In Searching the Spirit of Place:

Historic Semarang River with Malacca as Best Practice

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Abstract: The article describes a new idea for developing a historic river area based on the spirit of place. In some countries, this concept enables to make historic river areas be conserved and even to become objects of tourism. Malacca Malaysia reflects the spirit of place as a trade city. Unfortunately, in Surabaya and Jakarta, historic river conservation planning does not include the spirit of place in the past. Semarang City has implemented a conservation program in its old city area but has not yet touched its historic river and canal as a trading city in the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) – Company of Trade or Dutch East Indies era. Due to the tidal flood disaster and land subsidence, the canal and its historic buildings are threatened to disappear. This paper aims to inventory the buildings and spirit of the place in the past as an important step of conserving and controlling the built heritage. Historical methods were used for data collection. The old photographs, old maps and old videos dating back to the Dutch colonial era enabled to obtained the spirit of place as a multi-ethnic trading port during the spread of Islam (14-15th century), a trading port for the VOC and the strategic area for local government. Not all cities have complete documentation or even have videos of activities on the river in their past. The accurate inventory was an effective method for developing the historic river conservation. New research results are architectural conservation concepts that require building inventory stages and finding the spirit of place before planning and designing.

Keywords: Spirit of place, Semarang River, land subsidence, Dutch Colonial Era, Trading City.

尋找地方精神：以馬六甲為最佳做法的歷史性三寶壟河

摘要：本文根據地方精神描述了開發具有歷史意義的河流地區的新思路。在某些國家/地區，此概念使歷史悠久的河流地區得以保護，甚至成為旅遊業的對象。馬六甲馬來西亞體現了作為貿易城市的地方精神。在泗水，保護不包括過去河流的含義。三寶壟市已在其舊城區實施了一項保護計劃，但尚未將其歷史悠久的河流和運河作為 VOC（Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie）貿易公司或荷蘭東印度時代的商貿城市。由於潮汐洪災和地面沉降，運河及其歷史建築有可能消失。本文旨在盤點過去的建築物和精神，作為保護和控制建築遺產的重要步驟。歷史方法用於數據收集。可以追溯到荷蘭殖民時代的舊照片，舊地圖和舊錄像使人們在伊斯蘭教傳播（14至15世紀），VOC 和國際貿易的貿易港時獲得了多民族貿易港的地位

Received (date): July 15, 2020
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Introduction

This paper becomes important considering that along with the city's rapid development, the development of land transportation has changed the historic river area as a forgotten cultural path. However, several conservation efforts have been carried out mainly in Indonesia such as the Palembang Musi River, the Jakarta Ciliwung River, and the Kali Mas River in Surabaya. But it was considered unsuccessful because it did not restore the spirit of place to its time [1], [2], [3]. Semarang, Jakarta and Surabaya cities have similar characteristics, they are located on the North coast of Java and have the same geological history [4]. The sedimentation problem causes the river area to become shallow so that the port is moved. This of course causes the environment to experience degradation [5]. The city of Semarang, which had been a VOC trading base in the 18th century [6], [7] with its large harbor and canals as a trade transportation route, has now lost its identity as a trading city. The efforts of the Semarang City government are quite good in developing the conservation of Semarang Old City. However, due to the serious geological problems such as subsidence [8]–[10], tidal flood [11], [12] and sedimentation [5], [13] conservation efforts have not yet touched on the historical canals and rivers. Based on historical aspects of Semarang as a maritime city, some historians have discussed this problem [14]. This paper aims to uncover the glory of Semarang in the past in terms of architecture and urban planning [15]. It also intends to reveal the spirit of place along the Semarang historical river to complement previous conservation efforts.

Conservation and revitalization efforts which in the past have become the pulse of transportation for conservation of heritage areas have become a trending topic in several countries including Indonesia. Historical rivers in the neighboring countries such as Malacca in Malaysia and boat quay in Singapore [16] have become tourist attractions. Indonesia also made this effort, for example, in Ciliwung Jakarta and Kali Mas Surabaya.

Semarang, which was once a pre-colonial trading center (Mataram Kingdom era) and a trading center during the VOC, used the river as a means of transportation to deliver merchandise from the inland to the port. The Semarang old city is one of the areas that have the potential for cultural and historical tourism. The issue of degradation of buildings regarding their values and functions is a challenge to spur interest in visiting cultural-based tourist destinations.

