

## The Site of Rebah City, Abandoned Historical Witness

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**Abstract:** The site of Rebah City or Kota Lama is a historical relic was a legacy of the Johor Sultanate which was previously used as the center of government, but now it has abandoned and no longer maintained. This place is getting quietly. The number of visitors who come to this place are also getting smaller. Objective if the study is to produce studies that can be input for the improvement of this historical heritage site. Research found that there are some of the historical relic that still available in there such as tombs, ruins of building and old houses. Besides, there are some of the public facilities have built by the government such as gazebo, port, rest area, praying room and etc. From this, we can realize that the government and society are less capable of preserving the existing historical heritage. This is proven by the poor maintenance of the Istana Kota Lama which was once the seat of the Johor Kingdom government. In this visit, the writer hopes for the preservation of this historic site, where this place is a historical witness and becomes evidence of past civilizations.

**Keywords:** Rebah City, Historical Site, Abandoned, Preservation.

### 1. Introduction

The Riau Islands are one of many marine areas located in Indonesia. This region is located on the East Coast of the island of Sumatra. To the north, the Riau Islands extend from the Straits of Malacca to the Natuna Sea and the South China Sea. Apart from that, it also borders Malaysia and Singapore. As the largest archipelago on the east coast of Sumatra, most of the area is filled with waters with an area of 417,012.97 km<sup>2</sup> while the land area is only 10,595.41 km<sup>2</sup>. The Riau Islands are also filled with many small and large islands that are already inhabited or not yet and have been named or not [1].

Tanjungpinang City, Province of Riau Islands, Indonesia is a city that has a lot of history, culture and customs. One of them is the Istana Kota Lama or Istana Kota Rebah site which occupies the bank

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of the Carang river. This site is a legacy of the Johor Sultanate which was previously used as the center of government. Supported by its geographical location, the Riau Islands is ideal for trade route because of its sea route. This is what makes the triumph of the previous Malay kingdom. But unfortunately, the current state of the center of government is not well maintained. This historical site was heavily damaged, and weathered [2] [3] [4].

As a historical site, Kota Lama or Kota Rebah certainly has its own place in old records, *Tuhfat al-Nahfis* (a beautiful offering) for example, is an important work of Malay historical sources that discuss the Riau kingdom and centers of power such as Lingga and Penyengat Island. Which tells of the elegance and magnificence of the Istana Kota Piring in the southeastern part of the Kota Lama [5] [2].

### 1.1 The ruins of historical relics of Rebah City Palace

In the Old City Palace, there are ruins of buildings, tombs of kings, ports, and also other historical sites, including a port with poor condition. In the past, this site had become a tourist destination for foreign and domestic tourists. But it is starting to be abandoned because of not well maintained.

The local government has made improvements to the facilities and infrastructure at this historical heritage site. They also complete this location with management to help visitors who come to see the former historical relics. However, currently it is not running smoothly due to the decreasing number of visitors. This is due to the decline in public interest in historical relics, the lack of information regarding this location and the facilities that are not well maintained. Of course, this should be the government's attention, considering that this place is a historical relic of the former kingdom that once ruled in this region. This can be part of history education for students who want to study the history of the site of Rebah City.

### 1.2 Latest situation of the number of visitations to the historical heritage sites.

This historical tour visit is intended to rebuild people's awareness of the importance of history and the historical heritage itself. The concept of history itself is the past which has objects in the form of objects, events, experiences, and histories that have been researched with certain methods. From this historical tourism visit, students are able to learn from history in order to advance the nation. The benefits of studying history include to gain experience from the past, to be able to solve problems through applicable historical laws and foster maturity of mind, and to have a broad perspective and be wiser in making decisions [6] [7].

Researchers are interested in studying the remains of this historical heritage as a manifestation of its role to produce studies that can be input for the improvement of this historical heritage site. There is no way this will become our concern if we do not respect history and have the desire to appreciate history because this is a form of support in preserving historical heritage. This is the main purpose of the historical visit that the author wants to achieve.

## 2. Materials and Methods

In this study, there are four stages carried out to get optimal results in assessing the history of the old city palace: Heuristic stage, Critical stage, Interpretation stage. Historiography stages. The analytical approach with the concept of an urban park. Analysis of this study using a spatial perspective.

### 2.1 Materials

The materials used in this study are:

- a. Object of historical heritage site
- b. Observing of current Infrastructures and sites map.
- c. Site management system

- d. Related reports, books, journals or websites
- e. The results of the investigation to the public and other stakeholders.

