

The Urban Image Conservation and Development of Nakhon Si Thammarat's Old Town Community in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town Community dated a thousand years old from four eras of settlement development. The community is located on an ancient beach ridge that stands until the present day. It also has an image of a community that is unique to any city. Today the community is rapidly expanding, so the importance of the old town's various elements has been diminished. The research objectives are to analyze Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town Community's image and landscape and provide suggestions to preserve and develop the community's image. The methodology is theoretical concepts of the image of the city, urban landscape, historic urban landscape, and urban conservation, including field surveys to identify problems and the community's awareness. Visual assessments and mapping were also undertaken. Based on the study, the urban conceptual framework emphasizes the five elements of physical perception, whereas the cultural landscape concept focuses on the physical perception of the community's core components and sub-elements that express specificity of the district, including traditional custom, which is intangible culture and a landscape element as well.

The analysis of urban image reveals that Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town Community consists of the *path* in the area with Ratchadamnoen Road, Karom Road and Pattanakarn Khukwang Road as the main routes, the *edge* of the community divided by natural boundaries, which are various rivers and by man-made boundaries, which are canals and the old city's embankments, and the unique *district*, such as Tha Wang Community, Khaek Market Community, and Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town. The *node* or activity center is, for example, business activities in Tha Wang Community, Khaek Market Community and Hua It Market Community, and the tourism activities in the old community area around Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan Temple. The prominent *landmark* from the past to the present is Phra Borommathat Stupa. In addition, the unique physical elements in the old town are groups of large trees. Suggestions on conservation and development are to create awareness of secondary routes to reduce congestion of the main roads and connect to other attractions; to develop the old town's border from four eras for clearer perception; to promote the main activities within each district; and to have measures to control the height, billboards, old buildings' styles, and new buildings representing each district's uniqueness that will not obscure the perception of the community's landmarks.

Keywords: old city area, urban image, historic urban landscape, urban conservation, Nakhon Si Thammarat old town community

INTRODUCTION

Nakhon Si Thammarat's Old Town Community in Southern Thailand has thrived for a thousand years, with the development of settlements on an old sandbar running from the north to the south. The community was formed as a linear settlement with a unique image and landscape unlike any other city, with Ratchadamnoen Road, which is an ancient route linking the community's districts together (Chumphengphan, 2012).

These days, Nakhon Si Thammarat's Old Town Community is of great historical importance, and is both a national and international tourist destination. Within the community are districts that are unique and multicultural. There are a number of elements of the old city and significant archaeological sites scattered along Ratchadamnoen Road, especially Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan, which is a historical landmark that links past to present, and which was first listed on the Tentative List of World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in 2013.

The rapid expansion of the community has resulted in various problems leading to a reduction of elements of the old city and the original urban landscape. This has led to the research questions:

1. What are the elements of Nakhon Si Thammarat's Old Town Community image today?
2. How can these elements be preserved and developed to be suitable for the current urban expansion?

It seems clear that there should be an analysis of this urban area's image as part of the proper conservation and development of the old community of Nakhon Si Thammarat.

Study Objectives

1. To study the image and landscape of Nakhon Si Thammarat's Old Town Community
2. To find a way to preserve and develop the image of Nakhon Si Thammarat's Old Town

METHODOLOGY

- Collection of documents and research relating to the concept of urban image, urban landscape, conservation and development of the old city, as well as literature devoted to the development and history of the Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town Community, including local conservation laws, in order to identify potential ways to improve the area.
- Initial field survey in the area of Nakhon Si Thammarat's Old Town Community according to the concept of landscape and urban image, based on five elements to identify the route, boundary, activity center district and landmarks, as well as old town conservation concepts to pinpoint problems and make a visual assessment of the area with note taking and mapping.
- Analysis of the data obtained from Item 1 and 2 to summarize the issues and propose appropriate guidelines for the conservation and development of Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town and its image.

RELATED CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

Urban Landscape

The Image of the City (Lynch, 1960), Urban Landscape (Cullen, 1995), and Historic Urban Landscape (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2011) were reviewed as the main conceptual frameworks for identifying the key elements and potential of the city.

The Image of the City was written by an American architect, Kevin Lynch (1960). In the book, Lynch (1960) suggests that a set of mental images exist in the minds of the people who experience a city. The elements of the images consist of the following points:

- **Path** refers to routes of travel such as roads, rails, sidewalks, etc. Paths are significant for commuting in town. While people are traveling, they see various elements of the town

along the route and, therefore, establish relationships with these elements.

- **Edge** is an element that defines the boundaries of an area. They may be natural barriers, such as a coastline, a river, a canal, or a man-made boundary such as a city wall or moat.
- **Node** is usually the center point of a route, such as intersections or various junctions like bus stations and subway stations. A node could be a busy place in the town square. The node is a distinctive feature of an urban district since it forms relationships by connecting different routes together as a junction when one arrives or departs other locations.
- **District** or neighborhood is a community area whose size depends on the specific characteristics of the community, which is part of a city. The originality of the area is created by its unique features. Each area has different living conditions, according to the social structure. The community's way of life is reflected in the nature of the activities of people in each district, and each district has a distinct identity in the city.
- **Landmarks** provide a reference point or landscape symbol; a landmark is different to a node because a person may not access the landmark. It mainly provides a guidance signal for the environment and comprises signs, important buildings, monuments, etc.

Townscape Theory was introduced by a British architect, Gordon Cullen. He explained, with his concept of urban landscape theory, that human beings were able to recognize the urban environment by using urban elements such as the distinctive landscape or an area with a different construction pattern, which could be used as a reference point in traveling to create a better understanding of the environment (Cullen, 1995). An old city's elements, such as streets, empty space and architecture, make up the townscape of that city. Apart from this, local people living in the town learn through historical stories, a sense of historical continuity and the uniqueness of the area (Khanjanusthiti, 2009). Moreover, the visual urban landscape is vital to perception, and it becomes a means of transmitting the meaning of the environment to the people (Green, 1999). Therefore, landscape research today tends to be multidisciplinary,

which requires interdisciplinary support (Qviström & Vicenzotti, 2016).

