p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

https://e-journal.trisakti.ac.id/index.php/livas/index

ANALYSIS OF THE IMAGE OF KUPANG'S STRAAT 'A'

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ABSTRACT

"City image" refers to the perception of a city, shaped by visual experiences, social interactions, and cultural influences. It includes physical elements like architecture and landscapes, as well as intangible factors that define the city's identity and functionality.
Aims: This research project aims to explore the relationship between the tangible and intangible aspects of the image of Kupang's Straat "A" neighborhood.
Methodology and Results: The research first examines Kevin Lynch's city image principles. It documents the physical elements of Straat "A" using tissue analysis maps, followed by an analysis of both physical and non-physical elements through perceptual and experiential approaches. Finally, the dominant elements of Kupang's Straat "A" urban image are interpreted.
Conclusion and Impact: The research identifies three of the five physical elements of city image—paths, districts, and nodes—along with dominant non-physical elements like collective stories, identity, social activities, and user experiences. These findings enhance city image theory and offer valuable insights for urban design, particularly for architects and stakeholders.

MANUSCRIPT HISTORY

Received
June 24, 2024
Revised
July 26, 2024
Accepted
August 8, 2024

KEYWORDS

- Image of the city
- Kupang city
- Non-physical
- Physical elements
- Straat 'A'

1. INTRODUCTION

The term "city image" is used to describe the collective meaning that people ascribe to a city. This image is formed through a combination of visual experiences [1], social interactions, and cultural approaches [2]. The components that make up a city's image encompass architectural features, the natural environment, and infrastructure [3]. In addition to these tangible elements,

p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

there are also intangible aspects that shape the image of a city as perceived, experienced, and interpreted by the community and visitors [4]. Consequently, the elements that comprise a city's image play a pivotal role in defining a city's identity and functionality [5].

It is postulated that the formation of a city's distinctive identity depends on the interrelationship between the tangible and intangible elements that comprise the city's image [6],[7]. To illustrate, the Monas Monument in Jakarta serves as a prominent landmark within the metropolis, symbolizing the city in a dual capacity. First, it attracts tourists, and second, it fosters a sense of pride among the local population. It is unfortunate that many cities, especially in developing countries, have difficulty in maintaining their urban image elements [8]. The phenomenon of rapid urbanization, unplanned development and economic pressures often result in the removal of historical and cultural elements that are integral to the city's image [9]. Such impacts lead to urban homogenization, whereby cities lose their distinctive characteristics and become increasingly similar [10]. In line with this phenomenon, the loss of urban elements has also manifested in the city of Kupang, with Straat "A" being a case in point. However, the history and visual elements of this district are often disregarded in the development process. The city's boundaries are being eroded by modern development that does not take into account the context of the area, resulting in the loss of a distinctive visual identity and a weakening of the city's image appeal [11]. The Straat "A" area has the potential to possess a unique urban image due to its function as a center for business activities, trade, and public services.

Previous studies have been conducted to examine the elements of city image. For example, Poetri Yaumil Achir, et al. (2021) investigated the five elements of city image formation in the Kota Lama Kupang area, considering the influence of socio-cultural and economic elements within the community [12]. Similarly, Andreas K. S. Mukin (2023) explored the the study of city image elements in open space [13]; Lake (2019) on the elements of the Old Kupang City system [14]; Indriani Umar (2022) on the identification of image-forming elements of Marisa City [15], but, there is a lack of studies that discuss the blurring of physical and non-physical elements of city image. Therefore, it is imperative that research be conducted on the elements of urban image in order to identify, analyze and develop sustainable preservation and development strategies. By gaining an understanding of the elements that make up a city's image, city governments, urban planners, architects, and communities can work together to create urban environments that are not only functional, but also aesthetically pleasing and meaningful.

p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

It is expected that this research will contribute to the theoretical understanding of urban architecture in general and the city image of Kupang in particular. Methodologically, the research will develop a method for interpreting the urban image elements displayed by the study case. For those engaged in architectural practice, the results of this research are expected to provide insights into the key elements that should be considered in urban design.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Context

