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# Updated State of Conservation Report

## HISTORIC INNER CITY OF PARAMARIBO, SURINAME (C 940rev)

In response to World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.119

December 2024

## **1. Executive Summary of the report**

This State of Conservation Report of the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo World Heritage Site, inscribed in June 2002 addresses Decision 45 COM 7B.119 of the World Heritage Committee.

A second Paramaribo Urban Rehabilitation Program (PURP II) will be implemented for the coming 5 years. On 17 June 2024 a USD 30 million loan was signed between the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Government of the Republic of Suriname for the continued rehabilitation of the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo and to strengthen its Governance.

The extension of the borders of the existing buffer zones and the world heritage property has up till now not been implemented despite several efforts to do so.

The present 2020-2024 Management Plan needs to be updated for the period 2024-2028. The National Assembly Building that burned down in 1996 has been reconstructed and three historic government-owned buildings (Mirandastr. 10, and Waterkant 30-32) has been restored. Full photographic or graphic documentation and ‘as-built’ drawings have been made and are available.

The legal framework of the Building Committee and the Monuments Commission has been revised and four user-friendly manuals for both the Building Committee and the Monument Committee have been made available.

Despite two technical reviews by the Advisory Body and a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS Advisory Mission, the Surinamese authorities decided to restart the construction of the new Assembly Hall without altering the design and not following the recommendations.

Recommendations made in technical reviews of two restoration projects (Grote Combéweg 3 and Henck Arronstraat 1) and the rehabilitation of the Palm Garden have been followed. Two other projects (a new State Council building, and the construction of a hotel at the Kleine Combéweg) have not been implemented.

The construction of the Yogh Parking Garage bordering the core area of the world heritage property is a current conservation issue that may threaten the OUV of the property.

Other urban interventions or activities that may have a positive or negative impact on the OUV are the proposed construction of an Amphitheatre at the old Flag Square, the dismantling of a 40-year old Telecommunication Tower within the world heritage property and the preparations for the establishment of a National Parking Authority.

## 2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

This State of Conservation Report addresses Decision 45 COM 7B.119 of the World Heritage Committee in the following way:

### **Decision: 45 COM 7B.119 Paragraph 3:**

*Welcomes the designs of the Waterfront of the property, revised in conformity with the recommendations of ICOMOS' technical reviews, and the launch of the Environmental and Social Impact Analysis (ESIA), which will inform the final design of the Waterfront, as well as the planning of a new Paramaribo Urban Rehabilitation Programme (PURP), with the Inter-American Development Bank to start in 2024, and requests that extensive information in its regard be submitted to the World heritage Centre as soon as possible;*

Reaction of the State Party

On 17 June 2024 a USD 30 million loan was signed between the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Government of the Republic of Suriname for a second Paramaribo Urban Rehabilitation Program (PURP II) aimed at the continuation of the rehabilitation of the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo. Information about this Program will be shared with the World Heritage Centre.

### **Decision: 45 COM 7B.119 Paragraph 4:**

*Expresses its serious regret that no action has been taken concerning the extension of the boundaries of the property to include a 50-meter strip along the river, nor concerning the draft extension of the boundaries of the buffer zone and urges the State Party to submit them as a Minor Boundary Modification in accordance with Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines.*

Reaction of the State Party

In February 2022 the Site Manager gave a power point presentation for the Building Commission of the ministry of Public Works stressing the importance of extending the boundaries of the existing buffer zones as well as of that of the property. In May 2023 an explanatory note was prepared for the Building Commission stressing once more the need to revise the borders of the world heritage property and buffer zones. Since then no actions have been taken by the ministry of Public Works who is responsible for the implementation of this recommendation.

### **Decision: 45 COM 7B.119 Paragraph 5:**

***Takes note with appreciation of the approval of the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo World Heritage City Management Plan 2020-2024 by the Council of Ministers and the initial budget provided for its implementation and encourages the State Party to ensure its effective implementation and financial support.***

Reaction of the State Party

Sections of the 2020-2024 Paramaribo World Heritage City Management Plan have been implemented, particularly within the PURP I program. The existing Management Plan needs to be updated for the period 2024-2028.

**Decision: 45 COM 7B.119 Paragraph 6:**

***Also welcomes the rehabilitation of some 15 public and private historic buildings demolished or otherwise destroyed by fire or decay, the reconstruction of the former National Assembly Building, the restoration of three government-owned buildings in line with suggestions of ICOMOS' technical reviews and also requests the State Party to provide full photographic or graphic documentation of the reconstructed National Assembly Building and restoration of Waterkant 30 and 32;***

Reaction of the State Party

Up till now three government-owned historic buildings have been restored within the PURP I program and are back in use. These are Mirandastr. 10, and Waterkant 30-32. The National Assembly Building has been reconstructed and is presently back in use. Technical reviews by ICOMOS have been requested and received and recommendations have been followed. Full photographic or graphic documentation and 'as-built' drawings have been made and are available at the PURP-office.

**Decision: 45 COM 7B.119 Paragraph 7:**

***Equally welcomes the initiatives to raise awareness of the population and of owners on the importance, as well as general environmental conditions and changes to its surroundings, in order to help detect long-term developments in the property and its surroundings.***

Reaction of the State Party

Raising awareness and communication with stakeholders, and conducting ESIA's is a continuous process during the implementation of the PURP Program.



**Decision: 45 COM 7B.119 Paragraph 8:**

***Appreciates the review and revision of the legal framework of the Building Committee and the Monuments Commission in view of protecting the historic inner city and further requests the State Party to submit these to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies as soon as possible.***

**Reaction of the State Party**

In November 2022 the final report of the Consultancy “Revision of the Special Building Codes” Loan 3905/OC-SU Refr. Nr.: PURP-61-SBCC-CF was submitted to the Program Implementation Unit (PIU) of the PURP-I Program. The objective of this consultancy was to assess the existing legal framework used by the Building Committee and the Monument Committee, by reviewing, analyzing and evaluating existing legislation (Monument Act, Designation Historic inner city, special building codes and related legislation); to assess the institutional framework and operational viability of the Building Committee and the Monument Committee to carry out their duties; to provide guidance to the Ministry of Public Works to align and improve some articles of the Bouwbesluit (building codes) to ensure a coherent and effective legal framework for the World Heritage Site; to develop a proposal containing revised Special Building Codes; the production of four user-friendly manuals for both the Building Committee and the Monument Committee. The manuals produced will be working documents for the Building Committee and the Monuments Committee to support their duties on reviewing building plans for the historic city. The manuals are ‘Preservation with Respect’, ‘Building in the Historic Inner City Centre’, ‘Historic Preservation Techniques’, and ‘Monument Maintenance (preservation and preventive maintenance)’.

**Decision: 45 COM 7B.119 Paragraph 9:**

***Notes that the proposed new Assembly Hall behind the recently reconstructed buildings at Henck Arronstraat 2-4 and 6 would pose an adverse and irreversible impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), recommends to the State Party to study alternative options, including the refurbishing of the present location at the Onafhankelijkheidsplein (Independence Square), and in case of any further development at the premises of Henck Arronstraat 2-4 and 6, to respect the earlier agreed Master Plan and the recommendations of previous technical reviews, and urges the State Party to undertake Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs), in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, on the housing of the National Assembly at its present or alternative locations and submit these to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies as soon as they become available.***

**Reaction of the State Party**

The Advisory Body has conducted on request two technical reviews (dated May and September 2023) of the design of the new Assembly Hall. In essence, both were negative. From 12 – 16 January 2024 a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS Advisory Mission to Paramaribo was carried out in response to the request of 13 November 2023 from Suriname for the mission. The report of this joint mission was submitted in March 2024. Below are the conclusions and recommendations of the technical reviews of the Advisory Body of May 2023 and September 2023 as well as that of the Joint UNESCO/ICOMOS Advisory Mission of 12-16 January 2024:

### **Conclusions and Recommendations ICOMOS Technical Review of May 2023**

The construction of a new National Assembly Hall behind the recently reconstructed buildings at Henck Arronstraat 2-4 and 6 and corner Grote Combeweg is a complex urban and architectural design challenge. Given the high urban, architectural and symbolic importance of the location and surrounding buildings, any construction could have a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. The Master Plan of 2018 (image 4) gives a clear indication of the location and scale of any future extensions. ICOMOS supported this plan in its Technical Reviews of November 2018 and March 2019. This implies that any new construction should be limited in scale and height and should be concentrated on the area behind Henck Arronstraat 2-4 along the Grote Combeweg. The garden behind Henck Arronstraat 6 should be maintained as indicated in the Master Plan.

The proposed hall is unsuited and inviable, not only in terms of its urban setting, but also, in regards to its overall size, scale, proportions and architectural language. Therefore, should it be constructed, as proposed, it would pose an adverse and irreversible impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property.

Various design options should be explored for housing the National Assembly, including the refurbishing of the National Assembly Hall at its present location at Onafhankelijkheidsplein (Independence square). If the State Party wishes to explore the possibilities to build a hall at the location at the Grote Combeweg, it could consider the original plans in the final Dossier May 2017. A feasibility study could be undertaken if it were possible to divide the design programme among buildings D, E, F and G, but with the limited height as foreseen in the original design and in the Master Plan endorsed in the ICOMOS Technical Reviews of November 2018 and March 2019.

Appropriate Heritage Impact Assessments need to be undertaken with the objective to evaluate the potential impact of the various design options on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. The State Party is invited to submit these studies for Technical Review by ICOMOS as soon as they become available.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations ICOMOS Technical Review of September 2023**

ICOMOS maintains the conclusions on pages 4 and 5 of its Technical Review of May 2023.

