

# The Architectural and Urban Heritage of Jakarta

## A Case Study for Planning for Cultural Tourism in Cities in Indonesia

Ronald Gill

Delft University of Technology

The Netherlands

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### Introduction

In Indonesia one of the largest collections of culturally and historically valuable buildings, townscapes and sites throughout Southeast Asia can be found. Cities like Cirebon, Kudus, Yogyakarta and Surakarta have an image and identity shaped by Indonesian culture and tradition. The capitals Jakarta, Semarang and Surabaya, however, feature an initial town lay-out and architecture typical of 17th and 18th century Dutch cities. Others, like Bandung and Medan (1) are a sparkling blend of both cultures and prototypes of typical Indo-European architecture and town planning.

As in many countries in Asia, however, the potential for cultural tourism of cities in Indonesia still is insufficiently researched and poorly utilized. Programmes for cultural tourism mainly concentrate on conventional individual monuments. The city as a whole is not yet valued as a cultural phenomenon. This often results in neglect of the cities' hidden cultural treasures and indiscriminate destruction of a rich architectural and urban heritage.

The architectural legacy from the colonial period is still considered a missing link in the development of architecture in Indonesia. This architecture dating from more than three centuries of Dutch presence, is attracting increasing interest in Indonesia. Architects, planners and government officials have now begun to recognize that colonial architecture is part of their nation's history, despite the fact that it bears witness to a discreditable colonial past.

In 1988 *Paguyuban Pelestarian Budaya Bandung*, the Bandung Society for Heritage Conservation was founded. Bandung in colonial times was coined "the Paris of Java". Superb 20th century Dutch colonial architecture gave this mountain city its European looks (2). In 1992 Bandung's unique Indo-European or Indies architecture among which quite a few tropical Art Deco classics, fostered the founding of the Art Deco Society of Western Java, a sub-group of the Bandung Society for Heritage Conservation.

Semarang's historic city centre recently earned the name "Little Netherlands" (3) because of the concentration of Dutch colonial architecture in a compact urban nucleus.

Surabaya's Kota Lama, the old city, brings together a blend of Dutch, Chinese, Arab and Malay quarters and invites the visitor to a cross-cultural walking tour in "Little Eurasia".

But Jakarta's Kota, former Dutch 17th century Batavia, is perhaps the rarest example of early Dutch architecture and town planning. Among its contemporary counterparts it is the largest Dutch town ever built, notably outside Europe. As an example of an early, by design and expression original and pure Western European city Kota probably is unmatched in Southeast Asia.

### Planning for Urban Heritage and Cultural Tourism: The use of Urban Memory Maps

In this paper the architectural and urban heritage of Jakarta is looked into from the perspective of how its unique

historical characteristics can be researched and put to use for cultural tourism. Through the development of "urban memory maps" an effort is made to consider the city as a whole a cultural phenomenon from which a programme for cultural tourism can be drawn. The aim of urban memory maps is to acknowledge the cultural-historical factor in the process of urban planning and urban design. The basic assumption here is that apart from spatial and functional requirements, historical and cultural considerations equally affect the urban identity.

An urban memory map is a reflection of the historical architectural and urban morphology. It contains information on the specific characteristics of the historical urban structure, the buildings and the open space which makes a city a recognizable historic structure. All architectural and urban elements which individually or in cohesion, directly or indirectly, are valued to contribute to the city as a historic structure together make up an urban memory map. Urban memory maps are the result of urban heritage research. A historical structural analysis and the development of a scale of values are part of urban heritage research.

Urban memory maps can readily be included in the physical, the social and the cultural chapters of urban plans. With the use of urban memory maps, the historical and cultural identity of cities cannot be ignored in a design for an updated urban plan, as often is the case in urban renovation and revitalization plans.

Planning for cultural tourism can benefit from urban memory maps because of their cultural dimension. Plans for cultural tourism can now be put together taking into account the city as a whole as a cultural expression. With this, cultural tourism can be brought further away from "touristic culture" for which it is often considered a camouflage (4).

A discussion on the historical structural analysis and the preparation of the urban memory map for Jakarta

will not be given here. Instead, a brief historical overview and recommendations on how Jakarta's urban heritage can be put to use for urban planning and for planning for cultural tourism will be dealt with.

#### The case of Jakarta (5)

Today's urban structure of Jakarta is the result of more than seven centuries of autonomous and planned urban development. The pattern of colonial settlements established successively through deliberate intervention after the first Javanese settlement, from Dutch Old Batavia followed by the Indies municipalities of Weltevreden and Meester Cornelis (now Jatinegara) and the Indonesian new town of Kebayoran Baru together form a pattern that has laid the basis for the urban structure of post-colonial Jakarta.

