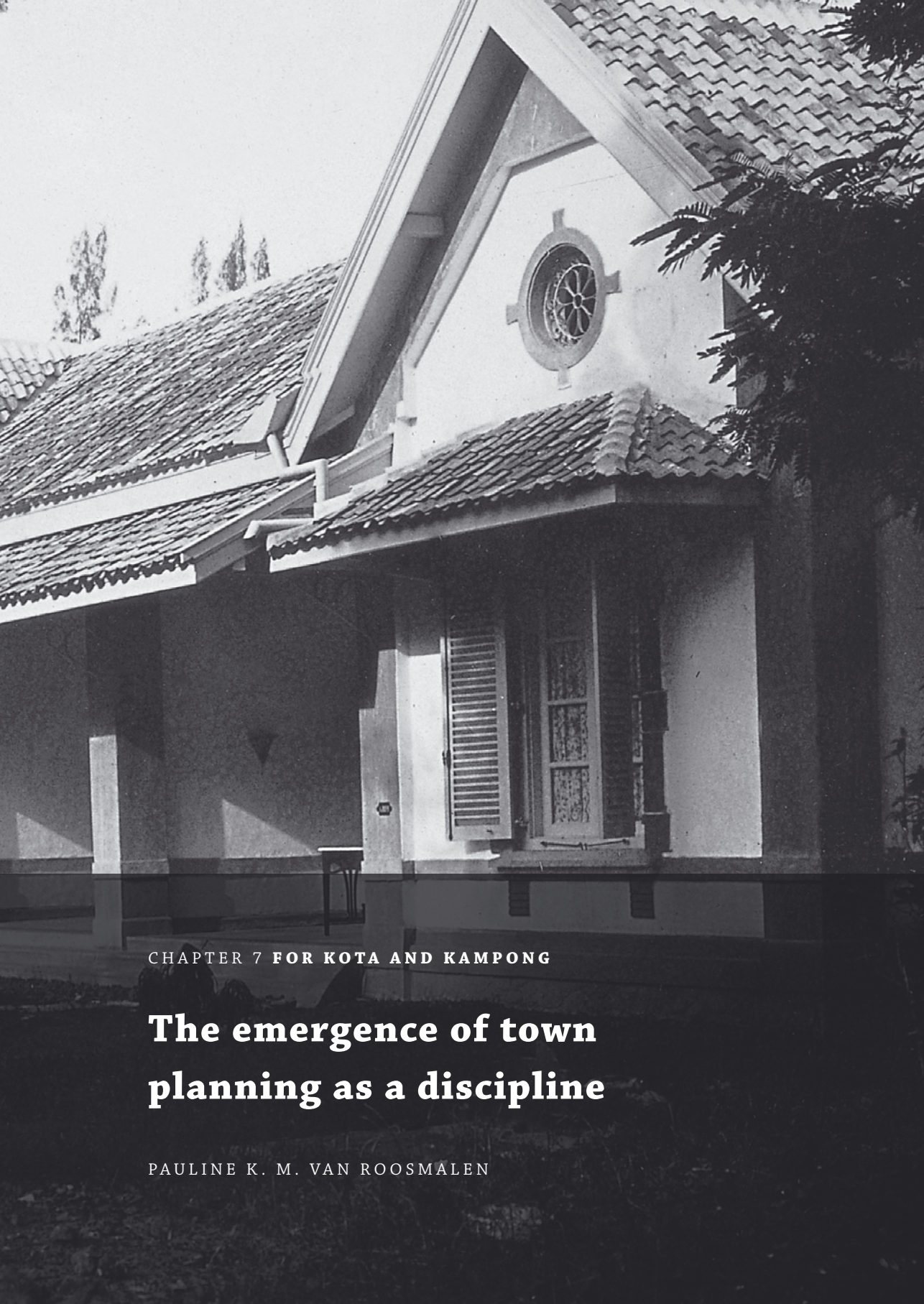




Privately designed attached dwellings
situated on the Karre Road in
Semarang. Photographed by
H.G. Tillema around 1910.



CHAPTER 7 FOR KOTA AND KAMPONG

The emergence of town planning as a discipline

PAULINE K. M. VAN ROOSMALEN

Obviously it cannot be denied that in the past many a regional administrative head or even the B.O.W. made important and sometimes very accurate decisions concerning town expansion – but that can hardly be said to constitute town planning.

(H.T. Karsten 1920).¹

At the time of writing *Indiese stedeboom* (Indian town planning) the author of this quotation had been living and working in the Dutch East Indies for some six years. Following his studies in architectural engineering at the Technical College in Delft (1904-1909) Thomas Karsten travelled to the East Indies to take up the position of 'chef de bureau' at his friend's architectural bureau in Semarang. The friend in question was the engineer Henri Maclaine Pont. It was not long before Karsten made a name for himself as an enthusiastic and gifted creator both of individual building designs and of urban development plans. With his book *Indiese stedeboom*, the first East Indian publication to deal with the objectives and the essence of modern town planning in the Dutch East Indies, Karsten's name became permanently linked to town planning in the Dutch East Indies during the first half of the twentieth century. He wrote the following about the basic conditions required for any town planning practice:

*What is essential is a perpetual interest in and knowledge of local issues [...]. Town planning can only be good if planners are well-informed about local conditions and constantly in touch with people's needs and the needs of industry.*²

At the beginning of the twentieth century town planning was a relatively young discipline. Even though people had contemplated city layouts for centuries, it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that the field was given renewed impetus through publications such as *Bijdrage tot de kennis van den stedenbouw* (Contribution to the knowledge of town planning) (1880) by H.W. Nachenius, *Der Städtebau nach seinen Künstlerischen Grundsätzen* (The artistic foundations of town planning) (1889) by Camillo Sitte and *Garden Cities of Tomorrow. A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898) by Ebenezer Howard. With a view to economic and social development these books described the demands, possibilities and problems surrounding future town and country development, and design. In many respects the problems encountered in the Dutch East Indies were so divergent though that European and American publications on the subject offered little solace.

Karsten's reference (see opening quotation) to the lack of a town planning discipline and the negligible intervention of the Department of Civil Public Works (Departement van Burgerlijke Openbare Werken, BOW) in the systematic development of East Indian towns did not imply that up until the 1920s every form of planning was totally lacking in the East Indies. Over the centuries various native and foreign powers had established settlements that adhered to a more or less systematic planning regime. Karsten did not wish to deny this, he merely wanted to point out that on the whole during the period of Dutch rule town planning had not existed because predetermined rational and practical considerations, a methodology, institutions, regulations and directives had been lacking.

The emphasis that Karsten placed upon the need for a systematic town planning approach and for systematic practice was to culminate, in 1938, in the presentation of a

draft for an ordinance in the field of town planning. The text of this draft ordinance was the result of the findings and recommendations made by the Town Planning Committee that had been appointed by the government in 1934. Among the most prominent members of the committee were J.H.A. Logemann (chairman), professor at the Law College in Batavia, M. Soesilo, a practising engineer and architectural supervisor employed at Karsten's bureau in Bandoeng, the engineer J.P. Thijse, at the time employed by the Municipal Works Service in Bandoeng, and Karsten.

By describing all aspects of the town planning process in a lucid and coherent fashion the ordinance provided architects, administrators and the general public with the necessary guidelines and insight. Despite extensive debate over the text of the ordinance and its elucidation during the first planning workshop in 1939, the war situation in Europe and Asia delayed its approval and decree until after the war. Though the delay was undoubtedly hard to accept for the committee members involved, it detracted little from the legal and practical significance of the ordinance being the first Dutch legal regulation to deal with all aspects of (tropical) town planning ranging from design to construction.

Another effective aspect of the ordinance was the fact that it did not confine itself to the discipline of town planning only. From time to time the authors stressed the importance of and the need to maintain a broad planological perspective and the need for cooperation between town councils and regencies in order to create regional plans and a national plan. Because of this broad and forward-looking view it is hardly surprising that when in 1948 the government decided to establish a spatial planning committee the ordinance was taken as the basis for the committee's activities.

Changes in the nineteenth century

Far-reaching developments

Nineteenth century colonial administrators and engineers abided by the instructions of the Dutch government and operated in its interests. Given the colonial character of the Dutch East Indies this meant that its administration and its development were organised in such a way as to serve the colonial power and the economy of the European part of the kingdom. Where architecture was concerned that meant that infrastructure, irrigation works, staff residences, offices, warehouses and utilitarian works constituted the most important building assignments. This situation changed slightly when in 1870 the Cultivation System was abolished and the Agrarian Act was adopted. Even though the colony continued to be centrally governed from Batavia and mandated by The Hague it was from that time on, no longer the sole prerogative of the government to establish trade relations and exploit the colony: private persons were also free to trade with and within the colony.

The result was an instant increase in the number of Europeans who settled in the East Indies. Between 1870 and 1900 the number of European civilians and military people in the colony increased from 44,200 to 90,800.³ Both in the countryside and in the city their arrival created employment possibilities that appealed to the many indigenous inhabitants. The arrival of the Europeans thus not only altered the composition of the population and

created new employment opportunities, it also generated a considerable migration of the rural population to the towns as well as from the Outer Regions to Java. Between 1870 and 1905 the indigenous population of Java grew from 12,100,000 to 28,300,000.

As the existing towns were not equipped to cope with such a population surge it was not long before an acute large-scale housing shortage arose. Endeavours to alter the situation by providing new housing areas and shopping facilities for the Europeans had an immediate negative effect on the housing situation among Indonesians as it were their houses that had to make way for such expansion plans. Consequently the housing shortage among Indonesians increased and led to a deterioration in their living conditions. This situation, together with the regular outbreaks of malaria, typhus and an occasional outbreak of the plague epidemic made it plain that drastic measures would have to be taken to put an end to this situation.

Standing up for architecture

More or less simultaneously and as a result of the new spirit of enterprise that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century and the prospect of the potential role that architecture might play in this new era, a debate commenced on the importance of good architecture and the emancipation of architects. What triggered the debate was the characterless and unoriginal architecture of many late nineteenth century buildings and structures. Many engineers who had been educated as architects were of the opinion that the cause of this problem was to be sought in the inadequate artistic training of the civil engineers who had been responsible for the design of many of those buildings. Lobbying for the rightful status of architects in the building industry they pointed out that civil engineers were primarily trained to design utilitarian works. Which meant that they were only partially conversant with the principles of good architecture. By contrast, architectural engineers were thoroughly familiar with the principles of architecture.⁴ Because of his knowledge of the theory of form and his artistic training an architect knew how to make form and colour correspond to the function of a building and how to create, both in the interior and in the relationship between a building and its environment, harmony, rhythm and rest while carefully considering good spatial planning – and should thus be favoured as a designer of buildings.

Since BOW was responsible for the design and realisation of the majority of the buildings in the colony it was especially towards that department that the architects directed their frustration. It was not only the efficiency and sobriety towards which BOW aspired that elicited a great deal of criticism from them. It was also, indeed particularly, the application of 'standard designs' that evoked their criticism because they so obviously bit displayed a preference for productivity and a disregard for architecture. Standard designs were basic designs that adhered to instructions and fixed directives concerning ground plans and elevations while forming the basis for new designs. In the post-1870 period BOW had turned to standardisation in order to keep abreast of the rising demand for buildings. With the exception of the department's buildings and the offices where administration was housed, BOW engineers made use of standard design for all remaining buildings. Among them houses, schools, hospitals, post offices, prisons, warehouses, and watch houses.

