

Repurpose Historical Building for Hotel Use Case Study: Harbour Rocks Hotel, Sydney

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Abstract— As the world is growing where tourism is considered as a primary necessity and culture and heritage are the main role for visitor to decide their destination. One of the crucial aspects of tourism is accommodation and how combining accommodation with culture and heritage will have an impact not only to the neighbourhood and seemingly increasing the tourism sector. By doing so, the visitors have a whole experience of heritage and culture in their accommodation. Using Harbour Rocks Hotel, Sydney as case study, being described and explained with the method that derives from theories and Conservation Guideline from Urban Redevelopment Authority, Singapore. The findings during the research are how Indonesia can follow the same path taken by Sydney to repurpose one of the abandoned buildings located in historic area to be a hotel and how Indonesia can learn from Singapore to have a certain guidelines with regards to the conservation and preservation heritage buildings. The conclusion is turning a heritage building for hotel use will benefit the most in terms of economy, tourism, heritage and indirectly support the sustainable system by reusing another building for a different purpose.

Keywords: *adaptive reuse, historical building, hotel, culture, tourism*

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, one of the largest countries in the world that have enormous collections of culture and history, from tangible and intangible culture, historical building which mostly were influenced by Dutch Colonial architecture, the townscapes, landscape and historical sites all across the nation from Sabang until Merauke. Indonesia has the basic quality to be the destination of culture and heritage tourism from all over the world. But similar to some of the country in Asia, the potential for cultural tourism of cities in Indonesia are still in doubt and can be considered insufficiently researched and poorly utilised [1]. The cultural treasure is hidden within cities and rich architectural element and urban heritage are not

maintained well which will have impact to tourism industry and the heritage building itself.

There is a fast growth in cultural tourism since 1980 resulting rising interest for history, culture or art which can be described from the demographic, cultural, social changes [2]. The growing interest in history, culture or art is at origin of the demand for accommodation and facilities, such as staying at hotels or dining at restaurants which offering a historical ambience in historical building. The number of historical buildings fulfilling a hospitality based function after restoration is increasing [3]. In social and cultural respect, both historical and cultural can benefit from the rising level of education: the higher people are educated, the more frequently they travel and the wider they show their interest in history and culture. The tourist that having a high interest in culture and wanting to discover, experience and broaden their knowledge of art and history during their leisure time [3]. Therefore they prefer to experience a historic accommodations with a high experience value, personal touch in a historical spatial setting.

Historical buildings are also represent the traditions of architectural design, the craftsmanship and ways of living and building and somehow can contribute the development of future incoming generations, as an existing resource of structures, elements and materials [4].

Turning a historical building into another function is called adaptive re-use based on the method of heritage building preservation. The method will rehabilitate the building by retaining the constructions, facades, and ornaments as much as possible to adapt to the new function and in addition also contributing the maintenance, development, redevelopment and rehabilitation of the area within the neighbourhood. On the other hand adaptive re-use is also helping to reduce the number of abandoned building. According to Giddings [5] Adaptive reuse is the only architectural heritage conservation

approach that addressed the three main issues of sustainability development: environment, economy and society.

Historical building that is transformed to hotel is also one of the most demanded types of tourist accommodation and are increasingly being placed as a heritage tourism as a broader initiative toward preserving historical building and using them as a different function. [6]. There are a lot of historical building in Indonesia and most of them are not in good condition. There are 602 historical buildings in Indonesia and there are only 7 buildings that were repurposed as accommodation. [7].

II. MATERIAL AND METHOD



Figure 1: Harbour Rocks Hotel, Sydney buildings on 1900, 1970, 1980, 2009 dan 2019. [8]

The Rocks Area, located in Sydney city centre, is a historical site and tourist precinct, which represent the urban heritage culture of Australia. From a hill it was transformed to a residential area since 1788.

The case study, Harbour Rocks Hotel, is one of the hundreds heritage building in The Rocks, which previously served as hospital garden in 1850 and Evan’s Store since 1890. The hotel is one of the preserved buildings in Australia and registered on 10 May 2002 by *New South Wales State Heritage Register*.

