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Typology and Heritage Preservation: Tracing Historical Layers of Cultural Heritage Buildings in Garut Regency

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ABSTRACT

Architectural heritage buildings serve as tangible evidence of historical processes and cultural transformation within a region. Garut Regency, as one of the historical centers in West Java, possesses a diverse range of cultural heritage buildings that reflect successive historical layers, including traditional Sundanese architecture, colonial influences, and early post-independence developments. This study aims to analyze the architectural typology of cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency and to examine their role in tracing historical layers while identifying challenges and strategies for heritage preservation. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with a historical-architectural approach. Data were collected through field observations, architectural documentation, archival sources, and relevant literature. Typological analysis was conducted by examining building functions, spatial organization, construction techniques, materials, and stylistic elements. The findings indicate that cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency can be classified into several dominant typologies, such as religious buildings, colonial administrative structures, residential architecture, and public facilities, each representing distinct socio-political and cultural phases. These typologies demonstrate the dynamic interaction between local traditions and external influences, particularly during the colonial and early modern periods. Furthermore, the study reveals that heritage preservation efforts in Garut Regency face significant challenges, including functional transformation, limited legal protection, and insufficient public awareness. Nevertheless, architectural typology provides an effective analytical framework for understanding historical continuity and change, as well as for formulating context-sensitive preservation strategies. This research contributes to the discourse on architectural heritage studies by emphasizing the importance of typological analysis in integrating historical interpretation with sustainable conservation practices at the regional level.

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1. INTRUDUCTION

Architecture plays a fundamental role as a tangible record of historical processes, cultural interactions, and social transformations. As a physical manifestation of human activity, architectural heritage embodies collective memory and serves as an important source for understanding the historical development and cultural identity of a region (Rapoport, 1990). In many regions of Indonesia, cultural heritage buildings reflect layered histories shaped by local traditions, colonial encounters, and post-independence transformations, making architecture a critical medium for historical interpretation and cultural preservation.

Garut Regency, located in West Java, possesses a diverse collection of cultural heritage buildings that represent various historical periods and architectural traditions. These buildings include religious structures, residential architecture, colonial administrative buildings, and public facilities that developed during the colonial and early modern periods. Architecturally, they demonstrate a synthesis of local Sundanese elements and external influences, particularly from Dutch colonial architecture adapted to tropical conditions (Handinoto, 2010; Sumalyo, 1995). As such, heritage buildings in Garut Regency constitute an important regional cultural asset that reflects both local identity and broader historical dynamics.

Despite their historical and cultural significance, many cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency face increasing threats related to urban development, functional transformation, and limited conservation awareness. Changes in building use, insufficient legal protection, and inadequate documentation often result in physical alterations that compromise architectural authenticity and historical integrity (Feilden, 2003; Jokilehto, 1999). These challenges highlight the need for analytical approaches that not only document heritage buildings but also support effective and sustainable preservation strategies.

Previous studies on architectural heritage in Indonesia have largely focused on individual buildings or stylistic identification, with limited emphasis on typological analysis as a systematic tool for heritage preservation. Typological analysis, however, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding architectural patterns, historical continuity, and transformation across multiple buildings within a regional context (Moneo, 1978; Kropf, 2018). By identifying shared architectural characteristics and historical functions, typology can inform conservation priorities and guide adaptive reuse without undermining heritage values.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the architectural typology of cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency and to examine how typological analysis can function as an instrument for heritage preservation. By integrating architectural analysis with historical interpretation, this research seeks to contribute to the discourse on heritage studies and to provide context-sensitive insights that support sustainable preservation practices at the regional level.

1.1 Literature Review

Architectural Typology in Heritage Studies

Architectural typology has long been used as an analytical framework to understand recurring patterns in building forms and their relationship to social and historical contexts. Typology does not merely classify buildings based on visual similarities but interprets architecture as a system shaped by cultural, functional, and temporal factors (Moneo, 1978). In heritage studies, typological analysis allows researchers to identify essential architectural characteristics that represent historical continuity and transformation.

