



Interpreting interior heritage at Wisma Batari Surakarta through Papanek's framework

Raden Ersnathan Budi Prasetyo, Joko Budiwiyanto, Primastiti Wening Mumpuni*,
Tanjung Bayu Aji

Program Studi Desain Interior, Fakultas Seni Rupa dan Desain, Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta
Jl. Ki Hajar Dewantara No.19, Jebres, Kec. Jebres, Kota Surakarta, Jawa Tengah 57126, Indonesia

*Correspondence author: primastitiwm@gmail.com

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Abstract.

This study analyzes the interior of Wisma Batari in Surakarta as a social design product by applying Victor Papanek's function complex framework. Interior is not merely an architectural space, but a design artefact that embeds functions, needs, social contexts, symbols, and aesthetic values. The study employs a qualitative descriptive-interpretative method using visual observation and spatial analysis, complemented by thematic reading based on Papanek's six dimensions: method, use, need, thesis, association, and aesthetics. The findings suggest that the interior of Wisma Batari forms a design system rooted in spatial efficiency, local materials as a reflection of "truth to materials," and room configurations that support communal activity. Space is never practical alone; it also represents morality, harmony, and unity within Javanese cultural logic. The study highlights that interior heritage can be understood as a social design product that evolves through adaptive reuse and the interrelation of functions, meanings, and materiality. The implication of this research opens a critical approach toward interior heritage as a locus for ethics and social responsibility within contemporary design practices.

Keywords: Interior Design, Social Design, Interior Heritage, Adaptive Reuse, Victor Papanek

Introduction

Wisma Batari in Surakarta is a cultural heritage building that carries a long social journey and the trajectory of modern architecture in Indonesia. Established during the Dutch colonial period, this building was once a residential house with an Art Deco style, which later went through a series of functional adaptation phases—from Japanese military headquarters, a union office, and now a public space for communal and performance activities. These functional shifts were not merely a physical transformation but also a social transformation that reflects how the community negotiated spatial meaning as the era progressed (Jonatan, 2022). Wisma Batari in Surakarta is a cultural heritage building that carries a long social journey and the trajectory of modern architecture in Indonesia. Established during the Dutch colonial period, this building was once a residential house with an Art Deco style, which later went through a series of functional adaptation phases—from Japanese military headquarters, a union office, and now a public space for communal and performance activities. These functional shifts were not merely a physical transformation but also a social transformation that reflects how the community negotiated spatial meaning as the era progressed (Trihanondo, 2024). Through this lens, the interior of Wisma Batari is not a mere activity accommodation, but it also serves as a medium that holds narrative identity, cultural materiality, and social values that continue to evolve.

Most studies on cultural heritage buildings in Indonesia have been conducted through architectural lenses or structural conservation. The focus and scope were commonly limited to physical aspects of the building—such as facades, plans, and architectural elements—without reviewing the interior dynamics as a design system that holds autonomy (Naufaly & Subekti, 2024; Razak, 2025; Trihanondo, 2024). Moreover, interior is the closest layer of human experience with space: there are social values, behavior, and layout in it. Studies about vernacular interior design also suggested that space could become a complex ideology representation that combines functional needs and local identity expressions (Oliver, 2012; Rapoport, 2016). Thus, interior heritage like Wisma Batari should be understood beyond an “inner layer” in colonial architecture, but it is a product of designs that carry distinctive values and cultural symbolic systems.

Within the Indonesia's socio-cultural context, interior space has wider functions than a mere place of activity. Space also serves as a social product that signifies the human relation with its surroundings, both physically and symbolically (Bhandari, 2022; Lefebvre, 2014). Interior, in this matter, is read as a design artefact—a result of creative decisions that reflect social, ethnic, and way of life values from community towards materials and space. This approach is aligned with the material culture studies that view objects and space as a cultural “text” which can be interpreted both visually and contextually. By understanding interior as a product of social design, the study of Wisma Batari will not focus on merely the physical form, but also to how the space negotiates modernity, vernacularity, and local identity values within its visual and material configurations. The evolving functions and meanings in Wisma Batari exemplify adaptive reuse as a cultural process, in which interior heritage is continuously re-contextualized within contemporary communal practices.

However, despite the increasing awareness of the importance of interior heritage studies, analytical frameworks remain limited. Most frameworks in Indonesia tend to adopt historical or conservative approaches, which underline conservation and authenticity without critically connecting the social and ecological dimensions of the interior itself. Moreover, the functional, symbolic, and moral aspects of interior design are often dismissed. The design theory of Victor Papanek becomes relevant for analyzing this context. Papanek proposes that every product design is a complex system that consists of six dimensional functions: method, use, need, *telesis*, association, and aesthetics. These six dimensions do not measure design quality through form and function aspects alone but also through its impact on community, environment, and culture (Papanek, 1972).

Papanek's conceptual framework allows interior heritage to be read through a multidimensional lens. Through the aspect of *method*, one can examine how the spatial organization and circulation within Wisma Batari operate systematically to accommodate multiple public functions. The dimension of *need* reveals how social and ritual necessities of Javanese culture are spatially articulated, while *telesis* and *association* open possibilities to interpret the interior as a representation of moral, symbolic, and cultural values embedded within society. In this sense, Papanek's theory is not positioned as a normative ethical framework for designers, but rather as an analytical tool to interpret how an interior operates as a social and material product of design.

This study is significant as it proposes a paradigmatic shift in the study of heritage interior design. Whereas previous scholarship has largely emphasized physical and visual conservation, this research underscores the importance of interpreting interior space as a *social design product*—an entity that lives within a network of social, ecological, and cultural meanings. Such an approach enriches the academic discourse on interior design in Indonesia, which has often been fragmented between aesthetics, functionality, and preservation. Moreover, by applying Papanek's *function complex* framework, this study introduces a reflective lens through which ethical, social, and environmental dimensions of design can be understood—not merely as prescriptive principles for creating new works, but as interpretive instruments for reading existing heritage interiors in contemporary contexts.

Accordingly, this research aims to interpret the interior of Wisma Batari as a social design product that embodies the relationship between function, need, social context, symbolic meaning, and aesthetics. Through this inquiry, the study seeks to frame heritage interior not as a static artifact of the past but as a living design system—one that both shapes and is shaped by its social environment. The

findings are expected to contribute conceptually to interior design theory and methodologically to design studies, fostering a more critical, reflective, and contextual understanding of design as a social practice, and of interior space as a culturally meaningful product.

Methods

This research implements a qualitative descriptive–interpretative approach aimed at understanding the interior of Wisma Batari as a designed product that embodies social, cultural, and material values. The methodological framework consists of three interrelated components: conceptual grounding, analytical framework, and data collection and interpretation procedures.

Interior as a Designed Product

The study begins with the assumption that interior space functions as a designed artefact—a result of deliberate creative decisions that reflect social and cultural values. This perspective draws from Prown’s concept of material-based interpretation (Prown, 2012) and is further connected to material culture theory, which considers material form and usage as active mediators of human experience (Lee, 2022; Cohen, 2019; Hepworth, 2019). Thus, the interior is not treated as a static background but as a dynamic system of designed relations among space, object, and user. This conceptual stance situates the research within critical analysis rather than design practice, focusing on interpretation and reflection.

Analytical Framework: Papanek’s Function Complex

The analytical framework adopts Victor Papanek’s function complex (Papanek, 1972). These dimensions allow the analysis to traverse technical, social, symbolic, and aesthetic layers of design simultaneously. The framework serves as a coding structure to examine how each dimension manifests within Wisma Batari’s interior—ranging from spatial configuration and user adaptation to material expression and symbolic resonance. The selection of this framework is justified by its inclusivity: it bridges utilitarian and moral readings of design, enabling interior heritage to be analyzed as both functional space and social artifact.

Research Procedure and Data Analysis

Data collection was carried out through three site visits at Wisma Batari, each lasting approximately 2–3 hours, conducted in March and April 2025. The research relied on field observation, visual documentation, and spatial interpretation, focusing on interior elements such as the ballroom, ceiling structure, teakwood joinery, material junctions, and lighting systems. These elements were documented through 154 digital photographs, 6 manual sketch diagrams, and annotated plans produced on-site to preserve contextual accuracy and represent spatial relations (Ballesteros-Mejía & Madero, 2024). The term “spatial interpretation” refers to the analytical process through which spatial organization and interior atmosphere were decoded through multiple representational modes. Beyond visual observation, spatial interpretation included annotating circulation paths, identifying spatial hierarchies, and examining affordances suggested by material arrangement and lighting configuration.

The analysis employed thematic coding derived from the six aspects of Papanek’s function complex framework—method, use, need, telesis, association, and aesthetics. Each dimension served as a coding category to extract design values embedded in the interior. The coding process was supported by a multimodal reading approach (Kress & Leeuwen, 2001), which interprets visual, material, and symbolic modes as interconnected communicative systems rather than isolated aesthetic features. In operational terms, multimodal reading was conducted by mapping rhetorical relationships between spatial configuration (method), material tactility (association), cultural symbolism (telesis), and experiential atmosphere (aesthetics). This integration ensured that the

analysis did not rely solely on standard visual description but instead attended to how interior elements communicate meanings across different semiotic channels.

During the visits, user narratives were collected through informal on-site conversations with four community members involved in organizing public events at Wisma Batari. These narratives were not used as primary ethnographic data but served as supplementary contextual validation to understand how users interpret the space and attribute meanings to spatial features. Quotations from these conversations informed the interpretive dimension of the analysis but were not treated as structured interview data. To maintain analytical transparency, the study acknowledges that theoretical interpretation is primarily grounded in observation and spatial analysis, supported by user narratives as contextual evidence rather than direct data claims.

Data validity was ensured through triangulation between visual documentation, spatial measurement, and user narratives, allowing the study to cross-check interpretive claims against observed practices and spatial conditions. The use of photographs, sketches, and annotated diagrams enabled the research to trace the relationship between formal spatial logic and social meaning, highlighting the interior as a socially produced design product—one that embodies morality, function, and cultural value within its material and spatial language.

Result and Discussion

Method – Interior as a Functional System

The analysis examines how Wisma Batari's interior operates as an integrated spatial system. Although only the existing plan is available (Fig. 1), it still retains the underlying order of the original colonial logic—symmetry, proportional hierarchy, and clear zoning between public, semi-public, and service areas. Using spatial syntax reasoning (Yamu et al., 2021), the study interprets the organization of circulation routes and proportional balance as a coherent system that continues to guide user behavior and interaction.

A closer reading of the plan reveals how the primary circulation axis—which runs from the entrance terrace into the central ballroom—functions as a spatial spine that structures users' movements. Upon entering, a visitor is immediately directed toward the central void, then dispersed laterally into the side rooms through perpendicular corridors that maintain symmetrically distributed access. This pathway creates a sequence of spatial experiences: threshold → central hall → distributed chambers, which communicates the interior's hierarchy and intended orientation. In Papanek's terms, this corresponds to method, as it exposes the logic behind how circulation is designed to orchestrate use, interaction, and visibility. The plan does not merely permit access—it pre-conditions user trajectories, suggesting preferred patterns of gathering in the ballroom before branching into communal activities in adjacent rooms. Through this logic, the interior plan embodies method as a set of procedural decisions that translate social intention into spatial order.

Although the documented photograph depicts a ceremonial wedding stage rather than an ongoing event, Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 together provide insight into how Wisma Batari's interior is spatially and symbolically prepared for public use. The arrangement of the stage, the orientation of the seating, and the frontal lighting rig reveal the ballroom's ability to transform from a colonial domestic space into a flexible platform for collective expression.



