

# *kampung kitchen*

*Sustaining the livelihoods of the local kampong residents  
through the informalities of their community  
within the colonial city center*

Reflection Paper

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# Shared Heritage

Shared heritage can be perceived as heritage shared by two or more entities such as individuals, institutions or countries. This shared heritage comprises of a history of, for example, past events, built structures and infused cultures in which the entities share. Within this context, the Shared Heritage Studio aims to explore the historic centres of Indonesian cities with a shared Dutch past, in order to find out if heritage can be used as a sustainable driver to solve current societal problems.

Shared heritage can be used as a means to grow a stronger relationship in order to work together towards a meaningful future. Furthermore, heritage value can never truly be one's own, depending to which extent one claims it. If we take colonial buildings for instance in the old shopping district of Bandung, then there are countless factors which can be taken into consideration such as the architecture. The architectural styles themselves in the historic city centre of Bandung are a combination of tropical

architecture of that region and architectural movements originating from different countries.

A perfect example was that of the Dutch architect and town planner Thomas Karsten (1884-1945). With an educational background from the Delft Polytechnic, he took along with him the concepts from prominent architects, such as Berlage, and design approaches, such as *Deutscher Werkbund*<sup>1</sup>, and expressed these in the Dutch East Indies in his town planning schemes and architecture (Coté & O'Neill, 2017).

In shared heritage, one cannot exist without the other. The values preserved from this past need to serve a wider societal problem in order for it to be conserved, and must therefore be reinterpreted through added value in the transformation.

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1 The *Deutscher Werkbund* was focused on the reintegration of the cultural traditions of German society.



Figure 1. A mix of Dutch and Indonesian society seen in the Braga street, near Maison Bogerijen (currently known as Braga Permai) (Abels, n.d.).

# 1. Design Problem Statement

*With this project I wish to sustain the livelihoods of the local kampong residents through the informalities of their community within the colonial city centre.*

The chosen site consists of the old colonial shopping street, *jalan Braga*, as well as the kampong adjacent to this street, which is known as *kampung Braga*. The problems reoccurring in the kampong are characterized by low income families; unhealthy way of living & working space portrayed by cramped spaces, inefficient daylight and ventilation; and unsanitary washing and cooking facilities. The majority of the residents earn a living through informal economic activities, thus are not supported by healthcare. These undesirable working and living conditions can result in an increase in diseases, which can only worsen their situation.

These observations led to the following research question: *which cultural values can you take from the past, and apply it as a resource to the current situation of the kampong residents in order to support a necessary balance within their livelihoods?*

Despite the bad condition, the residents are able to get by in the dense historical city centre, due to the strong community in the kampong, which bonds them together; where favours are done for one another, which is also known as *gotong royong*. The livelihoods within the kampong are largely based on self-employment in the form of goods and services such as selling food in front of their homes or on the street and creating artwork to sell. This is also known as informal economy and is not registered under official agencies, with no tax requirements or health services attached. Even though there is already insufficient space in the kampong to properly live in, the residents still make place for old traditions, which they practised back in the day (as seen in *kampung Naga*<sup>1</sup>), such as keeping livestock outside of their homes and cultivating fruits, herbs and vegetables, where there is space at least.

An important part of the development of kampong Braga was due to developments in the Braga street, resulting in the rise of the old colonial buildings we know now, that were built along with it. However, the current state in this part of the site, is characterized by dilapidated colonial building structures, which are not being used fully, meaning that the *shop-house* principle does not work anymore in the current society. Furthermore, the kampong is cut off from the Braga street by the colonial buildings, meaning that you cannot enter the kampong from the buildings, which results in no connection between Braga street and the kampong. Aside from this, the colonial buildings are also currently being threatened by private companies, who are replacing them with high rise hotels and malls.

This led to the following design question, which aims for a coherent solution in order to tackle the current underlying situation, addressed in the previous paragraph, of the site. This is thus formulated as: *how can the informalities within the kampong community contribute to the transformation of a historical colonial building within the old shopping district of the Braga street?*



Figure 2. Map of kampong Braga, adjacent to the Braga street, within the historical city center

<sup>1</sup> Kampong Naga is village in the south side of West Java, where age old traditions are still carried on by the current generation living there.

