

Research Article

Adaptation of Urban Renewal Marabunta Building as Restaurant and Bar Concept in the Old City Area of Semarang

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Abstract.

As of 2018, the Semarang City Government is rejuvenating the Semarang Old City Area to restore the potential of the city area, from an economic, cultural, and tourism perspective. The redevelopment of Marabunta Resto and Bar is one of the concrete forms of adapting the concept of urban renewal to the Old Town Area of Semarang. This building is a replica of a theatre building during the Dutch colonial era, better known as *Schouwburg*. Qualitative methods through historical studies were used to analyze the changes in form, aesthetics, and old functions. This study aims to look at the application of the urban renewal concept to the Marabunta Resto and Bar building as an effort to restore the initial spirit of *Schouwburg*. The application of the urban renewal concept to the Marabunta Resto and Bar building is also in line with the sustainable design principles of the Semarang Old Town area.

Keywords: urban renewal, Marabunta, sustainable, Semarang Old Town area

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1. Introduction

Urban renewal is an effort to repair and physically rearrange damaged areas in urban areas, to increase the social and economic value of the surrounding community [1]. There are 4 strategies of the urban renewal concept, that is revitalization, redevelopment, rehabilitation and physical regeneration [2]. The destruction of the Semarang Old City Area due to tidal flooding prompted the Semarang City Government to reorganize the Old City Area using the urban renewal concept. Since the end of 2019, environmental conditions in the Semarang Old Town area have improved, so as to attract investors and add to the attractiveness of tourists, which has an impact on increasing community economic activity [3]. This also happened in the case study of the Marabunta Resto and Bar building, as one of the heritage buildings in the Kota Lama area of Semarang. The Marabunta Building is a replica of the *Schouwburg* building which during the Dutch colonial era had a function as a performance hall. Purwanto describes *Schouwburg* as a theatre that has an important role in the development of performing arts, drama, dance and music in the city of Semarang [4]. This building stands based on the results



of relocation and redevelopment like the shape of the old building. During its journey, the redevelopment of the Marabunta building was not entirely successful, because the conversion of the function of the space and the visual appearance that was formed was not able to build a sensation of the atmosphere of space as happened in the Dutch colonial era. Until 2020, the Marabunta building was reopened by Nadia Lutvina Wijaya as the owner, with a different spatial concept from the concept of creating a nostalgic atmosphere and reviving the leisure aspect which was the initial function of this *Schouwburg* replica [5]. Redevelopment of the function of the Marabunta building is carried out by adapting the current lifestyle of local urban communities to space, so that the function of a restaurant and bar appears, as well as live music which is considered capable of meeting the leisure needs of visitors.

2. Research Methods

The research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive method. The descriptive method used is by: (1) identifying the concept of urban renewal by the Semarang City Government which is applied to the research object, the Marabunta Resto and Bar building; (2) conducting direct observation (survey) of research study objects and interviews regarding redevelopment and revitalization; (3) analysing the object of research study as a replica and restoring the value of Schowburg. Observations were made using literature data as a reference to explain the application of the urban renewal concept to the building.

2.1. Train of thought

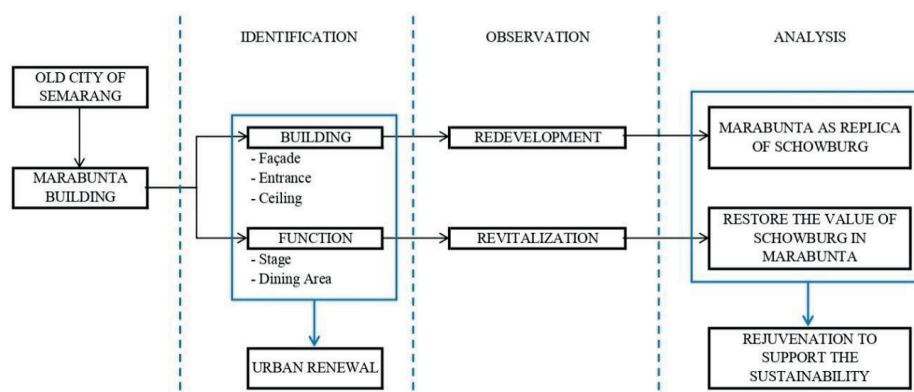


Figure 1: Train of Thought.

3. Result And Discussion

According to [6], urban renewal is a concept that is used to overcome the condition of slum environments in a city. This countermeasure is carried out by making planning adjustments to the conditions and environment of the city area. Activities, life, and the needs of urban communities are currently considered in planning. In addition, the orientation of urban renewal focuses on the future needs of urban communities. Human and physical are two important aspects that determine the direction of the development of a city. So urban renewal aims to improve environmental conditions that affect various aspects of people's lives. The concrete form of adapting this concept is improving physical, social, and economic aspects through the creation of new jobs [3]. The emergence of new jobs makes people more productive and increases economic turnover. This has led to the emergence of various commercial dining facilities around the Kota Lama area of Semarang. These facilities reuse European-style buildings that have been abandoned for a long time, one of which is Marabunta Resto and Bar. The dynamics of this change prove that there has been an increase in economic turnover that has occurred in the Kota Lama area of Semarang.

