

Photo: Pattarapong Chatpattarasill

October 31 was meant to be a time for Halloween celebrations, but this year, it turned out to be a horrifying day as photos on social media showed the demolition of Scala theatre in Bangkok's Siam Square.

Scala was one of the last remaining stand-alone cinemas and once a favourite spot where teens of the 1980s and 1990s hung out. Famous for its giant hall, grand staircase and chandelier built in the style of Art Deco, the cinema received the Outstanding Architectural Conservation Award in 2012. However, after serving local cinemagoers for more than half-a-century, Scala closed in July last year. No-one expected this beautiful landmark with unique architecture to be destroyed within a day.

The demolition of Scala attracted widespread criticism.

"For the past few years, we had hoped that the Property Management of Chulalongkorn University (PMCU) would change their mind about the fate of Scala," said the director of the Thai Film Archive, who was a guest speaker in the online discussion panel titled "Scala: From The Beginning To The End", held via Zoom recently.

Since its opening in 1969, Scala was not just a place where people went to see movies, but a historical landmark. It told stories about the culture and lifestyle of Thais in the past. By destroying it, that evidence has also been lost. What happened raises the question of whether the conservation of old buildings means anything to anyone in Thailand.

"Why are so many people emotional about the news? Because it was a unique building," said Antoine Lassus, adjunct professor at Chulalongkorn University. "When we talk about buildings like the Eiffel Tower, everybody knows it because it can't be seen anywhere else. It's part of national culture. So, when we destroy buildings like Scala, it isn't only the destruction of Thai heritage, but the destruction of Thainess too."

Meanwhile, a professor from Silpakorn University said that in Thailand today, the conservation of buildings and cultural heritage in society is centred on the Fine Arts Department.

"I understand there aren't many officers in the Fine Arts Department or a large budget. In the past, they maintained only national monuments such as temples, palaces and city walls, which all date from the pre-1920 era. But sadly, in the case of Scala, it was still considered a modern building. Therefore, it was not a priority to take care of this building," he said.

Section 1: Write the correct answer in the space provided.

1. When was Scala destroyed? .....
2. In what style was Scala built? .....
3. In which years did Scala open and close? .....
4. What other building does Antoine mention? .....
5. Silpakorn University takes care of buildings and cultural heritage. True or false?.....
6. The Fine Arts Department protects buildings from which era? .....

Section 2: Read the following passage. Then, fill in the blanks with the correct words from the choices given.

This is the ...7... of online streaming services where people can ...8... watch their favourite movies anywhere. ...9... half the population of youngsters never ...10... went to see a movie at the Scala.

7. __A. day	__B. age	__C. timing
8. __A. luckily	__B. easily	__C. easy
9. __A. Even	__B. More than	__C. Most
10. __A. did	__B. once	__C. had

Section 3: Find words that match the following definitions.

11. the act of destroying something, such as a building .....
12. a large frame which holds light bulbs or candles and hangs from the ceiling .....
13. negative comments about something or someone .....
14. the act of protecting something like a natural resource .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS