



had to be paid to the rules of military architecture. Beside this, it was required to plan and design sufficient building space for the merchants and their commercial administration, warehouses to store the merchandise, a church, a hospital, and of course to house of a military garrison including an ammunition store. In the light of all this, it is clear that this refers to a small town, an extremely little organized European 'look-alike' enclave in an enormous Asian setting. The final choice for the location of such a settlement depended on prevailing environmental characteristics and a sound observation of the strategic and functional conditions, like a position near a river or a natural sea harbour, or the vicinity of a settlement with a local governmental or trading community.

As its power grew, the VOC considered it essential to have a rendezvous harbour with central management facilities, possibilities for storage and coordination facilities for the home fleet to The Netherlands. The result was the founding of Batavia on the north coast of Java. With this objective in mind, in 1619, the Dutch Governor-General of the VOC (Jan Pieterz. Coen) arrived in Java from the Moluccas with a fleet of sixteen ships and a band of military troops. After an armed struggle, the settlement Jayakarta, on the northwest coast of Java, was razed to the ground, and Batavia was established on the ashes.

This was not the first or the last time the VOC was embroiled in local politics. In the later years, too, the Compagnie could not escape involvement in regional political quarrels. A concrete illustration is fortress Vredeborg (1760) in Yogyakarta, which was built opposite to the Kraton of the Sultan. I regard it as the ultimate example of urban planning based on power and politics.

#### *Architecture, references and development*

In the main settlements on Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Java, the VOC set up its civil engineering activities in Public Works Quarters (Ambachtskwartieren). Carpenters, bricklayers, the smith, other skilled labourers had workshops there and in Batavia thousands of slaves were involved too (Stavorinus 1793, II:215).

The leading skilled European labourers were allowed to work privately as well and often they were the designers or contractors in the commercial building industry. For example, the third town hall of Batavia (1707-12), nowadays the Jakarta Historical Museum, was designed by J.W. van der Velde, head of Public Works. The construction was carried out under supervision of Jan Kemmer, chief carpenter of the VOC. Contractors of Chinese origin also played a substantial part to the building industry. They worked for both the VOC and private citizens.

[Insert here]

Figure 2. The town hall of Batavia in the nineteenth century, photograph by Woodbury & Page (Source Merrillees 2000:45).

Throughout the whole VOC era, it was usual for bricks to be imported from The Netherlands, for instance the small yellow IJssel brick, which nowadays may still be found as paving material. Ordinary bricks were also produced locally. As early as the initial VOC period, brickworks and limekilns were to be found in the vicinity of the town. It was said that the pools on the Buffelveld (later Koningsplein and nowadays Medan Merdeka) were created because the clay was needed for the production of bricks (De Haan 1919:Paragraph 1114). Very early in its period in power, the VOC announced rules for standardizing and modifying

bricks, roof and floor tiles. There were even specially appointed supervisors who kept an eye on production and any breaking of the rules could lead to a financial penalty. In the town hall of Batavia, the templates used to establish the form, details and measurement of the standard product were displayed and the building industry had to comply with these.

The VOC did not set out any aesthetic guidelines delineating the outward appearance of the architecture of its buildings. The design had to satisfy elementary and functional requirements. The VOC was overwhelmingly preoccupied with the function of its structures, which was certainly not the same as having a coherent vision of architecture. The style and model were obviously derived from the knowledge and workmanship known in the home country and besides this expertise there were the Portuguese examples to be kept in mind. Incontrovertibly, Chinese contractors shaped form and detail, and later indigenous Javanese architecture influenced the appearance of the mansions built outside the city walls. As the VOC building production was primarily pragmatic, a construction was not designed or made to become an object of prestigious architecture. The opposite could be said about the sometimes extravagant mansions of high-ranking VOC employees in the eighteenth century, which could tend towards the palatial.

A few authors in the early-twentieth century considered VOC architecture to be Dutch, derived more or less directly from The Netherlands (Bosboom 1898; De Haan 1919; Van de Wall 1942). I consider such an opinion contentious and when subjected to a deeper analysis it does not hold water.

Regarding the urban layout of Batavia, a different conclusion can be drawn. The rectangular urban grid, featuring main axes, canals, a square, secondary through fares, and moats is often compared with the ideal urban layout conceived by Simon Stevin (1548-1620), the mathematician and advisor to Prince Maurits in works of military defence (Van Oers 2000:40, 79).

[Insert here]

Figure 3. Three small houses, Batavia ca. 1750 (Source De Haan 1923, 2:B4).

The houses built within the circumvallation of Batavia were described as fairly tall with a narrow façade and plastered walls inset with crossbar windows provided with rattan wickerwork for ventilation. As in The Netherlands, they were built as terraced houses, but with conspicuously small courtyards. The outward architectural aspect differed largely from the Dutch town house. The tiled roofs were parallel projected to the front streets, so it was possible to construct overhanging roof eaves to shelter the plastered façade and keep the sun off. Along the front façade of the houses was a small private area, the *stoep* (stoop), with a depth of about five feet and at both sides a small seat. Sometimes the *stoep* was separated from the public pedestrian pavement zone by a lower fence, which actually disappeared in the eighteenth century. This pedestrian zone, the *voorstoepe*, was paved with red ceramic tiles or blue stone, to a depth of about six feet. The roads were unpaved, just covered with coral stone and rubble. The phenomenon *stoep* was well known in The Netherlands as well, often separated from the public domain by poles of blue stone and tarred iron chains. In Batavia, when the evening fell, the people used to sit in front of their houses on the *stoep*, drinking a little, smoking a pipe and having conversations with neighbours or people passing by. In Batavia-Malay, the *stoep* was called *serambi*, from *serambi luar* the roof-covered veranda of

the indigenous house. Sometimes the *stoep* was covered by a secondary additional roof or by bigger overhanging eaves of the main roof, both supported by wooden columns. This type of *serambi* is an architectural precursor of the front veranda of the archetypical Indies house in the nineteenth century.

A small courtyard separated the house from the slave's quarters at the rear. The lifestyle different to that in Europe, the humid tropical climate, the building material available and last but not least the idiosyncratic skills of the local workers, this all influenced the architectural product. The establishment of the VOC in Asia generated what might be called hybrid architecture. The idea of a European functional perception should be recognized and in these buildings the willingness to create a product with references to Europe can be observed. The final result, however, was a product of multi-cultural interaction.

The Reverend François Valentijn lived in Batavia a year, in 1706, before he left for Ambon, the main VOC settlement in the Moluccas. He rented a big house on the prestigious Tjersgracht and at the beginning of the eighteenth century, back in The Netherlands, he wrote his impressive publication (eight volumes) *Beschrijving van Oost-Indiën* (Description of the East-Indies). He made a link between the tropical heat in Batavia-town and the merits of his house and wrote:

The heat in the streets and outside could be terrific in the daytime, however after five in the afternoon it is cooled down. In the houses no one takes any notice of the heat, because there are verandas, which are kept cool and dark by curtains and if there would be chance of some breeze it would blow in our windows through the open basket-work of rattan (Valentijn 1726, IV A:230).

Valentijn lived and worked for a long time on the island Ambon in service of the VOC and gave also an impression of his house there. He wrote about the great veranda at the front of the house, which was 92 feet long and a depth of 8 feet. The house had a back veranda, adjoining rooms at both sides and the courtyard had the caboose or kitchen and more than twenty rooms for the slaves. His experience was that it was very comfortable to live in these houses, because inside they were cool and they had just one storey because of frequent earthquakes (Valentijn 1724, II:128).

