

Evaluation of the architectural meaning of adapting traditional houses to become homestays in cultural heritage areas

Study case: Kotagede Yogyakarta

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Article history:</i> Received May 26, 2024 Received in revised form June 05, 2024 Accepted September 02, 2024 Available online December 01, 2024</p> <p><i>Keywords:</i> Adaptation Cultural heritage area Homestay Kotagede Meaning of traditional house</p> <p>*Corresponding author: Cecillia Diani Lelyta Marsonia Architecture Study Program, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta, St. Babarsari No 44, Yogyakarta, Indonesia Email: cecillialelyta@gmail.com</p>	<p><i>Slums are one of the threats to Cultural Heritage Areas (KCB) which consist of traditional houses, especially those with living museum status such as KCB Kotagede in Yogyakarta. One of the main causes of slums is the owner's (heir) inability to provide funds to preserve the building, which requires high costs. Assistance from the government or other parties, which is often incidental, is not a sustainable solution. For this reason, efforts are needed to optimize the potential of KCB so that it can generate sustainable conservation costs. One effort is to adapt traditional houses into homestays that offer cultural experiences for tourists. The study was carried out in 4 (four) residential buildings which were selected using purposive sampling. The study method begins with identifying initial plans of traditional houses and identifying plans for developing adapted designs. Next, using the Form - Function - Meaning structural approach, an analysis was carried out to what extent the architectural meaning of a traditional house was maintained in its adaptation into a homestay. This study reveals that a conventional house can be adapted into a homestay while maintaining its architectural meaning.</i></p>

Introduction

The richness of culture in Indonesia is very diverse, covering various aspects such as art, language, traditional clothing, and architecture (Riawan 2015; Ratnawati 2017). Indonesia has no less than 478 ethnic groups, including the Javanese ethnic group (Rimadiaz et al. 2023; Setyowati 2021). One of Java's cultural treasures is Kotagede, a traditional city located in Yogyakarta and built in the 16th century as the forerunner of the Islamic Mataram kingdom (Safitri and Ningsih 2022). With a fairly long history, Kotagede still exists and has been designated by the Regional Government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta as a Cultural Heritage Area (Reg. No. 3471141002.5.2021.3).

Among the various problems faced, lack of care and maintenance, changes in residential patterns, and the community's economic conditions are the main problems for preserving Kotagede (Sumardiyanto 2019). Kotagede is extremely vulnerable to slums since most buildings are constructed of wood, which is susceptible to weather and other environmental factors (Widianingtias, Pramudito, and Cahyandari 2020). Through initiatives to preserve, use, and develop, Kotagede has been preserved in several ways. A house preservation handbook, inventory, and documentation were released sometime after the Yogyakarta earthquake that destroyed the majority of Kotagede's traditional homes (Jogja Heritage

Society 2010; Dirjen Cipta Karya Kementrian PU 2011).

One of the efforts to preserve Kotagede is to utilize its potential as a tourism object by adapting traditional house buildings into homestays which, apart from providing accommodation facilities, also offer cultural experiences by living and doing activities with residents. Because adaptation is in direct contact with the physical structure of a traditional house, the problem that can be raised in this paper is whether the adaptation of a traditional house into a homestay can be done while maintaining its architectural meaning. This question is essential to raise because it often happens that the use of cultural heritage through tourism activities results in destroying the important values of the cultural heritage itself.

Methods

Adapting a traditional house into a homestay begins with analyzing tourist needs. From the analysis it was revealed that tourists' needs apart from housing facilities are also facilities for carrying out local activities and educational facilities. Next, the research stages are carried out as follows: The first stage is selecting and determining the traditional house object that will be adapted into a homestay. The traditional house chosen is *Omah* UGM (Case Study 1) which has been used as a means of education in preserving heritage buildings. However, physically *Omah* UGM still has several spaces and facilities that could potentially be used as a homestay. Next, 3 (three) traditional houses were selected around *Omah* UGM (hereinafter referred to as Case Study houses 2, 3, and 4). The distance between the three houses is within walking distance of *Oma* UGM (50-100 meters) so they can still be managed easily as a cluster. The first or original plans for these four (four) traditional houses buildings were found. The development plan that emerges from the adaptation of Case Study Houses 1-4 must then be identified. This plan is a synthesis of the analysis of capacity or capacity and space requirements. Evaluating the outcomes of the adaptation to the Case Study 1-4 house's architectural significance is the last step. This study evaluates architectural meaning and qualitative descriptive analysis using structuralism, more precisely form-function-meaning.