Figure 3. Seating layout oriented toward the stage during event preparation
Source: (Prasetyo, 2025)

While no live event was observed during the site visit, the configuration itself foregrounds the room's latent use: the raised platform creates a directional focal point, and the seating layout facing the stage indicates the anticipated trajectory of audience attention. In this sense, the analysis is based on affordances—spatial cues that invite particular modes of occupation—rather than directly observed behavior. The ballroom communicates its public function through its anticipatory setup: it signals how bodies are expected to gather, circulate, and participate even before the event occurs. Such a condition illustrates what Lefebvre describes as the production of space, in which use is not limited to physical occupation but also emerges through the spatial intentions inscribed into form, material, and symbolic imagery (Lefebvre, 2014).

Informal conversation with a venue staff member further indicated that the ballroom is most frequently used for wedding receptions and, on a smaller scale, for intimate performances such as traditional dance or music events. This narrative aligns with the spatial prefiguration documented in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3, where the arrangement anticipates collective spectatorship.

From this standpoint, the “use” of Wisma Batari is better understood as a state of spatial readiness—a design condition that anticipates multiple forms of gathering, from ceremonies and exhibitions to cultural performances. The modular configuration of the ballroom, combined with removable stage components, embodies what Zeisel terms *design affordances*: spatial cues that suggest potential behaviors and interactions even when user activity is absent (Zeisel, 1984). These affordances demonstrate the building's latent flexibility and its capacity to host various communal programs without altering its structural identity.

Moreover, the ceremonial display seen in Fig. 2 functions as a performative metaphor for continuity between past and present. The symmetrical arrangement of the backdrop, lighting, and axial layout retains the visual grammar of colonial order while embedding it within the narrative of Javanese social ritual. Such transformation exemplifies Tuan's (1979) notion of *place-memory*, where atmosphere and spatial character evoke emotional resonance and collective familiarity, even in moments of stillness.

Consequently, the photograph should not be read as mere decorative staging but as evidence of latent use—the enduring capacity of the interior to mediate between memory and modernity. The discussion of “use” in this context therefore transcends the literal act of occupancy, encompassing adaptability, atmosphere, and performative symbolism. Wisma Batari’s interior thus exemplifies a living design system, capable of sustaining flexibility, cultural relevance, and experiential continuity over time.

Need – Functional and Social Requirements

The analysis of need examines how Wisma Batari’s interior responds to evolving social functions while maintaining the coherence of its historical structure. In Papanek’s function complex, need refers to design responses grounded in real human requirements—social, ritual, environmental, and ethical—rather than stylistic intention (Papanek & Fuller, 1972). In the context of adaptive reuse, “need” is manifested as the negotiation between heritage continuity and contemporary programming: a process that enables new forms of communal gathering without erasing the spatial memory of the building. This transformation is illustrated by the shift from a colonial residence to a public venue, which demonstrates that need is not merely operational utility, but the collective expectation for accessible spaces that support ritual and social interaction. Beyond form and aesthetics, Wisma Batari accommodates a set of socio-cultural needs embedded in Javanese ceremonial life: spaces for hospitality, modesty, collective performance, and ritual preparation—functions that expand the interior’s meaning beyond its original domestic logic.