In addition, given the high urban, architectural and symbolic importance of the location and surrounding buildings, ICOMOS strongly advise the State Party to undertake a feasibility study and explore design options to house the National Assembly Hall and auxiliary buildings at the location of the Henck Arronstraat / Grote Combeweg along the lines of the Master Plan 2018. The design options should

be accompanied by street vistas and relevant urban view shades, from various distant angles (viewsheds), and information should be provided about street furniture, fences and auxiliary security installations. Heritage Impact Assessments following the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context* (2022), are equally required to evaluate the potential impact of the design options on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property before any decision about location and design can be taken.

If no suitable urban and architectural solution can be found within the parameters set out above and in the Technical Review of May 2023, then alternative locations of the National Assembly Hall should be seriously explored.

### **Main Conclusions and Recommendations Report Joint UNESCO/ICOMOS Advisory Mission to the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo**

On the proposed project: Should the project be constructed at the currently proposed location of Grote Combeweg, then the following recommended design parameters should be considered so as to minimize its overall impact:

**(Footprint)** Considering the historical urban evolution of the project site and its spatial relationships with its surrounding neighbors, the proposed new building should be reduced (in terms of its footprint), to the minimum feasible, in a way that it could still have room for its main components (e.g.: 51-seat assembly hall; 2 staircases; 2-elevators; supporting spaces; mechanical shafts).

**(Implantation)** Considering the above-mentioned arguments, the proposed new building could still maintain its proposed setback (on Grote Combeweg) so that: it becomes discernible; its front façade's presence does not block the view of building Henck Arronstraat 6 (as seen along Grote Combeweg's current urban vistas and viewsheds); it is consistent with current local building codes and with the fact that the more recently built buildings (along Grote Combeweg) were, in fact, built with said setback and that it provides for a seemingly necessary public atrium. All remaining setbacks (both lateral and rear) should also be considered as per current local building codes and bearing in mind the site's former spatial relationships with its surrounding neighbors (in so far as possible). This may allow for freedom of movement (at the ground level) adding to the historical semi-public former character of the site.

**(Height)** Considering the physical presence of the recently reconstructed buildings and the spatial relationship with the immediate urban context, the proposed new building should be reduced (in terms of its height), in such a way that, its facades (without the roof) are not taller than the ones pertaining to said recently reconstructed buildings. In order to achieve that, perhaps the proposed new parking space (on Level 000) could be relocated on the adjacent lots/yards which belong to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, so that the building would end up being one floor lower. Another possible way could be to relocate the proposed complementary meeting rooms (on Level 100) into the seemingly available spaces within the recently reconstructed buildings.

**(Connections with the recently reconstructed buildings)** Again, considering the above-mentioned arguments, the connections could be proposed in such a way that they: are as less intrusive as possible; have the minimum footprint necessary; are solved below the buildings' eaves and are consistent with the overall architectural idiom of the proposed new building.

**(Proportions and geometry)** The overall proportions and geometrical composition of the proposed new facades (mass; openings; architectural elements/resources) should be conceived in such a way that they reflect and are in harmony with the rest of the historic urban landscape. The idea being to be able to establish a clear, discernible and honest dialogue between the new building and said historic urban landscape in terms of proportions, rhythms, mass, openings, etc.

**(Architectural idiom)** This is left for the design architect to propose. There are no one-for-all recipes. Nevertheless, in order to not threaten the WH property's authenticity and integrity, the proposed new building should be able to respond to the values and attributes of the WH property that convey its OUV, in a way that it is respectful, discrete, discernible, harmonious, honest and authentic.

**(Roof; materials and color scheme)** The proposed roof, materials and color scheme could still be amended following current/local building code regulations, as long as its design is in harmony with the rest of the historic urban landscape and as long as it is not higher than the roofs of any of the recently reconstructed buildings.

**On the analysis of the streetscape in relation to the proposed new National Assembly Hall:** Based on the assessment previously set forth in this report, invite the State Party to adjust the proposed project in such a way that the height of its proposed facades are equal (or perhaps lower) to those of Henck Arronstraat 2-4 and 6. Further, the proposed set back (along Grote Combeweg) could be maintained so that it is consistent with current local building codes and with the fact that the more recently built buildings (along Grote Combeweg) were, in fact, built with said setback.

**In relation to Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs):** Undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) in line with the “*Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*”, on the amended design of the National Assembly Hall at Grote Combeweg, and submit it to the WHC for review by ICOMOS, in accordance with the WH Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.119. Furthermore, it is vital that the State Party takes note generally of the importance of carrying out HIAs for each project, within the WH property involving a new building or a major renovation to an existing building so that its potential negative impacts on the OUV of the WH property may be identified, assessed and avoided at the conceptual design phase (that is, prior to moving on the construction plans phase). Likewise, it is important to follow the standards set forth by the current “*Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*” for it explains how impact assessments can be used to protect the OUV of WH properties in order to manage continuity and change by informing good decision making in the context of UNESCO's 1972 World Heritage Convention.

## **Present Status**

In all aforementioned reports it was stated that the building, as proposed, seemed unsuited and inviable, not only in terms of its urban setting, but also, in regard to its overall size, scale, proportions and architectural language. Should it be constructed, as proposed, it would pose an adverse and irreversible impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property. Despite the comments and recommendations made in all three reports, the Surinamese authorities decided not to follow none of the recommendations with regard to the design as well as to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment to evaluate the potential impact of the various design options on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and decided to restart the construction of the new Assembly Hall without altering the design.

Since the restart of the construction works in May 2024 only the concrete foundation of the building has been completed. For weeks now construction works seem to be halted (temporarily). It is unknown whether limited funding or a delayed order for the steel construction to erect the building is the cause of this. With the construction holiday coming up in December, it is uncertain if the construction will continue this year.

## **Correspondence**

In chronological order are given some of the correspondence regarding the construction of the new National Assembly Hall:

12 – 16 January 2024: Joint UNESCO/ICOMOS Advisory Mission to Paramaribo to discuss with the Surinamese Authorities the design of the new Assembly Hall.

March 2024: Final Report of the joint UNESCO/ICOMOS Advisory Mission to Paramaribo.

22 April 2024: Visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to UNESCO to discuss the construction of the new National Assembly Hall. The Minister stated that the Surinamese authorities will provide a written statement on the ICOMOS Technical Reviews.

May 2024: The Minister of Foreign Affairs acknowledges the restart of the construction of the Assembly Hall. Pictures taken on 25 May 2024 and 16 June 2024 confirm the restart of the construction works.

18 June 2024: Note Verbale of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to UNESCO in which the Minister informs the Secretariat that the construction of the Meeting Hall of the National Assembly has been resumed within the technical probabilities.

28 June 2024: Letter from the Director of the World Heritage Centre to the Surinamese Authorities in which he acknowledges receipt of the Note Verbale. The Authorities were asked to provide the World Heritage Centre with updated plans and maps of the project and to clarify the conformity of the on-going project with the Decision 45 COM 7B.119 as well as with the recommendations of the Advisory Mission of January 2024.

There was no formal communication after this date.



Groundbreaking works new Assembly Hall, 26 September 2023. Official start was on 12 October 2023.





Restart construction works new Assembly Hall. Left on 25 May 2024 and right on 17 June 2024



**Decision: 45 COM 7B.119 Paragraph 10:**

***Also notes the technical reviews of four additional projects (two restoration projects, a new State Council building, the rehabilitation of the Palm Garden and the construction of a hotel at the Kleine Combeweg) undertaken by ICOMOS and requests furthermore the State Party to take the recommendations of these reviews into consideration, provide additional documentation as requested and enter into consultations with the Advisory Bodies as appropriate, and requests moreover that the State Party ensure that no permits are delivered or irreversible actions are taken in the meantime.***

**Reaction of the State Party**

Concerning the restoration of the Henck Arronstraat 1 & Grote Combeweg #3, *“ICOMOS International notes that the buildings are among the "listed monuments" of Paramaribo. Their restoration will contribute to the rehabilitation and conservation of Paramaribo's urban landscape and ICOMOS has no reservation about the restoration but does make a number of recommendations, particularly with regard to the historic development of the buildings and the importance of connected structures, the color scheme for the exterior of the buildings, and the maintenance programme”*. The State Party reacted by letter dated 27 June 2023, ref. M-1093 on the technical review of the restoration of the Grote Combéweg 3 providing additional information as well as clarification.

By letter from the director of the World Heritage Centre dated 27 September 2023, ref. CLT/WHC/LAC/RRH/23/042 the State Party received the following comments and recommendations: *“ICOMOS appreciates the response from the State Party and is satisfied with the received documentation regarding Grote Combeweg 3, particularly the set of very illustrative photographs from the period 1905-1988. It would be advisable that the State Party to prepares similar documentation for the building at the Henk Arronstraat 1. Historic documentation and analysis are essential elements in the evaluation process of rehabilitation projects. Therefore, ICOMOS encourages the State Party to include such documentation in future requests for Technical Review or advice”*.

The construction of an extension behind the State Council building has up till now not been implemented. Since the technical review conducted by ICOMOS in 2023 and submitted to the State Party by letter of the Director of the World Heritage Centre on 21 February 2023, ref. CLT/WHC/LAC/RRH/23/012, none of the requested documentation as requested in the aforementioned letter were carried out.

Regarding the rehabilitation of the historic Palm Garden, the ICOMOS technical review submitted by letter of the Director of the World Heritage Centre dated 18 May 2023, ref. CLT/WHC/LAC/RRH/23/032 were: *“ICOMOS International notes that the submitted study [Studies Palm trees in the Palm Garden of Paramaribo of January 2023 by Iwan Wijngaarde] is correctly developed with regard to the palms but is incomplete as further research should be undertaken before any further intervention. It is recommended that a specific management plan and rehabilitation project be prepared for the Palm Garden and that, among other actions that may get underway, the planting of new palms should await the rehabilitation project”*. These recommendations were followed by the State Party.