In the context of Kupang's evolving urban landscape, the Straat "A" area stands out as a place with a rich and varied history. It has witnessed and been shaped by pivotal moments and eras, including the colonial period, the advent of independence, and the contemporary era. In the early days of the area's history, the Straat "A" region was a modest settlement or open space used by the local population. With the arrival of Europeans, particularly the Dutch, Kupang began its development as a center for trade and colonial administration. The area was subsequently developed with the construction of basic facilities to support colonial activities, including warehouses, offices, and housing for colonial employees. After Indonesian independence in 1945, Kupang underwent significance changes. The Straat "A" area underwent a change in function, from a colonial center to one that was more integrated into the governmental and social structure of the newly independent Indonesia. The development of basic infrastructure, including roads, schools, markets and health facilities, began to meet the needs of the growing population [16].

During the New Order era (1966-1998), the New Order government's focus on national development also had an impact on Kupang and the Straat "A" area. The area experienced a surge in development with the introduction of major development projects funded by the central government. This period was also characterized by rapid urbanization, which resulted in substantial alterations to the structure and function of the area [17],[18].

Historical records show that during this period, the area of Straat "A" served as a gateway and boundary for Kupang. In 1905, General Van Heutsz invited a special team, led by Prof. Molengraaf, then a renowned Dutch geologist, and Dutch architect Ir. Assmussen [19]. The team was tasked with four main objectives: first, to finalize the boundary line between Dutch Timor and Portuguese Timor; second, to produce a map of the island of Timor; third, to complete the

p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

construction of the war-torn Kupang-Atapupu road; and fourth, to design the telephone network. As a result, Straat A became the main access route to the Resident's Office, the focal point of the Old Town (to the west) and Sonaf Raja Nisnoni (to the southwest) in Naikoten. The design of this road includes two main branches leading into and out of Kupang city towards Camplong (Kupang Regency) [20]. In 1914 it was called "Ir." Assmussen was responsible for the renovation of Kupang's main road. From a macro perspective, the street forms the letter "A," which is an acronym for Ir. Assmussen's initials. In the center of the "A", is the site of Christian Ngefak's 1986 Komodo Monument. Previously, a three-meter-high monument with a marble inscription bearing the name Ir. Assmussen in honor of the designer of the Kupang-Atapupu road.

In 1963, during the Trikora era, which was characterized by strong anti-Dutch sentiment, the monument was demolished. Despite the absence of the monument, the street is still known as Straat "A" or Asmussen Street. The names Van Heutsz and Prof Molengraaf are seldom heard, but the history of Straat Asmussen remains in the collective memory of the people of Kupang, even after a century had passed by 2014 [19]. Based on all the historical facts, the area of Straat "A" was determined as the case of research study.

2.2 The Steps of Analysis

The first phase of this research involves the formulation of a conceptual framework to facilitate the analysis of the elements that constitute the urban image of Kupang's Straat "A" area. This research will draw on the insights and experiences of Kevin Lynch regarding to the physical and non-physical elements of a city. It is postulated that perceptions and experiences of urban image elements are shaped to assist individuals in understanding, identifying, and engaging with the physical and non-physical elements of the urban environment [6].

Previous research has demonstrated that the interpretation of urban imagery can be approached through a number of theoretical lenses, including phenomenological, sociocultural, historical, and semiotic perspectives. In accordance with the theoretical framework proposed by Kevin Lynch, historical and semiotic approaches are employed to examine the impact of historical context and symbolism associated with urban elements on perception and experience. This approach encompasses the examination of the impact of historical edifices, monuments, and symbolic markers on the interpretation and comprehension of urban environments. As an urban area with a history and collective meaning within the community, the physical and non-physical elements of urban image of the Straat A area can be explored using historical and semiotic

p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

approaches. In line with the research objectives, this discussion will focus on how the physical and non-physical elements reflect their function as Kupang's city image and how Straat A can reflect the city's local identity.