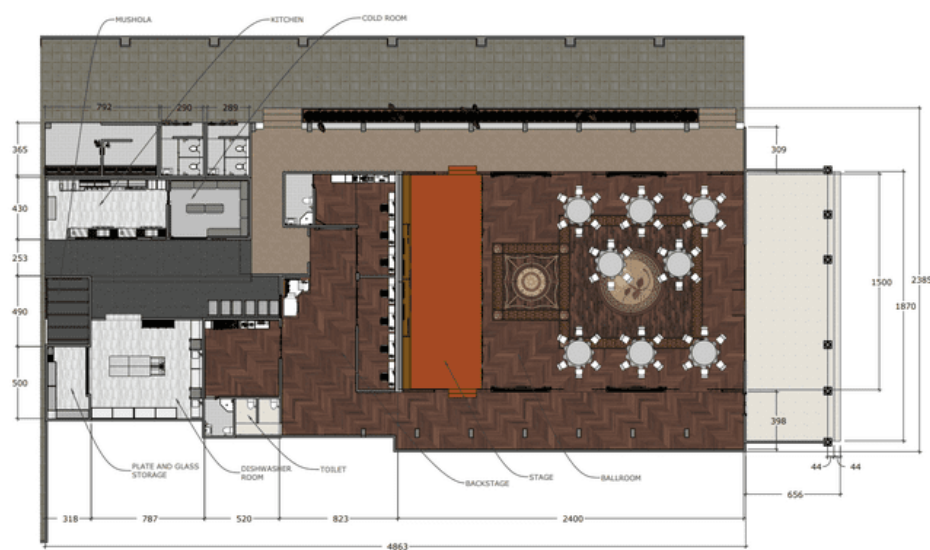


Figure 4. Layout showing public–private zoning of Wisma Batari
Source: (Prasetyo, 2025)

Fig. 4 visualizes how these needs are spatially translated through a layered zoning strategy. The drawing employs differentiated shading to indicate three operational domains:

1. the dark-toned zone, which represents the public ballroom, where communal activities and performances take place;
2. the medium-toned zone, which marks semi-public backstage and transition spaces, including dressing rooms and circulation corridors that mediate between the front stage and service areas; and
3. the light-toned zones, which indicate service functions (kitchen, mushola, cold room, restroom, dishwashing room), located behind acoustic and spatial buffers to ensure privacy and minimize disruption during events.

This zoning is not merely descriptive. Through a multimodal reading (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), the plan can be interpreted as an ensemble of communicative modes: geometry (zoning boundaries), material transitions (from parquet to ceramic tiles), and movement paths (expected user trajectories). Each mode conveys affordances—suggesting how bodies circulate, where sound should be absorbed, and how ritual transitions unfold. The integration of mushola and dressing rooms, for example, reflects ethical and spiritual needs in Javanese social events, indicating that the interior accommodates ritual modesty and gendered spatial practices, which are typically absent in Western colonial domestic layouts.

From a systems perspective, the zoning strategy aligns with Papanek's argument that the concept of need is inseparable from moral responsibility. The spatial organization ensures that multiple programs—food preparation, ritual performance, and social gathering—can occur simultaneously without friction. This is supported by logical circulation: separate access routes for guests and staff, direct adjacency between backstage and service areas, and acoustic separation between the ballroom and private quarters. Such arrangement embodies what Manzini (2024) describes as design facilitating new forms of social participation within existing spatial ecologies. The inclusion of modular furniture and mobile kitchen equipment observed during fieldwork further enhances situational adaptability, responding to the need for flexible layouts that accommodate weddings, exhibitions, or small performances without altering the building's structural identity.

A multimodal analysis of Fig. 4 deepens this reading beyond visual description. The direction of circulation arrows and proportional scaling of zones illustrate not only technical layout decisions but also symbolic hierarchies of space: the public ballroom occupies the largest and most central area, while service functions occupy peripheral zones—mirroring the socio-ritual value placed on communal gathering in contemporary Javanese culture. The adjacency between the ballroom and mushola speaks to collective practice: the design acknowledges that ceremonial events are often interwoven with ritual prayer. Thus, layout acts as cultural text, where spatial markers, thresholds, and programmatic adjacencies are read as expressions of collective identity rather than neutral planning.

