THE EPHEMERAL HISTORIC DISTRICT IN JAKARTA*

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ABSTRACT. *Preservationists conceived plans for a historic district during 1970 for the part of Jakarta that dates from 1619 and had been the commercial, official, and residential center for almost two hundred years. Efforts to establish the district have apparently failed, although several structures have been preserved as testimony to continuity in Jakarta.*

INDONESIA is a developing country where the supply of money is limited and where city officials are busy coping with present-day problems and anticipating future ones. Concern for the urban past has been less apparent than in the West, and the idea of urban restoration received its first expression in Indonesia only in 1970. This article focuses on that attempt to implement the concept of historic-district preservation in the city of Jakarta. The study opens with a description of the city's morphology during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries and then examines the preservation project known as the Proyek Pemugaran Jakarta Kota—its origins, implementation, and accomplishments.

Restoration as nearly as possible to original form was the approach selected for the historic district in Jakarta. This approach involved no new construction, with one exception, or new buildings, gates, walls, or ramparts. No structures were torn down to make way for buildings recreated from documentary or archaeological evidence, nor were streets converted into canals. There was no effort to reconstruct the area as it might have appeared at a specific time, for example, 1632, with walls, canals, and fortifications. The portion of the city selected for the project was well used, and the activities there threatened to overwhelm the historic survivals. The approach contemplated renovation of certain buildings and removal of accretions from some facades. Other elements included eviction of some current uses and adaptive reuse of buildings and open spaces, maintenance of environment and physical surroundings, and regulation of traffic flows, canals, and vistas. The goal was to create an impression of how this portion of Jakarta might have appeared at the end of the nineteenth century, certainly as it appeared at the end of the colonial period—a mixture of structures of various ages. Called a restoration, the project was more a preservation endeavor intent on preventing further change and deterioration in the oldest section of the city that had been altered markedly during the nineteenth century but still bore a morphological resemblance to colonial Batavia of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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EARLY MORPHOLOGY

The core of Batavia was guarded by ramparts and the outer canal. Although the area underwent gradual elaboration during the seventeenth century, its general morphology remained virtually unchanged. A map of Batavia, dating from 1632, shows the morphology of the town thirteen years after its founding by Jan Coen and his Dutch compatriots. Inscribed on a golden medallion given to Jacques Specx, governor-general of the Indies between 1627 and 1632, the map depicts a settlement bisected by the Ciliwong River (Fig. 1). The eastern section extended northward for two blocks and eastward for four; there were residences, public buildings, streets, and canals. The uninhabited western section had fields and a street (Utrechtstraat on later maps), but no canals. The town was surrounded by a wall with ramparts and, outside it, a canal. Another canal was inside the wall of the eastern section. The entire town was thus surrounded on all sides by water: canals on the east, south, and west; the Java Sea to the north. Also on the north was a fort surrounded by water and walls with its eastern side projecting beyond the shoreline. The river was straightened to look like a canal, and the whole settlement appeared to be a rectangle with streets and canals intersecting at right angles. The town kept that form throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The map additionally shows a Dutch church, a town hall, and a square, which was named Taman Fatahillah by the restoration project after an Indonesian Muslim teacher and leader who led the repulse of a Portuguese attempt to land at the mouth of the Ciliwong River in 1527. Twentieth-century preservationists sought to emulate the vista formed by the street leading from the town hall to the fort. The settlement in 1632 was probably not as complete as shown on the map, but from a preservationist perspective it accurately shows the core of the settlement on the eastern side of the river.[1]

Names of streets and canals appeared in the key to a map by Clemendt de Jonge that depicted the settlement in 1650 (Fig. 2). A map of the 1770 layout published by Petrius Conradi in 1780 also contained these names (Fig. 3). The north-south axis for the Heerestraat, now called Jalan Pintu Besar Utara, the Princenstraat, now Jalan Cengkeh, and the Tijgersgracht, now Jalan Pos Kota, is visible on these maps. The Leeuwinnengracht, the Groenestraat, the Groenegracht, and the Amsterdamsegracht—the last three being former rivulets into the Ciliwong River—were also shown on the maps. The Dutch changed the natural landscape to fit their conceptions of town planning, deepened and straightened the rivulets, and moved the mud from the channels onto adjacent land to increase elevation.[2]

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[1] J. Brandes, Een Plattegrond van Batavia van 1632, *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Lande- en Volkenkunde*, Vol. 43, 1901, 248–274; F. de Haan, Oud Batavia-Platen Album (Batavia: G. Kolff, 1919), plate G8; and F. de Haan, Oud Batavia (Batavia: G. Kolff, 2nd ed., 1922), Vol. 1, p. 91.

[2] de Haan, Oud Batavia, footnote 1 above, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, pp. 46 and 96.