Kropf (2018) emphasizes that typology is closely related to urban morphology and provides a methodological bridge between individual buildings and broader spatial structures. Through typological classification, heritage buildings can be analyzed as part of a collective architectural language rather than isolated artifacts. This approach is particularly relevant in

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regional heritage studies, where architectural similarities across different buildings reveal shared historical and cultural processes.

Heritage Preservation and Authenticity

Heritage preservation theory emphasizes the importance of authenticity as a core principle in conservation practices. Authenticity refers to the ability of a heritage building to convey its cultural significance through original form, materials, workmanship, and historical context (ICOMOS, 1994). Jokilehto (1999) argues that preservation should maintain the historical integrity of buildings while allowing for controlled change that respects their cultural values.

Feilden (2003) highlights that conservation interventions should follow the principle of minimal intervention to prevent the loss of historical fabric. In many developing regions, however, preservation efforts are challenged by economic pressures, limited institutional capacity, and inadequate public awareness. These challenges often lead to inappropriate renovations that compromise authenticity and historical significance.

Adaptive Reuse and Functional Transformation

Adaptive reuse has emerged as a key strategy in contemporary heritage preservation, particularly in contexts where heritage buildings must respond to changing social and economic demands. According to Plevoets and Van Cleempoel (2011), adaptive reuse enables heritage buildings to remain functional and socially relevant while extending their physical lifespan. However, the success of adaptive reuse depends on the compatibility between new functions and existing architectural typologies.

Several studies emphasize that uncontrolled functional transformation may result in spatial reconfiguration and material alteration that undermine architectural integrity (Feilden, 2003; Jokilehto, 1999). Therefore, adaptive reuse should be guided by thorough architectural and historical analysis to ensure that new uses support rather than diminish heritage values.

Community Participation and Cultural Identity

Recent heritage discourse highlights the role of communities as active agents in heritage preservation. Smith (2006) introduces the concept of heritage as a social process in which meaning is continuously negotiated by communities. Community participation strengthens a sense of ownership and contributes to the sustainability of preservation efforts.

UNESCO's (2011) Historic Urban Landscape approach further emphasizes the integration of heritage preservation with social, cultural, and economic development. In this framework, heritage buildings are understood as living elements of the cultural landscape that contribute to local identity and social cohesion. Architecture thus functions not only as a physical artifact but also as a medium for education and the transmission of cultural values (Rapoport, 1990; Norberg-Schulz, 1980).

Participation in heritage preservation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, which strengthens cultural identity at the local level. When communities are actively involved in decision-making processes, conservation activities, and cultural programs, heritage buildings function as shared reference points that reinforce collective memory and place-based identity (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). This process enables architecture to serve as a cultural anchor that connects historical narratives with contemporary community experiences.

In addition, community participation contributes to the transmission of intangible cultural values associated with heritage buildings, such as traditional knowledge, rituals, and social practices. These intangible dimensions are essential for understanding heritage as a living cultural process rather than a static historical object (UNESCO, 2011). Through community-based activities, heritage buildings become platforms for cultural education and intergenerational learning.

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Despite its importance, effective community participation often faces challenges, including limited access to resources, unequal power relations, and insufficient institutional support. Therefore, inclusive governance frameworks and capacity-building initiatives are necessary to empower communities and integrate their perspectives into heritage management. By aligning heritage preservation with community participation, cultural identity can be sustained and strengthened, ensuring that heritage buildings remain meaningful components of the living cultural landscape.

Research Gap

Although previous studies have extensively discussed architectural heritage, preservation principles, and adaptive reuse, limited attention has been given to the use of typological analysis as a practical instrument for heritage preservation at the regional level. Many studies focus on individual buildings or stylistic descriptions without systematically linking typology to preservation strategies. This study addresses this gap by employing architectural typology to analyze cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency and by demonstrating its relevance for context-sensitive preservation and community-based revitalization.

Recent research has also emphasized adaptive reuse and heritage preservation as responses to functional transformation and urban development pressures (Plevoets & Van Cleempoel, 2011; Feilden, 2003). However, these studies tend to focus on the outcomes of reuse practices without sufficiently integrating typological analysis as a guiding framework for conservation decision-making. As a result, adaptive reuse is frequently discussed in normative terms, with limited analytical linkage to architectural form, historical continuity, and typological integrity.

