Revitalization of Kota Lama Semarang and Early Signs of Digital Place Making Through Instagram

Marisa Sugangga[1,*], Angela Paramitasari[1], Widjaja Martokusumo[1],

Arif Sarwo Wibowo[1]

[1] *School of Architecture, Planning and Policy Development, Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia*
Corresponding author. Email: marisasugangga@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Kota Lama Semarang has just been revitalized in 2019 by the Kota Lama Management Agency or BPK2L (Badan Pengelola Kawasan Kota Lama). Nowadays, Kota Lama Semarang is far more crowded after the revitalization has been completed. The projects carried out improvements in terms of the area fabrics, building revitalization, and street furniture. These architectural elements have enhanced tourists' visual attraction, especially for getting selfies and taking pictures. The photo uploaded to social media attracts local and international tourists. Some corridors or spots often appear when the public search for keywords about Kota Lama Semarang on social media. This research aims to discover how people perceived Kota Lama Semarang's visual representation in the social media era, particularly on Instagram. Furthermore, this is the early step to go towards the digital placemaking concept. The photo-mapping method was conducted, in which the photos were collected through social media using Kota Lama Semarang hashtag and overlayed into the Kota Lama Semarang map. The result gives visual perspectives from Instagrammers related to the spots and architectural elements representing Kota Lama Semarang. These popular spots should have further attention to Kota Lama tourism's sustainability and its precinct's visual quality while taking authenticity and integrity into consideration.

Keywords: Revitalization, Heritage, Social Media, Kota Lama Semarang.

1. INTRODUCTION

Lama Semarang (Semarang Old Town) was a business district during the Dutch Colonial administration in the 17th century. This place has been recorded as one of the world trade centers in the 1800-1900s period. Kota Lama Semarang area is filled with buildings with various architectural styles coming from medieval, baroque, and modern style [1]. The formed urban landscape was a fortified city near the port, which had grown into the international port city during its golden era. This site was also connected to the harbor and railway station. In 1709, the growth of Kota Lama Semarang was influenced by three factors: Fort de Vifhoek, the tragedy of the Chinese against the Dutch in 1742, and the head quarter displacement from Jepara by VOC in the same year. Kota Lama Semarang's structure depends on the segregation of three main ethnicities, with three different areas formed with their own culture. The

Dutch area became Kota Lama Semarang, the Chinese Area became the Pecinan area, and the Islam area became the Kauman area. This paper only focuses on the Kota Lama Semarang area as a study case because of its progressive revitalization program conducted by the Semarang government. Based on its incredible history and value of place, Kota Lama Semarang has the potential to be designated as a cultural conservation area that needs to be protected [2].

Architectural conservation activities in Indonesia have gained attention since the 1980s, including Semarang city heritage conservation, which focused on Kota Lama (old town) precinct. Between 1990-2000, some important notes in the architecture and area conservation of Kota Lama Semarang resulted in the mayor of Semarang's published Decree of Old and Historic buildings Conservation (Keputusan Walikotamadya Kepala Daerah Tingkat II Semarang No.

646/50/1992). The early regulation noticed that 49 historical buildings needed to be preserved and conserved [3,4].

In 2003, Kota Lama Semarang's Urban Design Guidelines (UDGL) was established through local government regulation number 3/2003 [5,6]. One hundred and five buildings in the Kota Lama Semarang precinct were listed as historical buildings that needed to be preserved and conserved. As a result of this UDGL, Kota Lama Semarang has been revitalized up until 2019. The revitalization activities were done by a designated authority appointed by the local government, named Badan Pengelola Kawasan Kota Lama (BPK2L), as the manager of the old city area [6,7,8]. Some activities and efforts made recently for the old city revitalization were limited to physical quality enhancement, which changed Kota Lama Semarang's visual image (from Figure 1 to Figure 2). These changes give Kota Lama Semarang more opportunity to develop as the leading tourism precinct and destination for tourists from Semarang and outside the city. Even though some ornaments and details were changed, Kota Lama Semarang has a unique visual and landscape with Netherlandish or Dutch-colonial era's urban fabric as the main attraction.

Figure 1. Kota Lama Semarang 2000-2006. Source: [6].

Figure 2. Revitalization of Kota Lama Semarang based on National Spatial Plan in 2003. Source: [6].

"Social media gives a strong influence on choosing the tourism destination" [9]. When Facebook became popular, a place identity was established through the photo, video and written post uploaded [10]. In this digital era, social media influences the visual representation of Kota Lama Semarang. After the revitalization was completed in 2019, an increasing number of tourists visited Kota Lama Semarang. Nowadays, with technologies and gadgets that are easy to use, especially in accessing social media, people can easily upload photos that express the old city, bringing a significant change in planning and maintaining tourism management. With social media, tourists can easily access and gain information about potential tourism spots to visit as a destination.

The photos taken from their gadget were uploaded to social media and spread continuously through a hashtag or location tag related to Kota Lama Semarang, influencing local and international tourists visiting the destination. Some physical/built features from Kota Lama Semarang, such as corridors, spots, and elements of the building, can be seen in the photos uploaded on social media by searching for the Kota Lama Semarang hashtag or location tag. This research aims to discover the visual representations of Kota Lama Semarang after the revitalization. These visual representations can be seen as a perspective of Kota Lama Semarang from the people and tourists. Furthermore, this visual representation can be discussed and considered by the stakeholders to create and maintain Kota Lama as a whole and parts, especially for conservation and tourism plans.

2. METHODS

This research aims to discover the visual representation of Kota Lama Semarang post-revitalization from social media. Social media was used as part of this research as it plays an essential role in communicating the media in the digital era. The photo-mapping method was used as an analysis method. Instagram was selected as the representative social media for this research due to its focus on image posting, with additional information through the hashtag and location tag. Keyword #kotalamasemarang was used to find relevant Instagram posts or photos, collecting the 100 most popular photos with related keywords and time (2019). Furthermore, these photos were analyzed and organized based on which place the photo was taken, along with the architectural elements included in each photo to see each spot's dominant data. Finally, those groups of places/spots and architectural elements were put into the Kota Lama Semarang map to see the distribution of spots where people like to take photos. The results became a discussion for the next step of heritage conservation within the city precinct by comparing and understanding Kota Lama Semarang's previous revitalizations.

3. REVITALIZATION OF KOTA LAMA SEMARANG AND DIGITAL PLACEMAKING

3.1. *History of Kota Lama Semarang Revitalization*

Some important notes regarding heritage architecture and area conservation in Old City (Kota Lama) Semarang have been discussed since Mayor Sutrisno Suharto led Semarang city in 1990-2000. Those discussions resulted in the Semarang Mayor's published decree about Old and Historic buildings Conservation (Keputusan Walikotamadya Kepala Daerah Tingkat II Semarang No. 646/50/1992). The decree includes: 1. The use of buildings or areas for people's well-being; 2. Supporting the protection of building or area; 3. Drafting local regulation includes law, economy, social-culture, science and technology, people's participation, and management aspects such as general urban plan (Rencana Umum Tata Ruang Kota/RUTRK)/Local Government Regulation Number 2, 1992 [11,12].

In 2003, urban design guidelines for the Kota Lama Semarang area were arranged through Local Regulation Number 8, 2003. This UDGL defined 105 old buildings as conserved buildings that needed to be protected and preserved. Furthermore, this regulation becomes a reference for any revitalization activities. The entire old buildings in the Kota Lama precinct were 245 units. With the specification of 177 buildings privately owned, 68 buildings belong to companies, both private and public sectors, and 105 buildings were conserved [13].

In 2017, the revitalization in the Kota Lama Semarang area was done once again under the supervision of BPK2L (Badan Pengawasan Kawasan Kota Lama Semarang). BPK2L is a designated agency established by the government, with various stakeholders from the government, academicians, and communities. With a total area of 373.7 km2 and a total population of 1.7 million people (2019), Semarang city has made some improvements, including the historical building and area conservation activities. Since more complex problems exist, the revitalization program has decided to operate with a budget of approximately 183 billion rupiahs since 2017. This program aimed to revive the heritage area known as "Little Netherland," built in the Dutch Colonial era in 18 AD.

3.2 *Social Media as An Early Sign of Digital Placemaking*

Information technology advancement, known as ICT, has grown fast and gone through various lines of human life. In fair use, ICT could give an optimal benefit, given that it does not swerve from the social aspect [7]. On the other hand, the presence of ICT could also contribute to some aspects, for example, the formation of social spaces in the city. With the rise of the ICT era, there are other purposes and objectives for visitors in visiting a place; one of them is taking photos and sharing it on social media.

ICT has been widely used in creating placemaking in the planning and design sectors until today. In the planning sector, the term of placemaking related to ICT is popularized as digital placemaking. For heritage, urban development, and local government sectors, digital placemaking offers a range of powerful opportunities to increase the value of public spaces in ways that can translate into economic growth, cultural prosperity, and improving the lives of local communities [14,15,16]. The planning and design sector should consider all opportunities while developing with ICT to increase public spaces' value. Digital placemaking could also give a unique space experience for the public space user. One of the practices that have been done is a digital agency creating a digital kiosk and ICT access to street furniture.

In this era, the development of Industry 4.0 along with Society 5.0 grows rapidly. The implementation of Industry 4.0 will include the connections between humans, systems, and objects that allow an optimized, complete, dynamic, and real-time network. This era's characteristic acts like a network and the interconnection between people, objects, and systems through data exchange in real-time [17]. Whereas Society 5.0 focuses on positioning the human being at the center of technology and innovation, with more modification to benefit the future of humanity [18]. Both of these eras have a basic from the information society, especially digital information based on computers or the internet. With the rapid growth of information technology and society's role, social media plays an early significance and an essential part of giving information faster and easier for the world.

In the present-day, social media alongside information technology and society is applicable for promoting Kota Lama Semarang to the public. By merely creating keywords such as "kotalama," "kotalamasemarang," "semarang," or any words associated with Kota Lama Semarang, related information is generated instantly on the internet by web-search. People could also easily experience the space or ambiance of Kota Lama Semarang by reading the visitor reviews or seeing the uploaded photos. Unconsciously, what people did on social media will attract other local or even international visitors and tourists to experience the heritage precinct directly in its physical environment. Those activities form a new kind of "placemaking" digitally. This phenomenon has encouraged Kota Lama Semarang's conservation activities by enhancing the city precinct's physical qualities, such as building restoration and streetscape improvement.

Figure 3 *Streetscape* at Kepodang Street (left) and Letjen Suprapto Street (right)

In Tiesdell [19], a successful revitalization should enhance and improve the physical quality, local economy, and social-organization rehabilitation. The first step to boost the local economy is by improving the physical quality [20,21]. In the heritage area, this improvement can be achieved through conservation. The purpose of heritage conservation is to preserve the memory and knowledge from the past, pass or transfer it to the present, or even the future. However, in reality, this primary goal of conservation activities could not be achieved easily. It is about the building and the life between buildings that offers an opportunity to be with others in a relaxed and undemanding way [22]. The types of outdoor activities that take place in the cities are; necessary, optional activities, and social activities. Gehl also notices that the physical environment will improve if the area's development also improves the quality of outdoor facilities and more extended stays to boost the city-life experience (Figure 3). From these theories, the process of urban environmental design cannot be exclusive. All aspects of the urban environment, both the physical and activities, must be achieved. These needs must be considered, especially in conservation planning in a heritage environment with physical and historical value.

3.3. *Kota Lama Semarang in Social Media*

In this research, Instagram was selected as representative social media because it concentrates on photo and video sharing, visually observing and feeling the spatial experience. Instagram is not only for personal use but also for social network marketing and promoting a new place. Instagram is different from other social media because it applies a visual-based strategy [23]. Thus, this paper uses Instagram to know how popular Kota Lama Semarang is based on social media visuals. In this media, the popular visual representation of Kota Lama Semarang post revitalization can be analyzed. From 187,000 posts with the hashtag "kotalamasemarang," 100 most popular posts were collected as samples, with seven errors on which the Instagram posts are using the hashtag [24]. The pictures are still not related to Kota Lama Semarang, resulting in the 93 most popular posts as final samples (Figure 4). After analyzing the place included in each post, some places identified are Mandiri Empu Tantular, Ex Lloyd, Rumah Akar (rooted house), GPIB (Christian church), and some other spots in the old town area. The most popular spot taken by the Instagram user is tagged by 14 posts.

Marba building (14 posts), number 11. GPIB (12 posts), and number 10. Rumah Akar (11 posts). These three popular spots are heritage buildings. Marba and GPIB are located at Letjen Suprapto Street, and Rumah Akar is located at Kepodang street (both of these streets are well known. Fourteen popular building spots are located at Letjen Suprapto Street, while the streetscape appears on four posts. Meanwhile, Kepodang street has three popular building spots, and the streetscape appears on eight posts. These three most popular places and streetscapes were included in the revitalization program in 2019.
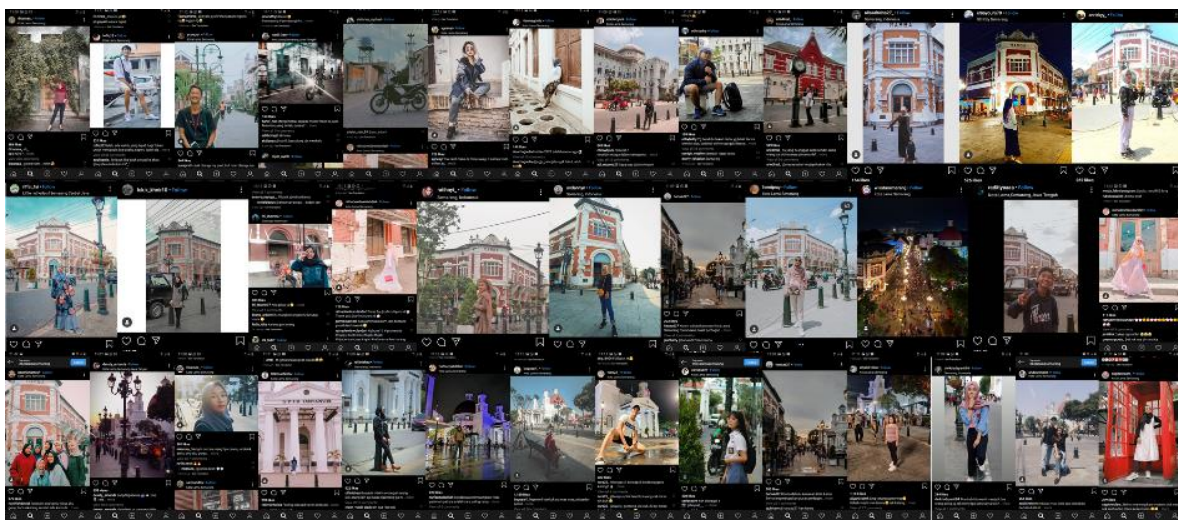
Figure 4. Instagram Posts with Hashtag "kotalamasemarang". Source: [24].

