

## RED NETWORKING

# PAM Awards 2013: Recognising excellence in architecture



**ACHIEVING MILESTONES:** The entries received for PAM Awards 2013 underwent a rigorous judging process covering 14 award categories



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The Malaysian Institute of Architects or Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia's annual awards, more widely referred to as PAM Awards, is practically an institution on its own, with a history dating decades back.

PAM Awards is not only a platform for the recognition of excellence in architecture, but is also a barometer of progress in terms of the quality of works produced within the industry.

Certainly one of the key highlights of the architecture fraternity's calendar of events, this year's awards increasingly bears testimony to the growing sense of design excellence as seen in the entries.

This year's event attracted participation from across a wide spectrum of 14 categories. These include the Single Residential, Multiple Residential - Low Rise, Multiple Residential - High Rise, Public & Institutional, Education, Alteration & Addition, Conservation, Interior Design, Commercial - Low Rise Office, Commercial - High Rise Office, Sports & Recreation, Planning & Masterplanning, the Overseas and Special categories. There was no shortlisted entry in the Special category this year.

"We actually modelled the judging system according to the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA) with the convener presiding over the two stages of the award. Five judges formed a simple majority for this year's awards," said Ar. Wooi Lok Kuang, convener of PAM Awards 2013, who commented on the varied nature of this year's entries.

"There were two practitioners from the institute including PAM past president Datuk Ar. Haji Hajeedar Abdul Majid of Hajeedar and Associates Sdn Bhd - last year's PAM Gold Medallist who has been practising a good standard of architecture in Malaysia for 40 years.

"Then, there's PAM immediate past president Ar. Haji Saifuddin Ahmad - the slightly younger architect with a down-to-earth approach to architecture," he said of these two judges of PAM Awards 2013.

Cheah Kok Ming who is an architect and senior lecturer at the Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore (NUS) was also a judge. The composition of the jury this year included Robert Such of Robert Such Photography, a noted architectural photographer and writer for architecture journals and Dr. Naziaty binti Mohd Yaacob, senior lecturer, Department of Architecture, University of Malaya (UM), Kuala Lumpur.



**The shortlisted entries under the Conservation category:** (Top) Penang's St. George's Church (East Design Architect Sdn Bhd); (middle) 23 Love Lane (BYG Architecture Sdn Bhd) and (bottom) the Kapitan Keling mosque (Arkitek Urbanisma Sdn Bhd).



**The shortlisted entries under the Multiple Residential Low Rise category:** (Clockwise from top) Seri Pilmoor in Ara Damansara, Selangor (GDP Architects Sdn Bhd), 20 Trees West in Taman Melawati, KL (Ar. Chan Sau Yan, CYSA Studio), Rymba Hills in Kota Damansara, Selangor (Arkitek Maju Bina Sdn Bhd) and Nadayu Melawati in Taman Melawati, KL (KSKA Arkitek Sdn Bhd).



**The shortlisted projects under the Sports & Recreation category:** (Top) the Veil-Suited 3-storey Fitness Centre in Kuching, Sarawak (Design Network Architects Sdn Bhd), (middle) The Straits View Residence Clubhouse in Johor Bahru (Y. Architects Sdn Bhd) and (bottom) the KTS Anniversary Park & Function Hall in Kuching, Sarawak (Integrated Design Consultant).



**Wooi, convener, PAM Awards 2013** said that the judging process this year emulated the AKAA system.



**PAM immediate past president Saifuddin** proposed the introduction of a new category of awards as in the PAM Awards Building of the Year.



**Datuk Hajeedar, PAM Gold Medallist** for 2012 was also a judge at PAM Awards 2013.



**Naziaty of UM** wants more participation from other architects in order to boost the quality of the awards.



**Cheah, architect and senior lecturer of NUS** was one of the judges at PAM Awards 2013.



**Such of Robert Such Photography,** a noted architectural photographer and writer was a judge at the awards.



in the process of shortlisting the final round of entries. In all, a total of 209 entries were received this year.

"As an academic (professional), my criteria for judging is similar to what I would do when I critic an architectural student's work.

"Essentially, we look for the balance in achieving form and function as well as how spaces are created. Entries that push the boundaries in terms of challenging the brief and building type are usually perceived to be more innovative and creative, thus (ending up) being short-listed," she remarked.

## Behind the PAM Awards

The PAM Awards represents part of the institute's objectives and mission to recognise excellence in architecture. Competitions and awards are effective ways to promote excellence in architecture since many recognised buildings in Malaysia were the results of such competitions and awards.

The PAM Awards 2013 will be presented during PAM's Annual Dinner to be held on 11 May at the Majestic Hotel, KL.