Furthermore, although community participation and cultural identity have become central themes in contemporary heritage discourse (Smith, 2006; UNESCO, 2011), empirical studies that systematically connect community-based revitalization with architectural typology remain limited, particularly at the regional level. Most research addresses community involvement as a social process without examining how typological understanding of heritage buildings can enhance community awareness and preservation strategies.

In the context of Garut Regency, scholarly attention to cultural heritage buildings is still relatively scarce. Existing studies largely focus on specific sites or descriptive inventories, leaving a gap in comprehensive regional analysis that integrates architectural typology, historical layers, and preservation strategies. Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by employing typological analysis as an instrument for heritage preservation, linking architectural characteristics with historical interpretation and community-based revitalization. By doing so, the research contributes a context-sensitive and integrative approach to architectural heritage studies at the regional scale.

2. METHOD RESEARCH

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design with a historical–architectural approach. This design is appropriate for investigating architectural typology and heritage preservation, as the research emphasizes interpretation of architectural forms, historical layers, and cultural meanings embedded in cultural heritage buildings rather than numerical measurement. The study situates architecture as a historical artifact that reflects socio-cultural and political transformations over time.

The research integrates typological analysis with historical interpretation to identify recurring architectural patterns and to trace their evolution over time. By combining architectural observation and historical inquiry, this design allows for an in-depth

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examination of the relationship between building form, function, and historical context. Furthermore, the research design supports an interpretative analysis of preservation issues by linking architectural typologies to contemporary challenges of conservation, adaptive reuse, and legal protection. Through this approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of cultural heritage buildings and to contribute to context-sensitive heritage preservation strategies at the regional level.

Data Collection

Data were collected through primary and secondary sources to ensure methodological rigor and data triangulation. Primary data were obtained through direct field observations of selected cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency. The observations focused on architectural characteristics, including building function, spatial organization, structural systems, construction techniques, materials, and stylistic elements. Architectural documentation, such as photographs and field sketches, was conducted to support typological identification.

Secondary data were gathered from archival records, historical documents, government regulations concerning cultural heritage designation, and previous scholarly studies related to architectural typology and heritage conservation. These sources provided historical context and supported the interpretation of architectural transformations.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study follows a qualitative analytical framework that integrates architectural typology and historical interpretation. The analysis begins with data reduction by organizing field observation records, architectural documentation, and archival materials into thematic categories relevant to architectural form, function, materials, and stylistic elements (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This step aims to ensure analytical clarity and consistency across different data sources.

Typological analysis is employed as the primary analytical method to classify cultural heritage buildings based on shared architectural characteristics and historical functions. This approach enables the identification of recurring patterns and variations that represent distinct historical layers within the built environment (Moneo, 1978; Kropf, 2018). Buildings are grouped into dominant typologies such as religious, residential, administrative, and public facilities, reflecting different socio-cultural and political periods in Garut Regency.

Historical interpretative analysis is then applied to trace the evolution of each architectural typology over time. This analysis examines changes in spatial organization, construction techniques, and stylistic expressions to understand the interaction between local traditions and external influences. Architecture is interpreted as a historical document that embodies cultural continuity and transformation (Rapoport, 1990).

To enhance the credibility of the findings, data triangulation is conducted by comparing field observations, documentary sources, and relevant literature. Analytical conclusions are drawn through synthesis, linking typological patterns with heritage preservation issues such as functional transformation, authenticity, and conservation challenges. This integrated analytical process supports the formulation of context-sensitive preservation strategies grounded in both architectural evidence and historical context.

Heritage Preservation Analysis

Issues related to heritage preservation were analyzed by assessing the current physical condition, functional changes, and legal protection status of the buildings. The analysis also considered challenges such as adaptive reuse, loss of authenticity, and limited conservation awareness. The findings were synthesized to formulate context-sensitive preservation strategies that balance historical significance, architectural integrity, and contemporary needs.

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Heritage preservation analysis in this study is conducted to assess the sustainability and conservation challenges of cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency. The analysis focuses on three main dimensions: physical condition, functional transformation, and legal–institutional protection. This framework is widely used in architectural conservation studies to evaluate the balance between authenticity, continuity, and contemporary use (Feilden, 2003; Jokilehto, 1999).

