

# **The Crown Property Bureau and Heritage Conservation**

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## **Introduction: Beyond ancient monuments**

The authorized conservation of cultural heritage in Thailand still focuses on the protection of ancient monuments and archaeological sites under the sole responsibility of a national organization, the Fine Arts Department (FAD under the Ministry of Culture. The power to register anything as heritage rests with the FAD, and has not been devolved to local authorities. Nevertheless, during the past two decades, there have been several efforts to promote the conservation of other kinds of heritage places such as private commercial buildings, shophouses, private residences and traditional urban communities. Such attempts did not come from the national conservation authority, but rather from residents, scholars, local government bodies or independent private conservation groups.

Since the end of the Second World War, the scope of heritage conservation has broadened from a focus on ancient monuments to encompass more mundane sites. People have realized that their customary environments were being severely damaged by war and industrialization and that there was a need to balance the quality of life by preserving the cultural identity of the people at large (Feilden and Jokilehto 1998: 11). The new concept of heritage conservation has been universally accepted and promoted by ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) in its International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites of 1964, known as the Venice Charter, where the term “historic monument” is defined to include more modest works and urban and rural settings.

In 1987, heritage conservation was further targeted to historic towns and urban areas as seen by the launch of the ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas, known as the Washington Charter - 1987, and also the introduction of historic towns and town centers as a sub-category of Groups of Buildings in UNESCO’s Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO 1987). The conservation of ordinary or everyday-life heritage is different from that of ancient monuments as it has to

deal with the complexity of land ownership and tenure patterns, diverse actors and stakeholders, as well as contemporary socioeconomic demands. Consequently, a single conservation body such as the FAD, that pays attention only to restoration techniques, may not be capable of saving the new kind of heritage because that requires negotiation skills and an understanding of the socioeconomic dynamics of urban development.

With only limited efforts at protection on the part of government, several mundane heritage sites in Thailand have been threatened or destroyed by new developments and rapid urbanization. Concerned over this loss and degradation, some private and nongovernmental organizations have undertaken actions and campaigns to protect valued properties which are not prioritized by the government. Examples of such efforts are the ASA (Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage) Conservation Awards which have now been extended to individuals and traditional communities (see ASA 2012), the restoration of private houses and a traditional temple by the Siam Society under Royal Patronage, the community-led conservation in Samchuk in Suphanburi province and Rim Nam Chanthabun in Chanthaburi province, as well as conservation programs initiated by local government in Lampang, Amphawa and Phuket municipal areas. Recently, a major landlord organization has actively participated in the conservation of everyday-life heritage, and through a decade of work has provided some hope to broaden the scope of heritage conservation in Thailand. The organization is the Crown Property Bureau.

### **Heritage buildings of the Crown Property Bureau**

The Crown Property Bureau (CPB) is one of the most prominent landlords in Thailand. The CPB has approximately 37,000 rental contracts covering a total area of 41,000 *rai* or 16,400 acres (Grossman 2011: 294–295) in thirteen provinces in Thailand. The profitable properties of the CPB are only 7 percent of the total, while the remaining 93 percent are rented out at zero or minimal rates to nonprofit and governmental organizations. Despite the small proportion of profitable properties, the CPB enjoys a significant income from the rental business, reported as 2.7 billion baht or USD 900 million in 2011 (CPB 2012: 10–11). The properties of the CPB are mostly located in the inner city or business core areas where land values are high. Apart from this rental income, the CPB also has income from the dividends of three leading public companies, namely Siam Commercial Bank Pcl (SCB), The Siam Cement Group (SCG), and The Deves Insurance Pcl.

The CPB is a unique organization. The roots of the Bureau can be traced back to the reign of King Rama V (1868–1910). During the era of absolute monarchy, all land belonged to the King and was under the responsibility of Phra Khlang Maha Sombat (the National Treasury) and Phra Klang Khang Thi (the Privy Purse). During

his reign, King Rama V separated his private properties from the national properties. There were at least two reasons for this separation. First, the government reformed its budgeting as a part of a comprehensive reform of national administration to cope with the demands by westerners for modernization and their threats to national sovereignty (CPB n.d.: 9). Second, the King had difficulty in withdrawing his private money from the Treasury Ministry and complained about the unfairness of the Privy Purse and the Treasury Ministry which took all the revenues, including those stemming from the His Majesty's own efforts, into the national budget (see National Archives 1893 and 1906).