The idea underlying the principle of standard design was that it facilitated a fast,

efficient and relatively inexpensive way of working because it enabled an engineer to realise a technically and financially satisfactory design with the minimum of effort. Because standard designs were used all a designer had to do was to concentrate on the design details. Thanks to the expertise of those involved, only written instructions needed to be provided during construction. Where necessary adjustments could be made, for example because of divergent soil conditions or available funds, particular representative demands or specific locations. According to the architects, however, the problem with this approach was that it led to solutions that were architecturally completely unsatisfactory. Remarks similar to the following became gradually more frequent and more insistent: 'Our government does not employ great builders' and 'Uniform through their insignificance, insignificant through their uniformity, is the best way of qualifying public buildings of the last few decades'.⁵

In 1898, in order to boost their plea for good architecture, architects of the colony established the Association of Dutch East Indian Architects (Vereeniging van Bouwkundigen in Nederlandsch-Indië).⁶ It also published a periodical, the *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* (The East Indian Architectural Journal). Subsequently, in 1850 two Indian branches of the Royal Institute of Engineers (Koninklijk Instituut van Ingenieurs, KIVI) were established. The KIVI initially published a special section on the Dutch East Indies in its periodical *De Ingenieur* (The Engineer). Later on a separate issue was published, called *De Ingenieur in Nederlandsch-Indië* (The Engineer in the Dutch East Indies).

In the same year that the Association of Dutch East Indian Architects was set up, the East Indian architects gained the support of a prominent Dutch architect, H.P. Berlage. Despite the fact that he did not have any personal or design-technical experience with the East Indies or its architecture he wrote the directorate of the Life and Life Insurance Company 'De Algemeene' (Levens- en Lijfrenteverzekeringsmaatschappij De Algemeene) the following regarding a design for their new office in Soerabaja:

*What seems to me to be generally most desirable is that in broad outline the East Indian building style is retained but that to that end the architecture is made slightly richer. The designer was, however, of a different opinion and applied a purely European architectural style. Presumably there was good reason for doing this, which I can accept, but I cannot but disapprove of this kind of European architecture because the façade resembles that of a villa-like shop in a small community designed by a small architect. It is this architecture that has made all our lovely cities and towns ugly.*⁷

Bolstered by the ideological support of the prominent architect Berlage, the East Indian architects continued to plea for good architecture. In view of the tense relations between architects and their colleague engineers at BOW the stance taken by the architectural engineer S. Snuyf was remarkable. Appointed as junior engineer of the accursed department he had already pointed out in 1908 that the then recent political and economic changes had led to a situation in which people 'were preoccupied with creating all the kinds of organisations that would make it possible for people to have a pleasant stay in the tropics' and 'everyone is doing his best to make our Indian years more pleasant'.⁸ The conclusion he drew from this was that architects would have to follow suit and contribute by designing 'pleasant public buildings', 'cheerful schools', 'nice fresh offices' and 'good hospitals'.⁹ Snuyf

contended that the custom of 'always building white houses with their bad, or even worse applied Renaissance styles' needed to be challenged and avoided.¹⁰

Apart from the works of Berlage what Snuyf saw as exemplary architecture were the designs of the Dutch architects P.J.H. Cuypers and W. Kromhout. He furthermore concluded that the choice of a certain architectural style did, to a high degree, also depend on the environment in which a building was situated. He wrote:

*When placed against a clear sky the silhouette of a building must be purer and more regular than when placed against the background of a wood or hill. In the latter case a fantastic silhouette can be very successful whereas in the former case clear-cut lines are a prerequisite.*¹¹

Clearly BOW was not insensitive to the persistent criticism of its architectural designs. Just one year after his first remarks Snuyf was appointed head of the department's newly created Architectural Bureau, a position that he was to fulfil until 1912. In his capacity as head of the bureau he immediately put his ideas into practice: his 1909 design for the post and telegraph office in Medan was widely acclaimed.

A new century, a new policy

Administrative reorganisation

The debate on architecture and the standardization adopted by BOW towards the end of the nineteenth century was indicative of the lack of sufficiently qualified architects and the need for change. The appearance of buildings was not the only thing that needed to be changed. The new character of the colony, the rapidly changing composition of the population and the accompanying social, cultural and political changes forced the country's administration to contemplate its approach to the task in hand. In order to adapt to the new situation and to the related changing social relations the liberal policy that had been adhered to for some time was further considered and elaborated. It was to result in a new political line that came to be known as the Ethical Policy. The revised political line was to pave the way for administrative reform. One of the most far-reaching moves was the decision to decentralise the central administration. The legal ruling required to that effect was adopted in 1903. Both from historical and political perspectives the Decentralisation Act was an important document as it officially put an end to having a central administration operating from Batavia – a system customary almost from the time the Dutch had set foot in the archipelago.

The Decentralisation Act marked the beginning of gradual administrative reform and the realignment of the power configuration. A government commissioner and an assistant government commissioner were appointed in order to implement the objectives laid down in the Decentralisation Act, to advise the governor-general and to inform all the authorities involved. One of the first suggestions the government commissioner made was that local councils should be established: administratively local, autonomous authorities which, taking into account the various hierarchical relations, would be individually responsible for local administrative and financial policies. The proposition was well received and resulted, in 1905, in the approval and establishment of the ordinance required for the establishment of local councils.

This so-called Local Council Ordinance was an important decentralisation instrument. It made it possible to create local and regional councils steered by a European administration, and regions and departments governed by local-based administrations.¹² In accordance with their founding ordinance, the local councils had to provide:

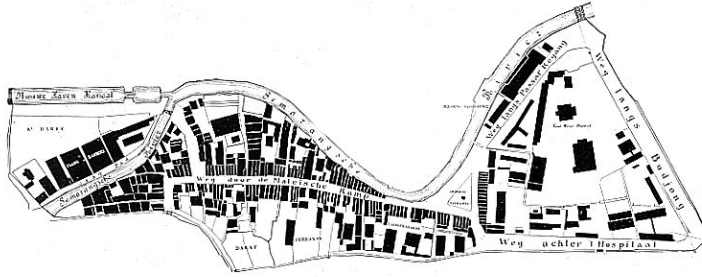
maintenance, repair, renewal and construction of public roads including accompanying attributes such as planting, banks, dykes, verges, etc., as well as other works of local importance such as: squares, gardens, gutters for general use, sewers, flushing conduits, works for the acquisition or distribution of drinking, washing and rinsing water, general slaughter houses, markets and pertaining sheds.

In addition they were responsible for the collecting of roadside refuse, the spraying of public roads, streets and squares, the fire brigade, cemeteries and public ferries. In connection with his responsibility for the implementation of the Decentralisation Act, the government commissioner – who was made decentralisation advisor as of 1912 – was involved in local authority affairs.¹³

The tasks confronting the local authorities were numerous and varied from sanitation works to public housing and *kampong* improvement, and from land issues to town expansion and improvement from the very start. Besides the municipalities had to deal with the presence of the many ethnic population groups, each with their divergent individual and regional habits and customs. The deficient or even totally lacking administrative experience of most of the local council members, the social and economic circumstances that deviated from those in the ‘motherland’ and the virtual lack of support and assistance from the Batavian government initially did not help to make administrators particularly enthusiastic about decentralisation politics. In the field of urban development it was no different: the approach required to achieve optimum results was more or less thwarted by the chronic lack of well educated and capable architects and engineers and the regional and even local variations in assignments, building types and town plans.

Unable to autonomously realise the town planning tasks, the local authorities regularly appealed to the East Indian government for understanding and support through the decentralisation advisor. One of the first hurdles facing the municipalities, which were primarily composed of Dutch citizens, was the land disposal right. In virtually every respect the traditional, indigenous rights and customs relating to land were different from Dutch rights and customs. In order to anticipate and elaborate on economic, social and cultural changes and organize and cultivate the land according to its own intentions and desires, the government in the nineteenth century had already started the recording of the various forms of indigenous landownership within the framework of the Dutch legal system. As the numerous variations and nuances of the indigenous system were very difficult to reconcile with the considerably simpler Dutch system this operation right up until the 1930s frequently lead to mutual irritation, incomprehension, conflict and amendments. Social objectives were secondary to state objectives.¹⁴ Therefore considerations concerning relationships between indigenous land rights and the preserving of the community rarely constituted a significant basis for the Dutch authorities.

Another problem was that when local authorities had been established it had been



Map of a district in Semarang (Central Java) inhabited by native people. The situation as it was around 1880.

decided that the indigenous authorities (known as the *desa* administrations) that were situated within the municipal borders would be autonomous at managerial level. It soon became clear that such a juxtaposition of two administrative powers created an awkward situation that often led to complications. The main problem arose from the fact that due to the separate status of indigenous municipalities and the lack of administrative powers of the European local authority in the *desa*, the indigenous authorities could not be forced to cooperate in the implementation of a municipal plan. They were thus able to frustrate the desired integral municipal approach and consequently emphasised not only technical but also the social differences.

The importance of hygiene

One of the reasons an integral approach was so desirable had to do with the improvement of hygiene, notably in the more densely populated regions of the larger cities. The first such concrete proposition to be made came from two Semarang town council members, W.T. de Vogel, a doctor, and H.F. Tillema, the pharmacist. In 1909 they lobbied for a new housing area to be situated in the hilly region a short distance south of the existing town. Drawing on their knowledge of medical matters De Vogel and Tillema argued that because of its hilly character and higher location the new neighbourhood would not only be visually attractive but, more importantly, more healthy. It would, in other words, constitute a good way of resolving a number of Semarang's major problems: insalubrious living areas.

From a professional point of view De Vogel and Tillema were both interested in changing the unhealthy conditions under which a substantial portion of the largely indigenous population lived. The fact that they then went on to try to present resolutions by drawing on town planning and architecture was something which, up until then, had been unheard of in the Dutch East Indies. Nonetheless the plea by De Vogel and Tillema was endorsed by the Semarang town council because its members recognised the need for a healthy city and an integral approach. A decision that underlines that fact that the municipal board in Semarang was forward-looking. Unlike many other boards it realised in an early stage that all problems were interlinked and that in view of the extent and urgency of the individual problems a coordinated approach was essential if optimum results were to be achieved.



Kampong dwellings in the Karang Bidaro district in Semarang. Photographed by H.F. Tillema around 1910.