For a city to be considered an ideal representation of its image, it must have five physical and non-physical elements. (a) Physical elements: The first category of elements is that of pathways, which includes roads, sidewalks, pedestrian walkways, railways, and other transportation corridors. It is essential to consider the following aspects: clear and consistent design, accessibility, and safety. Second, edges are defined as physical boundary elements, including river banks, beaches, cliffs, and man-made structures such as walls and fences. In addition, clear boundaries are essential because they delineate the boundaries between different areas, such as residential and industrial zones. It is clear that these physical elements require clear boundaries, aesthetics, and sustainability. Third, districts are defined as areas with similar characteristics. These may include business districts, residential areas, industrial areas, or areas with special functions, such as educational or entertainment areas. In addition, districts may include areas with consistent architectural styles or certain themes. This element should be able to express distinctive characteristics, functions, and connectivity. Fourth, nodes can be defined as major meeting places (e.g., major street intersections), gathering places (e.g., plazas, parks, shopping centers), and transit centers (e.g., train stations or bus terminals). Aspects of clarity include focus, accessibility, and diversity of activities. In addition, landmarks are defined as prominent buildings or structures, including towers, monuments, statues, and natural features such as hills, lakes, and large historic trees. They also include widely recognized iconic buildings, such as churches, museums, and government buildings. To be readily identifiable, such elements should be easily recognizable, have historical and cultural value, and be highly visible. (b) Non-physical elements: First, collective stories and narratives can be defined as collective memory that includes aspects of historical connectedness and community participation. Second, identities and meanings, which include significant aspects of cultural representation and diversity. Third, social and cultural activities are based on aspects of community activity and inclusiveness. Fourth, rituals and traditions are based on aspects of traditional maintenance and historical respect. Fifth, user experience, namely aspects of safety and comfort and social interaction, also plays a role in expressing the image of the city. Therefore, in addition to the physical elements of the image of the city, it is essential to consider the non-physical elements that contribute to the overall representation of the city.

p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

In light of the aforementioned approaches, the following steps of analysis are proposed. The first step is to record the shape and pattern of the study case in an empirical manner, then to redescribe it before entering the analysis stage. It is essential to read the pattern of the study case area in its entirety and with great detail. This includes observing the area in the context of both physical and non-physical elements that contribute to the image of the city. Second, the results of the observation should be described in terms of the aspects of perception and experience that were involved. Third, an interpretation should be provided as to which elements are still present, have disappeared, or are dominant in representing the ideal city image in the study area.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In line with the prescribed analytical procedure, the physical recording of Straat "A" was conducted on the basis of tissue analysis (see Fig 1).

Fig 1. *Tissue analysis* of Straat "A" area

p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

3.1 Physical and Non-physical Elements of the City Image in the Context of Perception and Experience

A visual examination of the tangible components of the urban landscape was conducted on the Tissue Analysis Map. This observation allows the tangible components of the urban landscape to be documented in their entirety in relation to the surrounding environment.

Path

The observations made on the Tissue Analysis Map indicate that the path in the area of Straat "A" area is a linear path formed from the circulation of vehicles passing on three main roads. These are Jalan Mulberry (southbound traffic lane), Jalan Alor (northbound traffic lane), and Jalan Sabu and Jalan Nangka (eastbound traffic lane) (see Figure 2).

The path configuration in the area of Straat "A" shows a linear disposition, which is in line with the topographical characteristics of the area. The path configuration has a triangular pattern, which conveys a sense of clarity and stability. In terms of the material composition, the surface is asphalt. The three sections of path are accessible by two-way traffic, resulting in a high density of vehicle users. The width of the sidewalk is limited to 2.00 meters. This concept facilitates the creation of unambiguous accessibility while ensuring a satisfactory level of safety. However, the width of the road does not support the access of container vehicle users, who often cross this route as a link to provincial and national roads (Jalan Timor Raya: Indonesia - Timor Leste). In addition, the pedestrian paths are available and inadequate due to their use as parking lots, street vendors (PKL) at several pedestrian points, and as night culinary tours along the eastern pedestrian path. Nevertheless, the configuration of pathways culminating at the intersection maintains the perception of the Straat "A" area as a unified entity, exerting a dominant influence on the physical landscape of the city.