The assessment of physical condition examines the integrity of architectural elements, construction materials, and structural systems, with particular attention to alterations that may compromise authenticity. Authenticity is understood as the ability of a heritage building to convey its historical and cultural significance through original form, materials, and craftsmanship (ICOMOS, 1994). Observable deterioration, material replacement, and inappropriate renovations are analyzed as indicators of conservation vulnerability.

Functional transformation is analyzed to identify patterns of adaptive reuse and their impact on architectural integrity. Changes in building use are evaluated based on whether they support the preservation of significant architectural features or accelerate the loss of historical character. Adaptive reuse is considered acceptable when it maintains the essential values of heritage buildings while allowing them to remain socially and economically relevant (Plevoets & Van Cleempoel, 2011).

Legal and institutional protection is examined through the status of heritage designation and the implementation of cultural heritage regulations at the local level. This analysis includes the role of government agencies, policy enforcement, and community participation in heritage management. The synthesis of these dimensions provides a basis for formulating context-sensitive preservation strategies that integrate architectural authenticity, historical significance, and sustainable use.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 General Overview of Cultural Heritage Buildings in Garut Regency

Garut Regency is known as one of the oldest cities in the East Priangan region, boasting a rich colonial architecture. The city's development began with the Dutch East Indies government's policy in the 19th century, which established Garut as an administrative center and resort town. The town's layout, centered on a town square, is a hallmark of colonial cities in West Java, as seen in Bandung and Cianjur (Handinoto, 2010). Around Garut's town square are important buildings such as the Pendopo Building, the Old Post Office, the Zebaoth Church, and the Papandayan Hotel, all of which are still in operation and leave a strong historical imprint.



Figure 1. Garut Post Office, 2024
(Source: Liputan6.com/Jayadi Supriadin)

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The Old Post Office, located on Jalan Ahmad Yani, is known to feature a modern, functional architectural style with art deco elements. This Art Deco architectural style is often referred to as a Dutch building.

This Post Office building is one of the few remaining classic Dutch-style buildings in Garut. The Post Office building was later designated a cultural heritage building by the Garut Regency government. Built in 1930, the Post Office is strategically located.

Garut Regency is one of the regions in West Java that possesses a rich concentration of cultural heritage buildings reflecting diverse historical periods and socio-cultural transformations. As a former administrative and economic center during the colonial period, Garut developed various types of buildings that remain significant historical markers today, including religious structures, colonial administrative buildings, residential architecture, and public facilities. These buildings embody the interaction between local Sundanese traditions and external influences introduced during the Dutch colonial era and the early post-independence period (Handinoto, 2010).

Cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency generally demonstrate architectural characteristics associated with colonial and traditional typologies, such as symmetrical layouts, masonry construction, pitched roofs adapted to tropical climates, and ornamental details that combine European and local elements. In addition, religious buildings, particularly mosques, represent continuity of local Islamic traditions while incorporating architectural adaptations influenced by broader historical developments (Sumalyo, 1995).

From a legal perspective, cultural heritage buildings in Indonesia are regulated under Law No. 11 of 2010 on Cultural Heritage, which defines cultural heritage as material cultural properties that possess important historical, scientific, educational, religious, and cultural values. However, many heritage buildings in Garut Regency face challenges related to limited documentation, functional transformation, and insufficient legal protection at the local level. These issues often result in alterations that threaten architectural authenticity and historical integrity (Jokilehto, 1999; Feilden, 2003).

Despite these challenges, cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency remain crucial sources for understanding local history and regional identity. Their preservation requires comprehensive documentation and analytical approaches that integrate architectural typology with historical interpretation. By situating these buildings within their broader historical and cultural context, heritage studies can contribute to sustainable conservation strategies that balance preservation needs with contemporary development pressures.

3.2 Architectural Typology and Building Style

Architectural typology is used in this study to classify cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency based on recurring formal, functional, and stylistic characteristics. Typology serves as an analytical tool to understand architecture not as isolated objects, but as part of a systematic and historical continuum shaped by social, cultural, and political contexts (Moneo, 1978; Kropf, 2018). Through typological analysis, buildings are grouped according to similarities in spatial organization, construction techniques, materials, and architectural expression.

The findings indicate that cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency can be categorized into several dominant architectural typologies, including religious buildings, residential architecture, colonial administrative buildings, and public facilities. Religious buildings, particularly mosques, generally reflect local Sundanese architectural traditions combined with later stylistic adaptations influenced by modernization and institutional reforms. These buildings emphasize functional spatial arrangements while maintaining symbolic elements that express religious and cultural identity (Sumalyo, 1995).

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Residential heritage buildings display variations ranging from traditional vernacular houses to colonial-era dwellings. Vernacular architecture is characterized by the use of local materials, pitched roofs, and spatial layouts adapted to climatic conditions, whereas colonial residential buildings demonstrate symmetrical plans, masonry construction, and stylistic features derived from European architectural traditions adjusted to the tropical environment (Handinoto, 2010).

Colonial administrative and public buildings represent another significant typology, marked by monumental scale, formal spatial hierarchy, and the application of Indische architectural styles. These buildings reflect the political and administrative functions of the colonial government while simultaneously incorporating local climatic adaptations such as wide verandas and high ceilings (Akihary, 1996). Overall, the typological and stylistic diversity of heritage buildings in Garut Regency illustrates the layering of historical influences and highlights architecture as a tangible record of cultural interaction and transformation over time.

3.3 Historical and Symbolic Value of Buildings

These buildings are not merely architectural artifacts, but symbols of historical journeys and local identity. For example, the Pendopo Garut Building has served as the center of government from the colonial era to the present day, symbolizing the continuity of administrative functions. Meanwhile, the Papandayan Hotel became a tourist destination for the Dutch elite in the early 20th century, marking the emergence of colonial leisure culture in the Priangan highlands.

Cultural heritage buildings possess historical and symbolic values that extend beyond their physical form, functioning as material representations of collective memory and cultural identity. Historically, buildings serve as tangible evidence of past social, political, and cultural processes, allowing architecture to be interpreted as a historical document embedded within its temporal context (Rapoport, 1990). In Garut Regency, cultural heritage buildings reflect successive historical layers, including traditional Sundanese culture, colonial administration, and early post-independence development.

The historical value of heritage buildings in Garut Regency is closely associated with their role in significant events, institutional functions, and social transformations. Colonial administrative buildings, for instance, symbolize the presence of colonial authority and bureaucratic organization, while religious buildings such as mosques represent continuity in Islamic traditions and community life. These structures embody the historical narratives of governance, religion, and everyday life, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of regional history (Handinoto, 2010).



Figure 2. Sociestraat or Jalan Jend. Ahmad Yani as it is today in 1936.
(Source: Collectie Wereldmuseum (v/h Tropenmuseum), part of the National Museum of World Cultures)

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Beyond their historical significance, heritage buildings also hold strong symbolic meanings. Symbolic value is expressed through architectural forms, spatial hierarchies, and ornamental elements that convey cultural norms, power relations, and religious beliefs. Architectural symbols function as non-verbal communication, transmitting shared meanings and reinforcing collective identity within a community (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). In the context of Garut Regency, the combination of local architectural elements with colonial stylistic features symbolizes cultural interaction and adaptation rather than simple domination or imitation.

Recognizing both historical and symbolic values is essential for effective heritage preservation. Conservation efforts that focus solely on physical aspects risk neglecting the intangible meanings embedded in architectural forms. Therefore, heritage preservation strategies should integrate historical interpretation and symbolic understanding to maintain the authenticity and cultural significance of heritage buildings for future generations (Jokilehto, 1999; ICOMOS, 1994).

3.4 Transformation of Function and Social Context

As time changes, many historic buildings have undergone functional transformations. Some have been revitalized as public spaces, government offices, or cultural centers. However, others have fallen into disrepair, even disappearing due to the pressures of modern development. This phenomenon demonstrates the tension between economic needs and the preservation of historical value (Oktavianto, 2019).

Functional transformation is a common phenomenon in cultural heritage buildings as a response to social, economic, and political changes. Over time, shifts in societal needs often lead to changes in building use, particularly in urban and semi-urban contexts where heritage buildings must adapt to contemporary demands to remain functional and economically viable (Plevoets & Van Cleempoel, 2011). In Garut Regency, functional transformation reflects broader social dynamics, including urban development, economic restructuring, and changes in patterns of community life.

The transformation of building functions has significant implications for architectural integrity and historical authenticity. While adaptive reuse can contribute positively to the sustainability of heritage buildings, inappropriate functional changes may result in spatial reconfiguration, material alteration, and loss of symbolic meaning (Feilden, 2003). For example, the conversion of former colonial administrative buildings into commercial or institutional facilities often alters interior layouts and circulation patterns, thereby diminishing their original architectural character.

Social context plays a crucial role in shaping how heritage buildings are transformed and perceived. Community values, economic pressures, and levels of public awareness influence decisions regarding building use and conservation practices. Heritage buildings that continue to serve communal functions, such as religious or cultural activities, tend to retain stronger social relevance and symbolic value compared to those repurposed solely for commercial interests (Jokilehto, 1999).

Understanding functional transformation within its social context is essential for developing effective heritage preservation strategies. Conservation approaches should consider not only physical aspects but also social functions and community engagement to ensure that adaptive reuse supports both architectural authenticity and social sustainability. Integrating social context into preservation planning enables heritage buildings to remain meaningful components of the living cultural landscape rather than static historical artifacts (ICOMOS, 2011).

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3.5 Conservation Efforts and Their Challenges

Interviews with the Garut Culture and Tourism Office (2024) indicate that approximately 25 buildings have been identified as potential cultural heritage sites, but only a small fraction have formal legal protection. Key challenges include limited funding, weak regulations, and low public awareness of the importance of preservation.



Figure 3. Garut Regency Hall
(source: infogarut.id)

Efforts to preserve cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency have been carried out through various approaches, including legal protection, physical conservation, and adaptive reuse. At the national level, heritage preservation is guided by Law No. 11 of 2010 on Cultural Heritage, which emphasizes the protection, development, and utilization of cultural heritage assets based on their historical, scientific, educational, and cultural values (Republik Indonesia, 2010). This legal framework provides the foundation for heritage designation and conservation planning at the regional level.

Physical preservation efforts generally focus on maintaining structural stability, repairing material deterioration, and preventing further damage to significant architectural elements. Conservation principles stress the importance of minimal intervention and respect for authenticity to ensure that heritage buildings continue to convey their historical and cultural significance (Feilden, 2003; ICOMOS, 1994). In some cases, adaptive reuse has been adopted as a strategy to sustain heritage buildings by integrating new functions that support their continued use and maintenance (Plevoets & Van Cleempoel, 2011).

Despite these efforts, heritage preservation in Garut Regency faces several challenges. Limited financial resources and technical expertise often constrain conservation initiatives, resulting in inadequate maintenance and inappropriate renovations. In addition, weak enforcement of heritage regulations and insufficient coordination among government institutions contribute to the vulnerability of heritage buildings. Social challenges, such as low public awareness and economic pressures, further complicate preservation efforts, particularly when heritage buildings are viewed primarily as economic assets rather than cultural resources (Jokilehto, 1999).

Addressing these challenges requires an integrated preservation approach that combines legal protection, technical conservation, and community participation. Strengthening

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institutional capacity and increasing public engagement are essential to ensuring that heritage preservation is sustainable and responsive to local socio-cultural contexts. By balancing preservation objectives with contemporary needs, cultural heritage buildings can continue to function as living components of the cultural landscape rather than static relics of the past.

3.6 Community Participation and Community-Based Revitalization

Community participation plays a crucial role in the sustainable preservation and revitalization of cultural heritage buildings. Contemporary heritage discourse emphasizes that local communities are not merely passive beneficiaries but active stakeholders whose knowledge, values, and daily practices shape the meaning and sustainability of heritage sites (Smith, 2006). In the context of Garut Regency, community involvement is particularly significant given the close relationship between heritage buildings and local social life.

Community-based revitalization focuses on integrating heritage preservation with social, cultural, and economic activities that benefit local residents. This approach encourages adaptive reuse strategies that respect architectural authenticity while enabling heritage buildings to support community needs, such as cultural activities, education, and local economic initiatives. By maintaining active use and social relevance, community-based revitalization helps prevent neglect and physical deterioration of heritage buildings (UNESCO, 2011).



