



The old town into trouble

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In recent weeks I stayed in planes, trains and taxis; but was most found on the Jalan 'day in- and day out'. From city to city, feeling a sort of fugitive never settled down --- a hotel was my home. This is not an usual lecture it's more a reflection on recent experiences.

In this presentation I will focus to the state of affairs, as it came my way during the journey, using positive and negative examples but refusing to borrow any final judgment on it. It is the observation that counts and these is already far from objective.

I am traveling now for some time through Indonesia trying to improve my current knowledge and to recalibrate my analysis, this in the hope getting more able to deliver a more fruitful contribution to the debate on the meaning and role of the old colonial town in the contemporary Indonesian city.

Cor Passchier

Medan USU - Nov. 3 2014



What makes the identity of a city and what actually makes is desirable to preserve ?

The old (historic) town is obviously an important contributor to the identity of a city. In the old town, the urban grid dates (even as a part of the built environment) from the colonial era. How is this experienced in the present Indonesia? It's all changed and nowadays the old town suffers under the pressure of overpopulation, traffic and an outdated infrastructure.



Bad maintenance of the building
no property management

Non acceptable energy net
infrastructure

No solution for traffic and
public transport

Rehabilitation



Jakarta. Kali besar timur

Jakarta Kota. The right building is the former office of Internatio/Lloyd and recently an investor decided to restore and rehabilitate the building. It looks like the adjoining building will no longer make it. Hopefully will the interaction with this building not ignored and may it restored as well. The initiative fits in in the Kota Tua programme of DKI.

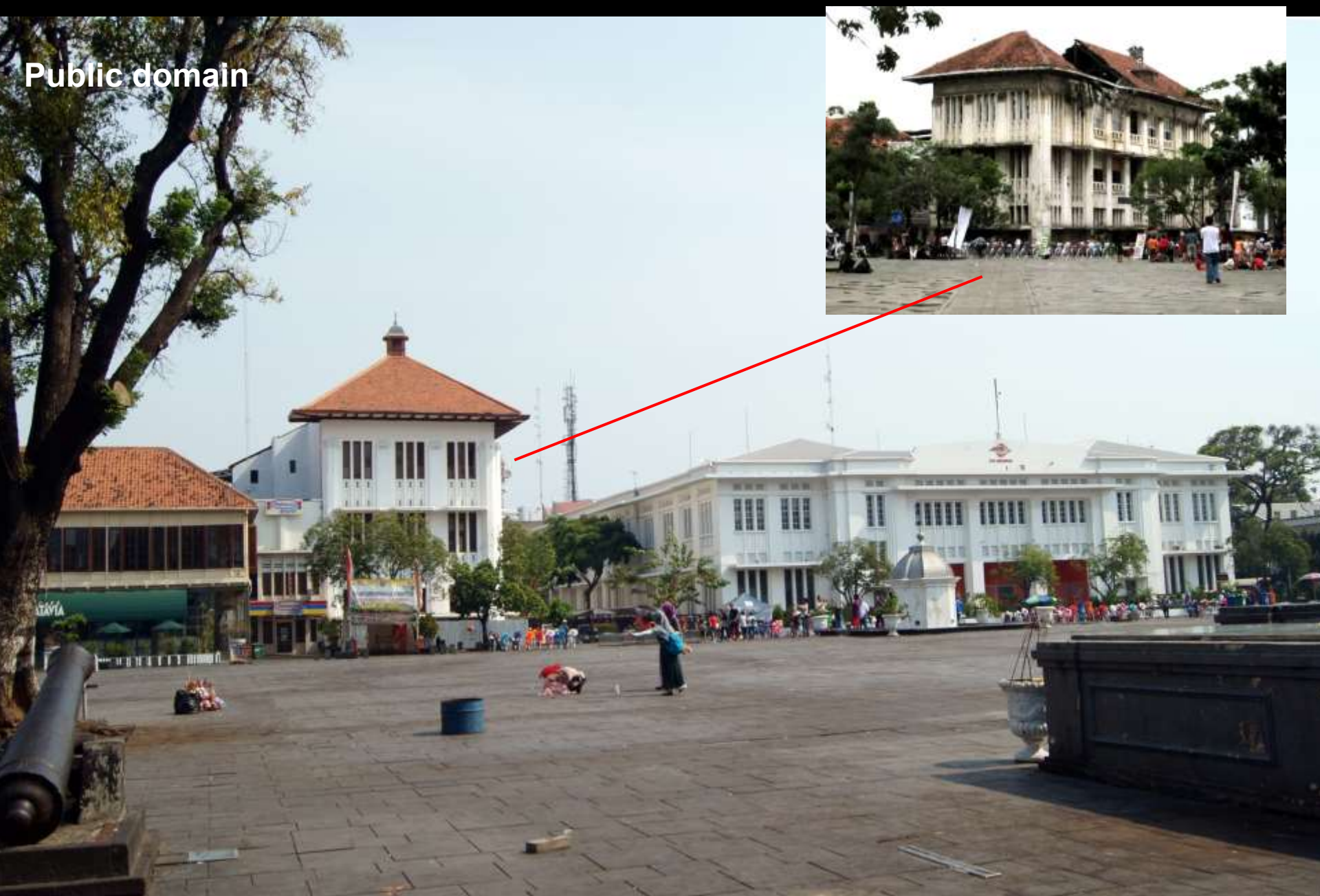
Destruction



One left

3 houses at the Jl Dago in Bandung (arch. Aalbers 1938) they were nicknamed 'the white locomotives'. Recently, there are 2 houses obstructed losing their fences and gardens and grossly violated with blatant advertising. Bandung is particularly known in the world for this kind of architecture; one even took part in world conferences, presenting Bandung as an art deco city. Although this can happen easily and all say then: '*sayang ini tetapi ada biasa juga*' and further nothing.

