

Spatial Concept of Baluarti Keraton Kacirebonan

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Abstract. The Kacirebonan Palace in Cirebon City, known for its Javanese culture, houses a unique settlement surrounded by the Balutanti Fort. Baluarti Keraton Kacirebonan blends Chinese, Colonial, and Traditional-era buildings, preserving Javanese customs and procedures. However, challenges such as lack of authority, unclear preservation concepts, reliance on government subsidies, conflicts of interest, and low community participation hinder its preservation. This study uses Combined Strategies, combining Historical Research and Qualitative Research, to analyze objects from the past and examine their relationship with architectural design. Data sources include inscriptions, writings, and local experiences. Palaces often change over time, maintaining their architectural style by comparing new buildings with old ones. The roof shape, openings, and columns of new buildings often resemble those of the old building. The chessboard pattern, used for small towns with defense, agriculture, and trade functions, is also prevalent. Social factors and cultural influences significantly influence the spatial layout of a settlement. The Kacirebonan Palace complex, located southwest of Kasepuhan Palace and 500 meters south of Kanoman Palace, spans 46,500 square meters and features a Chinese-mixing style, Colonial, and Traditional era building. Baluarti settlement, part of the palace area, has a grid pattern with small, narrow roads, following the Palace's tradition. Baluarti, a Javanese settlement, is a residence for nobles, high-ranking priyayi, and courtiers of the Kacirebonan Palace. The settlement is characterized by a magersari system, where the king gives land for Abdidalem's residence. The social status of the Baluarti community is derived from its family line, with most citizens having titles obtained from the king. Keraton Kacirebonan's architecture blends Colonial, Chinese, and Javanese styles, while religious beliefs, social status, and the traditional magersari system influence the Baluarti settlement's layout.

Keywords: Baluarti, Cirebon City, Keraton Kacirebonan

INTRODUCTION

The Kacirebonan Palace building that still stands tall today shows the existence of Javanese culture, which is still thick in Cirebon City, known as this cultural city. Around the Kacirebonan Palace is a unique settlement because the so-called Balutanti Fort surrounds it. The building in Baluarti Keraton Kacirebonan uses a mixture of Chinese architecture and Colonial and Traditional-era buildings. The shape of the building is like a magnifying building in the Dutch colonial era with solid European architectural influences. This can be seen from the shape of the house buildings where in the form of villages, limasan, and joglo, which can still be seen today. Most people in Baluarti village still hold fast regarding Javanese customs, procedures, and culture (Keraton). This peculiarity makes this baluarti village a cultural heritage area in the Kacirebonan Palace.

Physical and non-physical changes in Baluarti Village occur because causes come from inside and outside Baluarti Village. If left unchecked, things that cause negative changes in

physical and non-physical aspects will reduce the uniqueness or potential of Baluarti Village contained in its physical and non-physical aspects. One of the causes of physical and non-physical changes in Baluarti Village is the lack of authority of the Kacirebonan Palace of Cirebon City as the manager of the Baluarti Village settlement environment. However, in efforts to preserve this settlement area, problems are faced elsewhere. There are at least five issues/problems faced in the preservation of residential areas, including a) regulations, the application of rules and regulations in the field that have not been well realized, b) there is no clear concept in the preservation of the area so that the local community has not carried out the preservation of the area properly, c) funding, largely dependent on government subsidies, d) conflicts of interest, can come from within and outside the conservation area, and e) low community participation. Related to the problem of concepts, conflicts of interest, and still low community participation, it is hoped that the results of the research that will be carried out can provide information about the concept of this settlement, which is full of fair palace cultural values so that it is preserved and maintained for the generation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As modernism developed with its characteristic rationalism, meta-empirical beliefs slowly shifted. The inability of ratio to read the insensible signs of nature shifted some of the knowledge of pre-modern cosmology into the territory of myth and mysticism. In architectural studies, especially in Nusantara, cosmology is seen as one of the factors forming space (Mashuri, 2010; Sumalyo, 2001; Widayat, 2004; Widyatasari, 2002; Wesnawa, 2010; Xu, 1998; and Kartono, 2005). Sacred profane spaces, roof shapes, columns, house layouts, settlements, and cities embody cosmological concepts.