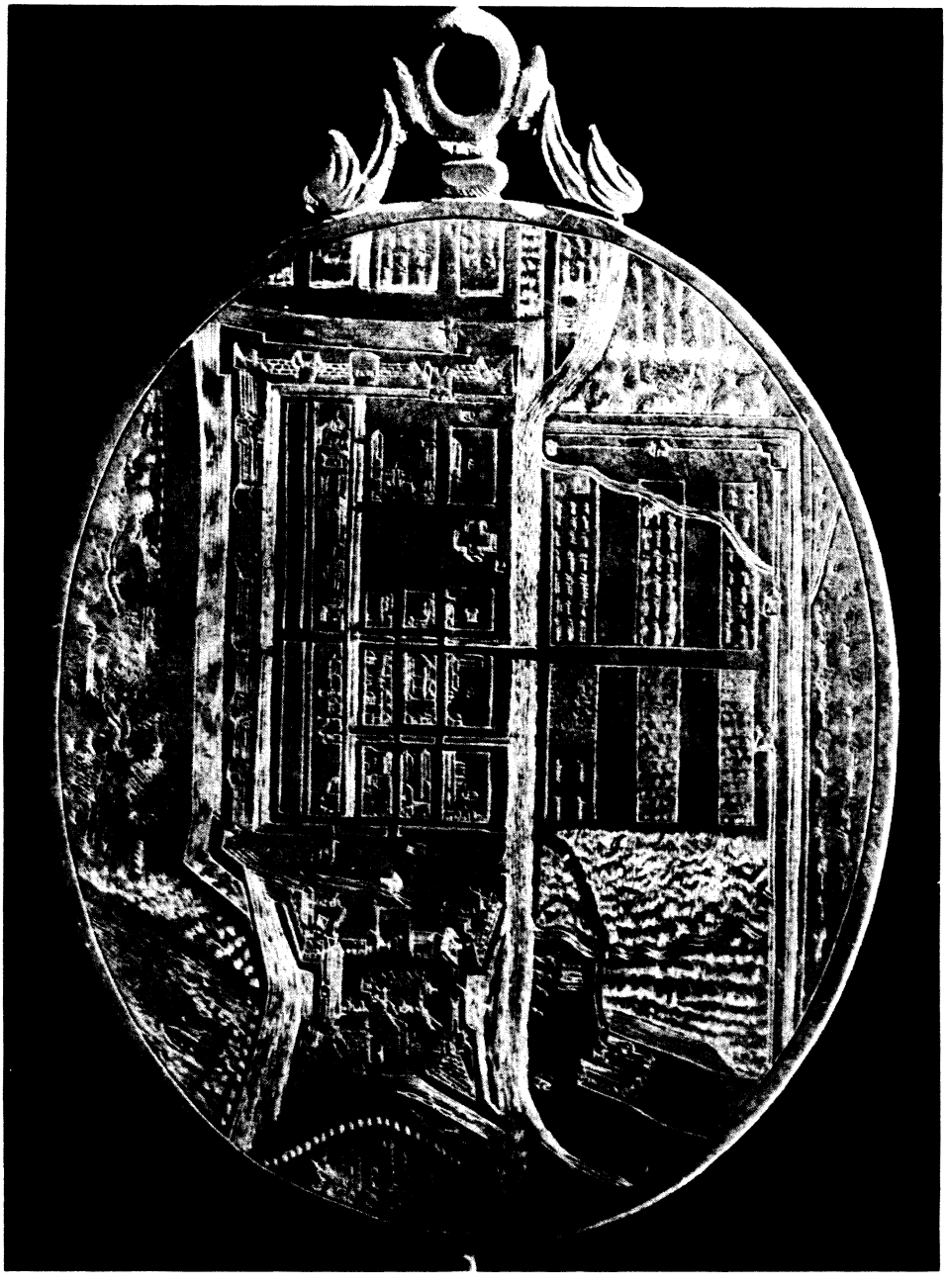

FIG. 1—Map of Batavia in 1632 showing streets, canals, fortifications, town hall, and a square. *Source:* de Haan, Oud Batavia-Platen Album, text footnote 1.

Canals had not yet been dug on the western side of the principal stream, which the early Dutch called *De Groote Rivier* and by the twentieth century was known as the Kali Besar. The Maleischegracht and the Rhinocerogracht, dug in 1639, appeared on the de Jonge map. That map also displayed the

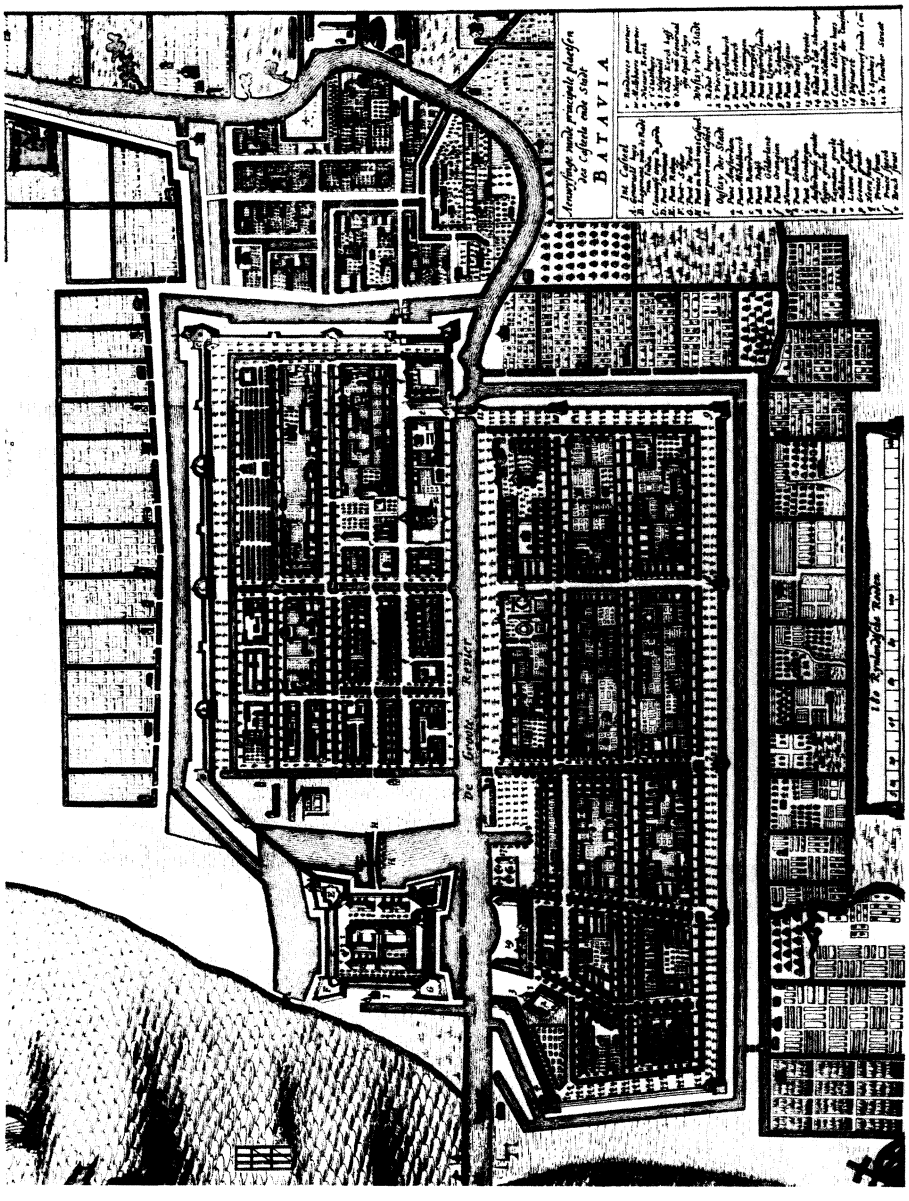

FIG. 2—Map of Batavia in 1650 by Clemendt de Jonge. *Source:* de Haan, Oud Batavia, text footnote 1, Vol. 1, insert back cover.

Jonckergracht, later renamed Roea Mallaccagracht, and the Utrechtstraat as well as the extension of the town to the north on the western side of the river with additional canals and streets.[3] The Kaimansgracht was shown on the 1650 map. A comparison of it and the 1632 layout indicates that canals were not always included in initial town planning but were dug on demand,

[3] Brandes, Een Plattegrond, footnote 1 above, p. 264.