Ultimately, Wisma Batari's interior fulfills functional, cultural, and experiential needs. It integrates accessibility, flexibility, and moral inclusivity within a preserved colonial framework, generating what Tuan (1979) articulates as place-memory: the capacity of space to evoke shared familiarity while hosting contemporary forms of life. In this sense, the interior cannot be understood as static heritage; it is a living design system, where need is continuously redefined through use, atmosphere, and social meaning. The measure of adaptive reuse success therefore lies not in its stylistic preservation but in the resilience of its design logic—its ability to sustain relevance, equity, and symbolic continuity across temporal transitions (see Fig. 4).

Telesis – Social Context and Design Morality

The spatial configuration itself enacts the social aspirations of its users. Through stage directionality, ceremonial backdrop, and structured circulation, the interior performs telesis—design as the material projection of collective ethical intention (Papanek & Fuller, 1972). In this interior, evidence emerges through multimodal affordances rather than recorded events: visual cues, spatial hierarchies, material contrasts, and symbolic adjacency that collectively prefigure patterns of social gathering. The arrangement thus operates as a communicative system; circulation routes, axial orientation, and formal symmetry script how bodies are expected to gather, witness, and participate.

The openness of Wisma Batari's façade—marked by large glazed windows and permeable thresholds—signifies a deliberate shift from colonial exclusivity toward collective accessibility. This architectural transparency is not a neutral aesthetic gesture but a semiotic act that materializes the ethics of *guyub* (togetherness) and *tepa selira* (mutual respect): the façade projects internal cultural values outward, collapsing the historical boundary between private prestige and public participation. The ballroom, once a locus of domestic hierarchy and symbolic capital, is therefore re-coded as a site of shared participation, where social harmony is spatially enacted through visible openness, symmetrical orientation, and balanced lines of sight. In this sense, the building functions as a moral

agent, facilitating the negotiation between heritage memory and contemporary communal life. Rather than treating morality as abstract principle, *telesis* is legible in the practical organization of space. The *sinoman* area—conventionally used in Javanese gatherings as a space for hospitality and collective preparation—constitutes an emblematic node of *gotong royong*. Its adjacency to the ballroom and service areas allows collective labor to unfold within the same spatial field as ritual performance, making mutual aid operational rather than symbolic. This reflects Appadurai’s argument in *The Social Life of Things* that objects and spaces accrue social biographies through their continued participation in cultural interaction (Appadurai, 1988). *Wisma Batari*’s interior extends such a biography: it narrates the transition from private ownership to a model of shared stewardship, where heritage space becomes a communal asset rather than a static relic.

Moreover, the interior’s configuration supports moral sustainability through its capacity for inclusivity. Permeability between indoor and outdoor zones, the modularity of the ballroom, and the flexible use of rooms for social and religious functions collectively articulate what Manzini calls design for social commons—design that enables collective experiences and sustains the moral economy of togetherness rather than serving isolated functions (Manzini, 2024). This spatial flexibility is a stance, not an accident: it privileges coexistence over hierarchy by embedding moral values in the logistics of use. Here, the absence of live event imagery does not constitute a limitation; the affordances themselves act as socio-spatial traces, revealing the moral logic inscribed in form, adjacency, and material choice.

The interior thus demonstrates that *telesis* is not decorative ideology but operational ethics: it is revealed through the way the space anticipates communal relations, encourages ritual modesty, and sustains relational proximity without erasing respectful boundaries. The building negotiates the values of historical preservation, social inclusion, and ecological awareness through design decisions that are simultaneously symbolic and functional. By positioning colonial geometries within contemporary social practice, *Wisma Batari* shows how heritage interiors can perform moral negotiation across generations—bridging continuity and transformation within a shared cultural horizon.

Ultimately, the *telesis* dimension of the interior expresses design as moral practice. *Wisma Batari* is not simply a heritage artifact but a moral landscape, where spatial design continues to shape—and be shaped by—the collective consciousness of its users. Rather than offering a static representation of the past, the interior projects a living ethical trajectory, enabling community life to unfold within forms that carry memory, intention, and shared aspiration.