Even now, it is from this network of historic urban elements that Jakarta derives its identity as the nation's capital.

For the Capital City of Jakarta the urban nuclei and elements which historically gave structure to the city, are still conspicuously present in the current urban structure. They can be structured to form an underlying network for the cultural history and urban identity of Jakarta.

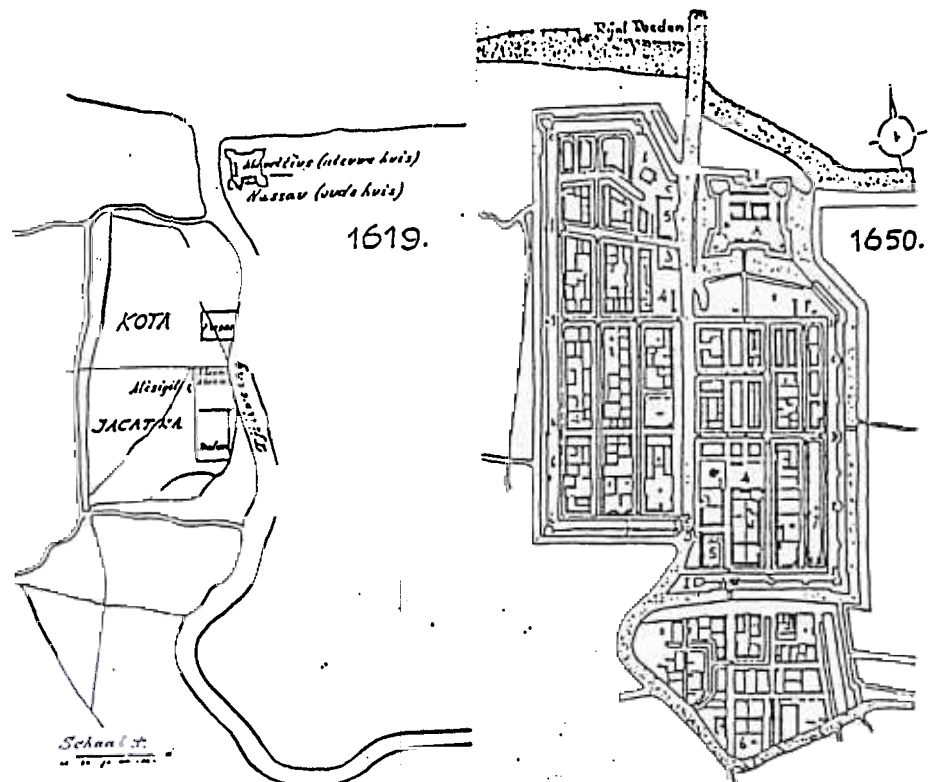
#### Pre-colonial Jakarta: Javanese Jayakarta

Jakarta's pre-colonial heritage stems from Sunda Kelapa on the west bank of Ciliwung river, mentioned as a 12th century harbour town of the Hindu-Javanese kingdom of Pajajaran (6) Directed by the Islamic Sultanate of Banten, Sunda Kelapa was taken over by Fatahillah in 1527 and renamed Jayakarta.

In accordance with the Javanese town planning principles the early settlement featured a town centre with an *alun-alun*, a ritual square, surrounded by the *dalem*, the king's palace, on the south side and the *masjid*, the mosque, on the west side. The total town area was

enclosed and amounted to some 30 hectares. Apart from the general characteristics of a coastal town as opposed to the inland Javanese settlement, little is known about Jayakarta's town lay-out and morphology. Similar to the coastal town of Banten, a Chinese quarter was already in existence on the east bank of Ciliwung river, outside the town on territory reserved for foreign settlers. The Dutch were allowed to settle here in 1611 to do their trade.

principles were first introduced in a settlement plan in Southeast Asia. The town lay-out was based on the principle of the traditional Dutch *waterstad* (watertown), as applied in medieval Amsterdam and in the urban model of Dutch engineer Simon Stevin. As in the home country it consisted of elongated parcels of land with a tight house-to-house subdivision of blocks. The streetblocks were separated by quais and waterways. Moats and earth ramparts provided a protective belt around the



Javanese Jayakarta on the west bank of Ciliwung river facing the build up of fort Jacatra by the Dutch. (based on the original sketch by J. W. Ijzerman in: Dr. F. de Haan, "Oud Batavia", 1922)

Dutch Batavia in 1650, a Dutch model compact town founded on the north coast of tropical Java. Protected by the "Kasteel", the watergate fort, the largest Dutch town outside the Netherlands was completed in less than four decades.

(source: H. A. Breuning, "Het voormalige Batavia, een Hollandse stedestichting in de tropen", 1954)

### Colonial Jakarta: Batavia and Weltevreden

In 1619 the Dutch made their presence a more permanent one on the shores of Java by overruling Jayakarta and establishing Batavia on the east bank of Ciliwung river. With the founding of Batavia by the VOC, the Dutch East India Company, Dutch town planning

town. In the second half of 17th century the west bank of Ciliwung river, site of Javanese Jayakarta, was added to the town, doubling the town area of Batavia.

Within half a century Batavia or Kota as it is called now, occupying an urban area of some 100 hectares, had quickly grown from a foothold for trade and commerce into a fortified town.

In the 18th century a circular defence line of fortified field-posts and *corps de garde* was erected around Batavia. The area within showed a mixed use of scattered *kampung*, sugar and coconut plantations and *landhuizen*, country estates of the wealthy Dutch traders and the company officials of the VOC. The ship-yards for repair and maintenance of the Dutch vessels were located off the coast on the Pulau Onrust island group in Jakarta Bay.

Kota represented the commercial hub and performed the role of the central business district surrounded by districts where the Chinese, the Arab and other so called "foreign Easterners" (7) live and work and by the extensive *kampung* of the Javanese. This role became even more important when after 1870 Indonesia was opened up by the colonial government for private entrepreneurship. Trade companies poured in and settled in Kota.

It was not until the early 19th century after the liquidation of the VOC, that a new impulse was given for the urban development of Batavia. Sanitary problems in stuffy Batavia urged the administrators of the brand new colonial government to look for a new location for their colonial headquarters. The estate of Weltevreden sitting on slightly more elevated land some five kilometres south of Batavia's borders was selected and designated to become the new centre of the Dutch colonial administration.

Unlike downtown Batavia with an urban structure of compact streetblocks and tight house-to-house subdivisions, Weltevreden or uptown Batavia was spaciouly laid out around two large squares. Koningsplein (now Medan Merdeka), the largest one amounted to slightly over 100 hectares, capable of holding a medium-sized Dutch town of those days.

The new town of Weltevreden was typically laid out for habitation by Europeans. Its urban structure however was based on principles reflecting learning and acceptance of a way of life in a tropical climate after the disastrous

experience with Old Batavia. Unlike Batavia, here the urban pattern was made up of a garden-to-garden subdivision of luxurious villas and government offices in a typical (Dutch) Indies architectural style. Around 1835 the Vanden Bosch Defence Line was laid out around Weltevreden to act as a security belt against attacks by the uprising Javanese. From a planning point of view it gave a firm coherence to the dispersed patches of urbanized land in Weltevreden and clearly demarcated the boundaries of its urban area.

