

## **Adaptation Strategies at Omah Lowo as a Place to Promote Creative Industry Products**

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### **Abstract**

This paper reflects on the adaptability of heritage buildings in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. A heritage building that has been abandoned for a long time and is now functioning again as a commercial building and batik gallery. The research method uses qualitative research was conducted using a descriptive approach. Omah Lowo has been empty and abandoned for 50 years. After being restoration, it was changed to the Batik Keris Palace and functioned as a museum and batik gallery, craft retail, restaurant and cafe. Adaptation strategies are important for the resilience and sustainability of heritage buildings.

Keywords: adaptation strategies, creative industry, heritage, Omah Lowo.

### **Introduction**

Surakarta in Central Java is an area rich in historical and cultural heritage that has the potential for tourism development (Putri et al., 2022). Tourism activities require comprehensive thinking in utilizing a city's historical assets. The uniqueness of nature and local culture is a competitive advantage in tourism. The existence of heritage buildings is an important element in supporting this (Martokusumo & Wibowo, 2021). For this reason, it is necessary to preserve the building.

Preservation of heritage buildings and sustainable development in urban areas is an important issue. Preserving heritage buildings not only contributes to the physical and economic aspects of the building, but also provides social and cultural identity, creating a dynamic place, spirit and sense of place (Lewis, 2016). Currently, the orientation of heritage building preservation prioritizes the sustainability of values in society (subject-based). It is no longer object-based, it is more monument-centric. For this reason, heritage buildings can be utilized and empowered to become part of development policies (Martokusumo & Wibowo, 2021). Adaptation strategies are an important step in reviving abandoned old buildings in urban areas. Adaptation, namely, utilizing a building object or structure by continuing its original function as a sustainability step. It can also add facilities according to needs, change the arrangement of space in a limited way, and maintain the architectural style, original construction, and aesthetic harmony of the surrounding environment (Atmodiwirjo & Yatmo, 2022).

This research aims to examine the implementation of adaptation strategies at Omah Lowo. This heritage building has functioned as a commercial facility and tourist destination in

Surakarta city. In some other research about Omah Lowo or the Batik Keris Palace, Jonatan et al., (2022), examines the concept of adaptive reuse in gallery interior design. Analysis on changes in interior function, interior forming elements, interior styles and furniture. While research Maximillian et al., (2022), examines the eclectic style of furniture at the Batik Keris restaurant and café. Restaurants and cafes as hangout facilities at the Batik Keris Palace. Researchers analyzed furniture objects including their function, shape, design style, material, and layout. Setiawan and Nurhasan's research examines the bioclimatic concept in the architecture of the Batik Keris Palace. Bioclimatic is an approach used by architects in designing buildings that are responsive to climate, considering that these heritage buildings have long been neglected and damp (Setiawan, 2021). Meanwhile, Mutiari and Novianty's research (2020), examines the cross-programming of Omah Lowo's interior utilization, which is different from its existing function. Then designing interiors for public facilities and the woodcraft industry. The research results can complement previous research references.

## **Method**

The research method uses qualitative research with descriptive analysis. Qualitative methods will produce descriptive data by observing objects, interviewing informants, and reviewing documents. The observation of the object is in the form of the Batik Keris Palace, while the documents are in the form of photos of the building before it was restoration. Primary data through observation and interviews. Secondary data is obtained from scientific journals, books, and photos. The data were analyzed regarding the implementation of the narrative approach in interior design. The Batik Keris Palace is located at Perintis Kemerdekaan street no. 1, Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. Land area of 3000 m<sup>2</sup> and a building area of 1500 m<sup>2</sup>. The existence of buildings in the area of leading tourist destinations in Surakarta (Haryono et al, 2019). The designated tourism area for cultural heritage, history, and traditional values in Surakarta (Rudyatmo, 2019).

## **Result and Discussion**

Omah Lowo was built in 1920 to belong to the Dutch nobility. In 1942, it was used as a hideout for guerrillas. Then in 1945, it was owned by Sie Djian Ho, a printing entrepreneur and ice factory in Surakarta (Okpriati et al., 2020; Setiawan, 2021). However, in 1982 there was a ruislag decision by the Diponegoro VII Regional Military Commander, and finally the building was taken care of by the Surakarta Government. Then the building was used for the veterans' office, the Hajj office, and the Surakarta Chamber of Commerce (Setiawan, 2021). Omah Lowo was designated as a cultural heritage building based on the Decree of the Mayor of Surakarta number 646/116/1/1997 which was later revised in 2013 (Rayhan & Sari, 2021; Rudyatmo, 2013). The condition of the building is abandoned, empty, and damaged. Thousands of bats

nest on the roof of the building for 50 years. Local people know this building as 'Omah Lowo' because when it was abandoned, it became a nest for thousands of bats.