Historic Urban Landscape

The concept of Historic Urban Landscape is intended to promote quality of life. It is based on the idea that the city is subject to dynamic forces in the economic, social and cultural spheres that shaped it and kept shaping it. This approach to managing historic urban landscapes integrates the goals of urban heritage conservation and those of social and economic development. This method sees urban heritage as a social, cultural and economic asset for the development of cities. Applying the historical landscape approach to the development of the old city, one must take into account the environment and the unique context of the old town. As a result, the conservation and development of each ancient town require a different approach (UNESCO, 2011).

The environment is also a vital issue in this approach UNESCO (2011). The environment concerns the context of topography, geomorphology, hydrology and the distinctive natural features of the area. In addition, the environment -- created both in the past and a contemporary contexts -- includes fundamental systems and utilities of the city; the open space, land use, and area management need to be taken into account as well. The emphasis is on learning and understanding the relationship of an old town's elements, and the integration of those elements with the broader social and cultural dimensions, value and meaning, economic processes, and cultural diversity. Understanding the old city and its context based on the concept of a historical urban landscape enables researchers to build a body of knowledge about the value and importance of the old town, contributing to the planning and management of a dynamic city (Global Observatory on the Historic Urban Landscape, 2016).

Guidelines for the Conservation and Development of an Old Town

In their publication of the Washington Charter, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (The International Council on Monuments and Sites [ICOMOS], 1987) discussed the features of elements to be preserved in a historic community area, including the original city planning clearly visible from the streets or apparent boundaries, the relationships between buildings and open space, appearance both outside and inside the building, the relationship between urban communities and natural environments, cultural activities, and the urban community's way of life (The International Committee on Historic Towns and Villages, 2011).

An Old Town or historic area is considered part of the cultural heritage, representing uniqueness and local culture inherited from previous generations. It is a testimony to historical development, including the man-made environment. There are two categories of cultural heritage: Tangible Cultural Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2008). Cultural heritage has no clear boundaries and is an integral part of the people in the community, while the natural environment is based on geography and city boundaries (Rodwell, 2018).

UNESCO has proposed the Culture for Sustainable Urban Development Initiative, which suggests that during the time that the global community is discussing future development goals, efforts have been made to use culture as the heart of international development, displayed through a variety of styles from cultural heritage to creative industries, as well as using cultural tourism as a tool for driving towards sustainable development (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2015). Culture is an integral part of the well-being of humanity as well as the development of local communities. Enhanced equality must be linked to multiculturalism as part of such development (Duxbury et al., 2016).

The approach to preserving the historic urban landscape and the conservation and development of an old city should involve exploring all dimensions of the city, meaning both natural and cultural resources. There must be a process of participation of all stakeholders at every step of the process, and consultation with experts to study the relevant values and develop protective measures. The fragility of old city elements is assessed in both the social and economic aspects, together with the impact that is expected to occur with new or continuing development. A conceptual framework for integrating urban heritage values and the status of the vulnerability of urban elements must be realized in order to achieve a unique old city conservation and development framework. Prioritization of activities and planning for the use of various resources should be considered. An appropriate working group network is required to form a local administrative framework for each project and to develop systems, mechanisms and tools for the coordination of diverse activities and projects with citizens and diverse stakeholder groups (Global Observatory on the Historic Urban Landscape, 2016).

In addition to preserving internationally valuable heritage and material heritage for economic reasons, cultural heritage landscape management guidelines should also place importance on local heritage values through comprehensive conservation policy measures (Ginzarly et al., 2019). Such guidelines help develop conservation in Thailand by preserving both tangible and intangible elements. Moreover, the concept of conservation should embrace previous changes that have occurred in the historic area. Implementing this approach requires a complex process, including the identification of heritage conservation and management. Landscape management goals must be part of a sustainable development strategy (Issarathumnoon, 2020). The conservation of historic cities and communities must be integrated with the economic, social, cultural and policy development of the city through an interdisciplinary approach that connects historic urban communities with neighboring areas (Peerapun et al., 2020).

The study found that the image and urban landscape in all five elements focused primarily on the physical perception of the city. However,

the current concept of cultural landscape and preservation of historical communities is to preserve the value of both tangible and intangible historical and cultural heritage at the local and international levels. The researcher utilized these concepts to formulate the topic of the study and the survey, the development of community settlement, neighborhoods and community landscape, critical architectural styles, areas for cultural activities, and laws on community area conservation as evidence to support the analysis and identify appropriate conservation practices.

DEVELOPMENT OF NAKHON SI THAMMARAT OLD COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT (Chuvichean, 2010)

The development of community settlements in the old city of Nakhon Si Thammarat can be divided into four eras (Figure 1) as follows:

Settlement in the old town of Phra Wiang (Tambralinga Period) during the 13th – 19th centuries B.E.

At this time, the city was very prosperous as the administrative center of the region. The community was built on a plateau of an ancient sandbar where flooding could not reach. Embankment and moats were built around the city, and natural canals were used as a means of traveling between communities. There was a paramount ruler called Phrachao Sri Thammasokrat. Physical and cultural heritage sites that remain in the community today include Phra Borommathat Chedi built in the Sri Lankan style, the city wall, the Giant Chedi, and a stone inscription at Sema Muang Temple, as well as various antiques and archaeological sites. In

addition to the physical heritage, intangible cultural inheritance comprises the Cloth Parade, Nang Dan Parade, etc.

Settlement in Nakhon Si Thammarat (Ayutthaya period) during the 20th – 24th centuries B.E.

