



The Architectural Design of a Modern Cinema with a Neo-Vernakular Approach in Bukittinggi

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Cinema, Modern Cinemas, Neo-Vernacular Bukittinggi

Received : 14, June

Revised : 28, June

Accepted: 30, July

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the architectural design of a modern cinema in Bukittinggi using a neo-vernacular approach. The project responds to the absence of modern cinemas in the city, despite strong public interest in film culture. Inspired by the traditional Minangkabau architecture, the design incorporates local elements such as the gonjong roof and traditional ornamentation reinterpreted through modern materials and spatial needs. The cinema is envisioned as both a cultural landmark and entertainment facility that fosters social connection and enhances local identity. By blending tradition with innovation, the project aims to support community development, promote cultural continuity, and provide accessible cinematic experiences without requiring residents to travel to Padang, the only city in West Sumatera with modern cinemas.

INTRODUCTION

Cinema is a space where people engage not only in film viewing but also in emotional and sensory experiences. It serves as a public entertainment facility that offers a large-screen visual presentation with immersive sound effects that enhance audience satisfaction (Prasetyo et al., 2021). As society evolves and economic conditions improve, going to the cinema has become a popular form of recreation and a cultural habit.

In Indonesia, cinemas have existed for nearly 124 years since the first film screening, "Gambar Idoep," was held in Batavia on December 5, 1900 (Safitri, 2022). The development of cinema in the country has undergone significant transformation from traditional single-screen theaters to today's digital multiplexes such as Cinema XXI, CGV, Cinapolis, and others. These modern cinemas provide greater comfort, technical advancement, and multiple screening options, distinguishing them from early conventional theaters (Yudistira, 2015).

In the city of Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, the decline of traditional cinemas such as Sovia and Gloria now repurposed as parking structures reflects a shift in public habits from communal cinema going to private digital viewing at home. Only Eri Cinema remains, screening old films with limited facilities, flat seating, and wooden benches, classifying it as a traditional cinema (Dinas PMPTSP Kota Bukittinggi, 2024).

Despite this decline, Bukittinggi has shown renewed interest in cinema culture. The West Sumatera Film Festival (WSFF) 2024, held at Eri Cinema, attracted over 500 visitors, indicating strong potential for local cinematic engagement (Sumbarsatu, 2024). However, Bukittinggi still lacks a modern cinema facility, forcing residents to travel to Padang, the only city in the province with contemporary cinemas.

With a population of over 140,000, 64.27% of whom are of productive age (Databoks, 2024), the demand for accessible modern entertainment in Bukittinggi is evident. A new modern cinema could not only provide recreational opportunities, but also stimulate the local economy, create jobs, and enhance cultural tourism.

This design proposes a modern cinema in Bukittinggi that embraces neo-vernacular architecture, blending traditional Minangkabau elements such as the iconic gonjong roof and ornamental motifs with contemporary materials and spatial functions. The goal is to respect local cultural identity while meeting the technological and spatial expectations of today's cinema experience. This approach allows for the reinterpretation of local traditions through innovative architecture, creating a meaningful public space that reflects both heritage and progress (Arifin et al., 2024).

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Definition of Cinema

The term "cinema" originates from the Dutch word "bioscoop", which itself is derived from the Greek words "bios" meaning "life" and "skopos" meaning "to see." A cinema is a place where films are projected onto a large screen using a film projector (Nirwana, 2021). According to Prasetyo et al. (2021), cinema refers to a performance using projected moving images (films) that

appear to talk and move; it is both a storytelling medium and the building in which these performances are held.

A cinema provides a space where the public can enjoy film screenings, allowing audiences to focus their full attention and emotional engagement on the stories being shown. The experience creates a sense of realism, as if the events on screen are truly occurring. Audiences are presented with a private visual performance, enhanced by sharp images and immersive sound effects that contribute significantly to their overall satisfaction (Prasetyo et al., 2021).

