



Hidayah Amin <hidayah.amin@gmail.com>

Incorrect usage of 'Rumah Bendahara' for historic Gedung Kuning

Hidayah Amin <hidayah.amin@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 19, 2013 at 8:52 AM

To: "ZURAIDAH ABDULLAH (SPF)" <zuraidah_abdullah@spf.gov.sg>, Julina Khusaini <julina@mhf.org.sg>, Masmunah Abdullah <mas@figolive.com>, Zulkarnine Hafiz <zulkarnine@figolive.com>

Salam to all

Please take note of NHB's response to the usage of the word 'Rumah Bendahara' - "Having said that, NHB acknowledges that the use of the term "Rumah Bendahara" might cause some confusion and we will remove the term from our heritage trail as well as official collaterals. We will also work with MHF to update Mamanda so that they will avoid using the term for their future marketing collaterals."

For your immediate action, please.

Thank you.

Best regards,

Hidayah

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Alvin TAN (NHB)** <Alvin_TAN@nhb.gov.sg>

Date: Thu, Apr 18, 2013 at 1:18 PM

Subject: RE: Incorrect usage of 'Rumah Bendahara' for historic Gedung Kuning

To: Hidayah Amin <hidayah.amin@gmail.com>

Cc: "MCI Yaacob IBRAHIM (MCI)" <Yaacob_Ibrahim@mci.gov.sg>, "Rosa DANIEL (MCCY)" <rosa_daniel@mccy.gov.sg>, "Rosa DANIEL (NHB)" <Rosa_DANIEL@nhb.gov.sg>, "Zuraidah ABDULLAH (SPF)" <Zuraidah_ABDULLAH@spf.gov.sg>, "Lionel YEO (STB)" <Lionel_YEO@stb.gov.sg>, "Tommy KOH (MFA)" <Tommy_KOH@mfa.gov.sg>, "warren@sph.com.sg" <warren@sph.com.sg>, "saat@sph.com.sg" <saat@sph.com.sg>, "mlsss@nus.edu.sg" <mlsss@nus.edu.sg>, "idris@sph.com.sg" <idris@sph.com.sg>, "siti_habibah@sza.com.sg" <siti_habibah@sza.com.sg>, "idris_bidin@sp.edu.sg" <idris_bidin@sp.edu.sg>, "zuraida@mendaki.org.sg" <zuraida@mendaki.org.sg>, arohim <arohim@singnet.com.sg>, "mnaz@vsapac.com" <mnaz@vsapac.com>, Nur Hidayah Abu Bakar <hidayah.bakar@lasalle.edu.sg>, "zahidi@zarkitek.com.sg" <zahidi@zarkitek.com.sg>, "Thangamma KARTHIGESU (NHB)" <Thangamma_KARTHIGESU@nhb.gov.sg>

Message Classification: **Restricted**

Good afternoon Hidayah,

We thank you for your feedback and we note your concerns.

In the course of developing the Kampong Glam Heritage Trail, NHB sought to incorporate inputs from the community and it was pointed out to NHB by some local residents in the area that the building was also referred to as "Rumah Bendahara". Consequently, NHB mentioned that the building was "reportedly" known as "Rumah Bendahara" because we wanted to acknowledge the community's inputs on the heritage of the building.

Having said that, NHB acknowledges that the use of the term "Rumah Bendahara" might cause some confusion and we will remove the term from our heritage trail as well as official collaterals. We will also work with MHF to update Mamanda so that they will avoid using the term for their future marketing collaterals.

Thank you for contributing to a better understanding of Kampong Glam's shared heritage and I hope your friends enjoyed their recent visit to the Malay Heritage Centre.

cc – Thangam, please follow-up on the removal of the term "Rumah Bendahara" from NHB's Kampong Glam Heritage Trail and related collaterals. Thanks!



Alvin Tan :: Director, Heritage Institutions :: National Heritage Board

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61 Stamford Road, #03-08, Stamford Court, Singapore 178892

Privileged/Confidential information may be contained in this message. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately.

From: Rosa DANIEL (NHB)
Sent: Monday, 15 April, 2013 9:40 PM
To: Hidayah Amin
Cc: MCI Yaacob IBRAHIM (MCI); Zuraidah ABDULLAH (SPF); Lionel YEO (STB); Tommy KOH (MFA); warren@sph.com.sg; saat@sph.com.sg; mlsss@nus.edu.sg; idris@sph.com.sg; siti_habibah@sza.com.sg; idris_bidin@sp.edu.sg; zuraida@mendaki.org.sg; arohim; mnaz@vsapac.com; Nur Hidayah Abu Bakar; zahidi@zarkitek.com.sg; Alvin TAN (NHB); Thangamma KARTHIGESU (NHB)
Subject: RE: Incorrect usage of 'Rumah Bendahara' for historic Gedung Kuning

Dear Ms Hidayah

Thank you for raising this to my attention.

I am currently in China on a work trip, and have asked my colleagues Miss Thangamma Karthiegesu (Director/Education and Outreach) and Mr Alvin Tan (Director/Heritage institutions) to look into this.

They will also consult the Malay Heritage Foundation as landlord for the restaurant. We will get back to you as soon as we can.