On the guidance of the King, national properties such as tax revenues and expropriated land were placed in the care of the National Treasury while the King's private properties, which came from inheritance or his own ventures in property and financial businesses, were placed under the responsibility of the Privy Purse, a unit under the Treasury Ministry. The separation of the two property accounts had an impact 30 years later after the 1932 revolution. Instead of combining all the royal and national properties into a single pot of national treasure managed by the proclaimed democratic government, the work of King Rama V had helped to segregate the properties into three types: public properties, meaning those being used for public interest; the King's private properties, meaning those belonging to the King before ascending the throne; and the crown properties, meaning those acquired by any means by the King during his reign. The separation was promulgated in 1936 in the Crown Property Act B.E. 2479 and the crown properties were managed under a newly established organization, the Crown Property Bureau (CPB).

Initially, the CPB was under the Ministry of Finance but later in 1948, through the Crown Property Bureau Act B.E. 2491 (as amended), the CPB became an independent judicial entity supervised by its own executive board (CPB n.d.: 11). Hence, the CPB nowadays does not have the status of a public body that has to follow the rules and procedures of the government bureaucracy.

Under the Act of 1936, most of the properties under the Privy Purse were transferred to the CPB. The Bureau also acquired additional properties through subsequent transactions particularly during the first two decades after the 1932 reform. Among its large number of properties, there are buildings constructed since the reign of King Rama IV that have historical and architectural value.

Based on a preliminary survey conducted in the early 2000s, the CPB classifies its heritage properties into three groups: palaces and residences; shophouses and commercial buildings; and offices and facility buildings (CPB 2002; see Table 1). In the category of palaces and residences there are 24 sites such as Ladawan Palace (presently the head office of the CPB), Maliwan Palace (presently the office of UN-FAO) and Parusakawan Palace (presently the National Intelligence Office). Most of the palaces and residences were converted into new uses such as government

offices, schools and associations to meet contemporary demands. In the category of office and facility buildings, there are six places such as the old provincial hall of Monthon Prachin, now in Chachoengsao province, the former headquarters of the Metropolitan Water Works Authority in Bangkok, and Bang Pa-in Lighthouse in Ayutthaya province. In the category of shophouses and commercial buildings, there are fifteen sites comprising a total of 1,960 units. Many shophouses are located in Rattanakosin Island or other parts of historic Bangkok such as Na Phralan, Tha Chang, Tha Thian, Praeng Phuthon and Praeng Nara. Some shophouses are in Yaowarat or Chinatown district such as Loenrit and along Songwat Road.

### Preliminary list of heritage property of the CPB classified by type<sup>1</sup>

#### *Palace and residence*

Bang Plu Palace (Prince Prompong Atiraj residence)  
 Ladawan Palace (Prince Yukhontikampohn residence)  
 Parusakawan Palace  
 Prince Dilok Noparat Palace  
 Maliwan Palace (see Figure 1)  
 Prince Naretworarit and Prince Sawat Watanawisit  
 Mother Luen Residence  
 Luang Jitjamnongwanit Residence/ former USSR Embassy  
 Prince Marupong Siripat Residence  
 Nongkran Samosorn Throne Hall in Suan Sunanta Palace  
 Thao Worakanan Residence  
 Ampawan House  
 BA buildings around Dusit Palace  
 Princess Tippayalankan Residence  
 Phraya Prasertsongkram Houses  
 Phraya Udom Residence  
 Princess Manassawas Residence  
 Thamniap Tha Chang Residence  
 Phraya Aphai Ronnarit Residence  
 Phraya Srithammirat Residence  
 Luang Sunthonnurak Residence  
 Groups of houses at the Sanam Chan Palace site

#### *Shophouses and commercial building*

Praeng Nara shophouses and Preedalai Theatre

<sup>1</sup> Source: CPB (2004).