Valentijn certainly did not describe these houses as resembling those in The Netherlands. On the contrary he did his utmost to describe them as typical products in harmony with tropical conditions.

The interior demonstrated various influences and obviously differed from the domestic interiors in The Netherlands. The plinths on the plastered walls were often made of porcelain tiles from China, paving the ground floor were red ceramic tiles produced in Java and later on even marble tiles from Ormuz in the Persian Gulf. The pillars and balusters of staircases might have beautiful (partly gold painted) woodcarving, also found in the upper lights in doorframes. This, combined with the reddish-brown colours of the door and window frames, betrayed Chinese influences in the interior.

The exterior façades were made of brick, mainly plastered. In the early days of the VOC coral stone was also used, but this has extraordinary capillary features making it very porous and the walls were permanently damp, exuding a certain smell. Initially the façades were built with open cross-bar windows, furnished with iron rails, often in combination with rattan

matting in the upper lights of the windows for ventilation. Later the fashion changed to glazed English-style sash windows, though in the rear façades of a house the rattan matting survived for a long period.

The architectural quality of the public buildings displayed a sober regularity, but it is remarkable that the entrances, door- and gateways were often more detailed. Like the entrance to the Portuguese Buitenkerk, Gereja Sion has a tympanum with Doric pilasters, the Watergate of the Batavia Castle a random cornice, and the Batavia town hall a portico.

### *Outside the city walls*

By the second half of the seventeenth century, the VOC was firmly established and it was safe to go outside the walls. The people of Batavia discovered the richness of the tropical environment and the more well-to-do set about planting their gardens, *thuynen*, around and outside the walls of Batavia town. The designation ‘garden’ is actually an understatement of what happened in those days, which was real landscape architecture, featuring ponds, statues and sculptures, and trees and shrubs in which garden houses were situated. At first these were small but it was not long before real country houses were built. This transformation continued throughout the eighteenth century. The owners of such a country house used to live there the whole year, although it was common to keep a house in old Batavia-town as well.

The amplitude of land available coupled with the luxuriant nature of Java must have exerted great influence on the architecture of country houses as well. However, some people still built houses in a rigid European style relieved by some flirtation with Baroque or Rococo, filtered by the tropical conditions. The house of the former Governor-General Reinier de Klerk built in 1760 on the Molenvlietsche dijk (Jl. Gadjah Mada) is such an example (Passchier 2005:207-13).

[Insert here]

Figure 4. The house of Reinier de Klerk, Batavia, 1760 (Photograph Cor Passchier 2002).

Others discovered and copied a more vernacular approach to architectural design; the house in relationship to nature was regarded as a major asset. In particular the Perkeniers houses on Banda are examples of such a handshake with a more indigenous style. But more often there is proof of the inception of new ideas and a conceptual mixture was built; the ground floor opened onto verandas, but the floor on the first level was more closed in keeping with the European tradition. It is interesting to pause and think that the owners were often raised or worked all their lives in the East: in India, Ceylon, Java and other exotic places. Their unforced relationship with the tropical environment was obvious and related to an acceptance of a local life-style.

The wealthier VOC employee displayed his richness by owning an opulent house. In the ‘East’ as they said: you have to express your wealth and monopoly on power with a demonstration of splendour and flamboyance. This could sometimes result in an overabundance of architectural expression. Such an example was the house ‘Weltevreden’, built around 1750, by the Governor-General J. Mossel and enlarged by his successor Governor-General A. van der Parra. The architecture of the façades was deliberately designed in an extra ordinary fashion to show the occupant’s position in the social hierarchy and of course his financial means. The house and the garden resembled Versailles in France. The main building

was two storeys high and the false front façade suggested that there were three storeys. The whole was embellished with roof sculptures in the form of large eagles. It was demolished in 1820. Its physical presence may have disappeared, but the name remained and the area was long known as 'Weltevreden', later *Batavia-centrum*, nowadays Jakarta Pusat.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the VOC went bankrupt. On 31 December 1799 this was declared and the Dutch government took over.

### *Intermezzo*

The period 1800-16 is virtually synonymous with turbulence and uncertainty, which finally ended with the introduction of a new form of colonial entity. Obviously, this period may be regarded as an interlude of great significance in the development of architecture and urban planning.

In the era of the VOC, the settlements were first and foremost trading stations, rendezvous and transit harbours. Urban settlements were basically laid out on military principles, although in time the richer residents built their country houses outside the walls.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, The Netherlands and its colonies fell under the influence and control of France, which was at war with England. The threat of an invasion of the main island of Java by the British was recognized as a serious possibility. Herman Willem Daendels, a former military General, who had served in the French army, was sent to the Netherlands Indies to become Governor-General under the aegis of the Batavian Republic. After an eleven-month voyage, Marshal Daendels arrived in Batavia on 1 January 1808 and he more than any of his predecessors had the authority to undertake radical measures if necessary.

Daendels can be considered a very extraordinary person in the long list of governors-general and we can also hail him as a planner and project developer, probably far in advance of his time. Among the main issues during the short period of his administration, the most conspicuous was the construction of the 'Groote Postweg', the long road along the north coast of Java (about 1000 km). It was completed in 1810. It claimed the lives of many local people who were enforced to help with construction work (Nas and Pratiwo 2002). The other most prestigious project was the establishment of the new satellite-town Weltevreden to the south of Batavia. This project envisaged a new settlement with government offices, army facilities, and leisure, provision and housing amenities for the European inhabitants. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, living in the old walled town of Batavia was awfully unhealthy. The mortality rates revealed frightening figures and Batavia was called the graveyard of East. In accordance with his instructions, Daendels decided to plan the new town and called it Weltevreden after the name of the former rural estate at the location. The project site was connected to old Batavia town by an already existing infrastructure of main roads and canals. A new Government House was planned, which was to replace the old VOC castle. Weltevreden was supposed to be the new central government heart of the Netherlands Indies. Symbolically, the Government House was partly built using bricks provided by the demolition of the castle and the walls once surrounding Batavia.

[Insert here]

Figure 5. Government House, Weltevreden-Batavia, 1809-29, photograph by Woodbury & Page (Source Merrillees 2000:193).

In June 1809 construction work started on the foundations, although the architectural drawings had not yet been made by the beginning of April 1809. Apparently Daendels was in a hurry. The construction was not yet finished when Daendels had to leave Java. In 1811, when the threat of a British invasion of Java grew more serious, Napoleon recalled him to Europe. General J.W. Janssens who succeeded him had to surrender four months after his inauguration and handed over the colonial government to the British. Thomas Stamford Raffles became governor-general. During Raffles' term in office, a new Department of Public Buildings and Works was established. Despite such formal steps, the building industry did not flourish. In 1816, the colony was handed over to the Dutch government again.

*Public works, the colonial army and architectural mannerism*

At the end of 1818 the Department was split into 'Civil Buildings and Transport' and 'Public Works', directly under the aegis of the Department of Finance. As colonial civil servants representing the government, the residents were responsible for the construction works in their region. For any important undertaking they needed the approval from the governor-general; only Batavia had its own professional chief inspector.

In 1827 a reorganization was carried out: the two separate sections were merged and named 'Waterstaat en Landsgebouwen'. After 1854, the Department was known as 'Burgerlijke Openbare Werken' or 'BOW' (Civil Public Works). The BOW was principally an organization of civil engineers, responsible for the construction of roads, bridges, irrigation works, and similar services. Most of these men had been educated at the Polytechnic College in Delft (The Netherlands). They were also entrusted with the designing of public buildings and the houses for officials in government service. These engineers had not been specifically educated as architects. In many cases they made use of architecture manuals (De Bruyn 1851; Van Lakerveld and Brocx 1864), which led to architectural mannerism and a mechanical application of the classic conventions.

The military engineers in the colonial army were the other group educated in civil engineering who also fulfilled a role as architects. These military officers were normally involved in the construction of military edifices, such as fortifications, bridges but also in the designing of barracks for the troops and the houses for army officers. In a society dominated by governmental officials and the colonial army, there were no architects, neither in the employ of the government, or privately commissioned. Particularly in the first decades of the nineteenth century, army officers were frequent involved in the construction of buildings in the public and private sectors. The Government House (1809) on Waterlooplein (Waterloo Square, now Lapangan Banteng) was designed by Major J.C. Schultze, who was also the architect of the club building 'De Harmonie' (1809). In Surabaya Captain J.P. Ermeling was the architect of the club building 'Concordia' and the orphanage (1849).

[Insert here]

Figure 6. Willemskerk, Protestant church Batavia, 1834 (Photograph Cor Passchier 1992).

A really astonishing example is Willemskerk in Batavia (Gereja Emmanuel 1834). Its design was made by a (land) surveyor of Public Works (Department Waterstaat), Jan Hendrik Horst, a lower-ranking employee born in the Netherlands Indies. No other buildings designed

by him have yet been discovered. Probably he was only occasionally involved as an architect or he may have functioned as a draughtsman for an (until now) unknown architect in The Netherlands. This remarkable church has a ground plan in the form of a circle with a domed roof and portico on the front façade, embellished with Doric columns. On the face of it, it would seem to have been the work of an experienced architect, which as far as we know now, he was not.

### *Architecture in the nineteenth century*

Colonial style is a term often used by American authors, whereas the British use Imperial style. These are actually very general terms and very unsatisfactory to use in an architectural-historical survey. The term Indies architecture, sometimes in use for the architecture in the Netherlands Indies, also falls short as it is some sort of container conception and ineffective in any attempt to determine the architectural approach to a building design.

Colonial architecture, as a term related to a socio-historical perception, regularly stands for the presence of colonial rule and power; the public building as a statement, a symbol for intimidation and repression. The nineteenth-century building suggests being a reflection or reminiscent of the buildings of the Roman Empire: the use of the colonnade with a Doric (Greek or Roman) capital, or in Tuscan, Ionic, Corinthian or composite orders, the tympanum, the oversized dimensions in the interior and the like. Indubitably it differs from the developments in architecture in The Netherlands and was probably influenced by British colonial architecture.

My conclusion has to be that research into the significance of the British interregnum (1811-16) in the colony and in particular its influence on architectural development may still be considered an as yet untrodden area. Another unsolved mystery is the time spent in Java by the architect George Drumgold Coleman. As a twenty-four year old architect, educated in Dublin and London, he arrived in Batavia from Calcutta (1819) in response to a private Dutch request (Goh Hwee Leng 1992:40). He was asked to design a cathedral and a Scottish church, but these projects were not accomplished. It is mentioned that he was involved in the designing of private buildings and sugar-mills. This snippet of information is very interesting, because in 1822 Coleman went to Singapore and became Superintendent of Public Works and later an architect-contractor as well. As architect, he was responsible for the construction of public and private buildings, bridges and the like and is regarded as the most important architect in Singapore in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The question of any influence on the appearance of architecture and its development during the time Coleman spent in the Indies is interesting. Probably, this eminent architect was even more important to the architectural approach in the Netherlands Indies during his Singapore period. Singapore may have been the natural enemy (in an economic sense) of Batavia, but it was also ineluctably a role model, an example, as a new more modern town.

[Insert here]

Figure 7. Indies house in Java, nineteenth century, photograph by Woodbury & Page (Source Merrillees 2000: 243).

In the architectural product of the nineteenth century, the images of neo-classicism and eclecticism are dominant. The spacious Indies mansion is an icon of the architecture in this

century. The enormous tiled roof, the colonnades, and the verandas at the front and at the back symbolize the identity of a whole era. Quoting the review in the Encyclopaedia of the Netherlands-Indies:

The way of life of Europeans differs from that in The Netherlands. The houses are open and breezy. They are usually built at some distance from each other, with a spacious front and back garden. Just a ground floor with a front and back veranda, the immense inner hall with rooms on both sides and in the backyard two wings of outer buildings, connected the house by roofed corridors. Here we find the servants quarters, stores, bathroom and latrine, the mews and stable for the horses. The walls, both external and internal are plastered and white washed, the façades have a plinth of black coal tar, the floor consists of marble blue or red tiles, grey or coloured cement often covered with rattan mats. The sun is kept out by jalousies and screens. The front yard, the stairway and often the front verandas are decorated with flowerpots lime washed, white or rose (Encyclopaedie 1901, I:5 13).

and further on:

Compared with Europe, more attention is paid to cleanliness and cuisine. The European takes a bath twice a day, breakfast consists of meat and eggs, at one o'clock a large rice meal of rice (*rjsttafel*) with curry and several side dishes as there are spiced eggs and meat, steak, potatoes, vegetables and fruit. At five o'clock there is tea and at eight or nine a complete European dinner (Encyclopaedie 1901, I:5 13).

The use of the classic architectural order in the nineteenth-century Indies house is also an expression derived from and familiar to the kind of architecture used for public buildings. The neo-classic colonnade is synonymous with status and obviously was the prerogative of the ruling class. This architectural tool (the column, colonnade) is, even nowadays, an architectural impression used to convey the same old message. Some houses for the *nouveau riche* are still built with a portico, a colonnade and in the *kampung* neighbourhoods of the poor people it can be found in their houses, produced on a scale of one to four or there about, prefabricated in concrete and sold along the roadside. The impact of the (archetypical) Indies house has been incredible and the colonnade in actual housing is a legacy from former colonial days to the present elite in its striving for status.

The Indies house probably is derived from different origins: the British bungalow as a theme, the floor plan is obviously influenced by Javanese architecture; the architectural appearance reflects both, classic and Javanese references.

As already mentioned in passing, the architectural design was often based on the use of manuals, which offered a choice of houses in different sizes, all related to the neo-classical style idiom. For reasons of both hierarchy and economy, the central government felt the need to regulate the different types of housing for the diverse higher- and lower-ranking governmental officials (1854) and later on the decreed standard designs for the housing of the indigenous regents (*bupati*) (1870), followed by standards for the European district officers (*resident* and *controleur*) (1879); these rules were constantly modified. The government might was the leading party, which set the standards of housing in the complicated socially

divided colonial society. The housing standard linked to social position and wages was of great influence on housing in the private sector (then a minority) as well.