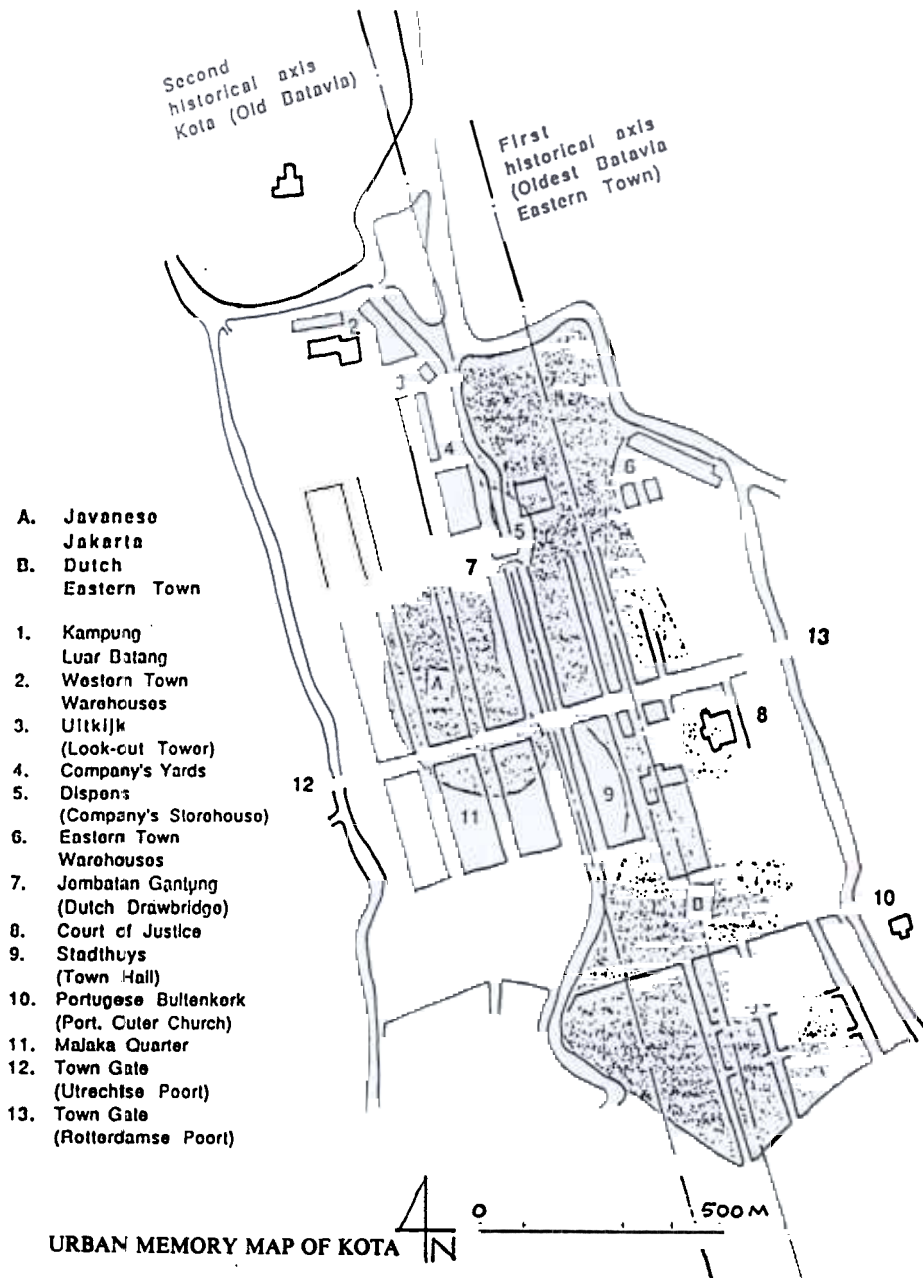
Weltevreden, unlike downtown Old Batavia was mainly residential and administrative. Here the dwellings of the Europeans are found and the government offices of the colonial administration marked the urban scene. At the turn of the century Jakarta featured two centres with a day and night-time use respectively. It took some hundred years after the establishment of the Defence Line, that the first large scale planned housing estates were developed outside its boundaries. These were the estates of Gondangdia and Menteng built southbound and inhabited by the well-off Europeans.

With its spacious lay-out, wide avenues and green open spaces, it was a striking reflection of the garden cities in the home country a.o. in Bussum and Laren.

#### **Jakarta, Capital City of the Republic**

After gaining independence Jakarta's population more than doubled and jumped to an estimated one and a half million in 1949. Therefore a decision was made to build a satellite town to accommodate one hundred thousand people. The design for Kebayoran Baru as the new town was called demonstrates a blend of West European and Javanese town planning principles, the latter one represented in the layout of self-contained neighbourhoods, similar to the indigenous rural *kampung* and separated by spacious traffic routes and green zones. (8)

In the sixties Jakarta was subjected to an urban policy of nation-building. It



The urban memory map of Kota obtained by means of a historical structural analysis provides points of departure for the programme for an updated urban plan and for a programme for cultural tourism for Kota.

aimed at moulding the city to become the capital of a nation searching for its own identity. The city became an instrument for the demonstration of an independent nation's prestige and pride. Construction of large scale infrastructural projects, like the Asian Games' sports complex at Senayan, and prestigious buildings, like Gedung Nusantara at Jalan Muhammad Husni Thamrin coined as the then tallest building of all Asia, were results of the urban policy of the Orde Lama (Old Order). Monas, the National

Monument, was erected on Medan Merdeka, Independence Square (formerly colonial Koningsplein or King's Square) shaping it into the nations' *alun-alun*.

Following the policies of nation building of the Orde Lama, the policy of Orde Baru (New Order) focussed on economic development and set the pace for the shaping and consolidation of the internal urban structure of Jakarta. With a programmatic approach for development sustained by five-year

development plans, efforts were made to tackle the huge backlog and the shortages in the provision of the city's infrastructure and services.

Jakarta Metropolitan Region covering an area of 650 square kilometers in different stages of urbanization, now harbours over fifteen million people and spreads its built-up area from Tangerang in the west to Bekasi in the east, almost reaching Bogor in the south. The initial network of historic settlements now merely makes up a few tens square kilometers or some five percent of the Metropolitan Region.

#### PERMANENCIES WITHIN JAKARTA'S URBAN STRUCTURE

For the Capital City of Jakarta, these subsequent phases in its urban transformation and the network of settlements from which it sprang up represent a reference for the city's existence and cultural identity.