From the architecture point of view, it is a big challenge to develop a historical fabric of the existing building to cater for future guests’ necessity of accommodation with certain standard, where was standardised by hotel chains based on “star” rating. The spatial and architectural element of the existing building might have conflicts with the design requirement of a hotel but in addition there will be a unique architectural design that works well when adapting the hotel design and how they work around the limitations of the historic fabric inside the building. It is essential for heritage hotel to maintain its traditional way and ensure to have an interesting element to be described in physical aspects such as façade and interior or decoration [9]. As according to Boo [10] Physical aspects play a critical role in determining satisfaction and loyalty for youth. The ambience of a whole physical aspects consist five distinct items specifically the decoration, entertainment, façade, layout and facilities [11]. According to Sachse [12], turning heritage building into hotel have to take

these items into consideration: cost, space constraint, infrastructure upgrade (MEP) and the strength of existing structure.

According *Urban Redevelopment Authority* [13] from Singapore, they emphasise 3R in terms of conservation: *maximum Retention, sensitive Restoration* and *careful Repair*. Some of the items describe in the guidelines, such as:

- Roof: how the roof have to be retained as much as possible and allowed to have an additional skylight.
- Forecourt/Courtyard
- Façade: the elements of façade, windows, doors, balcony, railings, decoration
- Canopy
- Wall Finishing
- Building colour
- End gable wall
- Rear or Side elevation
- Vertical Access
- Airwell
- Floor
- Ceiling
- MEP

Besides all the things above, location is one of the important factors to determine the sustainability of a hotel. Start from the selection of which potential area and which heritage building to be turned into hotel, doing an analytic investigation and market research on how is the impact of having a hotel in that area. [14].

To conclude all the theories above, Harbour Rocks Hotel will be described based on these criteria:

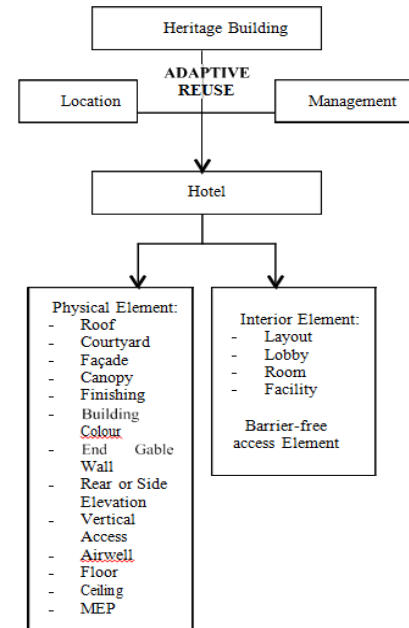


Figure 2: Indicator Assessment as Research Method

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Location



Figure 3: Aerial View

Street, The Rocks, Sydney, NSW, Australia. The location is prime as it served as conservation area, historical setting and one of the main tourist attractions in Sydney

B. Management

Harbour Rocks Hotel is under Accor Hotels Group, M Gallery by Sofitel, which dedicated to the lovers of historical setting, spectacular landscape or uniqueness of each property.

C. Physical Elements

i. Roof.



Figure 4: Roof Plan (Welsh+Major, 2017)

Roof is to be retained as much as possible. Additions of two skylights were introduced to be located on top of access (staircase) and airwell at the lobby (see Figure 3) which was allowed by the guidelines

ii. Courtyard

No courtyard in this building

iii. Façade & Canopy



Figure 5: Façade

No alteration done for 2nd storey onwards façade and to be retained as it is including the windows. As this is a heritage and conserved building, the guideline does not allow to change to size, location or type of the windows as it will change the scale and expression of architectural element.

First storey have an additional glass and aluminium façade which is still allowable. The main entrance was changed to automatic door to cater for diffable people. Awnings with hotel signage is located on top of the main entrance, placed under the main beam and not conceal the architecture element as per guideline.

iv. Finishing



Figure 6: Wall finishes

Existing wall is rendered as fair-faced brick wall, the wall is restored and repainted for rooms. The wall at the corridor is retained as it is with restoration and no paint.



