

Research Article

Identification of Style and Characteristics of Colonial Buildings of URC City Post in Lhokseumawe City

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ABSTRACT

The URC City Police Post building in Lhokseumawe City is a legacy of Dutch Colonial Architecture, showcasing a blend of European style (Dutch Land) and local Indonesian elements, known as the *Indische Empire Style*. This building has a distinctive visual character and is monumental. Some of the main characteristics of colonial architecture found in this building include the presence of sturdy materials such as specially blended cement, terrazzo for floors, Geveltoppen, acroterie roofs, a geometric symmetrical facade, the use of wooden-framed windows, and dormer elements. Classical European decoration (pillars, capitula) is combined with local decorative variations, such as on the cripedoma (entrance decoration) or tympanon. This study aims to identify and analyze the style and characteristics of colonial architecture found in the URC City Police Post building, located in Banda Sakti District, Lhokseumawe City. The research method used is descriptive with a qualitative approach through field surveys, photographic documentation of the object, and direct observation of building elements.

Keywords: Colonial Building; Architectural Style; Characteristics; Police Post; Geometric Symmetrical Façade

1. INTRODUCTION

Lhokseumawe is a city in Aceh Province with a long history, particularly related to the legacy of the Dutch colonial era. During that period, the colonial government built various important facilities, such as government offices, economic centers, and housing for Dutch citizens residing in Indonesia, including in the Aceh region and Lhokseumawe City. These residential buildings differ significantly from local homes, both in terms of form and layout, thus becoming known as Dutch colonial heritage buildings. The presence of this colonial architecture not only enriches the cultural heritage but also serves as a historical witness to the region's past development (Dafrina et al., 2021).

One of the colonial-style buildings is the police post office, located on Jalan Merdeka in Lhokseumawe City. This building was formerly the PNKA office from 1850 to 1951 and has been used as a police post since 1951. Constructed around the 1850s, the building covers an area of approximately 84 m². It has undergone several renovations (Nurfadhilah et al., 2024). The building's style reflects the transitional architecture of the Dutch colonial period, known for its blend of classical European elements and local adaptations. Colonial-style houses often served as symbols of social status, indicating a person's class or standing in society (Sumardiyanto & Marsonia, 2024). Colonial architecture generally possesses characteristics that distinguish it from other architectural styles. Organized spatial planning, symmetrical building proportions, and the use of sturdy structures are key characteristics adapted from European architectural principles. Furthermore, the selection of materials such as wood, stone, and zinc is done with consideration for both durability and aesthetics. Roofs are generally gabled or pyramidal, adapted to tropical climates, while the main room is often oriented toward a large courtyard to promote natural air circulation and visual comfort (Okta Rahmayana et al., 2023). The aim of this study is to determine and identify the form and characteristics of colonial architecture in the URC police post building in Banda Sakti sub-district, Lhokseumawe city (Azis, 2025).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach, by conducting direct surveys in the field and collecting data by taking photos of objects and observations to see the details of the style and characteristics of the URC city post building (Sebagai et al., n.d.). The research sample taken from the URC city post building is located on Jalan Samudera, Lancang Garam, Banda Sakti District, Lhokseumawe City, Aceh (Rahmawati, 2020).



Figure 1. Research location of URC Lhokseumawe city post

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Etymologically, the term style in Indonesian comes from the English word style, which means a scratching tool. According to (Fahrizal et al., 2018), developing styles do not emerge suddenly, but rather stem from pre-existing styles and are then adapted to suit the surrounding capabilities and context, giving rise to new styles. In the context of colonial architecture in Indonesia, the development of architectural styles (Rumah et al., 2003). It can be classified into three periods, namely the Indische Empire Style in the 18th to 19th centuries, transitional architecture in the period 1890–1915, and modern colonial architecture in the period 1915–1940 (Munawarah Panggabean et al., 2020).

a. Indische Empire style architecture (18th-19th century)

The term Indische literally refers to the Indies, or the Dutch colonial territories. Indische culture is a blend of European culture, local Indonesian culture, and Chinese Crossbreed Influences (Budiani et al., 2024). Indische Empire Style architecture has several key characteristics, including a symmetrical floor plan and the presence of a central room that serves as the main living area and is directly connected to the bedrooms. These rooms typically have a direct connection to a spacious front porch (voor galerij) and rear porch (achter galerij). The porch often features rows of classical European-style columns, such as Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian (Azis, 2025). Meanwhile, service rooms such as kitchens, bathrooms, warehouses, and other supporting facilities are generally separated from the main building and located at the back (Farhan et al., 2024).

b. Transitional Architectural Style (1890-1915)

The transition period marked the transition from the Indische Empire style to modern colonial architecture. During this phase, some characteristics of Indische Empire architecture were retained, such as symmetrical floor plans and the use of surrounding terraces. However, efforts began to simplify the building's appearance, one of which was reducing or eliminating the use of classical European-style columns on building facades (Dafrina, 2019).

c. Modern Colonial Architectural Style (1915-1940)

The emergence of modern colonial architecture was a response and critique of the Empire Style, which was considered overly rigid and decorative. Modern colonial architecture emphasized freedom in floor plan design, with a more varied spatial arrangement, adapting to the functional needs of buildings and the development of modern architectural thought at the time (Antariksa, 2004).