Figure 4. Heritage buildings, one of which is the Alun-Alun and Pendopo complex, were built on February 16, 1813 during the reign of Governor General Raffles.
(Source: Humaspemkabgarut)

Local communities contribute to heritage preservation through various forms of participation, including informal maintenance, cultural activities, advocacy, and collaboration with local authorities. Such participation strengthens a sense of ownership and responsibility, which is essential for long-term conservation outcomes (Jokilehto, 1999). Moreover, community engagement can enhance public awareness of heritage values and foster intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge.

Despite its potential benefits, community-based revitalization also faces challenges, such as limited access to resources, lack of technical expertise, and unequal power relations between communities and governing institutions. Therefore, effective revitalization requires

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supportive policies, capacity-building programs, and inclusive governance structures that recognize community voices. Integrating community participation into heritage management frameworks enables cultural heritage buildings to function as living cultural assets that contribute to social cohesion and sustainable development.

In recent years, community-based preservation initiatives have emerged, such as heritage walks and visual documentation by the local community, the "Garut Heritage Society." These efforts demonstrate that the public is beginning to show concern for their region's architectural heritage. However, this participation needs to be strengthened through local government support, particularly in the form of preservation policies and training.

3.7 The Concept of Adaptive Reuse in Conservation

One strategy being implemented in Garut is adaptive reuse, which involves repurposing old buildings for new functions without altering their architectural character. For example, several former colonial official residences are now used as government offices and cultural galleries. This concept is considered effective because it maintains the buildings' sustainability while adding new economic value.

Adaptive reuse is widely recognized as a strategic approach in heritage preservation that allows historic buildings to remain functional while maintaining their cultural significance. The concept refers to the process of adapting old buildings for new uses without compromising their architectural integrity and historical values (Plevoets & Van Cleempoel, 2011). In heritage conservation discourse, adaptive reuse is considered an effective means of extending the life cycle of heritage buildings by integrating them into contemporary social and economic contexts.

From a conservation perspective, adaptive reuse emphasizes minimal intervention and respect for authenticity. New functions should be compatible with the original spatial configuration, materials, and symbolic meanings of heritage buildings (ICOMOS, 1994). When carefully implemented, adaptive reuse supports both physical preservation and social sustainability by ensuring continued use and regular maintenance, thereby reducing the risk of abandonment and decay (Feilden, 2003).

Adaptive reuse also reflects broader socio-cultural dynamics, as changes in building function often respond to shifts in community needs, economic conditions, and urban development pressures. In regions such as Garut Regency, adaptive reuse has the potential to support local cultural activities, tourism, and small-scale economic initiatives, provided that conservation principles are respected. However, inappropriate reuse driven solely by commercial interests may lead to excessive alterations that undermine architectural authenticity and historical character (Jokilehto, 1999).

Therefore, adaptive reuse should be guided by comprehensive assessment and participatory planning processes. Integrating architectural analysis, historical interpretation, and community involvement enables adaptive reuse strategies to balance preservation objectives with contemporary demands. By positioning heritage buildings as active components of the living cultural landscape, adaptive reuse contributes to sustainable heritage preservation and reinforces the relevance of cultural heritage in modern society.

3.8 Architecture as a Medium of Education and Local Identity

Architecture functions not only as a physical artifact but also as a medium for education and the construction of local identity. Cultural heritage buildings embody historical narratives, cultural values, and social practices that can be communicated across generations through direct spatial experience. As such, architecture plays an educational role by enabling individuals and communities to engage with history in a tangible and experiential manner (Rapoport, 1990).

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In the context of Garut Regency, cultural heritage buildings serve as important educational resources that reflect local history and cultural diversity. Through architectural forms, materials, spatial organization, and symbolic elements, these buildings convey knowledge about traditional craftsmanship, colonial encounters, and socio-cultural transformations. Educational engagement with heritage architecture—whether through formal learning, guided interpretation, or community-based activities—can enhance public awareness of cultural heritage values and foster a sense of historical continuity (Smith, 2006).

