1974) results from the way they have been organised, their streets formed, buildings grouped and adapted to the micro climate, national and local traditions absorbed, changes of levels

exploited, important buildings retained or given prominence as well as spaces landscaped. To what extent the spatial organisation and structure influence the residents' perceptions of identity in Malaysian context will be observed in this research.

#### **Urban spaces : streets and squares**

In discussing spatial organisation or the quality of space in cities one needs to understand the concept of urban space. Krier (1979) suggested that if aesthetic criteria is not imposed, we are compelled to designate all types of spaces between buildings in a town or urban areas as urban space. However, he argued that there is a geometrical boundary to this space with a variety of elevations. This geometrical characteristic must be clearly legible as well as having aesthetic qualities in order to allow us to consciously perceive the external space as an urban space. This means that only certain types of urban spaces are noticed and remembered by people because of these qualities (Rapoport 1990).

The two elements of urban space are the street and the square (Krier 1979, Moughtin 1992). The geometrical characteristics of both spatial forms are the same and are differentiated only by the dimensions of their boundary walls and the patterns of function and circulation. The square, according to Krier (1979), is produced by the grouping of houses around an open space, whereas the street is the product of the spread of a settlement. Moughtin (1992) argued that the square or plaza is one of the most important elements of city design. Squares often function as the setting for civic buildings and principal meeting places. They also have meanings attached as centres or portals for places. Moughtin (1992) suggested that it is important to understand the importance of centres on man's perception of the environment in order not to inflict any damage to the city. He argued that Lynch's (1960) idea of

node, which is an important element to strong image, is akin to this concept of centre. The main square or centre makes a place distinctive from other places. However, squares do not play a significant role in the planning and design of towns and cities in Malaysia. The nearest urban space to squares that are present in the Malaysian towns is the Padang (green open space). Thus, the extent by which this space plays an important role in people's perception of the Malaysian town centre's identity would be an important finding. Can, for example the Padang function be likened to that of the squares in European cities, from the people's perception?

Streets however serve a more functional purpose. Streets and the streetscape, according to Nasar (1979), are important in defining the character of urban areas. This is because most people in urban areas live on streets and regularly pass through them in their everyday life. A sense of place can be achieved in street design by perceiving the spatial form defined by the frontages as a positive form (Moughtin 1992). This suggests that the structure of the town centre that is derived from the street networks contributes significantly to the identity of the town. Hence, a city based on a grid circulation pattern will be perceived differently to one based on a radial and concentric street pattern.

An important characteristic of spatial organisation is enclosure. Norberg Schulz (1980) suggested that the distinctive quality of any man-made place is enclosure. Its character and spatial properties are determined by how spaces are enclosed. Enclosure means a distinct area which is separated from the surroundings by means of a solid boundary. He also contended that the character of a man made place is to a high extent determined by its degree of 'openness', solidity or transparency of boundaries. Added to these qualities are the size, shape, barrier and links between spaces, which are important for spatial qualities

to be noticed by people (Rapoport 1990). For a street to function as place, it must possess the qualities of enclosure similar to a square (Moughtin 1992). There is also an unlimited range of spatial enclosure and closure. The sequences and the different kinds of character they evoke is rich (Bor 1974, Cullen 1986). Different emotional feelings are evoked by different types of spaces constructed, such as the effects of narrow streets or archways as compared to vast boulevards and squares on a person's emotions (Smith 1977, Moughtin 1992). Nevertheless, how important is aesthetic experience in influencing people's perception of identity in Malaysia?

Smith (1977) argued that active emotions linked to arousal are stimulated by 'novelty', surprise, complexity and ambiguity. It also depends on information, complexity, number of units, details and richness of ornaments and element of surprise. To what extent are these qualities important in people's perception of identity of place? How does emotion influenced people's perception?

The final aspect of quality of urban space is the treatment of its floors. Moughtin et. al (1995) argued that the floor has the potential of being read and impart meaning to the observer. Successful paving, he argued reinforced the character of a place. There are two main types of floor plane; the hard pavement and the soft landscaped area. The character of a paved area is determined by the materials used and the edging detail (Moughtin et. al 1995). Since paved areas are used by people in the town centres, it will be interesting to discover if they play a significant role in people's perception of identity in the town centre.

## Structure

According to Bor (1967), the best kind of environment with a stronger sense of identity is when there is a combination of a simple basic structure and carefully designed details

to enrich it. City structure, according to Zannaras (1976) is the spatial arrangement of the major features common to all cities - land use, buildings, neighbourhoods and street networks. Based on the arrangement and transition of these features, there are three physical models of urban structure - concentric zone, sector and multiple nuclei (Zannaras 1976). In his study on the relation between the cognitive structure and urban form, Zannaras (1976), found that the city structure has an important role in the arrangement of land use and variation of this influences the importance of the features perceived in the city.

The most important research regarding people's perception of the city's structure is that of Lynch (1960). Lynch was interested in how people understand the structure of cities and how they use them. He noted that people who notice the physical environment were able to describe it and there were some regularities in the things noticed. In his study on three American cities, he illustrated how the image of a city was organised and remembered by the selection of particular landscape elements known as landmarks, edges, paths, districts and nodes. These elements were included by people in their mental maps of the city's structure and they contributed towards the concept of imageability. Imageability, according to Lynch (1960) consisted of identity, structure and meaning.

"Paths are channels along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves" (Lynch, 1960, p 47). This includes streets, highways, canals, etc. and they usually fit into a larger network and had a directional quality. Edges are linear elements which are boundaries between two phases. They either act as seams joining two regions or barriers that close off one from the other. The common examples of edges are rivers, walls, rails and tracks. Districts, according to Lynch (1960) are medium to large sections of the city which have some common identifying character. They often have thematic qualities



which are a combination of activities, people and physical qualities. Nodes, on the other hand are strategic spots or intensive foci which a traveller can enter. It is a concentration of events, activities and core that symbolises an area. It can also be a place where major paths converge. Finally, there are landmarks whose key physical characteristic is singularity that is unique or memorable in context. Figure background contrast is its essential factor, and that there are major as well as local landmarks, which are only known to residents.

Norberg Schulz's (1971) contention is that Lynch's theory gives the well known terms in architecture and urban design such as squares, streets and quarters an existential dimension, hence, they are not just visual elements. Norberg Schulz's (1971) theory on existential space relates to urban structure and its influence on image and perception. He defined existential space as a relatively stable system of perceptual schemata or images of the environment. His concept of existential space consists of three components namely place, path and domain. His interpretation of domains is similar to Lynch's (1960) idea of district, which means areas of particular character. It acts as the ground on which places and paths appear as figures. This figure ground theory was proposed by Gestalt laws of visual organisation.

Norberg Schulz's idea of paths is similar to Lynch's path because he also specified that perceptually any path is characterised by its continuity and it is a direction to be followed towards a goal. Finally, Norberg Schulz's concept of place or centre, which is the goal or focus where meaningful events are experienced is similar to Lynch's concept of node. These three elements, according to Norberg Schulz are the basic schemata of orientation, which leads to existential space. The character of place is a product of its interaction with the surroundings.

There is a similarity in terms of ideas between Lynch and Norberg Schulz with regard to the influence of urban structure on people's image and perception of identity. The two scholars agreed that districts, paths (streets) and nodes (squares) are the basic elements in the urban structure. The design and planning of cities must give important consideration to these three elements according to Norberg Schulz (1971) in order for existential space to be felt. A strong image or identity of place also depends on the careful design and interaction between these three elements.

It is apparent that urban structure plays a significant role in creating the identity of place. Its influence on people is seen more in terms of their orientation abilities in a city and their sense of belonging to a place. Both Norberg Schulz's and Lynch's theory are based on the urban structure of cities in America and Europe where these three elements are dominant. Squares, for example are characteristics peculiar only to European cities. Although districts and paths can be presumed to be found, the design and character of the three elements might not be similar to other cities. It can also be questioned whether urban structure plays a significant role in people's perception of a smaller and defined area in the city such as the town centre. If it does, what are the elements of the urban structure that are important in the residents' perceptions of the town centre's identity?

Researchers after Lynch have also managed to discover other interesting findings about aspects of the city's structure that influenced people's image. It is apparent that many of these researchers have also acknowledged the importance of paths in image construction (Gulick, De Jonge, Harrison and Howard, Norberg Schulz). De Jonge's (1962) study in Holland found that image is more easily formed where street patterns are regular and there is a single dominant path, characteristic nodes and unique

landmarks. In cities where the overall structure and pattern are unclear, isolated landmarks, single buildings and individual paths are important together with visual details. Harrison and Howard (1972) have also discovered that paths were the most important elements in forming an urban image. According to Carr and Schisler (1969) the prominence of objects in the existing context is important in remembering the environment. Elements directly on the routes are remembered best such as bridges, overpasses as well as objects in the nearby perceptual environment such as houses and billboards. To a lesser degree, distinctive buildings in the distance and the general skyline are also noticed.

This literature review suggests that the structure of the towns and cities has an influence on people's perception of identity. The influence of the structure on the residents' perception will be investigated by identifying the characteristic of streets that are distinctive and their mental maps of the town centre. In addition to that, residents were asked in the interview about the physical features or special character of the town centre that they associated with its identity. Their orientation abilities in the town centre were also investigated in order to examine the influence of the town centre's structure in their daily lives. These maps showed the mental representation of the town centre's structure and the distinctive physical elements that influenced this structure.

#### iv. Views and movements /

Apart from physical appearance, location and structure, the final attribute relates to the influence of the physical environment on identity is views and movement. Views and movements are considered together here because of the effect that one has on the other. Views are thought to have an influence on the identity because vision was cited by

Rapoport (1990) as one of the potential noticeable differences in the environment that influence perception. Worskett (1969) also argued that the combination of different types of view out and the discipline of their arrangement can be a strong factor in creating local character. This is supported by Crosby (1965) who noted, that cities with a variety of street scenes or views have identity and create a feeling of well being to their inhabitants. Local views of significant building have an important role in providing an overall impression of a town and create a special character for the town (Worskett 1969). They also express the structure and visual organisation of the town (Worskett 1969). In Appleyard's (1969) research, viewpoint significance of building was one of the attributes identified in making a building known. Thus, the readiness of building to be seen at decision points such as road intersections is important for them to be noticed and recalled.

One of the characteristics of distinctive views is the discipline of their arrangements. An example is put forward by Worskett (1969). He suggested that the combination of contrasting viewpoints such as a broad panoramic view and a small tightly enclosed view play a big part in giving the street a particular character. If this arrangement is changed, then the whole character will be changed. Tibbalds (1992) also suggested that the arrangement of views and vistas towards interesting buildings or features contribute to the image formed by people, apart from assisting orientation.

The second characteristic of view is related to movement and angle of vision. Movement through space and the sequence of scenes, are according to Lozano (1974), central to urban perception and preference. This is further reiterated by Pocock (1978) who suggested that angle of vision and the order by which the environment is experienced have an influence on the image formed. Gosling

(1984) also supported this by arguing that the secret of creating a visually satisfactory environment is by recognising that movement and serial vision are part of design process. Cullen's idea of serial vision, according to Bor (1974) is when buildings are grouped to produce ever changing serial vision as one proceeds through spaces. The movement through various parts of the town according to Cullen (1986) has an effect on the views received and these series of views have an influence on the identity of the towns.

These scholars tend to have a consensus on the effect of views in contributing towards the identity of place. It was apparent in their suggestions that the overall discipline, sequence of arrangements, movement and angle of vision are important in making views noticeable and remembered, thereby enhancing the identity of towns and cities.

However, a question that needs to be raised is how important is the quality of views to residents' perception of the town centre's identity in Malaysia. Also important is the types of views that residents tend to notice and the effects of views in evaluating the physical appearance of the town centre. For instance, is identity of place associated with views that are liked by residents? If this is the case, what are the characteristics of views that are liked and considered beautiful by the residents? In addition what are the impacts of views that residents find obtrusive on their overall image of the town centre?

In this research, residents were asked about the quality of views that they found distinctive in the town centre. This is to discover if views play an important role in influencing the town centre's identity in Malaysia.

### 3.22 Influence of human activities

Human activities are the second component of identity of place (Relph 1976, Rapoport 1977, Appleyard 1969, Tugnut 1987, Lynch 1982, Bor 1974). Activities as defined by Akin (1976) are "...specific behavioural manifestation of man-environment relations constituting a form of purposeful transformation of matter or information (for example sleeping, eating, reading and other similar activities)" (Relph, 1976, p. 124). Rapoport (1977) suggested that activity can be analysed into four components; the activity proper, the specific way of doing it, additional, adjacent or associated activities which become part of an activity system and the symbolic aspect of the activity.

Banz (1970) argued that human activities, their motives and the environment are locked in mutual inter-dependence. The environment structures the human community by assigning places to individuals who then channel their communication, movements and other activities. The higher the density of activity, the more pronounced the structure's definitions are.

One of the reasons why people recall a building according to Appleyard (1969) is the role of the building as a setting for personal activities. It is suggested that the types and intensity of activities are the factors that influenced the character of an area or place (Rapoport 1990, Tugnut 1987, Gosling 1984). Pocock (1978) argued that the attributes of physical form are more meaningful when they reinforce usage or activity patterns. He suggested that the congruence between form and activity is important in terms of general orientation and comfort. In fact, Steinitz (1968) argued that when form does not visually express an activity pattern, then the latter dominates a person's meaningful knowledge and eliminates the attributes of form.

Apart from types and intensity of activities, people also influence the distinctiveness of activities (Rapoport 1977, Smith 1977). Montgomery (1995) argued that all good cities have distinctive identities and characters. Cities stimulate all senses and therefore an active street life ensure that city centres are patronised and remembered by people. The vitality of city centres and the success of urban spaces are brought about if there are steady flows of people, a high degree of visibility and a mixture of types of activity and different age groups of people (Montgomery 1995).

Finally, the other important characteristic of activities is transparency. Lynch (1982) argued that transparency is the degree to which one can directly perceive the operation of the various technical functions, activities, social and natural process that occur in the city because they convey a sense of life. Hence, his contention is the more transparent or visible the activities are the more they contributed to the identity of place.

Litt (1995) suggested that in seeking the qualities for a good city design, it is important to look at all the activities that people are engaged in while in public spaces. There are three distinct categories of activities according to Litt that take place in public spaces: necessary, optional and social activities. Of the three, the necessary activities take place regardless of the quality of the physical environment. It is the other two activities that are fostered by a high quality physical environment and which ensures that the city was loved and remembered by the people. These activities enrich the cultural significance of the city centre. However, one needs to consider how these activities influence the perception of identity of a place?

It can be seen from the literature review that human activities bring a sense of life into the city and that is

why they are noticed by people. These activities are said to be more prominent when the physical form and elements actually enhance the manifestations of these activities. It will be interesting to discover in what ways activities influence perception of identity by people. Which aspects of activities mentioned by these scholars are important in the residents' perceptions of the town centres' identity in Malaysia?

### 3.23 Meanings and cultural aspects of identity

Meanings are considered by many authors as playing an important role in urban image (Rapoport 1977, 1990, Pipkins 1983, Harrison and Howard 1982, Lynch 1960, Gulick 1963, Appleyard 1969). Meaning is manifested through symbols that are considered to be universal as they express the essential tendencies of the human mind. According to Punter (1991) it is important to examine the meanings that people attach to a locality in trying to create a sense of place. Downs and Stea (1973) also argued that physical features of the environment achieve significance or imageability through associations with particular sentiments, memories, attitudes or beliefs. Pipkins (1983) defined meaning as subjective reality manifested at both the psychological and socio-cultural level.

The New English Dictionary defined a symbol as "something that stands for, represents, or denotes something else". A symbol is an object which imparts meaning to the brain without having relationship to its phenomenology. It acts as a vehicle to gain access to deep rooted memories or to otherwise inaccessible areas of the memory. Smith (1974) argued that cultural development in society involves destroying symbols in order to reappraise the truth, which is valid in terms of attitude to architecture and planning. He identified four distinct fields of symbolism which are relevant to urban environment: associational symbolism, acculturated symbolism, symbolism of the familiar and



archetypal symbolism. The concept of symbolism embodies abstraction which is understood when the idea it presents is understood. Its function is communication and the symbol system gives concrete expression to the concepts of values, meanings and others (Rapoport 1977).

Downs and Stea (1973) contended that even below the level of monumental architecture, the city is rife with symbolism. However, such appreciation requires the eyes to perceive because the townscape, although perhaps not built as symbols, acquires meaning over time and thereby becomes symbols. They argued that "as the scene for particular social activity, the environment becomes associated in the mind with, and therefore symbolic of, that activity. Thus, in time, although the physical structure is seen, the response is therefore symbolic - not to what it is, but to what it represents - that is, to the sense of place" (Downs and Stea, 1973 p. 80).

Symbols influence perception when it is understood by the people. Thus, in a town where the physical elements can be considered as symbols of the time, these elements become easily identified and associated with the identity of a place. It is also apparent that both symbols and meaning are related and that symbols are understood when there are meanings attached to the physical elements. This suggests that different culture understand different symbols or attach importance to different types of symbols. Thus, one needs to understand the role played by symbols in the people's perception of identity in different cultural setting such as Malaysia.

There are two aspects of the image that influence perception as argued by Downs and Stea (1973). These are the 'designative' and the 'appraisive'. The designative aspects consist of attributes such as size, shape, texture, disposition and others which has been discussed in the previous section. The appraisive aspect, on the other hand,

is the meaning attached or evoked by the physical form. This appraisive response to the environment was divided into two components, the 'evaluative' and the 'affective'. The former relates to assessment using opinion or judgement incorporating general or external standards and preferences. It also involves the ranking of set of places according to a certain scale. The latter is concerned with emotional reactions to a place, hence a response of the heart with attitudes, feelings and beliefs involved. From Harrison and Howard's (1982) study, meanings are divided into economic, political and social, religious and ethnic, historical, functional, non-functional, general significance, convenience and welfare, as well as other factors related to meaning. They identified the attributes of association as being affinity, familiarity and atmosphere. Meanings are taken as the reasons given for recalling certain elements that do not relate to their physical characteristics.

Rapoport (1977) argued that a person's perception effectively depends on the meanings attached to the stimuli. This is association and depends on past experience and culture to influence the standards and environmental evaluation. Meanings and associations are identified by Harrison and Howard (1982) as the cultural component that affects imageability. Different cultures develop sensitivity to certain elements and as a result the cues become more salient and meaningful to the observer from that culture. For example, in a culture where colour, smell and sound are important, they tend to be more noticeable. "Noticeable differences are stronger when perceptual qualities in various sensory modalities and associations are congruent and reinforce one another" (Rapoport 1990, p. 273) Hence, changes in thermal, olfactory and acoustic cues would increased perception. This is reinforced by the salience and meaning of such elements, which play a major role in the judgement of the quality, status and social identity of areas. "The clearer,

stronger and more salient the contrast, the greater the likelihood that they will be noticed" (Rapoport, 1990, p.273). In this research, how different cultures perceive the distinctiveness of the town centre can inform us of the cultural differences in perception and the type of elements that are salient to each culture.

Another factor that is important in the study of meanings is names. Names, according to Rapoport (1977), have a strong influence on identity in the sense that name changes can lead to loss of identity. When names and cognitive schemata coincide with its physical equivalents, the environment becomes particularly clear and forceful. The importance of names as representing cognitive schemata may persist even when the original physical equivalents disappear.

Lynch (1977) also argued that "familiar town centre buildings are essential contributors to the ultimate sense of 'placeness' which that town projects" (Lynch, 1977, p.46). In urban situations, he argued that buildings in a town centre reflect the nature of the community, thus conveying its super image. Familiar buildings have value because of their historical association. George Banz (1970) discovered that devoid of meaning for urban form, position and shapes of convenient artefacts are remembered solely because they mark the frequently travelled paths. Thus, there is a lack of sensory involvement in physical forms with only intellectual relationships to provide information.

In this research, the meanings and associations are investigated with this affective point of view in mind. The reasons given for recalling and recognising distinctive physical elements that are not related to the physical or characteristics are categorised under meanings. This research is also concerned with residents' feelings towards the appearance of their town centre. Thus, it is important

to discover which of these types of image play a key role in the residents' perceptions of Malaysian town centres' identity.

### 3.4 The influence of social and cultural background on perception of identity

Apart from the physical environment, the social and cultural background of people are crucial in influencing image and perception of identity. This is highlighted by Rapoport (1977) and discussed in section 2.12. Downs and Stea (1973) argued that our society is pluralistic, consisting of different subgroups who respond differently to the same stimulus, and therefore construe different types of image. From the literature review, the social and cultural factors that have an influence on perception are listed below.

#### i. Life Cycle

Life cycle is thought to have an influence because sub groups at either extremity of the life cycle have distinctive involvement with the environment and therefore emphasise different elements. Downs and Stea (1973) argued that the child's view of the city is more egocentric, emphasising his house and local neighbourhood as compared to the adults who tend to emphasise the elements which are functional rather than aesthetic and revealed a perception of the minute and detailed world. Moore (1976) also supported this theory. However, what elements are salient in the maps of the younger people and those maps by the older groups could be an interesting finding of this research. Added to that is the question of how significant the differences in the image of the younger people compared to their elders is.

## ii. Socio-economic status

In studies conducted in Britain, India and the United States, it has been found that people of higher social classes include more areas of the city in their mental maps and are more accurate in describing its objective characteristics. However, studies by Appleyard (1969) in Ciudad Guyana found that the lower class of the socio-economic groups included more details and showed more complexity in their maps. This is due to the need of the poor to travel further to their place of work or to shops when compared to the rich, who are likely to get their necessities close to home. Thus, in the light of these differences in findings, it can be argued that the degree of interaction and experience with the environment affects image rather than social class per se. This implies that socio-economic status is not a factor that has a significant effect on the image formed.

## iii. Gender difference

In two studies conducted by Evenits and Cadwallader (1972) and Orleans and Schmidt (1972) (from Krupat, 1985), it was found that women included almost twice as much square mileage in their maps of their general neighbourhood as compared to their husbands (Krupat, 1985). Secondly, the husbands had a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the general area in their city. Thirdly, wives used their basic reference points whereas the husbands used more abstract co-ordinates. Thus, it is apparent that gender differences in forming an image are related to the level of detail covered. Lieberg's (1994) study discovered that boys have more detailed maps compared to girls. The latter generally have a more artistic design. These two studies seem to be consistent in their findings which suggested that gender difference in forming an image are related to the level of details covered. However, what type of elements were distinctive to the male and female

and the significance of the variation between the types of elements noticed by both gender were not fully discussed.

#### iv. Modes of travel

Zannaras as reported by Moore (1976) argued that navigational experience does have an influence on image forming. In fact, a number of studies, according to Krupat (1985), showed that the activity or passivity of one's navigational experience is a critical determinant of how one knows the city. He argued that the more active one's interacted with the city, the better one knows it. Thus, walkers, followed by cyclists, car drivers and then passengers ought to have the most ability to navigate their way around with ease. Walkers tend to have a vehicular image of a limited area whereas drivers have a clearer picture of the roads and routes in a wider area. This suggests that image may be affected by the types of transport which in turn is affected by the opportunity to travel, or to interact with the environment, and by the form or function of that interaction. A study conducted in St Louis by McGill and Karn (1982), according to Krupat (1985), indicated that the degree to which people interacted with the city was important in determining the amount of recognised and recalled information. In fact, the functional orientation of people, whether going for business or pleasure, was of great importance in what people actually remembered. If this is the case, then the purpose of the visit to the city and the image form has some relationship. Does this imply that people who live in the city centre have a different image than those who visit the city for recreational purposes or because it is their place of employment? If this functional orientation has a significant influence on variation of image, how does the image or perception vary?

#### v. Residence and degree of experience.

According to Krupat (1985), there is a striking resemblance between maps drawn by newcomers to a city and those created by young residents. Lynch (1960) found that those who know the city least orient themselves by topography, its larger districts, generalised characteristic and broadly defined directional relationships. Those who know it better refer to specific paths and rely more upon smaller landmarks rather than more generalised regions or paths. Anne Devlin's (1976) study on the development of image among wives of navy officers showed that after three months, their maps contained more information and the home territory was less prominent than in their earlier maps. Their earlier maps tended to contain the major arteries of the town and the path structure around the house.

Krupat (1985) discovered that visitors possess more distinctive viewpoints and images compared to any resident sub group. This is because residents tend to see the environment through a filter of habituation where meanings and social engagement have dulled their alertness to physical appearance. Visitors, particularly tourists have a high degree of expectancy focusing on design details and applying aesthetic judgements. This implies that there is a difference between the image of a visitor compared to a resident because of familiarity with a place. It also suggests that residents' perception of the environment are influenced more by meanings and association than by the physical appearance. Furthermore, it is also important to identify the characteristics of the physical appearance that are still important to the residents' perceptions and those which are no longer vivid in their perception of the urban environment.

Hence, from the various studies, Krupat argued that a person who is unfamiliar with the city sees it in either of two ways. First, as a series of scattered spatial elements or secondly, as a sequence of main routes that are disconnected and fragmentary. As familiarity increases, the

maps shift from sequential, or partially co-ordinated structuring with fixed reference points, to spatially abstract structures with a great sense of coherence. Personal characteristics influence what the individual sees or interpretes in the environment (Zannaras as reported by Moore, 1976). This eventually becomes part of the individual's participation or involvement in the environment and has a greater influence in the development of a city's image. Examples of other characteristics included in Zannaras's study are: length of residence in a large urban place, urban experience (defined as place where the individual spent most of his life up to the age of eighteen) and navigational experience. Of the three, length of residence is thought to perform better than other personal factors in distinguishing differences of importance assigned to different urban features. If length of residence is an important factor in developing image of a city, then what are the most important difference in terms of elements that are distinctive to those who have resided in the city for a longer period when compared to those who are new to the place?

#### vi. Life style

To an extent, the number and variety of roles a person plays determines the number of focal points of the city. This is because those who Webber (1964) termed 'localites' have their social world concentrated within a territorial neighbourhood around their place of residence. They have a restricted image compared to the 'cosmopolites' whose life spaces are scattered throughout the city and therefore have a more comprehensive image.

From the above, it can be suggested that the image and perception of the urban environment differs from one person to another depending on that person's social and cultural background. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the perception of the town centre's



identity, one needs to consider the presence of different sub-groups of the population. In identifying the most distinctive features of the city by residents, it is important to ascertain the similarities and differences in perception between various groups of the residents. The significance of the variation in perception between the sub groups must be determined in order to justify the usefulness of developing a group image of the city. The review of literature on these aspects was also taken into consideration in the questionnaire design and the identifications of respondents in the survey and interview. However, in this research only three socio-cultural factors were considered for detailed study: ethnicity, gender and age group. These are the three major factors that make up the composition of the residents in the town centre which is studied.

### **3.5 How identity of place is measured**

It is apparent that many studies in the past have made assumptions about identity of place by studying the image of the city. This is reflected by Lynch's (1960) work and those who have tested his theory in other parts of the world such as De Jonge and Gulick. Harrison and Howard's (1980) research on the other hand concentrated on the reasons why elements were recalled by residents in a city and is more empirical in nature. Norberg Schulz's (1980) theory on identity, however, is more phenomenological and qualitative in nature, drawing conclusions from intense observations and case studies of cities with unique characters.

All the previous research concerning identity have concluded that it is a quality that is derived from tangible things such as physical features, objects in the landscape and the intangible and less readily visible elements, namely meanings. Shamai (from Teo and Huang, 1996) suggested that a way of measuring sense of place is

the ability to recognise symbols of place and the sense of attachment and togetherness for the place. This criteria were used by Teo and Huang (1996) to identify the sense of place in public housing in Singapore. The criteria are public symbols (physical features that create the identity) and residents' involvement in the community centre of the housing scheme surveyed. The identity of the new town is measured by the ability of the residents to identify the design features used in creating the identity of the new town such as skylines, colours, landscape features, design motifs and others. The residents' reactions towards the new town environment are also analysed as well as their sense of belonging. This is analysed by the residents' use of the spaces and facilities offered in the new town. This similar approach was also adopted in the study by Teo (1996) of the character and identity of Singapore new towns. Teo (1996) attempted to study residents' perceptions of the planning elements that were aimed at providing an identity to the design of the new town by its planners.

Teo (1996) study aimed to assess the success of the elements used by the designers of the new town in bestowing the character of the place as perceived by the residents. The six planning elements were skyline, block design, town centre, town park, flat design and precinct. The difference between Teo's study and other studies such as Lynch (1960) and Harrison and Howard (1980), is that the elements associated with identity were stated by the researchers and that the residents' abilities to identify and recognise these elements were studied.

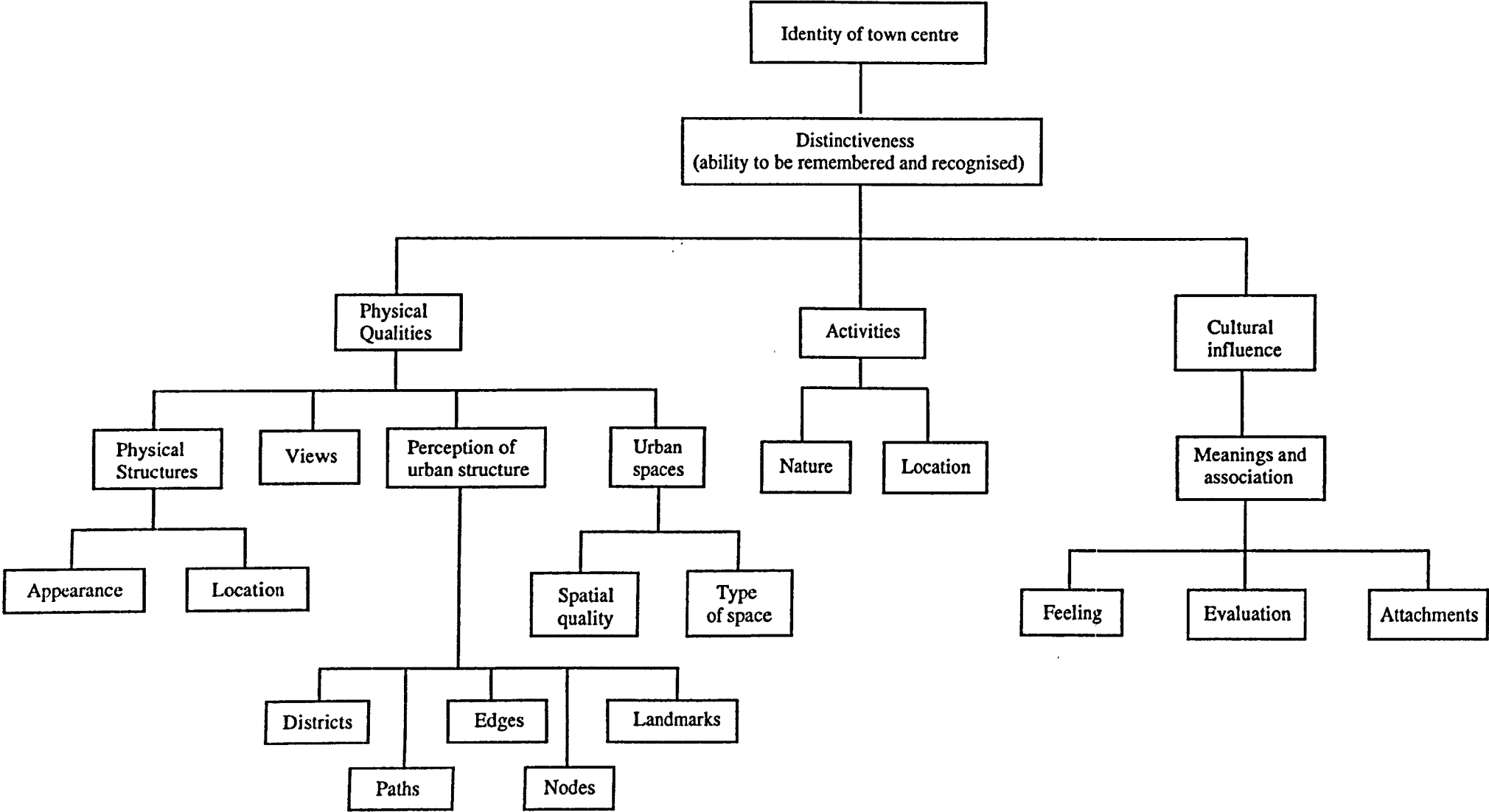
However, in other studies involving image and identity of place, notably that of Lynch (1960), free recall of elements that are distinctive to the residents was used. This implies that residents' perceptions are analysed without being steered towards identifying a particular element. In both cases, the criteria associated with identity for the physical elements are their

distinctiveness.

Finally, identity of place was measured in previous research by identifying the amount of meanings attached to a place. Teo and Huang (1996) have analysed this by assessing the level of participation and involvement with the facilities and activities in the place. Harrison and Howard (1980) however, approached the role of meaning in urban image by analysing the reasons given in recalling certain elements in the environment. This was also the approach adopted by Appleyard (1969). The reasons given that were not related to the physical characteristics were categorised as meanings and associations attached to the environment. In all these studies, frequency of recall was used as the indicator of strength of identity of a place. This approach was adopted in this research.

A conceptual framework was derived for the study of identity of the town centre as perceived by the residents in Kuantan town centre, Malaysia (see Diagram 3.2). In this research, the residents are defined as inhabitants of the place, meaning that they have to live, work and use the place that was studied. In the study of identity, the question of 'insideness and outsideness' is very important and need to be considered. Teo and Huang (1996) argued that being inside helps reinforce sense of identity and belonging to a place. As they argued that identity of place is closely linked to sense of place, ... "the assemblage of physical features and the meanings derived from the interaction of people with a locality were equally important components of a sense of place" (Teo and Huang, 1996, p.310). Thus, the respondents included in the survey are those who live within the boundary of the town centre. This definition of survey respondents also expedites the conduct of the survey as the smaller survey area impose fewer constraints on time and finance of the field work. In this research, the concept of identity of place adopted is related to the distinctiveness of the physical elements

DIAGRAM 3.2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF PERCEPTION  
OF IDENTITY OF THE TOWN CENTRE AS PERCEIVED BY RESIDENTS



of the town centre to its residents (rather than its users). The concept of distinctiveness is based, first, on the quality of the physical elements in the town centre to be noticed and remembered by the residents. These qualities might be due to the physical characteristics of elements in the town centre or due to the cultural influence on perception through meanings and association. The qualities associated with strong identity are elements that they are able to recall and also their awareness of the buildings and streets in the town centre.

25

### 3.6 Conclusion

Many scholars agreed that identity of place comprises the attributes of the physical environment, the human activities and the cultural influence in terms of meaning and associations. Although this chapter attempts to break this component into various parts, it must be remembered that the identity of place is a result of the interrelation of these various parts. It appears from the literature review that this interrelationship is very complex and that many scholars did not attempt to establish how each parts of the component influenced each other in order for identity of place to be created. Although the attributes of the physical environment and activities are more tangible and therefore much is written on how important they influence identity, they are also easier to understand because of their visibility. However, it is evident from the writings of others that the cultural component plays an important role in determining whether these two components are noticed and remembered as having a significant role in associating a place with a certain identity.

This implies that different culture perceived identity differently because of the meanings and associations attached to a place. Studies based on European cities could be presumed to be applicable to non-European ones. It is also apparent that identity is measured by the ability of

the residents to recall and recognise elements in a place. This ability relates to the distinctiveness of the physical elements and the amount of meanings attached to the place. Many of the studies also assessed residents' perceptions of the physical features that influence the appearance of the place and that the role of meanings is assessed through the reasons why elements were noticed. Thus, it is concluded from the review that physical features and their appearance are an important criteria for the study of identity of place. It is also apparent from the literature review that the perception of identity differs from one person to the other depending on their cultural and socio-economic background. Hence, only a few of the elements of the total form are recognised by all inhabitants as being part of their image of the city. Such elements are the common denominator which define the public image of an urban environment. The greater the number the greater is the probability of social cohesion based on civic pride.

This chapter has reviewed various literature that relates to how cities in the developed countries, especially in Europe and United States assumed their identity. This is due to the absence of studies undertaken in countries which do not share the same type of environment and culture as the European countries. It does however provide a platform for comparison as well as a basis for the study of how the identity of place of other societies is achieved. Furthermore, the attributes of identity of place discussed here are those that are conceived by various scholars, although some are derived from the people's perception of the environment. It would then be interesting to discover if these attributes are noticed by the residents in the town centre of Kuantan, Malaysia and which of these attributes play an important role in their perception of its identity. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology as well as elaborating on the techniques employed in collecting the data for this research.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the form and methodology employed in this research. This is seen as an important part of the research as the procedure by which relevant data collected will determine the reliability of the findings derived from the analysis of the data. The chapter is divided into six sections. The chapter begins by highlighting the scope of the study, emphasising the focus of the research and the points of inquiry. It summarises the research questions raised by this research, thus determining the choice of methodology adopted. The second section discusses the choice of methodology which is based on a review of previous methodologies and the nature of the research. It also seeks to address the research problems established earlier in this research. This is followed by explanations of the methodology adopted. The third section discusses the research techniques used in this study. It also highlights the reasons why certain instruments were selected for the research. This is followed by the research procedure and the stages involved in the process of data collection. The chapter ends with the conclusion.

#### 4.1 Scope of research

According to Relph (1976), identity is a basic feature of our experience of places which is both influenced by and influenced such experiences. He also argued that there are two reasons for attempting to understand the phenomena of place. The first, is because an expression of man's involvement in the world and second is because the

knowledge of it helps to maintain and manipulate existing places as well as the creation of new places. However, Relph argued that it is not enough merely to recognise the differences and similarities between places. A more fundamental act is to identify the similarities in the differences observed. Hence, he suggested that it is not just identity of a place that is important but also the identity that a person or group has with that place.

Rapoport (1981) argued that identity as a concept is difficult to define. However, he suggested that identity involves both the inside and the boundary to the outside. The 'inside' here is taken to mean the contents of a place while the 'boundary' does not have to be physical in nature. Lozano (1974) noted that in the perception of environment, there is a socio-cultural dimension that has to be added which results in perception and cognition being subjective and culturally specific. He argued that the cultural factors bear the final responsibility of linking the visual inputs of the environment and the human experience. This in return affects the human reaction and behaviour.

This link between culture and identity is best illustrated by Rapoport (1981) who argued that ultimately group identity depends on group survival and its culture. Hence, changes in the environment which are highly critical could lead to the destruction of culture, and consequently a loss of identity. One of the implications of rapid culture change is a condition that is described as environmental stress in which a group will concentrate on a few key elements to establish and maintain group identity. Whether this condition applies to Malaysia remains to be answered by the findings of this research.

There are two stages of analysis involved here in



discovering these elements. First is to find the social and cultural criteria central to the establishment and preservation of its identity. Hence, the core elements which express and support this criteria. The second is to discover the specific physical elements in the built environment that play a key role in the process.

(Lynch (1960) also suggested that future research should address how different major groups consider the image of their environment if cities are used by many groups of people.) This issue is more pressing in a country like Malaysia, where the population is multi-racial. The identity of place here was studied in the context of the city centre as argued by Worsket (1969) who noted that the town centre was the essence of the character of most towns. Worpole (1992) also argued that the town centre is the focus of civic identity, expressing the essence of what each town is and how it is different from another.

In Malaysia, town centres normally consist of historic centres and the additional newer centres that together form the central business district. The older centres can be distinguished from the newer ones by the condition, type of trade, street scene and the architectural style. No research has yet been undertaken to discover whether these differences are actually noticed and appreciated by the people in Malaysia. Previous research which covers how the environment was read and imaged by the public was undertaken using western cities as examples and without the problem of different cultural groups living and using the city as in the case of Malaysia.

Hence, this research seeks to answer questions relating to elements and qualities that residents associate with identity. It also attempts to discover if there is any variation between the different socio-cultural groups in

terms of elements perceived to be distinctive in the town centre. Finally, it seeks to examine the variation in residents' perception of identity between the different parts of the town centre, namely the older and the newer town centre.

## **4.2 Choice of methodology**

The choice of methodology for this research was governed by two factors:

First, the methodology adopted by previous research in the same field. Second, the nature of the research and the research questions.

### **4.21 Review of previous methodology**

A review of the past research in similar areas shows that there are two approaches to the study of how the urban environment is imaged by the people. The first type of research is done using a qualitative method. The front runner of this type of research was Kevin Lynch, whose work on the image of the city inspired many other works to be done in the field. His approach towards understanding the imageability of the urban environment was qualitative in nature and employed a range of techniques such as interview, sketch mapping, photo recognition and field observations and recording. Such data was analysed qualitatively. Others that employed similar methods and techniques were Gullick, De Jonge and Francesco and Mebane, to name a few. For these researchers, the samples used were often small (thirty respondents in the case of Lynch), using non probability sampling, open ended interviews and the data obtained was subject to the researcher's interpretation. The research findings were often descriptive and explanatory in nature.

The other type of research methodology adopted a quantitative approach. Harrison and Howard and Appleyard were among those who employed such methodologies. Although the techniques used were similar to the former, the data obtained was analysed statistically. Hence, their research findings centred upon the variables that influenced imageability. The samples used were larger (three hundred respondents in the case of Appleyard) and the samples were selected using probability sampling. The research findings concentrated on establishing the relationship between variables that influenced imageability.

Since there were two approaches towards this type of research problem, it is not surprising that Moore (1976) argued that at this point in time, there were no universally accepted methods and techniques for extracting environmental cognition. However, despite this, there is a growing acceptance of certain techniques such as interview and sketch mapping as the most reliable to study people's images of their environment.

Lynch (1982) argued that identity of place can be analysed and measured by simple tests of recognition, recall and description. However, Nasar (1990) argued that evaluation is central to people's perception and reaction to the environment. He contended that people tend to recall places that they have feelings about. Lynch (from Banerjee, 1990) argued that identity can be tested for by recall or by identification in the field. Lynch (1982) also suggested that to measure the identity of a place, we need to ask respondents to recognise photographs or other representation and recall places verbally or graphically. This depends on the quickness and intensity of recognition. This recall is then quantified and the number of interviewees able to do so is noted. This is then complemented with field descriptions which identify and

describe the places and events recalled. Harrison and Howard (1990) also used the frequency of recall of a particular attribute as a measure of its role in forming the urban image. Canter (1977) suggested that there are three categories of the procedures for identification and descriptions. The three categories are sketching, description and behaviour. Description involves asking people to give an account either in their own words or within the limits of the adjective ratings set by the researcher. This technique, according to Canter, whether it is open ended or constrained, is very rich in terms of information. Sketching involves asking people to draw things that they could remember but which are difficult to explain in words.

Hence, it is evident from the previous studies on this topic that the approach to the research can be undertaken either quantitatively or qualitatively. It is also apparent that to study the identity of the urban environment, one can rely upon people's description, recognition and recall of the urban environment. In addition, field description, interview, photo recognition and sketch mapping are considered to be reliable techniques for analysing people's images and perceptions of their urban environment.

#### 4.22 Nature of Research and Problem

The second criterion in determining the methodology to be adopted is to examine the research questions put forward. Strauss and Corbin (1990) argued that the way a research question is formulated is extremely important because it determines to a large extent the research method that is used. According to them, if the questions are aimed to develop a theory, then a qualitative research using the grounded theory method should be used. The research questions in this method will allow flexibility and freedom

to explore a phenomenon in depth. In addition, this approach assumes that concepts pertaining to a given phenomenon have not yet been identified or at least not in the population or place to be studied. The other reason may be that relationships between concepts are poorly understood or conceptually undeveloped. Finally, the questions might not have been asked in the same way so that it is impossible to determine the variables that pertained to this area. Hence, a research question in a grounded theory is a statement that identifies the phenomenon that are under study.

Most of the research dealing with urban image were undertaken in other countries of different social and cultural background than Malaysia. Hence, even if the concept has been explained in these countries and the variables pertaining to it have been discovered, the same cannot be assumed for Malaysia. It is the aim of this research to explain what is noticed as distinctive in the urban environment and associated with its identity. Hence, it is the process by which the environment communicates its identity to the people that is of concern in this research rather than testing the relationships between variables that contribute to its identity.

#### **4.3 Methodology adopted in the research**

From the literature review, there are two ways in which this research can be approached: qualitatively and quantitatively, using field studies and survey. However, in deciding which approach to select, it is important to highlight the differences between the two methods. Festinger and Katz (1953) argued that a simple distinction between survey and field study is that the former provides greater scope whilst the latter provides greater depth. A survey, they argued attempts to be representative of

larger populations and deal with interrelations and interaction through a study of final outcome. Ongoing social and psychological process are inferred in the survey from their statistical end effects. Field studies, on the other hand, observe and investigate thoroughly the reciprocal perception and attitudes of people playing interdependent roles. Field studies "...provide both a more detailed and a more natural picture of the social interrelations of group than does survey" (Festinger and Katz 1953, p.58). Hence, its objective is to obtain a better knowledge of significant variables rather than the final testing of a well formulated theory.

Having analysed these two different methodologies, the research problems are assessed according to the applicability of the two approaches in addressing the research problems and questions.

The field study is applicable to this research for the following reasons:

- i. According to Relph (1976) identity of place is related to context thus requiring a thorough investigation of the context in a qualitative way.
- ii. Relph (1976) also argued that identity is related to people's experiences of the place. People's experience with a place can only be elicited through lengthy interview and probing, a major technique of field study.
- iii. Much of the previous research dealing with the image of urban areas are either free recall verbal description or sketching. Both techniques are open ended and present some difficulties in coding. Thus, they are best analysed qualitatively.

iv. The research questions are geared towards explaining the phenomena rather than testing the relationship between variables. Such descriptive research is 'best approached by field studies.'

v. Field observation of the activities taking place in the town centre and the physical characteristics need to be recorded since physical elements and activities are, according to Relph (1976), a major component of identity. This data can only be obtained by field observations and the analysis undertaken qualitatively.

The survey method, however, can be useful to this research for the following reasons:

i. This research is concerned with the residents' perceptions of elements and qualities associated with the town centre's identity. Thus, the selection of the groups of residents to be studied must be representative of the population who reside within the town centre's boundary. Hence, a probability sampling procedure in a sample survey will ensure that the selection of groups of residents to be interviewed reflects the characteristics of the population of the town centre's residents.

ii. Through the use of a questionnaire administered to a larger sample of the population, certain information can be gathered beforehand and be used as a basis for a detailed follow up and investigation.

This research adopted a mixed method in view of the above arguments. Burgess (from Brannen, 1992) used the term "multiple research strategies" in which diverse methods are used in tackling a research problem. The more traditional term for this method according to Brannen (1992) is triangulation, which is the use of more than one method of

investigation and more than one source of data.

The rationale for mixing methods is best illustrated by Sieber (from Burgess, 1982). He argued that no research method is without bias and that every technique suffers from inherent weaknesses. It is intended that the mixing of methods will minimise the weaknesses of the methodology adopted for the research. Brannen (1992) argued that the multi method approach demands that the researcher specifies precisely the aims of each method, the nature of data, results expected and how the data relates to theory.

As this research is geared towards finding out what elements and the qualities contributed to the identity of place and how different socio-cultural groups perceive the identity of place, it is reasonable to say that this research is more qualitative in nature. The quantitative method therefore plays a subsidiary role. The contribution of the survey to a field study is that it corrects the holistic fallacy, often present in qualitative research method (Burgess 1982). Secondly it demonstrates the generality of a single observation and thirdly it verifies the field interpretations as well as casting new light on field observations. Brannen (1992) added that where quantitative methodology is subservient to qualitative methodology, they tend to fulfill three types of functions:

- i. They provide a quantified background data to contextualise small scale intensive studies.
- ii. They are used to test hypotheses thrown up by the qualitative work.
- iii. They provide the basis for sampling cases and comparison groups to form the intensive study.



Sieber (from Burgess, 1982) also argued that surveys can improve the design of fieldwork by identifying both representative and unrepresentative cases. Thus, the former will serve the goal of generalisation while the latter functions as theory refinement. He also argued that the replies to the survey questions provide leads for later interviews and observations, therefore enhancing rapport and guidelines for probing. Brannen (1992) also suggested that if the purpose of the fieldwork is to clarify or extend a survey finding, it must be conducted after the survey.

There are four phases to this research: a pilot survey; sample survey, in depth interview and field observations. The in depth interview and field observations were preceded by the sample survey. The sample survey established the elements that were noticed by the town centre's residents and their evaluation of its appearance. From the response of the survey, the in depth interview investigated the process by which the environment communicates its identity to the people and explains why certain elements are noticed whilst others are not. The field observations record and appraise the characteristics of the elements noticed and the activities that dominated the scene. This research followed the advice of Worskett (1969) who stated that to study the visual qualities, one must combine the subjective appraisal undertaken by the individuals and the more objective approach by conducting an opinion poll. In this way the findings are more comprehensive since the two techniques complement each other.

The data that needed collecting in this research was as follows:

- i. To establish the elements associated with the town centre's identity.

The data needed was the physical elements noticed or recalled in describing the town centre's appearance, elements used as symbols and landmarks of the town centre or considered as unique features, elements used in the perceptual structuring of the town centre and also elements used in recognising certain places in the town centre. In addition to that, elements that managed to evoke certain reaction from the residents, either positive reaction (likes) or negative reaction (dislikes) were also elements that are distinctive and thus associated with the identity of a place. Finally, elements that could be evaluated by residents, either considered beautiful or ugly, retained or removed were also distinctive elements because according to Nasar (1992) people are only able to evaluate elements that are distinctive and imageable.

- ii. To establish qualities associated with identity of place.

The data needed was the reasons that residents used in recalling or noticing certain elements in the town centre, reasons used to include certain elements in their perceptual structure of the town centre, reasons used to identify or recognise a place in the town centre, reasons used to describe the distinctive places in the town centre and reasons used in evaluating certain elements or places in terms of appearance.

- iii. To establish the variation in residents' perception of elements and qualities associated with the town centre's identity according to the different socio-cultural background.

This information was derived by examining the data stated in paragraph (i) and (ii) according to the ethnicity, gender and age group of the respondents. The response given were examined by establishing the similarities and differences according to their socio-cultural background.

- iv. To establish the variation in residents' perception between different parts of the town centre.

This information was derived by examining the location of elements that was mentioned by residents in (i) and the location of the elements drawn in their mental maps. The location of elements that was recognised by the respondents was also noted.

#### 4.4 Research Techniques

Harrison and Sarre (1971) argued that the nature of environmental image may caused problems in assessing the validity of image measurement. One approach they suggested therefore is to use a variety of measurement methods and to compare the overlap and differences in the resulting images. The use of a variety of methods in the study of environmental images, such as survey and attitude questionnaires, laboratory and clinical techniques, participant observation methods and content and textual analyses of a variety of media presentation, are also recommended by Bell (1990). He argued that through the use of varied measurement techniques, the overlap and differences in the resultant images can be compared and that this would increase its validity. Downs and Stea

(1973) also suggested that given the multi-dimensional nature of the urban environment, its full features cannot be revealed with a single technique, therefore a number of techniques must be employed for such a study.

#### **4.41 Technique for quantitative analysis**

The technique selected for the quantitative approach was a questionnaire survey. The data derived from this technique was analysed quantitatively.

##### **Questionnaire**

Bell (1990) argued that the most obvious way to measure moods, thoughts, attitudes and behaviour is by asking the subjects how they felt, what they are thinking and what they do or have done. This is achieved by the use of questionnaire and interview. This is also agreed by Downs and Stea (1973) when they noted that the foundation of environmental evaluation is verbal description either using free description or a checklist. Canter (1977) also suggested that the most direct way of exploring reactions and actions within places is by asking people to describe them and observing their behaviour within them. Since most studies relating to people's image of the environment in the past (for example Lynch, Appleyard, Harrison and Howard, Milgram and others) tend to use interview as their main technique, it can be assumed that a questionnaire would be a valid instrument for this study. In this research, a questionnaire was used and distributed to a sample of the town centre's residents. This provides a general background of the town centre's residents, their perception and opinions all of which provide the quantitative data to the research. Nevertheless Marans (1987) argued that although survey techniques are useful to find out what is going on in the people's minds or how they

felt about the environment, he suggested that they must be supported by other techniques.

#### 4.42 Techniques for Qualitative analysis

Four techniques were considered suitable for this research. The data derived from them was analysed qualitatively. The techniques are in depth or focused interview, free sketching, recognition tasks and field observations.

##### In-Depth Interview

The use of interview is also a common technique in the study of imageability of urban environment because of its ability to obtain a description of elements remembered by the respondents, as observed in Lynch's and Harrison and Howard's studies. Burgess (1982) argued that interviews take many forms with the structured interview at one end and the unstructured interview at the other.

However, most of the interviews undertaken in the past research are structured ones. In this research, an unstructured interview was used as it is seen to be more appropriate because Palmer (from Burgess, 1982) argued that the unstructured interview provides the opportunity to probe deeply and uncovers vivid and accurate accounts based on personal experience. Although it is termed as unstructured interview, Burgess (1982) argued that the researcher has to establish a framework within which the interview could be conducted. Despite being flexible, the interview is also controlled and must ensure that the informant relates experiences and attitudes that are relevant to the research problem and encourages the informant to discuss these experiences naturally.