Diagram patterns are patterns of urban space formed due to the influences of various aspects or activities that are most prominent in a city, such as religion or belief, politics, and government, or security and defense so that specific urban spatial patterns are formed, such as circular / circle patterns (circles), linear patterns, or radial-concentric patterns. According to Kostof (1991), the circular pattern is a pattern formed to show the concentration of power of the leader (king) and to optimize the city defense system.

Linear patterns are continuous patterns formed due to the encouragement of aspects of cosmological beliefs and aspects of physical and cultural topography. Meanwhile, radial-concentric patterns are formed due to security considerations and to optimize defenses inside and outside the city. Another pattern proposed by Kostof (1991) is the chessboard pattern (the grid), also called gridiron or checkerboard, which is the pattern (pattern) most commonly used

to plan a city (planned city). According to Kostof (1991: 99), the chessboard pattern (the grid) is generally used for small towns (towns), which have the primary functions as defense (defense), agricultural development (agriculture development), and trade (trade), as well as a symbol of democratic government (in western countries), as well as a symbol of absolute government (in China and Japan).

Some of these theories and concepts related to settlements and culture in general reveal that humans, in forming containers or places of life, are strongly influenced by cultures that have taken root and become an inseparable part of their lives. In addition, the social aspect is the next highly considered factor. It always goes hand in hand with forming a residential container for a particular community. Other aspects, such as climate, geographical conditions, etc., will be factors that follow cultural and social aspects. The spatial layout of a society is inseparable from the religious system or beliefs of the community concerned. Its most essential nature in life, this aspect of religion or belief, is difficult to change but becomes an influence and a basis in other life behaviors (Permana, 1995: 14).

RESEARCH METHOD(S)

In this study, the method used was combined strategies: historical research and qualitative research. This is because this research process emphasizes objects in the past and then analyzes them with conditions from that time to the present. This research also intends to critically examine and analyze the records and relics of an event in the past. The type of factor is taken based on objects that have been present since the past. Furthermore, further investigated in depth, what is the meaning and relationship between events at that time and the presence of architectural design in such a way (Groat and Wang, 2013). Valid and authentic data sources come from that period, such as inscriptions or writings related to the history of development, distribution, and acculturation of Islamic culture and its influence on the architectural meaning of the Kacirebonan Palace. In addition, supporting data sources are taken from local people who experienced firsthand how Islamic cultural civilization in the area around the Keraton.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Over time, a palace will experience periods of change or the addition of new buildings while still maintaining the authenticity of its architectural style; this can be done by analyzing and comparing the architectural elements forming the head, body, and legs of the new building with the old building. The roof of some new buildings still takes the shape of a roof almost the

same as the old building, namely the Prabayaksa building / Main Building. This roof shape is applied to new buildings, namely Pringgowati, Kaputran and Kaputren Buildings, and Gedong Ijo. The front shape of the roof of the Alit Museum is taken from the front shape of the mosque building or Langgar.