In June 2023 the State Party informed the World Heritage Centre that a risk assessment was conducted by Andres Ochoa P., ISA Certified Arborist (CO-0002A, ISA Certified Utility Specialist CO-0002U, M Sc. Urban Forestry). Since the first study proposed the removal of 418 of the total of 998 palms, the Paramaribo Urban Rehabilitation Program (PURP), decided to get a second opinion. The risk assessment was a supplement to the study that was undertaken in January 2023 and that was subject of the ICOMOS Technical Review of May 2023. The risk assessment provided a more detailed and thorough evaluation of each of the 1037 trees, and concludes that not only royal palms but also other species can be found in the garden, and that the health conditions of 87% and the structural conditions of 90% are good or fair. Based on the results of the assessment, only 50 dangerous or sick palms trees were removed instead of the 418 proposed in the earlier study.



Left: An arborist removing an abundance of Bromeliads in the top of a palm tree. Right: An arborist in the top of a palm tree removing Bromeliads.

By letter from the director of the World Heritage Centre dated 27 September 2023, ref. CLT/WHC/LAC/RRH/23/042 the State Party received the following comments and recommendations:

*“ICOMOS reiterates that all recommendations of the May 2023 Technical Review should be implemented in an integrated manner. This should be done by a multidisciplinary team of trained specialists in cultural landscape conservation. If needed, outside expertise should be sought from universities and/or the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes (ISCCL).*

*ICOMOS considers that the 2010 maintenance plan could be a basis for the preparation of the Management Plan for the garden. This plan should be updated and needs the addition of all components of a management plan and rehabilitation project that are specified in the May 2023 Technical Review.*

*Finally, ICOMOS would like to stress that the management plan and rehabilitation project as described above are critical for the preservation of an attribute which conveys the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property. They should be prepared before any intervention in the Palm Garden is implemented”.*

Based on the above ICOMOS comments and recommendations, the State Party decided to hire in June 2024 through PURP the consultancy firm *Heritage Futures* (Nicolas Clarke) to develop a Management and Maintenance Plan (2024-2029) for the Palmentuin. Heritage Futures submitted a progress report by 16 July 2024 and the draft report in late October 2024, while the final report is expected to be submitted by February 2025 at the latest. An on-site workshop will be held in the beginning of 2025. The draft Final Management and Maintenance Plan (2024-2029) for the Palmentuin will then be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for a technical review.

Regarding the planned construction of a hotel (Palm Garden Hotel) at the Kleine Combéweg, the technical review stated *“ICOMOS International notes that the Project lies at a sensitive location bordering the Palm Garden and thus high standards are to be applied to any construction. Based on the limited documentation provided, the hotel as proposed would seriously affect the historical and landscape values of the Palm Garden and would pose an adverse and irreversible impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage property. To proceed further, a Heritage Impact Assessment and a historical and spatial analysis of the building site are needed”.*

As of today, no further actions have been taken by the private investor. He did not acquire the three private building lots to build the hotel since his design would pose an *adverse and irreversible impact on the OUV of the World Heritage property*. Based on the above, it can be concluded that the proposed hotel at the Kleine Combéweg will no longer be constructed.

3. **Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value**

**Construction of Yogh Parking Garage**



3D Design Yogh Parking Garage

A conservation issue that has a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OV) of the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo is the construction of a 10-storey parking garage for the Yogh Hospitality Hotel at the Domineestraat just bordering the UNESCO World Heritage core area. The construction site lies in the proposed extension of the bufferzone II and is within the area of influence or the wider setting of the World Heritage Property. The construction of the Yogh Parking Garage is presently still on-going, however the lower floor is already in use. The construction started initially without the requested building permit from the Ministry of Public Works, which gave its informal consent for the construction. The building permit was issued months later. Given its scale and height, the Yogh Parking Garage is a large-scale urban intervention with a potential to negatively impact the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The Advisory Body conducted two technical assessments. In the first one dated April 2024, ICOMOS concluded that *“In terms of height, the proposed building is considerably higher than its surrounding. As seen in the photos provided by the State Party, all other existing buildings in the direct vicinity are much lower. As a consequence, the proposed building will not only stand out noticeably compared to its neighbours, but also, it will most probably be seen from key locations and/or important vistas (viewsheds) within the property's core zone, such as from the view line Klipstenenstraat towards the Keizerstraat, as well as the view line from the Keizerstraat towards the Domineestraat”*. Considering that the historic urban landscape of the property has rather horizontal/landscaped proportions, it can be said that the project, as proposed, will have an adverse negative impact on the overall visual integrity of the property and therefore on its Outstanding Universal Value. ICOMOS therefore recommended to *“Reduce the height and scale of the project by at least 2 to 3 stories less, in such a way that it may be no higher than the lower volume of the nearby Yogh Hospitality Hotel. The proposed walkway could still be kept on the same proposed level (if not on a lower level). Provide an HIA with particular emphasis*



*on the visual analysis and assessment of the potential adverse impacts on the visual integrity of the property as per relevant and important vistas (viewsheds) from within the World Heritage property.”.*

In May 2024 the authorities requested a second technical review and stated that the design was amended (the height was reduced, but the number of floors remained the same). In the second technical assessment the Advisory Body stated that *“The amended proposal keeps the same number of floors/levels, but it has been reduced in height (from +29.70 down to +26.745). Unfortunately, despite these changes, it still does not comply with the following recommendation (which was expressed in the previous ICOMOS Technical Review, April 2024), to: “Reduce the height and scale of the project by at least 2 to 3 stories less, in such a way that it may be no higher than the lower volume of the nearby Yogh Hospitality Hotel. The proposed walkway could still be kept on the same proposed level (if not on a lower level)”. ICOMOS concluded that it “maintains that the project should not exceed the lower volume of the nearby Yogh Hospitality Hotel, as to do so would mean that the project: “will not only stand out noticeably compared to its neighbours, but also, it will most probably be seen from key locations and/or important vistas (viewsheds) within the property’s core zone, such as from the view line Klipstenenstraat towards the Keizerstraat, as well as the view line from the Keizerstraat towards the Domineestraat”.. Considering that the historic urban landscape of the property has rather horizontal/landscaped proportions, it can be said that the project, as proposed, will have an adverse negative impact on the overall visual integrity of the property and therefore on its Outstanding Universal Value”.*

Despite two consecutive technical assessments by the Advisory Body the authorities never halted the construction work nor were the recommendations made by ICOMOS followed.



Construction Site: Groundbreaking Yogh Parking Garage, 7 April 2024

In chronological order are given the correspondence regarding the Yogh Parking Garage:

11 December 2023: the Site Manager of the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo sent an email to the Permanent Secretary (Director) of Public Works stating that he was recently informed that an application for a building permit was submitted to the Ministry of Public Works for the construction at the Domineestraat of a 10-storey parking garage for the Yogh Hospitality Hotel. According to the preliminary assessment the construction of the Yogh Parking Garage would pose a threat to the OUV of the historic inner city. It is recommended that the design of the parking garage be submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Center or ICOMOS for a technical assessment.

12 January 2024 ref. MOW 095/24: the minister of Public Works requests the minister of Education Science and Culture to submit the design (3-D streetviews) of the Yogh parking garage to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for a technical review by the Advisory Body.

2024 ref. M-0060: the minister of Education Science and Culture informed the minister of Public Works that the information to be submitted is incomplete and request additional information.

27 February 2024 ref. MOW 344/24: the minister of Public Works submits additional information and requests his colleague once more to submit the design to UNESCO.

April 2024: the site manager conducts a screening exercise and states that the location of the construction site is highly sensitive since it is in the area of influence or the wider setting of the World heritage property. Given its scale and height it is considered a large-scale project with a potential to negatively impact the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and concludes that a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is necessary.

10 April 2024 ref. CLT/WHC/LAC/24/020: UNESCO submits by email the assessment made by the Advisory Body to the Surinamese Authorities.

15 April 2024 ref. M-0451/24: the minister of Education Science and Culture submits the ICOMOS Technical Review (1<sup>st</sup>) to his colleague from Public Works and ask to lower the design with 2-3 floors and to conduct a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA).

25 April 2024 ref. MOW 768/24 informs his colleague that a HIA will not be a prerequisite to issue a building permit since there is not enough expertise in Suriname to conduct such an assessment which can be time consuming and an obstacle for private investors. He requests his colleague so look into the possibility of a capacity building course on HIA for Surinamers.

23 May 2024 ref. MOW995/24: the minister of Public Works submits to his colleague from Education Science and Culture a revised design stating that the height of the Parking garage has been reduced, but with the same number of floors. It is requested to ask a second technical review by the Advisory Body.

20 August 2024 ref. CLT/WHC/LAC/24/046: UNESCO submits by email the 2<sup>nd</sup> technical assessment made by the Advisory Body to the Surinamese Authorities. ICOMOS maintains its earlier conclusions that the Parking Garage will have an adverse negative impact on the overall visual integrity of the property and therefore on its Outstanding Universal Value.

2 September 2024 ref. M-1079: the minister of Education Science and Culture submits the 2<sup>nd</sup> ICOMOS Technical Review to his colleague from Public Works and informs him that the revised design still does not comply to the recommendations made by the Advisory Body and that it will have a negative impact on the OUV of the World Heritage Property.



