

JOGJA MOSAIC :
PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS IN THE JOGJA PLANNING GALLERY
PRE-DESIGN PROPOSAL

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ABSTRACT

The Jogja Planning Gallery is a kind of cultural park planned to be an exhibition space for artists and craftsmen in Yogyakarta. Its location is within the philosophical axis of Jalan Malioboro and based on the organizers' direction, the design is asked to consider contextual and sustainable aspects. The cluster of buildings and the spatial layout of the environment are expected to embody the philosophy, history, environment, spatial planning, building layout, and the future of Jogja. This concept is realized in a design that reflects an ideal dimension formed by the superimposition of historical dimensions and harmonious dimensions. The historical dimension refers to the philosophical axis of Jogja and the conservation objects at the site, namely: the former building of the Provincial People's Representative Council (DPRD) and two old banyan trees. The harmonious dimension is developed from an imaginary line connecting the actual position of the center point of the former DPRD building with Mount Merapi. The philosophical axis reminds of a spiritual relationship with the Creator or a journey towards existence. This pilgrimage is depicted as full of physical struggle through symbolizing the temptations of worldly functions on the left and right sides of the axis, including the future building of the Jogja Planning Gallery. This materialistic temptation must be overcome even though it can be misleading. The axis of harmony symbolizes human creativity, which always strives to achieve material truth despite always stumbling over its own physical limitations. The Jogja Planning Gallery is a superimposition of ideals that represent ambiguity, symbolizing the physical journey that must be undertaken with constant awareness and vigilance because the most important thing in life is to achieve spiritual existence.

Keywords: Ideals; Harmony; History; Superimpose

INTRODUCTION

Yogyakarta is a cultural city centered on and developed from Javanese traditional roots. In this culture, the primary goal of life is to maintain harmony with the environment and achieve what is known as "Memayu Hayuning Bawono." A loose translation of this philosophy is to beautify an already beautiful world. In the Javanese perspective, the universe has inherent perfection from the beginning, and humans are born with the natural capacity not only to maintain but also to contribute to that perfection as civilization progresses. The philosophical meaning of this mantra emphasizes the importance of maintaining balance and harmony between humans, nature, and the social environment, and encourages actions that benefit all parties.

The Jogja Planning Gallery building is a cultural park envisioned to embody the "Mangayu Hayuning Bawono" philosophy in architectural form. It is planned to function as a spatial information center for Jogja. Its primary activity is an exhibition space for Yogyakarta's arts and

craftspeople, although when measured against Javanese ideals, there seems to be a contradiction between the Memayu Hayuning Bawono mantra and the building's function. The goal of Javanese harmonization cannot be juxtaposed with the goal of demonstrating one's abilities. Javanese achievements are social, not individual. Only the king has the right to declare himself a creator, as he is the sole representative of the Creator on earth. The king is the owner and ruler of all creative rights within his kingdom. Everyone under the king's authority must adhere to Javanese customs when creating works under his decree. Therefore, in line with the location of the site and the traditions and beliefs held, this design was developed without departing from the context of the king's decree.

The cultural history of Yogyakarta was formed long before the kingdom was founded, continuing to develop and perhaps even accelerating through various socio-political and cultural upheavals. Yogyakarta's culture is not singular and stagnant. The palace itself demonstrates this dynamic. As an Islamic kingdom, the Yogyakarta palace still retains many Hindu concepts, reflected in its Indies-style architecture. The kingdom was formed on an axis that stretches from Panggung Krapyak, the palace, to the Tugu Pal Putih Monument, representing the relationship between the South Sea and Mount Merapi. This strategic axis was laid by Prince Mangkubumi to initiate the development of his kingdom and remains crucial to Yogyakarta's urban planning to this day. It is the philosophical axis, the center of Jogja's life, and a symbol of Javanese life orientation that prioritizes spiritual values.

Underscoring the narrative that states that one of the strengths of Javanese culture is its ability to "Javaneseize" all external influences, this proposal seeks to express this statement through an interpretation of Jogja's Javanese-ness. The Jogja Planning Gallery, both physically and socially, is inseparable from these Javanese principles and ideals. Its location at the intersection of Malioboro Street places it in the royal protection area, facilitating the people's material needs, but also reminding them of the potential for these material temptations to lead them away from the primary goal of spiritual life. In this position, the Jogja Planning Gallery is expected to serve as a pause for reorientation. It serves as a place to reorient the goal of achieving perfection, "Memayu Hayuning Bawono." This primary goal is spiritual and spiritual in nature. Its embodiment is a spatial and building layout designed based on the concept of environmental harmony and respect for history. Through the collected architectural attributes, arranged as a mosaic that depicts the journey, life and displays the track record of the development of Jogja culture..

