

**CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF TRADITIONAL HOUSE COMPOUNDS
IN TERENGGANU**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Science in Architecture

Faculty of Built Environment
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

FEBRUARY 2007

To my dear husband, Wan Othman Wan Abdullah, and to my beloved children and grand children who all helped me each in their own ways.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am truly thankful to my supervisor, Associate Professor Zainul Hakim Mohd Zain for his judicious suggestions along the research, for having patiently edited the many versions of the thesis, coaching me toward intellectual progress even under the pressure of time.

My gratitude goes also to Associate Professor Dr. Ismail Said for his help in the literature review, for many fruitful conversations and the warm hospitality of his family.

I owe a lot as well to the inhabitants of villages in Terengganu who welcomed me in their compounds and generously volunteered a treasure of information.

Finally, I wish to thank Ms. Jarina Mohd Jani and Mr. Yorgo Georgiou for their kind assistance during the final stage of this work.

ABSTRACT

As it was observed that Terengganu traditional residential landscapes are disappearing fast, it seemed obvious that something had to be done before oblivion sets in. Therefore, taking the traditional houses compounds as basic building blocks of the traditional villages, a survey on 16 house compounds found mostly in the valley of the Terengganu River, was conducted. The study was aimed at demonstrating i) that these units have a particular identity, ii) that they are valuable assets to the state as cultural landscapes. The 16 house compounds have been divided into four categories or types, based on socio-economic differences amongst the inhabitants reported in background literature on Terengganu, i.e: “*rakyat*”, “aristocrat”, “clan heritage” and “farmer”. The investigation entails the use of pictures, interviews, lists of features and sketch plans of the house compounds. The findings are presented in tables of frequencies revealing priorities for each type: “*rakyat*” - household activities, “aristocrat” -status symbols, “clan heritage” -family ties, and “farmer” -harvest and storage. The resulting “portraits” are then analysed against a series of seventeen criteria for cultural value drawn from the literature on cultural landscape assessment. In conclusion, the landscape in the house compounds are found to present varying identity types, homogeneity, variety, symbiosis and ethic norms, and hence qualify as cultural landscape. This can be considered as a valuable indication for the rest of the house compounds in ancient villages. The research intends to serve as a first stage framework towards further course of action to document and /or to preserve what remains of the identified heritage in Terengganu.

ABSTRAK

Menyedari bahawa landskap kediaman tradisi di Terengganu sedang menghilang dengan cepatnya, sesuatu patut dilakukan sebelum ia luput untuk selamanya. Dengan menganggap perkarangan rumah tradisional sebagai asas kepada kewujudan kampung tradisi, satu penyelidikan terhadap 16 buah perkarangan rumah yang kebanyakannya terdapat di lembah Sungai Terengganu telah dijalankan. Penyelidikan bertujuan untuk membuktikan i) bahawa perkarangan rumah tradisi mempunyai identiti tersendiri; ii) dan bahawa ia adalah sesuatu yang bernilai bagi negeri Terengganu sebagai landskap budaya setempat. Enam belas kediaman dan perkarangan tersebut telah dibahagikan kepada empat kategori, berdasarkan perbezaan sosio-ekonomi di antara penduduk dan kajian awal negeri Terengganu, iaitu: “rakyat”, “bangsawan”, “warisan keluarga” dan “petani”. Penyelidikan ini menggunakan gambar, temuduga, inventori dan lukisan pelan ringkas kediaman dan sekitaran. Hasil kajian disenaraikan dalam bentuk jadual yang menunjukkan kekerapan beberapa elemen yang mendefinisikan sebilangan ciri ciri khas bagi setiap jenis landskap. Gambaran tersebut kemudian dibandingkan dengan 17 kriteria yang telah digunakan oleh pakar dalam bidang senibina dan landskap budaya bagi mendapatkan nilai budayanya. Pada kesimpulannya, perkarangan rumah tradisional yang telah dikaji telah terbukti mempunyai pelbagai ciri identiti tersendiri seperti: berkategori, mempunyai persamaan, pelbagai, simbiotik, beretika dan adalah layak sebagai landskap budaya. Ini boleh dianggap sebagai petanda yang kuat bagi lain lain kediaman tradisi yang masih ada. Kajian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi langkah pertama ke arah tindakan lanjut dalam mendokumentasi dan seterusnya memelihara warisan yang telah dikenalpasti di Terengganu ini.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The state of Terengganu in Malaysia was for a long time synonym with “unspoiled beaches”, “charming fishing villages” and “pristine forest hills”. Then, over the last fifteen years, transformation of natural landscapes was noted, both by visitors and by residents (Chang, 2000). The estuary of the Terengganu River lost its fringe of sands and coconut fronds. Kuala Ibai lost its dream-like lagoon. Merang hill’s sweeping perspective over the sea and the land, the grand approaches to the Gajah Terung hills in Kuala Berang, these and other views that were for centuries part of the beauty of the land, disappeared. In the rural vicinity of the capital of Kuala Terengganu, rice fields and orchards have been replaced by rows of terrace houses (Marzuki et al.1999). In Seberang Takir, on the northern bank of the Terengganu River, hectares of mangrove palm have been replaced by a giant low-cost housing esplanade.