### *Exploitation of a colony, intervention and development*

After the consolidation of Dutch colonial government in Java and parts of Sumatra and Sulawesi, the economic independence (read, the financial profits for The Netherlands) of the colony became a subject of serious discussion. In the year 1830, the so-called Cultuurstelsel (Cultivation System) was introduced, a system of governmental exploitation of agriculture in the island of Java. On an annual basis, the indigenous population had to deliver a certain amount of agriculture products to the government, this together with the provision of (limited) free labour in the construction and maintenance of public works. The control on the planting and production was the responsibility of government officers; they worked together with the Javanese regents (*bupati*), local rulers appointed by the colonial government. The Cultuurstelsel indeed brought profits to the colonizing country, but was throughout its implementation constantly a subject of criticism, even considered as a sort of slavery by some critics. The decision, to administer the colony as a unit of agriculture production brought radical changes in the attitude to the right of intervention of the government in the domestic society. No longer was this confined to the coastal settlements, but now impinged on the rural hinterland as well. It brought, as a matter of course, the necessity to develop and improve public works such as roads, irrigation works and later the railways (1873).

In 1870, the Cultuurstelsel was abolished and the system of free economic enterprise was unleashed. From then on it was possible for the private sector to obtain uncultivated land on long lease from the government and private financial investment became possible.

Not only did the economic structure alter, the European colonial society was undergoing changes as well. More than ever, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, thousands of Europeans migrated to the colony, including an increasing number of women. In 1871, the first telegraph connection between Java and Europe became a reality. Inexorably the colonial society became more 'European'. The upper class of the Eurasian inhabitants focused more on The Netherlands. The distance between the colonizer and those who were colonized became larger. Particularly in the greater cities in Java, it was possible, as an European, to live and work without having social contact with the Indonesians (except servants) or to converse in a local language, not even in correct Malay, the lingua franca in the Indonesian Archipelago in those days.

It is often said that cities like Batavia, Semarang or Surabaya were actually European settlements, but this does not mean that these cities were similar to those in Europe. The colonial town, since the days of the VOC, had featured a certain system approximating 'Apartheid', although no such term was ever voiced then. The image and appearance of the colonial town were an expression of colonial society. In comparison with Europe, there were great differences in the arrangement of the urban areas and architectural morphology. The colonial town with the European commercial districts and neighbourhoods also encompassed Chinese quarters characterized by shophouses and warehouses, Arab quarters and the indigenous *kampung* areas. This combined with the differences in climate produced an ambience and urban environment quite dissimilar to a European town.

Keeping pace with the turbulent changes in colonial society, at the end of the nineteenth century the approach to the architectural product changed as well. The alluring opportunity

for commercial investment was the greatest stimulus behind the increase in European population. The construction of railways and road infrastructure made the inland accessible and the expansion of (hinterland) cities like Bandung and Malang possible. On the northeast coast of Sumatra, an enormous agricultural industry was booming and the new city of Medan was based on it. Building contractors became more professional and the first architects from The Netherlands arrived. New times brought new needs and a different style of architecture; the days of the Netherlands Indies neo-classical architecture were numbered. In a review of the products of the nineteenth century, the architect P.A.J. Moojen wrote:

Spiritless copies of a soulless neo-Hellenism, bad copies of sad examples, those silent white witnesses of a century of tastelessness and incapacity to create (Moojen 1907a:35).

From the beginning of the twentieth century, the new towns and urban areas featured the atmosphere of a 'look alike' European concept, with the houses designed to suit the needs of a European middle-class family, although the floor plans still reflected to the Indonesian conditions and tropical way of life.

#### *New times, new architecture*

The origins of modern 'Western' architecture are difficult to determine, but they are rooted somewhere in the middle of the nineteenth century. The Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace in London (1851) is commonly seen as a stimulating and important new development in architecture. The exhibition building designed by Sir Joseph Paxton was constructed of iron and glass, and compiled of elements designed for mass production. The Exhibition was a great success; the countries of the World displayed their divergent products and there was also a large collection of objects from Asia and Africa. This confrontation with other cultures was a very surprising experience for many Europeans. The level of artistic quality and the fact that these products represented an original (non-eclectic) creativity had an enormous impact. This discovery influenced the development of various arts, including architecture, and elicited serious discussion about the attitude of the architect in a fast changing and industrializing Western world.

The philosopher John Ruskin and the designer William Morris in Britain, as well as the architect Gottfried Semper in Germany were the leaders in a discussion arguing for renewal. Gottfried Semper thought it very important to work on the possibilities to produce simple and relevant objects for the common people. In France, it was the architect Violet le Duc, who was extremely interested in the clearness of technical construction kept in coherence with architectural form. He pronounced form to be a logical consequence of construction. In The Netherlands, the architect P.J.H. Cuypers became a dedicated follower of Violet le Duc in his strive for a rational approach to architectural form. He designed the Central Railway Station (1874) and Rijksmuseum (1876), both in Amsterdam. Another important and remarkable innovator was the Dutch architect H.P. Berlage, a generation younger than Cuypers. Berlage studied architecture at the Polytechnic School in Zürich, where Semper had been Professor since 1855. In various publications and lectures Berlage recalled the conceptions and ideas of Gottfried Semper.

Considering the developments in architecture in The Netherlands, the origin of the modern movement may probably be situated somewhere in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Berlage was not just an architect but also a town planner (urban designer of the Amsterdam South area) and importantly an erudite person imbued with a desire to proclaim a message. In 1911, Berlage visited the USA, where the work of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright in particular attracted his attention. In 1912, he published a study on the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, which was the first important contribution about him and introduced the work of this modern architect to The Netherlands. Berlage's relationship with Indonesia began when he designed the office of an assurance company in Surabaya (East-Java 1900) and then another in Batavia (1913). In 1923, Berlage finally visited the Netherlands Indies himself and travelled over Java, Bali and Sumatra. Back in The Netherlands he delivered various lectures, wrote about Netherlands Indies architecture and published his book *Mijn Indische reis* (My Indies voyage, 1931). The extraordinary contribution of Berlage to the development of architecture in the Netherlands Indies was his promotion of the most superb architecture, as he saw it; he took this architecture out of its colonial isolation.

Looking at the turn of the century, it is impossible to ignore the significance of the architect, town planner and painter P.A.J. Moojen. He was educated at the academy in Antwerp and arrived in Batavia in 1903, when he was twenty-four years old. From the beginning, particularly in his first years, he pronounced clear statements about the quality of architecture and criticized the degeneration of the architectural product, as he saw it. He opposed the Empire style as an 'unspiritual imitation and dead Hellenism'. Moojen was very concerned about the preservation of the architectural heritage in the Netherlands Indies. He adopted a critical attitude to the department of Public Works (BOW) and wrote about the lack in architectural education of the engineers who were responsible for the design of public buildings. The publication of Moojen (1907) concurred with the opinion prevalent in the BOW as well. Moojen's proposal was to establish a special BOW architectural section, the architect-engineer A. Snuyf was designated architect in 1909. Some years later (1912), the BOW reorganized and finally was given a real architectural section, the 'Afdeling Gebouwen' (Moojen 1907b).

[Insert here]

Figure 8. Water tower of Palembang by architect S. Snuyf, 1928 (Photograph Cor Passchier 1995).

The private architect Moojen manifested himself as a critical observer precisely in a period in which questions were being asked and a search for renewal was prevalent. The time was ripe for him to find a willing ear in the government and public sphere. In 1918, the central government commissioned him to survey the condition of the culturally valuable buildings in Bali. Coincidentally, this was just after the earthquake in January 1917. He produced his report and suggestions in 1920 (Moojen 1926).

