

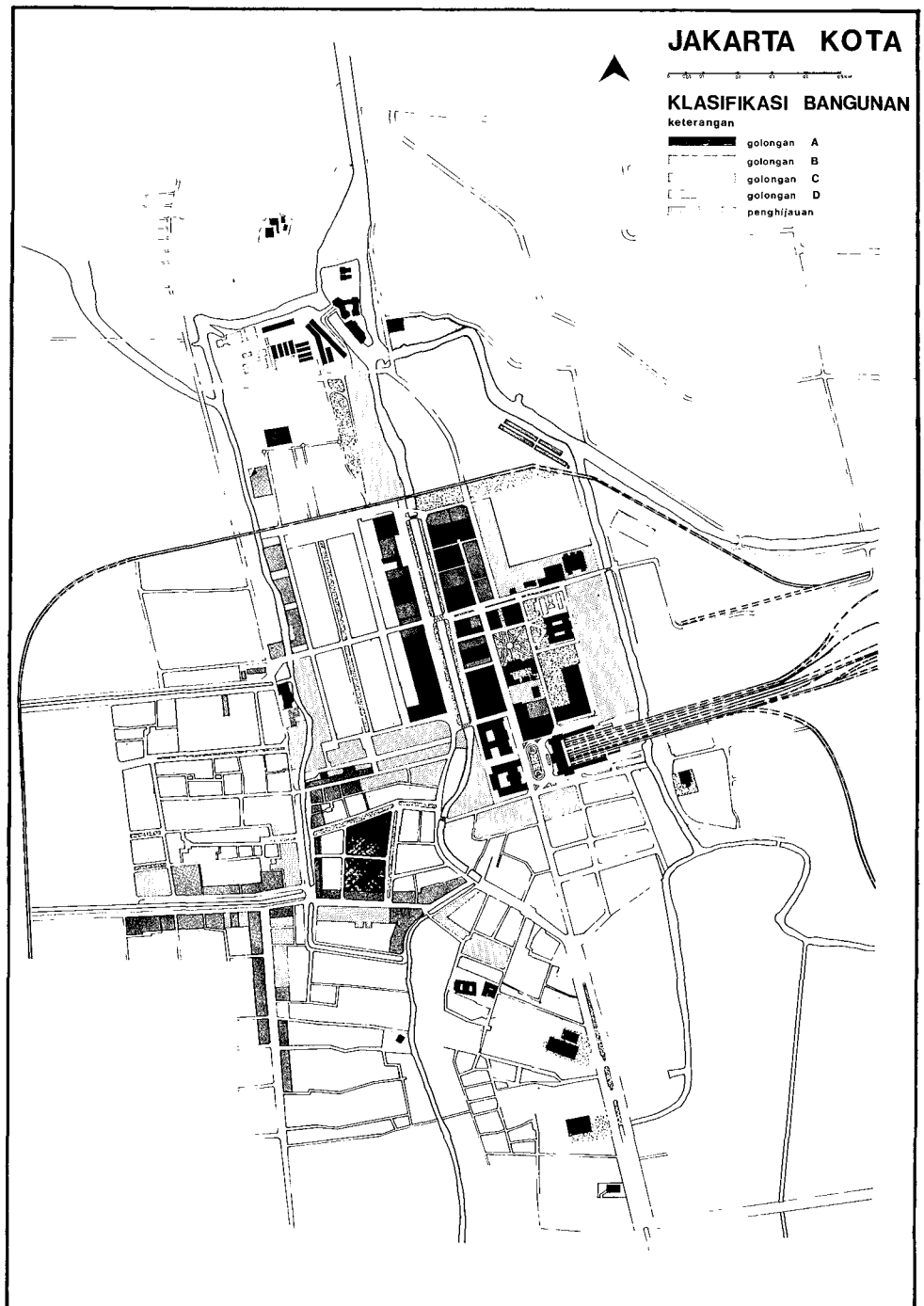
*Soedarmadji Damais*

Like many capitals of the developing world, Jakarta has grown very rapidly in a very short time, like many, it must come to grips with the major changes that such a growth brings to a city. Present-day Jakarta has enveloped not only surrounding villages but every previous urban settlement in the area. The old town of Jayakarta, founded in 1527, was a trading outpost known to the Portuguese in their heyday of trade as Sunda Kelapa. In 1619 it was destroyed and the Dutch colonial outpost of Batavia was built on the site. The colonial seventeenth and eighteenth century town subsequently gave way to a new centre, Weltevreden, built next to the old during the Napoleonic era. After World War II, at the time of independence, the Jakarta environs had between one and two million inhabitants. Presently the immediate area has six and the greater metropolitan area an additional three.