## 2. Value Assessment in Relation to Site & Topic

In order to fulfil the design goal, a case study is chosen, based on the need to tackle the design problems mentioned in the previous chapter. Therefore, the case study is characterized by: being a colonial building; it is located in the Braga street, consisting of an upper floor, which in this case, is partly vacant; and where part of the building is destroyed due to the collapse of part of the structure. Furthermore, the building consists of a basement, on the same level of the kampong, creating the opportunity to connect to the kampong. With this in mind, when coming across the Hellerman building, I was inspired by the vacant part, where the original structure can still be perceived.

The Hellerman building is part of the historical colonial ensemble of the Braga street, which is located in the historical city centre of Bandung, the capital of West Java. The building has known many uses, ranging from restaurant to convenience store to photo booth, but was originally designed as an ammunition and firearm store. The building owes its existence to the first shop at Braga street, which is Firma N. V. Hellerman and is located close to the lower section of Braga street. The owner of the shop, which was C. A. Hellerman, bought most of the land, which was cheap at that time, in order to build shops and selling them to European businessmen, who began to flood the Braga street, resulting in what was then known as *Parijs van Java* (ICOMOS, 1999), filled with its leisurely pleasures and driven by local tourism. Before this, the Braga street was known as *Pedatiweg*, which lies between the railroad and the Asia-Afrika street. Back then, the Braga street contributed to the expanding economy by serving as a trading route between the residence of the Regent and the residence of the coffee assist. This trading route resulted from large infrastructural developments such as the Groote Postweg (now *jalan Asia-Afrika*) in 1811, connecting Bandung to Jakarta, and the completion of the railroad in 1884, to strengthen this connection even further. This further resulted in an increase in population, in 1894.

It is speculated that the building dates back from 1918 and that the architect of the building

might have been Richard Schoemaker, who is the younger brother of the more prominent architect, Wolff Schoemaker. These facts and developments are seen as high historical value belonging to the building, because of they stem from a greater whole, such as that of the architect and it being one of the first buildings in the Braga street, which was determined for the development of the street and the design of its surrounding buildings in that period.



Figure 3. The drawing above illustrates the original facade and the drawing below illustrates the current situation





Figure 4. Street view of the Hellerman building in 1927 (Bint Bint, 2017)



Figure 5. Interior of the Hellerman building (own photograph)

### 3. Opportunities, Obligations & Dilemmas in the Design Process & Product

As a point of departure, cultural value is defined as being *"the assessment of the societal value of the residue of the past within a specific socio-cultural context and with a forward-looking perspective"* (Clarke, 2018). To do that end, cultural value can be used as the driver in order to make a social sustainable hub, serving both the kampong community as well as the users of the Braga street, which are local and international tourists.

When adding value to a certain element of the site or case study, I researched the element through three different time periods. The first and second period is based on what it meant for the past and how it is conceived in the current socio-cultural context of the area. However, in order to conserve a certain element, the most sustainable way to do it is to assign it a necessary use for current and future generations (Petzet, 2004), which leads to the third time period; the new value to which that element is assigned to in future society.

The Hellerman building once had a great relative art and rarity value through its prominent towers and its rich architectural stucco and ornaments in the front facade, but has since been diminished through socio-economic developments and lack of maintenance throughout the years.

The original typology of the Hellerman building can be described as the *shop-house* principle. This offered high historical and relative art value to the interior space of the ground floor through the large window openings in the front facade, the rarity value of the exposed concrete structure and the high use value of the clerestories, which brought in daylight to the interior space. (figure 4). This interior space, which is still present in the vacant part of the building is used as an inspiration to restore this quality throughout the rest of the ground floor and offered an opportunity as a connecting part between the building and the Braga street through public space, thereby creating an enclosing second facade behind the front facade (see figure 6). Therefore, by placing the dining space in this part of the building, the original design of the interior space has been kept.

The strategy for the before mentioned public space is based on the concept of how modernity is conceived by Thomas Karsten: "[...] modernity in any society should reflect their unique traditional cultures, physical environment and history" (Coté & O'Neill, 2017), thus striving to apply the cultural aspects of the local society into the Braga street. By giving back public space to the Braga street, you create opportunities for a richer experience and enriching the transition between interior and exterior.

