International Conference of Innovation in Media & Visual Design

IMDES Conference Proceedings
Universitas Multimedia Nusantara
11th-12th November 2020

# Which is The Main Concept of Old-Banten Area Development, to be A Cultural Heritage or Not?

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.31937/imdes.v1i1.1119

**Abstract:** Old Banten Area is historical tourism in Indonesia with tangible cultural heritage. It was the Banten Sultanate center that ever has the largest settlement and monopolized the trade in Southeast Asia. In 2017 Old-Banten set as a strategic provincial tourism area that excelled in the cultural sector. The program has taken the implementation progress then even get criticized by several parties which one of them written by the Chairman of IAI Banten. The development process has shown the characteristics transformation as opposite with the revitalization term. Based on those critics, the research overviews the characteristics of Old-Banten Area as a cultural heritage and the current cultural tourism development process through interpretive-historical method. The results might be used as an initial framework to understand the importance of place identities preserved in the concept of Old-Banten Area development.

**Keywords**: Old-Banten Area, Characteristics, Cultural Heritage

## 1. Introduction

Old Banten area is historical tourism in Indonesia with tangible cultural heritage that allows people to explore and get experience about the others way of life that reflects their customs, religious traditions, and intellectual ideas contained (Borley in Astiti, 2016). Banten Sultanate was one of the largest coastal settlements in the Malay Archipelago in the middle of the 2nd millennium and ever monopolized the trade of corps and natural resources in Southeast Asia. At that time, markets and ports were crowded places with various kinds of goods from China, Gujarat, Bengali, India, Persia, and overseas (www.iseas.edu.sg).

In the RPJMN IV of 2020-2024, one of the presidential strategies programs is increasing the promotion and preserving culture to strengthen the national character and identity, improve the welfare, and influence cultural development. Before those briefs, in Banten Provincial Regulation No.5 of 2017, Old-Banten set as a strategic provincial tourism area that excelled

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in the cultural sector. As area supported, Karangantu has developed along as an archipelago fishing port during 2015-2030. In other words, Banten Provincial government has been implementing the Old-Banten Area revitalization process.

However, the progress has get criticized by several parties which one of them written by the Chairman of IAI Banten. According to the opinion, Old-Banten heritages at least consists of three historical facts: (1) the center of Islamic civilization, (2) Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic acculturated culture, and (3) a port city as a relic of international trade. The composition and spatial structure transformation in the Old-Banten Area development and construction was quite the opposite with the revitalization terms. It could even threaten the historical and cultural values (Syuhada, 2018).

Based on the critics, the paper compares relations between the Old-Banten Area as a cultural heritage and the cultural tourism program development. The focus of this paper is to inquiry Old-Banten Area development concept and delivers the transformation look like through historical facts and spatial mapping. The results might be used as an initial framework to understand the importance of place identities preservation in the concept of Old-Banten Area development.

## 2. Methods

The paper discusses the Old-Banten area as a cultural heritage and the current cultural tourism development process through interpretive-historical method. Set of historical facts presented to provide an overview of Old-Banten spatial understanding. As the research scope, a few of Banten heritage elements were discussed to define spatial and physical characteristics. The research also reviewed and reinterpreted some literature into mapping based as a complementary.

## 3. Old-Banten Area Based on Administrative System

Old-Banten Area is a historic place that once becomes a political power center of Banten Sultanate. Since the Dutch Indies period, the Old-Banten administratively become a subregion in the Banten Residency. The Old-Banten Area was part of West Java Province after the Republic of Indonesian independence. But then in 2000, Banten Province formed as separated to West Java.

According to Thresnawaty (2009), Banten had been suspected of establishing at least in the middle of the $10^{th}$ or even $7^{th}$ century. At an early age, Banten is a Hindu-Buddhist settlement. Until the beginning of 16th century, Banten turns to be a territory of the Sunda Kingdom which is known as Pajajaran, with the area included all of Banten, Kalapa (Jakarta), Bogor to Cirebon, Tegal, Banyumas to Kali Pamali (Cipamali) and Kali Serayu (Ekadjati, 1983: 19). Based on De Graaf, 1974: 120 in The National Research Centre of Archaeology script (1998), in the 16th century, the central government of Banten Sultanate, which was

originally in Banten Girang, was moved to the town of Surasowan on the coast. This shift was intended to facilitate the connection between the north coast of Java with Sumatra's coast.