Physical revitalization is closely related to the built environment, such as buildings, parks, infrastructure, and other human-made spaces. The architectural elements are the essential components to attract people to visit Kota Lama Semarang (Table 1). Some architectural elements found on popular Instagram posts are visual components such as building facade, streetscape, building details (walls, doors, windows, or openings), aerial view, and building interior (Figure 7). Based on those five elements, streetscape (53) and building facade (31) photos are the most famous architectural elements taken and uploaded by Instagram users representing Kota Lama Semarang. These streetscape posts are located at Letjen Suprapto street, including the streetscapes in front of Marba and GPIB buildings and Kepodang streetscape.

These findings defined that these most popular architectural elements and spots (Figure 6) are the main attractions and visually attractive to Kota Lama Semarang visitors with social media accounts and Instagram (Figure 5). This finding is also in line with Semarang city's revitalization activities: physical improvement through building restoration (in the facade, interior, and adaptive re-use) and streetscape beautification.

Table 1. Revitalized Building in Kota Lama Semarang

No	Name	Address	Elements				
			Building Façade	Streetscape	Wall and Openings	Aerial View	Interior
1	Letjen Suprapto Streetscape	Letjen Suprapto St.		4			
2	Kota Lama Pool and Resto	Letjen Suprapto St.		1	1		
3	Old City 3D Trick Art Museum	Letjen Suprapto St.			2		
4	Keris Café	Letjen Suprapto St.		1	2		
5	Ikan Bakar Cianjur	Letjen Suprapto St.			3		
6	GPIB	Letjen Suprapto St.	2	11			
7	Telephone Box	Letjen Suprapto St.	1		1		1
8	Marba	Letjen Suprapto St.	11	11	1	1	
9	Spiegel	Letjen Suprapto St	6	4		1	
10	Weeskamer	Letjen Suprapto St	2		2		
11	Filosofi Kopi	Letjen Suprapto St					1
12	Kanisius Pusat	Letjen Suprapto St	1	1			
13	Ex BTPN	Letjen Suprapto St			1		
14	Bloem café	Letjen Suprapto St			1		
15	Branjangan Streetscape	Branjangan St	1	1	1		
16	DMZ 3D Museum	Branjangan St			2		
17	Kepodang Streetscape	Kepodang St		8			
18	Hero Coffee	Kepodang St	1				
19	Ex Lloyd	Kepodang St	1		1		
20	Jiwasraya	Gelatik St	2	1			
21	Rumah Akar	Roda II St		4	8		
22	Oudetrap	near Taman Srigunting		1			
23	Javara Culture	near Taman Srigunting			2		
24	House of GPIB Priest	near Taman Srigunting	1	1			
25	Mandiri Empu Tantular	Empu Tantular St	1	1			
26	Merpati Streetscape	Merpati St		1	1		
27	Suari Streetscape	Suari St		1			
28	Tawang Station	Taman Tawang St	1	1		1	
	Total		31	53	29	3	2
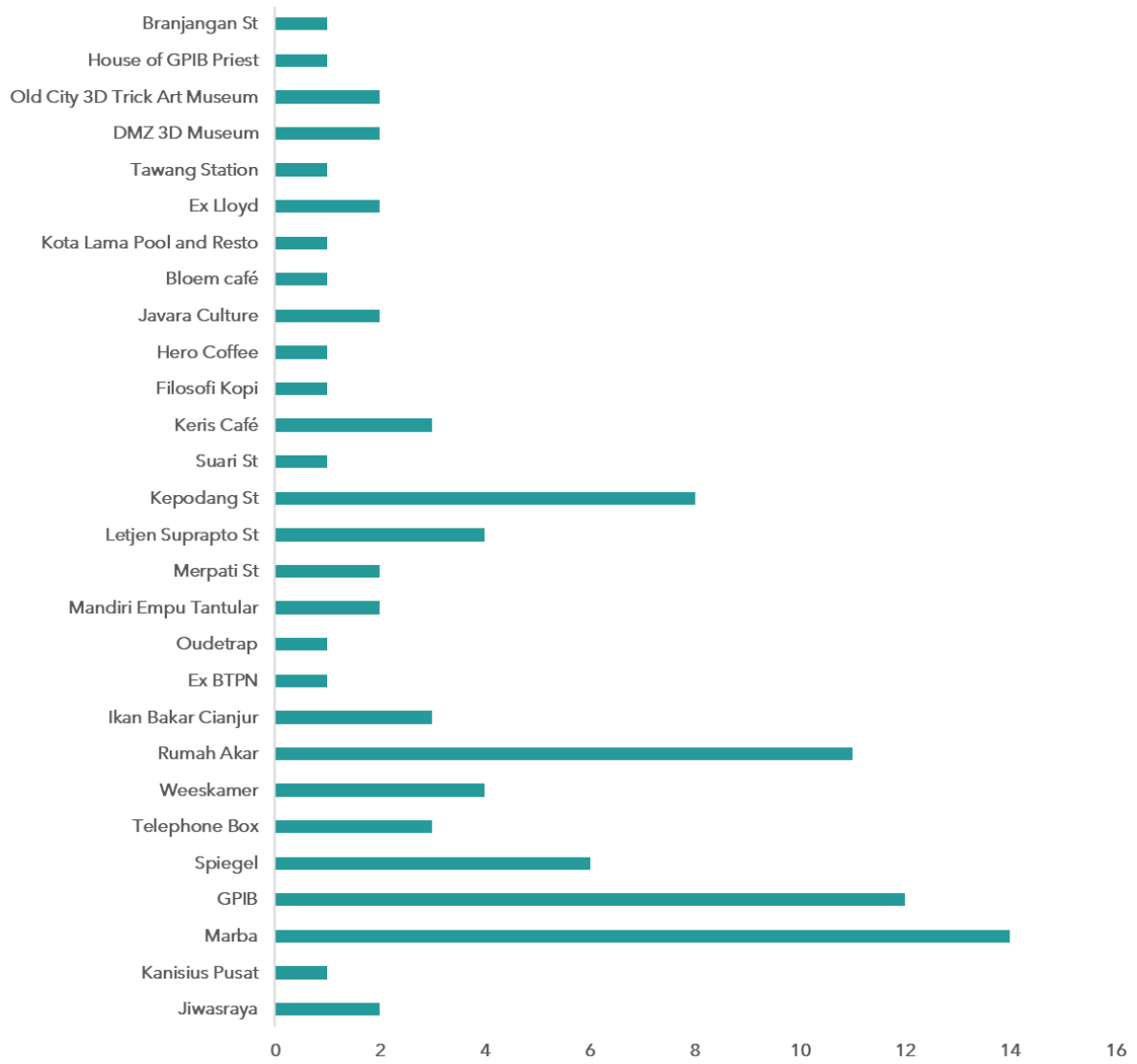
Figure 5. Frequency Data of Photo Spots in Kota Lama Semarang
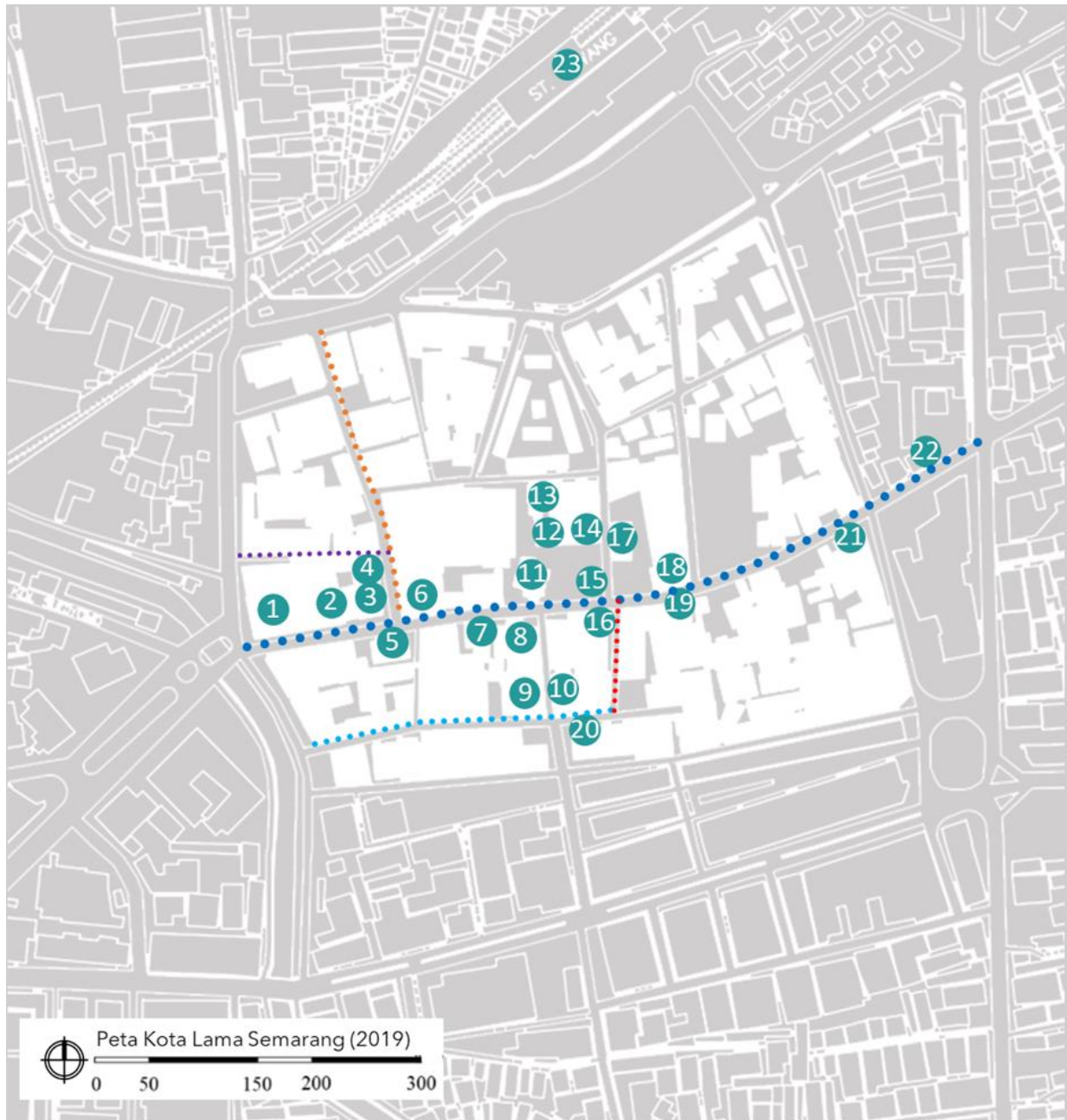
Keterangan:

