

The Development of the Post Office Cultural Heritage in Semarang

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to find new improvements from the post office building that mostly occupies the old building that is classified as a cultural heritage building. Architecturally, the conservation of cultural heritage has been written in regulations and laws, but the question is how to conserve the activity of the postal activities. Facing decreased customer transactions, increased competition from new technologies in digital, changing the city patterns, and the Post Office building as currently configured faces a challenging and uncertain future. Nearly half of the buildings that have been built since the 18th century are empty due to changes in the function of the post office, which no longer sends mail. The building of cultural heritage requires the conservation of content and containers that are adaptive to new functions. If conservation only relies on the uniqueness of buildings, it is found that there is a gap in the development of conservation models to adapt building and postal services to the digital influence and delivery of goods by the private sector and potential locations. By using the historical method of postal development, the history of the old city area, and the field survey to examine the shift of the present function, it is revealed that the conservation efforts that have been carried out by PT. The Indonesian Post Office not only focuses on buildings and activities but also attempts to increase the economic value of buildings in order to improve the image as post office service and strengthen the image as a gateway to the old city area of Semarang. It is found that the exposure activity was an old activity that was still attached to the post office building until now. Adaptive reuse is to accommodate activities that have relevance to post-service activities. As the architecture view, it is the unique architecture in the building and the city planning, because the post office building occupies a marker as the zero points of the city or also acts as a gateway to the old city at that time (it is possible to find other several cities). The post office building has a commercial value, which is quite high. Thereby adding commercial activities to get a better economic value can be increased (i.e., added activities for caffè, minimarket, coworking space). This recommendation will provide economic value for managers in dealing with the issue of a collapsed post office.

Keywords: *Heritage, post office, colonial building, image, reuse*

1. INTRODUCTION

Postal service organizations around the world are struggling to meet the challenges posed by the digital revolution and advancements in information communication technology. Unless they introduce innovation in service, their survival will be doubted. A study of 140 post office users in Malaysia focused on the determinants of service innovation in terms of human, technical, tangible, and intangible aspects. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents believe that the post office must operate for profit and social purposes. [1]. Another challenge is that post offices are facing increasing competition, practically in providing customer services to be able to win the competition with the emergence of private companies such as TIKI, JNE, PT. Repex Perdana Internasional cooperates with Federal Express (Fed-Ex), DHL, EXL Express, Cipaganti, TNT, Pandu Siwi, and

other shipping services [2]. They were switching mail delivery services using digital technology, reducing the workload of PT Pos services in sending mail, and only focusing on goods delivery services. Along with the pace of development and social media technology, how will the post office continue to exist in running postal service activities?

Semarang post office building is a case study of efforts to conserve by adding new activities in the face of competition as well as building conservation. As a cultural heritage building, the Semarang post office building was built along with the construction of the post road in Java. Outside Java, the construction of the post office is in line with the development of plantations in Sumatra [3]. Both in Java and Sumatra, the existence of post office buildings, being a zero-point marker of the city, is near the square or town square [4]. On the island of Java, postal buildings are united with the square and become a city circle of traditional cities in Java that are connected by De Groote Postweg [5].

Efforts to preserve cultural significance and preservation are made according to Burra Charter (1982) [6], Indonesian Heritage Preservation 2003 Charter. Referring to Law No. 1 Year 2010 about Cultural Heritage, the post office building fulfills the criteria as a cultural heritage object because it is more than 50 (fifty) years old, representing the period of style in its time, namely hybrid architecture, and have a special meaning for history. Related to preservation efforts, the government of Central Java issued Central Java Province Regulation Number 10 of 2013 concerning Preservation and Management of Central Java Province Cultural Heritage. Johar Post Office Building is included in the list of Ancient / Historic Buildings in Semarang.