p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

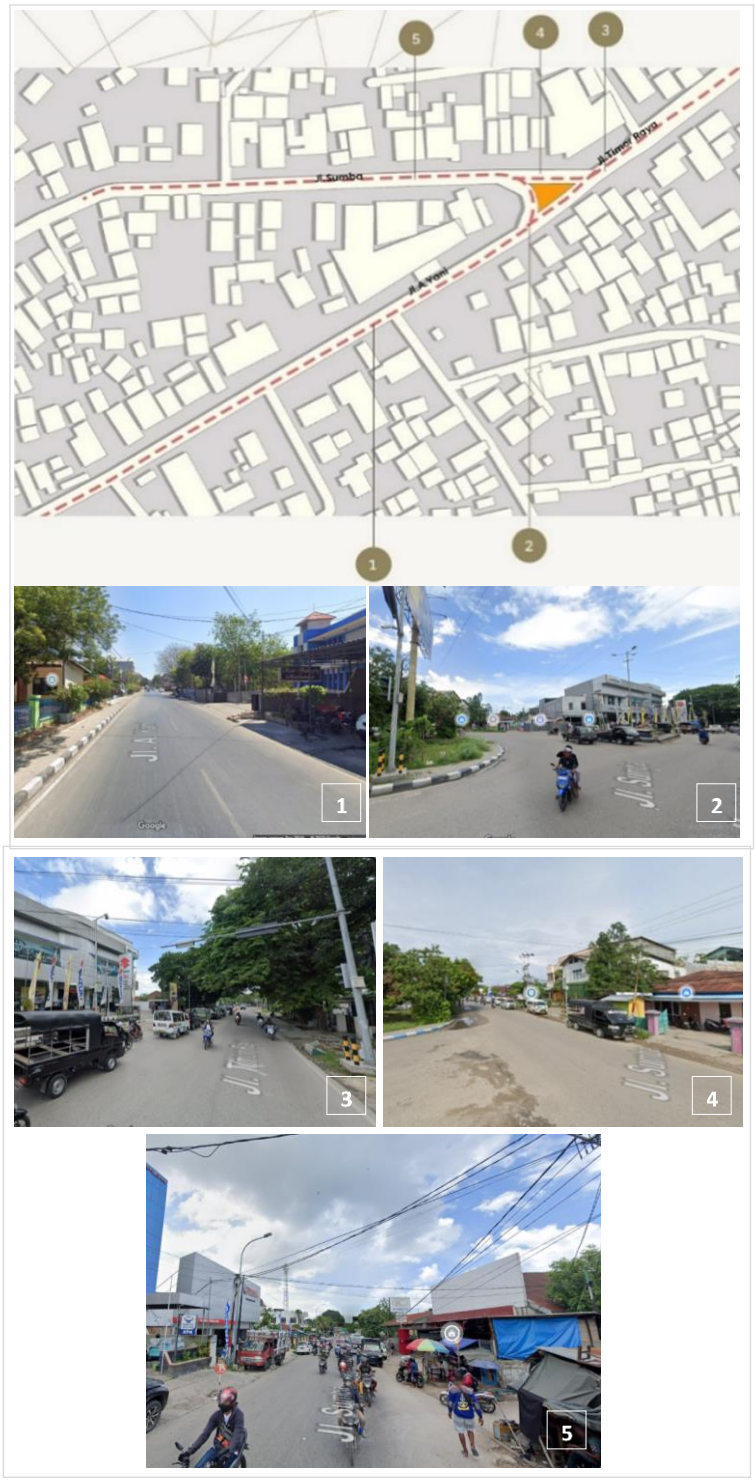

Fig 2. Map of circulation paths and streetscape of Straat "A" area

In terms of the historical dimension, it can be argued that the route elements of the Straat "A" Area area linked to the narrative of the past and the present, thus connecting the user

p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

community with the history of the border mission between Dutch Timor and Portuguese Timor and the identity of the road renovation from the Camplong area to Kupang by Ir. Assmusen. Based on this description, the interpretation of the physical elements of the path in the area Straat "A" can be described as follows: The physical elements of the paths in Straat "A" successfully display a clear and consistent pattern design, have accessibility that is easily accessible to everyone, and are safe for user safety. Likewise, identity and meaning remind users of collective stories and narratives that connect the past with the present and involve the community in building and maintaining the narrative of Straat "A".