Mandiri Empu Tantular (2) ①
Kota Lama Pool and Resto (1) ②
Old City 3D Trick Art Museum (2) ③
Bloem Café (1) ④
Keris Café (1) ⑤
DMZ 3D Museum (2) ⑥
Ikan Bakar Cianjur (3) ⑦
Jiwasraya (2) ⑧
Eks Lloyd (2) ⑨
Rumah Akar (11) ⑩
GPIB (12) ⑪

Pastoran GPIB (1) ⑫
Oudetrap (1) ⑬
Javara Culture (2) ⑭
Boks Telepon (3) ⑮
Marba (14) ⑯
Eks BTPN (1) ⑰
Spiegel (6) ⑱
Weeskamer (4) ⑲
Hero Coffee (1) ⑳
Filosofi Kopi (1) ㉑
Kanisius Pusat (1) ㉒
Stasiun Tawang (1) ㉓

Jl Merpati (2) ● ● ●
Jl Letjen Suprapto (4) ● ● ●
Jl Kepodang (8) ● ● ●
Jl Suari (1) ● ● ●
Jl Branjangan (1) ● ● ●

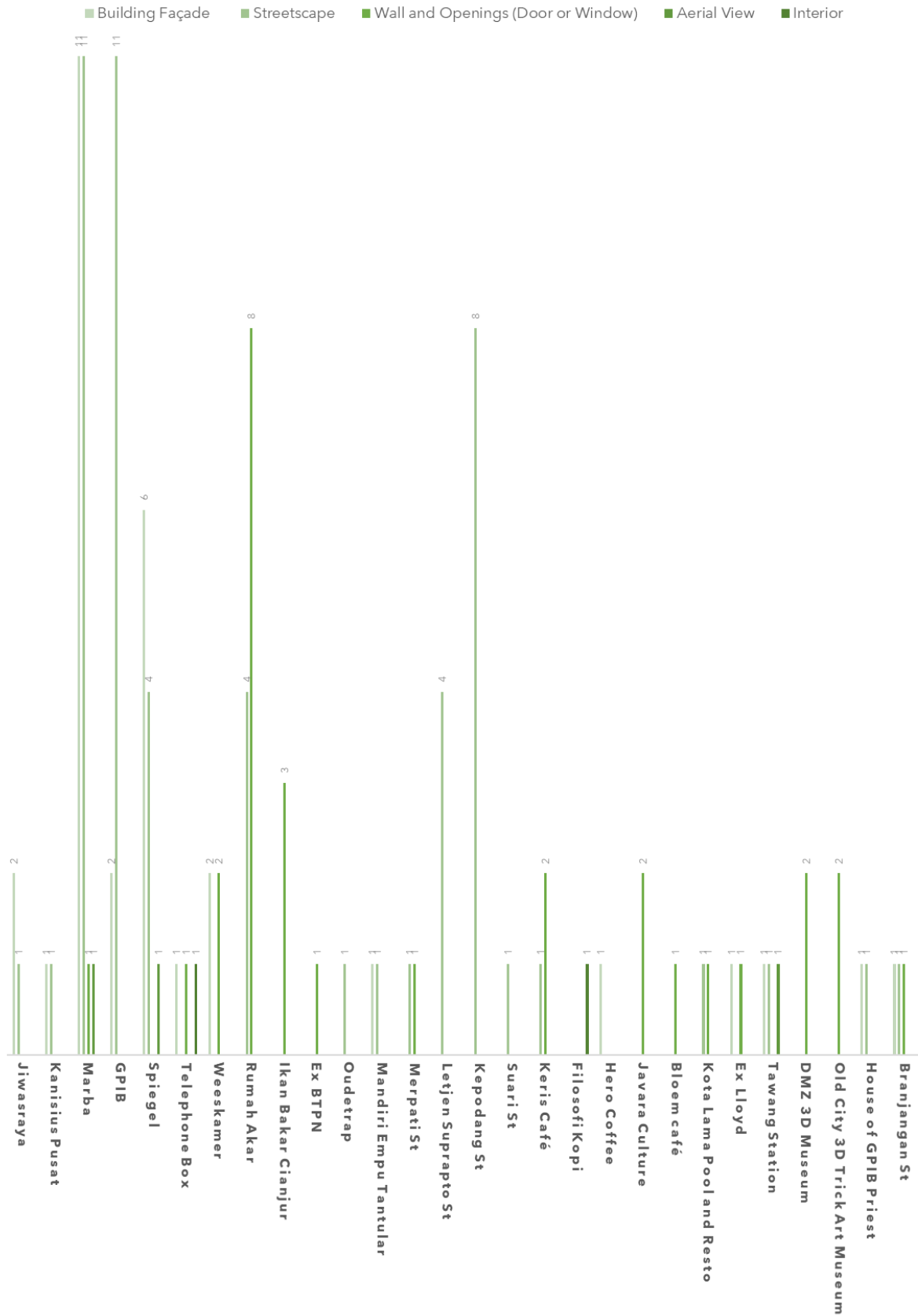**Figure 6.** Map of Kota Lama Semarang.

Figure 7. Architectural Elements Seen in Instagram Photo.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Kota Lama Semarang has taken various steps of revitalization programs to sustain its presence in the future. Activity such as physical improvement stimulates the local community and economy through building adaptive re-use and collaboration from various stakeholders like the government, academicians, and community. The most visible result is the physical improvement within the city precinct. While visually attractive, Kota Lama Semarang needs to offer more activities that are accessible. Various activities from the locals are available, with the main segment concentrated on the tourism sector, alongside food, beverage, and hospitality. Based on Tiesdell and Jan Gehl's theory, Kota Lama Semarang's revitalization improved physical quality while also boosting the local economy. Furthermore, it becomes the designated place for people to interact with each other in a public place. Before the conservation activities, Kota Lama Semarang was a dead city with no economic activities within. However, at some point, conservation activities in Kota Lama Semarang cannot transfer the memory and knowledge from the past.

Meanwhile, good accessibility for Kota Lama Semarang cannot solely depend on physical accessibility. In this ICT era, accessibility regarding information becomes essential, especially for promoting the city precinct. One of the user-friendly and inclusive information-sharing platforms is social media. The Instagram post, which focuses on visual information, is considered suitable for analyzing Kota Lama's place-making digitally in the post revitalization era.