However, inside the villages, as illustrated in Figure 1.1, the traditional scenery with houses on stilts and laid back atmosphere described in guidebooks had remained untouched.



Figure 1.1: A “timeless” scenery in Pulau Ketam, an island in the estuary of the Terengganu River. (Picture by author, 2004)

Then, from years 2000 to 2005, drastic changes occurred, starting in the most populated areas of Terengganu such as villages around towns, and on the coastline. One example is the beach agglomeration of Marang –facing Pulau Kapas, a former successful tourist attraction with its “cowboy town” planks walkways and fishing village lagoon. Development made without attention to the sensorial assets of the place destroyed all its charm to the eyes of outsiders. As one guidebook puts it:

“Marang “was”, because Marang is not anymore. No reason at all to stay there”. (Guide du Routard, 2003, translated from the French by the author).

The paradox is that, while this study is conducted, its subject, the Terengganu cultural landscape, is vanishing. According to the figures from the State Economic Planning Unit, from 1980 to 2004, although the pace is one of the slowest in the country, the population in some areas of the state has doubled (Unit Perancang Ekonomi Negeri Terengganu, 2004). Changes are deemed to happen. The phenomenon is global. The media echoes of protests in China and Africa where the numerous losses brought about by the spreading onslaught of traditional settlements are deplored (Three Gorges Probe, 2002, BBC World Africa, 2005).

Global trends in economy, including the rising scarcity of land and traditional materials do not presage well for the newly appreciated assets. As expressed in the following statement of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in Mexico.

“Due to homogenization of culture and global socio-economic transformation, vernacular structures all around the world are extremely vulnerable, facing serious problems of obsolescence, internal equilibrium and integration,”
(ICOMOS 1999).

At the same time, the value of the previously overlooked or taken for granted heritage is re-asserted:

“The built vernacular heritage is the fundamental expression of the culture of a community, at the same time, the expression of the world’s cultural diversity”
(Ibid.1999).

The vernacular built environment, especially in the tropics, includes the floral background that frames traditional structures. Under the Burra Charter on the built Vernacular landscapes heritage (ICOMOS, 1981), landscapes and gardens may be considered as places of cultural significance and part of the human heritage.

In Malaysia, landscape architects Kamariah Kamsah (1997) and Nor Atiah Ismail (2003) among others, have expressed their concern for the Malaysian landscapes which now demonstrate the “identity loss” and “placelessness” reported as characteristics of modern landscapes which “lack identity and personality” (Antrop,1997). Apart from warning of the physical disappearance of the vernacular landscape identity, these Malaysian authors have also emphasized the importance of vernacular landscape documentation for future planning: “There is a need to create a richer base of resources to design” further explained Nor Atiah (2003), studying the planting composition in rural Malay residential Perak.

1.1. Problem Statement

The disturbance of traditional vernacular landscapes raises social and anthropological questions. Do outward cultural changes such as those occurring in landscapes affect a people's sense of identity? Is the loss of the material supports of a former identity prejudicial to the people? A second series of questions are more technical: How to identify cultural values in a place? How much culture is embodied in dwellings and the built environment? How to demonstrate that a place warrants to be considered as cultural heritage?

A landscape architecture approach affords an answer to the technical questions by providing an inventory of landscape features. These features, such as architectural traits, plants species, gardens lay out and ground elements, may be shown to express a people's culture and their historical, artistic, economic and social achievements. The identified heritage may then be used in planning future development.

The task at hand for this particular study is to provide such an inventory and to demonstrate that there are good grounds to consider a series of house compounds in Terengganu as cultural entities or repositories of a culture. If the assumption that a cultural heritage is embodied in Terengganu house compounds is verified, then, further steps can be taken to document, preserve or use the identified assets.