17th century Kota, facing Jakarta Bay which gave reason to its coming into being and existence, is still strongly visible because of its distinct urban morphology which gave direction to the initial development of the hinterland. The 19th century settlement of Weltevreden with the present Merdeka square has stretched its importance to becoming the centre of national government in Jakarta of today.

The 20th century new town of Kebayoran Baru has retained its typical morphology of an independent urban nucleus within Jakarta's changing metropolitan mega-structure.

And despite its physical absence in the present urban metropolitan structure, it was early 12th century Sunda Kelapa which pinpointed Jakarta's early location, presenting its presence in Jakarta of today. Sunda Kelapa and Jayakarta still live on by picturesque *kampung* Luar Batang, a traditional Javanese fishermen's village on Jakarta Bay.

The above urban identity network of Jakarta features primary and secondary references based on cultural-historical and social aspects respectively:

Primary reference urban components successively are constituted by the Pulau Onrust island group, the historic district of Sunda Kelapa, the area around Taman Fatahillah in Kota and the government centre around Monas on Medan Merdeka.

Southwest it continues along continually renewing Jalan Sudirman dominating an endless stretch of *kampung* on both sides, to the new town of Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta's garden city of the fifties.

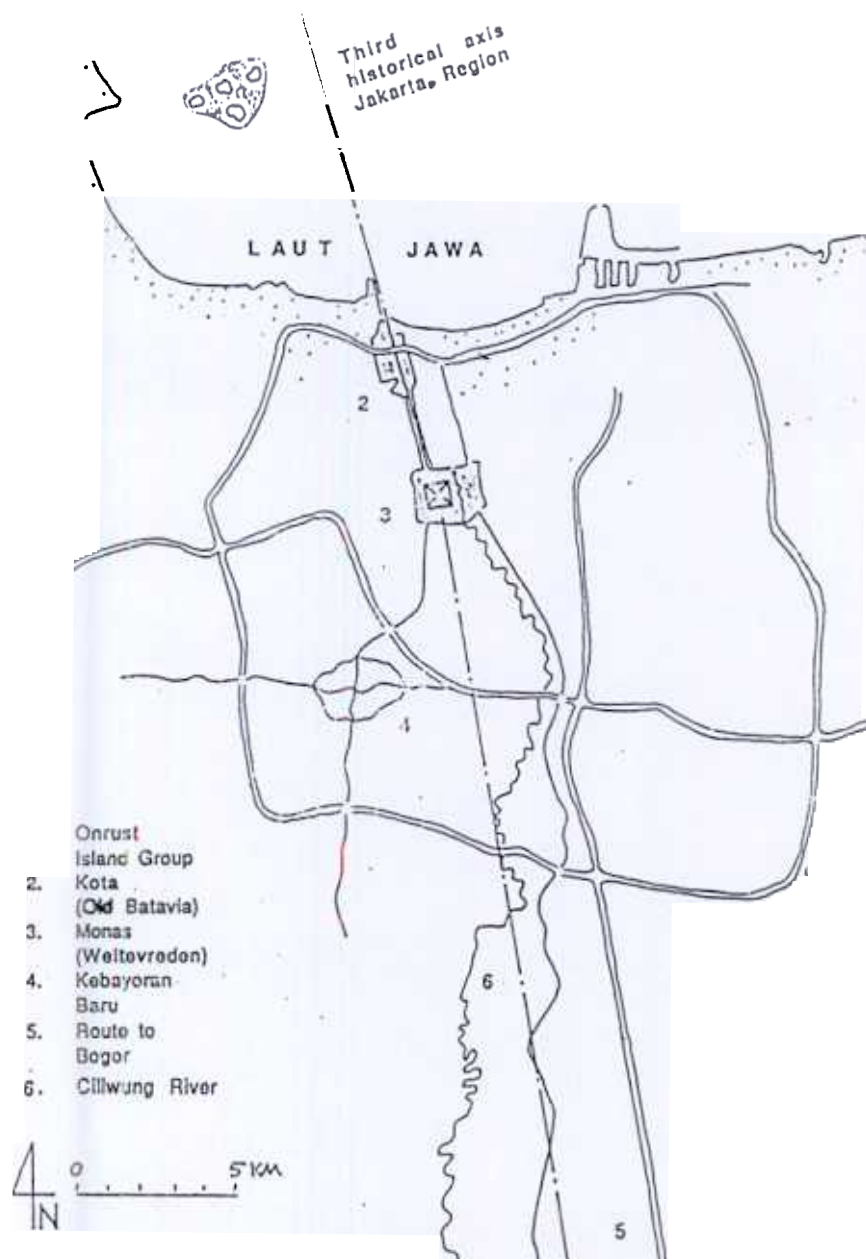
Southeast it presents the exuberant greenery of Condet area. Sitting on the banks of Ciliwung river, it is the centre of Betawi culture where the truly Jakarta people live a rural life in their traditional homesteads 9). Still the vegetable and fruit garden of Jakarta Condet is designated a conservation area.