The competitive competition for social media and private postal services spurred the government to invent innovations. Several studies on postal service innovation have been carried out in various countries. Malaysia, which is famous for the tourism industry and its hospitality, is also carried out to improve postal services. The innovative improvement of its post office services will enhance that reputation while meeting increasingly sophisticated demands from its domestic customer base [1]. In reorganizing a new future for Post Office Services in Ireland, they meet the needs and requirements of customers and the community. Post office services and networks are available in every community in Ireland and in cooperation with the retail post. Retail Post has been established as an independent business unit [7]. In Kenya, it is almost the same, Telkom Kenya is now responsible for offering telecommunications services, mail, and financial services. The postal sector is also liberalized so that other companies are registered to offer communication services. At present, there are ninety-six companies offering mail services (couriers and packages) registered by the Kenya Communications Commission, the official regulatory board in Kenya. With liberalization, the Post Office finds itself in a competitive market, a concept that is new and needs to be integrated into its business operations [8]. Some forms of innovation to face organizational challenges of PT. Pos Indonesia conducted at PT. Pos Sidoarjo is Product Innovation, including express post services, post-payment services, prime, and instant postal money orders, as well as prism stamp innovation.

The innovation process is intended to be able to provide better or cheaper value-added production or distribution, such as compensation (insurance) for damaged or lost letters, documents, and packages, electronic mobile, and also queue number machines (electronic) [2]. Pos Lampung has made innovations that can provide benefits that continue to increase significantly and be able to compete in global competition. They can respond to rapid changes that occur in the postal industry, and some innovations that have been done are useful in responding to current competition [9]. In addition to meeting service quality standards, the commitment of PT. Pos Indonesia Bandung always maintains and enhances development efforts in partnership with other post organizers. [10].

Innovations in existing postal services are still focused on product and process innovations. They have not answered all the challenges of the post office architecture and location aspects concerning the inclusion of post office buildings in cultural heritage buildings so that they need to be preserved and reorganized in a direction to adjust to the changing times. Efforts to adapt old buildings to current conditions with activities that provide service services and activities that are ongoing from the past to the present require special handling. This study aims to find significant factors that play a role in increasing innovation services in the Semarang conservation post office as a cultural heritage building and postal services.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The focus of the research is divided into three main aspects of the history of the post office and the construction of the highway, post office buildings (exterior and interior), aspects of the old city area, and the innovation of PT. Pos Indonesia in maintaining the existence and competitiveness of public services. The research method for extracting pos office as old building using historical data [11] that was obtained from pictures and maps of the location and past post offices taken from KITLV.

Grounded research methods are used to collect information in the present time [12]. Interviews with managers and assignments from managers to conduct an inventory of space and post office buildings in Semarang have been conducted since 2018. The research also used a descriptive method by carrying out the elaboration and presentation of cultural heritage and a review of the Semarang post office related to the history and condition of the building based on literature studies through books, catalogs, documents, and other written material that can be accountable. The field data obtained then analyzed with the urban design method [13]. The depiction of post office location and the site plan was evaluated in order to obtain an analysis of the post office acceleration and its strategic value. Conservation issues and appropriate conservation measures analyzed using the law of conservation. The limitations of ancient building data built by the Dutch colonial in 1750 resulted in data collection by redrawing the plans and the façade of the building. Redrawing the spaces in the building and data collection of additional activities carried out to enliven the building in the data and evaluation. The results of the evaluation found that there were still empty spaces and the number of service counters shrinking due to competition with goods shipping services by the private sector and loss of mail delivery due to the existence of social media.

3. ADDRESSING GAPS IN RESEARCH

According to Burra Charter [14], conservation actions include all processes/actions to protect an object and maintain the cultural meaning contained therein. To strengthen the understanding of heritage, the workers, and observers of conservation in Indonesia agree on

Indonesian heritage. In 2003, in the 2003 Indonesian Heritage Year declared the 2003 Indonesian Heritage Conservation Charter. It was the first charter that Indonesia had in agreeing on the ethics and morals of heritage conservation. UU no. 5 of 1992 updated Law No. 1 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage [15]. In the legislation explained the criteria for cultural heritage contained in Law No. 11 of 2010 [15] concerning about Cultural Heritage article 5, i.e., objects, buildings, or structures could be proposed as cultural reserves if they meet the following criteria: Aged 50 (fifty) years or more, Representing the shortest possible period of age 50 (fifty) years, Has a special meaning for history, science, education, religion, and/or culture, has cultural values for strengthening the personality of the nation.