Another aspect of the problem is the scale and the pace of the changes observed directly by this author in a growing number of house compounds in Terengganu. The speed and the large scale of the evolution are due to cumulative factors. Vernacular compounds are today submitted to numerous influences including abandon, demolition (internal influences), introduction of new materials and replacement with new standards (external influences), as illustrated in the pictures of Figure 1.2



a) New materials (Pulau Ketam)



b) Abandon (Kuala Terengganu)



c) Demolition (Nisan Empat, K. Terengganu)



d) Replacement (Pulau Duyung)

Figure 1.2: Changes in Terengganu house compounds. (Pictures by author, 2005)

Gradually modified, some of the residences reach a turning point where they disappear to leave room to new cultural categories. Renovated or new habitations are called “bungalows” (Anglo-Indian) “terrace houses”, “villas” (Latin) and “*Taman*” gardens (promoter’s language) where garden space is minimal.

Documentation of the still extant traditional houses compounds is urgent because the features that characterised the vernacular landscapes in Terengganu are now transformed by the forces of material globalisation. The change is not evolutionary, nor “involutionary” -an evolution from within, as described by Voss and Meekes (1999) in a study on the types of landscape changes.. It is more radical:

“In many areas, landscape history reflects a shift in man-landscape relations from involution towards replacement that strongly determines an over-all tendency towards decreasing characteristics, biodiversity, scenic values,

sustainability.”

ICOMOS Charter, Mexico (1999):

The evolution, in Terengganu, is fast. New generations are brought up interiorizing psychologically new concepts that have no links with the past. A new psyche, a new world vision is being formed. That is not the gradual “involution” observed in Europe by Voss and Meekes (1999). What is seen in Terengganu, in these authors’ terms, is “replacement”.

1.1.2 Assumption

However, it is still reasonable to assume that Terengganu cultural landscape exists and that the house compounds in the villages may be considered as cultural entities in their own right. In fact, the assumption is supported in various ways:

1.1.2.1 Observation

It had long been obvious to visitors in the East Coast state that Terengganu village landscapes had a striking personality made of the natural assets associated with the vernacular architecture and the practice of traditional trades and crafts (Sheppard 1949). Furthermore, living for more than thirty years in such a village, the author had ample opportunity to notice that houses and the grounds around them showed constant characteristics as well as visual differences that were not obviously linked to the natural background and, so, may be cultural.

1.1.2.2 Circumstantial contextual evidence.

The vanishing of the traditional house compounds observed today is interpreted by visitors as well as by villagers as an effect of the modernisation of building techniques and of the way of life of the inhabitants. Cultural landscapes are not only value related but also context dependant. Therefore, seeing that the Terengganu village landscape is affected by contextual changes, one may assume that the village landscape in Terengganu is fundamentally cultural.

1.1.2.3 Architectural Evidence

The existence of a Terengganu cultural landscape has been previously acknowledged through the bias of its architecture. It has been recorded for example, at the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia in a collection of measured drawings on 14 houses in Terengganu (Pusat Kajian Alam Bina Melayu, 2002). It has been the inspiration behind elegant reconstitutions made by Tengku Ismail Tengku Su in hTanjung Sabtu (Yong, 1997), and Dato' Raja Bahrin Shah in his beautiful Aryani resort (Kee, 1996). Both princes, pillars of the traditional heritage of Terengganu, have dismantled and reconstructed ancient houses and some of the landscape around the buildings.

Another Terengganu aficionado is tourism businessman Alex Lee (2000) who in Jenang near Marang has gathered ancient houses and artifacts from the past.

Today, exclusive hotels like the Tanjung Jara in Dungun and a few private residences reproduce the features that composed the traditional atmosphere. They seek the “feel” of the Malay village –Terengganu style-, with full sensorial experience, using timber architecture, *gulai* and *ulam* treats, herbal baths, music, flora and fauna. The trend may have started in Bali and Thailand and could be influenced by cultural heritage of these countries, but the gathered features are indigenous (Joshua Lim, personal communication).

The Terengganu State Museum has also relocated palaces and ancient houses showing the variety of the traditional style, including even a “fisherman’s house”.