## Sketching Technique

Lynch (1982) argued that to measure the identity of a place, we need to ask respondents to recall places verbally or graphically. Canter (1977) also suggested that sketching is one of the three categories of the procedure for identification and description of places. According to him, sketching involves asking people to draw from memory and identifying some of the major components of the places of interests. Holahan (1982) argued that the most common method of measuring cognitive maps involves sketching on a blank piece of paper of a particular environmental context. It is an easier and more efficient technique to collect data relevant to people's environmental images. It also provides a vivid and qualitatively rich format for externalising the pictorial aspects of the individual's environmental cognition.

Bechtel (1987) also agreed that the use of a paper and pencil test is most effective to search out responses to environment within people. However, he noted that there is a problem of scoring details for this technique as well as confusion arising in interpreting it that made for low reliability. Thus, he suggested that in order to resolve this problem the interviewers must be trained to be clear and consistent on what is to be included and to go over the sketches with the subjects after they have been drawn. This is the reason why this technique has to be analysed qualitatively.

In this research, the sketching technique was used to discover the residents' mental representations of the town centre's structure and boundaries. This was done by requesting the respondents to draw a map of the town centre on a blank piece of paper. During the sketching task, the respondents were also requested to explain their drawings

to the researcher.

### Recognition task

The other technique which Lynch (1982) suggested in order to measure the identity of a place is by asking respondents to recognise photographs or other representations. This depends on the quickness and intensity of recognition. This recall is then quantified and the number of interviewees able to do so is noted. Milgram and Jodelet (from Proshansky, 1976) also employed this technique in their study of Paris. The recognition test was used because there were numerous representations of things that a person could not externalised through drawing or verbal recall but will recognise them if shown a photograph. The method used was free recall and the respondents were asked to identify a set of forty photographs. A correct recognition, he argued shows that a scene is an active part of the subjects representation of the city, even if he does not spontaneously include it in his map.

This technique is applicable to this research because it provides another means of extracting information from the respondents that cannot be derived from free recall or drawing. This is because the respondents for this research are lay men from different socio-economic and cultural groups. Thus, the two techniques mentioned above might not be suitable for certain respondents who have difficulties in expressing themselves verbally and through drawing.

### Field Observation

Worskett (1969) argued that the character of the town determines the type of survey and its contents. There are two basic approaches to the survey, of which he argued neither by itself is perfect. The first is the objective

approach which is a social survey. The other approach is more subjective, in which the visual and historic qualities that made up the town's identity are assessed in an intuitive way by looking at the town. This is backed by archaeological evidence and historical documents and lists of buildings of architectural and historic interest. He suggested that both approaches are adopted to avoid any bias as well as providing a more comprehensive assessment of the towns identity.

Lynch (from Holahan, 1982) also employed a systematic field reconnaissance as part of his research technique. This was done by trained observers who recorded the presence and characteristics of elements in the cityscape that serve as focal points or landmarks for the residents. This visual survey was then compared with the results of the social survey. In this research, a visual survey was conducted by the researcher to record the physical characteristics and the activities that occurred in the town centre. These information were very useful and helped to explain the findings from the survey and interview.

### Library research

In addition, a literature search in the Archive Department, Museum, Public Library and Town Planning Department was conducted during the field work. The aim was to find out information regarding the history of the town that would assist in explaining why certain elements were distinctive to the residents. This search included tracing old photographs, maps, reports, journals and books that explained the development of the town centre. This information complements the findings from the social survey and interview.



## 4.5 Data Collection Procedure

The research was approached in three phases namely a sample survey, in depth interview and field recordings. This section explains the steps involved in the collection of data for this research.

### 4.51 Phase 1 - sample survey

The first phase of the data collection procedure involves the sample survey of Kuantan town centre's residents. As discussed earlier, the survey seeks to establish the profile and characteristics of the people who live in the town centre, the elements noticed of the town centre and their evaluation of the town centre's appearance. There were four stages involved in this phase: the questionnaire design, pilot survey, survey procedure and data processing.

#### Questionnaire design

The questionnaire schedule was designed in four parts. There is a mixture of closed and open ended questions. (see Appendix 5 for a sample of the questionnaire schedule).

##### i. Socio-economic background

This part of the questionnaire reveals information regarding the socio-economic status of the respondents. This covers information concerning their sex, race, age, occupation, educational level, number of children, religion and length of residence in the town centre. From this information, a socio-economic profile of the town centre population are derived and therefore the characteristics of the residents selected as respondents for the interview are established.

## ii. Residents' activities in the town centre

The respondent's use of the town centre can influence the identity perceived. Thus, questions included are the purpose of going to the town centre; the frequency of visits; shopping destinations; places visited for leisure, places they found confusing and reasons for their confusion. From these questions, one can derive the relationship between how the town centre is used and what is actually noticed.

## iii. What is noticed.

The third part of the questionnaire deals with questions relating to what is noticed in the town centre and the reasons for noticing the elements. Hence, the respondents were asked to name the streets and buildings that they know, the views that they found to be interesting, the unique buildings and streets, unique features and landmarks used to show people the way around the town centre. The reasons why buildings and streets are considered unique were also asked.

This part was designed to elicit from the respondents any elements that they noticed, remembered or thought to be distinctive. From the reasons given as to why these elements were noticed, a relationship can be derived between the characteristics of the elements and the frequencies of recall for that particular element. It also presents the type of elements that people often noticed in the urban environment and an explanation of why these elements are distinctive to the respondents.

#### iv. Evaluation of place

The final part of the questionnaire addresses questions that relate to the respondents evaluation of the town centres appearance. Hence, questions that were put forward are their appraisal of the town centre visually in terms of their likes and dislikes, the part of the town centre that they thought should be retained and what could be improved to make the town centre attractive. By asking the respondents to evaluate the place, one can identify places that are able to evoke a certain amount of reaction from them. It is implied from Nasar (1990)'s study that places that people have feelings about are those that are distinctive to them.

It is observed from the survey that the questionnaire was geared towards identifying the physical elements that were distinctive in the town centre. This is because the constrained nature of the questionnaire means that it was difficult to ask questions relating to meanings and associations with the town centre. This cultural influence on perception was investigated more in the in depth interview.

#### Pilot Survey

A pilot survey was conducted prior to the actual survey in order to test the applicability of the questionnaire and to estimate the amount of time required for the actual survey. A group of thirty residents from Kuantan town centre was selected in the pilot survey. The pilot survey in Kuantan, Malaysia was conducted prior to the actual survey to allow for any amendments to the questionnaires to be made before the actual survey. From the analysis of the pilot survey's result, several questions had to be rephrased and several terminology had to be clarified to avoid ambiguity during

the conduct of the actual survey.

### Survey Procedure

A sample survey was conducted of the Kuantan town centre's residents in December 1993. Two final year students from the Department of Urban and Regional Planning of the University of Technology Malaysia, were employed to assist in the survey. The students were adequately briefed on the purpose of the survey and the questionnaire design before the survey was conducted. As final year planning students, they had enough experience in conducting a social survey and were therefore suitable for the job. Prior to the conduct of the actual survey, two major decisions had to be made - the sampling procedure and the sample size needed for the survey.

According to De Vaus (1991), there are two broad types of samples which are the probability and non probability sample. Probability samples are preferable because they are more likely to produce representative samples. There are four main types of probability sample and the choice according to De Vaus depends on the nature of the research problems, availability of good sampling frames, money, desired level of accuracy in the sample and method by which data is collected.

In this study, the population to be sampled reside within the boundary of the town centre as defined by the Kuantan Town Municipal (MPK). Since there was no sampling frame available where a sample can be drawn, the sampling technique that is best suited to this research is multi stage cluster sampling.

The first step was the selection of areas to be sampled from the town centre. This was done by identifying the

location of residential schemes and mixed use areas where the residential and retail properties within the town centre. There were six such areas located within the town centre, including a village and a police residential quarter. Only five of these areas were included in the survey because permission was refused by the Police Headquarters officials to include their residential quarter in the survey. The housing schemes or residential areas were then divided into blocks, which in this case were categorised as the streets that were located within the housing schemes. A sample of the streets were then drawn and the households on each street were listed. A random sample of household within each street was then drawn using systematic random sampling. The number of households selected was based on a sampling fraction that is the ratio of number of households to be sampled and the total number of houses in the area. Within a household, one member was chosen to fill out the questionnaire. The selection of this person was done voluntarily by the households. However at times the researcher and the field assistants were forced to designate certain members of the households to participate in order to ensure that there was equal representation from all age groups and the two genders.

The decision on the sample size was based on the accuracy required for the sample as well as the extent of the variation that existed in the population selected. According to De Vaus (1991) the size of the population from which the sample was drawn is irrelevant for the accuracy of the sample, thus the sample size drawn for this survey was based on his calculations (see Table 4.1).

A sample size of three hundred and thirty respondents was selected with a sampling error of 5.5% at 95% confidence level. This figure was almost the same as to a study by Appleyard on urban image, in which his total number of

respondents was three hundred people. It is thought that for this study, it is not necessary to have a higher precision level for sampling and therefore an error of 5.5% can still be accepted. The reason for this is to ensure that there is sufficient number of respondents in each sub group when the sample is broken down into age, sex and ethnicity. The sample was only controlled in terms of these three sub groups as there were considerable difficulties in ensuring that other socio-economic characteristics were controlled. According to De Vaus (1991) the smallest sub group should have at least 50 to 100 cases. Hence, a sample size of 330 should have at least 100 cases for each sub group.

TABLE 4.1 : Sample size required for various sampling at 95% confidence level (simple random sampling)

Sampling error (%)	Sample size	Sampling error	Sample size
1.0	10000	5.5	330
1.5	4500	6.0	277
2.0	2500	6.5	237
2.5	1600	7.0	204
3.0	1100	7.5	178
3.5	816	8.0	156
4.0	625	8.5	138
4.5	494	9.0	123
5.0	400	9.5	110
		10	100

Source : De Vaus, 1991, p.71

In this survey, the composition of the respondents surveyed consists of 33% Malays, 62.1% Chinese and 4.8% Indians.

This figure does not reflect the racial composition of the town as indicated in the Structure Plan. This is because the population stated in the Structure Plan encompasses not only the Kuantan town but other rural districts under the jurisdiction of the Kuantan local authority. This explains why the racial composition is dominated by Malays (67.8%) followed by the Chinese (27.0%) and Indians (5%). The high percentage of Chinese covered in the survey is due to the higher concentration of Chinese in the town centre area, compared to other parts of the town and the rural districts. This fact is recognised in the Structure Plan, which showed that the Chinese dominate other races in the town centre of Kuantan. Thus, it explains why the survey respondents (which include only people who live within the town centre area) have different racial composition than the Kuantan district. In fact, throughout Malaysia, the Chinese tend to dominate the racial composition of towns and cities. Thus, the survey population reflects the existing pattern of ethnic composition in the town centres of Malaysia. There were more males (54.5%) involved in the survey than females (45.5%).

In terms of age group, the Structure Plan identified three age groups, the economically inactive (0 to 14), economically active (15 to 64) and those who are not economically active (over 65). The first group comprises of 40.1%, followed by 57.2% of the economically active and 2.6% of the over 65. There were seven age groups surveyed: 5.5% were of primary school age (7 to 12 years old), 10.6% were of secondary school age (13 to 17 years old), 18.5% were of college age (18 to 25 years old), 31.8% were within the 26 to 35 years old age group, 20.3% belonged to the 36 to 45 years old group, 7.6% were from the 46 to 55 years age group and 5.8% belonged to the pensioners and elderly group (over 56 years old). When this is compared to the age group of Structure Plan, it can

be seen that majority of the surveyed residents are in the economically active group and the youngest and oldest population are under represented. This is the case for the Indian and Chinese respondents. This cannot be avoided due to the difficulties of controlling the selection of respondents in a random survey. Nevertheless, the high proportion of the population in the economically active group indicated in the Kuantan Structure Plan compared to those who are not, suggests that the survey sample is acceptable.

A self administered questionnaire was distributed to each of the selected respondents and these questionnaires were collected a week after. This gave ample time for the respondents to fill out the questionnaire and also to clarify any ambiguous questions when the forms were collected by the interviewer. This strategy also ensures that questions are not misinterpreted by the respondents and also provides the opportunity for the interviewer to go through the questionnaire with the respondents.

### Data processing

The data obtained from the survey was processed using SPSS Pc+. In this research only descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used in analysis. The data from the survey also provides a socio-economic profile of the town centre residents. This information was then used to assist in the selection of respondents for further follow up interviews. Thus, cases that were representative of the group as well as those which were deviant were categorised. The respondents were then set into various cultural groups, age groups and gender in order to observe the variations of response between the groups in terms of their perception of the town centre. This was done by cross-tabulation of responses according to ethnicity,



gender and age groups.

#### 4.52 Phase II : In depth interview

The second phase is the in depth interview which was conducted after the questionnaires had been collected. According to Walker (1985), in depth interview is a conversation in which the researcher encourages the respondents to relate their experience and attitudes that are relevant to the research in their own terms. The researcher on the other hand has the opportunity to probe in detail and uncover new clues. Although many authors stressed that qualitative research uses an essentially unstructured approach to data collection, it does require some careful planning and administration.

In this research, a semi structured interview schedule was used to focus on the scope that must be covered in the interview (see Appendix 5). This schedule was used as a guidance and that during the interview, several other questions were added as a result of probing. The interview main objectives were to uncover the reasons why certain elements are noticed in the town centre, the process in which the respondents identified the town centre and the experiences of the respondents that influence his or her perceptions.

There were thirty respondents who participated in the in depth interview. This figure is derived because according to Walker (1985), if qualitative studies are undertaken in conjunction with a quantified survey, the sample that should be taken comprised between 20 and 40 in depth interviews. In selecting the sample composition, Walker (1985) argued that it is inappropriate to use rigorous sampling procedures as in the quantitative research due to the nature and scale of qualitative work. The sample

design, he argued is usually purposeful and people with specific characteristics, behaviour or experience are selected. This enables broad comparisons to be made between certain groups that is deemed to be important. This research followed the advice of Walker (1985) by selecting the respondents according to certain criteria that were relevant to the research topic.

In this study, it is considered that age, sex, educational background and ethnicity are important characteristics that must be considered in selecting the respondents. In addition, a review of the completed questionnaires in the survey was made to identify respondents which had differences in terms of opinion than the rest of the people that could be included in the in depth interview. These differences in opinion were termed as deviant cases and were selected for further follow up. The interview respondents consisted of fifteen males and fifteen females. The Malays made up ten of the respondents, followed by ten Chinese and ten Indians. The youngest respondent was a sixteen year old whereas the oldest respondent was a sixty five years old. There were ten respondents for each of the young, middle age and the elderly age group.

The selection of the respondents for the in depth interview depended on the willingness of the residents to participate in the interview. This is because an interview is a time consuming process which lasted between one to two hours. The most important consideration is that they are residents of the town centre. The respondents selected for the interview consisted of people from a varied socio-economic background. They include; students, housewives, shopkeepers, directors, managers, teachers, retired civil servants, clerks, stall holders, labourers, lorry drivers and the self employed person. The selected respondents ranged from those who have been a resident for more than

thirty years to those who have only been in Kuantan for less than five years. Thus, experiences of the long term residents and newcomers were taken into consideration. Their urban experience was also considered by selecting people who were originally from the rural areas and those who were born in the town's area and have never lived elsewhere.

The interview was tape recorded and later transcribed to facilitate analysis. Although for a majority of the respondents the interview was conducted in Bahasa Malaysia (the national language and mother tongue of the Malays), the transcripts are in English. This involved the process of translation of the taped interviews into English text in which every effort was made to ensure that the meaning of the words in the dialogue was not affected by the translation.

The next stage involved the analysis of the transcripts. This was done qualitatively by coding the interview transcripts into categories or recurrent themes. These categories include elements that were noticed, elements that were considered unique, places that were attractive and noticed, characteristics that made elements and places noticed, events that were associated with elements and places, sentiments and evaluation of places, memories associated with events and places, boundaries of the town centre, important landmarks, orientation abilities and unique features of the town centre. By sorting the transcripts into categories or themes, it was then possible to make connections between the categories and to compare between the cases. Unlike the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach places importance on each individual case and comparison between cases is made to establish if there are new explanations to the phenomena studied. Each case was analysed and studied to identify for a certain

pattern in the description of the town centre. If the same pattern was observed in all cases, then it was deduced that the theory was saturated and that it was the same and applicable for the others.

Following the interview, the respondents were asked to produce a sketch map of the town centre and the places that they remembered vividly in the town centre. In order to encourage the respondents to participate in the sketching, a blank piece of paper was given at the beginning of the interview. The maps were analysed according to the types of elements drawn and their locations, the areas covered in the maps and the sequence of their drawings. These sketch maps would be compared with the maps of the town centre as designated by the Kuantan Town Municipal (MPK).

At the end of the interview, a set of photographs of elements that were mentioned in the sample survey by at least 10% of the survey respondents were shown to the respondents. A total of seventeen elements were identified consisting of five elements located in the newer centre and twelve places in the older centre (see Table 4.2). These elements consisted of buildings, streets, open field, linear space and pocket of spaces within the town centre. These elements were assumed to be distinctive in the town centre as they were frequently mentioned by the survey respondents. The interviewees were asked to identify the names of the places and to describe the reasons why they were able to recognise the places shown. This recognition task was accompanied by an interview and the reasons given to recognising the photographs shown were tape recorded and transcribed. Analysis of this transcript provided an explanation of the clues used to recognise the distinctive places in the town centre.

TABLE 4.2 : ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN THE PHOTO RECOGNITION TASK

	BUILDINGS	STREETS	OPEN FIELD	LINEAR SPACE	POCKET OF SPACES
OLDER CENTRE					
Kompleks Teruntum	•				
Mosque	•				
Wisma					
Jalan Mahkota		•			
Jalan Besar		•			
River front				•	
Medan Pelancung	•				
Bus Station	•				
Taman Kerang					•
Padang			•		
Jalan Bukit Ubi		•			
Hospital	•				
NEWER CENTRE					
Jalan Tun Ismail		•			
Jalan Wong Ah Jang		•			
Market	•				

#### 4.53 Phase III : Field Observations

A visual survey was conducted to record the visual elements of the Kuantan town centre that contributed to the character of the place. According to Spreiregen (1965) a visual survey in urban design is an examination of the form, appearance and composition of a city. He argued that visual surveys are mostly recorded as simple maps accompanied by sketches, photographs and brief notes. Worskett (1969) argued that the character of towns can be analysed by appraising the visual features of the town subjectively and by examining the archaeological evidence that influences the town's character. In fact, Lynch (1960) had also conducted a systematic field reconnaissance of the towns studied by trained observers.

In this research, the visual survey is a record of the actual physical appearance of the town centre. This survey was used as a basis for comparison with the verbal description and sketch maps derived from the study. The visual survey consists of a photographic record of the town centre and notes made during the field observations of the town centre. The visual survey also recorded the major buildings, streets, building use, activities, landscape features and overall environment of Kuantan town centre. This visual survey provides a useful source of reference in the analysis (see Appendix 4).

#### 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the design of the research by emphasising the procedure adopted in the collection and analysis of data. It can be argued that the choice of research methodology adopted based on extensive reviews of previous research as well as existing theories on research methods. The mixed method adopted also resulted in a

variety of research techniques being used and this enriched the data collected. There were also two approaches adopted in the analysis; the quantitative and qualitative approach. It is evident that a combination of the two types of research methodology, each with its own strengths and weaknesses will complement the research findings. By adopting such an approach, it is hoped that there will be comprehensive data to cover the various aspects of the research problem. The next four chapters present the findings of the research. Chapter Five, which follows this chapter is an introduction to the study area and the distinctive elements perceived by the residents in the town centre.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE STUDY : KUANTAN TOWN CENTRE

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the town selected as the case study and the findings of the study. The purpose is to allow an insight into the physical characteristics and features of the town as well as giving background information to the analysis that follows. The chapter also seeks to examine the views of the local planning authority on urban design and the town centre. This is to ascertain the influence of the local authority on urban design policies on the physical development of the town centre.

This chapter is divided into five parts. The first part discusses the town in relation to the country as a whole. It also highlights the unique features of the country. This is then followed secondly by a brief discussion on the historical development of the town. The characteristics of the town centre are then examined in the third section which provides a profile of the town centre. The fourth part highlights the local authority's policies that influence the physical development and character of the town centre. The final section presents the conclusion to this chapter.

#### 5.1 Kuantan in relation to Malaysia

Malaysia is divided into West or Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia. Geographically divided by the South China Sea, Peninsular and the East Malaysia differ in terms of cultural composition and the rate of urbanisation. Malaysia, with the exception of Singapore and Brunei, is the most urbanised country in South East Asia, having more



than one quarter of its total population living in settlements with over 10,000 inhabitants. Urbanisation took place most rapidly between 1947 and 1957, during the post war and pre-independence period.

A unique feature of the country is its racial composition, comprising three major ethnic groups; the indigenous Malay group, the Chinese and the Indians. The three ethnic groups differ in terms of their religious and cultural background. Urbanisation in Malaysia is characterised by the disparity between the Malays and the non-Malays. The proportion of Chinese tend to outnumber the Malays and the Indians in the town areas. While many Malays now inhabited urban areas, the majority are still living in rural areas, with many of them engaged in agriculture.

In the towns and cities of Malaysia, the Chinese are usually concentrated at the hub of the central business districts with the shop-houses clustered along the main roads. They are known as 'Chinatown' where the main activity is retailing. In some localities, these Chinese shop-houses extend a considerable distance back from the thoroughfare whilst in others they are confined to a narrow ribbon. In the towns, the Malays are located in the peri-urban settlement which eventually becomes part of the town through expansion. In major cities, they are also found in Malay Reserves (land reserved only for the Malays) as well as in the squatter areas. In addition, many Malays are also associated with the army and police barracks in the town areas. Finally, the Indians are usually concentrated in areas associated with railway workshops and warehouses in the city. Otherwise, their homes are quite scattered throughout the many housing schemes found in the built up areas. However, with various steps taken by the Government after independence in the Seventies, racial segregation in residential areas has been reduced. Many residential areas of mixed ethnic groups are now found in the modern housing

schemes of the towns and cities.

Apart from being separated from East Malaysia, Peninsular Malaysia is also categorised into two distinct regions, the East and West Coast (see Diagram 5.1). The former is less developed and is associated with its assets of a rich cultural heritage and natural beauty. There are thirteen states in Malaysia, including two in East Malaysia, where each state having its own capital.

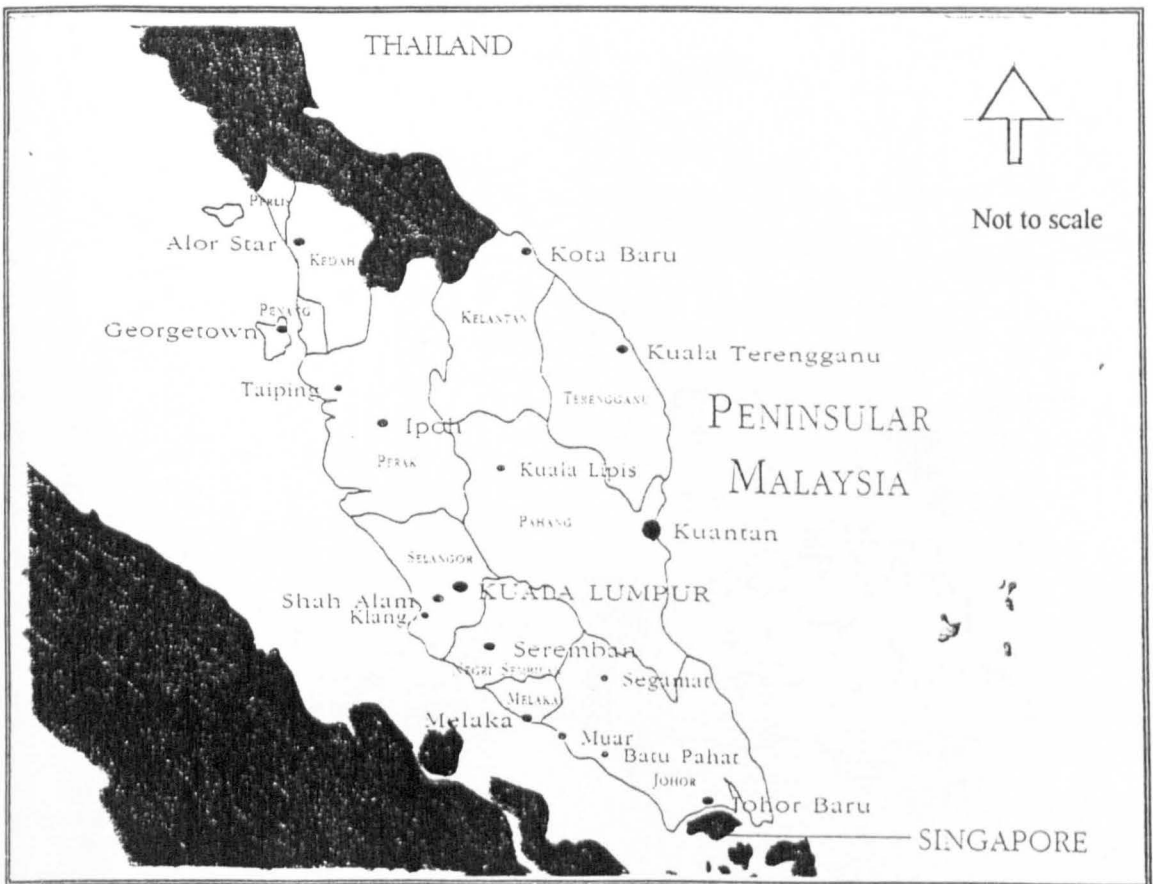


Diagram 5.1: THE EAST AND WEST COAST OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA  
Source: Yeang, 1992, p.20

The town under study, Kuantan is the capital of Pahang, one of the three states located in the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. It is the centre of administrative, commercial and social services for the state. Under the

Structure Plan, Kuantan town is identified as the major town centre and is under the administration of the Municipality of Kuantan (MPK). The administrative area of MPK is 32,401 ha (see Diagram 5.2).

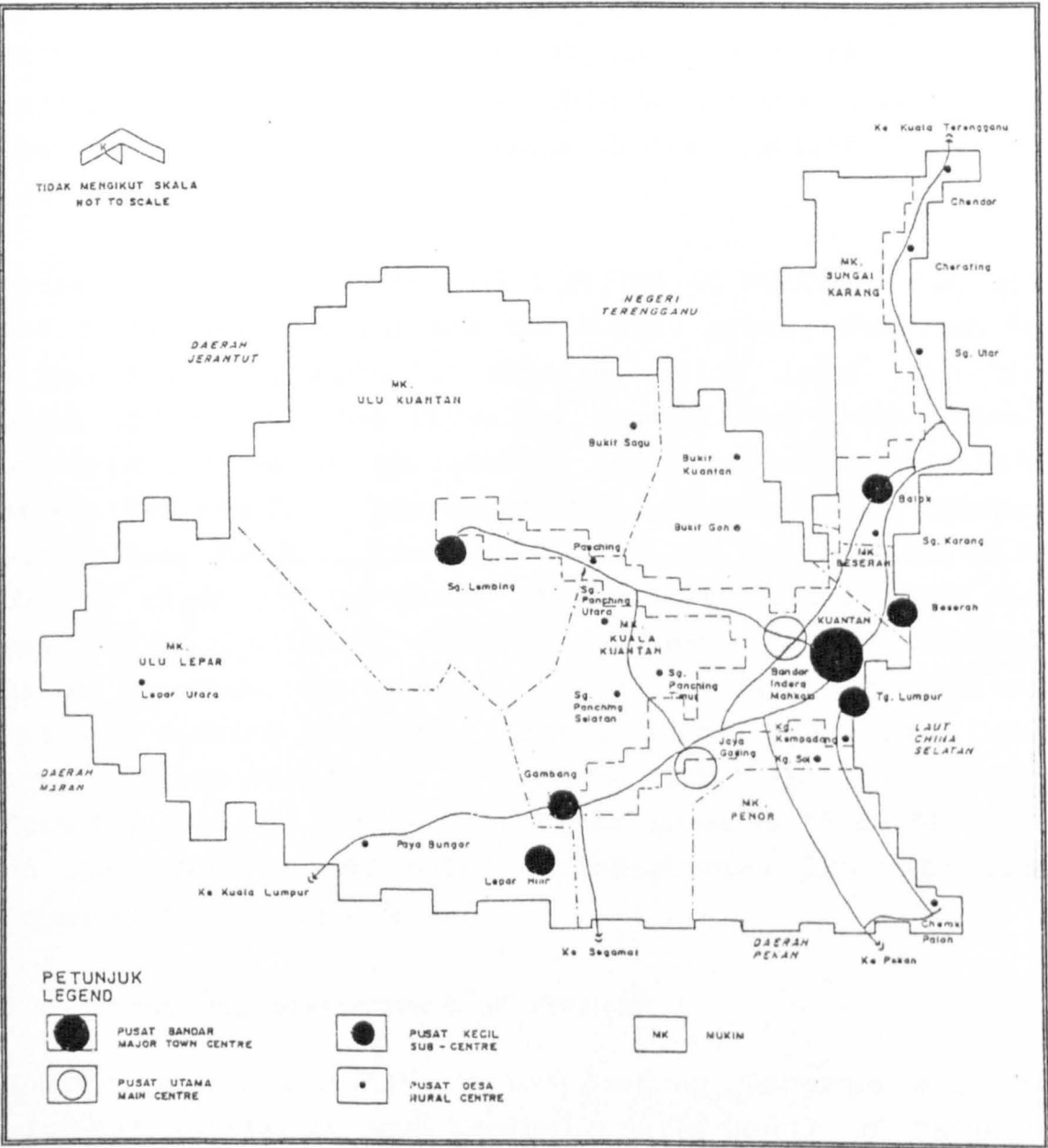


Diagram 5.2 : THE DISTRICT OF KUANTAN, PAHANG

Source : MPK, 1993, p 3-9

The population of Kuantan district as reported in the

Structure Plan was 170,573 based on the 1980 census. By 1990, the population was estimated to have grown to 258,100 on annual growth rate of 4.2%. Of the total population in the town, 81% came under the jurisdiction of MPK. Out of this, 45.2% live in Kuantan town. The ethnic composition of the town in 1990 consisted of Malays (67.8%), Chinese (27%), Indian (5%) and others (0.2%). The areas where the majority of the population are Chinese are the Kuantan town centre and two other small towns in the district - Gambang and Sungai Lembing.

There are three main physical features of Kuantan. They are the hilly, the lowland and the swampy areas. The town is situated by the river of Kuantan, which flows into the South China Sea. The river is one of the main natural drainage systems of the region. Its geographical location means that the town possesses some beautiful sandy beaches within easy reach of the town centre. On the opposite side of the river lie stretches of mangrove swamps, with two small fishing villages nestled in between. The river serves as an important transportation route between the town and the two fishing villages, Tanjung Lumpur and Peramu. The town is also surrounded by several hills and when viewed from the opposite side of the river appeared to be floating on the waters and dominated by the natural landscape (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 3).

## **5.2 Historical development of Kuantan**

Kuantan was originally called Kampong Teruntum and the original settlement was located at the mouth of Teruntum River, opposite the site of the present hospital. The original settlers here were fishermen and paddy growers. At the present site of Taman Esplanade (a river front park) there was an old Malay cemetery which was considered to be evidence of the original site of the early settlement. The town was believed to have been founded in 1852. The name

Kuantan, as reported in the book the History of Kuantan, written and published by the MPK, was derived from the name of the town where the original settlers came from, which was Kuantan in Sumatera, Indonesia.

The town began to expand when tin was discovered in Gambang and Sungai Lembing, which were located several miles from Kuantan. In the nineteenth century tin began to be mined extensively by the Chinese population. The town played an important role by acting as a port to ship tin to Singapore. The river front area of Kuantan River was developed as a centre for the management and collection of tin as well as providing services such as port facilities, customs offices, market, offices, district administration and shops. The Chinese began to inhabit this developed area along the river front whilst the Malays, who were the earliest settlers, moved away to the urban fringe.

In 1888, Kuantan was administered by the British and a District Office was then built to facilitate the administration of the British District Officer. In 1953, the administrative centre for the state was transferred from Kuala Lipis to Kuantan. From then Kuantan began to develop as a service centre with many government offices and other public amenities to be found in the town.

There were then two main transportation systems in Kuantan; land and water. The Kuantan-Gambang road facilitated the inland movement. However, to reach the town from Gambang, one had to cross the River Kuantan using a ferry at Tanah Putih. It was only in 1967 that the bridge over the Kuantan river was completed, facilitating transportation and resulting in the growth of the town (see Appendix 1 for old photographs of Kuantan and maps showing the development of the town centre since 1910).

### 5.3 Kuantan Town Centre

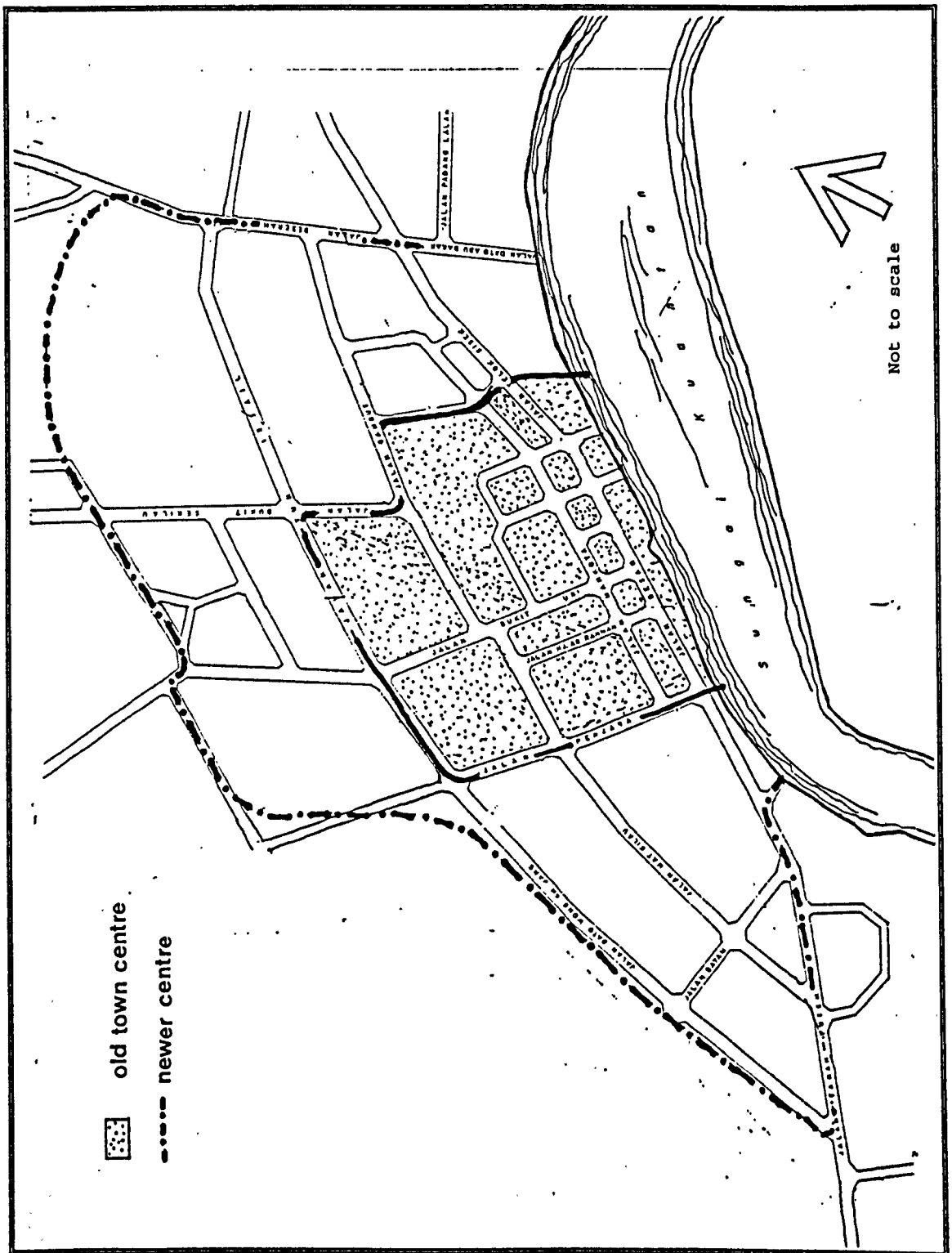
Kuantan town centre as gazetted by the Local Plan covered a gross area of 422.8 ha and is the regional focal point for goods and services. The topography is relatively flat with the Kuantan river adjacent to its southern boundary serving as a natural drainage outlet. The south bank, opposite the town centre comprises mangrove swamps with low hills to the north and to the east.

The town centre is bounded by Jalan Beserah to the east, Jalan Lim Hoe Lek to the north, Jalan Tanah Putih to the west with the Kuantan river to the south. Diagram 5.3 indicates the boundaries of the town centre as stated by the local authority in their Local Plan.

Initially, there was an open view of the river with the shop-houses on the north side of Jalan Besar fronting directly onto the river and its port-related activities. In the 1950s, various structures and buildings were constructed on the river banks which obstructed the view of the river from the town centre. There are two types of buildings in the town - (the pre-war and the post war) buildings. The former are generally co-ordinated shop-houses with constant scales and heights, thus providing a uniform appearance. There are also covered arcades to provide shade and protection from the elements as well as uniform pavement. The post war and recent buildings are mainly medium or high rise and devoid of these arcades with fragmented sidewalks.

According to the Structure Plan, the original commercial core of the town was close to the river, consisting of two storey shop-houses in Jalan Besar and Jalan Mahkota. These shop-houses were still intact during the field work. The construction of the government houses at the periphery of the Padang commenced simultaneously. The Padang which is

located at the centre of the town is surrounded by major civic buildings, which form the administrative core of the town centre. This is then followed by the development of two, three and four storey buildings along Jalan Hj Abd Aziz, Jalan Telok Sisek and Jalan Bukit Ubi comprising retail, wholesale and service outlets. Hence it can be seen that the town centre consists of two parts. The original old town centre, which extending from the river to Jalan Tun Ismail, Jalan Beserah to the east and Jalan Penjara to the west and the newer centre which begins at Jalan Tun Ismail, extends into Jalan Wong Ah Jang to the west and Jalan Lim Hoe Lek to the north (see Diagram 5.3).



According to the Local Plan, the predominant land use of the town centre was residential (25.4%) followed by vacant



land (19.4%), civic use (14.5%) and commercial (8.2%) (see Diagram 5.4). There was a total of 2,266 housing units located within the town centre boundary. The estimated population in 1990 was about 107,100, with the Chinese owning most of the business in the Central Business District, followed by the Malays and then the Indians.

Jalan Tanah Putih is the first road that takes the traveller towards the heart of the Central Business District (see Appendix 2 for the street plans of the town centre). As it is the main road from the west and south of the country into the town, it is among the busiest, with a heavy traffic flow. Jalan Mahkota is also very busy as it is the only route into the centre of the town due to the one way traffic system introduced by the MPK. Jalan Besar is the other major road and it directs the traveller away from the town centre back into Jalan Tanah Putih and out of Kuantan. Both Jalan Besar and Jalan Mahkota are recognised because of their one way traffic flow (the only ones in the town) as well as the size of the road, which consists of three lanes.

The other three major roads, Jalan Wong Ah Jang, Jalan Bukit Ubi and Jalan Tun Ismail carry the traffic within the town centre. Jalan Beserah on the other hand carries the traffic out of the town centre towards the north into the other two east coast states. Thus, it has quite a heavy volume of traffic, being the only outlet route for the town centre.

There are no separate pedestrian paths in the town centre except for the one along Jalan Bukit Ubi. They mostly occurred alongside the roads in the form of sidewalks or covered walkways called 'kaki lima' as seen in the streets of the old town centre. The major pedestrian paths observed in the town centre are along Jalan Bukit Ubi, Jalan Mahkota, Jalan Besar and Jalan Tun Ismail.



DIAGRAM 5.4

KUANTAN  
TOWN CENTRE:  
LAND USE  
DISTRIBUTION

Key:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Vacant land
- Industrial
- Open Space

Source : MPK (1993)

SCALE 1 : 10 000

A report on the character areas identified in the Visual Survey is presented in Appendix 4.

### 5.31 The old centre

From the visual survey, the town centre of Kuantan can be divided into two parts the old centre and the newer centre. Diagram 5.5 illustrates the boundaries of the old and newer centre. The old centre extends from the river up to Jalan Tun Ismail. It is also the most historical part of the town, where the earliest streets in the town centre are located. The State Mosque, Public Services Department, Government Offices and the High Court are located around the Padang. The Wisma Negeri, which acts as the Pahang state government administrative centre is located adjacent to the Padang. All the major banks were also located around this area. There is one major shopping complex located along Jalan Mahkota with the Hospital nearby. The rest of the buildings are shop-houses which accommodate retailing activities on the ground level and residential on the upper levels. The road system also differs from the newer centre because of the one way system operating in this area. Finally, the old centre differs from the new centre because of the presence of the river and the activities that occur in relation to the river. There are more stalls in the old centre compared with the new centre. (Stalls are temporary structures where food, fruits and Malaysian delicacies are sold).

### 5.32 The newer parts of the town centre

The newer parts of the town centre include the more recent phases of Jalan Tun Ismail. These are mainly two or three storey shop-houses and several high rise structures scattered mostly on the periphery of the enclave and containing government offices. Other retail development have also sprouted along Jalan Bukit Ubi and Jalan Wong Ah





Jang. The predominant use of land in the newer centre is commercial and retailing. The public related buildings are the fire station, market and the express bus terminal. Many new retail outlets are located in this area together with the hotels and major private sector office blocks. At the fringe of the newer centre is the residential areas of the town centre. Many of these shop-house units specialised in activities such as private clinics, spare parts shops or textiles shops and restaurants. The distribution of key buildings in the town centre is presented in Diagram 5.6.

#### 5.4 Local authority's policies relating to urban design in the town centre.

At the moment, the MPK has already produced three level of plans for Kuantan, namely the Kuantan Structure Plan, the Town centre Local Plan and three Action Plans covering the three zones identified in the town centre's local plan. In the Structure Plan, there was one section devoted to the town centre, which emphasised the planning and development objectives of the MPK.

In the Local Plan, attention was given to urban design as a result of the findings of the studies done by MPK. In their assessment of the town centre's physical appearance, they discovered that there was no distinct introduction to the town centre. There was also a lack of any clear entrance or portals into the town centre with the result that many visitors did not know that they had entered the town centre. They also identified other problems - the lack of landmarks and focal points as well as the location of shopping centres which were scattered all over the town centre. The planning authority (MPK) have concluded that the presence of badly maintained and dilapidated buildings within the town centre had affected the image of the town.



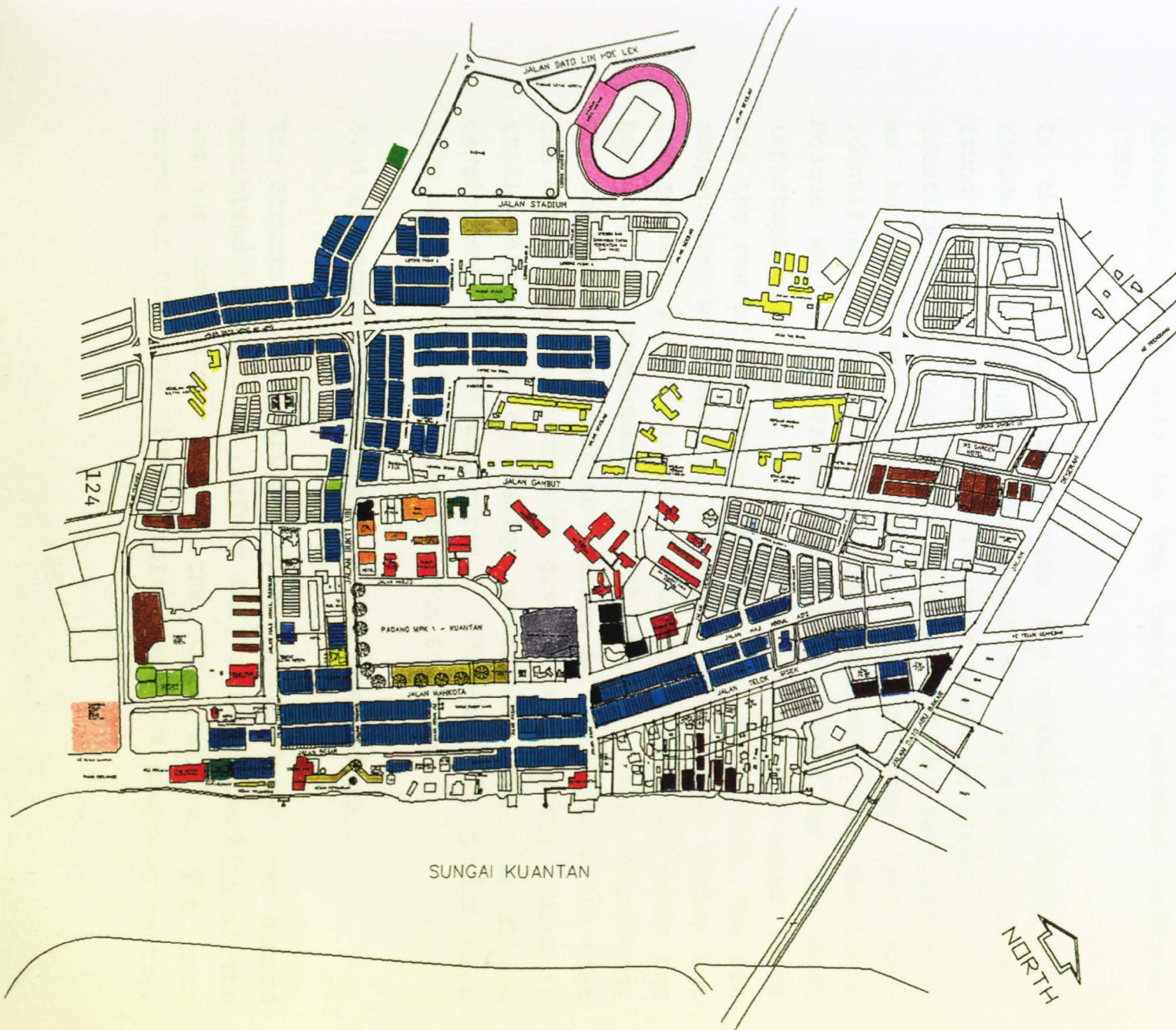


DIAGRAM 5.6

KUANTAN  
TOWN CENTRE:  
BUILDING USE

Key:

- Shop house
- Government office
- Offices
- Cinema
- Bus Station
- Post Office
- Schools
- Mosque
- Shopping Centres
- Stalls
- Stadium
- Petrol Station
- Banks
- Hospitals
- Fire Station
- Houses
- Factories
- Clinics
- Garages

Source: Field work 1994  
SCALE 1 : 10 000

The magnitude of the local authority's concern for the image and identity of the town centre can also be seen because of the engagement of a consultant in 1994 to conduct an urban design study of the town centre. At the same time, the MPK also produced their own design guidelines for development within the town centre area although this document was not made public. In its efforts to create an identity for the town centre, the MPK adopted the Royal Palm as the theme for the landscaping and beautification programme. These palms were planted abundantly especially in the central business district (CBD).

In the discussions held with the planners during the fieldwork and throughout the analysis of this study, it was found that they were concerned with means of promoting the identity of the town centre through physical features such as buildings and landscaping. The building that they identified as the most important landmark was the State Mosque while the Padang was acknowledged as its most important open space in the town centre. The other issue was the row of old shop-houses and the waterfront. The old shop-houses were seen as an asset to the town centre but the present conditions of the buildings together with the pressure for development was threatening their existence. The waterfront was another feature of the town centre that the MPK wished to promote to give it an identity. Work is still being done on design guidelines for the future development of the waterfront. However, an Action Area Plan had already been produced for this area.

#### **5.41 Structure Plan policies on the town centre.**

The Structure Plan policies with regard to the town centre maximised the comfort, safety and visual attraction of the various components within the town centre. The main component that was given priority was the shopping centre,

offices and administration. The Structure Plan policies also placed emphasis on provisions to be made for pedestrians through canopies and plants that provided shade. Added to this, the Structure Plan integrated the Kuantan river into the design of the town centre, thus facilitating the opportunities for tourism and recreation.

#### 5.42 Local Plan policies on urban design.

The Kuantan Town Centre Local Plan's policies on urban design covered three aspects:

##### i. Entrances to the town centre

The MPK was anxious to introduce plans that would provide an effective way of marking the entrances to the town centre (refer to appendix for the photographs of the areas mentioned). The policies that were adopted are as follows:

- a. To erect an archway and monument near the bridge of Jalan Tanah Putih and plant palm trees along it.
- b. To erect a sign board or monument before the Jalan Bukit Ubi intersection.
- c. To erect a landmark for the new development next to the bridge that acts as a portal into the town centre.

##### ii. To enhance the image of the town centre as the main service, commercial and cultural centre for the region.

In order to enhance the image of the town centre, the following steps were recommended:

- a. The mosque area would act as the focal point for the town centre.



b. The area along Jalan Bukit Ubi and Jalan Tun Ismail would be upgraded to be a modern shopping street, equipped with a continuous pedestrian linkage and ample car parking provisions.

c. The three main areas in the cultural zone, i.e Dataran Palma (Palm Square), Dataran Teruntum (Padang) and the waterfront area would be developed.

d. Buildings that have significant historic and cultural values would be restored and preserved.

Three proposals were made for selected buildings that were listed by the Structure Plan. These were: restoration, redevelopment and maintenance. The buildings identified for redevelopment were the row of old shop-houses along Jalan Besar. The new buildings to be built would reflect the design of the old buildings but using new materials. Other programmes involving conservation included the appointment of a Conservation and Preservation Committee, which had the power to list buildings, prepare an inventory of buildings and have powers to inspect, withhold planning permission and acquire old buildings. Finally, the local authority would try to set up a fund for conservation purposes and would award grants as an incentive for conservation efforts.

#### **5.43 Action Plans for the Kuantan Town Centre.**

Action Plans were produced covering three zones within the town centre (see Diagram 5.7). The areas were:

1. The mosque area.
2. River front.
3. Jalan Haji Abdul Rahman.

#### i. The Mosque area Action Plan.

This area was defined by the Structure Plan as a civic area, open space and commercial area. The mosque, Padang and part of the old shop-houses along Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar are located in this area.

The proposals of this action area plan included enhancing the mosque and the Padang through a landscape programme which included tree planting (such as palms), and constructing fountains and paved areas for pedestrians. This was in keeping with the intention to highlight the mosque and the Padang as the major node in the town centre. Other guidelines included set backs, plot ratios, architectural design features, pedestrian walkways, car parking and sign controls. The design guidelines also applied to the conservation works on Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar. The Action Plan was also concerned that new development and in fill buildings would be in keeping with the character of the old shop-houses.

#### ii. River front Action Plan.

This Action Plan included policies that would ensure that any new development on the waterfront would act as a landmark, providing the town centre with a unique image and identity. (This is because the river front was identified as one of the entrances into the town centre). Two types of development, each with its own character were identified for the waterfront. The first type of development, which was on the existing site of the jetty and the bus station was geared towards providing recreational activities for the town as well as catering for tourists activities such as souvenir shops and restaurants. The other parts of the waterfront adjacent to the bridge would be developed as a commercial area with modern outlooks and acting as a gateway into the town centre.