As explained at the beginning of the study, the urban renewal strategy includes 4 things, namely: revitalization, redevelopment, rehabilitation, and physical regeneration [2]. In the case study of the Marabunta Resto and Bar building, there are 2 strategies for implementing the urban renewal concept applied to the building, namely: (1) redevelopment; and (2) revitalization.

First, redevelopment, namely the implementation of novelty to buildings that no longer have preservation value by reconstructing new buildings on new land. This implementation is carried out by adding new functions to buildings to increase social and economic value [2]. From this understanding, it can be seen that the redevelopment process has 2 characteristics, namely relocation and increasing the social and economic value of a building. Relocation is an effort to move activities, facilities and infrastructure from one location to another, while still paying attention to the natural and built environment at the destination [7].

The Marabunta Building is located in the eastern part of the Old Town Area of Semarang, originally functioned as a performance hall called *Schouwburg et Hedele*. However, during the rebuilding, which was carried out in 1994, the building was moved 20 meters to the north from its initial location, namely Jalan Cendrawasih Utara [8]. The displacement occurred due to the main building collapsing due to age and tidal flooding. Tjahjono Rahardjo also explained that the Marabunta building which is currently standing was built on the former site of the *Schouwburg* building. Some of the interiors

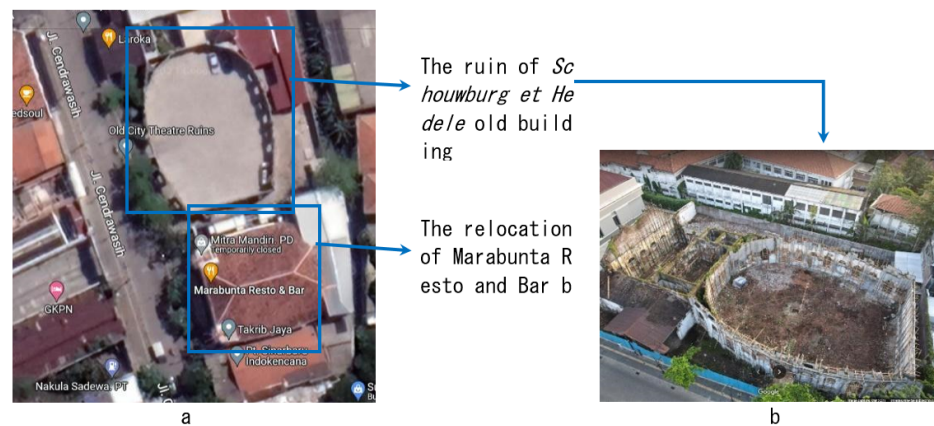


Figure 2: Relocation of Marabunta Resto and Bar (a), The Ruin of *Schouburg* (b).

of old buildings are reused in new buildings, this is why Marabunta is often referred to as a replica of *Schouburg* [9].

Various efforts have been made to maintain the sustainability of the Marabunta building, by carrying out various redevelopments both in terms of form and function. However, in the past few decades, several managers of Marabunta have still not been able to restore the glory of this building. This decline occurred due to a mismatch between the condition of the building and the current needs of society. Martoskusumo assessed the decline in the potential of this building as (1) a decrease in the physical condition of the building due to poor maintenance mechanisms making it impossible to use it; (2) the inability of building functions to support technical and functional activity requirements; (3) the influence of people’s attitudes towards the building’s image that arises from public perceptions of changes in value [10]. The process of redevelopment of the Marabunta building can be seen in the timeline as follows:

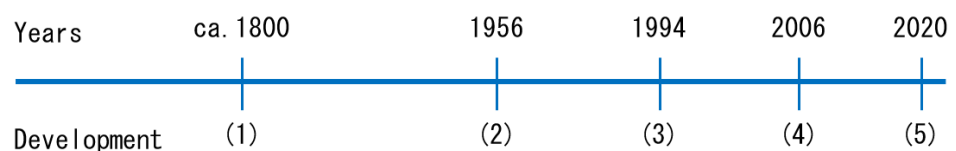


Figure 3: Redevelopment Timeline of Marabunta Resto and Bar.

(1) *Schouburg* was built around the 1800s’ [11]. The team of archaeologists from the Archaeological Center estimated that this building was built after the demolition of the Kota Lama fort in 1824 [9]. Initially, this building served as a venue for opera theatre performances during the Dutch colonial period, which played an important role in the development of performing arts, drama, dance and music in the city of Semarang [11, 4].

(2) After the independence period, the building was abandoned so the management was taken over by the Empat Lima Foundation and then used as a headquarters [12].

(3) The building collapsed due to environmental factors, so it cannot be used [12].