Association – Symbolic Meaning and Cultural Memory

Even without direct photographic documentation, *Wisma Batari*’s interior communicates a layered symbolic system that blends colonial spatial order with Javanese cultural expression. In Papanek’s framework, association refers to how design evokes emotional, symbolic, and ideological meanings beyond its utilitarian purpose (Papanek & Fuller, 1972). Within this dimension, the interior becomes a visual and moral text through which cultural identity and historical power relations are both remembered and reinterpreted. Rather than serving as frozen heritage, the space acts as a living discourse—continually mediated by material choices, atmospheric conditions, and communal practices.

The interior’s material vocabulary exemplifies symbolic hybridity in spatial heritage—the coexistence of inherited colonial discipline and localized reinterpretation (Spanu, 2020). The extensive use of teakwood in door frames, ceilings, and furniture connotes *jujur marang bahan*—truth to material—that aligns with the Javanese moral aesthetic of sincerity and endurance. At the same time, symmetrical proportions reflect the colonial ideal of order and control, articulating an architectural hegemony as visual governance: the use of symmetry to establish hierarchy and moral authority (Talamini et al., 2023). Yet, in the current adaptive setting, this visual discipline is softened by openness, translucency, and natural lighting that invite public participation rather than reinforce social boundaries. Light operates as a semiotic agent, transforming the atmosphere from one of exclusion to inclusion. Its interplay with reflective surfaces produces affective lightscapes—conditions in which

illumination constructs cultural emotion and collective memory (Edensor, 2015). The resulting ambiance merges reverence with accessibility, suggesting a contemporary moral realignment: from domination to togetherness. In simple terms, what was once a hall of prestige now facilitates collective presence, welcoming people as participants rather than observers of power.

Through this synthesis, Wisma Batari's interior manifests a hybrid visual identity: the geometric clarity of colonial modernism integrated with the material warmth and social fluidity of Javanese sensibility. This condition aligns with Rakat and Sutanto (2020), who argue that Indonesian heritage interiors function as "transcultural palimpsests," continuously rewritten through new social and aesthetic practices. The symbolic relationship between teak, light, and symmetry thus forms a living semiotic code—each element contributing to a moral narrative of resilience, humility, and balance.

Ultimately, the association dimension of Wisma Batari demonstrates that design operates simultaneously as memory and message. Its interior is not merely a residue of colonial taste but a reinterpretation of order through moral empathy and cultural continuity. By merging material honesty, luminous atmosphere, and proportional balance, the space constructs a visual ethics—an embodied representation of how modern Javanese identity negotiates between reverence for the past and openness to the future. In essence, the building shows how heritage space can shift from signifying hierarchy to enabling togetherness while preserving its historic character.

Aesthetics – Visual Language and Spatial Atmosphere

The aesthetic experience of Wisma Batari's interior is most vividly perceived through its ceiling composition and light distribution, as captured in Fig. 5. The photograph reveals an intentional orchestration of proportion, brightness, and material contrast that defines the room's atmosphere. The vast white ceiling plane, punctuated by evenly spaced luminaires and slow-spinning ceiling fans, generates what Zumthor (2006) terms *atmospheric presence*—a perceptual field where material and light converge to evoke emotion rather than spectacle.