Construction Yogh Parking Garage 17 October 2024: View from different sides



Construction Yogh Parking Garage 23 November 2024: View from different sides



4. **In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.**

#### Reaction of the State Party

As part of the rehabilitation of the historic Waterfront financed under the Paramaribo Urban Rehabilitation Program (PURP I) an amphitheatre will be constructed on the old Flag Square. A screening exercise has been conducted by the site manager and based on the exercise the design of the amphitheatre will not have a negative impact on the OUV of the property. On 25 September 2025 ref. M-1880, the minister of Education, Science and Culture shared the screening exercise together with the spatial design proposal of the Amphitheatre with UNESCO for information. Email correspondence followed between the World Heritage Centre and the Site Manager in which the Site Manager stated that no technical review was requested since the outcome of the screening exercise showed that there would be no negative impact on the OUV of the world heritage property. The documentation was shared as information only.



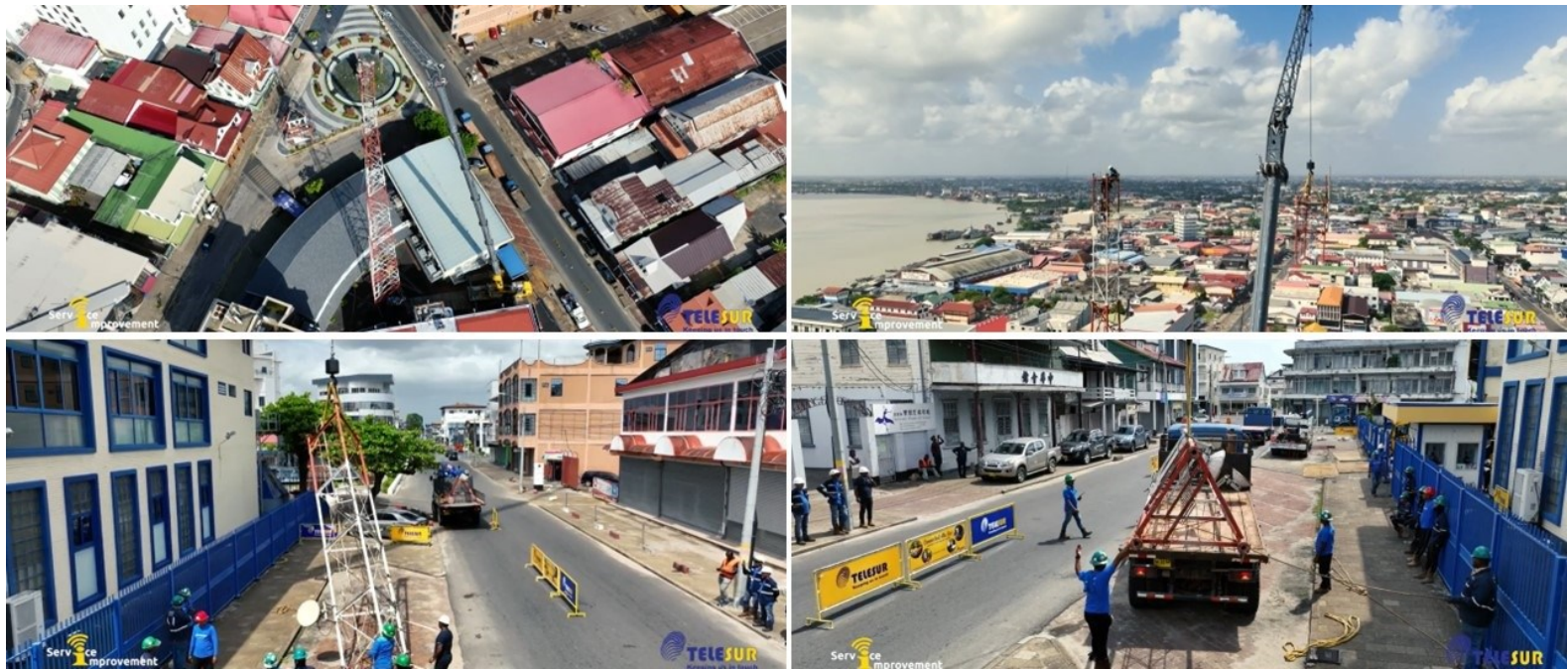
3-D model of the proposed Amphitheatre.

A USD 30 million loan for the rehabilitation of the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo (PURP II) was signed on 17 June 2024 between the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Government of the Republic of Suriname. This successor PURP program aims at restoring several more state-owned heritage buildings and strengthen the PWHS' governance for its' sustainable management. Also, a contribution agreement was signed between the IADB and the European Union (EU) represented by the European Commission (EC), in which the EU agreed to contribute an amount of Euro 2,670,000 for the financing of Climate Change Adaptation Investments for Paramaribo's Resilience comprising flood wall reconstruction and upgrading, construction of a pedestrian pathway (boardwalk) along the Waterfront, nature-based solutions, adaptation training and technical assistance. The Climate Change Adaptation Investments for

Paramaribo's Resilience will be implemented under the PURP II program.

### **Dismantling of Telecommunication Tower**

In December 2023 TELESUR, the Telecommunication Communication Company of Suriname, dismantled a 40-year-old telecommunication tower at its headquarters within the core area of the world heritage property. This high tower which connected other towers in the East, West and South of Suriname became obsolete in terms of technology and telecom data capacity since the transformation to a fiber optic network. With the removal of this tower the visual integrity of the property was improved.



Dismantling of 40-year-old telecommunication tower within the world heritage property

### **Establishment of National Parking Authority**

In June 2024 the consultant I.T. Transport Limited (UK) presented its final report for the establishment of a National Parking Authority as part of the PURP I project, Formulation of a Legal & Institutional Framework for the implementation of a Parking Policy'. The objective

of the consultancy was “to assess the current regulatory and institutional frameworks and make recommendations for amendments to the existing legislation and identify a new institution or select an existing institution that can be adjusted to function as the National Parking Authority (NPA)”. The NPA will be a division of the Road Authority (RA). The need for parking management in Paramaribo was initially identified in the Environmental and Social Assessment for the Paramaribo Urban Revitalization Program (ERM, 2016). Several urban mobility studies have been conducted after this date such as ‘The Strategic Urban Mobility Plan for Paramaribo Historic Center, Report II - Diagnosis and Strategic Objectives and Report III Implementation Plan by IDOM, 2018’, and ‘Parking Management Policy and Strategy for the Paramaribo Inner City’, MCrit & ILACO, Final Report, June 2022. The latter study validated the previous studies, analyzed policies from other countries, gave guidelines for parking management and provided an implementation proposal.

The proposal of I.T. Transport Limited (UK) for the establishment of a National Parking Authority will be tendered by 2025.

**5. Public access to the state of conservation report**

The State Party grants its consent to upload this State of Conservation Report for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of conservation Information System.





03.05.24





03.05.24

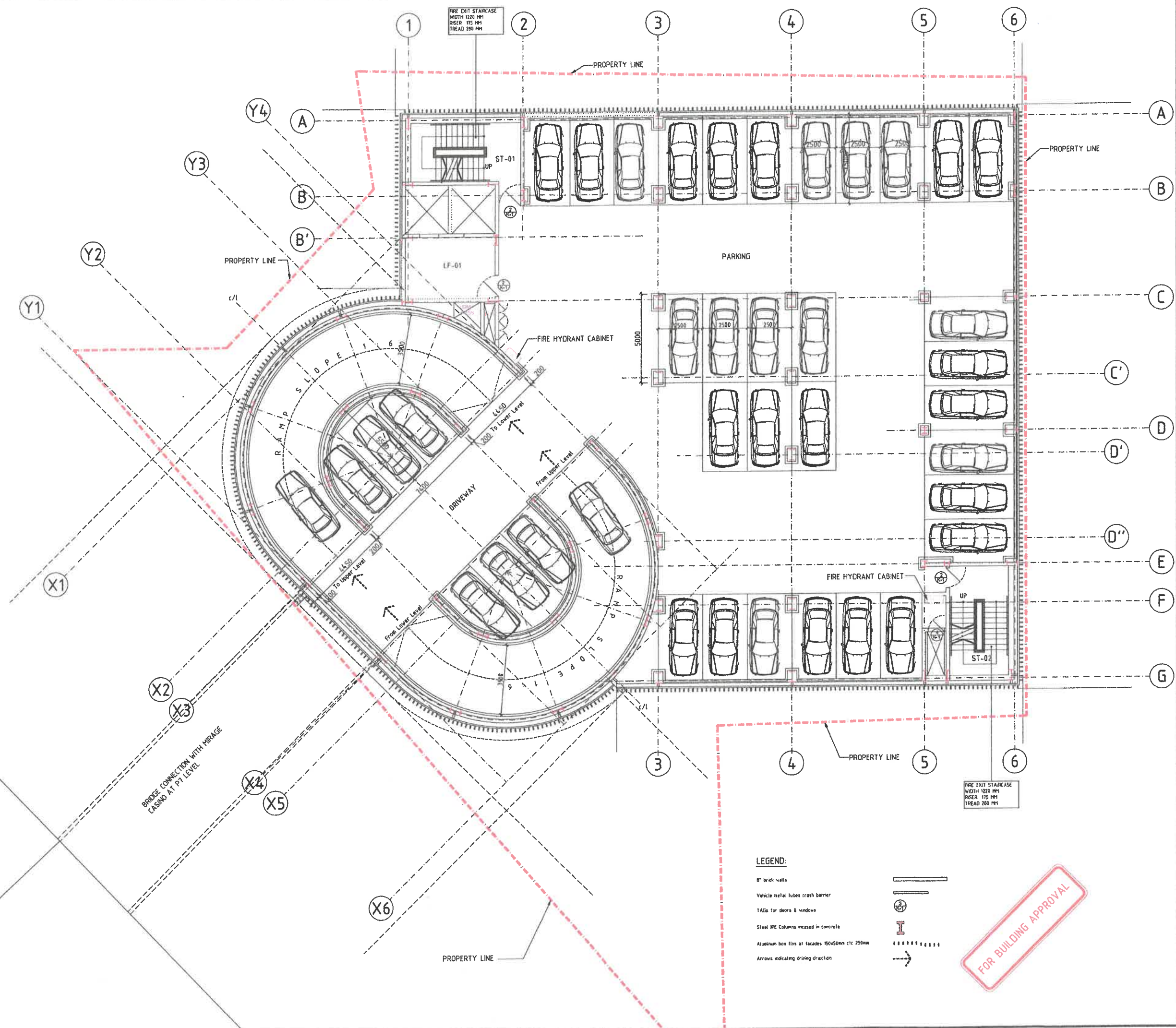


3



03.05.24





KEY PLAN

NOTES

ARCHITECT

OWNER

EMPLOYER

PROJECT TITLE

DETAILS OF REVISION/VERSION

DRAWING TITLE

DRAWING NUMBER

SCALE

REVISION

DRAWN BY

CHECKED BY

PROJECT PHASE

PHASE

THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL OTHER CROSS REFERENCED DRAWINGS. ANY DISCREPANCIES TO BE BROUGHT TO THE NOTICE OF THE ARCHITECT'S & RESPECTIVE CONSULTANTS