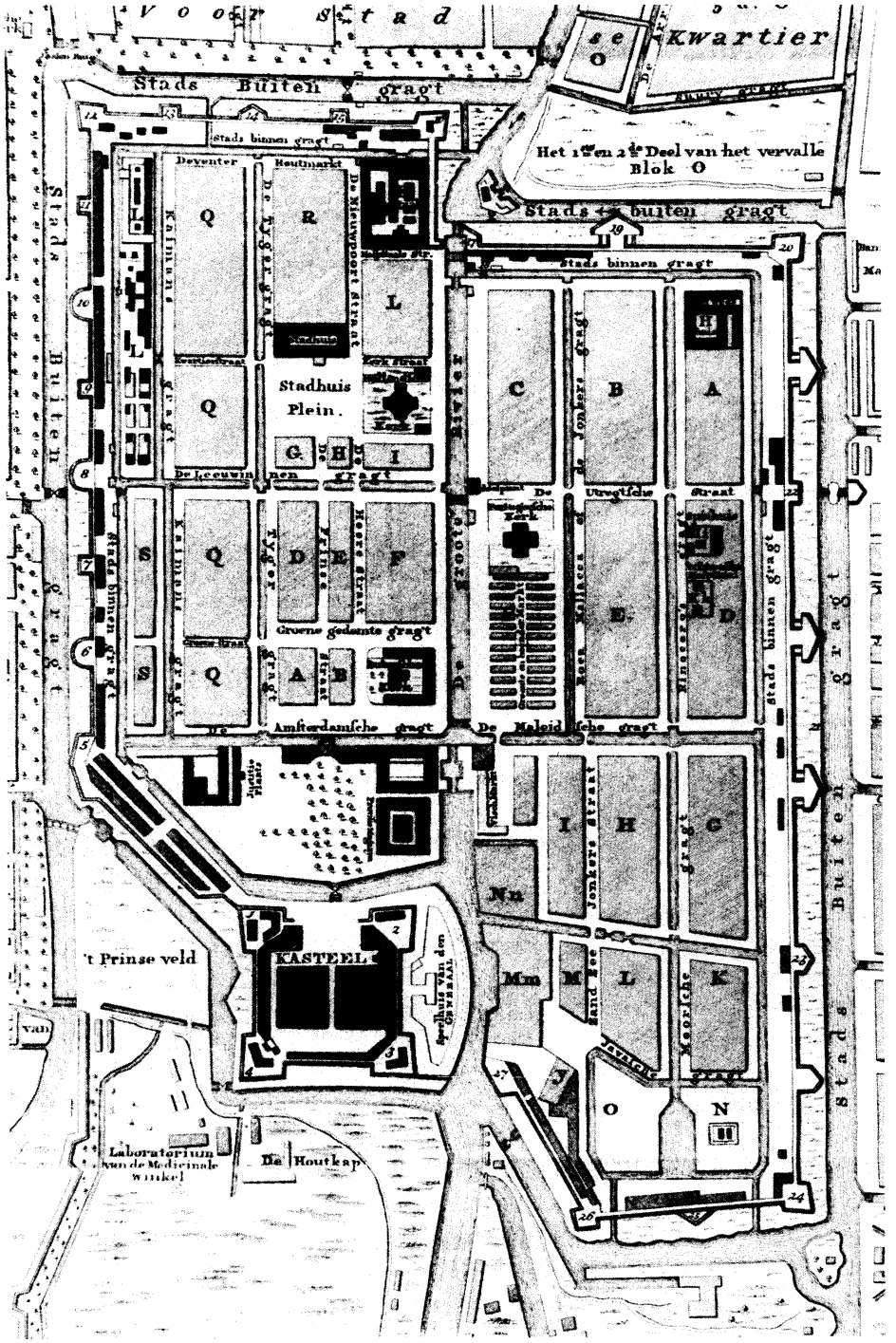

FIG. 3—Batavia in 1770. Morphology was much as it was in 1650, and the town-hall square was clearly marked. *Source:* de Haan, Oud Batavia, text footnote 1, Vol. 1, insert back cover.

sometimes by converting streets to the purpose. Canals were advantageous for commerce and distribution of goods, but they also had disadvantages.

The disadvantages were related to deposition of sediment and low water levels. As settlement continued, the canals were subjected to silting and filling. Early in 1654 colonial officials mentioned that the Tijgersgracht and other cross canals on the eastern side of the river were very shallow and filled with sediment. Boats could not use them, and they emitted a vile vapor. They were deepened with costs borne by owners of adjoining property.[4] A comparison of the shoreline on the two maps reveals that it had prograded far distant from the fort by 1650. Problems with canals were characteristic and continued into the next century.

According to a description of Batavia as it was in 1724 by François Valentijn, the city was located on marshy ground where fog was so thick at daybreak that ships in the harbor were invisible, but sun and breezes dissipated the fog by late morning. The city was surrounded by a wall of coral stone, which was fortified with twenty-two ramparts, each named for a Dutch city. Bisected by the big river that flowed from the interior mountains, the city had eight streets, sixteen canals, and fifty-six bridges. The canals were lined with beautiful vegetation that gave fragance and shade throughout the day. Valentijn asserted that the Tijgersgracht was the most beautiful canal in the city.[5] By the end of its first century, Batavia had acquired its distinctive colonial characteristics.

The canals were still shallow and filled with sediments. Some of them were completely dry at low water during most of the day, especially in May with the dry or eastern monsoon. The river was unable to provide water to the canals after the earthquake of 1699, which also rendered useless attempts to keep riverbanks free of deposition.[6] The canals had to be dredged once a year during June and July. Even so, persons who resided along the canal banks had to remove silt and clean them throughout the year, for within a month or two of cleaning, they were again clogged with silt.

Jan Hooyman recorded his observations fifty years after Valentijn. Hooyman also observed the persistent lack of water and mentioned the remedies. Water was diverted from the Sidani River west of the city to increase the water flow into the canal system during the dry monsoon. Although the lack of water persisted from May to November, widespread flooding marked the wet monsoon season.[7] He also remarked that water was diverted from the Sonthar River east of Batavia to augment the flow in the canal system.[8] Shallowness and low water were not the only problems with the canals.

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[4] *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Vol. 46, 1903, p. 376.

[5] François Valentijn's Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien (edited by S. Keijzer; Amsterdam: Wed. J. C. van Kestern, 1862), Vol. 3, pp. 510–556.

[6] Valentijn, footnote 5 above, p. 513.

[7] Jan Hooyman, Beschriyving van de Stad Batavia, *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap der Kunsten en Wetenschappen* Vol. 1, 1779, p. 44.

[8] Jan Hooyman, Verhandeling over den Tegenwoordigen Staat van der Landbouw in de Ommelanden van Batavia, *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap der Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, Vol. 1, 1779, pp. 186–187.

Canals produced environmental problems that detracted from their enjoyment. For example, they stank. Cleaning of them by residents left piles of mud in front of houses that faced the canals. The piles gave off an unpleasant smell, not surprising because of the household debris that was tossed into the canals.[9] Flies were also a problem: abundant and hovering under trees and around the mud piles, their numbers seemed to increase in the evening.

