Significance Assessment of the Historic Maimon Palace Area

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Abstract. During the last four decades, heritage significance assessment has become an important step in cultural heritage protection and management. It is essential to study cultural heritage significance and its assessment to develop the policies and planning, which will impact the conservation and the action in safeguarding cultural heritage in the future. Therefore, this research will explore the heritage significance of the historic Maimon Palace area through the historical and structural approach. It starts from documenting the existing, investigating the development of the historical place and formulating the statement of significance through group discussion meeting involving the local communities. The paper has presented the significance of the historic Maimon Palace area as a critical part of Medan city development, which is characterized by the Malay culture and Islamic identity. It is confirmed that Deli River, Derikhan Park, today is known as Seri Deli Park, and the Grand Mosque Al-Mashun are crucial elements surrounding the palace. The Maimon Palace’s landmark is not only the landmarks for this area but also have remained a leading landmark for the city of Medan.

1. Introduction
The term cultural significance vividly first described in the Burra Charter in 1979 is a synonym for cultural values [1]. Since the issuance of The Burra Charter, many countries adopted the concept of cultural significance and developed the criteria for assessing it. Today, the assessment for the cultural significance recognizes as the crucial step in the conservation process. Also, cultural significance assessment becomes a method for designation where a historic asset labelled as heritage.

Medan is recognized as a multi-ethnic city defined by the inhabitant and population living in the inner city, the Malay as the native for Medan city. The ethnic groups are not only from local or in other cities in Indonesia, but also from other Asian countries such as Chinese, Indian, and Arab, as well from Europe countries. The large scale of the plantation industry development on the east coast of Sumatra from the eighteen sixteen had gradually influenced the establishment of this character. The character of multi ethnics’ city like Medan probably cannot be found in other cities in Indonesia. Perhaps, we ever heard about the Chinese town or often called Pecinan area in other cities of Indonesia, but not for the kampong of Indian or Kling, and this is only in Medan city. Besides, there are various local ethnic groups reside in Medan city, for example, Malay, Javanese, Minangkabau, and sub-ethnic of Batak like Toba, Mandailing, Karo, Pakpak, Angkola and Nias. Malay is the native for Medan city since the Deli Sultanate Kingdom established in the late eighteen century. The remained historic building with Malay architectures can be found in the historic area of Deli Sultanate known as Kota Maksum located in the southern part of the centre of Medan City. The landmarks for this area are the Maimon Palace and Grand
Mosque Al Mashun. Besides, Medan is the centre for plantation industry at first started respectively from tobacco, rubber and palm oil that is perceived by the activities and function of the buildings in the inner city and the periphery of the town. Although the atmosphere as planter's town is not very remarked today, the infrastructures that were built with railways, roads, telephone and telegraph connections support the industry mostly still in function. Also, the recognized buildings in Medan that formerly were the headquarters of the plantation companies remained and functioned as the previous.

Therefore, this research will explore the heritage significance of the historic Maimon Palace area through the historical and structural approaches and value assessment by involving the local community. It starts from documenting the existing, investigating the development of the historic area and formulating the statement of significance through group discussion meeting attended by the local people.

2. Method
The study was carrying out the documentary source and then continued by field survey to inventory the recent existing and condition of the area. The study involved 30 local people in gaining valuable input to improve the protection and conservation of the cultural heritage of Indonesia shortly. The main criterion for the selection of participants was the interest in the protection of heritage conservation. Thirty participants have a variety in term of the profession, education, age, gender. They came from various community organizations, educational institutions, and government, as well as individuals who were owners of historic buildings, cultural activists, and private sectors. The research preferred to involve the community aiming to increase the role of the community more than only sharing an opinion or consultation. The participants were all invited to evaluate the significance of Maimon Palace. Before the assessment, the documentation and investigation of the Maimon Palace have been done by the author. The discussion group meeting used the Nominal Group Technique as O'Connor's argument [2] that the nominal group consensus is appropriate method to identify of items which are considered being culturally significant according to a range of different group cultural, sub-cultural and expert. Participants appointed one moderator to lead the discussion. On discussion, participants were allowed to ask questions or respond to the opinions of the other participants. Moderator then presented the main ideas of discussion results at the end of the discussion.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Historical and Structural Approaches
The growth of cities in Indonesia was significantly seen in the early 20th century. At that time there was a change to the administrative system of the city administration at the Dutch East Indies colonial administration, along with the publication of the Decentralization Act in 1903, but was conducted two years later in 1905. At that moment, it was arising thought of spatial planning to cities in Indonesia. According to this rule, in 1915 the Keresidenan Sumatra Timur (East Sumatra Residency) enhanced its status to be Gubernemen (Province). In 1918 the city of Medan officially became Gemeente with Baron Daniel Mac Kay as the Mayor. Based on the "Acte van Schenking" (Grant Deed) No. 97 Notary J.M. de-Hondt Junior, dated on November 30, 1918, the Sultan of Deli handed over the land to the Medan Gemeente, thus officially becoming the region under the direct rule of the Dutch East Indies [3]. In the early days of this township, Medan still consists of four villages, namely Kampung Merdeka-Kesawan Historic Area, Kampung Sungai Rengas, Kampung Petisah Hulu and Kampung Petisah Hilir [4]. Meanwhile, villages like Kota Matsum, Gelugur, Sungai Rengas, Medan Baru, Sungai Kerah, Sukaramai and others remain under Deli Sultanate territory.
Deli Sultanate was a historic area that during the colonial better known as Sultangrond. At first, this area did not include parts of Gemeente (Municipality of Medan). Although there was no precise geographical boundary that separated this area with Gemeente region, except for the road, the hallmark of the buildings in this area showed that separation. The street name can also identify the differences; that if the region Gemeente used the term of a road in Dutch such as straat, laan, and weg, then the Sultangrond area used the term-jalan, for instance, Jalan Djaparis, Jalan Poeri, Jalan Amalioen, Jalan Oetama, jalan Radja. Deli Sultanate region became a critically important area in the history and culture of the city of Medan, mainly in the context of the locality. When the village of Medan Putri progressed notes into a Dutch colonial town and was utterly dominated by the Dutch or other foreigners, this area became an area that was more local and traditional. Development of Maimon Palace in 1888 could be a public memory of an indigenous contribution, or a local native who participated in the early development days of the colonial city of Medan. 1891 was the year of the inauguration of the new sultan's palace. That year also meant that the capital of the Sultanate of Labuhan Deli was transferred to Medan, as shown in Figure 2.
According to Dutch Colonial rules at that moment, it used to consist of two different administrative regions. Both were Gemeente of Medan and Sultangrond. Therefore, the Sultangrond area was separated by the Gemeente of Medan, established by the Dutch East Indies Government, that we know as the central part of the city of Medan today. Later, these two regions were grown and developed together to form a lively and beautiful city. There was no massive barrier separating the two areas in addition to roads.