Modern cinemas, also known as cineplexes, are film exhibition venues with multiple auditoriums within a single building. These allow for simultaneous screenings of different films and often function as cultural spaces that accommodate activities related to performing arts, especially film (Sari, 2002). Modern cinemas offer a more comfortable and highquality viewing experience through digital projection technology and advanced audio systems. They also typically include complete facilities such as cushioned seating, food and beverage services, and online ticket booking (Yudistira, 2015).

Neo-Vernacular Architecture

One of the architectural schools of thought that emerged during the Post-Modern era around the 1960s is Neo-Vernacular Architecture. Post-Modernism arose as a response to the monotony and uniformity of Modernist architectural forms, which had begun to tire both architects and society at large (Widi & Prayogi, 2020). As a result, new directions developed, collectively known as Post-Modern movements. According to C. A. Jencks, six architectural streams emerged during this era: historicism, straight revivalism, neo-vernacular, contextualism, metaphor, and postmodern space.

Neo-Vernacular Architecture derives from the word “Neo” meaning “new” and “vernacular” referring to local culture passed down through generations. This architectural approach seeks to visually express a combination of modern elements with the aesthetic of traditional vernacular buildings, without strictly adhering to vernacular rules (Widi & Prayogi, 2020). The aim is to renew traditional appearances with a modern touch, while still preserving the essence of local culture and respecting its unique characteristics.

Rather than simply replicating the physical forms of traditional buildings, Neo-Vernacular Architecture strives to represent cultural expression through elements such as attire, ornamentation, spatial character, colors, and embedded philosophies. This approach reflects diverse interpretations of vernacular components, allowing architects to blend with local traditions while creating innovative designs that remain connected to strong cultural roots.

However, some previous studies have shown that the application of neo-vernacular architecture is often limited to symbolic approaches such as the repetition of traditional roof shapes or the application of decorative ornaments without considering the integration of functional and social meanings of space in the context of modern users (Rambe & Nasution, 2023). Such an approach risks creating a mere visual impression without deepening the spatial experience of the community. Therefore, in the design of this cinema, the neo-vernacular

approach is applied not only to the form and ornamentation, but also to the public realm arrangement strategy, connectivity between zones, and cultural engagement that reflects the Minangkabau character as a whole.

METHODOLOGY

The architectural design of this Modern Cinema in Bukittinggi uses the analogy method. The analogy method is a design approach that takes inspiration from a relevant object, concept, or phenomenon, then translates it into visual, functional, and symbolic design elements.

In this design, the human eye was chosen as the main object of analogy due to its relevance to the function of cinema as a visual experience space. The process of analogy method begins with the identification of the main characteristics of the eye, such as the oval shape, the center of focus (pupil), and the circular structure (iris). These elements are then related to the design needs and transformed into the building mass, seating arrangement, and space orientation system.

The selection of the analogy method is considered more appropriate than other design methods such as typological or purely functional methods, because the analogy method allows for design expressions that are both symbolic and contextual. In the neo-vernacular architectural approach, cultural symbols and local philosophies become an important part, so the analogy method is able to bridge modern forms with traditional meanings. In addition, this approach provides flexibility in translating cultural values into creative architectural forms, in accordance with the local Minangkabau context and meaning.

The steps of this analogy method process can be explained as follows:

1. Determination of the object of analogy: the human eye as a visualization symbol.
2. Identification of key elements: pupil (screen), iris (seat), sclera (building mass), retina (projection space), and so on.
3. Translation of elements into architecture: oval mass form, eye-patterned facade, orientation of space towards the center.
4. Evaluation and refinement of the design: concept feasibility test against function, aesthetics, and local cultural context.