Results and discussion

Initial Plan of the Case Study House

Case Study House 1

The initial plan of Case Study House 1 (figure 1) shows that the core of the house (*dalem*) is still intact and there are *jogan*, central *senthong*, *kiwa senthong* and *tengen senthong* as well as *pringgitan* at the front. In front of the palace there is a *pendhapa* with a *joglo*-shaped roof. On the left side of the palace there is a *gandhok kiwa* which extends forward to the left side of the *pendhapa*.

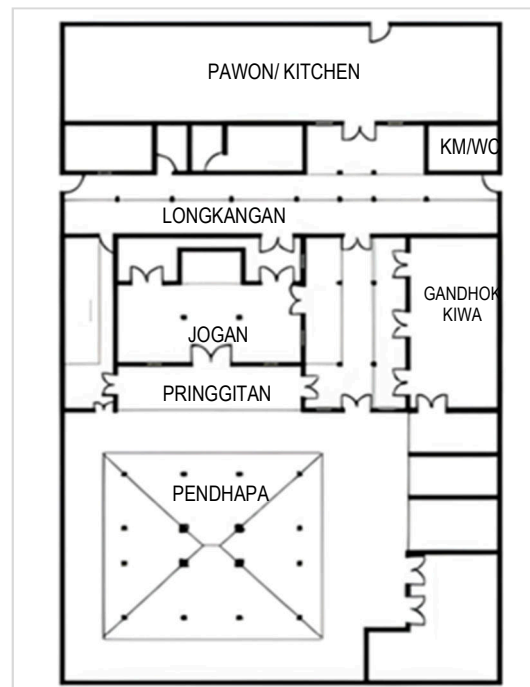


Figure 1. Initial plan case study house 1

Even though its dimensions are relatively small, on the right side of the palace there is a *gandhok tengen*. Behind the palace, there is a kitchen (*pawon*) which is adjacent to the KM/WC (*pekiwan*). Between *Dalem* and *Gandhok Kiwa* and *Pawon* there is *Longkangan*.

Case Study House 2

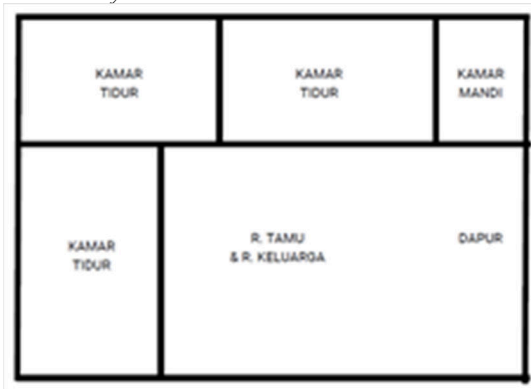


Figure 2. Initial plan case study house 2

The initial plan of Case Study House 2 (figure 2) shows a simple spatial arrangement and is no longer complete compared to the completeness of a traditional house. At the front, there is a Living Room which is also a Family Room adjacent to the kitchen on the left side, and the Bedroom on the right side. At the back, there are 2 bedrooms and a bathroom.

Case Study House 3

As can be observed in figure 3, Case Study House 3's initial plan is composed of two building masses: the front and the back. The building's front mass is fashioned like an L. Three (three) warehouses constitute the row in this building, with a kitchen to the left. There's a hallway that leads to a living room behind the row of warehouses. This front hallway leads to the bathroom and bedroom at the back of the house.

The rear building mass has relatively small dimensions with a simpler spatial arrangement. This building consists of 3 (three) bedrooms connected by a hallway.



Figure 3. Initial plan case study house 3

Case Study House 4

The initial plan of Case Study House 4 (figure 4) shows its completeness as a traditional house. The core part of the house (*dalem*) is still intact and there are *pringgitan* at the front, *jogan*, *senhong tengah*, *kiwa senhong* and *tengen senhong*.



Figure 4. Initial plan case study house 4

On the left and right of the palace, there are *gandhok kiwa* and *gandhok tengen*. Behind the palace, there is a kitchen (*pawon*) and a bathroom (*pekiwan*).

Adaptation results

Adaptation was preceded by an analysis of space requirements established by considering the entire Case Study House as one homestay entity. Therefore, adaptation between one Case Study House and another varies depending on the needs and conditions of each Case Study House.

Case Study House 1

Case Study House 1 was developed into the main building based on the analysis performed. The center of orientation is the interior, which serves as the central point of the home. *Senthong tengen* was converted into a bedroom, and *Senthong kiwa* was turned into an administrative space. A prayer room was created out of the most sacred area, the middle *senthong*. Originally intended to serve as a family room, the *jogan* was converted into a lobby. The palace's left-hand side, *Gandhok Kiwa*, has been converted into three (three) bedrooms.