Further southwards in Depok the university campus of Universitas Indonesia was completed in 1989. By its very name it acts as a symbol of a true national and cultural identity which is expressed in the concept of its lay-out and its architectural expression, an effort to bring about a truly Indonesian architecture, stretching its importance beyond its very location to all of Indonesia.

Secondary reference are Jakarta's Chinatowns, the Chinese quarters of Glodok near Kota, and Pasar Senen and Pasar Baru near former Weltevreden, thriving commercial centres frequented by the locals.

Jakarta's *kampung* as living examples of integration of social, cultural aspects and physical elements, of lifestyle and building tradition, like *kampung* Bali and the Pekojan district 10) the Moor's or Arab quarter of old Jakarta, are also components of Jakarta's permanent urban structure.





The Pulau Onrust island group, the historic districts of Kota and Monas and the university campus of Universitas Indonesia can be considered to be interconnected by a "cultural axis" which is staking a claim as a reference for Jakarta's spatial structure and cultural Identity. Extended to Bogor it can act as a reference for the region's Identity.

These areas marking Jakarta's identity based on social and cultural-historical values and as such considered to be permanencies of Jakarta's urban structure, implicitly are high risk areas and sensitive to indiscriminate development. Recently the triangle of Pasar Senen Chinatown was virtually razed to the ground to make way for profitable large scale commercial activities.

For the Jakarta Metropolitan Region, the natural environment such as Jakarta Bay, the coastal plains and the mountainous hinterland can be referred to as physical references of an obvious permanency.

Yet, the region's identity can be derived from the cultural-historical nodes within Jakarta's urban structure and the axis connecting them. This "cultural axis" finds its beginning in the

Pulau Onrust island group in Jakarta Bay and continues inland to reach even beyond the city's administrative boundaries to Bogor's centre and istana Bogor, the Bogor Palace. Here from the lush green of Kebun Raya Botanical Gardens splendid Bogor Palace emerges, a distinguished monument of national importance for the Republic in the dawn of its coming into being.

On the level of metropolitan Jakarta, the Kota-Monas-Depok cultural axis can act as a reference for the identity of the Capital City of Jakarta.

On the regional level, the Jakarta Bay-Monas-Istana Bogor cultural axis has an irrefutable potential as the cultural spine for the region's identity.

### Conclusions

Planning for urban heritage and cultural tourism cannot be seen in isolation from professional tasks such as urban planning and urban design. Urban history and urban culture should equally form the basis for urban planning and urban design exercises.

With the development of urban memory maps for historic towns, cities and even regions, a simple, yet effective tool can be offered to urban planners and designers to keep the urban heritage of towns and cities alive in the urban environment of today.

But this process of planning for urban heritage should be preceded by recognition and acceptance of the architectural and urban legacy as a valuable cultural-historical asset.

In the case of Kota presented as former Dutch Old Batavia, the social-cultural context of present-day Indonesian society should be taken into account. Even so the need for Indonesia to develop its own scale of values to assess the urban heritage which is familiar but none the less foreign.

In the case of Jakarta, so far, considerable progress on the urban level has been achieved. For the planning of urban heritage and cultural tourism on