Where, in many cases, the opening in the floor first floor and the roof (figure 5), which resulted from a collapsed right tower, might be conceived as an obligation to restore or to close up, it was the first instance acknowledged as an opportunity to connect the ground floor and the first floor. Finally, the opening in the floor and the tree on the first floor is used as a means to express informality and opportunity and as an inspiration to create a new connection to the kampong.

The Riga charter states that reconstruction should be carried out *"without conjecture or compromising existing in situ remains, and that any reconstruction is legible, reversible and the least necessary for the conservation and presentation of the site"*. However, in contrary to the conditions, reconstruction can still be carried out, where survival of the place is necessary; *"where a 'place' is incomplete through damage or alteration; or "where it recovers the cultural significance of a 'place'"*, as stated in the Riga charter (ICROM, Latvian National Commission for UNESCO, & State Inspection for Heritage Protection of Latvia, 2000).

Reconstruction of the original front facade, which is highly valued as being part of the significant historic fabric of the Braga street, will bring along high costs in restoration. However, the front facade consists of historical, artistic and symbolic significance for regional culture and history. In addition to this, it goes against the aspect of sustainability which proposes to use or re-use what is currently present. The question asked here is then: *what added value does it bring back to the new use value or for future generations*

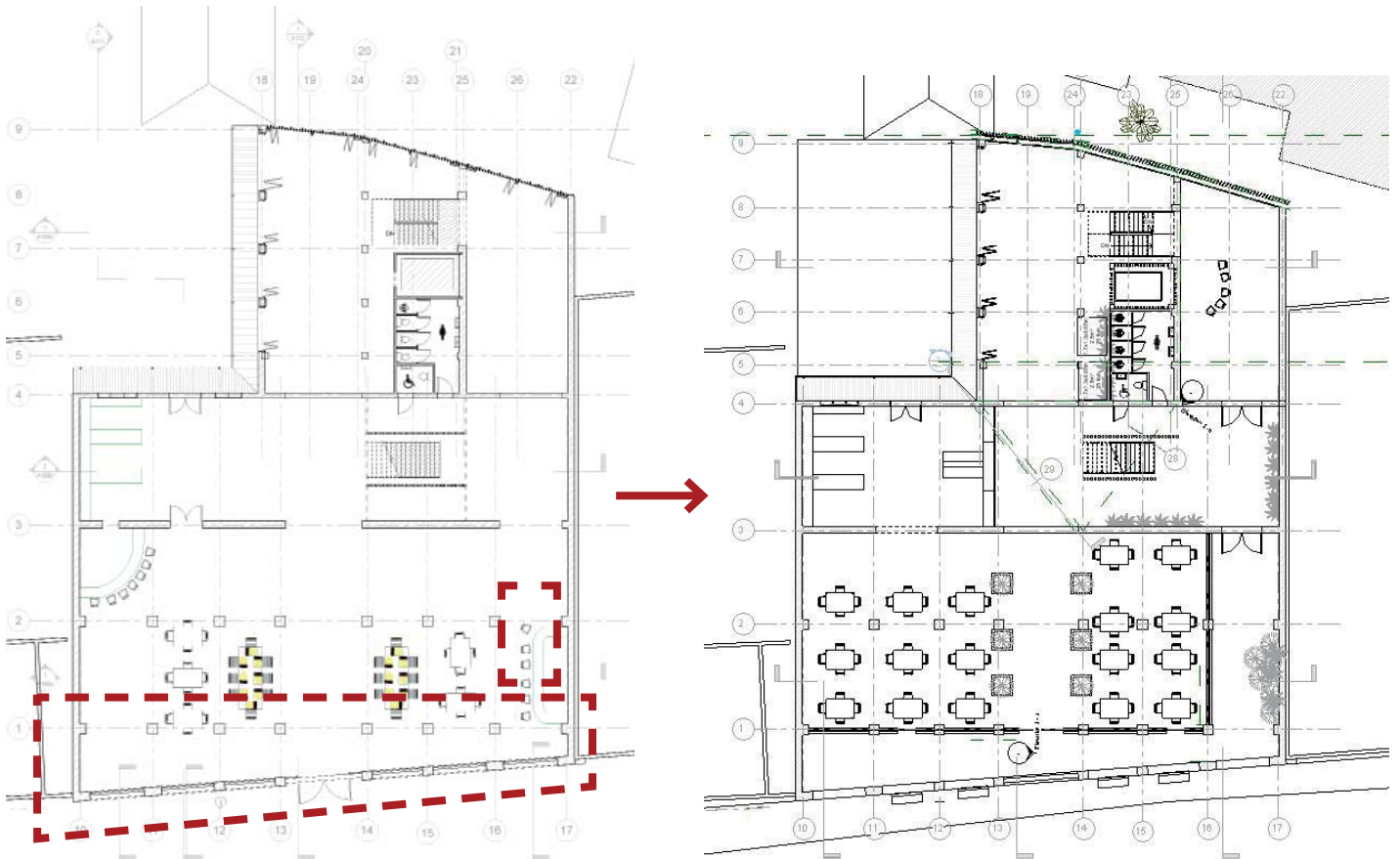


Figure 6. Defining the informal shape of the front space as public space, which further evolved into a new entrance for the Kampong



*in addition to its historical and relative art value? To what extent do you consider bringing back the towers? Is the historical and relative art value of such an element enough reason to reconstruct, without it having any added value to the new programme?* Two main attitudes from which you can approach this situation, derive from the French architect Viollet-le-Duc and English art critic Ruskin. The former is in favor restoration and defines restoration as to re-establish a building in an ultimate state that never existed before, while as the latter was against restoration and believed that you cannot restore that what has ever been great or beautiful in architecture (Van de Ende & Streng, 2017).