As president of the Bond van Nederlandsch-Indische Kunstkringen en Nederlandsch-Indische Heemschut (Society of Arts and Heritage), he pleaded for legislation to protect historically and culturally important buildings by listing them as cultural heritage. The government issued the *Monumenten ordonnantie* (Ordinance on Monuments) in 1931. The

ordinance was finally abrogated in 1992, when the Indonesian government replaced it by a new law on Archaeology and Monuments (Law 1992-5).

### *The beginning of a new century*

The so-called 'ethical course' in colonial politics is often traced to the men who published critical statements about the colonial conditions in the Netherlands Indies at the end of the nineteenth century. It was the Semarang journalist Pieter Brooshooft who had written (since 1884) about the prejudicial Dutch colonial exploitation and he found a comrade-in-arms in C.Th. van Deventer, a jurist and colonial specialist in the Dutch parliament, who wrote the article *Een eereschuld* (A debt of honour 1916, original 1899). In this he drew attention to the worrying situation of the indigenous population and insisted that the colony should be governed on a basis of justice and probity.

At the opening of the Dutch parliament in September 1903, Queen Wilhelmina delivered a speech in which she mentioned the moral mission of the Dutch government towards the indigenous population. This speech is often cited as marking the initiation of a change in colonial policy of the government. What became known as the ethical course was actually a blend of attempts to improve the people's level of education, offering the possibility for soft loans mainly for purposes of expanding agricultural expertise, improvements in agriculture by developing irrigation projects, the founding of public libraries and the like. The colonial society as a temporal entity was not a serious issue; this corrupted the character of the ethical course and made it compliant and paternalistic.

As a consequence of the Decentralization Law (1903), municipalities were established and the first municipal councils were set up in Batavia, Surabaya and Semarang, soon to be followed by others. In 1942, there were eighteen municipal councils in Java and twelve others in the rest of the Archipelago. The creation of a system of local government allowed the possibility to generate municipal ordinances and to organize an adequate staff of public officials. The larger cities had to deal with a number of infrastructure problems regarding urban planning and the housing needs of all categories in society. There was a lack of available building lots and urban development plans as well.

The increase in the population was faster than ever; the former rural villages (*desa*) were surrounded by new city extensions and became urban *kampung*. These *kampung* were often crowded areas, the former social cohesion disappeared and with it the collective system of mutual help. Nevertheless, in the initial period these *kampung* did not fall under the control of the city council, but under the direction of the central government. This was the source of many problems and endless annoyances related to urban planning, including hygiene. The municipal agencies had no option but to intervene, although the financial means to do this were not available.

Only a few Europeans were interested in the scope of a possible Indonesian future. Most of them were conservatives, who were convinced that the colonial situation should remain as it was, with here and there some modernization of course; but they had no doubts that the Indonesians would need them for a very long period. Others worked hard and more idealistically, feeling between them a responsibility for the development of the colony. Then, there were a very few, distrusted by the majority of the Europeans, who believed that the colony (in time) should have a certain degree of independence. In 1930, when the Association

De Stuw was founded to encourage this idea, some of the opponents described the members of De Stuw as defeatists and renegades in the colonial press.

*The house and the neighbourhood in the twentieth century*

The housing market for the colonial (mostly European) elite was characterized by an immense shortage in all categories at the beginning of the twentieth century. The colonial towns grew rapidly and there was a tremendous lack of available building plots, which consequently became smaller and more expensive. Town planning boards were established, building ordinances were enforced. The new town extensions were generously planned with a spacious layout, because the advent of the motorcar made access to the city centres from more remote locations much faster and easier. The newly planned European areas reflected the idea and atmosphere of a Dutch garden-city concept more and more. An era of new architectural eclecticism was launched in which villas were built in a romantic and picturesque style. However, this period of architectural mannerism and imitation around the turn of the century, with the Dutch villa as archetype, did not last for long.

Around World War I, a new type of colonial villa arose, modern in architecture, a suitable dwelling to reflect the life-style in the tropical climate. Instead of European influences, the ground plan of these dwelling houses was suited to an Indo-European tradition. As in the nineteenth-century Indies house, a special entrance hall was often missing, instead the house was entered by way of a small veranda at the front. The old grand reception hall was reduced to an inner circulation area functioning as drawing room, with a dining room at the rear. The kitchen and bathroom with lavatory were often located outside the main house, combined with a garage.

In contrast to earlier days, the servants were no longer lodged in the house compound. They lived outside in the township *kampung* areas. Around the 1930s, the appearance of these colonial houses seemed to refer to an universal architectural concept which could be found all over the Indonesian Archipelago; often a detached house with a tiled roof, plastered walls on a trass-layer of (kali)stone, (*jati*) teak windows; occasionally two storeys high with a garage and some outbuildings.

[Insert here]

Figure 9. Villa in Jalan Dago, Bandung, by architect A.F. Aalbers, 1937 (Photograph Cor Passchier 1989).

Apart from this type of tiled-roof housing, the modern movement in architecture emerged at the end of the 1920s, featuring flat roofs, cubic forms and sometimes the curved lines of Art Deco. This kind of sometimes flamboyant dwelling house was strongly influenced by the so-called modern movement in Europe and the USA.

Around 1930, town expansion had become a constant process linked to steady housing production. During the worldwide economic Depression in the 1930s stagnation in building activities predominated. However, until the late-colonial period, the dwelling house was subject to evolution. In 1937, the municipality of Batavia observed that the housing compounds were smaller and multi-storey architecture found in favour (Gemeente Batavia 1937:69).

As did the British in India and Malaya, the Dutch established a number of hill resorts in the higher regions in order to enjoy the coolness and as a reminder of Europe. Examples are the Puncak resort near Jakarta, Tretes near Surabaya and Berastagi near Medan. Nowadays these hill stations have retained their popularity and new buildings have been added to the old settlements. The cottage-like architecture of the hill station was often constructed in wood, with helm or saddle roofs and decked with timber shingles (*sirap*).

Back in the city, living in what was called a European neighbourhood, principally guaranteed an optimal level of service like schools, hospitals, shopping centres, well-constructed roads and suchlike. The environmental qualities of these town areas were made conform to a garden-city concept with an open layout, plenty of public green and trees alongside the roads and parks. The houses with large private gardens, green planting and hardly any fences contributed a great deal to the environmental quality. Examples of such neighbourhoods were Menteng in Jakarta, Candi Baru in Semarang, Darmo in Surabaya, Polonia in Medan and of course the Bandung north area.

The leading members of the colonial society lived in extraordinary conditions. Their dwelling houses took the form of spacious compounds as a result of obtaining formerly agrarian ground cheap. Certain particular groups of citizens including army officers, business employees, civil servants and others were lodged in (rented) houses owned by their respective organizations.

Others depended on the free housing market (lease or rent), which around 1900, was largely controlled by Arabic and Chinese house-owners. In the first decades of the twentieth century, they were partly superseded by European contractor-developers, who were involved in project development and construction of the new-town extensions.

The municipal council took care of the maintenance of environmental quality. The building ordinance of Batavia (1919) stipulated that 'owners of buildings and compounds are obliged to keep the buildings in a proper condition and at least once a year in the month of June, to paint their properties a white colour'.

The selfish side of the colonial elite was observed by Karsten when he wrote:

In particular the well-to-do and leading elite of the European residents did, as usual and understandably, takes good care of itself; in some areas they live very comfortably, even by international standards ... with spacious gardens only possible in a colonial society with cheap land prices (Karsten 1939:10).

The housing for the poor people is quite another story. This article is not supposed to be a history on public housing. But this topic is so important that I feel obliged to pay attention to some of the actors in the field of public housing, as well as to the appearance and development of the housing product.