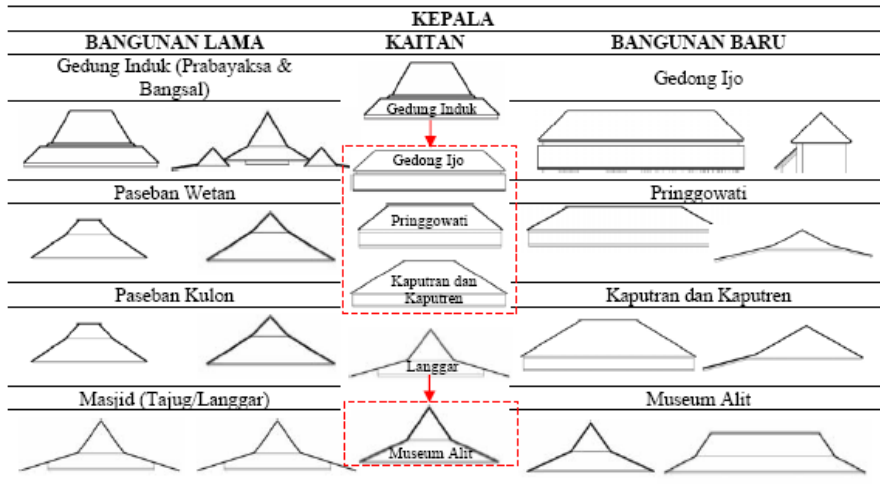


Figure 1. Roof Top Design

Source : Sudrajat et al., 2018

The shape of the openings/ventilation of the new building, namely Gedong Ijo, Pringgowati, Kaputran Kaputren, and Alit Museum, still applies symmetrical ornamental ventilation openings from the old building, the Main Building. Similarly, the columns in some new buildings (Pringgowati and Kaputren/Kaputran) also still take the form of old building columns (Main Building).

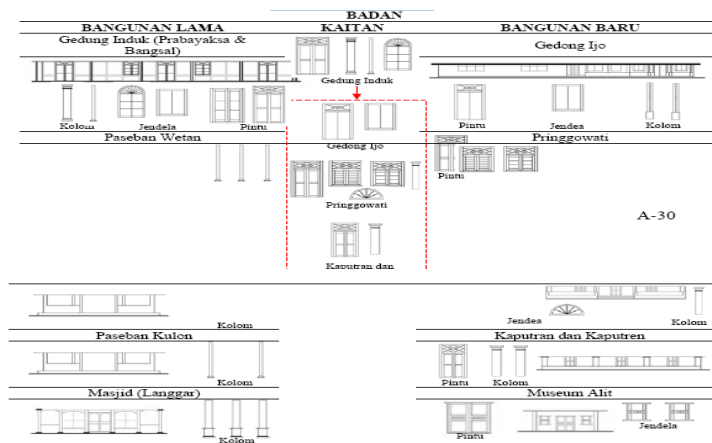


Figure 2. Building shape

Source: Sudrajat et al., 2018

Another pattern proposed by Kostof (1991) is the chessboard pattern (the grid), also called gridiron or checkerboard, which is the pattern (pattern) most commonly used to plan a city (planned city). According to Kostof (1991: 99), the chessboard pattern (the grid) is generally used for small towns (towns), which have the primary functions as defense (defense), agricultural development (agriculture development), and trade (trade), as well as a symbol of democratic government (in western countries), as well as a symbol of absolute government (in China and Japan). Some of these theories and concepts related to settlements and culture in general reveal that humans, in forming containers or places of life, are strongly influenced by cultures that have taken root and become an inseparable part of their lives.



Figure 3. Floor Shape

Source: Sudrajat et al., 2018

In addition, the social aspect is the next highly considered factor. It always goes hand in hand with forming a residential container for a particular community. The spatial layout of the Baluarti settlement can be seen from the elements that make up the spatial layout of the settlement. The spatial elements of the Baluarti settlement can be explained into two groups, namely:

a. Physical Elements of Spatial Planning

The Kacirebonan Palace complex is about 1 km southwest of the Kasepuhan Palace and approximately 500 meters south of the Kanoman Palace. Keraton Kacirebonan's position extends from North to south (the same position as other palaces in Cirebon) with a land area of about 46,500 square meters. Kacirebonan building is included in the model of Chinese mixing style, Colonial and Traditional era buildings. The shape of the building is like a magnifying building in the Dutch colonial era with solid European architectural influences.

Baluarti settlement is part of the Kacirebonan Palace area. This area is located inside the fortress or gate, where two small doors on the right and left of the gate symbolize the two sentences of shahadat.