Valentijn identified five churches: two Dutch, two Portuguese, and one Malay. The principal Dutch church was located on the western side of the town-hall square, now Taman Fatahillah. The original church on the site was replaced by a later one that was depicted on a sketch of the square by Johannes Rach and his school of artists (1763–1782). That sketch played an important role in restoration of the square (Fig. 4).[10] Other structures that Valentijn recorded included a hotel, an old men's home, a house for the destitute, an orphans' court, a hospital, and a home for elderly male Chinese. He listed eight markets. The town hall that Valentijn saw was a replacement for two earlier structures.[11] He considered it to be one of the most beautiful buildings in the city. The structure extended across one end of the square from Jalan Pintu Besar Utara to Jalan Pos Kota. It had two stories with five window bays on each side of the entrance portal. The letters V.O.C. appeared above the door on the front of the building as did the Batavian coat of arms and the Dutch lion. Over the roof were a tower and a cupola topped by a weathervane of a woman holding a sail in her right hand and arrows in her left. Valentijn estimated the height of the tower to be about the same as the tower on the town hall in Amsterdam. Approximately a century later, another observer remarked on the attractive simplicity of the structure, but he also noted many functional changes that had occurred with the shift of the town center to another location.[12] The structure has survived to the present day, but other elements of the early morphology underwent considerable change that would limit the scope of historic preservation in the twentieth century.

Nineteenth-Century Morphological Change

Vast changes occurred in the physical form of Batavia during the nineteenth century. The countryside appeared to be safe for settlement, and Europeans began to build houses outside the walls along the Anjol and Molenvliet canals. The administration of the settlement moved inland to Weltevreden, now Jakarta Pusat, and businesses and residents followed. The

[9] Valentijn, footnote 5 above, p. 515.
[10] J. de Loos-Haaxman, Johannes Rach en Zijn Werk (Batavia: G. Kolff, 1928), p. 31.
[11] Valentijn, footnote 5 above, p. 517; and S. Kalff, Het Bataviaasche Stadhuis, *Nederlandsch Indie Oud en Nieuw*, 7e Jaargang, No. 2, 11 April 1923, pp. 28–31.
[12] C. S. W. de Hogendorp, Coup D'Oeil sur L'Ile de Java et Les Autres Possessions Neerlandaises dans L'Archipel des Indes (Brussels: C. J. Mat, 1830), p. 232.

original site was abandoned, according to some scholars during the French occupation of the Netherlands (1803–1811), but others argued that the shift began by the end of the eighteenth century.[13] The fort, ramparts, city walls, and all exterior works were razed during the administration of Governor-General Willem Daendals (1808–1811). At first he considered removing the capital to Surabaya, but he later began to build a new center several kilometers to the south of the old settlement. Persons who could afford the move went to the new center, and the old one was left increasingly to decay.[14] From 1811 to 1816 the colony was occupied by the British. At the end of that regime, Batavia contained only Portuguese, Chinese, and older residents who did not want to relocate.

Among the principal reasons for abandonment of the settlement was the physical geography of the site. The low-lying land was marshy, poorly drained, subjected to flooding, unhealthy, and a breeding place for mosquitoes and hence malaria. Daendals thought that the streets in the original town were too narrow for a tropical climate: placed so closely together, the houses hindered the circulation of air. Canals continued to be a problem; filled with muddy and stagnant water, they were neglected and fell into disrepair. Europeans considered the Chinese cemeteries near the city to be undesirable, and clumps of trees gave off noxious odors. The filth and debris collected from the city at the drowned mouth of the Ciliwong River were exposed at low tide, and onshore breezes carried the smell into the city.[15] Reasons for moving were many, and the shift was not unexpected.

Problems with the canals came to the fore again during the administration of Governor-General van der Capellen (1818–1826). He ordered some canals like the Roea Mallacca and the Maleischegracht filled and converted to streets. Closing off some canals increased the force of the current in the remaining ones. Other efforts included cleaning the banks of the Kali Besar between the city and the Java Sea. To maintain those banks in good condition, the city administration gave them to Chinese residents with the expressed condition that they be used for kitchen gardens or other forms of cultivation. To encourage the flow of water in the river by restraining silting at its mouth, a pier or mole was erected there and extended some distance into the sea. Confined to its bed the river acquired a new force that hindered accumulation of sediments and allowed passage along the stream at all times.[16] Nevertheless, the canals were doomed. A hallmark of Dutch town planning, they were unsuited to the terrain of Batavia. For two hundred years they had been maintained with difficulty, and by the nineteenth century they no longer served social or commercial purposes.

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[13] Brandes, footnote 2 above, pp. 249–252; and P. J. Veth, Java: Geographisch, Ethnologisch, Historisch (Haarlem: De Erven F. Bohn, 2nd ed., 1903), Vol. 3, p. 415.
[14] de Hogendorp, footnote 12 above, p. 222.
[15] de Hogendorp, footnote 12 above, p. 222.
[16] de Hogendorp, footnote 12 above, p. 225.

