Exploring the Potential Tourism Objects in the Small City of Heritage Lasem

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ABSTRACT
Lasem is a small town that has the potential to be a tourist destination. Located on the northern coast of Java, Lasem has three types of landscapes, namely coastal landscapes, topographical landscapes, and mountainous landscapes. The purpose of this paper is to explore the potential of tourist objects that can be developed for tourists who have an interest in visiting Lasem. The method used is descriptive qualitative with field observations and direct interviews with visitors. There are several potential tourist objects that have been explored, such as potential natural attractions, potential cultural attractions, potential social attractions, and potential attractions that are built. The results of this study are the potential natural attractions obtained from the Lasem city landscape, such as the Lasem riverbank, Caruban beach tourism, Dasun, Karangjahe, Binangun, and Watu Layar. Potential cultural attractions such as ancient buildings are the result of cultural products in the past. The products of these buildings include places of worship (three ancient pagodas, Ratanava Arama monastery, Jami’ mosque, etc.) and houses with Chinese, Indies, and Javanese architecture. In addition, there is the potential of Lasem batik, which can be featured as a product of Lasem culture and the Lasem carnival festival. For potential social appeal, several community activities can be found in Lasem, namely New Year celebrations and Cap Go Meh, Ceng Beng celebrations, and others. While the potential attraction that was built is the Jami’ mosque complex, where in it there is the main building, pawestren, porch, tomb complex, additional foyer, and also the Nusantara museum. Of the three existing landscapes, the topographical landscape that has the most potential is visited because, in this landscape, there is potential for cultural attraction, the potential for social attraction, and potential for an attraction that is built.

KEYWORDS
Landscape, Lasem, small town, tourist attraction, potential tourism objects

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1. Introduction
Lasem is a small town located in Rembang, on the northern coast of Central Java. In the context of history, this city has a fairly long story, starting from around 7-8 AD. In Southeast Asia, there is a hereditary tradition of assembling boats using technology with woven palm fiber ropes combined with wooden pegs to create boat bodies or, more popularly, with ear binding and tie board techniques. In 2008, an ancient boat site was found in Punjulharjo Village, Rembang. The existence of the Ancient Boat site in Puncolharjo, the area between Rembang and Lasem, indicates that there were trade contacts with China (Martokusumo and Wibowo 2019:103). In 390 AD, it is known that there was the establishment of the Pucangsula Kedatuan, which was founded in the 4th century AD in Rembang Regency. The location of this Kedatuan is located in the western part of Mount Argasoka, about two kilometers to the east of Lasem today. The Kedatuan Pucangsula is led by a Datu Sambadra. At this time, ports and shipyards became important locations for the government. The location is in the south of Dukuh Tulis, Sumbergirang Lasem Village (Rembang Regency). Furthermore, in the year 412 AD, there was a monk from China named Fa Hien who, after studying Buddhism in Nalanda, India, then landed in Pucangsula. This reinforces that Lasem has always been the location of visits from outside.

As a small city, Lasem has shown its attractiveness to be visited by the Chinese through the Lasem port. In the 13th century, the Chinese first landed in Lasem to trade. The pier or port in Lasem can be categorized as harbor and port. To connect inland areas

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with Lasem, the transportation route uses the river, where in this route, it is proven that the remains of buildings in the form of ship anchors, shipyards, and Chinese ceramics are found (Rangkuti 1997:10–13). Evidence in the form of a large ship’s runway at that time showed that Lasem was an important area. This river naturally creates Lasem morphological formations where this route was once a transportation route for the surrounding community, so settlements were formed along the river channel. The growth of settlements began to form, such as in the villages of Babagan, Dasun, Karangturi, and Soditan. In the indigenous rule, the urban community was concentrated in the port area where the early Chinese settlements were located near the pier. There is also a government center or duchy, market, and square. Based on its typology and morphology, Lasem has strength in its historical background and heritage. Even though Lasem is not currently the main city, its appeal is still strong enough as a historic city and a destination for historic tourist visits.