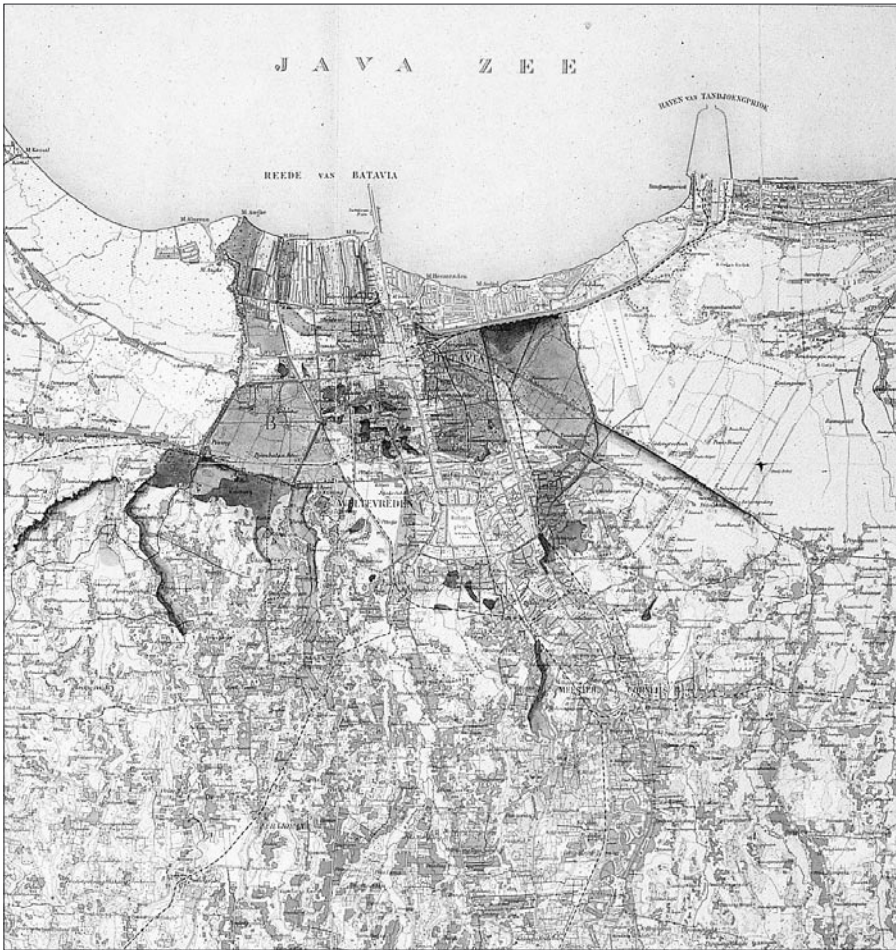


Attached European houses in the Karang Bidaro district in Semarang, around the year 1910.

From a Dutch and European perspective this was not unique though. In the Netherlands and Europe the attention devoted to town planning, to housing and to the relationship between the two had emerged during the late nineteenth century from concerns about the abominable hygienic circumstances in which many people lived. Here, too, it was often those who were not engineers who sounded the alarm to contributing to a better living environment. The situation in the East Indies was similar. Up until the early twentieth century civil engineers and architects had hardly occupied themselves with questions such as town expansion and public housing. It was the demand for a healthy living environment free of illness and epidemics that was to bring about a change in all of that and to force civil engineers and architects to devote more attention to these issues.

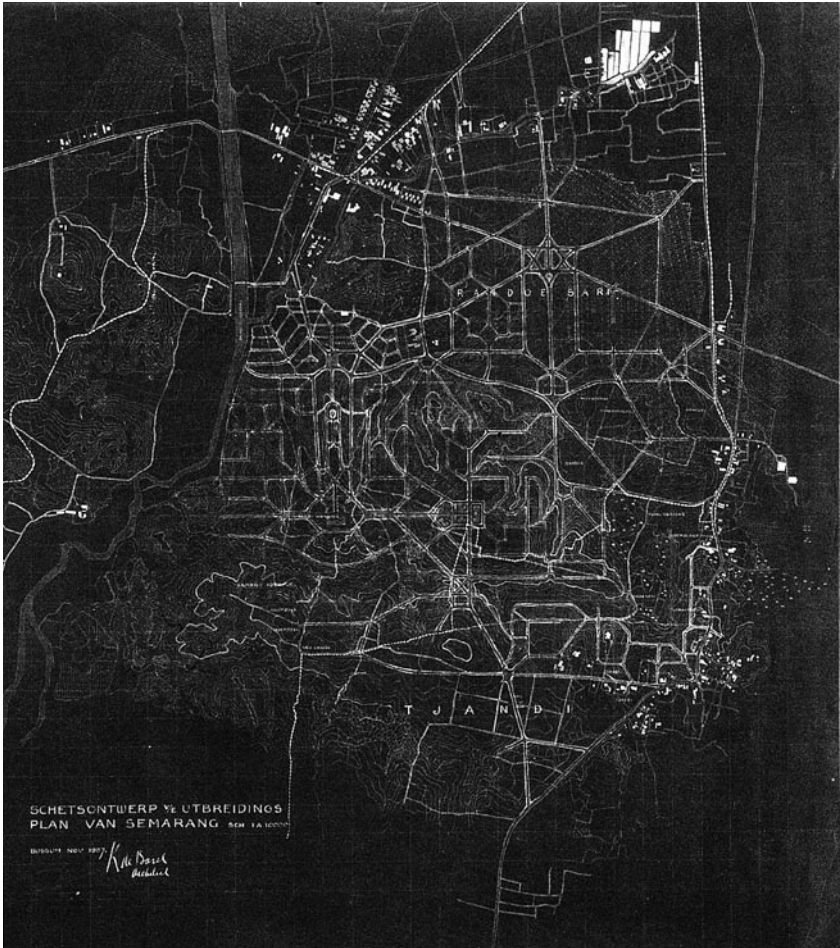
The ideas and principles upon which De Vogel and Tillema had based their appeal were later described in a book published by Tillema entitled *Van wonen and bewonen. Van bouwen, huis en erf* (On living and inhabiting. On building, house and property). In this publication which was presented during the tenth international housing congress in Scheveningen (the Netherlands) in 1913, Tillema described the housing issue in general and the deplorable housing situation in Semarang in particular. In the process, he not only drew attention to the issue of the layout of housing areas but also to the importance of water management and the provision of sufficient good quality drinking water. Tillema's arguments in favour of the hygienic and social changes required were substantiated with international examples, extensive figures, numerous illustrations and photos. It was particularly the photos that explicitly illustrated the architectural and hygienic misdemeanours varying from unsuitable building material such as corrugated iron roofing and walls fabricated from petroleum tins, to poor or unutilised building components. It was especially in that latter category that virtually everything was amiss including insufficient or no protection against the sun, little or no indoor ventilation and ventilation between houses, insufficient sun resulting from poorly selected and positioned trees, undivided water flows, blocked drains, stagnant water with breeding malaria mosquitoes, et cetera.

What Tillema was most critical about was the fact that uniform solutions were adopted and administrators and designers lacked knowledge. As a result his campaigns and publications were principally aimed at European politicians and citizens who took decisions but who, due to their often privileged social status were hardly ever confronted with the true



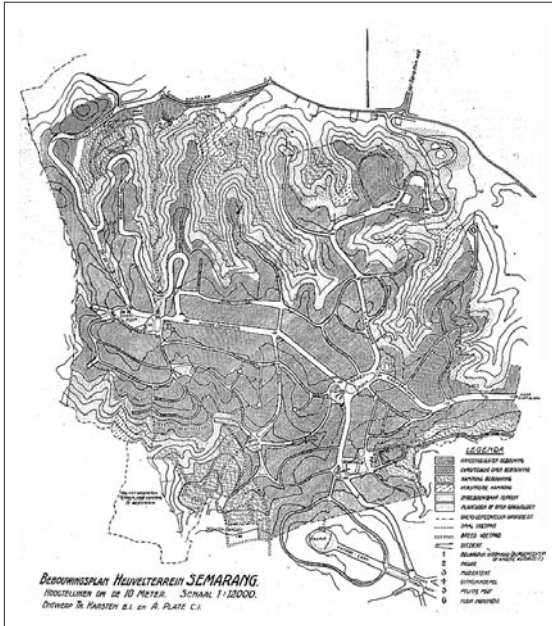
Topographical map of Batavia with an indication of the areas that were regularly subjected to flooding, 1913.

nature and extent of the problems. In his proposals for improvement Tillema stressed that in the designing and orientation of houses, parcels of land, public planting and town planning the specific hygienic demands of a tropical climate would have to be taken into consideration. More than in Europe it was crucial in the East Indies to make sure that air circulation was sufficient, sunlight was tempered (though explicitly not 'blocked'), waste materials removed, and water management under control. He also pointed out that both inhabitants and the town council were responsible for the creation of a good and pleasant living environment: the council because, apart from being responsible for good leadership, it was also responsible for drawing up a comprehensive urban development plan, and inhabitants because they needed to utilize their houses in accordance with the tropical climate.

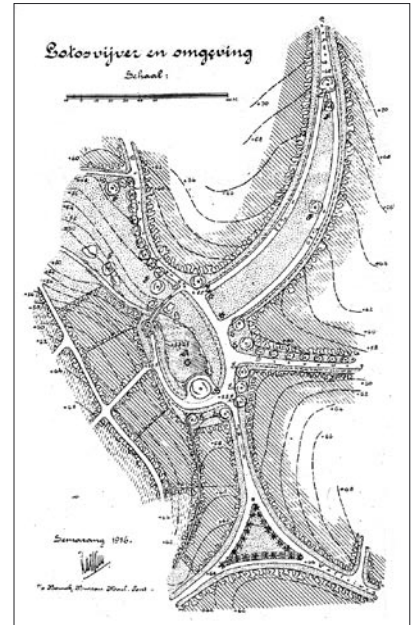


Blueprint of a design sketch drawn up by the engineer K.P.C. de Bazel in conjunction with the Semarang city expansion plans, 1907.

One example that serves to support the plea for an integral approach in the field of urban development was the state of affairs in relation to water management. The nature of the problems surrounding the supplying and discharging of water were so extensive in most East Indian towns that efforts to improve matters in other areas would be ineffective if the water management was not improved first. Problems with the supply and disposal of water was something that had been a constant source of concern from the moment the Dutch had first set foot in the colony. The floods during the monsoon, the lack of water during the dry season, the laborious provision of clean drinking water and the perpetual problems with the disposal of waste water were just some of the issues that had to be contended with. It was clear that no improvements would have a lasting effect if nothing was done to improve water management.



Building plans (scale 1:12,000) for the urban development of New Tjandi, the hilly area to the south of Semarang, according to the design of H.T. Karsten (engineer) and A. Plate, 1916.



Map of the Lotus pool and its surroundings in New Tjandi, Semarang.



Artist's impression of the Lotus pool in New Tjandi looking in a northerly direction, Semarang.

One of the first towns to introduce an integral improvement plan for the water management situation was Batavia. After nineteenth century efforts to abolish the problems by creating new housing areas and after a systematic but incomplete improvement plan had not led to the desired result, governor-general A.F.W. Idenburg in 1911 gave Public Works and the Batavia town council instructions to draw up a general plan in consultation that would ultimately lead to the sanitation of the town. In 1913, as a result of these instructions H. van Breen, who was an engineer and a member of the Batavia town council, presented an overview of works he proposed for the improvement of the drainage and supply of water in the capital Batavia. To illustrate just how unhygienic the conditions were, especially in the densely populated *kampongs*, he wrote:

*The drainage system in the kampongs is much worse than in the neighbourhoods inhabited by Europeans and prosperous Chinese. In many of the very densely populated parts there is absolutely no evidence of drainage facilities. Just here and there between the houses one finds a pit in the ground that is less suited to water transport than to pollution where the water collects.*¹⁵

Apart from pointing out that stagnant water constituted a major conveyor of stench, filth and disease, Van Breen also drew attention to the economic importance of good water management. He demonstrated that poorly maintained waterways obstructed intensive shipping movements on the major waterways and could in extreme cases even become dangerous.

The plan's main objective was to prevent flooding, to regulate local drainage, to put an end to long-term pollution, to end sustained pollution, and to remove and prevent any hazards and dangers posed to shipping. Because the municipality had already developed plans for the provision of drinking water Van Breen disregarded that particular issue in his memo. As Van Breen anticipated the town planning developments that were to materialise in the long term his memo and propositions concerned the area within the Batavian city boundaries and the various land areas that were soon to be developed for town expansion. Almost in passing Van Breen alluded to the advantages to be gained from various measures to be taken in connection with the existing traffic situation. He was of the opinion that the partial filling in of a number of large waterways would constitute an important contribution to the resolving of the traffic problems in busy parts of the town and that the presence of flushing conduits would make the hosing down of roads a great deal easier.