THE CONTRACTORS SHALL CHECK AND VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS ON SITE PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF ANY BUILDING WORK OR MANUFACTURE. ANY DISCREPANCIES SHALL BE NOTIFIED TO SUPERINTENDANT OR ARCHITECT IMMEDIATELY

ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES, UNLESS SPECIFIED OTHERWISE WRITTEN DIMENSIONS SHALL TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER LARGER DRAWING

DETAILED DRAWINGS SHALL TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER LARGER DRAWINGS

SYLVAN ARCHITECTURE  
NO. 252 FIRST FLOOR, ASHOKA ENCLAVE MAIN  
SECTOR 35, FARIDABAD (NCR), HARYANA: 121 003, INDIA  
TEL: +91 129 413 3228  
EMAIL: silva@sylvanarchitecture.com  
PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT: SIVAKUMAR SRINIVASAN

YOGH HOSPITALITY

YOGH PARKING  
PARAMARIBO, SURINAME

| REV | DATE     | DESCRIPTION           |
|-----|----------|-----------------------|
| R0  | 29.04.24 | FOR BUILDING APPROVAL |

PLAN AT P2-P6, P8 LEVEL  
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT DRAWING

YP-AR-BP-UN-TYP-GA

1:100

| REV | DATE | DESCRIPTION | DISCIPLINE |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----|------|-------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 01  | 11   | 12          | 13         | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |

DRAWN BY: JH  
CHECKED BY: SSK

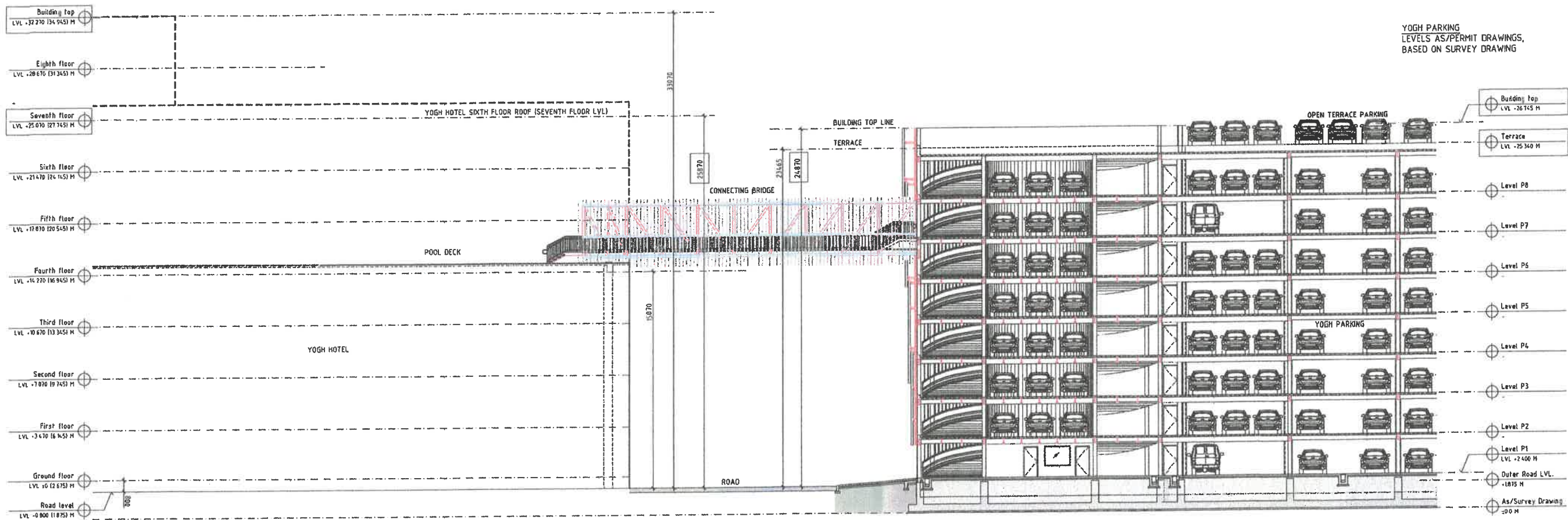
PD PRELIMINARY DESIGN  
DD DETAILED DESIGN  
CD CONSTRUCTION

SD SCHEMATIC DESIGN  
TD TENDER  
BP BUILDING PERMIT

AR  
BP



YOGH HOTEL  
LEVELS AS/CLIENT DRG WITH ROAD AT -0.800 M  
(IN BRACKETS LEVELS BASED ON SURVEY DRG  
WITH ROAD AT +1.875 LVL HAS BEEN INDICATED)



SECTION SN-01A  
1:150 @ A1

FOR BUILDING APPROVAL

|   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|----------|---------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| KEY PLAN  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| NOTES   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL OTHER CROSS REFERENCED DRAWINGS. ANY DISCREPANCIES TO BE BROUGHT TO THE NOTICE OF THE ARCHITECTS & RESPECTIVE CONSULTANTS                            |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| THE CONTRACTORS SHALL CHECK AND VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS ON SITE PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF ANY BUILDING WORK OR MANUFACTURE. ANY DISCREPANCIES SHALL BE NOTIFIED TO SUPERINTENDANT OR ARCHITECT IMMEDIATELY |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES, UNLESS SPECIFIED OTHERWISE. WRITTEN DIMENSIONS SHALL TAKE PRECEDENCE. DO NOT SCALE DRAWING   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| DETAILED DRAWINGS SHALL TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER LARGER DRAWINGS  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| ARCHITECT   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| OWNER   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| EMPLOYER  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| PROJECT TITLE   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| YOGH PARKING<br>PARAMARIBO, SURINAME  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| DETAILS OF REVISION/VERSION   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| REV   | DATE     | DESCRIPTION         |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| R0  | 28.04.24 | FOR INFORMATION     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| R1  | 29.04.24 | FOR BUILDING PERMIT |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| DRAWING TITLE   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| SCHEMATIC SECTION THROUGH<br>YOGH HOTEL AND YOGH PARKING  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| DRAWING NUMBER  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| YP-AR-CD-UN-SN-01A  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| SCALE   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 1:150   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| REVISION  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 0   | 1        | 2                   | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  |
| 10  | 11       | 12                  | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| DRAWN BY  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| PM  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| CHECKED BY  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| SSK   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| PROJECT PHASE   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| PD PRELIMINARY DESIGN   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| SD SCHEMATIC DESIGN   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| DD DETAILED DESIGN  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| TO TENDER   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| CD CONSTRUCTION   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| BP BUILDING PERMIT  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| PHASE   |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| CD  |          |                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## SCREENING PROCESS YOGH PARKING GARAGE DOMINEESTRAAT

| Impact characteristic | Prompt question                                    |   | Explanation   |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| Magnitude             | What change will occur?                            | Measurable indicator  | As the building location of the proposed parking garage is almost directly bordering the World Heritage Site, its location is highly sensitive since it is in the area of influence or the wider setting. Given its scale and height it is considered a large scale project with a potential to negatively impact the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). |
| Type                  | Positive or Negative Impact?                       | Positive, Negative or Neutral   | Negative, since the visual integrity of the World Heritage Property is at stake.  |
| Extent                | Area of impact?                                    | Measurable indicator  | The impact will be localized, but the massive scale and height will clearly have an impact on the direct surroundings (streetscape) and will be seen from the Klipstenenstraat and Keizerstraat.  |
| Duration              | Length of impact?                                  | Short-term, long-term, permanent  | Permanent. Once the parking garage is constructed the massive scale and height will have a long lasting impact.   |
| Frequency             | How often will this impact occur?                  | once, intermittent infrequent, intermittent frequent, continuous  | Once  |
| Reversibility         | Can the impact be reversed? Is it easy to reverse? | Naturally reversible, reversible through human intervention, easy or difficult to reverse, irreversible | The impact can be reversed if the height of the parking garage will be limited by 2 or more floors as indicated in the ICOMOS Technical Review.   |
| Likelihood            | How likely is it that this                         | possible, probable, definite  | Possible, since the contractor is already doing construction  |

|  |                    |  |                                  |
|--|--------------------|--|----------------------------------|
|  | impact will occur? |  | works without a building permit. |
|--|--------------------|--|----------------------------------|

Based on the above screening process a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is required.