The existence of historical relics that spread in several locations in the city of Lasem makes this city have its own charm to visit. Based on the results of an interview with Baskoro Pop (founder of Lasem Heritage), in 2012, the city of Lasem began to be visited by domestic tourists. The purpose of his tour at that time was to see historical buildings, namely the Chinatown area (small China). Unlike the case with the legendary Lasem batik collectors, they have already traveled to Lasem to hunt for batik that is typical of this area. Heritage must be recognized as something special and different from other forms of tourism, as reflected in the values and culture of a country and community. Therefore, an effective marketing system for heritage must have a comprehensive, integrated management system that basically aims to satisfy not only the client’s needs but also the public perception in order to be acceptable, profitable, and manageable or sustainable (Nuryanti 1997). As a city that has a long history and several significant relics as a tourist attraction, Lasem is a potential city to visit. What kind of potential tourist objects can be offered to visitors who come to Lasem? The purpose of this study is to explore the potential of tourist objects that can be developed to become an attraction for tourist visits. Based on a research search from open knowledge maps with the keyword potential for tourism objects ranging from 2012 to 2022, in previous studies, no one has discussed the potential for tourist objects in the small town of Lasem.

Figure 1. Open Knowledge Maps with the keyword “potential tourist attraction.”
2. Literature Review
According to (Leiper 1995), the development of tourist destinations is not only limited to geographic areas but also a combination of various products such as resources, services, and information management which has the function of moving tourists towards certain destination areas so that the decision of tourists to make repeated visits to a tourist destination is an understanding formed from the forming factors, namely tourism services and also geographic location.

Law Number 10 of 2009 explains that a tourist destination area is a geographical environment in which there are tourist attractions, tourism accommodation, accessibility, public facilities, and communities that are interrelated to support the realization of tourism. In line with this, the definition of tourism destination formulated by UNWTO(2007) is the attractiveness of tourist attractions that can become tourist preferences.

A tourist place must have an attraction so that it can be visited by tourists, both local and from outside. Tourist attractions are things that become the destination of tourist arrivals, which can be exclusive, good, and have qualities such as various cultures, natural wealth, and man-made products (Negara 2009). According to Cooper (1995:81) in Setiawan (2015) that the target of a tourist spot must have four elements, namely:

1. **Attraction**, for example, extraordinary culture, beautiful and enchanting nature, performing arts, and so on
2. **Accessibilities**, for example, means of transportation in cities and stations
3. **Amenities**, for example, the availability of lodging, accommodation, travel agencies, restaurants, and so on
4. **Ancillary services**, in the form of tourism organizations in tourism services. Examples: destination marketing organizations, visitor agencies, and so on

The development of tourist attractions, according to Yoeti (2002), is based on four indicators, namely (1) natural attractions, (2) Cultural attraction, (3) Social attractiveness, and (4) built attraction. This attraction is a pull factor from an interesting object; the driving factor so that tourists want to visit an interesting object is personal motivation. In making a trip, there are considerations that make tourists decide to take a trip called motivation. Movere is the origin of the word motivation which is rooted in Latin and has the meaning of encouragement or ability that results in an action or action (movement). Movere is often identified with motivation which means a transfer of motives (Priansa 2004:171). There are three important elements related to motivation, according to Mc. Donald in (Sardiman 2008:29) namely:

1. Energy changes in every human being are the beginning of motivation
2. A sign that motivation has begun to appear in someone is the feeling or feeling and affection
3. Goals are a form of motivational stimulation of a person

In previous studies, there has never been an exploration of the potential of tourist objects as attractions in the city of Lasem. Although in tourism development, it is necessary to explore potential objects of attraction. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the potential of tourism objects in accordance with the purpose of the study, namely to find out which tourism objects have the potential to be developed.

3. Methodology
The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Based on Sugiono (2016:9), this method is used to examine the condition of natural objects. This research approach is a guide in order to be able to explore or see social situations that will be studied in depth, broadly, and thoroughly. To explore the potential of tourist objects in Lasem, surveys, field observations, and interviews with visitors who have visited Lasem are carried out. This is done to obtain primary data. Data from several literature books and journals are also needed as secondary data to complete the research data. Analysis of primary and secondary data was carried out to obtain a description of the research objects needed according to the research objectives.

The analysis of the potential of tourist attraction objects in this study is descriptive and qualitative, which can be implemented by identifying and describing the condition of the existing components, which are categorized into natural attractions, cultural attractions, social attractions, and built attractions.
4. Results and Discussion

4.1 History of Lasem

Lasem is a small town on the northern coast of Central Java, Indonesia, with a long and interesting history. Lasem’s position on the map is as follows:

![Figure 2. Lasem district map](image)

Lasem, as a small town, has a total population of about 50,000 inhabitants, in accordance with its nickname, a small town that can be seen from its size. According to Susanto (2005), a small town is defined based on the dimensions and size of the city. Judging from the size of the population, Rondinelli (1983) states that the population of a small town is not more than 100,000 people. If overseas, a small town is measured by a population that does not exceed 100,000 people, then in Indonesia, a small town is a city with a population of 50,000 to 100,000 people. Currently, Lasem is a sub-district city, and part of Rembang Regency has an area of 4504 Ha and is traversed by the Pos Highway, which was built during the Daendels’ reign (1808-1811).