Municipalities unite

The proposals that were being put forward for Semarang and Batavia illustrate how municipalities gradually realized of the importance of treating the city as an organic entity. It was evident that in view of the recent economic and social developments and previous experience in the field of town planning it would no longer be sufficient to simply tackle problems in isolation. The main problem however, was that the extent and complexity of the requirements was completely disproportionate to the means available to deal with those requirements. The budget annually paid out to local councils by the government, known as

the 'allocated sum', was certainly not sufficient. The councils were also having to cope with a permanent lack of sufficiently well-trained designers and administrators, and inadequate legal and organisational means. The range of these problems was magnified by the vastness of the areas that had to be administered and the geographical distances between the different administrative areas, all of which meant that communication was kept to the minimum.

From the contacts the municipal authorities maintained between themselves, it was almost immediately evident that the problems facing the individual municipalities were so general that the most sensible and effective thing to do would be to work together. In addition to that the municipalities fairly quickly realised that it would be imperative to receive practical and financial support from the central government if the existing situation were to be improved. In line with the decentralisation notion though, the government in Batavia originally ignored any request for support and assistance from the municipalities. The local authorities had, after all, been established on the basis of the idea that they would contribute to improvements in the execution of various government duties.¹⁶ Involvement in local affairs and intervention from higher up was something which, in the eyes of the government, conflicted with the concept of decentralisation and the idea that municipalities as local representatives of the central government were responsible for the way in which affairs were run in their own territory.

At first hesitant but later more self-conscious, the municipalities endeavoured from the very beginning to convince the East Indian government that under the existing regulations they were hardly able to carry out their duties in a satisfactory manner. In connection with their direct responsibility for and the daily confrontation with local issues, they badly needed an organisation that facilitated the sharing of ideas and the sharing of experience. Preferably in collaboration with the central government. During the first conference on decentralisation organised by the municipalities the need establishment of an association was therefore discussed. One year later, in 1912, the Association for Local Interests (*Vereeniging voor Locale Belangen*, VLB) was set up during the second conference. The VLB operated as a platform where administrators, designers and other professionals involved could discuss various matters relating to administration and the way in which local authorities were organised. Its periodicals *Locale Belangen* (Local Interests) and *Locale Techniek* (Local Techniques) and the annual decentralisation conferences were important channels for presenting, studying, sharing and commenting upon various ideas and views involving all kinds of administrative and legal matters but also practical issues like water management, building regulations and other aspects of urban development.¹⁷

It is notably Local Interests and minutes taken during various council meetings that give an idea of the way in which economic and social developments forced local authorities to pay attention to general administrative matters and to consider the physical development of the town. Apart from dealing with the local administration many issues were discussed, such as: budgets, taxes and bye-laws, public health, public works, development companies, expropriation, social housing, building and housing inspection, gutters and sewers, water supply policies, premises managed by the local authority, roads, traffic, railways and tramways and sometimes also harbour affairs.

The decentralisation conferences that were variously convened in Bandoeng, Batavia, Malang, Semarang, and Soerabaja were attended by civil servants and a wide range of experts.

It is especially the preliminary advices and the conference proceedings that create a picture of the nature of those events, the subjects that arose and the views that predominated. They not only underlined the urgent nature of many questions but also illustrated how much more efficient it would be to no longer leave certain matters to the individual attention of separate municipalities but to regard such matters as national policy questions and thus deal with them in that way. The media used to discuss issues related to local policies were written preliminary advices, lectures or debates.

On a number of occasions it was in fact town planning or aspects thereof that constituted the conference theme: housing and social housing (1918, 1922, 1923, 1940), town planning in the Dutch East Indies (1922), expenses related to town planning (1933), and regulations concerning building alignment (1929). In that connection, D. de Jongh, mayor of Semarang and later director of the Department for Government Companies prepared a preliminary advice on housing in 1918. H.J. Bussemaker, mayor of Malang and later of Soerabaja, and R. Slamet, a Semarang council member, questioned the matter of the abolition of *desas* within the municipal boundaries and the subsequent reorganisation of municipal departments. A. Poldervaart, chief engineer and director of the Bandoeng Development and Housing Company and later director of Bandoeng's Urban Development Service, together with F.C. Frumau, director of the Public Works Service in Soerabaja wrote a preliminary report on the costs involved in urban development. One of the most notable contributions though, was the preliminary report entitled 'Indian town planning' presented by Karsten during the 1920 conference.

'Indian town planning'

'Indian town planning' – which despite its title mainly pertained to the island of Java – was a description of the objectives and essence of modern town planning in general and in the Dutch East Indies in particular. It described the various components of town planning and the means used to realise its principles. After establishing the scope of the discipline describing the various components and responsibilities, and identifying the organisational and dynamic model required for an urban development plan, Karsten listed the basic elements and the means used to realise any town plan: buildings and roads, the various building types, the way in which buildings are mutually situated, road type differentiation, length and cross section profiles, ordinances, and different official bodies.¹⁸ Alongside the technological aspects and regulatory measures, he described the aesthetic side of town planning at length.

On the aesthetics of town planning and architecture, the relationship between aesthetics and society, and the role and duty of the government, Karsten wrote the following:

The building of any town or village is a government task accompanied by the obligation to give form to that as consciously and as well as possible; the good quality then becomes an expression of the community as such [...]. Just as in our times it would not make sense for all kinds of aesthetic requirements to be demanded of local town planners, likewise no sustainable effects can be achieved by having local communities make demands of the inhabitants with regard to architecture. One cannot extract from a community any more aspects of good form than

*actually reside in its mental level which is determined by fundamental social factors that are much deeper rooted than any ordinance.*¹⁹

On the basis of the notion that 'good form and character' derived from the organic unity between external and internal matters, and thus constituted a criterion for a satisfactory design, Karsten argued in favour of organic plans. Plans in which the character of any one plan would largely be based upon local topographical, social and historical circumstances. With regard to the triple town planning task of creating space, facilitating spatial development and encouraging spatial experiences he noted that it was not simply possible to apply Dutch or European solutions to the East Indian situation. In order to reinforce the character of an urban development plan Karsten, in line with contemporary views on town planning elsewhere, was very much in favour of drawing up town plans that would be adapted to the local landscape. Hence in the Dutch East Indies the tropical climate, the vastness of the archipelago and the abundance of its flora were, to his mind, the salient elements that needed to be borne in mind and which in an almost natural fashion would lead to open, horizontal sections ('walls') of what would be largely open structures with much 'green'. Regarding design Karsten was of the opinion that the nineteenth century Western tendency to view what was 'beautiful as a more or less unnecessary externally imposed veneer', was quite remote from the Eastern view that good form is central to and inseparable from the entire design process.²⁰ In connection with this discrepancy Karsten – who was greatly interested in and had much appreciation of Eastern art philosophy – warned Western designers working in the East or in Eastern environments to be careful not to let their 'sober Western indifference' overshadow or eliminate the Eastern approach.²¹

According to Karsten, town planning in the East Indies of 1920 was transforming from a relatively unsystematic to a fully planned town planning design practice. As is evident from the opening quotation, to Karsten's way of thinking played an important part in the systemising of such a design practice. After all, it was the local councils that offered the administrative and technical continuity that he believed was necessary for good town planning practice and for the realisation of good town plans.

Apart from being attributable to a chronic shortage of craftsmen, the lack of continuity was largely a consequence of the physical and administrative circumstances that characterised the archipelago until the twentieth century. Firstly, the geographical distances between the central government in Batavia and the various local authorities elsewhere in the archipelago made consultation and the exchange of information between different parties sporadic. It also explained why the government in Batavia was hardly aware of specific local circumstances, problems and requests. Secondly, gradually acquired knowledge, insight, views and ideas periodically ebbed away because of the frequent changing and transferring of civil servants. Thirdly, the level of expertise of most technicians was so inadequate that also in that respect there was little continuity. Karsten maintained that this situation had changed for the better when the local councils had been installed. Through their direct presence and responsibility, administrators were immediately confronted with and answerable for local problems and circumstances. It was a condition Karsten deemed necessary for the emergence of proper town planning practice.

The clear and concise way in which Karsten brought together and described divergent

Table 1. Dutch East Indian urban planning 1907-1950

| Places | Urban planning project | Designer / responsible organisations | Year of initiation |
|-------------------|---|---|--------------------|
| Semarang | Tjandi Baroe | Ir. K.P.C. de Bazel | 1907 |
| Batavia | New Gondangdia | P.A.J. Mooijen | 1911 |
| Soerabaja | Darmo | Ir. H. Maclaine Pont | 1914 |
| Soerabaja | Goebeng, Ketabang, Koepang, Ngagel | Municipal Public Works Service Soerabaja | |
| Semarang | Tjandi Baroe | Ir. H.T. Karsten | 1916 |
| Semarang | Pekoenden-Peterongan, Sompok | Ir. H. Maclaine Pont, Ir. H.T. Karsten | 1917 |
| Malang | Oranjebuurt | Municipal Public Works Service Malang | 1917 |
| Bandoeng | Extension Bandoeng North | General Bureau of Consulting Engineers and Architects | 1917 |
| Buitenzorg/ Bogor | Kedong Halang | Ir. H.T. Karsten | 1917 |
| Medan | Polonia | Municipal Public Works Service Medan | 1919/1920 |
| Malang | G.G.-buurt, Bergenbuurt | Municipal Public Works Service Malang | 1920 |
| Bandoeng | Extension Bandoeng South and revision of Extension Bandoeng North | Municipal Public Works Service Bandoeng | 1927 |
| Malang | Extension Malang West | Ir. H.T. Karsten | 1931 |
| Bandoeng | Sorghvliet | Ir. A. Poldervaart | 1938 |
| Batavia/ Djakarta | Satellite Town Kebajoran | Central Planning Bureau/ M.Soesilo | 1949 |
| Balikipapan | Recovery | Ir. H.Lüning | 1949 |
| Samarinda | Recovery | Ir. H.Lüning | 1950 |
| Palembang | Recovery | Ir. H.Lüning | 1950 |

Source: Akihary, *Architectuur & stedebouw in Indonesië 1870/1970*.

town planning factors won him much support and contributed significantly to his position and influence in the field of town planning in the Dutch East Indies in the period before the Second World War. One of his earliest supporters was Dr. M.J. Granpré Molière, professor of architecture at the Technical College in Delft. In 1922 he devoted considerable attention to 'Indian town planning' in the journal *Tijdschrift voor Volkshuisvesting* (Journal for Public Housing). He commenced thus:

*This is a publication that definitely needs to be acknowledged; it is in itself remarkable that what may truly be termed a complete work has appeared solely on the East Indies, complete in the sense that the issue is dealt with to its fullest extent; and that is quite an achievement if one considers the different races, the striking transition from primitive to cultured town forms, and so on that exist in the Dutch East Indies.*²²

Granpré Molière's admiration was not only prompted by Karsten's analysis and description of town planning in the complex colonial society of the Dutch East Indies. He also considered 'Indian town planning' to be a refreshing change from what he perceived to be the prevalent tendentious, exaggerated or superficial approach to the town planning discipline. From his

remark to the effect that in Dutch planning main roads were 'often so blatantly' at odds with Karsten's insights it may be concluded that Granpré Molière was of the opinion that the principles and views voiced by Karsten lent themselves perfectly to examination and application outside the East Indies.²³

Apart from being founded on theories and ideals 'Indian town planning' was also based on experiences in the colony. In that respect the first example was Semarang. It was for Semarang that De Vogel, even before he and Tillema had presented their ideas for an expansion plan south of the existing town, in 1907 and of his own volition, asked the Dutch architect K.P.C. Bazel to design a preliminary plan for the future development of this area. After having become acquainted with the proposals by Tillema and De Vogel, the municipality decided some time later to ask Karsten to come up with a design for Nieuw Tjandi (New Tjandi). Karsten accepted the offer and presented his design in 1917.