In order to strengthen cultural preservation activities, the Semarang City government issued a List of Ancient / Historic Buildings in Semarang. The Johar Post Office building is included in the list. Related to preservation efforts, the government of Central Java issued Central Java Province Regulation Number 10 of 2013 concerning Preservation and Management of Central Java Province Cultural Heritage. [16] In these regulations, the Preservation and Management of Cultural Heritage aim: a) preserving regional cultural heritage and humanity's heritage; b) maintaining local wisdom; c) increase the dignity of the nation through the Cultural Heritage; d) strengthen the nation's personality; e) improve people's welfare; f) promoting regional cultural heritage to the community.

Meanwhile, efforts to develop cultural heritage buildings are carried out with due regard to the principles of expediency, security, maintainability, authenticity, and values inherent in Cultural Heritage. The development of cultural heritages, as referred to, can be directed to spur economic development, the results of which are used to preserve cultural heritage and improve the welfare of the community. Adaptation efforts as part of conservation development efforts can be made to meet the needs of the present while maintaining: a) original characteristics and/or face of the Cultural Heritage Building or Cultural Heritage Structure; and/ or b) original characteristics of the cultural landscape and/ or land surface Cultural Heritage Site or Cultural Heritage Area before adaptation. The adaptation referred to is carried out by a) maintain the values inherent in the Cultural Heritage; b) add facilities as needed; c) change the arrangement of space in a limited way; and / or d) maintain the architectural style, original construction, and aesthetic harmony of the surrounding environment.

According to the Charter, Government regulations, and the Law, the efforts to develop cultural heritage buildings through the adaptation of old buildings to the present conditions are still focused on the context of the building. Therefore, for cultural heritage buildings that are still carrying out service activities from the past, its services also need to be conserved, not only the building. Thus the research on efforts to develop the post office as a cultural heritage building has a knowledge gap to be developed, namely conservation as part of the heritage city. Heritage city is a city in which there is a cultural heritage area and/or cultural heritage buildings that have important values for the city, utilize the application of the arrangement and

preservation of heritage as the primary strategy for the development of the city [17].

Conservation activities aim to improve the quality of space, life, and the economy. The aim of improving this quality can only be successful if the community actively participates in reviving cultural assets, which in turn, these cultural assets will be able to support and improve the welfare of the city community independently. The heritage of the heritage city does not have to be static but can be dynamic. These conservation activities can take the form of development or development and undertake revitalization, preservation, restoration, replication and reconstruction efforts, and adaptive reuse (use of new functions on historic assets). Indeed, efforts to preserve heritage are not aimed at aesthetic interests or romanticism of the past but should have functional, economic, and other productive values [17].

The regional regulation of Semarang City Number 8 Year 2003 on Building and Environmental Planning of Semarang Old City RTBL 2013 [18] mentioned conservation actions in Old City areas including: a) Preservation: maintenance and prevention of a place or building from change or destruction in order still according to its original state. b) Restoration: restoring the original physical condition of the building by replacing the original elements that were lost without using new materials or by removing new elements. c) Rehabilitation: repair and restoration of damaged or declining building conditions by preserving its historical value so that it can function again. d) Adaptation: changes in a small part of a building or places so that they can be used for new functions that are more needed. e) Reconstruction: returning a place or building as closely as possible to the original by using new materials that have been studied. f) Demolition: destruction or reshuffle of a building or place because the level of damage is considered dangerous or because the level of change is considered to be no longer appropriate. g) Revitalization: an effort to revive ancient areas, buildings, streets, and the environment by implementing new functions in the original architectural arrangement to increase economic, social, tourism, and cultural activities.