Figure 1. Maliwan Palace (The FAO office) (source: author)



Figure 2. Loenrit shophouses (source: author)



Figure 3. S.E.C. Building (Siam Commercial Bank) (source: author)



Figure 4. Sala Chalemkrung Theatre (source: author)

Praeng Phuthon shophouses  
 Na Phralan shophouses  
 Tha Chang shophouses  
 Tha Thian shophouses  
 Phraya Sri Sahathep shophouses  
 Loenrit shophouses (see Figure 2)  
 Srasong Longtha shophouses  
 King Prajadhipok Museum (formerly John Sampson & Son Store)  
 The Oriental Hotel  
 S.A.B. and S.E.C. buildings (see Figure 3)  
 Phra Athit Road shophouses  
 Dheva Sathan shophouses on Bamrungmuang Road  
 Shophouses at the corner of Songwat Road  
 Tang Toh Kang goldsmith building

#### *Office and facility*

Former Monthon Prachin provincial hall in Chachoengsao Province  
 Monthon Prachin Courthouse  
 Former Metropolitan Waterworks Authority at Maen Sri

Bang Pa-in Lighthouse  
Buildings in Ratchatruenamai Association  
Sala Chalermkrung Theatre (see Figure 4)

This list is only a preliminary inventory of the CPB's heritage sites. Since 2004, the Bureau has continued collecting documents and conducting surveys on other valued properties both in Bangkok and provincial areas. Properties that have potential to be added to the heritage list include shophouses in Ayutthaya, Suphanburi, Chachoengsao, Phetchaburi, Ratchaburi and Nakhon Sawan provinces.

### The path toward heritage conservation

In its role as a landlord and real estate investor, the CPB in its early days had no engagement in historic preservation. Some old buildings survived, not because of any commitment to conservation, but because of a *laissez-faire* approach, while many others were pulled down. Take for example the redevelopment of Talat Ming Mueang, a market in an old area of Bangkok famous for its tailoring services and the site of a bus depot in the early twentieth century (see Figure 5). Two blocks of shophouses were built in the late nineteenth century, and a market in very fine late neoclassic revival style was built during the 1920s and 1930s. By the 1980s, Talat Ming Mueang was in decline so CPB decided to clear and redevelop the site in the 1990s. The historic shophouses and market were demolished, making way for a new shopping mall and residential penthouse called "The Old Siam Plaza", resulting in gentrification with a historic touch (see Figure 6).

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the CPB became aware of the heritage value of its properties. Perhaps at least three factors contributed to this shift: the organization was restructured after the economic recession in the late 1990s; the rise of community pressure; and lessons learned from "wholesale" redevelopment projects.

In 1997, the Thai economy slumped as a result of a poor monetary system,



Figure 5. Shophouses of Talat Ming Mueang before redevelopment (source: National Archives)



Figure 6. The Old Siam Plaza built on the site of Talat Ming Mueang in 1996 (source: CPB)

overinvestment in real estate business, excessive speculation and serious currency devaluation. The depression had a direct impact on the CPB as its two core companies, the Siam Cement Group (SCG) and Siam Commercial Bank (SCB), paid no dividends for some years. Initially the CPB had a recovery plan to increase rental income fees from its landholdings, including the historic sites, but this elicited complaints from the tenants. However, SCG and SCB were able to solve their financial problems in good time (Grossman 2012: 295), and the CPB resolved to use the experience of this recession to restructure its organization with the aim of reducing risk as much as possible. Instead of aiming at maximizing profit, the CPB followed the sufficiency economy approach advocated by King Bhumibol since the early 1980s. The CPB set itself four working goals: fairness to all concerned; security to cope efficiently with unexpected situations; a balance between conservation and development to meet social, economic, cultural and environmental demands; and public interest to promote livelihood in society (CPB n.d.: 11–14).