Related to this, the results of a case study in Semarang Old City, Jakarta Old Town, Chinatown, and Sunda Kelapa indirectly emphasize that the issue of physical damage to buildings that affect the degradation of values has an adverse effect on the development of tourism based on cultural history [17]. However, the conservation of Semarang Old City only applies the adaptive re-use method in degraded areas.

The canals designed during Dutch colonial time in Semarang City were similar to the European concept and are referred to as Venesia van Java. Until now these canals still get a touch of conservation activities. Semarang port and canal recorded the glory of Semarang as a global trading center at that time with its sugar production [18]–[20]. In the past, the rivers in Java became a transportation route for boats or large ships to the inland or kingdom [21]. There were ports of the North Coast and also on the river of the kingdom. In the Dutch era, the river also functioned to control the inland [22]. In the Dutch colonial era, the post highway and the railroad network changed the role of the river [23][24]–[26]. This phenomenon affects the pattern of the villages which were originally oriented towards the river [27].

The geological conditions of the North coast of Java changed from time to time. The beach moved forward by eight meters per year, and since 1847 its pace became twelve meters per year. This condition has changed Semarang group of islands into one mainland now.

The river is a main historic feature and natural resource of the entire cultural landscape of the region. Compatible development projects and proper conservation measures can help maintain the visual and environmental river qualities and historic environment. Revitalization of Historic Inner-City Areas in Asia creates the potential for urban renewal in Ha Noi, Jakarta, and Manila. The urban development strategy of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) draws attention to neglected historic city centers and lost development opportunities [28]. For example, Kali Mas Surabaya revitalized the historic river and the results were very profitable [3] as well as Ciliwung Jakarta [1]. However, it has not touched the spirit of place aspects and the risk of exposing the cultural heritage to the geological disaster of north coast of Java.

The cities around the Yangtze River Delta may serve as an example of design using the spirit of place and regional non-material cultural identity. The three most representative components of the spirit of place...
are the historical and geographical context, the rural temple festival, and the space of daily life [30][31].

This paper outlines an empirical approach to uncovering the spirit of place and inventorying the buildings that created this spirit in the past along the Semarang River.

1 Research Methods

The heuristic historical method based on the source of objects in this case was used to uncover the history of the Semarang city in the past. Similarly, the sources are in the form of archives and books as a reference. The Dutch museum now shares several images of old maps such as those from the museum of the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies. The associated Semarang Old City map is comprised of maps drawn in 1695, 1719, 1875, and 1880. Old photographs of Semarang beaches, rivers and villages in estuaries and along the rivers are very helpful in tracing the shape of buildings. Historical Video Archive of a train passing through the Kalibaru (new canal) suspension bridge Semarang, 1931 (https://twitter.com/videosejarah/status/781124029528891392) and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4ioJU8DvA0) uncover hidden facts about the life of the trade lane in the past.

Field surveys were also conducted to trace the condition of the old canal and buildings. The research categorizes traces of old buildings located on the coast and river estuaries as Maritime Archeology. Maritime cultural heritage objects include ports with all the facilities (warehouses and offices), docks and shipyards, boats and ships (vessels), fire towers, buoy lights, sea fortresses, and even humans [32].

This research uses analysis of building typology in the areas along the Semarang and Malacca Rivers. Historical analysis and conclusions according to Kuntowijoyo [33] must be based on four stages: (1) heuristics or the collection of historical data that is truly valid and authentic; (2) criticism or testing the truth of the data presentation; (3) entering the realm of interpretation by discovering the essence of historical events or historical facts; (4) when the interpretation is done, the conclusions are written down. The researchers call this the historiographic stage.

By carrying out reconstruction activities to finally find the city embryo’s spirit of place along the Semarang River, the article aims to reconstruct the history of the city’s past in the interests of urban planning in the present and future.

2 Results and Discussion

The discussion below will reveal information about geological disaster, discover the spirit of place, do mapping on old buildings along the river corridor and compare it with the historic area of the Malacca River. The spirit of place in the area that is currently experiencing geological problems still requires a touch of inventory to find the right conservation concept.

2.1. The Geological Disaster along the North Coast of Java

The impact of land subsidence in Java Island especially around coastal area on the northern part of the island can be seen in several forms, such as the wider expansion of (coastal) flooding areas, the cracking of buildings and infrastructure, and the increased inland sea water intrusion [34]. The causes of land subsidence are the over burden buildings and ground water extraction [13]. The data reveal significant subsidence in nine areas, including six major cities, at rates up to 22 cm/year. [35].

