

THE TRANSFORMATION OF MEDAN POST OFFICE: FROM POSTAL SERVICE TO CREATIVE CULTURAL CENTER

Hana Maulida Rangkuti¹, Faizaturrahmah², Fadhla Hayati³, Ikhwan Yazid H⁴

¹²³⁴SMA UNGGULAN AL AZHAR MEDAN

Email : hanarangkutimaulida@gmail.com, faizaturrahmah66gmail@gmail.com,
fadhlahayati9@gmail.com, ikhwanyazid08@gmail.com

Received : 01 September 2025

Revised : 10 October 2025

Accepted : 05 November 2025

Published : 11 November 2025

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.59733/jishup.v3i3.154>

Publish Link : <https://jishup.org/index.php/ojs>

Abstract

The Medan Post Office is a colonial heritage building that has undergone a functional transformation into a creative space called Pos Bloc Medan. This study aims to describe the transformation process of the Medan Post Office's function within the context of preserving its historical value as a cultural heritage building. The research method used a descriptive qualitative approach through a literature review of various journals and books. The results show that this transformation reflects the application of the adaptive reuse concept, which is able to maintain the value of colonial architecture while providing new functions relevant to the social, cultural, and economic needs of today's society.

Keyword : Medan Post Office, preservation, adaptive reuse, Pos Bloc, cultural heritage.

INTRODUCTION

The Medan Post Office is a colonial building constructed in 1911 by Dutch architect Ir. Simon Snuyf. During the colonial period, the post office served as a mail distribution center and administrative communication hub, making it a crucial node in the Dutch East Indies information network. However, changes in communication technology, particularly with the emergence of digital services such as JNE, modern courier services, and social media, have led to the decline of the post office's traditional functions (Sal, 2023). As their function declines, many postal buildings in major cities are no longer optimally used. This situation has given rise to the need for preservation strategies that not only preserve their physical form but also revitalize their functional value in a modern context. One relevant approach is adaptive reuse, or the transformation of cultural heritage buildings into new creative and public spaces (Panorama, 2025). The transformation of the Medan Post Office through the creation of Pos Bloc serves as an interesting model for how a historic building can be adapted into a creative tourism space relevant to the younger generation. Pos Bloc serves not only as a commercial space but also as a place for community, art, culinary, and social interaction, without eliminating the colonial aesthetic elements that define the building's visual identity (Proporsi, 2016).

BACKGROUND

The Medan Post Office has a modern colonial architectural character with distinctive elements such as an octagonal dome, stained glass, and natural ventilation (July 2016). Its historical value is reflected not only in its physical form but also in its role as a symbol of the development of communication and trade during the colonial era. However, social change and technological advancements have caused traditional postal services to lose their central role. To preserve its historical value while enhancing its economic function, the Medan Post Office was revitalized as Pos Bloc Medan, a creative space that combines art, culture, and the local economy (Hutasoit, 2023). This transformation is a successful example of the application of adaptive preservation concepts amidst urban modernization.

THEORETICAL STUDY

According to Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage, preservation encompasses the protection, development, and utilization of historical objects. In the realm of architecture, the concept of adaptive reuse is an effective strategy for preserving historical value by giving old buildings new functions. This principle is applied to

THE TRANSFORMATION OF MEDAN POST OFFICE: FROM POSTAL SERVICE TO CREATIVE CULTURAL CENTER

Hana Maulida Rangkuti **et al**

ensure buildings remain vibrant and relevant in the present (Purnomo & Laksitarini, 2021). From a tourism perspective, preserving historic buildings also creates cultural tourism attractions (Ali, 2015). The existence of public spaces such as Pos Bloc expands public access to local culture and strengthens the city's identity through authentic and educational tourism experiences (Ginting et al., 2025).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted using a literature study and descriptive analysis of various relevant literature regarding the transformation of the Medan Post Office into a Post Bloc. The data collected came from scientific journals, articles, and reference books relevant to the theme of preserving cultural heritage buildings and the functional transformation of the Medan Post Office. The analysis was conducted by reviewing the content, theories, and results of previous studies, then synthesizing them into new findings regarding the relevance of the historical and social values of the transformation. The focus of the research was directed at historical, architectural, social, and economic aspects, with the aim of describing how the transformation of the Medan Post Office into a Post Bloc can be understood through the theories of preservation, public space, and community empowerment.

RESULTSL AND DISCUSSION

1. Historical and Architectural Value

The Medan Post Office, designed by architect Simon Snuyf, was built between 1909 and 1911 in a modern geometric architectural style (July 2016). The building features an octagonal dome, high ceilings, and natural ventilation, promoting tropical comfort. Ornamental elements such as stained glass and the dove logo are distinctive symbols of colonial postal communication. Its historical value lies in its function as a communications center and a witness to the development of Medan (Sudarmawan, 2014).