According to Pamungkas in historia.id (2019), in 1678, there was a conflict between Banten Sultanate and Batavia. Furthermore, there was an internal conflict in the Banten Sultanate that used by VOC as an opportunity to control Banten in 1682. In 1816, the Dutch East Indies government formed the Banten Residency and divided into three regencies: Serang, Lebak and Caringin. The descendants of the sultan were positioned as a Regent (resident assistant) in Serang regency with the Kaibon Palace as the regional center (Regional Secretariat of Banten Province, 2018). But then in 1832 the Banten Last Palace cannoned by the Dutch Indies governors then the center of Serang Regency has moved (BPCB Banten in budaya.kemdikbud.go.id, 2014).

The Old-Banten Area was part of West Java Province after the Republic of Indonesian independence. But then in 2000, Banten Province detached to West Java. Meanwhile, Old-Banten has still listed as one of the districts in the Serang sub-regency. In 2007, Serang city reformed as Serang regency separated that also caused a part of the Old-Banten area has administratively divided (Regional Secretariat of Banten Province, 2018).

## 4. Place Identities of Old-Banten Area as a Cultural Heritage

Stated in the Republic of Indonesia Law no.11 (2010), there are five kinds of Cultural Heritage includes Object, Building, Structure, Site, and Urban and or Landscape Heritage on land and or on the water that has important value to preserved for history, science, education, religion, and or culture through the determination process. However, based on worldheritage.org, the Old Banten Area registered as Banten Ancient City was a tentative list of the World Heritage Site in 1995 but then delisted in 2015.

As stated on cagarbudaya.kemdikbud.id, since Law no. 11 in 2010 legitimated, Old Banten Area has not registered as National Cultural Heritage yet. The area components, both objects, buildings, and sites, have been gradually registered as progress. *“Soon after the nationally recognized, perhaps the Old-Banten could be a World Heritage Site”* (Kemdikbud in mediabanten.com, 2019).

In 1999, UNESCO adopted the International Cultural Tourism to advocate sustainable tourism that protects heritage resources for future generations. Tourism developments and infrastructure projects should take account of local architectural styles and vernacular traditions. In 2005, Vienna Memorandum defined the historic urban landscape beyond the notions of historic centers, ensembles, surroundings to include the broader territorial and landscape context. The cultural heritage character-defining elements at least consists of land use and pattern, spatial organization, visual relationships, topography and soils, vegetation and all elements of technical infrastructure (van Oers, 2010).

Banten Sultanate was one of the largest coastal settlements in the Malay Archipelago in the middle of the 2nd millennium and ever monopolized the trade of corps and natural resources in Southeast Asia (www.iseas.edu.sg). The vital functions area and the perimeter elements in the Banten Sultanate's golden age have defined unique spatial characters. As an overview, the Old-Banten heritage elements that have tight relations with the current development list in the following table:

*Table 1. The Elements of Old-Banten Area*

| | Site Elements | **Build On (Year)** | **Source** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Cibanten River and Canals | - | Michrob and Chudari, 1993 |
| 2. | Ports and Markets | Before 16th AC | Guillot, 2008 & Yakin, 2014 |
| 3. | Banten Grand Mosque (BGM) and the *Alun-alun* Public Space | 1552-1570 | Thresnawaty, 2009 |
| 4. | Surosowan Royal Palace | 1552-1570 | Thresnawaty, 2009 |
| 5. | Tasikardi Lake and "Pengindelan" Filtration System | 1570-1580 | BPCB Banten, 2014 |
| 6. | Minaret & Tiyamah Building around BGM | 1660-1678 | Michrob and Chudari, 1993 |
| 7. | Speelwijk Fortress | 1816 | BPCB Banten, 2014 |
| 8. | Kaibon Second Palace | 1809-1815 | BPCB Banten, 2014 |
| 9. | The Great Post Way | 1808 | Kampherbeek, 2015 |
| 10. | Railway | 1896 | Kereta Api Anak Bangsa, 2016 |

*(Source: Analysis, 2020)*

## *4.1 16th - 18th Centuries: City Development during Banten Sultanate Era*




*Figure 1. Banten in the 17th century. A bustling port city, with the palace on the left side of the background (www.warwickaseanconference.net)*