Researchers estimate the area of tidal flood in 2030 will reach around 4,846 hectares. Sea water penetration will soak the North Semarang [36]. It has been reported for some time that coastline of Semarang is retreated [8]. These geological problems require special handling to minimize the silting process.

2.2. The Old City Conservation

The twenty-first-century global warming poses a significant threat to the cultural heritage of coastal regions, but the effects of sea-level rise and changing weather patterns will not be evenly distributed. In addition, continued urban, agricultural, and industrial development concentrated in coastal areas contributes to the destruction of cultural resources. Mitigation of these threats requires rapid measures on the part of archaeologists and public land managers. Variability in coastal geomorphology, rates of relative sea-level rise, and the structure of prehistoric settlement and subsistence systems, however, produce different patterns of vulnerability [37]. With rapid economic growth, most cities experience uncontrolled development resulting in decay, especially on their historic cores. A city’s historic center is the heart of its urban identity, therefore once it is abandoned, the city’s identity tends to diminish, too. As a result, urban regeneration projects with a focus of urban preservation for historical city centers gain crucial importance to save this identity [38].

Malacca and George Town also have been listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 7 July 2008. Although they have been greatly threatened by modern development, many of the districts or quarters in this world heritage city have developed a blueprint which signifies the importance of conserving and controlling the built heritage. [39]

2.3. Spirit of Place of the Semarang River

Discussion of the spirit of place where the meaning
and symbolism of the region is the meaning and symbolism of the heritage area will attract attention to the area from two different times, namely the past and the present. Therefore, in recognizing the spirit of place in the present, one must first understand the meaning and symbolism of the region in the past. Especially in considering a combination of tangible and intangible aspects of the urban context [31]. Spirit of place usually has a strong and impressive relationship between people and place where spirit also occurs in the exclusive aspect of a place [40]. The spirit problem of this phenomenon is also the spearhead in the actual heritage both in terms of landscape, building environment, as well as intangible and tangible heritage, and its authenticity [41].

In the 16th century sea adventurers described Semarang city as a bustling port city. They recorded cities such as Bantam, Calava, Cheribon, Tegal, Pecalongan, Samarang, Damna, Japara, Rembang, Touban and Surabay. Semarang City as a trading center was mentioned in Chinese news by Mahuan since the 7th century AD. According to him, there was a rather crowded port in the north coast of Java which at that time was under the influence of the Ho-ling kingdom (Kalingga). Ships from India and Champa brought commodities, fruit, acids and charcoal from wood burning. An old sketch/painting by Johanes Racht about the city of Semarang (16th century) depicts the state of the indigenous central city of Semarang.

Semarang’s spirit of place in its early growth was detected by its presence on an old map of 1695. In 1468, there was a Ndarat/Darat village on the North side of the Semarang government center where foreign sailors landed and some settled until now [42], [43] [44] before the Dutch colonial government finally moved the port from the Mangkang area to this location. The physical structure of Darat Village, Melayu Village, Old Boom (1743) and New Canal (1875) settlements is a ship terminal equipped with a customs office and a fish market. The New Canal is equipped with various port facilities, such as a trading office, Dutch troop headquarters, lighthouse, Swivel Bridge, warehouses and several villa houses owned by port employees. The Marabunta Seven Warehouses are famous warehouse facilities in the New Canal area. The Dutch colonial government built a lighthouse in 1884. Until 1999 the lighthouse was still functioning well but the ground floor of the building submerged in water. Therefore, channels and dykes were made so that water does not enter the building (Insight, October 2, 1999, Lighthouse, Semarang City’s Mute Witness). Due to the normalization of the Semarang River, warehouses and trading offices along the west New Canal suffered eviction, and the traces are no longer visible.

Before the 1970s, Chinese ethnic rituals, known as Little Sam Poo, were held in Semarang in the Old Boom area. The Little Sam Poo procession started at the Semarang Lombok Alley Temple, and then moved along the Chinatown on Bojong Street (Pemuda Street), to Melayu Village, and ended at Old Boom [27], [45]. This tradition has now been lost. Habib (Islamic leader descended from the prophet) played a role in maintaining the continuity of Islamic traditions in Melayu Village settlements [27]. Likewise, the dugderan (the Islamic) is organized before the fasting month that reflects the multi-ethnic harmony of Javanese, Malay, Chinese and Arabic cultures by taking place in the square of the local government.