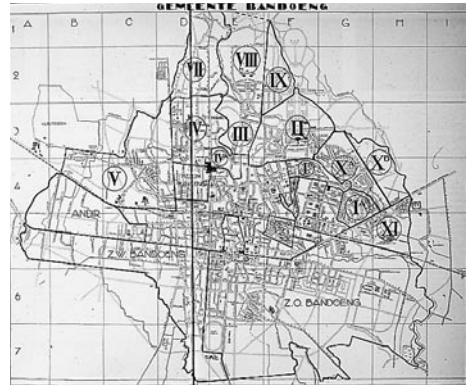
Other plans followed. In Soerabaja the municipality purchased the private land area known as Goebeng in 1908, the idea being that it could serve as a new European cemetery. The cemetery plans never materialised. Instead a new European housing area was created. With a view to the need for even more European dwellings the authority then went on to purchase the estates of Ketabang and Ngagel in 1916. In 1917 expansion plans for Batavia and Medan were finalised. One year later, in Batavia, the engineers J.F. van Hoytema, F.J.L. Ghijsels and H. von Essen presented their designs for the predominantly European residential areas of Menteng and Nieuw Gondangdia.

The development of a town

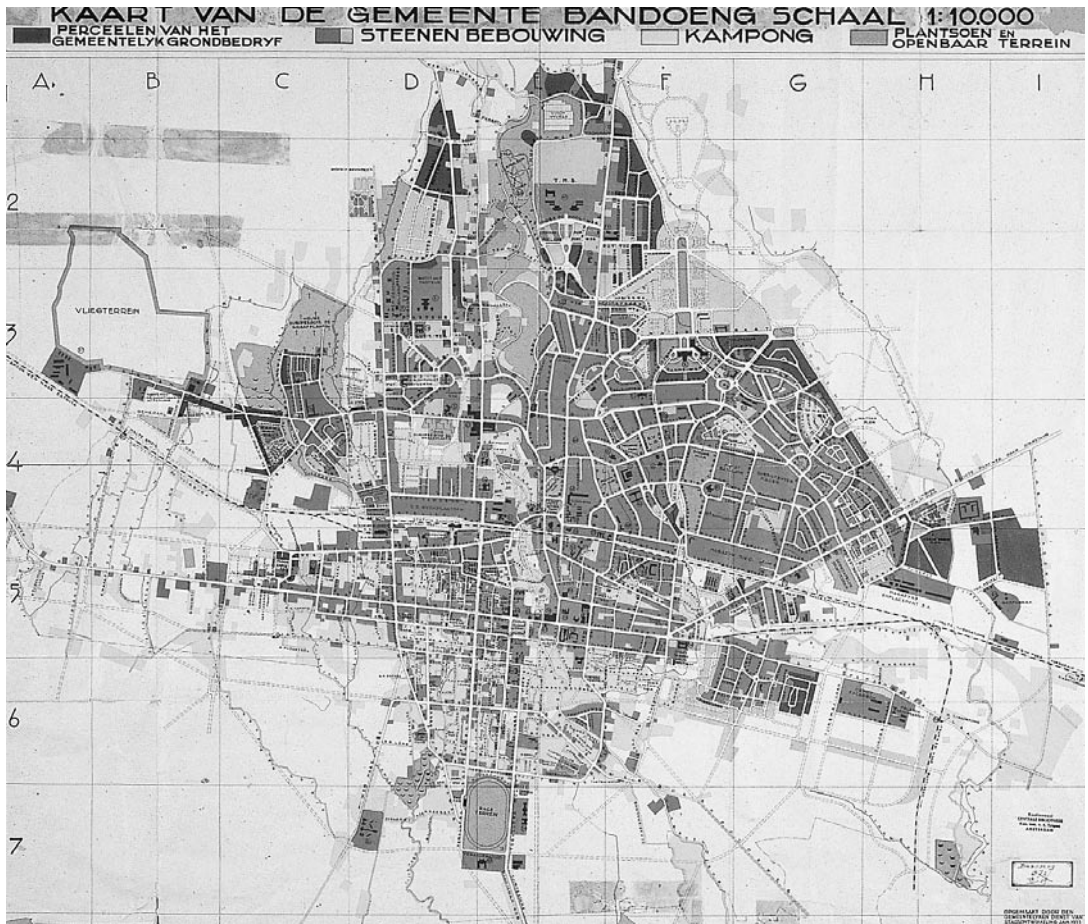
One municipality whose development was closely related to new policy and administrative organisation was Bandoeng. The proposal put forward by governor-general, J.P. graaf van Limburg Stirum in 1916 to transfer a number of departments from Batavia to Bandoeng. As a result and based on the 1917 design by the General Engineering and Architects' Bureau (Algemeen Ingenieurs- en Architectenbureau) for the northern part of the town Bandoeng was to be rapidly transformed from an insignificant municipality to a town of worldly allure. What was envisaged for the northern Bandoeng expansion plan was mainly European institutes and residential areas. The southern part of the city remained the living and working area for the indigenous inhabitants and the Chinese population. As a rule, the indigenous and Chinese neighbourhoods tended to have intricate and very built up street plans. Unlike in the northern part of the city, many houses were not linked up to water mains or the sewerage system. The northern neighbourhoods were spaciouly laid out: the through roads had a wide profile with plenty of green strokes were flanked by villas situated on spacious grounds. Admittedly the minor roads possessed more modest profiles and buildings but they, too, featured plenty of green areas.

One of the first institutes to be established in Bandoeng, partly in conjunction with the plan launched by Van Limburg Stirum, was the Technical College. After the college had opened its doors in 1920, some of the institutes to appear there a year later were the Government Companies department, the Post, Telegraph and Telephone Services, the Pasteur Institute, the National (Cowpox) Vaccine Institute (Landskoepokinrichting), and the Meteorological Institute.²⁴

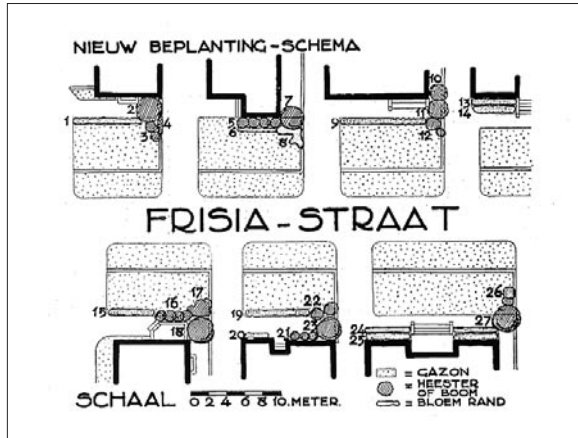
The way in which the plots were divided up in the expansion plan drawn up for North Bandoeng (West Java) by the General Engineering and Architectural Bureau (AIA) in 1917. Map dating from 1931.



The ground use divisions for the Bandoeng municipality as revealed in a map made by the Urban Development Service, 1933.



The new planting scheme for a section of the Frisia street situated in a European district in Bandoeng, 1935.



Photograph of an old street impression of the Frisia street in Bandoeng, c. 1934.



Photo of the Frisia street in Bandoeng after changes in the road profile and the individual plot divisions had been realised and the planting plan had been implemented, 1935.

The departmental transfer plan reinforced the systematic way in which Bandoeng worked on the expansion of its territory in a northerly direction. In order to control urban development as much as possible a municipal development company was established in 1917. Its task was to manage both the land within the municipal borders and in the adjacent expansion area. Though the company was responsible for urban development, the town council remained directly involved because of the municipal character of the company. The consequence of this was that when the development company did not have the financial assets for instance to purchase new land, it could only proceed with such transactions if the town council made a loan available. The consequence of this construction was that the funds collected from land sales flowed directly into the municipal reserves. When it emerged – after the first building plots had been delivered – that the demand for land and houses far exceeded the supply and that there was a real danger of speculation starting up, the municipality established a municipal construction company in 1918 to manage and control the market.

Another effective instrument that the municipality had at its disposal for the realisation of its plans was that of promulgating municipal ordinances in order to cultivate an orderly street image. Such things as 'public order, tidiness, cleanliness and health' were promoted. The advantage of this approach was that through its municipal companies the municipality was largely able to steer town planning developments so that, in time, it could apply for government subsidies.

By 1923 the Bandoeng development company had prepared and sold a total area of some 200 ha of ground for building purposes. When, as a result of amendments to Van Limburg Stirum's plan, the execution and the elaboration of the original plans began to stagnate after the mid 1920s and ground sales dropped, the expenses involved in the acquisition of the remaining 500 ha of ground started to weigh more heavily on the town's budget. It was a situation that regularly led to the accusation that the company was putting the municipality in financial jeopardy and which in 1932 forced the company to reduce its total amount of land to 350 ha. Notwithstanding these and other financial ups and downs – but thanks to its unyielding approach – the municipality of Bandoeng succeeded in realising a large proportion of the expansion of the northern area of its territory, creating an urban drainage and sewer system and fulfilling a number of town improvement plans, including *kampong improvements*.

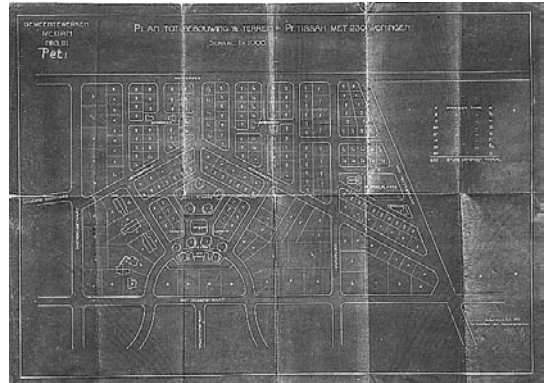
Sustained housing shortage

The expansion plans developed in many municipalities did little to alleviate the ever-more acute housing problem. It was particularly in the non-western neighbourhoods that the problems remained urgent. The sustained housing shortage that was very much in the foreground during the first decade of the century made a systematic approach to the problem unavoidable, not just on humanitarian grounds but also because of medical and political considerations.

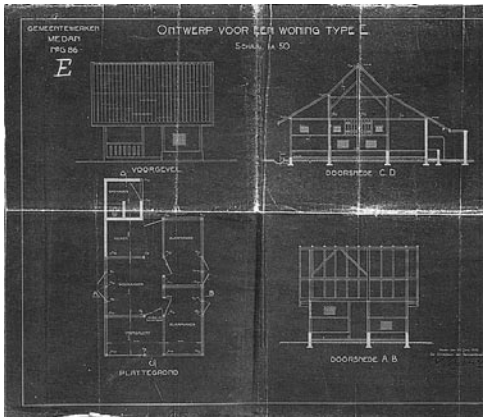
Round about 1920 it was possible to clearly distinguish three quite different types of housing areas on the grounds of ethnic, architectural, town planning and economic characteristics: European, indigenous and Eastern. The initial European districts were often densely built up and were a combination of residential and commercial buildings. They had often been built according to some kind of preconceived plan, the houses were spacious, stone was the predominant building material and European architecture and constructions prevailed. As the nineteenth century progressed the differences became more pronounced when the Europeans started building new housing areas. Situated some distance away from the old trading centres and very spaciouly laid out with predominantly large detached houses and plentiful splashes of green, these neighbourhoods were the embodiment of the hierarchical relations within the colony. With just a few exceptions, places of work and shopping facilities were situated some distance away from the residential area. The new constellation did not, however, completely do away with the old situation. The predominantly indigenous population in domestic service in the European neighbourhoods perpetuated their customs by constructing semi-permanent houses in the direct vicinity of the European neighbourhoods. It was almost impossible to conceive of a greater contrast than that which existed between these two environments.