Stephen Fokké

Site Manager Historic Inner City of Paramaribo

April 2024





### The concept | Isometric perspective

The triangular square features a centrally located circular amphitheatre, enveloped by a green buffer and tree structure that pays homage to the former flag poles. The organization of the space distinctly divides the event and leisure zone from the hospitality terrace adjacent to the historical buildings.







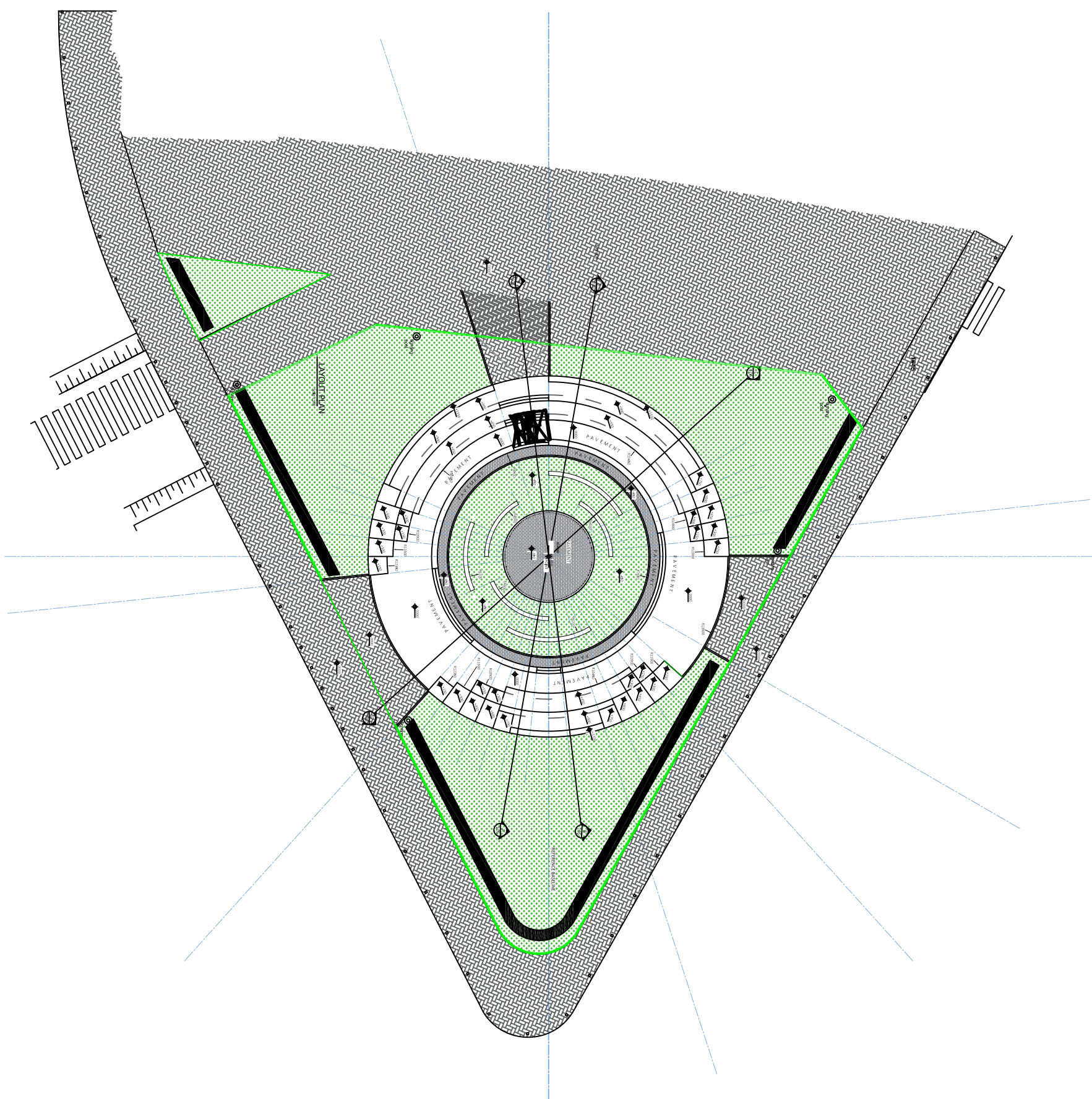