2. Transformation into a Creative Space

The revitalization of the Medan Post Office into the Medan Post Bloc is an application of the adaptive reuse concept, maintaining the building's physical character while introducing new functions (Purnomo & Laksitarini, 2021). The main area, formerly a service area, is now used as a venue for exhibitions, art performances, and MSME activities (Hutasoit, 2023). The spatial design was reorganized without altering the main structure to maintain harmony with colonial architectural values.

3. Social and Economic Impacts

This transformation increases community participation and creative economic activity around the Kesawan area. According to a study by Ginting et al. (2025), the spatial planning and accessibility at Pos Bloc support increased tourist visits and local businesses. The presence of Pos Bloc also strengthens Medan's identity as a city with an active and productive cultural heritage. Thus, adaptive preservation like this not only preserves the physical structure of the building, but also revives the social and economic meaning that is relevant to modern society (Ali, 2015).

Picture



Figure 1.0 Front view of Medan Post Office (Post Bloc)

THE TRANSFORMATION OF MEDAN POST OFFICE: FROM POSTAL SERVICE TO CREATIVE CULTURAL CENTER

Hana Maulida Rangkuti **et al**

Source: Instagram @posblocmedan



Figure 1.1 The atmosphere of creative activities in the Medan Bloc Post.

Source: Instagram @posblocmedan

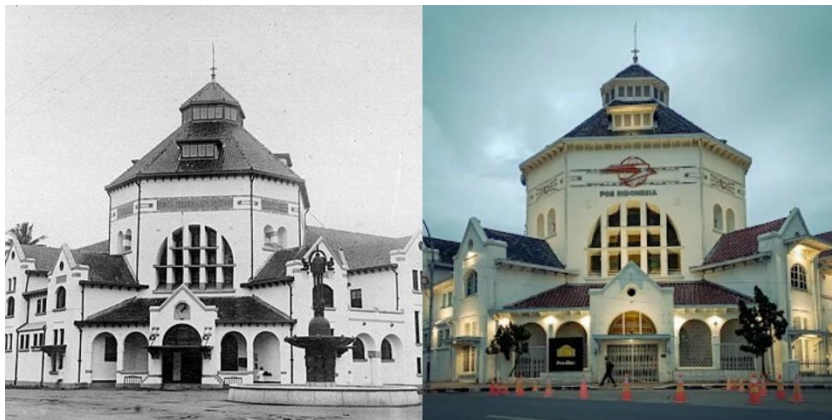


Figure 1.2 Comparison of the Medan Post Office before and after it became Posbloc.

Source: https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kantor_Pos_Medan and usu.ac.id

CONCLUSION

The transformation of the Medan Post Office into a Pos Bloc represents the successful application of the adaptive reuse concept to a cultural heritage building. The change in function from a postal service to a creative public space demonstrates that building preservation not only preserves its physical form but also its social and economic values. The retained colonial architecture lends a strong identity to the Kesawan area, while its new function creates a vibrant space for interaction and creative economic activity. Thus, Pos Bloc Medan serves as a clear example of how preservation and modernization can coexist to maintain cultural heritage's relevance over time.

REFERENCES

- Ali, B. S. (2015). Strategi Pengembangan Fasilitas Guna Meningkatkan Daya Tarik Wisatawan di Darajat Pass Kecamatan Pasirwangi Kabupaten Garut. Universitas Garut.
- Ginting, C. R., Frasetiya, D., Panjaitan, J. D., Prayogi, M. S., Hafiz, M. R., & Siburian, P. K. (2025). Peran Penataan Ruang dan Akses dalam Mendorong Kepariwisata Pos Bloc. *Gewang: Jurnal Arsitektur*, 7(1), 101–104.
- Hutasoit, S. S. (2023). Pos Bloc Medan: Transformasi Bangunan Cagar Budaya Menjadi Ruang Kreatif dan Objek Wisata. *Panorama: Jurnal Kajian Pariwisata*, 3(2).
- Juli, A. (2016). Kajian Interior Bangunan pada PT. Pos Medan. *Jurnal Proporsi*, 2(1), 13–22.
- Purnomo, A. D., & Laksitarini, N. (2021). Implementasi Adaptive Reuse pada Interior De Tjolomadoe. *Prosiding SENADA, Institut Desain dan Bisnis Bali*.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF MEDAN POST OFFICE: FROM POSTAL SERVICE TO CREATIVE CULTURAL CENTER

Hana Maulida Rangkuti **et al**

Sal, A. (2023). Analisis Perubahan Fungsi Bangunan Kolonial di Kawasan Heritage Medan. *Jurnal Pariwisata dan Arsitektur*, 5(1), 22–28.

Sudarmawan. (2014). Kantor Pos Medan Sebagai Bangunan Cagar Budaya. Medan: Balai Kajian Cagar Budaya Sumatera Utara.