

Reflection paper | Rise of the Kampung



Maarten Limburg | 4119606
Heritage & Architecture | Shared Heritage Studio Bandung
7-12-2018
Mentors: Job Roos | Nicholas Clarke

Index

Introduction	3
Shared Heritage	3
Design Problem Statement	4
Value Assessment	5
Iterative Design Process	5
Opportunities	
Dilemmas	
Obligations	
Challenges	9

Introduction

The reflection paper is about reflecting on the total design process from start to finish. The design process is complex and decisions are constantly being made. New insights give different approaches in how to tackle a dilemma. During tutoring, the design and process is discussed so that every week the design reaches a higher level. This paper shows what role the Cultural Value plays in the design process, what choices have been made and how this process influences the final design.

When starting with the Bandung Studio, a Cultural Value assessment was made to understand the DNA of the site and to discover the values that would eventually form the basis of the design. In every design decision, the three main questions needed to be asked: the how, the why and the what? The paper will describe what Shared Heritage is, followed by the Design Problem Statement. The Value Assessment will give an overview of the most important values of the site and building. The iterative design process describes: the opportunities, obligations and dilemmas of the site and building in relation to the design. Finally, the challenges during the project will be described.

Shared Heritage

Shared Heritage refers to the shared history that countries can have together. The traces left from the past tell a story about a country's history. The Netherlands has a rich history when it comes to trade and overseas expansions. Bandung was strongly connected with the Netherlands due to trade and because it was a popular living environment.

Shared Heritage doesn't necessarily have to refer to the tangible aspects, it can also be intangible, like the stories, culture or traditions of countries. Bandung also relates to my personal family history. My great grandfather, Louis Tuckermann, used to work as an engineer in Sumatra and later in Bandung. My grandmother, Carla Tuckermann, was born in Bandung and spent her entire childhood living in several cities in Indonesia. It could very well be that the family Tuckermann did their shopping at Braga Street. The stories or events about a place can give an extra meaning to the Shared Heritage.

The traces of this Shared Heritage left in Bandung can be found in the bigger scale such as the urban plan of the city, the main infrastructure and its different districts. In Bandung, many famous Dutch architects and planners helped shape the city. The Shared Heritage can be found in the rich Colonial architecture and several intangible aspects. In some restaurants in Bandung it is still possible to order traditional Dutch dishes, like 'Erwtensoeep'.

A few of the Dutch-period buildings in Bandung are still being used and remind us of the colonial past. Preserving this Shared Heritage for next generations is important because these historic buildings show us a part of the city's history that forms its identity. For the survival of the colonial buildings, they should not be treated as monuments but should take active part in the daily activities and needs of the city. Shared Heritage can be seen as a gift from the past for place-making in the city. The identity of Bandung is complex and consists of many layers but the colonial buildings are without a doubt part of it.

Design Problem statement

The colonial Braga Street and Kampung Braga can be seen as two different areas or 'worlds'. Due to the colonial past, the two areas always had a strict separation, but were somewhat dependent on one another. This dependency has been lost but the separation is still very noticeable. The Colonial buildings form a border around the Kampung, making the kampung difficult to reach and very enclosed. The enclosure of the Kampung can be considered a value but the seclusion of the area most certainly does not. The Kampung does not play an active role in the city, instead it is being neglected and pushed back.

Because Kampung Braga is very dense, space is very valuable. The little space inhabitants have, is used most efficiently. They use their living space for multiple uses such as a workspace, kitchen and bedroom. The homes are mostly self-constructed and of poor quality. They use the materials they can find to improve or repair their living conditions. This of course, relates to the low income of many of the inhabitants. Because the residents have to work with what they find, creativity is key.

Since Braga Street is such an attractive place to visit as a tourist due to its historical appearance, many street sellers try to earn money by selling their merchandise on this street. Artists however, don't have a space to show their art, instead they use the facades of the empty buildings to display their work.

One of the biggest threats of Braga street is that this historic street is rapidly losing its historical identity. Braga Street is known for its low-rise rich colonial-style architecture with its specific proportions. Modern high rise buildings disrupt the historic tissue of Braga Street.