Sincerely,

Rosa Daniel
CEO/NHB

From: Hidayah Amin [<mailto:hidayah.amin@gmail.com>]
Sent: Saturday, 13 April, 2013 5:36 PM
To: Rosa DANIEL (NHB)
Cc: MCI Yaacob IBRAHIM (MCI); Zuraidah ABDULLAH (SPF); Lionel YEO (STB); Tommy KOH (MFA); warren@sph.com.sg; saat@sph.com.sg; mlsss@nus.edu.sg; idris@sph.com.sg; siti_habibah@sza.com.sg; idris_bidin@sp.edu.sg; zuraida@mendaki.org.sg; arohim; mnaz@vsapac.com; Nur Hidayah Abu Bakar; zahidi@zarkitek.com.sg
Subject: Incorrect usage of 'Rumah Bendahara' for historic Gedung Kuning

Ms Hidayah Amin
Blk 161B, #03-97
Punggol Central
Singapore 822161
Tel: [+65 9625 0032](tel:+6596250032)
Email: hidayah.amin@gmail.com

13th April 2013

Mrs Rosa Daniel
Chief Executive Officer
National Heritage Board
61 Stamford Road #03-08
Stamford Court
Singapore 178892

Dear Madam,

RE: INCORRECT USAGE OF 'RUMAH BENDAHARA' FOR HISTORIC GEDUNG KUNING

I am the author of *Gedung Kuning: Memories of a Malay Childhood* and *The Mango Tree* books. My family owned and stayed in Gedung Kuning (Yellow Mansion) in Kampong Glam from 1912 to 1999 until the government acquired it under the Land Acquisition Act. Mamanda Restaurant currently operates at Gedung Kuning.

Recently, I noticed that a wedding invite (and signage) at my birthplace indicated the venue as Mamanda@Rumah Bendahara.

I would like to highlight two historical facts:

1. There is no record of a Bendahara (Prime Minister or Vizier in the Malay kingdom) in the court of Sultan Hussien or his descendants.
2. No Bendahara or its equivalent ever lived in Gedung Kuning.

Hence, stating that Mamanda is at Rumah Bendahara (House for the Prime Minister) is misleading and factually incorrect. Circa 1846, Tengku Mahmud gave Gedung Kuning its name after its yellow walls and the name has remained since. I remember how in 2005, former MP Zainul Abidin Rasheed discussed with me about changing the name Gedung Kuning to Rumah Bendahara for "glamour/marketing purposes". As there is no documentary evidence to indicate that the Riau Bendahara was based in Singapore, I opposed the idea and it was dropped.

A historic monument like Gedung Kuning must be given its due honour. Except for the heritage trail board outside Gedung Kuning (put up by the National Heritage Board), Mamanda did not acknowledge, in its publicity collateral and website, the real history of Gedung Kuning or about my great-grandfather Haji Yusoff the Belt Merchant. Perhaps the owners of Mamanda were hesitant to mention the history of Gedung Kuning after I admonished them on 11th July 2012 for plagiarising the content of my website (www.gedungkuning.com) without acknowledging me. As the owners did not bother to reply to my email of 26th February 2013 correcting them about the usage of the word 'Rumah Bendahara', I decided to write to the press about this matter. The Online Citizen and Berita Harian published my letter on 1st and 3rd April 2013 respectively.

Despite my email and letters concerning this matter, the owners of Mamanda went ahead and published two advertisements on Monday, 8th April 2013 and on Tuesday, 9th April (both on the front page of Berita Harian). The 8th April advertisement stated "Majlis Perkahwinan @ Rumah Bendahara" (Wedding ceremony @ Bendahara's House). The tagline was "*Hubungan cinta diraja dengan santapan Melayu bermula 150 tahun yang lalu dan terus hingga ke hari ini di Mamanda.*" – Royal love affair with Malay cuisine started 150 years ago and continues to this day at Mamanda. The tagline gave the impression that Royalty had been staying in Gedung Kuning since 150 years ago, and their love for fine Malay cuisine continues until today at Mamanda. This is clearly wrong, as Gedung Kuning had reverted to being private property in 1907. The 9th April advertisement stated "Mamanda: Dining@Bendahara Residence". Notwithstanding the incorrect grammar, the statement is factually wrong, as Gedung Kuning was never a residence for the non-existing Bendahara.

It is also ironic that the first line of the poem on both advertisements stated "*Gedung Kuning tersegam indah*" (Gedung Kuning stood beautiful). Why confuse the public? The owners of Mamanda are not ignorant of the history of Gedung Kuning due to our past correspondences; they knew of www.gedungkuning.com (a one stop portal about all things Gedung Kuning). Hence, why emphasize the blatant historical error?

The pertinent question remains – why attempt to hide the real story of Gedung Kuning? What good would hiding historical facts do to anyone? This matter is not just a question of names but also a matter of past legacy that must be told. Oral history plays an important part in the Malay culture. Images of the past are embodied in the language. As Gedung Kuning embodies that 'image of the past', to change its name is akin to distorting the facts of history.

I hope the National Heritage Board would look into this matter seriously as the public must not be misled about historical facts that are now being compromised for the sake of branding or/and marketing. Historical facts must remain true lest the future generation forgets the real history and accept what was given to them as the truth. The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) too plays a crucial role in ensuring that information portrayed to tourists is accurate lest the STB would be seen to be tweaking historical facts for that added marketing glitz.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

hidayah

File: Correspondence between former MP Zainul Abidin Rasheed and Hidayah Azzah

Encl. Correspondences between former MP Zainul Abidin Kasneeda and Ridwan Amin

Advertisement "Majlis Perkahwinan @ Rumah Bendahara" on Monday, 8th April 2013

Advertisement "Dining @ Bendahara Residence" on Tuesday, 9th April 2013

Signage of a recent wedding held in Gedung Kuning

Printout of SPH Treats stating 'Mamanda@Bendahara House' (20% off dining bill)

Cc. Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs

Madam Zuraidah Abdullah, Chairman of Malay Heritage Foundation (MHF)

MHF Board members

Mr Lionel Yeo, CEO Singapore Tourism Board

Prof Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-large & former Chairman of National Heritage Board

Mr Warren Fernandez, Editor, The Straits Times

Mr Saat Abdul Rahman, Editor, Berita Harian