After restructuring, the CPB launched a number of projects, campaigns and activities that enhanced public well-being, such as offering student scholarships, sponsoring research projects and academic seminars as well as assisting community development programs. The new policy also extended to heritage conservation particularly through provision of budget to support the restoration of historic temples such as Wat Makut Kasattriyaram in Bangkok (see CPB 2010). The CPB's holistic approach under the King's sufficiency economy philosophy has more scope for heritage conservation for the future.



Figure 7. A building in the compound of the former Russian Embassy on Sathorn Road in Bangkok (source: CPB)

One of the very first cases that made CPB more sensitive to the issue of heritage conservation concerned the site of the former Russian Embassy on Sathorn Road in the central business district of Bangkok (see Figure 7). The buildings in neoclassical revival style were constructed around 1910 as a residence of Luang Jitjamnongwanit, a Chinese entrepreneur. The compound was sold to the Privy Purse in 1916 and came under the management of the CPB after 1936. It was used as a hotel for a while and then in 1948 was rented as the office of the Russian Embassy.

In 1996, the leasehold contract was transferred to a real estate company, North Sathorn Realty, that wanted to demolish the old buildings and construct a 30-storey high-rise complex comprising a hotel and residences. In 2001, the compound was registered as a national heritage site by the FAD. Without any experience in heritage conservation, the CPB as the landlord had to negotiate with the FAD about the appropriate treatment of the site. In the negotiation process, the Bureau became aware of the site's cultural significance and agreed to preserve the existing buildings which will eventually be surrounded by modern high-rise. The case of the former Russian Embassy was the beginning of collaboration between the CPB and the FAD on subsequent conservation projects.

The second factor that paved the way for the CPB's involvement in heritage conservation was the rise of citizen pressure. From the late 1980s and early 1990s there were several protests by communities and environmental groups over government development projects for dams, expressways and slum clearance. This citizen power was encouraged by the 1997 Constitution that enshrined the principles of human rights, citizen participation and decentralization. There have been cases of both success and failure in the subsequent fights by citizens and NGOs against projects backed by government and politicians, but the constitution has at least established the principle that stakeholders must be consulted before the final decision is made on a project.

One of the prominent cases in Bangkok concerned Ban Khrua, a long-established Muslim community that blocked an expressway project in the early 1990s by appealing to community rights in the constitution (see Damrilert 2002). Before the constitution and these protests, the CPB had experience working with communities. In 1988, a low-income community located on CPB land in the Plabphla suburb of Bangkok faced plans to construct an expressway overpass on the site. With help from professional advisors on community development, the CPB negotiated a land-sharing scheme whereby a portion of the land was sacrificed to the expressway and the remainder was reassigned to accommodate all the residents in the community. The CPB also promoted the community's well-being by granting 30-year tenure and upgrading basic infrastructure and services. The project led to a partnership with universities and the Community Organizations Development Institute (a government agency) to plan improvements for many other low-income communities living on CPB land (see CPB n.d.: 54-67).

During that time, however, the CPB was not involved in any community-

based action regarding heritage conservation particularly with the old shophouse communities.

Since the promulgation of the 1997 constitution, community opposition has emerged against government proposals for developing Bangkok's historic area. A well-known case concerns the threat to a community living near Mahakan Fort in the Rattanakosin area. The case attracted attention from a network of slum communities, universities, human rights organizations, low-income housing groups, and even the United Nations (see Bristol 2008). One proposal to solve the problem at Mahakan Fort area was a land-sharing scheme (Prakitnontakarn 2006) which followed the example of the success story of the CPB with the Plabphla community.

The government proposal to relocate this historic community prompted resistance from residents of the CPB properties. In 1997, the Cabinet approved a conservation and development master plan for the Bangkok historic district or Rattanakosin (ONEPP 2004). The master plan, prepared without due public consultation, proposed relocating several communities to make way for open spaces and tourist facilities. Two of the targets for relocation were the Tha Thian and Tha Phrachan communities situated on the riverfront. Both are on CPB land. The authorities had to abandon the plan, and later in 1998, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) commissioned academic researchers to propose alternative plans (see, for instance, KMITL 1999).