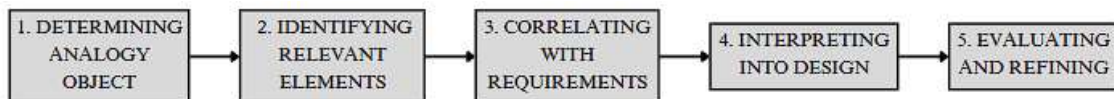


Figure 1. The Process Diagram of This Method

The analogy method begins by determining the object or concept to serve as the source of inspiration. In this cinema design, the human eye is selected as the primary analogy object due to its strong relevance to the function of a cinema as a space centered on visual experience. Relevant elements of the eye are then identified to extract applicable aspects for the architectural design. These elements are then correlated with the spatial and functional requirements of the building. The next stage involves interpreting the analogy into concrete design features. This interpretation includes visual forms, spatial arrangements, and

symbolic expressions. The final stage is the evaluation and refinement of the developed design. The eye-inspired concept is tested to ensure that it not only conveys the symbolic meaning of the eye but also fulfills functional, aesthetic, and contextual criteria.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Design Project Location



Figure 2. Site Design Project Location

The design of this modern cinema is located on Jl. By Pass, Campago Ipuh Village, Mandiangin Koto Selayan District, Bukittinggi City, West Sumatra 26117. The footprint area used is around 10,000 m², with orientation facing east, precisely to Jalan By Pass. Based on the 2021-2041 Bukittinggi RTRW, this area is designated as trade and service land, with a Basic Building Coefficient (KDB) of 50% as stated in the Bukittinggi City Regional Regulation No. 11 of 2017. The site is bordered by Jalan By Pass on the east side, Jalan Ipuh Mandiangin on the north side, vegetation of trees and bamboo on the south side, and residential areas on the west side.

Project Design Analysis

In general, the Modern Cinema Design consists of three primary functions:

1. Main Function: as a recreational facility for people to watch movies.
2. Management Function: covers all operational and administrative matters.
3. Service Function: divided into:
 - a) Building Service (utility systems and building infrastructure).
 - b) User Service (supporting facilities for user needs while in the theater).

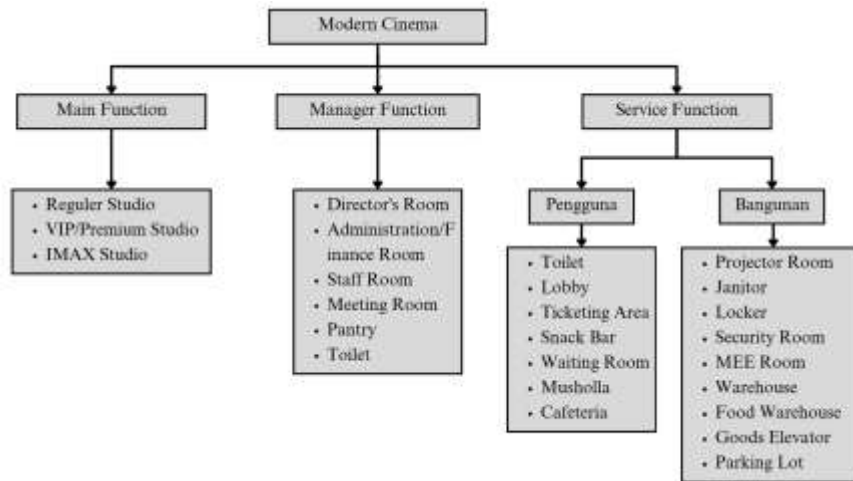


Figure 3. Functional Diagram of the Modern Cinema Design

Based on user analysis, the space requirements to support activities within the cinema are as follows:

Table 1. Space Needs Analysis

No.	Function	Area (m ²)
1.	Reception and Information	1.299 m ²
2.	Main Facilities	1.649,2 m ²
3.	Management Facilities	285,936 m ²
4.	Service Areas	3.325,84 m ²
5.	Outdoor Space	1.552,5 m ²
Total Required Area		8.112,476 m ²

The total area of space requirements including outdoor areas is 8,112.476 m². With a land area of 10,000 m² and a KDB of 60%, the maximum building area above ground level is 6,000 m². The building is designed with a total internal space of 6,559.976 m², including the basement parking area. Therefore, the design allows for a single-storey development with basement utilization.