## 2.2 Methods

There are four stages carried out to get optimal results in assessing the history of the old city palace as follows:

- a. Heuristic stage is the stage of collecting study source materials. In the study of this object, the focus is taken as the main source, namely the observation of historical heritage sites and other data that is requested directly to the manager of the historical heritage area of the Rebah City Sites or Old City Palace in the form of oral and written information as well as other secondary sources in the form of books and visits to various sources available on the website.
- b. Critical stage. In this stage the researcher examines the validity and credibility of the sources.
- c. Interpretation stage. This stage is carried out by interpreting facts and realities in the field as well giving meaning to the results of the fact studies that have been obtained.
- d. Historiography stages. This stage is a process of reconstructing past imaginative views and images of the findings of data and information obtained through a process of testing and in-depth analysis of the historical heritage sites of the old city palace [8].

The analytical approach with the concept of an urban park is a part that serves to clarify and sharpen the analysis of the study. A city park is a public area where historical relics are used specifically as visits for the community for aesthetic purposes, education, recreation or use of public facilities that have cultural values which have now become urban park areas. This paper uses data analysis techniques with a spatial approach means that the socio-spatial dialectic, which is from a study of the surrounding community or other related parties, has made improvements by making additions to infrastructure and also making slight changes or renewals to the locations where these historical relics are without damaging the remains. In the other hand, they also make improvements to the place where they live or work which is close to the location of these historical relics. Observing various problems in the location of the historical heritage of the Old City Palace, including in observing its remains, a spatial perspective is useful in the analysis of this study. Then separating the parts into certain divides as territorial boundaries indicates how important spatial attributes can have a direct impact on various elements of life in the vicinity of the historical heritage of the Rebah City site. In addition all of method above is constructed for the better finding and results [8] [9].

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Results

The result of this study shows history of Rebah City Site, Historical Objects/Relics, Current infrastructures for public built by local government and then Site maps of Rebah City Palace.

#### a. History of Rebah City Palace

At first in that time, center of government was in the territory of the Johor kingdom, then centered in the Kingdom of Riau, which is located in the region of Sungai Carang, Bintan Island. The move that took place several times from Johor to Riau was the opposite, in the end, the center of government centered in Riau, namely in Riau Lama or Hulu Riau. In the central area of government power has been jointly used by both the Yang Dipertuan Besar and Yang Dipertuan Muda. When he became the Yang Dipertuan Muda of Riau IV, Raja Haji occupied a palace called Kota Piring in 1778, his location was near the downstream which was then called Biram Dewa Island. In 1784 was the year when Raja Haji Fisabilillah died in Teluk Ketapang. Then since early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the center of government has moved to Daik, Lingga occupied by the Yang Dipertuan Besar (Sultan) and The Penyengat Indera Sakti island occupied by Yang Dipertuan Muda [2].

From Johor the Malay kingdom then centered on the upper reaches of the Carang River. The river called the Riau river. From the center of the Riau-Johor-Pahang kingdom, began the brilliance of government, science and religion. When Raja Ibrahim, who had the title Sultan Ibrahim Syah I, became the Sultan of Johor, Tun Abdul Jamil was assigned to build the Hulu Sungai Carang in 1672. The new area renamed into Hulu Riau and the Kingdom of Johor was also called Riau-Johor. Furthermore, it was known as Riau-Johor-Pahang-Lingga. Conflict within the kingdom began to occur due to a power struggle involving Raja Kecil and Tun Abdul Jalil [10].

But nowadays, when we visit this area the situation is very quiet, it is rarely seen that there are many people there, causing this place to not get enough attention and it looks as if it is neglected. Of course, this should not be ignored because there are many histories contained in the former legacy of the Kota Rebah Palace should be well preserved so that the next generation will still know the history of this place.

## b. Historical Objects/Relics

### i. Ruins of Buildings

The ruins of the buildings on this site are partially still standing, but most of them have almost merged with the ground. This foundation was once the remnant of the complex which is considered the Palace of the Old City itself. This foundation is made of stone materials such as gravel and lime with a foundation width that is larger than the current foundation size and is square in shape. Ruins of buildings can be found in the middle of the site and near the port, still standing, with a square hole in the middle. This building is under a tree and is covered with moss. Some of these relics are still intact but some are not intact. In the area where there are still remnants, it still looks clean and tidy because the management and visitors who come to this site to make a pilgrimage are always busy cleaning to clean both grass and foliage as well as other organic waste but they just clean with makeshift equipment even by just using their hands to pull out the bits and cite the scattered garbage.



Picture 1. Square foundation



Picture 2. Ruins of building

### ii. Tomb of The Kings

There are several collections of tombs of kings in the historic site of the Kota Lama Palace. It's at the end of the straight path to the entrance gate, behind the information board, then some parts of the site. The tombs are covered with yellow cloth. Most of the yellow cloth has faded, but there are some tombs that have been changed to new yellow cover. Some of them are still using old yellow cover but some of them are using new yellow cover for the tombs. The new yellow cover is used by single tomb and the others old cover are used by many tombs. In addition to praying for the spirits of the royal family, pilgrims come to this location, there are also those who deliberately visit to fill their spare time by observing historical places, some also visit for educational purposes.