While the new town extensions to satisfy the housing shortage for the Europeans grew rapidly, and contractors were involved in real-estate projects, the free enterprise market broke down in the public (low-cost) housing sector. The price of land, developing costs, infrastructure and house construction were out of kilter with the low rent the poor could afford. Commercial project developers were not interested in undertaking activities for public housing.

The colonial government was hesitant to become involved; it left the task to the municipalities. However, with the outbreak of the plague in Deli (1905) and in Malang (1911), the government intervened with large-scale housing-improvement programmes. The intention was to destroy the rats and eradicate them from the houses in the *kampung* and infected *desa* areas. In the 1920s, it was reported that about thirty million guilders was spent on improvement programmes funding the number of one million houses (Encyclopaedie 1932, 5:319).

The architect Henry Maclaine Pont (1923) criticized the governmental approach, because he regarded the implementation techniques used in improvement projects as slow and certainly inimical to the point of killing indigenous architecture and workmanship. Unfortunately he failed to offer a real outline for an alternative approach. After 1930, the government put its support on the matter of public housing on hold and it was not until 1938 that it again supplied small amounts of money to be spent on *kampung* improvement in Java and Madura.

In the inter-war period the number of people living in cities displayed a substantial increase. In the wake of the extension of the towns, what were formerly peripheral *desa* communities transformed into city-*kampung*. This gave rise to an anomalous situation in which city councils were responsible for the town extension projects, but these city-*kampung* remained under the aegis of the colonial civil service (Binnenlands Bestuur, B.B.). The upshot was constant problems in the fields of competence, management and public works. Later, from 1925, the government participated in initiatives to set up housing foundations, which were established in the bigger cities; but these institutions were of limited significance and proved inept at solving the housing needs for the poor. In the bigger cities, the city councils initiated *kampung* improvement projects, the construction of model-*kampung* and what were called small housing projects (Klein Woningbouw). The agenda behind this particular category of public housing was intended especially for the poor Eurasians (Indo-Europeanen). This would seem to indicate that the colonial government did not want them to disappear into the *kampung*.

The founding of city councils (Decentralization Law, 1903) was obviously a great stimulus to encouraging the involvement of the citizens to improve the quality of their environment and conditions. This was accompanied by the awakening of the interest of some Europeans in the situation and setting of the Asians, including the conditions of the indigenous people.

In Semarang (1913), the pharmacist H.F. Tillema published a book exposing the dwelling conditions of his fellow citizens, both poor and rich. He analyzed and criticized the unsanitary living conditions. He suggested improvements and made clear there were possibilities to create better and healthier living conditions, which would be more satisfactory and more suited to human comfort and needs. In the world of architectural design, urban planning and construction he was an amateur, but his statements made an impression. The city Semarang was apparently an interesting place for stimulating a rethinking of such problems. The physician W.Th. de Vogel, employed by the municipality, took the initiative to request the architect K.P.C. de Bazel (around 1912, office Amsterdam) to produce a preliminary idea about an extension of Semarang in the hills of Candi. The idea was to abandon the unhealthy down town and build a new town in the hilly region in the south. In 1915, the director of Public Works, Ir. Plate, asked the architect Herman Th. Karsten from the office of Maclaine

Pont to design a master plan for the extension to be situated in the Candi hill resort of Semarang. Later Karsten was involved to *kampung* projects in the areas Lampersari-Sompok and in east Semarang (Hawa-Halmaheira).

In the prolongation of the nineteenth-century tradition, the colonial army paid interest to the subjects hygiene and building production. In 1891, the captain engineer G.W.F. de Vos published about *Indische bouwhygiëne* (Indies architecture and hygiene). In 1927, general-mayor C.J. de Bruijn took care for a complete revision; he produced two books and five albums with drawings of all kinds of buildings (hospitals, schools, army barracks, houses for Europeans and *kampong* dwellings), most on scale 1:100. The aim was to create a physical healthy architectural product. He made use of designs of the Bandung architects C.P. Wolff Schoemaker, J.C.J. Piso and J. Bennink (De Bruijn 1927).

However, the government (all levels) never succeeded in its aim of satisfying the housing needs for the poor. In 1930, in Palembang it was reported that the housing conditions were terrible and consequently public health was in danger. The principal cause for concern was the space (*kolong*) under the (Malay-type) wooden houses built on poles in order to protect the dwellings from the periodic flood water. These (under)spaces were closed off with wooden planks and in use as a dwelling for poor people to rent (Vereeniging voor Locale Belangen 1930:344). After 1930, the colonial government stopped supplying any finance for public (low-cost) housing; in the grip of an economic world crisis, the shortage in the government budget was dramatic. Most of the finances in this field were the responsibility of the municipalities. The annual budget for *kampung* improvement in Batavia at the end of the 1930s, for instance, exceeded the budget of the government by four.

*Kampung* improvement projects, model *kampung*, and small housing projects were often designed by governmental or municipal officials, even by city council members and amateurs, contractors and others. Architects were hardly ever involved, although in several publications and congresses, architects contributed significant statements and proposals relevant to the conditions and urban planning.

The experiments in realizing low-cost housing were frequent and varied, varying from those based on local examples to prefab systems in wood or (patent) prefab skeleton-systems in concrete (like Burkhardt i.a.) (N.V. Algemeene Bouw- en Aannemingsmaatschappij Soerabaja n.y.[c. 1930s]). Contractors stimulated this industrial development because the use of more advanced techniques gave them the possibilities to get more grip on and a better position in the low-cost housing market; this not at their own risk, but in commissions from either the local government or a foundation. Although the target group, the vast mass of Indonesian people, was immense, the capacity of that mass to pay a commercial rent was limited, just as it still is in present-day Indonesia.

Most of the projects involved technical civil infrastructure works in *kampung* improvement like road broadening (fire protection), water supply, sanitation, and garbage collection and elimination (health protection). The production of low-cost (*kampung*) housing was certainly an activity undertaken in every large city, but it was a solution to the housing needs of just a few and remained unaffordable for the great majority.

More important were the dwelling houses the commercial companies built for their employees in all kinds of categories. The engineer on a sugarcane plantation in Java was often the architect of the industrial buildings and the housing for the specialized labourers (*fabriekskampong*). The unskilled lived in their *desa* in the rural environment. They were

actually farmers (*tani*) who worked under contract for the plantation, in the planting and harvest seasons. In Deli, Sumatra, the circumstances differed, because there was no existing infrastructure and a low density of people. Labourers had to be imported from China and Java and were housed in barracks (*rumah petak* or *pondok*) or *kampung*. The Deli planters encouraged labourers to settle after their contract expired. They built *kampung* for the Javanese, simple (small) wooden houses with *ijuk* roofing.<sup>1</sup> The most important plantation company, the Deli Maatschappij, draw concluded in 1929 that since 1919 it had built 700 dwellings. These were constructed using a prefab wood-skeleton system put together by carpenters in a factory in Medan. All kinds of companies, industries and community services assumed responsibility for the housing of their employees, in urban and rural situations.

### *Architects, opinions and reality*

The architects who lived and worked in the former Netherlands Indies were primarily Europeans. In the debates relating to questions of the future of architectural development in the colony, they discussed the matter with each other, or with other Europeans who were involved.