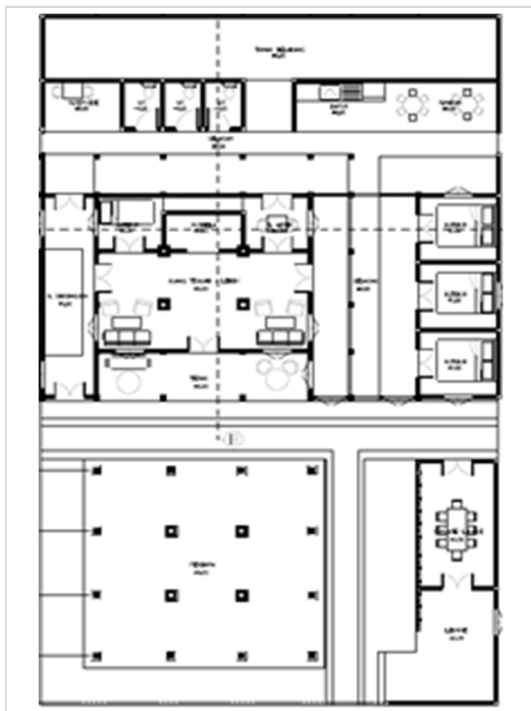


Figure 5. Adapted floor plan case study house 1

The *gandhok kiwa* on the left side of the *pendhapa* has been adapted into a lounge. The kitchen at the rear has been retained and is equipped with a dining area. The *pekiwan* behind the palace is still maintained as a KM/WC (figure 5).

Case Study House 2



Figure 6. Adapted floor plan case study house 2 (1st floor)

Because the meaning of Case Study 2 House was no longer maintained, adaptations were performed relatively more freely. Based on its needs as a tourism object, the Case Study House 2 was adapted into a Batik Workshop Area which is equipped with a bedroom and other supporting facilities such as a bathroom/WC, pantry and facilities to support the batik process. In order to optimize capacity, the adaptation of Case Study 2 House was performed by expanding it in a vertical direction (making it 2 floors) (figures 6 and 7).

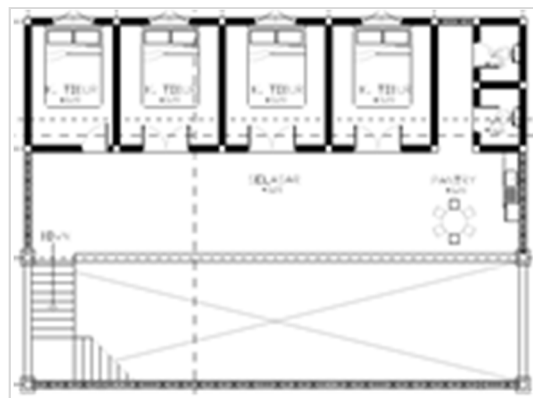


Figure 7. Adapted floor plan case study house 2 (2nd floor)

Case Study House 3

According to the results of the analysis of space requirements, Case Study House 3 was adapted for the main function of a museum and bedroom as well as several supporting rooms such as a bathroom/WC and dining room. Considering the unity aspect, the two building masses are united to form the letter C with a corridor surrounding the central courtyard (figure 8).

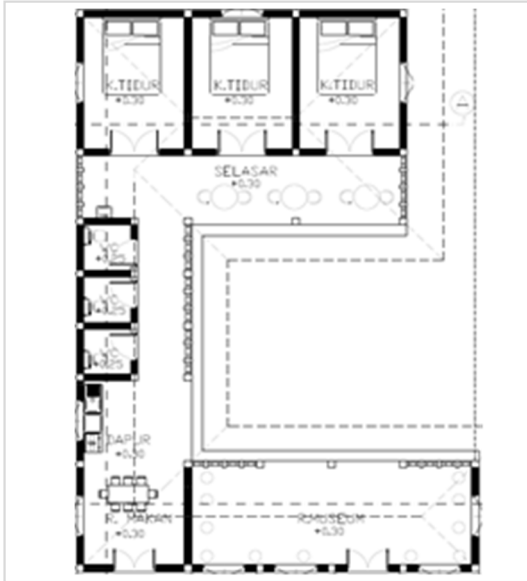


Figure 8. Adapted floor plan case study house 3

Case Study House 4

Case Study House 4 still strictly maintains the meaning of being adapted more carefully.