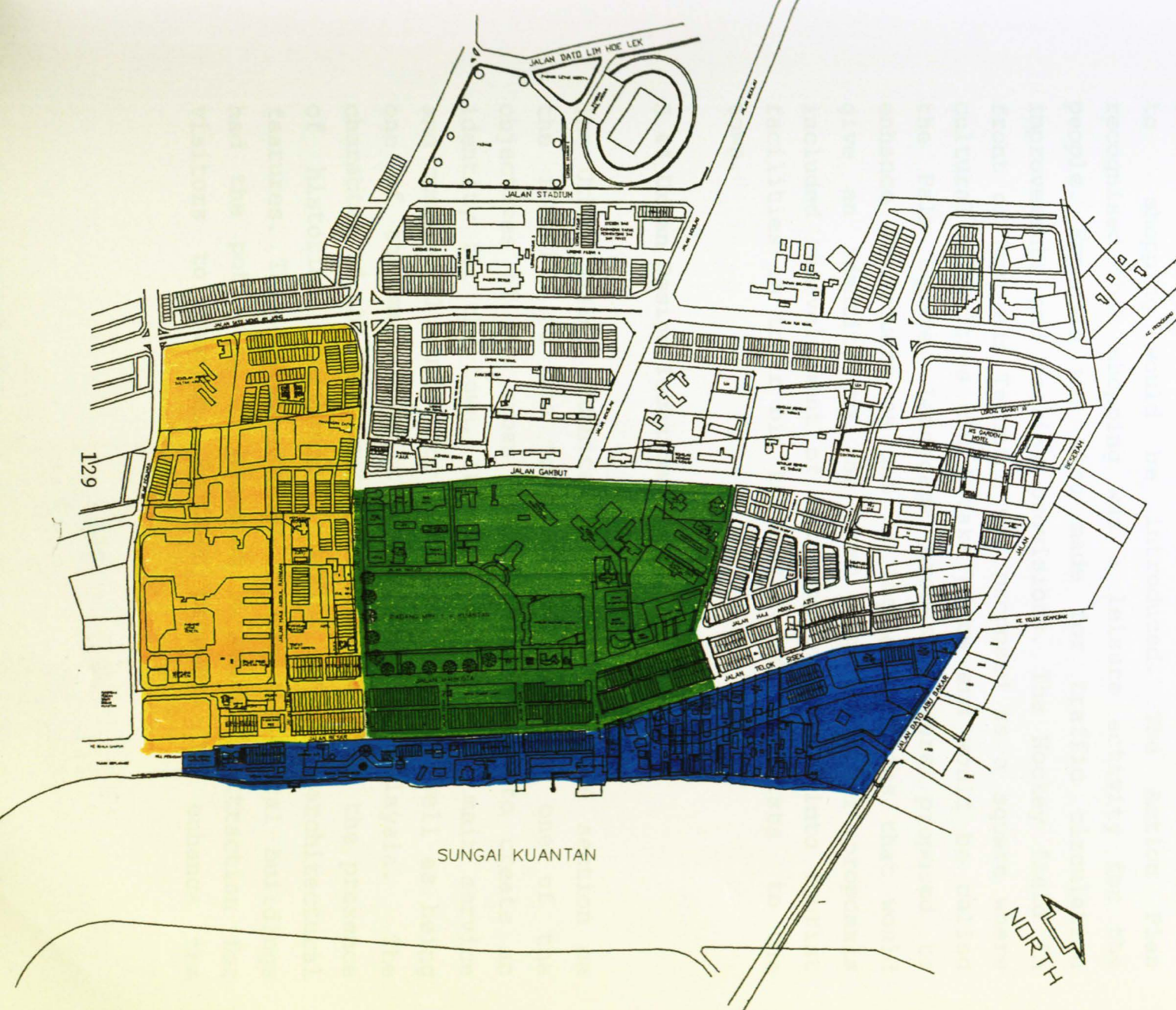





DIAGRAM 5.7

ACTION PLAN ZONES  
IN KUANTAN TOWN  
CENTRE

Key:

-  Mosque area
-  River front
-  Jalan Haji Abdul Rahman

SCALE 1 : 10 000

### iii. Jalan Haji Abdul Rahman Action Plan.

This is the area which was identified as the commercial core of the town centre. One of the main shopping complexes in the town centre, the Kompleks Teruntum, is located in this area as well as the Padang fronting the Kompleks. A new shopping complex, Kuantan Parade is now under construction. This building is located along Jalan Penjara and behind the Kompleks Teruntum. The new development for this area was designed to provide adequate provision for pedestrians and landscaping. An environment more conducive to shopping would be introduced. The Action Plan recognised that shopping was a leisure activity for the people. Emphasis was also made for traffic circulation improvements and parking provisions. The Hockey field in front of Kompleks Teruntum was proposed as a square where cultural activities could take place and would be called the Palm Square. Landscape proposals were proposed to enhance the square as one of the attractions that would give an identity to the town centre. Other proposals included redevelopment of existing buildings into tourist facilities in their bid to attract more tourists to the town.

#### **5.44 Urban Design Technical Report**

The Urban Design Technical Report devoted one section on the identity of the town. It stated that one of the objectives of the urban design studies was to create an identity for the town. It would become the main service and commercial centre for the east coast as well as being one of the main tourist attractions in Malaysia. The character of the town centre was attributed to the presence of historical buildings having unique architectural features. This unique design of the historical buildings had the potential of becoming a tourist attraction for visitors to Kuantan. Another proposal to enhance the

identity of the town centre was to utilise the river front as a tourist attraction.

Finally, the report encouraged the development of shopping complexes instead of just shop-houses in the town centre. This would ensure that the town would become known as an important commercial centre in the region. From the analysis of the physical development of the town centre, the town centre, it is seen that it did not portray an identity in keeping with its role as the main service, commercial and tourist centre in the east coast region. It was hoped that Kuantan town centre would have its own unique identity as well as being the regional centre, through programmes that helped to upgrade the services and other action programmes.

The Report also identified six urban design elements that played an important role in giving the identity to a town. These are:

- i. Building facade.
- ii. Skyline.
- iii. Building setbacks.
- iv. Colour.
- v. Plot ratio.
- vi. Development involving complexes.

The Report suggested that these features gave identity to the town centre and therefore must be regulated in future development. The Report recognised the uniqueness of the old shop-houses facade especially in the details. This was unlike the new shop-houses which had modern design and a uniform facade. The Report also identified colour as playing an important role in the identity of the town centre and suggested some control on the choice of colour for future development in the town centre.

It was apparent from the various documents discussed above that the urban design issues confronting the local authority were those relating to the physical appearance of the town, especially the town centre. Most of the policies were geared towards creating the identity of the town centre. From an analysis of the policies' contents, it could be seen that this involved creating landmarks and gateways to the town centre. There was also a desire on the part of the local authority to create physical structures or features that would act as symbols of the town centre. Three elements were given importance by the local authority that is buildings, open space (Padang) and the river front. It could be seen that these were the elements that the professionals associated with the identity of the town centre. It was also noted that the landscaping and conservation of old buildings were actions that the professionals felt could help create the identity of the town centre.

However, it was found from a Visual Survey, that very little had been done to protect the condition of these old buildings and some were already in a state that was beyond repair. The new buildings in the town centre also did not reflect the unique characteristics of the old buildings as identified in the documents mentioned above. It was also observed that the identity that the local authority wished to create were related to the needs of tourists' and not residents. It could be implied that these actions would result in the creation of an environment that is alien to the needs of the town centre's residents. It had been highlighted in the literature review that the identity of place was a result of the interaction of the residents with a place, and therefore their aspirations, value and cultural background helped to shape the environment. It is therefore important to understand their perception of the town centre's identity so that it reflects the residents' cultural values rather than that of the visitors. The

analysis of data in the next chapters will highlight the extent to which the intentions of the professionals have had an impact on the residents' perception of town centre's identity.

## 5.5 Conclusion.

This chapter provides a general introduction to the case study area and the urban design policies adopted by the local municipal council (MPK). It was evident that the MPK were concerned with the physical appearance of the town centre and that several policies with regard to planning and development of the town centre were geared towards urban design and creating a certain identity for the town centre. Many of these policies were related to the physical aspects of the town centre and its identity was perceived by the local authority as physical qualities that made Kuantan distinct from other towns. The Kuantan town centre also had several unique features and character as observed from the Visual Survey. Although several elements of the town centre such as the Padang, river front, mosque and the old shop-houses were considered to be elements associated with identity of the town centre in the Visual survey as well as by the MPK, this might not be shared by the residents. This will be observed in the findings of the fieldwork in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER SIX

### ELEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TOWN CENTRE'S IDENTITY

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research in terms of the elements that were seen by different groups of residents of the town centre as contributing to its identity. It addresses the variation in the residents' perception of distinctive elements between different parts of the town centre by analysing the location of elements that are distinctive to the residents.

It draws upon the analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data of the research. This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section identifies the types of elements that were noticed by the residents. The second section examines the elements used by residents to structure the town centre perceptually. The third section discusses the location of these elements within the town centre. The fourth section discusses the elements that are distinctive and associated with the town centre's identity. The variation in perception of these elements by different socio-cultural groups is presented in the fifth section. The final section presents the conclusion to the chapter.

#### 6.1 Elements that are distinctive and noticed by all residents.

In this research distinctive elements are defined as elements that were noticeable and remembered by the residents in describing the appearance of the town centre. In Chapter Two and Chapter Three, it has been highlighted that distinctiveness is a quality associated with the identity of place. Thus the discovery of elements that are remembered most vividly by the residents lead to the



identification of elements associated with the identity of place. Furthermore, Lynch (1960) suggested that there is a link between distinct elements and their vividness to the observers. There are three sources of information for identifying these elements: the questionnaire survey, the focused interview and the photo recognition interview. From these sets of data, it is found that the distinctive physical elements perceived by the residents can be divided into three categories - physical structures, urban spaces and landscape elements.

### 6.11 Physical structures

Physical structures that were identified by the respondents in the survey can be divided into two categories - the buildings and non building structures.

#### i. Building

It was observed from the survey that buildings were mentioned very frequently as elements that acted as symbols and unique features of the town centre (see Table 6.1 and Table 6.2). In Table 6.1, Kompleks Teruntum, (a shopping complex) was mentioned by the highest number of respondents (62.1%) as the symbol of the town centre. Other buildings such as the Mosque (23.9%) and bus station were also included in this category. The high number of respondents who mentioned a building as a symbol of the town centre suggests the distinctiveness of buildings as a symbol of the town centre to the respondents. Table 6.2, however highlights the unique features of the town centre. With the exception of the Padang, river front and Jalan Besar, all the unique features of the town centre mentioned in the survey were buildings. The highest number of respondents (48.5%) mentioned the mosque as the most unique feature of the town centre. The survey results also identified buildings as elements that acted as symbols and unique

feature of the town centre to a higher number of respondents compared to other elements.

Table 6.1 : Symbols of the town centre

	No (330 Resp.)	%
Kompleks Teruntum	205	62.1%
Bus station	86	26%
Mosque	79	23.9%
River	51	15.4%
Padang	38	11.5%
Jalan Besar	37	11.2%
Bridge	26	7.9%

Table 6.2 : Unique features of the town centre

	No (330 Resp.)	%
State Mosque	160	48.5%
Padang	160	48.5%
Kompleks Teruntum	100	30.3%
Benteng (river front)	46	13.9%
Jalan Besar	40	12.1%
Old shop-houses of J.Mahkota	30	9%
Bus station	26	7.8%
Market	5	1.5%
Stadium	5	1.5%

Source : Field Survey 1993/1994

Analysis of the focused interview transcript revealed that buildings were mentioned by all thirty respondents in describing the physical appearance of the town centre (see Table 6.3) . It was noticed from the interview transcript that buildings become a distinctive element to the respondents for six reasons; to act as landmarks or symbols, to identify the location of the town centre, to indicate its boundaries, to describe its uniqueness or special quality, to describe the changes in the appearance of the town centre and to remember an area in the town centre. Finally, buildings played a significant role in the photo recognition task. Respondents were able to identify the photographs quicker if there were buildings in

**TABLE 6.3:     DISTINCTIVE ELEMENTS MENTIONED BY RESPONDENTS IN THE  
INTERVIEW IN DESCRIBING THE TOWN CENTRE'S APPEARANCE**

	GENDER		ETHNICITY			AGE GROUP			
ELEMENTS	MALE (15)	FEMALE (15)	MALAY (10)	CHINESE (10)	INDIAN (10)	YOUNG (10)	MIDDLE AGE (10)	ELDERLY (10)	TOTAL (30 resp)
Beach	12	12	7	7	10	7	10	7	24
Roads/Streets	13	13	7	9	10	8	10	8	26
Riverside	10	6	7	3	6	3	9	4	16
Buildings	15	15	10	10	10	10	10	10	30
Traffic/Parking	10	7	6	5	6	6	7	4	17
Trees	6	7	3	7	3	3	-	5	13
Playground	2	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	2
Activities	9	6	7	3	5	4	10	2	16
Bridge	6	6	5	4	3	3	5	4	12
Garden	3	3	2	3	1	3	1	2	6
Padang	6	7	2	4	7	2	7	4	13
Lighting	3	2	4	2	-	2	1	2	5
Sculpture/ fountains	1	2	3	-	-	1	2	-	3
Sign	2	2	2	2	-	2	2	-	4
Hills	2	-	-	2	-	1	1	-	2
Pavings	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
Jetty	1	1	1	1	-	-	2	-	2
View	1	1	1	1	-	-	2	-	2
Cemetery	1	1	2	-	-	-	1	1	2
Junction	1	1	-	2	-	-	1	1	2
Clock tower	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1

them. It was observed that respondents found some difficulties in identifying places without any buildings in it. This is because buildings were seen to be the most important clue in helping the respondents to recognise a place in the town centre. In the three methods of investigation it was demonstrated that buildings played an important role in the residents' description of the town centre's appearance. It can be deduced that the distinctiveness of a building depended on the ability of the building to be easily recalled and used as a source of reference in remembering the town centre.

## ii. Other Physical structures

Apart from buildings, the other physical structures that were mentioned only in the interview, sketch map task and photo recognition task included structures such as the jetty, bridges, street furniture and traffic lights (mentioned by ten out of thirty respondents in the interview). However, the number of respondents who mentioned these structures were relatively low compared to buildings. Of these structures, the traffic lights were the most noticeable by the respondents. It was observed that the bridge was mentioned by six respondents and considered by them as having the potential of contributing towards the town centre's identity. This was reflected in Respondent 13's statements in describing the features noticed and symbols of the town centre.

" ...The Kompleks Teruntum is one of the symbol of Kuantan and is very famous. Now, with the new bridge, it will be an attraction. "

There are two bridges in the town centre, one located outside the town centre and the other at the fringe of the town centre boundaries. The former was frequently mentioned especially in describing the boundaries of the town centre and the elements that acted as entrances to the town. The

other bridge, which was still under construction at the time of the field work, was already distinctive to the respondents. The other type of bridge which the respondents noticed was the overhead pedestrian bridge found at Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar. These bridges were referred to by some respondents in identifying the two streets in the photo recognition interview as illustrated by Respondent 24's description of Jalan Besar.

" This is here. You can see the bus station and the overhead bridge. Without it, it is difficult to identify. There are only two overhead bridges that is here and in front of Kompleks Teruntum. "

The jetty is the other structure mentioned by some respondents in describing the town centre. The jetty is a place where many people go, especially those who travel between the town centre and the fishing villages on the opposite side of the river. It was also observed that in mentioning the jetty, respondents also referred to the presence of boats and fishermen's activities.

The other physical structures such as the jetty, clock tower, fountain and sculpture did not appear prominently in the residents' description of the town centre. They were used to describe the character of specific place in the town centre by only few interview respondents compared to other type of physical structures. One possible explanation is that due to the limited number of such structures that they are not a common feature of the town centre. This also suggested that their presence acted as local landmarks of the town centre and thus referred to only by smaller group of respondents. However, they appeared to play an important role as place markers of the town centre.

It is observed that physical structures played an important role in the residents' perception of the town centre's identity. Physical structures were distinctive to

the respondents in both qualitative and quantitative methods of investigation. It appeared that major buildings were used as public symbols of the town centre compared to the non building structures. The latter played a role in becoming the local landmarks and reference points in aiding the resident's orientation around the town centre.

#### 6.12 Urban spaces

The second type of element that was mentioned in the residents' description of the town centre's appearance concerned urban space. There are two elements of urban space according to Krier (1979) and Moughtin (1992) which are the street and the square. As opposed to the first element, urban space concerned elements which are spaces within the town centre that are distinctive to the residents, therefore easily recognised and remembered. Thus, elements that have spatial quality other than objects or structures are categorised under this. There were four types of spaces mentioned by the respondents in both the survey and interview. They were the street, Padang (open field), Taman Kerang (pocket space) and the river front (linear space). Of these spaces, the street and the Padang were mentioned by more respondents in the survey than in the interview. From the survey, it was observed that streets were also mentioned as one of the symbols of the town centre. Three types of streets were mentioned - Jalan Mahkota, Jalan Besar and Jalan Bukit Ubi (see Table 6.1). However, less than 10% of the respondents mentioned these streets suggested that they were used as symbols by only a small group of the respondents.

Apart from this, it was found that streets were also mentioned in describing the unique features of the town centre (see Table 6.2). However, the only street that was mentioned as a unique feature of the town centre is Jalan Besar, with a total of 12.1% of the respondents mentioning

it. Although the percentage was comparatively low, the inclusion of Jalan Besar as one of the unique features of the town centre can be seen as indicating its distinctiveness.

The Padang was mentioned by less than 10% of the respondents as symbols of the town centre. This suggests that it was not highly distinctive to the respondents to be used as public symbols for the town centre. However, the Padang was mentioned by the highest number of respondents (48.5%) together with the mosque as the unique feature of the town centre. This suggests that this space was very distinctive to the respondents only as a feature of the town centre. This implies that distinctive elements do not necessarily become symbols of the town centre.

Finally, the river front and the Taman Kerang were mentioned by only very few respondents as symbols and unique features of the town centre. This was quite an unexpected finding of the survey because both of these places were strategically located in the town centre and were the main settings for major activities in the town centre. However, they were more prominent in the interview and were recognised by more than half of the interview respondents during the photo recognition task.

### **6.13 Landscape elements.**

There is a significant difference in the findings between the sample survey and the interview with regard to landscape elements. In the sample survey, landscape elements were the third element mentioned by residents in naming the important elements of the town centre. However, the focused interview discovered that the landscape elements were more widely mentioned by the respondents in talking about elements that they noticed and thought to contribute to the character of the town centre (see Table

6.2). This difference in findings between the survey and focused interview suggests the limitations of the former technique in revealing the landscape elements that were distinctive to the residents. The landscape features that were mentioned in the sample survey were the river and beach (Teluk Cempedak). These features were mentioned when respondents were asked to name the symbols and features that were unique to the town centre (see Table 6.2). Although the beach was mentioned in both categories, the number of respondents doing so was very low to be of significance. However, the river was mentioned by more respondents (15.4%) as symbols of the town centre than other factors. It was rather surprising that the river was not mentioned as a unique feature of the town centre despite the town being located by the river. The survey findings suggest that the river was not as distinctive to the residents compared to the buildings and streets in the town centre of Kuantan. This is probably due to the lack of visual permeability of the river from the town centre. Furthermore, existing development was not fronting the river, which resulted in the river being away from the main circulation. This difference in findings between the survey and focused interview suggests the limitations of the former technique in revealing the landscape elements that were distinctive to the residents. The natural landscapes that were mentioned by the respondents were the river and the beach. The man-made landscape features mentioned included the trees, potted plants and paving. Of all these features the landscape features that were mentioned by a large proportion of respondents were the beach, which was mentioned by the highest number of respondents (quoted by 19 out of 30 respondents), river (15 respondents) and trees (13 respondents). The other features were mentioned by very few respondents to be of any significance (that is less than four). The distinctiveness of these elements were also observed by their preoccupation



with some of the landscape elements, especially the beach and the trees in describing the appearance of the town centre.

#### i) Beach

It was observed that the geographical position of the town and its centre played quite a considerable role in making some of the natural landscape features distinctive. This is evident in the case of the river and the beach. The beach, which was called Teluk Cempedak, was mentioned (as a factor that contributes to the town centre's identity see Table 6.3) by the highest number of respondents interviewed. However, geographically the beach was not within the town centre boundary despite being only about four miles away. The accessibility of the beach from the town centre for its residents had made the beach a feature that was closely associated to its identity. This was reflected by Respondent 10's comments.

" Q : Other than that? Well, if I ask what makes the identity of the town centre?

A : Teluk Cempedak.

Q : Why do you include it as part of the town centre?

A : Its distance is not far from the town. Although we feel it might be far because you pass through the jungle to reach there but if you look at the bus fare, it is cheap. The bus fare must have been based on the distance. "

The beach was also distinctive to the respondents because of its environmental qualities as reflected by Respondent 22's comments.

" Q : What is the first thing that crosses your mind when mentioned the word Kuantan?

A : Teluk Cempedak.

Q : Why?

A : The environment there is nice and clean. "

ii) River

In the interview, the river appeared quite significantly in the residents' description of the town centre. One of its contribution to the town centre was that it provided a panoramic view to the residents in contrast to the hustle and bustle of the traffic and cluster of buildings. This was evident when some respondents associated the river with the town centre's identity as reflected by Respondent 6's statements.

" Because, the river has been there for so long. For as long as I remember Kuantan, it has been there. If it is not there, then its identity will be gone. Furthermore, it still brings back our childhood memories. "

The river was seen here as forming the boundaries of Kuantan town centre because it prevented development from spreading beyond the river front as reflected by the following comments from Respondent 6.

" I think the town centre begins at the hospital bounded by the river up to the traffic lights of Jalan Teluk Sisek. It extends up to Jalan Beserah and the Bukit Sekilau area is also within the town centre limit. "

iii) Trees

The third landscape feature that was mentioned in the interview by many respondents were the trees. It was found from the interview that trees were distinctive to the respondents especially when they described the appearance and the environment within the town centre. This was illustrated by Respondent 21's description of the trees in the town centre.

" A : Kuantan has many trees because when I compare it with Ipoh, Ipoh hasn't got as many trees as Kuantan in its town centre.

**Q :** What is it about the trees that makes you noticed them?

**A :** The trees make the town looks natural, not just a place with heavy traffic. If you feel tired, you can always look at the trees. "

Hence, the presence of trees was felt to have a significant and positive effect on the environment as perceived by this respondent. The trees were also perceived to be reducing the impact of the hustle and bustle of the traffic and crowds of people in the town centre area. According to Respondent 17, the street plantings and the flowering plants in the town centre added colour to the street scene and visually improved the town centre's environment. In addition, they also provided shade from the sun. The trees were also distinctive because of the nostalgic memories they evoked between the past and the present. Thus, it was not surprising that some respondents constantly referred to the jungle that once covered the town centre area before developments took place. The jungle was mentioned especially when describing the changes in appearance between the present town centre and the past, as reflected by Respondent 7. Thus, the presence of trees is perceived by the residents as contributing to the town centre's identity.

#### **iv) Paving and street furniture**

Of all the landscape elements, paving and street furniture were least mentioned by respondents in the interview (see Table 6.3). These elements did not appear prominently in the respondent's description of the town centre's appearance or the character of place. In the photo recognition task, it was observed that these elements were mentioned only as supporting the other important elements such as buildings. This implies that their presence only complemented the distinctiveness of other elements, rather

than being the main factor that contributed to the identity of place.

## 6.2 The influence of residents' perceptual structuring of the town centre on their perception of elements associated with its identity.

In the literature review, urban structure is seen as one of the key components of the physical environment that influences perception of identity of a place. It was highlighted in Chapter Three that Lynch (1960) suggested that people use five elements to organise the city in their mind and that these elements have an influence on their image of the city. This study also presumes that the residents' perceptual structuring of the town centre had an influence on their perception of the town centre's identity. Thus, elements that were used to structure the town centre perceptually were seen as elements important to the town centre's identity as perceived by the residents. The sketch maps produced by the thirty interview respondents were analysed according to the types of elements identified by Lynch (1960). The analysis was also based on the level of details drawn and the sequence of drawing. The denser the map, by which large number of details were drawn, the more distinct was the image of the town centre. From the thirty maps drawn, it was evident that only four elements mentioned by Lynch can be identified; nodes, edges, landmarks and paths (see Table 6.4). In this section, the residents' perceptual structuring of the town centre were examined to identify elements that were distinctive and used to structure the town centre by the residents. Districts were not drawn by the respondents. This was probably because the town centre was only a small section of the town centre that it was perceived in itself as a district. This also confirms Lynch's (1960) theory that districts are medium to large

sections of the city that have similar characteristics.

#### 6.21 The influence of edges on perception of identity of the town centre.

It was observed that two types of elements were used to indicate the boundaries or edges of the town centre in both groups (see Table 6.4). These elements were streets (such as Jalan Tanah Putih, Jalan Besar and Jalan Bukit Ubi) and natural features such as the river. However, it was apparent that the river was noticed by fewer respondents as one of the boundaries or in Lynch's term, an edge that defines the town centre limits (see Table 6.4 ). Only nine respondents managed to draw the river in their maps. A possible explanation was that although there was a concentration of human activities which occurred at the river front there was no direct view into the river from the major streets in the town centre. Jalan Besar, for example, which was the street that lay parallel to the river front, only had a partly hidden view of the river. The other possible explanation was that recent development of the town centre were located away from the river. Consequently, the river appeared more like a backyard to the town centre. ✓

**TABLE 6.4 : TYPES OF ELEMENTS DRAWN IN THE MENTAL MAPS OF RESIDENTS**

No. of respondents who drew the elements used by Lynch (1960)

(Total no. of respondents = 30 persons)

	ELEMENTS/PLACES IN KUANTAN TOWN CENTRE	EDGES	PATHS	NODES	LANDMARKS	NOTES
1	River	9	-			Other elements that were drawn
2	Jalan Besar	12	21			by only one or two respondents
3	Jalan Beserah	3	3			were not included due to the
4	Jalan Wang Ah Jang	7	7			small number of respondents
5	Jalan Lim Hoe Lek	3	3			drawing them. These elements
6	Jalan Tun Ismail	4	8			include:
7	Jalan Penjara	16	16			1) Pedestrian overhead bridge
8	Jalan Gambut	1	23			2) Bridge
9	Jalan Bukit Ubi	8	29			3) Taman Esplanade
10	Jalan Mahkota	13	30			4) Old cemetery
11	Jalan Teluk Sisek	2	2			5) Hotel Pacific
12	Komplek Teruntum				28	6) Court house
13	Mosque				20	7) Hotel Samudera
14	Bus Station			21		8) MARA Building
15	Medan Pelancung				6	9) Prison
16	Old Shophouses				17	10) School
17	Market				7	11) Wisma
18	Ocean Supermarket				10	12) District Office
19	Parkson				13	
20	Police Station				20	
21	Benteng (Stalls)				7	
22	Taman Kerang			11		
23	'Bamboo' bus stand			6		
24	Chinese School				7	
25	Hospital				7	
26	Stadium				4	
27	Padang MPK I (near Mosque)			18		
28	Hindu Temple				2	
29	Padang MPK II (near Kompleks)			11		
30	Junction Jln Bukit Ubi/Jln Mahkota			25		
31	Junction J. Bukit Ubi/J T Ismail/ J			9		
32	Junction J. Penjara/J. Mahkota			15		
33	Junction J. Penjara/J. Besar			15		
34	Taxi Stand			10		

Hence, in the respondents image of the town centre it was Jalan Besar, rather than the river, which was considered the boundary for the town centre to the south. Both Jalan Besar and the key buildings were used by majority of the respondents to signify the beginning and the limits of the town centre in the interview.

The most common element used to define the edges of the town centre in the sketch maps was the streets. Ten streets were drawn to define the limits of the town centre in the sketch maps. Of these streets, Jalan Bukit Ubi were drawn by the highest respondents (24 persons) followed by Jalan Besar (21 persons) and Jalan Penjara (16 persons). The high number of respondents drawing Jalan Besar as an edge of the town centre whereas in actual fact, it was strategically located in the centre of town. It was one of the streets that defined the Padang. Since Jalan Bukit Ubi was also found to be distinctive in the survey, it can be suggested that it was the street that residents associated with the town centre. Thus, the area, located within the street was more vivid in their minds as being the town centre than other areas. This was also evident from the interviews when streets were used to demarcate the limits of the town centre. Respondent 7 for example, suggested that the boundary of the town centre lay between Jalan Besar and Jalan Lim Hoe Lek. Hence, the use of streets to define the boundaries of the town centre indicates that paths can also delineate the edge of the town centre.

#### **6.22 The influence of paths in residents' perception of identity of the town centre.**

The sketch maps also revealed the respondents image of the paths network within the town centre which indicated the structure of the town centre. The clarity of the path network as well as its accuracy in comparison to the roads

network suggested that the structure was distinctive and vivid in their minds. Appendix 2 indicates the actual road system as produced by the MPK.

During the questionnaire survey, respondents were asked on their orientation abilities in the town centre (see Table 6.5). It was apparent that all of the respondents did not lose their way in the town centre. There was also no place in the town centre which was confusing to them. This suggested that orientation, was an easy task for the residents and that the town centre's structure was clear to them.

**Table 6.5 : Orientation abilities of respondents**

	Yes	No
Ever got lost	0 (0%)	330 (0%)
Places confusing	0 (0%)	330 (0%)

Source : Field survey 1994/1995

When respondents were requested to draw a map of the town centre, all of them were able to do so by firstly drawing out the roads that they could recall in the town centre. Whilst the roads were being drawn, all the elements that acted as a landmark to them were drawn along the way. It was observed, in terms of the paths network, that there were three types of map produced (see Diagram 6.1). The first type was a complete map of almost all the roads within the Central Business District. This type of map was produced by three respondent. The three maps were also quite accurate and consistent with the road maps of the MPK suggesting the vividness and clarity of the structure of the town centre in these respondents' minds.







However, it was observed that the road directions to other areas outside the town centre were also drawn. This suggested that these directions helped the respondents to structure the town centre paths in the absence of the street's name. Overall, the three maps produced by the respondents were quite similar to each other which suggested that the main paths network of the town centre were highly distinctive to them.

**Table 6.6 : How a place is remembered**

	No (330 Resp.)	%
Streets name	315	95.4%
Building type	180	54.5%
Use	140	42.4%
Activities	138	41.8%
Sign	115	34.8%
Padang (open space)	4	1.2%

Source : Field survey 1994/95

The second type of map produced was partially completed covering the old town centre, from the Kompleks Teruntum area to the Mosque and Jalan Besar right up to the Parkson Supermarket and the Market and Ocean Supermarket building in the newer centre. These maps differed from the first one because they contained fewer details such as the minor roads. These maps were produced by ten respondents. It was observed that the maps which were drawn only covered streets which formed the main paths network in the town centre. Respondent 12's map provided the best illustration for this category (see Diagram 6.1). This group of respondents perceived that the town centre's main system of paths consisted of five roads. The roads were Jalan Besar, Jalan Mahkota, Jalan Bukit Ubi, Jalan Gambut and Jalan Tun Ismail. Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar were noted because they were parallel to each other, whereas, Jalan Bukit Ubi was noticeable because of its role as a spine road to

the other routes branching from it or crossing it. Although the maps were not as detailed as the first group, the town centre paths network still consisted of both centres.

The third group of sixteen respondents, which was the majority group, produced maps which covered the paths network of the old parts of the town centre. The maps varied in terms of the details ranging from Respondent 2's detailed map to Respondent 24's limited map of the old town centre (see Diagram 6.1). It was apparent that the main paths network that formed the structure of the town centre for these respondents were Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Bukit Ubi. The two roads were noticed as being perpendicular to each other and this was reflected in all the drawings.

From the sketch maps, it was observed that for many of the respondents, the paths network played an important role in the residents' perceptual structuring of the town centre. It was also discovered in the interview that many respondents found the path network to be distinctive and this assisted their orientation task. From their description of the path network and some of the sketch maps produced, it was evident that they had a clear structure of the town centre in their minds. Several factors were thought to have influenced this.

Firstly, the major roads were quite distinguishable and there were few side lanes or lower hierarchy roads branching out from this network of major roads. This was apparent in Respondent 3's description of the road system whereby it was difficult to be lost in the town centre.

" As I mentioned earlier, the main reason is that there are not many side roads, only a few major roads. If that is the case, you will never get lost easily. This is in comparison to the old town of Malacca, where there are so many side lanes and you find it easy to get lost. "

This explained why most of the maps drawn consisted of the major roads in the town centre.

Secondly, the size of the town and its centre was relatively small compared to metropolitan cities such as Kuala Lumpur. This means that it was easier for the residents to organise the path structure in their minds. This point was highlighted by Respondent 10.

" Well, the town is small and the road system is not complicated. You only need to walk a short distance to reach wherever you want to go. "

The traffic circulation and the road system were also distinctive thus making it easy for the residents to orient themselves. According to Respondent 14, the road system was simple with few turning points. In addition to that, the roads were also straight. It was observed from the Visual Survey that the town centre's road network was a grid which consisted of Jalan Bukit Ubi acting as a major spine to the town centre with the other roads running perpendicular to it. Surrounding the town centre were Jalan Tun Ismail, Jalan Dato Wang Ah Jang, Jalan Tanah Putih, Jalan Besar and Jalan Teluk Sisek which all linked up to form a ring road to the town centre. This ring road was linked up by Jalan Bukit Ubi and Jalan Penjara. The ring road was noticed by Respondent 24, when he mentioned that the main roads were quite clear and straight, with a loop that enabled people to get back easily to the town centre.

The other factor about the road system was that there was a one way traffic system in the old town centre. As commented by Respondent 19, this would make it difficult for anyone to be lost in the town centre.

" A : I am one hundred percent confident I will never get lost.

Q : Why are you so sure ?

A : Because the roads are all one way. "

Respondent 26 also felt that the one way traffic system enabled him to move about easily in the town centre without fear of getting lost as shown below;

" Perhaps it is difficult to get lost because the road system is one way and no matter how you move about you can get back to the original position. "

It was observed that the one way system was so distinctive to the residents even though only two major streets were affected by the scheme, namely Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar. It also had a significant impact on the residents' perception of the path network , enabling them to grasp the town centre's structure, thus making it easy to orient themselves. The distinctiveness of the one way system was also found in the case of pedestrians since half of the respondents interviewed did not own a car and relied upon the public transport to travel. It was deduced that the one way system became distinctive even to pedestrians because pedestrians shared the same paths as motorists in Kuantan town centre.

In summary, it was discovered that the paths network and the major roads were highly distinctive to the respondents. This enabled the residents to organise the town centre structure clearly in their minds. It is observed that a majority of the respondents who participated in the sketch maps task, found that the paths network was clear in their minds. Only very few respondents encountered problems in orientation based on the maps drawn.

It was discovered that the design of the road, its layout and the direction of traffic flow were the main factors that enabled residents to orient themselves easily in the town centre. It was also observed that streets which were mentioned as one of the distinctive elements in section 6.1 was one of the most important component of paths. It was

evident that the distinctive streets mentioned were also the main paths drawn in majority of the maps. These streets were Jalan Bukit Ubi, Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar, all of which were located in the old town centre. Although Lynch (1960) defined paths as channels along which the traveller potentially moves, analysis of the sketch maps revealed that the paths that drawn were paths used by vehicles and motorists. This suggest that paths used by the motorists are more distinctive to the residents compared to pedestrian paths or non vehicular paths. This is probably due to the lack of co-ordinated pedestrian paths of pavements in the town centre. Thus, residents rely upon the roads to structure the town centre.

#### 6.23 The influence of landmarks on residents' perception of identity of the town centre.

The sketch maps were also analysed for the presence of landmarks. According to Lynch (1960), landmarks are singular elements and point of reference which the observer does not enter.

The sketch maps were analysed in terms of the types of elements that were used as landmarks and the major landmarks noticed by the majority of the respondents and the minor landmarks which were present in the maps of only very few respondents.

It was observed from the sketch maps that the area within the old town centre had more elements present acting as landmarks to the areas drawn as compared to the newer commercial sector (see Diagram 6.2). The most common elements used as landmarks for the maps were buildings, of which the Kompleks Teruntum was drawn by the highest number of respondents (that is 28 out of 30 of the maps drawn). The Mosque and the Police station were also seen as

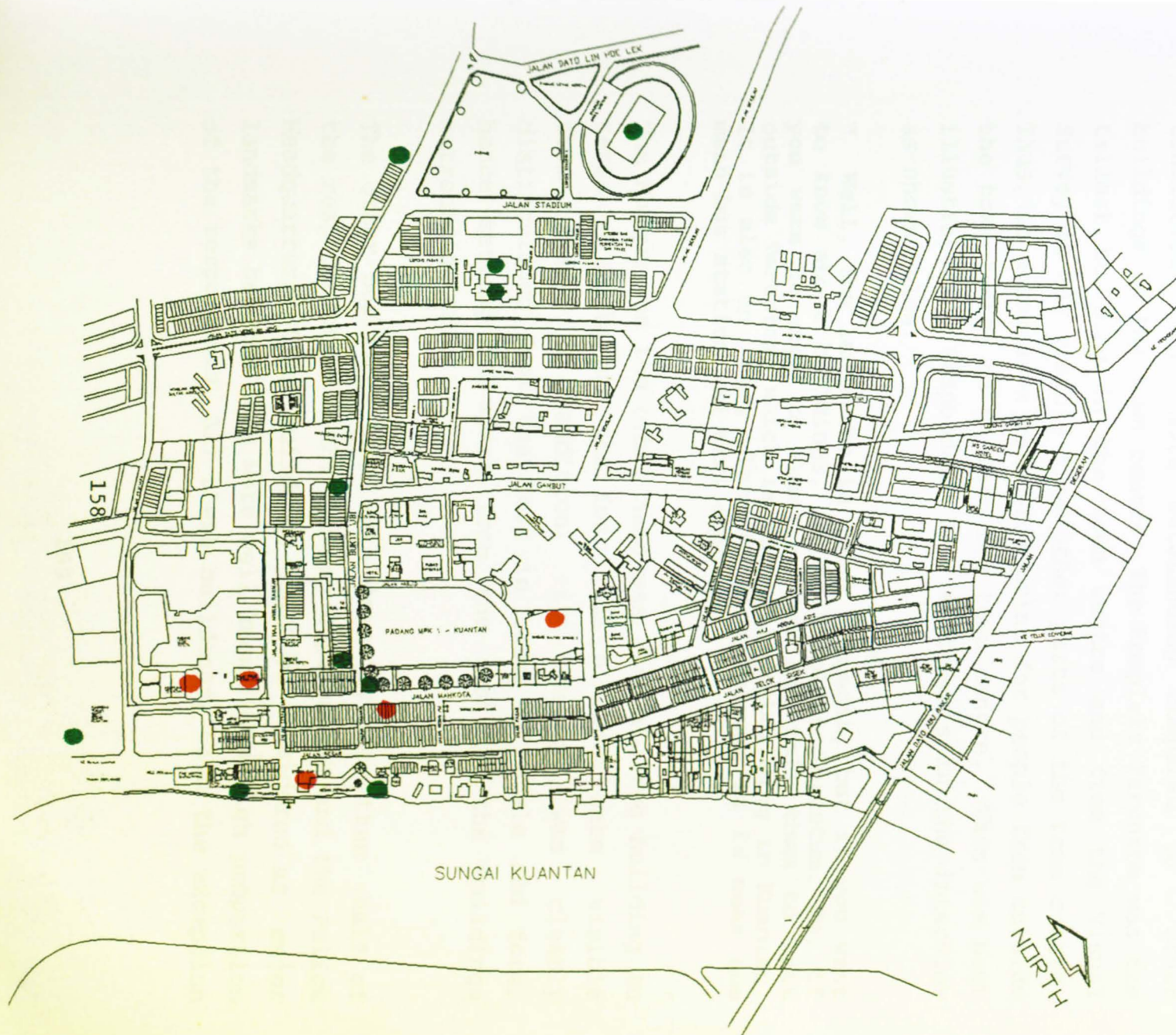


DIAGRAM 6.2

LOCATION  
OF LANDMARKS  
DRAWN BY  
RESPONDENTS

Key:

- Drawn by more than half of the respondents
- Drawn by less than half of the respondents

Source: Field work 1994  
SCALE 1 : 10 000



a major landmark because it was drawn in twenty of the maps drawn respectively. It was observed that both the Kompleks Teruntum and the Mosque were important landmarks to the respondents because of their popularity, as evident in the following statements made by Respondent 3.

" If you are talking about landmarks, there are only a few popular landmarks that is the stadium, Kompleks Teruntum and the present mosque. "

In terms of appearance, Kompleks Teruntum and mosque were considered to be more outstanding compared to other buildings in the town centre. The Kompleks Teruntum was the tallest building in the town centre and from the Visual Survey it was visible from other parts of the town centre. Thus, it acted as a reference point for people from outside the town centre to go into the town centre. This was best illustrated by Respondent 12's statements in the interview as shown below:

" Well, the landmarks is Teluk Cempedak, but if you want to know about buildings, it is Kompleks Teruntum. So, if you were to come to Kuantan, you can tell them to wait outside Teruntum, which is the tallest building in Kuantan. It is also an easy place to find because it is near the main bus station and taxi station. "

The Mosque, on the other hand was also a large building in terms of scale and its four tall minarets were visible from afar. In addition, its design was clearly distinguished from the rest in terms of style and form, hence setting it apart from the rest of the buildings surrounding it.

The other buildings that were drawn by more than half of the respondents were the Parkson Supermarket and the Police Headquarters. These buildings could be considered as major landmarks because they were well known by a high proportion of the respondents. All these buildings, with the exception

of the Parkson Supermarket were located in the old town centre. The other buildings that were drawn as landmarks by less than half of respondents, were the old shop-houses, Market and Ocean Supermarket building, bus station, hospital, Wisma buildings, the stadium and Medan Pelancung. Of this group, the buildings that were located in the new centre are the Ocean Supermarket and the stadium.

From the sketch maps, it was observed that Jalan Mahkota had the highest number of major landmarks, followed by Jalan Besar (see Table 6.4). The area around the Padang and Mosque were also observed to have clear landmarks to the respondents. Both streets and the Padang had historical significance, being the earliest site of the original settlement of the town. They were also seen by the residents as having unique characteristics. This suggested that the uniqueness of streets and open spaces was due to the presence of clear landmarks of the town centre. In addition to this, historic areas in the town centre also tended to have major landmarks that were important to the residents. The older buildings in the town centre also tended to be used as landmarks by the residents as reflected by the sketch maps. Examples of this were the old shop-houses which were among the earliest buildings in the old town centre. These buildings, although not distinguishable in terms of scale and height, were still considered as landmarks because of their familiarity. This was observed in the interview held with the respondents when these buildings, especially the old shop-houses were noticed because of their familiarity.

The other observation made regarding the choice of buildings as landmarks was that buildings like shops that were regularly visited by the residents were important landmarks to the town centre. An example was illustrated in the case of the Parkson Supermarket along Jalan Bukit Ubi

and the Ocean Supermarket along Jalan Tun Ismail. These two buildings were among the major buildings for shopping and regularly used by the residents for their shopping needs.

In summary, it was observed that landmarks were used by residents to organise the structure of the town centre but were usually drawn after the paths suggesting that paths were more important to them in their mental representation of the town centre. It was found that in cases where the path structure was very complete in the maps, there also tended to be many landmarks drawn in the maps. This indicated that clear landmarks influenced the clarity by which the structure of the town centre was perceived. This in addition contributed to the residents' perception of the town centre's identity.

#### 6.24 Influence of nodes on residents' perception of the town centre's identity.

Nodes were according to Lynch (1960) strategic spots or intensive foci which a traveller can enter and had a concentration of activities or thematic characteristics. Examples of nodes were according to him squares, junctions, bus terminals and others. It was observed from the maps that there were five types of nodes drawn by the respondents; road junctions, Padang, Taman Kerang, bus station and taxi stand. Of these, the major road junctions were drawn in almost all the maps. The junction of Jalan Bukit Ubi and Jalan Mahkota, for example were drawn by the highest number of respondents (twenty respondents). This suggested that junction nodes were very important to residents' perceptual structuring of the town centre. The other type of node which was very distinctive was the bus station, because it was drawn by the second highest number of respondents (twenty one respondent). It was also observed from Diagram 6.3 that a majority of the

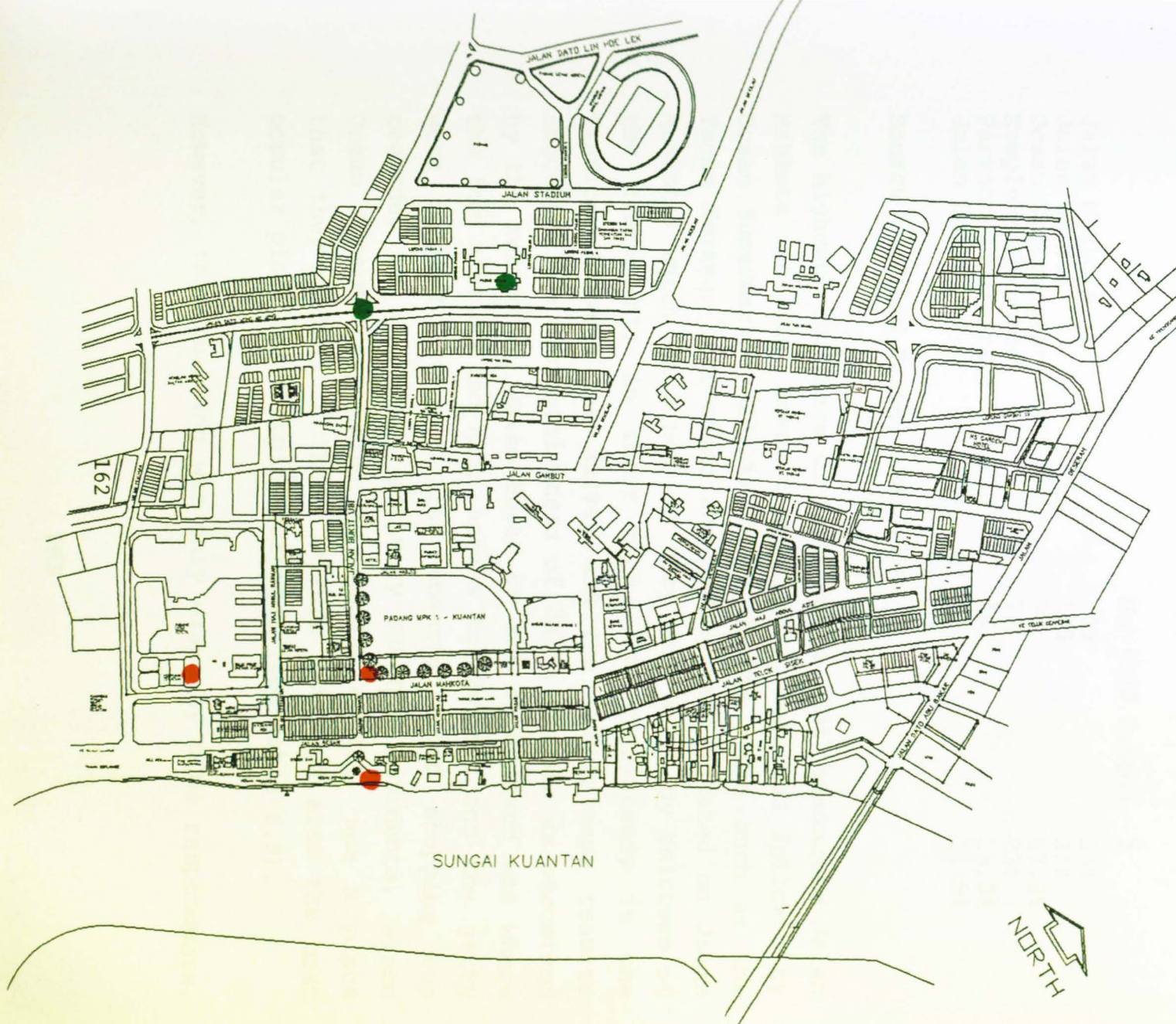


DIAGRAM 6.3

LOCATION OF NODES  
DRAWN BY  
RESPONDENTS

Key:



Drawn by more than  
half of the respondents



Drawn by less than half  
of the respondents

Source: Field work 1994  
SCALE 1 : 10 000

nodes drawn were located in the old town centre.

The questionnaire survey also attempted to identify the nodes of the town centre by requesting respondents to name places that they visited for their leisure purposes. Six places were mentioned by more than 10% of the respondents as places they liked to visit in their leisure time (see Table 6.7).

Table 6.7 : Places visited for leisure purposes

	No (330 Resp.)	%
Jalan Mahkota	109	33%
Jalan Besar	109	33%
Ocean Supermarket	90	27.2%
Kompleks Teruntum	76	23%
Parkson Supermarket	54	16.3%
Jalan Bukit Ubi	38	11.5%

Source : Field Survey 1993/1994

The highest percentage of respondents (33%) mentioned Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar respectively. This was followed by Ocean Supermarket (27.2%). Many of the nodes such as the Taman Kerang, taxi stand and Padang were located on Jalan Mahkota, which explained why they were drawn by thirteen of the respondents in their maps. The consistency in the findings between the survey and the sketch maps results suggested the distinctiveness of Jalan Mahkota as perceived by the residents. Jalan Besar on the other hand was where the bus station and main access to Benteng and the jetty were located. It was also observed that shopping was regarded as a leisure activity to the residents, since Ocean Supermarket, being a shopping outlet, was a place that they visited in their leisure time and also the most popular place for shopping purposes (see Table 6.8).

However, this building was only drawn by nine respondents,

that is, less than half of the respondents interviewed. Its location in the new centre probably explained why it was drawn by fewer respondents than the other nodes. The

Table 6.8 : Places for shopping

	No (330 Resp.)	%
Ocean Supermarket	223	67.6%
Market	223	67.6%
Parkson Supermarket	167	50.6%
Jalan Bukit Ubi	167	50.6%
Kompleks Teruntum	114	34.5%

Source : Field Survey 1994

reasons given for visiting these places were the presence of amenities and choices (58.2%), strategic location (41%) and many activities to watch and do (25.3%). This tends to support Lynch's idea of nodes as strategic spots where activities were concentrated (see Table 6.9).

Table 6.9 : Why places are visited for leisure

	No (330 Resp.)	%
Many amenities and choices	192	58.2%
Strategic location	136	41.2%
Many activities to do	47	14.2%
Many activities to watch	37	11.2%
Near to home	36	10.9%

Source : Field survey 1994

**6.25 Distinctive elements of the residents' perceptual structure of the town centre that influenced their perception of the town centre's identity.**

This section highlighted the perceptual structure of the town centre by its residents and its influence on their perception of the town centre's identity. It also highlighted the roles played by the distinctive elements in this structure. The distinctive elements used to

structure the town centre were buildings, streets and landscape features. Of these elements, streets were used by all respondents in their mental maps, followed by buildings. One of the possible explanation for this was that the residents constructed the image of the town centre based on the roads (paths) that they frequently used and buildings (landmarks) which they noticed were located along the roads.

It was observed that many of the respondents did not remember other physical elements such as trees, signs, overhead bridges and others apart from the buildings and streets. Only a small number of the respondents noticed these features and included them in their maps. The other elements that many did not remember to include in the map were natural features such as the river and the mangrove swamp. Even the green open spaces or Padang were missing in many of the maps. This suggests that such elements played a less important role in the way the residents structured the town centre in their minds as compared to buildings and roads. This also supports the findings of the sample survey regarding elements perceived by residents to be associated with the town centre's identity.

Among the five elements mentioned by Lynch (1960), only paths and landmarks were commonly used. It was also observed that the district was not used to structure the town centre. A possible explanation is the relatively small size of the town centre, which made the respondents perceived it as a district of the town itself. This suggests that the term district was only used to describe a larger area than the town centre. Most of the landmarks consisted of public buildings and major shopping buildings. The nodes drawn were mostly intersections of paths and places where the public gathers such as the Taman Kerang, Benteng, bus station and Padang. A major



shopping building was also considered as a node because shopping was seen as a leisure activity by the residents. Edges were present in some maps whilst in others they were not clearly shown. It was observed that the edges that were drawn were also among the main paths of the town centre. The edges drawn by the residents differed from the actual boundaries of the town centre, in particular the river.

The residents' perceptions of the town centre area and its size also differed from the definitive local authority map. Their perception of the town centre was limited to a smaller area and concentrated on areas where commercial development and administrative activities were located. The local authority's boundaries, on the other hand, covered the residential areas within the town centre. It was also observed that areas considered as the centre by a majority of the respondents were also the area where on street human activities were visible and where the main transportation nodes were located. In addition to this, the area identified by the residents as the core of the town centre was also the area which had historical and architectural significance. It appeared that the area also played an important role in the structure of the town centre and acted as the reference point for the residents. Clear entrances to the town centre were also important to the residents. This was related to their conception of the boundaries of the town centre in which residents tended to select certain elements as indicating the beginning or ending of the town centre.

The visual survey identified twelve character areas or visual units, of which two of them were in the newer centre (see Appendix 4). The survey provided a record of the elements and their physical characteristics as well as the human activities that were observed in the town centre. From the analysis of the sketch maps, it was discovered



that all the areas mentioned in the visual survey were drawn by the respondents but the number of areas drawn varied according to the individual respondent. Only three respondents managed to draw all of the twelve areas mentioned in the Visual Survey. The majority of the respondents were only able to place a few of these character areas in their structure of the town centre. It was also found that a majority of the respondents tended to draw the character areas that were located in the old town centre. This suggests the distinctiveness of the character areas of the old town centre.

It was also observed that the residents' perceptual structuring of the town centre also influenced their perception of the town centre's identity. Elements that were used to mentally structure the town centre tended to be elements that were distinctive to the residents. These elements were then used to describe the town centre's appearance.

### **6.3 Distribution of distinctive elements within the town centre area.**

One of the objectives of this research is to establish the variation in the residents' perception of identity between different parts of the town centre. This section will examine the distribution of distinctive elements in terms of location within the town centre. The influence of the existing pattern of land use on the location of distinctive elements will also be examined. This is followed by an analysis of the location of the town centre as perceived by the residents.