Efforts to conserve cultural heritage buildings require details about building activities that are still inherent in it. In various parts of the world, post office conservation efforts are focused on product and process innovation and have not yet answered all the challenges of building value aspects. Below are some findings on the location aspects, the post office building as cultural preservation, and the new aspects of activities at the Semarang post office as new knowledge.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. The Johar Post Office is in the Zero Point Area and the Gate to the City of Heritage

The first post office in Indonesia, then called the Dutch East Indies, was established on August 26, 1746, in Batavia, in the old city of Jakarta, four years later,

followed by the second post office, which was established in Semarang in 1750. The location of the post office was near the square and located on the Jalan Pemuda protocol road as one of the main streets in the city of Semarang. During the Dutch East Indies, this road was known as Bodjongweg (Bodjong Street). This road is included in the Great Post Road (de Grootte Postweg), which was built by Governor-General Herman Willem Daendels in 1808 along 1000 kilometers from Anyer to Panarukan. The long history of Jalan Pemuda has left many ancient buildings along the road because it had developed into a trade and settlement center for upper Europeans.

This highway has long historical roots. In Central Java, the highway was built by basing on the Coastal Highway [19]. This coastal highway connects several traditional city centers. [5] The transformation process from the Coastal Highway to the Post Road through the political process when Daendels took control of Java in 1808. For the benefit of the army and economic exploitation, the Post Road was built. [20]

The construction of the Post Road both in Priangan and on the North Coast of Java uses economic principles because it was not a newly built road, most of them are pre-existing roads. [20]. The development was made possible because Daendels wanted the transportation of agricultural products, and the mobilization of his army could be carried out quickly [20]. The link between the post office and the Post Road is related to the purpose of building a road to facilitate the delivery of goods. The Postal Service assisted this shipment of goods in the City of Batavia, Semarang, and Surabaya. As Governor-General, Daendels ordered the appointment of a head of the postal residency and the establishment of a post station equipped by horses, stables, and postcards. The place used for resting post-horses along the highway is known as the *pesanggrahan* or *brak*. This lane connects transportation with the area around the coast and inland by using smaller roads in the form of village roads, horse carriage roads, horse roads, and footpaths, and rivers. Post offices were built in several cities to facilitate the colonial government to keep in touch with their countries in Europe, and to send the news to their countries more easily.

Using the urban design method and technique, the position of the post office occupies the main highway because it is an essential means of transportation. [13]. Once the importance of the road, every ruler has an interest in the roadway in his area. Using historical methods [11], the view of ancient maps in figure 1 and old photos in figure 2, the location of the post office is the entrance of the old city of Semarang from the direction of the Grootte Postweg [13]. The site is significant. Related to conservation efforts, Central Java Provincial Regulation Number 10 of 2013 concerning Preservation and Management of Cultural Heritage of Central Java Province that the wrong management of Cultural Heritage aims to maintain local wisdom.

The development of cultural heritage by utilizing the potential of the location can be directed to spur economic development, the results of which are used to maintain cultural heritage and improve the welfare of the community. The development based on the potential of this location is following the interests of the army and economic exploitation, which uses economic principles

that want the transportation of agricultural products and the mobilization of army forces can be done quickly [20]. The location is the basis of efforts to develop the post office as a cultural heritage building that has a knowledge gap to fill conservation activities as part of the heritage city.



The Postal line on Java, Grootte



The map of Semarang in 1866 did not describe the existence of a post office, the papak building had already existed

The map of Semarang in 1917 has described the existence of a post office building in the Grootte post weg

Figure 1 The post office location in the center of a traditional city, along with the construction of a Grootte Postweg line, as city zero points, and as the main gate to the colonial area.



The Semarang Post Office, Telkom Office, and State Finance Office are viewed from the direction of Semarang Square (now from the direction of New Metro Hotel) circa 1915



The atmosphere in front of the Great Semarang Post Office circa 1915.

Figure 2 The post office was built in a zero point at the center of a traditional city in Semarang

As a cultural heritage building, the existence of this building is in the zero kilometer monuments, Semarang City, registered in the cultural heritage building of the city of Semarang. This site close to the Kota Lama (Old City), conservation area, so for the next future, the city planning of Kota Lama [21] has to be updated and involving this old post office as the main gate to Kota Lama (Old City). Based on reviews in the field, there are government efforts to regulate illegal parking and illegal traders in front of

buildings to strengthen the image of the landscape of the area. In front of the post office, there is a zero point in Semarang city. The zero-point area and post office position as the gateway to the Dutch colonial city fortress strengthen the preservation efforts of the heritage city. These dynamic conservation activities in the form of regional development have functional values and other production values. [17]

4.2. Post Office as a Cultural Heritage Building

In front of the Semarang Post Office, there is the Semarang Zero Point Monument. Aside from being on the Daendels main road, the Johar Post Office's geographical position is closely related to the development of the surrounding environment. Surrounding it are the old square and the 'Little Netherland' area in the Old City of Semarang, Johar Market, and the Berok Bridge environment as a small port that allows small boats to be anchored. It causes the activity in the area to be very crowded, where a post office is intended for a busy, easy, and fast position to achieve.