At that time, the CPB was not directly involved in the study except as a partner in the process. The first attempt to improve the physical condition of a community came through cooperation with the BMA to improve walkways and renovate façades at the CPB-owned Tha Phrachan and Tha Thian shophouses (see Figures 8 and 9). In the late 1990s, the CPB did not yet have an approach to community-based conservation but at least had moved away from actions that disrupted old communities, as had happened at Talat Ming Mueang in the late 1980s.

The third factor which converted the CPB to heritage conservation was the lesson learned from the failure of a "wholesale" redevelopment project. In 2001, the CPB proposed to undertake a large scale revitalization of Ratchadamnoen



Figure 8. Tha Phrachan shophouses before improvement of walkways and façades (source: CPB)



Figure 9. Tha Phrachan shophouses after improvement of walkways and façades (source: CPB)



Figure 10. Illustration of large-scale Ratchadamnoen redevelopment project proposed in 2001 (source: CPB)

Avenue and adjacent areas on Rattanakosin Island (see Figure 10). The project was administered by the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) and expected to receive approval from the cabinet. The project, which included improvement of facilities and changes in the usage of buildings and spaces aimed at boosting tourism-based economic activities and property value, covered an area of 3.216 square kilometers or nearly 800 acres. Several communities would be affected by improvements in infrastructure and transportation as well as the introduction of modern business activities which would eventually induce gentrification on a massive scale. A project of this type requires a good working partnership among the stakeholders, but the Ratchadamnoen scheme made little progress because the stakeholders, including local government, infrastructure providers, environmental and conservation groups, and particularly the affected communities, could not reach agreement.

The stagnation of the Ratchadamnoen project made the CPB adopt a more pragmatic approach. It refocused on much smaller and more feasible projects such as the conversion of a vacant building in modernist-fascist style on Ratchadamnoen Avenue into an interactive history museum, Nithat Rattanakosin. This project was completed in 2008 (see CPB 2012b). Another small-scale conservation project involved the renovation of nine units of Khao Hong shophouses on Phra Athit Road. For the first time in its renovation of commercial shophouses, the CPB ran a full consultative process with individual tenants regarding heritage conservation. The Khao Hong project began in 2005 with an initial idea to renovate and convert the



Figure 11. Khao Hong shophouses before rehabilitation (source: CPB)

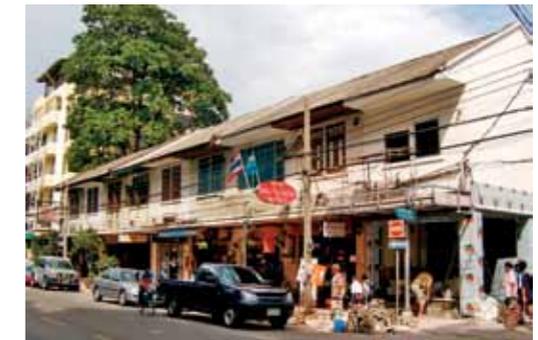


Figure 12. Khao Hong shophouses after rehabilitation (source: CPB)

70-year old shophouses into a boutique hotel, similar to conversions in Singapore's Chinatown conservation area. The existing tenants would be paid compensation to move out, and the shophouses would then be gentrified. However, after consulting with town planners and conservation professionals, the CPB adopted an alternative approach, namely to keep the existing tenants and work together with them on the renovation.

Two surveys were conducted, one on the structural strength of the buildings to find out whether they were still in good condition, and another on the opinions and requirements of the tenants to discover whether they were willing to participate in conservation and adaptation if they were not forced to move out and given security of tenure. Finally, the CPB decided to retain the existing contract with its tenants and to bear the costs of renovation on the condition that the tenants would follow some design guidelines to help to preserve the environment. The Khao Hong project took two years to complete and became a blueprint for other projects of community-based heritage shophouse conservation by the CPB (see Figures 11 and 12).

