



Photo: Gordon Hutchings


## Vintage vantage: Old aerial photos of KL

See what Kuala Lumpur looked like back in the days through the lens of a helicopter pilot. By **Loke Poh Lin**

Written by [Time Out KL contributors](#) Tuesday 13 September 2016



ADVERTISING

 The late amateur photographer Gordon Hutchings was a chopper pilot from New Zealand stationed in KL from 1963 to 1966, on secondment from RAF UK to the Royal Malaysian Air Force to assist their helicopter division. Here are some never-before-seen shots of the city – all captured when he was flying around town.



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Photo: Gordon Hutchings

## KL from air

This was shot from one end of [Batu Road](#) (now Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman), facing what was the flourishing part of KL in the '60s. Odeon Cinema with adjoining Chinese restaurant Lee Wong Kee is on the bottom left. The Sulaiman Court flats (with the big Mido neon sign) are in the middle right of this image.

Now long gone, here is where the current [Sogo](#) building sits. The tall building on the upper left is the AIA Building with the majestic St John's Institution behind it. Bank buildings were the earliest skyscrapers of KL, most of which are still standing today.



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Photo: Gordon Hutchings

## Parliament House

This aerial shot of Parliament House shows off Ivor Shipley's design to great advantage. You can see the entire complex of a rectangular three-storey podium, which contained the Upper and Lower Houses, and the 18-storey tower block where the offices of members of both houses and their secretariats are located.

The two buildings are linked by bridges and underground service corridors. The signature cladding is not made of metal but of prefabricated terrazzo. The most distinctive feature by far is the pleated roof for the House of Representatives, which gives the complex its most sculptural profile.

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Photo: Gordon Hutchings

## National Museum

Things to do

KL City Centre

Local architect Ho Kok Hoe was approached by the then director of the national museum, Tan Sri Mubin Sheppard, to attempt a design for this national institution. The brief was to create something Malaysian and modern, which required exhaustive research across the country.

Ho's design of two three-storey linear blocks, punctuated in the middle by a long hall, was eventually adopted; the roofs were inspired by a Malaccan house Ho had seen during one of his research trips. The museum murals designs were by Cheong Lai Tong, depicting episodes of



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## National Mosque

Things to do

KL City Centre

This shot of the National Mosque shows off the building's unusual design. No domes of any specific description, but something that complied with then Deputy PM Tun Razak's brief of being national, modern and Malaysian. A team led by Howard Ashley and two young architects, Baharuddin Abu Kassim and Hisham Albakri, started work on the design, but it was Baharuddin alone who worked on the project until the end.

The overall design was based on a stylised traditional Malay house set in a natural landscape, the pleated roof was inspired by an opened ceremonial umbrella which usually shades royalty,

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## Four Landmarks

Four iconic KL landmarks are captured in this shot: **Bangunan Sulaiman** (front left) was built in 1920, with a deliberately austere design to reflect its function as the government offices. First it housed the Income Tax Department, and later the Registration Department.

On front right is the [KL Railway Station](#), considered to be architect AB Hubback's best work in the federal capital. Completed in 1911 with its domes, spires and arches, it's one of the most memorable pre-Merdeka buildings in KL.

Across the road from the railway station is the **KTM Berhad headquarters**, built in 1904, also designed by Hubback following a Renaissance resurgence. To many purists, the aesthetics of this building surpasses even that of the station.

The humble building beside the headquarters is [The Majestic Hotel](#). Completed in 1932 with 51 rooms, it was a popular place for government leaders and dignitaries to gather. Architecturally it's a hybrid of Neo-Renaissance and Art Deco influences.



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## The Muddy Confluence

This aerial shot of [Masjid Jamek](#) and the meeting of the Klang and Gombak rivers shows the already developed centre of the capital in 1965.

It captures the main office of the then Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited with its flat roof, which faced [Market Square](#) (Medan Pasar) where the beginnings of Kuala Lumpur were recorded. The *medan* is flanked by the Kwong Yik Bank, Lee Wah Bank and Mercantile Bank buildings – all on the centre left of the image.

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