Edges

The physical boundaries of the area in question are not visible on the same Tissue Analysis Map, but the difference in atmosphere between the area inside Straat "A" and the area outside of it (before entering Straat "A") is clearly discernible. The interpretation of the physical element of edge is not clear. In empirical experience, there are differences in the area based on the atmosphere created by the activities of the boundary point or zone. These activities include pedestrian activities, passengers waiting for vehicles, the Oeba Market zone as a commercial area, and residential zones. In contrast, the clarity of area's boundaries in relation to non-physical elements is seen in culinary activities and night markets along the sidewalks, which strengthen social life.

Districts

A study of the physical elements of the districts was conducted through the use of the Tissue Analysis Map and the Zoning Map. The observations made on this map allow to see the whole area in its entirety, as well as the relationship between the functional zones of the area. The functionality of the area is heterogeneous, with a composition of residential areas, service commercial areas, and mixed areas. In terms of functional clarity, the area is dominated by residential areas (see Figure 3). The orientation pattern of the buildings is orientated to the street.

The physical elements of the districts can be interpreted as follows. The existence of functional areas that are quite different, namely heterogeneous from the complexity of residential areas, service commercial areas, and mixed areas, allows the perception of interconnectivity. This concept creates good connections between different areas to facilitate

p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

the movement of users. As a result, the Straat "A" area has clear and easily identifiable characteristics.