1.2 Objective of the study

Observation, contextual change dependency, and recognized architectural specificity- are as many reasons to suppose that a Terengganu cultural landscape embodied in its villages exists. Yet, a bibliographical survey shows that, from an academic point of view, it does not. Documents about the compounds, their lay out, the buildings in them, the ground accessories, plants use and garden composition are still too few to demonstrate the existence of a “Terengganu village cultural landscape” and to establish its characteristics.

In consequence, the objective of this thesis is to begin to substantiate the existence of this landscape, and to prepare for an exploration of its cultural value.

Referring to global efforts towards identification and evaluation of vernacular landscapes -such as International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) seeking to identify “on the ground cultural landscapes of universal value” (Roberts, 1994), the thesis focuses on one essential feature of the Terengganu landscape, the house compounds that composed until very recently the building blocks of the residential structures in villages and even towns in the state.

The title of this thesis deliberately contains an assumption that these house compounds of Terengganu may be considered as cultural entities. The goal of the study then is, through a preliminary assessment of a series of house compounds in the state, the verification of the assumption. To reach this goal, after a review of the literature to elicit theoretical and vernacular backgrounds, it will be proceeded to

(i) Investigate features and lay out principles of the considered house

- compounds to contribute to the identification of the Terengganu landscapes;
- (ii) Refer these features to their roots and role within Terengganu cultural context and substantiate through examples the significant relationship that exists between landscape features and a cultural heritage.

1.3 Scope of the study

The target of this study is the houses and their compounds. This includes the buildings, the flora, the fauna and the grounds on which these elements are found. At first, the chosen subject may appear to be vast. It needs to be circumscribed by defining its boundaries.

1.3.1 Stage of the study in a cultural conservation process

The proposed demonstration is a preliminary exploration. It is a first step towards a proper assessment.

If one refers to the Burra Charter cultural preservation sequence (ICOMOS 1999) for the conservation of places of cultural significance (available in Appendix A), this study is at the beginning of the sequence, at the “Understand significance” stage as shown in Figure 1.3.

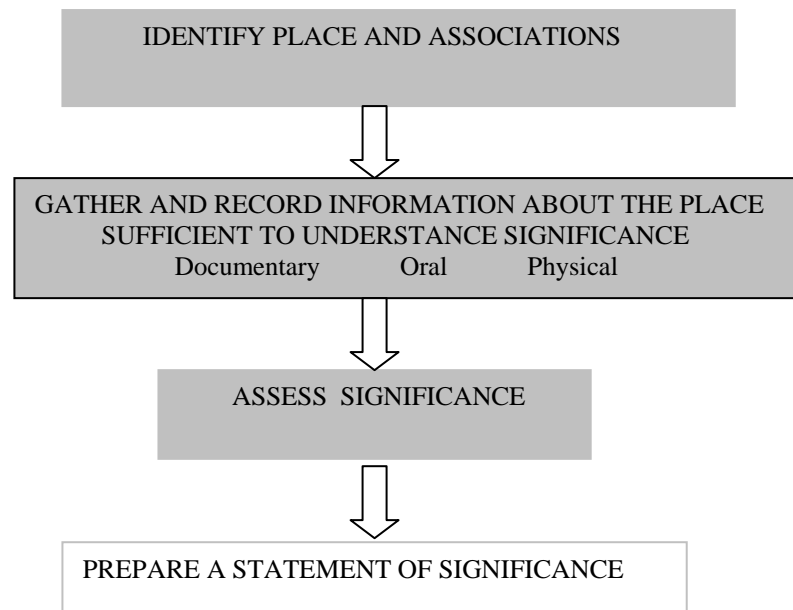


Figure 1.3: First stages of research in the Burra Charter Sequence, with the scope of the present study enlightened in grey.

After completion of these stages, the option would be opened to proceed to the further stages of the sequence towards preservation or full documentation provided in the Charter.

1.3.2 Common Boundaries with other Disciplines

As the field of cultural phenomena is multifaceted and “landscape issues are of interest in many disciplines” (Tress et al. 2001), it is necessary to precise the scope of this thesis in relation to other disciplines related to the field of cultural landscape.

1.3.2.1 History

In general, the material witnesses of the past remaining on the field are considered in this work in their modern role as part of the inventory of today s

landscapes, not for their historical value *per se*. However, the author believes that historical reference is essential to help select significant features and link these to the culture of the people who live in the given area. It provides proof of the documentary value of the considered compounds if these are eventually submitted to criteria for historical value.

