

Water architecture in Malaysia: A case study in Penang, 1957–1985

ABSTRACT

This research is driven by a fundamental recognition of the pivotal role played by water infrastructure in shaping urban environments, particularly within post-colonial settings. Focusing on the transformative period from 1957 to 1985 in Penang, marked by significant governance and societal changes, our objective is to comprehensively analyse the development of post-colonial water architecture. By identifying key factors influencing the design, implementation, and outcomes of water infrastructure projects, we aim to shed light on both successes and challenges faced during this era. Our motivation lies in extracting valuable insights from historical experiences to guide contemporary policymaking and scholarly efforts, with a specific emphasis on enhancing functionality, efficiency, and sustainability. Employing a history methodology encompassing historical analysis, archival research, and case studies, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of post-colonial water architecture in Penang, contributing to the broader goal of fostering efficient, sustainable, and aesthetically pleasing water infrastructure for improved urban living. This study found that the evolution of water infrastructure during this period in Penang was not merely a response to increasing urbanisation, but was intricately linked to policy decisions, technological advancements, and societal dynamics. One significant discovery pertains to the impact of governance changes on the efficiency and effectiveness of water projects. The shift in governance structures influenced decision making processes, project implementations, and overall outcomes in the realm of water architecture.