The ownership of Omah Lowo has alternated, and the final owner is Handianto Tjokrosaputro, a Batik Keris entrepreneur. Handianto Tjokrosaputro is the great-grandson of Sie Djian Ho (Okpriati et al., 2020; Setiawan, 2021). Omah Lowo was restoration starting in 2016 and completed in 2020. Omah Lowo was given a new name, namely the Batik Keris Palace. The function of the building is no longer as a residence but as a building for the public which was inaugurated on 2 October 2020 (Jonatan et al., 2022; Rayhan & Sari, 2021). The Batik Keris Palace as a commercial building and batik gallery is designed like the residence of the Sie Djian Ho family. The building consists of three buildings, building A as a museum and gallery for premium batik collections, building B for outlets for regular batik products and handicraft products. Building C is an additional building that is used for restaurants and café (Jonatan et al., 2022).



*Figure 1. The Batik Keris Palace (Omah Lowo) is divided into three buildings: (A) a museum and gallery, (B) outlets for regular batik products and handicraft products, (C) restaurants and cafes.*

*Source: Photo courtesy of Yusak Persada, 2020*

The stages of the restoration work began with replacing the roof of the building and cleaning up thousands of bats. The ceiling was repaired and equipped with antique lamps from the collection of Handianto Tjokrosaputro. Meanwhile, the floor which had been covered in bat excrement was cleaned and repolished so that the texture of the ornaments could be seen on the existing floor again. Walls, windows, and doors were maintained and repainted. The architectural form does not change because the building is included in the category of heritage building classification A. Classification A heritage buildings are buildings that are maintained in accordance with their original form. The layout of the room has not changed, while the function of the room is as a museum and batik gallery.

Adaptation strategy for Omah Lowo with a narrative approach. Narrative implies knowledge gained from human life experience. The narrative approach is one type of approach in the adaptation strategy. The built environment, in this case the interior, is designed to tell the story of the owner's ancestry, namely the Sie Djian Ho family (Brooker, 2017). The purpose of the narrative approach is to awaken the visitor's imagination as well as provide a strategy to connect heritage buildings with Batik Keris products.





*Figure 2. Interior design using art nouveau style furniture (A), Chinese style (B) and art deco style (C).  
Source: Photo courtesy of Yusak Persada, 2020*

Implementation of narrative in the Batik Keris Palace interior. Building A is used as a museum and gallery for premium batik collections. Interior design uses antique furniture and knick-knacks from Tjokrosaputro's collection to support the story of the Sie Djian Ho family. Some furniture includes: Chinese style furniture, art deco style furniture, and art nouveau style furniture. This furniture is in accordance with the building, such as glass windows with art nouveau ornaments. While the knick-knacks installed in each room include: memorable photos of the Sie Djian Ho family, photos of the history of the Batik Keris company, Chinese ceramic jars and pots, antique chandeliers, and several photos of the building restoration process. Furniture and interior knick-knacks become a link between interior architecture and the display of the Batik Keris collection. Museums and galleries create the atmosphere of Sie Djian Ho's luxurious and exclusive residence. The presence of Chinese-style furniture and knick-knacks shows the family's ancestral identity. Meanwhile, art nouveau and art deco artefacts show the lifestyle of the Sie Djian Ho family at that time. The batik collection is a cultural product as well as a building owner's business.

In the past, building B was a printing office owned by Sie Djian Ho (Rayhan & Sari, 2021). Now it functions as an outlet for Batik Keris products and handicrafts. The ceiling was repaired and repainted, as were the walls. The existing floor after being cleaned and polished again looks nicer and more unique. The rooms in building B have not changed. The layout of the furniture is dominated by display systems for batik and handicraft products, while only a few complement the antique furniture. The display of batik and handicraft products dominates the room because it matches the function of the room as a product outlet.

Building C as an additional building is used for restaurants and cafes. Restaurant serving traditional Surakarta menu. The interior design of building C is eclectic style (Maximillian et al., 2022). Eclectic style is defined as choosing various characteristics of design methods or styles using motifs from various style periods. The interior design of the restaurant is eclectic with some Chinese, Art Deco, Art Nouveau and Dutch Colonial style furniture. Building C is a separate building from buildings A and B so that the interior design is different from the two previous buildings. Even though the buildings are separate, they are still in one location and function as a hangout and meeting place. Restaurants and cafe complement the Batik Keris Palace because they are a step in the cross-sectoral business strategy of Batik Keris.

The Batik Keris Palace is an alternative tourism destination in Surakarta City (Suhita et al., 2022). In accordance with Tjokrosaputro's vision, he wanted to preserve heritage buildings and the memories in them. The heritage building is also used for cultural development, namely batik, so that the owner implements an adaptation strategy for its sustainability.

## Conclusion

The analysis above suggests that designing residential spaces to optimize early childhood movement patterns necessitates taking into account several factors. This is because children's activities and movement needs consist of passive and active movement patterns. In order to maximize the quality of residential safety, it's crucial to consider the shape of the building structure that supports the construction load. In the case of the Carissa House, the dimensions still align with the standards recommended by the literature. However, upon review, it becomes clear that the resulting space's shape does not provide maximum comfort in accordance with the definition of a child's proper movement space. In this way, designing the interior of a residence with limited land should really take into account the needs of its users, namely children aged under 5 years. Designing housing with limited land is a crucial aspect to consider, as land is becoming increasingly scarce in today's world and young children require ample space for movement to support their growth and development. We hope to advance to the next research stage, which involves direct field observation and experimental studies in residential expansion areas at the location.

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