LOCATION DESCRIPTION

The site is located within the Malioboro Street area, an area that is part of the Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis, namely: an imaginary line connecting the South Sea and Mount Merapi (figure 1). This line is explicitly stated in the road sections and symbolic signs starting from Panggung Krapyak, cutting through the middle of the palace, to the White Pal Monument. Panggung Krapyak symbolizes birth, the beginning of human life, or sangkan paraning dumadi (the beginning of events). The Yogyakarta Palace symbolizes human maturity and adulthood in living life, and is the midpoint in the human spiritual journey from birth (sangkan) to returning to the Creator (paran). The White Pal Monument (also known as the Golong-Gilig Monument) symbolizes the unity between the people and the king, as well as the relationship between humans and God or the human journey towards the Creator. Overall, the Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis, also known as The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and Its Historic Landmarks, is a spatial concept that depicts the journey of human life from birth to death, as well as the vertical relationship of humans with God and horizontally with each other and the surrounding nature.

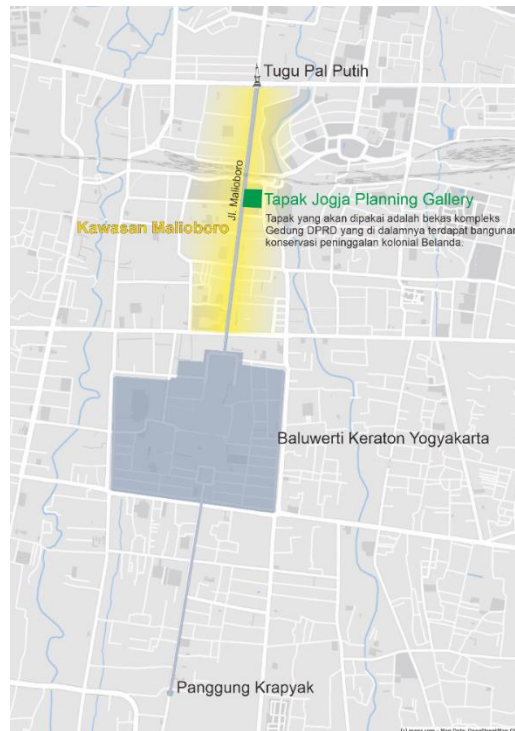


Figure 1: Location of the Jogja Planning Gallery Site

The section of Malioboro Street where the Jogja Planning Gallery is located symbolizes the human journey, which must always follow the path of goodness and seek good teachings. This path must be pursued with a pure heart and ignore the worldly temptations and preferences encountered along the way. A single thought can lead us astray and even lead us further astray from the primary purpose of creation. On either side of the road are facilities symbolizing worldly temptations and life choices, including the Kepatihan Building, a symbol of power, and Beringharjo Market, a symbol of materialism. However, others interpret the name Malioboro according to its meaning: some interpret it as the process of becoming a saint, while others interpret it as a flower-filled street. In this second interpretation, the facilities lining the road symbolize the colorful flowers that adorn life. With these diverse interpretations, the Jogja Planning Gallery positions itself as a stopover for a moment to orient oneself before continuing the journey.

THE SITE ANALYSIS

The site is located on the edge of Malioboro Street with other boundaries, south of Representative Street, east of part of Mataram Street and north of Ina Garuda Hotel. On the south side of the site is a part of the former DPRD building that is being conserved. This is a colonial heritage building that has become an integral part of Malioboro's history. In front of this conservation building, on the edge of Malioboro Street or southwest of the corner of the site between Malioboro Street and Representative Street there are a pair of very old banyan trees that have become part of the site marker (figure 2).

If a line is drawn between the former DPRD building under conservation and the center of Mount Merapi, a north-south line will appear at a different angle from the Malioboro axis. This is not only due to the different starting points (one axis is drawn from the palace and the other from the DPRD conservation building), but also because the Malioboro axis does not point exactly to the center of Mount Merapi. This phenomenon creates a dual reality regarding the axis orientation. The orientation of the palace toward Mount Merapi tends to reflect the concept of "towards" or

"towards," where the object can be more than just a physical object but also indicates the object's influence on its surrounding environment. This reality also indicates the vast scope for further exploration within the Yogyakarta philosophical axis phenomenon.