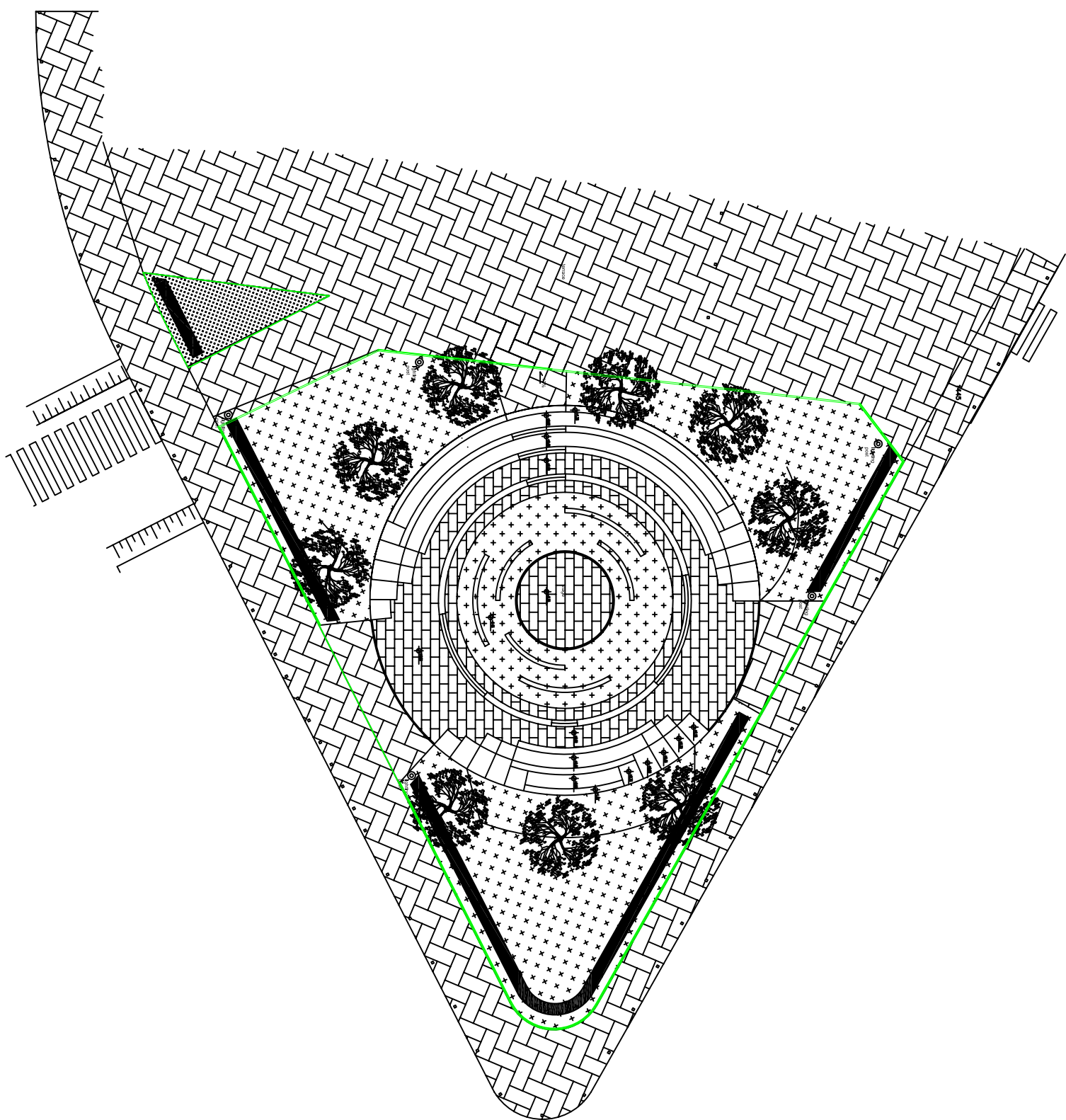




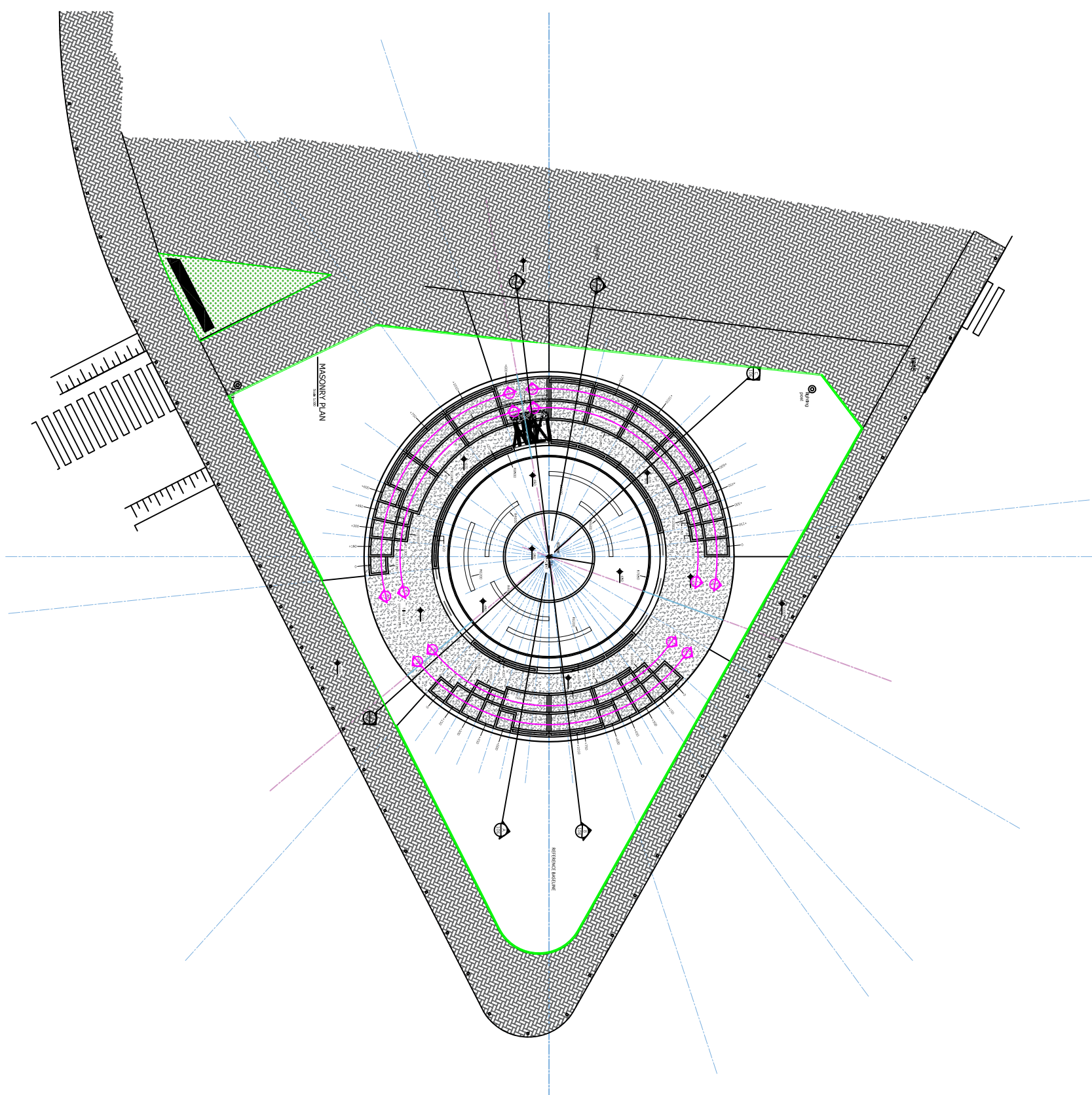
Evening performance | View from the Independence Square

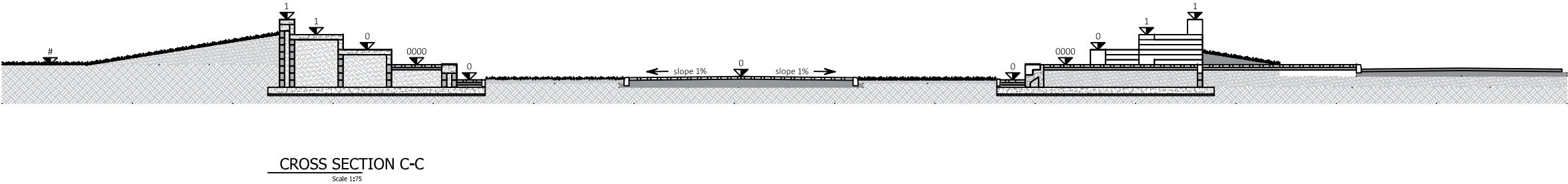
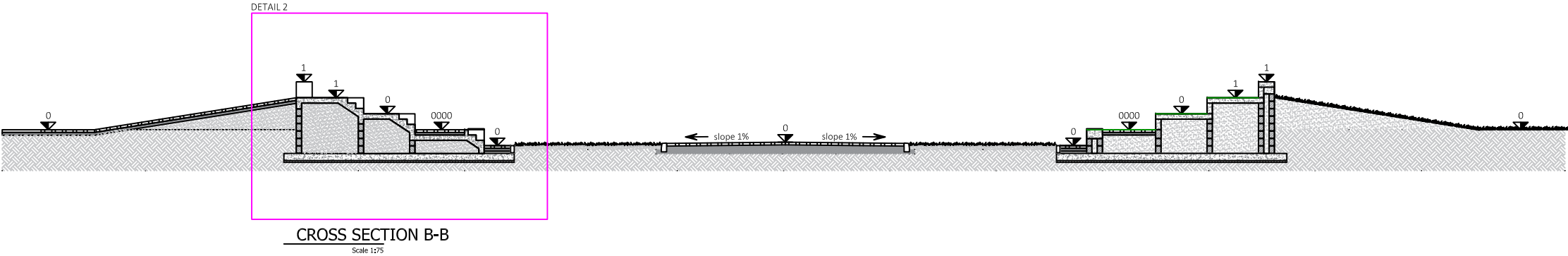
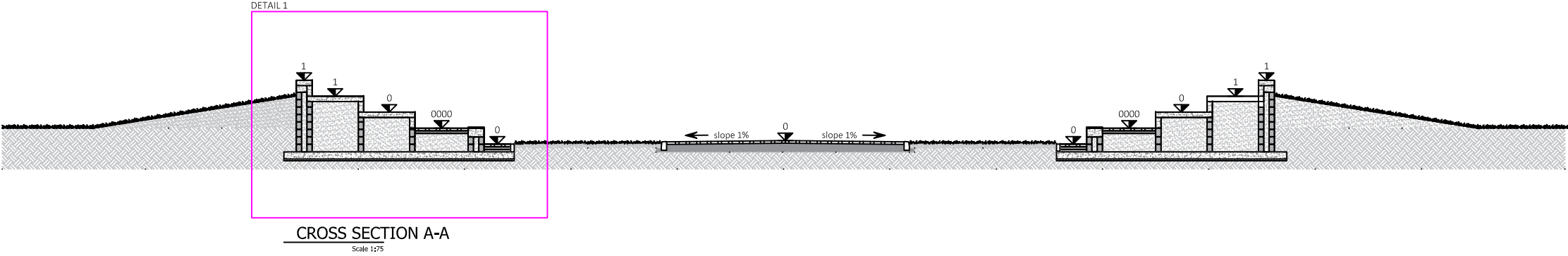




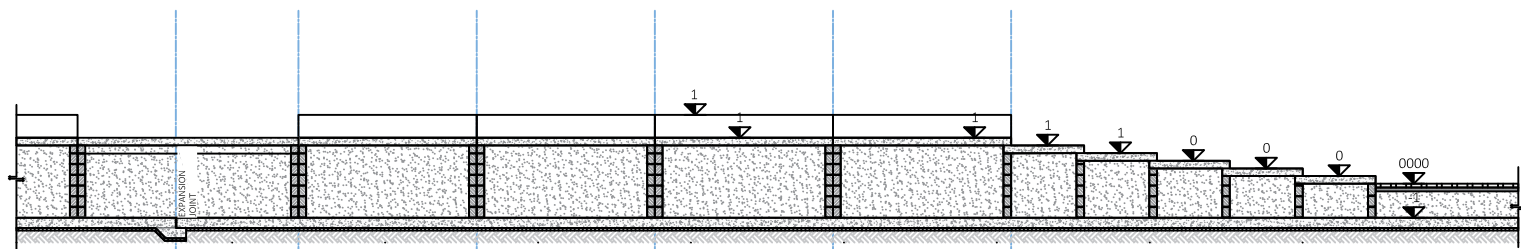






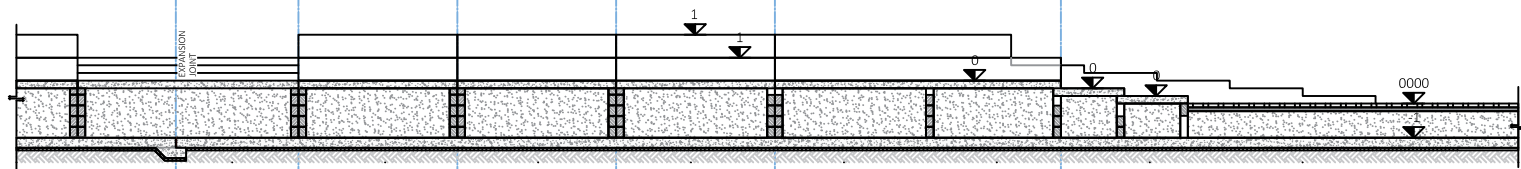






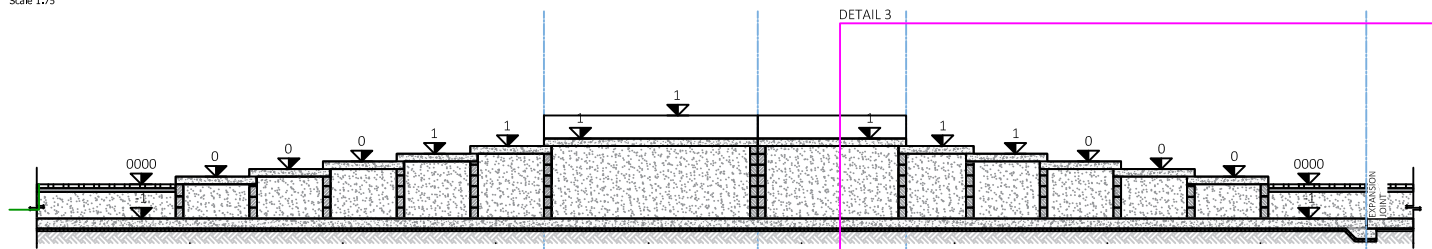
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Scale 1:75