Banten Sultanate was one of the largest coastal settlements in the Malay Archipelago in the middle of the 2nd millennium and ever monopolized the trade of corps and natural resources in Southeast Asian. (www.iseas.edu.sg). Yakin (2014) explained the Dutch sent expeditionary troops led by Cornelis de Houtman to explore the archipelago. Landed on Banten in 1596, Cornelis de Houtman described Banten as *Amsterdam van Java*, with the economic success in pepper and rice trade, invited Europeans and Asians to look for the fortune. At that time, markets and ports were crowded places with various kinds of goods from China, Gujarat, Bengali, India, Persia, and overseas (www.iseas.edu.sg). According to French historian Claude Guillot, the golden and glory peak of Banten was in the governments' economical and political policies.

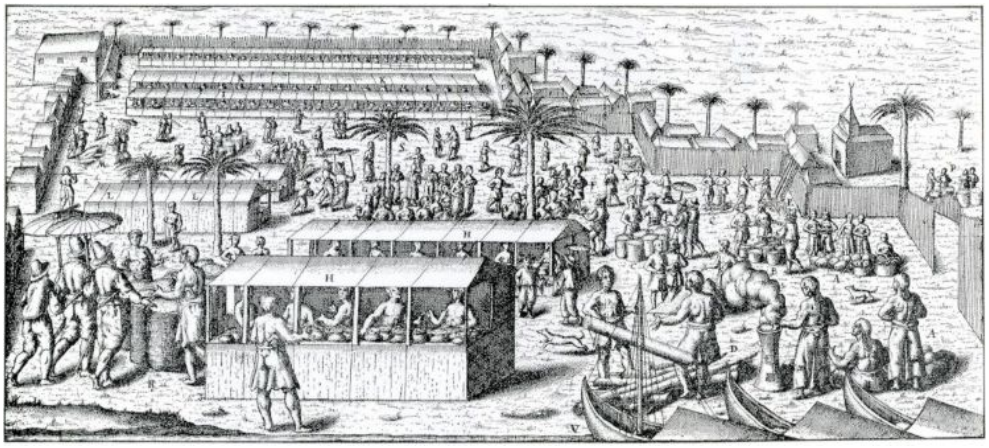

*Figure 2. A market situation in Banten, 1598 (John Guy on jalurrempah.kompas.id)*

Guillot (2008) describes that Banten has a large berth in the bay area. There were two important ports in Banten near the two streams of the Cibanten river; international port at the west and a regional port named Karangantu. Banten-Old Area is located between the two streams, which form a delta. A stream flowed in the delta, united the two other streams. Michrob and Chudari (1993) narrated the Cibanten river stream down in the middle of the Old Banten area that ships, junks, and gales sail across. There was also a streamlet surround the city that only gales sail over.

Michrob and Chudari (1993), stated that the physical development of the Old Banten area was initiated in 1525. At the time of moving the center of the Banten government to the coast, Syarif Hidayatullah determined the position of the palace, market, and the *Alun-alun* public space which had to be built near Cibanten river. The development of the area was constructed during the leadership of Maulana Hasanuddin (1552-1570) by building the Surosowan palace complex called *Gedong Kedaton Pakuwon* and mosques. Guillot (2008) describe the palace as a Traditional Javanese Palace Architectural Style with a *pendopo,* gazebo with four pillars spaced 40 feet from each other used as a public hall.

The complex of Banten Grand Mosque is a Javanese, Chinese and Dutch acculturated architectural styles. The Banten Grand Mosque is a worship place that almost rectangular shaped and wooden log constructed. The roof resembles a tower, consists of five

overlapping levels. The first roof exceeds the place of worship widen. The next roofs get smaller and pointed at the very top. According to Michrob and Chudari (1993), at the next development, Hendrik Lucasz Cardeel, built a minaret and *tiyamah* meeting hall around the Banten Grand Mosque to support government, security and education center.



*Figure 3. Left: Banten Grand Mosque, 1882-1889; Right: Tasikardi Lake, 1933 (Source : collectie.wereldculturen.nl)*

Guillot (2008) said two complementary attributes in the Javanese Palace precisely the *krapyak* zoo and the *taman sari* park. In Banten, the *taman sari* park is referred to as *Kebon Alas* (wild garden) in the middle of the Tasikardi Lake. BPCB Banten in budaya.kemdikbud.go.id (2014) mentioned that Maulana Yusuf (1570-1580) built a 6.5 ha artificial dam, named Tasikardi Lake that was used as a reservoir to holds water from the Cibanten River to flow to the rice fields and the Surosowan Royal Palace for daily needs. Water purification carried out using a unique and complex water filtration system, which was called *pengindelan. Pengindelan* was a bunker-like building to filter the water.