1. URC city post building style

In the URC city post building, there is an Indische Empire Style building style, a style that combines French European architectural style with local Indonesian architectural style (Sumardiyanto & Marsonia, 2024). The characteristics of the

Indische Empire Style are found in elements such as wood carvings, roofs, symmetrical and proportional shapes and bright colors (Yeni et al., 2025).



Figure 2. Research location of URC Lhokseumawe city post

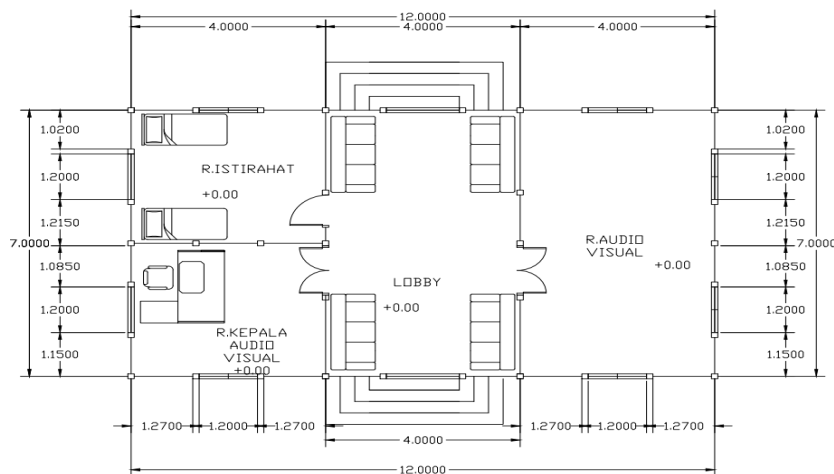


Figure 3. Floor plan of URC Lhokseumawe city post

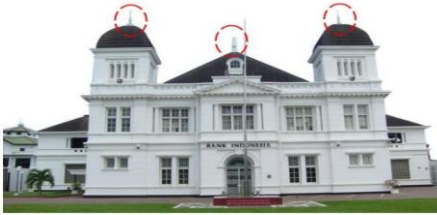



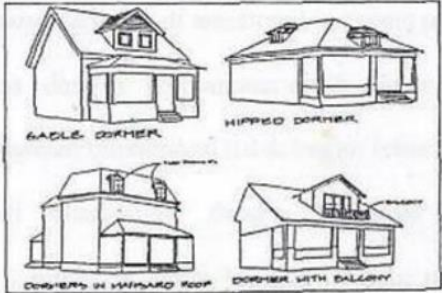

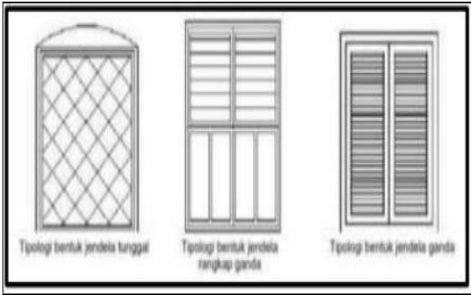

2. Characteristics of the colonial building of the URC city police post

Colonial buildings have many unique characteristics and what distinguishes them from other objects is

- a) Domer: Serves as a pathway for light and air to enter
- b) Tower: Marks the entrance to a building
- c) Gable
- d) Ballastr: Gable and gable: Serves as a way for air to enter the room
- e) Geveltopen: Made of concrete or blocks, located in front of the entrance or terrace as a fence or building deck
- f) Nok Acroterie: Triangular in shape and located at the top of the gable
- g) Windwijzer
- h) Chimney
- i) Tympanum
- j) Cripedoma
- k) Entrance
- l) Columns in a row
- m) Symmetrical façade
- n) Wooden-framed windows
- o) Brick and wood materials
- p) Decorative elements

All Dutch colonial architectural buildings have characteristics, one of which is the Lhokseumawe city post office building, including:

Table 1. Characteristics of the colonial building of the URC city police post

Type	Type Of Colonial Building	URC City Police Post
Rooftop Decoration 1) Nok Acroterie		
2) Symetric Facade		
3) Wood Framed Windows		
4) Dormer Functions as a place for air and light to enter high above with a fairly wide ceiling		

The windows in the building being studied have frames made of wood, the window sashes are also made of wood and are 120cm wide and 150cm high.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been conducted on the URC City Police Post Building in Lhokseumawe City, it can be concluded that this building has a Dutch colonial style, style or style of the Indische Empire which has a symmetrical, regular floor plan and there is repetition and there are 4 characteristics of colonial buildings in the URC City Police Post Building, namely: Nok Acroterie, symmetrical facade formation, window frames made of wood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Authors recommendations or suggestions from the results of their research findings to related institutions or to other researchers in the future. Based on the research findings, the URC City Police Post building in Lhokseumawe City needs more attention in efforts to preserve historical buildings, considering the strong character of the Indische Empire Style

colonial architecture it possesses. The role of the local government and related agencies is very necessary in maintaining the authenticity of the building's architectural elements, especially the facade, roof shape, opening system, and ornaments, so that the historical and architectural value is maintained and does not experience changes that reduce its authenticity. Further research is also needed to be conducted on other colonial buildings in Lhokseumawe City with a more in-depth approach, such as typological analysis and comparison, in order to enrich the documentation and understanding of the colonial architectural heritage in the area.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors discussed the results and contributed to from the start to final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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