The city of Lasem has several periods of history, namely the Hindu Era in 1513, where the square, Chinatown, and the kingdom were formed. Furthermore, in the Muslim era in 1588, there was the addition of a mosque around the square. In 1740 it became the era of Muslims and Chinese, where the population of this Chinatown was very dominant in Lasem. Tracing the history of Lasem based on Pratiwo (2010), this city has experienced significant urban development. Starting from the arrival of Admiral Chengho and his followers, who stopped and then settled to form a residential area, the road that was formed was still linear, and this road connected Chinese settlements with the square. In the 15th century, Dasun Street was the main street formed in Chinese settlements. In this era, in terms of attraction, Lasem has an interesting nature to visit, like the Chinese. For accessibilities, they still rely on river routes or ports to access cities or islands. Then in the 16th century, there was the addition of a road from the square to the east. Meanwhile, in the 18th century, a branching of the road from the south began to form, which became the Soditan road. Although based on Unjiya (2014), until the 17th century, the shipyard still existed, and in the 18-19 centuries, Lasem was still a place for the production of ships made of iron.

In 1745, the Dutch took control of Lasem, and this caused Lasem to drop level from a city to a sub-district. During the Dutch control of Lasem, the alun-alun disappeared and changed its function into a market (1750), and as a result of the deflection of the river in the 1840s resulted in the emergence of a land link as a substitute for a river connecting route. The main road appeared, namely Jalan Daendels or Grote Post, which was deliberately built to be connected to Batavia. In this era, accessibilities have begun to be considered; railway lines already exist, along with the development of land transportation lines.
From this historical journey, Lasem has the identity of the heritage city of Lasem. Lasem is known as an ancient coastal Javanese city in the Hindu era with various relics. Lasem became a boarding school and a pilgrimage destination for Muslims, then Lasem was famous for its opium funnel with its little Tiongkok. Lasem is a salt city because of its position in a maritime city. And Lasem has traces of Dutch colonial history, which until now still exist and are well maintained by the residents. With this diversity, Lasem is a city that has cultural acculturation.

### 4.2 Little Tiongkok

Based on the history and relics that have been conveyed previously, Chinese settlements in Lasem quite dominate the residential area in the small town of Lasem. Therefore, this city is called "Little Tiongkok"; from 20 villages in Lasem, there is one village, namely Karangturi village, which has the largest population of Chinese settlements. Potential and desirable buildings to visit based on interviews with visitors include:

1. **Cu An Kiong Temple**

   ![Figure 4. Cu An Kiong Temple](Source: (Gito 2017))

   Located at Jalan Dasun No. 19, Soditan Village, Cu An Kiong pagoda is estimated to be the oldest pagoda that stood in the 15th century and was renovated in 1838. The deity that is prioritized in this old temple is Dewi Samudra (Thian Siang Bo or Ma Zu or Mak Co). The characteristic of this pagoda architecture is that it is shaped like a building from southern China. The Siheyuan building is rectangular in shape and has the shape of a swallow’s tail roof as an ornamental detail which is believed to be a repellent against reinforcements.

2. **Bao An Bio Temple**

   The location of the Bao An Bio temple is in Karangturi Village Gang 8, built to honor Kong Tik Cun Ong (Guangze Zunwang). There is no definite record of when this temple was built, but this temple was renovated in 1919 and 1927.
3. Gie Yong Bio Temple
Gie Yong Bio Temple is located in Babagan Village, precisely in Babagan Chinatown; this building was built to honor Chen Sixian and Huang Daozhou, who were heroic figures in the Ming Dynasty. In addition to the two heroes, this pagoda is also believed to have been built to honor Chen (Tan) and Huang (Oey) as the people who first laid their feet in Lasem. News circulated that the two Chinese figures participated with the natives in the war against the VOC in 1740-1743. This event is known as the Chinatown Geger.

4. Lawang Ombo Heritage

Source: https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcS2bukAgptn6HrF-KS8Z435jZ5qmjdYOi4Erb-ZQSbwg8s
This building was built in 1860 by Liem King Siok, one of the traders who came from China. This building was famous as an opium warehouse in its time; it has a door that is wide enough so that it is called Lawang Ombo, which is taken from the Javanese Lawang, which means door, and Ombo, which means wide or big. Its location was very strategic as a center for the opium trade, so the Netherlands also had its own policy in order to monopolize the opium trade. The unique thing about this building is that there is a hole that, if traced, will reach the Lasem River; it is used for opium smuggling.