Figure 9. Adapted floor plan case study house 4

Similar to Case Study House 1, the palace serves as a center for orientation. *Senthong Tengen* was converted into a bedroom, *Senthong Kiwa* into an administration room, and *Jogan* into a lobby area. A prayer room was constructed out of the most sacred area, the middle *senthong*. *Pringgitan* was transformed into a lounging terrace. The *Gandhok Tengen* and *Kiwa* were converted into bedrooms. The area behind the palace serves as a dining room in addition to the kitchen and KM/WC.

Discussion



Figure 10. Aspects in architecture (primary and secondary categories)

Using a structuralism approach, Capon (1999) identified 6 aspects of architecture that can be grouped into 2 categories, which are the primary category (form, function, and meaning) and the secondary category (construction, context, and desire) (figure 10).

These three aspects have a specific relationship and cannot be separated from each other. In architectural works, form aspects and function aspects are attached, then humans interpret the meaning of the function aspects and

form aspects as well as the relationship between the two (figure 11).

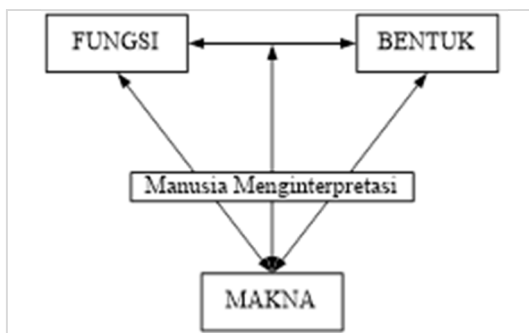


Figure 11. Diagram of the relationship between function, form and meaning in architecture redrawn from (Fauzy 2013)

According to Sumardiyanto's (2016) research, traditional Javanese houses in Kotagede have an architectural significance that prioritizes life safety. Only when Javanese people are able to uphold a harmonious relationship with the numinous unity which is composed of the natural environment, the community environment, and the supernatural will life safety be achieved (Magnis-Suseno 1984). The existence of *jogan*, which is an expression of a harmonious relationship with the natural environment, *emper*, which is an expression of a harmonious relationship with the social environment, and *senhong*, which is an expression of a harmonious relationship with the supernatural, allows for the realization of the numinous unity, which is maintained through an expression of respect. The three parts of the house are at the same time an embodiment of the principles of *hamemayu hayuning Bawana* (duties and roles of Javanese humans in relating to the natural environment), *manunggaling kawula gusti* (duties and roles of Javanese humans in relating to the social environment) and *sangkan paraning dumadi* (Javanese people's attitude to life is associated with the supernatural environment) (Bendung Layung Kuning 2013).

Meaning of Case Study House

Changes in form and function do not necessarily mean complete elimination of meaning because, as Salura and Bachtiar Fauzy (2012) explain, an architectural work will always change in response to changing conditions and new meanings will emerge. This dynamic

relationship between form, function, and meaning is a cycle.

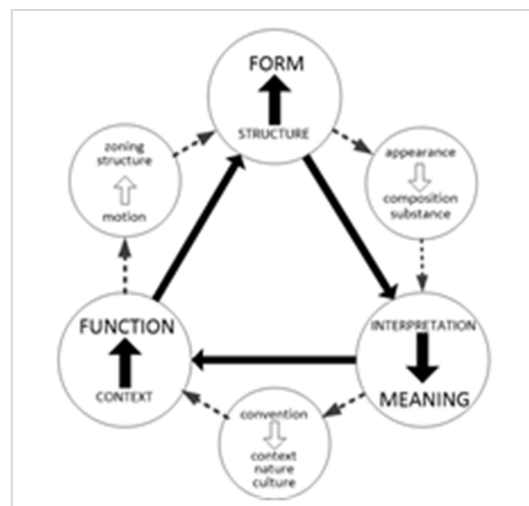


Figure 12. Rotation of the function-form-meaning aspect

Source: (Salura and Bachtiar Fauzy 2012)

Out of the four (four) traditional house buildings that were selected for adaptation, two (two) of the buildings Case Study Houses 1 and 4 have the spatial characteristics of a traditional house, while Case Study Houses 2 and 3 do not. Due to this, only Case Study Houses 1 and 4 were the subject of architectural significance discussions. Regarding Case Study Houses 2 and 3, the focus of the conversation was primarily on their function as a full-service homestay within the framework of a Cultural Heritage Area.

A traditional house was converted into a homestay while maintaining the integrity of its original purpose to accommodate the new use (table 1). The spaces in the inner area have a sacred character (in *senhong kiwa*, *senhong Tengah*, and *senhong tengen*) and semi-private (*jogan*). As for *gandhok*, especially *gandhok kiwa*, it has a semi-public character.

