Revitalization of Cultural Heritage Building: The Tugu Kunstkring Paleis

Polniwati Salimi1*, and Dila Hendrassukma1
1Interior Design Department, School of Design, Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia 11480

Abstract. Indonesia is a country rich in culture inherited from ancestors. Cultural diversity can be seen in the aspect of architectural buildings, namely heritage buildings with historical cultural values that must be passed on by generation. Their sustainability needs to be maintained as not many cultural heritage buildings are left to be found in Indonesia. The research object is the Kunstkring Paleis Monument building, originally established in the 19th-century gallery. This study aims to examine how the revitalization of historical buildings has occurred so far, related to changes in the function of cultural heritage buildings into commercial place that is still ongoing today without any change in architectural form. The research uses existing social exposure that exists with qualitative and descriptive methods. The result of this paper provides knowledge to the public and cultural arts experts, in particular about the adaptive reuse of heritage building space into a new function, as a commercial place. Kunstkring building which has stood for one century, can survive until now because of many preservation efforts made. Researcher figures out that revitalization can still be carried out in the future to preserve this historical and cultural heritage building.

1 Introduction

Indonesia as an archipelagic country with variety of cultures and histories. One of those is an old building which has high historical value because of the important story behind the building. Some old buildings are included in the category of cultural heritage buildings in accordance with the rules stipulated in Undang Undang Nomor 11 of 2010 regarding building benchmarks that can be categorized as cultural heritage buildings in Peraturan Daerah DKI Jakarta No. 9 of 1999 [1].

Because of the historical value of the building, preservation measures are needed so it is not extinct and can remain and be passed on to the next generation. Some ways to preserve historical buildings include restoration, consolidation, reconstruction, adaptive reuse, reconstruction, and replication.

Heritage buildings which are unique landmarks across the city have special cultural significance. However, many of the heritage buildings in lack of proper maintenance management, have become deplorable [2].

Cultural heritage objects in the form of government buildings, trade, city halls, hotels, museums, defensive forts, art galleries and other historical objects that have high architectural value left by the Dutch colonial government, seem to be decreasing year to year [3].

One of the Dutch colonial legacy buildings that still exist now a day is the Kunstkring building which now name to the Tugu Kunstkring Paleis due to the management. The Kunstkring Building which was inaugurated in 1914 is located at the intersection of Cut Meutia street, Wahid Hasyim-Teuku Umar in the Menteng area of central Jakarta, shown at Figure 1 below. This building still has the artistic beauty of the past and has a high historical value.

Fig. 1. Kunstkring building map.

Now a day people know the Kunstkring building which is now called Tugu Kunstkring Paleis as a fine dining restaurant with western and eastern menus, high class venue, wedding hall and art gallery. Behind its existence now, there are many historical journeys since the establishment of this building a century ago.

In the past, beside functioning as a residential area for the European community, the elite Menteng area-built with the idea of a garden city-was also used as a center of commercial activities and legislative government at that time. Figure 2 shows The Kunstkring building in the early of its establishment, located in the elite Menteng area and crossroads.

From the beginning of its establishment, the Kunstkring building has undergone changes in its function in that period until now, which of course will also experience changes in aspects of building elements and socio-economic aspects, but not the structure of existing buildings as historical buildings.
The study of adaptive use of Kunstkring in the form of revitalization during this century-long period as an effort to preserve cultural heritage buildings will be discussed in this paper. The impact of this research for society and researcher is spreading insight about how the function of heritage building has changed from a period of one century ago to the present without leaving the main structure and history of the building.

Fig. 2. Kunstkring building located in Menteng in 1914.

1.1 Problem statement

The problem stated here is that now a days generation does not understand how the historical value contained in a Kunstkring building that has stood for a century. How the journey to preserve that cultural heritage building that once was originally a gallery and experienced a conversion until now become a commercial building and useful to society.

What kind of preservation actions can be taken in the future is a challenge for the Indonesian people in order not to reduce the heritage of historical buildings.