Picture 3. Tombs with new cover



Picture 4. Tombs with old cover

### iii. Old houses

On this site, we can also find several old houses located on the left side of the site, the old houses have almost collapsed which this is a restoration of old houses of local people on that time. These houses are shaped on stilts made of wood and thatched with pottery.



Picture 5. Old houses

### c. Infrastructures

#### i. Public facilities

Beside historical objects, this site also contains new buildings made by the government for tourism purposes, one of them is gazebos. However, the condition of the gazebos is rotten and crumbled to the ground. This is due to lack of maintenance and changes in weather. There are any facilities for public those built by local government such as chairs, rest area, shop, praying room and etc.

#### ii. Port

This port was previously used by tourists from local and foreign to visit this site. Before arriving at the pier, we will enter the port tunnel like the old ports in general. Like the other sites around the Istana Kota Lama, such as the Daeng Celak, the Daeng Marewa and the Daeng Kamboja tomb, each site has a port. But unfortunately, due to the lack of maintenance of this site, the port has been neglected and damaged.



Picture 8. Port



Picture 9. Pier

### 3.2 Discussions

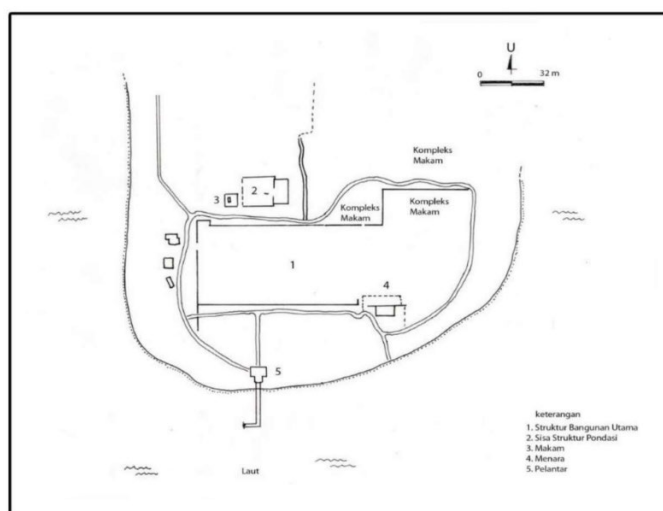
The historic site of Istana Kota Lama or Istana Kota Rebah is one proof of historical heritage that can be witnessed physically. Located on the bank of the Carang river, at the entrance gate, visitors will be greeted with a site map and a palace gate. There are no site guards or cleaners there. There are several types of trees that grow around the location including enau and melinjo trees. There are several gazebos that are rotten and collapsed, besides that there are also old houses which are in the same condition as the gazebo.

There is rubble of buildings that are thick and sturdy, but now they are covered with moss due to humidity. The ruins of this building can be seen at several locations inside the Istana Kota Lama site. Some of the ruins seemed to have almost merged with the ground, but some were still standing firmly under the trees.

There are also tombs of kings covered with yellow cloth, some of the cloth has faded. And at the back of this site, we can find a port that was used as a transportation center. This port is now being converted into a fishing spot for the local community. On the banks of the river there are trees inhabited by monkeys and snakes.

Overall, this site is great as a historical tourist spot, however due to a lack of attention and care from the government, this site has become neglected and covered with bushes.

### 3.3. Site Map of the Site of Rebah City



Figures 1. Site Map of The Site of Rebah City, Tanjungpinang[2]

Figure 1, the site of Rebah city is located in the area of Carang river village or Timun river village, sub-district of Piring City, district of East Tanjungpinang, Tanjungpinang City Province of Riau Islands.

Topographically, this area is very sloping and filled with dense green plants so that it functions as a small amount of clean water supply. On the site map show that there are number 1 for Main Building Structure, number 2 for the rest of structure's foundation, number 3 for Tombs, number 4 for tower and number 5 for port or bridge [2].

#### 4. Conclusion

Research found that there are some of the historical relic that still available in there such as tombs, ruins of building and old houses. Besides, there are some of the public facilities have built by the government such as gazebo, port, rest area, praying room and etc. From this, we can realize that the government and society are less capable of preserving the existing historical heritage. This is proven by the poor maintenance of the Istana Kota Lama which was once the seat of the Johor Kingdom government. In this visit, the writer hopes for the preservation of this historic site, where this place is a historical witness and becomes evidence of past civilizations. This is the historical tourism visit that the writer and friends do. From this, we can realize that the government and society are less capable of preserving the existing historical heritage. This is proven by the poor maintenance of the Istana Kota Lama which was once the seat of the Johor Kingdom government. In this visit, the writer hopes for the preservation of this historic site, where this place is a historical witness and becomes evidence of past civilizations. In addition, through this journal, the writer also hopes that readers will be more concerned about the cultural wealth around them.

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