REVITALIZING THE PEOPLE’S LIFE IN BUFFER ZONE AREA IN MELAKA: A CASE STUDY AT AN URBAN VILLAGE, MELAKA

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an urban design study conducted by a group of Master of Urban Design students at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia studying a buffer zone area in an urban village known as Kampong Jawa in Melaka. Data of town morphology were obtained from archival reports. Behavioral responses of residents were elicited from observation and interviews. The data were triangulated and displayed in maps and synthesized in tables that illustrated the potentials and constraints of the village. The results suggest that the tourism development of the core area and some specific part of the area has neglected the residents’ existence and their routine trading and social activities particularly in involving their daily life and incidental spaces such as in front of Melaka’s river and significant heritage place near their houses. Such activities created bonds among the residents and thus uphold their community integrity. Inasmuch, most residents have lost hope in protecting and defending their properties and preserving their communal and economic activities. As a result, most houses in the village were left in bad condition because the residents felt that there were no more reasons to take care of them since their lands will be taken by the municipality. Therefore, there is a need to restructuring the planning policy of buffer area in Melaka in order to conserve the urban village inhabitants.

Keywords: Melaka River, buffer zone, sense of belonging, urban village, kampong, heritage

1. INTRODUCTION

Kampong Jawa located away from the core zone where all the major important activities occur and the entire rich and famous merchant live, was originally a settlement for the Javanese’s people which the Dutch brought in to work for them during the invasion year 1641-1824 at Melaka. Located near the riverbank of Melaka river makes the area visible and well known among the low income community during that time to performed activities which generate additional income for them.

The area evolves from a small settlement to a significant local trading area. Later when British came in year 1795, streets are introduced and more commercial activities happened along it and that also make Kampong Jawa area have five important streets according to its momentous activities: (1) Jalan Kee Ann, (2) Jalan Pasar Baru, (3) Jalan Bunga Raya, (4) Jalan Jawa, and (5) Jalan Munshi Abdullah. Jalan Kee Ann and Jalan Pasar Baru were known as ‘The Last Great Bazaar of Melaka’ because there it situated the first and famous market in Melaka where the major trading activities happened. The Jalan Bunga Raya as ‘The Fortune Teller, The Gambler’ because a lot of Chinese immigrants originate the activities there that attract a lot of people. Meanwhile Jalan Jawa as ‘Theatre of Life’ because there are many local theatres, and Jalan Munshi Abdullah known as ‘City of A Thousand Lights’ because there are cinema, cold storage shop, pharmacies and many famous clubs and hotel situated in that street.

Nowadays, with the introduction of the new commercial area in Melaka Raya, Kampong Jawa areas are forgotten. Layers of culture and history happened which make the people there have a strong sense of belonging to the area and only the old people and some locals still keep on coming to the area. Until now the streets still surviving and bits and pieces from its glory days still can be seen in a different version which is saddening.

This paper presents a finding of a descriptive and interpretive study of the urban design elements that tide the life’s of people in urban village by keeping it alive until today in a buffer zone area in Melaka. The major research questions pertaining to this study...
include: (1) What are the issues and problems of the urban village is facing currently? and (2) What are the important elements of urban design which makes the area still survived until today and to make it better?

2. METHODS: Analytical Review on Books and Interview with People at Site.

Behavioral responses of residents were elicited from observation and interviews. The data was analyzed using SWOT analysis where a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in the data collected during the inventory stage. The data were triangulated and displayed in maps and synthesized in tables that illustrated the potentials and constraints of the urban village.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results suggest that the tourism development of the core area where most of the remaining historical monument and interesting night spot are and some specific part of the area has neglected the residents’ existence and their routine trading and social activities particularly in involving their daily life and incidental spaces such as in front of Melaka’s river and significant heritage place near their houses. This is obvious from the issues that uncover during the inventory stage.

3.1 Activities and Landuse

Kampong Jawa was majority occupied by commercial activities, only two small area inhabited by a settlement which hide behind the concrete buildings and tourism development near the riverbank. Changing some of the landuse to be more compatible to make sure the current situation and future planning will benefit the local residents and the visitors. For example the wholesale activities that exist in the area are causing traffic jams. Big lorries from the activities of loading and unloading supplies congesting the area. This not only makes people avoid from going to the area but also the operation hour only in day making at night the area dead. Figure 1 shows the information of the existing and proposed landsue in Kampong Jawa. Creating new landmarks such as new highrise buildings and distribution of nodes such as new eating place, pocket space can make the area more interesting to visit. Maximizing the potentials of the riverside can help to promote Kampong Jawa to tourist and outsiders by making it visible. More commercial buildings displaying the local crafts, jetties for water transportation and beautiful promenade making the area have a better image.

Figure 1: Landuse plan at Kampong Jawa

3.2 Movement pattern

Since the development of a new commercial area in Melaka Raya, Jalan Bunga Raya has become the main road for vehicles to travel out from the city centre. The shops near this road have the best opportunity to blossom their business resulting people making shortcut and crowdedness with traffic. As a result many people are not coming to this village. In order to change the situation approach such as street calming at the main road, somehow or rather make the vehicles move slower to appreciate the surrounding. New junctions are being proposed to have more turns into the area which become and alternative for the users other than improving the connectivity. Treatment at building and at corners also creating pause for the users specially the pedestrian to notice the place. To make journey walking within the area more convenient and interesting, new resting area and pocket spaces being introduced. Figure 2 shows the information of the existing and proposed traffic and movement pattern in Kampong Jawa.

Figure 2: Traffic and movement pattern at Kampong Jawa.
3.3 Solid and void

The existing Kampong Jawa has lots of lost spaces and making some area difficult to access. This phenomenon makes the area dangerous because prone to vandalism and robbery. The undefined space making the area lost its exclusivity and public or private area are very hard to differentiate. The land value in this area are becoming higher and by having more compact layout and creating a more defines spaces makes the area more legible to users. Figure 3 shows the information of the existing and proposed solid and void in Kampong Jawa. More fine grain is being introduced to have interesting perspective and create further sense of place in this area.

![Figure 3: Solid and Void plan in Kampong Jawa.](image)

Suggested Development

The main concern of the village development is to maintain the social character of the town and generate human flows to make the site alive while generating economy for the local people and revitalize the character of the river like in older days and injecting new economies to the urban village in core zone. Maximizing the river and the areas near the main road as the medium of advertisement by exposure and display traditional threatened activities such as local crafts can help people notice this area. Then by having a double frontage concept near the riverside encourage property owner to exploit the opportunity to provide compatible and competitive business. This new approach can prepare Kampong Jawa to welcome the spillover development from the core zone.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors like to express their gratitude to the Urban Design Studio 2 studio master, Associate Professor Dr Syed Zainol Abidin Idid, Urban Design Research and Conservation Unit at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning.

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