

Saftea members sad at prospect of leaving 60-year-old Pudu club



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COMMUNITY

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Jalan Pudu clubhouse, currently

Rebuilding Eurasian heritage from the foundation up sounds like beautiful figure of speech but in the case of Selangor and Federal Territory Eurasian Association (Saftea) it is a challenge president Sheila E. De Costa and Saftea members are faced with both metaphorically and literally in relocating their clubhouse.

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(now St. John's Cathedral) to build the one in Jalan Pudu.

“Our founding fathers saw this as a place for Eurasians to get together. It is basically to keep our cultural roots alive, somewhere for Eurasians to go where people understand you and who you are.

“We want to cherish these memories and this piece of history. If only the building could talk, 60 years is a lot to talk about.

“That’s why I’m hoping we can try and get old bricks from the present clubhouse to be put into the new building if we pull it down,” she said.

The association itself has steadfastly preserved its variety of cultural legacies from 1919 through pre-war times, the Japanese occupation as well as post-war with the clubhouse in historically rich Jalan Pudu for almost 60 years – since October 1953.

“I think when people talk about the association, they always think fondly of the wonderful functions, annual Christmas or New Year’s Eve dinners we used to have and, of course the food, I think we were quite famous for that though we have been wrongly labelled in some aspects.



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“Although we are a race-based association, it isn’t the same as many others in the sense that I think we are extremely *muhibah* because there’s no distinct race that classifies a Eurasian, it can be a very wide term and is very inclusive,” she said on the myriad cultures and races melded together to form the sub-culture.

The historical value of the clubhouse extends further as De Costa talked about help the association provided to the Eurasian community after World War II.

“Jalan Pudu used to be along the main thoroughfare in town where members lived within walking distance. We have a great storehouse of original documents that show how people would write to the association for us to help look for missing Eurasians after the war,” De Costa said.

While saddened by the prospect of moving, members of Saftea, including De Costa, believe it to be a turning point in their association, believing that the relocation may be a blessing in disguise that will keep their relevancy in the eyes of youths to carry forward the tradition through future generations.

“I hope that our association will be able to build a clubhouse which will be the pride of senior members and which would encourage the junior members to contribute and make it a place where they feel they belong, because times have changed and we’re in a different era, so we have to evolve

With the association's illustrious past, albeit an apparent number of ups and downs, it has always rallied together with its surrounding community in order to overcome trials and tribulations, while giving back to those in need along the way to progress forward.

"My motto is to never give up so you haven't heard the last of us yet, and I think with the help of the community we will come out stronger than ever, taking the association to greater heights," she said.

Saftea held a fundraiser themed 'The Last Hurrah, Celebrating 60 Years of Memories' at the Jalan Pudu Clubhouse, on Saturday for the rebuilding of their clubhouse.

For details on the association, call 03-2148 3107 or 016-361 0556

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