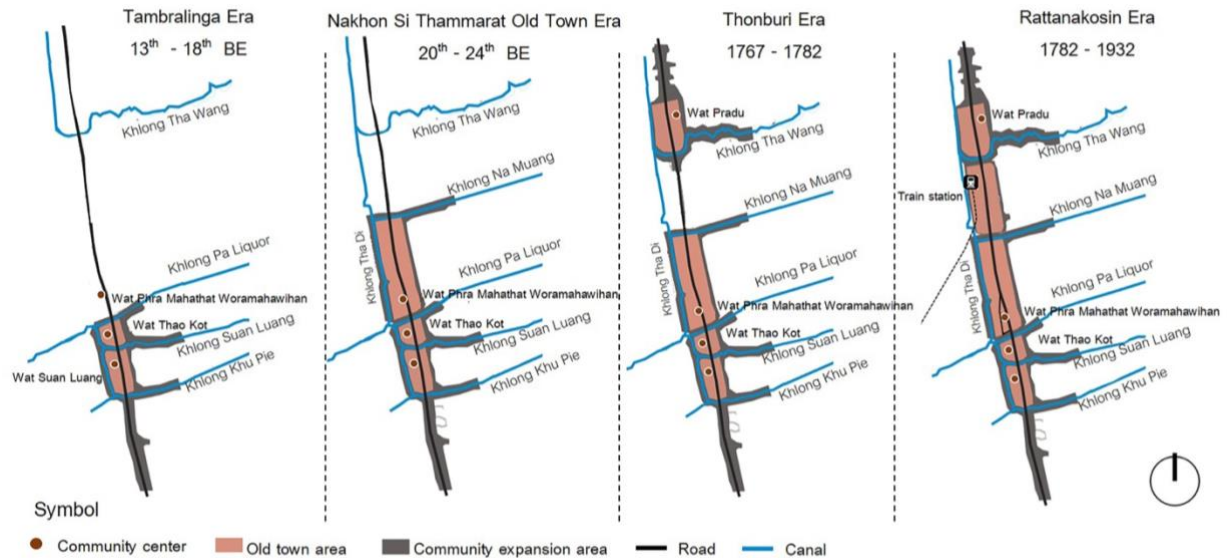
During this period, the community was still located on the same sandbar but had extended slightly to the north of the city of Phra Wiang. The development was rapid, and the city was a center of trade and export. After having been a colony of the Kingdom of Ayudhya during the reign of King Narai the Great, the king commissioned French engineers to build high brick walls, fortresses, and city gates. There were moats surrounding the city, and Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan Temple was the center of the community. An ancient route, which is now Ratchadamnoen Road, was used for traveling; the route included Na Muang Canal and Pa Lao Canal. The remaining physical, cultural heritage sites are the old city walls, moats, Sanamnamueang, a holy well, antiques, and archaeological sites.

Settlement in Nakhon Si Thammarat (Thonburi period) from 1767 to 1782

During the time when King Taksin the Great successfully regained freedom from Burma's colonialism, the nature of settlement was that of a community located on the waterfront along the Tha Wang Canal, which grew into a trading community. The community's physical and cultural heritage sites, which have lasted until today, are Haw Phra Sung, and Chinese buildings at Jang Temple and Pradu Temple.

Figure 1

Development of Community Settlements



Note. This figure demonstrates the settlement of the community in four eras: Tambralinga Era, Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town Era, Thonburi Era, and Rattanakosin Era.

Settlement in Nakhon Si Thammarat (Rattanakosin period) from 1782 to 1932

This period of time is when the community's physical appearance changed the most. In the reign of King Rama V, roads and railways were built. There were new settlements of culturally diverse groups of people, and Western art was incorporated into the area. Buildings, shops, and shophouses in this period were, therefore, a mix of Chinese and European style (also known as colonial style) architecture, especially in the Tha Wang area. As a result, the city became very prosperous, and that prosperity has continued up to the current day. The physical and cultural heritage sites in the community that remain comprise colonial shophouses, wooden row houses, the monk's house at Chantaram Temple, Than

Muang's House at Tha Pho Temple, and Guan Yu Shrine.

IMPORTANT DISTRICTS AND LANDSCAPE OF THE CURRENT COMMUNITY

The continuous development of the settlement involves changes and community expansion along Ratchadamnoen Road, resulting in a very specific community, which nowadays can be divided into four districts (Figure 2) as follows:

The old commercial district

The essential old commercial neighborhoods of Nakhon Si Thammarat are Tha Wang Commercial District and Khaek Market Commercial District, having activities such as food selling, apparel trading, and some local industries. Distinctive features are unique old architectural buildings like colonial shophouses

and numerous wooden row houses that are considered essential landscape elements in the area along Ratchadamnoen Road, which is the main route, and other secondary roads in the district. In addition, there is a mix of Buddhist, Chinese, Islamic and Christian cultures.

The new commercial district

This is a community area that has expanded from the old commercial district to support trading and services. There are shopping malls, markets, and various facilities. Central districts include Hua It Market area, and agricultural produce and food trade districts. Pattanakarn Khukwang is the city's nightlife district, and Hua Thanon Intersection is a commercial area that supports large shopping malls. The key landscape elements in the area are two- to three-story commercial buildings, which are highly dense throughout, and modern architectural styles on the sides of Pattanakarn Khukwang Road and Karom Road, which are the main streets of the district.

Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town community area

This is the old community district that supports cultural tourism activities. The area surrounding Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan Temple is home to an exceptional community of local wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation, such as nielloware art, rice noodle makers, shadow puppetry, Yan Lipao basketry, etc. Many of the city's famous local restaurants

can also be found in this area. Part of Nakhon Si Thammarat's Old Town Community District is the former Phra Wiang Old Town Community.

Currently, it is a residential area and is home to the National Museum of Nakhon Si Thammarat, which is a learning center that houses a collection of antiques. A key landscape feature is visible in the form of the city planning in the shape of an elongated rectangle with the north-south axis. Ratchadamnoen Road, as the main route, leads to Phra Boromthat Chedi, which is of high importance and the major landmark of the district. In addition, other elements of the old city can be seen, including the city walls, moats, and Buddhist and Brahmin religious sites. Groups of trees provide shade on both sides of the road and in sacred places and government buildings (Figure 3). Row houses and vernacular buildings can be found scattered throughout the area.

Residential and tourism services and accommodation areas

There is a residential area that has expanded from the old city area with the building of new roads to accommodate future expansion. Moreover, the area is currently experiencing rapid growth in the accommodation and hotel business. With the increase in tourism and urban development, more investment into these industries has been stimulated. Furthermore, the density of commercial buildings with modern architectural styles, such as two- to three-story buildings on both sides of Pattanakarn Khukwang Road, comprise significant landscape elements of these areas.

