

# Preserving the whole Semarang old city, Learning from La Defense

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## Abstract

Heritage area in Semarang facing many threats because of the conflict of interest between the land-value and the historical-value of the building. That conflict triggered a “War” between the building owner sighted with Capitalistic interest, based on the profit of the real-property and the public interest of a historical building. That threat is a long live threat and that’s why we need some solutions to conserve many heritage buildings in Semarang. La Defense in Paris city can be a model to treat an old-city like Semarang. The rigorous separation between Old-city zone and the New-zone for development can be an alternative solution of the Semarang nowadays city.

**Keywords: Semarang Old city, La defense-Paris, rigorous separation**

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At the year 2007 I wrote a paper “Intentionally Decaying Strategy”<sup>1</sup>, wherein I describe a condition of some threats to Semarang Old city. I depict that Heritage area in Semarang facing many threats because of the conflict of interest between the land-value and the historical-value of the building. That conflict triggered a “War” between the building owner sighted with Capitalistic interest, based on the profit of the real-property and the public interest of a historical building. That “War” involving many “actors” and stake-holders, e.g. the investor, the Government, the inhabitants, the co-inhabitants, the citizen etc. In that “War” many strategies were being used, among them, what the writer calls Intentionally Decaying Strategy. By this I mean a strategy - planned by the owner of a heritage building - to put many efforts to destruct the owner's (heritage) building on behalf of profit making. So far, many of the architectural heritages in Semarang has suffered Intentionally Decaying Strategy, done by the owner themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> Presented for The third International Conference on Environment and Urban Management, "City marketing, Heritage and Identity", 24rd - 25th August 2007, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Semarang, Indonesia.

## The ex-First Railway Station at Jurnatan,

Has been abandoned, tore down, demolished and then was developed as *Rukos* ("Rumah Toko", Shop-houses). At that moment, rose a Magic word :*Ruilslag* (Holland, *Tukar-guling*, Substitution). On that case *Ruilslag* means: to substitute a (Heritage) building on a (very) strategic location, with a new building on another location, usually out of town. While on the (very) strategic location commercial buildings would be developed. The word *Ruilslag* was then noted as a Magic and very dangerous word to the Heritage building in Semarang. On the *Ruilslag* movement, the Actors are the Government Officials, the *Anggota Dewan* (House of Representatives) as the "Owner", the Investor as the Developer. In the 2000s, after 20 years of its first development, this complex, Jurnatan, was developed again with the recent facades.



Figure 2 The First railway station



Figure 1. Shop house developed on the former site of First railway station in Semarang

## The Paragon project

The Paragon project clearly explains the phenomena too. The heritage GRIS (Gedoeng Rakjat Indonesia Semarang) building demolished to be a site for a superblock Paragon, hotel, mall & restaurant.



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1

Figure 3 Existing site, then developed for Paragon mall & hotel



Figure 4 The old GRIS heritage building that has been demolished



Figure 5 Artist imaging of GRIS old building on PARAGON facade

**Jalan Raden Patah, Little Nederlands**

Jalan Raden Patah, wellknown as Little Nederlands or Kota Lama (Old City), was a district of the old Semarang Colonial City. But it has suffered many Intentionally Decaying Strategy on the buildings there.



Figure 6 Illegal demolishing of heritage building

## Learning from La Defense, Paris

La Défense is a major business district of the Paris Metropolitan Area, located in the commune of Courbevoie, just west of the city of Paris. La Défense is Europe's largest purpose-built business district with 560 hectares (5.6 million square metres) area, 72 glass and steel buildings of which 18 are completed skyscrapers, 180,000 daily workers, and 3.5 million square metres (37.7 million sq ft) of office space. Around its Grande Arche and esplanade ("le Parvis"), La Défense contains many of the Paris urban area's tallest high-rises<sup>2</sup>.



Figure 8 Paris old City (foreground) & La Défense (background)



Figure 7 Paris (Old city) & La Défense

Since its creation in 1958, the business district of La Défense has become one of the major economic clusters in the metropolitan area and internationally renowned. La Défense strictly separates Paris (old) city with the new area for developing the city known as La Défense. The urban form of La Défense is based on overlaying urban functions, a large elevated pedestrian plaza on the historic axis and a high density through high-rise buildings<sup>3</sup>. Firmly anchored in its strong relationship with central Paris, La Défense has long been a modern extension or counterpart to the historical centre. Initially little attention was paid to its surrounding territory. The decision of the French state for the construction of La Défense on the territories of the suburban municipalities of Puteaux and Courbevoie led to important demolitions. A quarter of the territory of Puteaux was demolished to construct the new business district. From that moment on, the further development of this territory was conducted and overshadowed by this economic cluster outside central Paris<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia. the free encyclopedia

<sup>3</sup> Horn, Christian, LA DÉFENSE, A UNIQUE BUSINESS DISTRICT – FRANCE,

<sup>4</sup> Horn, Christian, LA DÉFENSE, A UNIQUE BUSINESS DISTRICT – FRANCE,



Figure 10 Bird's eye view & Grande Arche



Figure 9 the separated zone between Paris Old-city and La Defense as the New development area

Around 1950, the French state decided to create an international business district. A state-controlled firm, called EPAD (today named EPADESA), was created in September 1958 to buy the land, build the infrastructure, resell the developed plots and animate and manage the new business district on the municipalities of Courbevoie and Puteaux (today enlarged over parts of Nanterre). This planning operation aimed to gather in one place outside of Paris the new type of high-rise buildings. The idea was to preserve Paris's historical skyline featuring low-rise buildings and iconic structures such as the Eiffel tower and Sacré-Cœur on the Montmartre hill<sup>5</sup>.



Figure 11 Paris old city as a Conserved Heritage area

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<sup>5</sup> Horn, Christian, LA DÉFENSE, A UNIQUE BUSINESS DISTRICT – FRANCE,



## Preserving the whole Semarang old city, learning from La Defense

Semarang Old-city as a heritage area, all at once as a great asset for Semarang city and its people, is very significant to the life of the city, history, future, income resource and tourism. But Semarang Old-city facing many threats that are very close and besiege it! The Semarang mayor and House of Representatives can learn from the Modern new development held on Paris and La Defense, the strict and rigorous separation of the Old and the New Town area. It sounds like an absurd idea but it did happen in a worldly class city like Paris.



Figure 13 Proposal of Preserving the Semarang whole Old-city



Figure 12 Proposal of the new growth-poles to be?

It's never too late for Semarang to rise a next rule that separate Semarang Old-city and the New development area. Semarang had had an experience on developing modern area on an undeveloped area, which now becomes an elite area; it is "Simpang-lima"!



Figure 15 Plan of simpang-lima

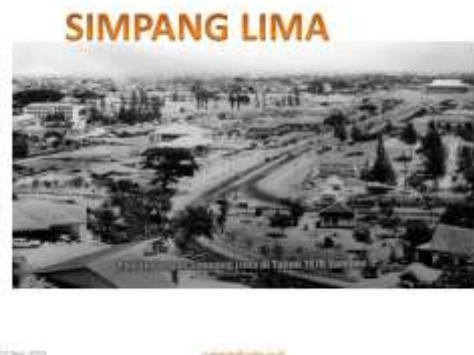


Figure 14 the undeveloped existing area for the next Simpang-lima



# SIMPANG LIMA



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1

Figure 16 Simbang-lima 2014

New  
development



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Figure 17 Semarang New development areas on many satellite areas

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