Researchers concluded that the area of the meeting point of the Old River and new canal (around the old Boom gate) was a natural landing/port and an international port of Semarang at that time. The new canal further strengthened the city image of Semarang as a VOC trading city. The existence of the port also was
strengthened by the local central government (Bubakan 16th century, Gabahan (1659), Sekayu (1666) and Kanjengan (1670) which in each of their displacements continue to look for strategic locations on the river banks.

Unfortunately, the spirit of place is lost because of the sedimentation process. Figure 1 explains the mapping of old villages that existed in the Dutch colonial period until now.

### 2.4. Western Side of the River Corridor

During the kingdom of Mataram in the 8th century, the Old Semarang River served as a shipping tool to deliver teak wood for building the Demak Mosque. This river was a meeting place between multi-ethnic traders because this river was integrated with surrounding areas such as Chinatown, Melayu Village and Kauman Mosque (Arabic). Figure 2 shows Johar Market, Semarang Old Square, and Connectors between the Berok Bridge Colonial Settlements.

Based on Figure 2 above, the serial buildings in the area along the West River are:

#### 2.4.1 Marabunta and Suspension Bridge

Marabunta is an old building that has existed since the colonial era. It is a proof of the golden age of Semarang port, which is the place for storage and trade of sugar owned by Oei Tiong Ham.

#### 2.4.2 Malay Village

Arab ethnic descendant and part of the Chinese dominate the population of Malay Village [27] with the location being at the intersection of the Semarang river (1743) and the new Canal (1875). This area was a ship terminal where traders from various regions made their business, until finally many multi-ethnic communities settled there.

#### 2.4.3 Layur Mosque

Layur Mosque is a former lighthouse tower which was a sign that the Malay village area was once a port. The mosque which used to consist of two floors is now only one floor due to land subsidence.

#### 2.4.4 Colonial City Facilities: Postweg Line, Post Office, Hotel, Dibya Puri Hotel

Semarang Post Office (Hoofdpost-en Telegraafkantoor) is a colonial building, with its function as postal services for the benefit of the VOC and residents inside the fort. The colonial government also built the Dibya Puri Hotel in 1847 along the great post way [46].

#### 2.4.5 Local Central Government Area (Johar Market, Kauman Mosque, Semarang Square)

The Semarang square has been around since the end of the 16th century with layouts following the standard square in Java which also has a large pavilion as the center of government [47]. The construction of the Johar Market in 1930 reduced the area of the Square east side [48]. The area of the square was cut off by the post and tram lines in the Dutch colonial period. There is a Kauman region on the West side as an Islamic village [49].

#### 2.4.6 Kulitan Village as a Historical Village

Kulitan Village was a place for successful leather entrepreneurs to become wealthy merchants in the colonial era. But now the condition of the village underwent physical changes because of migrants who began to settle there.

#### 2.4.7 Semarang Local Central Government in Sekayu Sekayu Village is a historical area which is full of material and non-material culture. Sekayu Village also has several characteristics of old building forms [46].

#### 2.4.8 Chinatown

Chinatown is a community settlement of Chinese descent. Shop houses or townhouses are the physical characteristics of architecture in this area [50]. The Semawis market is another unique place of interest in this settlement, where various kinds of goods and especially food products are sold.

#### 2.4.9 Lawang Sewu

Lawang Sewu is the Headquarters of the Dutch East Indies Railroad (NIS = Nederlandsch Indische Spoorweg Maaatschappij) which was inaugurated on July 1, 1907 [51]. During the independence era the Indonesian government gave the building to PT Kereta Api Indonesia as a regional office (1994). Now the government uses this building as a tourist attraction in Semarang City [52].

### 2.5 Eastern River Corridor

The Dutch Colonialists built this side of the River in 1850, with the aim of building a new port in the Kalibaru area [53]. Figure 3 describes some of the old buildings that cross this Semarang river which includes:
and settled down in the Bertam River for about five years. In 1402 they moved to a small fishing village up the west coast of Malay Peninsula that had a good port which was free of mangroves and a hill that could be easily defended. The place was then called Malacca.