Figure 2

Important Community Districts



Note. This figure shows that the critical community districts today have evolved from the settlement on the ancient sandbar, starting from the Old Town of Nakhon Si Thammarat and the old commercial district. Later on, there was an expansion of the community from the old city area along with the building of new roads like Pattanakarn Khukwang Road. Therefore, the development of a new commercial district, residential area, and tourist service area has occurred.

Figure 3

Groups of Large Trees in the Old Town Area



Note. This figure shows areas where there are groups of trees, which are on both sides of the road, and in sacred places and government buildings.

KEY ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Phra Mahathat Woramahawihaan Temple, also widely known as Wat Phra Mahathat or Wat Phrathat, is an architectural structure of great value and importance. It provides historical evidence of the region's role as an administrative center, and the prosperity of Theravada Buddhism influenced by Lanka or today's Sri Lanka, which is evidenced by the architectural art form of Buddha's relic stupa and Pra Boromthat Chedi (Figure 4). Buddhist and Brahmin worship places that are scattered along Ratchadamnoen

Road add valuable and essential elements as well. Moreover, the vernacular architecture in the old city area along Ratchadamnoen Road has the unique architectural style of the Rattanakosin period during the reigns of King Rama V to King Rama VII. There are one- to two-story shops or buildings resembling row houses with an architectural style that blends Chinese and Western art. There are beautiful stucco designs, stencils, and ventilators, which are primarily found in Tha Wang and Tha Pho Community. On the other hand, residential houses and Southern-style row houses are located in the community around Wat Phra Mahathat (Figure 5).

Figure 4

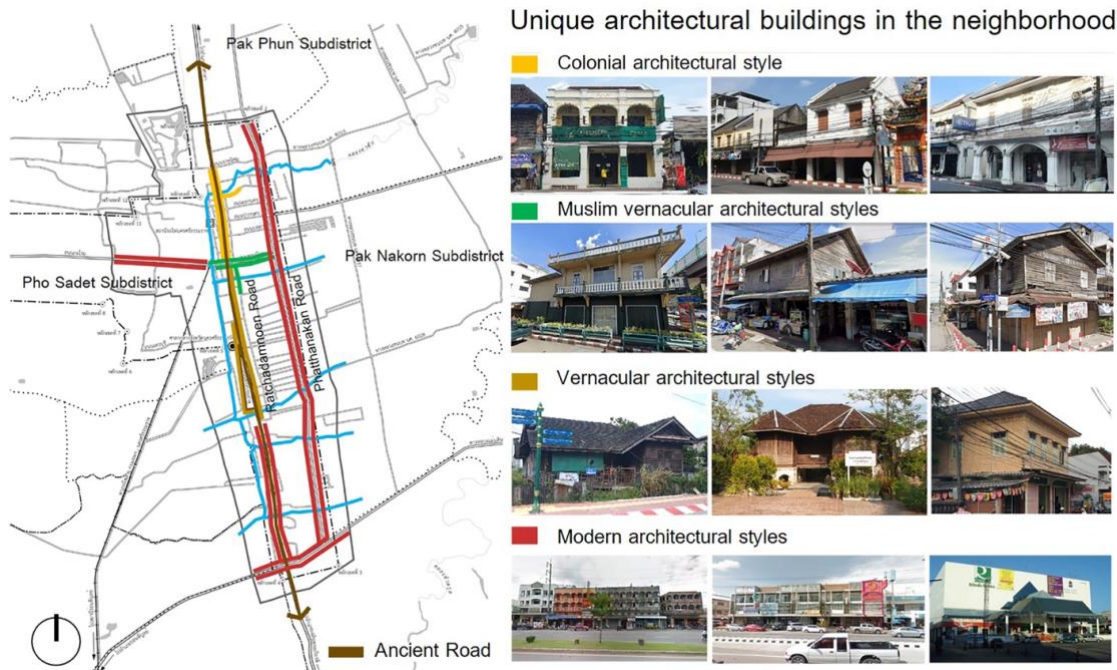
Phra Mahathat Woramahawihaan Temple



Note. This figure shows Phra Borommthat Chedi in Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan, with an upside-down bell-shaped chedi, an architectural art style influenced by Sri Lanka. It is an architectural structure of high value and importance in the area

Figure 5

Unique Architectural Buildings in the Neighborhood

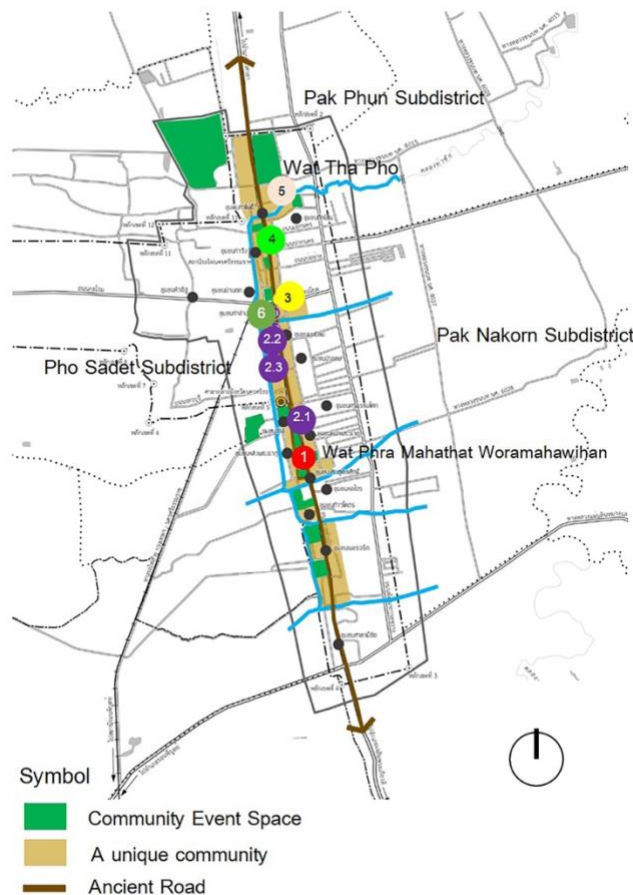


Note. This figure demonstrates the unique architecture in Nakhon Si Thammarat's community area, which consists of colonial-style buildings, local wooden houses, vernacular residential places, and modern architecture.