Public domain



Jakarta Kota. The ensemble of the buildings (some recently restored) on the north side of the Fatahillah Square, giving the square a renewed urban allure, the last in interaction with the museum buildings around.

Public domain



The square in front of the building (arch. AIA 1928) had become a polluted and inhospitable bus terminal and got under the rehabilitation plan cleared the square became restored as a public space.

Surabaya Kota.

The square was cleared and a new large building was constructed at the north (a mall), with the aim emphasize the urban charactre. However, this was not done by the new design of the square. The square (surrounded by street profiles) got raised up with a few meters of soil, heavenly planted with green vegetation and above paved paths and some street furniture. The distinctive urban character of a town square near the Jembatan Merah has disappeared. It became an amorphous unplesant environment without any identity.

The architectural concept of the historical office building got deformed by applying horizontal painted red colour accents, aswel parts of the ornamentation. The building became degraded and ridiculed. While the very existence of a historic building and a new shopping mall, adjacent to the dynamic nature of the city reflects.



Public domain



The atmosphere in the streets is determined (beside traffic) by trees and (open/closed) fences. In Jakarta, houses in Menteng are behind paggars hidden as defensible forts. In cities like Malang and Medan, the houses lay often in an open display in the garden not too much rebuildings. This gives the streets a familiar character, one feel safe and it's more beautiful and rather optimistic.

Overpopulated and crowded



The hearts of some older Indonesian cities seems to consist in a formal and an informal entity. The formal city has a recognized urban grid as: squares, streets and parks, rivers and canals, a railway etc... and is functional clustered. The informal city exist as hiding behind the facades of the formal urban decor. Hundreds of thousands of people live invisibly in the city in a hinterland of occupied former wastelands, on river banks, close to the railways, etc... The poorest part of the city population live there, one or the more self-sufficient; with the government in the role as superintendent and provider of energy and water, keeping an eye on order and hygiene. The informal city has its own (unmapped) secondary grid of small alleys and narrow streets hardly five feet wide and is linked to the system of the formal city through gaps between blocks at the formal roads.

Outdated infrastructure



Medan. Kesawan

Since the middle of the nineteen forties, the old city functioned as centre of the excessively enlarged town area. Hanging in its outdated dilapidated infrastructure as: the imperfect and small roads lacking public parking facilities, a public transport system dating back to the fifties; water- and electricity supplies outdated with an unsatisfactory capacity. This all is not unknown. The old town, traditionally facilitating employment and distribution of goods is subject to a process of continuous extravagant changes, which are hardly systematically supervised and equipped.

Functional buildings are left in disrepair



Surabaya: Simpang

The no longer functional buildings are left in disrepair, new office buildings- and shopping malls were constructed but neglecting a solution for a reuse of older buildings and also not in conjunction with the adaptation and innovation of logistics and traffic facilities. The old flow models could not handle and became clogged, congestion and air pollution are the results.

New functions for older buildings



Surabaya Darmo. Directors house Javasche Bank (Later Bank Indonesia), built in 1921 (arch. Job). To day the house is well maintained and has a cultural function as exhibition venue, library. The building is formal recognised as cultural heritage.

GEDUNG KEDIAMAN GUBERNUR B.I
BANGUNAN CAGAR BUDAYA
SESUAI SK WALIKOTA
NOMOR. 188.45/251/402.104/1996
NOMOR URUT 53
KEBERADAANNYA DILINDUNGI
UNDANG-UNDANG
DINAS KEBUDAYAAN & PARIWISATA
KOTA SURABAYA

New functions for older buildings



A bank established at Jl Dago Bandung found in the well maintained outstanding building (arch. Aalbers 1938) an attractive location

Conclusions

Urban planning follows often in review spontaneous developments in an attempt by interruption to create a more structural and sustainable extension of the town.

It seems realistic to consider: the standing of built heritage is in danger and will largely disappear from our view in a few decades.

And only a few highlights stand a chance to survive and will help to determine the (historic) identity of the city.

Often when built heritage is safeguarded it would not solitary survive but probably integrated into new built structures.

Reviewing the cities I visited in the last month, some alternating images kept hanging. Narratives are often displayed in printed letters, buildings telling also stories and when anchored in personal memories they may be read differently.





Jakarta



Bandung



Semarang



Surabaya



Malang`



Yogyakarta



Makassar

Medan





Jakarta



End