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Interior Design Typology of the Traditional Peninsular Mosques

Azizul Azli Ahmad
Department of Interior Design, Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying,
Universiti Teknologi MARA (Perak), Seri Iskandar, 32610 Bandar Baru Seri Iskandar,
Perak, Malaysia
Tel: +60165998902 E-mail: azizulazzil@gmail.com

Dr Aizan Hj Ali @ Mat Zin
Department of Islamic History and Civilization, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of
Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tel: +6079679088 E-mail: aizan@um.edu.my

Ezrin Arbi
Department of Architecture, Faculty of Built Environment Building, University of Malaya,
50603, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tel: +6079674475 Email: ezrinarbi@um.edu.my

The existence of a mosque in a certain area is often indicative of an established Islamic community living nearby. A mosque’s design can reflect the social status of the dwellers. Culture, geographical factors, climate as well as the belief of a Muslim community greatly influenced its mosque architecture. One of the most disputed issues is whether or not a dome is required for each mosque. Center to the development of a mosque is to provide a suitable, sacred place of worship to the Almighty. Therefore, a mosque design should have been focused on that sole purpose. Instead, emphasis on the outlook, number of towers or minarets, dome size, arabesque and calligraphy, has reigned supreme. Inadequate focus is given to the ablution area, issues on hijab, mosque compound, the comfort of prayer area and location of the minbar and mihrab which all require more detailed attention. In the past, several traditional mosques had shown a lot of maturity in the process of their architectural designs. Unfortunately, thinkers and architects alike failed to take advantage of the situation. This paper aims to highlight the spatial components of a traditional mosque and delve deep into the minds of “local experts” who are highly skilled in interpreting the spaces in traditional Malay mosques.

Keywords: Islamic architecture; Mosque; Interior design