The Portuguese took control of Malacca in 1511. Malacca became a strategic base for the development of the Portuguese in the East Indies and was ruled by them for 130 years. In 1641, the Dutch got control over Malacca. However, the Dutch were not interested in making Malacca a trade center between East and West but more concerned with the development of Batavia (Jakarta) in Indonesia. The remaining artifacts of the old city, which still have some preserved human values to fill the space, and to make it a historical city, have been listed on the UNESCO World Heritage Site since July 7, 2008.

### 2.7 Cultural Heritage Buildings along the Malacca River

The Malacca government groups this historic area into several categories according to the characteristics of the area. According to Baroldin [57] classifying several zones namely, Core Zone, and Buffer Zone. City Area Cleared Land (green zone) is a green open area that separates historic areas. The government allows the Built-Up Area (light blue zone). There are several historic buildings and attractions shown in Figure 4 below.

Malacca has its own characteristics as a conservation area [58]. Figure 5 below shows a row of old buildings along the Malacca River.

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2.5.1 Willem III Lighthouse

The Willem III Lighthouse (established in 1884) functions as a tower to oversee port activities, as well as a guide for ships from the Java Sea. The purpose of the construction of Willem III Lighthouse at that time was to facilitate the fleet traffic of VOC ships entering the port. As a result of land subsidence and tidal flooding, the ground floor of the Willem III lighthouse tower is almost always flooded with sea water.

2.5.2 Syahbandar Tower

The Dutch colonial government built the Syahbandar Tower (uitkijk) in Sleko Village Street during the industrial and agricultural distribution period (19th and 20th centuries). This tower serves to oversee ship traffic in the Semarang River near the trade office area.

2.5.3 Old City

Semarang Old City has a row of heritage architectural structures as a tangible cultural heritage site. Currently Old City has carried out revitalization activities and is also in the process of being one of the World Heritage objects, by submitting itself to the World Heritage committee, an institution under UNESCO [54].

### 2.6 Malacca World Heritage Site as Best Practice

Malacca and George Town, historic cities of the Straits of Malacca developed over 500 years in trading and cultural exchanges between East and West in the Straits of Malacca [55]. The influences of Asia and Europe have endowed the towns with a specific multicultural heritage that is both tangible and intangible. With its government buildings, churches, squares and forts, Malacca demonstrates the early stages of this history originating in the 15th-century Malay sultanate and the Portuguese and Dutch periods beginning in the early 16th century [55].

The history of Malacca might have been started far before the arrival of Parameswara from Tamna-hsi. Malacca had already been mentioned in a Javanese poem in 1324, and it was mentioned again within a list of Siamese dependencies in 1360. The Arabs had long known this place as Malaca, or “the market”. After Singapore was destroyed by Siamese forces in 1398, Parameswara escaped through Seletar River to Muar...
2.8 World Heritage Listing Criteria

These are the most complete surviving historic city centers on the Straits of Malacca with a multi-cultural living heritage originating from the trade routes. The Criteria for listing Malacca as World Heritage are based on the Operational Guidelines 2005.

Criterion (II): Malacca and George Town represent exceptional examples of multi-cultural trading towns in East and Southeast Asia, forged from the mercantile and exchanges of Malay, Chinese, and Indian cultures and three successive European colonial powers for almost 500 years, each with its imprints on the architecture and urban form, technology and monumental art.

Criterion (III): Malacca and George Town are living testimony to the multi-cultural heritage and tradition of Asia, and European colonial influences. This multi-cultural tangible and intangible heritage is expressed in the great variety of religious buildings of different faiths, ethnic quarters, many languages, worship and religious festivals, dances, costumes, art and music, food, and daily life.

Criterion (IV): Malacca and George Town reflect a mixture of influences which have created a unique architecture, culture and townscape without parallel anywhere in East and South Asia.

Semarang has similarities with Malacca because of historical aspects, heritage buildings and similarity in owning a river, but Semarang has two river estuaries that have different functions. Besides that, Semarang was once a Portuguese target to dominate after Malacca; but this target was unsuccessful because it did not produce economic benefits for them. The Netherlands then emerged because of the crowded fort as a preferred route to avoid Portuguese in Malacca. The existence of this route benefited the VOC to form a new trading center.