#### **i. Location of elements associated with the town centre's identity.**

The distinctive elements identified in the previous section

as associated with the identity of the town centre by the residents were physical structures (namely buildings, urban spaces such as streets and Padang, and landscape features) In order to identify the location distribution of the distinctive elements, respondents in the survey were asked to mention buildings and streets that they knew and those considered unique. Other questions referred to the features that they considered unique, elements that acted as symbols of the town centre, places with distinct views and places that they go for shopping and leisure purposes. The location of the elements and places mentioned by more than 10% of the respondents were then tabulated on a map (see Diagram 6.4 )

From Table 6.10 , it can be observed that there are more elements mentioned by at least 10% of the interview respondents located in the old town centre (twelve elements) than in the new centre (six elements). Diagram 6.4 illustrates the distribution of these elements in the town centre's map. It is apparent from the diagram that the distinctive elements as perceived by the residents were concentrated in the old town centre, namely along Jalan Mahkota. Of the eight buildings that were known to at least 10% of the respondents, four were located along this street. The Padang, which was mentioned as one of the unique features and symbols of the town centre was also located adjacent to this street. The most significant difference observed in the table is that none of the unique features and symbols of the town centre were located in the newer centre. The same observation is also made for places that were considered beautiful by the respondents, in which these places were located in the old town centre. Finally, all the buildings that were considered unique by at least 10% of the respondents were also located in the old centre. However, in the case of unique streets, only one of the four streets mentioned were located in the new



**TABLE 6.10: LOCATION OF DISTINCTIVE ELEMENTS IN THE TOWN CENTRE**  
(Mentioned by at least 10% of the respondents in the survey)

		LOCATION	STREETS KNOWN	STREETS UNIQUE	BUILDINGS KNOWN	BUILDINGS UNIQUE	UNIQUE FEATURES	SYMBOLS	DISTINCT VIEWS	PLACE FOR LEISURE	PLACES FOR SHOPPING	BEAUTIFUL PLACE	UGLY PLACE
1	Kompleks Teruntum	Old town centre	-	-	93.1%	52.2%	-	91.8%		23%	34.6%		
2	Wisma Buildings	"	-	-	56.2%	-	-	24.5%					
3	Mosque	"	-	-	42%	38.4%	48.5%	-				27.8%	
4	Hospital	"	-	-	12.5%	-	-	-					
5	Police Station	"	-	-	12.2%		-	-					
6	Rex Cinema	"	-	-	12.2%		-	-					
7	Bus Station	"	-	-			-	26%					29%
8	Padang	"	-	-			48.5%	11.6%				64.5%	
9	Benteng (riverfront)	"	-	-			13.9%	15.6%				17.4%	
10	Jalan Mahkota	"	55.8%	35%						33%			
11	Jalan Besar	"	45.2%	18.1%			12%	11.3%	29.9%	33%			
12	Jalan Bukit Ubi	"	68.6%	18.4%					43.4%	11.5%	50.7%	13.6%	
13	Medan Pelancung	"	-	-								18%	
14	Taman Kerang	"	-	-								53.4%	
15	Hotel Pacific	Newer town centre	-	-	10.7%								
16	Jalan Wong Ah Jang	"	36.3%	11.7%									
17	Parkson Supermarket	"	-	-						16.3%	50.7%		
18	Market	"	-	-							67.7%		31.1%
19	Jalan Lim Hoe Lek	"	-	-					11.3%				
20	Jalan Tun Ismail	"	34.8%	-									
21	Ocean Supermarket	"		-	24.3%					27.2%	67.7%		

town centre. It is apparent that the new town centre was more distinctive for the shopping facilities provided to the residents. This is because out of the five places mentioned by the residents as places for shopping, three were located in the newer town centre. The highest number of respondents quoted the Ocean Supermarket (67.7%) and the market (67.7%) as their places for shopping. Both buildings were located in the newer centre. It is also interesting to note that there is a difference between the type of places visited for leisure purposes mentioned by the respondents in both centres. In the old town centre, the three places visited for leisure purposes were streets; Jalan Mahkota, Jalan Besar and Jalan Bukit Ubi. However, in the new centre, the places visited for leisure purposes were buildings related to shopping activities; Parkson Supermarket and Ocean Supermarket. Diagram 6.5 illustrates that many of the elements that were easily recognised in the Photo Recognition Task were located in the old town centre. Thus, it can be suggested that there is a significant difference between the old and the new town centre in terms of residents' perceptions of elements that are distinctive in both areas. This difference can be attributed to the physical difference between the two. It was observed that the old town centre was more distinctive because of its physical appearance than the new centre. Furthermore there was a greater mixture of land use in the old centre than the new centre. This probably influenced the difference in perception of identity of a place. The location of major modern shopping buildings and the tendency of the new centre having only commercial activities probably made it less distinctive to the residents compared to the old centre. This resulted in the new centre to be noticed more for its shopping related facilities than its physical appearances. Hence, perception of identity also depended on the mixture of activities as well as the design of environment provided.



172

JALAN DATO LIN MOE LEE

JALAN STADIUM

- JALAN GAMBUT

SUNGAI KUANTAN



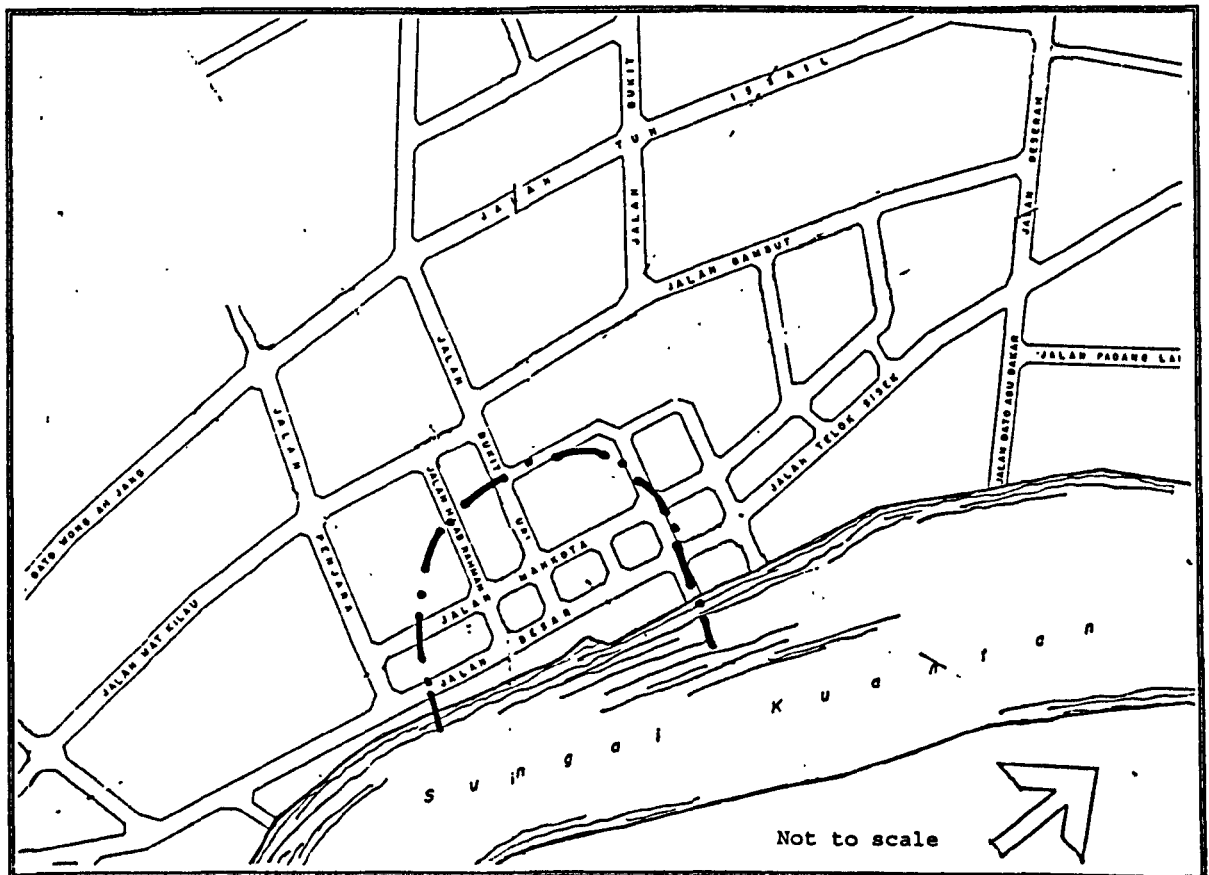
ii. The location of the town centre area as perceived by the residents.

Chapter Five has illustrated the location of the town centre and its boundaries as identified by the MPK. This map will be used as a means of comparison with the area perceived to be the town centre by the respondents. Comparison between the definitive town centre map and the respondents sketch maps revealed significant differences in terms of areas and boundaries.

The first type of maps which were produced by thirteen out of twenty four of the respondents only covered the areas within the old town centre. The rest of the respondents also produced the second type of maps, covered the areas within the newer commercial sector as well as the old town centre. For the first group of maps produced, it can be seen that the town centre was perceived by the respondents to cover only a small section of the actual town centre as defined by the local authority (MPK). The centre was perceived by these groups of respondents to include the area from the District Hospital at Jalan Tanah Putih to the Mosque, and from the river up to the Parkson Supermarket at Jalan Bukit Ubi (see Diagram 6.6 ).

For the first group of respondents, the town centre was considered to be the area located near the Padang at Jalan Mahkota between Kompleks Teruntum and the Mosque and Parkson Supermarket at Jalan Bukit Ubi to the north and the river along Jalan Besar to the south (see Diagram 6.5). There was a consensus of opinions between these groups of residents on the location of the town centre, with the only difference detected to be the actual boundaries. Some only considered the area near the Padang to be the centre to include the hospital to the west and the Parkson Supermarket to the north. It was observed that for some

respondents in this group, the town centre was considered small and that there was only one centre which was the old town centre. The new centre was not considered as a town centre, rather it was more of an area where shopping facilities were found. This probably explained why some of the maps drawn only covered a small section of the town



**Diagram 6.6 : Area perceived as the town centre by the first group of residents.**

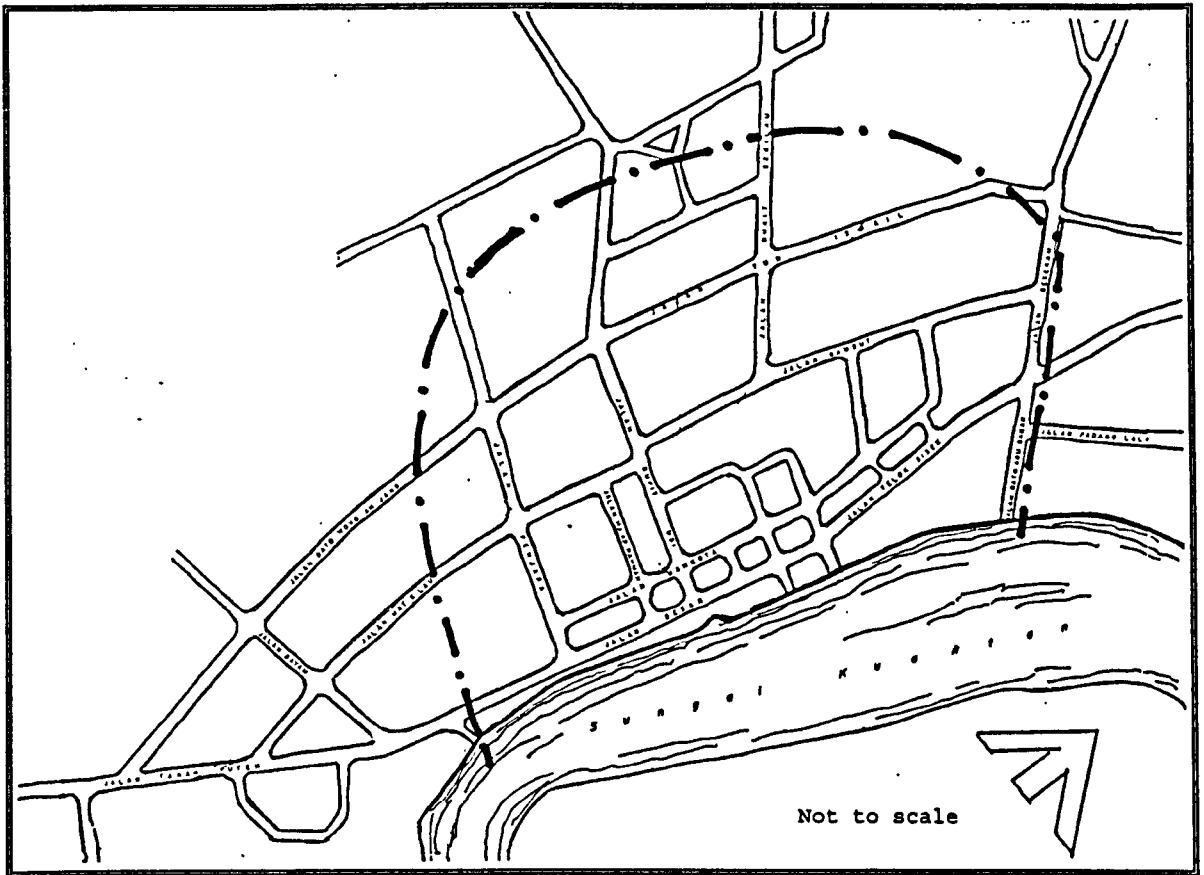
Source : Fieldwork 1994

centre that was near the mosque area. However, the majority of the maps drawn by this group covered the area between Kompleks Teruntum and the Mosque, suggesting that this area was perceived to be the core for the town centre. Of this, the Respondent 2's map highlighted the vividness of this area by the completeness of the map drawn in terms of elements that were present.



The second group of respondents tended to perceive the town centre as covering a larger area. This group of respondents perception of the town centre was about twice the size of the centre drawn by the other group. The town centre drawn by this group ranged from Jalan Penjara, to Jalan Beserah and the river to Jalan Dato Lim Hoe Lek (see Diagram 6.7). The map drawn by Respondent 5 was a good example of the maps produced by this group.

It was evident that there were two parts of the town centres which were distinctive as perceived by the resident; the new centre and the old centre. The old town centre was perceived to be more distinctive as it was drawn by all of the respondents, compared to the new centre (only drawn by less than half of the respondents). It was observed that for the second group of respondents, only Respondent 5, Respondent 15 and Respondent 25 were able to draw a detailed map of the streets and major buildings in both the old and the new centre. The rest of the respondents in this group only managed to produce a limited map of the newer centre. This suggests that the new commercial centre was less distinctive compared to the old centre. This is based on the level of details covered by the respondents in their maps of the old centre and the newer one.



**Diagram 6.7: Area perceived as the town centre by the second group of respondents.**

Source : Fieldwork 1994

In comparing the sketch maps with the interview transcripts, it was observed that there was a consistency between responses in the interview with the areas that were drawn as the town centre. It was observed that the second group of respondents which included the newer commercial sector as the town centre in their maps, also mentioned this area when talking about the boundaries of the town centre. These respondents considered the town to consist of two centres namely the (original) old town centre and the new town centre (where the commercial activities were located). This was reflected in the conversations with Respondent 24 as shown below.

" A : Yes, there are two town centres.

Q : Why is that so?

A : I think it is because of the market. The supermarkets are mostly there, so people tend to go there for shopping. In the old centre there are less shopping facilities, but still people are always there. On the whole, there are lesser attractions there . "

The old centre was thought to be the area between the Kompleks Teruntum and the Mosque and bounded by the river, Jalan Gambut and Jalan Bukit Ubi. Jalan Mahkota, Taman Kerang and the Padang were also included within the area. Respondent 15, for example, when asked about the boundaries of the town centre, considered the old town centre to be the area near the Padang where the Wisma building was located, as shown below.

" At first, the centre is Wisma Sri Pahang area, bounded by Jalan Besar, approximately 1 km radius from Wisma. "

However, when asked about the location of the town centre, the response was as follows :

" A : At the market area.

Q : Market area?

A : Where the Ocean Supermarket is located as well as all the banks along Jalan Tun Ismail. "

Thus, it can be inferred from these statements that the original centre was perceived to be the area around Padang and the new town centre as the area of the market. In order to understand why certain areas were drawn by the respondents as the town centre, a cross analysis was made with the interview transcripts. It is apparent that the characteristics associated with the town centre were concentration of activities, strategic location and concentration of people. Respondent 12, for example, associated the town centre with a place where shopping

facilities were located as illustrated below :

" Q : Where do you define the town centre for Kuantan?

A : It is located at the place where the shopping centres are. "

Respondent 17's perception of the town centre, however, included other factors as well as shopping facilities i.e where major development occur as reflected below.

" It is the centre of activities, business and administration. It is clear and compact. You can see other development radiating from it. "

The location of the area in relation to the town centre was also important in influencing the perception of the town centre. The town centre was a place which was strategically located and where access to other areas was possible and convenient. This was because of the major roads that ran through it as well as the nature of the traffic circulation system. This was highlighted by Respondent 14's comments.

" Because there are many developments there. Other than that, it is the Taman Kerang . I think the real centre might be Taman Kerang. The reason is that from there you can go to anywhere in town. There is a major road intersection here. "

Finally, the town centre was perceived as an area where there was a concentration of activities and where large crowds of people were found. This was reflected by Respondent 26's comments on the location of the town centre.

" A : The centre is at the mosque and Padang.

Q : Why ?

A : If you move around the town, you will go back to the mosque. The road system is one way, so if you move

around the town, you will get back to the mosque area. Furthermore, it is a centre of attraction to the people. There are many stalls, people selling medicine, and the town bus station. It is a historical centre of activity. "

It was also observed that the town centre was associated with the presence of the main bus station. The main bus station was located in the old town centre. Thus, this resulted in the town being perceived as having two centres, because people were concentrated at the two areas mentioned above. The following extract of Respondent 24's interview illustrated the influence of the main bus station to the residents' perception of the town centre.

" Now people tend to concentrate around the Ocean Supermarket and Market area. When the main bus station is completed, I think more people will go there, therefore the centre might shift towards there rather than the mosque area. "

It was evident from the interview that almost all the respondents considered the two centres different from each other in terms of their appearance. According to Respondent 8, the newer sector is the commercial centre of the town and was busier than the old centre. The latter, on the other hand was more noticeable for its administrative and stall holders' activities.

From the maps, it was discovered that only three respondents were able to draw the map of the two centres. The other nine respondents' maps indicated that these two centres were separated and linked only by Jalan Bukit Ubi. In the new centre, only the Market and Ocean Supermarket building and the Stadium Darul Makmur were drawn, whereas other elements were not noted. Their maps of the old town centre were denser, consisting of more elements than the former. This suggests that the new centre is remembered mainly because of the Market and Ocean Supermarket building and that it is the centre for the majority of the retailing

and commercial activities in the town. The area identified by the residents as the core of the town centre was also the area which had historical and architectural significance.

In summary, the size of the town centre and the boundaries perceived by the residents were different than the actual boundaries produced by the MPK. The town centre as perceived by the majority of the respondents was only a small portion of the one defined by the MPK. It was also evident that the definition of town centre between the residents and the planners differed because the town centre, according to the residents, was the core of the town. It was seen as the point of concentration for people and activities, namely commercial and administration. The area identified by the residents as the core of the town centre was also the area which had historical and architectural significance.

Analysis of the maps in terms of the sequence of drawing and density of maps revealed the difference between the old town centre and the new centre from the residents perspective. The imbalance in terms of the number of elements drawn as well as the sequence in favour of the old town centre as opposed to the new centre suggested the distinctiveness of the old town centre compared to its newer counterparts. This is possibly due to the presence of elements that were able to be remembered by residents and used by them in structuring the town centre in their minds. Finally, these findings were cross analysed with those of the photo recognition task. The photo recognition task suggested that more places in the old town centre were easily recognised by the residents compared to the new parts of the town centre. This implies that the old town centre has a relatively stronger identity as perceived by the residents as compared to the new town centre.

#### 6.4 Variation between different socio-cultural groups in perceiving the distinctive elements.

The section above examined the types of physical elements that were distinctive to the residents of the town centre. These perceptions were seen as belonging to the residents as a group of people occupying the town centre. However, the residents of the town centre consisted of people from different social and cultural backgrounds. Thus, this section examines the variation in perception between the different groups of residents. This is to discover if this variation is significant to the perception of the town centre's identity. The socio-cultural differences taken into consideration in this research were ethnicity, gender and age groups.

The variation in perception between the socio-cultural groups was assessed by analysing the survey respondents' response on the buildings, streets, unique features and landmarks that they knew and considered unique. This was because these were the elements that were distinctive to the residents and associated with the town centre's identity. Secondly, the elements used by respondents to describe the town centre in the interview were analysed. Finally, the variation that could be observed was between the sketch maps drawn by the different socio-cultural groups of residents.

##### 6.41 Variations according to ethnic background

It was observed that there was very little variation that existed between the three ethnic groups; the Malays, Chinese and Indians in their perception of the distinctive elements in the town centre. It was observed that all the ethnic groups mentioned buildings, streets and landscape features in recalling the town centre's appearance. The

slight variation in perception between the three ethnic groups was in their choice of buildings, streets and landscape features that they recalled. In the case of buildings, there was a similarity between the three ethnic groups in their choice of buildings known by the highest number of respondents from each group (see Table 6.11 ). It was observed that the mosque, despite being the place of worship for the Muslims, namely the Malays, was still distinctive to the non-Muslims, even though they did not use this building. This suggests that buildings that are distinctive are not necessarily related to them being used by the residents but also due to their physical appearance. A higher proportion of the residents from each ethnic group tended to know buildings located in the old centre. The only building in the new centre that was known to more than 10% of the respondents surveyed is the Ocean Supermarket. It was observed that more Chinese respondents noticed this building compared to the other two ethnic groups.

There was also a slight variation between buildings that were considered unique by the ethnic groups (see Table 6.11). The Kompleks Teruntum was considered unique by the highest percentage of Chinese respondents whereas the highest percentage of the Malay and Indian respondents found the State Mosque to be the building that was most unique to them. Nevertheless, a significant number of respondents from all groups found the Kompleks Teruntum and the State Mosque as unique buildings. Despite this slight variation, it can be deduced that the three ethnic groups shared many similarities in their perception of distinctive buildings. The buildings that were distinctive to all three ethnic groups were located in the old town centre.

There was also a slight variation observed between the three ethnic groups in terms of the streets that are known by the highest number of its respondents. Jalan Bukit Ubi



was mentioned by the highest number of the Malay and Indian respondents whilst the highest number of Chinese respondents mentioned Jalan Mahkota (see Table 6.12). It was observed that Jalan Bukit Ubi was mentioned by nearly

**Table 6.11: Buildings known and those considered unique according to their ethnicity.**

	Malays	Malays	Chinese	Chinese	Indians	Indian
Buildings	known	unique	known	unique	known	unique
Kompl. Terunt	96.3% (318)	38.7% (128)	91.2% (301)	58.4% (193)	93.6% (193)	25.1% (83)
Wisma	88.1% (291)	2.7% (9)	66.6% (220)	2.1% (7)	75.1% (248)	6.3% (21)
Mosque	55.1% (182)	43.6% (144)	34.2% (113)	35.1% (116)	50% (165)	43.6% (144)
Ocean	31.2% (103)	10.3% (34)	20.6% (68)	6.6% (22)	18.8% (62)	12.7% (42)
Hospital	2.7% (9)	0.9% (3)	17.2% (57)	5.7% (19)	18.8% (62)	-
Rex cinema	4.5% (15)	-	16.6% (55)	-	6.3% (21)	-

Source : Field Survey 1993/1994.

half of the Chinese respondents, suggesting that it was quite popular with this group as with the other two ethnic groups. It was observed that with the exception of Jalan Tun Ismail, the other streets in the newer centre were mentioned by only a few respondents to be of any significance. However, Jalan Tun Ismail was noticed by

more Malays than Chinese and Indians. Despite this slight variation, it was observed that all the roads that were known by a high proportion of the respondents from each ethnic group were located in the old town centre.

There was also a variation between all three groups on roads that were considered unique. Jalan Mahkota was considered unique by the highest percentage of the Malays. However the highest percentage of the Chinese respondents considered Jalan Bukit Ubi to be unique whereas the highest percentage of the Indian respondents found Jalan Besar to be unique. Despite this variation, it was observed that Jalan Mahkota was mentioned by quite a significant percentage of respondents from each group.

**Table 6.12: Streets that are known and those considered unique according to their ethnicity.**

Street	Malay	Malay	Chinese	Chinese	Indian	Indian
	Known	Unique	Known	Unique	Known	Unique
J. Buk ubi	75.7% (250)	20% (66)	49.4% (163)	38.7% (128)	74.8% (247)	-
J. Besar	55.7% (184)	16.3% (54)	42.1% (139)	17.8% (59)	62.7% (207)	31.2% (103)
J. Mahkot	46% (152)	33% (109)	60.3% (199)	36.6% (121)	62.7% (207)	25.1% (83)
J. Tu Ismail	46% (152)	13.6% (45)	27.8% (92)	4.5% (15)	37.5% (124)	25.1% (83)
J. wan Ah jan	2.7% (9)	-	32.7% (108)	16% (53)	12.7% (42)	18.7% (62)

Source : Field Survey, 1993/1994.

This suggests that there is some degree of consensus between the three groups in the uniqueness of this street and that the variation in perception is not significant. It was also observed that the Chinese and Indian respondents found the streets in the new centre such as Jalan Tun Ismail and Jalan Wong Ah Jang to be unique.

The other type of urban space which is the Padang was considered unique by the highest number of respondents from each ethnic group, followed by the river (see Table 6.13). The Taman Kerang was mentioned only by the Malay and Chinese respondents and the percentage of respondents doing so was too low to be of any significance. It was observed that the perception of the river as a unique landscape feature varied slightly between the Malays and the other two groups. More Malay respondents tended to notice the river compared with the Chinese and the Indians.

The Padang was distinctive to all the three groups compared to other urban space such as Taman Kerang and natural feature like the river. This suggests that the contrast of green open space to the built up parts of the town centre becomes distinctive to its residents from all ethnic

**Table 6.13: Perception of unique landscape features according to ethnicity.**

Landscape	Malay	Chinese	Indian
Padang	53.9% (178)	43% (142)	50% (165)
River	31.8% (105)	12.1% (40)	18.7% (62)
Taman Kerang	6.6% (22)	9.4% (31)	-

Source : Field Survey, 1993/1994.

background. Hence, it can be deduced that the three ethnic groups share the same perception of landscape features that are unique.

The focused interview tended to verify the findings of the survey. It was observed that respondents from the three ethnic groups also displayed certain similarities in their perception of distinctive elements. There was no significant variation observed between the groups in the elements used to describe the town centre. All three ethnic groups quoted buildings as the most important element that symbolised the town centre and set it apart from other towns. The only slight variation observed was the choice of buildings used by each group. Nevertheless, the trend observed was that the buildings mentioned by the three ethnic groups tended to be buildings for public use. It was also observed that the majority of the Malay respondents tended to be able to describe the town centre clearly, with very detailed observations made about the place. This was in contrast to the Indian respondents, who tended to have some difficulties in describing the town centre. As for the Chinese respondents, there tended to be two groups of respondents; one group which was able to give a comprehensive description of the town centre whilst the other group found some difficulties in describing the town centre. Nevertheless, this variation that was observed between the ethnic groups was related to their detailed observation rather than the elements that were perceived as distinctive.

In the sketch maps task, it was observed that the Indian respondents' maps were found to be least complete and lacking in detail when compared to the other two racial groups. It was observed that the Malay respondents' maps were clearer in terms of structure and also full of details. The three most comprehensive maps and the most

complete map of the old town centre were produced by the Malay respondents. It can be deduced that the Malay respondents had a clearer perceptual structure of the town centre than the other two ethnic groups. This is not an expected finding because the Malays, unlike the Chinese are not urban dwellers by origin. Although many of them were residing in the cities they still maintained a link with their families living in the rural areas or 'kampong' (village). One possible explanation was that this link with an environment which was different from the urban environment made them more observant of the details in their environment. The Chinese residents, on the other hand, having lived in the urban areas for generations tended to be numbed towards their environment. Thus, their familiarity with the surrounding resulted in many elements in their environment being unnoticeable and influenced their perception of identity of the town centre. The same explanation was applied to the Indian respondents.

Finally, in terms of ethnicity, the Indian respondents' sketch maps of the town centre were found to be least complete and lacking in detail as compared to the other two racial groups. It was observed that the Malay respondents' maps were clearer in terms of structure and also full of details. The three most comprehensive maps and the most complete map of the old town centre were produced by the Malay respondents.

However, despite this variation in the number of elements included in the perceptual structuring of the town centre by the different ethnic groups, they all used the same elements to structure the town centre namely paths, nodes, edges and landmarks. Hence, the variation observed could be considered as less significant because the difference was due to the degree of observation rather than the type of elements observed. Therefore, it could be presumed that

attempts to derive a group image of the residents were not a fruitless effort.

#### 6.42 Variations according to gender

As in the case of ethnicity, there was also very little variation displayed between the members of both sexes in their perception of distinctive buildings. The Kompleks Teruntum was known by the highest percentage of respondents from each group, followed by the Wisma building and the State Mosque (see Table 6.14 ). It was also apparent that buildings in the old centre were known by more respondents from both sexes compared to the buildings of the new centre. They also tended to agree on buildings which were considered most unique that is the Kompleks Teruntum and the State Mosque.

The roads known to both members of the opposite sex were similar, with Jalan Bukit Ubi, known to the highest percentage of respondents from both sex followed by Jalan Mahkota (see Table 6.15). However, it was observed that more female respondents tended to know Jalan Wang Ah Jang in the new centre than the male respondents. The percentage of female respondents who knew this street was quite high (44%). This was the slight variation observed between the two groups. It could be deduced that the females tended to know roads associated with shopping activities since Jalan Wang Ah Jang was a commercial street and was located in the newer part of the town centre. Although Jalan Mahkota was less known than Jalan Bukit Ubi to the two groups, it was however, the road considered to be most unique for them. This finding tends to be similar to those of the ethnic groups and that there is no significant variation between the gender in perception of distinctive elements.

There is also a similarity observed between the two sexes

in terms of the features that were considered unique by both groups (see Table 6.16). Both sexes tended to find the Padang to be a unique feature of the town centre. The river and the Taman Kerang were mentioned by too few respondents to be of any significance. Thus, it could be suggested that gender does not have an influence on the perception of distinctive landscape features.

**Table 6.14 : Buildings known and those considered unique according to their gender.**

	Male	Male	Female	Female
Buildings	Known	Unique	Known	Unique
Kompleks Teruntum	95.1% (314)	47.8% (158)	91.2% (301)	59.6% (197)
Wisma	76% (251)	2.1% (7)	66.6% (220)	1.2% (4)
Mosque	46.6% (154)	41% (135)	34% (112)	31.2% (103)
Ocean	18.1% (60)	6% (20)	14.5% (48)	8.5% (28)
Hospital	12.7% (42)	-	12.1% (40)	-

Source : Field survey, 1993/1994.

However, there is a difference detected in the maps produced between the two sexes. The female respondents produced more detailed maps of the town centre as well as covering both the old and newer centre. The three most comprehensive maps mentioned above were produced by the female respondents. The majority of the male respondents'

maps concentrated on the area around the Padang and the junction of Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Bukit Ubi.

**Table 6.15: Streets known and those considered unique according to gender.**

Roads	Male	Male	Female	Female
Name	Known	Unique	Known	Unique
J. Buk. Ubi	66.6% (220)	19.4% (64)	92% (330)	16.6% (55)
J. Mahkota	48.1% (159)	37.2% (123)	30.6% (101)	30.6% (101)
J. Besar	35.4% (117)	20% (66)	34% (112)	15.1% (50)
J. Tun Ismail	22.7% (75)	5.4% (18)	24.5% (81)	12.1% (40)
J. Wan Ah Jang	28.8% (95)	9.4% (31)	44% (145)	14% (46)

Source: Field Survey, 1993/1994.

**Table 6.16: Perception of unique features according to gender.**

Feature	Male	Female
Padang	40% (132)	31.2% (103)
River	9.4% (31)	9.4% (31)
Taman Kerang	7.2% (24)	8.5% (28)

Source: Field Survey, 1993/1994.



#### 6.43 Variations according to age group

It was observed that the highest percentage of respondents from all age groups knew Kompleks Teruntum (see Table 6.17) followed by the Wisma building and the State Mosque. It was observed that this finding was similar to the ethnicity and gender group. This suggests that the three buildings are highly distinctive to all the socio-cultural groups that occupied the town centre. It was also clear that the buildings of the new centre were less well-known by all the age groups.

The most unique building to all the age groups was the Kompleks Teruntum, suggesting a consensus between them of the most unique building in the town centre (see Table 6.17). However, there was a slight variation in the perception of other buildings between the age groups. This was evident in the case of the Wisma building, which was considered unique by only the school aged group (13 to 17 years), the younger residents (26 to 35 years) and the middle aged group (36 to 45 years).

The most significant difference was observed between the younger group of residents (7 to 12 and 13 to 17 years) and the oldest group of residents (56 and above). Buildings that were considered unique by the former such as the Wisma building and Ocean Supermarket were not considered so by the elderly group. Thus, there is a variation between residents from the extreme ends of the age group range in their perception of distinctive buildings. The other variation observed between the age groups was the perception of uniqueness of the old shop-houses of Jalan Mahkota. It was found that the younger group of residents (26 to 35 years) was the only group that found these buildings unique (46.2%). The percentage of respondents from other age groups mentioning these

**TABLE 6.17: BUILDINGS KNOWN AND CONSIDERED UNIQUES BY THE AGE GROUP**

Age Group	Building Known							Building Considered Unique				
	Kompleks Teruntum	Wisma	Mosque	Ocean Supermarket	Pacific Hotel	Rex Cinema	Hospital	Komplek Teruntum	Mosque	Wisma	Ocean Supermarket	Old Shophouses
7 - 12 years old	94.5% (312)	72% (237)	33.3% (110)	33.3% (110)	11.2% (37)	16.3% (54)	11.2% (37)	55.4% (183)	33.3% (10)	-	33.3% (110)	7.5% (25)
13 - 17 years old	91.2% (301)	65.7% (217)	22.7% (75)	11.5% (38)	11.5% (38)	17% (56)	11% (36)	37.2% (123)	34% (112)	33.3% (110)	17% (56)	23.1% (76)
18 - 25 years old	88.5% (292)	60.6% (200)	27.8% (92)	11.5% (38)	9.7% (32)	13% (43)	3.3% (11)	68.8% (227)	27.5% (41)	-	4.8% (16)	23.1% (96)
26 - 35 years old	89.4% (295)	74% (244)	46.3% (153)	23.9% (79)	6.6% (22)	10.3% (34)	10.3% (34)	51.2% (169)	31.2% (103)	33.3% (110)	5.7% (19)	46% (152)
36 - 45 years old	97% (320)	68.5% (226)	50.6% (167)	16.3% (54)	6.2% (20)	13.3% (44)	-	43% (142)	47.5% (157)	33.3% (110)	5.7% (19)	15.4% (51)
46 - 55 years old	95.7% (316)	60.6% (20)	4% (13)	8.2% (27)	20% (66)	-	-	52% (171)	20% (66)	-	4% (13)	-
56 and above	94.5% (312)	68.2% (225)	52.4% (173)	15.4% (51)	5.1% (17)	-	5.1% (17)	68.8% (227)	42% (138)	-	-	7.5% (25)
Location	Old Centre	Old Centre	Old Centre	Newer Centre	Newer Centre	Old Centre	Newer Centre	Old Centre	Old Centre	Old Centre	Newer Centre	Old Centre

buildings as unique were low to be of any significance. There was some variation observed between the age groups in their perception of streets in the new centre. Jalan Tun Ismail was known to a significant number of the youngest (50%) and the oldest (63.1%) group of respondents (see Table 6.18).

However, more of the oldest respondents (84.2%) tended to know Jalan Mahkota in the older centre compared to the youngest respondents (11.1%). The other variation observed was in the perception of unique streets (see Table 6.18). It was found that a significantly high number of the older residents (46-55 and 56 and above years old) found Jalan Bukit Ubi to be distinctive. However, it was mentioned by a relatively low number of younger residents as a unique street. Finally, Jalan Tun Ismail was considered unique by the oldest and the youngest group of residents. This differed from the response of the other age groups and suggested that this road was unique only to certain age groups rather than appealing to the residents across the age group spectrum.

It was observed that there was a variation between the age groups in their perception of unique landscape features. This variation was evident between the youngest and the oldest respondents surveyed (see Table 6.19). The Padang, was considered unique by more than half of the youngest respondents but was not mentioned by the oldest respondents. Again, the variation existed between the two age groups rather than among the other age groups. This was an unexpected finding since the Padang is among the oldest feature in the town centre and therefore would have been very distinctive to the older generations living in the town centre. The other unexpected finding was that the Taman Kerang, which was locally known as a favourite place for the older residents were mentioned

**TABLE 6.18: STREETS KNOWN AND THOSE CONSIDERED UNIQUE BY THE AGE GROUP**

Age Group	Streets Known					Streets Considered Unique				
	Jalan Bukit Ubi	Jalan Mahkota	Jalan Besar	Jalan Tun Ismail	Jalan Wong Ah Jang	Jalan Bukit Ubi	Jalan Tun Ismail	Jalan Mahkota	Jalan Besar	Jalan Wong Ah Jang
7 - 12 years old	16.3% (54)	11% (36)	44.2% (146)	50% (165)	27.8% (92)	27.5% (91)	16.6% (55)	11% (36)	-	33.3% (110)
13 - 17 years old	20% (66)	40% (132)	34% (112)	31.2% (103)	40% (132)	25.4% (84)	17% (56)	25.7% (85)	12% (38)	11.5% (38)
18 - 25 years old	19.4% (64)	55.4% (183)	39.2% (129)	21.2% (70)	44% (145)	21.2% (70)	8.1% (27)	40.9% (135)	11.5% (38)	9.7% (32)
26 - 35 years old	14% (46)	54% (178)	55% (182)	20.9% (69)	37% (122)	16% (53)	11.5% (38)	32.1% (106)	23% (76)	8% (25)
36 - 45 years old	52% (172)	52.1% (172)	59.7% (197)	25.1% (83)	23.6% (78)	17.8% (59)	3% (10)	38.8% (128)	20.9% (69)	13.3% (44)
46 - 55 years old	84% (277)	48.2% (159)	48.2% (159)	24% (79)	40% (132)	16% (53)	-	32% (105)	16% (53)	16% (53)
56 and above	78.8% (260)	84% (277)	73.3% (242)	63% (208)	21% (69)	-	-	47.2% (156)	16% (53)	5.2% (17)
Location	Old Centre	Old Centre	Old Centre	Newer Centre	Newer Centre	Old Centre	Old Centre	Old Centre	Newer Centre	Old Centre

by only a low percentage of the oldest respondents (10.5%) and not mentioned at all by the other older residents (46 to 55 years old).

Table 6.19: Perception of unique features according to age group.

feature	7-12	13-17	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56 & abv
Padang	55.4% (183)	37% (122)	16.3% (54)	31.5% (104)	29.7% (98)	8% (27)	-
River	5.4% (18)	2.7% (9)	3.3% (11)	6.6% (22)	4.5% (15)	20% (66)	10.6% (35)
T. Keran	11% (36)	2.7% (9)	4.8% (16)	4.8% (16)	8.8% (29)	-	10.6% (35)

Source: Field Survey 1994.

It can be deduced that Taman Kerang was distinctive to the older residents not because of its appearance but due to its activities. Thus, it was not perceived as a unique feature of the town centre by the older residents.

From the interview, it was apparent that there was a slight difference between the younger and the older residents in terms of the elements and places used to describe the town centre. As an example, the younger residents were aware of places relating to shopping and entertainment whereas the older residents' were more inclined to mention places relating to leisure and recreation such as the river front and the beach. The younger residents were also aware of places that had a negative impact on their environmental image.

In the sketching task it was observed that the younger groups were more confident and eager to participate in the sketch map than the older age group. It was observed that some of the younger respondents were able to put more details of elements that were vivid in their minds and tended to remember the names of buildings and roads. The maps produced by the older respondents on the whole lacked details and tended to produce the framework of the town centre. All the older respondents focused their attention to the area around the Padang, Jalan Mahkota, Jalan Besar and the river front. This was in contrast to the younger respondents whose maps covered a much wider area including the newer centre. Of the three most complete maps drawn, two of them were produced by the respondents in their early twenties whilst the other belonged to a thirty year old. The most complete map in terms of details for the old town centre was also produced by a sixteen year old respondent whereas the most sparsely drawn map was produced by a respondent in his late forties.

#### **6.44 Significance of variation in perception of distinctive elements according to the socio-cultural groups.**

It was apparent that there were both similarities and differences in the perception of distinctive elements by all the three socio cultural groups. However, as shown below the differences in perception observed were more in terms of the choice of buildings, streets and landscape features noticed than the types of element noticed.

There was a similarity in the perception of buildings by the three ethnic groups. The variations observed between the ethnic groups were in their perception of roads and the unique landscape features of the town centre. Thus,

ethnicity did have a slight influence on the perception of certain physical elements that were distinctive in the town centre. However, the variations observed were not that significant.

In general, gender did not have an influence on the elements that were considered distinctive and the male and female respondents were alike in their perception of distinctive buildings, streets and unique features of the town centre.

Finally, age groups had some influence on the perception of elements that were distinctive. This difference was more obvious between the youngest and the oldest respondents. The variation observed was displayed in their perception of streets and landscape features. Since their variation was in their choice of streets and landscape features that were distinctive, it could be deduced that this variation was not that significant.

It was observed that the variation in perception existed only within each socio-cultural groups such as the ethnic and age groups. However, there were similarities between the three socio-cultural groups in their perception of distinctive buildings, streets and landscape features, especially elements in the old centre. Thus, it can be suggested that the physical elements in the old centre were distinctive that they tended to be noticed by all the sub groups of residents. This implies that the variation in perception between different socio-cultural groups that occupied the town centre is not that significant. Hence, it is still possible to consider the shared image of the residents in the development of the town centre, especially when it concerns the old town centre.

## 6.5 Conclusions.

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the physical elements that were distinctive to the residents and the distribution of these distinctive elements in the town centre. This was also done to identify the variation in perception of elements associated with identity between the different parts of the town centre. The variation in perception between the different socio-cultural groups were analysed to establish if this factor had an influence on perception of identity.

In this research, the identity of place as defined by Lynch (1982) was related to the quality of the environment that made it distinct to the residents. Thus, it was assumed that elements that were distinctive to the residents became part of the attributes that created the town centre's identity.

It was discovered that the distinctive elements associated with the town centre's identity fell into three broad categories which were; physical structures, urban spaces and landscape features. From the description of these elements, it appeared that physical structures, especially buildings played an important role in helping the residents to identify the town centre. This was followed by urban spaces namely streets and landscape features playing a secondary role. Residents' perception of elements associated with identity was influenced by the ability of the elements to assist them in their operational tasks in the town centre. This explained why buildings and streets were the most distinctive elements in the town centre. This was because these two elements were important in their daily activities and movement within the town centre. It was observed that most of the distinctive buildings were



located in the old town centre. Streets in the old town centre were also more distinctive to the residents than the new centre. Overall, the old centres tended to have more distinctive elements located in it compared to the new centre.

Apart from elements that were distinctive, the elements used to structure the town centre perceptually also influenced the perception of identity by the residents. It was observed that the distinctive elements used by residents to describe the physical appearance of the town centre were also used to structure the town centre perceptually. The most common elements used were streets (acting as paths) and buildings (acting as landmarks). Of the five elements mentioned by Lynch (1960) that people used to image the city, only districts were not used by residents of Kuantan town centre. The residents' perceptual structure of the town centre was also observed to be clearer at the old centre compared to the new centre.

It was discovered that there was a slight variation between the ethnic groups and age groups in their perception of the distinctive elements in the town centre. The variation observed was in terms of the choice of streets and landscape features that were known and considered unique by the ethnic groups and the age groups. Although it could be deduced that age factors and ethnicity had some influence on the perception of distinctive elements, the variation observed was not that significant. It was also found that there was no significant variation in the perception of distinctive elements between the gender. It was clear from the analysis that the physical elements distinctive to all the three socio-cultural groups were located in the old town centre compared to the new centre.

This chapter has highlighted the elements that were distinctive to the residents. It has also highlighted the variation in perception of these elements between the different cultural groups that made up the composition of the town centre residents. The following chapter will analyse the qualities that influence the distinctiveness of these elements and the variation between the socio-cultural groups in perceiving their distinctive qualities.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### QUALITIES ASSOCIATED WITH IDENTITY OF THE TOWN CENTRE AS PERCEIVED BY THE RESIDENTS.

#### 7.0 Introduction

The previous chapter has identified the various types of elements that residents associated with the town centre's identity. This chapter examines the qualities that residents associate with the town centre's identity. The chapter is divided into six sections. The first section discusses the physical qualities associated with the identity of the town centre. The second section which examines the influence of activities on the distinctiveness of a place. The role of meanings and other cultural factors that influence the perception of identity of the town centre is investigated in the third section. The fourth section highlights the variation in the residents' perceptions between different parts of the town centre in terms of the qualities associated with its identity. The fifth section discusses the variation in perceptions of qualities associated with identity between different socio-cultural groups of the residents. The final section presents the conclusion to this chapter.

#### 7.1 Physical characteristics associated with the town centre's identity.

The previous chapter identified the physical elements that are considered distinctive by the residents. This section highlights the qualities of these elements that make them easily recalled and recognised by the residents (see Table 7.1). From the survey, the in depth interview and photo recognition task, it was determined that the physical characteristics that were mentioned in recalling and recognising the distinctive physical elements were divided

TABLE 7.1: FACTORS INFLUENCING PHOTO RECOGNITION

	PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS								ACTIVITIES		MEANING AND ASSOCIATIONS							LOCATION WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE		TOTAL NO OF RESPONDENTS
ELEMENTS/ SPACES		Appearance	Location In Context	Vegetation	Traffic system design	Landscape design	Quality of views	Lighting	Indoor (Building use)	Outdoor (on street)	Familiarity	Historical significance	Nostalgic memories	Affinity	Special Quality	Associations	Dislikes	Old town centre	Newer town centre	(Out of 30 respondent)
Kompleks Teruntum	Building	.	.	.							.							.		22
Mosque	Building	.	.				.	.			.		.	.				.		30
Padang	Space	.	.				.					.						.		20
Riverfront (Benteng)	Space	.	.	.		.	.				.	.	.	.			.	.		24
Jalan Mahkota	Street	.	.		.	.			.			.	.		.	.		.		25
Jalan Besar	Street	.	.		.	.			.		.			.	.	.		.		25
Jalan Bukit Ubi	Street	.	.	.					.		.					.	.	.	.	23
Bus Station	Building	.	.	.						.					.			.		23
Jalan Tun Ismail	Street	.	.	.	.						.					.			.	20
Jalan Wong Ah Jang	Street				.				.							.			.	10
Ocean	Building	.	.	.	.	.			.		.				.				.	26
Wisma Buildings	Building	.	.						.									.		20
Medan Pelancung	Building	.		.					.	.	.					.		.		20
Taman Kerang	Space	.		.	.			.	.	.		.	.	.				.		29
Hospital	Building	.															.			24
Market	Building	.	.															.		14
Parkson Supermarket	Building	.	.		.				.	.								.	.	23
Total no of respondent (out of 30 respondents)		28	26	18	15	12	10	6	15	13	20	17	12	19	6	15	5			

Source: Photo Recognition Task, Field work, 1993/1994

into seven categories, namely appearance, location in types and amount of vegetation, traffic system and street design, design of landscape elements, quality of views and lighting quality (see Table 7.2). These attributes are also found in both Appleyard's (1980) and Harrison and Howard's (1980) studies. The first two characteristics are the most commonly used by respondents in recalling and recognising the distinctive elements.

#### 7.11 Appearance.

The appearance of the physical elements, especially buildings played an important role in recognition by the residents. It was also observed in Harrison and Howard's (1980) study that appearance is the physical component that influences imageability. It was determined that there were nine features relating to the appearance of buildings that are used to recognise a building. These features were the height and size, architectural style, facade and decorations, condition and upkeep (age), building form, colour, roof form, bill boards and building materials. Appearance was mentioned in all the distinctive buildings, streets and places that were referred to by the respondents in the survey suggesting its importance in the recognition process. The use of appearance in recognising an element is more prominent with buildings such as the State Mosque and Kompleks Teruntum compared to other physical elements like the river front, Taman Kerang and Padang. In the case of streets, the buildings located along them became a feature influencing their distinctiveness. It was also observed that descriptions of the appearance do not only relate to the major buildings but also of the surrounding buildings. Based on the questionnaire survey, buildings were considered to be unique by the respondents for a variety of reasons (see Table 7.3).

TABLE 7.2: PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS USED TO RECOGNISE ELEMENTS

PLACE	APPEARANCE									LOCATION		VEGETATION			LAND SCAPE			TRAFFIC					VIEWS		LIGHTING	
	Height and size	Architecture Style	Facade	Condition	Form	Colour	Roof	Billboards	Materials	In Context	Specy	Age	Quantity	Location	Ground Surface	Fountain	Sculpture	Street Furniture	Circulation pattern	Traffic light	Road design	Sign	Traffic volume	Quality of view	Lighting quality	Presence of lighting
Old town centre																										
Komplek Teruntum	.	.			.		.	.		.				.												
Mosque	.	.	.	.	.	.	.			.					.									.	.	
Wisma																										
Jalan Mahkota		.	.	.	.					.									.		.					
Jalan Besar		.	.	.				.	.									.	.					.		
River front				.						.	.															
Medan Pelancung					.	.				.	.	.								.						
Bus Station																										
Taman Kerang											.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.				.			.	
Padang					.					.																.
Jalan Bukit Ubi										.										.	.	.	.	.		
Hospital				.	.	.	.			.																
Newer town centre																										
Jalan Tun Ismail					.	.						.	.	.				.	.	.	.	.				
Jalan Wong Ah Jang																					.					
Market						.		.		.													.			
Parkson Supermarket					.					.					.											
Ocean supermarket					.		.	.						.					.		.	.				

Source: Photo Recognition Task, Fieldwork, 1993/1994

The highest percentage of respondents (52.4%) mentioned height and size of buildings as the reason why a building was considered unique or distinctive. This suggests its importance in influencing the uniqueness of buildings as seen by the respondents. This was followed by architectural style which covered 39% of the respondents' answers and location (18.8%). Building use, facade and decoration, new condition and cleanliness were mentioned by 15.7%, 12.1% and 11.2% of the respondents respectively. The other characteristics were mentioned by less than 10% of the respondents and therefore considered to be insignificant. It was apparent that the appearance of a building was more important than other factors relating to its location and use in order to be recalled by the residents. It was also apparent that many respondents found the general form of a building such as its height, size and shape were more important rather than its detailed features.

Table 7.3 : Why buildings are unique

	No (330 resp.)	%
Height and size	173	52.4
Architectural style	129	39
Location	62	18.8
Building use	52	15.7
Facade and decorations	40	12.1
New and clean	37	11.2

Source : Field Survey (1994)

In the focused interview, these reasons were further elaborated by the respondents in explaining why certain elements were considered to be distinctive. From the interview response, it was clear that the height and size of the building was the most common characteristic mentioned which influenced the residents to recall the buildings. Such a finding was also similar to that of the sample survey.

### **i. Height and size**

Height and size are mentioned together here because they are considered to be interrelated by the respondents. The two buildings in the town centre within this category are Kompleks Teruntum and the State Mosque. The Kompleks Teruntum is the tallest (over twenty storeys high) building in the town centre. It dominates the skyline when viewed from the other side of the river as well as from outside the town centre. The visibility and prominence of its height was reflected in the comments made by Respondent 3 when describing the landmarks of Kuantan.

" Well, we go one by one. Okay, firstly, the Kompleks Teruntum, it is the biggest shopping complex and it is also the tallest building in Kuantan. "

The height and size of buildings was noticeable to the residents because of the lack of tall buildings in the town centre (the majority of which were between two to four storeys high). Thus, very tall buildings, such as Kompleks Teruntum are noticeable because of the contrasting effects the building has on the skyline. This implies that skyline has an influence on the residents' perception of distinctive elements in the town centre. The buildings that dominate the skyline also tend to be used as a landmark.

From the three techniques of investigation, it was observed that the size or scale of building is used to recall buildings. The State Mosque, for example, is most frequently mentioned regarding size as a measure of distinctiveness. Respondent 3 highlighted this unique feature of the mosque in the following conversation.

" Q : What aspects of the mosque do you find attractive?

A : It is the lights at night which make it attractive. Also, its huge size and unique colour. "



It is apparent that apart from Kompleks Teruntum, the State Mosque is also one of the biggest buildings in the town centre. The mosque was described by one respondent to be grand because of its sheer size. It is also apparent that the common factor between the two buildings apart from their height and size is their setting, which makes these characteristics easier to be appreciated from a distance. They are both fronted by a large green open space called Padang. This implies that settings have an influence on the distinctiveness of buildings in the town centre.

## ii. Architectural style

Architectural style was the next feature used in the survey, to describe buildings that are unique in the town centre. It was also apparent from the interview that architectural style was used to describe buildings such as the State Mosque and the old shop-houses. The design and architectural style of the mosque were recalled because it is different to the typical mosque design in Malaysia, as illustrated by some of the respondents' comments. Respondent 24, for example described the architecture of the building is different from other mosques in this country but similar to those in the Middle East.