Building Zoning

1. Public Zone: open access for all users.
2. Semi-Public Zone: specialized functions, limited access.
3. Private Zone: limited space for staff and managers.

Concept Design

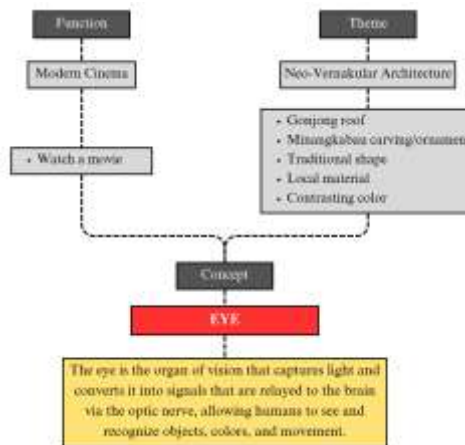


Figure 4. Basic Concept Scheme

The basic concept of the design is the “eye”, as a symbol of perception and visual focus in harmony with the function of the cinema. The oval shape of the eye, the center of the pupil, and the structure of the iris are translated into design elements such as the shape of the building mass, the facade pattern, and the arrangement of the inner space. The cinema screen is likened to the pupil, and the seating arrangement as the iris that leads to the center of attention. This concept is reinforced through a neo-vernacular approach that blends traditional Minangkabau forms and values with modern technology.

Table 2. Hierarchy of Concepts Design into The Building

Anatomy of the Eye	Design Interpretation	Application in Design
Cornea	Main entrance (light receptor)	Main Entrance The cornea is analogous to the cinema's entrance, where visitors begin their “entry” into the visual experience.
Iris	Distribution area	Lobby Area The cinema lobby or atrium serves as a transitional space directing visitors toward different zones, such as studios or seating.
Pupil	Point of focus	Cinema Screen The main screen inside the cinema studio becomes the focal point and primary destination for viewers.
Retina	Projection of visual experience	Cinema Studio The area where films are projected, representing the process of capturing and delivering visual imagery.
Lens	Focusing mechanism	Projection System & Lighting

		Lighting and acoustic systems that ensure optimal visual and auditory experiences.
Optic Nerve	Connection flow	Circulation Paths Corridors and circulation routes that connect different spatial zones within the cinema.
Sclera	Structural support	Main Building Mass The main structure of the building serves as the overall support system, reflecting the oval or elliptical form of the eye.
Eyelashes	Protection	Roof and Facade Shading The layered gonjong-shaped roof and façade shading elements act as protection from sunlight and rain.

Formation Concept

The concept of building formation is an idea or initial concept that describes the shape of the designed building. The application of the eye concept to the formation of the cinema building focuses on the shape of the eye on the human face as a representation of the sense of sight.