5. Lie Thiam Kwie Mansion (LZ factory tiles)

![Figure 8. LZ Factory tiles](https://media.suara.com/pictures/original/2017/10/07/46641-selasar-belakang-rumah-tegel.jpg)

The owner of this house is Kapitan Lasem Lie Thiam Kwie, a tile businessman. The tile business is located behind his house, which is quite spacious, and the building of his house has been around since 1910. Until now, Lie Tham Kwie's tile factory still produces certain types of tiles according to order. The following is a typical tile design from the LZ Tile Factory:

![Figure 9. Examples of ceramics by the LZ factory tiles](https://media.suara.com/pictures/original/2017/10/07/69095-contoh-tegel-kuno.jpg)

6. Rumah Merah Heritage

![Figure 10. Rumah Merah Heritage](http://karangturi-rembang.desa.id/desa/upload/artikel/sedang_1623480076_IMG-20210503-WA0011.jpg)
Rumah Merah Heritage is an ancient house owned by entrepreneur Rudi Hartono, purchased in 2016. This house is used as a lodging place and is equipped with souvenir shops such as Lasem’s batik, restaurants, and others. One of the uniqueness of this house is that it has a small underground hiding place only for 1-2 adults. This Chinese Indis architectural house is maintained by the owner as one of the cultural heritage of historical heritage in Lasem.

7. Grandpa Lo Gwen Gang’s House

![Figure 11. Grandpa Lo Gwen Gang’s House](https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTZtczJxFmkogUuCe7hYjkasshPMtz38ytIs6Tr8cRd8HysIK5D6aEX3TFpn36TAmu9FRQ&usqp=CAU)

Grandpa Lo Gwen Gang’s house is one of the pristine houses in Karangturi Village. Authentic Chinese architecture with wooden construction materials, this deck house once belonged to Ngkong Lim, who was the father of Grandpa Lo. This house was once used for batik, but over time it turned into a soy sauce and tauco business. This house is often visited by tourists who come to Lasem, such as an unofficial museum that tells the history of the Opa Lo Gwen Gang family.

8. Oei’s House

![Figure 12. Oei’s House](https://totosp.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/roemah-oei-6-e1543227176103.jpg?w=1024)

Oei’s house was built in 1818 and is located on Jalan Jatirogo. Based on the results of interviews with the Oei house manager, this house used to be a family home. Currently, it has changed its function into an inn, museum, and café. Tourists who visit can see the main house, which is used as a museum. There are many stories of the Oei family that can be seen in the museum. This Oei house inn takes the theme of the “Tempo Doeloe” inn, which has Chinese and Javanese architecture.
9. Lasem District Police Office

The Lasem Police Station was once owned by a wealthy Chinese merchant located in Gedongmulyo Village, which is on the side of the road. This house is the largest among other old houses, with two floors, and has a complete building and mixed style between Chinese and Indische Empire Style. The owner of this Indische Empire-style house is Liem Hong Hoen, one of Liem Cui Sun’s descendants. Rumors circulated that this large house building had been used as a location for opium smuggling, but in 1965 this building was taken over by the police. Until now, the building, which is located on Jalan Raya Pos, has functioned as the Lasem Sector Police Station.

10. House of Sigit Witjaksono

The Sekar Kencana Batik House in Babagan village is the second generation house inhabited by Sigit Witjaksono. According to Avilianto (2016), Mr. Sigit is the second generation to continue his business in the batik field. The residence and business space are in one location, so visitors who want to shop for batik or see this Chinese-Javanese architectural house can travel freely.
11. Omah Londo (Dutch House) Heritage

![Omah Londo Heritage](https://www.paspergi.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/IMG20190714110424_19.jpg)

Omah Londo is an Indische architectural style house located in Gedongmulyo Lasem Village. This ancient house has been well maintained so that until now, it still stands firm and has its own charm. The building is thought to have been built around the 1800s and is currently being used for lodging. According to Soebagyo, the current owner of Omah Londo, the land area is around 1,700 square meters.

### 4.2.1 Islamic Student City
Lasem is known as the city of santri because there are 28 Islamic boarding schools scattered in this city. Sayyid Abdurrahman, or known by the name Mbah Sambu is a famous figure who is the grandson of Sultan Hadiwijaya or Jaka Tingkir. He is a person who includes fighting for independence in Lasem.