Semarang also has the potential to develop heritage areas because of the similarity of characters to Malacca. Therefore, researchers understand that UNESCO has a special purpose, because not all aspects of culture and nature are able to be approved directly to meet the potential requirements to enter the World Heritage List. If referring to the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, 2002, which applies to the Malacca region, this paper classifies several criteria:

Criterion (II): The Semarang Old River has the potential as a multi-cultural trading city, because the area is a meeting site between multi-ethnic traders such as from Chinatown, Malay Village and Kauman.
Criterion (III): The Semarang River area is a living witness of Asia’s multi-cultural heritage and culture, as well as the Dutch colonial influence. This cultural heritage includes historic buildings in the old city area, while the intangible values appear in various traditions and worship festivals such as the Dugderan ritual crowd [61].

Criterion (IV): The Semarang River area is a reflection of a mixture of influences that has created a unique city’s architecture, culture and landscape.

2.9 Direction of the adaptive reuse model

There are heritage buildings on the Semarang River banks that have the potential to develop into heritage areas. However, the remaining buildings are almost partially or completely damaged, for example, Marabunta, and Syahbandar Tower; although Semarang City government has revitalized several old buildings in the historical area. The buildings have adopted the concept of adaptive reuse. Adaptive reuse is a process to modify or change something to replace the function with a new function by abandoning the old function [62]. Adaptive reuse is a good solution in reviving obsolete buildings to accommodate the latest needs of users as well as being environmentally friendly [63]. Transplanting is a remodeling type that is right for both building conditions [64].

3 Conclusion

3.1 Conclusions

The historical and geographical context, festivals, and space of daily life are the three most representative components for spirit of place.

Based on its history, the Semarang River at that time became a bustling port. According to the serial old map, it was revealed that there were bustling port layouts consisting of Pabean, local government area, Chinatown, European Settlement, Malay Village, Java Village, Mosque, Temple and others. Several villages and the port still exist along the Semarang River (Figures 2 and 3). Malay, Arab and Indian traders at that time built the Malay village with the natural port in 1400.

Based on the geography of Semarang city, according to some historians, there were already quite an active trade and maritime relations between China and Java around 1416.

Based on spatial aspects, the uniqueness of the Semarang river shows the traces of four former local central governments. These four traces of central government along the Semarang River prove that the river was a main transportation line from inland to the port.

Based on the aspects of tradition, the diversity of Chinatown architectural culture with its Chinese architecture, Kauman Village with its Islamic Architecture, the Old City with its colonial buildings, and Malay Village also prove that this area once had a landing place for sailors from various nations.

Malacca is a good example in implementing revitalization, both the physicality of buildings and spirit of place until the Malacca region becomes a successful heritage tourism destination and in accordance with UNESCO World Heritage Listing Criteria.
Based on the excavation of the field and building inventory and spirit of place, Semarang City has the same potential to conserve river areas as in Malacca. Historical aspects, geographical layouts, and traditions that still exist are taken into combined consideration of the tangible and intangible aspects in the urban context. The Spirit of place findings along the Semarang river, as a multi-ethnic port area in the time of the spread of Islamic Religion (14-15th century), a trading port for the VOC, and a local central government offices, have a strong relationship and become an exclusive aspect of a place [40]. This Spirit of place finding is a historical river landscape that forms the basis for conservation development in terms of intangible and tangible heritage, as well as the authenticity. Many of old buildings and canal facilities need inventories to be made as blueprint which signifies the importance of conserving and controlling the built heritage.

3.2 Recommendations

There are coastal areas along the coastline in Indonesia that were once recorded as cities of the World port at the time, including Semarang City. The progressive sedimentation and tidal flood processes in Semarang City are very threatening to damage the coastal area and the sitting rivers which were a means of transportation for large boats in the past. As a result, some objects of cultural heritage as artifacts are very vulnerable to damage. The inventory of buildings and traditions along the river will strengthen conservation and revitalization efforts in the area based on the spirit of place concept.

There is a similarity between the Semarang River and Malacca, which involves their physicality (river width and character) and historical roots as a city in the 13-15th centuries. The uniqueness of the Semarang is determined by a historical space along the river that is associated with the growth of the city which started from the crowded port to the local central government. It is very important for the government to conserve the Semarang river and port as a historical river corridor.

Using Malacca as best practice does not close the possibility to develop this region into a heritage area or even a world city heritage.

Acknowledgment

The authors thank the anonymous referees for their constructive feedback. This research was supported through the funding from Engineering Faculty, Universitas Diponegoro for funding the research with Contract Number 145/UN7.5.3.2/HK/2020 and the Ministry of Research and Technology 2020, research scheme applied research grants with Contract Number 257-91/UN7.6.1/PP/ 2020.

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