Figure 7: Toilet Finishing

New toilet is introduced for all the rooms. The finishes is using white ceramic tile to follow the existing toilet.

v. Building Colour

There is a significant colour change in between 1980 and 2009. Traditional paint schemes are still being used to recall the historic scape of the area.

vi. End Gable Wall

No end gable wall in this building.

vii. Rear or Side Elevation

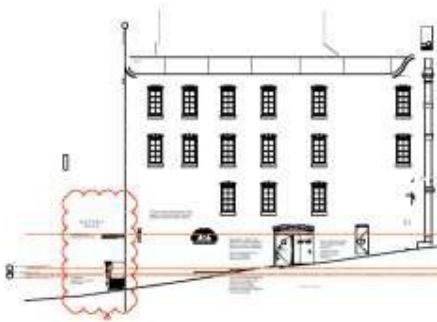


Figure 8: Side Elevation [8]

The other elevations still adopt and follow the existing treatment, such as no alteration to existing windows and ornaments.

viii. Access



Figure 9: Staircase

To adjust to the new function, new vertical access was introduced to cater for the necessity of a hotel and fire safety purpose. There is no lift at this hotel as there was a space and structural constraint.

ix. Airwell



Figure 10: Airwell

Based on the guidelines, airwell location and size is to be retained. There are 2 airwells in this building, 1 for the vertical access and at the lobby. The airwell open directly to sky to lend the interest of spatial experience. A lightweight translucent material roof covering is used

x. Floor



Figure 11: Timber flooring at 1st storey

Overall the floor structure was retained. First storey finished still using the original timber flooring with some new portion at the facility area. The subsequent floor was modified to cater for new bathrooms, therefore concrete was introduced as it was allowed by the guideline. The upper storey corridor was covered in carpet but still retaining the wood structure.

xi. Ceiling



Figure 12: Exposed Timber Ceiling Floor Structure

Based on regulation, exposed upper floor structure of timber boards and joists is preferred and has to be retained as much as possible and it was done by this Hotel. Only some part of the area that using false ceiling to conceal MEP.

xii. MEP



Figure 13: Sprinkler pipe

Most of the building using out bow system where all the conduits, piping is exposed. Due to the strength of the building hacking the building id not preferred and is considered has followed the conservation guidelines.

D. Interior Elements

i. Layout



Figure 14: Corridor

The spatial layout does have a big impact to the hotel in heritage building. The existing floor plan was divided into rooms and facilities. The size, the contours of the space, will be considered as character defining and it depends on from what is the previous function of the building itself. Due to the hotel programme, rooms are located along the perimeter of the building with corridor and an airwell located at the centre of the building.

ii. Lobby



Figure 15: Lobby

The lobby, that should be inviting, was altered in order to fit the purpose of a hotel lobby. A small reception in conjunction with hotel bar due to space constraint. All the element of the architectural elements at the lobby retain as it is with additional false ceiling to conceal mechanical and electrical support, like air conditioning without breaking the whole historical ambience.

iii. Rooms



Figure 16: Room

The rooms were fit in with the existing structure with additional brick wall to demarcate each individual room. This hotel, resulting an odd-shape rooms and a non- standard size, building into a hotel, like faced the down side of turning historical. But having a various shape and type of rooms often appeals to visitors who value experience with each visit.

iv. Facility



Figure 17: Facilities

The facilities provided is to be determined based on the stability of the building itself and case by case basis, such as restaurants, bar and gym. The historical feel is still imposed on those facilities.



Figure 18: Facility (restaurant plan) [8]

The restaurant is the latest edition of the hotel, which having a veranda, kitchen, seating area and bar and retail. The design of the restaurant and its amenities still following the guideline of conservation by retaining most of the space and architectural ornament.

v. Barrier-Free Access Element



Figure 19: Ramp at the entrance



Figure 20: Tactile Tiles

Even though it is a heritage building, the necessity of barrier free access is still required due to the function of the building is for public use. Ramp was provided at the entrance to cater for wheelchair user and rooms at 1st storey is available for them as well. Tactile tiles, a textured ground surface, were provided to assist visually impaired visitor.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Heritage building that have been adapted reuse, Harbour Rocks Hotel, all in all still following the conservation guidelines based on theories and Conservation Guideline by Urban Redevelopment Authority, Singapore and also providing a remarkable result with regards to the constraints. The findings during the research are how Indonesia can follow the same path taken by Sydney to repurpose one of the abandoned buildings located in historic area to be a hotel and how Indonesia can adapt from Singapore to have a clear guidelines with regards to the conservation and preservation heritage buildings. Indonesia, country that has enormous heritage building can learn from other country on how they are able to maintain their heritage building by doing adaptive reuse and turning it into other function which will benefit the most in terms of economy, tourism, heritage and indirectly support the sustainable system by reusing another building for a different purpose. The factors regarding conservation guidelines can also

be used to improve and manage the historical building in Indonesia as to date there is no detail conservation requirement guideline that served as a basis to value and conserve heritage building in Indonesia.

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