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RM12.9m boost for heritage buildings

RETAINING HISTORY: Nearly 60 pre-war mansions and premises within the World Heritage site will be restored

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HERITAGE building preservation and conservation is switching into high gear with 59 pre-war mansions and premises within the World Heritage site here, with the allocation of a RM12.9 million grant courtesy of Think City Sdn Bhd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Khazanah Nasional Bhd.

Some 16 conservation and restoration projects, including 10 located within the heritage core zone and six in the buffer zone were approved in the 5th round of Think City's George Town Grants Programme (GTGP).

The approval came after the

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The **Loke Thye Kee restaurant** in Jalan Burma, once a popular venue for Chinese cuisine in the 1950s and '60s, is being restored to bring back its lustre. Pic by Phuah Ken Lin

Think City to help in restoration work

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applicants fulfilled the various social criteria as stipulated by the Think City technical advisory panel.

Among the popular sites to be approved under the GTGP programme was the once-prominent Loke Thye Kee Restaurant in Jalan Burma, formerly touted as one of the most significant Chinese food outlet in Penang back in the 1950s and 1960s.

The other significant grant recipient was the Penang Goldsmith Association in Lebuh Muntri which had applied for its temple building to be restored.

Think City executive director Hamdan Abdul Majeed said restoration works for five out of the 16 projects had started in January.

"Our grants serve as incentives to reduce the financial burden of building owners whose properties have direct

environmental impact within the heritage enclave.

"We will assist building owners who share public spaces and amenities in the heritage zone," Hamdan said, adding that among the criteria for the grant were creativity and innovation in their conservation projects.

He said the grants were disbursed based on a working partnership between Think City and building owners who must show genuine interest in preserving heritage buildings.

He said this at the Think City office at the EPF Building in Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah here recently.

Hamdan said RM20 million was available under GTGP over a three-year period for restoration purposes. He said the remaining RM7.1 million would be disbursed in stages.

Hamdan added that the GTGP funds also include five technical grants and seven cultural mapping initiatives.



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Hamdan Abdul Majeed,
Think City executive director