These three factors shaped a new direction for the CPB at the turn of the twenty-first century. As part of its restructuring, the CPB has begun to emphasize human values, community development at the grassroots level and heritage conservation. In 2000, the CPB established a Conservation Project Division. In 2007, because of its increasing number of projects, the division was upgraded to a Conservation Management Department with two subdivisions - one responsible for implementing conservation projects and another responsible for historical research, database, inventory and internal administration.

### The CPB's conservation planning process

The CPB categorizes its conservation projects into two types: individual buildings and groups of buildings or more specifically shophouses which are inhabited. Both types follow a conservation planning process with three steps - identification; conservation treatments; and implementation.

*Step 1: Identification.*

Heritage identification is universally recommended as the first step in conservation planning (see Stubbs 2009: 145–146; Parker 1985). Identification means a process of ascertaining whether a property has some cultural significance according to a set of criteria. The most popular criteria used in this identification are historical, archaeological, architectural, technical and artistic values. For the CPB, this identification step requires archival study, site investigation, and documentation.

In its archival study, the CPB gathers information and materials from many sources. The Office of His Majesty’s Principal Private Secretary has information on buildings built since the reign of King Rama V including cadastral records, tenure history, rent contracts, reports and memoranda from internal departments. Other materials such as old photographs, old maps, rare books, chronicles, seminar proceedings and research reports are collected from the National Archives, Royal Survey Department, FAD, various libraries and universities.

For site investigation, the CPB conducts extensive surveys on potential properties, covering the structure, facilities, interior and exterior conditions (see Figure 13). The Bureau usually contracts these surveys out to qualified professionals specializing in heritage conservation. In many cases, archaeological study is also undertaken to understand the cultural significance of the site. The CPB also inspects its heritage buildings in Bangkok every other year to insure that they are used appropriately and maintained well.



Figure 13. CPB staff at site investigation (source: CPB)

The findings from archival study and site investigation are combined to evaluate the cultural significance of each heritage property and to make recommendations on a suitable approach to conservation.