The most prominent architects who gave a (verbal and written) opinion (in the 1920s) in congresses, magazines and lectures were Herman Th. Karsten, Henry Maclaine Pont and Charles P. Wolff-Schoemaker. They differed very much in character and opinion, but were all three spirited personalities. Although, we unhesitatingly consider them leaders of opinion, they were certainly not the only professional architects. The number of qualified architects in the Netherlands Indies in the inter-war period is really remarkable. Many professional architects established their offices in the larger cities. Most of them were educated in The Netherlands, a few elsewhere in such countries as Germany or Austria. In their offices they employed draughtsmen and superintendents of Indonesian, European, Indo-European or Chinese descent.

Karsten, born in 1884, was a friend of Maclaine Pont and came to Java in 1914. There he found work in the office of Maclaine Pont in Semarang. In 1916, he was appointed advisor in urban planning to the Semarang council, the first of a range of advisorships in his career. Karsten is generally regarded as the founder of modern urban planning in Indonesia. He was the *auctor intellectualis* of the SVO (Stadsvormingsordonnantie, Town Planning Ordinance 1938), a national concept of urban planning. The work of Karsten as urban planner was of great significance. He was involved as advisor in the planning and enlargement of many cities in Java and Sumatra (1916-42). He was also a communicator and publicist, constantly emphasizing the essential relationship between a harmonious arrangement and the coherence between the different elements making up the town as an entity. He was aware of the constraints imposed by working as a European architect under colonial conditions. Commenting on the approach and design of public (social) housing he asserted at the Public Housing Congress in 1922 (Sociaal-Technische Vereeniging 1922):<sup>2</sup>

---

1 *Ijuk*: roofing material, fibres from the Aren palm tree. See for instance the memorial book of the Deli-Batavia Maatschappij 1875-1925 (Moresco 1925) regarding Desa Ardjowinangoen in Gedong Djohore.

2 Congress regarding public housing (Volkshuisvestingscongres) 1922. Sociaal Technische Vereeniging, an association founded by P.J.S. Cramer, chairman (1917-23) of the 'Indische Sociaal-Democratische partij'.

Satisfactory solutions concerning domestic housing in a broader sense will require Indonesian architects who are educated in Indonesia (Karsten, cited in Flieringa 1930:95).

Wolff Schoemaker warned against the expectations for domestic architecture as he argued at the same occasion:

At least I should warn against the tendency to refer to indigenous examples and telling us we can learn from it (Schoemaker, cited in Flieringa 1930:95).

Wolff Schoemaker, professor at the Technische Hoogeschool (nowadays Institut Teknik Bandung), was born in Java and educated in The Netherlands. He was a strong personality and gifted as architect, painter and sculptor. He argued that Javanese architecture was finished as a source of inspiration in modern times and in the questions this obsolescence raised the architect had to be the arbiter.

Maclaine Pont was his exact opposite, although he also displayed a characteristic colonial point of view. He was impassioned by a deep empathy for the people, but they were misled by the degenerate, weak art displayed in the implementation of their works in timber construction.

It is not the place and there is not the room to digress on the different opinions of these architects in this period, particularly in the 1920s. The best approach would be to meet them in their work because, after all, the differences in their attitudes were not as great as they are often made out to be. It is interesting to read the words of Professor V.R. van Romondt. In his inaugural speech at the University of Bandung (Institut Teknologi Bandung) he asserted May 1954:

For a long period, Indonesia was used to following a dominant Western group. Now this group has disappeared and Indonesian society can no longer take distance itself from the original Indonesian culture, as its predecessors did. This would be regarded as completely unacceptable. But there are particular areas of conflict. Indubitably, Indonesian culture was inactive for a long time and people compromised themselves with an outlandish culture, which created the impression there was development and progress in Indonesia. But just a small number of Indonesians was allowed to involve themselves in this culture and mostly as supernumeraries (Van Romondt 1954:11).

#### *Architects and their work*

In an overview like this, name-dropping seems inevitable. Writing concisely about the architects and their work in the late-colonial period is not an easy undertaking. Architectural-historical qualifications, such as modern or traditional architecture, are connected to Western cultural references but could cause some confusion in a colonial context. It goes without saying that these European architects based their architectural approaches on Western roots, such as the developments in The Netherlands or Europe, certainly the USA, and last but not least kept an eye on the developments in the nearby British colonies. In this article it is not possible to give a complete overview of the work of the architects in the Netherlands Indies in

the first four decades of the twentieth century. I can do no more than illustrate some of their ideas, work and world.

At the beginning of the century, the government reorganized and established its own architectural office (1912). The architects employed there were responsible for the design of public buildings, school buildings, housing for governmental employees and the like. Sooner or later it was inevitable that a number of architects began their own office and enjoyed a successful career. Younger architects from Europe (mostly The Netherlands) came to the Indies and found employment in the architect's offices.

Looking at the identity of the more recent cities like Bandung, Malang or Medan, no one would deny that the work of the architects in the late-colonial period was very important and predominant, but it must not be forgotten that in the older cities the environmental identities were also greatly changed and modernized.

[Insert here]

Figure 10. Trade fair centre in Bandung by architect C.P. Wolff Schoemaker 1919 (Source Bandoeng 1931:23).

In Bandung, the architect C.P. Wolff Schoemaker designed the building for the Jaarbeurs (Trade Fair Centre 1919). It was the first project he accomplished after his arrival from a year off to travel through the USA. And it seems that the work of the great North-American architect Frank Lloyd Wright impressed him very much. Considering the Trade Fair and examining the handling and detailing of its outward form, the symmetry in composition, and the form of the roofs it has to be conceded that it is all of a superb – and in that period an example of innovative – quality. It can incontrovertibly be considered a step forward, as it was spared the eclecticism usual for this kind of buildings.

[Insert here]

Figure 11. Department of Public Works by architect J. Gerber 1920 (Photograph Cor Passchier 1989).

In the Bandung-North area, the governmental architect J. Gerber designed the office building for the Department of the Gouvernements Bedrijven (Public Works 1920). It bore the nickname Gedung Saté, which referred to the vertical element on the upper roof of the main entrance resembling a skewer with meat on it (the national food product *saté*). This building is definitely a landmark and is a bow to the tropical environment. However, it seems a solitary architectural product, not particularly reflecting Indonesian conditions. Indeed it would seem to have been more influenced by a romantic concept of tropical architecture. Its idiosyncratic design seems more reminiscent of South-American architecture.

[Insert here]

Figure 12. University of Technology Bandung by architect H. Maclaine Pont 1918 (Photograph Cor Passchier 1984).

In 1918, the architect Henry Maclaine Pont was commissioned to design the building complex of the Technische Hoogeschool (University of Technology) in Bandung, located in

the northern part of the city. The design of the buildings was inspired by the principles of vernacular architecture, as he interpreted these. The large span (15 metres) in the main rooms (all wood skeleton constructions) could not be solved by using traditional techniques. Therefore he used patent laminated wooden arc construction parts (system Emy).<sup>3</sup> The architectural result was really surprising creating a striking image with the bending roof ridges, the overall form and *ijuk* roof thatch (filaments of the Aren palm tree). The image of the building with the wooden façades in a green environment is not only a masterpiece of architecture. Its creator was aware that it was really innovative, neither Javanese nor European.

[Insert here]

Figure 13. Hotel Savoy Homann by architect A.F. Aalbers 1939 (Postcard 1984).