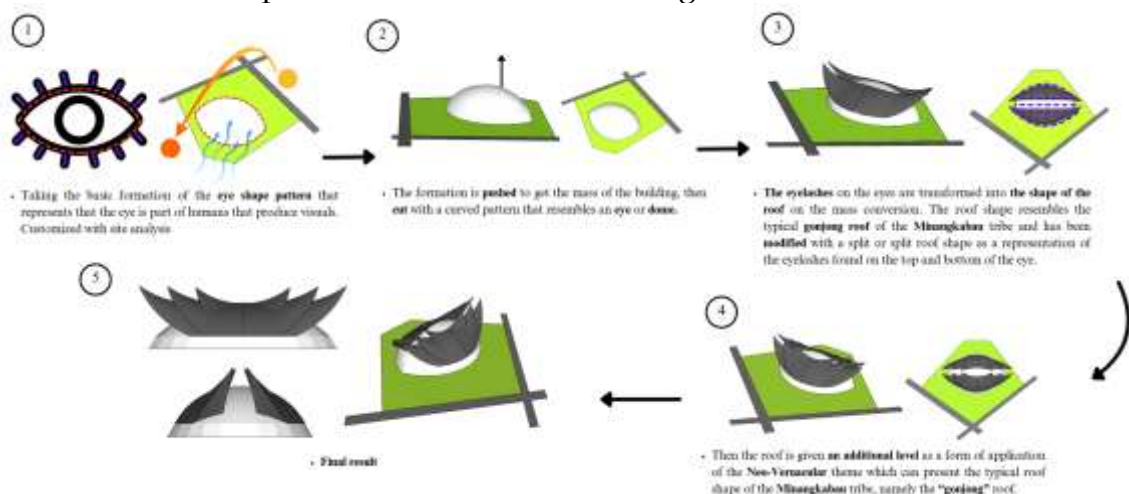


Figure 5. Formation Concept

Facade Concept

The cinema facade combines traditional Minangkabau motifs such as "pucuk rabuang" with a modern architectural approach. This motif symbolizes growth and hope. This combination creates a building face that reflects the local identity while remaining relevant to modern design.



Figure 6. Facade Concept

Application of Neo-Vernacular Architecture in Building Design

1. Use of Gabled Roofs

Referring to the Minangkabau gonjong roof that rises like a buffalo horn, it symbolizes local identity.



Figure 7. Use of Gabled Roofs

2. Use of Local Materials

The use of “pucuak rabuang” carved wooden materials, local natural stones and brick walls are physical representations of local wisdom.



Figure 8. Use of Local Materials

3. Expression of Traditional Forms

The building form adopts traditional Minang principles, but is reworked to fit a modern context.



Figure 9. Traditional Forms

4. Spatial Relationships

The circulation pattern follows the principle of rumah gadang: from public to private gradually, creating a directional spatial experience.



Figure 10. Spatial Relationships

5. Use of Strong and Contrasting Colors

Red, gold, black and brown colors are used on the facade and interior as a reflection of the Minang cultural character, while the building skin uses modern neutral colors.



Figure 11. Strong and Contrasting Colors

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The design of a Modern Cinema in Bukittinggi using a Neo-Vernacular Architectural Approach serves as a public facility for film viewing, featuring main spaces such as regular studios, VIP/Premium studios, and IMAX. The implementation of neo-vernacular architecture through the adaptation of Minangkabau vernacular forms is intended to preserve and reinforce local cultural identity in a way that is meaningful and well-received by the community. The design adopts a “visual” concept inspired by the human eye as a symbol of perception, focus, and visual experience. This philosophical foundation is

translated into spatial planning and architectural elements that enhance the cinematic experience while reflecting the traditional culture of the Minangkabau.

To improve the quality of modern cinema design using a neo-vernacular approach, it is recommended to provide more comprehensive facilities that support recreational needs and encourage the development of cinema in Bukittinggi. Strategic site selection should be considered to meet spatial requirements and ensure efficient layout planning. In addition, consistency in applying the established design concept must be maintained throughout the implementation process.

Furthermore, it is recommended that local government authorities, such as the Bukittinggi Tourism Office and Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), facilitate the development of culture-based entertainment facilities by providing strategic land, regulatory support, and integration into broader tourism plans. Support through streamlined licensing processes and collaboration with local creatives will help accelerate the realization of this design.

For private developers and investors, it is advised to view the potential market in Bukittinggi as a valuable investment opportunity. With a majority of the population in the productive age group and high tourism activity, the development of a modern cinema infused with local cultural identity will not only be well-received but also enhance the city's position as a cultural and entertainment hub in West Sumatra.

FURTHER STUDY

Future studies are encouraged to investigate the post-occupancy evaluation of neo-vernacular architecture in modern public facilities, especially in terms of user satisfaction, spatial experience, and cultural identity retention. Additional research may also explore the integration of sustainable technologies within traditional architectural forms. Moreover, a deeper study on community participation in the design process could enhance the cultural relevance and acceptance of future cinema developments in similar urban contexts.

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