1.3.2.2 Other disciplines

“Cultural” phenomena include man’s psyche and his natural environment. The exploration of the Terengganu landscapes from a cultural perspective includes a reference to disciplines such as sociology, psychology, architecture, botany and ecology to identify as well as understand the significance of the encountered features.

1.3.2.3 Spatial and temporal Determination of the Subject

The physical or geographical field of the research has historically determined boundaries. The areas of potential material are settlements mentioned in the literature on the history of Terengganu (Muhamad Saleh, 1992; Sheppard, 1949). They have been habited for more than three generations, are known for historical personages, or particular events, crafts or products establishing a long existence of the settlement. They are scattered following traditional economical patterns along river valleys (travels, trade and fishing), around estuaries (trade, fishing and international networking), and on the fringes of the forest (hunting and forest products gathering) (Mohd Taib, 1997).

To illustrate the existing diversity, the house compounds sample should be gathered from such varied areas in the state.

1.4. Definitions of the Terms as understood in the Thesis

The literature shows that there have been considerable shifts through times and places in perception of nature, earth and man's environment. Concepts have expanded and taken enlarged meanings, starting with the term of "landscape" itself:

1.4.1 Landscape

Vidal de la Blache (1903), founder of the French School of Geography, which introduced the relationship between physical and human elements in geographical studies, had given a simple definition: "*Un paysage est ce qui peut être perçu d'un seul coup d'oeil*" "A landscape is what can be grasped at a glance."

John Brinckerhoff Jackson, pioneer of landscape architecture who in 1951 founded "Landscape Magazine", further detailed the perception:

"Landscape consists of two root words: land and scope. While land refers to the physical and tangible things that we see and feel such as trees, lakes, mountains, buildings, flower beds etc. scope refers to how these physical phenomenon are translated and perceived in the mind."

(Jackson, 1984)

In both definitions, although the human observer is involved, there is a dichotomy between the object, the landscape and the onlooker, the subject. The second definition begins to involve more the senses and the mind as tools that influence the perception of the considered space.

Today, the inhabitant is seen as he invests himself in the landscape in an interactive relationship. The concept of landscape perception has been extended by the tenants of the School of Environmental Psychology to all the senses (Appleton,

1975, Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Its realm is now limited only by what the viewer's mind and heart can grasp during a very long lasting "glance" while experiencing his environment.

Additionally, following those who emphasize the importance of history in planning the future (Yahner and Nadenicek 1997; Marcucci 2000), it is necessary as well to consider the third protagonist not literally written in the word "landscape" yet essential, that is "time". For these authors, a landscape is the result, through centuries, of both -events in nature and impact of man, a perspective which confirms that the concept of landscape is inseparable from the concept of culture.

1.4.2 Culture

Culture is generally referred to as:

- i) *"Ensemble des structures sociales, religieuses etc. des manifestaion intellectuelles, artistiques etc. qui caracterisent une societe"* –"A sum of social, religious etc. of the intellectual, artistic etc. manifestations that characterise a society" (Larousse,1982).
- ii) "The customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious or social group". (Webster, 1977)

These two definitions refer mainly to the social and spatial aspect of culture at a certain point in time. There is also another, more encompassing, vision of culture.

- iii) "The integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, speech, action, and artifacts and depend on man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generation" (Webster, ibid.)

This last dictionary definition is normative. It implies a judgment of values. It has many other implications. Culture is seen as synonym to civilisation. It involves the array of man's devices to project himself in time, to overcome death after his own individual demise through his teachings, his art and his built environment.

Closer even to the present research perspective is the definition of culture given by Wan Salleh (1991).

“Culture is a kind of self actualization process, continuous, consistent, and self sustaining for any given community . It is a way of life typical of a group referring to beliefs and perceptions, values and norms, customs and behaviour. They share the quality among the group in a consensual way, passing on to others through the socialization and education of a new member in the society.”

This last definition expresses well the wide ranging role of the culture in traditional communities such as in Terengganu villages.

1.4.3 Cultural landscape

A “cultural landscape” is, literally, a landscape affected by a relation with a culture. Carl Sauer further defined the particular dynamism attached to the concept.

“The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, and the cultural landscape is the result”

Sauer (1925, 19)

Anthropologist and sociologist Amos Rapoport, refers to the same parameters:

“Cultural landscapes are defined as the result of the human action on the “primeval” landscape over long period of time”.

