

## KARNO EXILE HOUSE AS A TOURIST ATTRACTION WITH A HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL STUDY APPROACH

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**Abstract:** The Sukarno Exile House in Brastagi is a building that holds significant historical value for Indonesia. Situated in the town of Berastagi, North Sumatra, it has become one of the popular historical tourist attractions in Indonesia. Each year, many tourists visit this place to witness firsthand various historical artifacts inside. The building, designed with Dutch colonial architecture, has suffered considerable physical damage due to its age and the lack of effective maintenance, which could lead to the loss of the nation's historical value.

This research aims to develop a concept and a model for the effective preservation and conservation of the building. The goal is to attract more tourists to visit the site, creating income not only for the preservation of the building itself but also benefiting the local community.

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### INTRODUCTION

The development of tourist attractions is determined by the extent of potential supply and demand. Potential supply refers to the offerings of tourism activities available in the area. Meanwhile, demand represents the demand for tourism. The tourism target is not only intended to attract foreign tourists but also domestic tourists, both for natural and cultural attractions. From a positive perspective, the presence of tourism is perceived by the local community around the tourist attraction as a benefit, leading to an increase in their income. Additionally, it opens up the local residents' perspectives on the outside world through direct interactions with both domestic and international tourists..

The presence of buildings aged over 50 years serves as a benchmark for structures that should be protected (Ndoro, 2018). The location and layout of buildings situated in the city center, surrounded by new structures with modern concepts, pose a threat to historical continuity, leading to a diminished historical value.

The Exile House of Bung Karno is the place where Sukarno served his exile

as a political prisoner. This house is located in the heart of Bengkulu City, precisely on Sukarno Hatta Street, Anggut Atas Village, Gading Cempaka Sub-district. Originally owned by a Chinese trader named Lion Bwe Seng, the house was rented by the Dutch authorities to accommodate Sukarno during his exile in Bengkulu. Sukarno resided in this house from 1938 to 1942. The house contains Sukarno's personal belongings, including the iron bed used by Sukarno and his family, a collection of predominantly Dutch-language books, and the uniform of the Monte Carlo music group under Sukarno's leadership during his time in Bengkulu. There are also photographs of Sukarno and his family adorning almost every room, and an interesting detail is the old bicycle used by Sukarno during his time in Bengkulu (Huda and Ikhwan, 2018). The tourist attraction of Bung Karno's Exile House represents a significant potential for further development in the city of Brastagi. This building is a unique historical landmark with Dutch colonial architecture, serving as an historical icon in the Tanah Karo region of North Sumatra. It also stands as a silent witness to the Karo community's struggle against Dutch colonization

This potential can be further realized with the community's awareness and the commitment of managers to preserve the building. Continuous efforts to unearth information about the original condition of the building, yet to be revealed, will enhance the quality of the tourist attraction, aligning with the principle of material authenticity in conservation. If community awareness is heightened, it will become a powerful force in the management of the Bung Karno Exile House tourist attraction.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research employs a basic research method through field surveys, measurements, and analytical approaches to determine the conservation concept for historical buildings using both analytical model and design modeling approaches. The analytical model involves interviews and direct observations in the field to gather data about the architectural design construction's sustainability from the physical aspect of the building, focusing on visual characteristics. This analysis aims to understand the building's condition, considering parameters such as facade,

roof, floor plan, walls, doors, windows, floors, ceilings, and space characteristics. It is conducted to determine the use and function of the space, spatial organization, and building orientation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Maintenance and Repair of Buildings**

Upgrading and conservation efforts for Bung Karno's Exile House in Berastagi have been successfully implemented. Following the restoration and renovation process, the building has been preserved and maintains its original grandeur, just as it appeared when initially constructed in 1930 by a Dutchman named Van De Boer. Conservation initiatives extended to both the interior and exterior of the building, including the reorganization of the surrounding gardens and repairs to damaged sections. These conservation and restoration endeavors are crucial in preserving the historical and architectural value of colonial buildings in North Sumatra, particularly for Bung Karno's Exile House in Berastagi. The outcomes of these efforts contribute significantly to the preservation of historical and cultural values in the region. Moreover, they offer benefits to tourism and the local economy. Bung Karno's Exile House in Berastagi has become a popular historical tourist attraction, drawing visitors from both within and outside the country. Consequently, the conservation and restoration of Bung Karno's Exile House underscore the importance of safeguarding regional historical and cultural values while simultaneously enhancing tourism and the overall local economy.

### **Historical and Cultural Studies**

In the village of Lau Gumba, Berastagi, Karo Regency, stands a simple and old house that served as the location for Bung Karno's exile by the Dutch during Military Aggression II. The Dutch-style house, constructed in 1719, was originally the residence of a Dutch officer. Built from teak wood and measuring 10 x 20 meters, it features white paint and a red zinc roof. In the front yard, there is a 7-meter bronze statue of Bung Karno seated, serving as a marker that this house witnessed the historical struggles of Bung Karno. An important standard in the preservation of buildings, places that are preserved are places that have cultural significance. The

notion of culture here means aesthetic, historical, scientific, or social value for the past, present and future young generations. The classification is in accordance with Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 5/1992 Chapter I Article 1 (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2001, p. 3) concerning cultural heritage objects<sup>3</sup>. These heritage objects meet the following criteria:

- a. over 50 years old
- b. the architecture of the building represents the architecture of his time
- c. has an important value for the history of a region, science and culture.