1.2 Research objective

The goal to be achieved in this research is to provide knowledge to the public about how the historic building of the Kunstkring building can survive for a century until today. Actions of change and preservation in accordance with applicable regulations need to be discussed and studied for the sustainability of historical building in the future.

2 Literature review

Heritage comes in many shapes—in tangible forms such as sites, buildings, landscapes, or as intangibles, like memories, emotions, values and customs—as does the use of heritage, ranging from the purpose of building nations to marketing places. The use of heritage occurs in different arenas and takes on significance as a vehicle for political, cultural and entrepreneurial purposes, as well as educational [4].

Cultural heritage is “that part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes, be they economic, cultural, political, or social.” UNESCO defines cultural heritage as “the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations” [5].

Cultural heritages play a strong role in both economic and social life even though the majority remains informal, without public protection and without explicit management as they are the main institutions that connect history, territory, and society, defining the cultural context of social life [6].

A building can be considered to be a cultural heritage building through government determination process provided that the building is fifty years old or more, has special meaning for history, science, education, religion and culture, has cultural value for strengthening the nation's personality [1].

Revitalization is an effort to preserve cultural heritage buildings in order to regenerate important values by adjusting the function of new spaces that do not conflict with the principles of preservation and cultural values of the community [7].

The Menteng area was the first garden city in Indonesia in the 1920s, there was Ir. Bharlage a Dutch architect shop who called Menteng a European neighborhood because it was similar to Minervalaan, an elite area in Amsterdam which was one-twentieth the size of Menteng [8].

In 1902 art lovers in Batavia founded the Nederlandsch-Indische Kunstkring or Dutch Fine Arts Group. Kunstkring stands on the spark of personal initiative to promote the enthusiasm for the practice of fine arts, decorative arts, paintings, textile and porcelain crafts, music, architecture, and dance. Kunstkring membership is limited to influential Europeans and Indonesians only [9].

3 Method

To achieve an appropriate result, this study will use observations, hypothesis that will also be supported by some theories about revitalization, heritage building and culture preservation. Qualitative research methods used to emphasise the study process. Theoretical support will also be provided as a background review of the research due to the limitation of sources. Main subject for study case will be observed gradually.

Some steps of collecting data used in this research are essential data collection which researchers take from books, journals, articles and other different references identified with the field of cultural preservation, heritage building, Kunstkring building and Tugu Kunstkring Paleis.

From the first data collection, the author will take some documentation which is a method of research and planning that emphasizes the visual parts of the study object. Documentation will be provided by the web and on site.

Researchers narrow the scope of research only on the timeline of changes in the function of cultural heritage buildings: Tugu Kunstkring.

4 Result and discussion
4.1 Conservation and revitalization

The usage of cultural heritage buildings in the context of cultural heritage utilization cannot be separated from their conservation and preservation efforts. Those efforts must be carried out in a sustainable manner, so that they can provide the greatest benefit to the community and environment as well, besides that it can be inherited and learned by the next generation.

Conservation is the action taken to prevent damage to a building, prolonging the life of an old building. The conservation process itself must not cause damage, destroy or eliminate historical evidence [10].

There are several types of conservation of heritage buildings carried out by cultural and historical expertise:

- **Preservation**: the activity of maintaining the building as it is by not adding or sub tracing the physical aspect, just only maintaining the current condition.
- **Restoration**: the return of cultural heritage buildings to their original state of development.
- **Consolidation**: the effort to maintain the building architecture by doing additional reinforcement to the building structure.
- **Reconstruction**: rebuilding the collapsed heritage building.
- **Adaptive-use**: redevelopment of cultural heritage buildings adding some new functions, mostly in space changing, often called revitalization.
- **Replication**: the process of making twins using new construction.

The revitalization process is to put appropriate new functions into the heritage building in order to rising and funding the building itself. Therefore, it is the commercial function that is included, an effective way for the building to have its own costs. Not demanding drastic changes but only minor changes. Today many people are using heritage buildings as commercial places such as restaurants, art galleries, and showrooms.