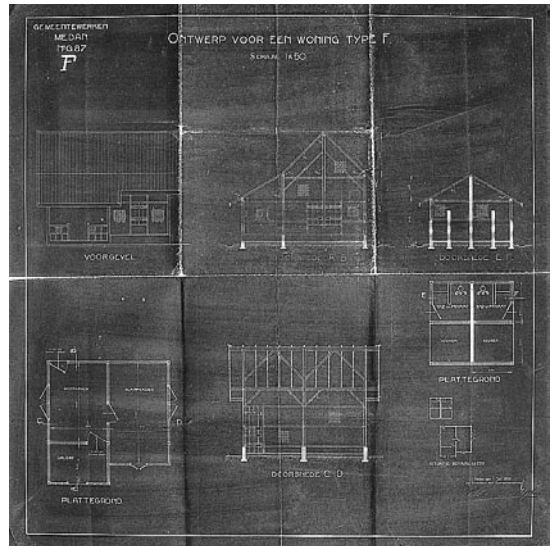
Blueprint of the layout for Medan, Sumatra (scale 1:10,000) including the five locations reserved for municipal housing, June 1920.



Blueprint of the building plans for 230 dwellings in the Petissah district (scale 1:1,000) according to a Medan Municipal Works Service design, 6-7-1920.



Blueprint of housing type E (scale 1:50) in the Medan municipal housing project, 30-6-1920.



Blueprint of housing type F (scale 1:50) in the Medan municipal housing project, 1-7-1920.

Contrary to the European minority the indigenous majority lived in neighbourhoods (*kampongs*) where planned and unplanned construction seamlessly merged. It was notably in the unplanned areas of these neighbourhoods that hygiene and other such matters left much to be desired. Even though various homes had been built along traditional lines, most of the houses in these densely populated neighbourhoods were fabricated from non-permanent material and did not adhere to any stylistic or hygienic guidelines. The generally dark and damp dwellings and the narrow, uneven and unpaved streets created an environment that was far from desirable, both hygienically and socially. Sanitation facilities such as washing provisions and toilets as well as water supplies and waste water systems were often lacking or else were inadequate. There were small shops situated in the neighbourhoods, other employment was usually a short walking distance away.

The third population group, referred to as the 'Foreign Easterners' (Chinese, Arabs, Indians) generally lived in separate neighbourhoods. This was partly a consequence of a European law which ruled that up until 1919 in Java and Madoera and 1926 in the Outer Regions the Foreign Easterners were obliged to live in separate camps. In the areas populated by Eastern people ground occupation was intensive: dwellings were small and built closely together and the streets were narrow. Living and working was often combined in one building with business on the ground floor and the living quarters on the first floor. The main differences between the indigenous and the Eastern neighbourhoods was that the building material used in the Eastern sectors was often of a more permanent nature than in the indigenous parts and that the architecture and construction often evoked those in the country of origin.

Municipal proposals aimed at improving the often unhygienic living conditions, especially in the densely populated areas, found little support and stimulation from the central government. Already in 1907 it had rejected a plan for *kampung* improvement in Batavia. Other municipalities were also soon made to understand that they were to refrain from any intervention in *kampung* affairs.²⁵ The uncooperative attitude of the government did not prevent town councils and interested parties from occasionally taking steps to alleviate the housing shortage and perpetually examining and drawing attention to housing shortage and hygiene issues.²⁶ The result was that from 1915 onwards each time a governor-general planned a working visit, a tour around a poor urban *kampung* would be part of the programme. In 1920 the request of the municipality of Medan for a subsidy for a municipal housing project even met with a positive reaction. The subsidy enabled the municipality to construct 34 European dwellings and 238 local inhabitant dwellings in three different *kampongs* in the space of four years.²⁷

Nevertheless, one-off solutions did nothing to structurally alleviate the housing problem for the municipalities. It was an utter waste of time: the problems mounted in proportion to the numbers of inhabitants. By 1920 the housing problem was far from resolved. At that time a mere 4.52 percent of the houses in Java and Madoera were fabricated from stone. All the remaining houses were fabricated from temporary materials and often just consisted of wooden walls and tiled or corrugated iron roofing. It was evident that especially where housing was concerned the municipalities would not be able to surmount the problems without the support of the government or other parties.

In an umpteenth attempt to convince the government that structural intervention was



Traditional dwelling according to a design created by the engineer H. Maclaine Pont in order to illustrate his lecture 'How can the endeavour to improve the housing situation in Java be turned into a national movement?' (1925)

unavoidable the Social-Technological Association (Sociaal-Technische Vereeniging, STV), established in 1918 as a sub-committee of the VLB, organised a conference on social housing in Semarang in the year 1922. Because of the scope of the subject and the relative lack of knowledge about the matter, the conference remained predominantly exploratory. The issues dealt with had to do with hygiene and with the social-political and town planning aspects of public housing. They were all discussed on the basis of preliminary advices questionnaire results and the designs of private architects. J.J. van Lonkhuijzen, chief inspector of the Civil Medical Service (Burgerlijke Geneeskundige Dienst, BGD) and the engineer J.T. Bethe, director of Public Works in Soerabaja, were of the opinion that improvements in the housing situation could not be achieved unless a healthy and hygienic environment was first created. This was not just a matter of cleaning up the actual houses and their immediate surroundings. The constructing of roads, the providing of sewers, the supplying of water and sanitation all had to be tackled first. The engineer H. Heetjans, who was the director of Municipal Works in Bandoeng, emphasised in his recommendations the importance of the link between land politics, extension plans, building and its corresponding regulations, and financing underlined how vital it was to possess reliable statistical material. To ensure that housing remained profitable at all social levels Heetjans proposed that private contractors should provide accommodation for the more well to do citizens so that town councils could focus exclusively on the building of cheaper dwellings and housing complexes.

During the conference the architects Karsten, Maclaine Pont and Professor C.P. Wolff Schoemaker focused on the technological-architectural aspects of the public housing issue. Their points of view were somewhat divergent. Even though they were all in agreement on the importance of generating good architecture and correctly situated buildings, Wolff Schoemaker and Maclaine Pont differed fundamentally when it came to the kinds of examples that should be followed and how plans should be drawn up. Wolff Schoemaker also contended that in the Dutch East Indies traditional 'architecture' was absent and that Hindu monuments, because of their lack of spaciousness, constituted unsuitable examples for housing. He was furthermore of the opinion that European materials and social conventions automatically resulted in different buildings to those dictated by Indonesian conventions.

By contrast Maclaine Pont, architect and inspector-engineer at the BGD was of the opinion that it was precisely in tradition local building styles that the solutions had to be sought. He studied various regional houses, experimented with the applied building materials and developed a type of house which, by making use of locally available materials and forms, would conform to Western norms of hygiene and comfort.

As there was no time for an in-depth or more specific exploration of the public housing not in indigenous housing problem during that first public housing conference the STV in 1925 organised a second conference exclusively devoted to the matter of indigenous housing and the sustainable improvement of poor *kampongs*.²⁸ Abdoel Rachman, assistant inspector of Building and Housing Inspection in Batavia, Frumau and the engineer J.J.G.E. Rückert produced preliminary advices on measures that would be required to improve substandard existing *kampongs*. Rachman and Frumau believed that it was utterly important to maintain the number of houses and the land available for public housing at acceptable levels. In order to ensure that local inhabitants were not expelled from their land they advised that a prohibition be placed on the selling of indigenous ownership rights to Europeans. They furthermore emphasised that there could be no systematic improvement of *kampongs* as long as autonomous *desas* existed within municipal boundaries because the administrative autonomy of the *desas* barred municipalities from having any kind of a say in matters.

Rückert endorsed the views of Rachman and Frumau but added a few supplementary remarks concerning aspects that stood in the way of improvement such as the lack of housing statistics, proper maps, legislation or financial possibilities. He also stressed the importance of maintenance after improvements had been carried out. To ensure the government did not confront the local population with a stream of changing ideas Rückert argued that during all phases of activity administrators and planners should engage themselves in direct and close contact with the population. Only in that way would the government be able to obtain the vital information required on various facets of the matter and to keep the population continually informed of its views and considerations. Where the duty of the government was concerned, he believed that if private companies were not able to provide enough accommodation it would then be the responsibility of the government to do so. The regent for Batavia, R.A.A.A. Djajadiningrat, supported the views of Rückert. He emphasized that the housing problem was indeed a material issue but also an important moral and hygienic, and thus ultimately, communal problem. The government could therefore no longer afford to leave the matter entirely to third parties. If it really wanted to deal with the problem the government would have to draw up and execute a proper relevant policy. Djajadiningrat and the conference participants maintained that the participation of the local population would be essential. Not just because it was the only way in which vital missing details could be obtained but also because it would involve the population when it came to realising improvements in their own environment and hence would improve relations between Indonesians and the local authority.

The housing conferences of 1922 and 1925 constituted the first communal occasions where experts and local authorities expressed views on the need to think systematically, ambitiously and collaboratively about public housing and *kampung* improvement. They were also the first events that prompted the central government to make advances in finding solutions to the problems. Not long after the first conference the government met

the request to set up an institute exclusively designed to meet public housing interests by agreeing to the establishment of a separate Division for Housing within the Public Health Service. To alleviate the housing shortage the government also agreed to the creation of and participation in commercial entities, such as public limited companies and private companies.²⁹ After the second conference the government agreed to a directive which would allow municipalities to appeal for subsidies amounting to up to 50 percent of the costs involved in public housing. What really constituted an important decision, though, was when the government finally decided to draw up and introduce a simplified compulsory purchase procedure and to grant municipalities priority rights to land that was earmarked to become part of future expansion plans.