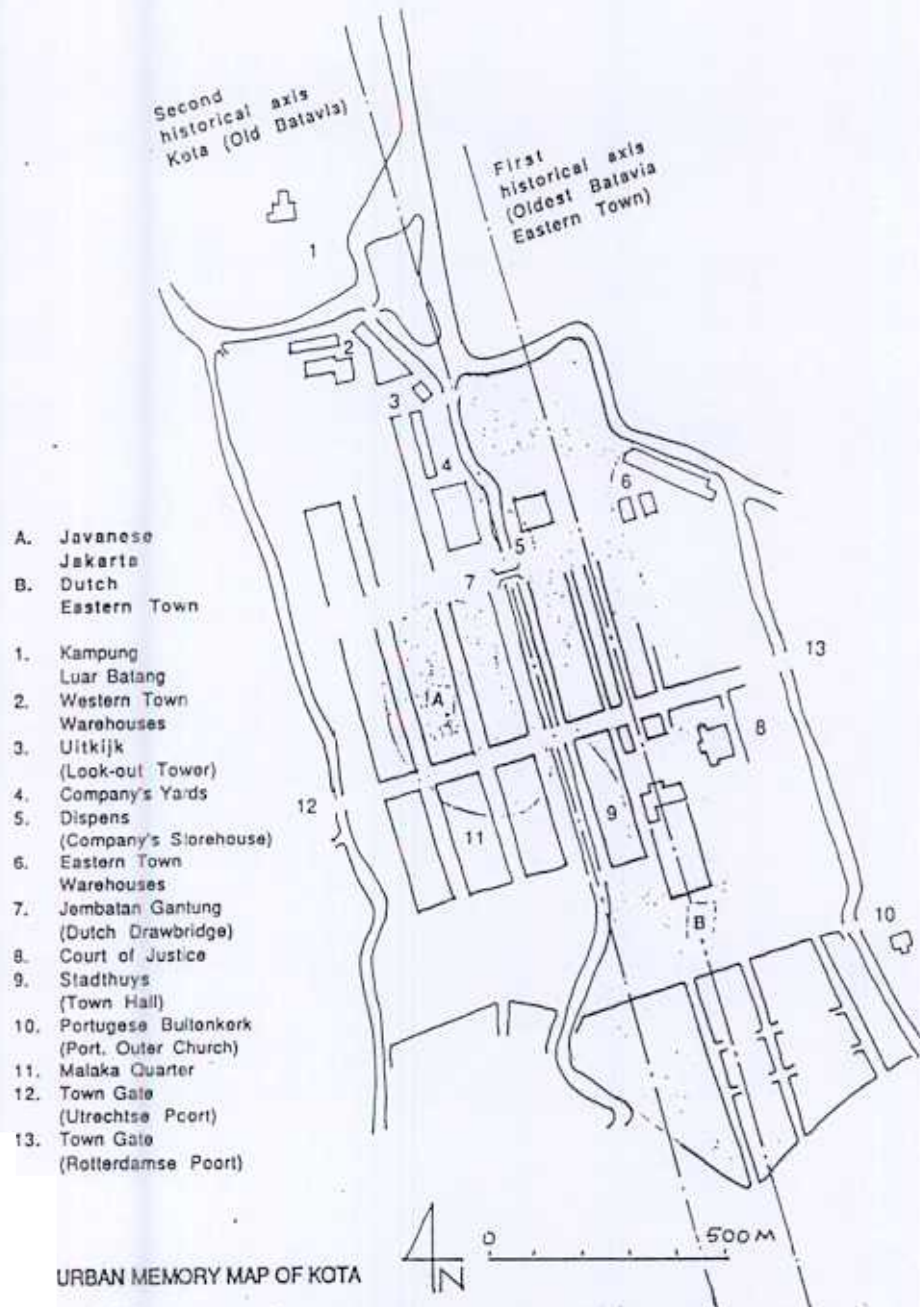
the metropolitan and regional level however there still is a task to be taken up. The Jakarta case could be used as a model for planning for cultural tourism in Indonesia, for cities like Cirebon, Kudus, Yogyakarta and Surakarta, which are stemming from an own culture and tradition.

### NOTES AND LITERATURE

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7. "Foreign Easterners" is a phrase used by the Dutch to identify the groups of foreign nationals in the Netherlands-Indies, like the Chinese, Arabs, Malays, Indians, Japanese.
8. Kebayoran Baru was designed by Soesilo who can be considered as the first Indonesian town planner.
9. The name Betawi is derived from the name of former Batavia and refers to the people who first occupied the territory.
10. Susan Abeyasekera, "*Jakarta. A History*" Singapore, 1989.

Ronald Gill MSc. Arch was born in Indonesia. He is an architect and currently working on a doctoral thesis within the Faculty of Architecture, Delft University of Technology, Netherlands.

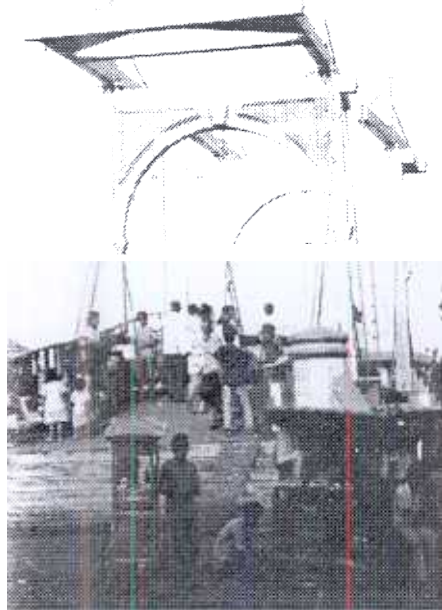




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Jembatan Gantung, the Dutch drawbridge spanning the banks of Kali Besar is a primary element of Kota's urban memory