According to Michrob and Chudari (1993), two stone bridges were built, to the north and the east of the palace to cross from the king's city to the Karangantu market. The bridge is known as the *Rante* chain bridge (Isnaeni in historia.id, 2012). In early 1677 Cakradana constructed the zigzag shape fortress around the Old-Banten, built on sand. *"In the middle of the 16th century, Banten is the only city in the archipelago has a brick fortress that surrounds the king's city",* wrote Guillot. This unique fortress could last for more than a century.

In the Banten Sultanate Era, the islamic government centralized in the Banten Grand Mosque and Surosowan Royal Palace area. River and canals become the primary transportation infrastructure for both trade-commodities and people. The settlement attends to follow the structure of the waterway and is divided into an ethnical kampong system. The spatial structure on the area of Banten sultanate interpreted as picture follows.

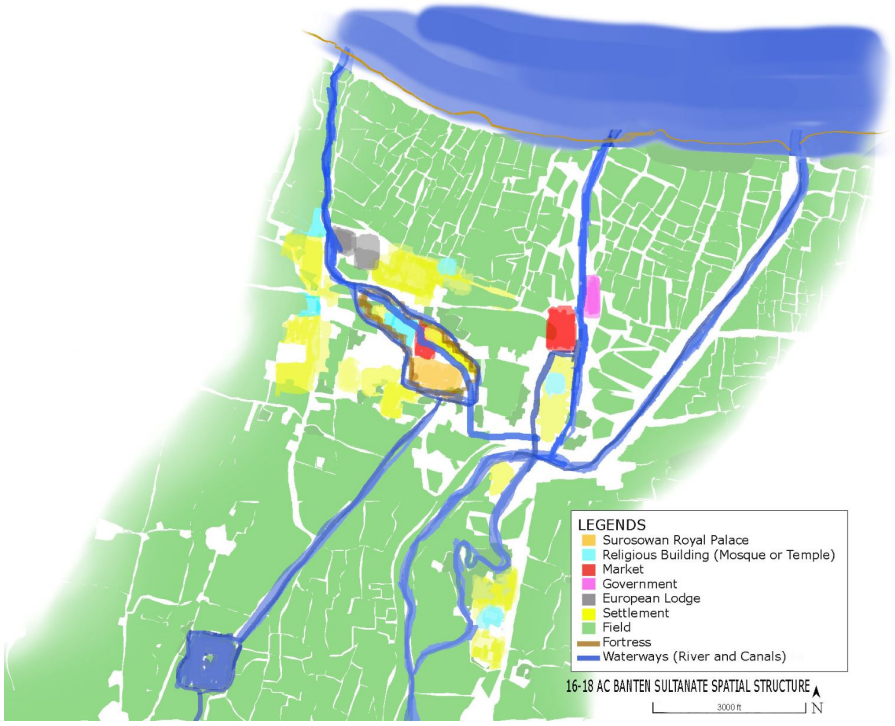


*Figure 4. Old-Banten Area Spatial Structure in the Banten Sultanate Era*
*Source: De Bry (1599) traced on google maps, reinterpreted by the Author (2020)*

## *4.2 19th century: Old Banten Area under VOC Reign*

The up and down of trade during the Banten Sultanate were closely related to the existence of the VOC *(Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie)* Dutch Company in Jayakarta since 1610. At that time, the Sultans of Banten was often opposed to the VOC regarding trade interests, so they were very strict in determining the policies (Yakin, 2014).

In 1808, Daendels, the Governor-General of VOC Dutch East Indies, rearranged the public administration infrastructure, both in Batavia and over the East Indies, and then planned the construction of *De Groote Postweg* The Anyer-Panarukan Great Post Way project. The construction plan of The Great Post Way caused a conflict between the Banten Sultanate and the Dutch East Indies, ended up with the Surosowan destroyed (Marihandono, 2008).