This suggests that people have certain set ideas of what a building should look like in terms of its architecture. Another factor that made the mosque distinctive was because the new building is architecturally different to the old one. A few respondents including Respondent 9 and Respondent 12 felt strongly that the old Mosque should have been retained rather than demolished and replaced with a new design. This is because the design of the old Mosque was considered unique compared to the other mosques in the country. An appraisal of the old photographs of the town

centre revealed that the design of the old Mosque was indeed unique. Instead of having a building with a dome as is typical of the mosque design in Malaysia, the old Mosque of Kuantan was built with the dome constructed from the ground, resembling that of a coconut shell (see Appendix 1). This distinctive feature was mentioned by Respondent 26 :

" Oh.. so much difference. The old mosque was just like a coconut shell. "

It was observed that the only other building where the design and the physical characteristics were mentioned by the respondents was the row of old shop-houses at Jalan Mahkota. The overall design and architectural features of these shop-houses were unique in comparison to the design of the new shop-houses. According to Respondent 2, the new shop-houses often look the same whereas these old shop-houses had features which were unique.

The style of the old shophouses in Jalan Mahkota was recognised because of their distinctive architectural feature. Respondent 4 highlighted the difference of this old building style in comparison with the newer design in the following statement.

" This is before the mosque where you have the fountain. I recognise the style of the building. The newer town centre do not have this kind of building. "

This indicates that the style of the buildings along Jalan Mahkota enabled the respondent to recognise the place, by comparing the style of buildings along the street with those in the newer parts of the town centre. Hence, the architectural style of buildings related to a certain period or having a distinctive style was a feature that was used to recognise a place. This was more obvious in areas which were dominated by buildings of a style different to that found in

other parts of the town centre. The dominance of a particular building style in certain streets created uniformity in terms of character. This uniformity influenced the distinctiveness of buildings and streets where they were concentrated.

### iii. Facade treatment and decorations

Facade treatment and decorations were the third characteristic recalled and recognised by the residents. The facade treatment relates to the elevations of the buildings including their window patterns and columns and ornamentation as well as decorative features such as engravings and detailing. The two buildings in which these features were mentioned in the interview were the mosque and the old shop-houses. The mosque was noticeable because of its detailed design features namely, the engravings and calligraphy adorning the walls and roof of the building. The intricate nature of its facade treatment as opposed to the bland buildings surrounding it, makes this building easily remembered by the residents.

The other building in which ornamentation was noticed was the row of old shop-houses at Jalan Mahkota. To some, namely Respondent 13, this feature made these buildings such as the mosque and the old shop-houses easily remembered and contributed to the identity of the town centre by their presence. The following conversation with Respondent 13 highlighted this.

" Q : Which area do you feel needs to be retained and not changed? "

A : The row of old shop-houses here. Just look at it. At the roof, there are a lot of ornamentation. The design is different, they are different than modern design shop-houses, whose facade is flat. At least, for the tourists, if they observe closely at the upper floor of the shop-houses, they will notice its difference. "

In the old shop-houses, the columns were also noticed by the residents. They commented on such features as the columns, window patterns and ornamentation on the facade etc. as illustrated by Respondent 8's statement. Again, comparison was made to the new shop-houses, which he felt did not have big columns. The columns of these old shop-houses were recalled because of their size as evident by Respondent 8's comments.

" This is Wall Street. Old buildings have big columns. There is the Meng Heng Restaurant. The Capitol Cinema is behind and the Chinese school is round the corner. "

Finally, windows were found to be a more recognisable feature in the old shop-houses of Jalan Besar and Jalan Mahkota than elsewhere. The windows of these shop-houses have wooden shutters and can be opened for ventilation unlike the modern shop-houses which have glass panels or glass shutters. However, the detailed window patterns were not observed by the respondents indicating that it was the general pattern of the windows which were noticed rather than its details. Respondent 26's description of Jalan Besar highlighted how the age, windows, columns and building materials helped the recognition process of the street.

" This place is near the river and I think the road is Jalan Besar. I also recognised the shops because they are old and different. The form of the old buildings are different. The windows and columns are different. The new shop-houses do not have any columns. Furthermore, the building material is made of timber. "

From the remarks above, it was evident that the windows were recognised because they were different. Although this difference was not mentioned, it was observed from the visual survey that the differences between the old and the modern shop-houses windows were in terms of their size, shape, material and type of windows. The shape of the

former are rectangular whereas the latter are square. Simple window design was easier to recognise. Respondent 10's description of the bus station in the photo recognition task highlighted this.

" This are the buildings nearby. The windows are simple and there are also food stalls around. "

The finding suggests that detailed design features and ornamentation enhanced the distinctiveness of buildings. It was apparent that the modern shop-houses were not distinctive compared to the old ones because they lacked detailed design features in their facade treatment. It can be seen that facade treatment is a distinctive feature for buildings in terms of their appearance.

#### iv. Building condition and upkeep (age)

Building condition and upkeep relates to the maintenance quality of the buildings. The condition of a building was associated with its age. Thus, very new or very old buildings were recalled and recognised because of their contrasting conditions with the surrounding buildings. Respondent 19 emphasised this point in identifying the photograph of the Padang are as shown below:

" This is the Padang and mosque. I recognise the mosque and Wisma building. The mosque is prominent because it is new. "

The mosque, being a new building, is prominent because it is located in one of the oldest areas in the town centre. Apart from the mosque, the Padang is fronted by some of the oldest buildings in the town centre. This age contrast enabled the residents to recognise the mosque immediately as well as the Padang. The same situation is also observed for the Ocean Supermarket, the newest retail building in the town centre.

Apart from very new buildings, old buildings were also used to recognise a street or area, especially, when there were very few old buildings left in the town centre. Kompleks Teruntum for example, was recognised because of the old hospital buildings as illustrated by Respondent 12's statement.

" This is Kompleks Teruntum because of the old hospital buildings located near it. "

The Medan Pelancung was also recognised because of the old PCCL building that was located near it. The neglected PCCL building was among the oldest buildings in the town. Similarly, Jalan Mahkota and Taman Kerang were recognised because of the presence of many old shop-houses compared to the other streets whose shop-houses were relatively new. This was reflected by the comments made by Respondent 14 in identifying the photograph of Taman Kerang.

" This is the Taman Kerang area. You can see the street traders. There are the old shop-houses at the background. "

So in the streets where the buildings were relatively new, the presence of an old building became a recognisable feature because of the contrast in terms of age and upkeep. However, age and upkeep also became a recognisable feature of a street such as Jalan Mahkota, which was dominated by very old buildings or buildings belonging to a certain period like the colonial buildings. Thus, it was apparent that age of buildings and their conditions were identified in relation to the age of surrounding buildings. The concentration of buildings of identical condition in terms of age and upkeep, was seen as a distinctive feature of the street. This suggests that historic streets with a concentration of old buildings were distinctive to the residents and gave a reason for their conservation.

## **v. Colour.**

The colour of buildings was mentioned in the recognition of Medan Pelancung, Jalan Besar, the State Mosque, Jalan Bukit Ubi, Parkson Supermarket, Jalan Tun Ismail and Ocean Supermarket. The colour that was noticed and recognised was the colour of the building itself or the surrounding buildings. This was illustrated by Respondent 2's comment when shown the photograph of Ocean Supermarket:

" This is Ocean because of the trees and the road dividers. The buildings surrounding it are new and the A&W is there, the only one at the ground floor. The colour of the building is turquoise which is easy to identify. "

Ocean Supermarket is distinctive because of its turquoise and white colour as opposed to the white or grey buildings the buildings surrounding it. The contrast in colour makes the building easily identifiable. Another example was provided by Respondent 5's description of the mosque.

" This is the mosque area. I recognise the building because it is new and the colour is unique. "

It was observed that the colour of the mosque was a combination of white and royal blue which again was a contrast to the surrounding white or grey coloured buildings. The colour of buildings therefore was a feature used by residents to recognise a building.

The other physical structures such as statues, fountains and clock tower were not noticed for their colour. This implies that colour is a distinctive feature that relates specifically to buildings. However, the findings suggested that the colour of buildings was only noticeable when there was a contrast. This contrast could only be achieved when

there was a uniformity in the colour of buildings within the town centre.

#### vi. Building form

The form of a building was a recognisable feature at least for Medan Pelancung, Kompleks Teruntum, Jalan Mahkota, Padang and the market. The form of buildings mentioned by the respondents was related to the overall shape of the buildings in the place. In cases where a building's form was mentioned, it was due to its contrast with the buildings surrounding or adjacent to it. As in the case of Medan Pelancung, the Pahang Consolidated Company Limited (PCCL) building which is located near it is in the form of a traditional Malay house. This was observed by Respondent 10's description of the photograph of Medan Pelancung.

" This is Medan Pelancung. I recognise the house. It seems so familiar. It is an old house. I recognise the shape of the house and it is the only house whereas the rest are shops. "

Simplicity of form was also a characteristic that was recognisable reflected by Wisma Persekutuan which fronts the Padang. Respondent 2's description of the Padang suggested that the rectangular block shape of the Wisma building was distinguishable and helped to identify the Padang. This was illustrated in his comment below:

" Padang near the mosque. The mosque is the landmark because of its design as well as the Wisma Building. The Wisma Persekutuan building is noticeable because it stands out since other buildings surrounding it are low rise. It is rectangular and typical of the government buildings in Malaysia. "

The interview indicated that the form of buildings was recognised and associated with the building use. Thus, building form was a distinctive feature to the residents and



this informed the residents of the type of use associated with different forms of buildings.

#### vii. Billboards.

Billboards that are mounted on the building's facade indicating the name of the retailer and the types of goods sold were mentioned in recognising Jalan Besar, Kompleks Teruntum, Jalan Mahkota, Padang and Ocean Supermarket. All these places except Ocean Supermarket were located in the older parts of the town centre. All the billboards that were mentioned were found on buildings that were related to retailing except for Wisma Persekutuan. The size of the billboard for this building is huge and can be seen from a considerable distance. This enables it to be recognised and associated with the identity of the place as illustrated by Respondent 10 in describing the Padang.

" This is the Padang near the town centre. I can see the Wisma building. On top of the building there is the word Wisma written on it. In addition to that, I can see the mosque. "

Another example which illustrates how the size of the billboard influences the recognition of a place is provided by Respondent 22's comments of Jalan Besar.

" This is Jalan Besar. I can recognise the overhead bridge as well as the SONY shop which has a huge billboard. "

In fact, the SONY billboard is very colourful especially in the evening due to the neon lighting. However this feature was not mentioned and it can be assumed that it is less important compared to the billboard's size in making a building recognisable. From the Visual Survey, it was observed that the Kompleks Teruntum also had a huge billboard with its name written on it and mounted on a podium. This

feature makes the building recognisable and can be read from a distance. It was noted that the size of the billboard was the only factor that made it recognisable. It seems that buildings mentioned have relatively larger billboards than the surrounding buildings.

The contrast in size makes them stand out compared to the others. It seems that if the building's billboards are of the same size, it is quite difficult for it to be recognised as a feature that could be used as clues to the identity of buildings in the town centre. Nevertheless, it was expected that billboards or signs as referred to by Appleyard (1980), were recognised by the residents. This is because billboards inform the residents of the building owner's name and type of trades and enables the residents to remember a building.

#### viii. Roof Form

Roof form was a feature of a building that was recognisable by some respondents in identifying the mosque, Jalan Bukit Ubi and the market. Since it was used to identify fewer places it could be suggested that it is a less distinctive feature of the elements compared to the features mentioned earlier. It was also observed that the roof form noticed is that which is different than the more common flat roof of the buildings in the town centre. The mosque for example, was recognisable for its huge dome which dominates the skyline around the Padang as illustrated by Respondent 25's comments.

" This is the mosque. I recognise the building itself. It is unique and different than the rest. I have never been near it but I know it is a mosque because it has a dome and the colour is like the mosque in Shah Alam. "

In Malaysia most mosques have domes and therefore a dome is synonymous to a mosque. It can be seen from this respondent's

statement that the dome was recognisable because the colour is similar to another mosque in the country. In addition to that, one respondent also noticed the four minarets of the Mosque, which he mentioned to be visible from afar. It was observed that the dome and the minarets, by virtue of their height, dominate the skyline of the area around the Padang. So, an interesting roof form which dominates the skyline is a characteristic that was recognised by the residents.

Apart from the colour and shape of a roof, it was also noted that respondents will comment if there are any other objects on the roof top. This was apparent in the comments made by Respondent 22 when asked to identify Jalan Bukit Ubi in the photo recognition interview.

" Is this near the Kamling Restaurant? Because I can see the Pacific Hotel so I know Kamling is near by. The hotel is prominent because of the thing up there and its shape. Other shops do not have anything on the roof. "

The object referred to at the roof top of the Pacific Hotel is the water tower which is also large and therefore visible from afar. Again, it was observed that the water tower on the roof was noticed because the surrounding buildings do not have a water tower on their roof top. Hence, roof form was used in the recognition process if it was different and unique in shape compared to the surrounding buildings. This uniqueness is based on them being different from the typical roof forms of the other buildings in the town centre. It also suggests that roof form was a distinctive feature of a building to the residents.

#### **ix. Materials.**

Building material was a feature that was used to recognise Medan Pelancung, Jalan Besar and Kompleks Teruntum. It was

mentioned in fewer places by lesser number of respondents and thus considered to be a less distinctive feature. Buildings that were noticed because their materials are those that are not made of concrete. Concrete is the most common building material used in the town centre and in Malaysia. An example of this is provided by Respondent 8's identification of Kompleks Teruntum.

" This must be Kompleks Teruntum. I can recognise the wooden building of the old hospital near it. "

The Kompleks Teruntum built in concrete is not noticed for its material but its location which is near to the old hospital timber buildings. This is because there are not many timber buildings left in the town centre. The same thing is observed in Medan Pelancung and Jalan Besar which were recognised because of the presence of a timber building nearby. Thus, a contrast in building materials was distinctive when there is a uniformity of building materials used in the town centre.

It is clear from the analysis, that, appearance was the most distinctive feature to the residents. This was due to the frequency of it being mentioned by the residents in describing the visual characteristics of the town centre. These characteristics were used to describe most of the distinctive elements in the old town centre compared to the newer centre. It was also observed that appearance was the physical component of imageability of cities in Harrison and Howards' study (1980). Appearance was also the most common characteristic used to describe landmarks in Lynch's (1960) study. In addition, Appleyard's (1980) study also identified appearance as a major factor in making a building known to the people. Thus, this study supports the findings of the studies mentioned above.

## 7.12 Location in context

The location of a place in its context was the second most frequently mentioned characteristics of the distinctive elements in the town centre (see Table 7.1 ). It becomes a recognisable feature especially when the surrounding environment is easily identified. It was observed that the locational factor of a place was mentioned in almost all the streets and buildings quoted in the survey. This suggests the importance of location in relation to its context in making an element recognisable. Streets and buildings are recognised by their location in relation to the buildings located adjacent to it or within its vicinity. The location factor was also the first characteristic mentioned in identifying an element as illustrated by Respondent 9's answers in identifying the photograph of Jalan Besar.

" This is Jalan Besar near Medan Pelancung. I recognise the old shop-houses with its sidewalks and these shop-houses tend to sell mainly dried salted fish. "

In fact, some elements were identified by the respondents by their location instead of their official or local names. An example is taken from Respondent 2's answers in identifying Jalan Tun Ismail as shown below:

" I don't know the road's name. Before it is Gelanggang Budaya. There are buildings under construction and an advertisement for Ocean. The roadside tree plantings can be used as clues because Kuantan has a number of trees. "

The presence of key buildings and their location within a street such as Jalan Bukit Ubi also helped its recognition as evident by the description of the street by Respondent 19.

" This is near the market. On the other side is the stadium. The other side is the fence of the new bus station. This is Jalan Bukit Ubi, there is a road leading from it to the stadium. The reference for Jalan Bukit Ubi is the fire

brigade. I recognise the wooden fence around the vacant land which people use to park their cars. "

From these remarks, it can be seen that although the market, the new bus station and the stadium are not exactly located at Jalan Bukit Ubi, they were mentioned first because this road was remembered for being located within the vicinity of the market and the stadium. These two are among the key buildings in the town centre. However, the presence of the fire brigade confirms the respondent's guess and completes the process of recognition as it is a key building in Jalan Bukit Ubi. It also happens to be the only fire brigade in the town, so heightening the identity of the street.

It was evident that buildings do not have to be important public buildings or major shops in order to assist a respondent to recognise a street. In fact buildings which are under construction were also used to recognise the location of a street. Stalls, which were considered as temporary buildings and petrol stations were also referred to in recognising a place. Respondent 20's description of the Parkson Supermarket highlights this point:

" There is an ESSO station nearby. This looks like Parkson Supermarket. I recognise the ESSO because it is situated near Parkson. I used the petrol station as a landmark. "

From the comments of the respondents, it seems that once they established the location of the element, they have more confidence in identifying the characteristics that enabled them to recognise it. Apart from describing the location of the place in relation to the buildings surrounding it, road junctions and the river front are also elements that were easily recognised. Hence, prominence and visibility to motorists and pedestrians were important for elements to be recognised. Road junctions were easily recognised because of the directional quality that were remembered by the

respondents. Respondent 12's description of Jalan Bukit Ubi, for example emphasised the presence of a traffic light junction on one part of the street.

" Jalan Bukit Ubi going towards the town centre. I can recognise the shop-houses and the Hotel Pacific. The hotel is near the junction with traffic lights. "

Respondent 2's description of the place was also based on the road sign that shows the direction.

" This is the junction between Jalan Bukit Ubi and Jalan Tun Ismail. I can recognise the traffic sign. There are four or five signs like this in Kuantan but this place is the only one in the town centre with this sign. Furthermore, it is huge, now easily identifiable. "

The other factor for location are the natural features, as evident by those places which are situated either along the river or adjacent to it such as Benteng, the bus station, Medan Pelancung and Jalan Besar. Respondent 3's description of Jalan Besar was also based on its location which was close to the river.

" Along Jalan Besar by the river. On the right hand side is the taxi stand and bus station. I can identify this building by its colour. "

The photo recognition interview illustrated that for all the distinctive elements, both in the old and the new town centres, location of the elements became the most important factor in recognising them. The location is recognised in the context of its surrounding environment which suggested that the respondents tended to remember the elements as part of the whole town centre structure. Thus, clarity of the town centre's structure was very important for recognition of the elements. It was also implied that location of the physical elements in relation to the structure of the town centre, became a distinctive feature of these elements.

### 7.13 Types and amount of vegetation.

The analysis of photo recognition interview revealed that vegetation was used as a clue to the recognition of Medan Pelancung, bus station, Benteng, Kompleks Teruntum, Taman Kerang, Jalan Bukit Ubi, Jalan Tun Ismail and Ocean Supermarket. It was the third most frequently mentioned characteristic in the photo recognition interview after appearance and location. Vegetation was used to recognise both the old and new town centres.

Respondents tended to recognise areas or elements in the town centre, by looking at the number of trees, age, species, density and location. Specific types of trees were distinctive to the residents as observed in Respondent 26 description of the 'bamboo bus stand'. A clump of bamboo trees grow in the area and since the bamboo trees have been there for a long time, it was associated with the place by the residents. The following conversation with Respondent 26 reflected the sentiments attached to the bamboo trees.

" A : I think it is the Bamboo trees near the bus stand. There are no other towns which have a place like this bamboo bus stand. The bamboo trees have been there for a long time.

Q : When was that?

A : I think it was around ever since the town was there.

Q : Is there a difference between now and before in that place?

A : It is the same with only slight changes. Now , they build some paving around it and is well maintained, unlike before it was left to grow naturally.

Q : So, what is the impact of the bamboo trees to the town centre?.

A :I think, without the bamboo trees it may be difficult to recognise the town. It brought a lot of memories to me. "

The amount of trees or other vegetation present was used as a clue to recognising a place. This was illustrated in the case of Medan Pelancung, river front, Taman Kerang, Jalan Tun



Ismail and Ocean Supermarket which tend to have more trees than the others. Respondent 7's description of Jalan Tun Ismail highlights this point.

" This is Jalan Tun Ismail. I recognise the trees. There is still part of the jungle left. "

Since the town centre is a place where many buildings are grouped together, areas where there were pockets of trees and plants became easily identifiable due to the contrast of colour, texture and material. Since trees are distinctive to the residents, their absence was also noticeable. Thus, areas without any buildings or trees such as vacant land can become a clue that respondents used to recognise certain streets. This was illustrated by Respondent 15's descriptions of Jalan Bukit Ubi.

" This is Jalan Bukit Ubi. I can recognise the trees and the vacant land. "

The age and species of the trees were considered to be the most distinctive characteristics to the residents. The age of trees or their maturity was also found to be a clue used to recognising a place. Hence, in areas where the trees are small and young or those where the trees are old and large help the respondents to recognise them. The mature trees in the town centre are found in Medan Pelancung area and Taman Kerang. Respondent 19's comments illustrated how the age and species of trees helped this process of recognition.

" This is near the PCCL building by the river front. There is the ice chendol stall next to it. It is an old building. It is just left vacant. There is the old Jawi tree near it. "

The location of trees or plants was also found to be useful in recognising a street. This was evident in the case of Jalan Tun Ismail in which the roadside vegetation became a

clue to the identity of the street, illustrated by Respondent 19's description of the street.

" This is the ticket office for MPK. I know the place. This is a main road and there are plants on both sides of the road. I go there everyday. "

These comments illustrate how the location of trees became a clue to recognising a street especially when there was a particular pattern in the way the trees were planted. Jalan Tun Ismail is the only street with roadside planting on both sides of the road. Kompleks Teruntum, on the other hand, is recognised by the tree planting around its perimeter. Thus, vegetation such as trees and shrubs are useful in the recognition process. The species, age and location of trees and shrubs were found to be more important in the recognition process compared to their size and colour.

Ground cover was also used in the recognition process although it was less frequently mentioned by the respondents. The ground cover was noticed for the quality of its maintenance and therefore areas where the ground was covered by well maintained grass was easily noticed as evident by Respondent 15's description of the river front area.

" This is near the eating stalls by the river. I recognise the coconut trees and the floating restaurant as well as the lighting. The grass area is well maintained. I used to come here when I was young. "

Apart from the river front, the other area where grass area is found is the Padang. In fact, the Padang, has a larger patch of grass area compared to the river front and yet it was not mentioned. Neither were the trees planted around the perimeter of the Padang were mentioned. This suggests that the Padang is not remembered for its vegetation but as an open space which provides a setting for the major civic buildings in the town centre. Since residents used trees to

identify certain places, the absence of trees provided a contrast to the street scene. This contrast is noticeable. Hence, it became apparent that vegetation can be considered as a distinctive feature of the streets in the town centre.

#### 7.14 Design of landscape elements.

Design of landscape elements was another physical characteristic that was distinctive to its residents and used to recognise streets and landscape features. This characteristic relates to the ground surface treatment, sculpture and fountain. The most common feature that was recognised was the pedestrian walkways as there were not many like them in the town centre. Paving was used to recognise Jalan Besar, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Kerang and the river front. Respondent 14's description of Jalan Besar illustrates this point.

" This is Jalan Besar. I get confused between Jalan Besar and Jalan Mahkota in terms of their names. I recognise the paving and the overhead bridge. This is the only place with a proper sidewalk. "

Pedestrian sidewalks were recognisable especially when other streets did not have a purpose-built sidewalk. These pedestrian sidewalks were recognised not just for their existence but also due to the pattern and the materials used for the paving. For instance, Taman Kerang was recognised because the pavements were made of concrete instead of bricks, as illustrated by Respondent 14's statements.

" This is the Taman Kerang area. You can see the street traders. There is the old shop-houses at the background. Also there is the paving of concrete blocks and the trees. "

It was apparent that the ground surface can be a clue to identifying a street particularly when people are on foot in

the town centre. The ground surface was mentioned more in terms of the texture felt. Jalan Bukit Ubi was identified by Respondent 25 because of its poor and uneven road surface.

" Where is this? It is near the fire station in Jalan Bukit Ubi. I look at the street because it is familiar. I find it difficult to describe. I think it is the road surface which is not really good and even. "

It was also noted that changes in the ground surface level were noticed in identifying an area. The most common form of changes in surface levels was when there were steps that linked higher and lower grounds. This was recognised by the respondents in Taman Esplanade at the river front. Respondent 12's comments illustrated how the presence of the steps helped in identifying it.

" This is Taman Esplanade near the river front. I recognise the steps. The only place with steps. "

In this case, the steps are found only at the river front because of the gentle slope between the street level and the pedestrian walkway along the river edge. Although the experience felt when walking on the steps is not mentioned, it can be assumed that the presence of the steps signifies a change in levels on the ground that was noticed. An explanation as to why the steps were noticed was provided by Respondent 20.

" I don't know where this is. Oh.. I think it is the stalls near Shell petrol station. I can see the steps because it is wide, you will pass it as you walk along the promenade. The stalls are quite unique. "

The other landscape element that people used to recognise a place is sculpture. The Visual Survey showed, that there were no sculptures in the town centre except for Taman Kerang. The design of the sculpture also helped in recognising a place as evident by Respondent 16's statements.

" This is Taman Kerang. You can tell from the sculpture of the cockle. I recognise the shape. "

The form or shape of a sculpture was a clue to recognising a place. Even if the sculpture is not distinctive itself, the presence of a sculpture does act as a landmark for a place especially when it is the only one in town. Singularity plays an important role in enabling a physical structure to be recognised. It is also, according to Lynch (1960) an essential characteristic for landmarks.

The third landscape element recognised was the fountain. It was observed that the size of fountain was not important in helping a respondent to recognise it. The sculpture at Taman Kerang has a small fountain around its base and this fountain was referred to in identifying the place. Respondent 4 highlighted this point.

" This is before the mosque. I recognise the fountain. The fountain is quite old and now repainted. Before there were colourful lights, now just normal lights. "

In this case, the fountain was recognised because of its age and condition rather than its size. However, the movement of water and the sound of it were not mentioned suggesting that the presence of the fountain itself was enough to enable a person to recognise it. It was apparent from the survey that the man-made landscape elements do contribute to the distinctiveness of streets and urban space such as Taman Kerang. It was observed that sculptures and fountains were used as landmarks by the residents. But fewer number of respondents mentioned them compared to Kompleks Teruntum, suggesting that these landscape elements are local landmarks of the town centre. Apart from this, landscape elements such as paved areas have more influence on residents' perceptions of distinctive elements. They tend to be mentioned by more respondents as opposed to other landscape elements. The

appearance and quality of ground texture were the most distinctive characteristics.

#### 7.15 Traffic system and street design. .

The photo recognition interview indicated that the traffic system and street design were common clues used for recognising the major streets of the town centre namely, Jalan Besar, Jalan Bukit Ubi, Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Tun Ismail. Eight aspects of the traffic system and street design were mentioned; they were the circulation pattern, road width, road dividers, direction of traffic, traffic lanes linking two streets, restricted access, traffic light junctions, road signs and traffic volume. Of these aspects, the circulation pattern and traffic light junctions were the most frequently mentioned characteristics of the traffic system and street design in the photo recognition interview.

The circulation pattern or road network was a recognisable feature of the traffic system in the town centre. It was also seen as contributing to the character of the town centre. In this case, reference was made to the simple road network, consisting of a ring road and a grid road linking it, which enables one to get back to the town centre if you are lost. This is reflected by the following comments by Respondent 24 :

" The roads here are not confusing and easy to comprehend unlike in Kuala Lumpur where there are a lot of intersections. If you haven't been there for a month, you won't find your way round. In Kuantan, the main roads are quite clear and straight. There is some sort of a loop, so that you can easily get back to the town centre. "

It was found that roads where there was a divider which separated the traffic between lanes were distinguishable to the respondents as illustrated by Jalan Tun Ismail. From the

Visual Survey, it was observed that Jalan Tun Ismail and Jalan Wang Ah Jang were the only streets that had road dividers between the lanes. These dividers are made more prominent by the street lights and plants that are placed at regular intervals. Respondent 3 highlights the importance of the road dividers in recognising Jalan Tun Ismail.

" Jalan Tun Ismail, partly because of the Bank Rakyat and the road dividers here. This road is wide and it has a divider unlike other roads in the town centre. "

Ocean Supermarket and Jalan Tun Ismail were recognised because of the restricted access into the Ocean Supermarket from Jalan Tun Ismail. The restricted traffic entry is noticed and used as a clue to recognising the street. This was also due to the direction of traffic that only allowed traffic to leave the street. Traffic direction becomes a clue to identifying a street especially when there is a one-way traffic flow. In a town, where most of the streets carry two way traffic, streets with one-way traffic flow become distinctive as in the case of Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar. Jalan Besar is recognised because of its one way traffic flow as reflected by Respondent 24's description of it.

" This is the same. I recognise the overhead bridge but I don't know the roads. It is near the bus station. In the past, if you come from Kuala Lumpur, you can go straight in the road, it was called Main Street. Now you can't enter the road because of the one way flow. "

It was evident that direction of traffic flow was an important clue in recognising a street only when there were a few places where traffic direction is different from the rest. In a town, where a one-way traffic system was implemented widely, it can be suggested that those streets which allow for two way traffic to pass through would then become easily identifiable. So, traffic direction becomes a

recognisable feature if it is seen in relation to the traffic situation of the town centre as a whole.

Streets which are designed to include a lane that links one street to the other were also recognisable, as illustrated by Jalan Mahkota. An example is provided by Respondent 14's description of the street.

" This is Jalan Mahkota. I recognise the old buildings. You can go to Jalan Besar using the lanes in between the buildings. Elsewhere, you can't use the side lanes to go to the next road."

From the Visual Survey, it was observed that Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar have several lanes between the blocks of shop-houses that allow pedestrian and vehicular access between the two streets. These lanes are narrow compared to the lanes between the shop-house blocks in the newer town centre. However, the difference between the former and the latter is that in the new centre, the lanes between the shop-house blocks are provided to allow access into the back of the shop-houses or to the blocks of shop-houses behind them. The former allows access into another street which probably explains why the respondent stated that it was the only place where the street was designed in such a way. This also implies that vehicular access into the streets was important for them to be recognised. In addition to the above, the photo recognition interview also reveals that traffic light junctions and cross roads were important in recognising a place. In Lynch's study, junctions were seen as nodes and where the traveller increased his observations to make decisions. This explained why junctions were easily recognised in the photo interview. A junction where many major roads meet was also an important clue to the resident as illustrated by Respondent 25.



" This is in front of Public Bank because I can see four roads converging between Jalan Bukit Ubi, Jalan Tun Ismail and Jalan Wang Ah Jang. I can also recognise the signboards."

It was noted that road signs are useful as a clue to identifying a street. It was also observed that direction signs at traffic junctions are easily recognised by the respondents as illustrated by Respondent 2's description of the junction at Jalan Bukit Ubi.

" This is the junction between Jalan Bukit Ubi and Jalan Tun Ismail. I can recognise the sign. There are four or five signs like this in Kuantan but this place is the only one in town with this sign. Furthermore, it is huge, new and easily identifiable. "

The comments made by Respondent 2 highlighted the reasons why the sign is distinctive. The size and condition of the signs therefore have an influence on recognition. There are indications that the number of signs in the town centre were also important in influencing recognition. Hence, the prominence of the sign was partly due to their lack of number in the town centre. From the Visual Survey, it was discovered that the junction had a considerable amount of signs concentrated in one place. The sign was quite distinctive because of the size of the board and the colour of the writings although the latter was not mentioned by any of the respondents.

Finally, the type and number of vehicles in a street were also used as a clue to identifying a place. This was more obvious if there was a concentration of a specific type of vehicle in a street. An example was provided by the presence of many buses in the bus station as illustrated by Respondent 26 's description below :

" This is the bus station because of the buses. Otherwise,

it is difficult to recognise. The buildings around it are different than before. In the past, the bus station is small."

The market was also recognised by a respondent for the presence of lorries around its vicinity. This type of vehicles was noticeable because of their large number in a street and the concentration of these vehicles increased their prominence compared to streets where there are a mixture of vehicles.

It is evident that traffic system and street design play an important role in the recognition of streets. This aspect relates to the circulation patterns and street design in the town centre. It was clear that very few residents mentioned the street design such as the width, sense of enclosure or streets curvature as characteristics that they noticed and recognised. This is due to the topography of the town that is relatively flat, which makes it easier to construct regular grid and straight roads. The streets of the town centre are also wide and lack a sense of enclosure (three lanes in the older centre and four lanes in the newer centre, flanked by two to four storeys buildings). Since the physical qualities of the streets were not distinctive, residents tend to focus their attention to the circulation pattern, street furniture and street landscaping.

#### 7.16 Quality of views

The quality of views also enhances the distinctiveness of physical elements. However, it was mentioned by very few respondents in the photo recognition interview which suggests that it is a less important characteristic of the distinctive elements in the town centre. It was observed that buildings, streets and landscape features were sometimes recalled because of the quality of views that were enjoyed by

the residents. The type of view that the residents remembered was that which was open and unobstructed. This could be likened to the grandiose vista mentioned by Cullen (1986) as one of the townscape elements. This type of view was referred to by respondents as a panoramic view and was used by them to describe the view across the river and the view of the mosque across the Padang, illustrated by Respondent 15's statement below :

" I think it is the mosque area. If you sit at Jalan Bukit Ubi, you can see the Padang and there are many shady trees. It is nice to sit there because the view is panoramic due to the extensive size of the Padang. "

The other type of view that respondents recognised was a screened view, in which the objects in focus were partly screened by other objects such as trees. This type of view was similar to Cullen (1986)'s idea of a screened vista in his book on townscape qualities. It is only noticed in the Padang area because the elevation of the mosque and its setting can only be appreciated with the unobstructed view from Jalan Bukit Ubi. However, the view of it from other parts of the town centre is partly hidden by the tall trees around the Padang and other medium - sized buildings surrounding the mosque. This was highlighted by Respondent 7's remarks below:

" Now you know it is a mosque and it is huge. In the past, the old mosque doesn't look like this one. The location is at the centre of the town which is not suitable. Usually, the environment of a mosque is different. The area is too busy and the view of the mosque is partly hidden and not clear especially from the river. The only full view of the river is when you stand in front of MPK building because it is directly opposite to the mosque. "

It was apparent that the quality of views played some role in enhancing the distinctiveness of physical elements. This also confirms Cullen's idea of serial vision as an important

component of a good townscape, as the qualities of views experienced by the residents affect their emotional reaction to the town centre's environment and their ability to remember them.

#### 7.17 Lighting.

The presence of lighting in certain places was also noticed and recognised by the respondents. However, it was mentioned by the least number of respondents who used it to recognise very specific place such as the mosque and Taman Kerang. The lights were used to describe Taman Kerang by Respondent 3. The rest of the area is quite dark at night and therefore the illuminations made this area very distinguishable. The Mosque is very prominent at night because of the lights around it whereas the other areas were mostly dark. This focused the residents' attention to the mosque when they visit the town centre at night.

#### 7.2 Activities associated with identity of town centre.

The activity which relates to what is happening in the place is an element which is associated with the town centre's identity. It was a factor mentioned less frequently by the respondents than other physical elements in describing the appearance of the town centre (see Table 7.1). From the survey findings activities were not mentioned as elements associated with the identity of the town centre such as symbol and unique features. However, they played an important role in determining why certain physical elements were noticed. Such elements were noticed and remembered because of their association with certain activities. The highest number of respondents that is 43.3% mentioned activities as reasons why streets were considered unique. In the survey, 29.4% of the respondents mentioned activities as reasons why

a place is considered unique while 18.2% of the respondents used activities as a reason to remember a place. The other 15.5% of the respondents quoted activities as contributing to why buildings were considered unique and only 4.7% used buildings as reasons to why features were considered unique. Of these factors, it was apparent that activities played a more important role in residents' evaluation of a place's appearance than other factors. However, compared to the physical elements, activities played a secondary role in the residents' perception of the town centre's identity. There were two types of activities mentioned by the respondents, activities which occurred within a building and activities that occurred outdoor or on the streets.

#### **7.21 Activities within a building (building use).**

Activities which occurred within a building were seen to be used by the respondents in recognising a place. In fact it was the fourth factor mentioned by respondents (15.5%) as a reason why a building was considered unique in the survey (see Table 7.3). However, it was used by more respondents (38.1%) in describing why a street was considered unique (see Table 7.4). It was observed that for this category, respondents tended to emphasise the types of activities and its intensity. In the photo recognition interview, one of the clues was the type of building used and this was categorised into seven types; retailing, residential, leisure, commercial, public amenities, educational and places of worship (see Table 7.5).

Retailing activities were noticed and used to recognise Medan Pelancung, river front, bus station, Jalan Besar, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Kerang, Jalan Bukit Ubi, Parkson Supermarket, Jalan Wong Ah Jang and the market. It was noted that the retailing activities that were mentioned were the types of

Table 7.4 : Why streets are unique

	No (330 Resp.)	%
Activities along streets	143	43.3
Interesting shops	126	38.1
Rows of interesting buildings	112	33.9
Trees along the street	30	9.1
Near to home	30	9.1

Source : Field survey 1993/1994

buildings used and the goods sold. The two types of buildings mentioned were shop-houses and stalls. The difference between the shop-house and the stall is that the former is a permanent building whereas the latter is considered temporary. However, there were also stalls which were purpose built with permanent structures but still considered as a stall based on the design and activities that occur within it. The shop-house is a common feature in Malaysian town centre and incorporates both retailing units on the ground floor and residential units on the upper floors. The shop-houses and stalls were mentioned because of their concentration in a particular area.

Examples of this were the shop-houses along Jalan Besar and the stalls near Taman Kerang, Medan Pelancung and the bus station. This was illustrated by Respondent 10's description of Taman Kerang.

" There are many stalls here.. but I am not sure where. I think it is Taman Kerang. "

Thus, the presence of many stalls in a place enables it to be recognised. It was also evident that the type of goods sold or the nature of trade engaged enabled a respondent to identify a street. In addition to that, places which

TABLE 7.5: ACTIVITIES USED TO RECOGNISE ELEMENTS

PLACE	Retailing	Residential	Leisure	Commercial	Educational	Place of worship	Nature of Activities	Prominence/ Visibility	Participant	Intensity	Variety
Old town centre											
Komplek Teruntum				.							
Mosque						.				.	
Wisma											
Jalan Mahkota	.										
Jalan Besar	.						.				
River front			.				.	.	.		.
Medan Pelancung	.									.	
Bus Station											
Taman Kerang							.	.	.	.	.
Padang											
Jalan Bukit Ubi				.							
Hospital											
Newer town centre											
Jalan Tun Ismail				.							
Jalan Wong Ah Jang	.										
Market							.	.		.	
Parkson Supermarket				.							
Ocean supermarket										.	.

Source: Photo Recognition Task, Fieldwork, 1993/1994

specialised in selling certain types of goods enabled their recognition by the residents as reflected by Respondent 19's description of Jalan Besar.

" This is the road of the dried fish shops. It is the old town. "

In terms of residential use, it was discovered that the only place where a building was recognised was in Medan Pelancung as illustrated by Respondent 10's comments. The building referred to is the former office of the tin mining corporation, PCCL, which operated the export of tin from Kuantan. The building was made of timber and designed in the form of the traditional Malay house in the state of Pahang. This building was recognised because its form is associated with residential use despite being left vacant and neglected.

Leisure related buildings such as the floating restaurant at the river front and Rex Cinema of Jalan Besar were mentioned in identifying the river front and Jalan Besar. Commercially-used buildings such as offices, banks and hotels are very distinguishable. This was evident in the case of the Wisma building (a government office block), which is used to describe the Padang area and Hotel Pacific which was used to identify Jalan Bukit Ubi.

Public amenities such as toilets are very distinctive to the respondents and used to recognise a place. This was evident in the river front area in which the public toilet near the jetty was recognised because it is considered to be the cleanest in town as reflected by Respondent 15.

" This is the public toilet, the best in town. "



Finally, public buildings such as schools and places of worship like the mosque were important for the recognition of a place. The activities that occurred within the building were visible during certain times of the day. This was observed in the early morning and late afternoon when school children and buses gather around the premises and Friday afternoons when Muslim men congregated in the mosque for their weekly Friday prayers. The latter activities also have the effect of increasing the traffic volume around the area as it is the only mosque in the town centre. Respondent 13 stated,

" I don't think it is appropriate to place a mosque right at the centre of the town because, imagine on Friday afternoon, there are traffic congestion as well as difficulties to find parking spaces. "

The activities generated by the buildings become a distinctive feature to the residents because of the crowd they attract and the volume of traffic generated. These activities provide a change in the atmosphere of the surrounding areas. The example given is the Market which was noticeable not because of its design but due to the type of shopping facilities offered. Around the vicinity of the market, the food stall holder operated from late afternoon until evening. Many people were seen visiting the market precinct to buy or eat the food sold, just like an open air restaurant. In the early morning, the market was busy with lorries and market traders bringing in vegetables, fish and poultry. This was then followed by the local residents who went to the market to purchase the market goods in the morning. The market area was busy from early morning until the evening. Respondent 1 highlighted the activities that occur in the area.

" This is the market because of the lorries as well as the stalls, which are opened in the evening. There are many people in the area. Adjacent to it is the Ocean Supermarket."

Elements were also recognised not for the activities that were observed but because of the range of activities that people could participate in. An example is provided by Respondent 22's statement in identifying the photograph of Ocean Supermarket.

" This is A&W in Ocean. I recognise the environment there. There are many things to do there. "

This building was recognised because of the potential activities that the respondents can participate in rather than identify the specific activities involved. Buildings of public use or major shopping buildings tend to be noticed because of the services they offer to the residents. This characteristic also related to the activities that take place either within the building or within its compound. It was illustrated that buildings without any unique design feature can still be distinctive if the human activities generated by them are important to the residents.

## 7.22 Outdoor and on-street activities.

Outdoor or on-street activities were more visible and prominent than activities that occur inside a building. It was the factor mentioned by the highest number of respondents as the reason influencing the uniqueness of streets (43.3%) in the survey (see Table 7.4). On-street activities were also used by 29.4% of respondents to explain why places were considered beautiful in the survey (see Table 7.8). However, these activities were only mentioned in recognising Taman Kerang, market, bus station, river front and Medan Pelancung. Of these places, only the market is located in the new

centre. These particular activities relate to the presence of people in the area and the type of activities engaged in. Taman Kerang, for example was noted for the presence of petty traders and stall holders selling things such as books, fruits and food. However, the activities that tend to gather the largest crowd were those conducted by the traditional medicine men. This was evident by the comments of Respondent 24 in describing Taman Kerang in the photo recognition interview.

" This is underneath the trees, where people sell medicine. It is like a medical centre for traditional medicine. This place was allocated for these petty traders. "

This place was also recognised for the type of people who often visited it as observed by Respondent 23 below:

" This is in the middle of the town where the old market used to be. I recognise the stalls which sell books and there are old buildings around it. This is where people sell medicine and full of men. "

The distinctiveness of Taman Kerang is due to the mixture and intensity of activities taking place on the sidewalks which managed to draw large crowds of people in the morning. These activities were also distinctive because of the characteristics of people they attract namely the elderly men and male pensioners. The visibility and prominence of these activities were due to their location at the junction between Jalan Bukit Ubi and Jalan Mahkota, two of the major streets in the town centre.

The stall activities were also observed and recognised in other places such as the river front, bus station and Medan Pelancung. The river front area was recognised for the activities that occur around the jetty and Taman Esplanade. The former relates to the presence of people sitting and

waiting to take the boats to the other side of the river, illustrated by Respondent 14's statements in recognising the river front.

" This is near the jetty where people wait for the boat. I recognise the jetty. I used to go there. "

It is apparent that outdoor activities were noticed and recognised by respondents as they are clearly visible and attracted public attention. Many of the distinctive places where activities were recognised are located in the old centre, with the exception of the market.

In comparison with physical characteristics, it was seen that buildings which accommodated activities which attract a large crowd, could be distinctive to the residents even if its physical characteristics were not. However, concentration of activities and their visibility from the streets were important in order for the buildings to be distinctive. Nevertheless, buildings were more distinctive if they supported visible activities either inside or outside the building as well as having physical characteristics that were easily identified. This was evident in the case of the State Mosque.

### 7.3 Meanings and associations related to the town centre's identity.

The field work showed that the residents' perception of distinctive elements was also influenced by memories evoked by the elements and associations attached to these elements. This was the result of the resident's experience of living in the town centre area. In analysing the characteristics of distinctive elements, there were other reasons given for an element to be considered distinctive apart from the physical

characteristics, including meaning and associations attached to the element.

Many survey respondents found buildings and streets to be distinctive because of their physical characteristics. All the reasons given relate to either the design or activities that occur in the building or street. However, when describing why a feature of the town centre was considered unique, there were 3% of the respondents who gave reasons including being outstanding and easily recognised apart from its physical characteristics (see Table 7.6). From the insignificant number of respondents mentioning this characteristic in the survey, it can be assumed that physical characteristics play a more important role in making an element distinctive. However, this also implies that the survey method has limitations in uncovering the non - physical factors that make an element distinctive, which requires more time and flexibility given to respondents to describe why certain elements are noticed.

Table 7.6 : Why features are unique

	No (330 Resp.)	%
Beautifully designed	148	44.8
The tallest building	80	24.2
Place of attraction	37	11.2
Beautiful scenery	31	9.4
Near to public place	26	7.9
Outstanding and easily recognised	10	3

Source : Field survey 1993/1994

The in-depth interview revealed more about meanings and associations attached to distinctive elements. Other social considerations were also found to influence residents' perceptions of the town centre's. Buildings were also noted to be distinctive because of popular activities, events

associated with it or nostalgic memories associated to the buildings and other forms of association. Apart from appearance and activities, meanings and associations were also used by residents to recognise the distinctive elements in the town centre.

The reasons given in identifying places shown which do not belong to appearance and activities were grouped under meanings and social consideration. This factor had a strong influence in recognising an element and in some cases, it was used as much as appearance in identifying the element. From the findings of the three techniques, meanings were then divided into seven types. They were familiarity, historical significance, nostalgic memories, affinity, special quality of a place, dislikes and associations (see Table 7.1). Other social considerations were divided into dislikes and aspirations (pride).

### 1. Familiarity.

Familiarity was the most frequent reason given for recognising a distinctive element based on meaning and associations. It was mentioned in identifying Medan Pelancung, river front, Jalan Besar, Kompleks Teruntum, mosque, Jalan Bukit Ubi and Jalan Tun Ismail. All these elements were located in the old town centre except for Jalan Tun Ismail. Familiarity aroused from many visits to a place, or often passing through an area or the frequent sighting of a physical element. Because of frequent visits to the town centre, the respondent was able to recognise the element instantly as shown by Respondent 22's remarks.

" This is near the bus station by the river. I usually go to the floating restaurant, Merry Brown. I noticed the steps which are familiar. "

So, familiar places or elements were important to the residents' perception of the town centre, because they have been there for a considerable length of time.

## 2. Associations.

Associations were another clue commonly used in recognising an element in the town centre. It was used to recognise Jalan Bukit Ubi, Jalan Mahkota, Jalan Besar, Jalan Tun Ismail and Jalan Wang Ah Jang. The most common factor of associations was the location of the elements in relation to each other and their associations with past activities which made them distinctive to the respondents. Thus, elements were recognised and described as being near or opposite to another place as illustrated by Respondent 16's description of Jalan Bukit Ubi.

" This is in front of Grandys near the Mamak's shop."

Some respondents, as one above, were sometimes unable to name the element yet were able to recognise it because of its association with a location whose elements were more familiar and distinctive to them. It was noted that this form of association was used to describe all the distinctive elements in the town centre.

Another form of associations used by respondents to recognise an element was the presence of a particular building or distinctive element not found elsewhere. These elements were used in the recognition process because they had been associated in the respondents' minds as being the clue to the identity of that element. An example was provided by Respondent 20's description of the river front which highlighted how association helped the process of recognition.

" It can be anywhere but for the boat used as a floating restaurant, then I know it is at the river front. Otherwise, it is difficult to tell. "

The second factor influencing the distinctiveness of buildings is the activities associated with them. Buildings which respondents found to be distinctive were those that were linked to past activities. The old shop-houses were distinctive because they were the shops which the respondents visited for shopping as well as leisure purposes. The Kuantan Recreational Club (KRC) building on the other hand was a place for social gathering in the past as illustrated by the following extract of conversation with Respondent 6 about Jalan Mahkota.

" A : Well, I guess it is because we have known that street for so long that it just register into our minds that it is the centre of the town. Furthermore, it was the original road with old buildings which still remain intact. During my childhood days, I can remember that if we were to go to the town, that is where we go whether to buy things or just to stroll. The first shop-houses were in Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar. Even now, they are still the same row of shop-houses of my childhood days. You know, the existing tourist centre is formerly the KRC.

Q : What was the function of KRC building?

A : In the past, when we have gathering or party, that is the place where we go for social gathering or functions. "

There was a sentimental attachment to buildings by the respondents because of their associations with events that occurred in the past. In this instance it rekindled fond memories of the things that happened when the respondent was young. As with the case of buildings, streets were found to be distinctive because of associations to their functions in the past. This was illustrated for Jalan Mahkota in the above quotation, which was considered distinctive because it was the original high street of the town centre as well as being the oldest street there. The distinctiveness of this street was increased by the presence of old buildings, and



for those who grew up in the town centre, these buildings became a reminder of their childhood days not because of their physical characteristics but simply because of their presence. Respondent 6's remarks highlighted this aspect.

" Jalan Mahkota still remains the same. I think the shop-houses are still the same ones. You probably noticed the old buildings there. If I go there, it rekindle my memories. "

Association with certain functions also made the streets distinctive as indicated by Respondent 15 who remembered streets according to the predominant land uses such as Jalan Tun Ismail, Jalan Wang Ah Jang and Jalan Bukit Ubi which had been noted for their commercial land uses and private sector buildings whereas Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar contained the administrative and government offices. This type of association helped the residents to recognise and remember the areas within the town centre.

### 3. Historical knowledge.

Findings from the photo interview revealed that knowledge of the history of the town centre influenced a respondent's recognition of an element shown by the respondent's description of an element based on past events and the changes in the physical appearance over a period of time. Historical knowledge was used as a clue to recognising Medan Pelancung, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Kerang, Padang and the river front, all of which were located in the old centre. In the survey, Jalan Mahkota and the Padang were mentioned by a significantly high percentage of respondents i.e. 63.6% and 62.1% respectively as places that they wished to be retained (see Table 7.7 ).

Table 7.7 : Places to be retained

	No (330 Resp.)	%
Jalan Mahkota	210	63.6
Padang	205	62.1
River front	139	42.1
Jalan Besar	124	37.5
Mosque	47	14.2
Medan Pelancung	47	14.2
Taman Kerang	28	8.5
Kompleks Teruntum	26	7.8
Jalan Bukit Ubi	10	3

Source : Field survey 1994.

This was followed by the river front and Jalan Besar, mentioned by 42.1% and 37.5% of the respondents respectively. The reason given by the highest percentage of respondents (49.1%) was because of their historical interest (see Table 7.8). These places were located in the oldest section of the town centre, suggesting that the historic areas of a town were valued and have meanings for the residents.

Medan Pelancung, for example was recognised by some respondents because it was located by the river front where there used to be a fresh fish open air market operated by the local fishermen. It used to be a place of attraction for the residents as indicated by Respondent 13's statements in describing Medan Pelancung.

" This is near Hotel Pahang, now called Classic, the same row as the Samudera Hotel. I recognise the old wooden house. This road is famous for its market and the fish market by the river where there was a jetty to Tanjung Lumpur. It used to be a place of attraction for the locals. "

Table 7.8 : Why places need to be retained

	No (33 Resp.)	%
Of historical interest	162	49.1
Suitable at its present location	145	43.9
The most beautiful place	140	42.4
Buildings of architectural interest	78	23.8
Meeting place for people	60	18.1
Provide nostalgic memories	25	7.5

Source : Field survey 1993/1994.

Apart from past activities, the place was recognised too because of the presence of historically significant buildings such as the PCCL building. It also relate to the history of the early development of the town. Evidence of the recognition of this was illustrated by Respondent 19's statements.

" This is near the old PCCL building by the river front. There is the ice cendol stall next to it. It was an old building. It is just left vacant. There is the old Jawi tree near it. "

Streets were also found to be distinctive if they had played a role in the historical development of the town centre. This was reflected by Respondent 9 and Respondent 8 who mentioned Jalan Besar and Jalan Mahkota as the earliest streets in the town centre. Jalan Tun Ismail and Jalan Bukit Ubi were remembered because they were quite recent compared to the other two streets according to the respondents. Jalan Tun Ismail was in an area still covered with jungle when the town centre first started. The same observation was made of Jalan Mahkota in which respondents were able to recognise the place because of the old wet market building which used to be located on the street before its relocation to the newer centre. In addition, Jalan Mahkota was recognised because it

was where the first bakery in town was located as evidenced by Respondent 11's remarks.