The Master Plan for Jakarta, completed in 1965, planned a constant growth for the period 1965–1985. But as early as 1971 it became evident that insufficient provision had been made in the Master Plan for the preservation and conservation of standing buildings, and that the rate of new construction threatened to replace entire residential quarters with high-rises and multi-lane highways. While some replacement was inevitable, a group within the city government feared that continued building activity along the lines suggested by the Master Plan would transform Jakarta entirely, leaving nothing of its former character. The Master Plan ignored the existing built-up areas, providing few guidelines for zoning, renovation, rehabilitation or reuse.

A programme for restoration and conservation in Jakarta evolved largely as an afterthought to the Master Plan. It did not come into being as the result of extensive feasibility studies, but after a series of practical and pragmatic projects; their individual successes allowed for the gradual development of a programme and of a Conservation Office in the Directorate of City Development. The Department was concerned with *doing* the feasible, rather than making incessant feasibility studies.

The project which provided the initial impetus was the restoration and rehabilitation of the town square of Batavia, called



*Jakarta Kota, the Old City of Jakarta: site of conservation efforts. At centre is the old town square, Taman Fatahillah*

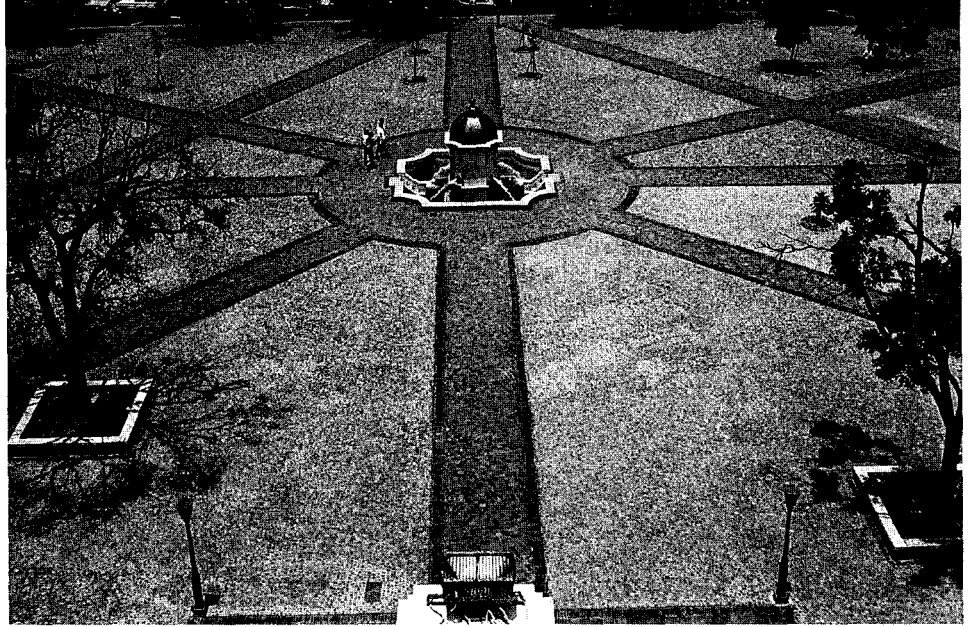
*Source: DTBP-DKI Jakarta*

Taman Fatahillah after the founder of Jakarta in Jakarta Kota. That resources should be allocated to an area and a collection of buildings so closely associated with the colonial past would seem rather unusual. This issue did indeed prompt considerable discussion. The immediate, pragmatic answer was that the restored square and its surrounding area was a natural tourist attraction in a city which otherwise had little to offer. However, there were broader issues which, while not clearly articulated at the time, came to the fore as this project and others were successfully completed. Indonesia has fallen heir to many colonial buildings, as have most countries with a colonial past. How should they be used, and what care should be taken of them? The following brief account of several projects undertaken by the Jakarta government demonstrates the variety of working solutions to this issue.

There was little in the way of Indonesian examples or studies that might have been useful for the restoration and conservation of the main square of Batavia and its surrounding neighbourhoods. The project was begun by collecting and studying old maps and engravings that might elucidate some details for restoration. For example, the focal centre for the square was a fountain which had long since disappeared, but was illustrated in several eighteenth century scenes. Soundings uncovered its emplacement and a copy was built. The buildings around the square were examined, and work begun on the old city hall. Built in 1707, this was a provincial and tropical version of Amsterdam architecture. The building had been in continual use as a military headquarters, and before restoration still housed much of its activities. With the construction of new quarters elsewhere, it was vacated and available for other functions.

The old city hall building was converted into a museum of the city of Jakarta, and included exhibits emphasizing the continuity of settlement of the site from the sixth century to the present. In this fashion, the focus of the building itself was extended beyond the colonial period only.