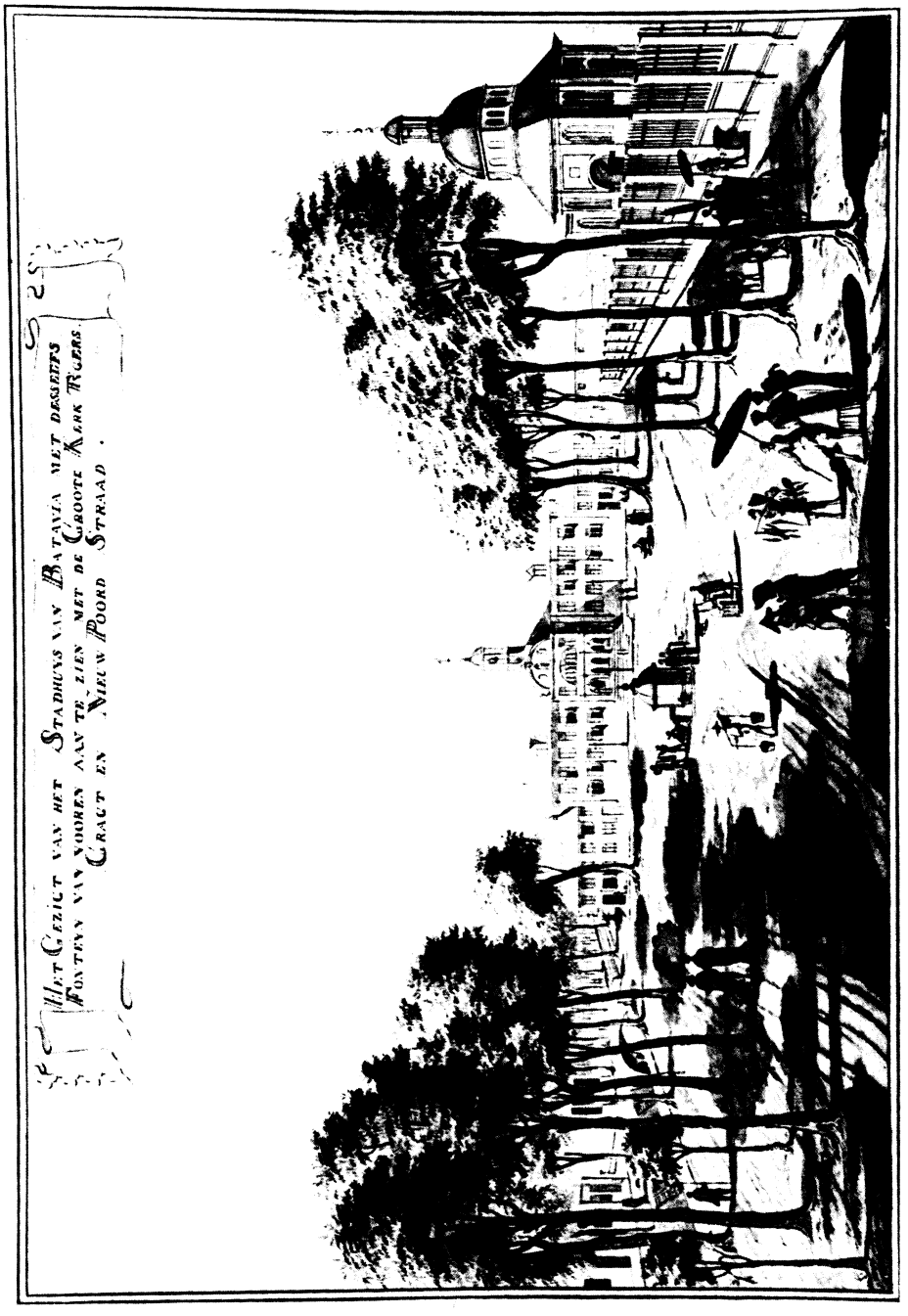

FIG. 4—Town hall and its square in middle of eighteenth century. Tree-lined Tijgersgracht is on the left. *Source:* de Loos-Haaxman, text footnote 10, p. 31.

By the end of the nineteenth century the morphology of the old town of Batavia differed very much from its characteristics during the previous two centuries. Features that had made the settlement unique among Asian cities and colonial capitals were gone. Successive administrations had filled in the interior canals to convert them to streets; the fort and most of the outer and inner canals on either side of the wall had been razed. New structures like the Court of Justice had arisen on the town-hall square. These differences in morphology that extended into the twentieth century defined the limits to which any preservation project might aspire. A morphological duplication of the old town as it was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would be difficult. An economic and social portrayal of the early settlement would have doubtful feasibility. A re-creation of the town as it was sometime in the seventeenth century might be exciting from a Western viewpoint, but such a concept was unacceptable to Indonesian thinking, was far too costly, and was impossible to implement because of the commercial and residential displacements that would have to accompany the creation of such a district. The directors of the historic-district project had little choice except to focus on the district as it probably appeared from the end of the nineteenth century to 1940 when the disruptions that ended the colonial era began.

District Plan

The historic district was to encompass the land in the eastern part of the original settlement from the town hall and its square northward to the Pasar Ikan, a fish market, on the inner harbor. This area included the Kali Besar and extended southward to Glodok, a Chinese residential zone located just south of the old city walls, as well as to the offshore islands of Onrust, Kelor, Cipir, and Sakit. The section of prime importance was the old town hall and square northward to the Pasar Ikan, a distance of one and one-half kilometers. Although this core contained several buildings of historic value, most structures were intrusive. None of the buildings aroused the interest of preservationists, but en masse they would give substance to the proposed district. The ones with historic value were the nineteenth-century Justice building, the eighteenth-century town hall, and several seventeenth-century warehouses from the era of V.O.C., the private trading company that ruled Indonesia for almost two centuries. In spite of the vast changes during that period, age, historical association, and limited survivals were reasons enough for the Indonesian government to undertake creation of the historic-district program.

Other factors were considerations that buttressed the intellectual appeal of the district concept. The role of museums was the most abstract of them. The government hoped that the artifacts and information about Indonesian history would contribute to a sense of national identity among Indonesian visitors. The district could also serve as an outlet for native handicrafts, a

function urged by a consultant from the International Labor Organization. If the project was well executed, it could foster international tourism and support hotels and other facilities in Jakarta. Tourism appeared to be the leading motive for the commitment of personnel and financing for the project from the Indonesian government. During the late 1960s Jakarta was taking its place as a world capital and a center of economic life, although the city continued to have a reputation as a collection of villages in many circles. Jakarta lacked a focus for tourists who merely stayed overnight on their way to the beaches of Bali or the temples around Yogyakarta. Nationalism, tourism, and intellectual appeal combined to support the concept of a historic district as a component in development of the city and reinforced efforts to preserve the few square kilometers of landuses and structures in the face of constant change.

Change threatened to overpower this small section of Jakarta with congestion, heavy traffic, and large numbers of people. By 1970 the city had a population of five million persons and was growing rapidly. High-intensity landuses had encroached on the district, and future activities could predictably engulf it. The square was being used as a bus terminal, while the former Justice building was headquarters for the mayor of West Jakarta and the former town hall was a barracks. These landuses surrounded the square and dominated its open space. Unused buildings like old warehouses were endangered by further decay, and the Pasar Ikan was simply overrun by masses of people engaged in their daily routines. However, these conditions and circumstances do not fully explain why the concept of a historic district was embraced in the 1970s. An alternative landuse was the immediate catalyst.

Road development was the alternative landuse. By 1970 Jakarta was a physically expanding city. Its master plan, among other things, proposed locations for new roads that promised increased speed of transportation and improved access among parts of the city. Planners projected constructing two roads in the district: one to the south and another to the north. The southern road would come from Tanggerang, an area west of Jakarta, and would lead to Jalan Jacatra. The northern road would connect the new civilian airport west of the city with the port of Tanjung Priok. They would have been major roads that would have severely disturbed historic vestiges that remained even from the nineteenth century. After a yearlong deliberation, city planners agreed instead to widen an existent road to the south of the railway station and to abandon plans for the northern road.[17] Dropping the scheme for the two new roads augured well for a historic district and brought about a change in the master plan of the city. Preservationists regarded the change as an achievement vital to the success of the district.

[17] Interview with W. P. Tjiong, director, Department of Building, Jakarta, 7 August 1973.

City planners were not the only persons or groups that had to be convinced of the desirability of a historic district.

Preservationists appealed to other members of the city administration mostly to gain money and workers to implement the project. They explained that restoration would be less expensive and might be more effective than new construction in revitalizing the area, especially from the viewpoint of tourism. The director of the Department of Development and the governor of Jakarta espoused the restoration approach in October 1970.[18] During the course of the ensuing year, not only the Department of City Planning but also other departments and the city council accepted the approach as policy. Ultimately seven governmental agencies—the departments of Public Works, City Planning, Sanitation, Parks, Traffic, Tourism, and Industry—incorporated into their budgets portions of the cost of implementing the historic district.[19] The mayor of West Jakarta also gave his support, and the vice-governor of the city headed a steering committee that included members from the departments of Tourism, Archaeology, and Museums.[20] With that range of support, threats to the area ceased to be accidental or uncontrolled; instead they resulted from planned development sponsored by the city administration. As acceptance of the project gained momentum, proponents matured their plans and defined their notions of theory and practice in historic-district planning.