Sultangrond area has developed on the initiative of the Sultan of Deli. Formerly, the area was inhabited by the Malays, and Deli Sultanate erected many buildings and facilities, such as the palace, mosque, and houses for the nobility. The Maimon Palace and the Grand Mosque Al Mashun were the landmarks for this area. Both buildings were more architectural in style and showed a blended style of modern colonial, Islamic and traditional. In conclusion, Sultangrond area was characterized by the Malay culture and Islamic identity. The Maimon's Palace and the Grand Mosque Al-Mashun are not only the landmarks for this area but also have remained a leading landmark for the city of Medan. Now, the area Sultangrond is leaving a legacy of local Malay culture influenced by the typical modern colonial. Therefore, it is not surprising that the remnants of the old heritage building also adopted the style of colonial architecture as seen in the former Municipality Bungalow that was located at the behind of Derikhian Park only across from the Grand Mosque. The place was a housing complex for royalty Deli and was still leaving some colonial-styled houses. Now, the old buildings are concentrated on the former site of the bungalow now called Jalan Martimbang, Jalan Dolok Marbun, Jalan Singgalang and Jalan Mahkamah. Jalan Mahkamah (Court Street) names that have existed since the colonial era will be reminiscent of Gedung Kerapatan (a court building) that was constructed at Jalan Katamso previously called Paleis Weg. The train tracks were parallel with the Mahkamah Street. Unfortunately, the Gedung Kerapatan has been destroyed, leaving only the name of Court Street and the railway tracks that are no longer used.
3.2. Cultural Mapping

Cultural mapping, largely considered, promises new ways of describing, accounting for, and coming to terms with the cultural assets of communities and places. Together, these assets help define societies in terms of cultural identity, vitality, sense of place, and quality of life [5]. Asset mapping is a tool for systematically identifying, managing, and visually presenting information on local
cultural assets. Cultural asset mapping begins by consistently consolidating existing information. Research participants will use the set of categories of cultural assets as a base to create additional layers of local data. All these resources were combined to create a foundation of information on cultural assets. For the study, it referred to Cultural Resource Framework or CRF identified by Statistics Canada into six categories of various cultural assets, ranging from the cultural heritage, natural heritage, festivals and attractions, cultural enterprises, community cultural organization, as well as cultural spaces and facilities. As previously mentioned, the study is a continuation of the previous study, which intended to explore the cultural mapping of the Deli Sultanate Area in 2016 [6]. The area of Deli Sultanate covers five of cultural assets except for natural heritage. Local people conceived this area as the centre of Malay cultural tradition in North Sumatra Province. The number, proportion and distribution of cultural assets in this area is shown in Figure 5 and 6.

**Figure 5** The proportion of cultural assets in the Deli Sultanate Historic Area

**Figure 6** Cultural Mapping of Deli Sultanate Area
3.3. Cultural Significance Assessment of the historic Maimon Palace Area

In the recent 30 years, the discourse on valuing heritage asset has steadily researched by the scholars since the issuance of the Burra Charter in 1979. The burgeoning of the investigation reports and paper written by scholars to address this issue by concerning on methods for identifying, articulating, and establishing cultural significance has shown the essential of valuing cultural heritage asset in the protection and management. As Bonnette [7] asserted it is possible to secure a long-term vision of city's historic districts' conservation project to maintain the overall cultural character of a place when the heritage planner knows which values are to be retained. If cultural values and their interrelationships can be identified and fully comprehended, this knowledge can be then used to assist in making management decisions now and in the future that will strengthen and enhance the benefits that accrue to society from the asset [8]. Therefore, the first duty of the community response to assess and define the values and to share their views on the fundamental matters with those concerned—the local society, first, the actors of the conservation process from top to bottom, and then the visitors. Only then, is it possible to act with a common vision [9].