*Figure 5. De Groote Postweg / The Great Post Way (Kampherbeek, 2015 in www.erickampherbeek.nl)*

Around 1809-1815, Sultan Syafiuddin established the Kaibon Palace in Kroya Village, about 500 meters southeast of the Surosowan Royal Palace, that passed by The Great Post Way.

Cibanten river streams down on the south side. Kaibon name came from the word of *ka-ibu-an* (mother-like) built for the Sultan's mother, Queen Aisyah, who hold the government in a while because when Sultan Syafiuddin died, his son as a successor was only five months old. (BPCB Banten in Budaya.kemdikbud.go.id, 2014). In 1832, the Kaibon Palace cannoned by the Dutch governors, only the building foundation and the left side of entrance left (BPCB Banten in budaya.kemdikbud.go.id, 2014). The Dutch governors also built a fortress near the Karangantu market, constructed by Cardeel (Michrob and Chudari, 1993).

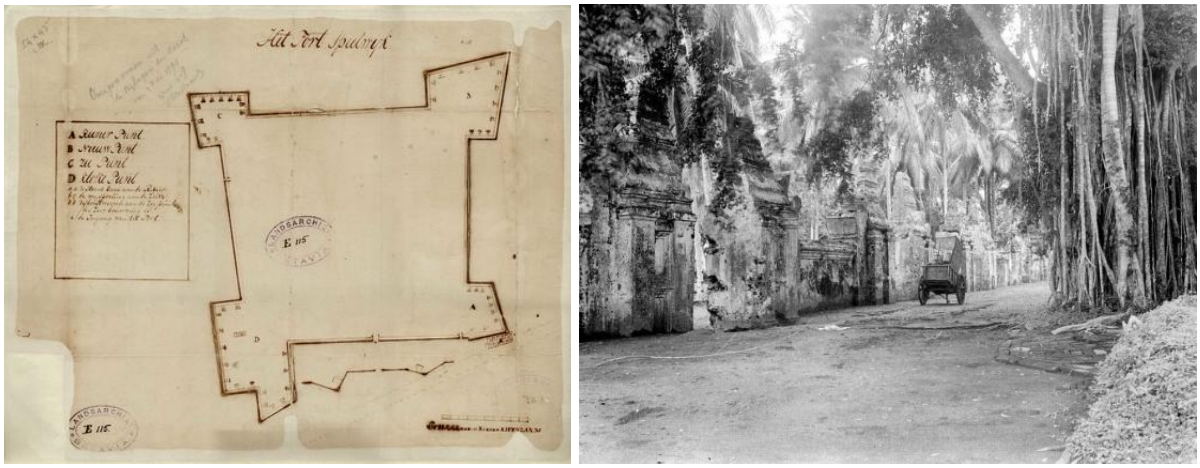

*Figure 6. Left: Speelwijk Fortress Plan, 1790-1965 (Source: www.bantenprov.go.id)*
*Right: The Ruin of Keraton Kaibon Second Palace, 1933 (Source : collectie.wereldculturen.nl)*

Then in 1896, VOC constructed a railway from Batavia to Rangkas Bitung-Cilegon-Anyer Kidul as a commodities transportation system. One of the stations was Karangantu station, near the Karangantu market (Kereta Api Anak Bangsa, 2016).

The ruin of Banten Sultanate Palaces both of Surosowan and Kaibon strengthens VOC politics. The ruin also influences the canals structure system, especially toward Tasikardi Lake. Tasikardi Lake and its *Pengindelan* filtration system are no longer used as a water reservoir. Furthermore, the construction of The Great Post Way and the railway slowly replace the maritime culture. These become the primary transportation infrastructure to move trade-commodities and people, replace the river and all its canals. The Great Post Way passed the Dutch lodges in the north of the Old-Banten area.

The Banten Recidency formation and the movement of Residencial government central influenced the Old-Banten area. The inhabitants around gradually abandoned the kampongs. The Old-Banten area could be considered as a lodge terminal located between Batavia as the central government and Merak Port in Anyer that is linked by The Great Post Way. As the effects, the Karangantu market and port decreased its function from serving international needs before to the regional needs. The river and canals used as a fishing boat route, no more intensely used. The Old-Banten area slowly becomes a historical city to the pilgrims. The spatial structure on the VOC reign is interpreted as picture below.