Pemuda Semarang Grand Post Office is one of the historic buildings in the city of Semarang. It was once used as a Post and Telegraph Office, but now it is only used by the post office. In 1979, restoration was carried out.

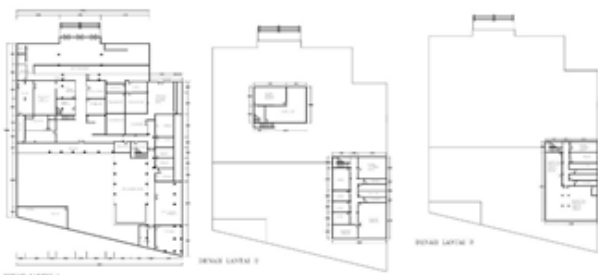


Figure 3 Redrawing of the Semarang post office plan found the empty space in several areas.



Figure 4 The uniqueness of the Post Office of Semarang from an old photo and redrawing.

The interior has high walls and painted white, the floors are using old ceramics, and the main room/lobby functions as a postal service office. The reduced activity of the post makes the post office counters decrease, and the lobby space becomes spacious. Some adaptive reuse activities create new function activities in Johar Post Office Semarang that supporting postal services. Now, the lobby is a place for discussion and interaction between

philatelists and post crossing friends around the city of Semarang. This activity occupies the post office lobby and is held on Sundays. The activity will support the continuity of the post office as a cultural heritage in central Java [16]. Now the post office has other functions in addition to sending letters, buying goods related to the post, sell postal items for collections. The post office should be able to be used as a comfortable gathering place for discussion by the philatelist community. The post office is also intended to pay monthly fees for electricity, water, and payment for severance.

This post office building has a Dutch architectural concept, symmetrical, and full of old European ideals. Because of its uniqueness, the post office building is included in the category of Cultural Heritage objects that need to be protected. In the Burra Charter [6], conservation is a general term that includes all processes/actions to safeguard an object and maintain the cultural meaning contained therein. Conservation or preservation is various efforts to maintain, restore, and improve the appearance and function of an area, site, object, building, or place by maintaining its historical and cultural value. Burra Charter [6] describes the types of preservation processes/actions, including Maintenance, Preservation, Reconstruction, Adaptation, Interpretation, retention of contribution. The operation of the post office is an activity that also conserves the existence of the post office itself that is important to dig deeper.

4.3. The Effort Conservation Activities Services to Increase the Economic Value of Buildings

Conservation of Cultural Heritage buildings is often the subject of study. However, the Post Road, which has historical value, unique, and is more than two centuries old, should be included in the law of conservation for the next future [15]. Conservation of both can be a further study considering that several post office buildings were built in line with the construction of the Groot Postweg in 1809-1811. Both have a substantial role in the form of city configuration along with the town square [5]. The Groot Postweg has changed the spatial configuration of Java, which was previously oriented to the axis between kingdoms in the area and trade cities on the north coast [20].

The position of the post office in Post Road has a strategic economic value. This road can increase the likelihood of new settlements, new markets, and where trade appears [22]. The historical roots attached to the construction of the post office and the Post Road are in line with Daendels' goal that the road will facilitate the transportation of plantation products, agriculture, and face enemy threats and facilitate the delivery of goods. The shipment of goods was assisted by the establishment of the postal service in Batavia, Semarang, and Surabaya. In several cities in Java, the Post Road corridor and post office buildings are on the path to the city center. In its development, the path has been transformed into a commercial area, such as in Bandung and Semarang.