Much of the elaboration of ideas came from examination of historic-district programs in the United States and Europe. On 12 October 1972, two members of the restoration committee went there to observe and reconnoiter museums and historic districts.[21] Their research was sponsored by the John D. Rockefeller III Fund, and the initial stage of the trip was to the United States. They examined museums and historic-preservation projects in New York City, Albany, Deerfield, Sturbridge, Mystic, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Washington, D.C., Williamsburg, Boston, Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans. In mid December they were in Mexico, and later that month they arrived in Lisbon, where they observed the Gulbenkian Museum, the Maritime Museum, and the Portuguese National Archives. They next went to the Netherlands where they observed museums and restorations in Amsterdam, The Hague, Leiden, Rotterdam, and Arnhem. After further stopovers in Great Britain and France, the two men returned to Indonesia in late January 1973. In addition to the firsthand observations, the trip also yielded a large collection of books, pamphlets, and documents about estab-

[18] Interview with Tjiong, footnote 17 above.
[19] Interview with Tjiong, footnote 17 above.
[20] Government decree, Surat Keputusan Gubernur Kepala Daerah Chusus Ibukota Jakarta No, Cd.3/1/2/72, Tanggal 3 March 1972, Susunan Keanggotaan dan Personalia Badan Pelaksana Pembangunan/Pemugaran Taman Fathahillah, Wilajah Jakarta Barat.
[21] Unpublished report by G. A. Warmansjah, director of Department of Museums and History of Jakarta, 21 February 1973.

lishing and managing historic districts. Work began on implementation of the project shortly after the return of the two committee members.

IMPLEMENTATION

Three principles guided the work on the historic district: (1) replacement of high-intensity landuses with low-intensity ones; (2) beautification of areas and streets; and (3) restoration and adaptive reuse of buildings for tourism. For example, the office of the mayor of West Jakarta was moved elsewhere. As a result, the jumble of official cars and people on official business was removed from the driveway in front of the building. Pressure for space lessened on the square, and the need for the nearby bus station was eliminated. The plan called for adaptive reuse of the vacated structure: it was to be a center for performing arts with an emphasis on traditional Indonesian dances, but the building itself was not to be altered. The change was an application of the first principle listed above. Other substitutions of landuses would have greater overall effects on the new district than did the change in the former Justice building.

One change involved the bus terminal at the northern end of the square. The terminal was small—the end of the line serving residents in the northern kampongs of Jakarta. With the shift of that terminal farther northward to a site along the Kali Besar, the square then underwent reconstruction based on the sketch by Rach and his school of artists, which I mentioned earlier, and on an 1869 account that described it as the only cobbled square in Asia.[22] Excavation exposed remains of brick pathways, so the directors decided to use a combination of eighteenth-century brick paths and nineteenth-century stonework as the surface of the square (Fig. 5).[23] Shade trees to break the open space were chosen because like tamarind they were mentioned in the description of Valentijn or because the species were available, not for historical accuracy. The center of the restored square seemed empty, devoid of focus, so the directors were prepared to add a well or fountain, regardless of its authenticity. Such a structure appeared on the sketch by Rach, and workmen uncovered the foundations of a well and rebuilt it.[24] By rerouting buses and other forms of traffic and by creating passive open space, the directors sought to restore the sense of tranquility that doubtlessly prevailed on the square around the town hall in less populous times.

A third substitution of landuse occurred on the southern periphery of the square on the side occupied by the former town hall. The army barracks was moved to a different site, and the structure was then renovated (Fig. 6). Though erected between 1707 and 1710, the building was still structurally

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[22] P. J. Veth, Aardrijkskundig en Statistisch Woorden Boek van Nederlandsch Indie (Amsterdam: P. N. van Kampen, 1869), Vol. 1, pp. 103–112.

[23] Letter from Sergio dello Strologo, consultant, to J. Tahiya, president of Caltex Indonesia, 2 March 1973.

[24] *Indonesian Times*, 3 April 1973, and *Jakarta Times*, 9 April 1973.

FIG. 5—Town-hall square undergoing reconstruction in 1973. Visible are the cobbles, brick pathways, and the Justice building. (Photograph by James L. Cobban)

sound, and thick, timbered floors were still intact. The plan in 1973 was to use the building as a museum to illustrate the history of Jakarta with texts and maps. Each room was to carry the name of a person who was famous during the colonial period; however, the theme for a room would not necessarily be associated with the person after whom it was named. Colonial-era furniture was to be on display, as were Javanese weapons from the Majapahit empire (1293–1530) to the present. A historically unjustified practice was murals on the walls on the lower floor. The shift from a high-intensity use as a barracks to a low-intensity use as a museum preserved the building, decreased traffic and congestion both around the structure and the square, and contributed to the objective of beautification and aesthetic appeal.

Beautification extended to other areas of the district, especially where water surfaces existed. In most instances, cleaning up would be a more accurate description than beautification. For example, the Kali Besar no longer was suitable for shipping and transportation, the purposes for which it had been constructed. It had become a conduit to remove runoff from the city during the rainy season, which lasts from May to October. The canal contained stagnant, black water, probably a condition not much different from the situation described in historical accounts that date back to the founding of the European settlement. The canal was choked with plant growth in some places. The committee proposed that the canal be dredged, the stag-

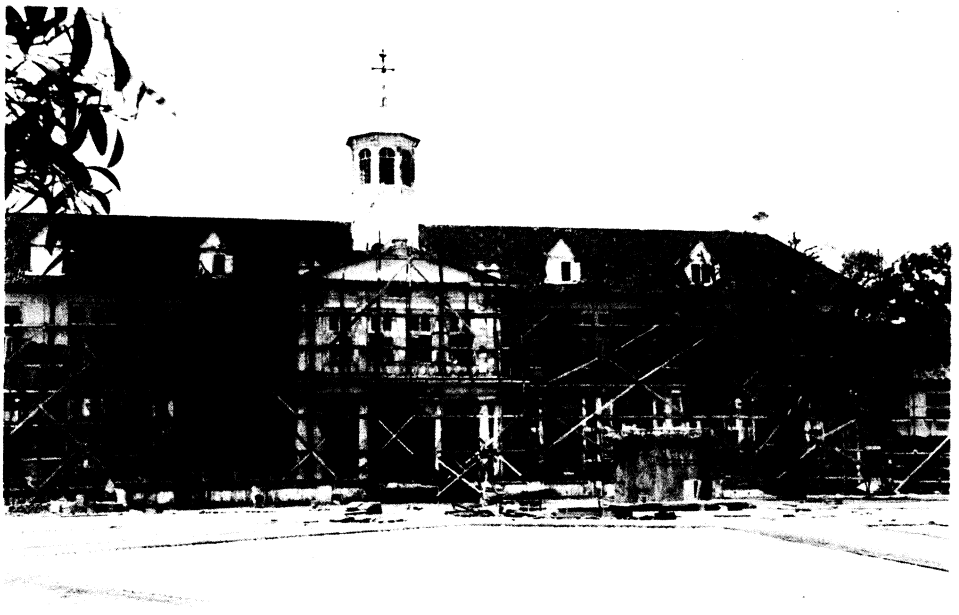

FIG. 6—Town hall undergoing renovation in 1973. Reconstructed well is the rectangular structure in right center. (Photograph by James L. Cobban)