The two most visited places are the Jami’ mosque and the Gus Zaim Islamic boarding school.

![Jami’ Lasem mosque](https://travel.tribunnews.com)

### 4.3 Lasem Batik
Lasem is also very famous for its batik. The advantages of written batik in Lasem are the motifs and coloring. The only color that other batik towns don’t have is blood red or getih pithik.
4.4 Natural Attraction Potential
The small town of Lasem, located on the north coast of Java, has three types of landscapes. Consists of topographical landscapes, mountainous landscapes, and coastal landscapes. These three landscapes have had an influence on the development of the city of Lasem in the past until now. Lasem has a river that is quite famous, namely the Lasem River or the Babagan river. This river was originally the beginning of the Lasem city axis in the past. As the axis that connects the interior and the sea, this river eventually becomes silted up, which results in large ships no longer anchoring here. This river has the potential to be used as a potential tourist attraction in Lasem. The Lasem riverwalk began to be developed in 2016 in the Dasun area as an attraction for visitors. Besides rivers, there are also coastal landscapes in the form of beautiful beaches such as Karangjahe, Caruban, Dasun, Binangun, and Watu Layar beaches. This is a potential natural attraction for the small town of Lasem.

4.5 Potential cultural attraction
In addition to the potential for natural attractions, Lasem also has the potential for cultural attractions that have not been maximally developed. The acculturation of Javanese, Chinese and Islamic cultures have the potential to become a cultural attraction. Some of this cultural acculturation is manifested in the construction of a house style which is still a relic in Lasem. Some of the houses previously mentioned, such as the Lawang Ombo, Lie Thiam Kwie Mansion, Merah House, Opa Lo’s house, and others, are attractive in terms of the acculturation of the culture attached to these houses. This includes the Kauman Islamic boarding school located in Karangturi village acculturation of Islamic and Chinese culture that was built hundreds of years ago.

Lasem, which has been visited by several visitors in the past, makes this city has a variety of religious sacred places that are embraced by its followers to this day. There is Ratanava Arama monastery, three old Lasem pagodas, namely Cu An Kiong, Poo An Bio, and Gie Yong Bio, Jami’ mosque, Pasuju, Sunan Bonang, and others. It will be a potential attraction to be developed.

4.6 Potential social attraction
The potential for social attractiveness can be seen in the community activities in Lasem. Among them are New Year’s activities and the Cap Go Meh celebration, which is held every year. According to Sudarwani (2020), this celebration is held alternately at three old pagodas in Lasem. However, the event is often held at Po Ann Bio Temple because the pagoda has a large meeting room so that it can accommodate many people. Then the temple’s annual celebration activities can also attract visitors. This activity was carried out by the Lasem Chinese community. The celebration is carried out with a number of wayangkulit, clonengan, and gamelan activities. This activity is carried out lively so that it can be used as a potential attraction for visitors who will travel to Lasem. Another religious activity that has become a potential social attraction is the Ceng Beng celebration, which is a funeral prayer that is held annually on April 5th. In addition to religious activities, there is a Lasem carnival festival which is held annually with the aim of elevating their tourist village. This festival is enlivened with a lion dance, grebeg dumbeg, and the carnival route starts in front of the Jami’ mosque.

4.7 Potential attraction built
The potential attraction that is built is like the Jami mosque complex, consisting of the main building, pawestren, porch, tomb complex, and additional foyer. There is also the Nusantara Islam museum which was built in the courtyard of the Jami’ Lasem mosque. This museum has 271 windows, in which there are engravings of the Koran. This museum is represented as a picture of Islam Nusantara, where traditional symbols in Indonesia are depicted in the building. This potential is very good and needs to be developed so that history is not forgotten.
5. Conclusion

Lasem, as a city that has a long history, has about 130 objects that will be submitted as objects of cultural heritage. The Rembang government has determined about 32 cultural heritage objects. It is planned that the city of Lasem will be proposed as a heritage city in the near future. With the many potentials that exist in the small town of Lasem, it will increasingly provide more value for the city that has been downgraded to become a sub-district city. Based on the analysis of the potential attractiveness of the city of Lasem, there are four potential attractions, namely natural attraction potential, potential cultural attraction, potential social attraction, and potential attraction built. These potentials become tourist attractions that will become the income of the city of Lasem. From the results of this study, it will be input for further research that can be explored more deeply related to the interest of visitors to the potential of tourism objects in Lasem so that it will be input for the local government to further explore and improve further on the potential that is most in demand by the local government visitors.

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