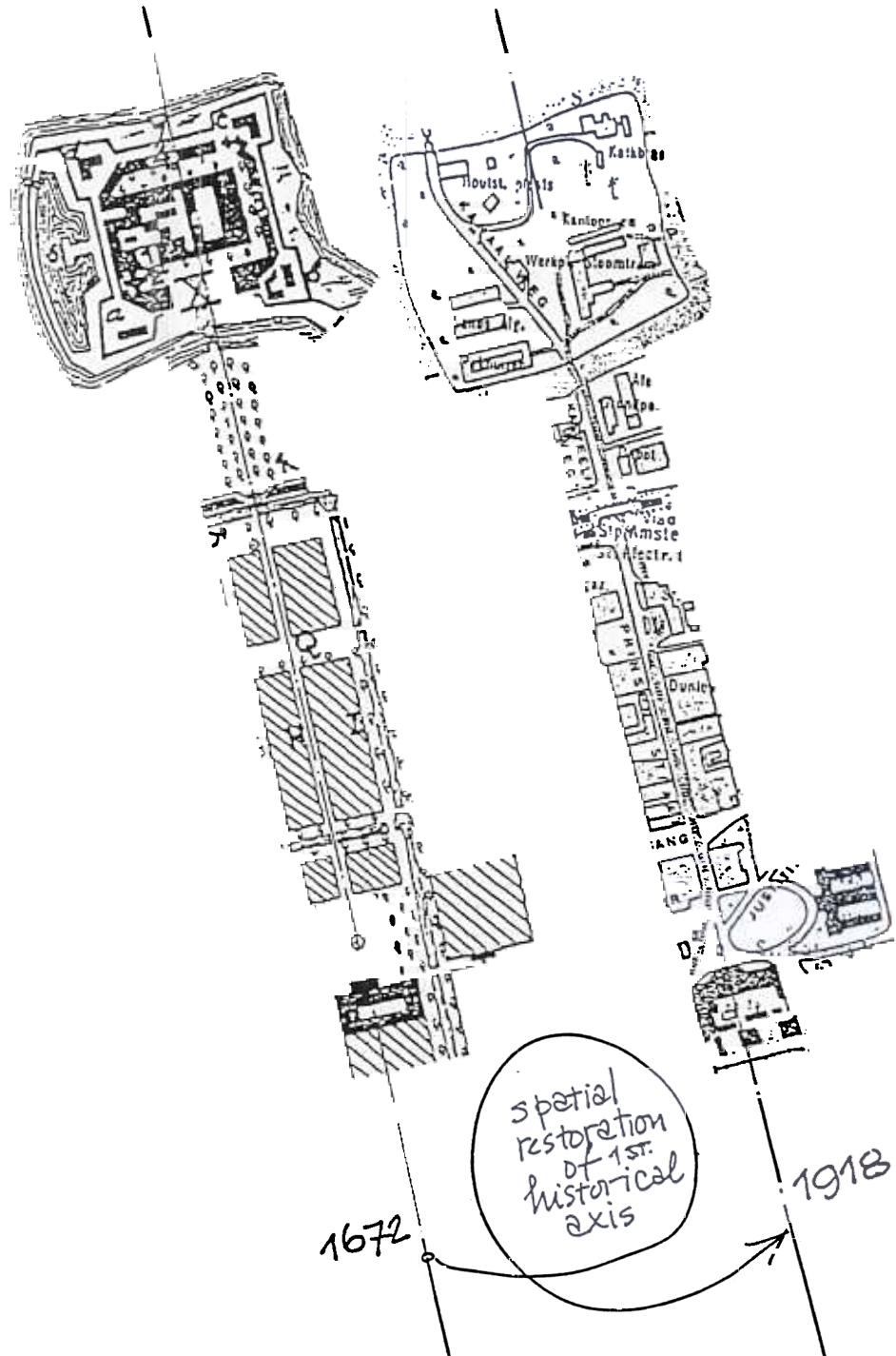


Monas, the nation's National Monument, a symbol of national identity dominates metropolitan Jakarta's Urban image



The faculty of Engineering of Universitas Indonesia (arch. Triatno Y. Harjoko) in Depok, an architectural expression of Indonesian cultural identity

CENTRE DE DOCUMENTATION  
UNIVERSITE PARIS 13 - CNRS  
10, av. de la Fédération  
93015 PARIIS  
Tel 01 45 70 - Fax 01 45 66 06 22



(photo's by R.G. Gill)



The first historical axis of early (eastern town) Batavia still strongly marks the urban identity of present-day Kota



The third historical axis which has importance for both Metropolitan Jakarta and the Jakarta Metropolitan region takes-off from the Pulau Onrust island group in Jakarta Bay and spans upto Bogor some seventy kilometers to the island of Java