4.1 Cultural heritage preservation

The object of this research is Tugu Kunstkring Paleis located on Jalan Teuku Umar no 1, Gondangdia, Menteng, Central Jakarta. The Grand historical building originally housed the Fine Arts Circle of the Dutch East Indies and was opened on April 17th, 1914 featuring various creative arts between 1934 and 1939 as well as world class masterpieces of Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Paul Gaugin and others [11]. Figure 3 shows the Kunstkring building in the past era, in 1914.

The Kunstkring building where architects of the early 20th century often gathered and discussed. The building is marked as the beginning of modern architecture in Indonesia [8].

Kunstkring building is an old Dutch heritage building whose initial ownership was by the Nederlandsch Indische Kunstkring which is a group of Dutch artists and culturalists. This building has been standing since 1914. The building was made possible through the donation of the land by one of the construction companies that participated in building the Menteng Residential Area.

The building housed the Kunstkring until 1942 before it functioned as the head office of Majelis Islam A’la Indonesia (High Islamic Council of Indonesia) and after Independence in 1945, it was used as the Immigration Office for Central Jakarta. In 1997, the building was sold to private sector. It was left neglected and thus stripped by robbers. All shutters and doors were stolen [8]. The window frames and stairs were removed, taken to the black market.

In 2003, on the order of the then-Governor the government bought back the building. The facade of the building was restored gradually, although without clear parameters. Many of the structural and decorative elements of the building were randomly replaced, while the looted parts remained missing.

The change of the ground floor to a private bar produced controversy. In 2008, it was uncovered that the building was getting to house an elite club owned by a universal establishment chain from Paris, the Buddha Bar. Figure 4 shows the Buddha Bar ambiance that generated public controversy at that time.

In 2011, the owners redesigned the concept of the building. The upper floor of the building was converted into an art gallery, similar with the previous use of the building, while the lower floor was converted into a restaurant with an architecture that is similar in language with old Batavian architecture [12].

In April 2013, the building was reopened as Tugu Kunstkring Paleis. Understanding the original purpose of Kunstkring as a centre of art and culture, Tugu Group reinstated its function opening the second floor as a gallery to exhibit creations from Indonesian artists. Despite most of the rooms and the main hall on the first floor have been turned into a fine dining restaurant, it is decorated with numerous art collections and antiques embodying the art, soul, and romance of Indonesia.
room is also dedicated to Raden Saleh, one of the pioneer of Indonesian romantic painter.

Kunstrink building now a day become Tugu Kunstkring Paleis which considered as heritage building according to Undang Undang nomor 11 tahun 2010 [1] had passed through a long period of changing, as shown in Figure 5.

![Kunstrink building timeline](image)

**Fig. 5. Kunstrink building timeline.**

4.2 Tugu Kunstkring Paleis

The Tugu Kunstrking now is a proud centre of art exhibition where people give high appreciation to the beauty of arts and history. Without changing the architectural building, as part of revitalization rules, Tugu Kunstkring Paleis adds many functional rooms. Additional function as part of revitalization can be seen through the fine restaurant, a grand elegant lounge shows in figure below, as well as tea house, shop that features of beautiful artwork, jewels and other design items.

![Pangeran Diponegoro Hall](image)

**Fig. 6. Pangeran Diponegoro Hall.**

There is Pangeran Diponegoro Hall shows in Figure 6 which is a magnificent hall with high ceilings and big capacity of people, furnished with long beautiful wooden table decorated with flowers, candles and elegant white linens. The painting of The Fall of Java was shown in the center of this hall, showing the capture of Prince Diponegoro on March 1830. This is the third painting in the world that’s portrays one of the most iconic events in Indonesia’s history.

The addition of new functions in the Kunstrking building can be seen in the creation of private rooms that still provide historical value, namely Raden Saleh Room, Soekarno1950 room, Colonial Rijsttafel Room, Multatuli Room. Not mention art space and performance gallery hall, coffee corner, lounge, tea house, shop that features of beautiful artwork, jewels and other design items. Some of the interior of Kunstrking building after gone through revitalization from the government shown below, Figures 7 to 11.