" This is Jalan Mahkota because of Meng Heng, the first bakery in Kuantan. These buildings used to be the high street with major shops. "

The above comment also suggested that the historical significance of the street as the old high street of the town centre was a clue used in recognising it. This suggested that the historical factor played an important role in the recognition of a distinctive element. Finally, the role that a landscape feature played in the historical development of the town centre also influenced its distinctiveness. This was detected in Respondent 9's description of the old Angsana trees near the Padang and Taman Kerang which were said to have been there ever since the town started. Their presence provided a sense of continuity between the present and the past, especially to residents who had grown up in the town centre.

#### 4. Nostalgic memories.

From the photo recognition interview, some respondents identified an element by the memories that they had of their childhood and the photographs rekindled their nostalgia. This resulted in the place being recognised not for its present appearance but for what it used to look like in the past, based on the respondent's childhood memories. Nostalgic memories then were used to describe Taman Kerang, Jalan Mahkota, State Mosque and the river front, all of which were located in the old centre. An example was provided by Respondent 3's description of Taman Kerang.

" By the look of the shape of the cockle, it is at Jalan Mahkota near the eating stalls. It appears to me like a

symbol of MPK. When I first came to this town, it attracted me because of the fountain and lighting at night. It is nostalgic for me. I don't know its name. The eating stalls nearby is called 'bawah pokok' or 'pokok buloh'. "

In the case of this respondent, an affinity had developed with the area because it was considered to be the most distinctive in the town centre when he first moved to the town. Recognition of the element became an easy process because of the bond that had developed as well as the cherished memories. The junction of Jalan Bukit Ubi was, however, noticed not because of the nostalgic memories of its present appearance, but because of the memories of its past appearance. This was manifested in cases where there were distinct changes in physical appearance between the past and the present. This was illustrated by Respondent 5's description of Jalan Bukit Ubi.

" This is near the market. There used to be a roundabout here, now there is only a junction. There is a shop selling shoes here. I think this is Jalan Bukit Ubi. I can see the laundry shop here. "

From the Visual Survey the place referred to is at the intersection of three major roads: Jalan Bukit Ubi, Jalan Tun Ismail and Jalan Wang Ah Jang. There were several traffic lights at this junction as well as a large number of road signs. The element was recognised because prior to the traffic lights, there used to be a roundabout to regulate the traffic flow. As there are no roundabouts within the town centre now, it seems that the marked change in the area triggered the recognition process. The river front area too was recognised because of the changes that had occurred. The respondent's memories of its past appearance were used as an aid to its recognition in the present as reflected by Respondent 8's remarks.

" Easy to identify, the floating restaurant. In the past, you can't walk along the river because it was only a small path. "

The new State Mosque was considered distinctive because it was built on the site of the old mosque. Both Respondent 5 and Respondent 9 found the mosque to be distinctive when they compared the design of the present mosque with the old one. A hint of regret was also detected in describing the design of the old mosque and its replacement by a different mosque design. These cherished memories of the old mosque influenced the distinctiveness of the present mosque.

Thus memories were important to the residents in that they provided a sense of continuity, and that the longer the element had been around, the more memories it evoked. These memories prevented the residents from feeling lost, especially when alterations were made to the appearance of the place. Places that provided memories to the residents contributed to the perception of the town centre's identity.

## 5. Affinity

In recognising a distinctive element, some respondents only relied on their subjective opinions or judgements. This was categorised under evaluation because the opinions formed were usually based on the respondent's evaluation of the appearance of the elements. This factor is used in describing the mosque, Taman Kerang, Jalan Besar and river front. The survey showed that the highest percentage of respondents (64.5%) surveyed mentioned the Padang and 53.3% of the respondents mentioned Taman Kerang as the two most beautiful places in the town centre (see Table 7.9).

Table 7.9 : Places that were beautiful

	No (330 Resp)	%
Padang	213	64.5
Taman Kerang	176	53.3
Mosque	92	27.8
Medan Pelancung	60	18.1
Benteng (riverfront)	58	17.5
Jalan Bukit Ubi	45	13.6
Kompleks Teruntum	25	7.6
Jalan Tun Ismail	20	6

Source : Field survey 1993/1994

It was common to find some respondents recognising an element because it was thought to be the nicest in town. This was illustrated by the statements made by Respondent 17 in describing the mosque.

" This is the mosque. I can tell easily. It is more beautiful than the other buildings. There are nice walls and paving. "

The elements which were recognised because of this factor were located in the older centre and based on the resident's affinity towards these elements. So, elements that were considered beautiful or nice were recognised easily than those which were thought to be ugly or messy. It can be assumed that elements which had a beautiful appearance will tend to be more distinctive and noticed compared to the obtrusive ones.

#### 6. Special quality (popularity).

Elements with special quality or those that were popular to the residents were easily recognised because of this factor. This quality was referred to by the respondents in recognising Jalan Mahkota, bus station, Medan Pelancung,

Parkson Supermarket, Kompleks Teruntum, Teluk Cempedak and Jalan Besar. All these places are located in the old centre except for Parkson Supermarket. In four of these places, the qualities mentioned related to the food found in the area. Jalan Besar, for example was known for its dried seafood products sold in the shop-houses. The nearby bus station was also recognised because of the popularity of the stalls which sold 'keropok lekor' a local delicacy made of fish in this region, as Respondent 15's commented.

" This is near the bus station, famous for its keropok. "

These examples illustrated how the quality of food was used as a clue to recognising a distinctive element and lending it a character without referring to its physical characteristics. In fact, these elements were known not only to the residents but also to the tourists and visitors who wished to sample the special food of the town. Another form of popularity related to the name of the element. This was used to describe and recognise Kompleks Teruntum. The building was distinctive because it was very popular and well known to the town's residents as reflected by Respondent 2's statements.

" There are two symbols for Kuantan, Kompleks Teruntum and stadium. Teruntum is the only shopping complex and have exclusive shops. The stadium is known to football fans and being a state stadium, it is also known to the outsiders. "

It was also interesting to discover that Respondent 11 also found Kompleks Teruntum to be distinctive although she rarely went into the building. The reason for its distinctiveness was that the complex was often mentioned by her children and it was a place which they visited when they were in the town centre. This suggests that other people can influence the perceptions of a building and increased its



distinctiveness. According to Respondent 6, the media played an important role in making a building distinctive such as Stadium Darul Makmor. This occurred during football matches when the media coverage of the games held there ensured that the building was noticed by its residents.

Natural landscape features such as the beach was found to be distinctive because of its popularity to the outsiders. Some respondents such as Respondent 4 observed that many of his friends who visited him asked for the beach because it was so well known. Uniqueness of appearance was assessed through what was said by acquaintances or visitors from outside the town, as emphasised by Respondent 3's statements.

" Talking about uniqueness, I feel that one of the unique thing about Kuantan is the Teluk Cempedak beach. This is because, from the information that I gathered from friends outside the town centre, the first thing that they know about Kuantan is its long and beautiful beach. "

No doubt, the special quality or popularity of a physical element increased its distinctiveness to the residents even if they did not find the physical and activities to be distinctive.

It was apparent that meanings and association attached to the physical elements did helped to make them distinctive to the residents as well as enhancing the character of the town centre. Reference to meaning and associations were found more in the focused interview and photo recognition interview. This was probably due to the unconstrained nature of these two methods in allowing the respondents to speak freely of their perception of the town centre. Memories of the past often influenced their description of the town centre as if there were certain elements that still provided this continuity between the past and the present.

## 7. Other social considerations.

Apart from meanings and associations, social consideration was also a factor which influenced the distinctiveness of elements. These social considerations included the residents' dislike about the town centre socially and their aspirations.

### i. Dislikes

The survey and field work showed that distinctiveness did not just depended on elements that were liked or favoured by the residents but also included those that gave a negative image to them. Elements that were obtrusive visually could be distinctive to residents because of the negative impact it had on the environment. This was observed in the survey when 59.8% of respondents mentioned a combination of six areas within the town centre as places that were ugly in terms of appearance (see Table 7.10). During the interview respondents mentioned places where they felt uncomfortable, which led them to a dislike of the place. Hence this made them disliked the place. Hence the older residents felt uncomfortable at the Taman Esplanade, which was also not a suitable place for the family leisure activities.

Table 7.10 : Places that are ugly.

	No (330 Resp.)	%
None	132	40.1
Market	103	31.2
Bus station	98	29.7
Riverside factory	55	16.6
Custom area	7	2.1

Source: Field survey 1994/95

Some of the female respondents, found Taman Kerang quite intimidating because the place was dominated by male residents. In fact, this was one of the factors that made them noticed Taman Kerang. In general, the town centre was well liked by the respondents and that there were very few negative comments about the town centre. The only comment made was that the respondents felt that the town centre was getting busier with traffic compared to the past. Streets like Jalan Mahkota were often mentioned because of the traffic congestion that usually occurred especially on Fridays and Saturdays. It was apparent that the respondents disliked traffic congestion so much that places or streets which had this problem were often very distinctive to them. Complaints about how difficult to cross certain streets or to drive through them sometimes dominated certain respondents' description of the town centre. This factor left an impression on them. The town centre appeared to be quite a safe place to the respondents, none of them appeared to have any problem being in the town centre. The only concern raised was on the lighting quality in which certain places in the town centre such as the market were quite dark at night that one respondent mentioned that he felt uncomfortable visiting them.

Finally, places that give a negative image to the town centre are also raised when they mentioned about things that they disliked in the town centre. Examples of such places were the back alleys near the market and Jalan Wong Ah Jang. Both places were mentioned by certain respondents as the red light district of the town, which they felt can be an intimidating place for the residents. The back alleys of the market area was also a favourite place for the transvestite and homosexual groups of the town, according to them.

It was evident that distinctiveness of a place does not just depend on the positive image or visual appearance of the town centre but also that of the negative image of the place. Hence, distinctiveness of a place, although it had a close association with evaluation, could be due to both the positive and negative evaluation. This suggests that the identity of a place was affected by both physical and social factors. However, it was observed that for Kuantan town centre, the negative social aspects of the town centre played a secondary role in the residents' description of it. Of the thirty respondents who participated in the interview, only two respondents mentioned their dislikes and their concern about places that portrayed a negative image.

#### ii. Aspirations and pride.

During the survey and interview, respondents were also asked about their aspirations for the town centre in order to uncover aspects of it that have the potential of contributing to its identity. This included questions on what they think needed to be improved. The highest percentage of respondents (37.8%) wanted the town centre to be kept clean (see Table 7.11). This was despite the fact that it had been cited many times in the past as the cleanest town in Malaysia.

Many of the respondents in the interview noticed that there were large number of trees grown in the town centre area compared to other major towns and cities in Malaysia. Despite this, many respondents still suggested that more trees should be planted to improve the quality of the town centre. Trees were noticed more because of the shade they provided than their aesthetic qualities. One interview respondent even highlighted his disappointment with the felling of some mature Angsana trees along Jalan Besar. These old trees, he argued provided a character to the town centre. It can be

implied that trees were very distinctive to the residents of a place and that they influenced the residents' perceptions of the town centre's identity.

Table 7.11 : What to improve in the town centre.

	No	%
	(330 Resp)	
1. Keep clean	125	37.8
2. More trees planted	113	34.2
3. Avoid traffic congestion	42	12.7
4. Maintain and refurbished old buildings	41	12.4
5. Didn't respond	37	11.2
6. Build more beautiful and tall buildings	33	10
7. More recreational facilities	33	10
8. Decorate streets with lighting	26	7.8
9. Improve river front	7	2.1

Source : Field survey 1994/95

Even in the interview, many respondents referred to the town as being clean. The respondents were observant of the environmental quality of the town centre and their assessment of the town centre's appearance was sometimes influenced by their perception of the environmental quality. The other point raised by a significant number of respondents in the survey was to have more trees planted (34.2%) in the town centre. This point was further elaborated by the interview respondents who felt that trees had a significant impact on the town centre visually and environmentally.

The other points on the improvements that were raised by more than 10% of the survey respondents were to avoid traffic congestion (12.7%) and to maintain and refurbish old buildings (12.4%). In the interview, respondents were quite preoccupied with the traffic situation especially in areas which were prone to congestion. The main complaint was the difficulties of crossing the road especially at Jalan Mahkota in the old centre. The residents' aspiration in seeing that

traffic congestion lessened could be seen as a natural reaction to an issue that was of major concern to them. The preoccupation of certain respondents with the traffic problem implied that these problems are very distinctive to them because it affected their daily activities in the town centre. This in return influenced the way they perceived the identity of it.

Finally, there were respondents in the survey who would like to see the old buildings in the town centre maintained and refurbished. Although the number of respondents who suggested this was only 12.4%, there was a rising awareness of conservation issues among the residents. When this aspect was cross analysed with the interview transcripts, it was apparent that many found the old buildings especially the old shop-houses had special features that contributed to the character of the place. Despite this, some of the interview respondents suggested that these old shop-houses should be demolished and new ones built. However, when the interviewee were probed about their reasons for saying this, their main concern was on the state of the buildings. Respondent 28, for example had contradictory views on this matter. On one hand, he stated that the old shop-houses were one of the buildings that provided an identity to the town centre because of their unique features but at the same time, he wanted to see all the old buildings demolished and new ones built.

This implied that the old buildings were very distinctive to the residents because of their architectural features and conditions. The problem faced by the town centre was that the condition of the old buildings was poor, this affected the residents' perceptions of the town centre's identity. It could be presumed that conservation work to restore these old shop-houses would have a positive impact on the town centre's identity because these buildings were very

distinctive to the residents. Finally, when the survey respondents were asked about places whose character they wished to be retained, all the places mentioned were located in the old town centre. The highest percentage (49%) mentioned historical interest as the reason why places needed to be retained.

This implied that residents' aspiration of the town centre included the retention of places that had historical significance. These places were very distinctive to them and their existence influenced the way residents perceived the town centre's identity. The focused interview also illustrated how many residents wanted to see the town developed although they did not want the places which had historical significance to be replaced by modern buildings. The reason given was mainly because even though new buildings symbolise progress, the character of the modern buildings cannot match the old. Many of these respondents were able to describe the uniqueness of the old buildings compared to the modern ones which tended to be monotonous. Again, the findings of the field work support the idea of conservation of the old town centre in order to enhance the residents' perceptions of the town centre's identity.

#### 7.4 Qualities associated with identity between different parts of the town centre.

The qualities associated with identity were those that enabled the residents to recognise and remember a place vividly. These qualities could be categorised into physical (tangible) and non physical (not tangible) qualities. The physical qualities of the town centre that were distinctive to residents and thus associated with its identity included physical characteristics of elements in the town centre and the human activities taking place.

The non physical qualities were the meanings and associations attached to the physical elements and other social considerations. The physical qualities played a more important role in the residents' perceptions of identity as they were frequently mentioned. However, the non-physical qualities although playing a complementary role in enabling the residents' to remember a place, they tended to be the contributing factor in making historic areas distinctive to the residents. Of all the physical characteristics mentioned above, the appearance and location of elements in context were the most frequently recalled and used to recognise areas within the town centre. This suggests that, to the residents, they were the most distinctive physical characteristics of the elements in the town centre.

Between the different parts of the town centre, the attributes relating to the appearance of elements were used to describe the elements in the older area. In contrast fewer number of attributes relating to appearance were used to describe the buildings and streets in the newer centre. Of the attributes, only building condition, building form, colour and roof form were used to describe buildings. Location in context, vegetation and traffic system as well as street design were characteristics that were equally used to recall and recognise elements in both centres. The other characteristics which were not used to describe the elements in the newer centre were design of landscape elements, quality of views and lighting qualities. This suggested that the older centre had more physical characteristics that were used in recalling and recognising the distinctive elements than the newer centre. Clearly, the distinctiveness of elements within the older centre related to the ability of the residents to recall and recognise their physical characteristics.



In the case of activities, indoor activities which is related to building use were more frequently mentioned than outdoor activities. However, compared to physical qualities, activities played a secondary role in the residents' perceptions of the identity of a place. Activities were used to describe both the old and newer centre. Nevertheless, the old centre was seen to be more distinctive because it had more outdoor activities compared to the new centre. The latter's activities mainly related to the building use. The non-physical qualities of identity were present more in the old town centre. This was probably due to its historical significance and the familiarity of the residents with its environment. The old centre also provided more meanings and associations to the respondents than the newer centre.

The distinctiveness of physical elements in both centres was seen in relation to its context. A contrast in terms of the attributes of the physical characteristics in particular the appearance of elements compared to the surrounding, enhanced their distinctiveness to the residents. On the other hand, when there was a concentration of these characteristics in the area, the appearance particularly would be distinctive to the residents.

Such findings support the existing theories regarding the attributes of the physical environment mentioned in Chapter Three. Attributes such as skylines were distinctive to the residents although they were not mentioned specifically. Added to that was the importance of settings for tall and large-scale public buildings in order for them to be perceived as distinctive by the residents. The setting also provided the key buildings with a sense of importance and this influenced their distinctiveness.

## 7.5 Physical characteristic of elements that were distinctive as perceived by different cultural groups.

This section discusses the physical characteristics of elements that were recalled by the different cultural groups and in doing so, highlighted the similarities and differences between them. This is to meet the third objective of the research which examined the variation between the socio-cultural groups in their perception of distinctive elements. Analyses were based on the interview transcripts in which the reasons by which elements were mentioned in describing the appearance of the town centre were coded for recurrent themes. For all the cultural groups, the recurrent themes that emerged in describing the physical elements were appearance, views, human activities, meanings and associations, environmental quality landscaping and traffic system. These factors were also utilised in recognising the distinctive elements in the town centre.

### 7.51 Variation according to ethnicity

In the survey, the respondents were asked to identify the elements used to remember the town centre (see Table 7.12). This was to uncover the qualities that were important in the process of remembering a place. Six factors were mentioned; street's name, building use, activities, type of buildings and open space such as the Padang. With the exception of the streets' name which related more to the meanings and associations, all these factors were physical qualities associated with identity.

From the table, it can be seen that there was little variation between the three groups in terms of the factors used to remember a place. All the three ethnic groups remembered a place by the streets' name, building type and

Table 7.12 : How a place is remembered according to ethnicity

	Malay (109)	Chinese (204)	Indian (16)
street name	107 (98%)	203 (99.5%)	16 (100%)
building use	73 (67%)	122 (59.8%)	15 (93.8%)
activities	28 (25.7%)	48 (23.5%)	2 (12.5%)
building type	51 (46.8%)	112 (54.9%)	7 (43.8%)
signs	44 (40.4%)	76 (37.3%)	1 (6.3%)
Padang	11 (10.1%)	26 (12.7%)	2 (12.5%)

Source : Field survey 1994/95.

activities. The slight variation observed between the group was that signs are the third important factor used by the Malays and Chinese but not the Indians. This meant that open space was the least used factor in remembering a place by the Malay and Chinese respondents. However, this variation could be considered as insignificant because the highest percentage of the three groups shared the same view regarding the three most important factors to remember a place.

There was some variation between all the ethnic groups, namely the Malays, Chinese and Indians in their perception of the physical characteristics of elements recalled and recognised. Of the three groups, the Malay respondents emphasised detailed design features on buildings appearance compared to the other two groups. The detailed design features noticed by the Malay respondents were more on the decorative aspects of buildings such as the ornamentation and engraving of the building facade and walls. This observation was expected since the traditional Malay house design is very rich in terms of detailing and engravings.

The Malays were also more comprehensive in their description of the appearance of buildings compared to the Chinese and Indians. None of the Indian respondents and only two of the Chinese respondents referred to the detailed design features of buildings. Indians are the least concerned with design features of buildings in describing the appearance of the town centre.

An example is provided by Respondent 1, a nineteen-year-old Indian girl who described the town centre based on the type of shops and development that occurred there. When further asked to describe the appearance of the town centre, she still referred to the type of buildings in the town centre as shown below:

" The appearance is as I have described just now. I don't know.. I don't think there is anything special. "

Even streets and places were described and mentioned by the appearance of certain buildings that were distinctive to the residents. This observation was made for all the three ethnic groups. This suggests that there is very little difference, if any between the three ethnic groups in terms of describing the appearance of the town centre. All the four distinctive elements discussed in Chapter Six were mentioned by the three ethnic groups. The slight difference observed was in terms of details mentioned in which the Malays were more detailed in their description of appearance and the Indians were the least detailed of them all.

There is however a slight variation observed in the perception of views by the ethnic groups. Views were noticed only by the Malay and Indian respondents. This was illustrated by Respondent 7, a Malay man, in his description of the river front.

" It is because of the scenery. In my housing area, the views are limited. At the river front, the view is panoramic, You can also see the river, watch the boats and make remember the past."

The Chinese, however did not find the scenery as a reason to describe the distinctiveness of elements. Between the Indian and the Malay respondents, the latter was more enthusiastic in describing the views in the town centre. The Malays also tended to mention the view of a building from other places to make it noticeable. This related to the visibility of the buildings from various angles in the town centre as highlighted by Respondent 18, a Malay female.

" I think it is the Kompleks Teruntum because you can see it from afar. Now, there is also the mosque, which you can see from afar. "

Of the three ethnic groups, the Malays and Chinese residents were more inclined to be aware of the surrounding environment especially cleanliness and the presence of trees and greenery. The presence of trees were mentioned by both the Malay and the Chinese respondents whereas cleanliness was emphasised only by the latter. Respondent 17, an elderly Chinese lady highlighted the cleanliness aspect and the landscaping treatment in describing the town centre.

" Yes, it is very clean now. Kuantan is now one of the cleanest towns in the country. Have you been to the toilet near the river front? It is very clean. Now, at the roadside, there are paving, making it attractive. There is also the street planting and flowering plants adding colour to the street scene. "

From the comments above that perception of cleanliness also applied to buildings as perceived by the Chinese respondent. Respondent 2, a Malay boy, stated that the area within the town centre that is visually obtrusive was that which was dirty and noisy as shown below.

" Yes, the express bus station because it is so busy, dirty , noisy and is not suitable to be located in the centre of the town. "

Hence, the environmental quality including non visual aspects such as noise and cleanliness were noticed by the Malay respondent.

The response suggested that litter and rubbish were noticed by the Malay and Chinese residents. Thus, the maintenance and up keeping of the town centre as a whole was a feature noticed in the town centre. This quality was not mentioned by the Indian respondents, suggesting that it is less important for the physical elements to be recalled.

There was also a variation observed in the perception of landscape treatment between the three ethnic groups. Among the landscaping carried out in the town centre that was noticed by the Malay and Chinese respondents were the trees, shrubs and pavements. The type of trees planted in the town centre was recalled by both groups, however, the tree species that they noticed differed.

Respondent 9, a Chinese male, was attracted by the Angsana trees in the town centre and felt that they contributed significantly to the identity of the town centre. Respondent 26, a Malay male also noticed the species of trees such as the bamboo trees near the Astaka and Taman Kerang. According to him, the bamboo trees helped him to identify the town centre as shown below:

" I think without the bamboo trees it can be difficult to recognise the town. "

However, the characteristics of trees were not mentioned by the Indian respondents. This suggests that this was less

important in the perception of distinctive landscape treatment in the town centre.

The other landscape treatments that were recalled by the Chinese and Malay respondents were the design of the sculpture, fountains, pavement and the quality of lighting. There was also a similarity between the Malay and Chinese residents in terms of environmental quality that was observed in the town centre. Finally, the traffic system and street design were noticed by all the three ethnic groups. However, it was observed that the Malay and Chinese respondents were more detailed in their description of the road system whereas the Indian respondents only focused their attention to traffic lights.

It can be deduced that there were greater similarities between the Malay and Chinese residents in their perception of environmental quality and landscape treatment. The qualities and treatments mentioned by the Malay and Chinese respondents were not observed by the Indian respondents, suggesting that they were less important than other characteristics in recalling an element. Thus, it can be deduced that ethnic origin does have some influence on the perception of the physical characteristics of distinctive elements in terms of these aspects. However, it was observed that the variation in perception between the ethnic groups was not of great significance.

There was a slight variation detected between the three ethnic groups in describing human activities that were noticed. The Malays were more observant of the street and outdoor activities, of which the activities happening in the Padang, Taman Kerang and the river front were the ones most noticed. This was evident in the detailed description of the activities that occurred in Taman Kerang and the river

front. It seemed that only the Malay respondents mentioned the activities of the medicine men at Taman Kerang, the boats and the fishermen by the jetty at the river. An example was provided by Respondent 26, a Malay man who described his enjoyment of watching the medicine men selling their products to the people who visited the place.

" I will always go there whenever I go to the town centre. There are a lot of things happening there such as the locals selling medicine underneath the trees. So, I like to sit there and watch all these activities taking place. "

It was interesting to note that most of the men who gather around the area were Malays and that the medicine men were also Malays. The Indians too were aware of the outdoor activities that occurred in the town centre as reflected in Respondent 12, an Indian man, who described the Padang as the centre for all the activities in the town. For the Chinese respondents, the outdoor activities were not distinctive to them as identified by their description of the town centre. In comparison to the Malay respondents, the Padang was more distinctive for them compared to Taman Kerang and the river front.

Both the Chinese and the Indians were more concerned with building use or activities that occurred in the building. This explained why both the Indians and the Chinese respondents focused their description of the town centre's activities on the type of shops available. One male Chinese respondent, Respondent 9, observed:

" It used to be this area, where the stall, Padang and the mosque are. Everybody came here, the Malays and their Chinese friends also came here. The Malays can pray at the mosque and the Chinese can pray at St Thomas church. It used to be a meeting place. Opposite the Padang, there is a row of shops, and at the corner is an old coffee shop and restaurant as its meeting place. The restaurant has Muslim food and so the



Malays can also eat there and used to be a meeting place. The food is good and cheap. There is also a book shop here. "

Meanings and associations played an important role in all the three ethnic groups' descriptions of the town centre. In their description of certain elements, the three ethnic groups often related to their past memories and associations. The places where the Malays, Chinese and Indian residents shared nostalgic memories of the past were the Padang and the river front, whereas the building which they had common affections for was the mosque. Between the three ethnic groups, it was noticed that the Chinese and Indians had more meanings attached to the Padang whereas the Malays were more closely associated to the river and its river front. When talking about the present distinctive feature of the Padang, the Chinese and Indian residents related to the past activities that occurred there as well as to its spatial quality. Respondent 12, an Indian man, did not want to see drastic changes to the Padang area and the mosque. This was because the area held memories for him. These memories were shown below:

" I think they should be left alone and untouched. In the past, most activities took place at the Padang. It used to be the old centre and even now, it is the centre for activities."

The Chinese respondents also emphasised their fond memories of the past in describing the distinctiveness of the Padang. Thus, the Padang was the element which both the Indian and Chinese respondents felt attached to and shared fond memories. The Malay residents, on the other hand, were more inclined to relate to the river front, with their past memories of what it used to look like and the activities that occurred there in the past. This was highlighted by the description of the river front by Respondent 6, a Malay lady. For this Malay respondent the distinctiveness of the river

was because of her nostalgic memories of the place. These nostalgic memories heightened her observation of the place and influenced its distinctiveness.

On the whole, the three ethnic groups' tended to associate meanings with the buildings and places in the old town centre through their past experiences. Thus, there was no significant variation in the influence of meaning and associations for the ethnic groups. It can be deduced that although there was a slight variation in the perception of qualities associated with identity especially in the physical characteristics and activities between the ethnic groups, this difference was too minor to be of significance. Furthermore, their difference was mainly between the type of physical characteristics and activities observed rather than the difference in qualities associated with their identity.

#### 7.52 Variation according to gender factor.

There was no significant variation observed between the gender in their perception of distinctive physical characteristics of the physical elements except for in the level of details observed. From Table 7.13 it is seen that the male and female respondents were similar in the factors used to remember a place in the survey.

It was observed that female respondents were more aware of buildings associated with shopping facilities rather than its architecture. This was illustrated by Respondent 14, a working housewife, who described the town centre's attraction by the shopping buildings available.

" I think for the housewives, what is important is the market, shopping area and grocery stores. "

Table 7.13 : How a place is remembered according to gender

Remember	Male (179)	Female (150)
streets name	178 (99.4%)	148 (98.7%)
building use	121 (67.6%)	88 (58.7%)
activities	44 (24.6%)	30 (20%)
building type	88 (49%)	86 (57.3%)
sign	63 (35.2%)	62 (41.3%)
padang	22 (12.3%)	22 (14.7%)

Source : Fieldwork 1994/95

This was also highlighted in the survey when the highest percentage of the female respondents (37.3%) mentioned Ocean Supermarket as the place they liked to visit during their leisure time (see Table 7.14).

The male respondents on the other hand, were aware of key public buildings and buildings of architectural interest. An example was provided by Respondent 8, a Chinese man in his fifties, who mentioned the old court house and District Office building in describing the town centre of Kuantan.

" The old court next to the District Office. The design is still the same, that is during the colonial period. "

The highest percentage of the male respondents (40.6%) mentioned Jalan Besar and Jalan Mahkota as the place they visited in their leisure time (see Table 7.12 ). This implied that streets in the old town centre were a favourite place for the male respondents. It also explained why their descriptions of the town centre were mainly focused around the old town centre.

Table 7.14 : Places visited for leisure purposes

	Male (180)	Female (150)
Market	23 (12.8%)	28 (18.7%)
Ocean supermarket	34 (18.9%)	56 (37.3%)
Benteng	9 (5%)	7 (4.7%)
Jalan Mahkota	73 (40.6%)	36 (24%)
Jalan Besar	73 (40.6%)	36 (24%)
Kompleks Teruntum	41 (22.8%)	35 (23.3%)
Jln. Bukit Ubi	21 (11.7%)	17 (11.3%)

Source : Fieldwork 1994/95

It was observed that both the male and female respondents were observant of the design of the buildings in the town centre especially the mosque and the old shop-houses of Jalan Mahkota. However, the male respondents emphasised on the overall shape and architectural style of the buildings whereas the females tended to describe the detailing and ornamentation on the buildings. This was illustrated by the following comments.

" I think the wall is beautiful because it is not a proper wall since they punched it with holes. Other than that, I think the dome is pretty with its stripes and blue colour. "

(Respondent 15)

" I will start with the mosque. At one time the mosque was unique with its coconut shell shape dome. However, with the new mosque, it resemble other mosque in the middle east like Medina and Mecca. "

(Respondent 20)

There was no variation observed between the gender in their perception of view as a distinctive characteristic of the physical elements. The similarities displayed between the male and female respondents suggested that views of buildings and landscape features were appreciated by both sexes in their description of distinctive elements in the town centre.

Trees and landscaping work such as street planting were noticed by both female and male residents. The only variation was that the males tended to focus on the tree species and its location, as illustrated by Respondent 26, a Malay male whilst the female focused their attention on the street planting such as potted plants. The latter was illustrated by Respondent 15, a Malay female :

" In Jalan Bukit Ubi, there are many palm trees planted along the road dividers. The difference between this street and Jalan Tun Ismail is that Jalan Tun Ismail does not have palm trees but potted flowering plants. "

Both groups noticed the lights, fountains and pavement although the males were more observant of the details of these elements compared to the females, from their detailed descriptions of the lights at Taman Kerang and the mosque. The cleanliness of the town was only mentioned by the female respondents whereas the dirtiness of places was mentioned by a male respondent.

Hence, both the male and female respondents' perceptions of the environmental quality were similar to each other and only varied in the level of details observed, with the former observing the details whereas the latter were more concerned with the overall environment. However, in the case of traffic situation and street design, they tended to be similar in their perception. Thus, it can be deduced that environmental

quality was a distinctive characteristic of the physical elements to both genders.

There was no difference observed between the male and female residents in terms of human activities. The two respondents who seemed to be more aware of the activities in the town centre than others, Respondent 26 and Respondent 6, were both a male and female respectively. The two groups were aware of both the outdoor or on street activities as well as those that occur indoors. This was evident in their description of the distinctive streets and buildings in the town centre's appearance. The female respondents were more enthusiastic when talking about the type of shops and the goods sold compared to the men. Both male and female residents were inclined to notice in detail the type of activity and the people who participated in it. Both the male and female respondents described the distinctiveness of certain elements or features based on their past memories and associations. The male residents tended to concentrate on the Padang and the mosque when recollecting their past memories. Discussions were focused upon the old mosque design and the environment surrounding it as illustrated by Respondent 9, a Chinese male remarks.

" I thought the old mosque design was very unique. Only very few mosques in the world has a dome of that particular shape. So, I feel it should be preserved for the future generations. They blamed the structure of the mosque to justify building a new one but I thought that could be repaired. "

The female residents, however, found the river front to be more distinctive based on their recollections of the past activities that took place as well as the changes in appearance of the river front between the past and the present. This was illustrated by Respondent 6's descriptions of the river front. Thus, the only variation between the male

and female residents was the type of elements or features that they associated with their past memories.

### 7.53 Variation according to age factor.

There was a slight variation between the different age groups in their perception of distinctive physical characteristics of elements. From Table 7.14, it was observed that all the age groups shared the same opinion with regard to the factors used to remember a place in the survey. The most important factors were street names, building use, building type, signs, activities and open space.

More variation was observed between the youngest and oldest group of residents in perceiving the environmental quality, views and landscape treatment. Although the types of buildings noticed by the younger and older residents were similar, the former was aware of buildings relating to shopping and commercial activities compared to the latter. Table 7.15 illustrates the places that residents liked to visit in their leisure time according to their age group. There was a significant difference in the choice of place visited between the younger (7-18 years old) and the older respondents (above 18 years old). This was most obvious between the youngest and the oldest group. The highest percentage of the youngest group of respondents quoted Jalan Bukit Ubi and Parkson Supermarket as the place they liked to visit most whereas the oldest group mentioned Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar. The younger respondents' description of buildings were more concentrated on the facilities offered by the building as well as the building's age and condition.

It was also observed that younger respondents had a tendency to notice buildings that were relatively new and recent in the town centre.

Table 7.15 : How a place is remembered according to age group

	7-12 (18)	13-17 (35)	18-25 (61)	26-35 (105)	36-45 (66)	46-55 (25)	>56 (19)
st. name	17 94.4%	20 57.1%	60 98.4%	95 90.5%	51 72.3%	25 100%	19 100%
bldg use	12 66.7%	20 51.1%	38 62.3%	88 83.8%	56 84.8%	21 84%	16 84.2%
activie s	6 33.3%	3 8.6%	14 23%	26 24.8%	13 19.7%	5 20%	5 26.3%
bldg type	12 66.7%	4 11.4%	27 44.3%	51 48.6%	38 57.6%	18 72%	9 47.4%
signs	8 44.4%	4 11.4%	20 32.8%	51 48.6%	37 56%	18 72%	9 47.4%
Padang	4 22.2%	3 8.6%	8 13.1%	11 10.5%	8 12.1%	4 16%	2 10.5%

Source : Field survey 1994/95

This also explains why the older residents were more inclined to mention the old buildings when describing the appearance of the town centre and its distinctive elements in the interview. However, new buildings such as the mosque and Ocean Supermarket were also noticed by the older group of residents. They also found it easier to recognise old buildings compared to the new ones because of their design. The older residents were also more observant of the building's design itself. This was made evident through the description of the details on the building and the ability to discuss the architecture of the buildings that contributed to the identity of the town centre. Despite this minor difference, it is clear that appearance of elements was distinctive to all the age groups.



There was also a variation observed in the perception of views between the age groups. Views tended to be observed by the older residents compared to the younger residents. From the description of features of the town centre recalled, it was apparent that the older the residents, the greater was their tendency to mention view (scenery) as a unique characteristic of the town centre. The older residents, emphasised on the details of the views that they recalled. The presence of the river was found to have a significant impact on the older residents who particularly liked to spend their time at the river front enjoying its breathtaking view. This landscape feature was also recalled due to the panoramic view across the river that could be enjoyed by the residents. The view across the river was noticeable to the residents as illustrated by the description by Respondent 16 who was a middle aged Malay lady.

" I like to go to the river front because whilst you eat, you can watch the boats and the scenery across the river is nice. "

All the respondents who mentioned the views across the river were above thirty years old. None of the respondents aged twenty five and below mentioned the views in their descriptions of the town centre. It can be deduced that age group has an influence on the perception of views. These views were appreciated by the older residents and used as clues to describing the identity of elements in the town centre. This characteristic was seen to be less important to the younger residents. Thus, view was a distinctive feature to the older residents compared to the younger ones.

There were both similarity and variation between the age groups in their perception of environmental quality, landscape treatment and traffic system. The variation in perception observed was in terms of landscape treatment. The

lights, fountains and pavement for example were noticed by the older residents, who felt a sense of pride towards them. This observation was not shared by the younger residents. A possible explanation is that these features are associated with buildings and streets that have been around for a long time, which means that they are elements that the older generations are attached to. As in ethnicity and gender, it was observed that there was very little variation between the age groups in their perception of the traffic situation and street design. Both the younger and the older respondents found the road system, traffic system and traffic lights to be distinctive. Hence, traffic circulation pattern was a characteristic that residents from all age groups observed and remembered in the town centre.

The middle-aged and the older residents were more aware of the outdoor, or on-street activities taking place both in the present situation or in the past. The examples given above involved respondents who were over forty years old. Those respondents who were in their teens and early twenties were more inclined to notice the building use and indoor activities, especially those related to shopping and entertainment. This was highlighted by Respondent 1, a nineteen-year-old respondent's response to questions on the appearance of the town centre. The answers given were basically describing the commercial activities of the town centre that was the presence of shops and banks. When asked to describe the attractive features of the town centre, the respondent seemed to experience some difficulties in doing so as illustrated below:

" In the town .. er ... doesn't include shopping eh? Apart from the mosque.. I don't quite know. "

The same observation was made for the other younger respondents in their description of the town centre. This

suggested that the activities noticed by the younger residents were related to the commercial activities. Street activities were more distinctive to the older residents who were usually involved in them. This was evident in the Visual Survey in which it was observed that Taman Kerang was a favourite place for elderly men. This group of residents spent their leisure time chatting with friends and watching the street hawkers such as the traditional medicine men.

The younger residents gathered in the shopping areas such as Kompleks Teruntum and Ocean Supermarket. Hence, this explained why they were more inclined to notice indoor and shopping-related activities. It could be deduced that activities that were distinctive to each age group were those in which they themselves participated in.

Age of respondents had an influence on the meanings and associations in describing the appearance of the town centre. Buildings, streets and other features that were considered distinctive were noticed because of their ability to remind them of their childhood days. It was also detected from their expressions that they had become attached to these elements through the memories of the past and this in turn had increased their distinctiveness. This is especially so when there are significant changes between the present and past activities in the town centre. The comments made by Respondent 20, a man in his mid forties, reflected this sentiment.

" Because I have been here for a long time, the mosque was there since my school days. It was sophisticated at that time. Now, it has a design of its own with the colour and it creates a uniqueness. You can also mention its four minarets. If you mention to people the mosque, there is only one mosque in the town centre, so it becomes a focal point. "

These elements provided a continuity to the older residents of the identity of the town centre when other elements had changed.

Table 7.16: Places visited for leisure purposes according to age group.

	7-12 (33)	13-17 (52)	18-25 (101)	26-35 (169)	36-45 (109)	46-55 (47)	>56 (34)
Market	5 27.8%	2 5.7%	15 24.6%	13 12.4%	11 16.7%	4 16%	3 15.8%
Ocean super	5 27.8%	16 45.7%	16 26.2%	28 26.7%	15 22.7%	8 32%	2 10.5%
Benteng	1 5.6%	-	5 8.2%	4 3.8%	4 6%	1 4%	1 5.3%
Jln Mahko	3 16.7%	5 14.3%	16 26.2%	32 30.5%	30 45.5%	11 44%	12 63.2%
Jln. Besar	3 16.7%	5 14.3%	16 26.2%	32 30.5%	30 45.5%	11 44%	12 63.2%
Komplek s	2 11.1%	13 37%	23 37.7%	19 18.1%	12 18.1%	5 20%	2 10.5%
Jln B Ubi	7 38.9%	4 11.4%	3 4.9%	19 18.1%	2 3%	2 8%	1 5.3%
Parkson	7 38.9%	7 11.4%	7 11.5%	22 21%	5 7.8%	5 20%	1 5.3%

Source: Field survey 1994/95

The younger residents did not share similar sentiments about the elements of the town centre in the past and description of their distinctiveness were based on the physical characteristics and activities of the present day. None of

the respondents below the age of twenty five mentioned nostalgic memories of the town centre. Their observations mainly centred upon the present appearance and activities associated with the elements in the town centre. This was probably because the number of years spent in the town centre were not as many as those of the older residents, who had instilled these experiences and cherished the memories in their minds. Thus, elements that had been in the town centre for a long time had this special characteristic that was not shared by the new elements. They were also noticed and appreciated more by the older residents than by the younger ones.

#### 7.6 Significance of variation in perception of qualities associated with identity between different socio-cultural groups.

It was observed that the perception of qualities associated with identity did not vary greatly between the socio-cultural groups. The only slight variation observed was between the ethnic and age groups. Nevertheless, the variation observed between the ethnic groups were in terms of details of the physical characteristics of distinctive elements observed. Thus, this variation did not have significant implication on the perception of distinctive physical characteristics of elements in the town centre. There was also a less significant variation between the age groups. More variation was displayed between the youngest and the oldest group of residents than other age groups. Nevertheless, this variation had very little impact on how the town centre should be developed in order to be distinctive to all socio-cultural groups that occupied the town centre. It could also be implied that residents from different socio-cultural backgrounds had more similarities

than difference in the perception of distinctive physical characteristics of elements in the town centre.

It was clear that compared with the perception of physical characteristics, there were more variation displayed between the socio-cultural groups in their perception of activities and the influence of meanings and associations in their perception of qualities associated with identity. More variations were observed between the ethnic and age groups compared to gender. In terms of activities, members of each ethnic and age groups varied in their perception of indoor and outdoor activities that were distinctive. The same was observed in the role of meanings and associations in their perception. The most significant variation was observed in the age groups in which meanings and associations were used only by the older residents in perceiving the qualities associated with identity. The findings implied that different groups of resident perceived activities in different ways and therefore consideration of different groups' needs and perceptions of activities must be given in the development of the town centre. It was also apparent that different groups of residents have different meanings and associations attached to elements in the town centre and that more meanings and associations are attached to elements in the old town centre by the three socio-cultural groups, in particular the older residents. Thus, meanings and associations attached to elements by different groups of residents must be considered in any plans for development of the town centre. This will avoid the uprooting of elements that have meanings to some groups of residents as well as to create a rich environment that had meanings to all groups of people.

## 7.7 Conclusion.

The purpose of this chapter was to examine how the residents perceived the qualities associated with identity of the urban environment. It also sought to examine the variation in perception between different socio-cultural groups that occupied the town centre. It was assumed in this research that the physical characteristics that were easily recalled and recognised by the residents were considered as distinctive to them.

From the attributes of the distinctive elements mentioned by the residents, it could be deduced that physical characteristics played an important role in the perception of these elements by the residents. The distinctiveness of the physical characteristics of elements were influenced by the greater amount of details noticed by the residents. However, it was discovered that the distinctiveness in terms of physical characteristics were perceived by the residents in relation to its context and surrounding elements. Hence, location of distinctive elements played an important role for their distinctiveness to the residents. Proximity to major routes, landmarks and natural features enhanced the distinctiveness of elements. Thus, a contrast in the physical characteristics of an element had a greater chance to be noticed and considered distinctive by the residents. In addition, the influence of these elements on the skyline and the settings provided by them also enhanced their distinctiveness to the residents. It was also observed that when there is a concentration of certain physical characteristics in a street, for example, these characteristics were then noticed by the residents because of their uniformity in that particular context.

It was evident that both activities and meanings and associations played a supporting role in enhancing the distinctiveness of the physical elements. This was more apparent if the physical characteristics of these elements were less distinctive. Activities, both indoor and outdoor, also assisted in making an element distinctive. The mix of activities, apart from the type of people who participated in them were the characteristics that made the activities noticeable. In addition, intensity of activities in certain places, streets or buildings also heightened their prominence and visibility and this led to distinctiveness.

Meanings and associations provided the non visual factor that influenced distinctiveness of elements. They played an important role in making an element distinctive when there was a lack of other physical elements such as distinctive buildings. Historical significance also helped an element to be remembered with a sense of attachment. This suggested that elements and areas in the town centre that had historical significance or had been in existence for a long time were distinctive to the residents. This also implied that a sense of continuity between the past and the present by the existence of elements that had meanings were important for the perception of identity of the town centre, especially in the old centre. It was then concluded that the qualities associated with the town centre's identity were distinctive physical characteristics, visible human activities and the amount of meanings and associations attached to the physical elements in the town centre.

There was only a slight variation between the socio-cultural groups in their perception of the qualities associated with identity of the town centre. The variation displayed was between the levels of observation made on the details of the elements noticed. From the analysis above, it was



apparent that there was only a slight variation between the three socio-cultural groups in their perceptions of distinctive physical characteristics. More variation was observed between the ethnic and age groups compared to gender. The variation was between the type of characteristics that were distinctive within each group. The other variation observed was in terms of the level of details observed. Nevertheless, this variation is not that significant and that there were more similarities in their perceptions of distinctive physical characteristics. This implied that it is still possible to develop the town centre according to the shared image of the residents as a group.

It was observed that all the socio cultural groups based their perceptions of distinctive elements on activities. The slight variation existed in the type of activities that were noticed. This was observed in the case of the ethnic and age groups. It was observed that participation in outdoor activities had an influence on the perception of distinctiveness. This variation in terms of perception of activities suggested that development of the town centre should accommodate for the activities of the various socio-cultural groups that occupied the town centre.

Finally, it was observed that of the three socio-cultural groups, only the age group displayed significant variation in the influence of meanings and associations on their perception. This was observed where only the older residents had meanings and associations attached to the physical elements in the older town centre. The younger residents did not share the same sentiments. Their observations of the physical elements were limited to the physical characteristics and associated activities. As for the ethnic group, their only variation was in their choice of elements. There was very little variation displayed between

the gender groups and that both male and female residents were influenced by meanings and associations in their perception of distinctive elements. The slight variation was the type of element or feature that they associated with their past.

This finding implied that different socio-cultural groups had different meanings and associations attached to the elements in the town centre. It was also deduced that the degree of experience of living in the town centre influenced its residents' perception of distinctive elements. Thus, consideration must be given to the meanings that various groups attached to the elements in the town centre in order to create a richer environment for all groups.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION

#### 8.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings of the research and conclusion to the thesis. The chapter is divided into six sections. The first section presents the research agenda. This is followed by a summary of the main research findings. The third section presents the implications of the research for existing theories pertaining to the subject investigated. This is followed by suggestions for further research. The fifth section presents recommendations of the research. The final section presents the general conclusion to the research.

#### 8.1 Research Agenda

This research aims at establishing the residents' perceptions of elements and qualities associated with the town centre's identity. Therefore, the research seeks to establish the physical elements that are distinctive to residents and their characteristics that influence their distinctiveness. This was done by establishing elements considered distinctive by the residents and used to describe the town centre's appearance as well as to perceptually structure the town centre. The qualities associated with identity were derived from the indicators used to describe the distinctive elements by the residents. Variation in the residents' perceptions of the elements and qualities associated with identity was also seen in relation to their different socio-economic backgrounds and between different parts of the town centre.

In this research, the identity of place, as defined by

Lynch (1982), was related to the quality of the environment that made it distinct to the residents. Thus it was assumed that elements that were distinctive became part of the qualities associated with the town centre's identity.

The literature review in Chapters Two and Three had established three main issues that were of relevance to this research:

i. Identity comprises of three main components; physical environment, activities and meanings and associations. There is a complex relationship between the three which was not established.

ii. Variation in perception between different socio-cultural groups is expected. Of all the socio-cultural factors studied, the differences in perception between different ethnic groups are not studied. Most of the theories about differences in perception between different socio-cultural groups relate to how they image the environment rather than specifically relating to the perception of identity.

iii. Although many scholars emphasised the uniqueness of traditional settlements and cities, this uniqueness is attributed to the architectural richness of these old cities. Many of the empirical studies in this area treated the image of the city as one entity rather than considering it as consisting of many different areas. However, it is not certain how the residents perceive the difference in identity between different parts of the town centre.

## **8.2 Main research findings.**

This section presents and discusses the main findings of the research. There were four main findings identified in

the analysis. The first concerned the elements that were considered distinctive by the Kuantan town centre's residents and the qualities associated with identity. The second was related to the qualities associated with identity of the town centre. The third finding was the variation in the perception of distinctive elements and their characteristics by the different socio-cultural groups that occupied the town centre. The fourth finding was the variation in perception of elements associated with identity between different parts of the town centre.

#### 8.21 Elements associated with identity by the residents.

The findings of Chapter Six suggested that elements which residents associated with the town centre's identity fall into three broad categories; physical structures, urban spaces and landscape features. These are distinctive elements that were used by the residents to describe the appearance and to perceptually structure the town centre. It was discovered that physical structures, especially buildings played an important role in helping residents to identify the town centre. This is followed by urban spaces, namely streets and landscape features. Landscape features only played a secondary role as elements associated with the town centre's identity compared to the other two elements. This finding is similar to Salim's (1992) who discovered that buildings and streets are important imageable elements of Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This suggests that elements which residents associate with identity are similar between a small area such as the town centre and that of a larger area such as the central areas of a large city. Thus, perception of elements associated with identity is independent of the size of the area studied. The research also discovered that buildings played an important role in

helping the residents of Kuantan town centre to appraise its appearance. The more distinctive buildings are found in the town centre, the stronger is its identity to the residents. Buildings that contributed to the identity of the town centre to residents were major private buildings associated with shopping. Streets that contributed to the identity of the town centre were major streets of the town centre. They played an important role in describing the town centre's appearance and its boundaries. This finding supports the findings of other scholars (Lynch, Gulick, De Jonge, Harrison and Howard and others) on the importance of streets or paths in image construction. The landscape features played a secondary role compared to the other two elements in influencing the identity of the town centre. Contrary to what other scholars have said about the importance of geographical setting, open spaces and natural features (discussed in Chapter Three), the residents do not associate these landscape features with the town centre's identity as much as the other two elements in Kuantan, Malaysia. The geographical location of the town centre as being sited by the river and near to the confluence of the river to the South China Sea do not have any significant impact on residents' perceptions of the town centre's identity. It can be deduced that the town centre's identity is perceived more in terms of the physical structures and the circulation network by the residents. It was also observed that the least distinctive physical elements were street furniture, lighting quality and ground treatment. Hence, it can be deduced that they have a less significant role in the perception of the town centre's identity.

Although the perception of elements associated with identity was observed to be similar between smaller and larger areas, it was observed that the perceptual structuring of a smaller area differed than that of a larger area. This is because only four of the elements

mentioned by Lynch (1960) were used; nodes, edges, paths and landmarks. Of these elements, paths and landmarks were frequently used in the resident's perceptual structuring of the town centre. Nodes played a less important role in the residents' perceptual structure whereas edges were the least important elements in the way residents' structure the town centre perceptually. It can be concluded that in a small area, residents' perception are concentrated on elements that would aid them in orientation. There was a similarity in elements used in the residents' perceptual structuring of the town centre and the elements used to describe the appearance of the town centre. This implies that perception of identity is affected by the way residents' perceptually structure the town centre. Hence, the town centre's structure has an influence on how the identity of the town centre is perceived.

There is also a similarity between the findings in this thesis and Lynch (1960)'s study although Lynch used different terms to describe elements that people used to image the city. This is because building is an example of Lynch's idea of a landmark while streets are the most common example of paths and sometimes referred to as edges. The landscape features that were distinctive in this research consisted of open spaces such as the Padang, which can be categorised as a node. Finally, natural feature such as the river is a good example of edge, although in this research, it was observed that very few residents considered them as an edge of the town centre. The only element of Lynch that was not observed in this research is district. This is because the small area covered by the town centre means that it is actually a district of the town itself.

## 8.22 Qualities associated with the town centre's identity.

The characteristics of elements that are distinctive to the residents were assumed in this research to be the qualities associated with the town centre's identity. There are three basic qualities associated with the identity of the town centre; physical characteristics, activities and meanings and associations. They are also the basic components of identity as established in the literature review of Chapter Three. In Chapter Three, there was no attempt to establish the influence of each of these components on identity but that many scholars supported the statement that identity is a complex interrelationship of these three components.

In this research, however it was evident that the three qualities associated with Kuantan town centre's identity played different roles or had different levels of influence on how identity was perceived by the residents. This was based on the number of descriptions of the town centre using each of these qualities. The findings of Chapter Seven showed that physical characteristics played the most important role in residents' perception of the town centre's identity. The physical characteristics were the most frequently quoted qualities in residents' description and perceptual structuring of the town centre. Of the physical characteristics' qualities, appearance and location were the most frequently quoted characteristics of the distinctive elements of the town centre. This finding also supports Appleyard's (1980) and Harrison and Howard's (1980) study. Thus, it is concluded that the qualities associated with identity are strongly influenced by the physical appearance of the town centre, namely its buildings and streets. The location factor played a prominent role in Harrison and Howard's (1980) study, and it was observed in this study that it was the second



quality that was frequently mentioned after appearance. As in the case of Harrison and Howard's study, the influence of location on perception of identity was due to it being used in their orientation process. The ability to identify the location of distinctive elements in the town centre help to strengthen the residents' perception of the town centre's identity.