In 2005 and 2010 massive high rise buildings were built in Braga Street. These modern buildings measuring up to 78 meters, are in vast contrast to the low-rise colonial buildings. To build these new skyscrapers, vast areas of Kampung Braga and historic buildings along Braga Street needed to be demolished. A high wall creates a harsh border between the dense urban Kampung and the enormous shopping mall.

The kampung is literally being destroyed and pushed back to create space for the tourism sector. The differences between the rich shopping street and the poor Kampung are getting worse. The residents of Kampung Braga notice little to nothing from the economic center that Braga Street is. The fact that over 30% of the colonial buildings in Braga Street are empty, but still new skyscrapers are being built, is even more peculiar. It seems that the colonial buildings are not actively being used but are merely a remnant of the past. The Kampung has no possibilities to grow and Braga Street is becoming more monotone in use.

Before arriving in Bandung, I was under the impression that the Kampung was in a very bad state compared to Braga street. My opinion started to change after the visit. It turned out that the Kampung was much more vital than Braga Street. Braga Street, with the many colonial buildings felt threatened and vulnerable. By focusing on colonial buildings a change could be made that has effects on both Braga Street and Kampung Braga.

The problem statement is as follows: *'The community of Kampung Braga is being pushed into the background and has no space to grow in its creativity nor in the possibility to start a business at Braga Street.'*

Value assessment

Some parts of the building were not accessible because the shop-owners did not give permission to enter the building or simply because it was closed and abandoned. A nearby hotel made it possible to photograph the complex from above, to get an understanding of how the building worked. Since no plan drawings of the building could be found, everything needed to be assessed using the few historic photographs or literature of the street.

The main values of the building complex can be found in the oldest part of the complex: the shops. The still existing details such as ceramic tile flooring, stained-glass windows above the cantilever, wooden shop-windows and façade ornaments. All of these have reflect the rich history of Bandung, in particular Braga Street. The ceramic flooring and stained glass both have Age value. Whereas the façade has Historic Value. The building has steel doors in the back of the building with high use value.

The building tells a story through its various building periods and is therefore valuable for preserving and re-using. The building illustrates the set of regulations architects needed to comply in the 1920s to build at Braga Street. These are visible in various aspects of the building.

The European architecture style with Art Deco facade, the total height of no more than two floors of the building, the stained glass above the cantilever, the natural ventilation systems, the big glass window-shops, the high ceilings to improve comfort all contribute to the buildings use as shop house. The rich Art Deco façade, with its original detailing, and the building's physical connection with kampong Braga makes it an unique building in Braga Street. Most buildings have no connection with the kampong.

The value statement is as follows: 'the shop house contains several valuable aspects of how the Dutch designed buildings in Indonesia and more particularly at Braga Street using several design principles such as climate appropriate devices, proportion systems and its use as a shop. The building tells a story about the rich past of the once so famous Braga Street.

Iterative design process

To make the assessment more clear in its structure, the opportunities, dilemmas and obligations will be discussed separately in relation to the discovered values and how the new design reacts on these assigned values.

Opportunities

The problem statement made it clear that the kampong and Braga Street do not work together. The building however has a physical connection with the kampong. This can create opportunities for the transformation of the building. Because the building is next to a road that leads into the kampong, there are possibilities in re-using the entrance into the complex from this road. Many schemes were drawn in how this road could be of value to the building. It turned out, later in the process, that this road was of great importance to cocncept of the project.

The complex has a strong inward direction and feels like an enclosed entity within the city. This enclosed character is similar to that of the kampong. Because all of the roofs of the

different building volumes direct inwards, a strong sense of enclosure is felt within the courtyard. This sense of direction and enclosure in the courtyard gives importance to open space. The courtyard with the old tree can be considered the 'heart' of the complex.

The building has several values, as described in the value assessment, that can be re-used in the new design. It was sometimes difficult to find these values since they were not clearly visible at first. By zooming in on particular elements a better judgment could be made on how valuable the elements were.