Rapoport, (2004, 1)

A mirror for anthropologists, a cultural landscape expresses the identity of a people on a considered land. Beyond this, the rich semantic aspect of cultural landscapes implicated by the dynamism of the concept is today well appreciated by researchers from multiple horizons. Studying an area in southern France, Roberts (1994) observed the “multiple-functional layers” that characterize the landscape and “make it a narrative text of overlapping and oscillating meanings”.

1.4.4 Traditional Village, Kampong and Garden

There are numerous definitions of what is “traditional” and “they apply to much more generally than just the built environment” writes Rapoport (2004). To simplify, a “traditional village” is taken to mean a small settlement, established at least for more than 50 years by people united by a common origin or economical activity, following a common customary rule (Birbaum, 2002). When used in this study, the term refers to that definition. It may be added that, in Terengganu, traditional settlements are often found established since more than three generations of Malay inhabitants who share the same religion and customs (Muhamad Saleh, 1992).

A “kampong” (or in Malay “*kampung*”) is not synonym with “village” because in academic writings, the vernacular expression has anthropological connotations of “Malayness” which brings a perspective other than landscape observation. When used in this study, it implies these connotations.

“Compound”: According to the dictionary, the word “compound” comes from the Malay language. It is, “by folk etymology, from Malay kampong, group of buildings, village; a fenced or walled area containing a group of buildings and

especially residences.” (Webster, 1977). It is a physical unit composed of houses and grounds that implies material or symbolic boundaries.

“House compound” refers to a residence, -a house, and the grounds -the compound, on which it is located. It is the subject, and the basic unit of this thesis. In Perak, Nor Atiah (2003) has chosen the term of “residential garden” to elicit the cultural value of the “planting composition” in the rural residences. However, this author does study the relationship between the house parts and the garden space and planting organisation. Nor Atiah demonstrates how house and grounds are a physical unit that tells a researcher how the inhabitants live, how they perceive life and interact with their natural environment. The scope of the present study includes as well other aspects of cultural significance such as architecture and ground features. Hence, the two words unit “house compound” has been selected as appropriate to describe the field of the research.

The term of “garden” is used by landscape architecture researchers in Malaysia (Ismail Said 2000, Nor Atiah, 2003,) when describing an area with plant species associated to a residence. A convenient, professionally explicit term; it may not be exactly adapted to the reality in Terengganu. A “garden”, literally, is “guarded”. From these researchers’ observations, one particular feature of the Malay village “garden” is that it has not usually delimited by material borders or fences.

The term generally used in this study is “grounds”, except for the designation of separate zones around a house when the term of “yard” would not sound adequate: “back garden”, “side garden” are preferred to “backyard” and “side yard”.

1.4.5 Elements, features and attributes

Terms related to landscape components commonly used in descriptive analysis such as “elements”, “features” and “attributes”- are understood here according to the chosen perspective, in order of progressive abstraction respectively.

Therefore “Features” refer to the visible and outward aspects of landscape components; “Elements” are the components considered as parts of the landscape; “Attributes” refers to characteristics in the landscape which are found not separable from its identity and “Markers” , idiosyncratic features of a landscape may emerge among the attributes. But it would be premature to seek to determine these in a preliminary study. “Feature”, understood as a descriptive term without particular connotation is the preferred term at this stage of the research.

1.4.6 Glossary

Definition of terms that could not for various reasons find a place in this chapter or in the text of the following chapters signaled by an asterisk(*) in the text are available in Appendix C.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The present study hopes to bring a new contribution to landscape architecture through its multidisciplinary approach of landscape units and the documentary value of its inventories. Its results may benefit other disciplines as well such as architecture, anthropology, planning and sociology.

1.5.1 Originality of the Thesis Subject

Studies on small scale landscapes such as the Mormon homesteads in Utah and “farmersteads” in Arizona have been the work of American geographers (McClalland et Al., 1990). Similarly, in Europe, geographers have identified and studied regional individual habitats such as the “*souf*” of Algeria or the Normandy

farm in France, the “*hacienda*” in Brazil, as part of chorography discipline (study of places or regions), (Bruhnes, 1960).

As mentioned earlier, a number of researches have been conducted on villages in Terengganu from the architectural and environment planning point of view at Malaysian universities (Pusat Kajian Alam Bina Melayu 2002, Wan Fadhila 2003, Mohd Sarhil 2003). Both series of studies give views on the land and compounds as well. However, the perspective chosen in the thesis is presently relatively unexplored. A study covering house compounds as integrated units of landscape or “wholes”–building, grounds, flora and fauna- has not been made yet in the east coast state.