The distinctiveness of the physical characteristics of elements are related to the number of details noticed by the residents. The findings of Chapter Seven suggested that distinctiveness, in terms of physical characteristics, was perceived by the residents in relation to context and surrounding elements. Thus, a contrast in the physical characteristics of an element has a greater chance of being noticed and considered distinctive. The location of physical elements influence their distinctiveness by virtue of their prominence and visibility. Hence, elements strategically located to major paths, or with proximity to other elements acting as landmarks, enable them to be noticed and recalled by the residents. This finding is also similar to Appleyard's (1980) finding on the importance of visibility for a building to be known.

It was found that a uniformity of physical characteristics of elements in certain locations was also distinctive to the residents. This occurred when there was a concentration of certain physical characteristics in a street, so that they dominated the whole street scene. Thus, uniformity and contrast of physical characteristics are important factors in influencing the distinctiveness of these elements as perceived by the residents. Hence, it can be concluded that identity of a place is perceived in relation to the overall appearance of the place. Elements that provide a contrast to a uniform background strengthen the identity of a place.

It was found that other qualities apart from appearance and location were relatively less distinctive based on the lower frequency of recall. It was also observed that the other qualities were used to describe specific elements rather than used to describe the overall appearance of the town centre. The perception of qualities associated with identity by residents is strongly influenced by the appearance and location of buildings and streets compared to landscape features.

Apart from physical characteristics, it was evident that activities and meaning and associations played some role in influencing residents' perception of identity. This is more apparent if the physical characteristics of these elements are less distinctive. In Appleyard's (1980) study, the role of a place as setting for personal activities and inference on cultural significance is one of the factors influencing why a building is known to the people. Hence, this study also correlates with Appleyard's finding. However, the study discovered that activity and meanings and association played a supporting role to the physical characteristics in influencing residents' perceptions of the town centre's identity.

It was found that both indoor and outdoor activities assisted in making an element distinctive in the town centre because of their location and the crowds and traffic generated. The intensification and mixture of activities in certain streets or buildings also heighten their prominence and visibility and these lead to their distinctiveness.

Secondly, meanings and associations provide the non-visual factors that influence the perception of identity. It was found that familiarity and associations were the most frequently used reasons concerning meanings in recognising a distinctive element in Kuantan. This finding tends to

support Harrison and Howard's (1980) study on the role of meanings and associations in urban image, although there is a variation in the categories used relating to meanings and associations between the two pieces of research. The findings of Chapter Seven demonstrated how buildings, streets and landscape features that had been around in the town centre for a long time tended to be more distinctive than the later elements. Thus, there is a relationship between perception of identity and the historical significance of elements in the town centre. It was also discovered that places which had all the three qualities; distinctive physical characteristics, visible activities and meanings attached to the physical elements are recalled by most residents. This finding also suggests that perception of the town centre's identity in Malaysia is influenced by these three factors, similar to the theories put forward by various scholars in the literature review. It can be deduced that qualities associated with identity by the residents are similar to those proposed by the scholars.

#### **8.23 Variation in perceptions of distinctive elements and their characteristics between the socio-cultural groups.**

The way in which elements were considered distinctive were also analysed based on the different socio-cultural backgrounds of the residents. The findings of Chapters Six and Seven demonstrated that there was a slight variation in the perception of distinctive elements and their characteristics by different socio-cultural groups. The variation observed was more in terms of details of the physical characteristics of elements and activities observed than the type of elements observed. More variation was observed in the ethnic groups and the age groups compared to gender. In the case of ethnic groups, the slight variation was in the level of details observed. The

findings suggests that the Malays (the indigenous population and a major ethnic group in the country) tend to be more observant of the town centre's details than the other two groups. The slight variation in perception of the physical qualities associated with identity suggests that the ethnic groups pay different levels of attention to physical qualities.

Nevertheless, this variation is considered as insignificant since the ethnic groups share similar perception with regard to the types of elements and the qualities associated with identity. Thus, it can be concluded that perception of identity is not influenced by ethnicity. Hence, it is possible to design and plan the town centre according to the perception of the residents as one cultural group. One explanation is that the three groups have lived with each other for a long time that they tend to assume certain common values in perceiving the environment. Another explanation could be that the environment is not able to stimulate the cultural differences in the ethnic group's perception. This could be explained with further research into this matter.

The only significant variation observed is between the youngest and the oldest residents in the age group. Their variation is in terms of the physical characteristics' details and types of activities associated with identity. It was also found that the older residents' perception were determined more by meanings and associations than the younger ones. The latter perception of identity were only influenced by the physical characteristics and activities. This is the most significant variation observed which have an implication on proposals regarding the old buildings in the historical parts of the town centre.

The findings imply that the variation which exist between

different socio-cultural groups is more in terms of details observed than the type of elements and qualities associated with identity. This means that previous studies which derived a group image of the environment is valid and not a fruitless exercise. However, the slight variation in perception between the old and younger residents with regard to the influence of meanings and associations indicate that the planning and design involving historical and old parts of the town centre should consider the importance of meanings in the older residents' perceptions.

#### 8.24 Variation in perception of elements and qualities associated with the town centre's identity between different parts of the town centre by the residents.

The findings of Chapters Six and Seven revealed that residents' perception of elements and qualities associated with identity varied between different parts of the town centre. The research findings suggests that the old parts of the town centre have a relatively stronger identity compared to the newer parts as perceived by the residents from all socio-cultural groups. This was based on the number of elements considered distinctive, the amount of qualities associated with the town centre's identity and the clarity of the residents' perceptual structure of the two areas. This is the most important finding of this research. This also supports Rapoport's theory that the old cities are more legible and have a clearer image than the modern cities. The old centre was perceived to have a stronger identity than the new centre because of the distinctiveness of the physical characteristics of buildings, streets and landscape features. Added to that, the old centre had more concentration and mixture of activities that made them distinctive to the residents. The other significant difference is that residents' perception of the old town centre was also influenced by the meaning

and associations as shown in Chapter Seven. Another weakness in the planning and design of the new centre is that there is very little variation in terms of land use and activities taking place as observed in the Visual Survey. This is unlike the old centre which accommodates a mixture of land use such as residential, administration and recreation. This is probably the most important ingredient for a strong identity to the residents.

The findings also highlights that a clear perceptual structure of the town centre is important for strong identity. Finally, the findings confirm that strong identity as perceived by the residents is related to the presence and the amount of key components of identity stated in literature review i.e. physical environment, activities and meanings and associations. It is implied that the old parts of the town centre have a stronger identity because they have more components of meanings compared to the newer area. Thus, conservation of older areas is not just an act of preserving the physical environment but in this context also seen as a way of establishing the identity of place.

The conclusion to these findings can be summarised as follows:-

- i. Residents' perceptions of the town centre's identity are influenced by the presence of physical structure, urban spaces, landscape features and the clarity of their perceptual structuring of a place. Of these elements, buildings followed by streets are the most common elements that residents associate with the identity of a place.
- ii. There are three qualities that residents' associate with the identity of a place; physical characteristics,

activities and meanings and associations. The study observed that the physical characteristics (especially appearance and location) play a more important role as the qualities associated with identity compared to the other two in terms of residents' perception.

- iii. The residents' perceptions of identity between the different parts of the town centre, namely the old and the new parts of the town centre vary. The old centre is perceived to have a stronger identity because of the presence of more distinctive elements and the three qualities associated with identity. Meanings and associations have a stronger influence on perception of identity of the old centre as compared to the new centre.
- iv. There is no significant variation between the different socio-cultural groups in their perception of the town centre's identity that it is possible to assume that they share similar perception. However, meanings and associations do have an effect on the older residents' perceptions compared to the younger ones and that places with historical significance have a different effect on the two age groups' perceptions.

### 8.3 Planning and urban design implications

The findings of this study have several implications on the planning policies and urban design strategies with regard to the town centre. These implications are discussed in relation to Kuantan town centre and also has a general application to other town centres which share similar characteristics to Kuantan. These characteristics, where they are major towns which have not acquired a city status were referred to in Chapter One.

## 1. Conservation actions.

The findings of Chapters Six and Seven suggested that the old town centre possessed more qualities associated with 'identity' and therefore, is very distinctive to the residents irrespective of their different socio-cultural groups. From the sample survey, a higher percentage of buildings, streets and places mentioned were located in the old town centre, suggesting their vividness to the residents. The new centre, built post independence, possessed less of these qualities and therefore, had a weaker identity from residents' perception. This finding implies that it is of utmost important to designate the area covered by the old town centre as a conservation area. This means that the existing character of the area that is distinctive to the residents with its affiliated activities and meanings and associations need to be retained. From the findings of Chapters Six and Seven, it was discovered that the distinctive characteristics of the old town centre were the clarity of its structure, namely the path network or circulation pattern, the mix and quantity of activities and the presence of distinctive physical elements such as old buildings, mature trees and open spaces like the Padang and the river. Thus, policies on conservation should cover all these aspects and future development should not subdued the distinctive characteristics of the old town centre. The old town centre should also acts as a model for the design of future town centres in Malaysia in terms of its planning and townscape qualities.

In the case of Kuantan the conservation area should cover the river front (Benteng), the Kompleks Teruntum, part of Jalan Bukit Ubi, the Padang and the old schools area of Jalan Gambut. Designation of a conservation area should be accompanied by guidelines on how future development should



take into consideration the existing character of the area. Policies on conservation should be formulated by the local authority (MPK) which covers not only the historical and architecturally significant buildings but the other physical elements such as existing trees, views, street activities and land use pattern. Part of the conservation actions involve the listing of buildings of historical and architectural interest. Listed buildings should not be limited to individual building but also those which have group value such as the old shop-houses of Jalan Mahkota in Kuantan old town centre. The sample survey discovered that a high percentage of buildings remembered by respondents were old buildings in the old centre.

Conservation may take the form of adaptive re-use of buildings, in which new uses are introduced into the old buildings, uses that would be more suited to the present. Since appearance was important to residents in considering the distinctiveness of old buildings in the survey, care must be taken in maintaining or restoring the main features. The local authority is encouraged to co-operate with the owners to restore the old shop-houses as the cost of conserving old buildings is usually quite substantial.

It was found that detailed features of old buildings such as colours, ornamentation and columns were very distinctive and, therefore, must be considered carefully in any restoration and adaptive re-use. Residents also felt attached to the design of old buildings, as illustrated in the findings of Chapter Seven. In order to maintain the historical significance of the buildings, such as the old PCCL building in Kuantan could be used as a museum, cultural centre or art gallery. Such use would allow residents and visitors alike to learn about the history of the town and the building, whilst enjoying its present use. It is also recommended that the old shop-houses be

renovated and kept for their original use, which is retailing. This would be in accordance with their functions as the earliest and original high street of the town centre.

## 2 Decisions regarding the town centre structure.

The identity of Kuantan old town centre's is partly influenced by the residents' perceptual structure. The clarity of the residents' perceptual structure of the old town centre, namely its path networks and landmarks enable the residents to orient themselves and to identify the centre of the town. The clarity of the structure is a result of a path network which have a clear distinction between its major and minor roads. The findings of Chapters Six and Seven revealed that major roads were distinguished by their traffic directions, street activities, landscaping treatment, street design and street furniture. The major streets of the old town centre were easily identified by the presence of many key buildings acting as landmarks. The following actions concerning traffic circulation and street design are recommended.

From the findings in Chapter Six, it is proposed that the road circulation be designed to facilitate the residents in differentiating between the major and the minor streets. It was observed in the survey that major streets were those known and considered distinctive in the town centre. Firstly the major and minor streets can be identified using the traffic directions, in which one - way streets are introduced for minor streets to assist them in being distinctive whereas the major streets are to carry two - way traffic. This recommendation is based on the findings of Chapter Six and Chapter Seven, which discovered that traffic direction was one of the factors that influenced the distinctiveness of streets and used in the

recognition process of distinctive places.

In the case of Kuantan town centre, the existing circulation pattern consisting of a ring road system and a spine running across the town centre was seen to be very distinctive to the residents, as illustrated in Chapter Six. The survey also identified that none of the respondents ever got lost in the town centre or found the road system confusing. As a policy, it is therefore desirable that this circulation pattern be retained and any future development of the Kuantan town centre to recognise the distinctiveness of the present network. The distinctiveness of the major and minor road networks can be enhanced by distinguishing the design of traffic directions, street layout, signage, landscape and street furniture. These factors were observed to be influential in the distinctiveness of streets as highlighted in Chapter Seven.

The characteristics of street design that were noticed were the presence of side lanes, set backs, the nature of the street either straight or curving roads, the presence of central reservations, street plantings and parking spaces. It is suggested that the street design of major and minor roads be clearly differentiated in terms of the characteristics mentioned above to increase its distinctiveness. When this pattern is noticed and understood by the residents, it is used as clues in identifying the different streets, thus strengthening the residents' perceptions of identity of the place.

In Kuantan, it is recommended that a formal landscaping approach be adopted for the major streets to emphasise their importance. Examples of the landscape treatment for major streets are potted plants, and avenue of trees such as palms planted along these streets. The minor streets

should adopt a more informal landscape approach, using trees that provide shade and large foliage.

It was also shown in Chapter Seven that a mixture of activities occurring along the street, and the crowd of people drawn to them, were the most common reasons for making the street distinctive. It is, therefore, suggested that on-street activities such as the street traders, traditional medicine men, local fruit sellers and others be encouraged, but their operations must be regulated and controlled to avoid over-patronising a place. It is suggested as a policy that outdoor activities are limited to shopping streets and historically significant streets. This is because these were the streets known to a higher percentage of the respondents surveyed. The concentration of outdoor activities on such streets ensure that these streets become more distinctive to the residents. In the case of Kuantan town centre, it is suggested that the street activities of Jalan Mahkota be maintained and encouraged. The setting for these activities could be enhanced by providing better amenities, pavements and street furniture.

Finally, it was noticed that paved sidewalks were noticeable by the residents and considered distinctive by them. Hence, purpose built pedestrian paths and colonnades (such as the old shop-house arcaded walkways) are suggested in the town centre as they have a role in contributing to the identity of the town besides providing convenience and safety to the pedestrians. It is also suggested that pedestrian paths be provided to link the major nodes of the town. In the case of Kuantan, it is recommended that a pedestrian path be provided to link the old and new parts of the town. In Chapter Six it was observed that the old centre and the new centre were seen as separate components in the residents' perceptual structure of the town centre.

The proposed pedestrian path could be seen as a unifying element between the two centres.

### 3. Decisions regarding entrances to the town centre

In Chapter Five, it was highlighted that the MPK was very concerned with the lack of clear entrances into the town centre and that their urban design policies were to identify the entrance into the town centre. Chapter Six illustrated that clear entrances played an important role in the residents' perceptual structure of the town centre. Entrances into the town centre could be distinguished by certain physical structures such as bridges or archways as discovered in Chapter Six. In the case of Kuantan town centre, the elevated pedestrian bridges at Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Besar has the potential of acting as a portal into the old town centre. Another element that could be used to signify the entrance into the town centre is landscaping. Chapter Six highlighted that certain types of trees and their levels of maturity were very distinctive to the residents. Thus, it is recommended that the area around the entrance into the town centre, near the hospital, should be intensively planted with trees and potted plants. The use of potted flower plants hanged on the lamp posts along the streets leading to the town centre can inform the residents and travellers that they are approaching the centre.

### 4. Decisions regarding 'nodes' or centre of the town.

It was discovered in Chapter Six, that the Padang was considered as a major node of Kuantan town centre because it is located at the core of the town and at the junction of the major streets. It was also surrounded by key public buildings, namely the State Mosque. It provided a setting to the mosque and emphasised the scale of the building. In

the survey, it was discovered that the Padang was one of the most distinctive features of the town centre by the respondents.

The Padang could be a feature that strengthens the identity of the existing town centres in Malaysia. It has the potential of providing the town centre with a character that is similar to that of the squares of the western towns and cities. The design of the Padang must ensure its visibility and accessibility to the residents and acts as a major node that ties the whole town together.

The other type of node that was distinctive to the residents was road junctions as evidenced in Chapters Six and Seven. Thus, road junctions need to be designed to enhance their distinctiveness and act as place markers. This could be achieved through landscaping by using potted plants, sculptures and fountains and the locating of key buildings at major junctions.

##### **5. Decisions on landmarks of the town centre.**

Landmarks were used by residents to structure the town centre perceptually as illustrated in Chapter Six. There are two elements used as landmarks; buildings, and structures such as overhead bridges and traffic lights. Of the two, buildings were the most commonly used landmarks and as illustrated in Chapter Seven, were also the most distinctive physical elements in the town centre. The type of buildings used as landmarks are major public buildings or shopping places. The findings of Chapter Six revealed that the characteristics that influenced the distinctiveness of buildings as landmarks are height, size, functions, architectural style, location and meanings and associations. Prominence and visibility played an important role for buildings to be identified as major

landmarks as reflected by the Kompleks Teruntum in Kuantan. In the case of Kuantan town centre, it is recommended that Kompleks Teruntum be used as a reference point in protecting the skyline. Future development should be discouraged from exceeding its height and only major public buildings are given prominence. It was found that relative height was more important than the height itself in making buildings and places distinctive as discussed in Chapter Seven. It is recommended that a zoning plan, based on an urban design strategy which identifies the areas where tall buildings should be located, is produced by the local authority. This is to ensure land use pattern in terms of height can be easily read and noticed by the public.

#### 8.4 Contributions of the research.

There are three major contributions of this research:

i. Previous studies relating to image had concentrated on a large area either that of the whole city or focusing on the central areas of the city. The broader area covered had implications on how image of the city was formed by the people. This study differs from previous research because it concentrates on residents' perceptions of a smaller section of the town such as the town centre. Thus, the study's contribution is on the way the residents perceive the identity of a specific section of the town, namely the old parts and the newer parts of the town centre, compared to the overall image of the town.

ii. The previous research discussed image as perceived by one group of people who occupied the city. The theories covering differences of perception between groups of people focused on socio-economic factors such as gender, life cycle and length of residence. This research places an

emphasis on variations between different socio-cultural groups of residents occupying the town centre. The factors taken into account are ethnicity, gender and age group. The research contribution is the variation in perception of identity based on ethnicity since this factor is not covered in previous research.

iii. The final contribution of this research is in terms of the planning and urban design implications that resulted from this research. Several urban design strategies were suggested that could be used to enhance the identity of Kuantan and the centres of future new towns.

#### **8.5 Suggestions for further research**

This research investigates the Kuantan residents' perceptions of their town centre in terms of elements that are considered distinctive and associated with identity. Based on this investigation, further research is proposed:

- i. The research only studied the residents' perception and excluded the perception of visitors to the town centre. Research which compare the differences or similarities between residents and visitors to the town centre would provide useful information on the distinctive elements noticed by residents and by visitors. The similarities of distinctive elements could be used to inform planners and urban designers in their proposals for town centre design.
- ii. Since this research only covered those who reside within the town centre, it would be interesting to discover if a survey of residents who live outside the town centre gives the same results in terms of elements that are noticed and considered distinctive in the town centre. Such results would establish the influence of location of the residents' homes and their distance from the town centre.



iii. A research to establish if residents' place of origin has an influence in their perception of the town centre is also suggested. In this case, do people who originate from the rural areas perceive distinctiveness of elements differently from people who actually grew up in the urban areas. This type of research could help in the planning and design of town centres for rural migrants and resettlement schemes.

iv. Finally, the findings of Chapter Seven suggested that physical appearance played an important role in influencing perception of identity. The attributes are height, size, architectural style, location, facade treatment, lighting, landscaping, age and quality of maintenance. It is suggested that further research into these features could be conducted to establish a design guideline for distinctive buildings that could contribute to the identity of a place.

## 8.6 Conclusion.

This research studied the identity of a place by focusing on the town centre of Kuantan, Malaysia. The emphasis was on the distinctiveness of the town centre's visual appearance to its residents. This distinctiveness was related to the extent an element or place is recognised and remembered vividly in their description of the town centre's physical appearance as well as in their perceptual structuring of the town centre. The reasons why they were recalled provided explanations of the characteristics that make the elements distinctive. These characteristics were accepted as the qualities associated with the identity of a place.

It was found that residents' perceptions of the town centre's identity are influenced by the distinctiveness of

elements in the town centre. This distinctiveness depends on the physical qualities, activities and meanings and associations. It was discovered that there is no significant variation in the perception of identity between different cultural groups. The old parts of the town centre was also perceived to have a stronger identity compared to the new parts of the centre. This is due to the presence of more components of identity in the old centre.

Finally, the study provided some planning and urban design implications as a product of the research. The research also found that there were similarities between the theories developed in the west and those found in the Malaysian situation. Its most important contribution to existing knowledge is that the old town centre, which has a historical significance for the town, is perceived as having a stronger identity than the new centre.

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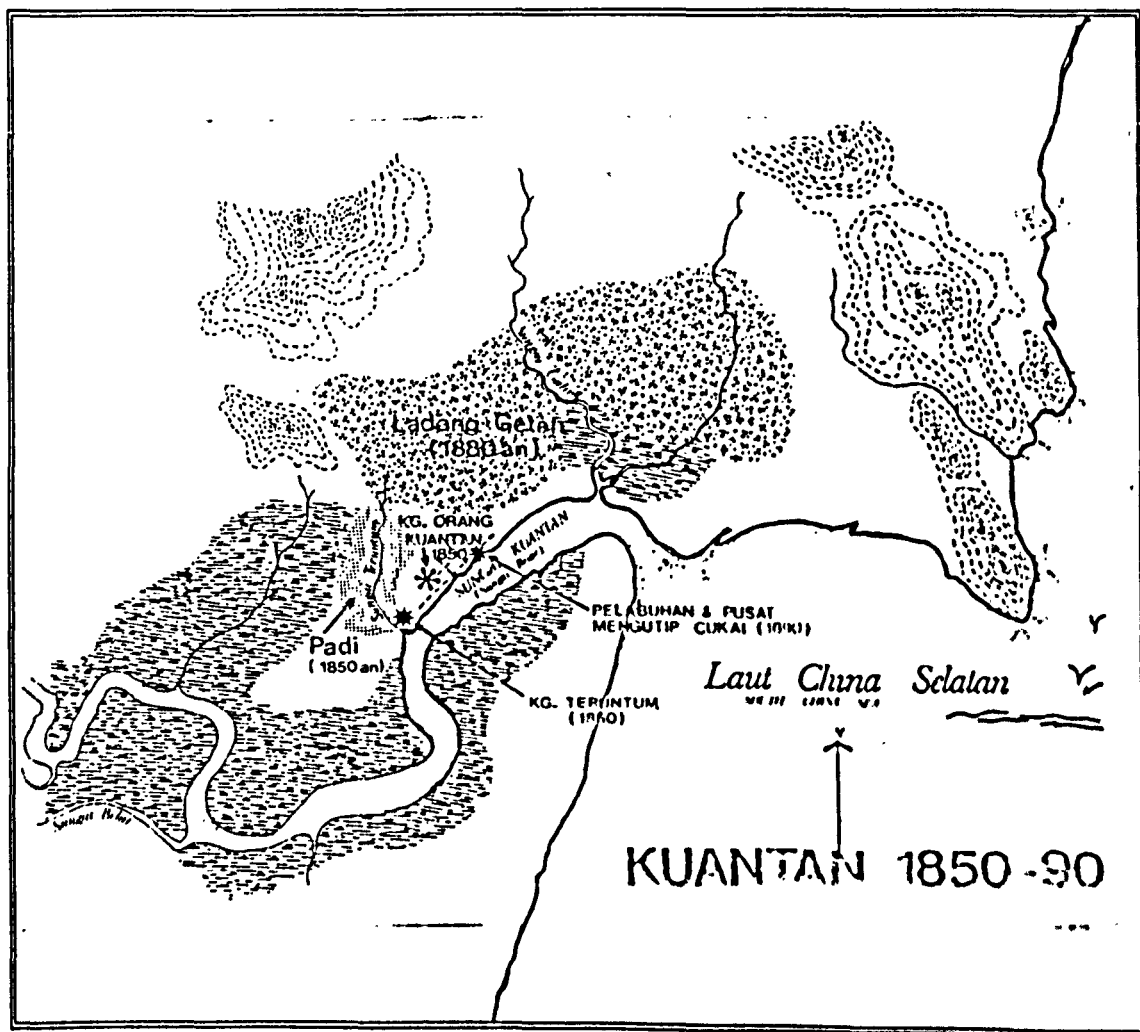
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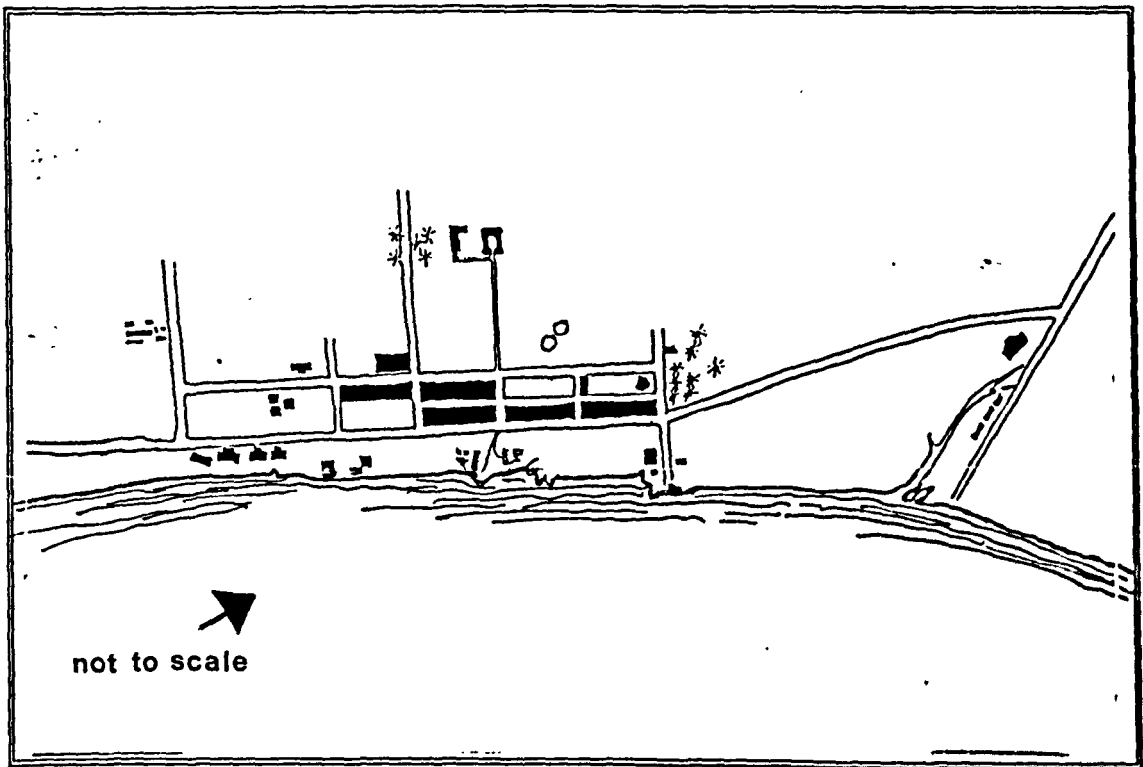
## APPENDIX 1 : HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF KUANTAN TOWN

(Note: The source of the old photographs are from Shamsuddin and Sulaiman's (1992) study whereas the present photographs are taken during the visual survey in 1993/1994).

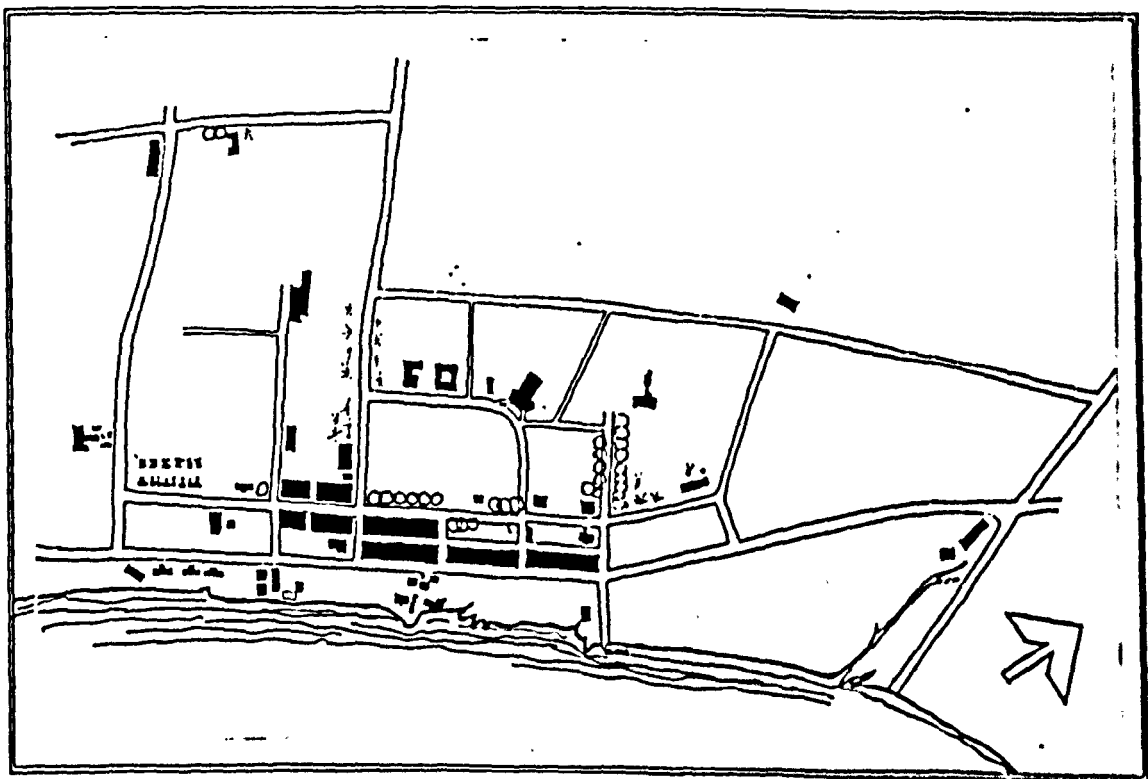


LOCATION OF KUANTAN TOWN BETWEEN 1850 TO 1890  
(NOT TO SCALE)

Source : Sejarah Pembukaan Kuantan, Majlis Perbandaran Kuantan (1989)

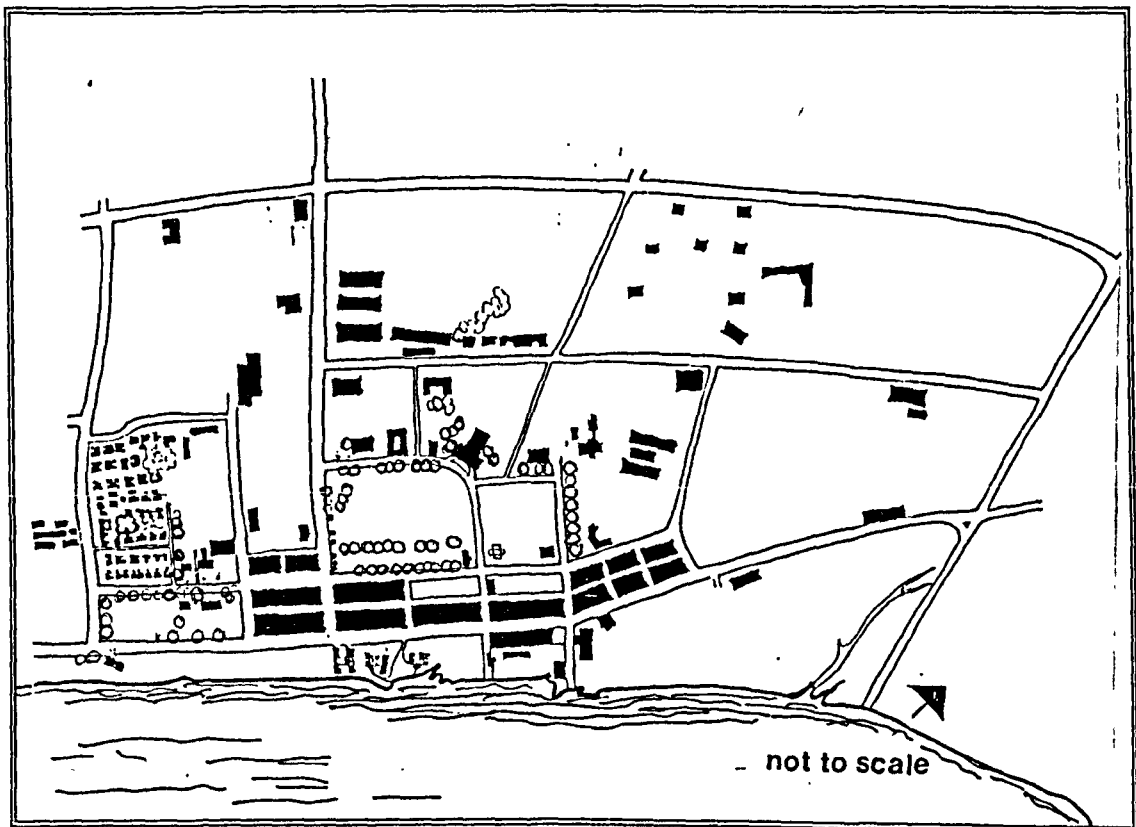


MORPHOLOGY OF KUANTAN TOWN CENTRE 1900-1910

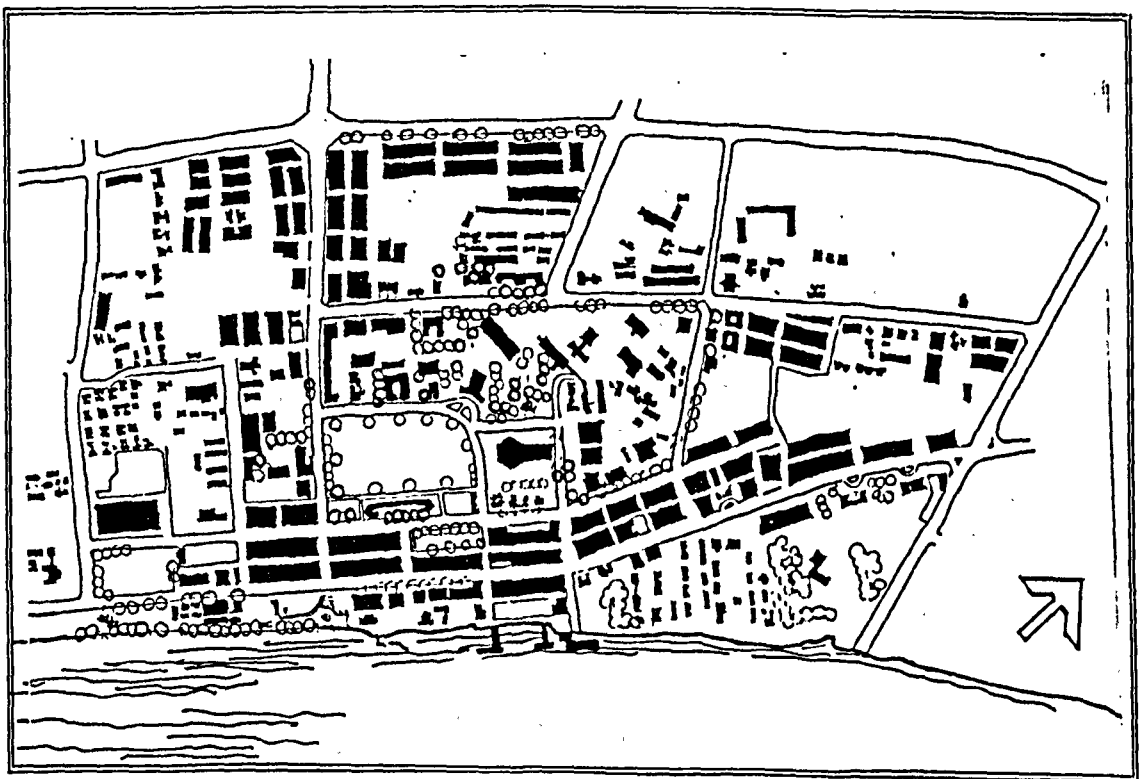


MORPHOLOGY OF KUANTAN TOWN CENTRE 1920-1930 (NOT TO SCALE)

Source : Shamsuddin and Sulaiman (1992)



MORPHOLOGY OF KUANTAN TOWN CENTRE 1950-1960 (NOT TO SCALE)



MORPHOLOGY OF KUANTAN TOWN CENTRE 1980-1990 (NOT TO SCALE)

Source : Shamsuddin and Sulaiman (1992)



Photo. 1 - The old market place in 1922



Photo. 2 - Jalan Mahkota in 1922

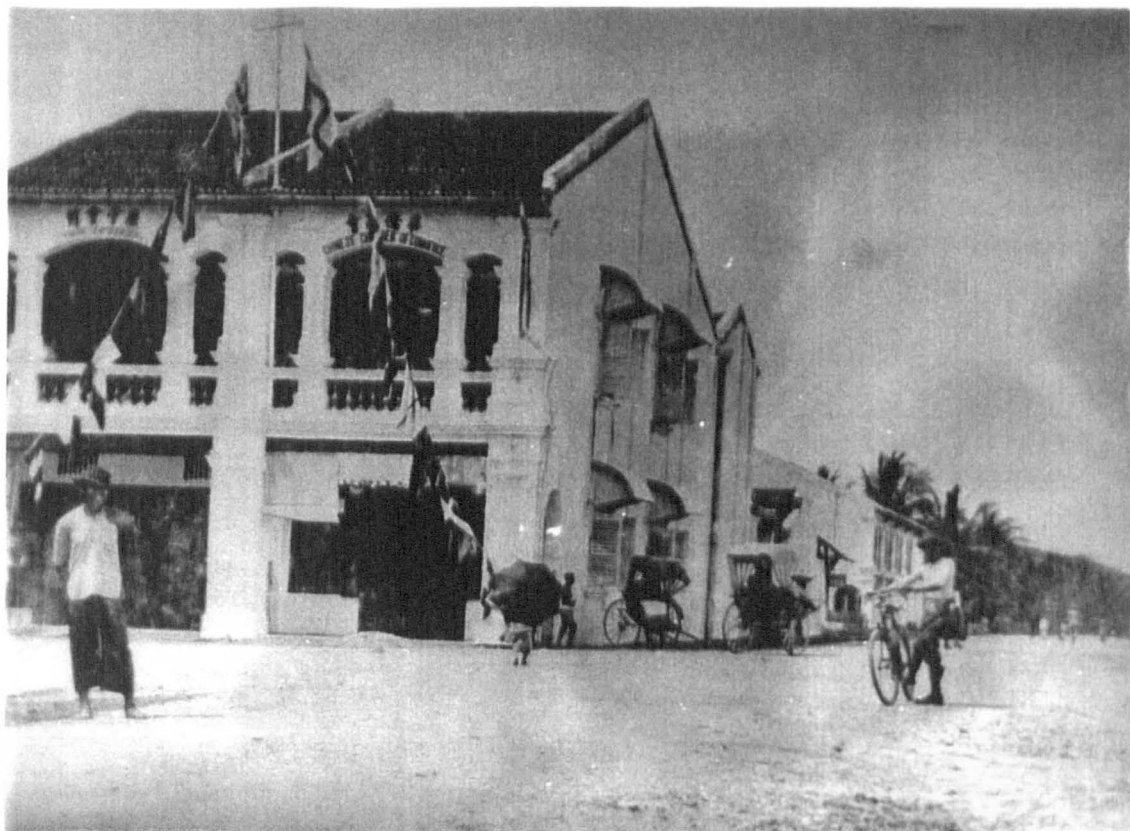


Photo. 3 - The junction of Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Bukit Ubi in 1929

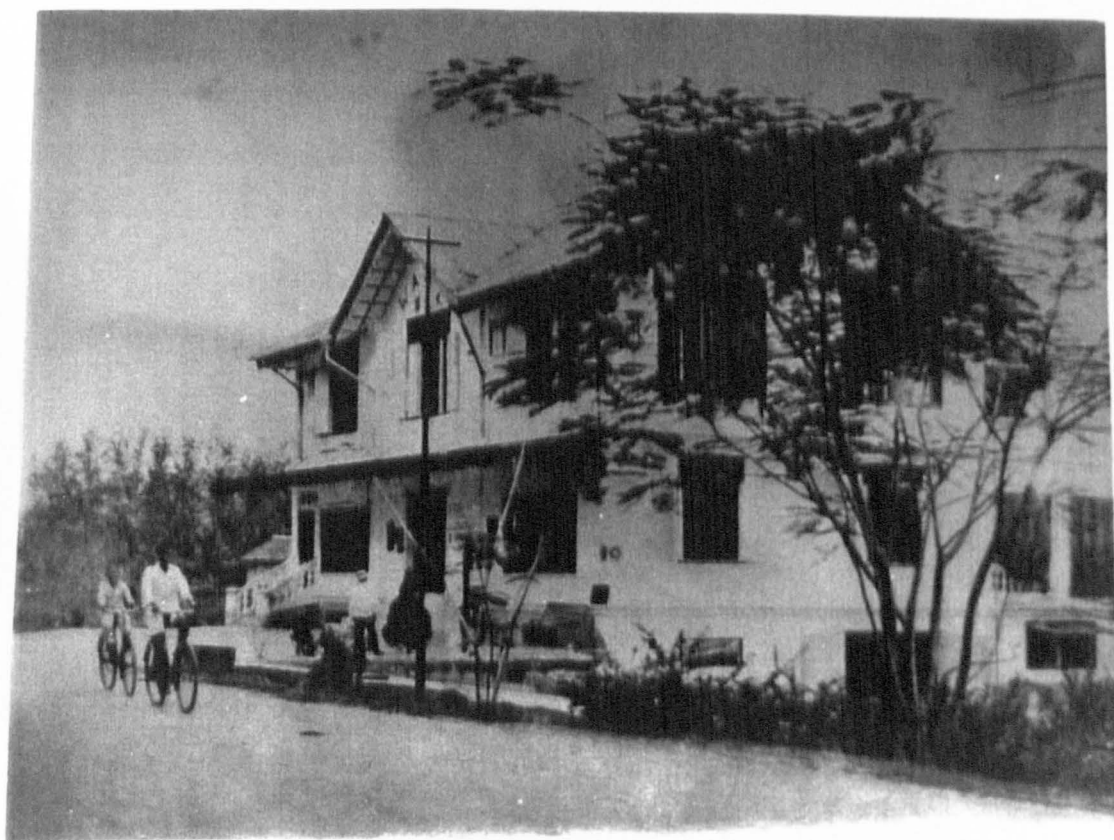


Photo. 4 - Jalan Teluk Sisek in 1929



Photo. 5 - Jalan Bank, near the Padang in 1930



Photo 6 - The rest house, near the Padang in 1930





Photo. 7 - Jalan Teluk Sisek in 1933



Photo. 8 - Jalan Mahkota in 1934



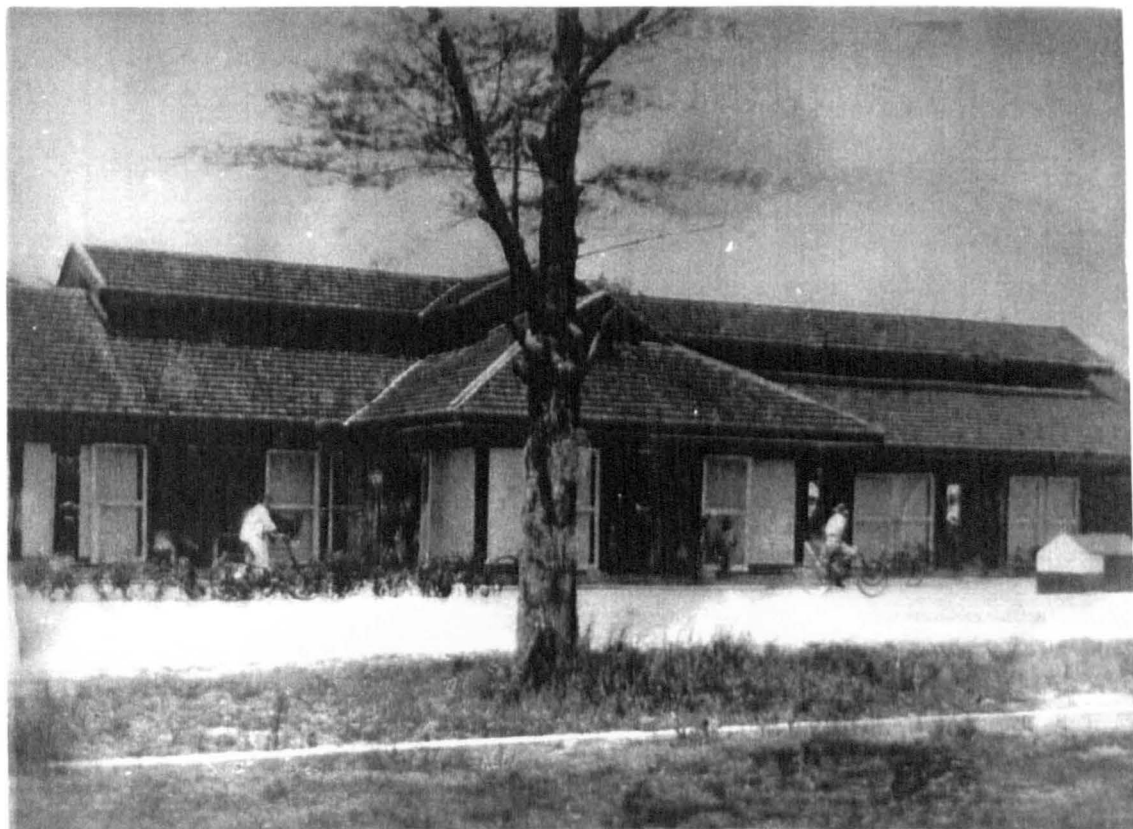


Photo. 9 - The old market at Jalan Mahkota in 1932



Photo. 10 - Jalan Besar in 1932



Photo. 11 - Kuantan Jetty in 1936

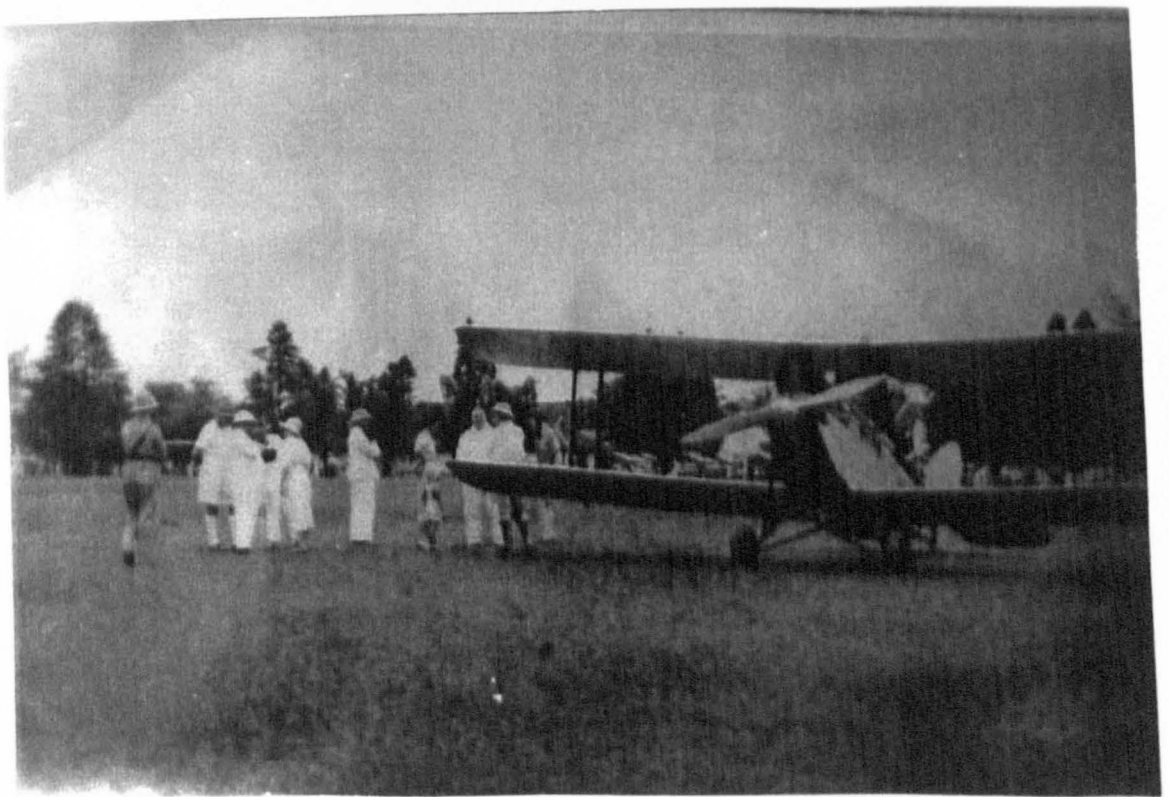


Photo. 12 - The Padang in 1936



Photo. 13 : Kuantan jetty in 1947



Photo. 14 : The old bus station at Jalan Besar in 1946



Photo. 15 - Jalan Mahkota in 1953



Photo. 16 - Padang KRC in 1953





Photo. 17 - Taman Kerang in 1965

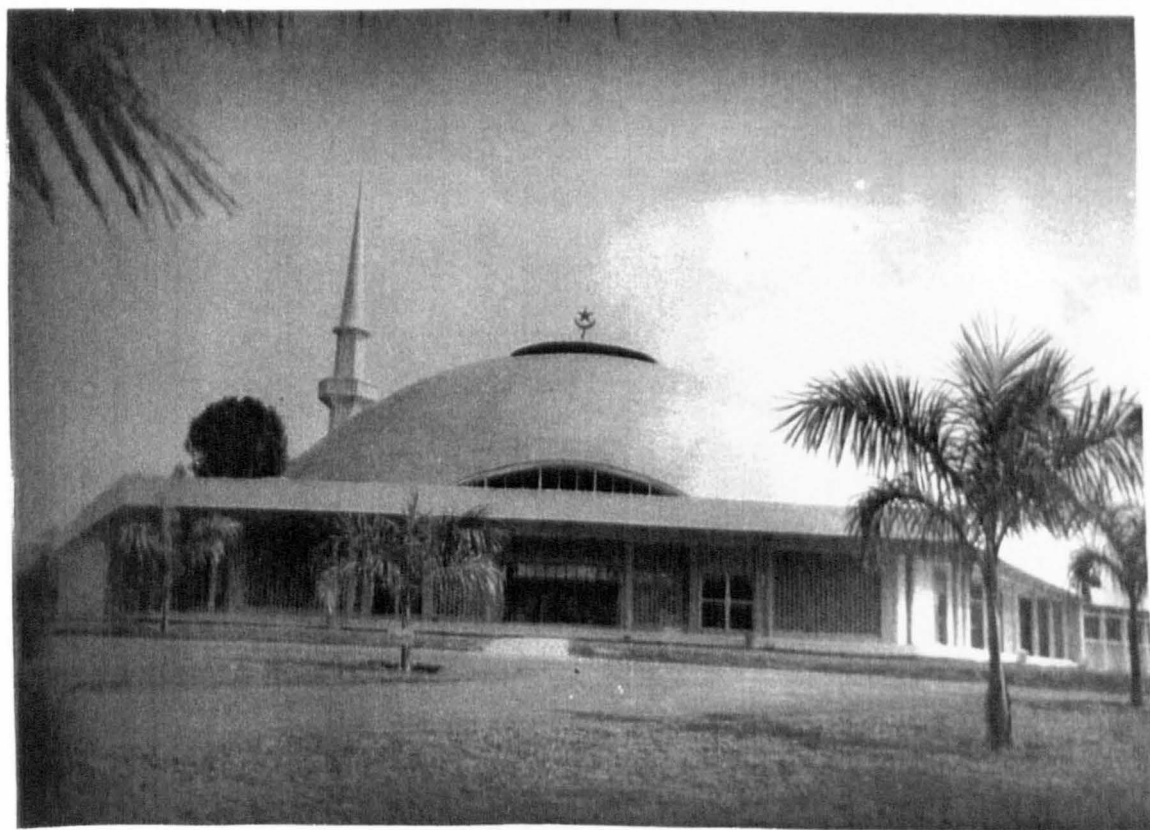


photo. 18 - Old mosque in 1962



Photo. 19 - Jalan Bukit Ubi in 1964



Photo. 20 - Jalan Bukit Ubi in 1972

Photo 21 : Aerial view of Kuantan town centre in 1963



Photo. 22 : Aerial view of Kuantan town centre in 1975

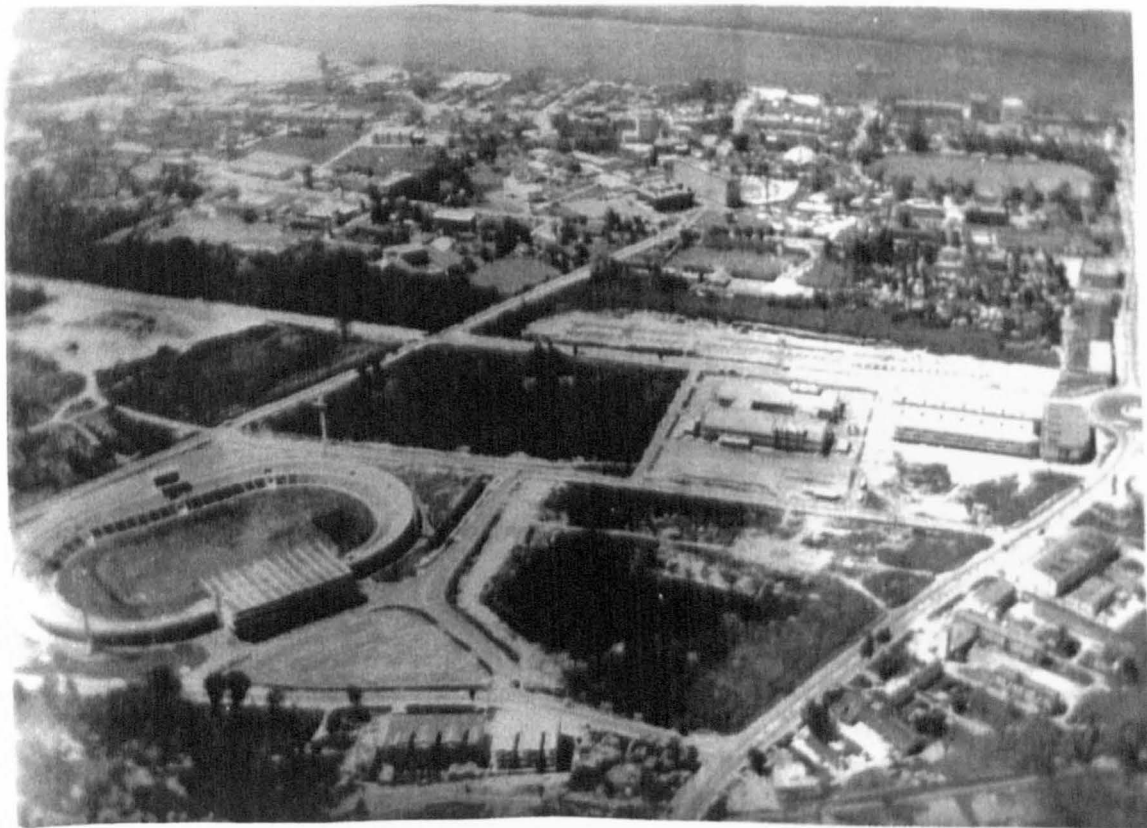
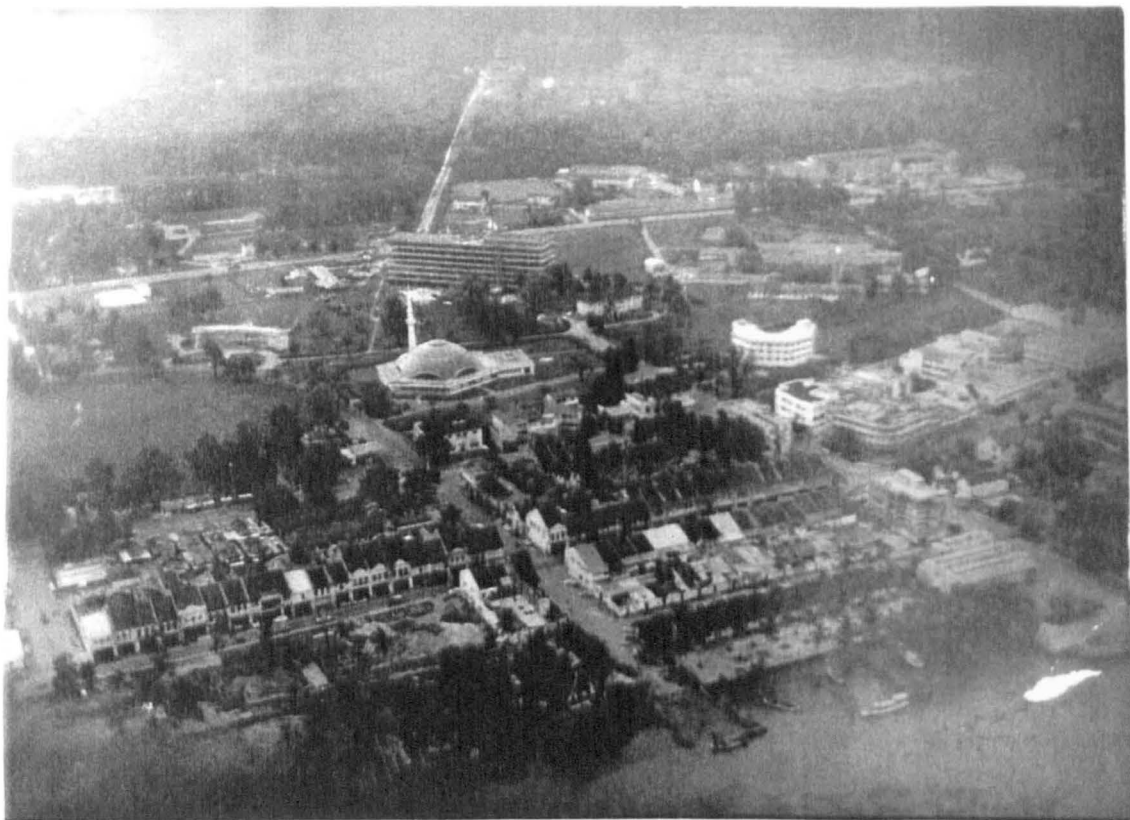