According to history, during Dutch Military Aggression II on December 22, 1948, three leaders of the Republic of Indonesia – Bung Karno, Sjahrir, and Haji Agus Salim – were captured by the Dutch in Yogyakarta and subsequently exiled to this location. They were detained here for 12 days before being moved to Parapat due to security concerns. Despite tight security during their stay, the Dutch decided to relocate Bung Karno to Parapat, as the Karo region was known for its independence struggle, led by a group known as the "laskar rakyat." Even though Bung Karno spent only 12 days here, he holds a special place in the hearts of the Karo people. They affectionately called him "Bapak Rakyat Sirulo," meaning the Father Symbolizing the Prosperity of the People. The Karo community admires Bung Karno for his teachings, which align with Karo values such as mutual cooperation, pluralism, and solidarity. The house still stands sturdy and well-maintained, preserving the authenticity of its structure, including the furniture inside such as beds, wardrobes, and other furnishings, which remain unchanged from the past. However, the house is not open to the public, unlike Bung Karno's exile houses in other locations.

### **Building Changes**

Studying the changes in the physical structure of this building is beneficial for identifying the original state of the building during its initial construction and its existing state, which reflects the current condition of the building. Understanding the "original state" is crucial for interventions aligning with the main principles of conservation, specifically authenticity, which emphasizes the true original condition. Historical documentation studies of Bung Karno's Exile House in Berastagi, Tanah Karo, generally indicate that the building's condition remains natural, corresponding

to its original state. Only a few changes have occurred, primarily in the wall and bathroom areas.

### **Building Documentation**

Documentation is carried out through the study of historical documents (photographs, written manuscripts) and on-site building surveys to gather data on the physical condition of the building. This involves documenting changes and the current state of each architectural element and structural component of the building, as illustrated in the following images.:



Gambar 1 Gambar Bangunan Pengasingan Sukarno di Brastagi

### **Building Structure Condition**

The structural survey is conducted based on forensic observations carried out on the building, involving visual inspections and Non-Destructive Testing (NDT). The results of the structural study indicate damage to the building's structure, such as damage to the structural elements of the ground floor. The reinforcing steel in the structure has undergone corrosion, leading to an increase in rust volume. This can cause cracks in the concrete or plaster and result in spalling or the detachment of the concrete cover. Both the main and additional structures are old buildings that did not

account for disaster loading factors during their construction. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the disaster-resistant structure is needed, considering the building's designated loads. This analysis should take into account natural disaster resilience to ensure the overall stability and safety of the building structure.

The building has shown structural damage and structural reinforcement measures need to be taken for damage to the components of some building elements, so technically the stages of conservation work needed are: (1) disassembly, (2) cleaning and peeling, (3) preservation, (4) repair and reinforcement which includes: splicing materials as a follow-up amputation (bonding); filling the gaps of damage (filling); reinforcement of materials (consolidation); injection; replacing; camouflage, (5) coating, and (6) documentation of each process stage.

### **Conservation Guidelines**

Based on considerations from the study of history and the documentation of architecture and building structures, conservation guidelines can be formulated with interventions such as:

- a. Retaining (to retain/to preserve) Preserve to the maximum extent possible the form, materials, and building technology, as well as architectural elements throughout the historical journey of the building. This principle aligns with conservation practices internationally, such as the "material authenticity" principle.
- b. Restoring (to reinstate/restore) Restore architectural elements that have been lost or damaged through reconstruction, also known as anastylosis, using scientific approaches such as typology studies and laboratory testing.
- c. Revealing (to reveal) Bring the building back to its original condition by removing or cleaning architectural elements that cover the building's condition. The formulation of these conservation guidelines aims to provide direction for conservation efforts to preserve and restore the building's condition with its historical and aesthetic values.
- d. Architectural intervention guidelines maintain the current appearance of the building, including all architectural elements such as the main entrance, canopy, windows, pilasters, dormer windows, existing rain gutters, and other components. These guidelines are intended to guide conservation interventions, ensuring the

preservation and restoration of the building's condition while maintaining its historical and aesthetic values.

## CONCLUSION

The introduction of a new function into a building must consider whether the intended function is compatible with the existing structure (such as having sufficient windows and the ability to protect and enhance cultural evidence within the building). Besides function, location is a crucial consideration when introducing a new function into a building, as each location has different needs. Given these considerations, it is evident that conservation activities suitable for Bung Karno's transit building involve adaptive reuse, aligning with the restoration type of activity. This approach ensures that the new function not only respects the original structure but also takes into account the unique characteristics and requirements of the location. It involves repurposing the building in a way that preserves its historical and cultural significance while adapting to contemporary needs and ensuring compatibility with the surrounding environment. Adaptive reuse is a sustainable conservation strategy that respects the integrity of the structure while accommodating new and relevant uses.

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