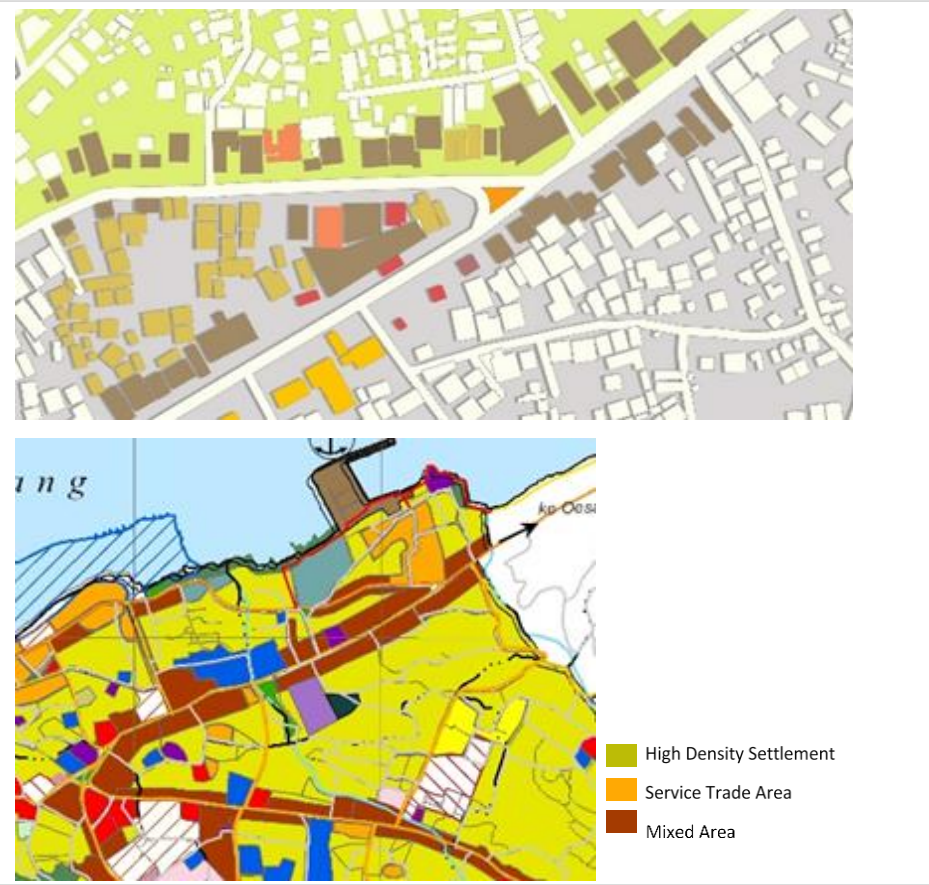

Fig 3. Map of the distribution of zoning functions in the Straat "A" area

Nodes

Empirical observations indicate that the Oeba market in the Straat "A" area serves as a focal point for commercial and service activities, with a particularly strong presence in the local community. In terms of quantity, social activities that do not have a physical presence tend to be more prevalent than those that do. On the Tissue Analysis Map, the node is clearly visible as a result of its connection to the meeting point of the A monument. This node is formed and flanked by Jalan Mulberry (southbound lane), Jalan Alor (northbound lane), Jalan Sabu and Jalan Nangka (eastbound lane), all of which are highly accessible and well connected to the main lane (Jalan Timor Raya). It is this sense of interconnected accessibility that the community believes creates the collective narrative of Kupang's Golden Triangle (see Figure 4). In addition to the focus and accessibility, the diversity of activities displayed from the Straat "A" area contributes to a vibrant

p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

urban life. It can be argued that the physical elements of nodes reinforce the user's experience of safety and comfort, and have a social interaction value that forms a cohesive community support space on the scale of the city.

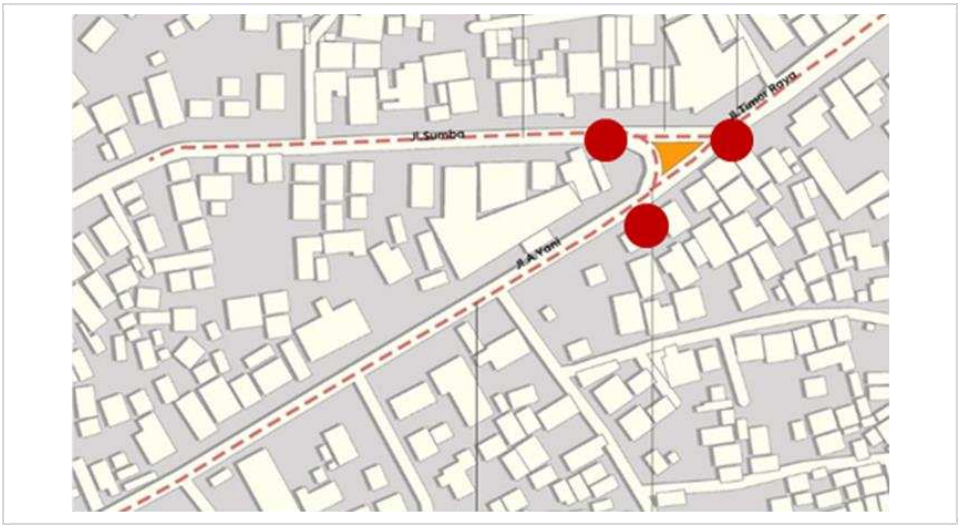

Fig 4. Map of nodes on Straat Area "A"

Landmark

As early as 1914, the designer of the Kupang-Atapupu road wanted to present the area with the letter "A" as its initials. This was reflected in an inscription erected in memory of Ir. Asmussen, the engineer responsible for the construction of the road. Asmussen. In 1963, Ir. Asmussen's inscription was removed in order to increase anti-Dutch sentiment. In 2014, a sculpture of the letter "A" and a monument to the Komodo dragon were erected to emphasize the local identity of the area. From a certain distance, this element is unrecognizable due to its small size and lack of iconicity. The monument is located at the intersection of Jalan Mulberry (southbound lane), Jalan Alor (northbound lane), Jalan Sabu and Jalan Nangka (eastbound lane). Although the monument is of a smaller scale than the overall mass of the building, its location on the axis of the area ensures that it is a dominant feature. The ornament that is clearly visible from a distance is the concrete "A" sign. At a certain distance, it can also be seen that the letter "A" monument is adorned with a carved Komodo dragon statue. However, the entire ornamentation (letter A and Komodo dragon statue) is difficult to identify because the small dimensions of the ornamentation, make it difficult to discern the basic shape, color, and texture of the material (see Figure 5).