CROSS SECTION E-E

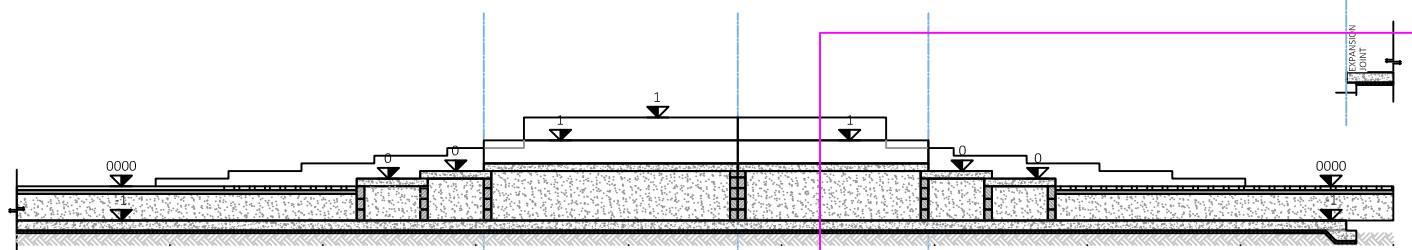
Scale 1:75



CROSS SECTION F-F

Scale 1:75

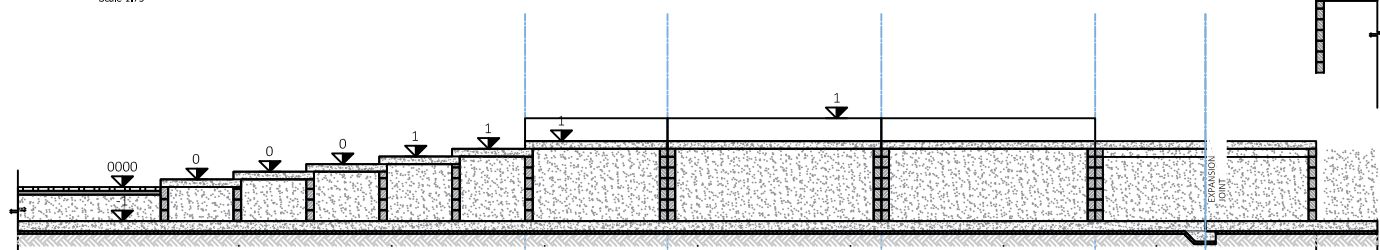
DETAIL 3



CROSS SECTION G-G

Scale 1:75

DETAIL 4

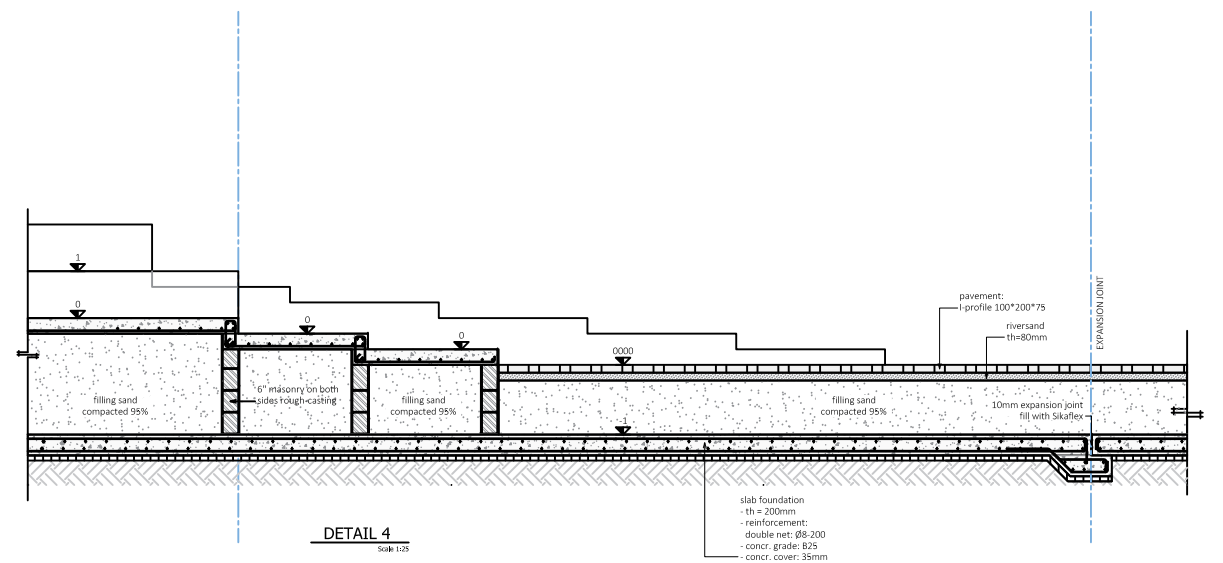
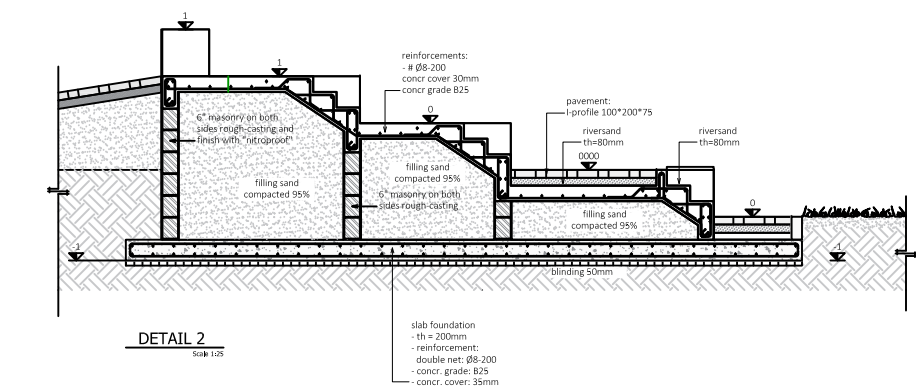


CROSS SECTION H-H



CROSS SECTION I-I

Scale 1:75





**To: Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo**  
**The Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre,**  
**7, place de Fontenoy,**  
**75352 Paris 07 SP**  
**France**

**Paramaribo, September 25, 2024**

**Ref. No.: M-1880**

**Subject: SU-L1046 PURP: Submission of Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) Screening Exercise and Design Proposal for the Amphitheater at the Waterfront**  
**Appendices: 2**

Dear Mr. Assomo,

I am writing to submit the following documents for your information regarding the ongoing developments at the Waterkant area in Paramaribo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site:

- 1. Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) - Screening Exercise for the Amphitheater at the Waterfront**
- 2. Spatial Design Proposal - Amphitheatre at Waterkant, Paramaribo**

These documents are provided to keep the World Heritage Center informed of the progress and planned activities related to the design and development of the amphitheater at Waterkant, Paramaribo. We believe these documents will help ensure that the project aligns with the preservation and protection standards required for World Heritage Sites. Thank you for your continued support.


Yours sincerely,

**Prof. dr. Henry Ori**  
**Minister of Education, Science and Culture**

**Cc: - Dweight Warsodikromo – Permanent Secretary of Culture, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture**  
- Tatiana Kopelman – Teamleader PURP, Inter-American Development Bank  
- Vidya Narain – Secretary General of the Suriname National Commission to UNESCO  
- Natasja Deul - Program Coordinator PURP

## HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA)

### SCREENING PHASE HIA DESIGN AMPHITHEATER WATERFRONT

| Impact characteristic | Prompt question         |                      | Explanation   |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Background            |                         |                      | <p>The amphitheater to be constructed under the PURP I program is planned at the old flag square bordering the Independence Square and the Waterfront. Originally, this triangle was an unused green area covered with grass with vistas towards the Square and the Suriname River. In the 1980s it was transformed into a flag square shaped as a gear wheel consisting of 14 flags of international organizations and countries with whom Suriname had diplomatic relations. The Surinamese flag was positioned in a star in the center of the square. At a certain point the gear wheel shape was changed into a complete circular shape.</p> <p>The square - located in the heart of the UNESCO World Heritage Site - attracted for decades lots of people especially in the late afternoons and evenings because of its central location within a historic built environment and its waterfront scenery. Activities such as capoeira dance and skateboarding were performed on the square. The concrete edges of the square functioned as seating for strollers. In short, the old flag square used to be a magnet attracting people. In 2012 the old flag square was demolished, and a new flag square was constructed on Independence Square.</p>  |
| Magnitude             | What change will occur? | Measurable indicator | The construction of an amphitheater aims at reinstating the magnet function of the old flag square.   |

|               |  |   |  |
|---------------|--|---|--|
| Type          | Positive or Negative Impact?                       | Positive, Negative or Neutral   | Restoring the magnet function of the former flag square will have a positive impact on the outstanding universal value of the world heritage property and will contribute to the revival of the Waterfront area. The amphitheater will be positioned in such a way that the vistas towards Independence Square and the riverfront will not be hampered. Furthermore, the projected grass area around the square will resemble the green grass area the square originally used to be. |
| Extent        | Area of impact?                                    | Measurable indicator  | The impact will be localized, having an impact on the direct surroundings (streetscape).   |
| Duration      | Length of impact?                                  | Short-term, long-term, permanent  | Permanent, long-lasting impact.  |
| Frequency     | How often will this impact occur?                  | once, intermittent infrequent, intermittent frequent, continuous  | Continuous   |
| Reversibility | Can the impact be reversed? Is it easy to reverse? | Naturally reversible, reversible through human intervention, easy or difficult to reverse, irreversible | The impact can be reversed through human intervention.   |
| Likelihood    | How likely is it that this impact will occur?      | possible, probable, definite  | Definite   |

#### **Outcome screening exercise:**

Based on the preliminary design of the amphitheater and the above screening process no Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is required.

Stephen Fokké  
Site Manager Historic Inner City of Paramaribo  
27 July 2024, revised 14 August 2024