During more than three decades, many countries around the world have adopted the conservation process of Burra Charter with certain adapting to the administration structure of their countries. Accordingly, identifying or recognition values or a feature's special interest or heritage significances to make the historical asset secure and safe is the first phase of safeguarding and managing those assets that we as a society wish to protect. In the legal conservation planning context, it is also called a nomination or listing process. Until today, the Burra Charter has become the best-known guideline for heritage significance assessment.

On a similar note, Mason [10] asserted that value assessment could be broken down into a three-part model: identification, followed by elicitation and elaboration (including exploring connections and overlaps), and the last part is the declaration of values that will mention why a historic asset is essential to conserve. The three-part model of value assessment is a more detailed rendering of 'the cultural significance assessment' over occupying the centre of the planning process methodology as illustrated by Mason in Figure 7.

![Figure 7 Overview of cultural significance assessment process](Source: Adopted from Mason)
As the aforementioned in Burra Charter, value is the single reason underlying heritage conservation. It is self-evident that no society makes an effort to conserve a historic asset what it does not value. Since the publication of the Burra Charter in 1979, many countries recognized the importance of identifying the cultural heritage significance or values to develop the policy and planning in heritage management. Today, the cultural significance assessment is part of the listing process of a historical asset as heritage. We need a set of criteria which contain principles, characteristics, categories, and guidance to help decide whether a historic asset has heritage value or not and to make the assessment results more accountable, transparent, and consistent as well. Although the discourse of cultural heritage conservation in Medan had evolved since the 1980s, cultural significance assessment is still a new concept for Indonesia heritage community with the absence of its description within the Indonesian Heritage Act No. 11 of 2010. The study of establishing criteria for significance assessment of cultural heritage in Medan has been done by Fitri [11]. She found six criteria derived from five values as follows:

(i) It has a strong association with events and important people (warrior, politician, historian, humanist, writer, scientist, philanthropist, and others.) that have played an important part and contributed to the historical development of Medan city.

(ii) It has potential information that will contribute to the understanding of the historical development of Medan, and it can be utilized for the present.

(iii) It has a strong or special association with a society or community, showing the identity and character of a diverse ethnic and nation.

(iv) It possesses rarity in terms of function, design, and craftsmanship.

(v) It was a creation or product of a designer, architect, builder, and artist that demonstrated high achievement of creativity, technology or scientific, uniqueness, which has contributed to the cultural and historical development of Medan city.

(vi) It demonstrated specific local tradition and represented the local identity or cultural diversity.

Heritage listing has traditionally been the territory of academics and experts coordinated by the authorities of the region. However, the contemporary trend in heritage conservation theory today emphasizes the role of community in the cultural significance assessment is essential. Therefore, the research intended to assess the heritage significance of the historic Maimon Palace has involved the local people. By using those criteria, the significance of the historic Maimon Palace resulted as follows: This area is not designed by special architects but looks interesting arrangement and layout for each building. The Sultanate of Deli as a Malay kingdom that led to the east coast of Sumatra in the past. The grandeur of the Palace, the Al Makshun mosque and the Deli series park is one of the effects of advancements in the tobacco plantation industry that began with the role of the Sultan Deli by granting land concession rights to plantation entrepreneurs. Medan is a city that is growing and developing rapidly due to the advancement of the plantation industry, especially tobacco, can be described with the grandeur of this Palace. Therefore the area is a significant part of the historical development of Medan (Criteria i and iii). This area is widely associated with central figures in the Sultanate of Deli and also the Deli Malay community and even northern Sumatra (Criterion iii). Architecturally, the building designs in this area reflect a mixture of Islam, traditional Malay and European styles. Therefore, it becomes a source of information to understand the history of the development of the city of Medan, in particular, synonymous with Malay culture while contributing to the development of current knowledge (criteria ii, iv, vi). Become the local identity of the city of Medan on a national scale.

4. Conclusions

Assessment of the significance attributed to heritage is a very important activity in any conservation effort since values strongly influence the decisions that are made. It should be carried out as a necessary preliminary to any conservation action. Significance assessment is also the process of studying and understanding the meanings and values of places, objects and collections. Many researchers argued the value assessment could be elicited and expressed by the quantitative and qualitative research methods. However, since determining of the category of value now becomes more important and needed in the
sustainability of conservation works, until now there is no standard or formula for cultural heritage significance assessment which is agreed by all countries. The method to characterize the value based on the views and experiences of local people thus considered to be the best approach. It fulfilled five criteria of the six established criteria meaning that the Deli Sultanate region became a critically important area in the history and culture of the city of Medan, mainly in the context of the locality.

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