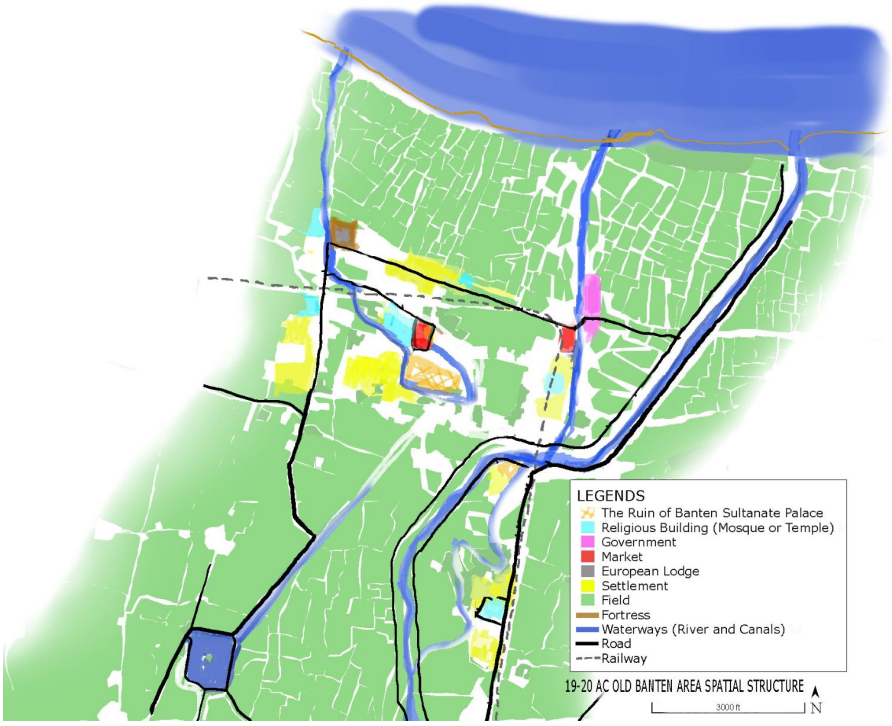


*Figure 7. Old-Banten Area Spatial Structure in the Dutch Indies Period*
*Source: The National Research Center of Archaeology (1998) traced on google maps, reinterpreted by the Author (2020)*

## 6. The Development of Old Banten Area as a Cultural Tourism

In the RPJMN IV of 2020-2024, one of the presidential strategies programs is increasing the promotion and preserving culture to strengthen the national character and identity, improve the welfare, and influence cultural development. By those briefs, in Banten Provincial Regulation No.5 of 2017, Old-Banten Area set as a strategic provincial tourism area that excelled in the cultural sector. As areas supported, Karangantu was developed along as an archipelago fishing port during 2015-2030. In the provincial plan, during 2011-2030 Old-Banten developed to be a cultural tourism area.

According to detakbanten.com (2018), the revitalization of the Old-Banten Area had held under Serang Regency then transferred to Banten provincial government as recommended by The Ministry of Education and Culture. Referred to the Law no. 11 in 2010, revitalization is a development activity aiming to regenerate the important values of the Cultural Heritage by adjusting the new spatial functions in line with the principles of preservation and cultural values of society. Currently, Banten Provincial government has been implementing the Old-Banten Area revitalization process and even has get criticized because of preservation concept misunderstanding.

Regarding the Old-Banten elements and physical characteristics, as the figure 8 shown, the development program has taken the following steps:

1. Informal sector relocation and the landscape construction of the *Alun-alun* public space around the Banten Grand Mosque (www.faktabanten.co.id, 2018 & www.rmco.id, 2019)
2. Site preparation and land clearing for Sukadiri terminal and Old Banten New Market (www.detakbanten.com, 2018)
3. The dredging and construction of a canal around the Surosowan Royal Palace (pembangunan.dpupr.org)



*Figure 8. Up Left: Alun-Alun Landscape (Source: Bangkit, 2019 on google maps);*
*Down Left: Informal Sector Relocation (Source: www.faktabanten.co.id);*
*Up Right: Sukadiri Terminal Site Preparation (Source: www.detakbanten.com);*
*Down Right: Canal Dredging and Construction (Source: www.pembangunan.dpupr.org)*

The most criticized physical construction was *Alun-alun* landscape. *Alun-alun* had been used as a temporal place to accommodate various functions during the Banten Sultanate era. *Alun-alun* located in the east of Banten Grand Mosque complex which has Javanese, Chinese, and Dutch acculturated architectural style. According to Syuhada (2018), now *Alun-alun* is decorated with a non-historic element that contradicts the Banten heritages. The granite pavement and the umbrella-like columns are prominently visible. Those elements precisely represent the characters of the Nabawi mosque in the middle-east. The design tends to eliminate the physical characters of Banten heritage.

