

THE IDENTIFICATION OF VISUAL CHARACTER OF TRADITIONAL MALAY AND COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE AT THE SERUWAY ROYAL PALACE IN ACEH TAMIANG DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Visual character is used to identify and classify type of style in particular building. The growing number of modern buildings causes similarities between one region and another. This results in a loss of people's grip to recognize their own environment and to obscure regional identity. Seruway is one of sub-districts in Aceh Tamiang, in which the majority of the population is Malay ethnic. However, in the colonial period, Malay cultures experienced mixed culture. This mixing occurs in social and architectural life, one of which is the Seruway Royal Palace where there are two styles namely the Malay and colonial architectural styles. This study applied a descriptive qualitative method by identifying the physical elements of buildings that form visual characters covering the upper, wall, and base area with elements of ground plan, style, door and window, roof, ornament, material, color, column, and volume. The results show that the visual character in the Seruway palace that uses Malay architecture lies in material, color, column, door and window. While the colonial architecture applied in ground plan, rooftop ornament, and awning.

KEY WORDS: Visual Character, Malay Architecture, Colonial Architecture, Seruway Palace

INTRODUCTION

Visual character is needed to identify and classify styles in a building. Buildings in Indonesia have similarities in physical form but have links with each other when viewed from the visual aspects. Fajarwati in Purnomo (2012) states that the character of an architectural object is uniformity or specificity which consists of the characteristics of architectural objects or basic elements arranged and combined together so that the object has quality and distinctiveness that are different from the others.

Seruway is a sub-district in Aceh Tamiang district that consists of various ethnic groups such as Aceh, Java, Malay and so on. The majority of the people are Malay because the Malay cultural root as a tradition is inherent in the Seruway community. In this sub-district, there is the Seruway Royal Palace where this building was built during the reign of Teuku Zainal Abidin in 1928 – 1945. Judging from the shape and architecture of this palace, it has a very unique and interesting visual character from other surrounding buildings. The Seruway Royal palace building has two architectural styles, Malay Traditional and Dutch Colonial Architecture.

Mahyudin in Faisal (2013) states that there is Malay culture in the art of building an ordinary house called "Seni Bina". *Seni Bina* is architectural science in Malay culture. Traditional Malay architecture is one part of Malay culture in the scope of architecture, planned and built with creativity as well as aesthetics by the Malay people. In Malay buildings, there are several components that make the building a place to carry out life activities. The component is materials of the building that

are arranged into a comprehensive building unit. Component is a major factor to view traditional architecture, which consists of name, form, building parts, typology, building period, structure, composition and space function, ornaments, as well as ways of making passed down to the next generation.

As in the case with the areas in Indonesia that were occupied by Netherlands, either the houses, offices, or other buildings have acculturation of local culture and Dutch culture in terms of the building. In the book 'Dutch Colonial Architecture in Indonesia', Schoemaker states that Occidental (western) Architecture is a construction that is totality, while Indonesian traditional architecture is a subjective, elementary composition, with an emphasis on the outer area, especially the front area. This explains that most likely what is meant by totality is that all parts of construction become a complete whole while the architecture is subjective and elementary.

Colonial architecture is a brief naming of the architectural style that existed during the Dutch occupation in Indonesia. The colonial architecture in Indonesia according to Sumalyo (1993) is a very different culture, due to the cultural mixing between the colonist and diverse Indonesian cultures. The influence of cultural mix used by the Dutch in the architecture and city plan in Indonesia is a style and architectural concept that were growing in Europe at that time.

VISUAL CHARACTER

According to Poerdarminto in Sujono (2002) the word 'character' means an accent or characteristic while the word 'visual', according to Smardon in

Sujono (2002) means the main characteristics that can physically provide attribute to a visual source in a system, to the point that it has a fixed quality. So, visual quality is a special attribute found in a system that is determined by cultural values of essential physical property.

The visual character of an environment is composed of visual elements. According to Motloch (1991) in Adenan, the visual elements are as follows: (1). Point; (2) Line; (3) Form; (4) Color; (5) Texture.

MALAY AND COLONIAL TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE

Malay architecture is generally in the form of stage houses and elongated form, because they are used as adaptation to life with other tribes and are also used as adaptation to life in tropical swampy and heavily forested islands. Stage form is used to avoid the risk of flooding and wild animals in the coast and jungle, while the elongated form is used for expansion, addressing social and security needs so that all families can live in a house lined up extending.