p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

The following is an interpretation of the physical elements of the landmark, referred to as the "Straat A" area. The signage in the Straat "A" area functions as a symbol of a collective narrative, representing an agreement on the historical value of the design history of the Kupang-Atapupu highway. In accordance with the designer's concept (Mr. Christian Ngefak, 1986), the complementary element, in the form of a Komodo dragon statue, serves as a symbol of the East Nusa Tenggara region based on local identity. However, the visibility of the landmark as a physical element of the city is not clearly visible from different points of the city. As a result, it does not support user orientation and navigation because it is not an iconic and monumental building.

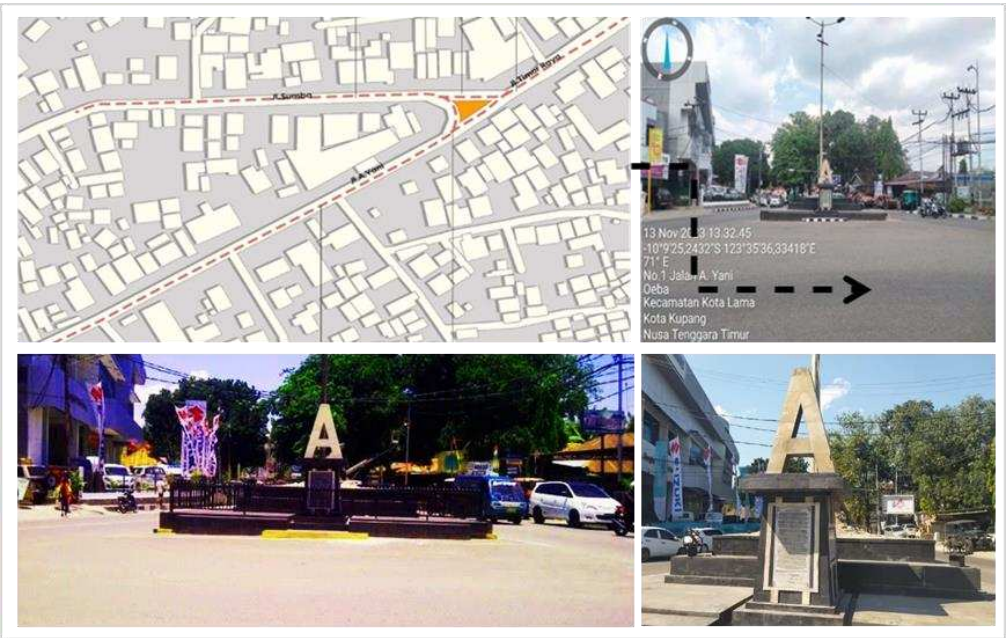

Fig 5. Map of landmarks and details of landmark ornaments in Straat "A" Area

4. CONCLUSION

The analysis led to the following conclusion. The present study introduces a novel approach to the analysis of urban imagery that includes both physical and non-physical elements within a given urban area. The analysis method consists of three steps. First, a physical record of the area is made using a tissue analysis map. Next, a description is provided based on the principles of physical and non-physical elements of the city image as outlined by Kevin Lycnh. Finally, the interpretation of perception and empirical experience is presented. Second, the analysis of the tissue analysis map of the Straat "A" area of Kupang City reveals that the area is able to represent only three physical elements of the city image. These are the physical elements of streets,

p-ISSN 2580-7552; e-ISSN 2548-7515, Volume 9, Number 2, pp 75 – 88, 2024

districts, and nodes. In contrast, the non-physical elements of the urban image of Straat "A" area of Kupang City manifest as collective narratives, identity and meaning, social activities, and user experience. Third, an in-depth understanding of the physical and non-physical elements of the Straat "A" urban image can serve as a basis for the design of analogous urban images.

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