Far-reaching breakthroughs

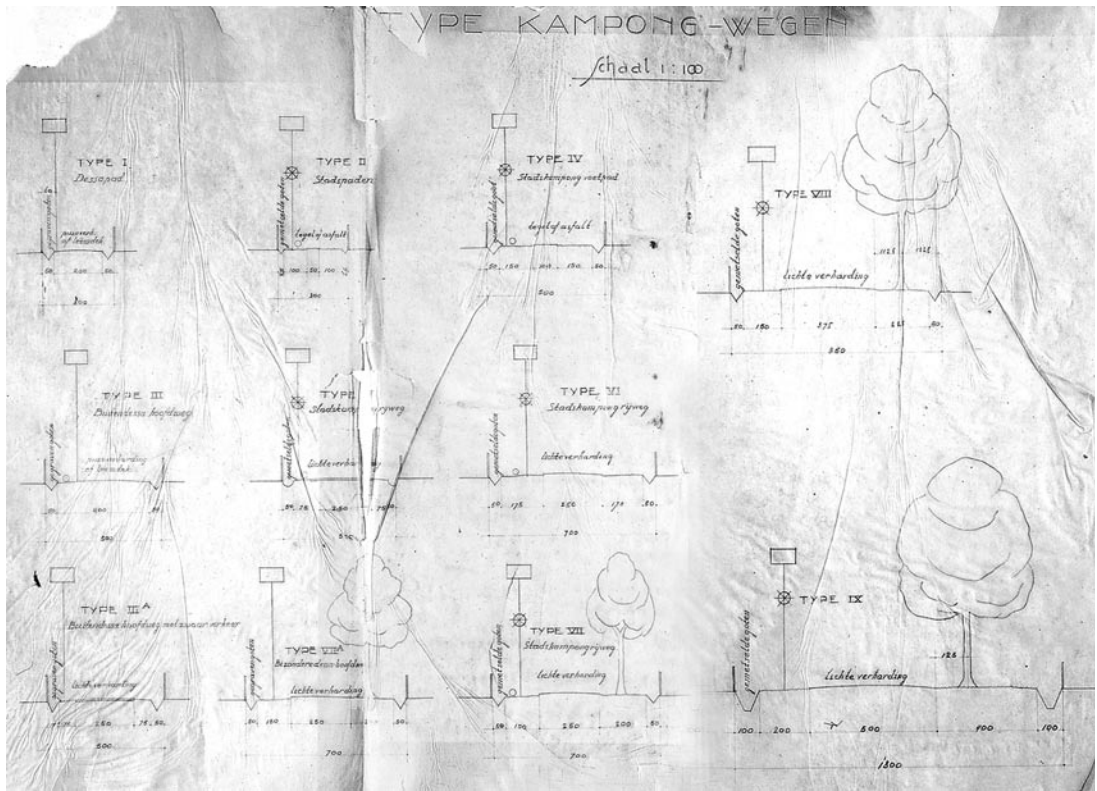
Revision

The changes in the national policy regarding urban development that began to take shape in the mid-1920s enabled municipalities to contemplate the designing of plans that incorporated more than one issue and could be worked on for a substantial length of time. In concrete terms, it gradually became possible to embark upon public housing, extension plans and kampong improvement in mutual cooperation. In the second half of the twenties a number of important decisions were taken, notably in the field of acquisition and land use. In 1926 in what became known as *Bijblad* (Supplement) 11272, some guidelines for town extension and public housing were drawn up whilst the existing ruling on municipal priority rights to land was expanded.

The priority right was a ruling that had been adhered to since 1911. It gave municipalities the chance to acquire government land for future expansion and improvement plans. *Bijblad* 11272 extended this ruling by stipulating that municipalities might acquire priority rights if they possessed an urban development plan that had been approved and adopted by the town council and the government. Apart from giving an overview of improvements and expansions such a plan also needed to indicate the areas outside the municipal boundaries where the city wished to claim priority rights. In linking together priority rights and town plans *Bijblad* 11272 killed two birds with one stone: the municipalities were ensured, for some time, of the chance to expand their towns in a specific direction while at the same time methodical urban development was guaranteed.³⁰

In the same year that *Bijblad* 11272 was adopted the government also agreed to what was termed the Disruption Ordinance, a ruling designed to stimulate the realisation of home, work and recreational zones. Furthermore, in 1927 and 1928 the government approved 'Regulations regarding the obtaining of free access to land on behalf of the State' and a regulation concerning structural financial support for *kampong* improvement plans.

The increasing willingness with which the government in Batavia agreed to the wishes and demands of the municipalities is striking. What remains to be seen though is whether the change in the originally aloof stance of the government is to be exclusively attributed to hygienic and humanitarian considerations or whether there were also underlying political-economic considerations. It is an undeniable fact that both on the European and on the



Various types of kampong roads according to the 'Guidelines for the implementation of kampong improvement' laid down by the engineer J.J.G.E. Rückert (1928).

Indonesian side political movements arose that opposed colonial policy. Their protests became ever more frequent and vehement during the 1920s. Moderate organisations like Boedi Oetomo and Sarekat Islam and the more extreme Perhimpoean Indonesia were good examples of this trend. It is not unthinkable that the altered attitude of the government was to no small degree influenced by considerations pertaining to these very developments.

One indication in this direction is to be found in the plea that Rückert made before the People's Council (Volksraad) in 1928 for the granting of a government subsidy for municipal kampong improvement schemes. He contended that any financial contributions to kampong improvement would serve two ends:

May that segment of the population which inhabits the town kampongs still live in muffled resignation, unconsciously convinced that it cannot be any other way, one should not forget what a rewarding field it is to work with such a population for those who set themselves the goal of overthrowing the authority which allows such situations to continue without intervening. It

is no coincidence, Mister Chairman, that a number of leaders are not at all enthusiastic about the kampong improvements. As long as political power is not obtained they prefer to allow the poor situation to continue; there is no better thinkable means of propaganda. Up until now the kampong population has remained quiet but the source of unrest, the perpetual threat to peace and order remains in the so badly neglected kampongs.³¹

Rückert commented that the not very stimulating or even discouraging government policy had precipitated such neglect that the 1928 situation remained one in which *kampong* improvement would have to start from scratch. From that point of view the government had no alternative but to impose stringent measures in order to make that possible

As the People's Council agreed to Rückert's proposal the government from that time onwards allocated a maximum sum of 500,000 guilders on the national budget for *kampong* improvements. A sum assigned to subsidize up to 50 percent of the total cost of municipal *kampong* improvements projects. The criteria for the assessment of the submitted improvement plans were drawn up by Rückert. His *Leidraad bij de uitvoering van kampongverbetering* (Guidelines for the implementation of kampong improvement) described the directives and principles for the improvement of roads, gutters, flushing conduits and local sanitation.

Modelling town planning

The government decisions taken after 1926 finally gave local authorities the leverage to systematically deal with and execute the whole range of issues with which they wrestled since 1905. Organisations and the measures taken provided the support required to optimally execute any given task whether that was the creation of a sewer, the combating of floods, the building of houses, the improvement of a kampong or the drawing up of a extension plan. This process had hardly been set in motion when, in the early 1930s, external factors temporarily upset the applecart. In the wake of the economic depression ensuing from the 1929 Wall Street crash, the government was forced to revise financial promises between 1931 and 1934. Especially in the field of *kampong* improvement this was a great disappointment because it implied that the modifications that were about to be implemented had to be postponed yet again.

In line with new policy regarding the coordination and steering of urban development the government decided in 1930 to set up two investigation committees: one to examine building restrictions and the other to look at building alignment. The research conducted by the Building Restrictions Committee was aimed at documenting all building restrictions issuing from general and local regulations. The committee was also responsible for advising the government on whether it was desirable to replace existing restrictions with legal regulations. If the answer to this issue was affirmative, the committee was invited to present proposals to that extent. The Building Alignment Committee consisted of members who also had a seat in the more extensive Building Restrictions Committee.³² Its task was to investigate the way in which various municipalities assessed building lines.

Following the activities of these committees the government decided to establish a new committee in 1934. This new committee, the Town Planning Committee, was given

the task of studying the issue of town planning. In other words, it was required to examine and formulate principles and rudiments for town planning in the urban areas of Java in order to replace *Bijblad* 11272 and all sorts of other prevailing measures in the field of town planning.³³

The decision to establish a Town Planning Committee marked the start of the coherent approach to town planning that was to become customary from that time onwards in which attention was paid to the various design-technical, methodological and legal aspects. In view of the fact that many members of the Town Planning Committee had previously been members of the Building Restrictions Committee this almost automatically formed an important link between legislative and other issues related to town planning. Thus, through its individual members the committee pooled more than 25 years of experience and knowledge in the field of town planning.

Because of its high degree of expertise the committee was able to formulate a draft ordinance regarding town planning in a relatively short space of time. Already by 1938 a draft and elucidation for a *Stadsvormingsordonnantie* (Town Planning Ordinance) had been presented. One section in the draft text explained that the ordinance aimed to incorporate social, economic, political and field-intrinsic aspects:

*The town plan and the town planning regulations order layout and construction, both on the part of the municipality and third parties, so that in this manner the development of a town is made to correspond to its social and geographical character as well as to its anticipated growth. The aim is also to strive for a fulfilment of the needs of all population groups in accordance with the nature of those needs and to achieve a harmonious functioning of the town as a whole, all of which must fit in well with the environment while observing its function in a general respect.*³⁴

After the customary defining of the terminology used, the Town Planning Ordinance described the various components of an urban development plan: the general plan, the detailed plan, the zones to be opened up, the components and the building regulations where necessary. Further directions and indications for the elaboration and detailing of town plans could be issued by the government. This account was followed by a description of how existing works and parcels of land would be handled and what procedures were to be adhered to when it came to determining the various sub-plans, including measures concerning tolerance obligations, types of licences, mandates, compulsory rulings and building inspection. The ordinance closed with a description of the financial side of town planning: the determining of rights to compensation, damages and values, and the different ways in which contributions could be made to costs.

The *Toelichting op de Stadsvormingsordonnantie stadsgemeenten Java* (Elucidation of the Town Planning Ordinance for the Municipalities of Java) which, with its 204 pages was almost four times as long as the ordinance, by means of statistics and descriptions elaborately conveyed the actual situations in East Indian towns and the notions.³⁵ Regarding the extent of the descriptions, the authors observed that it was the versatility and newness of town planning together with the lack of overview and the need for overview, structure and policy that made a shorter description both impossible and undesirable. In order to enforce



Map of Batavia indicating the area earmarked for the future satellite city of Kebajoran Baroe to the south of the existing municipal border, 1948.

these measures and because of the social consequences, the compilers maintained that the necessary 'supervision' would initially have to focus on social and administrative aspects and only at a later stage on matters of a technical nature. Excluding defence structures and other works such as railways and harbours together with the relevant land, the Town Planning Ordinance would apply to all municipalities in Java and would be enforced as soon as the governor-general gave his approval to the proposition.³⁶

Though it was by no means a perfect end product, the Town Planning Ordinance was from many points of view (architectural, administrative, legal, economic, sociological, hygienic, defence-wise, cultural-historical, financial and fiscal) a document of great importance. It constituted a first effort to lay down the principles, methods and legal basis for town planning in the Dutch East Indies in one all-embracing ruling.³⁷ Apart from the various specific demands that the climate, the nature of the tasks, the vastness of the archipelago and the abundance of its flora placed upon town planning, the ordinance was a fairly general ideological and methodological description of town planning practice. As such, it might have been suitable for application outside the Dutch East Indies.

Untimely end

The draft version of the Town Planning Ordinance was discussed a year after its presentation during a Planning Workshop organised by the Planological Study Group in 1939.³⁸ What was pointed out a number of times during the debate was the fact that the ordinance aimed to achieve a degree of perfection which definitely did not correspond to reality. Those present

therefore doubted whether 'the ordinance would speedily find its way into the Law Gazette'.³⁹ Another thing that was mentioned was the fact that because of the unfamiliarity of the many new concepts included in the ordinance, the observed transition period between the present and the future status quo would be too brief.

Other points of criticism asserted that the town planning discipline was approached too much from the housing angle and paid too little attention to traffic aspects – which meant that it leaned too heavily on the Dutch Housing Act. Furthermore there was criticism about the fact that much was said about public housing while precious little had been achieved in that particular area and it was fair to assert 'that a nation was in need'.⁴⁰ The conference participants also objected to the fact that the ordinance used zoning schemes and zoning plans as town planning instruments even though experienced had shown that such instruments were ineffective. They were also of the opinion that the proposed procedures would cause friction because compared to the decentralisation advisor town councils had limited authority. Finally they stated that preliminary plans and planning elements required more legal protection and vigour than the draft text suggested as it was 'doubtful whether the Government would ever adopt a city plan'.⁴¹

In reaction to the criticism, Logemann and Karsten elucidated a number of points during the Planning Workshop. In general, Logemann and Karsten promised that any criticism or comments on the draft text deriving from conference participants or, for example, from the departments corresponding with those of the committee, would be incorporated in the text as accurately as possible. Due to the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 and the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies in 1942 this commitment never materialised.