Figure 1: General form of Malay houses
 Source: Said and Embi, 2018: 138

Traditional Malay architecture in general is as follows:

1. The form and element of building refer to religion (belief) aspect, culture and customs.
2. In a stage house.
3. The floor is not the same height (levels) between one room and other area.
4. The ridge of the roof is parallel to road or river.

The traditional Malay house symbolizes “*Tiga Tungku Sejerangan*” which means that something that you want to do can only be perfect if there are three suggestions supporting it. This is marked by three spatial division functions, namely:

1. Main building area
2. Front porch/guest area
3. Back porch/kitchen area

Soekiman (2000) states that in making regulations regarding the construction of office buildings and official spaces, the Dutch government used the term *Indische Huizen* or *Indo Europeesche Bouwkunst*. This is probably due to the shape of the building that is no longer purely European but has mixed with Indonesian traditional houses. The use of the *Indis* term for building style along with the growing popularity of the *Indis* term is a mix of

Western culture elements, especially Netherlands and Indonesian culture.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative aimed to find out things that are related to something. Observation on the architecture of the Seruway royal palace in Aceh Tamiang was conducted by examining, observing and identifying the building directly as the object of this study. Qualitative method was used to obtain detailed data, namely actual data and accurate data. Data collection techniques in qualitative research used in-depth interview techniques, literature study, observation and documentation.

Table 1. Research Parameters

Physical Elements of Visual Character	Upper area	The shape of the roof and the slope of the roof angle
		Ornaments on building
	Wall area	Window and door opening
		Building Color
		Vertical Elements
		Horizontal Elements
	Base area	Basic shape of building
		Building material
		Style
		Building Volume

Source: Berry in Dwi Cahya (2014) and Francis DK Ching (2008)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following is the results of the identification of visual characters in Malay architecture and colonial architecture in the Seruway Royal Palace of Aceh Tamiang Regency.

Table 2. Identification of visual characters

No.	Physical Elements	Colonial Architecture	Malay Architecture
1	Ground plan	The shape is in symmetrical in <i>Indis</i> Empire Style and Transitional Architecture. There is central room in the middle and is surrounded by a terrace with Greek columns. Service area is located apart	The shape is in stage and without attic. There is a front porch for male guests and back porch for female guests. The rooms are usually adjacent to each other and there is also paddy barn that is separated from the other.

		from the main building	
2	Door	It usually has two doors with wide openings. It is made from wood material in the <i>Indis</i> Empire Style and glass material in Transitional and Modern architectural styles.	Generally, it has two doors with opening extending downward. It is made from wood material with fin shape or plain wooden door.
3	Window	The shaped is in <i>Kupu Tarung</i> with wide openings that has two windows made from wood and glass material laying on a symmetrical plan. According to Sumalyo (1993), the window type is <i>Krepyak</i> and glass window and it has two layers/double	It has the same height as the door and reaches the floor of the building but is given a 60 cm high partition from the floor and decorated with various forms of foliage ornaments and most has two windows with wood material. There is no particular rule in the position on the plan, it is according to space requirements
4	Roof	It is dominated with saddle and shield. Some are equipped with awning in modern architectural style with concrete materials and roof tiles. There is an addition of vents on the roof (dormer) in transitional architectural style. The roof slope is usually steeper and there is no particular rule in the positioning of the roof	There are various styles of roof in Malay Architecture such as pyramid and shield. The laying of the roof is parallel to the direction of river or road and it is made from <i>nipah</i> palm leaves. The slope of the roof is usually normal according to the roof material.
5	Ornaments	It has various styles including	Ornaments in Malay

		<i>Nok Actoterie</i> (<i>kemunca</i> roof ornament), <i>Agevel Toppen</i> (<i>kemunak</i> ornament in the front), <i>Bovenlicht</i> (ornament on vents above the door and windows), curls of plants and <i>Aries Ram</i> (horned goats).	architecture avoid human or animal forms. The shape of flower, fruit and leaves is dominantly used.
6	Wall	The dominant material is concrete with plain colors and partly with exposed stones.	The material is from wood and some part of the building should not be painted. Only royal house can be painted in bright yellow color, which symbolize a triumph
7	Column	It usually uses Greek-style columns such as <i>Doric</i> , <i>Ionic</i> , <i>Corinthian</i> and composites with concrete material.	Using a round or square wood material column

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