The *pringgitan* which is located in front of the palace has a public character. For instance, the central *senhong* is the most suitable room to serve as a prayer room. Similarly, the *jogan* a family room in a traditional home has been converted into a lobby. From a functional perspective, then, the conversion of a traditional house into a homestay involves relatively controlled changes.

Table 1. Correspondence of initial functional characteristics and adaptation

Function Beginning	Character	Adaptation Function
<i>Jogan</i>	Semi private	Lobby
<i>Senthong Tengah</i>	Sacred	Prayer room
<i>Pringgitan</i>	Public	Terrace
<i>Gandhok Kiwa</i>	Semi public	Lounges

Because the change in function still maintains the character of the original function of a traditional house, this is also followed by changes that occur in the form aspect, which remains under control.

The phenomenon of converting traditional houses to homestays in the Kotagede Cultural Heritage Area forms a cycle and can be explained as follows, based on the rotation of aspects of function - form - meaning (figure 12). The setting shifts from a traditional private home to a more public homestay during the *Diwali* season. Movement, activity and the organization of activity groups (zoning structure) will undoubtedly be impacted by this shift in context. When the purpose of a space changes due to changes in activity, the family room (*jogan*) might become the lobby. Similarly, the *senthong* has evolved into a place of prayer. The structure that generates form, namely space and its extent (form), is altered in the following cycle. The conversion of *senthong* and *gandhok* into bedrooms as seen in Case Study houses 1 and 4 is an example of structural change. Space and its visible scope will have an appearance consisting of a composition. Next, the observer will interpret this display and produce meaning. Furthermore, the meaning of an architectural work is recognized through an agreement (convention) by a certain natural and cultural environment (context, nature, culture). The meaning of traditional houses changes from an expression of seeking safety to a means of survival in the context of their adaptation into homestays in Kotagede.

The cycle of changes in function – form – meaning can be summarized in a table (table 2).

Table 2. Adaptation in the form – function – meaning cycle

Cycle of Change	Initial conditions	Adaptation Result Conditions
Function Change	Residential home	Homestay
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A family gathering • Save the offerings tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting between guests • Pray/prayer
Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jogan</i> • <i>Senthong</i> • <i>Pringgitan</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby • Place of prayer • Lounge
Change of Meaning	Looking for life safety	Means of survival

Conclusions

The initial plans of Case Study Houses 1 and 4, which are relatively complete as traditional houses (there are *dalem* with *jogan* and *senthong kiwa*, *senthong* tengah and *senthong tengen*, as well as *pringgitan* and *pendhapa*) still show their architectural meaning, that is as an expression of seeking life safety through a harmonious relationship with the natural environment, the social environment and supernatural nature. However, the new function as a result of adaptation to becoming a homestay has shifted its meaning no longer as an expression of seeking safety in life but as an expression of survival.

Meanwhile, based on the function, completeness, and spatial arrangement, it can be seen that Case Study Houses 2 and 3 no longer show the characteristics of traditional houses. Thus, it can be concluded that the architectural meaning of Case Study Houses 2 and 3 has not been maintained at all from the start. However, this does not mean that adaptations to Case Study Houses 2 and 3 can be carried out haphazardly because as part of a cultural heritage area efforts must still be made to contribute to the quality of the cultural heritage area (Mahmud and Weishaguna 2015). The adaptation of Case Study Houses 2 and 3 into a Batik Workshop and Museum is also a positive thing because adaptation does not only include physical interventions but must also be accompanied by interventions in other aspects such as socio-cultural and economic (Agustian and Utomo 2023).

According to this study, converting traditional homes into homestays is generally a good attempt to preserve traditional homes, particularly in terms of development and use. Making use of and expanding traditional homes into homestays will undoubtedly create opportunities for fund-raising to support building upkeep and enhance the well-being of the owners. Due to limited maintenance funding, adaptation may be an attempt to break free from the slum phenomenon, even though it carries the risk of changing the definition of a traditional house.

Apart from that, adapting traditional houses into homestays also allows tourists to directly enjoy the cultural and traditional atmosphere offered by living with residents. Apart from that, tourists can also be directly involved in daily activities carried out by the community, for example, batik making. This is expected to have a positive impact on local value education which is sure to be unique.

However, aspects of protection, both physical (through building maintenance) and non-physical (through developing functions that are still following the character of their original function) need to receive balanced attention. Likewise, social relations among local communities must also receive sufficient attention because architecture is essentially an inseparable part of the values that live in everyday social interactions.

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Author(s) contribution

Bonifasius Sumardiyanto contributed to the field measurement, data analysis, article drafting, and visualization.

Cecillia Diani Lelyta Marsonia contributed to the research plan preparation, methodologies, literature review, visualization, data analysis, article drafting and revisions.

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