TRADITIONAL ACTIVITY AREAS

In culturally diverse neighborhoods, unique and nationally renowned local activities are still carried on. Most traditional activities are held in open spaces within the religious grounds. Significantly, the area inside Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan is the leading site for organizing traditional activities that have been passed down through generations of local residents. These traditions and activities include the tradition of the Cloth Parade to the Chedi, the Fire Offerings, the

Nang Dan Parade, the Tenth Lunar Month Festival, the Lak Phra Chak Phra, and more. There are also significant places that house specific activities, such as the Lad Na Phrathat Walking Street, the Ligor Floating Market, the Alms-giving Road, Tha Chi Market, etc. These traditional activities are significant elements of the intangible cultural heritage of the community. Organizing the activities usually involves the use of Rachadamnoen Road and Phra Borommathat Road to link the community and the flow of activities together (Figure 6).

Figure 6*Traditional Event Spaces in the Community***Traditional event space in the community**

Note. This figure identifies areas of important community traditions as an intangible cultural heritage that comprise essential elements of Nakhon Si Thammarat's Old Town Community.

RELATED LAWS IN NAKHON SI THAMMARAT OLD TOWN

In this section, the laws related to conservation are considered for the feasibility analysis with respect to setting guidelines for protection and development in the community area based on its role and potential (Figure 7).

Nakhon Si Thammarat City Plan

The latest announcement about law enforcement became effective on November 20, 2019. According to the plan, there are, altogether, nine types of land use. However, only the parts relevant to the current Old Town Community are presented here. The use of land in the Nakhon Si

Thammarat Old Town Community area is regulated for art and cultural conservation. Tha Wang and Khaek Market Community areas are both of the commercial types, and the new commercial area is a medium-density commercial and residential type. The area unaffected by this regulation is Phra Wiang Community District, which is a medium-density residential type. However, it should be recategorized to the art and cultural conservation type due to its high historical and archaeological value.

Announcement about the Old Town of Nakhon Si Thammarat

On December 13, 2010, the boundary of Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town was announced,

comprising a total area of 3,789 square kilometers. The purpose of this announcement was to clarify the extent and elevate the importance of the Old Town area. However, this area does not include the old town from the Thonburi period.

The Municipal Law of Nakhon Si Thammarat Municipality

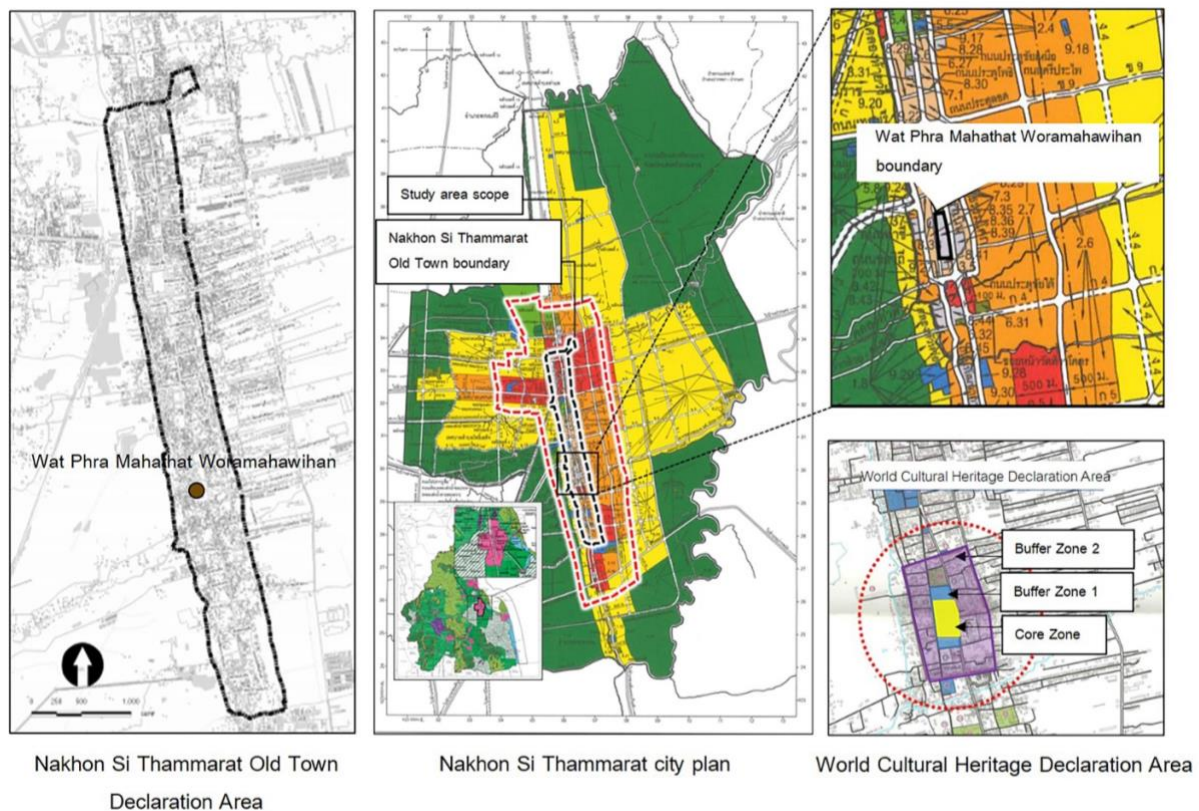
In 1995, Nakhon Si Thammarat Municipality (1995) enacted a law against the construction and modification of certain types of buildings in the area. For example, construction of buildings more than twelve meters in height in the Old Town area surrounding Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan is prohibited. Despite this restriction, there is a lack of regulation that would require the building style to be consistent with the identity of the district.

Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan Temple and World Cultural Heritage Area

Since the Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan Temple and its surroundings have been proposed for listing as part of the World Cultural Heritage, there has been an attempt to define the boundaries that define both the core zone and buffer zone. The core zone consists of Area 1, the Yellow Plot for religious activities; Area 2, comprises the Blue Plot for the monastery, whereas Area 3, the Purple Plot, is the buffer zone around Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan Temple. These specifications have helped enable the development guidelines and measures to control the construction of buildings in the area.

Figure 7

Laws on the Conservation of the Area



Note. This figure illustrates the various areas subject to current requirements and laws relevant to the conservation of each area.

ANALYSIS OF NAKHON SI THAMMARAT OLD TOWN COMMUNITY'S IMAGE

There are five elements that comprise the concept of urban imagery: path, edge, district, node and landmark. To find the uniqueness of each district, the details (Figure 8) of these five elements are analyzed, as follows:

Path

Path Identification

Ratchadamnoen Road, Karom Road, and Pattanakarn Khukwang Road are the main routes (paths) of the community. Significantly, Ratchadamnoen Road is a piece of evidence showing the settlement of the community along this main road since ancient times. Moreover, the road links different sections to the historical sites and important places in the city, with the emphasis placed on Phra Boromthat Chedi. Therefore, it is a preferred route of traveling for various tourist activities.

Path Recognition

Paths within the Old Town can be recognized easily because Ratchadamnoen Road is the primary infrastructure element of the Old Town, which is located along the north-south sandbar, which has defined the space in which the community has formed and lived from past to present. The community district and the different groups of unique old buildings can be clearly perceived when people travel along Ratchadamnoen Road.

Path Problems

Because it is an ancient route, it is difficult to expand the traffic surface of Ratchadamnoen Road, which causes many problems because the volume of traffic has been increasing year by year. Nowadays, traffic congestion is unavoidable on Ratchadamnoen Road, particularly during the rush hours and during the traveling seasons.

Edge

Edge Identification

The current edge of the community district is defined by natural boundaries. For instance, the canals -- Tha Wang, Na Muang, Pa Lao, Suan Luang and Khu Phai canals --act as clear physical boundaries of the community. Meanwhile, man-made boundaries like the embankment and city walls are also part of are the old city's morphology.

Edge Recognition

The edge of the old community behind Nakhon Si Thammarat's old city wall cannot be clearly recognized because only the city walls in the north remain. The canals and embankment in Phra Wiang Old Community are clearly visible; however, today, houses have been built in the area, obscuring the old city boundary.

Edge Problems

Identification of the boundary of Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town and Phra Vieng Old Community is unclear because certain spots of the canal are untidy and deserted, and the canals have also been invaded and destroyed by the community. Furthermore, the collapse and deterioration of the city walls, ditches and soil levees have been caused by rapid urban development.

District

District Identification

At present, the central community districts are Tha Wang and Tha Pho Trade Community District, Hua It Market District, Pattanakarn Khukwang District, Khaek Market Community District, and Hua Thanon Intersection Trade Community District. The Historical Community Districts consist of Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town Community District, Phra Wiang Community District, Tha Wang Community District, and Tha Pho Community District. These are all very distinctive neighborhoods.

District Recognition

The community district can be recognized by the nature of the activity, such as trade, tourism, residence, etc., and from the architectural style of each era through colors and materials, such as the area of Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town, Tha Wang Community, Tha Pho Community, and Khaek Market Community. Various landmarks and groups of large trees add to the distinct character of each district as well.

District Problems

Due to the city's recent expansion, the perception of the old districts of the four eras has lessened. Although there are measures to restrict land use, and to promote activities that are unique to each district, there are no measures to control the architectural style of each district, resulting in dilution of the identities that have existed since the past between Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town Community District, Tha Wang Community, Khaek Market Community, and Phra Vieng Old Community District.

Node

Node Identification

The current centers of activities are located in important community districts. Examples are the trading nodes in Tha Wang Community, Khaek Market Community, and Hua It Market Community. In contrast, tourism nodes are found in the old community area around Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan Temple, which is a center of essential tourism activities.

Node Recognition

Recognition of the node comes through the nature and patterns of activity, atmosphere in the

area, and architectural styles that reflect the physicality of each district.

Node Problems

Commercial and tourism activities are continuously organized. Some activities, such as Na Phra That Market and religious and cultural parades, are held on the road. As a result, there are problems with travel and traffic congestion due to the fact that the activities are concentrated along one thoroughfare, Ratchadamnoen Road.

Landmark

Landmark Identification

The most significant landmark of the city is Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan. Secondary landmarks at the district level are pedestrian overpasses at Tha Wang Intersection and Khaek Market Intersection, Suan Phra Ngoen's Giant Pagoda, Old City Walls, City Hall, and Clock Tower. Most of these landmarks are along Ratchadamnoen Road.

