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4 DECEMBER 2018

PENANG GROCERS ASSOCIATION HERITAGE BUILDING PREMISES TO UNDERGO REPAIR AND RESTORATION WORKS

GEORGE TOWN: George Town World Heritage Incorporated (GTWHI) has signed an agreement today (4 December 2018) with the Penang Grocers Association to launch conservation works to repair and upgrade the 81-year-old building premises in No. 4, Jalan Pintal Tali, George Town.

The works on the Category II Art Deco style shophouse will cost about RM100,000, consisting of two phases - the repair of the roof and walls, and the upgrading of the toilet and office areas. The expenses will be fully sponsored by the State Government of Penang through George Town World Heritage Incorporated.

The agreement was signed by GTWHI General Manager Dr Ang Ming Chee and association president Mr Leong Keng Fei.

During the signing ceremony, both Dr Ang and Mr Leong thanked the State Government of Penang and the Board of Directors of GTWHI for the support and opportunity.

“We will collaborate closely with the association to conserve and preserve the building, with the aim of continuing the community activities of the association,” said Dr Ang.

Dr Ang also suggested for the association to set up a committee to ensure a holistic management of the building premises, which faced problems such as a leaking roof and damaged walls and floor. The suggestion received a positive response by the association.

Mr Leong said they have been appealing for funding for the restoration of the building premises for the past four years.

“We are happy and grateful that the building will now be restored. It will provide a better environment especially for our lion dance troupes which hold their trainings here once a week.

“This place is also a meeting point for members and the local community to meet and exchange ideas with one another,” he said.

Leong added that the association, which represents the local grocers and workers of sundry shops, currently have 200 active members in the northern region.

Chuang Yeh Construction has been appointed to carry out the restoration works on the heritage building, which are expected to be completed in February 2019.

The association was founded in the early 1900s as a sundry shopkeepers’ guild, and is now famous for its lion dance troupe. It also houses artefacts such as flags, banners and lion dance heads at its premises.

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ABOUT GEORGE TOWN WORLD HERITAGE INCORPORATED

George Town World Heritage Incorporated (GTWHI) was established by the Penang State Government in April 2010 as the site manager of the George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site. GTWHI is tasked to manage, safeguard and promote the site's Outstanding Universal Values in cooperation with the federal, state and local governments, as well as local communities, organisations and associations.

GTWHI develops and incorporates multidisciplinary knowledge in policy-making, educational, promotional, capacity building and mobilisation activities. The GTWHI team encounters daily challenges in conserving over 4,000 heritage buildings within the site, adaptive reuse of spaces and the safeguarding of living heritage, including those outside the World Heritage Site. GTWHI also works on cultural heritage promotion in schools, youth participation through volunteer activities, disaster risk reduction, regeneration of residency within George Town, paper and object conservation, first aid for cultural heritage in emergencies, and organising training workshops, among others.

These tasks are conducted through some 50 programmes and projects annually, with sponsorship from the Penang State Government, and in collaboration with UNESCO and its Category 2 Centres. Together with heritage professionals and the local communities who live in, work in and visit George Town, GTWHI will continue innovating pragmatic and holistic strategies to ensure George Town's heritage is conserved and safeguarded for future generations.