The existing steel doors in the back of the building got a new purpose. Since the back of the building is accessible, a material shop could fit this space well. Most buildings along Braga Street are directly built next to each other, this building however does not. The Gang Cikapundung has a strong kampong atmosphere due to the several small shops. This alley is not being used by visitors or tourists because it is dark and narrow. This alley has the potential in becoming much more attractive to visitors and can be re-designed in a more healthy way. In the process, it turned out to be very difficult what to do with these shops. Removing them was not really an option, because that meant you would destroy someone's income. Besides, if the shops were removed, what to do with the plastered façade and prevent people from starting to build a shop again.

To give these shops more opportunities and a sense of belonging, the best option was to make the shops part of the building, they are being pushed into the façade of the colonial building. This reinforces the buildings character in the new design and relates to the fact that the colonial building has always been used for commercial purposes.

One of the advantages of the colonial buildings is that they are aesthetically attractive due to their scale and original detailing which can contribute to the experience of the consumer. The fact that the building has always functioned as a shop was a crucial given for the new design. Because Braga Street is such a popular shopping street, the use as a shop is still suitable. The nature of the shops however will change. Due to the monotone function of restaurants at Braga Street, the transformation should offer a place which stimulates diversity.

To stimulate creativity and to preserve crafts knowledge embedded in the kampong community, the buildings use, changes into a workspace where people can design, create and sell their ideas. The height and size of the shops made it possible to accommodate workspaces for small entrepreneurs. Due to the wooden roof construction, the separating walls between the three shops have no load bearing function. During the process it became clear that the shops needed to be connected to the rest of the building. How and why became clear through the use of the building. In the beginning of the project a strong separation was made between the front and back of the building. In the front, crafts could be sold and produced in the back of the building. I later discovered that seeing how the crafts are made could be of valuable to Braga Street and how the visitor experiences the building.

Since Kampung Braga is as old as Braga Street, possibly even older, some heritage buildings can be found inside the kampong. These buildings are valuable and need to be preserved. Although there are a lot of problems in the Kampung, considering safety and hygiene, there are also many qualities. There is a very strong community present and the atmosphere is very calm compared to Braga Street. The new function of the complex can contribute to the existence of the current Kampung. Instead of demolishing the Kampung and replacing it with high-rise towers, as it is being done currently, the complex can offer a place

where Kampung residents can produce elements they can further use to upgrade their homes. In that sense the adaptive re-use of the chosen building can be seen as a top-down approach, which can stimulate a bottom-up approach inside the community.

Dilemma's

Most of the dilemma's during the project were in the front volume, simply because this volume has the most values. By removing the ceiling of the shops to show the construction, the heat buffer of the roof disappears. Heat from the sun can directly go into the shops, therefore an opening for ventilation was essential in making the space climatically comfortable. The design dilemma translated into how the openings in the roof should look without destroying the fragile proportions between the Art Deco façade and the sloped roof. Several concepts were drawn that would not destroy the composition.

By removing parts of the separating walls between the shops, the question rises in what to do with the missing original floor. Some parts of the existing wall will be kept to form the separation between the newly added pavilions in the space and to make the visitor aware that the space used to be three separate shops.

Several options were drawn in what to do with the missing floor. The first idea was to copy the original floor so the entire floor would act as one. After discussing the dilemma with the tutor, showing the modern floor could actually make a statement, and that it would be more powerful to leave the floor as if.

A lot of time was spent on how to restore the front façade. To bring back the coherency and clarity of the façade, the two missing shop-windows needed to be re-constructed. The dilemma that follows however, is how to restore the shop-windows without both of them looking fake. The wooden window-shops should be carefully reconstructed, maybe by the craftsmen working in the complex itself. Trying to find information about the façade turned out to be difficult since no documents were available.

The construction of the 1950s block has a high value because it shows that architects during that time were experimenting with different construction principles and materials. In the new design, the construction needed to be reused as much as possible due to the embodied energy inside, its constructional connection with the two other volumes and the high value it displays. The dilemma that followed was how to use most of the construction but also strengthening it so it could hold the extra weight of added floors on top. Since it was unclear where the foundation was located exactly, figuring out how the construction could be reused turned out to be time consuming.