When you think about it, they both emphasize on the same thing; Ruskin can be interpreted in such a way, that what has ever been beautiful could have only been beautiful in its original context, meaning that it cannot preserve that same beauty and its same interpretation in the current and/or future social context, thus you can never restore it. In that same sense, Viollet-le-Duc points out that when restoration occurs, it should be done in such a way that you don't restore the original element, but that you restore it through the addition of a new layer, as he so well defines it, 'in a state that never existed before', keeping in mind the usability of current and future generations.

This aspect is tackled in the design through reconstruction, interpretation and adaptation of the front facade, where the first approach illustrates how an element of high value, which was once lost, can be brought back through reconstruction and is implemented in the new use. The second and third approach is based on reinterpreting the depth of the original front facade and the adaptation of the opening in the floor.

The design process is an iterative process where I've jumped back and forth in order to develop the solution even further. In order to do so, it was necessary to zoom out in order to look at the solution from a bigger picture and to see if an aspect was neglected. In this sense, when is a solution truly THE solution? When the project goal is achieved. The purpose of this project is to achieve balance in the livelihoods of the kampong residence, within the historic city center of Bandung. This means that more elements have to be taken into consideration than only the perspectives of the kampong residents, such as the values of the building itself, the qualities of the Braga street, such as public space, etc.. That is the bigger picture.

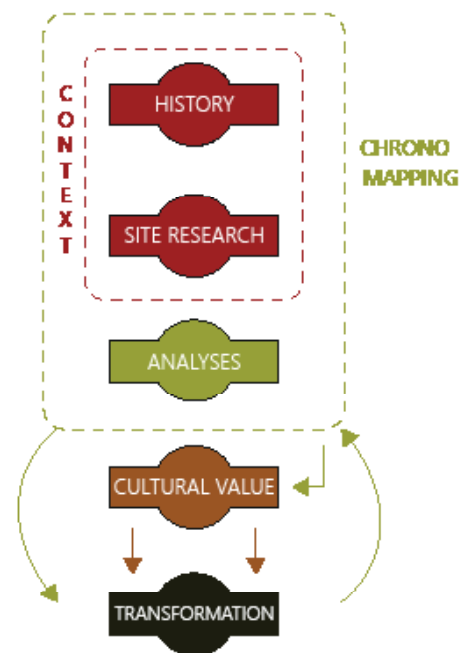


Figure 7. Diagram showing the iterative process between the different assets (own illustration)

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