Referring to a holistic ecology perspective, the study intends to emulate the efforts of international agencies such as the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), as well as those of individual nations including the Malaysian Ministry of Art, Culture and Heritage, towards increased awareness of the heritage value of vernacular landscapes. In Terengganu, particular points of significance may be stressed as follows.

1.5.2 Preservation of the esthetic diversity.

The research may help reduce the process of oblivion of the material and visual diversity of Terengganu cultural landscape. It can bring some material towards further identification of the features of a “Malay garden” and may contribute to the preservation of the “*zahir*” (the visible) part of this type of South East Asian gardens.

1.5.3 Awareness of the Significance or Implications of cultural Changes.

If the house compounds are in effect found to be cultural and to embody the world-view of their inhabitants, the normative element of these landscapes (Arnesen 1998, Rapoport, 2004) will be emphasized. Once it is shown that the identified “cultural units” (the house compounds) carry values (norms), and that these values may disappear with them, it is the hope of the author that awareness of the significance of the changes will be triggered or reinforced. The social and moral issues alluded to previously may be examined. Are these changes really necessary to the inhabitants or wanted by them? Are they ineluctable? What are their far reaching consequences?

The transforming traditional Terengganu landscape is particularly worthy of scholarly attention because it is associated with a known rich historical and artistic heritage (Sheppard 1978; Syed Ahmad Jamal, 1994). Trying to decipher that heritage through its remains in the landscape will help increase the awareness of an alienation threat brought about by the changes.

Alienation, for anthropologists is expressed in a feeling among villagers of being strangers –alien- or by-standers on their native land. The impression of “on-site uprooting” was previously reported as experienced mostly by indigenous tribes “when their attachment to the land is removed” and by dwellers of suddenly logged forests (Colin, 1996).

Furthermore, “losing landscape is threatening social cohesion in the affected groups. It may produce what we could call landscape induced alienation” (Arneson 1998). The point is that not only knowledge, art and skills disappear, but also that the effects of that disappearance on the Malay villagers are still rather uncharted. On the positive side, with studies such as the present one, a measure of continuity may be envisioned.

1.5.4 Education and Learning

This study is expected to illustrate the didactic function (Rapoport 2004, 4) of the built environment in a traditional culture such as the one in Terengganu where it would have played the role of an ever available teacher. In fact, the house compound unit has still today a pedagogic role for a researcher who has the opportunity to read the “live” lessons from the past.

In the past, preservation in writing was not necessary as the culture was written in the way of life of a people. “The vernacular built heritage” was “the fundamental expression of the culture of a community” (ICOMOS 1999) and the “memory bank of social groups” (Arnesen, 1998). Education was made by environmental information and oral transmission. Informal interviews conducted for this study continue the tradition. The research attempts to capture knowledge consigned on nowadays fragile material supports such as the vernacular landscapes and the memory of elders.

1.6 Summary of the chapters

The first chapter states the problem of the rapid landscape changes and presents the study’s approach, a preliminary assessment of the cultural value of some Terengganu house compounds landscapes. This involves the assumption that these house compounds in Terengganu can be considered as cultural entities to begin with, an assumption that will be verified by substantiating their cultural value.

Chapter two reviews the literature on (i) the perceptions of landscape through history and (ii) the theories on cultural landscape that are potentially pertinent to Terengganu. The various theories are summarized in a conceptual map and the criteria for cultural value derived from the various perspectives are introduced.

Chapter three gathers background information on the state's geography, history, architecture, flora, literature, and evokes the links of the Terengganu people with surrounding nature. This information is particularly important because of the necessity to know beforehand the components of the vernacular culture in order to find them embodied in the features of the surveyed house compounds.

Chapter four presents the conceptual framework of the research, together with a diagram of cultural components and a table of criteria for cultural value derived from the literature. Heuristic "types" of compounds are proposed. The investigation tools and information supports such as tables of features and plan sketches are presented as well as the selected house compounds.

In chapter five, tables of features frequency yield findings on the general aspect of these landscapes. Observation of less frequent but conspicuous features brings about the more specific Terengganu character. Observation of patterns in space organization and ethno-botanical surveys complete the findings

Chapter six presents a characterization of the sample deduced from the findings and confirms the value of the exploratory typology. Then, the surveyed house compounds are screened to the series of cultural value criteria derived previously from the literature. The screening is followed by an empirical verification of the results. The results are found to be positive and the assumption of cultural value is verified. A brief review of implications of the results is made.