Architecture also plays a central role in shaping local identity. Heritage buildings function as visual and symbolic markers that reinforce collective memory and regional distinctiveness. The preservation and continued use of these buildings contribute to the affirmation of local identity by maintaining spatial references that are deeply embedded in everyday social life (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). In this sense, architecture acts as a cultural anchor that connects place, memory, and identity.

Recognizing architecture as both an educational medium and a carrier of local identity has important implications for heritage preservation. Conservation strategies should integrate interpretative and educational components to ensure that heritage buildings remain meaningful to contemporary communities. By linking architectural preservation with educational initiatives and community participation, heritage buildings can continue to function as living sources of knowledge and identity rather than static historical objects (UNESCO, 2011).

Historic buildings have great potential as a means of historical education and the formation of a community's cultural identity. Preserving colonial buildings in Garut can provide a learning resource for the younger generation about the journey of history, aesthetic values, and the importance of preserving cultural heritage.

3.9 Typological Analysis as an Instrument for Heritage Preservation

The typological approach used in this study proved effective in identifying the relationship between the building's form, function, and symbolic value. For example, the presence of a wide veranda and high ventilation indicate tropical adaptation, while European decorative elements reflect colonial influences. This understanding provides an important basis for designing preservation strategies appropriate to the local context.

Typological analysis serves as an important analytical instrument in heritage preservation by enabling a systematic understanding of architectural patterns, historical continuity, and transformation. Rather than viewing heritage buildings as isolated objects, typology positions architecture within a broader morphological and historical framework shaped by social, cultural, and political contexts (Moneo, 1978; Kropf, 2018). Through this approach, architectural typology becomes a practical tool for identifying significant characteristics that should be preserved.

In the context of cultural heritage preservation, typological analysis helps determine essential architectural elements that define the identity and authenticity of heritage buildings. By classifying buildings based on form, function, spatial organization, materials, and stylistic expression, typology allows conservation efforts to focus on core attributes that represent historical values while accommodating necessary functional adaptations (Jokilehto, 1999). This is particularly relevant in managing adaptive reuse, where understanding typological integrity can prevent excessive alteration.

Typological analysis also contributes to policy formulation and conservation planning. By identifying dominant architectural typologies within a region, preservation authorities can develop guidelines that are sensitive to local architectural characteristics and historical layers.

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Such guidelines support consistent conservation practices and reduce the risk of inappropriate interventions that may undermine heritage significance (Feilden, 2003).

Moreover, typology facilitates the integration of heritage preservation with community-based revitalization. When typological knowledge is shared with local communities, it enhances awareness of architectural values and strengthens collective responsibility for preservation. As a result, typological analysis functions not only as an academic method but also as a practical instrument that bridges historical understanding, architectural conservation, and sustainable development in heritage contexts.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that architectural typology serves as an effective analytical instrument for understanding and preserving cultural heritage buildings in Garut Regency. Through typological analysis, heritage buildings are revealed not merely as individual historical artifacts but as interconnected architectural forms shaped by layered historical, social, and cultural processes. The identification of recurring architectural patterns provides a structured framework for interpreting historical continuity and transformation within the regional built environment.

The findings indicate that functional transformation and socio-economic pressures pose significant challenges to heritage preservation, often resulting in alterations that compromise architectural authenticity. However, when guided by typological understanding, adaptive reuse can function as a sustainable preservation strategy that maintains essential architectural characteristics while accommodating contemporary needs. This highlights the importance of integrating architectural analysis into conservation planning rather than relying solely on regulatory or technical approaches.

Furthermore, the study underscores the critical role of community participation in sustaining heritage values and reinforcing local cultural identity. Community-based revitalization initiatives, when aligned with typological knowledge, enhance public awareness and foster a sense of collective ownership toward heritage buildings. This participatory approach positions architecture as both a cultural resource and an educational medium within the living cultural landscape.

Overall, this research contributes to architectural heritage studies by bridging typological analysis, heritage preservation, and community engagement at the regional level. The findings offer practical implications for policymakers, conservation practitioners, and local communities in developing context-sensitive preservation strategies. Future research may expand this approach by incorporating comparative regional studies or integrating quantitative assessments to further strengthen heritage preservation frameworks.

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