A completely different kind of architecture, but representing a landmark as well, is Hotel Savoy Homann (1939) on the main east-west road (Jalan Asia Afrika) in the centre of Bandung. A view of Hotel Savoy Homann can almost be claimed as trade-mark of Bandung. The building was designed to meet the aspirations of the city council to create a higher and more continuous street façade. The way the hotel façade is sited, back from the alignment and coming forward in a curve exudes a unique and refined feeling to project the building in the environment of an existing street. The façades had a coloured texture. Aalbers experimented with that in other buildings as well. Very remarkable was the open ground floor of the lobby offering direct and visual contact with the street beside. Hotel Savoy Homann is not only a culminating point in the work of the modern architect A.F. Aalbers, but also a landmark for the Modern Architecture movement in Indonesia before World War II.

In Surabaya 1916, the architect C. Citroen started working on the design of a new town hall for the city. For several reasons he had to produce a redesign (1920) and finally finished it in 1926. The town hall of Surabaya is therefore probably a remarkable but hybrid building. It features the combination of a traditional and modern (Art Deco) architectural approach. The interior, including the furniture, was also designed by the architect. Citroen was a productive architect who lived and worked in Surabaya.

The building of the Handels Vereeniging Amsterdam (1925) was designed by Eduard Cuypers, a well-known Dutch architect (Amsterdam) with an office in Batavia as well. Cuypers was very capable and professional, but also very much based on routine and a commercially-oriented drive, such as 'keep the customer satisfied'. It seems that Cuypers tried to join the above-mentioned discussion about architectural development in the colony with the idea that the building is a statement, but that the design is simply dressed up. Compared with the work of Maclaine Pont or Gerber, the difference in treatment is clear. The building in Surabaya is located west of the river Kali Besar and to the north of the railway. It is a traditional building, modified to the suit tropical conditions by a tiled roof with a

---

<sup>3</sup> Around 1830, the French (engineer) Colonel A. Emy invented, a construction system, which laminated wooden planks by using iron construction material (screws, brackets). The system might be regarded as a precursor of the modern bond laminate constructions of wood. This kind of construction created the possibilities to realize bigger spans than in traditional Javanese architecture.

horizontal dividing for purposes of ventilation. In the handling of the façades Cuypers made use of Hindu-Javanese style elements in decoration and detail. The building has a rather palatial appearance.

[Insert here]

Figure 14. Governors office in Surabaya by architect W. Lemei 1930 (Source Broeshart 1994: 108).

The architect W. Lemei, working for the government and designed the office building for the Governor of East-Java (Surabaya, 1930) located south of the railway and to the east of the river Kali Mas. The design seems to be a salute to the work of the modern architect Willem M. Dudok, a leading Dutch architect from the 1920s to the 1950s. See, for instance, the (primary) school building Dudok built in 1928 in the town of Hilversum. The resemblance is salient.

Batavia was the capital of the Netherlands Indies and is nowadays Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. Just after the turn of the twentieth century, the architect P.A.J. Moojen was one of the first (maybe the first) private architects. He settled in Batavia in 1903. Probably his most remarkable work is the building of the Kunstkring in 1914. On the ground floor was a restaurant and on the first floor an art gallery. The building is located at the entrance to the former European (residential) area, Menteng. The Kunstkring building features the clear concept of a ground plan cohering with architectural form, used in combination with 'modern' construction-material like reinforced concrete. The architecture of the building is of conspicuous quality, not connected to a certain style but emphasizing the statement of Moojen regarding innovation and leaving behind the dead-end street of eclecticism. The characteristic front façade with the tower elements and the sensitively designed and detailed entrance define this building as a unique monument of architectural heritage and a landmark in the urban environment and entrance to the Menteng area. In the handling of the interior he showed that he was a painter as well, by using calcium colours (ochre-yellow, blue-grey motifs) to decorate walls and ceilings.

[Insert here]

Figure 15. KPM (shipping company) office building in Batavia by architect F.J.L. Ghijssels 1916 (Photograph Cor Passchier 1984).

In 1916, F.J.L. Ghijssels, architect in the AIA office (Algemeen Ingenieurs en Architectenbureau), designed the office building of the KPM (Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij) in Batavia and took the development towards modern architecture really a step further in the direction initiated by Moojen. Located in the centre of Batavia, this characteristic building was real cynosure in those days. The handling of the volume, the symmetrical front and the fine detailing, the Art Deco decorations and motifs, all combine to give the building its characteristic and representative quality. It is an example of architectural

design perhaps derived from north-American sources, although the British colonial architecture in Malaysia produced the same kind of architecture.<sup>4</sup>

For decades, the revitalization of downtown Batavia (Kota) has been a subject of discussion, although hardly anything has happened yet. The last colonial project there was the creation of the square, Stationsplein (Pintu Besar Utara). On the northern side, the architects J.F. Blankenberg and C.P. Wolff Schoemaker designed the head office of the Nederlandsch-Indische Handelsbank (1938), a traditional building on a monumental scale with sober appearance. On the eastern side, F.J.L. Ghijsels designed the railway station with a façade inspired by the sunset (1929), certainly an almost dramatic manifestation. On the western side stood the head office building of the NHM (Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij 1929). The architects were C. van der Linde and A.P. Smits, Amsterdam, scions of the former atelier of architect K.P.C. de Bazel, who designed the head office of the NHM in Amsterdam, 1917. Van der Linde visited the work in progress several times. They also designed the NHM office in Medan (1929) in the same kind of architecture. The design of the building follows a traditional concept, but with appropriate adjustment to the tropical climate, while it was one of the first with a consequent double façade (no direct sun on the office windows and pedestrians, who walked around the building, were protected from the sun). The very monumental building displays a rigid façade design with an attic third floor at the front. The southern side of the square retained an ordinary street façade. This square with the buildings clustered around it and the Javasche Bank office besides the NHM building on the northern side was the heart of the Central Business District in Batavia during the inter-war period.

[Insert here]

Figure 16. The Factorij, the building of the Nederlandse Handels-Maatschappij 'NHM' in Batavia by architects C. van der Linde and A.P. Smits 1917 (Source Gemeente Batavia 1937:47).

### *Epilogue*

Indonesia today, with the presence of an indigenous and colonial architectural urban heritage has to deal with questions regarding historical-cultural value and the preservation, re-use or demolition of buildings. Beside this historical-cultural importance, what is the significance of the architectural heritage nowadays and is there actually a role for it to fulfil? In the field of architecture, the colonial episode left behind environmental qualities, structures and buildings. Those architects all functioned in and derived their references from the colonial situation. Their clients were commercial bodies or private individuals who were located in the upper strata of society. The legacy is perhaps a product of the past, but nevertheless, the colonial architectural products form a substantial part of the daily environment and décor of almost every Indonesian. Architecture, historical or modern, is an exponential product of society in past or present. There seem to be interesting possibilities to research the attitude and

---

4 Although the introduction of Art Deco in Malaysia was at least a decade later than in Indonesia, compared with the KPM building (1918), the analogy with the Anglo-Oriental building in Kuala Lumpur is striking. But this building was built in 1936.

perception of Indonesian society towards its architectural heritage. Do people appreciate it? Do they use and manage it for their own comfort or progress? Or is it ignored and regarded as something of the past, without any value? In the minds of the common people, the products of architectural heritage are often not recognized as belonging to their own world. Maybe they are seen as related to another culture, to that of the more well-to-do, or maybe they are seen as relics of a former society, which no longer exists and seems to have faded away with the past.

---