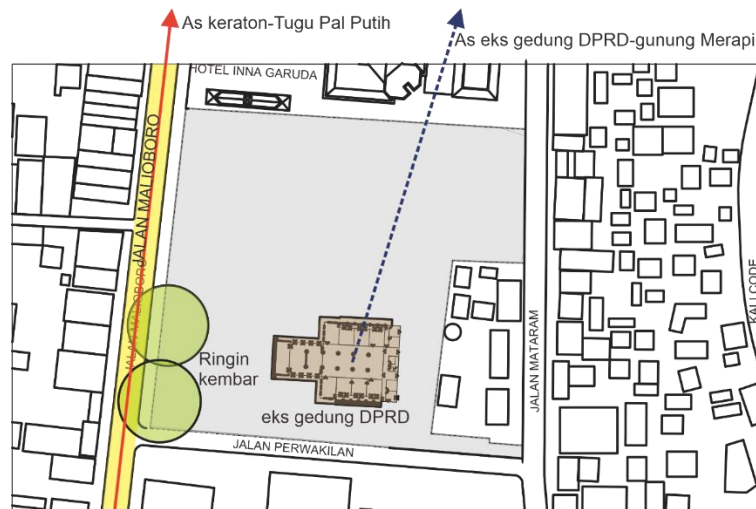


Figure 2. Site location (former DPRD Building)

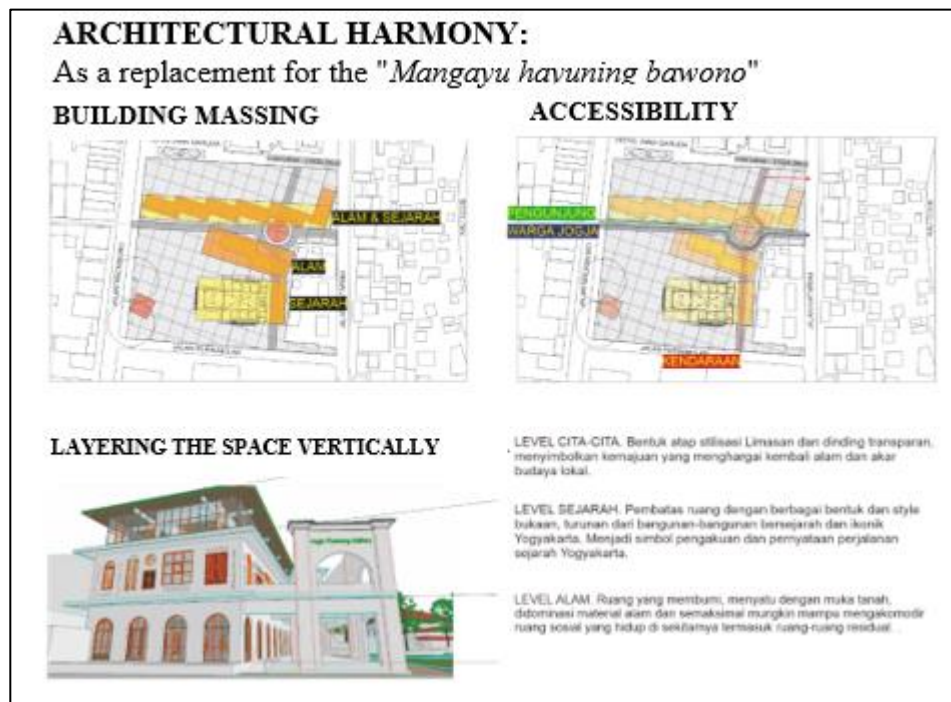
The reality of the actual line toward Merapi also leads to a duality with the existing and conserved buildings on the site. The position of the building on the site is more oriented towards Jalan Malioboro, thus the existence of the site orientation axis towards Merapi forms a new duality between the orientation towards Malioboro and towards Merapi which is not geometric.

CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

The Jogja Planning Gallery embodies a sophisticated mosaic design approach that weaves together multiple layers of meaning and spatial dimensions (Zavoleas et al., 2023). This methodology draws inspiration from the philosophical axis of Jalan Malioboro, creating a superimposition of two fundamental dimensions: the historical and the harmonious (Rong, 2025). The historical dimension anchors the design to Jogja's cultural heritage, incorporating the former DPRD building and two ancient banyan trees as conservation elements that serve as tangible connections to the past (Zainudin et al., 2016). Meanwhile, the harmonious dimension emerges from an imaginary line connecting the DPRD building's center point with Mount Merapi, symbolizing humanity's perpetual quest for balance between earthly existence and spiritual transcendence (Nasser, 2022). This dual-layered approach creates an ambiguous yet intentional spatial experience, where visitors navigate through physical manifestations of philosophical concepts (Musso, 2024). The mosaic methodology allows these disparate elements—history, spirituality, nature, and contemporary function—to coexist within a unified architectural language that respects context while projecting sustainable futures for Yogyakarta's cultural landscape (Wang & Zakaria, 2025).

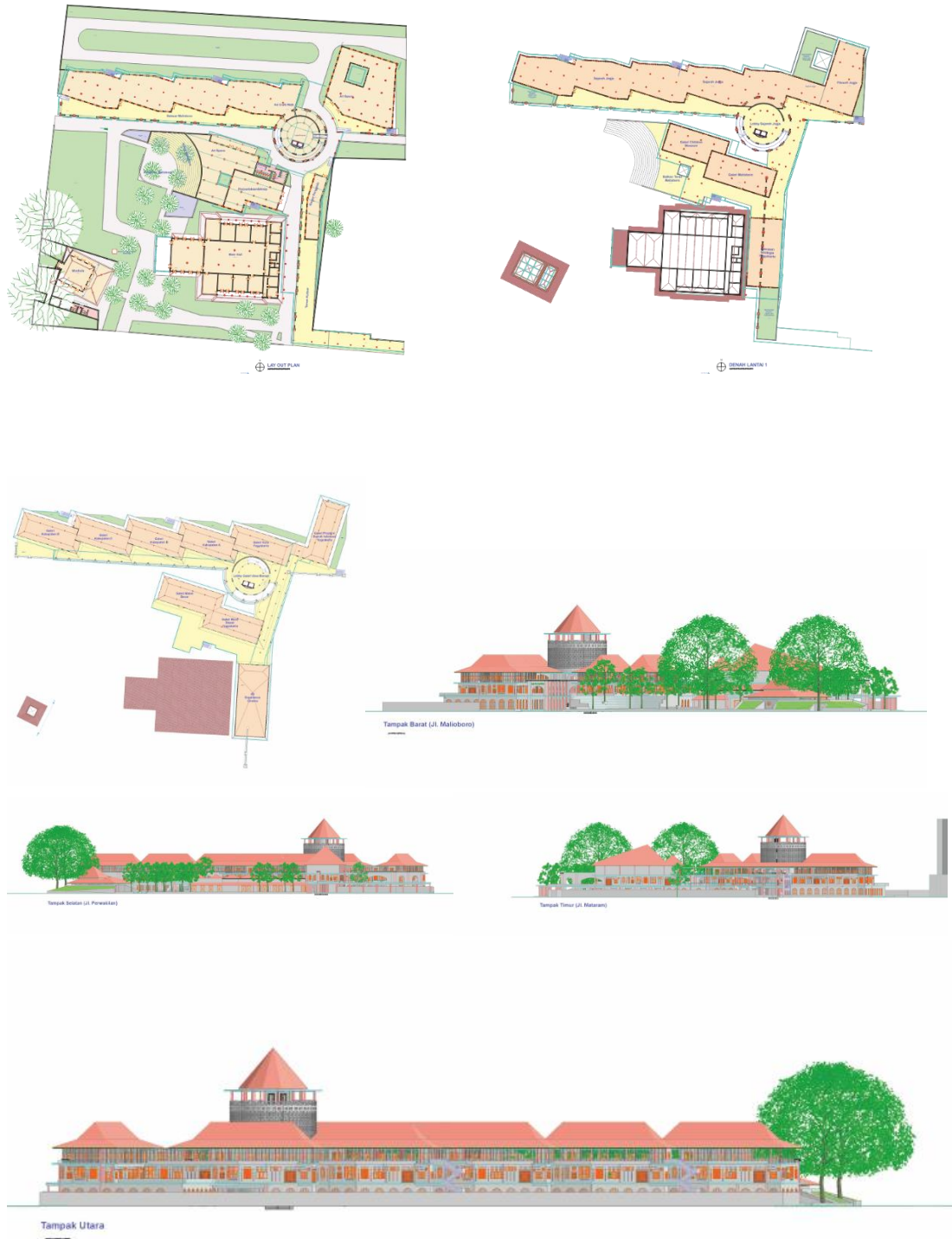
The implementation of the mosaic design approach manifests through careful spatial orchestration that respects both axes simultaneously (Alkhresheh, 2025). The building cluster arrangement follows the philosophical axis as its primary organizational spine, with exhibition spaces and artisan workshops positioned strategically along this sacred alignment (Amro et al., 2023). However, rather than creating a rigid linear composition, the design introduces deliberate deviations and lateral expansions that represent the "temptations of worldly functions" mentioned in the conceptual framework (Nasser, 2022). These programmatic elements—galleries, workshops, public plazas, and

