Abstract— As an ancient district of Surakarta or Solo, Central Java, Kampung Laweyan has some vernacular architecture in particularly Javanese house. Kampung Laweyan is also a heritage district because there are a unique pattern of settlement, a historic mosque, and unique Javanese architecture. Some of the community in Laweyan has been implementing local wisdom or genius loci to sustain their both tradition and vernacular built environment. In contrast, the modernity and global paradigm reduce the local (traditional) paradigm. The value of tradition, local myth, and belief, are factors that traditional community can not develop. On the other hand, the development program which arranged by government did not match with the traditional community’s need. In fact, most traditional/vernacular built environment has many potential aspects.

How to choose the right approach and strategy to sustain vernacular built environment such as Kampung Laweyan? This paper consists of discussion about strategy and approach that may increase the quality of architecture in vernacular built environments, that the dwellers can develop their built environment. This paper will focus on some aspects in vernacular architecture. From the study, strategy on sustainable design (architecture) can be proposed.

Keywords: ancient district, heritage, historic, local wisdom, vernacular architecture.

I. INTRODUCTION

Kampung Laweyan, an ancient district in Solo, is well known as home based batik industry. It is a heritage area with vernacular Javanese architecture [1]. As a heritage settlement the vernacular architecture within the settlement should be preserved. On the other hand, the development programme and the increasing needs of the settlement’s dweller may affect the design of the Javanese houses.

In order to keep the Kampung Laweyan as a heritage area, the right approach to sustain the vernacular Javanese architecture of the area should be given special attentions.

II. VERNACULAR JAVANESE SETTLEMENT – KAMPUNG LAWEYAN

Kampung Laweyan inhabited by the batik producers, built during the 17th [2]. As one of the heritage place in central Java, the settlement pattern is unique with the historic mosque and Javanese architecture. Figure 1 shows the settlement pattern of Kampung Laweyan.

The Settlement is bordered by a river and the pattern is combination between linear and grid pattern. Most of the houses were built on north – south orientations.

The Settlement supports the inhabitants in their everyday lives and economic activities as batik producers from generation to generation. Hence Kampung Laweyan is a life heritage, where perfect Javanese houses exist. The dwellers sustain their traditions and the vernacular houses, and obtain their incomes by using the houses as place for batik industry. Figure 2 shows the plan of the Javanese house, and figure 3 shows the picture of the house.
Figure 3. The picture of a house showing the front yard and the “pendapa” which is closed with walls and windows.

From figure 2 one can see that the house has a spacious front space, called “pendhapa”. This space and the front yard usually used as places for batik making activities, done by the women. The inner of the house, called “dalem” can be used for the other batik craft activities and storing of the products. The everyday life activities are at the left wing of the house. The local wisdom such as the arrangement of the house spaces and the yards are still preserved, and proved to be very useful for home based industries and for everyday lives.

The appearance of the houses is quite unique with the beautiful roof and good proportion of the building. The “pendhapa” is usually open, without walls. However as some of the dwellers need places for storing, then the “pendhapa” was closed with walls.

Most of the houses in Kampung Laweyan were built about 200 years ago, and were occupied by 3 or 4 generation [3]. The houses can be seen as memories to the dwellers and also to the observers. From the point of view of heritage settlements and houses, the Kampung Laweyan shows power, beauty, life and memory as indicated by Ruskin. As mentioned by Jokilehto, Ruskin stated that the “seven lamps” or guiding principles of architectural conservation include: sacrifice, truth, power, beauty, life, memory and obedience [4].

Kampung Laweyan has the “power” as the centre of economic activities in the city of Solo; the most famous batik industry. “Beauty” is shown by the nice environment and the beauty of vernacular houses in the settlement. “Life” is indicated by the living activities and batik production activities through generations. “Memory”, can be seen from the community in Laweyan, who implemented the local wisdom and preserve their tradition and vernacular houses. Figure 4 shows the mosque of the Kampung Laweyan, one of the nice built environment in the settlement.

Figure 4: The mosque, as one of the built environment in Kampung Laweyan.

III. STRATEGY AND APPROACH TO INCREASE THE QUALITY OF VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

The built environment in Kampung Laweyan includes the buildings, the streets, the spaces between houses and house yards. These can be seen as vernacular built environment, which was developed based on the Javanese concept. Since Solo or Surakarta is increasingly developed, some city problems are also exist, such as urbanization, human settlements and economic condition of the society. The dynamic development of the city approaching some areas of the city, such as Kampung Laweyan; which affect the socio-culture, economic and architecture of the kampung.

As an ancient city Solo also has many old historical settlements, one of these is the Kampung Laweyan, which is appointed as a heritage Javanese settlement. How to preserve the vernacular Javanese architecture, while on the other hand city dynamic development also reach the Kampung Laweyan, is interesting for discussion.

As the economic conditions of the inhabitants of Kampung Laweyan increasing, their abilities to improve their houses also increasing. Some houses have been improved with new appearance, which is different from the old Javanese vernacular houses. From the field survey by the writer in 2008 about 10% of the houses have been modified with the adoption of colonial or modern architecture. Would it be a new direction in the built environment of the Kampung Laweyan? Figure 5 and 6 shows the renovations of the houses.

Figure 5: The new appearance of the house with colonial style
If the Kampung has been decided as heritage settlement, then a right strategy and approach to increase the quality of the vernacular architecture should be decided.

The strategy to conserve the Kampung Laweyan should be decided based on the agreement of all stakeholders involved in the conservation, bearing in mind the needs, the socio-economics conditions and the culture of the inhabitants. Regulations then can be created at the local level and agreed by all involved in the conservation, i.e. the community, the government, the city population, the batik buyers and traders. The approach should be based on the well being of the Kampung Laweyan community. How the conservation of the settlement and the vernacular built environment can give benefits to the community, and the historic city – Solo should be understood by all the stakeholders. With agreement and understanding of all involved, it is expected that the conservation regulations will be followed by all.

People innovated their houses without changing the plans of their houses. However, some have changed the style of houses as colonial or modern architecture. It can be proposed here, that the style of the houses should be kept as Javanese Style, even though the material can be renewed; and the plan of the house are not changed. This direction is to keep the Javanese style exist in the heritage area of Kampung Laweyan. Figure 7 shows the innovation of the house, keeping the Javanese style.

Incentives can be given to the dwellers who can maintain the Javanese vernacular architecture, such as tax waiving, obtain funds for renewing the materials of the house, promotion by the government about their batik industry and their heritage houses.

The appearance of the Kampung Laweyan with its traditional dwellings, will support the historical environment of the city, and the city can represent a heritage from the past, provide spaces with elaboration of aesthetics and identity. Other areas of the city may become modern, but for the settlement, which was decided as heritage area with vernacular Javanese architecture, should be maintained and given special attention.

IV. CONCLUSION

The dynamic style appearance of the Javanese vernacular houses can be seen as phenomenon of architectural development. In the future this phenomenon can create a new vernacular built environment. However, the new vernacular built environment should support the city heritage requirements. The historical harmony of the city can be maintained with the linkage between the past, present and future evolution of the city.

The challenge is how to maintain the physical structure and the Javanese style of the vernacular houses, to meet the present dweller’s needs, and functional requirement of the houses. The local regulation agreed by all the stakeholders involved in the conservation of the Javanese vernacular houses, may help to keep the Kampung Laweyan as a heritage representation of the city. Special attention, maintenance, guidance and promotion of the Kampung Laweyan, and incentives for the one who kept the Javanese vernacular house, should be available forever.

V. REFERENCES