In conclusion, Chapter seven suggests an extrapolation of the study results to similar landscapes in the state of Terengganu. Finally, the importance of elaborating a conceptualisation of the Terengganu's house compounds landscape architecture is envisioned. The process is illustrated in the flow Chart presented in Figure 1.4.

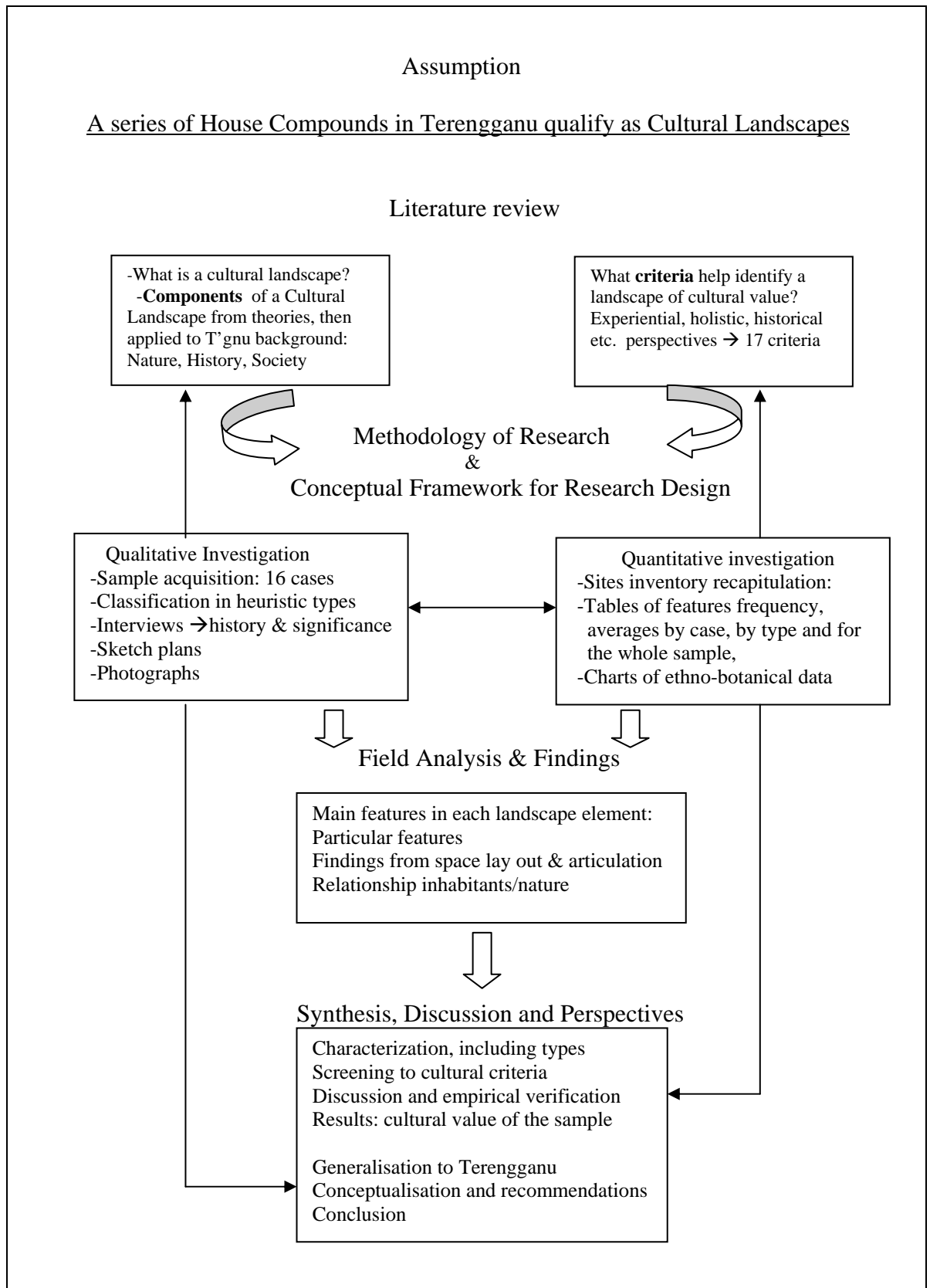


Fig.1.4: Flow Chart of Research Procedure & Demonstration.