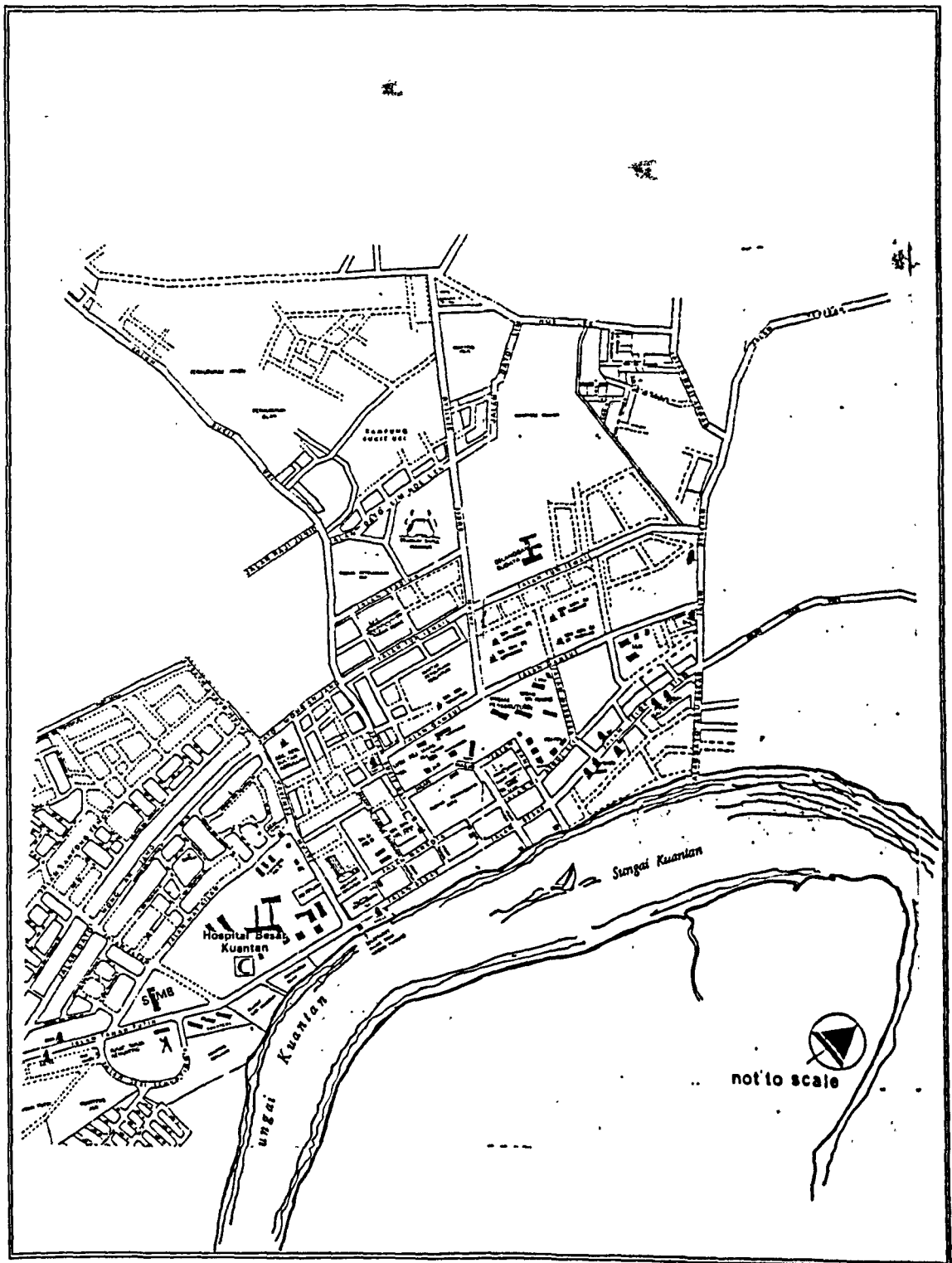
Photo. 23 : Aerial view of Kuantan town centre in 1994.



Town Centre Plan (MUT TO 2010)

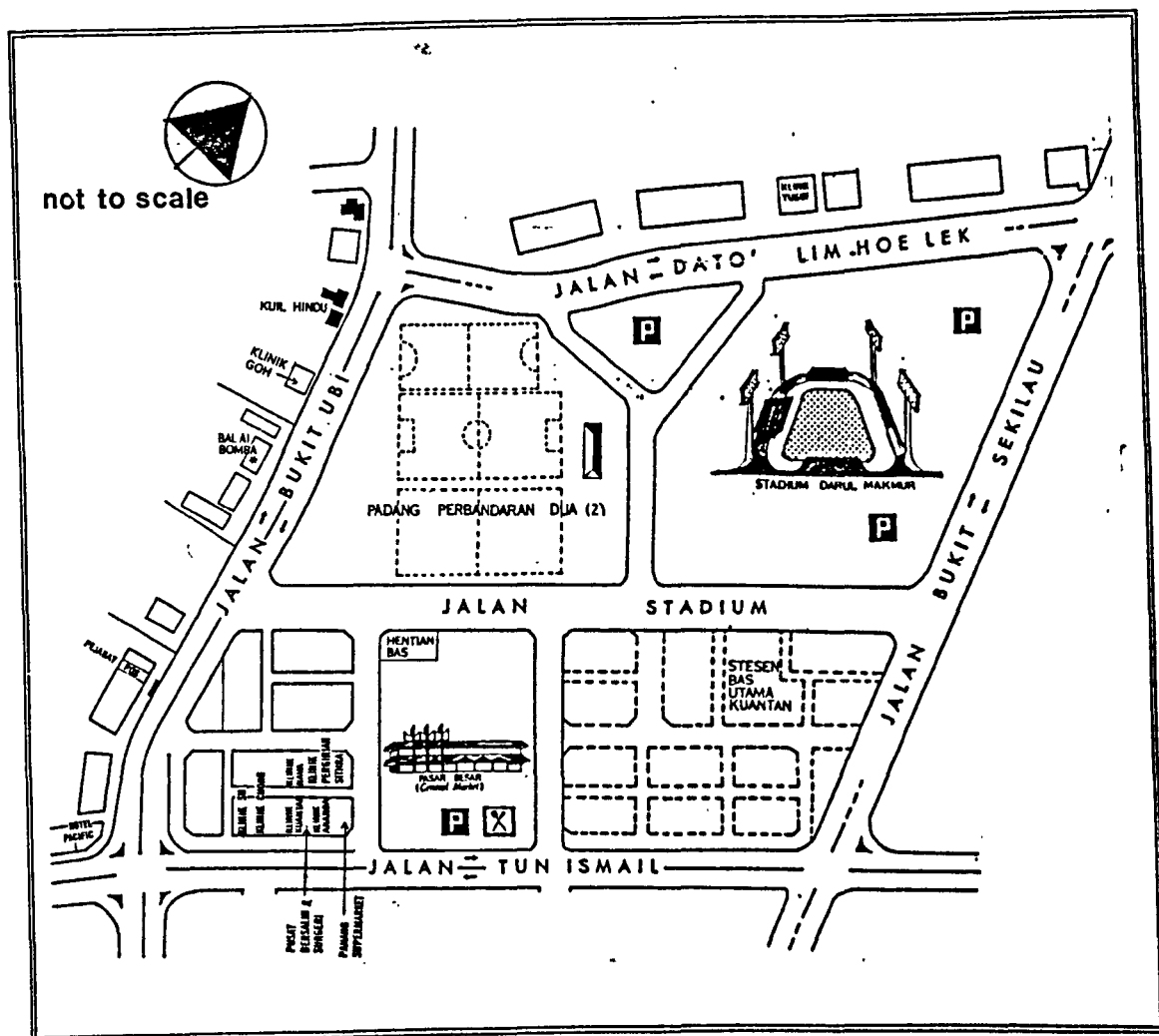
Source : Department of Town Planning, Kuantan City Municipal.

APPENDIX 2 : THE STREETS PLAN OF KUANTAN TOWN CENTRE



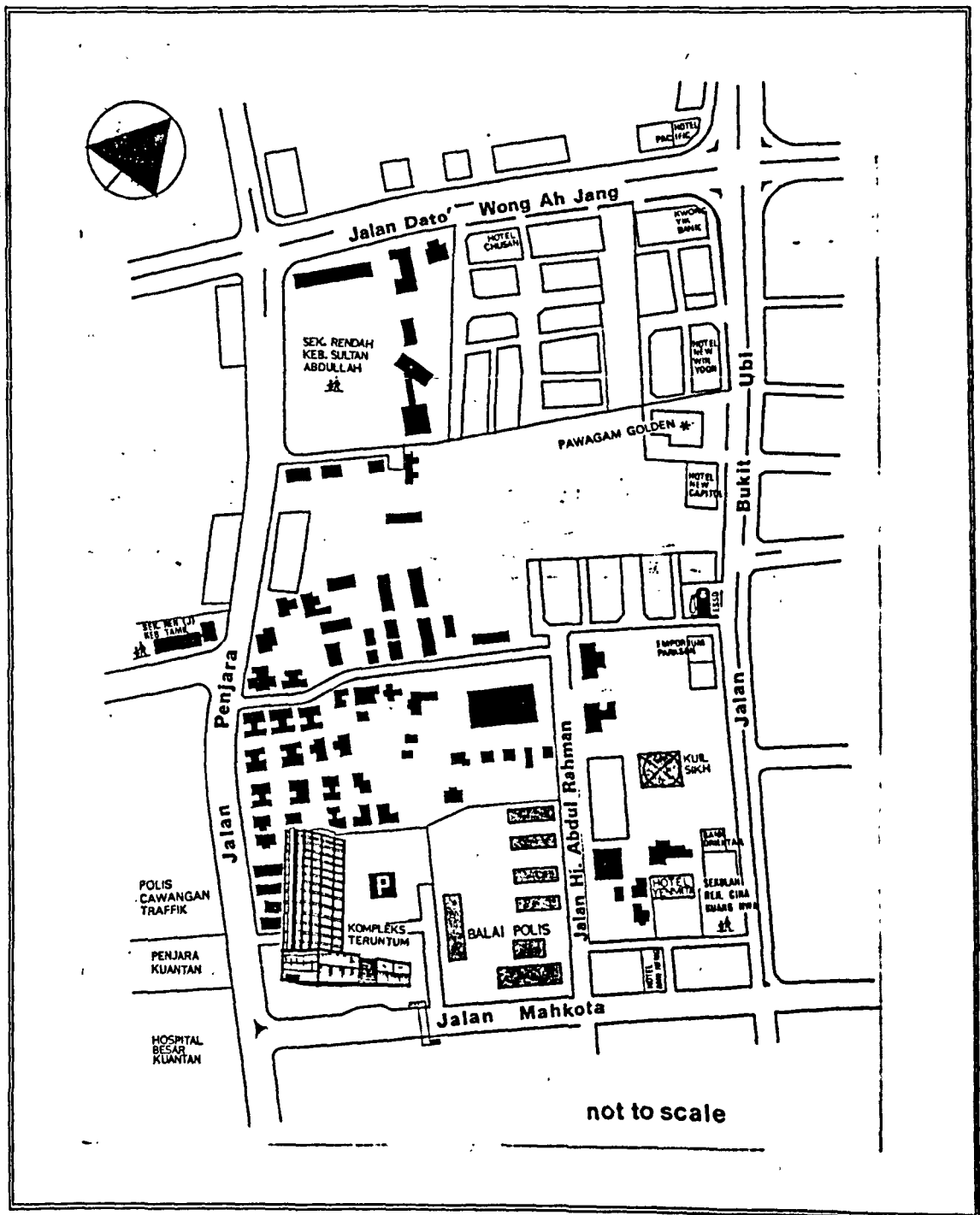
TOWN CENTRE PLAN (NOT TO SCALE)

Source : Department of Town Planning, Kuantan Town Municipal.



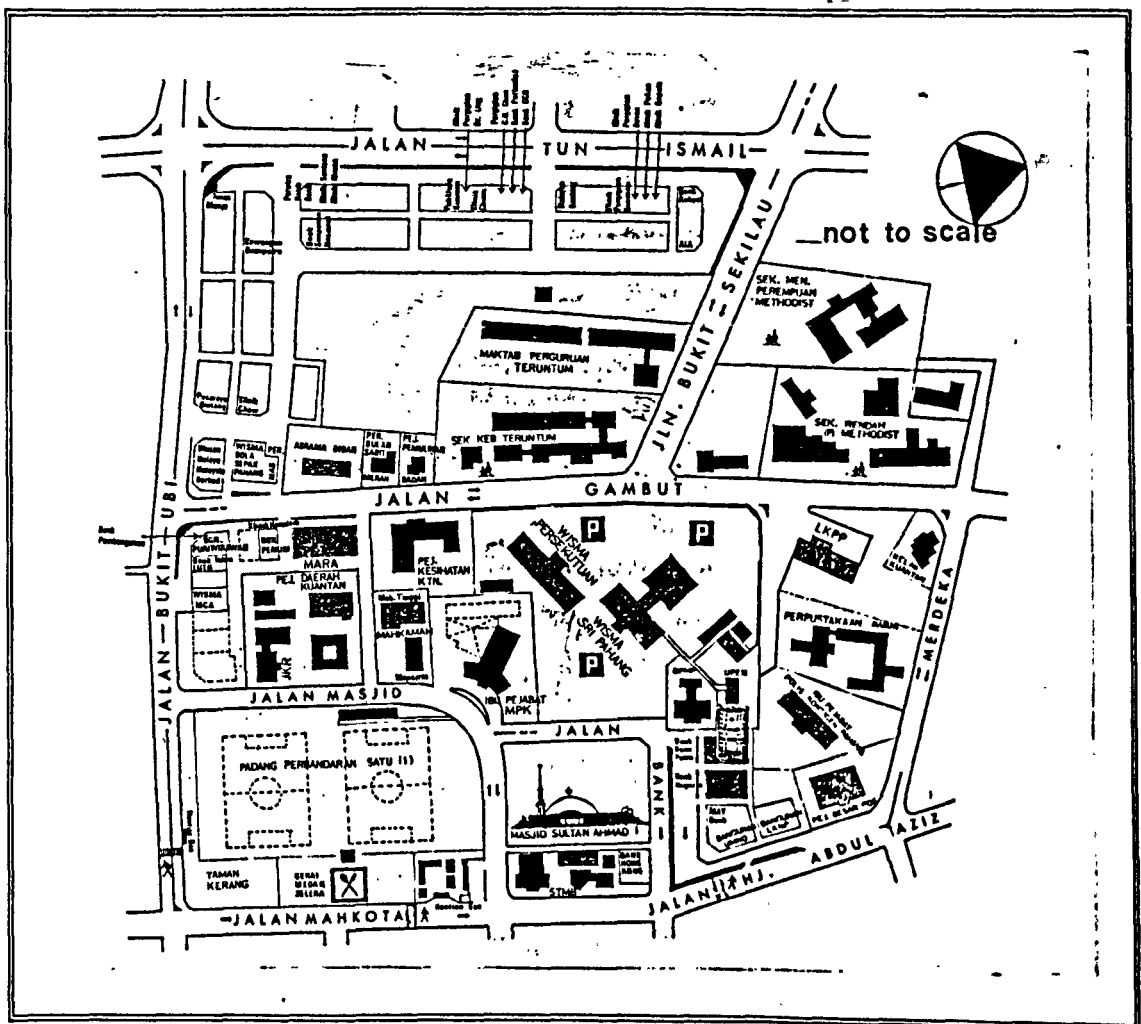
ZONE A : STADIUM AND MARKET AREA (NOT TO SCALE)

Source : Kuantan Street Map, Department of Town Planning, MPK (1989)



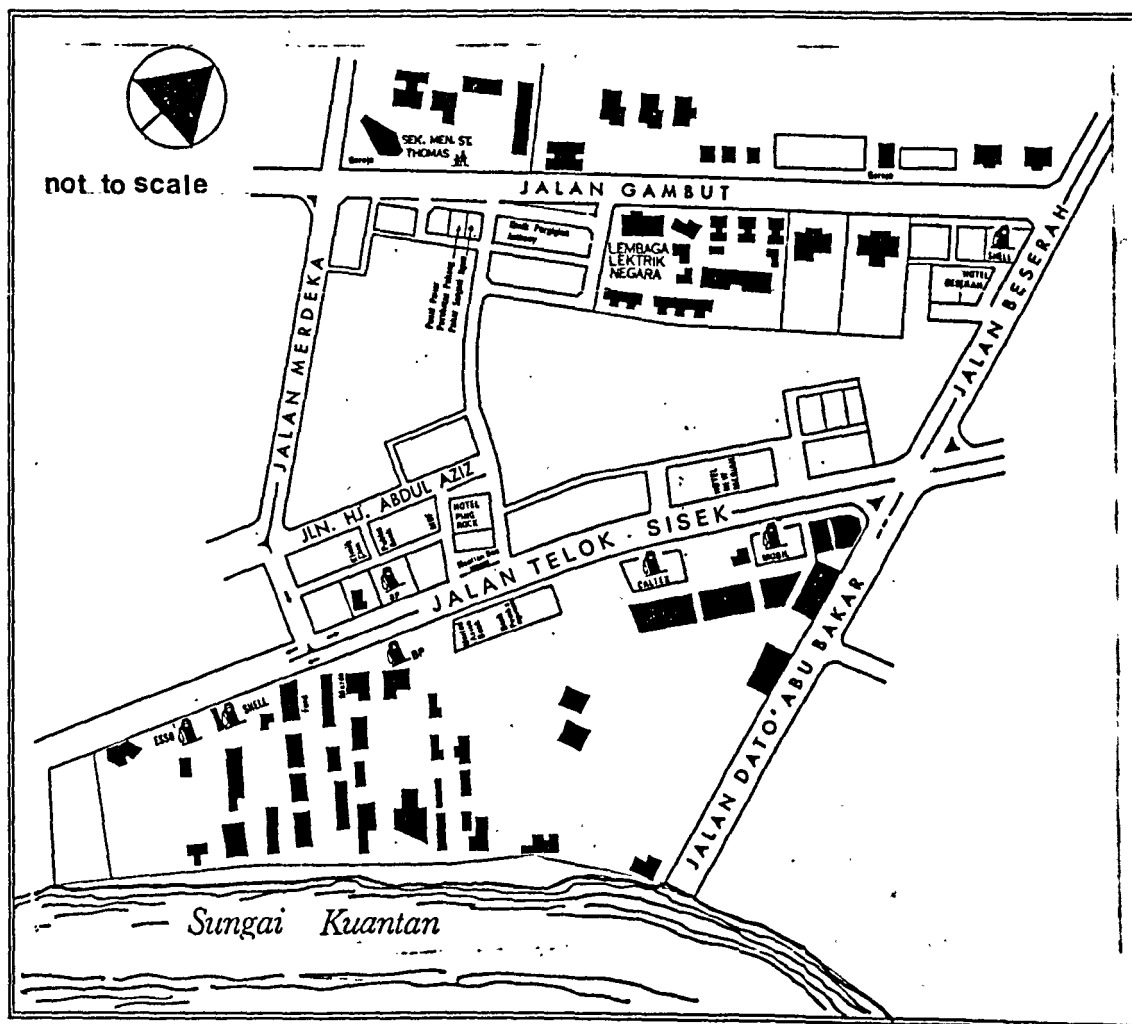
ZONE B : JALAN BUKIT UBI UP TO JALAN PENJARA (NOT TO SCALE)

Source : Kuantan Street Map, Department of town planning, MPK (1989)



ZONE C : JALAN MAHKOTA UP TO JALAN TUN ISMAIL  
(NOT TO SCALE)

Source : Kuantan street map, Department of town planning,  
MPK (1989)



ZONE D : KUANTAN RIVER UP TO JALAN GAMBUT (NOT TO SCALE)

Source : Kuantan street map, Department of Town Planning, MPK (1989)



APPENDIX 3 : THE CHARACTER AREAS OF KUANTAN TOWN CENTRE



Area 1 : Benteng (riverfront)

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Area 2 : Bus station and Medan Pelancung



Area 3 : Jalan Besar





Area 4 : Kompleks Teruntum



Area 5 : Jalan Mahkota





Area 6 : Taman Kerang and Astaka



Area 7 : Padang and the State Mosque





Area 8 : Jalan Bukit Ubi





Area 9 : Jalan Tun Ismail



Area 10 : Jalan Wang Ah Jang





Area 11 : Jalan Gambut



Area 12 : Jalan Penjara



## FINDINGS OF THE VISUAL SURVEY

### Area 1 : Taman Esplanade and Benteng (river front)

There are two types of character here, one a tranquil and peaceful landscaped area and the other an area which is alive with activities. The Taman Esplanade is a green space with a children playground located next to an old muslim cemetery. The ground level of this park is higher than the river banks and steps are provided to link the two spaces. The remaining parts of the slope are covered with well maintained grass. This is the most tranquil and breezy place to be in the town centre, with plenty of trees to provide shade. It is observed that many people tend to watch the view of the river and stroll along the riverbanks in the evening. A paved pedestrian path is constructed along the water's edge with a row of coconut trees lining it. The railings that are constructed along the path prevent access into the waters except from the jetty.

Adjacent to the Taman Esplanade is the more active area of the river front. Here, stalls were built for the petty traders to sell local delicacies as well as fruits. Ample parking spaces are provided with access from Jalan Besar. Next to this is a row of food stalls known locally as 'Benteng'. These stalls attract many customers to the area in the evening. The jetty is located next to these stalls whilst the bus station is situated behind them. Between the jetty and the bus station is a public lavatory, which was voted many times as the cleanest toilet in town. On the opposite side of the river is a stretch of mangrove swamps. There are two fishing villages on this side of the river- Tanjung Lumpur, located at the river estuary and Peramu, in the inner parts of the river. A bridge which spans the river was under construction during the field work.

### Area 2: Bus station and Medan Pelancung

The bus station is actually a tarmac area surrounded by single storey timbered buildings and stalls. These buildings accommodate the ticket office as well as stalls selling local delicacies and food. The bus station plays an important role in transporting people from the town to other parts of the state and the country. This is due to the absence of railway service. Next to this is the Medan Pelancung, which is a purpose built group of stalls selling local crafts, food and delicacies. It is a busy place and often visited by visitors and the local residents. The presence of large and matured Angsana trees by the riverside near Medan Pelancung makes the place very cool and shady. It is also located next to PCCL buildings, which is the building used by the company involved with tin mining operations when the river front was the location of

the port of Kuantan.

### Area 3: Jalan Besar

Jalan Besar is among the earliest street in the town together with Jalan Mahkota. It is a one way street carrying the traffic flow away from the town centre, west bound towards Kuala Lumpur and the southern parts of the state. Several lanes were constructed between the row of shop-houses flanking the street, linking it to the Jalan Mahkota which runs parallel to it. It is also the busiest street in the town centre. This road is characterised by a mixture of the old and new shop-houses. The street is also very wide, consisting of three lanes. An overhead pedestrian bridge crosses the road to the site of the bus station. This bridge became a feature of the street as it is one of the only two pedestrian bridges in the town.

Another physical characteristic of the street is the provision of a pedestrian path together with street plantings along the side of the bus station and Medan Pelancung. A low rise wall erected along the path prevents people from crossing the road at every point. The pedestrian paths are paved in mosaic using white and red coloured bricks. Concrete benches are provided as well as bollards located at certain points on the sidewalks to prevent vehicular access and off street parking. For the latter purpose, a small parking space is provided near the stalls of Medan Pelancung.

The predominant building use in this street is retailing, although hotels and boarding houses as well as restaurants are also abundantly found. Despite being an old street, there is only one stretch of old shop-houses left along the street. These shop-houses are in a bad state of repair due to weathering effects and lack of maintainance. This street is famous for the shops selling dried seafood products, which gives an exotic character to the street through the display of dried fish, dried squids and other similar products along the covered walkway of the old shop-houses. The aroma from these local delicacies fill the air as one moves along the walkway, providing a richness of character to the area. The arcaded walkways are also used as an over spill area to display goods sold on the premises. The other type of specialised shops such as electrical goods, textiles, restaurants, textiles, photo studios and others. The newer shop-houses opposite to the bus station, for example, tend to specialise in electrical goods and the neon lights on the fascia boards provide a colourful frontage to the buildings. The oldest cinema, called the Rex Cinema, is also located on this street. The buildings along the street are a mixture of two to five storeys buildings, with the Hotel Samudera being the only high rise and the tallest buildings in the street.

#### Area 4: Kompleks Teruntum.

The fourth character area is around the vicinity of Kompleks Teruntum. The Kompleks is the tallest building in the town and is situated strategically at the entrance of the town centre. It was constructed in the early seventies, consisting of a podium block and a twenty storeys tower block. It is the first and the only shopping complex in the town centre. The podium block consists of specialised shops and banks whereas the tower block accommodates many offices belonging to the private sector. The design of the building is typical of the modern architecture which influenced the commercial development in the urban areas of Malaysia in the seventies and eighties.

An overhead bridge linking the Kompleks to the other side of Jalan Mahkota acts as a portal into the town centre. Opposite the Kompleks is a hockey field belonging to the MPK. This field provides the Kompleks with a setting. Public access into the field is restricted because of the tall fences that have been erected around its perimeter. Immediately fronting the field is the former Kuantan Recreational Club (KRC) building now used by the Tourist Development Corporation (TDC). This building is among the oldest buildings in the town and has recently been renovated. The space between it and the bazaar on the opposite side has also been paved and landscaped. Occasionally, a stage show or an open air exhibition will be performed in this square.

The taxi stand for the town is located in the vicinity of the bazaar whereas the Police Headquarters, with its familiar blue and white blocks is situated next to the Kompleks Teruntum. The Police Headquarters contain several blocks of medium rise flats for the police constables and their families. These flats are surrounded by fences and it is an area with restricted access for the public.

On the other side of Kompleks Teruntum are the remaining blocks of the old single storey timbered buildings belonging to the District Hospital. A new and modern hospital buildings are still in use, being incorporated with the new hospital complex. The new hospital building is a medium rise building with a pitched roof.

#### 5. Jalan Mahkota

This street, which is formerly known as Wall street is also among the earliest street in the town. This street is characterised by its width (three lanes) and is very straight. It is flanked on both sides by rows of old shop-houses, whose facade are different to the newer ones in that they have interesting detailing and window pattern. The other unique feature of the street is its continuous arcaded walkways (known locally as five foot walkway) and

large columns, a feature not found in the new shop-houses. These arcaded walkways are used by pedestrians walking along the street in the absence of sidewalks. They provide shade to the traveller as well as the opportunity to have a closer look at the merchandise displayed by the shopkeepers.

As in the case of Jalan Besar, Jalan Mahkota is also one way street and carries traffic into the town centre from the south and Kuala Lumpur. The old shop-houses are used for retailing purposes, the majority of which are specialised shops such as photo studios, goldsmiths, book shops and others. There is a large temporary parking space along this street which used to be the site of the old market before its relocation to its present site in Jalan Tun Ismail. Several trees are planted along the parking lots providing a certain amount of shade. In the evening, fruit sellers sometimes sit beneath the trees to sell their goods, and at the same time brighten up the place.

#### Area 6: Taman Kerang/Astaka.

At the junction of Jalan Mahkota and Jalan Bukit Ubi, there is a different street scene brought about by the existence of Taman Kerang and Astaka. This is one of the major road junctions in the town centre as it is the first junction in the road system that carries the traffic from the old town centre into the newer commercial centre in the north.

Taman Kerang offers a green space in the heart of the CBD, with a sculpture of a cockle tower acting as a focal point and landmark to the street. This space is paved with concrete slabs and a pergola with benches underneath it was erected in one corner. The space is enclosed by the fences and planting that surround the Padang next to it. Another feature of the space is the presence of several tall and matured Angsana trees which because of their large foliage make the area shady and cool. A local name for this place is 'bawah pokok' which literally means underneath the trees. It is a setting for many activities such as people socialising, crowds gathering to watch the local medicine men selling his traditional medicine products as well as the petty traders selling handicraft products and books. These activities attract many people especially elderly men and pensioners who go there to listen to the talks given by the medicine men or just to enjoy a chat with their friends underneath the shady trees. These activities occur from morning until midday. In the past, this space was also the setting for many open air activities in the town centre such as singing competitions.

Adjacent to Taman Kerang is a group of food stall called the Astaka. The Astaka used to be a favourite haunt for the locals and has been there for a long time. The seating areas for the customers eating in the place are in the



open. The 'bamboo bus stand', a name used by the locals for the bus stand in front of the stalls also makes the place busy with people. The name is derived from a clump of bamboo trees which grow at the corner of the bus lay-by. The bamboo bus stand is a popular place with the locals and during the fruit seasons, there would be many people from the surrounding areas selling seasonal fruits, the most notable of which is the 'durian' - the king of Malaysian fruits. During the fruits season, people flock to the area to buy fruit at bargain prices, and the activities spill over into the parking area on the opposite side of the road in the evening. It is common to see people crowding around the area watching other customers haggling over the price of the fruit with the durian sellers. In addition, several purpose built stalls are found in the area for the fruit sellers.

#### Area 7: Padang and the State Mosque

The seventh character area is the Padang which lies behind the Astaka. The Padang is a large green open space owned by the MPK and is a setting for sporting activities in the town. It used to be the most important public space in the town and has hosted many public ceremonies and festivals from the colonial days until independence. There used to be a direct view of the river from the Padang but this view is now blocked by buildings.

Today the Padang is still the largest green open space in the town centre and is the setting for the civic and administrative buildings of the town and state. The main public buildings that fronted the Padang are the State Mosque, the Court, the Religious Department (used to be the MPK Headquarters) and the Wisma Persekutuan (Federal Government Offices). They are relatively old buildings and each has its own distinguishing design. The Wisma building is a tall rectangular block with the word Wisma written on its roof top and can be seen from quite a distance. Close by are two other tall buildings belonging to the Bank Bumiputra and Bank Negara. The design of the new mosque has resulted in some of the space of the Padang being taken up for the mosque foundation. This is in contrast to the time before the renovation of the old mosque as illustrated by the old photographs. The present mosque is one of the largest buildings in the town centre, with a significant impact on the skyline due to its huge dome and four minarets. It is also a colourful building, clad in white and royal blue stripes, in contrast to the white and greyish coloured buildings in the town centre. Most of the time, the Padang area is peaceful and quiet except on Friday afternoons, when it becomes the busiest place in the town centre with the Moslems flocking into the mosque for their Friday prayers.

#### Area 8: Jalan Bukit Ubi

This street is distinguished by its function as a link between the old town centre and the newer centre to the north. One of its distinguishing features is the landscaped pedestrian walkway built at the side of the Padang which is the only pedestrian walkway in the town centre. The pedestrian path along this street has an interesting and panoramic view of the Padang and the Mosque. Various amenities are provided for pedestrians such as seats, kiosks and trees that provide shade and comfort. This is the only pedestrian path which has these facilities because the others are just sidewalks. It is observed that Jalan Bukit Ubi acts as the path that takes the pedestrian flow from the bus station to the market and a department store (Ocean Supermarket) at Jalan Tun Ismail. In the middle of the street a row of palm trees was planted to beautify it. The palm trees are chosen by the town officials as the 'identity' tree of the town.

The other feature of the street that is observed is the mixture of the old and new buildings located along the street. The oldest Chinese school is located along the street opposite Taman Kerang. Among the retail outlets in the town centre, the Parkson Supermarket is the biggest shopping building in the street. The new town bus station is located behind this supermarket, which makes the area fairly busy with people. The biggest traffic light junction in the town centre is also located at the cross roads between this street, Jalan Tun Ismail and Jalan Dato Wong Ah Jang. It used to be a roundabout and is adequately landscaped with potted plants as well as huge signboards indicating the traffic directions. Located at one corner of this junction is the Hotel Pacific, one of the largest hotels in the town centre. At the end of this street is the Fire Station and the Hindu Temple. The rest of the buildings that line the street are modern shop-house blocks.

#### Area 9: Jalan Tun Ismail

This is the major street in the newer centre and is where the Ocean Supermarket, the Market and the Stadium are located. Again, the area is characterised by the activities of the Market and the Ocean Supermarket attached to it as well as the retailing and commercial buildings lining the street. The area is busy with people from morning until evening. The Market is responsible for the huge amount of traffic generated in the area. The Market and the Ocean Supermarket are actually located in a single building with the latter occupying the upper levels as well as a small portion of the ground floor. The Ocean Supermarket is the biggest and the newest departmental store. Besides being a large building, it is also distinctive due to its white and turquoise colour. At the ground floor entrance to the

Supermarket, there is a restaurant belonging to one of the fast food chains, A&W. Therefore, people who come to this area do so to visit the fast food restaurant as well as shopping. Surrounding the market compound are several purpose built stalls for the fruit sellers and food stall holders. Car parking spaces are provided in the area between the market and the stalls as well as at its periphery. Alongside the market is a place where temporary stall holders can operate their business, selling food in the afternoon and evening and thus making it one of the main outdoor eating places in the town centre.

Fronting the stalls, on the periphery of the market, is the third open space in the town centre. It is used as a playing field and is fenced. Adjacent to the field and on the other side of the road is Stadium Darul Makmor, a stadium belonging to the state and where all the important sporting events in the state place. The stadium floodlights can be seen from quite a distance and it is also used as a landmark. Opposite the stadium is the site of the new bus station which is still under construction at the time of the survey. It is a large building which will incorporate other commercial and retailing users as well as, once it is completed, replacing and activities of the present river front bus station. It is anticipated that upon its completion, more traffic will be generated in the area. The other shop-houses along this street accommodate many other types of shops ranging from banks, sundries stores, restaurants and specialised shops. However, the predominant building use is that of private clinics. The street design is distinguished by the width of the street which is a dual carriage way. Along the central reservation tall street lighting are spaced in between shrubs and potted plants which are planted as part of the street beautification programme. Another feature of the street design which is different to those in the old centre is that vehicular access to the shops is via a slip road. Car parking spaces are also provided along the slip roads. Therefore, there is an open view along the street with very little sense of enclosure. The walkways of these modern shop-houses lack the sense of enclosure as well as failing to give adequate shelter from the sun and rain, unlike the arcaded walkways of the old shop-houses.

#### Area 10: Jalan Dato Wong Ah Jang.

As in the case of Jalan Tun Ismail, this street also carries four lanes of traffic. The street is characterised by the presence of a central reservation. Medium sized trees are also planted along the street as well as shrubs along the central reservation. The buildings that line the street are mainly four to five storeys shop-houses with the facade dominated by billboards and advertisements. These buildings are set back from the street with a slip road in between, for access purposes. The predominant building use

is that of garages and shops selling spare parts for cars, although the presence of other retailing uses area also observed. There are no distinctive architectural features observed in the rows of buildings flanking the street. In terms of design, these modern shop-houses are standardised blocks which are also found in Jalan Tun Ismail and streets of most other towns.

#### Area 11: Jalan Gambut.

Jalan Gambut is a street that acts as the boundary to the old town centre. It is a street characterised by the presence of many of the town centre schools, some of which are old and established schools. Among the oldest buildings found on the street is the Kuantan Club building, a legacy of the colonial times. This building is easily identified by its architecture as well as being a black and white coloured timbered building. A few large and old trees are also found within its vicinity. At the junction between this street and Jalan Bukit Ubi, there is a fairly recent restaurant building called Grandys, styled in post modern architecture. At its corner, the pedestrian path is attractively paved with coloured bricks and landscaped with potted plants. Several high rise buildings are also found such as the Wisma Bolasepak and Mara Buildings.

#### Area 12: Jalan Penjara

Jalan Penjara is named after the prison which used to house the convicts in the town. A new prison has been built outside the town centre to accommodate these prisoners but the buildings of the old prison still remain. This street is characterised by the mixed nature of the development taking place along it. Immediately behind the Kompleks Teruntum and fronting the street are the old residential quarters for civil servants. These are single storey, detached, timbered buildings scattered in a low density along the street. Adjacent to these is Sekolah Abdullah, which is amongst the oldest schools in the town centre. The school field which fronts the street provides an open space between the buildings. Opposite this lies a stretch of four storeys modern shop-houses with a residential scheme behind them. These shop-houses are typical of the shop-houses of the newer commercial sectors and are engaged in different retailing activities.

## APPENDIX 5 : QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE

Name of interviewer

Date of interview : .....

Address of respondent: .....

Time of interview : .....

Time ended :.....

If interview not taken, please state reasons :

.....  
.....  
.....

Is a follow up necessary : Yes / No

Is the respondent interested to participate in the indepth  
interview : Yes / No

.....

### INSTRUCTIONS TO INTERVIEWER :

1. Please tick the answer given.

2. If there are more than one answer to the question,  
please indicate on the list of the multiple choice, the  
answers given for the question.

3. For non multiple choice questions, please write clearly  
on the spaces provided.

4. Please ensure that all questions are answered. If the  
respondents refrain from answering certain question, please  
state the reasons for doing so.

## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Dear sir/madam,

This survey is part of a research conducted by myself for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom. The purpose of the survey is to find out how the residents of Kuantan town centre perceived their urban environment.

You have been selected at random to take part in the survey and I would be really appreciated if you could spare some time in answering these questions. An interviewer representing me will be collecting the completed questionnaire on ..... If you need some clarification on how to answer the questions, please do so then.

I assure you that the information that you provided will remain strictly confidential and is used solely for academic purposes.

There will be a second part of this survey which takes the form of a focus interview. If you are willing to participate in this interview, please inform the interviewer when you are likely to be available for the interview. We will then get back to you to arrange for an appointment.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Yours sincerely

.....

Suhana Shamsuddin

Lecturer,  
Department of Architecture  
Faculty of Built Environment  
University of Technology Malaysia  
Skudai, Johor.

## QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE

### A. Respondents Background

#### 1. Sex.

- 1 - Male
- 2 - Female

#### 2. Ethnic Group.

- 1 - Malay
- 2 - Chinese
- 3 - Indian
- 4 - Sikh
- 5 - European
- 6 - Eurasean
- 7 - Others (specify)

#### 3. Education level.

- 1 - Primary school
- 2 - Secondary school
- 3 - College
- 4 - University
- 5 - None

#### 4. Occupation.

- 1 - Unemployed
- 2 - Self employed
- 3 - Retired/Pensioner
- 4 - Professional
- 5 - Managerial
- 6 - Businessmen
- 7 - Government officers
- 8 - Teachers
- 9 - Lecturers
- 10 - Clerical
- 11 - Police/Army
- 12 - Labourers
- 13 - Factory worker
- 14 - Housewife
- 15 - Student
- 16 - Others (please state).....

#### 5. Age group.

- 1 - 7 to 12 years old
- 2 - 13 to 17 years old
- 3 - 18 to 25 years old
- 4 - 26 to 35 years old
- 5 - 36 to 45 years old
- 6 - 46 to 55 years old
- 7 - 56 to 65 years old

8 - Above 65 years old

6. Religion.

- 1 - Islam
- 2 - Buddhist
- 3 - Hindu
- 4 - Sikh
- 5 - Christian
- 6 - No religion
- 7 - Others (please state) .....

7. Number of children, if married.

- 1 - one child
- 2 - two children
- 3 - three children
- 4 - four children
- 5 - five children
- 6 - six children
- 7 - seven and above

8. Length of residence.

- 1 - Less than a year
- 2 - 1 to 4 years
- 3 - 5 to 10 years
- 4 - 11 to 15 years
- 5 - More than 15 years

9. Place of work.

- 1 - Within the town centre
- 2 - Outside the town centre
- 3 - Not applicable

10. Frequency of visit to the town centre.

- 1 - Once a week
- 2 - Twice a week
- 3 - Every other day
- 4 - Every day
- 5 - Once a fortnight
- 6 - Once a month
- 7 - Others (specify) .....

11. Mode of travel to the town centre.

- 1 - Walking
- 2 - Bicycle
- 3 - Motorcycle
- 4 - Trishaw
- 5 - Car/Van
- 6 - Bus
- 7 - Lorry



8 - Others (specify) .....

12. Purpose of going to the town centre.

- 1 - Working
- 2 - Shopping
- 3 - Leisure
- 4 - Business
- 5 - Live there
- 6 - Others (specify) .....

13. Name the place or places that you normally go for leisure or social activities such as relaxing, eating, chatting, sight seeing etc. in the town centre.

.....

14. Why is this place a favourite of yours ?.

- 1 - beautiful sceneries.
- 2 - lots of activites to watch.
- 3 - plenty of things to do.
- 4 - strategically located.
- 5 - excellent facilites.
- 6 - convenient parking.
- 7 - easy access by public transport.
- 8 - Others (please state)

15. Name the place where you do your shopping.

.....

16. Why do you choose this place?

- 1 - all the major stores are located here.
- 2 - it has many other facilities besides shopping.
- 3 - it is strategically located.
- 4 - convenient parking.
- 5 - easy access by public transport.
- 6 - others (please state) .....

17. Do you ever get lost in the town centre area ?

- 1 - Yes.
- 2 - No.

18. If yes, which part/area do you find it confusing to find your way around?

.....  
.....  
19. Why do you find this place confusing?

- 1 - the buildings all look the same.
- 2 - no features that is unique to the place.
- 3 - very poor signage.
- 4 - uncoordinated road system.
- 5 - Others (please state)

20. Name 3 streets that you know in the town centre.

- 1 - .....
- 2 - .....
- 3 - .....

21. Which street do you find to be most distinctive in Kuantan town centre?

.....  
22. Why is it unique to you?

- 1- the name of the street
- 2- size of the street.
- 3- length of the street.
- 4- activities occuring along the street.
- 5- tree plantings and landscaping on the street.
- 6- row of interesting buildings lining the street.
- 7- presence of shops on the street.
- 8- presence of offices on the street.
- 9- shape of the street.
- 10- interesting view and scenery.
- 11- Others (please state)

23. Name 3 distinctive buildings or groups of buildings in the town centre.

- 1 - .....
- 2 - .....
- 3 - .....

24. Which building or rows of building do you find to be most unique?

.....  
25. Why is this building unique to you?

- 1- facade
- 2- decorations/ornamentation
- 3- height
- 4- size
- 5- architectural style
- 6- setting (location)
- 7- building use (internal)
- 8- building use (external)
- 9- colours
- 10- roof form
- 11- building material
- 12- Others (please state)

26. Name the symbols that you would use to describe the town centre to the people.

- 1 - .....
- 2 - .....
- 3 - .....
- 4 - .....

27. Which view in the town centre do you find to be most unique?

.....

28. Which of the following place or features do you think is most distinctive in Kuantan town centre and worthy of being pointed out to a person who wants to familiarise with the city?

- 1- benteng
- 2- KOMTAR
- 3- padang MPK
- 4- row of old shop houses at Jalan Mahkota
- 5- State Mosque
- 6- jeti penambang
- 7- hospital
- 8- Medan Pelancong
- 9- Taman Kerang
- 10- stadium
- 11- wet market
- 12- others (please state) .....

29. Why do you find it to be distinctive?

.....

.....

30. How do you remember the town centre? Tell us the important clues that you tend to remember first in the order of its importance.

- 1 - Name of roads .....
- 2 - Major buildings .....
- 3 - Groups or rows of buildings .....
- 4 - Road junctions or roundabouts .....
- 5 - Street pattern .....
- 6 - Visible activities .....
- 7 - Trees or landscape features .....
- 8 - Colours .....
- 9 - Use of buildings .....
- 10 - Sign or bill boards .....
- 11 - Squares.....
- 12 - Field .....
- 13 - River or sea front .....
- 14 - traffic light .....
- 15 - statues .....
- 16 - bridge .....
- 14 - Others (specify) .....

31. Which of these places in the town centre do you like and think is pretty ?

- 1 - Benteng.
- 2 - Padang MPK.
- 3 - Taman Kerang.
- 4 - KOMTAR.
- 5 - State Mosque.
- 6 - Medan Pelancong.
- 7 - Jalan Besar.
- 8 - Jalan Mahkota.
- 9 - Jalan Bukit Ubi.
- 10 - KRC building.
- 11 - Hockey field in front of KOMTAR.
- 12 - Hospital.
- 13 - Jalan Tun Ismail.
- 14 - Jalan Masjid.
- 15 - Stadium.
- 16 - Jalan Telok Sisek.
- 17 - Others (please state)

32. Why do you think it is pretty?

- 1 - beautifully landscaped.
- 2 - it has buildings of architectural interest.
- 3 - beautiful setting.
- 4 - tranquil and peaceful atmosphere.
- 5 - lots of facilities for people to occupy their time.
- 6 - a place that is comfortable for relaxing.
- 7 - lots of human activities going on.
- 8 - Others (please state)

33. Which of these places do you dislike and think is ugly?

- 1 - Wet Market.
- 2 - Express Bus Station.
- 3 - Squatter areas along the river.
- 4 - Factories adjacent to the squatter areas.
- 5 - PCCL building area.
- 6 - Hospital.
- 7 - Stadium.
- 8 - Prison area.
- 9 - Police station.
- 10 - Custom Office area.
- 11 - Wisma Persekutuan.
- 12 - others (please state) .....

34. Why do you think it is ugly?

- 1 - it is smelly.
- 2 - it is messy.
- 3 - a place used for loitering.
- 4 - dirty and covered with litter.
- 5 - overcrowded.
- 6 - lots of graffiti and vandalism.
- 7 - buildings are not well kept and maintained.
- 8 - unmanaged landscape.
- 9 - others (please state) .....

35. Which part of the town centre, would you like to be retained and must never be demolished for new projects to take place?

- 1 - River front area (Benteng).
- 2 - Padang MPK.
- 3 - Jalan Mahkota.
- 4 - Jalan Besar.
- 5 - Jalan Masjid.
- 6 - Medan Pelancong.
- 7 - Taman Kerang.
- 8 - Others (please state)

36. Why do you want it to be retained ?

- 1 - it has buildings of architectural interest.
- 2 - it has old buildings of historical significance.
- 3 - it is associated with important events.
- 4 - it has nostalgic appeal.
- 5 - it is best suited to the area.
- 6 - it is the most beautiful place in the town centre.
- 7 - Others (please state)

37. What need to be improved in the town centre to make it attractive?

.....  
 .....

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

( This schedule is used as guidance only and probing to the responses given will be done if the answers to the various questions warrants further investigations. The sequence of questions will vary according to the respondents' answers and also to encourage better rapport with the respondents)

### RECALL TASK

1. When you think of the Kuantan town centre, what is the first thing that comes into your mind that symbolise the word Kuantan ?
2. How would you describe the town centre appearance in the physical sense ?
3. What elements of central Kuantan you think are most distinctive. Please tell us those that you find easiest to identify and remember.
4. How would you describe this element or place. If you are taken there blindfolded, when the blindfold is taken off, what clues of the elements or place would you use to positively identify where you were ?
5. Please tell me the boundary of the town centre. How do you define its boundary and what are the most significant features that make you include them inside the boundaries.
6. Do you have a place in the town centre that is special or meaningful to you? Why is it special and what is its distinctive features?
7. Is there anything about the town centre which you dislike in terms of its appearance. Why do you dislike it?

### SKETCHING TASK

Could you please make a quick map of the centre of Kuantan. Please cover its main features as if you were making a rapid description of the town to a stranger. What are the main features that you would used to describe the town centre and the location of the area that you feel reflects the centre of the town. Please also indicate the limits of the town centre. Also point out the clues of the physical features along the routes that is important in making your decisions as to where to go. Please name the roads or elements that you can remember that are located in the town centre. When you're in the town centre, what gives the hint that you are already there.

## RECOGNITION TASK

For the following sets of photographs, please name the place or buildings or the main features in it. What are the clues given to you by this place or buildings that make you able to recognise them.

