![Art space and performing gallery hall](image)

**Fig. 7. Art space and performing gallery hall.**

![The gallery dining](image)

**Fig. 8. The gallery dining.**

What about restaurants that use cultural heritage buildings? Listed buildings limit the restaurant’s rights to the architectural changes of the building. A restaurant that uses listed building can be commercially unique and have important role because the building itself has historical, science, education, religion, and /or cultural value through a process of preservation [13]. Just like Figure 8 shown, unique dining room collaborate with gallery where guests can enjoy the cuisine in the artsy atmosphere filled with selection of fine art and artistic item.
Figure 9 shows a room that is inspired by the famous royal dish “Rijsttafel” (a Dutch word that literally translates as “rice-table”), a celebratory meal performed for and adopted by the Dutch. Therefore, it is named Colonial Rijsttafel room, the room that has Dutch colonial history from the past century.

Rijsttafel itself is the concept of food serving by many waiters who bring one food each and served marathon. Guests can take their own dishes from the dishes brought by the waiter one after another until it can reach forty kinds of food [14]. This room has seating capacity of eight guests.

Figure 10 shows a bread and coffee corner.

Figure 11 shows a gallery shop.

In line with its original mission to promote beautiful arts in the city of Jakarta, Tugu Kunstkring Paleis returns the original function as a vibrant art centre that celebrates creativity by dedicate area to be a very unique art and exhibition space.

In accordance with the rules of the concept of revitalization, where there is no change in architectural of the historic building, so is Tugu Kunstring Paleis.

Maintaining the original look of Kunstkring building. However, to give the impression of grandeur and luxury, some lighting treatment is very necessary. Architects and historical culture expertise also considers about the lighting aspect.

Subtle external lighting, when designed with caution and sensitivity, can bring life and additional space to landmarks. This is an extension for architecture, enhancing the quality of views and perfecting the shape of the structure, colour and shape of the building [15].

Figure 12 shows the façade of Kunstkring building in the evening where the lighting gives a majestic impression to the architecture of the building.

The Tugu Kunstkring Paleis is a cultural heritage building rich in details and elements that characterize the *indische* empire style. The choice of artificial lighting colors as well as armature types will greatly affect the visualization of building elements, especially the front view [16]. The use of artificial lighting in visualizing architectural elements in buildings will increase aesthetic value as a building that undergoes revitalization to support its commercial value function.

The initial function of this building was art centre and exhibition space. This building has neo-classical, art deco and a bit of art nouveau style. It can be seen from the symmetric facade and rhythmic elements. The facade has several architectural elements such as arc-canopy, pilasters, glazed doors and windows, and ornaments like balcony, fabric canopy, and yellow small tiles on the wall [17].

5 Conclusion

Cultural heritage buildings are ancestral heritage that must be preserved. Experiencing ups and downs in maintaining, preserving, and also the management aspect, the Tugu Kunstkring Paleis which was originally named Kunstkring Art Gallery was able to stand for 109 years and still survives today.

From the research conducted, it was found that several periods lasted from its establishment to the present with development and transfer efforts that changed from time to time. The management of the building, which was originally an art gallery and had...
become an immigration office, is also a strong issue related to the preservation of cultural heritage whose ownership is owned by the government and leased to private parties with historical and cultural art backgrounds. The building’s functions back to the original as art galleries and restaurants as additional functions.

Finally, researchers hope that this revitalization history can open people's insights and awareness to continue the sustainability of preserving buildings by working hand in hand to contribute between the private sector and the government considering that there are not many more cultural heritage buildings from time to time if Indonesians people do not care about it.

Similarly, this paper can be the reference for researchers who will write about the revitalization of cultural heritage buildings, considering on this modern and advanced era people needs knowledge in research that reopening insight about heritage buildings from many aspects, for example the furniture material, the style or the decoration left for the sustainability building and others.

References

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