(4) The new building was completely reconstructed and then named the Multipurpose Building Marabunta. In the early 2000's, this building was used as a commercial multipurpose building, which was rented out to hold events, seminars, workshops, etc. In addition, this building is also used as an office. In early 2010 this building was also used as a discotheque [12,13]. The multipurpose building in Marabunta discontinued operation and fell into degradation because these attempts did not produce adequate outcomes. As a result, the building's appearance, functional purpose, and image are elements that could lead to its ultimate destruction. To preserve the Marabunta building's existence, both the government and business communities have to take significant action.

(5) In 2020, the Marabunta building has been renovated and is back in operation with a new space concept. This building has adapted the function of a new space, which has transformed into a restaurant and bar with live music, as one of its daily agenda [5].

The interior design of the Marabunta multipurpose building experienced the following renovations to transform into the Marabunta Resto and Bar.



Figure 4: Interior of Marabunta (Before (a) – After the Renovation (b)).

In Figure 5, the picture on the left is the interior of the Marabunta multipurpose building, while the picture on the right is the interior of the Marabunta building after undergoing a renovation process. From the comparison of the two images, there are 4 interior elements that have not changed, including: (1) The shape of the ceiling resembles an upside-down ship's hood, complete with grids and detailed carvings in the Art and Craft style; (2) The fanlight ornament on the ceiling is in the shape of a circle with plant motif details; (3) The shape of the window with a semicircle at the top; (4) Stained glass ornaments complete with Art Nouveau style decorations. Meanwhile, the difference

between the two images is the layout and type of furniture selection, material details, circulation, and the formation of the atmosphere of the room (ambiance).

In addition, there are also differences in the stage area, including: (1) Detailed ornament on the top of the stage; (2) Stage materials and finishing; (3) stage leveling; (4) Leveling on the side of the stage; (5) The lighting system has been adapted to the needs of the stage for the performance, while the form of the stage still uses the old form. These differences and similarities can be seen in Figure 6.



Figure 5: Marabunta Resto and Bar Stage (Before-After Renovation).

Second, revitalization is a process of aligning the old functions of buildings with new functions that suit the needs of the community. The objectives are to improve building quality and economic value [2]. The revitalization that occurred in the Marabunta building by added value to the building by optimizing the function of the space to become a restaurant and bar. Now, the place is quite popular among the people of Semarang City today. Nadia Lutvina Wijaya, as the manager, wants to restore the value of *Schouwburg* as a performance hall at the Marabunta building by presenting live music performances [5]. Processing of the interior is also designed to be a space that has a classy and luxurious impression, to balance the leisure needs of visitors. The main goal is to revive

the image of Marabunta as it was during the heyday of *Schouwburg* which was one of the identities of Semarang City.

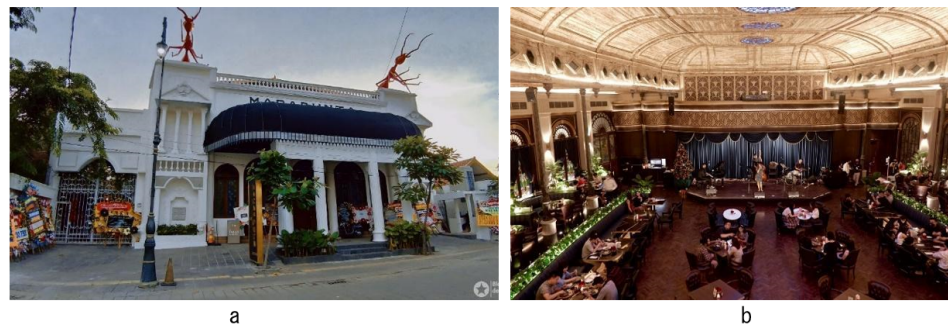


Figure 6: Facade of Marabunta Resto and Bar (a), Interior of Marabunta Resto and Bar (b).

The urban renewal concept applied to the Marabunta Resto and Bar building has been included in the deep rehabilitation approach. The preservation approach with changes and adjustments have made not only to the outside appearance of the building but also to the interior elements [14]. Based on the passage of time from time to time, it can be seen the development and changes in form and function that have occurred in the Marabunta building. The building which was originally built as a *Schouwburg* replica has a different building shape from the old building. According to Sudarmono, the facade of the building has a new design that still adapts to the style of the colonial buildings around it. However, in terms of material, it still uses some of the original materials from the *Schouwburg* building [12]. The construction of this new building was carried out by reusing items from the old building. Doors and stained-glass materials are new building elements. This new building also added an ant statue ornament which is a representation of the Marabunta building [9,13]. In the interior, room design also has a much different visualization, according to the needs and functions of each room.

4. Conclusion

A concrete effort by the government and business leaders to revitalize the Semarang Old Town Area can be seen in the implementation of the urban renewal concept to the Marabunta Resto and Bar building. According to the research team's analysis, there were two stages to the urban renewal concept's implementation in the Marabunta building: (1) redevelopment, and (2) revival. The goal of the large-scale renovations being done is to maintain the original façade, ceiling, and entry's distinctiveness. While this was happening, the Marabunta café and bar's interior design and operation were revitalised by bringing back the *Schouwburg* spirit concept. The sustainability of Semarang's ancient city area is supported by these techniques for revitalising historic buildings.

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