The town square was bordered with other buildings of a public administrative nature, including the court house, the post office



*View of Taman Fatahillah in Jakarta Kota. This paved square with its central fountain was reconstructed according to old drawings*

*Photo: DTBP-DKI Jakarta*



*View of Taman Fatahillah after the 1974 restoration efforts. The building, formerly the city hall of Batavia, is now the Municipal Museum*

*Photo: DTBP-DKI Jakarta*

and the like. Since many of these functions had also outgrown their buildings, an opportunity presented itself for the reuse of the entire square. Transformation of the other buildings proceeded apace; the old courthouse was transformed into a museum of painting and ceramics, with the collection of Vice President Malik forming the nucleus. Another old building was reused as a museum and theatre for puppetry, an ancient but still very active art form in Indonesia.

While the reuse of the square was a government-sponsored activity, the programme for restoring or rehabilitating the immediate neighbourhood had to involve the participation of the homeowners. The Conservation Office contacted each homeowner, showing him or her what could be done to upgrade the neighbourhood. In exchange for painting their houses in a series of colours chosen by the Office, a programme of planting and street paving was begun. Within a year most of the houses were repainted, and at least a cosmetic rehabilitation of the urban environment around the old centre had begun. The newly rehabilitated square was inaugurated in 1974 as the site of the Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA) conference; it has been used repeatedly for exhibitions and other events, like the "Festival Jakarta '78," with great success.

The success of the programme of rehabilitating the square prompted the Conservation Office to extend its attention to the adjacent harbour area of Sunda Kelapa. The long wharf is still used by ships that sail among the multitude of Indonesian islands; the harbour also contains the old warehouses of the East India Company and the harbour master's tower (Bastion Culemburg). The tower was repaired and refitted while several warehouses, now belonging to the Ministry of Telecommunications, were turned into the beginnings of a Maritime Museum. Further plans for other warehouses call for the refitting of these buildings to serve as a community service centre for the surrounding neighbourhood, the improved kampong of Luar Batang.

The location of community services for the burgeoning neighbourhoods of Jakarta is a continuing problem for the city government.

The Building Department, with its conservation branch, was able to provide land for such centres by carefully reviewing existing built-up areas. The review process focused attention on old cemeteries. The Dutch colonial cemetery covered an extensive area and was largely unkempt. A decision was made to halve the area occupied by the cemetery, freeing it for community use. All existing tombstones were reset into a memorial park; the remaining area is now occupied by a youth centre and community hall. A similar action was taken with an old Muslim cemetery in Tanah Abang—part of its area was freed for the Said Naum mosque and madrasa.

Consistent with the policy of utilizing and revitalizing all available resources, a new look was taken at the many squatter communities which had sprung up within the Jakarta city limits. The idea of conserving what was already available prompted the development of the Kampong Improvement Programme. Instead of razing these settlements and then building gov-

ernment-funded housing, the conserving of the already available housing stock seemed much more economical. Services (water and electricity) were brought to the areas and streets were provided with paving, drainage and lights. While the Kampong Improvement Programme may be classified as a housing programme, it was nevertheless generated by a similar attitude to available resources as bona fide restoration programmes.

A further application of the same ideas can be seen in the conservancy area of Condet, to the south of Jakarta, a village with surrounding orchards which specializes in fruit production for the city. The expanding population of Jakarta is threatening the livelihood of many such villages. The conservancy programme provided funds for services and house maintenance, and took the entire village and its orchards out of the real estate market. The aim was to strengthen the existing community, by providing it with better access roads and services so that its important function could



*Sunda Kelapa harbour, Jakarta: the restored harbour master's tower, Bastion Culemburg*

*Photo: S. Damais*

continue. Thus it would provide a living for its inhabitants, rather than see them pressed into the already overpopulated tertiary economic sector in the metropolitan region.

Finally, a word should be said about zoning for preservation. Although Jakarta does not have very old historic areas, several neighbourhoods have a consistent character. One such neighbourhood, Menteng, was developed in the thirties and is representative of *De Stijl* Dutch architecture. Argument can be made that there is no ideological reason for preserving an area closely linked with the Dutch colonial past and its destructive policies of discrimination and exploitation. But although it was built for the Dutch colonials, it is now entirely in Indonesian hands. Safeguarding its appearance by restricting all exterior alterations can only be a positive addition to the general appearance of Jakarta.

In conclusion, several points can be made. The Indonesian conservation policy and programmes developed slowly, along very practical and pragmatic lines. The relative success (implementation) of each programme assured the development and implementation of another. By broadening its approach in conservation and preservation, the city government was able to utilize many of the rehabilitated areas and buildings according to its set of priorities. Constant communication between several government agencies was necessary for implementing projects. Such communication, as well as appropriation of funds and rights, would not have been possible without the direct knowledge and participation of the political leaders of the last decade.



*Condet village, south Jakarta: a newly-constructed pedestrian lane*

*Photo: DTBP-DKI Jakarta*



*Condet village, south Jakarta: a traditional house restored by its owner with money from the government conservation office*

*Photo: DTBP-DKI Jakarta*