nant water removed, and trees planted along the banks to imitate the appearance in the eighteenth century. So beautified, the canal would become a pleasant strolling route between the Taman Fatahillah and the Pasar Ikan, the two foci for the district (Fig. 7). Only the portions of the canal that showed clearly on maps from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were to be included in the historic district. A clean canal would add to the aesthetics of the district and would be attractive to both tourists and residents.

Beautification involved more than just the Kali Besar. It was undertaken in the Pasar Ikan, the northern anchor of the district. The Pasar Ikan was an area of residences and small business with several warehouses that dated from the late eighteenth century. There was to be no disruption of current landuses as had been the case around the town-hall square. The residential and commercial uses would reflect similar activities during earlier times. Efforts at beautification were to focus on cleaning the harbor, which was reached after passing through a long breakwater begun in the early 1630s and later extended to prevent silting at the mouth of the harbor. Still used by small craft, the harbor could appeal to tourists, especially in conjunction with sailing ships that frequent the outer harbor. The principal shipping site moved to the port of Tanjung Priok ten kilometers east of Jakarta after 1878 in response to the opening of the Suez Canal.[25] Debris and refuse were to be removed not only from the water but also from an adjoining strip of

[25] S. Kalff, Bataviasche Wijken, *Nederlandsch Indie Oud en Nieuw*, 9e Jaargang, No. 1, 19 August 1925.

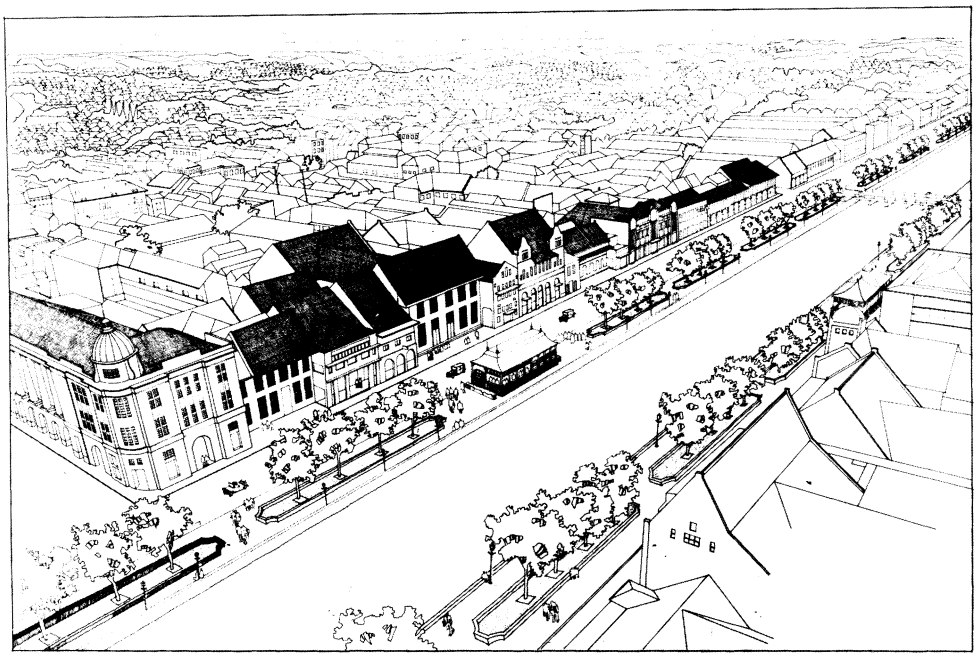

FIG. 7—Artist's drawing of the Kali Besar after beautification and tree planting. *Source:* Project Office, Kantor Gubernor, 1973.

land, and three model boats were to be anchored along the shore. The boats were to represent different periods of the history of the city. There were a replica of a United East India Company ship, a model of a sixteenth-century Portuguese vessel, and a modern Chinese junk to acknowledge the role of the Chinese minority since the founding of Batavia. Beautification of the Pasar Ikan, directed more to the water than to the land, was an integral component of the district concept.

Streets were another important component in district planning. To promote smooth-flowing traffic around the square, there was a proposal to switch from two-way to one-way movement on streets. Accretions on facades facing them were to be removed, particularly the fenestration so that buildings would regain their original appearance. It was recommended that facades along the Kali Besar be painted and the building owners should bear the costs. Also shacks were to be leveled. In the Pasar Ikan, planners wanted to remove makeshift structures that petty traders had erected against a wall of the warehouse designated for a maritime museum. The suggestion that streets carry Dutch names at least on plaques was discarded because of Indonesian nationalistic sentiment. Another proposal was to open a vista from Taman Fatahillah along Jalan Cengkeh to the Pasar Ikan. That suggestion included landscaping a street on the section of Jalan Cengkeh closest to the square so that tourists could walk directly to the Pasar Ikan and avoid the Kali Besar. As an integral component of the district, streets were to link

its different parts and to provide a sense of definition and cohesion to the district, especially for foreign tourists.

Encouragement of tourism was a leading factor in the district concept. The attractiveness for tourists was to be enhanced by adaptive reuse of some structures. The role of the town hall and the Justice building have already been mentioned. In the Pasar Ikan, a warehouse was to be converted into a maritime museum that would display the history of navigation in Indonesia. Another warehouse was to become a spice museum where the importance of spices during the Dutch period would be highlighted. Elsewhere a sea aquarium was to be restored, and a mosque, built in 1734 and allegedly the oldest surviving one in Jakarta, was to be refurbished and landscaped. It was also to become a center for Islamic history in Indonesia by additions to its library. At the other end of the district, the building that housed the History Museum in 1970 was to be redesigned as an arcade with boutiques for selling batik, spices, and handicrafts, a coffee shop, a tavern, and a restaurant named after Thomas Raffles, the British governor from 1811 to 1816. Known as the Betawi Arcade, the building was to be on the site once occupied by a Dutch Reformed church in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Adaptive reuse of the structure was primarily for tourism, and it would be an outlet for indigenous handicrafts, an important factor in evaluating the success of the district.[26]

Because of its size, the historic-district project would have been ambitious in any country. To contemplate a historic district of such scope in Indonesia was particularly praiseworthy. Located in a section of Jakarta where competition for space among landuses was intense, the model was based on Western examples with multifaceted aspects.