After analyzing the most popular Instagram posts with the photo-mapping method, the result shows that the most uploaded street corridors are Letjen Suprapto Street and Kepodang street, while the most famous buildings uploaded on Instagram are Marba, GPIB, and Rumah Akar. Concerning architectural elements, building facade elements and streetscapes become essential components, as those elements are the most popular visual components posted on Instagram by users. In conclusion, the visual aspect is essential in attracting people's interest in the place, as they want to post it on social media. From a visual aspect, information and space experience can be obtained quickly by everyone, especially in this digital era, where people can search for information about Kota Lama Semarang easily and fast. Revitalization programs have successfully given Kota Lama Semarang the brand new "Little Netherland" identity to people and visitors, with its physical improvement, beautification on streetscapes, and building adaptive reuse.

On the other hand, social media gives a new approach to promote the city precinct, particularly on Instagram. People can notice and experience Kota Lama Semarang's visual elements by searching it on their gadgets. This experience could be understood as a new kind of place-making or so-called digital placemaking.

The conclusion based on the data distribution is that the revitalization in Kota Lama Semarang, particularly on its building, public space, and streetscape, gives a healthy and attractive visual impact to the visitors to take photos and upload them to social media. These elements and spots can promote Kota Lama Semarang's physical development, especially for some less popular spots or spaces with special treatment. More spots are introduced to the visitors; visual and activity diversity will be generated within the area. However, one thing that needs to be taken into notes is that this city precinct's integrity and authenticity should become the revitalization program's primary thoughts, particularly in physical and visual improvement. Otherwise, the outcomes will be limited to aesthetic and attractive beautification, yet the knowledge transfer will be missed. A straightforward example found in Kota Lama Semarang is red telephone boxes at Letjen Suprapto street, as seen on three popular Instagram posts as samples. While the origin of the telephone box is from the UK, it is visually attractive and aesthetic as a photo background. Still, it is imperceptive to Kota Lama Semarang's contextual concept and identity.

Revitalization should make a proper and sensitive intervention because it relates strongly to the visual identity shown to the public, which has limited knowledge about the city precinct. Social media can act as an initial magnet to gain visitors through visual attraction and storytelling to improve the economy and tourism sector in Kota Lama Semarang. Another way to visually understand and experience the city identity is by using virtual reality or augmented reality accessible through their gadgets. For example, people can use augmented technology accessed through mobile phones, containing information and story about history or trivia that can deepen their knowledge about Kota Lama Semarang identity.

Figure 8. Heritage Eye by Bristol City Council. Source:[14]

Besides the pros and cons of beautification in conservation, there are some examples of how technology can bridge history and society. One of the famous application of conservation walk in Bristol is Heritage Eye. This application is a pilot by Bristol City

Council, which replaced the lengthy paper-based forms with a streamlined app, available to everyone (Figure 8). Bristol residents could report possible risks to local heritage sites in minutes, cutting out bureaucracy levels, and democratizing the process [3].

Based on the two theories, improving physical quality is necessary because there are direct benefits. In the case of the Kota Lama Semarang, this impact is seen immediately as an increase in the local economy. The previously neglected areas are now starting to come back to life through social media and become functional. However, from a conservation point of view, some objectives have not been fully achieved. The delivery of this place's meaning and value has not been fully conveyed to the public. Several ways can be achieved to bridge between history, conservation goals, and the existence of ICT as a tool in the digital era.

Another way to introduce history through social media is by making a virtual tour to educate and promote a place. One real project from the Kota Lama Semarang community is a virtual tour of Kota Lama Semarang (Figure 9). This virtual tour is designed to give the viewer who cannot go directly to Kota Lama Semarang, a more real-time view of the location, and is presented by one or more guides. In Architecture or Urban Design, a virtual tour is often used to describe a place using various videos of photographs. It is also a visual-based experience but has a deeper meaning because the audience also hears the story from the guide about the objects' value or history. This alternative is a wise choice to use social media in architecture and conservation both on Instagram or other platforms to reach the purpose of conservation itself.

Figure 9. Virtual tour from one of the communities in Kota Lama Semarang. Source: [25]

5. CONCLUSION

In the era of Industry 4.0 or Society 5.0, the disruptive nature of the current period to the future leads to the necessity that the conception of conservation as part of an urban strategy requires re-understanding to respond to globalization/modernization. Without being careful in responding, the concept of conservation will not achieve

its objectives and only become a process of beautification without any continuation of these efforts. Until now, revitalization activities are still limited to beautification. For the long term, these activities must pay attention to the local context and activities from surrounding communities to improve the Old City of Semarang quality.

The role of conservation activities will undoubtedly include the following: first, conservation is no longer limited solely to aesthetic issues but part of the community's social responsibility in interpreting their environment. Second is, for rapid disruptive changes, the role of conservation is to maintain cultural artifacts with all their attributes and allow an opportunity to control the change in a better direction. The third is that conservation is limited to preserving and efforts to define and create the environment's quality. Fourth is, conservation activities have a part in creating an inclusive environment, so that the machine needs to involve the broadest possible participation of stakeholders.

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