Documentation is the final task of identification. The heritage buildings are

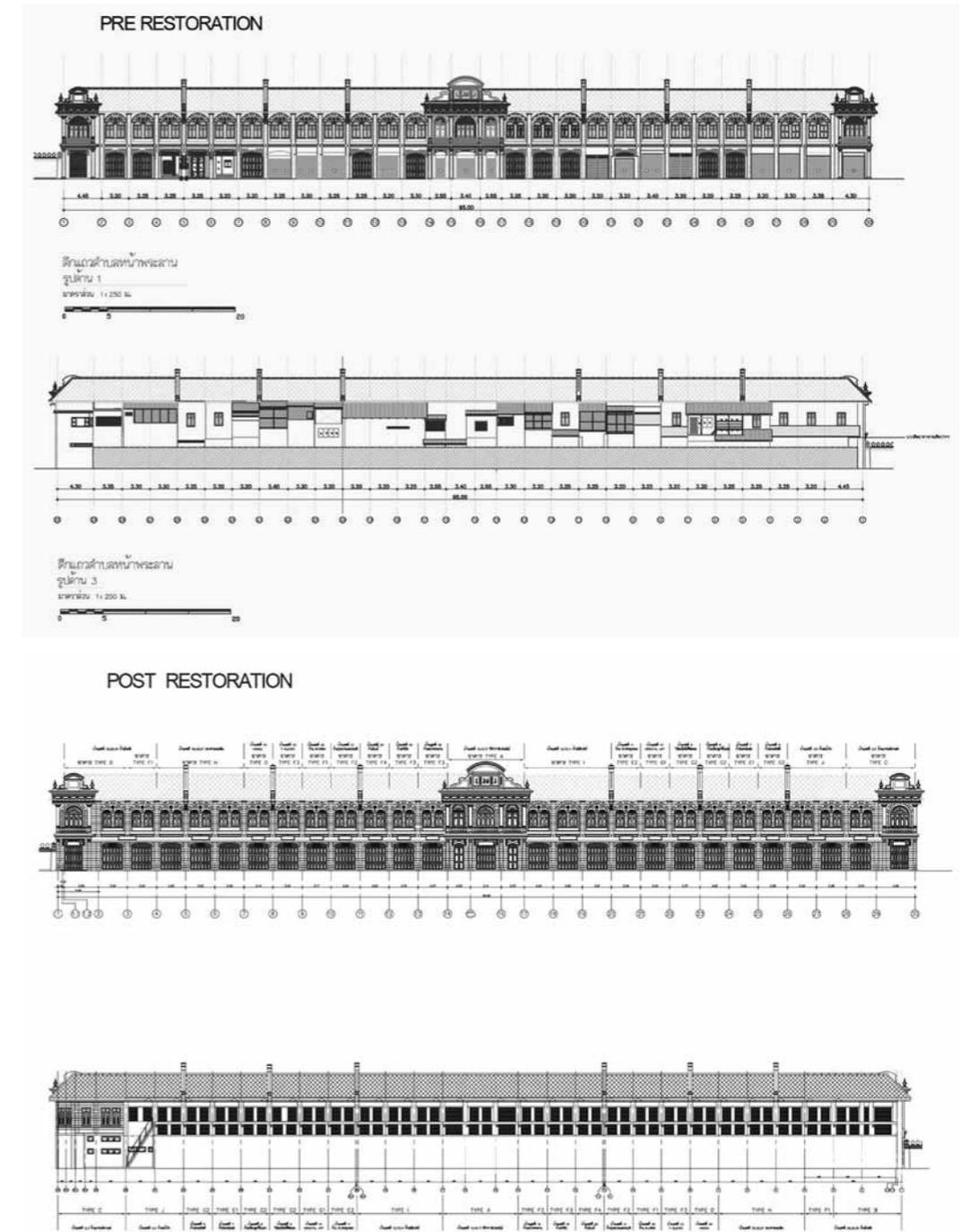


Figure 14. Architectural documentation of historic shophouses at Na Phralan before and after restoration (source: CPB and Praditthananurak Co. Ltd.; CPB and Kudakan Co. Ltd.)

documented in the forms of photographs, maps, descriptive reports and architectural drawings. Drawings are made to depict the current condition as well as the assumed original state of the buildings (see Figures 14, 15).

This identification phase creates an inventory of heritage properties consisting of digital maps showing the locations and files of information such as name of the property, address, year of construction, architect or builder, brief history, architectural characteristics and state of conservation.



Figure 15. Rehabilitation was chosen as the treatment for the Na Phralan shophouses as there is an extended structure at the rear to meet contemporary use (source: CPB and Kudakan Co. Ltd)

### Step 2: Conservation treatments.

In conservation, the term “treatments” means any actions or interventions that appropriately protect, reveal and enhance the cultural value of the heritage. There are various degrees of treatment or intervention ranging from do-nothing to reconstruction of heritage that has already been lost (see Feilden and Jokilehto 1998: 59–63; Stubbs 2009: 125–127). In Thailand, some popular treatments are preservation and stabilization (retaining the existing condition and preventing future deterioration); restoration (bringing back to an original state based on proven evidence); rehabilitation (restoring a significant part along with additional



Figure 16. Ladawan Palace (source: CPB)



Figure 17. CPB Regional Office in Chachoengsao (formerly Prachin Provincial Hall) (source: CPB)

structural work to fulfill new uses); and reconstruction (re-creating a lost structure on the same location). The decision on which treatment to apply depends upon the present state of the building, evidence of its past, budget availability, as well as the conservation philosophy. The CPB does not make the decision on its own judgment, but invites five conservation advisors from outside the organization to recommend the appropriate treatment. The conservation advisors also help in the selection of qualified contractors to insure quality and transparency in the conservation process.