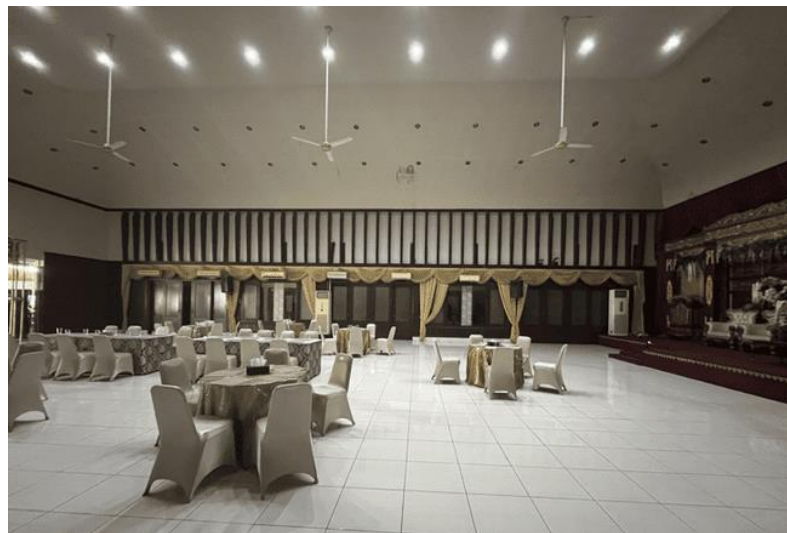


Figure 5. Ceiling composition and ambient lighting of the main ballroom, illustrating proportional rhythm and warm luminance
Source: (Prasetyo, 2025)

The dominance of neutral surfaces—white ceiling, ivory tile, and muted beige upholstery—creates an optical calmness that accentuates the vertical rhythm of dark teak panels along the rear wall. This juxtaposition between light and shadow constructs an interior equilibrium reminiscent of Böhme's concept of *aesthetic atmosphere*: space perceived as an immersive tone rather than a collection of objects (Böhme & Thibaud, 2016). The visual serenity softens the colonial geometry of the hall, translating rigid symmetry into contemplative stillness.

Recent studies on heritage lighting highlight how luminous uniformity fosters comfort and collective focus in large public interiors (Nasar & Bokharai, 2017). In Wisma Batari, the ceiling's evenly diffused lighting transforms what once represented social hierarchy into an accessible and democratic ambience. The warm reflection across the glossy floor amplifies spatial openness, while the exposed structural grid maintains the honesty of form and proportion.

This fusion of colonial precision and vernacular warmth produces a renewed visual identity—an interior that balances order and empathy. The aesthetic thus operates as both memory and emotion: the discipline of colonial architecture absorbed into the sensory intimacy of Javanese spatial feeling, materialized through proportion, light, and silence (refer to Fig. 5).

Conclusion

The reading of Wisma Batari shows that heritage interiors, when approached as designed products, operate as socially embedded systems rather than aesthetic relics. The building's interior synthesizes function, symbolism, and moral value into a spatial logic that negotiates between colonial order and contemporary Javanese ethics. Interior design, in this framing, is not static preservation but an evolving discourse in which material form and lived practice co-produce cultural meaning.

Through Papanek's Function Complex, the study interprets the interior across interdependent dimensions. The need dimension reveals how Wisma Batari accommodates current social practices—accessibility, ritual hospitality, and flexibility—while retaining its historical structure. The teleis dimension identifies openness, circulation, and support zones as material expressions of *gotong royong* and *tepa selira*, translating ethical intentions into spatial organization. The aesthetic dimension repositions proportion, daylight, and material tactility as forms of cultural empathy, not stylistic citation. Together, these layers disclose an interior that narrates social values as much as it accommodates activity.

The study's contribution is to reposition interior heritage as an active social product of design. Materials—teak surfaces, geometric order, soft illumination—function as signifiers of honesty, discipline, and inclusion, sustaining cultural identity through design practice. This reframes interior analysis as moral inquiry: understanding how space mediates between collective memory and contemporary meaning. This approach advances interior design discourse from visual representation toward social and moral epistemology, aligning with theory that treats interiors as agents of cultural transformation rather than outcomes of visual intention. The findings are interpretive, grounded in multimodal reading and field observation rather than user surveys; future research can extend this through ethnography or comparative heritage studies. Ultimately, Wisma Batari illustrates how heritage interiors materialize the dialogue between tradition and modernity, beauty and responsibility. Its spatial language shows that design matters not only for what it preserves, but for how it continues to shape collective ways of inhabiting meaning.

In simple terms, this study shows that Wisma Batari's interior is not only a preserved building, but a living space where design, culture, and everyday social values continue to shape how people gather and create meaning today.

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