commercial spaces—flank the axis on both sides, creating a dynamic tension between spiritual journey and material engagement (Yan et al., 2024). The preserved DPRD building serves as an anchor point, renovated to house primary exhibition functions while maintaining its historical facade (Dell'Ovo et al., 2021). The two banyan trees become natural gathering nodes, their canopies defining outdoor exhibition areas that blur boundaries between built and natural environments (De Gregorio et al., 2020). Sustainable strategies are woven throughout: passive cooling through strategic orientation, rainwater harvesting systems, local material utilization, and landscape design that enhances biodiversity while creating contemplative spaces for visitors (Sirror, 2024).



IMPLEMENTATION OF CONCEPT IN DESIGN

The mosaic design's ultimate realization lies in the experiential journey it orchestrates for visitors, transforming abstract philosophical concepts into tangible spatial sequences (Lo Faro & Miceli, 2019). Upon entering, visitors encounter the philosophical axis as a subtle yet persistent presence—a slightly elevated pathway or a change in materiality that guides movement without dictating it (Rong, 2025). The surrounding programs create deliberate distractions: vibrant workshop activities, enticing gallery exhibitions, and commercial amenities that test one's focus on the spiritual path (Amro et al., 2023). This choreographed ambiguity reflects life's constant negotiation between material desires and existential purpose (Nasser, 2022). The harmony axis intersects at key moments, marked by view corridors toward Mount Merapi and contemplative spaces that encourage pause and reflection (Musso, 2024). The preserved historical elements serve as reminders of temporal continuity, while contemporary interventions using local craftsmanship demonstrate cultural evolution (Gravagnuolo et al., 2024). This mosaic composition—fragmented yet unified, historical yet forward-looking, spiritual yet grounded—creates an architectural narrative where visitors physically experience the philosophical journey toward existence, making the Jogja Planning Gallery not merely a building but a spatial manifestation of cultural consciousness and sustainable harmony (Wang & Zakaria, 2025).



CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The Jogja Planning Gallery complex paradoxically clarifies a profound misalignment: Yogyakarta's philosophical axis does not physically point directly toward Mount Merapi's actual peak. However, this apparent discrepancy is not an error requiring correction, nor does the Gallery seek to create contradiction. Instead, the complex illuminates a deeper truth—that the axis orients toward Merapi's sphere of influence rather than its physical coordinates. This symbolic orientation acknowledges the mountain as a gigantic, omnipotent presence that sustains life and occupies a

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transcendent realm above human existence. The Gallery's harmonious dimension, connecting the DPRD center point with Merapi, materializes this conceptual relationship, demonstrating that sacred geography operates beyond cartographic precision, embracing metaphysical rather than literal alignment with divine forces.

Through its dual-axis mosaic design, the Gallery becomes an architectural instrument that clarifies rather than contradicts Yogyakarta's cosmological understanding. The superimposition of historical and harmonious dimensions reveals that authentic orientation transcends physical accuracy, embodying instead a spiritual acknowledgment of Merapi's life-giving power and supreme authority. This reinterpretation transforms potential misalignment into intentional symbolic gesture, where the axis represents humanity's reverent recognition of forces beyond mortal comprehension. The Gallery's spatial composition—preserving heritage while projecting new alignments—demonstrates that cultural truth resides in symbolic relationships rather than geometric precision. Consequently, the complex enriches Yogyakarta's philosophical narrative, validating that sacred orientation measures spiritual resonance, not surveyor's angles, thereby deepening rather than disrupting the city's cosmological integrity.

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