

Rust and Remembrance: A Journey Through Miri's Industrial Past

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Abstract

This research investigates the disparities in historical preservation efforts, with a specific focus on Miri, Malaysia. As Miri's fast urbanisation is pushed by the oil and gas sector, historical sites important to the region's early twentieth-century petroleum production and wartime experiences are increasingly overlooked. This neglect arises from a prevalent preference for economic growth above the preservation of historical and cultural assets.

While Sarawak attempts to modernise its economy, the propensity to prioritise new developments over historical remains risks erasing a substantial portion of its identity. Miri, formerly a thriving oil industry city, has a distinct history woven from threads of pioneering oil discovery, colonial influence, and wartime endurance. These historical layers, as manifested in surviving structures, artefacts, and landscapes, provide a valuable cultural resource with the potential to enrich the lives of current and future generations.

Furthermore, a lack of public understanding and involvement in these historical sites impedes preservation efforts. Many Sarawakians are ignorant of the historical significance of these places and their potential contribution to the state's cultural identity and tourism industry. This study suggests that a rethinking of historic conservation objectives in Sarawak is urgently required. By prioritising the preservation of Miri's industrial and wartime heritage, Sarawak can not only protect its distinct cultural character, but also develop sustainable tourism that celebrates the past while looking forward. Furthermore, this study emphasises the importance of historical history in defining a city's character and establishing a feeling of place. By maintaining these ancient sites, Miri can set itself apart from other quickly rising cities, creating a distinct urban character that draws visitors and improves the