Using grounded research, the strategic potential as an architecture building with unique character [12] and as a

commercial area greatly supports the increase in post office assets. The concept of transforming post office building assets to support conservation efforts has been carried out on its physical aspects. The condition of the building, which is strong enough with attractive colonial architectural values, requires support to concentrate activities in it. Physical restoration and material changes/additions still refer to changes that can be accepted by the rules of cultural heritage objects.

A re-adaptive approach is held to support the interior of the building and the function of activities that are still ongoing. The loss of the role of the post office as a means of sending mail does not eliminate the post office manager to keep issuing stamps. Issuance of limited stamps is associated with philatelist communities (people who collect postal objects). This community gathers comfortably to discuss with fellow philatelists. Meeting activities use the post office lobby adjacent to the ticket window. The availability of the post office items for collection becomes a medium to strengthen the philatelic community every month on Sundays. The post office management facilitates philatelic gathering activities.

Innovative post office services and philatelic activities involving members from all over Indonesia and the general public making purchases of collectibles succeeded in increasing reputation. It is consistent with what has been done in other countries such as Ireland, Kenya [1] [7].

Product innovations, including express postal services, postal payment services, prime, and instant postal money orders, and prism stamp innovations have been carried out at several post offices similar to those that have been carried out at other post offices [2]. These innovations provide ever-increasing benefits in responding to the rapid changes that occur in the postal industry [9] and the development of city planning as Kota Pusaka (Heritage City) [17]. In addition to meeting service quality standards, the commitment of PT. Pos Indonesia Bandung always maintains and enhances development efforts in partnership with other post organizers [10].

5. CONCLUSION

Physical conservation emphasizes the potential location of post offices. Conservation efforts for the post office have more value than just physical conservation and the activities that support the postal activity. Other values can be further studied, which is about the strategic value of the location, namely as a building that functions as a 'Landmark' and 'Focal Point' of the area gate. This strategic location can become a place for citizens to gather on Sunday and was developed by the manager to form a philately group. The additional activities in the post office play a role in increasing innovation services in the Semarang conservation post office as a cultural heritage building and postal services. It is in line with the law, which states that Semarang's old city conservation efforts have been carried out through the old city RTBL and implementation. [18]. However, the post office existence as the main gateway towards the old city and as a marker area of the city has not got attention from the government. In line with the RTBL and the post office's strategic position

in the central location of Semarang, as the main gate to the colonial area, as the city zero-point requires a marketing strategy for investors to maximize the function of buildings in the strategic area. Changes and revitalization of the old city area into a commercial area by doing adaptive reuse as a cafe, restaurant, coworking space, mini market, and gallery can be an inspiration for the adaptive reuse of post office buildings. It should be done while accommodating postal activities as a form of content and container conservation that still survives until now.

Conservation of new activities that support postal services such as innovating on postal services as a cultural heritage development can be directed to spur economic development, the results of which are used to preserve cultural heritage and improve the welfare of the community. Thus, the revitalization approach with a pattern of attention to buildings and activities within them is not enough. There needs to be an approach that emphasizes the economic aspects of the location of the post office on the postal track. The postal line has criteria as cultural heritage as stipulated in Law Number 11 Year 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage article 5 [15], namely objects, buildings, or structures can be proposed as cultural reserves if they meet the following criteria: a) Aged 50 (fifty) years or more, b) Representing the shortest period of style aged 50 (fifty) years, c) Has a special meaning for history, science, education, religion, and /or culture.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- a) The architecture of the post office building has a strong character among the surrounding buildings so that it has the potential as a marker to enter the old city area of Semarang.
- b) The building is still functioning properly and has economic value for its owner; and the potential for revitalization within the limits of conservation principles.
- c) From the perspective of 'urban fabric' post office buildings are both physical and historical nodes - Post Road (de Groote Postweg), distribution/network of colonial buildings, markers of Jalan Bojong (Pemuda) – Kota Lama (Old City), and monuments de-structuring the square Semarang city.
- d) In revitalization, the government needs to provide support to building owners to integrate private, social, and cultural interests.
- e) The valuation method can reveal potential or risk in addition to the 'value' that is very necessary for revitalization. Thus, this method can be done to establish underlying assumptions and knowledge of revitalization

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