Unfulfilled Vision

With the project objectives as the basis for evaluation, the program has not fared well in the decade or more since its establishment. Many objectives are still unfulfilled. Some museums exist and are open to visitors, but the promise has not been achieved. The former town hall is occupied by a history museum, but there is little about the history of Jakarta in it. There is furniture from the Dutch colonial period, but it is not arranged in any order. The display thus fails to suggest living conditions, either Dutch or Indonesian, in former times. There is no display of the history of the city based on documents like maps, sketches, or records. A geological display occupies some space, and there is a small exhibit of weapons. A poorly painted mural shows a battle between Europeans and Indonesians.[27] These exhibits and displays have some interest and value, but they are far below the standard to which international tourists are accustomed.

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[26] Interviews with Sergio dello Strologo, Aji Damais, historical adviser, Amir Sutaarga, director of the National Museum, and Tjiong, footnote 17 above, August 1973.

[27] Adolf Heuken, Historical Sites of Jakarta (Jakarta: Cipta Loka Caraka, 1982), pp. 33–35.

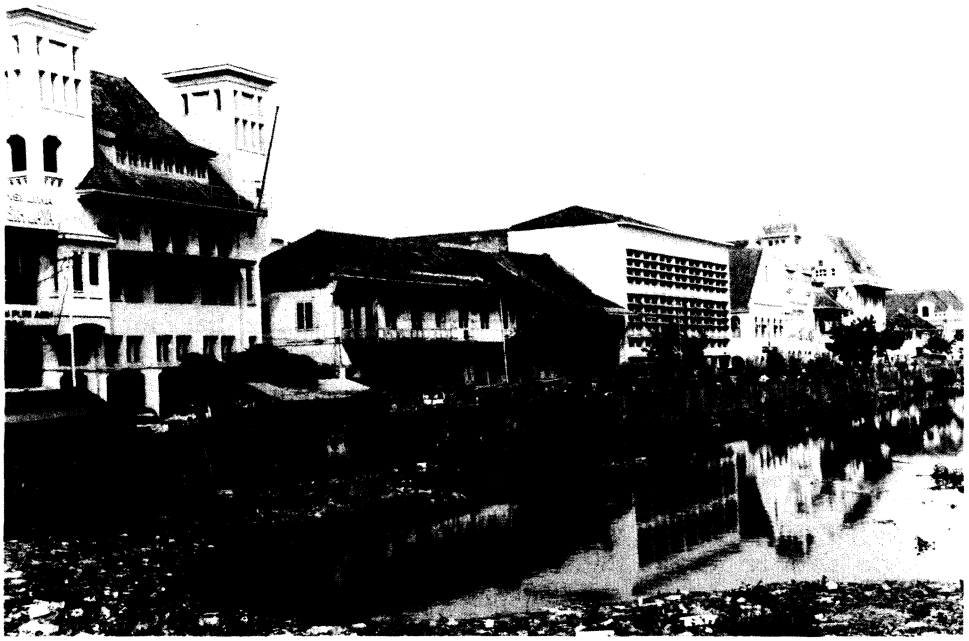

FIG. 8—A view of the western side of the Kali Besar in 1984. Trees are few, and the canal is choked with weeds. (Photograph by James L. Cobban)

Other goals remain unattained, especially ones related to tourism. A performing arts center specializing in Indonesian dances and the Betawi Arcade did not materialize. The nearest restaurant serves only simple fare and is on a corner opposite the Taman Fatahillah. From May to November water in the Kali Besar is as black and stagnant as it has been for centuries (Fig. 8). The slender saplings along the eastern side of the canal are scraggly and give scant shade. The tree-lined walkway appears only on an architectural drawing. No trees have been planted on the western side of the canal. The number of shacks and lean-tos has been reduced, but the narrow road is crowded with cars brought to the district by the businesses that face the street. Accretions remain on facades, and only one house, probably built in 1730, on the Kali Besar is painted.[28] Glodok remains a busy center of commerce, untouched by historic preservation. The small park on Jalan Cenkeh is overrun with street vendors licensed by the city.

The results are no better in the Pasar Ikan. The Maritime Museum is housed in a warehouse and displays small fishing boats from the Indonesian archipelago in large rooms. There is also a small photographic display of Dutch shipping during the current century. That approach avoids the problem created by the diversity and the number of past inland Javanese king-

[28] V. I. van de Wall, De Toko Merah te Batavia, *Nederlandsch Indie Oud en Nieuw*, 12e Jaargang, May, Afl. 1, 1927, pp. 11–18.

doms. The warehouse designated for the spice museum is empty; the sea aquarium is unrestored; and the mosque is unimproved. The inner harbor is devoid of model ships, and the water is as black and debris-laden as it was ten years ago. Preservation and tourists have not reached the offshore islands. Only a few curious persons wander to the Pasak Ikan and the museum there.

These observations lead to the most-telling comment: the historic district does not exist. Tourism promotion makes no mention of it, and memory of it seems to remain only in the minds of individuals who worked on the project more than a decade ago. Is it correct to conclude that four years of labor and the equivalent of U.S. $4,000,000 were wasted on yet another third-world development project? No, because achievements do exist; however, they must be classified as monument rather than district preservation. Preservation of monuments has been practiced in Jakarta for at least fifty years. It began with the Monumenten Ordonantie of 1931 and is continued by the current government. The preserved warehouse that contains the Maritime Museum gives an idea of the size and volume of colonial commerce that cannot be obtained solely from statistics. The enormous, long, narrow, high-ceilinged rooms preserve Dutch-building practices as well. The preserved Justice building illustrates one aspect of Dutch colonial administration as well as an adaptation of structures to tropical conditions. In place of the Betawi Arcade, there is a museum of puppets for the traditional shadow play from different parts of Java. The crowning achievement is the preservation of the town hall and the reconstruction of the square and fountain. Thus preservation of specific structures, reconstruction of the square and its fountain, and creation of passive open space are the enduring successes of the historic-district project. If road development should commence again, the restored town hall and its square would survive as legacies of the project and reminders of the continuity of Jakartan urban life.

The project promulgated the idea of district preservation, or something beyond concern only for single structures. The idea of preserving an urban heritage was premature. Fifteen years after its conception, municipal, provincial, and central governments have accepted the idea of district preservation independent of the concept of restoration of individual structures. While the concept survives, the practice languishes. District preservation in Indonesia competes with alternative uses for space and funds, the obstacles to similar projects in the West. Not surprisingly, the concept of historic-district preservation was fleeting in Jakarta, and the existence of the district was ephemeral.