Landmark Recognition

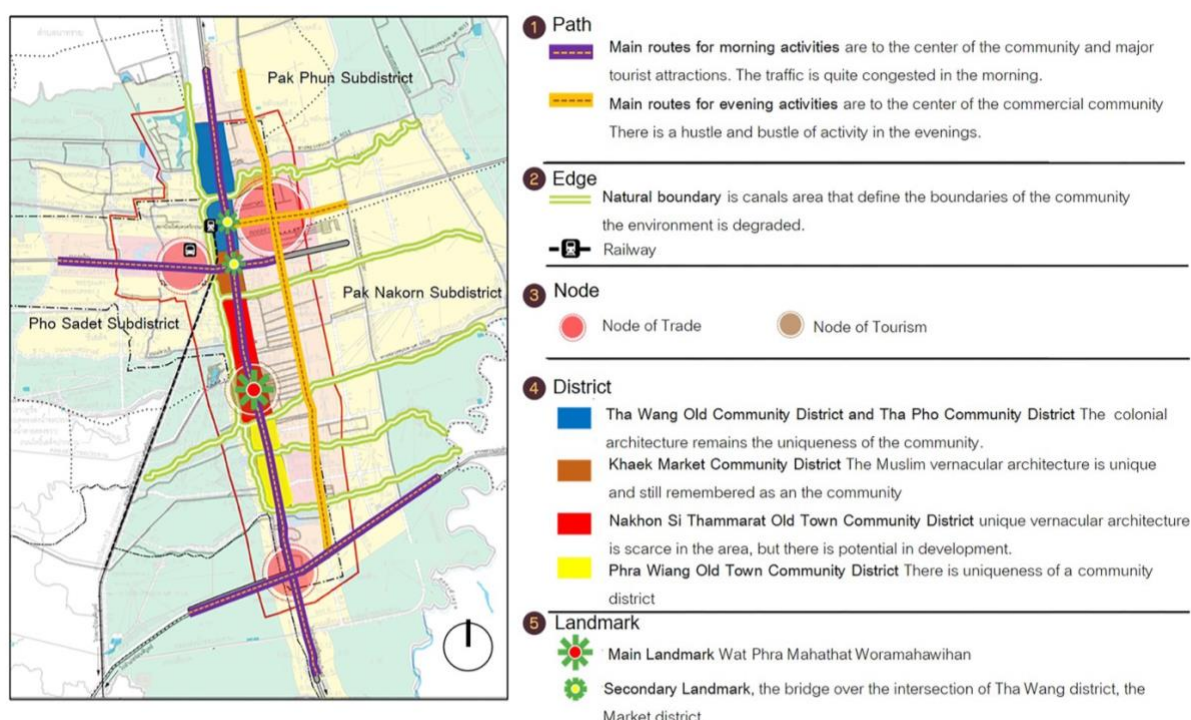
People can quickly notice these landmarks, such as the pedestrian overpass in Tha Wang and Khaek Market areas, when they travel along Ratchadamnoen Road. Also easily visible is the tip of Phra Borommathat Chedi, which can be seen from afar, and Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan, which has always been associated with Ratchadamnoen Road.

Landmark Problems

Newly constructed buildings and street furniture can block visual access to Phra Borommathat Chedi from different points on Ratchadamnoen Road and other roads. As a result, the perception of significant city landmarks is decreased.

Figure 8

The Image of Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town Community



Note. This figure displays the image of Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town Community nowadays.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NAKHON SI THAMMARAT'S OLD TOWN COMMUNITY

Analysis of the image and landscape of Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town should lead to further conservation and development according to UNESCO, giving importance to both tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Figure 9). The details are as follows:

Path

- Ratchadamnoen Road should be promoted as the primary road to support the city's traditional activities and recognize its historical significance. When traveling along Ratchadamnoen Road, people can observe the settlement of the community along the main road that has taken place since ancient times, and they are connected by the road to various parts of the

area, including historic sites and landmarks of the city with, a focus on Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan and Phra Pratat Chedi as the prominent landmark and major tourist attraction of the town.

- Traffic congestion on major roads should be reduced by developing secondary routes to increase alternate travel opportunities and more traveling options. An emphasis on improving secondary streets, tourist attractions, road surfaces, and signs is needed, including tourism route arrangement by tram-style tour buses, parking spots and public car parks outside the old town area.
- Sidewalks should be improved and expanded under the shade to motivate people to walk and to connect them more comfortably to tourist attractions such as Phra Borommatham Road, Sri Thammasok Road, Sri Thammarat Road, etc., and promote them as tourism routes in the community area, allowing more comprehensive route development and complete connections to the main street.

- Measures to control large vehicles or sightseeing buses in the conservation area are needed to decrease the density of Ratchadamnoen Road and reduce the vibrations that may affect the important historic sites of the city.

Edge

- Awareness of clear community boundaries should be raised, or some symbols created that indicates the edge more clearly. Further, there should be greater awareness of entering the old community area of the four eras defined by the canals, which are natural boundaries, the line of the city walls and the city gates, which are artificial boundaries, and from the crossing roads where the former city gates were located.
- Some measures should be implemented to conserve and preserve the natural boundaries and various ancient structures. This could be done by, for example, improving the landscaping of the canals and moats to create attractive public areas by setting at least a six-meter

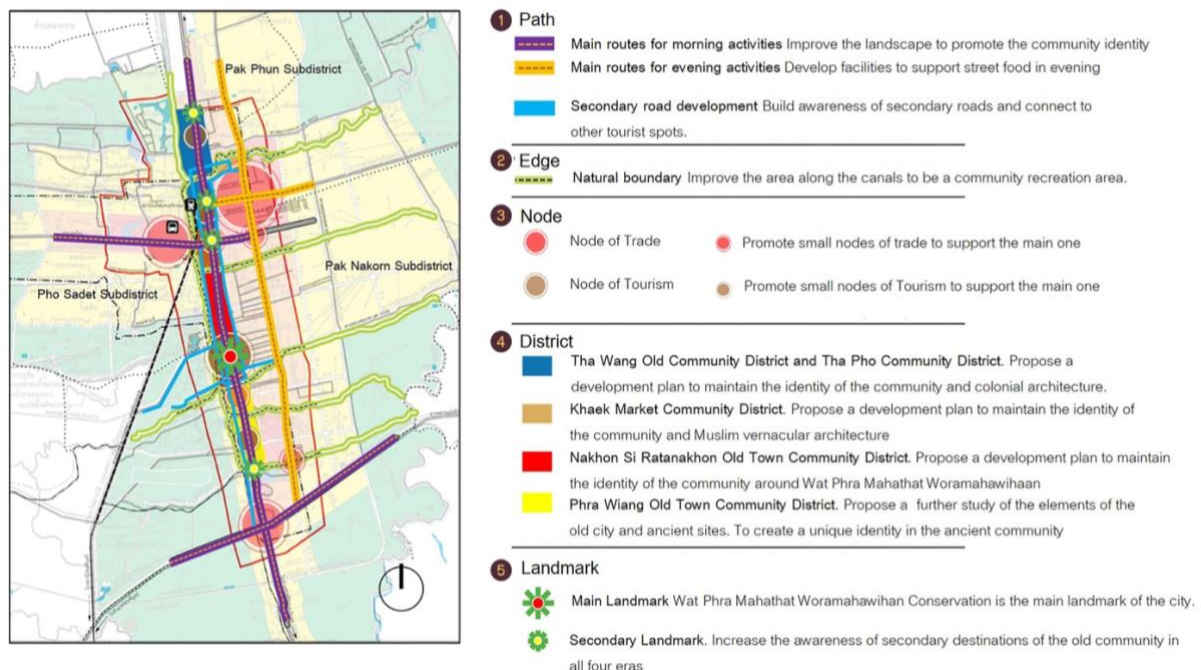
distance from the channel to maintain the natural boundaries of the Old Town.