Figure 4. Land/Area Boundaries in Baluarti Settlement Spatial Planning
Source: Documentation, 2024

Gapura Paduraksa and Kuta Besi Fort are the Palace's initial entrances. The gate is referred to as a connecting place between two places. The spatial pattern of Baluarti is to surround the Palace concentrically. As for access to the Baluarti area, they enter from the North, namely Gapura Padaraksa, then pass through the square and Mager Sari area, then go through the Kahagung Gate. While from the east and west, you can use the Gapura Silatangkep Gate.

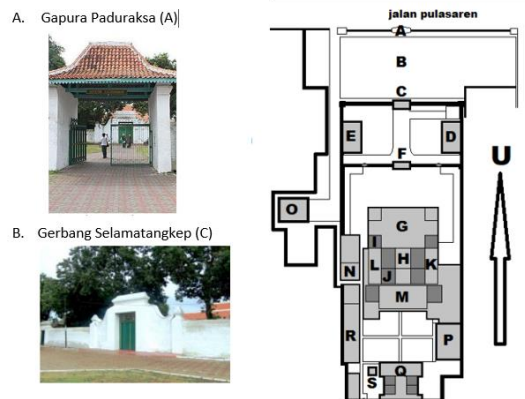


Figure 5. Access to Baluarti Settlement Spatial Planning
Source: Documentation, 2024

The shape of the Baluarti settlement model is a grid pattern formed by settlement land/plots with small and narrow environmental roads. Where the small (secondary) roads are oriented towards the wide primary road and surround the Keraton. The circulation

pattern rotates clockwise, called pradaksino. The circulation in the Baluarti residential area follows the tradition of the Palace, where the direction enters from the North.

b. Non-Physical Elements of Spatial Planning

The people in Baluarti are generally ethnic Javanese people. This is because, in addition to the absence of monographic data containing data about the descendant community in the settlement, it can also be known from the history of Baluarti itself, namely that Baluarti comes from the Portuguese word *Baluarte* which means fortress, and between the walls surrounding the Palace and Baluarti there are residential areas. Baluarti is a residence devoted to nobles, high-ranking *priyayi*, and courtiers of the Kacirebonan Palace. In addition, there are also residences for other courtiers who live around the Palace. According to Kanjeng Budaya (2016), after the Palace was completed and Sinuwun, the King gave land around the Palace for the *abdidalem's* residence. *Abdi Dalem* has the right to stay but is not entitled to own, and at any time, it is asked again to be handed over to the Palace, which is called *magersari*. The *magersari* system is a non-physical element in the spatial layout of the Baluarti settlement.

In its development, the courtier who got the land made a place to live for relatives or servants. Moreover, if some housekeepers want to serve the king, then the Palace will see who gives recommendations to the servant. So that if something happens in the future, the party who gives recommendations must also be responsible. Conditions like this develop continuously so that the settlement of Baluarti is getting denser. The status and titles in the social life of the people in the Baluarti settlement at that time were primarily *Santana dalem*, and *abdi dalem*, who worked/served the king. So, almost all citizens in Baluarti have titles obtained from the king. The social status of the Baluarti community is obtained from generation to generation from its family line, namely the social status of nobles and courtiers of the Kacirebonan Palace.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The architecture of Keraton Kacirebonan incorporates a blend of Colonial, Chinese, and Javanese styles, evident in the design of its main buildings and the use of specific elements like Javanese roofs, red plaster materials, and Chinese ornaments. Despite being built over time, new structures harmonize with the original architecture, maintaining the Palace's unique aesthetic and making it difficult to discern the age differences between buildings. The Baluarti settlement's spatial layout is shaped by physical and non-physical elements, including religious beliefs, social status linked to the royal court, and the traditional *magersari* system, wherein the

king initially granted residents land and housing with certain conditions. However, the current situation has evolved, with some properties being bought and sold without royal consent.

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