### Step 3: Implementation.

There are three aspects to the implementation of a CPB conservation project: funding, construction work and quality control. The source of funding depends on the type of tenants and the future use of the building. In the case of heritage buildings which the CPB occupies, such as the Ladawan Palace and the CPB regional office



Figure 18. Former residence of Phraya Sri Thammathirat under restoration. The project is funded by the tenant, Sitabut Barmung School and Sino-Thai Foundation for Culture and Education (source: CPB)

in Chachoengsao province, the CPB uses its own budget for restoration work. In the case of heritage buildings rented to tenants, the CPB has at least two forms of partnership. The first is “tenant’s budget”, meaning that the cost of construction is paid by the tenant who is usually granted a long leasehold contract. Examples are the Warshves Palace, rented by Matching Studio Public Company Limited; the former residence of Luang Jitjamnongwanit, which later became the Russian Embassy, rented by North Sathorn Realty Company; and the former residence of Phraya Sri Thammathirat, rented by Sitabutr Bamrung School and the Sino-Thai Foundation for Culture and Education.

The second type of partnership, known as “matching budget”, is usually applied to groups of individual tenants who rent shophouses and who each have a different financial situation and living preferences. The CPB contributes 75 per cent of the construction cost while the remaining 25 per cent is paid by the tenants. This method was applied in the renovation of the Na Phralan shophouses completed in 2011 (see Figure 19) and will be applied to future projects in Tha Chang, Tha Thian and Ban Mo. These projects involve no gentrification so the CPB extends the rental contracts of all the existing tenants. To lessen the hardship of the tenants, the CPB also subsidizes any moving and rental costs

Figure 19. Na Phralan as an example of shophouse restoration under matching funding program (source: CPB and Association of Siamese Architects)



during the construction. This matching budget program may not be applied to all the CPB-owned shophouse communities as the conditions may differ from one community to another.

The CPB contracts out the construction work to qualified companies on a competitive basis. Eligible companies must be certified by the FAD and have a good record on restoration work. The company is selected after a review by the CPB’s panel of conservation advisors.

In order to insure the quality of conservation work, all the conservation projects regardless of their type of funding have to pass a review process by the conservation advisory panel. In the case of registered buildings, approval is also needed from the National Committee on the Conservation of Monument of the FAD.

### **Implications for heritage conservation in Thailand**

In Thailand, the CPB is not the only owner of everyday-life heritage, like shophouses, marketplaces and residential buildings. Many more heritage places belong to private individuals, private organizations, temples, local government bodies and the Treasury Department. Unlike the CPB, most owners do not have sufficient resources to undertake conservation programs. Moreover, as discussed

earlier, the national conservation authority, the FAD, may not be capable of taking care of all kinds of heritage sites. Therefore there must be alternative ways to help safeguard and preserve heritage without placing the burden on private owners and the FAD.

The CPB's experience in conservation projects suggests that schemes to preserve everyday-life heritage should have three components: heritage identification and inventory; economic incentives; and protection measures.

Everyday-life heritage can be found in any urban area that has been developed over time. The process of identification, documentation and inventory should be done at the local level rather than at the center by the FAD. This implies the introduction of a system for registering heritage sites. The challenge lies in finding the required knowledge and professional skill at the local level.

The CPB has successfully implemented conservation through the system of matching funding between the tenants and the bureau. An outside contribution of funding can help to convince a private property owner to favor conservation rather than redevelopment. Tax credits and matching funding schemes are popular ways to offer economic incentives for conservation. Reduction of tax in the case of conservation donation can help establish a conservation fund. Unfortunately, in Thailand there are no such incentives for heritage conservation.

The current system for registering monuments by the FAD is too rigid, and practical only for ancient monuments. The protection and maintenance of everyday-life heritage must be undertaken at the local level with the participation of local conservation groups, local government bodies and residents in the community. Each locality can be linked through a nationwide network in order to have weight in negotiating with the central government on such issues as conservation standards and economic incentives.

Lastly, all CPB projects are made possible because of the attention paid to communicating with all the stakeholders including the FAD, tenants who have diverse objectives and constraints, local government bodies, and other relevant authorities. Any program of conservation requires investment in gathering information and skills in communication and negotiation.

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