Node

- The main activities and activity sites of each district, such as the commercial activities in Tha Wang Community District, important historical sites, and cultural tourism in the Old Town of Nakhon Si Thammarat should be promoted to increase recognition of what makes each district unique.
- The unique landscape elements, such as ancient sites, vernacular architecture and large trees in Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town, Phra Vieng Community District, and Tha Wang Community District, also need to be preserved.
- Measures should be implemented for the conservation of valuable old buildings in each district, which may or may not be enlisted as the government's historical sites, and to regulate the style of new buildings, including regulations controlling the installation of billboards and electric poles, in order to create harmony and promote the uniqueness of each district.

Figure 9

Guidelines for the Conservation and Development of Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town Community Image



Note. This figure provides an overview of proposals for the conservation and future development of the community districts and the image of Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town Community.

District

- The nodes and traditional activities of the community should be promoted by creating uniqueness to prominently indicate the center of activity, such as the area within a religious place, park, government office, etc.
- Secondary nodes for activities that can accommodate activities in each district should be developed and promoted by creating public parking spaces to support transportation in crucial areas, along with the development of activities and cultural attractions for those secondary nodes.

Landmark

- The most significant landmark of the city, which is Phra Borommathat Chedi, should be maintained and enhanced by implementing measures to control the height and building patterns of surrounding structures, routes and accessibility, including perspectives that are important to the city's leading destinations.
- Awareness of secondary landmarks in each district, such as archaeological sites along Ratchadamnoen Road, City Hall, etc., should be promoted.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has explored "The Image of the City" and "Townscape" theories together with the old city conservation principles. A survey of the area was conducted for analysis and identification of potential approaches to the development of the community district and promotion of the cultural heritage for enhanced integrity and better perception. Achieving these goals requires specific measures to control different elements in the community districts in accordance with the physical characteristics and history of the area. The issues can be summarized as follows:

The paths in the area consist of Ratchadamnoen Road, Karom Road, and Pattanakarn Khukwang Road as the main routes of travel. There have been settlements along the main road since

ancient times. The route problems are caused by an increasing number of vehicles and traffic congestion today. The conservation and development approach is to promote Ratchadamnoen Road as a historic road to support the traditional activities of the community, to create greater awareness of secondary routes to reduce congestion from the main roads, and to increase travel options and connections to other tourist destinations in the community.

The current edge of the community district is defined by natural boundaries, namely various canals in the community. In addition, the embankment and the old city walls act as man-made boundaries to the city's morphology. The problems of the boundaries are that there have been invasions into the canals and deterioration of the city walls. Guidelines for conserving and developing the boundaries in the future should call for precise edges to be established for the four eras of the old city from the canals, the original city wall lines and the roads where the former city gates were located.

The community districts in the area are unique and diverse, which can be perceived by the architectural styles found in each district. The problem is that the four districts -- one from each of the four eras -- still cannot be clearly recognized, and lack of control over the architectural styles results in the absence of the traditional identity of each district like the Nakhon Si Thammarat Old Town Community or the Tha Wang Community. The conservation and development approach in the future need to promote the main activities within the district, such as the commercial district and cultural tourism district, maintain essential elements of each, such as buildings, historic sites, large trees, etc., and to implement measures to control the façades of old buildings and new buildings that need to be integrated into the identity of each district.

At present, the nodes are the center of commercial activities in Tha Wang, Tha Pho, Khaek Market, and Hua It Market, while the centers of tourism activities are Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan and the old community area around the temple. The nodes can be recognized from the activity patterns and atmosphere in each area. The problem with the nodes arises from the dense commercial and tourism activities in the old community area

around Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan Temple. Traffic is quite serious as cars are stuck on Ratchadamnoen Road. Guidelines for the development of the activity center should call for the development and promotion of sub-activity centers that can support the main activities of each area. For example, additional public parking spaces can be created to accommodate travel activity centers in critical areas. Sub-activity sites in the community area and cultural attractions are also encouraged.

The most prominent landmark is Phra Borommathat Chedi in Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan Temple. Secondary landmarks, which are primarily located on Ratchadamnoen Road, are, for instance, the pedestrian overpasses at the Tha Wang and Khaek Market intersections, the Giant Pagoda at Suan Phra Ngoen, the old city walls, and the clock tower. The problem with the landmarks is that new buildings and street furniture obscure the viewpoints in each neighborhood. Guidelines for landmark conservation and development should focus on preserving the prominent landmarks of the city, such as the Buddha's Relic Chedi and other secondary landmarks in each district, and maintaining the visual perspectives that are important to the community through measures to control building height and layout.

From this investigation of the urban image according to five elements to identify the potential and uniqueness of Nakhon Si Thammarat's Old Town Community, it was also found that additional unique elements within the community were collections of large trees, which both represent the area's heritage and continue to act as vital elements of the image and landscape of the old city as well.

However, it can be seen that the community identity analysis, according to the concept of the image and landscape of the old city, focuses primarily on the physical perception of the city (i.e., the tangible cultural heritage). On the other hand, the current UNESCO concept of conservation considers both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, such as the traditional events of the city and the traditional activities of each district.

Suggestions

Nowadays, there have been changes in architectural styles which have had an effect on valuable old buildings in Nakhon Si Thammarat's Old Town Community. Moreover, with no restrictions or municipal laws governing the construction of these buildings, it is impossible to control their appearance. Therefore, a study of guidelines for establishing urban planning measures or local regulations is necessary in order to propose those that are appropriate to preserve the uniqueness and valuable architectural styles in each community for future generations.

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