The incoming PAM president Ar. Chan Seong Aun will also be introducing the PAM Council members for the 2013-2014 term.

**Next: PAM Awards 2013 Gold Winners.**

Pics courtesy of PAM.

## Judging from the inside out

According Wooi, who is also the principal architect of the eponymous firm Wooi Architect, the different perspectives brought about by the photographer who oftentimes views the building looking from the inside out brought about a fresh perspective to the judging process.

He observed that the inclusion of an academician who is used to "reading plans from the inside out" made the judging process more balanced as compared to only restricting the judging process to the architecture fraternity.

"All five judges could vote for the entries. I could not vote during the process as my role was to ensure a level playing field," he explained.

"Anonymity was also maintained

with regards to the architects behind the projects purposely not being revealed as the jury wanted to avoid favouritism.

"During the first shortlisting process, each judge made a selection of the entries individually based on the images and the plan submissions by the architects," he maintained.

According to Wooi, the projects that received at least three votes were immediately shortlisted.

This inevitably ensured that everyone would have an equal say rather than the judging process being dominated by just one or two persons.

"The technical reviewer acted as the eyes and ears of the jury when they wanted to find out more about the angle or aspect of the entries," shared Wooi elaborating on the two-stage process.

The second round involved a checking system which was quite stringent as it involved the technical reviewer going to the actual site to ensure that the photographs taken at the site were original and not doctored, which is something that occurs in most awards.

"For instance, even in the case where the tree has not even grown halfway, the rendering can be so realistic to portray a full-grown tree," quipped Wooi.

He shared that one of the shortlisted entries was actually disqualified by the jury because of this.

For this reason and more, he stated with serious intent that it is important to have someone neutral presiding over the whole process of judging.

"This year, the first round of the selection process was quite

straightforward and easy as compared to last year where there was a lot more deliberation," shared Saifuddin.

"We also observed that each year so far, PAM Awards has not had a Building of the Year being awarded. Thus, we are proposing that in the future, all the gold winners will compete for a new category in the PAM Awards Building of the Year.

"Some of the projects are spread out in Malaysia and overseas, making it hard to make proper judgment. Since there were no visits made to the respective sites, we are suggesting that next year, the submissions have to be accompanied by videos," said Saifuddin who is also the founder and director of SNO Architects Sdn Bhd.

Datuk Hajeedar, managing director of Hajeedar and Associates Sdn Bhd, a

past PAM president who was conferred the Lifetime Achievement in Architecture PAM Gold Medal Award 2012 was another judge at PAM Awards 2013.

Stating that this was the first time he was taking on the role of an assessor for PAM Awards, he noted that while the quality of submissions this year was high, he was also aware that there were other projects undertaken by Malaysian architects who are "shy, reluctant or too busy to submit" their respective works that did not find their way to the awards.

"High and medium density housing, office developments, individual houses, institutional buildings and interior design project entries were submitted. The conservation works and the relatively smaller office and residential projects were among the exciting entries.

"In the first session, each assessor had to simultaneously pre-select their preferred choice of entries in the various categories for consideration. After which, the shortlisted submissions were identified for further evaluation and verification by a panel of PAM appointed technical assessors who visited the respective sites over a two-week period."

At the final deliberation, all the short-listed submissions were re-evaluated, debated and finally, a consensus was reached among the assessors to award the winning entries in their respective categories for PAM Awards 2013.

According to him, the criteria adopted reflected the respective professional backgrounds of the assessors.

"From my perspective, the criteria and merits in the assessment came

from the first impressions, impact, architectural presence and significance of the projects.

"The total design relationship of the spaces, detailing, climatic response, execution of the works, functionality and the ultimate user-friendly qualities of the projects were my fundamental criteria for assessment," he detailed.

Naziaty meanwhile hoped that future PAM Awards would see a rise in the number of submissions received by the institute. To her, this would spur the industry to be more competitive which ultimately leads to higher standards.

"This is my first time judging at the PAM Awards. The quality of submissions is consistent with the development of architecture in Malaysia.

"More architects and clients should

participate in the PAM Awards to give a truer picture as I believe there are works that we refer to within the academic circles that were not submitted. This is especially in relation to the single residential and interior design categories," she analysed.

Naziaty shared that there were some "really interesting works" being developed in the conservation and adaptive re-use categories.

"I would clearly say that the three shortlisted projects were of very high standards in terms of conservation and is comparable to other projects in other parts of the world," she enthused.

Naziaty added that she found the first round of judging rigorous, noting that there were many debates and healthy arguments among the jury members