Building up and rounding off

Resetting the course

When, after the Second World War and the Japanese occupation, Indonesia proclaimed its independence on 17th August 1945 it became clear that a reviewing of the political relations was necessary and unavoidable. Despite intensive inland armed combat and international pressure to acknowledge Indonesia's independence, it was not until 27th December 1949 that the Netherlands officially transferred power to the new federal government of the republic. In the intervening period administrative adaptations had been made in order to deal with current businesses. One of the adaptations on an administrative level was that the colony was no longer to be ruled by a governor-general and run by directors of departments but by a lieutenant governor-general and secretaries of state. The pre-war lower administrative units of residences, municipalities and regencies were retained. The position of advisor for decentralisation was abandoned altogether. The Provincial Ordinance of 1924 was further elaborated. Alongside the existing provinces of Central, East and West Java, the places and the islands of Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes (Sulawesi), the Moluccas and the Soenda islands were also given the status of province.

Because of the war and the ensuing hostilities, much damage had been incurred in many parts of the country, especially to harbours. In order to restore the 'normal' pre-war situation it was essential to speedily embark on repair and reconstruction activities. The administrators

as well as the designers soon realised that the reconstruction work that needed to be done was tremendous but that the means available for doing that were restricted. They also realised that the only way to cope with the work ahead would be by centrally organising activities. It was therefore decided that a Central Planning Bureau (Centraal Planologisch Bureau, CPB) would be established, a centralised service that would fall under the Department of Public Works and Reconstruction that was, in effect, the successor to the Department of Transport and Public Works. All the designers who had any experience with town planning issues were employed by this bureau. They included J. P. Thijsse who, before the war, had worked for the Municipal Works Service in Bandoeng and M. Soesilo who had worked with Karsten in the thirties. Besides them only six more people (two urban developers, two architects, a sociologist and a lawyer) and administrative personnel were employed. Because he died during the war, Karsten was no longer able to contribute to the spatial developments in the archipelago in person.

From Town Planning Ordinance to Spatial Planning Act

In its activities the CPB worked on the principle that local town plans were by definition subordinate to reconstruction projects and that because of a lack of factual data they were temporary and would be subject to review as soon as the situation stabilised and more information was available. Just as had been the case before the war, the CPB staff were soon confronted with obstacles that were the consequence of the absence of a solid methodological and legal basis for town planning. One of the problems was that according to the still prevailing pre-war ruling, areas without a municipal status were not empowered to draw up or execute town plans. In order to put an end to that obstructive situation it was important to draw up an emergency ordinance as soon as possible.

As no proper legal foundation for such an ordinance existed, the draft text of the Town Planning Ordinance of 1938 was used. Some minor changes were made in order to adjust the text to post-war circumstances and it was then approved by the lieutenant governor-general in 1948. Shortly after he designated 15 cities and places where, because of recent and future developments, the ordinance could well be enforced. The first place where the Town Planning Ordinance was adopted and entered into force as of 1949 was Bandjermassin in East Indonesia. Later that year the following towns were to follow suit: Padang in Sumatra and in Java Batavia, Tegal, Pekelongan, Semarang, Salatiga, Soerabaja, Malang, Tjilatjap, Tangerang, Bekasi and the areas around Kebajoran and Pasar Minggoe.⁴²

With the coming into force of the Town Planning Ordinance urban development and reconstruction plans, detailed plans and building regulations were, for the first time, given a solid legal and methodological basis. In order to be applicable to development outside Java and to reconstruction plans, a few adjustments were made to the contents of the ordinance. The lemma of the legal text in the *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië* (Law Gazette for the Dutch East Indies) mentioned this clearly:

Town planning. Rules in order to ensure town planning is well considered, in particular in the interests of a rapid and effective reconstruction of all areas hit by the turmoil of war.

The broadening of the field to which the ordinance was applied was achieved by appending two articles to the original ordinance text. Article 51 stipulated that the ordinance should apply in cities and in other places where the drawing up of an urban development plan was necessary because of recent or expected urban planning developments. Article 52 determined that in cases where towns had no municipal status or had their own appropriate municipal departments, the resident would be empowered for a certain period of time to appoint other authorities to execute the powers of mayor and aldermen.

Whether the decreed Town Planning Ordinance met with the intention of the director of the CPB, Thijsse, that it should exclusively serve to meet the 'present abnormal circumstances' and should therefore just have the temporary character of an emergency ordinance is difficult to determine.⁴³ What is clear, however, is that the Town Planning Ordinance was an important point of departure for the tasks of the Interdepartmental Government Committee for Spatial Planning in Non-Urban Regions (Interdepartementaire Regeringscommissie voor de Ruimtelijke Ordening in Niet-Stedelijke Gebieden) that was established in 1948.⁴⁴

In establishing this committee the government fulfilled the ambition of Thijsse to broaden the town planning discipline in Indonesia to include spatial planning and general planning in line with developments in Western Europe and North America. Thijsse was of the opinion that the Town Planning Ordinance was to be perceived as the forerunner to spatial planning. Political developments and developments in the field of planning would irrevocably lead to a planning practice that was no longer confined to an area within the municipal boundaries but which would also come to be applied to areas outside those boundaries. In the light of the ongoing building up of a federal state, Thijsse was of the opinion that the work should be organised in such a way that individual federal states would be made responsible for the organisation and the realisation of coherence between the various regional plans. In order to make sure that everything went smoothly the committee decided that there was a need for a law on the procedure and the decreeing of plans.

In spite of a number of drastic personnel changes that took place after 1949 as a consequence of the transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands to Indonesia, the government committee continued its activities.⁴⁵ The draft text for the Spatial Planning Act that was subsequently handed over to engineer Laoh, the Minister for Public Works and Energy (Pekerjaan Umum dan Tenaga Listrik) was largely based on the Town Planning Ordinance and on the Dutch National Plan and Regional Plans Act. It contained guidelines for a national plan, regional plans, the execution of zoning, approval and assessment procedures, building regulations, compensation and indemnification. Just as with the Dutch equivalent, the Indonesian act provided a national plan for the entire country or at least part of the country. In order to enable politicians and designers to make decisions based on the needs and demands of various groups and sectors, the national plan was divided up into what were termed 'facet' plans.

It looks like the Spatial Planning Act was never decreed nor implemented. J.W. Keiser, the lawyer involved in the legal sides of the Town Planning Ordinance and the Spatial Planning Act noted in 1951 that because an Indonesian translation of the text was not available the Indonesian government was unable to assess the law proposal. Looking for an explanation why the act was still not decreed in 1954, Thijsse wrote:

*This regional and national planning law has not yet been approved to date although the draft was presented more than 3 years ago. One of the reasons of this postponement is certainly the expectation that the execution of this law will be very difficult owing to the lack of competent personnel.*⁴⁶

'Contribution to the morphology of town planning, particularly in Indonesia'

The lack of capable personnel to which Thijsse alluded was not a problem that only manifested itself in Indonesia after the transfer of power. Also immediately after the war he frequently alluded to it. He repeatedly emphasised that the civil engineers who had been educated at the Bandoeng Technical College were insufficiently equipped to take up leading positions in the field of town planning or general planning because of deficiencies in the educational system. In order to improve this situation, Thijsse proposed adapting the curriculum and introducing refresher courses for civil servants in the areas of planning and town planning as well as in sanitation and technical hygiene.

The inadequate education was directly related to the lack of good publications and manuals on town and other planning matters that were applicable to Indonesia. The first book that was to bring about a change was Thomas Nix' dissertation *Bijdrage tot de vormleer van de stedebouw in het bijzonder voor Indonesië* (Contribution to the morphology of town planning, particularly in Indonesia) that was published in 1949. Nix was an Indo-European architect who before the war had been employed by the architectural and engineering bureau Hulswit and Fermont in Weltevreden and by Ed. Cuypers in Amsterdam. In his book, Nix provided an accurate and orderly overview of the elements and components of an urban development plan. As the content was clearly based on pre-war activities in the field of town planning and broadly corresponded to the procedures and stipulations of the Town Planning Ordinance, that is to say to Karsten's ideas and theories, colleagues criticised the book for its unoriginal and rather handbook-like character. Although the criticism was not unfounded, the publication, precisely because of its content and appearance, demonstrated the urgency of the need for study material and the lack of expertise in the field of town planning: barely half of the 16 titles in the bibliography related to town planning in Indonesia.

Definite turning-point

At first the political and social changes confronting Indonesia from 1950 onwards had few repercussions as far as cooperation between the Dutch and the Indonesians was concerned. In retrospect though it became clear that the reconstruction era was to be the last period when the Dutch would prominently intervene in urban development and planning activities in the archipelago. Though they did not disappear from the scene immediately, their prominence gradually diminished after the transfer of sovereignty. The fact that Indonesia determined things for itself became evident when, for instance, President Soekarno decided to abolish the federal state in 1950 and once again centralise power under a central national government in the capital city which, by then, had been given the name Djakarta.

In the area of planning, apart from the different working atmosphere, the administrative alterations were not very influential. In the case of education, on the other hand, some

sweeping changes were made. In 1950 the decision to unite all existing colleges in one national university situated in the country's capital, the University of Indonesia (Universitas Indonesia, UI) led to the conversion and incorporation of the civil engineering department of the Technical College in Bandung to the UI faculty of architecture.⁴⁷ The curriculum largely continued to be based on that of the Technical College in Delft. In order to supplement the civil engineering courses Soekarno instigated the curriculum for architecture students was to include lectures on art and on the history of Hindu-Javanese building construction and design.⁴⁸ Attention for the theory and design side of contemporary architecture and to town planning remained limited to a minimum.

Finally the Indonesian-Dutch society which had in many respects been sustained came to an abrupt end when in 1957 the Indonesian government refused to accept the inflexible attitude of the Dutch government regarding the political status of New Guinea. Because of the subsequent deterioration in relations, 50,000 Dutch nationals were forced to leave the country. That was this political upheaval that really put an end to Dutch involvement with Indonesia.

The temporary vacuum created by the speedy departure of Dutch experts in the field of town planning and planning was soon filled by colleagues from Germany, Austria and notably the United States of America. Not long after their arrival it was decided that the two UI faculties which had been situated in Bandung since 1951 should once again be made independent. Thus the former Bandoeng Technical College once more regained its independence and was renamed the Bandung Institute for Technology (Institut Teknologi Bandung, ITB). Another consequence of the breaking of ties with the Netherlands was a gradual adaptation of the curriculum at the faculty of architecture. In accordance with education in the United States the subject of architecture became more integrated into the curriculum while at the same time town planning and landscape architecture were added. Almost simultaneously a plan was presented to establish a complete and independent school for town and regional planning in Bandung. The underlying idea was that it would in time evolve into an independent institute for urban studies and research for South and South-East Asia. Although this idea never materialised ITB organised courses on town and regional planning in conjunction with the United Nations aid programme for Indonesia from September 1959 until April 1965.⁴⁹

The result of the increasing influence of the United States was that town development and design practice which up until 1957 had been mainly modelled on Dutch practice gradually became more oriented towards other, mainly American, methods and approaches. It was a trend that was reinforced in the 1960s when the first Indonesian designers who had graduated in the United States returned to Indonesia and when opportunities to be financially supported to study in the United States expanded. The direction subsequently followed by Indonesian town planning gradually led to a situation in which the Dutch model, ideas and knowledge that had laid the foundations for East Indian town planning gradually made way for an all American approach.