During several tutoring's, the essence of the new addition became more clear. First, many shapes were drawn on how the tower should look like. This approach was not fruitful and a different strategy was necessary. Eventually, climatic issues formed the base of the appearance of the tower. The choice of material, lightness and openings in the construction were key in making decisions how the tower would function and eventually look like. The addition needed to reflect the characteristics of the kampung whilst still being part of the existing colonial building. Since the use of material was so different, there were struggles in connecting the new with the old. Later in the process I found out that the appearance of the tower in relation with the old was not very relevant. The construction of the tower determined largely how the tower would be used and give its characteristic appearance.

Obligations

Inside the 'courtyard' of the current building, an old fruit tree is growing. This tree was part of the garden and provided some shading. During the 1930s, the open courtyard used to provide natural ventilation into the building. The courtyard is now completely covered with roofs to create extra living space. This covering of the courtyard with corrugated metal sheets leads to dark, unventilated and unpleasant living conditions. It is an obligation to re-open this courtyard to create more light and air into the complex. This is also applicable to the original Art-Deco façade. The façade is covered in tiles that need to be removed after the façade can be rendered again. During the 1930s the façade could be seen as one, all of the different shops had the same shop window making a coherent display. Two of the three original shop windows got demolished. The second last original shop-window got demolished entirely around 2009 and is being replaced by a steel fence.

The general shape of the original façade is still very intact and visible. In all of the three shops the stained glass and ventilation holes are still present, although boarded up. The cantilever that provides the shops morning shade is still existing. The cantilever of the middle shop has been modified, probably due to leakages and became thicker. The cantilever is not only functional for shading but also works as a connector between the three shops. All of the small interventions during the past couple of decades distract the viewer to see the facade as one. The cantilever therefore needs to be restored to its original condition.

When visiting Braga Street it became clear that during the early morning, the shop owners put cloths in front of the shop-windows to protect it from direct sunlight. During the 30s awnings were used to protect the shop from heating up too much in the morning. It can be seen as an obligation to reinstall these awnings that fit to the character of the building and helps prevent the shops to warm up too much.

From a photograph taken in the 30s, it is visible that the corner of the building was raised. This small tower was most likely used as light advertisement but is now missing. This advertisement was lit during the evening to draw attention to the visitors. The light tower was a characteristic element of the building and was used to draw the customer's attention. The lights on top of the corner is the last missing element that should be reinstalled so the façade can show its true light again.

Challenges

During the project I learned that not every problem could be solved. Only the relevant problems needed to be tackled and sometimes compromises needed to be made to re-use the building in the best possible way. The project was really about showing the potential of the colonial building but knowing that not everything should or could be solved. Transforming the building so that it can play an active role in the city of Bandung again whilst respecting the values that it contains. Some values were more important than for instance, changing the building to protect it from the harsh climate.

The challenges of the project in the beginning were in figuring out on what to focus. Because the city is so complex, the underlying problems were not easily found. Many contradictions in the area made it sometimes confusing what the problem was really about. Also the qualities of the building were not directly visible. The building needed to be observed carefully in finding these qualities. Many of the challenges in the design came from creating a space where both worlds could meet. Both worlds have their own identity, with completely different lifestyles and making them merge into one space turned out to be puzzling. The building needed to accommodate the needs for Braga Street as well as Kampung Braga. The stacked workplaces on top of the 50s construction for instance needed to represent the Kampung community whilst also being connected to the existing colonial Braga Street, two opposite atmospheres. Many tests were made in how the addition could reflect this Kampung atmosphere while still being part of the colonial heritage.

The decisions made in the process were all connected to the Cultural Value Assessment. This made it easier whether or not to remove parts of the building. The fact that some parts of the building were inaccessible made it more difficult to re-use the building. Assumptions needed to be made, of how the spaces were configured using reference projects. A lot of time was put in, using historic photographs and emailing several brokers in figuring out the interior state of the building. Exploring the building first hand would make it more effective in value the building.

More research could be done in how the two areas really function, what work residents in the Kampung do, what they do in their spare time, how they experience their day. Due to the limited time and language barrier, it would be interesting to do more research into these aspects. To fully understand a place, more time needs to be spend on site and getting to know people. Some residents were holding back what they really wanted to say. When coming back a second time, they were willing to speak more openly. Spending more time, talking and eating with the locals, can definitely give a better understanding of how they experience the area and what the actual problems are.