The development also might affect the spatial character of the Old-Banten through the following plan:

1. The relocation discourse of Karangantu market (tangerangexpres.co.id, 2019)
2. The tourism-support area landscape design in Kasunyatan Village and the new roads construction plan (Agung, 2018)

Until the early year of 2020, the Karangantu market relocation plan has rejected by the community and the Serang City DPRD Regional Government (setdprd.serangkota.go.id, 2020).




*Figure 9. Left: New Road Planning; Right: Tourism Support Area Design (Source: Agung, 2018)*

The spatial design and plan at least consist of support-tourism area design, and a new construction road plan. The government tends to revitalize the Old-Banten area, but actually, the development progress would threaten the spatial structure of Old-Banten city (Syuhada, 2018). Instead, the potential vital elements like the waterway transportation route, Karangantu port and market, and the Tasikardi Lake did not get special treatment yet. Those spatial elements were potentially define the Old-Banten characters to enhance the historical and cultural values. The development even transform the Old-Banten spatial structure to the new one as interpreted in figure 11.

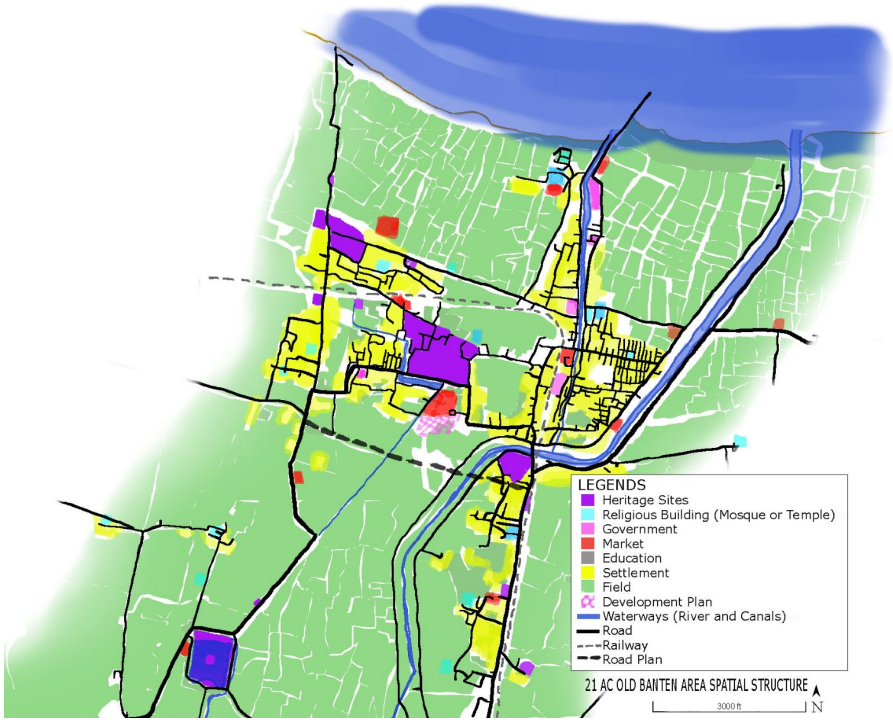


*Figure 10. The Current Development of Old Banten Area Spatial Structure.*
*Source: Agung (2018) and google maps, reinterpreted by the Author (2020).*

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Old-Banten Area development program mainly focuses on physical construction. The new functions development would threaten the spatial structure of Old-Banten Area. Instead, the vital elements did not get special attention yet. As a revitalization-term contradictive, these policies even might transform the Old-Banten spatial structure to the new one. The question to ask, *"Which is the main concept of Old-Banten Area development, to be a cultural heritage or not?"* If it yes, so the development would need a comprehensive evaluation mainly in the heritage preservation concept.

This paper is limited to reveals the critics through historical facts and conducts the comparison between the development and heritage term definitions. The spatial character mapping is used to reinterprets the heritage elements based on several literatures. Furthermore, it might need an integrated and comprehensive study to determine the whole heritage area.

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